

# J-M BUILDING CONTRACTORS



Continuing To Provide Professional Designs  
and Builds To Their Customer's Satisfaction

**L**ocated in Alma, Ontario, J-M Building Contractors has continued to offer quality workmanship, whatever the project, since 2015. Headed by John Horst, the company provides a wide range of customized construction products, all completed to the highest of standards and to the customers approval. John says that at the very beginning when he launched the company, the concentration was on smaller projects, but now the focus is more on undertakings like timber framing and house building, markets that they have started to penetrate more frequently and quite successfully over the past few years.

For the novice like this writer, I asked John, what exactly is timber framing?

“Using beams to frame and having exposed ones on under covered areas and also using timbers to build a roof over the front porch or entrance, a patio or a pergola, are just some examples of timber framing”, he says. John says too that the photos that have been included with this article, are just a few examples of original designs of houses that his company has built and in most cases are the result of the customer's own drawings, as they normally have a good idea of what they want the final product to look like. But of course, he adds that on certain occasions, the client may ask for a second opinion, which he will gladly share.

So, how did John become part of the building trade?

“For nine years I worked as a Construction Framing Carpenter and eventually I decided that I wanted to venture out on my own, which I did. At first, we took on any work that was available, including working as a ‘framing crew’ on several job sites and with this experience I was able to start out on my own and then work at building up a customer base.”

Currently, J-M Building Contractors, despite their location in Alma, ON, has completed projects all the way from Tobermory to Grand Bend, thanks in part to a pre-installation system that John has created, which actually begins at his head office. “With the timber frames, we have the beams shipped to our shop first and then we cut them to size and make what we call, ‘Timber Frame Kits’. The beams then get stained and are shipped to the job site and assembled, so if someone from say Tobermory calls and places an order, half of the project has actually been pre-made at our shop in Alma. This makes it much easier for us to do work outside of our own area.

John says that J-M Building Contractors currently employs five employees and mostly they are working with two different crews and two work sites. One work crew may work out of the shop in Alma and possibly build timbers,

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while the other one could be working at a job site assembling the project. If they happen to be framing a building, then all five workers will be on-site. He adds too, an important fact is that all of J-M Building's employees are part of the local community.

Tobermory to Grand Bend is a long stretch of mileage and has allowed the opportunity for many customized projects to be designed by J-M Building Contractors, but is there one project that even to this day John would consider to be one of the most unique?

"Actually, this past summer we started a job that once it is completed, I believe it will be one of our best builds ever! It's a large house that is still in the making, the timbers are on but the bricks aren't done yet and of course there is no landscaping so really, it doesn't advertise very well right now, but I am sure it will when it is completed. The design includes a large, open timber frame roof area, rather than an enclosed conventional roof and ceiling and when finished, this project will also include a patio that should have a 'country feel' to it."

Is there a major difference in how he 'builds' now compared to when he first started in the business?

"Yes, the first timber framing project was completed one piece at a time on-site, where now we are doing all of the cutting in our shop. I think we have more modern tools now which also makes it easier to complete the job more efficiently and by finishing much of the work in the shop first, helps to speed up the entire building process."



Why did you select this industry as a profession?


"I was always intrigued by timber framing and it fascinated me how the 'joinery' and the actual 'build' took place. I thought it was an opportunity to work at something unique and that other trades were not taking advantage of. It's not like every carpenter in town was going to be working on timber framing, so we have perhaps developed a niche and there is also the satisfaction of completing and providing a unique design, which I find to be very rewarding."

John says that his schooling was all hands-on experience and admits to being self-taught and adds that when he moved into timber framing designs, he 'felt his way into it', including working with an engineer who specialized in 'joinery'.

So, what does the future hold for J-M Building Contractors?


"We will continue to give a 'country feel' to any frame that we build, while giving a rustic appearance to the roof. We also want to offer products where the framing and the roof continues to compliment each other."

John states that they have added a showroom now that displays examples of structures that his company has built in the past and says that they have been very fortunate to get numerous referrals from prior customers, which remains one of the best forms of advertisement for J-M Building Contractors.

For more information on J-M Building Contractors go to [www.jmbuilding.ca](http://www.jmbuilding.ca) 


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