



Iconic in Nature

BY CYNTHIA FLASH

When the U.S. Army built homes for its newly established post on Seattle's Magnolia Bluff in 1899, no one would have imagined that more than a century later these stately residences would eventually be for sale to the public in the middle of what has become a treasured urban park.

The Army established Fort Lawton to serve as a coastal defense for the South

Puget Sound and the Bremerton Naval Base and to protect the city of Seattle. The fort, during World War II, served as the second largest port of embarkation to support the Pacific Theater and was home to more than 20,000 troops at a time. It ultimately processed more than one million military personnel and their families. In 1968, the Army determined it could no longer use the vast majority of the fort and eventually transferred more than 500 acres of land back to the

city of Seattle, which in 1973 dedicated the area as Discovery Park. Fort Lawton officially closed on Sept. 14, 2011.

Now, for the first time, 26 historic homes that are part of the "Fort Lawton Historic District" in the heart of Discovery Park, are going on the market. Beginning in September 2015, the first of these newly restored homes will be sold to homeowners who appreciate their historic significance and the opportunity to live in a 534-acre park that includes

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1886

Seattle business leaders petition the U.S. government to establish a military post on Magnolia Bluff

1891

The final construction of a Bremerton dry dock by the U.S. Navy increases the strategic importance of defending Puget Sound

1895

Federal legislation is introduced to designate an Army installation on Magnolia Bluff

1896

Acting Secretary of War, Joseph Doe, approves Magnolia Bluff for the fort site

1898

A new Army post at Magnolia Bluff is approved by Secretary of War, Russell Alger, and construction begins

1900

Fort Lawton opens

1902

The fort is redesigned for infantry use

1910

The fort's master plan is redesigned once again by famed landscape architect John C. Olmsted and identifies housing for officers and enlisted men (one year earlier, Olmsted was called on to draft the comprehensive plan for the University of Washington)



A Century in the Making – Fort Lawton | “These homes are living wor



MONTANA

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woods, hiking trails and an undeveloped tidal beach on Puget Sound.

“In Fort Lawton we saw a tremendous opportunity to transition these landmark homes built and owned by the government into a vibrant community of privately owned homes,” said Gary Blakeslee, vice president and principal with project developer RISE Properties Trust. “But even more than shepherding this transition, we saw historic homes in a truly park-centric location that needed to be preserved and updated by a careful steward, and delivered into the hands of people as passionate about community as we are.”

RISE Properties Trust is one member of the team that is bringing these homes to market. The team also includes GGLO and BOLA Architecture + Planning and Realogics Sotheby's International Realty. Members of the team joined a round

table discussion with the *Puget Sound Business Journal* recently to discuss the significance of this project.

The Homes at Fort Lawton, each listed on the National Register of Historic Places, were built between 1899 and 1935 as an early example of efficient community planning and development, a plan further enhanced by noted landscape architect John C. Olmsted. The close community of vintage military Colonial Revival-style homes could come from the pages of a historic novel, featuring turn-of-the-century charm with a small-town American aesthetic. The homes are clustered in two neighborhoods - Montana Circle and Officers' Row - which are anchored by Fort Lawton's Parade Ground and overlook other historic landmarks. Officers' Row features 13 stately homes with views of Puget Sound and the Olympic Mountains, while Montana Circle is a charming mix of 13

brick and wood homes with territorial views tucked among mature trees.

This private development on former military-owned land is similar to the iconic Presidio in San Francisco, another former military installation that was converted to for-market housing open to the general public. But unlike the Presidio, which includes some 1,100 dwellings and is available only to lease, The Homes at Fort Lawton comprise just 26 fee-simple residences that will be sold to individual owners. For the past decade, the Fort Lawton homes were available as rental properties. In 2013, RISE Properties Trust entered an agreement to purchase the properties, which the company closed on this year. It hired historic preservation architects BOLA Architecture + Planning to meticulously restore the historic exteriors.

“Our goal was to make it look as if we hadn't been there, as if the buildings had

been there since the late 1800s and that we had not made any significant changes to them,” said Rhoda Lawrence, AIA, principal with BOLA. “If no one can tell what we've done, we feel the project's been a success. The houses at Fort Lawton are living history and the new owners will be their custodians.”

She said it is also important to make the houses useful for today's owners. “They need to move forward with modern lifestyles; they can't be stuck in time.”

That was the challenge set by RISE for renowned GGLO - to embrace the restored exteriors while thoughtfully updating the interiors to modern standards, which include new finishes, state-of-the-art systems, Miele appliances, new plumbing and electrical systems. GGLO principal Kimberly Frank, IIDA, said the team analyzed the properties' design origins to determine who the homes were designed for and why, in addition to looking at the

1942-1945
During WWII, Fort Lawton becomes the second largest port of embarkation of soldiers and materials to the Pacific Theater

1951
A grove of trees and monument honoring the war-dead are dedicated near the post chapel

1951-1953
Fort Lawton once again serves as a major port of embarkation and return for U.S. troops involved in the Korean War

1972
The Army surpluses 391 acres of Fort Lawton, transferring the property back to the City of Seattle

1973
The City of Seattle dedicates the surplus land as Discovery Park in honor of HMS Discovery, the ship commanded by Captain Vancouver during the exploration of the Puget Sound

1975
Fort Lawton's early 20th - century buildings are surplussed

1978
24 buildings at Fort Lawton are listed in the National Register of Historic Places, creating the "Fort Lawton Historic District"

2011
Forest City Military Communities, a private partnership with the U.S. Navy to manage the historic homes at Fort Lawton, officially tender the property for sale

2015
RISE Properties Trust acquires 26 historic homes on Montana Circle and Washington Avenue and proceeds to restore the homes — subject to approvals by the Historic Preservation Board and municipal authorities — prior to releasing the homes for resale

orks of art and history.” — STEPHANIE MCMAHON | Realogics Sotheby's International Realty



social and environmental conditions of the time.

“Unlike military housing, contemporary private residences tend to reflect the individuality of their owners,” she said. “The design team gave consideration as to how new owners may individualize their homes within the framework of historic preservation guidelines.”

The design team applied a balanced approach, considering the nature of historic architecture with many small rooms for specific purposes against contemporary living ideals of open interiors that connect multiple activities and gather residents. In some cases GGLO consolidated rooms or converted an extra bedroom into a luxurious master bathroom.

“The main objective,” she said, “is to preserve these heirloom properties and position them for a certain future, the next chapter in their place in history as part of Fort Lawton. GGLO’s goal is for new

homeowners to feel they are an extension of the rich history of the place, a rare opportunity to add their life and experiences to the future of these residences.”

Each home includes original high ceilings, thick moldings and refinished hardwood floors, as well as tiled fireplaces, oversized windows, and wraparound porches.

Perhaps the most interesting part of this development is the fact it’s located in the middle of a park in an urban setting. The homes are on large private lots with plenty of open park space around, yet are just six miles from downtown Seattle and minutes from Magnolia and Ballard. Residents are literally surrounded by Seattle’s largest park, offering access to more than 11 miles of trails, open spaces, and South Beach - a wild, secluded coastline bound by Magnolia Bluff to the east and the West Point Lighthouse to the west.

“Historic preservation meets modern community planning and thoughtful interior

design to create an idyllic small town in the heart of the big city,” said Stephanie McMahon, community sales director with Realogics Sotheby’s International Realty, the listing broker. McMahon has a special appreciation for the property as the wife of Navy Captain Scott McMahon, which has given her the opportunity to live in several quintessential military communities around the globe. “These homes include luxuries that are not anticipated in a city that is growing as rapidly as Seattle – vast open space, unspoiled wilderness and tranquility. It is a residential enclave that will be admired by many but owned by few.”

McMahon said she expects multiple interested buyers for each property and hopes that future homeowners are equally passionate about the historic nature of the homes and the mission of the park, which is “To provide an open space of quiet and tranquility away from the stress and activity of the city, a sanctuary for wildlife, as well

as an outdoor classroom for people to learn about the natural world.”

Blakeslee calls the historic homes of Fort Lawton “very, very special.” He speaks from experience, since his family has taken up residence there during the restoration.

“Living in Fort Lawton has provided me with a whole new perspective and a greater appreciation for this extraordinary national treasure,” he said. “It’s transformative to leave the hustle and bustle of downtown Seattle and less than 15 minutes later end up at the park gates. This is more than home – it’s like being granted a new day at the end of your day.”

McMahon agrees, calling Fort Lawton “a once in a century opportunity. It’s the kind of property that will be passed down for generations. Far more than a residence, these homes are living works of art and history.”

A series of video interviews with members of the Fort Lawton team can be viewed at www.OwnFortLawton.com.



PANEL of EXPERTS



GARY BLAKESLEE

Gary Blakeslee serves as President of Thrive Developments. Throughout his career Gary has worked on more than 3,000 residences, where he has been responsible for everything from managing the design, permitting and pre-construction phases, to construction management, marketing and sales. He has a Construction Management degree and is a licensed real estate broker.

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Kimberly Frank is the Interior Design Principal at GGLO. She brings the unique perspective that the interior environment should be created through a holistic lens that goes beyond the five senses. She is an expert in understanding current and upcoming trends, target demographics, sustainable design and using this information to create a unique user-experience distinctive to the project's story and brand.

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A founding partner of BOLA, Rhoda Lawrence actively leads many of the firm's preservation design and adaptive use projects. She is a preservation architect with experience in all phases of renovation design. Her work includes planning, condition analysis, public agency permit reviews, and construction administration. Her 32 years of practice reflects her passion and expertise in technical preservation and creative design solutions for building rehabilitations.

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About the Homes at Fort Lawton



- Homes will be offered for sale as they are restored beginning with Montana Circle in September 2015 and concluding with Officers' Row by Summer 2016.
- Duplex and single-family homes range from two-bedroom and two-bathroom residences of 1,674-square-feet to the General's House comprising six bedrooms and four bathrooms with more than 6,600-square-feet. Homeowners will benefit from a decade of property tax credits in exchange for the restoration of the registered landmark.
- Prospective buyers are encouraged to register to receive priority sales information. A VIP preview event for prospective homebuyers and brokers will be hosted in advance of the Grand Opening Sales Event scheduled for early fall 2015.



Artists renderings illustrate the inspired interiors.

For more information visit www.ownfortlawton.com

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