



Not just for bachelors anymore

Anderson Estates keeps history alive in sought-after Lower Mount Royal

OLD WORLD CHARM AND MODERN living have come together to make one of the city's oldest and most distinguished buildings a landmark residents can call home.

Once Calgary's tallest building, Anderson Estates, located at 804-18 Avenue S.W., symbolizes sophisticated living and nostalgia for another time. Located in Lower Mount Royal, near the heart of Uptown 17th, the historical building remains a cornerstone of downtown Calgary culture and a hotspot for young trend-setters.

There is something about its solid red-brick walls and hearty exterior that makes the Anderson a favourite among many Calgarians, young and old. For nearly a century the character and charm of the building has attracted the attention of railway executives, oil tycoons, artists and celebrities. (It was the setting for Jann Arden's music video, *Insensitive*.)

"The building is beautiful; the brick, the sandstone, the maple floors—there's nothing else like it," says Calgary realtor Chris Zaharko of the one-time bachelor's hotel built from 1912 to 1913 by widower Alexander Victor Anderson, for \$150,000.

It remained in his hands until his death in 1920, and was bequeathed to his family. The Anderson was later sold to Calgary businessman Victor Mah in 1977, a time when rent controls existed. With a

love for the building's original architecture, Mah invested a lot of time, money and dedication to keeping the Anderson's spirit alive. He later converted the complex into condominiums in the early 2000s.

Whatever its incarnation over the years, this landmark has retained its cult-like status among Calgary's eclectic community.

"I love old buildings," says Heidi Israelson, 35. Renting her unit from a friend who left Calgary last year, Israelson jumped at the chance to live in the beloved building, one filled with a vibrant past.

The Baroque-style building was built with classical features and boasts a few modern day touches added over the years. While things like the plumbing, roof, windows, and unit kitchens and baths are new, the integrity of the original design, created by architect Roscoe B. Whitten, remains intact.



“Modelled after the design of the Palliser hotel, originally built by Canadian Pacific Railway, the Anderson was once home to the city’s elite.”

The H-shaped building, designed to maximize the natural light, still includes the original solid oak baseboards and mouldings, maple floors, brass railings with cast-iron rails, and imported Italian marble stairs.

Each of the units, 65 one-bedroom and a single, two-bedroom, have ten-foot ceilings, six-foot tall windows, granite countertops, maple or oak cabinets, re-porcelained claw-footed tubs, and a new hot-water system.

When the building was built in the early part of the 20th century, rent for a one-bedroom unit in the Anderson began at \$60 and later dropped to \$32.50 during the Second World War. Today, the units sell as condominiums ranging between \$300,000 and \$500,000, says Zaharko. Currently there are a pair of one-bedroom condos for sale, as well as the building’s only two-bedroom condo.

The building features two different floor plans, with exception to the two-bedroom, which had originally been bought as two condos and expanded by a past owner. The T-shaped condos are 497 square-feet, while the bay window units are 619 square-feet. But Zaharko says each unit feels deceptively larger, thanks to the amount of natural light and floor plan.

Modelled after the design of the Palliser hotel, originally built by Canadian Pacific Railway, the Anderson was once home to the city’s elite—CP executives new to Calgary living away from family, waiting for new homes in Mount Royal to



be built. The tradition of sophistication continued when the executives moved out and their staff moved in, becoming the premiere serving quarters for Calgary’s wealthiest and most prominent citizens.

At one time there was a large dining hall in the building for its many single residents who did not enjoy eating alone. There was also a concierge desk, library, and it’s even been home to artists’ studios over the years.

The Anderson still features its original, brass cage elevator, once operated by a uniformed attendant. The ornate Otis birdcage has been maintained and is in ideal working condition, second only to a similar elevator found in the White House. And history buffs will appreciate two of its now-defunct cast-iron coal-burning boilers in the basement were built and installed by the same manufacturer as the ones found on the Titanic. CL

For more information about Anderson Estates or the three units up for grabs, visit www.zaharko.com/projects/anderson_estate