unity® homes
A Better Way to Build
6 Blackjack Crossing, Walpole NH 03608 · tel: (877) 203-3562 · unityhomes.com

Timeline

1972
Before Bensonwood

Tedd's first company was B&B, named for Benson & Benson: Tedd and his brother, Steve. Together, the Benson brothers start out doing renovation, remodeling, and cabinet making. Later, they start disassembling falling down timber frame structures for clients in exchange for the materials. Steve Benson dies tragically in 1974, and B&B later becomes the Benson Woodworking Company.

October 1973
Bensonwood's first shop

Tedd builds a 5,000 SF woodworking shop in Alstead, NH out of recycled timber frame barns and silos. The shop, with its simple but strong timber-frame joinery, gives Tedd the confidence to move forward with more sophisticated forms of timber framing.

May 1974
Smith House: Bensonwood's first prefab

Tedd works with friend, Mike Burke to build a new stud-built house with a timbered French country kitchen and dining area. He elects to prefabricate the construction elements in his newly finished woodworking shop for the added control and precision it allows. This seminal project cements Tedd's early belief in the advantages of off-site fabrication.

October 1975
Taft House: First modern timber-frame house

Tedd and Dave Bryant build what the Concord Monitor refers to at the time as "…the first full timber frame house built in NH in over 60 years." From there, Tedd and his dedicated craftsmen go on to create the home's exterior & interior doors, stairway, cabinets, built-ins, paneling, moldings and furniture — all in the new Alstead Woodworking Shop. From this influential project, the importance of control and influence on finishes is realized. This Greene & Greene holistic ethic, arising out of the Arts and Crafts movement, continues to be part of the DNA of the company and informs the way the all projects are approached.

August 1978
SIPS

Tedd realizes the potential applications for residential structural insulated panels (SIPs) after seeing aluminum-skinned insulating panels at a walk-in freezer manufacturer.

6 Blackjack Crossing, Walpole NH 03608 · tel: (877) 203-3562 · unityhomes.com

Timeline

September 1979
Tedd's first book published

Tedd Benson (with Jim Gruber) publishes first book, *Building the Timber Frame House: The Revival of a Forgotten Craft* (Scribner's, 1980; Simon & Schuster, 1995). Instrumental in the revival of this centuries-old form of building with heavy timber, the book serves as a manual for builders and designers of timber frame homes. Today, it is still considered the bible by timber frame enthusiasts around the world.

August 1980
Simsbury House: First stress-skin panel home

Tedd and Amos Winter develop some of the first stress-skin panels for residential use. With the timber frame providing for the structural loads, the two develop a way to incorporate Bun stock, a rigid foam insulating material, to create a structurally uncompromised, built-up enclosure system. The company continues to produce its own closed panel walls, though with greener materials and greater sophistication than in this early prototype.

May 1984
Masahiko Ishikawa teaches at Bensonwood

Masahiko Ishikawa brings Japanese temple building skills, infusing Bensonwood employees with knowledge about fashioning ultra-precise timber frame connections and ancient techniques of making compound joinery.

July 1984
Timber Framers Guild of North America founded

Tedd and a small group of timber framers form the Timber Framers Guild of North America knowing that the timber frame revival needed a vital, well-connected industry to establish a forum for learning and standards.

May 1985
Rees Acheson fabricates portable mortising machine

Tedd hires Rees to fabricate a portable mortising machine, making it possible to rapidly create timber frame joints with great precision. It is still use today on the largest timbers. Rees continues to innovate at Bensonwood for several years.

April 1986
Bensonwood purchases first PC

Company purchases early computer for $6,000 and asks Rees Acheson for a whole new strategy for mastering complex compound joinery. Rees develops a trigonometry program with AutoCAD output of Hawkindale angles, thus creating specialized software where none existed before. This allows timber framers to layout and cut the many compound angles in hip and valley roof structures.

6 Blackjack Crossing, Walpole NH 03608 · tel: (877) 203-3562 · unityhomes.com

Timeline

September 1986
Robert 'Ben' Brungraber, Ph.D. hired

Bensonwood becomes the first company to have a professional engineer dedicated to timber frame design and engineering. Ben elevates the company's engineered timber frames to new levels, proving to building inspectors the efficacy of his sophisticated compression & tension joinery. From Ben's extraordinary talent and experience, begins the company's legacy of timber frames as fine-engineered structures.

April 1987
First appearance on This Old House

Bensonwood first featured on PBS Television's *This Old House.*

August 1987
Brian Smeltz hired

Lucky for Bensonwood, Ben Brungraber brings Brian Smeltz into the company. A Renaissance man and Jack-of-all-trades, Brian proves to be an excellent timber framer, artist, designer, teacher, salesman, and project manager. His enthusiasm and creativity leave an indelible mark on the company.

March 1988
Spline joinery developed

Bensonwood develops spline joinery to strengthen timber frame connections and allow for more varied timber design, while increasing the load capacities of the structure.

October 1988
Tedd Benson's second book published

Tedd publishes second book, *The Timber-Frame Home: Design, Construction, Finishing* (Taunton Press), providing a comprehensive guide to building a timber framed home.

May 1989
Blitz-build in Pennsylvania

Tedd Benson and Bensonwood lead a Blitz Build of two Habitat for Humanity homes in Pennsylvania, the first of many such Blitz Builds.

September 1989
Second appearance on This Old House

Bensonwood featured for the 2nd time on PBS's *This Old House* on the Wickwire Barn series.

June 1991
CAD comes to Bensonwood

Bensonwood begins modeling timber frames using 3-D CAD software.

6 Blackjack Crossing, Walpole NH 03608 · tel: (877) 203-3562 · unityhomes.com

Timeline

May 1993

Boris Noel, first international intern, joins Bensonwood

Boris Noel begins long line of talented, international interns. Unlike tradespeople in the United States, those in the European and Asian building trades are highly educated and revered for their mastery. Hungry for outside knowledge, Bensonwood invites these interns from abroad to simultaneously learn and share the skills of master craftsmen. Collectively, these interns from countries such as France, Germany, Switzerland, and Japan bring a wealth of information to the company's growing bank of knowledge.

April 1994

Open-Built® created

By merging the best thinking of open building proponents like John Habraken and Steward Brand with his own concepts, Tedd develops a practical, digitally-based design, fabrication and construction system that revolutionizes how homes are designed and built. Open-Built allows for the disentanglement of mechanical systems from the structure of the house and organizes them for more efficient installation and long-term access. With Open-Built, Bensonwood designers electronically catalogue every design element they create. The 3D Open-Built grid system allows existing design elements to be quickly and easily adapted to any new home design.

August 1995

Bensonwood builds floating timber frame.

Bensonwood works with the Alexandria Seaport Foundation to build a boat-building shop/classroom for at-risk youth. Through the building and use of wooden boats, full time apprentices earn their GED and prepare for a career in the building trades.2004 Bensonwood builds floating timber frame.

June 1997

Bensonwood begins CNC timber milling

Bensonwood adds a computer driven, numerically controlled (CNC) high-speed timber cutting machine that crafts timbers and joinery with accuracy to 1/32 of an inch. Driven by Bensonwood's Open-Built®, rule-driven software the automated machine, improves efficiency, reduces cost and improves accuracy.

November 1997

Tedd Benson publishes third book

Tedd Benson publishes 3rd book, the *Revised and Updated Timber Frame Home* (Taunton Press). This extensively updated and reworked book takes an in-depth look into the process of building a timber frame and making it into a comfortable home. In the book, Tedd showcases his latest advances: from new design, engineering and joinery to wiring, plumbing and glazing.

6 Blackjack Crossing, Walpole NH 03608 · tel: (877) 203-3562 · unityhomes.com

Timeline

March 1998

Bensonwood develops keyed beams

Bensonwood engineers and timber framers develop keyed beams, a new laminating method that allows greater spans with relatively small timbers and makes the connections visible and aesthetically pleasing.

February 1999

Bensonwood begins wall fabrication

Bensonwood begins building its own wall panels for improved energy efficiency, electrical routing and design flexibility. The new panels greatly reduce waste, compared to SIP panels, because window and door openings are built in place rather than cut out and discarded.

July 1999

Bensonwood builds timber frame on Washington Mall

Bensonwood demonstrates a timber frame barn raising on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. as part of the Smithsonian Folklife Festival. The festival educates the public about cultural traditions that contribute to the American and human experience.

October 1999

Tedd Benson publishes third book

Tedd Benson publishes 4th book, *Timberframe: The Art and Craft of the Post and Beam Home* (Taunton Press). The book presents 25 years of Bensonwood's craft and practice, with examples ranging from the Rocky Mountains to New England and from traditional to contemporary, taking its readers on a tour of the most beautiful post and beam homes in North America.

June 2000

Bensonwood relocates, expands

Bensonwood builds state-of-the art design, fabrication and assembly facility in Walpole, New Hampshire.

April 2002

Smithsonian Magazine features Bensonwood

Bensonwood is featured in Smithsonian Magazine ("*Building to a Different Drummer*") for its Walden Cabin, a timber framed replica of Henry David Thoreau's simple 10'X15' cabin on the shores of Walden Pond. Timber framing parallels are drawn from this Spartan, diminutive cabin to the exquisite high-end homes that Bensonwood became known for.

unity® homes
A Better Way to Build
6 Blackjack Crossing, Walpole NH 03608 · tel: (877) 203-3562 · unityhomes.com

Timeline

August 2004
Open-Built Floor System Developed

Bensonwood invents a floor system that allows the complete separation of structure and service layers, while providing easy access to plumbing, wiring and HVAC. It is the culmination of several years of product development and becomes the Open-Built second floor system, which eventually becomes standard on all two-story Unity Homes.

March 2005
Bensonwood partners with Huber Engineered Woods, LLC

Bensonwood enters into a joint development agreement with Huber Engineered Woods LLC to develop new wood-based products and applications for home design and construction, and to develop new technologies in home design, subassembly design, modular design and related processes.

May 2006
Bensonwood Partners with MIT

Bensonwood begins long-term partnership with MIT on the Open Prototype Initiative, with the goal of developing affordable, flexible, high-performance houses. Utilizing Open-Built technologies and prefabricated building systems, the initiative results in Open_1, a multi-use rehab center/home, and OPEN_2, an environmentally friendly, multipurpose present's home for Unity College.

July 2006
Bensonwood builds Loblolly House

Using waste-saving 3D BIM modeling and visualization software, Bensonwood engineers, fabricates, and constructs the award-winning Loblolly House, one of the most talked about houses of 2006, designed by Kieran Timberlake Architects. Featured in Wired Magazine and Treehugger.com, the shore home's Bosch aluminum frame is held together with Bensonwood designed and engineered connectors.

December 2006
Bensonwood named Small Builder of the Year

Bensonwood wins 2006 Small Builder of the Year award from the Partnership for Advanced Technology in Housing (PATH) for its ground breaking work in Open-Built design and building systems.

September 2007
Habitat Blitz-Build

Bensonwood, along with over 500 regional volunteers, completes the local Blitz-Build of a Monadnock Habitat for Humanity home for a New Hampshire family of 10 in need. The 2100 SF home is built in just eight days.

unity® homes
A Better Way to Build
6 Blackjack Crossing, Walpole NH 03608 · tel: (877) 203-3562 · unityhomes.com

Timeline

October 2008
Bensonwood builds home on This Old House

Bensonwood featured in all seventeen episodes of PBS's *This Old House* fall season.

December 2008
Bensonwood awarded 'Small Builder of the Year' by Residential Contractor.

Residential Contractor names Bensonwood 'Small Builder of the Year' for 2008.

June 2009
Bensonwood partners with Dow Chemical to develop new building systems.

Bensonwood enters into a joint development agreement with Dow Chemical Company to develop new and improved home building products through the development of new technologies related to products, structural systems and insulating systems.

December 2009
Unity Home certified LEED Platinum, Net-Zero.

Unity House earns LEED Platinum Rating for the president's house at Unity College. A year later the home and welcome center are Net-Zero certified.

September 2010
Vermont totally passive house built

Bensonwood builds a Passive House in Vermont that requires no heating system.

November 2010
Bensonwood Wall named as Top 10 Product of the Year by Building Green

Bensonwood's OBPlusWall™ is designated as one of Building Green's Top-10 Products of the Year by the editors of Environmental Building News and GreenSpec®.

November 2011
Bensonwood's Lifestyle custom home built

Bensonwood builds its first Lifestyle home featuring its award-winning, R-35 Bolus Wall™, the highest rated standard wall system available in North America.

October 2012
Unity Homes Launched

Bensonwood launches Unity Homes, an outgrowth of the Open Prototype Initiative, Unity Homes offers a wide range of architecturally diverse, ready-to-build, high-performance homes based on four distinct building platforms.

unity® homes
A Better Way to Build
6 Blackjack Crossing, Walpole NH 03608 · tel: (877) 203-3562 · unityhomes.com

Timeline

December 2013

Tedd Benson Named Co-Chair of Vision 2020 Design+Performance Panel

Tedd will work with other members of the Vision 2020 panel to re-imagine home design and construction in the US and to map a clear path towards sustainability in residential construction by the year 2020.