

POST HOMES

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NEIGHBOURHOOD SNAPSHOT



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Lofts in Corktown now fetch \$400,000 to \$600,000.

Once avoided, Corktown's desirable for its location

SHUTTER TO LAKE SHORE; BERKELEY TO RIVER

BY SUZANNE WINTROB

The first settlers to the area hailed from Ireland's County Cork — hence the name Corktown — and found work in local breweries, factories and brickyards. They couldn't afford to rent a pricey pew at St. James Cathedral, so they built Little Trinity Church. Many of the Victorian row houses and worker cottages still stand, and the factories and breweries are now condos and lofts bearing the names of what had been in the building before. Residents take great pride in the neighbourhood and talk it up gladly. They even have a Yahoo! chat group and newsletter to stay up to date on Corktown news.

Average house price A decade ago, nobody would have dreamed of owning property in Corktown's industrial wasteland. But over the past six years, real estate has doubled and tripled, yet is still affordable. An 80-year-old two-bedroom, 1,200-square-foot row house that needs fixing goes for \$300,000, while a younger and slightly larger partially renovated one costs about \$450,000. Lofts — with such names as the Knitting Mill, the Brewery Lofts and Queen City Vinegar Company Lofts — are generally open-plan with 14-foot ceilings and floor-to-ceiling windows. A one-bedroom, 1,200-sq.-ft. loft sells for more than \$400,000, with some nearing \$600,000.

Demographics Professionals and artsy types in mid-20s to early 40s, work downtown, single or married, kids on the horizon

Local schools Nelson Mandela Park Public School; alternative Inglenook Community High School; St. Paul Catholic School

Local Parks Local parkettes for people and dogs include Stinky's Park (named for a smelly conve-

nience store) and Sackville Playground. But the big news is the redevelopment of the 80-acre West Don Lands that will include 23 acres of parks and public spaces, 5,800 residential units, including 1,200 units of affordable rental housing, retail and office space, walking and cycling paths, an elementary school, community centre and two child care centres. Phase 1 — 480 condos and 120 affordable rentals — is scheduled to be finished in 2008.

Transit Streetcars along Queen and King streets go to the Yonge subway line; Lake Shore Boulevard winds to Gardiner Expressway and Don Valley Parkway

Retail Roche Bobois, Studio B, Klaus by Nienkamper and UpCountry for furniture, Vistek for cameras, Librairie Champlain for French books, nearby St. Lawrence Market for food

Dining Dominion Pub, Fusilli for pasta, Weezie's bistro, Peter's Cajun Creole Pizza and Savoury Grounds Coffee

Other attractions Enoch Turner Schoolhouse, Toronto's first free school, built in 1848 and now a museum; St. Paul's Basilica, built in 1887, conferred by Pope John Paul II as a minor Basilica

Local trivia In the 1970s, actor Dan Aykroyd ran an after-hours boozecan called the 505 Club at 505 Queen St. E., where he'd welcome his friends like Francis Ford Coppola, ZZ Top, Mick Jagger and the Beatles. Rumour has it that Aykroyd, Gilda Radner and John Belushi dreamed up *The Blues Brothers* there. Today the place is a private residence, but Aykroyd drops by when he feels nostalgic.

■ **Sources:** David MacLean, Bosley Real Estate; Geon van der Wyst, Royal LePage Real Estate Services; towardsfront.ca; torontothegood.com; residents Ingrid Gadsden, Jen Horsey and Kristian Smythe

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