



» HOMES & CONDOS

Inspired by the world's great boulevards

Luxury finishes, amenities by Amexon for new condo, Residences of 488 University

IAN HARVEY
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Officially, University Ave. is the grand boulevard of Toronto, a double-wide swath of multi-lane roadway with landscaped medians blooming with flowers and monuments to those who marched before us.

Unofficially, it's Hospital Row, a busy stretch of six lanes bordered by monolithic commercial and medical buildings, jammed with traffic leading to Queen's Park, where it suddenly vanishes north of Bloor St. to become Avenue Rd.

It wasn't always that way — once it was the gem of the city's streets, home to parades and walks through the park when Queen's Park was actually a gated sanctuary.

With the launch of the Residences of 488 University Ave., Amexon Development Corp.'s 55-storey structure at the northwest corner of University and Dundas St. W., the grand old lady is about to get some of her sparkle back.

Dan Menchions, principal of II by IV Design, said the vision is to project the building's status as the first new condo on the avenue that draws inspiration from the world's great boulevards such as Park Ave. in New York and the Champs-Élysées in Paris.

"It really needs a grand presence," he said. "And the client approach has been luxury from the ground up.

"What has impressed me in working with (Amexon) is that they want quality in every detail, from stand-alone soaker tubs to the millwork, the walk-in closets and to the kitchen cabinets, which are all custom-made

with finish options of wood or lacquer and European-style design with pullout tray liners."

The plan is to update the existing 17-storey office tower then graft the new, residential structure on top, with suites rising up to 55 storeys.

On the ground floor, a double-height atrium will host an upscale restaurant and shopping that leads to commercial/office space topped by Amexon's 18th-floor Sky Lobby and 30,000 square feet of amenities on two floors.

Energy saving components and solar roof panels will also feed into the power grid.

Jason Schiff, executive sales manager of 488 University, said a unique steel-and-glass exoskeleton will surround the existing building and support the new structure. An outer glass envelope on both upper and lower structures will help blend the two components. Design additions will make the entrance onto the wide sidewalks of University Ave., and on the building's west side facade on Simcoe St., "pop."

Prices for the 453 residential suites start at \$398,000 for a 544-square-foot, one-bedroom suite with terrace. Units range through, 1+1 (bedroom plus den), two bedroom, 2+1 bedrooms, three bedrooms and 3+1, all with large terraces and panoramic views.

Occupancy is tentatively slated for November 2017.

Inside the office tower is TTC access to St. Patrick subway station. A walk away are the shops and restaurants of Spadina Ave., Queen St. W., Yonge St. and the entertainment district. To the south lies the Rogers Centre and Union Station, which is nearing completion of its own expansion project.

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TARA WALTON/TORONTO STAR

Dan Menchions, left, of II by IV Design and Jason Schiff, executive sales manager of the Residences, say their vision for the project is inspired by boulevards such as Park Ave. in New York and the Champs-Élysées in Paris.

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The Residences go above and beyond standard

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Core Architects are handling the project and plan a porte-cochère off Simcoe St., on the building's west side, adding to the hotel-style glamour.

Both Schiff and Menchions agreed the goal was always to go big — and go for quality.

As a result, interiors will feature limestone and marble while suites will feature herringbone-patterned wood floors along with quality fixtures, tiles and finishes far beyond the “standard” condo offerings, walk-in closets and large ensuites in each unit.

It will also be smart-home ready with an installed touch pad in each suite and able to link with smart appliances or automatic window shades.

The unique location and height contribute to city views — to the north is the boulevard itself and Queen's Park, east and west views will also include Lake Ontario, and south (the most popular with registered buyers) offers the CN Tower and waterfront. An abundance of windows and a plan for open-concept layouts, said Schiff, allows the designer to create a spacious, contemporary vibe for each suite.

And each of the units will have a six-to-eight-foot-wide balcony. “It really is something different for the down-



TARA WALTON/TORONTO STAR

Schiff, left, and Menchions in a suite's kitchen at 488 University Ave. The Residences' interiors will feature marble and limestone.

town niche market, where there isn't too much outdoor living space,” said Schiff. “We went to provide a living-space extension and these are big enough to be a terrace.”

The 30,000-square-foot amenity space will include a two-storey, marble-and-limestone stairway connecting the Sky Lobby to the library, squash court, state-of-the-art gym, indoor and outdoor salt- and freshwater pools, sun deck and hot tub. For less strenuous relaxing, the Sky

Bar will offer a private club for residents and guests. An underground parking area will have pay-as-you-charge electric vehicle stations and reserved, shared car spots.

With its proximity to U of T, Schiff says many buyers are investing for their children while others like the proximity to the financial district.

“We've also got some empty nesters and young professionals so it's across the spectrum of this market,” added Schiff.



Indoor and outdoor salt- and freshwater pools are planned for the space.

> THE RESIDENCES OF 488 UNIVERSITY

Location: University Ave. and Dundas Sts.

Developer: Amexon Development Corp., with CORE Architects and II by IV Design (interiors)

Size: 55 floors (17 commercial), 453 suites

Price: Starting at \$398,000 for 544-sq.-ft. one-bedroom with terrace. Final details and floor plans pending.

Info: 488University.com, 416-252-3000, Email: info@488university.com. Sales centre at 393 University Ave., 10 a.m.-8 p.m.



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