

TORONTO STOREYS

By Ainsley Smith - July 10, 2020



A small parcel of land in Kensington Market that once housed a parking lot has been redeveloped into “deeply” affordable housing for some of Toronto’s most vulnerable residents.

Located at 25 St Leonard Avenue, the new rental units are owned and operated by St. Clare’s and are purpose-built to support people experiencing homelessness.

The units are studio apartments that feature a washroom, kitchen, and combined sleeping/living space. Tenants will also have access to shared facilities including laundry and other programming space.

The City will be providing rent supplements that will allow the units to rent at approximately 50% of average market rent — about \$524 per month.

According to the City, the addition of the new 22 units cost \$5.4 million to construct and was funded as follows:

- St. Clare’s: \$3.8 million equity and mortgage financing
- RESCON: \$1 million via a fundraising effort that resulted in 21 donors from the construction and infrastructure sectors.
- The City of Toronto: \$500,000 capital grant plus fee waivers and property tax exemptions through the Open Door Program and a \$150,000 development grant.

The apartments are part of an intensification project, built on a small strip of land that was formerly a parking lot next to an existing 77-unit affordable housing building owned and managed by St. Clare's in the Kensington Market neighbourhood.

The new three-storey building features durable and attractive construction materials, including laser-cut, steel railing panels that were created based on art from local artists Margaux Smith and Leo Krukowski.



The art installation reflects the community and also signifies the strong connection the community has with the tenants of the existing building and their desire to welcome their new neighbours.

“As the former councillor for this area, the 25 Leonard Avenue project has been important to me from the very beginning. I am so happy to have been able to support the creation of these new affordable housing units and to know that there will soon be 22 new tenants living in a safe, supportive and affordable home,” said Councillor Joe Cressy, Ward 10 Spadina-Fort York and Chair of the Board of Health.

“The COVID-19 crisis has shown just how critical access to affordable housing is to our health – you can’t follow public health advice to stay home if you don’t have one. As Chair of the Board of Health, I know that projects like 25 Leonard will help improve the health of individuals experiencing homeless and the community as a whole.”