



**LOCATION**  
755 16th Street, West Vancouver, B.C.

**OWNER**  
District of West Vancouver

**PROJECT MANAGER**  
WSP

**ARCHITECT**  
DIALOG

**GENERAL CONTRACTOR**  
Smith Bros. & Wilson (B.C.) Ltd.

**STRUCTURAL CONSULTANT**  
RJC Engineers

**MECHANICAL CONSULTANT**  
AME Consulting Group

**ELECTRICAL CONSULTANT**  
AES Engineering Ltd.

**LANDSCAPE CONSULTANT**  
van der Zalm + associates inc.

**TOTAL SIZE**  
57,180 square feet

**TOTAL COST**  
\$36 million

# West Vancouver Police Services & Municipal Hall Project

by ZUZANNA WODZYNSKA

The residents of the District of West Vancouver, B.C. have been enjoying a new Police Services and Municipal Hall building since the official ribbon-cutting on October 30, 2017. The first of a multi-phase project, the new building replaces the long time police headquarters originally built in 1954. At various times it has shared space with a fire hall, a Provincial Court, and the Chamber of Commerce.

“Despite numerous renovations, the building was not fully accessible to those with mobility challenges and the building had no provision for fully secure storage of police vehicles,” explains constable Jeff Palmer, communications officer at West Vancouver Police. “That was aside from numerous age-related deficiencies, including a chronically leaky roof, a boiler intent on repeated breakdowns in winter, inadequate ventilation, pest intrusion, and unsafe building materials including asbestos throughout.”

Moreover, the existing facility was not constructed to post-disaster standards, which could prevent first responders from deploying equipment and vehicles, or delivering life-saving services to the community.

“The new building adds over 57,000 square feet of gross area to the existing municipal hall and includes a new police station, new municipal offices, a customer service centre, fitness room, shared meeting spaces that are also available for community use, as well as a new atrium that is able to accommodate public gatherings,” describes Trevor Thimm, associate at Dialog. “The overall height of the new building is confined to two storeys of



programmed space above two levels of underground parking.” The design team worked with the topography of the site, ensuring that the existing municipal hall tower retains its prominence and remains visible from neighbouring streets.

“We tried to establish a strong architectural dialogue between the new structure and the existing and adjacent Municipal Hall, setting a new vocabulary that is relevant to the current time and place, but taking cues from the Hall’s architectural expression,” says Thimm. “This includes a strong horizontal expression with pronounced cornice lines and soffits, an aluminum glazing system with dark spandrel panels, and cantilevered volumes raised on columns.” A simple material palette, well-defined forms

and organizational clarity, as well as exposed heavy timber roof structures in public interior spaces were also prominent in the architecture of that era, and included in the current design.

“Massing for the new building is organized along an extension of the north-south circulation spine that originates in the existing Hall,” describes Thimm. “This spine provides access to the customer service hub from a new visitor parking lot to the north and divides the new facility into police functions to the east and municipal functions to the west.”

The location of the new building, as with many projects, presented its challenges. “The building is situated adjacent to many residential housing units including apartment buildings. We tried to ensure we keep the

impact to the neighbourhood to a bare minimum. This resulted in having to rearrange impact activities to non-critical hours. The District of West Vancouver staff and management was a great assistance in helping to navigate through the neighbourhood conditions,” says Gary Cheema, project manager at Smith Bros. & Wilson (B.C.) Ltd.

The new building and existing Hall are linked by a two-storey multi-purpose atrium constructed of glulam beams and exposed glulam decking. Entry plazas at either end of the atrium serve as the main points of entry to the facility and provide additional places for public gathering.

“The primary landscape feature is an off-site streetscape treatment for three road frontages, designing it

not only for the site and architectural design, but to also follow the District of West Vancouver Ambleside streetscape standards,” explains Jennifer Wall, landscape designer from van der Zalm + associates inc. “The other notable landscape feature is a small amenity space that originally began as a rain garden, but transformed to having

significant seismic events,” notes Thimm. “It also includes redundancies in the mechanical and electrical systems, a large water reservoir to supplement the fire suppression system, and a sizable backup generator capable of running for 72 hours.”

Moving a 24/7 policing operation involved many unique challenges and needs. The option to close for a few days or over the weekend to set up a new facility does not exist. “Planning for the police move was started a year in advance of the actual move,” notes John Wong, manager of facilities and assets for the District of West Vancouver. “It included co-ordinating with outside agencies such as E-Comm, RCMP, Telus and Shaw to ensure these agencies could plan accordingly and make the move seamless.” It also included maintaining and documenting security of exhibits and confidential files, safely and securely moving firearms and other use-of-force tools, and ensuring all key technical systems were functional and compliant with all regulatory requirements.

The timeline created other challenges as well. “The District sold the property that the existing station occupied to a local developer, agreeing to have the police moved out of that facility

by the end of 2017,” remembers Thimm. “Multiple bid packages were issued over the course of several months so that demolition and foundation work could commence before design of the upper floors was complete.”

Cheema adds: “SBW had to overcome many challenges presented by this building from the constructability of a post-disaster building to the time-frame in which it needed to be built. With help of the consulting team, we managed to piecemeal the tender packages and fast track the project to meet the firm deadline of the police move. Furthermore, we worked closely with the structural engineer to design a flat slab system in order to utilize a state-of-the-art skydeck forming system, which further helped accelerate the project duration.”

Phase two of the project will entail the seismic upgrade and renewal of the existing Municipal Hall, and phase three will include the construction of a new Fire and Rescue Services building and Ambulance Services building.

“A project of this type has not been done anywhere else. It has freed up space and allowed us to move staff out of dilapidated buildings around the community and bring all employees together to serve our community,”

comments Nina Leemhuis, chief administrative officer for the District of West Vancouver. “Bringing police and municipal staff together creates a sense of co-operation and partnership, so that the priority of being a customer-centric organization can now actually happen.”

Len Goerke, chief constable of the West Vancouver Police, elaborates:



“Residents can now be assured West Vancouver Police will remain able to respond in the event of a major seismic or other natural emergency, while all residents and employees of West Vancouver Police can readily access all areas of an important public building, regardless of mobility challenges.” **A**



underground water storage with a low-profile landscape on top.” This space has basalt slabs scattered throughout, with a seating node overlooking the bands of Veronica and Isotoma.

“Designed as a post-disaster facility, the new building employs a robust concrete structure designed to withstand



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