

SUN NEW HOMES & CONDOS

IN THE NEWS

Honouring Hamilton's past

Royal Connaught landmark revived as luxury condominium breaks ground

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Special to QMI Agency

Level a building and a piece of history is gone forever. Restore it to its former grandeur — repurposed for a new generation of users — and you immediately sense you've accomplished something honourable.

That's how many residents of Hamilton, Ont., are feeling now that construction has started on phase one of the Residences of Royal Connaught, a downtown condominium development by Valery Homes and Spallacci



Opened in 1916, host to prime ministers, royalty and Hollywood stars, the Royal Connaught has been a venerable landmark for nearly a century.



All suites have nine-foot ceilings with top-quality materials to ensure contemporary elegance.

Group that is restoring the iconic landmark, says Glen Norton, manager of urban renewal for the City of Hamilton.

"Many of us have some connection to it so it's always kind of hurt seeing it sit there empty," said Norton, who enjoyed Rotary Club lunches at the former Royal Connaught hotel every Thursday for more than a decade.

Others had their wedding receptions and high school proms there. Now, they can own a piece of the city's history themselves.

The Royal Connaught opened in 1916, immediately becoming a prime destination for entertaining royalty, prime ministers, Hollywood stars and visiting dignitaries. Standing 50 metres tall, it was a palatial presence in Hamilton's down-

town, boasting a breathtaking rooftop view of Lake Ontario and the Niagara Escarpment.

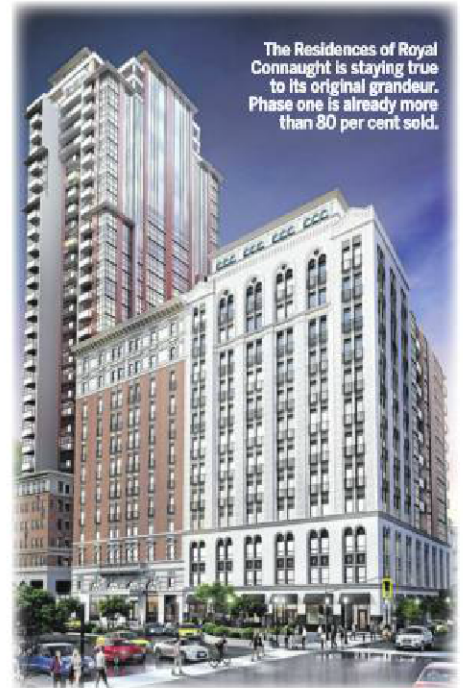
The Residences of Royal Connaught is staying true to that original grandeur. With phase one already more than 80 per cent sold, developers recently unveiled a coveted collection of only 15 penthouse units. Penthouse ceilings reach up to 16 feet, windows are oversized, and all living areas are appointed with premium finishes.

"...The Residences of the Royal Connaught is truly one-of-a-kind. It can never be replicated, so it's only fitting that the Penthouse Collection will be truly exquisite," said Ted Valeri, president of Valery Homes, in a statement.

Norton calls the rejuvena-

tion project a bellwether for the city. "There have been a lot of years in the past where you couldn't have sold a building downtown at a good price," he said. "Now we're even getting into bidding wars which is unique for us."

The City of Hamilton is offering several incentives designed to promote restoration projects. From reduced downtown development charges and interest-free loans to façade grants and a unique phased-in approach to taxes, the goal is to alleviate some of the upfront



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costs, said Norton.

The city is also supporting downtown revitalization by supporting the Gore Park promenade which will be integrated with the landscaping plan for the Residences of Royal Connaught. In addition, the farmer's market and library were recently renovated, and a new bus terminal was built so that fumes would no longer permeate the Gore

Park area.

"What we're trying to develop in our downtown is that feeling of human scale, walkability, clean and safe, and interesting," he said. "When you think of Mississauga, you can't identify a downtown there, they're trying to fabricate one from scratch. Well, we've got one. It's a 100-plus years old so we just need to preserve it and improve it."



An expansive eighth floor rooftop amenity space will offer condo residents more than 35,000 square feet of indoor/outdoor recreation space.