

December 2014
\$5.00

Award

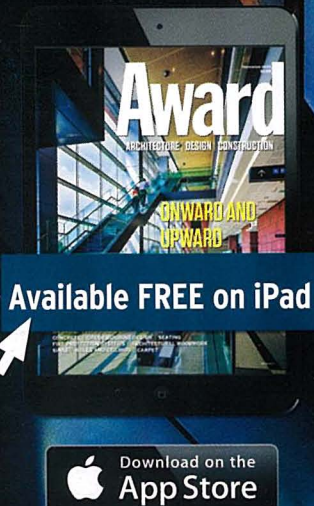
ARCHITECTURE | DESIGN | CONSTRUCTION

ONWARD AND
UPWARD

ZEIDLER PARTNERSHIP
ARCHITECTS

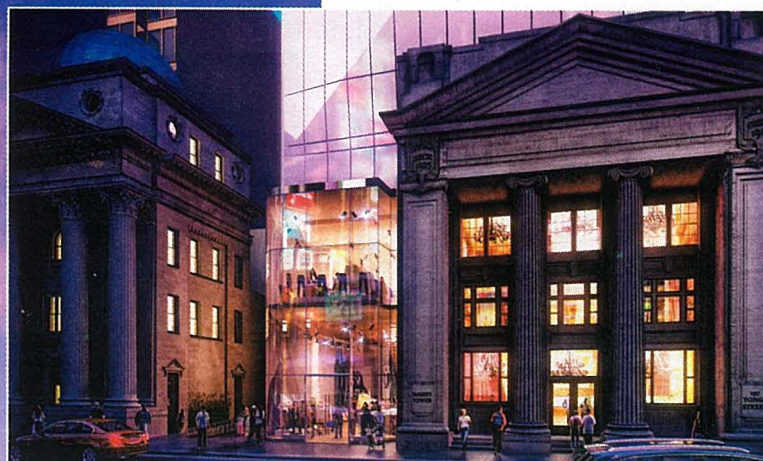
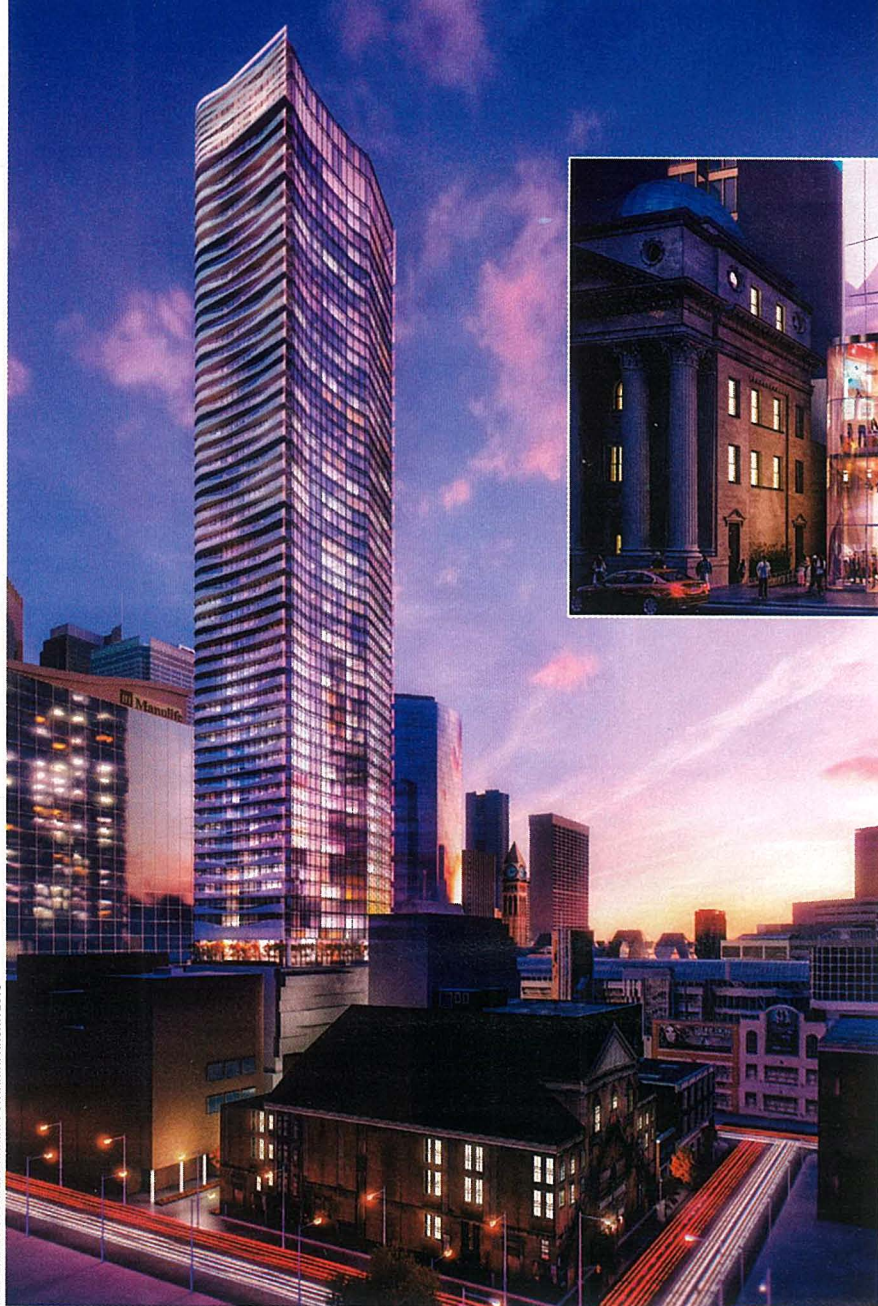
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The Massey Tower

by Zuzanna Wodzinska

In the heart of downtown Toronto, The Massey Tower will be a 60-storey, multi-purpose addition to the city.

Originally the site of the Canadian Bank of Commerce building since 1905, Massey Tower will be integrating the historical structure into its overall design by incorporating the original structure into the first four floors as lobby space.

To create a neutral backdrop for the heritage building, the third to seventh floors of above-grade parking will have folded surface geometry patterned in fritted glass and will feature architectural lighting to further enhance the reading of these folds. The lighting will also highlight the unique elements of the building's historic facade.

The ninth floor will hold the tower's state-of-the-art fitness centre, steam room, rain room, sauna and juice bar. The floor directly above it will be a cocktail lounge featuring windows designed to achieve a higher than average Sound Transmission Class (STC) rating to ensure residents' comfort.

"We were able to take the historical significance of the area, Toronto's original entertainment district encompassing Massey Hall and The Elgin and Winter Garden Theatre Centre, and incorporate the cultural legacy into residents' homes," says Anna Simone from Cecconi Simone Inc., interior designers on the project. "As you enter the lobby, architectural details of the original Canadian Bank of Commerce building are accompanied by art celebrating iconic entertainers like Louis Armstrong and Ella Fitzgerald."

The cocktail lounge will open up to an amenity terrace designed by Janet Rosenberg & Studio Inc. "An elegant material palette will blend the contemporary terrace with the more traditional architectural elements of the heritage building," explains Janet Rosenberg. "A mirrored ceiling with suspended lights will add a surreal dimension to the space and reflect a sleek water trough and sculptural element."

Janet Rosenberg & Studio also included a five-metre-high water wall

into the design that is composed of textured limestone to add soothing sounds and create visual impact. The terrace will have outdoor seating and dining areas, defined by planting features.

"We deliberately kept planters and elements away from the terrace railing so that you can walk right up to the edge and have unobstructed views to the dynamic city skyline and streetscape," adds Rosenberg. The remaining floors of the tower will comprise of residential suites to be accessed by four elevators.

The facade of three of the tower's sides will feature alternating balcony types with diagonal bends in opposite directions of each opposing plate to create a billowing shroud. By contrast, the north face of the tower will be clad entirely in curtain wall with no balcony projections in order to accommodate nearby St. Michaels Hospital's helicopter flight path that overlaps the site.

"The singular language created by the shroud will have the added effect of providing a unique but neutral backdrop," says David Pontarini, partner-in-charge at Hariri Pontarini Architects. "It will highlight the heritage components of the site, while softening the form and connecting the building back to the angled face of the north facade."

LOCATION

197 - 201 Yonge Street, Toronto, Ontario

OWNER/DEVELOPER

MOD Developments Inc.

ARCHITECT

Hariri Pontarini Architects

HERITAGE ARCHITECT

ERA Architects

GENERAL CONTRACTOR

Tucker HiRise Construction Inc.

STRUCTURAL CONSULTANT

Read Jones Christoffersen Ltd.

MECHANICAL/

ENGINEERING CONSULTANT

Able Engineering Inc.

INTERIOR DESIGN

Cecconi Simone

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

Janet Rosenberg + Studio Inc.

TOTAL AREA

526,474 square feet

TOTAL COST

\$78 million

Projects with heritage components are always a challenge, but here, the old bank had been entirely abandoned in the 1980's. "It's kind of scary when you see buildings without occupancy for 20 or 30 years because you start to realize that they'll get to a point of no return," says Michael McClelland, founding partner of ERA Architects, in a press statement. "This building was pretty heavily deteriorated on the interior."

Buried under layers of adhesive and concrete topping was the original stone tile mosaic floor from 1905, which created the biggest challenge both in preservation and incorporation into the overall design. The floor itself is fairly large while the tower footprint needed to be situated more or less centrally over the site. With the unavoidable overlap, the only feasible solution was to salvage the historic floor for reinstatement after the completion of the new structure – a strategy already put into play as construction progresses. "The floor was cut into several large panels, each weighing 22,000 lbs., which were then lifted onto trucks and transported for storage off-site. The panels will be meticulously stitched back together once reinstated," explains Pontarini.

The heritage aspect is not the only challenge facing the teams. The site itself is fairly small and is further complicated through easements with adjacent properties.

Existing driveways, ramps, and exit paths have to be maintained for both the north and south neighbours of the future tower – this limits the design team's ability to fit a below-grade parking garage. The historical preservations further contract the usable floor area.

"Once elevators, exit stairs and other essential operating elements were added to the equation, very little space is left for a traditional vehicular ramping system," says Pontarini. "A fully automatic car parking system was selected to overcome the limitations of the site."

There will be two car bays at grade that users will drive into. They will then exit their vehicles, swipe the electronic key fob or card, and leave the car bay. Once the parking system scans the vehicle for dimensions and occupants, it will be hoisted into the parking levels on the third to seventh floors.

Once the building is complete, the ground level will still need to be durable and functional to accommodate the high volumes of pedestrian traffic. "A uniform palette of materials will be used throughout the site, providing a cohesive public realm strategy," explains Rosenberg. "Subtle shifts in paving materials and tones and textures will be used to direct pedestrian flow and aid in way-finding through the network of walkways linking to the Elgin and Winter Garden Theatres and Massey Hall." ■