



WINNING COMBINATION

Stuart Silk Architects and Constantine Builders, Inc. become WSDA's newest endorsed companies

Photo by Steve Keating

At first glance, it might appear that WSDA's newest endorsed companies are a little out of the norm — as a construction company and an architectural firm, they're only peripherally related to dentistry — but they bring a commitment to quality, integrity and intelligent design that mirrors what happens every day in a dental practice. Stuart Silk Architects (www.stuartsilk.com) and Constantine Builders, Inc. (www.constantinebuilders.com) bring with them a rich history of design and construction in both commercial and residential arenas. Together, they recently completed an award-winning project, The Orion Building in West Seattle. The winner of the National Association of Industrial and Office Properties (NAIOP) award for Office Development of the Year, the building (pictured at left) was honored for its quality construction, design and use of sustainable materials.

An early start

For George Constantine of CBI, his tenure in contracting began when he was ten, while tagging along with his dad, a contractor. Although his father did a lot of residential work, Constantine has made his mark for the past 30 years in construction doing solely commercial projects. Today, he employs 22, and completes anywhere between 20-30 medium-sized projects a year — mostly for the health care industry, including dentist/specialists offices, and a raft of tenant improvement work.

For Constantine, becoming a dental industry "specialist" happened by circumstance, not design. "We were building a shopping center complex and one of the buildings was purchased by a dentist, Dr. Phillip Redd. Because of my background in health care, he asked me to build out his new space. I understood the industry and it's intricacies well." Constantine continues, saying, "He loved the work we did and told some friends, who then hired us—and then word began to gradually spread within the dental industry in Washington. We found ourselves developing a niche for ourselves within the community."

The challenges of health care

Today, health care industry construction accounts for nearly 90 percent of his business, and of that number, nearly 75 percent is done within the dental community. Constantine explains, saying "The reason we like the field is because it differentiates us from the competition. It takes an increased level of expertise to know how to build these efficiently and cost effectively, so we've pursued that avenue." Challenges like proper coordination with HVAC and medical gas suppliers have become second-nature to the UW grad (the first in his family to attend college). That attention to detail has won Constantine both awards and fans — says client Susan Barrett of SJ Barrett & Company, "It is one thing to design a project with great detail, and quite another

to have it executed with care and accuracy by a general contractor. In the case of CBI, their professional staff has done exactly that each time we have worked on a project together. They partner with us to find avenues to attain the desired result, without asking us to compromise our objectives."

Core values

CBI's core values — providing the highest level of customer service, working honestly and with integrity, scheduling proactively to complete projects under budget and ahead of schedule, seeking out exemplary employees, maintaining a safe work environment for employees and subcontractors, and building a referral source from all clients — have kept the company busy and popular with happy clients. Constantine is proud of the reputation he's built, and stands on his unwavering commitment to building on-time and within budget.

Stuart Silk: Building brand recognition

A look at Stuart Silk's website gives a glimpse of what he's really all about: stately, beautifully designed and built homes across the region. But while he's made his name in residential design (and what a name it is, awards abound), his commercial designs are standouts, too. Case in point: The Orion Building — sleek and modern, but with a rustic edge that gives it that Pacific Northwest vibe, the award-winner perfectly showcases what Silk's designs are all about.

Building owner Dr. Ted Pilot had this to say "While we worked with other architects prior to Stuart Silk Architects, we found his team was more willing to take chances and think outside the box. For example, we weren't even thinking that our building could be awarded LEED certification and Stuart and his team made that a possibility. Medical/dental spaces have standard space requirements; however, their team presented creative ideas that did not take the typical cookie-cutter approach. They brought a fresh outlook that offered a highly functional space as well as a fresh perspective for the building design."

The lesson here? Don't shoebox Silk: if there's something you want done, he's got a team for it. "The great thing about being a medium sized firm is that we have the capability of gearing up and handling any size project. But, at the same time, we're not a large mega-firm — you're always going to have direct contact with me and the other principals. We consider this a sweet spot in our industry — we have the capacity to do a lot of work quickly, but we also pay attention to the details, and we're not spitting out rote designs like some of the large firms." Among the 15 or so working at the firm are professionals from residential, commercial and interior disciplines, giving the company a broad range of skills.

A residential connection

Silk's connection to the dental industry

began with a residence for a WSDA member "We created a home for Dr. Ken Russell that won every award known to man, it was on the cover of a number of magazines and was very highly received. The process of designing for Ken was a really interesting, intellectual exercise and I really enjoyed the whole experience." Silk continues, saying, "I found him to be intellectually curious, smart and very interested in design and the environment around him. And, he was sustainably motivated, which ties in to our interests and goals — our DNA, if you will."

At last year's PNDC, Silk had a booth and continued courting the dental community, "We had some great conversations, which further reinforced our decision to work with dentists — we find that we often have parallel interests, which allows us to do our best work," Silk relates. And while he's definitely interested in his collaboration with dentists in commercial work, he's open and willing to a vast range of projects, including residences and interiors. "We have a fantastic interior team," says Silk, "Danielle Frank runs it for us — she has 13 years of experience at ensuring that clients end up with a warm, friendly and calming environment." One of the things that differentiates Silk's firm from others is that they're not simply designers, they're accredited, licensed architects — and that gives them a range and expertise that many competitors don't have.

With 30 years in the business of designing excellence, Stuart silk and his team can provide nearly any design service — from straight architecture to hands-on touch-feel-finish selections and the things that are so important to making environments welcoming for patients.

Endorsed company benefits

Visit www.wsga.org/endorsed-products for detailed information on membership benefits offered by CBI and Stuart Silk Architects.

Stuart Silk — Complimentary initial consultation and free feasibility study to analyze a property for code red flags and highest and best use options. (Approximate value: \$1,500)

CBI — Complimentary Pre-Construction Services (Value \$5,500).

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