PARTNERSHIPS AS A CATALYST FOR DEVELOPMENT

2012 AIA PROGRESSIVE ARCHITECTURE AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

“Will make a huge difference in this place” – Ann Beha (juror)

“It brings a historical neighborhood into the 21st century in a way” – Mary-Ann Ray (juror)

LAURIER BRANTFORD YMCA ATHLETICS & RECREATION CENTRE
Presentation Contents

• Project context/description
• City of Brantford context/impact
• Evolution of partnership – benefits/challenges
• Role of design for successful development/partner needs/obtaining funding
• Importance of planning and aligning plans between partners
• Q&A

Overview of Wilfrid Laurier University

• Established in 1911 at the Evangelical Lutheran Seminary of Canada
• Known for its innovation in academic programming and delivery
• One of the fastest growing universities in Canada, with enrolment doubling over the last ten years

Four university locations:
• Waterloo
• Brantford
• Kitchener
• Toronto
Brantford Campus Facts

- At the inception of the Brantford Campus in 1999 there were 39 students; as of November 2015, there were over 3,000 students.

- The Campus Master Plan calls for creation of an integrated urban campus through "strategically located new construction and adaptive reuse of existing downtown buildings."

- Currently operates in 19 buildings

- Covers over 634,997 square feet

- Employer of about 268 full-time and part-time employees

Brantford Campus Growth Projections

First phase: 2010/2011
- Development on existing or recently acquired University landholdings accommodate new student residences, athletics and learning commons to enrolment of 2,800

Second phase: 2-7 year period, through to 2016/17
- Development will require additional land, provide additional academic space, new residence space and parking to enrolment of 4,000

Third phase: 7-12 year period, through to 2022/23
- Additional land required to accommodate additional academic space, residences and potentially parking to enrolment of 8,000

Fourth phase: After 2023
- Expected to reach enrolment of 15,000
Brantford, Ontario-Characteristics

The City of Brantford is:

- A City of 100,000 people in Ontario, Canada
- 10th fastest growing metropolitan area in Canada
- Downtown is designated as an *Urban Growth Centre* and directed to achieve a density of 150 residents/jobs per hectare by 2031
- Post-secondary expansion contributes to achieving this density goal.
- A “Post-Secondary Downtown”

Post-Secondary Impacts

- **Impacts on Downtown**

  Post-secondary expansion is the primary economic engine for downtown.

  - Shared facilities benefits all.
  - Laurier has spent nearly $100 million in downtown since 1999.
  - The financial, social and cultural benefits of a post-secondary presence in the city and downtown are incalculable.

  - But there are other impacts as well – parking, health services, etc.
Brantford Video Clip
The YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington/Brantford

• The YMCA has been an anchor institution in the Brantford community since 1856

• A charitable, not for profit organization

• Delivers programming in health & wellness, child care, camp, employment and settlement services within the community

• Part of a national and global organization
YMCA Partnership - Evolution

• Build a stand alone Y
• Build beside one another
• Build a facility together, or…
• Laurier Brantford YMCA

So, why partner?

• We needed each other…
• YMCA – had been working on new YMCA facility for the last 3 decades
• WLU – has a small undersized athletic and recreation centre and has multiple needs to expand the campus
• The City of Brantford has a need to develop land downtown.
How did it start?

• We each had defined our own internal needs

• We were looking for a partner that aligned with these needs and our values (original MOU had six institutional partners)

• Worked the partnership to fit our circumstances
  i. Clarified the vision
  ii. Understand joint values
  iii. Created partnership principles to guide our decisions

Partnership Vision was Created

Wilfrid Laurier University, Brantford Campus and the YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington/Brantford, have come together as equal investors in the development and operation of a new recreation and athletics complex in Brantford. This unique partnership will meet the health, sport and recreation needs of the primary constituents for both parties, along with the expected synergies that come from this type of collaboration.
Partnership Values Established

- **Equality**: This is a partnership of equals working towards a common goal that is mutually beneficial. To the extent possible, responsibilities, duties and leadership will be conducted on a shared and negotiated basis. Where it makes sense for one institution to take the lead, the institution will do so.

- **Trust**: Both institutions will function at all times on a basis of trust and mutual respect ensuring regular and open communication between the partners.

  **Health & Wellness**: As partners, both institutions seek to improve the health and wellness of all users of this facility, as defined by the *Social Determinants of Health*. These are the primary factors that shape the health of Canadians, including but not limited to education, health services, employment, early childhood development, social safety network, aboriginal status, disability and gender.
Partnership Values Established

1. Capital Partners with Ownership & Operations
   • YMCA & Wilfrid Laurier University

2. Six Nations Partnership
   • Non financial, political support
   • Chief personally supported pitch to government
   • Development can occur with Six Nations support
   • Outcomes that will benefit Six Nations People

3. Project Partners (non-capital)
   • Nipissing University, Six Nations Polytechnic, Conestoga College

Partnership Values Established

• Fed-Dev Ontario, $500k planning grant

• Province made first commitment, July 2011

• City funding approved in principle, Feb 2012

• Federal funding commitment, Sept 2012
**Partnership Values Established**

Capital funding based on strong collaboration
- Government likes it
- Donors like it

$58 M Laurier Brantford YMCA Centre
- Federal Government $17M
- Provincial Government $17M
- Municipal Government $5M
- Joint Capital Campaign $5M
- YMCA Contribution $7M
- Laurier Contribution $7M
Agreed upon Partnership Principles

1. Respect for the distinctive identity of our partners while working together as one
2. Shared ownership, governance and operating responsibility
3. Fiscal responsibility and risk management
4. Service quality and value
5. Leadership development and volunteer engagement
6. Family oriented, student engaged, community accessible and learning centered
7. Diverse, inclusive and respectful
8. Excellence in and recognition of athletics, recreation and fitness
Shared Project Leadership

- Joint Capital Campaign
- Joint Government Relations strategy
- Design lead with Laurier
- Construction lead with Laurier
- Facility operations lead with YMCA
- All decisions are consensus based, with equal organisational votes

Shared Project Leadership

- MOU with Wilfrid Laurier University
- MOU with City of Brantford
- MOU with project partners
- Facility Design MOU with Laurier
- Joint Development Agreement (YMCA & Laurier)
- Funding agreement with Provincial Government
- Funding agreement with Federal Government
- Funding agreement with Municipality
Shared Project Leadership

- Developing common goals and objectives
- Developing a governance structure which connects with existing organizational structure
- Understanding the risk approach of each organization and resolving differences

Importance of planning and aligning plans between partners
Planning Matters? Or Planning Matters!

- The upfront non development related planning was a critical component of the overall project development

- Without all these agreements in place the physical development would be near impossible to move forward

Planning Matters? Or Planning Matters!

- The challenge is how does one physically align the goals/requirements of 3 organisations for a common yet different purpose?
Planning Matters? Or Planning Matters!

• Well…turns out its not that easy

Planning Matters? Or Planning Matters!

• The partners needed to jointly develop:
  
  • demand analysis
  • functional space programming
  • stacking and fit test
  • staffing analysis
  • footprint analysis
  • dedicated space analysis
Planning Matters? Or Planning Matters!

• The functional program development was the key part of the entire process

• It was complicated however this process laid the foundation for how we would coexist going forward

Planning Matters? Or Planning Matters!

• From there SD, DD, etc. took place and all along we all worked side by side and it wasn’t always pretty
Planning Matters? Or Planning Matters!

• Why is it important?

• This project is complicated!
• Environmental issues
• Archaeological issues
• Site issues
• Budget issues
• Stakeholder issues
Planning Matters? Or Planning Matters!

- Shared Issues Continued
  - Marketing, branding etc.
  - ITS
  - Risk Management
  - Annual operating plan and budget

Planning Matters? Or Planning Matters!

- Our upfront collaboration and document development laid the foundation for successful project implementation
- And we would do it again....
The concept, structure, and design of the proposed Wilfred Laurier University/YMCA Brantford Athletic Complex embody three principles.

Memory
An interpretation of the site and its once existing, though derelict, architecture drove the evolution of the proposed design. Rhythms and patterns of the former buildings informed the relationships from massing to skin. Not only were the investigations complete in two dimensions but a thorough analysis via three dimensions also generated the design narrative essential for the overall site. Architecture is a conduit for imagination and possibilities; fictions engage our imagination in active motion.

The former streetscape no longer occupies the site; still, it is part of the collective consciousness of Brantford. Initially built as a composed series of buildings, a unified form was articulated by surface texture, openings in the street wall and the pedestrian datum. The narrow commercial fronts contrasted the volume of large warehouse and theatre spaces, resulting in a unique rhythm between front and rear. While the facades on Colborne Street were composed and defined a clear street edge, at the rear, the city block took on an informal and spatially more complex character. The rear also revealed the edge of the downtown escarpment; the thin two to four story Colborne Street edge stepped down to Water Street level. Over a century-and-a-half, the structures morphed into an ad-hoc streetscape. Especially at the rear, the rhythm and patterns of the former blocks unintentionally evolved to create delightful adjacencies and spatial opportunities.

Movement
The building is about movement. Movement in terms of bodies being put through physical effort, movement through space, and movement towards a fresh perception. Directly at the confluence of a dynamic city edge between the north and south, the project accentuates its horizontality and conceals its vertical extent, leading to an architecture that is experienced only through movement. While maintaining an integral uniformity, the overall volume is strategically divided into smaller fragments and re-assembled in a way that the architectural design reconciles the program elements with the topography through movement up, down, across, between, over, and under. The largest programmatic components are recessed into the escarpment eliminating the imposing scale of these internal volumes, and allowing permeability above ground.

Landscape
The form is an elongated bar anchored by a subterranean volume. The ‘landscape’ serves as the horizontal datum mediating the below- and above-ground conditions. Due to its sloping, undulating surface stretched between the upper and lower extend of the escarpment, the ‘landscape’ also serves as a boundary-field between the urban core and the non-urban river valley. Conceived as an integrated design, the architecture and landscape offer the public a unified and cohesive experience, assert a contemporary expression – a new identity - to the block, and strengthen the city as a whole.
Laurier Brantford YMCA Athletics & Recreation Centre Video Clip
The......”So What” Slide

• This is an unprecedented approach to capital development - a true integrated partnership and it was the partnership that attracted funding and interest for this development.

• Funding, design, agreements, principles, innovation doesn’t mean much if you are not prepared, or don’t understand one another and you must build a deep seeded trust and be able to collaborate to be successful.