

Integrating design and construction

By John R. DaSilva, AIA

The Roman architect Vitruvius in his *Ten Books of Architecture* (ca. 25 BC), defines the essence of architecture as a synthesis of *firmness, commodity* and *delight*, or, in other translations, *strength, function* and *beauty*. For Vitruvius, achieving a successful home required the integration of design and construction.

At Polhemus Savery DaSilva Architects Builders we perform our work based on a model called integrated design/build. This means our single professional organization is responsible for both the design and construction of our projects. Architect and constructor relationships in the more typical design-bid-build scenario, where one can profit by proving the other wrong, are rife with mistrust and contentiousness. The client ends up in the middle. Our integrated design/build model helps to avoid these problems.

To create successful homes with happy owners it takes a passion not only for thoughtful design and quality construction, but also for serving those clients. Meeting the needs of busy clients who are usually at a distance from their projects dictates a deliberate, highly organized approach and a commitment to a smooth process of design, permitting, construction, and on-going maintenance. Our approach streamlines this process and allows our clients to be as involved or un-involved as they wish, while still achieving the high level results they deserve.

While our clients are diverse, their need for clear, direct and honest communication, a trustworthy relationship, and hassle-free project management is universal. In the words of one client quoted in an article about his house: "I always felt confident that the design concepts could be turned into reality because of the harmony that existed inside the firm." In another article, another client praised our "ability to blend the artistry of architecture and design with precise construction."

Our long experience with and careful attention to solving functional needs, creating well considered forms and spaces, and crafting special detail allows us to create homes that feel both rooted on Cape Cod and unique to their owners and sites.

We are committed to delivering fine design, quality construction, functional success, and budget and schedule control with single-source accountability. These commitments and connections ground our architecture in both a living tradition of construction and in the needs of our clients. It allows an ongoing integration of art, craft and function. It helps take our architectural design beyond the pure realm of fine art and into the more complex realm of practical art. It provides our clients with the best chance at achieving a balanced process and a positive outcome—at achieving the classic Vitruvian synthesis of firmness, commodity and delight.

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