

BOSTON HOMES

THE COMPLETE GUIDE

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Union Wharf is a special place

Three residences with million-dollar pricetags are on the market

BY MARILYN JACKSON
STAFF WRITER

Union Wharf is prime waterfront property along Commercial Street that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The historic portion of the wharf consists of two buildings of rough Quincy granite, a five-story edifice (a sixth floor was added in 1979) and a three-story building that were built in the mid-1800s during the heyday of Boston's maritime industry.

Farther out on Union Wharf are two rows of attached brick townhouses, constructed in 1979, that complement the granite building. During the past few years much of the commercial space on the wharf has been converted to residential use. Today, the 89-unit complex consists of 64 residential units, 23 of which are three-level townhouses.

Carmela Laurella of Otis & Ahearn Real Estate is marketing three of the residences at Union Wharf. "It's rare to have three available all at once," she says.

Two are townhouses, each with different views of the inner harbor; the other condominium is a corner unit on the fifth floor of the main building. All are priced for more than \$2 million.

"This area is like a little bit of suburbia," says Laurella as she walks toward one of the townhouses. The sidewalks are lined with shade trees, and small pine-mulched gardens



This aerial view of the waterfront shows Union Wharf, with its 23 townhouses at water's edge and the two adjacent granite warehouses, closer to Commercial Street, that were converted to condominiums in 1979. Lincoln Wharf is next to it.

COURTESY PHOTOS / OTIS & AHEARN REAL ESTATE

in front of the units explode with flowering greenery – azaleas, rhododendrons and roses. A private outdoor, heated swimming pool is situated between the row of town-

houses, and a cool ocean breeze wafts across the lot. Traffic noise is muted.

Townhouse 12 at Union Wharf is on the southerly side of the wharf and captures expansive views of the city skyline as well as Boston Harbor. It is listed at \$2.35 million. "The owners spent a year renovating this home before moving in," she says.

The elegant entrance to this unit, with a vaulted ceiling and marble flooring, provides a direct view to the water. To the right is a stunning kitchen, which has been upgraded with custom-designed white SieMatic cabinets that contrast with the honed slate floor and the black Bressia Nouvelle granite countertops that line both walls. A peninsula provides even more workspace. The backsplash is exposed brick, which adds a touch of color. Top-of-the-line appliances include a Dacor electric cooktop, a warming drawer and a GE microwave and KitchenAid convection oven.

There is a built-in breakfast table in front of a pass-through to the dining area. This features a mural, revealed when the pocket doors are closed; the other side is mirrored



Both Townhouse 25 and Unit 505 at Union Wharf have delightful northerly views of the harbor.

Residences at Union Wharf are simply luxurious

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and fits into the mirrored wall. There is a hand-painted mural in the powder room, opposite the kitchen, as well, and the vanity with gold-plated faucets is painted to match the mural.

The dining area flows easily into the living room and continues out to a private teak deck. Designer lighting is featured throughout, and Brazilian hardwood floors add warmth to this space. A wood-burning marble fireplace extends into the living room so that, when lit, flames are visible from three sides.

A graceful open staircase with a wrought iron and brass balustrade leads up to the second floor where there are two bedrooms, plus a third room that could be used as a bedroom or den. The large room boasts a red oak floor and a wall of built-in shelving that includes an entertainment center. Also on this floor is a sumptuous bath with a whirlpool tub set in custom-wood paneling a mirrored wall and hand-painted cracked tiles. A large laundry room on this level includes a full-sized, side-by-side washer and dryer and a soaking sink.

The staircase continues to the third level where the master suite has been designed as a true retreat, set off by a pair of glass doors. The master bedroom has three skylights and a wood-burning fireplace with a custom wood mantel. Sliding glass doors open onto a second private teak deck that offers panoramic views. The master bath is expansive and includes a double marble-topped vanity, a glass-enclosed steam shower and an oversized whirlpool soaking tub.

This home has a built-in sound system that extends to the decks, which have remote-controlled awnings. Another nicety is the central vacuum system that is on each level as well. This residence has a three-zone heating and cooling system and 200-amp service.

Townhouse 25 at Union Wharf, which approximates 2,290 square feet of living space, like that in Townhouse 12, has a similar floor



Unit 505 is loft-like, with 11-foot-high ceilings, exposed brick and bamboo flooring, but this condo also includes Italian tiles, glass and light fixtures and a state-of-the-art kitchen.

plan, with three bedrooms and two-and-a-half baths. It is listed at \$2.1 million.

"As soon as you enter this lovely home you have direct water views from every room," says Laurella. From the entrance, you can catch a northerly view of the inner harbor and the Tobin Memorial Bridge.

The entry itself is slightly simpler. A generously sized kitchen is on the left side of the hallway that leads to one grand room which serves as the dining room and living room. The kitchen is L-shaped and can be enclosed by a pocket door that opens into the living room. There is lots of countertop, topped with granite-colored Corian, and oodles of white cabinetry. Appliances include a Gaggenau electric cooktop and oven.

The grand room features parquet floors, and the furnishings are arranged to provide a great open space. Exposed bricks and beams, reminiscent of the early days of the waterfront wharves, were part of the original design of these townhouses, and this owner decided to keep that ambience. The wood-burning fireplace has a natural wood mantel. Sliding glass doors open onto a private balcony.

On the second level are two large bedrooms with big closets and a full

bath. One of the bedrooms serves as a second living room or den, where another wood-burning fireplace with a slate surround can be enjoyed. Built-in bookcases flank the fireplace.

Like the other townhouse, the third floor is the sun-filled master bedroom suite. A wall of glass, with sliders that open to a second private deck, meets the ceiling, which is vaulted, creating a sense of spaciousness. Around the corner is a huge bath, accented with mosaic tiles.

The third condo is Unit 505, located in the original wharf building. Laurella said that this unit was meticulously renovated by the current owners, adding state-of-the-art appliances and custom-designed lighting fixtures while preserving the exposed bricks and beams of days of yore.

This unit, which features three bedrooms, a den and two-and-a-half baths, is larger than the townhouses, but the living space is on entirely one level. "It's a real family home," said Laurella, who added that it is completely sound-proofed. She is offering it at \$2.195 million.

Two units were combined to create this residence, and a brick archway between the two was preserved. The space is loft-like, especially with its 11-foot-high ceilings and the grand room that comprises nearly half the space, yet it is very contemporary and eclectic. The flooring is bamboo, a hardwood that is environmentally popular because when harvested it quickly replenishes itself; its blond color is a nice contrast to the aged beams and exposed brick but nearly matches the kitchen cabinetry. The wood-burning living room fireplace has a marble mantel that was custom-cut in Italy. The fireplace is raised and set into a wall of exposed brick. A spacious private deck, with a northern orientation, is located off the living room.

The kitchen is open to the grand room and features top-of-the-line stainless steel appliances, including a Jenn-Air cooktop and a Frigidaire



The living room in Townhouse 12 features a three-sided, wood-burning fireplace and access to a private deck.

Gallery refrigerator. Baltic birch custom-made cabinets, some faced with glass, ring the built-out kitchen that also has hand-cut, hand-painted Italian tiles, black granite countertops and a long breakfast bar that edges the living room space. There also is a large kitchen pantry.

A second wood-burning fireplace, which is also raised and set into an angled wall of exposed brick, is in the master bedroom, where the thick hand-hewn beams have been painted white to further brighten the space. There are two other bedrooms here, including one with a loft with a set of stairs outside the room to access it.

This home has two-and-a-half baths, and all feature custom floor-to-ceiling tile work and Murano light fixtures. The master bath is luxurious, with an oversized whirlpool tub, glass-enclosed shower, toilet and bidet and sink, outfitted with Philippe Stark fixtures. A custom-tiled steam shower that can accommodate two comprises the second bath, and a half bath, with top-of-the-line Hans Grohe and Duravit fixtures, includes a granite custom-made counter with an antique sink of hammered copper.

All the residents of Union Wharf have access to a spacious, common roof deck, which is atop the original three-story wharf building, she added.

Union Wharf has 24-hour gated security, and each unit has deeded parking. Unit 505, because it was a double unit, has a second deeded parking space. Additional parking is available for rent, and boat owners at this complex have priority to rent a slip at the Union Wharf marina. Barkan Management Company manages the complex.

Union Wharf is considered one of the most prestigious addresses on the waterfront, according to Laurella, and the Rose Kennedy Greenway will be at its front entrance when it is completed. Its location is ideal, within walking distance of the North End, the Financial District, Government Center and Downtown.

DETAILS

Address: Union Wharf, 323 Commercial St., Waterfront


Age: 1846; 1979; varied subsequent dates

Townhouse 12:
Price: \$2.35 million
BR/BA: Four bedrooms, two-and-a-half baths
Size: 2,292 square feet
Taxes: \$12,852
Condo fee: \$1,067

Townhouse 25:
Price: \$2.1 million
BR/BA: Three bedrooms, two-and-a-half baths
Size: 2,290 square feet
Taxes: \$12,618
Condo fee: \$1,142

Unit 505:
Price: \$2.195 million
BR/BA: Three bedrooms, den, two-and-a-half baths
Size: 2,463 square feet
Taxes: \$13,297
Condo fee: \$1,167

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 This property may be seen by appointment.



A white beamed ceiling and a mirrored wall brighten the dining area in Townhouse 12 that features exposed brick and hardwood flooring.