



» HOMES & CONDOS

WHAT THEY GOT: CONDOS



BIRCHMOUNT

Location: 60 Mendelssohn St., Warden Ave. and St. Clair Ave. E.

Asking price: \$284,000

Selling price: \$278,000

Previous selling price: \$205,595 (2009)

Size: over 800 sq. ft.

Parking: one underground space

Maintenance fees: \$338.63 per month

Taxes: \$1,496 (2012)

Bedrooms: 2

Bathrooms: 2

Days on the market: 50

This two-bedroom suite in a midrise building in Scarborough sold for 98 per cent of the asking price.

"This condo appealed to the buyer because of its vicinity to St. Clair Ave. E.," says listing agent Ira Jelinek.

"The community this building is a part of includes two condo buildings as well as townhouses."

The unit boasts an open balcony and is conveniently located within walking distance to the Warden subway station. It is also close to a school and parks.

Unit has: living room with hardwood; kitchen with ceramic floor, ceramic backsplash, granite counter tops and built-in dishwasher; master bedroom includes hardwood and four-piece ensuite; second bedroom with hardwood and three-piece ensuite.

Listing agents: Ira Jelinek, Harvey Kalles Real Estate Ltd., Brokerage and Dolores O'Brien, Re/Max Rouge River Realty Ltd., Brokerage



UPPER JARVIS

Location: 500 Sherbourne St. north of Wellesley St. E.

Asking price: \$339,900

Selling price: \$335,000

Previous selling price: \$326,950 (2011)

Size: about 650 sq. ft.

Parking: one locker

Maintenance fees: \$285.54 per month

Taxes: \$1,565 (2012)

Bedrooms: 1 plus 1

Bathrooms: 1

Days on the market: 13

Selling for 99 per cent of the listing price, this one-bedroom unit features a den and vaulted ceilings.

"The soaring 11-foot ceilings, the extra-high windows, the oversized terrace and the view of the architectural feature of the church's dome all contributed to the quick sale of this unit," says buyer's agent Omer Quenneville.

"The terrace is large enough for an outdoor lounge area.

"From both Cabbagetown and Rosedale, the building is only a five-minute walk to the subway.

"There is grocery shopping right across the street, and many bars, restaurants and cafés nearby."

Building amenities include a concierge, an exercise room, sauna, guest suites, a media room and a party/meeting room.

Unit has: foyer with closet; living room with walkout to patio; dining room; kitchen with granite countertops, breakfast bar and stainless steel appliances; den with laminate floor; bedroom with double closet and large window; four-piece bathroom.

Buyer's agent: Omer Quenneville, Graydon Hill Realty Ltd., Brokerage

Compiled by Allison Harness from information that is publicly available. Send recent homes sales to soldhome@rogers.com. Not all submissions can be used.

TRASH TALK



ELLEN MOORHOUSE FOR THE TORONTO STAR

This year, try wrapping gifts in reusable bags with recycled ribbon and tree decorations. This bag is from Bagnetic (bagnetic.com, two for \$7.99).

Bring back the bag charge

Charging for plastic was a strategy that worked extraordinarily well

Plastic bags. So useful, especially this time of year, so numerous and so destructive to the environment when carelessly handled.

It's estimated the world uses up to a trillion of them a year — even though it wasn't until the late 1970s that they became common in grocery stores.

And to think Toronto had a perfectly good system in place — the 5-cent retail bag charge — to curb our overuse. Alas, that's gone and the proposed ban on plastic bags has vapourized in the face of potential legal challenges.

Toronto won international recognition for its 5-cent bag strategy. The Solid Waste Management Association of North America — SWANA for short — bestowed a gold award for communications excellence in 2011 for the city's implementation of the policy. Indeed, one of the campaign ads, still viewable on the city's website, features a frog sitting on a plastic bag in a pond; it alone deserves a prize.

These garbage Oscars may lack glamour. Award categories such as collection systems, transfer stations, landfill management or waste-to-energy excellence don't have quite the same ring as best film or best actor. But SWANA counts about 8,000 members from industry and government (compared to the Motion Picture Academy's 6,000). When Toronto and other Canadian municipalities bag



CITY OF TORONTO PHOTO

One of Toronto's campaign ads, still viewable on the city's website, features a frog sitting on a plastic bag in a pond.



ELLEN MOORHOUSE

SWANA awards, as they regularly do, they deserve credit.

The behaviour-changing success of the 5-cent strategy in this ethnically diverse city of 2.6 million was impressive. A waste audit of single-family households showed a 56 per cent drop in "plastic bag generation" in 2010, compared to pre-ban 2008. Major grocery stores reported declines of 70 per cent and more. The city estimates Torontonians were using 242.2 million fewer bags a year, representing a net savings in waste management of \$104,000.

Clearly a nickel goes a long way in promoting that most important of the 3Rs — reduce. Let's hope council will change its mind next year

when the bag issue is back on the agenda. In fact, I think stores should charge for all bags, both paper and plastic. And while we're at it, let's add coffee cups to the pay-for-it list. (The city's most recent litter survey shows cups as a significant component, with Tim Hortons leading the pack.)

Like most, I have a love-hate relationship with plastic; so useful, but so pervasive and destructive as a polluter. But here's why I prefer a charge rather than a ban on bags: > Plastic bags have a smaller carbon footprint than the paper alternative. Paper may be compostable and less harmful to wildlife when we litter, but making or recycling it carries significant environmental costs.

> We reuse plastic bags, notably for garbage. If retail bags were banned, many of us, especially apartment dwellers, would be reduced to buying single-use retail-size plastic bags for household garbage. How environmentally friendly is that? Plus Toronto's green-bin program has been designed for using plastic bags in our kitchen catchers.

> Toronto has a recycling program for plastic grocery bags. (You stuff one bag full of other bags, tie the handles and put it in your blue bin.) Committed recycler Chuck Burke, who I've written about before, says there's a huge unsatisfied market for the material: He shipped almost 500 tonnes of used bags and film to Central America in August to be turned into flooring.

So, there you have it: With the nickel charge or something similar restored, Toronto's strategies truly would promote the 3Rs of reduce, reuse and recycle when it comes to plastic bags. So, council, please do the right thing next year, and retailers who continue to charge the 5 cents, please continue.

In the meantime, let's hope the good habits fostered by the three-year fee on bags continue in its absence.

Jim Harnum, Toronto's new general manager for solid waste, is optimistic. "I don't think if a person who chooses consciously to start bringing a reusable bag is going to go back to a plastic bag. So from our standpoint, that's the good news."

And his ideal bag option? "The small reusable polyester bags. They look like cloth but they're polyester," says Harnum.

"We recommend them over cotton, over paper, over plastic, over anything. They've got the smallest carbon footprint if you use them 11 times."

What a great way to wrap your gifts this holiday season — with an attractive, reusable cloth bag tied up with a bow!

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New Shangri-La deserves the attention it seeks



CHRISTOPHER HUME

As downtown adds residential to its architectural repertoire, Toronto is a city in transition. Hotels have always had a role in the core, but now the condo has arrived.

This is a good thing, of course, though the results can be confusing — in an interesting and thoroughly delightful way. One can no longer be sure exactly what one's looking at, if that matters.

At University Ave. and Adelaide St. W., which reads like an extension of the Financial District, big changes are underway. Gone is the corporate flavour that characterized the area. These days the landscape is more varied; it encompasses traditional office towers, a cultural attraction (the Four Seasons Performing Arts Centre) and now, a domestic component.



CHRISTOPHER HUME/TORONTO STAR

The Shangri-La brings an unprecedented level of architectural intensity to the University Ave. and Adelaide St. W. neighbourhood.

CONDO CRITIC

The Shangri-La, 180 University Ave.: Occupying a large site on the west side of University north of Adelaide, this 66-storey extravaganza brings an unprecedented level of architectural intensity to the neighbourhood. Nothing quite like it has been seen before, perhaps in all Toronto. For the most part, the recent arrival inhabits its space well.

One might have preferred a little more restraint, but that's not what this building is about. Indeed, try as one might, it's hard to avoid the Shangri-La. From the extraordinary sculpture on University Ave. to the exquisite glass pavilion behind it, the gentle geometry of the tower to the impressive stone facades of the podium, this is a complex that will not be denied. It's also a complex that doesn't

shy away from complexity. Though the design spirit is minimalist in some ways, the building takes a downright deconstructionist pleasure in its own multifaceted nature. With so much going on, the base reads like a whole streetscape of its own. Parts extend out toward the street, others pull back. The sculpture, by Chinese artist Zhang Huan, hovers in the narrow space between creepiness and beauty. Again, it's unlike anything in Toronto, a city where most public art ranges from the decorative to the commemorative.

Though the Shangri-La tries too hard to impart a sense of exclusivity, of being expensive for the sake of being expensive, it also represents an exciting addition to the skyline. The combination of hotel (below) and condos (above) feels appropriate. The main entrance, on Simcoe St., presents a more sober face to the city. The residential entrance, on Adelaide, reads almost like an afterthought. The main facade, on University, is the public face of the Shangri-La, a function it performs brilliantly.

Grade: A
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