



PARCEL 11 STATS

Usage: Community Centre/Daycare
Materials: Zinc, glass, concrete.

West Side
2 Stories

Community Centre/Daycare
45,000 SF

East Side
3 Stories

With the construction of a new neighbourhood came the need for new amenities. A community centre was assigned a spot on the waterfront at the northeast corner of the Olympic Village. Architects Nick Milkovich and Walter Francl collaborated on the design, with early ideas contributed by Arthur Erickson.

“We were given a fairly complex program,” says Francl. “It’s not just a community centre; it’s a day care and a boating facility, as well as a two-storey restaurant.”

The site offered additional challenges. “It’s such a long space – 100 feet deep, and it felt like two miles long,” says Milkovich. “So shaping it to create a gathering space, and opening it to the street and to the water, those were key.” To protect residential views, the community centre was limited to two storeys at the west rising to three at the east.

“What transpired was a building form that presents a strong unified presence yet is as transparent as possible to the street,” says Francl. “You can see through the lobby, into the gymnasium, into the various elements of the restaurant. Then its curving

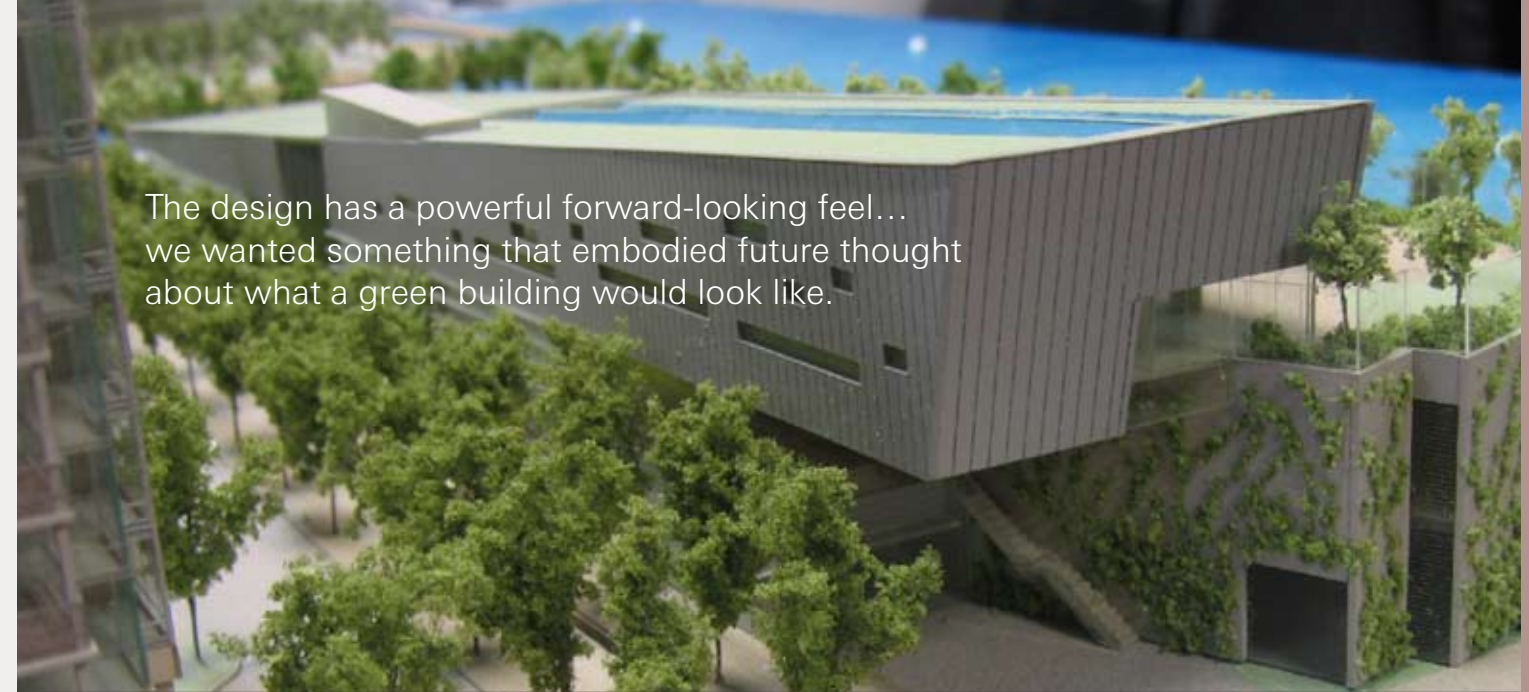
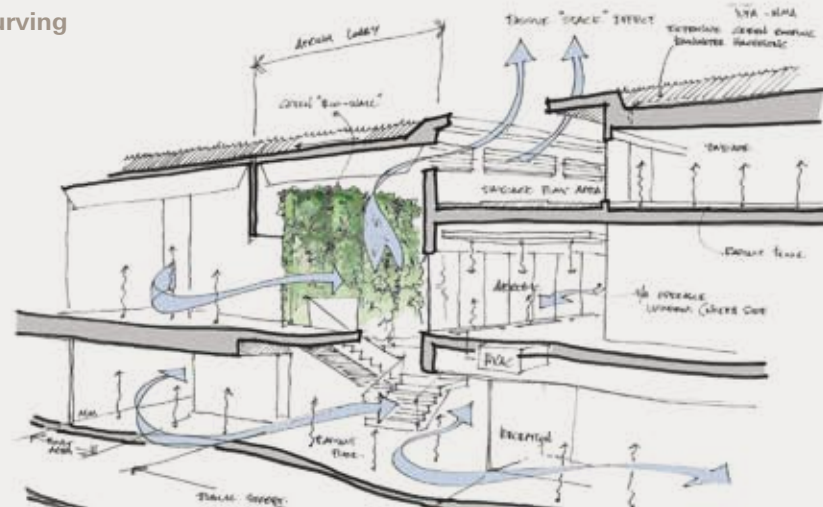
form on the north side embraces a plaza, to enclose the space a bit.” The building’s lobby is broken with a two-storey space that provides walk-through access from the street to the waterfront. With so much glass, extra attention to shading was required to prevent overheating in the sun.

Francl says designing for a community that doesn’t yet exist – and has no local residents to speak for it – was unusual. “We tried to respond with a design that has a powerful forward-looking feel,” he says. “It’s a LEED Platinum building [in the summer it may generate more power than it needs] so we wanted something that really embodied future thought about what a green building would look like. It’s futuristic perhaps, but it has a very elemental quality with zinc and concrete and glass; it might have erupted out of the ground itself.”

Boating groups will use space on the main floor, while the day care will occupy the top floor of the building, with a large outdoor play space on the roof. Says Francl, “It has a magnificent view out over False Creek. It’s going to be the nicest day care in the city.”



Above: Parcel 11 elevation drawings from all sides. At right, a sketch shows relationships between passive design features and mechanical systems.



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From early scale models to laying the sod on the green roof, the community centre becomes a reality. The building is aiming for LEED Platinum certification.



PROFILE

Walter Francl

BSc, BArch, MArch, PEng, MAIBC, LEED-AP
Walter Francl Architecture Inc.

Interested in building since he was a child, Walter Francl studied structural engineering and then enrolled in architecture. He worked for James Cheng before pursuing a master’s degree at Harvard University. Back in Vancouver, he worked for the firm that would become Stantec, and then launched his own practice.

Francl has worked on a number of projects for the Vancouver Park Board, including the Kitsilano Community Centre and Trout Lake Arena. He collaborated with Nick Milkovich and Arthur Erickson on the community centre at the Olympic Village.

“It’s been a bit of a nail-biter,” Francl says of the project’s tight timeline. “It’s exhilarating and rewarding too. The glaziers and the metal cladding applicators really want to do this job right, they’re very committed. I think everybody rises to it for a job that’s of this caliber.”

Francl says the SEFC project is important in its effort to rethink the urban context. “This is going to be a new typology for North America in terms of building type, and Vancouver has led the way. I think everybody’s going to be quite amazed when they start walking around. It’s been an inspiration. I’m happy to have been involved.”