

Enhancing Life Through Design

The Propel Studio
Custom Home
Inspiration Book

 propel studio

Designing beautiful spaces for people and the planet.

We aim to improve the lives of our neighbors, make the people in our communities smile, and work in an inclusive manner that engages people in the design process. Each of our projects adheres to our five design principles:



Materiality

We approach each project with a focus on materiality. All of our projects aim to be well crafted with a close attention to details. Authenticity is what we look for, celebrating each material's strengths, uniqueness, and beauty.



Beauty

The most sustainable building is a beautiful building that is taken care of over time. Each project should have elements that delight and inspire, while overall beautiful projects have refined proportion, scale and composition. We aim to incorporate all of these elements in a timeless design that draws on our other design principles.



Sustainability

Architecture must respond to its context and be designed for the specific climate in which it is built. Our work aims to be calibrated for high-performance, reducing the use of energy, water, and other resources needed to make it function. Further, we look to create spaces with strong connections to the outdoors and surrounding landscape, making our buildings have a positive impact on the environment with interiors that maximize comfort, views, and natural light.



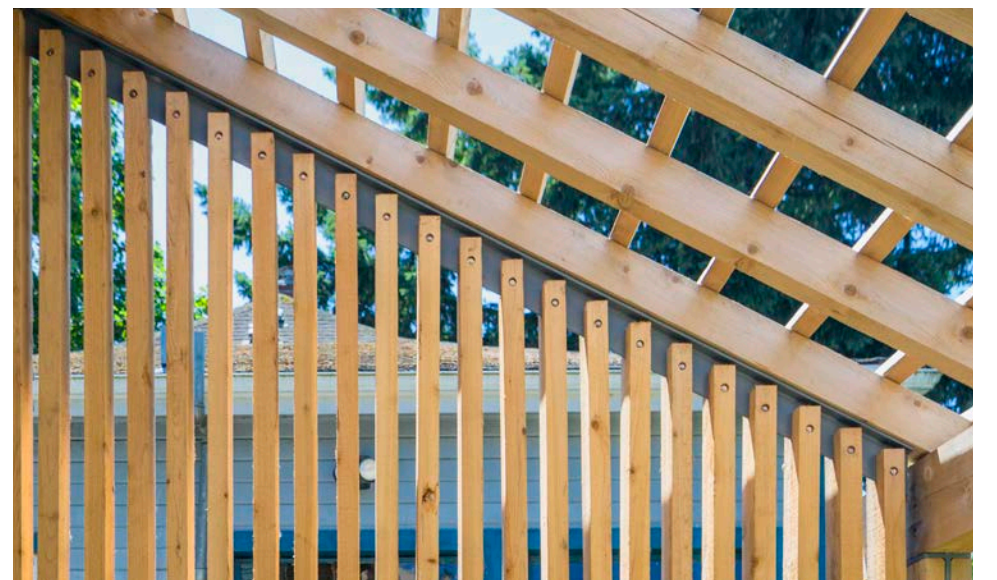
People

Each of our clients is unique and we strive to respond to their specific needs, lifestyle, and values. We have an individual approach that is based on collaboration with our clients. Propel believes in design generosity - finding ways to use our skills to give back to our community through volunteering and pro-bono services.



Simplicity

As we work through our design process we look for ways to simplify our projects to their necessities. This "less is more" approach leads to efficient uses of space and intuitive designs that enhance the experience of our projects. A minimalist design allows the moments of delight - a great view to the exterior, or the beauty of natural wood - to really shine.



CUSTOM HOME DESIGNS

Our design process leads to custom homes which respond to your specific property, your aesthetic values, sustainable design strategies, and the project budget. Each design is tailored to meet your needs and taste, and the design draws from our years of experience delivering creative designs to accommodate your unique lifestyle.

On the following pages we share examples of our custom home designs. We've included these completed projects so you can get some insight on our aesthetic style as well as to offer you some ideas for consideration for your project.

If you would like to set up a consultation, please e-mail us at:

info@propelstudio.com

To learn more about our mission and see additional examples of our work please visit our website:

www.propelstudio.com





Sheltered Nook House

Area = 2,010 sf

With a beautiful, hilltop site, our design approach was to take advantage of the natural surroundings and views over the landscape, while keeping the architecture from dominating the site. We semi-submerged this single-level house, carving private outdoor areas into the hillside in the form of a sunken courtyard. This protected outdoor living room extends out from the interior living spaces to provide year-round access to the outdoors.

Large windows and sliding glass doors reinforce the connection to nature, while a flexible great room contains the living, dining, and kitchen areas. One wing contains the master bedroom with en-suite bathroom and an outdoor shower, allowing for the clients to gracefully age in place. A second wing houses the second bedroom, restroom, and a guest suite with separate entrance. All of the rooms have direct connections to the outdoors through floor to ceiling glass windows and doors.

Materials include shou sugi ban cedar siding, polished concrete floors, natural wood interior trim, native landscaping, gabion walls, and permeable pavings in the courtyard.











The Mullet House

New/Renovated Area = 1,200 sf

A couple in SE Portland was looking to transform their home into a wonderful modern place to live, while preserving the existing house. They also requested carving out an internal ADU as part of the project, to give them some rental income to offset the cost of the addition and help cover their mortgage payments.

To accomplish these goals, we designed a large bump-out at the back of the house that contains a living room, and home office on the ground level and a master bedroom and guest room on the second level. Coupled with the renovations to the existing house, the new additional blends with the older house to create an open modern layout.

We find that the beauty of natural wood and exposed structure creates a modern look while allowing natural colors and textures to permeate the interior. In this case we have exposed structure on the new living room with beams that extend out into the backyard creating a trellis. This motif continues on the second level where the structure extends out and creates a covered balcony off the master bedroom that overlooks the garden below.











Poolhouse Addition

New/Renovated Area = 1,400 sf

The client wanted a contemporary addition that added work space off the garage, a large family room, and a covered outdoor kitchen for entertaining. To address the various program elements we floated a large box over the existing garage. The box extends out towards the backyard and pool to create covered outdoor space for the kitchen, dining and entertaining. A small bump out from the garage on the main level acts as a small workshop and office. The floating box above becomes a large family room/play room with floor-to-ceiling window system that connects the room to the outdoors and provide great views to the backyard below.

By utilizing a bold material palette of natural + dark stained cedar siding and metal panels, the addition creates an interesting and complimentary juxtaposition between the old and the new.











The Wedge House

Area = 500 sf

The primary design goal was to create a compact, efficient home that has a strong connection to the outdoors. We accomplished this by incorporating a large south-facing overhang that protects three large doors that completely open the “great room” to an outdoor deck.

The overhang is designed to create a protected outdoor space, while also being optimally angled to provide shading from the sun in summer. In the winter, when the sun angles are lower, the overhang allows the sun to penetrate into the spaces, lighting and warming the building. The exposed concrete floor provides thermal mass to regulate temperature fluctuations and maintain a comfortable interior temperature.

Once the form of the building was set, we looked to local materials to create a northwest modern aesthetic. The exterior siding is durable and economic fiber cement lap siding with 4 inch exposure. Inside, we used touches of natural wood throughout the cabinetry and finish trim to give a sense of warmth and texture. The design utilizes advanced framing to optimize use of lumber, reduce the amount of wood and thermal bridging in the exterior walls, and allow for more efficient insulation.











Namaste House

Area = 550 sf

This client challenged us to develop a design that was simple, modern, and dark. To respond to this request we cladded the simple form in darkly stained cedar siding, with natural cedar where the volume is carved out at the back patio. The goal was to keep the house compact and efficient while making it feel larger by developing a strong connection between indoor and outdoor spaces. We created a simple box form, and then carved out a covered patio and protected front entryway. The interior is bright and open with large windows and doors providing lots of natural light from all directions. Large glass patio doors allow the space to be opened to the outdoors. The client wanted a place to gracefully age-in-place, so we developed a single level design with minimal barriers.







FAQ

We understand that the process of designing and building a custom home can be confusing and stressful. We hope to collaborate with our clients in a way that makes it fun and as stress free as possible. This starts by listening to our clients, being transparent and good communicators, and trying to take as much work off your plate as possible. Below are some frequently asked questions about designing a custom home and hiring an architect.

Question 1: How much does it cost to build a Custom Home?

One of the first questions we always get asked is how much a project costs and what our design fee is. This is a difficult question to answer without knowing more specifics about your project, but we can at least give you some insight into some typical construction cost ranges for a brand new home in Portland, Oregon.

- *\$100,000 to \$500,000* *Land Acquisition*
- *\$600,000 to \$2,000,000* *Construction cost*
- *\$60,000 to \$150,000* *Architectural fees*
- *\$15,000 to \$50,000* *Engineering and other consultant fees*
- *\$25,000 to \$80,000* *Permits*

Of course, this is just a rough breakdown and the specifics of each site, the building conditions, the availability of contractors and materials, among many other factors can alter the final costs of the project. Also, the quality of finish materials, appliances, fixtures and other design elements can vary from project to project depending on client's taste. Please use these numbers as a rough estimate as you learn more about the design process and start developing your list of wants and needs for your dream home. Location also plays a big role in the cost of the project as labor and materials prices can be dramatically different across the country.

Question 2: How long does it take to design and build a custom home?

This is another tough one to answer as every project and client is different. In our experience it can take anywhere from a few months to a year or more to design a dream home for our clients. A lot depends on the size and complexity of the project, our clients ability to make decisions, and of course, working in meetings around your schedule.

Beyond the design work itself we estimate about 10-12 weeks to get permit approval, and another 9 months to a year for the construction process, although that can vary depending on the size and complexity of the project.

Question 3: What services do architects provide?

Our role as the architect is to see the big picture when it comes to your project, and bring that concept through to the intimate details. We help you explore what is allowed on your property, what appeals to you aesthetically, and what you require functionally. We coordinate the team of designers, engineers, city permitting staff, and construction professionals. We also guide your project through the maze of building codes and zoning requirements. Our job is to work with all of the people involved, so that your project is built the way it was intended, and that the final project meets your needs and quality expectations. We help you with everything from creating a site plan, developing the design concept and floor plans, all the way to selecting tiles, counters, and other finish materials. In short, we follow your project from early concept design through completed construction working with your best interests at heart.

Question 4: At what point in my project should I involve an architect?

As soon as you decide you want to build something new or renovate a space you already have, you should start looking for an architect. Architects provide important pre-design services including site evaluation, feasibility studies, programming, and can help you explore options you may not have considered. Involving an architect early in the process can help avoid costly mistakes, and increase the likelihood of your satisfaction with the project. We are trained to consider the challenges, opportunities and hurdles in each unique project and navigate the best path towards a beautiful solution.

Question 5: Don't architects add substantial cost to a project?

Although architects' fees are part of the project cost, hiring an architect can actually save you money in many ways. We can monitor your budget and negotiate to get the best materials and workmanship at a good price. Our designs can reduce energy and water consumption, maintenance and lifecycle costs. We can turn a difficult lot into a successful building site. We also spend time planning and fully developing your ideas to hopefully avoid costly changes once construction is underway - one of the biggest reasons projects can go over budget and schedule. We can also work within your budget, meaning architectural fees don't have to increase the total cost of the project, as we know that budgets are always limited.

Question 6: How are architects compensated?

Our fees can be based on time, a stipulated sum, a percentage of the construction cost or the project's square footage. We are open to various forms of compensation to best fit the specifics of the project and the client. However, our most common fee structure is a lump sum fee. We find that clients prefer to have cost certainty when it comes to the design fees. We develop a proposal with a fee breakdown for each individual client based on the project scope and complexity. In general, as you are developing your project budget, you can estimate that the design fees will end up being approximately 10% of the construction costs.

Question 7: What's the client's role in the design process?

We will depend on you to communicate your design preferences, functional requirements, and budget. Your timely response to questions and design submissions will help keep the project on schedule. It is also important for you to raise any concerns you have as the project proceeds, so they can be addressed in the earliest stages. Working in partnership with us will help ensure the best possible outcome for your project. All design decisions are made as a collaboration between us as the designers and you as the client and you approve the work at the end of each phase before we proceed with work. As always, open communication, regular feedback, and trust is the foundation of any great working relationship.

Success doesn't come without the hard work and contributions from a team of passionate people.

Propel Studio has made it this far thanks to a growing list of contributors and collaborators. As we continue to evolve and grow we want to recognize that great design is a team effort, including our great clients.



Tuan Vu
LEED AP
Project Manager

Tuan is an innovative designer who leads Propel Studio's creative approach to each project, with an emphasis on working with diverse communities and international clients.



Nick Mira
RA, LEED AP
Project Architect

Nick believes in providing excellent service to our clients and brings a dedication to design exploration, building science, and technical expertise to each project.

designed in
**PORTLAND
OREGON**



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