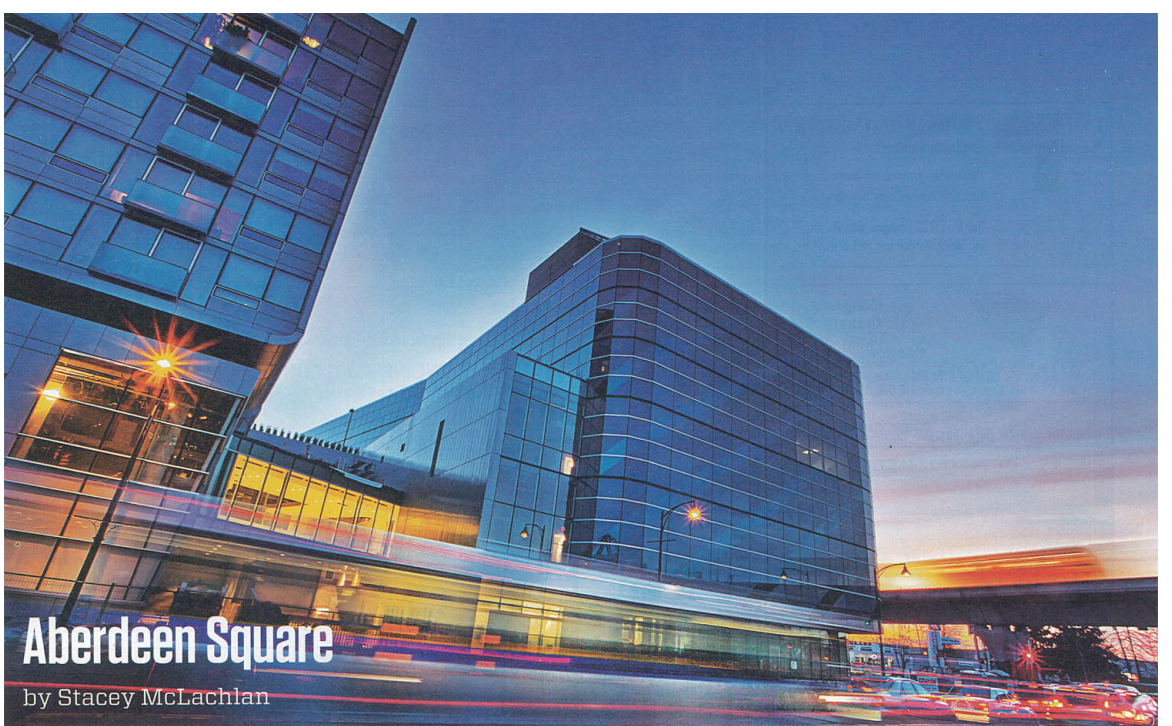




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The relationship between development group Fairchild Developments Ltd. and Bing Thom Architects Inc. began 14 years ago with the decision to re-develop Richmond, B.C.'s Aberdeen Centre and turn it into a much larger retail shopping centre with architectural updates. The process evolved into a three-phase development: Aberdeen Expansion Phase 1; followed by Phase 2, which included the construction of luxury condominium Aberdeen Residence; and Phase 3, the Aberdeen Square retail and office centre. All three phases are designed by Bing Thom Architects.

"Aberdeen Centre provided larger leasable unit in an upscale environment," explains Danny Leung, senior vice president and general manager of Fairchild Developments Ltd. "Aberdeen Square provides strata units for ownership with three levels of commercial retail units and three levels of offices. The retail occupancy for the new Aberdeen Square contains smaller-sized units in a stratified development." The 240,000-square-foot space will offer over 200 retail stores and 100 business units for purchase – and a food court, of course, for hungry shoppers. "It has a smaller footprint, but higher density than Aberdeen Centre," explains Leung, pointing out that Phase 1 of the Centre is only three levels high.

Though construction materials were chosen to easily blend Aberdeen Square with Aberdeen Mall, the new development has its own distinct style. "The Aberdeen Square glazing captures the distinct culture of the growing Richmond City Centre through its artful display of a graphic diagonal pattern which wraps the west and north facade of the building," says Jacqueline Wiles, project manager with Bing Thom Architects. "These accent bands are comprised of translucent etch fritting laid in a circular dot pattern embedded within the reflective glazing units." The reflective glazing becomes an animated canvas as it mirrors the comings and goings of the Canada Line SkyTrain, which connects directly to both Aberdeen Square and Aberdeen Centre via a 20-foot bridge and interior concourse. It's a beautiful building, and one designed with a message in mind. "As a continual display of motion, the expressive diagonal ribbons produce a dynamic veil that attracts the community and unifies its surrounding

context. Presenting itself as a theatrical art piece to the city, Aberdeen Square engages visitors with an exciting facade design that invigorates and establishes the developing urban hub," explains Wiles.

Entering through the main entrance off No. 3 Road, visitors step into a dramatic atrium where they'll find sweeping staircases and escalators leading to the shops. Twinkling LED lighting wraps the room, and a textured plaster wall adds visual interest. Although Aberdeen Square is not a LEED-designated building, the team incorporated green components wherever possible during the design and build. The building facades feature low-E coatings and frit, and reflective coatings minimize solar gain; the landscaping is done with non-invasive native species; dedicated bicycle parking is available on the street and in the underground parkade. The leveraged proximity to the SkyTrain station is an eco-friendly move, too. "It's a means to focus a number of strategies around transportation. Connections are made to the Canada Line at two levels, seamlessly integrating it into the new Aberdeen station," Leung says. "Access to end of trip facilities is provided in the existing Aberdeen Centre building."

For a seaside city, particularly one built on top of potentially temperamental tectonic plates, earthquake preparedness is an essential step in the planning process. And it all starts with the foundation. Frank Nadalini, project engineer for Bush, Bohlman and Partners, did the structural engineering for the Aberdeen Square project, and took on the project with gusto, even as it changed over the years. The project was originally conceived as a Retail Shopping Complex in 2007, but by 2009, the developer revised its business model as a strata

title retail/office complex. Bush, Bohlman and Partners had a challenge on its hands to construct the larger building within the confined space bounded by the existing Aberdeen condominium, mall parkade and the existing Canada Line station on No. 3 Road. Using reinforced Franki piles and stone column densification to prevent liquefaction, the team achieved this – and managed to add an additional level of office space.

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Mid-construction revisions are part of any project, and Aberdeen Square faced a few other conundrums along the way. The small size of the site proved to be challenging. "It was a tight fit – the space was bounded by the Aberdeen SkyTrain station to the west, the Aberdeen Residence and Cambie Road to the north, the strip mall to the south, and the Aberdeen Centre to the east," points out Leung.

Mark Verigin, project manager with general contractor Graham Construction and Engineering, agrees that site conditions were less than ideal: "From an access point of view, the construction of Aberdeen Square was akin to building a ship in a bottle." Even the sky had its limits: Vancouver International Airport flight path restrictions limited the crane height. But it's clear the development team had the tools to overcome these challenges. Leung and Verigin credit the team's thorough