



# HSBC PLACE REDEVELOPMENT

by NATALIE BRUCKNER

It has been well documented that in order for Canada to reduce its carbon footprint, the existing building stock needs to be brought into an energy-efficient future . . . and so when you come across a major redevelopment project like the one currently happening to HSBC Place in Edmonton, you have to commend those who are forward-thinking enough to not only transform a 1980s' building into a state-of-the-art commercial property, but who go that one step further and raise the bar when it comes to redeveloping buildings.

As with any renovation of this scale, it is no easy task, and yet Alberta Investment Management Corporation (AIMCo), Epic Investment Services, and Cushman & Wakefield Asset Services, along with a highly skilled team have seized the opportunity with both hands and created what will become Edmonton's newest "AA" class office building. HSBC Place is not only targeting LEED Platinum certification and WELL Gold certification, but is the first office building in Western Canada to be certified Wired Platinum . . . quite a resume!

As Micheal Dal Bello, senior VP, real estate at AIMCo, rightly says, "A full redevelopment of this scale requires the expertise of many partners,

and AIMCo is fortunate to utilize local and national expertise to see it through." With a team that includes Dialog (architect), PCL Construction Management Inc. (general contractor), RJC Engineers (structural consultant), and Smith + Andersen (mechanical/electrical consultant), it is fair to say AIMCo, Epic Investment Services, and Cushman & Wakefield Asset Services secured an extremely skilled team, well versed in renovations of this scale.

AIMCo originally acquired HSBC Place – an 18-storey office tower located in the centre of Edmonton's downtown business core – on behalf of its clients back in February 2017. Under the direction of Epic Investment Services, the project's scope of work is extensive in that it involves stripping back the building to its concrete structure and rebuilding it inside and out into a tech-forward and socially conscious building.

Once complete, the building will boast a triple glazed curtain wall system, floor-to-ceiling view glass in the office area, new mechanical and electrical systems, and a revitalized two-storey lobby featuring a digital art installation that is the first-of-its-kind in Western Canada.

Adjacent to the building is a nine-storey parkade (which includes two

levels below grade and seven levels above) that is being extensively redeveloped. The parkade is undergoing a full concrete rehabilitation to parkade slabs and perimeter spandrels, the construction of a exterior metal cladding and stone cladding facade, the removal of existing asphalt to main floor and basement, new traffic coatings to the parking decks and ramps, as well as numerous mechanical and electrical upgrades.

PCL, who was also part of the building's original construction team back in 1979/1980, began demolition work in June, 2018. This involved the removal of the curtain wall, which Darren King, senior project manager at PCL describes as, "tricky, especially around the data centre that needed to remain operational throughout construction.

To protect the area we installed insulated freezer panels as a temporary wall to allow the curtain wall to be removed without impacting operations."

King explains that to increase efficiency, a temporary monorail system was installed around the entire roof to help remove the existing curtain wall and replace it with the floor-to-ceiling glass. Designed by Dialog, the entire facade uses thin vertical strips of perforated aluminum to maximize the use of energy-efficient triple-glazed vision glass, which is not only esthetically pleasing but optimizes occupant comfort as it reduces solar gain during summer and heat loss during winter.

Inside, the building has been completely stripped down, from the basement (also known as the concourse level from previous use) and the

RENDERINGS COURTESY EPIC INVESTMENT SERVICES

two podium levels (main lobby, fitness and conference centre on the 2nd floor) to the 16 floors of office space, and a two-storey mechanical penthouse.

In order to open up the lobby area, structural modifications were necessary to reinforce the columns and core, and a large section of the second floor concrete slab had to be removed. “The re-massed podium required the existing second floor to be demolished to create a two-storey open lobby space,” explains King. “The existing columns and elevator core needed to be strengthened before any demolition could take place. We also removed the concrete floor to the second floor elevator lobby and replaced it with a glass walkway.”

Crystal Glass Canada (Commercial Division) provided the incredibly impressive interior glazing package to the HSBC Bank and office space which included office fronts, vestibule glass entrance doors, and an Engineered Glasswall System (designed by Dialog and Engineered through Crystal Glass).

“The highlight of our scope was the engineered 30-foot high Interior Vestibule Glasswall with 20-millimetre thick clear laminated [safety] glass,” explains Dylan Schiewe, commercial (construction) division manager at Crystal Glass Canada Ltd. “We placed a Spider-Crane inside of HSBC to erect the structure, which is supported by stainless steel spider fittings and 24-millimetre thick clear laminated glass fins.”

For the building’s systems, a great deal of attention has been paid not just to the mechanical and electrical systems (which have been replaced with energy-efficient technologies), but to the building’s security and communication systems, helping make HSBC Place a highly intelligent building.

“As an integration provider, our objective is to take pieces from different puzzles and place them into one board. We integrated systems that typically remain independent such as HVAC, lighting, access control, building management, and intercom and video [CCTV] into one single solution,” explains Eddison Sambury, project manager at Fibertel Communications Canada Inc.

For an added convenience the owner wanted to provide its tenants with the ability to access various areas of the building such as the parkade, wellness centre, and even the elevators from their cell phones. “It was challenging as we are working on one building that has multiple systems and we had to make sure it would all come together seamlessly. This required close collaboration and input from multiple parties to ensure its success,” explains Sambury.

Perhaps one of the most challenging aspects, not just for Fibertel but for all the teams working on the project, has been that during the renovation, the building was in part still occupied by tenants.

“We couldn’t just strip down the existing systems and replace them, we needed to ensure access to the building was not impeded. Working on the parkade for example, access and video [CCTV] surveillance for tenants was essential, because of this requirement FTC needed to employ a phased approach during installation to ensure all tenants both new and existing were adequately covered,” says Sambury. Again, this required a high level of co-ordination throughout, and King credits the bank employees who “were incredibly patient throughout construction.”

When it comes to putting the tenant first, the owners have truly gone above and beyond with this building. From the gender neutral and accessible washrooms and electric vehicle charging stations, to the focus on indoor air quality and overall health and wellness of occupants.

With the project now in its final stages, the team are extremely proud of what they have achieved, and rightly so. “It has been an incredible journey and, considering the scope, the project was completed within a very short timeframe . . . 18 months in total. Teamwork and having excellent relationships between all stakeholders was key to our success,” says King.

In conclusion, Dal Bello says: “Edmonton supports a vibrant downtown and our redeveloped HSBC Place builds off the energy of the current rejuvenation.” **A**

---

**LOCATION**

103rd Avenue and 101st Street, Edmonton, Alberta

**OWNER/DEVELOPER**

Alberta Investment Management Corporation (AIMCo)

**ASSET AND PROPERTY MANAGEMENT**

Epic Investment Services

**DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT**

Cushman & Wakefield Asset Services

**ARCHITECT/INTERIOR DESIGN/  
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT**

DIALOG

**GENERAL CONTRACTOR**

PCL Construction Management Inc.

**STRUCTURAL CONSULTANT**

RJC Engineers

**MECHANICAL/ELECTRICAL CONSULTANT**

Smith + Andersen

**BUILDING SCIENCE CONSULTANT/  
COMMISSIONING**

Morrison Hershfield

**TOTAL SIZE**

317,000 square feet

**TOTAL COST**

Undisclosed

---