

PARKIN ARCHITECTS LIMITED



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Thirty years of innovative public design

Not all architecture firms vie for the high-profile commercial contracts. Some find more appeal in dedicating a large portion of their time and energy to public service design, and the pursuit is not without reward. With a legacy covering almost 80 years, Parkin Architects Limited has built a thriving business over the last thirty years on innovative design projects for many of Canada's leading healthcare, educational, recreation, justice, and research institutions. It's currently a leader in a new, more holistic approach to designing correctional institutions with facilities planned, designed or built in Nunavut, Newfoundland, Windsor and Toronto.

THE FIRM SPECIALIZES in architectural services for institutional clients, such as acute and mental healthcare, recreational, research, justice, correctional, and educational. It is a long-standing leader in healthcare architecture in Canada. Its Vancouver, Toronto and Ottawa offices serve both Canadian and international clients with the immediacy and attention of a local service. Its designs can currently be found in eight provinces, and in Nunavut. Clients include some of the foremost Canadian institutions, many of which have enjoyed ongoing relationships for over 20 years.

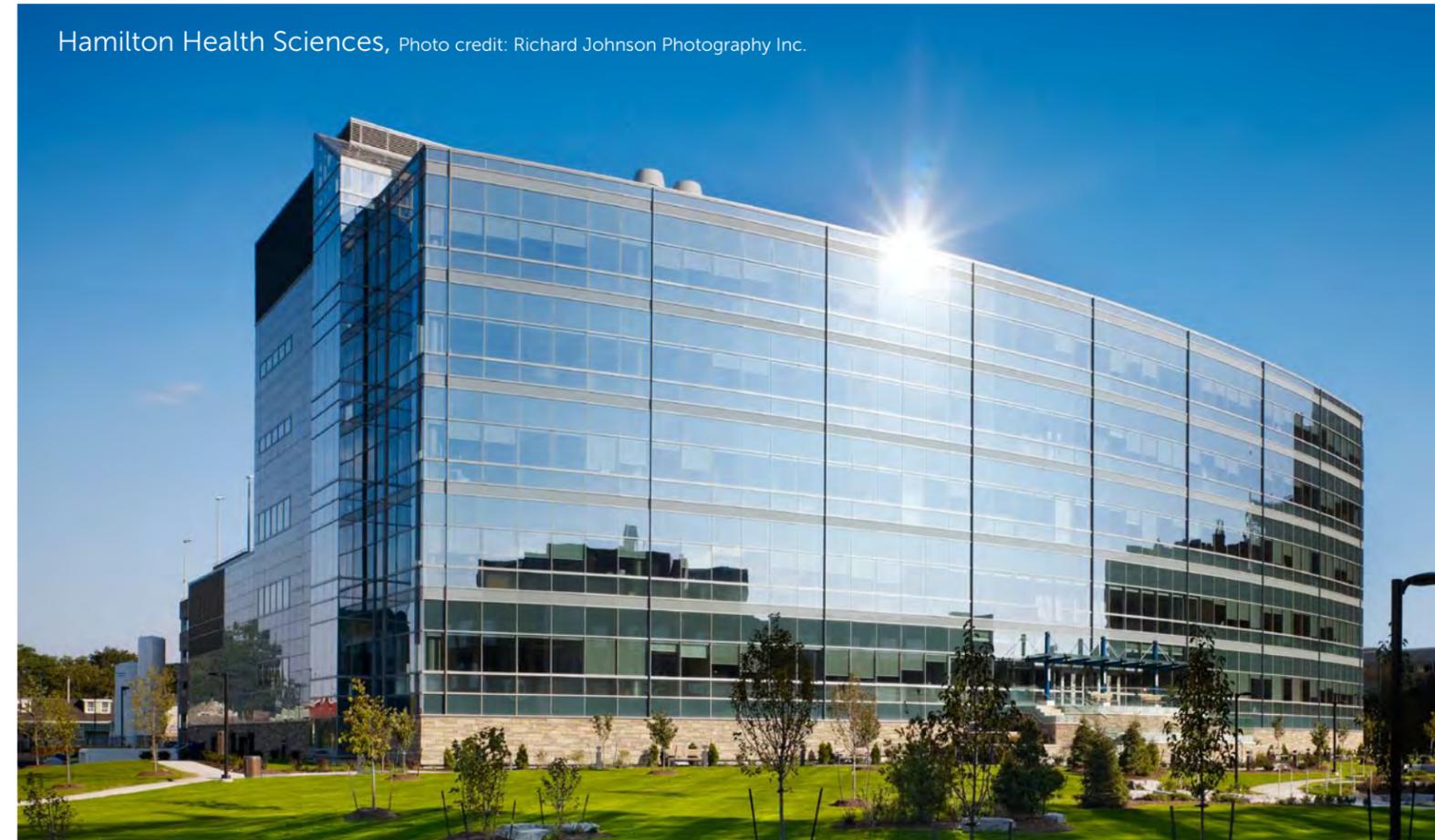
The Canadian Business Journal spoke with

founder and director Harland Lindsay about the firm's dedication to designing challenging and innovative structures, its expertise in healthcare and public-private partnerships (P3), and its plan to expand into countries that can benefit from its years of professional experience.

Innovative designs in interesting places

In Nunavut's remote and harsh Arctic climate, Parkin is currently working on five, independent design-and-build projects that include two high schools, a middle school, a police facility, and a hospital renovation. Northern Canada presents many logistical challenges, but Lindsay explains that the firm thrives on the challenges and the opportunity to work with northern communities, which are unique experiences because of the values these communities espouse. The Inuit, for example, are guided by certain principles that govern how a building is designed, such as the common good, respect, harmony and balance and preparing for the future. As a result, Parkin designers must build each structure to promote and celebrate Inuit values, culture and sensitivities.

"It's interesting designing up there. They are great people to work with. They have a different philosophy on the way that they educate, and particularly in the way that they deal with people who have committed crime. They look upon their criminals as being not evil people, but people who need to be healed," Lindsay explains. "That's a rather refreshing change from what





Southwest Centre Photo credit: Shai Gil Photography

you will find in the majority of North America. It makes it special for those of us who are working up there; it makes it a special place to do work.”

Correctional facilities designed as healing environments

The Parkin design approach is similar in many ways to that of the Inuit culture. In 2012, the firm designed one of Canada’s first correctional facilities designed as a healing environment, called the Rankin Inlet Healing Facility. The facility included ceramic toilets, carpet and linoleum flooring, wood finishes and windows that open.

Over the years, Parkin has become a leader in a new way of designing correctional facilities in Canada. Called direct supervision, this method is based on a new way of operating correctional facilities which involves guards, community volunteers, inmates and victims interacting more significantly. The objective is to provide an environment that supports the reintegration of individuals back into society.

When Parkin submitted the Rankin project to Behavioral Health, an American trade magazine dedicated to psychiatric issues, the adjudicators noted that the facility “would make a better psychiatric hospital than at least 95 percent of the facilities that are in use as psychiatric hospitals in the USA today,” Lindsay says.

Expertise in public-private partnerships
Parkin is heavily active in P3 and the firm designed the first P3 hospital in Ontario, now

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known as Brampton Civic Hospital. Lindsay explains that P3 have rapidly become a way of providing lower-cost, higher-quality public infrastructure in Canada and internationally. He says Canada’s P3 market is expanding and the country’s growing expertise has established it as a global leader.

Some of the P3 buildings designed by Parkin include the Providence Care Hospital in Kingston, Ontario. Much of the facility is composed of complex continuing care, physical medicine and rehabilitation, and specialized mental health services. Parkin designed the forensic mental health unit as an inpatient unit comprising single-patient rooms, grouped in three pods of 10 beds. These pods include quiet activity rooms, lounges,

Wilfrid Laurier University Centre Photo credit: Richard Johnson Photography Inc.



kitchenettes and outdoor porches.

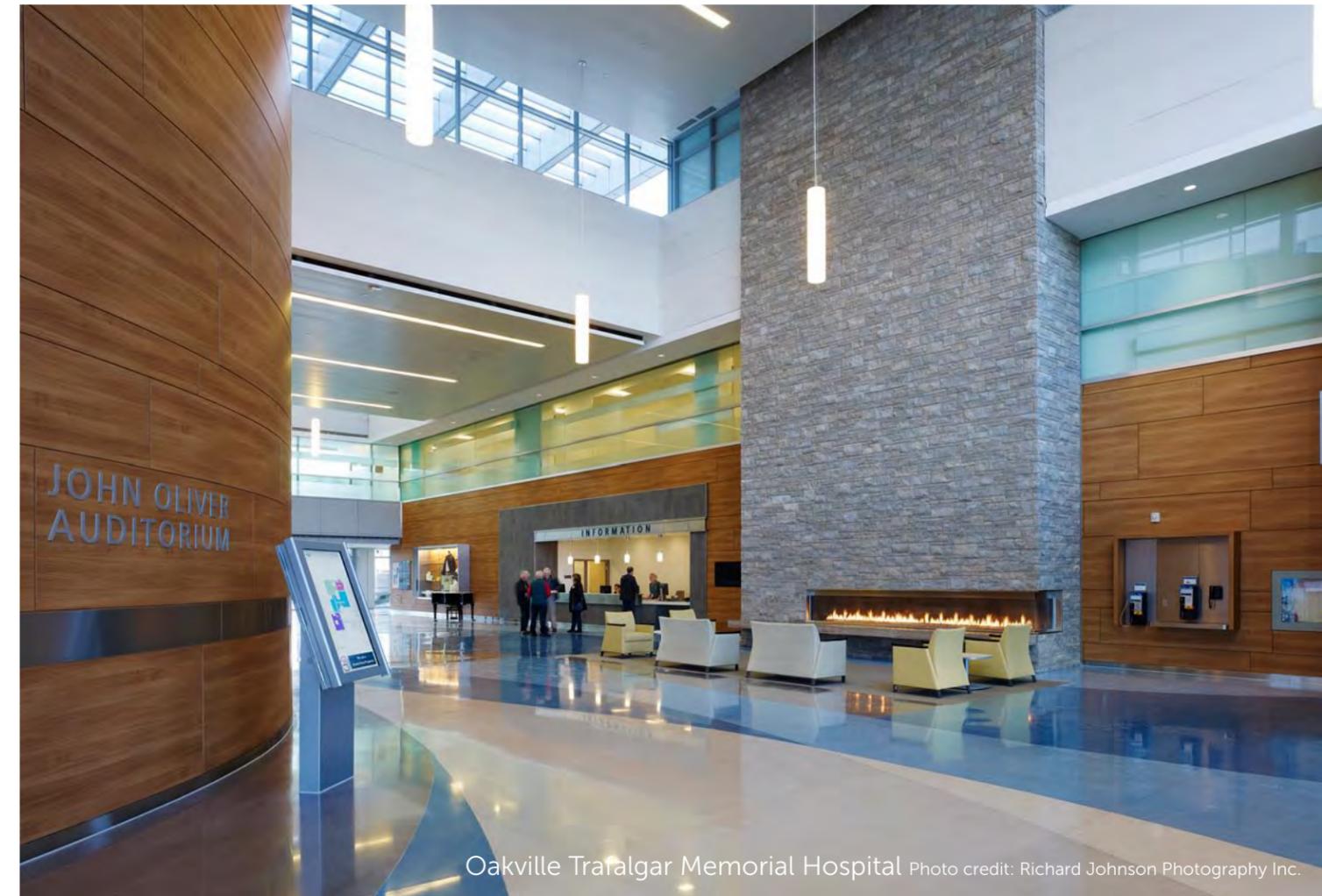
Parkin also recently designed the new critical care tower at Surrey Memorial Hospital to meet the challenges of the busiest emergency department in British Columbia. The new facility is LEED Gold accredited. It also includes the first stage of pediatric redevelopment in the lower mainland region, where the design focuses on family-centred care, complete with a Ronald MacDonald Family Lounge and overnight rooms for parents.

Exporting expertise abroad

In considering future plans, Lindsay stresses the importance of continuing to contribute to society in a positive way. With its growing expertise in P3 and healthcare infrastructure, Parkin is beginning to actively market beyond Canada in South America, Europe, the Middle East. "With our hospital experience, particularly, and some of our justice experience, we have expertise that we can export to other countries that are also going through, not only traditional architecture, but also the P3 process," Lindsay explains.

"We walk in the shoes of our clients, especially in healthcare. We have spent time in ORs, we've spent time in labs, we've spent time in radiology, with surgeons, nurses, radiologists and housekeeping staff, watching what they do, and how they do it. So we're able to bring a wealth of practical experience to our clients," he adds.

In fact, giving back to the community and



Oakville Traralgar Memorial Hospital Photo credit: Richard Johnson Photography Inc.

being passionate about doing so is one of the firm's core principles. "We're profoundly passionate about what we do. It's easy to believe in the kind of buildings that we tend to design," he says. "Being passionate about healthcare facilities - facilities that are for the benefit of humankind - they make it easy to be passionate, and we are."

Lindsay attributes much of the firm's success to having relatively small, yet extremely hardworking and integrated teams that can make decisions quickly. "There is no corporate clutter in here. We're not a huge firm. Each of us knows what's expected of each other and of ourselves. The decisions that our clients and consultants

can rely on, we can make very quickly," he says. "One of our core factors is integrity and trustworthiness; we are honest, honourable and straight forward. We all prefer to sleep at night thank you very much, so we make commitments and we don't walk away from them." **CBJ**

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AS SEEN IN THE FEBRUARY 2016 ISSUE OF THE CANADIAN BUSINESS JOURNAL

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