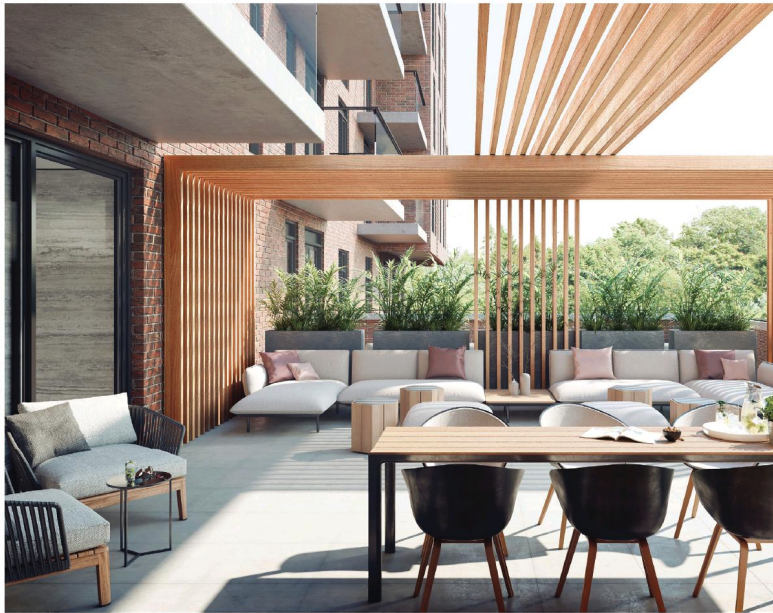




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## ST. CLAIR SITE 'A SIGNIFICANT PRESENCE'

122-unit project launching this spring *PH2*

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PHOTO: ADHOC STUDIO

"In Toronto, the vernacular of home happens to be red brick," says architects Quadrangle's principal Richard Witt, and St. Clair Village follows that maxim.

## Fitting in, not contrasting

ST. CLAIR AVE. RESIDENTS WANTED VIBRANT AND ACTIVE, AND CANDEREL LISTENED

ALEX NEWMAN

Is there such a thing as an undiscovered pocket in Toronto? James Deitcher, Canderel's director of residential development, thinks so, which is why he started hunting for property to develop along St. Clair Avenue West a few years ago.

Stretching from Bathurst St. to Oakwood Ave., the surrounding neighbourhoods were previously home to Italian and Portuguese families, and all along the avenue, butchers, fruit markets and tailors jostled for space. The fabric of the area started to change as some of those communities migrated north and construction began on the streetcar line in 2005.

Deitcher liked what he was seeing and when 900 St. Clair Ave. W. became available, Canderel jumped on it. The site had entitlements in place, as well as an architect — Quadrangle's principal Richard Witt.

When Canderel held the first community meeting about the St. Clair Village

project, Witt remembers "how often people kept saying they wanted activity at the street level."

That desire drove the design of the project's street-level podium. Access from both Alberta and St. Clair avenues, a setback to widen the sidewalk and an all-glass front, says Witt, "enhances the site's significant presence in the context of the street."

People also wanted homes to suit the area. "And in Toronto, the vernacular of home happens to be red brick," Witt says. "When you get up close, brick is tactile, has texture and human scale, people respond to that, even at three or four storeys off ground."

Renderings reveal a building that is understated, even underwhelming, but has fine articulations in Cordovan bronze details, and is set back at various points to create exterior open space.

Witt explains the rationale for the subtlety. "Toronto is a busy city with quite a lot of buildings screaming for attention. We wanted to deliver a building that was contemporary, but also feels as though it's been there for-

**1. Looking for a community hub?** Wychwood Barns, a 100-year-old streetcar facility has been transformed and is now home to a farmers market, an artist live-work space, a playground and an ice rink.

**2. If you like heritage...** Casa Loma, Toronto's only castle, built in the 19th century, has tours of the house and gardens. And Wychwood Park, an enclave of original Arts & Crafts homes designed by the likes of architects Eden Smith and Arthur Edwin Whatmough is nearby.

**3. For those wanting some peaceful green space,** Prospect Cemetery running north from St. Clair Ave. W. has memorial features such as the Lights of the Madonna, and works by Canadian artists.

ever, something that fitted in, rather than contrasting with the existing context."

The 122 units range from 500 square feet to 1,300 sq. ft., with an average size of 750 sq. ft., offering layouts that feel spacious. The condos are priced from the mid-\$400,000s to more than \$1 million. There are several three-bedrooms and purchasers can also combine units, which was a conscious decision, Deitcher says.

"I believe there will be demand for larger suites from

downsizers coming from nearby Wychwood, Cedarvale, and Hillcrest," he says. "And young families, who may have grown up here but can't quite swing that first home."

Amenity spaces are appropriate for the demographic — there's a temperature-controlled wine storage lounge, and a fitness studio with top-of-the line TRX props and cardio equipment, a party room and an outdoor terrace. A terrace takes up approximately two-thirds of

the roof, with the remainder being a green space, designed as a passive element for rainwater absorption and combating heat island effects.

This isn't the first project Canderel has developed in an established but up-and-coming neighbourhood. Deitcher points to their DNA condo on King West. Projects like these satisfy the city's requirements for its corridor plan to develop mid-rise housing on main streets, he says.

"The Avenue Studies were to ensure that local character is preserved in these neighbourhoods. Every element of the streetscape along St. Clair is balanced. Wide sidewalks, a dedicated streetcar lane, mixed-use zoning and boutique retail storefronts, create the ideal environment for mid-rise development."

Infrastructure is starting to catch up. Now that the streetcar right-of-way is completed, the avenue is enjoying renewed growth. According to a 2018 TTC report, car traffic has dropped by 10 per cent, transit use is up seven per cent, cyclists have

increased by three per cent and pedestrian use has risen by four per cent since the line was completed in 2010.

The neighbourhood has a walk score of 95 and a transit score of 83. But residents at St. Clair Village will still have parking spaces — 68 of them, including visitor parking and two car-share spaces — and enough bike spots for 115 residents and 17 visitors.

Witt recently walked around the neighbourhood — four years after he first explored it when the development was in the concept stage — and he says he's amazed at the changes taking place.

"I can't believe the restaurants and clubs," he says. "It made me think of what had been expressed at that first community meeting, how the residents wanted a vibrant, active neighbourhood."

Special to National Post

Launching this spring, the presentation centre will be located at 805 St. Clair Ave. W. Occupancy is slated for fall 2021. To register visit: [stclairvillage.com](http://stclairvillage.com)