



# **mh maher** construction inc.





Gladstone Hotel Toronto ON.

## Maher Construction: A tradition of excellence in the delivery of construction management, general contracting, and design-build services

### By Construction Times Staff

The familiar red and white banner of Maher Construction Inc. has been posted at numerous building projects across the Greater Toronto Area since the Toronto-based general contracting and design-build construction management firm was founded in 1996.

And when the president of Maher Construction Inc. posts his company's sign at a construction site it serves two purposes. It lets people know who's building the area's next landmark and it lets his client know who will be running the show. That's because every project that Larry Maher takes on for clients in the institutional, commercial and industrial sectors receives the personal attention of the man whose company bears his name.

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"By maintaining an open line of communication with each member of the project and by providing a leadership role throughout the construction phase, we are able to ensure the integrity and quality of each phase of the project," Maher explained. "As a result, we are proud of our extensive list of repeat clients."

"Our continued success is also due to our long-term relationship

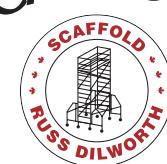
with clients, sub-trade contractors, consultants and employees," he added.

When Eb Zeidler, of Zeidler Partnership Architects, was looking for a construction company to help restore the historic Gladstone Hotel in Toronto, the Zeidler family chose Maher Construction Inc. The restoration of Toronto's oldest operating hotel is a project that includes new mechanical, electri-

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cal and life safety systems and a complete upgrade to 52 guest suites and ground floor bars. Maher Construction is also overseeing the reconstruction of the main entrance canopy and the building facade of the five-storey, 35,000 square foot building. Other construction projects currently being managed by Maher Construction include a new home for Union Gas, in Toronto and the second phase of new offices for Save the Children Canada. The Union Gas project is located in mid-town Toronto in the Yonge Eglinton Centre.

Maher Construction Inc. completed Phase I of an office expansion for Save The Children Canada in 2003 and has been contracted to construct Phase II, scheduled for completion, this summer. Maher Construction Inc.'s portfolio of past projects includes a wide range of general contracting and design-build assignments.

Maher Construction has acted as general contractor for the construction of the following retail outlets: a 42,500 sq. ft. The Brick retail store, in Whitby; the management and supervision of a 9,200 sq. ft. store for Pottery Barn Kids, in Toronto's exclusive Yorkdale Shopping Centre; and a new 4,500 sq. ft. store for W10 Fashions, in Toronto. Maher is also responsible for building the 25,000 sq. ft., Canadian head office of ASP Maxcess Flooring, in Oakville. Institutional and educational sector projects managed by Maher Construction have included: residences and office of the Consulate General of Barbados, in Toronto; a 5,200 sq. ft. computer lab and 3,500 sq. ft. library for Humber College, both in Toronto; the 2,000 sq. ft. home of the Bathurst Rutherford Chiropractic and Rehab Centre, located in Vaughan; and a 4,500 sq. ft. banking outlet for the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce at the Moringside Mall, in Toronto. From its humble beginnings as fledgling construction management firm founded by Maher while he was a student attending York University, Maher Construction Inc. has grown to become a respected name in construction management, general contracting and turn-key design build services for the institutional, commercial and industrial sectors of the Toronto area, and beyond.

"I knew from a very young age that I was destined for a career in the construction industry," said Maher, whose first exposure to the building industry was a child, accompanying his father Art Maher to various job sites throughout the GTA. "My father was a designer who managed building projects for others, before establishing his own design firm," explained the 30-year-old company founder and president. Projects designed and managed by ATLM include: the 48,000 sq. ft. home of Ital Pasta, and the 12,000 sq. ft. Park Ridge Industrial building, both located in Brampton. ATLM also designed and built the 21,500 sq. ft. headquarters of ECS Engineering, and the sprawling 38,500 sq. ft. La Perla Convention Center both located in Vaughan, and the massive, 110,000 sq. ft. Golden Falcon Complex, in Toronto.

ATLM has also developed a reputation as respected builder of luxury homes, with portfolio of residences, ranging in size from 4,500 sq. ft. to 11,000 sq. ft., from Richmond Hill to Brampton.

"I have worked for my dad as a labourer, and doing electrical and carpentry work, from as far back as I can recall, so it only seemed natural for me to pursue a career in the construction industry," said Maher, whose first project as proprietor of Maher Construction Inc. was a 4,000 sq. ft. coin-operated Laundromat on Weston Road, near Lawrence Avenue, in 1996. Larry Maher's father Art Maher had designed the building and asked his son to submit a bid on its construction. Larry submitted a bid, and it marked the start of a long relationship with his father, and then others, who quickly recognized Larry's abilities as a general contractor. Art Maher was born and raised in Hong Kong. He emigrated to Canada with his family when he was in his 20s secured a job in the Montreal office of Craig, Zeidler, Strong - the forerunner of The Zeidler Partnership, and the firm responsible for the design of the world renowned Toronto waterfront tourist attraction, Ontario Place. Art struck out on his own to form ATLM Design and Consulting, in 1975 - the year his son was born.

Art Maher had "millions of square feet" of design and construction



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## Project Management



experience under his belt for such firms as West York Construction when his son came of age to start up his own company, recalls Art. "We did a lot of Laundromats together when he first started out," the 67-year-old designer said. "I would design it, and he (Larry) would build it." It proved to be a productive partnership that benefitted both parties.

"When Larry needs architectural or design work done, he quite often asks me to do it and when a client of mine asks me to recommend someone to bid on the building of a project, I'll recommend him for the job. That's how we work," the elder Maher explained. "With a proven track record of completing new construction and renovation

projects, our partnership with ATLM allows us to bring a vast depth of experience and expertise to each project we undertake," stated Larry Maher. "These valuable assets enable Maher Construction to offer pre-construction, cost consulting, design and management of the entire construction process - from concept to ribbon cutting." Juggling the rigors of obtaining a degree, with managing a construction company, have proved to be a delicate balancing act for Maher during his first three years of operation. "It ended up taking me five years to complete my degree because I had to keep on dodging classes to complete projects," said Maher, who obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree from York in 1999. His

education in construction, on the other hand, is the result of practical experience and night courses. "Every job I ever had, since I was a teenager, has been working in construction and I got my degree so I would always have something to fall back on," he remarked. "My formal construction training has been obtained through continuing education at the University of Toronto and by taking courses through the Ontario General Contractors Association (OGCA)." Maher's experience, education and desire to succeed has taken Maher Construction Inc. from "barely making a profit during our first year," to now being able to tackle building assignments in excess of \$8 million. Attention to detail,

and a high degree of personal involvement by the principle, have been the keys to the continued growth of Maher Construction. "I'm personally involved with every project we undertake," Maher explained. "I'm the principle. I'm easy to get a hold of and I always know what's going on. I always make myself available to owners and I treat each job as if I am building the project for myself."

"When we agree to build something for someone, it's a one-on-one relationship," he continued. "Clients deal with me directly and they don't have to go through three or four people to get a hold of me. It's a way of doing business that appeals to our customers and it's good for me because I get to experience the rewards of a job well done at the end of the day." "With each project we build, we are making a physical contribution to the environment, and when we're finished, it's nice a feeling to hear people say you did a good job," he added. "That's how we get a lot of our business. This industry runs on referrals and recommendations from others."

Maher Construction's recent work at the Gladstone Hotel has also been the subject of much attention as the year-long renovation project draws to a close later this year. The restoration has captured the attention of area residents, media, and it's also been recognized as a featured project on the OCGA website.

Maher Construction began restoring the Gladstone Hotel, located in the heart of the city's art and design district at Gladstone Avenue and Queen Street West, last May. Maher is performing the facelift for the landmark hotel's current

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Design &amp; Project Management



owners, the Zeidler family, in conjunction with Zeidler Partnership Architects. According Maher, the Gladstone Hotel was built 115

years ago and is the oldest operating hotel in the city. The ornate, five-storey, red clay brick building was originally designed by Toronto

architect George Miller. Zale Spodek, of Zeidler Partnership Architects, is heading up the conceptual re-design of the building

which was once a glorious destination, providing accommodations to travelers from the Parkdale train station, as well as visitors and



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exhibitors to the nearby Canadian National Exhibition. Over time, however, the Gladstone has gradually lost its lustre and has become less of a traveler's destination, he said.

According to Gladstone Development Manager Christina Zeidler, one of the goals of the restoration was to reinterpret the commercial definition of the hotel. "Our recent restoration efforts have rescued the Gladstone from

decrepit decline and renewed this architectural landmark for a re-imagined future," she said. Zeidler said her vision for the future will reflect the essence of the Parkdale area's lively art and design community. "The hotel is rooted in the Parkdale community, not just in a physical sense, but also in a social sense," she outlined. "It is a place where artists show their work, perform, and more importantly, a place where

neighbourhood people come just to hang out."

"We have upgraded heating, electrical, and bathroom facilities, taking care to preserve the original details and flavour of the hotel," she said. As the project entered the home stretch last month, Maher was overseeing anticipated finishing work of carpenters, flooring tradesmen and painters, in addition to a not so common contribution from a bevy of local artists. That's because the newly-renovated hotel will feature 15 rooms that have been individually designed by the local arts community.

According to Zeidler, more than 27 different local artists are involved in room design and creation and selection of wall treatments. Maher said he had no reservations about accepting the challenge of renovating an historic landmark. "There are some companies that only do new buildings," he offered. "We've done lots of new buildings, but we also feel quite at home here (at the Gladstone) doing these complicated renovations."

Maher was also quick to recognize the efforts of his right-hand man on the project, Site Supervisor Andrew Farrugia, in addition to the army of sub-trades who have helped to restore the building. "Without the proper trades, this project could never have been completed in one year," he praised. One of the challenges Maher faced during the renovation was co-ordinating construction activities in order to allow the hotel to maintain uninterrupted operation of its main floor bar and ball room throughout the duration of the project. Maher was even forced to dismantle and re-assemble exterior scaffolding in order to accommodate a weekend

film shoot.

Although he's also been overseeing the construction of many other projects in the GTA area, Maher said his second home for the past year has been the Gladstone. "I'm actually going to miss this place when we're done," he lamented. "I have gotten a lot of enjoyment out of this project and it's been an honour working for Eb (Zeidler) and Christina (Zeidler)."

Almost every project that Maher is involved in is for repeat customers, or by referral. "Most of our bids are submitted by invitation from, developers and architects and private businesses we work with," he explained. "And, we generally like to assemble teams using the same trades, whenever possible. It makes easier to bring projects together on time and on budget." When he's not out estimating or managing construction projects, Maher likes to spend time with his wife and six-month-old son. Maher also devotes much of his time to community service and is a board member of Temple Sinai Synagogue, in addition to serving on various fundraising committees for both the United Jewish Appeal and the Simon Wiesenthal Center. Maher said he is grateful to have the opportunity to collaborate and often spend time with his father when he goes to work each day. Through Maher Construction Inc.'s affiliation with ATLM, the father and son have worked together on more than 20 projects during the past decade. "A lot of what I have built today, is because of my father," Maher confessed. "A lot of his clients, have now become my clients."

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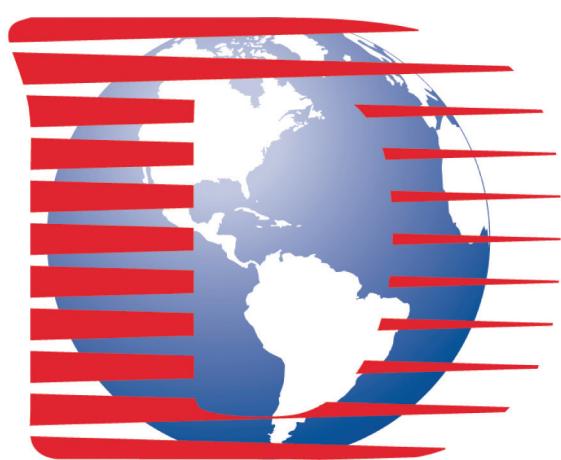
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