

# Palliser South Professional Building and Office Tower

by Robin Brunet

In August, as the Palliser South Development Project in Calgary neared completion, Aspen Properties president and CEO Scott Hutcheson's reputation as a visionary (so deemed by the Calgary press) was more appropriate than ever. In 2006, he had purchased the Calgary Tower complex with the aim of revitalizing an entire block that bridges Calgary's Beltline and downtown. Palliser South is the result, and Hutcheson's vision combined with the handiwork of Gibbs Gage Partnership, PCL Construction Management Inc. and a host of sub-trades have transformed the site into a landmark.

The development includes an 18-storey Palliser South Tower built partly on top of an existing 1,374-stall parkade. This tower rises eight floors, then cant to the west at an angle over the parkade for another 10 floors, providing a total of 330,000 square feet of office space. It slopes away on the east side from the sixth floor so that the

floor plates grow progressively larger toward the top level.

The tower is augmented by a two-storey, 13,000-square-foot professional medical building and is the \$93-million culmination of a site revamp that has already seen the installation of a new mirrored glass skin that covers One Palliser Square, an older tower on the corner of 9th Avenue and First Street, and a new parkade facade of glass panels arranged in a basket weave design. A walkway over the railway line is connected to both towers: at Palliser South, it connects to an escalator that descends into a plush two-storey lobby, and at One Palliser Square it connects to a new escalator and refurbished lobby area.

A remarkable aspect of the new tower and professional building is that its design stayed relatively intact from concept to construction. "The design was very strong to begin with, and we took some of our cues from Scott

Hutcheson's affinity for the Rocky Mountains," says Gibbs Gage lead architect Vince Dods. "That inspired the canting exterior, and inside it inspired the extensive use of limestone, granite and other natural materials."

Hutcheson remarks that "the speed to market of this future office space gives Palliser South a competitive advantage since we're able to provide office product to large users at a much quicker than normal development horizon." He adds that the tower's cantilever design and upper-storey floor plates of up to 21,500 square feet would "be appealing to tenants with large office space needs." By contrast, the floor plates from main to eight average 13,400 square feet in size apiece.

Dods points out that there had "been a request to keep the existing parkade because it provided parking for the new development" and negated the need for additional underground parking. With existing mechanical services to

## LOCATION

101 9 Avenue S.W.  
Calgary, Alberta

## OWNER/DEVELOPER

Aspen Properties Ltd.

## ARCHITECT

Gibbs Gage Partnership

## CONSTRUCTION MANAGER

PCL Construction Management Inc.

## OWNERS REPRESENTATIVE

Pivotal Projects Incorporated

## STRUCTURAL CONSULTANT

Read Jones Christoffersen Ltd.

## MECHANICAL CONSULTANT

Emans Smith Andersen  
Engineering Ltd.

## ELECTRICAL CONSULTANT

Mulvey + Banani International  
(Alberta) Inc.

## TOTAL AREA

343,000 square feet

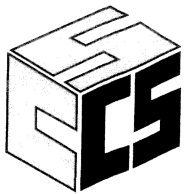
## CONSTRUCTION COST

\$93 million

utilize, no sub-surface work was required. However, as advantageous as it was to retain the parkade, it posed construction challenges. PCL senior project manager Ryan Schmidt says, "the bottom eight floors of the tower followed a standard construction process, but because the ninth floor and all subsequent floors extend west over the parkade, the cantilevered design required three support columns, and we had to cut three holes for these columns out of the existing concrete parkade slabs."

Due to space restrictions, much of the material handling for the columns was performed by hand. "There just wasn't enough room for equipment of much size," says Schmidt.

To which Dods adds, "It reflects on the talents of PCL and the structural engineer [Read Jones Christoffersen Ltd.] that our ambitious design was brought to life without major problems." ■

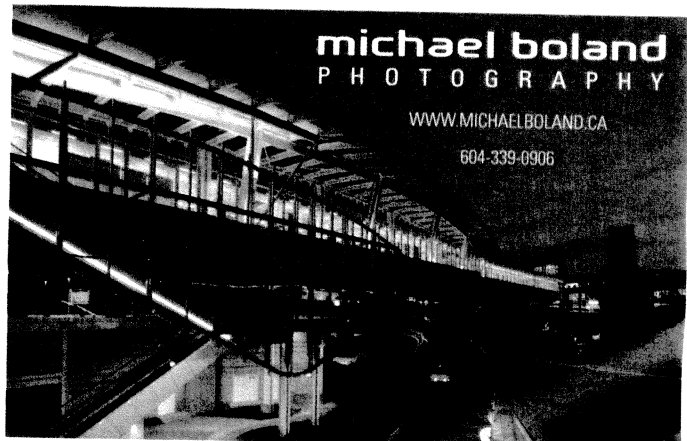


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*We are proud to have been part of the Team on the Palliser South Professional Building and Office Tower project.*

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PHOTOGRAPHY

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