



BATTERSBYHOWAT

It's late Thursday night in our home office at 1645 East Georgia Street, just off Commercial Drive in Vancouver. As usual, most of our critical work is done wearing sleepwear when the phone isn't ringing and a deadline looms ... or is passing ... our deadline was today.

We, **Heather Howat (M.Arch.95)** and **David Battersby (M.Arch.95)**, met at the University of Manitoba, as undergrad students in the Faculty of Architecture. David was pursuing a Bachelor of Environmental Studies with a landscape major, while I was completing a Bachelor of Interior Design. We furthered our education at TUNS through the completion of our Master of Architecture degrees in 1995. The following year we had the good fortune to be approached by a young couple who wanted to build a waterfront home north of Vancouver, on Howe Sound. Though it was never fully expected that this project would be the genesis of a burgeoning design practice, I was able to join David two years later on our own work, full time.

It should be noted that we didn't simply hop off the academic bandwagon and jump into private practice. During the course of our education, we not only benefited from the co-op program at TUNS, but also interspersed three additional years of work experience with our official academic activities. David worked for **Jim Hancock (B.Arch.72)** off and on for five years and I worked with both Neale Staniskis Doll Adams and Jennifer Marshall and Bill Fisher. This exposure has had a defining influence on the nature of our practice. Though our work is strongly focused on design, our approach is grounded

in the pragmatics of building and an appreciation for the limitations and opportunities of the construction industry and design culture within which we work.

For us, the integrity of the work lies at the intersection of poetic and prosaic concerns. For example, in the Staehling Residence (Canadian Architect Award of Excellence 2001) prefabricated roof trusses are designed to express and reveal their constituent parts (top chord, interstitial webbing, bottom chord), differentiating the practical containment of an interior volume from an expressive wrapping and folding roof plane. The same modest precepts that shaped our earlier projects continue to define the more elaborate commissions with which we are currently engaged. The North Bend Residence (Canadian Architect Award of Excellence 2004) defines a rich multivalent experience of its own internal landscape and the surrounding forest. The experiential complexity of the project is embedded in a discrete construction that is intended to read as a shadow in the forest. The mass of the building recedes against its context and its own inhabitation. The black stained cedar cladding, a response to the massive old growth stumps that pepper the lot, is penetrated by yellow cedar and aluminum curtain wall apertures that articulate the reciprocal relationship between building and site.

Our work is an expression of an extensive network of collaborations, from clients, consultants and tradespeople to the talented and dedicated individuals who contribute within our office. battersbyhowat.com



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