



When Meets Nature Architecture

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When nature meets architecture, it can create a breathtaking experience. When the natural view is as stunning as the rolling landscape of Charlottesville, creating an amazing space becomes that much easier. With this new pool house, the surrounding environment and views comprised three of the four walls. The former pool house and its flanking trees obstructed stunning mountain views from the main house, located behind the structure. The homeowners desired a new pool house that would maximize the views from the home, without moving the existing in-ground pool, hot tub, and surrounding

patio. Purple Cherry Architects designed a pool house that provided cover from the elements, a cooking area, a full bathroom, a changing room, and pool storage. But most importantly, the new building allowed a view of the Blue Ridge Mountain range from the existing home.

The solution was to rotate a new pool house into the woodland edge and open up the view even more through the further removal of trees. Next, the new structure needed to be open on three sides to permit the view from the house to the covered entertainment space and sight lines through the pool house to the stunning mountain range beyond. Lastly,

our goal as the architect of record was to blend the new structure with the adjacent forest. To make it disappear. To not have it “stand out,” but be symbiotic with nature to create that breathtaking experience for the user.

To allow the clients to visualize the new structure within the landscape, the Purple Cherry Architects (PCA) team utilized its three-dimensional software, Revit. It merged the 3-D model into actual photographs of the site from various points at the main house. This software permitted the homeowners and the PCA team the means to make any siting adjustments desired to maximize views,



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further reinforcing confidence for the new contemporary design.

"The 3D part of the design process was very helpful," states the client. "The visualization and the ability to move around the structure greatly helped us to make decisions." This technology is standard for the firm and allowed for a real-time experience of the structure for all involved in the project.

The building itself is simple. The 20-foot by 40-foot covered area allows for large group entertainment. A stone spine along the rear anchors the single sloping roof feature. Located within this spine are a full bathroom, changing room, grill area, and a pool toy closet. The Douglas fir changing room features organizing cubbies, hooks, and a bench for visitor use.

Along the face of the spine wall, mahogany custom cabinets by Russ' Fine Woods line the visible face. The large television centered within the cabinet wall allows for viewing from the pool and all surrounding areas. A translucent roll-down screen hidden in the wood-planked ceiling can be lowered and tied off to block winds and the western setting sun. Infrared ceiling-mounted heaters extend the seasonal use of the space.

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The new pool house, beautifully constructed by local custom builder Greer and Associates, is nestled just along the southern woodland at a sloping area of the property. This location allowed for the building to "bank" into the slope, creating a large storage area beneath the structure for pool and exercise equipment. A sizeable structural slab covered in random regular blue-stone caps this space. Two stacked stone wing walls anchor the structure and blend it into the existing pool terrace walls. Long steps create a seating connection between the two terraces.

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Amazing ceramic tiles emulating falling rain and patinated metal were selected from local tile store Sarisand Tile. Sleek honed granite tops from Cogswell Stone Fabrication cap the long line of mahogany cabinets. Finally, Palecek's contemporary furnishings provide casual yet elegant seating, lounging, and dining areas within the new space.

The clients' favorite part of the building? Aside from how it fits into the landscape and the view, it's a very large patio under the high rising ceiling, which makes way for the unexpected bonus storage space.

Throughout the 2019 fall and winter project timeline, one owners' goal was very clear: to complete the new building and all related site work for an outdoor wedding on the property in the spring. This goal was met with great enthusiasm by the entire design and construction team.

The client recaps the design process by noting, "The original purpose of the project was to (re)open up a precious view from the main house. The end product achieved that but in a spectacular way that improves on the entire experience at the pool house."

Born and raised in Virginia, **Cathy Purple Cherry** ultimately landed in Annapolis where she grew a large architectural firm specializing in high-end custom homes and estates. A talented architect, visionary, and three-dimensional thinker, Cathy is able to marry clients' dreams with the reality of the built environment. While Cathy revels in the intricate design opportunities presented by high-end residential architecture, she is equally passionate about her philanthropic efforts and her work serving the special needs community through the firm's Purposeful Architecture studio. An award-winning residential architecture and interior design firm specializing in exceptional homes and luxurious estates throughout the East Coast from Plymouth, MA to Warm Springs, VA, Cathy has grown her team two-fold in the past three years. Purple Cherry Architects truly loves the journey of bringing together their clients with stunning pieces of property where they can build the home of their dreams.

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