

Wall Street Journal Features Siddoway

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Wall Street Journal Features Squirrel, Idaho, Home by Ward + Blake Architects



Exterior, horizontal, overall rear 3/4 view, Earth Wall II, Squirrel, Idaho; Ward + Blake Architects

Modern green-build residence incorporates patented rammed earth wall, sod roofs

The Siddoways purchased their barley-field home site near Squirrel, Idaho, picturing a Tuscan villa, but architect Mitch Blake of Jackson Hole-based Ward + Blake Architects had other ideas. (photo: Roger Wade Studio)

Jackson Hole, Wyoming – October 24, 2014 – An earthy modern residence may be an unlikely sight for a barley field in rural Squirrel, Idaho, near Jackson Hole, but architect Mitch Blake, a principal of Jackson, Wyo.-based [Ward + Blake Architects](#), took his design

cues from the 290-acre high plains site for the home, which is featured in today's *Wall Street Journal*. "We didn't envision this," admits homeowner Lauri Siddoway in the article. In fact, Ms. Siddoway and her husband, Doug, originally asked architect Blake "to design them something in a traditional, Tuscan-style akin to their Italian-revival home in Spokane, Wash.," notes the *Wall Street Journal*, but for Blake the traditional style "wasn't gelling" with the Western wide-open-spaces.

"Thank goodness he didn't listen to us," says Ms. Siddoway. Instead, the famously site-driven Ward + Blake Architects design team crafted an environmentally responsive groundscraper with sustainable features and a low-upkeep rusticated materials palette.

Reinforcing the horizontality of the low-slung design, an earthen wall that stretches the length of the residence literally grounds the Siddoway home on its site. The wall, which incorporates soil from the site, was made using Ward + Blake's patented seismically-stable **EarthWall** construction technique that reinforces age-old rammed earth building methods with post-tensioned steel. In addition to offering stability for the home's location 10 miles from seismically active Yellowstone, the wall also helps regulate the home's temperature, storing warm or cool energy in its thick core.

Just under 6,000-square-feet, the Siddoways' four-bedroom, 3½-bathroom home is divided into two pavilions connected by a covered outdoor walkway under the home's combination of Corten steel and sod roofs. Exterior steel support columns are girded by split Engelmann spruce logs. For the interior, the *Wall Street Journal* article describes the concrete floors and vaulted ceilings of reclaimed wood, but – like the house itself – focuses on the remarkable views, which "reveal jagged mountain peaks and gold-and- green grain fields out back."

The Siddoway residence may turn heads in the remote farming area of Squirrel – "this is definitely not what they're used to," architect Blake is quoted as saying in the article. But the home's earthen wall and sod roofs also reference area history, harkening back to the region's pioneers whose first homes were often the close-to-the-ground structures known as "soddies." More information and images of the Siddoway residence are available on the Ward + Blake website, where the home is referred to as "EarthWall II": http://www.wardblakearchitects.com/projects.php?project_id=40.

Ward + Blake Architects was built on a distinctive vision: to be provocative in thought, flexible in nature and disciplined in execution. Since 1996, the firm has earned recognition for architecture that is sensitive to its environment and successfully integrated with its surroundings, including being named 2013 Firm of the Year by the six-state AIA Western Mountain Region. Ward + Blake creates buildings that are tactile, modern, bio-climatically responsible, honestly expressed, technologically sound and artfully crafted. A recent monograph, *In the Shadows of the Tetons: Selected Works of Ward + Blake Architects*, provides an overview of the firm's award-winning work. For additional information, visit Ward + Blake online at www.wardblakearchitects.com or call 307.733.6867.

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