

ON SITE

West Don Lands gets a boost from Pan Am Games

DDUNCAN MCALLISTER
Special to QMI Agency

With only a year to go, there has been much anticipation of the Toronto 2015 Pan American — Parapan American Games to be held at the site of the West Don Lands community.

This week, we imagine what Toronto's newest community will look like after the Games. The 32 hectares of land along the Don River has been transformed into a miniature city within a city. From a design standpoint, the West Don Lands presents a unique opportunity to build a new urban community from the ground up.

Adam Feldman is the senior associate at architect-Alliance in charge of the Integrated Design Team for PanAm. "It's actually very exciting because it's going to

be one of the first complete new neighbourhoods built from scratch in Toronto. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to build a whole district because there aren't a lot of pieces left in Toronto."

Feldman speaks of the challenges associated with building a dual-purpose project, that the trickiest part wasn't actually constructing the building within the timeframe. It was the complexity of completing the design.

The Pan Am planners had imposed a stringent set of requirements for the buildings. "We had to figure out really efficient and smart ways to design all these buildings so that they were the best they could be for their final use, but also work for the Pan Am Games," says Feldman.

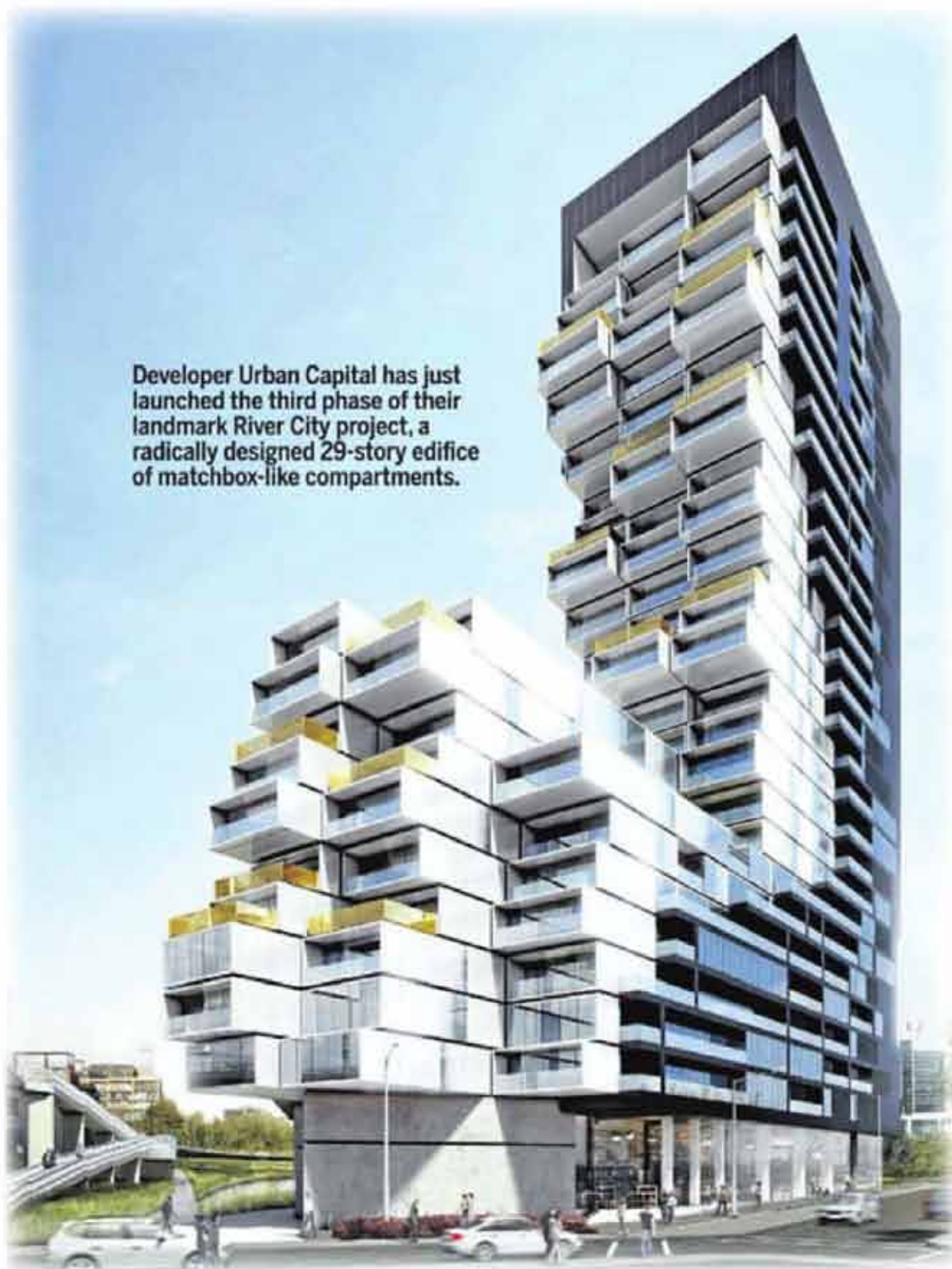
High architecture has been a hallmark of this well-thought out community and there have been influences

from various architects, designers and landscapers. Feldman describes the concept of cohesive diversity, where different architects work on different buildings and lend their distinct styles to the project.

"So we, architectsAlliance, joint ventured with KPMB (Kuwabara Payne McKenna Blumberg Architects), and we also brought in Daoust LeStage from Montréal and we brought in MJM (MacLennan Jaunkalns Miller Architects) from Toronto," explains Feldman. "Once the buildings, the blocks were parceled off, all the firms went back to their office and worked on those individually."

Developer Urban Capital has just launched the third phase of their landmark River City project along the Don River. Phase three is the only residential tower in the community, a radically-designed,

Developer Urban Capital has just launched the third phase of their landmark River City project, a radically designed 29-story edifice of matchbox-like compartments.



The West Don Lands was designed from the outset to be a model high-tech community with advanced infrastructure throughout.

29-storey edifice of matchbox-like compartments, the unique vision of Montreal's Saucier + Perrotte Architectes.

"This one is a little more of a park setting because you've got the big Corktown Common to the south and you have Underpass Park to the north and another park called Lawren Harris Square just adjacent," explains David Wex, the visionary behind the River City condominium development. "It's a little more in the West Don Lands as supposed to phases one and two that were more King Street."

Urban Capital has engaged the services of internationally-acclaimed interior designer Graham Hill, to design the interiors of 20 exclusive units. A cube within a cube, the Graham Hill Collection of contemporary suites represents smart-design and the use of tech-

nology.

In addition to being an architectural accomplishment, the entire West Don Lands was designed from the outset to be a model high-tech community with advanced infrastructure throughout.

Waterfront Toronto and IBM business partner Element Blue have announced a new, first-of-its-kind collaboration that showcases Toronto's waterfront as a leading example of how to build a smarter city.

The Games have provided an incentive to accelerate what was once a very slow-moving project. What seemed like a massive pile of sand at the foot of the Don Valley for many years, has rapidly been transformed into Toronto's newest neighbourhood. "After 10 years of thinking about it, suddenly it's done," says Feldman.