

DEL Condominium Life



Fall/Winter 2014 • \$0.95

▲ SUITE SUCCESS

Condominium Life – Put YOUR Stamp On It!
Spice Up Your Home's Appeal with
Colourful Patterns and How to Choose
the Right Dining Room Table

▲ TRAVEL

An Inspiration to Poets and Painters Alike
England's Romantic Land of the Lakes
Well Worth a Visit!

▲ WINE CELLAR

Fine Choices for Entertaining and
For Helping to Warm the
Cold Winter Nights

▲ BEING GREEN

Be Waste Wise and Let's Start a
Green Initiative in the New Year

Wishing Peace and Joy to All during the Holiday Season and in 2015!



Transforming a “Before” . . .

into an “After”

By Anita Wilkém

Photographs courtesy of Wiklém Design Inc.

Anita Wilkém is the creative director and founding partner of Wiklém Design in Toronto. With 20 years of experience in the industry, she has built a reputation for timeless value, distinctive environments and trusted design solutions. She has won several awards internationally and in Canada for her interior design work. Visit www.wiklemdesign.com

Last year, we were approached to modernize the common elements at Walden Pond I in Markham. When the team first came to the site, the bones of the building had so much potential. In fact, two years prior, the lobby and main-floor elevator areas had been updated in a light grey and light blue palette. However, the remainder of the building had remained untouched and was in need of a design overhaul. Maple wood accents, de rigueur in their prime, had yellowed, making the condominium look more like an outdated cottage. Wooden curlicue accents clashed with rectangular wall panels, making the design scheme appear haphazard, random and out of proportion.

The board of directors and residents had a mandate in mind. They really wanted to update the hallways, floor elevators and the two amenity rooms in keeping with the ground floor treatment – all with an eye to a prudent overall investment. So we got right to work, beginning with the corridors. Why? As high-traffic areas, corridors serve as a gateway to the residents' homes. Since they are the first thing a visitor sees, they offer the ideal opportunity to set the tone and add character to the whole building. The existing hallways were washed out and the suites literally disappeared into the walls. And so the transformation began.

LEAP OF DESIGN FAITH

We selected a contemporary, steel-grey hue as the colour base for the corridors that immediately added depth and strength to the hallways and suite doors. An incongruous maple plate rail ran parallel to the ceiling and was removed, instantly adding height. The ceiling tiles were replaced with broader linear tiles that better suited the pre-existing light fixtures and widened the space. I was very proud of the board of directors for taking a leap of faith with us when it came to the carpet. Everyone agreed that the utilitarian tiling by the elevators needed to go. We chose a pattern that was somewhat traditional. However, we laid it deliberately off centre to add interest and drama to the area. The execution of the carpet

OUTSIDE YOUR SUITE



Before



After



After

was an ingenious way to modernize and elevate the profile of the building. It was a treat to work with such an adventuresome board and manager.

THE DOORS OF PERCEPTION

When it came to the suite doors, we recognized right away that they needed to pop out from the corridors. We started by removing the upper bulkhead above the doors and inserted a custom-printed lattice light lens over the threshold. Beyond repainting over the tired maple, we knew that hardware would make all the difference to add significance to the entrance. And this is where high-quality details would be worth the upfront investment. To prolong the life of the doors and to control ornamentation, we added a push button “hook” to hang decorations. Stainless-steel kick plates, door knockers, peepholes and escutcheon plates with deadbolts and leaver handles added sophistication to the door, and the light played off the original mirrors that framed the threshold.

The threshold itself was fashioned of natural oak. Given the foot traffic, carts and walkers, natural oak is the ideal choice because it wears well and can take longtime abuse before it starts to look tired.

The board of directors test-drove a number of door handles to make sure they were easy to use for all residents. Having a handle with good heft that feels right really adds to the living experience.

The elevator walk-off was also given a dramatic overhaul similar to the suite doors, with the rich steel-grey doors tying in perfectly to the carpeting. The overhead lighting, designed with a repeated diamond pattern on the light fixture, looks like a metal mesh. Because it is an acrylic, it is easy to maintain, repels dust and is easy to keep clean.

SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS – DO MORE WITH LESS

Once the corridors were completed, we were ready to refresh the card and party rooms. The majority of the budget was allocated to the corridors, so the team developed a prudent plan to leverage what existed and inject contemporary new ideas. The vision was to turn the card room from just a space to an ace! The quality of the existing solid-wood furniture was excellent, so we opted to incorporate it into the design. It was amazing how much difference reupholstering the chair seats, accent painting and replacing the wall covering and carpet made to the whole room. We also provided guidance to the board when it came to selecting artwork for the amenities, which they sourced for the most part on their own.

The party room has a wonderful patio and large window that really let in the natural light. The first thing we suggested was a sleek, unobtrusive screen window blind that could be rolled up out of view. The maple-wood bar area was outdated and dominated the space. We opted to paint over most the yellowed wood with the rich grey colour already used throughout the building. This technique really pulls the site together visually as you move through

OUTSIDE YOUR SUITE



Before

the building. We installed a beautiful, pattern wall covering behind the bar and on the walls to lead the eye to the windows. The new carpet, slightly lighter than the corridor, was the perfect complement for new sitting-area furniture. When recommending furniture, we opted for practical, durable pieces that are easy to lift and that work well together regardless of configuration.

TIPS

- Invest in good-quality commercial grade materials.
- Recycle and reuse where possible – be sustainable!
- Leverage different textures to add interest for the eye to follow.
- Try before you buy – test-drive fixtures.



After