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ahead of the power curve; fundamentally, it defines what the organization is and always will be.

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The general contractors had received the name and price of the various trades that had submitted bids, and then had simply to choose from among them in order to finalize their offering to DCC. This relieved much of the burden on the contractors, explains John Blasko, Manager, Contract Services, at DCC Head Office. "Instead of spending the last couple of days negotiating with trades, they could focus on sharpening their pencils on their part of the job."

This new approach resulted in the two lowest bids for the \$104 million project being within \$17,000, or .016% of each other.

"Clearly, value to the Crown was a major benefit," says Blasko. "We were able to achieve very competitive and compliant bids."

Another benefit was a quick contract award. DCC's targeted turnaround time from close of tenders to award of contract is 15 days but in this case it was done in 12. "This means the contractor is quicker to get on to the ground. This helps us meet the ultimate goal of timely occupancy of the new facility," Blasko explains.

The electronic bidding system, owned and operated by the B.C. Construction Association (BCCA) as part of its provincial bid deposit, also saved DCC time and effort by directing interested trades to the relevant sections of the project drawings and documentation, having already designated which trades would carry out which tasks.

"In addition, the trades could say which companies they wanted to work with," says Blasko. "We don't force relationships by using this system."

Characterizing the electronic bidding process as “an absolute success story,” Blasko predicts that it will be the future of project tendering at DCC. Overall, everything went very well, Blasko recalls, even with some valuable lessons learned by both DCC and the BCCA around the importance of clear and open communications regarding how the process works and the risks associated with each party’s involvement and their accountabilities.

As a follow-up to the B.C. experience, the Contract Services line is planning a pilot project for a fully electronic tendering process. In this instance, it would not only be the trades whose bids would be submitted and closed electronically, but the bids for the whole project.

Tonnes of gravel and kilometres of pilings will ground helicopter facility

At nearly \$104 million, the 443 Maritime Helicopter Squadron facility at Victoria International Airport is the largest project awarded to date at CFB Esquimalt.

The new 20,539-m² facility will house nine new Sikorsky Cyclone helicopters, which will replace the squadron’s aging Sea Kings.

The first step in the three-year project will be to transport 300,000 m³ of gravel to the site. This will involve approximately 100 25-tonne truck and pup (dump trucks with trailers) loads each day for 216 days (more than seven months). The gravel will be coming from gravel pits throughout southern Vancouver Island. The trucks will enter the airport through a back road that leads to the construction site, so that they don’t have to mix with regular airport traffic.

The next phase of the project will be the driving of approximately 12 km of pilings to provide the stable sub-structure for the building. The structure is being built to post-disaster standards, since Victoria is in a high-risk seismic zone.

Construction is expected to be completed in June 2014.

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"No one had ever heard of that before," says DCC's Paul Greff, in charge of the 18-month, \$2.6 million renovation of Hewett House, a [recognized federal heritage building](#) overlooking the harbour at the Royal Military College (RMC). Greff says the best guess was that the sand was there to help soundproof and fireproof the floor.

The surprises continued throughout the project—including finding old exterior walls hidden in newer, interior ones, and uncovering joists and studs burnt in electrical fires—but Greff's team handled them with ease. Both the architect and general contractor had experience with previous heritage projects, as had a number of the on-site workers.

In addition, Greff himself and the DND project manager, Linda Lausch, had a strong interest in preserving the beautiful structure while turning it into



classrooms and offices for the new tenant: the Royal Military College's military psychology and leadership department.

At the time the project started, the three-storey, Italianate house, which was built in 1875 for the first commandant of RMC, Lieutenant-Colonel Edward O. Hewett of the Royal Engineers, and his wife, had not been used for at least four years and had not been well maintained for many years before that. But, says Greff, it did "have a great old style feel to it. High ceilings, sloping floors, old architectural details, many fireplaces ... I saw great potential in the building."

With the support of a heritage consultant, the team maintained or restored a great many of the heritage elements—more than originally intended, Greff notes. At the same time, the house is now structurally sound, and modern building systems, including air conditioning, are seamlessly integrated with the heritage elements. A number of ceilings had to be replaced, for example, which was a perfect chance to hide necessary ductwork and electrical conduits. Acoustic lining insulation now does the soundproofing job of the sand.

The new tenant moved in over the summer, to be ready by the time classes started in September. "Each time I enter the building, the tenant expresses gratitude for our work and appreciation of the successful outcome," Greff says.

And, fortunately, one challenge Greff and his team did not have to face was picking up after the house ghost, George. "We were never formally introduced," Greff adds.



DCC's Paul Greff, Coordinator, Mechanical outside Hewett House during the renovation.

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When Irwin joined the company in 2006, he arrived at a time when the organization was at a bit of a crossroads. Client demand for support to domestic and international operations was growing, civilian engineers and technicians in the Department had been voluntarily deploying to Afghanistan on six-month rotations for the previous two years, and DCC's five service lines were maturing.

The obvious question was, "Where do we go from here?"

After an analysis by Ross Nicholls (former DCC President and CEO), Ron de Vries (then VP, Ops), Angelo Ottoni, (VP Corporate Services and CFO) and Irwin to consider the best service delivery model to meet the changing needs of DND and the CF, it was clear that the business was evolving. To remain effective, DCC needed to stay true to its roots. The matrix organization of business management and service lines was the result.

Ever the engineer, Irwin likens DCC to a house with people as its foundation, leadership as its supporting pillars and strong stakeholder and client relationships as the roof that brings it all together.

"People are the power of DCC, so we have to provide strong leadership to allow our people to grow into leaders so they can lead the company with a real understanding of DND and the CF. We have to be able to anticipate their needs and tailor our services towards that goal."

“The culture, the attitude of support and the teamwork is better here than anywhere I've seen in my entire life. It's collaborative and results-oriented. The camaraderie goes beyond the limits of sight and employees having a real association with DCC. Unlike the military where you might be attached to a particular unit, people here belong to DCC – they identify with it as a whole. It has been an absolute pleasure to work here.”

Irwin retired in September 2011 and will remain in Ottawa.

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So, when an expert as highly qualified as Benjamin says Defence Construction Canada is at a positive "turning point", one might be inclined to sit up and take notice. He says because infrastructure is so key to operational success for the CF, and a crucial pillar of the *Canada First* Defence Strategy, DCC could soon find itself building on its record of success.



"DCC was created to respond to the defence needs of Canada and as those needs change, DCC adapts. With 35,000 buildings and works across the country, the Department of National Defence and the CF possess the largest infrastructure portfolio in Canada. Most of it was built during or following WWII, so many of those buildings are now 50 to 60 years old and require either demolition or major retrofits.

"That's one issue, of course, but the future for DCC goes deeper than construction projects. As baby boomers retire, there is a requirement for knowledge transfer and renewal of the workforce. As a result, the bases are turning to DCC to help support management of their facilities because they know we are well positioned to do so with our expertise."

Benjamin says that as new high tech, "greener" buildings are being constructed, there is a requirement for highly specialized "green" workers who are trained and knowledgeable in working with those new technologies. As a result, we will likely see an Infrastructure and environment community renewal in DND that focuses on highly skilled labour. This will guarantee the proper life-cycle management of those Crown assets while delivering the same results using existing industry expertise. Given its current mandate as a federal Crown corporation, DCC is very well positioned to facilitate such transformation and renewal through its expertise and different contracting mechanisms.

When you put all the pieces together and look downrange, Benjamin says the future is exciting for DCC, our Client-Partner DND/CF and for him personally in terms of professional development.

"We are at a turning point and it's a win-win-win for us all."

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The report also describes DCC's value through its support to DND's changing requirements and its commitment to sound fiscal management. As always, DCC continues to strive to deliver the best in service to our Client-Partner – continually improving our services to help deliver better value for DND, the CF and the Government of Canada.

Visit the [DCC website](#) to view the report or contact the [Communications Department](#) for a print copy.

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DCC at Work is our Corporate Services newsletter, delivered bi-monthly to our public- and private-sector partners and the public at large. The articles in *DCC at Work* focus on service-delivery success stories, from the most complex projects to innovative ideas that save time and money.

To suggest story ideas or to comment on the newsletter, please contact [the Editor](#).

Look for the next issue of *DCC at Work* in December 2011.



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