



Pine Creek Residence

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The Montana Chapter of the American Institute of Architects is pleased to announce Place Architecture is the recipient of the 2005 Excellence in Design Merit Award for 2005. Place Architecture will now be able to compete at the Regional level in 2006.

The design of the house grew as a response to its surrounding. Both the immediate site and the broader context of the Paradise Valley were drawn upon to inspire the final form. The house sits itself in a natural fold of the land. At the end of the fold a cliff drops steeply to the valley floor towards the Yellowstone River. By locating itself in the fold, foreground views were able to be controlled. The house also extends out over the cliff, reaching towards the Yellowstone River. A sense of privacy and sound mitigation from the nearby road were also achieved by working with this natural feature of the site.

Drawing its formal vocabulary from the surrounding mountains, the overall shape of the house has a dialogue with the immense landscape of the valley. The roof form responds to the mountain slopes and valleys while the planar qualities are in response to the rim rock outcroppings on the adjacent ridges.

On the north, the structure is nestled into the hillside and presents a solid protective skin to shelter the house from the northerly winds. Wing walls, sheathed in contrasting corrugated galvanized metal, break through the plane of north wall to open up views from the interior to the northeast mountains. These breaks in the plane also take advantage of the cool breezes which fall from the same mountains, helping to cool the house during the summer. The detached garage provides further protection from the road and creates a small, private yard in the midst of the expansive landscape.

As the house is approached from the south, the form becomes more transparent and opens itself up. The sense of openness and transparency signifies a welcoming to the entry side of the house, responds to the views of its surrounding and takes advantage of passive solar. Sitting low in the natural fold of the site, combined with the layering and transparency, the house appears to float on the landscape.

In the interior, the space is opened to the vista with tall aluminum storefront windows. The roof soars upwards toward the valley to enhance the experience of the building opening up to the sky and mountains and inviting the outdoor experience to the inside. The deck opens to the west, sited at the edge of the cliff. The experience of the ground dropping away while the deck expands and the roof soars creates the sense of lofty flight into the natural world.

Simple sustainable techniques were employed in the house. Located to take advantage of passive solar, deep roof overhangs provide protection from the sun in the hot summer months and allow the sun penetration in the winter. The roof also provides protection over the deck, creating the sense of an outdoor room. Natural day lighting was employed to help to reduce the amount of artificial lighting used. Simply, low maintenance materials were chosen for their visual appearance and sustainability.

The Montana Chapter of the American Institute of Architects is located in Billings, Montana. For more information, visit www.aia-mt.org or call 406-259-7300.