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THE LAYOUT OF THIS CONTEMPORARY BEAUTY DEFINES THREE SPACES IN SIMPLE GEOMETRIC FORMS: THE RECTANGULAR MAIN-FLOOR PUBLIC AREA, THE RECTANGULAR PRIVATE UPPER FLOOR AND THE SQUARE GUEST SUITE, SHOWN HERE, THAT'S DISTANCED FROM THE OTHERS. EACH SPACE VISUALLY CONNECTS TO A SERENE COURTYARD, DESIGNED BY LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT LINDA ATTAWAY, CHECKERBOARDED WITH PAVERS, GROUNDCOVER AND QUIET WATER FEATURES.

A Kirkland contemporary thinks outside the box

GEOMETRY SQUARED

WRITTEN BY KATHRYN RENNER PHOTOGRAPHS BY LARA SWIMMER





"It's really two rectangles and a square," says architect Jill Lewis, principal of the Queen Anne-based firm Coop 15, reducing a high-drama Kirkland home down to basic geometry. But as you sit in the living room filled with light and sky and overlooking Lake Washington from this East of Market neighborhood, nothing here feels basic.

Even the casual passerby can sense this house has something Lewis calls "the Big Idea." It's a house that is architecturally serene, clean and organized. And that's exactly what the two physician homeowners prescribed: Build them a sleek, modern home. Hold the furniture, because they wanted almost everything built in. Hold the accessories, because they prefer surfaces clear and uncluttered. Hold the color, because they think clouds and water and the magical landscape architecture of Linda Attaway should be the artistic elements. Oh, and make the design livable for their two preschool-age children and Danger, the brown Lab that is mild as a lamb (just watch out for the torpedo tail wag).

To fill this prescription, Lewis did go basic in the sense that she limited the number of materials and repeated them throughout all three levels of the 3,000-square-foot home. But she added twists that lift this home to its lofty design. The main glassed-in floor (rectangle number one) is rotated slightly, so the top bedroom level (rectangle number two) appears as if it floats asymmetrically. That juxtaposition makes two geometric shapes look delightfully daring.

The "square" she refers to is the guest suite, which juts from the main floor in ideal isolation. Its flat roof, visible only as you descend the home's stairway, is laden with a succulent garden designed by Patrick Carey of hadj Design. He blanketed the roof with alpine wild flowers and sedums. "They look like plants out of a Dr. Seuss story," quips the wife.



ABOVE: THE SECOND FLOOR OVERHANGS LIKE A TABLETOP. **OPPOSITE:** BECAUSE THE OWNERS PREFER BUILT-INS TO FURNISHINGS, LIVING-ROOM PANELS CONCEAL A MAZE OF CABINETS AND DRAWERS. EVEN WITH TWO SMALL CHILDREN ABOUT, ROOMS RETAIN THEIR SOPHISTICATION. "THIS IS HOW MINIMALISM COEXIST WITH REALITY," SAYS ARCHITECT JILL LEWIS.



"ONE BIG SPACE IN A TRANSPARENT BOX" IS HOW JILL LEWIS DESCRIBES THE KITCHEN (TOP). CUSTOM CABINETRY SPECIFICS A NICHE FOR EVERYTHING DOWN TO THE COFFEE MAKER, WHICH HAS ITS OWN SLIDE-OUT SHELF. NOTHING CLUTTERS THE COUNTER AND AMBIENCE. EVEN THE BUSY DINING ROOM (ABOVE LEFT), WITH ITS WASH-AND-WEAR CHECKED CARPET, RETAINS A SLEEK PANACHE. HEADING UPSTAIRS, OPEN-TREAD WALNUT STEPS SEEM LIGHT AS AIR. AND THE ROBIN'S-EGG BLUE WALL THAT INTERSECTS ALL THREE LEVELS CONCEALS DUCTWORK AND MORE STORAGE. *OPPOSITE*: THE MASTER-BEDROOM RETREAT SOOTHES WITH A CERAMIC-ROCK FIREPLACE AND HANS J. WEGNER CHAIRS.



That rooftop garden is just one of several whimsical touches that flirt with the home's industrial spine. The house is a backdrop for the couple's humor, says Lewis, who also orchestrated the interior design. The owners galvanize minimal rooms with the unexpected: bold pop-culture graphics on otherwise spare walls, a shocking-orange ceiling in the white guest room and a rotating fan in the master bedroom that looks to be right out of *Star Trek*.

More subtly, but just as surprising, is the robin's-egg-blue cabinetry that Lewis banks next to cabinets in sable black stain and the kitchen's stainless steel. "It's fairly bold, but you don't get tired of it," she says.

The blue cabinets—installed on monoliths of wall in an otherwise transparent, open floor plan—reveal the precise, Rubik's Cube-type decisions behind the design. Open the cabinet doors, and there's the right-sized compartment for absolutely everything—a coat closet on the entry-door side and cubicles for the TV, kids' books and toys on the living-room side. But close the doors, and near monastic peace returns.

Similarly, the blue wall in the kitchen hides a maze of ductwork and storage so nothing impedes the clarity of space and view. Even recessed lights and speakers are carved into the ceiling and effaced in

calculable, complementary geometric lines.

Despite the scrutiny of detail, which turned out to be a year-long process that both Lewis and her clients completely enjoyed, this is no look-don't-touch home. There are nods to putting the "fun" in function, from the couple's cookbook collection and favorite Tex-Mex recipes to rug tiles in the dining area that can be snapped up and cleaned pronto, to the backyard vegetable garden for the children and posts draped with wire that will yield a mini-grape harvest. This home, with its two rectangles and a square, beautifully brings family life full circle. ■

Design Details:

ARCHITECT & INTERIOR DESIGNER
Jill Lewis, Coop 15, (206) 284-8355

CONTRACTOR
Joseph McKinstry Construction Company, (206) 723-4651

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER
Lori Brown, Evergreen Design Company, (360) 387-8480

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT
Linda Attaway Landscape Architecture, (206) 838-4110

ROOFTOP GARDEN
Patrick Carey, hadj Design, (425) 482-9763