

Great Performances

Corporation enhances Toronto's waterfront and economy



Corus Quay



Build Toronto Inc.
Don Logie | Senior Vice President of Development

Location: Toronto, Canada

Corus Entertainment is one of Canada's largest integrated media and entertainment companies, with a focus on children's television that includes Nickelodeon (Canada) and YTV. Its new waterfront headquarters in Toronto will be as whimsical and accessible as its programming.

Located along the edge of Lake Ontario on the East Bayfront, Corus Quay is a 44,600-square-meter office and broadcast center that's providing more than just office space—it's spearheading the development of a community destination.

The project is in harmony with the mission of its developer, Build Toronto Inc. Build Toronto is the City of Toronto's innovative real estate and development corporation, tasked with maximizing the value and economic development potential of properties within one of the fastest-growing regions of North America.

Operations began in May 2009 as part of the city's strategy to enhance Toronto's economic competitiveness. Build Toronto's origination, however, dates back even further.

"Several years ago, the mayor was looking for ways to improve the city's finances. A blue-ribbon panel of senior executives from around the city looked at some alternatives and concluded that Toronto had a tremendous asset in its 7,000-plus pieces of real estate valued at \$17 billion," explains Don Logie, Senior Vice President of Development for Build Toronto. "They recommended that the city restructure the way it handles its real estate and look at it more as a central resource, and the mayor accepted that proposal."

As a result of the decision, municipal departments and agencies could only hold on to their land if they had a proven use for it. If they

“The building is very porous and welcoming for visitors. There is also a major performance area opposite it, adjacent to the new Sugar Beach Park. People can wander into the park and come upon a large performance area where bands can perform while looking out onto the park.”

didn't, the land defaulted to central control. Build Toronto was devised to utilize those surplus assets and create value for the city by ensuring they are developed in the best way possible, with sustainable and high-quality design standards.

"The previous real estate company was not structured in that way," says Logie, referring to the Toronto Economic Development Corporation, or TEDCO. "The city set us up and hired a very experienced team of real estate executives to implement this new mandate."

Two of the most important side effects of Build Toronto's work are the creation of jobs and the reinvigoration of declining neighborhoods. The corporation has private and public sector partners, and operates at arm's length from the city, its sole shareholder.

Currently, Build Toronto boasts 35 properties, mostly vacant land in some of the best locations in Toronto. Seven of those properties are ideally situated near subway stops—and Build Toronto is the only corporation with access to them.

CORUS QUAY

The Corus Quay project was originally the work of TEDCO. It was a massive piece of property along the waterfront, close to downtown, but the site was highly contaminated and underutilized with solely industrial, storage and warehouse facilities.

"In order to try and kick start development, TEDCO did a lease with Corus Entertainment to construct a 500,000-square-foot office building of seven stories right on the waterfront," says Logie.

Designed by Diamond and Schmitt Architects, the project serves the purpose of consolidating Corus Entertainment's 11 separate Toronto locations into one long-term home. The 53,000-square-foot floor plate is nearly double the size of that of similar projects to ensure the building remains low and doesn't obstruct the waterfront views offered by the buildings behind it.

Three of Toronto's most popular radio stations are located on the ground floor, facing out to the public so visitors can stand outside and watch the radio personalities at work. Two 30-foot-high sliding glass doors open up to the six-story atrium on the south end of the building.

"The building is very porous and welcoming for visitors," declares Logie. "There is also a major performance area opposite it, adjacent to the new Sugar Beach Park. People can wander into the park and come upon a large performance area where bands can perform while looking out onto the park."

A waterfront promenade stretches between Corus Quay, the lake and Sugar Beach Park, and Corus Quay itself has applied for LEED Gold certification due to several green roof spaces and a five-story interior living wall.

Working toward Corus Quay's March 2010 completion was not always easy. Being close to the waterfront meant the site was only five feet above the water table on highly contaminated soil, which would have to be dug up for the building's one-story underground parking garage. To remain green, Build Toronto shipped the contaminated soil off to a nearby TEDCO site where the soil was cleaned for reuse over an 18-month period.

"The soil that was left on the site still had some contamination, so we used a liner and created an extra concrete finishing level in the underground garage to ensure the health and safety of the occupants was preserved," says Logie. "The environmental issues caused us to change our techniques for foundation design and record extra costs, but we worked around those to complete the project on schedule."

Although the waterfront where Corus Quay is located has not seen development in the last 40 years, it is already seeing growth thanks to the new facility Build Toronto has developed there. George Brown College is constructing a campus next door and two other new parks are underway. The area will likely continue becoming a hub of activity with constant broadcasting and public performances along with Corus Entertainment's more than 1,200 employees who now all work at Corus Quay.

Moving forward, Build Toronto is working on several new sites, including one building that will obtain LEED Gold certification partly through a 60 percent reduction in energy consumption. For comparison, LEED Gold buildings generally reduce energy consumption by 20 to 25 percent.

"Build Toronto, in a very short period, has assembled a very experienced and capable team," declares Logie. "We are very excited to get moving on further projects beyond Corus Quay, and to further enhance our great city." DDC

BA GROUP

BA Group creates innovative plans for movement in urban environments by solving pedestrian, bicycle, transit and automobile transportation challenges. Our collaborations with Build Toronto, Waterfront Toronto and the City of Toronto to create and improve transportation to and within Toronto's Waterfront districts include our recent successful contributions to the Corus Building, East Bayfront Precinct, West Don Lands Precinct and the Western Waterfront.

BA Group is proud to be a member of
the Build Toronto project team
responsible for the successful completion of the
Corus Building
in the East Bayfront District of Toronto's Waterfront

Multi-Modal Transportation Planning, Design & Engineering for
Movement in Urban Environments
www.bagroup.com

BA GROUP
Transportation
Consultants