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CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE IN WOOD ARCHITECTURE 2017-18 WOOD DESIGN AWARD WINNERS

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### Special Industry Residential

When a housing project pairs energy efficiency with social responsibility, the results can be heavenly

## Right at Home Housing and Westmount Presbyterian Church

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Located in a mature residential neighborhood in Alberta's capital, the building housing the Westmount Presbyterian Church presented a problem to its congregation. After more than a half-century of service, the aging structure required significant upgrades – more than the current congregation could afford – and so it looked for partnership opportunities that would benefit both the church and the sur-

rounding community. Enter the Right at Home Housing Society, which came in to replace the church building and residence with a much smaller church and daycare center next to 16 three- and five-bedroom townhouse units for low-income families.

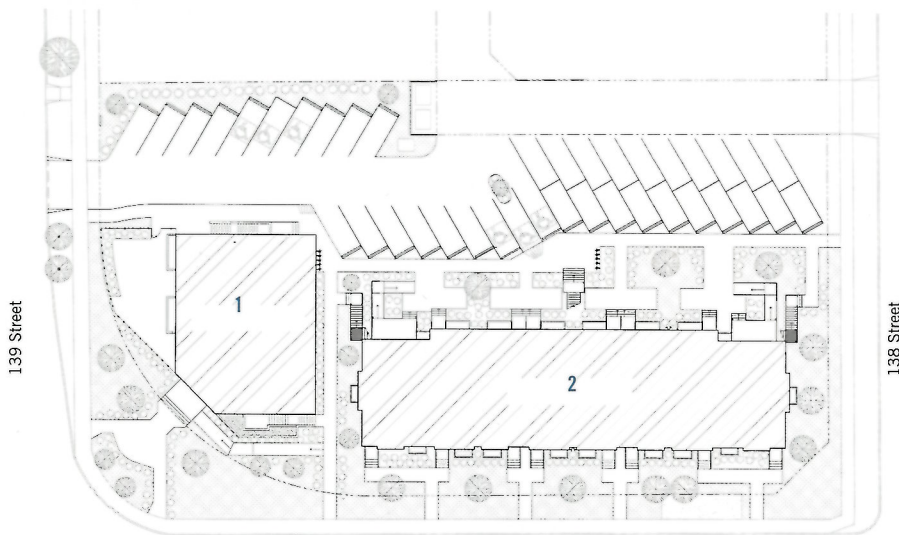
As a nod to the church's history, the project re-used the existing 50-year-old glulam arches and wood deck from the church interior for the new church's

interior, front doors and various wood details. But just as important as looking to the past was designing for the future; specifically, a net-zero energy model was chosen to ensure sustainability and assure future affordability for low-income residents. Wood was the obvious choice to support this goal, with a 12-in. thick heavily insulated exterior wood wall with minimal thermal bridging helping to achieve the net-zero model.



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1. church and daycare center

2. 16 unit townhouse complex

⊕ SITE PLAN

The project also has heavy timber construction to support the exterior concrete slab balconies and exterior stair structures. This was chosen for a beautiful natural design look and for structural support, as well as achieving the required fire ratings. The project has a geothermal system installed with heat pumps and a heat recovery system, a photovoltaic solar panel system was installed on both the church/daycare and townhouse complex, and there are no gas appliances or gas heating systems installed in either of the buildings.

With the extreme heat and cold temperatures that are typical of Edmonton's climate, wood construction with double the industry standard of insulation of most buildings was chosen to future ensure net-zero energy efficiency, supporting lower energy costs for a low-income housing model. Even the smallest details, like large windows and window wells for the church basement to allow natural light into the daycare space, were carefully designed for energy efficiency.

Perhaps just as important (or even more so) as the project's impact on the environment is its impact on the surrounding neighborhood. Having seen many changes over the years resulting in a population of many age ranges and family types, the area's existing school was in danger of closing due to decreased enrolment. With projects like this bringing in more young families, the community was excited for the chance to increase neighborhood density and ensure the viability of its school and community center.



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