

# Animakee Windigo Island:

Promoting welcome and wellbeing



Photography: Stationpoint Photographic

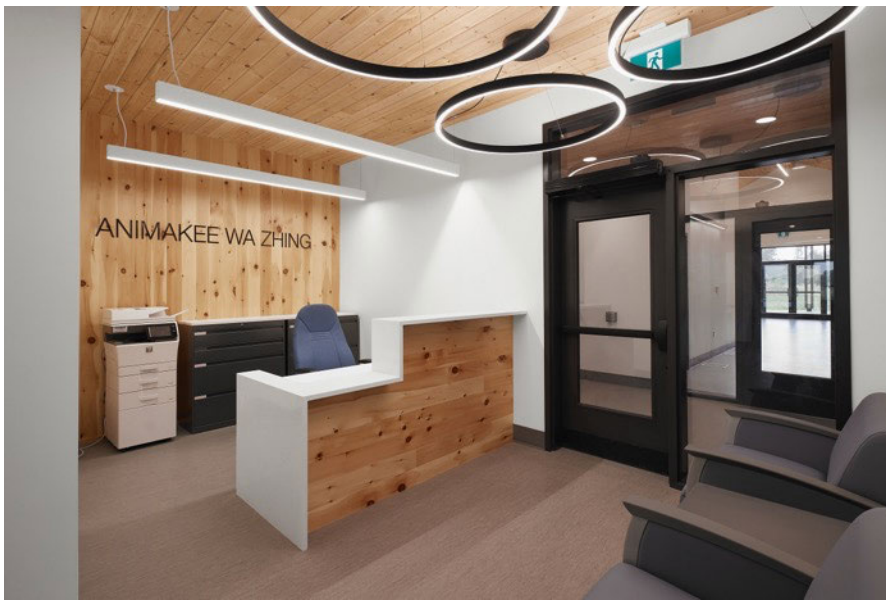
Serving the local Animakee Wa Zhing #37 First Nation, this newly built facility is located on Windigo Island in Northwestern Ontario and functions as a sister site to their administrative building on the mainland. With a focus on providing healthcare services and gathering places for this remote community, the space is carefully crafted to honor their culture, traditions, and the surrounding landscape.

## Connecting Space and Land

The building is designed to evoke a welcoming and comfortable atmosphere that promotes healing and wellness by melding Western medicine with traditional healing practices. Its orientation aligns with the four directions contained within the Indigenous Medicine

Wheel. Gathering areas for community use complement a range of private spaces for delivering healthcare and social services.

To establish a strong connection to the surrounding landscape, the building's architecture blurs the boundaries between the interior and exterior. The main entrance features large windows to enhance transparency and facilitate views inside and out. Wood cladding extends from the exterior into the interior, reinforcing the relationship with nature, while a neutral color palette lets the beauty of the setting take center stage. Shawn Sinclair, Architect, Boreal Architecture Studio explains, "This is not a building where everything is closed off and hidden. It connects directly to the gorgeous island setting, making people feel like they are truly part of their environment, rather than being enclosed in an institutional-feeling facility."



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Shawn Sinclair, Architect  
Boreal Architecture Studio

### Flexibility and Sustainability for the Long Term

It was crucial for the building to be both regionally suitable and culturally appropriate. Due to the area’s limited access to utilities, solar panels and geothermal systems were incorporated to make the structure self-sufficient. Located on a remote island without road access, all materials had to be transported either via ice roads or by barge—an expensive and logistically complex process. As a result, careful selection of durable, sustainable furniture was essential to ensure long-term functionality. Shawn explains, “We needed something incredibly resilient and long-lasting that won’t require servicing within a year or two.” He adds, “We chose Global products because we know they will be very durable, easy to maintain, and uphold high healthcare standards in terms of cleanliness, while still looking and feeling warm and comfortable.”

By including a range of flexible furniture options like mobile tables, community spaces like the boardroom can be reconfigured as classrooms or for other purposes as needed. Shawn concludes, “I’m proud we were able to create this building in such a remote location and have it meet the same standards as any other site in the country. Not only will it deliver much-needed services to the community for years to come, but it also beautifully aligns with the environment and the community it serves.”

### FEATURED PRODUCTS:

Licence™ desking, Bridges™ desking, Vion™ task and guest seating, Obusforme™ Comfort task seating, Drift™ lounge seating and tables, Global Accord™ seating, River™ tables, Terina™ tables, Citi Square™ bench seating, Popcorn™ guest seating, Swap™ tables, Primacare™ lounge seating

DESIGNER: Boreal Architecture Studio





