

Maine Home

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+ DESIGN

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MASTERS OF

Fresh work from 13 of Maine's visionary architects

by Rebecca Falzano



IN Maine, “architect” is a title hard earned and carefully used; in fact, the word is reserved under law for those who have passed the state’s seven-part licensing exam. While Maine is one of the few states that allows those with at least 11 years of professional experience alone to sit for the exam, the most typical path to becoming an architect is to graduate from an accredited program and then fulfill about three additional years of training under the guidance of a licensed architect, similar to a doctor doing a residency. Only after meeting these qualifications can one sit for the Architect Registration Exam (ARE), and only after passing that can one say he or she is an architect.

MH+D has had the privilege of covering Maine architecture

for nearly nine years now. It is no secret that architects here are doing cutting-edge work, creating designs reflective of, respectful of, and responsive to our one-of-a-kind climate, history, and environment. These architects know how to choose materials that will endure the spray of salt from the sea; to design for the weight of snow on roofs; to make walls that withstand heavy winds; and to account for limited sunlight in winter. They recognize the beauty in our historic farmhouses and shingle-style homes, and they see the future in public buildings that form a handshake with their surrounding communities. Some of these lessons they learned in school, of course, but many they learned working firsthand on projects like the ones on these pages—projects

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that required innovative solutions, deep collaboration, willing clients, and above all, creative, conceptual thinking.

For Will Winkelman, architecture school began with abstract two- and three-dimensional studies and moved into conceptual design exercises that had nothing to do with buildings, per se, but everything to do with building the mental tools for critical thinking. Over time he learned to apply those skills to actual buildings. “For some in the program,” says Winkelman, “it was a frustrating time, as we were not yet working on anything tangibly architectural. But we were learning a scalable approach to design in general that could be applied not only to buildings but also to objects, urban environments, and so on. Those studies have proven

to be a great foundation.” Kevin Browne learned about New England history at architecture school in Pennsylvania, and how to design and build within that context. “Many of the homes that form our towns and villages have been standing and functioning for more than 100 years,” he says. “The goal of our work is not necessarily to recreate these historical structures, but to build on the design of the past with modern architecture to create a new, timeless vernacular that will help to form a style for the next 100 years.”

In this year’s Architecture Listing, we present to you a baker’s dozen—13 architecture firms who are quite literally designing Maine’s future.

A VINTAGE GETAWAY IS REIMAGINED & MADE ENERGY-EFFICIENT









Set atop a bluff sloping down to Casco Bay, this gambrel-style cottage was one of the first homes on Cousins Island. Built in 1905, the cottage was originally designed for an executive in charge of building the railroad up through Maine. The current homeowners asked Kevin Browne Architecture to preserve the character of this historic cottage while expanding on it to create a cozy four-season cottage for their family and extended family for years to come. The goal? To make the most of the lot and the water views. The property is situated to get a full view of the sunsets over coastal waters, which isn't common along the coast of Maine. The existing cottage and garage were in rough shape and had been added on to haphazardly over the years. The first step in the redesign of the main cottage was to create a softened gambrel roofline that runs straight through to the water side of the cottage. On the first floor of the main cottage, a deep covered porch on the water side of the house was continued to create a wraparound porch. The homeowners wanted to preserve the high ceilings and beadboard walls of the interior spaces of the first floor, so only updates for modern conveniences

were made. The existing garage, pieced together in the early '80s, was removed and replaced with a gambrel-style carriage house, connected to the main cottage as an extension of the porch.

Since the home was originally built as a seasonal cottage, many of the renovations included energy-efficient upgrades such as closed-cell spray foam in the walls, ceilings, and floors. In addition, all windows were replaced with low-e windows, and the existing heating system was replaced with high-efficiency heat pump units.

ARCHITECT: KEVIN BROWNE ARCHITECTURE
Builder: Jeff Sonnichsen Builders/Redfern Properties
Landscape Architect: Sarah Witte
Interior Designer: James Light Interiors
Structural Engineer: Structural Design Consulting
Photography: Jack Michaud Photography