



They Know Design: Top Architects in Washington

Here are 37 top architects who design beautiful homes, additions, and renovations.

By: [Mary Clare Glover](#)

Who are the best architects in Washington? To find out, we went to the source—to local architects.

In an online survey we asked residential architects to tell us about peers whose work they admire. (They could not vote for themselves or for their partners.) We asked about established firms and up-and-comers, about modernists, classicists, and every style in between. We also reviewed lists of award winners in local and national design competitions.

The result is this list—the 37 firms that received the most recommendations. Then we called them and listened to them describe their work.

If an architect is not listed, it does not mean the firm isn't good. Some well-known firms, like **Hartman-Cox**, focus on commercial projects. Other top talents, including **Hugh Newell Jacobsen** and **Allan Greenberg**, have national reputations but do not do a lot of projects in Washington. Some firms are too new or too small to receive many votes. And firms listed here may not be right for your project—but might happily provide referrals.

Another way to find an architect is through the American Institute of Architects. Log on to aiadc.com to find links to more than 70 members who do business throughout Washington. (Go to “client resource center” under “hire an architect.”) You can see more extensive portfolios by visiting the AIA chapter at 1777 Church Street, near Dupont Circle; 202-667-1798.

AIA's Northern Virginia chapter (703-549-9747) lists more than 100 architects on its Web site, aianova.org (click on “find an architect”), while Maryland's Potomac Valley chapter (301-935-5544) lets you search for an architect by Zip code on aiapvc.org.

Top Vote Getters

If you are spending money on an architect, you may want a design that could land your house in *Architectural Digest*. The firms below frequently win awards, and many of their designs have appeared in national magazines. Insiders say these 11 firms are doing the very best work in Washington.

Barnes Vanze Architects, Northwest DC; 202-337-7255; also in Middleburg; barnesvanze.com. Since founding Barnes Vanze Architects in 1989, Anthony “Ankie” Barnes and Stephen Vanze have grown their firm from 2 to 30 architects. Although most known for traditional styles, they also take on modern projects.

Cunningham/Quill Architects, Northwest DC; 202-337-0090; cunninghamquill.com. Ralph Cunningham and

Lee Quill head a team of 25 architects at this Georgetown firm. Well versed in both traditional and modern styles, the firm places an emphasis on creating, says Cunningham, “an overall unified look.”

David Jameson Architect, Alexandria; 703-739-3840; davidjamesonarchitect.com. A top vote getter in our survey; David Jameson’s modern designs have won awards locally, nationally, and internationally. Peers call his work innovative, detailed, and thoughtful. “We never do the same thing twice,” says Jameson. “That’s what makes it a blast.”

David Jones Architect, Northwest DC; 202-332-1200; davidjonesarchitects.com. The six architects at this firm do high-end, traditional work. Jones describes his designs as “simple” and “geared toward casual living.” He often incorporates ecofriendly technology such as geothermal heating and cooling systems and green roofs.

McInturff Architects, Bethesda; 301-229-3705; mcinturffarchitects.com. One of the area’s premier architects. Mark McInturff’s modern, innovative work consistently wins awards. Peers call McInturff’s work elegant and thoughtful, and they admire his attention to detail.

Moore Architects, Alexandria; 703-837-0080; moorearch.com. Among our top vote getters, Charles Moore and his team of eight architects can turn a drab 1940s ranch into a stunning bungalow or add a seamless addition to a historic farmhouse. Says one peer: “I admire the way Charlie Moore is able to use history in a smart way.”

Muse Architects, Bethesda; 301-718-8118; musearchitects.com. Stephen Muse says his 15-architect firm does a lot of “corrective surgery” on older or historic houses: “We try to extend what’s best about the house and fix its problems.” For many of Washington’s old homes, that means creating more glassy, open spaces.

Neumann Lewis Buchanan Architects, Northwest DC; 202-775-4881; also in Middleburg; nlbarchitects.com. David Neumann, Andy Lewis, and Mark Buchanan specialize in traditional, timeless styles for high-end new homes and renovations. A top vote getter in our survey; this firm’s award-winning work can be found in the Washington area, rural Virginia, and on Maryland’s Eastern Shore.

Robert M. Gurney, Alexandria; 703-739-3843; robertgurneyarchitect.com. Winner of multiple AIA awards in recent years—and the person who garnered the most votes from peers in our survey—Gurney is known for unique and sophisticated modern design.

Russell Versaci Architecture, Middleburg; 540-687-8777; russellversaci.com. Russell Versaci is a leader in the “new old house” design movement, which uses classic, traditional styles in high-end new homes. Versaci describes his work as “the antidote to the McMansion” and says his designs often incorporate front porches and dormers.

Wiedemann Architects, Bethesda; 301-652-4022; wiedemannarchitects.com. Although most known for seamless additions to and renovations of older homes, Greg Wiedemann also does modern work. His designs convey a sense of intimacy. “We want our homes to feel comfortable to our clients,” he says.

More Good Architects

These firms may have received fewer votes in our survey, but their peers say they are talented. Some are small shops that offer one-on-one service and may take on more modest projects.

Ahmann Architects, University Park; 301-864-1334; ahmannarchitects.com. Thomas Ahmann worked for Stephen Muse and Greg Wiedemann, and their influence shows—Ahmann’s renovations and homes fit seamlessly into their surroundings. This three-architect firm is happy to take on small projects.

Amestudio, Alexandria; 703-549-2948; amestudio.com. Ben Ames's work combines clean, modern design with a palette of warm materials including mahogany, bamboo, walnut, and natural stone.

Bennett Frank McCarthy, Silver Spring; 301-585-2222; bfmarch.com. Ralph Bennett, Larry Frank, and Brian McCarthy can do a range of projects—from Craftsman-style bungalows to housing for the elderly and those with special needs.

Broadhurst Architects, Rockville; 301-309-8900; broadhurstarchitects.com. Insiders call Jeffrey Broadhurst, who worked under Stephen Muse and Gregory Wiedemann before opening his own firm seven years ago, an up-and-comer. The firm earned three local AIA awards last year.

Cole Prevost, Northwest DC; 202-234-1090; coleprevost.net. This small, ten-year-old firm specializes in modern design and has interior designers on staff. What you won't see in one of his designs, says Robert Cole: "vast expanses of stark white. Colors are very important."

Division1 Architects, Silver Spring; 301-608-0909; division1architects.com. Although known for commercial work, including K Street's Lima Restaurant and Mondo Sushi in Pentagon Row, this firm also does a lot of innovative residential projects. Partner Ali Honarkar says it uses a lot of glass, concrete, and steel in its modern designs. What you'll never see? "Crown molding."

Donald Lococo Architects, Northwest DC; 202-337-4422; donaldlococoarchitects.com. Although most known for his traditional work, Lococo is also comfortable working in modern styles. His small, eight-year-old firm loves to incorporate timbers and natural stone into designs.

Dynerman Whitesell Architects, Northwest DC; 202-337-1290; dwarchitects.com. "We solve problems by taking away rather than adding," says architect Alan Dynerman, who describes his work as "elemental and simple." The four-architect firm works often in natural materials and places an emphasis on natural light.

Franck & Lohsen Architects, Northwest DC; 202-223-9449; francklohsen.com. This eight-year-old firm specializes in classical, traditional architecture. "We've done log cabins to cathedrals to everything in between," says Arthur Lohsen.

Hamilton Snowber, Northwest DC; 202-332-5416; hamiltonsnowber.com. Cynthia Hamilton and Chris Snowber, who used to work for David Jones, create mostly traditional designs. They do a lot of renovations in historic neighborhoods such as Cleveland Park, the Palisades, and Chevy Chase.

Kube Architecture, Northwest DC; 202-986-0573; kubearch.com. This small Dupont Circle firm specializes in contemporary design and likes to experiment with nontraditional materials such as recycled rubber and plastic. Principal Richard Loosle describes its work—a lot of light, open spaces with rich colors and textures—as "warm modern."

Lawlor Architects, Capitol Hill; 202-543-4446; lawlorarchitects.com. Before opening his firm in 2003, Steve Lawlor worked as a senior project architect for Mark McInturff. His transitional designs, he says, "are neither harshly modern nor painstakingly traditional." The firm works mostly in Washington's historic neighborhoods such as Capitol Hill, Cleveland Park, and Chevy Chase.

McCartney Architects, Northwest DC; 202-328-0200. This four-architect firm specializes in additions and renovations of older homes. "We want our projects to look like the new and old were done at the same time," says Jack McCartney. The four like to maximize natural light by subtly raising and enlarging windows.

Meditch Murphey, Chevy Chase; 301-657-9400; meditchmurphey.com. Marcie Meditch describes her small

firm's style as "country modern." Meditch and her husband, John Murphey, who worked under acclaimed modernist Hugh Newell Jacobsen, create designs that are simple, clean, and unique. Says Meditch: "The more unusual, the better."

MW Architecture, Northwest DC; 202-667-3012; mw-architecture.com. Meghan Walsh, who has a fine-arts background, uses a lot of recycled materials in her modern designs. Her three-architect firm takes on large and small projects.

Outerbridge Horsey Associates, Northwest DC; 202-337-7334; outerbridgehorsey.com. This small firm specializes in traditional work—from Georgetown and Potomac to the Eastern Shore.

Randall Mars Architects, McLean; 703-749-0431; randallmarsarchitects.com. In business 18 years, Randall Mars combines traditional house shapes with contemporary interiors that emphasize natural light and airy, open layouts.

Reader & Swartz Architects, Winchester; 540-665-0212; readerswartz.com. Wife-and-husband architects Beth Reader and Chuck Swartz do new homes and renovations mostly in rural Virginia and West Virginia. Says Swartz about their offbeat modern designs: "Sometimes we don't behave ourselves."

Reena Racki Associates, Northwest DC; 202-363-4739; reenaaracki.com. Reena Racki says her designs fuse the old and the new: "I am more interested in architectural structure than style." Her projects have an international flair and often incorporate elements from different cultures.

Richard Williams, Northwest DC; 202-387-4500; richardwilliamsarchitects.com. Williams's work ranges from historic restorations in the city to contemporary new homes in the country. His detailed designs maximize natural light and are mindful of the property's landscape and surroundings.

Rill & Decker Architecture, Bethesda; 301-652-2484; rilldecker.com. Jim Rill and Anne Decker, who have worked together for more than 20 years, create traditional styles with a modern sensibility. They recently worked with Sheila Johnson to renovate Salamander Farm, her "stone manor farmhouse" outside Middleburg.

Rixey-Rixey Architects, Georgetown; 202-333-2626; rixeyrixeyarchitects.com. Husband-and-wife architects Douglas and Victoria Rixey tackle a wide range of styles. Recent projects include an ultramodern kitchen in a historic home, a traditional renovation of a Georgetown rowhouse, and a modern take on a shingle-style home.

Studio27 Architecture, Northwest DC; 202-939-0027; studio27arch.com. Todd Ray and John Burke head a team of 14 architects at this innovative, contemporary firm. Their residential designs place a strong emphasis on green technology and materials.

Suzane Reatig Architecture, Northwest DC; 202-518-0260; reatig.com. Peers admire the clarity and simplicity of Suzane Reatig's designs, which include single- and multifamily homes such as apartments and condos. Her modern projects—many of them in DC's Shaw neighborhood—feature lots of glass and open floor plans.

Treacy & Eagleburger Architects, Northwest DC; 202-362-5226; treacyeagleburger.com. Jane Treacy and Phil Eagleburger create light, airy designs. "We ride the line between modern and traditional," says Treacy.

Van Dusen Architects, Northwest DC; 202-332-3890; vandusenarchitects.com. Ben Van Dusen, whose small firm does mostly new homes and large renovations, calls his style "warm modernism." He likes to use color, stainless steel, and natural materials such as wood and stone.