

NANAIMO REGIONAL GENERAL HOSPITAL EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT

LOCATION

Nanaimo, British Columbia

SIZE

3,080 m²

COMPLETION

2012

ARCHITECT

Stantec Architecture Ltd.

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER

Read Jones Christoffersen

**ENGINEERED WOOD
FABRICATOR**

Structurlam

GENERAL CONTRACTOR

CMF Construction Ltd.

PROJECT OWNER

Island Health (Vancouver Island Health Authority)

B.C. GOVERNMENT MINISTRY

Ministry of Health

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The city of Nanaimo is located on the east coast of Vancouver Island in British Columbia. The Nanaimo Regional General Hospital (NRGH) serves the city of 85,000, as well as the surrounding Nanaimo Regional District.

With a rapidly growing population, technological advances in medical treatment and an increasing emphasis on patient centred care, the old facility reached the end of its useful life. The Vancouver Island Health Authority decided to rehabilitate the existing building and add a new 3,080 square metre expansion. The construction started in the summer of 2010, and the building opened its doors in the fall of 2012.

The project follows the 'generative space' approach to design. This approach endeavours to create an environment that considerably improves the physical and psychological health,

quality of care, and quality of life for all building users. Among the strategies employed are access to daylight and views, physical and visual connection to nature, and the use of wood in both the interior and exterior of the building.

Many aspects of the design reflect these goals. The lobby and reception area are open and airy, with high ceilings and natural wood finishes. The planning of the space is also highly functional, with the reception structured so patients are easily triaged. The waiting areas and treatment pods are organized around individual courtyards. These courtyards are open to the sky, so the patients are connected to natural light and interior gardens at all times. A separate mental health unit includes four secure bedrooms, treatment rooms and courtyards, living spaces, and recreation areas.



Photo courtesy of Artez Photography

“A goal of the project was to create an environment that would be great for patients and staff, and a very important aspect of that was connection with nature. This was achieved with the courtyards bringing daylight in, as well as being able to get outside and experience the healing and calming effects of the outdoors. Use of wood both on the interior and exterior were part of our healing solution, and also supporting the BC Wood First values.”

Bruce Raber, Vice President and Healthcare Sector Lead for Canada, Stantec

WOOD USE

The idea that wood can play an important part in contributing to a healing environment is gaining acceptance among healthcare architects and practitioners. At the NGRH Emergency Department, the beneficial attributes of wood are introduced as soon as one approaches the building; the entrance is marked by a prominent glulam and heavy timber canopy that reaches out to greet arriving visitors. The canopy is supported by diagonal Douglas-fir glulam struts that spring from asymmetrical concrete bases. The struts support horizontal Douglas-fir glulam beams, and a secondary structure of solid Douglas-fir purlins and decking. Exterior seating benches in the area of the entrance are also made from reclaimed Douglas-fir.

Inside the building, a variety of applications showcases the complementary grain patterns and tones of different species. The Douglas-fir of the exterior canopy structures is carried into the interior where it is used for seating benches and trims.

Hemlock, finished in a warm tone to match the Douglas-fir, has been used for perforated acoustic ceiling panels in the entrance lobby and other communal areas, while sanded solid Eastern Maple handrails provide a warm and tactile accent to the main stair and continue along the connecting corridors. The link between the existing and new portions of the building is framed with Douglas-fir glulams and finished with fir paneling.



Top and bottom right photos courtesy of Artez Photography
Bottom left photo courtesy of Corey Stovin Photography

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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