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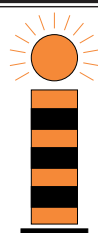
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RGB Group leads environmental innovation in Platinum LEED for Homes project



Third Ave. project also only second in Ottawa to meet commercial-level seismic standards

HEATHER SEFTEL-KIRK – The Ottawa Construction News Special Feature

The RGB Group — “Real Green Buildings for Life” — is taking a leadership role in building LEED Platinum residential projects as it completes a multi-family residential project in the Glebe. The Third Ave. project is also only the second Ottawa residence constructed to commercial-level earthquake resistance standards.

RGB’s founder and CEO Rolf Baumann says that while a high LEED standard may have been the intent all along, the element of earthquake resilience is one that evolved when the contractor decided to use steel for construction. “The lot is 25x100,” he said. “The only way to build within the lot lines and afford the space we wanted within the home was to use steel. Once certain conditions were met, we were no longer building to residential specs but to commercial and the seismic demands followed.”



RGB Group

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Baumann says the house is “like a lego project but with all steel. It was all pre-measured and cut and just needed assembly.”

The all-steel frame is 30 to 40 per cent stronger than Ottawa’s seismic building code requirement, and allowed for the construction of a 4,000 sq. ft. duplex with minimal walls, nine-ft. ceilings on each level and every upgrade residents could possibly want. “We’re crafting a high-end product in an upscale neighbourhood,” he said. “Both units feature 2,000 sq. ft. of open concept space with modern, European kitchens and four-inch solid maple flooring. No possible upgrade has been over-looked.”

The Third Ave. lot site originally had a small, single-family wood-frame home. Baumann said the new structure represents the future of urban residential design. “People want to live in neighbourhoods like the Glebe where they have access to the services and products they need on a daily basis,” he said. “With small lots and proximity to lot lines requiring non-combustible materials and creative uses of spaces, solutions like this will provide the answer.”

The Ottawa Fire Department has taken an interest in the project. “This home is earthquake resilient and won’t burn. That’s of great interest to the fire department and, in fact, they keep touring groups through

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here to explain the benefits of this kind of building.”

Baumann's steel-frame design incorporates abundant brick and porches to reflect the neighbourhood's essence, while achieving modern energy efficiency and design. “We expect to achieve LEED Platinum on this project. That can't be done without attention to detail and the quality assurance of the trades involved. I use the same trades I have for the past 20 years so I know I have that.”

LEED point earning details include using four litre toilets instead of traditional 4.6 litre low flush; 98 per cent energy efficient heating; EnerStar appliances; and LED lighting. “There are always better options available than what most people are using,” Baumann says.

“You just have to look. The exterior of the building has 50 pot lights for security so instead of using 50W lights, we use LED 1½W lights, representing a huge energy savings. We installed high efficiency electronic fireplaces. Operating with an on-demand source instead of a traditional pilot light, there is zero waste. The zero VOC ceramic paint is washable and good for 30 years unless a colour change is desired.”

Beyond these elements, the all-steel construction means no mould or mildew and the home will score points in design innovation. “Design innovation is about building something better than what was there before and here we have a multi-family space on what used to house a single family home.”

The Glebe project is RGB's second LEED Platinum residential project. RGB also constructed Montauk Private Executive Townhomes near Carleton University, the first LEED for Homes residential development in Ontario.

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