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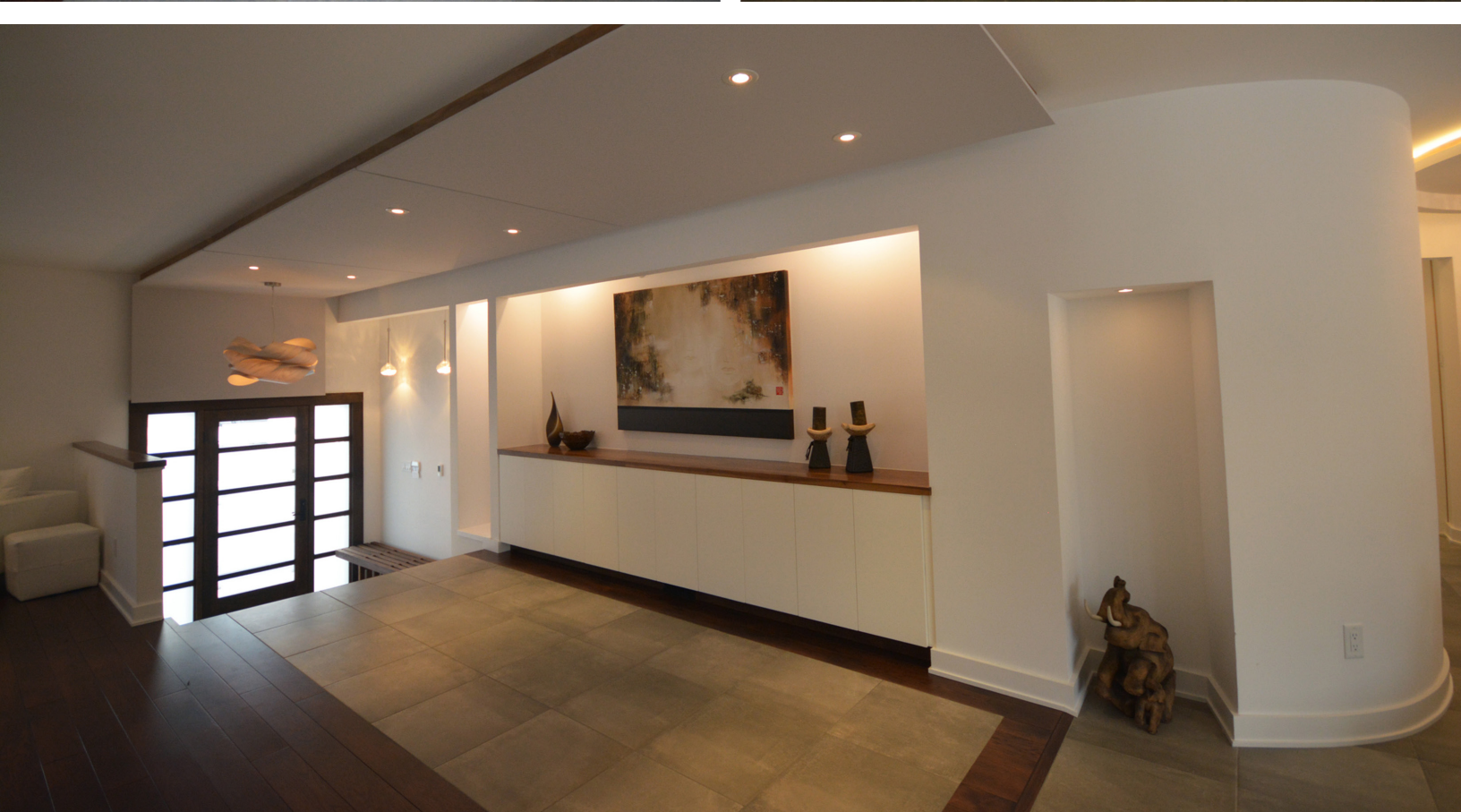


Architectural design brings art and functionality together within one unit; her designs not only need to adhere to the desires of her clients, but also ensure the building layout is structurally sound, aesthetically pleasing, and blends into the surrounding environment. In short, the creator must produce a space that is both beautiful and livable.

HOURLY AVEDISSIAN, founder of Houry Avedissian Architecture Design (Ha² Architecture & Design) combines the artistic and practical elements of

architecture in each of her projects. Through her dedication to detail and outstanding ability to “bring each project from start to finish,” Avedissian has brought herself to the forefront of residential home design and construction.

Avedissian did not begin her career as an independent consultant. After graduating from the University of Montreal’s Architecture department in 1999, Avedissian joined as a front-end institutional and commercial building designer as an intern Architect at a Montreal large-scale firm. Two years later, she moved to a similar large firm, this time focusing on pharmaceutical and medical buildings.





Yet Avedissian desired to fully understand the architectural process. Although working with large firms provided her the opportunity to gain tremendous experience in specialized areas, the size and complexity of the projects barred her ability to engage fully with the endeavor.

"I wanted to explore how to bring a project from beginning to end," Avedissian explains in a recent CBJ interview. "I wanted to see how everything came together. When you're burning the midnight oil focusing on one step, you want to be able to master the next phase in the construction documentation process and implementation on site.

In 2007, Avedissian decided to take a major step in her career development. She joined a small architecture firm focused on the construction of smaller condo buildings and waterfront projects in the Islands. Here, Avedissian learned the business side of the industry, such as the administrative aspect of architecture, building client relationships, and construction supervision.

In 2008, the economic recession caused the small firm to end operations. Avedissian returned to Canada, bringing back a wealth of knowledge and a passion for taking on the full spectrum of requirements to bring a project to term. At this time, she was connected to a contact looking for a full design of a residential house in Ottawa. Avedissian embraced the opportunity.

"I'd never taken on anything like it before," she explains. "It really was a stepping stone into the area of small scale residential design. I was able to use a lot of what I observed and learned



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C A M B R I A

previously working with the smaller firm and apply it to a project that was totally my own."

The project was a success, and Avedissian soon gained the attention of a large architecture firm in Ottawa. This firm, faced with an overflow of projects too small to warrant immediate interest, contacted Avedissian with the offer to transfer these smaller projects to her. In January 2009, she began her third project - the Treehouse.

The Treehouse, located in Westboro, exemplifies Avedissian's ability to combine natural elements present in the environment with modern design. The project integrates contemporary layouts and materials with the classic playful 'treehouse' theme; the clear open concept provides ample living space while the open windows allow



for natural light to warmly light the interior.

The success of the Treehouse led to a series of other successes; Avedissian's design was featured in a local quarterly magazine. It was again featured in Style magazine in the summer of 2012 and was a Finalist in the Greater Ottawa Home Builder's association's (GOHBA) award ceremony in October of 2014 for Custom Urban Infill in 2400SF and under category.

"After [the Treehouse], my business really took off. I built it bit by bit, slowly compiling a portfolio of different residential design projects. It's been a great development," Avedissian says.

Today, Avedissian's portfolio contains an array of uniquely designed residential new builds, rebuilds, and renovations. These include the Prestone Drive Residence in the Orleans neighborhood of Ottawa, the Royal Twins Residence, Brierwood Residence in Westboro Ottawa, Clancy Residence addition on Beacon Hill and E2 Residence Renovation who also made Finalist at this year's GOHBA awards in Ottawa as well, just to name a few.

Avedissian has also recently had the opportunity to redesign her primary school library (the Alex Manoogian Library), allowing her to reconnect with her roots and give back to the community that started her down the path to success.

In the future, Avedissian intends to continue to bring her unique flair to each project. "I always want my projects to be very distinguished from the others, and don't want to have a trademark look – although some elements will show here and there. It's about that holistic approach: the

inside, outside, furniture, cabinetry. It all flows naturally into each other. I want it to fit in the neighborhood, but also have a distinguishing quality inspired by my clients and their way of life."

"I always want the viewer to understand that each element was meant to be there – everything is there for a purpose. It can't fit anywhere else."

In order to fully engage with her clients, Avedissian ensures that the client is aware that working together will be a long-term relationship. Bringing a project from initial design to completion can take up to two years, meaning that each party must understand the implications of the task ahead. In order to facilitate this, Avedissian works with her clients at every step, and adjusts her 3D model designs to their specifications and providing specialized insight into the best way to meet their living needs.

"The client sees their home as it should be, and can experience the house as though they're almost living in it. Everything is presented in a way that lets them know exactly what their home will be like."

Avedissian has also recently begun branching out into smaller commercial projects, and is looking forward to taking on these new challenges ahead.

"This next step is a new opportunity to bring my designs to the forefront," concludes Avedissian. "You never know how your business will grow; it's important to develop with every presented opportunity."