

Foundational Musings

A Quick Q&A with Lee Bearsch, Founder of BCK and Director, BCK-IBI Group

Lee formed the firm now known as BCK-IBI Group in 1976. He earned his B.Arch. from Clemson University in 1965 and completed post-graduate studies in town planning and urban design at the Architectural Association/University of London in 1970. He began to practice in 1970 with Llewelyn-Davies Associates (International) in London, then later in New York. Lee was also commissioned in the U.S. Army as 2nd Lt and served in Washington, DC from 1965 to 1967.



Tell us about your family. I have three sons (Casey 37 years, Peter 35 years, and Ben 32 years), one stepdaughter, and one stepson. Collectively, they have 10 children (The youngest three are all under a year in age). My oldest granddaughter is 8 years old and is named Lee Bearsch after, you guessed it, her grandfather.

Your family pet? Our Brittany Spaniel (Bernadette) rules the roost, spending half of the time at our home and the other half in Brooklyn with my son Ben.

What's your favorite project? It will always be the Next One, because it is the next great opportunity.

Hobbies? I enjoy golf, snow skiing, and furniture making.

What do you find remarkable? The most interesting thing (to me) in life is how closely we are aligned. I have numerous examples (all long and involved stories) where halfway around the world I meet someone by chance and they turn out to be closely entwined with my relatives or close friends, etc. This concept of six degrees of separation has been a continuous recurring part of my life.

Our BCK Ballers — 2013 Co-ed Volleyball Team

Having fun
and staying active!



Project Highlight: Trillium Creek — Primary School

West Linn-Wilsonville School District
 West Linn, Oregon, USA
 LEED Gold Registered

The design team was inspired by one student who announced during a design charrette, "I want to be the captain of my own learning." That notion was used as a basis to identify features and design techniques that emphasize the building is student centered. Interior spaces are designed to intentionally blur the edges, supporting collaboration, utilizing floor space for transitions and connecting students throughout the building to the center of the school and inquiry — the library. Collaborative learning neighborhoods emerge from these open and flexible porches, supporting partnerships and a sense of community between students and teachers. Intentional spaces and furnishings throughout the building provide independent learning spaces and areas for small group work. Classroom porches, the library, and wellness commons are designed with mobile furniture to give teachers and students the flexible space to extend lessons into larger gathering spaces.



Notions of community, collaboration, and teaming drove the use of interior glazing and "see-through" design of the building. Visual connections reinforce the public nature of the work of teaching and learning and invite collaboration and teaming. Splashes of bright colors stem from students voicing desires to have vibrant learning spaces. Similarly, the slide that connects students from the second to first floor balances students' desire to have alternative and stimulating components of the building, with opportunities to build skills around collaboration, mindfulness and a respectful use of space.



Forensic Architecture and Engineering

Sounds like a topic that would be covered on the latest episode of CSI.

The case: The newly constructed bus loop at your school is failing after the first winter. In spite of constant proof rolling, on site construction observation by third parties, and removal of suspect soils during construction, there are still issues. After further investigation, it's clear the root cause of the failure is complicated and not easy to identify.

The detectives: A forensic architecture and engineering team. Forensic architecture and engineering is the identification of a problem, careful examination and documentation of what is occurring, and solving the identified issue. Forensic architecture and engineering may be required when materials fail or are used improperly, or when unforeseen defects or environmental circumstances cause a building to deteriorate prematurely. School districts often need help developing cost effective solutions to quickly bring the issue to a close.

Case solved: A team of geo-technical engineers was called in to observe and sample the failing areas in the bus loop. Soils and asphalt were tested and analyzed. The solution involved surgically adding drainage to remove water sheeting between the virgin soil and fill installed to bring the bus loop up to the desired grade level. New drainage patterns created around the school changed the way water travelled under the site. This situation was not observable when the original geotechnical report was created. The bus loop was reconstructed and has withstood many freeze thaw cycles since being remedied.



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