

NICHIHA CASE STUDY

# Canadian Heritage Design Made Possible with Nichiha

## A Revitalization-Driven Effort

The New Brunswick city of Saint John is in the midst of a renaissance. This transition has been deliberate, with a written “Population Growth Framework” serving as the north star for the initiative. A facet of this effort is to attract residents to the city’s historic downtown area.

Saint John is Canada’s oldest incorporated city, with roots dating back to May of 1785. A rich industrial history can be gleaned from the abundant popularity of masonry-heavy structures. Gaining momentum in the 2010s, revitalization efforts sought to refresh these dated looks, balancing them with contemporary offerings that would attract new residents.

In support of this endeavor, a city-owned property at the intersection of Canterbury and Grannan streets was identified in 2017 for potential sale and development. A new multifamily project was in motion, to be dubbed Telegraph Square. Based on the project’s mandates and vision, Nichiha Architectural Wall Panels (AWP) became the preferred choice for exterior cladding that would utilize modern material science to deliver both aesthetic impact and durability.

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## PROJECT DETAILS

### LOCATION

Saint John, New Brunswick,  
Canada

### PRODUCTS

[PlymouthBrick](#) - Crimson  
[SandStone](#) - Gentle Gray

### TIMELINE

2020–2021

### TYPE

Multifamily  
(Mixed use with commercial)

## CHALLENGE

Find a contemporary cladding solution that closely mimicked the look of traditional materials and could withstand onerous climate extremes.

## SOLUTION

Nichiha’s robust PlymouthBrick and SandStone AWP protected the structure and its occupants while also delivering a refreshed, attractive aesthetic.

## RESULTS

With impressive mimicry of brick and concrete materials, Nichiha cladding easily blended the neighborhood’s traditional looks with contemporary performance.

“It was so important to keep that essence of the old, but be able to bring in the new. I think that’s where they really saw Nichiha as a great fit.”

**ANDREW WINTER, NATIONAL SALES MANAGER FOR ILA MARKETING GROUP**

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### Heritage Details for a Historic Location

Telegraph Square’s build site had local significance that a new design would seek to incorporate. In fact, the building’s moniker draws from its location on hallowed ground for journalism in Saint John. The Telegraph-Journal and Evening Times-Globe occupied the space until a nearby move in the early 1960s, with the building eventually being torn down in the 1990s. The only remaining element of the original structure was its brick foundation, which sloped westward down Grannan street and had since been converted into a small parking garage.

Knowing this, designers sought to incorporate elements from the location’s past into the new design, and the name was chosen to honor its history.

### Blending Tradition and Modernity

Comeau MacKenzie Architecture, a local firm, headed up Telegraph Square’s design, seeking to incorporate elements that would help the building blend into the surrounding neighborhood. Nichiha’s impressive brick- and concrete-mimicking cladding even won over the local historical society.

“Telegraph Square is among the first revitalization projects in the city,” said Andrew Winter, national sales manager for ILA Marketing Group, Nichiha’s Canadian market representatives. “In dealing with the historical committee, it was so important to keep that essence of the old, but be able to bring in the new. I think that’s where they really saw Nichiha as a great fit.”

The design used a brick-effect façade accented by concrete-mimicking vertical columns—all Nichiha products. The structure’s top two floors would utilize the company’s concrete-look panels. The result was a six-story, 32-unit multifamily building with commercial tenants occupying street-level spaces.

### Unflinching Protection

Aesthetics aside, the building envelope would have to be tough. Saint John sits adjacent to the Bay of Bundy, home to the world’s highest tides. Weather can be unforgiving, with whipping winds, heavy precipitation, Nor’easters, and even the occasional tropical storm.

Architects would need to lean on Nichiha’s weather resilience, particularly for Telegraph Square’s top floors, which peeked above the surrounding neighborhoods, being more exposed to the elements. Fortunately, Comeau MacKenzie was already familiar with Nichiha’s fiber cement lineup.

“The main reason they went with Nichiha was from past experience and confidence of the architect,” said Winter. “[The other projects] were in Newfoundland, which is Canada’s worst province in terms of weather.

Nichiha’s AWP lineup is tough—able to shrug off such severe weather. At 5/8" and 3/4" thick, respectively, the chosen [PlymouthBrick](#) and [SandStone](#) cladding options are far thicker than comparable alternatives. They are among the brand’s most robust AWP offerings and are up to the task of withstanding New Brunswick’s brutal winds and intense freeze-thaw cycles.

## Overcoming Installation Hurdles

All the right elements were in place. The design had been finalized, the city approved the use of Nichiha, and all parties were comfortable with the protection the cladding would offer. That is precisely when the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic began, bringing with it numerous headaches to the project.

“A lot of things became hurdles,” said Winter. “Number one was labor.”

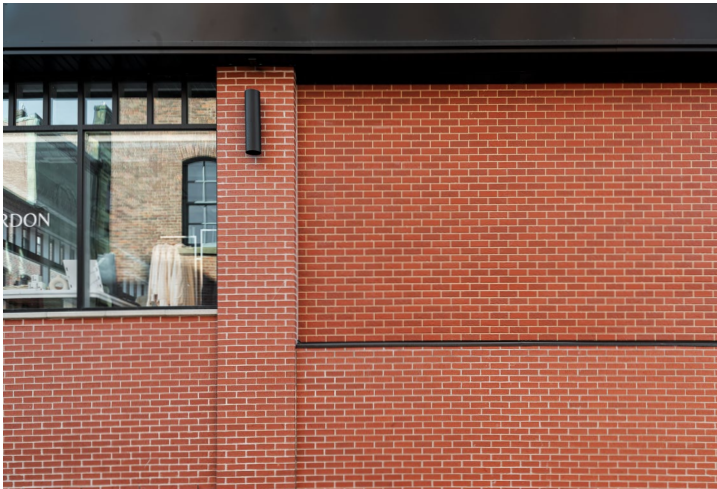
Thanks to a collaborative effort between Nichiha and CanWel Building Materials—the transporter and importer of Nichiha product in Canada—stock arrived despite supply chain woes.

The challenging labor considerations were lessened thanks to the clever way the cladding is installed. Unlike masonry, the wall system, which is engineered with an incorporated rainscreen, installs with Nichiha’s [Ultimate Clip System](#), requiring a far smaller installation crew.

Despite the global challenges brought on by the pandemic, the project was finished in 2021. Telegraph Square’s aesthetic was a perfect match for the surrounding neighborhood. The look is classic Saint John, blending the looks of masonry and stone with black accents and extrusions. Architects were even able to successfully incorporate the brick foundation details of the original building.

The building serves as a prolific manifestation of the city’s efforts to attract new residents. Telegraph Square was intended to court young professionals and retired individuals to reside in the heart of uptown Saint John. When the building opened its doors to tenants in the summer of 2021, it delivered on that aim. The Nichiha team was proud of the results.

“Saint John is a beautiful city with stunning architecture and amazing people,” said Winter. “We’re so happy to be a part of its history and its future.”



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Nichiha USA, Inc., a subsidiary of Nichiha Corporation, was established 1998 and is headquartered in Johns Creek, GA. Nichiha Corporation, an international leader in fiber cement technology for more than 35 years, has 13 plants worldwide and markets distinct patterns of fiber cement siding products in the U.S. In 2007, Nichiha opened its first U.S. manufacturing plant in Macon, GA, responding to an increase in demand for fiber cement products in the Southeast market. For more information, call 1.86.NICHIBA1 or visit [www.nichiha.com](http://www.nichiha.com).

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