

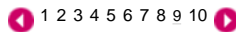
Past Perfected

A family of four settles into a remodeled midcentury-modern house on Mercer Island. The project, designed by Lane Williams of Coop 15, is part of the Tour of Architects, March 20.

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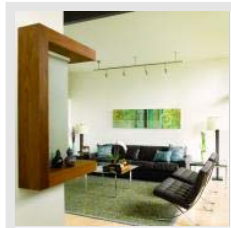
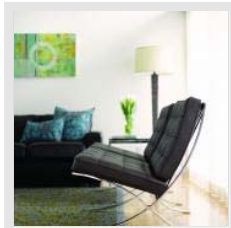
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During their new-home hunt, Bill Bunker and Joanne Kennedy toured a midcentury-modern residence on Mercer Island. They sensed immediately that it was the one. "We made an offer on this home the day that it came on the market," Joanne says. Having lived in several traditional-style residences around the Seattle area, the couple knew exactly what they wanted. "We [were looking for] a dated 1950s or 1960s ranch that needed some love," she explains.

Though she was trained as an architect, Joanne found that between raising two young daughters and working at her job in marketing, she had little time to draw plans for the remodel. After several years of putting ideas on the back burner, the couple was ready to pass the work on to another expert. Enter Coop 15's Lane Williams, a Seattle architect who had previously designed a project for the couple's Mercer Island neighbor.

Williams found working with Joanne a collaborative process, rather than a struggle for the pencil. "Working with another architect on the project really made our work easier, because we were dealing with her ability to make decisions and understand the thinking behind the design," he says. "Joanne was always very open to our ideas and contributed as we went along."

Joanne agrees, as her intention was not to interfere. "The best architecture comes when an architect is able to see their vision through," she says. Bill was equally active as a participant, Williams says, "which is something we always hope for when we are working with couples."



The home, originally designed by Northwest architect Leo L. Fischer, was ready for updates to make it more livable and family friendly. The main living areas of the house were cramped and isolated from one another, and the finishes and fixtures were outdated. Supported by Coop 15 project manager Trevor Dykstra and collaborating with contractor Joe McKinstry of the Joseph McKinstry Construction Company, Williams worked to maintain the character of the existing structure while creating a more modern and comfortable home.

"There's a fine line when you are trying to respect the best qualities of the original architecture," Williams says. "There were some modifications made, but it's still in the style of the original, a style that is very deeply rooted in the midcentury work being done in the Pacific Northwest at that time."

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Joanne and Bill's goals for the remodel were similar: "We wanted to retain the spirit of the '60s house but wanted to really refresh it and make it more comfortable," Joanne says.

Several structural elements were changed. Coop 15's design altered the gabled roofline of the garage to make the entry more welcoming and enclosed an existing courtyard between the garage and the house to create a family room. Williams and his team also removed the interior walls that separated the main-floor living areas to create a better flow between rooms. The main-floor bedrooms were made more private by adding a pocket door in the hall, and the bathrooms were reconfigured to optimize the existing space.



Additionally, the original wall of windows along the back of the house was fitted with new energy-efficient windows and two large sliding doors that access the dining and living rooms. This combination allows an abundance of natural light to shine in the living areas, while bringing the outside in during the summer months. "[The sliding doors] open up the backyard to us," Joanne says. "It's so nice to hear the sounds from outside." An existing narrow deck that runs along the living and dining rooms was modified to add steps down to a new stone-paved terrace for outdoor entertaining. "It makes access to the backyard more gracious," Williams says.

The existing kitchen was cramped and isolated from the rest of the house—"a classic one-person 1960s kitchen," Joanne says. The homeowners longed for an open kitchen where they could still feel connected to family and guests. The U-shaped room now provides plenty of space for two cooks to work simultaneously, as well as ample storage in the walnut cabinetry. Just off the kitchen is a new family/project room where Allison, 10, and Sarah, 7, can do homework and remain close to the heart of the home.



Keeping with the couple's original intentions, the new layout encourages unity and conversation, rather than isolating family members from one another. Each living area flows into the next with ease. "We love having the everyday spaces. The kids love it, and they have a place where they can just be," Joanne says. "We feel like we're all here together."

Resources:

Architect: Lane Williams, AIA, [Coop 15](#), 2214 Queen Anne Ave. N., (206) 284-8355.

Project Manager: Trevor Dykstra, [Coop 15](#).

General Contractor: Joseph McKinstry, [Joseph McKinstry Construction Company](#), 3304 Beacon Ave. S., (206) 723-4651.

Landscape Design: [Octavia Chambliss](#), (206) 295-2979.

Cabinetry: [Cornerstone Fine Woodworking](#), 5809 238th St. S.E., Ste. 4, Woodinville, (425) 483-7083.

Tour of Architects

This [Coop 15](#)-designed project is part of the 2011 Tour of Architects, sponsored by *Seattle Homes & Lifestyles*. The two-day tour features projects on Bainbridge Island (March 19) and in the greater Seattle area (March 20).

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