

Workplace for the Neya Waban Guardians of the Algonquins of Pikwàkanagàn First Nation

The Neya Waban Guardians are the monitors and protectors of the land of the Pikwàkanagàn First Nation. Their line of work is of utmost importance to protecting and upholding the land and traditions of the Pikwàkanagàn First Nation. They currently do not have a building to act as their headquarters. They require a space for their staff to do office work and outside jobs, that also reflects their core values as a community.

The first meeting with the client, represented by Amber Hein, happened on the 22nd of September, at which the client expressed many needs for the building, from both a design perspective and a functional aspect. These needs are listed below, grouped in order from most to least important.

1. The building contains 5 small offices, 2 bathrooms, and one kitchenette.
2. The building contains an open-concept common workspace area, with room for 5-7 spaces for monitors.
3. The building has a space to store equipment, as well as vehicles.
4. The building has a space for a freezer.
5. The building is wheelchair accessible.

The needs listed above are of most importance when designing this building. They are critical to the function of the building and the purpose of the Guardian program itself.

6. The design of the building reflects the culture and ideologies of the Algonquins of Pikwàkanagàn First Nation.
7. There is a sheltered outdoor space designed with cultural activities in mind, room for 5-10 people.
8. There is a mobile workbench, with storage space, that has room to store and dry medicine.

The needs listed above are highly desirable for the client, but are not completely necessary for the function of the building and Guardian program.

9. The building contains a circular learning centre.
10. The building contains a loading dock for the transportation of materials, medicines, etc.
11. The building is a state-of-the-art facility.

The needs listed above would be nice to implement, but are not needed for the users of the building.

The needs expressed by the client can be summed into this problem statement:

There exists a need for infrastructure to represent the culture of the Algonquins of Pikwàkanagàn First Nations, and aid the Neya Waban Guardians in their work by giving them an office space, and a place to practice cultural activities and medicine harvesting.

A building akin to the one proposed by the client is the Millbrook First Nation Cultural & Heritage Centre. This building contains multiple spaces designed for the community of Millbrook to come together and participate in different cultural workshops, such as drum-making, creating talking sticks, and more. The building features an outdoor auditorium and a few open rooms designated for community events. This centre features a few key aspects that the client expressed a need for.

The needs suggested by the client also bring up questions within the team, such as how many people they plan to host for activities, and what certain ideologies and specific cultural aspects the Guardians would like to see reflected in the building.

In summation, the client proposed a building for the Neya Waban Guardians to use as a workspace for their job of monitoring the land and harvesting plants and animals for their use in the community of the Pikwàkanagàn First Nation. The building will also act as a centre for the people of the community to come together and participate in events and cultural workshops. The design of this building is important to act as a functional workspace, as well as a place for the Pikwàkanagàn First Nation to come together as a community.