

SUNSET COMMUNITY CENTRE: FACILITY TOUR



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Background:

The new facility was designed by Bing Thom Architects and built by Haebler Construction Ltd., The design features a uniquely curved roofline resembling a five-petal flower when viewed from the air. The roof's design is also echoed in the gentle knolls of the new surrounding green space, bringing new visual interest to the traditional streetscape of Main Street. The new centre was relocated to Main St. to increase the public presence of the building.

The new facility at 30000 sf is 20% larger than the old centre that first opened in 1950. The use of concrete and glass creates an open, light-filled interior that provides space for a full-sized gymnasium featuring a hardwood floor and ceiling, two multipurpose rooms, a fitness centre, aerobics/dance room, arts and crafts room, youth lounge and two preschools. The facility was designed and built with numerous energy saving features, including a state-of-the-art geothermal heating and cooling system and radiant floor heating.

The replacement and relocation of one of Vancouver's oldest community centres was a joint project between the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia through the Canada/BC Infrastructure Program, the City of Vancouver, the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation and the Sunset Community Association.

The Canada/BC Infrastructure Program, administered through Western Economic Diversification, provided \$4 million and the Sunset Community Association contributed another \$900,000 towards the project. The balance of funds was provided by the City of Vancouver through its 2003-2005 Capital Plan.

An interesting historical note about the funding for the original Sunset Community Centre is that Bing Crosby came to Vancouver to do a fund raiser for the project and participated in the ground breaking for the building. This event was recorded in several ways and the records were stored in a time capsule located in the wall of the old community centre. The time capsule and its contents were removed when the old centre was officially decommissioned and the contents are now at the Vancouver City Archives.

The Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation officially opened the new Sunset Community Centre on April 7, 2008. Dignitaries at the opening ceremonies included Park Board Chair Korina Houghton, Sunset Community Association President Walter Schultz, Premier Gordon Campbell, Chuck Strahl, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Vancouver Mayor Sam Sullivan.

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Sustainability:

The Park Board identified sustainability as one of the five strategic directions that the Park Board will pursue in the 2005 to 2010 Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan states:

Greening the Park Board

- *Integrate sustainability concepts into the design, construction and maintenance of parks*
- *Advance the use of green building and facility technologies*
- *Build on current corporate greening practices and policies*
- *Advocate for a healthy urban environment*

This is complimented by the new Mission Statement: *"Provide, preserve and advocate for parks and recreation services to benefit people, communities and the environment"*

Sustainable design was a priority for the Sunset project and LEED accreditation was the means chosen to achieve this goal. The architectural request for proposals for the project specified that the building was to be designed to be a LEED project. During schematic design the project team decided that silver accreditation was the project goal. We thought at one time that Gold would be possible but we have missed a few credits that we needed to achieve that goal.

Strategies for achieving Silver accreditation:

Sustainable sites:

- Reduced parking capacity. The gravel parking lot provides parking for 61 cars which is less than the 81 spots required by the zoning bylaw. The gravel lot and grass swale also allow rain water to return to ground water.
- Reduced heat island effect through the use of low albedo roofing and reducing hard surfaces on the site.
- The soil excavated on the site was diverted from landfills and was used to build the berms in the field and as fill at the site of the old community centre.

Water efficiency:

- To reduce water consumption there is no irrigation of the landscaping and low consumption fixtures such as dual flush toilets and metering electronic faucets were used.

Energy and Atmosphere:

- The use of geothermal heating and cooling. A series of 40 wells were drilled in the field to the south of the new building to provide the source of the heating and cooling energy. The geothermal field provides approximately 60% of the building heating and cooling through two heat pumps. The geothermal field is supplemented by high efficiency Viessmann boilers. Nine of a possible ten credits were achieved for energy performance.

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- Best practice commissioning was done through a third party commissioning agency Airmec Systems.
- Purchasing “Green power” is still being considered.

Materials and Resources:

- 50% of the construction waste was diverted from landfills and we are trying to get the credit for 75% diversion
- We are also pursuing the credit for durable buildings

Indoor Environmental Quality:

- Thermal comfort, day lighting and views were the focus here. Windows and daylight have been provided in all program spaces and offices and opening windows also. The central corridors are skylit to reduce the need for lighting the circulation and gathering space when the centre is open during the majority of the year.

Other Features:

- The building is located on a portion of the Sunset nursery site. The park to the south of the building used to be inside the nursery and not usable by the public.
- The gym floor in the new centre is parquet which makes more efficient use of the tree since small pieces of wood are less wasteful to manufacture than long boards.
- The use of tilt up construction was chosen to reduce the amount of formwork required for the structural walls.
- The old community centre has been demolished and the site returned to park. The old centre was selectively demolished so that the lumber in the building could be repurposed or recycled, the concrete from the building and pool was crushed on site and used as structural fill, excess excavated material from the site of the new community centre was used as fill, all metals were recycled.