



BRIDGEPOINT HOSPITAL

by Yvan Marston
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Bringing together a next-generation hospital with a fearsome 149-year-old jail could easily have become a study in contrasts:

One, the future of chronic care, and the other a grim reminder of past neglect. But the figure of Father Time carved into the keystone at the south entrance of the Renaissance Revival-style jail speaks to what unites the buildings.

Bridgepoint's new \$622-million facility is for longer stays to serve patients with complex chronic diseases. These patients need an environment that promotes wellness.

"The new building was designed to support our active care philosophy where patients, caregivers, family and community support are part of one coherent approach to providing care to people living with multiple and complex health conditions," says Jane Merkley, Bridgepoint's chief nursing executive.

And the space contributes to that, she says, explaining that by having views of the parks, city streets and buildings, patients have the opportunity to remain connected to the community. "This has positive impacts on their treatment, sense of hope and the healing process," she adds.

The 10-storey glass and zinc-paneled rectangular building sits on a north-south orientation taking full advantage of the cityscape to the west and nestled neatly into the hillside of Riverdale Park overlooking the Don Valley Parkway.

The fifth floor is deeply recessed which prevents it from appearing as one large monolithic block. Architecturally, it breaks down the composition of inpatient rooms above and below into smaller components. The fifth floor provides semi-public spaces in the core of the building providing opportunity for increased socialization.

"To unite the whole thing, you have a continuous plane of glazing in the centre of the west and east elevation. This unites the upper and lower half," says Greg Colucci of Diamond Schmitt Architects, whose firm, along with HDR Architecture, form the project's architects of record. "And wherever there is a break from the pure box, that is a space specifically for patient use such as a dining room, lounge or therapy," he says.

At the core of each floor are therapeutic services and on the perimeter are single- or double-occupancy rooms for its 464 patient load. Common therapy spaces are on every patient floor, as are communal dining facilities.

Besides the hospital foundation, there is little in the way of administration offices as most have been incorporated into an ambitious repurposing of the property's historic Don Jail, a notorious Toronto prison that was mothballed in the late 1970s.

The whole project – which includes public roadways, the new 680,000-square-foot facility, the heritage restoration and adaptive reuse of the historic jail, the demolition of a decommissioned modern jail (adjacent to the Don Jail) as well as the eventual destruction of the 1960s Bridgepoint Hospital – involves a complex arrangement making two teams of architects



responsible for the two-tiered project design and delivery under Infrastructure Ontario's Alternative Financing and Procurement (AFP) program.

The first team, Stantec Architecture Ltd. and KPMB Architects, formed a joint venture in 2006 to design the new hospital for Bridgepoint.

The hospital called for a design exemplar, which saw the team design what the building would look like, its materiality and spatial arrangements. This joint venture produced the Project Specific Output Specification (PSOS) that Bridgepoint then put to tender.

"The design exemplar was very prescriptive," says Mitchell Hall of KPMB. "The PSOS included over 250 drawings and outlined mandatory requirements – everything from the size and shape of the building to details about the material." As the first design exemplar P3 project in Ontario, it was attractive for the joint venture because of the level of specificity required, explains Stuart Elgie of Stantec Architecture.

When Plenary Health and PCL Constructors Canada were awarded the work, they had their own team of architects, HDR Architecture and Diamond Schmitt Architects Inc. They became responsible for the design as constructed. This team developed the design exemplar as set out by Stantec | KPMB and the rest of the planning design compliance (PDC) team.

As large construction projects in Ontario go, such complex P3 arrangements have become increasingly common since 2009, says Darius Zaccak, of PCL Constructors, the designbuild contractor on the project. "We've taken a very broad role here, one that is an extension of our traditional role as general constructor or construction manager," he says.

Building in the well-established Riverdale neighbourhood, mere feet from a fully-operational hospital, as well as restoring another structure that is physically connected to a working jail, posed a host of challenges for the constructor.

"The first thing we did was to articulate the plan in a simple way by detailing things like the number of trucks coming through the neighbourhood," says Zaccak. PCL then coordinated regular meetings with the community and the site's existing tenants to inform them on things like project status and when roads would be closed.

Reintegration into the community is the ultimate goal for patients here and it was important to bring the community into the hospital space, says Stuart Elgie of Stantec. "One of the key moves from this perspective was the connection from

Gerrard Street and north through the site to Riverdale Park." On the east-west axis, pedestrians can come through the site's civic court and into the building's main lobby. Here pedestrians can enjoy the terrace views to the west or exit and move through the gardens to the north and out to the park.

"The idea was that we could bring the landscape of Riverdale Park and the Don Valley right into the site through the civic court and ideally up through the building with the terraces on the fifth floor and the roof garden on the tenth," says KPMB's Mitchell Hall. Working with the design exemplar, prime consultants HDR Architecture faced challenges with maintaining the building as it was specified while finding improvements and innovations as it moved the project to completion.

"We wound up changing the stacking of the hospital on the lowest level because it provided better access to parking for outpatients," says Tod Landscape Architect

Trigg, a senior project manager with HDR. The team included former hospital administrators capable of providing Bridgepoint with detailed explanations of how nurses would work within the new building's programming.

"As the architects charged with delivery we had to propose alternatives to the design to achieve the same design intent," explains Brian McClean, HDR's associate managing principal.

Design-build contractor, Plan Group Inc., says that respecting and retaining the historic fabric of the building was integral. While there were physical space limitations involved in the project, these were solved by the co-location of some services. In addition,

Plan Group used a number of innovative solutions to enhance the building. One of the technological solutions was the implementation of an Integrated Management Information Monitoring System which allows certain users in the facility to monitor alerts and see notifications from the various building systems all with one user interface.



The repurposing of the old Don Jail was also a matter of maintaining aspects of architectural intent. The heritage significance of the building and site called for the provision of public areas within that were preserved for historic interpretation.

The five-sided rotunda forms the Don Jail’s staging and surveillance core and is now a public area. Above, the wooden catwalks once patrolled by guards still ring the upper levels where are now housed senior executive offices. The wings east and west provide further workspace so that as many as 186 users can occupy the building. Cleaning and restoring almost 150 years of dirt and grime on the exterior required considerable work, explains lead heritage architect Paul Sapounzi of The Ventin Group Ltd. (+VG). There are different schools of thought on cleaning, he explains. Do you bring it back to pristine state or do you do the bare minimum and just remove any material that may cause damage?

Bridgepoint’s heritage architect E.R.A. Architects Inc. outlined in the output specifications that some amount of “patina” was appropriate. Sapounzi’s team managed to find that middle ground: not perfectly clean but with most of the heavy staining removed.

“We still left a significant amount of the staining because that was an important element of telling the story of the building,” he says, adding that it is about balancing the need to acknowledge the site and what went on there with the need to change the story.



Location

Gerrard Street & Broadview Avenue,
Toronto, Ontario

Owner

Bridgepoint Health

Owners’ advisor

Infrastructure Ontario

Developer/project manager

Plenary Group

Planning, Design & Compliance

Architects

Stantec Architecture / KPMB Architects

Design-Build Contractor

PCL Constructors Canada Inc.

Architects

HDR Architecture / Diamond Schmitt Architects
Incorporated

Heritage Architects

+ VG Architects

Structural/Leed consultant

Halsall Associates limited

Mechanical/Electrical Consultant

Smith and Andersen Consulting Engineering

Landscape Architect

The MBTW Group

Civil Consultant

A. M. Candaras Associates Inc.

Urban Design Consultants

Urban Strategies

Total Area

680,000 square feet

Total Construction Cost

\$622 million (build and operate)