Yamahouse

Bellingham, WA

Yamahouse is a 795 sq ft, two bedroom, one bath Accessory Dwelling Unit that provides both privacy and connection to the outdoors through views, light and outdoor covered spaces. Influenced by Scandinavian/Japanese design and the name of Bellingham's sister city Tateyama, Yamahouse is a natural fit in Bellingham.

Small homes can often present problems of privacy, so Yamahouse uses a physical separation of work and family space to help solve this problem, with distinct and varied spaces throughout the ADU that contribute to the feeling of a larger house. The kitchen and dining are separated by a difference in ceiling height and quality of light that this provides. However, the primary spaces are all located on the ground floor for easy accessibility, with an additional bedroom on the upper floor to provide a flexible living arrangement for residents of various ages and abilities.

The upstairs bedroom can also be used as a private retreat from the common spaces and the office is just far enough away to feel separate, but close enough for a daily home-cooked lunch. In a new world of remote and hybrid work it can be difficult to keep the stress from work from bleeding into home and family life, and the ADU works to find a simple solution to these problems.

Yamahouse's materials speak to its context but is also appropriate for many sites. The board-form concrete base of the ADU wraps around the back and sides of the building and opens up to direct the views towards the front. This allows for more privacy, in this case from the alley, and on a larger site can help with privacy between the ADU and the primary residence. The upper floor material is a lighter wood to contrast the heavy concrete below. Yamahouse's roofline allows for a tall, light and airy space in the dining room while also providing lots of covered patio space. The size of the large, south-facing lower roof allows for great opportunities both in solar energy and rain collection, allowing the ADU to minimize it's long-term water and electricity use.