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Beauty Designing for life and work at home and the Business



A Seattle urban rehab mixes commerce with pleasing domesticity.

House The Public/

Every house must welcome visitors from time to time, but some make a business of doing it beautifully. By Cheryl Weber, LEED AP

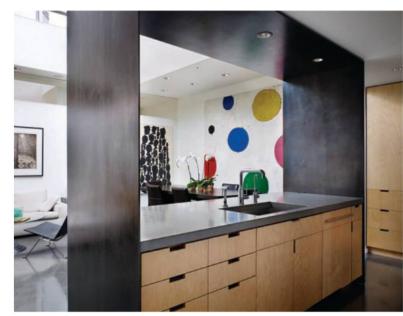


The Public/Private House Street Smart





is the wife's office. Directly behind that is what Engle calls the shipping container—an ipe-clad core housing a powder room on the left and a kitchen in the center. Thin steel "blinders" bookend the kitchen's parallel counters, partially hiding it from pass-throughs on either side, and pocket doors close off the core from the street view. The wood rectangle "could have been moved forward or backward in the space, but we placed it in the sweet spot so it provides a buffer between the courtyard and the street," Engle says. The courtyard Engle refers to is an airy living and dining room at the house's center, where a 12-foot-9-inch-by-9-foot skylight, and the ipe wall, make it feel like it's outside. Interior clerestories let light through to the master suite, entered through a pivoting door behind the living room. Four steps up beyond the bedroom is a second bath adjoining the husband's office, and an outside entrance. The husband, who uses a wheelchair, goes to work by going outside, up the sidewalk, and into the rear door. "He wanted to commute, and that's his commute," Engle says. The concrete floors have a smooth terrazzo finish that's easy to maneuver on, and the hydronically heated surface



makes the wheels warm to the touch.

The gut-renovation of the 100-yearold building, once a drug store and soda fountain, immediately hit a snag.

Excavation of the flimsy, 2-inch-thick slab revealed unstable soil, which meant digging down and refilling with gravel. But in a building this old, there's always a surprise lurking behind the walls. "When you have a crisp architectural design, you can't get away with crookedness—that was the biggest challenge," says builder Stan Christensen. "We reframed the old side walls to get insulation in, and did a lot of furring and straightening to get things level and plumb." Exterior improvements included



replacing the Victorian paint job with a charcoal-gray color that respects the building's form.

"I love this space because, with constraints, great things can happen," Engle says. "It has as many uses as some houses we do that are 8,000 square feet."

Project Credits: Builder: Christensen Construction, Seattle; Architect and interior designer: Tyler Engle Architects PS, Seattle; Structural engineer: Swenson Say Fagét, Seattle; Living space: 1,543 square feet; Site: 0.35 acre; Construction cost: \$229 per square foot; Photographer: Benjamin Benschneider. / Resources: Bath tile: Dal Tile; Bathroom light fixture: FontanaArte; Blackened Steel: Company K; Cabinets: Pacific Rim Cabinets, Boojum Woodworks; Countertops: Dogpaw Design; Floor: Durashine; Interior Paneling: Christensen Construction; Kitchen backsplash tile: Pental; Plumbing fixtures: Kohler.



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