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## DESIGN QUESTIONNAIRE

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Welcome to the design process! I guarantee it will be hard work, fun, sometimes frustrating but ultimately rewarding. The first step is talking about who you are and what you have in mind for this project.

We've outlined our aspirations for the work we do in our own "[manifesto](#)." Of course, each project is different, and some of the techniques and approaches we talk about are appropriate and possible for some clients, sites, budgets and projects and not for others. Our goal is to make a place for you that fits like a glove, works like a charm, and doesn't cost you more than you want to spend. Our cards are on the table - now it's your turn!

As we progress through the design process you will learn about many different options you have for each area of your home. Your responses to this questionnaire will serve as an initial guide for us in coming up with a design that is right for you. More than anything else it will get you started thinking about your goals and priorities, and make it easier for you to make decisions when the time comes. We'll probably propose some ideas that are different from what you might have expected. Some things we'll actually have good reasons for!

The more you can tell us about who you are, what you do, how you do it, and what your dreams are for this project, the better we can serve you. Good communication is the key to a successful project. This questionnaire is an evolving experiment toward that end. We refine it based on our clients' feedback, so let us know what you think. It's meant to cover a wide range of projects - from a new house for multiple generations of a family in the country to a remodeled kitchen for one person in the city - so adapt the language of the questions, and your answers, to your situation.

Remember: This is not a test! There are no right or wrong answers. Think of working on this questionnaire as a consciousness-raising exercise. You've probably thought a lot about the project already. This questionnaire is a vehicle for conveying all of the things you've been thinking about to us. If it seems too long, too much work ("Hey, I thought we were paying this architect to figure this out for us!"), or off the mark, here are a few alternatives: answer only the questions that seem important

and relevant to you and skip the rest; read it over, think about it all, and we can talk when we get together for our initial meeting; or, write down your answers to this more concise form:

- \* Who are you, and how do you want to live?
- \* What are your site and home like?
- \* What is the building project at hand?
- \* What do you like and dislike in a home?
- \* What is your budget?
- \* How can we best help you?

So, let's begin!

### First, the Appetizers...

1. Describe the project at hand simply and specifically, in your own terms, in a nutshell. For example: "Bring more light into the kitchen," or "add a second story to our house that includes a master bedroom, two smaller bedrooms, and a shared bath," or "a new compact three-bedroom one and a half bath home for a family of four in the city." (Hint: You can come back to this question....)
2. What is your budget?
3. What is the address of the project?
4. What is your current address?
5. What is the best way for us to get in touch with you?

### I. Thinking about where you live now...

*Everyone comes to a building project with some things they'd like to keep with them in their new place, and sometimes some very good ideas about what they'd like to leave behind. Get out your measuring tape!*

- I.1. Room by room, measure and describe any large or emotionally significant pieces of art or furniture you have now that you would definitely like to use in your new place. For example...sofas, easy chairs, bookshelves, dining table, china cabinet, kitchen table, beds, side tables, dressers, mirrors, paintings. If you can, make simple

sketches and put your measurements right on them. Otherwise, digital photos with length, width and height work well. Several of our clients have created binders for this information, and that has worked really well for us.

I.2. How many linear feet of bookshelves do you have now? Need more? Less?

I.3. For each closet you have, measure the rods, and any shelves. Do you need more or less than you have now?

If we will be renovating your existing home, please answer these questions to the best of your knowledge.

I.4. Does your home contain any asbestos? If so, where?

I.5. Do you have a buried oil tank on your property?

I.6. Approximately when was your house built? Does it contain lead-based paint?

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## II. Thinking about your new place...

*Everyone has more feelings about buildings than they realize. The following questions are meant to get them on the table at the outset. You shouldn't worry though if you don't have a strong opinion in every area. (Note: If you would rather explore your preferences by tracing the use of your dream house through the path of a day, skip ahead to A Day in the Life. This section often brings up lots of ideas you might not get to otherwise. Then come back to this section.)*

II.1. What are your preferences in the following areas? I've listed some of the most common examples. Please feel free to add your own.

- \* **foundation:** block, concrete, wood (yes, it's even a good idea in some cases!), posts, insulating concrete forms, etc.
- \* **exterior walls:** wood frame, post and beam, brick veneer, steel frame, insulating concrete forms, Structural insulated panels, straw bale, rammed earth, autoclaved aerated concrete, etc.
- \* **windows:** wood, metal, casement, double hung, awning, hopper, slider, tilt-turn, etc.
- \* **doors:** flush, raised panel, hollow core, solid core, sliding glass, French doors, etc.

- \* **siding:** shingles, clapboard, tiles, board & batten, stucco, brick, metal, cork, fiber-cement, etc.
- \* **roofing:** shingles, standing seam metal, tile, recycled computer casings, rubber, slate, etc.
- \* **heating/cooling:** radiators, forced air, in-floor radiant, electric baseboard, fireplace, wood stove, etc.
- \* **fuel for heating:** gas, electricity, propane, wood, solar, etc.
- \* **source electricity:** utility grid, photovoltaic, wind, micro-hydro
- \* **lighting:** natural, fluorescent, LED, incandescent, track, recessed, indirect, etc.
- \* **interior finishes:** bright cheery vibrant colors, subdued natural colors, varnished wood floors, carpets, tile, etc.

II.2 Choices of many materials and techniques of building have environmental and social effects - both in their use in the project and beyond - some positive, some negative. If we know the issues that are important to you, we can skew the choices to correspond with your values. Rank your priorities for each of the following issues from 13 (lowest priority) to 1 (highest priority).

- \_\_\_ conservation of resources
- \_\_\_ conservation of energy
- \_\_\_ indoor air quality
- \_\_\_ local community
- \_\_\_ local economy
- \_\_\_ social and economic justice
- \_\_\_ preservation of agricultural land
- \_\_\_ preservation of Northwest forests
- \_\_\_ preservation of wildlife habitat
- \_\_\_ preservation of watersheds
- \_\_\_ preservation of ground water
- \_\_\_ preservation of tropical rain forests

\_\_\_\_\_ global warming

11.3. Tell us about any other passions or interests you have - in sustainable building or culture, or just in general if they will influence our design of your place.

11.4. Here is a partial list of the techniques that might be employed in a home designed to be "environmentally friendly." With regard to your interest in including these items in your home, mark each with a Y for yes, M for maybe, N for no. You might want to read [Investing in Efficiency](#) on our website before continuing with this section. (We won't hold you to this list...you may change your mind as you find out more.)

Y M N keep H/W thermostat at 120°

Y M N low-flow shower heads

Y M N faucet flow restrictors

Y M N gaskets behind outlets & switches (helps with air-tightening)

Y M N clothes line (the least expensive and most energy efficient clothes dryer!)

Y M N automatic night set-back thermostat

Y M N low-toxic wall paint

Y M N low-toxic clear wood finishes

Y M N H/W tank and pipe insulation

Y M N durable materials and finishes

Y M N double-glazed windows

Y M N job site recycling

Y M N "engineered wood" for framing (utilizes smaller, fast-growing trees, though most is still from clear-cut forests)

Y M N minimize carpets (the single best thing you can do to improve indoor air quality besides taking your shoes off at the door)

Y M N avoid virgin old-growth lumber

Y M N avoid non-plantation tropical hardwoods

Y M N stack framing (reduces wood used in framing by 25-30%)

Y M N air tightening techniques (the average house has air leaks the equivalent of a three foot diameter hole....)

Y M N efficient refrigerator

Y M N sealed combustion heating devices (very efficient, and good for indoor air quality and safety)

Y M N maximize daylighting

Y M N low-toxic materials

Y M N avoid CFC-based foams (alternatives are available)

Y M N formaldehyde-free particleboard

Y M N dimmers for lighting (reduce energy use and increase lamp life)

Y M N efficient water heater

Y M N organic vegetable garden

Y M N compost pile

Y M N worm box

Y M N fruit trees, berry vines

Y M N ultra low-flush toilet

Y M N efficient dishwasher

Y M N compact design (smaller house)

Y M N preference to local products

Y M N products with recycled content

Y M N chlorine filter on shower

Y M N water filter

Y M N super-insulation

Y M N retractable awnings

Y M N efficient clothes washer

Y M N compact fluorescent bulbs

Y M N LED lighting

Y M N heat recovery ventilation

Y M N triple-glazed windows

Y M N bicycle garage

Y M N wood (or other bio-mass) stove

Y M N green (planted) roof

Y M N rain water collection

Y M N gray water system

Y M N advanced natural daylighting

Y M N solar hot-water panels

Y M N photovoltaic panels

Y M N composting toilets

Y M N wind power

Y M N active solar heating

II.5 Which green building rating or building approach interest you?

*I'm happy to walk you through of the advantages and disadvantages of each of these programs. My current focus is on [Passive House](#), an approach that reduces heating and cooling energy by 90% over 2009 International Energy Code, for a reasonable cost. [Living Building Challenge](#) is an incredible aspirational goal.*

- BuiltGreen
- EnergyStar for Homes
- LEED for Homes
- NAHB National Green Building Standard
- Passive House (Passivhaus)
- Living Building Challenge

II.6. Do you prefer houses seen from the road or hidden at the end of a driveway?

II.7. Do you appreciate a formal front door along with an informal back door? Or will one door serve all occasions?

II.8. Do you enjoy specific rooms for specific functions: bedroom, dining room, living room, kitchen, etc.? or do you prefer open planning, such as one "great room" for living/dining and kitchen?

II.9. Do you want/need a one story house or a multilevel structure?

II.10. How much extra storage space do you need? What will you store there?

II.11. Would you like a fireplace? Where?

II.12. What is your favorite house? What do you like about it?

II.13. Do you have a strong preference for an architectural style? Some names art historians and others have given them include: Cottage Style, Shingle Style, Tudor, Colonial, Arts & Crafts, Suburban Ranch, Federal, Modern, Bungalow, Prairie, Mission, Spanish Colonial, Greek Revival, Tyrolian, Log, Shaker, International Style...? (Ask us about our favorite for our own new work: [Northwest Romantic Modern](#).)

II.13. Any strong dislikes?



II.14. Do you prefer large picture windows? Small windows that frame special views? Both, depending? (By the way, "depends" is a fine answer for any of these questions.)

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## Room Descriptions

*Now, getting more specific, let's look at each part of the house. These might be actual rooms, or just areas or functions within the house. Describe each element as specifically as you can at this stage - material, color, texture, brand, dimensions. Again, don't worry if you haven't made choices about these things yet - we'll make suggestions, and a lot of this will come out of the particular site, program and budget you have. The sizes especially will vary. This is just to let us know about your general ideas, and choices you have made or preferences you have, so we can keep them in mind as we design. It's also a good exercise to develop a sense of the sizes of things, so when we are looking at a floor plan of your house, you can imagine how big a room will be.*

### Porch(es)

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*Make copies of this part of the questionnaire for each porch - say, if you'd like a front and a back porch.*

Dimensions (w x l x h):

Floor:

Roof:

Lighting:

Furniture:

### Entry

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Dimensions (w x l x h):

Walls:

Door(s):

Window(s):

Floor:

Ceiling:

Lighting:

Furniture:

### Living Room/Area

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Dimensions (w x l x h):

Walls:

Door(s):

Window(s):

Floor:

Ceiling:

Lighting:

Furniture:

Equipment:

### Study/Office/Studio

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Dimensions (w x l x h):

Walls:

Door(s):

Window(s):

Floor:

Ceiling:

Lighting:

Furniture:

Equipment:

### Dining Room/Area

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Dimensions (w x l x h):

Walls:

Door(s):

Window(s):

Floor:

Ceiling:

Lighting:

Furniture:

### Kitchen

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The following questions are designed to help you start thinking creatively about how you use your existing kitchen and how you'd like to use your new kitchen.

- \* What is the primary use of your kitchen?
- \* What major change would you make to the space in your kitchen (larger, smaller, shape, traffic flow, etc.)?

- \* What percentage of each day do you and/or your family spend in the kitchen?
- \* How often do you cook?
- \* How many people will be cooking and/or working in the kitchen at the same time?
- \* How often do you entertain?
- \* How many people do you typically entertain at one time?
- \* What is the most elaborate meal you can imagine yourself cooking?
- \* What is the single worst thing about your present kitchen?
- \* What would you change about each of the following?
  - o Floor?
  - o Lighting?
  - o Appliances?
  - o Counter/work space?
  - o Storage?
  - o Traffic flow?
- \* How hard are you and your family on your kitchen (wear and tear)?
- \* What would you like to show off in the new kitchen?
- \* What would you like to hide?
- \* If you had to pick a single luxury item for the kitchen, what would it be?

Dimensions (w x l x h):

Walls:

Door(s):

Window(s):

Floor:

Ceiling:

Lighting:

Furniture:

Stove:

Oven:

Microwave:

Refrigerator:

Sink:

Faucet:

Dishwasher:

Other Equipment:

Bathroom(s)

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*Make copies of this part of the questionnaire for each bathroom.*

Dimensions (w x l x h):

Walls:

Window(s):

Floor:

Ceiling:

Lighting:

Furniture:

Sink:

Tub:

Shower (if separate from tub):

Faucets:

Toilet:

Other fixtures:

## Bedroom(s)

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*Make copies of this part of the questionnaire for each bedroom.*

Dimensions (w x l x h):

Walls:

Window(s):

Floor:

Ceiling:

Lighting:

Furniture: (What size bed? Chest of drawers? Nightstands?)

Closet(s):

## Basement/Utility/Laundry Room

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*We can often combine laundry with another room—either kitchen or bath.*

Dimensions (w x l x h):

Walls:

Window(s):

Floor:

Ceiling:

Lighting:

Furniture:

Washing Machine:

Dryer:

### Attic

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Dimensions (w x l x h):

Walls:

Window(s):

Floor:

Ceiling:

Lighting:

### Garage

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What kind of vehicle(s) do you use for transportation? (Make/model/year)

What all needs to be accommodated in the garage? Cars? Trucks? Motorcycles?  
Bicycles? Tractors? Lawnmowers? Airplanes? Boats?

Would you like a workshop area in the garage? If so, describe the kinds of things you will be doing.

Would you prefer the garage to be attached or separate?

Would you like a space above the garage, such as a guest room or hobby room? If so, describe the features it should include.

Dimensions (w x l x h):

Walls:

Window(s):

Floor:

Ceiling:

Lighting:

...

### III. Thinking About the Site

*Your site is an integral part of your home. These questions will be easier to answer after you have spent some time exploring your site. Take the questionnaire with you. Have these questions bouncing around in your head while you're bouncing around the site. Imagine it in each season. If they would be different, write down your answers as they would be in spring, summer, fall and winter.*

III.1. What's the single best thing about your site?

III.2. What's the worst?

III.3. What could easily be improved?

III.4. What's fine the way it is?

III.5. How do you get onto your site? How do you move about?

III.6. Are your neighbors friendly?

III.7. Locate all the compass points. Describe the boundaries. North, East, South, West.

III.8. Are there any covenants, access or utility easements, development restrictions, or setback requirements that you know of? Where can we find out more about them?

III.9. Please attach the legal description of your property. (Usually something like 'the south 60' of the east 100' of Block 9, Lot 12 in the Harrison Heights addition...') We'll need this for the building permit.

III.10. What is your county Tax Assessor's number? (Also needed for the permit.)

III.11. What kinds of buildings are nearby? Describe them. What are they? When were they built? Do they have a particular style? Use particular materials? Any you particularly like or dislike?



- III.12. Describe the soil. (Rock, gravel, sand, loam, clay, etc.) Are there parts of the site where the soil is different? Is there septic capability?
- III.13. Have there been any problems with water on your site? (Mud slides, ponding water on site, water in the basement, etc.) What and where?
- III.14. Are there any special earthquake, wind, snow, or other considerations in your area?
- III.15. What care does your site need from you? Is there any danger of erosion? Flooding? Loss of habitat?
- III.16. Are there rocks or trees or other materials on-site that might become building materials?
- III.17. Where will you dig your well, if you need one?
- III.18. List all the different kinds of plants, shrubs and trees that are on the site now.
- III.19. List any other plants you'd like to have on your site someday:
- III.20. Is there any natural shade on your site? How about nearby buildings or large trees that cast shadows?
- III.21. List all the other animals that you suspect may live on your site, or even visit it. Indicate how welcome or unwelcome each is.
- III.22. What can you see from your site? To the north, east, south, west?
- III.23. What can you smell on your site? List both the nice and the unpleasant things.
- III.24. What can you hear? List both things you like to hear and things you wish you didn't.
- III.25. From which direction does the prevailing wind come from?
- III.26. Where do the storms come from?
- III.27. How long do you imagine you will own your site?

III.28. Imagine your ultimate dream home. Describe what you'd like to have in the landscape outside. Where will the vegetable garden go? the compost? the herb garden? the fountain? the orchard? the sundial? the hot tub? the sandbox? the trash cans? the tool shed? the swing set? the pool? the tennis court? the polo grounds? the planetarium?

III.29. Where is the best place on your site to picnic? barbecue? sun bathe? have a quiet talk? sneak a kiss? (Just for examples...) Does your site support all of the activities and occasions that you would like to have take place there? What's missing?

III.30. What specifically do you have in mind for the site in the project we will do now?

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#### IV. Thinking about the Budget

*Whatever we do, a building project is likely to be one of the most expensive expeditions on which you'll embark. Remember the Boy Scout motto: Be Prepared! As of this writing (December 2014), a very rough guide for custom residential new construction and renovation in the Seattle area would be to allow \$250 per square foot for a nicely, but not luxuriously, finished average size (2,200 SF) house, with the typical range being \$200 to \$300 per square foot. Outside of Seattle, construction costs are often lower. \$175 to \$225 per square foot would be a prudent starting point. Kitchens and bathrooms done on their own tend to run quite a bit more, because of all the plumbing, electrical and cabinetwork. Garages and unfinished basements and decks are less. Work in remote locations, like the San Juan Islands, is more expensive. Smaller projects cost more per square foot than large projects. Modern design can be less expensive than authentically detailed Craftsman. For more information, please read "[How Much Will It Cost?](#)" on our website.*

*For new construction, it's imperative to leave at least a 10% contingency for changes and additions, while for renovations, because you don't know what you might uncover, 20% is better.*

IV.1. What dollar amount do you see yourself investing in your place over the time you own it?

IV.2. What is your total budget for the project at hand now? - including construction costs, design fees, consultants, permits, everything.

IV.3. Will you be applying for a construction loan?

IV.4. Have you allowed for contingencies? In a pinch, do you have other sources of financing you can draw on?

IV.5. If it turns out you don't have the money to build all of the project now, would you rather build the project in phases, or scale back the project to build with the money you have?

IV.6. Can you or your family or friends provide any of the labor or materials for the project? Would you like to?

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## V. How Can We Help?

*Different people have different needs and expectations when it comes to the services of a design professional. Generally speaking of course, the less we do the less we'll be billing you. If you're handy, or if you have the time and skills to supervise the work, a permit set and a few suggestions about materials might be all you need. Being directly involved in the creation of your home can be incredibly rewarding, and it's usually a once (or twice) in a lifetime opportunity. On the other hand, you can almost always save money, reduce stress and decision-overload and end up with a better project by having a complete set of construction documents (including all the details and materials specifications) done before you actually begin construction, and having our office involved during construction, with onsite visits and consultation for both you and the builder.*

*Trust us on this one.*

*Without a full set of plans and specs, inevitably there will be at least one day when you're standing in the midst of your half-completed construction project with a \$50/hour electrician standing around asking "So, in this room, you want fixtures for A-19s, PL 13s, or MR-16s? How many? What wattage? Where? Where do you want the switches? You want 3-ways? Dimmers?" while in another room a plumber is waiting for your answer on your choice of shower valve and the drywall guy (the one balancing the glob of wet white stuff on a tray) won't close up the walls until all these questions are resolved.... Over the years, we have found that the projects on which we have provided Construction Administration services have turned out much better. Remember--we've been through this process something like 200 times. We're not making this up.*

V.1. Have you worked with a design professional before? What was the project?

V.2. If so, what was your experience like? Were there things you really appreciated about the way they worked? Things that could have been done differently?

V.3. Would you like us to make design and materials choices then run them by you for approval, or would you rather have first shot at finding and picking things?

V.4. Generally, would you like to have as much as possible figured out before construction (so you can be more certain about prices) or (if you like to see things full-size or in place before deciding), would you prefer to, as much as possible, get started building and improvise as we go?

V.5. Describe what, at this stage, you have in mind for us to do for you on this project. (We might make suggestions for other things along the way.) Here are some possibilities:

- \* Come up with ideas for a design to suit your needs.
- \* Produce permit drawings for submission to local officials.
- \* Figure out & draw construction details (like foundations, beam connections).
- \* Figure out & draw finish details (like moldings & cabinetwork).
- \* Suggest materials to use.
- \* Help find a contractor.
- \* Observe the construction to make sure things are built the way you want them to be.
- \* Suggest paint colors.
- \* Suggest or design furniture or light fixtures.

V.6. Do you have a figure in mind that you would like to spend on design services? You can express that as a percentage of the cost of construction, hourly rates, a lump sum total, or whatever way you like.

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*(But wait! You also get...)*

## A Day in the Life

*Each member of the household should consider these questions separately and then the whole household should do it as a group. Dialogue is the most important ingredient. No fair having one person answer all the questions for everyone! Again, don't worry about being neat - the idea is to get as much information down as you can. We'll talk about many of these things at some point in the process. You'll make more decisions than you*

*ever thought possible! More than anything else, this next bit will get you thinking about the myriad activities and occasions we ask our homes to support.*

*This section is most useful as a private tool to help you answer the more specific, concrete questions in the other parts of the Questionnaire. Share your answers with us only if you feel comfortable doing so.*

VI.1. Regardless of importance, list every human activity that you can think of that will take place in your home - even ones like sleeping or waiting for the shower. Include your current activities and also the new ones for which you hope to provide. This will likely take quite a long time.

VI.2. Now try to put the list in order of importance. What are the most important things? Which would you give up or wait for?

VI.3. That was too quick. Do it again and this time don't worry about erasing or using arrows.

VI.4. Now write a sentence or paragraph about each of the first ten activities. If there was a favorite place or a special time in your past where an activity took place, describe the surroundings in as much detail as you can remember. What was the light like? Describe the materials. What were you touching, hearing, seeing, smelling?

VI.5. Group or arrange the activities according to how many household members and/or friends will be involved, and how frequently.

VI.6. Now group them again, in a different way. Your choice.

VI.7. Characterize each behavior or activity as one of the following: Quiet, Loud, Private, Public, Cozy, Social (add or replace with your own criteria).

VI.8. List ten important ceremonies or celebrations that will take place at your house. Use a few sentences to describe the essence of each one for you. (Front door greetings, birthdays, New Year's, Halloween, etc.)

VI.9. Order them by importance.

VI.10. Order them by frequency. (Or any other way that makes more sense to you.)

For the next questions, imagine yourself in your new home, living in it the way you dream of. Think of each answer as a short story, or as part of a scene in a movie (except that you can smell things too - Sense-Surround has arrived!)

VI.11. How will you wake up? What's in the room? What can you see? smell? hear?

VI.12. Describe your way to the bathroom. How many sinks are there? Is there a tub, or a shower? Who is with you? What are they doing?

VI.13. Where do you keep your clothes? Describe the journey from the bedroom to the kitchen. Are there stairs? What are they like? Describe the experience of coming down the stairs.

VI.14. Do you eat breakfast? Do you make a lunch? Who is at the breakfast table? What can you see from the kitchen? Where is the paper? Where is the COFFEE! (ahem.)

VI.15. Describe the entire layout of your kitchen, where everything is: the location of the stove, the refrigerator, the sink, etc. Try to imagine every move it takes to prepare your morning meal.

VI.16. What else must be done before starting the day? What are you doing today? Is it a work day? Will you be at home or away? What about other times?

VI.17. If you're leaving the house, how do you get to the bus? the bicycle? the car? Is there a garage? What's the weather like? Is it comfortable to get out of the house with your chosen mode of transport? Are there doors to open? Snow to shovel? What's the driveway experience like?

VI.18. If you're staying home, what happens after breakfast? Is there a project? Do you work at home? Where? What special needs do you have for a place to work? Will there be visitors? Children?

VI.19. Visitors! Where will your visitors enter the house? Where will they hang their coats? How much space will be needed for the activity you have planned with them? What kind of lighting will be required? Will they be here for lunch? Will they stay overnight? Where will they sleep?

VI.20. Will lunch be eaten indoors or out? Where?

VI.21. Describe the preparation of your lunch, where everything is and where everyone is sitting. Who is in the kitchen?

VI.22. Don't forget clean up! Where is the dishwasher (if there is one)? How do the dishes get from the table to the sink? to the dishwasher? Where do they go when they come out of the dishwasher?

VI.23. What happens after lunch? Do you have a different project or more visitors? Do children come home from school? What will be needed for the afternoon's activities? Are they indoors or outside? If inside, what kind of space and lighting will be needed?

VI.24. When you go outside for activities, what will you need? Is there storage for equipment or clothing? Try to think about all the things that happen when you make the transition from inside to outside and vice versa.

VI.25. Do the clothes need washing? Where do you do the laundry? Do you like to put the clothes right in the dryer, or hang them up outside?

VI.26. What happens at the end of the afternoon? Do the "Hunters and Gatherers" return? Do they arrive by foot, by bicycle, or automobile? What are they bringing back? Tools? Bags? Supplies? Where do all the different things go?

VI.27. Is there a ceremony or tradition for when you, or other people, return to the house?

VI.28. Does everyone eat separately or does the entire household have dinner together? When? Where?

VI.29. Who is involved with preparation of dinner? Describe the "choreography" in as much detail as you can imagine. Where does everyone sit or stand?

VI.30. What happens when you have a formal dining occasion? Is there a separate room or table? Where are the special utensils or dishes stored? What is the lighting like? What else is this room or table used for?

VI.31. What happens after dinner? Where do you go? What do you do? Are there chores?

VI.32. Do you have any hobbies you enjoy at home? Is there a special place for them? Do they need special accommodations? (Like, a 220 volt line for the ceramic kiln?) Lighting? Storage?

VI.33. Who goes to bed first? What is the sequence of retiring for the night? Are there ceremonies or traditions?

VI.34. Describe the journey to your bedroom. Do you turn off lights? Let out animals? Are there stairs or doors? Describe what it's like to climb the stairs and be on the second floor after the sun has set. Which lights are on? What can you see or hear? Is the moon out?

VI.35. Who is in the bathroom? What will you do in the bathroom? What is the lighting like? The floor? The walls?

VI.36. What do you do before falling asleep? Do you read in bed? What can you see? hear? smell?

VI.37. Where is the light switch?

*Now simply answer all the previous questions for every special day of the year, and for every season.*

*No problem, right?*

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## The 2-D Model

*Here's another approach to answering the questionnaire: It's called the "two-dimensional model." This can either replace or supplement writing down the answers on this questionnaire. Some people may find doing it this way easier or more fun. It's a way to launch the planning process without the need for drawing skills or full knowledge of all the parts or of the site. (It's also a great way to involve kids in the process.)*

Make separate 2-D models for the site and for the house. (It'll be less restrictive that way.) For the site "model," first, sketch a map of your site. Get a big piece of paper, because you're going to need lots of room for scribbling notes, making little sketches, and pasting scraps of paper and photos on. Draw the property lines. (Leave room on the outside to mark down things outside your immediate lot.) Add blobs for the buildings that are there now. They don't have to be professional looking or be exact - it's the thought that counts! Then start writing or drawing the answers to the questions about the site right on that map. Use crayons or colored pencils if you like - the more colorful and full of stuff the page is at the end the better. One good technique is to write things on pieces of paper, then move them around until you've got them arranged the way you like and paste them down. (Use a non-toxic glue-stick, not rubber cement.) Cut out photos from magazines if there have been images



that have captured your imagination, and paste them on too. (Here's a tip: You can make more than one version, exploring different ideas or approaches each time.)

Then, (or at the same time) do the same thing for the "house" model. Don't worry about the shape of things or how they fit together. Think about your activities, the connections between them, and the qualities of the place that would support them. Make big loopy blobs for say...

a place to cook

a place to sleep

a place for everyone to be together

a place for me to be alone and work

a place to take a bath

a place to...recycle nutrients

a place to eat in the sun

as well as any others for those ten, or more, most important activities you thought of back there.

Then into each blob add notes, sketches, photos, cartoons - all that stuff you've been thinking about, things you'd like to see. Test your 2-D model with all of the great scenarios you've been developing. Is it all there? Add new blobs if you need to. See how they overlap. Draw big and small arrows between things that have connections, circle things, be messy, have fun!

## VII. Time for Feedback

Please tell us what you thought of this questionnaire. Did you find it useful? Which parts worked and which didn't for you?

## The Modern Age

This questionnaire is available on paper, disk or via e-mail. Let us know what format works for you.

### Credit where credit is due...

This document started as a design questionnaire developed by John Connell and others at the Yestermorrow Design/Build School in Vermont. I've it changed extensively, added things inspired by the way architecture was taught by Peter Pragnell and others at the University of Toronto when I was there in the late seventies, thoroughly mixed in my own ideas about sustainable design, and modified and updated it based on feedback from our clients.

—Rob Harrison

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