THE HOUSE AS ART

ARCade

FEBRUARY/MARCH ISSUE

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COLUMN OF MANYORDERS

Rebecca Barnes

YOU SAID IT

THIS IS THE LAST ISSUE OF ARCADE fourth year. Those of you who subscribe received a reader survey from us in De-

cember, and nearly twenty percent of you returned it. (Far fewer of you took similar surveys and cynicism support or finan-

cial support, but there will be plenty of additional opportunities.)

ARCADE began as a calendar: you still depend on it for the calendar, but features and news are at least as important to you.

As a matter of fact, you seem to con-
der us a forum for increasing the depth of the calendar.

Most of you feel you're getting a real bargain, and would pay more. You'll get.

ARCADE is worth $2.50 an issue, or $15 per year, between our next issue, Subscribers can continue to subscribe for $10. (If you re subscribe before June 1, you can do it at the $10 year rate that has held for you for three years.)

If the returns we received represent the way you'd like to use ARCADE's, the importance of ARCADE's regional focus cannot be overstated. This has not been a conscious strategy of ARCADE's editorial policies until we recently evaluated our-

 misunderstood in the last issue, Northwest regionalism, representing ARCADE's first planned redistribution with regard to features.

The following summarizes the survey's results:

1. What people read most often and like best is pretty evenly distributed among the features, the calendar, and this Column. We've got to keep all of them.

2. Feature work by good young firms, with plan, section, elevation, and section. If this is a publication for archi-

tects, you gotta assume your readers understand diagrams. If not, all is lost.

3. Do less long-text ruminations on per-

sonal theories ("Light in Architecture," "My Creative Growth from Repeated Mistakes") and more on the boards in the Northwest — in the Northwest — and histories.

4. Ideas for future articles ranged from an overview of Spokane architecture to a furniture design; some even came with offers to write. Few ideas were repeated. Of those which appeared more than once, the most popular had to do with major urban development projects, "work on the boards" in the Northwest, art, and histories.

5. To the questions most frequently raised at staff crits, you gave these answers:

a) The balance between text and graphics is pretty good, with a few requests for increased graphics, and one for more and better calendar.

b) ARCADE's readability is just fine, if a bit dense the calendar.

6. DEPTH of coverage fared the same as readability.

7. Asking for specific and concrete criticism was approved generally, although some of you wish for a bit more than "work on the boards in the Northwest, art, and histories.

8. ARCADE will cost more because so many of you indicated that to be your preferred means of support.

9. With encouragement like this, who needs criticism? We've got we've got a solid base of support for work taking at being a leading voice in local design issues. As we pick our way along on this dark path, we hope you'll occasionally shed some light on our progress.

LETTERS TO ARCADE

Dear ARCADE:

Suggestions, a few requests for improving.

ARCADE says, "Thanks! You guys are gods!" All of these ideas are appreciated, all are fundamental to ARCADE; none is overwhelming. It's your job, dear reader and you, to keep us on the boards in the Northwest architecture and design.

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SOME RAINY SUNDAY SOON, YOU may notice the absence of the Seattle Times Real Estate section and you may experience the "don't know whatcha got till it's gone" syndrome over the de-

narrowing of bit of environmental design
decisions which had been closed in the past by "light in architecture," "my creative growth from repeated mistakes.

Dear ARCADE:

I'd like to see ARCADE become consid-
er we are creating "Art"? Why do barns
designed to admire or abuse any more. Instead,

DO THE PEOPLE OF SEATTLE WANT an entertainment center (or anything else, for that matter) more than they want a public park of the stature of New York's Central Park, Chicago's Lincoln Park? That's the question that ought to be asked, before the Seattle City Council commits to rede­

velop Seattle Center, as has been pro­
posed, as a more elegant, up-to-date version of a World's Fair campus. Seattle Center is the largest single publicly-owned piece of Seattle Times Real Estate for the future (a few blocks down Broad). It could bring to the city the kind of recreational use of which it was dreamed: the green open space and meandering path­ways of traditional urban parks. Rather than opening up the planning process to the widest possible range of potential users, the current concept plan for the Center is a proposal which accepts the Center's current users, organizes them by type ("Twenteenth") and lets the open space be used any way the open space seems to be used any way. Seattle gets to having urban land to dream about. Property downtown. It is close to the waterfront and yes, you must keep an eye on the waterfront. It is near the Seattle Times, which publishes a weekly arts section. Seattle is a city of both professionals and citizens who are concerned about our future as a mediocre vs.

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THE FIRST THREE ROME FELLOWS OF Architecture and Urban Studies in Italy are NIAUSI (the Northwest Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies in Italy) are David Hoedemaker, Rebecca Barnes, and Stuart Silk who will live in the Institute's Palazzo Pio apartment, respectively, this spring, summer, and fall. The Fellows will follow their self-designed programs in Rome and return to the Northwest to present the Fellowship experience. NIAUSI was founded in 1969 to encourage cultural and educational exchange between design professionals here and in Italy. There is hope that a study by way of more inspired clients or will lead inevitably to the homogenization of Seattle's contemporary architecture irrespective of nuances of local climate and culture. The outcome depends on us, on how this design community supports and learns from, combats or ignores the outside world as they are in solving these problems of "the birthplace of civilization." Hoede­ maker will study the new classicism; Barnes, the cultural value of public open space; Silk, the idea of procession. NIAUSI anticipates sending four Fellows in 1986. For further information, call Susan Hei­ kala at 728-3320, and watch for informa­tion on their presentations.

EDWARD L. BARNES GOT THE NOD from the UW's Architectural Commission for the design of the planned addition to the Red Square area. An additional 125,000 square feet will increase the Li­ brary's total area to 550,000 square feet. Conti­ nuation occurs in one or several phases, and whether Barnes is formally confirmed as the architect must await the outcome of this year's State Legislature. Ed Duthewiler, the [architect spearhead for the Suzzallo expansion budget will be reviewed early in the session, perhaps in March. (The Library was built in 1923-27 from a design by Bebb & Gould, and added in 1950 by Birdwood Wright.)

The Commissioners (Robert J. Frasca of ZGF in Portland; James Freed, Partner of I.M. Pei; Peter Walker, former partner of Sasak; Dean Gordon Varey of the Architecture Professor Cervais Reid, Chairman of the Art History Department; and student Larry Vandez, of UW's graduate architecture/interviewed six prospects. Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer, James Stewart Polshek, Eisenmann-Roberts­ ton, Walker-McGough Feltz Lyrwla (Kane Hall architects) with Guzman Bok­ kerts, and Tewson Dally laid a com­ petition in Barnes whose taste for a major commission is ingrained. This whetted his experience with the University's architect selection process. Asked, "Why Barnes?", Duthewiler remem­ bered that Barnes seemed to him to have the best grasp of the design problem, the highest sensitivity to the campus, and a sincere personal commitment to the job. Barnes sketched and described the prob­ lem more and talked less about his own work, than did his competitors. And he drew to the Northwest Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies in Italy (A Memo to the Arts Commission)

You've got a study that should, like the 1% Program itself, become the envy of others charged with your kind of responsi­ bility. It's good, it's well-written, graphi­ cally handsome, and as brief as it can be and still present a good framework for planning public art downtown. Read it. Read it as a study, however, not as a plan. It's not a thought rational for deal­ ing with some of the very questions you have been asking about how to effectively plan for art, to mesh the varied sites and prospective artists with the changing fab­ ric of the city. But it is not a plan.

Andrews, Hirschfeld, and Rouch could have come up with a plan, given you their ideas as to how you ought to make deci­ sions, selected the sites, told you what art­ works ought to go where, and you could take it or leave it. They didn't. Take it and develop your own art plan for downtown. Take time to debate the implications of the framework presented. The study identifies the fundamental objectives of using artwork to support Seattle's sense of identity. I happen to agree with this objective. Do you?

If you were to adopt this study as it is, what would you get? You would get the recipe that Andrews et al have prepared. First, take a good measure of the term "civic context." Think change, movement, and interaction. Think networks of public places where artworks or activities dovetail to downtown's dynamic identity. Make decisions that support the city's sense of identity. Research and monitor how your decisions ultimately are working for people.

Second, take a good look at the expense of the expensive language of artwork. Think of both abstract and representational artistic forms. Don't be restrictive — people derive meaning from art in either form.

Third, take a big look at the range of how art­ work communicates to its audience. Think in broad categorial aesthetic, didactic, functional, and symbolic.

Fourth, mix in an understanding of the choices artists make in creating artwork and in relating to it sites. Think of at least three intended types of relationships: inde­ pendent pieces, transposition pieces, and site inseparables.

Fifth, sit in four criteria for selecting a downtown site: availability, opportunity, scale, and network.

Sixth, combine these ingredients with a dash of your own good judgment and experience.

Using this recipe, the authors came up with four kinds of priority sites (go in order now), future sites (watch for upcoming opportunities), and temporary sites (just too good to go un­ noticed). The recipe does not tell you what pre­ cisely should happen on these sites. That is up to you, Arts Commission. The rece­ ptive in Artwork Network for the things you decide to do. A framework for thinking about how deci­ sions about public art ought to extend to beyond simply placing objects here and there in the downtown. Artwork Network acts as an objective and autonomous, however, directed toward a common and worthwhile end: to bring out and rein­ force the city's identity. By the way, don't keep this to yourselves. There are many in the community who can cook with you and who have a genuine stake in the results.

DENNIS RYAN

Dennis Ryan, Director of the UW College of Architecture's Urban Design program and recently deposited Seattle Times columnist, enjoys menu planning for many palates.

MAKING YOUR MARK IN TERRA COTTA. A collaboration between the National Building Museum and one of the oldest manufacturers of terra cotta in the U.S. will result in a new terra cotta product line designed by architects who have come up with a plan, given you their ideas as to how you ought to make deci­ sions, selected the sites, told you what art­ works ought to go where, and you could take it or leave it. They didn't. Take it and develop your own art plan for downtown. Take time to debate the implications of the framework presented. The study identifies the fundamental objectives of using artwork to support Seattle's sense of identity. I happen to agree with this objective. Do you?

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THE HOUSE AS ART

"The house we were born in is more than an embodiment of home, it is also an embodiment of dreams."

- Gaston Bachelard in The Poetics of Space

Model #2. Photo by Carolyn Law.

To explore the poetic notion of the house can be a marvelous adventure. As architects, we search for ways to do this. But as a profession, we are often saddled by an overly tedious, detailed practice that, as it grows, can do just the opposite of what we intend it to do. Instead of freeing us as creative designers, it sometimes stands as the enemy of our youthful promise. Artists have a luxury that architects by the definition of our profession, are usually denied. Artists can approach the concepts of house, home, and sense of place without the pragmatic burdens of budget, codes, or clients' programs.

I was intrigued by the thought that artists' attitudes toward house and home could be explored through their work, where they are more easily and frequently realized than in the architect's comparatively few built projects. Coincidental to this thought was the exhibition at the Linda Farris Gallery of the work of a Seattle artist, Carolyn Law.

Law's work interested me initially because of its architectonic quality and the similarity of the child-like gabled forms in her models to an exhibit of the work of Lars Lerup at the Bonnafont Gallery in San Francisco a few years back. I studied in greater detail the small models and, perhaps with an overly narrowed focus, missed her point entirely. But what I did discover is a language of parts seen in contemporary architecture. I was reminded more than once of the early houses of New York architect Steven Holl, where his almost defiant use of parts seemed at first arrogant and naive, but upon further examination, well-suited to two-dimensional compositions with powerful balance.

Law's houses are small studies for installations that are meant to force the viewer to interact with the work. In her piece "Model #3" she leaves four gabled forms against each other in an obviously precarious fashion. She creates a path defined by doorways to draw you into the experience. Along this journey she plays with the contradictory elements of line and planar drawing. At the doorways she paints a "threshold," and at the "jams and head" she paints a boldly colored stripe. This clarifies a line drawing sitting within the plane and adds measurably to the implied transparency of the facade. The transparency is further emphasized by the final gabled form which is densely colored and opaque.

In "Building for a Changing World," Law explores the simultaneous occurrence of place and change within the house. The skewed gabled form signals that things are out what they seem. Passing through the door, you are met with a line which throws off your balance while you are moving into the spiral of chaos. I found this piece particularly intriguing because it mixes the sense of order and compulsion of the tiled facade with the tension of unbalanced standard elements. An examination of the facades of the early houses of San Francisco architects Batey and Mack show a similar dramatic upheaval of these parts, but set in the visual sturdiness of concrete block or stucco.

In "Model #2" Law explores the use of a screen as a layering device that adds life and changing drama to the gabled form behind it. The transparency of this element increases or decreases depending on the light. Thus serving as a scrim, the screen frames the wall behind, almost as a stage set.

The potential in this idea and material is well documented in Robert Low's biography, Seeing is Forgetting. Its use outside his studio can be seen in his plaza art at the Public Safety Building in Seattle, titled "Nine Spaces, Nine Trees." Frank Gehry is an architect who also uses this idea in several of his projects. Many architects, unfortunately, can't get beyond the literal cause of its architectonic quality and the transparency of the facade. The transparency or opaqueness. It is an inspired solution for a truly urban site, experienced primarily from the automobile. For the artist or the architect, then, the house can be a vehicle for testing bigger ideas. Our personal experiences of the house give each of us a different view of the stability and dreams sometimes more powerful than our "grown-up" rational existence.

When we design, we should therefore look to the artists for their vision, as their ideas are often quite strong and not encumbered by the pragmatic necessities of architectural practice.

William Zimmerman

William Zimmerman is an architect with the Mithun-Bowman-Emrich Group in Bellevue.

Although the four designs seem to fall easily into these two camps, there are differences in the formality and nonformality between all of them. Carolyn Widger and Stuart Silk's Mt. Baker House is the most formal due to the consistent use of primary forms - cubes, cylinders, and pyramids.

These simple direct shapes were important to us, the architects noted, "in our effort to create a raw, almost child-like character to the house." The designers' interest in axiality, procession, and interior drama has given rise to a 3,400 sq. ft., three-story, cube based cylindrical atrium. Stairs and corridors work off of the central form which also serves as a showcase for artwork. The architects cite both Gunnar Asplund's Stockholm Public Library and Lewis Carroll's Through the Looking Glass as inspirations for the narrow "circulation slots" (stairs and hallways) that penetrate the house, bringing light from splayed skylights at the roof through the increasingly enclosed floors below.

Interior materials reinforce the symmetry and control of the Mt. Baker House plan and its manipulation of light and space. Red plaster columns, a floor pattern of green and white marble squares, basket glass block, and a polychrome color scheme act to intensify interior drama. The rigor and purity of the building form is reinforced by an axial pathway on the exterior intended to lead through ascending columns to the central entry. The reality of the site - a densely wooded triangular lot - seems to continue the processional quality as the existing vegetation and trees don't acknowledge the symmetry of the building entry.

Aristocratic:Anarchistic Serious:Frivolous Proce

Mt. Baker House
Stuart Silk, architect
2571 Shorelands Drive S., Seattle
(at the corner of Shorelands and St. Clair)

Site plan.

Model

Second floor plan.

Section BB (north-south).
Four Houses

**Lake Sammamish House**
Ken Rothschild, architect
2450 Sammamish Parkway SE, Bellevue

The two nonformal houses are smaller, and both are set on hillside sites with roads abutting the uphill side and water below. Ken Rothschild's Lake Sammamish House, designed and built by him for an art teacher, is a tight, three-story, low-gabled cube. Its exterior is characterized by galvanized metal roofs and aluminum windows linked by a wide band of flashing between rosy-pink painted plywood panel siding. Interiorly, the spaces — bedroom suites above and below the main living area — are twisted within a square plan. The kinetic and fragmented aesthetic that results from this twist is reinforced by the details. Cabinets and built-in furniture are made up of overlapping and applied painted planes, and trim that frequently runs beyond the edges of doors and walls. There's also a functional advantage to the twisted plan: the small spaces are seemingly enlarged by borrowing one from another, and views to the outside are framed somewhat differently than the external, zoning-determined massing would otherwise allow.

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**Interlaken House**
George Suyama, architect
1427 Interlaken Avenue East, Seattle

As with the Mt. Baker House, George Suyama's 3,200-sq. ft. Interlaken Park House is set within a backdrop of trees and is approached from below. The view and access from the steep drive would give any building an imposing quality, and in fact, they affected the design of the entry sequence of the house. Although the front facade is not symmetrical, it reads as a pure form. The house was built partially over the existing foundations of an earlier dwelling. Its entry is through a central, rectangular atrium with biaxial stairs leading to the living and sleeping rooms on the second and third floors. Interior spaces are organized around the light-filled spatial void of the atrium.

George Suyama describes the design of this house as deriving from the specific site which is "unusual for Seattle, urban yet rural...very special...a place that recalls the villas of Italy, or Lake Como." The order of the plan evolved in response to an undefined residential program, the owner's interest in art deco furniture, and from Suyama's desire to depart from the kind of insubstantial Post-modern design that he felt was beginning to be practiced in Seattle. He also references the work to that of Adolf Loos and to the French interior designer Jacques-Emile Ruhlmann. This influence is apparent with interior details where wood, metal, and painted surfaces are combined. On the exterior, vertical groups of windows, painted stucco, an inscribed keystone over the entry, and the wide chimney and fascia reinforce the overall sense of solidity, tradition, and containment.

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...continued on page twelve.

The Philadelphia String Quartet at Meany Hall. Call June 27, 479-489.

An exhibit of students' works from the Rome Studio Program, through 2/21 at Architecture Hall Bldg., 205.

The Portland AIA and the Oregon Schools of Design present a lecture by ISDM design partner Jared Carlin at ISDM's recent workshop, 8 pm, PSD.

Arms of the Alien. The Alien peoples of Ghana are known for their woodsculpture, neck rings, and stilts, tusk-like anklets, and shining metal beads. Each object indicates rank and status, and relates to the important women's communication. SAN Pavilion 2/14-3/1.

A walk through major slides of Waterfront history, 10 am to noon, in the market. Meet in the lobby of the Terminus Building.


The Vigo Chi Choir by the Pantages Theatre, in Tacoma. Call 272-0817.

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Facade for application to "Washington State's Arts Foundation Fellows Program."

Public Citizen of the Year Awards. Call 625-4765.

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At Traver/Sutton Gallery through 3/2.


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According to the American Institute for Design Detailling, of Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, this is National Drafting Week. "In honoring members of the design and drafting community..."
TIMELINE: SEATTLE HOUSING

This is a graphic illustration of an architectural timeline, showing examples of Seattle residential architecture and corresponding cultural, architectural, and political events of a given time period. Although there were many architectural styles in and around Seattle during the time periods outlined, we have chosen only one for each period. Each example is a representation of the changes that occurred in residential design during that period.

A look at Seattle housing would not be complete without a look at multi-family dwellings. Two examples have been given to show the differences that have occurred over the years. Fifty years and only a few miles apart, both buildings use the courtyard as the generating force of their designs. The older example, one of Fred Anhalt's apartment buildings from the late 1920s, is an L-shaped building from which each unit looks into the courtyard. The more recent example, the Waterfront Place Building by The Bumgardner Architects, from the early 1980s, has a central courtyard with units overlooking it from all sides. Both schemes depend on the courtyard to give each unit a sequence of light and air, and to create visual connection to the other units. Although half a century lies between them, both illustrate the same values and ideas of housing, even though technology and economic forces have helped to give them different appearances.

Frank Lawhead received a Bachelor of Architecture degree from Washington State University in June, 1982.
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1930
Developer Row Houses 1930s to 1940s
Architect: Thomas, Grainer and Thomas

1931
Empire State Building, Shreve, Lamb and Harmon, New York City, completed; Rockefeller Center, New York City, completed, 1931-37
Hitler gains power in Germany, 1933
Franklin D. Roosevelt proclaims “New Deal,” 1933
“Mutiny on the Bounty,” starring Clark Gable, 1935
Falling Water, Frank Lloyd Wright, Bear Run, Pennsylvania, 1936-37
“Guernica,” Picasso, 1937

1935
“One Row Over The Cuckoo’s Nest,” 1975
Mao Tse-Tung dies, 1976
“Annie Hall,” Woody Allen, 1977
“Ordinary People,” 1980
The movie “Gandhi,” 1982
Vietnam Veterans Memorial, 1982
Wacker Drive Building, Kohn, Pederson, and Fox, Chicago, 1983

1940
Martin Residence, 1949
Architect: Fred Bassetti

1941
Japan bombs Pearl Harbor, US enters WWII, 1941
“Casablanca,” starring Bergman & Bogart, 1943
The Glass Menagerie, Tennessee Williams, 1945
Baker House, MIT, Alvar Aalto, 1946-48

1943
“Casablanca,” starring Bergman & Bogart, 1943
Lakeshore Drive Apartments, Mies Van der Rohe, Chicago, 1950

1945
The Glass Menagerie, Tennessee Williams, 1945
Baker House, MIT, Alvar Aalto, 1946-48

1946-48
Baker House, MIT, Alvar Aalto, 1946-48

1946
“Annie Hall,” Woody Allen, 1977
“Ordinary People,” 1980
The movie “Gandhi,” 1982
Vietnam Veterans Memorial, 1982
Wacker Drive Building, Kohn, Pederson, and Fox, Chicago, 1983

1950
Blair Kirk House, 1950
Architect: Paul Kirk

1951
Unité d’Habitation, Le Corbusier, Marseilles, 1946
Israel achieves nationhood, 1948
Truman re-elected, 1948
Lakeshore Drive Apartments, Mies Van der Rohe, Chicago, 1950

1955
Strandberg Residence, 1955
Architect: Mithun and Nesland Architects

1959
Pomander Public Services Building, Michael Graves, 1993
High Museum of Art, Atlanta, 1984
Wacker Drive Building, Kohn, Pederson, and Fox, Chicago, 1983

1975
Unit Plan 16th Avenue E. & Republican Street

1980
Lindstrom Residence, 1979
Architect: Morgan Lindstrom

1982
The movie “Gandhi,” 1982
Vietnam Veterans Memorial, 1982
Pomander Public Services Building, Michael Graves, 1993
High Museum of Art, Atlanta, 1984
Wacker Drive Building, Kohn, Pederson, and Fox, Chicago, 1983

1985
Benoliel Residence, 1980
Architect: Canatsey Weinstein Architects

1975
Williams Residence, 1978
Architect: Gerald Williams

1980
MacKee Residence, 1979
Architect: Roger Newell

1984
High Museum, Atlanta, 1984

1986
“Annie Hall,” Woody Allen, 1977
“Ordinary People,” 1980
The movie “Gandhi,” 1982
Vietnam Veterans Memorial, 1982
Wacker Drive Building, Kohn, Pederson, and Fox, Chicago, 1983

1990
Strandberg Residence, 1955
Architect: Mithun and Nesland Architects

1999
Benoliel Residence, 1980
Architect: Canatsey Weinstein Architects
CONVERSATION: DOWNTOWN HOUSING

In early December, ARCADE brought downtown housing professionals together to discuss housing in Seattle. In the forum that follows, two architects, two landscape architects, and one developer consider housing in downtown and greater Seattle, its successes and failures, the frustrations and possible inhibiting factors of zoning codes, and the realities of economic issues. The discussion was optimistic in tone and looked toward a greater future that awaits the city.

Tom Berger, a landscape architect and principal of Tom Berger Associates, P.S., has worked on many projects over the years with Al Bumgardner and Gordon Walker. Al Bumgardner, an architect, and principal of Off/on/Walker Architects, P.S., is a well-known developer and is one of the five prominent professionals that you'll be hearing from in this forum. Bruce Lorig is a landscape architect and principal of Robert Shinbo Associates who has done the solar site planning in many large housing developments. Gordon Walker, an architect and principal of Off/on/Walker Architects, P.S., is a well-known developer and is one of the five prominent professionals that you'll be hearing from in this forum.

Bruce Lorig: There isn't a representative downtown housing developer; there simply isn't. Every entity that's been a downtown housing opener for a while, albeit literally. People have done one project, some two or maybe three, depending on the way you look at it. And they haven't done the same thing at the same time, amateurs at the same time. Nobody has done the same thing twice.

Tom Berger: That's right. And they go into a market that's safe — that's already determined by a number of people — and they go in and they build it and they absolutely exploit every last inch of it, using the argument that we can build it better if we got a strong curb appeal when people come up? The whole atmosphere is addressed just like a stage set is approached that way. In the Seattle area, that attitude of market ing has not been a prevalent one. Nor has there been a big company that's come into the Northwest that looked at the Corner Street site and said, "We're going to build there," where the amateur has developed a thing, saying, "Here is my area, and I'm going to get it." That market, which you mentioned, is so specialized.

When you take the marketing capabilities of California firms, the financing capability, the buying capability, all of the other aspects that they have, they could do all sorts of things if they wanted to. Obviously, they don't want to — and for a reason. That reason is that the market is probably still too tentative. I don't know where all those people are in California who are buying these houses and selling all over. I get it. That market, which you mentioned, is so specialized.

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Bruce Lorig: It is, but when you start relating it to the total cost of project — I mean, it's frustrating, it's tough, it's awful, but it doesn't add that much to the cost, percentage-wise. People can't tell the difference in price within five percent anyway. When Albuilt developed his plans he started with the (design) always generating the cost, and then it was developed from that.

Bumgardner: Yes, and he also developed his own site and made his own iron works. He was self-contained, and he had an emphasis, which was that little courtyard.

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DOWNTOWN HOUSING FOR FAMILIES

Berger: I wouldn't say that families are screaming to get downtown housing.

Bumgardner: Well, Market Place North has work with those people who have had families.

Lorig: And yet, there are only two families with children in Market Place North.

We did an analysis of how many children there were in other highrise downtown buildings, and we found out that we thought there would be four in Market Place North; four children.

Walker: There's another very obvious reason why there's not a lot of people down there. You have all sorts of other alternatives. You don't need to live down there. You can go buy a house for less money, a half-mile from downtown and be on iron works for the price. A front yard, a back yard, schools nearby, and you can do all those things important to families.

Lorig: Housing for families is not there now, but it should be. You have to understand that downtown housing is going to be, at best, twice as expensive as housing on Capitol Hill. So you've already excluded an awful lot of people who are frightened, for a good reason, that they haven't got the money.

Walker: I don't know this, but I would just say that downtown housing may well send their kids to private schools, because there is nothing else reasonably close.

Berger: You are absolutely right.

Walker: What it really comes down to is you appreciate the unique character and the discretionary income than most young professionals have in the child-bearing years. People who have the income to live downtown are either single and don't have any (children), or couples who don't have any. As soon as there are kids, things are expensive. How can you live downtown?

Walker: It's all back to kind of a basic learning curve I think we're in. I was reading a book on Olmsted, I was curious about how he got involved in Seattle. The interesting thing was that in 1903 Seattle was a park — virgin wonderful forest. Who could conceive the need to build a park system? A few people did, and the people started something that only eighty years later are we beginning to see the value of.

Now you can walk to a park. Right now we're dealing with a power to make something civil. I'll be another fifteen years before it becomes nice like Vancouver.

William Zimmerman: I'd like to know what all of you think about the "AIA TIMES"
Home of the Month," what impact it may have on the housing we're producing talking more single-family than anything else.

Bumgardner: I think it's degenerated really badly. Twenty years ago, it and Sunset magazine were two things that helped my practice flourish. I purposely selected houses that were controversial rather than safe things. The paper did a good job of presenting them. But the last five years or whatever, most of them don't make any kind of statement, or anything that would provoke me to go look at them. It was a very valuable thing in those days, but I don't think it amounts to anything now. People were shocked, but I think the whole idea was provocative. It made people think. People who were considering building were impressed.

Berger: At one time the paper had an interest; they were excited. Now someone calls up and says, "Yeah, I need to have something [to write about]."

Bumgardner: Also, they keep changing who writes the articles.

Berger: That's what I meant. Someone who had a keen interest and knowledge of architecture and said that was something that was going to get a lot of interest... Now it's a haphazard kind of a thing.

Bumgardner: The whole real estate section in the Times has gone way down hill. Polly Lane, one of the best in the country, was president of real estate editors. She doesn't even have that title anymore. She's now a business editor, and it's all lumped in with the economy section.

Berger: They don't actually seek out good projects. Most of those things, I think, come in. They call in and say they have a house they would like to consider. The people that are there are not going out looking for things. There's still good technology and continuity to find out what's being done and what kind of things get good reactions.

Bumgardner: In his heyday, Russell Young was an advertising manager, and his wife wrote the articles and was also a scout for a number of national magazines. She'd get paid for finds and in turn got paid for another article; there was a lot more vested interest.

"You have architects who are having to become attorneys in order to design."

Walker: I don't think your average crowd looks at the Times' open houses.

Bumgardner: There was also a time when the single-family house was a major part of what was going on, and that's not so now. It's much more compact houses, apartments, and condominiums.

HOUSING THE POOR DOWNTOWN

Shinbo: It's a real dilemma, the whole issue of employment downtown... Let's face it, commercial office space makes more money than residential; that generates the need for housing. If you're going to encourage commercial development downtown, we ought to provide housing so they're not commuting.

Lorig: But is this city encouraging us to build dense housing?

Walker: You can't formulate how to get a good mix in the types of people in housing. The plus side is building enough stuff that is inexpensive that will be affordable.

Lorig: But is this city encouraging us to build dense housing?

Walker: People buy what they can afford and then they adjust their lifestyle to suit it.

The Market has turned into a young professional neighborhood, and I kind of miss that old mixed quality.

Berger: What is good design is what is responsive to people, and it's not necessarily what we perceive to be good design. Good design is something that's economical, that addresses people's needs, that puts them in the place they want to be. Some of those people like the suburbs of Bellevue the best, where they don't have to talk to their neighbor.

Lorig: The reality of what people do is very much determined by what they can afford. That's very much the problem with downtown housing. It's not inexpensive.
West Seattle House
Mark Millett, architect
7159 Beach Drive SW, West Seattle (north of Lincoln Park)

Complete: Unfinished
Contemplative: Provocative
Simple: Complex
Object: Process
Solid: Fragmented

Despite their differences these four houses represent a movement away from earlier traditions. They diverge from Modernism and from Post-modernism which emphasize reductive function and technical expression. And they aren't in the typical Northwest vocabulary of bungalows or Japanese-influenced designs with exposed joinery and natural materials. Nor do they have the simple geometry and blending of indoors and outdoors à la Sea Ranch. These new Northwest houses share an interest in complex interior spaces, in contrasts and in manipulating natural and artificial light and color for heightened and theatrical effects. None of the new houses has overhangs, and none uses wood in its “natural” state. Light is introduced in complex and different ways within each house. Even without complete landscaping, it appears that the new houses have a separate, less romantic relationship to nature. They are set more onto their sites, not as natural extensions, but more as interacting objects. The use of clearly refined, man-made materials — stucco, metal, plywood, aluminum — and artificial colors plays up this distinction. An increased sense of enclosure within the houses may be due to energy conservation and codes. It also reflects a contemporary attitude that accepts a separation between man and nature, and is interested in a direct interplay rather than blinding of the two. The focus on interior space also suggests an increased urban attention to personal, family, social, and personal needs and activities. These preoccupations are not new ones, but they seem to be becoming more important in domestic architecture of the Northwest as our environment becomes denser and our stimulus more urban.

The striking difference in the design of these four houses represents increased pluralism in Northwest design. Influences come from specific owners and the qualities of their building sites, but also from the pluralism in Northwest design. Influences come from specific owners and the qualities of their building sites, but also from the pluralism in Northwest design. Influences come from specific owners and the qualities of their building sites, but also from the pluralism in Northwest design. Influences come from specific owners and the qualities of their building sites, but also from the pluralism in Northwest design. Influences come from specific owners and the qualities of their building sites, but also from the pluralism in Northwest design. Influences come from specific owners and the qualities of their building sites, but also from the pluralism in Northwest design.