Merle Thorpe Architects

presents

A CHESAPEAKE BAY BOATHOUSE

Restoring a Prized Amenity

Along Maryland's Protected Shores

A Chesapeake Bay Boathouse
and a number of our other projects
can be seen on our website:
MerleThorpeArchitects.com

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
PLEASE CONTACT:MERLE@MERLETHORPEARCHITECTS.COM

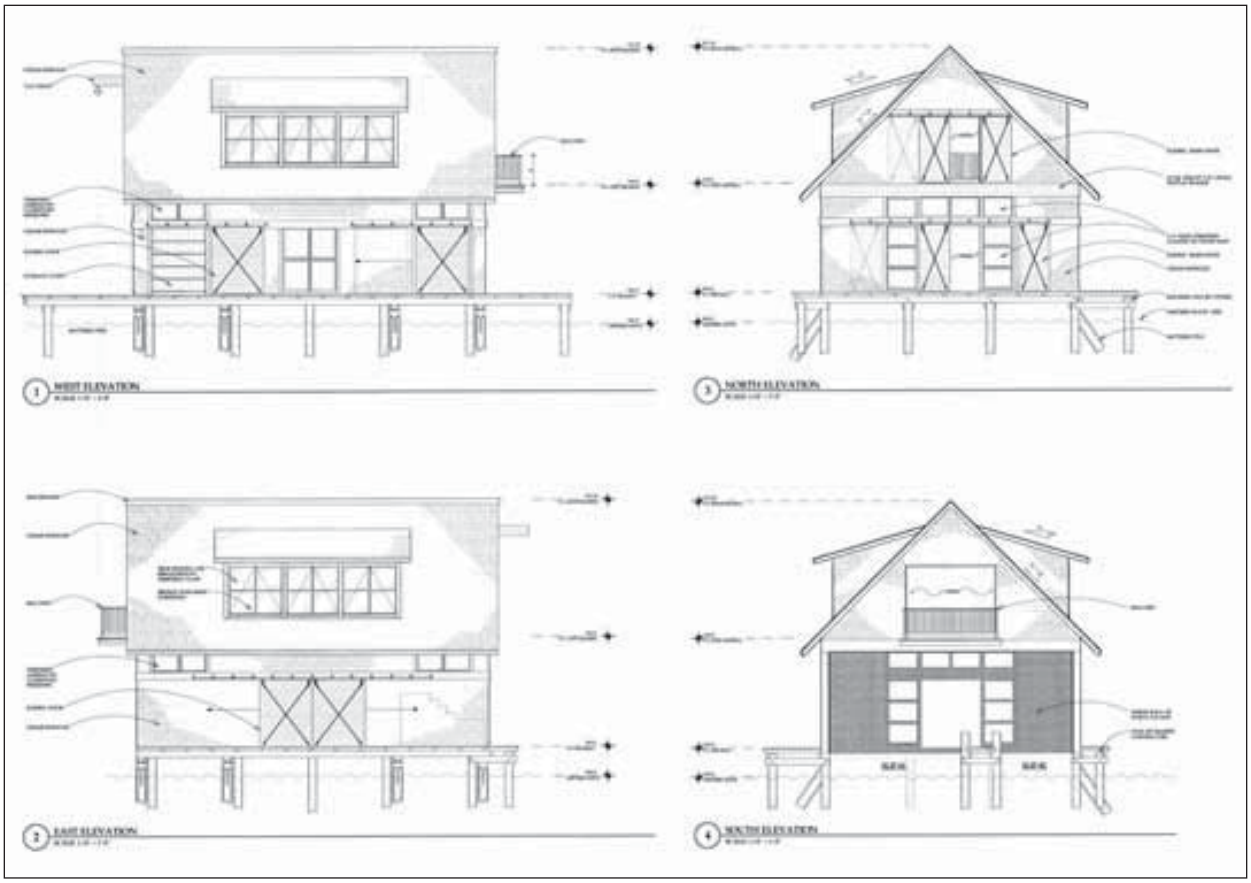
3235 P STREET, NW • WASHINGTON, DC 20007
TEL 202•298•7771 •TEL 410•745•2215

CHESAPEAKE BAY BOATHOUSE

Restoring a Prized Amenity along Maryland's Protected Shores

By Merle Thorpe Architects

When clients purchased an historic waterfront farm in Easton, Maryland, they asked us to design a new boathouse on the grandfathered footprint of an old one. The design of the new 1-1/2 story boathouse draws upon the local agricultural vernacular, and contributes positively to the visual waterscape of the upper Tred Avon River. Yet, the traditional design conceals advanced engineering that allows it to withstand harsh winds, with generous openings on all sides. We drew upon our extensive Eastern Shore experience to guide the owners' through the regulatory review process, and achieved the owners' objectives of collecting the family's extensive water sport activities in one place.



The boathouse satisfies an ambitious program that includes a floating dock, two dock slips, a mooring and a sail loft on the second floor, in addition to the two-berth-wide boathouse. One way of keeping the design in scale was through the balance of dormers and barn doors. Another way was to extend the design to the staging area where a bench, trees and a living shoreline meet the pier.

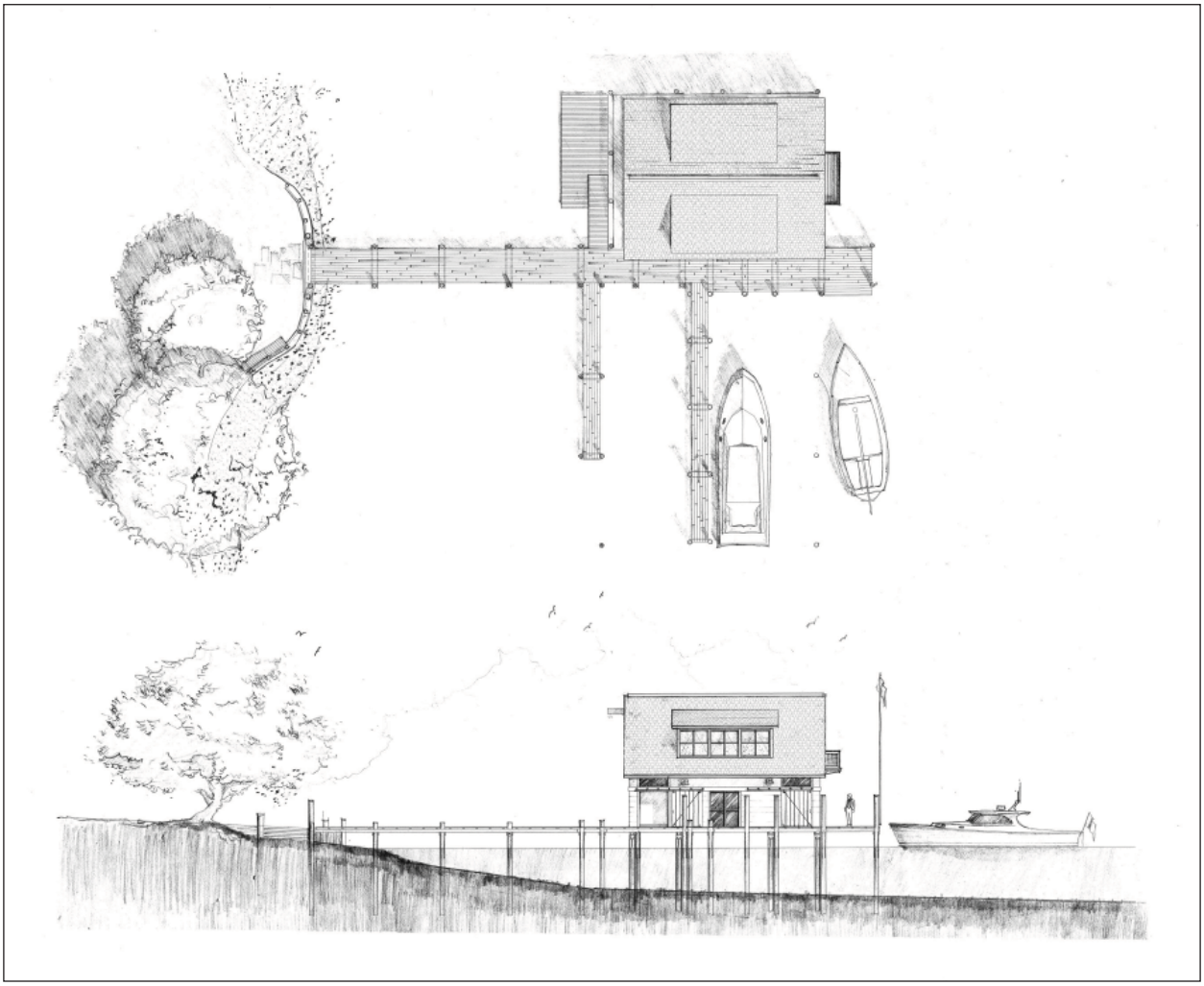
We selected a hot-dipped, galvanized woven wire mesh for the boathouse's railing assemblies. The material holds up well to the corrosive effects of salt and water, and also helps reduce the overall weight of the structure. The materials introduces a crisp, modern aesthetic to the boathouse design, which reads as functional and visually transparent from the inside looking out, and the outside looking in.

The long, curved cedar bench augments the boathouse and anchros the onshore assembling area. It also becomes a pleasant place from which to observe nature's diurnal and tidal changes. Exposed to sun for much of the day, the bench receives tree shade from the afternoon sun. The bench becomes a spot from which to observe the tides flowing on the shoreline below, which was carefully restored with native aquatic grasses.

The Grandfathered Boathouse
The new boathouse and pier were built upon the grandfathered condition of this preexisting boathouse and dock.

The relatively straight-forward cedar-clad exterior belies a complex structural design built to resist the corrosive saltwater environment and 120 mph hurricane-force winds. To achieve the openness created by the sliding barn doors, the boathouse required a rigid metal frame formed by a matrix of hot-dipped, galvanized steel bents and secondary beams, and steel saddles connected to the above-water steel structure, both to battered (or inclined) pilings below the water and vertical piles on the pier.

The boathouse design deliberately follows the local vernacular to provide interest and contrast from the formality of the neo-Georgian style of the property's main house.



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The boathouse is a functional, welcoming and contextually appropriate point of arrival for visitors on their final approach.

Merle Thorpe's practice on Maryland's Eastern Shore began in 1989. Merle Thorpe Architects understands the unique attributes of the location, climate and ecology. The practice extends to the greater Atlantic seaboard. Merle Thorpe brings over 30 years' experience as a practicing architect to diverse projects. Recognized for excellence in custom residential design, the work has received numerous awards for distinctive residential architecture, including an Award for Excellence from the DC Chapter of the American Institute of Architects.

ARCHITECTURE IS PERFORMED BEST IN COLLABORATION WITH OTHER INDIVIDUALS COMMITTED TO THEIR RESPECTIVE CRAFTS. TO THAT END, WE WANT TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE FOLLOWING STAFF, CONSULTANTS AND CONTRACTORS:

ARCHITECT - MERLE THORPE ARCHITECTS PLLC
CONTRACTOR - OWNER CONSTRUCTED
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LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT - YUNHHI CHOI, YUNGHI CHOI LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS
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