

PREVIEW: THE AVENUES OF WESTBORO



For the Avenues of Westboro, architect Barry Hobin has designed six semi-detached houses and 11 single-family homes in an early Prairie architectural style.

Honouring the past

Developer preserves heritage convent, adding blend of new homes in heart of Westboro

BY KAREN TURNER

Stretched across half a city block between Edison and Melbourne avenues, Uniform Urban Developments is stitching the past to the future in its latest infill project, The Avenues of Westboro. At one point, the imposing brick convent, which sits on the 1.2-acre property, was in danger of being demolished to make room for development. Now the exterior is going to be preserved and the interior converted into a triplex. Single-family homes and semi-detached homes will also be built on the grounds, preserving a link to the past. The convent for Roman nuns, which was run by the Institut Jeanne d'Arc, has been an integral part of the community since the early 1900s. It's here at the northwest corner of Kenwood and Edison avenues that In-

stitut founder Mère Marie Thomas d'Aquin designed a two-and-a-half storey building in 1933 as a home for handicapped children. La Maison Jeanne d'Arc was later used as a boarding house and French-language training centre for young women moving to the city to find public service jobs. Though not an architect, Thomas d'Aquin was an accomplished painter and poet whose design inspiration for La Maison Jeanne d'Arc was the architecture of Brittany, France, where she'd spent her childhood. "It's a mix of modern, Tudor and classical," says Uniform general manager George Georgaras when asked to describe the architectural style of the heritage building. "She wasn't an architect, but she travelled quite a bit. She put together a mix of styles she remembered from her travels." To appease community concerns about preserving the landmark building and about building a development that would blend into the popular eclectic neighbourhood, architect Barry Hobin designed six semi-detached houses and 11 single-family homes in an early Prairie architectural style. Large windows and earthen tone stucco, stone and brick façades were teamed with a mix of flat and low hip roofs, recessed entrances and covered front balconies. "It's clean. It's simple lines. West-



The exterior of Maison Jeanne D'Arc on Kenwood Avenue in Westboro will be preserved and the interior gutted and rebuilt to accommodate townhomes.

boro is so diverse, I think they will complement the neighbourhood," says Georgaras of the streamlined designs, which have all been named after avenues in Westboro. While the exteriors are being linked to the past, the inside spaces are modern, contemporary and open with gleaming hardwood floors and staircases, sleek granite countertops and luxurious ensuite bathrooms.

The 30-foot lot singles start at \$782,600 for the 2,687-square-foot Westhill and the two-bedroom semis are priced from \$549,800 for the 1,815-square-foot Tweedsmuir. Using its original footprint, the heritage building will be gutted inside and converted into three lofty townhomes with 2,793 to 3,602 square feet of living space spread over three floors. Prices range from

\$663,700 to \$723,100. To boost the streetscape of the project and help it blend with the existing homes in the neighbourhood, a low stone wall will run around the perimeter of the development. The driveways for the semis and the parking garage for the townhomes will be accessed from a private back lane. "A great deal of attention was paid to landscaping, streetscape design and maintaining the established neighbourhood feel," says Uniform's marketing co-ordinator Emily Meyers, adding that many of the trees dotting the property will also be preserved. No townhomes in Westboro, Uniform has been building infill projects in the village for the past five years, including the award-winning Charles Ogilvy Estate, an enclave of eight upscale homes surrounding the renovated mansion of Ottawa department store magnate Charles Ogilvy, located directly across from the Avenues. "Each location is unique and we've tried to come up with designs unique to the neighbourhood," says Georgaras. "Here, we're creating half a city block in Westboro. That's a rare opportunity." For more information about the Avenues of Westboro, call 613-225-2135 or visit uniformdevelopments.com.

LE GAL COUNSEL

Who pays?

New house next door forces neighbour to replace furnace

BY LES VANDOR

Q: I live on a 20-foot lot in a small house built years ago. Next door, a builder is erecting a three-storey house. I recently had a visit from the gas company telling me that, because of the new construction, I have to convert to a chimneyless furnace. I was told that if I didn't comply, the gas company could cut off my gas supply. I was also told that, even though it was the builder who caused the problem, it was my infraction. I told this to the builder, and suggested that I might take him to small claims court. He indicated he would rather pay something toward a new furnace. I got a first estimate of \$7,100. The estimator told me that about five years ago his firm had a similar situation with a client, and that her lawyer spoke to the neighbour's lawyer, and the neighbour had to pay. My city councillor's office told me I'm not the first person this has happened to, and that the others had asked the builder to pay half. The councillor's office also told me there is no municipal bylaw for this situation. They have asked the city's planning department to submit something to the province, but this doesn't seem to be an urgent matter. When the negotiations first came up, I went to the meeting that dealt with the request to the city to approve the plans. I didn't know enough to ask the planners to look into the chimney matter. So, my question is: Who is legally responsible for the cost of my new furnace?

M.K.

A: The first time this should have been raised was when it went to city hall for approval. That is why you see signs posted asking for public input on what are often called minor variances. Your councillor is right: There is no set law regarding such matters, but general principles would have your neighbour or the builder fully responsible for changes that affect your property. This applies to overhanging branches, changes in grade or close proximity that force you to change the way your furnace vents. If, however, you don't want to antagonize the builder or your new neighbour, then paying for half the cost of the new furnace yourself seems reasonable.

LegalSpeak: Paying for half is not a novel legal concept. Is it any wonder that King Solomon, in the 10th century BC, reportedly wanted to split a baby in two to solve a domestic dispute?

Les Vandor is an Ottawa lawyer, author and broadcaster. Send your questions to him at lvandor@langmichener.ca. These answers serve as a guide and you are encouraged to consult a lawyer. We regret that not all questions can be answered.

Grand Opening



Westwood Hill
LOFTS

Great Location ...
Great Value ...
Great Lifestyle!

One level bungalow lofts and two storey 2 and 3 bedroom designs starting from

\$179,900

the 5th Avenue
UNIT C1
996 Sq. Ft.
3 Bedroom
Sales Centre Hours
Mon. to Thurs. 12 to 6
Weekends 12 to 5.
Closed Fridays
613-421-1515



*floor plan shown is priced from \$181,900

www.westwoodhilllofts.com

KELLER WILLIAMS REALTY

www.BennettRealEstatePros.com

Marnie Bennett 613 236 5959 (Broker)

E&OE Nov 07