

ARCHITECTURE
DYNIA ARCHITECTS

INTERIOR DESIGN
**JACQUE JENKINS-STIREMAN
 DESIGN STUDIO**

BUILDER
MILL IRON TIMBERWORKS



DUAL-LEVEL LIVING

> Story by Richard Anderson

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The north face of Snow King Mountain offers wondrous views of the National Elk Refuge, Grand Teton National Park and, on clear days, the southern reaches of Yellowstone—with the added embellishment of downtown Jackson’s dynamic urban center in the foreground.

However, the north face of Snow King is also dark. Between the shadow of the mountain peak and the shade of the dense forest, getting light into living spaces is a challenge that requires creative solutions.

For a recent residence project on Snow King, Dynia Architects addressed this challenge with a three-story, vertically organized scheme that placed the primary spaces—living, dining, kitchen, and master suite—at the top, and secondary spaces—studies, library and guest rooms—on the middle level below. The ground floor, carved deep into the slope and devoid of daylight, became the ideal location for garage and utility functions.

The challenge to this approach, as Stephen Dynia, the project’s designer, points out, is “to create a compelling vertical circulation space that will entice you to the top floor and, once there, a living space that powerfully connects with the magnificent landscape, a place that makes the journey worthwhile.”

The first goal is achieved in the form of a generously sky-lit stair atrium that draws people toward ever-changing daylight animated by the boughs of pine trees above. The two runs of stairs are shifted to ease their visual length, with the upper stair more directly connecting the two elevated living floors, and the lower stair serving the entry.

One arrives at the uphill end of the top floor and turns 180 degrees to face an infinite, iconic landscape. The layout—an open plan that includes kitchen, dining and living areas—blends with nature as you approach the bi-fold glass wall that opens to extend the living environment onto a deep terrace across the face of the house, further integrating interior space with nature. The terrace, also accessed from the master suite, includes a central gas fireplace and is ideal for outdoor sleeping. Inside, the master suite is separated from the common area by the day-lit atrium, which filters light to all spaces.

Karen Parent, senior project architect from Dynia Architects, managed the process through completion, working closely with the homeowners to develop a palette of texture and color to enhance the architecture—both outside and inside. The objective, Parent adds, “is to fully understand the owners’ sensibilities when selecting things like wood species for the siding, ceiling, and cabinets; the exact tone of the concrete walls and floor; paint color; and lighting.”





Setting: Snow King residences face two basic challenges: the steep hillside building site and the shadowy, north-facing aspects.

Life 360: The living-dining-kitchen space allows for views straight through from south to north, making the most of natural light and the ever-changing view to the north.

Clean Angles: The dimensions of the stainless-steel, gas-burning fireplace in the living room mimic the wide, panoramic vista afforded by the north-facing wall of glass looking out over the town of Jackson, the National Elk Refuge, and endless Wyoming sky.

Interior Equilibrium: "The finishes and furnishings are a wonderful balance of the Mountain West paired with the homeowners' urban roots," Jacque Jenkins-Stireman says of her design approach.





One highlight that came from this owner-architect relationship is a wall of black pebbles in the shower that is illuminated obliquely by a skylight above to stunning textural effect. “We as architects do not draw a line between the exterior and interior of a house. It is a holistic endeavor that results in a unified environment, and furthers the owners’ connection to this beautiful, natural environment,” Dynia says.

The carefully considered design approach also made for an exciting construction project, says John Walker, owner of Mill Iron Timberworks, who has been working with Dynia since 1997. “The small, steep site, the spatial divide on each level, and the simplicity of the finished details required thoughtful planning and close collaboration with the architect,” Walker says of the project he and his crew began in the summer of 2012.

“Modern homes must be constructed with incredible precision because you can’t cover up joints with superfluous elements like molding and trim. I enjoy working through these challenges with the architect,” Walker elaborates. The challenge is similar when it comes to furnishing interiors, Jacque Jenkins-Stireman, the project’s interior designer, concurs. “You have to be mindful of absolutely everything that goes into the space,” she says. “Everything has to be very clean. The objective for me was to provide beautiful, functional furnishings and finishes that support the architecture and the landscape alike.”

That meant a lot of custom work—much of it done by Walker—including the solid-oak dining room table that Stireman declares “an engineering feat.” A solid, 3-inch-thick slab of wood seems magically suspended by a single metal support. “There’s no heavy base, no chunky legs, no carving,” Stireman says. “It’s spectacular. It’s a very functional piece that doesn’t take away from the architecture. You see through the table allowing the light to continue through the space, maintaining the flow from the inside to the outside.”

The guest bedrooms provide another example. Of modest size and simply furnished—there’s really just one piece of furniture, the sleeping platform, also crafted by Walker in his Thayne cabinet shop—they contain walls of glass looking into the woods of the backyard. “You feel like you’re sleeping outside,” Stireman says.

At 4,200 square feet, it’s a generously sized home that balances openness and intimacy. “The homeowners didn’t want enormous spaces,” says Dynia. “They wanted it integrated, fairly compact.”

And with the entirety of Jackson Hole right outside their plentiful windows, they got the best of both worlds. ♦

Ascent: Direct sunlight pours through skylights over the staircase, luring visitors up from darker nether floors and suffusing the uppermost floor with warmth.

Custom Furniture: The dining room table, built by contractor John Walker, consists of a vast mass of wood magically suspended by a single support, reinforcing the effortless flow of light and air through the space.

Raised Rest: Walker also built the bed platform in the guest room, which, while in the darker, rear side of the home, still feels bright and airy thanks to a wall of glass opening onto the woods.

Home Sweet Home: The owners’ adored dogs, Linus and Lingling, enjoy easy access to the outdoors through the rear of the home, which opens onto a spacious terrace and the natural landscape of Snow King Mountain.



STEPHEN DYNIA

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Stephen Dynia founded Dynia Architects over 20 years ago with the goal of designing buildings and spaces that connect people to the exceptional natural environment of Jackson Hole. His firm designs public and private buildings ranging in scale from the Center for the Arts performance hall to community housing projects; from modest guest houses to major custom residences. Dynia sculpts light, form, and space into architecture that draws inspiration from nature and from the realities of site and program. He leads a team of talented professionals in creating built environments that unite the spirit of Jackson Hole with the possibilities of the present.



THE POWERFUL LANDSCAPE IN WHICH WE LIVE INSPIRES OUR ARCHITECTURE AT EVERY LEVEL.

What do you value most about your client relationships?

Clients come to Dynia Architects expecting innovative, thoughtful design—meaningful architecture that serves their needs—to which our portfolio of award-winning work attests. Yet it is equally important that the process is smooth and orderly; that schedules and budgets are abided by, and that the experience of planning and building a house—a complicated matter for clients with busy lives—is as stress-free as possible.

We enjoy developing our relationships with clients through the course of their projects and hope that their lives are ultimately enriched by the work that we do together.

Walk us through your approach to a project from start to finish.

The first step—whether the project is 2,000 or 15,000 square feet—is gaining an understanding of our clients' desired program, site, budget, and schedule. I initiate schematic design options for each project, supported by a team of senior architects, each with a minimum of 15 years' experience working in Jackson Hole.

Through client meetings and site visits, we focus on understanding the nuances of a site: sun and view orientation, terrain and texture, and specifics of the program, i.e., how the home will be lived in. Through a rigorous process, the team develops the initial concepts through sketches and models until our clients are satisfied that the design direction will serve their needs.

We then assemble an established team of consultants to execute the project. These include a general contractor, engineers, landscape architects, lighting experts, and interior designers. Our work continues until finish materials are selected and the last details are finalized. We collaborate closely with the contractor to address any challenges that may arise during construction and also remain flexible to ensure that, as the building takes shape, any insights that our clients develop are supported and addressed.

We are tenacious throughout the process, always looking for the best possible design outcomes and the most sensible decisions with regard to the program, budget, and schedule. I personally see each project through to completion, with the objective of happy clients taking ownership of architecture that exceeds their expectations.