

# Traction Architecture

JODY BECK, AIA, LEED BD+C AND ROSS-ALAN TISDALE, AIA



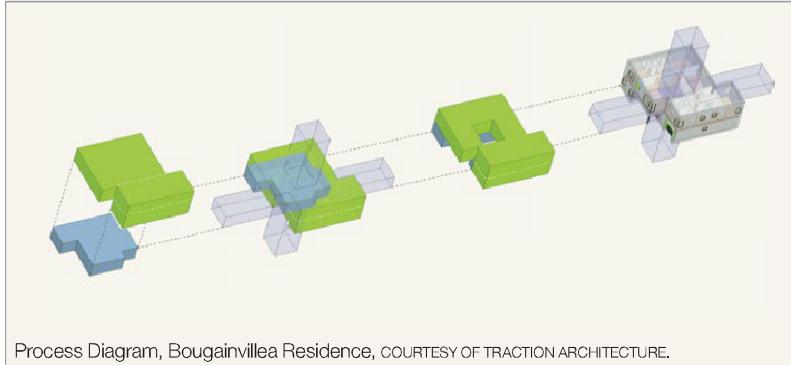
Seagrape House on Anna Maria Island. PHOTO BY MORIS MORENO.

*“Membership in the AIA has helped put the spotlight on our young firm. We’ve been in practice for less than 10 years, but the recognition we’ve received as a result of our membership has helped us position our firm, Traction Architecture, to grow. Last year, my husband and partner, Ross-Alan Tisdale, AIA, won the competition for newly licensed members at the AIA National Convention in Denver. Since then, we’ve had great recognition for the Seagrape House, a project we completed last summer. As a result of our response to a call for submissions in AIA Florida’s “Friday Facts,” Seagrape House was featured prominently in a Wall Street Journal article about elevated beachfront homes. Seagrape House also received an Honor Award for Design from the AIA Tampa Bay Chapter. Last Fall, an interview with Ross was featured on the front page of the AIA National website in which he discussed his range of professional experience in the profession, from designing lunar habitats to storm resilient homes.” Jody Beck, AIA*

Traction Architecture is a young award-winning practice in Tampa led by husband and wife team Jody Beck, AIA, and Ross-Alan Tisdale, AIA. Before founding Traction Architecture, Beck and Tisdale, both licensed architects, garnered a wide range of experience from teaching architectural history and theory in the University of South Florida’s School of Architecture to developing lunar habitats for NASA. After completing their undergraduate degrees (Beck at Brown, Tisdale at Yale), they met in Los Angeles while pursuing Master of Architecture degrees at SCI-Arc. They returned to Tampa in 2007 and established Traction.

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Process Diagram, Bougainvillea Residence, COURTESY OF TRACTION ARCHITECTURE.



Elevation, Bougainvillea Residence,  
COURTESY OF TRACTION ARCHITECTURE

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The firm's design process is largely informed by an interest in history, theory and culture and a desire to address the spirit of a place, not just its physical characteristics, but its deeper narratives. They are inspired by Florida's tradition of fictional landscapes from the Fountain of Youth to the Magic Kingdom. Traction's projects evolve from a weaving together of narrative, site and material to create designs that are manifold and suggestive. They aspire to make architecture that tells a story.

Seagrape House, a recently completed project on Anna Maria Island, inspired them to think about a most basic architectural narrative – that of man versus nature. The relentless sun combined with the threat of extreme weather was a big consideration in the design. As part of that process, they studied diverse ideas about protection, from concrete bunkers to spacesuits.

For the Bougainvillea Residence, a project currently under construction, they were interested in the history of the original 1940's Art Moderne home that had to be demolished to make way for the new home. The architects wanted the design to contain traces of the original building's character as a clue to the site's history. The asymmetrical geometry of the original floor plan became a catalyst for generating a sequence of solids and voids through the interior and exterior spaces of the new home. ■

**Project Credits:** *Seagrape House: Traction Architecture; Whitehead Construction, Inc., Contractor: Sego & Sego, LLC, Structural Engineer: Two Trails, Inc., LEED Consulting.*