

15TH GBMTM Global Buyers Mission

September 6-8, 2018
Whistler, British Columbia

WoodTALKS Speaks to the Importance of Integrated Design



This week, 800 buyers, sellers and specifiers of value-added wood products have gathered in Whistler for the Global Buyers Mission (GBM), Canada's largest show of its kind. And on day one, WoodTALKS—a wood design and construction education event held in conjunction with the GBM—was front and centre.

On Day One, first to the podium was architect **Bo Helliwell of Blue Sky Architecture**, renowned for his distinctive and stunning West Coast timber architecture. Helliwell spoke of the principles that inform his firm's design approach and that are integrated into every project they undertake. This includes a focus on the building site for early guidance, optimizing natural light, staying organic

with shapes, providing structure and shelter space, celebrating local weather, using natural materials and colour, ensuring craftsmanship, using natural energy and seizing opportunities where they arise. In addition to his generous use of Western Red Cedar and Douglas-fir, Helliwell spoke of the importance of contractor familiarity with timber design.



Peter Moonen of Wood WORKS! BC's fame, presented next on wood construction and durability and "what you think or may not know to make wood last". Moonen's bottom line is that designers and builders must have an understanding of the factors likely to impact wood in use and integrate their design and treatment solutions to allow wood to reach its full potential. Most important in this regard are moisture considerations or as Moonen says, "following the raindrop and anticipate where it is going to flow". The key being to cover exposed surfaces, particularly end-grains and elevating the connections above the snow or water pooling level. Other hazards to avoid include colour degradation from UV light, staining from galvanized nails and condensation where different products overlap.



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Architect Oliver Lang's information-rich presentation was a look into the future as it relates to society's housing challenge of ensuring livability, sustainability and affordability. His integrated software-driven solution—not unlike automation in car manufacturing—involves establishing a base system or platform with almost unlimited opportunity for variation and repetition. The building solution that best meets the challenge lies in the convergence of mass timber and modular building systems with software engineering and robotically assisted off-site prefabrication. But the future is near with the city of Esquimalt's recent approval of his 12-storey, 83-unit Corvette Landing project. The modular construction will make for a significantly faster completion of the project; approximately nine months from first dig to move-in day.



Shelley Craig of Urban Arts Architecture spoke of her firm's 100 Mile Building journey with the Radium Hot Springs Community Hall and Library and how it brought life to the important goal of "buying local". The final design approach supported the local wood-based economy, incorporated mass timber solutions and involved the community throughout the design and building process. The result: more than 80% of the project value was sourced, built and installed by individuals or suppliers within a 100-mile radius of Radium. Quite an accomplishment—a first in Canada—since the town lies in a long valley between two of BC's largest mountain ranges.



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The day's final presentation by **architect John Hemsworth and engineer Robert Malczyk** was a touching story about Rebuilding the Heart of a Small Community, one hockey arena at a time. The impetus was their earlier authorship of a prospective report on wood recreational facilities (given that two-thirds of BC's 190 arenas are more than 35 years old), commissioned by the Wood Enterprise Coalition. The story became a reality when the hypothetical town used in the report—Hazelton, BC—hired them to replace their 44-year-old, volunteer-built arena. And although residents had known the foundation was shifting, they were not expecting the design team to declare their arena too dangerous to keep open, right in the middle of a hockey practice. A major setback, given the important role the arena played as a place for people to come together, the community rallied behind the new, cost effective venture, that will redefine the new heart of Hazelton. In an engaging tag-team approach, their presentation was the perfect wrap for an impressive day of WoodTALKS.

Day two of WoodTALKS—kicked off with the opening of the buyers trade show, which is covered in a separate story.



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The WoodTALKS participants were then treated to a presentation by **architect Allyn Stellmacher** on the modernization of US Federal Center South Building in Seattle, headquarters of the US Army Corps of Engineers. Stellmacher explained how their team used reclaimed timber from an adjacent warehouse to create one of the most energy efficient office buildings in the United States.

Commissioned during an economic downturn, the project also came with employment goals and a very short time-frame. Unique to the effort was the need to test and grade all the deconstructed wood planks and beams and modify the project in real time based on what was available.

Rounding out the multi-day WoodTALKS event was the opportunity for the participants to engage directly with the value-added wood manufacturers showcasing their products at the tradeshow. Similar to “speed dating”, the participants rotate around the trade show floor via mini-seminars, learning the latest on wood products and wood systems. The participating companies included Woodtone, Watkin Sawmills & Chemco

Treating, The San Group, FraserWood Industries, Fenstur Windows and Doors, Western Red Cedar Lumber Association, International Timberframes, Daizen Joinery, C & C Resources, BC Log and Timber Building Association, Barker Manufacturing, Westeck Windows & Doors, PowerWood, Kenkékem Manufacturing, StructureCraft Builders, and Forestry Innovation Investment.

On Day 3, the architects hit the road for a site tour of Kadenwood Estates, a private enclave of mountain home sites situated above Whistler Creekside, with high end residences nestled among the old growth forest and astounding Coastal Range Mountain views. The tour was guided by the lead architect, Don Gurney, who provided a first-hand look into the project design, how glulam post and beams were used for structural and aesthetic application, and the construction processes.