



As a renowned and much sought-after architect, Gordon Ridgely is best known in the upper echelons of society as the man responsible for many of Toronto's most beautiful and stately, Georgian-style mansions. Gordon is the principal of the Toronto-based firm, Gordon Ridgely Architects and his description of himself as something of a "renaissance man" is very apt. His deep passion for architecture is complimented by a thorough knowledge of the construction and building industry, together with a great love and knowledge of superior interior design, art, landscaping and horticulture.

Schooled in the history of architecture, he is an absolute perfectionist when it comes to following the historic precedents of proportion and scale. Gordon steers clear of anything stuffy, ornate or pretentious. He states instead that, "I love a classic house, done with fine materials and proportions that will last." As a result, his homes are a study in classical lines, refined elegance and timeless appeal.

Born in Oshawa, Gordon's family was involved in building and land development, and some of his first memories include visiting building sites on Sunday with his father and, later on, working during his summer, tarring basements, assisting tradesmen and getting a thorough grounding in the fundamentals of proper construction. He says, "That early experience has proven over the years to be a great asset to me and the firm. I literally learned this business from the ground up. I know what construction is about and because of that I rely upon first class mechanical, electrical and structural consultants to be our partners on projects. We make sure that our houses work aesthetically and technically."

Clients comment on how generous and comfortable Gordon's homes are to live in and they deeply appreciate how his houses are designed with the surrounding landscape in mind. In fact, he cannot stress enough how, "vitally important the relationship of the house is to its surroundings. I don't think of it as four walls on its own. We take everything into account when designing a home. I love to establish an axis which allows you to see from the front door right through to the garden. Creating a sense of movement in a home is so important. It is also important to incorporate terraces, covered porches and deep, landscaped window wells and sunken gardens."



His passion for landscaping and horticulture translates into homesteads that are magnificently laid out and offer the owners an idyllic and tranquil escape. Gordon's approach to architecture is very holistic and he will often be found collaborating with the interior designers and landscape artists to ensure the entire project flows together as a seamless, integrated whole.

Recognising that a first class team of professionals and skilled experts are needed to bring an architectural concept to life, Gordon holds in high esteem those who can synergistically work together with him to create a beautiful, well finished and impeccably crafted home. He recently had the pleasure of working with such a team. Gordon was involved in designing the winning home for the 2010 PCM Princess Margaret Sweepstakes Grand Prize, together with noted designer, Lynda Reeves of House and Home and Carlos Jardino from PCM Inc., Oakville's master builders of luxury, custom-style homes.

"A very fine, very special project", is how Gordon Ridgely describes the exquisite Grand Prize home, located in upscale Oakville.

Commenting on how pleasant it was to work with such a professional team, Gordon states that, "We had to work in a very compressed timeframe on this project and I was impressed by Carlos and PCM and what they managed to achieve. Carlos is a very fast builder and we had to scurry at times to stay ahead of him with our drawings. Although the timelines were tight, the project was well managed and I was very pleased with the end result. It's a gorgeous house."

Known as an expert planner himself, he goes on to say that, "I really admire PCM. They are full of drive and enthusiasm and they go fast and save money. Carlos' methodology works and it works well. I admire someone who can take the building process and abbreviate it. Taking a long time isn't actually a good thing. Faster is generally better as long as you can still maintain extremely high quality, because everyone involved retains enthusiasm for the project. You can see this in Carlos' own house which is absolutely wonderful and was completed in less than four months."



Although best known for his Georgian-styled homesteads, Gordon's first love is Modern architecture and he firmly believes that there is a significant move towards that style. He is quick to point out that any good architecture, including Modern architecture, should always follow proven, basic concepts of design. "Modern architecture done well is a delight", he says, but he eschews much that is labelled modern because it is, "untutored and mismanaged and incorporates incorrect details."

Gordon's approach with clients is respectful and engaging and he focuses on carefully listening to their aspirations and ideas.

"I do an initial sketch design to see if we're on the right wave length and we work it through with the client and what they want to achieve. We then bring in the structural consultants and continue to develop the spirit of the interior and the landscaping. I love to involve the clients heavily in the process because they are the ones that are going to have to live in it! I want to get the best product for a client and make sure that they will love and feel comfortable in their home."

When asked to sum up what he does best, he simply states that, "I like to design tasteful, gentle homes that don't age and have an understated elegance about them. Nothing pretentious, just classic and lasting."

His reputation as a master architect is undisputed and Gordon Ridgely's homes are, without question, as refined and unpretentious as the architect himself.



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