

Building Awards recognize Toronto's best

BY ANN HANNAH

When it comes to doing business, branding, reputation, and even friendliness, our country ranks among the best the world in study after study. As Torontonians, we should be proud of the contribution our city makes to Canada's world standing.

One key element that fosters our outstanding international reputation is development, and to recognize some of Toronto's foremost commercial buildings, Greater Toronto Realtors hosted a Commercial Building Awards presentation and reception on November 21st at the Toronto Real Estate Board.

During the first half of this year Realtors, developers and architects were invited to nominate various types of projects located in the GTA, including green, industrial, commercial office, commercial residential, and multi-residential and/or institutional, with one new and one retrofit building selected to receive awards.

A panel of judges comprised of professional engineer Mitch Gascoyne, Realtor Phil Nanavati, and professional quantity surveyor Paul Westbrook, evaluated projects completed between January 2009 and November 2011. The projects were evaluated based on various criteria, such as sensitivity to the environment, design and innovation, and success in answering a specific developmental need in the community.

The winners were as follows:

Habitat for Humanity Toronto in the new building category and Birchstone Centre in the retrofit class.

Habitat for Humanity Toronto, located at 155 Bermondsey Road, took top marks for its innovative approach to serving a number of different functions and its environmentally sustainable design. The new facility includes the organization's Home Building Factory, training facility, ReStore East York and administrative office all under one roof. It is also LEED Silver certified, meaning it meets stringent standards in building environmental sustainability.

Birchstone Centre, located from 3571 to 3609 Sheppard Avenue East, stood out for the energy-efficient materials used in its renovation and its ability to eliminate waste by re-using the existing building shell. In addition to its energy-efficient enhancements, the design improved functionality by adding an elevator to service medical and dental offices and was beautified by adding three glass feature towers to break up its former strip mall appearance.

Since each of the buildings nominated contributed to making Toronto a more attractive, environmentally sustainable city they also merit recognition. They are: Yorkdale Centre, Tyler Mews, Cushman and Wakefield Toronto

East, CSREFI Canada Leaseholds Incorporated and Liberty Plaza.

Local historian Mike Filey served as the event's keynote speaker. A noted author, tour guide and radio host, Mr. Filey offered unique insights into Toronto's past.

The success of this event would not have been possible without the commitment of Realtors who volunteered their time to help organize it. Many also contribute to a better Toronto by volunteering their time to support various efforts in communities throughout the GTA.

Nominations for the Second Annual Commercial Building Awards will be sought in 2013, with a reception and presentations to be held in winter 2014.

If you know of a building that you believe merits recognition, I encourage you to share your thoughts with a Greater Toronto Realtor.

For the latest information on Toronto's real estate market visit TorontoRealEstateBoard.com



Ann Hannah is the President of the Toronto Real Estate Board, a professional association that represents 34,000 Realtors in the Greater Toronto Area.