

BLACKBURN

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Round Lot Farm - Medfield, Massachusetts

**Over Three Decades of
Experience in Design Excellence**

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“The years teach much which the days never know” – Ralph Waldo Emerson. Perhaps no quote better sums up the value of experience. In an ever changing industry which demands expert design being utilized over a wide variety of project types, experience is not only useful, it is essential. For over 32 years Blackburn Architects has been distinguishing themselves as a design-oriented firm dedicated

to balancing their clients’ needs, budget limitations, and site concerns to achieve their project goals. Their extensive experience and deep appreciation for architectural heritage form the basis for an all-inclusive methodology guiding them through each of the firm’s distinct design disciplines.

Blackburn Architects began as Smith Blackburn Stauffer Architects in 1983, focusing mostly on adaptive re-use urban design. When the chance to work with renowned landscape architect, Morgan Wheelock on a 400 acre barn project in Middleburg, VA, presented itself, John Blackburn and his former colleague Robbie Smith jumped at

the opportunity and started what would become the first of many equine-centric projects. Inspired by Wheelock, John and his colleague adopted a design technique that took the natural elements of a horse’s “intended” environment and replicated them inside the barn. This design method would become the signature of a Blackburn Barn and elevate Blackburn as an industry thought leader. The firm officially became “Blackburn Architects” in 1995. Since their inception Blackburn Architects has not only been known as the national expert on equestrian design, but has also expanded that expertise to Renovation, Adaptive Reuse and

Residential design. As a full service boutique firm with a staff of twelve, Blackburn Architects cover projects from initiation and concept design through to construction documents and management, with geographic reach throughout the United States and abroad in over 35 states and 3 countries.

Without question, equestrian design continues to be a strong niche for Blackburn Architects. “We believe that great equestrian design starts with the horse and ends with the building that fits the horse, the owner, and the surrounding environment like a glove,” explains John Blackburn. “Our job is to create a structure

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Devine Residence (Custom Residential) — Photo: Paul Schraub



Devine Residence (Custom Residential) — Photo: Paul Schraub



Devine Residence (Custom Residential) — Photo: Paul Schraub

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that stands harmoniously in the land.” With a portfolio that includes over 100 equestrian projects, Blackburn has fostered a reputation for genuine, honest communication backed by solid, hands-on service that is always inclusive of eco-friendly elements. “Since our first equestrian project in 1982 we have employed the concepts of environmental conservation. We have LEED accredited designers on staff and use green design in almost every decision from placement of the stables on the site to the materials used in construction.”

Recognizing the importance of preserving the built environment and embracing the special challenges of adapting older buildings for new uses is another market segment that Blackburn excels in. At the very core of their philosophy is their respect for the historic importance of architecture. “The qualities that really distinguish Blackburn Architects are experience, expertise, design innovation and respect for the past,” continues John. “By unifying technology and design with sensitivity of the existing structure, the result is the best of the past and the present, and value that will hold its place in the future.” With such an extensive portfolio of renovation and adaptive reuse projects, Blackburn Architects have demonstrated a remarkable ability to integrate new uses and modern technologies in historical buildings with artful results.

To create distinctive residential

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Rosemount (Adaptive Reuse) — Photo: Blackburn Architects



Rosemount (Adaptive Reuse) — Photo: Blackburn Architects

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design, Blackburn Architects believes integrating individual lifestyle with an aesthetic form, the necessary functions of a home and the demands of the site. “We are extremely inventive and responsive so that each project is reflective a client’s personality and our design expertise,” adds John. “A home should be designed to accommodate change and adapt with time. When children grow up and adults grow older, their needs obviously change. A well designed home will adapt gracefully to life’s changes.” Whether the design is contemporary or traditional, Blackburn Architects brings fresh thinking to every project.

There are numerous strengths that Blackburn brings to every client and project, and at the top of the list is certainly their experience. “We have over 32 years of experience in each of our specialties, including a wide range of project sizes and scopes. With so much experience to draw from, we are able to provide a more holistic approach to design and service,” explains John. “Our extensive experience is reassuring to clients and vendors. We are flexible, accessible and personable. We design to fit the context and needs of the client.” By using building integrated modeling software that allows Blackburn to share ideas with clients and vendors, they can more reliably make changes in earlier stages of project development. The work progress is more accessible at an earlier phase and

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Hopkins Candy Factory — *Photo: Staff*



Hopkins Candy Factory — *Photo: Staff*



Hopkins Candy Factory (Adaptive Reuse) — *Photo: Blackburn Architects*



River Farm Bank Barn — Photo: Kevin Wyner



River Farm Bank Barn — Photo: Kevin Wyner

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the client can feel more engaged.

With such success for over three decades, John Blackburn is the first to give credit to his staff and the process the firm uses in attracting and nurturing top design talent. “We are very proud of the level of talent we maintain at Blackburn. We are very careful to give projects to staff members that match their talents and strengths,” states John. “In this way our team members take ownership of each project and are in control. I, of course, bring it along with them and this in turn teaches them and they learn from the whole experience.” This process

allows John to be involved in all aspects of a project and to be hands on from project inception. “Communication is extremely important to all phases of the design and construction process. All projects are discussed in staff meetings and we keep the client informed at all times. I am also always accessible whenever anyone, staff or client, needs me.”

When discussing design philosophy, three things are central to Blackburn Architects. The design must balance and address the demands of the site, the needs of the owner and ensure the health and safety of the occupants (horses and humans alike). To guarantee adherence to that philosophy on each and every project, Blackburn uses a process that brings the clients vision to light early on. To match the client’s budget to their needs as early on

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in the process as possible, Blackburn Architects will do a Master Plan starting with a site visit followed by a client questionnaire to find out about the clients expectations. A written program is then developed with a site analysis, which in turn will facilitate a site plan including all buildings. Next a concept design with floor plans and elevation study is completed, followed by outline specifications. The final part of the master plan is to come up with a budget that fits the client and site. “We create a Pinterest file to have the client show us certain details they like that we can incorporate in the design,” adds John. “Based on experience I can often show the clients ways to do things they may not have thought of.”

Certainly what matters most to Blackburn Architects is complete client satisfaction. The following quotes are only a handful of examples of the dedication to design excellence guaranteed by John Blackburn and his team.

“Working with John and the Blackburn Architect team was a pleasure. John was careful to ask me all kinds of questions before the firm began the designing process to determine exactly how I planned to use the barn. The result was a design that perfectly addressed my wants and needs. During the construction phase, not only did the team answer my questions and create the barn of my dreams, but they interfaced seamlessly with our builder despite the fact our location

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Sagamore (Renovation; Equestrian) — Photo: Cesar Lujan



Sagamore (Renovation; Equestrian) — Photo: Cesar Lujan

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is 500 miles from Washington, DC.

In addition to being a physically lovely structure, the layout, dimensions and attention to small detail made the facility exceptionally safe for both my horses and whomever is working in the barn: riders; vets; farriers; and barn workers.

The horses moved into the barn in October, 2001. Since that point the eight stall barn has been a source of continuous source of pleas-

ure to me, my family and animals.”
- **Client from Medfield, MA**

“The Westchester Corporation has benefited greatly from our long term relationship with Blackburn architects with regards to many aspects of the maintenance and improvement of our 1920’s era buildings. One of our largest projects has been the restoration of the façade which is wrapping up in 2016 after staging the work over 15 years. Over the years, we have worked together on large scale projects as well as small interior improvement projects, each time Blackburn’s participation was not only well received but created a positive end result for our Member Owners.” - **Ann Benefield,**

General Manager, The Westchester Corporation

“When we were looking for a barn, we were not sure what we wanted. We were fairly positive that we did not want to build a prefab barn as they can be hot in the summer and cold in the winter. We liked the look of a wood structure but did not believe that a custom barn was in our price range. My husband Carl came across the ad for Blackburn Architects and we loved the option of the pre-designed green barns. We also could appreciate the thought and consideration for the horses that John puts into his designs. I can say the horses love the barn as much as we do. They are happy and relaxed

in the "horse space" and we have a wonderful "people space" to hang out and entertain. Our neighbors often comment on what a beautiful addition our barn is to the neighborhood” - **Hollie Wilent, Greenbarn client**

Over three decades ago, John Blackburn could hardly have imagined where his fledgling firm would be let alone what it would evolve into. Yet as Ralph Waldo Emerson so aptly penned, success rarely happens overnight and experience never does. When looking ahead, Blackburn Architects will draw from that hard earned experience to map the

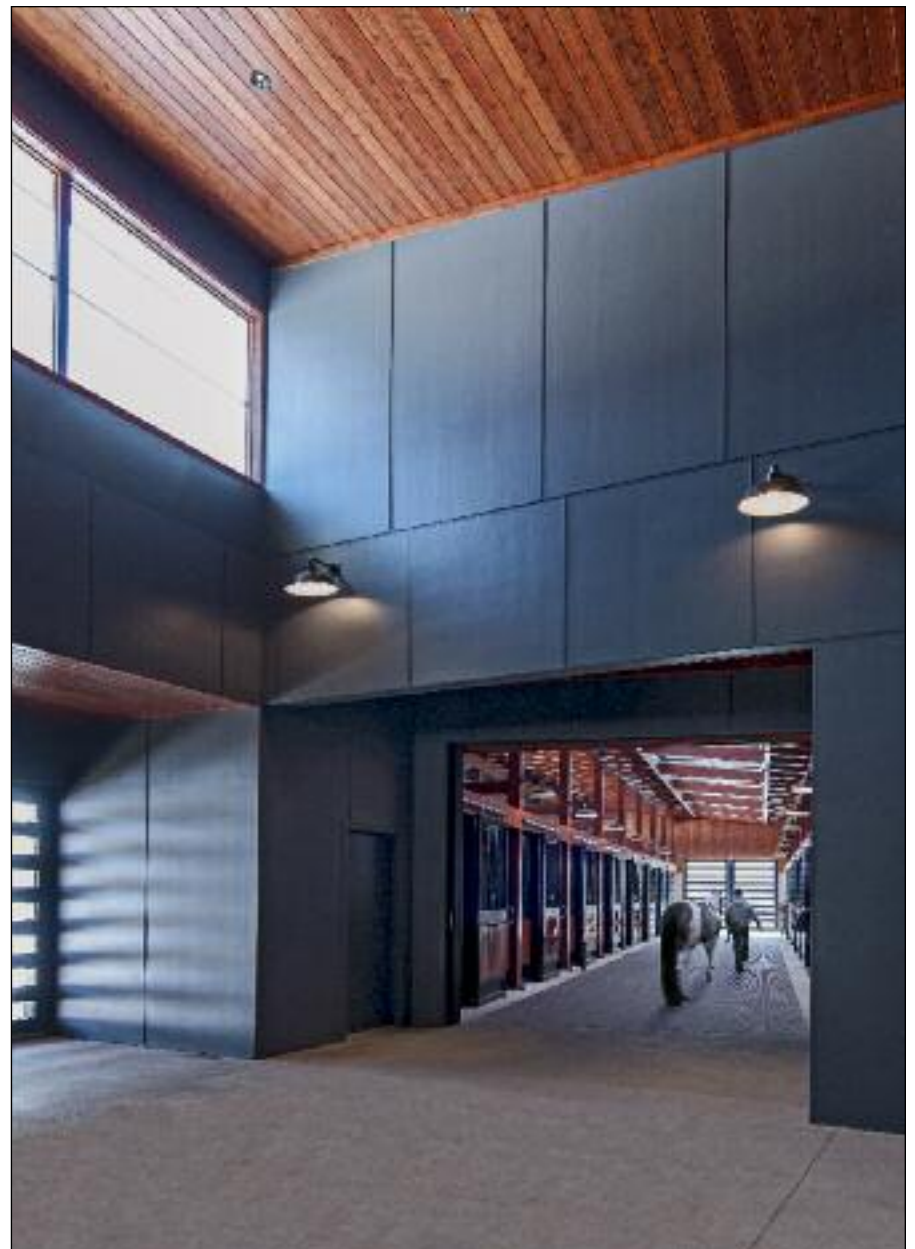
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Pegaso (Equestrian) — Photo: Cesar Lujan



Pegaso (Equestrian) — Photo: Cesar Lujan



Pegaso (Equestrian) — Photo: Cesar Lujan

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future of the firm. What it comes down to is complete satisfaction of each and every unique client, and as they continue to grow and diversify their renovation and adaptive re-use, Blackburn Architects will never forget what made them an industry leader. “Regardless of budgets and resources, all of our work is of the highest quality,” says John. “Our invaluable experience, dedication to meticulous detail, personalized top-to-bottom service and strict adherence to standards set by our design philosophy, culminate in bespoke, functional spaces clients can be proud of.”



Westchester (Historic Restoration/Facade Restoration) — Photo: Staff

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