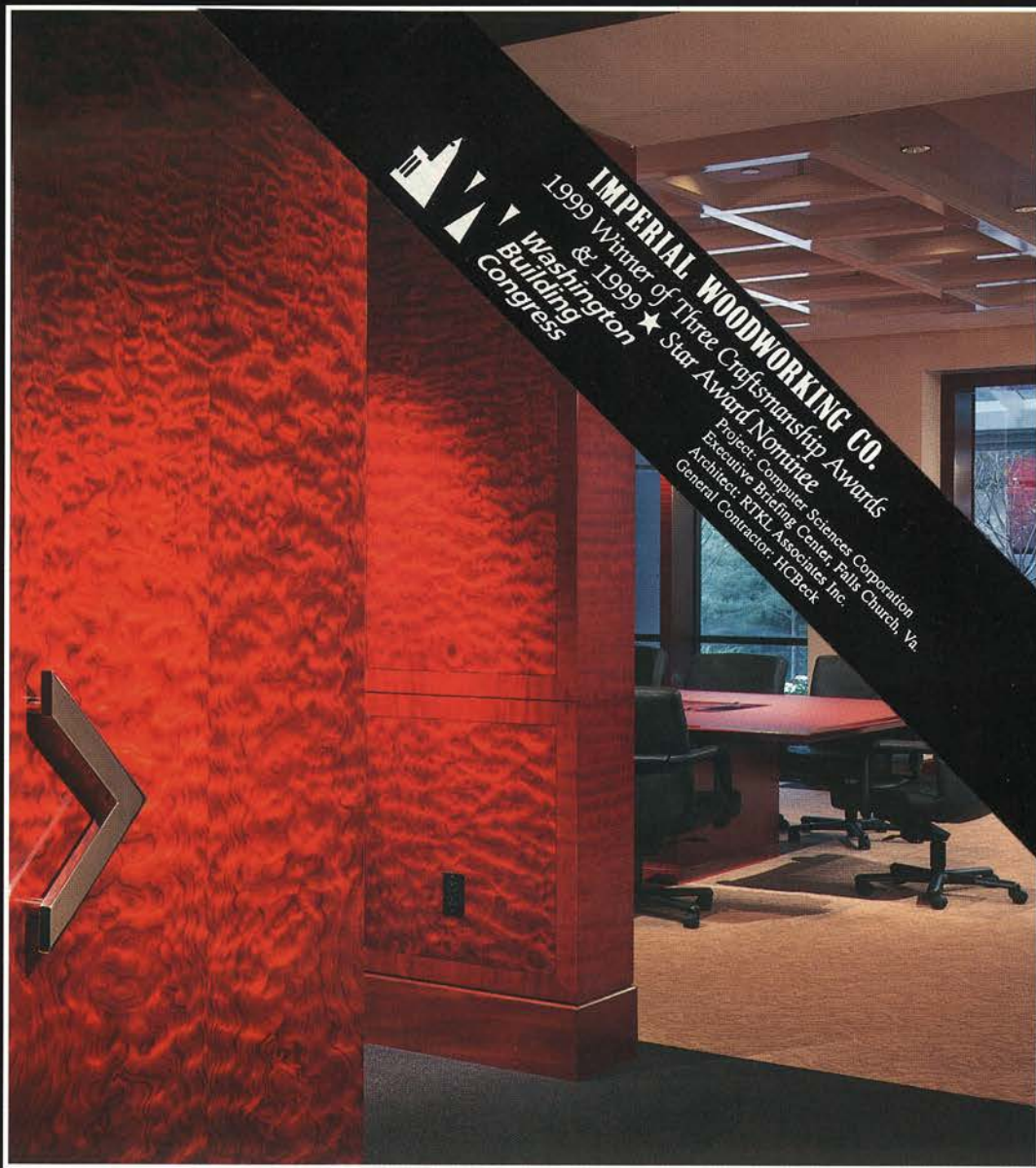


# DESIGN SOLUTIONS

JOURNAL OF THE ARCHITECTURAL WOODWORK INSTITUTE

SUMMER 1998 / \$6<sup>25</sup>

**FINISHING • UV COATINGS • HAMMERTONE • COURTHOUSE • HEADQUARTERS**



**Architectural Woodwork Institute**  
1952 Isaac Newton Square West  
Reston, VA 20190



# INTEGRATE CHANGES IN FINISH, MAINTAIN CONTINUITY OF AESTHETIC

Photos by Maxwell McKenzie©

Computer Sciences Corporation uses its Falls Church, Virginia facility as a premier meeting and presentation center. Company officials and clients from around the world congregate at this facility for meetings and sales presentations. The quiet nature of the surroundings and the beauty of the interior environment make for a unique experience.

To create a state of the art executive briefing center that would be used as the corporation's worldwide marketing center serving to unify this multina-

tional corporation's sales message of diversified services, architectural firm RTKL Associates, Inc. designed a 44,000 square foot briefing center on two floors. It was the final phase of a three building corporate campus that was designed by the architect over the last ten years.

The objectives for the project focused on the concept of creating a single "face" for the corporation that was unified yet flexible. Based on the design objectives outlined by CSC senior management, RTKL developed a

hierarchy of spaces that addressed the diverse corporate culture. Level one of the briefing center includes the more complex spaces in terms of function and finish, addressing the private sector needs of the corporation. The lower level space (below grade) utilizes the same design vocabulary but with less sophisticated materials and finishes. This level also doubles as an educational and training center in addition to briefing center functions.

In an effort to support CSC's desire for a timeless design solution, RTKL



One of the three briefing rooms featuring kawazinga/bubing a framed paneling incorporating audio/visual, multimedia and teleconferencing technology.



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Photo 1:  
Henry Crown Corp. Headquarters, Chicago, Illinois, client  
Larson Associates, Inc., architect  
Nick Merrick, Hedrich-Blessing, photographer



Photo 2:  
Chicago residence, client  
Larson Associates, architect  
and designer  
Marvin Herman &  
Associates, associate  
architect  
Jon Miller, Hedrich-Blessing,  
photographer



Photo 3:  
Computer Sciences Corp.,  
client  
RTKL Associates, Inc.,  
architect  
Maxwell McKenzie,  
photographer

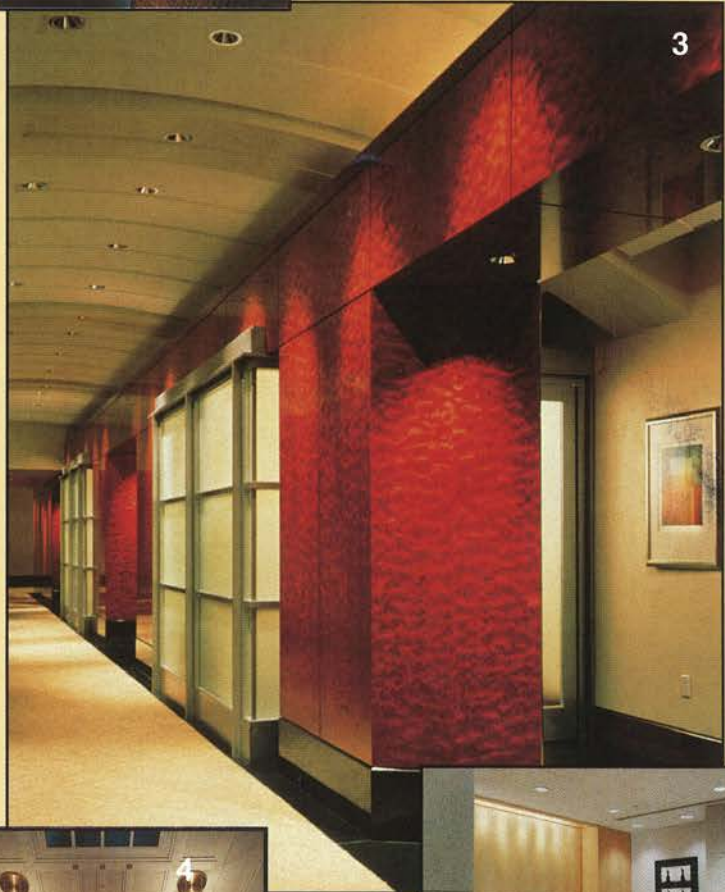


Photo 5:  
JMB Realty Corp. Headquarters, Chicago, Illinois, client  
Griswold, Heckel & Kelley architect  
Jamie Padgett - Karant & Associates, photographer

Photo 4: USG-Building/Lobby client  
Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, architect



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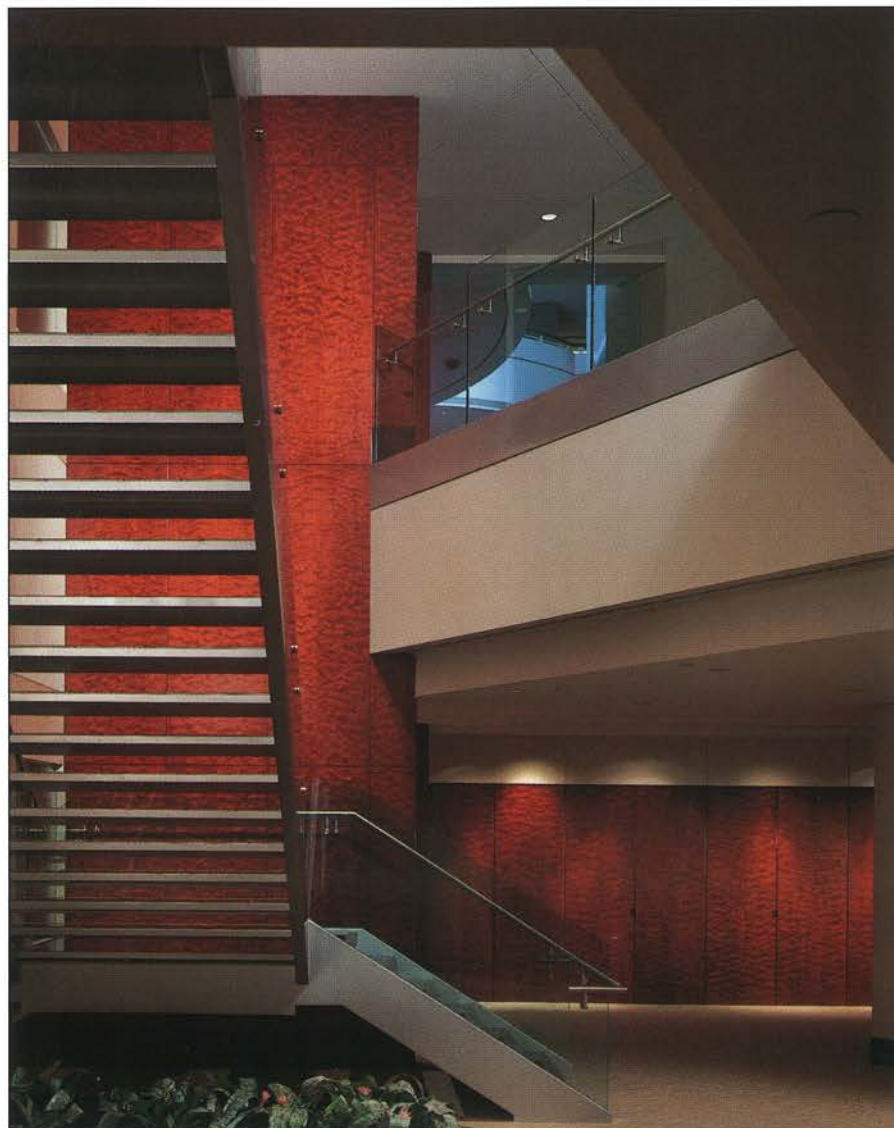


**Each briefing room has its own ante room paneled in kawazinga/bubinga veneer, kawazinga cabinetry and lacquered doors and portals at each end closing off the chamber.**

elected to take a modernist approach to the spatial organization and design. The design of the project centers around the galleries located on both levels of the project. The galleries are the avenues of the facility. All primary spaces are located off of these gracious and dynamic spaces. The galleries are connected vertically by an open glass and stainless steel monumental stair that connects the main reception area to the lower level prefunction area. The reception area is primarily lacquered hammertone finished panels, upholstered walls and stainless steel resulting in a very clean and straightforward space.

The galleries include a very high asymmetrically vaulted ceiling lit indirectly by incandescent and halogen concealed light sources. The major feature of these spaces is the wood veneer wall that is "freestanding" within the gallery spaces. This wall is punctuated by private phone/executive workrooms constructed of imron painted steel with opaque glass. The lower level gallery is identical in design and utilizes a lacquered hammertone finished panel in lieu of veneer detailed similarly to the upper level gallery.

CSC desired a design that was timeless yet not trendy, and the design had to be dynamic as well. The selection of special materials used in strategic locations was an early concept. Once these materials and locations were determined, high quality background materials were required. The design team looked at various materials and concluded that very special veneers would be the best solutions for these precious materials. The background materials would be hammertone with upholstered wall fabrics, black granite and polished stainless steel as accent. The team looked at many veneer choices ranging from highly figured avodire and anigre to various exotic mahoganies. The designer had a personal preference, however. On a previous headquarters project he had located a log of kawazinga veneer from a premium veneer house. That particular client



**A two-story communicating open stairway features a kawazinga wall which ties together the gallery corridors on the upper and lower levels.**





**Above:**  
The upper level gallery corridor is framed by a kawazinga wall.

**Below:**  
The perimeter window walls in the briefing rooms feature existing mullions wrapped in bubinga.







**Multimedia capabilities of the briefing rooms.**

selected another veneer. He showed the veneer to CSC and the debate was over. This veneer had the character and scale of figure that could hold its own in a space filled with other high quality materials.

The briefing rooms on the first level utilize a combination of wood veneer panels, upholstered walls and a lacquer lighting trellis suspended from the ceiling. All of the detailing in these spaces is modernist in approach employing concealed flush doors and paneling framed in quarter-sawn bubinga veneer with the main field of the panel being rotary sliced kawazinga veneer. The briefing rooms on the lower level utilize lacquer finished panels detailed similar to the upper level briefing rooms, signaling the change in level of finish. Mahogany solid was used for standing and running trim and doors.

The key to the overall design was to integrate the changes in finish yet maintain continuity of the aesthetic. This was accomplished by maintaining the quality level of materials, the approach to how they are used in the

space and how they are detailed.

The design required significant amounts of woodwork, provided by AWI member firm Imperial Woodwork-

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*"The difficult aspect with the hammertone finish was to maintain consistency."*

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ing of Palatine, Illinois. Upon entering the executive presentation center, the visitor is greeted by a two-story hammertone finish wall with a compliment of bubinga window mullions at two-story opposing windows. A stand alone reception desk combines hammertone

finish and kawazinga veneer with custom metal, glass and stonework. Hammertone finish continues throughout the reception area, integrating inset fabric wrapped panels at the communicating stairway to the lower level. A unique feature of the open stairway is a two-story kawazinga wall which ties together the gallery corridors on the upper and lower levels. The upper level gallery corridor is framed by a kawazinga feature wall. Across from the feature wall are three briefing rooms. The briefing rooms feature kawazinga/bubinga framed paneling incorporating audio-visual, multimedia, and teleconferencing technology alongside disappearing whiteboards.

Lacquer grid structures at the ceiling house the ambient light source for the room. Each briefing room has its own ante room paneled in kawazinga/bubinga veneer, kawazinga cabinetry and lacquered doors and portals at each end closing off the chamber. The perimeter window wall at the briefing rooms have the existing mullions wrapped in bubinga. The mullion cov-





**Dining room in the presentation center features kawazinga paneling and credenzas and two level restrooms with bubinga partition wraps forming portal frames for mahogany louvered stall doors.**

ers double as a housing for black-out screens and their tracks. The lower level gallery corridor mimics the upper level corridor except that the kawazinga feature wall is now hammertone finish. Across from the hammertone wall are bubinga portals housing kawazinga doors opening into the Demonstration Rooms. The lower level also houses conference rooms and an auditorium, all containing lacquered display walls. The presentation center also contains a dining room with kawazinga paneling and credenzas and two levels of restrooms with bubinga partition wraps forming portal/frames for mahogany louvered stall doors.

### **Hammertone Finish**

Over 2,400 sq. ft. of surface area was sprayed in hammertone, and consistency of texture in the finish proved challenging. The hammertone finish is a modified AWI System OP-4 at 60° sheen (an opaque finish). According to Imperial Woodworking's Frank Huschitt, Jr., "The hammertone finish is a

specialty finish designed to simulate a hammered metal look. Hammertone can be done in a variety of different ways, some transparent and some opaque. The quality of the topcoat comes from using a perlescent ingredient made from an iridescent material and added to the finish." Hammertone is referred to as a decorative finish and requires a great deal of technique and artwork in the formulation and application, since temperature, mixture quantities, and many other variables can affect the final appearance.

"The difficult aspect with this project and the hammertone finish was to maintain the consistency of appearance," Huschitt continued. "A one-time application of hammertone finish is easier, but it's very difficult in a large-scale project like this where the finishing process might take weeks with large areas to cover. That's why we felt this was particularly special."

The scope of the hammertone finish itself was an outstanding design feature. The perceived texture of the

finish beckons one to touch and feel the surface up close. The figuring in the kawazinga veneer is in beautiful contrast to the hammertone paint finish, close to the kawazinga. Together, the kawazinga veneer and the hammertone finish paneling, though two dimensional surfaces, produce a surface that seems three dimensional upon viewing.

Shop finishing for all other stained wood was a premium closed-pore AWI System TR-2 at 60° sheen.

Along with the opaque finishes, the kawazinga surfaces proved challenging for the in-house veneer and finishing craftsmen at Imperial. Selection of the veneers was made based upon required quality and quantity of veneer. AWI Associate Member R.S. Bacon Veneer supplied the necessary flitches that maintained a consistent figuring with natural coloring, allowing Imperial Woodworking to bring to life this beautiful wood. A two-piece bookmatch displays the beautiful figure in all of the kawazinga veneer work. Book and end



**Another view of the conference table in one of the briefing rooms.**

vener matching done on the two story kawazinga wall at the communicating stairway features the kawazinga veneer in a cascading effect. The premium finish on the kawazinga veneer work highlights the depth that the natural wood possesses.

Another difficult part of the project involved the integration of technology, audiovisual systems and the architectural woodwork for the project. These systems are state of the art and had to be integrated seamlessly into the design. Most of the points of user interface occurred in the architectural woodwork and the custom furniture for the project, therefore very careful coordination with the consultants and the woodworker were imperative to success.

### Close Coordination

"RTKL has had a long and trusted relationship with Imperial Woodwork," a representative of the architectural firm stated. "As they have done on previous projects, their expertise in veneer lay-up and complex detailing surfaced on this project. When reviewing and inspecting the log, many excellent suggestions were made by the woodworker to improve the appearance of the lay-up and the use of the log. Coordination of the work with the consultants, architects and other trades was exceptional. The veneer lay-up on the project is spectacular."

For his part, Imperial's Frank Huschitt, Jr. enjoys working with RTKL. "Our ongoing relationship with RTKL



in Washington, D.C. is very valuable to us," he says. "When RTKL's Michael Considine and his design group look for a finished product that is unique in both craftsmanship and finish, we are contacted. Often we are contacted during the design development stage to

take design sketches and turn them into finished pieces. Over the past few years in conjunction with RTKL we have completed a distinguished group of projects that highlight excellent craftsmanship with premium quality and unique finishes."

Project:	<b>Executive Presentation Center, Computer Sciences Corporation</b>	Falls Church, Virginia
Woodworker:	<b>Imperial Woodworking Co.</b>	Palatine, Illinois
Architect:	<b>RTKL Associates, Inc.</b>	Washington, D.C.
General Contractor:	<b>HCBECK</b>	Falls Church, Virginia



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