

by Brian Martin

Photo credit: MEC Ottawa Store (courtesy MEC)

There are a lot of myths in this world. When it comes to "green construction," one reads that environmentally sustainable building is far too expensive to make sense in the business world and is the preserve of government projects only.

Just don't try selling that idea to Mountain Equipment Co-op (MEC).

The Vancouver-based co-op with 11 stores nationally has set a stunning record. In recent years, it has increased its retail space by 150% while increasing its actual energy consumption by just 50%. It is currently building a 200,000-square-foot distribution warehouse in Surrey, using the same stringent environmental guidelines.

Early and intensive planning is the secret, said MEC facilities manager Chris Higgins. Architects, the general contractor and major sub-contractors must all form a team from Day 1 and search for energy-saving ideas. It is a system coined "integrated design" and was introduced to the company by architects Bunting Coady.

MEC goes beyond simply looking at the operating costs; they look at every aspect of construction as well. For example, they strive to buy products manufactured as closely to its construction site as possible, to minimize energy used in transporting materials.

In addition, says Higgins, they take a long-term view. In its Montreal store, the company chose a HVAC system that cost \$500,000 more than a standard system. On the other hand, it costs \$100,000 per year less to operate.

In only five years it will have paid for itself, and the next 10 or 20 years will be a bonus. Integrating this type of life cycle saving with green construction methods results in a project costing just 2% to 5% more than standard construction, said Higgins.

Much the same story is told by Tom Douglas of B.C.'s Discovery Parks Trust.

PCC
TSXV

GREEN
POWER
PURE
ENERGY



Becoming BC's Pre-eminent Supplier of Green Electricity

- Run-of-river hydro projects to meet British Columbia's future energy needs
- Portfolio of 29 projects with more than 1400 MW of future development, enough to power 440,000 homes
- Energy Purchase Agreements (EPA) in place with BC Hydro (211 MW) for 35 year term
- Projected annual revenues of CAN \$65 million based on current EPAs
 - GE facilitating ~CAN\$600 million in project finance of Toba/Montrose
 - First Nations agreements finalized
 - Federal and Provincial environmental approval
 - Construction to begin in Q3 of 2007

Plutonic Power Corporation

Suite 600 - 888 Dunsmuir St. Vancouver BC V6C 3K4

Tel: 604-669-4999 Fax: 604-682-3727

Toll Free: 1-877-669-4999

E-mail: nancy.goertzen@plutonic.ca

www.plutonic.ca



Stantec = Sustainable Solutions

At Stantec we approach our projects with a sustainable mind-set. We focus on life cycle solutions that encourage our clients to consider the environment and resource efficiency. In everything that we do, we strive to ensure that our business practices and design approaches meet the needs of the present without compromising the future.

Stantec provides professional architectural design and consulting engineering services in mechanical, electrical, structural engineering, and sustainable design.

In Vancouver, call (604) 696-8000.



Stantec

AD-DAMN-0007/MAY 14/11

One Team. Infinite Solutions.



Photo credit: Concert Properties

Highrise: Tucked into the south end of downtown Victoria, the Astoria tower by Concert Properties is close to downtown shopping, restaurants, parks and the Inner Harbour

Concert Properties, one of Canada's largest condominium developers, says prospective buyers now regularly ask about the environmental aspects of new buildings

"Some of the country's larger companies are now realizing that green buildings are good for business," he said. At a recent meeting in Toronto, an American firm produced figures to show that the new green building it was promoting could actually provide "free rent" for firms moving in, once they'd factored in the cost of employee turnover, health care, increased productivity and decreased energy costs.

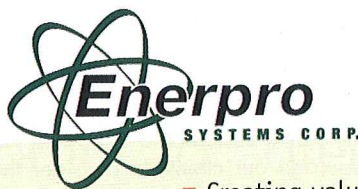
It seems the advantages of green construction have also sunk in with the person in the street.

Concert Properties, one of Canada's largest condominium developers, says prospective buyers now regularly ask about the environmental aspects of new buildings.

"British Columbia is ahead of the curve on this, although there is also a lot of interest in Ontario," said Brian McCauley, senior vice-president with Concert.

Victoria, according to McCauley, is a "hot bed" when it comes to interest in environmentally friendly construction. He says a lot of this can be credited to the large Dockside development detailed elsewhere in *Green Space*. Features prospective buyers most commonly ask about, he says, involve energy conserving lighting systems and appliances and water saving items such as low-flow showers, storm water management etc.

Like MEC, Concert Properties finds the extra cost of going green to be very minimal. McCauley says the increased cost can be as low as 2% – the larger the development the lower the percentage. He also pointed out that questions about extra costs will soon be consigned to history. Green construction will shortly become the norm, according to him, driven both by public demand and government legislation.



- Creating value from energy
- Proven performance
- Ensuring a sustained level of reduced cost and consumption

Enerpro Systems Corp 604-982-9155 www.enerprosystems.com

Making energy conservation FIRST nature.





Photo credit: Concert Properties

"The commercial sector is not far behind. The 'fit' between sustainable design principles and residential projects at all scales is rapidly narrowing and we are helping our builder/developer clients make the leap to sustainable."

At the end of the day, the push to green construction and

answers to whether or not it is possible will be provided by consumers, says Dan Jones, president of the B.C. branch of the Appraisers Institute of Canada. What is really required, he said, is a major player in "corporate America" or "corporate Canada" to step forward and demand green construction in all their buildings. At the pace the movement is going, it appears very likely that may happen within days. ■

Green building: Concert Properties is engaged in a range of exciting building initiatives. A green roof installed by Xeroflor is featured at Concert's Jazz building.

"British Columbia remains in a leadership position – we frequently export our B.C. marketplace experience to the 'green' professionals in our other offices"

– Brian Palmquist, sustainable building consultant, Morrison Hershfield Ltd.

There is a fly, however, in this green ointment. The eco-design movement has grown so quickly there is a shortage of expertise when it comes to people who are capable of green design and green construction, says McCauley.

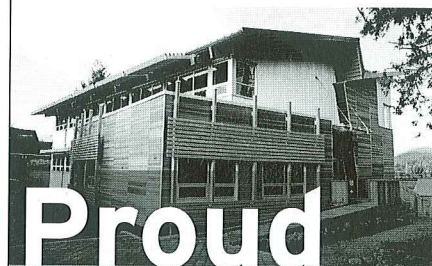
"There is a lot of greenwash out there," he warned. "Greenwash" is industry jargon for "hogwash." It refers

to people and companies who talk a good environmental line but don't have the training or expertise to back it up. This is something, says McCauley, that afflicts builders more than designers. It is also something, he said, that is rapidly changing for the better.

"We hear different perspectives on sustainability from our 12 offices around North America," said Brian Palmquist, sustainable building consultant at Vancouver's Morrison Hershfield Ltd.

"It's clear British Columbia remains in a leadership position – we frequently export our B.C. marketplace experience to the 'green' professionals in our other offices. Our work as Canadian LEED assessors tells us that sustainable building has already reached a 'critical mass' of buy-in among institutional building owners such as educational, health care and government.

rjc Read Jones Christoffersen
Consulting Engineers



Proud
to be a part of
Integrated Design Teams
at the forefront
of Sustainable Design

Photo: Operations Centre, Gulf Island National Park Reserve, first **LEED® Platinum** Certified building in Canada. RJC was the Building Envelope Consultant.

- > Structural Engineering
- > Building Science
- > Structural Restoration
- > Parking Facility Design

Innovative thinking.

www.rjc.ca • Vancouver • Victoria • Nanaimo • Calgary • Edmonton • Toronto

Practical results.