

Services Provided By Toronto Artscape:

Property Acquisition, Funding, Development and Management:

Toronto Artscape's property management operations focus on the development or re-development, and management of buildings for artists' use, as private and semi-private studios, performance, rehearsal, or exhibition spaces.

In addition, Toronto Artscape provides consultation services to arts organizations looking to develop their own sites and interim project management to unincorporated arts organizations.

Liaison/Information Services:

Toronto Artscape acts as a liaison and spokes agency on work, live/work and housing space issues at all levels of government. This is done in consultation with all sectors of the arts community.

Artscape also participates on City planning, urban development and housing committees and acts as the representative for the City of Toronto to other cities and countries with relation to arts space/facilities issues.

Research and Clearing House:

Artscape provides a two-fold referral service for artists looking for workspace and live/work space and landlords who have affordable space for rent. A listing in our

Clearing House database is free and all property owners and artists are encouraged to register with us.

Reference Library

Artscape maintains a comprehensive collection of reference and technical data pertaining to artists' space, collected from counterpart organizations world-wide. Our library is publicly accessible during regular office hours.

Short Term Space:

Our building at 60 Atlantic Avenue has a large studio space which is available for temporary rental on a daily, weekly or monthly basis for exhibitions or rehearsals.

For more information on any of the items in this newsletter please call the Artscape office at (416) 392-1038.

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ARTSCAPE

TORONTO ARTSCAPE INC.

60 Atlantic Avenue, Suite 111
Toronto, Ontario
Canada M6K 1X9

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TORONTO ARTSCAPE INC. 60 Atlantic Avenue Suite 111 Toronto Ontario M6K 1X9 Tel: (416) 392-1038 Fax: (416) 392-1059

179 Richmond Street A New Home for Toronto's Contemporary Music Community

Many of Toronto's contemporary music activities are centred around the Music Gallery - a non-profit performance, recording and rehearsal facility located in the downtown west end. The Music Gallery's current location has been inadequate for its needs for some time and for the past two years Artscape has been working closely with the organization's staff and Board to find a new location. After looking at dozens of buildings and spaces around the downtown core, a property came to Artscape's attention which seemed to offer everything the Gallery needed: an "entertainment district" industrial zoning, a performance space which could seat approximately 150, dressing rooms, lobby and other support areas, office space and even recording and mixing facilities. The previous occupant was a film company (alas the recession giveth and it taketh away!) whose facilities, with minimal renovation, can be turned into a publicly accessible performance space.

Artscape has taken on the head lease for ten years and passed the building on to the Music Gallery as its principal tenant. The rent is affordable and the expenses appear to be in-line - EXCEPT - for the property taxes (see below). The architectural firm of Kongats Phillips have

been hired to help with the renovations and improvements and the grand opening is slated for October.

Property Tax and Ontario Artists

The Music Gallery was certainly capable of taking on 179 Richmond Ave. themselves. Why did they ask Artscape to take on a head lease? There is really only one reason - property taxes. They thought that since Artscape has now 65,000 sq.ft. of arts space, we would stand a better chance of being able to renegotiate the property taxes to bring them into line with what a non-profit arts organization can afford. As is often the case these days, property taxes can make or break an arts space - for Artscape's projects and all the other arts organizations and individual artists in town.

One of Artscape's long term objectives is to persuade the Province of Ontario of the logic of granting artists tax free status on all non-profit arts real estate. Churches, educational institutions, hospitals - even the Boy Scouts! - do not pay property tax. Society views them as charitable institutions of essential value. We believe that arts space should be viewed by the Province in exactly the same way.

Taxes must be paid before the painter paints or the dancer gets paid and - put bluntly - in order to pay property taxes we must request a higher level of government grant support.

Toronto Area Artists' Housing & Live/Work Projects

In our last newsletter we reported on the developments in zoning and Ontario Building Code regulations that will ultimately make appropriate and affordable live/work projects much easier to design, fund and bring to completion. What we would like to do in this issue is to provide a brief summary of the live/work and artists' housing projects that are completed or are currently under way in and around the City of Toronto.

To Date....

Within the City of Toronto, there are two artists' co-operatives, Arcadia and Beaver Hall, as well as the Performing Arts Lodge, a new non-profit housing project for the performing arts community. These projects offer affordable residential alternatives, with security of tenure, for Toronto artists of all disciplines. The design and completion of live/work projects has proven to be a much more arduous task.

Of the three projects both Beaver Hall and Arcadia were originally envisioned as live/work projects, but municipal zoning and the Ontario Building Code forced the decision to build according to residential standards. In addition, because the funding sources used to

build these projects were housing oriented, the sizes, configuration and finishes of the suites were also residentially driven.

Arcadia Housing Co-operative

Units: One Hundred & Ten
Arch: A.J. Diamond
Type: New Construction
Built: 1986

Arcadia was the first housing co-operative specifically for artists within the Metropolitan Toronto area and, as such, represents a critical milestone in the provision of affordable housing for artists.

The project is located on the Toronto waterfront and was designed specifically for artists. Though funding sources required the suites to mimic traditional housing, structural flexibility was built into the units that allowed occupants to adapt their space to their own needs. North side apartments have mezzanines that span half of the unit, with the other half being two storeys in height. On the ground floor the common recreational rooms have direct ground access and extra ceiling height to allow them to be used as common work areas.

The Arcadia Co-operative provides information sessions for prospective tenants, during which, artists can obtain information about the project and unit availability. To find out about the next session, contact the co-operative's office at (416) 260-6611.

Beaver Hall

Units: Twenty-four
Arch: Oleson and Worland Architects
Type: New Construction
Built: 1988

The Beaver Hall Co-op is located at 29 McCaul Street, just north of Queen Street West near the Ontario College of Art and the Ontario Art Gallery. This new built project was designed by Oleson and Worland Architects and was named to commemorate the Beaver Hall Group, an association of artists who had worked in Montreal during the 1920's.

There are 24 units in the building, ranging in size from 550 to 850 sq. ft.. While this might be considered to be small for combined living and working, most of these spaces were built without walls (unlike Arcadia where the walls were built and then taken down by the artists) and the ceilings are higher than normal residential standards. The building also offers access to a shared studio/gallery/meeting room, a communal roof deck and studio space for physically challenged artists.

Performing Arts Lodge

Units: Two Hundred and Five
Arch: V.W. Kuchar and Associates
Type: New Construction
Built: 1992

The Performing Arts Lodge (P.A.L.) was just opened this past January, providing 205 residential suites for Toronto's performing arts community. The building is located at The Esplanade and Market Square (near the centre of the city) and was funded by the Ministry of Housing as a non-profit project.

In The Works....

Arcadia and Beaver Hall may not have won all the battles in persuading their diverse funding and regulatory partners that live/work was a relevant type of space to create, however, it was the work on these initial projects which brought the concept into the consciousness of these partners - opening the doors for live/work studios in the future. The struggle to provide live/work space continues and, after many years of persistence, there are several more projects at various stages of development.

Lakeshore Village Artists' Co-operative

Units: Ninety-two
Arch: Allen, Ensslen and Barrett
Type: New Construction
Built: 1992/93

Lakeshore Village Artists Co-operative is located in Etobicoke, a part of Metropolitan Toronto to the west of the city centre. This four building, 92-unit artists' co-operative forms the northern boundary of Lakeshore Village, a large scale development being undertaken by a private developer on a site

once occupied by a Goodyear Tire factory. Like Arcadia and Beaver Hall, LVAC has also pushed the live/work concept beyond normal residential thinking, by actually having combined living and working occupancies allowed within the same unit without the need for fire wall separations. This makes the project the first legally zoned and Building Code compliant live/work project to be built within the regional municipality of Metropolitan Toronto. However, in order to achieve permission for this dual occupancy, a number of compromises were necessary: artists had to agree to a list of permitted uses in the studios, additional ventilation was required and all four buildings had to be sprinklered.

Most of the units are designed to be flexible live/work spaces for artists and their families, with space for 1-3 bedrooms should walls be erected. However, suites are relatively small, providing only the space that the social housing funding programme would allow for residential use. Typically there are seven studios per floor. The north apartments are specially designed studio units, with two storey high north-facing spaces for sculpture, painting, or photography. Ceilings are slightly higher than residential at 2.8 metres.

The project is structured with commercial light-industrial space at the street level of all four buildings, one of which will be a common work space for co-op members whose work is too toxic or dangerous to be undertaken in their studio - ie. medium hazard or F2 type activities. The four buildings together form a type of buffer between the industrial land to the north of the Goodyear site and the residential redevelopment to the south.

LVAC's original mandate was to provide live/work units for visual artists. With the formation of a new board, this mandate was broadened to include other disciplines. Tenants took occupancy on June 1 (two buildings) and on July 15 of this year. Some units are still available, including a few subsidized spaces. For application information on this co-operative, please contact the project manager at (416) 255-3815.

The 419 Artists' Co-op

Units: Thirty
Arch: Robert Murphy Architect
Type: New Construction & Retrofit
Built: In Development Stage

The 419 Coxwell building is a two-storey red brick warehouse built at the turn of the century and situated in the east end of Toronto. The proposal for the site is designed to maintain the character of the existing building (while adding an additional storey) and includes plans for underground parking to maximize open space at grade. The ground floor will contain workshops, classrooms and a gallery.

Of all the projects discussed to this point, 419 Coxwell is probably more typical of most artists' live/work sites. It was an old derelict building inhabited illegally by artists. The architects wanted to keep the inside essentially intact, but the building's timber post and beam construction did not permit the addition of one more floor and parking. As a result, the interior is now a new building of non-combustible construction within the old brick shell.

The units are larger than LVAC and offer lofts (mezzanines in the language of the building officials). They are as stripped down and open as possible to accommodate flexible arts use. Each suite has a roughed in electrical feed of 100 amps and an extra exhaust boot. Medium hazard (F2) activities will take place in a separated ground floor area.

What is perhaps most unique about this project is that it has received the first site specific zoning for artists' live/work within the City of Toronto.

The Bartlett House Project

Units: Twenty-eight
Arch: Dunker Associates
Type: New Construction & Retrofit
Built: In Early Development Stage

The Bartlett House project is designed to be partly new-built and partly a renovation of an existing turn-of-the-century school house that has been occupied by artists as live/work studios for a number of years. The City of Toronto (through its housing

agency Cityhome) bought this site in 1989, intending to take it down and rebuild. Unaware at the time that it housed artists, the City now plans to expand the building for continued live/work studio use. Fourteen new units will be added to the existing fourteen. These existing units are characterized by high ceilings and lots of natural light and ventilation. New units will follow the same format. The studios at present are all different, with a range of unit sizes and character. The goal of the renovations is to keep the building in as close to its existing state as possible. New units will be built without interior walls and equipped with only the basic services. This will allow artists to form the space to meet their own requirements. The current occupants' activities include woodworking, candlemaking, small jewellery making, painting, photography and music.

Unlike LVAC and Coxwell, Bartlett is in its early stages of development. Cityhome is intending to submit an application to the Ministry of Housing for the current allocation proposal call and is considering Artscape for the management of the project. It is anticipated that existing tenants will be involved in the new tenant selection process.

Artscape Enters the Fray

Artscape has just put in an offer on an old warehouse in the downtown west end of Toronto. With the Ministry of Housing's recent commitment of 20 - 22 units of social housing and the City of Toronto's support of \$250,000, Artscape has launched its first live/work project. Much more to come....

The Studio

The Studio is intended to be a visual artists' retirement home. The group behind the project received their non-profit charitable organization status in 1988 and have since received financial endorsements from both Imperial Oil and the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, as well as having been assured the support of the Faculty of Fine Arts at York University for the location of the project on a 2 1/2 acre site designated by the York University Development Committee.

The preliminary plan for the project will see the live space separated from working space, but located within the same building. The

organization is currently soliciting inquiries about the project in order to get more information on individual needs and space requirements. An application for an allocation has been filed with the Ontario Ministry of Housing. If you are interested in more information you can write to: The Studio, Box 225, 131 Bloor Street West, Suite 200, Toronto, Ontario, M5S 1R8.

Zoning Update

As you may remember from our last newsletter, the City of Toronto has drafted a new zoning by-law that will allow as-of-right artists' live/work studio development in I1 (light industrial), CR (commercial/residential) and IC (industrial/commercial) zonings. This zoning by-law amendment is a part of the new Cityplan package, which was recently approved by Toronto City Council. Unfortunately, sources within the City have indicated that the by-law will likely be appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board, leading to further delays.

In addition, the City of Toronto has also been working on a zoning by-law amendment to permit home based businesses in Mixed Commercial Residential (MCR) zoning. The City's current zoning regulations permit only day care, bed and breakfast establishments and the offices of dentists, physicians, chiropractors or osteopaths to operate within residential units. The new Home Occupancies zoning amendment would allow artists (as well as many other home-based service occupations) to work legally within MCR zoning. Like the artists' live/work studio zoning, it could be a while before these changes come into effect, but clearly progress is being made.

Congratulations Tapestry

Congratulations to our 60 Atlantic tenants Tapestry Music for their success at this year's Dora Mavor Moore Awards. Tapestry received three awards for their production of Nigredo Hotel during the 14th annual theatre awards ceremony.