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BE OUR GUEST

GUEST HOUSES FOR VISITORS AND MULTI-GENERATIONAL LIVING

Having a dedicated space for hosting guests overnight has always been a necessary feature of every home. Whether it is a dedicated guest bedroom, a pullout couch in an office, or even space in the basement, the most gracious hosts create a space where guests can feel welcome, comfortable and have privacy. However, given the complex challenges of the last few years, many homeowners are no longer simply desiring a guest suite, and are increasingly requiring a more expansive separate guest house.

This increased demand for something that has long been thought of as extravagant can be attributed to a myriad of reasons, but most significantly the pandemic and inflation, which have created a greater need for homes that accommodate multiple generations. The need for a multigenerational home could look like accommodating the care of an aging family member or assisting a child who needs to return home but would like to live semi-independently. This is, of course, in addition to the families who increasingly desire a guest house solely for occasional

use.

When designing a guest home, it is important to take into consideration who it will primarily serve. It is also important to understand whether it will be a standalone structure or combined with another function such as a pool house, a gym, or a detached garage. Guest houses are frequently one-story if they are meant to serve aging parents or grandparents. When it is a dual-purpose structure, the bedroom (or bedrooms) become a second-story element to ensure the guest house is smaller in scale as compared to the principal structure.

When designing such a structure, you also take into account how the guest house bedrooms will be used—for example, if the intention is to support shorter stays, rooms do not need to be overly large. The goal behind a small bedroom is to provide just enough space to get around the bed and lay out a suitcase, with no excess furniture. The strategy of intentionally creating smaller spaces serves three purposes: it helps to reduce the overall scale of the structure, it helps to create a sense of coziness, and it helps to reinforce that it is a shorter-term stay.

BY CATHY PURPLE CHERRY, AIA, LEED-AP, FOUNDER AND PRINCIPAL OF PURPLE CHERRY ARCHITECTS

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DURSTON SAYLOR



In terms of aesthetic design, guest houses can be consistent with the main home, or they can nod to the main home while also taking on their own unique characteristics. The photos that accompany this article highlight two of our recent guest house designs. In the modern residence, the exterior of the guest house strongly echoes the design of the property's main residence. Each pod of the guest home contains a suite that is connected to the main living space via a glass link, and a third suite is located on the second floor.

In the more traditional residence, the exterior design of the guest house is relatable to the Georgian style of the main home while also introducing fun nautical and industrial influences. For example, we incorporated a touch of Nantucket blue on the front door and on the custom benches that flank it. In addition, the kitchen features open shelving, a custom zinc kitchen island fabricated at countertop height for use as both an island and a dining table, and wood countertops for a more casual and nautical feel.

Architecture and interior design aside, a guest house or an in-law suite can be a wise investment as it allows multi-generational living. Taking these important design considerations into account when creating your own guest quarters will ensure the space meets the two most important goals: to create a visitor's dream, and to serve the needs and desires of the homeowners or their extended family.





Most importantly, it is essential to understand the zoning regulations of your jurisdiction. In many zoning districts throughout the country, guest houses are not permitted unless they are linked to the main house or unless they are below defined square footage.

Born and raised in Virginia, **Cathy Purple Cherry** ultimately landed in Annapolis where she grew a large architectural firm specializing in high-end custom homes and estates. Today, the firm has four offices—Charlottesville, VA, Middleburg, VA, White Sulphur Springs, WV, and Annapolis, MD—and specializes in creating luxurious residences across the United States. A talented architect, visionary, and three-dimensional thinker, Cathy is able to marry clients' dreams with the reality of the built environment. While she revels in the intricate design opportunities presented by high-end residential architecture, Cathy is equally passionate about her philanthropic efforts. She and her firm offer their design knowledge and sensitivity to the special needs community via the Purple Cherry Purposeful Architecture Studio. A true creative servant, Cathy Purple Cherry is unfailing in her efforts to positively impact all those around her.

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