

Pushing Regulatory Boundaries

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Writing in the *New York Times* in 1970, architectural critic Ada Louise Huxtable quipped, “What happens when architects build for themselves? All hell breaks loose...”¹ This riposte could have been aimed at Arthur Erickson whose acclaimed architectural skills came up against numerous trials, many of which were of his own making, when it came to the design of his own home. For the duration of his long and celebrated career, Arthur Erickson lived in a garage. In 1957, soon after he had begun teaching at the nearby University of British Columbia, Erickson purchased a 120-foot by 66-foot lot in the West Point Grey neighbourhood of Vancouver.² At this time, the site contained only a 40-year old double-car garage with a small adjacent lean-to at the lane edge as the rest had been left bare in anticipation of unrealized house construction.³ Erickson moved temporarily into this garage. Fifty-two years later, Erickson was still living in the garage when he died after having survived a high-profile bankruptcy during which it was declared as his only asset. Throughout his career, this garage-home had remained a constant and potent reference point for a number of key narratives that fed Erickson’s public persona. The underlying commonality amongst these narratives was Erickson’s cavalier attitude toward established norms. However, upon closer examination, there were also several ways in which Erickson’s treatment of his own home illustrated an underlying tension present within his attitude toward architecture at large. This was a tension between whether Erickson believed architecture should be generated in response to external conditions of established rules and norms or instead whether architecture emerged *sui generis*, an exceptional phenomenon born directly from its own context. This unresolved tension, in turn, reflected Erickson’s uneasy engagement with his own position within the late modernist movement, a movement searching to relocate architectural creativity and authority. These issues lurk behind the longstanding intrigue that has surrounded Erickson’s own home.

Erickson’s home was often downplayed in relationship to the surrounding landscape. The garden remained a focus to the point that the home was described by one journalist as, “really more of an appendage to his rather extraordinary garden.”⁴ Eschewing the manicured lawns featured on neighbouring lots, the garden was densely filled with ornamental bamboo, grasses, ferns, reeds,

rhododendrons, pine azaleas, mountain laurels, and dogwoods.⁵ One visiting journalist recalled this mixture as a “glistening jungle.”⁶ With this lush abundance of planting, Erickson described his desire to present the garden, “like a forest clearing in some indefinable wilderness.”⁷ This was a wilderness of Erickson’s making. When he had first acquired the site, the existing English garden had matched the neighboring gardens with its, “crisp square lawn and a rose arbour.”⁸ Neat herbaceous borders had furthered the orderly design of the garden.⁹ Erickson, however, described how vegetation quickly overwhelmed the site through his own neglect, saying that as a busy young professional, “I never had time to tend to the garden.”¹⁰ Erickson then elaborated, “The third year, the weeds took over entirely, so I got a bulldozer and told the operator to bury the garden, dig a hole, and make a hill high enough so I couldn’t see the house across the street.”¹¹ Subsequently, Erickson further distanced his garden from those of his neighbours, which were described by one journalist as “prim-and-proper suburban,” when he added a moon-viewing platform jutting into his newly dug pond, inspired by his longstanding interest in the Katsura Imperial Villa.¹²

Decades later during the fight to preserve the site from demolition, it was again the garden that was prioritized over the building.¹³ It was a local landscape architect who initiated the preservationist momentum during the 1990s that eventually saved the site.¹⁴ The preservationist rationale that achieved this feat was consistently focused upon the historic value of the landscaping. This valorization of the landscape reflected Erickson’s own descriptions of his creative process. A key touchstone for Erickson’s own identification as a modernist architect was his repeated assertion that his designs were generated from their site. Repeatedly Erickson extolled the primacy of site, saying, “Site is paramount for me because it has always been the richest source of inspiration.”¹⁵ On another occasion, Erickson similarly described how he thought, “architects most of all should be listeners, since architecture is the art of relating a building to its environment.”¹⁶ Similarly, commentators often remarked how Erickson’s designs were derived from their surroundings, appearing to be a “direct response to a specific topography...”¹⁷ The case of Erickson’s own home demonstrated an emblematic manifestation of

Erickson's complex relationship to the idea of the site as a generator of architectural form. In effect, Erickson had responded to the existing suburban garage that he had inherited by surrounding it with a landscape meant to evoke a pre-existing forest wilderness. There was thus an underlying tension in the way in which the architecture was here subsumed by its landscape, a landscape that had been generated in contradistinction to the generic suburban architectural condition.

Erickson often dismissed the architectural merit of his home, saying in 1965, "It was a hideous little house..."¹⁸ The fact that the home was a renovated garage remained clearly evident with one journalist describing how, "His living room has the unmistakable rectangular dimensions of a narrow, one-car garage, and so does his bedroom-study..."¹⁹ The tight interior space measured around 600 square feet.²⁰ Over time Erickson renovated some minor interior partition walls, but by and large he often referred to the place as "a one-roomed house."²¹ Writer Edith Iglauer visited Erickson and described how the tiny interior allowed one to survey everywhere at once, saying that from one end, "I could see Erickson sitting and talking at a table desk strewn with books and architectural drawings."²² Erickson's tiny bed was stuffed into, "a loft accessed via a childlike ladder."²³ He gleefully described to a journalist how, "I dive into bed from the ladder."²⁴ A little while later, Erickson continued tinkering with this space, pushing the loft ceiling up into a skylight he cut into the garage roof allowing him to, "stand up to make the bed."²⁵ In keeping with the impromptu quality of the home, there was limited heat and as a result there were some areas that were only usable during the summer months.²⁶ Not only was the thermal comfort precarious, so too was the structure. The underlying structure was described by one journalist as, "a primitive wood foundation."²⁷ This provisional quality of the domestic arrangement was foregrounded, allowing Erickson to maintain an evasive distance to its architectural merits.

When examining the materials used within Erickson's home, one finds a similar emphasis upon making reactive decisions based upon what was already at hand rather than upon prescriptive design projections. An eclectic mix of materials within the home reflected opportunistic application and

resourceful experimentation, often featuring salvaged remnants from a range of Erickson's projects. At one point, the living room walls were covered in 6" square beige Italian suede fabric tiles, an interior decorating experiment undertaken by Erickson's partner and interior design collaborator Francisco Kripacz.²⁸ A City of Vancouver trolley car seat sat in the living room and when covered with pillows acted as a sofa.²⁹ Further seating included rosewood sofas and chairs, which Erickson had collected on a research trip to Brazil. Marble slabs used in the interior had been salvaged by Erickson during a renovation from the urinals of the Vancouver Hotel.³⁰ At the end of the living room stood a repurposed turn-of-the-century column.³¹ The improvised quality of the interior was emphasized in Erickson's telling of this column's provenance: "I set a destructive Irish sailor-handyman to taking down all the partitions, arriving only in time to save the collapse of the roof by propping it up with a wood and terracotta Ionian column I'd retrieved from the demolition of a former residence."³² The bathroom similarly featured an eclectic array of materials that reflected a range of Erickson's design commission with a fiberglass shower, mahogany cabinets and glazed leather-clad walls.³³ The experimental application of many of the material choices sometimes led to unintended consequences as in when Erickson returned home to find his entire pond drained because he had chosen to line it with roofing paper.³⁴ With a similarly relaxed attitude, Erickson embraced the patina that was left throughout the interior by his exotic social life. To this end Erickson waxed poetic about, "the black shoe polished fir floors that had been badly pocked by the stiletto heels of visiting Spanish dance troupes."³⁵ Repeatedly, Erickson demonstrated a strategic attitude towards the material qualities of his home, responding to what was immediately available.

In addition to the ways in which Erickson treated his home as a responsive design, he was also prone to using it as a narrative device that emphasized his visionary rule-breaking public persona. In numerous descriptions of the home, Erickson proudly relayed stories of how he had contravened local bylaws, frustrated neighbours or otherwise disregarded norms. In doing this, Erickson often referenced his authority as a design professional to justify the breach. Soon after acquiring the property, Erickson described how, "I could look out of my living-room windows across the road and see a neighbor's very

ugly front door...,” a view which soon pushed him to dramatically re-grade the site.³⁶ He hired a man with a bulldozer to shovel the garden into a hill at the end of the property until he could no longer, “see the ghastly door.”³⁷ Erickson described how this activity attracted local attention, saying, “Everybody in the neighbourhood thought I was excavating to build a house, and chatted with me over the picket fence, very happy to believe that they were no longer going to have a nonconformist garage dweller among them.”³⁸ Erickson continued with his description, explaining how he then flouted their expectations, not only in not building a conventional house but also in replacing the existing four-foot picket fence with a seven-foot solid cedar wall further hemming in the property. A neighbor subsequently complained to city officials that this fence contravened the city-mandated maximum fence height of four feet. Erickson attempted to compromise by cutting the fence down to six feet before the city then had to intervene.³⁹ At the subsequent City Council variance application meeting, Erickson recounted how he lost his temper when a councilman pressed him on the colour of the fence, erupting with, “Surely with my background, I should be the judge of that!”⁴⁰ When compelled again by the city to paint the fence, Erickson threatened to hire a graffiti artist.⁴¹ Eventually, Erickson agreed to cut the unpainted fence down by a further three or four inches just as he encouraged his thick bushes and trees to grow ever taller.⁴² Obscuring by-law infringements with thick vegetation was a strategy not limited to the property line. Erickson had also built over the exterior space between the garage and adjacent lean-to in order to create one continuous structure joined by this sky-lit connection. A carefully cultivated grapevine covered over this illegal link.⁴³ Since Erickson was living in the intended garage, whenever his habit of renting cars left him with a vehicle to park, he would use the back lane as his storage space, a practice that was frowned upon by the city and which irked some neighbours.⁴⁴

Erickson’s approach towards the wildlife that was attracted to his densely planted garden similarly generated neighbourly attention. Architect and friend Barry Downs described how Erickson was ruthless with his BB gun, unafraid of shooting at the herons that threatened to eat the fish in his pond. Erickson admitted to Downs that once he had “shot through the neighbour’s window accidentally.”⁴⁵

Additionally, late one night Erickson was attempting to chase some pesky raccoons away from his fishpond with a flashlight when he called a friend who owned a gun for further back-up. His neighbours reported seeing waving flashlights and hearing gunshots emerging from the dense foliage and soon a squadron of police cars was on the scene.⁴⁶ In his own defense, Erickson then asked a journalist, “Have you ever tried standing in pyjama pants, trying to explain a vendetta with raccoons to a curious policeman at 2 a.m.?”⁴⁷

But these disturbances and contraventions were all minor infractions compared to the larger issue that Erickson was unlawfully living in a garage with the domicile illegally placed abutting the edge of the lane. This unresolved issue was continually brushed aside by Erickson, who instead questioned the legitimacy of the underlying planning premise, saying “...if I were making the laws, mine would be the only legal house in the city – it makes so much sense to build on the lane and keep all of your free land in one yard in front of you.”⁴⁸ This contention with planning regulations was symptomatic of Erickson’s larger disregard for the role of urban planning in relation to architecture. While he had begun his career demonstrating an interest in how architecture sensitively responded to given planning regulations, over time Erickson developed a far more antagonistic sense that architects should be given more authority to adapt planning to architecture.⁴⁹ This growing sense of architectural exceptionalism in the face of planning regulation was illustrated when Erickson’s declared in 1980, “Social and economic theories? Bound to disaster. There’s only one law. Call it Erickson’s Law.”⁵⁰ Architect and long-time employee Bing Thom corroborated Erickson’s growing antagonism towards regulatory compliance when he observed, “Architecturally, he’s always pushing the problem to its limits. He’s always pushing the client to the limit. He’s always pushing governments to their limit. Regulatory authorities to their limit.”⁵¹ Erickson wrote a text in 1988 in which he described how architecture naturally existed in a state of defiant conflict with its urban context. He argued that the challenge was to make the building appear as if the context had been shaped in response to the building, instead of the other way around. “Since urban surroundings are usually given, the trick is to make them appear as if they were made for the building.

Even though the building is a new intruder, it can appear as though it has orchestrated its own skyline, its own approaches and their unfolding spaces.”⁵² This sleight of hand in which architecture appeared to respond to its environment but in which it effectively recreated its environment in its own image, was a trick that Erickson credited with having learned from his modernist predecessors.⁵³

In addition to flaunting urban planning regulations, Erickson also used his home to project his crossing of social expectations. Erickson’s home soon became associated with bacchanalian parties amongst his vast acquaintances, his neighbours and the public at large, creating a platform for his image as the intriguing man at the center of an expansive and cultivated social sphere. The bon vivant Erickson was described in a local paper as someone who, “appears as predictably in the society columns as canapés at the soirees he frequents.”⁵⁴ The house parties grew legendary through retellings, often featuring well-known guests such as Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau.⁵⁵ Newspapers told of anthropologist Margaret Mead reading to spellbound attendees at one event. Journalists similarly reported on another party in 1967 for the London Royal Ballet where Rudolf Nureyev danced around Erickson’s pond, which had been specially filled with black swans, before jumping into the water in the buff for some inspired skinny dipping.⁵⁶ Illuminated by Japanese paper lanterns, another party was described as having been choreographed around a climatic moment featuring two musicians playing traditional Japanese instruments to accompany Erickson as he released a jar of fireflies that had been flown in from eastern Canada earlier that day.⁵⁷ Erickson described using his home and garden as a malleable stage set for such elaborate events, describing, “If I have a lavish party, I put musicians across the water, and it’s as if they were playing from an island over the sea.”⁵⁸ Another journalist described how, “The buffed and the beautiful once vied for invitation to parties hosted by him and his longtime partner, Francisco Kripacz...”⁵⁹ The architectural press joined in such descriptions with *Canadian Architect* magazine telling of, “many joyous parties, and more than a few tipsy artists plunged happily into the hot tub.”⁶⁰ The interest in Erickson’s social life was widespread: “Of special interest to people in Vancouver were the elaborate themed parties he hosted in his bachelor's garden with sometimes as many as 200 guests looking

for parking.”⁶¹ For an intrigued public, the non-traditional approach embodied by Erickson’s home seemed to match the exotic social sphere contained behind those high hedges.

Erickson’s makeshift house also reinforced narratives about the modern architect as a global peripatetic figure who did not require a home, merely a pied a terre from which to briefly touch base between world travels. In numerous interviews Erickson dismissed his home as merely, “a place to camp” as his, “real home is in the world.”⁶² The modest quality of the home had Erickson describing how pleased he was that, “this place is so convenient, because I can shut it and leave.”⁶³ Erickson explained how his frenetic professional schedule had created a strong sense of restlessness: “I find that about every fourth day or so I become impatient and it’s time to move along.”⁶⁴ In other interviews during the 1980s Erickson claimed that he had not stayed more than ten consecutive days in place since 1965.⁶⁵ One journalist stated in 1985 that, “It is possible, given his legendary jet-setting and near-compulsive travels, that Arthur Erickson has no home these days...”⁶⁶ When a journalist interviewed Erickson in his home, she described how the ever-frenetic Erickson owned a beautiful Le Corbusier lounge chair but that he only, “likes to rest in it briefly... before he goes out to dinner.”⁶⁷ Furthering this mythology of a modern architect who was at home in the world, Erickson once listed in the *Canadian Who’s Who* that his twin “recreations” were architecture and travelling.⁶⁸

Constant restlessness was not merely a condition of Erickson’s living arrangements but was also thoroughly embedded in his design working practices. Citing his desire to work on schematic designs undisturbed, Erickson characterized the extreme isolation of an airplane cabin as the ideal workspace. One interlocutor described how he worked: “Frequently on an airplane he sketches with his fine point black felt tip pen secure against air pressure on standard 8 ½ x 11 vellum sheets, comfortably accommodated on his tray table.”⁶⁹ Erickson described in 1978 how his constant travel often made him unavailable to his employees but that this sense of constant postponement suited his design ethos saying: “My work method is crudely described as ‘by the seat of the pants’.... This becomes sometimes

confusing and disturbing to those working around me since it means postponing decisions and pursuing explorations for as long as possible without making any emotional, intellectual or sensible commitment.”⁷⁰ This absenteeism posed a challenge for Erickson’s collaborators as this comment from his long-time employee and protégé Bing Thom’s makes clear: “Arthur, it was said, was never going anywhere, he was always leaving.”⁷¹ But regardless of its efficacy, basing his design methodology in this form of cosmopolitan restlessness became a selling point for Erickson as he attracted a more international clientele. Erickson described hosting a reception at his home in 1976 for 150 people that included a Saudi Arabian prince who happened to be in Vancouver. Erickson described taking the incredulous prince on a tour of his tiny home, with the astonished prince laughing out loud when he saw the makeshift ladder leading to Erickson’s bed tucked above a storage area. Two nights later, the prince invited Erickson to his own reception, whereupon he continued the running joke by inviting Erickson, should he feel tired during the party, to climb up into the canopy above the bar to have a rest.⁷² Erickson had clearly cemented his reputation as a cosmopolitan traveler amongst potential clientele. Soon after, Erickson began several Middle Eastern design commissions, including the unbuilt Centre for Science and Technology in Saudi Arabia. Erickson’s restlessness, based upon the premise of only requiring a pied a terre was thoroughly embedded not only in his working methodology but also in his client relations.

Erickson’s home also served the purpose of reinforcing his image as an architect who was still in touch with his modest background despite his high-flying ability to hobnob in elite circles.⁷³ Public intrigue around Erickson’s exotic social sphere had begun to sour in some quarters by the late 1970s and early 1980s, with some observers beginning to gripe about his “King Arthur and His Court regal public image.”⁷⁴ As the impression of Erickson’s profligate ways grew wider, he more frequently mentioned both his modest middle-class childhood and his home’s modest origins in lectures and interviews.⁷⁵ The incongruity of this mixture was particularly striking during the 1970s when Erickson was beginning a number of large-scale projects in the Middle East. The architectural photographer Simon Scott who

worked with Erickson remembers “Gulf sheikhs pulling up in big black limousines and being astounded at the simplicity of his home.”⁷⁶

Ultimately the contradictions and ironies embedded within the narrative web surrounding the garage-home and its proprietor were unsustainable. The makeshift home built on a tantalizing mythology of cunning improvisation and cavalier rule flouting was not solid enough to carry the full weight of its own success. By the early 1990s it became clear that Erickson had overextended himself. When the fall came, it was humiliatingly public. Newspaper headlines screamed, “Arthur Erickson, the High Rolling World Famous Architect from Vancouver is Broke.”⁷⁷ In 1992 Erickson declared bankruptcy with personal debts of \$10.5 million with a list of 300 creditors.⁷⁸ His home was listed as his only asset, but it too had been “hopelessly over mortgaged” in the words of one of the officials handling the bankruptcy.⁷⁹ When the paperwork emerged, many were incredulous that Erickson had managed to carry \$3.4 million in mortgages on a property that was only valued at \$450,000.⁸⁰ One journalist offered that such audacious cunning at least deserved accolades for the, “work, thought and experimentation in the realm of financial ingenuity.”⁸¹ Though partly obscured, the financial strain had been building for some time. In 1989 Erickson had closed his Toronto office leaving creditors and lawsuits in his wake.⁸² In 1991 he had closed his Los Angeles office similarly under a cloud of debts.⁸³ All of the charms that had been embodied by his lifestyle turned against him. Foreshadowing his endemic financial problems, Erickson had told a journalist in 1985 that, “travel and telephone costs among the larger expenses of his business.”⁸⁴ Once the bankruptcy was underway, Erickson dismissed the troubles as him being an “idiot savant” when it came to the business of architecture, while others suggested that it was Erickson’s willingness to use company funds for his high-maintenance lifestyle that had been at the root of the problem.⁸⁵ The more forgiving were willing to explain this financial problem as inherently linked to the architectural, as in Bing Thom’s explanation, that “You have to drink the fine wine your millionaire client drinks, even though you don’t have those millions. That’s a dilemma for architects of his stature.”⁸⁶ The pressures around maintaining the richly inflated mythologies surrounding his image finally became

unsustainable. It all came crashing down around the overextended little garage that had improbably helped buoy all the tantalizing stories surrounding Erickson. With creditors and realtors circling, there was a remarkable last minute scramble to create the Arthur Erickson House and Garden Foundation that ultimately preserved the site. This heroic act of preservation, seemingly implausible given the insurmountable financial challenges, had been a very near miss.⁸⁷ Once again, the narrative of exceptionalism carried this improbable garage forward, re-animating it once again.

Cultivated over decades, Erickson projected an intricate entanglement of narratives around his home that served varying purposes in sustaining his public persona. The long arc of his career and his shifting needs and attitudes meant that these narratives sometimes conflicted with and compounded one another. Within the center of this narrative swirl, the building remained a touchstone to Erickson who declared in 1992, “The house is very much a part of me. It’s one of the constants of my life.”⁸⁸ At the core of the stories he told about his own living arrangements was a rich well of tension between Erickson’s dueling understanding of architecture as both reactive and projective. This irreducible tension was manifest in Erickson’s lifelong hedging over whether he would ever complete the project and build himself a home rather than continue to live in the garage. The promise of finishing the project was ever present, always a teasing hurdle away from completion. At one point, Erickson quipped that he was merely building up his savings, saying, he “...still can’t afford an Erickson house.”⁸⁹ At another point, Erickson suggested that he might rather hire another architect to complete the project for him.⁹⁰ Observers wondered if perhaps Erickson had attempted to design a home for himself, but had tragically given up under the immense pressure of expectation.⁹¹ Within this rich web of speculation and narrative, Erickson remained at the center, enticing visitors with his curiously adapted garage-home while projecting the tantalizing promise of architecture yet to come.

- ¹ Ada Louise Huxtable, "The Architects Design Their 'Dream' Home," *New York Times* (July 12, 1970)
- ² Arthur Erickson, "The House at 4195 West 14th Avenue, Vancouver, British Columbia. No date," *Speeches by Arthur Erickson* (Publisher not identified, UBC Library, NA749.E75 A5 1978) Erickson spent \$11,000 in purchasing the property located at 4195 West 14th Avenue, Vancouver.
- Rhodri Liscombe, "Critical Biography," *Arthur Erickson – Selected Projects 1971-1985*, Exhibition catalog (New York: Center for Inter-American Relations, 1985):8.
- ³ Arthur Erickson, "The House at 4195 West 14th Avenue, Vancouver, British Columbia. no date," *Speeches by Arthur Erickson* (Publisher not identified, UBC Library, NA749.E75 A5 1978)
- "The house was purchased in 1957 for \$11,000. What attracted me to it was the garden – the whole of the property (66x120) was to the south of the house, since the house was on the lane, and had been developed as a colourful English herbaceous border garden concealing a vegetable and raspberry patch at the southern end. The house itself had been built about 40 years earlier as a garage to be lived in while the main house was built – properly, on the centre of the property. It was temporarily converted into a dwelling with a small kitchen, front hall, bedroom and bathroom. But the owners never built the main house. Instead they added a single garage next door which, when I bought it, was used for storage."
- ⁴ Hadani Ditmars, "The Former Home of Late Architect Arthur Erickson Faces an Uncertain Future," *Wallpaper* (March 1, 2013)
- ⁵ Linda Fraser and Michelangelo Sabatino, *Arthur Erickson: Layered Landscape* (Halifax: Dalhousie University Press, 2013): 12.
- ⁶ Edith Iglauer, *Seven Stones – A Portrait of Arthur Erickson, Architect* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1981): 30.
- ⁷ Linda Fraser and Michelangelo Sabatino, *Arthur Erickson: Layered Landscape* (Halifax: Dalhousie University Press, 2013): 10.
- ⁸ "Exotic battleground: The Deceptive Tranquility of Arthur Erickson's Garden Belies a Three Decade-Long Struggle Against Pesky Bureaucrats and Roving Racoons," *Canadian Architect*, Vol. 40, Issue 11 (November 1995): 42.
- ⁹ Arthur Erickson, "The House at 4195 West 14th Avenue, Vancouver, British Columbia. No date," *Speeches by Arthur Erickson* (Publisher not identified, UBC Library, NA749.E75 A5 1978)
- ¹⁰ Zak Ghanim, "Interviews by Zak Ghanim with Arthur Erickson" 1994, last accessed January 2018. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X0upz3gKndk>
- ¹¹ Edith Iglauer, *Seven Stones – A Portrait of Arthur Erickson, Architect* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1981): 33.
- ¹² Steve Whysall, "Battle Blooms Over Erickson's Abode: If You Think the Architect Was Great, You Probably Favor Preservation," *Vancouver Sun* (July 24, 1993)
- ¹³ Chris Dafoe, "Donors Come to Rescue of Erickson House," *Globe and Mail* (January 28, 1997)
- "The real value of the lot lies with Erickson's gardens, according to the members of the Arthur Erickson House and Garden Foundation."
- ¹⁴ Landscape architect Elizabeth Watts was the early initiator in preserving the site in 1993 and in establishing the Citizens to Preserve the Arthur Erickson House & Garden Foundation.
- ¹⁵ Linda Fraser and Michelangelo Sabatino. *Arthur Erickson: Layered Landscape* (Halifax: Dalhousie University Press, 2013): 6.
- ¹⁶ Adele Freedman, "In Erickson's Eden, An Architect Can Improve on Nature," *Globe and Mail* (October 4, 1980)
- ¹⁷ Rhodri Liscombe, "Critical Biography," *Arthur Erickson – Selected Projects 1971-1985*, Exhibition catalog (New York: Center for Inter-American Relations, 1985): 9.
- ¹⁸ Rita Reif, "Home: 2 Garages and a Lean-To," *New York Times* (September 14, 1965)
- ¹⁹ Edith Iglauer, *Seven Stones – A Portrait of Arthur Erickson, Architect* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1981): 28.
- ²⁰ Steve Whysall, "Battle Blooms Over Erickson's Abode: If You Think the Architect Was Great, You Probably Favor Preservation," *Vancouver Sun* (July 24, 1993)
- ²¹ Arthur Erickson, "The House at 4195 West 14th Avenue, Vancouver, British Columbia. No date" *Speeches by Arthur Erickson* (Publisher not identified, UBC Library, NA749.E75 A5 1978)
- ²² Edith Iglauer, *Seven Stones – A Portrait of Arthur Erickson, Architect* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1981): 34.
- ²³ Hadani Ditmars, "The Former Home of Late Architect Arthur Erickson Faces an Uncertain Future," *Wallpaper* (March 1, 2013)
- ²⁴ Rita Reif, "Home: 2 Garages and a Lean-To," *New York Times* (September 14, 1965)
- ²⁵ Arthur Erickson, "The House at 4195 West 14th Avenue, Vancouver, British Columbia. No date," *Speeches by Arthur Erickson* (Publisher not identified, UBC Library, NA749.E75 A5 1978)
- ²⁶ Ibid.
- ²⁷ Hadani Ditmars, "The Former Home of Late Architect Arthur Erickson Faces an Uncertain Future," *Wallpaper* (March 1, 2013)
- ²⁸ Arthur Erickson, *Francisco Kripacz* (Vancouver: Erickson Estate, 2015): 4.
- "In the updating of my coach house in Vancouver, he used 6" square pieces of Italian suede in a natural light camel colour on the walls to blend with the carpet and sofas as a single palette. The bathroom walls, on the contrary, were covered in glazed squares of calves' leather to blend with the teak cabinetry."
- ²⁹ Rita Reif, "Home: 2 Garages and a Lean-To," *New York Times* (September 14, 1965)
- ³⁰ Arthur Erickson, "The House at 4195 West 14th Avenue, Vancouver, British Columbia. No date," *Speeches by Arthur Erickson* (Publisher not identified, UBC Library, NA749.E75 A5 1978)
- ³¹ Rita Reif, "Home: 2 Garages and a Lean-To," *New York Times* (September 14, 1965)
- ³² Arthur Erickson, "The House at 4195 West 14th Avenue, Vancouver, British Columbia. No date" *Speeches by Arthur Erickson* (Publisher not identified, UBC Library, NA749.E75 A5 1978)
- ³³ Hadani Ditmars, "The Former Home of Late Architect Arthur Erickson Faces an Uncertain Future," *Wallpaper* (March 1, 2013)
- ³⁴ Rita Reif, "Home: 2 Garages and a Lean-To," *New York Times* (September 14, 1965)
- ³⁵ Arthur Erickson, "The House at 4195 West 14th Avenue, Vancouver, British Columbia. No date," *Speeches by Arthur Erickson* (Publisher not identified, UBC Library, NA749.E75 A5 1978)
- ³⁶ Linda Fraser and Michelangelo Sabatino, *Arthur Erickson: Layered Landscape* (Halifax: Dalhousie University Press, 2013): 13.
- ³⁷ Ibid.,13.
- ³⁸ Edith Iglauer, *Seven Stones – A Portrait of Arthur Erickson, Architect* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1981): 33.
- ³⁹ Alan Edmonds, "The Architect Who Thinks People Matter More Than Buildings," *Maclean's* (June 1970)
- This fence episode becomes the opening gambit of this national profile of Erickson.
- ⁴⁰ Edith Iglauer, *Seven Stones – A Portrait of Arthur Erickson, Architect* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1981): 35.
- ⁴¹ "Exotic battleground: The Deceptive Tranquility of Arthur Erickson's Garden Belies a Three Decade-Long Struggle Against Pesky Bureaucrats and Roving Racoons," *Canadian Architect*, Vol. 40, Issue 11 (November 1995): 42.

⁴² Edith Iglauer, *Seven Stones – A Portrait of Arthur Erickson, Architect* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1981): 35.
The contravention of the fence is also described here: CP, “Architect Makes His Own Rules,” *Globe and Mail*, July 13, 1985

⁴³ “Exotic battleground: The Deceptive Tranquility of Arthur Erickson’s Garden Belies a Three Decade-Long Struggle Against Pesky Bureaucrats and Roving Racoons,” *Canadian Architect*, Vol. 40, Issue 11 (November 1995): 42.

⁴⁴ Edith Iglauer, *Seven Stones – A Portrait of Arthur Erickson, Architect* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1981): 28.

⁴⁵ Eve Lazarus, “Arthur Erickson’s House and Garden are on the Endangered List,” *Every Place Has A Strong Blog* (January 10, 2015) <http://evelazarus.com/arthur-ericksons-house-and-garden-are-on-the-endangered-list/>

⁴⁶ “Exotic battleground: The Deceptive Tranquility of Arthur Erickson’s Garden Belies a Three Decade-Long Struggle Against Pesky Bureaucrats and Roving Racoons,” *Canadian Architect*, Vol. 40, Issue 11 (November 1995): 42.

⁴⁷ Alan Edmonds, “The Architect Who Thinks People Matter More Than Buildings,” *Maclean’s* (June 1970): 49.

⁴⁸ Arthur Erickson, “The House at 4195 West 14th Avenue, Vancouver, British Columbia. No date,” *Speeches by Arthur Erickson* (Publisher not identified, UBC Library, NA749.E75 A5 1978)

⁴⁹ Vancouver City Council Archives. Meeting Minutes, (May 22, 1963): 339, City of Vancouver Archives.
The meeting minutes note that in 1963 Erickson served on the City of Vancouver Planning Design Panel.

⁵⁰ Adele Freedman, “In Erickson’s Eden, An Architect Can Improve on Nature,” *Globe and Mail* (October 4, 1980)

⁵¹ Lindsay Kines Vansun, “Beautiful Things, Beautiful Spaces,” *Vancouver Sun* (July 27, 1991)

⁵² Arthur Erickson, *The Architecture of Arthur Erickson* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1988): 19.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁵⁴ Tom Hawthorn, “Arthur Erickson, the High-Rolling World Famous Architect from Vancouver is Broke,” *Calgary Herald* (March 15, 1992)

⁵⁵ David Stouck, *Arthur Erickson: An Architect’s Life* (Madeira Park: Douglas & McIntyre, 2013)

⁵⁶ Hadani Ditmars, “The Former Home of Late Architect Arthur Erickson Faces an Uncertain Future,” *Wallpaper* (March 1, 2013)
This Rudolf Nureyev story was also referenced in Steve Whysall. “Battle Blooms Over Erickson’s Abode: If You Think the Architect Was Great, You Probably Favor Preservation,” *Vancouver Sun* (July 24, 1993)

⁵⁷ “At one edge of the pond, a flat marble platform, salvaged from the bathrooms at the old Hotel Vancouver, is now slightly moss covered and provides a sunny spot for sitting. The story goes that the late ballet star Rudolph Nureyev once danced on the platform at one of Erickson’s parties.”

⁵⁸ David Stouck, *Arthur Erickson: An Architect’s Life* (Madeira Park: Douglas & McIntyre, 2013)

⁵⁹ Edith Iglauer, *Seven Stones – A Portrait of Arthur Erickson, Architect* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1981): 33.

⁶⁰ Hugh Brewster, “Remembering Arthur Erickson,” *Xtra* (June 3, 2009)
“‘For one particularly memorable party in Fire Island Pines on July 7, 1979, Kripacz had filled their soaring, Erickson-designed beach house with gold and silver balloons. At midnight, the house’s retractable roof opened and the balloons ascended into the starlit sky. Amidst clouds of dry-ice fog, singer France Joli then appeared to belt out her disco hit ‘Come to Me’ for the boogying men below.”

⁶¹ “Exotic battleground: The Deceptive Tranquility of Arthur Erickson’s Garden Belies a Three Decade-Long Struggle Against Pesky Bureaucrats and Roving Racoons,” *Canadian Architect*, Vol. 40, Issue 11 (November 1995): 42.

⁶² David Stouck, *Arthur Erickson: An Architect’s Life* (Madeira Park: Douglas & McIntyre, 2013)

⁶³ Stacey Peck, “Home Q & A,” *Los Angeles Times* (June 20, 1982)

⁶⁴ Edith Iglauer, *Seven Stones – A Portrait of Arthur Erickson, Architect* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1981): 30.

⁶⁵ Stacey Peck, “Home Q & A,” *Los Angeles Times* (June 20, 1982)

⁶⁶ Edith Iglauer, *Seven Stones – A Portrait of Arthur Erickson, Architect* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1981): 20.

⁶⁷ Stephen Godfrey, “For Erickson, Home is Where the Work Is,” *Globe and Mail* (October 19, 1985)

⁶⁸ Edith Iglauer, *Seven Stones – A Portrait of Arthur Erickson, Architect* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1981): 34.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁷⁰ Rhodri Liscombe, “Critical Biography,” *Arthur Erickson – Selected Projects 1971-1985*, exhibition catalog (New York: Center for Inter-American Relations, 1985): 6.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁷² Tom Hawthorn, “Arthur Erickson, the High-Rolling World Famous Architect from Vancouver is Broke,” *Calgary Herald* (March 15, 1992)

⁷³ Stacey Peck, “Home Q & A,” *Los Angeles Times* (June 20, 1982)
“Three mortgages filed against the \$825,000 property were lifted Wednesday as a result of major donations from Vancouver millionaire developer Peter Wall, the Wall Financial Corporation and Phyllis Lambert, founder of the Canadian Centre for Architecture.” Additionally, the mortgage holder Capital Group Inc. agreed to donate what it was owed. The Power Corporation of Canada also agreed to donate their mortgage.

⁷⁴ Tom Hawthorn, “Arthur Erickson, the High-Rolling World Famous Architect from Vancouver is Broke,” *Calgary Herald* (March 15, 1992)

⁷⁵ Jamie Lamb, “Erickson Home a Monument to Ingenuity in Creative Financing,” *Vancouver Sun* (June 25, 1992)
“‘He hobnobbed with the rich and the soon-to-be infamous, including Iraqi strongman Saddam Hussein, for whom he was to build a 3.5 kilometer development along the Tigris River in Baghdad.”

⁷⁶ Michaelangelo Sabatino, “Arthur Erickson – Money, Media and Canadian Architecture,” *Perspecta* 47 (August 2014): 73.

⁷⁷ Hadani Ditmars, “The Former Home of Late Architect Arthur Erickson Faces an Uncertain Future,” *Wallpaper* (March 1, 2013)

⁷⁸ Tom Hawthorn, “Arthur Erickson, the High-Rolling World Famous Architect from Vancouver is Broke,” *Calgary Herald* (March 15, 1992)

⁷⁹ David Smith, “Noted Architect Files for Personal Bankruptcy: 300 Unsecured Creditors Listed,” *Vancouver Sun* (February 26, 1992)
A first mortgage of \$400,000 is held by National Trust. Power Corp holds a second mortgage of \$67,000 while a group called Capital Group holds a third mortgage of \$3 million. Erickson filed for personal bankruptcy in Vancouver in February, listing debts of \$10.5 million and assets of \$450,000. John Todd is a trustee of Coopers & Lybrand who handled Erickson’s bankruptcy and made this comment about Erickson’s mortgage.

⁸⁰ David Smith, “Noted Architect Files for Personal Bankruptcy: 300 Unsecured Creditors Listed,” *Vancouver Sun* (February 26, 1992)
John Todd is a trustee of Coopers & Lybrand who handled Erickson’s bankruptcy and made this comment about Erickson’s mortgage.

⁸¹ Jamie Lamb, “Erickson Home a Monument to Ingenuity in Creative Financing,” *Vancouver Sun* (June 25, 1992)

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ Lindsay Kines Vansun, “Beautiful Things, Beautiful Spaces,” *Vancouver Sun* (July 27, 1991)

⁸⁴ Lindsay Kines Vansun, “Beautiful Things, Beautiful Spaces,” *Vancouver Sun* (July 27, 1991). This is also discussed here: Donna Walters, “The Collapse of an Architectural Pillar Jolts LA,” *Los Angeles Times* (July 15, 1991)

⁸⁵ CP, “Architect Makes His Own Rules,” *Globe and Mail* (July 13, 1985)

⁸⁶ Tom Hawthorn, “Arthur Erickson, the High-Rolling World Famous Architect from Vancouver is Broke,” *Calgary Herald* (March 15, 1992)

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ The Arthur Erickson House & Garden Foundation was established in 1992. In 1997 the tenuous financial situation was improved. “Three mortgages filed against the \$825,000 property were lifted Wednesday as a result of major donations from Vancouver millionaire developer Peter Wall, the Wall Financial Corporation and Phyllis Lambert, founder of the Canadian Centre for Architecture.” The mortgage holder Capital Group Inc. agreed to donate what it was owed. The Power Corporation of Canada also agreed to donate their mortgage.

⁸⁹ Ian Mulgrew, “Erickson’s Heritage Site Saved by Donors: ‘A Magical Poetic Spirit,’” *Vancouver Sun* (January 24, 1997)

⁹⁰ Christopher Hume, “Is This A Ruined Man?,” *Toronto Star* (March 15, 1992)

⁹¹ CP, “Architect Makes His Own Rules,” *Globe and Mail* (July 13, 1985)

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹¹ Ian Mulgrew, "Erickson's Heritage Site Saved by Donors: 'A Magical Poetic Spirit,'" *Vancouver Sun* (January 24, 1997)

Illustrations



Figure 1. Arthur Erickson photographed in his living room. 1972. Photo: Selwyn Pullan



Figure 2. Erickson's home and garden. 1959. Photo: Selwyn Pullan



Figure 3. Erickson's garden. no date. Photo: Simon Scott



Figure 4. Arthur Erickson, "My Personal Stonehenge" sketch. no date. Photo: Canadian Centre for Architecture Archive



Figure 5. Erickson's garden with moon viewing platform visible. no date. Photo: Simon Scott

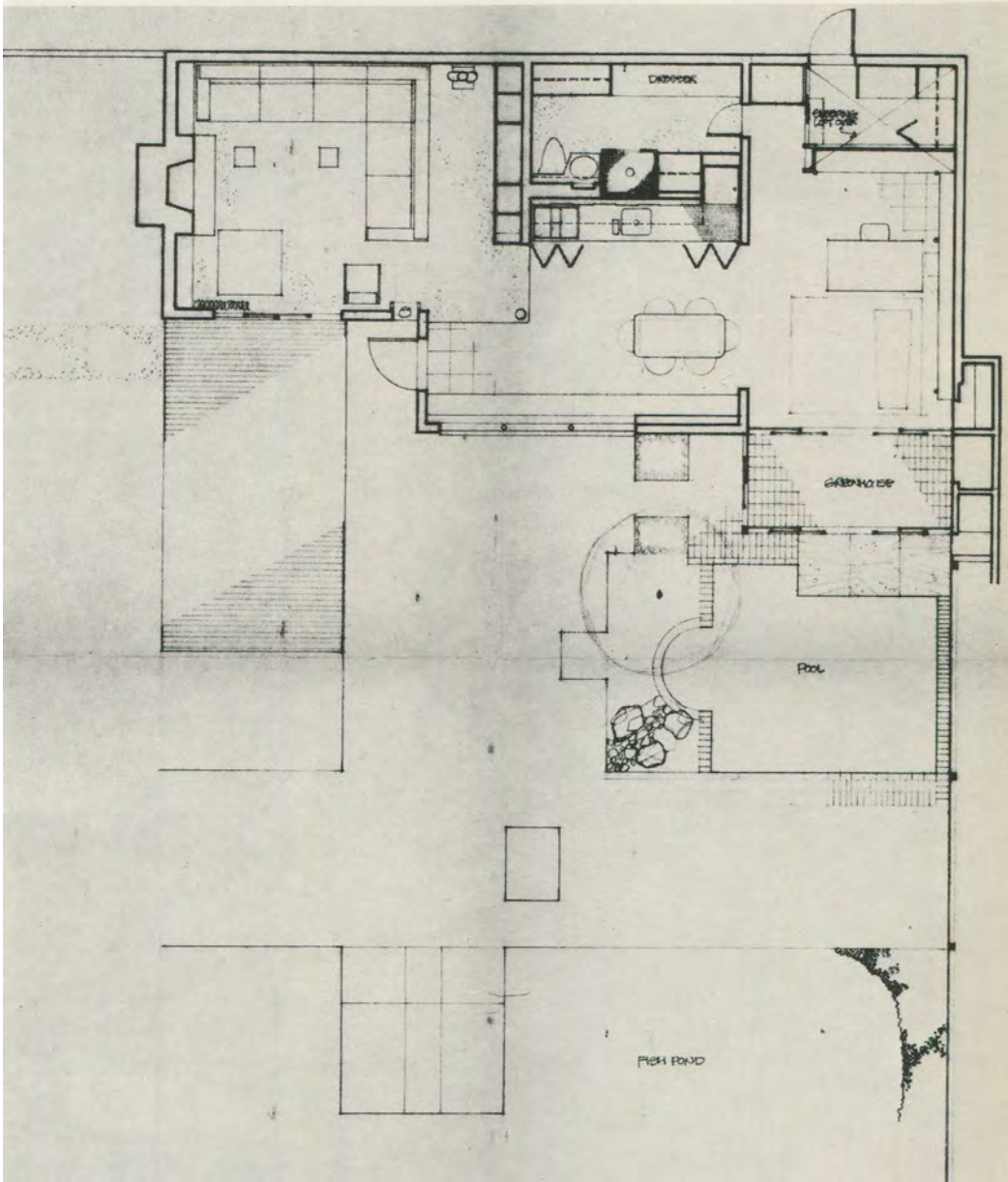


Figure 6. plan of Erickson's home. c. 1977. Photo: from Barbara Plumb, *Houses Architects Live In* (New York: Penguin Books, 1977)



Figure 7. Erickson's study. no date. Photo: Simon Scott



Figure 8. Erickson's living room. no date. Photo: Simon Scott



Figure 9. Erickson's dining room. no date. Photo: Simon Scott



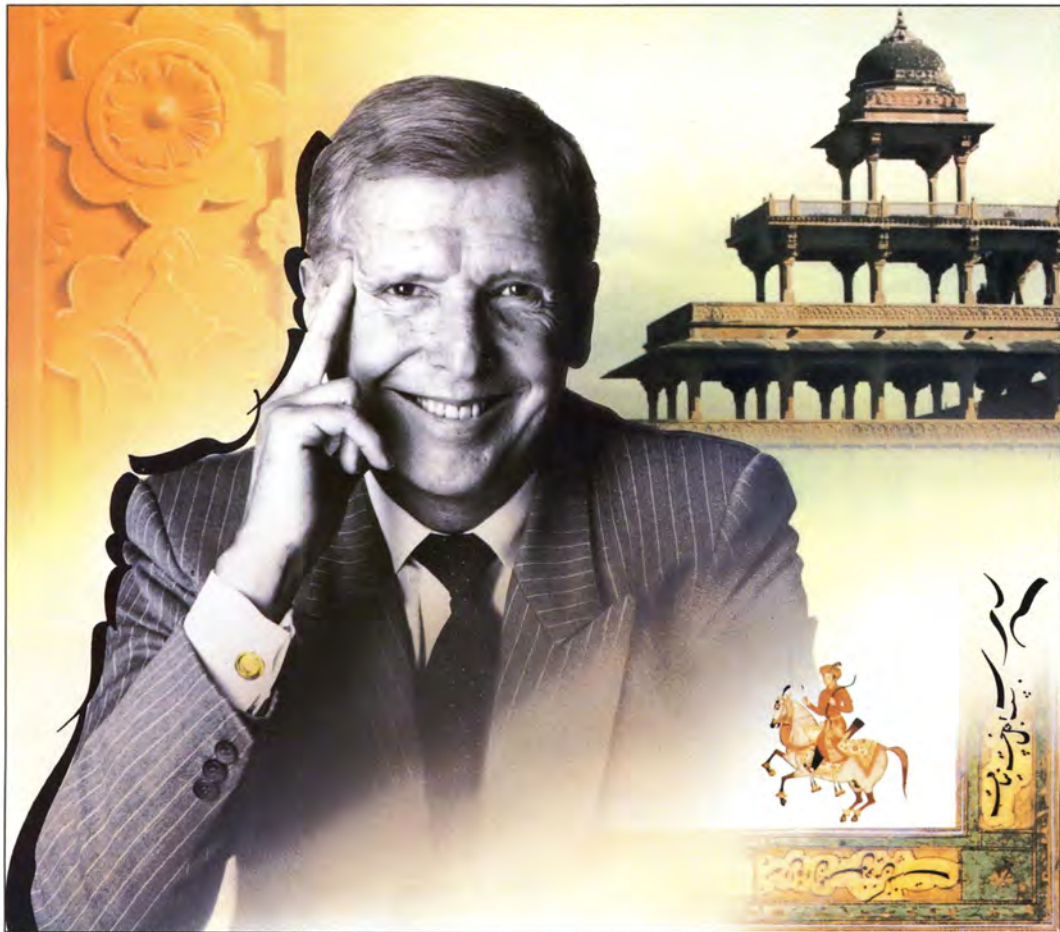
Figure 10. Erickson's washroom. no date. Photo: Simon Scott



Figure 11. Erickson's garden. no date. Photo: Simon Scott



Figure 12. Erickson's Japanese language teacher in his garden. no date. Photo: Erickson Family Collection



Arthur Charles Erickson, Architect, Vancouver.

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Figure 13. Erickson featured in an Air Canada magazine advertisement. 1986. Photo: *Maclean's* magazine, September 8, 1986



Figure 14. Erickson in his garden. 1970. Photo: *Maclean's magazine*, June 1970

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