



BC DESIGNED STRUCTURE TO RISE IN LONDON'S TRAFALGAR SQUARE

Digitally-cut timber wall links to "Vancouverism: Westcoast Architecture + City-Building" Exhibition at Canada House, London

For Release:

LONDON - A stunning demonstration of Canadian technical, design and entrepreneurial innovation is about to rise over London's Trafalgar Square. Tied to a summer-long exhibition of British Columbian achievements in architecture, engineering and urban development opening inside the building the same day, the corner of Canada House facing Trafalgar Square and the National Gallery of Great Britain will be temporarily wrapped with an undulating 200 foot long, 27-foot-high wooden wall.

Named the "**Trafalgar Square Demonstration Construction**" the stunning display was conceived by some of Vancouver's most creative architects, engineers, urbanist/critics and builders, including the legendary Vancouver based architect Bing Thom, and will be constructed by renowned British Columbia design and engineering company StructureCraft, also responsible for the one-of-a-kind wood roof structure for the Richmond Speed Skating Oval.

"This is not yet a commercial product, but rather an all-new invention meant to demonstrate the new possibilities of wood, and the wave of creativity spreading out from Vancouver right now," says Hong Kong-born Bing Thom, lauded for his Canadian Pavilion at Expo 92 in Seville, and the Chan Centre for the Performing Arts at the University of British Columbia.

The heart of the wall is simplicity itself: blocks of BC Western Red Cedar, shaped to fit snugly one next to the other at a range of angles. When construction on site begins on June 5, the cables will be pre-tensioned to make them more rigid, then carefully stacked in rows, one on top of the other and pinned together vertically to ensure stability.

Fellow Vancouverite Gerry Epp, the structural engineer for the temporary wall, created the cut wood blocks at his high tech wood fabrication company StructureCraft Builders.

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"We were inspired by the interwoven twigs of birds' nests—a form that supports and steadies itself," he says. "We had a very narrow construction zone between the Grade 2 Listed, Robert Smirke-designed Canada House's walls (which we could not touch), and its perimeter wrought-iron fence. This form was chosen to rise high, while maintaining stability in all directions."

Linking with the exhibition in Canada House's galleries and foyers, "London Vancouverism" creative director and exhibition co-curator (with London architect and critic Dennis Sharp), Trevor Boddy remarks: *"along with being a spectacularly beautiful material to work with when used correctly, wood does not require the hydrocarbon energy inputs crucial to manufacturing metals, concrete, glass or brick, and because there now exist new sustainable timber harvesting and replanting techniques, British Columbians know that wood has emerged as the greenest of all materials for new buildings."*

He adds, *"imagine, a building material that shapes perfectly with computerized milling equipment, but which also sequesters greenhouse gasses as it is made. You might call setting organic ribbons of this re-conceived material from Canadian forests in front of this magnificent 19th century structure by the British Museum's architect as 'The Empire Strikes Back.'"*

For further information about the London Festival of Architecture visit: www.lfa2008.org.

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Media construction site tours are available from 10 June, upon prior booking, as well as interviews with the designers and Vancouverism creative director.

For more information and construction progress images, please contact:

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"Vancouverism: Westcoast Architecture + City-Building" is produced by Trevor Boddy, presented by the Morris and Helen Belkin Gallery of the University of British Columbia, and hosted by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade through the Canadian High Commission, London, with Canada House Trafalgar, and under the aegis of the 2008 London Festival of Architecture.