



Don Mills

Don Mills gets modern Flaire

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SPECIAL TO THE STAR

[Flaire Condominiums](#) — with its sculptural design and sinuous, curving balconies that flare as they wrap around glass towers — is contemporary, but with a retro mid-century nod to its Don Mills neighbourhood.

Composed of two 11-story towers that rise from a four-storey podium, Flaire has a resort-like courtyard set-back from the road. Designed by architects [Giannone Petricone](#), the entrance canopy with its ultra-modern V-shape and glass-enclosed lounge space, like a firm handshake, makes a confident first impression.

One of six condominium residences and one conversion project (LivLofts) on the 16-hectares (40-acre) Shops at Don Mills site, the development — a partnership between [Cadillac Fairview Corp.](#) and [FRAM Building Group](#) — offers an “urban village” concept of residences, indoor and outdoor recreational spaces, retail stores, office and professional spaces, restaurants and food emporiums.

Located at Don Mills Rd. and Lawrence Ave. E., the neighbourhood is based on a town-square master plan.

FRAM president Frank Giannone says proximity and flow gives Flaire a sense of connectivity. He adds the established destination shopping and dining location offers a sense of familiarity.

“On a day like today with so many people on the street you don’t have to tell them that this is a people place. It really is an urban village and it feels like that. So you can easily see yourself coming to live here. You don’t have to convince somebody that this is what is going to come in the future.”

Niall Collins, senior vice president of development with Cadillac Fairview, says a community feel is essential.

“It is a place where you can live, you can work, you can play; there is activity for all of those — it’s a real community, a little hamlet.”

Originally known as the Don Mills Centre (one of the earliest suburban malls in Canada), the site has been reborn with high-end stores and boutiques like Coach, Michael Kors, Anthropologie and the showroom of luxury eco car Fisker, as well as restaurants and food emporiums from some of Canada’s biggest culinary stars.

Celebrity chef and restaurateur [Mark McEwan](#) operates the 22,000 square foot gourmet marketplace McEwan, as well as the upscale eatery Fabbrica. He calls the neighbourhood “the new Lawrence Park” with its proximity to downtown and influx of young professionals.

“You can be downtown in a heartbeat. It’s very, very connected and people have just begun to discover this.

“I sort of bought into where I think Don Mills will be in five years. I like the neighbourhood now — but I know where it’s going and I think the future bodes incredibly well for it.”

Giannone says their team travelled through the U.S., Canada and Europe to research the urban village model and find out what works for the Canadian climate.

At the heart of the Shops at Don Mills is the centrepiece: a large public square with a distinctive clock tower designed by Canadian artist Douglas Coupland and water feature designed by Karajal of Quebec.

Rimmed by restaurants, the square is an all-season gathering place even featuring a skating rink through the winter months.

With a park and large community recreation centre in the planning stages (residences also have their own state-of-the-art fitness facilities) there are events and occasional festivals that create a neighbourhood hub sensibility.

Internal streets names pay homage to prominent historical figures in Don Mills (the land, once owned by businessman E.P Taylor, had originally been set aside for a brewery.)

But residents of the pedestrian-friendly enclave will also be able to embrace the outdoors from their own units. With few nearby buildings exceeding three stories, there will be enviable views from the curvaceous balconies — some of which offer 225 square feet of additional living space.

Collins says the shape of the building allows units to have more than one aspect:

“They’re not looking in a single direction — a lot of the units can enjoy the view downtown at night or during the day and it’s unobstructed.

“In the evening the city glows from the lake and the balconies are incredibly generous — there are great opportunities to enjoy the outdoors on that balcony with a fantastic view.”

Residents will also be able to enjoy alfresco living from the fifth floor podium rooftop deck with its Miami-inspired cabanas, barbeque fire pits and seating alcoves.

Collins says it will be a chic and contemporary gathering place.

“(It’s) going to be spectacular — especially the views downtown in the evening. I think it’s really going to have something to offer that will be unique. It’s going to sit between both towers where everybody can enjoy it. It sits over large piece of landscaping to the front of the building so I think there will be feelings of you’re not downtown with built-up buildings — there’s a lot of amenity space.”

Giannone emphasizes the design details will give Flaire “a presence of address,” some of which are the floor-to-ceiling windows, sculptural pieces of artwork in the common spaces and custom kitchen and baths all designed by Alessandro Munge of [Munge Leung](#).

Of the neighbourhood, McEwan is upbeat: “I think coupled with the development of Don Mills and with 2,050 nice condo units projected out five or six years — it’s going to be an amazing community.”

Details

Project: Flaire Condominiums

Developer: Cadillac Fairview Corp. and FRAM Building Group

Location: 99 The Donway West

Architect: Giannone Petricone Associates Inc.

Designer: Munge Leung

Number of suites: 296 units

Price range: From the mid-\$200,000s to mid-\$500,000

Suites: 1-bedroom and to 2-bedrooms

Occupancy: 2015

Sales centre: 12 Marie Labatte Rd., 416-445-8868, www.flairecondos.com