

Gitigaan

Building Tribal Cannabis Infrastructure

Client: Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa · **Location:** Northern Wisconsin



Slab pour, from above.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Project Overview

The Gitigaan cultivation and processing project represents an important investment in tribal cannabis infrastructure in northern Wisconsin. The Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa pursued an emerging economic opportunity requiring the integration of specialized cultivation and processing systems in a demanding climate.

McCormick's team joined during the construction phase. We were not the original project developer or cannabis development consultant. The facility concept, delivery structure, and several major procurement decisions were established before our involvement. Our role was to execute our contracted construction responsibilities and coordinate technical interfaces within that existing framework.

Tribal nation	Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa	Cultivation approach	Controlled-environment greenhouse
Location	Northern Wisconsin	McCormick involvement	Construction-phase execution, technical coordination
Facility	Cultivation and on-site processing	Setting	Northern Wisconsin climate — significant winter demands

CONSTRUCTION EXECUTION

Construction Scope & Execution

McCormick joined Gitigaan during the construction phase, under contract to execute defined construction scopes within a delivery structure established before our involvement. Our contracted construction scope included:

Site work	Concrete	Electrical	Plumbing
HVAC	Headhouse construction	Carpentry	

Major portions of the project were contracted among separate parties. Within that structure, McCormick executed its contracted scopes and coordinated the technical interfaces between building systems, cultivation equipment, commissioning, and the other contractors' scopes.



Steel frame rising.



Envelope closing in.

Coordinating Across Separate Contracts

Complex projects may use multiple prime contractors and specialty suppliers for sound commercial or operational reasons. This approach can work well when interfaces are identified, responsibilities are documented, and coordination is clearly assigned.

At Gitigaan, major portions of the project were contracted among separate parties. That structure reinforced for our team the importance of mapping connections between building systems, cultivation equipment, commissioning, and contractor scopes. Practical tools include a responsibility matrix, coordinated procurement schedule, interface register, change-control process, and an agreed escalation path.

Key principle: *Separate contracts can succeed when technical interfaces are managed as one integrated project.*

Integrated Building Systems

Cultivation and processing infrastructure combines building envelope, HVACD, electrical distribution, lighting, irrigation, water treatment, environmental controls, specialty equipment, processing systems, workflow, and biosecurity. A decision affecting one system can change the requirements of several others.

The transferable lesson: align facility design, production objectives, project delivery, and technical responsibilities as early as possible.



Greenhouse interior: rolling benches, irrigation, and blackout curtain.

The Facility Strategy

Gitigaan incorporated greenhouse cultivation in northern Wisconsin, where winter temperatures, seasonal variation, and environmental-control demands are significant design considerations. Greenhouse and sealed indoor facilities each have potential advantages and constraints. The appropriate selection depends on production strategy, energy economics, environmental requirements, capital availability, and long-term operating assumptions.

The greenhouse concept had been selected before McCormick joined. Our role was to help implement the chosen strategy, not to revisit the original development decision. The broader lesson is that comparative lifecycle analysis should inform facility selection before substantial capital is committed.

What Gitigaan Reinforced

We share the following observations to support informed planning on future projects, not to evaluate the Tribe's decisions or suggest that any single development approach is universally appropriate.

The Building Is Part of the Cultivation System

Facility type is a foundational controlled-environment agriculture decision. Climate, envelope performance, humidity management, mechanical loads, energy use, and production requirements all influence operating economics. A strong evaluation considers local climate, crop strategy, environmental targets, capital cost, maintenance, utilities, operating cost, and the useful life of the asset.

Key principle: *Determine how the operation needs to perform before determining what to build.*

Coordination Is a Construction Discipline

Cultivation facilities combine conventional construction with specialized environmental and production systems. A designated project coordination function helps keep design, budget, schedule, equipment, commissioning, and operational readiness aligned. Decision rights, reporting lines, and coordination responsibilities must be established and understood — and on tribal projects, participation, workforce, and economic-development objectives deserve thoughtful integration into project planning. Each nation determines its own governance and approval processes.

Construction programs involve many participants and evolving decisions. Meeting records, decision logs, scope matrices, RFIs, written approvals, and documented cost and schedule impacts help preserve institutional knowledge and minimize misunderstandings.

Key principle: *Respect sovereign decision-making while making project execution responsibilities clear.*

First Cost Is Only One Part of Value

Initial construction cost matters, but it should be evaluated alongside long-term energy use, maintenance, labor, environmental stability, equipment replacement, and production performance. A lower-cost initial option may be appropriate in some circumstances; in others, additional upfront investment may reduce lifecycle cost or operational risk. Neither outcome should be assumed without project-specific analysis.

Key principle: *Value engineering should improve total lifecycle economics, not merely reduce initial capital spending.*

Commercial construction experience is essential, but cannabis infrastructure also requires familiarity with cultivation environments, production workflows, and specialized building systems. Owner-side technical advice can help an owner compare facility alternatives and evaluate risks before procurement and construction.

THE ECONOMIC LENS — CAPEX + OPEX + PRODUCTION PERFORMANCE. *For cultivation infrastructure, a meaningful comparison accounts for the cost of producing a consistent, saleable gram over time, not simply construction dollars per square foot.*

DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

The McCormick Development Model

Our project experience, including Gitigaan, reinforces a disciplined approach to planning and delivery. For a new cultivation or processing project, we recommend the following sequence:

01 — DEFINE	Clarify business objectives, production strategy, operating requirements, and desired outcomes.
02 — ASSESS	Review the site, climate, utilities, facility alternatives, and technical risks.
03 — MODEL	Evaluate CAPEX, OPEX, production assumptions, and lifecycle economics.
04 — STRUCTURE	Establish procurement strategy, project coordination, responsibilities, and decision authority.
05 — DESIGN	Integrate architecture, engineering, cultivation systems, and owner requirements.
06 — BUILD	Execute clearly defined scopes with active interface management.
07 — COMMISSION	Verify that systems operate together under the facility's intended production conditions.

A practical starting point: an Owner's Project Requirements document and Cannabis Infrastructure Plan can align the production objectives, facility strategy, budget, operating assumptions, contractor interfaces, commissioning requirements, and future expansion priorities before major commitments are made.



Greenhouse structure going up.

EXPERIENCE

The Value of Experience



Greenhouse entrance and interior corridor.

Every significant infrastructure project provides experience that can strengthen the next one. Gitigaan gave McCormick's team valuable firsthand exposure to construction-phase integration of specialized cannabis systems in northern Wisconsin. We appreciate the opportunity to have contributed to this important tribal initiative. The experience reinforced the value of early technical coordination, disciplined capital planning, clearly defined roles, and lifecycle-focused facility design.

These are principles we bring to conversations with tribal nations, developers, operators, and capital partners. Our objective is to support informed decisions while respecting each nation's priorities, governance, and development strategy.

Experience builds better infrastructure.

Specialized Cannabis Facility Construction

New Development · Facility Expansion · Modernization · Technical Integration

DISCUSS YOUR CONSTRUCTION PROJECT