

DARREN J. TAYLOR

239 N. Mill St., Gratz Park | LEXINGTON, KY 40507 | 502.424.0032 | darren@gibsonaylorthompson.com

OVERVIEW

I am a Principal with Gibson Taylor Thompson Architecture & Design in Lexington, KY. I also serve as an instructor in the Historic Preservation department at the University of Kentucky College of Design. My work in the field mainly deals with the adaptive reuse of historic structures and contemporary additions to historic structures along with new construction work across various disciplines. With over eighteen years in the design and building trade, I bring a wealth of experience to my endeavors. I hold a Bachelor of Architecture degree from the University of Kentucky, a Master of Architecture degree and a Certificate in Historic Preservation, both from the University of Pennsylvania. I am a Governor (Beshear) appointed member of the Kentucky Historic Properties Advisory Commission and serve on several local design and preservation-based boards and committees.

My pedagogy in the classroom is focused on the erosion of “glass box” preservation ideals and the theory that what is old isn’t always important and what is important isn’t always old. I am always pushing my students to look at found objects as malleable elements where opportunities for contemporary space can be infused and complementary. I have presented these ideals on the state level, most recently at the 2014 Governor’s Mansion symposium in his speech entitled “The Preservation and Valuation of Public Buildings as our Shared Heritage – Owning Everyone’s Architecture”. I also push my students to assess and derive value out of the vernacular moments in found architectures and environments.

EDUCATION

Master of Architecture

Certificate in Historic Preservation

2011

University of Pennsylvania, School of Design, Philadelphia, PA

Bachelor of Architecture

2004

University of Kentucky, College of Architecture, Lexington, KY

- 3.3 Cumulative GPA
- Dean's List (2001, 2002, 2004)
- Robert Kingsley Design Prize (2004)
- Nominated for Skidmore, Owings & Merrill Travel Scholarship (2004)
- Studio Design Prize (2002, 2003)
- Vertical Studio Design Prize (2003)
- Anthony Weber Travel Scholarship (2002)
- Coordinator and co-author of the University of Kentucky College of Architecture admissions exam (2001-2004)
- Studied in Venice, Italy – University of Kentucky Atelier (2002)

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PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Gibson Taylor Thompson Architecture & Design | Lexington, KY 2019-Present
Principal – Gibson Taylor Thompson Architecture & Design is a collaborative design firm focusing on detail, clarity and innovation. Our design philosophy is deeply entrenched in Kentucky’s architectural history and dynamic landscapes. We approach architecture with a rich awareness of regional traditions coupled with the ever- evolving technologies to produce buildings with a lasting, distinct appeal.
- Darren Taylor Design | Lexington; Louisville, KY 2017-2019
Owner/Designer/Preservationist – In an effort to return to my passion of working on the design, restoration and reimagining of Historic Properties I left my previous position to focus my efforts completely. My projects deal mainly with historic rehabilitations, contemporary additions and other Historic Preservation related efforts. This practice also allows me to devote more time to teaching and researching.
- Nomi Design | Lexington; Louisville, KY 2015 – 2017
Creative Director - Nomi is a firm of 14 professional Architects, designers, fabricators and makers. They focus on the process and craft of making to inform the designed spaces. I served as Creative Director, engaging every aspect of every project in the office coupled with project management and design. Directed transition from previous firm and led the team to a “Next Progressives” denomination and publication in Architect Magazine in May of 2017.
- Alt32 Architecture/Design | Lexington, KY 2011 – 2015
Vice President of Business Development - Rebranded firm entirely from Lucas Schwering Architects. Operated as Vice President of Business Development, Project Manager and lead designer on many of the firm’s projects.
- Carpenter | Taylor Design, PLLC | Lexington, KY; Louisville, KY 2005 – 2011
Partner - With Clyde R. Carpenter, FAIA. Working in both the rural and urban historic districts in Kentucky, we specialize in blending traditional Kentucky Architectural vernacular with modern tendencies to redefine the modern Kentucky house for our clients.
- GBBN Architects | Lexington, KY; Cincinnati, OH; Louisville, KY 2004 – 2009
Project Designer - Worked on a variety of project types through multiple design phases from conceptual studies to construction administration. Led and served on design teams to complete projects in every market sector of the firm’s practice in both the US and China. Experience included projects in mixed-use, sports, educational and residential disciplines. Held multiple responsibilities in office management, marketing and client relations in both the Lexington and Louisville offices.
- University of Kentucky | Lexington, KY 2005-Present
Assistant Professor/Instructor – Architecture Department/Department of Historic Preservation, College of Design. Instructed the following courses - Preservation design studio for master’s students in Historic Preservation; Second Year Architecture design studio.

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TEACHING EXPERIENCE

University of Kentucky | College of Design | Lexington, KY 2005-Present
Instructor – Historic Preservation Dept., College of Design – currently teaching Historic Preservation Design Studio
Assistant Professor – Historic Preservation Dept., College of Design – Co-taught Historic Preservation Design Studio - 2005
Instructor – School of Architecture, College of Design – Second Year Studio Professor - 2013

PROJECT EXPERIENCE

Stone Creek Farm Residential Renovation, Addition and Masterplan
Fayette County, KY | Completed 2021

This is a very intensive full renovation of an 1880 Italianate Victorian Structure with accessory additions of various structures. Respecting the volumes and detailing of the existing structure, I, along with Baron Gibson and Clyde Carpenter, are authoring new, complementary additions and flanking outbuildings to strike a new balance and infusion of contemporary forms.

Summe Residence Historic Renovation and Addition

Northside Historic District | Lexington, KY | Completed 2022

This project was a very contemporary addition to a 1910's four square house in downtown Lexington. The owner had a desire to respect the simple nature of the existing house and erect an addition that would bring extensive light and views into the house.

Circa 1820 Building Commercial Renovation and Addition

Battle Row Properties | Lexington, KY | Completed 2022

This is a very intensive full renovation of an 1820 early Federal style building in downtown Lexington. The building is being restored to its original form after years of neglect. A complementary, yet contemporary set of additions are being placed on the rear. The building will house retail and office space for my company and other local businesses.

Historic Elmwood Estate Assessment

Eastern Kentucky University | Richmond, KY | Completed 2017

I was approached by ECU to perform a Historic Structures Report as the basis for a renovation and reuse of this fabled estate. Built in 1887 for the prominent Richmond cattle Family, the Watts', it has sat empty and untouched since 1971 when their daughter and remaining heiress passed away. Recently acquired by ECU, they are preparing to restore and repurpose this magnificent 9,000 sf historic house, the state's only believed example of a Chateausque style house outside of Louisville, the masterpiece of Cincinnati Architect Samuel E. Des Jardins.

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Historic Russell Theatre Assessment

Downtown Maysville, KY | Currently Underway

I, along with Clyde Carpenter, were approached by the board of the Historic Russell Theatre in Maysville to perform an assessment of the overall structure and provide proper historic cost analyses to return it to its original 1929 glory. We hired Staggs & Fisher to assist with the MEP aspect of the theatres lack of conditioned air. We are working with the theatre board to provide information to help them raise funds to undertake the restoration.

International Book Project Renovation

Lexington, KY | Completed 2018

Our neighbor on Delaware Ave, the International Book Project, currently exists in a 1950's industrial bow string truss building. The new renovation and restoration will expose the original structural elements of the building to create a better environment for the staff while celebrating the buildings quality construction and industrial past.

Richmond Residence Renovation and Addition

Ashland Park | Lexington, KY | Completed 2018

Sitting directly across from and on axis with Ashland, the Henry Clay Estate, this project is a complete renovation of and addition to 1928 Historic Dutch Colonial Residence. Built as a Lexington Herald "Model Home" by Frankel & Curtis Architects, this house has many noted features. The side walls of the house are solid, two story Kentucky river limestone that act in juxtaposition to the clapboard siding of the other elements of the house. The addition is in contrast to the swooping roof lines of the house in its rectilinear form. Large volumes of glazing arranged in a symmetrical fashion set up views from the large open living room to the yard and are flanked on a central fireplace volume.

Sparrow/Wahlgren (Heinl House) Residence Renovation

Mulberry Hill Historic District | Lexington, KY | Completed 2018

Complete renovation of 1901 Victorian House on N. Limestone in downtown Lexington. This structure has some very unique features such as a central octagonal hall with a stained-glass skylight to the second floor. All new systems and restored finishes coupled with re-thinking of a badly done rear addition that will create pockets of space when transitioning from exterior to interior.

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Pfister Residence – Renovation and Addition

Fayette Park Historic District | Lexington, KY | Completed 2016

This project is a renovation and addition to an 1890 Richardsonian/Romanesque house in the Fayette Park section of downtown Lexington. The renovation re-imagines existing spaces to create new, dynamic moments. In the entrance hall, the floor and existing bathroom above were removed to create a double height space and dramatic view upon entry. In the rear, an existing exterior brick wall was removed to connect a two-story great room addition to the new kitchen, creating a long linear space in which the family of four can relax together around the hearth and kitchen. The addition references a former sleeping porch in volume but is framed in a modern language with stacked volumes. Introducing regulating windows that mirror the scale of the adjacent existing windows sets up a rhythm in the addition that relates to the original house.

York St. Challenge

NoLi CDC Site | Lexington, KY | *NoLi CDC Competition Winner* | Completed 2016

In late 2014, we won a national competition from the NoLi CDC to engage with existing shotgun houses on York St. in Lexington's Northside neighborhood on the edge of the East End. Traditionally an African American migrant worker neighborhood, these houses had long been abused along with the tenants. Our winning entry was a reimagination of these structures as maker space living units for people of the community, artists or makers. Our fabrication shop fabricated every element of the structure on our CNC machine and our team built two of the 6 final structures.

Scudder Residence Renovation

Northside Historic District | Lexington, KY | *Winner, BGT Award* | Completed 2016

Year long, complete renovation of excellent example of Romanesque/Richardsonian structure on 2nd Street in downtown Lexington. This very well-known house was completed in 1888 for Capt. Howard, Post Master of Lexington and Civil War hero. Since 2000, the house sat empty, taking on water and overall decay. Considered almost lost, I brought this magnificent example back to life, highlighting its exquisite contributing features such as a seemingly cantilevered 3 story turret and large curved "wedding" staircase.

Buchta Residence Carriage House Renovation

Downtown Frankfort Historic District | Frankfort, KY | Completed 2016

Complete renovation to 1840 Carriage House in downtown Frankfort. Original structure had been badly altered over the years, with much of its contributing character stripped and its openings removed. We adaptively reused the building into a guest house for the owners 1865 Italianate residence creating three floors of living space. Extensive Masonry, wood, plaster, window and trim restoration.

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Moose Lodge – Renovation and Addition

Constitution St. Historic District | Lexington, KY | Completed 2015

This project consists of a renovation of and addition to a circa 1840's residential building that has played a prominent role in the news publication history of Lexington. The newly renovated portion and addition will house local natural resource assessment firm Respec, Inc. The addition will house open workspaces, a gallery and a new two story elevator and stair tower facing the skyline. Board form concrete, cementitious siding and a green roof will be the represented materials as this addition responds to the existing federal style structure and nearby Sayre School campus buildings.

Calospa Lexington

Chevy Chase | Lexington, KY | *AIA KY Honor Award Winner 2016* | Completed 2015

Fit-up of existing 2,514 sf suite in an existing 1980's era, 3 story commercial structure. The space includes an open retail component with a serpentine wall as a divider between the public and private waiting areas and treatment spaces. There are 5 exam rooms with one Physician's office. Accessory program includes two restrooms, nurses work area and kitchenette. The awards committee made the following statement about this project: "This design demonstrates the simple power of a generative idea. The often-misused curvilinear wall, in this case, plays a subtle role of creating a sense of relaxation in the carefully edited space. Further, it delineates the boundary between front and back of house. The design succeeds in creating a relaxing ethereal experience."

Adaptive Reuse - Athletic Field Hs.

Transylvania University | Lexington, KY | Completed 2014

This project was an adaptive reuse of a 1950's industrial building to become Transylvania University's Athletic Field House and competition fields. Previously the office for a roofing company, the building had been surprisingly untouched and most of the character I desired to showcase was present. The program included locker rooms, coach's office, breakout space, training facilities and entertaining/recruiting areas along with exterior NCAA compliant running track, soccer and lacrosse field along with accessory field and track elements.

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Adaptive Reuse - The Plantory at the Bread Box

Northside Historic District | Lexington, KY | Completed 2013

Our team began this project with a simple plan to design a non-profit incubator on the 18,000 sf second floor of the Bread Box in downtown Lexington. It blossomed into our team design and fabricating almost every aspect of the space including walls, doors and furniture. Long abandoned, the rebirth of this building as an adaptive reuse project had been a labor of love. Nothing was as it seemed and major structural and infrastructural issues complicated the process but we overcame. It is now a non-profit/small business/community center space that celebrates the beautiful industrial conditions found there.

Kaplan Residence Renovation and Addition

Cherokee Triangle Historic District | Louisville, KY | Completed 2012

What began as a simple kitchen renovation to a 1901 townhouse in Louisville's famed Cherokee Triangle neighborhood, quickly blossomed into a full renovation and addition. The family of 4 did not want to leave the community they were in so making an addition was the viable option for them. Along with Clyde Carpenter, we created a rear addition of a glass "seam" to separate old and new, then a large sloping roof that housed a second-floor bedroom "box" floating above the living space. The exterior walls were large two story glass expanses that allowed a transparent view to the side yard, a rarity in the area, which the family had acquired after the neighboring house burned.

Dean (Fee) Residence Renovation and Addition

Rural Bracken Co., KY | Completed 2012

This project was a renovation and addition to the 1804 birthplace of John G. Fee, known abolitionist and founder of Berea College. I, along with Clyde Carpenter, added a rear addition of two flanking wings separated by a public space and circulation seam. We, along with the owner, were quite adamant that we not physically engage the classic façade of this house, rather that we connect minimally to the sides of the rear of the house and add two complementary volumes of a master suite and garage.

Sutherland/Comley Residence Renovation and Addition

Northside Historic District | Lexington, KY | Completed 2010

This project was a renovation and addition to the 1865 Dabney House on Third St. in Lexington's Northside Historic District. I, along with Clyde Carpenter, transformed the existing 4,500 sf structure into habitable space for the family by keeping the rooms as they were, only repurposing two bedrooms for bath suites. We added a new rear addition that abutted the rear of the house. A visual glass "seam" gave a break between the traditional house and the modern addition. On the interior, a new rear stair becomes a center focus through the entry hall, washed in light from roof top skylights, it provided an accent to the rear glass wall that opened to a pool on axis with flanking guest house and garage.

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Wagner Residence

Rural Clark County, KY | Completed 2009

I, along with Clyde Carpenter, designed a new 1,800 sf residence for a retired couple on a hill in rural Clark County. The scheme was based on staggered A-frame ski lodges of Colorado and had a center entrance with flanking kitchen and master suite that opened into a two story great room with views of the vista.

Yum! Center | University of Louisville

Louisville, KY | Completed 2008

This was a new practice facility for the Men's Basketball, Women's volleyball and Women's lacrosse teams at the University of Louisville. Situated on the edge of the formal campus, it is located on a brownfield site that posed many challenges. The building housed locker rooms, coach's offices, training facilities, two gymnasiums and several large open entertaining and break out spaces with view of the campus and adjacent athletic fields. Performed while at GBBN Architects.

PUBLICATIONS/PRESENTATIONS

Article in Business Lexington – “Authentic Spaces: A Catalyst for Social Innovation” – Business Lexington, Smiley Pete Publishing Co., Lexington, KY, 2013

Kentucky Governor's Mansion Symposium Invited speaker – Title: “The Preservation and Valuation of Public Buildings as our Shared Heritage – Owning Everyone's Architecture” – Presented January, 2014

SERVICE

Board Member – Kentucky Mansions Preservation Foundation – 2017-Present

Board Member, Governor (Beshear) Appointment –

Kentucky State Historic Properties Advisory Committee (2009-2016, 2020-2023,2024-Present)

Executive Advisory Committee – Gratz Park Neighborhood Association

American Institute of Architects, Associate member

Associate Director, Elected - AIA KY (2008, 2009)

Advisory Board Member, Appointed - Eastern Kentucky Chapter (2007, 2008)

Membership Committee Chair, Appointed - Eastern Kentucky Chapter (2005-2008)

University of Pennsylvania Alumni Undergraduate Candidate Interviewer (2014-Present)

LexArts Corporate Giving Committee Co-Chair (2014-2019)

LexArts Public Art Council - The Murals Project, Lexington, KY (2007)

Member - Blue Grass Trust for Historic Preservation, Lexington, KY

Member - First Presbyterian Church, Lexington, KY

Session Member & Ruling Elder, Serve on Property and Campus Design Committees

Alumni advisor to Curriculum Committee, Appointed - College of Architecture

Eagle Scout - Boy Scouts of America (1996)

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TECHNICAL SKILLS

- Autodesk Revit – Proficient experience with BIM software for project delivery.
- Autodesk AutoCAD – Twenty years’ experience. Proficient in the production of project drawings in all phases of design.
- Autodesk Maya – Experience realizing parametric design solutions in 3D through modeling and renderings.
- Google Sketch Up – Knowledgeable in exploring design solutions in 3D, creating renderings, site plan modeling and integration with Google Earth.
- Adobe Creative Suite- Photoshop, InDesign, Illustrator, Acrobat – Ten + years experience. Proficient in the creation of renderings office graphics, reports and presentation material.
- MS Office Suite – Proficient in the organization and creation of reports, spreadsheets, graphics and presentations.

PERSONAL

I reside in the Historic Gratz Park neighborhood in downtown Lexington with my wife Kelly and our twin ten-year-old boys, Carter and Wesley. We are involved in downtown activities and enjoy all that Lexington has to offer both urban and rural. We frequently travel for pleasure to Europe, the Caribbean, the West Coast and beyond. In my free time, besides looking after our 1901 home, I enjoy driving my 1969 Cadillac Coupe DeVille, donating my time to various organizations and cheering on the Pittsburgh Steelers or the Kentucky Wildcats basketball team. I serve on several facilities-based committees at our Historic First Presbyterian Church in downtown Lexington along with Gratz Park neighborhood association and investment Club. I am a firm believer that being a good Preservationist is also being an active community member.