

Sean Burke <http://Unboxedhouse.com/Progress>

Basic Stats:

- What is(are) your name(s)? **Sean Burke**
- What do you do for a living? **I work for a large architecture firm as a designer and the BIM Digital Practice Leader (aka, I help project teams effectively use technology).**
- How many people do you/will be living in your tiny house? **One for now, with room for the right companion to join me on my big journey in a tiny house.**
- What part of the country do you live in? **Seattle, Washington.**
- How many square feet is your house? **175 SF**
- When did you start your build? **Summer of 2014.**
- Is your house complete? **No, not yet.**
- Have you been documenting your tiny house build and if so, where can people find that information? <http://Unboxedhouse.com/Progress>

Background:

- Why did you decide to build? **Want to put my construction knowledge into practice by creating something for myself. I also want to own my own home without a mortgage.**
- What was your life like before your tiny house? Were you fairly active, have you always had 'projects' going on? Were you fairly sedentary and looking for a change? Did you tend to work too much? (This question is an effort at trying to figure out WHO gravitates to the tiny house lifestyle) **I was definitely too sedentary at home, even though I walk a**

couple of miles each day with a dog and to commute by bus into downtown. I wanted to both work less, and spend more time making things with my hands.

- How did you come to hear about the movement, figure out it was right for you and get started? **I learned about this lifestyle in 1999 after reading an article about Jay Shafer. Only in the last 2 years have I become serious about it, realizing that all my stuff was occupying more of my time and money than I was happy about.**
- What is/was your design inspiration? **The lowly industrial shipping container combined with a love of modern architecture.**

Technical:

- How do/did you find the time to work on your house with a job, kid(s), relationships, AND building a house? Did you do anything special to keep the balance? **I have a full-time job, and work weekends on the design and construction. No kids, at least not yet.**
- Have you run into any problems with your local codes? How did you solve them? **Still discussing code related topics with local officials. Want to ensure the house can be inspected if needed.**
- Where did you get the tools that you use? Were they yours, borrowed, rented etc.? **My housemate has graciously allowed me to borrow any tools he has. I own a few of my own and there is a tool library in town that has very low rates compared to a commercial rental company.**
- How long did (are you expecting) construction to take? **Expecting one year for substantial completion. I'm hoping I can do it faster, especially if I'm able to move construction into a heated warehouse during the late fall/winter. Some luxuries like the washing machine may come later as finances allow.**

- Have you/were you able to stay on schedule? **So far... I've started much later than planned.**
- What is/was the most time consuming portion of your build? **Yet to be seen. I guess it will be the custom casework (stairs, storage, cabinets, etc...)**
- What is/was the most limiting factor for your build? **Weight. I'm doing what I can to ensure that a professional tow will not be necessary to move the tiny house. Designing to be weight balanced on the tongue – with no more than 11,000 pounds dry weight.**
- Is your house on a trailer? If yes, how do you attach to the trailer? How do you move your tiny house? (Do you have a truck, do you hire it done?) **Borrow or rent a Ford F350 or similar 1-ton pickup truck when the time comes. For now, I have access to an F250 while it's under construction.**
- Do you have accessory houses/dwellings that you use to supplement storage/working/living? **No.**
- Where did you get your plans? **I made them myself.**
- Have you consulted any 'professionals'? (structural, mechanical, plumbing, design etc.)? **I work with many designers and engineers in my profession. I'll be calling in a few favors when I need advice.**
- Are you insuring your house? With who? **I plan to. Still need to research options.**
- Have you been using any sponsorships to help fund your house? **I'm working on that.** How do you go about finding that sponsorship? **Contacts in in the construction and technology sectors.**

Specifics:

- What sort of items do you have for cooking? **This will evolve over time. A gas range for when off grid, and portable induction burners when on city power. One day, I hope to have an all solar power system. That could be an expensive initial investment for cooking, heating and cooling.**
- Are you tied to the power grid or are you off grid? **Designed for either condition, as I don't have a permanent location picked out yet.**
- Are you going to have a washer and/or dryer? **Yes, a full-size LG ventless combo unit.**
- Where does your water come from? **For now, from the main house via hose.**
- What kind of toilet are you going to have? **Either a separating composting toilet, or a bucket / grey water storage tank for off-grid.**
- What do you use for a heat source if anything? **The current plan is to use a Mitsubishi mini-split system. Space heater may work in the interim.**
- What are some of the space savings tricks you used? **Under the sleeping platform is storage, stairs and also furniture that hides away.**
- What do you have for insulation? **Rigid foam board on roof and walls, fiberglass batt in the floor.**
- Where are you planning to park your tiny house? **Still working on that one.**

Personal:

- How much will/did your tiny house cost? **The budget is \$25,000. We'll see how well I stay under that.**
- What is/was the most expensive part of your house? **The custom trailer.**
- 'Best' injury story (worst injury)? **Let's hope I have no tales to tell in this area.**

- What has been your biggest accomplishment with your tiny house? **Starting!**
- What is/will be the biggest benefit to living in a tiny house? **Enjoying the freedoms that come with a minimalist lifestyle.**
- Is there anything you'll miss about living in a standard house? What will you miss the most? **I don't expect to miss anything. We'll just have to find out when I get there. ;-)**
- What has been the scariest part about building your own house? **Fear of failure. That is probably why this will take a little longer to accomplish, so I can take more time to carefully plan the details.**
- If you could change one thing about your house what would it be? **Get back to me in 2-3 years. I'm sure it will not be perfect. Accepting the quirks and knowing that reality may be different than plans is an important thing to embrace.**
- Did you have cash in hand to complete your build, pay as you go or take out a loan to construct your house? **Half cash in hand, the other half loan from 401k and pay as I go.**
- Have friends and family been skeptical or supportive of your ideas? **So far, very positive. It's been a blessing to have such a great support system.**
- Is there anything else you would want other people to know about your house and build? **Other than the unusual construction techniques necessary to incorporate the shipping container, I would say yes, there's one thing: Because everything was modeled digitally, and the box was scanned, much of the interior work will be fabricated directly from the design model using CNC milling. The hope is that if all goes well, future versions of the Open Source house plans could be less expensively built.**

If that happens, more like it could be built as alternative affordable housing for those in need.