

From Sea to Sky

Contractor's projects range from Olympic to affordable



During the 2010 Olympics in Vancouver, some athletes will be staying in a village mostly built by Glacier Creek Contracting Ltd. Once the Olympics are over, those same units will be used to offer affordable housing in Whistler, British Columbia.

Glacier Creek Contracting has been building impressive projects in the Whistler area since its inception nearly 13 years ago. The region is also known as the Sea-to-Sky Corridor, which includes the entire area from Horseshoe Bay—just north of Vancouver—up through Whistler to Pemberton. Affordable housing in the region is fairly scarce: it's known for its resource extraction, which has historically only promoted the growth of small towns alongside the resources.

"The primary work we have been doing in that area has been generally related to affordable housing, whether it is for a municipal affordable housing entity or for private markets that focus on the same residents," says Eric Prall, President of Glacier Creek Contracting.

The company's overall expertise is broader, boasting abilities in general contracting and construction management. Prall himself has been in the construction industry most of his life, with 30 years of experience that include projects for large-scale concrete, pre-cast high rises, strip malls and town houses, just to name a few.

With over \$155 million worth of construction completed, Glacier Creek Contracting has proudly worked on more than 1,500 units, primarily residential with some hotels in the mix. Its extensive list of awards says even more about its skill.

The Canadian Home Builders' Association British Columbia annually recognizes the local residential construction industry with the Georgie Awards. Glacier Creek Contracting may be the Meryl Streep of the Georgies, taking home multiple Gold Georgie and Silver Georgie awards for contributions ranging from energy-efficient methods to public-private partnerships. Other awards include Louisiana-Pacific's SmartSystem Home of the Year and being selected as a finalist for Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's Housing Award for affordable housing innovation.

Glacier Creek Contracting has a mission—to create innovative real estate developments that fulfill the needs of their communities with the highest standards of construction, customer service and community values.

SMOOTH OPERATOR

The supervisory staff at Glacier Creek Contracting may have been in the construction business for upwards of 20 years each, but the company is still committed to growing its staff.

"We do a lot of training to enhance our abilities related to the building code and building science," says Prall. "We're always trying to stay ahead of things."

It's the joint knowledge and team effort that set Glacier Creek Contracting apart, and the group effort makes for effective projects. "Basically, the whole operation of our company is based on teamwork—and



Rainbow subdivision



Working with reclaimed timber from Stanley Park

the teamwork within the company grows outward to everybody that we deal with," explains Prall.

When the company takes on any new project, everybody involved is taken into consideration to assure that individual jobs intersect with a common end goal. Glacier Creek Contracting believes having the right suppliers and trades working on a job is paramount for success. "And that goes right from working on the job site as the general developer to the consultants," says Prall. "Everybody has to be on the same track moving forward, and it makes for a much smoother operation and end result."

Keeping things smooth is especially easy with the additional skills Glacier Creek Contracting has developed over the years. The company does specialized insulation work and is certified to do spray foam insulation—a green and efficient way to provide thermal insulation and minimize air infiltration.

In addition, Glacier Creek Contracting is a certified building envelope renovator. Certain circumstances made that skill turn out to be more useful in the region than anticipated.

"A number of years ago on the coast of British Columbia, there was a significant crisis in which a huge number of buildings were failing due to water infiltration through the outside wall. They had to be taken apart on the outside and rebuilt," says Prall. "Obviously, new technology since then has been designed to prevent that kind of crisis or minimize it, but there are still many buildings that need to be

renovated from the outside. That work is strictly legislated and we are licensed to be doing it."

The team efforts, partnerships and skills the company has grown into over the years have led it to two recent projects that will bring much needed affordable housing to the Sea-to-Sky Corridor.

WHISTLER ATHLETES' VILLAGE

Currently, Glacier Creek Contracting is finishing up the previously mentioned Olympic project that will house athletes during the games and local residents afterwards. The project—Whistler Athletes' Village—was built entirely from scratch.

Anticipated for completion this July, the \$35 million project will total 57 townhomes and 89 apartment units. The construction is divided into four separate smaller projects—two for the townhomes and two for the apartments. The lead developer is the Whistler Development Corporation, an entity created by the municipality to fulfill its obligations to build an Olympic village.

The first incarnation of the village will be when it is used during the Olympic games. In this version, the units will be arranged more hotel-style, with a focus on extra bedrooms. For example, rather than building separate living and dining rooms initially, those spaces will be utilized as additional bedrooms to accommodate athletes.

Once the games are over, the units—particularly the additional bedrooms—will be converted back to standard use. "These projects go



“ We’re using a different twist on green. We are staying away from geoexchange systems on this project and instead focusing on designing the buildings to be more efficient with less energy demand. ”



Pioneer Junction townhouses

a long way to helping out the people who live and work in the valley and need help affording their own property,” says Prall.

Many of Glacier Creek Contracting’s projects are done hand-in-hand with the Whistler Housing Authority (WHA) and the athletes’ village is no different. The WHA is mandated to find ways to support residents with the creation of affordable housing and to govern the affordable housing for certain groups. With such a demand for affordable housing, the WHA has developed a wait list. Residents in need of the housing can add their names to the list and when projects come online, the WHA takes people off the list in order. Due to this, Whistler Athletes’ Village is entirely presold to those on the list.

Glacier Creek Contracting is a Built Green Certified Builder and the project features an array of green components. Most notably, it’s being built beside a decommissioned landfill that has a methane collection system in it.

“The methane from the sewage treatment plant all gets directed to a boiler. So there is a heat recovery from the treatment plant and the boiler—and that heat warms water that then goes through a main to heat pumps at all of the units within the athletes’ village,” explains Prall. “It makes the heating of these units very, very efficient.”

A great deal of timber is being used in the project, all recovered from Stanley Park in Vancouver, where a recent windstorm blew down a significant number of large trees.

RAINBOW

With the same end user—the WHA’s affordable housing list—Glacier Creek Contracting is working on the Rainbow project, a subdivision aiming for completion by the end of 2010.

Rainbow will feature 80 units comprised of duplex homes for a total construction cost of \$36 million. However, while Whistler Athletes’ Village will thrive during the Olympics, Rainbow will slow down. Due to the Olympics and its necessary lockdown on transportation through the area, construction will have to stop for about a month to a month-and-a-half.

Yet Rainbow is ahead of the game when it comes to green components. Seeking Built Green Platinum certification, Rainbow will be trying something new.

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Established in 1992, Coastal Mountain Mechanical began designing and installing mechanical systems for large custom homes and expanded to include commercial and multifamily residential projects. Working with Glacier Creek Contracting has given Coastal Mountain Mechanical the opportunity to provide Whistler residents with affordable housing incorporating state-of-the-art energy efficient systems. We look forward to working with Glacier Creek Contracting on future successful projects.

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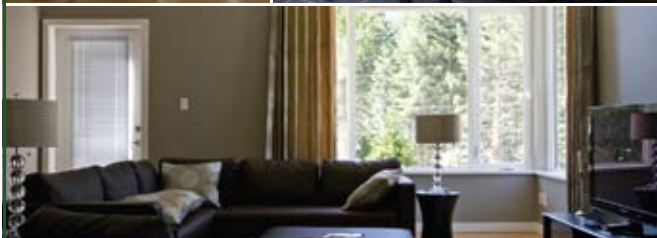
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FOR THE 2010 WINTER OLYMPICS
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Whistler Athletes' Village

“We’re using a different twist on green,” says Prall. “We are staying away from geexchange systems on this project and instead focusing on designing the buildings to be more efficient with less energy demand.”

In lieu of the geexchange systems, Glacier Creek Contracting will be using some of the components it knows best like spray foam insulation throughout the development for a tight air exchange. In addition, the company will include triple-glazed windows and efficient water and heating.

To gain heat, Rainbow will include drainwater heat recovery—an innovative technique to capture heat by installing devices into waste drain lines. “For instance, it will grab the heat from around a shower drain,” explains Prall. “So as the shower is on, there is a system wrapped around the pipes to recover the heat going down the drain. That heat then tempers the incoming cold water from the municipal system to significantly boost its temperature.”

The drainwater heat recovery is not the only innovation Glacier Creek Contracting will be enacting in Rainbow. It will feature a senior living component—the first for Glacier Creek Contracting.

The senior component will include 40 units spanning two apartment buildings. The affordable housing will begin construction in April 2010 and incorporate many of its own green initiatives. “It’s somewhat unique to Whistler because Whistler has generally been a young community,” says Prall. “But there is a demand now.”

Fortunately for Glacier Creek Contracting, the types of projects it’s working on include work for municipalities and affordable housing—in other words, work not severely affected by the current economic situation.

“Over the next three to five years, our goal will be to maintain the status quo,” says Prall. “Given the economic environment that we are all in, if we are able to maintain that, we will be very happy. We’re carrying on; we’re moving forward.”



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