Andy Warhol, Roy Lictenstein and Anish Kapoor are all represented in the lobby of Waterloo House

Robert Indiana's Love sculpture in the northeast corner of the lobby, is also visible from the street

At the traditional roof wetting of the new Waterloo House a year ago, all parties involved—owners, architect, contractors, and government—cited the $100 million project as a landmark for the future of Bermuda. In 2008, the previous owner was given permission to demolish the building and replace it with one of 90,000 square feet to contain commercial and residential spaces. It was subsequently purchased in 2010 by Bermuda resident Peter Green and his family, who chose local architects, BotelhoWood, to design the building. Even in those challenging economic times, they wanted high-quality design and construction—and they wanted it quickly.

The architects created a seven-story building, with the lower floors serving as office space, topped by seven penthouse apartments with spectacular views of Hamilton Harbour, Paget, and the Great Sound. Numerous sub-contractors, including Woodbourne Associates, Island Glass, BAC and P&M Electrical, were able to complete the project in 30 months, particularly noteworthy on an island such as Bermuda where all materials must be shipped in from abroad. Nearly 90% of the space was leased when the construction was only 50% complete, and it is now fully occupied.

The courtyard and lobby areas beautifully illustrate that quality of design and construction. Rather than being a simple rectangular building bordering the sidewalk, Waterloo House is set back from the street with a small wing containing the lobby projecting to the sidewalk. This creates a triangular courtyard area but also allows the lobby to face eastward, across the courtyard, parallel with Pitts Bay Road, and on toward the city of Hamilton. The all-glass northern and eastern walls of the lobby are two floors high, which maximize the effect of this view.

The art of Waterloo

Teak covers the wall behind the reception desk

Four Mies van der Rohe Barcelona chairs are the only furniture in the lobby

That courtyard is dominated by the towering Will Collieson sculpture, Points of View, with its sail- and spar-like shapes, emerging from a small fountain. The rest of the courtyard is constructed of India quartz, sandblasted to a matte finish and supported on pedestals with a gap below for fast drainage of rainwater. The slight slope of Pitts Bay Road is accommodated with a shallow ramp from the sidewalk at one end and a few steps elsewhere.

The same quartz is used for the lobby floor, but here it is polished to a gloss. This interior floor is also elevated with an 18-inch space below, which functions as supply for the air-conditioning through numerous small gratings set into the floor. This arrangement, a first in Bermuda, allows the supplied air to arrive at low volume and velocity, making it imperceptible by sound or feel.

The west wall, opposite the entrance, is covered with a unique teak surface. Closely spaced vertical kerfs are cut slightly more than halfway through the wood on the exposed side, while the backside features similar horizontal cuts. These intersecting kerfs create an interesting pattern of lines and squares, but also function as sound-deadening material, which is important with all the glass and stone on other surfaces. The overall effect of all these surfaces—glass,

stone, and teak—is one of simple, high-quality elegance.

Other than the reception desk, the only furniture is a square glass coffee table surrounded by four Barcelona chairs, the iconic design by Mies van der Rohe originally for the German pavilion at the International Exposition held in Spain in 1929.

Continuing that theme of fixtures contrasting with surfaces is bold and colorful art. Large originals of Roy Lictenstein's Water Lillies and Andy Warhol's Marilyn Monroe flank the reception desk, and a vertical arrangement of Anish Kapoor geometric prints extend the full two-story height on the southern wall. Most prominent is a large reproduction of Robert Indiana's Love sculpture in the northeast corner, which is also visible from the street. These pieces of art, chosen by the Greens, add glamorous color and interest. It is the Waterloo House's intention to add more art, probably sculptures, in the future.

For those passing through the courtyard and entering Waterloo House's lobby, whether they are residents, employees, or visitors, it must certainly create an atmosphere of simple, yet bright elegance and tranquility. Surely this serves to uplift the spirit and brighten the day, at least to some degree.

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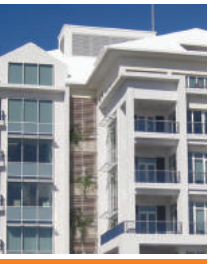

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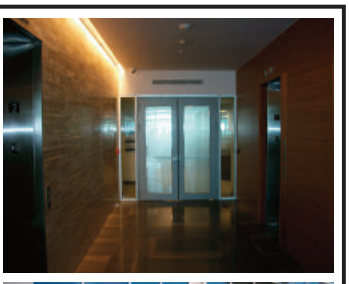

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