Dental Clinic Expansion
Swinomish Indian Tribal Community

Project Location: La Conner, WA
Project Area: **10,725 GSF Total** (5,425 GSF Addition; 5,300 GSF Existing)
Project Cost: ~$2.66 million

The existing Swinomish Indian Tribal Community’s Dental Clinic was constructed in 1995 as a split-level facility which houses the Dental Clinic on the main floor and the Senior Center below. The tribe was in need of an expansion to meet the growing needs of their members. The existing clinic has five chairs, and the expansion needed to double that, for a total of 10 operatory chairs. In addition to the clinic’s expansion, the tribe has also been approved to train Dental Health Aide Therapists (DHATs) and is in collaboration with Skagit Valley College to provide the clinical training site for this program. This DHAT Training program is the first of its kind in the lower 48 states, and aims to provide lower cost care for rural communities throughout the state.

The existing building is one of several iconic buildings in the Swinomish Village. With cedar exterior finishes and cultural references to tribal colors and canoes, the expansion was designed to compliment as well as enhance the existing building. The addition mimics the existing building in scale and form, and uses the connecting linkage to create a daylit, covered area below that is used by the Senior Center as a place to extend salmon barbeques and socialize outdoors.

Design challenges included working with a steeply sloped site, archeologically sensitive boundary, and a need to maintain exterior ADA accessible pathways connecting the upper and lower levels. By decreasing the footprint size of the lower level, and using columns to cantilever the upper floor out the East, the team was able to avoid encroachment on archeologically sensitive areas.

Sustainable strategies were woven through the design, with a focus on natural and sustainable products and efficient systems. Solar shading was a critical component to the design to help keep heat gain to a minimum in the patient operatories. The design team studied options for providing effective sun shading and overhangs that provided adequate shading during summer/winter solstice and fall/spring equinox. The intent with the design was to provide effective shades that respected and blended with the cultural design of the existing building’s shading devices.

Interior spaces take advantage of natural light, incredible views of the Swinomish Channel, and soothing colors. The lobby space, which utilizes the existing entry, is redesigned with relites to view the children’s waiting area in the new lobby for supervision and safety. The lower floor houses the DHAT Training Classroom, DHAT offices, staff/student locker rooms (including showers), restrooms, and a shared kitchenette.

Strategic phasing allowed both the Senior Center and existing Dental Clinic to remain open during construction of the addition. The facility now provides the adequate number of dental operatories to serve the growing community and houses one of few DHAT Training facilities in the US.
LOWER LEVEL FLOOR PLAN

LEGEND

1. DHAT OFFICE
2. CONFERENCE
3. STUDY
4. LOCKER ROOM
5. SHOWER
6. RESTROOM
7. DENTAL STORAGE
8. MECH. / ELEC.
9. DHAT STORAGE
10. CUSTODIAN
11. CLOSET
12. HALLWAY / KITCHENETTE
13. DHAT CLASSROOM
EXISTING BUILDING: LOOKING EAST
EXISTING CONDITIONS: WEST ELEVATION

NEW CONDITIONS: WEST ELEVATION
DEMOLITION PLAN: EXTERIOR OF LOWER LEVEL
COVERED LOWER GATHERING AREA
EXTERIOR DETAILS
INTERIOR SPACES
STERILIZATION AREA
SUNSHADE STUDY - SUMMER SOLSTICE
EXTERIOR WALL SECTIONS & SUNSHADING OVERHANG