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The Central Administration Project



By [Canadian Architect](#) — On [Sep 17, 2020](#)

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The Central Administration Project (CAP) by Thier+Curran Architects is a uniquely designed building that was created with smaller elements to fit its modest hometown, while maintaining civic dignity.



Photo Credit: Tom Arban

Located just south of Hamilton in Cayuga, Ontario, the project has been sensitively scaled and massed to ensure contextual fit of a large building in a small town. Where it is adjacent to single family dwellings to the west, the building was intentionally reduced to a single storey to relate better to its neighbours.

Facing south towards the arena, civic gravitas is provided by a new civic plaza that is defined by stone walls and paving stones that leads to the main entrance. A seating cluster, feature planters for stormwater retention and county agricultural plantings break down the scale of the plaza, while a walkway provides a pedestrian link from the CAP to the arena.



Extensive new trees surround the CAP, including along the upgraded Chippewa Street and between the building and the parking area, helping to soften the transition from landscaped to hard surfaces. Photo Credit: Tom Arban

Despite a tight site, the architecture team created a high quality workplace for the CAP staff, a civic beacon for the County and a dignified but not elaborate Council Chamber used also as a Courtroom. The Council Chamber / POA Courtroom and support spaces are pulled to the southeast and expressed on the exterior as a fitting focal element.

Access to organic light is an important tenet of the design with generous windows throughout. Operable windows in all office areas provide natural ventilation for greater thermal comfort, especially during shoulder seasons. Thermal comfort is further augmented with small, localized zoning of the HVAC system to allow greater control and temperature response.

Two staff rooms of different qualities have been provided. The third floor staff room acts as a quiet space for reflection and gathering of thoughts while the ground floor space is larger and more active, spilling out to an adjacent outdoor terrace. Both feature varied seating types and styles, allowing choice and varied degrees of socialization.



Photo Credit: Tom Arban

Stairs have been designed, not as a utilitarian afterthought, but as daylit spaces with doors on hold open devices, making them appealing and encouraging use. A secure card reader controlled staff entrance was installed into the south stairwell with convenient access to all levels, including the basement mud room.

The basement includes a mud room for all field staff with lockers for field wear, and a decontamination shower. A sick room and a wellness / multi-purpose room that includes adjacent showers and washrooms supply additional amenities for staff.

The central two storey lobby/atrium is a glassy focal point that organizes the building's circulation with overlook from the second floor. Service spaces and circulation are located behind the lobby, away from office areas for maximum office flexibility. Large expanses of workstations have been avoided by breaking up areas with support space clusters, defining smaller 'neighbourhoods' for staff comfort and privacy.



Photo Credit: Tom Arban

The workstation layout reflects the overall goal of providing access to daylight. Generally, workstations have been clustered to the north of the building in an open, flexible, efficient office loft space. This frees up the building perimeter for shared circulation, minimizing private space on the windows.

The remainder of the ground floor is clad in a warm, rich gray brick while the upper stories are differentiated with a sleek panel cladding system, giving a smooth modern finish. The main entrance is identified by a generous steel frame canopy with the warmth of wood decking exposed on its underside, which extends to the driveway to mark the entrance.

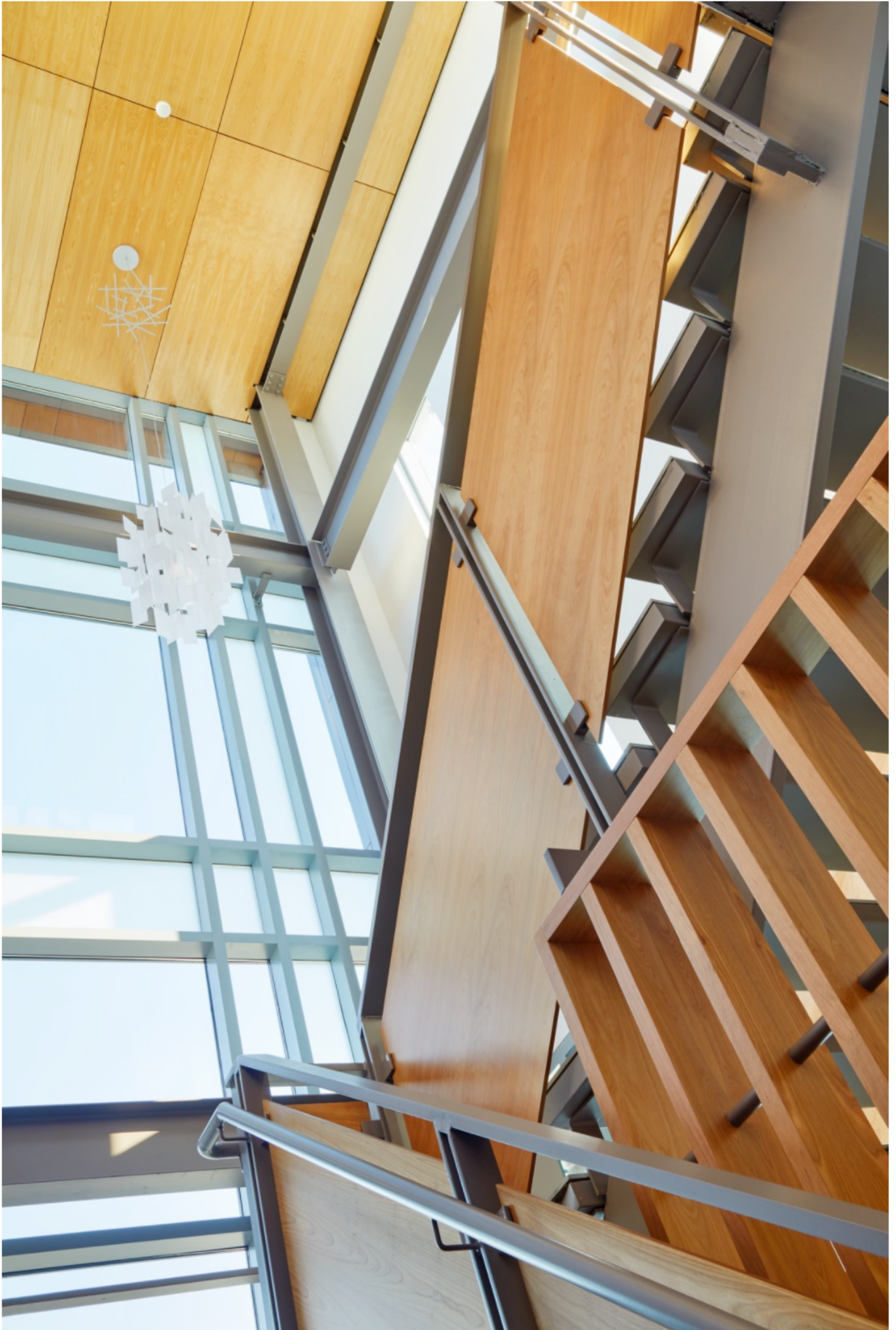



Photo Credit: Tom Arban


The elongated two storey lobby is heavily glazed for civic transparency with large overhangs that provide sun control and features the same wood deck as the entry canopy. Extending from the lobby is the main public stair with an illuminated roof 'lantern' or beacon reaching skyward as the building's tallest element.

To animate the façade and prevent the building from looking too institutional in a residential context, varied window sizes are carefully patterned as. Larger areas of accent windows are placed at strategic locations such as corners and the central circulation aisle of the workstation area to allow long views. Colour is used as an inexpensive design tool throughout the building with wood and stone accents in highly visible areas for maximum impact.

A number of sustainable and energy efficient design features have been incorporated into the design including reduction of stormwater off-site with retention in planters and perforated piping for natural recharge. Energy efficient heat pump type HVAC system to provide excellent localized control and responsiveness, water heating with localized instantaneous hot water heaters to avoid water storage, and vestibules to limit heat loss each time doors open.



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