

Heartfelt Homes

a gift that keeps giving

Creating a home for someone is something like preparing the perfect gift. What is meaningful to one person is different than what matters to another, so personalizing each design is essential. At ACM Design, we think that the best homes are born from a collaborative creative process with our clients. This process allows for an interactive experience in which we come to learn about what you expect your life to be like in your new home. We think about your daily rituals and what they mean for the layout and circulation; we ponder your hopes for how you will feel in these spaces. While seemingly non-architectural, these details inform the built environment. You may want this environment to be very different from your previous home ... or not.

Often, we are creating a place that works functionally now and has aspects that express something from earlier in the clients' lives. Holly and Jim* moved here from Pennsylvania, where Holly had grown up on a farm. When she began her family, her parents gave her some land from their property on which to build a house, and in time the grandkids came home from school to Grandma's house for hot cookies each afternoon. We created a kitchen for Holly that had a hutch detail and rustic beams, all reminiscent of her mother's kitchen. Today, preparing meals is Holly's gift to family and friends in her new kitchen. It feels like her mother's kitchen but functions like a modern chef's kitchen. Considering her rituals for how she uses her kitchen was the key to unlock the ideal layout while weaving in memories from her past made the space feel right.

Likewise, Jim lived for a time in Japan before they married. He appreciated Japanese culture and design and wanted to infuse that influence into the new home design. Together, we decided to feature a tansu chest in the foyer as a design focal point that could be enjoyed on a daily basis.



Our clients tend to want that kind of interactive experience. When they step into their home during construction or when it is complete, they will already have memories relating to that space. **You see, we know that designing a home isn't only about the physical objects, but the memories associated with things that remind us of times past and make us look forward to times to come.**

Ava and Bryan* are very private people. They came to meet me and left without giving much indication of whether they wanted to hire me. An hour later, though, they called and said, "We want you to design our house." Something in our conversation resonated for them, and it was only as time went by and the trust between us grew that they gifted me with the ability to peer into the depths of their family life. We started the process and, as we did, the story of their journey gradually surfaced, and I learned of the health struggles they had endured together when their children were young.



Now, all these years later, Ava and Bryan together delight in their grandbabies, who come to their house two or three days each week, riding their trikes around the kitchen, just as we envisioned. Throughout, they impressed me with the richness of their life together and with their family relationships.

Seeing the beauty of their lives, I felt committed to them beyond the level of simply designing a house. Together, we were creating a real home that would be the backdrop against which their lives would further emerge.

As the home construction was nearing completion, I gathered the courage to ask Bryan, "Why did you choose to work with me from the many talented architects at your disposal?" His answer was short and simple,

“ You listened to us. ”



Our concepts of what home can be resonated, even though what that looks like is unique to each homeowner. As a personal example, I love to travel and, when I do, to purchase a piece of artwork to remember the trip by. I put these in specific places in my home where I know I'll see them or walk by at certain times, to really savor their beauty and treasure those memories.

We are creating spaces that hold memories and things that are dear to people, that give a sense of what they hope the future will be, and yet with presence and attention to how they live now. Layer upon layer, this is the story of people's lives. Our clients trust us to interpret that story in a way that feels good to them. Everyone knows that **feeling**: When you walk into a home and say, "This feels right."

When we hear those words from our clients, knowing we've created something special, it is very fulfilling and makes us strive to continue to work at that level.



ACM DESIGN
Timeless homes

* Out of respect for our clients' privacy, we have changed the names.

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