



by Polly Lane  
Real-estate editor

# 16 years and still selling 'super' Seattle

It's not surprising today to hear that a newcomer has chosen the Puget Sound country for a home and place to work, especially since the rash of national publicity about what a livable place it is.

But Henry Griffin, 48, architect and executive vice president of CHG International, Tacoma-based builder-developer, "discovered" Seattle 16 years ago.

And he still thinks it is "by far the greatest city in America. I have fantastic faith in Seattle. It has everything going for it. You can walk every place... there is nowhere else in the world like it."

Griffin scrutinized Seattle a lot more than many newcomers. He and his family fled Cuba following the revolution there. They didn't want to stay in Spain, their first stopping point, and moved on to London. Then they began in earnest to find a city with a future for an architect and his family.

**AFTER EXTENSIVE** study, the Griffins selected San Francisco, Seattle, Vancouver, B.C., Adelaide, Australia, and Durban, South Africa.

Then he met Herman Sarkowsky, Seattle developer and sports entrepreneur, who offered him a job if he moved to Seattle.

Griffin went to work for Sarkowsky, president of United Homes, one of the area's largest home-building companies here during the 1960s.

While with United Homes, which later was acquired by I.T.T. and Levitt Homes, Griffin met Clint Hergert, Hergert, an Enumclaw native and University of Washington graduate, had worked in real estate in Auburn and Kent in the 1950s and joined United Homes as vice president in charge of marketing in 1962.

In 1971, following the economic slump here, the two left United Homes to form their own company, CHG International. "International" was added to the name because they were looking into a building program in Latin America that never worked out.

The two hold all of the voting stock in their company and half of the non-voting stock. Sarkowsky and Del Belfoy of Rainier Mortgage Co., and also a United Homes owner, own the other half of the non-voting stock.

In February, the partners will move from Tacoma to new headquarters in West Campus at Federal Way. (see related article).

Hergert, 49, company president, said they expect sales of \$60 million and hopes to begin an estimated 2,000 housing units in the 1977-78 fiscal year.

**THE COMPANY** has built a lot of single-family homes in the Tri-Cities area, Grays Harbor and Kitsap Counties, as well as Seattle and Tacoma. Next year the partners said they hope to expand into the Oregon and Idaho markets, as well as do more in Eastern Washington.

Though they are not especially interested in commercial office or retail development, the company does build, own and manage 3,500 apartment units.

Recently the partners purchased a half block site at Sixth Avenue and Columbia Street (now occupied by the Doris and Breslin Apartments) and are considering three more sites in the Denny Regrade.

"We want to be ready when people start moving back into the city," they explained.

They don't have specific plans for the sites, but will consider either rental or condominium high-

rise units, most likely.

They also handle condominium conversions, a popular part of the housing market this season.

Though the partners went through hard times with the rest of the housing industry here in the early 1970s after the economy slipped, the two say they have a knottier problem now: the lack of buildable lots — a difficulty shared with all housing builders here.

The time involved in planning a project probably is the most dramatic change in the business in the past 15 years, the two said. Now it takes two years instead of two to three months to get a sizable project under way.

"Zoning means nothing, either," Hergert said, referring to the successes citizens have had in slowing or stopping some projects.

The officials said the heavy-demand market here now is forcing them to re-analyze their home prices every month. Higher labor and materials costs, as well as land, keep pressing the prices higher and higher.

Most of their homes are mid-priced and all qualify for federal financing guarantees. Griffin said they haven't noticed much interest by buyers in energy-saving features, though they offer insulated glass as an option for \$450 to \$600 extra in a typical home.

"Only about 5 per cent of the buyers take it," he said.

All of their homes use electric heat and all have maximum side-wall insulation, Hergert said.

**THE COMPANY** prefers to build in areas with a 20-home minimum because of their approach to building. The partners said they don't believe factory-built housing ever will replace "stick" building, despite the increasing prices. Both think typical factory-built homes

are unimaginative and unattractive. But they are considering using some mass-production techniques for the unseen parts of homes.

CHG, with its affiliated design and management groups, has a payroll of about 200 with 40 in headquarters offices.

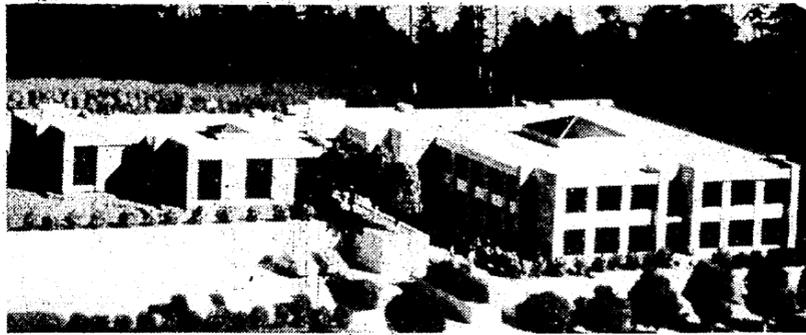
Though they plan to expand their territory and build farther from headquarters in West Campus, Hergert and Griffin don't

## real estate

want their company to get much larger. They are comfortable with it the way it works now.

But they do plan to continue to be a major part of the housing market here.

Seattle remains tops on their list of places to live and work, even though they've seen the downside, as well as today's spectacular high.



Two-story headquarters to be in West Campus.

## Construction starts on headquarters

Construction of a \$950,000 headquarters building for CHG International, Tacoma-based developer and contractor, has begun on 1.5 acres at 100 S. 333rd Street in West Campus at Federal Way.

The 21,000-square-foot, two-story building will be ready for occupancy in late February. Solar reflecting glass will separate bleached-cedar and stucco panels and the building will be wrapped around a skylighted atrium with an executive annex attached.

CHG is acting as its own developer and contractor, with LSB International, engineering consultant. Ron Coulter, Bellevue, and LSB International are architects. The Evergreen Associates, Tacoma investment group affiliated with CHG International, will own the building.

Chaffee Zumwalt & Associates is landscape architect. There will be parking for 80 cars on the site.

## City Credit Union looks to move

Next fall, members of the City Credit Union of Seattle will be conducting their business in a new place.

Plans for the project, which may cost as much as \$2 million, call for use of the 25-year-old building now on the northwest corner of Third Avenue and Columbia Street and construction of two additional floors. That will put three levels above Third Avenue. Two lower parking levels, entered from Columbia, will remain.

The building formerly housed, in part, a branch of Seattle-First National Bank, which holds a long-term lease on the site. The credit union's building at Third and Marion Street houses the Sea-First branch now on a long-term lease.

Richard Hobbs of Hobbs/Fukui, architect, designed the building. Work is expected to begin shortly after the first of the year and will be paid for as completed.

According to Frank Mathews, credit-union manager, the two main floors will be used to serve the credit-union's 12,500 members; the top floor will be rented until such time as it may be needed for expansion. The credit union has assets of \$44.5 million.

The quarter-block original building was designed and constructed to support a total of six floors above the two parking levels. The extensive renovation design includes provisions for adding as many as three floors to those already planned.

The credit union some months ago applied for a building permit for a \$450,000 renovation of their old building, which was built in the 1920s. The firm had occupied the second floor since 1957, and planned to use the first floor for expansion. In the meantime, the bank entered negotiations to use it, and the present arrangement was approved.



## Times Open House

by CATHY REINER

A sweeping look at ferries on Puget Sound, the far-off shores of Bainbridge Island and the bluffs of Magnolia are the views from today's Times Open House in West Seattle.

Perched high on a hill above North Admiral Way, the modern, angular-designed home was built in an established neighborhood of older homes.

The house is entered across a railed bridge to a glass-paneled front door. Inside, an oak parquet entry leads off in three directions.

Straight ahead, the entry hall passes a guest closet and a passage to a compact powder room. A circular cut-out in the wall allows a peek-through to the view windows of the living room.

Tall peeled posts guard the entrance to the living and dining rooms. The living room is sunken, and soars two stories to a beamed, cathedral ceiling and a skylight.

The room has six tall windows to the Puget Sound view, and a

floor-to-ceiling redwood-and-ceramic-tile fireplace.

A half-wall separates the living room from the dining room, which is up a step. The dining room, already spacious, can be extended wider by opening sliding glass doors to the outside deck.

The kitchen can be closed off from formal areas by a sliding pocket door. Inside, the room has two walls lined with heavy oak cabinets, almond-colored appliances (including a microwave oven), and orange-colored counter tops.

The overhead lighting, recessed, is trimmed with oak.

A deep-purple, stained-glass window is over the double stainless-steel sink.

The breakfast nook, under a tinted atrium-style window, overlooks the front yard.

The kitchen opens back to the entry where stairs lead up to the master suite. The suite has a wide balcony over the main areas of the home with space for a study or den at one end.

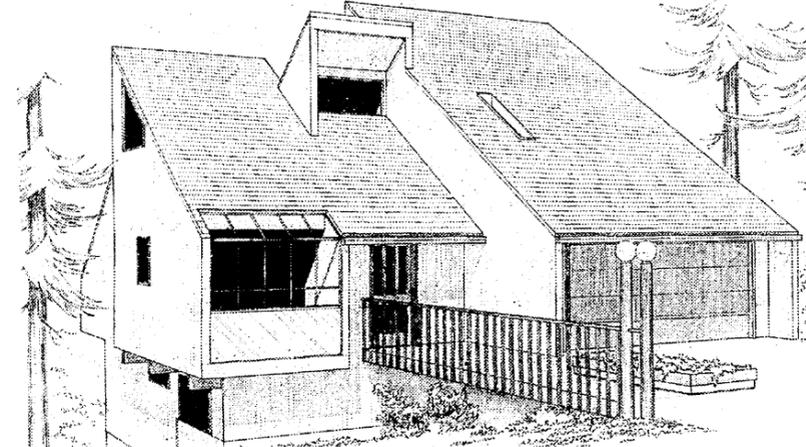
On the west wall a wide window looks above rooftops to the Olympic Mountains and Blake Island, while the living room's skylight is at eye level for a view north across Puget Sound.

The huge master bedroom looks even bigger because of its 16-foot cathedral ceiling. One wall is lined with three deep closets, and sliders on the opposite wall open to a tiny, private deck.

The room has a wide oak vanity under theatrical-style lights, and twin espresso-brown sinks. A high clerestory window above has a wide shelf for plants.

The adjoining bathroom has a deep oversized soaking tub in the same espresso color, ceramic-tiled walls and a skylight.

Two flights of stairs down is the



children's level with two bedrooms, a full bath, utility room, furnace room and large recreation room.

A double garage with a built-in workbench and an automatic door is at the front of the home.

The home was sold early this week, but the builders plan to break ground on another one next month.

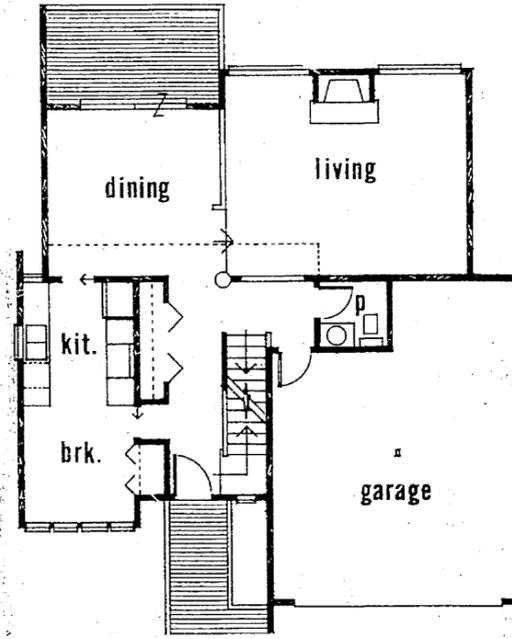
**Builder:** Structures Northwest, Gordy Cole and Ken Grimes, Structures Northwest, West Seattle.

**Architect:** Dale Norsen, Seattle. Exterior: cedar tongue-and-groove siding, cedar-shingle roof, aggregate drive, natural plantings.

**Square feet:** lot, 4,000; house, 3,000 including garage and decks. **Price:** \$114,500.

### To get there

Take the Admiral Way exit off the West Seattle Freeway. Follow Admiral Way over the hill to the 5700 block, following the Times Open House signs. Park along Admiral Way, and plan to walk up the hill to the home. Open House hours are 1 to 5 p.m.



## New center checks land-use decisions

The Central Seattle Community Council Federation has created a Neighborhood Land-Use Information Center, to inform communities about land-use decisions affecting them.

It will monitor the activities of land-use review boards, the City Council, the Office of Policy Planning and other appeal boards acting on permits.

Further information is available from John Fox at the Federation, 810 18th Ave.

## DM INC. REPORTS



Captain Joseph Coppola

Mr. Coppola this month completes 5 years with DM Inc. and has just transferred to our new office at 307 Broad Street. His service to the public has been outstanding. Mr. Coppola's knowledge and ability in the real estate industry is evidenced by the multi-million dollars of sales he has transacted, and his many satisfied clients. We congratulate you, Joe, and wish you the very best as you enter your new office.

Sincerely,

*David Meyers*  
David Meyers, President

P. S. You too should inquire into the new DM Inc. training program and Broad Street plans.



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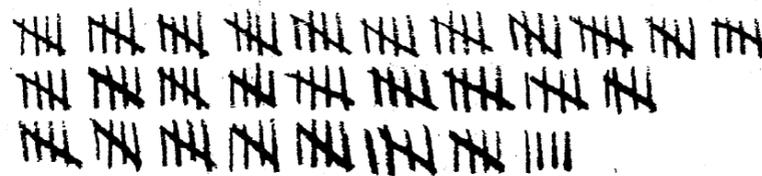
On the upper mall. Just off I-405 in Kirkland. Jane Jones, Manager 822-8284  
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## Madison House/Totem Lake

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