

Banff's Cascade Plaza tries redesign

David Parker, For the Calgary Herald

Published: Friday, June 28, 2013

Cascade Plaza, on the corner of Banff Avenue and Wolf Street in Banff, is the largest indoor shopping centre in the town and on its lower level also boasts Banff's only food court.

It's a large building with more than 80,000 square feet of retail, 27,000 square feet of office and has 30 rental residential units.

Yet it has never quite succeeded in embracing the local population and visitors have perhaps been confused as to what's available through the main entrance as there is little welcoming signage.

Last summer, Vyetta Sunderland of Matrix Real Estate Services was awarded the management contract for Cascade Plaza. With Marcel Proskow, principal of Calgary-based Maxam Design International, she persuaded owner Investors Group to redevelop the building to create a more inviting retail presence.

Sunderland has offices in Calgary and Banff and a staff of 13 who manage many other developments including The Market at Quarry Park, Douglas Square, Riverbend and Lake Bonavista shopping centres. She says the building looked more like a hotel than a shopping experience so the first thing to change will be the

name from Cascade Plaza to Cascade Shops.

Proskow, who has focused on designing retail for 22 years, with many projects created for overseas clients is today concentrating his efforts on Western Canada.

Besides its shopping centre work, Maxam has built up relationships with a number of retail operations that entrust it with all of their work.

It handles design work for Rexall Drugs, FYI Doctors, Joey Restaurants and Good Earth Cafe, which has new Calgary locations at Foothills Hospital, South Health Campus and the city municipal building.

Maxam also has a Vancouver office that is busy with projects for B.C. Lotteries, Urban Fare and Ben-tall Kennedy.

Maxam architect Miles Burgoyne says the message behind the Cascade redesign is to tell people of a big, exciting change to the property.

The first phase, which has council approval and will be completed by year-end, will alter the exterior with a new canopy that will mean ridding the sidewalk of the rather in-the-way bench, adding more Riverstone rock on the facade up to the balcony level and painting the outside walls with a warm ochre colour. It will retain the original Standish Block name under the eaves.

The interior of the shopping mall's public spaces is to be totally upgraded using more natural, area materials to better represent the mountain environment.

Sunderland is happy to be able to offer her current tenants, like Rexall Drugs, The Gap, The Old Spaghetti Factory and Indigo Books the benefits of the upgrade and is confident the new look will attract other good retailers.

The renovations represent a large investment by Investors Group into the Banff community and it has already provided locals with a large, traditional greenhouse on the roof of Cascade's parking structure where the Banff Greenhouse Society is operating 20 garden plots.

Randy Williams, the former recent president and CEO of Tourism Calgary is joining Osborne Group Contract Executive Corp. next week as principal and head practice of a new hospitality division.

Osborne president and CEO Mark Olson says that Williams ' many years of experience in the hotel industry as well as his experience leading city, provincial and national tourism bodies and his relationship with other hospitality executives will be a great asset to his company and which will continue to bring real value to the industry in Western Canada.

Alida Visbach, president and CEO of Heritage Park Historical Village, treated members and guests at this week's Heritage Park annual general meeting to a first viewing of a new park video that was warmly applauded.

It was produced by its new promotional agency C&B Advertising, recently founded by agency veterans Phil Copithorne and Leigh Blakely who are developing the park's brand strategy as it moves into its 50th anniversary celebrations in 2014.

At the same meeting, Robert Reid, who is moving to Kelowna, was thanked for his many years of volunteer service that stretches back to 1991, most recently as chair of the Heritage Park Society board of directors.