

RND Construction Helps 4té inc. Celebrate New Chapter and New Name With Brand New LEED Gold Retrofit Office Space



RND Construction, under the watchful eye of owner Roy Nandram, has built a reputation in Ottawa over the past 20 years as a contractor who truly cares about sustainable building. So when 4té inc. (formerly Gansen Lindsay Design) was looking for a partner to help them turn a barren warehouse into a chic, minimalist and environmentally-friendly digs for their growing interior design firm, the choice was an easy one.

"When we were looking for a new building, we went and toured one of the spaces Roy had done and we just loved it," says Micheline Whale, who owns and runs 4té inc. along with business partner Viv Nutt. "Roy quickly put us in front of the architect, Christopher Simmonds and the engineers he usually works with. We loved that there was already a team in place that had had success together in the past."

And so this project was unique in that the owners (4té inc.) actually chose their consultants and constructor before they had even found a building. At that time, March 2009, Gansen Lindsay (as they were still known), was operating out of a 3,000 square foot leased office at 150 Isabella, directly opposite the Museum of Nature.

In 2006, Whale and Nutt, who were both Associates at the firm, had purchased the business from original partner Helma Gansen as part of a planned succession. Because they wanted to encourage a non-hierarchical work environment where every member of the team was equally important, the two new owners opted not to change the operating name to some combination of their surnames, but rather to consult that very team and come up with a new brand that reflected the passion and commitment of them all.

"We held two or three sessions with all our staff to brainstorm together and figure out what our new brand should be," says Whale. "And after all the ideas were presented to our staff, we collectively decided on '4té inc.', which is meant to evoke the word 'forté' - strength in what we do - and also to represent the 4 main disciplines we work with; mechanical engineering,

electrical engineering, architectural and interior design." With a fresh name and a fresh philosophy, Whale and Nutt wanted to take their firm to the next level by putting an end to renting and finding their own office space too. "We like to use the phrase: 'New building, new energy, new name' to describe all the changes we've been making," says Whale. When it came to office space, however, moving the firm was as much about dollars and cents as it was about rebranding. When 4té inc. found a 12,000 square foot warehouse for sale at 73 Breezehill, they realized that they could easily invest and retrofit 6,000 sf of that space into a modern, minimalist office space, and the combined mortgage and operating costs would be comparable to their previously leased space. In other words, it was a no-brainer.

