

Mining company Hudbay wanted a headquarters that would simultaneously highlight its 85-year history and convey a forward-looking focus. Taylor Smyth Architects dug deep for a refined solution.

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Hudbay describes itself as “an integrated mining company with operations, development properties and exploration activities across the Americas.” Its most recent ventures include a copper development project in Peru that is slated to begin production in 2015, and a new gold, zinc, copper and silver mine in Manitoba, where the company also owns other mines, ore concentrators and a zinc processing plant. The design of Hudbay’s corporate headquarters in Toronto’s new 25 York Street tower (also known as Telus House) deftly conveys the message that is a prosperous, forward-looking company with a lot of history behind it. “We’ve been mining in Manitoba for more than 85 years,” said David Bryson, Hudbay’s senior vice president and chief financial officer. “We wanted to incorporate visuals that would communicate some of our strengths and experience, within a modern design that would reflect what we’re trying to do strategically with the company, which is to take that history and that strong expertise and use it to expand into other jurisdictions to move the company forward.”

Ramping up for new operations in Manitoba and Peru made it necessary for Hudbay to expand its corporate office; its previous Toronto headquarters accommodated between 20 and 25 employees, and its new office, which occupies an entire 26,000-sq.-ft. floor of 25 York Street, now provides workspace for approximately 40 people. Hudbay selected Taylor Smyth Architects of Toronto to consult on the choice of a new space, and to design it. “One of the first things we asked them was, ‘Do you have any pictures from the mines and the processes you go through that we could look at to get some inspiration?’” said Michael Taylor, who was partner-in-charge on this project. “Once we had seen what a great collection of pictures they had, we decided that their photos should become part of the art for the space.” The design firm brought in art curator who determined how images of mining, smelting and other operations, originally shot in many cases for Hudbay’s annual reports, would be cropped, framed and positioned throughout the office. And in place of conventional signage in the elevator lobby leading to the reception area, Taylor Smyth Architects designed a frieze incorporating actual Hudbay raw zinc ingots, in their factory-finished state with the company name stamped into them. “We wanted to pick interesting materials that spoke to the process of what they do,” said Mr. Taylor.

The company’s operations also inspired the large, custom art installation in the entry area: a sculptural, copper and walnut form that ripples across a wall and around the reception desk, evoking both the strata of the earth and the look of molten metal in foundries. As well, the rough, split-faced stone on the opposite wall, and backlit, spun aluminum ceiling panels with

a bubble-lattice texture allude in a very polished, non-literal way to the vertical, machine-hewn cliffs and net-covered roofs of mines that figure prominently in some of Hudbay’s archival photographs.

The company is targeting a LEED for Corporate Interiors (LEED CI) Silver rating for its headquarters and chose to lease space at 25 York Street partly because the building itself is a LEED Gold (Core and Shell) development; green aspects of its design include a raised-floor ventilation system and an exposed concrete structure that through its thermal mass reduces the need for artificial heating and cooling. Although a high percentage of the workspaces within Hudbay’s headquarters are perimeter offices for senior executives, several strategies were deployed to ensure that inboard workstations receive considerable more natural light than was the case in the company’s previous space. A film applied to the glass fronts of the private offices ensures that their lower portions are translucent (to provide a measure of privacy at seated height) but higher up these walls are completely transparent to maximize the transmission of natural light to the interior. Several meeting areas, including unenclosed lounges, are also located along the perimeter and help to open up the entire floor to spectacular views of the city and Lake Ontario.

Hudbay wanted a headquarters that would be elegant and flexible, and its lunchroom is a good example of a space that easily meets both objectives. Like the rest of the office, it incorporates large expanses of wood that add warmth to the clean simplicity of its lines. On a daily basis, it’s a lunch-room that offers great city views to Hudbay’s own employees. When the company hoses luncheons for investor groups, the space suggests, in a serene and understated way, that this mining company’s future is golden.



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