

RND Construction celebrates 25th anniversary

Roy Nandram builds on sustainable construction and community contributions to expand scope as residential, commercial building innovator



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STAFF WRITER

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RND Construction started in 1980 to fulfill an unexpected project-completion challenge. Twenty-five years later it has grown to a respected and award-winning general contracting company, community contributor, and an innovative industry leader.

RND founder and president Roy Nandram immigrated to Canada from Guyana in 1976 and studied mechanical and industrial engineering at Algonquin College. After graduation, he worked for a local general contractor, honing his skills as both project manager and vice-president, developing relationships within the industry. Then the recession hit and the company closed its doors.

“I left Guyana by myself at 19 and came to Canada where everything was so different. In 1976 being a visible minority in Ottawa was challenging. Once I had established my-

self and people knew who I was that was not such an issue and I was able to build on my talents and strengths.”

Nandram says he was then hired to finish a project that had been abandoned by another contractor. “It soon came out though that the job had to be completed by a third-party company, rather than an employee, so I started RND to complete that work and then went from there.”

In the early days he says he worked on renovation jobs and small commercial projects, picking up additional work through word-of-mouth and referrals. As his reputation grew, the size and scope of the jobs increased and the company expanded.

He credits much of his success to his upbringing and lessons his parents instilled in him. “My parents did not have formal education beyond grade six and strongly believed education was the way to have a better life. They taught me to work hard and not to

let challenges stop me.”

It makes sense then that education has been a key focus of Nandram’s. He holds a degree in economics from the University of Ottawa, obtained through part-time studies. He became a certified construction estimator (2000), a certified construction superintendent through the Ontario General Contractor Association (OGCA) (1990) and a professional Gold Seal project manager through the Canadian General Construction Association (CGCA) (2011).

In 2009 Nandram received his LEED accreditation from the Canadian Green Building Council. He has since gone on to construct many EnergyStar and R2000 homes and is one of the only builders in Ottawa to have constructed three LEED Platinum custom homes.

His interest in creating a sustainable environment also has roots in his personal history. “I was the fourth child in a family of 10

kids and grew up in a block of at least 100 kids. This is where I learned about life, sharing resources and dealing with people. This is where ‘green’ naturally started.”

Understanding the importance of sustainability and with his own interest in education and sharing information, he says RND sends a quarterly newsletter to clients to share information that is relevant and interesting. “I still attend a lot of seminars and trade shows as well to continue my own education and development and to look for new opportunities for the business and for my clients.”

This summer, as an example of new opportunities and lessons to learn, RND will begin constructing its first passive home custom construction project.

Nandram says he has been involved with some wonderfully innovative and beautiful projects and that, with his focus on creating more energy-efficient and sustainable buildings and homes, there is always something

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interesting happening.

“I’m proud of all of our projects,” he said. “There is a small commercial building on Industrial Ave. I own that we had Chris Simmonds Architects design back in 2003. The building is beautiful of course but it was also able to achieve 50 per cent greater energy efficiency than was required by code at the time.”

He says the first LEED Platinum home he constructed in Rockcliffe Park is another project he is fond of, both for what the project team achieved and because the client was so eager and willing to achieve this high level of sustainability, making it a pleasure to construct.

Over its 25 year history, RND Construction has received many awards and recognition for innovation and excellence. In 2014 the company was a finalist for the ScotiaBank EcoLiving Business Leadership Award and for the EnerQuality ENERGY STAR for New Homes Champion of the Year award.

In the 2014 Greater Ottawa Home Builders Association (GOHBA) Awards, the company was recognized for Green Custom Home of the Year, Exterior Living Space, Exterior Details, and was awarded the Ottawa Citizen Peoples’ Choice Award.

In 2013, among several other awards, RND received the City of Ottawa’s Urban Design Award. The company has also received numerous recognitions for renovations, as custom builder and for its urban infill projects.

Nandram says the key to his reputation

and success has been an honest approach to the way he runs his business and the way he works with clients, a commitment to integrity in all things and to looking after his clients from start to finish.

As outlined on the company’s website, RND is committed to “fair, transparent, responsible and accountable conduct-based character (as well as)... adherence to the spirit and letter of defining professional standards.”

Over the years Nandram has become very involved as a member of the GOHBA, taking on roles within various committees including as chair of the building innovation committee.

As the business and Nandram’s personal involvement in the industry grew, so did his community involvement. “Part of our purpose in life is to give back so once I could, I did.”

Nandram participated in a 2013 renovation of Roger’s House, where he co-ordinated the renovation of the home’s basement into work and living spaces. For Heartwood

House, RND renovated a former Giant Tiger location, turning it into a new home for the 18 non-profit organizations.

The company supports Habitat for Humanity, donating all of the reclaimed materials possible from its construction projects to Habitat’s ReStores, participating in events like Blitz Builds and supporting the organization’s annual Steel Toes and Stiletto gala. RND also co-sponsors an annual golf tournament for the Canadian Diabetes Foundation.

Combining his interests in education and community involvement, Nandram also guest lectures when he can at Algonquin College to inspire the next generation of construction leaders.

Always wanting to grow and evolve, RND has embarked on a new path: custom

homes for sale. The company is currently constructing four infill homes in the Riverside Park south area designed by Christopher Simmonds Architect to be both beautiful and highly energy-efficient.

Looking back on 25 years of growth and success, Nandram is grateful to the experiences that formed him, and the people who surround him. “I did not do all of this by myself. I am surrounded by a group of dedicated staff some of whom has been around since inception. My main supervisor Tymen has been involved since we started. My wife Diane has been running the office and accounting since day one. I couldn’t have done this without them.”

For more information about RND Construction, visit rndconstruction.ca.

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Congratulations RND on your 25th Anniversary



Christopher Simmonds Architect