

THE METROPOLITAN BUILDER

Greater Houston Edition

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Dialogue with a Designer



The DESIGN firm
FULL SERVICE INTERIOR DESIGN

Excelling in collaboration, detailed planning,
and innovative project management



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Victoria Sheffield of Sheffield House Design

***BATHS OF AMERICA** opened its doors in January 2005 when brothers Ali and Zeeshan Sultanali decided to start selling plumbing and tiles to the Houston market. Baths of America focuses on customer service and partners only with brands offering quality products and customer service. In addition to plumbing, Baths of America now offers door and cabinet hardware, major appliances, cabinetry, and countertops. It has turned into a one-stop shop for designers, builders, and architects, offering the latest designs and trends in the market.*

This month, Baths of America highlights the expertise and dedication of The Design Firm. Renowned for simplifying the complexities of construction, remodels, and new home selections, The Design Firm excels in collaboration, detailed planning, and innovative project management. From guiding remodel clients to maximize their investment to offering specialized support through their SPEC department for new home selections, the team ensures every project aligns with the client's vision, budget, and timeline. With a focus on creating stunning, functional spaces, The Design Firm transforms the building and renovation process into a smooth and rewarding experience.

***BATHS OF AMERICA:** What motivated you to enter interior design?*

***The Design Firm:** At The Design Firm, we operate as a cohesive team of skilled designers, collaborating to simplify the complexities of construction, remodels, and new home selections. Each member brings unique expertise to create detailed plans, coordinate seamlessly with builders and contractors, and source high-quality materials to enhance efficiency and value. Whether it's guiding clients through a remodel or crafting tailored solutions for new construction, our shared goal is to align every project with the client's vision, budget, and timeline. Together, we strive to deliver stunning, functional spaces that exceed expectations and make the design process enjoyable for all.*

***BATHS OF AMERICA:** How has the field of interior design changed since you graduated?*

***The Design Firm:** As time has progressed, people have increasingly embraced a fusion of diverse design styles, seamlessly blending traditional pieces with contemporary elements to craft spaces that are a true reflection of their individual personalities. In recent years, interior design has also been profoundly shaped by a heightened awareness of sustainability, with a growing emphasis on eco-conscious*



materials and environmentally friendly practices.

BATHS OF AMERICA: *How can an experienced interior designer help a custom home builder or a remodeling contractor with their building or remodeling projects?*

The Design Firm: The construction phase is complex, requiring timely decisions and problem-solving. At The Design Firm, we excel in collaboration, expertise, and project management, ensuring a cohesive vision throughout every build or renovation. Our talented interior designers bring a trained eye for aesthetics and functionality, producing detailed plans and coordinating design elements with construction needs to save time and costs. With a network of quality suppliers, we source materials efficiently, prevent costly mistakes, and enhance both property value and market appeal. By understanding client needs and working seamlessly with builders and contractors, we deliver functional, beautiful spaces that exceed expectations and enhance satisfaction for all involved.

BATHS OF AMERICA: *What sets you apart from other designers?*

The Design Firm: For over 40 years, The Design Firm has been dedicated to crafting beautiful designs for our clients. Our unique team approach to every project ensures that we meet our clients' needs with the belief that collaboration yields the best results. Our limitless design creativity knows

no bounds, allowing us to consistently deliver exceptional and innovative solutions. We push the boundaries of what is possible, providing unique and creative solutions across every design style.

BATHS OF AMERICA: *How do you begin the materials selection process when working with builders' and remodelers' clients?*

The Design Firm: It all begins with a clear understanding of the overall budget or allowances, and then getting a vision for the client's lifestyle, personal taste, and functional requirements.



BATHS OF AMERICA: What are some common mistakes builders and homeowners make?

The Design Firm: Common mistakes in custom home construction or renovation include underestimating the budget, often overlooking expenses like design fees, permits, or unexpected challenges. Builders and homeowners should establish a realistic budget with a buffer for unforeseen costs. Insufficient research into property regulations can cause delays or legal issues, while neglecting long-term needs, such as future accessibility, can limit a home's adaptability. Over-customization may inflate costs and hurt resale potential, making balance crucial. Skipping the planning stage, especially for challenging terrains, can result in costly revisions. Ignoring energy efficiency leads to higher utility bills and a larger environmental footprint, making sustainable features a smart investment. Lastly, attempting to bypass professional guidance often leads to costly mistakes, underscoring the importance of involving experienced architects, builders, and designers.

BATHS OF AMERICA: Speaking about staying current, how do you keep yourself up to date with all the design trends happening in the industry today?

The Design Firm: We frequently attend markets whether it be in Las Vegas, High Point, Atlanta, or Dallas to draw inspiration and keep current on the latest interior design trends and new products. However, when it comes to the overall construction of a home, we tend to focus on making more timeless selections to ensure the client will be happy





in the long-run and get the most out of their investment.

BATHS OF AMERICA: *What would be your recommendation for “what to do first” in a design project when working with the builders and/or homeowners?*

The Design Firm: We invite both the builder and/or homeowner to visit us at The Design Firm for an initial consultation. This meeting allows us to better understand their needs and explore how we can best assist them. It also offers an opportunity to discuss our process in detail and for them to review our comprehensive portfolio of past projects. If the introduction is made by the builder, all three

parties are welcome to attend, ensuring that expectations and budgetary parameters are clearly established from the outset. Following this consultation, we will arrange the first site visit, if possible.

BATHS OF AMERICA: *Any last thoughts or comments?*

The Design Firm: The synergy between contractors, vendors, and designers is paramount to the success of any project. Clients reap the rewards of a seamlessly integrated team, each expert driven by a shared dedication to exceptional quality and precision.



For more information contact
The Design Firm
281-494-4433

www.thedesignfirm.com

13013 Southwest Freeway, Stafford, Texas 77477

