

Metro ARCHITECT

FALL 2014 — VOLUME 6 NO.4

Murphy & Dittenhafer Architects: *Making Inspiring Places*



CODO 241 — J. David Allen & Son Photography

*Murphy &
Dittenhafer*
ARCHITECTS



Consistently producing excellent architecture for over twenty-eight years is an accolade that only a handful of firms can boast. Yet one such accomplished firm, while enjoying a long list of design awards, has measured success not by the number of honors received, but by the clarity of design intention and construction approach resulting in the creation of “inspiring places”.

Murphy & Dittenhafer was founded by Michael Murphy and Frank Dittenhafer, both University of Pennsylvania graduates who were influenced by the work and teachings of Louis Kahn, Robert Venturi, Laura Olin and others who questioned the latest architectural fads and fashions in search of a more “timeless expression” for architecture. Established in 1985 after each partner had accumulated substantial experience working on a variety of projects with major architectural firms, Murphy & Dittenhafer has grown from a small firm of two architects to a

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MURPHY & DITTENHAFFER ARCHITECTS

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staff of twenty in response to continued requests for architectural and master planning services, including a significant percentage of repeat clientele. Providing architectural services for clients throughout the mid-Atlantic region, Murphy & Dittenhafer prepares initial site assessments, feasibility studies, programming and master planning efforts as well as designs for renovations, expansions, adaptive reuse, restoration and new construction. The firm's wide variety of projects range

from small accessibility to multi-million dollar rehabilitation and new construction projects.

While Murphy & Dittenhafer Architects has received significant success throughout their twenty-eight year history, there is another "story within their story" involving personal and professional tragedy overcome by determination, hard work and talent. The year 2010 will always be remembered as "the year" by Frank Dittenhafer and others at Murphy & Dittenhafer. It began with the unexpected passing of Murphy & Dittenhafer co-founder Michael Murphy in February of 2010 followed by the complete "incineration" and total loss of Murphy & Dittenhafer's North Charles Street Baltimore office space and contents as part of a five alarm fire in

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New Student Center at University of Baltimore — Photo: Alain Jaramillo



Boonsboro Library — Photo: J. David Allen & Son Photography

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MURPHY & DITTENHAFER ARCHITECTS

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December of 2010, all in conjunction with a languishing economic recession throughout 2010 that was generally devastating to the architecture profession. Fortunately, Murphy & Dittenhafer's diversity of primary practice areas, the support of loyal clients, the resiliency of

employees – and the firm's second office location in York, Pennsylvania - all contributed to sustaining and even growing the practice.

Emerging from such calamitous events, Murphy & Dittenhafer has truly become a stronger and more determined firm. The firm's high standard for excellent design continues to be applied to projects of all types, uses, sizes, locations and budgets. "Our strength continues to be the ability to maximize the potential of every assignment and exceed our clients' expectations with the built product," explains Frank. "The diverse array of projects designed by M&D and built throughout Maryland and Pennsylvania eschews any particular style of design, avoids convention and has focused on appropriateness, thus maximizing the potential of every commission regardless of project type, size, scale or budget."

Certainly at the very core of each design from Murphy & Dittenhafer is the goal of creating an inspiring place. "We are more interested in designing a place that people want to spend time in – which is our measure of excellent architecture and a successful project – not whether it has received a design award," continues Frank. "We believe in a "timeless" approach to architect-

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Boonsboro Library — Photo: J. David Allen & Son Photography

MURPHY & DITTENHAFER ARCHITECTS

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tural design that is “contemporary” of its time, without blindly becoming a “neo-modernist” like many firms today. Murphy & Dittenhafer does not have a style and we are proud of that. Our approach has been to listen, research and investigate many possibilities towards developing an “appropriate” partee and visual language.”

It is often repeated at Murphy & Dittenhafer that they are involved in designing “Architecture” – which goes beyond just meeting the technical and professional practice based requirements for



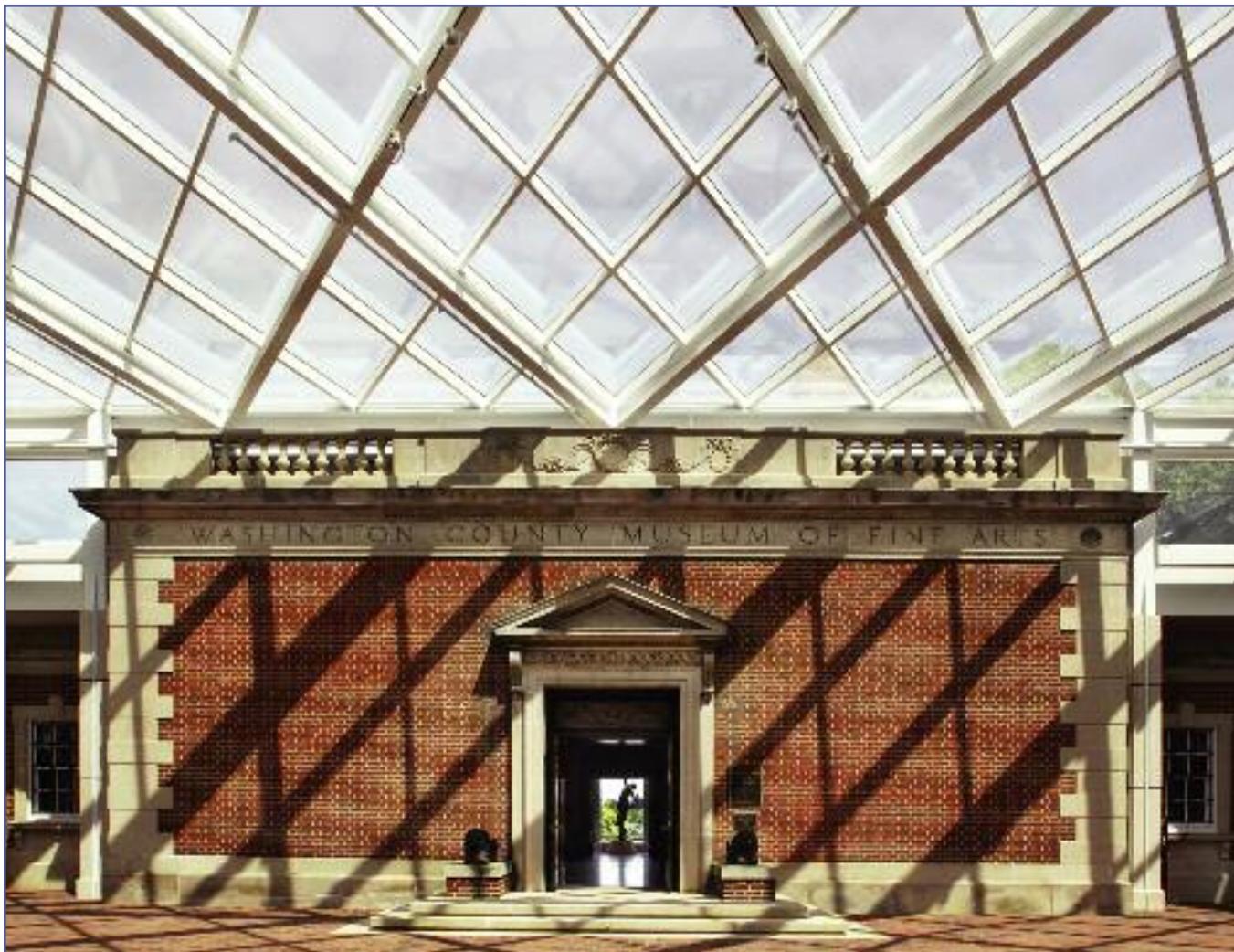
CODO 241 — J. David Allen & Son Photography

constructing the built environment. “Architecture engages the user, the occupant, the visitor, the resident, the person walking

by, driving by, a community or neighborhood or entire city. Architecture “enriches” the experience, whatever the experience

is,” explains Frank. “Excellent architecture is very meaningful and is “inspiring”. Otherwise it is just construction. “Making Places” has been our tagline for many years as we have always worked very hard to find ways to impart the qualities of “Place” that are unique to each project in our design. We focus our project design concepts around timeless principals that will impart positive meaning to all who encounter the “places” we have created.”

A definite result of Murphy & Dittenhafer’s philosophy is the strong relationships they forge with their clients. By continuing the perspectives the firm’s founders had since the very beginning, Murphy & Dittenhafer always consider it a privilege to be selected and hired by a client to provide architectural services. “Our perspective is that forming a strong “relationship” based on mutual respect and understanding of common goals is essential to the success of an architectural project. We work very hard for our customers – and they know it and appreci-



Washington County Museum of Fine Arts Courtyard Enclosure
— J. David Allen & Son Photography

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MURPHY & DITTENHAFER ARCHITECTS

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ate it,” maintains Frank. “We treat our clients with considerable respect –and make the design process an enjoyable experience for them.”

What makes these relationships form so naturally and strengthen throughout the entire design and construction process is the importance Murphy & Dittenhafer places on communication between staff and their clientele. “Our clients have repeatedly praised our ability to listen and also our talent to translate what we have heard into an inspiring, engaging result that functions well and will stand up to the test of time,” says Frank. “Our staff is composed of very talented, creative and dedicated people who are committed to producing excellent architecture. They are also very good communicators, technically proficient and understand the construction process and constructability very well.” In fact, a strong team atmosphere is inherent in every aspect of Murphy & Dittenhafer. To give an example, once a year, usually in

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St. Paul Place Parking Garage — Photo: Alain Jaramillo

MURPHY & DITTENHAFFER ARCHITECTS

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the summer, the entire office shuts down for “M&D Day” – a tradition that has been ongoing for over 25 years. The entire office, including all administrative and support personnel along with the architectural/interiors staff spend the day visiting five or six Murphy & Dittenhafer projects that are recently completed, in the midst of construction or just commencing the construction phase.

The result of such an integrated approach to client relations is design excellence and quality architecture behind all of the work undertaken and completed by Murphy & Dittenhafer. Any client that has hired Murphy & Dittenhafer quickly discovers the firm is not just about providing professional services as required by law to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the general public. In fact, Murphy & Dittenhafer starts where many architectural firms stop, and that is with the “givens”. “Services we provide such as responsiveness, frequent communication, completing projects on time and under budget, integrating sustainable design, code/regulatory compliance, sound constructability choices for critical elements such as the exterior envelope (roofs, walls, windows/glazing, structure, etc.) and other characteristic of a professional architectural practice are only the beginning of our dedication to every client,” says Frank. “With many firms (successful architectural practices), that is unfortunately the end of the story. My opinion is that these firms or individuals are not really involved in designing or producing

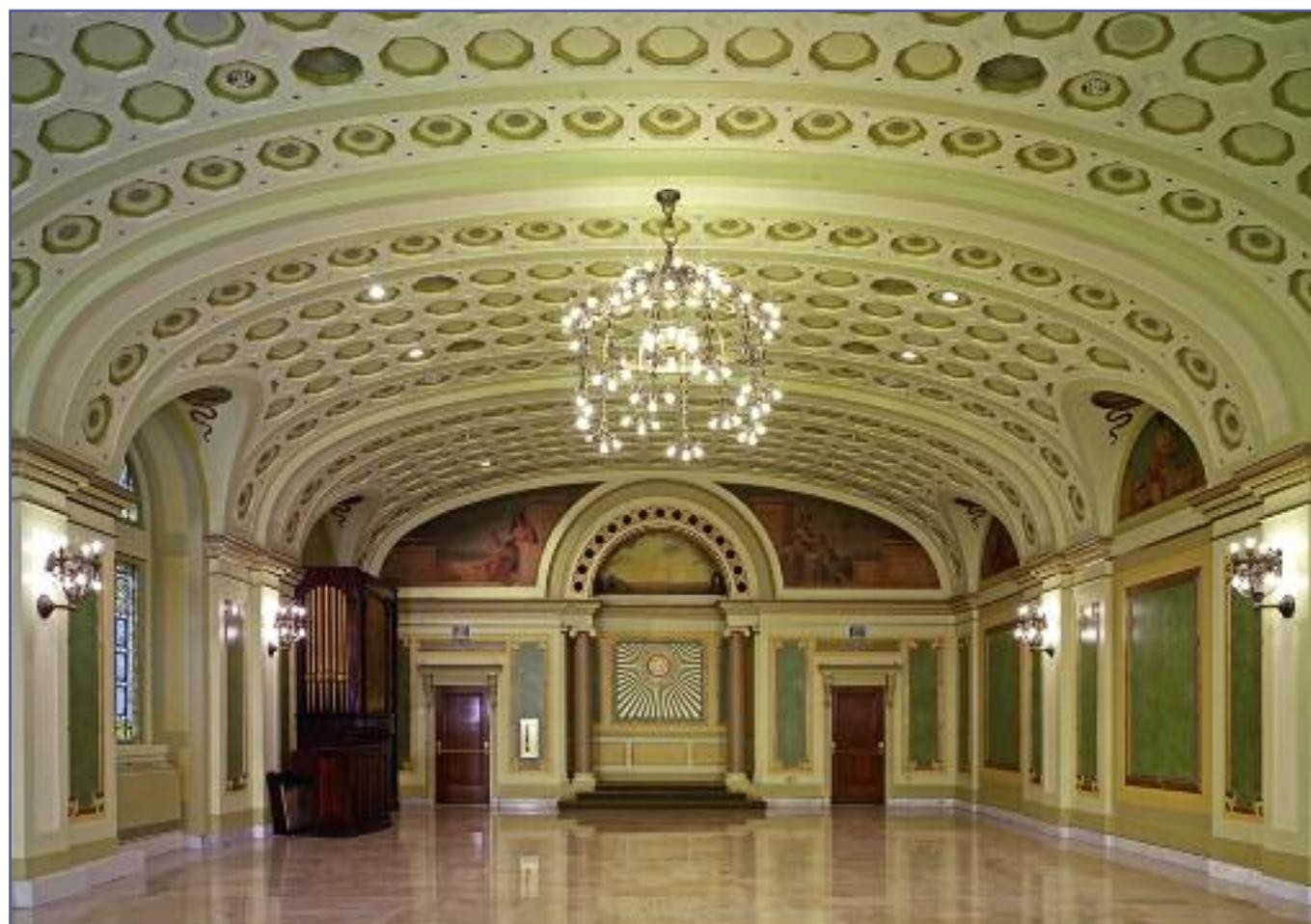
“Architecture”. They are more accurately licensed ‘Architectural Technicians’.”

The firm has completed quite a number of LEED certified projects – covering a range of building types and certification levels; but has been an advocate of responsible design approaches for over twenty years. “Common Sense Green” was something Murphy & Dittenhafer promoted for many years and now the technology, product marketplace and construction industry has caught up to support and supplement what they have believed was just “Good Design”. “Integrated into all of Murphy & Dittenhafer’s work are sustainable (green) design strategies – to the degree that the firm does not “promote” this aspect of M&D’s practice or design approach as anything unique or a ‘separate expertise/skill set’,” explains Frank. “Of course re-using and repurposing and renovating existing buildings, Murphy

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Tremont Grand — Photo: Alain Jaramillo



Tremont Grand — Photo: Alain Jaramillo

MURPHY & DITTENHAFER ARCHITECTS

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& Dittenhafer's specialty, is potentially the most sustainable approach for any project – to the degree that I have “turned up the volume” on advocacy to maximize the reuse of all vacant or underutilized structures before any more new buildings are constructed. I have not met an older building that we could not convert into almost any desired new use.”

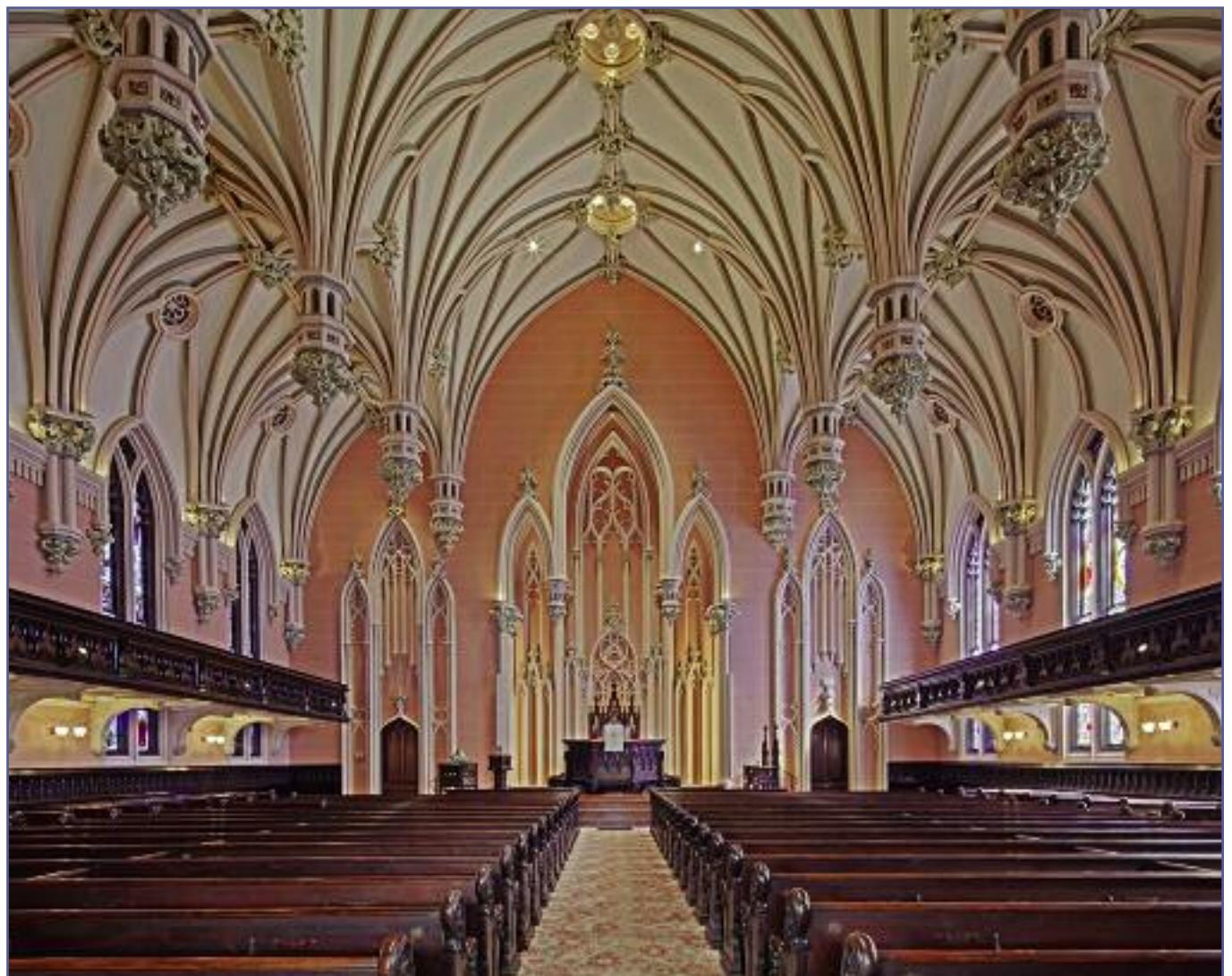
While winning awards is not what Murphy & Dittenhafer strives for with their design, the firm has received a considerable amount of awards for Design Excellence on projects of all types – scales large and small - and typically with modest construction budgets. For AIA Baltimore's 50 year anniversary of their Design Awards program held in the fall of 2012, the Chapter put together a retrospective presentation of all award winning projects over that timeframe – which included 25 award winning Murphy & Dittenhafer projects during the past twenty years of our participation – more than all but one other Baltimore firm. In total, Murphy & Dittenhafer has been recognized with 72 state and local Design Excellence awards and over 180 awards for Excellence in Architectural Design, Historic Preservation and Craftsmanship.

Of course Murphy & Dittenhafer understands first and foremost that client satisfaction, not merely winning awards, is the goal of every project. The following quotes are only a sample of satisfied clientele that were praising the effort and excellence that is Murphy & Dittenhafer:

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Wagman Construction Corporate Offices — J. David Allen & Son Photography



First & Franklin Presbyterian Church — Photo: Alain Jaramillo

MURPHY & DITTENHAFER ARCHITECTS

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“You, Todd and others at your firm are such an incredible bridge between what is and what could be. I always feel better when I walk into one of your projects. And to me it’s those kinds of feelings you inspire through your designs that have the potential to take us people to our highest and best selves. You make us feel better about ourselves and other people in the places we spend time, and that certainly has the power to bring about the dynamic, sometimes messy but always beautiful dance of community that can elevate us in ways we can’t even imagine.”

**William H. Swartz, III,
President, Sherman Property
Management**

“I can personally account for Murphy & Dittenhafer’s excellent performance in all phases of planning, design and construction. The University of Baltimore Student Center singularly transformed our campus into a more engaging, urban place where students enjoy spending time. I would hire the firm again for any upcoming project.”

**Mr. Steve Cassard, Vice President
of Facilities Management and
Capital Planning, University of
Baltimore**

“Murphy & Dittenhafer helped Old St. Paul’s make use of an historical paint study through sensitively working with two distinct design periods and melding them to a painting and lighting design suited for current day use. M&D provided the discipline of approach in evaluating the historical factors along with current needs and opinions in the church. They are moti-

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Hippodrome Theater — Photo: Alain Jaramillo



Hippodrome Theater — Photo: Alain Jaramillo

MURPHY & DITTENHAFFER ARCHITECTS

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vated and eager to work with historical buildings and the process of keeping them relevant while drawing on the original design intent. M&D was especially helpful in being on site during implementation of the work to ensure progress and outcomes were as desired. Overall, M&D provided the structure and coordination to link history and future in making this long-awaited renovation project a reality for OSP!”

Mr. Reid LaClair, Junior Warden, Old St. Paul’s Episcopal Church

“You and your staff have played an important role in the renovation of McCuan Hall and we appreciate your excellent work. The renovated Smith Theatre, the new lobby area, the development and senior administration office areas, classrooms, and the television studio look beautiful. The McCuans are very pleased with ‘their’ building and we received positive feedback from the faculty, staff and community supporters about the renovation. You are part of the HCC family and have watched and helped us grow to the beautiful campus we are today—thank you.”

Dr. Kathleen Hetherington, President, Howard Community College, discussing the McCuan Hall/ Smith Theatre renovation

“From personal experience, I know that this is a dedicated and highly qualified firm. Not only has

Murphy & Dittenhafer won countless awards throughout the years, but Principal in Charge Frank Dittenhafer’s advice and counsel is sought by many in the community, and he is respected greatly for his knowledge and expertise in his field. Our campus has directly benefited from Murphy & Dittenhafer’s design expertise and out-of-the-box ideas to craft amazing spaces while working within the constraints assigned.”

Ms. Holly L. Gumke, Director of Business Services, Penn State York

“Our new green office has transformed our work environment. Not only is it saving us money, but it is such a nice place to come to work. Promoting sustainable design is a top priority for us . . . now we can walk the walk!”

Caroline Boyce, CAE, Executive Director, AIA Pennsylvania

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Asked to describe what qualities of Murphy & Dittenhafer that have direct correlation to such intense customer loyalty and satisfaction, Frank was quick to answer. "We don't hold back on effort – leaving "nothing left in the tank" when we design. We explore many options early in the Concept or Schematic Design Phases – not prescribing to developing only "three" design options - or to a specific number of design meetings with our client collaborators. We have always sincerely stressed 'M&D will do what it takes'". To the staff at Murphy & Dittenhafer it is their definition of what "professional" means – a higher level of quality product, service and effort. "Not only are our architectural staff creative, talented and quite experienced - they are genuinely nice people – and our clients have consistently commented how much they like working with Lauren Merrill, Todd Grove, Bruce Johnson, Debra Miller-Schober and others." With

a total of 20 persons including six licensed architects and a certified Interior Designer, Murphy & Dittenhafer brings a rare combination of capability and capacity that is a "good fit" for small, medium and larger projects – and always with a focus on excellent client service.

One defining aspect of Murphy & Dittenhafer's work and design philosophy is an outgrowth of their involvement with renovating older existing historic buildings and designing expansions/additions to them. "These projects required our specialized knowledge about historic architecture and technical expertise to carefully restore/repair significant historic interior components and exterior features – many times in compliance with National Park Service, State and/or Local guidelines for receiving approvals for tax credits and construction permits in historic districts," asserts Frank. Examples include The Hippodrome Theater, the Tremont Grande, the Seminary Ridge Museum (Schmucker Hall), Hanover Junction Railroad Station and the Wallace-Cross Mill.

The firm also has an expertise in renovating, repurposing and expanding existing buildings that are not necessarily "historic" and

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Murphy & Dittenhafer Architects

Awards 2010-Present (Partial Listing)

2014	2012	2011	2010
2014 Historic Preservation Award Construction Project Award Public and Institutional Properties Preservation Pennsylvania Schmucker Hall Gettysburg, Pennsylvania	2012 Good Design = Good Business Award, AIA Baltimore Washington County Museum of Fine Arts Hagerstown, MD	2011 National Voussoirs Award Alpha Rho Chi CODO 241 York, Pennsylvania	2010 Award for Excellence in Design, AIA Maryland New Student Center University of Baltimore Baltimore, Maryland
2014 Design Excellence Award AIA Baltimore Old St. Paul's Episcopal Church Baltimore, Maryland	2012 Excellence in Design Award AIA Baltimore First & Franklin Street Presbyterian Church Baltimore, MD	2011 Awards of Excellence International Parking Institute Market Street Parking Garage York, Pennsylvania	2010 Good Design = Good Business Award, AIA Baltimore New Student Center University of Baltimore Baltimore, Maryland
2014 Award for Excellence in Design AIA Central Pennsylvania Zimmerman Center for Heritage Waterside Pavilion and Accessibility Enhancements Wrightsville, Pennsylvania	2012 Michael F. Trostel Award for Excellence for a Historic Preservation Project, AIA Baltimore Marketview Arts York, Pennsylvania	2011 Award for Excellence in Design, AIA Maryland First and Franklin Street Presbyterian Church Baltimore, Maryland	2010 Excellence in Design Award AIA Baltimore CODO 241 York, Pennsylvania
2014 Award for Excellence in Design AIA Central Pennsylvania Old St. Paul's Episcopal Church Baltimore, Maryland	2012 Excellence in Design Award AIA Baltimore CODO 28 York, Pennsylvania	2011 Restoration & Rehabilitation Award Baltimore Heritage, Inc. First and Franklin Street Presbyterian Church Baltimore, Maryland	2010 Commonwealth Award 10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania CODO 241 York, Pennsylvania
2013	2012 Excellence in Design Award AIA Central Pennsylvania First & Franklin Street Presbyterian Church Interior Sanctuary Restoration Baltimore, MD	2011 Award for Excellence in Design Tri-State AIA (NY, NJ & PA) Tremont Grand/ St. Paul Place Garage William C. Smith & Company/ Baltimore Development Corporation Baltimore, Maryland	2010 Gold Award 10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania Elevation Lofts Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania
2013 National ABC Eagle Award Excellence in Construction Seminary Ridge Museum/ Schmucker Hall Rehabilitation Gettysburg, Pennsylvania	2012 Excellence in Design Award AIA Central Pennsylvania Marketview Arts York, Pennsylvania	2011 Gold Award 10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania CODO 28 York, Pennsylvania	2010 Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Commercial & Industrial Construction Award Preservation Pennsylvania CODO 241 York, Pennsylvania
2013 Commonwealth Award 10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania Marketview Arts York, Pennsylvania	2012 Historic Preservation Award: Outstanding Domestic Project Historic York, Inc. 900 South George Street York, Pennsylvania	2011 Award for Excellence in Design AIA Pennsylvania Tremont Grand/ St. Paul Place Garage William C. Smith & Company/ Baltimore Development Corporation Baltimore, Maryland	2010 Award for Excellence in Design AIA Central Pennsylvania Market Street Parking Garage York, Pennsylvania
2013 Good Design is Good Business Award, AIA Central Pennsylvania Courtyard Enclosure: Washington County Museum of Fine Art Hagerstown, Maryland	2012 Historic Preservation Award: Outstanding Adaptive Reuse Historic York, Inc. Marketview Arts York, Pennsylvania	2011 Award for Excellence in Design AIA Central Pennsylvania CODO 28 York, Pennsylvania	2010 Excellence in Design Award AIA Central Pennsylvania New LEED Offices for Wagman Construction York, Pennsylvania
2013 Award for Excellence in Design, AIA Central Pennsylvania Residences at Ribbon Place York, Pennsylvania	2012 Special Preservation Award: Streetscape Enhancement Historic York, Inc. Market Street Parking Garage York, Pennsylvania	2011 Historic Preservation Award: Outstanding Adaptive Reuse Historic York, Inc. CODO 28 York, Pennsylvania	2010 Award for Excellence in Design AIA Central Pennsylvania Project Hope York City Redevelopment Authority York, Pennsylvania
2013 Historic Preservation Award Historic York, Inc. York Central Market York, Pennsylvania	2012 Award of Merit Illuminating Engineering Society of North America First and Franklin Street Presbyterian Church Baltimore, Maryland		2010 Green Building Award for Indoor Environmental Quality GBACPA Wagman Office LEED Interior York, Pennsylvania
2013 Historic Preservation Award Historic York, Inc. Marketview Arts York, Pennsylvania			

MURPHY & DITTENHAFFER ARCHITECTS

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many times would be considered “ugly and ordinary” by the general population. “Murphy & Dittenhafer has embraced these “ugly ducklings, white elephants, abandoned/ignored structures” in the heart of cities and on college campuses – and transformed these undistinguished buildings into engaging new “places” that become magnetic - where people want to spend time,” continues Frank. Examples of some higher education projects that fall into this category include Johns Hopkins University, Howard Community College, Penn State University, Bloomsburg University, Shippensburg University, University of Maryland, and Prince Georges Community College.

Being highly interactive within

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Lofts at Ribbon Place
— J. David Allen & Son Photography



Roosevelt Park House Pool — Photo: Alain Jaramillo

“TGA is proud of our relationship with Murphy & Dittenhafer.”

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FEATURED PROJECT DETAILS

Name	Project Location	Owner Name	Square Footage	Construction Cost
New Student Center	1420 North Charles St. Baltimore, MD	University of Baltimore	60,000 SF	\$13,000,000
CODO 241	241 North George St. York, PA	CODO 241, LLP	69,500 SF	\$11,600,000
Boonsboro Library	100 West Washington St. Hagerstown, MD	Washington County Division of Public Works	10,000 SF	\$1,600,000
Courtyard Enclosure	Hagerstown, MD	Washington County Museum of Fine Arts	3,200 SF	\$1,300,000
St. Paul Place Parking Garage/ Tremont Grand	Baltimore, MD	City of Baltimore Dept. of Public Works/ William C. Smith Co., Inc.	90,000 SF	\$25,000,000
Wagman Construction Corporate Offices	231 North George St. York, PA	Wagman Construction	7,800 SF	\$900,000
First & Franklin Presbyterian Church	210 West Madison St. Baltimore, MD	First & Franklin Presbyterian Church	7,600 SF	\$1,600,000
Zimmerman Center for Heritage	1706 Long Level Road Wrightsville, PA	Susquehanna Gateway Heritage Area	2.2 Acres	\$1,200,000
Hippodrome Theater	12 North Eutaw St. Baltimore, MD	Maryland Stadium Authority	170,000 SF	\$53,000,000
Lofts at Ribbon Place	239 E. Boundary Ave. York, PA	Berger Rental Communities	28,300 SF	\$3,070,000
Roosevelt Park Poolhouse	2600 Madison Ave. Baltimore, MD	Department of Recreation and Parks	2,813 SF	\$550,000
Old St. Paul's Church	233 North Charles St. Baltimore, MD	Old St. Paul's Episcopal Church	12,000 SF	\$250,000
Lofts on George Street	232 North George St. York, PA	Susquehanna Real Estate	55,000 SF	\$5,000,000



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the communities they serve - and where their two offices are located, is essential to Frank and everyone at Murphy & Dittenhafer. “We routinely assist non-profit organizations and community based groups with preliminary planning



Old St. Pauls Episcopal Church — Photo: Alain Jaramillo

and conceptual design services on a pro-bono or reduced fee basis – because improving the built environment within our communities– improves the quality of life for all residents, workers, visitors – and acts as a catalyst for future improvement,” says Frank. Recently, the firm completed a comprehensive Conceptual Plan for the redesign and transformation of Continental Square at the

center of downtown York, PA – conducting several public forums and meeting with a variety of stakeholder groups over the course of six months to obtain a strong consensus and the initial support necessary to move the multi-year initiative forward towards implementation of early phases of the reinvention of a city’s primary urban space.

Looking to the future, Frank

cannot help but be excited. “Our three primary goals remain the same as they have been for the past 28 years. The first is to produce excellent architecture. The second is to receive fair compensation, and the third is to enjoy our work. Achieving all three goals – not just two of the three is mandatory at Murphy & Dittenhafer,” maintains Frank. The two other “sub-

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Lofts at Ribbon Place
— J. David Allen & Son Photography



Lofts on George Street! — Photo: Susquehanna Real Estate

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goals”, which were added a few years ago, are to provide exceptional client/customer service and constantly improve the firm’s products and processes. “Speaking more generally, our goal is to continue doing the type of quality architecture design –maximizing the design potential - on every project regard-

less of project size, type or budget,” continues Frank. “We also want to continue to be involved in the very diverse array of architectural commissions: i.e. higher education, religious/faith based, housing of all types, performing and visual arts, non-profit community based, historic preservation /adaptive re-use,

interior design/workplace design - and planning which includes urban planning, master planning and community planning.” It sounds like we can look forward to a lot of inspiring places to live, work and play in the near future, compliments of the architectural excellence of Murphy & Dittenhafer.



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ON ALL OF YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS.
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