



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Design Makes Life Better

Fitch Design Company

BY **JAMES SLONE**
CONTENT SPECIALIST
MBAKS

Fitch Design Company Principal Designer Selena Fitch with Jack, her sole office companion in the early days of the pandemic. He's become a popular icebreaker for clients visiting the showroom. "You can see them take a deep breath and immediately feel more at ease with Jack in the room."



When Selena Fitch got into design, her dream job was creating skyscraper interiors. But the universe had other plans. When she graduated from the Art Institute of Seattle with a BFA in Interior Design in 2007, the Great Recession had just started, and entry-level commercial design jobs evaporated.

Selena put skyscrapers on hold and found her way into residential design, first as an independent designer, then for a handful of firms. Eventually,

Below: Fitch Design Company modernized the dining room, kitchen, and breakfast nook of this 1977 Queen Anne Hill home while honoring its original styling.

Opposite page: A gorgeous new bathroom designed by Fitch. Note the seamlessly integrated shower and stylishly tiled bathtub installed in a dormer.

she made her way to Everett-based Soleil by Design, where she took on the role of manager and principal designer in 2017.

A natural designer, Selena creates sleek spaces without sacrificing creature comforts. She specializes in kitchens and bathrooms—rooms designed for functionality but reflective of their owners' personalities and needs. "When I meet someone or walk into their home," Selena says, "I immediately get a strong sense for who they are, and I let that guide my design."

Passion Projects

Selena is especially passionate about kitchens. Great kitchens, she explains, "start with meticulously planned cabinet layouts that fit the client's day-to-day use."

We know Selena will take ownership of our client's concept and create a functional design that looks fantastic.

JON ELKINS, Shirey Home Pros

One recent highlight: a collaboration with custom builder Carlisle Classic Homes. The clients wanted to remodel their 1977 Queen Anne Hill home, modernizing their kitchen while retaining its character.

Selena had to design around an existing beam and posts, installing a flush beam and removing a back wall to expand the kitchen. Her design called for white cabinetry and a matching wood hood, complementing existing cedar planks, new stainless appliances, a classic farm sink, and vintage-inspired light fixtures. Subway tiles and quartz countertops

brought a classic texture. In the breakfast nook, she kept the original banquette, while in the dining room she installed new blue hutchches with misty glass, introducing a modern yet vintage twist, and added a new cast iron and quartz table.

Bathrooms offer their own issues, such as limited space, lack of storage and accessibility, and, often, little personality. Targeting these problems is step one.

A new master bathroom designed by Fitch puts this idea into practice. Part of a dormer extension project that created a larger master





suite, the bathroom includes a shower, drop-in tub, double vanity, and walk-in closet. Space constraints led to the decision to center the shower on a wall to accommodate a ceiling-mounted rainhead. Frameless glass seamlessly leads the bathroom into the shower, while recessed medicine cabinets add significant storage. The space-defying coup is a sanctum-like bathtub placed in an existing dormer, brightened with elegant white tile.

A Company on Speed Dial

Selena's skills have not gone unnoticed. Issaquah-based Shirey Home Pros has worked closely with Fitch Design on a number of remodels, and Selena's now their go-to for design.

Within six months, Selena was able to steer the company toward profitability.

Owner and Sales Manager Jon Elkins tells me, "We know Selena will take ownership of our client's concept and create a functional design that looks fantastic. Selena is a great guide for clients who don't particularly know their style and a great listener to homeowners who do."

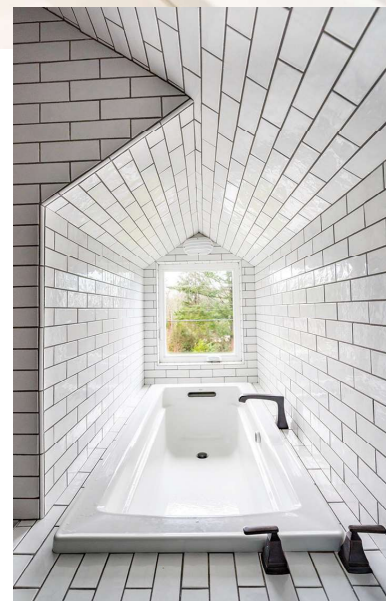
Selena pulls off the delicate balance through her communicative approach. Amy Ecklund, owner of Seattle remodeling company AmyWorks, agrees. "Her wealth of knowledge and willingness to share it has always made my work easier." This was true from the first collaboration.

During permitting for a basement ADU, the original

designer stepped away from the project. Amy reached out to Selena. "Fitch Design Company came out, took all the measurements, put together drawings with all the ADU requirements included, and submitted everything for permitting within three weeks." From that day on, "Selena's company is on speed dial."

From Soleil to Fitch Design Company

When Selena started at Soleil, the company was in rocky financial straits, but a change in ownership gave her a chance to prove herself. "The new owner, Laura Bowyer, was wonderful and encouraged me to grow the business." Selena set to work talking to contractors, and within six months was able to steer the company toward profitability.



Two years later, Laura transferred ownership to Selena. Again, Selena says, the universe seemed to be intervening. "I immediately rebranded it Fitch Design Company to make it my own, because the name was the last part of it that was not wholly me."

Under Selena's direction, Fitch Design Company garnered several awards, including two

COVID-19 has kept demand steady, as clients trapped at home have a lot of time to think about fixing wasted and dysfunctional spaces.

Best of Houzz Awards and multiple REX/T-REX Awards—three in 2019 alone, for Design Excellence in Architecture and Design Excellence in Interior Design both over and under \$125,000. Seattle Architects has named Selena one of the ten Best Interior Designers in Seattle.

Internally, Fitch Design Company is a well-rounded operation with five employees: Selena, two designers, one administrative assistant, and one bookkeeper. Their full suite

of services keeps them busy; Selena estimates the company takes on 60–70 projects a year.

Far from decreasing her business, COVID-19 has actually kept demand steady, as clients trapped at home have a lot of time to think about fixing wasted and dysfunctional spaces or adding an ADU. Even before the pandemic, the Great Recession reduced the importance of resale value. “Homeowners began to focus on making their home livable

and permanent. COVID has accelerated this trend.”

In fact, business is brisk enough that Fitch Design started supplying cabinetry packages directly to contractors and recently opened a new showroom.

Who Needs Skyscrapers?

Selena is passionate about design because she “likes to see things happen, move, change, become fresh again.” And Fitch Design takes every step of the design process seriously, working with each client to deliver results that speak for themselves, with a seamless construction phase. The company relies on referrals,

with nearly all their marketing focused on enthusiastic testimonials.

Selena says she is no longer interested in skyscrapers. Why? “Because residential design means every project is its own thing, and always involves a different story, a different person with different needs.

“People are so affected by their surroundings, and one positive change in their environment can change their whole being. Design affects people. And when it comes to residential design, positive changes in the home environment can make positive changes in a person’s life.” ▲



Fitch Design Company was recognized three times over at the 2019 REX Awards. Selena, front row, second from the left, holds her trophies and stands among her fellow REX winners.