



HARRISARCHITECTS PLLC

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# Firm marks 10 years

## *Harris Architects plans old, new projects*

**Name:** Harris Architects

**Location:** 33 West Probart St., Brevard

**Date opened:** June 1998

**Owners:** Douglas K. Harris and Ellen Pratt Harris

**Ages:** He is 51, she is 49.

**Originally from:** She is originally from South Carolina and is a 1981 graduate of Clemson University. He is originally from Haddenfield, N.J., and is a 1979 graduate of Georgia Tech.

**Number of employees:** Six

**Goods or services offered:** Architectural services

### **How did the business get started?**

“We moved to Brevard 14 years ago, and my husband worked for another local firm and I started my own practice, Ellen Pratt Harris, AIA, and then 10 years ago we decided to start practicing together,” Ellen said. “I specialize in historic preservation work and my husband specializes in new construction. We do both residential and commercial, although most of it is residential.”

### **What is your philosophy of architecture?**

“A good project is sort of an equation of the people that are involved, the architects, the owners, and the users of the building, particularly if it is a historic site or place,” Ellen said. “It’s taking a concept through to a built structure. The thing I enjoy the most as a preservation architect is the investigation and trying to determine what a building looked like originally.”

The couple doesn’t impose their style on clients, but try to help the clients visualize whatever it is that is floating around in their minds, Doug said.

“I think we have sort of a philosophy that what we do is bring

## IN THE NEWS!



*Ellen Harris, left, and her husband, Doug, both with Harris Architects, look over some plans in front of the French Broad Place going up in Brevard.*

Photo property of MIKE DIRKS/TIMES-NEWS

together the people, the place and the process of designing a building,” he said. “The people part is the client, the community, the neighbors, and the place is trying to be responsive to the location so that it (structure) feels like it belongs there, whether it’s in town or up on the side of a mountain. We don’t have a particular style of our own, because we are trying to find out what the client wants and operate based on their vision, defining their goals and dreams about the project.”

### **What are your thoughts about being in business for 10 years?**

“We’ve very much enjoyed living in Western North Carolina and have enjoyed having a practice here,” Ellen said. “It catches up with you, definitely. The time has gone by very quickly. But we’ve been very thankful for the opportunities that we’ve had here.”

### **What’s new?**

“We just completed the restoration of the Polk County Courthouse, which was a two- and-a-half year project,” Ellen said. “We’re also working on French Broad Place, a retail/commercial and residential four-story building in downtown Brevard. That’s scheduled to be completed in February 2009. We are also working on two housing developments, Cadence Point and one called Cobblestones.”

“Cadence Point has 32 housing sites in Brevard on Forest Hill Circle, just west of town,” Doug said. “It will be single family homes, a combination of arts and crafts and bungalow style and then there’s two story houses adapted from the Charleston

single house style. That is a two-story house with side porches, or a wrap-around veranda if you will, very typical of downtown Charleston. We're trying to capture the in-town neighborhood character.

The Cobblestones is a community of smaller homes on smaller lots, a total of 20 housing units, that will have a cottage look to them, mostly three-bedroom homes that are one and half story. This is also in Brevard, located on Osborne Road. This subdivision will have sidewalks and open space and there is a pond on the property also to give it a neighborhood feel."

The architects also said they are working on the Cherokee Foothills Visitors Center, located on Route 11 in Traveler's Rest, S.C. It's a project that creates a lot of excitement for her as a restoration architect, Ellen said.

"It includes an antebellum house and a store that dates from the 1870s," she said.

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