

CFM & D

CANADIAN FACILITY MANAGEMENT & DESIGN

AN EXCERPT FROM
RAY ANDERSON'S
NEW BOOK

UPSTAIRS & DOWNSTAIRS

AT U OF T'S NEW EXAM CENTRE

HYDRONIC
HEATING

TANGIBLE CAPITAL ASSETS:
A CITY OF CALGARY CASE STUDY

**FACILITY
SOFTWARE
DIRECTORY**

[observations]

BY PAMELA YOUNG



PASSING THE COFFEE TEST

I always enjoy writing *CFM&D*'s "Facility Design" cover story, mostly because it's an opportunity to interview progressive clients and the talented people they hire to design their spaces. Often there's so much to say about these projects that some of my favourite material just won't fit into the article.

This month's design feature on the University of Toronto's Exam Centre is a prime example of a story that was tough to cram onto two pages. For one thing, it's two interesting projects in one. The bottom three floors of an old warehouse were converted into one of the first purpose-designed exam-writing facilities anywhere. Meanwhile, the top floor, which will likely receive LEED® Gold-CI certification any week now, is the office of two departments that are instrumental in shaping the built environment on campus: Facilities and Services, and Real Estate Operations.

Another difficulty in cutting coverage of this project down to size was that it was supposed to be a design story, but some interesting material that came to light really had more to do with operations and employee relations. In particular, I was struck by what Ron Swail, U of T's associate vice president of Facilities and Services, had to say about coffee provisions for staff in the offices atop the Exam Centre.

Fifteen thousand cups of espresso later, Ron Swail has no regrets about buying his staff a really good java maker

"The cappuccino machine has been an unbelievable hit," Mr. Swail told me. "The coffee we used to drink was un-

drinkable, and I think my staff and Real Estate Operations' staff are worth decent coffee."

Operating on that assumption, Mr. Swail bought a really good espresso/cappuccino maker for those who drink the fancy stuff, and those who prefer just plain coffee are supplied with name-brand roasted beans from Tim Hortons. The fourth-floor offices have now been occupied for just over a year, and in that time workers have gone through more than 15,000 cups of espresso. The guy who services the espresso machine was amazed to see that kind of consumption in a 100-person office. But Mr. Swail couldn't be happier. He figured that since staff are by far the greatest expense in any office, the really good machine he bought would pay for itself in productivity gains within four months if just six people a day stayed in the building to have their coffee, as opposed to taking time to leave the building and go to Starbucks or wherever. And besides, they might just have a coffee station chat with someone from another department that could lead to a better solution to a work-related problem. "I think it's misguided to not provide the odd amenity for the staff," Mr. Swail says. I raise my mug of dark roast and salute him. | **CFM&D**

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CFM&D

OCTOBER 2009

Volume 23, Issue No. 6

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Canadian Facility Management & Design (CFMD) magazine is published seven times a year by CFM Communications, 4195 Dundas Street West, Suite 338, Toronto, ON M8X 1Y4; tel (416) 236-5856; fax (416) 236-5219; email cfm@sympatico.ca; www.cfm.ca.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Canadian subscriptions are \$35/year (incl. GST). U.S. subscriptions are US\$45/year. Foreign subscriptions are US\$55/year. (GST Reg. # 123146425).

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ISSN 1193-7505

© 2009 CFM&D. Canadian Facility Management & Design™ is a Registered Trade Mark of CFM Communications Inc.

Printed in Canada.

Publications Mail Agreement No. 40051958
Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to:
CFM Communications Inc.
4195 Dundas Street West, Suite 338
Toronto, ON M8X 1Y4

FACILITY DESIGN

A TWO-FOR-ONE DEAL ON CAMPUS

At the University of Toronto, the first three floors of an old warehouse have been transformed into a 1,000-seat Exam Centre and the top floor is now progressive office space for U of T's FM and real estate staff

BY PAMELA YOUNG

For decades, the Depression-Era storage facility at 255 McCaul Street, just south of the University of Toronto's downtown campus, attracted scant attention. Owned by the Toronto District School Board and used partly as a central plant, partly as a warehouse, its most distinctive features were a smattering of ruggedly handsome Art Deco detailing, massive, mushroom-capped concrete columns, and a freight elevator sufficiently colossal to transport a forklift or two at a time.

Now more than 50,000 people spend hours in this building each year – anxious hours, in many cases. Several years ago the school board sold 255 McCaul and two neighbouring properties to the university. Today the first three

A 100-seat space within the Exam Centre was designed to offer accessibility across a wide spectrum of special needs



Above: exterior view. **Top:** The fourth-floor offices of the university's Facilities and Services and Real Estate Operations departments, shown here shortly before the installation's completion, are targeting LEED® Gold (Commercial Interiors).



floors of 255 McCaul are formally known as the University of Toronto St. George Campus Central Examination Facility, and the top floor, which should soon attain a LEED® Gold (Commercial Interiors) designation, houses the university's departments of Facilities and Services and Real Estate Operations. In total, the Exam Centre and the fourth-floor offices comprise about 80,000 square feet, and the construction cost was just under \$20 million. It was a fast-tracked project, with move-in completed within 16 months from the engagement of the architects (Montgomery Sisam Architects, Inc).

The first purpose-designed 'stand-alone' facility of its kind at a Canadian university, the Exam Centre fulfills two mandates: it provides designated general examination facilities on a space-strapped urban campus, where rinks, gymnasiums and other large, enclosed spaces designed for other purposes have traditionally been pressed into service; and it contains a test-writing facility that is accessible to students with all sorts of special needs, ranging from physical disabilities to Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. With two 300-seat examination rooms, a few smaller classrooms and the 100-seat accessible area, the Exam Centre can accommodate approximately one thousand students at any given time. Christopher Rizzo, the University of Toronto's development manager, says that demand for use of the Exam Centre has exceeded expectations. "Throughout the regular school year and the summer session, it's used almost daily for tests, midterms and exams," he says. The facility has even become a revenue-generator for the university; nearby hospitals and various professional associations have booked it for their own exams during U of T's own down times.

In the accessible centre on level 3, students can choose to write in a variety of different spaces, depending on their needs. Those who suffer from claustrophobia might choose a carrel with a view to the outside, while ADHD sufferers might find it easier to concentrate at an interior carrel. There are also private rooms, ranging in size from 6 x 6 feet to 6 x 8 feet. Some of these private rooms have height-adjustable desks, suitable for wheelchair-bound students; visually or manually impaired students can book a private room with an extra chair for the person serving as their scribe. All private examination rooms on the accessible level have a full-height band of glazing that allows the exam supervisors – known as invigilators – to see look in as they circulate the floor. "The windows also make the private rooms feel less claustrophobic," says Montgomery Sisam's Ed Applebaum, the principal in charge on the 255 McCaul



> In general exam-writing facilities, including the 300-seat space shown at top, applied finishes were kept to a minimum for maximum durability. The 100-seat accessible exam-writing facility (above) has carrels, private rooms and an invigilators' station.

renovation. "People writing exams in them want privacy, but they don't want to feel like they're in a closet."

As Mr. Rizzo sees it, renovating an older building such as 255 McCaul is also a matter of striking the right balance – one between improved energy performance and cost effectiveness. "We considered seeking LEED certification for the whole building, but the building envelope challenges would have been cost-prohibitive," he says. "We would have had to build interior walls, we would have needed special insulation, and we would have lost floor space," he says. In the end, the university decided to seek LEED for Commercial Interiors for the top-floor offices only, knowing that the rest of the building would benefit from the mechanical upgrades that would entail.

The existing mechanical and electrical systems were gutted and replaced; a new variable speed drive ventilation system ensures that a building that can be packed with students one day and relatively empty the next can have a huge volume of air circulating through it when necessary, but not constantly. In the exam centre's lobby, a living wall demonstrates the university's commitment to exemplary indoor air quality – and gives stressed-out students a soothing hit of greenery on their way to and from the exam rooms.

Through the capture and reuse of rain water for grey-water requirements and the installation of efficient wash-room fixtures, water savings of more than 60 per cent have been achieved. Meanwhile, the installation of efficient lighting fixtures and lighting controls has reduced electrical consumption. New windows and repairs to the brick exterior upgraded the thermal performance of the building, as did

a new roof. For the long-term health of the old brick envelope, says project architect Daniel Ling, the existing perimeter radiators were replaced with new ones, as opposed to some other type of heating system. "We had to heat it in the same way, otherwise it would be too much of a drastic change, and the brick would deteriorate," he says.

While the first three floors are the public part of 255 McCaul, the fourth-floor office area is a high-profile space on campus in its own right. Previously the university's Facilities and Services department and its Real Estate Operations were scattered in spaces over five floors in another building. To Facilities and Services associate vice president Ron Swail and his colleague Nick Zouravlioff (who is no longer with the university) it was important to consolidate staff on a single floor and integrate the two departments physically, since their work is often interrelated.

The top floor at 255 McCaul afforded an opportunity to do just that – but it was 10 per cent smaller than the departments' combined spaces. To make the new space work, senior managers with private offices took a space cut of 30 per cent and the space standard for other staff shrank by 25 per cent. To spread natural light around to everyone, private offices were moved to the interior or given the less desirable views. Meeting space and shared open space were increased, and hotelling and "virtual worker" programs made it possible to use space far more effectively. "What I've been most impressed with is how positive the vibe is in the new space," says Mr. Swail. "We have more people laughing, more people communicating, more people smiling than in the dungeon we used to work in. Happy people I think work harder. Happy people are healthier. You can't put a dollar value on that." | CFM&D

General Contractor: Eastern Construction; **Mechanical and Electrical Engineering:** Crossey Engineering Ltd; **LEED® Consultant:** Enermodal Engineering; **Furniture:** Herman Miller, Hawthorn; **Furniture Dealer:** Brigholme; **Flooring:** InterfaceFLOR, Niagara Protective Coatings; **Lighting Controls:** Lutron; **Consultants on Fourth-Floor Office Space:** Mandy Sutherland (change management), Steelcase (applied research), Jane Woolsey/An Organized Vision (move consultant).