

Television City changing the view of Hamilton.

By Chris Sanislo

Is the secret officially out?

You certainly don't have to go far to find a Hamiltonian willing to passionately sell the merits of our city to any and all listeners – whether they want to hear it or not. But now we may be on the cusp of something completely different. Perhaps something we haven't seen since the local steel industry boom of the '50s; although, that era had enough grit, suspended particulate and labour strife to scare off the less hardened. Today, people outside our city's borders are passionate about Hamilton. As hard as it may be for our parents to comprehend this, people really want to live here.

The combination of factors that has led to this demand have been well documented and debated. Do we really have something a little different here? Or, is this all a function of fleeting affordability?

Enter the renowned and respected Toronto-developer Brad Lamb. This former understudy of Harry Stinson – another developer who's made big plans and enjoyed success here in Hamilton– has made his fondness for our city very apparent.

“Hamilton's rich culture and potential has had my attention for a while,” Brad explains. “For years I've been making annual overnight visits to the city to take in the culture, food, nature and development. It was about two years ago that I really started to take interest in developing here.”

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The backup for Brad's ringing endorsement comes by way of plans for 30 and 40 story condo towers set to vault skyward from site of the CHCH headquarters – aptly named Television City. This \$360 million project will bring 618 condo units to downtown. And the plans include the preservation and reuse of the Pinehurst Mansion, built in 1850, that has been occupied by CHCH since 1953. In a city

where heritage buildings frequently meet the wrecking ball, a warm welcome generally awaits developers who recognize their value.



“Hamilton’s revitalization still reflects the city’s culture and history. I wanted Television City to mirror that essence of Hamilton,” Brad explains. “Preserving the heritage of the 1850s mansion, featuring playful displays of vintage televisions keep the aesthetic both nostalgic and modern.”

As you would expect, the plan calls for plenty of amenities. Along with features like an outdoor infinity pool and skyclub, Television City will also include an open workspace area – an area designed to encourage creative collaboration and a digital solution to work-at-home needs. This has definite appeal to the city’s growing demographic of young professionals. And, given the long-term economic impact this group wields, drawing them downtown should appeal to everyone else as well. When it comes to identifying who the potential residents are, Brad points out that this is more about a mindset than age ranges and income brackets.

“Our target audience for Television City would be individuals that are forward thinkers that desire an elevated style of living.” Brad underscores that the diversity of the units reflects the desire to be inclusive of a diverse range of residents. “We’re designing Television City to ensure that there is something for everyone, from single people living in bachelor units to a growing family living in the three-bedroom penthouse.”

Promotional materials also list another key feature – that prices will be 20% lower than comparable units in Toronto. Overt affordability comparisons also seem to be a new trend when marketing our city to those down the highway. And that can cause more than a few of us to bristle. Being a lower priced alternative to Toronto doesn’t exactly play to our HamOnt pride. But, while cost-of-entry is a big selling point, there are plenty of others to complement.

Brad is one of a number who have drawn a link between Hamilton and Brooklyn. While the scope is enormously different, there are similarities to our relationship with Toronto and theirs with Manhattan. And of course, a common denominator is the more affordable cost of living. But Brad explains that there is a more emotional and intangible tie with Brooklyn. “I believe there is a cultural parallel. Over the years, Hamilton has progressed from its past as a steel town to a city rich in culture and community,” he explains. “The focus has shifted from heavy industry to art crawls, galleries and some phenomenal restaurants. It is undeniably in the midst of a cultural renaissance.”

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