

URBAN DEVELOPMENT



June 23, 2016 • Seattle Daily Journal of Commerce

IN PIONEER SQUARE, REALITY REPLACES MYTH

Over the past five years, dozens of restaurants have opened; apartments are replacing parking lots; and just wait until Weyerhaeuser opens.

During most of the nearly 40 years I've lived in the Puget Sound area, I've been aware of the popular image of Pioneer Square.

Long before most people here were ever born, Pioneer Square bore the identity of Skid Road —



BY MARK HINSHAW
WALKER MACY

a name associated with many down and out parts of North American cities. Indeed, the neighborhood is rooted in people who were down and out, rough and tumble, and marginalized by society — some criminal, some antisocial, some just strange.

Less than five blocks from where I am writing this, 115 years ago a former police chief provoked a blazing gun battle with two brothers in a drug store over a personal disagreement. The brothers walked away; the chief did not. Since then, the neighborhood has witnessed countless shootings: some lethal, most tragic.

Activities and games make Occidental Park more inviting.



PHOTO BY MARK HINSHAW

Together with the homeless people begging for money, this image seems to be most firmly rooted in many people's minds. Indeed, plenty of people profess that they will never set foot in Pioneer Square for fear of being hassled or seeing something disagreeable.

This image persists, despite the dramatic changes that have occurred in the last five years. Yes, homeless people are still present. Folks just have to get

over that because the missions and shelters that dot the neighborhood aren't going away. Yes, drunks still careen about late at night; although from this resident's experience the drunks are more likely to be out-of-control Seahawks or Sounders fans than the chronically inebriated.

But despite the myth, Pioneer Square is a profoundly different place than it was just a few years ago. Now I know what you

are saying. "Hasn't this been said several times in the last 30 years, with no real change?"

Yes, there was the initial preservation period in the 1970s, with young upstart design firms, emerging artists and entrepreneurs who filled the formerly empty buildings. Eventually, the city declared it a historic district and that saved the place from demolition. The stabilizing and energizing effect was palpable. That was the era of random buskers, the running of the Ivar's clams and Rainier beers, the occasional "streaking" office worker, and the Washington Shoe building packed with funky artists, cheek by jowl, in a glorious warren of tiny galleries. That era ran its course and the district slid gradually into a malaise.

Some years later, Occidental Park was redone and the Square seemed to be coming back again. Then the Great Recession knocked it firmly back to the point where it seemed like every other storefront was empty. For a while, all but two storefronts on Occidental were vacant.

That was truly a depressing and scary period. It was also about the time that we decided to move from the then much livelier Belltown. As Julia Roberts said in *Pretty Woman*, "Big mistake. Huge." We looked around and realized that everything but a few bars closed at 5.

Enlivening the streets

But hold on. Something amazing happened. Or rather several amazing things.

Alliance for Pioneer Square was formed, which tied together a number of previously infighting factions of merchants, property owners and residents. Among the many brilliant actions by the alliance, a mechanism was set up to fund programs to enliven the streets and public spaces. Partnerships were created involv-

ing the city, service providers, waste management companies and the MID (Midtown Improvement District), a maintenance organization of the Downtown Seattle Association.

Streets and alleys were cleaned of trash, dumpsters removed, and the rat population, which fed off the former, was largely eradicated. Police presence was increased and a number of subtle but strategic moves were made to increase the sense of safety. Do people still get panhandled? You bet. But that would be true in any city in the world. If some folks don't like that they can choose to stay in their hermetically sealed shopping centers. Frankly, at this point we don't need them.

Multiple times a week fans of sports teams and music groups stream around the Square, filling restaurants and cafes, as well as places to drink. The place is now lively day and night; indeed many places are staying open well into evening hours even when no events are scheduled. At least 20 superb restaurants and cafes have moved in.

Five years ago The Stranger dubbed Pioneer Square the city's sandwich capital. That may still be true but those eateries have been joined by the likes of Matt Dillon and his growing empire of splendid restaurants including London Plane and Bar Sajor. Along with the wonderful and diverse cuisines of Radici, Girin, Nirmal, Quality Athletics, Altstadt, Il Corvo, Good Bar, Taylor Shellfish Oyster Bar, Casa Antigua and others, there are splendid places to eat in every quadrant of the Square.

Some historic districts elsewhere in the country have come back mainly by being foodie meccas. That was beginning to happen here and then something else occurred. Actual shops came back. Clothing shops, shoe

VENN AT MAIN - BELLEVUE / IMAGE BY BARRACUDA WAD

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GOING BEYOND THE MOCK-UP WITH VIRTUAL REALITY

Advances in VR can accelerate project delivery and shave costs along the way.

Hairdryers, bed linens and furniture are among the last items one might expect to encounter in a busy downtown construction site. Yet for today's hotel builders, the practice of creating full-scale guestroom and hallway mock-ups — to help project owners and developers assess look and feel in the early stages of construction — is standard protocol.



BY PHIL GREANY
MORTENSON
CONSTRUCTION

Allowing key stakeholders to experience and evaluate the spaces early can avert costly reconfigurations during and after construction, accelerating project delivery and shaving costs along the way.

Six years ago, Mortenson Construction followed the same approach at Providence Everett Medical Center. To help staff test drive a model operating room, the project team built a metal-stud frame, covered the inside walls with paper and drew outlets, TVs, medical-gas connections and phones to depict their positions in a finished room. Paper shapes laid across the floor represented items like chairs, carts and operating tables.

Providence surgeons and other attending staff navigated around 2-D shapes on the floor with carts

in tow, assessing the room's layout for day-to-day usability.

Yet rounding up a busy surgical team — to simulate an actual operating environment and the dynamics involved — proved elusive. Conveying to an anesthesiologist that a mark on the floor represented a doorway was not easily understood to mean that opening it would block an adjacent phone. In the case of hotels, keeping a mocked-up room dry on a construction site during a Seattle winter means building out temporary roofing and water management systems, an added cost and time element.

Fortunately, the commercial real estate and construction world is seizing on advances in virtual reality hardware and software, led by the gaming world, to supplant costly physical built-outs with immersive experiences nearly indistinguishable from the real thing.

Already in Seattle, the Mortenson team has fashioned VR models using the HTC Vive headset for the University of Washington Medical Center, the Tilt49 office project and the neighboring 41-story AMLI Arc apartment tower. The plan is to follow suit with the new Residence Inn by Marriott taking shape a block away.

'Feels like you're falling'

In April 2015, Mortenson bolstered its integrated construction



An HTC Vive virtual reality headset is used to check out an amenity deck on a future building.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MORTENSON CONSTRUCTION

group in Seattle to extend the benefits of Oculus Rift VR technology to customers, among the first builders to do so. Stakeholders unaccustomed to interpreting drawings could now experience a building long before the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Sarah Dreger, a senior integrat-

ed construction manager with Mortenson, recalls that while the Oculus Rift platform and headset was a game-changer, motion sickness was a recurring complaint.

The emergence of the HTC Vive has proven to be a massive improvement. When a user wear-

ing the headset begins walking in the real world, the platform's motion tracker translates those movements into their VR environment. The Vive accounts for varying user heights, and incorporates the perspective of

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ON THE COVER

MacFarlane Partners retained the exterior of the 1927 Pioneer Sand & Gravel Co. headquarters for the podium of the 901 Harrison tower in South Lake Union. Find out how architects and developers are embracing the past on page 13.

IMAGE FROM ANKROM MOISAN ARCHITECTS

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NEW LEASE ON LIFE FOR ICONIC FIRST HILL APARTMENT

More than a half-century since its debut in 1962, the new-look Panorama melds vintage design with modern amenities.

The earliest media mention of First Hill's Panorama apartment building can be traced to page 14 of the July 23, 1958, issue of The Seattle Times, in an article wedged alongside Hollywood news briefs and an ad touting Kentucky bourbon.



BY JOHN GLEASON
SECURITY
PROPERTIES

It details a planned \$3.5 million luxury apartment tower in First Hill that would replace three turn-of-the-century mansions razed the year prior, a vestige of the neighborhood locals once referred to as "the first hill."

Designed by prolific Seattle architect George Bolotin and originally named Panorama House for its stunning views, the building would feature a drive-in front entrance, marble lobby walls and floors, a heated outdoor pool and notably, four penthouses. The 18-story Panorama opened to residents in 1962 with monthly rent starting from \$110.

In September 2014, Security Properties acquired the building, renamed it Panorama and spent more than a year completing a full-scale restoration.

The initial aim was to re-portion the large apartments into smaller ones. But it quickly became clear that maintaining the expansive floorplans — ranging from 975-square-foot one-bedroom apartments to 2,500-square-foot penthouses — would differentiate the living experience.

With new residents moving in this spring, including a few returning residents who've called Panorama home from the very beginning, the building is about 70 percent leased and has undergone a dramatic revitalization. Four newly restored penthouses on the 18th floor are among the largest available in any Seattle high-rise, with views oriented toward Puget Sound, Lake Union and the Cascades, and a look that melds midcentury touches with modern design.

Reimagining older buildings

A walk through the Panorama's curved porte-cochere — a rare feature more typically found on the East Coast — is a walk through history. Originally designed to accommodate the gas guzzlers of the late 1950s and '60s, residents were once greeted by valets who steered the cars into an adjoining three-level parking garage. Today, the restored porte-cochere is better suited as a

Panorama has downtown's largest pool deck.



IMAGES FROM SECURITY PROPERTIES

pick-up and drop-off location for ride-sharing services.

The trio of original columns supporting the porte-cochere and the lobby are now wrapped in a reflective stainless steel, one of the many ways in which Seattle architecture firm Clark Design Group sought to modernize the building while taking cues from Panorama's vintage vibe.

Other examples include the lobby's elevator bay, wrapped with original terrazzo marble, and the reclamation of original light fixtures. Even a first-floor conference table incorporates a 1,600-pound travertine slab left behind by an original penthouse resident (rumor has it that the slab was craned into the building before the roof was completed).

To architect Eli Hardi of Clark Design Group, who served as project manager on the Panorama restoration, reimagining older buildings is a balancing act. Change too much and you risk compromising the character that differentiates the property, he said.

"The porte-cochere, the terrazzo, these are all existing elements that you can't include anymore



Parquet flooring was one of the midcentury holdovers from the original Panorama House. New cabinet pulls in the kitchen were inspired by the originals.

without paying an arm and a leg. If you have it already, why not incorporate it?" he says. "From the large oculus lights in the lobby, to the penthouse skylights, to the unobstructed views from the sixth floor and up, there are a lot of unique aspects to the building that don't exist elsewhere."

But not everything was worth preserving.

Hardi describes the ground-floor lobby, at the time of its purchase by Security Properties, as compartmentalized and closed in. Walls separated the main amenity space from a beauty salon that once served resi-

dents. The new-look Panorama conveys the feeling of openness with expanded sightlines.

"We wanted visitors and residents to be able to stand outside the porte-cochere, look through the lobby, and be able to see through the amenity space and beyond," Hardi said. "It's a way to

activate the ground-floor space and draw people into the building.”

Melding new with old

Not unlike the closed-in feeling of the original lobby, all 179 of the apartments once had galley-style kitchen layouts requiring a door to get in. When Clark Design Group architects first toured the units, they encountered Space Age stoves with pull-out cooktop drawers, the same sort of luxury appliance seen in ‘60s TV sitcom “Bewitched.”

Stripping away the walls allowed for an open-kitchen layout, complete with an island and built-in wine fridge. The result: a far better reflection of the kitchen’s role as a focal point and gathering place in the modern home.

“These were once closed spaces, with closed-vestibule entries, closed kitchens and closed living rooms, and you had to swim around to get that view,” said Clark Design Group associate Linda Shedd, who designed the new-look apartment interiors. “Now, you can see the view the moment you walk through the door — it’s captivating. You can’t help heading straight for the window.”

The new kitchen cabinetry, meanwhile, melds modern touches — undermount sinks and quartz countertops — with

knobs inspired by the originals. Marble windowsills and marble floor thresholds are also hold-overs. And the same motifs once found on the oven glass and kitchen backsplash tiles are still present throughout the building, including the window frosting in the four penthouses, and on the original staircase that connects the basement amenity floor with the lobby.

“Our guiding principle was to match the character of the original architectural elements and hardware with today’s standards, and to achieve a seamless blending of the two,” said Elisabeth Nelson, a designer with Clark Design Group.

Perhaps the most distinguishing feature found in the homes is the original parquet flooring, refinished and returned to each apartment.

Inside the four penthouses, original wood-burning fireplaces — once low to the ground and drawing attention to the bareness of the wall above — were revamped with a natural stone that was stacked vertically. In keeping with the midcentury-modern theme, it now lends a floor-to-ceiling feel, while delineating the living room from the rest of the expansive space. It’s now among the most striking features of the penthouses.

Home to modern Seattleites

Posing a few design hurdles



At nearly 2,500 square feet, Panorama’s four renovated penthouses are among the largest for rent in Seattle.

was the building’s original electrical system, which was cast into the Panorama’s concrete framing. Adding electrical capacity to accommodate new washers and dryers in every residence — plus the demands of today’s electronics and kitchen appliances — meant devising elegant workarounds like drop ceilings to hide wires and ducts.

Much of the remaining work centered around restoring the

building’s existing spaces and orienting them to modern uses.

The Panorama has long featured downtown’s largest outdoor pool deck at 15,000 square feet. In addition to refreshing the space, Security Properties replaced a tired putting green with bocce and shuffleboard courts. An outdoor kitchen, seating, fireplace and a Tiki-themed lounge have also arrived in time for summer.

“The Panorama could have

been overly modernized and made bland,” Hardi says. “But pouring time into the details is what has made the project what it is. To be able to create something new from within an existing palette is that much more rewarding.”

John Gleason is the managing director of asset management for Seattle-based Security Properties, which purchased the Panorama building in 2014.

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PIONEER SQUARE

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stores, a fabric store with classes that is open every day and evening. And many of these places are staying open later and later.

Perhaps the most significant and long-lasting impact, however, is coming from the fact that now — after decades — people want to live here. New apartments cannot be built fast enough. On virtually every parking lot there is a project underway, adding many hundreds of people, ranging from high-income to lower income. The first condominiums in 25 years are under construction, fetching top dollar.

Clearly this is not your father's Pioneer Square. It is a compact, richly layered, dense and diverse urban neighborhood. Lately, I've even seen families with kids strolling about.

Finally, it goes without saying that the most astonishing new change is the soon-to-be-completed new headquarters of the Weyerhaeuser Co. This international company chose the district to relocate from its long-standing iconic building in the suburbs onto what had been one of the most forlorn blocks in the entire city. That alone belies the persistent myths about Pioneer Square. Once those 800 employees begin to explore and settle into the patterns of the district, the place will go through

yet another transformational shift.

Amidst all of the changes swirling around and changing Pioneer Square back into what was Seattle's first real neighborhood, there is one spot that has stayed pretty much the same for decades. That is the single block of Occidental between Jackson and Main.

The now fully occupied storefronts of Occidental flank a supremely elegant public space, perhaps the most refined in the city. One measure of how special this place is comes from the many wedding parties that choose it for their photos — the ultimate in romantic symbolism. Interestingly, as we have made recent attempts to convert streets into public spaces, this 80-by-240-foot rectangle remains as a stunning example of the value of simple moves: grand trees, lights and a carpet of bricks. Sometimes less is definitely more.

Mark Hinshaw is a principal with the landscape design firm of Walker Macy, which has offices in Pioneer Square. Walker Macy recently completed a study of public open spaces in the district, with recommendations for improvement. Hinshaw has lived in the neighborhood since 2009.

The Dancing til Dusk program has two events scheduled next month in Occidental Park.



PHOTO BY MARK HINSHAW

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BALLARD'S NORDIC ROOTS COME OUT AT ODIN APARTMENTS

In today's rapidly changing skyline, design teams must be sensitive to preserving a neighborhood's identity.



BY BRIAN RUNBERG & LARRY FLACK
RUNBERG ARCHITECTURE GROUP

Urban cities are not static, nor should they be. They are constantly growing and changing to accommodate societal needs over time. Typically, change is incremental and, as a result, any disruption is more easily accommodated. Sometimes, it's more sudden.

The sheer number of tower cranes in just the downtown core illustrates that Seattle is experiencing a period of intense change not seen for decades, if ever before. To that end, according to Rider Levett Bucknall, as reported in the DJC, there are currently some 60 fixed cranes in Seattle, up 43 percent over last summer.

This rapid growth is healthy, as it stimulates our economic engine and creates vitality and diversity in our cities. But this type of change also requires that design teams be sensitive to preserving pertinent neighborhood characteristics and identity.

Today's successful architects look to address many of these key issues by asking themselves: What is it that makes an individual neighborhood special and interesting to begin with? What are the intrinsic aspects to cultivate to improve upon its individual identity? Was there something significant that occurred there in the past that we can learn from? Does it represent something significant about our society? And, does it function in a distinctive way?

These are just a few of the many potential influences that ultimately define a distinctive neighborhood in the midst of change. Above all, proper acknowledgment that these urban areas have unique characteristics to be embraced and honored — not eroded — represents a fundamental step toward appropriate and thoughtful redevelopment.

Ballard's rich history

Such was the objective of our team when we started design on the Odin Apartments in Ballard for Equity Residential.

Rich in Scandinavian heritage and a central part of Seattle's maritime and timber history, Ballard is one of the most culturally

Odin has a mid-block pedestrian connection to break up the long site.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF RUNBERG ARCHITECTURE GROUP

distinctive neighborhoods on the West Coast, and one that is transforming quickly before our eyes, especially during the most recent development cycle. The unique waterside working neighborhood is now a designated urban village and, as a result, earmarked to accommodate a significant portion of Seattle's growth.

Most design responses would typically be contextual, but some are more culturally dominated. Odin was one such project. With this historic and cultural context in mind, we designed this 303-unit apartment building with the specific intent to enrich this resurgent neighborhood. Inside and out, we strove to bring to the project a unique experience of space.

Neighborhood character

Our approach to design at Odin, just like with any project, is closely linked to the building's surrounding space. The blocks in this specific area of Ballard are unusually long, leaving little opportunity for pedestrians to meander through the neighborhood, as is part of the charm of the Old Ballard Avenue only a couple blocks away.

The Odin site is between Swedish Hospital, its four-story parking garage and All The Best Pet Care's store parking lot — an awkward contrast in scale and character to the pedestrian-friendly older part of the neighborhood. Attempting to magically create

The building is organized around a central courtyard.



an island of retail shops here was not viable. So, we carefully engaged the public realm through ground-level housing with stoops in some areas, and live-work units in others that ring the perimeter of the building.

In addition, there is no alley at Odin — no back side of the project at all. To enliven these frontage areas, individual canopies and signage, inspired by the scale and detail of the historic Ballard Avenue pedestrian

environment, were brought into the design.

Further pedestrian scale was established by a desired mid-block connection; the building is organized around a central courtyard with a lush pedestrian mews that subtly migrates between the adjacent streets, much like the adjacent waterway that connects Puget Sound to Lake Union.

This form led to a "geode" metaphor, resulting in distinctive

outer shell and inner courtyard elements. Scandinavian architects have often evoked design inspiration in their connection with nature through metaphors. Here, the geode split, or "fissure," is positioned to maximize morning and afternoon sun streaming into the courtyard. A dramatic juxtaposition occurs between the enduring hard-edge exterior skin, contrasting with the delicate and translucent emerald green courtyard surfaces.

Marrying exterior and interior

The overall mass floats on a traditional Scandinavian white brick base in contrast with the translucent, green hues of the courtyard. Nordic sensibility is further translated through birch trees and expansive glass windows that allow the natural light to saturate the building interiors. Parallel to this, timber and maritime influences are woven throughout the material palette, from the exterior cladding down to the interior finishes.

For the interiors, Robin Chell Design embraced the strong Nordic vision and carried it beautifully throughout the building. Authentic Scandinavian touches ranged from subtle materials such as natural wood and exposed blackened steel, to more literal features such as an abstract wall covering inspired by a fishing lure, and the profile of a Viking ship etched into a concrete wall. The main lobby has a large, organic light fixture inspired by the movement, scale and tones of the Aurora Borealis, among other evocative features.

"We drew a lot of inspiration from both modern and classic elements of Scandinavian interior design," explained Robin Chell. "Clean lines, open and airy spaces, and neutral tones balanced with pops of color give Odin a unique sense of place. It's sophisticated and playful at the same time, paying homage to a classic

White brick, a traditional Scandinavian building material, can be found throughout Odin.



interior style in an authentic yet unexpected way."

The strength of continuity theme that runs throughout this project is greater than the sum of its parts. In an industry that is often driven by prescriptive methodology of develop-

ment, and an industry that chases or repeats the latest trends, cultivating authenticity from deep within is a welcome departure.

When a design team steps into a new area, careful attention must be paid to the many

nuances and characteristics that make that neighborhood a special place. Change is inevitable, but putting the right foot forward in a new development is a common responsibility to preserve character while accommodating the needs of future generations.

For Odin Apartments, Brian Runberg was the design principal and Larry Flack was the project architect. Runberg Architecture Group is a leading designer of sustainable urban mixed-use, housing and adaptive reuse projects.

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IS DEAD RETAIL SPACE BRINGING YOUR BUILDING DOWN?

Good storefront design can boost a mixed-use building's brand and become part of its amenity package.

Picture a typical mixed-use condominium project circa 2005. What do you see on the ground floor? A nail salon, a sandwich chain, maybe empty space? Unfortunately many developers saw little value in the required ground floor retail and gave minimal thought to the spaces' design or future tenants.



BY JEFF REIBMAN
WEBER THOMPSON

Often ground floor spaces were sold as retail condos or given to the homeowners' association. Some of this is understandable: in a hot condo market many units are sold before the building is finished and developers don't have much incentive to focus on the retail. The city also shares responsibility, requiring retail the market can't support because of well-intentioned but insufficiently flexible zoning policies.

Sadly many neighborhoods today are living with the long-term effect as ground levels remain underutilized and some urban villages fail to live up to the promise of useful services, activation and walkability.

Fast forward through the recession (don't you wish you could!) to the current apartment boom and a different pattern emerges. Today many more mixed-use developers understand the value great ground floor retail tenants can bring.

The shift from condominiums to apartments certainly plays a big part. While many condominium projects can sell a significant number of units before completion, even in a strong market it takes much longer to rent up a large apartment building with few pre-commitments. Fully leased buildings still have turnover to deal with. Having vacant space on the ground floor is bad for business at the leasing office. This makes the retail much more important regardless of whether the building is a long-term hold or sold soon after stabilization.

Branding with retail

Retail can be a positive driver of rental business. Regardless of a building's branding, the ground floor tenants are equally important in establishing identity.

I asked Greg Van Patten of the Wolff Co. to define success for retail in a mixed-use project and he didn't hesitate: "The most important thing is that it enhances the building's branding overall," adding, "of course we

want good rent and strong long-term tenants, it's a balance."

"Some institutional investors aren't really comfortable with retail," he says. "Investors generally assign a lower value to rental income from retail because they see it as risky, but if you have quality tenants with good credit, that will lower the risk and increase value. Local investors can be different because they understand the neighborhoods and may see the risks differently."

The Wolff Co.'s recently completed Pike Motorworks project will be home to Redhook's new Capitol Hill brewpub, which Van Patten describes as the best of both worlds — well established but still very much a local Seattle business.

Maria Barrientos, a longtime Seattle developer agrees. "Retail defines the building at the pedestrian level floor for most people," she says. "People are more likely to say 'the building where Skillet Diner is' than to use an apartment name or address."

Barrientos says she works only with local investors who understand the value good retail brings to a project.

Beyond branding, compelling retail tenants also become part of the amenity package. Living above a great bar or coffee shop expands your choices in the building and it gives you the feeling of belonging, of being a regular at your hangout.

As Capitol Hill developer Liz Dunn of Dunn & Hobbes points out: "Renters today are very savvy about design and amenities ... they want where they live to reflect their personal identities."

Dunn believes local small business owners fill this role better because they are creative and more responsive to the neighborhood. "Folks with one or two locations are pouring their heart and soul into that space," she says.

Dunn, who has also developed stand-alone retail projects such as Melrose Market, believes that getting the right tenant is paramount. "Their success establishes the credibility of the space and builds value long term," she says.

Dunn defines successful retail in terms of human activity as "solid customer traffic (that) translates into revenue, directly and indirectly."

Street appeal

Asked what most apartment developers are looking for from their retail tenants, commercial broker Laura Miller confirms: "Most importantly they want a gathering space for the residents



Lake Union Partners worked with local bartender Joe Russell to open his first establishment in The Wally apartments on Stone Way in Seattle.

PHOTO COURTESY OF LAKE UNION PARTNERS/TUCKER ENGLISH PHOTOGRAPHY



At Sunset Electric, Stout is popular for after-work gatherings, sporting event viewings and late night grub. The Seattle pub also hosts special events on the rooftop.

PHOTO COURTESY OF WEBER THOMPSON/ERIN HATCH

... the ideal tenant serves as a coffee shop in the morning and wine bar at night."

In order to make the most of this appeal, some mixed-use developers are blurring the lines between retail and residential. Van Patten says a physical connection between the uses provides a real benefit.

Although resident security concerns need to be addressed, it's possible to have a connection to the lobby, an overlook, or an entry experience that actually comes through the commercial spaces to connect residents to the businesses.

When trying to attract top-notch tenants, developers and architects must understand what design elements make retail spaces desirable. Street appeal is paramount. Incorporate an interesting storefront, with high-quality materials, well laid out mullions and operable windows or large doors that enhance the connection to the sidewalk.

Aligning entries with adjacent sidewalks is also key; level changes will impact the visual connection and stairs and ramps will eat up valuable floor space. Columns can impact the usability of the space; a few inches

of movement can be the difference between a feature and an obstacle.

Finally, consider opportunities for the tenant to customize their street presence. Too much uniformity across a building can make the individual businesses feel invisible. Breaking down the frontage so individual spaces can establish distinct identities within the larger system can help. Looking for opportunities to preserve elements of an existing structure, whether it's an entire space or reclaimed materials

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

mobility-challenged wearers.

Dreger's group uses the open-source Unity gaming engine to build out fully immersive worlds for Mortenson customers and end-users to explore. The project architect's design content is used as a starting point. Then, custom elements like hotel wallpaper and hospital trays are designed and imported in. Depending on the level of detail desired, a virtual model can be built in as few as two days.

"If you beam yourself up to a balcony on the 38th floor of the AMLI Arc tower in Seattle and accidentally walk off the edge, you really feel like you're falling," says Dreger when describing the lifelike environments. "It freaks you out. You have to look down and remind yourself, 'It's alright, I'm still in Kirkland, there's carpet. We're good.'"

Like physical mock-ups, engaging in VR walk-throughs can curb costly design changes before construction is underway or already complete. And without the mock-ups themselves, additional cost and schedule savings

can be realized.

Mortenson allows Vive-wearers to toggle between day and night when standing on the 40th floor of the AMLI Arc amenity space, both a unique decision-making tool for the owner and a compelling sales tool for leasing staff. Those in the retail and hospitality verticals, meanwhile, can preview the sight lines their customers first experience when stepping foot in their built environment, an important branding consideration.

Similarly in a hospital setting, a surgeon can be transported into a future operating suite to test its work flow and ergonomics. Vive controllers lend the ability to manipulate the furniture, medical gas connections, monitors, light booms and even walls.

All users are equipped with a virtual pen to draw comments and suggest alterations in the virtual reality environment. Video and images of each VR session can be captured and shared, and changes can be cataloged for the project team to reference.

The future UW Central Utility

Plant is among the many Mortenson projects to benefit.

"Before its completion," says Dreger, "the university's facility management staff will be able to answer, 'When we get in there, will we have the room to service this pump? What kind of equipment can we fit? Will we be able to get a scissor lift in here?'"

From Disney to Seattle

Mortenson Construction's Seattle office first used virtual design and construction modeling during its work on the iconic Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles in 2000, a project some deemed unbuildable due to the free-flowing nature of Frank Gehry's design and its absence of 90-degree angles. In partnership with Stanford University and Disney Imagineering, the team borrowed advanced techniques from the manufacturing and aerospace worlds and applied them to construction.

The next leap came in 2006 during the completion of the University of Washington's Benjamin Hall Interdisciplinary Research Building. To inform its design,

Mortenson's Seattle team outfitted a dark room with projectors that beamed a 3-D building environment onto the walls and floor. The resulting technology was aptly named CAVE — Computerized Automatic Virtual Environment.

CAVE was subsequently used by Mortenson offices across the country, including the team that brought Penn State University its Pegula Ice Arena in 2013. The use of CAVE helped avert \$475,000 in changes by identifying them in the design phase.

An eye on the future

The newest virtual reality tools present a novel way to engage the community during construction, and to convey the benefits that may not otherwise be understood until the completion date.

Ahead of its work on the UW's Computer Science & Engineering II building, Mortenson plans to post QR codes around the project site. With a \$15 Google Cardboard viewer and their smartphones, students, staff and faculty will be able to immerse themselves into the

project and experience the finished space, and learn about the various stages of construction.

In urban settings, engaging the community about potential impacts with innovative tools can help build support, trust and understanding.

In the coming years, VR hardware and software will continue to evolve at a rapid pace. Heightened processing capacities will enable multiple users to experience the same virtual space at the same time wirelessly, without being tethered to a PC.

Another anticipated arrival is augmented reality. For asset managers, this means looking at a piece of building equipment and instantly seeing the last time it was serviced, and how it has been performing.

"The use of virtual reality in design and construction is here," says Dreger, "and as an industry we have the obligation to push its use to benefit the advancement of modern society."

Phil Greany is a construction executive with Mortenson Construction in Seattle.

DEAD RETAIL

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

from the site, is very compelling because of the unique and rich feel it can create.

Both Miller and Van Patten agree that it's important to pay attention to commercial space early in the design process. Miller notes that more developers are getting brokers engaged early to review the design layout and finish work, vet decisions about the spaces and understand the needs of future tenants. Van Patten points out the importance of thinking through signage locations early so both the building and the tenants have good opportunities.

Seek out tenants

Of course location and neighborhood demographics are key to attracting tenants too. If a building isn't on the hottest corner in town people may not be eager to rent. Savvy developers or brokers seek out tenants by finding successful small business owners in similar neighborhoods who might be looking to expand; or even by backing a popular chef or bartender who's ready to strike out on their own.

Barrientos, who has developed both apartment and condominium projects, says there is no difference in her approach to retail between the two. "Empty retail may not hurt sales initially but it impacts how people feel about

the building and the community long term and reduces turnover," she says.

And Van Patten says, "Empty retail is one of the worst things that can happen to a project."

Empty or underutilized retail is equally bad for neighborhoods and business districts long term. This development cycle has proven there is real value in well-designed ground floor retail. More and more mixed-use developers are holding the retail portion of the building as their own long-term investment, even while off selling the residential above. This model encourages thoughtful retail design regardless of the financing structure or residential category.

The city also needs to play a part by focusing zoning and design review on creating the best quality retail where possible and allowing the flexibility of convertible spaces where the market doesn't yet support new retail to avoid empty storefronts.

With the next wave of condominium development upon us, it's essential for the fabric of our neighborhoods that these lessons translate into great retail design regardless of the use above.

Jeff Reibman, AIA, is an architect and partner at Weber Thompson, where he co-leads the Mixed-Use and Affordable Housing studios.

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CAPTURING THE PAST IN TODAY'S BUILDINGS

The celebration of a site's history and the importance of placemaking cannot be lost amid the fast pace of Seattle's growth.

Seattle is short on land and experiencing growing pains. Creative reuse of Seattle's existing historic fabric could be the solution to the city's need for density while enhancing neighborhood character.

A quick glance at the website Seattle in Progress pulls up a map covered in orange pinpoints, each one representing a project that is seeking city approval.



BY DAVE HEATER
ANKROM MOISAN
ARCHITECTS

A more thorough search in the commercial real estate database CoStar reveals a startling number of projects being proposed around downtown. In the Central Business District, South Lake Union, Belltown, Denny Triangle, Capitol Hill and Central District areas there are approximately 100 multifamily projects in planning or under construction.

Those numbers support recent U.S. Census Bureau data finding that Seattle is one of the top five big cities for population growth for the third straight year, this time coming in at number four. Increasing by 2.3 percent, Seattle added more than 15,000 new residents between July 2014 and July 2015. With only 84 square miles of land on which to build, and adding thousands of new residents a year, we have to find innovative ways to add density to our city.

With land at a premium, developers are getting creative — and that's a good thing. By combining parcels occupied by smaller underutilized buildings, projects can grow and become very efficient to construct; however, eliminating some of the existing architectural feel of a neighborhood is an easy way to upset current residents.

Seattle has struggled to find ways to encourage adaptive reuse without rejecting developers who are pouring billions of dollars into our local economy and adding much needed density.

Conservation through integration

In 2009, the Seattle City Council expanded the Pike/Pine Overlay District boundaries in order to capture more of Capitol Hill's auto row heritage buildings under its guidelines. These include limited project sizes and incentives for preserving parts of older character structures in new developments.

Ankrom Moisan worked with Alliance Residential on the first project developed under these

guidelines. In the process, we restored or rebuilt five facades from three early-1900s buildings and incorporated them into the larger development called Broadstone Infinity. Now filled with thriving dining and retail tenants, Broadstone Infinity has improved the pedestrian experience while retaining the architectural language of the neighborhood and adding nearly 250 new apartments to Capitol Hill.

Under similar guidelines, Ankrom Moisan assisted AvalonBay Communities with integrating the former Phil Smart Mercedes dealership at 600 E. Pine into a 320,000-square-foot mixed-use project. The original car decking, brick walls and structural beams are now part of amenity spaces for residents and storefronts for retailers. The area's history as auto row is celebrated through the use of metal cladding on the exterior, and artwork and related materials on the interior.

We also worked with MacFarlane Partners on redeveloping a site in South Lake Union near Denny Park. Surprisingly, after beginning the design of the six-story, mixed-use apartment building for the client, the exterior of the 1930 art deco automobile garage on the site was designated as a Seattle landmark. In revisiting the project, we found a way to incorporate the concrete structure into the new building,



Alliance Residential restored or rebuilt five century-old facades from three buildings as part of its 250-apartment complex on Capitol Hill called Broadstone Infinity.

IMAGES FROM ANKROM MOISAN ARCHITECTS

CAPTURING THE PAST — PAGE 19



901 Harrison tower retained the exterior of the 1927 Pioneer Sand & Gravel Co. headquarters.

Collaboration is key.

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FOR OLDER APARTMENTS, CHOOSE RENOVATION OVER DEMOLITION

Tenant-occupied renovations can often return two to three times the money invested.

With the increasing cost of land and construction for new multifamily development, repositioning of older and outdated apartment buildings in desirable locations offers an opportunity for owners to capitalize on.

Given all the new construction of apartment buildings in the past few years, it may come as a surprise to many that the period of greatest apartment supply in greater Seattle was between 1986 and 1991, when approximately 80,000 new units were built. These properties are now 25 to 30 years old and are ripe for renovation rather than demolition.



BY ROSE O'DELL

THRIVE COMMUNITIES
MANAGEMENT

Older communities tend to have desirable, larger unit floorplans and more open space than contemporary buildings. Although owners sometimes struggle to see the potential of an asset, with a creative vision, buildings can be transformed to quickly

generate substantial increases in market rent, net operating income and appraised value. Often the return on investment is two to three times the money invested. There is also an environmentally conscious aspect of renovating rather than building ground up that is appealing to renters in today's ecological marketplace. While downtown residential towers must meet LEED status, invigorating older



Before



After

The owner of Station Nine in Lynnwood repositioned the property by upgrading units and redesigning amenity spaces like this outdoor living room.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THRIVE COMMUNITIES MANAGEMENT

housing stock in our neighborhoods is sustainable repurposing.

The new approach

One of the obstacles for many owners in pursuing value-added development is the perceived need to either fully vacate a building or participate in a lengthy construction schedule dependent on unit-by-unit vacancy. We call this “renovating on

turn” and both approaches can take over 24 months or longer. In the case of the latter scenario, construction costs will significantly increase since the work is intermittent and not streamlined.

For example, if you assume it takes six weeks on average to renovate and re-lease a vacant unit with an average rent of \$1,000 a month and you're spending \$15,000 per unit on upgrades, you would realize \$1,500 in vacancy loss and therefore a 10 percent increase in cost. Multiply that by 100 units and it's a significant loss. “Renovating on turn” is the antiquated approach — both laborious and expensive.

The new approach is tenant-occupied renovations. And these are not small projects. These are transformed communities in terms of interior decor, architecture, branding and improved amenity areas with the capacity to compete with new assets.

Tenant-occupied renovations are accomplished with a thoughtful repositioning campaign and a fully integrated and disciplined execution. When these spaces are improved to maximize their full potential, the large floorplans and more open space is an advantage that resonates with many renters.

Thrive has worked with clients to successfully reposition properties that at first glance appeared to be a rather mundane product in a submarket saturated with new apartment options. Our goal has been to transform these properties while fully occupied. It takes mastery of communication and integrated development services but current residents appreciate the upgrades and the owner is able to quickly meet underwriting objectives.

With increasing land and construction costs in the Pacific Northwest and a sincere focus on sustainability, there has never been a better time for renovations, in particular tenant-occupied renovations. It's a success-

ful option for owners to hold on to their long-term asset while capitalizing on today's rental marketplace.

A local case study is Station Nine Apartments. Located in Lynnwood, the community is a 126-unit asset that was underperforming as a Class C property. Given the deferred maintenance and poor aesthetics of the property upon acquisition, the owner decided to pursue an extensive repositioning program with an investment of \$30,000 per apartment.

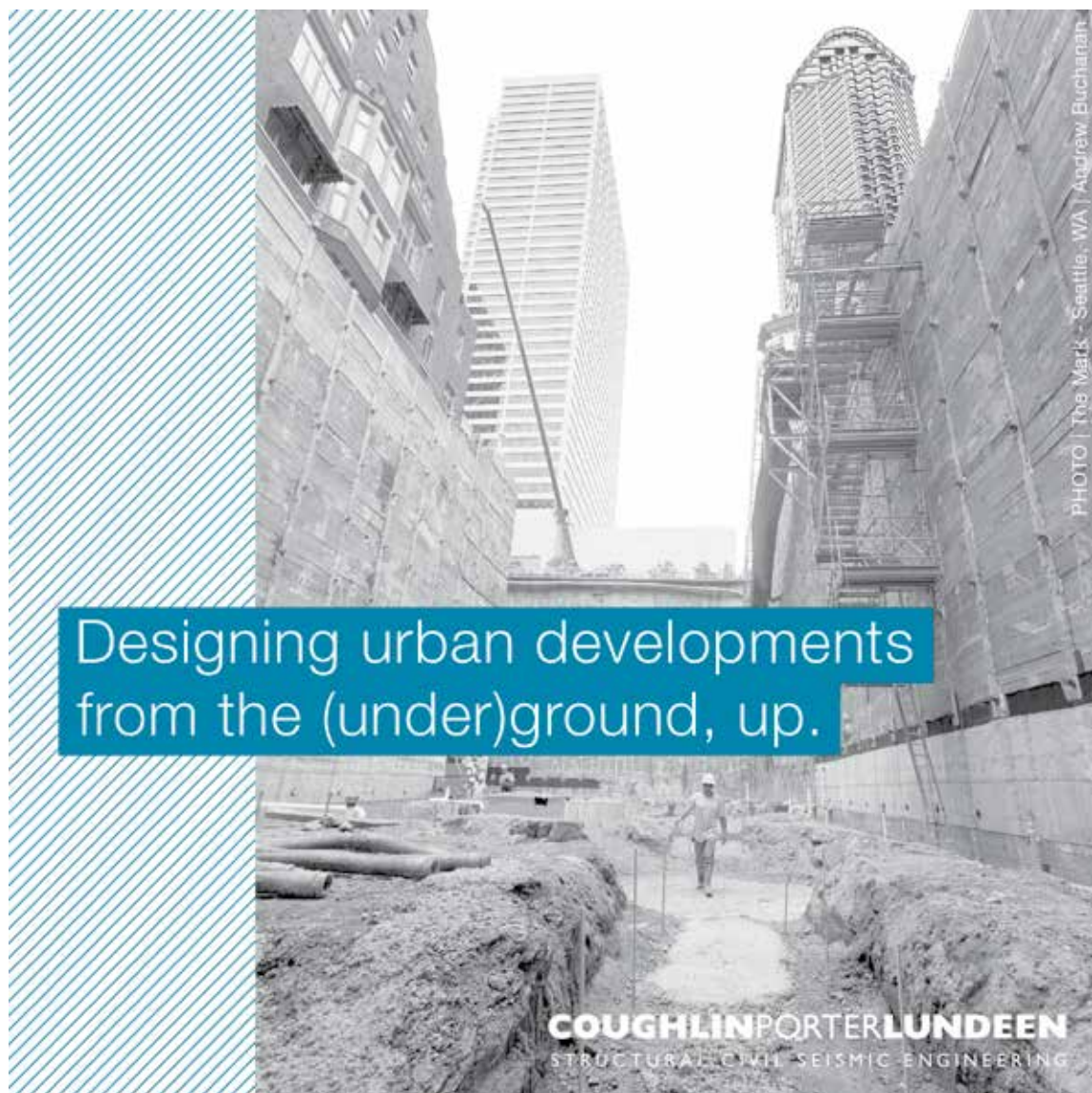
Through value analysis investment underwriting and market positioning, Thrive engineered the exact set of upgrades to match the physical realities and nature of the target renter profile. While remaining fully occupied, the community was renovated in less than 12 months, resulting in market rent increases of 37 percent and an approximate increase in value (net of costs) of two times the capital invested.

The owner was also able to refinance the community 15 months after acquisition.

With upgraded interiors and repurposed common areas that offer the same type and quality of amenities found at newly built communities, Station Nine Apartments reflects all that a new building has to offer but with larger floorplans and more open space. Today, the transformed asset successfully competes with new construction.

Capturing value

As an integrated property management and development firm, we are all for new construction. Our region needs more housing supply and some older property configurations are not feasible for renovation. The tower growth in downtown and mid-rise development in urban centers is a sensible, sustainable model for a growing city.



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LOOK TO THE WATER FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

New rules allowing houseboats and floating homes to be on the NW Multiple Listing Service have spiked interest in the unique dwellings.

By now we've all heard about, if not in some way experienced, the craziness of the Seattle housing market. Record high prices for single-family homes, coupled with extremely low inventory and a large increase in high-paying technology jobs have made all-cash offers and bidding wars the norm for people looking to purchase a home or condo in or around Seattle.



BY BRENDON MEYER
ZILLOW GROUP

Despite all the craziness, there is a niche within the housing market that still exists for those of us who can't afford the \$500,000 average price tag for a home in Seattle. The only catch: you've got to be willing to wave goodbye to dry land, and wave hello to an aquatic lifestyle.

Houseboats and floating homes have been a mainstay of Lake Union's waterfront communities for over 100 years. While the city itself has consistently continued to grow, these communities have ebbed and flowed in number over the years. Recently, with the adoption of a new shoreline master plan and new rules allowing houseboats and floating homes to be listed on the NW Multiple Listing Service, there has been a major spike in interest for these unique dwellings — and for good reason.

Although floating homes in Seattle have sold for as much as \$3 million, houseboat prices are often much more reasonable.

'Owning the mud'

Floating homes differ from houseboats in a few distinct ways, which helps explain some of the price discrepancies. Owners of floating homes usually "own the mud," meaning they physically own the land beneath the water, while houseboat owners typically rent the moorage space in which their houses are parked.

Floating homes are also plugged into the city sewer system and have city power. Houseboats on the other hand are connected to dockside shore power and have black water tanks that need to be pumped out regularly.

Despite these differences, both offer their owners the same opportunity for an unparalleled living experience. Imagine coming home from work and sitting on your rooftop deck, looking out over Lake Union as sailboats zig-zag across the water and seaplanes land and take off in the distance. Many of the marinas,



Brendon Meyer paid about \$250,000 in 2014 for his houseboat called "Nick of Time."

PHOTO COURTESY KEVIN BAGLEY/SPECIAL AGENTS HOUSEBOATS

especially the ones along Eastlake, have direct views of the Space Needle and the city skyline. Paddle boarding, kayaking and fishing are right outside your back door.

While the summer days of life on the water tend to be the more memorable ones, some of my favorite memories are of winter storms. Something about the wind whistling through the masts of the sailboats parked around my houseboat, coupled with the sound of rain drumming on the roof and the slight sighing sound the dock lines make elicit a feeling of deep satisfaction. I've fallen asleep many a time curled up with a good book on my couch, the boat doing its best to rock me gently to sleep.

The best part about this lifestyle for me is the simple fact that I am able to afford living in the heart of Seattle. I purchased my houseboat two years ago for around \$250,000. It's about 700 square feet, making it almost as big as many of the apartments my peers are still renting today. It was a new construction, built by Bill Haggard, a local craftsman who has specialized in building houseboats for years.

My marina, Canal Marina, is located "on the cut" or the chan-

nel between Lake Union and Ballard. This location is perfect for me. I am five minutes from Fremont or Ballard, and roughly 10 minutes from the heart of downtown. There are grocery stores right up the hill in Queen Anne, and I am a short walk away from some great bars and restaurants.

How to buy

Purchasing a houseboat isn't nearly as difficult as you might think. Although there are some slightly intimidating nuances that can be daunting for first time buyers, overall the experience isn't too different from buying on land. This is especially true if you have a Realtor that knows what they are doing. In my case, I used Kevin and Linda Bagley of Special Agents Houseboats.

Kevin and Linda are the premier agents for this niche. They actually live on a 60-foot paddle wheeler houseboat, and their office is suspended over the water on Lake Union. Together they have over two decades of experience. They live and breathe the aquatic lifestyle and they made the process so easy for me. Their connections with-

in the community, their wealth of knowledge and friendly laid back style was truly something I hadn't seen before from any real estate agent.

Before purchasing a houseboat you go through an inspection process, not much different from what you would have done for a home on land. The main difference is the "haul out process." The boat is essentially lifted out of the water by a huge crane called a travel lift. While it is out of the water, the marine surveyor inspects the hull for any damage or soft spots. The process will also ensure that the boat's safety gear, including bilge pumps are working properly. Just about everything else during the survey is the same as it would be on land.

You can get financing for purchasing a houseboat, however there is only one lender that will do it, Sound Community Bank. Their rates are very reasonable, but buyers should be aware that in addition to the 20 percent down payment, you will also need to have cash for the sales tax, which is about 10 percent of the overall price.

Despite the relatively large cash outlay that is initially required, when compared to the

cost of purchasing a single-family home on land, this can often be far more affordable.

If you were to tell someone that you were going to buy a boat as an investment, you'd probably be laughed at, but in the case of houseboats in Seattle, their values have actually consistently tracked alongside home values on land. This makes purchasing them that much more enticing. Over the last year I have seen many awesome houseboats sell for between \$169,000 to around \$400,000. This price range is definitely in the ballpark for a lot of people, and although competition amongst buyers is increasing, there are certainly some affordable opportunities to be found on the lake.

So, if you've been thinking about buying a house in Seattle, but you've had trouble finding a home you love, try putting on some boat shoes and hitting the docks.

Brendon Meyer is a local entrepreneur, Realtor and business consultant for Zillow Group. The Washington native is a board director of the Lake Union Live-aboard Association. His houseboat at Canal Marina is named "Nick of Time."

SEATTLE'S BUILDING BOOM PUSHES APARTMENT EVOLUTION

With increasing competition, new apartments are upping the ante with high-end finishes and unique amenities that balance work and fun.



BY ROBIN CHELL & SCOTT SURDYKE
ROBIN CHELL DESIGN

Where once we'd expect to find business centers, theater rooms and exhibition kitchens, we are now finding co-work spaces, multi-media gaming rooms, and stylish entertainment hubs.

How residents relax, play and connect is being reinvented on a monthly basis, as many new projects push the boundaries of what we've come to expect in apartment living.

Zeroing in on authenticity

Over half of the renters downtown are new to our region — many from outside the U.S. When asked what they are looking for in an apartment community, many respond that they want a community that feels “authentic” to Seattle.

The design and development communities have been quick to respond to this demand, and as a consequence we are seeing many projects with an “industrial chic meets Northwest natural” vibe, with plenty of exposed concrete, reclaimed hardwoods, blackened steel and white subway tile.

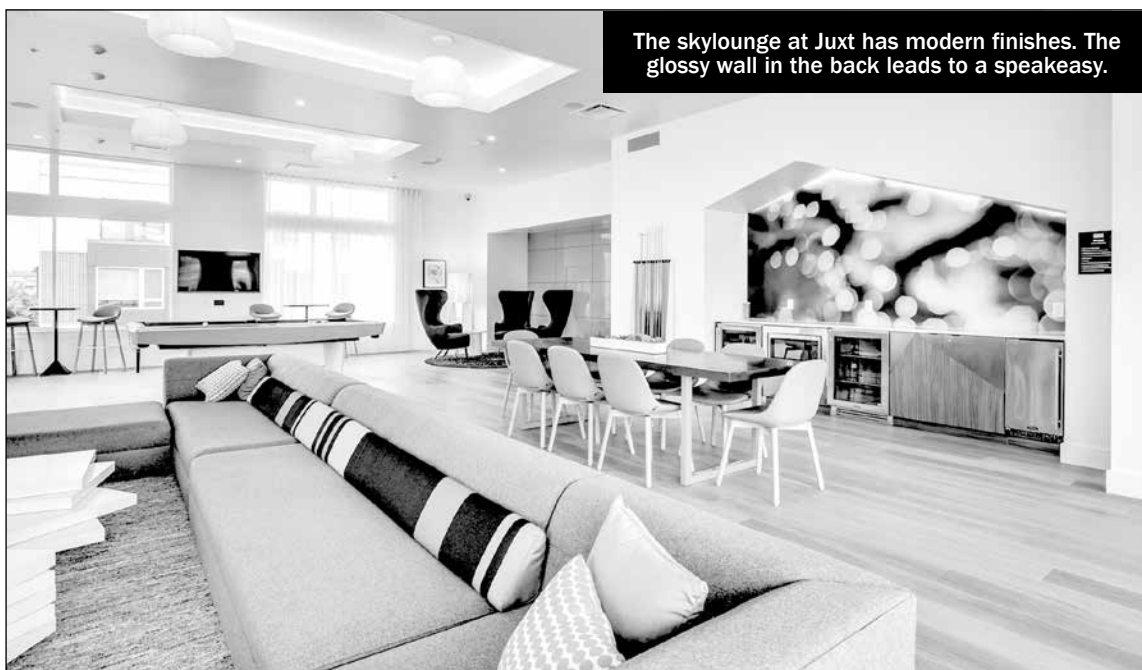
But is this look appropriate for every project and every neighborhood? With rents easily topping \$3 per square foot for new mid-rise product, are we in danger of creating the “same old, same old” in the eyes of the market?

By zeroing in on what is special about the surrounding neighborhood character or history, new apartment buildings can capture a unique sense of authenticity and identity. For example, Capitol Hill's old brick auto row buildings have helped to establish a predominant industrial character that reflects the attitude and vibe of the hip Pike-Pine Corridor.

New projects such as Pike Motorworks, Que and Modera capture the essence of what people want in a Capitol Hill apartment. Across town in Ballard, new apartments are drawing inspiration from that neighborhood's historic Scandinavian roots and maritime heritage. For new projects in the International District, that neighborhood's diverse Asian heritage provides a rich tapestry from which to draw design inspiration.

As the fastest growing neighborhood in the Pacific Northwest, South Lake Union has its own unique attributes and sense of place. For Juxt, a new 361-unit apartment building on Dexter Avenue North, Holland Partner Group engaged Robin Chell Design and Runberg Architecture Group with the goal of drawing from both the past and future of the neighborhood to create a sense of authenticity.

For interiors and space plan-



The skylounge at Juxt has modern finishes. The glossy wall in the back leads to a speakeasy.

PHOTO BY BRENT SMITH

ning at Juxt, our directive was to design a unique and exciting building that evoked the juxtaposition of Lake Union's industrial heritage with its reputation as a 21st century hub for innovation. “Industry meets innovation” was the guiding principle, influencing everything from unit finishes to the programming of the amenities and common areas.

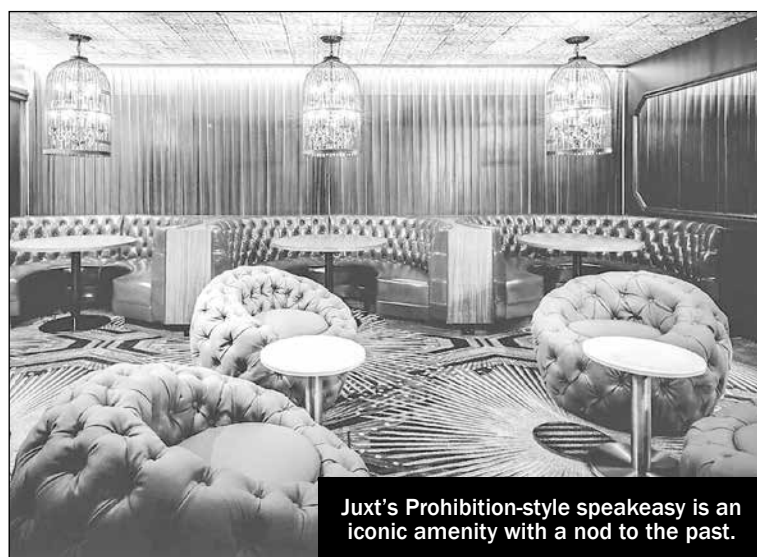
At Juxt, clean, modern interior finishes such as porcelain tile and wood veneer are contrasted with industrial materials including blackened steel and board-formed concrete. The result is an atmosphere that blends the luxury of an upscale high-rise with the approachable vibe of a hip urban mid-rise. In addition, traditional apartment amenities have been reimagined as multipurpose, socially oriented spaces that encourage activity and community.

One of the first decisions made in the development of Juxt was to eliminate the business center, replacing it with a more casual work space. The resulting Laptop Lounge is a pet-friendly co-work space, complete with back-painted glass whiteboards, Apple TVs, informal work stations and a collaborative meeting table. The space has large windows that open onto a breezeway.

Raising the bar

In keeping with the theme of “industry,” the design team at Juxt thought it would be appropriate to tap into some of the most popular industries in our region. As a result, the amenities at Juxt include a playful focus on our region's role in the production (and enjoyment!) of beer, wine and spirits.

On the ground level there is a



Juxt's Prohibition-style speakeasy is an iconic amenity with a nod to the past.

PHOTO BY ARTHUR WESSEL/HERO CREATIVE

gaming loft with arcade games and shuffleboard — and a beer kegerator. The main lobby on Dexter Avenue has a separate hospitality area that is designed as a wine bar, where resident tasting events are planned. The Cellar, as this amenity is called, also features a high-tech digital espresso machine. But the building's crowning amenity, paying homage to liquor and spirits, is a very special space on the top level.

Hidden behind a glossy paneled wall, in the back of a sleek and modern skylounge, is Prohibition-style speakeasy. With rich, upholstered red leather banquettes, copper-topped bar and individual liquor lockers, the speakeasy is a luxuriously hip place where residents can host their own cocktail parties, game nights and special events. As an apartment amenity, it's the first of its kind on the West Coast, and it puts Seattle front and center in the evolution of apartment living.

Collaboration

The 361-unit mid-rise, which opened last month in South Lake Union, is on track to being 80 percent leased this month. Developer Holland Partner Group says the combination of high-quality interior finishes, great views and unique amenities are being well received in the highly competitive downtown Seattle/SLU market.

“We are now leasing about 20 units a week, which is unheard of,” says Brenda Warner, property manager for Holland Residential. “People obviously love the speakeasy, but they also love the rest of the amenities, the great views, the quality of the units, the story of the building, and the whole package.”

Holland Partners was a true collaborator, and the firm was very receptive to new ideas and to rethinking the amenities.

EVOLUTION — PAGE 19

HIGH RISE VS. LOW RISE — WHICH IS GREENER?

Towers may seem more efficient from an urban planning point of view, but they use more energy than low rises.

At last count, there were 16 tall towers going up in Seattle. Our high-rise boom is clearly following the global trend of increasing urbanization.

The data suggests that while in 2014 more than half of the world's



BY TOM MARSEILLE
WSP/PARSONS
BRINCKERHOFF

population lived in urban areas, by 2050 this is predicted to rise to two-thirds, with 2.5 billion new city dwellers — the equivalent of constructing five cities the size of Beijing every year until then.

But, we are actually living at the crossroads of not one but two significant trends: urbanization and climate change. Cities are responding to the trend toward urbanization by reaching for the sky. And many argue this is also a more sustainable forward path than a continuing horizontal expansion.

At first blush, high-rise buildings enable more people to live, work and spend their leisure time or access public services in a relatively small area, and that drives more efficient mass transportation. So, from an urban planning point of view, towers are very sustainable.

But, can a high-rise building ever truly be greener than a low-rise building in terms of energy consumption?

Viewed with business-as-usual thinking and technology, the simple answer is no. If you are going to wash clothes or take a shower on the 40th floor, you have to bring the water up there. When you come home from work or shopping and hop on an elevator, you consume more energy relative to if you lived on the ground floor.

Standing out on the skyline, a tall building is more exposed to solar heat gain, and can require greater amounts of cooling to maintain a comfortable temperature. While Seattle summers may be getting warmer, there are still good opportunities to design effective natural ventilation, and full passive cooling without any air conditioning for low-rise buildings. In contrast, our tallest buildings create design challenges relative to low-rise buildings to even mechanically ventilate, much less use operable windows to naturally ventilate.

Energy demands tend to be higher for towers, and strategies

developed for low-rise buildings may not be effective for high-rises.

Yet, at a minimum we are being challenged by an increasingly stringent Seattle energy code to consider what's possible. And unique challenges aside, those do not mean a designer cannot put knowledge, skills and creativity to work and devise a high-rise building that uses dramatically less energy than its peers.

In Portland, the Edith Green-Wendell Wyatt Federal Building is a recent award-winning example of what is possible in a multi-tenant high rise. The Stone34 project in Seattle, developed and built by Skanska, while not a high-rise tower, established a benchmark for high performance. That spirit has carried forward as Skanska is now developing a commercial high-rise tower at Second and University in our urban core.

Opening windows

As with any other building, a more sustainable outcome starts with evaluating what is specific and unique about a project and its site, and pursuing appropriate passive strategies that result in improved energy performance. For a high-rise building, that means first focusing on improving the facade — ideally considering building orientation — to reduce the need for heating and cooling. And while reflecting as much of the sun's heat away as possible is the summer goal, the design also needs to make the best use of natural light.

The higher winds and other climatic variations you find between the street and penthouse in a high rise present both a challenge and an opportunity. Seattleites still largely prefer the option to open their windows and enjoy fresh air in abundance when weather permits. Whereas in a sealed building, you have to constantly pump in fresh air and exhaust stale air, using more energy.

Opening an upper story window is not an easy thing to do on a high rise. We have to design the facade so you can get the fresh air we want but the wind doesn't blow the window off or blow a gale through your home or office. So, the aim is to provide the ability to shut down the air-conditioning when outdoor conditions allow, as opposed to being forced to use it all the time.

With passive strategies at the facade in play, synergies then open up for the economic use of efficient mechanical systems.

Better facades result in smaller systems, and those mean additional rentable floor space and either potentially higher ceilings as an amenity, or the ability to include more floors in a building within a zoned height limit.

With the evaluation of more efficient systems comes yet another opportunity in high-rise developments. Where those buildings combine offices, homes and other uses, it can enable a more efficient use of resources. Residential buildings have different usage patterns than offices. This presents opportunities to share energy and equipment. A clear synergy results when waste heat from office cooling can be collected and stored during the day and used later as a source for hot water and/or heating for apartments.

As we better understand the energy balance between available resources and building



Skanska's 38-story office tower planned for Second and University in downtown Seattle is designed to LEED gold standards.

HIGH RISE VS. LOW RISE — PAGE 19

IMAGE BY PICKARD CHILTON ARCHITECTS



PLACES
PEOPLE
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PORTLAND
SAN FRANCISCO

Southport is on the south shore of the lake, adjacent to Gene Coulon Park in Renton.

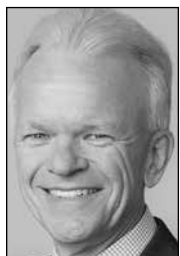


IMAGE FROM SECO DEVELOPMENT

RE-ENERGIZING AN OLD POWER PLANT SITE ON LAKE WASHINGTON

Seco Development's Southport will have a mix of offices, apartments, restaurants, shops and a hotel.

With the amount of development our region is experiencing, it's no surprise that the Seattle and Bellevue central business districts are absorbing many of these projects. Newer urban villages like South Lake Union, Bellevue's Spring District and Redmond's Overlake Village are also seeing explosive growth.



BY GREG KRAPE
SECO
DEVELOPMENT

You may be surprised to learn that a new mixed-use urban village — a true destination environment creating a unique sense of place — is rising in an unexpected location.

The vision began to take shape 20 years ago. Where many saw an antiquated power plant, Seco Development envisioned a thriving neighborhood on the shores of Lake Washington. When Seco learned the land was going to be available from Puget Sound Energy, it set in motion what would soon become the defining moment of this vision.

In November 1999, Seco acquired the 17-acre Shuffleton power plant adjacent to the 57-acre Gene Coulon Memorial Beach Park in Renton. Seco then began creating an urban village that fosters a live, work, play and stay environment.

The Southport vision

Every detail that went into

planning Southport on Lake Washington was with the intent of promoting a balanced lifestyle. Although centrally located near interstates 405, 90 and 5, Southport should leave residents, employees and visitors feeling like they are a world away.

As you stroll the neighborhood, it feels as though you are in the middle of nature yet surrounded by all of the necessary amenities. Southport allows you to step out the front door and go kayaking, relax in the park, take a ride on the regional bike trail, or play tennis or beach volleyball.

From the beginning, Seco envisioned Southport as a technology center with upscale office buildings, residential units, a hotel and retailers. Amazon.com even considered Southport for its corporate campus in the early 2000s to meet its growing space needs.

Seco's commitment to this initial vision for Southport remains unwavering. Today, Southport has 383 luxury apartments and will open a new hotel in June 2017, followed by three office towers in May 2018.

Build and they will come

Unexpectedly, the residential portion came first. Started just as the dot-com bubble burst, the 188-unit Bristol I apartment building marked the official arrival of Southport in 2002. It was a roll of the dice, but the gamble paid off.

Strong demand for the Bristol's waterfront location positioned

the second residential phase — the 195-unit Bristol II — to open its doors in 2008. Just two football fields away from The Landing's 800,000 square feet of retail and more than 20 restaurants and entertainment venues, these nearby amenities played a crucial role in the success of Southport's residential component.

Southport attained a new milestone with the October 2014 hotel groundbreaking. Unknown to Seco, Hyatt Hotels spent nearly 15 years searching for a site that was central to Sea-Tac Airport but also unique. Last fall, Hyatt signed on to operate this hotel as the Hyatt Regency Lake Washington at Seattle's Southport.

When it opens next June, the 12-story, 347-room luxury waterfront hotel will be the first in Seattle to have fiber Internet in all guest rooms, as well as virtual reality and augmented reality compatible convention facilities. It will also have a full-service restaurant, spa, indoor and outdoor exercise facilities, VIP lounge, and more than 43,000 square feet of meeting space.

Visitors will have views of downtown Seattle, the Olympic Mountains, Mount Rainier and Lake Washington.

Workplace of the future

While early concepts had the office towers coming online first, this turned out to be the final phase.

Seco broke ground in January on the Southport Office Campus, one of the region's largest office

projects under construction. The three nine-story towers with nearly 730,000 square feet of Class A waterfront office space will be LEED-certified and serve as a hub for high-tech firms and other innovative companies seeking creative work environments.

These companies' next generation workforces are seeking more than just a place to work. Culture is by far the biggest draw in terms of recruiting and retaining top talent. In fact, company culture outranks corporate brand and salary in studies. This is even more important in our region where competition for top talent is especially challenging.

High-performance teams require an environment that promotes teamwork, innovation and collaboration in an idyllic, desirable setting — with cutting-edge systems and infrastructure. The corporate campus will have a fiber optic network with up to 100 gigabyte data speeds, as well as a redundant power grid. These capabilities ensure future tenants have every advantage at their disposal.

The experience of the future office's employees, customers, clients and guests received painstaking consideration. For example, the three entry floors create a majestic open space that extends outside. A large living room with an enormous glass window opens up into the public plaza outside. In addition, there are several places where conference rooms open to the outside.

Renton is rising too

Southport has become a catalyst for economic vitality in the city of Renton, spurring additional development in the vicinity, including a new Residence Inn by Marriott and Hampton Inn by Hilton.

Construction of the hotel and office projects has resulted in nearly 6,000 new jobs. The future Hyatt Regency hotel and office campus employees will provide a lasting economic impact, while also generating demand for services, tourism and convention business. In addition, six carefully selected restaurants — three of which will be open by next June — will draw visitors from across the region.

With an estimated value of approximately \$1 billion when fully occupied, Southport is poised to become a significant waterfront showpiece for the city following its successful transformation from an old power plant into a mixed-use office, hotel, residential and retail destination.

When the office campus opens its doors in May 2018 — after more than two decades of planning, patience and perseverance — the Southport vision will finally become a reality.

Greg Krape is president of Seco Development, which has been recognized as one of most successful mixed-use development companies in the Puget Sound region with over 35 years as a significant landowner in Seattle, Bellevue, Kirkland and Renton.

HIGH RISE VS. LOW RISE

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needs, appropriate strategies to accomplish this may be implemented.

Getting to net zero?

Perhaps the last question when considering a 21st century high-rise building is whether it can ever achieve net zero energy. For an urban high rise, its relatively tiny roof area in relation to its size rules out receiving a large benefit using conventional technologies for generating renewable energy, such as photovoltaic or solar thermal panels. The use of building integrated photovoltaics at the cladding of the facade, while helpful, is not as mature or efficient, and within a developing urban core year-long access to the sun is not a given.

And, even if enough renewable energy could be deployed on a high rise to offset energy demand, Seattle's downtown uses a networked electrical grid for reliability, so it cannot today safely accept back-fed

energy generated on site.

Fortunately, new district paradigms are emerging that are practical, achievable and localized. They take us beyond thinking in terms of site boundaries when considering options for our building projects. The concept of heat sharing — harvesting neighboring energy resources that would otherwise be wasted — is one such opportunity, and can enable the step change needed to achieve high-performance outcomes.

A recent example of heat sharing is Amazon using waste heat from Clise Properties' data center for use in its neighboring high-rise office tower.

Urbanization and climate change is our future. With planning, good design and future thinking, we can consider both and deliver great projects in our great city.

Tom Marseille is a senior vice president and director of sustainability for WSP/Parsons Brinckerhoff in Seattle.

EVOLUTION

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Together we had a great time challenging ourselves to design something that would be really unique in this market. The efforts seem to have paid off, as the building is enjoying a very healthy lease-up.

Looking back, looking forward

The blue and white eight-story building, designed by Runberg Architecture Group, has abundant open spaces, including a large central courtyard with a bocce ball court, and a rooftop terrace with covered barbecues, lounge seating and an outdoor cinema. The building itself blends traditional elements such as brick and concrete with innovative materials including glowing resin panels. Ground floor apartments with stoops and semi-private patios line the street level and are clad with a brownstone-style brick.

The project team felt it was

important to preserve and incorporate the story of South Lake Union's past. Historic photos and old blueprints are placed in public areas throughout the building. The lower lobby on Eighth Avenue has a two-story fireside lounge and a unique "industry wall," which displays old industrial and maritime machinery, some of which was found on site.

As downtown continues with its major building boom, we will likely see even more evolution in the form of new amenities, dynamic architecture and innovative interiors. Juxt is one building that is helping to move things forward, while at the same time preserving a sense of authenticity that is unique to its neighborhood and to Seattle.

Robin Chell Design is a Seattle-based interior design firm specializing in mid-rise and high-rise multifamily projects.

RENOVATION

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But as our city becomes denser, we simply believe that a mix between repurposed vintage buildings and new construction provides a greater value for all. It allows local families or smaller LLCs to hold long-term assets, retains architectural diversity in our neighborhoods and provides physical "space" in our urban landscape.

While new construction will always establish the upper range of market rates, invigorating older housing stock will make an asset much more competitive with a wider range of renters. In looking to the future, this is the new entrepreneurialism of real estate.

Rose O'Dell is a principal and executive vice president at Thrive Communities Management.



Got Diversity? We Do!

CAPTURING THE PAST

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

designing it as ground-floor restaurant space. Today, the Mark on 8th is open and its 175 apartments are quickly leasing up.

Landmark reimagined

Using lessons learned from these projects, when our clients approached us about studying another site they owned in South Lake Union for high-rise housing, we suggested they self-nominate the existing building on the site. By self-nominating the former Pioneer Sand & Gravel Co. headquarters at 901 Harrison, MacFarlane Partners and the design team would be able to navigate the entitlements and landmark board schedules proactively instead of reactively.

The 1927 building's exterior was deemed distinctive, and we moved forward with the design of a mixed-use development, incorporating the landmarked building into the podium of a 24-story tower. When completed, it will be the tallest residential tower in South Lake Union, towering 60 feet over its neighbors, but the pedestrian experience will be dialed in to the restored Mission Revival building housing retail along the sidewalk.

The celebration of a site's history and the importance of place-making cannot be lost amid the fast pace of Seattle's growth. For this reason, architects and developers should look for ways to connect new developments to the neighborhood's history through storytelling, especially when incorporating character

structures into new construction.

The design concept for 901 Harrison contrasts the site's history as a stone and gravel supplier with the area's future: computer technology. A gabion stone and concrete wall marks the entrance to the building and emphasizes the separation between the old and the new. From a base using ultra thin cement-based panels, the tower gradually builds in transparency as it moves upward. Just as Seattle's industries have evolved, so have our building materials and methods.

Looking ahead

With dozens of construction cranes in the downtown Seattle area, it is important that developers, architects and planners get creative about how to provide density while honoring the city's history. For many of our clients, that has led to interesting and complex projects with a strong sense of place.

Despite the additional challenges that come with celebrating a historic structure in a modern development, the result can be a thoughtful design expression that strengthens a community's urban fabric.

Dave Heater joined Ankrom Moisan in 1990 and moved to Seattle in 2006 to open the firm's second office. Today he is president of Ankrom Moisan, which has offices in Portland, Seattle and San Francisco.

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