

June 2006

New England CONDOMINIUM

The Premier Guide to Condos, Co-ops and Planned Communities

A Condominium Primer

**Differentiating the Mid-Rise
from the Faux Loft**

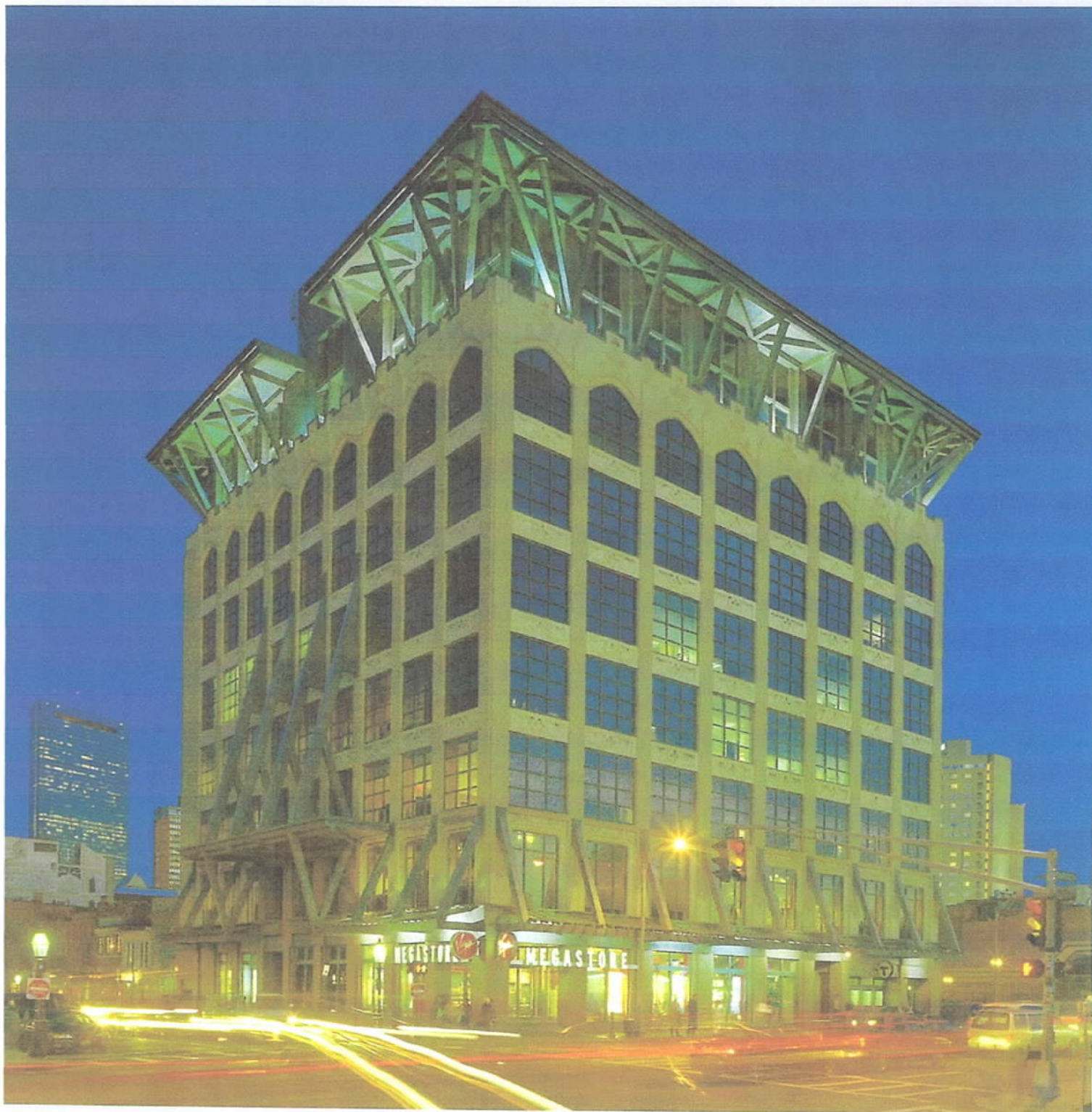
What a Racket!

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Dramatic lighting makes 360 Newbury especially distinctive at night.



HOT Properties

The Newest, the Coolest, the Latest
in Condo Development

By Ellen E. Browne

You can see them in the newspapers every weekend, and to the novice condo-watcher, it may feel as though choosing from among the seemingly thousands of condominiums currently on the market is an impossible task. But to the more experienced home shopper, it has become abundantly clear that these days, condominiums aren't limited to townhouses or garden-style condominiums and some of them are going to great lengths to distinguish themselves from the competition, embracing cutting edge design, a progressive social outlook, or innovative technology.

Photo courtesy of Lucy Chen. Design courtesy of ADD Inc.

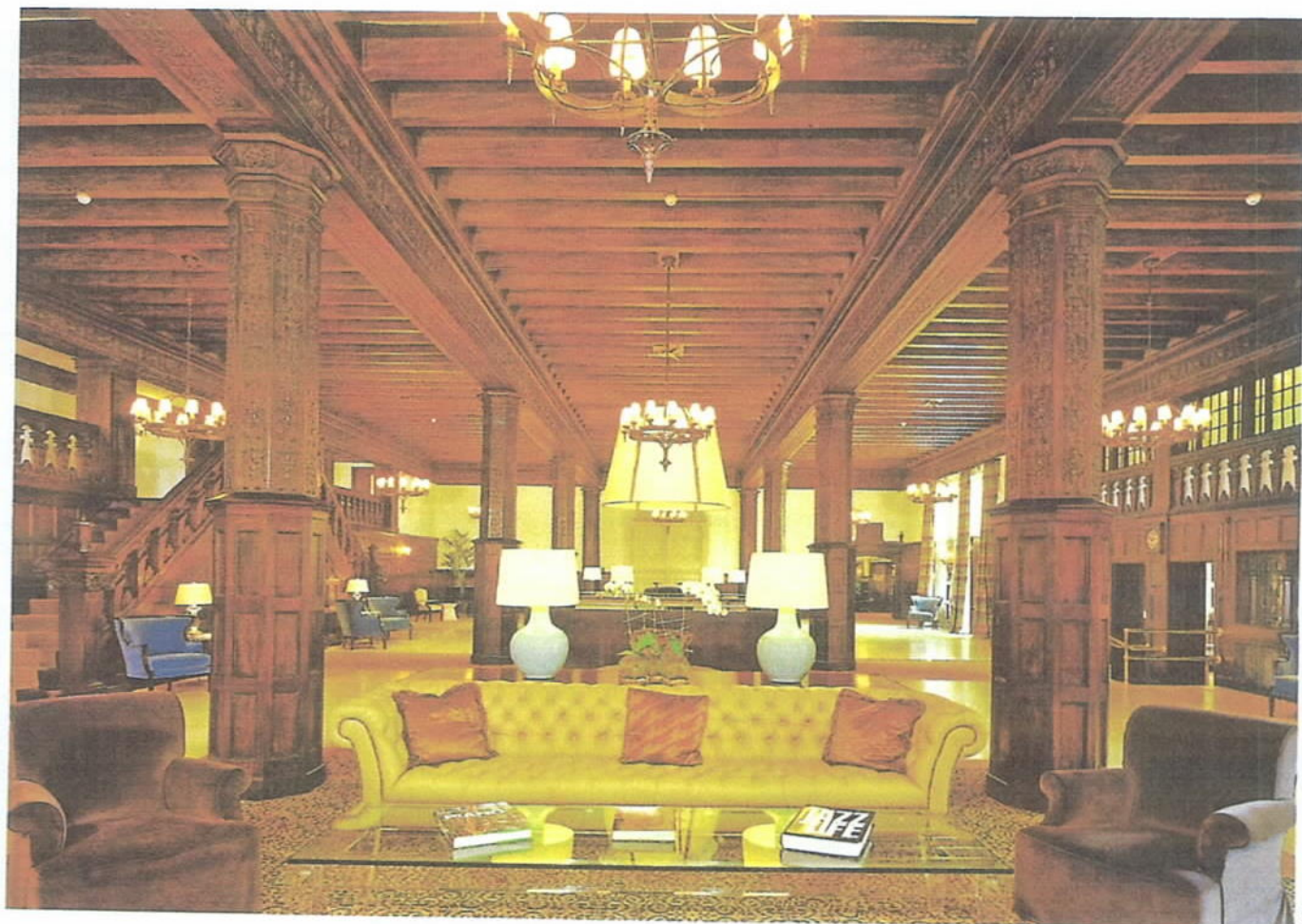


Photo courtesy of Bruce Martin

The lobby in Longwood Towers

IN THE HEART OF THE BACK BAY

The condominiums at 360 Newbury, in Boston's tony Back Bay neighborhood, are the outcome of a retooling of what was once a commercial property. Located at the corner of Massachusetts Avenue and Newbury Street, the building was constructed in 1918. During its early years, 360 Newbury housed a lumber company; Wurlitzer Music, of Wurlitzer organ fame; and a machine tool manufacturer. It underwent its first renovation, under the guidance of master architect Frank O. Gehry, in 1987, when it was re-purposed from manufacturing concerns to office and retail space. During this first renovation, a new floor was added to the top of the building and the distinctive struts were installed.

The second renovation, overseen by the Boston Residential Group, LLC, is also being guided by Gehry. This time, the architect has wrapped the building in copper sheathing and re-purposed it yet again to house 54 loft-style condominiums and office and retail space at the street level of the building.

Mr. Gehry's talents are world-famous in the design and construction industries. In New England, he is best known for designing the cutting-edge Ray and Maria Stata Center at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The center houses the school's Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory, the Laboratory for Information and Decision Systems, and the Department of Linguistics and Philosophy. Farther afield, Gehry also designed the Disney Concert Center in

Los Angeles, California, and the titanium-wrapped Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain.

Lofts in 360 Newbury range in size from 800 to 3,300 square feet and are available in 1-, 2-, and 3-bedroom units. Prices range from \$500,000 to \$3,000,000. Occupancy is currently scheduled for fall 2006.

A PROGRESSIVE OUTLOOK

One of the newest trends in condominium development is the lifestyle condo. And one of the latest is Paradise One, a project taking shape in trendy, college-laden Easthampton, Massachusetts. Packaging itself as progressive in outlook and inclusive in nature, the community is being designed to meet the life needs of

Photo courtesy of Lucy Chen. Design courtesy of ADD Inc



At left, a living room in 360 Newbury; below and running clockwise, a rendering of the first phase of Paradise One; a custom kitchen in Deer Path Farms; springtime at Longwood Towers; one of the signature gargoyles at Longwood Towers; the re-purposed chocolate mixer in One First.



Rendering courtesy of Kubm Riddle Architects

Rendering courtesy of One First

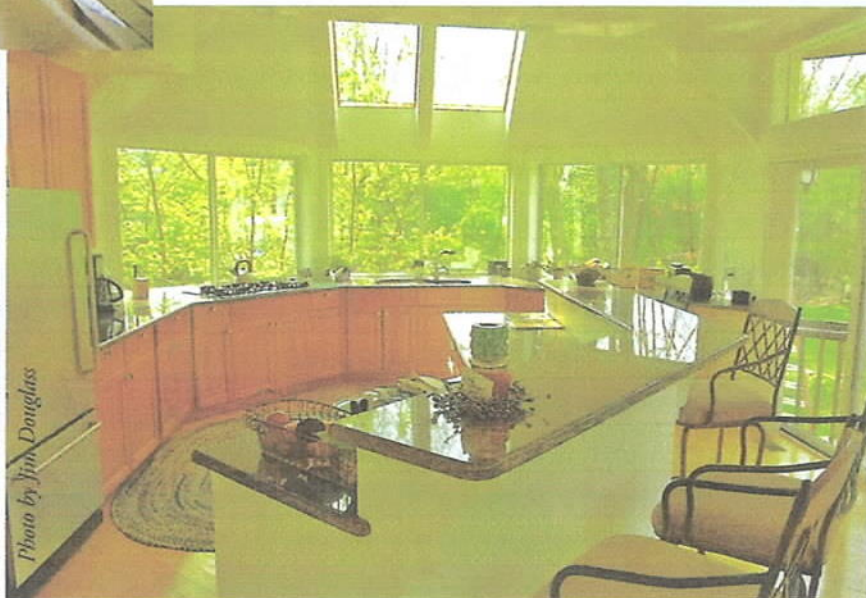


Photo by Jim Douglas



Photo by David Pascual





*Photo at left is Deer Path Farms;
At right is One First*

retiring Baby Boomers regardless of whether they are straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender.

The concept for Paradise One arose during a reunion of a group of college friends. Partners Heather and Nancy Whitley felt that a niche existed for a company to "address the lack of options for aging gay Americans." The result of that meeting is their development company—Possibilities, LLC—which they founded in May 2003, and Paradise One, which aims not only to house aging gay Americans, but also to care for them over their lifetimes.

The partners are embracing both new and more established design strategies to meet their goals. Key to the idea are universal design to allow residents to age-in-place and cutting edge technology to help residents stay healthy over the long term. "Intel is creating our tech infrastructure," says partner Heather Whitley. "Paradise One is first of its kind, with tele-medicine or tele-health technology to enable people to stay in their own homes. But it is not an age-restricted

community. We will use devices—kiosks—to measure vital signs, including blood pressure, blood sugar, and heart rate, which can be delivered via the Web to your practitioner so you don't have to trot to the doctor all the time. If you're dealing with congestive heart failure, weight is an issue, and we can install a sensor in your bed to weigh you on a regular basis.... Options will be available on a menu, and you can plug-and-play what you need, and pay as you go. If you need [the service or technology], it's readily available." The community's concierge will also play a central role in the lives of residents, not only fulfilling the traditional role of making social arrangements, but also monitoring resident's medical concerns, if asked to do so.

In addition to an outlook that is socially progressive, the partners are also electing to follow an ecologically responsible development plan. "Paradise One will be the first LEED-certified building in Western Massachusetts," says Heather Whitley. "We're being very particular about the

windows, and we're working with the land and the area around us instead of assaulting it." Developed by the U.S. Green Building Council in Washington, D.C., the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) rating system is "a voluntary, consensus-based national standard for developing high-performance, sustainable buildings."

Condominiums at Paradise One will range in size from 800 to more than 1,500 square feet and are priced between \$259,000 and \$599,000. The first phase of development will be 87 units in a renovated historic mill building. The second phase will be 15 apartment-style 1- and 2-bedroom condominiums. Paradise One expects to break ground toward the end of the summer, and occupancy is expected in the Fall of 2008.

HOW SWEET IT IS TO BE GREEN

Feeling eco-friendly and ready to do your bit to save the planet? A condominium development taking shape in Cambridge, Massachusetts, might fit that bill while simultaneously appealing to your sweet tooth.

One First is the name of the remade New England Confectionery Company—better known to children everywhere as NECCO, of NECCO wafer fame. Redeveloped by Leggat McCall Properties, LLC, the new version of the property will retool the factory into 196 condominium lofts. But perhaps more relevant today, much as the condo might have buyers sleeping with visions of sugarplums dancing in their heads, the project is also planning to offer the option of building solar

technology into the condos. Buyers will not only be able to rest easy on the fact that the sun is generating some of their electricity, but also revel in lower energy bills.

Current plans, according to project manager John Soininen, call for the installation of "a 60,000-watt, grid-tied solar system that will supply power to run the common area lights and elevators. Ten percent of common area load can be produced by the system. When we're producing more than we can use, we feed back into the grid. We're applying for a grant from the Mass Collaborative to fund it... and [it's being] offered as an option to buyers." Interested buyers can elect to purchase a percentage interest, or shares, in the output of the system. "We are effec-



Rendering courtesy of One First

tively creating an energy co-op within the condo, and the energy we collect will reduce the condo fee [for the resident who has elected to buy a share in the system]. If 10 people each buy 1 share, and NSTAR credits \$1,000, [each share owner is] credited \$100. [We hope it will be] a relatively simple structure within the condo association

and won't be labor intensive to bill or manage."

In recognition of the building's own history, the gardens at One First will host one of the old factory chocolate mixers, now re-purposed to serve as a water feature.

Lofts range from 700 to 2,500 square feet and are priced from the low

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A kitchen in One First

\$400,000s to more than \$1 million. The first units will be ready for occupancy in this summer.

UTOPIA, CUSTOMIZED TO YOUR PREFERENCES

Quick! What's your idea of the perfect condominium? Soaring ceilings? Lots of glass and a beautiful view from every window? Or, just perhaps, does the luxury of being able to specify every detail in the design of your home appeal to you? If so, a community taking shape in Hudson, Massachusetts, might pique your interest.

Architect and master planner Gerry Sarno, developer of Deer Path Farms in Hudson, aims to place control of the design experience firmly

into the hands of buyers. "We have no preset or predetermined framework," he says. "What's important is that the home is designed so it enhances the value of the community." And Deer Path serves as a testament to his point of view. Each of the 40 homes already built includes customized details from top to bottom.

Sarno is committed to the concept that each home must be a reflection of its owners, and his approach to the building process reflects his views. "I don't want people to conform to the space they buy. The home should make *their* lives easier." To underscore his approach, Sarno involves his buyers at every step of the design process, from specing their perfect space to se-

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lecting tile and light fixtures. "I give the buyer more time to select things. It slows down the construction process, but it results in happy homeowners. I believe in a fully customized home and home design experience."

To bring about that customized home, Sarno spends long months with buyers, distilling their wish lists into plans for a home that optimizes the buyer's experience of living in it. Deer Path is still in development, but Sarno takes a long view on the emerging workings of the community. And his focus is on a peaceful and always pleasant living experience. "I want to make this as pleasing as possible, so there are no meetings that are contentious." He focuses on building good relations with and among owners. "Roles should be clearly understood," he says, "so everyone understands what they do and what the association does. And everyone should be committed to the value of the community." That community-building approach serves him well, so well, in fact, that it acts to recruit new board members.

Homes in Deer Path currently range in size from 1,200 to 6,000 square feet and are priced between \$600,000 and \$3 million.

A GRANDE DAME GETS A FACE-LIFT

Opened at the peak of the Roaring '20s, Longwood Towers has had a long, luxurious, and star-studded history in Brookline. In addition to offering elegant appointments and luxurious services to its homeowners during its heyday as an 800-apartment complex, the building was also

home to a noteworthy mix of business people, sports and media stars, and, because of its proximity to the area's hospitals, medical luminaries. Francis Countway, CEO of Lever Brothers (of soap fame) purportedly invented deodorant in this building, supposedly as a result of his experience of being a little too close for comfort with his overheated golfing companions. Baseball slugger Babe Ruth and boxing great Joe Louis also called Longwood home, as did diabetologist Elliot Proctor Joslin, MD, namesake of the world-famous Joslin Clinic in Boston.

Today, Longwood Towers has been purchased by Atlanta-based Radco,

a development company with a penchant for recasting faded historic properties into top-of-the-line condominiums. In its new iteration, Longwood will include 277 units and numerous high-end common areas, including a movie theater, wine storage and tasting room, and, in a nod to its own past, when its public spaces hosted gatherings of Boston's Brahmins, a billiards room.

Units at Longwood Towers will range in size from 500-square-foot studios, to 2,500-square-foot, 2-bedroom units, to 4-bedroom suites and penthouses. Prices will run from \$300,000 to \$2.5 million. 🏠

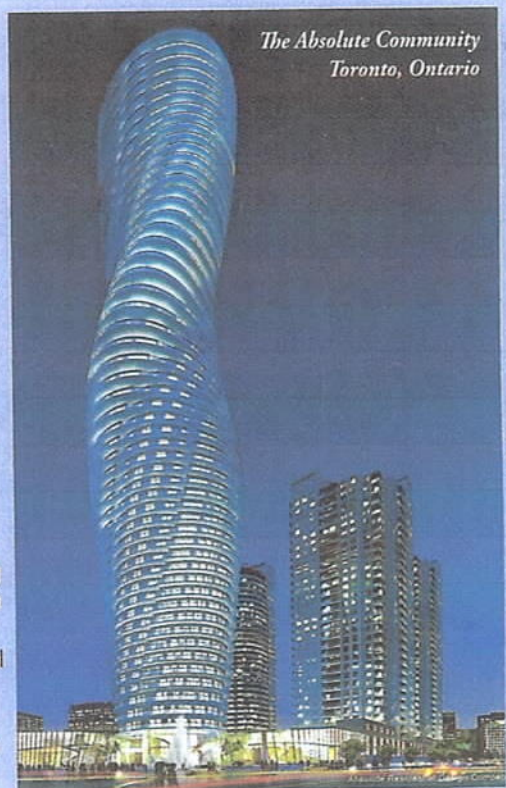
A Little Farther North

While it's beyond New England's borders, a condominium tower in Canada is making news throughout the building industry.

Not your normal building, permitting, and construction story, the tale of the Absolute Community in Mississauga, Ontario, starts with a design contest. Sponsored by the Absolute Community and Toronto-based developers Cityzen Development Group and Fernbrook Homes, the competition received 90 design entries for the new 56-story Absolute Community condominium to be built in Canada's sixth largest city. The Review Committee made the first pass through the entries, and the six designs offered by the semi-finalists were posted on-line. Then the contest was opened to the public for final selection. In March, after tabulating the 6,000 votes cast in the on-line competition, the winning design was announced. The winning design for the 56-story condominium tower was submitted by Yansong Ma, founder of MAD, an architectural firm with offices in Beijing and Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Construction is expected to begin in early 2007, and the project is

expected to take 2½ years to complete. Units will range in size from 500 to 1,300 square feet and will be priced between \$220,000 and just over \$1 million. Penthouse suites will range in size between 1,600 and 2,800 square feet. Prices for penthouses have not yet been set.



Rendering courtesy of MAD, Beijing, China.