

1. Modern Talk: NW Mid-Century Architects Oral History Project  
(by Docomomo WEWA)
2. Interview with Gene Zema
3. 7.15.08
4. Interviewer: Kathleen McNeely

## 5. TRACK 1

6. **Kathleen:** So, Gene. I'll start with the first question, so--
7. **Gene:** Is it the same sheet we're looking at? All right.
8. **K:** So where did you grow up and what were your hobbies and interests as a child?
9. **Gene:** Born in San Francisco up to about when I was eight or nine years old and then we moved to Sacramento where my parents had a small farm. And that's where I attended grade school and high school. And interests, as a hobby, oh. Normal kids. Hunting fishing. Swimming. Playing around.
10. **K:** Actually I'm going to take that from you 'cause I keep hearing the sound in it. But I'll—or you can set it down. So but, would you say that, what childhood influences may have led you to study architecture?
11. **Gene:** In fact, I didn't steer toward architecture until after my first year of college.
12. **K:** Wow.
13. **G:** So. What determined it, I know, but as I look back now, I've always been pretty handy with my hands, building things. And that certainly has helped me on in later life.
14. **K:** What led you to attend the University of Washington?
15. **G:** Well, we used to, my folks used to take vacations up here and I really got to like the area and everything was so different from what it was in the Sacramento Valley. Here's it's rain and green and hills and the Sacramento is flat and dry and hot.
16. **K:** [Laughs]
17. **G:** So.
18. **K:** Stark contrast.
19. **G:** So, to get away from that atmosphere down there, it just naturally rotated that I came up here to the University.
20. **K:** And when you were finished with school was it just a natural progression to settle here or did you think of moving elsewhere when you were done?
21. **G:** You mean after I graduated here? Oh. No, I married one of the local residents [laughs].

22. **K:** There was no getting away!
23. **G:** So, it pretty well settled here. And, which I didn't experience any difficulty there. It just sort of a natural thing to do.
24. **K:** And Janet is a local. She was born and raised?
25. **G:** She's a local. She was born in Seattle. Yeah. She's—she's one of the related to the original Denny's.
26. **K:** Wow.
27. **G:** That discovered Seattle.
28. **K:** Wow.
29. **G:** Yeah. So she goes back that far.
30. **K:** That's great. Cool. So, I have a question about your architecture education. What were some of the strengths and weaknesses of the education you received at the University looking back?
31. **G:** Well, the thing back then was very competitive and I'm not sure what it is now. But I recall, I was on a GI bill, after the service, and there were sixty-five of us started in our class. Sixty-five. And the way it worked there, you're constantly competing against your fellow students. As a result, thirteen of the sixty-five graduated.
32. **K:** Wow.
33. **G:** That's a big drop. And it isn't. Sometimes I felt that it was a little unfair, because there were a lot of good guys there with talent, but they didn't, they probably needed a little more push.
34. **K:** More self-discipline or—
35. **G:** Uh. Instead of being slammed down. But anyhow—
36. **K:** Little bit more lifting up.
37. **G:** That's about the only thing that I can think of. I think otherwise it was pretty well covered. Yeah.
38. **K:** So, how did your experiences in the Navy influence your education and your practice?
39. **G:** Very little. [Laughs] Well, as far as the practice and the profession, very little. But as far as giving me the GI bill for three years, books and tuition paid, plus a little bit of money a month, that was a big help. Otherwise, I don't know if I could have made it.
40. **K:** [Laughs] Yeah, it's tough. So as far as discipline or the way that you, your study skills or anything, would you say—
41. **G:** No. I don't think it had anything to do with the service. Of course, I had it fairly easy in the service. I was in a, it was called a V-5 program there where you trained to fly for the Navy. And I was in my second year of college and the war

- ended and they said, signed up for another four years, and go to pre-flight to Pensacola or take your discharge. I really wanted to get back to school. I didn't think that a career in the Navy, that I was set out for that.
42. **K:** That's good, we're glad you chose that. So. Many of your buildings suggest prior construction or carpentry experience. Where and how did you develop that?
43. **G:** Well, that's a good question. It's, I just thank somebody that I came out with the talent. I've always been able to build. While I was in college, I used to go back down to Sacramento Valley and Reno, Nevada, where my mother and stepfather migrated to. And I built them some buildings in the summertime. Some storage sheds and additions to their house that I did myself. So I mean, it just seemed natural. How I acquired that, I don't know. Maybe genetic.
44. **K:** [They laugh] That's great. It definitely comes through in your work.
45. **G:** But it had also reflected on the houses that I built during my practice, myself, and the houses that we lived in.
46. **K:** Did you build, so you built basically the structures that you designed for yourself, your office and your homes?
47. **G:** Well, our first house in Sheridan Heights, which was an AIA award thing, it started there. Where I had the general contractor put up the shell and get us enclosed and then I took it from there. And then my next project down on Eastlake, I extended that a little further. And then the third house, even further then. And then this house, which was totally mine. So it sort of worked upward, see how far I can go by myself.
48. **K:** That's great. You're brave, though, too, it's. That's fantastic. So, what sort of role, this is a kind of an architecture question, what sort of role did models play in your design process and developing construction details. Did you work in model much?
49. **G:** Models. Um.
50. **K:** Like through, just scale models of a building, or did you just visualize it and draw it?
51. **G:** No, I can pretty well visualize it. Yeah. At times, we made models for the clients. They couldn't visualize it. But, no, most of the time, in fact, I'm amazed that nowadays, you can do something at a computer but still I don't think that a computer can do what you really think it should be. Other than that, I've always liked a modular approach to buildings. And this is what intrigued me with the Japanese. Also there were several architects in my era, or before me, that I really had praise for. And that was Paul Kirk, one of them, who had a very definite modular approach to building. And beautiful plans. The looks of it, the elevations of it, were sort of standardized 50s, but the plans were superb and that really impressed me. Yeah.
52. **K:** Do you know if Kirk had exposure to Japan, had he been to Japan and seen that kind of work or was that--?

53. **G:** I don't know.
54. **K:** Yeah, 'cause you're right, his work does have that.
55. **G:** Yeah. It does have the modular, planned simplicity, which I've always admired. Yeah.
56. **K:** Well, you answered my next question which was among your contemporaries, who were your favorite designers and why?
57. **G:** Right. Well, as I say, Kirk probably influenced me the most. And other architects, not so much for their design, but I think for their personalities. You know, like Fred Bassetti and Arnie Bystrom, I'm a little older than him, but still he did some nice work, some nice wood building. Anderson, Ralph Anderson, did some superb wood buildings, you know. So. But the, out of the big practicing architects, I think Kirk's office and Bassetti's office were, I mostly admired.
58. **K:** That's great. You've touched on this a little but, do you want to briefly talk about your approach to individual projects, the influence of the site, the program, the client, how you approached projects.
59. **G:** Well, they're all important things. I'm very cognizant of terrain. Sun is important. I like to orient the buildings. Of course, if there's any view, that's what people seem to favor the most. Ingress and outgress for cars is a big one. How do you, since we're stuck on our cars, which, that's prime and then it relates into placing the house on the site, how it relates to the terrain. And trees of course, are important.
60. **K:** Would you, what is your fondest memory of a client or project you designed?
61. **G:** Oh. Well, several clients. The ones that would say, you know, "Just do it. Just do it." They were of course my favorite kind. Well, Bill Holm, who is a noted Northwest art professor and collector was just a carte blanche and Max Marinoni on Bainbridge. Well, they were in tune with what I can do for them. I think that says it in a nutshell. You find people that say, if you show them some work, or they've heard about it or, and they say, "We like what you do. Here's our budget. See what you can do." That seems to be the normal thing. Although there have been times when people have come in and said, "Well, we want it to look like such and such, and we like two stories rather than one." In other words, they place problems in front that may not relate to the site. And you tell them, "This can't be done. You'll have to go somewhere else."
62. **K:** How did your Ford Foundation grant affect your architectural practice and had you traveled much prior to that?
63. **G:** That was our trip to Japan for the first time. I started getting interested in Japanese art prior to the trip, in the about mid-50s. And started studying plan layouts. If you're designing in wood, you can't beat the Japanese at doing things in wood. The way things go together. The reverence that they have for wood and it tied into the modular system, which seemed exactly what I like to do. So. And, to answer your question then, of course, that trip I really looked forward to it, it

was a chance to travel all over Japan for two months, and look at all of the famous sites and have access to old houses and old buildings. Because our leader was Ito, [Inaudible: Tay-gee Ito] who was an architectural historian. So it was just ideal. And I don't know how much I learned about wood architecture. But I don't think that my designs were Japanese.

64. **K:** Your subsequent, your work here, you don't think that's—
65. **G:** I don't think the buildings that I did have a Japanese flavor. The interiors and the objects within it seem to indicate. People come in and they think this is a Japanese house. Uh. So.
66. **K:** They don't know.
67. **G:** But I did appreciate the nuances of wood and how things go together and of course, the modular plan was so simple. It really worked for me. Yeah.
68. **K:** Well, that kind of leads me to this question. It seems very natural for you to incorporate art into your architecture or, how did that begin?
69. **G:** Well, that's, I'm a collector. I like antiques. My first love of antiques was the, was Northwest Coast art in the 50s and 60s and in dribbles on up the line. But that became so scarce, that it became a passing thing. But then I started on the Japanese folk-art thing and I saw things on that first trip that were just marvelous folk art items. And at that time, not many people were interested in folk art. They were interested in the fine arts, like the Seattle Art Museum has. Fine arts meaning, big screens and scrolls and carvings. But no one thought of everyday pottery and laquerwork and things that the people themselves used. They didn't think of that as artwork. But I did. I thought they were beautiful items. And that led into then having a gallery to sell these items. Yeah.
70. **K:** When you retired from your architectural practice. Where did you direct that creative energy?
71. **G:** Well, people keep asking me when I retire, but I just can't picture a departure point. It sort of went into, well I've always been a loner, you know. I've had, I've been in partnerships with several people. Dick Bouillon who was an architect way back then. And Bumgardner, Al Bumgardner and I were partners for a while. But then I found that it wasn't as satisfying. Because as you get bigger work, you lose the design fun of it. So, reverting back to then just doing jobs that I thought'd be fun to do. And two or three houses a year is plenty for me. I figured it takes nine months of my time from the time I start a design project to when I can finish the drawings. That's a big gap of time.
72. **K:** So, prior to construction.
73. **G:** Yeah.
74. **K:** Yeah.
75. **G:** So, I just kept on trickling along. And I don't know, my last job was for Ron Reeder here, but that was about, what, four or five years ago. Maybe that's the time that I retired. But in the meantime, I had a gallery to run, in that Eastlake

- building. And that didn't take too much of my time. It worked out more fortunate that I could have the shop going and I could keep busy with my work. It seemed to go together. Um. And of course, that took me to Japan on buying trips twice a year. And I figured I've been to Japan sixty times. But those were only one or two week sections. So. But essentially, I kept my practice going sporadically, and the gallery going sporadically. And it seemed a nice way to go.
76. **K:** This question, I'll just ask it. What are thoughts on the current movement toward sustainable design in architecture?
77. **G:** What is sustainable design?
78. **K:** Tell me what you think it is.
79. **G:** I don't know. I don't understand. Sustainable design. Does that mean repetition of the same design? Sustainable? I don't understand that word. Sustainable.
80. **K:** So, without going into detail because I think it's, can be defined a million different ways, but using materials that can, that are renewable, that are not one – time things and recycling, reusing old things or, and energy efficiency, using—
81. **G:** Sustainable. Okay. Well. I'm a great collector of building materials, too. I like recycling. This house, by the way, I would say at least half of the materials here have been recycled. If that's what is meant by sustainable, yes, I'm all for it. I'm all for it. But unfortunately, it's a very high labor consuming idea. I don't know, as people would pay for that if there's easier ways out to buy new, which is too bad, you know. But building this house by myself, I can afford to spend the time to clean up and recycle materials. One of my best friends was a Dr. Allen Loeb, who was the director of Swedish Hospital. And before he retired and subsequently died, I used to get a lot of materials from the hospital from their building projects, that they were gonna dump. For example, there were, they built the Nordstrom Parking Garage and he had a pile of sixty sheets of four by eight plywood, Masonite faced that the contractor couldn't reuse anymore. But it belonged to the hospital. And they were gonna dump it. No one wanted it. So I said, "Oh gosh. That'd be perfect for me." 'Cause like, this house, there's sixty sheets of sub floor in this house. So you know, things like that. And I can point out a lot of things around this house. All of this glass, the hoods in the kitchen, all the doors, all the hardware. All the salvage material. So if that's what you mean by sustainable, I'm all for it.
82. **K:** You were ahead of your time. That was a pointed question, actually. So. Are there any other experiences or anecdotes that I wouldn't think to ask about that you might want to share, just about your practice and your experiences over the years?
83. **G:** Well, I noticed you had in there, one of the questions about you know, do I miss the arena. But I found ways to keep busy. In fact this project here, I wanted to see if I could do everything. I mean, absolutely everything. Because my other houses, it was always partial. I always had someone come in and put up the frame and do the big stuff. But here we started out with nothing, flat lot. Absolutely

nothing. And I encountered all these things that had to be solved, which you normally take for granted. Water, sewage systems, which I knew of course, in designing other projects, I knew about it. But when you're doing it yourself, it's, there's no one to say, "Well, is this good or bad?" You have to decide. So I allowed myself seven years to do this project. Which gets me back how I kept busy, you know. But we built the little storage building out there. And then the middle house, using wind-powered windmill for water. And then all these rocks came from the property here. Plus all the recycled material. That kept me busy.

84. **K:** Did it take seven years?
85. **G:** Pardon me.
86. **K:** Did it take seven years?
87. **G:** It took exactly seven years, it did.
88. **K:** But, and you've continued though, with other structures, even, since then.
89. **G:** Well, I built the kiln. The kiln out here was after that, but I don't, well, I didn't consider that as a big deal. It was just building a kiln, that's all.
90. **K:** It ties in nicely, though.
91. **G:** Hmm so.
92. **K:** Well, thank you Gene, we'll take a break and maybe some other questions'll come up.
93. **G:** Oh, that'll be fine.
94. **K:** But yeah, let's—
95. **G:** Perhaps I can show you around, though, [inaudible] things if you like.
96. **K:** That'd be great. Maybe I'll carry this with me. I'm gonna do a little, I'm gonna say good by here.
97. **TRACK 2**
98. [Sound of walking]
99. **G:** This section is on Northwest Coast.
100. **K:** Okay.
101. **G:** And all the rest of them, are mostly books about Japan, Japanese art, Japanese architecture.
102. **K:** Wow. Did you do most of your collecting just here or did you travel to find?
103. **G:** Oh, we traveled all over for books and back east and, well, that's the way I like to take vacations. You know. I've got to have a goal in mind. I'm uncomfortable just to go and sit in the sand. But yeah, all of these books here are on Japan and exploration books. I like the Wilkes. I don't know if you've heard of Wilkes.

104. **K:** Hm mm.
105. **G:** Did a lot of early discoveries of the Northwest Coast. This is Perry's first trip to Japan. 1853, 1854. And then in here [sounds of walking] more books on everything.
106. **K:** And are these some of the folk artifacts? And some of this is your work, right?
107. **G:** Well, that's mine, up there. Yeah. That's mine. This is mine.
108. **K:** Wonderful.
109. **G:** That's the Sheridan Heights house.
110. **K:** Is that home still in tact? To your knowledge?
111. **G:** Oh, it's still there. I saw it about a year ago. But they, of course it isn't that color anymore. It's sort of a, it was all natural cedar and stained. And now it's sort of a beige. So. Yeah. People think they're upgrading. But then you know, but that's normal. These are early pictures of our office down on Eastlake. The little building, yeah.
112. **K:** Yeah, that's—
113. **G:** And that I built myself. Yeah. That's right. That's another project.
114. **K:** Was that the first, was that before Sheridan Heights or was that—
115. **G:** After.
116. **K:** After.
117. **G:** Well, no wait a minute. Sheridan was what, '54 and so was that. I opened that up in '54. So that might have been the first project. Or both together. Maybe they were going on. Yeah.
118. **K:** Did you tend to work repeatedly with, on your residential client's homes with the same contractors or did you—
119. **G:** Yes.
120. **K:** You did.
121. **G:** I had a list of about six contractors. And they got to know my work and they knew what I wanted. I had a more fun time supervising the jobs. Less arguments. So yeah. They. I had a good crew, a good set of six.
122. **K:** Well, looking at this bookshelf here and so many of your buildings, too, with the wood details. Did you kind of develop—
123. **G:** That's new. I just built that last year.
124. **K:** Hey! Did you develop, I mean, you just kind of, like the furniture that I've seen, you've showed me at one point, the, I think maybe it was from the office originally. You have some old drawing tables and stuff and they're similarly constructed. Just very simple.

125.     **G:**    This is one remaining. That one?
126.     **K:**    Yeah.
127.     **G:**    Yeah. This is one of the drafting tables.
128.     **K:**    Just very simple.
129.     **G:**    Well, I don't know. It's just as I say. It just seemed to come natural. You know, you look at it and you get some wood and you build it. I've never. You know, I've never encountered any [laughs] different. This, by the way, this was a deck here.
130.     **K:**    Oh.
131.     **G:**    Up to the window line outside there. And we never used it. So, two or three years ago I decided to build that deck and enclose this and make this my office. I needed space where I could pay bills and—
132.     **K:**    Right.
133.     **G:**    I don't know. Have you seen the pond, have you seen the? Oh, you haven't. Okay. This is our bedroom in here. You can walk in there if you'd like.
134.     **K:**    Thank you. Oh, tell me about these.
135.     **G:**    Well, those are old antique Japanese capes, rain capes, and there are three of them. One, two, three. And you can't feel it in here, but there's generally an oilcloth paper inside that makes it waterproof.
136.     **K:**    The fabric is so beautiful.
137.     **G:**    Yeah. [Inaudible] folk art jackets, you see, which is recycled. Is that sustainable?
138.     **K:**    [Laughs] It's just practical. It makes sense.
139.     **G:**    There's our bathroom in there. The floors are all the rock from the property, you know. [Sounds of walking] Why don't you go in here, I'll go this other door.
140.     **K:**    Okay. Wow. [Sounds of a tarp being rolled up? Water?] Wow, it's like a Japanese soaking tub and—
141.     **G:**    Well, exactly. That's what it is. We can heat this up to about a hundred and four and come in here and soak, with a martini, you know.
142.     **K:**    [Laughs] You've got it made. And it's got a side door through there. And this is the guest side?
143.     **G:**    And this door is the same there. And this wing, this is the reciprocal of this wing. So it's symmetry, you know. And this building is on a module. This building is on a twelve, six foot, three foot, two-foot module [inaudible] so.
144.     **K:**    It's rhyme and reason, I think. It's very nice.

145.       **G:**     So again, this wing is the exact duplicate of that. And then this is our guest wing. [Sounds of walking]
146.       **K:**     The grandkids come.
147.       **G:**     Well, they're, they've gotten big now, we're gonna, we have given away that bunk so I can have more room to put other things in. more collectibles.
148.       **K:**     Well, it's nice and cool in here. And is this an antique?
149.       **G:**     Oh yeah. This is a foot powered, transfer of water from one level up three feet. The man stands on those outcroppings, hanging out up here, and with his foot, pushes this and that scoops the water up and empties it out there.
150.       **K:**     That's beautiful. Is it cedar, do you know, or?
151.       **G:**     Uh, no I don't think. Cedar would be too soft. I think it'd be [inaudible] hinoki. But it's not a hardwood. It's semi-hard. [Sounds of walking] And as I was growing up I was interested in taxidermy. But these I picked up in junk shops. I don't kill. But I want to preserve.
152.       **K:**     Oh yeah. Oh, they're in wonderful shape, too.
153.       **G:**     So there's another word. Sustainability. That I've always wanted to preserve.
154.       **K:**     Right. [Laughs]
155.       **G:**     Well, I can take you out now if—
156.       **K:**     That'd be great. Thank you. [Sounds of walking. Leaving house, going outdoors.]
157.       **G:**     So when is it that you graduated?
158.       **K:**     I graduated in 95.
159.       **G:**     Is that out of our school here, out of Gould?
160.       **K:**     Mm hmm. So it's been thirteen years, I guess.
161.       **G:**     And are you practicing, or—?
162.       **K:**     I am. Now, I'm practicing actually on my own for the last two years.
163.       **G:**     Oh, you are?
164.       **K:**     Yeah.
165.       **G:**     [Inaudible]
166.       **K:**     Yeah, I'm still, I have to admit I do a lot of remodels and additions in Seattle.
167.       **G:**     Oh yeah, well, that's the way I started. A lot of remodels and plot plan drawings and you know, minutiae. But you did what you gotta do.

168.     **K:**     Well, and I've kept busy, but I do hope to move onto some new project here. I aspire to, anyway. I love the access coming in with that sculpture.
169.     **G:**     Yeah, that was done by Allen Loeb.
170.     **K:**     Oh.
171.     **G:**     Yeah. [Sound of walking outside] Yeah, the kiln, I think, what about three years ago, or maybe three, four years ago, right in there. Time is going by so fast. I can't keep up. But we're going to have a firing here probably in a month. Yeah, I'll show you the studio, there's enough space, there's enough stuff in there now to make it worthwhile.
172.     **K:**     You want to fill it up?
173.     **G:**     Yeah.
174.     **K:**     Wow.
175.     **G:**     Yeah, this is it.
176.     **K:**     Let's just, I have to—
177.     **G:**     This little building's on a module, now. [They laugh] Tan, tan, tan, tan.
178.     **K:**     It's, I have to say it's just, I think because it has this simple purpose and there's no walls really, it is just beautiful.
179.     **G:**     It's very, very simple. With no walls, it means you had to brace it.
180.     **K:**     But that, but it
181.     **G:**     [Inaudible]
182.     **K:**     But it mirrors the house in a way.
183.     **G:**     Well, it's a detailing. The wood and yeah.
184.     **K:**     It's wonderful.
185.     **G:**     But everything's on a module. Two foot center on the rafters, you know, it's fun to design that way and it's fun to build that way. Because you don't have to keep checking the drawings. You know if it's on module, this is twenty four, thirty six, six feet, you know, it's—
186.     **K:**     Oh, I agree.
187.     **G:**     It really works. All—Gould Hall's on a module.
188.     **K:**     Oh yes.
189.     **G:**     In those days, I think, what are they? Nineteen feet? I forget. But it's all modular.
190.     **K:**     What was that project like? That was a big concrete building?
191.     **G:**     Well, that was a lot of fun. Because, for me anyhow. My main job on that project was writing the spec book and supervising the job.

192. **K:** The construction.
193. **G:** Yeah. And of course, I was involved in the design, all the way through, but the fun part was the supervision on it and Sellen, Sellen Construction was the general contractor. And this was my first introduction to big time contractors. I mean.
194. **K:** Huge.
195. **G:** You don't fool around. They don't like fooling around. Money. They don't like the nitty gritty. I'd come on the job, I would share, I would share every Monday morning at the shack, anybody can come, give me the problems, we'll solve it right now. And it worked just like dream work. It just, anything I wanted. Nels Nelson was the superintendent on the job. If I didn't like something, I'd say, "Change it." They changed it. It was a beautiful relationship.
196. **K:** That's great. Well, the building has stood the test of time.
197. **G:** The only cost overruns were demanded by the University. And then documented on paper.
198. **K:** It's always the client.
199. **G:** We were on budget. Right on the button.
200. **K:** What about the nuclear reactor building? What was that? Was that before or after? That was before.
201. **G:** That was before. Yeah. That one, Lovett, Wendell Lovett was involved. And I would have to say that most of the design criteria was Wendell. He was of the international school. He liked, he wasn't regional. He was international and of course he wanted to do something that would be attractive internationally but in effect that was the first nuclear training reactor in the US that was not enclosed in concrete.
202. **K:** It was visible.
203. **G:** It's a glass box so that you can walk around and look down on this [inaudible]. And that was a first for us.
204. **K:** And did you, were you doing the construction observation on that, too?
205. **G:** I was the supervisor of that, too, yes. [Sounds of walking through brush] Well, this was the first building that I put up, where we would come here to work on weekends and during the week. And we had our fireplace there and ate out here. It was sort of an interim. And now a storage shed. [Sound of door opening] This is what keeps me busy nowadays.
206. **K:** Ceramics.
207. **G:** Yeah.
208. **K:** It's beautiful.
209. **G:** Go ahead and.

210.     **K:**    Thank you.
211.     **G:**    These are about a day old. Still wet, yeah.
212.     **K:**    That's wonderful. What kind of glazes and stuff do you use?
213.     **G:**    Well, this is celadon.
214.     **K:**    Okay.
215.     **G:**    And this is no glaze. I sort of like, this is sheeno and celadon.
216.     **K:**    That's very nice it has a real natural material feel to it.
217.     **G:**    Oh, here's some of our drafting. Here's one big drafting table, one of the storage units.
218.     **K:**    That's great. Always a use for that.
219.     **G:**    I'm drying clay for reuse. Recycled. That's one thing about claying, a lot of recycle. You don't like a piece, before it's bisqued, you can't fire it, but if it's air dried, like all these in here are air dried, any one of those I can crumple up and put back into water and resoak, you know, which is sort of fun to do.
220.     **K:**    Are these doors salvaged, antique or—?
221.     **G:**    These are Japanese sliding doors. That's right.
222.     **K:**    Kind of ventilation in the middle of it.
223.     **G:**    [Inaudible] pretty incredible, eh?
224.     **K:**    Yeah. Wow.
225.     **G:**    We're in the midst of having a metal roof put on these two buildings. So that's a new strip you see up there along the edge and at the top. Step right through here. See. It's all banded with five quarter by four because a layer of three shingles—
226.     **K:**    Oh.
227.     **G:**    —is five quarter. So that you wait, we have to cut off all the trim, put the five-quarter on and then that makes a flat bed and the metal goes right over it.
228.     **K:**    Clears right over the top. And this is you, you get your water pumped with—
229.     **G:**    This is our well here. That's the windmill, when it's unfurled, pumps water into that storage tank, from there it's sucked into the house. There's a small tank and motor there that puts it under pressure for use.
230.     **K:**    Mm hmm. Wow.
231.     **G:**    But when we started the land was bare like this.
232.     **K:**    So all the fruit trees and thing you guys have added.

233. **G:** Every tree and plant I've put in here. Right. [Sounds of walking through grass] Hey gang, where are you?
234. **K:** Oh my. Oh, you've got babies.
235. **G:** Two babies.
236. **K:** Wow.
237. **G:** That's this year. Just two out of eighteen eggs.
238. **K:** Oh my goodness.
239. **G:** That's the rate.
240. **K:** Is that typical?
241. **G:** For peacocks, yeah. They're all show and no action.
242. **K:** Gosh. [Laughs]
243. **G:** In fact, one peahen just got off a bunch of eggs in there I think there were twelve eggs and none of them were any good. So this year is only two chicks. And they're doing fine.
244. **K:** And are the brown, are they less mature? Do they get more colorful as they age? Or are those the females?
245. **G:** No, no, no, no. The peahens are the all beige ones.
246. **K:** Okay.
247. **G:** The peacocks are the ones with the long tail and the blue necks. Those with no tail are still immature. See, they're only about a year old.
248. **K:** And the white one is just a—
249. **G:** Well, the white, there is a white peacock breed, but that one hatched out from these blues, I call them blues. There's some genetic quirk in here.
250. **K:** So it's, they had the right genes to combine and—
251. **G:** Well, somehow the white genes got intermixed and there were two of them. One, the one I let loose down here and it took off and the coyotes got him.
252. **K:** Oh.
253. **G:** Which is all right.
254. **K:** Yeah, that's gonna happen.
255. **G:** That's a recycle.
256. **K:** Right. [Laughs]
257. **G:** And this one. These I, this one I raised from a baby.
258. **K:** Oh, so very tame.

259.     **G:**     Come on. Come on. [Talks to the peacock]

260.     **K:**     That's amazing.

261.     **G:**     So where's your office?

262.     **K:**     I actually work out of my home right now, very low—

263.     **G:**     Where is that?

264.     **K:**     It's in Bryant. So just near, in Ravenna, that area.

265.     **G:**     Oh, Ravenna district? Yeah. Oh sure. Okay.

266.     **K:**     I actually just moved there recently. I was living in Ballard and it's nice to be back in the, kind of in the University District zone. I kind of missed it.

267.     **G:**     You want to see the garden, or?

268.     **K:**     Yeah, it'd be great.

269.     **G:**     Okay.

270.     **K:**     Thank you. [Sounds of walking]

271.     **G:**     One of my granddaughters [inaudible] is starting her senior year at the U and they found an apartment someplace north, maybe in the Ravenna district, I don't know. Some.

272.     **K:**     What's she studying?

273.     **G:**     Well, she's studying political science. [They laugh] and she just got some kind of a Jackson Award or something from her prof, I don't know what that is, but anyhow.

274.     **K:**     That's great. Well, it must be a fun time to be studying political science. [Laughs] So these are ponds from old cisterns, or?

275.     **G:**     No, well, no they were new when I bought them. But they're stock watering tanks. Yeah, you get them here at the farmer's supply.

276.     **K:**     And they overflow, trickle down.

277.     **G:**     That's beautiful. And I like native plants. This is reed, this grows wild. Look how the tall [inaudible] it's just huge. There it is right there, too.

278.     **K:**     Uh huh.

279.     **G:**     And that's a native iris. That's the one that grows down at Lake Washington, you know, in the big floating. It's actually a pest.

280.     **K:**     Oh it.

281.     **G:**     Yeah. It's invasive.

282.     **K:**     Wow and these water lilies are growing right out of the pond as well.

283.     **G:**     They're coming right out.

284.     **K:**     [Laughs] Wow. Beautiful

285.       **G:**    I used to have gold fish in here and koi carp, but we'd get up in the morning and the blue heron would be sitting here—
286.       **K:**    Would eat them all.
287.       **G:**    —waiting.
288.       **K:**    Having breakfast.
289.       **G:**    As soon as something moves, zappo. [Sounds of walking] So.
290.       **K:**    So now we're back on the back side of the house.
291.       **G:**    This is the, well the back, depends which.
292.       **K:**    What the front and what's the back.
293.       **G:**    I call that the front and I call this the back. Yeah.
294.       **K:**    Right. That makes sense to me. [Sounds of walking, entering house] I have never been to Japan, but I kind of imagine that the scale too just feels.
295.       **G:**    Oh, you'd like it. If you like doing things in wood.
296.       **K:**    Yeah.
297.       **G:**    Oh yeah. One of our shows that we gave to the Seattle Art Museum back in '83, I'd say that eighty percent of the stuff was our stuff. This is a, there's the cat for the poster.
298.       **K:**    Is that ceramic or?
299.       **G:**    Wood.
300.       **K:**    Wood. Wow, painted. Wow.
301.       **G:**    Well, does that do her?
302.       **K:**    That's great, thank you so much.
303.       **G:**    Okay. All right.
304.       **K:**    Tell me a little bit, actually about the kitchen construction. This is really [inaudible] beautiful.
305.       **G:**    Well, I like the idea of the sliding doors. I've always been against covering up cabinets. Because, you know, that's an ideology where you want it to look good.
306.       **K:**    You want to hide all the real life stuff.
307.       **G:**    Yeah. And just recently. This is the way I like it. You know. You buy these neat things down at, oh what's the, there's a firm that, called Boxes or something like that. And I like it open. I like things where I can, you know, I like cooking, now. And I like things where I can, I know where they are, I can get them fast. And the use of sliding doors, here, you'll notice. It makes things a [inaudible] easy, you don't have to step aside to clear yourself.

308. **K:** Take all the space. Yeah. And this hood. Is this a salvage?
309. **G:** Oh, well this came out of one of the labs at Swedish.
310. **K:** Oh my.
311. **G:** They were, they had put this in, it was brand new and the forces decided, the doctors didn't like it 'cause it was too small. And so Allen said, "Hey." He took me down to the lab and he says, "What do you think of this? We just paid over five thousand for that and nobody wants it. The contractor doesn't want it. We're gonna junk it." And I said, "Now, wait a minute. What is it, five feet? It fits into my six foot module." [They laugh]
312. **K:** It's amazing. And you certainly don't have any problems with exhaust. It's right out there.
313. **G:** Yeah. No it just goes.
314. **K:** And you have lighting built in, too.
315. **G:** Yeah.
316. **K:** That's great. That's a wonderful, it's a wonderful kitchen. It's very usable. Well, that's great. I want to keep talking and stay all day but [laughs].
317. **G:** Yeah, it'll take you a good two hours to get back.
318. **K:** Yeah, that's true, actually the, we—

[End of interview]

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- 320.
- 321.