

## Dolyn Developments achieves excellence delivering on complex and high profile projects



**STAFF WRITER**  
– The Ottawa Construction News



Founded in 1989, family owned Dolyn Developments Inc. has developed a reputation for excellence in delivering complex, sensitive and high profile projects. The company is securely in the hands of long term employees and building from within and through the addition of new staff who bring their own expertise and skills, and is positioned to continue growing to meet Ottawa's market demands.

Dolyn's newly installed vice president Ryan Currier is one old/new addition to Dolyn's team. "I spent my first 10 years here and then went away for five to gain some additional experience and insights. Now I'm back and looking forward to working with some former clients and helping Doug (Burnside – Dolyn's president)."

Currier says he has gained project management skills which will help with many of Dolyn's complex projects. "There are so many great things about Dolyn already and hopefully I can bring another layer to that, help hone the skills of our staff and position us to be ready for further growth."

Burnside says he is thrilled to have Currier returning. While he will become more hands on with specific projects, Burnside will be able to focus more on client relationships. "A lot of times a client will need someone to guide them along the way, someone to help them make decisions to ensure the project's success, and that will be part of my focus. I will also be looking for new opportunities and slowing down my career in construction."

Currier says relationship building and communication is key, both in bringing new clients

on board and throughout the projects. He says a lot of the work of co-ordination and collaboration has to take place at pre-project meetings. Here, trades are on board with their assistance in helping Dolyn achieve cost objectives, product requirements and project timelines.

Dolyn has always excelled at the preconstruction phase, helping clientele avoid the major project pitfalls relating to cost, design efficiency, and expedience in maneuvering through the various stages of the approval processes.

"It's important to us and to clients that things run according to plan so that includes watching long lead times on materials, ensuring a precise and well thought out plan, and following it all, a superintendent who is well organized and a strong communicator is also essential."

Along with Currier, part of Dolyn's successful past and future, are several key employees. Project managers Andrew Splinter and Daniel Carley have been with the company for five years and both bring their expertise and problem solving skills to a long list of successful Dolyn projects. "Our office manager Benita Steele has been with the company for 17 years and keeps everything about our operation running smoothly. We could not do what we do without her."

Here is a look at some of Dolyn's current and past project successes:

## Long term employees build relationships and reputation



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### 888 Lady Ellen Place

The work at Lady Ellen Place has special meaning for Dolyn as it will become the company's new head office. Relocating from its current location in a retrofit heritage home whose space was choppy and included numerous stairs, Currier says the new location will be accessible, offer more parking and

provide a better staff working environment.

"The new space will be brighter, more open, upgraded and modern," he said. "We'll have open areas for more collaborative efforts, a bright, beautiful reception area and a glass boardroom for meetings."

Dolyn will own the building but only occupy about one quarter of it for now, intending to build to suit and lease the other 8,000 sq. ft. Eventually, of course, the company may expand to additional areas within the building.



### Empress Ave.

Another current project is a complex condominium upgrade to some 90 occupied units located on nine-storeys.

Currier says here envelope upgrades, including new glazing, curtain wall, patio glazing and new exterior aluminum panels and interior finishes, requires close co-ordination, communication and adherence to schedules.

He says traces of asbestos in the building require tenants to leave their suites for two days as the remediation and heavy lifting takes place. The rest of the work then continues with the suites occupied. "We had to put

a recipe and plan in place and then execute it exactly to reduce the impact to the building owner and tenants. This involves being hands on with the owner to adjust the schedule both monthly and weekly for the tenants."

He says working in someone's home always requires greater attention to detail to ensure trades are respectful and mindful of the environment. Here he says the challenge in working out the complex plan increased that level of detail significantly.

Currier says with many aging buildings in the city, this project is an excellent example of how Dolyn can help other building owners.



### 290 West Hunt Club Rd.

Dolyn is just completing work on another project involving a retail box store on Hunt Club Rd. where Currier says a 40,000 sq. ft. addition was constructed.

Here, two anchor tenants – Lazy Boy and Mandarin Chinese – required detailed corporate specifications to be met. "Besides the corporate colours and finishes, for Lazy Boy we had to install a great deal of electrical under the floor slab. For Mandarin there was extensive underground plumbing, a commercial kitchen and an in-slab koi pond."

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It was great working with the  
Dolyn Development team on the  
290 Huntclub project.

We were quite impressed with their management style  
and we look forward to working with them in the future.



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He says the complexities of this kind of corporate location require much detail, with client discussions and meetings to ensure specifications are met. Where other local locations exist, Currier says the team will often visit to ensure everything is well understood.



#### Rideau Cottage

One of Dolyn's past projects suddenly became more prestigious when it was announced that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his family would be moving into the 9,000 sq. ft. Rideau Cottage on Rideau Hall's grounds, rather than taking up immediate residence at 24 Sussex.

Burnside says Dolyn was responsible for a design-build construction management procedure to completely renovate the building in 2013-2014. "The National Capital Commission (NCC) wanted to restore and maintain the building's heritage designation, but also upgrade it with features such as air conditioning, uninterrupted power supply, completely replace all plumbing and electrical systems – all this while minimizing damage and restoring all heritage aspects."

He says maintaining details including the plaster and crown moldings while providing upgrades required creative thinking. Because there was nowhere to run duct work for instance, air conditioning is delivered through three inch pipes run through the walls.

"The windows had to be restored and it took a while to find someone that was suitably experienced and competent to meet the required results."

The work he says required the windows to be removed to an offsite location for restoration work to be completed and the holes boarded up until they could be returned.

Other work included turning the dirt floor basement, formerly used for storage, into a concrete slab with in-floor heating to make it a livable space.

He says the masonry was in very poor condition and approximately 30 per cent of the entire building's masonry was deconstructed and reconstructed. "The NCC had very specific concerns and wishes for the building and they were a great and active part of the team. It was a very efficient and enjoyable way to tackle a very challenging project."



#### Heritage Funeral Home

High profile projects do not make up all of Dolyn's most complex projects. In the case of Heritage Funeral Homes, Dolyn was called in after another general contractor tried and failed to complete the project.

"At the point we were asked to get involved," says Burnside, "our first step was a forensic audit to determine where the project stood. We then had to explain to the client what had been done, what still needed to be done, what had been done to a low quality standard and what they had lost financially."

He says the challenge extended not only in gaining the trust of the client, but also the trust of the trades who had been left hanging by the previous contractor. Burnside said Dolyn

ended up floating the project somewhat until the financial status could be determined and cleared up so that the trades could be paid in a timely manner once again.

Other complications included an original design that did not take into account the high gas use or special exhaust system requirements for the cremation unit that had to be installed.

"In the beginning we had a client who was very disillusioned with the whole process, was about a year behind the date the project was to be completed and so was losing business. In the end we had the trust of a client who was finally able to open their doors and was pleased with the final result. I think they will speak very highly of us."



#### 4275 Innes Rd.

Dolyn took a "brownfield" (contaminated soils) site on Innes Rd. and transformed it into a two-storey 22,000 sq. ft. medical building that houses the dentist owner, as well as specialists including audiology and chiropractic care.



#### TD Canada Trust

Another project on Hunt Club involved a new pad site construction, designed to achieve LEED certification, for regular client TD Canada Trust.

"We've completed several projects for TD Canada Trust

so we know what they expect and they know what we can do."

Currier says knowing what the client wants and being able to deliver means Dolyn works on projects like this with a short list of trades that in turn can deliver what is expected. "The client has several models that they will roll out, depending on the location and needs and proprietary design elements that must be done right. This isn't the time for trying someone new to see what they can do."



#### MySalon Suites

For Florida franchisor MySalon Suites and a local franchisee, Dolyn completed a fit up that was unique, both for the area and for the client.

"MySalon has a specific model that is normally installed in main floor mall spaces. They couldn't find a suitable space like that here so we had to adapt their model to suit a sixth floor fit up."

Burnside says that included running plumbing for the 36 individual spa suites that make up MySalon through the floors below. This required a great deal of co-ordination, both with the building owner and existing tenants. This was a very intensive and laborious project.



#### YWCA/ YMCA

While sometimes a project in itself may be straightforward, its location is not. Dolyn also completed a renovation on an existing YMCA/YWCA location within Merivale Mall.

Splinter says the team divided a space previously occupied by another tenant and converted half into new boardrooms

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and office space for the YMCA/YWCA. “Working in a functioning mall during business hours, we provided a concise schedule to the building owner, completed all of the new work first and then tied into the existing building on schedule to avoid disruption to the other tenants.”



#### Merivale Bus Garage

At the Merivale Bus Garage, project manager Andrew Splinter says Dolyn helped OC Transpo improve the efficiency and environment for staff. “We created two new lanes after removing the two existing lanes in place. In order to complete the work, the project had to be scheduled into two phases so one existing lane always remained opened and operational during the construction process in order for the buses to be cleaned inside and out on a nightly basis.”

Splinter says it took a lot of planning between owner, contractor and subtrades to complete the demolition of one lane while one remained opened as the exiting vacuum system, fuelling station and bus wash were all tied into one. Once the process of making the lanes operate separate from another was complete, the installation of the new works commenced.

The new works consisted of removing the existing equipment and prepping for the new equipment installation by chipping and removing all existing concrete slabs to allow for new plumbing, sewage and tanks. The new mechanical and electrical portion of the work included two new RTU’s, all new lighting fixtures and wiring for the new bus wash and vacuum equipment.

The final result he says allows OC Transpo to have a faster, more efficient, safer workplace for the staff. The new lanes also allow for hundreds of buses to be cleaned and fuelled every night.



#### Pearl Plaza

Also located on Merivale Rd. is Pearl Plaza, another challenging site.

“This building is a new construction for a dentist who occupies half and wanted to lease half. The land was a former gas station and although the soil contamination had been cleaned up, the fill used was not appropriate to support the building.”

Burnside said rather than a costly excavation and engineered fill as was designed, or

the use of expensive deep foundation techniques, Dolyn conducted value engineering and decided to hire a company that was able to provide “rapid impact compaction” services, a technique seldom used locally. In the end he says the decision saved the client a lot of time and \$150,000 in costs.

Dolyn also took the building design and redesigned the exterior skin, while keeping the intended bright appearance to make the structure a statement building along the street and providing interest for the students who populate the area and patronize one of the building’s key clients.

“We also had to redesign the site services. Instead of having them run across Merivale Rd. as originally planned, we were able to connect them to an adjacent street which proved to be a much better and far more affordable option.”

#### Tweed Marijuana

Dolyn also helped transform the abandoned Hershey plant in Smiths Falls into alternative medicine provider Tweed’s local medical marijuana plant.

Burnside said Hershey had literally walked away from its operation, leaving food products, equipment and storage where it lay. “There was a lot of work first cleaning up the space Tweed intended to use and then working with them to determine their needs, while they themselves were still sorting out what those needs were.”

For initial purposes, Tweed decided to occupy just 30,000 sq. ft. of the 500,000 sq. ft. building. He says the designated space had to

be made water tight and exterior walls reinforced. Then, a moisture/water recovery system was required to deal with the large amounts of moisture the operation would produce. “There were separate rooms for the various stages of plant growth that each distinct plant needs for lighting and moisture so we worked with the client to develop a plan for that.”



#### Wall Sound and Lighting

For client Wall Sound and Lighting on Woodward Dr., Dolyn created a new façade, adding new cladding and curb appeal for this established retailer. Upgraded office space and improved interior functionality was also created, along with a mezzanine for a showroom and offices.

“Here the client had some general ideas of what they wanted but needed advice and guidance to reach the final design,” says Burnside.

Many of these projects demonstrate key elements of Dolyn’s approach to projects and the keys to its success: Problem solving, client engagement, attention to detail and creative thinking that all come together to ensure each project’s success and client’s satisfaction.

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