Challenging accepted norms in health care design, this new greenfield facility responds to the highly emotional reality of what really happens in a hospital. TBRHSC affirms a growing belief in the value of designing for the body, the mind and also the spirit.

The most prominent feature is the means through which the hospital draws on its context and makes tangible references to the natural surroundings. It is the first hospital in Canada to gain approval for the use of wood as a primary structural element.

The dramatic three-storey interior space flooded with natural light serves to acknowledge the spiritual dimension of human life. The welcoming glass concourse intentionally curves to follow the path of the sun and functions as a central circulation and gathering space with a lively café.

Conceived as a path through a forest, the timber structure is also rooted in the history and culture of the area.

A “seasonal river” terrazzo floor pattern composed of fish and other natural forms flows through the space. It is also the first cancer center in Canada to incorporate direct light skylights within the radiation treatment rooms to lift the spirits of patients and staff.

There is a powerful attraction to this design that draws patients, staff and visitors who gather to share their thoughts and talk through emotional issues. Moving beyond the standard requirement for circulation, the concourse expresses an expanding new and reimagined role of the hospital as a place that fosters interaction, healing and hope. And at only 1½% of total building area, it provides daily functional, programmed space for 95% of the users.

[illegible]

Plans

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Project for the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre. Pilon Architects Inc. / Farrow Partnership / Associates / Ellis Don / Hospital Construction Group / Mario Chiesa / Malo Construction Services Inc. with Hatch Engineers / Mechanical Supervision Inc.