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A Trade and Lifestyles Publication

FALL 2020

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FALL 2020

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**HICKS
DESIGN
STUDIO**

Architect Bill Hicks





With residential projects ranging from 2,000 to 50,000 square feet, the firm has the capability to design any style of home from traditional to transitional to modern.

PHOTOS courtesy of Hicks Design Studio



HICKS DESIGN STUDIO



Experience translates into creative & innovative possibilities

TEXT Krista Deverson

Experience translates into possibilities. For Hicks Design Studio that experience means they can push the envelope on creativity in the most standard of projects and undertake different, more complicated projects that may not seem entirely plausible. With forty years of design experience, Bill Hicks, his partner, Jason Huether and the remaining long-term associates of the design firm, Hicks Design Studio, have the ability and

confidence to solve any design problem or concern.

Their firm of about sixteen people has maintained a focus on residential design from the beginning. With residential projects ranging from 2,000 to 50,000 square feet, the firm has the capability to design any style of home from traditional to transitional to modern. Bill Hicks and Jason Huether have noticed a change in the demands of their clientele over the

years. Whereas they began doing mostly traditional style homes, the demand for either transitional homes with more modern interiors or fully modern designs has increased over the last five to ten years. This style became more popular in Toronto and has started branch out throughout the Greater Toronto area over the last few years.

However, Hicks and Huether noticed that as the demand for modern design

has grown, so has the need for aesthetic differentiation. Being so comfortable with their design ability, they began to take a different approach to the style of modern houses. With most modern homes looking nearly identical to each other, Hicks Design Studio works to create projects that push the boundaries of modern style and makes them unique to other homes of the same aesthetic. They take a different approach by using materials like wood and glass, with a goal of setting themselves apart in the design. Hicks says that there are still clients wanting very traditional homes too with French or English influences. And, with the extensive experience of the firm, they are quite comfortable working with all different design styles to create one-of-a-kind homes.

Although their focus has been on residential homes in southern Ontario, Hicks Design Studio has worked on projects across Canada and internationally, both large and small-scale. From a 30-home development in Moscow, to a palace overseas, to numerous cottages in Canada, Hicks Design Studio has the professional capabilities to tackle almost any project. Bill Hicks has noticed, in fact, that one of the impacts of Coronavirus is the increased interest in building new weekend family retreats and cottages in Ontario.

Regardless of the idiosyncrasies of a location, Hicks Design Studio has the expertise to overcome any regulatory issues and work through complicated policies to get the building project complete. With the increasing difficulty in the building approvals process, projects can become slowed down by the number of studies required, resulting in frustrations and delays. However, Hicks Design studio has the unique ability to navigate, manage, and expedite the approval and permit process for their clients. Their track record in managing the approvals process is strong and so they are often approached by clients



who know that their particular site will require more unique solutions in order to be approved. As a firm, they work hard to meet the clients wish list and make their dream builds a reality. For example, the firm works often on projects bordering Lake Ontario because they have a solid track record of working with the Conservation Authority to meet their design requirements.

Furthermore, they often are hired to take on a project management role to assist with hiring and coordinating project consultants from interior designers, to structural experts, to landscape designers, and more. The project management services they provide make the building process an easier and more seamless experience for clients

who often are busy professionals in their own right and may not have the time to oversee a project themselves.

The firm's unique way of processing approvals, where they aim to work all of them simultaneously, speeds up the process for their clients. Their expertise in this area gives them an edge on more challenging projects that require multiple approvals or municipal support. For more controversial projects, permit processes could take six months or more. Due to their skill level in working through regulations, Hicks Design Studio has the confidence to take on more unique projects. Bill Hicks and Jason Huether say that there are not too many projects that scare them away, noting that if they are confident in a project, together, they

will find a way to make it work.

While residential projects are the foundation of Hicks Design Studio's business, they have also branched out into other areas and are gaining recognition for their designs. They are the leading designer of Golf Club clubhouses in Canada and recently were retained by Capilano Golf and Country Club in Vancouver to redesign their clubhouses. Similarly, they have been working on a golf course project in Osprey Valley and another Golf destination resort in Caledon, Ontario, constructing three new clubhouses and a number of residential villas and executive retreat buildings.

Furthermore, they're working on more projects on the hospitality end of the





spectrum including a large historic hotel in Niagara-on-the-Lake, which will be one of Canada's top five star resorts and a new winery in the region that will require a major facility in the area. They also worked on a very complex project in Elora that comprised a spa, hotel, and wedding venue building.

The other development that required extensive knowledge and understanding of municipal and conservatory regulations was the new condominium they constructed on the edge of the river in Elora, Ontario. It was one of the most



unique and spectacular projects they had ever worked on because it required approvals to allow them to build right on the edge of the Grand River. However, due to the firm's solid reputation and previous admirable projects in the area, Hicks was able to garner support from the town mayor and counsellors, resulting in the project approval.

Hicks says that many of their projects came because of previous residential clients that were so thrilled with the work the firm accomplished that they were curious to see what kind of results they could complete in commercial projects and places. Their reputation for developing commercial spaces into environments that are warm and welcoming instead

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of cold, sterile spaces, is what has increased the demand for their services in the commercial field.

Bill Hicks attributes much of his success to the development of numerous essential skills in the field. As the industry has grown and changed over the last forty years he has been in business, Bill Hicks says his firm has become a jack-of-all-trades in a sense because as an architect, one must be able to undertake multiple roles. He must be able to use the skills of a marriage counsellor, a lawyer, a politician, and a negotiator at times for example, just to be able to see a project to its completion.

While the firm has really grown and expanded their focus over the last forty years, the residential side is still their main focal point and is now led by Jason Huether, who's design skills match Bill Hicks' vision and aesthetic, after so many years of working together. Their confidence in these projects has given them a solid base to tackle other, more challenging and demanding architectural designs in different fields.

The results speak for themselves with their innovative and capturing designs that transform both residential and commercial spaces into masterpieces.



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