

CONDOBUSINESS

LITTERBUGS, BEWARE

Toronto cracks down on
waste contamination at
multi-res properties

+ Spring maintenance

Landscaping contracts,
refreshing refurbishment
and weeding out dandelions

PART OF THE
REMI
NETWORK.COM



A recent refurbishment at Symphony Place balanced investing in high-impact design elements and saving money by incorporating original building components.

A renovation that sings

Pass by 71 Simcoe St. and it's hard not to stop and notice the boutique 87-unit condominium —but it wasn't always like that.

BY ANITA WIKLÉM

Symphony Place's board of directors recently decided it was time for a refurbishment. With neighbours like Roy Thompson Hall and the Romanesque-styled St. Andrew's Church, the location was ideal, but the building was a diamond in the rough. Focus areas for the project included the treatment of the building exterior, the lobby, corridors and elevator areas, followed by the suite corridors.

The design team set out to come up with a cost-effective design solution. Working closely with the board of directors, the team's strategy was to save money by incorporating original building components such as the wood wainscoting, crown molding, marble floors and structure and

investing in high-impact design elements that would leave a lasting impression.

The front exterior of the building was updated with full glazing that opened up the concierge area and let in natural light. The signature lattice design from the Roy Thompson Hall reflected beautifully off the glass. Durable and contemporary stainless steel columns now frame the entrance, giving it an urban vibe. The board went the extra mile on the hefty door handles, hinges and hardware used in the lobby — the doors everyone is going to pass through several times a day. The finishing touch was elegant address signage in cursive over the entrance.

Inside, the team saved money in a number of areas. For example, the existing marble floors were repaired and polished to their original luster.

The existing wood concierge desk and millwork, which were expensive when they were installed, were in also good condition. The team realized that they were treasures, but their colour was dated. Stripping the wood down would have been a costly, time-consuming endeavor. The solution was to opt for a solid charcoal grey stain to cover the beige shade but still reveal the high quality of the wood grain texture.

An extended stone-top counter installed in the concierge area freed up space and served to anchor the area. Holes drilled in the desk hid the



Top photo with inset: The front exterior of the building was updated with full glazing that opened up the concierge area and let in natural light. **Bottom left photos:** A beautiful lobby ceiling dome that was already in place was painted with exaggerated brush strokes to look like an elegant silver leaf applique. **Bottom right photos:** Cream wallpaper was paired with the high-gloss grey accent paint on the millwork.

cords of newly installed polished chrome lamps. It was a small, inexpensive solution that removes visual clutter and looks clean.

To lend more of a contemporary feel, the design team paired a good quality vinyl wall-covering with mirrors and used it in small portions to save money. The light iridescent grey palette was an elegant contrast to the charcoal millwork throughout the building.

Many design components were upgraded with finishings that made them appear more expensive than they really were. A beautiful lobby ceiling dome that was already in place was painted with exaggerated brush strokes to look like an elegant silver leaf applique. This treatment was set off by the glow of an

enormous crystal chandelier suspended over the seating area.

The chandelier was an investment, but it will last through future renovations in decades to come. Another investment was the hand-knotted, silk/wool area rug placed inside the diamond floor accents to make it appear nested in the seating area — like it had always been there.

Other outlays went toward custom, commercial-grade furniture that is comfortable, glamorous and durable as well as three new works of art. The design team worked with an artist selected by the board on sizing, proportion and scale. The hand-painted pieces offered a fresh pop of colour, modernity and an element of surprise to the lobby area.

This design project was an exercise in how to balance saving and investing while making the renovation sing. In working with the board, the design team recognized that the bones of the building were solid and leveraged that as a money-saving asset for the corporation. When it came to the sensory design components — things people touch, feel or see — it was the high-quality extras that added panache. □

Anita Wiklém is the creative director and founding partner at Wiklém Design Inc. She has extensive experience and expertise in condominium refurbishment design.



Wiklém Design inc.
interior design

Timeless Value
Distinctive Environments
Trusted Solutions



Philip Castleton Photography Inc. (feature image) & Jorjas Photography (3 accent images)

Lobbies • Corridors • Elevators • Amenity Areas
Conceptual Design & Design Development
Contract Documents: Specifications & Tendering Services
Contract Administration: Design Implementation & Document Administration
Budget consideration • Site tours • References available



Award winning design since 1993

1478 Danforth Avenue, Toronto, ON M4J 1N4 Canada • 416.934.9161 • info@wiklemdesign.com

www.wiklemdesign.com