



CYPRESS

Offers Durability in the Berkshire Mountains

The Kripalu Center for Yoga & Health, located in Stockbridge, Mass., has been teaching skills for optimal living through mind, body and spirit for nearly 40 years. To better accommodate its guests, the Center's ownership commissioned architect Peter Rose, principal, Peter Rose + Partners, a firm with a long history of environmentally innovative architecture, to develop a master plan for the Center's enlargement.

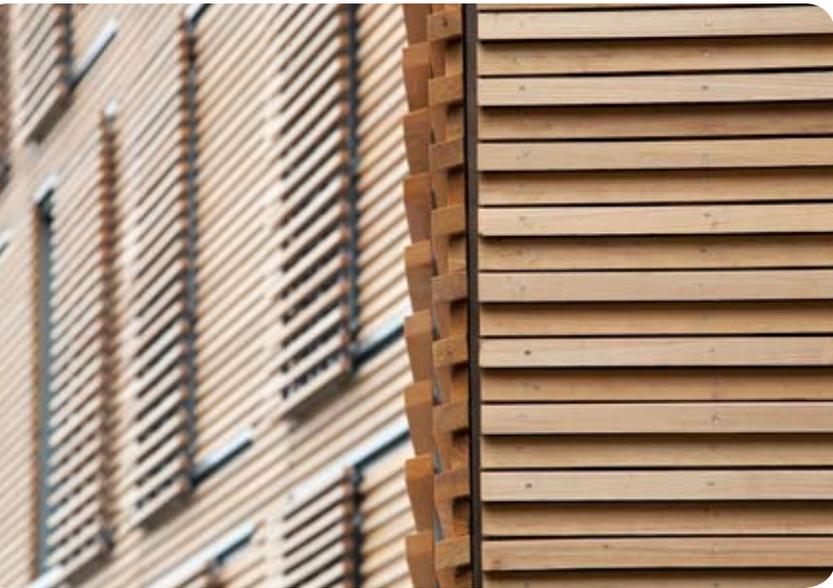
The first phase, completed in 2010, was the development of a new housing tower that would be seen as a model for environmental stewardship and function as an educational center for its visitors. Peter Rose + Partners designed a striking cypress-clad, six-story dormitory with angled wings that offers expansive views of the Center's majestic lake, trees, and rolling hills.

Senior designer Matthew Snyder said cypress, a wood native primarily to the southeastern U.S., was specified for the 34,000 square-foot tower for several reasons, including its superior weather resistance and sustainability. "We needed a material that could take the rain, sleet, sun, and extreme temperature ranges day in and day out with minimal maintenance and associated costs," he explained. "Cypress fulfilled all those requirements."

In addition to providing weather protection in New England's volatile four-season climate, cypress also offered resistance to decay, insects, and other damaging elements thanks to *cypressene*, a naturally occurring preservative in the wood.



The six-story dormitory offers views of the site's majestic lake, trees, and rolling hills through cypress screens.



“As the building ages, the honey-colored cypress will weather to a natural gray and give the cherished landscape center stage.” – Matthew Snyder



Photos © Matthew Snyder

The architects were equally pleased when they discovered a source of cypress that was salvageable from trees downed by Hurricane Katrina. “The ability to take some of that destruction and put it to productive use in a yoga center seemed inspired,” Snyder added.

The cypress cladding not only provided a durable rain screen to deflect water and absorb the sun’s U.V. rays; it eventually will help the building naturally merge into the scenic Berkshire Mountain surroundings. “We applied a clear sealer to the wood,” Snyder explained. “As the building ages, the honey-colored cypress will weather to a natural gray and [blend in with the local environment to] give the cherished landscape center stage.”

In addition, the tower’s 80 guestrooms were individually equipped with a sliding cypress sun screen. Snyder said the screens were designed with good looks and simple climate control in mind. “Guests can move the screens to control air circulation and room temperature,” he noted.

“Kripalu’s housing needs are modest and straightforward, but the architecture of the housing tower, like yoga itself, is full of subtlety and layers of complexity that gently improve the structure’s performance,” Rose said. “Light, air, using minimal means to create a calm healing environment—it’s all about fulfilling these almost intangible requirements.”

Rose’s simple yet sophisticated design helped the building come in under budget, ahead of schedule and to consume 40 percent less energy than a conventional building of its size. Just as importantly, by utilizing the inherent beauty and environmental performance of cypress, he and his design team were able to fulfill the ultimate goal of building a retreat for holistic healing and meditation that blends naturally into its surroundings.

For more information on the many uses of cypress, please visit the Southern Cypress Manufacturers Association at www.cypressinfo.org or scan the QR code below.

