

Snapshot: Kathryn Craft

By SAM BENNETT
Journal Staff Reporter



Kathryn Craft

Firm: Craft Architects
Location: 1932 First Ave.
Website: www.craftarchitects.com
Specialty: Industrial, commercial, financial, retail.

Q: What are you working on?

A: We're working on a number of projects, such as the new Wells Fargo prototype design for the Renton Village retail branch, together with HOK's Texas office. We are also working on a 55,500-square-foot building for RSS Management and Allwest, and the master planning of an industrial park site.

Working with new and larger clients has allowed us to expand our markets into retail and financial groups, as well as industrial and commercial.

We enjoy working with sophisticated clients like Wells Fargo's corporate properties division because they are educated in architecture and the design and development process. I think people are going to see that the new prototype design is quite a step forward for Wells Fargo. It's a refreshing, innovative use of traditional materials with a sophisticated design.

Q: How did you get involved in your specialty?

A: Eleven years ago, while working at CNA, I was introduced to two industrial developers and began working on their projects. I found this was an area I really enjoyed. It's an important niche that often gets overlooked. Our Christmas card last year showed Santa and his sleigh backing into a loading dock. The idea was to show where Santa really gets his presents: one of those large distribution centers. I also discovered my passion is working closely with clients and building a strong repeat business.

Q: Is your creativity limited on industrial buildings?

A: Many of the buildings look like simple boxes, but actually they are quite sophisticated in their layout and master plan, especially in an industrial park. The sophistication has to do with circulation safety — including keeping cars separate from the trucks and allowing for the flow of trucks to safely back into loading docks. We keep up with trends in the trucking and distribution center industry, and bring that knowledge to our clients. We also work with brokers and contractors in making decisions around land deals and planning strategic locations for distribution centers and manufacturing facilities.

Q: Can industrial buildings be more sustainable?



The 76,000-square-foot RSS Management/Univera Healthcare has a flexible design for multiple tenants, including the city of Lacey.

A: We are discovering new ways to create sustainable solutions for industrial design, exploring the use of green roofs and eco-friendly materials. We're working on on-site stormwater detention. Sites that may have half a million square feet of pavement can create a lot of stormwater. If we can be innovative in implementing sustainable materials or ideas at a low cost to developers, then they will be accepted.

Q: Who is your current favorite architect?

A: Antoine Predock, because we both work in concrete. He uses concrete in a warm way, creating texture similar to our techniques.

Q: What's your favorite local building?

A: Probably Seattle City Hall. I think it's clean and modern, yet it uses natural materials. The building is a good blend of the traditional feel of a municipal building, but still has the warmth of the Northwest.

Q: How did you get into architecture?

A: I moved from home when I was 18 years old and starved for a couple years, living in an apartment above a tavern. One Christmas, when I was dirt poor, a boy came to my door and gave me a Christmas card with a \$50 bill inside. The card said "Merry Christmas. We believe in you." I never discovered who sent the card but it was at that point I decided I needed go to college. This event was a turning point for me. I had always wanted to be an architect and have my own firm. Now I have the firm, a great team and wonderful clients. My dream is coming true.



The Wells Fargo Wealth Management Center is an addition to a Mercer Island building and the first of its kind for Wells Fargo.