The Tour

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   (interior open)

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   (interior open)

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9. *Egan House
   1500 Lakeview Blvd.
   (interior open)

* indicates open interior

About DoCoMoMo

DOCOMOMO is an international organization with regional groups throughout the U.S., Europe and South America. The mission of our local chapter, organized as a committee of Historic Seattle, is to build appreciation and public awareness of the significance of Modernist buildings and structures in Western Washington through education, documentation, and advocacy. DOCOMOMO meets monthly to discuss topics in Modern architecture, design and preservation, and to arrange small tours of post-war era buildings. The committee is open to all members of Historic Seattle.

Presented by Historic Seattle & DoCoMoMo. WeWa
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History of the Eastlake Neighborhood

Eastlake is a long hillside community, only five blocks wide as defined by I-5, between Mercer Street at the south and the University Bridge at the north. When the Interstate Freeway was constructed in 1962, it cut the community off from north Capitol Hill.

Claimed from forests, Eastlake was first made up by small farms. The neighborhood was established in the early 1890s as a group of homes and small businesses along the street car line that linked the city’s downtown to neighborhoods along the north end of Lake Union—such as University, Latona, and Portage Bay. When the University Bridge was constructed in 1919, travel along Eastlake Avenue increased. The streetcars were replaced by buses in the early 1940s.

Like many of the city’s oldest neighborhoods, Eastlake contains a fascinating mixture of uses and building types. These include industries such as Seattle City Light’s earliest electric generating plant (presently Zymogenetics) at the south end, the Lake Union Dry Dock and Sound Propeller Company on Fairview Avenue East, both founded to serve the navy’s needs in World War I, and the site of William Boeing’s 1916 airplane facility at the foot of Roanoke Street.

The neighborhood retains many other examples of its built history with Victorian farmhouses, Craftsman bungalows, Mission Revival and Art Deco styled apartment buildings, and dense marinas with repair yards, fishing boats, canoes, kayaks, motor and sailboats. Eastlake’s houseboats were first constructed in the teens and 1920s as a floating “Hooverson”—small seasonal homes for loggers and fishermen, and was gradually transformed to house a low-income residential community of bohemians, poets, students, and activists by the 1960s. Presently it is a visually complex and permanent water world of multi-story floating residences.

Eastlake also contains one of the city’s oldest schools—the original wood-frame Seward Elementary, which was built in 1893—along with its year-2000 addition. Along the primary arterial, Eastlake Avenue, there is a collection of commercial offices, restaurants, taverns and stores.

For those who simply travel through it, this street provides many glimpses and sliver views of the water. These are complemented by street-end shoreline parks at the foot of Yale, Roanoke and Newton Streets, the small Fairview Olimsted Park, and the green hillside open space at the neighborhood’s south end which is distinguished by the classical-like columns of the freeway. Today Eastlake is a vibrant, active community treasured by its community of residents, and home and business owners.

For more information about the neighborhood, contact the community’s web site: http://eastlake.oo.net

Thank You
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“Architecture is what you do to a building when you look at it.” - Walt Whitman

Specifics
The map on the back of this brochure provides locations of properties on this tour. You may visit them in any order you choose. Look for the Historic Seattle tour signs to guide you. Please respect the interiors you visit—do not touch anything, open closed doors, or enter rooms that are closed to view.

Please note that baby strollers are not allowed inside tour buildings. Young children will be admitted only if carried by an adult. Also you may be requested to remove your shoes, weather dependent.

We hope you enjoy this tour and leave with a greater appreciation of the Modern Movement in the Eastlake neighborhood.

“Less is only more where more is no good.” - Frank Lloyd Wright

Welcome
1. Elmec Building
1920 Eastlake Avenue E.
Original Architect: Durham Anderson & Freed
Date of Construction: 1959-60

The Elmec Building is a good example of an Eastlake office building constructed in an era when it was popular for architects and engineers to build their offices in the neighborhood. The visual low-scale of the neighborhood, the availability of land, and desirable mix of uses were attractive to design professionals. This building is significant for its association with two of the most prominent engineering professionals in the region.

Located on the southeast corner of Eastlake Avenue East and East Newton Street, the two-story, 4,000 square foot building takes advantage of its steep slope by creating two separate entrances—one off each thoroughfare. The main structural system comprises exposed steel I-beams connected to create a rigid frame infilled with stacked concrete masonry units. On the southern face, the steel frame extends beyond the infill wall to create a brise soleil made up of individual louvers. The north and south elevations are glazed with an aluminum storefront system.

The original builders, mechanical engineer Richard Stern and electrical engineer Tom Sparling, came to the Pacific Northwest in the early 1940s. Sparling Associates and Stern and Towne, shared office space and the two men collaborated on several projects which led to a partnership to build the Elmec Building (named after their respective fields) to house their individual firms. Their projects ranged from residences to institutional and industrial facilities, and larger scale buildings like the Crown Plaza Hotel.

Stern and Sparling have contributed significantly to the engineering profession. In addition to their individual practices, Sparling was involved in improving codes and standards in electrical engineering, and Stern taught mechanical engineering at the University of Washington College of Architecture. Today, both men remain active in their profession.

The Elmec Building was designed by Durham Anderson and Freed, formed in the early 1950s. The firm gained most of its attention for the design of churches, for which they gained national recognition. These include the Fauntleroy Congregational Church, a City of Seattle Landmark, and Highland Covenant Church in Bellevue. Their work in the 1960s and 1970s included Fire Station No. 5 (1964), Association of General Contractors' Seattle Headquarters Building (1965), Atmospheric Sciences Building on the University of Washington campus (1970), and the master plan for the U.S. Naval Base in Bangor, Maine (1978).
Remodels have changed the structure slightly. The greatest impact occurred in 1973 with a small addition on the north side, designed by Marvin Damman, which changed the plan from its original rectangular to its current L-shape. The central skylight that originally brought light into the lower floors has been filled in and the brise soleil/louvers have been removed from the bottom floor. The top floor of the building is currently occupied by Leavengood Architects, who renovated it in 1998.
2. Pacific Architect & Builder’s currently: United Indians of All Tribes Foundation

1945 Yale Place E.
Original Architect: A.O. Bumgardner & Partners
Construction Date: 1959-60
Structural engineer: Worthington, Skilling, Helle & Jackson
Construction cost: $153,538

Originally built in 1960 for Pacific Architect and Builder magazine, this building is an interesting site and program solution expressed in a structural experimentation common to the Modern Movement.

The building is composed of three floors housing different program components: parking/building services at the lowest level, printing at the middle level and publishing office on the upper level. Dictated by need of each program for a large unobstructed floor plate and the weight of the printing equipment, the structure was necessarily concrete. Atop the concrete frame, a hyperbolic paraboloid roof - freezing the main floor of structural columns or bearing walls, covers the publishing floor. This allowed for flexible partitioning while creating an uplifting formal effect as the building rises above the steep hillside on Yale Avenue. Furthermore, by constructing the stair tower as a separate feature on the floor and emphasizing the entry with a ramp that bridges the gap between building and hillside, the sloped site is even more dramatic. Clerestory windows infilling the roof form fill the upper offices with natural light while the overhanging roof allows them to be free of blinds or curtains. The building has endured some changes over the years from different owners. A previous owner installed HVAC ducts on the first floor adding some clutter to the lofty ceiling space. The building is now owned by the United Indians of All Tribes Foundation who have made some minor alterations including reconfiguring the entries.

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Born in Illinois and graduated from the University of Illinois, Al Bumgardner came to Seattle in 1949. He started an independent practice in 1953 that produced many notable modern residences. He acted as an editor consultant to Pacific Architect & Builder magazine before receiving the commission to design their new facility. In the 1960s, his practice expanded to A.O. Bumgardner Partnership, then later to Bumgardner Partnership with David Wright, Mark Simpson, Jenny Sue Brown, and Al Dryer (who is credited for this design). The partnership expanded beyond the original small-scale practice, to design the South Campus Center at the University of Washington, and Market Place North and Waterfront Place Condominiums near the Pike Place Market.
3. Architect’s Office
Building
2000 Minor Avenue East
Date of Construction: 1960–61

Paul Hayden Kirk’s small office building is a fine example of the personal attention to site and detail that produced some of Seattle’s best Modernist architecture.

Built as Kirk’s architectural office, the building is a beautifully scaled, simple wood post-and-beam frame structure articulated with delicate details and connections and clad in cedar siding (originally stained dark brown). Following the natural slope of the lot, the structure was raised from street level, poised over open ground area, providing parking spaces underneath the building for employees. The floor plan is one open space with facility core and a staircase that connected directly to the parking area. The building is made accessible through an angled concrete ramp. The volume is entered through a glass gallery that stretches along the south side of the building. The clear-glass corridor was punctuated with multi-colored glass vent louver, giving the walkway a touch of brightness. Located at the far end, Kirk’s studio and offices occupied 2/3 of the space, the remaining space used as rental.

Inside the conference room and Kirk’s own office, walls were sheathed in cedar; windows were covered with wood louver screens. Furnishings included chairs and tables designed by acclaimed woodworker George Nakashima. Over time, the building has retained its initial
shape and character, although the original interior finishes are gone and the parking area has been partially enclosed.

Kirk’s previous office was located at 615 Lakeview Boulevard. The need for larger office space coincided with a new direction in Kirk’s architectural career. In 1957, the firm was known as Paul Hayden Kirk & Associates. It reorganized again three years later under the name Kirk Wallace McKinley & Associates. Kirk’s residential and clinic design practice was expanding, and commissions increasing in scale with large public and civic projects, although houses never disappeared completely from the firm’s work. Many projects were widely published including the University Unitarian Church, University of Washington Faculty Club (with Victor Steinbrueck), the Japanese Presbyterian Church and the Magnolia Branch Library.
4. Lake Union Community Psychiatric Clinic
2009 Minor Avenue East
Date of Construction: 1962–63

During the 1950s, Kirk was known as a specialist in the design of medical clinics, collaborating on a book about this subject. He designed more than fifty clinics during that decade alone, including the Lake City Medical Clinic and Blakely Psychiatric Clinic.

Next door to Kirk’s office building, his firm designed a psychiatric clinic. The clinic is similar to Kirk’s office, acting almost as an extension of it. Since the site was also sloping, the building was raised to provide privacy and parking, but the similarities stop there. Function, plan, and scale define a very different type of environment.

Before it was turned into offices, the psychiatric clinic housed twenty-one therapy rooms, private offices, a large staff library-lounge, and waiting rooms. The “C” shape plan of the clinic is organized around an airborne central court. Divided into adult and children’s areas, the two wings are linked by two enclosed bridges. To filter the sun and provide privacy, wood slats project over the windows.

The most striking feature of the building is the waiting area volume, which offers a place for relaxation and contact with nature. The space, enclosed by the south-side wall and bridge, is -over-
divided into three segments of equal size, the central one of which is an open-sky courtyard. Inside, through glass walls, waiting rooms face each other, separated by the courtyard, which is articulated by small decks.

In its expression of enclosure, and in the way light gives character to spaces, the clinic is representative of Kirk’s sensitivity and talent to create simple but rich spatial composition.
5. Asian Gallery/Architect’s Office Building

200 East Boston Street
Original Architect: Gene Zema
Date(s) of Construction: 1953-61

When informed of DoCoMoMo’s plan to include his building at 200 East Boston in the tour of the modern-era buildings of the Eastlake neighborhood, Gene Zema smiled and asked, “Me, a modernist?”

The first phase of the complex, built in 1953, exhibits many modern-era elements; foremost, the massing of the structure is an abstraction of an elemental form that is reinforced by Zema’s use of pure planes of material, namely wood, stucco, and glass. The roofline is almost flat, a tool used to accentuate the feeling that the building is an assemblage of floating planes. The structure also hovers above the ground to minimize the impacts on the site, giving the impression that the building has a finger, rather than a footprint.

The adjoining two-story structure, comprised of an office, gallery, and residence was built (partially by Zema) across a small courtyard in 1961. This phase of the project illustrates the evolution of Zema’s design sensibilities. Namely, Zema expanded on Modernism to experiment with design that is specific to our region. This phase of the project exhibits the influence of the Japanese through Zema’s mastery of wood detailing. Zema states, “I was definitely influenced by the Japanese use of materials…as a designer, I turned to the culture that knows the best about wood.” As wood was once widely available and relatively inexpensive in this area, Zema adapted Japanese craftsmanship to fit modern design exploration in the Northwest.

Further, Zema states that he was influenced by the Japanese modular system of building. Zema notes that almost 90 percent of his work was based on a modular system. This includes the 200 East Boston structure, which was developed on a 6-foot grid. By establishing a logic on which to rely, Zema states, “It makes a building easier to design and also easier to build.”

Zema built the first “gallery” of this complex only three years after he graduated from architecture school at the University of Washington.
After working for other firms and passing the state licensing exam in 1951, Zema opened his own practice, which he then moved into the East Boston structure after it was completed. Zema ceased his commercial practice of architecture in 1976, but many of his buildings can still be enjoyed — notably the Wells-Medina Nursery, Gould Hall at the University of Washington, in addition to many examples of his exceptional talent in residential design.
6. The Castlewood Apartments
2717 Franklin Avenue East
Date of Construction: 1929

Although not strictly modernist, the Castlewood Apartment Building is considered an exemplary example of the early work of noted modernist Seattle architect, Paul Albert Thiry. It is very well preserved and exhibits distinctive Art Deco/Moderne characteristics on a plain brick façade. However, the building is significant to the early Modern period for its site planning, innovative floor plan, and early execution of the modernist tenets of rational design and regional influences.

The Wood and Milner Corporation commissioned Thiry to design the Castlewood Apartments in 1929. Apartments built in the early 1900s were generally proportioned in scale and massing, constructed of wood or brick masonry, and carefully landscaped so as not to overwhelm the surrounding homes or streetscapes. Many were built without garages, as many tenants did not own private vehicles. However, the Castlewood did include a garage, perhaps indicating that it originally served a higher class of residents. The building remained an apartment building until 1991, when it was converted to condominiums.

The building has a slightly irregular L-shaped plan, and a series of three projecting gables that face east toward the street. The innovative plan allows natural light to enter each dwelling unit from two sides, and also provides ample cross-ventilation. One of the unique features of the site is the landscaped courtyard, which is accessed through a wooden arbor that rests on stylized brick piers and engaged masonry wall.

West stair tower

On the exterior, the building exhibits selective and restrained Art Deco/Moderne features, such as horizontal banding, vertical tower projections, and stylized geometric chevrons on an otherwise utilitarian brick masonry façade.

When the Depression of the 1930s drastically reduced the number of his commissions, Thiry took the opportunity to travel around the world, where he met influential Modernist architects including Le Corbusier. He quickly abandoned the stylistic Art Moderne features of his University of Washington Beaux Arts training upon his return home in favor of variants of the mod-

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ernic ideals he had observed in Europe. These included incorporation of modern life and new technology into architecture, open floor plans, and the expression of structure. Because of this, Thiry is credited with introducing European modernism to the Pacific Northwest.

His early efforts at modernism—rectilinear surfaces, continuous bands of windows, and strong horizontal axes—which he first implemented on his own house in 1936—were in sharp contrast to other houses of the period and met with public resistance. He moderated the “pure” modernist style with vernacular Northwest elements such as sloping rooflines, exposed structural systems, and wood cladding, and created a unique style that was eventually embraced in the region.

After World War II, Thiry’s office produced a number of high profile buildings including the Museum of History and Industry (1948 - 1950, altered); The Frye Art Museum (1952, altered); and The Washington State Library in Olympia (1954 – 1959). Thiry also took several planning commissions between 1952 and 1963. During that period, his work included the planning for the 1962 Seattle’s World Fair, for which he was principal architect, master planning for the nation’s capital in Washington, D.C., and planning for the Montana Libby Dam Project.

Until the late 1980s, Thiry continued to work, continuously experimenting with materials and building technology. He died in 1993, having designed many of Seattle’s prominent public Modern buildings of the 1950s and 1960s.
7. Architect’s Office Building

1264 Eastlake Avenue East
Original Architect: Steinhart, Theriault & Anderson
Date of Construction: 1956
Construction Cost: $22,800

This building is a striking example of post-war International Style Modernism in Seattle. Built in 1956, it is one of the earlier Modern building included on this Eastlake tour. 1264 Eastlake Avenue East was designed by Steinhart Theriault and Anderson as their architectural office, and was occupied by the firm until the mid-1980s. The building attracted considerable attention when it was built because of its design and its highly visible location near the intersection of Eastlake and Fairview Avenues.

In September 1960 Pacific Architect and Building noted, “This little building (is) ‘a real eye-stopper’ with an overall design quality that removes it from the gimmick category.”

The building was placed on a small wedge-shaped parcel, and it took advantage of the site with a raised and cantilevered form. The building plan included an offset entry and enclosed garden, a covered balcony, and a main interior space, which was divided into a reception area and offices. Exterior materials were limited: an exposed steel frame, stone-clad foundation, glazed aluminum framed windows, and stained redwood cladding and screens. The interior featured cork flooring, mahogany trim, redwood ceiling, and floor-to-ceiling translucent fiberglass screens.

Detailing consists of a continuous wide flange steel beam which defines the horizontal floor slab, metal flashing along the perimeter of the flat roof, and the steel X-braced tie rods. The resulting appearance is a simple glass box, floating above the street. The wood screens, of spaced vertical and horizontal redwood strips, provide a layered sense of transparency. The screens serve as a natural contrast to the overall machined design, and recall the influence of Japanese architecture on Northwest Modernism.

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Formal characteristics of this building design, which exemplifies the International Style, are summarized by Architect Robert Venturi as unity, clarity, simplicity, unacknowledged taste, a minimal aesthetic, structural functionalism, and sense of harmony. It is not pragmatic, mannered, or complex and thus, according to Venturi, lacks richness, ambiguity, complexity, dissonance, and contradiction.

Arden Steinhart, the senior partner in Steinhart Theriault and Anderson, earned his architectural degree at the UW in 1929. He worked for other architects and for engineers before forming a partnership with Robert Theriault and Roy Stanley in 1953. In 1955, Einar V. Anderson became the firm’s fourth partner. With Roy Stanley’s death in 1956, the firm became Steinhart Theriault & Anderson. All three had been trained by teachers who embraced the post war ideals and formal tenets of Modernism. After Anderson’s early death in 1970, the firm became Steinhart, Theriault & Associates.

Steinhart, Theriault & Anderson designed churches, schools and community and commercial buildings in Seattle in the 1950s and 1960s. Their office on Eastlake Avenue appears to be the most intact and the most innovative of their projects. Articles in historic design magazines and newspapers suggest their work was consistently Modern in design, but direct and functional rather than expressive, as exemplified by the firm’s designs for smaller commercial structures, public buildings, and churches. These include seven public schools in Highline, Mercer Island, and Shoreline which date from 1953 to 1961, a small West Seattle dental office and bank buildings in Burien and Kent in the early 1960s, five churches in the Seattle area, and the Rainier Golf and Country Club. Only the 1962-era Swedish Club, located at 1920 Dexter Avenue North, compares with the 1264 Eastlake Building in its evocative International-styled design.
8. Lakeview Boulevard Apartments
1555 Lakeview Boulevard East
Original Architects: James Chiarelli and Paul Kirk
Date of Construction: 1949

The Lakeview Boulevard Apartment building (originally C & K Apartments) is a model of efficient use of space, rational layout and cost-effective construction. Although commonplace today, these qualities reflected a post-war faith in rational progress and ideals that turned away from past building traditions and looked toward the future.

Looking at the exterior, it is easy to understand how the building's structure was organized and how interior spaces might be arranged. The brick facades of the stairwells, contrasted with the large expanse of window glazing of the apartments, make it obvious which are living spaces and which are the service cores of the building. Three levels of living spaces are arranged atop one level of service spaces, such as garage, storage, laundry rooms, and a boiler room. Whereas apartment buildings traditionally had a grand entrance with one main staircase or elevator core, the architects here chose to provide three staircases. This drastically reduced the amount of interior hallways, thereby leaving more private space for the tenants.

Dividing the building into four simple bays, similar in structure to a pavilion, allowed interior
spaces to be opened up and unencumbered with structural members. Although Interstate 5 clearly dominates the site today, visually as well as audibly, the Lakeview Apartments had a view of Lake Union when originally constructed.

Early on, Paul Kirk focused primarily on small-scale residential projects, with historicist details. By the time he and James Chiarelli formed a partnership in the early 1940s, the firm was producing modernist structures such as the Crown Hill Medical-Dental Clinic in Lake City and Lakewood Community Church. Chiarelli later worked on the Seattle Opera House (1962). Kirk gained accolades for buildings which interpreted Modernist ideals into a "Northwest" idiom, such as University Unitarian Church in Wedgwood (1955-59) and the Magnolia Library (1962-64).
9. Egan House
1500 Lakeview Boulevard East
Original Architect: Robert Reichert
Date of Construction: 1958
Construction Cost: $10,762

Arresting, controversial, and unusual. The distinctive Egan House is one of architect Robert Reichert’s most notable residential designs, built for Admiral Willard Egan in 1958. Considered by many to be an outstanding example of Washington state residential architecture, its notoriety is linked to two reasons—the advanced design, especially for the period when it was built, and the house’s relationship to the surrounding property.

The Egan house simply and effectively shows modern design principles at work. Basically, the wooden house is a triangular form on a rectangular plane atop a pier block. The interior levels diminish in size as they rise, and the overall effect is clearly geometric. The house responds to the sloping site by a correspondingly sloping roof, stepped back floor plates, and skewed north wall. The design reflects how someone would occupy or view a particular space. For example, tall windows look up hills or to tall trees and low windows frame low growth on the hillside. It is 20 feet by 40 feet and contains 1,060 square feet of living space over a partial ground floor daylight basement.

In 1998, after numerous threats of demolition, Historic Seattle worked with the Seattle Parks Department to acquire the Egan House and the use of the immediately surrounding land with the end-goal being use and preservation of the house.

Currently, Historic Seattle is moving forward with plans to improve the Egan House. Initially, the building will be repaired and modestly upgraded, with the intent to stabilize the property and support long term preservation. Rot and insect damage will be repaired, and the building will receive a new roof, paint, and complete cleaning. Interior improvements will include electric and heating systems, and kitchen and bathroom upgrades as needed to allow for residential occupancy. Historic Seattle hopes to raise additional funds to support a complete, accurate preservation of the Egan House in the future.

Besides the Egan House, Robert Reichert designed and built numerous residences and apartment buildings in Seattle, a number of which remain today. Reichert is now viewed as an independent visionary who suffered from being decades ahead of this time. During his career,
he remained very independent from the rest of the architects in Seattle and likely suffered a lack of recognition from it.

His personal philosophy was simple: create art in sight and sound. And indeed he did both as an architect and as an organist. He was deeply committed to both disciplines, viewing them to be exactly related. Reichert studied at the University of Minnesota, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and graduated from Harvard University with a Master’s in Architecture. He also attended the Royal College of Organists in London. Reichert opened an architectural practice in Seattle in 1951 with the intent of practicing what he termed philosophical architecture and romanticism in the arts. He defined this romanticism as freedom from an authoritative, regulated, and enforced world of art. And so he embarked on creating his distinctive style of architecture by designing bold, expressive, and controversial buildings—the Egan House being an exemplary case in point.