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## TORCHIO ARCHITECTS RECEIVES AIA MARYLAND DESIGN AWARD

Torchio Architects received a Citation for Design Excellence award for their Torchio Building project from the Maryland Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA Maryland). The award was presented at the organizations annual meeting held at Historic London Town and Gardens Visitor Center and Museum in Edgewater, Maryland on September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

Greg Torchio, AIA, LEED AP, who is president of Torchio Architects, Inc., was the chief designer and builder of the project. He also owns the building with his wife Phyllis Johnston. The Torchio Building located at 205 East Water Street in Centreville is the new headquarters of Torchio Architects and Every Body Yoga. It also houses a branch office for the structural engineering firm Baker, Ingram and Associates.



Torchio Building, 205 East Water Street, Centreville, Maryland

The building has three stories, two above grade and one below. The architect's office is located on the upper level, the tenant space is on the ground level and the yoga studio is located on the lower level.

Torchio has been practicing "green" building design principles for over 25 years and is certified by the United States Green Building Council (USGBC) as a LEED Accredited Professional. LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design), is a green building rating system developed by the USGBC. The Torchio Building was designed and constructed to meet the requirements for LEED Silver, the certification of which is pending.

The Torchio Building uses 50% less energy than a conventionally built building of the same size. This reduction in energy is possible because of the use of increased insulation, geothermal heating and cooling, the use of natural daylight whenever possible and a light control system which only allows electric lights to be used when spaces are occupied and when natural light is not available.

Additionally, the building is designed to use only half the amount of water used by a conventional building of similar size. Lastly, recycling, reuse and reduction of building materials waste reduced landfill deposits from this construction project by 50%.

One of the many unique features of the building is the "Walnut Tapestry", a functional art piece designed by Torchio. Fashioned from a single black walnut tree that once stood on the site, the sculpture consists of eight 35' long by 1" thick varying width slabs that stand vertically between the opposing runs of stairs. The slabs are woven between horizontal stainless steel bars that attach at each landing. The boards were sawn, planed, finished and installed by Vicco von Voss, a timber framer and furniture maker who has a sawmill just north of Centreville. The sculpture also functions as a code compliant guardrail.



Left to right: Jury representative from AIA North Carolina, Robin Abrams, AIA, ASLA and 2009 AIA Maryland president Larry Frank, AIA presented the award to Phyllis Johnston, owner and Greg Torchio, AIA, LEED AP, owner, architect and contractor.

Torchio's submission illustrated the point that, by building this building, his firm was setting an example for their clients. Many architects "talk the talk" but the Torchio Building is proof that they "walk the walk". The representative juror, Robin Abrams, AIA, ASLA, head of the NC State University Architecture Program commented that this is what separated the Torchio Building from other projects. She added these comments from the jury: "Architect, contractor, carpenter, engineer -- this architect has done it all. We commend the architect's effort to "walk the walk." We also think the building appears to be a good addition to the streetscape."

In addition to Torchio Architects, the Torchio Building design team included Davis, Moore, Shearon and Associates, civil engineers and Allen & Shariff Corporation, mechanical, electrical and plumbing engineers.

AIA Maryland is the state component of the American Institute of Architects, and has 1500 members. Each year members are encouraged to submit the best of their recently completed projects for consideration. This year the entries were judged by a jury of peers from the AIA North Carolina component which was chaired by noted architect and scholar Frank Harmon, FAIA. This year there were 113 projects submitted of which 18 received awards. The Torchio Building was the only project recognized in the commercial category.