



BUILDING & REMODELING WITH FSC

For Residential Projects



Making it Happen: Residential Architects

Strategies for Making it Happen as a Residential Architect

Residential architects and designers are tasked with balancing the goals of their clients while designing a beautiful and practical building. Ideally, architects and designers introduce new ideas and materials to a project team that contribute to the project's green building goals. On a residential green building project these ideas and materials may include operable windows, a building orientated properly on the site, or use of FSC-certified wood.

This guide addresses large (mixed-use condominiums and multi-family) projects separately from small (custom home) projects as they can follow different avenues towards being built.

Multi-family and Mixed Use Projects

Large residential projects typically involve several stages including schematic design, design development, construction documents, and construction submittals. Each stage should provide ample time for research, project team meetings, specifications and even product testing. Once the project owner and design/construction team has set goals for the project, the schematic phase begins to layout how the project will be designed and which products will be included. This is a good stage to determine where wood products could be used and to research the availability of FSC-certified products for those building components.



Introduction to Designing & Building with FSC

Most mixed-use, multi-family, or high occupancy housing projects are developed on a different timeline from single-family, remodeling projects or custom homes. Many of these large projects are more on a capital project time line that involve many professionals interacting and communicating during distinct project stages. For this type of project we believe that you should consult *Designing & Building with FSC*.

Designing & Building with FSC charts the connection from the FSC-certified forest products industry to the design and building industry. It is a tool to assist you in understanding the issues surrounding forestry today, and how as part of the green building community, you can use your purchases to drive positive change in our forests.

Download the *Designing & Building with FSC* guide (www.fscus.org/dandbwithfsc.org) and browse the Specifying, Building, and Accounting FSC Use section for guidance on appropriate steps, in various project design and construction phases, to ensure that FSC products make it to your project site.



As an architect you have the capacity to inform and influence your projects.

By following up with manufacturers and suppliers of FSC-certified products during design development, architects can further discuss estimated quantities, pricing, availability, delivery times, etc. These are all important questions to ask because FSC products are not always stocked at local material suppliers and sometimes they need to be ordered in advance to ensure that products arrive on time. Clear specifications, at the general and individual product level, should be written on a line-item





FSC products are not always stocked at local material suppliers and sometimes they need to be ordered in advance.

Photo Credit: Ryan Temple

basis to ensure that all those involved with the project further understand which products need to be purchased and used. To better communicate the need for specific FSC products provide the contact details for vendors that have met the FSC Chain-of-Custody (COC) criteria to the general and subcontractors.

To guarantee and document that FSC products are used, you will need to develop a submittal process. For more detailed strategies about the use of FSC products on large scale projects go to www.fscus.org/dandbwithfsc.org

Individual/Custom Homes and Remodels

An architect who is working on an individual or custom home may not need the structured stages that a large scale project requires and the transition between phases of the project may be more dependent on your client's discretion. Unlike large scale projects where there are several layers of professionals working on the same project, a smaller project can require less formal communication and more of a relationship between the architect and the client. Another element of working on smaller scale projects is that you may have more direct input into your customer/client's green goals. Whether you assisted the homeowner with developing the goals or you came in after they had a set project, they are going to look for you provide them with the best information to narrow down those goals to obtainable products and features. As the beacon of information you would be well served to understand FSC-certified wood, how you can find products in your market, and how you can help make more products available in your market.



Case Study: Green Urban Living in Arlington, VA



The Residence at Liberty Center is a new mixed-use development project.

Photo Credit: Ballston Investor Group LLC

The Residence at Liberty Center in Arlington, VA is self described as “exceptional urban living” surrounded by “the urban charms of brand-name shopping, excellent dining and flowing plazas.” This brand new mixed use project, developed by the Ballston Investor Group LLC and designed by The Smith Group, is another example of the growing trend toward urban living that is sweeping across North America.

The developers were very interested in offering high quality flooring products for the interior of the condos. Ecofinishes, a supplier of environmentally friendly floors in Alexandria, VA was brought in during the planning stage to provide some eco flooring options that could be used in the showroom of the condo building.

Danny Boyle, Vice President of Sales at ecofinishes, explains his first encounter with this project, “Though a green flooring option was not a requirement, it was very high on the “wants list” for the Shooshan Company. They of course wanted good looking, high performing flooring, at a competitive price, but they also wanted to know they were making an ecologically responsible choice. The strict standards that the FSC puts on its certificate holders put us in a very positive light. In the end, the developer selected several varieties of Ecotimber’s engineered flooring.”

Three shades and looks were selected, Patagonia Teak, North American Maple, and Stained North American Red Oak. As the project progressed the flooring was ordered and all the material was secured except for the Patagonia Teak. This product was currently unavailable because the area in South America where this FSC product is harvested from was experiencing its rainy season and according to the forestry practices in that region, little if any logging takes place during the rainy season. This is an important element to forestry in the tropics as logging activity during the rainy season can be extremely detrimental to soil stabilization and water quality as landslides are much more frequent.

However, in Arlington, VA, The Residence at Liberty Center had to continue construction so the FSC Patagonia Teak product was switched out for a non-certified product. When asked what could have been done to avoid losing the FSC Patagonia Teak to lead times, Danny replied, “Understanding your lead times on a project is always key, but when





Understanding your lead times on a project is always key.

Photo Credit: EcoTimber

working on a multi-family project with options it's critical. It's probably best if the general contractor and flooring subcontractor address this issue at their scope meeting."

In the end the project is going to use 50,000 square feet of Ecotimber's FSC-certified maple and stained red oak flooring. Plus, it is sending a signal to the market that FSC products are available if you take the time to research their availability and communicate the timing and delivery needs that all specialty products demand, FSC-certified or not.

Danny was also able to squash another misnomer in the market regarding FSC products, when asked if they were more expensive than non-certified products he responded with, "If you are comparing apples to apples on beauty and quality, the FSC products we have seen are competitively priced with non-certified when the other elements of the products are equal. So you don't have to pay an arm and a leg for a good quality product that is beautiful and environmentally sound."

