



Rendering of the view west from the Don River Park looking along Front Street. COURTESY OF THE COMMUNICATIONS GROUP

Housing athletes, then city slickers

Condo trends. The Pan Am athletes' village is set to give Toronto's Canary district a makeover

DUNCAN MCALLISTER

life@metronews.ca
Twitter: @nebulix

Torontonians will remember with fondness the old Canary Restaurant on Front and Cherry streets that will now figure prominently into plans for a grand gateway to the West Don Lands neighbourhood.

This storied structure was the original site of the Palace Street School built in 1859, and has morphed into several functions over the years.

The Cherry Street Hotel was later built as an extension which eventually became the Canary Restaurant occupying the front lobby. The Vlahos family has operated the venerable eatery since 1965, and finally closed its doors in 2007.

Developments are quickly ramping up in preparation for the Pan American games which



Rendering of Canary District condominiums. COURTESY OF THE COMMUNICATIONS GROUP

Toronto will be hosting in 2015. Over 35 acres of land centred on Front Street between Bayview Avenue and Cherry Street is slated for a huge makeover and will serve as the home for 8,000 athletes during the course of the games. Afterwards, the new townhomes and condos will go on the market as regular housing units.

Originally planned to be built in three phases over 10-12 years, now more than half of the West Don Lands will be completed for the games in June 2015.

"This condominium project is being developed as part of the athletes' village for the Pan/Parapan Games and it is accelerating development of the West Don Lands," says Meg Davis, VP of development at Waterfront Toronto.

At a recent groundbreaking event at the Cherry Street site, the high-profile design team took the wraps of their plans and architectural visions for the Canary district and surrounding neighbourhood.

According to architect Bruce Kuwabara of KPMB, the historic Canary and CNR buildings on Cherry Street will be restored as free-standing gateposts to mark the western entrance to the new neighbourhood.



The Canary Restaurant, circa June 2006. DUNCAN MCALLISTER

"Every block was developed to reinforce the extension of Front Street through to its terminus at Don River Park and its role as the main street and public promenade of the village," he says.

Peter Clewes is a senior partner with ArchitectsAlliance, a key player in the design team. He maintains that in 2012, the condominium market is the housing market. "The Canary district will realize the great promise of a truly sustainable city, while making a significant break with the tower-and-podium typology that has dominated Toronto's response to intensification," he says.

Toronto plays host

Athletes' village factoids:

- The Pan American Games take place July 10-26, 2015.
- The Parapan American Games take place August 7-14, 2015.
- There will be 10,000 athletes and officials in attendance.
- Facilities will include a welcome centre, a 3,500 seat dining hall, parking and service facilities, and a transit mall.