CELEBRATING WESTERN RED CEDAR ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN
When we discuss architectural design, the term “timeless” stands as a consistent and enduring design goal. There is no single definition of timeless, but we can probably all agree that it is achieved when a design is not associated with trends or styles, something that can stand up against the test of time. Architecture at its core tries to achieve this by combining utility with beauty in buildings and structures. When successful, the architect’s creation resonates with us whether two thousand years old or two days after completion.

As part of the architectural design decisions we must balance structure, function, systems and exterior finishes. A material should be durable, useful and well suited to its purpose. For me, Western Red Cedar has always brought some surety to this decision process because it is a timeless material that has an innate beauty that in many ways embodies the ideals of timeless modern design.

Western Red Cedar has a direct and simple beauty that needs little in terms of treatment or finish but always gives a sense of craft. It is amazingly practical in that it is insect resistant and water resistant. It has utility in that it can be used in so many ways with such a wide variety of applications ranging from finished furniture to a durable exterior finish. We can use it as shingles, a dozen kinds of siding or milled to whatever one can imagine. It also has an innate beauty in its patterns, imperfections, grain patterns and knots. And of course, there is nothing like the scent of Western Red Cedar.

Western Red Cedar is also an appropriate material for our time and place when we consider sustainable design. It is renewable with responsible forestry practices, providing natural habitat while growing, and in the end captures carbon like few other building materials; and, it can be recycled and composted. Whenever I receive cedar on my job sites, I am always amazed by it. I think about the tree that it came from and I regard this as a near sacred use of a living thing that will have a new life and purpose in providing shelter.

For these reasons, and many more, Western Red Cedar presents itself as a unique and multifaceted solution for designing and building. The selections for this year’s Cedar Book reflect this range of applications, aesthetics, building uses and environmental settings, ranging from New Zealand to the Pacific Northwest or Texas to Southern California. In this book, no two projects took the same approach but when looking at these designs, it is hard to imagine another material contributing so much to the success of their designs.
Tucked into a wedge-shaped, moderately sloping lot that backs onto a heavily treed ravine, Bluebonnet is subtle yet bold, unmistakable from the street, yet in no way ostentatious.

“With this project, we struck a perfect balance of dark and light, opacity and transparency, and scale within the natural landscape,” explains project lead, Mark Simone. “For the
Cedar cladding felt like a natural choice due to its low carbon footprint and for its natural aesthetic qualities.”

MARK SIMONE, ARCHITECTURAL DESIGNER
To create even more texture and visual interest, Simone specified different grades.

“We used KD Select Knotty and clear mixed grain with a shiplap profile throughout,” he says. “Knotty cedar was suitable for the vertically oriented boards which were stained black. We liked the variation and warmth of the clear mixed grain for the clear coated horizontal boards and soffits.”

Even in this North Vancouver neighbourhood - which hosts an eclectic mix of homes that have been built over the past 60 years with some original oddities - the Bluebonnet is a standout and for all the right reasons.

“A home entirely clad in cedar is a very unique thing,” concurs Simone. "Everyone who’s seen it has been blown away by the final product and the response has been outstanding.”

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Elevated on a prime location that overlooks Lake Wanaka and the surrounding mountains, this New Zealand property offers stunning vistas. But it’s also subject to climatic extremes including hot summers, cold winters and onshore winds across the water.

So, the challenge for the Condon Scott Architects team was to design a family retreat that capitalizes on the extensive views while ensuring the home is comfortable to live in during all seasons. They addressed this in two ways.
The first was through the overall design. The home is comprised of two wings, with a linkway between and deep eaves to counter the sun’s intensity. They also configured multiple sheltered courtyards throughout the home, allowing the owners to find respite from all wind.

The second way they addressed this goal was through choice of material. The rounded exterior walls are clad in a dramatic dark-stained Western Red Cedar siding. Strong and durable, yet very easy to work with, cedar checked a lot of boxes.

“We chose to specify Western Red Cedar as the exterior siding because it’s a very stable product against the high UV levels here in this region,” explains lead architect Barry Condon. “Plus, the vertical lines of the WRC gave us the ability to clad the curved elements of the design seamlessly.”

“Western Red Cedar cladding has proven to be one of the most stable products to withstand climatic conditions.”

BARRY CONDON, ANZIA
The clients also wanted privacy as well as “architectural flare” – again, cedar was able to deliver on both fronts. The innovative design combined with the use of nature’s most beautiful building material created instant curb appeal for this sanctuary.

“The house is located in quite a prominent corner lot, bordered by two suburban streets,” says the award-winning architect. “The cedar walls wrap around the home and create a sense of privacy from the street frontage. The sweeping curved forms, accentuated with the vertical cedar cladding, has certainly been the most talked about aspect of the design.”
Competition for this golf course project was fierce. The developer’s vision was ambitious and very specific: 40 stunning guesthouses to be built on an island in the middle of a lake in the Muskoka region, on the Canadian Shield landscape.

The design would also have to respect the area’s history and distinctive architectural aesthetic. And the build would have to employ practical construction techniques to minimize disruption to the landscape as well as maximize energy efficiency and sustainability. It’s the kind of complex project that requires an experienced and innovative firm.
In the end, there could only be one winner. MacKay-Lyons Sweetapple Architects beat out five other firms with their proposal for this standout project. Their award-winning design uses a modernist stylistic vocabulary to express archetypal concepts.

The exterior is understated, and the interior is sensuously dramatic, airy, and gracious. The main living space of each exquisitely crafted pavilion rises to a showstopping peak and is naturally lit from above via a periscope window in the gable. The bedrooms and bathrooms - two of each - are spare and elegant.

GRADE
‘A’ Clear and Better

PATTERN
Smooth face shiplap siding and T&G, v-joint paneling

SIZE
1x4

FASTENING
Stainless steel

APPLIED FINISH
Transparent latex stain
To enhance a seamless connection between indoors and out, Western Red Cedar was used throughout the cabins. Inside, they used nature’s most versatile material on the ceiling, walls, cabinets, bedbox and hearth. Outside, each cabin is clad in cedar shiplap and topped with a distinguished monolithic, cedar-shingled roof.

No strangers to WRC’s beauty and superior performance in harsh weather, MacKay-Lyons Sweetapple Architects knew they found the right building material for the job.

“We chose Western Red Cedar for its natural, warm appearance, its aromatic characteristics as well as its durability; to stand up to the demanding climate of their location,” explains lead architect Brian MacKay-Lyons. “We often use natural materials such as Western Red Cedar to create a connection with the surrounding landscape.”
Set in the Southern California coastal beach town of Encinitas, this beautiful custom home was designed for a young family who wanted to have a fun, outdoor space to play with the kids as well as plenty of space to accommodate guests from out of town. They also wanted it to be built as sustainably as possible. Which just happens to be one of Brett Farrow’s specialties.

So, in addition to a standard solar system, he incorporated a rainwater collection and fog harvesting systems in the design phase. Landscape was also a big consideration. For

“Western Red Cedar communicates quality, craft and a warmth that is hard to get from any other material.”

BRETT FARROW, ARCHITECT

ARCHITECT
Brett Farrow
Architect

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER
Dodd & Associates

GENERAL CONTRACTOR
La Costa Builders

PHOTOGRAPHY
Pixer Pros

LOCATION
ENCINITAS, CALIFORNIA, USA

RESIDENTIAL

605 CORNISH

19XIV
this, he installed both drought tolerants and native species. However, the most sustainable element is the wood framing and Western Red Cedar siding.

“I choose to work with cedar because it’s natural beauty, scent, variations and resistance to insects and water,” explains Farrow. “The fact that we can use such a beautiful material that also captures carbon is another reason why I chose to use cedar throughout the home. When grown in a sustainable manner, there is no better environmental choice for North America.”

With that in mind, he also used Western Red Cedar on the ceiling and fencing.
“I like to work in a ‘natural modern’ aesthetic that ties into both the coastal location and tradition of California Modern Architecture,” says Farrow. “Cedar is elemental, it’s fairly off-the-shelf and brings a warmth and aesthetic accessibility to what could otherwise be a cold, hard edge modern form. I also like to contrast it with concrete and natural metal colors.”

As for the homeowners, opting to use nature’s most versatile material throughout their home was almost a given.

“They sought me out to design this home because of another house down the same street that I designed and built a few years prior, which also used Western Red Cedar throughout,” says the award-winning architect, adding “So, going with cedar was an easy and almost automatic choice - I use it in all of my work.”
Surrounded by the city of Austin, West Lake Hills has generous lots, many of which were developed in the 1950s and 1960s with mid-century modern homes. The original house on this property was no exception.

With that in mind, the clients and architects of Matt Fajkus Architecture wanted to honor this style with a progressive interpretation. So, they kept the horizontality of the original design.
The low-pitched roof and unique fireplace form were also respected in the adaption.

As for their environmental goals, they wanted to work with the site, rather than against it. This meant preserving all the existing trees by carefully locating the footprints around the critical root zones. In addition, connection to the outdoors was prioritized in the design through views to the surrounding trees and physical connections to outdoor living spaces on every level.

Another way they provided a connection to the surrounding landscape was through their choice in naturally beautiful Western Red Cedar on the

“Cedar balances the other materials, crisply contrasting one another in symphony.”

MATT FAJKUS, AIA
exterior walls of the outdoor living spaces, the exterior soffits, and the ceiling in the kitchen, living, and dining areas.

“Western Red Cedar is incorporated systematically through the design of the house, as part of a volumetric and experiential strategy, rather than in ad hoc locations,” explains Fajkus. “This includes on the front façade, inside the house, and in the back, helping to blur the lines between inside and outside. The most pronounced application is on the underside of the soffits in the front, continuing as a flush surface to the interior ceiling, and then reappearing in the back again.”

The timeless beauty of cedar also played a key part in paying homage to the area’s mid-century modern design roots.

“The simple material selections, including cedar, are based on the original palette,” says Fajkus, “while also providing an updated enhancement.”
Inspired by the regional farm structures of Vermont’s Green Mountains, Bank Barn’s simple gabled form is instantly recognizable as a building built in the local vernacular but at the same time it has a very contemporary feel.

One of the most attention-grabbing aspects of the project is the way it interacts with the landscape. Nestled into a hillside overlooking a meadow and the foothills, Bank Barn is at one with the surrounding natural beauty which is captured through the expansive glass elevation.
The home is also exposed to dramatically changing weather throughout the seasons. Balancing the extremes of warm humid summers with freezing and heavy snow laden winters require buildings to respond to a full range of climate conditions. So, Birdseye architect, Brian Mac, needed to create an envelope that maximized thermal efficiency while offering an aesthetic befitting a modern barn house.

No stranger to nature’s most versatile material, Mac chose Western Red Cedar. He knows from working with cedar on other projects how well it stands up to
the elements, and how many different grades and profiles there are to choose from.

It’s also pitch and resin free, which means it accepts and holds a wide range of finishes beautifully. For this project, he sourced out prefinished tongue and groove boards for the project’s siding.

“The color, texture, tone and reveal details of the WRC allowed us to detail a contemporary vision with a familiar palette to the landscape,” explains the award-winning architect.

In the past, Mac has strategically applied clear and knotty grades to create contrast and define spaces. Here, he only wanted a beautiful knotty grade of cedar.

“We selected that for its clean, yet timeless aesthetic” he says. “Characteristic of local barn vernacular, the weathered siding provides a tactile and recognizable softness to the more contemporary moves on the building.”
The main objective for this Oregon addition was to create a multi-use, family space on the second floor, where growing boys could play and horse around while being separated from the quieter area of the main house. The adults also wanted to utilize the space for home fitness as well as a media room.

The goal for the ground-floor, meanwhile, was to incorporate a covered outdoor kitchen – emphasis on “covered” (a must in the rainy Pacific Northwest climate). The clients also wanted the 2-story structure to be an architectural standout and a
“We chose Western Red Cedar because it’s beautiful and durable!”

TUAN VU, ASSOC. AIA

Propel also created interesting juxtapositions by using different grades and finishes. The dark-stained exterior siding is a knotty grade of cedar and contrasts beautifully against the crisp, clear, naturally stained cedar.

The Poolhouse Addition utilizes clean modern cedar siding on the outside and inside to both differentiate and complement the rustic-traditional wavy edge cedar siding featured on the existing home,” explains lead architect Nick Mira. “The continuation of the cedar soffit from outside to inside helps blur the line of interior exterior within the home to accentuate the feeling of being connected to nature.”
This interplay of light and texture is just one of many contemporary looks that architects can achieve with a material as versatile as Western Red Cedar. That’s because cedar comes in a variety of sizes, grades and profiles. Cedar is also pitch and resin free, which means it accepts and holds a wide range of finishes beautifully.

For this project, the overall effect is a warm glowing floating box that honors its surroundings. And a big part of that was the choice in material.

“The beauty of cedar contributed to the final result by connecting a high quality and natural look to the wooded Pacific Northwest setting,” says Mira.
At the heart of this certified Passive House is the cedar-centric courtyard. By providing a strategically located outdoor living space, the First Lamp team provided opportunity for southern light into the house and passive solar gain. The large sliding doors, meanwhile, provide a private connection to nature.

In keeping with the overarching goal of reducing the building's ecological footprint, First Lamp designed a stunning Western Red Cedar rainscreen system. Since cedar is a natural thermal insulator, this not only protects the building against moisture, but it also helps conserve energy. And from a design perspective, the rich tonal wood makes for a beautiful feature wall and creates visual cohesion with the cedar fencing and cedar-clad garage.
“We chose cedar mostly for its natural beauty and warmth, but also because it’s a rapidly renewable resource.”

TAYLOR CALLAWAY, AIA

“Cedar’s natural color helps offset the clean modern lines of the house and the other painted finishes,” explains lead architect, Taylor Callaway. The award-winning architect is well versed in the many ways Western Red Cedar makes a statement in the context of contemporary design. And having seen his impressive portfolio of work, the clients knew they could trust his enthusiasm for nature’s most versatile material.

“They were on board from the beginning,” he says, before adding “and they loved how it turned out.”
When designing two homes for a client on one 50'x50' infill lot, there are some inherent restraints - especially in a dense urban area where sprawling out is not an option. The design response had to be vertical. But it also had to be warm and inviting, which as lead architect Webster Wilson explains, was no easy feat. “The biggest challenge on such a tight site was to provide high quality spaces and meet the program for two separate family units, but also maintain privacy from each other.”
We chose Western Red Cedar for its natural beauty and exterior performance.”

WEBSTER WILSON, AIA

and other neighbors,” says Wilson. “The result is a 4-story wood structure, with the units separated by a green roof “canyon”, and carefully crafted and choreographed fenestration locations.”

He tempered the modern clean lines of the duplex by cladding it in a beautiful knotty grade of Western Red Cedar.

“There is a lovely texture and unique character that comes with a knotty grade, which also happens to still be cost-effective,” says the award-winning architect. “There is visual interest up close, so the building is not just appreciated from across the street. Wood siding in general, evokes the tangible craftsmanship and timeless connection to the past and nature, that you can never get with machined metals or cement boards.”
Just by virtue of being a tiny-home community, Hiatus Benham is a green project. Each cottage-style house only uses 400 square-feet to create nearly 600 square-feet of highly functional living space. Multi-use lofts, furniture, storage-integrated stairs and modular shelving are among the many space-saving features.

Along with leaving a smaller footprint, each zero-energy home is 40 - 50% more efficient.
We love the natural feel of cedar.”

JESSE RUSSELL, HIATUS HOMES FOUNDER

than the average American residential dwelling. The 22 homes are strategically situated throughout a forested area and connected by winding paths. The unique layout creates privacy but also promotes social interaction among the like-minded people who live there.

“The Hiatus community combines the liberating feeling of small housing with an inviting design that naturally turns neighbors into friends,” says one happy homeowner.

To further connect residents to their woody landscape as well as to each other, the homes are clad in nature’s most versatile building material.
“The use of Western Red Cedar in our houses helps tie all the homes together, blend them into the environment and natural spaces surrounding the homes, and creates a casual feeling that helps connect the community,” explains Jesse Russell, Hiatus Homes Founder.

Cedar was also used for decking, storage benches and bike boxes as well as the community garden. Which means these homeowners will get to enjoy their outdoor living spaces for years to come. That’s because Western Red Cedar is naturally resistant to rot, decay and insects, making it an ideal material for all exterior applications.

For this project, the Hiatus developers specified a beautiful knotty grade of wood, which really adds a lot of character and texture to both the private and communal structures.

“Hiatus Homes is built on the foundation of creating liveable spaces through creative and curious design,” says Russell, adding “and Western Red Cedar was a key element to that process.”
Located in the historic district of Detroit’s Brush Park, John R 2660 is part of a revitalization project called City Modern. In total, LOHA designed four anchor buildings, each with its own unique exterior. John R is a great solution that stands out.

Inspired by Detroit’s urban palette, John R is a mixed-use building wrapped in a rhythm of thin vertical boards of Western Red Cedar and floor-to-ceiling windows that bring texture and openness to the ground-floor retail. Playing with horizontals and verticals, the façade is expressed as a series of horizontal bands at each floor level that are reinforced by a metal coping detail at each floor level.
“The use of cedar is a defining feature and has given the project a unique character that simultaneously fits the context while standing out.”

LORCAN O’HERLIHY, FAIA

The decision to use nature’s most versatile material was twofold. For starters, it’s naturally resistant to rot, decay and insects, making cedar an ideal siding product for Michigan’s harsh winter season.

“Cedar is a good choice for cold environments because it has a high R value, meaning that air infiltration is very limited, it requires less mechanical conditioning,” explains LOHA principal-in-charge Lorcan O’Herlihy. “So, it’s a good choice for a sustainable envelope.”

Secondly, cedar has timeless appeal. Which was important because the clients wanted the development to be stitched into the existing street fabric, serving as a bridge between downtown and midtown, and bringing much-needed housing and amenities to the neighborhood.
KD Select Knotty

PATTERN
T&G with
1/4" reveal

SIZE
1x4

FASTENING
Stainless steel

APPLIED FINISH
Semi-transparent,
solvent born,
oil-based stain

Mission accomplished. The beautiful texturized knotty cedar complements the structure’s clean contemporary lines while still honoring the area’s heritage.

“John R 2660 has become a key example for how new development can both reflect the vast history and anticipate a future for the neighborhood,” says the award-winning architect. “The combination of the classic material of cedar and the forward-thinking design approach of LOHA unite to produce a memorable landmark in the community.”
S ituated on the former military outpost, Confluence, Fort Collins strives in every way to live up to its site’s historic past. But at the same time, it’s also a very progressive, highly livable community.

That’s because the clients wanted a memorable three-building project that would add focus to the area and create salable commercial and residential spaces within a very walkable neighborhood. And that’s exactly what the team at [au]workshop architects+urbanists delivered.
“Confluence is a mixed-use project in the truest sense, composed of pedestrian-oriented retail, office, housing, and concealed off-street parking,” explains lead architect Randy Shortridge. “Twenty-six residences feature terraces with outstanding views of the city rooftops and the mountains beyond, while shady courtyards provide welcoming niches to the pedestrian realm.”

In order to link the site’s heritage to the redevelopment’s new look and feel, Shortridge needed a building material with timeless appeal. He chose Western Red Cedar for the siding and soffits.

“We were drawn to the personality of the cedar and how it would age gracefully alongside the other building materials in the context of the neighborhood,” says [au]workshop’s Principal in Charge, Jason Kersley, who turned to Western Red Cedar Lumber Association (WRCLA) field technician Paul Mackie for specification and installation support.

And how did the clients feel about the result?

“They liked the cedar so much they asked if we could replace other materials with more cedar,” says Shortridge, adding, “so we did!”

"The cedar will age with personality.”
Randy Shortridge, AIA
Stretched along a flat road just a short distance from the Pacific Ocean, this medical clinic needed an exterior material durable enough to resist mold and salt damage caused by the nearby sea breeze. But it also needed to be warm and inviting for all the local seniors that rely on the facility for healthcare — in other words, it had to be a top-performing, yet all natural, siding product.

The clinic’s director turned to Architanz Fukuoka, an architectural firm that specializes in stylish wooden architecture.
“He asked us to make it more understated because he was concerned that some patients, especially elderly people, might feel uncomfortable to enter the clinic if it was too modern,” says lead architect, Tetsuya Fukuda. “I have designed clinics in the past, but I have always aimed at designing them to be ‘healing places’ for patients. So, the director and I shared the exact same vision for this clinic.”

That vision included using nature’s most versatile building material throughout the project.

“I decided to use Western Red Cedar for exterior materials for this project because it covers a lot of bases,” explains Fukuda. “Using Western Red Cedar can improve visibility, give a sense of calm and warmth, and address the problem of salt damage from the ocean.”

“I chose Western Red Cedar because it’s durable and excellent in design.”

TETSUYA FUKUDA, ARCHITECT
The finished product is a welcoming structure that’s rich in tonal range and instantly recognizable from the street.

“In Japan, it’s common for many clinics to display a big signboard,” he says. “But I placed a modestly sized signboard on the wall near the entrance for this clinic to make the building itself express its existence.”

To connect the interior to the exterior and to create a healthy environment for occupants, the Architanz Fukuoka team also used cedar on the soffit/ceiling system.

“This helps patients relax and forget about their pain and illness,” says Fukuda of cedar’s biophilic characteristics. “I’m always glad to hear that people coming to the clinic feel calm and cozy.”
Set on a heavily treed 28-acre site, Camp Manitou may feel like it’s hours from the nearest urban center, but it’s actually only five minutes from Manitoba’s largest city, Winnipeg. This year-round camp and recreation facility - home to an outdoor pool, a zip line course, a covered hockey rink, mountain biking trails and toboggan runs - provides a vibrant setting for visitors. The one thing it was missing was a focal point - a welcoming lodge to unify all the other amenities and immediately connect visitors to the wooded landscape.
Western Red Cedar was selected because it is a cost-effective, durable, and attractive natural material that radiates warmth.”

JASON KUN, MAA, AAA, RAIC
Having completed several other projects where Western Red Cedar featured prominently, the team at 1x1 was aware of cedar’s biophilic and beauty-enhancing characteristics.

“The use of Western Red Cedar elevated a relatively simple building into a unique, inviting space that exudes warmth,” says Kun. “The south side of the building with its low cedar soffit and long deck has become a favorite spot for campers to gather for both socializing and learning.”
The 14th volume of the Cedar Book profiles stunning and award-winning architecture from inspired designers around the world. These architects continue a tradition that started centuries ago when the Indigenous Peoples of the Pacific Northwest recognized the value of using this unique wood species.

First Nations people recognized Western Red Cedar’s natural durability, stability, versatility and beauty, making it the preferred choice for building ocean-going canoes, ceremonial dance masks, totems, basketry, clothing and post-and-beam houses and lodges. Today’s discerning architects and builders enhance their projects with this stunning, versatile and sustainable building material. Nature still knows best. Despite all efforts at imitation, no man-made product can match the beauty, performance and longevity of Western Red Cedar—something this book, as well as the RealCedar.com online gallery, undoubtedly illustrates.

Western Red Cedar is one of nature’s truly remarkable materials. It absorbs and stores greenhouse gases, generates less water, air pollution and requires less energy to produce than alternatives. And it comes from a renewable and sustainable resource. More than ever before, we must find ways to reduce the pressure on our planet’s environment and finite resources. By choosing products with a light carbon footprint and by reducing waste, we can have a real impact on climate change now, and into the future. As part of their commitment to transparency, the Western Red Cedar Lumber Association has Environmental Product Declarations available for siding, decking and other products. We hope this book inspires you to consider Western Red Cedar for siding, paneling, trim boards, decking, soffit and outdoor structures on your next project.
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