

# SECHELT HOSPITAL

**LOCATION**

Sechelt, British Columbia

**SIZE**

5,400 m<sup>2</sup>

**COMPLETION**

2013

**ARCHITECT**

Farrow Partnership in association with Perkins+Will Canada

**STRUCTURAL ENGINEER**

Fast + Epp Structural Engineers

**CIVIL ENGINEER**

Stantec

**GENERAL CONTRACTOR**

Graham Construction and Engineering

**ENGINEERED WOOD FABRICATOR**

Structurlam Products

**PROJECT OWNER**

Vancouver Coastal Health

**PROJECT OVERVIEW**

Located on British Columbia's Sunshine Coast, this project involved the renovation of an existing district hospital, the expansion of the emergency department, new diagnostic imaging, ambulatory and special care facilities, as well as a new two-storey patient wing and entrance lobby.

Constructed on land donated by the Shishalh First Nation, the design approach was inspired by Aboriginal traditions that integrate both the natural environment and the local community into the healing process. With its curved corners and muted natural tones, the exterior form and finishes of the building evoke the traditional bent-wood cedar boxes used by the Shishalh people for storing sacred objects - a metaphor well-suited for a building in which those in the local community are cared for.

The new patient wing is designed with a narrow floor plan, giving all rooms access to natural light and ventilation and to views of the surrounding landscape. These features are known to improve patient outcomes and serve to enhance the sense of connection to 'place'. Indigenous planting, left largely untended, embeds the building in its unique coastal setting.

For its part, the new light-filled lobby performs a similar function. It serves both as a public gathering place for patients and their visitors, and as a connection between the new and existing parts of the building. Equally important, its design reinforces the connection of the physical building with the cultural roots of the community it serves.



Photo courtesy of Latreille & Delage

*“There is a strong relationship between the use of wood in the built environment and the effects on health outcomes. This is further enhanced when there are strong cultural ties to nature. This project drew upon the use of wood as a design concept and as a building material essential to the aboriginal life style.”*

**Larry Harder, AIBC**

*Director, Capital Projects, Vancouver Coastal Health*

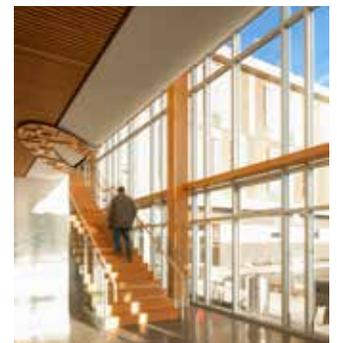
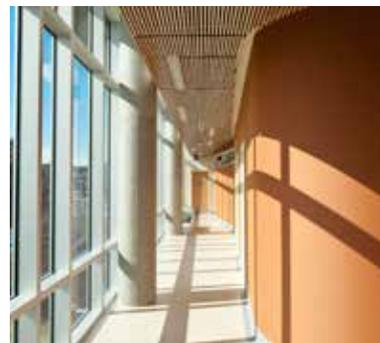
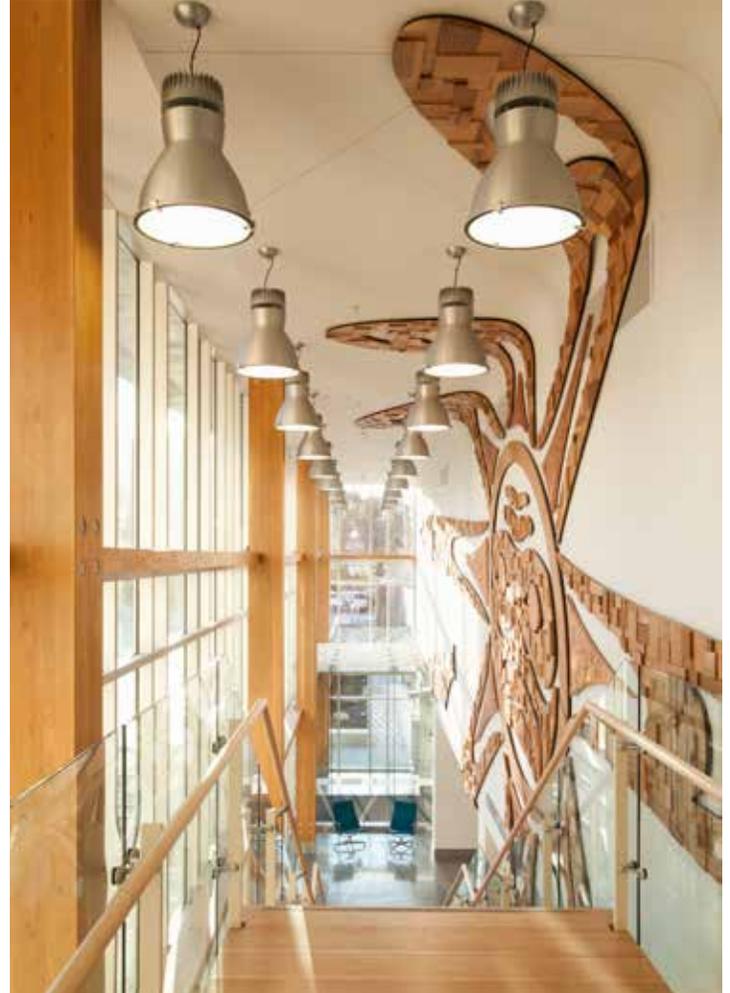
## WOOD USE

It is in the lobby that wood features most prominently. Here, where a welcoming atmosphere and a sense of wellbeing are most important, the natural warmth of wood makes a vital contribution.

The roof of the double height space is supported on Douglas-fir glue laminated (glulam) columns, mirroring the simple post and beam construction of coastal long-houses. A secondary structure of horizontal and vertical glulam members supports the glazed curtain wall, providing lateral resistance against wind loads. The bases of the vertical glulams are raised off the floor on steel knife plates secured with countersunk stainless steel screws and washers. A similar concealed connection is used between the vertical and horizontal of the curtain wall.

The feature staircase is constructed using strips of reclaimed Douglas-fir, biscuit jointed together to form combined tread and riser elements. Reclaimed Douglas-fir was also used to create slatted ceilings in the public areas of the building.

The structural and non-structural wood elements are deliberately refined in their detailing, so as to better compliment the western red cedar mural that extends the full 21 metre length of the lobby. Carved by artists from the Shishalh First Nation, the mural includes a canoe in which everyone paddles together – a symbol of the friendship and collaboration between all members of the community that has been manifested in this project, and underpins its future success.



*Photos courtesy of Latreille & Delage*

## 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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