

Some Unusual Features of Island in the Sky

1. When you enter the winding driveway to "Island in the Sky," you find yourself in a beautiful, well-maintained and park-like estate. The trees throughout much of the six and a half acres have been thinned out to encourage healthy growth, and to emphasize the beauty of the "old growth." One tree has been named the Grandfather tree because it is estimated to be more than four hundred years old. Many of the trees are more than a hundred years old. At night the lights along the driveway illuminate the landscape to accent the beauty.
2. Facing southwest towards the water of Eastsound, the many islands of the San Juans and the distant mountains, the house adapts well to winter and the warm summers. In the winter, the orientation takes advantage of passive solar heat gain from the low-angled winter sun, while in the summer with the sun moving over the roof, many operable windows and doors provide cross-ventilation cooling, eliminating any need for air-conditioning except for very rare occasions. There is a screen system if the need arises (See no.15)
3. The house has a beautiful tile roof. It weighs 55,000 pounds and adds to the strength of the home. Situated more than twelve hundred feet above sea level, the front of the house is built to withstand winds of more than 100 miles an hour. You are not in the "jet stream," but there are days when you experience weather differently than you would at sea level.
4. There is a separate generator house with a Kohler generator rated at 10Kw. The Ford engine uses clean burning propane fuel. This industrial-grade system cost around \$10,000 installed.
5. Heating and air-conditioning are provided by two independent heat pumps. The main heat pump has two zones, and uses propane for backup. The second heat pump serves primarily the library (and has electrical back-up heat). There are a few days a year when temperatures reach close to 80 degrees, and these same units provide air-conditioning.
6. Skuttle Steam Humidifiers were installed on both heat pumps in 1998 with remote humidistat controls located next to the respective thermostat.
7. The 500 gallon propane tank is primarily to provide backup heat for the main heat pump when temperatures go below thirty degrees, and to provide backup heat in the event of an electrical power outage. This tank also provides fuel for the living room fireplace and for the emergency generator which in turn can provide electrical power to operate the backup propane heating system.

8. A sophisticated driveway alarm system is activated at the entrance to Island in the Sky by a magnetic detector in the ground. When a car enters or leaves the property an audible alarm sounds in the house, whether during daylight hours or in the middle of the night. If after dark, the same system also automatically turns on all driveway lights for visitors and to let an intruder know that his presence has been noted. It also allows the owner to return at night and have driveway lights come on automatically.
9. A professionally designed lightning protection system was installed; there are numerous lightning rods on both the main house and the guest house which are connected to heavy copper cabling in the ground which circles both houses. The system cost about \$10,000. Lightning is infrequent but the original owners felt this protection was essential.
10. A water pressure tank has been installed that increases nominal 35 psi to 60 psi, but is optional. An instant hot water faucet has been installed.
11. All Kitchen base cabinets have excellent sliding shelves, and tile is used extensively.
12. There is a central vacuum system.
13. The house is connected to a community water system, with the well and pump house located on the lot. A total of six lots have access to this water system. The adjacent lot is one of these six lots, so there actually are only five lots obtaining water at present. The system was built about 1980, and has two 1750 gallon storage tanks located on other lots. The main 1750 gallon tank was replaced in 2005 and probably should last 20 years. The other 1750 gallon tank was replaced in the late 1990's. All five water users share equally in the day-to-day maintenance and electricity, but all six lots share in major capital costs, such as the 1750 gallon tank.
14. A 540 foot well was drilled in late 1999 on lot #2, primarily to ensure that if the community well system failed there would be water for Island in the Sky. The concern was being expressed that some day there might be a moratorium on private wells. Such a moratorium would not apply to an existing well. A preliminary test suggested this well will produce 1.4 gpm (2000 gallons a day). The current usage is about 250 gallons a day so this well should be more than adequate for either or both of the lots. The well was capped without installing a pump. Cost of the drilling was \$9000.
15. The floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking Eastsound are equipped with a sophisticated automatic sun shade system that was installed on the outside of the living room and front library windows. The shade material blocks about 85% of the sun without blocking the view. An adjustable sensor extends the shades when the sun intensity reached the programmed level, and retracts the shades

when the sun intensity falls below this setting. A wind sensor automatically retracts the shades whenever the outside wind reaches about 25 mph to protect the system from wind gusts. Originally installed about 1994, the system was overhauled in 2005, replacing the high maintenance components including all motors, cables, and the control boxes (cost of this overhaul was \$10,800). In addition, interior manually operated shades were installed in 2008.

16. There is a manually-operated sun shade system on the greenhouse.
17. There is a water softener system.
18. The greenhouse has both hot and cold water, a two by eight foot long tray for placing plants that need watering from an automatic watering system controlled by a seven-day timer. It is computer controlled and allows the owners to be gone for weeks at a time.
19. A firewood storage box is located in the library next to the wood stove and has an outside door so that wood can be added to the box without having to carry it through the house.
20. On a clear day from the living room you can see the entire Olympic Range of snow-covered mountains extending from just opposite Seattle to the western-most peaks almost at the Pacific Ocean. And then by looking north you can also see a 3500 foot mountain on the island of Texada in Canada, ninety miles away. A panoramic view unequalled anywhere in the United States.
21. The separate guest house, complete with kitchen, was built in 1986. The roof was replaced in April 2006 with 50-year asphalt shingles by Clyde Duke (\$7000).

Improvements

1. A new security system was installed in 2009 and is activated by forced entry, low temperature, gas detection, or manually, and is connected to an alarm service in Bellingham. Electrical and telephone lines have no outside switch boxes to ensure that the system cannot be deactivated from outside the house. A backup power source ensures that this system will fully function for more than 24 hours in the event of a power outage. The greenhouse is part of this system. Installation cost of \$2300.
2. A high quality Bang & Olufsen audio-visual system was added in 2009 with built-in speakers throughout the main house and on the library and kitchen decks. The Bang & Olufsen system center is located in the living room and interfaces with the Direct TV satellite input. The system was installed by a Bang & Olufsen technician. (Cost: \$ 54,000)

3. A new solar-powered weather station was installed in 2008 which indicates and records temperature, wind speed and direction, and rainfall. This weather station is connected to a backup power source that assures information is not lost even in extended power-out situations.
4. In 2008 a propane fireplace was added in the Living Room and provides another source of backup heating if needed (in addition to the generator and wood-burning stoves). (Cost: \$11,000 including construction of chimney chase)
5. Cabinet work in the library and living room was installed in 2008.