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The architecture in the living room of this Paul Hayden Kirk-designed house looks almost exactly the same as when it was originally built in 1967, but Heliotrope Architects replaced the west-facing windows with large patio doors. The bleached cedar walls display works from the owner's art collection, including a black-and-white bicycle painting by Vancouver-based artist Andre Petterson. Neutral furnishings, including sofas from Flexform and chairs from B&B Italia, keep the focus on the unique ceiling. **OPPOSITE:** The original living room as photographed by Julius Shulman and featured in the fall 1970 issue of *Living Now* magazine, which hailed the house as having "the distinctive woodsy look of houses in that region."

HISTORY IN THE RE-MAKING

An iconic house by midcentury architect Paul Hayden Kirk goes from noteworthy to nothing—and then back again, thanks to Seattle architect Joseph Herrin.



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Archive, Research Library at the Getty Research Institute (2004.R.10)

*i*he 1940s and '50s saw the rise of the Northwest's own unique take on Modernism, a style we now take for granted because of its enduring influence. Angles, multiple windows, and the artful use of stone, wood, and glass were abundant then, as they are now. During the decades when the look was cutting-edge, though, architect Paul Hayden Kirk emerged to become one of Seattle's most well-known and widely published practitioners of Northwest Modernism. His work

was acclaimed locally, but it was also noticed globally; between 1945 and 1970, he was featured in 60 articles in architectural journals across the country.

In the '60s, Kirk designed a house for his brother Blair, who acted as contractor to build the 2,600-square-foot structure on the west side of Washington's Mercer Island. Blair had an extensive collection of modern art, and Kirk designed spaces within the house to display it—an architectural move that would come full circle almost 50 years later. »

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ABOVE: As shown in this archival photo by Julius Shulman, the two-story house has a pair of pointed towers lined with clerestory windows over the carport and sits atop a wooded hillside. **BELOW:** The new front door showcases a water-jet cut strip of metal with multiples of an ancient European symbol called a lauburu, a talisman of good luck.



Shortly after its completion in 1967, the house was shot by Julius Shulman, the American architectural photographer whose famous images of California houses helped spread midcentury design around the world. An article published at the time (in the now-defunct magazine *Living Now*, accompanied by Shulman's images) noted that, "the most distinctive feature of the house is the pair of narrow pointed towers projecting like horns over the carport. Clerestory windows on the inner sides of the towers flood the living room with sunlight."

Today, the house still stands on its hillside, but when it went on the market in 2010, the structure was in disrepair. The man who bought it was unfamiliar with Paul Kirk, but, like the original owner, he had an interest in collecting modern art, and was drawn to the midcentury style. By chance, he mentioned purchasing the house to a friend in his cycling group, architect Joseph Herrin of Seattle's Heliotrope Architects. Herrin, a huge fan of Kirk's work, jumped at the opportunity to restore the iconic residence.

Over four years, Herrin and his client worked to restore and highlight Kirk's outstanding architectural details, including the pointed towers and the living room where the homeowner planned to display pieces of modern art. "Aesthetically, the homeowner was interested in enhancing the things that drew him to the house in the first place," Herrin says. "That meant the bones of the house, the original architectural structure."

The renovation preserved the living room's original layout and only slightly modified the rest of the main floor, retaining much of Kirk's vision—an important goal for both homeowner and architect. Throughout the house, the team replaced old windows with new Milgard ones, and in the kitchen, added new, larger openings on the western side to better capture the views of Lake Washington. In the living room, they replaced painted wood walls with cedar cladding, bleach-stained to match the original wood, and added casework. The homeowner wanted some separation between public and private spaces, though, so Herrin reconfigured the downstairs (which had already been modified by previous owners) to create a master suite and two additional bedrooms.

Heliotrope's sensitive renovation has brought the house back to its original glory, and then some. "We wanted functionality and minimalism, but also a comfortable, subtle elegance," the homeowner says. With those goals fulfilled, he carries Kirk's original concept—an artful, art-filled home—into the future. »

DESIGN TEAM

architecture: Heliotrope Architects

construction: Mercer Builders

architectural metalwork: Company K

landscape: Ohashi Landscape Services



ABOVE: The kitchen was ripped down to the studs and renovated. An island with stained walnut cabinetry and a bleached-oak bar top provides extra seating and work space. The cabinets above the sink have a stained walnut frame and blackened steel doors, fabricated by Company K. **RIGHT:** Images of the current interiors (on the left) and the original interiors (on the right).



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A custom table, crafted by Greg Klassen from a repurposed slab of western maple, sits in the dining room, a space that was formerly a glassed-in atrium. Montis Mila chairs continue the neutral tones from the living room, and metalwork by Company K on the stair railing features the same lauburu found on the front door. ✦