



Library podcast

Residential Architecture in Seattle and Environs, 1880-2000 - Part 2

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[00:00:36] This podcast is being presented in two parts. You are listening to part 2.

[00:00:43] We should also point out that there are a lot of much smaller houses built in Seattle in this period and this of course is because the impact of the Depression and then World War 2 means that many people trying to start out are building houses that we could refer to almost as cottages and builders are producing these. These tend to be found more in outlying areas to the Northwest Southwest Northeast. I'll show you just a few examples. And one of the things you begin to note is. Particularly the use of the corner window which seems to be in something that comes from modernism and introduced influences ordinary building. It shows us this is not a building from the early 30s. This is from 1940 or onward. We see some corner windows as early as forty one. We definitely see them in these small houses in the late 40s and you'll find these all over Seattle pretty much in the outlying areas. The neighborhoods that developed later. So even though we're focusing on big houses architect designed houses other things are going on simultaneously.

[00:01:51] One other kind of house I want to point out is this the Ralph and Evelyn Stewart residence by William J. Bane of 1939 1940. This was published not the photograph but a description of the house in the Daily Journal of Commerce. Or it may in those days I don't recall a change or have been the Seattle Daily Bulletin

[00:02:15] But anyway. And Baines said this was a quote California ranch house. And we believe that that was probably the first use of the term ranch house for a building in Seattle. Now that's prior to World War 2 and it's just that singular house but ranch houses will become ubiquitous after World War 2. This is a house type that is found all across the United States. This is a planned book from the post-war era. This was actually published in Detroit. But it shows you typical ranch house of the postwar era with the kind of strong horizontal roof often hipped living room to one side kitchen to the other bedrooms and back. And it's kind of spreading house often with eight foot ceilings that emphasis on the horizontal. And these are all over Seattle. I just picked out three to show you two in the northeast and one in the south. But you know they're all over and they go for two decades from

the late 40s or beginning of the 50s up until 1973. Ranch houses these spreading houses are a very typical house type. And there are literally hundreds of these being built if not in Seattle proper in Seattle in the suburbs. And there are a variety of other types I'm not going to show you there are our houses in that period raised ranches split levels try levels.

[00:03:44] And you've probably seen all of them. So that's a whole story in itself. We'll go back to architect designed buildings.

[00:03:53] Explorations of regionalism continued. This is Lionel praises Richard and Ali Ruth Lee weekend house up on Lopez Island and it's a rather remarkable design from 1947 was published in Architectural Record in 1952 and you can see the horizontal spreading elements and this had a solid roof. Which is quite remarkable for the early date. This is how the house was approached from the north. So in the slide here the view is to the left that's to the south. You come to Lopez Island and a ferry at the north end and have to drive down through the island and then you arrive at the inside of the V to this. And I show you the plan to show you how clever Preez is to give you a glimpse of what's out there through the house and then from the inside. This is the view from the living room a weekend house. The large sliding. Inside outside. And you look across the Strait of Juan de Fuca at the

[00:04:51] Olympic Mountains.

[00:04:54] It's an extraordinary Spatial Sequence that ends with the incredible view.

[00:04:59] And this is going to become characteristic of these houses of regional architects in this period. It's not about showing off to the street. It's about passing through the House in a kind of choreography to a private garden or through a view. In all kinds of designs. Here's a Seattle example by one of his students at the UW in the 1930s. And then one of the colleagues John Rau taught it at the U. For many years and the architecture school. Here's the raw residents as you see it from the street just the carport and the opaque. And. I show you the plan and then here's where you enter. So you go around to the left up to the front door. And again it's all blank. It's not about showing off to the street. But when you come through. There's a 28 foot long glass wall four foot glass panels and the operable one is the one with a kick plate at the bottom and the view to the private garden up above.

[00:06:02] And so it shows you if you don't have a view you can do this in a private space in this city so this gives you a sense again it's about your private space in these regionals houses. This was published in McCall's magazine in 1954. It's a Seattle landmark today.

[00:06:21] Chevrolet and Kirk the firm that Paul Kirk was in with James cheerily from the just after the end of the war until about 1950 again designed some demonstration houses to revere quality home Institute was promoting Revere products copper and brass piping and fixtures and also modern houses. So this is a modern house got a lot of play in the Seattle Times. And 1948 49.

[00:06:49] This is the view to the street and this is the back again. So. To the yard to the private space. Glass wall. Kirk. And roar were almost contemporaries at UW. In fact Paul Kirk was was best man when he got married. So they're clearly aware of each other's work because this was advertised as the Revere quality house. It was open in November nineteen forty says eight here I thought was forty nine. But anyway one of those years and probably thousand people came through this house to see it and to experience what you know the future house of Seattle should be like. In this regard. We have to point out briefly the influence of Marjorie Phillips who was the architectural writer for The Seattle Times in this period.

[00:07:39] And she promoted modernism and modern houses in her articles and talked about Northwest architects and their styles. I also want to point out this is not a house. This was Gaffney's like Wilderness Lodge

[00:07:55] In what is now Maple Valley of nineteen forty nine fifty. And this building won a national award. And what's important there is the exposed structure and the treatment of that relationship. So here's the arrival and you pass through this. And on the inside there's this grand space again oriented to the view and you see the wood ceiling and the wood structure because the articulation of structure becomes a very common feature in these regional houses following about 1950. We see it for example and Paul Kirk's house for his brother Blair Kirk House number one also sadly altered. But you can see the wood frame structure the wood construction a very simple house. We're seeing literally right through it. But this is the kind of regional mode in this period. This use of structure to articulate or to shape the design and here a view from the inside looking back. These houses are often very small. You have to remember that people who lived through the Depression and war didn't have the expectations for huge amount of space that people have today. And here and one example of Kirk's work of the 1950s the two images below show the house to the street. The image above shows the back wall to the garden. So again to the street you get the carport the entrance and a pretty plain wall the house opens to the private view. And there you can see the Express structure the relationship of inside and outside supporting an informal kind of living. And here tri level lower intermediate upper which is again typical house type of the period the degree of transparency in these houses and this was an era when electricity was very expensive. It's perhaps revealed by this photograph of Paul Kirk the house for his brother. This is number two on Mercer Island

[00:09:46] And we are literally looking right through Benjamin McAdoo the leading African-American architect of this period a graduate of the University of Washington in 1946 is another contributor to the regional mode in this period here the Rivkin residence on Mercer Island.

[00:10:03] And I show you the from the street again this is the side of the house that doesn't show off. You just see the shallow sloping roof the car carport the entrance. You can read the structure but the view is on the other side. Or his George Haig residence and they'll slide in the lower right shows you again from the drive. It's pretty simple and plain but from the interior it's all about glass indoor outdoor relationships the relationship to the view to the lake and indoor outdoor informal living. That was the period and that was the way people did it. So when you see these regional US houses often what you see from the street is pretty boring. The interesting part is when you get inside and can see how the

House and the site in the view are all designed as one thing. Others. Roland Terry here in the partnership Terry and more. This is the Hallberg residence on Bainbridge Island and you can see the exterior view shallow sloping roof express structure and then again the interiors you read the structure the stone and the integration with nature and the relationship to the outside gardens even Paul theory not an architect we think of as a regional as so much of his work is tough concrete. But here in his own vacation house in nestled in the landscape relationship to the lake a little bit of Japanese influence there and here shows you again the expression of structure the transparency the broad overhanging roof. Indoor outdoor relationships the steps down to the lake are actually 18 inches high and those are cushions that were designed so you could sit on the steps

[00:11:45] And look at the lake is 18 inches is the right height to sit now not all the houses of that era have their structure shown here.

[00:11:54] Paul Kirk's dollar residence just south of downtown looking towards Lake Washington and here the Japanese influence is much more overt. Note the shoji screens in the lower right. There's also a pool with reeds in the entrance way here in the atrium but rather remarkable degree of transparency and spatial flow and all of this design. But you're not seeing the Express structure so we shouldn't say that all houses in this period have that somehow that element. There's always something and it's saying that we should also point out not all the architects in this region in this period are doing regionalism. There are other architects pursuing other ideas. One of the most individual whose work is the most unusual is Robert Reichert and the building of his. That's best known as the Willard Egan residence which is just below St. Mark's Cathedral Lakeview Boulevard dating from 1958. This triangle this wedge that just is built up against that painted white. This kind of abstract form and Weicker is not regional at all. He's doing something totally different. He's the stand in in this lecture for all those architects whose work. In this period did not fit the kind of regionalist idea we tend to focus on the regionals. But there are other things going on. We should never think everybody's doing just one thing. They weren't. There's always individuals. We also have houses in the region from this period by Frank Lloyd Wright three of them one into coma.

[00:13:32] The Chauncey Griggs residence this one and is it called the ray brand his residence and you can see the concrete block the strong horizontals the overhanging roof. And rights integration of the furniture designs as well and the layers of space concrete block indoor outdoor view rights work of course influences all the modern isms of this period. His work is not regionalist but certainly the regional is learned from right. All architects in the period did but Wright's work is very individual. It's very much about right. Probably the most unusual right house in that region is the Tracy residents and Normandy Park because this is a you Sony and house. That's what kind of building system that Wright invented. The owners the Tracy's actually cast all the blocks themselves. Yes for a year or every night they would go home from work to this site and. Break the forms off the blocks that cast the day before put the forms back together mix up some concrete cast some more blocks. And wait another day. Every day for a year. And that gave them enough blocks to make the house. And you can see there are blocks everywhere. It's inside outside the relationship there blocks as you can see on the left that have glass built in. This is the living room. Even the ceiling which is also the roof is all of individual blocks held together.

[00:15:02] It is a remarkable tour de force of block construction a family's love for rights work and incorporation of it.

[00:15:11] And this survives today in private ownership. There's ever a tour and you can get to see it. It is a gem. It's so beautifully preserved architecture graduate from the U.

[00:15:23] After World War 2 also contribute to the development of regional design. We don't have time to talk about a lot of them today so I'll just point out Jean Zima whose work is quite interesting and there's a book by Grant Hildebrand about Zimmer's career. This is the Zima residence in Laurel Hurst. And again you can see the Express wood structure the overhanging roof the strong horizontals here's the view of the complexity of the roof from above and this as houses often have quite unusual spatial dynamics.

[00:15:55] This is two photographs put together to try to give you some sense of the spatial characteristics of the living room the stairs and how that all goes together around the fireplace as a kind of Fulcrum at the center of this space. Really an extraordinary house

[00:16:11] In this period. We also have architects occasionally working with builders. And modern architects working with builders which. Is unusual. There was a time when builders were willing to build modern houses here in Norwood village by Jim Weldon Gwynn and houses by literally Kirk and Bastian Morse. Again this is work. That's research by David Rasch and reported in an essay in the second edition of shaping Seattle architecture. Or here. Kirk's work for level construction in Olympic manor. He's one of several architects who did designs that were built in Olympic manor and Kirk's drawing as shown there. And the house on the far right the lower photograph shows that House realized the builder wasn't quite willing to go as far as Kirk. He's made it a little more conventional it doesn't have the glass going all the way down to the floor on the front wall but there. There you see again the influence. So we find builders scale houses that are modern designs that architects had a hand in in this period. And there were architects like Jerry Groth another post-war graduate who published designs for inexpensive houses and popular periodicals.

[00:17:26] Here's a Jerry crop design for our next simple house to build and you can see the regionals elements express structure the kind of informal interior the large areas of glass related to the yard the car park and so on. Or here another Jerry Graff design and another popular magazine. Showing you again. The willingness of these architects to try to create better houses for people of all kinds

[00:17:55] And publish in popular magazines and have others do their designs. You could write to grow up and he'd send you a set of plans for his small price.

[00:18:05] We also see the emphasis on structure sometimes being carried further and work particularly somebody like Wendell Lovett who really loves the structural expression did a series of buildings this is his own vacation cabin and you can see the truss turned upside down.

[00:18:20] Perhaps better in this photograph supporting the cantilever of the deck is a tiny little cabin but I think really it's quite an elegant design. And that fascination with structure

[00:18:33] 1973 74 we have the Arab oil embargo and price of oil goes up. There are gas lines people suddenly become conscious of the price of heating their houses. And that changes architecture the building codes begin to change and houses become less lightweight less transparent more enclosed. And we start to see that in a variety of buildings of this period. I'll show you one. This is the Norman Johnston and Jane Hastings residence by the Hastings group the firm founded by L. Jane Hastings a night early 1950s graduate university who's here in our audience. And this is over on the way from the you towards Laurel Hurst and you can see it there

[00:19:16] And this has some large areas of glass orange the view. But notice how the shingled house the walls are much more solid. This is prior to the energy codes really being adopted. It takes a few years for the tough energy codes we have now to go into place. But you can already see the awareness beginning to shape how one thinks about doing a house and how different the houses after 1973 are when people realize. Electricity and energy are never going to be that cheap again and that house because it's shot is such a tight sight and it's organized so vertically. It's all planned around this interior staircase that goes up and connects with the various rooms on all the different levels. It's kind of high hard to illustrate. So you'll just have to look at the staircase and imagine how that works. It doesn't mean that you can't do glazed walls and houses but it means you have to balance them with enough solid to get the energy value of the on up high enough here love it when the love at Schofield house. You can see the amount of solidity wrapping around the side and back that in a sense gets you a high enough our value that you can have a high degree of glass facing towards the view.

[00:20:27] This is also the way Lovett moved in his designs towards the idea which he talked about it. As kind of a house which is a cave. It has a protected space and then it has a view. So your back is protected and you have a view out later this would be called prospect and refuge theory which you can look up on the web or here. Arnie Bystrom the Peggy Moore residents again you can see the much greater amount of enclosure. But that doesn't mean the House can't have transparency it just has to be planned. And so you see the degree of transparency in this house again which has the informal living. So houses get more enclosed and architects have to be more clever about how they balance the parts which have high insulating value with the parts that have transparency. We don't have a lot of post-modern houses in Seattle.

[00:21:19] The influence of people like Michael Graves and others of that era.

[00:21:26] Charles go made in New York five all those kinds of things.

[00:21:30] One of the architects who did a few post-modern houses was Stuart silk fairly early in his career. This is the Mackie house. I don't have the address I only have one view but it does suggest the influence of postmodernism.

[00:21:45] We do have architects however doing inventive designs that reflect a variety of influences. Olson Sundberg this is the Jim Olson graduate of the University. This is John and and how Berg's residence and you can see in the model the corner columns those are actually concrete. This has the characteristic of a kind of almost classical Villa but it's totally modern. There's the design of the house from the exterior and it's a house for our art collector. So basically the whole house is designed around a series of rooms that with lighting tracks and. Light indirect natural lighting and all of that because it's all about displaying a collection of art through the whole house. So a very different idea. And Jim Olson has done a whole series of houses for art collectors that are very specially designed so a particular design approach beautifully crafted as you see here regionalism also continues here in this part of the country. And Jim Cutler is one of the architects who has continued to regional this work here. The guest house on the Bagley and Virginia right property up in the highlands. From nineteen eighty seven. It looks as if the concrete wall to the right was pre-existing but that was actually built into the hillside and then the wood house is constructed up against that here we're using recycled timbers for a lot of the House and the interior showing you again the use of natural wood the Express structure the revealed elements the sliding doors out to the patio.

[00:23:23] So here's an architect who has continued to do work that we would characterize as regional list even under the constraints of current energy codes. So it's still possible it's just not as lightweight as thin as it was prior to the 1970s. Or here and early house by also Sundberg Condé gallon. This is actually Tom context design over near Spokane and you can see the large areas of glass. This is his most regional list work this high degree of transparency. Frankly I don't know how he was able to achieve this. And then you see the exposed structure and elements of this house design literally as a bridge. Really quite lovely piece of work however there are some architects who argued that that kind of regionalism is really no longer appropriate.

[00:24:15] Went to love it would say before he died that the regents changed that.

[00:24:23] We're not about cutting down trees and doing extractive kinds of things that this region although natural resources are still part of the economy. We're much more about things like Boeing and engineering and software and technology and regional architecture really ought to respond to that. And so here's his house for trial Simone Simone of course a very significant figure in the whole evolution of digital systems usable web computer interfaces a variety of technological advances rather extraordinary. So this is this Samoan villa built in three stages in Medina. This is phase one dating from 19 from the 1980s. And there is not a visible stick of wood in this entire house. And it is extraordinarily beautifully crafted. Occasionally that there are tours and it's worth seeing it is so beautifully executed but it is a very different idea of what is an appropriate house in this region. But again look at who the client is as well and this is the house as finally realized with all free wings completed as it exists in Medina today. And this is described in detail in Grant Hill the brand's book on the architecture of Wendell Lovett and Arnie Bice from other firms have managed to combine different kinds of approaches here for example Miller Hall in the Michael system's residents and Mercer Island if we look at this side we are seeing metal panels and a kind of tough minded abstract composition concrete block concrete metal and so on. But if we turn around and look from the other we see wood construction exposed wood structure a kind of warmth and integration with a landscape a kind of

balancing or combination a hybrid of the two and very much I think reflective of many Miller Hall buildings in residential buildings in the 80s and 90s and even 2000s.

[00:26:29] Technologically tough minded in some ways but also warm and engage with the region and others so a balancing of both sets of ideas we could also see and work from this period emerging ideas that we find in the work of Tom Cotton dig here before it became Olsen Konig it was Olsen Seidenberg kind Allen and this is the residence for the artist Carol Bobo up in Shoreline says Seattle but its shoreline and. A house that is solid and integrated with the landscape but designed as an artist's studio and workspace for the variety of things. So this is literally the interior with this heavy steel and crane where ales to be able to move the furniture out and be able to work on large pieces and do things in this. And it's the beginning I think of what we see in context later work this fascination with mechanisms and how things work and moving parts and all of that country who grew up in eastern Washington and Idaho and was fascinated by mining temples and and the equipment left over from the old days of mining and things like that. I think that has come out in his work and he's developed a very personal style that I don't know that he would appreciate it be calling regional.

[00:27:49] But I do think his his history has influenced his his approaches to architecture.

[00:27:56] We also can see this if we look at work by somebody like George Toyama this is the firm. So Yama Peterson juju Gucci this is in southwest Seattle sama's recent house well no longer that recent for himself and his wife. And I think you see here the wood construction and the Express structure but it is done in a almost minimalist way and in a way that emphasizes the kind of linearity and simplicity of elements in composition. So it doesn't have that kind of rustic Woody feeling of much of regionalism. It really is a much more austere kind of thing. And I think we find that often in Sharma's work and there's a book on CRM as architecture published by authored by Grant Hildebrand. So you can see many of the designs. This is just representative of them.

[00:28:51] I'm going to end with two projects by younger firms by younger people because I think we should also say although it's hard to talk about younger people because their work is just emerging that there is a of course a new generation of architects coming forward and doing residential work because often that's what architects get to do first in their careers.

[00:29:15] This is by a firm called Helio trope. Their offices are based in Balad and this is what they call the North Beach residents. It's on Orcas Island. And it was completed in 2010 and it won a national III design award in 2012. So that's part of the reason why I'm showing it to you. It's a vacation house. And here's this is a view from the beach and here's what the house looks from the other side and you can see it is just a simple rectangle transparent spaces solid ends. And that's almost the whole design. That kind of simple object placed on an actual site touching the site in some cases in a very minimal way. The house is designed it's intended to primary uses between May and October when the family lives there the rest of the year it's only visited and it actually is designed with green features so that it has a green roof. Solar collectors and the way the House is operated it produces a balance of electricity so that the electricity generated in the summer months balances out the electricity consumed in the winter months when the House is minimal used so that the net zero

impact on the environment. So kind of a remarkable minimalist design but also this attention to green factors to energy and such that's become so much a part of the way designers are thinking these days and the last house I want to show you is they buy a telly a Jones that Susan Jones is firm the CLTV house in Madison Park.

[00:30:58] So it's the home of Susan and Marco and I'm showing you two views of it under construction. So this seal T stands for cross laminated timber and that is a type of engineered wood that so the house is designed and then the walls are all made up of prefabricated layers of timber that are cross laminated. So on one layer the grain goes say horizontally the next layer the wood is all laid up vertically the next layer horizontally and then those pieces are brought up this whole house was assembled in two days. That is the armature of the House and so you can see the pieces going in with a crane and then you're going to see those windows later on and you can see the piece up above being craned over to be added to the house so this is the house as completed in 2015. That's the view from the street. So there's have another layer of wood on the outside. That is the weather protection that protects the cross laminated timber layers which gives this house an extraordinarily high energy value. The energy modeling that was done before the House was ever built suggested it would be 38 percent. Below the energy levels required by code

[00:32:22] The exterior of the lobe has an R value that is resistance to heat loss or heat gain heat loss in the winter heat gain in the summer. That is seventy five percent above the Seattle code and Seattle codes are not weak codes the house got a green star built green five star rating and it has some remarkable spaces because the interior is all the cross laminate timber left natural and then the exterior you see is cloud this way

[00:32:56] Detailing this house was inspired by the movement that comes from Germany called passive house which is an attempt to do houses that basically are zero energy consumption whatsoever. So it's very tightly detailed so all the joints and all of that minimize energy loss at all those kinds of places and this received an award from the Seattle chapter AAA in two thousand

[00:33:21] Sixteen.

[00:33:22] So this is the final House and it shows you younger firms and the kind of experimentation in some ways this whole house you could characterize as a science experiment to test this technology see how it works. See if it's livable how it performs and it suggests the kind of things that may be possible in the future. So there you have it a brief overview of Seattle residential architecture. And

[00:33:50] We can turn the lights up and see if there are any questions.

[00:34:06] Any questions. If not we'll all go home.

[00:34:10] Yes sir. I have a comment. Leading up to the point first of all. Very interesting. Is. This. In your presentation to both cable while when I was a young college student back in the 70s. The

personals Kevin Lynch. Images of the city. Come to. You with Kevin. Breakable. And the second one. Was. At the top of the future show. They had to make do impressions of my really developed. With someone like him and his idealism of what the city was like when you bought them right. The. Top Toffler talked about the lesson of permanence. He talked about the coming of the. Future. Of. In. This election with the margin the hole. Being torn apart. No put together. I don't mean like 20 but it can be easily disassembled and moved to another place in the last hour or so before that could be filled with some of these tractor trailers. That we see that the homeless are starting to get. So my question is because of Alvin Toffler is less lessons of permanence where no longer will we be taking these gigantic monstrosities. One person. President. How can we get back to Texas. Because. It was created. Basically. Build houses for the poor. Well the whole that that will have energy efficiency and are you all discussing these social issues with. Architecture. Which. Is. The question you ask is complex

[00:35:54] And has multiple answers so let me begin by saying in the architecture school these days yes social issues equity and diversity. And who do we serve is very much a part of the conversation. On the other hand. The history of how we have designed and built for people with a lesser means is. Both somewhat more limited in terms of what's available information and has frankly as much harder to research say you know I showed one slide of. World War Two period cottages and those kind of small houses that were being built that you know were eight hundred square feet that were starter houses for many families. But the research on that has not been done. So it's very hard to do that. The housing projects that were built say yes let terrorists and high point Holly park and so on. Tended not to be single family houses which was in my discussions with the library what we would focus on today.

[00:37:11] So that would be kind of different lecture so it sort of wasn't totally addressed to your point the question you raised about Alvin Toffler. That is a difficult question to answer because there are some people would argue that Toffler was wrong that you actually need to accept a certain degree of permanence so people have stability in their lives because so much else is changing and also a house like the last one I showed you this CLTV house

[00:37:41] That has a substantial amount of material in the walls in order to reach the energy performance that it's reaching for. It's much easier to imagine lightweight construction being assembled and taken apart and assembled and put and taken Ricard. If you're not worried about the joints tight and are they leaking energy and all of that but if you're going to meet the energy challenges then the question is what's the value the energy values in in her walls and how are you getting there and one of the ways you get there is with mass and how do you type do you make the joints. Well one of the way is you make them as solid as possible. So it's a tougher proposition to talk about things that are assembled and disassembled. The question of lower cost housing is a really difficult one in Seattle today

[00:38:28] Partially because of the limited amount of land and the great amount of demand. I mean we're in it. That's the crisis so many people are moving here in this city is not getting any bigger and

the lots are all laid out so it makes it that that's a whole other discussion of policy issues and how to do that. So there's a lot of complications in answers to your question.

[00:38:50] Most of the housing at the university that's being done say a studio projects that students are designing that address people of more limited means tend to be multi-family projects not single family. We don't do much single family design at all in the university. We have one course in our department that teaches how to design one family single family house but it's not a studio it's just a course for people who want to learn that. But the reality is that most people who graduate and start firms single family houses or where they start remodeling. Additions and then maybe occasionally they get a new house. I mean that's startup practice for many people

[00:39:31] Other question. Yes

[00:39:33] It's the author is Grant Hildebrand h i l DB BRCA and D and it's titled A thriving modernism a thriving T.H. our Ivy I enjoy modernism. The houses of Wendell Lovett and Ani by.

[00:39:50] Ok yes here with.

[00:39:53] So again yours is another very complicated question. Part A Part Of The problem is it is one that has to do of course with the way the city is zoned. And the fact that zoning

[00:40:11] Essentially sets what can be built on different parcels. The tendency of developers is to max out to what the zoning allows

[00:40:22] The zoning is not got a lot of increments in it.

[00:40:27] Ok. So in certain NC zones neighborhood commercial zones now those are zones that want mixed use buildings retail at the ground level and then residential above typically sometimes a floor of office in there. Those zoning those levels tend to be say forty five feet sixty five feet.

[00:40:47] That's not the kind of housing you're talking about but it addresses some of the issues because if you think of somebody like say Jane Jacobs or William H white they talk about the need for retail at the street level that activates in the sidewalk and that's what provides us protection because we can't just have police on every block etc. etc.. If defensible space question which Oscar Newman wrote and published in white 73 which was addressed initially to the kind of public housing that was being built in cities and address the fact of the problem of the high rise tower and ground related housing was better and so on. That problem actually never existed in Seattle because we never built high rise public housing. The public housing we had in Seattle and we had public housing yes were terrorists Holiday Park High Point. All of that yes or Terrace was started as public housing was the first integrated public housing project. The United States. And now of course it no longer survives but then the housing that was built during World War Two is defense work or housing. That's why Hollow Point was built high point was built near Vista. I could go down the list of the three I remember right now. Those were all built as two storey buildings with fair amount of ground around

them so they all would have met defensible space guidelines. We never built high rise public housing because after World War Two all the defense housing was converted by the Seattle Housing Authority to being affordable housing. And. Was integrated and for many families

[00:42:16] After the war that was the first house people could afford. I mean people came back who had been in the Depression of the war you know they had nothing except you know and then they built lives and careers in this city. And if you couldn't afford to buy anything

[00:42:31] You know that housing which was public housing was the starter you know got old and then the pot federal policies changed. And the idea of what should be built was changed and so that was all knocked down and then converted to mixed income neighborhoods of with some units protected in some not in things like places like Holly park many and there are higher density. Those are still many of them designed with certain defensible space features. The question you're asking about is what the market builds what private developers build in places like the neighborhood commercial center of Ballard or Capitol Hill or the University District and they're basically it's pushing the envelope to maximum. Whatever. And the tendency is to build units that one single person will live in either studios or one bedrooms because you can maximize the number of units within a volume if you make the units smaller family housing. You don't get a return. So why build it. If you're building in the private market and right now the private market will absorb a lot of young people move to city work in the tech industries and what they want is if a studio unit or a one bedroom unit Max. And so that's what gets built and those things maximize the envelope. The challenge is

[00:43:59] To write it. It's very difficult because of decisions made by the state of Washington Supreme Court in the 1980s that mean that we have the most owner favorable property laws of any state in the United States.

[00:44:18] We have the strongest vesting doctrine if any of your attorneys know what that means of any state in United States. What that means is to get developers to do anything we have to give them something. So if you want to get amenities you have to give them like an extra floor guy. On Capital Hill pipeline corridor where they wanted to protect historical facades to get them to protect the historical facades that gave most developers an extra floor that made it worthwhile to protect them. They couldn't just write a law that said you must protect historical facades because of this decisions by the state Supreme Court that would not be legal. That would be considered a taking from those developers. We have the. If I don't want to be political. But you could say we have the most

[00:45:06] Property rights friendly Supreme Court of any in the entire United States.

[00:45:14] People say oh Seattle is such a liberal place and it's sold for social justice. And that's all true except for property rights. Property rights. We have the most frankly to use the political term conservative.

[00:45:29] And it's because of decisions by made by the Supreme Court and how they've been interpreted since the 1980s. Those of your attorneys just look up to Norco and Carlson decisions.

[00:45:37] They're the ones and so that makes it very tough to address the questions you're asking away over here sir.

[00:45:44] Yep there the. Again it's a matter of meeting density and so with the typical six pack as a way to build within that zone the maximum number of units and the way it's done some years ago when Sally Clark was on the city council. Rick Mohler professor in our department at the University worked with Sally Clark and we did studies of different zoning laws so if you changed the zoning law this way what would be the impact in terms of say a series of sites. And so it was like testing different ways to revise the ordinances.

[00:46:26] But that was Sally Clark. She no longer is on city council. There is no one I'm not. This is not a tap. But if you look at the background of the members of city council right now there's really no one that comes from a background in land development

[00:46:43] Or land use planning or architecture or historic preservation or anything like that.

[00:46:52] So the members of city council have many many fine skills and expertise but they actually are less knowledgeable. I believe in land use because it gets very technical very quick. You just change few words in the land use code and has a major impact on what gets built in a particular zone. Sally. When she got Rick Mueller to do these kinds of studies when she had hit the Land Use Committee you know they would look at these technical language but it's again it's very hard to regulate and change when developers have the right. To do what the code allows. If it's not prohibited in Washington it's allowed.

[00:47:40] And it's very hard to get good form from prohibitions only the contrast to say a state like Massachusetts where you know any urban project is a negotiation. Basically what happens is the developer comes in the city might set down some staff people sit down and say on this site we would like to see this. And it's all negotiated. You can't do that in Seattle. The decisions of our Supreme Court give developers absolute rights. They have vested rights

[00:48:09] And you cannot take those away. So you can negotiate all you want. But you can't. Anything that's allowed by zoning they can do. You can't they won't negotiate that away.

[00:48:19] Carlson And Norco and an o r c o I think 82 and 84. But you can look up once an appellate decision and one's a Supreme Court decision. There's also a Seattle University law school law review article which lays it all out about Washington State vesting. Doctrine. And it explains how and they those professors talk about how wonderful it is that we have the best vesting document in the country.

[00:48:49] Anyway this is because I've been involved in land use fights where I've been an expert witness I've had to learn about this stuff. Yes. So the gentleman here pointed out and it's a good point that I've been a little one sided in my comments that there are some developers in this city who

[00:49:12] Do not operate just seeking to max out the envelope but who design in a way that creates a much greater sense of place or a much greater sense of community somehow of developers doing cluster housing. He pointed to the firm well and there are others. And so you can find examples if you want to go online what you would do is you would google cluster housing Seattle and see what comes up. Now you'll get some projects that are gonna be a problem but you'll get some interesting work as well and this is a valid point. But these are people who are willing

[00:49:49] To actually not max out their profits in order to higher quality stuff. And oh you think you can max your profits and do it.

[00:49:59] So. So there are examples. He pointed to a project called the Fremont loft defensible space a fair number of units on the property and so there are examples of successes. The question is how do you replicate those and get other people to follow them. Good question. Yes. Mm hmm. Right. Actually I I I would answer that question by saying actually the question had to do with how do single family houses which are developed and built incrementally. How do you keep. Can you get a neighborhood out of that. And I think the answer to that question is less. With regard to style

[00:50:41] And more with regard to certain sets of relationships that they have formally to say the sidewalk the street whatever. For example one of the things that the people called New Urbanists have been talking about is. The virtues of the alley. Because if you have blocks with alleys then what happens is the houses confront the street with porches the garages face the back. Fronts with porches engage with the sidewalk engage with the city you know the kind of small scale bungalow kind of things that we got in Seattle and neighborhoods say like Wallingford or places like that as opposed to if you go out to some of the suburban neighborhoods where the lots or why the garages face the street. There's no alleys. The houses are set back. There's no sidewalks because they were part of the city that was not annexed until say what nineteen fifty four fifty five. And it's much harder and people live much more individually because this the pattern of development is more spread out.

[00:51:50] There's not the kind of public space in which people walk you walk you walk in the streets in some areas. That means taking your life in your hands. Houses don't have porches they're all inward and all of that. Now of course the regionals work did look inward because that was the ideal in the postwar period was to have your suburban house and have your private place and be apart. Many people would suggest that the neighborhoods that are pre World War Two. Are more convivial because they encouraged walking. The houses are close together. I mean part of Queen Anne Hill where I lived my first 20 years in Seattle was planted with 50 foot lots but the lots were sold by metes and bounds and we were on a loft it was thirty seven feet a parcel that was thirty seven feet wide and you know houses for next door was fine. You know and we got out and walked and people walked. You could walk to the community center all that walkable communities is what fosters conviviality and knowing your neighbors and all of that yeah. The question I have less to say about the form in terms of justice at a box or whatever as opposed to I mean visually you know something that is three stories tall on a row of houses that are one stories tall.

[00:53:04] Seems to be out of scale but it's a harder question. The question is does the House have features that engage with the public realm well or towards the shared Street. That's the question. I think. I think that's where you go. The difficulty in many places is the suburbs that were built in say the 50s and 60s and 70s which are automobile dependent. High energy use. Once the land is subdivided it's very difficult to go back and retrofit. It's very difficult to go back and say cut up suburban lots in half and put two houses where there is one and identify those suburbs. If you look at the walk scores and there's studies that are being done in the urban design and planning department UW the neighborhoods like Queen Anne and capital hill in Wallingford that are the pre-war neighborhoods. High walk scores more high performance in terms of people knowing each other and all of that it's outlying neighborhoods that were developed later they are much less so and are much more energy intensive. You have to drive to do everything. So it's a that's a difficult problem because once land is subdivided

[00:54:20] It's very hard to go back and change. So I don't have an answer to your question.

[00:54:25] Yes. Wow that's an interesting question.

[00:54:29] So the question was Is it worth it to invest in an architect. Prominent architect if you can afford it. I mean there are houses that are market it is

[00:54:42] You go on the web. Elizabeth air house. Lionel priest house. Jane Hastings House. There's one block in West Seattle right. We saw that the other day. Aaron Ivey house. Arthur Loveless. So those names I think Paul Kirk also you know a modern house. Oh yes. Paul Kirk how so. That was a 10 percent premium for Paul Kirk house.

[00:55:05] I don't know Tom conducts houses will probably command that someday. George Sharma's houses I'm sure will command that. I mean Sue Yamma but of course his houses are probably pretty expensive to begin with. Jim Olson's houses too I mean. But yeah somebody like that who's designing fine custom houses and is a name architect. Those houses are probably going to hold their value. I would believe but. I'm not an expert in investing in houses I've owned three houses in my life. Because I tend to. And then just stay. So I don't know a lot about buying and selling.

[00:55:44] Every time I've tried to invest in real estate I've lost money so I'm not very good at predicting the future.

[00:55:52] Yes Jane that's a hard question to answer. I haven't lived on Queen Anne Hill in 10 years. So we used to go and walk and we knew our neighbors and all that. But I mean people do things. There are people that have neighborhood groups that put out neighborhood directories that get to know their neighbors that have neighborhood e-mail list that share snow information crime information you know pets sitting on it. You can build community but you need somebody. Who will sort of start it. You know there's these things once a year what is it first week in August neighbors night out there some neighbors have hoods that really get into that. And not just on Queen Anne Hill or older neighborhoods. I mean out in the. Outlying areas in Seattle as well. But it depends if there's

nobody who sort of starts it and may not get started. But I've seen that change take place in neighborhoods in which I've lived in which a person sort of decides we should have a neighborhood directory and gets to know 80 or 100 families literally by going around and knocking on doors and getting data and building an email list and then that just starts it. And then people sort of use that they may not meet each other just walking around on the street but they meet each other through digital media. Now you probably can do this on Facebook and all that stuff but you know my age it's email is the kind of thing we use. That's what I know. You've had your hand up for a while. What that sounds somewhat like that sounds like what people do when they try to do co housing

[00:57:36] When a group of people get together and sort of plan a community and it may have smaller units and there are certain shared facilities and there's even there's I think the first co housing in this region was done on Bainbridge Island which was a series of small houses. There's now a CO housing community in a what five story or six story apartment building on Capitol Hill Capitol Hill coal housing they had dinner together once a week. They have a shared small space. So that's almost like a naturally occurring co housing

[00:58:10] Sometimes of what you have is apartment buildings that become naturally occurring retirement communities and sees and basically no seriously people move in and they find it's a good building and then a unit becomes vacant and they get their friends to come in and over time it develops into a kind of extended family and it tends to be retirees who do this and they create it into a community just by who they attract and who lives there. And there is actually this term for it. Norfolk you know and our scene naturally occurring retirement community. So those things can happen and again probably your example somebody started it or got a bunch of people to sign on to saying we'll share this space. And then everybody went in

[00:58:56] There. There's if there's a starter you can build community I believe that these are very different questions from what I talked about but this is fine.

[00:59:04] Yes. Right. So the shared public open space. But the problem of course is there's some parts of Seattle in which they're very under part by standards.

[00:59:16] If you're fortunate if you're in maple leaf and you have that because a lot of parts of Seattle north of 80 fifth don't have much because that was all in the colony until 1954 and so private development just developed at county standards were very minimal.

[00:59:31] The same thing happened for example Cal Anderson Park again when they cover the reservoir and created space. Now we can argue about who took it over. That's a different question. But the idea of creating those spaces. But there's only so many reservoirs to suddenly be covered and created at a shared public open space.

[00:59:49] Anyway so we're at three o'clock and so we're probably at the limit of what we were promised people you would get out of here. I'll just show you one thing if you're interested.

[01:00:05] This is a book that is the second edition of shaping sail architecture and some of the houses I showed are in here and David rational I mentioned who was here but had to leave wrote some of the essays and there's also an essay in the back on how to read do architectural history research in Seattle. And we should also point out before you leave that the library housed in Northwest room. And. They provide help to people who come and ask questions about researching buildings all the time so there's there are resources here in this library if you're interested in neighborhood history that you can draw upon anyway. Have a good weekend enjoy the summer and enjoy Seattle

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