

S-S-H HOUSES

Seattle, Washington



SITE

This project involves two freestanding houses on adjacent city properties. Each site presented a difficult slope up from the street. Land-use regulations required detached residences and height and setback requirements defined a fairly small building envelope for each.

PROGRAM

There is a family relationship between the two sets of owners: a mother, daughter and their two husbands. The family wanted to balance easy access between the two units while maintaining individual households. The design of a single-family home normally has to meet the desires of two clients. In this unusual case all four clients had to approve of the function and aesthetics of the design – agreeing to build matching houses in order to reduce design and construction costs.

SOLUTION

Initial design studies considered “bunkered” garages at the front yards. However, it quickly became apparent that significant cost efficiencies could be realized if the two houses shared access to a common parking court at the back of the lot. Constructing the garages above grade reduced shoring and foundation expenses, while the matching plans and simultaneous construction reduced construction expenses.

The first floor is an open loft plan with the main living space extending the length of each house. A narrow service zone (stair, pantry, powder, and mechanical) runs along the side and acts as a buffer to the adjacent property. Upstairs, the master suite faces the street view side, while additional rooms are tucked in back. The bathrooms and laundry are stacked above the lower floor service zones. The upstairs circulation spine overlooks the back patio, and has been designed to allow a bridge to be added to access a future garage roof deck. The back yard is the shared connection between the houses. The kids use the entire yard and paved court, while grown-ups pop back and forth across the patios, maintaining their own homes but sharing a life together.





