

Thunder Bay Consolidated Courthouse



Americas Justice

This 200,000 ft², state-of-the-art facility brings two existing courthouses – the Superior Court of Justice and the Ontario Court of Justice – into one building in downtown Thunder Bay and will include space for a number of services, including the Victim/Witness Assistance Program and Legal Aid Ontario.

The facility’s design is also sensitive to the cultural aspects of the region and houses the Province’s first Aboriginal Settlement Conference Suite, specifically designed to respond to the needs of the region’s Aboriginal population.

Project facts		
Location Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada	Client Ministry of the Attorney General	Value (NPV) C\$247 million
Consortium Plenary Justice	Plenary Americas' role Project sponsor Developer Equity investor Financial arranger	Builder Bird Design-Build Con- struction
Architect Adamson Associates Archi- tects/Ricci Greene	Services Johnson Controls	Financial close date November 2010
Completion date February 2014	Contract Terms 32.75 years, DBFM	Awards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top 100 Projects, 2012 ReNew Canada • LEED® Silver Certified

The Thunder Bay Consolidated Courthouse serves the entire region, including the communities of Armstrong, Geraldton, Longlac, Manitouwadge, Marathon, Nipigon, Schreiber, Fort Hope, Ogoki Post and Lansdowne House. Bringing justice services together under one roof, in a modern accessible facility will help reduce delays in the court system and increase access to justice.

The facility is a six-storey building, with one level of parking below grade and an enclosed mechanical penthouse on the seventh level. It accommodates an estimated 250 personnel in 15 courtrooms and 4 conference/settlement rooms. The courthouse accommodates a maximum of 72 persons in custody in a day-use holding area at one time. This increases the total number of courtrooms available, and provides better public access and security.

The project achieved Substantial Completion in February 2014.



Design features

Green design

The new courthouse achieved LEED® Silver certification in January 2016. The green design elements include a glazed atrium that brings natural light deep into the building, as well as a focus on energy efficiency, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, a healthy indoor environment and green housekeeping practices.

User-focused design

The design also includes:

- barrier-free design for public access that includes fully barrier-free courtrooms, infrared hearing assistance and a barrier-free witness stand and jury box;
- enhanced accommodation for interpretation, including one jury room permanently equipped for simultaneous interpretation, and two portable interpretation booths; and
- capacity for expansion and internal flexibility, to ensure maximum usefulness throughout the life of the building.

Innovations

This project included a large payment from the government at the end of construction. The size of the payment resulted in inefficient financial structures.



Through innovative thinking, Plenary devised a financial structure that saved an additional \$500,000 in NPV by effectively negotiating drawdown and repayment timing and adjusting the commercial structure accordingly.

The financing solution for the project included a mix of bond and bank financing in order to efficiently address combined short and long funding needs. This combination required Plenary to manage intercreditor issues and provide creative solutions to reconcile the interests of the different debt providers.

Local economic impacts

Plenary Justice was responsible for assembling the construction team. Many elements of the construction were awarded to local trades, representing a direct investment of roughly \$30 million into the local Thunder Bay economy.

At the peak of construction, it is estimated that 225 workers were on site daily.