



## The New OPP Caledon Detachment Project

### Architecture combines policing requirements with customized local design

By Habibur Rahman | September 2013

The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) recently opened a new detachment in Caledon, with some unique design challenges.

Designed by +VG Architects (The Ventin Group), the building will be leased to the OPP but owned by the municipality. “We’ve done several of these throughout the province,” said +VG senior partner Paul Sapounzi. “The OPP as the end user has very specific requirements and are very on the ball with respect to their facilities, giving us a clear guide to the systems and program components they need.”

Sapounzi says the program requirements are divided into several key elements: The public spaces, which include education and resources and a multi-purpose room for OPP and community use. The building also needs areas for police administration, patrol officers and investigation/detectives.

“Beyond these there is interface between the police and the courts and space for prisoner handling which includes retention cells, sally ports and compounds for seized goods,” says Sapounzi.

The building has been designed to achieve LEED certification through a focus on its environment and energy consumption, water usage, storm water controls, local trades, and a compact building footprint, resulting in more permeable surfaces.

Sapounzi says his firm has designed several detachments like this for the OPP in recent years, but there is only one consistency to their designs – there is none. “Each building is designed to represent its community, whether that is agricultural, historic or urban,” he said. “In the case of Caledon the design uses a lot of natural materials, including stone, to reflect the region’s geography.”

Designs must also incorporate the OPP’s safety requirements, which include active security measures like monitoring, wiring and cameras. As well, the building incorporates “passive security (which) involves designing a building that will control and influence people’s actions,” Sapounzi said. “Part of our job is to create a building that will encourage protection and safety through its design.”

The detachment is also designed as a post-disaster centre with enhanced seismic structural design.

Sapounzi says his firm has developed a core team of experts for the different OPP projects, including partner Dennis Vass, who have a great deal of expertise in municipal and OPP policing and are able to deliver these projects successfully on time and within budget for the municipalities.

Other similar projects have taken place in Wellington County and one is currently underway in Pembroke.