



The Ritz Towers, PCC 260, completed a series of infrastructure projects in less than four years.

Infrastructure

A Complete Rebuilding of Condo PCC 260

By Gerry Pickering, President PCC260, on behalf of the Board of Directors

OUR CONDO building, which is almost 25 years old, is uniquely located a short walk from Bramalea Shopping Centre in Brampton. The main transportation terminal, located just outside the plaza, provides both GO service and local Brampton buses and is extremely convenient for travel both locally and throughout the GTA. Bramalea Shopping Centre has everything that most people would need including a 24-hour supermarket and there are another 75 businesses being added to the shopping centre, which is scheduled to open in 2010.

We believe that our condominium is one of the best-kept secrets in Brampton because of our beautiful surroundings. We are a private con-

dominium residence, built in 1985, with 221 suites in a 28-storey facility. This includes a private residence, shared facilities complete with indoor/outdoor pools, tennis courts, gas barbeques, squash courts, billiard rooms, party rooms and a convenience store all of which are situated on 10 acres of park land, nestled against conservation authority land complete with a lake and walking paths. All of the recreational facilities are managed by PPL under the direction of our on-site property manager and the Shared Facilities Committee.

The previous board mandate was to build the reserve fund, which they did leaving our current board

of directors with a healthy balance for future projects. Approximately four years ago, everything seemed to hit us at once. It began with numerous floods since the domestic hot water pipes were bursting in various places without warning. Our insurance claims were rising quickly not to mention our insurance deductible.

Therefore our first major infrastructure project was to replace all of the hot water piping in the building which was completed within six months by Jermark Plumbing and Bestcorr Services & Contracting based on the design and engineering specifications provided by M & E Engineering. During this period

our property manager, Ms. Leonora Frangella, who is our best overall asset with her extensive knowledge, strong networking ability and communication skills, worked closely with the board of directors in developing a plan going forward to rebuild our infrastructure and re-brand our condominium, the Ritz Towers, with major upgrades so that the building and grounds truly live up to its name. We believed that by doing this it would certainly help to improve our property values as well.

We agreed that there are three key necessities for a condo building such as ours:

- A reliable water supply (already addressed and completed with our hot water riser project)
- A reliable heat source (we definitely needed new boilers)
- Reliable elevator service (there was a desperate need for new elevators)

We made a number of accomplishments over the next year which included:

- The installation of new handicap doors at garage levels and the main entrance doors to our condo.
- A new modern enterphone system
- Replacement of gate arms and controllers (we have a gated community)

- Replacement of main breaker switches

Through our network of contractors, we were introduced to Dean Brigham from Terra Energy Management Services Inc. a performance management organization that specializes in designing more energy efficient building systems. Over the past three years Terra became our key asset to help us with our infrastructure program. They worked closely with us in designing retrofit upgrades that provided for enhanced system performance, substantial annual savings and all predicated on a strong business case (financial) analysis.

The overall process was initiated with a detailed energy audit, completed by Terra, which looked at every energy consuming building system. The first project was the redesign and installation of a new garage lighting system. Terra was able to enhance the lighting output by 25 per cent while maintaining the existing utility consumption through the use of more energy efficient lamps and ballasts.

The second phase to the process was the upgrade of a central heating plant (shared domestic and heating) that was designed to provide \$46,000 in natural gas savings and was enhanced with a reconstruction of our hallway make-up air



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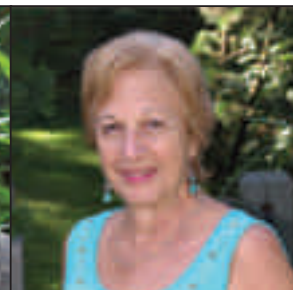
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units to our central heating/cooling system to not only provide for hallway heating but to also allow for de-humidification of the corridors in the summer (an upgrade enjoyed by all our residents today). The scope of work included two new heating boilers (Thermal Solutions, supplied by E.J. Walsh). This included a building automation system installed by InSync Controls, and variable speed drives (Danfoss) with the initial design provided by Terra, final engineering by M & E, and full system commissioning by Terra. To date, our corporation is realizing savings in excess of our expectations and resident comfort has been greatly enhanced.

■ **Going Up!**

The next big project initiative was to replace the three aging and failing elevator cars. This was a huge undertaking, and some eight months later we were done, thanks to Kone Elevators.

One last remaining infrastructure item we wanted was new windows but we were looking at a potential cost in excess of \$1 million, which was financially prohibitive. Dean Brigham from Terra referred us to CanAm Building Specialists who provided us with a potential alternative. CanAm came in with a unique concept of refurbishing our existing windows that would reduce stack effect and save us energy. For a fraction of the cost of total replacement, we now have windows that do not leak and residents are much more comfortable.

We completed all of our major infrastructure work over a period of under four years in total. We did it all using smart money management. We never borrowed any money and we never imposed any special assessments. Overall our condo corporation, PCC 260, is a solid business enterprise well positioned to continue to operate efficiently and effectively for years to come.

We had a plan and we stayed with it until completion. We are proud of our accomplishments and we have lived up to our major challenge in making our Ritz Towers an excellent place to live. ■