

Sustainable design



The Whidbey Island home has two wings extending from a tower, a sort of crow's nest where the homeowners can relax and enjoy the views.

Everett architect strives for connection with surroundings

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After years of designing buildings and homes for others, architect Robert Reed finally had the opportunity to design and build his own home.

But even that project required blending his vision with another: his wife. The home in Everett's View Ridge neighborhood melds his contemporary tastes with wife Rhonda's traditional ideas. The outside incorporates elements such as a steep pitched roof and dormers, while the interior is clean-lined and airy, with tall ceilings, rooms flooded with natural light and sparse trim.

And there were their children to think about too. The house incorporates some interesting features for their daughters, a 12-year-old and 7-year-old twins, including a wing with two tiny bedrooms and an ample

About this series: This is an installment in a new Home & Garden series on local architects, featured on the last Thursday of every month for the next year. To suggest a Snohomish or Island county architect, contact reporter Debra Smith at 425-339-3197 or write dsmith@heraldnet.com.

playroom that can be shut off so adult places stay tidy and kids can be kids.

Fine Homebuilding Magazine featured the Reeds' home on the cover, which led to an appearance on Home and Garden Television.

Reed is hesitant to assign his work to a certain category or style — he considers what he does a collaboration with the client and the builder. But his own home reflects some of his beliefs about design: efficient use of space, a connection between indoors and out, and a home that seamlessly fits its site.

Sustainability is also important to

Reed. Building and living in a home eats up lots of energy, and Reed thinks builders can do much to cut down on waste in the products and techniques they use.

"I consider myself an environmentalist," he said. "Growing up in the Northwest, we have an appreciation for natural beauty. Any project starts with respecting the environment and the site."

He said he sees too many home sites cleared without any consideration for the natural features. He thinks about the best way for a home to be situated, including capturing the views and the light. At a recent Whidbey Island project, Reed carefully selected a spot on a wooded five acres to take in a stunning meadow view.

That 2,200-square-foot home, featured in the photos, includes two wings extending from a tower with a ship's ladder up to the top. The homeowners wanted a spot like a crow's nest where they could sip wine and take in the view.

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Robert Reed

Firm: Robert Reed Architect, 4309 Olympic Blvd., Everett; 425-349-7016; www.reedarchitect.com. His one-man firm is focused on custom residential homes, vacation homes and remodels. He can help with site analysis and selection, design, preparation of construction documents, selection of materials and finishes, and choosing a contractor.

Education: Earned a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in architecture from the University of Washington. He worked for several east-side King County firms before starting his own firm.

Age: 43

Favorite architect: Reed admires the work of Richard Meier, a contemporary New York architect known for his clean, white, spatially rich designs. Meier once said his "fundamental concerns are space, form, light and how to make them." In the past few decades he has become known as the preeminent architect of museums, including the Getty Complex in Los Angeles.



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