



## Award of Merit

### Tsingtao Pearl Visitor Centre



#### Consultant

Fast + Epp

#### Owner

China Vanke Co. Ltd.

#### Clients

StructureCraft Builders Inc.  
Bohlin Cywinski Jackson Architects

#### Category

Buildings

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Nestled in a mountain meadow surrounded by rocky outcroppings and narrow bands of farmed terraces in coastal China, the 28,000 sq. ft. Tsingtao Pearl Visitor Centre highlights the beauty of the site, serving as a welcome portal to this growing community development while using ordinary Canadian wood in a far-from-ordinary way.

Over the past twenty years China has shown increasing interest in utilizing the skills of Western architects. As the country imports ideas and technology, its insistence that construction be carried out by Chinese companies has often resulted in obstacles to progress – felt by Western architects left powerless to ensure their designs are successfully communicated and implemented.

This project was an experiment in how Western designers can overcome these challenges to see their innovative designs executed in detail – with a sophisticated design and a building material unfamiliar to locals.

The key was finding a delivery method that could achieve this. Fast + Epp joined forces with related timber builder StructureCraft, with cooperation from the Chinese client and regulators, to devise a method to parcel construction so that complex components and connections could be designed and fabricated in Canada, while mass wood elements could be assembled by the foreign work force. This was developed using techniques which are cutting edge world-wide, yet at the same time simple enough to ensure success.

Inspired by ideas of creating a warped solid wood plate, the team developed 39 novel solid-laminated wood roof panels to be fabricated on site using ordinary lumber. Concurrently, 93 glue-laminated wood columns of varying length were individually milled and fitted with custom universal connectors, and shipped to China. Extensive prefabrication and planning secured success, as well as compliance with the project's schedule, which saw the building wholly designed and constructed in eight months.