

Diamond Schmitt leads design for Therme Canada | Ontario Place Redevelopment

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TORONTO – Therme Canada has engaged the Toronto based, global architecture firm, Diamond Schmitt to lead the design of Therme Canada | Ontario Place, a year-round landmark waterfront destination that reconnects people to Lake Ontario. The design for Ontario Place’s West Island is grounded in the planned expansion of public park space, and honours and celebrates Ontario Place’s history, including the iconic 1967 Pods and Cinesphere. Diamond Schmitt’s design incorporates three themes, expressed through architecture: the scale and spirit of exhibition pavilions; the restorative qualities of natural forms; and the transparency of greenhouse architecture.

The design team led by Diamond Schmitt and Therme ARC includes Canadian companies: landscape architects, STUDIO tla; shoreline engineers, Baird; civil engineers, Arup; transportation consultants, BA Group and building code consultants, LMDG. Future Ontario-based team members will include structural engineers, heritage consultants, and aquatic habitat consultants.

“Therme is grounded in the planned expansion of public park space. It honours and celebrates Ontario Place’s history, including the Pods and Cinesphere. We designed the West Island of Ontario Place to connect people to the water year-round. Our design weaves three themes, expressed through architecture: exhibition pavilions; natural forms; and greenhouse architecture.” – Gary McCluskie, Principal, Diamond Schmitt

Therme Canada | Ontario Place will be a year-round entertainment and relaxation destination that houses botanical gardens, indoor and outdoor swimming facilities, and improved public access through the creation of more than eight acres of public space. A free-access public beach and much expanded pedestrian and cycling access will allow people to better connect with the Lake.

The new aspects of the facilities are comprised of four main components: a new entrance pavilion, a new bridge to the West Island, new parkland and beach areas, and the main Therme Canada | Ontario Place building. The Therme building transforms the West Island and is designed to combine the restorative environment of a botanical garden with the physical and sensory experience of an aquatic environment.

Therme Entrance Pavilion: The entrance pavilion establishes a new public presence along Lake Shore Boulevard West with an open and welcoming form with three transparent vaults inspired by a trillium flower. The Therme Entrance Pavilion is a hub, an information and exhibition space with an access to the West Island. A double height, wood-lined entry hall defines the pavilion’s natural character. The Therme facility preserves and honours the heritage of the West Island site with a scale and spirit inspired by the neighbouring Ontario Place Pavilions and Cinesphere, which will be protected. The goal of supporting body and spirit with wellbeing in an egalitarian, welcoming environment is infused throughout the pavilion’s transparent and natural forms.

Therme Bridge: The new Therme Bridge connects the mainland to the West Island and provides all-season public access to the island park and a new public beach. The bridge integrates interior passage for Therme visitors and open access for pedestrians and cyclists. The bridge cladding is glass and copper – connecting the entrance Pavilion to the main Therme building. The Therme Bridge also maintains boat access to the inner Ontario Place Marina, and the open space on the bridge offers improved vantage points for dragon boat racing and other waterway activities.

Parkland/Beach: The planned design of the parklands and beach areas surround the Therme Canada | Ontario

Place building and ensures year-round public waterfront access. The restorative value of outdoor green spaces for recreation, community gathering, and overall quality of life will be enriched with free, public swimming areas; a new significantly expanded beach area; improved access to the lake edge, beach, wetlands; and an extension of the William G Davis trail across the entire site, accessible to all.

Therme Building: The exterior envelope of the main Therme Canada | Ontario Place building is clad in energy efficient, triple layer bird friendly glass on a steel structure, building on the tradition of public botanical greenhouses and glazed exhibition halls. The curvilinear roof is formed by a series of layers. Visitors arrive at a belvedere overlooking of the aquatic halls that house the botanical gardens and pools. The building program is distributed over multiple levels, with the largest spaces located on the ground floor. The interior and exterior experiences are woven together throughout the levels of the building. The glass greenhouse architecture supports the integration of landscape inside the building with indoor pools and a transparent envelope allowing vistas of Lake Ontario and abundant daylight for the planted interior environment. A series of landscaped roofs extends the planted environment to the form. In summer, rooftop pools—adjustable by season—provide a transition between the exterior and interior.

Diamond Schmitt is a global architecture firm delivering design that empowers people, communities, and organizations to harness change for the greater public good. The firm employs a collaborative working process to create architecture known for its high performance and careful craftsmanship. The firm's designs include innovative, highly sustainable aquatic, wellness, public assembly, and civic buildings. The work includes Toronto's Central YMCA and two new YMCA's, The Peter Gilgan Centre for Research at Sick Kids, Toronto's Evergreen Brick Works, Daniels Spectrum in Toronto's Regent Park; the new Canada Senate Building and the National Arts Centre in Ottawa; Smart Centres Place in Vaughan; and Mariinsky II in St. Petersburg, Russia. Each has received widespread recognition, while advancing community interests within the public realm. With offices in Toronto, New York, and Vancouver, Diamond Schmitt is currently leading the net zero design for the Ottawa Public Library – Library and Archives Canada Joint Facility, and David Geffen Hall in New York City's Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts.

Therme Group is a global organization known for creating the world's largest and most technologically advanced entertainment and wellbeing destinations. Every year it enables millions of people to have the opportunity for a healthy and sustainable vacation at home. Therme Group and its strategic partners operate four facilities in Europe and have more than 10 large-scale projects in the late stages of development worldwide.

More information about Therme Canada can be found at thermecanada.com.