

Brownfield Redevelopment in the Toronto Port Lands

Pinewood Toronto Studios – 256 Commissioners St.



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Pinewood Toronto Studios is located on lands formerly owned by TEDCO along the north side of the Shipping Channel in the City's port lands. Previously a large, vacant polluted site on Toronto's waterfront, the film and new-media complex is now Canada's largest in the industry.

In 2003, research on Toronto's film industry identified the need for purpose-built studio space to attract large productions in order for Toronto to remain competitive. It was decided that TEDCO, the City's previous Development agency would facilitate the development of a studio/ new media emergence district on lands it owned. After the release of a world-wide Request for Expressions of Interest (followed by a Request for Proposal in 2004) the private investment consortium of Toronto Film Studios/ Rose Corporation was selected as the successful proponent to develop the largest film and new-media production complex called Filmport. TEDCO's Board of Director's approved the recommendation by the executive team.

In 2009, Pinewood Studios Group based in the UK became the operating company of the studios and the complex was renamed to Pinewood Toronto Studios (PTS).

The 50-acre site that PTS is built on was previously used as an Imperial Oil tank farm until the mid-1990s. The land was left vacant for more than twenty years impacted by both hydrocarbon and metal.

Following a complete environmental assessment, an integrated site management strategy was developed by TEDCO. Redevelopment involved an onsite treatment principle of the contaminated soil and groundwater solution rather than land filling and a "dig and dump" approach. A majority of the excavated soil underwent biotreatment on adjacent TEDCO land which could then be reused for other construction projects. The site was remediated to provincial environmental generic cleanup standards in under six months.

The development is the first in the port lands to embrace green design principles starting from the remediation stages to the final building design which TEDCO and it's consultants facilitated.

Vapour barriers and sheet pile walls were installed along the boundaries of the area to inhibit recontamination. The entire operation was managed within TEDCO lands to avoid off site trucking or dumping eliminating some 3,700 trucks from leaving the port lands and avoiding 60 tonnes of CO2 emissions.

All materials from demolished buildings and foundations were recycled – former concrete foundations were crushed into

aggregate to reuse in new roadways. Trees, plants, and biomass matter cleared from the construction site were chipped and composted for future landscaping. Some 30 acres of waterfront property have been cleaned up, municipal services and road improvements extended.

The complex has incorporated many cost efficient green elements as part of the overall development. Some of these initiatives include high-efficiency mechanical systems, bio-swales for storm water treatment, sophisticated waste recycling systems, light photo sensors, earth-friendly cleaning products and living walls and fences.

In addition to their own developmental greening program, PTS is taking a leading role in sustainability by adopting and creating green initiatives that will set the bar for how the film industry does business now and into the future.

TPLC is the largest property-owner in the port lands area of Toronto with roughly 400 acres in its portfolio. The lands reclaimed from Lake Ontario were used for a number of heavy industrial activities since 1917 which have contaminated the soil and groundwater. Environmental stewardship is a key undertaking of TPLC as part of the City of Toronto's redevelopment vision for the port lands area.