



[BWM]

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Letter from the Editor

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the latest issue of Business World Magazine, and to all the stories of business excellence contained within.

In this edition, we chose to focus on some of Canada's leading experts in the fields of architecture and construction. The companies we've highlighted are known for delivering economical, responsible and effective outcomes and have built reputations in their areas to match that excellence.

An example is **Align Builders** in Camrose, Alberta – a commercial construction company that leads their region in client satisfaction. For that piece, we spoke to founder and director Ben Paulson about how they keep clients happy and build trust, and about some of their flagship projects that made their reputation possible.

Also featured in this issue is **i4architecture**, a Thunder Bay-based design firm with a driving force to create “meaningful places and thoughtful spaces.” Cory Stechyshyn, President & Architect, talked to us about what that tagline means, and just how i4architecture goes about achieving it.

On top of these stories, we also spoke to Lorne Rose of **Lorne Rose Architect**, a Toronto-based designer with a passion for modern architecture as well as innovation and collaboration. Lorne walked us through his design process and philosophy, and went in-depth on a recently acclaimed project that showcases what their company can do.

Each of those stories – and more like them – can be found in the coming pages. We hope you enjoy, and we'll see you back here next time.

All the best,

The Editorial Team

To reach our editorial staff with questions or comments please write to: editor@businessworldinternational.com

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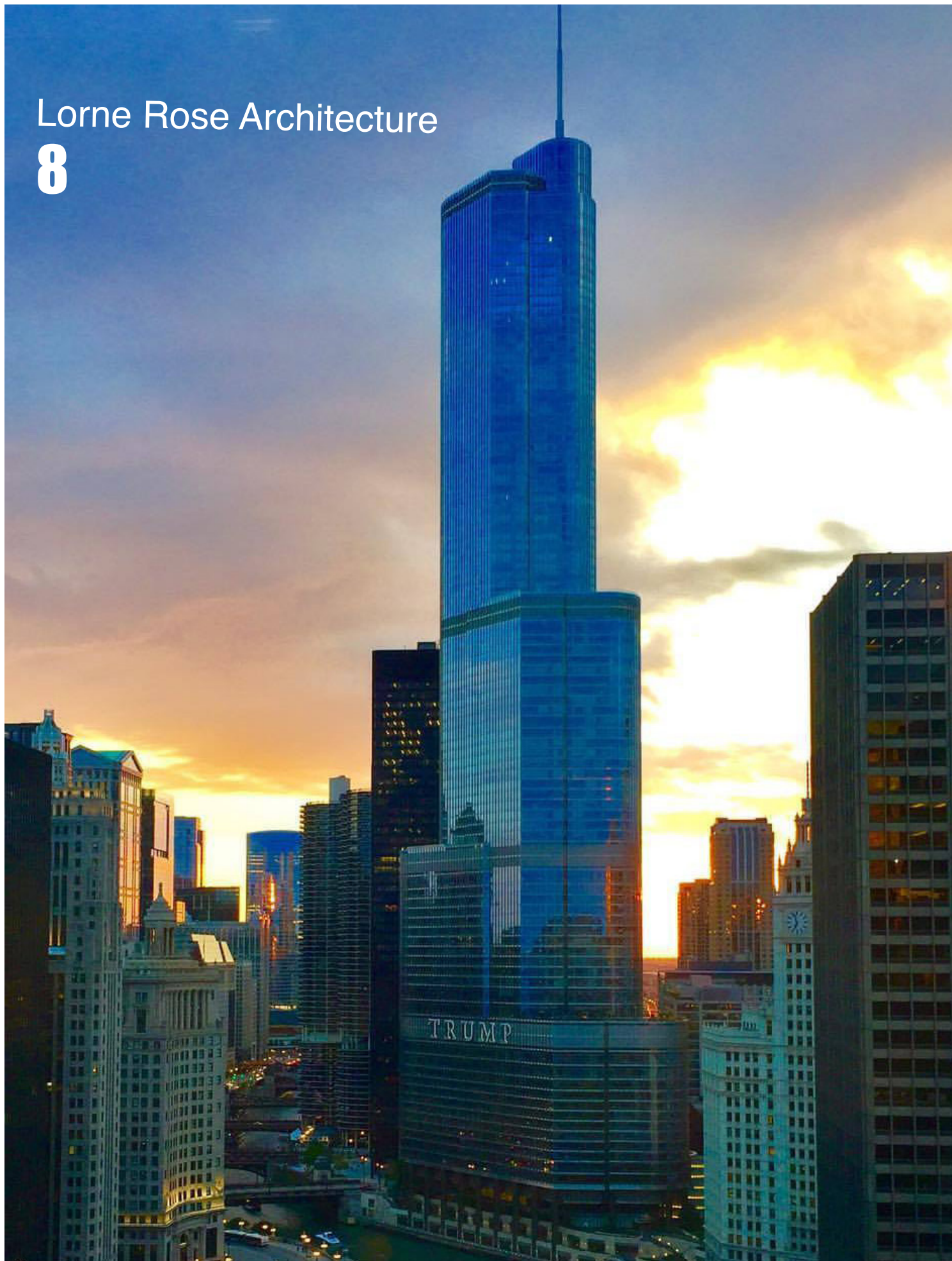
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The Hidden Gem



Lorne Rose Architecture

8





FRESH THINKING



Align Builders is a commercial construction company based in Camrose, Alberta, and backed by several decades of industry experience. Founder and director Ben Paulson started the company with the goal of delivering projects more efficiently than the other building companies in the area.





“We wanted to make the building process more streamlined and enjoyable, and reduce stress for our clients,” Ben says. “That was our aim, and based on the feedback from our clients, we’ve achieved that.”

Today, Align Builders works throughout east-central Alberta, within roughly an hour-and-a-half radius from their office in Camrose. Much of their work takes place in smaller rural centres, where they have found themselves to be a good cultural fit. Their project sizes are varied, ranging from simple renovations to turnkey buildings valued at \$4 million, with most of their work taking place in the \$1 million

to \$2 million range.

According to Ben, the reason all of those clients choose Align Builders is the same reason he started the company in the first place. “We hear a lot from clients that we’re easy to work with,” he says. “I believe that’s where our success comes from.”

“We’re a fairly young group, all of us under 40, so we tend to bring a fresh way of thinking to our work,” he adds. “We’re all very hands-on, we’re very approachable, and we like to develop relationships with our clients. We go the extra mile to make sure they’re happy and their needs are being met as far as the con-

Campbell-McLennan





Grant Thornton



struction process goes.”

To achieve that level of client satisfaction, Align Builders prefers to get involved with a project as early as possible, ideally before the design is finalised. If a client just comes to them with just a general idea, for example, then the Align team will have the opportunity to truly learn and understand their needs and propose solutions that are both cost and time-effective.

The company will even develop multiple preliminary drawings – as well as the realistic costings that will go with them – so the clients will have options, and the chance to make in-

formed decisions about “what they really need, and what they really want,” Ben says. That way, the client can go into the actual engineering and design stages with a lot of the decisions made, which will very likely save them considerable time and expense.

If a client goes to a designer first, on the other hand, things can turn out differently.

“If a client has a dream and a vision, but doesn’t have a contractor like us involved, they can over-design something that their budget doesn’t allow for,” Ben explains. “But we can accurately take all the costs into consideration, and we can show clients where their budget



can be used most effectively.”

In addition, Align Builders also has a proven history of helping clients get through the permitting and development approval stage of their projects. That can be one of the most stressful aspects of building, and the team at Align Builders is prepared to handle it so the client doesn't have to. That's another advantage of involving them early on.

PROBLEM SOLVERS

Though young, the Align Builders team – including Ben and his two brothers – is also experienced, with many of them having

worked together for many years prior to the commencement of the company. That team includes the company's 10 direct employees, as well as their longstanding roster of subcontractors- many of whom are locally-based, and work with the company on a daily basis.

“We consider a lot of our subcontractors as part of our team because we've worked together for so long,” Ben says. “We're all very close, and we look out for each other.”

“There's a trust factor,” he adds. “That's important because our clients are trusting us, so we have to trust the guys we're hiring on their behalf. It helps that most of us are locals, so



we all feel a responsibility to the community and the clients in the community.”

When adding to their team, Ben says they look for the “right personalities” as much as they look for experience. He says all of their guys have to be “adaptable,” as well as “good problem solvers.”

“It really makes a difference to our clients when our guys on site can identify issues and come up with solutions,” Ben says. “Every construction project has the potential to have issues, but our guys, with their problem-solving mentality, keep those issues to a minimum.”

One of Align Builders’ employees is a quali-

fied safety auditor with the Alberta Construction Safety Association (ASCA), and proudly maintains their Certificate of Recognition (COR) through the association. When it comes to safety, Ben says the company “strives to exceed industry standards – not just meet them.”

FOCUS ON SOLUTIONS

A recent project that showcases Align Builders’ capabilities is a new Windsor Plywood store in Camrose that Ben and his team both built and helped design.

Originally, the clients’ intention on that proj-



ect was to rehabilitate an existing building with significant structural issues. Over the course of planning those repairs, the cost became “quite high,” so Align suggested creating a new building instead.

“We showed them some proposals and concepts for a new building, and showed them the initial costs as well as the lifecycle costs long-term,” Ben recalls. “Looking at it that way, it became apparent that a new building made much more sense.”

The challenge, however, was that the new building had to be on the same location – and it had to be constructed while the client was

still operating out of their old location.

“So we went to work on designing a concept that would fit on the same piece of land, while still allowing us enough space to build the new facility without impacting their business,” Ben says. “We were able to create an outcome that worked for them and us, and we just finished construction a while ago, all while successfully allowing them to maintain business operations the whole time. We consider that a real win.”

The cost of shutting down their business while constructing a new building or completing an upgrade can be considerable for clients, but Align Builders successfully helped Wind-



sor Plywood avoid those expenses. They have achieved similar outcomes for several other clients, and Ben says they “take a lot of pride in that type of thing.”

“We have success doing that because our team is so tight, and so adaptable to different situations,” Ben says. “We don’t focus on the issues, we focus on the solutions.”

“It comes down to us being a young, energetic group with fresh thinking,” he adds. “We don’t have to follow a strict guideline. We can adapt to the customer’s needs. We don’t have to take the easy route.”

Ben also credits the company’s success at

overcoming challenges to their aforementioned accessibility. If a client has an issue, they can very easily get a hold of Ben or anybody down the line – many of whom are empowered to make decisions on behalf of the company.

Moving forward, Align Builders aims to maintain that high level of accessibility and the problem solving that comes with it. The company will continue to grow in size and geographical reach, but their hands-on approach and dedication to client satisfaction will stay the same.

“We take a lot of pride in building relationships with our clients, as well as their projects,”



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Ben says. “At the end of projects we tend to have close relationships, and that usually ends up resulting in repeat work. That’s one of our main measuring sticks of success – how often we’re generating business with existing clients. We expect that as our client list grows and expands, that will continue.”

To learn what Align Builders can do for you and your business, you can contact their expert team at Info@AlignBuilders.ca or Jolene@AlignBuilders.ca





**Imaginative,
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htful

i4architecture is a Thunder Bay-based firm committed to delivering economical, responsible and effective design outcomes. With every project, their goal is to discover a design solution that will enhance the space it's built, and meet the needs of the client building it.

BALMORAL PARK

The image shows the exterior of a modern building with a large glass facade. The words "BALMORAL PARK" are prominently displayed in blue, bold, sans-serif capital letters on a light-colored horizontal panel above the glass. The building has a white metal railing on the roof. In the foreground, several cars are parked, including a dark sedan, a red SUV, and a white car. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds.



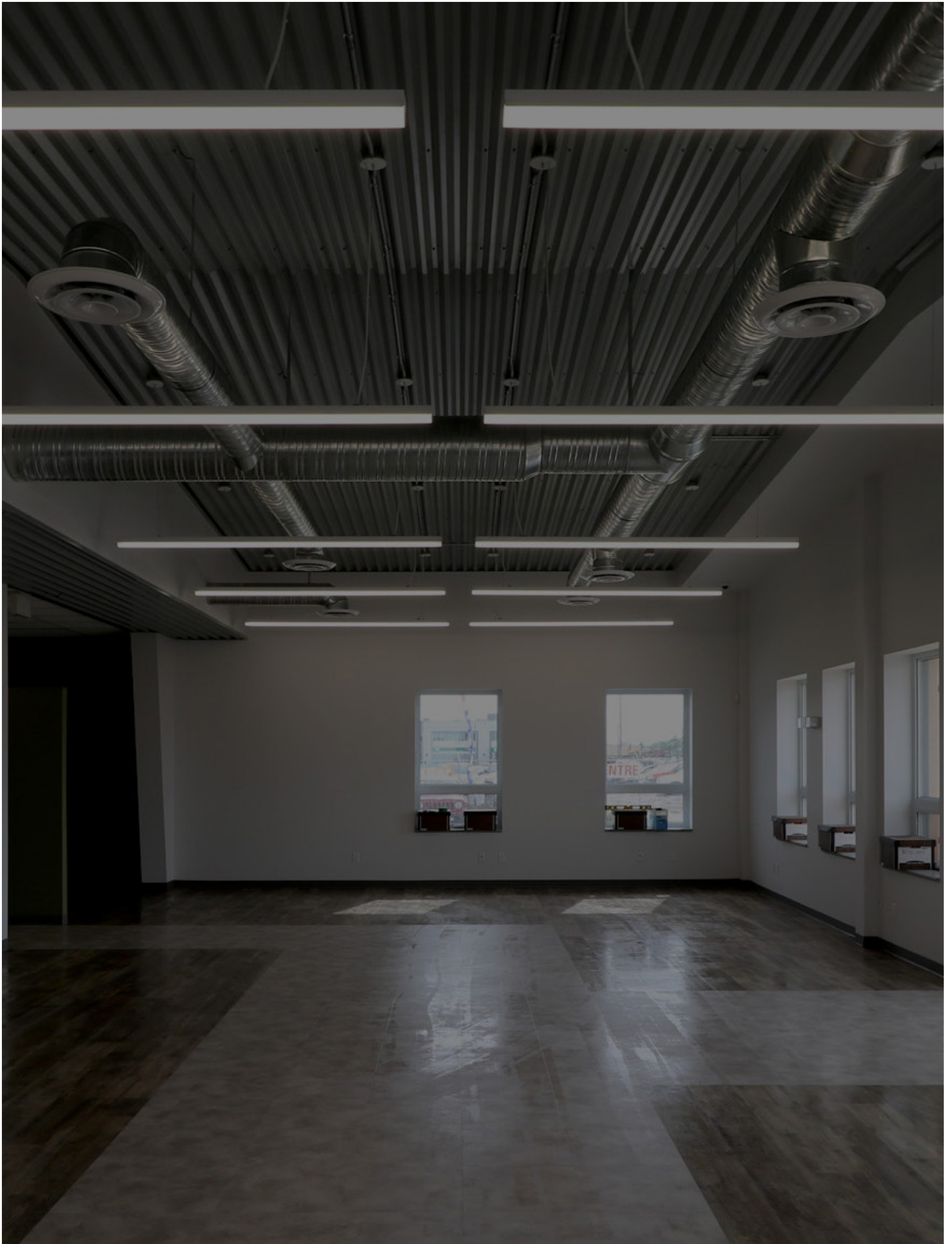
“Our tagline, which is also our driving force, is ‘Meaningful places and thoughtful spaces,’” says Cory Stechyshyn, President & Architect. “We want the people who experience our architecture have meaningful experiences.”

Cory has been working in the architecture sector since 1984. Over the years, he has developed a broad range of project experience and has been involved in on-site project management and contract administration of a large number of complex and diverse projects. Armed with that knowledge and expertise, he founded i4architecture as a sole proprietor in 2014.

The company was named after the four words that represented “the golden objectives” of the young firm. Those words are “imaginative, innovative, inspiring, and insightful.” The fact that i4 sounds like “eye for” was unintentional, but fitting.

Today, i4architecture’s service offering includes pre-design work, design, construction documentation, and construction administration. They also have experience working alongside contractors in a design-build capacity. The kind of work they do is varied, and has so far included car dealerships, office buildings, office interiors, research buildings, medical





clinics, and more. They have a special interest in health and life sciences, so when those projects become available they pursue them passionately.

Size-wise, Cory says there's currently "no project too small," especially for existing clients. On the other side of the coin, there may be projects outside their capacity, but they are open to collaborating with other firms and pooling their resources to go after them. Their typical project, however, is valued between \$1 million to \$20 million.

According to Cory, i4architecture is set apart in that niche by the confidence they in-

spire in clients.

"We get along well with everybody – from clients, to contractors, to suppliers, to local authorities," he says. "Clients see that. They see that we have a good rapport with the whole construction industry and community. That instills confidence in our ability to complete their project for them, and confidence that the process will go smoothly."

Cory credits his strong relationships with all industry stakeholders – but especially clients – to his diplomatic approach, coupled with his proven track record for delivering high quality projects.



To achieve that consistency, Cory and his team ensure that a quality control process with multiple checks and balances exists at the top of every job. They start by going through all the necessary steps to determine the client's true wants and needs, they consider present multiple options for achieving their goals, and they call on their experience and expertise to ensure that no critical zoning, legal, or environmental go overlooked.

"A lot of care, control, and nurturing goes into every project to make sure it starts off on the right foot," Cory says.

From there, Cory and his team "stay com-

mitted all the way through," he adds.

"We pay as much attention to the design process as we do to the drawing process as we do to the construction process. We make sure that what's constructed in the end is very close to what the client's expectations are and were."

That committed approach has proven to be very successful. When Cory left his previous firm and started i4architecture, many of his clients followed him. i4architecture has also earned almost all of their work through word-of-mouth, which is the greatest indicator of client satisfaction there is.



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SATISFYING WORK

Currently, i4architecture is the prime consultant for a project on the Lakehead University campus, called CASES (Centre for Advance Studies in Engineering and Sciences).

CASES is a brand new state-of-the-art facility valued at roughly \$18 million. It encompasses two storeys and 45,000 square feet, and is composed of a renovation of an existing two-storey building as well as a two-storey addition, connected by a new bridge linking to the adjacent Patterson Library building.

i4architecture's consulting team has been

involved in that project since its early days. They worked closely with the university project team and the researchers to develop a vision and direction for the project's design.

"We had an entire summer of meetings with the researchers that would be using the labs, and each of them are very highly specialised in their knowledge and the types of research that they do," Cory says. "We had to understand enough about that they do to make sure we properly accommodated them in these new spaces. That was a bit of a challenge, but the experience was so collaborative that I know we will be successful."



Cory himself is particularly excited about CASES for a number of reasons. For one, it's a life sciences project, and that's one of his main interests. For another, it is targeting LEED Gold Certification, and sustainability in design is something he is very committed to.

"That's the way the future is going," he says. "Buildings need to be responsible to the environment. The construction sector is one of the largest consumers of energy and one of the largest creators of waste, so we have a responsibility as designers to reduce and minimize that impact."

On CASES, i4architecture has lived up

to that responsibility by heavily considering stormwater retention, and calling for extensive landscaping and site development work that would handle stormwater on-site, rather than sending it off into the municipal system. They also called for recycled and locally-sourced materials to be used in the building construction, and maximised access to natural light in the design to reduce the need for artificial lighting. Plus, they implemented various features to reduce the building's use of water and electricity, and to improve thermal efficiency so the building can be more easily heated in the winter and cooled in the summer.



“And the whole time, we were trying to create an aesthetic that doesn’t suggest it’s a sustainable building,” he adds. “A lot of sustainable buildings get a bad rapport for looking similar. We wanted a design concept that was more natural, and didn’t have the stigma of being a ‘prototypical energy-efficient building.’”

CASES is under construction now, with work well underway on the renovation portion and just beginning on the edition. It is expected to be complete and operational by April 2018.

Another current project that i4architecture is excited about is a ‘Journey to Life’ centre they are involved in designing for the Salva-

tion Army in Thunder Bay. Cory describes that job as a “very meaningful” one, and thus “right in line with the sorts of projects we like to get involved in.”

Other meaningful projects on the company’s radar include developing modular and transportable housing prototypes for First Nations communities that currently have housing challenges, as well as coming up with stock affordable housing designs that could help meet the needs of the Ontario market.

Beyond those pet projects, Cory sees i4architecture doing more of the same types of projects they have been doing so far, and at





the same rate they have been doing them.

“I’ve been in this profession for 30 years and I know that the place where we are is now is sustainable from a business point of view,” he explains. “We’re at a size where we can sustain the staff we have, still take on projects of a substantial size and nature, and be satisfied with the work we do. We’re in a really great position.”

To learn more about i4architecture, their past and current projects, and their team of skilled professionals, visit <http://i4a.ca/>



The logo for Lorne Rose Architect is a red square containing the text 'LORNE ROSE' in white, stacked vertically, with 'ARCHITECT' in a smaller white font below it.

LORNE
ROSE
ARCHITECT

DESIGNING DREAMS

Lorne Rose Architect is a Toronto-based firm with a passion for making dreams come true. No matter what sector they are working in, and no matter what size project they are working on, they make sure they are always meeting the needs and requirements of the client – both now and in the future.



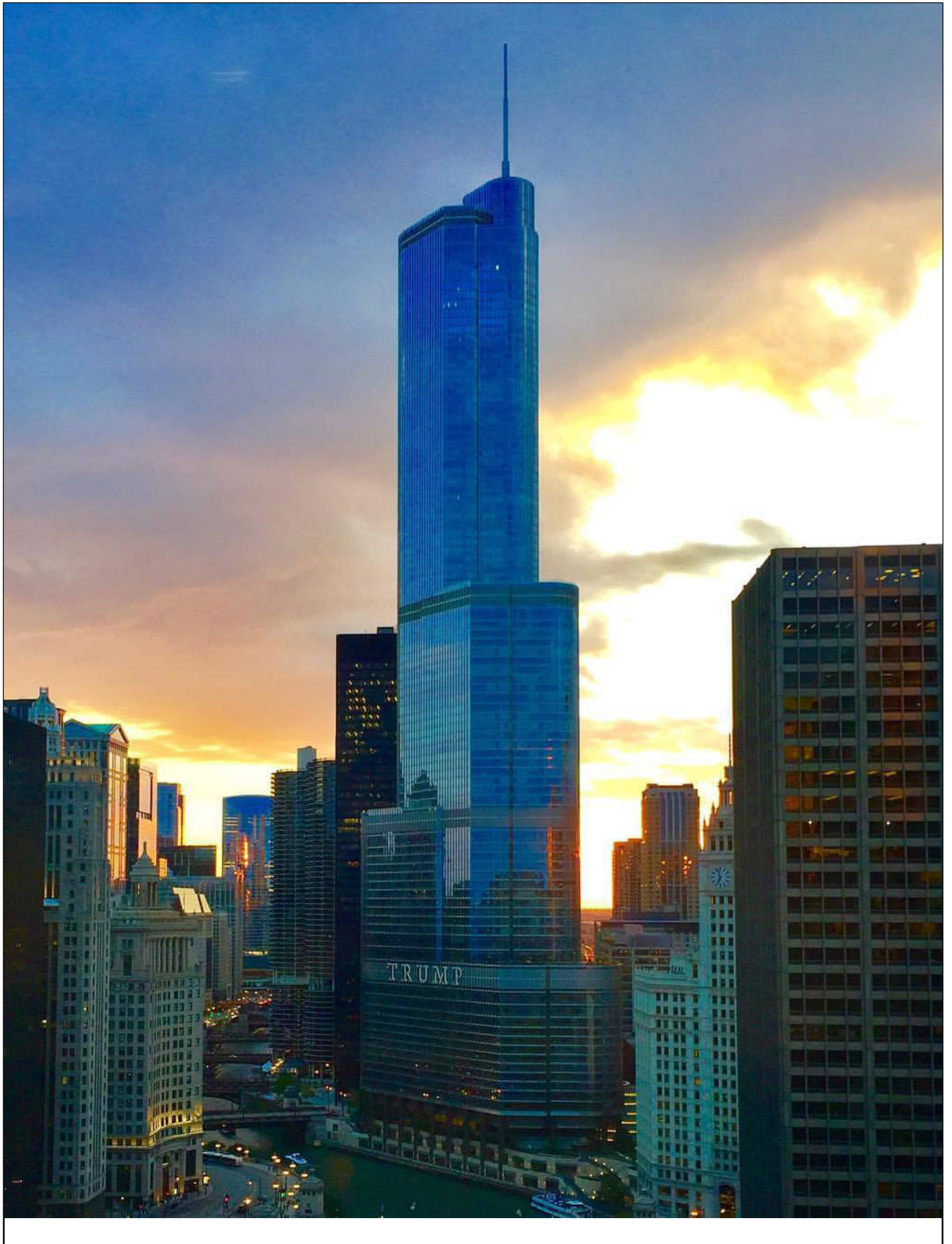


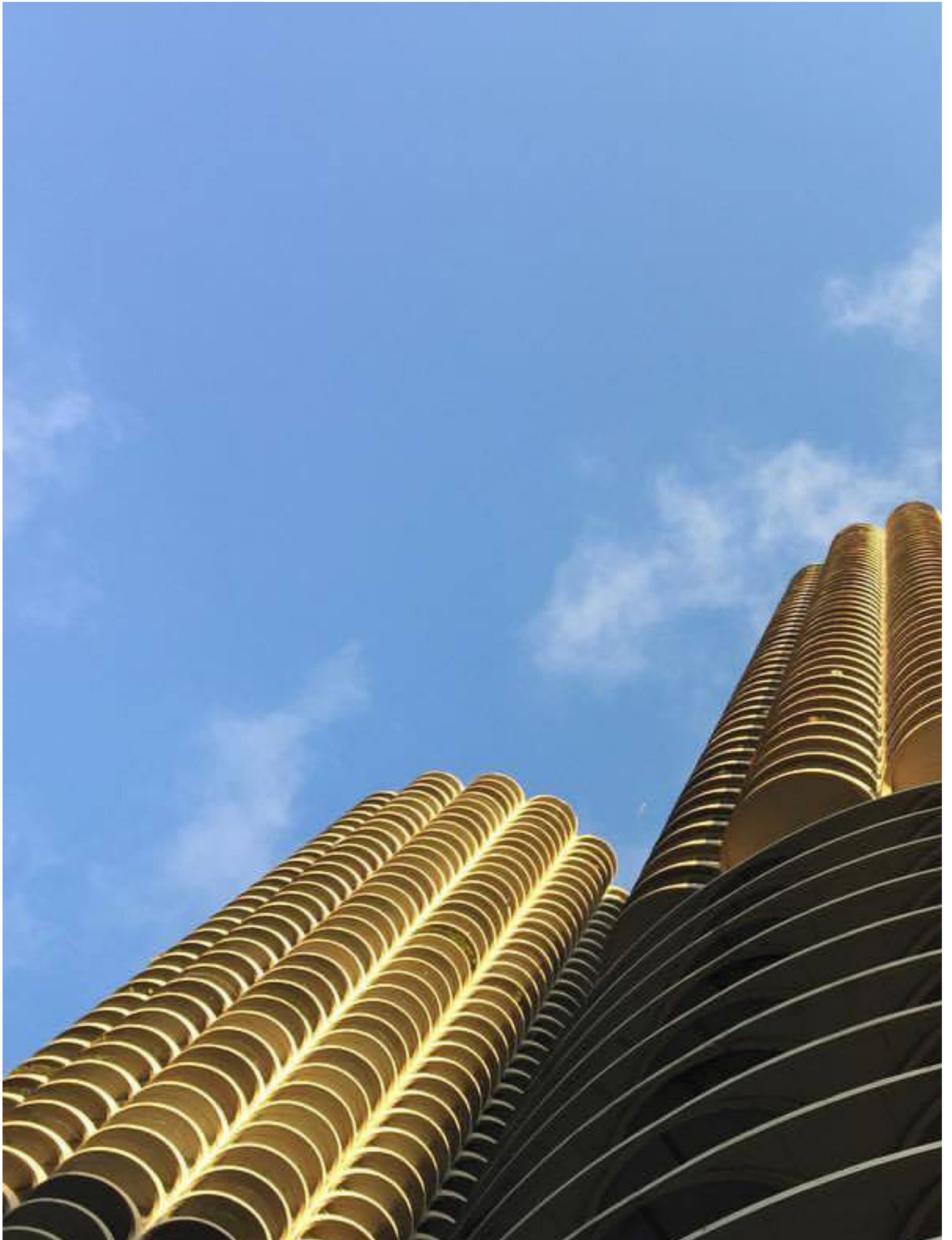
“Excellence, innovation, and collaboration are hallmarks of our work, from the moment we meet with the client to the completion of their project,” says Lorne Rose, founder and director. “Our priority is to meet the specific needs and requirements of our clients today and deliver a design that will be still functional and contemporary tomorrow.”

Lorne was born and raised in Toronto, and first knew that he wanted to be an architect at 10 years old. To make his dream come true, he attended the Ohio State University and earned a Bachelor of Science in Architecture, and then a Masters of Architecture at the University of

Michigan. He established his own firm in 1995. In the early days of the company – then called Rose + Bigauskas Architects, before becoming Lorne Rose Architect Inc in 2000 – he concentrated on the high-end residential sector. In the years since, the company has branched out and done townhouses and various commercial works within the Greater Toronto Area, while still making high-end custom homes their speciality.

Today, Lorne Rose Architect is capable of offering clients on those projects the full range of architectural services – starting from site analysis and going all the way through to con-





struction administration. They customize their process to meet the specific needs and wants of each individual they work with, but their service offering can include schematic design, design development, scheduling and budgeting, construction documentation, and more.

According to Lorne, that depth of capability is part of what sets his firm is set apart in their niche – that, plus their “unmatched service and value.”

“We pride ourselves on providing a customised process which our clients are the centre of,” he says. “We never try to convince them that our design is right for them, we will con-

tinue to work until they are truly in love with the design we deliver.”

“We will, however, always tell a client when we disagree with them,” he adds. “We will share our insight, opinion and expertise, and then we will sit back and listen. We’ll be patient and we’ll spend the time to get their dreams down on paper.”

Lorne Rose Architects consists of Lorne himself and only three other longstanding employees, so clients benefit from intense interaction with Lorne himself throughout the entire process. He personally evaluates, modifies, and hones every design, making sure it en-



compasses the client's original vision.

That hands-on personal service and collaborative process has been very well received by past clients. This is evidenced by the company's long list of client testimonials as well as history of repeat work and referrals. Over the years, they have done second houses for clients looking to scale either up or down, cottages for people they have previously done houses for, and plenty of homes for family members of past clients.

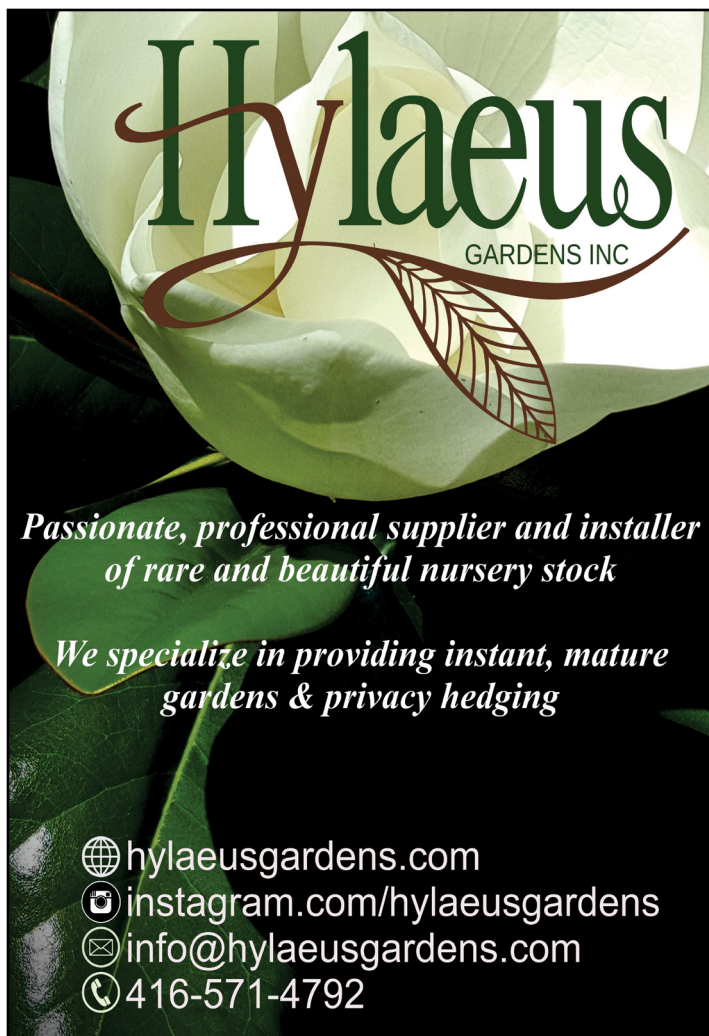
A MODERN FUTURE

Recently, Lorne Rose Architect moved into

a new live/work space in Midtown, Toronto, which they designed themselves. They are very proud of the result they achieved, and will be using it as a showpiece for clients.

That project is situated in a corner lot, and involved the refurbishment of an existing, older semi-detached brick building. The firm's changes included opening up previously narrow spaces, adding modern windows to allow natural light, and incorporating warm colours to create "a warm and relaxing feeling."

Externally, Lorne Rose clad the front of the four-storey building with Indiana limestone in a linear stratum effect, and incorporated large,



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floor-to-ceiling windows. They also topped the cement-board clad carport with a green roof, creating a “charming view” from the living room and meeting area, which overlooks it.

Internally, the project incorporates home design elements, making it truly feel like one outside the small working area. Natural hardwood floors were used in some areas, with “wood look” vinyl floors in the more high-traffic areas, “adding notes of elegance and hominess,” Lorne says.

“We’re very proud of that project,” Lorne says. “It exemplifies what we do. It’s creative, it’s cozy, and it’s beautiful.”

“We took a derelict building and a real eyesore in the community and created something that everyone loves,” he adds.

Many locals have commented on the revitalized look of the corner property, and thanked Lorne for being a part of the turnaround. And as his own client on the project, Lorne is also personally very pleased with the end-result.

“I love it,” he says. “It’s everything I was looking for, and it took me a long time to find.” Lorne is also proud of that project because it serves as an example of modern architecture, which he doesn’t get the chance to do as much as he likes. Fortunately, he sees that chang-



ing as more local clients embrace the form and commit the funds to doing it right.

“Modern houses can look cheap and run-down in a few years if people don’t allocate the right funds,” he explains. “But they use low-maintenance materials, so they may cost more initially, but in the long run I believe they cost less.”

Lorne hopes to do more modern projects moving forward, and continue implementing contemporary appeal on every design he can. For example, last year he struck a good balance on a newly-built English-style manor house – which was anointed Robb Report

Home & Style’s Ultimate Home 2016, and was praised for feeling “simultaneously grounded in old world tradition and steeped in modern interpretations of glamour and comfort.”

That award-winning home was 14,000 square feet, and Lorne is very proud of the result and the press it generated – but he’s still not looking to do manors every time out. Instead, he simply wants to work with passionate clients who have the means to execute their visions.

“For us, the size of the project doesn’t really matter,” he says. “It’s the client that matters. Great clients create great projects. Clients that

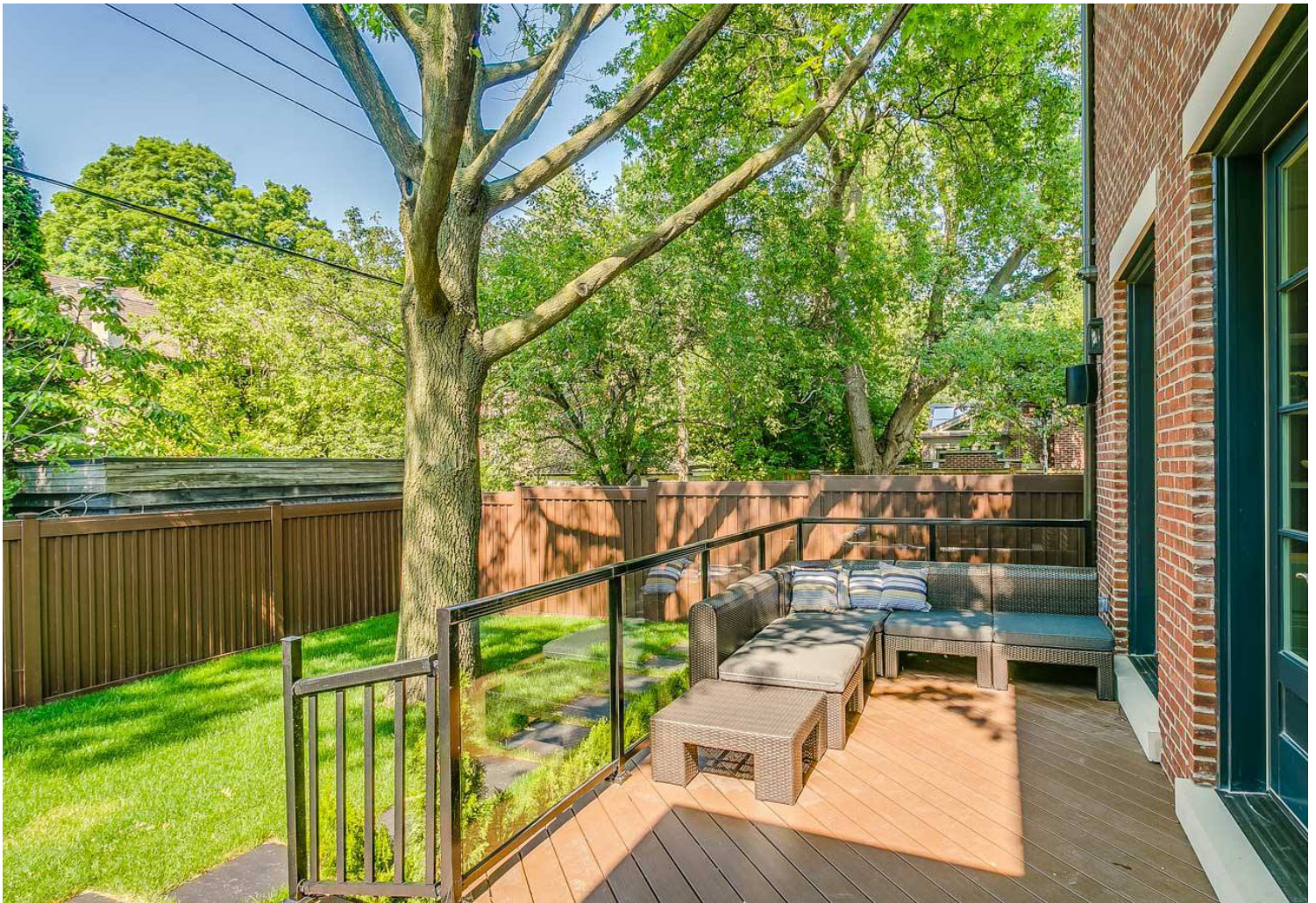


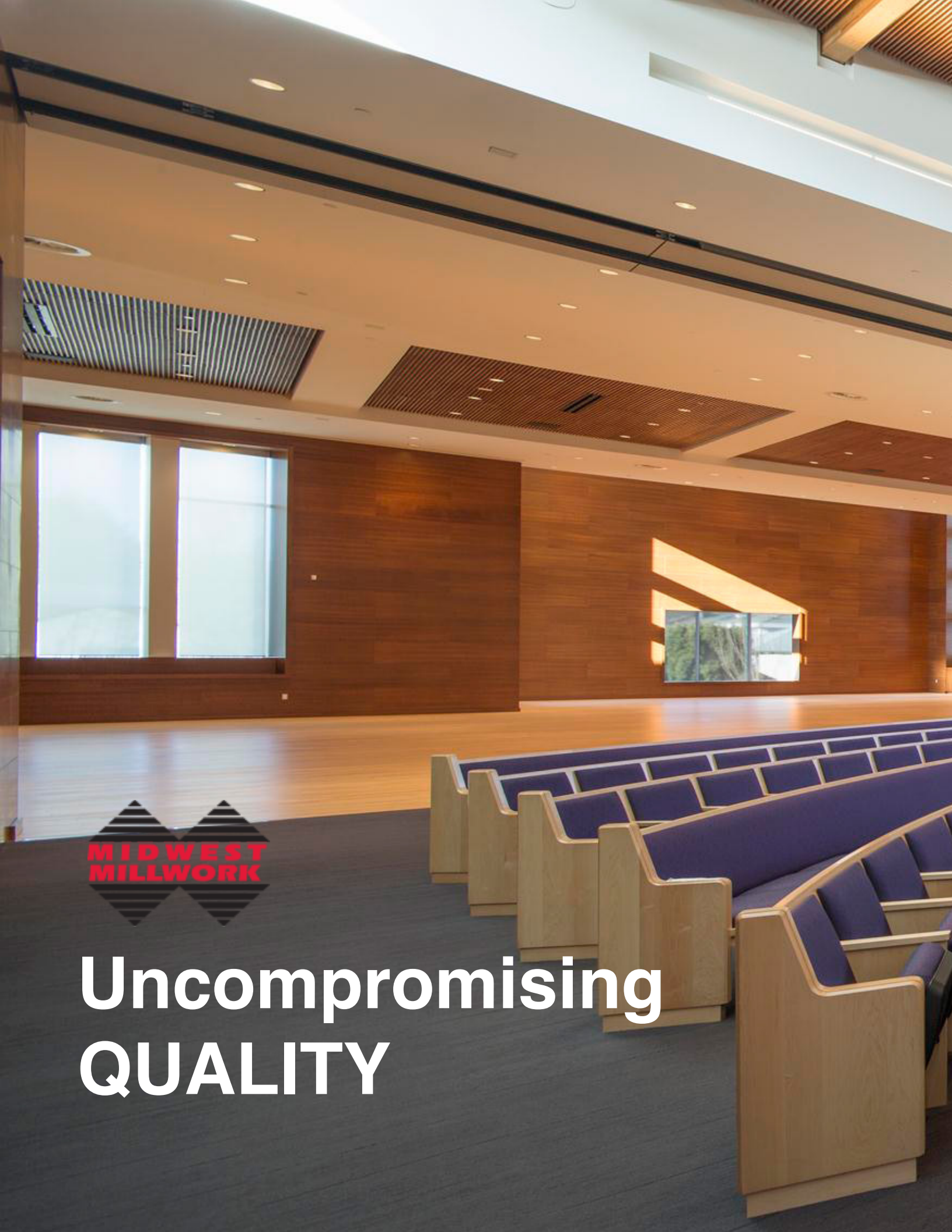
are enthusiastic about what they want to do and have the funds to implement it properly – theirs are the projects that come out great, whether they are big or small.”

As for the size of Lorne Rose Architect, Lorne says he is happy with the company the way it is now. He has worked among larger teams in the past, and he didn’t like the compromise on personal service that came with that.

“I really like the small boutique size of our company,” he says. “It means everyone works on every project, and everyone knows the client, and everyone has a great relationship.”

To learn more about Lorne Rose Architect, their process, their services, and their competitive advantage, visit <http://lornerose.com/>





**Uncompromising
QUALITY**





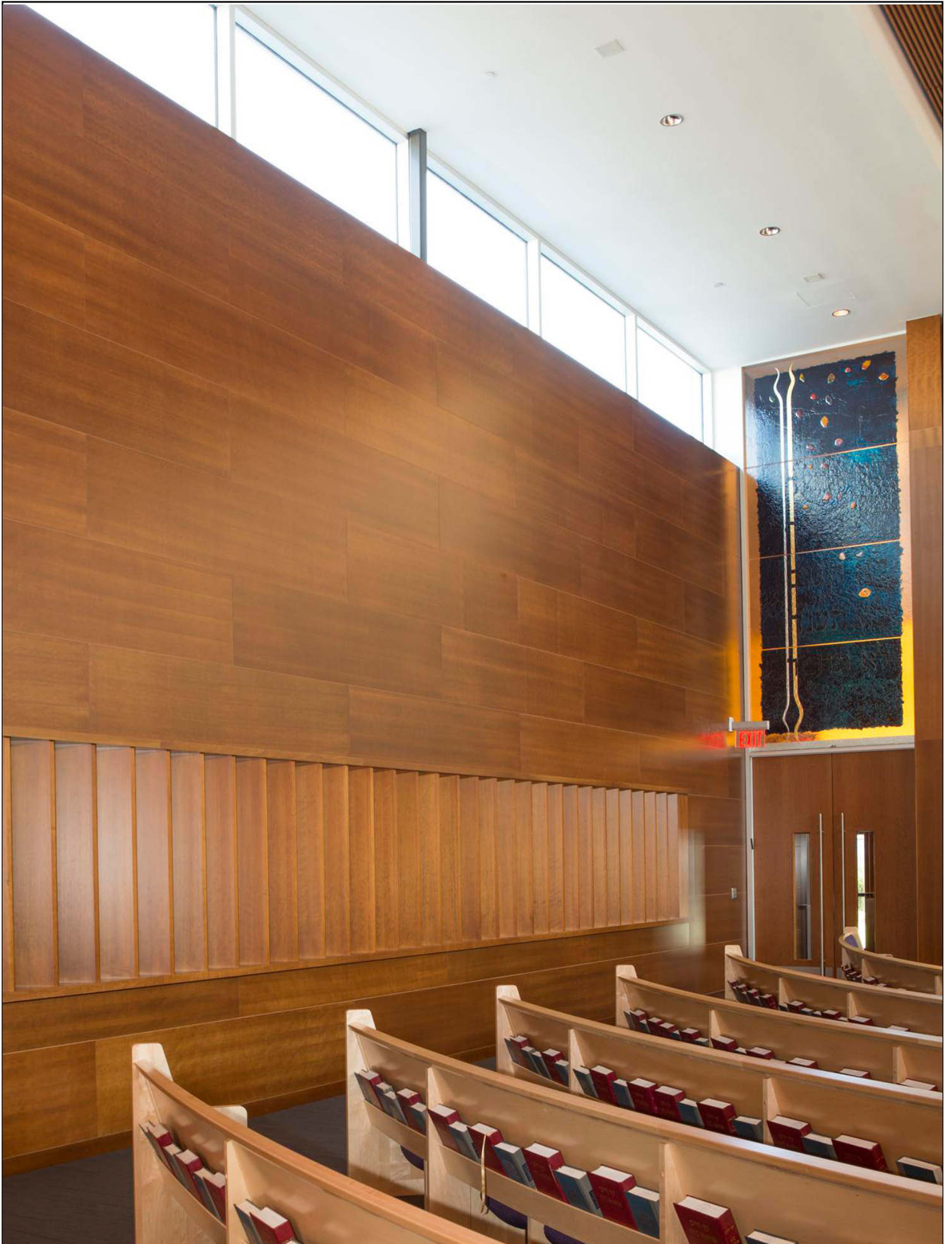
Midwest Millwork is a full-service custom millwork and casework company that has been serving Western Canada since 1975. Today, they provide premium quality solutions to meet all millwork requirements from design to installation, and they ensure that client expectations are met and surpassed on every project.

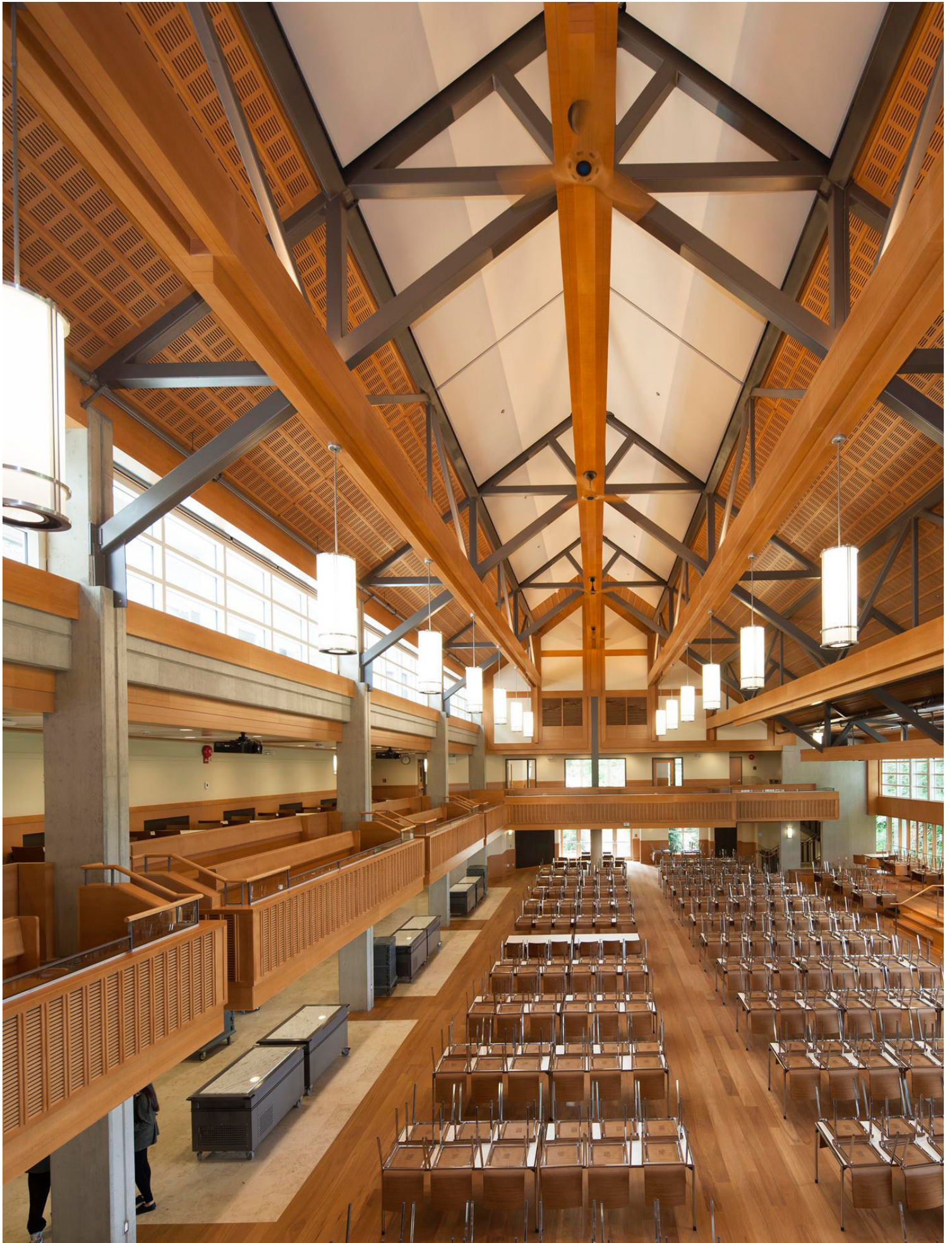
“Our quality of work is what has driven our success, and what will continue driving it,” says Dave Hildebrand, owner of the company. Dave is partners in the business with his brother, and they both grew up around the millwork industry. Their father, company founder Henry Hildebrand, supplied and installed custom

church furniture across Western Canada in the 1960s. Dave and his brother got their start in the company’s original shop, helping out where they could and learning the business first hand at a young age.

Midwest Millwork started their transition into custom millwork and casework with the expansion of that original shop from 2,500 square feet to 6,000 square feet in 1976 and to 18,000 square feet in 1992. In 2007, the company then custom built a modern 42,000 square foot facility with state of the art machinery and automation systems.

As the company grew, they transitioned from





doing just custom wood products into plastics, glazing, upholstery, metal fabrications, solid surfacing material and stone. Those are all integral components of many of their current millwork projects – which include large institutional projects such as schools, hospitals, banks, office buildings, and much more.

“We’re a custom operation, so there are very little types of work that we can’t do,” Dave says.

The majority of Midwest Millwork’s clients are main building contractors, and their projects can range in value up to \$3 million. Because the majority of their jobs are pub-

licly funded, they generate most of their work through the tender process. But while price is very important, it’s usually not the defining reason Midwest Millwork is selected.

“We separate ourselves from our competitors by the quality of our work,” Dave says. “We’re not always the most competitive in terms of dollars and cents, because we simply won’t back off on our quality. We won’t cut corners and reduce what we do. We keep our standards very high.”

Dave admits that those standards mean that they’re not right for every job: “Sometimes people want things done as cheaply as they



can, and it's not about quality," he says. "There are shops that will provide that service, but we've not gone down that road."

"We believe our quality is second-to-none in the industry, without question," he says.

An important part of achieving that quality, Dave explains, is the talent and commitment of their team – which includes staff in estimating, design, project management, engineering, production and also installation. At one point, the company used subcontract labour for installs, but they now do it all in-house to ensure their quality and reliability never wavers.

Many of the company's experienced team

members have been with Midwest Millwork for more than 20 years. All of them are acutely aware of the importance of quality control and attention to detail at every project stage.

To ensure their team remains on the cutting edge, Midwest Millwork also strongly encourages and supports employee training and skill development. They are proud to have partnered with the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT) in support of the cabinet-making apprenticeship program.

In addition to the talent of their staff, Dave also credits the company's unrivalled quality to their transparency and material selection,



among other things. That starts with providing clients with very detailed drawings, so they know exactly what they are supplying them with and that it's in line with their exact requirements. It continues with the usage of only high quality materials – which isn't necessarily as straightforward as it sounds.

“In the market now, there's an awful lot of material coming in from offshore that is very economical in terms of pricing, but that comes with a tremendous amount of challenges in terms of quality,” Dave explains – and those challenges are sometimes only apparent in time, and not up-front.

“That's a challenge our industry faces,” he says. “When a project is just completed, you might not see the problems. But over time, materials are cracking, shrinking, warping, twisting, and turning – a year later, there can be all sorts of evidence that something has gone wrong with a product.”

Midwest Millwork has combated that challenge by being diligent about their research and also by calling on their experience. If a product has turned out to be unreliable in the past, they will not use it again.

“We stay away from products that we have any questions about using whatsoever,” Dave



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says. “That’s critical to us. We don’t compromise anywhere, on anything we do.”

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

With every project Midwest Millwork undertakes, they aim to build a relationship with their client. They achieve that by providing not only a high level of quality, but also a high level of service.

“We’re constantly engaging with our clients over the course of the project,” Dave explains. “We’re meeting with them on the job site, discussing issues when they come along, putting forward suggestions for cost-saving measures

when budgets are tight – we work as closely with them as we can in order to assist them with relationships with their own clients.”

“We make sure clients can count on us to complete work properly, on time, and to their specifications,” he adds. “We’ve found some success with that. Contractors are aware that we’re not a fly-by-night operation. We’re reliable, and they know that.”

As a result of that reputation, many clients come to Midwest Millwork before tenders are awarded to discuss the jobs and how best to achieve them. Dave says they welcome that engagement, even if it doesn’t ultimately lead



to them getting the job every single time.

“We’re not going to get every job, we understand that and we’re fine with that,” he says. “But we do want to let our clients know that they can come to us at any point in time with any project, and we’ll be happy to sit down and discuss it with them.”

Midwest Millwork already has relationships with clients that go back 15 to 20 years, and they are looking to create more of those long-standing relationships moving forward. In the past couple years alone, they have made engaging with ongoing clients one of their top priorities.

“We’re putting in the extra time and effort in to working with clients more closely than we ever have before,” Dave says. “We’re making some real headway that approach. It’s amazing how much difference that seems to be making.”

Moving forward, Midwest Millwork will maintain that approach, and they hope it will translate into more involvement on the major institutional projects across the region – projects such as the Peter Lougheed Hall at the University of Alberta, which is among the company’s proudest achievements so far.

The Peter Lougheed Hall is a distinct stu-





dent residence that includes a wide range of student-oriented amenities. It is one of the largest and highest profile projects Midwest Millwork has completed to date. It featured numerous unique elements, such as the wall panelling, seating arrangements, custom cabinetry, curved display areas with custom veneers, and more.

“That was a hallmark project for us in many ways,” Dave says. “There were a lot of stand-out features. It all came together very well into a really nice finished product.”

Midwest Millwork aims to do more stand-out, highly-customised projects like that one –

and they aim to get involved with them earlier in the process.

“We want to move away from the tender process,” he says. “We want clients to call us early on so we can collaborate and discover the best and most cost-effective way for us to deliver their project, without sacrificing quality.”

“That’s where I’d ultimately like to see us go. But it’s a real process to get there, it doesn’t happen overnight. It takes a long time to build relationships like that with clients, but we believe we’re well on our way.”





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