



Architects oversee six-year Bell ExpressVu venture

Warehouses transformed into hi-tech campus

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Under the watchful eye of Toronto's Julian Jacobs Architects, two warehouses in Scarborough were transformed over a six-year period into the Bell ExpressVu Telecommunications Centre, headquarters for the new 376-channel satellite uplink.

Carried out under tight timelines, the project involved the micro-management and co-ordination of numerous disciplines—including architecture, structural, mechanical and electrical engineering as well as interior design.

Jacobs adapted the first Scarsdale Road warehouse in a record five months.

"Working with clients in the high-tech industry imposes a whole new set of demands and challenges, quite often with time being the most crucial factor," Jacobs said in a statement.

"We've had a long and interesting journey with Bell ExpressVu as it has continued its phenomenal growth."

The project entailed renovation of 100,000 square feet of space in two adjacent buildings, a 30-year-old candy factory and a 25-year-old warehouse. The buildings have been linked to create a high-tech campus that covers almost

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Various views of the Bell ExpressVu Telecommunications Centre, headquarters for the new 376-channel satellite uplink. Top to bottom: View from the street at night; the sun-splashed atrium cafe lounge; the master control room; the award-winning antenna dish chandeliers in the lounge. Photos courtesy JULIAN JACOBS ARCHITECTS

Architects humanized environment

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six acres. Hard construction costs were \$20 million. Construction manager on the first phase was Vanbots Construction Corp. while Harbridge & Cross Ltd. was general contractor on the second phase.

The design team included Smith & Andersen Consulting Engineering, the mechanical engineers on the first phase and mechanical-electrical engineers on the second phase, as well as Crossey Engineering Ltd., electrical engineers on the first phase, and structural engineer Robert Brown who worked on both phases. Landscape architects were Vertechs Design Inc.

Jacobs, whose firm was responsible for both architecture and interior design, said project challenges included supervision of 80 electricians onsite working non-stop to install more than seven miles of wiring to handle power.

This power grid feeds transmit-

ters, including 260 television monitors in the master control room, as well as the outdoor "satellite farm."

Other challenges were the need to control dust and the extreme heat from the powerful generators in an air-conditioned environment.

Atmospheric park

The architects made an effort to humanize "the purely technological environment" for the Bell ExpressVu employees. In the centre of one warehouse, they created an atmospheric "Central Park" atrium with a glass roof. This allows daylight to enter an otherwise dark environment.

The atrium, with its live ficus alii trees and cafe tables, is a multipurpose space that serves as a cafeteria and lounge or as a place for informal meetings and seminars.

Another innovative landscaping feature is an Algerian ivy-clad wall

with trickling water basin that acts as a space divider.

An award-winning, and slightly humorous, design feature in the telecommunications centre is the adaptation of satellite dishes, both old and new, as lighting fixtures. The large, outmoded dishes were converted into chandeliers, while newer, small dishes have been used as wall sconces.

Julian Jacobs won an International Illumination Award for these lighting fixtures.

The warm colour palette throughout the building is autumnal—burnt orange, deep red, amber, olive and brown. In addition to use on the wall colour and furnishings, this scheme is repeated in the stain on the original concrete floor—a cost-cutting device that allows reusing the existing floors.

This stain gives the flooring a look that is reminiscent of an antique Roman floor.

worker suffered flash burns to the eyes and a temporary loss of vision.

At the time of the incident, the first worker was on a scaffold platform and the second worker was on a ladder leading up to the scaffold platform.

One end of the scaffold was located 1.5 metres from the energized equipment.

The workers had been fabricating a framework for a wall that was to be used to extend the divider between bays at the trans-

were not stored or used so close to an energized electrical installation, equipment or conductor that they could make electrical contact with an energized conductor.

They were found to be in violation of Section 194 of the Regulations for Construction Projects. This was contrary to Section 25 (1) (c) of the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

The fine was imposed by Justice Robert Bigelow of the Ontario Court of Justice at Old City Hall in Toronto.

Kiel Opera House to get facelift

ST. LOUIS

A St. Louis landmark is about to get a new life.

Developer Donald Breckenridge has announced plans to renovate the Kiel Opera House, refurbishing the ornate art deco building into the performing arts and community centre of its past. The building is scheduled to reopen in 2005.

"After spending the last seven

months researching and planning this project, I'm totally committed," Breckenridge said.

Breckenridge plans to spend up to \$30 million (U.S.) to renovate the opera house, which closed in 1991 when a civic group demolished the adjacent Kiel Auditorium to build what is now the Savvis Center, home of the St. Louis Blues.

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