

# IDAHO

## ARCHITECTURE



2022 DIRECTORY



ANNUAL OFFICIAL PUBLICATION AND DIRECTORY OF AIA IDAHO

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Idaho Architecture is the annual official publication and directory of The American Institute of Architects – Idaho Chapter.

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## Greetings from Chad Blincoe, 2021 AIA Idaho President



1st & 4th Ketchum project tour by Pivot North Architects Ketchum, Idaho

I want to thank the AIA Idaho Board of Directors and the membership for the honor of serving as the 2021 AIA Idaho President and the opportunity to lead this organization during a challenging year. This beautiful publication, our annual “yearbook,” is a reminder of the high level of accomplishments of our members and the efforts of Anna Foster, our Executive Director. I am excited to see how we moved forward in the short period of time since I came on board and look forward to the future.

Our membership has been actively growing, so that’s a sign of a healthy organization. We are currently at a 327-member count. Since 2018, our membership gained 55 new members, five transitioned to Emeritus status, and 21 became licensed.

One of the main tasks for our board is **Advocacy and Public Outreach** – keeping our membership informed and the board involved in any relevant legislative topics and issues. Monthly legislative updates through the newsletter and during our board meetings have been instrumental to our board and members. We are much better prepared to act when certain legislation is introduced by other industries relevant to architecture. We have relied heavily on our lobbyist Benn Brocksome for advice and information and worked together to review legislation and support or oppose bills. Our Advocacy Committee meets several times a year and works in close communication during the legislative session. We have also been working with AIA National for help and guidance during this time.

As part of this effort, we are working to create visibility and advocate for architecture through our new magazine.

The first issue of “Idaho Architecture” Publication/Annual Membership Directory went out to all Idaho legislators, construction industry partners, mayors and planning and zoning departments across Idaho.

We hope to offer interesting content and relevant and educational information to our members and the public in this current issue.

### Highlights of 2021:

- We continue to sponsor the annual Construction Industry Legislative Reception and our industry partners.
- Last year, AIA Idaho successfully passed the Good Sam Bill protecting Idaho Architects during emergency times.
- We are currently working to establish licensing reciprocity with Canada and hope for Idaho to join the agreement that over 40 states have already joined.
- We have a very active ARE Prep Group/Associate program. Eight Associate members were licensed in 2021. Congratulations to the new architects! Currently, 21 Associate members across the state are on track to licensure.
- In 2021, we awarded four \$500 Architectural Licensing Scholarships, encouraging Associate members to get licensed.
- We continue the partnership with Idaho State Building Code Board. Our Advocacy Committee members supported the



Building Code Board that successfully got the State to adopt the 2018 code with amendments.

- We continue to support Idaho QBS Board, and this year QBS passed bill #1042.
- Public outreach: our website includes a very active job service. The programs calendar and announcements have been a great public relations/PR tool. We get many public contacts through the website.
- We inform members of upcoming continuing education, AIA programs, and new jobs through our monthly newsletter. We recently surveyed our membership and are taking all suggestions and ideas into consideration for future program planning.
- Our Professional Affiliate Member Network has been growing, and we continue to grow relationships that help us with sponsorships and continuing education. This includes sponsoring the Design Awards. Thank you for your continued support and partnership!
- The 2021 Design Awards Conference just took place in Ketchum, and it was a successful event for everyone. We received great coverage in the statewide media. Congratulations to the designers and all the winning project teams!
- AIA National is transitioning to the new state representation model and dissolving the regions as they were previously. As of January 2022, our state will have a representative on the AIA Strategic Council for the first time.
- In 2021 AIA Idaho board signed the Memorandum of Understanding. It formalized our state AIA structure with

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one Mandatory (AIA Central Idaho) and three Voluntary sections (AIA Eastern Idaho, AIA Mountain Idaho and AIA Northern Idaho).

- We are financially healthy and continue to provide scholarships and encourage board member attendance of the state and national events like Grassroots and State Governance network.

I encourage you all to continue to be involved in AIA programs and accept leadership roles in your sections and state board. I know this has been a time for growth and education for me.

Thank you,  
Chad Blincoe, AIA  
President, AIA Idaho



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## A Message from AIA Idaho Executive Director

**D**ear Friends and Colleagues,  
It is my pleasure to share with you our second edition of AIA Idaho’s magazine, Idaho Architecture.

2021 was a busy and successful year for AIA Idaho, from a way-too-much-fun design awards gala to record involvement of our members and growth in our membership. Founded in 1951, the AIA Idaho chapter quietly celebrated its 70th anniversary as we were navigating the COVID-19 epidemic, remoting, working via Zoom, email, and phone calls. Finally, we meet again in person, and it is a whole new society we are in. The recent worldwide problems have raised many questions about how to move forward responsibly and safely toward a renewed normalcy and resiliency.

As we are all aware, Idaho is enjoying unprecedented growth and economic boom times. While the booming economy is undoubtedly a great thing, it does come with challenges. How do we balance the plentiful work with doing our best work? How do we find the staff to do the work? Most urgently in Idaho, how do we solve the affordable housing crisis? As most states across the country face similar issues, there are no simple answers to those questions, but I believe there is no substitute for sitting down with architects.

When I look at our directory and see familiar firms and individual's names I see a highly qualified resource. Each member of our organization has a unique set of knowledge and professional skills that, when shared, can bring solutions that benefit the local communities and the whole state. Architects are a valuable resource for any institution, government, school, or business seeking change. Our 380 members design and manage projects, select products, contract vendors, and guide clients in various industries, including commercial, health care, residential, hospitality, education, and more. Architects are experts in talking to clients, finding out what is essential about their needs, and creating sophisticated solutions that win consensus.

This publication, our annual “Yearbook,” is a reminder of architects as a resource and a celebration of the accomplishments of our members. In this edition, you will see highlights from the recent Idaho Design Awards Conference, interviews with architects who served as our jurors, content written by our architects about issues they care about.

Lastly, I would like to congratulate the AIA Idaho Design Awards recipients. There is a lot of excellent design going on

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in our state, and our conference was a success because of the efforts of our dedicated volunteer members. Thank you for your time and energy!

Thank you for using our directory to connect with the architectural community in Idaho, and I hope you fully utilize this resource by contacting any of our members.

Sincerely,

Anna Foster  
Executive Director  
The American Institute of Architects – Idaho Chapter



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# 2021 AIA Idaho Conference and Awards Gala

Thank you to everyone who attended the 2021 AIA Idaho Conference and Awards Gala on September 23-24 in Ketchum, Idaho. A big thanks and much appreciation to our sponsors. Everyone had a good time – we hope to see you at our next event. To learn more, please visit [aiaidaho.com/calendar](http://aiaidaho.com/calendar).















# 2021 Idaho Design Awards

On Sept. 24, 2021, AIA Idaho members and friends gathered in person at the *Argyros Performing Arts Center* in Ketchum for the 2021 Design Awards celebration.

Idaho Design Awards Program is designed to encourage excellence in architecture, to elevate the public consciousness of great design and commitment to service, which contributes to the advancement of the profession and the built environment. The program will recognize outstanding achievements in architecture and design of Idaho individuals, firms and project teams.

*“Architects are uniquely positioned to solve problems and positively impact three of the most pressing issues facing our communities: climate crisis, public health and equity. In our fastest growing state, the design community has the answers and I encourage the public and local officials to talk to the local architects when making decisions important to their community. Idaho Design Awards will celebrate the incredible work of architects of our state and I am so pleased to share the winners’ names,”* said Anna Foster, the Executive Director of AIA Idaho.

This year the award recipients were selected by a three-member jury who evaluated 36 projects for demonstrating exceptional design and superior work of architecture. Additionally, the jury evaluated whether designs are sustainable, affordable, durable, innovative, socially impactful, meeting client needs as well as addressing the natural and built contexts. The program recognized the achievements of 10 projects: four Honor Awards, four Merit Awards and two Citation Awards.



The Arggyros Performing Arts Center by Michael Doty Associates, Architects

## Congratulations 2021 AIA Idaho Design Award honorees!

**Pivot North Architecture** — Front Street Garage, Boise, Idaho; Commercial, Citation Award

**VY Architecture** — EnergySeal, McCall, Idaho; Honor Award

**Michael Doty Associates, Architects** — Arggyros Performing Arts Center, Ketchum, Idaho; Public, Award of Merit

**Cole Architects** — Fire Station No. 8, Boise, Idaho; Honor Award

**Williams Partners Architects** — Snake River Gorge, Twin Falls, Idaho; Residential Single-Family, Award of Merit

**Farmer Payne Architects** — Sage Residence, Ketchum Idaho; Citation

**Michael Doty Associates, Architects** — Shaw Mesa Family Retreat, Custer County, Idaho; Honor Award

**De Reus Architects** — Bigwood Residence, Sun Valley, Idaho; Architect as Client, Award of Merit

**Michael Doty Associates, Architects** — Fox Hollow Gulch Residence, Adaptive Reuse & Preservation, Award of Merit

**Pivot North Architecture** — Elks Lodge Renovation, Twin Falls, Idaho; Honor Award

## Special Awards

**VY Architecture** — EnergySeal, McCall, Idaho; Commercial, Energy Efficiency & Sustainability Award

**Architect Jack Smith, FAIA** — Kanzan House, Blaine County, Idaho; Best Use of Idaho Wood Residence

## Design Awards Jury

Faith Rose, AIA, **O’Neill Rose Architects**, Brooklyn, New York

Thomas F. Robinson, AIA, **LEVER Architecture**, Portland, Oregon

Ben Waechter, AIA, **Waechter Architecture**, Portland, Oregon

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# 2021 AIA Idaho Design Award Winner

## EnergySeal Headquarters



### Project Description

EnergySeal Headquarters, located in McCall, Idaho, is a 16,000-sf office and warehouse building designed and built for a high-performance insulation contractor. The goal of the project was to create a modern, ultra-energy-efficient building in the harsh climate of Idaho's central mountains, where winters can exceed 10,000 heating degrees days (more than Moscow, Russia). Heating such a large space in a cold climate is costly, so to reduce long-term operating costs, the facility employs an extremely well-insulated envelope to reduce heating loads.

The entire building (11,000 square feet of warehouse and 5,000 square feet of office space) will be certified to meet the PHIUS+ Passive House standard. In addition, the office space is designed to be Net-Zero with renewable energy generated onsite by a façade-mounted PV array.

EnergySeal Headquarters is among the most energy-efficient building in North America, with a measured energy use intensity (EUI) after the first year of occupancy of 14.85 kBtu/sf/yr *before* renewable energy production.

After the electricity generated by the 14.7 kW solar PV array is accounted for, the EUI becomes 12.0 kBtu/sf/yr, which allows the building to meet the 2030 Challenge 80% reduction from the baseline site EUI target.

**Project Name:** EnergySeal Headquarters

**Architect:** VY Architecture

**Project Completion:** August 2019

**Project Location:** 14037 HWY55  
McCall, ID 83638

**Project Type:** Energy Efficiency Commercial

By committing to an aggressive energy target early in the planning stages, even a challenging project type such as a warehouse can result in an ultra-low energy building capable of cost-effectively reaching net-zero without overly complex and expensive mechanical renewable energy systems.

### Type of construction materials, mechanical systems, and any other pertinent technical information

The project team achieved aggressive levels of energy efficiency by focusing on designing and executing a high-performance building enclosure that relies on super-insulation, high levels of air-tightness, and thermal bridge-free design.

The building was modeled using the WUFI Passive energy-modeling software to optimize the building enclosure, mechanical systems, lighting, and PV system. This detailed modeling assured that the annual heating and cooling demands





and overall source energy usage would meet the stringent PHIUS+ certification standards.

All structural components were carefully modeled and designed to ensure that thermal bridging was minimized and accounted for in the energy modeling.

The high-performance wall and roof systems utilized a combination of HFO low-global warming potential (GWP) spray foam and ultra-low embodied energy plant-based cellulose insulation composed of 85% paper fiber.

The high-performance R-8 windows utilize R-11 triple-pane glass with low conductivity frames. Motorized external Venetian

window blinds control solar gain and glare to minimize the cooling load and maximize indoor environmental quality for occupants year-round.

The ultra-efficient building enclosure allowed the building to be heated with a very simple HVAC system. A single 4-ton variable capacity cold-climate air source heat pump serves the entire warehouse space. The office portion of the building is served by a 3-ton heat pump with an integrated intelligent communication system that provides zone control through modulated dampers and smart controllers. The office space is ventilated using an 87% efficient heat recovery ventilator (HRV), controlled by an indoor environmental sensor that modulates the ventilation rate based on real time occupancy and indoor air quality. 🌱

A photograph of four women in a professional setting. One woman with short white hair and glasses stands in the center, looking at a smartphone held by a woman with curly hair. Two other women are seated on either side, engaged in conversation. The background features a large potted plant and a wall with a large, dark, teardrop-shaped object hanging from it.

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# Advocacy 2022



**A** IA Idaho saw many successes and changes in 2021. A lengthy legislative session showed the dedication of the AIA Idaho Board and Advocacy Committee as they remained committed and engaged throughout the year. Working diligently through 2021 in the longest Legislative Session in Idaho's history provided opportunities to achieve the realization of several of our advocacy goals. Regulatory reforms, changes to rules, protecting and updating building and energy codes, property tax changes, and more resulted in tremendous results for architects this past year.

Working with a broad coalition, AIA Idaho was able to gain business-friendly updates and reforms to public contracting and Qualification Based Selection. After extensive negotiations and multiple drafts, we were able to pass Senate Bill 1042 as amended, unanimously in the House and Senate. This multi-year process created consensus and will serve the residents and businesses of Idaho for generations to come. We also expect positive outcomes in 2022 as we work carefully to update and modernize the licensing and authority of the State Architects board and develop policy enabling us to have NCARB reciprocity



with Canada and supporting the other policies that we work on each year.

Please enjoy this edition of Idaho Architecture and feel free to contact AIA ID with any questions. We are always eager to hear from you, and I look forward to continuing to serve you as we meet and exceed advocacy and government relations goals for AIA Idaho in 2022 and beyond. 🌟



# Natural Gas and Resilient Pathways to Carbon Neutrality



**I**ntermountain Gas is proud to join the American Institute of Architects (AIA) Idaho Chapter as a fuel distribution company with resources to support the AIA's journey towards carbon neutrality by 2030. Our shared values with AIA start with a commitment to being a catalyst for change. That means holding ourselves to the highest standards as we explore what it means to be a gas delivery company at a time when GHG emissions reductions have never been more important.

The path to carbon neutrality runs through the pipelines of gas suppliers like Intermountain. We serve an essential role in decarbonization efforts.

In fact, pathways to reducing GHG emissions have been long pursued by our industry. Methane emissions rates associated with natural gas production have declined continuously since 1990 and today are just 1%<sup>1</sup>. Natural gas distribution systems likewise emit less than 0.1% of produced natural gas annually, decreasing emissions 73% between 1990 and 2017 even as our industry experienced a 50% increase in natural gas production.<sup>2</sup>

Recent analysis performed on behalf of Oregon's Rural Gas Service by Guidehouse has indicated that a decarbonization pathway leveraging the use of gas pipelines and low carbon gaseous fuels alongside other decarbonization strategies, can result in cost-effective GHG reductions and deeper decarbonization, as well as

increased energy reliability and resource adequacy.<sup>3</sup> Research from the Gas Technology Institute (GTI) has likewise demonstrated that decarbonization pathways inclusive of natural gas can offer appreciable CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions reductions with lower costs to consumers and society.<sup>4</sup> This places our industry at a strong starting point to support the decarbonization goals of our communities, while sustaining the energy system as more intermittent fuels, such as solar and wind energy, come on to the grid.

However, in order to maintain a continued mix of fuels to heat and power today's modern buildings, it's essential that the fuels and technologies are paired together in ways that maximize the value they bring to end users. This can be achieved through a twofold strategy of reducing the carbon intensity of the fuels we depend on and increasing the efficiency of the equipment and buildings that use them. Intermountain sees such convergence of energy and building science as having invaluable benefit for the climate we all share. AIA members are part of an essential partnership that can maximize efficiencies both at the energy source, as well as at the site where it's utilized.

## Decarbonizing Fuels

There's a revolution taking place in how energy is being sourced across the wires and pipelines that bring heat and energy to our homes and businesses. Just as the electric sector is increasing investments in wind turbines and solar panels to meet

the needs of a low carbon future, so too is the gas sector investing in decarbonized innovations such as renewable natural gas and hydrogen.

Direct use gaseous fuels are the most efficient application of this energy source in homes and buildings and avoids line losses associated with the use of gas to generate electricity. The efficiency benefits of direct use can be further maximized through the strategic inclusion of low carbon fuels into the pipeline. Gas infrastructure, much like electric wires, are a highway through which multiple energy sources can be transported to end users. The pairing of renewable with traditional fuel sources within our gas pipeline is an essential step to reducing GHG emissions while simultaneously reducing the risk of brownouts associated with intermittent renewable resources.

While some technologies, such as hydrogen, are still emerging, a broad coalition of energy companies and efficiency organizations are working together to support this transformation. In January 2021, the Electric Power Research Institute and GTI partnered together on a five-year endeavor called the Low-Carbon Resources Initiative (LCRI)<sup>5</sup>. The initiative focuses on the large-scale deployment of low-carbon electric generation technologies and low carbon energy sources such as hydrogen, bioenergy, and renewable natural gas (RNG). These tools will help enable affordable pathways to economy-wide decarbonization. Intermountain is currently investing



Together, this suite of actions ensures that gaseous fuels, along with the thousands of miles of existing infrastructure that move it, remains available to customers to provide the Northwest with reliable energy for space and water heating, cooking, agriculture, manufacturing, and many other essential end- uses. But even the least carbon-intensive energy is only as reliable as the equipment used to harness it, and the efficiency of the building that relies on such fuels.

in a five-year commitment to this coalition and believes strongly in the value of transformative partnerships and investments to drive innovation.

As we move forward with increased investments in emerging technologies, Intermountain Gas is also proactively reducing the carbon intensity of the product we deliver today by introducing RNG into our system. As of April 2021, Intermountain pipelines transported more than 480k Dth of RNG from three dairy digesters to end-use customers, or enough to power 14k homes for a year. We look forward to adding more RNG into our system as it becomes available.

In addition to decarbonizing the fuels placed in the gas pipeline, local distribution companies are managing upstream and fugitive emissions through programs such as Call Before You Dig 811, Common Ground Alliance, and continual exploration of other voluntary actions to reduce methane emissions from excavation damage. Programs such as EPA's Natural Gas Star Methane Challenge Program, of which Intermountain Gas is a founding member, also support comprehensive actions to reduce methane emissions.

Together, this suite of actions ensures that gaseous fuels, along with the thousands of miles of existing infrastructure that move it, remains available to customers to provide the Northwest with reliable energy for space and water heating, cooking, agriculture, manufacturing, and many other essential end-uses. But even the least carbon-intensive energy

is only as reliable as the equipment used to harness it, and the efficiency of the building that relies on such fuels.

## Decarbonizing Buildings

AIA members are no strangers to innovation in the design of high-performance architecture. As the newest member of AIA, Intermountain looks forward to leveraging our partnerships with GTI and other leaders in energy innovation in support of greater adaptation of the building and energy sectors to meet modern challenges. We have already begun this work as recognized leaders driving energy efficient residential construction across our service area, receiving the 2021 ENERGY STAR® Market Leader Award for efforts that resulted in an additional 1,536 homes and/or apartments being certified as ENERGY STAR® in 2020.

Advances in building design inclusive of gaseous space and water heating equipment can help further drive our industries towards the achievement of high energy performance and carbon neutrality.

Research from GTI demonstrates that gas heat pump technology can result in significant reductions to energy consumption with efficiencies greater than 100%.<sup>6</sup> The Utilization Technology Development (UTD) group of GTI is in the process of further developing and demonstrating this technology as well as next generation combined heat and power systems leveraging the resiliency, reliability, and economy of gaseous

fuels. Intermountain looks forward to continuing to partner on these efforts as well as with the North American Gas Heat Pump Collaborative, which seeks to transform the market to state-of-the-art natural gas heat pump technologies. Such opportunities can be leveraged to benefit the AIA membership as we strive towards deeper efficiency and NZE buildings.

This strategic partnership of building professionals, equipment manufacturers, and fuels suppliers is essential to ensuring balanced and effective pathway towards decarbonization. Intermountain is proud to join the AIA in its efforts to elevate the way energy is used in buildings. The path ahead is complex, but we are confident that together, we can help realize the vision of AIA's 2030 commitment. We are proud to take this journey with our fellow AIA members. 🌱



*Intermountain Gas Company is a natural gas distribution company serving approximately 391,000 residential,*

*commercial, and industrial customers in 76 communities in southern Idaho.*

*Alyn Spector is Manager of Energy Efficiency Policy for Cascade Natural Gas Corporation, sister company to Intermountain Gas. He has been in the energy industry for over 15 years and developed energy efficiency programs and decarbonization strategies for his organization since 2008.*

<sup>1</sup> According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Inventory of U.S. Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions and Sinks: 1990–2018 released in April 2020 as well as the EPA's Greenhouse Gas Reporting Program (GHGRP).

<sup>2</sup> Northwest Gas Association, 2021 Natural Gas Facts [https://www.nwga.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/NWGA\\_Facts\\_2021\\_Final.pdf](https://www.nwga.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/NWGA_Facts_2021_Final.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Analysis of Oregon's Cap-and-Reduce Program GHG Emissions Reductions, Provided to Avista Corporation and Cascade Natural Gas Corporation, October 22, 2021

<sup>4</sup> Case Studies of Future Residential Natural Gas and Electrification Scenarios in Leading Low Carbon Regions [https://www.gti.energy/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Future-Residential-Natural-Gas-and-Electrification-in-Low-Carbon-Regions-Technical-Paper\\_Liss-Jun2018.pdf](https://www.gti.energy/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Future-Residential-Natural-Gas-and-Electrification-in-Low-Carbon-Regions-Technical-Paper_Liss-Jun2018.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Hydrogen Technology Center — Low-Carbon Resources Initiative • GTI

<sup>6</sup> Bridging the gap: gas-fired absorption heat pumps in America — CIBSE Journal



## Legends in Our Midst: AIA Idaho Q&A With Jack Smith



House at Eagle Creek - Photo by Fred Lindholm



House at Eagle Creek - Photo by Tim Brown

**J**ack Smith has had a long and continuing career as both a practitioner and a professor of architecture, and his peers have recognized him as a distinguished architect. We at AIA Idaho were pleased to interview him and thank him for the opportunity.

### **Why did you become an architect?**

I wanted to be an architect from a very early age. I believe that architecture is first about building and second about everything else. At age 10, I gained a passion for building by working summers for my uncle, a general contractor. Later, at age 14, my cousin Max, a designer, gave me books on Frank Lloyd Wright, Mies van der Rohe and Le Corbusier, the big three modern architects of the time. I read them all before entering college.

Construction is an important teacher. As an architect, you should be able to do anything you ask a contractor to do. Gaining a passion for books and reading is critical to any education.

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Kanzan House - Photo by Gabe Border

**You studied architecture at the University of Utah and taught design there from 1964 to 1967. You also had an apprenticeship with John Sugden. What were the most important things you learned as part of your university education and apprenticeship?**

I entered college in 1949. Although this was the mid-20th century, it was early enough to have professors from the École des Beaux-Arts, who were well versed in classical architecture, and some influenced by the German Bauhaus, who were modernists. Gaining an appreciation for history, classical architecture, and modernism was important and remains important to my practice and teaching.

In my undergraduate years, I also studied other disciplines, including music, art history and English literature. I believe these other disciplines broadened my outlook.

Due to financial constraints, I left college before obtaining my degree. In 1952 I met John Sugden, a Mies van der Rohe protégé. I served a 12-year apprenticeship with John, then took the architectural registration exams to become a licensed architect. Through my apprenticeship with Sugden, I learned the exacting discipline of the Miesian way.

Mentors have been a key part of my education and professional life. My mentors were John Sugden, Robert Bliss, the Dean of Architecture at the University of Utah; his wife Anna Campbell

Bliss, a distinguished artist; and Dan Kiley, a celebrated landscape architect. The opportunity to work with such great people was most important to my education, and I feel blessed to have known them.

John Sugden frequently quoted Mies and talked about his discipline. Mies said, "It doesn't matter how well you do the wrong thing." But how do you know what the right thing is? You have to understand what is appropriate. That's not so easy. In any setting, philosophy is important if you want to be good at what you do.

**How did your work as a professor at several different universities help you as an architect?**

My teaching career started in 1964 before I had a degree or was licensed, which is quite unusual. As a teaching associate at the University of Utah, my own education continued by being associated with distinguished faculty and visiting professors and practitioners such as Frank Lloyd Wright and Buckminster Fuller. One of these visiting practitioners was Dan Kiley, from Vermont, with whom I became a partner from 1967 through 1971. Being a member of Snowbird Design Group and the original architect for Snowbird, I returned to Utah in 1971 to complete my work on the Snowbird Ski Resort.

I believe that teaching and practice are symbiotic. Practice keeps the academic side well-grounded in reality, and teaching keeps

► — continued on page 22



Kanzan House - Photo by Gabe Border



Kanzan House - Photo by Gabe Border

one intellectually astute. During my practice from 1971 on, I returned periodically to the University of Utah and the University of Idaho as a visiting professor. In 2001 I returned to school. I earned a Doctor of Architecture degree from the University of Hawaii in 2006. Since I was already an architect, I spent most of my five years studying East-West comparative philosophy in the philosophy department. I wrote my doctoral dissertation on the influence of traditional Japanese architecture on the modern architecture of the early 20th century. I most recently retired from teaching at Montana State University. I was a teaching professor there from 2006 to 2020.

**You won your first award in 1958 and your most recent award in 2021. How have the many awards you've won as an architect affected your professional development?**

It is always nice to be recognized by your peers for your work, but architecture is more about trying to do good work than trying to win awards. Le Corbusier said, "It is easy to be different but difficult to be good." If one tries to do good work, the awards come naturally.

**Tell us about becoming a Fellow of the College of Fellows of the American Institute of Architects in 1996.**

I have been a continuous member of AIA Idaho since 1975. I left my practice in Salt Lake City and San Francisco to start an independent practice in Sun Valley. One of my colleagues here in Idaho nominated me for fellowship based on my body of work. I was successful in being elevated to fellow in category one, "Design." I am most proud of this honor, given to fewer than 3% of architects nationally.

**The architectural critic Allan Temko said your outlook is international and was influenced by Japan. How did you become interested in Japanese architecture, and what influence did it have on your work?**

Traditional Japanese architecture had clarity of purpose and structure, honesty, and truth and integrity of materials. Its tenets continue to influence me. Nothing I do is literally Japanese. It is only the underlying principles or tenets that continue to inform my designs. Mies said, "A compromise is only possible when both parties are wrong." I do believe one





House at Eagle Creek – Photo by Tim Brown

needs to compromise on minor issues of pragmatics, but one should never compromise one’s principles.

**What type of project do you most enjoy designing?**

Those where I can interact with the clients on a professional and personal level. Custom residential most often fills that need. I am also interested in affordable housing in that this typology has become critical worldwide.

**What is your favorite project?**

Frank Lloyd Wright said, “My next one.” I agree. However, in 1999, my work on the House At Eagle Creek was recognized by the historical architectural society as one of the most important houses in Idaho, and the Kanzan House was awarded Best Use of Idaho Wood by AIA Idaho in 2021.

**Which ones will you be remembered for?**

I hope all of them.

**In 2021, the World Population Review listed Idaho as the fastest-growing state in the U.S. Do you have any suggestions for Idaho’s architects as they meet the newcomers’ needs?**

Take a position of leadership. People talk about architecture being a collaborative profession, and it is, but the architect

needs to lead the team. Be philosophically grounded, considerate, and morally and environmentally responsible, keep your standards high, and only compromise when it’s reasonable. You may save your clients the cost of your fee every time you make a good decision.

It’s also important to educate people about what architects do. Architects are polymaths. You aren’t a jack of all trades and master of none; you have to try to master it all. You have to be knowledgeable about construction, structures, aesthetics, music, art, philosophy and literature. Studying will give you depth.

**What study recommendations do you have for architects who want to broaden their understanding of design and architectural history?**

I think one should never stop reading and being exposed to other disciplines and the humanities in general. The study of philosophy has become very important to me in that it underpins almost everything. Critical thinking is fundamental to success in any profession and, in my view, life itself. History is the best teacher. 🌐

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# What Structural Engineers Want Architects to Know

BY CHRIS HOFHEINS, BHB STRUCTURAL



BHB Structural Engineers Project

**T**here is a famous African proverb that reads: “It takes a village to raise a child.” It also takes a village to design and construct a building. The goal for all project team members is to work together to deliver a successful building for our clients. Here are four items architects can do to help their structural engineer deliver a winning project.

- Engage the structural engineer early
- Communicate what is important to you and the client
- Establish clear lines of communication
- Develop a schedule that maximizes design time and minimizes design changes

## Engage the structural engineer early

The best practice would be to consult with a structural engineer at project conception. When consulted from the beginning, your structural engineer can provide different building material options and cost-effective ways to structurally frame the building. Creating floor plans and building concepts prior to consulting with a structural engineer will limit the options a

structural engineer can provide. Due to product lead times, many cost-effective solutions may no longer be an option for the project, which will increase project costs.

## Communicate what is important to you and the client

Structural engineers want architects to be successful in delivering their vision to clients. Occasionally, a structural engineer’s nature to please is misguided when we do not understand what is most important to the architect, contractor, and owner. Take column placement as an example. Without additional input from the architect, the structural engineer will provide a column layout that is most efficient for the building structure. This efficiency may be in contradiction with the architect’s goals. Frequent communication and feedback to your structural engineer will enable them to provide structural options that meet your vision, are cost-effective, and builder-friendly.

## Establish clear lines of communication

Structural engineers are problem solvers by nature. Communication comes fast and from all directions. Sometimes



structural engineers unintentionally get the proverbial cart in front of the horse. A common example is when a contractor contacts the engineer directly seeking a solution to a problem. If your structural engineer knows the architect's communication preferences, engineers can be more responsive to needs and questions without creating confusion in the process.

**Develop a schedule that maximizes design time and minimizes design changes**

The most notable change in the industry I have seen over my career is the acceleration of the design process. Structural engineers are typically on the critical path to complete our design and deliver permit documents so the contractor can get in the ground as soon as possible. The need to start construction quickly is at odds with the structural engineer's need to develop the most cost-effective design. The two most notable things architects can do to help structural engineers successfully overcome this challenge are building a schedule that maximizes our design time and minimizes changes. Go to bat for your structural engineer to help them establish a design timeline that enables the contractor to deliver the project on time while maximizing the structural engineer's design timeline. Establish

intermediate design deliverables, then hold owners and design team members accountable for hitting deliverables and making decisions. Late information and changes raise the hurdle and make it more difficult for your structural engineer to deliver a complete and cost-effective design on an accelerated schedule.


Nothing is more satisfying than being part of an effective team that works together to deliver a successful project despite the obstacles along the way. Engaging with your structural engineer early, sharing project goals with clear lines of communication, and developing a schedule that enables all team members to be successful are the necessary ingredients to a successful project.



*Chris Hofheins is co-founder and President of BHB Structural. Over the course of 20 years, BHB has become one of the largest structural engineering firms in the Intermountain West by focusing on providing responsive, well-coordinated and creative structural*


*engineering. Chris frequently gives AIA CES presentations on a variety of topics. He can be reached at [chris.hofheins@bhbenigneers.com](mailto:chris.hofheins@bhbenigneers.com) or 801.355.5656.*

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## Getting to Know: Thomas Robinson, AIA Idaho Juror



AIA Idaho Awards Jurors: Thomas Robinson, Faith Rose, Ben Waechter

What something is made of always interests us, and we design buildings around material characteristics. We leverage material to do even better what it can already do really well.

### **Why did you become an architect?**

I was interested in design from a young age because of a house my great-grandfather built in Woods Hole, Massachusetts. My interest in architecture is an outgrowth of that.

The house is on the southwest corner of Cape Cod. He used timber harvested from Oregon in 1928. I grew up in the suburbs of Washington D.C., but I would come to his house in the summer. It was a very small, simple house. I always admired its materiality and the craft that had gone into putting it together. The wood wasn't finished, and you could see the fingerprints of the people who had put it together. I liked how it felt to be there.

### **You studied architecture at the University of California, Berkeley and Harvard University Graduate School of Design. What was the most important thing you learned at either or both schools?**

The two schools had different approaches, and I got a lot out of my time at both. I was fortunate to be at Berkeley, which had incredible and brilliant professors. My education there was focused on the arts and design. During my first semester, all we did was hand drawings. It was just a pencil on paper, and you never had a straight edge. We studied art, aesthetics, composition, drawing and sculpture. There was also a great building sciences department where the professors focused on subjects such as daylighting, sustainability and indoor air quality.

After Berkeley, I worked for several years, and I was licensed before I went back to the design school at Harvard. That experience opened my eyes to a broader, more international world of architecture. People all over the world gave lectures.

One of the most amazing experiences I had there was with Peter Zumthor, who wasn't as famous then as now. That was a highlight of my graduate school experience. Meeting him led me to move to Basel, Switzerland, with my wife. I worked at Herzog & de Meuron for three years.



### **How did the two educational experiences differ?**

They were different but complementary. Berkeley focused on building sciences. You learned how to make things from different materials. Harvard was much more connected to what is happening internationally. We also looked at larger issues around theory and how intellectual movements impact the production of architecture.

### **How has your work as the USDA Wood Innovation Grant Visiting Professor at the University of Arkansas helped you as an architect?**

The Fay Jones School of Architecture and Design at the university focuses on innovation specific to timber. It was great to share what I had learned about mass timber buildings.

### **What has been the most significant work experience you've had so far during your career?**

We were part of the team that won the 2015 U.S. Tall Wood Building Prize Competition. We used a \$1.5 million grant to develop a high-rise wood building design and pay for the testing and modeling to demonstrate that tall wood buildings are possible. We worked with national and international engineers and research scientists. The project has impacted international building codes and how people think about tall wood buildings.

### **How have the awards you've won as an architect affected your professional development?**

Rewards are gratifying, but the real reward is the work itself and knowing clients love the spaces that you've created.

### **Why did you start LEVER Architecture?**

In 2009, when I started LEVER Architecture in my basement, I had already begun thinking of architecture as more than an end in itself. I was fortunate to have great relationships with people I worked with through the years. Opportunities came up when I started telling people I was on my own, and after a while, I found some office space. Now we have 42 people.

We have been open to insights from our long-term collaborations with consultants, contractors and subcontractors. Our most successful architecture reflects a strong work relationship with everyone involved.

What something is made of always interests us, and we design buildings around material characteristics. We leverage material to do even better what it can already do really well. In the case of wood or timber, we know what it can do better than other materials and what it does not do quite as easily. That understanding is our framework as we think about the design.

### **What has your experience been like as a juror for AIA Idaho annual award competition? How have the project evaluations you did for the competition influenced you professionally?**

I was excited to be a juror. I grew up hiking in the mountains, and I had always heard amazing things about Ketchum and Sun Valley, but I'd never been to Idaho or spent any time there before. Idaho's incredible landscape was interesting. I spent some time in Sun Valley, and I enjoyed meeting the architectural community.

It's good to get out of the environment you are used to and see what other people are doing in a different landscape and place.

### **Which project for the 2021 competition did you enjoy the most? Why?**

For me, it was a wonderful surprise to find innovation in places you are not as familiar with and don't expect. Buildings for an insulation company or a high-end heating and cooling company can become amazing pieces of architecture. Architecture can come from anything, and it can come from any program. It can be part of your everyday life.

We gave VY Architecture a commercial architecture honor award for a project called EnergySeal. The building is for a company that installs insulation, and it demonstrates how you can bring a richer experience to people's everyday lives. Because being in an extraordinary everyday building is as valuable as spending time in a French cathedral.

### **In 2021, the World Population Review listed Idaho as the fastest-growing state in the U.S. Do you have any suggestions for Idaho's architects as they meet the newcomers' needs?**

We should collaborate now and advocate for good decisions.

Idaho's primary strength is the landscape. If you spoil something, you can't easily unspoil it. But if you aren't thinking long-term about the impact of how you grow, it's very easy to lose what's special about a place like Idaho and the west in general.

Growing without a plan is always a danger because it takes place without thinking about the impact of growth on the larger ecosystem in 10 or 20 years. But that impact will lead to an environment from which people will want to escape.

Architects are always working on making the future real. They use their skills to demonstrate or visualize what different types of growth will mean, how they can impact that future, and maintain the strengths that make people want to come to Idaho in the first place.

### **Any last words?**

Design is connected to the materials you find or potentially harvest from a particular landscape. Hopefully, that connection is something people can recognize that makes them feel more connected to a place.

LEVER Architecture has a set of goals and principles that we use to create the experiences for people in our buildings. We're very interested in setting off with a shared set of experiences and principles and the client's or community's aspirations. It is a team effort. My goal is always to ask whether we are keeping our eyes on those initial principles. Are we creating spaces that move people and allow them to do their best?

The way a tool is used to do something is what is meaningful. It isn't about the tool itself. If you put a lever in the right place and know how to use it, you can move the world. 🌍



## Getting to Know: Ben Waechter, AIA Idaho Juror



Furioso Vineyards, Waechter Architecture, photographer Lara Swimmer

### **Why did you become an architect?**

Construction and architecture had always been in my family, so I always had both in my life. My paternal grandfather was an architect. He trained and worked in Germany, immigrated and ended up in Oregon. My maternal grandfather was a builder in Oregon.

I wasn't sure what I wanted to be when I went to the university. Like many students, I tried different subjects such as drawing, sculpture and photography classes, and I spent time in the art and architecture building. It was inspiring, and I felt the pull in the arts. Of all the arts, architecture felt like the right choice because of my experience growing up.

### **You studied architecture at the University of Oregon and graduated in 1995. What was the most important thing you learned as part of your university education?**

I didn't know much about architecture when I started, even though I had experience. What had the biggest influence was how the School of Architecture program opened my eyes to what architecture is and can be. During my time there, I began

to understand and appreciate architecture. It opened my eyes to a way of thinking about architecture that was really just the beginning.

### **How has your work as an adjunct instructor at the University of Oregon, School of Architecture, helped you as an architect?**

Teaching requires me to explain things clearly and precisely. I have summarized and organized my approach for achieving clarity, and I teach it to students throughout the course as a framework. It is not formulaic, but it helps students think about how to design their own projects.

### **What has been the most significant work experience you've had so far during your career?**

After my experience at the University of Oregon, I left the U.S., moved to Europe, and worked for three years in Renzo Piano's RPBW Architects studio. He is one of the most famous living architects, and he has projects all over the world.

Professionally, my experience at RPBW Architects was extremely formative because it combined seeing, experiencing



and working. I worked with a group of extremely talented architects. In addition to being around them, I was also around some of the most important projects in the office at that time, and I gained an understanding of how the workshop operates. RPBW Architects is in Genoa, in northern Italy. Since it is near the Mediterranean and close to Switzerland, I spent a lot of time in Switzerland, too, and I met many Swiss architects.

**How have the awards you've won as an architect affected your professional development?**

When you submit for an award, you are telling a story. I want to be precise about telling that story to others, and the submittal preparation process helps me be very clear about a project's importance. After telling the story, I better understand what did and didn't work, and I learn from that. It helps me move on to the next project.

**An AIA Idaho biography about you said you started Waechter Architecture "to pursue experiential and clear, distilled design concepts for a wide range of building types and scales." Would you please tell us more about that?**

The buildings that resonate with me and the architects at Waechter Architecture have a strong sense of character and vividness. Even though many design aspects are important, the word "clarity" captures the experiential precision we want. Thinking about clarity grounds our approach as we work on individual projects.

The clarity project has become an overarching project. We take a step back and ask ourselves, why are we designing buildings and what is important about their design? We've developed different techniques to apply to our work, but all of them are under the umbrella of clarity.

- Spatial composition or order is an important starting point for us. We want to understand how it feels to be in a building space. Spaces are affected by the shape and proportion of the rooms. For example, how tall is the room relative to its width and length? As we adjust those proportions, how do the adjustments make the space feel different? When we shape the size and proportion

As architects, we all need to carefully understand what is unique about a particular environment, its culture and the history of the existing buildings in the area. Then we need to design buildings that support the environment's uniqueness, whether that means the form, the materials or both, so we can continue the dialog of what is unique about a particular place.

of spaces, we also consider complementary spaces. How can an entry sequence or moving through different spaces affect how people feel about occupying a building or a space within the building?

- We also work toward clarity of composition. The places that feel the best to be in have simple and distilled floor plans and elevations, but there is a balance between simplicity and functionality. We work hard to try and make our floor plans, elevations, and sections as simple as possible while still being functional.
- We like to have clarity within the material palette. We limit the number of building materials because that allows them to have a stronger sense of identity and character.

**What has your experience been like as a juror for AIA Idaho annual award competition? How have the project evaluations you did for the competition influenced you professionally?**

It is always really interesting and fun to visit a new community of architects. We share many things even though we come from different locations, political views and economic situations. I benefit from understanding other people's challenges and responsibilities and learning about their opportunities, constraints and responses to their unique situations.

**Which project for the 2021 competition did you enjoy the most? Why?**

All the projects were really interesting. I don't have a specific project in mind, but there were a lot of single-family house

entries this year. The strongest projects tended to be where the architects could solve all a house's requirements as simply as possible.

I also enjoyed seeing how the houses were placed. Some of the houses seemed like just a speck when I compared them to the big, natural beauty of the Idaho landscapes, but their simplicity allowed them to coexist gracefully with their surroundings.

**In 2021, the World Population Review listed Idaho as the fastest-growing state in the U.S. Do you have any suggestions for Idaho's architects as they meet the newcomers' needs?**

Every community in the world is facing this problem, not just Idaho. Globalization opens up all sorts of opportunities, which is great, but from an architect's view of the built environment, there's also a risk of sameness that can happen.

As architects, we all need to carefully understand what is unique about a particular environment, its culture and the history of the existing buildings in the area. Then we need to design buildings that support the environment's uniqueness, whether that means the form, the materials or both, so we can continue the dialog of what is unique about a particular place.

Supporting an environment's uniqueness doesn't mean imitating old things. It is possible to design buildings that respect the older buildings while still clearly being new. 🌱



## Getting to Know: Faith Rose, AIA Idaho Juror



### Why did you become an architect?

People, culture, and how a culture expresses itself have always interested me. I have studied music, languages and literature, but I became interested in architecture because it is tied to the physicality of a place. Architecture ties all my interests together and brings them into a reality that exists beyond me.

### You have a B.A. from Amherst. What did you study?

I arrived at college late in the 1980s, intending to learn a foreign language and become a diplomat. I started with German, but the Iron Curtain had just dropped. I became fascinated by the USSR and was excited to learn about its hidden, mysterious and forbidden culture, so I began studying Russian.

### You studied architecture at Yale University. What was the most important thing you learned there?

I had a fantastic professor at Yale named Alex Purves. He always used to say the idea is only 1% of the project. The most important thing I learned is how to take an idea floating in your head and translate it into a physical entity. As you become conscious of your process, you can control it and develop projects intentionally instead of by accident.

### You were the executive director for the City of New York Public Design Commission. What was that experience like?

I had a phenomenal public sector experience. I worked in the Department of Design and Construction on the Design Excellence Program for 10 years before Mayor De Blasio

appointed me to be Executive Director of the Public Design Commission at City Hall. The Design Excellence Program's mission was to harness the deep field of architectural talent in New York City to produce world-class public buildings.

The commission reviews most capital projects designed on city-owned property, and it is responsible for ensuring a high level of design quality. I had a bird's-eye view of everything that was happening. It was really edifying to see architecture and its effects on the built environment from this vantage point.

### What has been the most significant work experience you've had so far during your career?

Architectural work involves weaving together processes that have many moving parts. The project is a bit like a basketball or soccer game. The ball is always in play, and everyone is constantly moving. You need to think simultaneously about the present and the future.

Opening and running a small firm with my husband and partner, Devin, feels like the biggest, most complex and never-ending architecture project of them all. You have to balance different needs, scales and paces.

There are three main pieces to balance:

- 1. The office:** We work to create a good office culture.
- 2. Clients:** It's important to us to develop a good working relationship with our clients; projects often take a few





years, and a relationship built on trust is a must for them to succeed. We also work to maintain a flow of new clients.

- 3. Projects:** To me, clients and projects are two distinct things. Our job is to manage projects for our clients and ensure they are built correctly.

**How have the awards you've won as an architect affected your professional development?**

I feel like awards are important for a few reasons:

- They establish us as good designers and architects, which gives us credibility with clients.
- It's important to have a presence. Awards keep you relevant and in the public eye, especially within the architectural community.
- They may attract clients and people looking for work in our office.
- Seeing work through other people's eyes provides helpful feedback that can teach us what does or doesn't speak to them.

**How and why did you and Devin O'Neill start O'Neill Rose Architecture?**

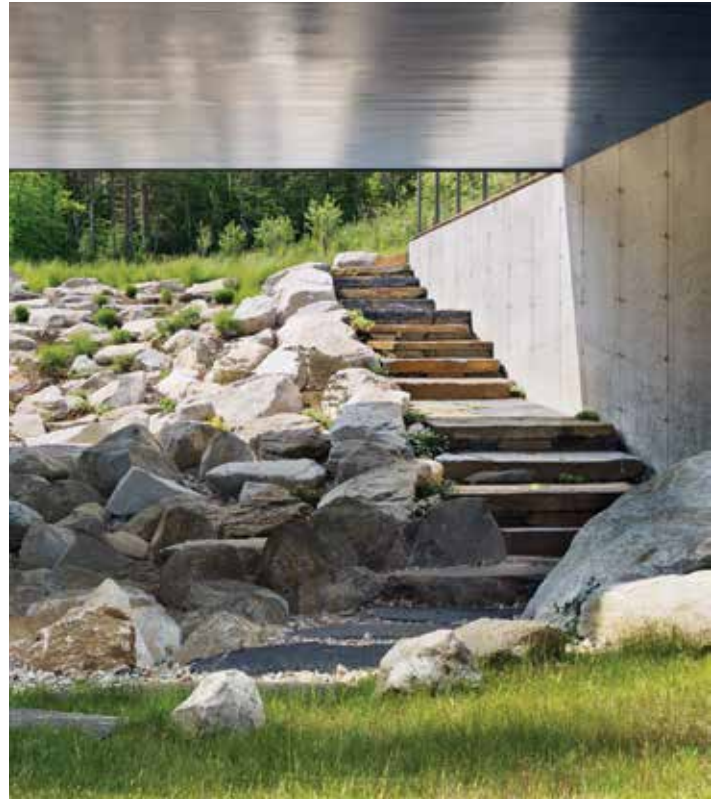
I went to Amherst on a classical piano scholarship, and I also studied ballet. Until that point, art for me had always been playing somebody else's music. I had never relied on my own creativity before. But I took an improvisational dance class where we would get on the stage to perform, and only then would the teacher give us a prompt. It was terrifying, but it was also so freeing.

I had a fantastic professor at Yale named Alex Purves. He always used to say the idea is only 10% of the project. The most important thing I learned is how to take an idea floating in your head and translate it into a physical entity. As you become conscious of your process, you can control it and develop projects intentionally instead of by accident.

There's a difference between performing someone else's work and your own, which is why many people in creative fields, including architecture, want to express their own point of view. Devin and I both had good experiences working in other firms. We worked in places that did good work and had steep learning curves. But we eventually wanted to explore and develop our own ideas.

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People are brave to submit their work to scrutiny you get in a competition. The wide range of work generated great discussions about how people think about architecture now. Being a juror is like being in a design crucible. You focus intensely for one or two days in a room where you talk about architecture for hours, and then you meet the people who are competing and talk about architecture some more. The experience was very inspiring.



► — continued from page 31

Devin took the plunge first and worked on our first project. I joined him when we felt that we were established enough and were reasonably secure financially.

**What has your experience been like as a juror for AIA Idaho annual award competition? How have the project evaluations you did for the competition influenced you professionally?**

Before I was an architect, about 25 or 30 years ago, I lived in Ketchum for a year and a half. It was lovely and energizing to return there and meet with the Idaho design community from across the state. The region is different from the region I practice in, and I found a lot of outside inspiration.

People are brave to submit their work to scrutiny you get in a competition. The wide range of work generated great discussions about how people think about architecture now. Being a juror is like being in a design crucible. You focus intensely for one or two days in a room where you talk about architecture for hours, and then you meet the people who are competing and talk about architecture some more. The experience was very inspiring.

**Which projects for the 2021 competition did you enjoy the most? Why?**

I do a lot of residential work, so Michael Doty Associates Shaw Mesa Family Retreat in Custer County was a familiar typology. I had a gut reaction to that house. It was so beautifully sited, and

the home itself was an incredibly clear, bold gesture in response to the site's stunning natural beauty.

There were two other buildings I loved, one commercial and one public:

- The EnergySeal headquarters in McCall by VY Architecture
- Fire Station No. 8 in Boise by Cole Architects

Both were really well-designed buildings that were useful and engaging spaces. People don't often expect these types of buildings to be beautifully designed. Architecture is a way of improving our experience of daily life, and good, thoughtful architecture can elevate an experience no matter what the building is.

**In 2021, the World Population Review listed Idaho as the fastest-growing state in the U.S. Do you have any suggestions for Idaho's architects as they meet the newcomers' needs?**

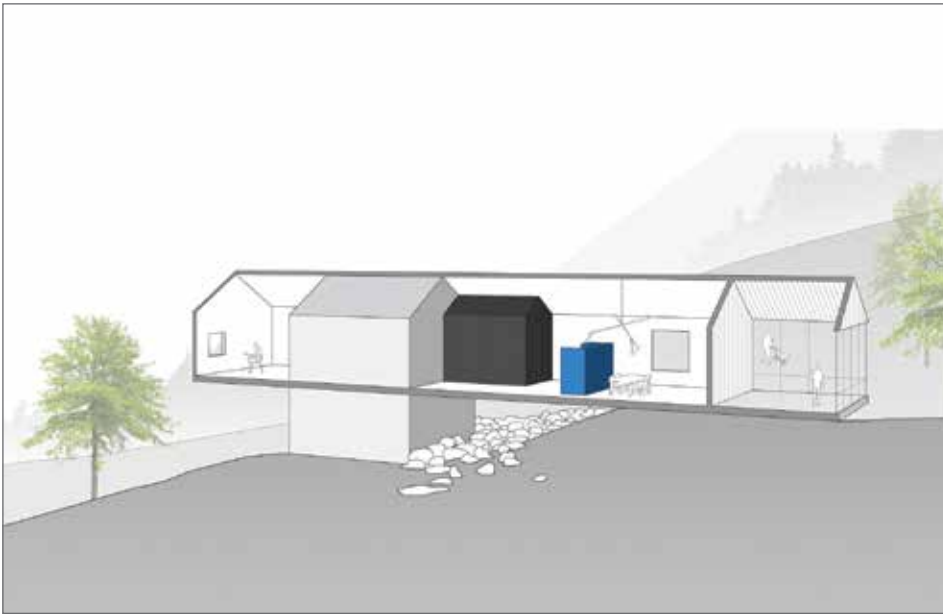
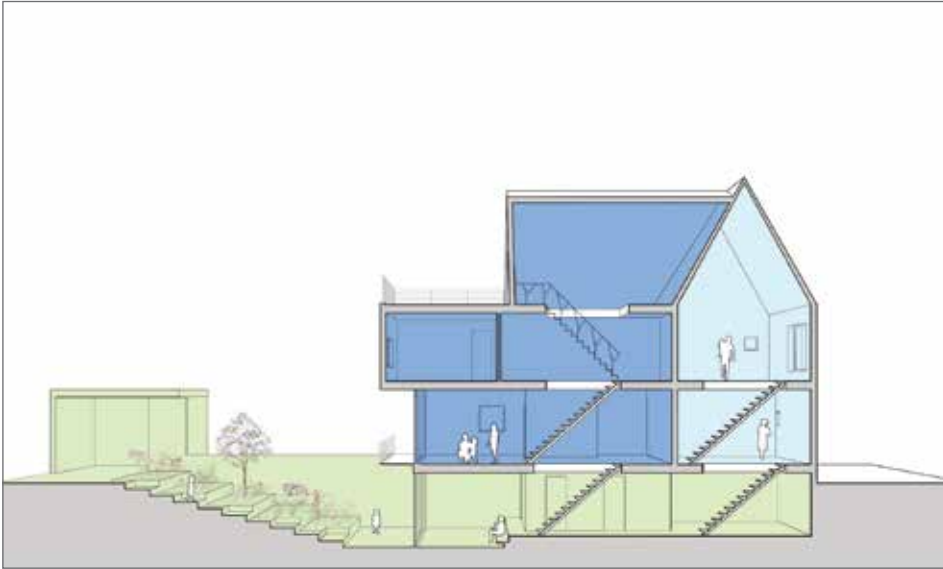
Nature has a physical presence in Idaho that is remarkable and powerful. It's important to support "smart growth." This means making your cities denser, so they are vibrant and full of life. It also means protecting Idaho's resources by approaching growth intentionally.

There are many ways architects can participate in shaping growth beyond doing individual buildings – joining community boards or zoning commissions or getting involved in shaping policy. In addition to professional practice, your combined efforts will add up to intelligent growth. 🌱



# The Concept of Home

BY FAITH ROSE, AIA IDAHO JUROR



We always want our buildings to have a conversation with the landscape,” said Faith. “For this project, we created the five little huts from kits that can be put together to create art studios. People can camp wherever they want on the land, which is hilly and bold, and each placement creates a different conversation. The buildings are very gestural, and they are almost like characters.”

Faith Rose of O’Neill Rose Architects spoke about the concept of home at the 2021 Idaho Design Awards ceremony on Sept. 24, 2021. She pointed out that for the last 20 months, COVID-19 has shaken up many people’s ideas of home. But even before that, changes in communities and societies were increasingly reflected in peoples’ homes.

As part of Faith’s presentation, she highlighted three examples of change that O’Neill Rose Architects has explored:

- Multigenerational houses
- Aging-in-place houses
- Live-and-work environments

## The Projects

### A Multigeneration House

Queens, New York, one of New York’s five boroughs, is one of the world’s most ethnically diverse urban areas. It is a patchwork of unique neighborhoods, each with its own identity. However, the borough’s housing stock consists primarily of single-family homes built in the 1950s, when architects designed homes for the American nuclear family.

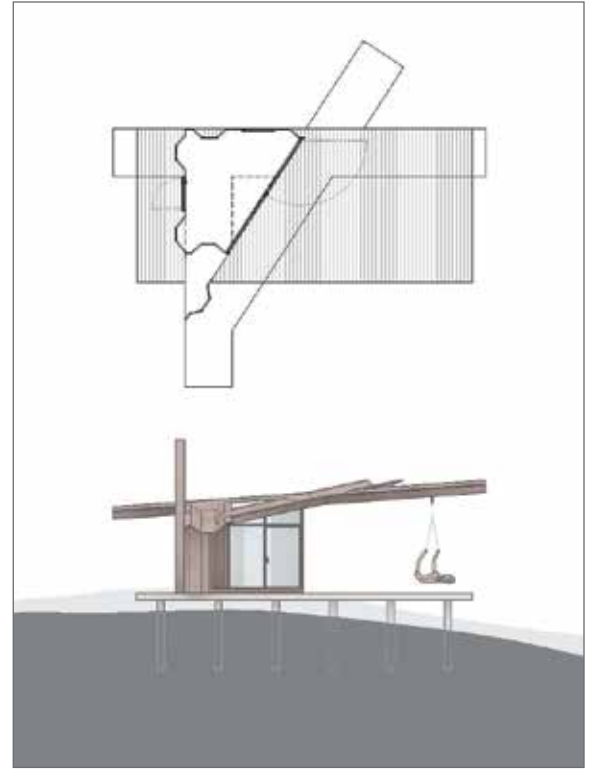
A client at O’Neill Rose Architects asked for a multigenerational home to accommodate three generations and three distinct groups in one home.

1. The client, his wife and their two small children
2. His younger brother and his sister-in-law
3. The mother of the client and his younger brother

Each group needed to have its own space. Also, the home had to comply with code and zoning requirements that, among other things, had been written to force the construction of pitched roofs.

Faith said, “We asked ourselves, ‘How do we create a home that honors the communal living conditions of their old country, but also recognizes the younger generation will want the more American values of privacy and space?’

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► — continued from page 33

“We decided to create three disparate dwellings with areas that connected and overlapped. Each dwelling had clear boundaries, but the home’s circulation wove through all of them, connecting them to each other.” As Faith explained:

The family matriarch was on the ground floor. Above the ground floor were apartments for the brothers’ families. These two-level apartments share the second and third floors.

The family matriarch insisted that her sons’ homes be connected to her apartment by stairs. O’Neill Rose Architects suggested excavating the land behind the home to bring light into her apartment, and she decreed that the backyard would become a terraced garden. She uses the space to grow food and medicinal herbs. The entire family could hang out in the ground-floor family room, next to the garden, and the stairs made it easy for the grandmother to watch her grandchildren on the second and third floors.

The multigenerational home had a modest budget. To keep costs down, the architects repurposed materials when possible. For example, leftovers from engineered wood beams were sliced in half diagonally to make treads. The treads were inserted onto pins attached to steel stringers. A semi-opaque white screen separated the stair from a seating area; it was built from polycarbonate panels held in place with a single peg.

## Aging in Place

The next project Faith presented was built for the housing-related needs of older adults. The average age of the U.S. population is increasing because more and more of its citizens

are retirement age or older, even after the pandemic. As a result, O’Neill Rose Architects has been looking at the needs of older adults. Faith said, “Studies have shown that there are many benefits to aging in place, particularly when it comes to mental health. In turn, [many design elements] lend themselves to creating spaces that support positive aging in place.” She also noted that physical activity in green spaces improves mood and cognitive function and decreases depression and stress.

The Undermountain House project was designed for growing old gracefully. The clients loved nature, and they wanted to continue experiencing it as they aged and became less active. The home is set like a stitch in the land. It was built on a single level and sited to “experience the full motion and beauty of the land” from different heights, said Faith. Although the home is immobile, the landscape rolls around and underneath the home to create a sense of motion. The sun moves through the space throughout the day. Residents can see the orchard, the pond and the woods through large windows. Small windows frame views of the rain garden, the woodpile and meadow flowers. (The architects included a low, tiny window for the family dog to see the rain garden. The rain garden has boulders and an outdoor staircase on one side.) Windows at one end of the home focus on the tree trunks. Windows on the other end show swaying treetops and sky. There is also a screened-in porch.

In addition to the dog’s rain-garden window, the lower level has en suite bedrooms for the client’s children. The lower level will be the caretaker suite later on.

The surrounding area has many agricultural buildings to which the home responds. It has a simple barn-like shape. The stone



base anchors the building, and lighter wood framing floats above. The house extrudes across the hilly ground plane so that the main floor is at ground level on one end and floats 10 feet above grade at the other end. The stone garden follows the natural grade and slips under the center part of the house. The rain garden allows rainwater to sluice through the boulders and run down to a wetland pond.

### **A Live-and-Work Environment**

The third project Faith described was the complete opposite of the second one. It is located on 400 acres of coastal agricultural land in Bodega Bay, California, and the Pacific Ocean is visible in the distance. A sculptor owns the land, but a rancher uses it.

The sculptor asked O'Neill Rose Architects to create studios to house visiting artists for his art colony, with an existing barn with a gallery and communal kitchen serving as the colony's center.

Each one-person studio had to abide by the migrant workers' housing rules, which meant they could only be occupied for 90 days at a time. After that, they have to be disassembled. The primary building materials were taken from the sculptor's nearby sculpture yard. They included steel sheet piling, heavy timber and bolted connections. The sculptor moves the huts to a new location every 90 days with a forklift and a small crane that also move sculptures.

"We always want our buildings to have a conversation with the landscape," said Faith. "For this project, we created the five little huts from kits that can be put together to create art studios. People can camp wherever they want on the land, which is hilly and bold, and each placement creates a different conversation. The buildings are very gestural, and they are almost like characters. Their relationship to the land depends on where they are located. A llama guards some of the cows, so one studio has a flat roof with eaves that touch the ground like ramps. That way, the llama can climb up and survey the land."

The small studios have a minimal footprint on the land, and their size encourages artists to spend most of their time outside.

### **Idaho's Challenge**

Architects have an ongoing opportunity to redefine the types of homes they work on. The pandemic, climate change and rapid population growth are all changing the parameters of what a home is. The idea of homes and how they should function was called into high focus during the pandemic, with people confined in tight spaces that had to function for multiple uses. Many people experienced isolation and familial frustration, but they are now finding new opportunities for remote work

that are changing the rules for how and where they can live.

As Idaho's population continues to grow, applying smart-growth principles is the best way to preserve Idaho's beauty and quality of life. Implementing ideas such as making cities denser to create walkable neighborhoods and distinct, attractive communities can prevent urban sprawl; likewise, buildings that use sustainable materials and practices can minimize the built environment's impact. 🌱





# Seven Easy Strategies To Dramatically Reduce the Carbon Footprint of Buildings in Cold Climates in Rural Locations

BY LINDSEY LOVE, ASSOC. AIA, NCARB



If the science about climate change is accurate, we have three to seven years to dramatically reduce emissions to avoid the worst outcomes of climate change. AIA acknowledges and advocates that architects have a role to play in helping to reduce our global carbon footprint<sup>1</sup>. We now know the embodied carbon in buildings significantly contributes to overall emissions. We must focus on reducing this as well as operational carbon for energy efficiency. Because buildings are such a significant contributor, they also offer a significant opportunity for carbon storage<sup>2</sup>.

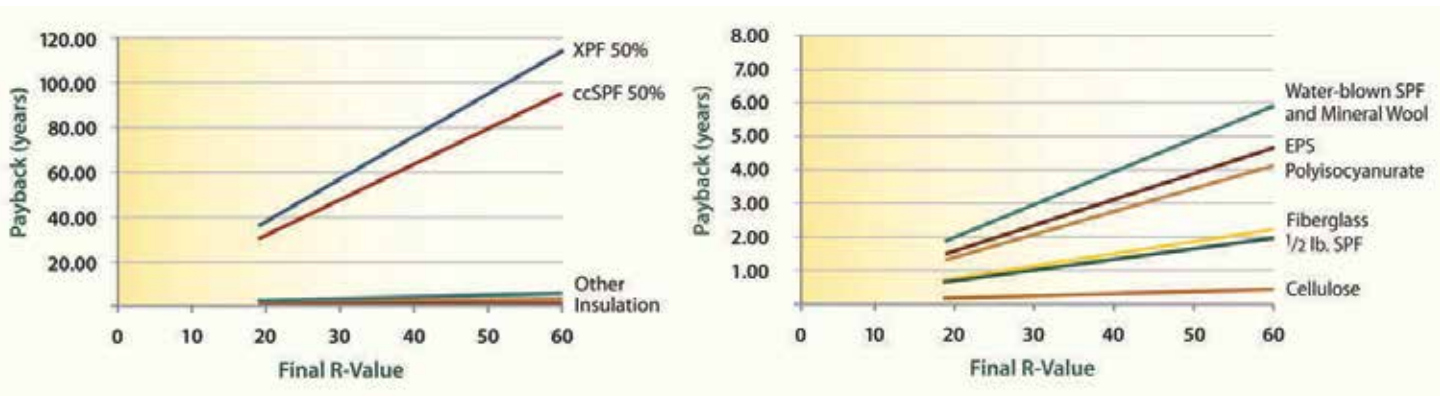
The point of this article is to help Idaho architects, engineers, and builders cut through the challenges of our region to realize the low-hanging fruit of implementing low and carbon-negative materials in our projects.

In a relatively rural state, we face some challenges to implementing practices that help us reduce the embodied carbon footprint of buildings. In general, the building industry evolves slowly, and being a rural area, even more slowly. We are far from materials and product suppliers, and professional peer

and contractor learning may be slower than in more fast-paced markets. And, our successful, leading high-cost markets happen to be fairly conservative and stable rather than motivated to evolve. The common sentiment is: why fix something if it is not broken and is making money?

This list of seven strategies is simple to implement – these are tools you can use beginning today – and will make a dramatic difference. First, we have to understand what causes an embodied carbon footprint. It helps to think of it in terms of currency: everything – all the “stuff” in our lives – either puts in or takes out carbon (energy, emissions) from the atmosphere. Too much carbon in the atmosphere is the problem which means too many things are putting it in rather than taking it out (storing or sequestering it). However, some things that put carbon in actually “payback” their input over time. Anything that puts in less than it takes out over its lifetime has a climate-positive payback, and if the payback period of the product is short, it is a good investment in our global health. Insulation is a primary example of this: it puts some carbon out as it is getting produced, but then it saves operational carbon over time.

### Some insulations do a better job at paying back than others.<sup>3</sup>



Credit Alex Wilson / Buildinggreen.com



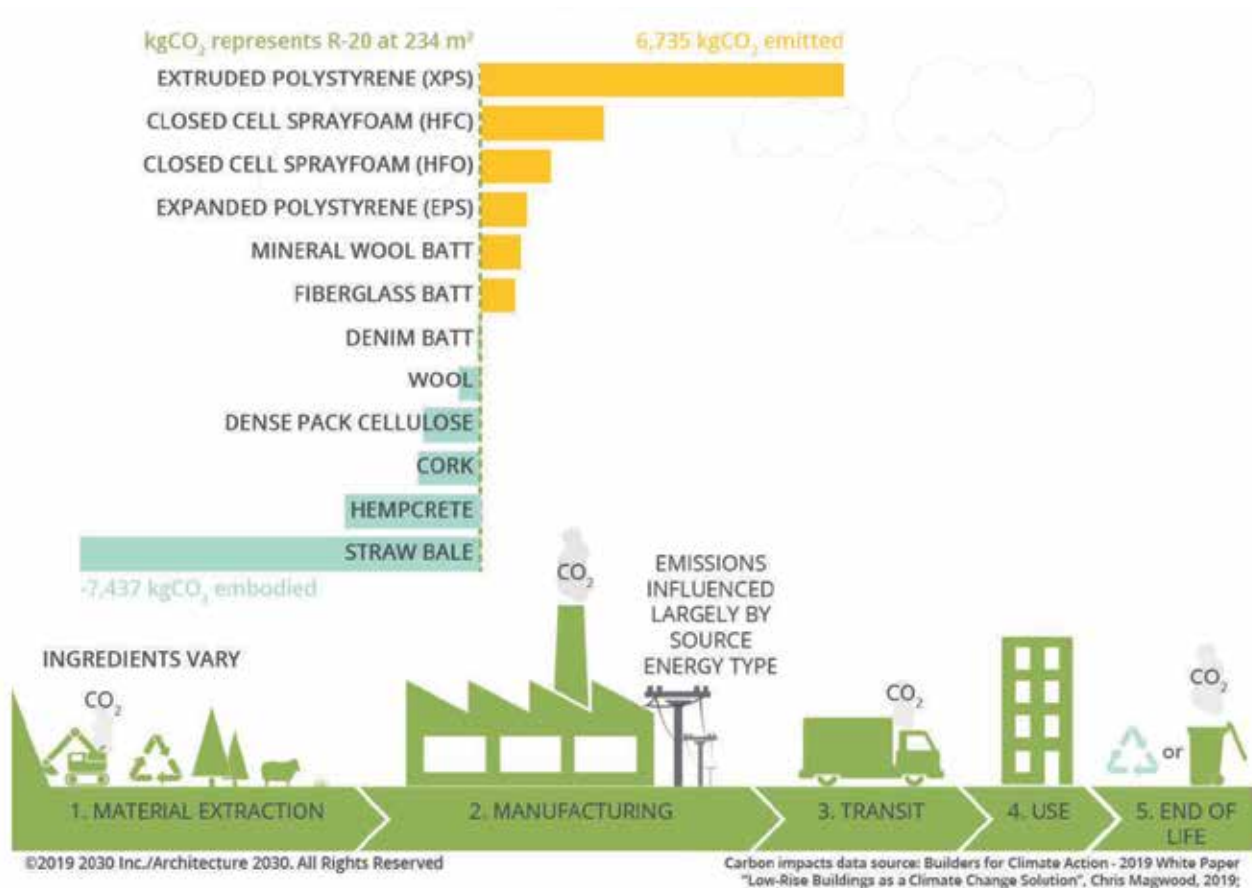
In a relatively rural state, we face some challenges to implementing practices that help us reduce the embodied carbon footprint of buildings. In general, the building industry evolves slowly, and being a rural area, even more slowly.

Next, we should examine which components of the building are significant enough to impact the overall embodied carbon: structure, insulation, and HVAC systems are the big ones. There's a lot of "stuff" in the structure and insulation of a building, and these are the main aspects to target first. HVAC systems have much less "stuff," so it is not intuitive to think that these components have a significant impact. Refrigerants in heat pumps and air-conditioning systems are the culprit, and a simple refrigerant leak can wipe out any measures taken to reduce the operational or embodied carbon of a good building. We'll focus on the assemblies, or the "stuff" in this article, but there is also a good reference read about refrigerants<sup>4</sup>.

**I. Cheaper is better.** Say what?! Not always, but Occam's Razor holds true in many instances of construction as well as in physics (because building is physics!). The simplest, least-expensive solution is often the best for the planet.

There's so much to unwind in this subject, but in general, less processed and especially plant or bio-based materials have low-carbon impacts. In the case of plant-based, there is potential for carbon storage, depending upon the practices of the harvesting and processing, i.e., forestry or farming practices, lumber company, the mill, transportation, etc.

### CARBON IMPACTS OF INSULATION



► — continued on page 38



Credits Love | Schack Architecture - left: CLT structure w/ Guttex insulation, right: strawbale insulation



Credit Hempitecture - hemp batt insulation

A good rule of thumb is to use wood instead of steel or metal framing as much as possible and use plant-based insulation whenever possible. If you can specify FSC or SFI wood products, then you will have a carbon storage effect. If not, at least the number will be low.

Although wood is not as sleek or low-profile as steel, a great side benefit of wood is that it has far less thermal conductance and therefore helps to reduce thermal bridging and condensation within assemblies, which helps a building stand up longer. (Cross-laminated-timber [CLT]) is beautiful and regional and can replace steel or concrete in many instances. CLT is produced regionally by SmartLam [smartlam.com].)

If you cannot use cellulose, hempcrete or straw, then use fiberglass, hemp batts (not shown on the graph, but fall between denim and wool, which will very soon be Idaho-produced; see hempitecture.com), or anything besides XPS and spray foam.

The second aspect of “cheaper is better” is that a code-built (yes, even an Idaho code-built building with R-values from 2009) can actually be better than a high-performance building.

Anything with super high R-values that is relatively thin (XPS, spray foam) took a considerable amount of energy to produce. We love Passive Houses, but when packed full of high-energy foam insulation (spray foam or XPS), they probably have done

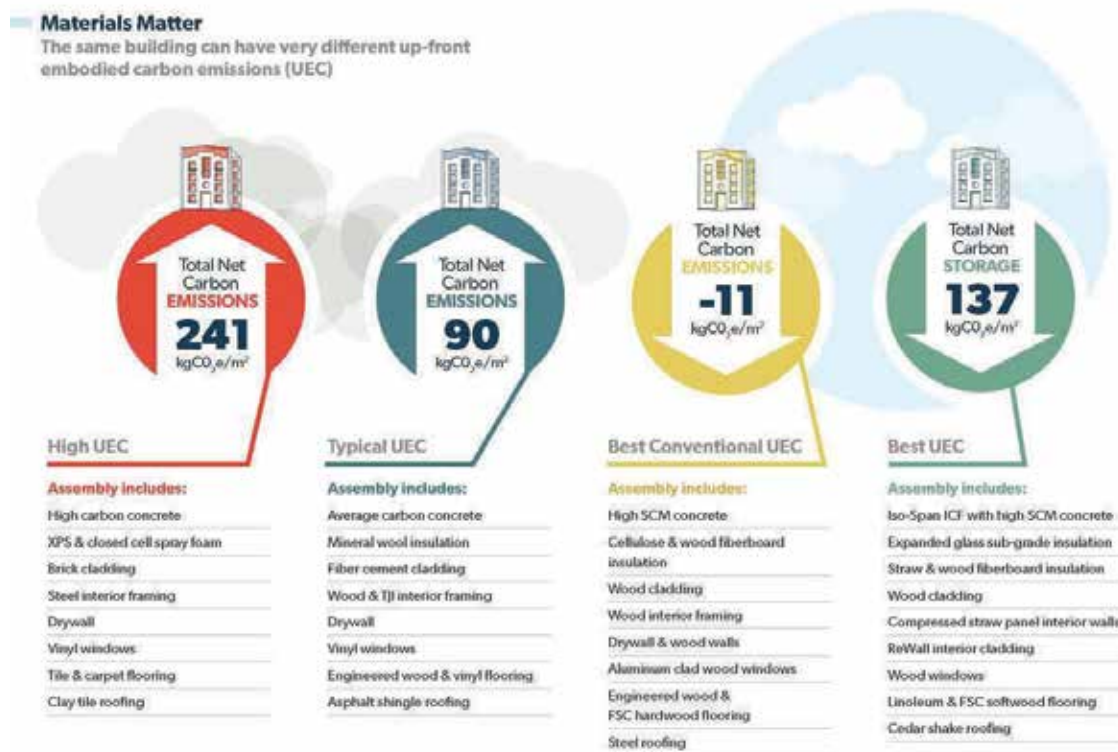


more harm than good, and their payback period may be more extended than the functional life of the building. And at any rate, it is much longer than we have time to curb climate change. A Passive House insulated with cellulose, on the other hand, will do good by the climate over a relatively short period of time. And the payback period is short.

**2. So you've chosen to use low-carbon materials – great!**


Now you have to ensure the flat roof is air-tight to keep your roof sheathing from rotting, how to get a good R-value in the walls, and what to use below grade. Implementing these materials in an already reasonably designed building may not be possible without making significant changes, but it might.

A good rule of thumb is to use wood instead of steel or metal framing as much as possible and use plant-based insulation whenever possible. If you can specify FSC or SFI wood products, then you will have a carbon storage effect. If not, at least the number will be low.



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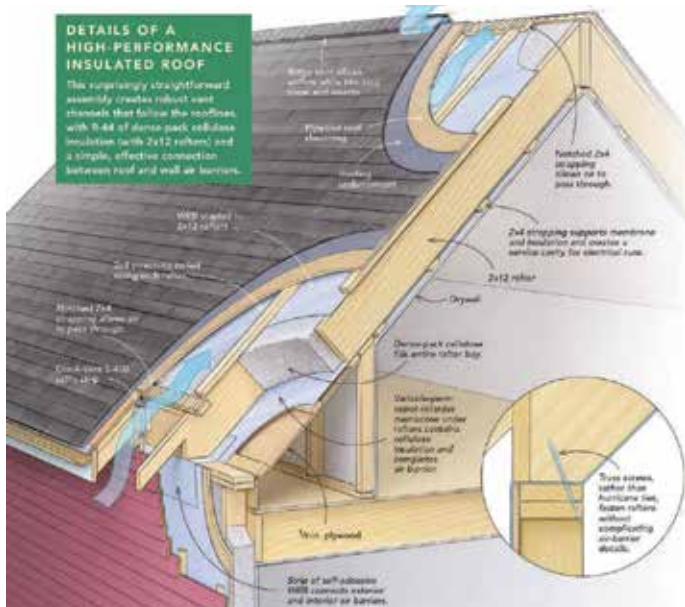
From the top down, here are some guidelines:

**Roofs:** again, cheaper is better: Whenever the design allows for a simple wood truss-roof with blown-in insulation and venting above the insulation, do this! And allow for a good, high-energy heel. Good design can work around aesthetic challenges. Embrace the energy heel and work with it. Every contractor knows and loves this system. Implementations challenges will be low.

When the design calls for a low-slope, flat, or vaulted roof, you have more limited options, but there are still options. The most conventional strategies are to “flash-and-batt” or add rigid insulation over the sheathing. Minimize the amount of rigid or foam insulation you use, but it must be adequate enough to prevent condensation. As always, use mineral wool (Toprock) or EPS, or anything besides XPS. Maximize the amount of dense-packed insulation. You can get air-sealing with the flash and batt strategy, but only as long as the spray foam does not become brittle and crack, and only if installed correctly. In the high-performance building science community, spray foam is not



Credit 475 Building Supply



Credit FineHomebuilding

considered a “durable air seal.” But, based on the availability of innovative, educated, or like-minded contractors, this may be the option with the least harm.

The next option, when adequate slope allows excellent venting, a structural rafter, truss, or joist roof dense-packed with low carbon insulation can be covered with a cold roof such as this<sup>5</sup>.

In areas where labor is extremely expensive and depending upon the pitch of the roof, contractors may argue that this is more expensive than spray foam. It is possibly true, but it is not necessarily true. It depends on the contractor more than the system.

For a flat or low-slope roof, it is more imperative that the contractor be educated and willing<sup>6</sup>. A high-R-value, dense-

packed roof such as the one above can be left unvented if there is no chance of moisture entering the insulation cavity and if whatever moisture may sneak its way in can get out. This requires excellent air sealing with tapes and caulks at every penetration and a chase to eliminate most penetrations, such as an electrical chase framed below the roof framing. This assembly is risky, and building scientists argue about how risky. Idaho has, in general, a very dry climate, so the risk is lower here.

In the two dense-packed options, the use of “smart membranes” and excellent air sealing is crucial. A smart membrane with smart installation and a plan for applying it at each junction keeps moisture vapor out of the assembly and allows it to escape to the interior. Not every contractor is aware of smart membranes, but there are some common options, and most contractors in our market are familiar with CertainTeed products and will be more open to this version, Membrain, rather than an unknown brand. Performance, installation, and permeability vary, but an article discusses the most common<sup>7</sup>.

**Walls:** champion a thick wall. Thick walls are the best walls. Thick walls inherently feel better to humans than paper-thin ones – they are more sheltering. And, at each window, there is an opportunity for something interesting: angled window jambs allow light to reflect and fill a room more softly, and deep sills create places to sit or place objects. We give up some R-value per inch with low-carbon or carbon storing insulations, so we have to add inches back in.

There are a couple of options for where those inches can go relative to the sheathing layer (similar to a roof):

- Exterior insulation provides better performance by reducing thermal bridges, and we benefit from keeping the sheathing warm, thus avoiding condensation. It creates some challenges with fastening siding, but this is a reasonably



conventional practice nowadays, and most contractors have gotten over their fear that the fastening will fail. We know that the compression of the fasteners can provide enough friction to overcome the force of gravity. Different insulations have some performance aspects to consider, such as how water, air, and vapor interact. This is important to learn because the WRB must be installed differently with, say, mineral wool boards than with wood fiberboard.

It is possible that rigid wood fiberboard could be the game-changer in reducing embodied carbon in buildings. Some of the products can act as the WRB, thereby reducing labor costs, and some provide shear support – thereby eliminating the need for sheathing in some seismic zones<sup>8</sup>. The only current producers are in Canada and Europe, but GoLab will come online in Maine in the near future<sup>9</sup>.

- Interior insulation can be increased by widening the framing, either by using 2x8 instead of 2x6 structural walls or adding an extra wythe of minimal 2x3 or 2x4 framing. Often spray-foam loyal contractors will agree that the extra cost of 2x8 framing lumber will offset the cost the stem wall because of wicking.
- EPS, mineral wool, and foam glass (not on the chart of insulations) are three relatively easy options for of foam insulation, so they can't argue that "thicker walls are more expensive." The R-value of a 2x8 wall with cellulose or batts is still not quite as high as the R-value of a 2x6 wall with spray foam. Still, most contractors will advocate for flash and batt over filling the entire cavity with foam, so even if they build a 2x8 wall but ultimately go with their preference



PC: Cairn Collaborative

of flash and batt, the harm of foam is still reduced. If they end up filling the 2x8 cavity, well, then, you did more harm, but you also will have learned a lesson (personal experience) – work with contractors you trust and clients who trust you.

A double-stud wall is a can of worms in terms of options for thickness and insulation options. It's less conventional and more challenging to frame. But because of the options it can be the right choice if you have a client who is willing to push the sustainability envelope with an alternative insulation such as straw bales<sup>10</sup>.

Panelization helps us to conventionalize and control the worms in the can. When we start talking panels with contractors and clients, people care less about what is inside the panel and more about how much time they can save in a short building season. This can be a great strategy for bringing everyone over to your side. There is risk with panelization and there is more upfront investment. The panel company must be reputable and the shipping should not overwhelm the savings. Some reputable American and Canadian panel companies include:

- Tectoniks: [bensonwood.com/tektoniks](http://bensonwood.com/tektoniks)
- Collective Carpentry: [collectivecarpentry.com](http://collectivecarpentry.com)
- Ecocore: [ecocor.us/enclosure-systems-2](http://ecocor.us/enclosure-systems-2)
- New Frameworks Gryphon Panels: Ecococon <https://ecococon.eu> are excellent European panel companies looking for U.S. projects so they can begin to manufacture in the states.

Foundations are challenging. Water and biodegradable materials do not mix and this is the most vulnerable part of the building. It is hard to get around using a higher-energy insulation while also preventing mold and rot. You must first decide if the insulation should be interior or exterior and to how much moisture it will be exposed.

## Wood-fiber insulation products

There are only a small number of brands of rigid wood-fiber insulation available in the U.S. When GO Lab hits the market, there will be five, including:

### Gutex Multitherm

R-VALUE R-3.7/in.

WEIGHT 8.74 lb./cu. ft.

PERMEABILITY 44 perms, approx. 18.5 perms for 2<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in. material

COMPRESSIVE STRENGTH 1462 lb./sq. ft. (approx. 10 lb./sq. in.)

FIRE RATING (ASTM E119) at 4-in. thickness passed 1-hr. testing as part of assembly

FIRE RATING (ASTM E84) Class B material (a Class A product was recently announced)

### Agepan THD

R-VALUE R-2.87/in.

WEIGHT 14.36 lb./cu.ft.

PERMEABILITY 18 perms



### Steico Universal Dry (shown)

R-VALUE R-3.5/in.

WEIGHT 11.23 lb./cu. ft.

PERMEABILITY 46 perms, approx. 19.4 perms for 2<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in. material

### MSL SonoClimate Eco4

R-VALUE R-2.7/in.

WEIGHT 16.5 lb./cu.ft.

PERMEABILITY 26 perms

COMPRESSIVE STRENGTH (ASTM C-209) ≥ 50 lb./sq. in.



Credit New Frameworks

**Exterior:** If it is porous and the ground is wet, then the insulation value will disappear.

**Interior:** A conditioned crawl space can help to control the humidity, but insulation must be installed properly against this part of a building. Mineral wool is porous, but more conventional and be both in and outside of a stem wall. EPS has higher carbon footprint, but can be under a slab (specify compressive strength) or on a wall, inside or out. Foam glass is not yet conventional but replaces gravel.<sup>11</sup>

**3. Work with contractors you trust and clients who trust you** (the second part comes easily when you start with the first part). This can go either chicken or egg first, but if you are adamant that your clients will be better served by working with a contractor on your team, then you will all more easily achieve the clients' goals. This works very well, most of the time. If you do not have a contractor you trust in your circle, then reach out to different certification programs to find out who in your region is educated and interested. The construction industry is not as savvy about embodied carbon as they are about energy efficiency, in general, but EMU provides affordable contractor training for Passive House methods that is very well done. Though they do not focus on embodied energy, they educate with various types of materials and methods, so contractors are exposed to all the options.

**4. Take the easy way out, reduce friction.** We must circumvent the “spray-foam as a do-it-all in one strategy.” Embrace membranes, tapes, and caulks, and then support your contractor through the “how to” – reduce the friction they feel about learning a new system. Take time to think through sequencing of installation of framing and membrane components and get their input. A little planning goes a long way toward reducing labor on site. Once you do it will be second-nature, just like spray foam is currently for many. Also: avoid gable trusses! They are really challenging to air-seal with membranes and tapes.

**5. Take responsibility.** Your client hired your company for many reasons and they do not need to know how all the sausage gets made. They probably don't care about the sausage as much as you think they do, so just do what you do.

**6. Forget about embodied carbon** (when talking with contractors and especially clients). Most people don't get it yet. Someday this will be mainstream terminology, but until then, our job is far easier when we speak the same language as clients. Communicating about a healthy indoor environment is something that everyone will be on board with from the beginning. It just happens that many high carbon materials also contribute large loads of toxins to our environment and potentially indoor air. Healthy materials is a parallel route leading to the same destination (unless we're talking about manufactured antimicrobials, but that's another story).

**7. Just do less harm:** if everyone would start building high performance straw and hemp commercial and institutional buildings and singing Kumbaya tomorrow, that would be amazing. In the meantime, use your intuition to evaluate what you can bite off now and do it without looking back. Use each failure to learn and improve. 🌱

<sup>1</sup> <https://blueprintforbetter.org/articles/design-resources-to-help-stop-climate-change/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.buildersforclimateaction.org/report---whiet-paper.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.buildinggreen.com/news-article/avoiding-global-warming-impact-insulation>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.greenbuildingadvisor.com/article/reducing-refrigerant-leaks-from-heat-pumps>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.finehomebuilding.com/2021/04/28/a-new-take-on-insulating-a-roof>

<sup>6</sup> <https://foursevenfive.com/blog/the-ten-golden-rules-for-foam-free-flat-roofs/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.finehomebuilding.com/project-guides/insulation/smart-vapor-retarders-for-walls-and-roofs>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.finehomebuilding.com/project-guides/insulation/284-in-favor-of-wood-fiber-insulation>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.timberhp.com/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.greenbuildingadvisor.com/article/a-case-for-double-stud-walls>

<sup>11</sup> [https://www.owenscorning.com/en-us/insulation/foamglas?adobe\\_mc=MCMID%3D90569524272236196302559584395362591500%7CMCORGID%3D3AED27E253DB1E4C0A490D4E%2540AdobeOrg%7CTS%3D1638747205](https://www.owenscorning.com/en-us/insulation/foamglas?adobe_mc=MCMID%3D90569524272236196302559584395362591500%7CMCORGID%3D3AED27E253DB1E4C0A490D4E%2540AdobeOrg%7CTS%3D1638747205)



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