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The JAS Corner Store is
an Ode to Slow Retail

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Courtesy of JAS



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On the corner of Wallingford Ave N and N 36th Street in Wallingford sits **a little red building** that was once the Edgewater Grocery; back when Wallingford was called Edgewater, a brand-new streetcar was running past, and farmland wasn't far away – it was 1913. Today, the building retains a lot of its early 20th century charm, and is once again open to the public. After founding JAS Design Build in 1992, Kim Clements & Joe Schneider, both architects by education, started using the space as a cabinet shop, then, as office space, and today:

The JAS Corner Store.

“For Kim, the Corner Store seemed like a practical notion, an idea that manifested itself out of necessity. *“What if we had a laboratory for our interiors department? A space where we could work with clients and each other in real scale, and in real time?”*”



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JAS is based on both Lopez Island and in Seattle, focusing on residential work ranging from renovations of historic homes to additions to newbuilds that look modern, but feel warm. Today, the firm also includes a robust interior design arm, evolved from their strengths in custom furniture. **For Kim, the Corner Store seemed like a practical notion, an idea that manifested itself out of necessity.** *“What if we had a laboratory for our interiors department? A space where we could work with clients and each other in real scale, and in real time?”* she riffs. Clients of the design-build firm come here to browse, to meet with the design team, and to see some of their interior choices up close.

The Corner Store is also open to the general public, and offers the embrace of a well-curated space filled with old and new things. There’s no exterior signage to speak of, giving the sense you’re discovering something hidden – and when you go in, it doesn’t have the feel of a traditional store you pop into, make a loop, and either make a purchase or not. “Ideally, you don’t want to experience it that way,” says Kim. “We didn’t invent the notion of ‘slow retail’, but I feel that is what we wanted to create here. Like opening the drawers of artifacts at the Museum of Anthropology at UBC; inviting people to have an experience and find things on their own terms.”

Kim describes what’s inside as “housewares that are unique and maybe a little bit eccentric”, and she delivers – there’s a vintage bird cage filled with her sons’ old dinosaur toys, for example, that feels right at home. A row of unique vintage lamps hangs from the ceiling, a set of stools repurposed from burly woods sit in the corner, a pair of vintage rattan living room chairs that could have passed for new are part of a living room setup. A highlight is a set of charcuterie boards repurposed from a vintage paper slicer, showing the markings and the wear. You’ll find ceramics, blankets, pillows handmade from overages of JAS upholstery projects, alongside many other things.





Spaces like the **JAS Corner Store** – and Kirk Albert's in Georgetown, Peter Miller's in Pioneer Square, Hoedemaker Pfeiffer's Housewright – fill a space in brick-and-mortar retail that is less focused on volume, and more on experience, on finding objects with a story. The fact that these kinds of stores are rare has, for Kim, a bit to do with the way we build commercial spaces in the city today. Kim: “[The Corner Store] was also a reaction to the loss of small, unique shops in Seattle. The spaces being created by new 3-over-2 buildings along corridors like North 45th Street and Stoneway offer ground floor retail-commercial spaces (required by zoning) that are often much more square footage than a small independent and entrepreneurial shop owner can afford to rent or even to stock properly.” The 110-year old building the Corner Store calls home certainly adds much charm – nothing like the creak of hardwood floors older than you beneath your feet. The Corner Store is a fitting enhancement to the neighborhood, and an idea that a design lover can only hope other firms emulate.