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CHARLES CORREA ASSOCIATES

The \$300 million project being spearheaded by the Agha Khan in Don Mills.

Vanbots had early input into Aga Khan's Toronto landmark

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staff writer

Contractor Vanbots brought its "builder's hat" to the table during the pre-construction phase of a \$300 million project now under way in Toronto's Don Mills neighbourhood.

The company, a division of Carillion Construction Inc., provided advice during design development on both constructability and budgeting.

"Budgeting was particularly critical, since there are two significant buildings as well as a large landscaping package and underground parking," says vice-president Don Griffin. "We've got pretty good intelligence on the local subcontractor market."

The project, being spearheaded by the Aga Khan, consists of the first-ever Aga Khan Museum for Islamic Art, an adjacent Ismaili Centre and a series of landscaped gardens.

The official groundbreaking was in late May.

Site clearance is currently underway. Substantial completion is scheduled for the end of 2012.

Designed by Indian architect Charles Correa, the Ismaili Centre will be the newest addition to a network of such centres worldwide and the second in Canada.



FUMIHIKO MAKI/MAKI AND ASSOCIATES

The project includes the Aga Khan Museum of Islamic Art.

Clad in French limestone, the building will include a 1,100-square-metre prayer hall, 400-square-metre multipurpose social hall, library and offices. The centre features an innovative double-glass roof.

The 10,000-square-metre museum, designed by Japanese architect Fumihiko Maki, will house exhibition space, 350-seat auditorium, reference library and multi-media centre as well as classrooms and workshops.

Architects of record for the complex are Toronto's Moriyama & Teshima Architects, who previously collaborated with Maki on the Delegation of the Ismaili Imamat building in Ottawa.

On the Don Mills project, the firm is responsible for preparation of contract documents, contract administration, obtaining necessary approvals, client liaison and consultant co-ordination.

Daniel Teramura, partner in charge of the Ismaili Centre project, said the glass roof over the prayer hall "is probably the most distinctive feature" of the centre from an architectural perspective.

"It's really quite unique," he said. "It is actually a double glass structure. This creates a thermal buffer zone, which allows us to create a comfortable interior environment."

The glass roof was designed in collaboration with structural engineers Halcrow Yolles.

Griffin, whose firm is acting as construction manager on the project, said key construction challenges in addition to the centre's glass roof structure include the angled external walls of the museum and the overall level of finishes.

"The expectations are very high," said Griffin, a professional engineer and LEED-accredited professional.

The two buildings will be united by a landscaped park designed by Lebanese landscape architect Vladimir Djurovic in collaboration with Moriyama & Teshima Planners. The park will incorporate a formal garden, reflecting ponds and more than two kilometres of walking trails.

Key subtrades currently on site include Blu-Mar, York Excavation, Gilbert Steel, Alliance Forming, Avenue Structures, Premform Ltd. and Coredale.



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