

2014 WOOD DESIGN AWARDS - WINNER

Western Red Cedar

Alfred Waugh, Formline Architecture + Urbanism

Liard River Hot Springs Facility, Liard River, BC



“Integral use of cedar that was used throughout the project. Cool. Understated. Wonderful. Totally functional. Feels like a gem you’d discover in a forest.”

- jury comments

Western red cedar was a natural first choice in building material for the Liard River Hotsprings facility for a number of reasons.

In effect, the use of Western red cedar is simply an extension of nature – the shape and form of the design co-exists harmoniously with the surrounding natural and cultural landscape. Located deep within the boreal forest, the hot springs are a unique micro-climate enriched with a dynamic community of plants, insects and vegetation. The properties of Western red cedar allow for a durable structure to withstand the environment, particularly in its resistance to insect attack by way of its thujic acid component.

The air surrounding the hot spring is particularly damp and moist, with pools of exceedingly hot waters surrounding the facility creating humid streams of mineral-rich mist – the presence of phenolic oils in Western red cedar help with these climactic conditions by providing resistance to weathering, mold and fungus.

Because it is a very soft wood, Western red cedar allows people to be in comfortable contact with the wood even though the surrounding elements are very hot – its ability to withstand a lot of sweat and heat made it an easy choice of material. Its very low shrinkage factor and resistance to warping, twisting and checking also meant that it would be able to withstand the harsh environment without compromising its aesthetic integrity.

Lastly, the aromatic quality of Western red cedar produces a calming and relaxing feeling as the sweet fresh aromatic oils release, adding to the total therapeutic hot spring experience.

High resolution images available. Please e-mail mmclaughlin@wood-works.ca