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Photo: VHF

Erickson Residence and Garden

Original Building 1924, House & Garden created 1957-58, Renovated 1960 & 1970s

Arthur Erickson
Vancouver Heritage Register: A

*"Arthur Erickson has been acknowledged as Canada's greatest architect...[his] House and Garden was his inspiration, his haven, and one of his most delicate design accomplishments."**

Born in 1924 in Vancouver, Arthur Erickson became internationally renowned. His sensitivity to the site, careful handling of light and incorporation of landscape elements, often involving water, were consistent elements throughout his award-winning career.

Erickson's private home and garden stand in stark contrast to his large commissions, including Danto Residence (stop #3). Purchased in 1957, his home served as a place of experimentation, shown in the adaptive reuse of two garages, done without city inspectors, behind fences and foliage. His home was also his refuge with substantial use of glass embracing a large, serene garden, a place of tranquility. Erickson lived in this modest 650 square foot home until just before his death in 2009.

The significant landscape element found in Erickson's work is seen in the thoughtful consideration of the garden. Comprising the larger amount of the site, it is seen as one of the first and best examples of a Modern residential garden, intrinsic to its heritage value. Surrounding a large pond, the gardens shift from formally designed near the home to unstructured as you near the edge of the property.

In 1960 the second renovation connected the original structure with a newer garage. A 1970's renovation saw updated finishes, a new greenhouse and carpet over fir floors. Italian suede and Thai silk covered the walls and new teak kitchen cabinets were installed along with new bathroom fixtures. The living room of this time was photographed by influential photographer, Selwyn Pullan.

This home is currently owned and managed by the Arthur Erickson Foundation who are working towards the long-term conservation of the site.

*From Erickson House Conservation Plan, Donald Luxton & Associates, Sept 2014.

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Built 1951

First Owner: A.E. Wood

After thirty years in one family, this house was purchased by the current owners in 2003. With an eye for the architectural bones, they stripped out 1970s finishes to reveal its potential. They opened the kitchen to the living space and retained the dining area extension created by the previous owners.

No architect has been identified with the design of the home. Yet between the original builder and the new owners' vision, it exhibits the ideas and aesthetic of post-war design. The split-level form takes advantage of its sloping lot, presenting a modest façade to the street but open to the west at the rear, accentuated by a sloping ceiling.

A central Modernist element of the home is the imposing stonework pier fireplace that is both an interior and exterior feature. It creates a dramatic entry to the home and is a dominant element of the living room. A sealed high-performance wood burning unit has been installed to continue enjoyment of this feature.

In modernizing the home, the new owners kept the structure intact including the location and pattern of windows. Single glazing has been replaced on the street façade for sound proofing and several windows were reinstated. The large patio-side opening originally had five panels but had previously been replaced with sliding doors. The original divisions were identified and reinstated with the configuration of the French doors.

The connected garage and carport remind us of the new approach to home design of this era, embracing the convenience of the car, although here still keeping it away from the formal entry to the home. Modernist block forms with exposed beams and architectural panelling integrate the design with the house.

2



Zaklan Residence

Built 1969/70

Peter Wardle, Designer

The current owner, an architect, discovered this modest home when it went on the market in 2011, and was intrigued by the design which works with the natural landscape and a very narrow lot. Designed by Peter Wardle in 1969, the house was considered an innovative solution to affordability at that time. The house is only 12' 3" feet wide and 65' long, with a central courtyard carved out of the massing. Compact yet with open-plan living spaces, it exhibits a West Coast Modern appreciation of natural materials and connection to the outdoors.

The main floor plan contains the kitchen, double-height dining area, master bedroom and a home office. The main floor spaces centre around a small "jewel box" courtyard, separating the public areas from the master bedroom. The living room is located in a loft space on the upper level overlooking the dining room below and with views to the north shore mountains. The double-height volume faces south, draws light deep into the space and spatially connects the two living levels.

The construction is timber-frame clad with rough sawn cedar siding. The simple interior palette features natural wood materials including hardwood floors, tongue and groove cedar ceilings, rough sawn and finished cedar panelling, exposed wood beams, and an open wood stair. This is contrasted with simple white plaster walls. The owners have been making ongoing energy efficiency improvements and may decide to upgrade the single-glazed windows. Beyond that, few renovations have been required aside from improvements to what was originally an unfinished basement - a space now able to function as a separate suite, completed by the previous owner.

Original plans indicate the front stairs were designed as a straight run to the second floor. The owners intend to honour that plan, allowing space to create a garden area.

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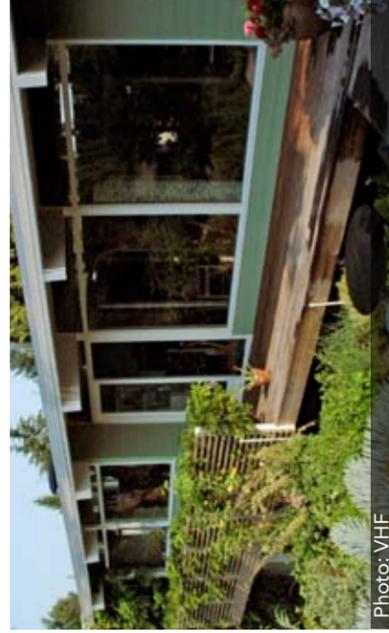


Photo: VHF

Built 1952

First Owner & Permit Holder: Ernest W. Wellwood, Engineer

This modest home with mid-century roots has evolved closer to Modern principles over time. Purchasing in 1988, the current owners saw potential in a simple house. Wall-to-wall shag carpeting and heavy drapes came out the day they took possession, and the main floor was gutted in 1990.

With their vision and determination, a crisply modernist aesthetic has been revealed over multiple renovations. Kitchen and living room walls were removed early and an interior glass wall installed for projected artwork. Single-glazed windows were replaced and some window openings adjusted or added. One of the owners enjoyed the mentorship over many years of Robert Ledingham, whose influence lingers throughout the house. Most of the work was undertaken by the owners, allowing for the careful, time intensive details and finishing.

The ceilings and beams were sandblasted to remove old paint, and the fireplace stonework was cleaned. The plank ceiling was stained and painted beams marry the interior and exterior spaces. The connection between the indoors and outdoors has been amplified with undraped glazing and the expansion of functional exterior living spaces.

An unfinished basement was made into a suite, which was reclaimed later to create more space for the family. A crawl space was dug out to become a full storage room. New basement windows, French doors and light wells brightened up the basement bedrooms. This allowed the reconfiguration of the original three bedrooms on the main floor into a master suite. The bathroom remains in its original location with sprung door.

The yards were minimally landscaped in 1988 and have since been carefully planned and planted by Landscape Architect, Dean Gregory. The north-facing rear yard is a private oasis while spaces beside the house and in the secondary building are used for dining and relaxing year round. The front yard is designed to offer privacy and allow food production.

3



Danto Residence

Built 1962

Arthur Erickson

Arthur Erickson designed this Massey Medal winning home for Dr. Julius and Genevieve Danto. The house departs from the conventional, informal West Coast Regional Style of post-and-beam structuring. Rather than using natural materials, Erickson chose to use what he called "the marble of our times", concrete, as the primary construction material of the building. He believed concrete enabled both simplicity and functionality, but in this instance it also creates a textured harmony throughout the large home.

The Danto family decided to approach a young, much talked about architect to design "a little Spanish house." They discussed the use of concrete, but were surprised by the plans which involved a lot of stairs and elevations. Mrs. Danto felt the design strongly resembled Erickson's concurrent project at SFU and had to be considerably scaled back. New experimental materials and approaches were utilized, some of which succeeded, others immediately generated leaks.

The roofline rises and falls in a series of steps to follow the gently sloping site, echoed by the cedar fence, which has been carefully maintained in its original design. The low profile of the home, surrounded by Erickson-chosen bamboo, offers a hidden quality to the street and allowing for minimal window coverings.

Interior Japanese "fusuma" panels throughout the house allowed for both openness or privacy for a flexible, spacious interior. From any doorway in the house, passages offer stunning visual sightlines through glass or open portals to the outdoors. The glass corners create incredible transparency to the landscape. The wood elements are predominantly bleached mahogany. The bathrooms are still original but have aged, so this may be a last opportunity to see Erickson's design. There have been no major alterations to the original layout however the kitchen was renovated by a prior owner, and more recently the laundry/garden room was updated.

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Photo: © Michael Peirlmutter

B.C. Electric Building (The Electra)

Built 1955-57; Rehabilitation 1995

Thompson Berwick & Pratt; Rehab by Merrick Architecture Vancouver Heritage Register: A (M)

"The tower kept Modernism's promise to elevate the urban environment through the application of technology and art." - from *The New Spirit: Modern Architecture in Vancouver 1938-1963*.

When completed in 1957, the BC Electric Building was a striking example of Modern design. It remains so after its conversion to residences, at which time it became Vancouver's first heritage-designated Modernist building.

The BC Electric building was designed to fulfill company president Dal Grauer's commission for a "signature building" to serve as head office, sparing no expense and reflecting huge postwar growth enabled by the development of electrical power. Grauer, unlike many others of the time, embraced forward-thinking Modernist ideals. The tower complemented the adjacent Dal Grauer Substation, completed three years earlier, notable for its visible substation inner workings.

The Thompson Berwick & Pratt design team was led by Ned (Charles E.) Pratt, in consultation with engineer Otto Safir. Initially envisioned with stepped angular blocks at each corner of the site, the design morphed to a sheer lozenge-shaped tower. It was engineered to meet Grauer's desire that "every employee have the finest office space," well-lit and ventilated, with every desk within 15 feet of a window and view. Pratt and Safir devised a structural service core that supports cantilevered floors, the exterior clad in glass and enameled metal curtain walls.

Pratt involved artist B.C. Binning and a young Ron Thom for the decoration and detailing. Binning's adaptation of the company's chevron logo is seen in the repeating design of the vivid mosaic tile work. The colours of the mosaics are those still used in BC Hydro's logo today.