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Rare view of Toronto's green canopy from upcoming Rosedale on Bloor condos



An aerial rendering of the building's position in relation to the downtown core.

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On a typical weekday morning, the southwest corner of Sherbourne Street and Bloor Street West is a happening place.

With every change of the traffic light, throngs pour out of the Sherbourne subway station and across the road, many heading to work at National Post, Rogers' headquarters or

other office towers nearby. The intersection's Tim Hortons does brisk business, its doors often obstructed by the lineup of people standing in single file for the 75 Sherbourne bus heading south. Cars, courier trucks, taxis and bicycles jockey for position throughout the day. It all starts up again as afternoon rush hour approaches, the faces a tad wearier though the scene ever as lively.

That corner will get even busier when The Rosedale on Bloor, an upscale 52-storey condominium and hotel, opens its lobby doors. The glass-and-metal tower will house 476 condo suites ranging from 307 to 871 square feet and priced around \$200,000s to \$600,000. Canada's first Canopy by Hilton hotel, with 188 rooms, will have the first nine floors.

Despite opening day being five years away, developer Steve Gupta is already excited about transforming the neighbourhood. The president of Toronto-based Easton's Group/ Gupta Group has been buying up buildings east of Yonge Street for two decades and turning them into hotels and condominiums. He currently has two projects on the go down the road at Dundas and Jarvis streets plus a hotel/office/condo project farther north at Yonge Street and York Mills Road.

But it's The Rosedale, designed by Page+Steele/IBI Group Architects, that's got Mr. Gupta talking these days, especially because of its proximity to downtown's trendy Yorkville district. In fact, he's touting the building as offering "all the services of Yorkville without paying Yorkville prices." The Rosedale's enormous gold marketing brochure beckons would-be buyers to an "exclusive address" with "the allure of Yorkville" and suite layouts such carrying names as Scollard, Cumberland, Bellair and other Yorkville streets.

Never mind that Yorkville and its fancy Mink Mile shops and restaurants are a 10-minute walk from Bloor and Sherbourne and that the intersection is far from glitzy today. Given The Rosedale's anticipated chic interior and classy vibe, Mr. Gupta is unperturbed.

"We like to be the first one to do something differently," he says, referring to his history of introducing Toronto to new hotel brands such as Marriott Hotels' Fairfield and SpringHill Suites and winning awards for it. "We have been pioneers. We were the first ones in Canada to take the upper mid-scale brand and not only make them the best in Canada but the best in North America."

It's professionals, young and older, who Mr. Gupta is after at The Rosedale, luring them to "resort-style living" with a wide range of amenities that are de rigueur for today's smaller suites. He's promising a rooftop outdoor terrace with fireplace, barbecues and fire

pits, a fully equipped catering kitchen adjoining a private dining room, a theatre room and lounge area. There's a fitness centre and yoga room plus a snazzy indoor pool shared with the hotel. There will even be a business centre with boardrooms to give entrepreneur-minded residents some extra workspace. The suites, designed by Toronto's Studio Munge, will have Quartz countertops, stainless steel European appliances and in-suite laundry. Interior bedrooms will come with a sliding glass-panel door to provide light and airiness.



The podium of the Rosedale, which will face Bloor Street, and will house restaurants and retail.

Though the suites have a neutral palette, colour will pop in the condo lobby to draw inspiration from the adjoining hotel. As Alessandro Munge explains, wood veneer and stone on the walls and grey, black and white floors will make an intriguing contrast to the blue, grey-blue and silver ombre effect displayed in a series of metal-clad floor-to-ceiling columns.

“There was this kind of sense of fashion [to the interior design],” he says. “We drew inspiration from the latest handbags and the latest runway models to the latest fashion wear and latest retail shops coming out there. You do have some of those strong

architectural forms with a hint of art sculpture in these spaces ... We've almost made it more hospitality, like it could almost be a hotel lobby with a floating furniture lair in the centre, the concierge open and inviting. It feels very hospitable. It feels more on-brand to some of the luxury brand hotels we're doing around the world."

Though Mr. Gupta has owned the property for a year, two other owners had it before him but weren't able to make a go of their plans. Mr. Gupta initially also proposed a 10-storey building on the Selby Street side of the property but gave that up after the City of Toronto balked.

Kristyn Wong-Tam, who rules the riding, says having three changes of ownership in five years has been challenging for area residents (it was her very first file when she became Ward 27 city councillor) and she commends them for "bearing the brunt" of all the application changes along the way.

Now that The Rosedale is a reality, she's pleased that it will create "a vibrant Main Street" thanks, in part, to the \$3.3 million that the City has required Mr. Gupta to pay towards affordable housing, community and cultural space, parkland and streetscaping. She's also grateful that the hotel, new stores and restaurants will create jobs. As the application continues to move through the necessary approval steps, she'll be looking at ways to better manage the increased traffic that's bound to arrive with a 52-storey building.

"These are all things that we're trying to keep an eye on," says Ms. Wong-Tam. "There are lots of different moving parts."