

RESIDENTIAL

New Common Areas at Davisville Village, Toronto

Kohn Shnier Architects, Toronto

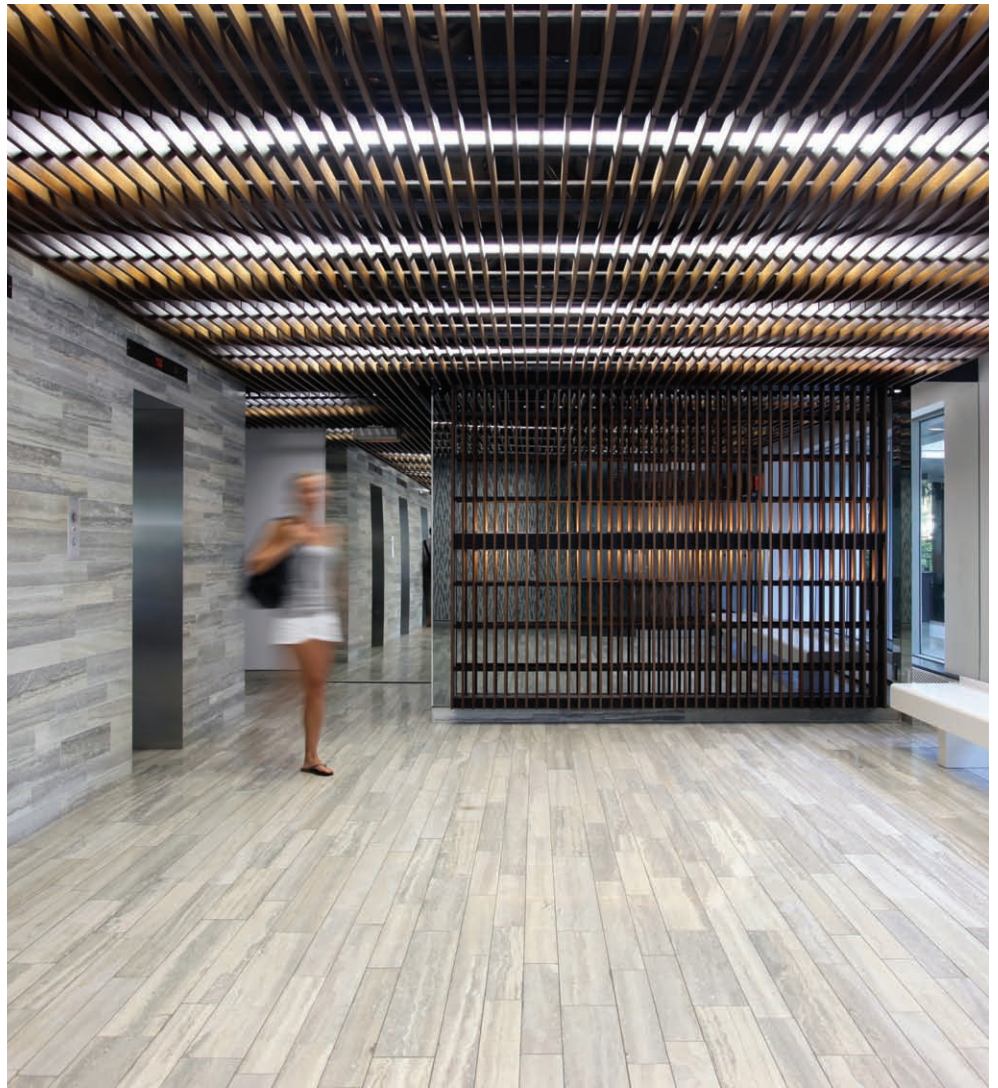
While Toronto's unending real-estate boom brings construction cranes to the horizon, it puts pressure on landlords of older rental properties, which must compete against newly constructed units with attractive amenities. It was in this context that Greenrock Property Management hired Kohn Shnier Architects to renovate the shared amenity spaces of a series of downtown rental apartment buildings dating from the 1960s.

A redesigned entry vestibule increases visibility and tenant security. New travertine floors and walls brighten the lobbies and corridors; a new, suspended wood-slat ceiling diffuses light from overhead fluorescent fixtures while offering easy access for maintenance. Integrated glass-tile accent panels organize room identification.

Amenities include a renewed pool, change rooms and a new workout area visible from the swimming pool; the vibrant tile pattern exudes a sense of fun. The focal point is a large red cross, evoking '60s Pop Art, denoting the first-aid station, where emergency signage and equipment integrate with the overall design. Retrofitted areas are barrier-free. Improved lighting, sight lines and way-finding contribute to making the public areas feel open, safe and secure. Sustainability features include automatic faucets, low-flow fixtures, efficient lighting, robust and long-lasting materials, and a new mechanical system that recycles energy to heat the pool.

The renovated facilities, reportedly, have seen a big increase in use. Tenancies are more stable and the upgraded infrastructure will reduce operating costs. The fresh design and value-added features have enhanced the buildings' desirability and tenant applications have risen correspondingly.

Design team: John Shnier, Stephanie Vermeulen and Brigitte Luzar



Photography by Rick O'Brien