CITY OF ISSAQUAH WASHINGTON

LANDMARK REGISTRATION FORM

PART I: PROPERTY INFORMATION

1. Name of Property

historic name: WENBERG, JOHAN AND LOUISE, HOUSE

other names/site number: HRI #2292

2. Location

street address: 5360 232nd Avenue SE, Issaquah, WA

parcel no(s): 6446200335

legal description(s): OVERDALE PARK #3 LOT 134 TGW LOTS 130 AND 131 OF SD PLAT

3. Classification

Ownership of Property:

- ☒ private
- ☐ public-local
- ☐ public-State
- ☐ public-Federal

Category of Property:

- ☒ building(s)
- ☐ district
- ☐ site
- ☐ structure
- ☐ object

Name of related multiple property listing:

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

King County Mid-Century Modern Residential MPD

4. Property Owner(s)

name: Louise B. W. Luce

street: 5360 232nd Avenue SE

city: Issaquah state: WA zip: 98029

5. Form Prepared By

name/title: Sarah J. Martin, contracted historian

organization: SJM Cultural Resource Services LLC date: October 2023

address: 3901 2nd Avenue NE #202, Seattle, WA 98105

6. Nomination Checklist

☒ Site Map (REQUIRED)
☒ Photographs (REQUIRED): *please label or caption photographs and include an index*
☐ Last Deed of Title: *this document can usually be obtained for little or no cost from a title company*
☒ Continuation Sheets
☒ Other (please indicate): Map imagery, clippings

BACKGROUND & RESEARCH

Consulting historian Sarah J. Martin completed research and drafted this report between June and September 2023. Research repositories included King County Historic Preservation Office, Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP), Washington State Archives Puget Sound Regional Branch, and the University of Washington Libraries. In particular, the UW Built Environment Library's Alan Michelson provided important context on passive solar design. Additional research included interviews and correspondence, as well as review of secondary-source literature and numerous online collections, including Washington State Archives, Seattle Public Library's *Seattle Times* and *Post-Intelligencer* historical archives, and Newspapers.com.

Martin conducted a field survey of the nominated property on February 23, 2023. The fieldwork included photographic documentation and visual inspection of the setting, property, landscape, and built features. She wishes to thank the homeowner Louise Luce and Sue Thomas for their assistance gathering information and photographs as well as reviewing draft nominations. This effort, which also includes preparation of a National Register of Historic Places nomination, was made possible thanks in part to support from 4Culture, King County's cultural funding agency.

PART II: PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

7. Alterations

Check the appropriate box if there have been changes to plan, cladding, windows, interior features or other significant elements. These changes should be described specifically in the narrative section below.

☐ Yes	☒ No	Plan (i.e. no additions to footprint, relocation of walls, or roof plan)	☐ Yes	☒ No	Interior features (woodwork, finishes, flooring, fixtures)
☐ Yes	☒ No	Cladding	☐ Yes	☒ No	Other elements
☐ Yes	☒ No	Windows			

Narrative Description

Use the space below to describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance, condition, architectural characteristics, and the above-noted alterations (use continuation sheet if necessary).

INTRODUCTION

The Wenberg house, named after its original owners Johan and Louise (Bruse) Wenberg, is located at 5360 232nd Avenue SE in the Overdale Park neighborhood of Issaquah. Completed in 1963, the residence was designed by architect Omer Mithun of the Bellevue-based firm Mithun & Associates Architects and built by Swedish immigrant carpenter and builder Gustav Bruse.[1] The one-story residence occupies a 2.12-acre corner parcel that also includes a two-car garage (1963), two small non-historic outbuildings, and a wooded area. The property's mid-century design, materials, and craftsmanship are highly intact, from the surrounding landscape and viewshed to the most private of interior spaces.

SETTING & SITE

The Overdale Park neighborhood is in North Issaquah, an area north of Interstate 90 with views of the surrounding Cascade foothills and the Olympic Mountains on the western horizon (figures A1 and A2). Lake Sammamish State Park forms the northwest boundary of North Issaquah, much of which was annexed into the City of Issaquah in 2000 (figure A7). Overdale Park sits on a hill to the east of East Lake Sammamish Parkway SE and north of SE Issaquah-Fall City Road. The Wenberg parcel and others in the loop of streets bounded by 232nd Avenue, 54th Place, 235th Avenue, and 53rd Street are relatively flat on the hilltop. Adjacent residences across these streets are on downward slopes from the hilltop. The Wenberg house was among the first residences completed at the hilltop, with others added in the mid-1960s.[2] Houses on the slopes were built in the 1970s and 1980s.

The Wenberg house occupies the northeast corner parcel at the intersection of 232nd Avenue SE and SE 54th Place (figures A4, A8, and A9). The driveway is off of SE 54th Place. The driveway is pebble stone pavement and terminates at the two-car garage located behind the residence (photos D1 and D2). Surrounding the house and garage is about a half an acre with ornamental plantings and shrubbery. The remaining acreage is planted with Douglas fir, cedar, and native shrubbery (figure A5).

[1] Gustav Bruse is Louise Wenberg Luce's father.

[2] For example, construction on the neighboring house at 5344 232nd Avenue SE was started about the same time but was finished more quickly than the Wenberg house.

From a 1963 photograph (figure B12), it appears that the entire lot was cleared in the early 1960s, and that the revegetation with seedlings occurred soon after the house was built.

RESIDENCE

The Wenberg house has a rectangular plan and is built into a hill that slopes gradually downward from east to west. The house sits at grade on the east side near the primary entrance. On the west side facing SE 232nd Avenue SE, the terrain slopes downward revealing approximately four feet of the **concrete foundation** (photo D5). A **raised wood deck** extends the full length of the west elevation and wraps around to the north side (photos D6 and D7). The deck features a basic square railing system that is absent of ornamentation, balusters, or screening materials. It terminates at a **porch on the north side** with direct access to the master bedroom (photo D8). The house has a partial basement that is accessed from the interior.

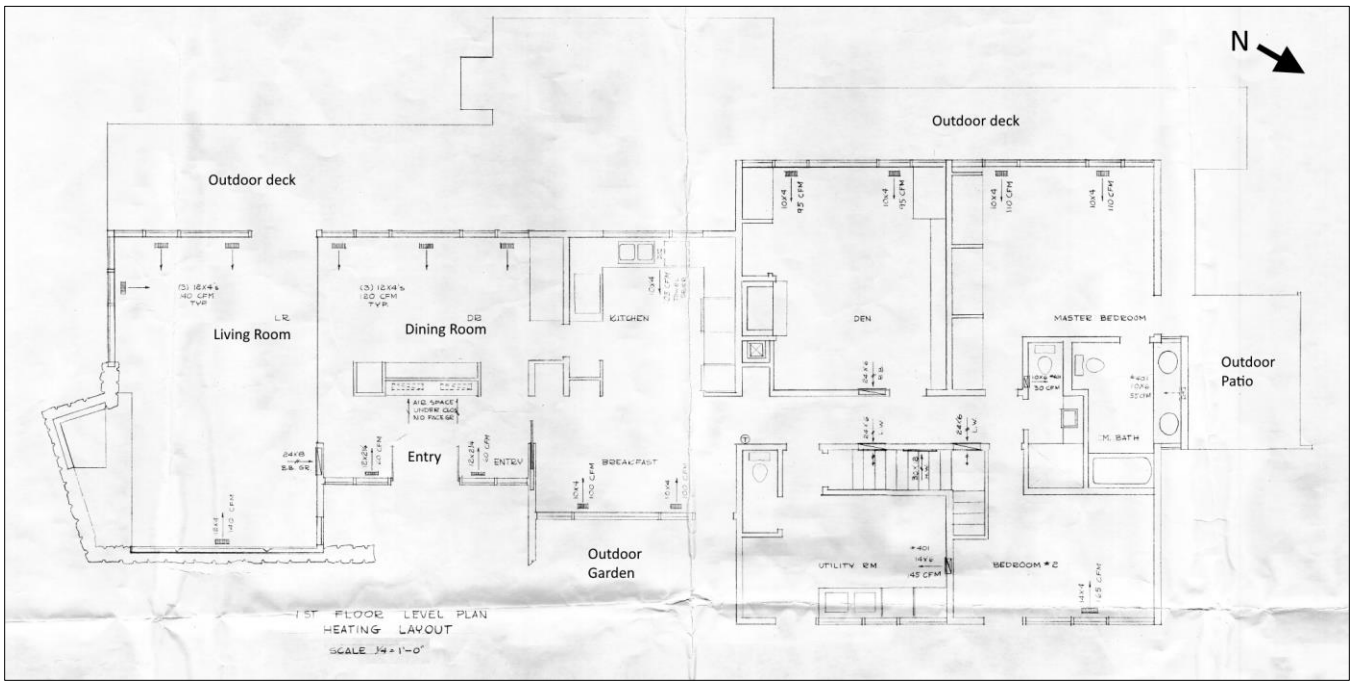
The **built-up flat roof** rests on long rectangular wood beams. The roof has a light-colored surface that reflects the sun, thus lessening the impact of the sun's heat within the house. There are three skylights. The center portion of the residence features a raised flat-roof section with shallow clerestory windows set between the beams. The ends of the beams have copper sheathing to protect the wood from water infiltration. The beams extend well beyond the walls to support the cantilevered roof with its deep, five-foot overhangs on all sides of the house (photo D5). At the primary entrance, these beams extend to the driveway to provide a covered walkway between the buildings (photo D4). The walkway roof has openings on either side of the path to enable the growth of plantings and trees. Beams also support another covered walkway connecting the utility room with a door at the rear of the garage (photo D9). Between the two covered walkways is an **outdoor garden** that is made private by a wood screening fence with a swinging door (photo D10).

Although the **primary entrance** is somewhat downplayed by its deeply recessed placement on the east facade, it is accentuated by cedar double doors featuring Northwest Indigenous-inspired carvings, made by Johan Wenberg. The round door handle also carries the same Indigenous artistic motif. The entry is framed by broad, vertical-panel siding (photos D11 through D13).

The home's **exterior cladding** is typical of mid-century houses, with a mix of horizonal cedar lap siding, vertical cedar slats, and native sandstone (photos D1 and D7 through D9). The stone, collected by the Wenbergs near Surveyor's Lake southeast of Snoqualmie Pass, is concentrated in two areas: at the southeast corner of the residence where the broad, low chimney is located and also on a south-facing wall within the outdoor garden.

The window and door openings are reportedly strategically placed to provide optimal ventilation and natural light within the house. For example, some lower-placed windows on the west side of the house and some clerestory windows open to facilitate air flow through the interior, increasing the cooling effects during periods of warmer weather. In addition to the aforementioned clerestory windows, large expanses of clear-glass **windows** with metal casings span much of the east and west elevations (photos D5, D7, D9, and D10). Common living areas that are concentrated in the south half of the residence

feature floor-to-ceiling windows with sliding doors. The private living areas have half-wall windows with fixed and hopper units.



Sketch floor plan of Wenberg house. Base plan is taken from Mithun & Associates Architects' first floor heating plan, drafted by C. Myrick, June 15, 1962. Source: Louise Bruse Wenberg Luce private collection.

Interior

The house has 2130 sq. ft. of finished space and a basement with 1090 sq. ft. of unfinished area. The main level has 8' ceilings, except in the entryway and dining room where the ceiling is 12'. Common living areas occupy the south half of the residence where the spaces are generally open and free flowing. These areas include an entryway, living room, dining room, kitchen, and breakfast nook (now a small office). The breakfast nook connects to a double-loaded corridor in the north half of the residence that accesses private living areas, including a den, utility room, hallway bathroom, master bedroom with a private bathroom, and a second bedroom. Access to the basement is through the utility room via a narrow enclosed staircase. The basement is finished in concrete and used only for storage.

The interior is free flowing but has clearly defined spaces defined by changing floor and wall materials and patterns, differing ceiling heights and lighting, and built-in bookcases and display cabinets. Builder Gustav Bruse's fine carpentry skills are on full display throughout the interior, particularly in the entryway display cabinet and the built-in buffet and cabinetry in the dining room. These are made of teak with maple footings. Most walls are painted plasterboard with vinyl baseboards, while accent walls are finished in wood or stone. Door and window openings are void of trim, which is typical of the

style and period of construction. Windows throughout the home feature original Jaylis window screens, which are woven plastic accordion style screen curtains that hang vertically on a track.

The primary double-door entrance opens to a small **entryway** with a flagstone floor that softens the transition between the outdoor and indoor spaces (photo D13). The walls on either side of the entrance are finished in vertical wood strips and bookended by walls of painted plasterboard with vinyl baseboards. The area has a raised 12' ceiling with shallow clerestory windows on the east and west walls that draw one's eye upward. Directly opposite the entry doors is the aforementioned Bruse-built display cabinet made of teak, maple, glass, and tile (photos D14 and D16). The cabinet, with all of its glass, allows light to pass through while also serving to separate the entry from the dining room. The entryway is further lit by indirect perimeter lighting at the base of the raised ceiling. The entryway accesses the living room that occupies the south end of the residence, as well as the adjacent dining room and breakfast nook to the north.

The **living room** has a variety of exceptional features and finishes. A focal point is the stone hearth, wood stove, and copper hood comprising the southeast corner of the room (photo D15). A recent analysis of the hearth revealed its construction to be a mix of igneous, sedimentary, and metamorphic rocks. Portland State University geologist Scott Burns said, "The fireplace is quite exciting. It is like a museum of geology on its own due to the diversity of rock in Snoqualmie Pass."[3] The east wall of the living room is finished in wood panels and topped by a row of shallow clerestory windows (photo D14). Floor-to-ceiling windows wrap around the southwest corner of the room. A wide sliding-glass door on the west wall leads to the deck and, when left open, allows the room to extend outdoors. The 8' ceiling is painted plasterboard with two recessed lights and a hanging lamp located southwest corner of the living room. The hanging light is made of nylon and operates on a rheostat switch.[4] The ironwood floor is woodblocks laid in a square basket pattern, which flows into the adjacent dining room.

The **dining room**, although a relatively small space, has notable features and finishes (photo D16). It shares space with the entryway, beneath the same raised 12' ceiling and clerestory windows on the east and west walls. A rectangular light fixture that mimics the ceiling and clerestory windows, hangs from two square stems over the dining room table.[5] The west wall is floor-to-ceiling windows. On the north wall is the aforementioned built-in birch buffet and cabinetry. The buffet features a countertop and backsplash with small, square, ceramic tiles that have a reflective green finish. The teak cabinets above and below have a smooth, warm-colored finish with small circular hardware. Next to the buffet is a wood, hollow-core, swinging door that leads to the kitchen (photo D16).

The **kitchen** and **breakfast nook** (now a small office) occupy the center part of the house, easing the transition between the common living areas at the south end and the private living spaces on the north

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[3] Scott Burns, Email Communication with Sue Thomas, May 24, 2023.

[4] The Wenbergs purchased the hanging lamp at Nordiska Kompaniet in Stockholm. Louise Bruse Wenberg Luce, Interview by Sue Thomas and Sarah Martin, Feb. 23, 2023.

[5] According to Louise B. W. Luce, the light fixture was designed by architect Milton D. Hunt, University of Washington, Master's Architecture, 1960. Milton Douglas Hunt obituary, published online by Legacy Remembers, Oct. 16, 2013. Accessed Aug. 10, 2023. https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/peninsuladailynews/name/milton-hunt-obituary?id=23926327

end. Reflecting this transition are the changes in wall finishes and flooring materials. Both spaces have painted plasterboard with vinyl baseboards and flooring made of large, square laminated plastic tiles that are white with gold streaks and speckles. The kitchen is u-shaped with the built-in stainless-steel sink beneath the west-facing windows (photo D17). The kitchen is highly intact, featuring its original birch cabinets and hardware, ceramic tile countertop and backsplash, and 1960s-era Frigidaire countertop range and a sleek, curved 1949 General Electric refrigerator. The space blends with the adjacent breakfast nook, where the floor-to-ceiling windows on the east wall look to the private outdoor garden. A hinged wood door also accesses the garden. The kitchen and breakfast nook each have a small closet with accordion folding doors and shelves for storage.

On the north wall of the breakfast nook begins the **hallway** to the private living spaces (photo D18). The white laminate plastic flooring with gold streaks and speckles carries through the hallway. The walls are painted plasterboard with vinyl baseboards. There are two ceiling-mounted light fixtures and two **skylights** to illuminate the corridor. The hallway terminates at the home's main bathroom. On the west side of the double-loaded corridor is the den and master bedroom with a private bathroom. The utility room and second bedroom are on the east side. These spaces have doorway openings with a hinged, hollow-core wood door.

The **den** is relatively large and prominently placed on the west side of the house overlooking the deck. Bruse built the ceramic tile fireplace on the south wall. It features cream-colored, textured tiles from Mexico and a small copper fireplace door that was made in 1853 and comes from Louise B. W. Luce's grandparents' home in Sweden (photo D19). The west windows sit atop a half wall finished in painted plaster board. The north, south, and east walls also are painted plasterboard. The den has square, dark brown tile flooring that is a Weyerhaeuser product made of wood chips, sawdust, and glue.

The **utility room** is multi-functional, housing the laundry appliances as well as serving other household maintenance needs. The walls are painted plasterboard. A ceramic double-sink with cabinets beneath sits next to the laundry appliances, with windows above. Next to the sink is a hinged wood door to the exterior that opens to a covered walkway to the rear of the garage. The room also provides access via an enclosed staircase down to the unfinished basement. On the south wall is a small bathroom with only a toilet.

The **main bathroom** at the end of the hallway is quite eye-catching, with its brilliant blue tiles illuminated by natural light from a skylight above and a wall-mounted light above the sink (photo D20). The flooring, countertop, and backsplash are finished in small, 3/4" square tiles in various shades of blue. A large shower with a built-in tile seat or shelf is on the east wall and is finished in light-blue tile with a dark-blue tile floor. The bathroom sidewalls are finished in wood panels. The wood drawers and cabinets below the sink have original hardware. The toilet is along the west wall.

The **master bedroom and private bathroom** occupy the northwest corner of the house. A half-wall of windows with fixed and hopper units are on the bedroom's west wall. A row of closets with sliding doors are built into the south wall. Original, square ceiling-mounted lights are situated in a row in front of the closets. The bedroom flooring is carpet and also Weyerhaeuser pressed tiles. A door on the north wall leads to the porch on the north side of the house. The **bathroom** is relatively large and

features a bathtub along the east wall, a toilet on the south wall, and two sinks with built-in cabinets below on the north wall. Tall pivot windows on either side of the sinks (with Jaylis window screens) provide natural light (photo D23). A panel of recessed fluorescent lighting comprises the ceiling above the sinks. Mirrors mounted above the sinks open to reveal built-in medicine cabinets. The bathroom sidewalls are finished in wood panels, and the flooring is small rectangular tiles in various shades of brown and tan.

Across the hallway at the northeast corner of the house is the **second bedroom** (photo D21). Immediately outside the bedroom is a built-in wood wardrobe with doors and drawers (photo D22). The whimsical triangular door and drawer pulls are original. Like the master bedroom, the walls are painted plasterboard, and there are closets with sliding doors built into the south wall. A half-wall of windows on the east wall illuminates the space as does a square, ceiling mounted light. The flooring is carpet.

GARAGE

The two-car garage measures approximately 22’ by 25’ and mimics the residence in appearance and materials (photos D1 through D3, D9, and D10). It has a concrete slab foundation, post-and-beam framing, narrow vertical cedar slat cladding, and a flat built-up roof that rests on long rectangular wood beams extending from the residence. Shallow clerestory windows are set between the beams at the roofline on the east and west side elevations. The single-leaf, tilt-up garage door comprises the south elevation. It has matching, vertical slat cladding and retracts into the overhead garage space.

CHANGE OVER TIME & INTEGRITY

Aside from the addition of two ancillary outbuildings behind the garage, there have been no major alterations to the property. Over time, the planted trees and shrubs have grown and evolved to somewhat reduce the viewshed. Nevertheless, the property retains a very high degree of integrity of setting, location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

The property’s character-defining features include its strategic placement on the hilltop corner lot facing the southwest viewshed; the placement of the detached garage and the private garden between the garage and the house; the home’s wood post-and-beam structure; its local, natural building materials, including the wood and native stone; its flat roof with wide overhanging eaves; the large expanses of glass windows; and designed outdoor spaces including a raised deck spanning the front (west) and north façades. Significant interior features include the impressive stone fireplace; the built-in display cabinet in the entryway; the built-in buffet and cabinetry in the dining room; the open and free-flowing layout of the common spaces; and the direct access of several interior spaces to either outdoor decks or gardens. Embellishment is minimal and generally limited to the carved cedar panels of the double-door entrance and the stone used to construct the chimney and adjacent walls. Through these character-defining features, the property conveys its original function, period of construction, and historic associations.

SUMMARY

The Wenberg property's mid-century design and craftsmanship are on full display from the moment one parks in the driveway and carry through to the most private of interior spaces. From the wood post-and-beam framing and natural claddings to the free-flowing interior with changing floor and wall materials and patterns, the residence exemplifies thoughtful design that integrates interior spaces with the outdoors. The house interior merges with the immediate surrounding landscape via window walls, decks, gardens, covered walkways, and garage, offering a spacious quality to the one-story residence.

PART III: HISTORICAL / ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

8. Evaluation Criteria

Historical Data (if known)

Designation Criteria:

- ☒ A1 Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of national, state, or local history.
- ☐ A2 Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in national, state, or local history.
- ☒ A3 Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, style,or method of design or construction or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ A4 Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.
- ☐ A5 Property is an outstanding work of a designer or builder who has made a substantial contribution to the art.

Criteria Considerations:

Property is

- ☐ a cemetery, birthplace, or grave or property owned by a religious institution/used for religious purposes
- ☐ moved from its original location
- ☐ a reconstructed historic building
- ☐ a commemorative property
- ☐ less than 40 years old or achieving significance within the last 40 years

Date(s) of Construction: 1962-63	Other Date(s) of Significance: 1965 (lots 130 and 131 purchased)	
Architect: Omer Mithun – Mithun & Associates Architects	Builder: Gustav Bruse	Engineer: N/A

Statement of Significance

Describe in detail the chronological history of the property and how it meets the landmark designation criteria. Please provide a summary in the first paragraph (use continuation sheets if necessary). If using a Multiple Property Nomination that is already on record, or another historical context narrative, please reference it by name and source.

INTRODUCTION

The Johan and Louise Wenberg House, named for its original owners, is significant for its strong associations with mid-20th century patterns of community planning and development, as well as its excellent reflection of the Northwest Regional Style. It is located in the 1960s-era Overdale Park neighborhood, a planned residential subdivision of approximately 120 acres that was only annexed into the City of Issaquah in 2000. Completed in 1963, the Wenberg house occupies a sprawling hilltop lot with a southwest view of the Issaquah Valley. The residence's impressive post-and-beam structure,

expansive glass walls, and passive solar design are notable and reflect the work of architect Omer Mithun and builder Gustav Bruse, as well as the contributions of the Wenbergs themselves.

The **multiple property document** ***King County Mid-Century Modern Residential*** and its companion historic context ***Mid-Century King County: A Context Statement on Post-War Residential Development*** provide the history of residential development and architecture in King County from 1946 to 1975.[6] The MPD provides registration requirements for individual properties, which include the retention of sufficient integrity to convey historic function and character. It further identifies the **Single-Family Residence property type** as an important physical representation of this development, noting seven stylistic subtypes found in King County. The Wenberg house is an excellent example of the **Northwest Regional Style** and meets the registration requirements set forth in the MPD to be designated an Issaquah City Landmark under **Criterion A3.** The well-preserved residence exhibits all the hallmarks of the style and period, including its low, ground-hugging profile, deep eaves, and the use of outdoor spaces to extend interior rooms. Its passive solar design is notable and reflects the influence of architect Omer Mithun.

The Wenberg house also meets **Criterion A5** as an outstanding work of a designer, architect Omer Mithun, who has made a substantial contribution to the art and profession. Within the architectural profession, he was recognized as a leader in energy conservation and inducted into the AIA College of Fellows in 1973. The Wenberg residence is an outstanding representation of Mithun's skills at passive solar design for which he was so well regarded. Further, it is an early extant example of his interest in passive solar design, completed a full decade before his broad recognition as an expert in energy conservation.

Lastly, the Wenberg house meets **Criterion A1** for its strong associations with patterns of community planning and development. Its design and construction were directly related to its location in Overdale Park, a new hilltop subdivision on the outskirts of Issaquah with design covenants intended to influence construction quality and property appearance and to protect views.

MID-CENTURY ISSAQUAH

At the dawn of the 1940s, Issaquah's population stood at just over 800. The community's early physical development had been shaped by its role as a coal mining and lumber town.[7] Its main early-20th century industries included "farming, dairying, manufacturing of lumber and shingles, and fruit raising (and coal mining)."[8] As road networks developed in the automobile age, Issaquah's location along the old Sunset Highway helped solidify its role as a market center for many small towns in the Cascade foothills of east King County.

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6 *King County Mid-Century Modern Residential* Multiple Property Document, (King County Historic Preservation Program, 2022). BOLA Architecture + Planning, *Mid-Century King County: A Context Statement on Post-War Residential Development*, 2017.

7 Sarah Sodt and Kate Krafft, Survey and Inventory of Historic Resources in City of Issaquah, WA. King County Historic Preservation Office. 2003, p. 4.

8 "Issaquah," *The Coast* XVII, no. 6 (June 1909): 398.

The opening of the Lake Washington floating bridge in 1940 brought more people and significant change. The new bridge shortened the drive to and from Seattle, which had previously required drivers to travel south around the lake. U.S. Route 10, the forerunner of I-90, was completed in 1941 and followed the general path of the Sunset Highway connecting Spokane with Seattle.[9] With these transportation improvements, the Eastside and Issaquah emerged from World War II poised for significant suburban growth that would be driven by a booming post-war economy, a need for housing, and a growing regional population.

In the post-war years, farms and coal and timber company landholdings gave way to residential subdivisions throughout King County, including around Issaquah where hundreds of single-family homes were constructed during the late 1950s and early 1960s. Cities including Issaquah annexed surrounding areas to better accommodate growth and to build their tax bases (figure A7).[10] With annexations and growth, Issaquah's population reached 1,870 in 1960 and 4,313 in 1970.

PLAT & PROPERTY HISTORY

Landowners A.J. and Julia Peters, Paul and Blanch Impey, and Alfred and Shirley Deranleau filed three plats creating the Overdale Park subdivision in 1957-58.[11] Peters, an Issaquah-based real estate developer, led development of the 120-acre tract that was on land formerly owned by the Baxter, Darst, and Pinter families (figure A10).[12] It had 140 large single-family residential lots, ranging in size from one-third of an acre to one acre and overlooked Lake Sammamish and the Issaquah Valley to the west. The neighborhood remained outside Issaquah city limits until annexation in 2000 (figure A7).

Overdale Park No. 3, where the Wenberg house is located, was the largest and easternmost of the three Overdale Park plats. Attached to the plats were protective design covenants. These were common among mid-century subdivision developments in King County as a way for developers and homeowners alike to maintain and stabilize property values in the absence or lack of zoning. In the case of Overdale Park, the 25-year covenant restricted land use and lot size; the height, placement, quality, and size of buildings; temporary structures; signs; garbage and refuse disposal; and nuisances. It reinforced the importance of views, declaring, "it is to the advantage of every lot owner therein that the view be forever preserved and improved wherever possible." It said that within a year of purchase, each lot owner was *required* to "cut down and remove all alder trees" on their property. Further, any other trees or shrubs, existing or planted later, that obstructed views were to be cut back or removed to preserve views. A three-member Architectural Control Committee reviewed matters covered by the covenant.[13]

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[9] Sodt and Krafft, p. 5-6.

[10] BOLA Architecture + Planning, *Mid-Century King County*, p. 13.

[11] King County Recorder's Office, Plat of Overdale Park No. 1, recorded August 19, 1958; Plat of Overdale Park No. 2, recorded August 19, 1958; and Plat of Overdale Park No. 3, recorded August 19, 1958.

[12] "Announce Overdale Park Development," *The Issaquah Press*, May 23, 1957, p. 1. *Metsker's Atlas of King County Washington* (Seattle, WA: Charles F. Metsker, 1936).

[13] King County Recorder's Office, Covenants for Overdale Park No. 2 and Overdale Park No. 3. Recording no. 9203030229.

The Peters Agency marketed available real estate in Overdale Park in local and regional newspapers, and presumably connected interested buyers with architects and builders. In an early promotional piece on Overdale Park in *The Issaquah Press*, the Peters Agency boasted that the first and westernmost plat had "practically sold out."[14] It continued,

> The developers long ago dreamed of a residential subdivision in this area that would have all the attributes attractive to the more discriminating home site seekers – convenience to Seattle, close to Issaquah shopping facilities, good view, well planned lay-out, controlled standards of homebuilding, seclusion, large lots and many other desirable features.[15]

In early April 1959, the Peters Agency reported that 76 lots had been sold, six homes were under construction, and three more homes were scheduled to start soon.[16] Meanwhile, Johan and Louise Wenberg were finalizing their purchase of lot 134 in Overdale Park No. 3 from the Peters Agency.[17] (They subsequently purchased lots 131 and 130 in 1965.[18]) Johan, a medical doctor who graduated from the University of Washington School of Medicine's first class in 1950, and Louise, a librarian and 1947 UW graduate, were among the first to purchase and develop in this addition and were drawn to this corner lot for its excellent southwest exposure, both for the view and for its design potential.

The Wenbergs kept detailed records of their expenses, which provide important insight into their decisions as well as timeline of the property's design and construction. In keeping with the property's covenant requiring an owner to "remove all alder trees" within a year of purchase, the Wenbergs had it bulldozed and cleared.[19] By early 1961, architect Omer Mithun was consulting on the design. In April 1962, Johan Wenberg obtained a building permit from King County Engineer's Office to construct the residence (figure C1).[20]

Gustav Bruse, an Edmonds-based builder and Louise's father, was the primary builder. Louise recalled, "My father did absolutely all of the carpenter work."[21] He had assistance from Ivar Johnson and other craftsmen (figures B4 through B11). Stone masonry work was completed by O. Isaksen, T. O. Beckman, Loren Holmberg, Bob Barker. For the most part, construction materials were sourced locally. Much of the home's lumber came from the Tanner Mill in North Bend, and, as previously mentioned, the Wenbergs collected stone from Snoqualmie Pass near Surveyor's Lake. A who's who of mid-century contractors and suppliers are noted on the expense list. For example, glass for the many windows came from Sunset Glass, a Bellevue-based firm that remains in business; the fireplace I-beam came

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14 "Blacktopping for Overdale Park Development," *The Issaquah Press*, Oct. 17, 1957, p. 1.

15 Ibid.

16 "76 Lots Sold at Overdale Park; Six New Homes," *The Issaquah Press,* Apr. 9, 1959, p. 1.

17 King County Recorder, Statutory Warranty Deed, no. 5029888. A. J. Peters, et. al. to Johan B. and Louise B. Wenberg. Lot 134, Overdale Park No. 3. Recorded May 11, 1959.

18 King County Recorder, Real Estate Contract, no. 5828895. A. J. Peters, et. al. to Johan B. and Louise B. Wenberg. Lot 131, Overdale Park No. 3. Recorded Jan. 5, 1965. King County Recorder, Real Estate Contract, no. 5897861. A. J. Peters, et. al. to Johan B. and Louise B. Wenberg. Lot 130, Overdale Park No. 3. Recorded July 1, 1965.

19 Wenberg House Expenses, 1959-1967, p. 1. Louise Bruse Wenberg Luce private collection.

20 King County Engineer's Office, Building permit for 5360 232nd Avenue NE, April 5, 1962.

21 Louise Bruse Wenberg Luce, Interview by Sue Thomas and Sarah Martin, Feb. 23, 2023.

from Tsubota Steel & Pipe; Daly's provided wood finishing products such as Benite stains; and Ernst Hardware supplied miscellaneous materials.

The Wenbergs themselves contributed in tangible ways to the construction of the residence. Johan worked closely alongside Bruse during construction (figures B6, B7, and B10), as did Louise who recalled, "I dipped all the siding of the house, garage, and deck in a solvent one summer."[22] Notably, the cedar double doors at the primary entrance feature Northwest Indigenous-inspired carvings made by Johan. Louise picked out all the home's fixtures and interior finishes. The couple also put considerable effort into the outdoor areas surrounding the house. Appearing on the expense list are ten payments totalling nearly $1,000 to landscape architect Richard Haag, between April 1963 and September 1966, when he was also working on adaptive re-use plans for Seattle Center.[23] While Haag's involvement is noteworthy, his ultimate influence on the Wenberg property was minimal. As Louise put it, "He wanted berms … we didn't want that. [Although] the idea of the stone walls we took from him."[24] Further, Haag did not influence the selection or placement of the plantings. Those decisions were made by the Wenbergs. Louise was a master gardener, and the couple made special trips to nurseries throughout the region and also special ordered from more distant ones. The expense list included purchases from Buckley Nursery, Wayside Gardens, Richmond Nurseries, Nature's Finest, Valley Landscaping, and Sunset Village Nursery.[25] Other plantings, particularly those noted on the site overview (figure A5) have a more personal backstory and generally date to before 1970, like the Ponderosa pine on the south side of the house that Louise's mother dug up from the side of the road near Lake Wenatchee when it was only but a few inches tall, and the Sequoia that Louise received from Johan as a rootball for Christmas in 1969. The Japanese species were planted after Louise and Johan took a trip to Japan in the late 1960s.[26]

Although the expense list ends in early 1967 with the purchase of Jaylis window screens, the Wenbergs continued to shape their house into a home. They sought out light fixtures, furniture, and art that reflected tenets of mid-century Scandinavian design, and continued to perfect the surrounding outdoor spaces. As of this writing, Louise has called this home for 60 years.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Modern Movement & Northwest Regionalism

The Modern movement in American architecture encompasses a period from about 1930 to 1975 and includes a range of architectural styles, including International, Miesian, Wrightian, Minimal

[22] Louise Bruse Wenberg Luce, Interview by Sue Thomas and Sarah Martin, Feb. 23, 2023.

[23] Haag opened his Seattle office in 1958 and began teaching site planning at the University of Washington. He is best known for his designs of Gas Works Park (1978-88) and at Bloedel Reserve (1979-84). Duane A. Dietz, "Richard Haag," in *Shaping Seattle Architecture: A Historical Guide to the Architects*, second edition, ed. Jeffrey Karl Ochsner (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2014), 347.

[24] Louise Bruse Wenberg Luce, Interview by Sue Thomas and Sarah Martin, Feb. 23, 2023.

[25] Wenberg House Expenses, 1959-1967, p. 5-7. Louise Bruse Wenberg Luce private collection.

[26] Louise Bruse Wenberg Luce, Interview by Sue Thomas and Sarah Martin, Feb. 23, 2023.

Traditional, Contemporary, Ranch, Split-Level, and others. The movement was a reaction to Eclecticism and a rejection of historical forms and styles, instead favoring simplicity, functionality, flexibility in plan, regularity and structural order, and avoidance of applied ornamentation.[27]

Following World War II, suburban projects dominated the work of Seattle-area architects and builders. Minimal Traditional and Ranch-style houses were most common in builder subdivisions of the post-war era throughout the country, but the Contemporary style was a favorite of American architects, particularly on the West Coast and in Seattle. The Contemporary style was influenced by Frank Lloyd Wright's Usonian houses – stylish, moderately priced small houses designed for the American middle class – and their emphasis on the design of interior spaces with respect to the outdoors.

Unlike Eclectic movement styles of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Contemporary style was focused on the interior and how each space relates to the outdoors. Designed from the inside out, Contemporary houses incorporated outdoor living spaces, gardens, and viewsheds into the open and flowing arrangement of interior rooms. In the Pacific Northwest, these houses are often built on sloping hillsides with a terraced landscape and oriented toward views of a lakes and mountains. The design – including the low-pitched or flat roofs with deep eaves and large expanses of glass to draw in light – accommodates the wet, moderate climate and dark winters and enabled creative uses of solar passive energy applications.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, a group of eager, young architects, including Lionel Pries, Paul Kirk, John Rohrer, Roland Terry, Gene Zema, Ralph Anderson, Arne Bystrom, and others, began exploring Modernism in a regional context, to take residential development beyond the emerging Contemporary and Ranch styles. What resulted was a Northwest regional style of Modernism, influenced by Scandinavian and Japanese architecture, with an expressive post-and-beam structure that is integrated with the landscape and built of local, natural materials.[28]

The **Northwest Regional Style** was popular from about 1950 through the 1970s. The Wenberg house reflects the key characteristics of the style, as it is described in the multiple property document *King County Mid-Century Modern Residential*.[29] It has one story and a basement, with an asymmetrical form and a rectangular footprint. It has flat roofs with skylights. Its wood post-and-beam framing and natural claddings reflect locally available materials. Wood claddings appear in a variety of finishes, including horizonal lap siding, vertical slats, and panels. Architectural embellishment is minimal, although the use of native stone may be seen as an embellishment. The primary entry is subtle but distinctive, with double doors carved in an Indigenous American motif. Windows are large expanses of glass, some extending floor-to-ceiling, with simple casings and no surrounds. The interior common spaces are free flowing, and several interior spaces have direct access to either outdoor decks or gardens. The garage is detached but integrated into the design of the house via covered walkways.

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[27] Virginia Savage McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2017), 548-549.

[28] Jeffrey Karl Ochsner, ed., *Shaping Seattle Architecture: A Historical Guide to the Architects*, second edition (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2014), 18; McAlester, 629-635.

[29] *King County Mid-Century Modern Residential* Multiple Property Document (King County Historic Preservation Program, 2022), F13-14.

Passive Solar Design

With the style's emphasis on site orientation and local, natural materials, it was well-suited for sustainable design applications, especially during an era of increasing environmental awareness. The home's architect, Omer Mithun, for example, advocated for solar design techniques in his Modern movement buildings. In particular, he championed **passive solar design**, which relies on structural and architectural factors to influence temperature and energy regulation, such as south-facing windows to capture heat from the low angle of the winter sun, a wide overhanging roof on the southern side to guard against the summer sun, and well-placed trees and shrubbery for shade and to direct breezes.[30] With thoughtful design, he said, "You can get a house to do a good share of its own heating just by the design of it and by insulating it well and using thermal pane windows."[31]

Solar concepts in residential design have roots in the world's oldest building traditions and emphasize adaptation to local climate and topography, a concept Mithun underscored in his public commentary on the subject.[32] In 1933, the Century of Progress Exposition in Chicago featured architect George Keck's House of Tomorrow, which some scholars point to as "an origin point for our current understanding of passive solar design."[33] A group of influential architects in California's Bay Area in the 1930s and 1940s took interest in solar design from a Regional Modernist perspective, focusing on climate and topography in their designs.[34] This interest continued among architects following World War II, particularly within academic programs including at the University of Washington. In the 1960s, architects started "reappreciating how vernacular architecture across the world had responded to the specifics of climate and local natural forces."[35] Victor Olgyay's *Design with Climate* and Bernard Rudofsky's 1964 *Architecture Without Architects* were important publications of this era. This interest also coincided with an emerging study of Indigenous traditions across disciplines, including architecture, anthropology, and cultural geography.[36] Environmentalism and the oil embargo of the 1970s drove interest in passive and active solar design into the mainstream media for about a decade (figures B15 and B16).

The Wenberg house has all the hallmarks of passive solar architecture. The Wenbergs had actively sought a location suitable for passive solar design and an architect sensitive to natural surroundings.

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[30] Don Carter, "Oldfangled Ways to Save Fuel," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, Dec. 5, 1976, p. 38. David Wright, *Natural Solar Architecture: A Passive Primer* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Co., 1978), 206.

[31] Linda Lewis, "Active Versus Passive: Which type of system to heat your home?" *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, July 3, 1977, p. 106.

[32] See for example Don Carter, "Oldfangled Ways to Save Fuel," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, Dec. 5, 1976, p. 38; and Barbara Huston, "The Sun House," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, Nov. 20, 1977, p. 49.

[33] Zach Mortice, "New Exhibition Shines a Light on George Fred Keck's Solar Home of 1933," *Architectural Record*, Feb. 8, 2022. Accessed Aug. 24, 2023. https://www.architecturalrecord.com/articles/15511-new-exhibition-shines-a-light-on-george-fred-kecks-solar-home-of-1933

[34] Alan R. Michelson, Email Communication with Sarah Martin, Aug. 23, 2023.

[35] Alan R. Michelson, Email Communication with Sarah Martin, Aug. 23, 2023.

[36] Bernard Rudofsky, *Architecture Without Architects: An Introduction to Nonpedigreed Architecture* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1964). Accessed Aug. 24, 2023. https://www.moma.org/documents/moma_catalogue_3459_300062280.pdf Alan R. Michelson, Email Communication with Sarah Martin, Aug. 23, 2023.

Louise said, "We got this lot with the southwest exposure, which is what we wanted." Regarding the design, she continued, "Omer had a card that figured the declination of the sun at this latitude, this location, and so this is calculated to let the winter sun in and exclude the summer sun." This was accomplished with the wide overhanging eaves.[37] In addition to the overhangs, the strategic placement of windows that opened, including some lower-placed windows on the west side of the house and some clerestory windows, enhanced air circulation and air flow through the interior.

ARCHITECT AND BUILDER

Architect: Omer L. Mithun, Mithun & Associates Architecture

Omer L. Mithun (1918-1983), a native of Iowa, graduated with a bachelor's degree in architecture from the University of Minnesota in 1942. Following his graduate degree in naval architecture from the University of Michigan in 1945, Mithun led construction and ship repair at the Bremerton Naval Shipyard (1945-46). He worked briefly for the Seattle firm Naramore, Bain, Brady & Johanson (1946-47) and joined the School of Architecture faculty at the University of Washington in 1947, remaining until retirement in 1982. Following brief partnerships with Ronald Wilson (1949-1952) and Harold Nesland (1952-55), he continued as Mithun & Associates Architects for much of the rest of his career.[38]

Suburban projects dominated the profession – and Mithun's portfolio – in the post-war decades. His projects included residential, commercial, religious, and medical projects in the greater Seattle area. As part of his teaching role at the UW, Mithun participated in community forums that partnered university faculty from a range of disciplines with communities throughout Washington. During the late 1940s and 1950s, Mithun spoke to many organizations, from Bellingham to Longview, usually opining about trends in modern homebuilding and architecture.[39] He was involved in civic affairs in Bellevue, serving on and chairing the Bellevue Planning Commission from 1953 to 1972, and later the Medina Planning Commission. His partnership with Nesland resulted in their notable work in Bellevue's Surrey Downs neighborhood, with their residential designs receiving broad, national attention when featured in *Better Homes and Gardens Five Star Home Plan Book*. Other projects during the late 1950s and 1960s attributed to Mithun & Associates Architects include the Bellevue Presbyterian Church, Bellevue (1954-58); Bellevue Medical Dental Center, Bellevue (1962-68); Tally Building, Bellevue (1969-70); and Everwood Park, Bellevue (1973-76).[40]

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[37] Louise Bruse Wenberg Luce, Interview by Sue Thomas and Sarah Martin, Feb. 23, 2023.

[38] "Omer L. Mithun," Docomomo US/WEWA website, accessed Aug. 17, 2023. https://www.docomomo-wewa.org/architect/mithun-omer-l/

[39] "Architect Opposes Copying Out of Past," *Spokane Chronicle*, Dec. 15, 1949, p. 109. "Functional Use of Architecture Urged In Home Building," *Bellingham Herald,* Dec. 15, 1952. "Architect Says Builders of Homes Have 'Missed The Boat,'" *Longview Daily News*, Apr. 6, 1953, p. 9.

[40] Ochsner, *Shaping Seattle Architecture*, 462, 464-465. "Omer L. Mithun," Docomomo US/WEWA website. "Harold J. Nesland," Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation webpage. Accessed July 10, 2023. https://dahp.wa.gov/historic-preservation/research-and-technical-preservation-guidance/architect-biographies/bio-for-harold-j-nesland

Mithun was "a leader in energy conservation," and championed passive solar energy applications in architectural design.[41] While he clearly integrated passive solar applications into his designs relatively early in his career, demand for his expertise increased considerably as fuel prices climbed following the Arab Oil Embargo of 1973. His firm designed several solar showcase residences that were featured in area newspapers in the 1970s, including an extant two-story house at 6304 156th Place NE in Redmond.[42] Another one of his local solar house designs, in Redmond's Meadows neighborhood, was featured in *Family Circle*, a popular national publication, which led to his appearance in newspapers and at conferences across the country in 1978-1980.[43]

Under Mithun's leadership, the firm won local, regional, and national design awards. In 1973, the AIA College of Fellows inducted Omer Mithun, recognizing the national significance of his influence on the development of the profession. The successor firm, known as Mithun, is a leading West Coast firm with 180 team members in Seattle, San Francisco, and Los Angeles.[44]

Comparative analysis of one of Omer Mithun's best-known projects in the Seattle area, the Surrey Downs neighborhood, with the Wenberg house illustrates the range of his skill and talent as an architect and reinforces his preference for Modern Movement designs. The Surrey Downs subdivision, with two plats established in 1952 and 1958, reflects a builder-developer business model that was popular in the post-World War II years and incorporated the work of architects through the use of stock house plans. Mithun's firm produced several stock plans, using a variety of house forms that mostly reflected the Contemporary style, that builders could then modify based on consumer wishes. While economy of scale made the homes affordable to more homebuyers, it also gave the subdivision a cohesive, custom-built appearance.[45] In contrast, the Wenberg house represents a markedly different business model for Mithun, a custom-design approach in which he consulted closely with the property owners to incorporate their individual wishes on everything from design to construction materials. Mithun's interest in passive solar design coincided with the Wenbergs' desire for an environmental design using local materials. Although his design of the Wenberg house is not well known, it is an outstanding example Mithun's expertise in passive solar design for which he later gained broad recognition.

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[41] Ochsner, *Shaping Seattle Architecture*, 462. "Solar Contest Encourages New Methods," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, Dec. 14, 1980, p. 51.

[42] "Solar home to be open," *Seattle Times*, Nov. 20, 1977, p. 133. Mary Rothschild, "Houses with A Place in the Sun: Solar Homes," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, Nov. 6, 1977, p. 44, 46.

[43] Barbara Huston, "The Sun House," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, Nov. 20, 1977, p. 46, 49. Robert L. Anderson and Elizabeth Gaynor, "The Family Circle Solar Energy House," *Family Circle*, Mar. 27, 1978, p. 116-117. See, for example, "Passive solar energy conference tomorrow," *The Columbia Record (Columbia, SC),* Sept. 17, 1979, p. 65.

[44] "Omer Mithun FAIA," AIA Honors / Seattle and Washington webpage. Accessed July 10, 2023. https://sites.google.com/site/aiaseattlehonors/aia-national-honors/aia-fellows/omer-mithun-faia. Mithun website, accessed Aug. 17, 2023. https://mithun.com/

[45] Northwest Vernacular and SJM Cultural Resource Services, *Surrey Downs, Bellevue, Washington: Reconnaissance Level Survey* (Aug. 2021), 13-15.

Builder: Gustav Bruse (1891-1971)

Gustav Bruse immigrated to the U.S. from Sweden in about 1910. He settled in Cook County, Illinois, where he married Elvira Lindberg (1893-1985), and the couple's daughter Louise was born in 1924. Beginning in 1920, federal censuses recorded Gustav's occupation as a carpenter. The 1940 census recorded the family living in Gary, Indiana. Within a few years, the family moved to the Seattle area, and initially they lived in Seattle where Gustav worked as a carpenter at various places including the Seattle Port of Embarkation and Fort Lawton.[46] By the mid-1950s, the Bruses lived in Edmonds.

If not for the Wenbergs' meticulous record-keeping and Louise's oral history, Bruse's important association with this residence could have been lost to history. His name does not appear on documents or clippings collected while researching this narrative. Unfortunately, it is not known if he completed other similar works as a builder or was associated with any other Mithun-designed properties.

[46] Polk's Seattle City Directory, 1948-49. Ancestry.com, 1950 US Census, Seattle, WA.

LIST OF FIGURES

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Section A – Maps & Aerial Images

Figure A1. USGS Topographic Map, Issaquah Quadrangle, 2020.
Wenberg House, Lat: 47.553068 / Long: -122.030131

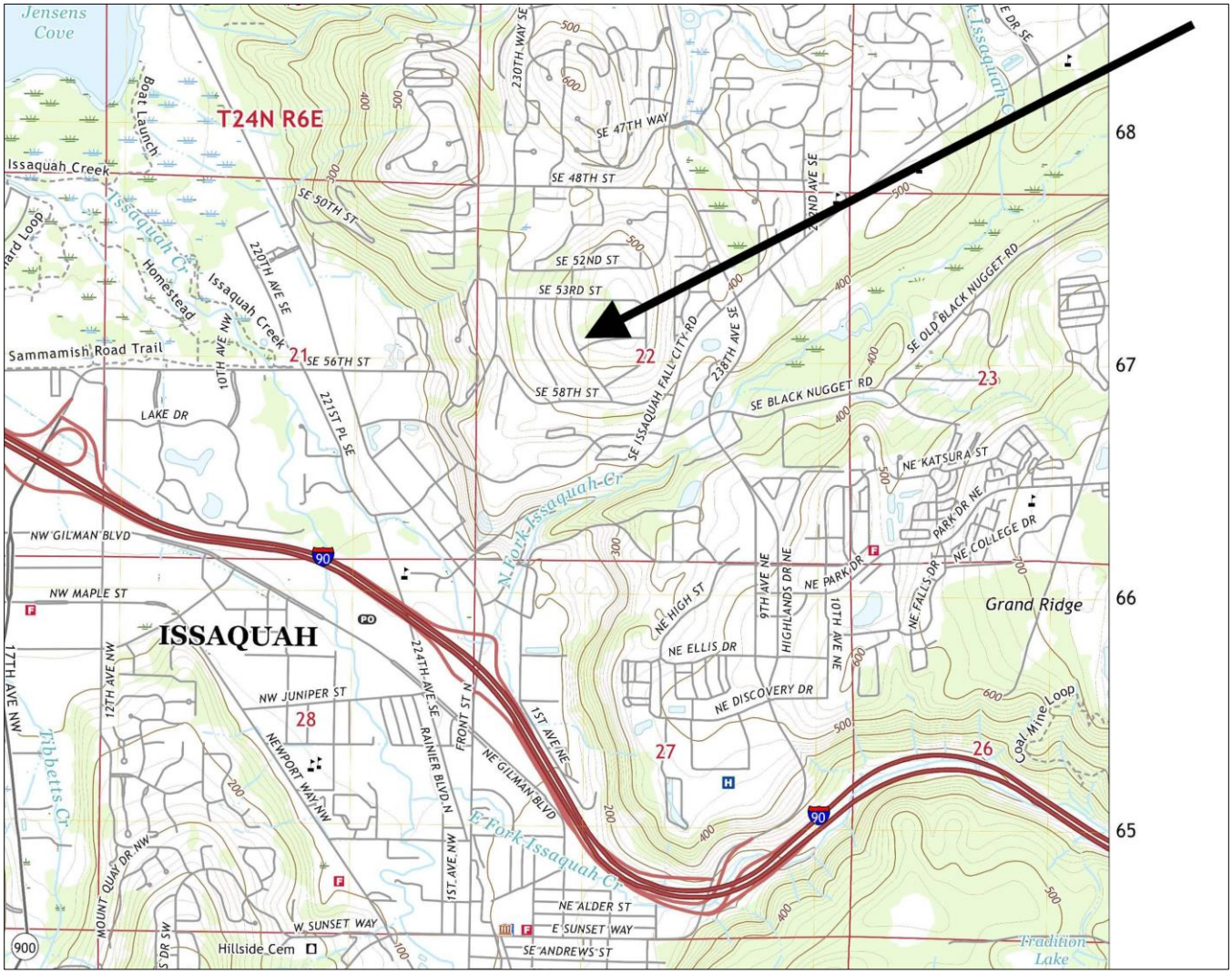

Figure A2. USGS Topographic Map, Issaquah Quadrangle (partial), 2020.
Wenberg House, Lat: 47.553068 / Long: -122.030131

Figure A3. Aerial image, with parcel highlighted at center. King County iMap, 2021.

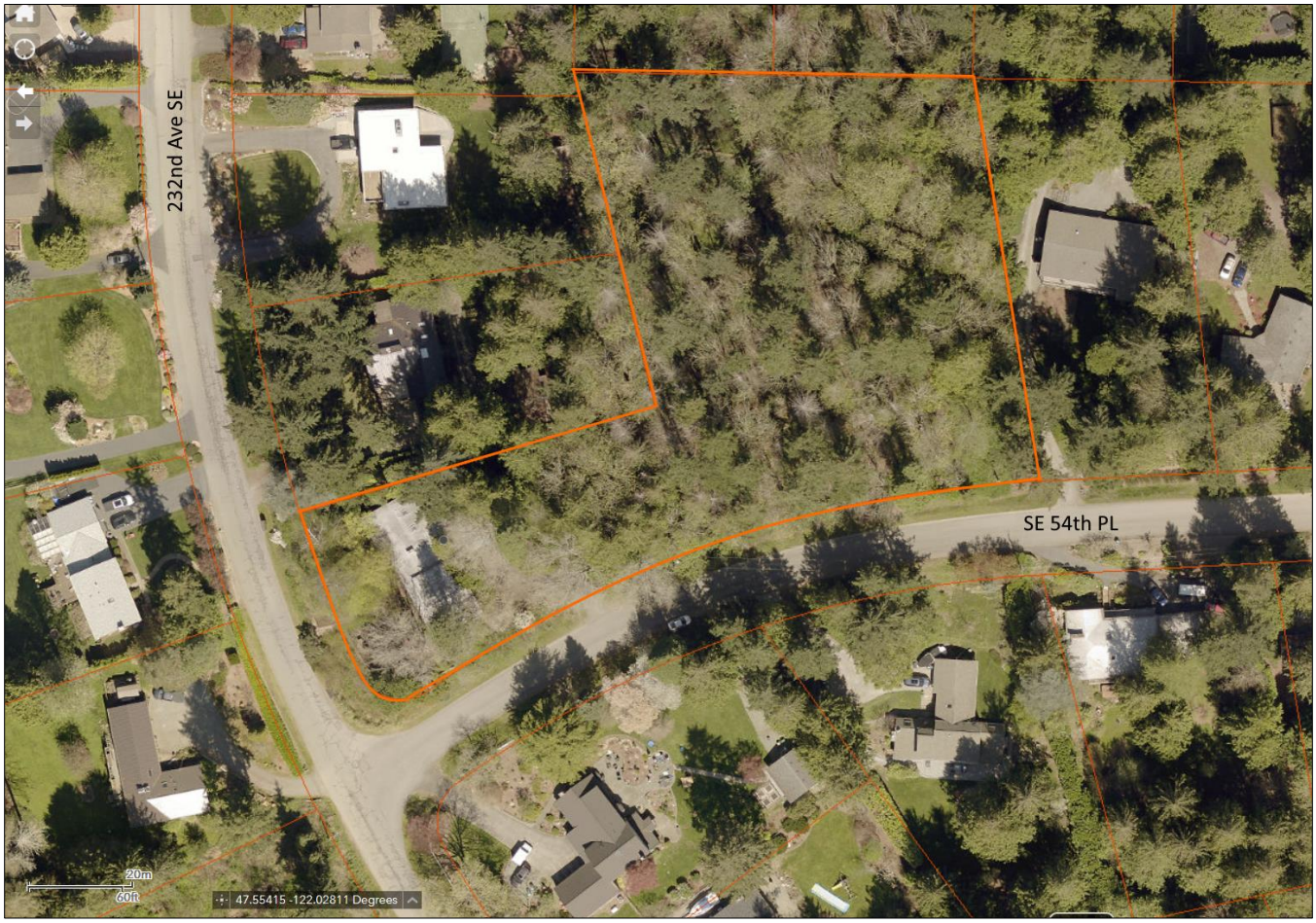

Figure A4. Close-in aerial image, with parcel highlighted. King County iMap, 2021.

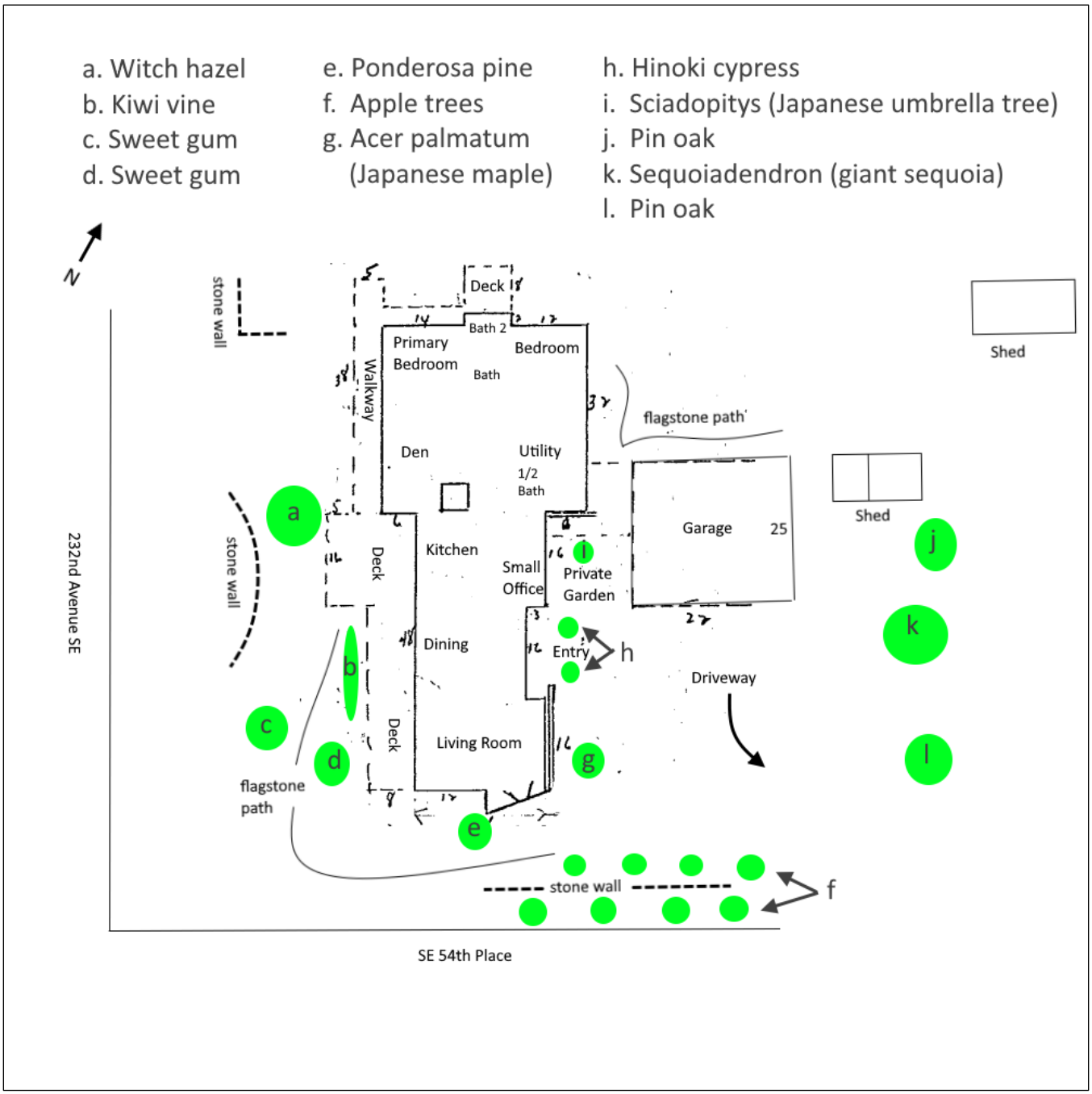

Figure A5. Current site overview, with notes on landscape features and plantings

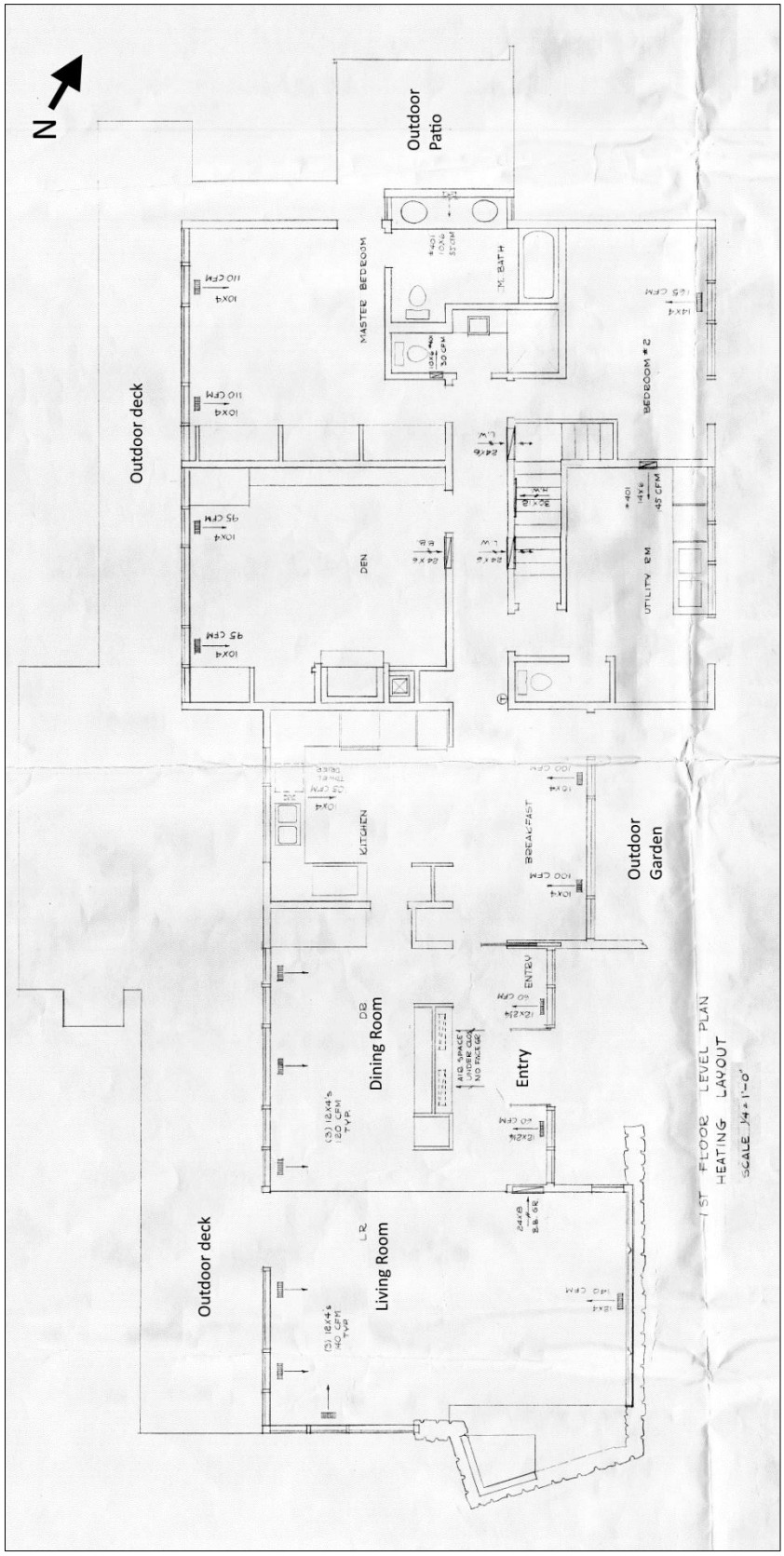

Figure A6. Sketch floor plan of Wenberg House. Base plan is taken from Mithun & Associates Architects' first floor heating plan, drafted by C. Myrick, June 15, 1962. Source: Louise Bruse Wenberg Luce private collection.

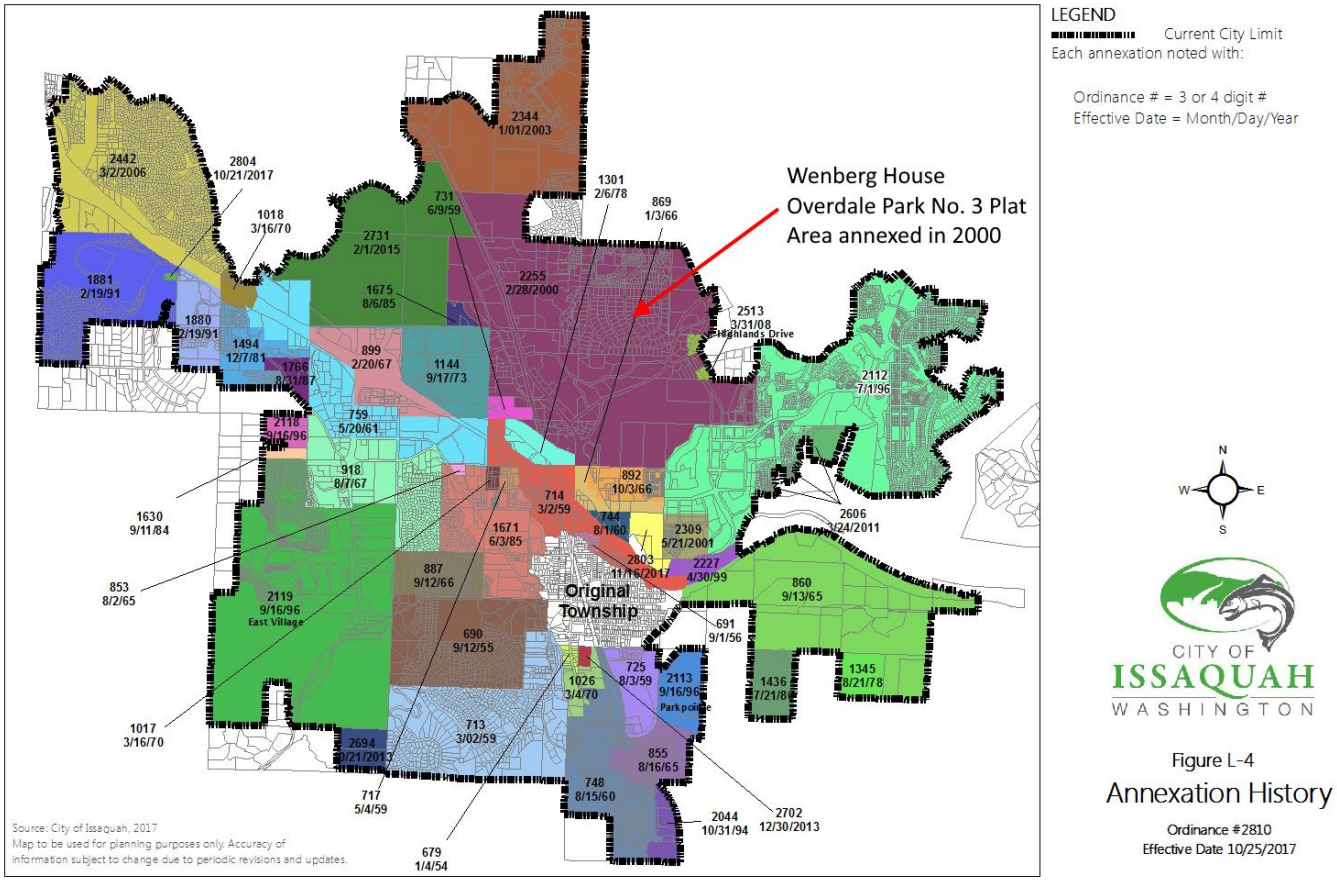

Figure A7. City of Issaquah Annexation History Map. 2017.

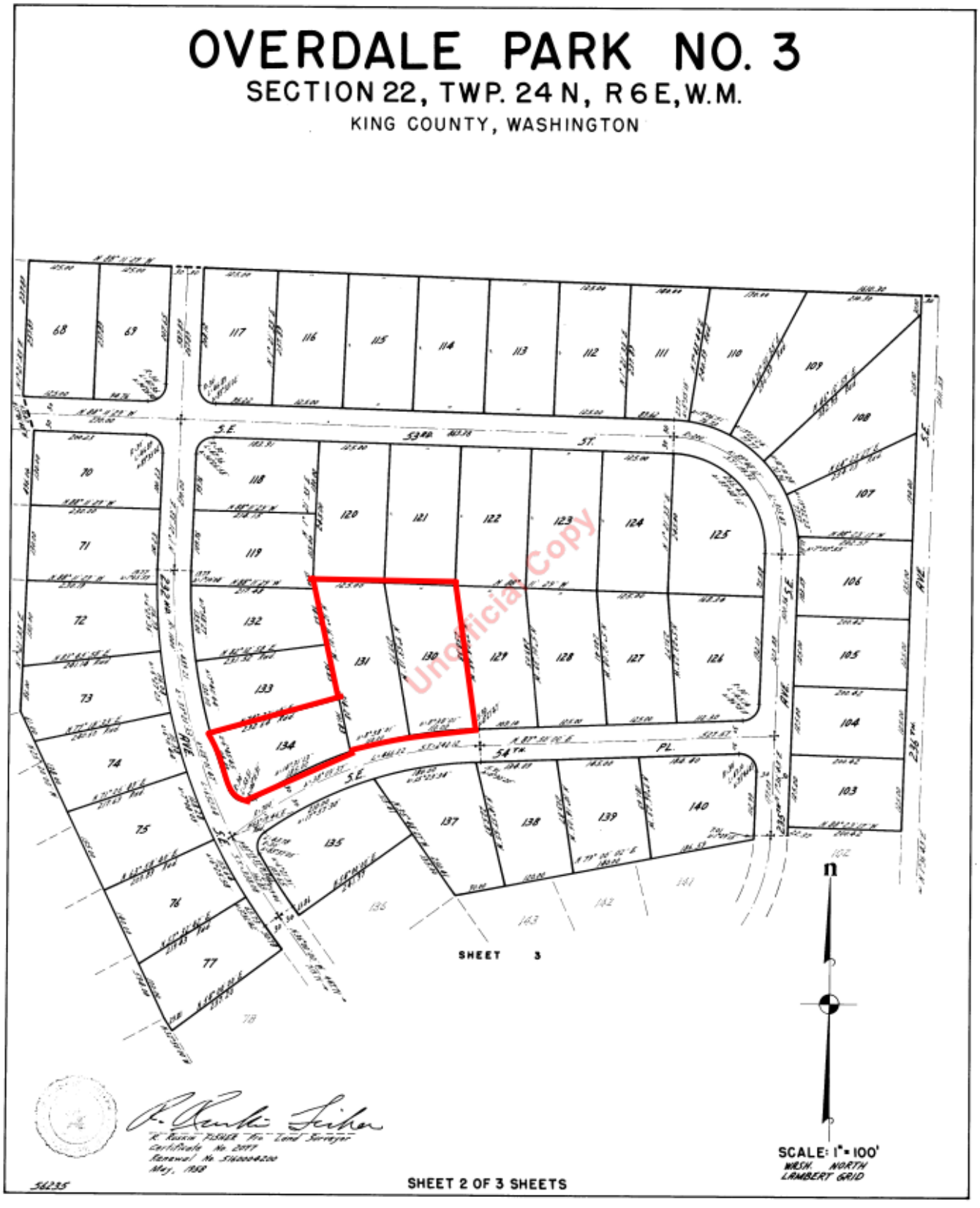

Figure A8. Overdale Park No. 3 Plat Map (1 of 2), with parcel highlighted, 1958.

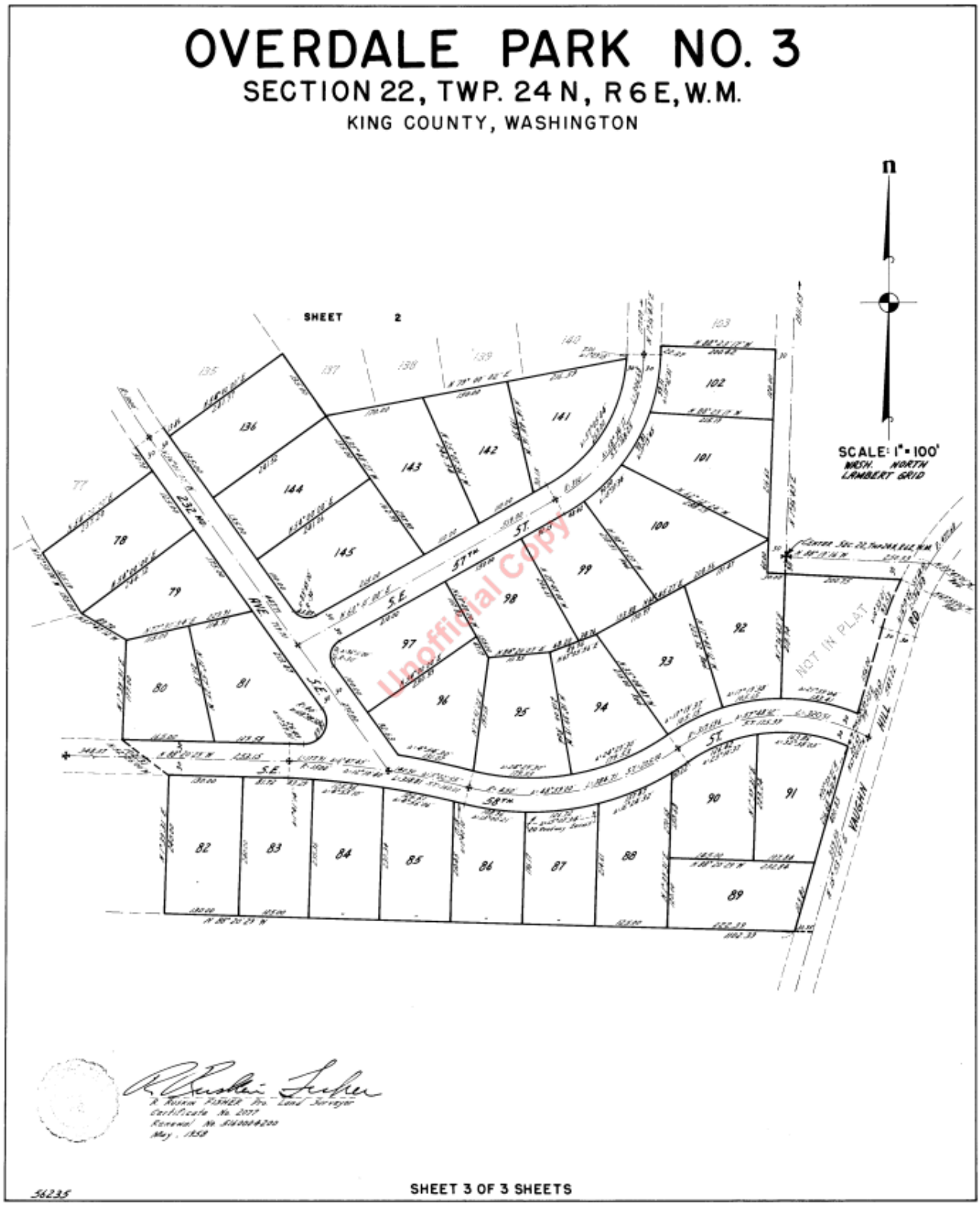

Figure A9. Overdale Park No. 3 Plat Map (2 of 2), 1958.

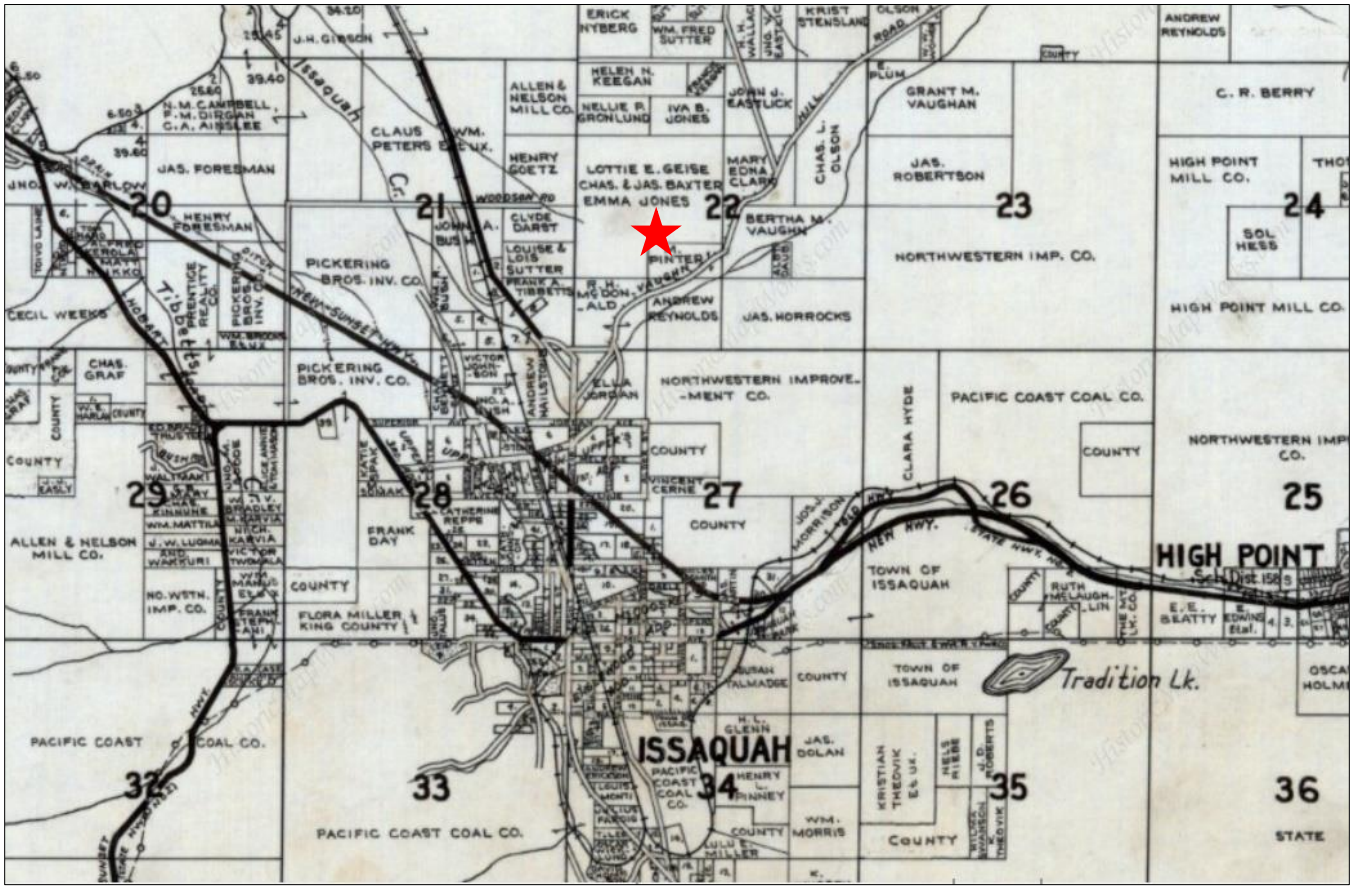

Figure A10. Partial map of Township 24N, Range 6E. Metsker's Atlas of King County, Washington. Seattle, WA: Charles Metsker, 1936.

Section B – Historic Photographs & Clippings

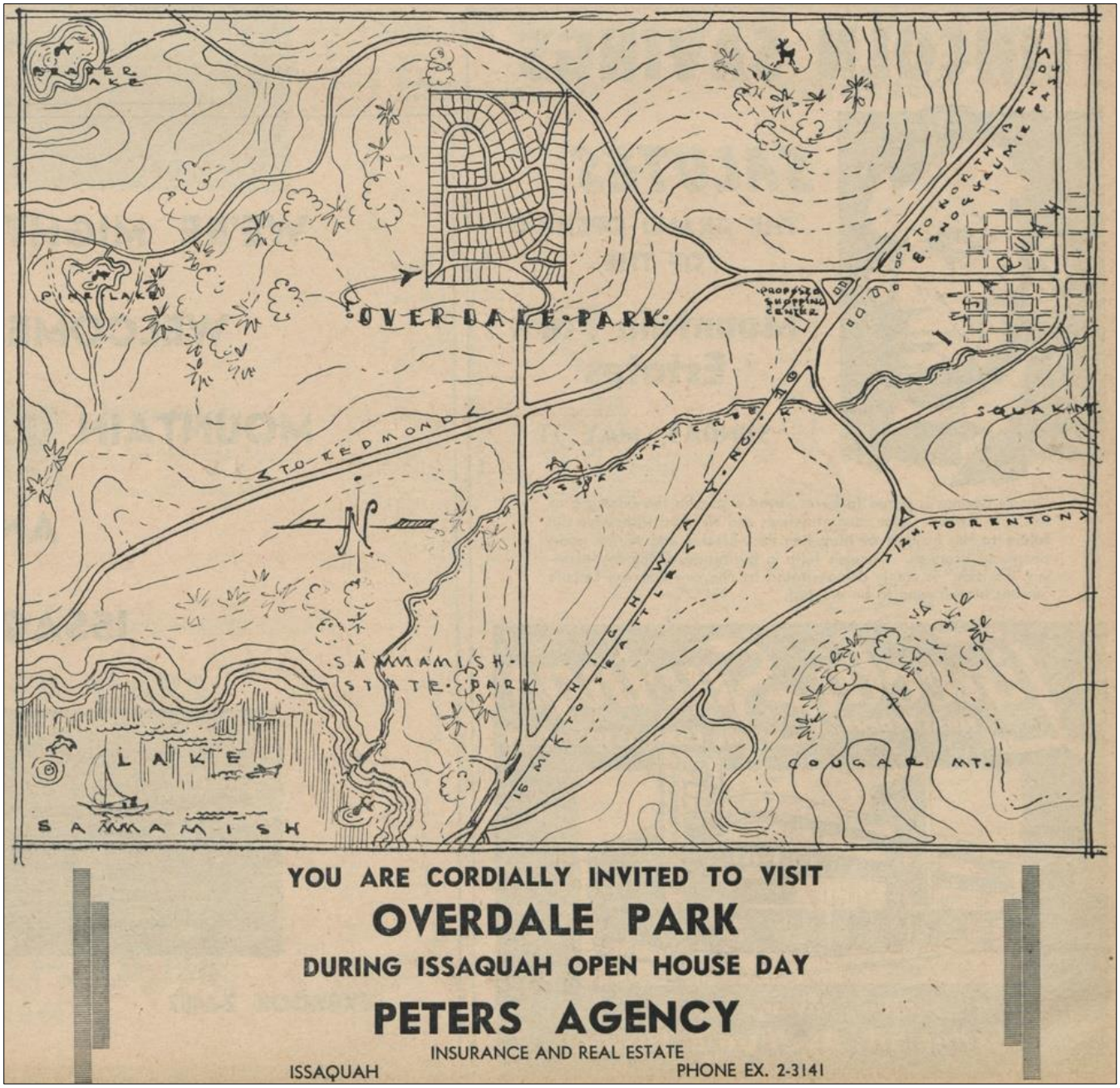

Figure B1. Advertisement for Overdale Park, *The Issaquah Press*, May 8, 1958, p. 5.

OVERDALE PARK

IS NOW AN

OFFICIAL COUNTY ACCEPTED RECORDED PLAT

IT HAS REPEATEDLY BEEN PRONOUNCED AS ONE OF THE EAST-SIDE'S PREFERRED RESIDENTIAL SUBDIVISIONS. ITS OUTSTANDING FEATURES ARE:

1. VIEWS WITH CONTOUR PLANNING
2. CLOSE IN AND ACCESSIBLE
3. AMPLE GOOD WATER
4. SECLUSION
5. LARGE LOTS
6. GOOD SOIL
7. ROADS OF HIGH STANDARDS
8. PROTECTIVE COVENANTS, PRESERVING HIGH STANDARDS OF SUBURBAN LIVING

All are cordially invited to visit this outstanding development

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Overdale Park

The perfect place to build your dream home. Large, view, residential tracts with protective restrictions. Fully platted and recorded, county roads, and excellent deep well water. One mile north of Issaquah, very easy to drive to Seattle. Reasonable prices and terms. Builder inquiries invited.

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Issaquah EXbrook 2-3141

Figure B2 (left). Advertisement for Overdale Park, *The Issaquah Press*, Aug. 21, 1958, p. 3.

Figure B3 (right). Advertisement for Overdale Park, *The Issaquah Press*, Oct. 2, 1958, p. 6.

Figure B4 (left). Wenberg House under construction, 1962. Source: Louise Bruse Wenberg Luce private collection.

Figure B5. Builder Gustav Bruse (left) consults with architect Omer Mithun (right) at the Wenberg House construction site, 1962 or 1963. Source: Louise Bruse Wenberg Luce private collection.

Figure B6. Builder Gustav Bruse (right) and property owner Johan Wenberg (left) at the Wenberg House construction site, 1962 or 1963. Source: Louise Bruse Wenberg Luce private collection.

Figure B7. Gustav Bruse and Johan Wenberg collecting stone for use in the home's construction, with Tiger Mountain in the background, 1962 or 1963. Source: Louise Bruse Wenberg Luce private collection.

Figure B8. Unidentified men at the Wenberg House construction site, 1962 or 1963. Source: Louise Bruse Wenberg Luce private collection.

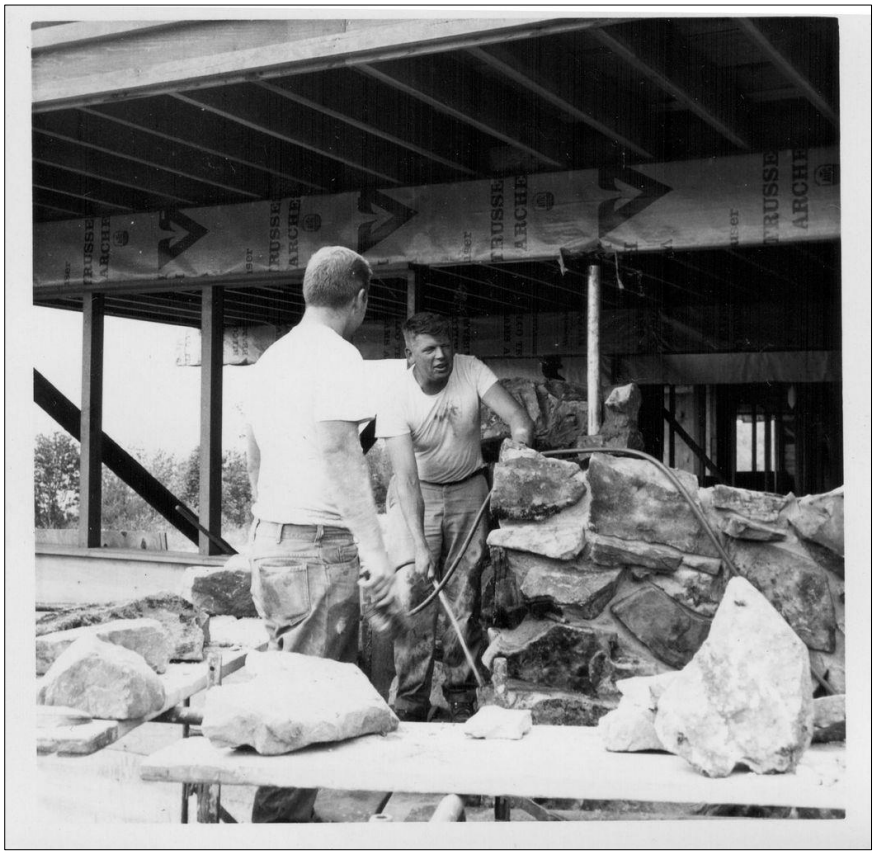


Figure B9. Unidentified man at the Wenberg House construction site, 1962 or 1963. Source: Louise Bruse Wenberg Luce private collection.

Figure B10. Johan Wenberg, Gustav Bruse, and an unidentified man at the Wenberg House construction site, 1962. Source: Louise Bruse Wenberg Luce private collection.

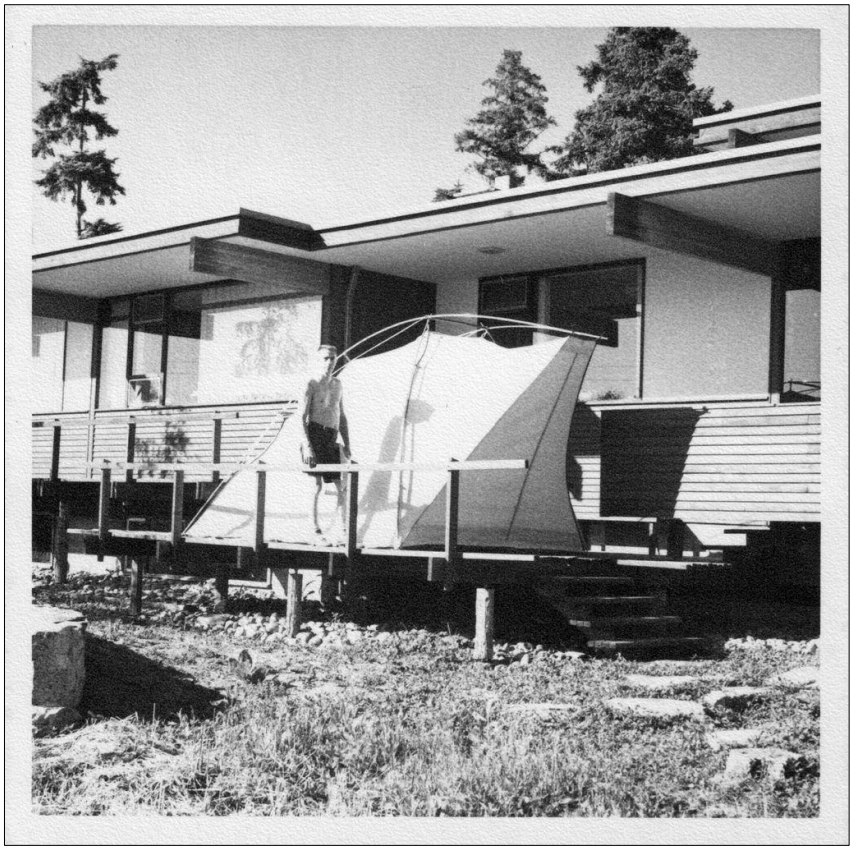
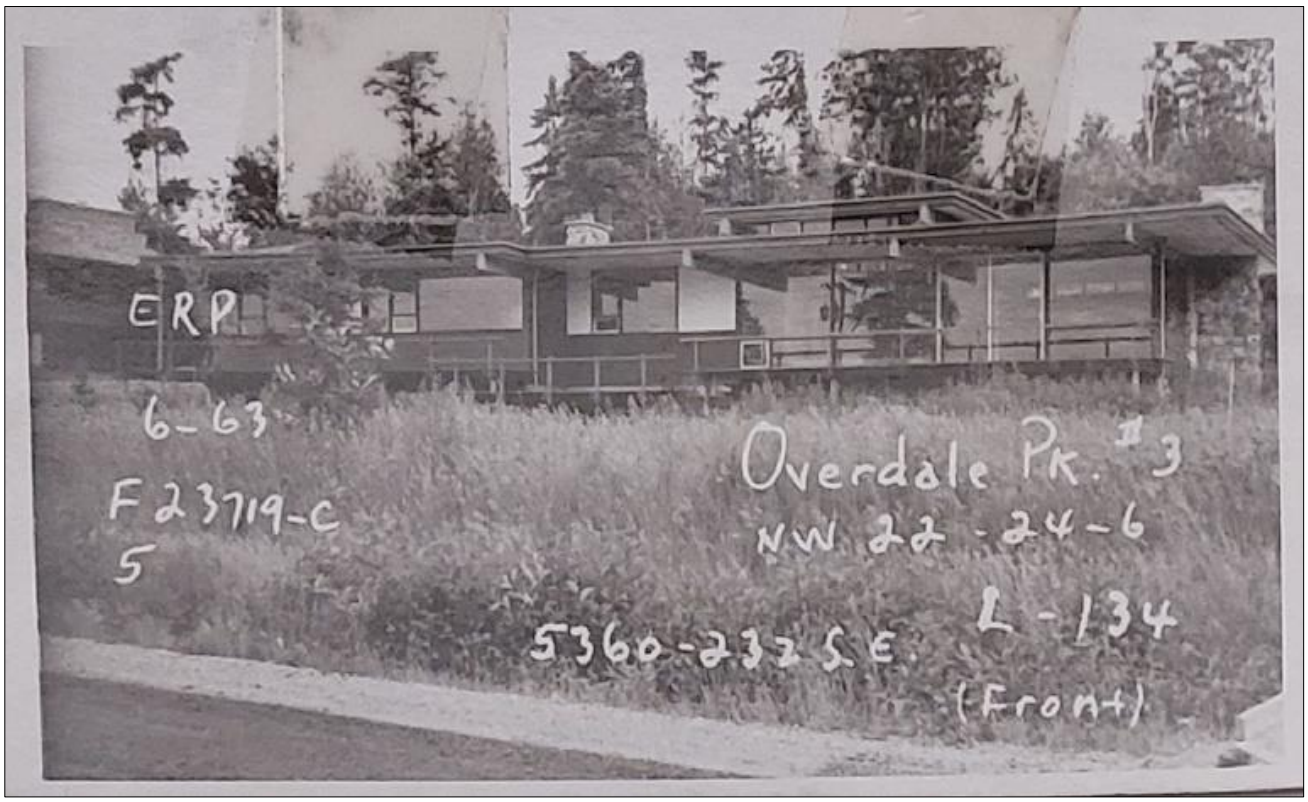
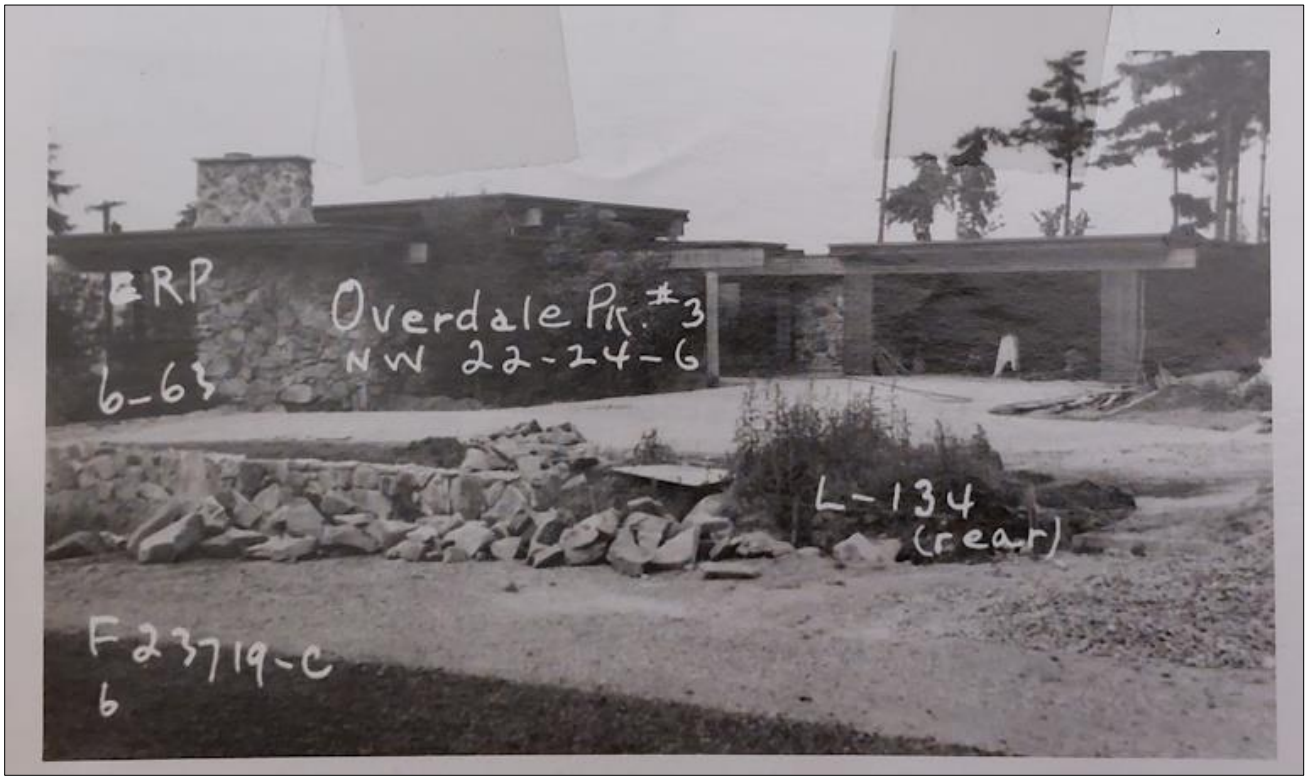


Figure B11. Johan Wenberg standing on the front deck of the nearly finished residence, 1963. Source: Louise Bruse Wenberg Luce private collection.

Figure B12. Wenberg House nearing completion, 1963. Note the neighboring house at 5344 232nd Avenue SE is also nearly complete.





Figures B13 & B14. King County Assessor photos of the Wenberg House, near completion, 1963.

Oldfangled Ways to Save Fuel

This is another in a continuing series of reports on how to save energy—and money. This article explores what architects call "passive systems" for energy conservation. These systems rely on siting, selection of building materials and other design considerations.

By DON CARTER
P-I Consumer Affairs Writer

Omer Mithun, a second-generation Norwegian-American, went back to the Old Country Last summer to pick up some "new" ideas.

For some years now, the Bellevue architect has been studying what might be called "architectural folk medicine" for staying comfortable with very little fuel.

And even in Seattle's cloudy climate, Mithun is enthusiastic about solar energy and many other simple, inexpensive ideas our ancestors used in the thousands of years before we had cheap energy and marvelous mechanical central-heating plants.

Architects call these ideas "passive systems," because they involve structural and design factors, but no machinery or moving parts.

"Few people," says Mithun, "realize how simple it is to design comfortable buildings that rely primarily on the right orientation to provide much of our winter heating.

"In the summer, it is simply a matter of properly located shading devices - or trees - to avoid overheating."

Mithun, who also teaches architecture at the University of Washington, says the sun's heat is potent, even in rainy Seattle.

Much current national research on solar energy involves complex and expensive systems to collect and store the sun's heat.

—P-I Photo by Phil H. Webber

ARCHITECT OMER MITHUN WENT TO OLD COUNTRY TO PICK UP "NEW" ENERGY IDEAS

But Mithun believes it is even more important to start with the simple basics of good design, so that the house itself produces the major gains.

For example, windows can be located where they trap the winter sun and exclude the less welcome rays of the summer sun. Building mass (heavy materials such as concrete and stone) can store excess heat for later use.

One advantage of energy-efficient design is that it adds almost nothing to construction costs, Mithun says.

Houses cost about the same to build with or without such features.

Another bonus, aside from reduced heat bills, is that the building will be more comfortable winter and summer.

Mithun acknowledges that the more expensive "active" systems may become more attractive economically as fuel prices rise.

But he also points out that a house with well-designed "passive" systems is able to use sophisticated "active" hardware more efficiently than other structures.

Some elements of energy-efficient design cited by Mithun:

Windows facing south can capture substantial heat from the low-trajectory winter sun. Overhangs on the southern exposure protect against the summer sun.

Where possible, minimize large windows facing west. They take the full brunt of the hot afternoon summer sun.

A brief look at the path of the sun in this latitude explains why a southern exposure can produce a substantial heat gain during the winter.

The winter sun rises late in the southeast and sets early in the southwest. The highest point in its trajectory at noon on December 21, the winter solstice, is only 20 degrees.

That means it shines almost directly into unobstructed south-facing glass.

June is another story, as the sun rises early in the northeast, swings high and sets late in the northwest. At noon June 21, the summer solstice, it is 67 degrees above the horizon.

Hence the desimability of overhangs.

- Well-located trees can help keep your house warmer in the winter, cooler in the summer. Deciduous trees are especially helpful because they offer shade in the summer months, then lose their leaves to let the winter sun into the house.
- Good insulation is important for reduction of heat loss through the building's walls and roof. It not only saves fuel, but also makes the house more comfortable by keeping the walls warmer.

In some respects, Mithun is a solar "radical," but he's not unreasonably militant.

If you have a choice lot with a grand view to the north, for example, Mithun won't tell you to put all the big windows on the south side.

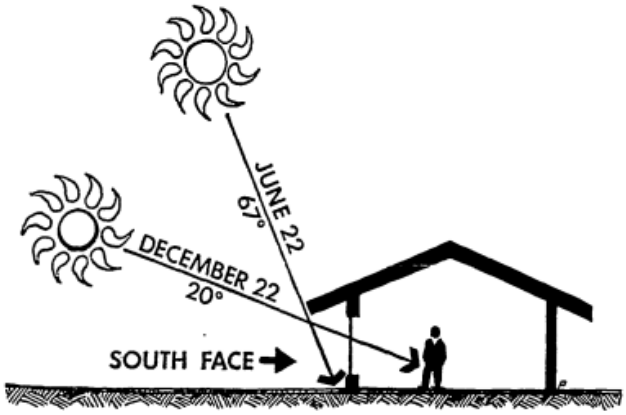
Don't ignore the view, he says, but consider some trade-offs so that your heating bill doesn't make your mortgage payment look small by comparison.

If there's anything new under the sun, it isn't the idea of designing houses to conserve energy.

***Xenophon*, an Athenian general and historian, reflected on the problem and wrote in about 400 B.C.:**

"In houses with a south aspect, the sun's rays penetrate into the porticoes in winter, but in summer the path of the sun is right over our heads and above the roof, so that there is shade.

"If then, this is the best arrangement, we should build the south side loftier to get the winter sun and the north side lower to keep out the cold winds."



SOUTH WINDOWS USE SUN IN WINTER, KEEP IT OUT IN SUMMER

Mortgage Symposium

Mortgage lenders will discuss condominiums and mortgage futures trading at a day-long symposium December 9 at the Sea-Tac Holiday Inn. Continental Mortgage Insurance Inc. is the sponsor.

Figure B15. *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, Dec. 5, 1976, Extra, p. 38.

Active Versus Passive

Which type of system to heat your home?

THERE ARE TWO basic types of solar energy systems — passive systems, in which the house itself is the collector and storage unit of solar heat, and active systems, which use mechanical means to transfer heat from a separate storage unit to the living space of the house.

Passive systems are difficult to add to an existing house. They should be considered primarily in the design stages of a new house, says solar architect Omer Mithun, an advocate of passive systems.

"The biggest energy gains can be made for nothing in the design of a new house," he says. "You can get a house to do a good share of its own heating just by the design of it and by insulating it well and using thermal pane windows."

In a passive system, the house is built with a north-south orientation. Often double-glazed windows on the south face collect the radiation, which is then stored in a thick concrete slab.

Mithun believes that every new house should be designed for some passive acceptance of solar energy. Evan Brown of the Ecotope Group agrees. Brown also believes that in an old house with the right orientation, a person can take advantage of the sun's energy by insulating, double glazing windows, closing off windows that are not in use, putting in more windows that face south and increasing the thermal mass in the house to store heat.

Passive systems by themselves are not able to provide uninterrupted comfort levels in the Northwest. Because of this, Mithun believes that "active systems are worthwhile if they are not overdone."

An active system uses mechanical means, such as pumps and pipes or fans and ducts, to carry heat from the collectors to the storage unit and from storage to the living space of the house.

The collector, which captures the sun's energy, is the part of the system that most people think about when they discuss solar energy.

In the Northwest the flat plate collector, which can pick up radiation through a cloud cover, is the most commonly used. The solar radiation passes through the transparent cover of a 4- by 8-foot panel, hits an absorber plate and is picked up by whatever fluid is used in the system (usually air or water).

In a wet system that uses water as the fluid, the heat from the collector is usually stored in a water tank in the basement. When air is used, the warm air is stored in a rock bin. The heat then circulates through the house as needed either as hot water in radiators or baseboard units or as warm air in a forced air duct system.

The collectors are usually installed on the roof of the house facing south at a tilt — at Seattle's latitude — of about 60 degrees. If the roof is not suitable, the panels can be set up away from the house or along a wall. A house requires about one square foot of collector for every two-and-a-half to four square feet of floor space.

Collectors are generally the most expensive part of a solar heating system, ranging in price from $150 to $400 for a 4- by 8-foot panel.

The National Bureau of Standards has issued engineering performance criteria for residential solar installations, and a list of systems approved under these standards is available from the Energy Research and Development Administration, Technical Information Center, P.O. Box 62, Oak Ridge, Tenn. 37830.

P-I PHOTO BY TOM BROWNELL

Omer Mithun: designs for the sun

A wet system is usually cheaper and requires less space for storage. For every square foot of collector there should be between one and two gallons of water storage.

A disadvantage of a wet system is the susceptibility of its components to corrosion, leakage, freezing and boiling. Copper used in the collectors will not corrode but is expensive. Aluminum and steel will corrode unless chemicals are added to the water.

City Light, which installed a wet system on its experimental solar house on Beacon Hill, had problems before the system ever went on. Three of the collector panels were corroded when they arrived.

A dry system does not have freezing, leaking, boiling and corrosion problems, but large ducts are needed for the movement of air, and these are often difficult to install in an older home. Also, rock bin storage can be cumbersome — one-half cubic foot of rock storage is necessary for every square foot of collector panel.

A third kind of storage system, which the government calls experimental but which one manufacturer says is fully developed, takes up less space than either water or rock. This is change-of-state storage, using eutectic salts, which change from solid to liquid when heated.

There are other questions to ask about a solar system before you buy. Some of these include the type of warranty with the system, the efficiency of the collector (what percentage of incoming radiation does it capture?), the heat storage capability of the system, durability and ease of repair of the collectors, the quality of the insulation and structural methods.

If you do not feel capable of evaluating the technical performance of a particular system, you may want to consult someone who should be able to. Solar technology is a field too new to be overrun with experts yet, but some are available. Potential sources for the names of these experts in your area are the American Institute of Architects, 1735 New York Ave. N.W., Washington, D. C. 20006; the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air Conditioning Engineers, 345 E. 47th St., New York, N.Y. 10017; the National Association of Home Builders, 15th and M Streets N.W., Washington, D. C. 20036.

No matter what kind of solar system you buy, you will have to have a backup heating system. The sun conceivably can provide 100 per cent of the heat, but a system that would do this would be too expensive for most people to install. Even a system that provides between 50 and 75 per cent of the heat in a home will cost between $5,000 and $19,000.

Mithun explains one solar equation this way: "If you put in 500 square feet of panels to provide heat for 300 days, it would take 1,000 square feet to provide for 30 more days and 1,500 square feet to take care of the five coldest days. Installing that last 500 feet is like buying a dump truck to carry your groceries. It costs too much for the amount of work it's doing."

Mithun believes that with mass production and technological refinement solar systems will go down slightly in cost. One estimate is that it will decrease 20 per cent in the next 20 years.

Other people, however, say that the basic technology is here now and that refinements will be minimal. And since the cost of a system is mostly in materials like metal, glass and plastic, which are not going to get any cheaper, the cost of solar systems will not go down.

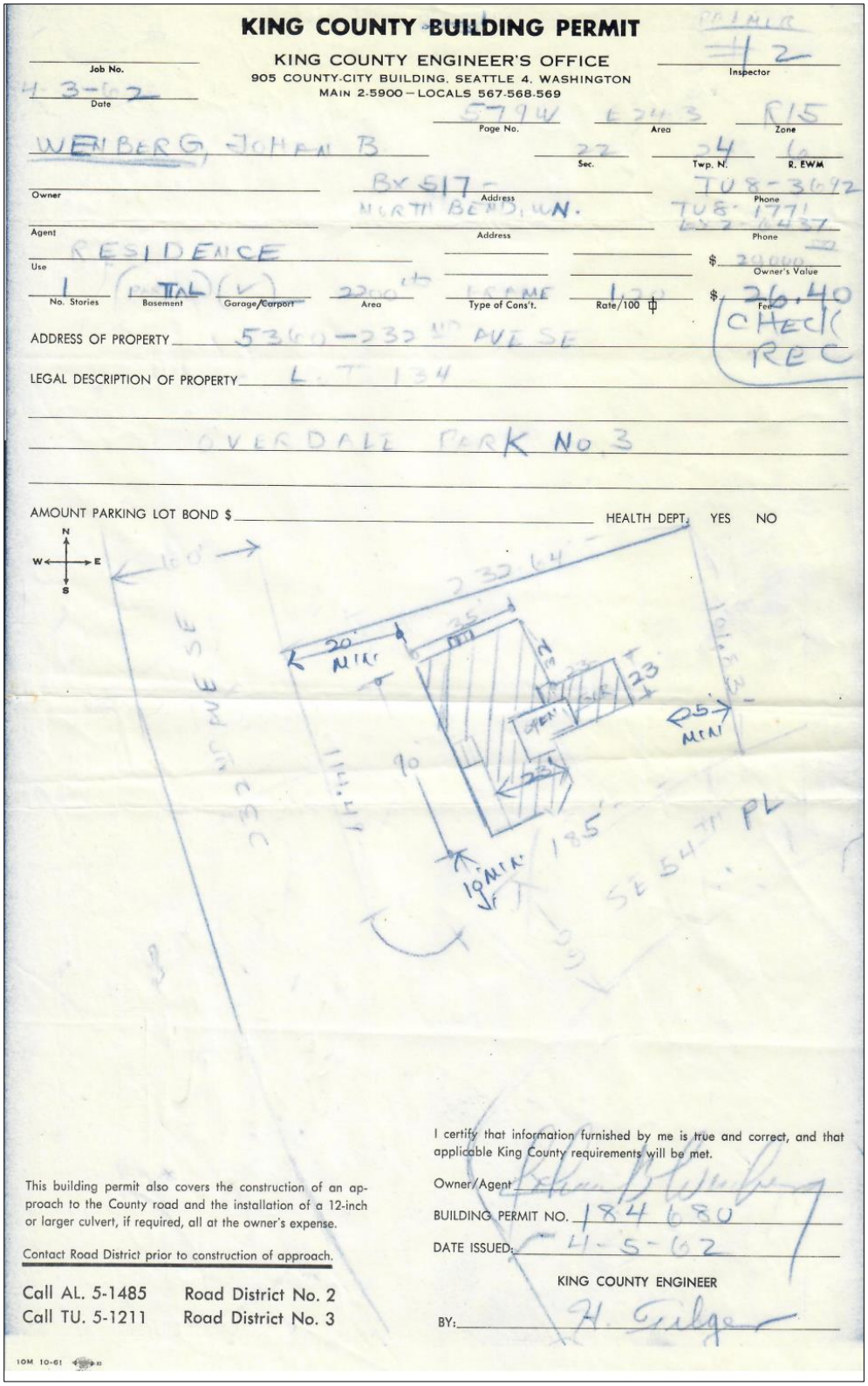
Cost-effectiveness is a byword in the growing solar industry. Everyone wants to know how long and how much fuel prices have to go up before a solar system pays for itself. This kind of reasoning irritates Al Abramson, an independent manufacturer of a solar energy system.

"With solar you get the utility company off your back," Abramson says. "Solar offers a freedom from dependency that is unavailable elsewhere. Even the government has not learned how to put a tax on it. With a quality like that, how can you talk about whether it's cost-effective?"

—LINDA LEWIS

Figure B16. *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, July 3, 1977, Extra, p. 106.

Section C – Building Permit & Architectural Drawings



KING COUNTY BUILDING PERMIT

KING COUNTY ENGINEER'S OFFICE
905 COUNTY-CITY BUILDING, SEATTLE 4, WASHINGTON
MAIN 2-5900 – LOCALS 567-568-569

Job No. 4-3-62 Date — Inspector PALMER #12

Page No. 5794 — Area E243 — Zone R15

WENBERG, JOHAN B — Sec. 22 — Twp. N. 24 — R. EWM 6

Owner — Address BX 517 NORTH BEND, WN. — Phone TU8-3692

Agent — Address — Phone TU8-1771 EX3-6437

Use RESIDENCE — $ Owner's Value 20000

No. Stories 1 — Basement TAL — Garage/Carport (V) — Area 2200 sq ft — Type of Cons't. FRAME — Rate/100 1.20 — $ Fee 26.40 CHECK REC

ADDRESS OF PROPERTY 5360-232ND AVE SE

LEGAL DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY L. T 134

OVERDALE PARK NO 3

AMOUNT PARKING LOT BOND $ _____ HEALTH DEPT. YES NO

N W E S

This building permit also covers the construction of an approach to the County road and the installation of a 12-inch or larger culvert, if required, all at the owner's expense.

Contact Road District prior to construction of approach.

Call AL. 5-1485 Road District No. 2
Call TU. 5-1211 Road District No. 3

I certify that information furnished by me is true and correct, and that applicable King County requirements will be met.

Owner/Agent Johan Wenberg

BUILDING PERMIT NO. 184680

DATE ISSUED: 4-5-62

KING COUNTY ENGINEER

BY: H. Gilge

10M 10-61

Figure C1. King County Building Permit, approved April 5, 1962.

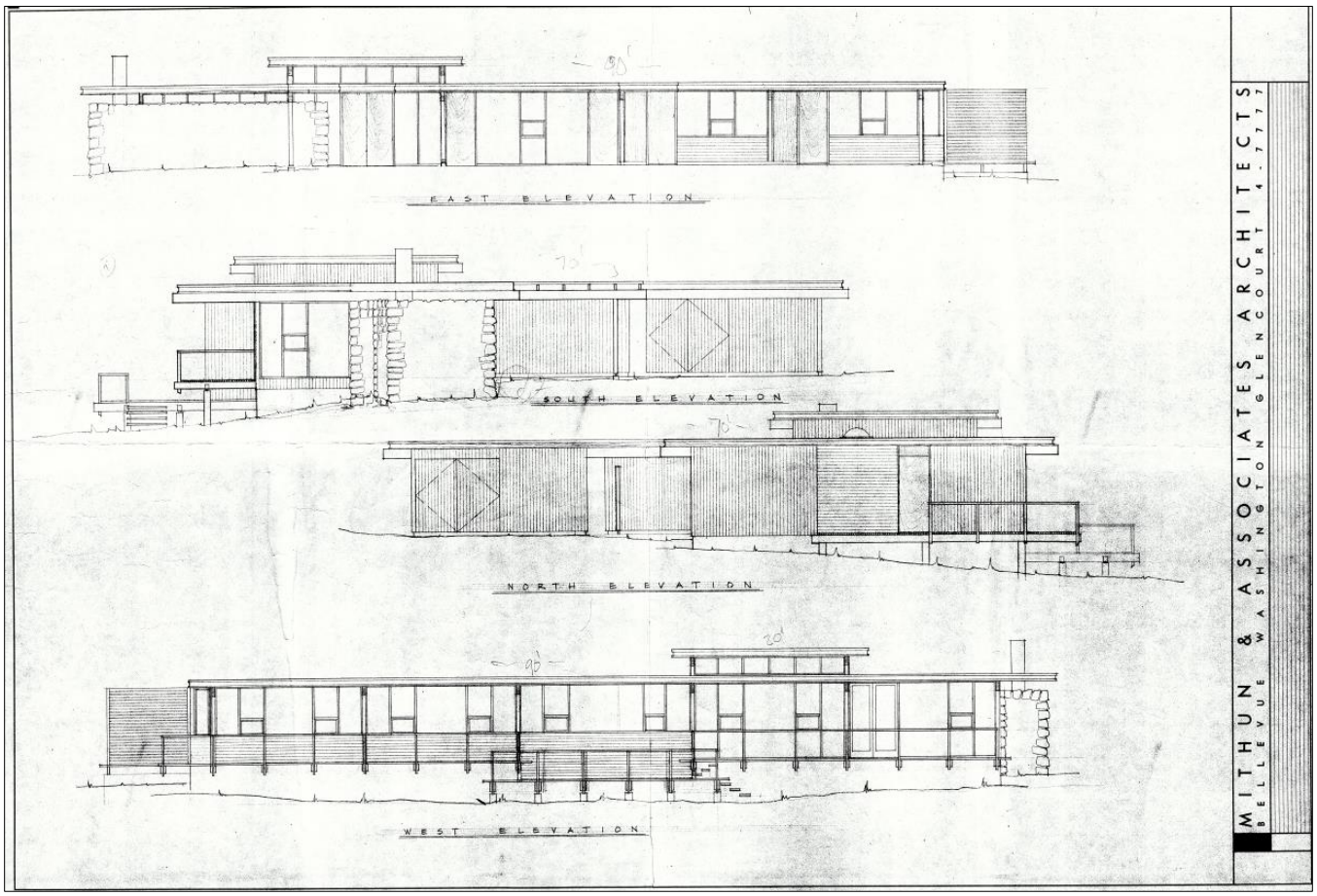


Figure C2. Elevation drawings, Mithun & Associates Architects, undated draft. Source: Louise Bruse Wenberg Luce private collection.

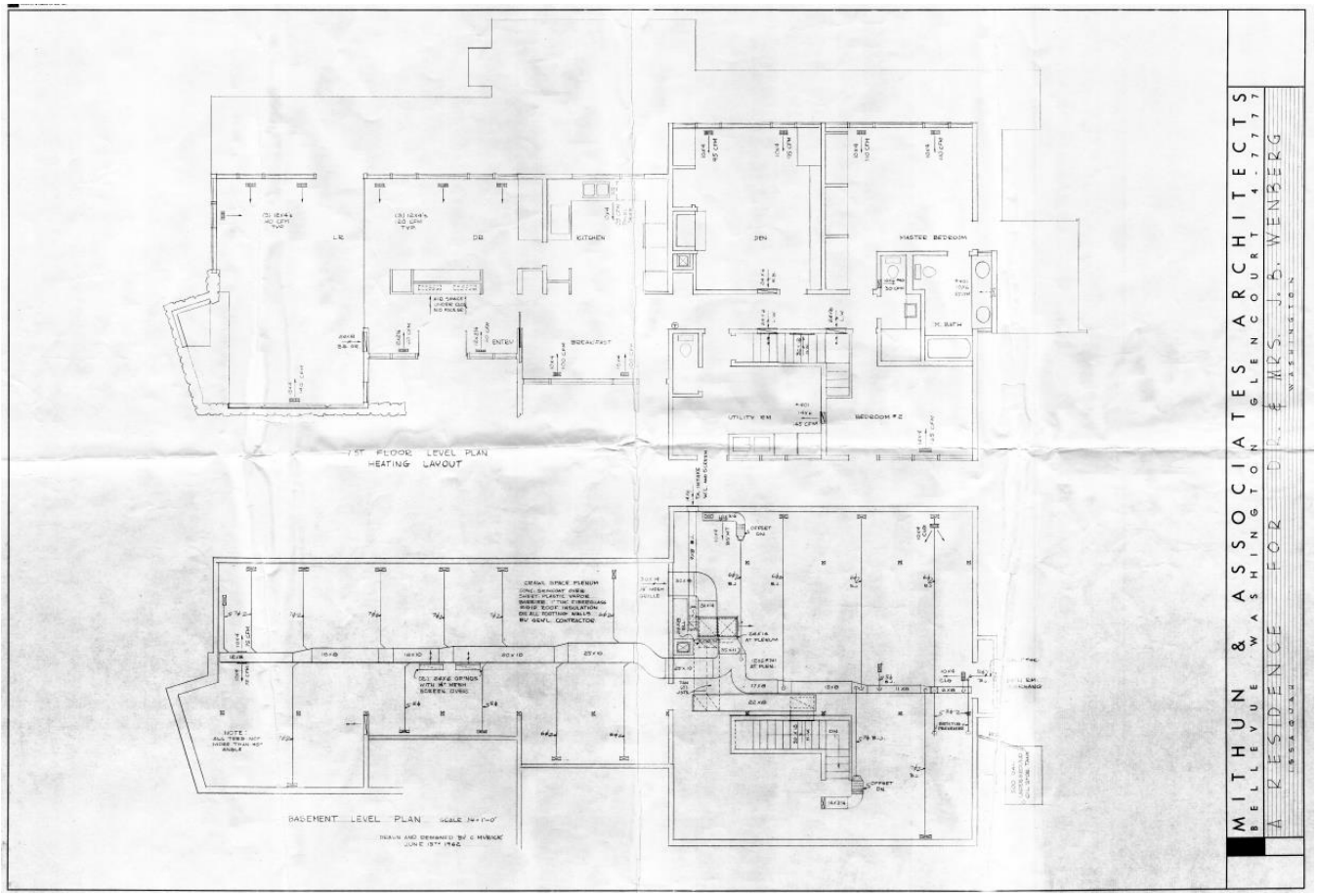


Figure C3. Mithun & Associates Architects, basement and first floor heating plans, drafted by C. Myrick, June 15, 1962. Source: Louise Bruse Wenberg Luce private collection.

Section D – Recent Field Photographs

Photographer: Sarah J. Martin Date Photographed: February 23, 2023

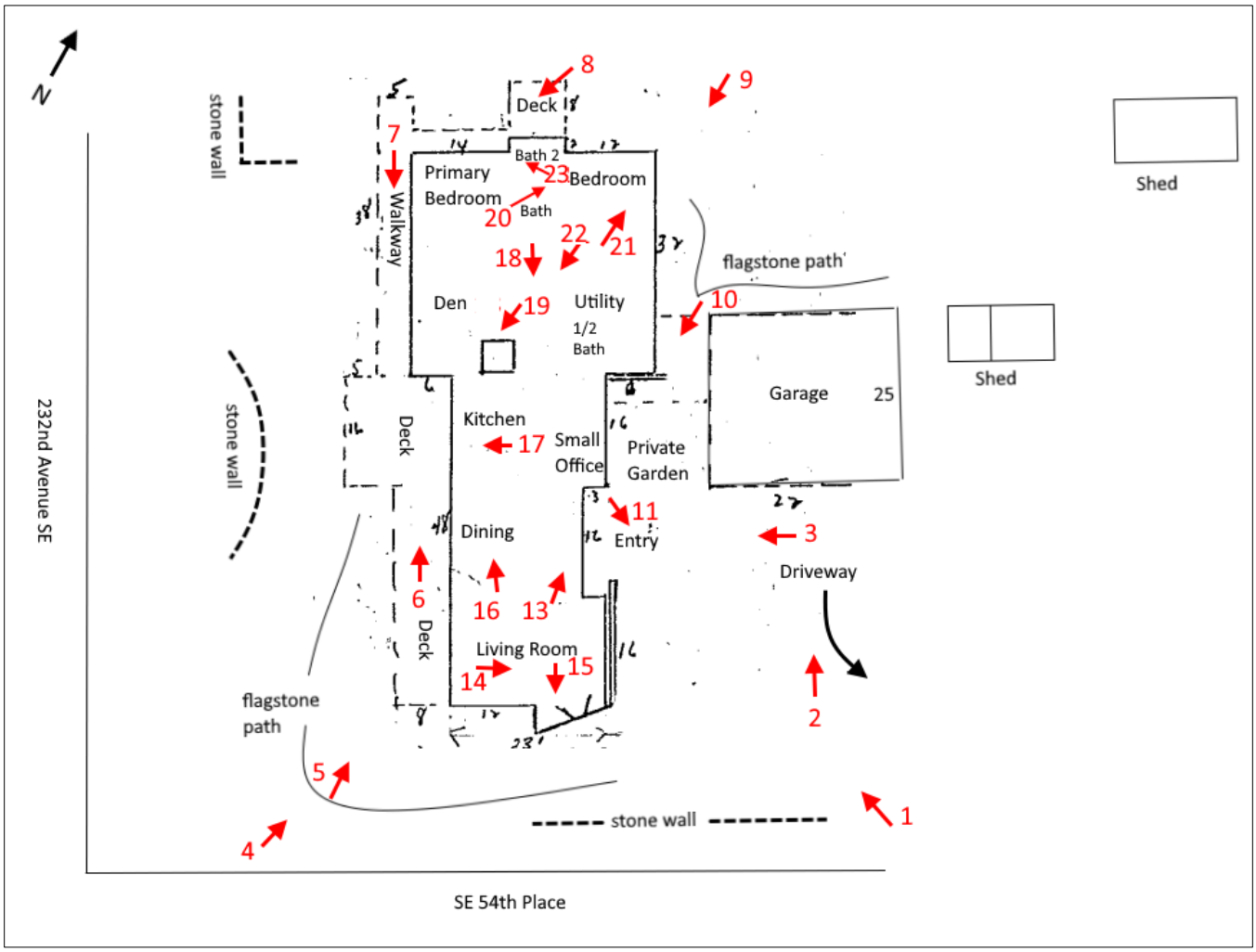


Photo Directions

Photo D1. House and garage from base of driveway

Photo D2. Driveway and garage

Photo D3. Primary entrance, garage, driveway

Photo D4. Southwest corner of house

Photo D5. Southwest corner of house

Photo D6. Deck along west side of house

Photo D7. Deck along west side of house

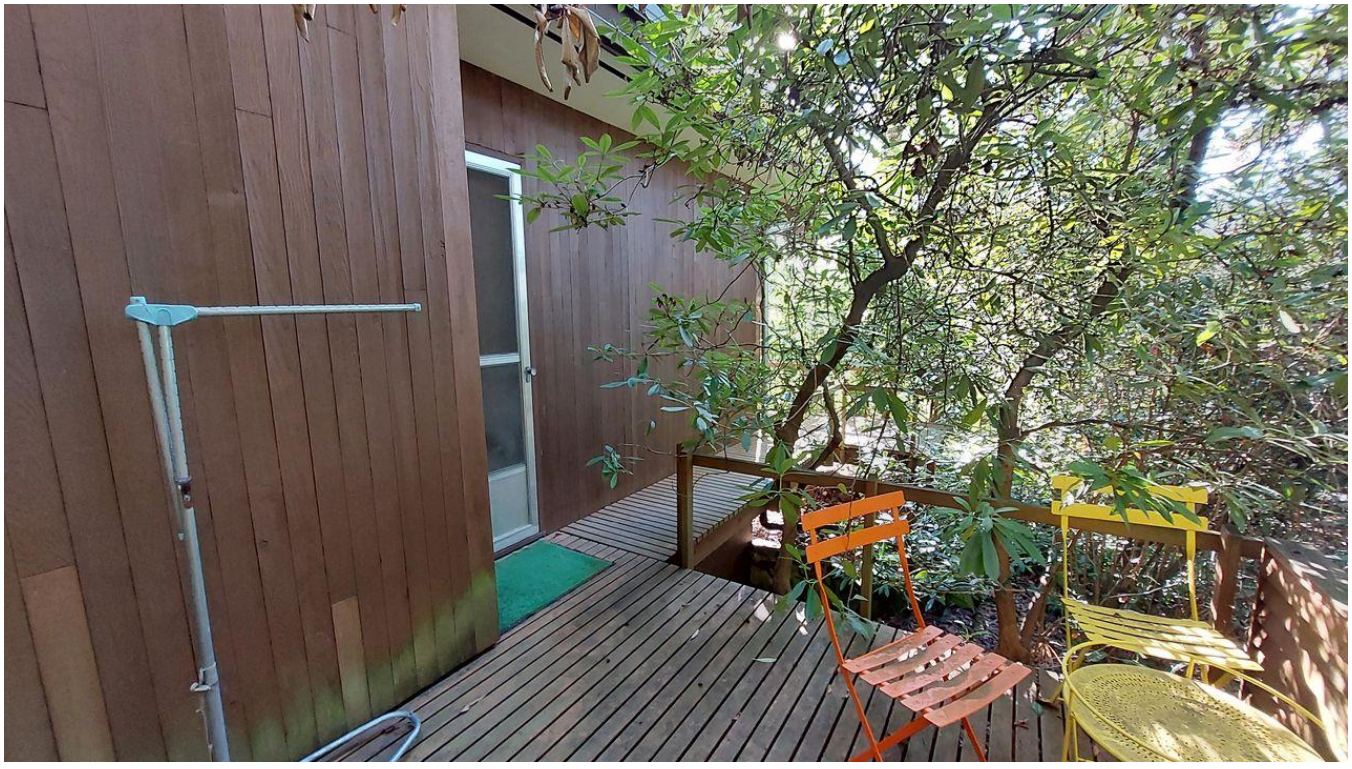


Photo D8. Deck and porch on north façade at main bedroom

Photo D9. Northeast corner of house and garage at left

Photo D10. Outdoor garden between house and garage

Photo D11. View toward driveway from primary entrance

Photo D12. View of doors at primary entrance

Photo D13 Interior at primary entrance

Photo D14. Living room, with display cabinet built by Gustav Bruse at left

Photo D15. Living room fireplace with copper hood

Photo D16. Dining room, with display cabinet built by Gustav Bruse (right) and light fixture by Milton Hunt

Photo D17. Kitchen

Photo D18 (left). Hallway

Photo D19 (right). Den fireplace

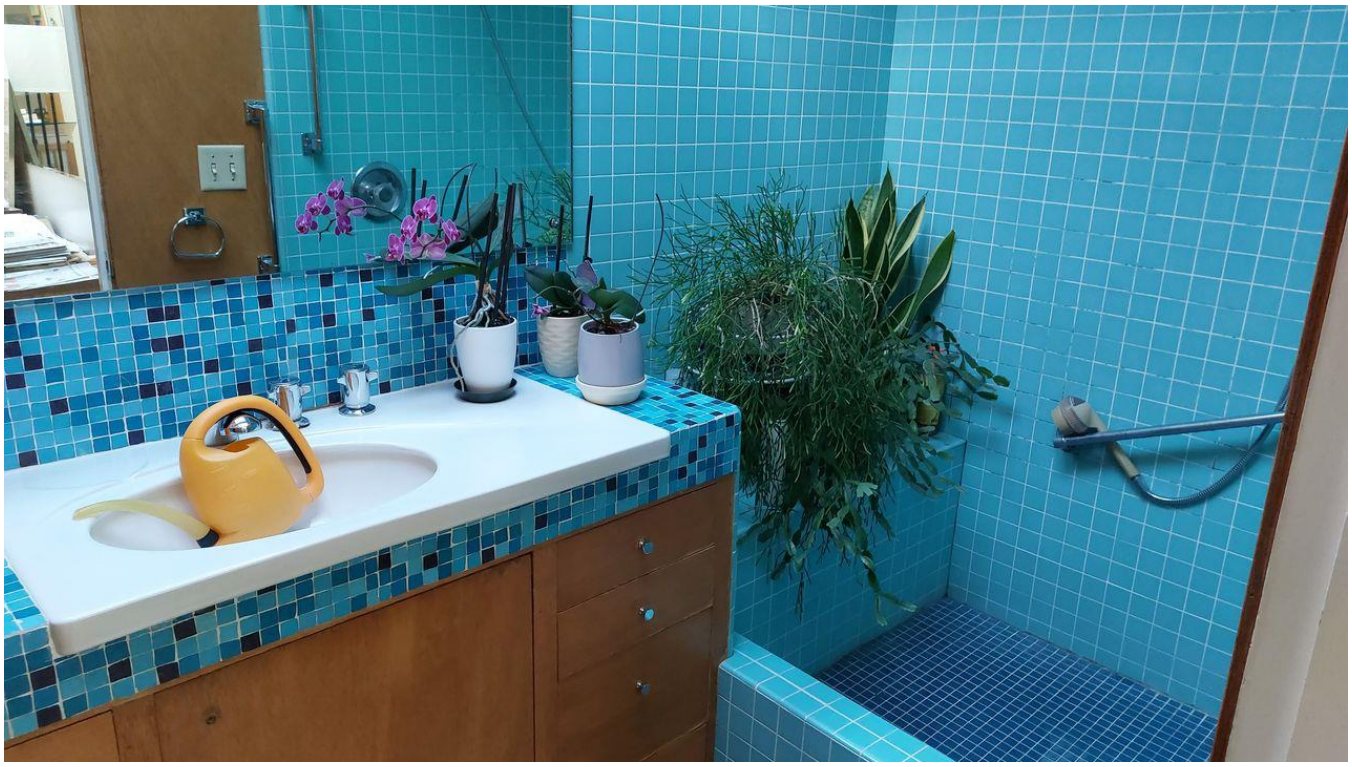


Photo D20. Main hallway bathroom

Photo D21. Second bedroom

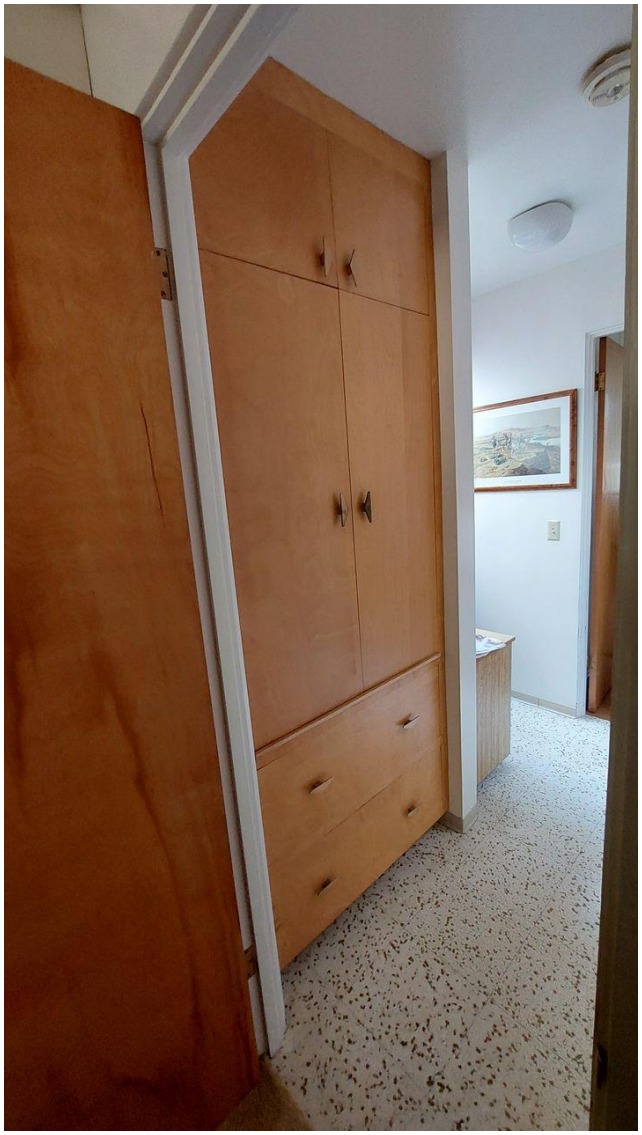


Photo D22. Hallway built-in cabinets

Photo D23. Jaylis window coverings in master bathroom

PART IV: MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

9. Previous Documentation

Use the space below to cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form (use continuation sheet if necessary).

Previous documentation on file:

- ☒ included in King County Historic Resource Inventory #2292
- ☐ previously designated an Issaquah Landmark
- ☐ previously designated a Community Landmark
- ☐ listed in Washington State Register of Historic Places
- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing
- ☐ (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings, Survey #:
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering, Rec. #:

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☒ King County Historic Preservation Program
- ☐ Local government
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- ☐ Other (specify repository)

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