

Article

Hamilton ready for world-class highrise condos says Lamb

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A double highrise condominium and multi-use project proposed for the CHCH television property in Hamilton, Ont. will introduce a new era of quality and hipness to the city, says its developer.



The CHCH building, originally constructed as a private residence and completed in 1850, is said by developer Brad Lamb to be in "amazing shape." The protected heritage building will be "fixed up" and Lamb aims to install a five-star restaurant and make it a "destination mansion." - Photo: DON WALL

Brad Lamb of Lamb Development Corp., a partner in the project with Movengo Developments, says the city is finally ready for a condo project where construction costs will reach close to \$600 per square foot or more.

The Television City project, valued at \$360 million, will contain 619 units in connected towers of 40 and 30 storeys on 44,000 square feet of property. Other proposed features include restaurants, an infinity pool, fitness centre, sky club and public access parkland. Lamb also plans to construct a co-op tech centre, a stimulation-oriented children's play centre, a private dog walk and a pet-washing station. Retro television/CHCH iconography will be used throughout.

The heritage CHCH building, originally built in 1850 for Hamilton business owner Tristam Bickle and known as Pinehurst, will be completely preserved and upgraded, said Lamb, with a 3,000-square-foot "glass box" extension built.

Real estate records indicate the building, located at 163 Jackson St. W., was sold to Lamb Development in November 2016 for \$6,950,000.

"Our project is world class, and by that I mean the building would be comfortable in London or Paris or New York or Toronto and now Hamilton," said Lamb. "So we are putting a building in that the city of Hamilton has not seen yet, in terms of the construction materials, the architecture, the design. All of those things cost money. I wanted to see Hamilton able to absorb those numbers."

Now it can, he has determined.

"That is the first thing, that the city has reached a critical mass for highrise construction," Lamb said. "Meaning, we are sure there is a market for this product now, and we are sure we can sell it."

Second and third consideration in selecting his projects, he explained, he has to be sure there is a modern clientele ready to buy, and he likes to build in areas where there will be a transformation — his literature describes building in "fallow" areas — with neighbourhoods experiencing a transition and investors in his properties reaping profits.

Again, Hamilton fits the bill in both respects, he said.

"I only like to work in cities where there is a street scene going on, there are cool restaurants, cool bars, cool people, a scene taking place, because those kind of people relate to what I build," Lamb explained.

"Not everyone likes our stuff because it is modern. We use a lot of exposed concrete so if you like cool modern stuff, you love what we do."

Zoning remains an issue and Lamb knows he will have to engage in "arm wrestling" to convince the city to grant the density and height he is seeking.

"The good news is, I wasn't thrown out of anyone's office when I presented it," Lamb said.

Design consultants on Television City include architect Peter Clewes of architectsAlliance and Kelly Cray of U31, responsible for interiors.

Since 2001 Lamb has developed 17 completed projects, his website notes, and there are four currently under construction, with another eight projects incorporating 2,600 units in development. Typical projects include Work Lofts and Flatiron Lofts in west central Toronto.

Transportation infrastructure was also a factor in Lamb's Hamilton investment decision. The recent construction of the nearby Hamilton West GO Station was a deal maker, he said.

"If the GO station hadn't happened, I wouldn't be there, so when I saw the GO station completed, and I realized it was 55 minutes from Toronto, the bottom line is, Toronto is the economic engine of southern Ontario and proximity to it is a positive thing. That GO station made me believe that Hamilton is going to open up."

Additionally, Hamilton's proposed light rail transit line was a "huge factor," he said.

Lamb also said development fees are low in Hamilton, and land prices for developments like his are much lower than in Toronto.

Sales will start in September, and the hope is that commitments will reach the 450-unit threshold well within two years and that zoning will be obtained within that period as well, leading to a possible launch of construction in July 2019.

If the 450-unit target is reached quickly, both towers would be built nearly contemporaneously, the first 40-storey tower getting underway a possible half year ahead of the second tower, with a three-and-a-half year overall construction timeline.

Unit prices will start at approximately \$220,000, with unit sizes ranging from 400 to 2,000 square feet.

Photo



The proposed Television City project in Hamilton, Ont. will offer high-grade features not seen in existing residences in the city, says its developer Lamb Development Corp., including nine-foot ceilings, built-in stainless steel appliances, hardwood floors, double-thick stone counters and gas nozzles on balconies for barbecues, all as standard features.

Photo:
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