

The *Art* of Hybrid Timber Framing

*Ideas Techniques and Tips to Create
Unique Personalized Beauty*

YOUR COMPLIMENTARY CHAPTER



B E R T S A R K K I N E N

The Art of Hybrid Timber Framing is a **must read for owners, architects, and builders** who want to influence the look and feel of their timber project. It is rich with imagery and dives deep into the philosophies and practices that have shaped the success of Arrow Timber Framing, a hybrid timber framing company.

Naturally, timbers and exposed beams have outsized impact on the aesthetics of building projects. Adding timbers without weighing the structural and aesthetic impacts can be worse than doing nothing and will magnify any awkward imbalances.

This guide will help you plan and build it right the first time! Important topics to consider include:

- **How to achieve optimized beauty by first defining ugly**
- **Where to draw the line with hybrid timber framing**
- **Seven chapters portraying diverse and unique timber styles**
- **How to avoid the over simplified “Hail Mary” approach**
- **How to accurately predict in the cost of hybrid timber framing**

Arrow Timber Framing Owner, Bert Sarkkinen, is the son of a carpenter who developed a passion and knack for building at a young age. He has experienced multiple challenges in this craft through “trials by fire” to become the visionary and chief designer he is today at Arrow Timber Framing. He is especially proud of his design, production and manufacturing team who he credits to the ongoing growth and company success.

This book provides the crucial knowledge needed for every phase of the project from planning to completion. This guide will help you protect your financial investment and optimize the look of post and beam construction.

“This is the most comprehensive planning guide to help you protect your investment and gain long-term project satisfaction to be enjoyed by future generations. We wish you much success as you create unique, artistic and beauty for your next timber project.”



Bert

A **ARROW**
TIMBER FRAMING

Bert Sarkkinen - Arrow Timber Framing

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The Oversimplified “Hail Mary” Approach

18

You’ve seen it before. Time is running out. The quarterback is trapped in the pocket. Hulking linebackers are closing in. The football is then thrown up in a long, desperate pass known as a “Hail Mary,” because options are so limited. You have probably seen the figurative equivalent unfold in your life or felt like a trapped quarterback at some point in your life?

In the context of hybrid timber framing or post and beam construction, the ticking clock and charging linebackers can be viewed as: **Lack of awareness, faulty information, lack of energy, lack of money, deadlines, and inertia or prior decisions.** Clients and partners are the “quarterback” who wants to capture a unique touch—a certain look and feel, which requires the expressive use of exposed-beam construction.

Rushed thinking and decisions can happen in many ways (see Fig. 17.1). Typically, it starts way early on with the **lack of awareness** or clarity. Or stated differently, the inability to “see around corners” due to lack of specialty expertise and focused attention. As specialty artisans, we see this occurring in about 30% of the *brainstorms* or initial consultations we do with potential ideal clients. And we understand how architects and builders view the details regarding the timber elements as small potatoes. From their perspective, they simply have bigger fish to fry.

The architect must deal with site conditions, views, weather patterns, energy efficiencies, construction methods, living patterns, style, massing, multiple changes/revisions, and designing within a budget, to name a few of the bigger fish. Typically, architects will have some sort of placeholder timbers drawn in the plans, but by this point, the **energy** to dig into the details of hybrid timber framing is understandably low—for both the client and designer.

This plan is sent to the engineer, who then gets involved with the details of making the timbers work . . . but only with goal of efficient engineering, as they should. (see Fig. 17.2-3) But the aesthetics can suffer, and oftentimes, the proposed method of construction will have unnecessary costs as well as design flaws, which could cause troubles down the road. This is an example of less-than-optimized or **faulty information.**

The contractor must grapple with timing, actual cost predictions, final construction methods, building materials, and optimizing the “want list,” in addition to determining whether or not a client is a good fit. Many times a contractor will be hesitant to initiate a consultation with their clients and a specialty service provider like us, for fear of muddying the waters, wasting time, and talking about something they feel their clients don’t have **money**



Fig. 18.1: Protecting your investment by optimizing your design with creative ideas and 3D modeling is easy.

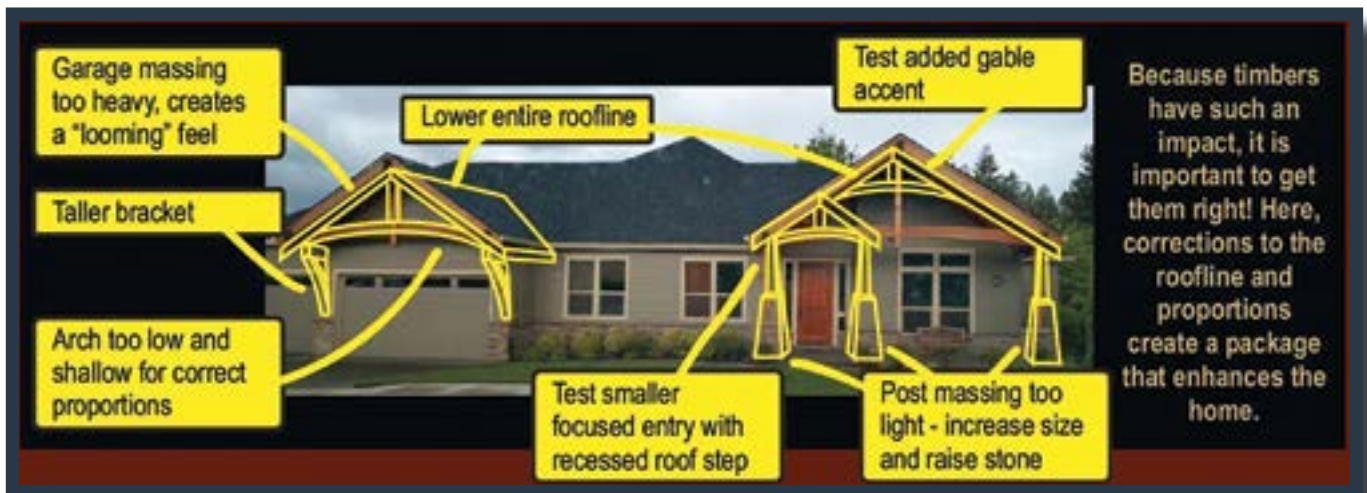


Fig. 18.2: Because timbers have such an impact, it is important to get them right! Here, corrections to the roofline and proportions create a package that enhances the home.

for. And understandably, their biggest concern is putting together a real budget that works for their clients.

What many designers and contractors don't realize is the outsized impact the timbers will have on the overall look and feel of the project. If timbers are hurriedly crammed into an ill-fitting space, the negative impact of oversimplified, “Hail Mary,” timber frame applications can be worse than no timbers at all.

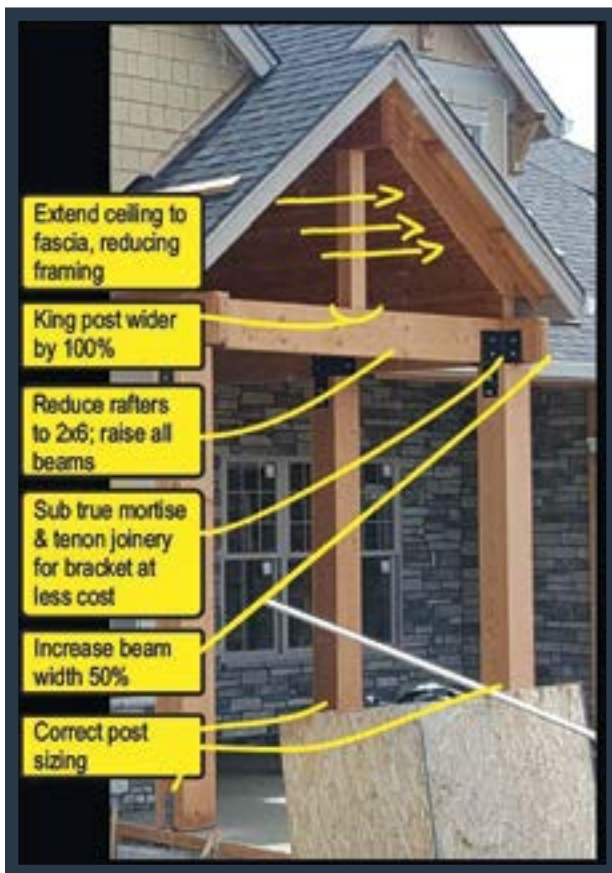


Fig. 18.3: Some designs need an expert eye to get that “just right” feel. ATF analyzes each element for proportion and function. Sometimes small corrections can save costs!

Once the building process has started, quite a bit of **inertia** from prior decisions has accumulated. And as the contractors and subcontractors dig into the details of what it will take to get the timbers done within the **deadline**, they will often reach out to us. Now everybody can “see clearly around the corner.” For many people, the extra effort and money required to remedy this situation is just too much, so they settle for an inferior solution.

But for builders and clients willing to invest extra time and resources, options are still available. It just takes committing to extra work, communicating, and dealing with hiccups.

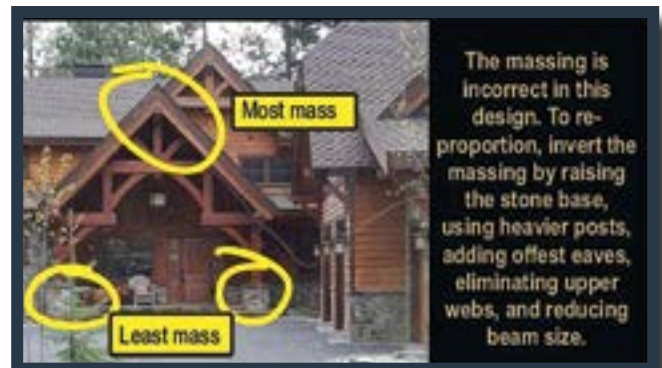
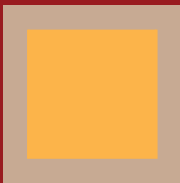


Fig. 18.4: The post size required to support most loads is incredibly small. Canopies like this must have visual mass at the posts to “ground” a good solid vibe. In fact, 90% of the timbers we design are sized by eye for looks and not by loading.

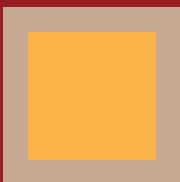
Happiness Is . . .

I believe our self-worth and well-being is linked to our accomplishments . . . for better or for worse. I tend to get irritable when I am unproductive. Some procrastination is fine, but when production idles for too long, it puts my teeth on edge! Getting started is rewarding— not only is something accomplished, but you own the positive memory and reinforcement of self-worth. But remember to plan vacations and downtime. You don't want to keep raising the bar to levels that produce an imbalance in your life. Getting started is a skill you can develop, which initiates a virtuous cycle and makes you feel good.

. . . Overcoming Procrastination.



LATER



TOMORROW



NOW

Traction Box



Have we given you any ideas or added incentive to avoid the oversimplified “Hail Mary” approach?



YES



NO

Of course, some budgets will only allow so much in resources be put toward exposed beams. But, have we given you enough insight to help your clients avoid “ugly”? Perhaps adding some good-looking accent pieces? Or, you encourage them to upsize their posts? Are you more likely to call someone like us (ATF) for a hybrid timber package? Or, at least put some substantial thought into ways you and your clients might avoid “ugly”?

It is worth it because, done correctly, hybrid timber framing can raise the perceived value of everything involved in a project, from trim to appliances. As of one client stated, **“Bert, say what you want, but the timbers make our house.”** The trick is about staying aware and making sure the timber framing gets enough attention to hit the *sweet spot* clients are looking for. As the builder, you instinctively know when your clients get there. Nobody has to tell you.

You will see examples of how others have committed to the extra communication and work, and overcome inertia, which had them “painted into a corner” in the next chapter.

