

Construction history of the Grande Bibliothèque

1998	Choice of the Palais du Commerce site, De Maisonneuve Blvd. East in Montréal
June 2000	Contract awarded to the architectural team of Patkau/Croft-Pelletier/Gilles Guité of Vancouver and Québec City, winner of the international architectural competition
July-September 2001	Demolition and site preparation
October 2001	Excavation and foundations
October 2002 to November 2004	Construction of building
November 2004 to April 2005	Fitting out of the interior, shelving of collections and arrival of staff
April 30, 2005	Official opening



- > About 250 workers and over 100 suppliers were involved in building the Grande Bibliothèque over the past four years.
- > It took more than 20,000 hours to shelve the documents in the Grande Bibliothèque.
- > To bring the virtual library to life, about 100 people worked on setting up the Internet portal of the Bibliothèque nationale du Québec, including 54 writers, 22 content coordinators and 30 or so technical experts.

work

POMERLEAU

People and Challenges • [www.pomerleau.ca](http://www.pomerleau.ca)



*Just like a writer, the Pomerleau-Beaubois team applies its skills and expertise to creating masterpieces.*



## Openness, transparency and light

The Patkau/Croft-Pelletier/Gilles Guité group of Vancouver and Québec City was the grand winner of the Grande Bibliothèque architecture competition launched in January 2000. It won out over 36 other architectural firms from 11 countries, by presenting a design as elegant as it is functional, combining natural light and superb materials.

In October 2001, Menkès Shooner Dagenais Architectes joined the team to serve as project manager and to ensure the exceptional quality of the drawings and the execution of the project. The construction work was entrusted to Hervé Pomerleau Inc., in October 2002.

Light and airy, the exterior building envelope consists of some 6,000 plates of frosted, tempered glass with a glacier-green ceramic coating evoking landscapes of the Far North. It is the first time that this type of exterior finish, produced entirely in Québec, has been used in North America.

Inside, the architects created two spectacular rooms, in which wood plays a prominent role, filtering light and sound without closing off the areas. They were inspired by the famous novel *Les Chambres de bois* (*The Silent Rooms*) by Québec writer Anne Hébert, published in 1958. These rooms are home to the national collection and the universal lending and reference collection. The wood used, yellow birch, with its soft, warm tones, is one of Québec's three official emblems.

From the great hall, with its tall concrete columns, there are two main ways to get around the library. One focuses on efficiency, rising vertically via stairways and three panoramic elevators. The other, a promenade that leads to the reading areas, winds around the room that houses the universal lending and reference collection, affording many views of the interior as well as glimpses of the city.

### Grande Bibliothèque: facts and figures

- > Construction budget (including facilities and land): \$97.6 million
- > Computer architecture: \$12.7 million
- > Acquisitions of new documents: \$17.2 million
- > Document processing and cataloguing: \$14.1 million

Purchase of the collections of the Bibliothèque centrale de Montréal, in accordance with an agreement between the Québec government and the city of Montréal: \$35 million

Total floor space: 33,000 square metres on six levels

Employees: nearly 400, with more than 250 serving the public

#### Collections:

- > 4 million documents
  - > 1.2 million books
  - > 1.2 million other documents (journals, magazines, newspapers, music CDs and cassettes, DVDs, videocassettes, reference works, software, etc.)
  - > 1.6 million microforms





## ***A forum for culture, knowledge and exchange***



The spacious layout of the Grande Bibliothèque meets the most varied of needs. There are meeting and activity areas, such as the auditorium, exhibition hall and children's section, as well as quiet areas for undisturbed reading. There are also a number of study rooms located throughout the building, available upon request to users looking for a quiet place to read or work.

The Grande Bibliothèque has 2,520 seats, including 1,300 armchairs for reading, 350 computer stations, 44 stations for listening to discs and cassettes, 50 stations for viewing films, four lecture rooms, four training rooms, and 21 meeting and research rooms. High-induction air conditioning and heating systems ensure users' comfort, while saving energy. The electrical and computer cables are built into the floor, which facilitates technical maintenance and preserves the appearance of the concrete finish on the ceilings.



### **L'architecture est le grand livre de l'humanité**

**Architecture is the Great Book  
of Humanity**  
*Victor Hugo*

#### *Architects*

> PATKAU CROFT PELLETIER  
MENKÈS SHOONER DAGENAI  
Architectes

#### *Mechanical and Electrical Engineers*

> BOUTHILLETTE PARIZEAU  
ET ASSOCIÉS / GROUPE HBA  
EXPERTS-CONSEILS

#### *Structural Engineers*

> NICOLET CHARTRAND KNOLL /  
LES CONSULTANTS GÉNIPLUS

#### *Landscape Architects*

> SCHÈME

*are proud partners in the realization  
of the Grande Bibliothèque.*





## Furnishings by Dallaire

To create a comfortable setting for library users, 500 reading surfaces, 850 chairs and 500 lamps were manufactured based on designs by Michel Dallaire Design Industriel, winner of the furniture design competition launched in fall 2001. The beauty as well as the functional and ergonomic qualities of these creations are apparent in the inclined work surface, the footrest and the ingenious camouflage of cables. Michel Dallaire Design Industriel also designed the computer and microform stations, the multimedia listening modules, the conference tables and the original, colourful furniture for the children's section (Espace Jeunes).

## Light up your mind ... at the library

The Grande Bibliothèque required 70,000 hours of electrical work, more than 5,000 light fixtures and 6,150 metres of track lighting. To tackle the complex challenges involved in this project, Électrique Britton invested heavily in training its professionals. We worked hard to make sure that a trip to the library is always an enlightening experience.

LA CIE  
**ELECTRIQUE BRITTON** LTÉE

ISO 9001 certified

(514) 342-5520 • [www.britton.ca](http://www.britton.ca)



## Your subscription is your passport

To serve its clientele, the Bibliothèque nationale du Québec offers two kinds of subscriptions: one for services provided in the Grande Bibliothèque, the other for remote services. In either case, the subscription is free for all Quebecers.

## Using remote services

When you sign up for remote services, you can use the numerous electronic resources offered by the library portal ([www.bnquebec.ca](http://www.bnquebec.ca)). Fill out the subscription form available on the portal and we will promptly send you a user number and password for accessing remote services.