

BUSINESS

Weaving art into architecture: Introducing Land+Shelter's Andrea Korber

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Andrea Korber stands in front of her Carbondale home, which she designed and is currently under construction. Note the house number in the brickwork. Photo by Jeanne Souldern

Land+Shelter Architecture and Planning has been a driving force behind some of the region's most innovative architectural projects. Led by owner Andrea Korber, the firm's mission goes beyond just designing buildings; it's about infusing art into the built environment and creating spaces that resonate with the community.

Korber, who joined the firm in 2007, has been integral in shaping Land+Shelter's identity. Originally from Rhode Island, one of her fondest childhood memories is attending summer camp at the Rhode Island School of Design, where she discovered "the absolute magic of making art" by creating plaster sculptures in hollowed-out beach sand. This discovery sparked her lifelong passion for art and design, which led her to earn a bachelor of arts at Dartmouth College and a master of architecture from the Harvard Graduate School of Design.

Land+Shelter was founded in 2005 by Korber's former business partner, Gavin Brooke. Initially, the firm was a blend of architecture and real estate development, which gave Korber a crash course in the intricacies of the local community when they worked on projects like Carbondale's Third Street Center. That project was pivotal for the firm, introducing Korber to the challenges and rewards of community-driven work.

"That project was formative for Land+Shelter in a couple of ways," Korber reflected. "Since then, we've done a lot of community and municipal work. Our specialty isn't so typical for a small-mountain-town firm. All of that public work is something you find more often in a city."

Land+Shelter's portfolio includes a range of public and private projects, from the Carbondale Aquatic Center to the Burlingame Early Childhood Education Center in Aspen. The firm also worked on the addition and remodel of the True Nature Healing Arts Center in Carbondale. Their work is characterized by a commitment to making each project functional and a piece of art that blends seamlessly with its surroundings.

One of the firm's more unique contributions to the community is designing the self-storage facility on Highway 133 in Carbondale. From the beginning of the project, Land+Shelter, as the architect, partnered with Carbondale Arts to integrate a series of murals and sculptures to ensure that the facility would feature artwork prominently on display. "We took that project because we wanted this to be good. We didn't want it to be something at the entrance of our town that we'd despise," Korber explained.

This approach to architecture, where art is interwoven with practicality, is a hallmark of Land+Shelter's philosophy. The firm views architecture as a technical skill and a form of art — a belief rooted in the firm's early days when it was housed in Studio for Arts and Works (SAW). SAW's mix of artist and architecture studios "infused our DNA with that culture," she explained.

Land+Shelter's six employees work on residential, public and educational projects. Their public work is particularly noteworthy, including projects like the Rifle Animal Shelter and the Carbondale Aquatic Center, designed with a community's needs and its aesthetics in mind.

Korber is especially proud of the firm's public work, which often involves collaborating with municipalities and other stakeholders. "We've been in Carbondale since 2005, and we're involved with the community," she said. "We're committed to making sure our projects reflect that."

As the housing crisis continues to affect the Roaring Fork Valley, Korber believes architects have a crucial role in finding solutions. "The housing crisis in the mountains is not going away. It's an all-hands-on-deck kind of thing. Architects can help

people envision something that feels like it's part of the town and is livable," she shared.

For Korber, architecture goes beyond building structures. It's about creating spaces that inspire, uplift and weave into the community's fabric. Looking ahead, Korber and her team are eager to continue their work of blending art, architecture and community in every project they undertake. "We're hoping to blend municipal work into more affordable housing work," she noted, highlighting the firm's ongoing commitment to addressing the pressing issues facing our community.

To view Land+Shelter's projects, go to www.landandshelter.com