

An excerpt from

Timberframe

by Tedd Benson

Light, God's eldest daughter, is a principal beauty in a building.
—Thomas Fuller, English cleric

Sun Lodge

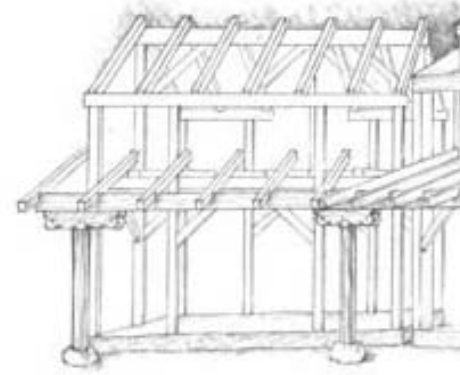
In the mountains of southern Colorado, there is little precedent for residential architecture. For the Native Americans, the elevation was too high for settlement. And when the miners came for gold and silver, all their energy was directed into the earth; little is left of what they built above ground. Those who design and build in this region must therefore be aware that the building archetypes for the future are being created today. With the ever-present sun, the magnificent views, and the rugged



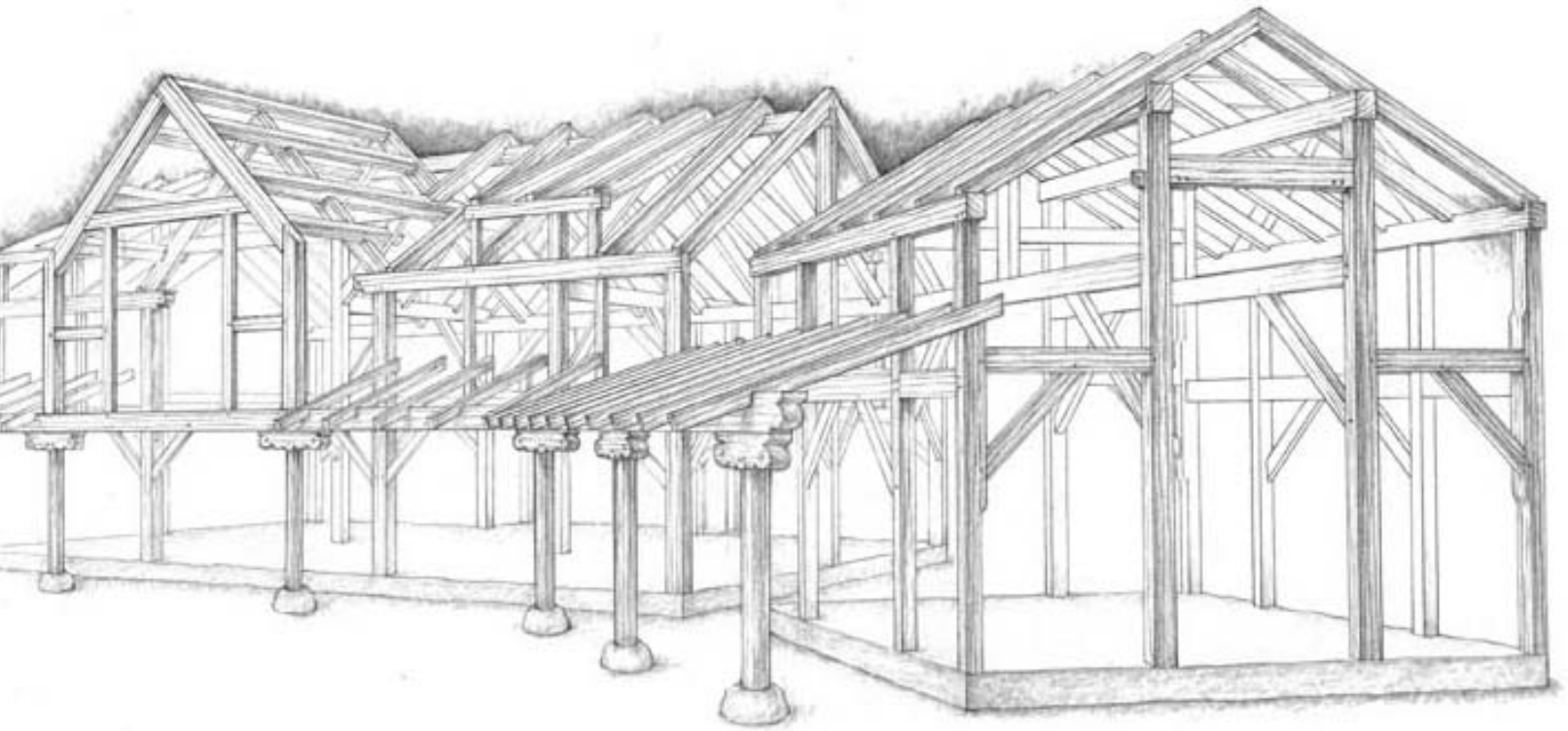
terrain as inspiration, and a timberframe at its core, this home's design is a bold and appropriate stride in the right direction.

Cutting into a hillside site created a protected area for the building, which is oriented to capture the panoramic views to the south. The north-side entry faces onto an interior courtyard.





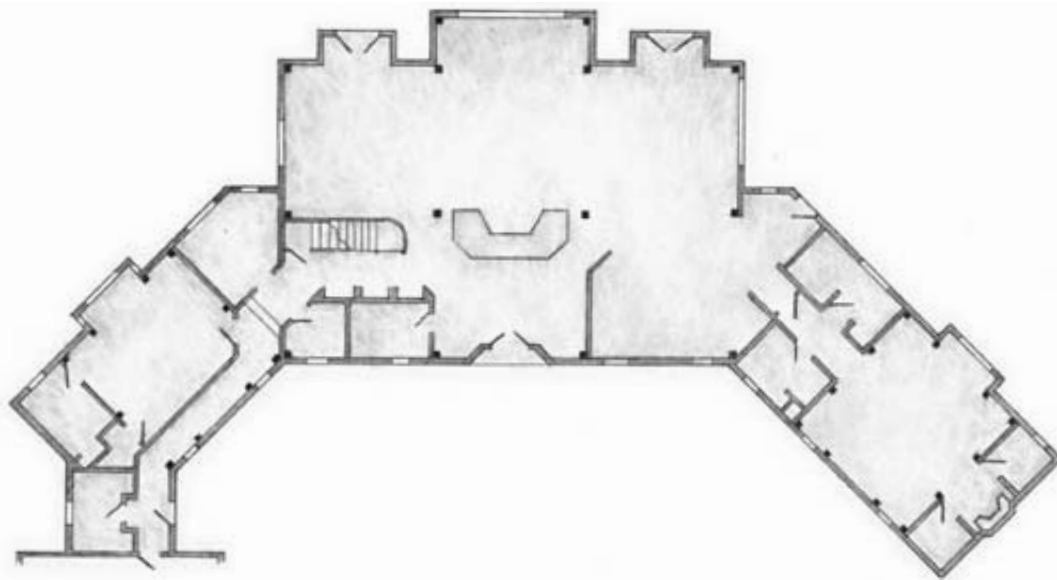
More than just a vaulted space, the great room is a stunning hall of light. High windows and lofty spaces allow the light to penetrate deep into the home. Roof extensions and conventionally framed bays not only make cozy alcoves, but their projected sides also bring morning and evening sunlight into the great room space.



size
4,950sq. ft.
completed
1992

location
Southwest Colorado

Three independent frames, with conventionally framed connections and bay extensions, make up the building's primary structure. Salvaged fir timbers were used in the central frame, while the outer wings are made with new fir. The porch timbers were sandblasted to make them look older. The round columns, which once were pillars in the Boston College ice arena, are longleaf southern pine. Porch plates, rafters, and column capitals are salvaged fir.





An oak spline, connecting to a beam on the opposite side, is extended to add strength to the joint. Its carved end is both decorative and structural.

left A well-built stone chimney brings with it the rugged textures and mottled coloration that are the real stuff of the earth; as with natural timber, imitation always fails.



The Southwest design influence is evident in the extended log joists, the arched cavities between them, the rounded corners, the geometric pattern on the balusters, and the rustic post and capital detail on the porch. Timberframing is an elemental and adaptable building system. It doesn't dictate design style.



Soft-textured timbers and the planked ceiling create an elaborate wooden canopy over the white plaster walls and the light-filled space of the master bedroom. It's hard to imagine the proportions of the room working without the timbers, which add texture and lower the volume to a comfortable level.



Timbers anchor and frame an extended bay, which is this bedroom's natural light and ventilation source. It's also an inviting window seat for reading, soaking in a little sunlight, or just enjoying the view.



left A second-floor bedroom fits snugly under the sloping roof. There is both a sense of enclosure and spaciousness as the room rises from the low eaves to the ridge beam. A gable dormer lifts the exterior wall high enough for full-height windows and creates added headroom.

(PHOTO BY TEDD BENSON)

right Twig shutters and a bentwood sink base are fine examples of the owners' inspired decorating abilities. While an interior decorator can help, interior design is one area where homeowners can really make a difference. It's what makes the home personal.

