

# WAGNER RESIDENCE

6003 EAGLERIDGE DRIVE, WEST VANCOUVER  
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

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## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE: WAGNER RESIDENCE



**Address:** 6003 Eagleridge Drive, West Vancouver

**Name:** Wagner Residence

**Architect:** Percy Underwood

**Builder:** Einer Silberbauer

**Original Owner:** Percy Underwood

**Long-Term Owner:** Yvonne Wagner

**Date of Construction:** 1963-1965

### Description of the Historic Place

The Wagner Residence, located at 6003 Eagleridge Drive in West Vancouver, was designed and constructed in an unusual variation of the West Coast Style of architecture, with references to romantic traditional architecture. The side-gabled, linear, one-storey house with partial basement maintains its original interior and exterior integrity.

### Heritage Value of the Historic Place

Completed in 1965, the Wagner Residence is valued as a unique representation of the West Coast Style. Characterized by its design innovation, use of natural materials, and sensitive integration with the natural environment, the West Coast Style was one of the most prevalent local styles between 1945 and 1970. The West Coast Style evolved during an era of post-war prosperity, growth, and the disruption of traditional institutions. Designed by and for architect Percy Underwood, and constructed by craftsman Einer Silberbauer, this house features a unique combination of modern and historic architectural influences. The interior features arced ceilings supported by hand adzed beams, which feature scroll-cut detailing. Underwood designed the ceiling structure of the main room to resemble that of an upside-down ship, supported by a centre beam and two flanking beams, as well as side beams that extend across the entire ceiling to the floor level on each side. The house features first-growth cedar wood, 10-centimetre wide tongue-and-groove plank ceilings and walls on the interior, with local Caribou Brown stone on the exterior of the house. The historic architectural influences are expressed through the use of hand adzed beams and leaded glass windows, some with conventional diamond patterns and some with whimsical circular designs and small panes of coloured glass. The house features a linear, rectangular layout, which offers both privacy and selected views to the outside.

Built on a steeply sloping 2,154 square metre lot along Eagleridge Drive, the Wagner Residence is significant for its integration with the surrounding natural environment. The West Coast Style was suited for houses built on spectacular and challenging sites; the natural surroundings of the residence were minimally disturbed during the construction of the Wagner Residence. Its linear design and landscaping, which includes the use of local stone, rhododendrons, arbutus trees, and hedges, allow the Wagner Residence to blend almost seamlessly with the natural environment. Every axis of the house was intentionally designed to offer the inhabitants privacy, while embracing the surrounding natural materials, on both the interior and exterior of the house, as well as the views to Howe Sound. The Wagner Residence was constructed at the peak of the ascending Eagleridge subdivision, which became a prime location for the work of Underwood's contemporaries in the 1960s; Thompson, Berwick & Pratt designed the Greig Residence at 6026 Eagleridge Drive in 1960 as well as the Case Residence at 6011 Eagleridge Drive in 1964, and Arthur Erickson's firm designed the Catton Residence, located at 6028 Eagleridge Drive, in 1968. The Wagner Residence exists today as one of several mid-century urban retreats in the Eagleridge subdivision, integrated within the natural environment.

The Wagner Residence was designed in 1963 by one of the Lower Mainland's most notable architects, Percy Callahan Underwood (1894-1978), who was born in London, England, and arrived in Vancouver in 1921. Shortly after his arrival, Underwood spent a few years in Seattle, but returned to Vancouver in 1925. Underwood found employment with the revered firm of McCarter & Nairne, remaining there until the 1930s, when he opened his own practice. Through the remainder of his career, he was involved in a series of successful partnerships with other local architects. Underwood was known for his variety of residential, commercial and institutional designs, and in 1946, received praise for his work from the esteemed Richard J. Neutra. In the 1950s, Underwood designed numerous pavilions and animal houses and the Parks Board offices in Stanley Park, demonstrating a more whimsical and romantic interpretation of modern architecture. Underwood designed the Eagleridge house as his retirement home and his thoughtful details are evident in each room, from the nearly invisible placement of electrical outlets below the line of the cedar walls, to the laundry area with built-in ironing board, to the seamless cupboards and closets throughout the house. The design of his family home, completed in 1965, was one of his last commissions and, though he would only live there for two years, it was the pride of his career. Yvonne Wagner purchased the house from the Underwoods in 1967. Under the dedicated care of Yvonne, the house has maintained its full integrity and exhibits the same appearance and condition today as it did upon its completion in 1965.

### **Character-Defining Elements**

Key elements that define the heritage character of the Wagner Residence are its:

#### **Site:**

- location at 6003 Eagleridge Drive in West Vancouver;
- continuous residential use;
- setting amongst mature vegetation on a steeply sloping lot, with views to Howe Sound;
- landscape features, including mature, native trees and plants at the rear of the property, and a planned garden at the front; and
- Caribou Brown stone pathways.

#### **Exterior:**

- residential form, scale and massing as expressed by its one-storey plan with partial basement, side-gabled roof structure and linear massing;
- wood-frame construction with stone cladding;

- unusual variation on the West Coast Style, including its: extensive use of local building materials, including Caribou Brown stone cladding and hand adzed curved wooden brackets, beams and columns; relationship between the interior and exterior spaces; and wood frame window assemblies, some with leaded glass panes, which feature a variety of shapes and patterns including diamond, and an organic, circular design with coloured and textured glass inserts;
- open cedar soffits with exposed, hand adzed scroll-cut beams;
- recessed front-entryway with overhanging eaves offering weather protection at the front door and a covered connection between the house and garage;
- custom three-tiered metal art piece at the front entryway, representing a mid-century interpretation of a prayer wheel;
- custom vertical panelled solid wooden front entrance door with original hardware, mail slot and custom, leaded glass side-lights;
- access door between laundry room and exterior for service deliveries;
- original, attached garage, angling off from the rectangular volume of the main house structure, accessed by an original custom vertical panelled solid wooden door and by two, vertical panelled cedar garage doors, and featuring several leaded glass window assemblies; and
- two internal stone chimneys.

**Interior:**

- arrangement of rooms;
- West Coast Style details, such as its Cabot Wax stained first-growth cedar wood, 10-centimetre wide tongue-and-groove plank ceilings;
- custom details that reference romantic traditional architecture, such as its hand adzed, scroll cut beams and brackets, which support the vaulted ceiling in the living room and in the bedrooms, resembling an upside-down ship in the main room, as well as diamond patterned leaded glass windows;
- concrete slab flooring, beneath later edge grain oak;
- half-height storage wall in the entrance foyer;
- two ensuite bedrooms on the main floor, featuring vaulted ceilings, seamless, built-in storage spaces and window seats with recessed light fixtures above;
- two custom hand adzed wood-framed, stone fireplaces, one in the living room and one in the maid's quarters located in the partial basement;
- angled and curved 'ship-style' staircase with wooden steps and balustrade leading to the second bedroom, which served as Underwood's bedroom and studio;
- custom metal hanging light fixtures, which echo the patterns on the leaded glass windows, as well as the 'prayer wheel' outside the front door;
- kitchen area featuring original, separated laundry-room section with built-in ironing board and one of the only above floor-level socket in the house, provided to plug-in the iron;
- original teak wooden cabinets the kitchen, as well as a custom, multi-light wooden door with side lights leading to the rear patio;
- original custom sockets placed beneath the cedar wall panelling to create a seamless wall profile as well as to conceal the location of sockets;
- custom light switches and buzzer call system throughout;
- original door hardware, some without tongues, featuring custom pewter knobs; and
- lower-floor living space 'maid's quarters' with views to Howe Sound.

# IMAGE COMPENDIUM: 6003 EAGLERIDGE DRIVE



Front entrance and gardens



Front elevation



Window detail



Caribou Brown stone cladding



Rear elevation



Rear patio and access to kitchen



Garage and driveway flanked by curved hedges



Gable end detailing on roof above rear patio





Access door on exterior for service deliveries



Front entrance detail



Hand adzed curved wooden bracket



Covered front entrance with custom side lights and art piece representing interpretation of a prayer wheel



Hand adzed wooden bracket



Art piece representing interpretation of a prayer wheel, front entrance



Rear of the property underneath the patio



View southwest to Howe Sound



View west to Howe Sound



Living room ceiling, stone fireplace, foyer and staircase to second bedroom



Vaulted garage ceiling





Window seat in living room with views to Howe Sound



Living room facing east



Tongue-and-groove ceiling panel: 10 centimetre thickness



Hand adzed wooden post detail



Hand adzed wooden scroll cut post



Door to lower level (left) and storage space (right)



Leaded glass windows with coloured glass inserts



Custom hanging light fixture, echoing the organic pattern of the leaded glass windows



Master bedroom with vaulted ceiling and ensuite bathroom



Window seat featuring leaded glass windows and storage beneath, master bedroom



Living room, looking toward the kitchen (left) and rear patio (right)



Concealed sockets





Second bedroom (Underwood's studio) with vaulted ceiling, corresponding doorway and custom light switch



Window detail, front entrance side light



Interior ledge for incoming mail



Side light detail, front entrance



Original kitchen cabinets



Original kitchen cabinets



Living room ceiling detail



Custom pewter door knob



Lower level window