

Architectural Details

Robert Carl Williams Associates P.C.
Principals: Daniel J. Pratt, A.I.A., president
An architecture firm providing fine design for 37 years

Pittsfield, Vermont
Robert Carl Williams, founder

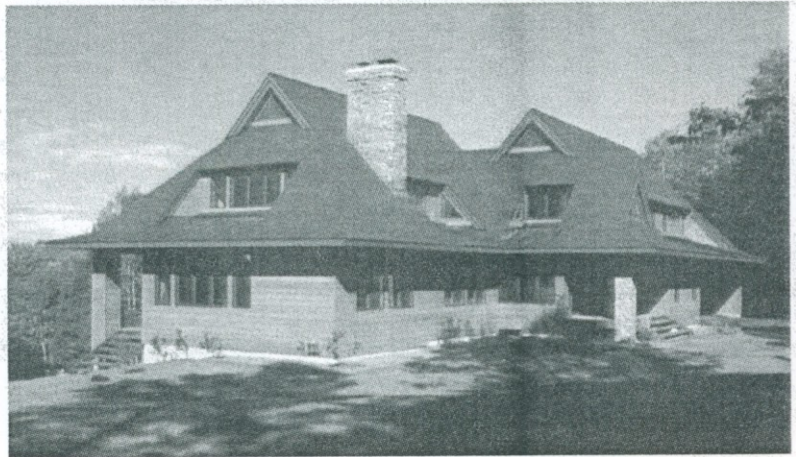
Spring/Summer 2000

Building Your New Home

Congratulations. You're ready to build a new home. You've purchased the land and you've got a folder full of ideas you want to incorporate into your home. If you make the right decisions at the start of your project, you can save time and money and get the home you'll enjoy for years to come. If you don't, you may be very disappointed with the results.

Be sure to choose a team of well-qualified professionals who you feel comfortable working with. Robert Carl Williams, founder of Robert Carl Williams Associates, said, "In my more than 35 years as an architect, the single most common mistake I've seen is in the siting of a home."

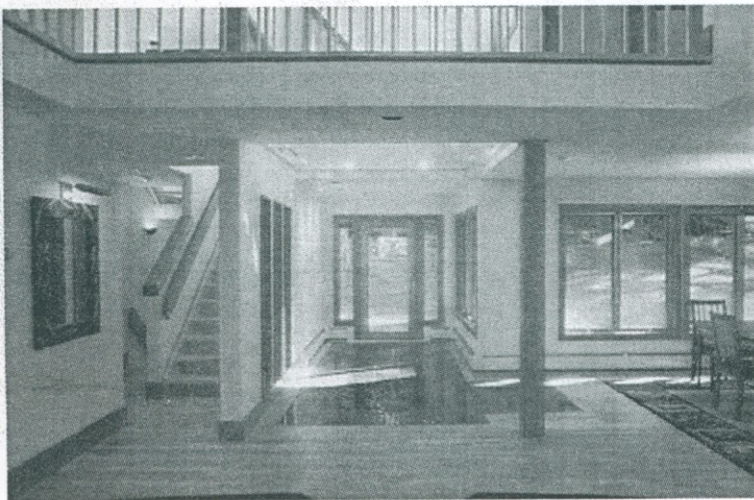
The best way to avoid this is by hiring an architect and contractor who understand the importance of siting along with design and building. Don't rely on pre-designed house plans; they do not take into account your needs or the land on which the house will be built. Your architect will visit the site and determine the best location prior to beginning design work. Also, don't rely on your contractor to design your home. Re-



member, a contractor is primarily a builder. Good builders value good architects as well as architects value good builders. When siting your home, your architect will consider the following:

- in an urban or suburban setting, your architect will determine how various style homes will accommodate themselves to the surrounding buildings
- in a rural setting the building must fit the landscape
- in either setting, how the driveway should approach the house; what views can best be enjoyed from different points; which of the interior spaces need southern or northern light; and how the sun moves across the site from morning to afternoon and its effect on interior spaces.

Tell your designer everything. Your architect should know as much about you and your family and your lifestyle so that he can design the home that best fits your needs. The more detail you can express about what you like and want, the more your architect will have to work with. You may have an extensive wish list, but only by talking in depth with your architect can he tell what things are truly im-

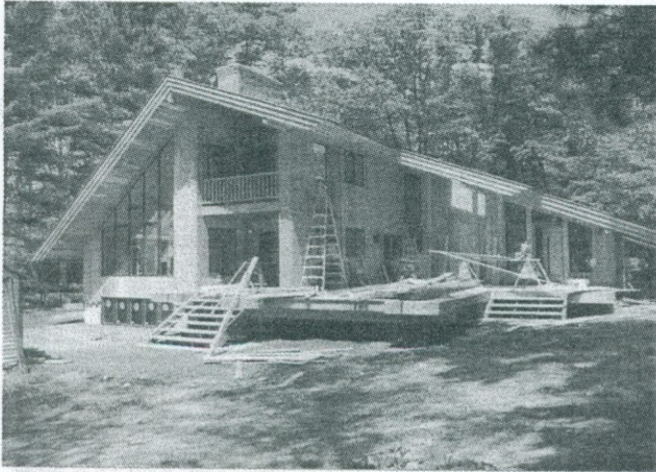


cont'd on p. 2 ➔

Building your new home, cont'd.

portant and should therefore become the priorities. Daniel J. Pratt, president of Robert Carl Williams Associates, says that while it's rare that a client can have everything on his or her wish list, a good architect can design the home in such a way that the greatest value can be achieved for the money spent.

During the design phase, you should pay a lot of attention



A dream under construction.

to the ideas your architect is developing. Make your changes now before construction begins and you will be much happier (and so will your contractor!). Remember this is your home and your money. If you are going to use competitive as opposed to negotiated bidding (see accompanying story), have your architect handle this process. You'll be pleasantly surprised to learn that often times the architect's fee is less than the difference between competitive pricing bids. The architect is the professional here and he or she has the expertise to get you the best value for your money, and maybe even save some for you in the process.

Once construction begins, your architect can also stay on top of your project. It is part of his job to observe the construction work as it progresses and communicate regularly with the contractor. The architect also verifies that the amount of work being billed and the amount of work completed are in sync. As your representative and advocate, your architect will earn his fee many times over by making sure you get the best value for the money spent.

Few decisions we make are as heavily invested with our time, money and energy as the decision to build a home. Often when we decide to build a home, we are making the decision to turn dreams into reality. And the reality is that with the right team, led by your architect, your new home can be a dream come true.

Competitive or Negotiated Bid?

Once you've approved a set of plans you're ready to go to the next step. It's time to hire the contractor.

When entering the bidding process for a contractor, you can do it through competitive or negotiated bidding. This decision often depends on how familiar you are with the local building community.

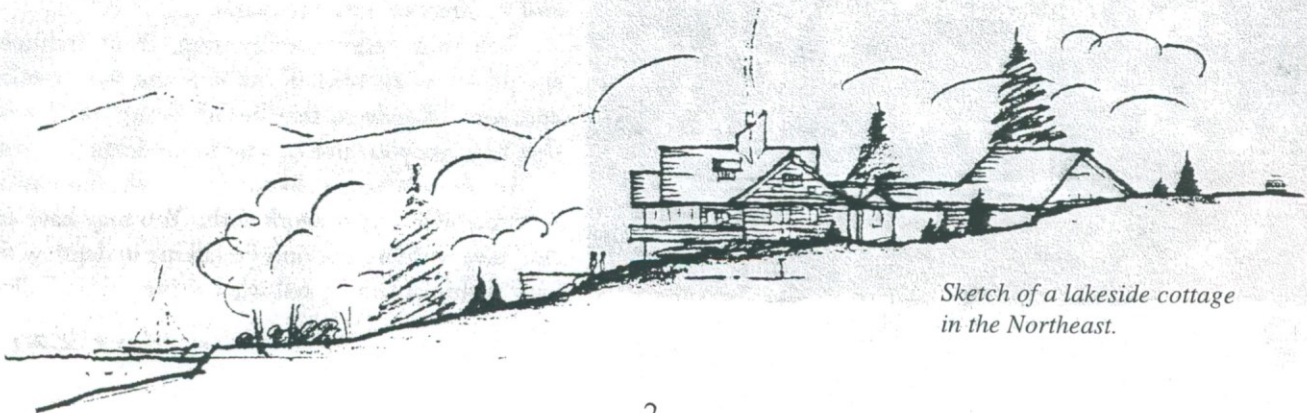
If you don't have any experience with local contractors, you will probably decide to do competitive bidding. Once your architect has drawn up your plans and done the specs, it is sent out to a small group of qualified contractors. Your architect can help you pick the bidders if necessary.

It will take about a month for the bidders to formulate a price for the land development and site work, retention of the permits, and building your home. Upon receipt of the bids, you'll review them (probably with your architect) and choose your contractor. If you have experience with a particular contractor or have received

high praise about a contractor who you know you want to work with, you will likely choose to do a negotiated bid. The advantage here is that the entire team - you, your architect, and your contractor - are all working together right from the start of the project. This most likely will save time and it may or may not save on the cost.

According to RCWA's president, Daniel J. Pratt, AIA, the bid process you choose will not necessarily affect the cost of your project. Pratt added they have seen as much as 25% or more difference between the low and high bids in a competitive bidding situation.

The bid process will not change the end product, a home that you're happy with. By choosing an architect to design your home, you've already ensured that you'll have an advocate for what you want. And, combined with a contractor who has the reputation to do the work you want and service his product even after it's completed, you can be confident of the project's success whether your home is being built around the corner or around the world.



Sketch of a lakeside cottage in the Northeast.