

Wood WORKS! BC



2011 WOOD DESIGN AWARDS - WINNER

Architect

Bing Thom, Bing Thom Architects

Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater,
Washington, DC



High resolution images
available. Please e-mail
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Nic Lehous*

The urban landscape in Washington, DC features many concrete and granite buildings. The architect felt this new structure would showcase wood and would stand out from the crowd. The design involved preserving and renovating two historic theaters while adding a new third theater. All three theaters were covered with a 475-foot long cantilevered roof thereby creating 200,000 square feet of enclosed space. A transparent wall so the old theaters were still visible is made possible with a heavy timber supported roof and glazing system.

According to the architect, the decision to use wood was an easy one. The project had a very tight budget and the structure had to be beautiful, and wood made perfect sense. In the end, wood ended up doing triple duty – it was used to hold up the roof and the glass; and it provided the final finish for the space. When Arena Stage reopened in 2010, it was the first modern structure to use heavy timber components in the United States capital. It is also the first project in the US to use an efficient hybrid wood and glass enclosure to envelop two existing structures.