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Building on a position of strength

Core Condos going for buyer attention with first T.O. sales launch of the year



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From left, Andrew Hoffman, president of CentreCourt Developments, Elaine Ceconi, partner, Ceconi Simone, Shamez Virani, v-p CentreCourt Developments and Mansoor Kazerouni, executive v-p of Page + Steele / IBI Group Architects, discuss the plans and renderings for CORE Condos.

By: [Ryan Starr](#) Staff Reporter., Published on Thu Jan 09 2014

Andrew Hoffman is confident that Toronto's real estate market will have a good, strong year.

President of CentreCourt Developments, Hoffman is showing that confidence with the first project launch of 2014: Core Condos at Church and Shuter Sts.

"We want to be the focus of the condominium consumer coming out of the gate in 2014," he said in a recent interview at his company's Adelaide St. W. headquarters.

Core, a 24-storey development, will include 220 suites that range from 390-square-foot studios to 775-square-foot, two-bedroom-plus-den units. Suites are priced from the low \$200,000s. (Eighty per cent of the units will be under \$400,000, the company says.)

Designed by Ceconi Simone, the condos will have floor-to-ceiling windows, and engineered wood or laminate flooring in the living/dining areas and bedrooms.

Kitchens will come with stainless steel appliances, composite stone countertops and under-mount sink. Bathrooms will have porcelain flooring and wall tiles, and top-mounted sinks.

Toronto's condo broker and agent community has been eagerly anticipating a new project from CentreCourt, Hoffman maintains.

It's not hard to see why. The company had Toronto's top-selling condos in 2011 and 2012: Karma, at

Yonge and Grenville Sts., and Indx, located on Temperance St. in the financial core. CentreCourt spent 2013 getting those projects off the ground, along with Peter Street Condos in the Entertainment District. The three developments represent a total of 1,700 units under construction.

CentreCourt's plate may be full but, after being presented with the opportunity to buy the "strategically located" site last fall, Hoffman felt confident "the timing was right to be the first out of the gate in 2014."

Core Condos' single-floor amenity area is designed to serve as a full extension of the residents' living spaces, drawing them out of their compact condos and into an open-concept lounge that will include a fully stocked coffee bar, flat-screen TVs, free Wi-Fi, a fireplace, billiards and tables for working and dining.

There will be an additional 3,000 square feet of open-air terrace space, with lounge seating, fire pits and barbecues. The amenity level also will have a guest suite and fitness centre, and a private dining and party room.

"We want to encourage interaction among residents and give them a casual, comfortable, inviting place to hang out," explains designer Elaine Cecconi of Cecconi Simone. "It's not a precious thing, it's supposed to be something they'll engage in and get a lot of use and benefit from."

The target market for Core Condos is young professionals: Bay Streeters, Ryerson University and University of Toronto faculty, and hospital workers who want to live close to work.

"Whether they're buying or renting," Hoffman says, "we're catering to someone who finds this location and value proposition attractive. They want to be in the core."

Along with the downtown location, Core Condos will deliver some drama — the building has been divided into two sculpted facades that will be separated by a narrow glass slot at the north and south ends. The effect will create a duality in the tower's appearance.

The eastern facade will be wrapped in sheer, white skin that tapers in and out, allowing daylight to penetrate the block behind and give this side of the tower a sculpted look.

"(It will be) a very dynamic and recognizable profile in the skyline," says architect Mansoor Kazerouni, a principal with Page & Steele / IBI Group Architects, who wanted to design a building that would be "striking and capture people's imaginations."

The west-facing side of the building is darker and more conservative, a flat facade that's defined by a charcoal-grey frame and split down the middle, with balconies running along the exposed spine.

Two existing townhouse facades will be retained; a portion of the tower will float above these heritage structures and the brick wall of one of the townhouses will be visible through a glass wall in the Core Condos lobby.

The design process at Core veered from the typical condo-development path: Normally an architect creates the initial design for a building, and the interior designer and builder work to make their plans fit within those parameters.

At Core, the project's design team, led by Cecconi and Kazerouni, worked in closely from the very start. They were instructed by Hoffman to make functional suite design a primary focus.

“(CentreCourt) said we won't make form for the sake of making form, and we won't sacrifice functionality of the units for the sake of the building design,” Kazerouni explains.

That meant if an optimal unit layout required that the balcony be located in a particular place, the architect worked to accommodate this on the building exterior. It was a considerable challenge, he says, but in the end it made for a more intriguing design.

“The articulation and detailing (on the building) really came from the inside out and got expressed on the face of the building,” Kazerouni says. “It's not easy to say, ‘the unit needs a balcony here.’”

“But in this case we actually made it work in terms of the architectural form. We've integrated it in a very elegant way.”

CORE CONDOS

Location: Church and Shuter Sts. (a block east of intersection)

Developer: CentreCourt Developments

Architect: Page + Steele / IBI Group Architects

Designer: Cecconi Simone

Size: 24 storeys; 220 units, from 390 sq. ft. to 775 sq. ft.

Price: From the low \$200,000s.

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