PROPERTY TAX CASE STUDY
CORRECTING ERRORS

The Client's Challenge

The property, the head office for a construction company, had seen its assessment double in 2008 to $5.4 million, partly as the result of a building expansion. Turner Drake was retained to mitigate the increase in property taxes.

Turner Drake's Approach

We set to work with our customary gusto and meticulous attention to detail. The property was developed with 10 major buildings, including a helicopter hanger, office building, heavy equipment service bays, bunk houses and trailers. There were also several smaller buildings. We spent two days measuring and inspecting every building on the property. We carefully researched the legal description and layered the site boundaries on a satellite image. We obtained a copy of the assessment record from the provincial assessment authority, Service Nova Scotia, and compared this information with the land and building inventory we had compiled during our extensive site visit. It quickly became apparent that the physical attributes of the property, detailed in the assessment records, contained substantial errors and omissions. The assessor had overlooked two service easements over the property which consumed almost 5 acres, and half of the land value. He had double counted almost an entire building, treating the single storey warehouse section of the service garage as a two storey building. The assessment seriously overstated the value of the four bunk houses: they were manufactured buildings connected together. The assessor had costed them as dormitory buildings, an error which overstated their construction cost by 45%. We made multiple attempts to contact the assessor but he ignored our calls, so we prepared a Court position, sent him a copy, and prepared to lock horns.

Winning Results

As soon as he had read our Court position, the assessor contacted us and agreed to correct the assessment, reducing it by $618,000 … thus producing tax savings of $45,380 for the two years under consideration.

TURNER DRAKE & PARTNERS LTD.