

SPECIAL PROJECT PROFILE:
Vancouver Olympic Village/Millennium Water

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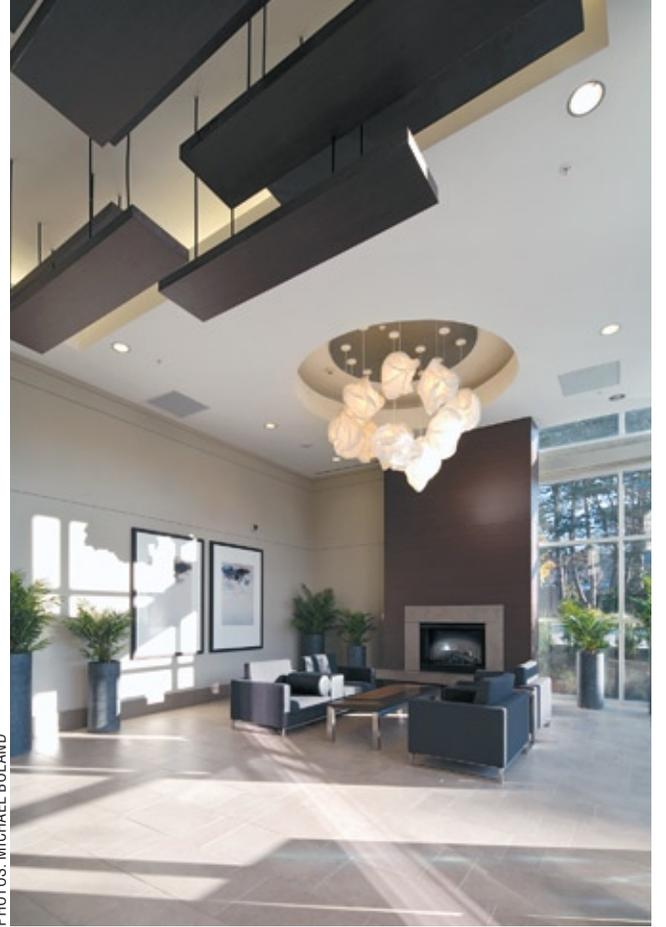
North Vancouver has long been one of the great places to live in Metro Vancouver. The addition of the twin-towered Vista Place in the heart of the upper Lonsdale area adds to the popularity of the neighbourhood.

Don Forsgren, president, west region, of Vancouver-based Intracorp Projects, says everything went well, from start to finish. “It was a success in the market, as well as being a new landmark for North Vancouver,” says Forsgren. “The towers have great views, even from the lower floors. You can see pretty much everything in Greater Vancouver – the city, the harbour, Stanley Park, Lions Gate Bridge.”

The towers, comprised of 284 condominiums, a gym and other amenities, are tied into North Vancouver’s city hall, the new library building and a shared civic plaza. This close association with the City might have worried some developers, but according to Forsgren, “the City was fantastic to work with. It’s been a very good interaction. It was interesting to have the city officials watching the whole thing as it was going up. The city inspector could wander over anytime.”

Doug Ramsay, a principal with Ramsay Worden Architects Ltd., says Vista Place was an interesting project for all the reasons mentioned above. “The building is located on part of the old city hall parking lot,” says Ramsay. “Intracorp won the proposal for the land and the City then used that revenue to help fund the construction of the new library. It was a win-win situation for everybody. Previously, much of the land was just a surface parking lot. The project created a plaza, an auto-court and an outdoor garden that links the two residential towers and the city hall building. It was an underutilized space and now, coupled with the city’s new parking lot, it can be used for outdoor community events. And the plaza, with its water feature, artwork and benches, is a great place for people to meet.”

Ramsay believes the City of North Vancouver is ahead of most communities in the way it plans for the future. “It’s a very progressive city,” he says. “North Vancouver has a district energy heating



PHOTOS: MICHAEL BOLAND

Vista Place

by Jerry Eberts

system and Vista Place is on the grid. The system uses gas-fired boilers to distribute a district-wide hot water heating system under the streets and into our building. This provides the project with an efficient source of hot water to provide space heating for the residential units, as well as to heat all of the domestic hot water for the building.”

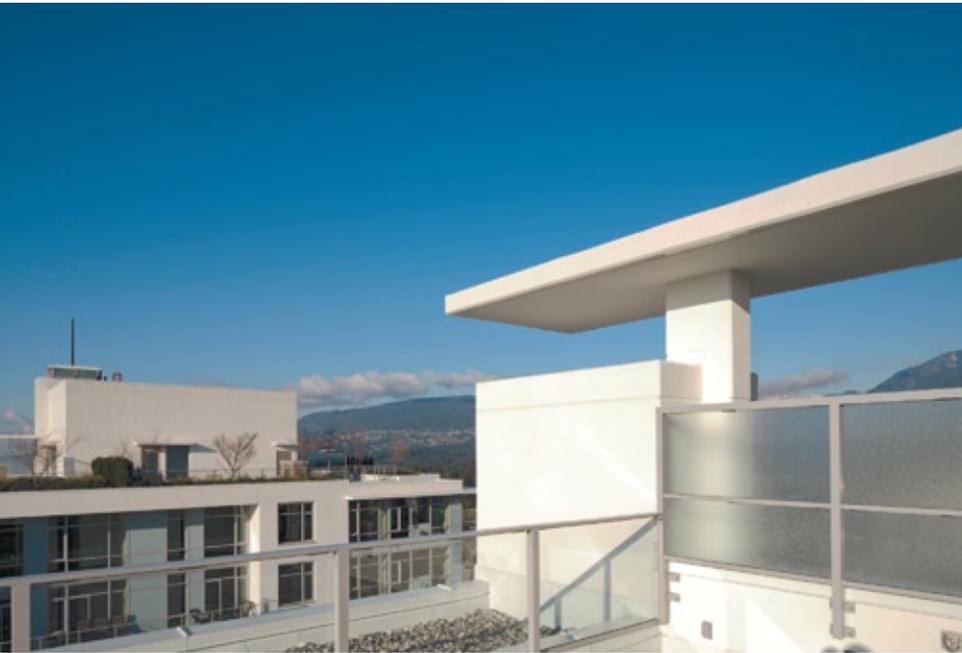
This is, however, far from a mere nod to the green movement. Vista Place is a LEED Silver building, meaning that from the beginning the project has kept careful track of the elements that went into the process, as well as waste generated. “It’s not an easy process,” says Ramsay. “The consultants and design team as well as the contractor and developer had to pay attention to a lot of details including, for example, where construction materials came from, meaning they can’t have been manufactured or shipped from outside an 800-kilometre radius. The LEED consultant did a terrific job of coordination.”

The two 19-storey glass-and-concrete towers are joined by a green roof-space that sits atop a row of two-storey townhouses, each with its own front door entrance.

What is being called the Commons area is a landscaped courtyard between city hall and Vista Place. Within the Commons is the new auto-court, water features and a kid’s play area for use by tower residents, city staff and the public. Peter Kreuk, principal with landscape architects Durante Kreuk Ltd., says his main concerns had to do with “streetscape issues and sustainability. “Our irrigation system is more sensitive than what was done in the past,” says Kreuk. “Sensors determine when the soil is dry and when the gardens need to be watered. This eliminates the situation where sprinklers would run during a rain shower. The areas on the property that are accessible to the public were another interesting situation. Something like the kid’s play area might normally be kept up by the parks department. But the interesting deal that was made with the City means these areas are the responsibility of the strata corporation. As builders, we have to ensure these areas are safe and can be turned over to the strata. But this all adds to the vitality of the environment.”

Linda Gallo, senior interior designer for Insight Design Group Inc. of Vancouver, says she was “involved from the





MICHAEL BOLAND

beginning, right from the initial visioning part of the project. We're part of the team and had a lot of fun working together."

The suites were designed to "let the outside in," says Gallo. "The outdoors are a big appeal to those living on the North Shore. This building has sweeping views of downtown and Burrard Inlet, as well as the mountains, and we used that as the concept. We used very warm, natural earth tones for each of the three schemes offered. Each had a different flavour for different personalities, from using very dark 'espresso' colours to more traditional mahogany."

"There is a lot of wood in the kitchens, with limestone backsplashes," says Gallo. "The bathrooms have marble or limestone countertops and porcelain tile on the floors. There is hardwood throughout. For the common areas, we wanted to stay with the natural concept. The lobby features a ceiling detail that is a sort of logjam effect, planks of dark wood of different lengths and depths at random angles. It calls to mind tugboats hauling logs."

As structural engineer, John Markulin – a partner with Vancouver-based John Bryson & Partners – was not surprised that this Intracorp project ran smoothly. As structural engineer of record, Markulin's role was to "help the architects find their vision."

"Every building is unique," says Markulin, "but the challenges with Vista Place were trying to integrate the parking structure with the residential buildings. There was a lot of fine-tuning and we found a happy medium. It's like that on every project. We have to try to come up with a way that it all comes together without additional expenses."

Erik Mak, an associate with MCW Consultants Ltd., was electrical engineer for the project. He says that despite this being one of the first LEED residential projects in North Vancouver, his

role was "more or less the same" as on other projects for Intracorp. "Data network cabling was roughed in for each condo," says Mak. "So every suite just needs to add a router and all the hardwiring is in. We found a way to save energy in the parking lots with occupancy sensors. With the two buildings, there are multiple entrances to the underground parking and sensors by each entrance that turn the lighting on full, then down to a lower level."

Don Forsgren of Intracorp sums up the project with enthusiasm. "Given the scope and size of this building, it was an exceedingly smooth project," he says. "There were no great challenges or surprises and we're very happy with the end result." ■

LOCATION

1320 Chesterfield Avenue
North Vancouver, B.C.

**OWNER/DEVELOPER/
GENERAL CONTRACTOR**

Intracorp Projects

ARCHITECT

Ramsay Worden Architects Ltd.

STRUCTURAL CONSULTANT

John Bryson & Partners

MECHANICAL CONSULTANT

Sterling Cooper & Associates Ltd.

ELECTRICAL CONSULTANT

MCW Consultants Ltd.

LEED CONSULTANT

Rethinking Building Inc./Light House
Sustainable Building Centre

INTERIOR DESIGN

Insight Design Group Inc.

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

Durante Kreuk Ltd.

TOTAL AREA

280,000 square feet

TOTAL CONSTRUCTION COST

\$65 million
