



## VanDusen Botanical Garden Visitor Centre Vancouver, BC

At the turn of the millennium, VanDusen Botanical Gardens knew it was in dire need of revitalization – it struggled to attract a younger demographic and overall visitor numbers were in decline. To address these challenges, VanDusen made plans to create an iconic visitor centre along a busy commuter corridor and add profitable spaces such as a café, event venue, and flexible education and administration rooms. The new centre would blend into its surrounding landscape, with a free-form roof that referenced a native British Columbia orchid.

The team chose a wood solution in the interests of economy, sustainability and to meet tight time constraints imposed by a federal-stimulus package. While similarly dramatic forms have been achieved using concrete, this structure was to be “radically green” – achieving LEED Platinum and Living Building Challenge status. It was a world’s first. Fast + Epp was able to tackle a complex design by breaking it down into manageable pieces. We designed 71 uniquely-shaped roof panels, prefabricated with mechanical, electrical, acoustical and ceiling finish components. This sped up erection times, ensured installation accuracy and mitigated panels’ exposure to harsh winter rains. To accommodate the undulations of the building’s 50-foot atrium, we also developed a novel universal panel-to-column connection to avoid unique connections at every support location.

### Fast + Epp

Status  
Completed 2011

Project Cost  
\$22 million

Area  
19,000 ft<sup>2</sup> (1,765 m<sup>2</sup>)

Architect  
Perkins & Will

Client  
City of Vancouver, Board of Parks & Recreation

