



IRONWORKS

by LAURIE JONES

The City of Victoria is known worldwide for the charm and history reflected in its downtown architecture. One of the latest additions to this landscape is the 88-suite, dual-building Ironworks condominium complex, featuring a rust finish with the unique Corten cladding. This new structure looks like it was built decades ago, blending in perfectly with the actual vintage buildings in the Old Town district.

“One of the largest parts of my business is heritage renovation work, so the fact that I built something new that is appropriate for the location is quite pleasing to me, and important,” says Chris Le Fevre, president and CEO of Le Fevre & Company Property Agents Ltd. “I spent a lot of time in the desert in California where Corten steel is prevalent, and I remembered how cool that product can look. For this design I was mindful of something that was steel and antique without being pseudo, and fortunately we found people who were capable of putting it together architecturally and physically in a complete fashion.”

The colour on the outside of the building is actually rust. “What makes Corten different from regular steel used on a rusty shed roof, for instance, is this material rusts to a certain point and then it actually creates a beautiful, long-standing, weatherproof surface that protects the fresh steel

underneath,” says Justin Gammon, project architect with Christine Lintott Architects Inc.

The Ironworks development began in 2016 and its footprint is a compilation of five lots. “Phase One encompasses three lots and is part of a multi-phased project,” says Christine Lintott, principal. “Newer buildings in the plan will have a different exterior finish.”

Comprised of studio and one-bedroom apartments, the Ironworks buildings are priced for young, urban, downtown residents who want to get into the market. “Each unit has either a patio or some other form of balcony, high transom windows to add to the natural light factor, and beautiful views,” says Gammon. “We’ve included a large interior courtyard space and many suites have an overlook into it. This creates opportunities for sharing and developing the community.”

The two interior colour schemes are subtle, including pallets of white, greys, and blacks with light wood cabinetry. Long length, wide plank LVT flooring, large format tiles in the bathroom, and honeycomb kitchen tile create a fresh, modern look that balances the vintage exterior. “Taking cues from the Corten steel, the exterior rust red – symbolic of bricks in the surrounding buildings – and black accent colours are typical of a Victorian warehouse esthetic,” says Gammon.



Lukas Farey, project manager, Campbell Construction Ltd., explains the cladding came with almost a stainless-steel look to it. “We applied a solution to the Corten that makes the oxidizing of the metal accelerate. Eventually the building would do that on its own over time.” He adds the two buildings at Ironworks share a concrete podium, with a glazed walkway connecting the structures. “It acts as if it’s one building, but during construction we built it as if it were two,” he says.

“There are four commercial spaces on the ground level, with four levels of residential above that. One potential business is an Indian restaurant so we had to upgrade the ventilation system and the existing structure to accommodate kitchen requirements.”

Farey notes one of the challenges during construction was dealing with a rust water coming off the building. “As the Corten is exposed to the elements, and before it reaches its final patina, it begins to oxidize and the run-off water will be a rust colour. To prevent this from flowing onto the balconies or sidewalks, we used a variety of drains and canopies.”

He notes Ironworks is a unique project in terms of anything locally, or even on Vancouver Island. “It’s just across the street from the Capital Iron building, which is also a heritage landmark in Victoria.” **A**

LOCATION

515 Chatham Street, Victoria, B.C.

OWNER/DEVELOPER

Le Fevre & Company Property Agents Ltd.

ARCHITECT

Christine Lintott Architects Inc.

GENERAL CONTRACTOR

Campbell Construction Ltd.

STRUCTURAL CONSULTANT

RJC Engineers

MECHANICAL/ELECTRICAL CONSULTANT

Avalon Mechanical Consultants Ltd.

ELECTRICAL CONSULTANT

Triumph Electrical Consulting Engineering Ltd.

TOTAL SIZE

64,345 square feet

TOTAL COST

\$17 million

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