Reconstructing the Past while Building the Future

By Mary Stack

Originally from Buffalo NY, Tom Turner moved to World’s End as a teenager along with his nine brothers and sisters. Taking to the Hingham area instantly, Turner began his career in residential remodeling 23 years ago and his reputation for high quality work and professionalism has been growing ever since.

These days, Turner largely relies on word-of-mouth recommendations for projects which make best use of his high-end, customized approach. Since opening his business in 1992, he has rarely needed to work outside of Hingham, which is a great tribute to his solid reputation within the community. “Although we work all over town, Crow Point has become an up-and-coming neighborhood in recent times and therefore has been the focus of many of my projects.” Understandably, many homeowners want to take advantage of the great views overlooking Hingham Harbor and also the Boston skyline. “The landscape changes with the light and the views out over the islands are incredible,” Turner notes. He is proud to be involved in the restoration of Hingham’s eastern shore; he regards it as an undiscovered area that for a time was a well kept secret.

Turner has found that building on or near the ocean can present varying micro-climates with dramatic changes in temperature and wind direction. This combination creates design challenges from a construction and energy efficiency perspective. “Clients are increasingly concerned with their home’s impact on the environment and look for guidance in building more energy efficient homes.” A good architect is critical in any construction project but he or she becomes invaluable in this kind of problem solving. Turner finds that he frequently partners with architect, Sally Weston Associates on his custom design work. “Sally and I have built up a good professional relationship over the past 16 years. I really value the intricacies of her design and her great attention to detail.” Weston reiterates Turner’s opinion of why they work so well together. The secret, she says, lies in having “mutual respect for each other’s abilities – we each do what we do best.” Weston emphasizes the importance of applying forward thinking to the overall scope of each project. “We are organized on all fronts and design everything completely; Tom’s great strength is in following drawings explicitly.” For his part, Turner says he takes pride in bringing architectural drawings and customers’ dreams to life.

Turner and Weston worked as a team on Kathy Morley’s 160 year-old house located in the historic district of Hingham. The challenge was to demolish the back portion of the house and build a seamless-looking addition. Morley enthuses about the professional dynamic of Turner’s whole team: “They were wonderful to work with, and believe me, I know, because we lived here throughout the entire construction project.” Turner and Weston share mutual standards of quality and communication, says Morley, adding that “they are proactive and create minimal disruption, thus the whole building process was smooth from start to finish. The result was such a great blend that it is hard to believe there is a new extension.”
One of Turner’s recent waterfront renovations was the Olmstead residence. This remodeling project, located on the banks of Hingham Harbor, also required melding the old with the new. The house had lots of character but needed updating. “Some rooms had to be reduced to the studs while great pains were taken to preserve the lines and historic detail. The challenge lay in constructing a new addition that was harmonious with the old,” says Turner. The Olmsteads are typical Turner customers: busy people who rely on their general contractor to deliver the project on time, on budget, but without sacrificing the high standard of quality for which Turner’s team is known. According to Dan Olmstead, “Tom did a fabulous job on our project. He is reliable, talented, and a tremendous value. We would highly recommend his work.”

Turner says he welcomes the challenge of working on older homes because no two days on the job are alike. But in addition to updating antique houses with a sense of their own history, Turner also enjoys constructing new homes that have the feel of the past yet incorporate every modern innovation and amenity. His home office is an apt example of his superior skills all fused into one space; every hi-tech convenience is cloaked in solid wood and customized cabinetry. The design feels anchored in classic craftsmanship and at once plugged-in to the future.

Tom Turner has been a faithful steward in maintaining the historical beauty of the South Shore, and his future, deeply rooted in Hingham’s past, looks bright indeed.