

# EDITOR & PUBLISHER

## Going for the gold with a green new headquarters

By Jim Rosenberg  
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On land bought by the publisher's family, The Columbian is moving to a new headquarters in downtown Vancouver. Completed earlier this fall, the project added \$30 million to the \$300 million already invested in an area undergoing redevelopment. Feeling no urgency, according to Publisher Scott Campbell, the move-in has been delayed several weeks, owing to vibration and noise from data-center air conditioning. "Once we move," he explains, "we can't shut the data center down long enough to do anything to it."

The earliest "big picture" planning dates from the 1990s, and Dario Designs still consults on operations and planning the evolution from a newspaper business to a media and real estate company. About four years ago, says Campbell, the paper was able to assemble enough downtown property to keep all operations there instead of moving out of town near a freeway. The idea was to erect an office building, with the newspaper as anchor tenant, in the middle of an area that "represents a total turnaround for the downtown area," he adds. With the paper's offices occupying four of six floors (some ground-floor retail space is anticipated) in an 118,000-square-foot building, the project sought to adhere as closely as feasible to U.S. Green Building Council Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) criteria, aiming for gold certification — the second-highest level. LEED is a voluntary standard for developing what the council calls "high-performance, sustainable buildings," based on energy requirements related to location, design, construction, materials, systems, and services. LEED, says Campbell, "was something we definitely wanted to explore."

From neighboring Portland, Ore., GBD Architects was chosen for its considerable LEED experience, and that city's Pearl District developer, Gerding Edlen Development, managed the project. Campbell says he "didn't want to spend a fortune just to make it LEED-certifiable," but was willing to spend on whatever would pay for itself. The LEED premium came to "maybe 10%," he adds (Next door is the first LEED-certified Hilton Hotel.)

First and maybe foremost, the new headquarters sits on a formerly occupied downtown site close to public transportation, and businesses and services used by employees. LEED "touches all elements of the building," Campbell says, citing its recycled materials, efficient infrastructure, nonpolluting interior finishes, bicycle storage ("we wanted that anyway"), even a ground-source heat pump, "which was about a million-dollar premium"



Awaiting gold-level LEED certification, The Columbian's site is a major part of Vancouver's downtown redevelopment.

but will "eventually pay for itself" by cutting energy costs.

Helping put the project beyond gold-certification requirements are interior and exterior water efficiency, energy efficiency exceeding code by 40%, non-fluorocarbon refrigerants, 95% recycled construction waste, local and recycled building materials, Forest Stewardship Council-certified wood, indoor air quality, CO2 monitoring, and green housekeeping.

While the current quarters pack 360 people (including 70 in production) into a "hodgepodge of spaces," Campbell says that with natural light, ergonomic furnishings, easier staff interaction, and "a more robust network," the new workplace environment "is dramatically better."

Nearby company property will become a parking lot, and perhaps later a building site. But it is "unlikely that we'll move production there," Campbell says. "Semi trucks don't fit with dense urban build-out." The Columbian new home has a millimeter-wave radio link to its plant, a block and-a-half away: Vacated space at the older offices will provide more room for the expanded packaging center and "at least 20,000 square feet to lease out," he adds. In the meantime, seeking better access to prime waterfront acreage where a paper mill once stood, the city is considering putting in a road — but "half our [old] building is sitting on it," says Campbell; "It's right in the way."