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MAY/JUNE 2010

Sustainable Architecture & Construction

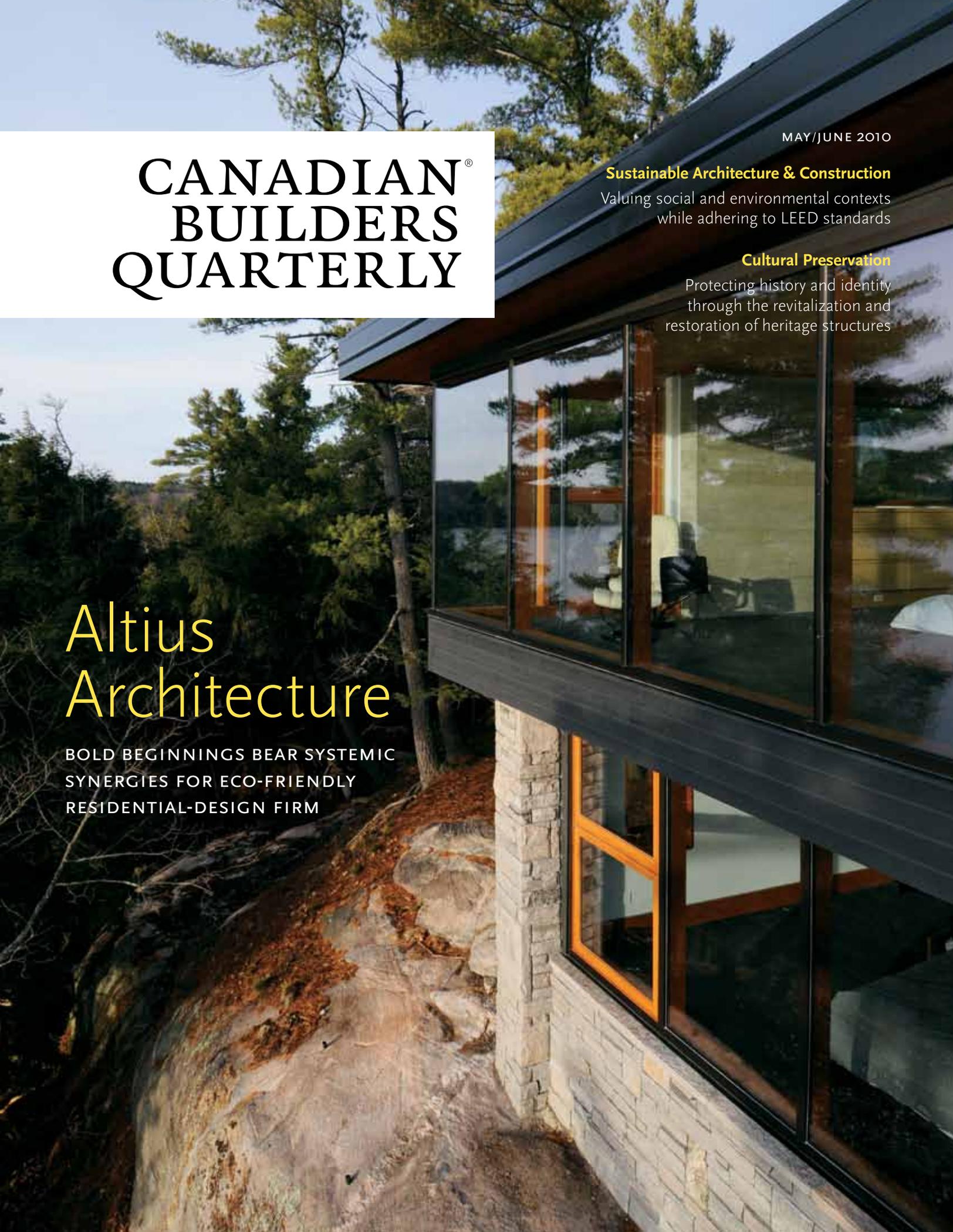
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Workers install a high-gloss coatings system that protected the 'MDF' floors on the set of *Night At The Museum: Battle of the Smithsonian*.

CFC PREPARATION & COATINGS

Family-operated flooring business maintains A-list projects in tough economy

BY JENNI SPINNER

AT A GLANCE

LOCATION:
ABBOTSFORD, BC

FOUNDED:
2000

EMPLOYEES:
5

AREA OF SPECIALTY:
CONCRETE-FLOORING INSTALLATION

WHILE MANY BUSINESSES STRUGGLE, CFC PREPARATION & Coatings thrives. In the decade since the Abbotsford, British Columbia concrete-flooring company opened, each year has brought more success than the one before; its sales projections for 2010 are quintuple the amount that the firm netted in its rookie year in 2000.

General manager and owner Chris Dalton says that while most competitors are tightening their belts, CFC seeks to offer more, not fewer, services. Expansion might seem counterintuitive in a down economy, but it's worked for his company.

"Our competitors are broken down into groups: surface preparation, coating installers, or decorative systems," he says. "Most of them don't cross over into other areas. We've been able to bridge the gap between surface

preparation, installation of industrial/commercial, and also the decorative side of the business."

CFC very much is a family affair. Dalton's eldest son, Sean, is the production manager, managing the crew and overseeing the varied coating-application requirements. His skill, creativity, and dedication have helped CFC grow. Chris Dalton's two other sons, Andrew and Eric, also are installers and often take time from their busy lives to assist when deadlines threaten. Their dedication and work ethic, coupled with support from Dalton's wife, Susan, and brother Tony, help the company get through hectic times.

Photographs of CFC's past projects demonstrate its capabilities, but Chris isn't content with letting the work speak for itself; marketing is a top priority. "My goal for

marketing is to present a professional image through our brochures and our Web site," he says. "We give the customer something that shows what we do—not what someone else did, or a picture from a supplier catalogue, but actual jobs that are ours. We create the image that we are a reputable, established company that will be around for years to come."

CFC started out installing protective coatings on industrial and commercial concrete floors before delving into decorative concrete. The decorative-concrete field has become increasingly crowded, but CFC stands out. "What made us different was bringing our knowledge of industrial coatings with us, to make sure that the beauty of the decorative work was protected properly," Chris says.

And because the company's staff is well versed in both highly artistic and purely functional concrete-floor coatings, it has landed a wider range of jobs than less-diversified competitors. In December of 2009, CFC's job schedule included a decorative coating for a salon, industrial coating at an auction facility, and a decorative-quartz garage floor for a \$1 million home.

CFC's broad range of services and top-quality results have landed it starring roles on high-profile, high-exposure jobs. "We've been fortunate to be chosen to provide protective coatings in four feature films: *Night At the Museum*, *Night At the Museum: Battle of the Smithsonian*, *Watchmen*, and *Percy Jackson & The Olympians: The Lightning Thief*," Dalton says. "It's been really great to see our work on the big screen." In addition, CFC's work on striking commercial projects, like a six-foot engraving on the floor of TemptAsian restaurant in Vernon, BC, have enabled the firm to show off its capabilities to the general public, attracting even more attention and clients.

Another factor distinguishing Dalton and CFC is business acumen. Many concrete-flooring pros possess technical knowhow and artistic skill but aren't as comfortable with people as they are with tools. Dalton previously served as director of sales for American Express Wholesale Travel, heading up Canadian motor-coach sales. Time spent leading seminars, product presentations, marketing, and advertising for AmEx armed him with the skills that he needed to lead CFC. "The difference in my job now is that I wear jeans, work shirts, and sometimes a hard hat and steel toes; in the past, I used to live in a three-piece suit," he says.

And even as work uniforms change, CFC's goal to grow remains the same. "The eventual goal is to expand our business into other cities and provinces, and set up satellite companies to operate as CFC," Dalton says. "We are always looking at new products to make sure that what we offer is the best for our clients. You can't just sit back—you have to be aware of changes and new products and developments." CBQ



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