

## U.S. Land Port of Entry: Warroad, Minnesota - Julie Snow Architects

This simple and efficient rectilinear 3726 square meter (40,108 square foot) project blends with the environs, thanks to the unassuming massing that captures the harmony of the rugged north. The form's honest profile is composed of unpretentious lines that cut the sky with bold and confident strokes while overhangs extend space from the interior to the exterior and emphasize key points of entry as well as vehicular zones. Throughout the day, the shifting sun and shadows accentuate slots and notches cut out of the whole like the work of a master woodcarver whose respect for the medium is reflected in his careful incisions.

The studio's typical sensitivity is similarly evident in the structure's attractive material palette of sustainably harvested cedar siding. Indigenous cedar is juxtaposed in both clear and black satin stain. The clear and welcoming nature of the wood is reserved for the vehicular inspection areas and interior of the facility. The black exterior "shell" conversely succeeds at camouflaging the edifice against the expanse of forest and enhances the charm of the more natural, lighter fields of cedar. The black motif against a landscape that is often covered in a blanket of white snow, is visually strong and further adds to the composition's iconographic symbolism as an outpost in the wilderness. When one arrives at the station, the inviting material warmth and richness of the architecture goes down easily, much like hot apple cider on a blustery winter day.

The success of the building is propagating additional commissions from the U.S. Government. Currently under construction is the Van Buren Land Port of Entry in Maine. It is of a similar size and is scheduled to complete in the fall of 2013. As is prevalent of the équipe's work, this new complex is also characterized by its robust sensibility to its environs and responsive sense of place.

The Warroad project is impressive both from an architectural perspective with its straightforward geometric logic and purity of spirit and from the interest it has created. Its effortless shape and intelligent use of materials make it stand out easily from the rest of the "forest."