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PERSPECTIVE RAIC | IRAC Architecture Canada

by ANGIE SAUVÉ
Membership and Communications Co-ordinator - RAIC

Nanaimo Celebrates Architecture

The Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (RAIC) is heading to Nanaimo, B.C. in June for the 2016 Festival of Architecture. This annual conference is designed to engage the public as well as architects from across the country. It's an exciting opportunity for those interested in the built environment to network, socialize and learn.

The four-day Festival celebrates the theme of CONNEXIONS. It will explore how design connects a community, how spaces can shape our life experiences and how people can work together to contribute to solving problems on a local and global scale.

For architects and those with an interest in design, there are many natural and architectural sites of interest in Nanaimo. Festival attendees can visit the various ports that welcome visitors by sea, such as the Port Authority Welcome Centre, designed by Checkwith Poiron Architects. The 14,000-square-foot building, completed in 2011, was designed to receive cruise ship passengers. Showcasing local resources, it employs a variety of wood products, giving the main hall the feeling of a giant ship's hull. Glass walls offer panoramic views of the Nanaimo Harbour.

The BC Ferries Departure Bay Ferry Terminal, by Grout McTavish Architects of Vancouver, sees more than 300,000 passengers a year. Innovative structural systems, natural daylighting, a Sea Loop heat exchange system and radiant heat floor slabs contributed to this project's LEED Silver rating.

In nearby Cathedral Grove in MacMillan Provincial Park, visitors can stand beneath giant Douglas fir trees that are more than 800 years old. The forest is on the highway between Qualicum Beach and Port Alberni, and short easy trails lead directly from the roadside.

The Festival is an excellent way to collect continuing education points through a wide range of high-quality continuing education sessions. This year's topics, among many others, include the challenges of modernizing schools in a First Nations community; the building of a tall timber student residence; the stories behind a university multi-faith centre and the Halifax Central Library and how to integrate building performance analyses in early design.

The conference offers sessions by leading experts and inspiring keynote speakers such as Shawn Atleo, National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations; Ken Greenberg, FRAIC, urban designer and former Director of Urban Design and Architecture for the City of Toronto; and Marc Kushner, co-founder and CEO of Architizer, an American media company that focuses on architecture.



▲ Nanaimo Port Authority Welcome Centre.



▲ Departure Bay Ferry Terminal.

Patrick Reid Stewart, MRAIC, the first person of First Nations ancestry to be elected President of the Architectural Institute of British Columbia, will speak at the conference. Monica Adair, MRAIC, winner of the 2015 RAIC Young Architect Award, will present a session. Past RAIC award winners will be in attendance including Gold Medalists Peter Busby, FRAIC, and Brian MacKay-Lyons, FRAIC.

A walking tour with the City of Nanaimo's heritage planner, Chris Sholberg will focus on Nanaimo's heritage as told through its buildings. Participants will receive an overview of the city's heritage conservation program, including successes and challenges. To promote public awareness, the Festival will include members of the community in a design charrette and a sketching tour.

Festival participants will have a chance to relax and catch up with fellow architects from across Canada during a variety of lively social events. The opening reception will offer a Coast Salish experience with traditional cuisine and performances, in celebration of the cultural richness of First Nations communities of the West Coast.

The 2016 RAIC Festival of Architecture takes place at the Nanaimo Convention Centre, from June 8 to 11, 2016.

For a full list of speakers, events, and to register, visit Festival2016.raic.org