

PROJECT COMPLETES DECADE-OLD HERITAGE BUILDING REVITALIZATION



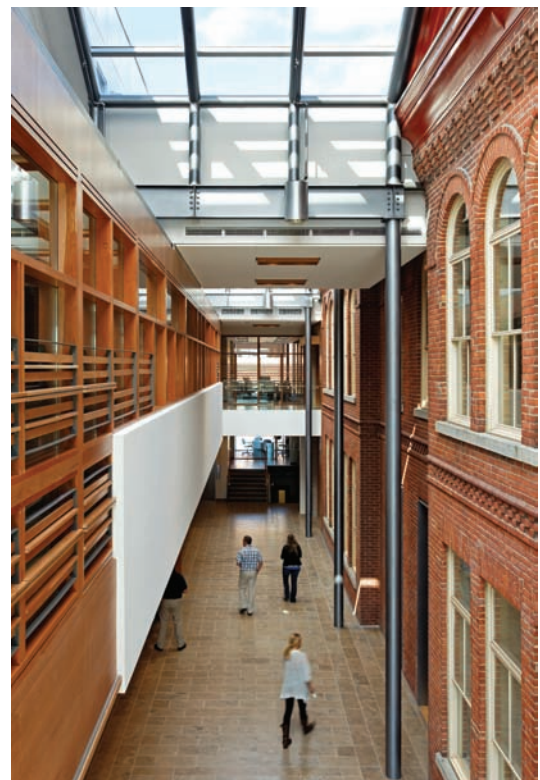
Article Courtesy of *The Ontario Construction Report*, Published December 2012

photos by DAVE WHITTAKER

+VG Architects' success in completing a \$28-million addition to the original Victoria School building at Queen's University concludes a revitalization project that began more than a decade ago. The expansion opened to students in September and was completed within the university's budget.

+VG partner Chris Hall said the project's first phase, completed 10 years ago, included the restoration of the original Kingston building constructed between 1892 and 1914 and a 68,000 sq. ft. addition at the building's east side to create Goodes Hall, the Queen's School of Business home. "The latest addition is 75,000 sq. ft. over four above-ground storeys and one below ground, plus a level of underground parking with spaces for about 90 cars", he said.

Hall said virtually the same team worked on the most recent project as the original decade-old renovation. The designers revisited their previous work, which set the standard for the school, and sought to refine the details for a seamless look to the overall building. "It was really interesting to revisit this," said Hall. "We were able to find a compatibility of details and new and





DAVE WHITTAKER

unique gestures to connect the original school so it looks and feels like the whole structure has always been there.”

The architects made extensive use of glass to eliminate academic silos and bring the campus cultures together. “There was an expectation by the university that the new phase would mirror the first phase somewhat, but we wanted to provide spaces that would compliment each other instead of competing,” said +VG partner Peter Berton.

“Where phase one featured an atrium, phase two has the “commons” with tiered levels geared towards gathering,” said Hall. “This is a south facing area with predictable sun, so through high performance glazing and summer shading components we were able to create a beautiful, transparent space which is really connected to the campus.”

The addition includes two 80-seat theatres and a flat floor class for special events and guest speakers. The new wing also offers additional study rooms and two floors of faculty offices. “There is a green roof and a faculty lounge with a deck overlooking the campus,” said Hall.

The building has been designated to LEED Silver standards. Berton said the new building has its own cooling plant and has tapped into the university’s steam heating.

“One of the bigger challenges was rationalizing a historic building raised five feet above grade with accessibility,” he said. “In phase one, we put the whole ground floor at the same level as the main building and created a natural ramp hidden behind a colonnade. For phase two, we utilized the level change to create the interior tiered seating area of the commons.”

Hightech Woodcraft general manager Ricardo Dos Santos said his company has done a lot of millwork and cabinetry with +VG over the past 20 years. Do Santos says his company created custom wall panels, kitchen cabinetry, and acoustic wood ceiling panels and decorative panelling for the school of business project. “The biggest challenge was creating custom wrap around wood screens but we pride ourselves on attention to detail and craftsmanship so we enjoy challenges like these.” The work incorporated Hightech’s understanding of differences in wood treatments and glues for sustainable projects.

The project required a tunnel under Union Street to connect the new underground parking to the Tindall Field parking garage, requiring significant civil work. “The footprint we had to work with was not large enough to handle a ramp so connecting to the existing garage saved money and maximized the parking capacity under the addition,” said Berton. “It may not be an intuitive way into the parking area, but it makes sense.”

Hall said +VG Architects specializes in education restoration and re-use - a natural fit for this project. “Nicole Crabtree was our project manager for this job and she was integral in getting the project completed,” he said. •

+VG The Ventin Group Architects is a full-service architectural firm offering new design, expansions and heritage restorations for cultural, educational, municipal, justice, healthcare, residential and recreational facilities. Our staff of 50+ operates in five offices in Ontario, in Brantford, Kitchener, Toronto and Belleville. See www.plusvg.com for more information.