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## PIN/MATTHEWS ARCHITECTS

Canada's far north is a land defined by extremes. Light, temperature and environment are experienced in radically different ways over the course of the year. Beginning at the edge of culturally diverse communities, the wilderness is so vast, rugged, pristine and starkly beautiful that it overwhelms all else, giving form and spatial order to the land. Simply beginning to understand centuries-old traditions in a land that to many seems strange, dangerous and alien is not only intimidating, but also a life-long endeavour. Turning this understanding into a built form that will positively and sensitively contribute to the physical environment and the fragile heritage of the peoples of the North requires great honesty and humility.

It is in this social, political and physical environment that **Gino Pin (B.Arch.65)** began Pin/Matthews Architects in 1985. The firm's work reflects a love and respect for the unique beauty of the northern landscape and its ever-changing moods. Guided by sensitive responses to the Canadian Shield landscape, the cultural needs of First Nations peoples, the variable lighting conditions and the climate, the firm strives to develop a formal and material palette that is culturally significant, is sensitive to nature and merges buildings with their surroundings.

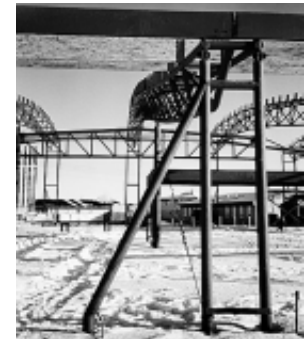
The intent to celebrate and work with nature guided the design of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly Building, set in the wilds at the edge of Yellowknife. Nestled among trees and huge granite outcroppings, the building stands as a backdrop to the natural features surrounding it. Pin/Matthews Architects has shifted the focus from the building to nature, embracing the opportunity to preserve, revive and enhance the various fragile ecosystems of the site. Zinc, a material mined in the North that develops a grey patina as it weathers, is used in sheets and panels cast on a local Yellowknife stone, matching the shades and textures of the surrounding bedrock. The experience of being in nature is carried into the building, where extensive glazing frames views of the adjacent lake and woods, allowing natural light to penetrate deep into the heart of the building. Glass friezes modulate incoming light, much the same way as the surrounding trees dapple light entering the building and veil against excessive summer light. The play of light continues into the Assembly Hall and Caucus Room, whose circular forms symbolically accommodate a unique form of government by consensus.

The recent design of the Cambridge Bay High School on the northern, wind-swept shores of Nunavut, designed as a heritage-based community education centre, was developed in collaboration with the elders and youth of the community. It facilitates not only mainstream education in a culture-based ideological framework, but also the cultivation and enhancement of cultural traditions for the entire community. The rounded building turns its back to the wind, minimizing snow accumulation on and around the building and using natural wind-flow patterns to scourge the perimeter of snow. Clerestory glazing and roof lighting are designed to maximize the light entering the school in winter when daylight is a scarce commodity and reduce the amount of heat build-up and glare created by a summer sun that never sets.

Pin/Matthews is an active employer of our work term students and graduates. They can be reached at 3502 Racine Road, Yellowknife, NT, X1A 2L9, tel: (867) 920-2728, fax: 873-3816, e-mail <pma@cbaexp.com>.



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1. Legislative Assembly Building – exterior detail
2. Legislative Assembly Building – Visitors' Gallery
3. Cambridge Bay High School – structure
4. Northern Addiction Services Treatment Centre