

As a youth completing secondary school in New Zealand, Roger Bayley may have first shown his tendency for balancing tradition with a desire to head off the beaten path. “Tired of school,” the young Bayley announced he would not attend university. When confronted with limited job options, however, his practical streak intervened, and he completed a degree in structural engineering.

Still seeking adventure – and now better equipped for it – Bayley immigrated to Toronto. There he was recruited by a Canadian engineer assembling a team to develop the King Abdulaziz University in Saudi Arabia, who “thought I had the right spirit for it,” Bayley says. The team completed the master planning and early concept design work for what was at the time the largest building program on the globe. On the job, Bayley worked with architect Paul Merrick of Vancouver.

Returning to Canada, Bayley and Merrick launched Merrick Architecture in 1984. “It was before people were using the word sustainability,” says Bayley. “Still, we talked about doing things more efficiently, and adopting standards that are more respectful of the human condition and the environment.”

When green building consultant Andy Kesteloo died unexpectedly during the Millennium Water Olympic Village project, Bayley picked up his role. Already acting as project-wide design manager, he was propelled on a demanding learning curve about sustainable design, bringing diverse opinions together through an integrated design program. Bayley earned credit for keeping the aspirations of sustainable development in sight while helping the

team resolve the myriad challenges of on-the-ground implementation.

“An incredibly bright, enthusiastic and energized group formed around this project,” says Patrick Lucey, an ecologist who consulted on SEFC. “But to be successful, it needed a man of extraordinary vision. Roger is the catalyst that made all of this happen.”

For Bayley, it was the experience of a lifetime. “This has been the most spectacular, wonderful, delightful, engaging opportunity. People have wondered how I’ve survived it given the complexity and the demands, but it was exceptional, to take land in the industrial heart of a city and demonstrate what can be done in community development, with sustainable infrastructure, and considering both social and environmental responsibility.” Bayley credits the Maleks, “who had the confidence to take it on in the most complicated construction environment ever seen in Canada.”

Bayley developed The Challenge Series to “celebrate what people have done here, from drywallers and heating installers through to the municipal planning authorities who set the vision to begin with.”

Bayley’s adventure continues as he launches his own company, Roger Bayley Inc. “At the end of the day we need real demonstrations of responsible action; we need to improve people’s lifestyles and their ability to raise their families and participate in the global community. If I can take the experience here in Vancouver and use it to help others, that’s a valuable conclusion to my career.”



ROGER BAYLEY
BE Structural, PEng



SHAHRAM AND PETER MALEK
Millennium Development Corporation



“When the call came for expressions of interest for the Olympic Village project, we consulted with people we respected. Whoever we talked to would try to put us off doing it. It just wasn’t fish or fowl – it was so different.”

With a smile, Shahram Malek remembers the discussions as Millennium decided to bid on a project to build an entire community on an abandoned brownfield site in time for the Olympics. The challenges were many: to create a mix of market housing, social housing and commercial space, tied into community facilities not yet developed; an imperative to meet LEED™ standards, implement extensive green roofs and utilize a district energy system; develop unit designs that could meet Olympic athletes’ needs and then be sold as high-end condos; and an inability to wrap up financing until after the Olympics. Plus the timeline: only two-and-a-half years with no room for error.

Challenge, however, is what the Malek brothers were brought up on. Born in Iran, their father sent them to boarding school and then to university in the UK, then brought them home to join the family construction and development company, one of the largest in the Middle East. “He told us it was about hard work and honesty, not about money. Anything you aspire to, you can make it happen. He had confidence in us and gave us responsibility at a very young age.”

The revolution in Iran resulted in the family’s emigration to Canada, where the family started over again in the early 1980s,

launching a small construction company and building up to large development projects. The seven-tower City in the Park development in Burnaby gave them experience with building an entire community from scratch. L’Hermitage in Vancouver saw Millennium creatively bringing together market housing, commercial space and social housing in one plan by combining several lots of land and being willing to experiment. Both provided learning and experience that would serve them well as they took on the Millennium Water Olympic Village.

“I think what was intriguing in this project was that it was on the water, right in the centre of Vancouver, with an influence on the whole area. And we felt the Olympics were an opportunity to do something that could be truly unique,” says Malek. “Our father always said, ‘Do your homework, do your research and be wise, but get the right project. If you don’t enjoy what you are doing, you shouldn’t be doing it.’ So that’s the way we approached it – we didn’t have time for any fear or regrets.

“We always knew it was going to happen, but certainly it was a huge relief when we were able to take a deep breath, and it was suddenly over with the buildings ready for the Olympics. The next stage will be when the community is being used by people, when everyone can walk through it and enjoy all that it has to offer, including plazas, parks, shops and other amenities. That’s something we’re really looking forward to.”