



Glacier Creek
Contracting Ltd.

COMBINES TRADITIONAL BUILDING TECHNIQUES AND PROVEN INNOVATIONS

By: Perry King

Glacier Creek Contracting has gained recognition for their award-winning work on the Vancouver Olympics Athletes' Village in Whistler, British Columbia in 2010, but their impact on British Columbia has been significant for decades.

Created by Eric Prall, Glacier Creek has built everything from 25-storey high rises to single family homes in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia. Settling in Whistler, BC, with a skilled team at the pre-build and build stages, Glacier Creek looks to establish a strong rapport with their clients and partners at the early stage of any project.

Don Coggins, Glacier Creek's marketing and sales manager, in an interview, says that in this competitive industry, regardless of the size and cost of the project, or whether it's public or private in nature, the company approaches any challenge with open-mindedness and pragmatism.

"No matter what we're building, we take a team approach to it," explains Coggins, who is a relative new comer to the industry, "we'll start with the architect, and we do work with a number of them, and look at what they're doing and how they're doing it and get involved very early in what they're designing."

Weighing costs and benefits, and provid-



ing foresight at the sub-trade, contracting and development levels, Coggins says Glacier Creek wants to establish “a solid green base for any project,” develop a practical budget and establish best practices to prevent cost overruns and solidify construction timelines.

This attention to detail has gained Glacier Creek a 14-year working relationship with the Whistler Housing Authority (WHA). When the contracts for the 2010 Olympic Athlete’s Village came up, this relationship served them

well. Glacier Creek was rewarded about 50 per cent of the entire build. The projects were completed on time and on budget — providing accommodations for thousands of Olympic and Paralympic athletes, then converting them to affordable townhome and apartment units for residents once the Games ended.

From milling fallen fir trees from Vancouver’s Stanley Park — they fell during a windstorm — and using them in the timberwork of some of the buildings, to tying into the district energy

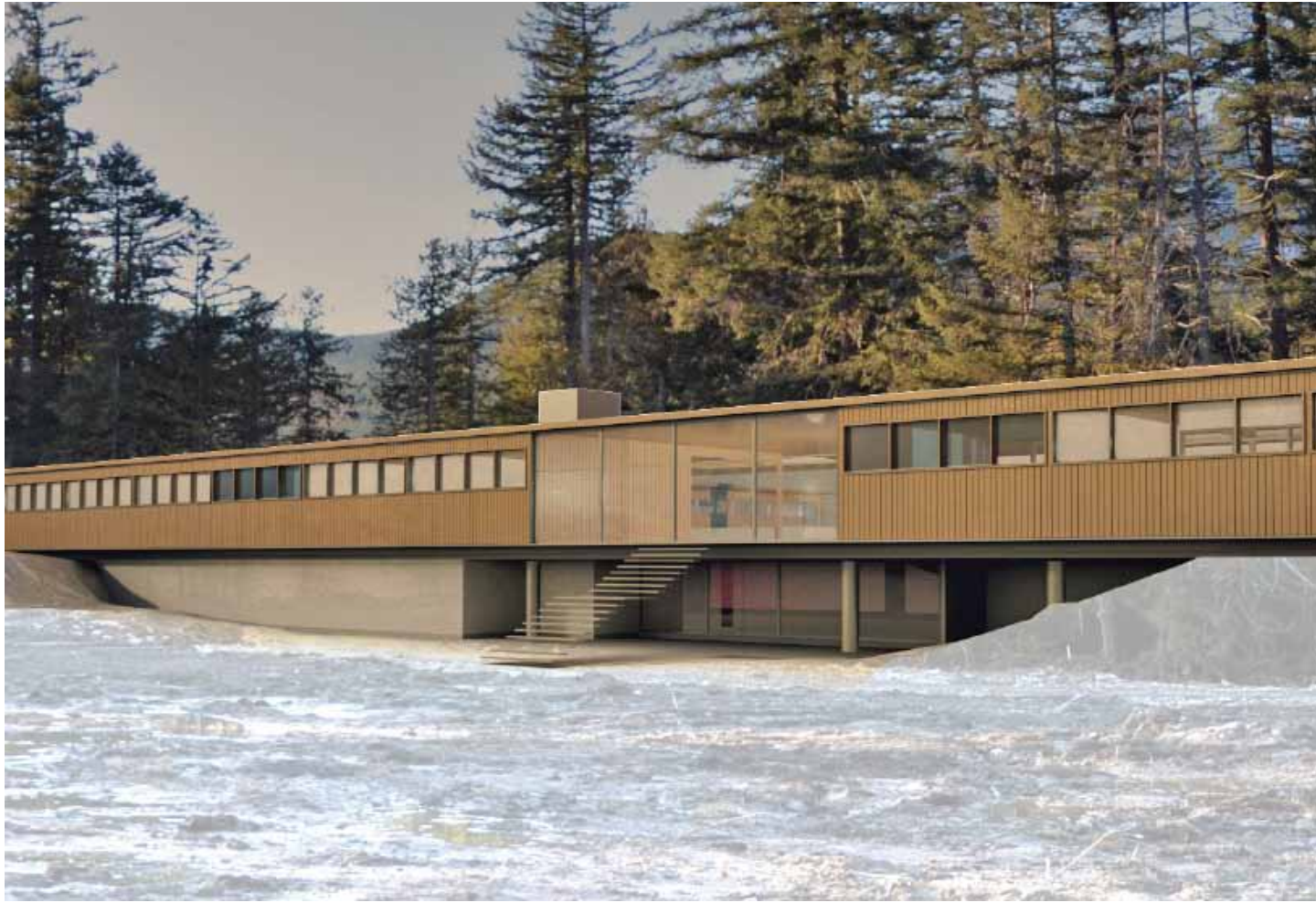


systems, the Whistler Development Corporation pushed the envelope on environmental best practices. Glacier Creek’s portion of the Village amounted to a little over \$34 million in construction value. The Canadian Home Builders’ Association of BC rewarded Glacier Creek with a 2010 Gold Georgie for best public-private partnership for Lot 6.

The Rainbow Project is another good example of this. In 2010, working with the WHA, Glacier Creek Pacific Contracting built 76 duplexes and

four single-family homes, all pre sold to WHA members. “We put together a complete package for people,” said Coggins, “we arranged for the financing, working to a strict schedule with our team to ensure move in timetables were met, so that these homes were truly affordable.”

The units are all environmentally friendly, certified Built Green, Gold, and six of the units were built with solar-assisted domestic hot water and space heating. All these homes were



designed with a “high performance building envelope” consisting of spray foam insulation throughout, triple glazed windows and heat recovery ventilators.

The Rainbow project earned Glacier Creek 2010 Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) national award for best practices in affordable housing — an honour they shared with the WHA. Glacier Creek was also named the 2010 BC Hydro Power Smart Residential Builder of the Year for the same project.

That award and others help reinforce the company’s main philosophy.

“That housing should not just be affordable to buy, it should be affordable to live in as well,” said Coggins.

Glacier Creek has split into three divisions, each with a separate focus. Glacier Creek Contracting Ltd. and Glacier Creek Pacific Contracting Ltd. both focus on projects but the former division focuses on projects of larger size and scope, which value in the tens of millions of dollars, while the latter focuses on individual homes and customized projects. The third division, Glacier Creek Insulation Ltd., provides insulation services that supports the company’s environmental initiatives on their building proj-

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ects and to other contractors.

“The insulation company started primarily because we wanted to have complete control of all quality control and scheduling for this part of the construction,” Coggins explained. According to Coggins, citing a 2009 Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation study, 85 per cent of the value of a net zero homes comes from 15 per cent of the cost by addressing en-

velope issues and insulation needs — that better insulation increases the value of your home and lowers monthly living costs.

“When you put that into practice, it is one of the most important thing you can do when building,” he said. “Make sure a house is sealed and insulated properly, and that’s going to have a financial benefit on operating costs and for resale as energy costs continue to rise.”



Each year, the company’s housing portfolio is growing and diversifying. In addition to a current project in the Wedgewood neighbourhood of Whistler, they currently have housing projects under way at the Maples and Crumpit Woods in Squamish.

Glacier Creek is working the Hill Academy, a Toronto-based sports academy focused around

house and 6 dormitory buildings with a potential for a future Ice Arena.

Future Glacier Creek plans to continue to achieve consistent workloads in the Sea to Sky Corridor while maintaining innovative approaches to balancing the cost of delivering high performance energy efficient homes with affordability.

high performance athletes, to build a second campus in Pemberton. Construction will start in August after the Pemberton Music Festival and The Hill Academy Pacific will be open and ready for the 2015–2016 academic year. This project will proceed on a phased basis and consists off an Academic Building, Field-