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TELUS Takes Top Honours at 2008 AIBC Architectural Awards

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TELUS House, Vancouver's innovative architectural icon, received top honours at the 2008 AIBC Architectural Awards announced on Saturday evening as part of the Architectural Institute of British Columbia's annual conference. Nine awards were given out, including five merit awards, two special jury awards and an innovation award, all in recognition of architectural excellence.

"These awards are meant to acknowledge excellence in architectural practice, celebrate the achievements of B.C. architects, and recognize the ways in which architects help to define the province's built environment," says AIBC Council President **David Wilkinson**. "The true value of the AIBC Awards Program is that it serves the public interest by recognizing the outstanding work being done in the profession, and helps to raise both awareness and confidence in our communities."

Selection for the annual awards is carried out by a reputable volunteer jury that reflects the diversity of the profession, and using an anonymous process. "The jury process was both stimulating and rewarding," remarks Jury Chair **Daryl Condon**. "We had a record 51 submissions to select from this year, and I commend my fellow jurors for the thoughtful consideration they gave to each submission. Our discussions were complex, reflective, and well thought through, leading to a wonderful roster of award winners."

The 2008 AIBC Architectural Award categories include:

- **Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia Awards in Architecture (Medal and Merit categories)** - to honour excellence in completed architectural projects. For a project to be considered in this category, at least one of the project's lead design architects must be an AIBC registered architect active at the time of project completion. Projects must have been completed within the previous seven calendar years.
- **AIBC Innovation Awards** - recognize achievements that are not strictly 'architectural,' but that have a direct bearing on the future of architecture in areas such as sustainability, ecology, building technology, and the innovative use of materials. This award is about doing things differently, and better, helping to ensure that architecture remains vital and influential.
- **AIBC Special Jury Awards** - given for exceptional achievement, selected from all entries, as determined by the awards jury. This award allows honours to be given for exceptional architecture that might otherwise go unrewarded.

This year's top honour, the **Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia Award in Architecture - Medal**, went to:

TELUS House
Busby Perkins+Will Architects
Lead Design Architect: Peter Busby

TELUS House in Vancouver is the culmination of a two-phase project carried out over seven years. It was originally intended to revitalize the clients existing complex, and reposition its corporate identity at the same time. The client's mandate – "reuse, recycle, go green" – was taken to heart. As a result, TELUS House has raised the bar for sustainable design practices. In addition to being visually striking, its unique and highly effective natural ventilation system represents the first double-wall, triple skinned "green" building solution in the country. The Phase Two atrium also pushed the envelope, utilizing a unique and elegant steel solution that boosted structural integrity while opening the inner space to an abundance of natural light.

Jury comments:

"The use of the existing building and its innovation is unique. Its architecture lies outside our conventional ideas."

“On every level, it is thought out and resolved. It’s very well done.”

“This is excellence. It brings value to the client at so many levels. Nobody else was doing this kind of work. This is difficult to do.”

In addition, five projects received Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia - Merit Awards:

The Fred Kaiser Building at the University of British Columbia
Omicron Architecture Engineering Construction and architectsAlliance
Lead Design Architects: Michael McColl, Peter Clewes and Adrian DiCastrì

This structure, part of the Faculty of Electrical & Computer Engineering on U.B.C.’s Main Mall, manages to be everything a hall of higher learning should be, a smart combination of administrative offices, seminar rooms, research labs and public space. Designed for LEED® Gold rating, it features a full spectrum of sustainable design elements. All this, while addressing the challenges of a highly-constrained building site. With clarity and simplicity, the building also provides a seamless link to the surrounding buildings while bringing a contemporary face to the campus.

Jury comments:

“The character of the glass lends support to the character of Main Mall.”

“What stood out for me is how the materials are used. Big buildings necessitate a logic and clarity of flow. I think it’s refreshing.”

“The scale fits with the modernist legacy. It’s spectacular in its form.”

The Black Hills Estate Winery
Bevanda Architecture
Lead Design Architect: Nick Bevanda

Located in Oliver, Black Hills Estate has grown to become one of the Okanagan’s most reputable wineries. In doing so, it had also outgrown its previous home. This remarkable new facility is far removed from the Quonset hut that had been the winery’s locale since 1996. Like the wine, it maintains a connection to the land and climate, and features a functionality that serves both the business and art of wine-making. Its modernistic design speaks to simplicity and quality... a bold note with a hint of the architectural sophistication now indicative of B.C.’s burgeoning wine industry.

Jury comments:

“This building is contemporary and expressive. There’s a strong link between its purpose and its architecture.”

“The technology and technique of this building are frank. It’s uplifting. It’s rare to see that frankness.”

“It captured my eye. It’s extremely appropriate.”

Obakki
mcfarlane / green / biggar architecture and design
Lead Design Architect Michael Green and Designer Michelle Biggar

This small but impactful Gastown store is the embodiment of simplicity, in keeping with the modern-day fashions to be found within. Signature millwork helps to connect the modern aesthetic with the rugged brick and concrete of the original building. The end result delivers on the flexibility and creativity that the client required. And it does so with a spirit of sustainability. This project is distinct in its absence of gesture, a minimal design philosophy that brings something truly unique to the retail environment.

Jury comments:

“It stands out in its simplicity and use of existing surfaces.”

“There are a lot of transitions in this space; there’s a high level of resolution. It’s very beautiful and poetic. It has all materials, yet it’s cohesive.”

“It’s special – it creates desire.”

Gulf Island House
Measured Architecture
Lead Design Architect: Matthew Woodruff

Like an island, this piece of architecture stands out in its simplicity. As noted in the submission package, it is “a project with a normal program, a normal budget, and a normal site for a normal family”. The end product, however, is exceptional. This is a simple, two-bedroom holiday house on a small 1/3 acre site, positioned to take maximum benefit of sun, site and surroundings. A compact, zoned plan allows maximum heating efficiency while making optimal use of the limited internal space. Strategic window placement and large openings provide both natural light and natural ventilation. The result: energy use that is a mere 25% of a conventional, comparable home.

Jury comments:

“This is an interesting project; it’s not over-the-top. It’s nice to see architectural modesty.”

“There’s research, risk and innovation in this house. There are subtle but beautiful solutions being proposed.”

“This is a really important project – everything created was purposeful.”

Metchosin House
Marko Simcic Architect
Lead Design Architect: Marko Simcic

This private residence, designed for a retired couple and their large extended family, is a product of the land. The home’s oceanfront locale heavily influenced its design features. So, too, did its standing amidst a sensitive Garry Oak grove. Protection of the root and water systems guided decisions about the project’s framework. The project reflects a concerted effort to understand and embrace nature and her processes in a sustainable way. The result is a blurring of physical boundaries, a heightened sense of awareness, and an idiosyncratic design flow with complex spaces that somehow remain cohesive.

Jury comments:

“This is exceptional in its response to the natural setting.”

“There’s a high level of resolution and detail.”

“Some of the images are extraordinary. I see innovation here. I’m seduced.”

One **2008 AIBC Innovation Award** was granted to:

Expanded Demand for Canadian Wood Products
Urban Arts Architecture
Lead Design Architect: Shelley Craig

Urban Arts worked with the Canadian Wood Council and BC Wood WORKS! to market wood products as a preferable, sustainable building choice, expanding market demand for Canadian wood products, particularly in the mid-rise sector of five- to eight-story buildings. The team researched and produced a position paper, and held expert forums in Vancouver and Toronto. Innovative ideas emerged, including hybrid towers using multiple construction materials. Next steps include creation of a mid-rise prototype, and ultimately changes to the National Building Code.

Jury comments:

“This project is stepping outside of the traditional definition of architecture. For this to be submitted is interesting.”

“What I really like about it is that they’re using design research for marketing – they’re systematically developing typologies that would allow wood products to enter new markets – which I think is actually very refreshing.”

The two 2008 AIBC Special Jury Award winners are:

The Chinese Freemasons Building
Joe Y. Wai Architect
Lead Design Architect: Joe Y. Wai

Located at 5 West Pender Street in Vancouver, the Chinese Freemasons Building was originally completed in 1907. Its use of colour, texture, and composition of thick and thin vertical and horizontal lines set it apart in Vancouver's Chinatown of that time. The project began as a restoration in 2004, a significant task unto itself made more challenging by the addition of a residential component on the upper floors. All this, while maintaining its unique features and historical significance. With painstaking research, creativity and attention to detail over a three-year period, the Chinese Freemasons Building was brought back to life. The jury chose this project for its synergy between adaptive re-use and historic rehabilitation.

Jury comments:

"It's a re-use of a building and deserves to be acknowledged and rewarded."

"This building has high visibility and is a landmark. It's a restoration challenge that the architects have followed through on. It demonstrates excellence of practice, if not design."

"This takes a building's history and brings it into contemporary use. There's a lot of under-used fabric in Vancouver and Victoria that could be inspired by this project. This is what we should be doing. This is an important and exceptional project."

King David High School
Acton Ostry Architects
Lead Design Architects: Mark Ostry and Russell Acton

King David High School in Vancouver represents a modern take on an education setting. The block-long private school in Vancouver's Oakridge community speaks of sparseness, strength and simplicity awash in natural light. It is a model of functional space, and a vehicle for both sanctuary and interaction, both inside and out. In granting this award, jury members are recognizing craft in architecture.

Jury comments:

"I like the simplicity and modesty of it."

"It's clean, simple, well resolved and integrated."

"It's a clever use of simple gestures. This is a refined building."

High resolution images of all the 2008 AIBC Architectural Awards Winners are available via the AIBC ftp site.

Ftp address: [ftp.aibc.ca](ftp://ftp.aibc.ca) Username: aibcftp Password: cmns2003

The Architectural Institute of British Columbia is a self-governing body dedicated to excellence in the profession of architecture for the benefit of its membership, the environment and society.

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