

SIMCOE COUNTY STUDENTS SAIL SMOOTHLY INTO NEW SCHOOL BUILT BY ROSS CLAIR CONTRACTORS INC.



JOANNA LAVOIE – The GTA Construction Report Special Feature

This spring 350 excited students and teachers sailed smoothly into their brand new school. Designed with a nautical theme, and inspired by Collingwood's long history of shipbuilding, Admiral Collingwood School located in the town's southeast quadrant at 15 Dey Drive hopes to be an anchor for new developments in the growing town located on the southern shores of Georgian Bay.

Collingwood has an extensive nautical history, so it was fitting to design a brand new school with just that theme. "The school kind of has a nautical design to it. You will see portholes and the library looks like the wheelhouse of a ship. You will also see a compass in the front entrance of the school," explains Arjay Canrinus, project manager at Ross Clair Contractors Inc., but site superintendent for the Admiral Collingwood job.

Brad Parkes, supervisor of Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) design and construction department, elaborates on the maritime décor.

"The architect used pictures of the S.S. Collingwood steamship to model a lot of things. The front entrance looks like the prow of a ship," he says.

Designed with children in mind, Admiral Collingwood School is a well-lit, student-friendly place designed for learning.



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Admiral Collingwood School

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“The colours used are for the children with reds, blues, greens which are nice primary colours and there’s lots of natural light,” adds Mr. Parkes. Admiral Collingwood School is focused on three important educational elements, which are arts, academics and athletics, while always keeping a positive attitude.

This ambitious development project broke ground

in the fall of 2001 and was just recently completed in March 2003. The old school was originally Collingwood Collegiate from 1925 to 1954. It then became Collingwood Senior Public from 1954 to 1981. For 21 years, the school was known as Admiral Collingwood, educating students from kindergarten to grade eight in Collingwood’s downtown area. But, the building was deemed too costly to repair making the erection of a new elementary school inevitable.

“It needed a heating upgrade and it needed to be brought up to code which

included a sprinkler system and new stairwells as the old one’s which were run down. It looked old and there were a few structural things happening. The list just went on,” says Mr. Parkes.

Architectural firm Ted Handy and Associates of Barrie designed the new Admiral Collingwood School, which was given the same name as the original building to maintain the school community’s proud heritage. Burling Ranger was commissioned to do the masonry work, Simcoe Mechanical handled the mechanical aspects, Walker Electrical dealt with the



electrical side and the structural steel firm was Norweld Structural Steel. Day and Behn Engineering Inc., handled the mechanical and electrical engineering, Meades Engineering was the structural engineer, and Greenland International Consulting Inc. took care of flood water management and site service engineering, rounding out the design team.

The new building is 56,000 square feet in size and has a capacity of 550 students with 22 classrooms in total. In the fall of 2003, The Simcoe County District School Board also plans on relocating its Extended French Program to the new school.

This project is the first time that Ross Clair Contractors Inc. has constructed a new school, and the project was a good

learning experience for Mr. Canrinus, who was the superintendent of construction for Admiral Collingwood School.

“It was a positive experience to work with them [SCDSB]. Our company has certainly worked on other schools with additions and renovations. School-wise, this is probably one of the biggest projects we’ve done,” says Mr. Canrinus.

Ross Clair Contractors Inc. has done projects for the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) as well as for various institutional, commercial and governmental buildings.

One of the main goals of the Admiral Collingwood School project is to help expand the town’s sense of community by anchoring new housing developments in the area. Remaining vigi-

lant, the SCDSB went through a nine-month rezoning and severance process with the Town of Collingwood in order to make the new school happen. And, Mr. Parkes feels that the new building has only added to the betterment of community.

“It brings a sense of community to the area. We hope it anchors a new set of subdivisions,” he notes. “The sense of community was very evident the day we marched the students from the old school to the new school.”

The Simcoe County District School Board has 91 elementary schools, 16 secondary schools and six adult learning centres. School enrollment varies from 200 students in the rural schools to 2,000 students in the board’s largest secondary school.



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