

# Macdonald & Lawrence Timber Framing Ltd.

## NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

### **VANCOUVER ISLAND COMPANY RECOGNIZED FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN HISTORIC REHABILITATION**

COWICHAN VALLEY, BC — Macdonald & Lawrence Timber Framing Ltd. has been recognized for outstanding achievement in historic rehabilitation for its work on the Olson-Long Barn, a large and historically important barn that reportedly dates from 1887.

During the annual awards by the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, State Historic Preservation Officer Dr. Allyson Brooks said the award acknowledges the meticulous preservation approach used by Macdonald & Lawrence.

“Macdonald & Lawrence kept as much of the historic fabric as possible,” said Dr. Brooks. “Unlike many contractors, they fully documented their work and made recommendations for future preservation efforts.”

Gordon Macdonald, managing director of M&L, first inspected the barn in December 2007 and provided options to owner Vonda Long for its preservation. In June 2008, Gordon led the 3-man team that diligently completed the work.

“It’s an exhilarating process to unravel the story of a historic building and develop a plan to conserve it for future generations,” said Gordon. “Overall, our work went exceptionally well.”

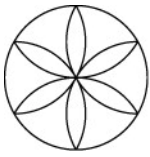
The M&L team rehabilitated the barn using a careful mix of modern technology plus centuries-old craft techniques. The repair work also had to be coordinated with the ranch’s need to use the buildings each day.

“With new timber frames, most of our work takes place at our Cobble Hill shop before we erect the frame on site; however, when it’s an existing structure, the work is often completely site-based,” said Gordon. “The planning is more complex as we must adapt to situations that present themselves as the work progresses.”

Macdonald & Lawrence Timber Framing Ltd. is a specialist carpentry company located on Vancouver Island that designs, builds and erects structural timber frames. Gordon Macdonald and Steve Lawrence have conserved numerous historic treasures, including Windsor Castle, Stirling Castle, Ernest Shackleton’s expedition hut in Antarctica and other important structures in Canada and abroad. Macdonald is also leading the building conservation and repair work on Captain Robert Falcon Scott’s Terra Nova Hut at Cape Evans, in the Ross Sea of Antarctica.

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## 2009 State Historic Preservation Officer's Awards

Excerpt from Speech by Dr. Allyson Brooks, Washington State Historic Preservation Officer

### Valerie Sivinski Award for Outstanding Achievement in Historic Rehabilitation

#### Olson Long Ranch

The third recipient of this year's Valerie Sivinski Award is for the recently completed restoration of the Olson Long Ranch near Conconully. Over the past year owner Vonda Olson Long in concert with **Macdonald & Lawrence Timber Framing Ltd. from Cobble Hill, British Columbia**, undertook an extraordinary project to accurately restore and preserve many of the unique features of the Olson-Long Ranch.

Dating to 1887, the ranch itself contains an impressive collection of original agricultural buildings including a barn, icehouse, chicken coop, wood shed, two original homes, a machine shed, a branding shed, a bunkhouse outhouse, gas house, granary, garage and windmill. Utilizing the resources at hand, the original occupants constructed the buildings by hand, using a complex series of rock crib foundations which enabled the structures to be erected on level ground despite being located on an undulating hillside.

Due to 100+ years of service and exposure to the harsh elements of the Okanogan backcountry, many of the buildings were showing signs of their age and some were even threatened with eminent collapse. Demonstrating her commitment to preservation, property owner Vonda Long brought in the expertise of **Gord Macdonald** and his crew at **Macdonald & Lawrence Timber Framing**. Their skill and high standards of craftsmanship gave new life to the deteriorated buildings.

**Macdonald & Lawrence** tackled the problem of collapsed rock cribbing with the skill of a surgeon; working in tightly confined spaces and handling the repairs with a light delicate touch. In order to preserve the historic integrity of the structures, they installed gabion cages behind their new log work, then backfilled the cribs with loose rock to hide the cages. "Folding wedges", used to adjust the wall after the new logs shrink, were cut into a race on top of the round logs.

After poor soils and rotted timbers were discovered during the restoration process, the contractor's work and priorities were reallocated. Once the rock walls were repaired, attention was shifted to replacing rotting siding, and floor boards. In this process and following the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, **Macdonald & Lawrence** kept as much of the historic fabric as possible. Unlike many contractors, they fully documented their work and made recommendations for future preservation efforts.

This award recognizes the commitment of the Long family to preserve this extraordinarily intact ranch property in the beautiful Okanogan Highlands. It also recognizes the meticulous preservation approach followed by the rehabilitation contractor **Macdonald & Lawrence**.

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The speech can be read in its entirety at  
<http://www.dahp.wa.gov/pages/HistoricSites/documents/Speech09All.pdf>

Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation online at  
<http://www.dahp.wa.gov/pages/HistoricSites/HistoricPreservationWeek.htm>