

HOME OF THE WEEK

A made to measure heritage home

Builder John Emery got the city and neighbours onside to tear down an existing home and replace it with a new one that blends in

60 BINSARTH RD.

WHAT: A newly built Georgian-style house with four bedrooms and seven bathrooms in Toronto's Rosedale neighbourhood.

LIVING SPACE: 5,300 square feet above ground

LOT SIZE: 50 by 150 feet

ASKING PRICE: \$6.35-million

TAXES: \$13,961 (2007); to be reassessed

AGENT: Royal LePage Real Estate Services Ltd., Johnson and Daniel Division (James Strathy Warren)

BY CAROLYN LEITCH

The recently built residence at 60 Binscath Rd. is located in the North Rosedale heritage conservation district. As in other designated areas, it's not easy to get permission to significantly alter home exteriors in the district, let alone to tear down a dwelling.

But the developer in this case, John Emery of Fairmont Property Corp. Ltd., not only has a reputation for building houses that fit nicely into traditional neighbourhoods, he's known for being able to get the neighbours onside.

Mr. Emery ultimately received the necessary approvals from the city to tear down the rather small house that was on the property and replace it with this approximately 5,300-square-foot, three-storey residence.

The house was designed by Raymond Murakami of Murakami Design Inc. The main floor boasts 11-foot ceilings that provide a spacious atmosphere, as well as expansive walls that are ideal for displaying artwork, according to Royal LePage real estate agent James Strathy Warren. Because there is no wainscoting, traditional or modern furnishings could be accommodated.

"You could go very contemporary with the high ceilings," Mr. Warren notes. "You could shake it up a bit."

The main level is meant to be both comfortable for a family and as a backdrop for elegant parties, according to Mr. Warren. In the latter case, guests can move about easily and not run into any cul-de-sacs.

"One thing I want to see – whether it's a \$500,000 or \$6-million house – is circular flow," the agent says.

The dining room can accommodate about 10 people around the table, he notes. "It reminds me of an English townhome."

The reception area is in the centre of the main floor, and the staircase is turned around so that guests don't encounter it head-on as they enter the space. It's also perfect for a host or hostess to make a special entrance to a party, Mr. Warren adds.

"I love reverse staircases. It just adds to the overall elegance."

The kitchen includes two Miele dishwashers, and a third one is located in the pantry. There also is a Sub-Zero refrigerator, and two refrigerated drawers provide added cooling space.

Upstairs, the master bedroom is hidden behind mahogany doors. The suite is equipped with the latest technology to control temperature, lighting, sound and entertainment systems. The master bathroom has a heated marble floor, his-and-hers vanities, a walk-in shower and stand-alone soaker tub.

Looking out of the suite's wall of windows, you see the



The house at 60 Binscath built by Fairmont Property. Agent James Strathy Warren says the new house has improved the streetscape with its distinctive look. ROYAL LEPAGE



Clockwise from top left, the main staircase; the lower-level pool; the living room with gas fireplace and Georgian-style marble mantel; and the library, with hand-made Khayia mahogany panels.



The amenities

With 11-foot ceilings, the main floor features large principal rooms with dark-stained floors of quarter-sawn white oak. A library is paneled in mahogany, and has a coffered ceiling. A dramatic reverse staircase ascends from a centre hall.

At the rear is an open-concept space comprising the kitchen, family room and eating area, with doors opening to the garden. The countertops in the kitchen, wet bar and pantry are fashioned from Calcutta honed marble.

Some areas of the house feature heated stone floors.

A state-of-the-art system controls temperature, security and lighting. The house also contains Category 5 wiring and structured cable for high-speed internet, television and communication services.

Upstairs, mahogany doors lead into the master suite, where French doors open to a Juliet balcony overlooking the garden. A dressing room is lined with hand-crafted closets and includes a flat-screen TV. The ensuite bathroom has a separate water closet, cast-iron tub and honed marble flooring with in-floor radiant heating.

The two other bedrooms on the second floor have ensuite bathrooms. Located on the third floor are a bedroom and bathroom as well as a games room.

On the lower level, an "infinity" swimming pool is surrounded by limestone and enclosed in glass. A media room has built-in surround sound and a gas fireplace. Adjoining an exercise area is a bathroom with limestone floors and walls, as well as a steam shower.

A climate-controlled wine cellar is constructed of reclaimed brick and lined with Douglas fir wine caskets that accommodate 500 bottles.

Outside, the landscaped property includes a very private stone terrace in the rear garden. A more functional element is an in-ground irrigation system. The exterior features copper trim and a cedar roof.

copper trim on a Juliet balcony and, beyond, the landscaped yard and garden.

"You get to see all of these delicious things, like copper [and] arbours," Mr. Warren says.

Off the master bedroom is a large dressing room, where there is a separate exit to the hall – a feature that makes it unnecessary for an early riser to pass through the bedroom again.

"What I think is so spectacular about this master suite is that you're 'cocooned in,' but you have a secondary door so you can depart quietly," the agent adds.

There are two other bedrooms, both with ensuites, on the second floor, while the

fourth is on the third floor, along with a bathroom and games room.

Another highlight of the house is located on the lower level: a four-foot-deep propulsion pool. A current – from gentle to strong – can be created by turning a knob.

"You can get in and swim against the tide," Mr. Warren says.

For further enjoyment, the pool room also has built-in speakers and a television. Rounding out the lower level, which has heated limestone floors, are media and exercise rooms, as well as a nanny's suite.

Fairmont construction manager Craig McPherson points out that heated basement

floors are becoming *de rigueur*, and that "smart-house" systems controlling such things as lighting and temperature are becoming increasingly sophisticated.

With all of the high-tech wiring and security, the house practically runs itself, he adds. The agent believes the new house has improved the streetscape with its distinctive look. The previous house was a smaller one with a side-hall plan, he adds.

"People like to see a really pretty house. It's up on the hill, so there's a real presence. After about three years when the landscaping grows up, people won't be able to tell it's a new house."

» Special to The Globe and Mail

PRIVATE PROPERTIES

A DHL founder asks \$32-million (U.S.) for ranches

BY CHRISTINA S.N. LEWIS
WALL STREET JOURNAL STAFF

William Armsted Robinson, a founder of DHL Worldwide Express delivery, is asking for \$17-million (U.S.) for his horse ranch and \$15-million for a fishing property, both in Idaho.

The reclusive businessman, one of California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's big donors, breeds the exotic Lusitano show horse. The 940-acre horse ranch includes indoor and outdoor pens and arenas, a veterinary clinic, a breeding room and stables. There's a 10,000-square-foot

main house, a roughly four-acre man-made pond and an airstrip and hangar for a small aircraft. About 180 acres can be developed; the rest are under a conservation easement. The property borders a national forest. The 70-odd Lusitanos on the property aren't included in the offer.

About 30 kilometres north, Mr. Robinson's 600-acre fishing ranch has a four-bedroom house along the Falls River, plus a separate guest house. There's a four-stall barn and several kilometres of trails, and Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks are close by.

Mr. Robinson, who sold his stake in the express-delivery company in 2003, bought the properties vacant in the 1990s and built all of the infrastructure and facilities, according to agent Roger Brink of Alta Realty.

PROPERTY MAY BE LINKED TO UNCLE TOM'S CABIN

In Louisiana, a property that's been linked to the 19th-century classic *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is on the market for \$6-million.

The 2,000-acre property was part of a much larger cotton plantation owned in the mid-19th century by Robert McAlpin, whom local legend

calls the inspiration for the novel's chief villain, Simon Legree. The property was renamed Little Eva Plantation after the novel's main character, and the cabin of fictional slave Uncle Tom was said to have been on the site.

State tourism and real estate websites both claim the connection to the book, which helped galvanize the antislavery movement leading to the American Civil War.

"The truth is much less definitive than the real estate declaration, but there may be some connection," says Joan Hedrick, a biographer of author Harriet Beecher Stowe

and a history professor at Trinity College in Hartford, Conn.

There are seven ponds and three houses, including a roughly 6,000-square-foot main house. The property, in Natchitoches Parish about 450 kilometres northwest of New Orleans, includes 200 acres of pecan-tree farms, and other parts are leased to farmers.

T-SHIRT MOGUL LISTS MIAMI BEACH LOT

Seth Gerszberg, a founder of the Ecco fashion brand, has listed a nearly three-acre waterfront lot in Miami Beach for \$13.9-million.

The unusually large, vacant

parcel, on Pinetree Drive with about 300 feet on the water, is zoned for as many as three houses and has potential for deepwater dockage.

Mr. Gerszberg paid \$9-million for the land in 2004. He plans to donate the net proceeds to Tikva, a home for abandoned Jewish children in Ukraine.

In 1993, Mr. Gerszberg and designer Marc Ecko helped found a hip-hop-inspired T-shirt company, Ecco Unlited, whose expanded operations now include a full menswear line and a magazine.

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