

Return to Form

There are two types of people in this world: those who see a listing for a decaying 1,400-square-foot home built in 1954 and grimace, and those who make a viewing appointment. "We were looking for a new place and I thought, This one looks weird and ugly—let's go see it," says artist Adelaide Blair, who, along with her software developer husband, Darin McAdams, renovated a Seattle home built by the late architect Robert Reichert, known for his expressive modernism, as a live/work space for himself and his mother, Tillie.

A Seattle couple's playful, shed-roofed home honors the eccentric vision of its original architect.

The couple worked with architect Stefan Hampden, a principal at Cast Architecture, to restore the historic, shed-roofed residence, using Reichert's exuberant, avant-garde sensibilities as their guide. It was no easy task: Behind the baby-blue siding installed by a previous owner, Reichert's original plywood-stucco construction was rotting. With a down-to-the-studs rebuild on their hands, the team used Reichert's sketches, period photographs, and advice from local historian Jeffrey Murdock to create a

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Artist Adelaide Blair and software developer Darin McAdams worked with Cast Architecture's Stefan Hampden to update a 1954 Seattle home that architect Robert Reichert built for himself, his mother, and his pipe organ.





"The house is an homage to Reichert, not a restoration. It's a living piece of architecture."

STEFAN HAMPDEN, ARCHITECT

functional home within the original plan.

In true Reichert style, Hampden took liberties to develop the more idiosyncratic elements of the design, retooling the entrance to include a courtyard behind a rebuilt Alexander Calder-inspired steel gate; introducing Mondrian-style shelving in the dining room for the couple's game collection; and re-creating the original, southern exterior graphics—or “shadow paintings,” as Reichert called them—while extending them around the facade.

Reichert's graphic on the sloped ceiling had been painted over, so Hampden extrapolated from archival photos to replicate it. He also made more common alterations, such as introducing east- and west-facing windows to bring in more natural light.

And the towering eastern wall—built to accommodate Reichert's beloved pipe organ—now instead supports a lofted home office for Darin.

But while they sought a home that functions for their everyday lives, the couple still wanted its spirit to reflect Reichert's. “Darin and Adelaide were constantly pushing for the design to be more playful and expressive,” says Hampden, who appears to have struck the right balance.

“There are moments where I look around and feel like I'm living inside a work of art,” says Darin.

“It felt like we had an instruction manual from Reichert that was a little vague,” adds Adelaide. “We had to find a spot between him and us.” ■

For the dining area (right), Hampden designed a bookcase to store the clients' extensive board game collection and installed sliding doors to connect the space to a new patio. The architect collaborated with local craftspeople to re-create Reichert's black-and-red graphics on the facade (far right) and living room ceiling (above).



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