

New Junction condo is designed with local artisans' creativity and expertise

Midrise building Craft Residences will also have bespoke, 'smaller scale details' including recycled elements in exterior bricks and soffits



A boutique condo in west-end Toronto is taking its name and design inspiration from the Junction's creative spirit.

Craft Residences by Gairloch Developments is envisioned as a new gateway at the western edge of the Junction, an eclectic neighbourhood popular with makers, artists, designers and foodies. The Junction is home to [Malta Village](#) — and also to Gairloch's offices. Another Gairloch project in the neighbourhood, Junction Point, was [BILD's \(Building Industry and Land Development Association\) Project of the Year in 2021](#) and has garnered acclaim for its distinctive form.



To create Craft Residences on Dundas St. W., Gairloch president Bill Gairdner called on architect Heather Rolleston, principal and design director of BDP Quadrangle and a member of the city's Design Review Panel. She and Gairdner have worked together previously, including on [Leaside Common](#), and she understands his esthetic. Gairloch is known for its use of modern masonry on its condo projects.

"I let Heather run free and she comes back with some ideas," says Gairdner. "I often simplify what architects do. I like to concentrate on one or two moves and do them the best we can. Smaller scale details really shine through on a small format building. It's important to get the detail right."

Craft Residences will create a new, mid-block connection so residents and community members will have better access to the neighbouring cul-de-sacs and a rear laneway. The eight-storey building with 86 suites starting in the \$800,000s will have a terraced design and at street level a forecourt will be set back for greater pedestrian access and movement, and also house new retail storefronts.



Rolleston knew Gairdner wanted to use non-conventional materials with an arts and craft quality. Her team sourced brick from Amsterdam that will be applied to the building's curving facade to create a bespoke texture. The brick's pistachio colour is a reference to the Malta Village community and the building's brutalist-style architecture is inspired by the Valletta City Gate in Malta's capital city.

"The brick is made of recycled material, so it's environmentally friendly," says Gairdner. "It has a unique, earthy, warm texture and it hasn't been used in the GTA before, to the best of my knowledge." The brick is made from a 60 per cent recycled blend of porcelain, concrete and other construction debris. The building's soffits will be made from recycled aluminum cans.

"Instead of stucco or wood or metal panels, we thought we'd experiment with the aluminum product that dances with the light a bit," says Gairdner. Craft Residences will also be one of the first Toronto buildings to use linear glass brick accents, first seen on the "crystal" façade of Amsterdam's flagship Chanel store. The bricks are layered over one another to provide light to interior spaces typically kept covered.

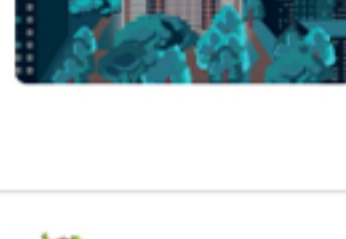


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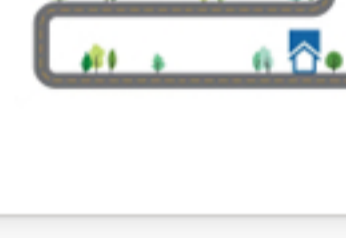
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Gairdner wanted an interior designer local to the neighbourhood and tied to the local artist community, and looked to Ashley Rumsey and Mason Studio for the job. The building's interiors will feature unique craftsmanship and pieces from local artisans, fabricators and designers.

"What's so great about the Junction is there is an abundant supply of talented craftspeople and artists on every street," Gairdner says.

"I have a long-standing relationship with Bill and this project is very close to us," says Rumsey, who has made her home in the Junction for more than eight years and has watched the neighbourhood develop. "There is a lot of opportunity with this project's location on Dundas W. on the outer edge of the main Junction retail strip that allowed it to be connected to the residential streetscape, not nestled right in the hustle and bustle. It allowed us to differentiate the building."

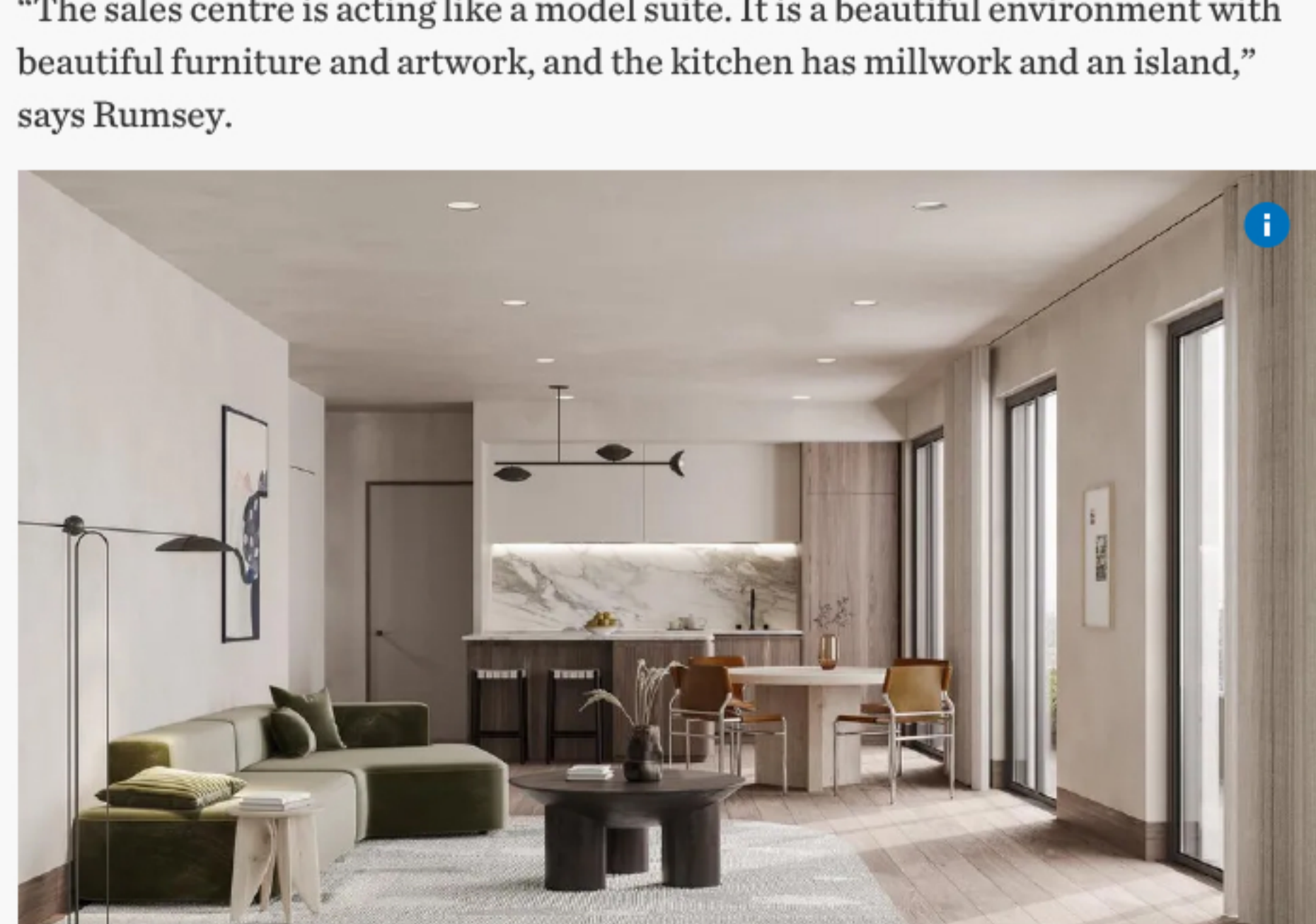
The goal was to seamlessly integrate the architecture and interior design. Local artisans will contribute to the interior fixture and finishes, such as textural plaster — by area artisan Christina Ott — furniture, lighting and tile patterning.

"The notion of working with local fabricators and artists is consistent with our work overall," says Rumsey. "People who want to live in these homes often want them to reflect the community they are in. While this building is going to be beautiful, the real draw is the Junction and we want the interior to be a mirror for what's happening in the artistic community here."

The floorplans are unique in most units and the layouts resulting from the punched — or separated — windows allow for optimal furniture placement. Kitchen appliances will be integrated, with cabinetry pulls and mullion panels. Bathroom vanities will be rounded to echo the building's curves.

Rumsey has created three interior packages rooted in natural materials such as wood and stone. One is high contrast with dark wood and light tile, the second is more monochromatic and the third package has natural marble for the backsplash and upgraded flooring.

"The sales centre is acting like a model suite. It is a beautiful environment with beautiful furniture and artwork, and the kitchen has millwork and an island," says Rumsey.



Craft Residences' amenities include a family area and fitness centre overlooking the pedestrian forecourt, as well as a multi-purpose co-working lounge with kitchen, theatre projector and locally sourced furnishings.

Gairloch says Craft will attract a mix of purchasers, from move-up buyers looking for more space, who want a neighbourhood-oriented location; people moving from other parts of the city or from Mississauga or Brampton who want to be closer to downtown jobs or High Park; and investors.

Despite the challenges of developing small midrise projects, Gairdner remains passionate about the form. "When I was 1 looking to get my first condo in the city, I looked at larger scale projects but they felt soulless. I bought at 66 Portland (by Freed Developments) because it was human-scale with unique units.

"Ever since, I thought it was the right way to build out the city. We (Gairloch) have become specialists in that area and my heart is with midrise and avenue-style buildings."

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