

# OKANAGAN REGIONAL LIBRARY VERNON BRANCH

**LOCATION**

Vernon, British Columbia

**GENERAL CONTRACTOR**

Task Construction

**COMPLETION**

2012

**GLULAM FABRICATOR**

Structurlam Wood Products

**ARCHITECT**

CEI Architecture

**PROJECT OWNER**

Okanagan Regional Library

**STRUCTURAL ENGINEER**

Bush Bohlman and Partners

**PROJECT OVERVIEW**

The new Okanagan Regional Library Vernon Branch replaces an aging and outdated facility, that nonetheless had been well used and well loved by the community.

Perhaps more than any other type of community building, the role of the branch library has been transformed by the rapid advances in information technology. As libraries evolve from being perceived as book repositories to community service centres through which many kinds of information can be accessed, flexibility for the future is more important than ever.

A design 'charrette' involving the client, project team and stakeholder groups confirmed that the new facility should be flexible enough to tap the potential of emerging technologies

and meet the changing needs of users. It should also enhance user access, promote community engagement, and ensure a healthy environment for users and staff. The use of wood for both structural elements and interior finishes contributes to these goals with its warm and inviting appearance, its proven ability to reduce stress and beneficial physical attributes - being both non-toxic and dust free.

The building siting, envelope, glazing, and building systems were all designed to promote energy efficiency and sustainability. With the completion of the new facility, the area of the library has expanded, and now encompasses almost 3000 square metres over two floors of modern, open space boasting city-wide views and lots of natural light.



Photo courtesy of CEI Architecture

*“The new library features some very large and impressive wood beams which are fully visible from the top floor and add a very warming look to the entire facility. They capture the eye and really set the building apart.”*

**Don Nettleton, Financial Manager, Okanagan Regional Library**

The main floor features a kids area, teen area and a 125-person community meeting room opening directly to the street. Upstairs via an open staircase flooding both floors with natural light are public internet stations, a computer lab and study space, smaller meeting room, adult reading area and offices for library staff.

Through careful consideration of form, materials and relationship to context, the building design met the many different objectives of the project and resulted in a unique expression that is current, while still responding to the past.

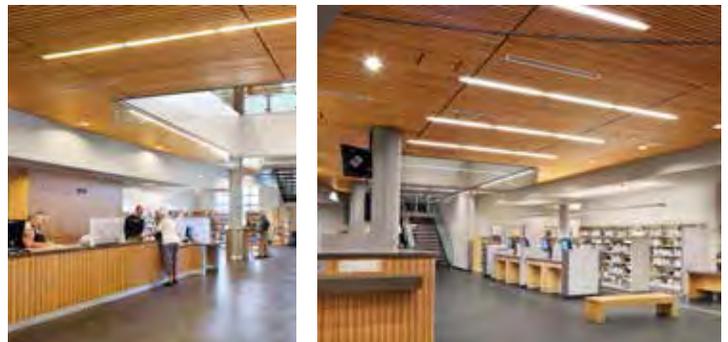
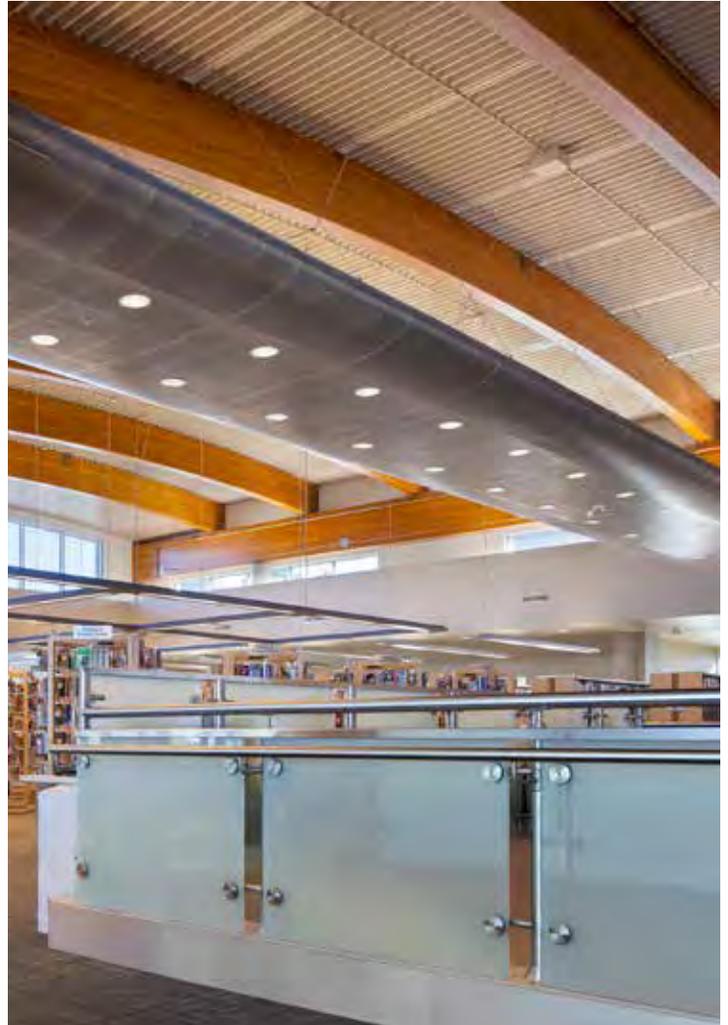
## WOOD USE

The original library building featured natural light and warm wood structural members and finishing

elements. From the outset, the project team was committed to incorporating these same attributes into the new building to the greatest extent possible.

The location of the building next to a minor railroad, and the inclusion of a parking garage in the program, dictated the use of concrete for the main building structure. However on the upper floor, which houses the adult collection and is organized around a skylit stairwell, wood is the dominant material.

Long span glulam roof beams minimize the need for internal column supports, and so provide flexibility for any future reconfiguration of the space. Slatted wood ceilings attenuate ambient noise, while millwork and veneers add to the richness and warmth of the space.



Photos courtesy of CEI Architecture

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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