

THE ETHICS OF IT ALL: MY VALUES AS THEY PERTAIN TO ARCHITECTURE

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

of the

North Dakota State University

of Agriculture and Applied Science

By

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARCHITECTURE

Major Department: Architecture

May 2026

Fargo, North Dakota

North Dakota State University
Graduate School

Title

THE ETHICS OF IT ALL:
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By

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MASTER OF ARCHITECTURE

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ABSTRACT

Through careful contemplation I have determined that the most impactful topic for this thesis is the improvement of myself. If I become a better architect now, then the impact I'll have through my career will be greater than any other project I could do this year.

So how do I improve myself?

I thoroughly examined my deep-seated beliefs and explored the beliefs of others. This exploration concluded with the establishment of a personal code of values. Which consists of three core values, each with three subcategories: Ethics (Commitment, Altruism, Integrity), Sustainability (Eco-nomical, Small, Symbiotic), and Artistry (Detail, Craft, Beauty), all of which have definitions slightly off the norm. These values will guide me through my future career, but to take them on a trial run I designed a single-family home while keeping them at the forefront of my priorities. There was difficulty, but I am overall content with the result.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Jack, thank you for being ever patient and supportive of my hairbrained ideas, and for being the voice of reason when I've gone off the rails. I couldn't have gotten through the last three years without you, and I can't wait to see what the future holds for us.

Regin, thank you for guiding me through this year and being willing to go to war for my unique board design. And thank you for lending me your books, they were invaluable resources.

To Nick and Michael, thank you for encouraging my outside-the-box ideas, and for reading my drafts when others wouldn't.

To my parents, thank you for your support, emotional and financial. When I decided at 12 years old to come to NDSU and become an architect I had no concept of how hard it would be, thank you for not letting me give up.

DEDICATION

To everyone that ever taught me.

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1. INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of the year I asked myself two questions: what drives me, and how can I make an impact.

Most students approach Thesis with their minds set on solving a difficult problem or fixing a systematic issue. There is nothing wrong with this method; it makes for interesting projects that are topical to current day issues — but my priority lies in the impact, and chances are slim that our projects this year are ever implemented as a solution.

So — I have determined that the topic that is most likely to have an impact is improving myself. If I make myself a better architect now, then the impact I'll have through my career will be greater than any other project I could do this year.

How do I make myself the architect that the future needs?

I plan to establish a personal code of values to abide by throughout my career and build an uncompromising determination to make the world a better place. I'll accomplish this through deep introspection of my beliefs, as well as exploring the architectural beliefs of others through literature. After I have established my personal code, I will put it to the test with a practice client. Even though this exercise won't match the experience a client would give me, I will take any practice I can get.

In short, my goal is to make myself the architect that the future needs by analyzing current day issues, responding to them with theory, and putting that theory into practice.

2. BACKGROUND

I have never seen a thesis like this before, which means that I have no true examples to guide me. However, this thesis is very much similar to a manifesto, so I will be able to read what other architects, designers, and artists believe and let that inform my values.

The works that were the most helpful were:

Super Normal : Sensations of the Ordinary by Jasper Morrison and Naoto Fukasawa.

Deborah Berke's portion of the speech *Beauty, Justice, and the Built Environment* at Abundant Futures Live 2025

From Eclecticism to Doubt by Eileen Gray and Jean Badovici.

The not so big house : a blueprint for the way we really live by Sarah Susanka.

House as a Mirror of Self : Exploring the Deeper Meaning of Home by Claire Cooper Marcus.

The Eyes of the Skin : Architecture and the Senses by Juhani Pallasmaa.

Village Homes' solar house designs : a collection of 43 energy-conscious house designs by David Bainbridge, Judith Corbett, and John Hofacre.

And the words of climate activists, scientists, and industry professionals.

3. VALUES

3.1. Introduction

We shall begin by setting a baseline, the following criteria are things that I view as obvious knowledge for the field of architecture. In the Abundant Futures Live talk of 2025 Deborah Berke, Dean of Yale School of Architecture, laid what she believed should be the ground rules for architecture going forward.

“It has to be universally accessible,

It has to be well structured,

It has to be environmentally sourced, constructed, and operated,

It has to be free of human suffering,

And it needs to be beautiful.

Universally accessible means not just getting a wheelchair in, it means all users feel welcome. That’s universally accessible.

Well structured means Built to last, with systems and structures that are stable, reliable, and offer the possibility for future adaptation.

Everybody in this room knows the built environment contributes more than 40% of the global carbon footprint, so everything we build going forward or rebuild or adapt needs to actually reverse the climate crisis.

And Free from human suffering means that no material or no product used in construction should be produced with forced labor, slave labor, indentured labor, or child labor, period.

And finally and most importantly, it should be beautiful.

Because access to beauty should not be reserved solely for the rich. Every street a person walks down, every park their children play in, every school their child goes to, every community center their grandmother sits in with her friends should be beautiful. Because to delight in one's surroundings is a universal right”

(MASS, 2025).

3.2. What I have to say about Ethics

Most people go about everyday life not thinking about ethics because its role in life is more innate rather than consciously considered. However, in the case of architecture it is necessary that ethics be purposefully involved, there is too much at risk.

“Architecture inevitably involves all the larger issues of society” - Max Bond
(Smith, 2025).

3.2.1 Commitment

We have a duty as architects to do our best for our clients. This duty applies to more than just the clients who are paying us, but to everyone that will ever see or interact with our designs, from the owners of the building to the passersby on the street and to the people that scrub the floors. We owe it to all of them to make their interaction with our design as smooth as can be. We owe excellence to everyone in our society regardless of if they give us anything in return. We are civil servants, in our own way.

“It’s [design’s] historic and idealistic purpose, to serve industry and the happy consuming masses at the same time, of conceiving things easier to make and better to live with, seems to have been side-tracked” (Fukasawa & Morrison, 2007, p. 28).

In many ways the current built environment is screaming at everyone. Our public spaces have been made hostile in the interests of capital. There are laws against simply existing within a public space (loitering); this is killing community. Teens don’t have anywhere else to go so they stay inside behind screens. The government has tried to drive homeless people away to where

they can't be seen, hiding society's failure to care for these people. These excerpts from *The Eyes Of The Skin* perfectly illustrate the hostility of public space:

“The wide open spaces of contemporary streets do not return sound, and in the interiors of today's buildings echoes are absorbed and censored. The programmed recorded music of shopping malls and public spaces eliminated the possibility of grasping the acoustic volume of space. Our ears have been blinded” (Pallasmaa, 2005, p. 51).

“A society of surveillance is necessarily a society of the voyeuristic and sadistic eye. An efficient method of mental torture is the use of a constantly high level of illumination that leaves no space for mental withdrawal or privacy; even the dark interiority of the self is exposed and violated” (Pallasmaa, 2005, p.49).

So, what can we as architects do? After all, this is more of a societal problem, a bit beyond our jurisdiction. All we can do is our best.

Our duty also extends past humans. The Earth should be considered as a client in every design we conceive; after all, the earth bears the brunt of our decisions. As the designers of the built environment we need to foster a symbiotic relationship with the earth, rather than taking without regard for our host. We need to be making better decisions — for our descendants, for the planet, for the future. We the people are as dependent on the planet as it is on us. We cannot fail, for its sake as much as our own.

“The fact remains that man has unprecedented control over the world and everything in it. And so, whether he likes it or not, what happens next is very largely up to him” – Sir David Attenborough (*Life on Earth*, 1979).

3.2.2 Altruism

Many of us are aware of the stereotype of the egotistical architect; I want to take preemptive measures to ensure that I never fall into that self-centered pattern of thinking. The primary way that the ego of an architect has a negative effect is by prioritizing themselves over the client and refusing to acknowledge when they are wrong.

“There is always temptation to impose one’s own design, one’s own way of thinking or, even worse, one’s own style. I believe, instead, that a light approach is needed. Light, but without abandoning the stubbornness that enables you to put forward your own ideas whilst being permeable to the ideas of others”
(Renzo Piano, 1998).

Nothing you design is for you. There is no need to insert your own tastes and preferences. Put your clients before yourself, and put your clients before the design; remember, we are civil servants. We are but a guide for the client, a chaperone through the realm of possibility. I want to design for people rather than for the sake of design. This memory of Max Bond recounted by Davil Lee — a former colleague of his — embodies the direction that I want to take my career:

“Architecture for him was about the people rather than the form, ... [he] found form that reflected the condition and the people that he was working with”
(Smith, 2025).

And finally, don't just design to be noticed. Get comfortable with remaining unrecognized. I want to do great things with my career, but I don't care if I receive any recognition for it. I will be perfectly satisfied just knowing that I am making my clients happy and the earth happy.

It was reading *Super Normal* that helped me articulate these things that I was already feeling. Especially pertaining to great, selfless, and subtle design. The following passages really hit the nail on the head for me:

“Designers generally do not think to design the “ordinary.” If anything, they live in fear of people saying their designs are “nothing special.” Of course, undeniably, people do have an unconscious everyday sense of “normal,” but rather than try to blend in, the tendency for designers is to try to create “statement” or “stimulation.” So “normal” has come to mean “unstimulating” or “boring” design” (Fukasawa & Morrison, 2007, p. 20).

“I've started to measure my own designs against objects like these glasses, and not to care if the designs become less noticeable. In fact a certain lack of noticeability has become a requirement” (Fukasawa & Morrison, 2007, p. 28).

“I always get hung up on the creator's intentions or the self-expression being at odds with the functions or the harmony inherent in that object” (Fukasawa & Morrison, 2007, p. 102).

3.2.3 Integrity

It will be very important for me to find a firm that aligns with my ethics and values. It will be hard to stick with my values as a young professional if those around me who have more

say and impact don't agree with my positions. In that situation my first instinct would be to say that it's fine, that it's just the way it is and that I'll have to wait to express my values until I'm in a position with more security and power. But that's dumb. I know it would eat away at me if I allowed my values to be so easily compromised. It is simply not an option. But I need to find a balance between rigid commitment to my values and spineless submission. I need to figure out which scenarios deserve my flexibility. Unfortunately I think this can only be revealed through time and experience.

I must not be easily swayed by the ideals and opinions of others. If I am ever asked to bend my values I must carefully consider through deep introspection what is being asked of me and decide accordingly.

I must not justify cutting corners just because it is easier or convenient for me. I owe it to myself to take on challenges and grow from them.

I must never stop learning. Do not resist new ideas just because they are new. Study them in depth and then decide if they should be embraced, modified, or rejected.

I must never stop thinking for myself. No other person or artificial program is capable of making what I will make. Each and every one of us has an amazing and unique machine within our skull that is capable of magnificent things, and I believe that it is a shame to outsource creativity to something that gains no joy from it, all while allowing our brains to atrophy from lack of exercise.

In short:

“What is needed most in architecture today is the very thing that is most needed in life — Integrity” (Frank Lloyd Wright, 1954).

3.3. What I have to say about Sustainability

As an architect in the 21st century, I think choosing not to build sustainably is incredibly irresponsible. Haven't you heard? The planet is dying and we still have time to fix it. I think you may be ignoring this because it seems too large, unachievable, difficult. Get over it. Any step in the right direction is beneficial no matter how small. You've got a job to do, and it's more important than you realize.

3.3.1 Eco-nomical

For our capstone project we designed a senior-focused multi-family residential project in the heart of Bismarck. Due to the fracking industry being what supplies such prominent jobs in North Dakota, the people are largely against anything marketed as "sustainable", because they see it as a threat to their livelihood. However, sustainable building practices in general are not hurting their industries, so when in relation to architecture it is a slightly misguided fear.

When working with this anti-sustainability attitude there is still a way to work sustainable features into the building, but when doing so you must leave out the key buzzwords so you don't trigger a negative response. I am not suggesting that you lie to your clients, it is important to *truthfully* tell them exactly what they are agreeing to, while omitting the "sustainable" association.

Even if a client doesn't request any sustainable measures, it is sometimes possible to include them on the basis that it will save them money in the long run. It helps that sustainability can be incorporated into the dwelling and the lifestyle in so many different ways. As time goes on we see so much improvement in these methods, as well as an eagerness from the public to

utilize them. Hopefully one day it will be standard practice to include sustainable features into all new construction.

3.3.2 Small

An easy way to be sustainable is by decreasing size. American homes have done nothing but grow overtime, while the amount of people living in them has decreased.

I personally really hate this trend. It is rooted in the American ideal that bigger is better, that having More is better regardless of quality, and that More is the ultimate social display of success. Now, I am not advocating that we all return to living in the 800 square foot homes of the late 1700's and early 1800's in America, that is unrealistic. But it would benefit us all to focus on quality before size.

'Mc Mansions', as they are colloquially known, represent the extreme of this trend. Ranging from around 5,000 square feet and upward they take up an extraordinary amount of space while giving the dweller little comfort in return. As prospective client Laura stated to Susan Susanka in her book *the not so big house*: "All we've got is square footage with no soul" (Susanka & Obolensky, 1998, p. 8).

The average suburban Mc Mansion is made cheaply and wastefully. They are built using cheap materials and often the bare minimum quality of assembly. The wasteful side of Mc Mansions lies in the square footage. The two to five people that will be inhabiting the home regularly could not possibly need all that space, many rooms will probably go unused for long periods at a time. This is all before even considering the wasted vertical space. Mc Mansions often have large double-height spaces; these spaces waste construction materials and money heating them.

The solution is simple: build smaller. I think every architect should read *The Not So Big House* by Susan Susanka. Her book perfectly lays out why and how to design smaller, trading square footage for quality. The world could use more quality.

3.3.3 Symbiotic

As I stated above, we all need to be considering the earth in the role of a client. We design these buildings that will have a lasting — if not permanent — impact on the earth, so it only makes sense to prioritize the world's best interests before our own, and before that of the design. “Sustainability in construction isn’t a challenge — it’s a responsibility (Dr. Jane Smith, Environmental Engineer).”

We tend to think of ourselves as the stewards of the earth — an ideal stemming from Christianity — all while forgetting that we are part of it. We are still creatures, albeit capable of much good and much harm. We must remember that “Humans are not separate from nature. We are a part of it.” - Carl Sagan

The built environment should blend seamlessly with the natural environment. We need to create a symbiotic relationship with nature, our designs could showcase the endless beauty that it has to offer, but more often than not we choose to crush it beneath our foundations.

“The living world is a unique and spectacular marvel yet the way we humans live on earth is sending it into a decline” (*David Attenborough: A Life on Our Planet*, 2020).

There is much room for improvement in the sustainability of construction, but at least there is room. So many solutions have been engineered in recent years, and these solutions tend to only get more affordable with time. Throughout my career I want to be a proponent for

sustainability. I want to live to see the day that “sustainability” is not something we discuss anymore, because it has become innate.

3.4. What I have to say about Artistry

In my personal hierarchy of inner identities Artist comes before Architect. Art is an all-encompassing umbrella that I live under, a lens which I view the world through. In my hierarchy Artist is on par with Human, because I believe that to be Human is to be an Artist. Now some may balk and rebut: ‘But I’ve never painted in my life!’. To that I ask: Have you created? Did you ever dream up stories as a child, or build something out of Legos that was all your own? Then you are an Artist. Art lies in the childlike wonder and play that we all had, some people — who society would define as “real” artists — were just more encouraged to feed their creativity.

Now, what does this have to do with architecture? Everything. To design is to make art, meaning that every single architect is an artist whether they know it or not. We carve spaces and paint them with light, carefully organize every space so that it is pleasing to the eye and ear, and influence the emotions of those who experience it. If that’s not an artist I don’t know what is.

3.4.1 Detail

Let us ruminate on the words of Eileen Gray as quoted in *The Eyes of the Skin*: “As if a house were to be conceived for the pleasure of the eye rather than for the wellbeing of the inhabitants”, and Juhani Pallasmaa’s interpretation of her methods: “... whose design approach seems to grow from a study of the minute situations of daily life rather than visual and compositional preconceptions” (Pallasmaa, 2005, p. 62). I wholeheartedly agree that we need to be putting the humanity of a home before any other design aspect. The purpose of a home is to

be a sanctuary to retreat to, somewhere that the inhabitants feel wholly at peace with themselves and at ease enough to invite guests in to share in their refuge. Home is where you can shed the outer layers of the public self, and return to your deep inner self. You are the home and the home is you, people who know you well will be able to recognise this.

“One must build for the human being, that he might rediscover in the architectural construction the joys of self-fulfillment in a whole that extends and completes him” (Gray & Badovici, 1929).

A recent experience I had with detail came from the advanced ceramics class that I’m currently taking. Fellow graduate architecture student Sulia Lee was describing the motivations behind her design of a collection of candlesticks: “I made them to fit my hand, because, well, they’re mine”. The simplistic beauty of this statement moved me; they reflect me because they are mine. How often do we get this level of personality from an object anymore? When was the last time something fit you perfectly? This is what I want to bring to architecture — personality, a reflection of the best parts of the self.

The goal for everything that I design is to imbue it with as many details as I possibly can. From the curved edge of a countertop where there could have been a hard corner, to the way the door handle fits in your grasp, to having the dishwasher next to the sink for easy loading; I am most interested in the type of details that you don’t notice until they are gone. The following observations from *Super Normal* greatly inspired me in this regard, and have finally given me language to articulate what I’ve been feeling for years.

“It’s interesting to discover, after five years of using a chopping board, that we’ve been making use of aspects of its design without even noticing them.” (Fukasawa & Morrison, 2007, p. 104).

“...the sudden appreciation of a form so subtly adapted to its job as to be almost invisibly integrated into the object, allowing it to perform naturally and without call for praise until we are ready to notice it...” (Fukasawa & Morrison, 2007, p. 104).

“These days we take function for granted and for the most part things work well enough not to complain about them. So taking a purely functional approach to design would be disastrous. Super Normal’s about how things work in our relation to living with them. Not just in one-off use but interactively, over the long term, in relation to everything else we own and use and the atmospheric influence all these things have on our lives.” (Fukasawa & Morrison, 2007, p. 104).

3.4.2 Craft

The western world has a quality problem. I’m sure you’ve noticed that the products being made these days “Aren’t like they used to make them”. Producers are more worried about making a profit than making a good product. This mentality has expanded to almost every nook and cranny of production since the industrial revolution. Everything from clothes and furniture to technology and homes. Almost anything you can buy has fallen into this trap; and if the product is higher quality then it’s almost always an exorbitant price, leaving the poor and middle class with no other options. I believe everyone deserves quality and beauty; in a happy future those would be considered human rights. But unfortunately those with only money on the mind control

production, which has led this prediction from Eileen Gray's *From Eclecticism to Doubt* (published 1929) to come to fruition:

“If we aren't careful, standardization and rationalization, both excellent means for reducing costs, will only lead to providing buildings that are even more deprived of soul and individuality than those we have seen thus far.” (Gray & Badovici, 1929). CC Translation

It is our job as architects to design with care and quality so that our art can be enjoyed for decades to come. Do not settle, do not choose hardware based on things like price alone. Regardless of how well the physical space is designed, if the doors are hollow plywood and the surfaces veneered particle board it will bring down the atmosphere of the entire space. There is no true replacement for quality materials and skilled craftspeople.

It doesn't help that these days people are encouraged to throw things away when they are slightly damaged. If things were higher quality, or at least repairable, we wouldn't be having this problem. The dumpster behind my apartment is always full of things that could have been at the very least donated to the thrift store instead of thrown away. People have gotten so used to things being disposable, we aren't taught to mend anymore, we are moving away from a culture of repair/reuse/repurpose towards a culture of waste. All of this on top of the epidemic of “Planned Obsolescence” — mostly seen in technology but encroaching on other markets. Because how do you get people to buy more of your product? You make your product degrade faster. It is infuriating. These problems bring me back to some quotes from Francesca Picchi and Naoto Fukasawa discussing Japanese terms:

“Naoto mentioned the wabi-sabi principle, which implies an idea of beauty or serenity that comes with age, when the life of the object is evidenced in its patina and wear, or in any visible repairs” (Fukasawa & Morrison, 2007, p. 110).

“In Japan, we have the word shutaku. A literal translation would be “polished by hand.” It is a metaphor for something that’s been used and become better after having been touched again and again; shutaku is a polished luster; it is also a metaphor for something that has taken on a personality of its own, or improved with age. It fits comfortably in one’s hand, a metaphor for something that has come to fit in our lifestyle. This same meaning is included in wabi and sabi, but the awkward beauty of something decaying over time indicates an overall beauty, which human hands cannot touch directly; nature in its entirety has weathered that thing. Shutaku expresses a beauty that occurs with time when an object survives constant use, undergoes a metamorphosis and becomes more beautiful than something that is new” (Fukasawa & Morrison, 2007, p. 110).

I have a longing for a world where more people appreciate the ideals of wabi-sabi and shutaku, and the charming flaws gained with age. This culture of waste is a societal problem — not one that can be entirely solved with architecture — but I’ll still do what I can. Through my career I want to promote quality, longevity, and repairability. There is a beauty that comes with life well lived, and the quality of today's products is not letting them live full lives.

3.4.3 Beauty

The most important value I hold regarding architecture is beauty. Now, my definition of beauty deviates from the standard. I say beauty is anything that makes a person feel a positive

emotion when they see it. This is a very wide definition, and it will vary from person to person; One person can find beauty in something considered unequivocally hideous by another, which is why it is so important to get to know your clients and the things they find beautiful. In *Super Normal* Jasper Morrison reflects on a pair of wine glasses: “If I even catch a look at them on the shelf they radiate something good” (Fukasawa & Morrison, 2007, p. 28). This is what I want the entire home to do for the residents, to always exude goodness and happiness, to be a delightful atmosphere to exist within.

An architectural opinion that I've had for a few years now is: *If it's not beautiful what's the point?* After reading *Super Normal* I realized that I'm not just talking about the base definition of beauty, but also the beauty of function. The following quote (once again from Jasper Morrison) perfectly describes the variety of beauty:

“I think Super Normal is wrapped up in a debate about beauty, not just beauty quickly perceived but beauty on other levels, beauty which takes time to be noticed, which may become beautiful through use, the beauty of the everyday, the beauty of the ugly and useful, long-term beauty” (Fukasawa & Morrison, 2007, p. 103).

4. RESULT OF VALUES IN PRACTICE



Figure 1, Thesis Board

4.1. Client Process

I recruited a couple that I am friends with to be my “practice clients”. I say “practice clients” but I treated them and their ideas just as I would a client that was paying me to design for them. Their preferences in combination with my values directly informed the entire building. I chose these clients not knowing anything about their architectural preferences, specifically because I wanted to go into this process blind to simulate the most real experiment possible.

I began our collaboration with an adjacency exercise. Using small pieces of paper with room labels on them I had the clients each separately organize the rooms by which spaces they would want connected to each other. I noted any major conflicts between the couples’ preferences, and from there I created the floorplan.

My next step was extensive conversation with the clients. Together we went through every room in the house and noted their desires for each: Do you have a specific aesthetic vision for this space? How large do you need this room to be? What are the windows like in this room? Etcetera. Then I asked some questions about the house as a whole: What sustainability measures are you comfortable with? How far are you willing to stretch that comfort zone? Are you open to any alternate green construction methods? Etcetera.

After this initial interview I created a few floorplan iterations. I showed them to the clients and together we made some alterations. It was then that we all discovered that there was a large disagreement over the kitchen, one client wanted it completely open and the other wanted it completely closed off. This was going to be a challenge to solve architecturally.

4.2. Project Location & Site

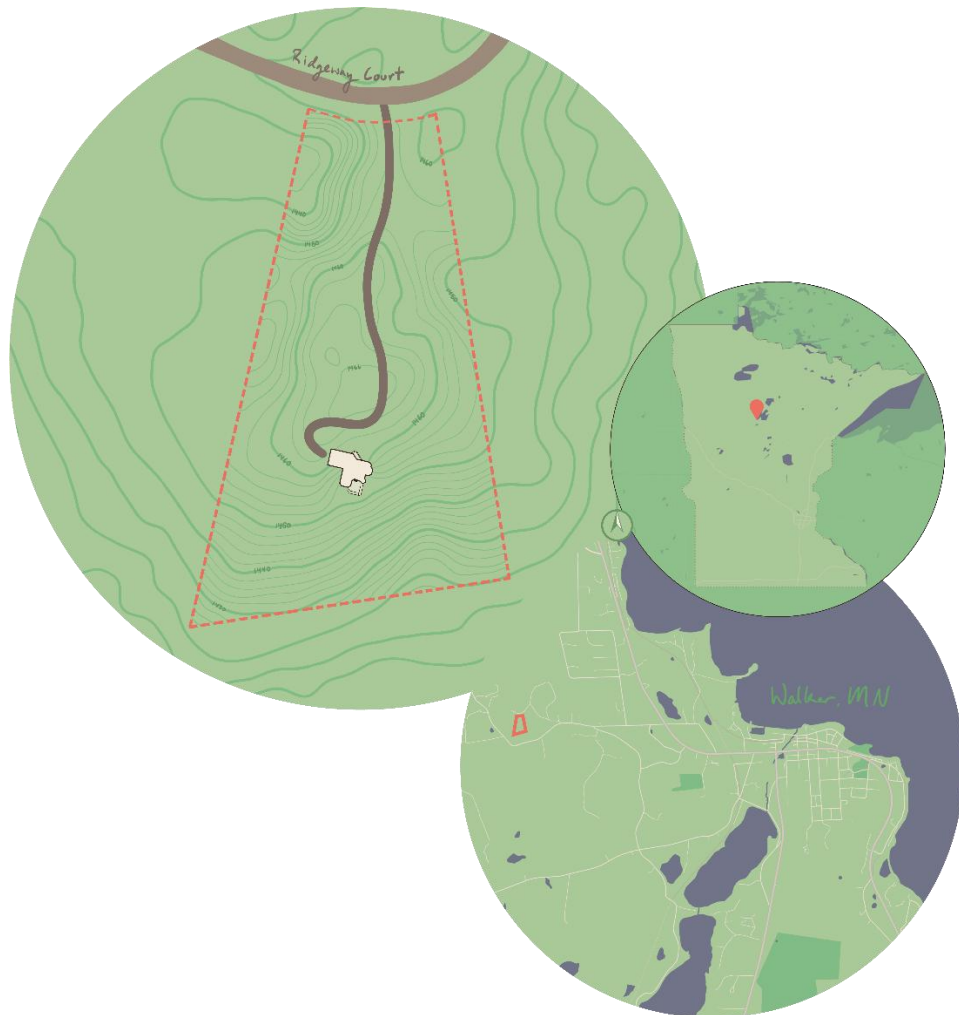


Figure 2, Site Context

My site is in Walker, it is a small lake town in north-central Minnesota with a population of just under 1,000 people. The lot is located five minutes from the center of town in a newly paved development. (Development is a loose term here, it's a lot more spread out and each lot is 5-10 acres). On the site itself we can see that it has a decent amount of elevation change within its borders, I chose to work with this instead of against it. (Fig. 2)

4.3. Final Design

We can see that the driveway (Fig. 2) here meanders instead of taking a straight path to the garage. I wanted to guide the view of the front facade (Fig. 3) rather than have the large and often ugly garage doors be the first thing that you see.



Figure 3, North Elevation

In Figure 4, we can see the change in elevation between the first and the second floor, creating a walk-out basement which we can see clearly in Figure 5. This section also shows the enfilade that is created by the steps descending from the entryway into the kitchen.



Figure 4, East Elevation



Figure 5, Section Cut

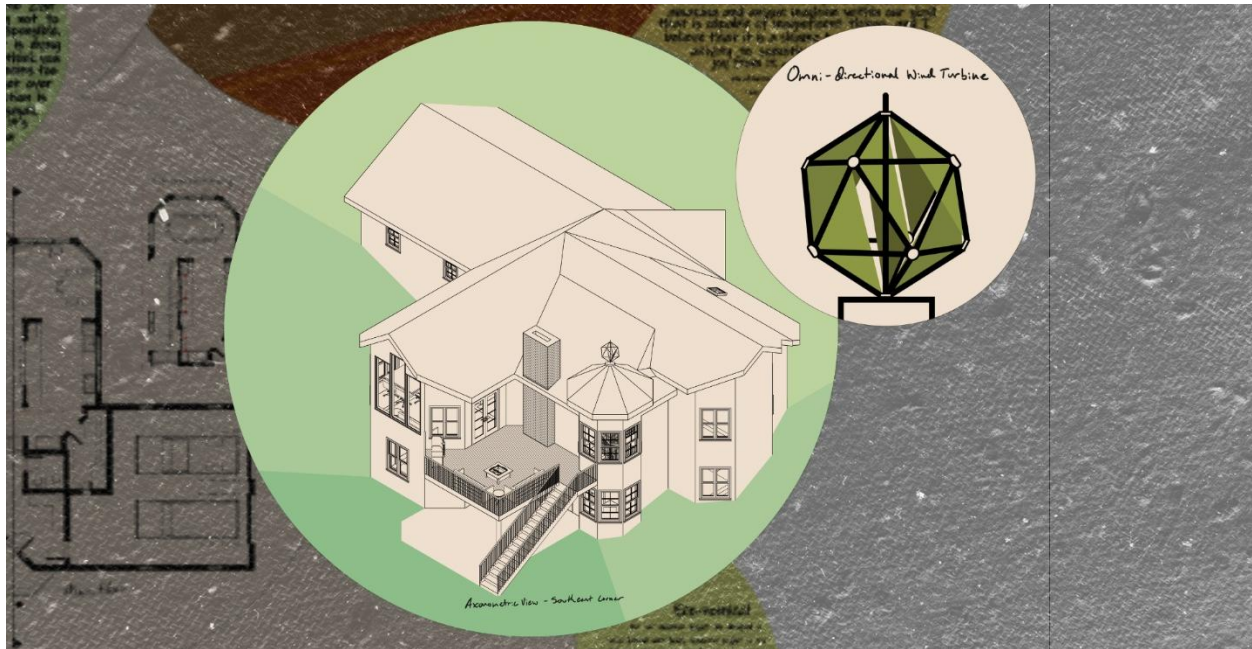


Figure 6, Axonometric View and Wind Turbine

The first thing we see in Figure 6 is one of the unique ways that sustainability is incorporated into this residential home, this omni-directional wind turbine was designed by Physicist Young June Jeon. It is able to harness wind power from any direction and generate power even with a slight breeze.

This Southeast axon here gives us a great view of all the southern windows and the stacked deck and patio.

From the patio we enter into the basement (Fig. 7), which my clients wanted to designate as the kid's domain. There are three bedrooms for the children, and a shared bathroom. In the middle here we have the family room slash playroom. And off to the side is a small office which was specifically requested to be tucked under that stairs.

This (Fig. 7) large, hatched area is the garage slab, and the smaller hatched area is the space that the sunken main bathroom tub takes up.

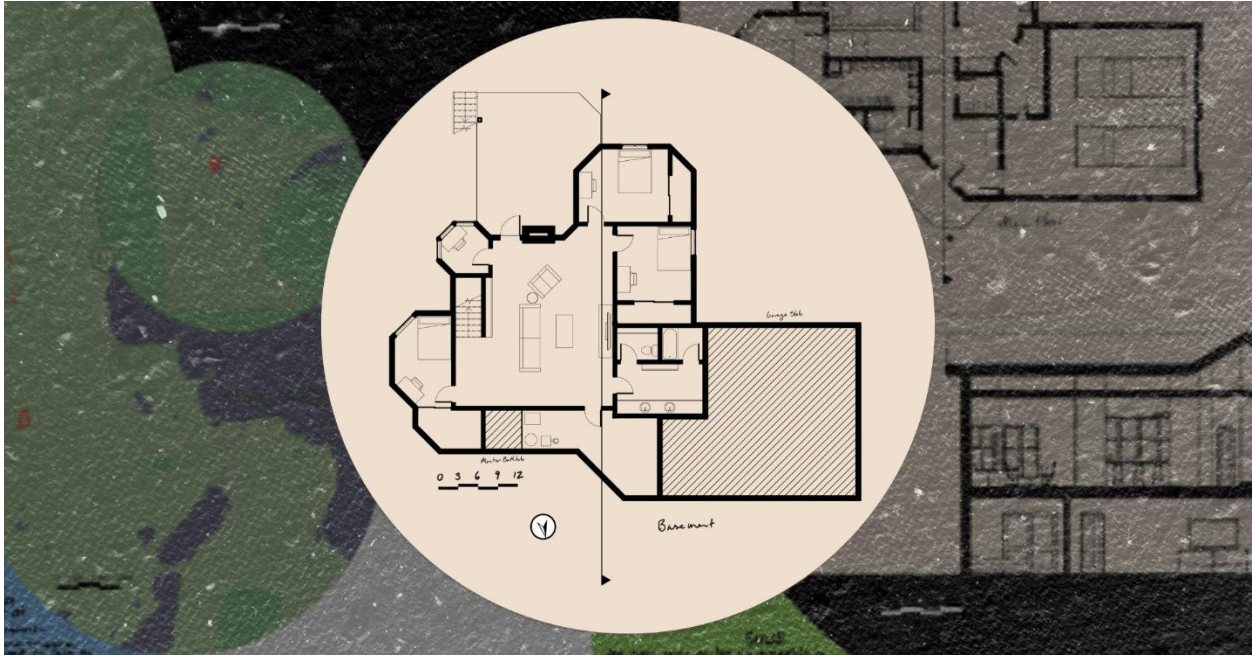


Figure 7, Basement Plan

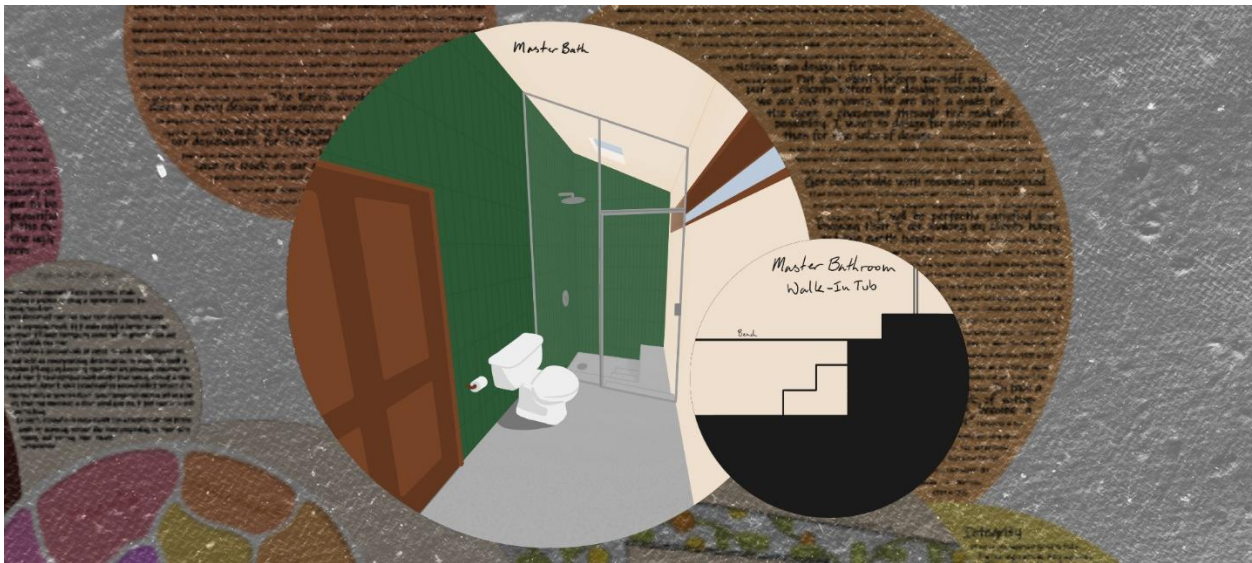


Figure 8, Bathroom Render and Tub Detail

This walk-in bath was specifically designed by one of the clients. It separates the area from the rest of the bathroom, increases the available height of the shower head, and the steps extend to create a bench that doubles as storage (Fig. 8).

A few specific requests were: The gorgeous emerald green tiles, high windows that allow light but not sight lines, and a concrete floor.

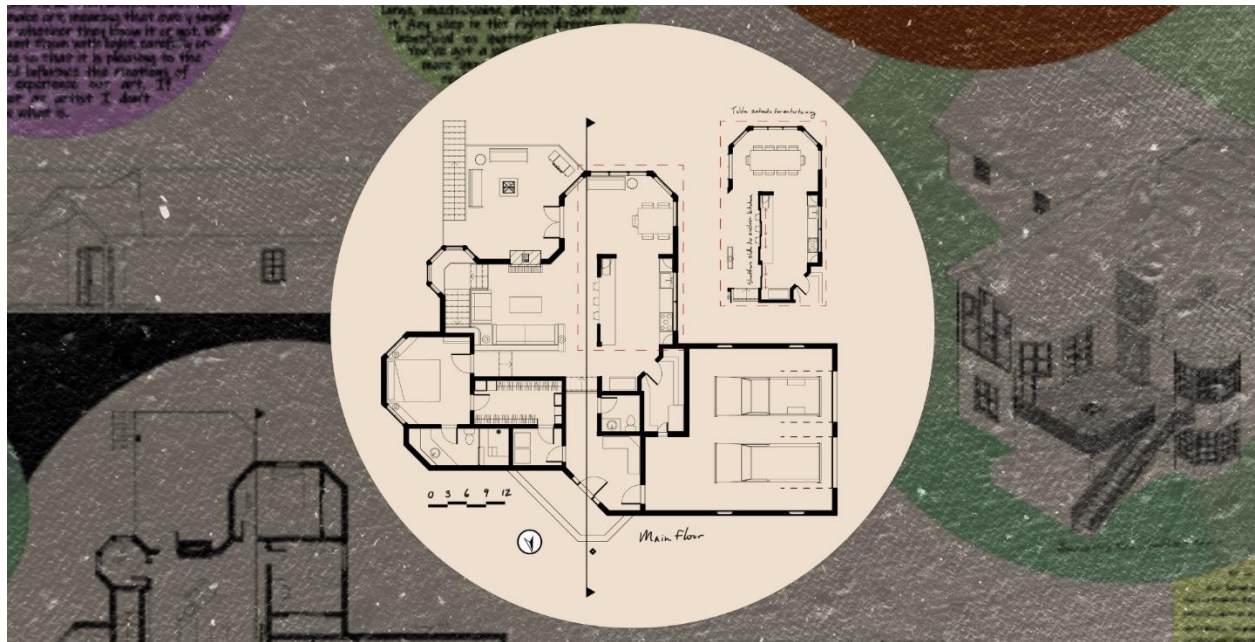


Figure 9, Main Floor Plan

On the main floor plan (Fig. 9) we can see the walk-in bath, then the main bedroom, an excessively large walk-in closet by request, with an entry into the laundry room, which is also accessed through the foyer. The foyer has a built-in bench with shoe storage underneath and hooks for hanging coats above. From there we descend a few steps into the primary living space.

To the right we have the kitchen, with an island, a large pantry, and windows behind the sink and stove. My clients biggest conflict was over the kitchen, one wanted it completely open and the other wanted it completely closed, to solve this I designed the kitchen to transform between the two modes using sliding stained glass panels. This transformation is shown in the upper right of Figure 9. This area also shows the sunroom transforming into a formal dining room for holidays or events. The clients asked for a four season porch, but to keep the home smaller they were willing to settle for a sunroom with operable windows.



Figure 10, Kitchen Render

Figure 10 is my rendition of the stained glass while it is in its "open" state. The clients requested a citrus theme.

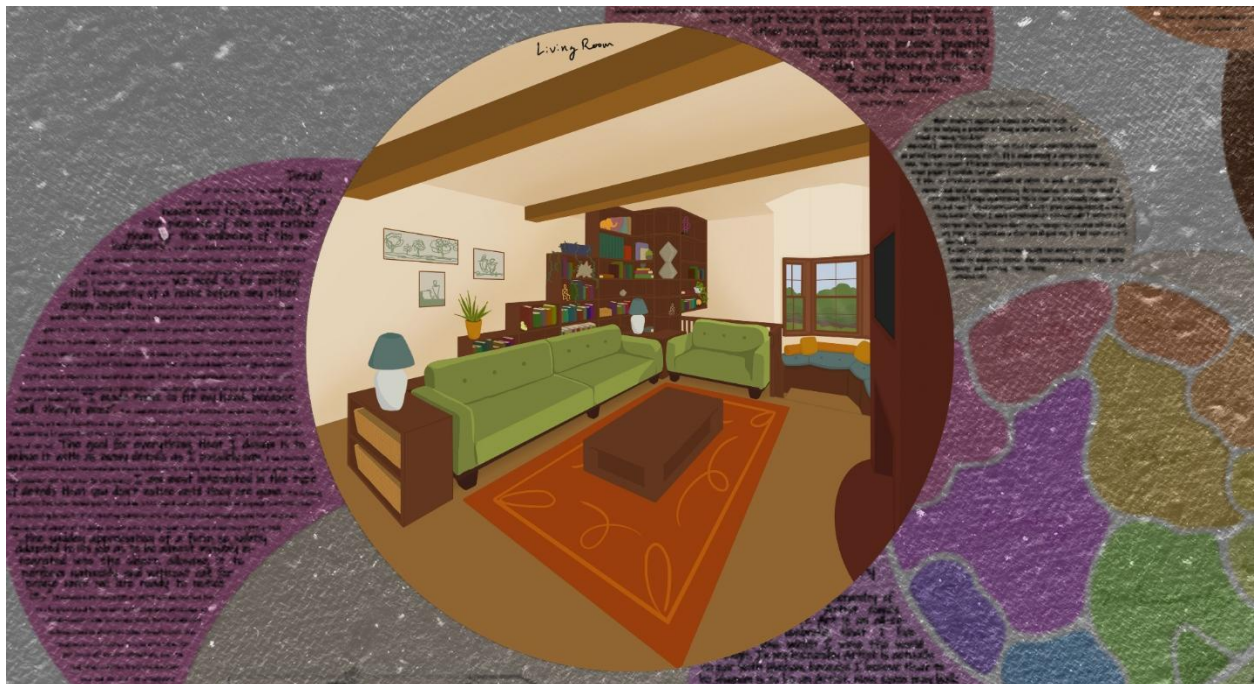


Figure 11, Living Room Render

Now for the living room (Fig. 11 & Fig. 9), it is cozy and well lit, and the stepped bookshelves behind the couch provide a sense of enclosure and comfort. Behind them is the entrance to the main bedroom, which I chose to separate from the living room using the bookshelves for a better sense of privacy.

Down the stairs a bit we see the window seat, which was a specific request. It is the ideal place for reading and observing the outdoors.

4.4. Conclusions, Was the Project Objective Met?

So, closing thoughts. Did I succeed? Am I a better architect now? Only time will tell, but I am confident that this project was beneficial to me. During my time working on the home I became aware that I was not prioritizing my values. I was completely distracted by challenge of the design, and the final result suffered from it. This makes the project even more important for my future, I need to work on consciously incorporating my values into all of my designs.

In combination with that issue, this is not a style of house that I would choose to design, and when presenting the final boards it is obvious that the personality that the boards exude does not match the style of the home. In the future I hope to attract clients that are looking for my particular style, or clients that have a unique vision that they want.

All that said, just because thesis is over doesn't mean that this project stops, this is the foundation for a lifelong exploration into what drives me. I am excited to build upon my list of values as I progress through my career.

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