



Photo by Mosaic Architecture, P.C. of Helena, Montana

The Shiland House

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The Montana Chapter of the American Institute of Architects is pleased to announce Mosaic Architecture is the recipient of the 2007 Excellence in Design Citation Award. Mosaic Architecture will now be able to compete at the Regional level in 2007.

The Shiland House started as an effort to explore design and construction goals within our architectural office. As such, a group of designers within the office formed an LLC and purchased a small infill lot within the older upper south side of Helena. The goals were simply to show by example that good, affordable, and sustainable design can be achieved in a small home within an established and historic neighborhood. The firm acted as the general contractor as well, and towards the end of construction, installed the bamboo and concrete floors as well as the concrete counter tops and fixtures.

The design was a well thought-out three story plan that focused on economy of space and energy efficiency. Though the lot is only 40' wide, it abuts an alley on one side. The firm pursued a variance to push the house closer to the alley in order to provide more space on the south side.

With a sensitivity to solar orientation and space layout, this design brings a sense of openness and elegance to a small house. This house is designed for a small infill city lot and attempts to create connections between the indoors and the outdoors by carving out space along the south side of the plan for outdoor living and landscaping. Energy conservation measures have been taken into consideration by providing the opportunity for winter solar heat gain from the southern exposure. Large windows and awnings were planned for the south side while the north side included more modest punched openings. A decorative concrete floor under the south windows provides a heat sink and a comfortable place for dining.

Structural Insulated Panels were used for the roof and walls over a timber structure that the firm salvaged from a Montana Department of Transportation storage building replacement project that they were working on. Timbers were re-sawn locally.

Other 'green building' efforts explored included a whole house fan located at the top of the open south side and stair, high flash ash content concrete, good daylighting, bamboo flooring, and a high efficiency heating system.

Overall the neighborhood and the community seemed pleased with the outcome. A recent resale of the home brought better than \$100,000 more than the original sale of \$165,000 only 2-1/2 years ago. The firm was happy with the design effort and the final solution and learned a bit about construction and sales along the way.

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.