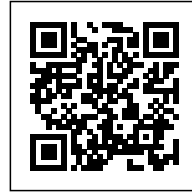




STACKT MARKET: BOLD URBAN INTERVENTION

Posted on January 13, 2020 by martabuges



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Stackt is a bold urban intervention and a revolutionary market and cultural space, made possible by daring to rethink what constitutes the retail marketplace in every sense – its concept, site, building materials and user experience.



LGA was asked to design the two-block, 2.4 acre site and help stackt establish Canada's largest shipping container market place, providing Torontonians and their visitors with a lively cultural destination and community hub with anchor and pop-up shops, food and beverage vendors and an onsite brewery, woven with courtyards, pedestrian paths, and open spaces for community programming and events. Surrounded by new developments and condo construction, a daycare center, railway tracks, Fort York historic site and the Bentway's new public outdoor space, stackt embraces the area's unique and changing characteristics while augmenting them with an additional amenity.

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The concept was born from the idea of leasing and activating a dormant City of Toronto-owned property at Bathurst and Front Streets while the City prepares for its future use as a public park. Shipping containers pay homage to the industrial nature of the site, while creating a retail setting with a unique personality. They also mean that stackt's physical structure can be picked up and deployed elsewhere – even in a different configuration – at a future date.

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According to Janna Levitt, Partner at LGA Architectural Partners, "As our world becomes more digital, retailers are looking for unique physical spaces and experiential opportunities for their customers. Shipping containers suggest an unusual and immersive retail experience while also offering a practical and sustainable building solution. Their inherent modularity means that the project can be disassembled and deployed elsewhere to create future stackt developments, while leaving the site unscathed."

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The problem was that the buildings fell under the scrutiny of permanent structure zoning, including their level of servicing and taxes – models that didn't make sense for a temporary structure. LGA worked closely with stackt and Graig Uens, Senior Planner at the City of Toronto, to work within these by-laws while minimizing barriers so that the project could proceed – thereby also setting a precedent for future temporary developments.

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As the largest shipping container market in Canada, stackt is ambitious in both its scale and its plan. On the ground level the new containers thread in and out to create a network of detached buildings with single and double-height interiors. These were retrofitted to provide heating and cooling, as well as the necessary power and water infrastructure to support small businesses. Ramps ensure accessibility for strollers and mobility devices. The containers' arrangement creates side streets that enhance the pedestrian experience and courtyards ideal for cultural programming. While containers conventionally lend themselves to grid-like formations, on the third storey reclaimed containers zigzag across the site, providing some dynamism and presence from Bathurst Street, from the condo towers, and from vantage points on the Gardiner Expressway. The storefronts are deliberately uniform to reduce visual clutter and also level the playing field between the independent tenants and their more experienced neighbors; and with some of the units reserved for pop-ups, a visit is like a treasure hunt to discover new vendors with each season.

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By capitalizing on the site's scale, modularity, and unique model for pop-up shops and retailers, stackt takes the urban market to the next level and sets a new standard for future urban marketplaces

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