

Real Estate

27east

Click here to view the best
property values on the East End
corcoran.com

| HOME | NEWS | A & E | SPORTS | COMMUNITY | MULTIMEDIA | REAL ESTATE | CALENDAR | CLASSIFIEDS |

Publication: The East Hampton Press & The Southampton Press

Staying afloat: Local architects say slow market isn't hampering their business

By Beth Young

Aug 20, 08 12:51 PM



Chris Coy, of Barnes Coy Architects in Bridgehampton, said that his firm is having a banner year.

[see all images](#)

Chris Coy of Barnes Coy Architects in Bridgehampton says that he's one of the guys who's kept busy, and that his office is currently hiring.

He said that business in his company's Bridgehampton office is up between 20 and 25 percent over last year, and that the company's other offices in Manhattan and Vail, Colorado, are also doing well.

"My office has never been busier," he said. "Our clients are not getting financing. They have the resources to commit and they perceive this as a good time to start a building project."

He said that 2008 is one of the firm's busiest years on record.

"Our niche is very high-end houses. The houses tend to be \$5 million and up," he said, though he added that the firm will take on any size project as long as it is of architectural interest.

Though he said that material costs had increased dramatically, in some case by 15 to 20 percent over last year, he has had no difficulty finding materials that clients now want to work with, many of which are environmentally conscious products like ipe and bamboo.

"Anybody good is busy. That's the state of the world out here," he said.

Harry Bates of Bates Masi Architects in Sag Harbor said that while he's seen a slowdown in the amount of construction on the East End, he's worked on as many as 20 projects at one time this summer, while in normal years he tends to work on 10 to 15 projects at once.

"We're very busy," he said of his firm, which does new residential construction and small commercial buildings. He said that part of the firm's success is its focus on green architecture and its participation in the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification.

New home construction is shrinking on the East End, but architects here say that they've been at least as busy as ever, due in part to the demand for high-end and green homes.

Only 62 new permits for homes were issued on the East End through August 7 of this year—down from 175 in the same time frame in 2005. Across the country, the American Institute of Architects reports that its Architecture Billings Index—which indicates the amount of time between an architect billing for his or her services and the time construction begins, has shown an increase in the amount of time between the end of the design process and the beginning of construction for the past six months. New construction now begins, on average, between nine and 12 months after the final architectural documents are prepared.

Architects here, however, said that they gauge their success by how busy they are, and many said they are busier than ever.

Email this article

Print this article

Get news alerts

RSS Feeds

Share

SEARCH 

ALL HEADLINES

- › New fertilizer setback requirement to become law **1 comment**
- › Money saving tips for every home
- › The legacy of William Bottomley lives on, but for how long? **1 comment**
- › Plant layering is a fun way to save money and grow the garden
- › Manorville furniture maker boasts an array of skills
- › Local architects represented the East End in Washington
- › Home Economy: Refinancing 101
- › Designing every detail: Bathrooms done right
- › A modern twist in historical building
- › Sweet peas look and smell great from garden to vase **1 comment**

YMCA East Hampton RECenter
MARCH MEMBERSHIP MONTH

Member Appreciation and Open House

<p>Family Day Saturday, March 21st 10:00-1:00pm Music, Entertainment Games, Snacks and Fun! Family Swim 1:00-5:00pm</p>	<p>Adult Day Sunday, March 22nd Ages 18 & up 10:00-11:00pm Free Fitness Assessments Bagels And Jazz!</p>
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

It's A Win Win Deal!
Members receive a Free Month for every new member you bring to the Y
New Members receive 20% of your Y Membership

For more information call 631-329-6884 or www.ymcali.org

"We try to do green anyway," he said, adding that green roofs, geothermal heating and ventilating, and the use of recycled materials and bamboo walls and floors are becoming more popular all the time.

"People, I think, naturally are interested in saving what they can on anything," he said.

Anne Surchin is an architect based in Southold who specializes in renovations, additions and historic preservation. She said that while her work level has not changed since the downturn in the housing market, many of her colleagues have told her that business is slow.

"If they say that they're busy that might show that you're in demand and you're hot and you're wanted, but my colleagues are all telling me they're slow," she said. "The AIA is saying that the last to pick up will be residential and they've had quarter after quarter of no growth. Are we a little separated from the rest of the architectural world? Yeah, we seem to function on a different level, but the billings index has gone way down."

Ms. Surchin, who recently attended a seminar called "Alternative House Practices: Designing in a Depressed Market," at the Harvard Graduate School of Design at which many AIA architects spoke, said that many architects from throughout the country said that they were laying off as much as 20 percent of their staff.

"That was really shocking to me. They did high end residential work and there were some really big well-known firms," she said, adding that her colleagues on the East End "may be busy, but are they getting paid? Payments are slow in coming."

"A lot of people are holding off in general because they don't have the discretionary income," she said. "At the lowest end, in the starter home market, people still need starter homes. What's been hit the hardest is middle market, 3,000- to 5,000-square-feet, where people aren't out-and-out wealthy. The wealthiest always have money."

Ms. Surchin added that many of her clients are now gravitating toward energy efficient building.

[Add a Comment](#)



Bamboo
"THE BEST SUSHI IN THE HAMPTONS"
RESTAURANT & SUSHI LOUNGE

OPEN 7 DAYS YEAR ROUND 631-329-9821
47 MONTAUK HIGHWAY
1 MILE WEST OF EAST HAMPTON VILLAGE

**DEVLIN
MCNIFF**

631-324-6100