Parade One – CityPlace

by Luigi Benetton

Located on former railway lands just west of downtown Toronto, the Parade One condominium development consists of a nine-storey podium from which rise towers of 18 and 38 storeys, containing 835 suites total – plus one of the most daring design elements to grace a condominium project to date.

Tim Gorley, executive vice-president of Page + Steele/IBI Group Architects, notes similar setups for neighbouring projects. "The zoning for the area called for a high tower and a medium tower supported on a podium structure," he says.

Gorley worked with his colleague Mansoor Kazerouni to bring to fruition the original concept created by New York's KPF Architects. "Our role (led by Mansoor) was to develop a concept through detailing, material selection, detailed planning and City approvals," he says.

"We designed Parade to create a modern version of grand buildings fronting on parks, like those by Central Park in New York City," says Gabriel Leung, director of development for Concord Adex Inc.

Leung speaks of Parade One in context with its twin (fraternal, not identical), Parade Two. "The towers are designed as clean Cartesian forms (round and square) to play against each other," Leung explains. "For the mid-rise buildings, one is oriented north-south, the other east-west to enhance the geometrical interplay amongst the buildings."

The round and square towers will come together in 2012 when the team joins the 28th through 30th storeys using a split-level, two-storey bridge 26 metres long and seven metres wide.

The bridge's lower level party room will offer great views north, south – and down. A glass floor consisting of five three-foot by five-foot glass panels will lead eyes 28 storeys down to a public mews between the two condominiums.

This view will also include a second-floor amenity area consisting of a roof garden, barbecues and a lounging area. Private courtyards from both buildings will lead to this area. "We designed planters instead of fences to keep these private," says Paul Ferris of Ferris + Associates Inc.

The bridge's upper level will house two suites, belonging to each tower. Bedroom areas will sit in the towers while the bridge section will contain living, dining and kitchen space. The bridge's roof will serve as exclusive-use terraces.

The bridge will connect to the towers using bearings that let the 'parts' slide over each other. "When the towers move independently, the bearings will allow the bridge to move with ease," says Agha Hasan, principal with Halcrow Yolles.

Hasan notes that, to his knowledge, this is the first time a bridge between condominium towers will contain residential units. To fully understand how to build it, the team commissioned a number of studies, including wind tunnel tests to determine the effects of wind on the bridge during the hoisting operation and after final installation.

PHOTOS: HAROLD CLARK PHOTOGRAPHY

The studies revealed certain limits, like that of the maximum height for the bridge. "You can put a pedestrian bridge much higher, since it can tolerate larger movements," Hasan explains, adding that architectural features will conceal expansion joints and residents will not experience any more wind vibration than their neighbours down the hall.

Walters Inc. will build the bridge on the ground, then work with Western Mechanical Electrical Millwright Services Inc. to hoist it into place during a one-day operation. They will use strand jacks located on steel beams cantilevered over the edges of the towers' roofs.

The project team will choose hoisting day carefully. "We've done snapshots of weather patterns, we've projected wind tolerances," says Les Siddall, senior project manager for PCL Constructors Canada Inc. who is managing the project. "We'll wait for a window of weather that lets us do the lift."

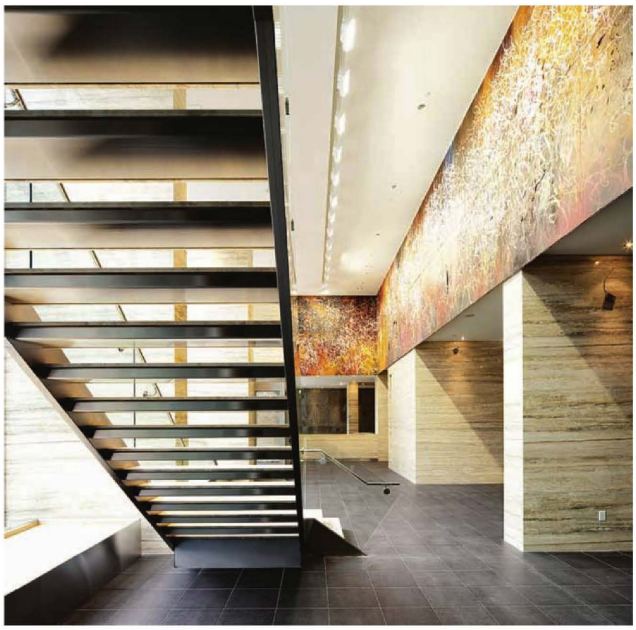
Once in place, contractors will finalize connections between the bridge and the towers, including waterproofing and expansions. "We have large transfer walls and beams in the area of the bridge, so we used high-strength concrete, and the columns were larger than they would have been if the bridge wasn't there," Siddall says.

Wood ceiling panels add a touch of luxury to all the suites, a look that the modern open-concept kitchens had to match. "The three finishes available include high-gloss white, light oak and dark oak," says John Cheung, general manager for Royal Laser Manufacturing Inc.

"The main challenges we faced with these designs were the actual installation of the panels and maintaining the colour of the finish throughout. The configuration of the panels and the cabinets was unforgiving for variations in the colours. The panels and cabinet doors had to be run in the same batches to ensure consistency."

From a project-wide perspective, Concord Adex realized efficiencies thanks to the master-plan nature of the overall development. "We pre-excavated and shored both blocks and did all the caisson work at the same time," says Jeff Wilkinson, project manager of Block 26W and 29 for Concord Adex. "This reduced costs and decreased project duration."

That master plan helps landscaping integrate with the area surrounding the building, particularly the park to the south, the walkway lining the north end of the property from east to west and a pedestrian bridge (to be built later this year) spanning the rail lines just north of that walkway.



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These park elements lead into a pedestrian mews between Parade One and Two which, in turn, transition into the lobbies of both buildings.

To merge the park and urban themes coming together in this area, Ferris chose a 'deck' design for an outdoor terrace available to retail spaces at ground level. "Rather than an open plain of wood, we'll have a grove of trees growing up through the deck," he says.

His design for the north-end turning circle/drop-off area 'artfully' ensures pedestrian safety. Rather than installing bollards, "we created a large planter on the mews side," he explains, adding that the team picked a piece of public art named "Me and You" by local artist Maha Mustafa to place between the mews and the drop-off. It consists of two curving pieces of steel 'spooned' towards one another.

The planters and public art installations will buffer pedestrian and car spaces, resulting in what Ferris designed to be "a plaza that people use." ■

OWNER/DEVELOPER
Concord Adex Development Corp.

ARCHITECT OF RECORD
Page + Steele Architects/IBI Group Architects

CONCEPT ARCHITECT
Kohn Pederson Fox Associates

GENERAL CONTRACTOR
PCL Constructors Canada Inc.

STRUCTURAL CONSULTANT
Halcrow Yolles Partnership Inc.

MECHANICAL/ ELECTRICAL CONSULTANT
MCW Consultants Ltd.

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS
Ferris + Associates Inc.

INTERIOR DESIGNER
II BY IV Design Associates Inc.

KITCHEN DESIGNER/ MANUFACTURER
Royal Laser Manufacturing Inc.

BRIDGE INSTALLATION
Walters Inc. in conjunction with Western Mechanical Electrical Millwright Services Ltd.

PROJECT AREA
83,000 square feet

PROJECT COST
$140 million (excluding soil preparation)