

Bald Mountain Road

Home Requirements

Mick Brown 9/21/2024

I intend to build a house on Bald Mountain Road in Camden, Maine. Phase I is complete, the building lot is purchased. The next step is to list my requirements for the proposed building. First a list of things that I really want. Second, a list what would I like to have but could compromise on.

I view this as the starting point for discussions with architects and builders and anyone else with an opinion.

Required

- **Approximately 2,000 sq ft main residence.**

Most of the time there will be two of us. It's OK to be crowded when guests are sleeping over. 2000 square feet feels like ample space without being cramped.

- **Passive house**

It just makes sense to build something energy efficient.

- **Solar house**

Free energy from the sun. It seems a shame not to take advantage.

- **Take advantage of the view**

The lot has excellent views from higher elevations. The goal is to build at an elevation that takes advantage of the view. It will pose additional challenges in the design and build stages but hopefully these can be accommodated. The house should be designed around the view which luckily is close to southern exposure. The interior focus of the design should be focussed to the south so that the most used living areas share the view.

- **Minimum two car garage.**

With enough space to store outdoor items (bikes, snow blowers etc). Either attached to the main house or a separate building close by.

- **Japandi simplistic internal style.**

I'm drawn to the simplistic, clutter free interior styles of both Scandinavian and Japanese homes. I'd like the interior to be somewhat based around these styles. No flourishes, no fuss, no curly bits. Straight lines, white walls, pale wood, you get the idea.

- **Master bedroom plus two spare bedrooms/hobby rooms.**

I have a large family scattered around the east coast. I would like to be able to host them all several times a year. This is the age old tradeoff of spare bedrooms that are used sparingly against the ability to host large gatherings. My proposed solution is two spare bedrooms that also function as hobby rooms for the majority of the time. Christine is an avid quilter, so a bedroom with plenty of tabletop space and maybe a Murphy bed would be ideal. Plus ample closets to store the gear when used as a bedroom. I would use the other bedroom for my hobbies which require less space but the same concept of enough storage to convert it into a bedroom.

- **Workshop**

I enjoy woodworking and have an array of tools. A basement (or similar) with enough space to handle 12' lumber would be ideal. It doesn't have to be in the heated house interior. It would need reasonable ventilation.

- **Away room (library/study/TV room)**

I like the idea of having a room that doesn't fit into the ascetic of the rest of the house. A room that has dark walls, bookshelves on all the walls, a big comfy red leather sofa, a window reading seat. A place to spend evenings, reading, listening to music, even watching TV. Neither of us watch the TV but having one is useful every now and then and one hidden on one of the walls would be perfect. This room should also be capable of being converted into an overflow bedroom.

- **Screened-in porch.**

Not a three season room, more of a way to enjoy the six months of the year outside without mosquitoes. Maybe there are glass panels to protect the room in the harsher months, but it is not envisioned that the room will be used in the colder months.

- **Modest sized kitchen with clean uncluttered surfaces.**

Part of the uncluttered ascetic. The kitchen doesn't have to be large, but big enough for a few people to pitch in with food preparation. I like the idea of a large pantry or a 'back kitchen' to store counter top appliances. I'd also like a breakfast bar that seats four people for informal dining. High quality doors, cabinets and fixtures. Also a powerful outside vent for cooktop.



This design caught my eye. An island with a food prep side plus a continuous surface that morphs into a table area. No sink or cooktop on the island.

- **Patio for outside cooking.**

Preferable out back where it can't be seen. It doesn't have to be large, just big enough for a grill, counter space and access. It would be perfect if it was half covered by some sort of overhang to allow cooking in inclement weather.

- **Ample storage space.**

Not great amounts, but enough to accommodate everyday storage.

- **Landscaping.**

Leave as natural as possible. Remove as few trees as necessary. As maintenance free as possible and definitely no lawn. Any disturbed areas to be covered in native wildflowers or other ground cover.

Nice to Have

- **Use as much local resources as possible.**

Materials and labor.

- **Efficient house structure (simple shape).**

The simpler the shape, the easier (& cheaper) the construction, the more energy efficient, the easier to insulate.

- **Combined living room, kitchen, dining area.**

Open plan living, linking the daily 'living' spaces together.

- **No permanent formal dining room.**

As with spare bedrooms, rarely used but kind of important now and then. My tendency would be to have an expandable dining table in a smaller space close to the kitchen and living area. When needed for formal dining, then shuffle the other furniture to expand the dining area to accommodate the extended table. I'm open to ideas on how to accomplish this.

- **Fully electric heating with backup heat source.**

It's a solar house. Make use of the solar power plus batteries (such as the Tesla Powerwall) and attached EVs to store electricity. A mains electrical connection is needed but hopefully not utilized too much. Heating with heat exchangers, electric tankless water heaters, electric cooktop and oven. No flammable sources in the house interior. I'm a bit concerned with a backup heat source but maybe it's not needed if the house is insulated enough.

- **Pantry/back kitchen to store surface appliances out of site.**

Keep the clutter away from the main kitchen. Store coffee pots, toasters, kettles etc out of sight in the back kitchen but easily accessed.

- **Possibility for Away Room to convert into bedroom.**

Sofa bed, or camp beds or blow up mattress as overflow sleeping.

- **Breakfast nook on SE corner with view.**

I'd love a small nook with a little table that catches the morning light. Enough space for two comfortably or four at a push.

- **Master bedroom on SE corner.**

Let the morning sun shine through.

- **Master bathroom on east side for morning light.**

I love my current bright master bath in the mornings. The sunlight makes all the difference. Sometimes it's the unexpected things like this that make life more pleasant.

- **Washer & drier on same floor as bedrooms.**

Smaller top stacking units are fine, or even an all-in-one unit. Need space for accessories and laundry baskets but not for folding. A pretty small space should suffice.

- **Electric fireplace.**

A focus to huddle around on those cold winter evenings. Enough heat to be effective but more as a source of comfort. In the Away room?

- **EV charging in garage.**

I mean, who doesn't want free mileage!

- **Front porch.**

It looks cool and sounds appealing. There is nothing more American than sitting on a rocking chair on the porch with a lemonade. I guess I'd need a hound dog to complete the picture.

- **Unfinished Great Room/Guest unit/ADU (above garage?)**

I'd like a construction project that I can do at my leisure. I enjoy this kind of construction. I'm thinking of a great room that I could turn into overflow guest space, a workout room, maybe even an ADU. Insulated to passive house standards. A total space < 1000 sq ft with its own electric HVAC.

- **Gazebo.**

Away from the house, high on the lot with better views. A small screened in area and a patio with fire pit.

- **Raised Herb Beds.**

Standing height raised beds for growing herbs. Just a small space, probably out the back of the house.