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# CAPITAL *at* PLAY

*Western North Carolina's Free Spirit of Enterprise*

LOCAL INDUSTRY

**By Design**

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What do Sovereign Remedies, Asheville Beauty Academy, & Ole Shakey's have in common? The brain behind them.

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With construction booming across Western North Carolina, the architectural firms of the region find their services in demand more than ever.

# BY DESIGN

WRITTEN BY BILL KOPP

## MEET OUR ARCHITECTURAL RESPONDENTS

**SCOTT HUEBNER** started Brickstack Architects in 2011; he earned his licenses to practice architecture in North Carolina and Pennsylvania in 2007. He employs a draftsman and an architecture intern in his Oakley office. Brickstack focuses solely on residential work; three-fourths of those projects are new construction, with the remainder renovations/remodels.

**JESSICA LARSEN**, with an office in downtown Asheville, is the sole proprietor of the one-woman clem Designs. After earning her license in 2009, she founded her company in 2015. Nearly all of her work – 95% – is residential, with the occasional commercial project.

**JOHN LEGERTON** earned his architect's license in 1982; he launched Legerton Architecture, P.A. in 1995. Today the downtown Asheville firm employs nine people, seven of whom are licensed architects. About 40% of Legerton's work is residential, with the rest split among educational, commercial, and public/institutional projects.

**DUNCAN MCPHERSON** is principal and owner of Samsel Architects; he earned his license in 2008, but already had extensive experience working in architecture firms for more than a decade. Founded in 1985 by Jim Samsel, the firm employs 14 people, half of whom are licensed architects. The firm's work is 60% residential, with the remaining 40% in commercial projects. *Jim Samsel and his firm were profiled in the November 2015 issue of this magazine.*

**AL PLATT** established PLATT (formerly Platt Architecture) in 1982; he earned his license in 1978.

**PARKER PLATT** joined his father's firm in 1994 and became a licensed architect in 2005. Based in Brevard, PLATT employs 20 persons, six of whom are licensed architects. Four-fifths of PLATT architectural projects are residential.



DUNCAN MCPHERSON of Samsel Architects discussing design plans, photo by Todd Crawford

## At its best, architecture can be both inspired and inspiring. Playwright and poet Christopher Marlowe wrote of “the wondrous Architecture of the world” in 1587.

Architecture is one of the earliest human endeavors to bridge the gaps between creativity and practicality, combining form and function. Not only is it a worthy and noble path, it is also a profession with skills that are in demand through lean and robust economic periods. People always need somewhere to live and places in which to engage in education, worship, commerce, and other pursuits.

At present, North Carolina's Buncombe County is home to more than two dozen architects and/or architectural firms; an additional 40 are found throughout the rest of Western North Carolina. In this feature, six architects from five leading firms in the region share their accumulated experience and observations about architecture and its place in our community.

## Training, Apprenticeship, Certification, Licensing: The Odyssey of a New Architect

As the mini-biographies suggest, one doesn't simply hang out a shingle that reads “Architect.”

“To be a licensed architect,” explains Duncan McPherson, “the American Institute of Architects sums up the order of operations nicely: education, experience, examination, and then licensure.” There are many paths to that goal, Jessica Larsen concedes, “but the most direct” is to earn a Bachelor of Architecture degree. John Legerton says that there are some other common education tracks for those pursuing a career in the field. He mentions “a four-year undergraduate degree—like a Bachelor of Science with a major in architecture – plus a two-year Master of Architecture degree,” and another approach: a four-year undergrad degree in a course of study not related to architecture, followed by a three-year Master of Architecture program.

“After school, the next step is to complete the intern development program,” Larsen says. That step requires training as an apprentice with a licensed architecture practice or firm. “Throughout this program, you're typically working under a mentor,” she says, noting that the entire track—education and apprenticeship—can last eight years or more. The experience

helps prepare one for the Architect Registration Exam (ARE). “The ARE is an extensive test that covers everything from practice management to construction techniques,” explains McPherson. “It's similar to the bar exam that lawyers take in order to practice law,” adds Scott Huebner. “The registration exam has evolved over the years in various forms since the mid '60s.”

Candidates must pass each of the six divisions of the national ARE with the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) and obtain certification from that body. After passing the ARE, one can register with a state to be a licensed architect. “All states require architects to obtain a license to practice,” Larsen says. There's no national licensing program for architects. “You apply in the state where you wish to practice,” Legerton says. “In North Carolina it's the North Carolina Board of Architecture.”

But McPherson believes that—even after all that study, testing, and licensure—an additional step is essential: *more* education. “An architecture license has to be renewed every year,” he points out. And like select other professions, renewal requirements include the earning of continuing education credits. “One of the reasons I love architecture is that it's a profession of infinite learning,” McPherson says. “No two projects, or clients, are ever the same. The industry is always evolving and advancing, and it's our responsibility to stay on top of the latest developments.”



JOHN LEGERTON discussing building materials with his team,  
photo by Blake Madden

Of course, not everyone who embarks upon this challenging journey makes it to the level of licensure. While allowing that “there are current and historical examples of self-taught or non-licensed people who have had successful careers designing buildings,” Huebner says, adding that “if you have not passed the exam, you may only legally call yourself a designer, an intern, or similar.” Parker Platt notes: “In the State of North Carolina, you can design a home without a license. That said, we feel strongly that people should hire an architect versus an unlicensed individual.” Among the reasons for choosing a licensed architect, Platt says, “you’re benefiting from the professional education, internships, and certifications that architects must obtain to become licensed.” He also notes another factor that can provide peace of mind for clients: Licensed architects carry professional liability insurance.

Huebner makes the observation that many who don’t achieve licensure cite “the significant time commitment and overall difficulty as the reason. The profession holds licensure as a significant milestone and an important building block of an architect’s education and development.” He believes that earning an architect’s license “shows commitment and a dedication to the profession’s highest standard.”

## The Wild World of Regulations

It also helps if an architect has great facility—or absent that, at least a deep well of patience regarding—at compliance with regulatory bodies and statutes. Many professions entail dealing with governmental red tape, and architects contend with their fair share. It stands to reason that a large commercial project or a residential development would face a bewildering assortment



photo by Justin Mitchell,  
courtesy of clem Designs

of rules and approval processes, but the same is true even for a comparatively small project.

John Legerton gives a taste of what’s involved.

“To have a single family residential project approved for construction,” he says, “one has to design and prepare detailed site and building plans for review and approval by either county or local municipal zoning boards and building safety departments.” Depending on the particulars of a given residential project, he notes that additional review and approval may be required by water and sewer departments (or health departments if a septic system is required); architectural design review boards (for homes located in certain developments); the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (if the home is located near significant streams or other waterways); and county or municipal stormwater review departments (if a large enough area of the site is being disturbed by the construction). And if the home is to be built in a historic district, local and sometimes state historic resource commissions may weigh in.

That’s only a *partial* list, Legerton says. A complete list might include “other regulatory agencies, depending on the project location and complexity.”

Of course, the list of regulatory bodies with a stake in larger multifamily, commercial, institutional, educational, and other projects is considerably longer. Start with review by all of the aforementioned agencies and then add a dozen or more. Some of those will be familiar to the average citizen; others may not. Legerton ticks off a list: “Neighborhood organizations, Fire Marshals, Development Services Departments, Street Departments, Planning and Zoning Commissions, Downtown Commissions, Tree Commissions, Riverfront Commissions, City and Town Councils, the State Construction Office, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, and the North Carolina State Department of Transportation.”

Again, Legerton notes that his quick list is by no means exhaustive. He emphasizes that “other local, state, and/or federal regulatory and funding agencies” may require their own review of the architect’s plans, depending on the project location, type, environmental issues, and complexity.

And while it is true that at least the occasional review is a cursory affair, any project that has even the slightest whiff of being “different” raises a number of red flags. Parker Platt cites a real-world example. “While designing a contemporary home, we faced regulations imposed by a property owners’ association that didn’t allow flat roofs.” Platt worked closely with the board of the relevant property owners’ association, eventually convincing them to allow flat roofs. “Provided,” he adds, “that they were living, vegetated roofs.” The entire negotiation took a full year.

A flat roof isn’t terribly exotic, after all. But Platt recalls another project that really *was* unusual, and the solution to the challenge definitely qualifies as unique. “Years ago we had a client who wanted to build their house over a regulated trout stream. To get the required permits, we had to meet with various regulatory agencies and citizens’ boards over several months.” In the end, Platt convinced the regulators to grant a permit to build the house, but it would be classified as a bridge.

Historic renovation projects present yet another set of regulatory and review challenges. McPherson says that plans must “balance the original charm and character of a historic structure with current safety standards and functions of the modern day. And when these [considerations] are combined with historic preservation requirements, tax credits, and local zoning regulations, the design process can be a tangled web.” Problem-solving skills serve the architect—and the client—well in such complex situations.

Combine a project involving a historic property, add the wrinkle of it being designed for education purposes, and still more complexity is the result for the architect. Hueber says that education is a particularly difficult type of building category, thanks in part to fire safety and egress considerations. A 2014 Brickstack project centered around conversion and renovation of a circa-1920 building in Oakley. The building, which had been structurally modified and expanded multiple times since its original construction, would become the creative campus



AL + PARKER PLATT  
courtesy of PLATT

for Roots + Wings School of Art and Design, founded and owned by the architect's wife, Ginger Huebner.

The project itself was complex, says Scott Huebner. "We were able to consolidate the spaces, give each classroom direct exterior access, provide each classroom with two single-use bathrooms, and make the spaces brighter and more dynamic." In addition, the finished project provided the neighborhood with a playground, fenced play field, new pedestrian-friendly sidewalks, and more than 50 new trees and 100 shrubs.

"It was a colossal effort with a number of very difficult code challenges," but the efforts paid off in the end. "We're very proud of the work for what it has given to the school and its students, but also as an amenity to the surrounding neighborhood," he says. The renovated building is now home to several other businesses as well, including Brickstack Architects.

## Designing and Building Relationships

Architects interface with a wide array of people in a variety of professions. Depending on the scope and demands of a particular project, they often find themselves working closely with builders, developers, and bankers, and sometimes with review boards. "Developers will hire an architect when they're developing larger projects and mixed-use developments," Legerton says.

Bankers are involved in reviewing architectural plans and project costs, and they project economic viability documents prior to approval of financing, says Legerton. "They're also involved in reviewing the projects under construction and at completion to approve progress and final payments for the construction work."

Architects work closely with builders and contractors throughout the entire construction phase. Legerton says that for some projects, builders are also involved in the initial planning, schematic design, and design development phases. "I want every builder that I work with to say that we worked in unison toward a common goal of providing our clients with the highest quality construction and design," says Huebner.

Huebner's architectural design projects often bring him in contact with the Architectural Review Boards of communities in and around Asheville. He says that there are two overarching and lasting sentiments he wishes to impart to the members of those boards. "My homes will be well designed with a great emphasis on quality," he says, "and they will fit well into the landscape."

All of those working relationships are cultivated; that's especially important in Western North Carolina, where professionals all seem to know one another, and where reputations—good and bad—are lasting. "Asheville is a small town," says Huebner. Mixing metaphors to make an important point, he adds, "One burnt bridge can have a very long tail."



SCOTT HUEBNER,  
photo by Morgan Ford



JESSICA LARSEN  
photo by Katie Shaw,  
Kate Suzanne Photography



LEGERTON ARCHITECTURE  
worked on The Funkatorium,  
photo by J Weiland

## Earning New Business

Most of the architects interviewed for this story say that the majority of their new clients come via referral, but that's not the only way. "We [also] get a lot of our work through repeat work with ongoing clients, and through competing for

**"We always assume that when we're meeting with a prospect that they're talking with other architects as well."**

work on projects by responding to requests for qualifications and competitive interviews," says John Legerton.

"Getting work is not an exact science," says Scott Huebner. "It's a combination of marketing past works via your website, Instagram, or print ads. And I sometimes get work from folks who ride past one of my projects under construction." McPherson says that Samsel's experience in

that regard is similar. "A good amount of work is referral or even repeat clients, but most are new clients who have found us online, in advertisements, or [through] a combination of exposure to our work," he says.

Whether it's a residential or commercial project, the client generally interviews multiple architects before selecting one. "We always assume that when we're meeting with a prospect that they're talking with other architects as well," says Platt. In fact, he encourages that kind of fact-finding. "It's a serious and important decision," he says. "We know that we're not the right fit for everyone."

Brickstack's Huebner says that he has a general rule of not pitching his services to prospective homeowners. "Not because I don't think it's worth my time," he explains. "But because it's a 'race to the bottom' mentality... that places a skewed priority on things that, in the end, will not likely yield either good architecture, a good experience, or a less expensive project." He says that a better approach—and one that suits his style—is for prospective homeowners to tour one of his recent projects and speak with those homeowners. "There's simply no substitute for getting personal and honest feedback from homeowners and seeing the project 'in the flesh,'" he emphasizes.



photo by Justin Mitchell  
courtesy of clem Designs



photo by David Dietrich  
courtesy of Brickstock Architects



“We try to educate all prospective clients—public or private—about the value of a fair and quality based selection process for choosing their architects,” says Legerton. In his experience, when this type of selection process occurs, the price tag is merely one of several measures used. And the clients end up happier in the end.

He points out that the value of local sourcing extends to the selection of an architect as well. A professional based in the region where the project takes place offers many advantages. Those include “expertise in building in the local climate and topography, and knowledge of our local regulatory processes and requirements.”

McPherson agrees, saying, “Building in the mountains and on steep slopes requires different expertise than building on flat land.” Further, “architects who have experience designing in a place bring a deeper knowledge and respect for the land, its history, and its community.” And he says that there’s a people factor, too. “Good relationships with local code officials, contractors, and craftspeople are hard to create in an instant.”

“There’s *always* a benefit to hiring a local architect with a proven track record,” says Parker Platt. “They come with local knowledge about the environment, materials, lifestyle, and intricacies of a place.”

## Out With the Old?

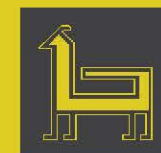
Asheville’s unusual relationship with architecture is well known. As the Great Depression ended, many buildings were left unoccupied. And because the city remained in a significant financial downturn ruin for many years to come, derelict buildings remained standing. Unlike cities such as Atlanta, where old edifices would regularly be torn down and replaced with newer and more modern structures, many of Asheville’s buildings still stood. And when economic conditions finally improved at the tail end of the 20th century, renovations meant that Asheville entered the 21st century with a remarkably large share of historic buildings, many with impressive architectural designs. “It’s a positive thing that Asheville has remained relatively untouched, like Prague in the Second World War,” says Al Platt.

The work of Douglas Ellington, an architect acclaimed for his designs in the Art Deco Style, is a prominent and enduring fixture of Asheville. Three of the city’s most well-known landmarks—Asheville High School, the S&W Cafeteria downtown, and the First Baptist Church—are all Ellington designs. The Sylvan Theatre in nearby Sylva is another notable structure designed by Ellington, and his 1926 cottage still stands in Chunn’s Cove, just east of Asheville.

Today, Buncombe County is home to more than 110 buildings listed in the National Register of Historic Places; many of those structures are noted for their architectural design, incorporating styles in and outside of the Art Deco idiom. In all of Western North Carolina, there are more than 300 such designated buildings.

Preservation is important, and architects often have a heightened sense of it. “Asheville is extremely fortunate that so many of the older downtown buildings were not demolished and have been preserved in the past 30-plus years,” says Legerton. “We’re greatly indebted to the citizens who organized and fought some of the larger proposed projects that would have demolished many of the older buildings and the downtown street layouts.” He’s been a part of those preservation initiatives, too: “I have worked with other individuals and organizations to save significant local structures from being demolished.”

And in both cases—when buildings are restored as well as when they’re razed to make space for new projects—architects are involved. “For better or worse, architects are often at the center of these kinds of discussions,” Huebner says. “Progress is not always pretty, especially if it comes at the expense of tearing down a beloved structure.”



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photo by David Dietrich  
courtesy of Brickstack Architects

“This gets at the heart of our profession and the nature of a society,” McPherson says. “We will be forever rebuilding our cities and towns. Our historic structures are often what define a town’s character the most. These old buildings are impractical to recreate, so preserving and reusing them is vital to maintaining a sense of place and telling the story of a town.”

Al Platt admits a twinge of disappointment when old buildings are destroyed. He quotes songwriter Joni Mitchell: “You don’t know what you’ve got till it’s gone.” McPherson concedes, though, that sometimes preservation is impractical, and “the opportunity to create something new outweighs the past.” Legerton adds, “It depends on the particular building, its level of prominence, and how significant the structure is to our community.”

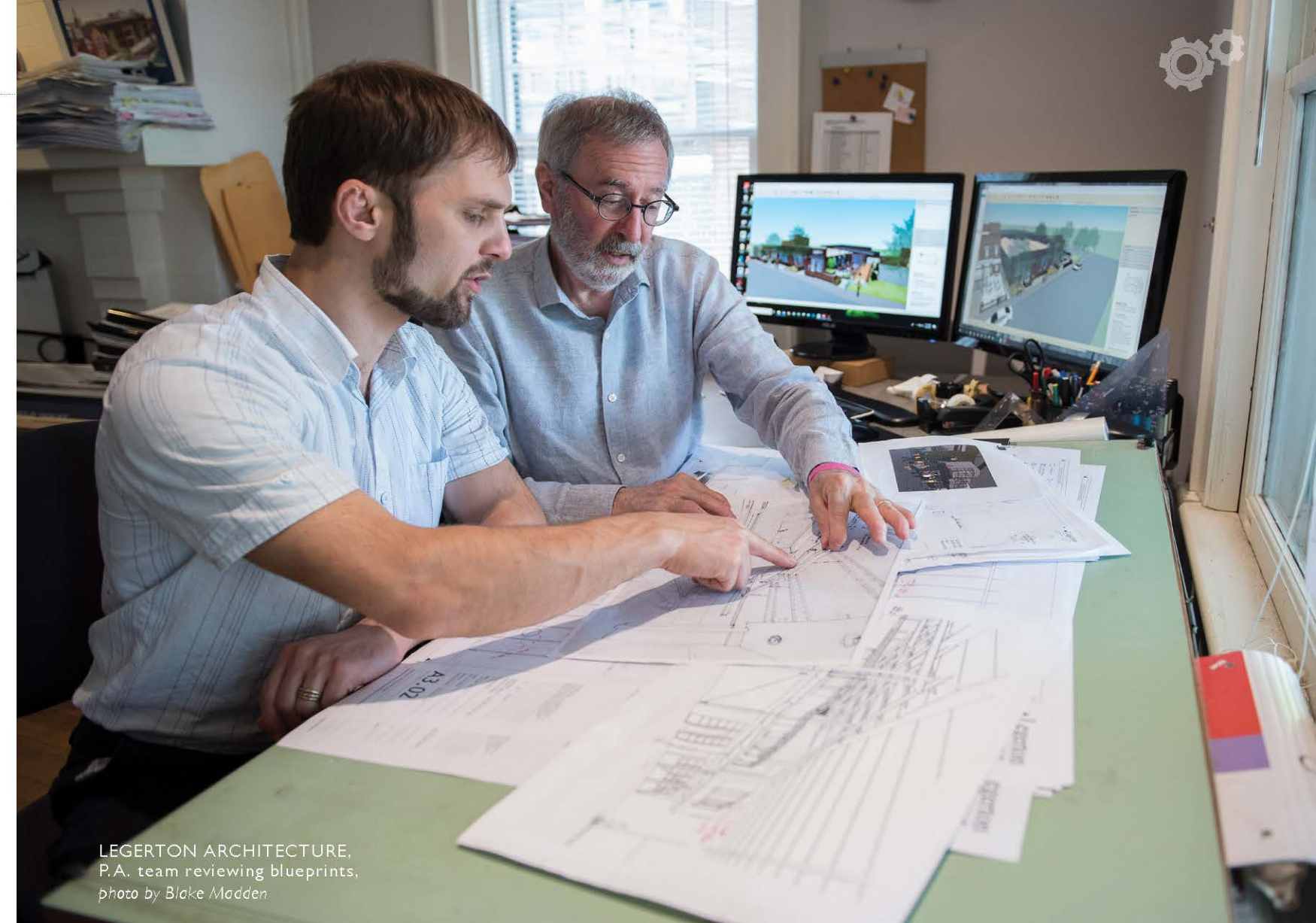
**“This gets at the heart of our profession and the nature of a society... We will be forever rebuilding our cities and towns.”**

Admitting that there’s no simple formula for making those judgments, McPherson suggests applying this question to each situation: “What building will serve its community best, today and in the future?” For his part, working on renovations as well as new structures, Huebner says that his approach has always been that “whatever we design [must] work in harmony with its surroundings.”

### Form, Function, and... Fashion?

Even with all of the formal training that architects receive, at its heart architecture remains a creative endeavor. But unlike some other forms of creative expression, architecture must—in all but the most unusual instances—conform to some agreed-upon ideas concerning functionality and design concepts. Because the work is being done for a client (residential, commercial, industrial, and so forth), the wants and needs of the client are taken into consideration.

So, do the practical constraints placed upon architects leave room for them to express their own unique creativity? Every one of the architects



LEGERTON ARCHITECTURE,  
P.A. team reviewing blueprints,  
photo by Blake Madden

interviewed for this story answers in the affirmative. “While putting our clients’ needs and desires first, we almost always feel free to be creative within the constraints of a project,” says Parker Platt.

“The extent varies somewhat depending on our client’s preferences, and sometimes on budgetary or other constraints,” says Legerton. “Generally, there’s opportunity for creative design – at some level – on every project.” He notes that some projects allow for significant freedom where creative design is concerned.

Larsen approaches design from a problem-solving perspective. Against that backdrop, “every project allows me the freedom to show my creativity, as each project and client brings a new problem to solve,” she says.

McPherson finds great value in the collaborative nature of architectural projects. “Collaboration is one of the most rewarding and challenging aspects of our profession,” he says. “Part of our process is finding the right balance [between] our clients’ vision and our own expertise and creativity.” He explains that one hallmark of a successful project is that the collaboration extends even farther to include “contractors and craftspeople who actually make our creativity a reality.”

Established trends in the industry also exert influence on architectural designs. Both Huebner and McPherson emphasize the growing popularity of modern and contemporary design values. “All of our work has its roots or fingerprints of the past,” admits Huebner, “but we strive to create work that feels of the time in which we live. And I love that modernism frees me from the boundaries of a style from the past.”

He cites the influence of Italian architect Renzo Piano, designer of the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris and New York City’s Whitney Museum of American Art. “While his work—mostly commercial—is very different from one project to the next, the common thread is that it feels fresh and modern and exquisitely crafted,” Huebner says. “And that is what I strive for in my own work.”

“There has been more of an appetite and market for modern and contemporary work in our region than there has in the past,” observes McPherson. He says that Samsel Architects embraces the new: “We have evolved our design to a modern aesthetic that’s still inspired by local materials and regional vernacular.” And he believes that modern designs must be rooted in a sense of place and the character of the site.



photo by David Dietrich  
courtesy of Samsel Architects

Parker Platt espouses a more measured approach. “We don’t like to think of our work as trendy or fashionable,” he says. “We’d much rather it be timeless.” He acknowledges that tastes do change through the years, saying, “And we work to remain in touch with the current state of affairs. In the past five years, we’ve seen a remarkable increase in clients who are interested in a more contemporary aesthetic.”

Legerton’s firm places a high value on “creating contextually sensitive, sustainable designs for our clients and the communities where our projects are located,” he says. As a result, he generally makes a point of avoiding particular architectural trends. For her part, Larsen focuses on the clients’ demands. “Trends and fashions are dictated by my client’s interests,” she says.

To turn an old adage on its head, the client is always the customer, but the client isn’t always right. “Occasionally we are asked to create what we call a ‘Frankenstein Design,’” says McPherson, “sticking random images, ideas, and styles together into a single project.” He says that Samsel avoids creating that kind of architectural monster by guiding clients toward a more cohesive concept that meets their goals, even though it might look different from their preconceived ideas.

Huebner takes a similar approach in his residential projects. “If a homeowner asks me to design something that is outside of the bounds of my comfort level, then I might suggest that we’re not a good fit.” He likens the architect-client relationship to a marriage, built on honesty, good communication, and trust. “Trust also comes from letting go a little,” he says, “allowing the creative process to reveal something that’s unexpected and delightful.”

Problems of that nature are not commonplace if everyone involved has taken the time to consider if the architect is right for a given project. According to Legerton, clear communication of the client’s goals is a key to success. “Some of our clients want their projects designed with strong historical references and details; others want for their projects to fit in well with the context of their site, neighborhood, and community.” Details and materials might be modern, or they might lean toward

the traditional. “All are valid approaches if designed well and contextually appropriate,” he says.

And while tradition has its place, Huebner says he has noticed a trend. “I’m a small test sample, but I find that clients’ tastes are starting to shift and become more open to modernism, including larger windows, open floor plans, simplified roofs, less decoration.” He quotes the pioneering 20th century architect Charles-Édouard Jeanneret, better known as Le Corbusier: “Trash is always abundantly decorated; the luxury object is well made, neat and clean, pure and healthy, and its bareness reveals the quality of its manufacture.”

### Architects and Architecture for Today and Tomorrow

All of the architects interviewed for this story acknowledge global and regional environmental factors, as well as the need to consider those factors in their architectural design work. Sustainability is more than a catchy buzzword: It’s a foundational concept in today’s design. “Houses need to become much more energy-efficient,” says Al Platt.

“Projects should be sustainably designed to have as minimal of an impact on our environment as possible,” Legerton says. He notes that the trend toward that kind of design “should gain even more prominence going forward.”

Huebner says that he’s particularly interested in technology trends as they relate to building science and building materials. Recent Brickstack projects have featured solar photovoltaic panels and hot water panels that integrate subtly into home design. “They’re practically invisible,” he says, noting that one recent project is “98% net zero,” meaning that the total energy consumption of the home is almost completely offset by renewable energy generated onsite. “That’s a very exciting trend,” he says.

“Our buildings need to withstand increasingly harsher climates,” Huebner says. “And that means that the materials we build them out of need to respond.” He also expresses



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:

PLATT property, photo by Jerry Markatos

Antidote Bar, photo courtesy Legerton Architecture

Home designed by cJem designs photo by Jonathan Saunders

Brickstack Architects work, photo by Kevin Meechan

Samsel Architects principals Nathan Bryant and Duncan McPherson, photo by Todd Crawford





strong interest in using building materials that have a lower impact on the environment. Legerton has observed a trend toward “better environmental and climatic sensitive building designs, materials, technologies, and systems for all building types.”

“Designing for climate change and climate resiliency is where we must be focused,” says McPherson, noting that the energy efficiency movement has been around for more than a half century. His firm is committed to designing “buildings that don’t contribute to climate change and buildings that can adapt and be resilient to climate change.” He believes that building designs must be responsive to the air quality, wind, rain, and sun of a particular place. “We’re in unprecedented times,” he asserts. “These factors and our larger ecosystems are changing in unpredictable ways.” With a goal of designing buildings with (at least) a 100-year functional lifespan, he asks himself this question when working on a new design: “How will our designs today perform in the year 2120?”

Speaking of the future, there’s a guarded optimism about the market for new architects in Western North Carolina. “It’s saturated,” admits Larsen, “but if you are a good, honest, trustworthy, and communicative person, there’s plenty of work and opportunity.”

Legerton notes that there are already quite a few architectural firms in Western North Carolina, and that some local projects enlist architects from outside the area. Even so, he says, “it seems that most local firms have ample work and opportunities.” But he cautions that “when another economic downturn occurs, that situation will change and there will be fewer opportunities and fewer projects.”

Al Platt takes a sunnier view. “There’s always room for more good design,” he says.

Newcomer architects who have completed their study, apprenticeship, and licensure and manage to land a job with a firm in the region can expect to make \$50-60k annually starting out, says Legerton. According to the latest data available from the North Carolina Department of Commerce (the 2019 “Star Jobs” employment projections table), the category “Architects, Except Landscape and Naval” receives four stars—the second-highest rating—was estimated to add about 220 annual positions to its current 2,800 jobs. The table pegs architects’ median annual wage statewide at \$78,200.

The category “Architectural and Engineering Managers” is another four-star job; the state’s Department of Commerce estimates more than 4,000 jobs in that field statewide by 2026; that translates to 300 new jobs each year. Median annual wage

for that level runs just under \$133,000 annually, according to the “Star Jobs” report.

### Waxing Architectural

Asked to sum up their philosophies of architecture, these creative professionals provide wildly divergent answers, yet

conducting all business [recognizing that] people and place matter.”

Duncan McPherson has clearly given the subject some thought as well. “Our creative process blends art and function to create an individualized project for each client,” he says. “Ultimately, we strive for our work to inspire joy in those who use, work, and live in the spaces we

create.” He finds inspiration from “the urban fabric, the people we work with, and the beauty of the natural world. I hope the experience of our work and the values of our firm inspire others in our community to make our world a beautiful and better place. I believe that architecture has the power to enhance the quality of our lives,” he says.

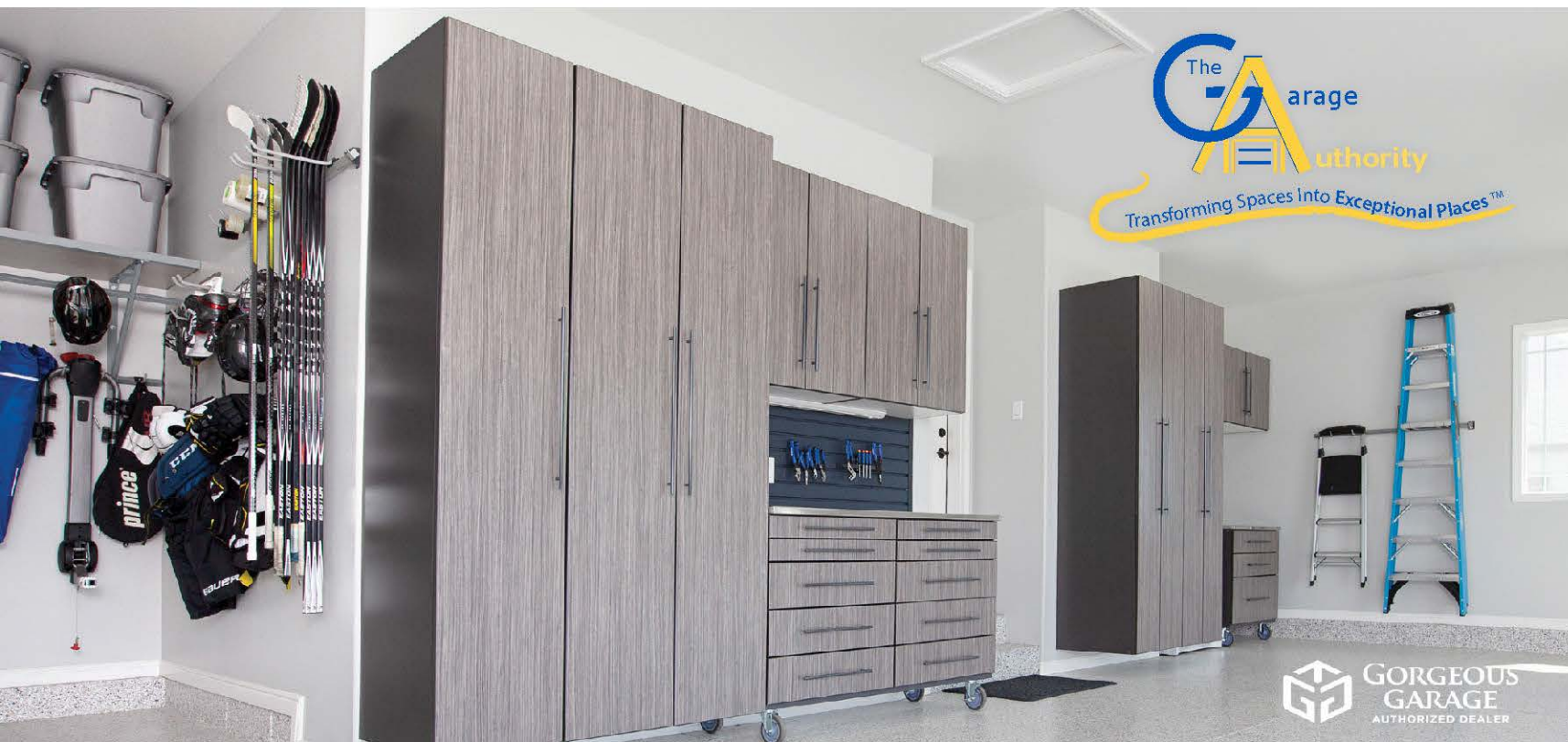
Scott Huebner draws wisdom from Marcus Vitruvius Pollio, a Roman civil

engineer of the 1st century B.C.E. “Vitruvius was famous for saying that architecture must have these three essential qualities: *firmitas*, *utilitas*, and *venustas*, he says.

“Strength, utility, and beauty. That sounds about right.” ©

**I hope the values of our firm inspire others in our community to make our world a beautiful and better place. I believe that architecture has the power to enhance the quality of our lives.**

they share some common themes. Parker Platt is succinct. “Listen first,” he says. “Design and build second.” John Legerton shares that sentiment but expands upon it. “Our core values are listening carefully, improving communities, contributing to our local and regional quality of life, and



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