

# TLA'AMIN COMMUNITY HEALTH AND MULTI- PURPOSE CENTRE

**LOCATION**

Tla'Amin First Nation  
Powell River, British Columbia

**SIZE**

696 m<sup>2</sup>

**ARCHITECT**

McFarland Marceau Architects Ltd.

**STRUCTURAL ENGINEER**

Equilibrium Consulting Inc.

**CONSTRUCTION COMPANY**

Heatherbrae Construction

**PROJECT OWNER**

Tla'Amin Community Health  
Society

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

For more than 2,000 years, the rich history of the Tla'Amin Nation (Sliammon First Nation) has been linked to the majestic forests on its traditional lands on the north Sunshine Coast of British Columbia. Through Tla'Amin Timber Products, the band – one of 20 indigenous Coast Salish tribes – continues to manage these forests sustainably to provide social and economic benefits.

When the Tla'Amin people were invited to help create the Tla'Amin Community Health and Multi-purpose Centre, they chose wood for its traditional and cultural value. The Band supplied red and yellow cedar for the heavy timber structure and siding.

The structure, which received a 2011 WoodWorks! BC Institutional Wood Design Award, was carefully oriented to the cardinal compass points and located in a natural wooded setting to benefit the traditional health and cultural programs.

Building with wood yielded many benefits for the Tla'Amin people. Wood-frame construction is easily adaptable, an important factor to accommodate changes during construction at the remote location north of Powell River. Using wood also meant the project was able to support an apprenticeship program that specifically recruited and trained local band members.

The Tla'Amin Community Health and Multi-purpose Centre houses integrated medical, dental, social services and traditional healing programs for the Tla'Amin First Nation as well as Tla'Amin Band Council meetings. There is flexible space for the development of community health and cultural programs, as well as a conference facility.



Photo courtesy of McFarland Marceau Architects

*“The Tla’Amin Health Centre Facility is a beautiful place for the important healing work we do for our community. Visitors, clients, service partners and employees alike, all enjoy coming here. There is much use of wood, a traditional structure building style, earth tones throughout, and the benefit of so much natural light from the huge windows. It is like bringing nature inside with us, which is medicine for us too.”*

*Cynthia Jamieson, A/Executive Director,  
Tla’Amin Community Health Centre*

## WOOD FEATURES

### APPRENTICESHIPS: BUILDING LOCAL SKILLS

The construction management method of procurement for the Tla’Amin Community Health and Multi-purpose Centre supported an apprenticeship program for local Sliammon band members.

### EXTERIOR USES: DURABLE AND FLEXIBLE

– Building with wood meant the project was able to respond to changes during construction at the remote site. Designers also chose wood because it can withstand weather and rigorous maintenance procedures.

### INTERIOR USES: COMFORTABLE AND HEALING

The Centre’s use of wood provides a tangible connection to nature and the outdoors, offering an

aesthetic appeal unmatched by other building materials.

Research shows the visual presence of wood in a room is both psychologically and physiologically beneficial, and a study by the University of British Columbia and FPInnovations concludes wood interiors reduce stress by creating a comforting, supportive and healing environment.

### CEDAR: CELEBRATING A RICH CULTURE

– Cedar is considered the tree of life for the Coast Salish peoples, and connects the Sliammon people with their rich past. The Centre design incorporated red and yellow cedar, including red cedar ceremonial poles with copper caps. The Sliammon Nation contributed to the project by donating red and yellow cedar from their traditional territories for the heavy timber structure and siding.



Photos courtesy of McFarland Marceau Architects

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

This profile is published by Forestry Innovation Investment, the Government of British Columbia’s market development agency for forest products.

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