

## POWER OF TREES

Mark Cullen reports on how a coalition formed to help save Toronto's foliage, **H2**



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# NEW IN HOMES & CONDOS

## WEST DON LANDS

### Underpass Park will benefit residents

River City brings more suites to market as parkland takes shape

**RYAN STARR**  
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

David Wex has been so impressed with what's happening at Underpass Park that the developer recently threw a party there to show it off to his colleagues and associates.

"It's a really interesting, quirky space" says Wex, a partner with Urban Capital, builder of River City, the 900-unit, four-phase residential project that's taking root near the foot of the Don River south of King St. E.

River City will benefit greatly from the creation of this new public space. Designed by Vancouver landscape architecture firm Phillips Farevaag Smallenberg (along with Toronto's The Planning Partnership), Underpass Park will transform the derelict region under the Eastern Ave. and Adelaide and Richmond Sts. overpasses — all of which cut through River City — into an animated community passageway complete with tables, seating and greenery.

And Wex thinks it has succeeded admirably.

"Now it's an asset as opposed to being a liability," he says.

RIVER CITY continued on H16



Abacus Lofts, at Dundas St. W. and Ossington Ave., was designed by Richard Witt of RAW Design.

**RYAN STARR**  
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Architect Richard Witt knew he'd designed a great condo when a community meeting for the project ended with him receiving a round of applause.

"That's never happened to me before," Witt says, still sounding taken aback. "Usually it's like I'm being sent out as a sacrificial lamb for everyone to tell me there's not enough parking or that the height is too big."

In the case of Abacus Lofts, it was the opposite: the community was jazzed about what Witt proposed for the site, formerly an auto service centre at 1245 Dundas St. W. just east of Dovercourt Ave.

His design previously had been selected as winner of a limited competition organized by developer Tony Azevedo, principal of Daz Developments; he'd told Witt to "give me something interesting," the architect recalls.

Witt obliged. His design for Abacus Lofts, a seven-storey midrise, features an inverted stepped facade that cantilevers out toward the street and then back in again toward the top of the building.

This will not only look super cool when it's built, it also will reduce shadowing and allow for more pedestrian activity at the base of the condo, in accordance with the city's midrise development guidelines.

ABACUS continued on H16

# Cool design

Abacus Lofts' fanning facade earns approval of the local community and city council

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