

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

historic name **Wenbergs, Dr. Johan and Louise, House**

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 5360 232nd Avenue SE not for publication

city or town Issaquah vicinity

state Washington code WA county King code 033 zip code 98029

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national statewide local

Applicable National Register Criteria

A B C D

April 22, 2024

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

WASHINGTON STATE SHPO

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official

Date

Title

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register	<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register	<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register
<input type="checkbox"/> other (explain: _____)	

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private
<input type="checkbox"/> public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/> public - State
<input type="checkbox"/> public - Federal

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/> district
<input type="checkbox"/> site
<input type="checkbox"/> structure
<input type="checkbox"/> object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
	2	buildings
		district
		site
	2	structure
5		object
7	2	Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

None

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: Single dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: Single dwelling

DOMESTIC: Secondary structure

DOMESTIC: Secondary structure

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: CONCRETE

walls: WOOD: weatherboard

STONE: sandstone

roof: OTHER: built-up with aluminized tar

other: _____

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

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 (2021 pop. 39,505). 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, four stone walls, 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 1 through 3). Lake Sammamish State Park forms the northwest boundary of North Issaquah, much of which was annexed into the City of Issaquah in 2000 (figure 8). 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 4 and 9). 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 1 and 2). Surrounding the house and garage is about a half an acre with ornamental plantings and shrubbery. Also on site are four stone retaining walls which match the detailing of the stonework on the main house. These walls define various areas within the outdoor garden areas and help create a flat parking area on the site. The remaining acreage is planted with Douglas fir, cedar, and native shrubbery (figure 6). Also found here are two non-historic wood outbuildings which were added later. These contain gardening equipment. From a 1963 photograph (figure 22), 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.

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.

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RESIDENCE

Exterior

The Wenberg house has a rectangular plan and is built into a hill that slopes gradually downward from east to west. The east side of the house sits at grade. On the west side of the house, facing SE 232nd Avenue SE, the terrain slopes downward revealing approximately four feet of the concrete foundation (photo 5). A raised wood deck extends the full length of the west elevation and wraps around to the north side (photos 6 and 7). The deck features a basic square railing system that is absent of ornamentation, balusters, or screening materials, except at the southwest corner outside the living and dining rooms and on part of the north side where the railing is solid and faced with horizontal clapboards. It terminates at a porch on the north side with direct access to the master bedroom (photo 8). The house has a full basement beneath the north two-thirds of the house that is accessed from the interior.

The flat roof rests on long rectangular glu-lam wood beams and has a light-colored aluminized 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.³ 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 5). At the primary entrance, these beams extend to the driveway to provide a covered walkway between the buildings (photos 2, 3, and 11). The beams are supported by a single round log post on one side – the only log post found in the home's construction – and the garage structure on the other side. 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 9). Between the two covered walkways is an outdoor garden that is made private by a wood screening fence with a swinging door (photo 10).

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 coast tribal-inspired carvings, made by Johan Wenberg. He first sketched the motif on paper and then used a power router to create the bear and eagle imagery that is depicted in a pole form (photos 11 and 12). The round door handle lockset, reportedly purchased as is and not custom designed, also carries a similar artistic motif (photo 13). The entry is framed by broad, vertical-panel siding, which accentuates the entry and differs from the rest of the building. To the left of the entrance, on the north-facing exterior wall, is a dalle de verre window measuring approximately 26.5" x 13". Dalle de verre, a French phrase meaning "glass slab," refers to a glass art technique that uses pieces of thick-cut colored glass set in position with an epoxy cement (photo 11). According to Louise Luce, she purchased the dalle de verre made by renowned stained-glass artist Marianne Cassar at the Henry Art Gallery before their house was completed. Cassar "designed and produced large stained-glass windows for many years. Her work has been installed in several local churches, including the Central Baptist Church in Tacoma, the United Church of Christ in Normandy Park, and the Chapel of John Knox Presbyterian Church in Normandy Park."⁴

³ According to Louise Luce, the Wenbergs hired Abe Briarcliff (or Berarcliff), a coppersmith from Edgewick Road off I-90, to install the copper sheathing, line the fireplace with copper, and build the hood over the cooktop all at the same time.

⁴ "Cassar, Glass Designer, Dies," *Seattle Times*, Jul. 2, 1987, D9.

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The home's exterior cladding is a mix of horizontal cedar lap siding, plywood panels, vertical tongue-and-groove cedar slats, and native sandstone (photos 1 through 10). The horizontal clapboard siding is only found on the east and west facades below the window openings. 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 home's operable windows are set in metal frames, while fixed windows are set in wood frames. 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 span much of the east and west elevations (photos 5, 7, 9, and 10). Common living areas that are concentrated in the south half of the residence feature floor-to-ceiling windows with sliding doors (photos 17 and 18). The private living areas have half-wall windows with fixed and hopper units.

Interior

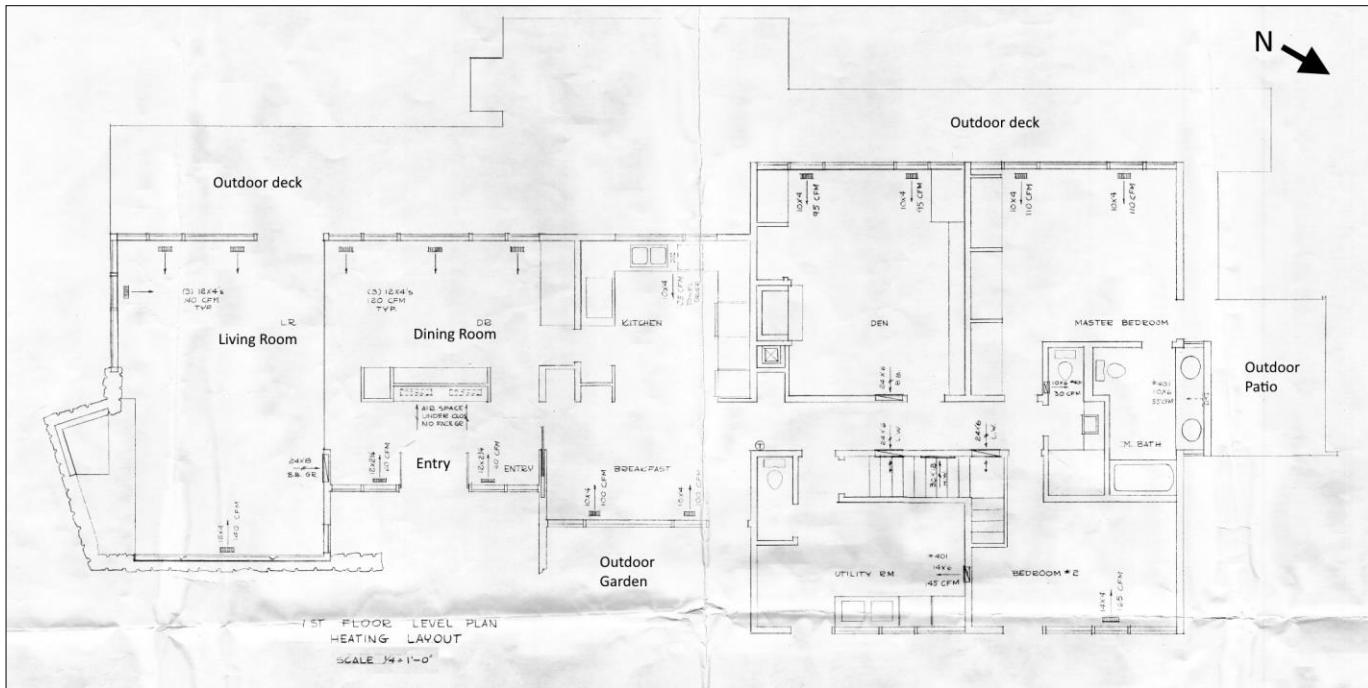
The house has 2130 sq. ft. of finished space and a basement with 1090 sq. ft. of unfinished area. The main level has 8' ceilings, except in the entryway and dining room where the ceiling is 12'. Common living areas occupy the south half of the residence where the spaces are generally open and free flowing. 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, straight-run staircase. The basement is used only for storage. The large, open, unfinished space occupies the north two-thirds of the house and has a concrete floor and walls, with wood cabinets, closets, and shelving lining the perimeter walls (photo 28). The south portion, below the dining room, entry, and living room, is a shallow crawl-space area with a concrete floor.

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

The interior is free flowing but has clearly defined spaces marked by changing floor and wall materials and patterns, differing ceiling heights and lighting, exposed glu-lam beams, 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 Traversing Window Coverings*, which are woven plastic accordion style screen curtains that hang vertically on a track (photos 17, 19, and 27).

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 14). 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 15 and 18). 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 southeast corner where there is a hearth, wood stove, and copper hood set within an angled wall faced in stone (photos 15 and 16). The hearth itself is a slab of smooth concrete raised slightly above the floor. The green copper hood features vertical raised seams and appears to float in the recessed corner of the angled stone wall. A recent analysis of the stone revealed its construction to be a mix of igneous, sedimentary, and

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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."⁵ The east wall of the living room is finished in wood panels and topped by a row of shallow clerestory windows (photos 15 and 16). 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 (photos 5 and 17). The 8' ceiling is painted plasterboard with two recessed lights and a hanging lamp located in the southwest corner of the living room. The hanging light is made of nylon and operates on a rheostat switch.⁶ Exposed glu-lam beams dominate the ceiling. The ironwood floor is woodblocks laid in a square checkerboard parquet pattern, which flows into the adjacent dining room (photos 17 and 18).

The dining room, although a relatively small space, has notable features and finishes (photo 18). 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.⁷ 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, 1" x 1" 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 18).

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 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 with integrated stainless-steel backspace and side drain surfaces located beneath the west-facing windows (photos 19 and 20). The kitchen is highly intact, featuring its original birch cabinets and hardware, countertops and backsplash with 6" x 6" ceramic tiles featuring a light green, textured, matte glaze finish, a 1960s-era Frigidaire countertop range, and a sleek, curved 1949 General Electric refrigerator. The workspace to the left of the refrigerator is designed for kneading dough and features a slightly lower countertop with a marble top (photo 20). 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 wood accordion folding doors and shelves for storage.

On the north wall of the breakfast nook begins the hallway to the private living spaces (photo 21). 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

⁵ Scott Burns, Email Communication with Sue Thomas, May 24, 2023.

⁶ 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.

⁷ According to Louise Wenberg Luce, the light fixture was designed by architect Milton D. Hunt, University of Washington, Master's Architecture, 1960, and installed at the time of the home's construction. Milton Douglas Hunt obituary, published online by Legacy Remembers, Oct. 16, 2013. Accessed Aug. 10, 2023.

<https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/penninsuladailynews/name/milton-hunt-obituary?id=23926327>

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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 resembles a traditional Swedish tile stove, called a kakelugn, that is not commonly found in the Pacific Northwest, but it does not have the same internal workings as a kakelugn.⁸ It features 6" x 6" cream-colored, textured tiles from Mexico and small 12" x 13" copper fireplace doors that were made in 1853 and come from Louise Luce's grandparents' home in Sweden (photo 22). The den's 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 (photos 23 and 24). 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 porcelain sink is set within the blue-tiled countertop and features an unusual placement of the two sink knobs, both to the right of the faucet. 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 casement windows on either side of the sinks (with Jaylis window screens) provide natural light (photo 27). 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 1" x 2" rectangular tiles in various shades of brown and tan (photo 27).

Across the hallway at the northeast corner of the house is the second bedroom (photo 25). Immediately outside the bedroom is a built-in wood wardrobe with doors and drawers (photo 26). The whimsical triangular doorknobs 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.

⁸ For more on kakelugns, see "Swedish Masonry Stoves KAKELUGNAR." *Swedish Press*, Mar 31, 1992. 22 and Petter Eklund, "Functional Fires," in *Ceramic Review*, no. 253 (January 2012): 58–63.

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GARAGE

The two-car garage measures approximately 22' by 25' and mimics the residence in appearance and materials (photos 1 through 3, 9, and 10). It has a concrete slab foundation, post-and-beam framing, narrow vertical cedar slat cladding, and a flat roof that rests on long rectangular glu-lam 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.

DRIVEWAY LANTERN

Siting at the southwest corner of the driveway, near the street, is a lantern marking the entrance to the home. Designed by architect Milton D. Hunt, the same designer as the dinning room light, the fixture is comprised of wood, glass, and steel. The fixture itself, rests on a concrete filled 18" steel tube cut approximately 2' above the ground level. Above is a wood frame holding layers of wooden platforms and shaft. Floating around the wooden shaft are four tiers of colored yellow glass laid horizontally. Light emits from notches in the base of the lanterns, upwards towards the glass panes.

STONE WALLS

Four stone walls of native rock help define various areas of the yard. Three are L'-shaped and one is in the form of an arch. The far eastern wall acts as a short 2' retaining wall which forms a flat area for the driveway and on-site parking. The wall at the southwest corner of the site, is also a low retaining wall creating a flat garden area. Centered on the west side of the lot is a low, above ground arched wall which defines an additional planting area. At the far northwest corner is another low L-shaped garden wall which defines an additional planting area.

CHANGE OVER TIME & INTEGRITY

Aside from the addition of two ancillary outbuildings behind the garage (non-contributing), 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

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construct the chimney and adjacent walls, as well as site retaining 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.

WENBERG HOUSE RESOURCE TABLE

Resource Name	Built Date	Rank
House	1963	Contributing
Garage	1963	Contributing
Driveway Lantern	1963	Contributing
Stone Walls (four)	c.1963	Contributing
Outbuilding/Shed 1	1984	Non-Contributing
Outbuilding/Shed 2	c. 2000	Non-Contributing

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1963

Significant Dates

1963

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Mithun, Omer (Architect)

Bruse, Gustav (Builder)

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance for the Wenberg House is 1963, the year the home was completed and placed into service.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

N/A

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Narrative Statement of Significance

(Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

INTRODUCTION

Johan and Louise Wenberg commissioned the design of the residence at 5360 232nd Avenue SE in 1961, which at the time, was on the outskirts of Issaquah in King County, Washington. Designed by Omer Mithun of the Bellevue-based Mithun & Associates Architects, the Modern Movement residence was built on land platted in 1958 as part of the new Overdale Park neighborhood. The planned residential subdivision of approximately 120 acres 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 Modern design are notable and reflect the work of Mithun and builder Gustav Bruse, as well as the contributions of the Wenbergs themselves.

The property is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C in the area of Architecture. The highly intact residence is an excellent example of Modern Movement architecture, blending tenets of the Miesian tradition with regional preferences for expressive wood post-and-beam framing and natural claddings. It exhibits several hallmarks of the Modern Movement, including its low, ground-hugging profile, deep eaves, and the use of outdoor spaces to extend interior rooms. Also notable is the home's ability to passively harness the sun and natural breezes to help regulate interior light and temperature, through its southwest orientation, wide overhanging eaves, and window placement, a reflection of the influence of Mithun, who later gained broad recognition as an environmental design expert.

The period of significance begins and ends in 1963, the year the home was completed and placed into service.

MID-CENTURY ISSAQAH⁹

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.¹⁰ Its main early-20th century industries included "farming, dairying, manufacturing of lumber and shingles, and fruit raising (and coal mining)."¹¹ 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.

⁹ A County-approved 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 additional contextual history of residential development and architecture in King County from 1946 to 1975. *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. Both documents are available at this weblink: <https://kingcounty.gov/en/dept/dnrp/buildings-property/historic-preservation-program/papers-and-research>

¹⁰ Sarah Sodt and Kate Krafft, Survey and Inventory of Historic Resources in City of Issaquah, WA. King County Historic Preservation Office. 2003, p. 4.

¹¹ "Issaquah," *The Coast* XVII, no. 6 (June 1909): 398.

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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.¹² 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 8).¹³ With annexations and growth, Issaquah's population reached 1,870 in 1960 and 4,313 in 1970.

PLAT & PROPERTY HISTORY



The Issaquah Press, Aug. 21, 1958, p. 3

Landowners A.J. and Julia Peters, Paul and Blanch Impey, and Alfred and Shirley Deranleau filed three plats creating the Overdale Park subdivision in 1957-58.¹⁴ 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 10).¹⁵ 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 8).

Overdale Park No. 3, where the Wenberg house is located, was the largest and easternmost of the three Overdale Park plats (figure 9). Attached to the plats were design covenants, which 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. Design covenants influenced the development of a neighborhood over time, often directing its physical appearance, protecting viewsheds, and maintaining an architectural standard of the homes. 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

¹² Sodt and Krafft, p. 5-6.

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

¹⁴ 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.

¹⁵ "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).

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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, initially made up of the owner-developers, reviewed matters covered by the covenant.¹⁶

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.”¹⁷ 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.¹⁸

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.¹⁹ Meanwhile, Johan and Louise Wenberg were finalizing their purchase of lot 134 in Overdale Park No. 3 from the Peters Agency.²⁰ (They subsequently purchased lots 131 and 130 in 1965.²¹) Johan was a medical doctor who graduated from the University of Washington School of Medicine’s first class in 1950, and Louise was a librarian and 1947 UW graduate. Johan worked as an internist in private practice for ten years in North Bend and then for Group Health in Seattle until he died in 1970. Louise, as a young woman, had lived in Chicago and recalled her personal interest in Bauhaus design and even met one of the movement’s leaders Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. She kept this interest, and years later, she and Johan selected this corner lot in Overdale Park for its design potential, as well as its excellent southwest exposure and view.

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.²² 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 25).²³

¹⁶ King County Recorder’s Office, Covenants for Overdale Park No. 2 and Overdale Park No. 3. Recording no. 9203030229.

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

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

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

²⁰ 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.

²¹ 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.

²² Wenberg House Expenses, 1959-1967, p. 1. Louise Bruse Wenberg Luce private collection.

²³ King County Engineer’s Office, Building permit for 5360 232nd Avenue NE, April 5, 1962.

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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."²⁴ He had assistance from Ivar Johnson and other craftsmen (figures 17 through 20). Stone masonry work was completed by O. Isaksen, T. O. Beckman, Loren Holmberg, and 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 from Tsubota Steel & Pipe; Daly's provided wood finishing products such as Benite stains; and Ernst Hardware supplied miscellaneous materials.

The Wenbergs themselves also contributed in tangible ways to the construction of the residence. Johan worked closely alongside Bruse during construction (figures 16, 17, and 21), as did Louise who recalled, "I dipped all the siding of the house, garage, and deck in a solvent one summer."²⁵ Notably, the cedar double doors at the primary entrance feature Northwest coast tribal-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 totaling 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.²⁶ 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."²⁷ 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.²⁸ Other plantings, particularly those noted on the site overview (figure 6) 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.²⁹

Although the expense list ends in early 1967 with the purchase of *Jaylis Traversing Window Coverings*, 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.

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

²⁵ Louise Bruse Wenberg Luce, Interview by Sue Thomas and Sarah Martin, Feb. 23, 2023.

²⁶ 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.

²⁷ Louise Bruse Wenberg Luce, Interview by Sue Thomas and Sarah Martin, Feb. 23, 2023.

²⁸ Wenberg House Expenses, 1959-1967, p. 5-7. Louise Bruse Wenberg Luce private collection.

²⁹ Louise Bruse Wenberg Luce, Interview by Sue Thomas and Sarah Martin, Feb. 23, 2023.

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ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE
Modern Movement Architecture



Wenbergs, Dr. Johan and Louise, House, 1963. Note the neighboring house at 5344 232nd Avenue SE is also nearly complete.

The Modern Movement in American architecture encompasses a period from about 1930 to 1975 and includes a range of architectural styles and forms, including International, Miesian, Wrightian, Minimal Traditional, Contemporary, Ranch, Split-Level, and others. The movement was a reaction to Eclecticism and a rejection of historical styles and forms, instead favoring simplicity, functionality, flexibility in plan, regularity and structural order, and avoidance of applied ornamentation.³⁰

Following World War II, suburban projects dominated the work of Seattle-area architects and builders. Minimal Traditional and Ranch 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,

³⁰ Virginia Savage McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2017), 548-549.

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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 lake 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 passive solar 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 style and Ranch house form. Some, like Omer Mithun, adapted the Miesian box to incorporate the use of post-and-beam structures and natural claddings that eventually resulted in a Northwest regional brand of Modernism that was popular through the 1970s.³¹ Mithun, in particular, designed residences with a site's attributes in mind, including its slope and orientation toward the sun, and became a leader in energy conservation in architectural design.

The Wenberg house design embodies that search for a regional style and reflects a transition that blends Miesian tradition with regional Modernist tenets influenced by Scandinavian and Japanese architecture. The home's Miesian influences can be seen in its horizontal, boxy form; the rigid exposed structural system; the floor-to-ceiling windows; the flat roofs; and the free-flowing interior spaces. Its Northwest regionalism is characterized by its integration with and use of the surrounding landscape; its expressive wood post-and-beam framing; its natural claddings, including the thoughtful use of native stone; its double-door entrance featuring a Northwest coast tribal-inspired carving; its interior spaces that have direct access to either outdoor decks or gardens; and a garage that is detached but integrated into the design of the house via covered walkways.

With the design's emphasis on site orientation and local, natural materials, the Wenberg house was well-suited for sustainable design applications, although mainstream environmental awareness was still a few years in the future. The Wenbergs had actively sought a location suitable for environmental design and an architect sensitive to their wishes. 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.³² In addition, the thoughtful placement of operable windows, including some lower-placed windows on the west side of the house and some clerestory windows, enhanced air circulation through the relatively open interior spaces. As discussed in more detail below, Mithun had long touted environmental design applications, and the Wenberg house exhibits some of those applications that Mithun would later promote as passive solar design.

³¹ 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.

³² Louise Bruse Wenberg Luce, Interview by Sue Thomas and Sarah Martin, Feb. 23, 2023.

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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 partnerships with Ronald Wilson (1949-1952), Harold Nesland (1952-55), and William Ridenour and Donald Cochran (1956-1960), he continued as Mithun & Associates Architects for much of the rest of his career.³³

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 across Washington, usually opining about trends in modern homebuilding and architecture.³⁴ 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*. Another notable residential design that resulted from his brief partnership with Ridenour and Cochran was the 1960 Chandler residence overlooking Lake Sammamish that was featured on the cover of *Better Homes and Gardens* in May 1960, discussed in more detail below. His firm's other projects during the late 1950s and 1960s included 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).³⁵

Mithun was "a leader in energy conservation," and had been promoting tenets of environmental design in his public lectures for at least a decade prior to his work with the Wenbergs.³⁶ For example, at a community discussion in Longview in 1953, he emphasized the importance of the site in planning the design of a new house, including such factors as the slope, existing trees, direction of the sun, and prevailing breezes. He promoted the use of natural materials not only in the exterior claddings but also in the structure itself.³⁷ He made similar arguments about the importance of thoughtful window design and placement at a talk in Bellingham in 1952.³⁸ By the early 1970s, Mithun was a champion of what was then called passive solar energy design in architecture, promoting many of the same environmental design elements that are found in

³³ "Omer L. Mithun," Docomomo US/WEWA website, accessed Aug. 17, 2023. <https://www.docomomo-wewa.org/architect/mithun-omer-l/>

³⁴ "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.

³⁵ 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>

³⁶ Quote is from Ochsner, *Shaping Seattle Architecture*, 462.

³⁷ "Architect Says Builders Of Homes Have 'Missed The Boat,'" *Longview Daily News*, Apr. 6, 1953, p. 9.

³⁸ "Functional Use of Architecture Urged in Home Building," *Bellingham Herald*, Dec. 15, 1952, p. 10.

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the Wenberg house.³⁹ While Mithun had 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 in the Meadows neighborhood.⁴⁰ It was featured in *Family Circle*, a popular national publication, which led to his appearance in newspapers and at conferences across the country in 1978-1980.⁴¹

Under Mithun's leadership, the firm won numerous 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 today as Mithun, is a leading West Coast firm with 180 team members in Seattle, San Francisco, and Los Angeles.⁴²

Comparative Analysis

Comparative analysis of a few of Mithun's residential projects in the Seattle area 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 and partner Harold Nesland produced several stock plans, using a variety of house forms that mostly reflected the popular 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.⁴³ In contrast, working with individual clients on custom residences afforded Mithun and his firm the opportunity to explore the breadth of Modern Movement design. During his brief partnership with William Ridenour and Donald Cochran (1956-1960), Mithun's firm designed an exceptional Miesian-influenced home overlooking Lake Sammamish that garnered national attention.⁴⁴ Built on raised concrete piers to avoid the potential for high-water levels, the boxy residence with glass walls appeared to float on the landscape. With this design, "a problem location was turned into an asset."⁴⁵

In the Wenberg house, one of Mithun's first residential commissions following his partnership with Ridenour and Cochran, he used many of these same Miesian references while incorporating a decidedly regional

³⁹ Ochsner, *Shaping Seattle Architecture*, 462. "Solar Contest Encourages New Methods," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, Dec. 14, 1980, p. 51.

⁴⁰ "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.

⁴¹ 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.

⁴² "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/>

⁴³ Northwest Vernacular and SJM Cultural Resource Services, *Surrey Downs, Bellevue, Washington: Reconnaissance Level Survey* (Aug. 2021), 13-15.

⁴⁴ It was one of 20 houses selected by the editorial board of *Architectural Record* for the 1960 edition of Record Houses. It was also featured on the cover of the May 1960 edition of *Better Homes and Gardens*. "Lake Sammamish Home Accorded National Honor," *Seattle Times*, Jun. 19, 1960, p. 27.

⁴⁵ Ibid. "Disciplined insert in the landscape," *Pacific Architect & Builder*, Jan. 1960, p. 17.

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aesthetic. In this custom design, he consulted closely with the Wenbergs to incorporate their individual wishes on everything from design aesthetics to construction materials. In particular, Mithun gave considerable individual attention to the design, remaining on-site checking measurements and consulting with the Wenbergs sometimes well into the night. Mithun's interest in environmental design coincided with the Wenbergs' desire for a residence that took advantage of the site, incorporating the southwest viewshed and sloping landscape while using natural materials. Although the Wenberg house is not well known, it is an outstanding example of Mithun's expertise in regional Modernism and an early example of his use of environmental design tenets for which he later gained broad recognition.

Builder: Gustav Bruse (1891-1971)

To build the house, the Wenbergs hired builder Gustav Bruse, Louise's father. He and Johan would build the house together. 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. 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.

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Spokane (WA) Chronicle

"Architect Opposes Copying Out of Past." Dec. 15, 1949, p. 109.

"Swedish Masonry Stoves KAKELUGNAR." *Swedish Press*, Mar 31, 1992. 22.

Wenberg Luce, Lousie Bruse. In-person interview by Sue Thomas and Sarah Martin. Feb. 23, 2023.

_____ . Personal collections.

Architectural drawings, draft copies, undated.

List of house construction expenses, 1959-1967.

Photographs, 1960s.

Property development and construction expenses report, 1959-1967.

Property deeds.

Wright, David. *Natural Solar Architecture: A Passive Primer*. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Co., 1978.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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 Record # _____
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government: King County Historic Preservation Program
 University
 Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 2.12 acres

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1 47.553068 -122.030131
Latitude Longitude

3
Latitude Longitude

2
Latitude Longitude

4
Latitude Longitude

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The nominated property includes one parcel encompassing Lot 134, 130 and 131 of Overdale Park #3 Addition in Issaquah, WA. It is otherwise known as Parcel No. 644620-0335.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nominated property encompasses all the property that is currently associated with the Wenberg residence. It is approximately 2.12 acres.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Sarah J. Martin (Edited by DAHP)

organization SJM Cultural Resource Services, LLC date February 2024

street & number 3901 2nd Ave NE #202 telephone 785-342-1665

city or town Seattle state WA zip code 98105

e-mail sarahmartincrs@gmail.com

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Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)



Figure 1. Google Earth Map. North is at the top.

Wenbergs' House
Issaquah, WA

Latitude: 47.553068 Longitude: -122.030131

Wenberg, Dr. Johan and Louise, House

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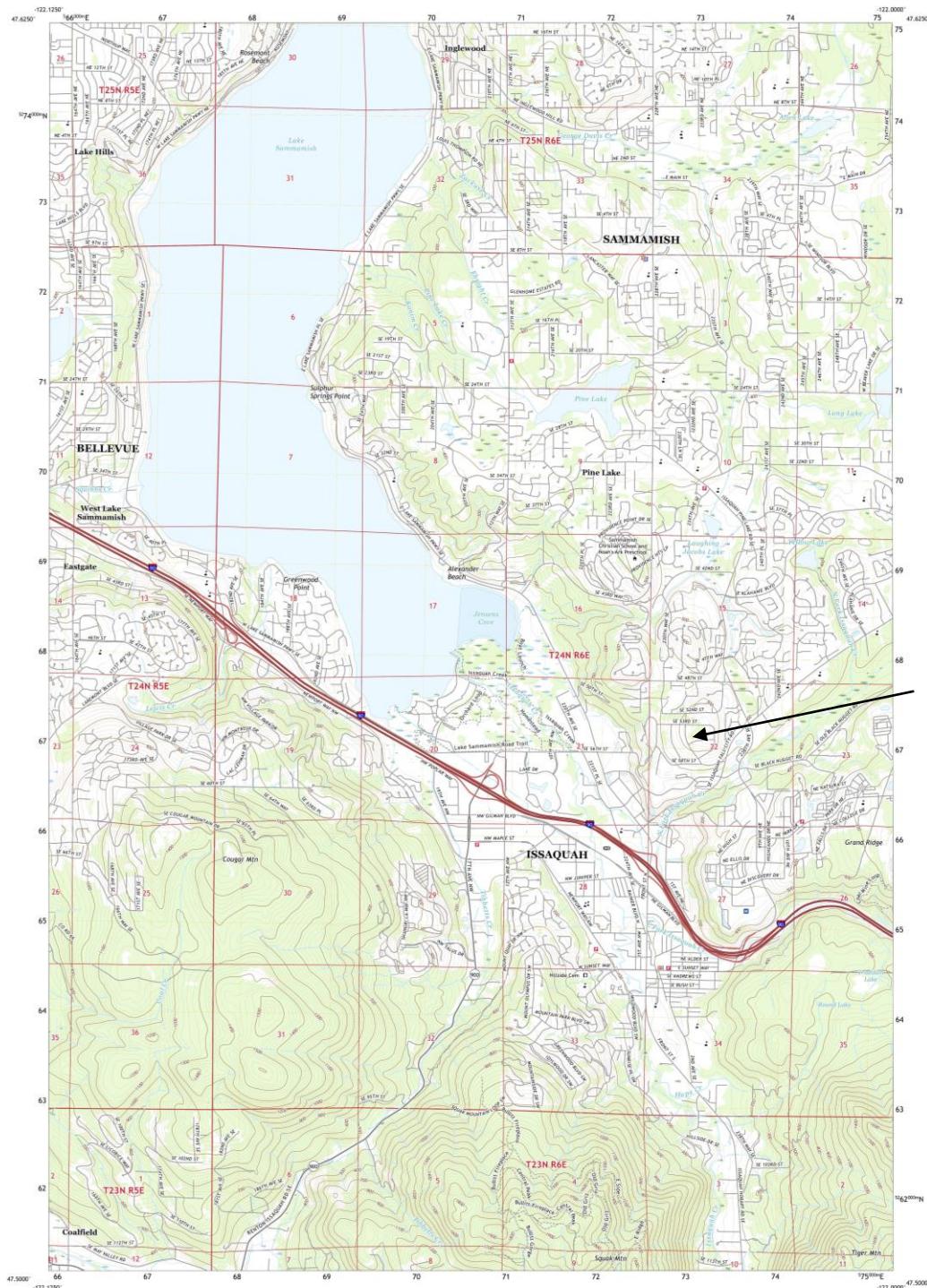


Figure 2. USGS Topographic Map, Issaquah Quadrangle, 2020.
Wenberg House, Lat: 47.553068 / Long: -122.030131

Wenberg, Dr. Johan and Louise, House
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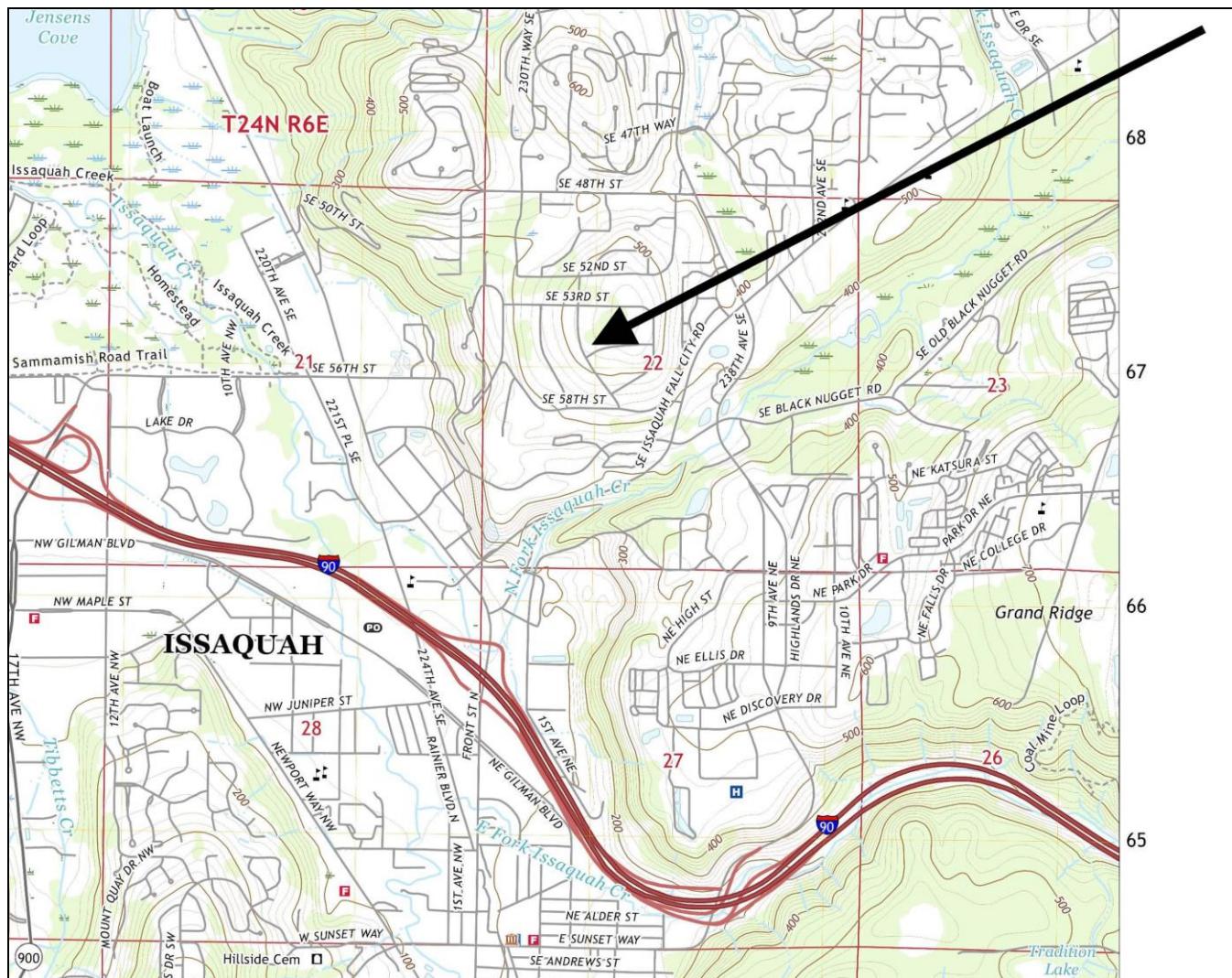


Figure 3. USGS Topographic Map, Issaquah Quadrangle (partial), 2020.

Wenberg House, Lat: 47.553068 / Long: -122.030131

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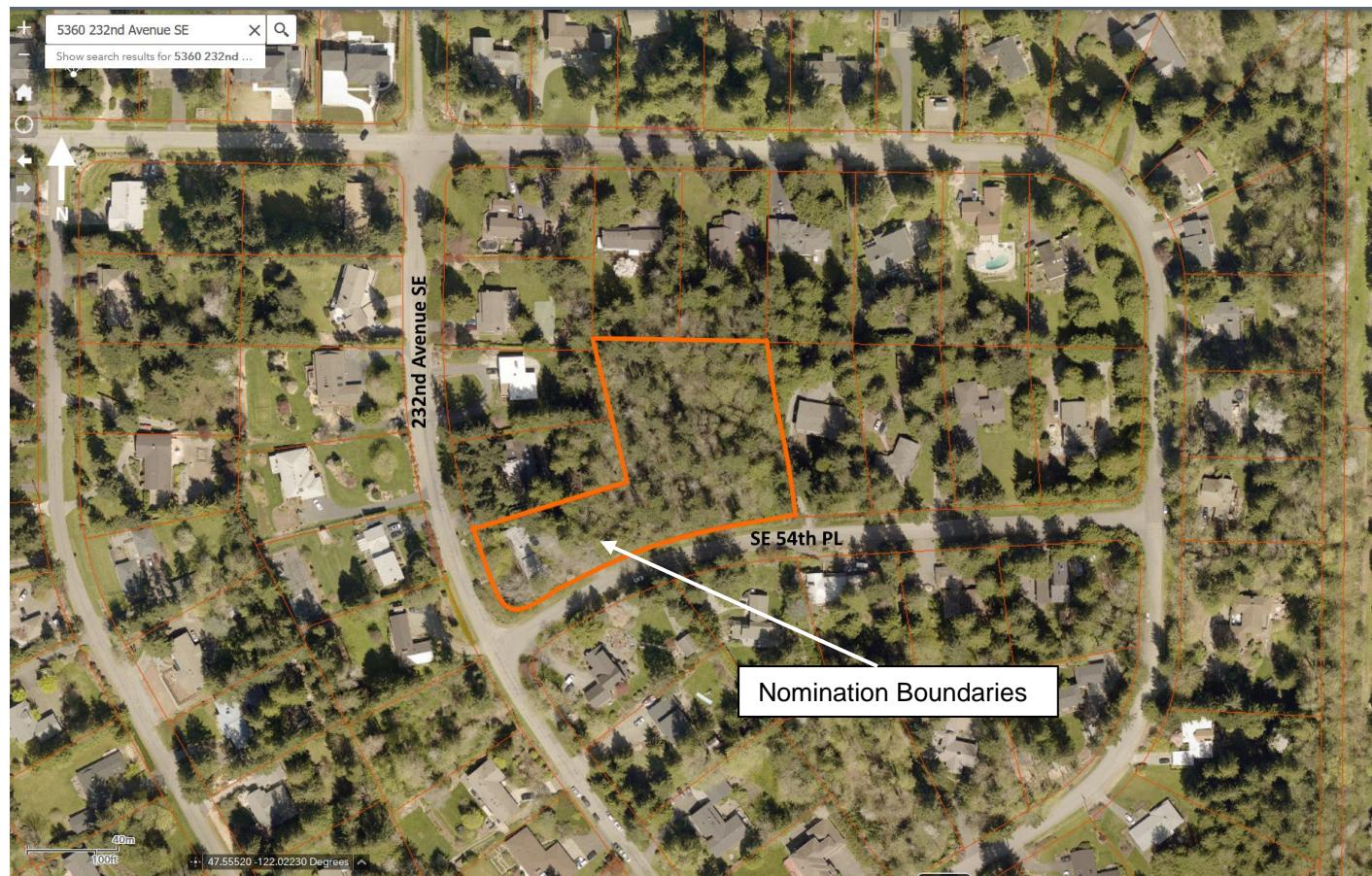


Figure 4. Parcel Map. King County IMap. Parcel No. 644620-0335

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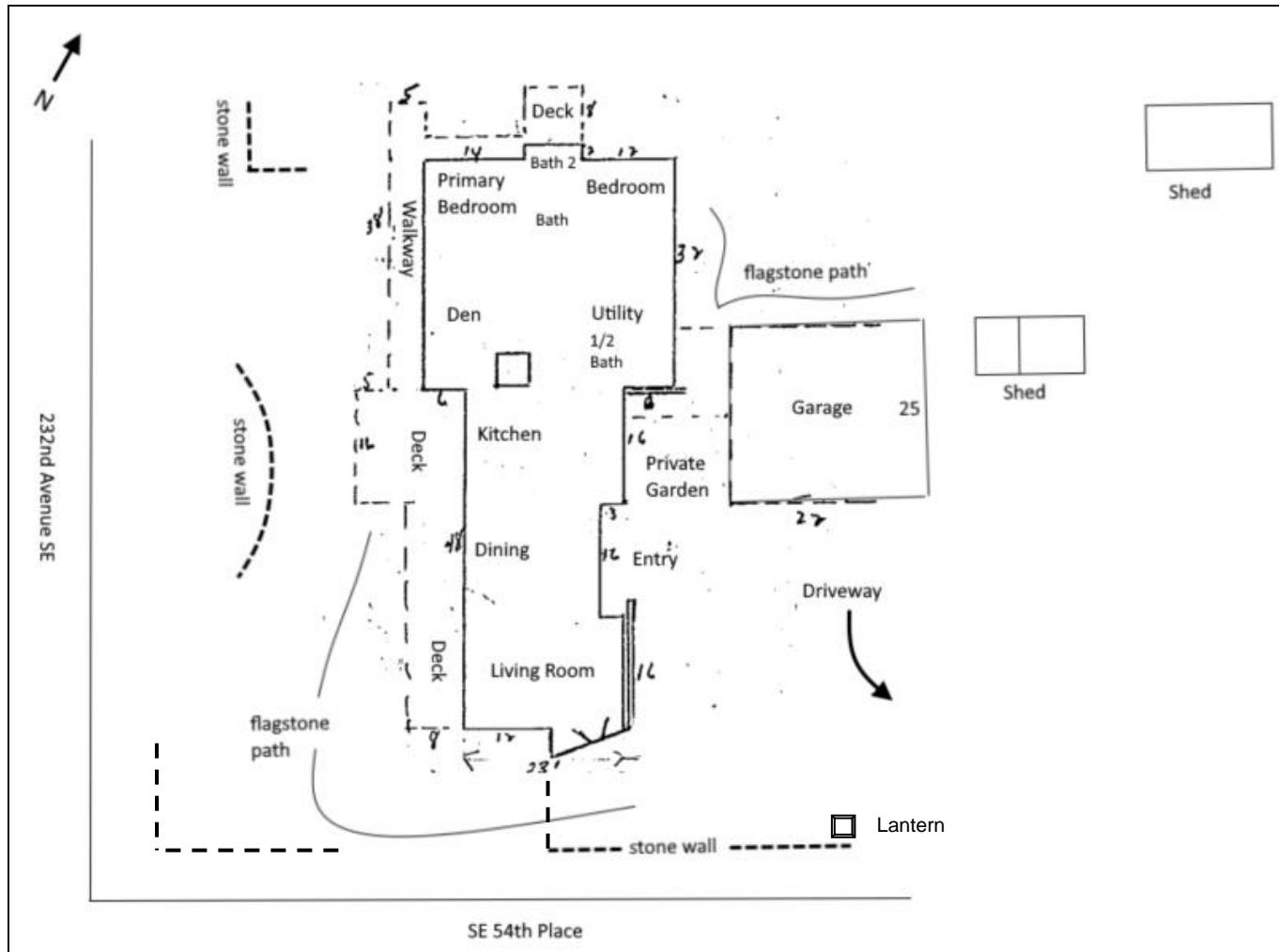


Figure 5. Current Site Sketch Map. Not to scale.
Showing parcel features and building footprints and features

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- a. Witch hazel
- b. Kiwi vine
- c. Sweet gum
- d. Sweet gum
- e. Ponderosa pine
- f. Apple trees
- g. Acer palmatum
(Japanese maple)
- h. Hinoki cypress
- i. Sciadopitys (Japanese umbrella tree)
- j. Pin oak
- k. Sequoiadendron (giant sequoia)
- l. Pin oak

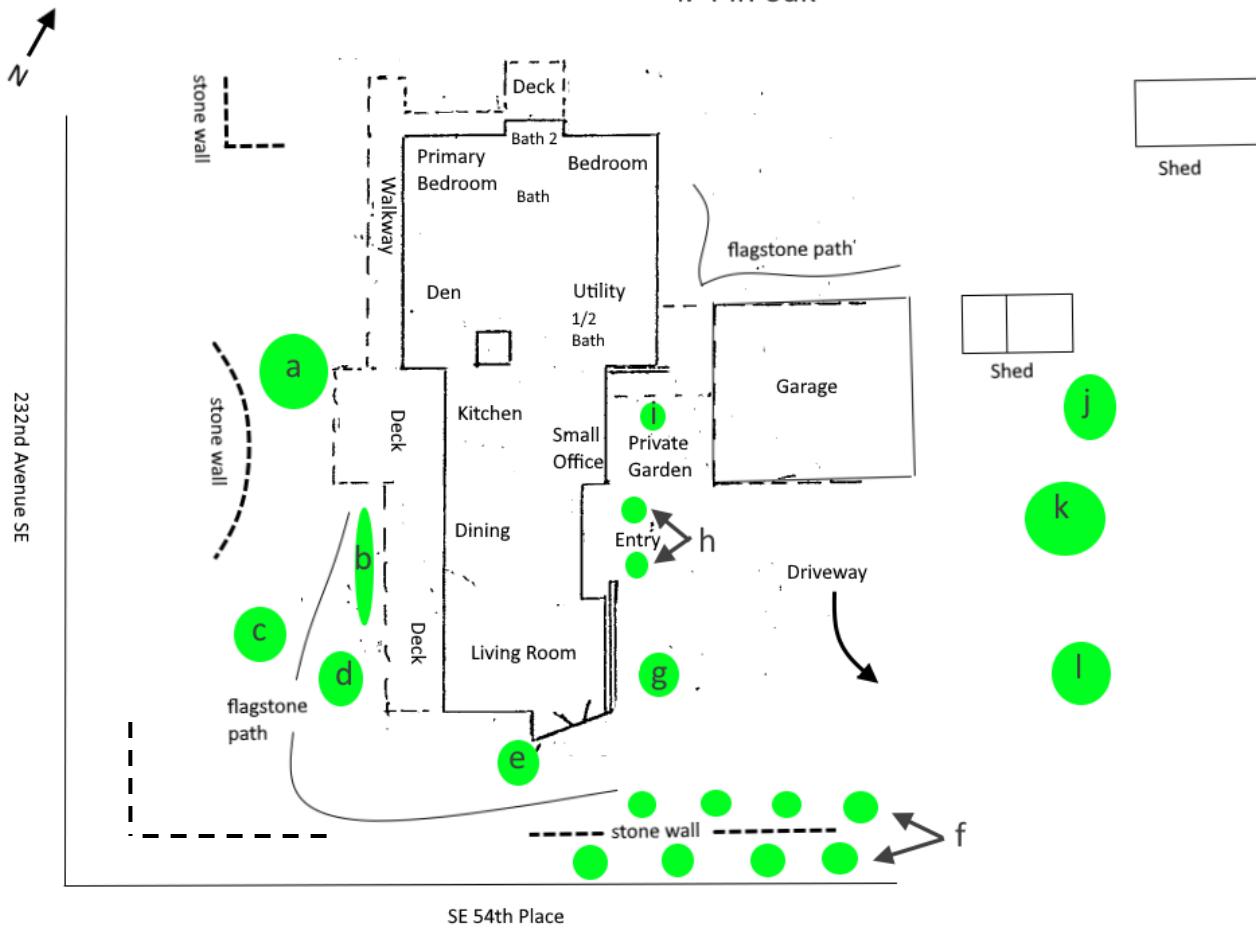


Figure 6. Current Site Map, highlighting landscape features.

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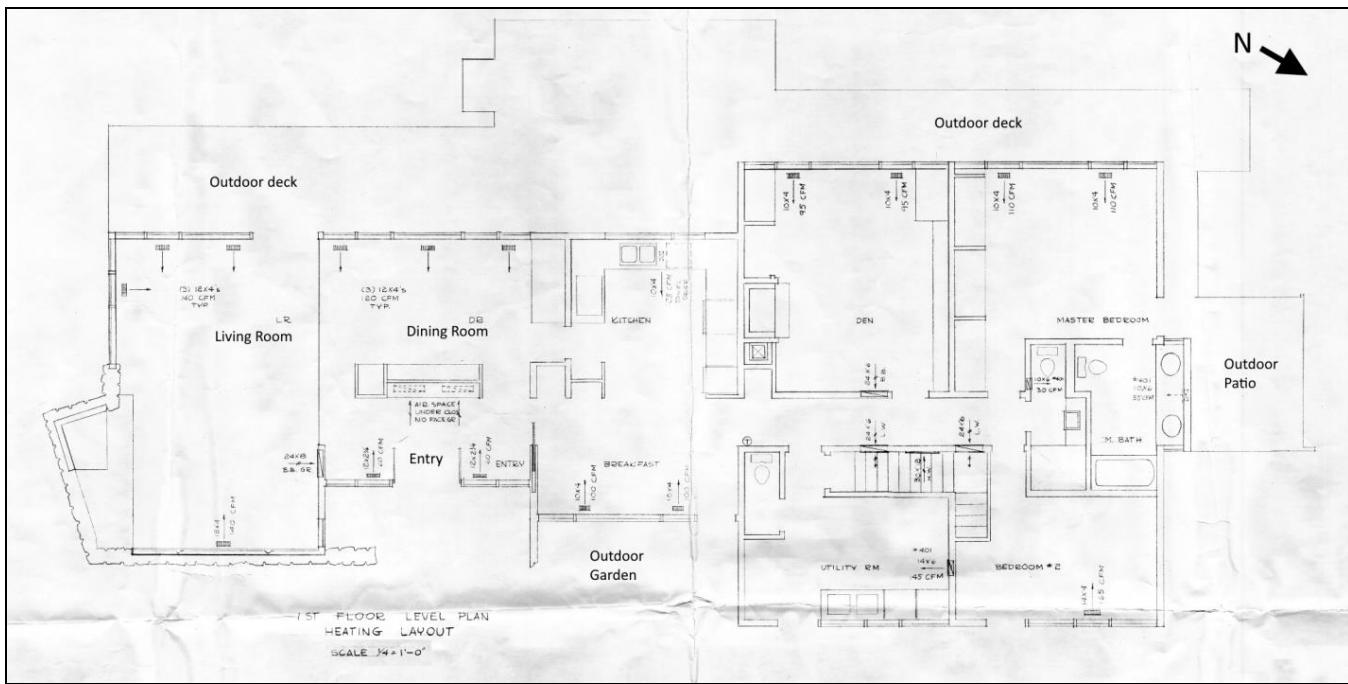


Figure 7. Sketch floor plan of Wenberg House.

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.

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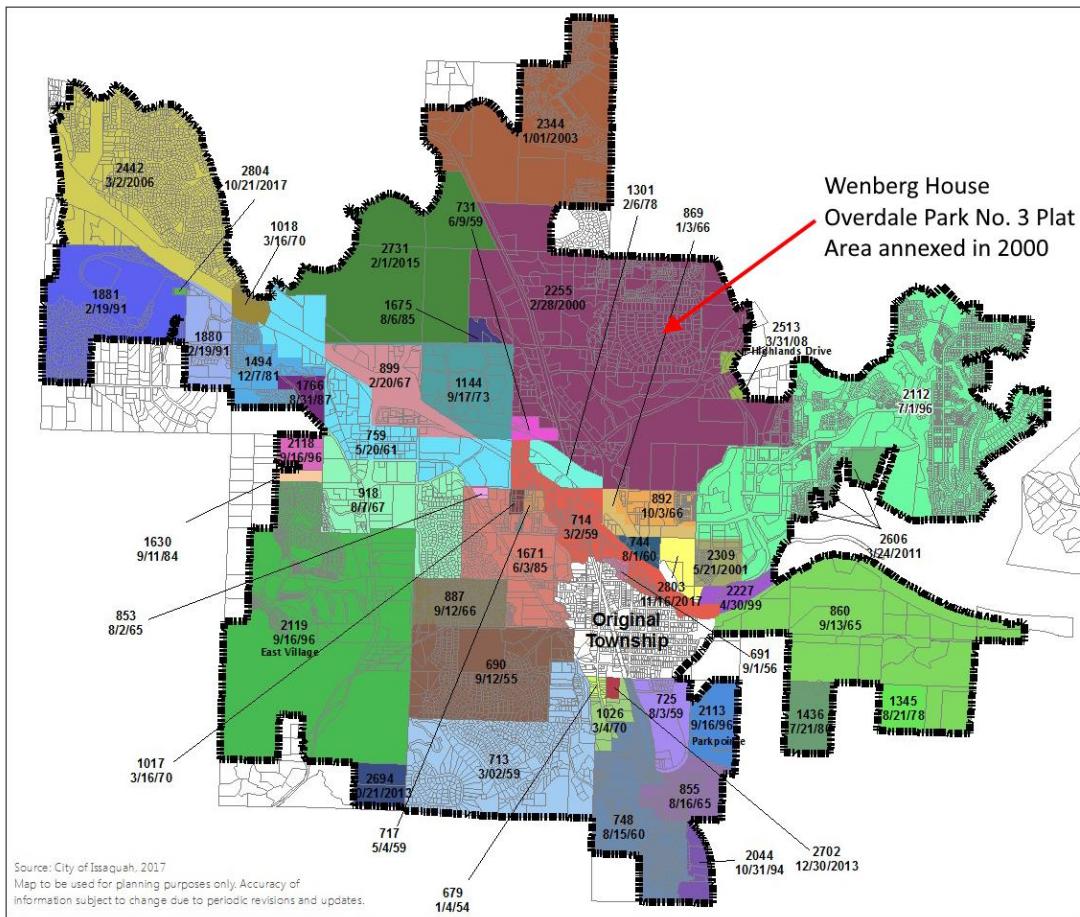


Figure 8. City of Issaquah Annexation History Map. 2017.

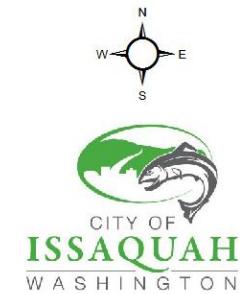


Figure L-4
 Annexation History

Ordinance #2810
 Effective Date 10/25/2017

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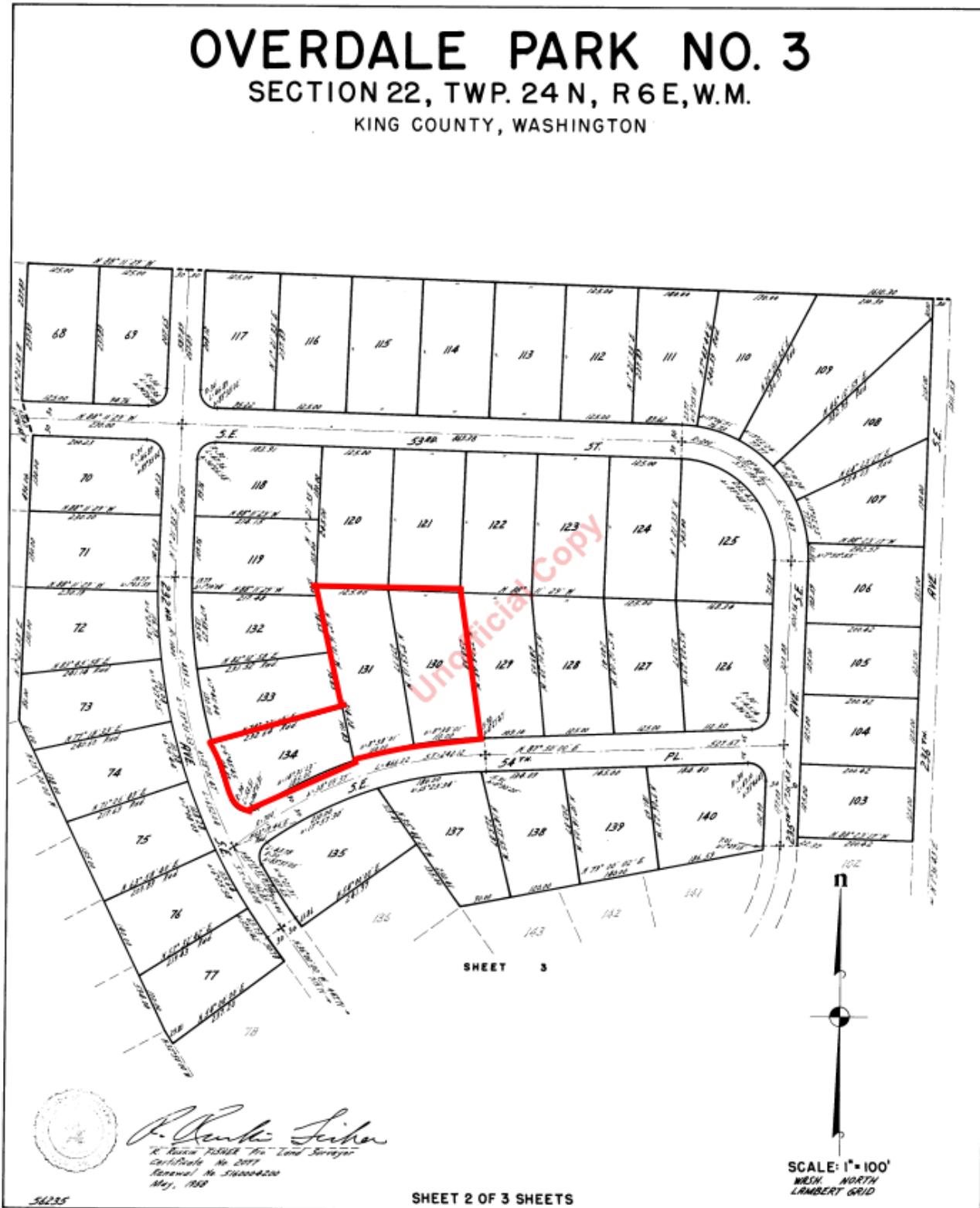


Figure 9. Overdale Park No. 3 Plat Map (partial), 1958.
Wenberg property highlighted

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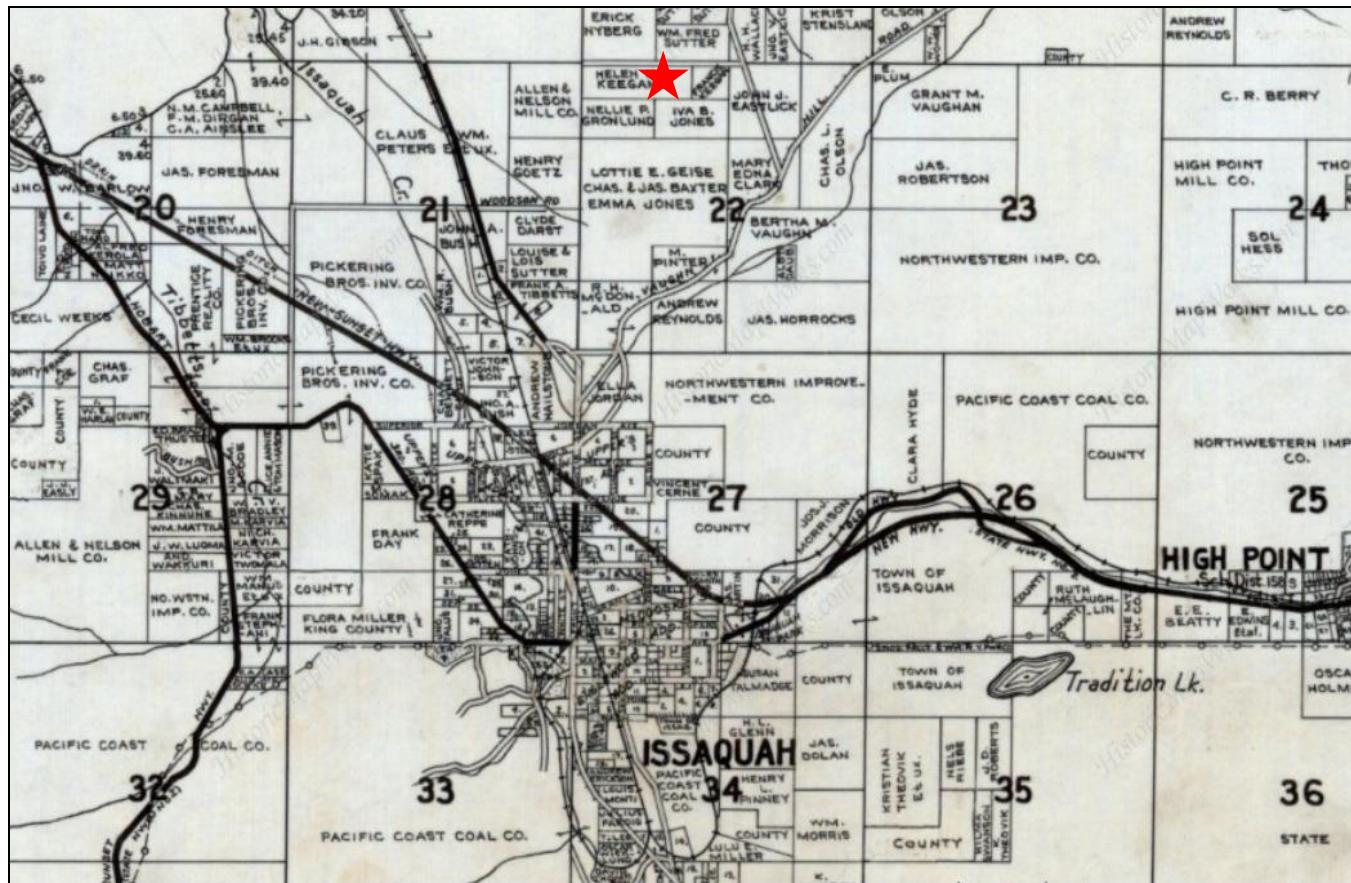
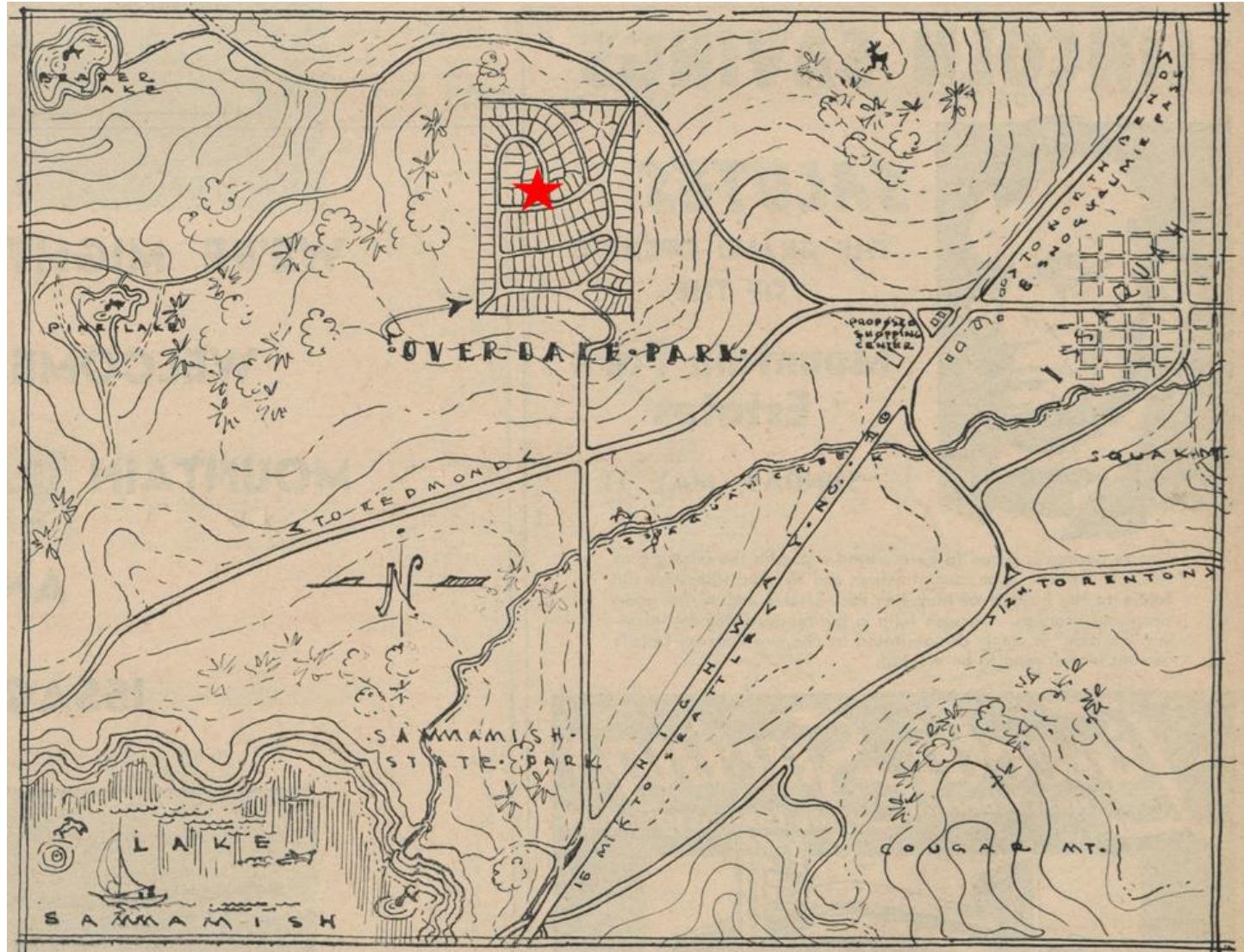


Figure 10. Partial map of Township 24N, Range 6E. *Metsker's Atlas of King County, Washington*. Seattle, WA: Charles Metsker, 1936.

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Historic Photographs & Clippings



A detailed map of the Overdale Park area. The map shows contour lines, roads, and various landmarks. A red star marks a specific location within Overdale Park. Key features labeled on the map include: OVERDALE PARK, PINE LAKE, REDMOND LAKE, SAMMAMISH LAKE, SAMMAMISH STATE PARK, COUGAR MT., SQUAWK MT., and a PROPOSED SHOPPING CENTER. Arrows indicate routes to REDMOND, TACOMA, and RENTON. The map is framed by a decorative border.

**YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO VISIT
OVERDALE PARK
DURING ISSAQAH OPEN HOUSE DAY
PETERS AGENCY**

INSURANCE AND REAL ESTATE
ISSAQAH PHONE EX. 2-3141

Figure 11. Advertisement for Overdale Park, *The Issaquah Press*, May 8, 1958, p. 5.

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Figure 12. Left. Advertisement for Overdale Park, *The Issaquah Press*, Aug. 21, 1958, p. 3.

Figure 13. Right. Advertisement for Overdale Park, *The Issaquah Press*, Oct. 2, 1958, p. 6.

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Figure 14. Wenberg House under construction, 1962. Source: Louise Bruse Wenberg Luce private collection.



Figure 15. 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.



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Figure 16. 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 17. 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.



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Figure 18. Unidentified men at the Wenberg House construction site, 1962 or 1963. Source: Louise Bruse Wenberg Luce private collection.



Figure 19. Unidentified man at the Wenberg House construction site, 1962 or 1963. Source: Louise Bruse Wenberg Luce private collection.



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Figure 20. Johan Wenberg, Gustav Bruse, and an unidentified man at the Wenberg House construction site, 1962.
Source: Louise Bruse Wenberg Luce private collection.



Figure 21. Johan Wenberg standing on the front deck of the nearly finished residence, 1963. The tent suggests that Johan may have camped on site during at least some of the construction.
Source: Louise Bruse Wenberg Luce private collection.



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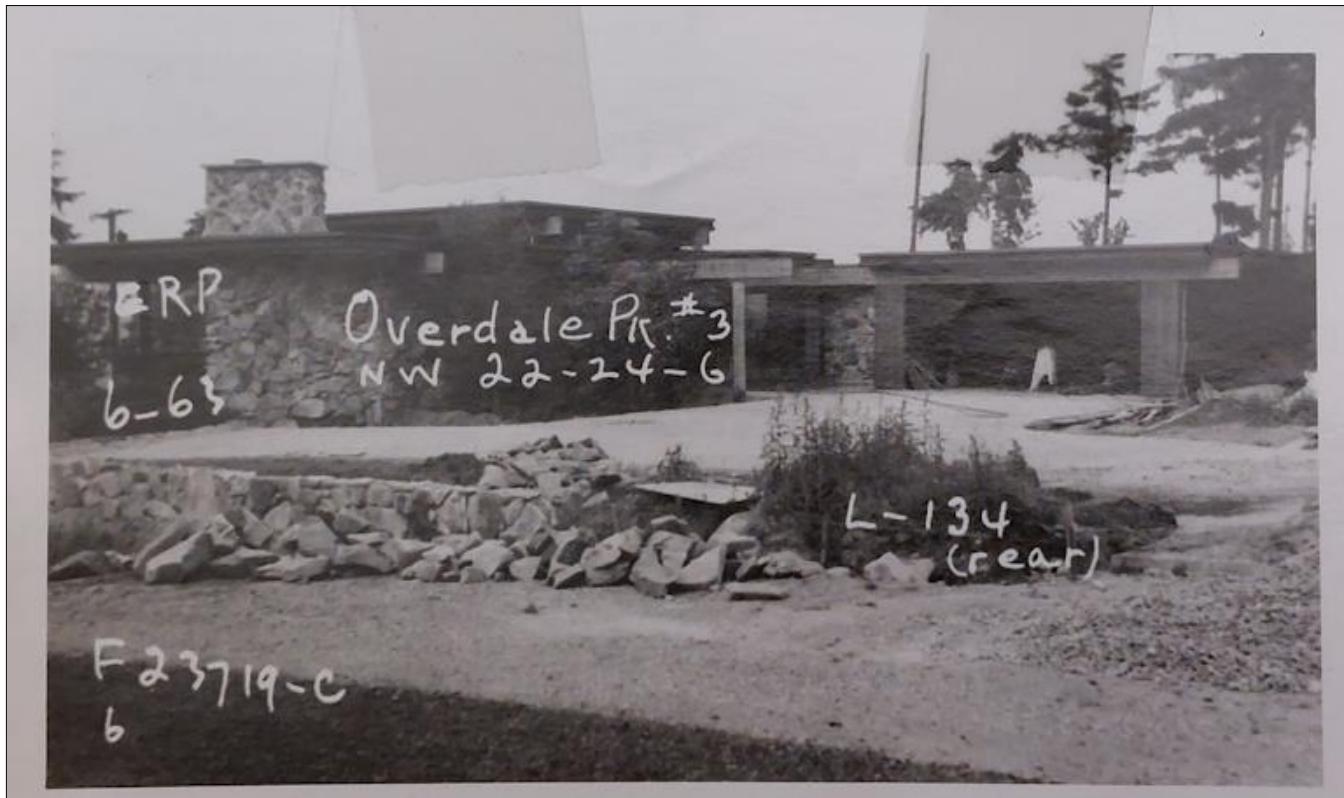
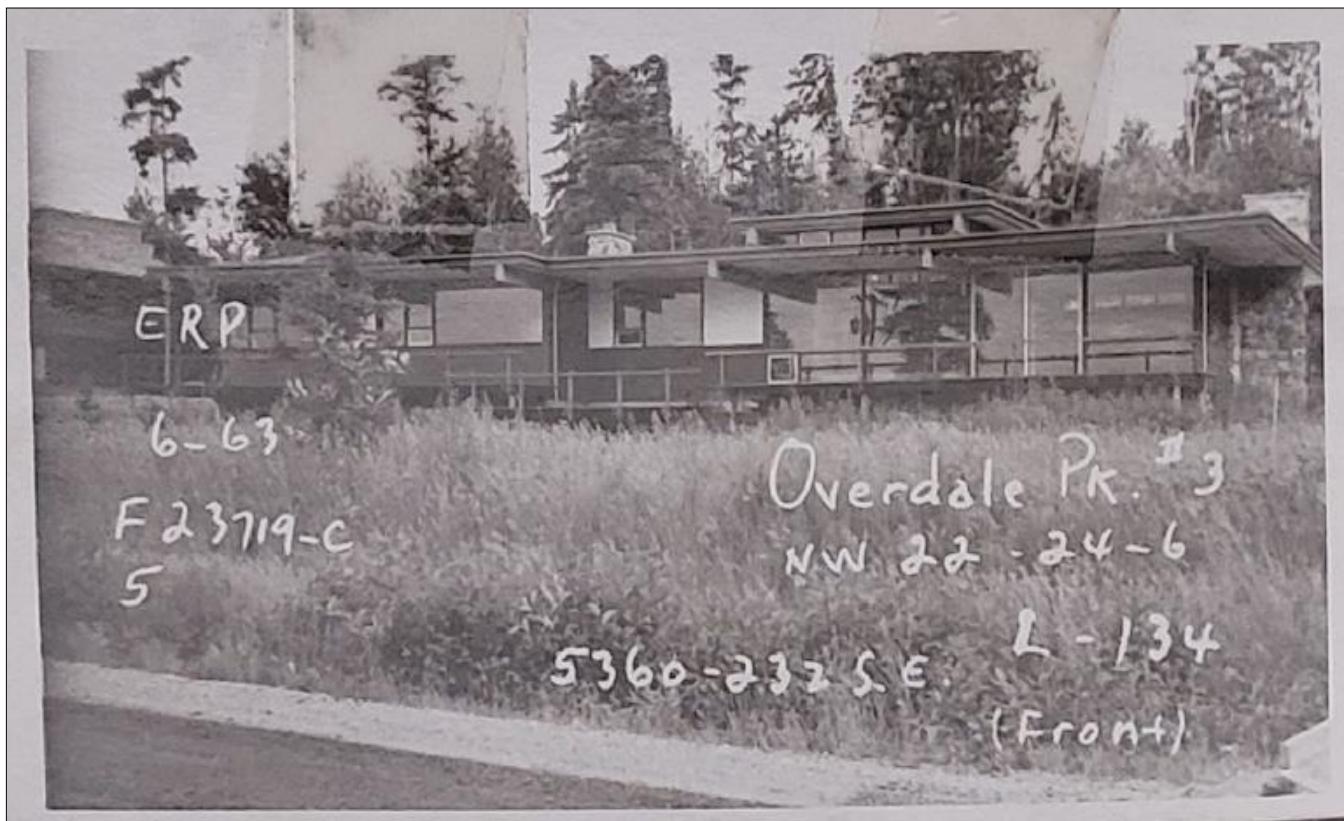
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Figure 22. Wenberg House nearing completion, 1963. Note the neighboring house at 5344 232nd Avenue SE is also nearly complete.

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Figures 23 and 24. King County Assessor photos of the Wenberg House, near completion, 1963.

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Building Permit & Architectural Drawings

Figure 25. King County Building Permit, approved April 5, 1962.

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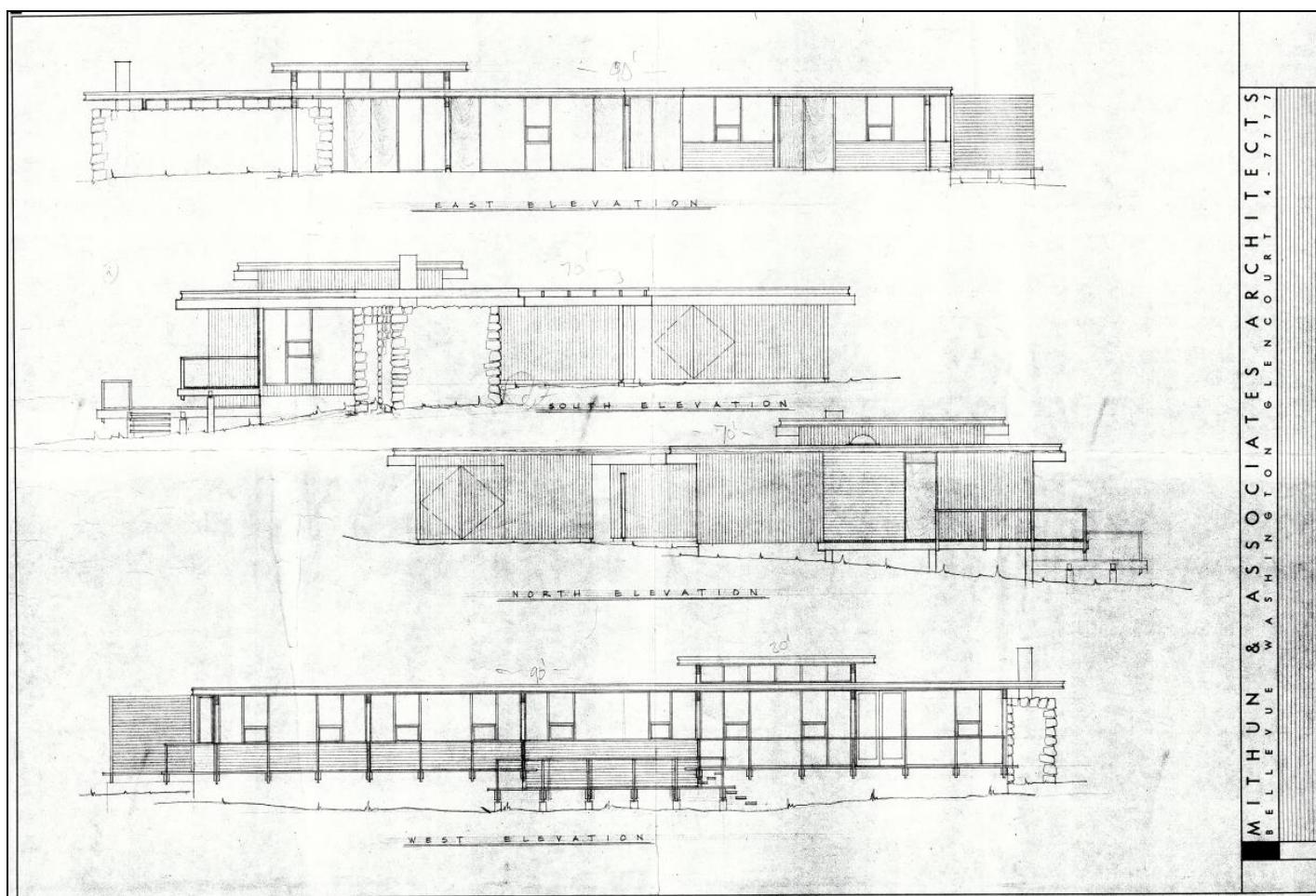


Figure 26. Elevation drawings, Mithun & Associates Architects, undated draft. Source: Louise Bruse Wenberg Luce private collection.

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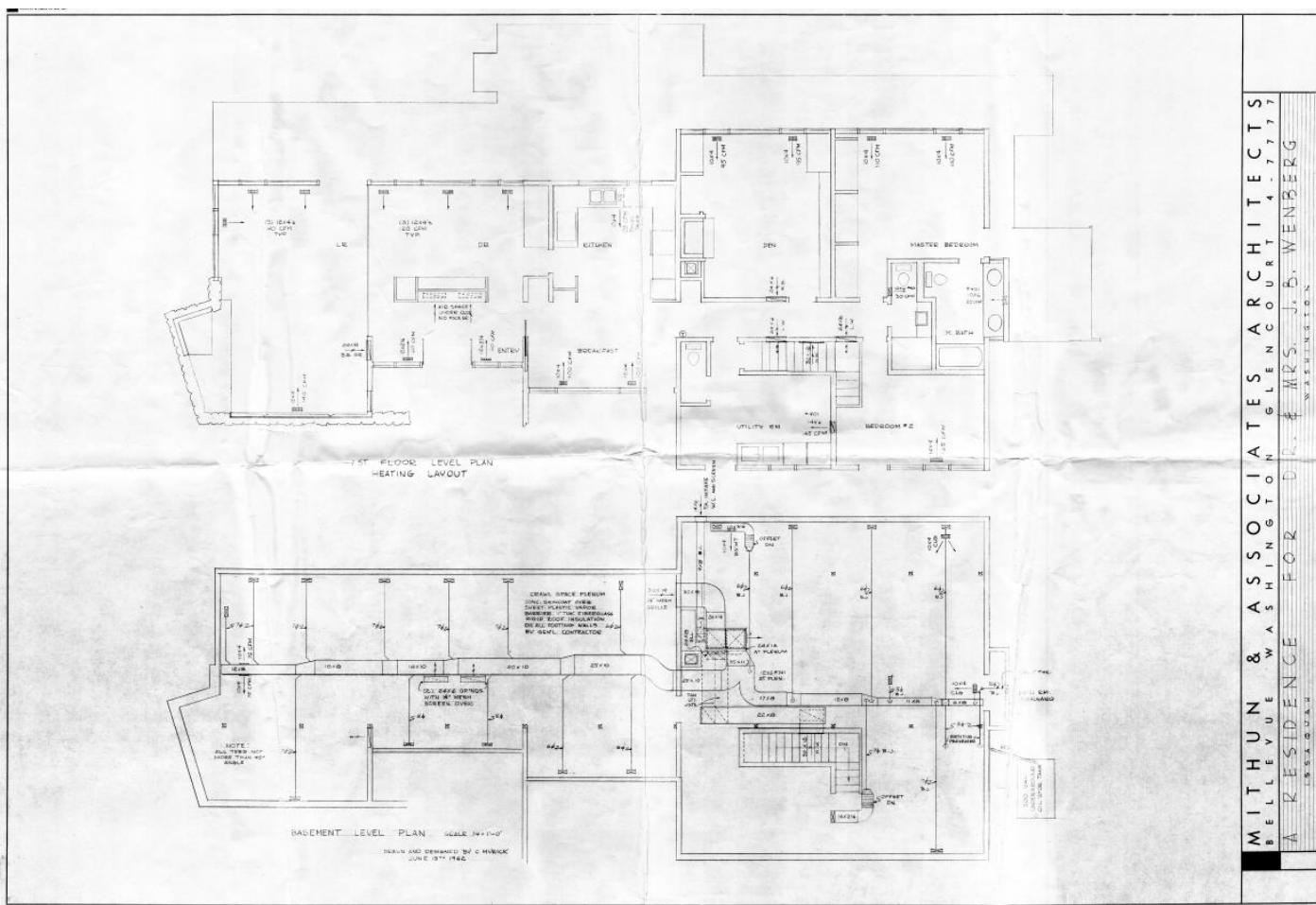
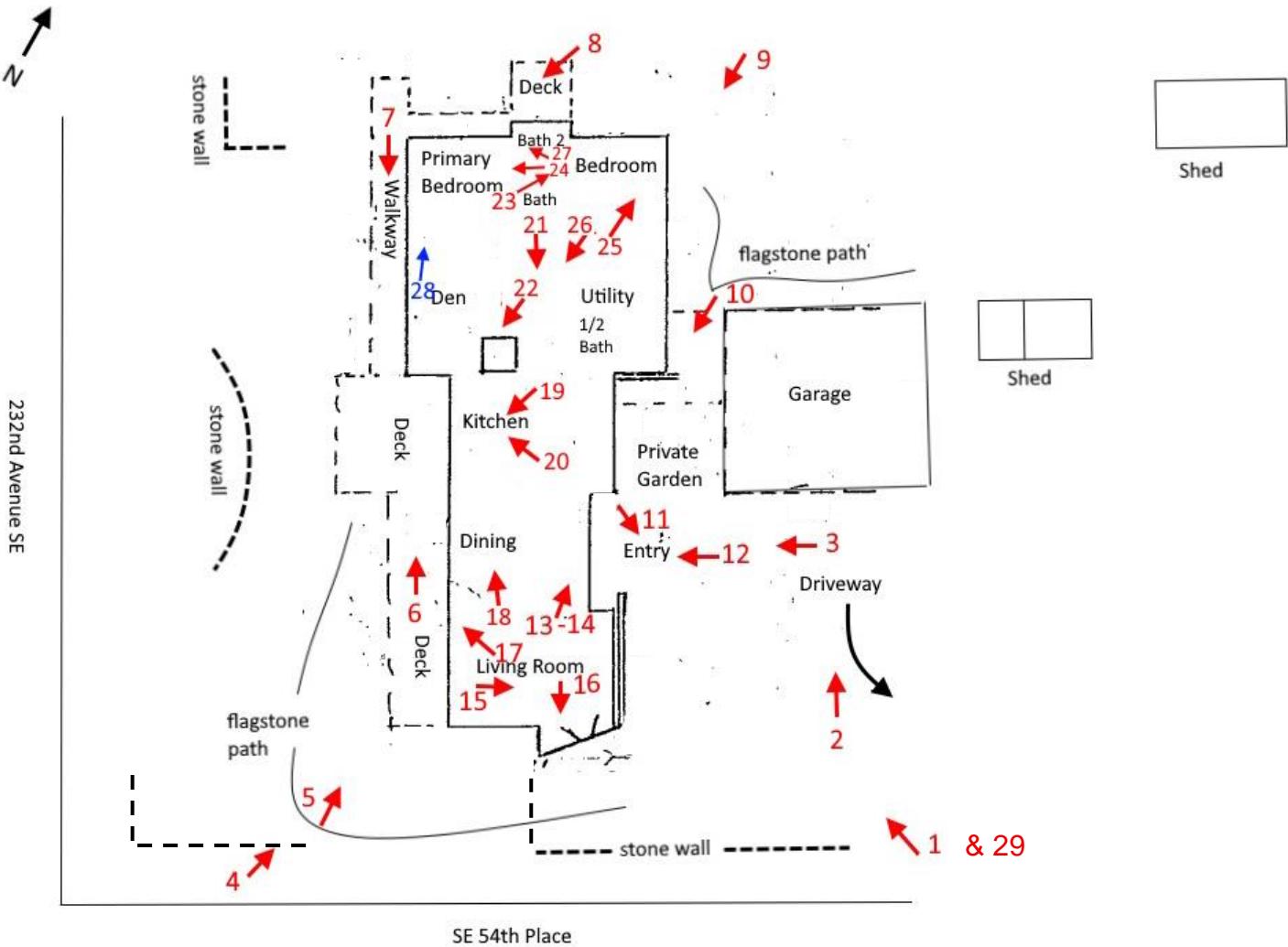


Figure 27. Mithun & Associates Architects, basement and first floor heating plans, drafted by Claude Myrick, June 15, 1962. Myrick worked for Mithun as a mechanical engineer. Source: Louise Bruse Wenberg Luce private collection.

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Photograph Key. All photos are taken on the main level except 28 (shown in blue), which is taken in the basement.

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Wenberg, Dr. Johan and Louise, House
City or Vicinity: Issaquah
County: King **State:** WA
Photographer: Sarah J. Martin (unless otherwise noted)
Date Photographed: Photos 1-16, 18, 21-23, 25-26 taken Feb. 23, 2023
 Photos 17, 19, 20, 24, 27, 28 taken Jan. 4, 2024, 29 taken Apr. 11, 2024

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1 of 29. WA_KingCo_WenbergsDrJohanandLouiseHouse_0001. House and garage from base of driveway.



2 of 29. WA_KingCo_WenbergsDrJohanandLouiseHouse_0002. Driveway and garage.

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3 of 29. WA_KingCo_WenbergsDrJohanandLouiseHouse_0003. Primary entrance, garage, driveway.



4 of 29. WA_KingCo_WenbergsDrJohanandLouiseHouse_0004. Southwest corner of house.

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5 of 29. WA_KingCo_WenbergsDrJohanandLouiseHouse_0005. Southwest corner of house.



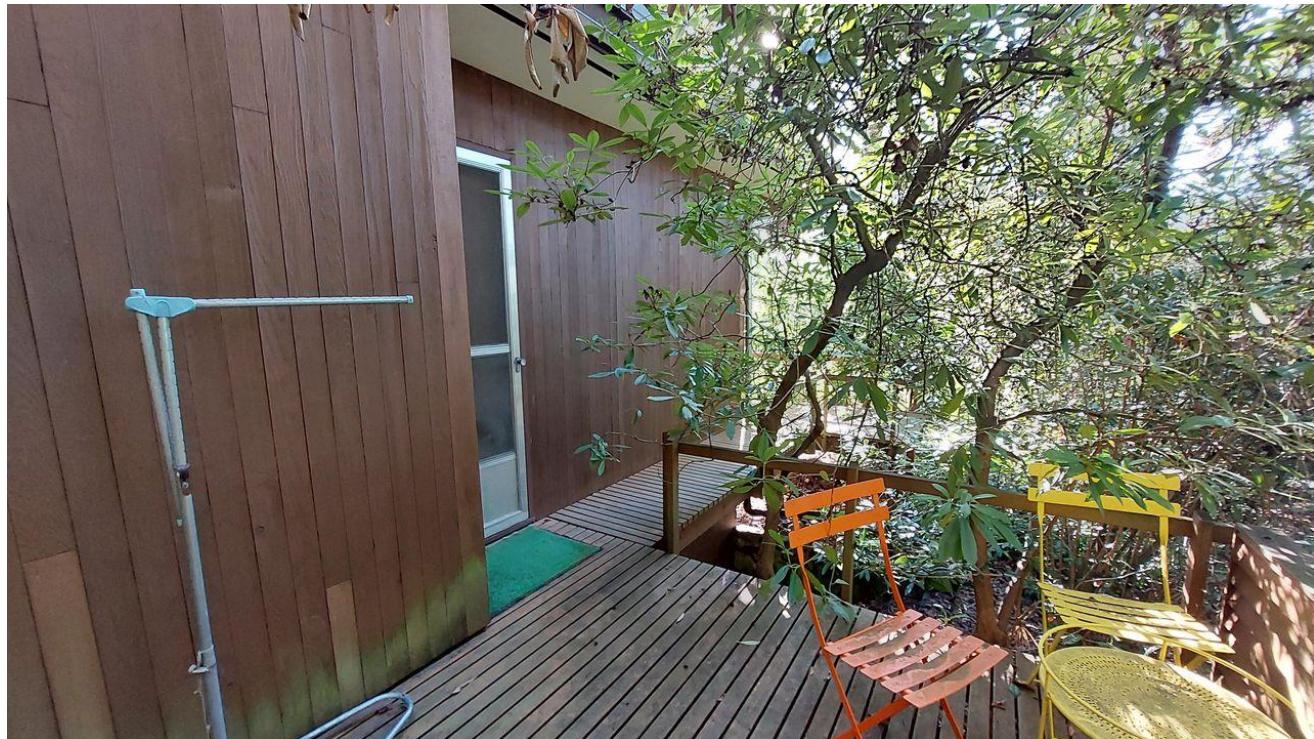
6 of 29. WA_KingCo_WenbergsDrJohanandLouiseHouse_0006. Deck and west façade.

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7 of 29. WA_KingCo_WenbergDrJohanandLouiseHouse_0007. Deck and west façade.



8 of 29. WA_KingCo_WenbergDrJohanandLouiseHouse_0008. Deck and porch on north façade at main bedroom.

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9 of 29. WA_KingCo_WenbergsDrJohanandLouiseHouse_0009. Northeast corner and rear yard.



10 of 29. WA_KingCo_WenbergsDrJohanandLouiseHouse_0010. Outdoor garden between house and garage.

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11 of 29. WA_KingCo_WenbergDrJohanandLouiseHouse_0011. View toward driveway from primary entrance.



(Left) 12 of 29. WA_KingCo_WenbergDrJohanandLouiseHouse_0012.
Exterior, primary entrance.



(Right) 13 of 29. WA_KingCo_WenbergDrJohanandLouiseHouse_0013.
Door lockset (interior)

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14 of 29. WA_KingCo_WenbergDrJohanandLouiseHouse_0014. Interior at primary entrance.



15 of 29. WA_KingCo_WenbergDrJohanandLouiseHouse_0015. Living room.

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16 of 29. WA_KingCo_WenbergDrJohanandLouiseHouse_0016. Living room fireplace.



17 of 29. WA_KingCo_WenbergDrJohanandLouiseHouse_0017. Living room sliding doors.

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18 of 29. WA_KingCo_WenbergDrJohanandLouiseHouse_0018. Dining room.



19 of 29. WA_KingCo_WenbergDrJohanandLouiseHouse_0019. Kitchen.

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20 of 29. WA_KingCo_WenbergsDrJohanandLouiseHouse_0020. Kitchen.

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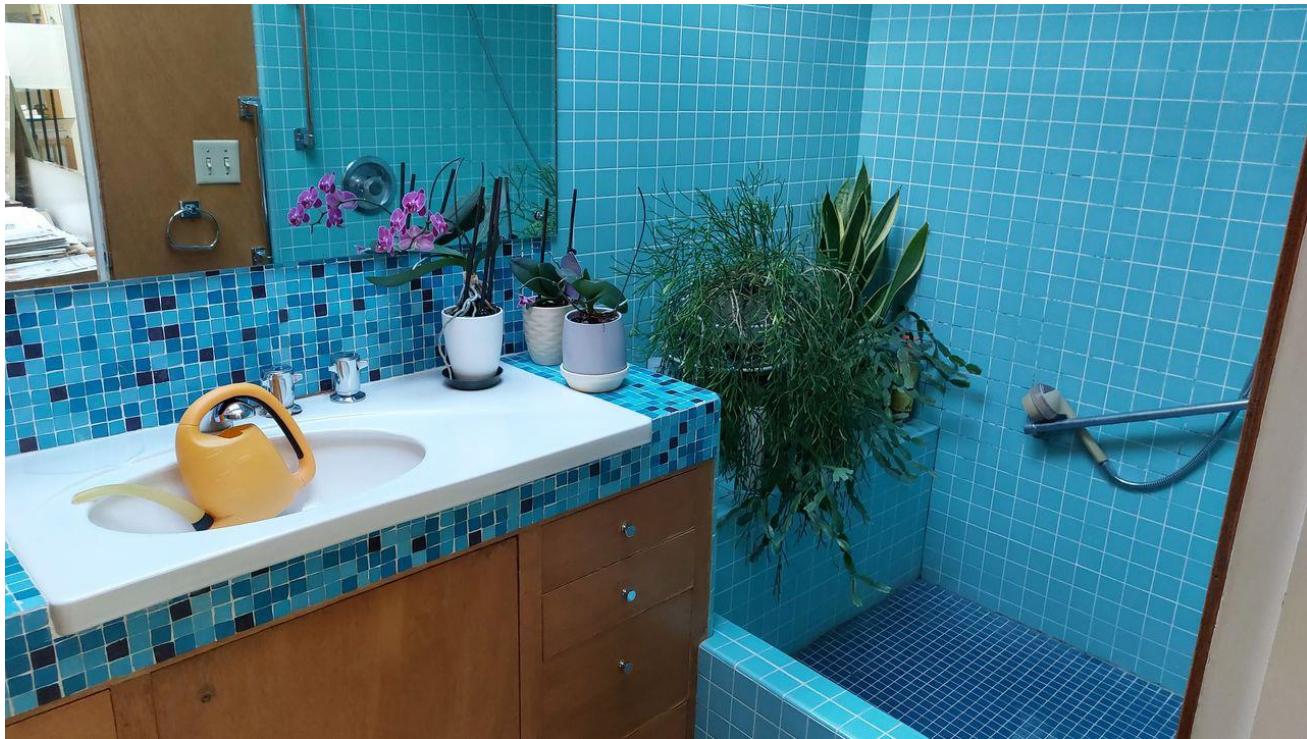


(Left) 21 of 29. WA_KingCo_WenbergsDrJohanandLouiseHouse_0021. Hallway.

(Right) 22 of 29. WA_KingCo_WenbergsDrJohanandLouiseHouse_0022. Den fireplace.

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23 of 29. WA_KingCo_WenbergDrJohanandLouiseHouse_0023. Hallway bathroom.



24 of 29. WA_KingCo_WenbergDrJohanandLouiseHouse_0024. Hallway bathroom.

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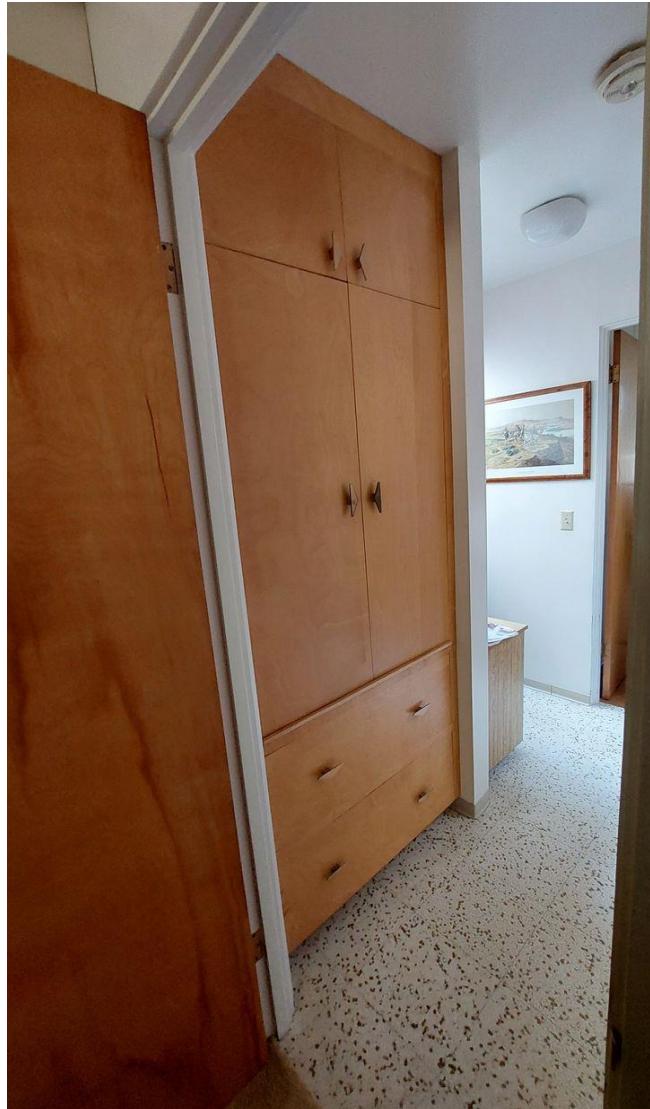
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25 of 29. WA_KingCo_WenbergsDrJohanandLouiseHouse_0025. Second bedroom.

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(Left) 26 of 29. WA_KingCo_WenbergDrJohanandLouiseHouse_0026. Hallway built-in cabinets.

(Right) 27 of 29. WA_KingCo_WenbergDrJohanandLouiseHouse_0027. Master bathroom

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28 of 29. WA_KingCo_WenbergDrJohanandLouiseHouse_0028. Basement.

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29 of 29. WA_KingCo_WenbergDrJohanandLouiseHouse_0029. Driveway Lantern. Photo by Michael Houser

Property Owner: (Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.