

# JAMES PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

**LOCATION**

Port Coquitlam,  
British Columbia

**CAPACITY**

370 students; community  
activities

**ARCHITECT**

Grant + Sinclair Architects Ltd.

**ENGINEER**

Read Jones Christoffersen  
Consulting Engineers

**PROJECT OWNERS**

School District No. 43 (Coquitlam)

**B.C. GOVERNMENT MINISTRY**

Ministry of Education

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

When the British Columbia Ministry of Education replaced 100-year-old James Park Elementary School in Port Coquitlam as part of the Seismic Mitigation Program, it used as much wood as possible to create a healthy indoor environment and a smaller environmental footprint.

The two-storey school meets LEED Gold standard, offers elementary and full-day kindergarten and pre-kindergarten programs, and houses a variety of community-based services. Opened in October 2012, it was designed to meet the needs of students for the next 50 years.

To support British Columbia's Wood First Initiative, the school has a wood roof, wood panelling in the hallways, and wood

trim throughout. This provides a relaxed, productive indoor environment, promoting a sense of well-being and creating special places that inspire open thinking and new ideas.

Wood-frame buildings protect occupants during earthquakes in many ways. Wood products are lighter than other building products like reinforced concrete, thus putting less stress on the foundation and structure. Wood-frame construction allows the building to flex, absorbing and dissipating the force of the earthquake. In California, most public schools are made with wood, and an assessment after the 1994 Northridge Earthquake found most structural damage was repairable and not life-threatening.



*“James Park Elementary is an excellent example of a modern, 21st-century learning environment. It will provide current and future students, teachers and community members with a safe, comfortable building to work, learn and explore.”*

*Ivano Cecchini, Principal, Facilities Initiatives, School District 43*

## WOOD FEATURES

### UNIQUE WOOD ROOF: ELEGANT AND FUNCTIONAL

Not only is the sloped butterfly wood roof pleasing to the eyes, it provides an effective drainage system with reduced silt and pollutants by having a central oversized gutter that directs rainwater to catchment pillars on either end.

### MEASURING ENERGY

**EFFICIENCY** – A consumption dashboard near the school’s main entrance illustrates the building’s energy efficiency, and offers green tips and demonstrations. Wood products moderate humidity by absorbing or releasing moisture to maintain equilibrium with the adjacent air – and studies show it can reduce operational costs.

### BEST CHOICE FOR

**COMMUNITY SPACE** – Wood is hypo-allergenic and, unlike carpeting, prevents the build-up of dust and is easier to clean; this makes it a great

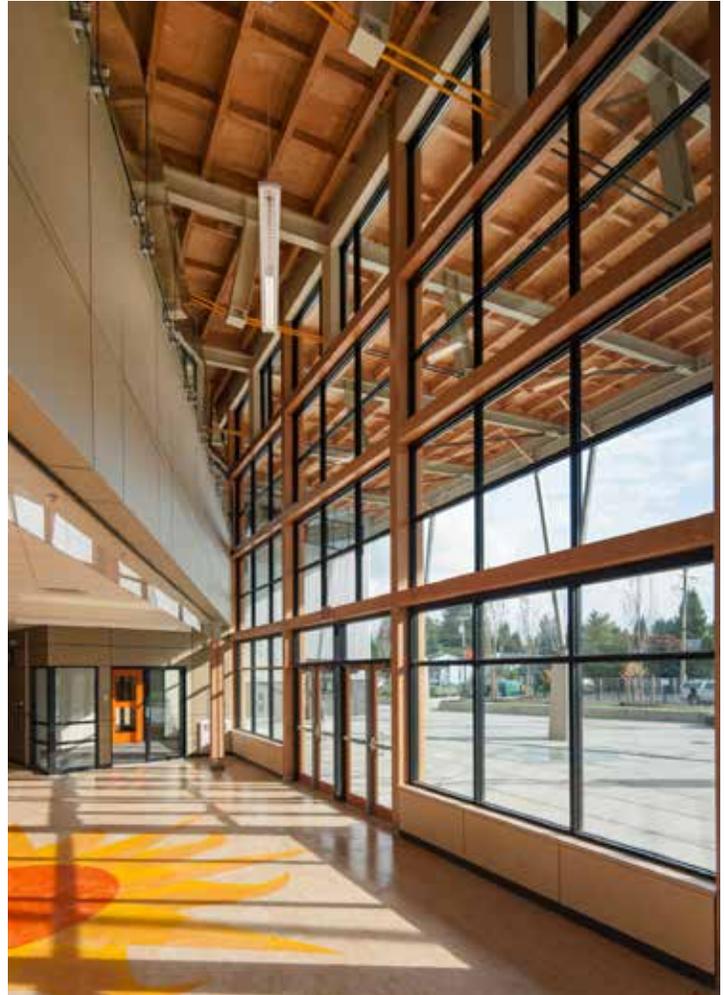
choice for a building like James Park Elementary School, which houses neighbourhood learning centres and is open to community activities after school hours.

### LINK TO NATURE: OPEN AND BRIGHT

– James Park Elementary School builds on the tangible connection wood has to nature and the outdoors. Its classrooms all have windows leading to a south-facing Learning Commons, and it has an exterior covered learning patio.

### RELAXED LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

– The wood trim and panelling throughout James Park Elementary School offer students and teachers a comforting, safe environment that reduces stress. Research by the University of British Columbia and FPInnovations concludes that wood interiors reduce stress by creating a supportive environment.



Top and bottom right photos courtesy of Grant + Sinclair Architects  
Bottom left photo courtesy of naturallywood.com

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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

For more examples of innovative wood building projects throughout British Columbia, visit:

[naturallywood.com](http://naturallywood.com)