

40 Northumberland: State of the art clothing factory turned cozy condominium

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Situated next door to the beautiful Church Our Lady, 40 Northumberland (Wellington No. 65) is an award winning, downtown Guelph, loft-style condominium. This beautiful building is only a ten-minute walk from downtown amenities, and a five-minute walk from the Guelph Market and City Hall. Residents can walk to stores, restaurants and transit, including the GO train. On their return, they can relax in their well-maintained and beautifully designed home. This quiet, attractive building is home to 18 families, four of whom have lived in the building since it became a condominium in 1992. The buildings' history dates back to 1910 when construction began.

History of 40 Northumberland

Construction began on 40 Northumberland Street in 1910. High ceilings, huge windows and large open-

concept areas and fire prevention features were state-of-the-art when the building opened. During its 75-year history as a garment factory, it was occupied by only two companies. The Colonial Whitewear Company (later know as the Colonial Dress Company) described their plant as “the largest of its kind in the Dominion” with over 175 employees working in the building. That is about 80 individuals on each of the three floors. Colonial advertised itself as a manufactures of ladies' high class dresses and shirt-waists.

The Guelph Elastic



Hosiery Company acquired the building in 1960 and moved into it in 1986. Joseph Cartledge and his wife founded the company in 1907. Initially, they manufactured

40 Northumberland is a well-designed building with a sense of history

only support hose. The company diversified its products by introducing elastic sports equipment in the 1920's, including garter belts, suspenders and athletic supporters. They held a world-wide patent on the "Protex Jock Strap" for 21 years. Johnson & Johnson was their main distributor. After moving into 40 Northumberland, they began producing "Buoy-O-Boy" lifejackets, marine equipment and patented a new safer life preserver for children. The company is now called Protexion Products.

A contractor acquired 40 Northumberland after Guelph Elastic Hosiery moved out. Blueprints for the renovation were ready by 1989 and apartments were ready for rental in 1991. In 1992, it became a condominium corporation.

Unique Features of 40 Northumberland Street

Upon entering the recently renovated lobby and viewing the framed vintage photos, one is reminded of the industrial heritage of the building. A photo of the employees posing proudly outside the building, and another of models displaying the dresses created at 40 Northumberland Street are counter-balanced by a quirky iron dress form,

who sports seasonal accessories. A plush traditional area rug completes the invitation to enjoy the features of this unique building.

Each hallway has three window wells that have been transformed to showcase the history of the building as it evolved from a shirt factory to a producer of life jackets. The window wells have exhibits such as vintage sewing machines, traditional dresses, an artfully displayed jock strap and of course, life jackets. In keeping with the unique nature of the condominium, each display is different and certainly provides cause for conversation amongst visiting guests.

Every unit has a slightly different layout and square footage, but they all have beautiful high ceilings and enormous windows that create a light and airy feeling.

The interior walls do not extend all the way up to full ceiling height, which provides an original twist on the open concept design while still providing the necessary privacy. French doors open onto Juliette balconies, many of which are adorned with tasteful window boxes during the summer months. They allow the beauty of the outdoors to enhance the wonderful features that are evident in these original units.

Improvements

The property manager and board members continually work hard to keep condominium fees as low as possible while still maintaining the exterior and interior integrity, appeal, and safety of our building.

In addition to the routine maintenance jobs performed



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over the last twenty years, there have been many improvements to the structure of this one hundred year plus old building. The old, very large drafty windows have been replaced with energy-efficient, mullioned windows that retain the charm of the old ones. A large rooftop deck was added, giving residents a peaceful, panoramic view of the neighborhood. The remainder of the flat roof has been replaced and metal flashing caps have been added to the parapet surrounding the roof. Drainage for the roof system has also been upgraded. Exterior brick repairs and repainting needs have been assessed and repairs will be undertaken in stages over the next few years. Last year, the lobby was refurnished and this year the halls and doors will be freshly painted.

Major street construction (sewers, drains) took place over the last two years. Our resident gardeners removed the perennials in all the front flower beds and relocated them to the safer side gardens. The major street work unearthed many rocks, which were gathered and stockpiled in a safe spot. Our owners are looking forward to spring; they have plans to build beautiful and (we hope) permanent rock gardens to grace the front of our building. We have a lovely herb and flower garden at the rear of the building that provides a quiet, serene space to read a book or hold summer get-togethers.

40 Northumberland is a well-designed building with a sense of history which is proudly on display in the halls and lobby. Because of its great location and the care that is provided by both management and owners, this state-of-the-art factory has been converted into a stately condominium that pro-



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vides both comfort and convenience for its residents. ■

This article was written by the current Board of Directors of WCC No. 65

