

## **A New Way of Treating Addiction and Mental Health**

With the completion of Phase 1A of redevelopment of the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) at 1001 Queen Street West in Toronto, Ontario, "we have begun the replacement of institutional facilities with an urban village and streetscape," says Christopher Edey, Communications and Urban Planning Manager in the Redevelopment Office at CAMH. "The mixed CAMH and non-CAMH functions will provide physical integration with the community, and recognition of better services needed for our clients."

The new building area is 81,313 square feet, with four connected buildings and courtyards. A ground floor corridor connects the larger building to three smaller buildings, which have linked corridors on each of their four floors for staff-only access transportation of food, laundry and other hospital services, and also for emergency access. "The exterior of the buildings is comprised mostly of brick and EIFS facades with numerous windows and some curtainwall," says Dean Sabeau, General Contractor, Eastern Construction Ltd.

The Ontario Ministry of Health funded 90 percent of the \$35 million budget. The new buildings were designed by The Community Care Consortium (C3) comprising three architectural firms: Kuwabara Payne McKenna Blumberg Architects (KPMB), Montgomery Sisam Architects Inc, and Kearns Mancini Architects Ltd. The complex blends into the Trinity-Bellwoods neighbourhood with the brick colours being reflective of Victorian Toronto. Brick walls from the original 1850 site remain on the east, west and south side of the site, protected by heritage legislation. The west wall has been re-pointed and topped with new metal caps. Work on the remaining walls is not yet scheduled. "The buff tone on the larger building ties in with the colour of the heritage walls, and the red brick on the three inpatient buildings indicate their separate functions, still tying in with the area," says Terry Montgomery, speaking on behalf of the consortium.

"The entire site, with the lower buildings and coloured brick gives the project European scale and Toronto identity." The larger building is brick and stucco with punched windows indicating its administrative functions and outpatient treatment services. Wood panels and bay windows lend residential character to the other buildings. "It's a hospital within an urban village with a typical city streetscape in the middle of the City of Toronto," Montgomery says.

Karen Martin, the Administrative Director of the Mood and Anxiety Program (MAP) at CAMH says, "The design of the new residence-like buildings indicates how far we've come and that we're moving forward. We have 24 rooms in each building with private washrooms and showers, and lockable doors, for clients who still require hospital care but who have progressed beyond the acute stage of their illnesses."

Each four-storey inpatient building has six private rooms per floor. One room per building is totally wheelchair accessible. Shared kitchen and lounge areas equipped with modern furnishings chosen by the design team provide meeting space for clients and work space for staff replacing the need for traditional nursing stations. Large windows provide access to the natural light "crucial to the clients' recovery," Martin says. Computerized work centres for staff and quiet rooms for clients and visitors are in each building. Frosted glazing on the windows and lights with occupancy sensors (an environmental consideration) provide privacy and indicate when a room is in use.

A green roof on the outpatient building and another roof structure disguise HVAC and other mechanical functions needed for a hospital facility. An eight-foot wooden fence between the north courtyard and public park on the north-west corner of the property provides client safety and privacy.

The landscape concept designed by Janet Rosenberg + Associates, Landscape Architects + Urban Designers, and built by Aldershot Landscaping "has a very contemporary approach and vision, and is in keeping with the new architectural aesthetic that blends easily with historic components," says Janet Rosenberg. "Horticulture is one of our strengths and we understand that the plant materials we choose need to meet all the maintenance requirements. The intent was to use a varied planting scheme that would provide interest throughout all seasons. The courtyards [on the north side, and behind each residential building] provide an alternative, calming environment for clients that allows for a more sensory experience and casual atmosphere for social interaction, all very important to the client's recovery." The carefully designed spatial sequences include passive areas, seating areas and walkways. "The big idea behind our design was to better integrate the institution into the city's fabric and eliminate, at least conceptually, boundaries and any stigma associated with the site by making it into a well-designed, well-landscaped space."

The 27-acre CAMH site on the south side of Queen Street West is bounded by Shaw Street to the east and Dovercourt Road to the west. Fennings Street and Ossington Avenue run north of Queen Street, and Sudbury Street to the south. Shops, boutiques and restaurants line the north side of Queen Street.

White Squirrel Way, an extension of Fennings Street, was named for the white squirrels in the area, as part of an extensive community consultation process. "Each building has its own street address, marked by original artwork purchased from artists who have been clients of the mental health and addictions system. We have this same art throughout as way finding aids to occupants and visitors," Martin says.

"One of the [construction] challenges, as with many projects in an urban setting, was the restrictive room for manoeuvring on site. A new city street with underground sewers, water and electrical services was incorporated into the design," Sabeen says. "Due to the site layout, this same new street served as the only construction roadway servicing the project. Needless to say, this led to creative scheduling activity to allow for installation of the underground services and construction of the street while at the same time allowing for construction activities to complete the project."

These new facilities offer inpatient "alternative milieu"(AM) settings providing treatment for mental health and addiction problems in an entirely new environment that the team "pushed each other to create" Martin notes. Staff are learning to work in "whole new ways" says Sheila Pitch, Transition Manager of Addiction Services. "Our workstation walls can move, and the furnishings were designed to work in either the workstation or a private office. There is also good staff integration for both mental health and addictions services because of the design of the new facilities."

Montgomery explains that "crucial dialogue occurred between the architectural team and the CAMH team, to make sure things were done right, and a post-occupancy review will be conducted to evaluate the impact of the design on recovery outcomes, which will be interesting."

**Sidebar:**

Originally built as the Toronto Lunatic Asylum in 1850 on 54 acres of land outside what was then city limits, this site has seen many changes. Over time, land was sold off and the CAMH site reduced to 27 acres that will be totally redeveloped. The full \$382 million project is scheduled for completion in 2020. Edey explains, "Future development includes further CAMH and non-CAMH facilities, two more public parks and street extensions that will complete the vision of an integrated urban village." The team celebrated the opening of Phase 1A in June to coincide with the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the creation of the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. This consolidated services from the Clarke Institute of Psychiatry, The Addiction Research Foundation, The Donwood, and the Queen Street Mental Health Centre, located throughout the Toronto area, into one. "We continue to transform lives and attitudes in these areas of health, and we look forward to the future," Edey says.

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