

# home stead

jackson hole  
architecture,  
interiors + art



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Purpose-built outbuildings are gaining in popularity.

# Outbuildings Are In

STORY HOMESTEAD TEAM



PAUL LAVOLD/COURTESY GYDE ARCHITECTS



AUDREY HALL/COURTESY WRJ DESIGN

One outbuilding can serve multiple purposes; this one includes guest quarters, a fitness area, a small garage for outdoor gear, and more.

Jackson Hole's original outbuildings—barns and outhouses—were utterly pragmatic. Even so, early settlers did them with style. About one century ago, Wesley Bircher built an unknown number of Gothic-style barns with soaring, gabled roofs up and down Fish and Fall Creek Roads at the base of Teton Pass. (Today, it is believed about seven of these “Bircher barns” still stand; most are on private property, but the nonprofit Teton Raptor Center has two recently remodeled ones on its campus you can visit.) And, of course, there are the two Moulton barns on Mormon Row. In early 2024, an article in *Cowboy State Daily* described the T.A. Moulton barn as “one of America's most emblematic images” and proclaimed it “without doubt the most photographed outbuilding in the world.”

Barns are still being built in Jackson Hole today, but the most popular type of outbuilding has long been a guest house. More recently, local homeowners are adding purpose-specific outbuildings—from party barns to gyms, creative studios, and meditation retreats. “There has been a clear increase [in these] in the last three years, really since Covid,” says Rush Jenkins, CEO and co-founder of WRJ Design. “People have been spending more time in their mountain homes and realized they want to have other gathering places separate from the main house.”

Architect Shawn Ankeny, founder of Ankeny Architecture and Design, says outbuildings can be both exciting and peaceful. “The process of leaving your house and going to another building is exciting, and, once

Homeowners today aren't just building guest houses to enhance their properties, but also creative studios, party barns, spiritual retreats, and more.

you're there, it can feel like you've left everything behind and gotten away,” she says. According to Eric Logan, principal at CLB Architects, outbuildings can also “bring a richness of experience” to a property and offer homeowners the opportunity to play with color, materials, or even theme. “Clients can take risks in outbuildings because there isn't as much concern about them being as attended to as the main house,” says Jenkins, who has done outbuildings with ski and movie-poster themes. Outbuildings can still be pragmatic, too: greenhouses, sheds, and storage for the multitude of outdoor gear that is a part of Jackson Hole life. In short, outbuildings can be almost anything ... even attached to a main house. And, massive acreage is not required.

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—Architect Shawn Ankeny





AUDREY HALL/COURTESY WRJ DESIGN

The owners of this 2,400-square-foot barn in Wilson approached WRJ Design to “create a beautiful interior,” says Jenkins. “They wanted us to make the second floor very welcoming and luxurious for guests as they visit and also asked us to create a sitting area in the exercise room that would feel like an intimate home space rather than a gym space,” he says. By including art in the space, as well as by using fabrics including cashmere, faux fur, and wool, the firm delivered. “A small structure that is beautifully designed can be super interesting within a property,” Jenkins says. “It creates more intimacy than a large structure can. Often, we find that people love being in the smaller spaces more.”

Wilson homeowners combined a guest house, entertainment area, gym, and even outdoor gear storage into one beautiful space.



AUDREY HALL/COURTESY WRJ DESIGN



PAUL LAVOLD/COURTESY GYDE ARCHITECTS

This art studio (shown below) is attached to, but not accessible from, the main home. A door on the front porch (shown here) provides access.

The art studio designed by GYDE Architects for an East Jackson home is not an outbuilding in the strictest sense—it is attached to the side of the home, which was built in 1955 by one of the early superintendents of the National Elk Refuge. But we count it as an outbuilding because you must exit the main home—go outside—to enter it. Also, because the property is only one-quarter of an acre in size, a detached outbuilding was not possible. “There are lots of ways to create ‘outbuildings,’” says Katherine Koriakin, principal at GYDE Architects. GYDE senior project designer Pip Barr says, “Having to leave your house, even if you only have to go to the front porch, creates a feeling of separation. Once you’re in the studio, you have no idea that the main house is on the other side of the wall.”

While GYDE worked to make the 280-square-foot studio separate from the house—you enter it from a door off the home’s front porch or via a door from the backyard—the firm also designed it so that it complemented the house. It is clad in the same wood, reclaimed from the 1955 structure, as other elements of the home, including a balcony off an over-garage guest house. “It was always the intention that the art studio enhanced the home,” Koriakin says. “It really finishes off the front porch area, but it is a refuge of its own.”



PAUL LAVOLD/COURTESY GYDE ARCHITECTS



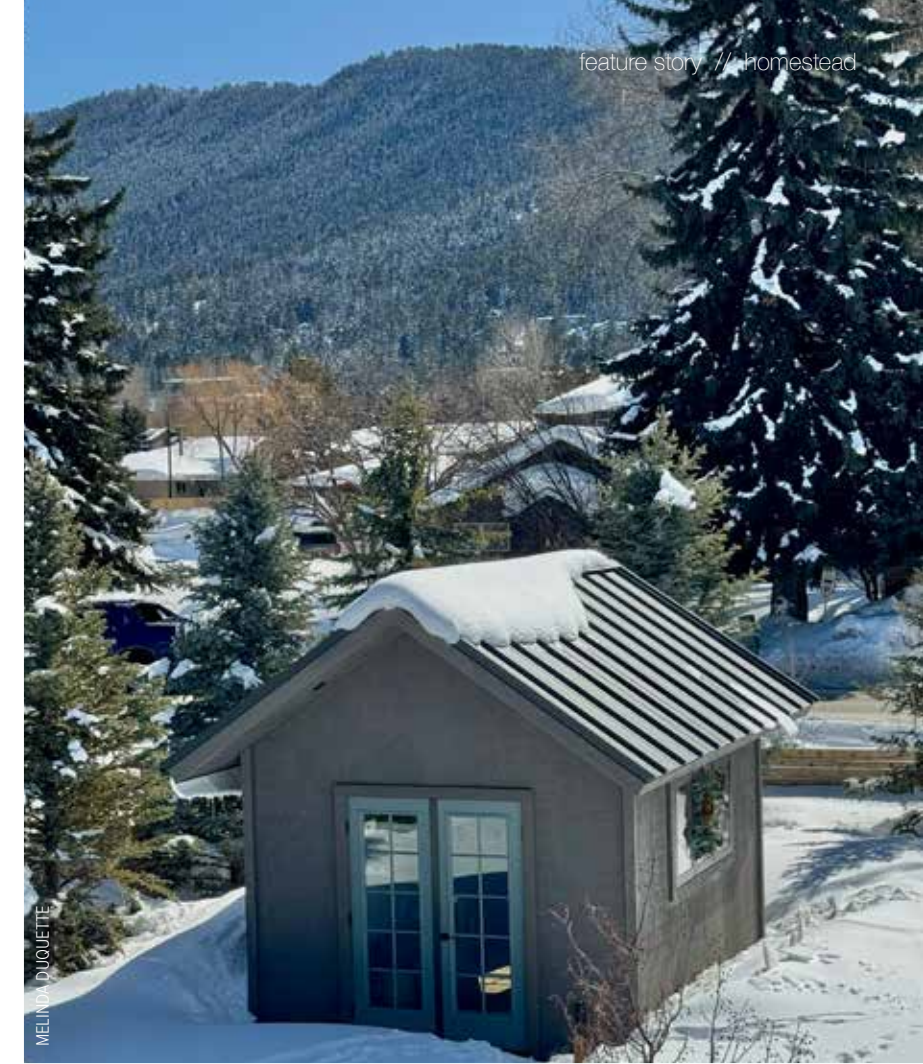


One of four buildings on the property, this writer's studio offers a different experience of the site than the main house.

MATTHEW MILLMAN

“It’s nothing fancy,” say the owners of a recently completed home about this 120-square-foot potting shed in their backyard. “We wanted a utilitarian building where we could store all of our yard stuff instead of our garage. We like the garage to be clean.” Although architect Shawn Ankeny designed the main home, this potting shed was simple enough that the homeowners say they “just drew it up” with the builder. “We decided what size it needed to be, and we matched the roofline and colors of the main house,” they say. “We knew we wanted it to look similar to the house. We put it in the backyard so you see it when you go out the back kitchen door. We thought it would be nice to look at.” Inside there’s a counter, sink, and shelves purpose-built for storing the cushions of their outdoor furniture. ▣

A utilitarian potting shed is elevated when its colors and roof line match those of the main house.



MELINDA DUQUETTE



MATTHEW MILLMAN

The owners of a 35-acre lot in Wilson didn’t come to CLB Architects looking for a compound that included multiple buildings. “We explored what was possible to do on the property from the county planning and zoning perspective and also from the neighborhood’s regulations, and we identified the opportunity to do four structures,” Logan says. “That led to this combination of house, guest house, writer’s studio (pictured above), and a spiritual building.” This grouping of buildings, in turn, allows the homeowners to experience their property and surrounding landscape in very different ways. Standing in the living room of the main house, “You see everything around,” Logan says. “You understand the context of the site very well. The writer’s studio, which is hanging on the edge of the trees, is the counterpoint to that. It’s like you’re in the forest—an opposite experience to the main house.”



MELINDA DUQUETTE