



**LOCATION**  
6455 Macleod Trail, Calgary, Alberta

**OWNER/DEVELOPER**  
Cadillac Fairview Corporation Ltd.

**DESIGN CONSULTANT**  
GH+A Design

**ARCHITECT**  
Zeidler Architecture

**GENERAL CONTRACTOR**  
PCL Construction Management Inc.

**STRUCTURAL CONSULTANT**  
RJC Engineers

**MECHANICAL CONSULTANT**  
Smith + Andersen

**ELECTRICAL CONSULTANT**  
Designcore Engineering Ltd.

**LIGHTING CONSULTANT**  
Gabriel MacKinnon Lighting Design

**TOTAL SIZE**  
30,000 square feet

**TOTAL COST**  
\$17 million

# CF Chinook Centre Food Court Modernization

by ROBIN BRUNET

Every public facility becomes dated after a while, some pleasingly and some awkwardly so, and arguably a public venue that is more susceptible to looking out of date than others is the shopping mall food court – as was the case in Cadillac Fairview Corporation Ltd.’s CF Chinook Centre in Calgary.

Well kept and enthusiastically patronized but hopelessly garish, the food court would receive a \$17-million revitalization. Paige O’Neill, general manager of CF Chinook Centre, told the press when the project was announced in 2017, “The food court was last done in 2000, so it’s 18 years old and it’s time for a redo.” She added that the project would include expanding and modernizing units, enhancing décor elements like tiling, upgrading furniture with communal tables and banquets, and the implementation of sorting stations to improve the overall experience for guests.

The project would also include a revamp of the Centre’s existing outdoor patio – ultimately, the 30,000 square feet of redeveloped space would feature 835 seats and 20 dining options.

The redevelopment would augment several projects at the property, such as a newly opened pedestrian bridge that connects to CF Chinook Centre (the modernized food court would have direct access to this bridge, thus acting as a welcoming arrival experience for incoming shoppers). Another upgrade to the centre was a \$4.5-million investment to



the south portion of the facility, focusing on new tiling and railings.

Ian Ross, Cadillac Fairview’s senior director, architecture and design, remarks, “GH+A design studios was

the designer and Zeidler Architecture the executive architect. GH+A developed the design concept under close supervision from the internal CF Architecture and Design team, and

Zeidler documented and administered the project. As well, Gabriel MacKinnon Lighting Design was an important member of the design team and process.”

Joni Vallon, project director at GH+A design studios, describes the task her company faced in bringing new life to the food court. “It was very challenging to modernize: it had thematic ambience with a centrally located carousel and brightly coloured oversized tenant signs, along with a mixture of floor levels, odd shaped kiosks, and rustic materials,” she says. “The space is vast, so the challenge was to make it easy to navigate while offering different styles of seating and environments on a more intimate scale.”

Ross agrees, noting, “The key design challenge was working with the existing three level space, with careful consideration of sight lines to all retail units and factoring the addition of the new pedestrian bridge traffic flow lead to clearly defining circulation paths through the space. Increasing the seating capacity of the dining hall was also important and addressed by infilling an existing floor opening.

“Additional challenges also included working with the existing high open structure in the space, with the decision made early in the design process to leave the space open and clean it up, putting emphasis on elements at the lower levels of the space.”

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Vallon says, “Calgary has evolved into a sophisticated city, and we wanted to bring a fresh urban approach. The existing food court was a complex multi-level architectural shell with an abundance of columns and oversized detailing, so our goal was to simplify the space with broad architectural strokes. This was achieved using a strong black and white palette accented with natural woods and grey tones.”

She adds that GH+A’s design also called for wavy bulkheads to be straightened out and treated with a linear textured high gloss white tile; and tenant openings to be outlined in a elegant black quartz and thin large format tile frame, which would allow each venue to stand out.

New, simplified low walls in white glass mosaic tile would delineate each of the seating areas, and each area would feature its own common tables

and booths in warm wood tones, with custom lighting.

Sean Crawford, partner at Zeidler Architecture, says the first step in modernization consisted of “assessing the court and peeling back layers to determine its integrity – and apart from some water penetration and issues with some railings, it was in fairly decent shape.”

A full 3D scan was conducted of the food court and brought into Revit software “to establish exact existing heights, angles, and spaces,” says Crawford. “This process, which took a matter of weeks, allowed us to generate precise drawings and saved us countless hours overall.”

The construction process presided over by Chris Boehmer, project manager at PCL Construction Management Inc., was divided into two main phases: demolishing the south side of the dining hall and vendor spaces then rebuilding while keeping the north side open to shoppers (a process that commenced in January of 2018); then opening the new south side and closing off the north side for demolition and upgrading.

Most of the old décor was not reused, with one notable exception. “We absolutely loved the Louis Poulsen suspended vintage lights in spun aluminum, so they were carefully restored, re-lamped, and re-distributed to light

the seating areas, with the careful guidance of Gabriel MacKinnon Lighting Designers,” says Vallon.

A lot of PCL’s work was conducted after hours to minimize shopper disruption, and Crawford was impressed by the builders’ ability to cope with any circumstance. “PCL had only five months to complete phase one, and yet this was pulled off without any undue problems,” he says, adding that Designcore Engineering and mechanical consultants Smith + Andersen “deserve equal praise for doing a terrific job.”

As of early November the modernization was being prepped for opening, and Josh Thomson, VP, development at Cadillac Fairview, says, “Dining is an essential aspect of the overall shopping centre experience, and we are delighted to evolve the centre’s food court into a signature CF dining hall where guests can enjoy culinary delights in a premium environment.”

Vallon echoes the sentiments of her project colleagues when she says, “The space is unrecognizable: it’s clean, inviting, and hip yet classic. There was an outstanding collaboration between Cadillac Fairview, the designer, the architects, the lighting designers, and the contractors, and we are delighted with the final outcome.” **A**

**zeidler**  
ARCHITECTURE

**congratulations**  
to Cadillac Fairview on the success  
of the new CF Chinook Dining Hall  
—proud to be part of the team!

image credit Cadillac Fairview

*We’re proud to partner with  
the City of Calgary on the  
Centennial Planetarium —  
an exciting and important  
adaptive re-use project.*

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