

Science North



LOCATION

Sudbury, ON

CLIENT

Regional Municipality of Sudbury

SIZE

15 Acres

PROJECT TEAM

Raymond Moriyama, Partner-in-Charge
Anson Finlay, Project Architect

AWARDS

Governor General's Medal for Architecture,
1986

The City of Sudbury commissioned MTA to undertake a Feasibility Study that would determine a cultural/recreational facility that would increase community amenities and tourism revenues for Sudbury. At the time, Sudbury had no idea what the attraction could or should be, they only knew that they needed something to boost a flagging local economy.

Science North is a core museum which links other educational, cultural, and recreational centres in Northern Ontario. The facility provides an exciting overview of the world of science. The project includes a main exhibit building and theatre, linked by a tunnel carved through rock, and an entrance building. Science North is sited in a six-hectare (15 acre) park with a wharf, beach, outdoor pavilions, and parking.

MTA looked to the 'Spirit of Place' and realized that the true richness of the area lay in its geology: the controversial two-billion-year-old Sudbury Basin. Therefore, geology became the starting point of the design for Science North.

MTA created not only the design for a new museum, but an entire Business/Marketing/Exhibition plan that would ensure operational sustainability of a remote facility. Self-esteem was the unexpected by-product of the community's direct involvement in the design and construction processes: The residents embraced the snowflake as a metaphor for the Centre, and unemployed miners, who were on strike at the time, were engaged for the excavation work.

In 1991 MTA designed a 67,000 SF addition to Science North including a new entrance in the form of a water link. To this day, Science North draws steady crowds of tourists, sustaining the community with ongoing related revenue generation, and is a facility that has put Sudbury on the international map.