

# Shaping Buildings, Shaping Lives

Q&A with **Sheryl Seaman**, Architect of PBS Hawaii's NEW HOME

**W**inston Churchill once said, “We shape our buildings; thereafter they shape us.” Our NEW HOME on Nimitz Highway and Sand Island Access Road in Honolulu will be a place that will help shape lives – a gathering place where students can learn from one another, where music and culture will be shared, and where honest discussions will be heard.

Construction begins on our NEW HOME this summer.



Sheryl Seaman

PBS Hawaii sat down with NEW HOME architect and project principal Sheryl Seaman, AIA, ASID, LEED-AP, to talk about the process and vision that went into the design of PBS Hawaii's NEW HOME.

## **PBS Hawaii: What was the process in determining the design of PBS Hawaii's NEW HOME?**

Sheryl Seaman: We start every project with a design charrette [a collaborative session]. We get all the stakeholders together in a room. There were [PBS Hawaii] staff members, there were board members, there were **HIKI NŌ** students, community people. We talked at length about what this new studio space should be and

would mean. What it came down to was that it was a gathering place, a place where truth is told. It should be a place of delight where people can work together, an *ohana*, a family kind of feeling. It should be an oasis for the people who come there, whether they're coming there to work, to visit or to attend an event.

**It's interesting that you've taken some elements that are organic and applied them to something that is inorganic, something that is made of concrete and steel.**

I wanted to come up with a screen that will go around the building, so I said, “How about if we do it in a botanical pattern based on Hawaiian plants that have meaning for what you [PBS Hawaii] do?” For instance, *kalo* is the sort of foundational element of Hawaii. Then, there is *ulu*, which we chose because Hawaiians used every bit of the breadfruit tree for something; no piece was wasted. We felt that was a good sign of stewardship for PBS because you live off of your donations, and stewardship is very important. We also did the *kukui* tree. It represents enlightenment and knowledge. There's also the *ipu*, which was used for communication; that's how they broadcast. We created this design that would incorporate these four very important plants that would be the screen that would wrap the building.

## **What is your vision for PBS Hawaii's NEW HOME in the future?**

I think you guys do such a great job with bringing the community in with **Long Story Short** and **Na Mele**, and all the kinds of things that you do. I see that as kind of a community center, and by making it a nice building and making it easy to park and be safe in that area, then I think people will be willing to go there.

*Learn more about the PBS Hawaii NEW HOME Campaign online: [PBSHawaii.org/newhome](http://PBSHawaii.org/newhome)*