

# URBAN & SALVAGED WOOD

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## MODEL SPECIFICATION

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*CSI Master Format Section 062020*

*Aligned with USRW Certified Wood Standards*



## URBAN ASHES

*Developed for the design, specifier, and supply community*

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## Introductory Note

This three-part specification is provided by Urban Ashes as a design and procurement tool to support the integration of urban and salvaged wood into construction projects. It reflects real-world implementation experience across municipal recovery systems, design teams, and material supply chains, and is intended to be adapted to project-specific requirements.

Definitional language in this Section is adapted from and aligned with the Standards for Certification and Chain of Custody for Urban, Salvaged and Reclaimed Woods published by Urban Salvaged and Reclaimed Woods, Inc. (USRW). Where this Section uses defined terms (Salvaged Tree, Salvaged Wood, Fresh Cut, Orchard Wood, Chain of Custody, Local Wood), those terms carry the meanings set forth in the USRW Standards. The definition of Urban Wood in this Section has been adapted to reflect the two-source scope of this document.

Urban Ashes assumes no responsibility for the accuracy, completeness, or applicability of this document to any specific project. It is the responsibility of the user to review, modify, and coordinate all requirements with applicable codes, standards, and project conditions.

## Scope

This Section covers wood that was not harvested for its timber value and was diverted from the waste stream, including:

- A.** Urban wood is any wood that was not harvested for its timber value and has been diverted from the waste stream into a usable product. Sources include trees removed for storm damage, insect infestation, disease, age, right-of-way clearing, development, or other disturbance. For the purposes of this document, urban wood comes from two sources: fresh-cut urban trees and salvaged trees. Source locations include urban forests, urbanized areas, peri-urban areas, rural areas, roadsides, and small communities.
- B.** Salvaged wood from salvaged trees, including orchard and agricultural removals, wildfire-damaged trees, and forest health and fire management thinnings.

This Section does not cover wood recovered from building demolition or deconstruction.

## Intent

- A.** Treat urban and salvaged wood as a primary material category, not a substitute for virgin lumber.
- B.** Bridge the gap between specifier intent and supply chain reality through scalable documentation and grading language.
- C.** Prioritize highest and best use of recovered wood, with downstream pathways considered only when higher uses are not viable.
- D.** Support regional, municipal, and project-adjacent sourcing where supply allows.
- E.** Improve material performance and usability through clear character, grading, and mockup expectations.
- F.** Align with USRW Certified Wood Standards and emerging certification, procurement, and owner requirements.

## How to Use This Specification

This document is intended as a starting point for project-specific specifications. Users should adapt language based on project scale, intended application, available supply chains, and owner requirements. It is most effective when coordinated with early project planning, including material sourcing strategies, fabrication capabilities, and installation requirements.

## Limitations

This specification supports the integration of urban and salvaged wood into projects. It is not intended to:

- A. Replace project-specific design, engineering, or specification development.
- B. Serve as a standalone standard for structural design, grading, or code compliance.
- C. Mandate specific suppliers, vendors, or proprietary systems.
- D. Require full traceability or advanced documentation where project conditions or supply chains do not support it.
- E. Override the judgment of the design team, contractor, or fabricator in determining suitability for use.
- F. Eliminate the need for mockups, samples, or field verification.
- G. Substitute for USRW Certification or other formally adopted third-party certification systems.

Final implementation shall be determined by the project team based on project goals, constraints, and available resources.

### EDIT CONVENTION

Bracketed terms [like this] indicate options for the specifier to retain, choose, or revise.

EDIT NOTES are guidance for the specifier and should be deleted before issuance for construction.

Subparagraphs may be retained, deleted, or expanded to meet project-specific requirements.

***EDIT NOTE:** Revise this Section by deleting, retaining, and inserting text to suit Project-specific requirements. Coordinate this Section with related Division 01, 06, and project sustainability requirements.*

## PART 1 — GENERAL

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### 1.1 SUMMARY

**A. Section Includes:**

1. Urban wood from fresh-cut urban trees and salvaged trees, sourced from urban forests, urbanized areas, peri-urban areas, rural areas, roadsides, and small communities.
2. Salvaged wood from salvaged trees, including orchard and agricultural removals, wildfire-damaged trees, and forest health and fire management thinnings.

**B. Section Excludes:**

1. Wood recovered from building demolition or deconstruction.
2. Wood harvested for its timber value from commercial forestry operations.

**C. Related Sections:**

*EDIT NOTE: Retain or delete subparagraphs below to identify Related Sections that require Urban or Salvaged Wood sourcing.*

1. Section 015639 "Temporary Tree & Plant Protection"
2. Section 018160 "Wood Supply Chain Disclosure Requirements"
3. Section 311000 "Site Clearing"
4. Section 033000 "Cast-in-Place Concrete"
5. Section 055010 "Landscape Metal Work"
6. Section 061000 "Rough Carpentry"
7. Section 062013 "Exterior Finish Carpentry"
8. Section 062023 "Interior Finish Carpentry"
9. Section 064023 "Interior Architectural Woodwork"
10. Section 064100 "Architectural Wood Casework"
11. Section 096400 "Wood Flooring"

### 1.2 DEFINITIONS

*EDIT NOTE: Definitions in this Section align with the USRW Standards (Standards for Certification and Chain of Custody for Urban, Salvaged and Reclaimed Woods). Delete definitions not applicable to Project.*

- A. Urban Wood:** Any wood that was not harvested for its timber value and has been diverted from the waste stream into a usable product. Sources include trees removed for storm damage, insect infestation, disease, age, right-of-way clearing, development, or other disturbance. For the purposes of this Section, urban wood comes from two sources: fresh-cut urban trees and salvaged trees. Source locations include urban forests, urbanized areas, peri-urban areas, rural areas, roadsides, and small communities.
- B. Fresh Cut:** Trees that were freshly cut, that were not harvested for their timber value, and that came from areas where we live.
- C. Salvaged Tree:** A tree removed for reasons other than its timber value, including damage from wildfire; orchard and agricultural turnover; forest health and fire management thinnings; fire prevention work.

- D. Salvaged Wood: Wood products from salvaged trees.
- E. Orchard Wood: A type of urban wood sourced from an orchard. An orchard is an intentional planting of trees or shrubs maintained for food production, comprising fruit- or nut-producing trees generally grown for commercial production.
- F. Urban Forest: A forest or collection of trees that grow within an urbanized area, urban cluster, or rural area as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau. May include any kind of woody plant vegetation growing in and around human settlements.
- G. Local Wood: Wood and wood products that have not traveled a significant distance from point of origin to final destination, including all processing and manufacturing procedures. To be considered “local,” that distance must be less than 500 miles. Material that travels a greater distance may still be certified under the USRW Standards but may not be labeled as “local.”
- H. Chain of Custody (CoC): The chronological documentation of the path wood products, and the finished products made from them, take from the urban forest or urban environment salvage site, orchard, or related point of origin to the consumer or final installation, including all harvesting, hauling, processing, manufacturing and remanufacturing, drying, storage, and distribution links.
- I. Character: Natural variation in grain, color, texture, knots, and other features inherent to urban and salvaged wood. Character is not considered a defect unless it impacts structural performance or intended use.
- J. Highest and Best Use: The principle that every removed urban or salvaged tree should be utilized to its highest viable application. Use changes based upon circumstances, however that highest use is frequently lumber, as this provides a long-term carbon storage pathway and minimizes waste.
- K. USRW Certified: Wood and wood products that have met the chain of custody requirements set forth in the USRW Standards as attested to by an accredited certification body, and organizations (cities, arborists, tree services, haulers, processors, manufacturers, users) meeting USRW organizational standards.

### 1.3 PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS

- A. Provide urban and salvaged wood suitable for intended application, including:
  1. Moisture stability appropriate to use.
  2. Dimensional consistency and fabrication readiness.
  3. Compatibility with finishes, adhesives, and installation systems.

### 1.4 ACTION SUBMITTALS

- A. Samples: Submit [3] samples of finished wood, minimum [12] inches long, representing the range of color, grain, and character.

### 1.5 INFORMATIONAL SUBMITTALS

*EDIT NOTE: Retain or delete subparagraphs below as necessary to document how the urban or salvaged wood meets project goals.*

- A. Wood Product Sourcing Transparency Form per Section 018160 (where applicable).
- B. Source Documentation:
  1. Photos of source trees or material at point of origin.

2. Location of origin, including city and state.
  3. Removal Permit (where applicable): documentation from a public agency that the removal was approved within their removal standard.
- C. Processing Documentation:**
1. Milling location.
  2. Fabrication location.
- D. Drying Documentation per USRW Appendix A (Urban Lumber Drying Standard):**
1. Air dried (AD) or kiln dried (KD) classification.
  2. Moisture Content Category at point of sale or installation.
  3. If kiln dried, kiln type (solar, dehumidification, RF, vacuum, or conventional) and process.
- E. Sterilization and Pest Mitigation Documentation:**
1. Method and location.
  2. Where kiln sterilized, submit temperature reached and duration held; sterilization shall meet ISPM 15 standards where applicable.
  3. Documented efforts to reduce insect infestation per USRW Section 3.8.
- F. Minimum Documentation:** At minimum, provide source location, processing location, and drying classification for all urban or salvaged wood used in the Project.

## 1.6 CHAIN OF CUSTODY DOCUMENTATION

*EDIT NOTE: Specify the documentation level appropriate to project goals. USRW Certified wood satisfies Level 2 or Level 3 depending on certification scope.*

Provide chain of custody documentation aligned with one of the following levels:

- A. Level 1 — Basic Documentation (Baseline):**
1. Source identification (site, property, or jurisdiction).
  2. Photographic documentation of source material.
  3. Identification of processing locations.
- B. Level 2 — Batch-Level Traceability (Recommended):**
1. Unique identification of logs or material batches.
  2. Documentation of transfers between parties (Transportation Documents per USRW).
  3. Identification of lumber batches derived from source material.
  4. Drying and processing records by batch.
  5. Linkage of batches to fabricated products.
- C. Level 3 — Full Traceability (Advanced / USRW Certified):**
1. Continuous chain of custody from source tree or salvage site to installation.
  2. Documentation of all custody transfers and processing steps consistent with USRW CoC requirements.
  3. Identification of final installed products and locations.
  4. Accessible records linking source to installation.
  5. Integration with third-party systems or digital tracking platforms (e.g., AncesTREE™ or equivalent).

- D. Batch-level tracking is acceptable in lieu of individual piece tracking.

### 1.7 QUALITY ASSURANCE

- A. Qualifications: Fabricators shall demonstrate experience working with urban and salvaged wood and shall employ skilled workers whose products have a record of successful in-service performance.
- B. Work shall account for natural variability and ensure performance consistent with intended application.
- C. Shop Drawings: Refer to required submittals in Related Sections.

### 1.8 DELIVERY, STORAGE, AND HANDLING

- A. Logs delivered prior to milling shall be stored on level ground or skids, with airflow maintained beneath and between logs to prevent end-checking and surface decay.
- B. Lumber shall be stickered with consistent spacer dimensions and stack alignment, sized to support the species and thickness of material being stored, with stacks weighted or banded as needed to limit cupping and bow.
- C. Stored material shall be elevated above grade and shielded from direct ground contact, standing water, and wicking surfaces.
- D. Cover material with breathable, weather-resistant sheeting that sheds rain and snow without trapping condensation. Anchor or weight covers to prevent uplift.
- E. Where material is stored on site for extended periods, monitor moisture content periodically and adjust storage conditions as needed to maintain target moisture range.
- F. Handle finished or sterilized lumber to avoid contact with untreated material or contaminated surfaces that could compromise pest mitigation status.

## PART 2 — PRODUCTS

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### 2.1 MATERIALS, GENERAL

- A. Urban Wood. Provide urban wood from fresh-cut and salvaged trees that were not harvested for their timber value. Sources include municipal tree removals, right-of-way clearing, utility work, site development, storm response, and disease or insect mitigation across urban, peri-urban, rural, and small-community settings.
  1. Trees and species: [As indicated in Related Sections and Contract Drawings.] [On-Site: As indicated on Tree Mitigation Plan in Contract Documents.]
  2. Size and dimensions: As required by application as shown in Contract Drawings.
  3. Removal Permit (where required): provide documentation from the public agency or tree owner authorizing removal.
  4. Relative moisture content: [Maximum [12] [15] percent at time of installation.] [As required by Related Sections.] Moisture Content Category per USRW Appendix A.
  5. Wood to be [air dried (AD)] or [kiln dried (KD)] to achieve relative moisture requirements.

6. Wood shall undergo sterilization or pest mitigation appropriate to species and intended use, meeting ISPM 15 standards where applicable.
  7. Sourcing radius: [Wood extraction to be within [100] miles of the Project site.] [Wood extraction to be within [500] miles to qualify as “Local Wood” under USRW Standards.] [Wood extraction to be within the maximum radius of Project sustainability requirements.]
  8. Logs and lumber shall be inspected for foreign objects (nails, fencing, embedded hardware, fasteners) before milling and re-inspected during and after milling. Material with metal contact damage shall be flagged or rejected.
- B. Salvaged Wood.** Provide salvaged wood from salvaged trees, including orchard and agricultural removals, wildfire-damaged trees, and forest health and fire management thinnings, where the trees were not harvested for their timber value. May include wood from rural areas, transportation corridors, and agricultural lands.
1. Species and source: [As indicated in Related Sections and Contract Drawings.]
  2. Size and dimensions: As required by application as shown in Contract Drawings.
  3. Relative moisture content: [Maximum [12] [15] percent at time of installation.] [As required by Related Sections.]
  4. Wood to be [air dried (AD)] or [kiln dried (KD)] to achieve relative moisture requirements.
  5. Sterilization or pest mitigation appropriate to source condition (e.g., EAB-affected ash, beetle-kill species, fire-impacted material).
  6. Sourcing radius: [Wood extraction to be within [100] miles of the Project site.] [Wood extraction to be within [500] miles to qualify as “Local Wood” under USRW Standards.] [Wood extraction to be within the maximum radius of Project sustainability requirements.]
  7. Logs and lumber shall be inspected for foreign objects before milling and re-inspected during and after milling. Material with metal contact damage shall be flagged or rejected.

## 2.2 MATERIAL CHARACTER AND GRADING

***EDIT NOTE:** Urban and salvaged wood often carries character marks (knots, mineral streaks, checking, color variation) that are inherent to the material and should not be treated as defects. Specify grade based on intended use rather than defaulting to commodity hardwood standards.*

- A.** Visual grade shall account for natural character inherent to urban and salvaged wood. High-character material is acceptable provided structural and performance requirements are met.
- B.** For applications where appearance grade is required, NHLA G-101 grades [FAS, Selects, No. 1 Common, No. 2 Common] may be referenced, recognizing that strict adherence may unnecessarily limit viable supply.
- C.** For character-grade applications, allow visible character consistent with mockups or approved samples.
- D.** Structural grade. For wood used in elements bearing loads of [100 PSF] or more, wood shall be machine graded with MSR grades meeting minimum structural criteria in the Contract Documents.
- E.** Coordinate grading expectations with mockup and sample requirements in Section 2.5 and Related Sections.

## 2.3 HIGHEST AND BEST USE

*EDIT NOTE: Highest and best use is a core principle of the USRW Standards: every removed urban or salvaged tree should be utilized to its highest viable application, frequently lumber, as this provides long-term carbon storage and minimizes waste.*

- A. Urban and salvaged wood shall be processed and specified to prioritize the highest-value viable application appropriate to the material's species, dimensions, grade, and condition.
- B. Material suitable for architectural lumber, millwork, or structural use shall not be downgraded to lower-value applications (mulch, chips, biomass, fuel, or disposal) without documented justification.
- C. Where material is unsuitable for primary applications, secondary uses such as site furnishings, casework substrates, or landscape elements are encouraged before lower-value pathways are considered.

## 2.4 ACCEPTABLE ALTERNATIVES

- A. Where urban or salvaged supply is insufficient for the Project:
  1. USRW Certified wood from sources outside the project sourcing radius.
  2. FSC Recycled or FSC Mix material where consistent with project sustainability goals.
  3. Proprietary sourcing programs (e.g., Carbon Smart Wood) may be used with the following clarification: such programs represent material sourcing and branding frameworks and are not third-party certification systems. Where feasible, materials should also meet or be eligible for third-party standards such as USRW.

## 2.5 VARIABILITY AND MOCKUPS

- A. Natural variation in color, grain, and character is expected.
- B. Provide mockups or sample sets where required to establish acceptance criteria prior to fabrication.

## 2.6 WOOD SUPPLIER CONTACT INFORMATION

*EDIT NOTE: Optional. Use when local wood supplier, salvager, or fabricator has been identified for Project material needs. Preference for USRW Certified suppliers and Urban Wood Network member operators where available.*

- A. Name of supplier
- B. USRW Certification status (where applicable)
- C. Phone number
- D. Email address
- E. Website

*EDIT NOTE: Specifications regarding fabrication of wood should be covered in the Related Sections pertaining to each specific application.*

## PART 3 — EXECUTION

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### 3.1 EXAMINATION

- A. Prior to installation, the Installer and Contractor shall jointly inspect substrates and adjacent conditions for compliance with installation tolerances, dimensional accuracy, and environmental requirements specified in this Section and Related Sections.
- B. Verify each piece of urban or salvaged wood against documented chain of custody, moisture content, and grade prior to installation. Material that has absorbed moisture in transit, shows visible mold, contains unremediated pest activity, or has lost dimensional stability shall be rejected or returned to controlled drying conditions.
- C. Confirm that interior environmental conditions (temperature, relative humidity) at the installation site are within range for the specified material and application before proceeding.
- D. Do not commence installation until unsatisfactory conditions have been documented and corrected.

### 3.2 PREPARATION

- A. Acclimate material on site for the duration recommended by the fabricator or as required by application, with airflow maintained throughout the acclimation period.
- B. Final surface preparation, including planing, sanding, and finish application, shall occur per Related Sections covering the specific application.
- C. Inspect and remove any residual foreign objects (nails, fasteners, embedded debris) prior to final fabrication or installation.
- D. Where logs are processed on site or near site, debark prior to milling and dispose of bark and slabs per Project waste management requirements.

### 3.3 INSTALLATION

- A. Install material in accordance with Related Sections, fabricator recommendations, and manufacturer instructions for adhesives, fasteners, and finishes.
- B. Account for natural movement, dimensional variation, and character of urban and salvaged wood through fastening patterns, expansion gaps, and detailing appropriate to species and application.
- C. Coordinate sequencing with adjacent trades to protect installed material from damage, moisture exposure, and contamination through Project completion.

**END OF SECTION**