

Interior Design Concept and Approach to Suite Planning

After planning the infrastructure, developing the public realm and parks, determining the building massing and external design, and incorporating efficiency and sustainability features into building function, one of the most important aspects of the new homes developed at Millennium Water was still left to be determined: the approach to the interior design of the residential suites.

“We wanted to deliver a green product without compromising style or design,” says Adele Rankin who was the lead interior designer from CHIL on this project. The interior design concept and approach is to provide a contemporary and international look while focusing specifically on environmentally conscious products and ideals. Meanwhile, the designers did not want to impose on residents. “The interior design provides a luxurious and elegant backdrop for the individual homeowner to present their own style,” says Shahram Malek, co-owner of Millennium.

Given Millennium Water’s almost 1,100 suites and more than 10 lobbies, the scale of this project was quite different from other projects that primarily focus on one main public space and fewer units. The process of planning the suites was very collaborative, as space planners, architects and the developer worked together on hundreds of layouts for more than a year. “The team was very large, larger than I’ve ever experienced,” says Harvey Reehal, Principal Director of Inform Projects, which specializes in kitchens and bathrooms. “Everyone had to work together. We listened to each other, discussed and modified.”

“In working with many different architects and consultants it was necessary to ensure that, although the building design varied, the interior design remained a constant thread throughout,” adds Rankin. “It was important to ensure that all buildings received the same attention and focus on design excellence.”

What is FSC Certified?

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is an international non-profit, multi-stakeholder organization established to promote responsible management of the world’s forests. FSC’s model of certification allows products sourced from certified forests to enter the marketplace with a credential that is unique. Any FSC-labelled product can be traced back to a certified source. This aspect of the system is the basis for any credible certification system and is the link between consumer preference and responsible, on the ground forest management.

LEED™ Requirements

This project was different from other interior design projects, with a major difference being the project’s objective of qualifying for LEED™ Gold certification for sustainable design. “While we always endeavour to be environmentally conscious in our selections and designs, ordinarily this doesn’t always remain the most important aspect due to budgetary concerns, client preferences or availability,” says Rankin. “We were able to keep our original selections in this project as everyone involved agreed on and encouraged the LEED™ objective.”

All products in the suites and the public spaces were selected and designed with sustainability at the forefront. For example, all appliances are EnergyStar, all plumbing fixtures are water-efficient, the paint is low VOC (volatile organic compounds,) which improves indoor air quality and reduces urban smog as compared to paints with higher levels of VOC, the carpet is 100% wool, the engineered wood flooring and the kitchen cabinets are FSC certified (see sidebar) and the countertops are made of quartz. All of this helped achieve the LEED™ Gold certification.



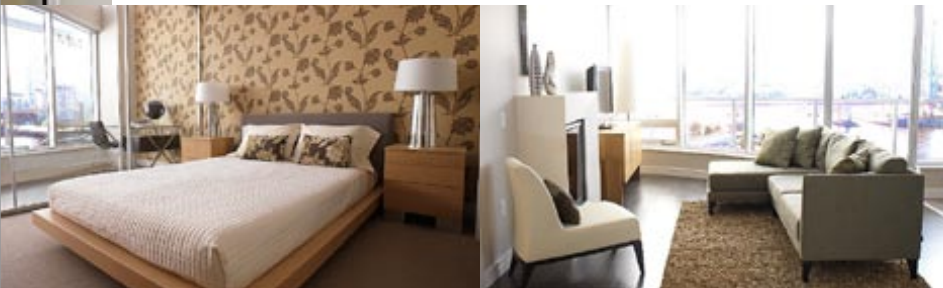
Design Principles: Open Space, Natural Light and Air Flow

The suites at the Olympic Village are planned around the concept of an open living lifestyle. This means there is more open space, offering a sense of casualness. “People are not living in closed rooms like they used to,” says Mona Foreman of Sheffield Design, the space planner for the suites. “Even though we are opening it up, I was also trying to carve a space where you could still define areas that give a sense of intimacy and comfort. The main function is making a space feel really good.

“The kitchen is the hub of a home, so we wanted this to be an open space but have a layout that helps divide the space as well,” says Foreman. Every layout has a large island that separates the preparation area of the kitchen from the dining room or family room or living room. The “west coast living” concept, which emphasizes views and leaves living space open to a suite’s view opportunities, was also part of the design concept.

One of the criteria for the interior design was to have as much natural light coming into the unit as possible. “I was always thinking about how we can get the best light,” says Forman. “We wanted it to be bright even on a rainy day.” This also reduces the need to turn on lights, improving energy efficiency.

In these suites, windows open so there is a natural flow of air through the unit. “The layout was developed so you would have all the amenities you have in a house, such as a patio in the back, and a back door that goes to an exit staircase. Having both physical and visual access on both sides would give you the essence of feeling like you are living in a house,” says Foreman.



IN MEMORIAM: Richard Negrin

**May 19 1956 – September 21 2009
Principal, CHIL**

Richard Negrin studied architecture at Dalhousie University and then joined his father’s firm, Reno C. Negrin Architects, in Vancouver in the 1980s. After his father passed away, Richard expanded the business, carving out a niche in the development and hotel industry. New clients included Four Seasons, Shangri-La, Fairmont, Silver Birch, Concord Pacific and Millennium.

Negrin’s specific role in Millennium Water was overseeing CHIL’s interior design. While sourcing locally produced products, accounting for environmentally sensitive material choices, and understanding the requirements and aesthetics of these specialized building systems, CHIL was able to achieve a refined and responsive product and uniquely west coast design. Negrin’s 25 years of spatial design knowledge also helped solve many space-planning challenges the designers encountered in creating the approximately 1,100 units, as he worked with clients and other consultants to achieve sellable suites that would meet all the needs of potential buyers.

Richard was respected for his easy approach to both clients and staff, both of whom he treated with respect and dignity. The large turnout at his memorial service was a testament to his ability, and the admiration he had gained in the development and hotel design industries. He is missed for his talent and especially his kindness.

Left: The kitchen design and layout is seen as the hub of the home where it is open, bright and resource efficient.

Right: Living space design emphasizes the views and daylight to create a comfortable space that requires less artificial lighting and energy use.