

Maine Home

DECEMBER 2017

+ DESIGN



The
Architecture
Issue

DECEMBER \$5.95



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CREATIVE GENIUS

**TWENTY IMAGINATIVE ARCHITECTURE PROJECTS
MAKING INDELIBLE MARKS ON THE STATE**

Maine architecture has a storied past. In Portland alone, buildings range from the Colonial Tate House (1750–1820) to the Renaissance Revival United States Custom House (1868–72) to the postmodern Portland Museum of Art addition by Henry Nichols Cobb of Pei Cobb Freed and Partners (1983). For a variety of reasons, design evolution often means buildings that were once “in style” aren’t anymore. And whether or not you deem a particular building beautiful, what there’s certainly no arguing about is that Maine architecture continues to evolve at a rapid pace.

Need proof? You’re holding it in your hands. In this, our annual Architecture Issue, we’ve rounded up 20 recent residences and commercial buildings that speak to the caliber of design happening around the state. Many have a quiet beauty, an inherent simplicity that echoes the qualities that help define Maine in both its landscape and culture. Some projects are designed to be a seamless transition from sea to land to structure, while others have an eco bent along with a bit of unflagging grit. (A home designed by GO Logic and built far beyond the last power pole in Palermo comes to mind.)

The projects range in scope—from a contemporary residence with a planted flat roof to a three-story urban penthouse to a 19,000-square-foot office building for an insurance company—but what is notable about many of them, as architect Scott Blanchard of Eric A. Chase Architecture puts it, “is what you don’t see.” The firm updated a turn-of-the-century farmhouse with solar panels that store summer’s excess energy to be used during winter’s sun-shy months. Indeed, sustainable design strategies are used in abundance: Fiorentino Group Architects planted a fine fescue lawn that requires less water, and BrightBuilt Home constructed an entire house off-site—both saving on the cost of construction and saving the home from the elements while it was built. These projects speak to a level of sustainability that simply wasn’t possible just years ago.

What will Maine architecture bring in the coming years? If the following pages offer a glimpse of where it’s going, if they serve as a roadmap to the future being built around us, then we’re on the right path. In color, form, line, shape, space, texture, value, and scale, these projects are making their artistic, imaginative, optimistic, and indelible marks on the state. Here’s to making beautiful history.



AN AIRY OASIS IN KENNEBUNKPORT

The clients came to Whitten Architects looking to replace a worn 1930s cottage with a new contemporary, day-lit, energy-efficient vacation home. It also needed to provide amenities for their extended family and friends. Located on a frontal dune, this house would be constrained by the height limitations of the town and the FEMA floodplain of the beach. Whitten Architects worked closely with William Walsh of Walsh Engineering Associates to create a code-compliant path to maximizing occupied space while keeping the building in line with its surroundings and complementing the neighborhood aesthetic. Needing to set the structure 11 feet above the street for flood purposes, Whitten Architects worked with Albert Putnam to create an evocative language of exposed galvanized steel structure that would tie the building to the ground with a light and airy touch. The galvanized steel is repeated throughout the house on the exterior entry stairs, water table, and exterior porches, tying the building to the land and creating a contemporary interpretation of a beach cottage.

Large, comfortable processional steps provide a gentle arrival through the house and down again to the beach, making the house a permeable bridge between the outside world and the beach. Once a visitor ascends the steps and enters the house, the view changes from structure, screening, and street to beach and open ocean. The sound of the rolling waves that pervades the house creates a constant sense of serenity. Expansive glazing embraces the view and connects the occupants to the outdoors. Landscape architect Emma Kelly's landscape rolls around and through the lower level of the house, slipping underneath the exposed steel structure and continuing to blur the line between indoor and outdoor spaces.

The building seeks to minimize energy consumption through an insulated shell, daylighting strategies, and cross-ventilation. A large solar electric array works to offset the energy consumption in the building. View-driven decks extend the living space toward the beach. They provide needed shade in the summer and a commanding overlook of the beach below. These spaces create the perfect respite after a day at the beach.

Architect: Whitten Architects

Project Architects: James Beasley & Rob Whitten

Builder: Douston Construction

Civil Engineer: Walsh Engineering Associates

Interior Designer: Spaces Kennebunkport

Landscape Architect: Emma Kelly Landscape

Structural Engineer: Albert Putnam

Photographer: Trent Bell