

Origami Lofts: Form and function in harmony

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Special to the Star

Sayf Hassan is disappointed with what's been happening, or rather not happening, to Bathurst St. north of Queen St.

"South of Queen you have a decent amount of density on Bathurst, and you have fairly well-scaled, midrise projects of architectural merit," says Hassan, principal of builder [Symmetry Developments](#) and a former area resident.

"But as soon as you go north of Queen, Bathurst becomes a bit of a wasteland. It really needs to be rebuilt and revitalized."

That's what Hassan is aiming to do with [Origami](#), an architecturally captivating seven-storey condo with 23 units that he's planning to build at 202 Bathurst, just north of Queen.

As the project's name suggests, Origami, designed by [Stephen Teeple](#) — the architect for all of Symmetry's recent Toronto developments — was inspired by the "intricate forms of ancient Japanese paper folding," the sales brochure notes.



Origami will be an architecturally capturing seven-storey condo at 202 Bathurst St.

SUPPLIED ILLUSTRATION

Accordingly, the blue zinc cladding that drapes over the building's glass core will feature a series of angular folds and cut-outs. On the top of the building, a setback glass cube will house Origami's four penthouses, all two-storeys.

There will be 1,000 square feet of retail space at the base the building, enough room for a single shop, Hassan says.

The origami theme continues on the inside, where suite floor plans have been named after traditional origami animals. Options here range from "simple and efficient" (the Camel, a 387-square-foot studio unit with Juliet balcony) to "expansive and proud" (the Crane, a 983-square-foot two-bedroom penthouse with a 130-square-foot terrace).

Origami went on sale in October. Prices start from \$219,900.

True expression

The lofts, designed by [DKStudio](#), will have nine-foot ceilings in the principal rooms, prefinished engineered wood flooring, stacked Energy Star washer and dryer, and a barbecue connection on the balcony or terrace.

Kitchens will have Corian countertops, a mosaic tile backsplash and Energy Star stainless steel fridge, gas cooktop, dishwasher and microwave hood-fan. Bathrooms will have Corian-topped vanities, custom cabinetry and soaker tubs.

Certain suite design elements echo Origami's exterior form. The kitchen island, for example, resembles a sculpture that folds and bends. The pantry door is folded into a dramatic angle, as well.

"What I love about Stephen's (architectural) design and the origami theme is that you can take one sheet of paper or sheet of zinc and cladding, and through the process of bending and folding, actually create a beautiful object," explains designer Dmytriy Pereklita of DKStudio. "So the idea here was to extrapolate that inside the building."

"It's rare to get a building that's a whole — a true expression of an idea from start to finish," Teeple points out.

[Paul Johnston](#), the broker handling sales for the project, credits Hassan for being willing to "push the envelope" on design with Origami and "raise the bar" for Toronto residential architecture.

“It’s not much of a risk,” the developer says, standing beside his team of consultants during a recent interview at the Origami sales centre. “The bar is actually extremely low and needs to be raised a bit.”

Sensitive to design

Origami is aimed at end users who are “sensitive to design and extremely sensitive to livability,” Johnston says, buyers who want to be in the thick of the Queen West action but want nothing to do with a highrise condo.

“These are not voracious investors of consumer-condo product. These are people who want to live in a great area and in a really cool condo.”

Origami’s fine-grain midrise form will help it to fit well within the existing neighbourhood, Teeple notes. The building is also establishing a standard for the ongoing redevelopment of Bathurst north of Queen.

“It looks to the future,” he says. “The idea is that (Bathurst) will eventually be a street of similar-height buildings and it would form an avenue, but the buildings themselves could all be different.”

“The nice thing with smaller infill developments (like Origami) is that while you can create the continuity of the street space, you also get smaller developments that each have a different character.

“That enriches the street and makes a downtown better, more livable and more dense. All the right things.”

As the Origami folds

Location: 202 Bathurst St.

Developer: Symmetry Developments, symmetrydevelopments.ca

Architect: Teeple Architects, teeplearch.com

Interior design: DKStudio, dkstudio.ca

Building: 7 storeys

Units: 23 lofts, from 387 sq. ft. to 983 sq. ft.

Price: From \$219,900

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