

# LIVE/WORK HOUSING CONCEPTS

## HOUSE REVIEW LIVE AT IBS 2012

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Leading architects and designers present four creative solutions for live/work housing.

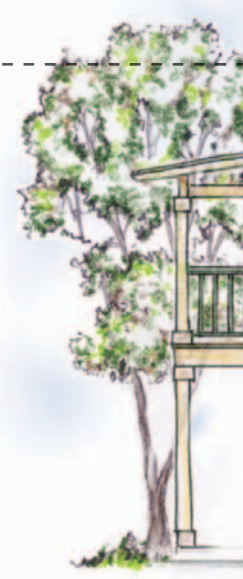
By Larry W. Garnett, FAIBD, House Review Lead Designer

Flexibility and diversity would seem to be more important than ever for those of us in the design and building professions. On that note, we challenged our design team to come up with some innovative ideas and concepts for what has recently been referred to as “live/work” projects.

In the last few years, the marketplace has witnessed the re-emergence of buildings that have residential units above or adjacent to office and retail spaces. This is actually an old concept of “living above your store” found in many small towns all over the country. As you take a closer look at this type of product, you'll find a great deal of flexibility inherent in the designs. A retiring professional might continue a limited practice of law or consulting, utilizing an area that is easily accessible to the public while actually being an extension of the home. A young entrepreneur could use one of these spaces as a low cost location to start their business. The options are almost endless.

For the builder and developer, the flexibility becomes even more valuable. The ability to change from office space to extra living space (guest quarters, etc.) allows the buildings to easily adapt to the current market conditions.

As always, we welcome your comments and ideas. Email me at [larrygarnett@larrygarnettdesigns.com](mailto:larrygarnett@larrygarnettdesigns.com).



## BARNARD STREET VILLAGE

### DESIGNER'S ESSAY

This design is part of a small concept village that includes medium-density residential components along with retail and office space located on a highly visible corner. Shown here is the live/work building. With the current market conditions, the developer wanted as much flexibility as possible. The overall design allows for various residential layouts with one and two bedrooms, along with the ability to change from office to residential space as needed. In addition, the first-level suite "A" and the identical suite "E" above offer additional flexibility for the individual tenant. The flex space can be utilized as a guest suite or a home office with direct access to the exterior. This versatile layout is perfect for:

- A retiree who wants to continue their profession on a limited basis and then convert the space to a bedroom later.
- A young entrepreneur starting their first business.
- A stay-at-home mom with a part-time business.

This conceptual design can be further adjusted, depending on the particular market. Numerous floor plan layouts are possible in addition to various exterior façade treatments.

### DESIGNER

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### PLAN SIZE

#### First floor:

Living suite A and B: 1,300 sf  
 Office suite C: 1,050 sf

#### Second floor

Living suite E and F: 1,300 sf  
 Living suite G: 1,050 sf  
 Width: 90 feet  
 Depth: 77 feet





LIVE/WORK HOMES AND SHOPS

**ARCHITECT**

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**PLAN SIZE**

Shop first floor: 920 sf (each)  
 Residence second and third floor: 2,065 sf (each)  
 Home: 3 bedroom, 2 bath  
 Width: 42 feet  
 Depth: 28 feet



**ARCHITECT'S ESSAY**

The key to making live/work solutions fit into the fabric of today's traditional neighborhood designs and onto main street in any town across America is the scale of the buildings, the proportion of the architectural elements, and the details of the aesthetics. These are homes and shops in a three-story configuration, not commercial mid-rise structures at five, six, or seven stories.

The shops have large picture windows on the street and flag signage that can be seen from either direction on both the sidewalk and street. There are no large neon signs plastered on the front of the building. The entries to the shops are tucked off to the sides of the entry vestibule so as not to have so many doors on the street; the display windows are much more important to the shop owners than the entry door. The shops are an appropriate size (920 square feet) for a small business creating a manageable size-to-income ratio.

The residential homes are not an afterthought in live/

work solutions. The residences need to have a well thought out entry sequence and floor plans that people are proud to call home. With this design solution, there are no dark hallways to your front door, but rather a stairwell with natural light from both the entry door on the first floor and the double doors that open onto a shared porch overlooking the street. The homes are true "city homes," with 2,065 square feet designed for a family, complete with a large parlor, gathering room, kitchen with counter seating, café, powder room, and convenient laundry room with laundry shoot access on the second floor. The third floor then becomes one for the bedrooms, with a large master suite and master bath, as well as two secondary suites with walk-in closets and a shared bath.

The key to the success of live/work solutions is careful attention to the scale of the buildings, as well as the creation of workable shops and liveable floor plans.

## PINEY WOODS

### ARCHITECT

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### PLAN SIZE

First floor: 2,980 sf  
 Second floor: 2,232 sf  
 Home office: 1,120 sf  
 Width: 115 feet, 10 inches  
 Depth: 58 feet, 5 inches



### ARCHITECT'S ESSAY

Flexibility is always a good idea in home design, whether it is flexibility in designing a study that can be converted to a guest bedroom or a gameroom that can be converted to an in-law suite. One interesting concept for today's homes is being able to live and work in the same structure. More and more, we are seeing homes that incorporate a separate area for running a business from the home. These projects entail more than just converting a room in the home into an office; they involve designing a separate area with a dedicated entrance and its own identity.

One such home is Piney Woods. The home utilizes the attic above the garage to incorporate an entire office designed to accommodate three to four people in a 593-square-foot space. At first glance, you would never think there is an office over the garage. With a private entry and complete separation from the main house, the office allows for a full-fledged business to operate effectively. The exterior is designed to blend with the home, and the dormers bring plenty of natural light into the office space. Tucked within a dense grove of pine trees, Piney Woods makes most people wish their office was in the same setting.



**PALUXY LANDING**

**DESIGNER**

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**PLAN SIZE**

**Individual building:**

Width: 22 feet  
 Depth: 80 feet (with garage and courtyard)

**Living areas:**

First floor: 1,000 sf  
 Second floor: 800 sf



**DESIGNER'S ESSAY**

This concept presents a live/work design that can be combined to create as many units as needed for the particular site and market conditions. Since the units are primarily residential, the location would ideally be adjacent to the main retail area, perhaps along a perpendicular side street. Such a location allows the building to be an ideal transition from the high-traffic retail main street to the nearby residential neighborhood.

The flexible streetfront space can be utilized as a small office or retail store. This type of business incubator location could allow a small startup business, such as a computer repair technician, the opportunity to turn their skills into a money-making venture with minimal costs. As many professionals are downsizing their operation, this could also be an economical and convenient alternative to a large office. Furthermore, if one of the spouses is now able to work at home, the need for two automobiles is no longer an issue.

