

A RUSTIC APPROACH TO "POST" MODERN

Take it easy on the budget *and* get what you want in a new house? Two post-and-beam designs let their Washington State owners do both—with 'found' materials paving the way



Using post-and-beam construction and salvaged materials, architect-owner William Isley created this striking cedar-clad home on Bainbridge Island, Wash. Its sun-filled rooms project from a massive central core, which rises 45 feet from the unusual circular site.

PHOTOS DICK BUSHNER

BIG LOOKS AT A SAVINGS

In the creation of a new house, design usually comes first and appropriate materials are specified later. But for this free-spirited home on Bainbridge Island, Wash., the process was reversed: Architect-owner William Isley and his wife, Minne, gathered nearly everything needed to construct the basic building before they sat down to conceive

the imaginative design.

When the couple's home of the past five years—a restored yacht—became impossibly small for their expanding family, Bill designed a new house around the salvaged materials they'd been collecting. Surplus telephone poles became the posts that support the house and define its shape; heavy fir timbers from a pre-

war factory became floors, ceilings, and beams; most of the windows hail from a turn-of-the-century mill; and even detail items, such as brass hardware and beveled glass, were rescued from old buildings facing demolition.

"My idea was: Build new; feel old," Bill reflects. And his design accomplished both, taking advantage of its unusual

site—a 100-foot-diameter circle set in an 8-acre wooded tract. The tract is a land condominium—with seven circular building sites—developed by Isley a few years ago.

To minimize land coverage, maximize exposure to the sun, and focus on views of Puget Sound, Bill opted for post-and-beam construction, which, unlike conventional framing with load-bearing walls, allows for large open spaces and rooms arranged in nearly any configuration. The design uses a sturdy skeleton of foot-thick poles and 3" x 12" beams bolted together to support the body of the house, which rises 45 feet from the ground. "You can see the structure and see through

it, too," says Bill. "The effect is massive, warm, elegant, and fun."

Dominated by the soaring four-plus-story core from which rooms and decks project, the 2,050-square-foot house fills about a quarter of its circular site. Its informal beach-house styling and cedar-shingle exterior not only harmonize with the forest setting, but, in spirit, make the home the family's "land yacht," as well.

Encircled by kitchen, hall, living areas, and

Honey-tone beams and floors give a rustic look to the master suite (below) and dining area (bottom), which opens to a deck (below, right) that adds 200 feet of outdoor living space to the home.

deck, the dining room forms the nucleus of the interior plan and serves as the center of activity for family and guests. "I wanted a dining room that could seat thirty and still provide room to circulate," remarks Minne.

Thanks to the use of recycled materials and thoughtful, economy-oriented on-site direction by builder Ron Brown, the distinctive house cost no more than a plain-Jane structure of the same size—about \$50 a square foot in 1978. "And the house is so well built," chuckles Bill, "that it'll last a thousand years"—plenty of time for the couple to add a studio and bedroom to the ground level and install a greenhouse on the roof.

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Surplus telephone pole helps support a balcony overlooking the study (opposite), and visually separates the dining area and kitchen beyond. Built-in seating (above) edges the living room with burgundy-color cushions. The windows, saved from an old mill, cost only \$3 apiece, but required \$15 in new glass and 10 hours of refurbishing each.

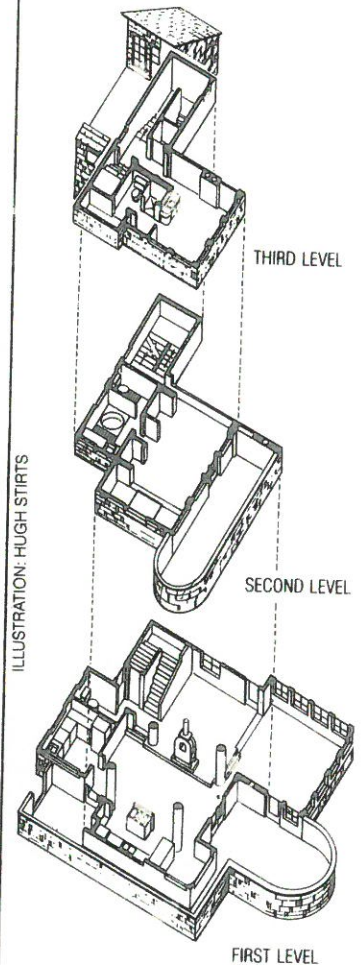


ILLUSTRATION: HUGH STIRTS

