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MODERN LIVING ON ELLIOTT BAY

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INSPIRED BY THIS RARE VIEW OF SEATTLE'S SKYLINE, ARCHITECT LANE WILLIAMS AND CONTRACTOR/HOMEOWNER TROY ADAMS DESIGNED AND BUILT A MODERN WEST SEATTLE HOME AS STUNNING AS ITS REMARKABLE VIEW. WHITE SPACE DESIGN GROUP PRODUCED THE ALL-IMPORTANT VISUAL FLOW WITH ITS CHOICES OF INTERIOR FIXTURES, FINISHES, AND FURNISHINGS, WHILE SPRING GREENWORKS' LUSH LANDSCAPE DESIGN COMPLETED THE WHOLE.





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IT WASN'T THE EXISTING 1902 HOME OR ITS HISTORY OF BEING THE LAST RESIDENTIAL POLLING STATION in Seattle that tempted Troy and Jen Adams to sell the traditional Kirkland home Troy built to build an ultra-modern one in West Seattle. It was the street itself. Palm Avenue runs along a steep cliffside that looks across Elliott Bay toward Seattle. "My wife fell in love with the street and its gorgeous view," recalls Adams, who spent a lot of time researching the best architects, interior designers, and landscape architects for the job. "I do a lot of research when I'm building," explains Adams, which is how he found Lane Williams Architects whose architectural style, longevity in the field, and ability to design a uniquely modern home appealed to him. In addition to sharing his roster of fine subcontractors, Williams adroitly designed a rooftop deck with a unique interior staircase with access to the roof. "Most people wouldn't notice the rooftop staircase," says Adams, "but those interested in architecture and building see it as a key feature."

"It is truly a breathtaking site with considerable challenges," notes Williams who met Adams at the property initially. "You enter from the street level and suddenly everything drops at a very steep rate to the backyard. We had to stabilize that with steel pilings. The greatest challenge was how to create a design that takes advantage of the rare way the land curves around from West Seattle, looking back at downtown Seattle from as many rooms in the house as possible."

The solution was to create five floor levels with the central living spaces pushed to the view side, while less essential areas like the laundry room are found on the street side. For the living room, Williams chose LaCantina multi-slide doors, known for their good quality large units. "When a house focuses on a view at the back," says Williams, "glass is not in the public view, so the part facing the public is relatively closed and inherently less welcoming." To resolve this, he modulated the front façade using glass in the garage door and created a rooftop tower that acts as a glass beacon at night.

Adams is also a sales manager for a large commercial steel distribution company in Montreal, which gave him great contacts for the Corten steel that became a defining element in the exterior and interior design. Prior to razing the existing home, Adams discovered Alex Childs of White Space Design Group of West Seattle, who assisted in its usage indoors. "Choosing hard surfaces are not a builder's strong suit as a rule," says Adams, "and Alex was great at that and illustrating it on boards that made the process of choosing hard surfaces very easy." Additionally, her ability to create visual flow from floor-to-floor impressed Troy greatly.



OPPOSITE West Elm chandelier crowns existing dining furniture overlooking Elliott Bay. THIS PAGE Corten steel burnishes entry. White art entitled "Sweep" by Dave Crawford. Black circular mirror plays off painted black Marvin Contemporary windows aluminum exterior and hefty vault-style Fleetwood entry door.

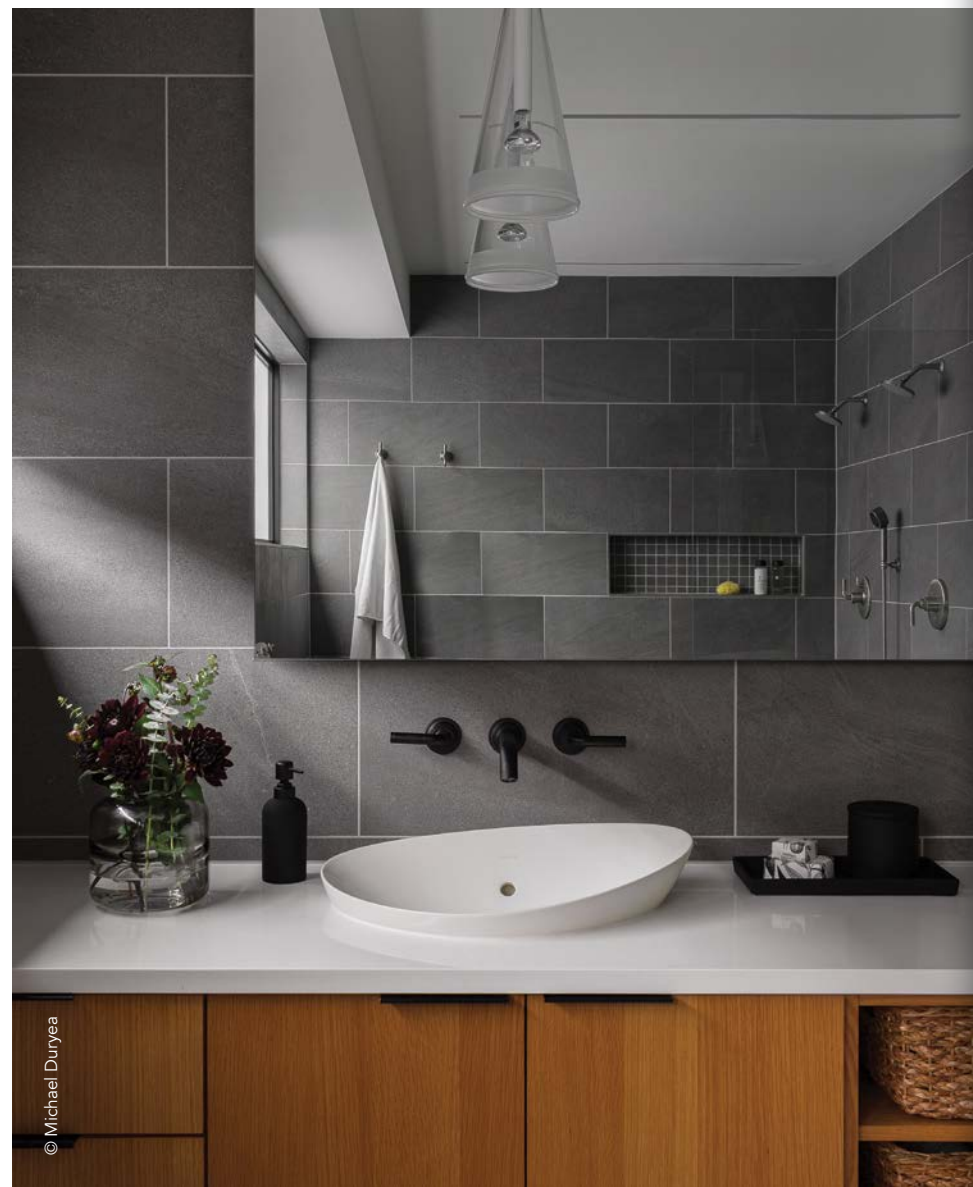
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White Space Design Group anchors darker palette as a backdrop that allows view to shine - including the MOSA fireplace tile that features three different tones in a single colorway. Restoration Hardware floor lamp right lights a pair of Pottery Barn Owen Leather Armchairs. The Adams' handblown glass plates by Czech SkLO adorn wall between the living room and Williams' den tucked at right behind a glass wall that opens onto water view.





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OPPOSITE LEFT A favorite c.1960s rattan chair Troy discovered at a Ballard consignment store. OPPOSITE RIGHT Double vanity features California Faucets and super white polished PentalQuartz countertop. THIS PAGE White Space Design Group selected the master bath wall and floor "Pietra Italia" from Arizona Tile. Rare to find black (inside and out) Maxx Soaker acrylic tub sourced through Portland's Chown Hardware trucked to Seattle. Childs recommended brushed stainless fixtures Troy found at California Faucets.



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"We considered the amount of natural light and the view," recalls Childs, "and chose warm and deeper tones to anchor the interior space, highlighting the showstopper view." As Childs began to work with the Adams', who had come from a more traditional background, she tailored her design to create a blend of the latter with a more transitional aesthetic appropriate for the modern architecture. She anchored the darker tones of the kitchen's Sorano quartz backsplash, painted Sapele upper cabinets with the espresso-stained oak lower cabinets Troy established with his cabinetmaker. Troy's adjoining glassed-in wine cellar helps transition dark to light in the dining room overlooking the view. Childs also chose the MOSA tiles for the dramatic 18-foot living room fireplace that reaches that room's cedar ceiling. The adjacent den is on a mezzanine level at the front of the house that Williams also opens to the back view via a glass wall.

Adams pre-rusted the Corten steel that wraps the garage panels, continues through the entry, and appears periodically on the staircase landings and on the wall opposite the fireplace. "We used a solution of vinegar, salt and hydrogen peroxide to accelerate the rusting process," he says, "then coated them with clear polyurethane once it reached the desired rust color." His choice of a heavy Fleetwood entry door reminded him of a bank vault door. "Its oversized interior hinges allow the door to open and close effortlessly," he says.

Adams soon learned that building a modern home required much greater attention to detail than traditional architecture. "It starts with Williams' great, detailed 3-D design," he says. "Every sub who worked on the home had to don a pair of interactive-VR goggles to see what we were after before they began work."

The final pièce de résistance, was the landscape design by Robin Parsons of Spring Greenworks of Kirkland. Adams was familiar with her work especially in reference to modern architecture and says, "She nailed it right away." She came on board when construction was already underway, but no front yard structures other than a concrete wall had been created. Working with Adams, Parsons designed the paths of



THIS PAGE Williams' use of horizontal garage glass echoes Marvin Contemporary windows' placement and is reiterated in staircase tower's glass orientation. Japanese Holly Sky Pencil pops against Corten steel garage. OPPOSITE Kitchen features painted Sapele African hardwood upper cabinets by Sky River Industries. Thin Line Sonneman light fixture task lighting. Espresso-stained lower cabinets play off Hallmark Alta Vista Malibu wooden floors from CFM. Crate & Barrel leather stools.



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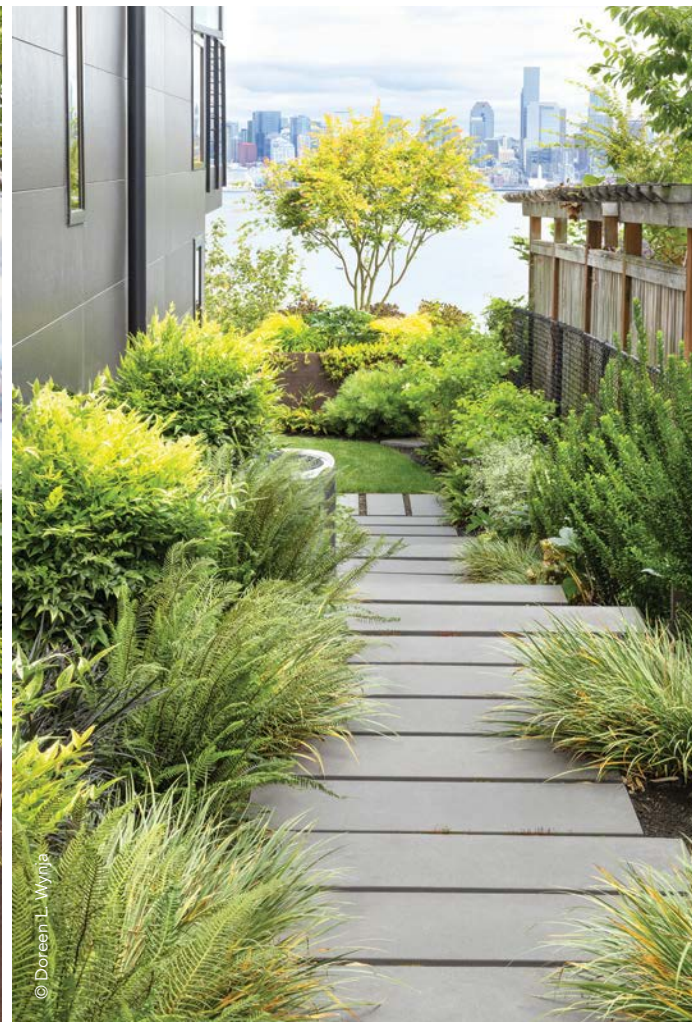


ABOVE Japanese Blood Grass reiterates Corten Steel garage. Blue Fescue balances right. Bushy Arctic Fire Dogwood in bioretention planter. OPPOSITE TOP New Zealand Flax, Blue Fescue, and Lithodora Grace Ward fill steel planter. Scotch Moss adorns pavers. OPPOSITE BOTTOM LEFT Japanese Forest Grass spills over planters, contrasting with curved glass birdbath. OPPOSITE BOTTOM RIGHT Castohn Olympic pavers with Mexican pebbles for contrast. Lemon Lime Nandina left. Acorus gramineus grasses right.

Olympic pavers, raised beds, bioretention planters, and the entry into the home, including collaborating on a water feature emanating from the Corten steel garage wall. After meeting with Troy to get his vision, she looked at the big picture: architectural style, the client's desires, and vernacular of the local area. "I made recommendations for a natural plantscape to integrate the home with the unique surrounding harbor and city scape." Robin also considered City of Seattle ECA restrictions. Choosing Corten steel planters overlooking the backyard view aptly echoed Williams' architectural finishes. The landscape plan was skillfully installed by Verde Design Studio, including collaboration on the water feature.

Williams says his design focuses on livability. "What that means to me," he says, "is a high level of comfort that requires balancing the desire for view with the need to feel sheltered: balanced refuge."

In fact, Troy recalls experiencing that feeling the first evening they moved into the home. "Seeing the joy on my wife's face while we looked out on Elliott Bay on a beautiful October evening was so nice," he says. "Just to sit down, take a deep breath after 17 months of building and really enjoy it."



PROJECT SOURCES

ARCHITECT
Lane Williams Architects
lanewilliams.com

INTERIOR DESIGN
White Space Design Group
wsdesigngroup.com

LANDSCAPE DESIGN
Spring Greenworks
springgreenworks.com

SELECT TILE
Arizona Tile
arizonatile.com