WHY UNIVERSAL DESIGN IS IMPORTANT

Universal design is described as, the design of an environment which can be accessed and understood by all people regardless of their ability (mobility, size, or age). Buildings or product design which are specifically designed for one specific need, do not help individuals who may be limited in mobility, restricted mental processing capabilities, or need devices for approach, reach, and manipulation.

Universal design when you are focusing on aging in place, becomes incredibly important for those growing old but still wanting to maintain their independence. Currently most senior citizens would like to stay in their own home. This creates a challenge for those individuals when their environment is not equipped for changes that come with age. By making changes to make the appropriate additions to their home and therefore grow with them, and continually improve their quality of life.

In conclusion I implemented universal design in a recent project for a client who was looking for a new addition to their home, so they can maintain their independence as they age. I saw the potential to be a wonderful challenge where there is a lot of opportunity to make a difference for elderly people plan to live. I believe this add a consistent quality throughout my designing career and how this is the time to become more educated on the matter.

"Universal Design is good design.”

When applying Universal Design to a space or environment, our design is a design that is easy to understand and experience with no limits. This is incredibly important when applying to homes for those who may be limited in mobility. Increased need of taking, required training or non-restricted mental processing capabilities. This is also known as “Aging at Place.” You will find this concept throughout Universal Design. It can be achieved by eliminating unnecessary components, consistent design, and provide adequate space and use for approach, reach, and manipulation.

To begin creating a space for our client we needed to determine the outer most transitions for us. We included a sitting area overlooking their pond, a bedroom, laundry with storage, and a spacious bathroom. I was able to achieve a space plan that would be wheelchair accessible if needed and a completely walkable level apartment.

SPECIFIC REQUESTS FROM THE CLIENT:

- Plumbing fixtures not WD should be clustered in NW so the plumbing runs are short.
- South wall angles from current house at 90 degrees, perhaps with pia.
- Would like to avoid hallways and doors. Two doors only needed pocket door to close toilet stall and tracked door closing off addition from main house. Openings should be sized for wheelchair access.
- Wood (Maple) floors except in bath/bathroom.
- Six inch external walls.
- In-floor radiant heat.
- Stairwell style roof.
- Green metal roof.
- Wood windows (Andersen triple pane).

CONCEPTUAL ELEVATIONS

FRONT EXTERIOR RENDERING

This rendering is a visual representation of what the existing home on the left would look like with the new addition on the left. My client is a very Eco friendly family and wanted to maximize their land with appropriate orientation and building materials.

KEEPING their Scandinavian style was a very important request, and kept the integrity of the home.

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