

# TS'L'TS'SWATUL' LELUM ASSISTED LIVING FACILITY

**LOCATION**

Duncan, British Columbia

**SIZE**

5,100 m<sup>2</sup>

**COMPLETION**

2012

**ARCHITECT/PRIME  
CONSULTANT**

Lowe Hammond Rowe Architects

**STRUCTURAL ENGINEER**

WSP (formerly Genivar)

**GENERAL CONTRACTOR**

Kinetic construction Ltd.

**PROJECT OWNER**

M'akola Housing Society

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

This project is located on the traditional territory of the Cowichan Tribes, close to the town of Duncan, and provides fully accessible assisted living accommodation for 54 seniors. The four-storey facility includes laundry on each floor, common living, dining, theatre and craft rooms, as well as an assisted bathing room and other personal care facilities. Each of the 46 single and 4 double units also includes a kitchen with a fridge and stove.

The majority of residents are elders from the Cowichan Tribes, and great care has been paid to ensure that they feel at home in their new surroundings. The building is set in landscaped grounds that include a gathering area and planting of indigenous species such as flowering red currant, vanilla leaf, camas, and sword ferns.

The exterior of the building incorporates elements reminiscent of traditional Aboriginal architecture, including a front entrance canopy supported on inclined posts, a detail echoed at a smaller scale in the overhanging eaves. The building is oriented so that the exterior gathering circle, the entrance and the interior lobby are all arranged along a common axis, reinforcing the connection between indoor and outdoor space.

The main lobby, which features a 13 metre high totem pole, extends the full height of the building and divides it into two wings. All four floors have a generous interior gathering space overlooking the lobby, enhancing the sense of community. The lobby acts as a common area for the entire building and includes artwork and furnishings that reflect Cowichan culture.



Photo courtesy of Independent Media Productions

*“For the Cowichan First Nations, wood is important from both a cultural and a spiritual perspective. The significant presence of wood throughout Ts’l’t’s’watul’lelum creates a familiar and welcoming atmosphere, where the Elders feel connected to their community.”*

**Kevin Albers, CEO, M’akola Housing Society**

## WOOD USE

The building is a conventional wood frame structure that employs 2x6 and 2x4 framing in combination with wood I-joist floors and 2x10 joists for the flat roof. At the lowest level to the west of the entrance atrium, the amenity spaces are contained within a concrete structure which acts as a podium for the wood frame upper floors. The concrete structure was necessary to separate the residential and assembly spaces. While the building is sprinklered, an alternative solution to the provisions of the British Columbia Building Code was required in order to achieve the four storey interconnected atrium space.

The lateral system for the structure consists of conventional wood-frame shear walls with ply-wood on one side, located between suites and along the corridors. Tie down anchors are used at the ends of the shear walls.

Post and beam construction is used for the entry canopy, roof deck and rear patio covered areas, and as ‘eyebrows’ over the level one windows. The entry canopy was constructed of heavy timber 8x10 Douglas-fir columns with 8x16 Douglas-fir beams and 8x12 purlins. These support 2x4 solid Douglas-fir plank decking, exposed on the underside and clear finished.

Douglas-fir was also used for the struts and soffits of the upper ‘butterfly’ roof, as well as in the design of the feature semi-circular trellis and pergola around the fire-pit. Interior wood finishes include feature ceiling treatments, and door and window sills and frames.

The wood for the building was locally sourced and band labour was employed where possible for the construction.



Photos courtesy of Independent Media Productions

## 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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