



Common spaces don't have to be cathedral height to offer a sense of significance. This area feels open while offering intimacy and efficiency.



Incorporating a mix of exterior materials allows the homeowners to have antique siding while using less expensive alternatives for the balance.

# Timber Framing in a Tough Economy

## Spending Wisely. BY JONATHAN ORPIN

In spite of our size and depth, we're not a kit timber framer. We're committed to a level of craft and design that finds its home in custom building. Over the past 25 years, we've helped our clients — from notable architects with large-scale budgets to young couples just launching their dreams — understand the economics of building for longevity and effectiveness, for great design and fine craft. Along the way, we've learned the best use of a dollar.

### 1. Scale Down:

- The old cliché fits, less is more. A good designer can shave unnecessary square footage without sacrifice. In a world where square footage is directly proportional to cost, this can be a huge savings.
- Consider lower ceilings and more intimate volumes. A skilled designer can create an open feeling without cathedral heights. Not only will this increase your heating/cooling efficiency, your material costs will be reduced.
- Generic plans rarely save money over the long haul. Except for the most modest and straightforward floor plans, you'll spend more money adapting that premade plan to fit your site, lifestyle, and budget than if you started from white paper with a quality design professional.
- Consider a hybrid timber frame, utilizing the extraordinary craft of timbers in the public core while maintaining high levels of finish and insulation in private zones.

**2. Time is Money:** A well crafted timber frame can be raised and enclosed (walls, roof, windows) in weeks... not months. In most cases, these components are created in the shop, then assembled on site. In our case, the same craftsmen that cut your frame will go to the site (no matter where) and raise it, offering additional speed, competence, and safety.

**3. Choose a timber framer with experience in design, engineering, general contracting, and enclosure systems:** One-stop shopping will not only save significant time and money, it will allow you to get to the final result quicker and with more consistency.

**4. Invest in efficient & effective mechanicals, appliances, and other materials:** You will pay more upfront, but you'll save money down the road and your home may garner a higher resale value if you should ever sell.

Whether your goal is to stretch your budget or invest in higher quality materials and craft, these are areas where you can save and end up with a personal, efficient, and high quality home.

Our timber frames are expressions of our integrated teams and the extraordinary people who inhabit them. We'd be happy to help you develop a budget for your home.



Jonathan Orpin is an international presenter on the craft and sustainability of heavy timber construction, a charter member of the Timber Frame Business Council, serving on its board as well as that of the Timber Framers Guild, and the founder of two companies: New Energy Works, a 25 year old timber frame firm specializing in greater sustainability in craft-intensive homes, and Pioneer Millworks, a leading wood products company. He can be found most days at the company's West Coast show home & studio — a LEED H Platinum candidate in Portland, OR called The Vermont Street Project. [newenergyworks.com](http://newenergyworks.com)