Bye house, so named after the client it was designed for, Arthur Edward Bye was originally meant to be a single family house. Architect John Hejduk designed it as one of three in his early 1970's Wall house studies. Basically he analysed the practicality of the wall as the fundamental architectural element. Consequently the house is now more commonly known as Wall house 2. It was to be built on an open forested site in Ridgefield, Connecticut, but was abandoned due to uncertainty about the cost. Thus like the rest of Hejduk's designs this did not come to pass.

That is, until Groningen city in Netherlands embarked on constructing the house as part of its lakefront Hoornse Meer housing estate on the outskirts of the city. This was a way of paying homage to John Hejduk as a great architect and educator by realising his work in his homeland. Due to the differences in the site locations and time contexts, the house was modified to meet the contemporary building requirements. One of the modifications was magnifying the original scale by 120%. It was constructed posthumously using the architect's drawings and was finished in 2001, 28 years after it was designed and 1 year after John Hejduk's death. The change in location and lack of a client however implies that the house cannot be used as a family home. Instead it offers an opportunity to gauge the feasibility of John Hejduk's designs off paper and as real built architecture.

In the Wall house 2, John Hejduk experiments with space and time, eschewing the modernist way of designing buildings with continuous blending of spaces and lack of absolute boundaries. His work is a unique blend of Cubism, Architecture and Surrealist painting. Central to this theme is a 1.5 metre thick wall which acts both as a barrier and connector, a plane which dictates the architecture of the house and the lives of its inhabitants.

This wall is 18 metres long and 14 metres high which gives it hierarchy by size. Furthermore its dominance is emphasized by its being the central support; all other living spaces are cantilevered off it. The wall's vitality is also due to its being the only way inside the cantilevered rooms through a long raised corridor which is perpendicular to it. Once inside the living spaces, movement from one level to another necessitates walking back through the wall and using the spiral stairs attached. In this way, the wall also acts as a marker of time for the occupants depending on when and how often they pass through it. It divides the structure into three: itself basic, simple and minimalistic symbolises the present; the long corridor for access represents the past, the journey through space and time; and the future is the colourful beautifully shaped living spaces. John Hejduk strives to emphasise the rhetorical purpose of the wall as opposed to its being just a structural element.

By dividing the spaces thus, it also emphasises their different functions. This difference in functionality can further be seen in the distinct colouring of the various living spaces. The gray of the wall for example shows its neutrality while the orange kitchen signifies warmth both as energy due to cooking and emotion due to satisfaction.

In the end, despite the chalk and cheese similarity between its intended and final locations, Wall house 2 manages to retain the authenticity of John Hejduk's original design. As of September 2005, it is sometimes used as a residence for emerging artists and architects thus continuing his life.

REFERENCES