

The wise decision

With more and more small renovation projects taking place at courses, golf course superintendents are working in concert with ASGCA members to ensure a project's success

It's a common scenario: a change to the golf course is required, or has been proposed, and the superintendent is asked to handle it themselves. But even for small projects, partnering with a golf course architect can reap many rewards.

Jeffrey Brauer, ASGCA Past President, highlights the broad perspective that a golf course architect can offer: "Typically, superintendents design for maintenance, contractors design for construction ease, and members design for their own games. Golf course architects design from all perspectives, and have the skills to bring it together with appropriate compromises."

On average, ASGCA members have almost 30 years' experience and have been involved with nearly 150 projects. This wealth of experience means that they will often have previously addressed, multiple times, issues that a golf club may face only once.

Our years of experience with all kinds of design solutions have prepared us to address every detail of a golf course, no matter what the situation



Scot Sherman,
ASGCA

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Stephen Kay,
ASGCA

"It is not often that there is an emergency on a golf course, but one client encountered a situation recently that required immediate attention," explains Scot Sherman, ASGCA, of Greenville, South Carolina. "A bridge crossing one of their lakes had become very unsafe. Having worked with many talented bridge builders in the past, I knew what to construct. Despite there being no specialist bridge builders available in the area and timeframe required, I was able to work alongside a commercial building contractor who was working on another project on the site to create a solution."

Sherman, the contractor and club collaborated and in six working days they designed, constructed and opened the new bridge, spanning 50 feet across the lake.

"Our years of experience with all kinds of design solutions have prepared us to address every detail of a golf course, no matter what the situation," concludes Sherman.

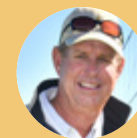
Throughout North America there are ASGCA members who conduct the majority of their business regionally—this proximity enables them to offer a great service, even for small projects.

"I had a client that just wanted to add one sand bunker and one forward tee. But they couldn't agree where to put them, so they gave me a call. I had another appointment nearby so it was easy for me to call in and take a look," says Stephen Kay, ASGCA, who is based in New Jersey and has worked for more than 300 clubs, primarily in the Northeast.

"The original plan for the bunker would have put it on the main irrigation line, so it needed to be moved, up to 20 yards one way or the other. And that would then impact the placement of the forward tee.

"In addition to making sure the work went smoothly and on budget, one great benefit to the club was having someone to take final responsibility for the decision. It gave them confidence that they were making the correct choice, and

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wouldn't find themselves having to do the work again."

John Sanford, ASGCA, of Jupiter, Florida, echoes the point of responsibility: "Hiring a golf course architect will safeguard the superintendent, committee members, professional and general manager from scrutiny by members or other stakeholders. An ASGCA member will take all issues into consideration, and prepare their vision for review and comment. Final plans will be made with feedback from all stakeholders in mind."

By consulting a golf course architect, clubs are also demonstrating that they are taking steps to protect public health and welfare. "Whatever you move on a golf course, there are safety issues and a standard of care to consider," says Kay. "An ASGCA member has the experience to ensure that safety issues are fully considered and inform the work that is being done. I also advise my clients to notify their insurance company of any changes, and invite them to review the work."

Concern over fees often leads clubs to think twice about consulting an architect for small projects. But hiring an architect can deliver savings in multiple ways.

"Hiring an architect is not as expensive as many perceive," says Sanford. "Even if it's a small project an architect can quantify the work and prepare a bid sheet so that golf course contractors can bid competitively with the same specifications. This process will get you the best contractor for the best price."

Kay describes a project where a client had received a bid from a contractor for the work but decided to bring in an architect before going ahead.

"It was a good decision, because immediately—through preparing

proper bid sheets and getting prices from three contractors—we realized a 15% saving on the original price. That was more than double the amount of my fees."

Many ASGCA members also provide a low-cost service that will help guide in-house teams on small projects. The September 2015 edition of *Golf Course Management* highlights the one-day evaluation that Chris Wilczynski, ASGCA, offers his clients. "It's kind of like a financial planner taking all your information and analyzing it," Wilczynski explains to GCM. "My goal is to provide a list of things that can be done in-house—things that are simple and may require in-house labor but not a lot of capital investment."

Having an architect oversee in-house work in this way provides clubs with confidence that their changes have been professionally validated—even more so if their golf course architect has drawn up a Master Plan for the course. This

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way the club can ensure that small changes are also contributing to the long term design vision for the course.

But perhaps the biggest risk associated with handling small projects in-house is compromising the golf experience. "Everything should be designed, not just built. Design is the difference between delightful and dull," says Brauer. "Golf course architects think in terms of maximizing enjoyment. And we know how to create those 'magic moments' that will make the best golf experience from your course." ●

Find an ASGCA member in your area by visiting www.asgca.org/members.

5 GREAT REASONS

TO CONSULT A GOLF COURSE ARCHITECT FOR SMALL PROJECTS



1 SAVE COSTS

A golf course architect will design the most cost-effective solution possible, and can prepare bid sheets to ensure maximum value from contractors.

2 ASSIGN RESPONSIBILITY

Getting an expert to oversee course changes will help achieve buy-in from all stakeholders, and minimize the chance of the work having to be re-done.

3 MAXIMIZE GOLFER ENJOYMENT

Not only will a golf course architect help you to achieve technically the best result possible, they will design it for maximum enjoyment for members and guests

4 STAY SAFE

A golf course architect will ensure that any changes that are made are done safely, with a standard of care to staff, golfers and their neighbors.

5 COMPLY WITH REGULATIONS

Golf course architects are familiar with permitting requirements, helping clubs to stay on schedule and avoid fines.