



**GRAND PLANS:** This is an artist's rendering of B.C./Canada House, to be built in Torino, Italy, for the 2006 Winter Olympics. This building, made by Sitka Log Homes, will be centrestage for promoting the 2010 Olympic Games in Vancouver.

## B.C. company chosen to build B.C./Canada House for 2006 Olympics

Sitka Log Homes begins the flurry to build a home in time for the Games

by JEFF CUMMINGS

Canadian athletes will compete for gold in the Torino Winter Olympics next year in Italy, but one company in British Columbia feels they've already won at least one gold medal for their country.

100 Mile House-based Sitka Log Homes was chosen out of 11 companies to build a home base—to be known as B.C./Canada House—for B.C. athletes and representatives to showcase to the rest of the world the upcoming Vancouver Winter Olympics in 2010.

"Although we are not athletes competing in the Olympics, we all have a huge sense of pride for our contribution to Canadians," said John Johnson, owner and manager of Sitka Log Homes. "It's thrilling to have our work showcased while inviting the world to visit British Columbia in 2010."

However, this isn't the first internationally recognized feat for the small company that could; it built three very large lodges at Snowbasin Resort, the site of the downhill and super giant slalom races during the 2002 Salt Lake

City Winter Olympics.

According to Johnson, in the competition for the building in Italy the B.C. government gave Sitka Log Homes two locations within the same Piazza (square) to work with in creating their design.

However, a few days before the contest deadline, Italian officials decided on a different location requiring a plan that incorporated an existing building into the design. This meant that Sitka had to start over entirely.

Their last-minute scrambling paid off, as they were narrowed down from 11 companies into the final three. When they found out they had won the bid

to construct the building, Johnson and his staff were ecstatic, but they knew they would have a lot of work to do.

"The project was awarded to us later than expected, and therefore we were unable to begin it when we had planned," said Johnson. "There is a definite deadline by which to have everything completed and there is absolutely no ability to extend that deadline—the Olympics will begin



**John Johnson**

when they are scheduled to."

Due to time constraints, most of the building will be prebuilt in British Columbia, including the roofing and the fireplace, said Johnson. But before getting to that point, Sitka Log Homes has had to obtain all of the necessary approvals and permits from the Torino officials and has had to hire architects and engineers in B.C. and Italy.

Once the project is finished, the existing building will become one with B.C./Canada House by the addition of a log post and truss façade to the exterior, as well as an extended porch roof featuring structural log work over existing doors.

"Upon entering the house, visitors will be impressed by the open atmosphere and particularly awed by the very large 36-inch-diameter flared cedar post in the centre of the building that bears the centre of the roof structure from four directions," said Johnson. "The feature post is an example of the magnificent timber which is unique to British Columbia."

Standing in the reception area, visitors can take in most of the house at a glance, said Johnson. A large curved staircase with a wood railing and forged metal balusters leads to an open loft above with an office and meeting rooms, as well as display and seating areas.

The building's lounge features a large stone fireplace, which is at the centre of where the existing building and B.C./Canada House join. This feature will allow a natural flow from the lounge area into the existing building, so that it will appear to be of the same structure.

"B.C./Canada House is being built using about 90 per cent of its materials from British Columbia and Canada," said Johnson. "These examples of the finest products will build an important awareness of Canadian industry, tourism and culture. It will also act as an invitation to the world to visit us for the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games."