

Hillside Home

Jackson, Wyoming

Stephen Dynia, AIA

Stephen Dynia Architects, PC

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Photography by Gordon Gregory

Below: Set in a forested site, a two-story plan for the house makes for a small footprint and takes advantage of views. Bottom: A bookcase follows the rise of the staircase between floors. Opposite top: The living room opens to a deck that wraps around part of the house. Flooring is bamboo. Opposite bottom: The home's functions are divided into two distinct forms, one clad in red cedar, the other in corrugated metal.



Sometimes, it doesn't take a lot of bells and whistles or research and point systems to create a sustainable house. Sometimes, all it takes is a modest budget and a client's desire to live a simple lifestyle.

That was the case with a recent residence designed by architect Stephen Dynia for a site above the Snake River Canyon about thirty minutes' drive from Jackson. The client, a librarian from the Midwest, purchased the one-acre parcel in an older, pine-covered subdivision in 1993 and slowly began planning a dream retirement home where she could pursue an active lifestyle, work on hobbies and enjoy nature.

"The client hired us in 2003," recalls Dynia, who has worked on residential, cultural and commercial projects in Wyoming and beyond. "She had a modest budget, but at that time, construction costs were starting to soar. We kept working the design to keep the pricing down, and she kept working a few more years to build the house."

Eventually, Dynia and the client worked out a design with simple materials and lines, and energy-efficient strategies



that would keep her cost of living in the house manageable.

"The site slopes," explains Dynia, "but there was an obvious place for the house on a plateau, which allowed us to maximize views. We also made use of a driveway that the developer had put in."

Dynia created a two-story, 2,500-square-foot plan, reducing the footprint on the site, and placing most of the client's daily living spaces on the second level, capturing light and views. The first level contains the garage, entry, hobby room and guest quarters. The kitchen, living and dining areas, and master suite are upstairs. A balcony off the living and dining room provides a room for outdoor living.

The architect broke up the home in two zones. A smaller, rectangular zone--the location of the entry, stairs and kitchen, is clad on the exterior with corrugated metal. A larger, wedge-shaped zone embraces the home's other rooms and is clad in red-stained cedar siding. Roofing on both zones is corrugated metal, and the roofline rises to the south on the larger section, providing views for the living and dining areas. Dynia detailed the exterior entry with a slatted wood alcove, which serves to screen the driveway from the door and doubles as firewood storage.

Inside, materials were also kept simple. Bamboo flooring, maple cabinetry and white walls keep the interior airy and light. Track and pendant lighting provide pools of light by night. Dynia designed a bookcase that follows the staircase between floors and placed the living area's slightly canted fireplace between glass doors and windows leading to the deck. Furnishings and accessories were chosen for their uncluttered and modern lines.

The home's sustainability comes in easy gestures. The bamboo for the flooring is a rapidly renewable resource. The home has no mechanical cooling, relying on cross ventilation and ceiling fans during the warmer months. At more than 7,000 feet, snowfall and cold weather are the climatic issues, but Dynia's sloping roofline easily sheds snow accumulation, and he avoided placing windows at the home's north end. Low-e windows help prevent heat loss during winters, as does the use of cellulose insulation. Low-flow plumbing fixtures keep water usage to a minimum, and the owner chose to keep the property's natural vegetation. "There's not a stitch of landscaping, so there's no irrigation," Dynia says.

The most sustainable element of the house? How its design kept the green in the client's wallet. "We built it for \$190 a square foot," Dynia says. "It's our belief that if a house is simple and tailored to the owner, a modest budget can work."

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Sofa: B&B Italia, www.bebitalia.it.

Le Corbusier LC4 chaise: Cassina, www.cassinausa.com.

George Nelson bench: Design Within Reach, www.dwr.com.

