

CORE IDENTITY

**TWO CORPORATE OFFICES IN DOWNTOWN
TORONTO REASSERT THEIR RESPECTIVE IDENTITIES
THROUGH NEWLY REDESIGNED INTERIOR SPACES.**

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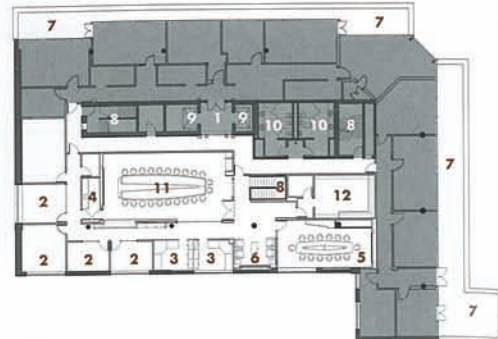
In recent years, there has been an increasing level of sophistication apparent in the creation of a public image that positively reflects the values and interests of businesses in the corporate and commercial sector. Integral to this exercise in corporate identity and branding is the physical design of a company's office space, and the message it delivers to its employees, clients, and the population at large. Here, two businesses—an international mining company and a large corporate law firm—have undertaken major redesigns of their office spaces to accommodate current functions but also to communicate and clarify not only who they are, but what they do and how they do it.

In this era of heightened environmental awareness, mining is frequently viewed as a nasty, ugly business dedicated to the extraction and depletion of the earth's resources. However, Taylor Smyth Architects have attempted to mitigate that reputation through the creation of a subtly elegant head office for Agnico-Eagle Mines in Toronto. Gold and gold-mining operations are the focus of the company, with exploration and development concentrated in Quebec, Finland, Mexico and the US.

The Toronto headquarters occupies the top two floors of a five-storey building located just east of the financial core of downtown Toronto, enjoying privileged views of St. James Cathedral and the



OPPOSITE VARIEGATED COLOURS AND PATTERNS CHARACTERIZE THESE SPLIT STONE CORES—REMNANTS OF THE MINING EXTRACTION PROCESS—WHICH ARE PUT TO GOOD USE IN THIS EXPRESSIVE FEATURE WALL. **TOP** DEFINING ONE WALL OF THE RECEPTION AREA, HORIZONTALLY GRAINED TRAVERTINE SLABS ARE INTERSPERSED WITH THE OCCASIONAL STRIP OF GOLD-COLOURED ALUMINIUM, EVOKING STRATIFIED GEOLOGICAL LAYERS OF THE EARTH. THE FROSTED GLASS BEHIND THE DISPLAY CASE PERMITS SHADOWY GLIMPSES OF EMPLOYEES IN THE CORRIDOR BEHIND. **ABOVE** CONTAINED WITHIN A WOOD-FRAMED TRANSPARENT ACRYLIC SCREEN, STRIKING PHOTOGRAPHIC IMAGES OF MINERS AT WORK ARE FEATURED PROMINENTLY IN THE FOURTH-FLOOR LUNCHROOM.



FIFTH FLOOR

- 1 ELEVATOR/LOBBY
- 2 OFFICE
- 3 WORKSTATION
- 4 SERVERY
- 5 MEETING ROOM
- 6 BREAK-OUT AREA
- 7 TERRACE
- 8 STAIR
- 9 ELEVATOR
- 10 WASHROOM
- 11 BOARDROOM
- 12 SUPPLY/COPY



FOURTH FLOOR

- 1 RECEPTION
- 2 OFFICE
- 3 WORKSTATION
- 4 MAP ROOM
- 5 MEETING ROOM
- 6 LOUNGE/KITCHEN
- 7 TERRACE
- 8 STAIR
- 9 ELEVATOR
- 10 WASHROOM



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CLIENT AGNICO-EAGLE MINES
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INTERIORS TAYLOR SMYTH ARCHITECTS
ART CONSULTANT DARREN ALEXANDER
AV CONSULTANT AWW-TELAV
CONTRACTOR MARANT CONSTRUCTION
GROUND FLOOR AREA 1,500 M²
BUDGET \$1.74 M
COMPLETION DECEMBER 2007

peaceful park surrounding it. The design of the space concentrates the primary offices and a huge boardroom on the penthouse level, and offices on both floors enjoy generous amounts of outdoor terrace space.

Both literal and metaphorical allusions to mining and geological exploration are ever-present. As such, material selections include plenty of stone: travertine sheathes entire walls and limestone is used for flooring. Accented by strips of gold-coloured aluminum, a massive travertine wall rises two storeys from the fourth-floor reception area to the fifth floor, wrapping around an open stair. Contained within this wall is a display case that showcases raw samples of gold ore, the focus of Agnico-Eagle's business.

Literal imagery is also incorporated into the office design. In the fourth-floor lunchroom, a seating area is separated from the corridor by a cherry wood-framed screen, into which clear acrylic screens are placed. Transferred onto these



TOP THE BOARDROOM DOOR IS ADORNED BY A FLOOR-TO-CEILING LUMINOUS BACKLIT PANEL OF TRANSLUCENT STONE. **ABOVE** A DISPLAY CASE IS SET INTO THE STRIKING TRAVERTINE WALL IN THE RECEPTION AREA, SHOWCASING RAW SAMPLES OF GOLD ORE.



TOM ARBAN

screens is an enlarged black-and-white photographic image of miners at work, discovered in Agnico-Eagle's archives. The transparency allows views of movement and activity behind the screens, and the effect is striking.

But most compelling is the incorporation of actual byproducts from the mining process into the design of the office. Core samples of beautifully patterned and textured stone have been used to create a feature wall in the reception area. Extracted from bore holes drilled during mining investigations, these split stone cores would otherwise be disposed of, but were meticulously arranged in a vertical sequence of slender columns by the architectural team, who also retained the hand-drawn chalk marks on the stone as a record of the mining industry process. Visually arresting, this wall offers one of the most poetic memories of the office.

The Toronto-Dominion Centre has long been established as the financial heart of the country and one of Canada's architectural icons. Comprised of six office towers and a low-rise banking pavilion, the TD complex is best known for its Mies van der Rohe design, the commission of which we are forever indebted to Phyllis Lambert. Though Mies (along with Bregman + Hamann and John B. Parkin Associates) was responsible only for the design of the plaza, the banking pavilion, the original TD Bank Tower (1967) and the Royal Trust Tower (1969), over the next two decades, the remaining four build-



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TOP THE VAST AND SPACIOUS RECEPTION AREA OF THE TORYS OFFICE ON THE 33RD FLOOR, WHERE COMPELLING ARTWORK COMPETES WITH SPECTACULAR VIEWS OF LAKE ONTARIO. **ABOVE** PASCAL GRANDMAISON'S COMPETITION-WINNING PHOTOGRAPHIC STUDY OF AN ANDROGYNOUS MODEL COVERS AN ENTIRE WALL IN THE NORTH MULTI-CONFERENCE ROOM.

ings were designed to be harmoniously consistent with their older siblings.

Within this prestigious complex, Torys LLP occupies 10 floors in the 36-storey TD Waterhouse Tower (1985) on the south side of Wellington Street across the road from Mies'

original TD Bank Tower. Torys is a massive business and commercial law firm with offices in Toronto and New York, and with an impending lease expiration, debated on whether to move entirely or to conduct a substantial renovation to its existing space to better meet the firm's spatial