

Bullitt House

1125 Harvard Avenue East,
Seattle

Presented by
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for Seattle Parks
and Recreation
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Bullitt House, 1956, courtesy of the University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections.



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Bullitt House

1125 Harvard Avenue E

- Parcel 676270-0035: 1.58-acres
- Residence built 1955; addition 1956
- House designed by Fred Bassetti for Stim and Kay Bullitt
- Immediate landscape designed by Eckbo, Royston, and Williams (plan not fully implemented)
- Owned by Seattle Parks and Recreation, City of Seattle, who acquired the residence through a living trust prepared in 1972 and codified in 1992 (Seattle City Ordinance 116164)
- The Bullitt residence until Kay Bullitt died in 2021

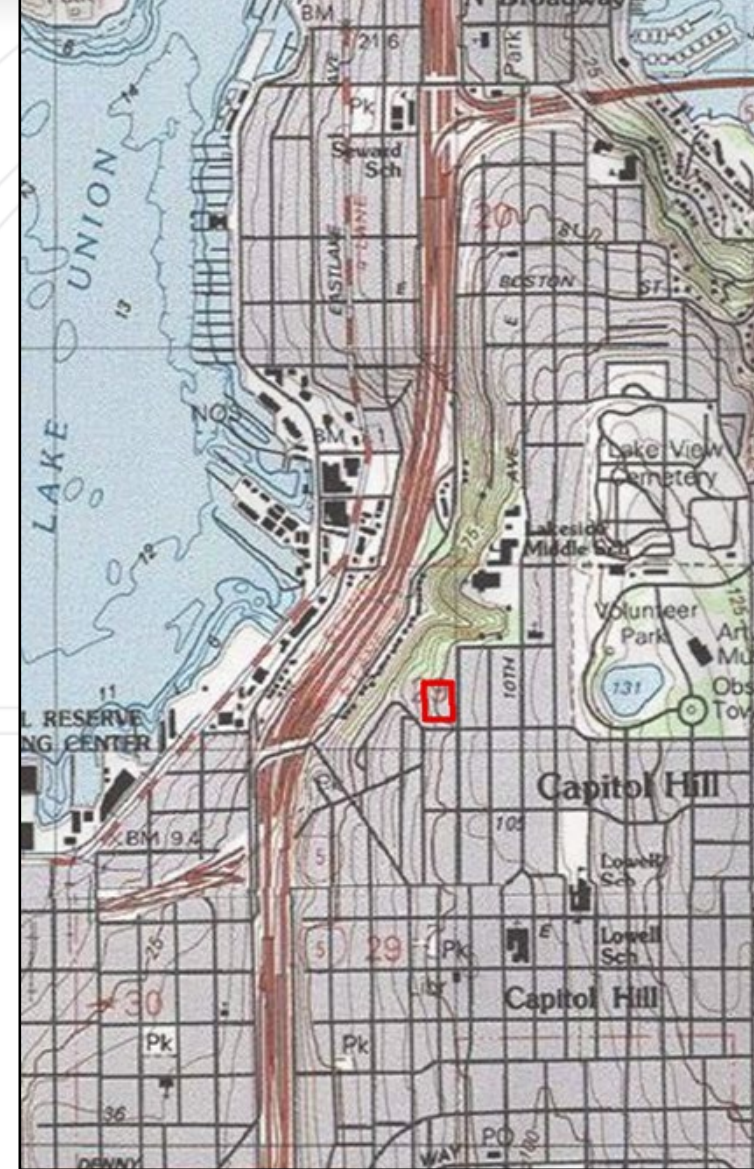


Bullitt House, south elevation, 2022.

Bullitt House

1125 Harvard Avenue E

- 8 lots combined
- Located within the Harvard-Belmont neighborhood on Capitol Hill
- At the northwest corner of Harvard Avenue E and E Prospect Street
- Within Seattle's Harvard-Belmont Landmark District (1980)
- Within the National Register's Harvard-Belmont Historic District (1982)



Bullitt House, 1125 Harvard Avenue E



Bullitt House, aerial view.



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Developing Capitol Hill

Seattle is located in the traditional territory of the Lushootseed-speaking Duwamish peoples.

- 1851:** The Denny Party of 24 Euroamericans arrived at Alki Point in West Seattle. They would help establish the City of Seattle.
- 1855:** The Treaty of Point Elliott directed the Duwamish to move to reservations. The contemporary Muckleshoot Indian Tribe, Suquamish Tribe, and Tulalip Tribes count many Duwamish descendants among their members.
- 1872:** Lake View Cemetery is established, followed by Volunteer Park in 1876.
- 1880s:** As resettlement expanded, the location of the Bullitt House was logged.
- 1901:** Developer James Moore named “Capitol Hill” and began attracting the wealthy to what he called “Millionaire’s Row” (14th Avenue E).

Developing Capitol Hill: Millionaire's Row

“...A hybrid class of mostly nouveau riche residents, who may have worked but did not necessarily have to... often built grander homes than even the biggest boxes and also preferred to site them in their own limited zones. The residences on ‘Millionaire’s Row’ may be included in this set—at first they put up a gate straddling 14th Avenue at Roy Street. Many of the big houses west of Volunteer Park on Federal Avenue and beside the somewhat serpentine streets north of Aloha Street and west of Broadway fit this more upper-crusty character. A sizeable percentage of the homes of this type were built late—after World War I.”

—Paul Dorpat, *Seattle Neighborhoods: Capitol Hill, Part 1 – Thumbnail History*, HistoryLink.org Essay 3188.



Developing Capitol Hill: Restrictive Covenants

Particularly common in new developments established during the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s.

- 1924:** First restrictive covenant in Seattle written for the Victory Heights neighborhood in north Seattle.
- 1927:** Individual homeowners in Capitol Hill Heights signed a petition to add racially restrictive language to their deeds (Capitol Hill Community Club). Residents on 90 blocks on Capitol Hill followed.
- 1947:** University of Washington student, Katherine Pankey, identified 964 homes on Capitol Hill with restrictive covenants.
- 1948:** Capitol Hill covenants expired, thanks to organizations like the Christian Friends of Racial Equality (CFRE) and in spite of public campaign by Capitol Hill Community Club. Planning programs like “red lining” continued.



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Developing Capitol Hill: Restrictive Covenants

- The Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project continues to research the use of restrictive covenants.
- Researchers have not named owners at 1125 Harvard Avenue E in their lists of developers and sellers adding restrictive covenants to their deeds.
- Deed language collected by the City of Seattle from 1949 to 1973 do not include racially restrictive language.
- However, census data from 1950 shows that Capitol Hill remained almost exclusively White in the mid-twentieth century. Of 3,920 people in the census tract, 3,899 were identified as White, only 2 were Black, and only 19 were identified with other racial groups.

1125 Harvard Avenue E: Ownership History

Horace Chapin Henry (1844-1928) and Susan Johnson Henry (1854-1921)

- **1890:** Came to Seattle for the Northern Pacific.
- **1893:** Built 1117 Harvard Avenue N.
- **1895:** Residence burned.
- **1904:** New residence completed.
- **1926:** H. C. Henry donated his art collection to UW: Henry Art Gallery.
- **1935:** Henry's children donated property to Seattle for a city library. When Seattle chose a separate site, the property was acquired by the Bloedels.



Property of Museum of History & Industry, Seattle

Julius H. Bloedel (1864-1957)

- Lumberman who lived north at 1137 Harvard Avenue E until his death.
- Bloedel's son Prentice, founder of the Bloedel Reserve with wife, Virginia, sold to Stimson Bullitt.



Bloedel House, view northwest, 2022.

1125 Harvard Avenue E: Ownership History

Charles Stimson Bullitt (1919-2009)

- Son of Alexander and Dorothy Stimson Bullitt, developers and early Seattle broadcasting family.
- Yale-educated lawyer and philanthropist.
- **1948:** Married Carolyn Kizer (poet); three children.
- **1952:** Ran for Congress in Seattle's first congressional district; acquired 1125 Harvard Avenue E for a new family home.
- **1953:** Marriage to Kizer ended.
- **1954:** Met Kay Muller at Americans for Democratic Action meeting.

Katharine Squire Muller (1925-2021)

- Daughter of William (insurance and real estate) and Marion (Dean of Women at Colorado College) Muller.
- Radcliffe-educated political activist and teacher.
- **1944:** Attended the Hampton Institute.
- **1953:** Moved to Seattle.

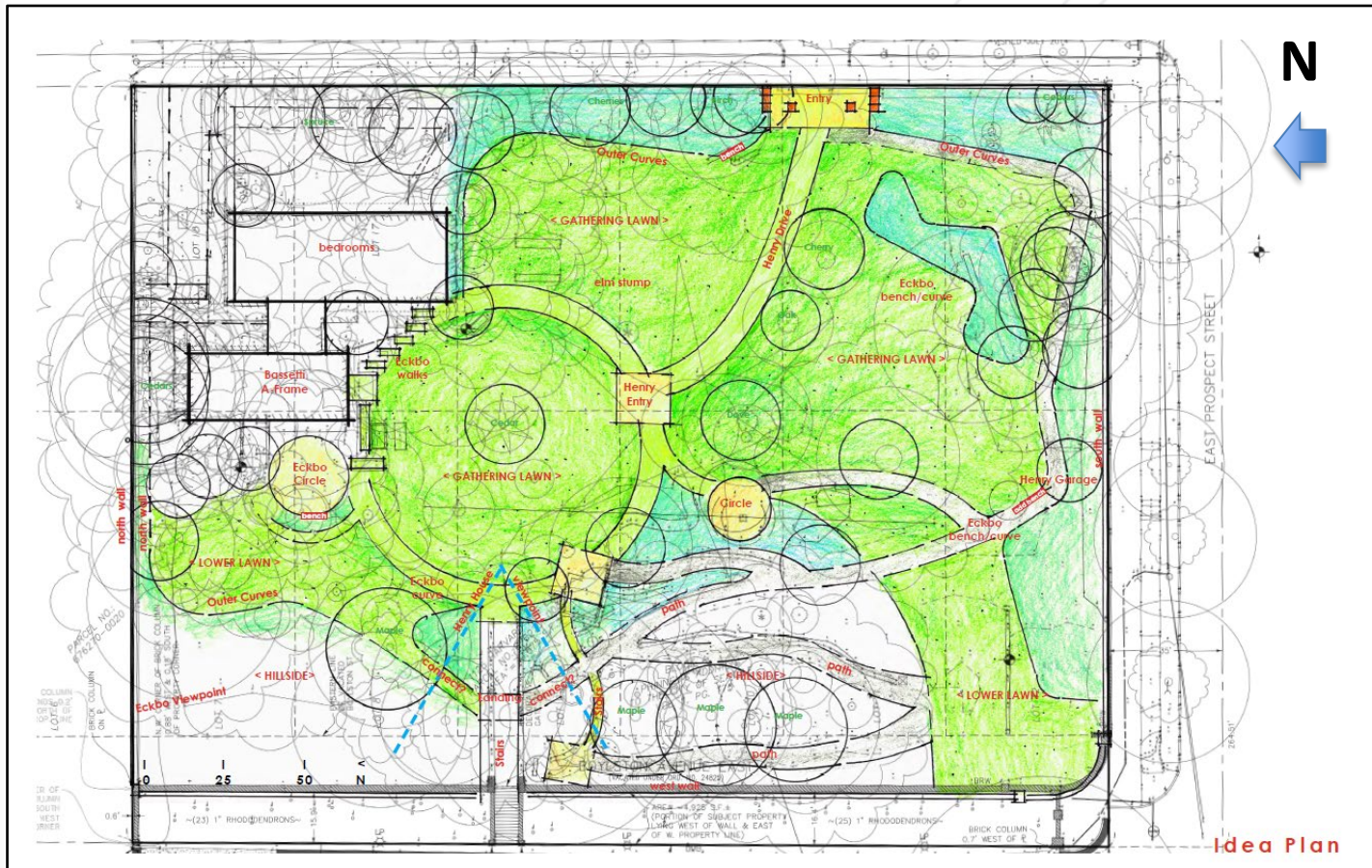


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Constructing 1125 Harvard Avenue E



1954: Harold W. Merritt's site plan:

- circular drive
- eastern entrance
- western stair
- paths south to garage/stable

Site plan prepared by landscape architect Karen Kiest and provided courtesy of Seattle Parks and Recreation.

Constructing 1125 Harvard Avenue E



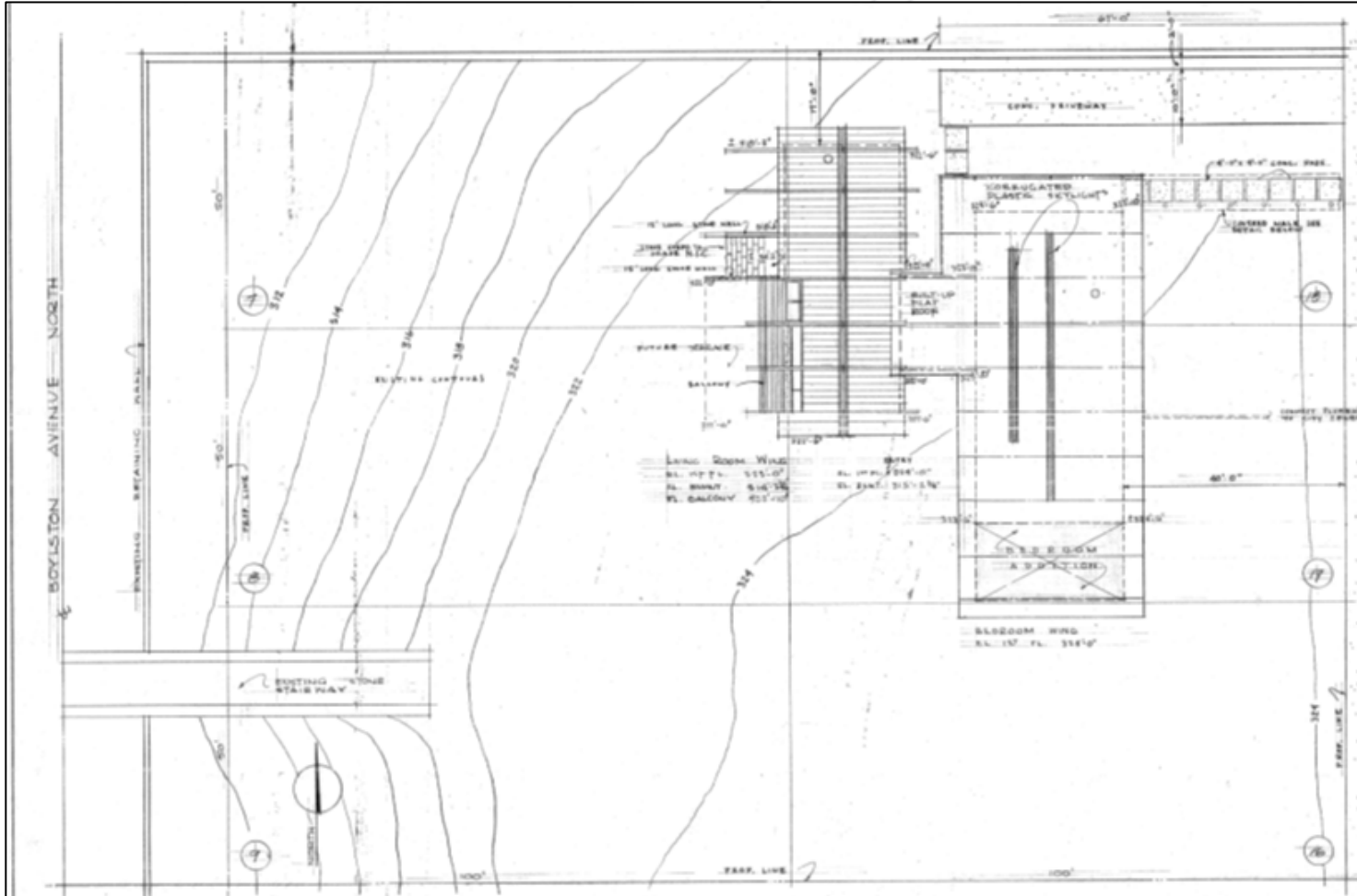
1955: The San Francisco landscape architects Eckbo, Royston, and Williams designed the immediate grounds. Kept a remnant from the Henry era, the elaborate wall and staircase to Boylston Avenue E.

1955: Fred Bassetti, political connection and popular Seattle architect, designed an A-frame home reminiscent of a “ski lodge.” Enlarged by two additional bedrooms in 1956.

King County Assessor photos courtesy of Puget Sound Regional Archives, Bellevue.

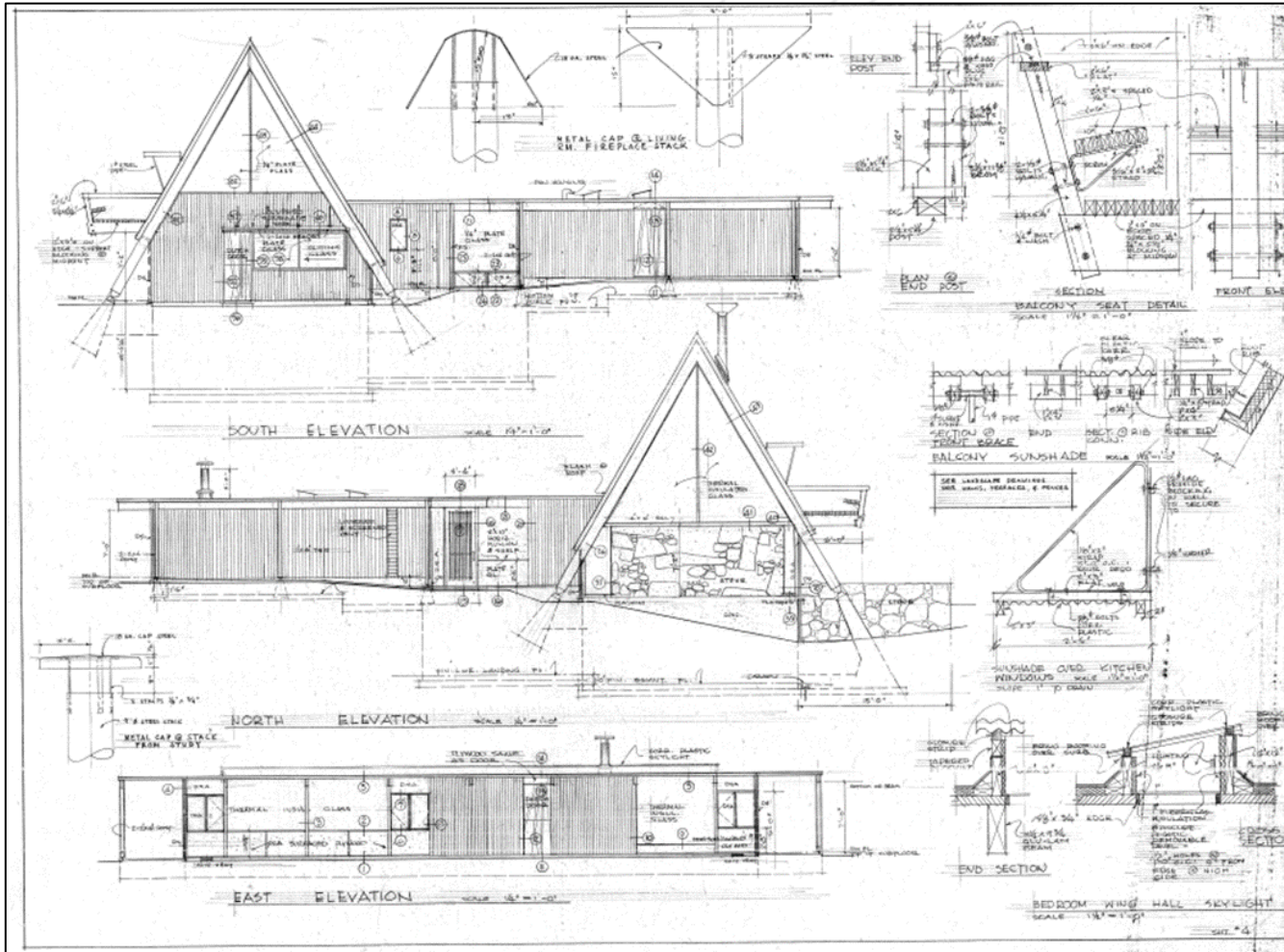


Constructing 1125 Harvard Avenue E



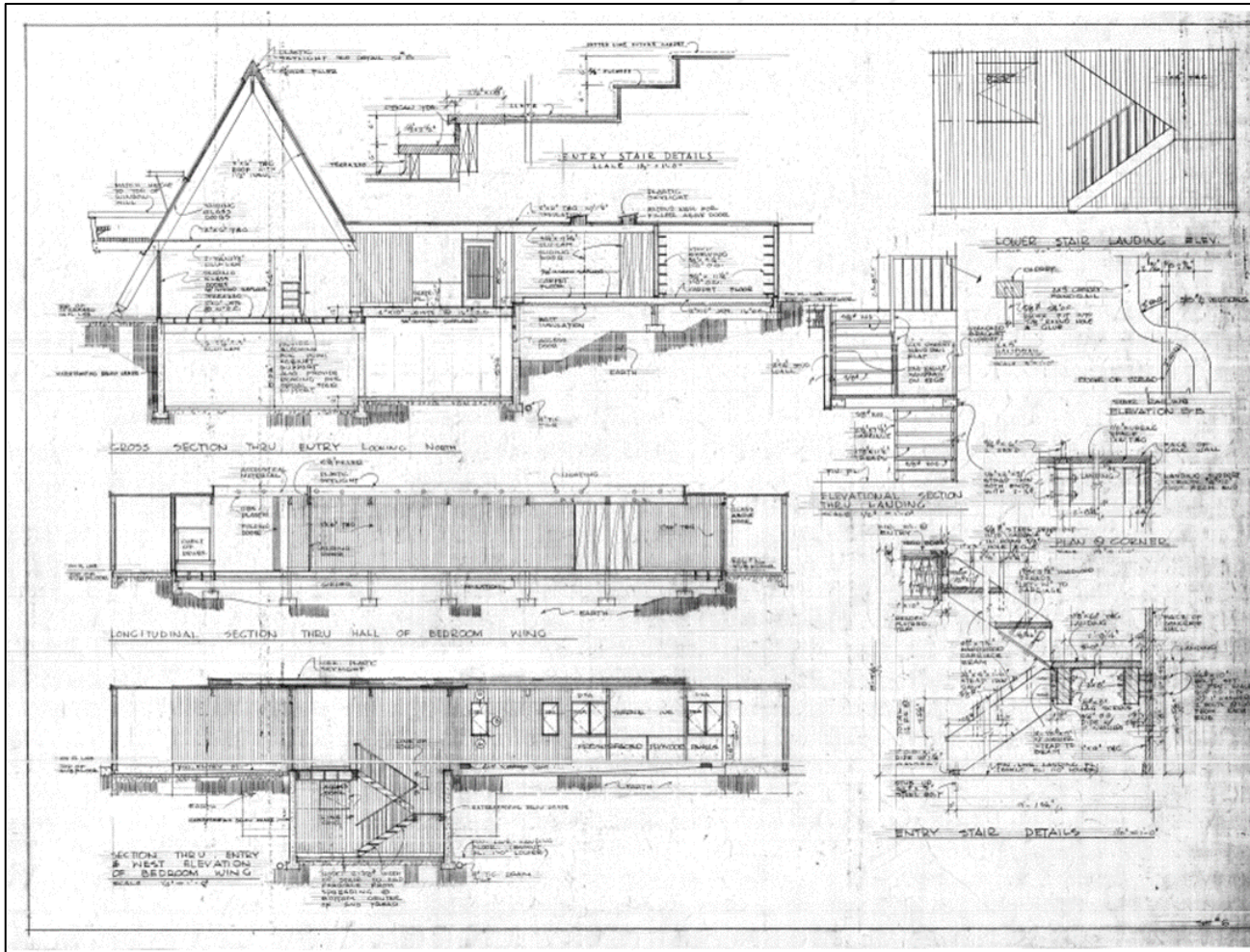
Fred Bassetti, Bassetti and Morse, 1955.

Constructing 1125 Harvard Avenue E



Fred Bassetti, Bassetti and Morse, 1955.

Constructing 1125 Harvard Avenue E



Fred Bassetti, Bassetti and Morse, 1955.

Constructing 1125 Harvard Avenue E



"Architectural Rendering" on trace of the Bullitt House interior, undated and unsigned.



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The A-Frame

One of the strongest and most durable forms, uses a simple triangular truss.

- Japan's Gassho-style farmhouses with silkworms in the upper stories.
- Native construction in the snowy U.S.
- Stables and lodges in Sweden.

Popular in the U.S. in the 1950s: economic expansion led to vacation homes.

Accessible modernism, showing up *Better Homes and Gardens* and *Popular Mechanics*. By the 1970s, they lost popularity, were mass-produced, and used as roadside architecture.



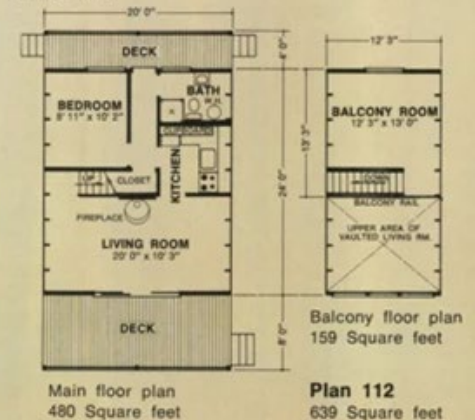
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American Plywood Association, 1969

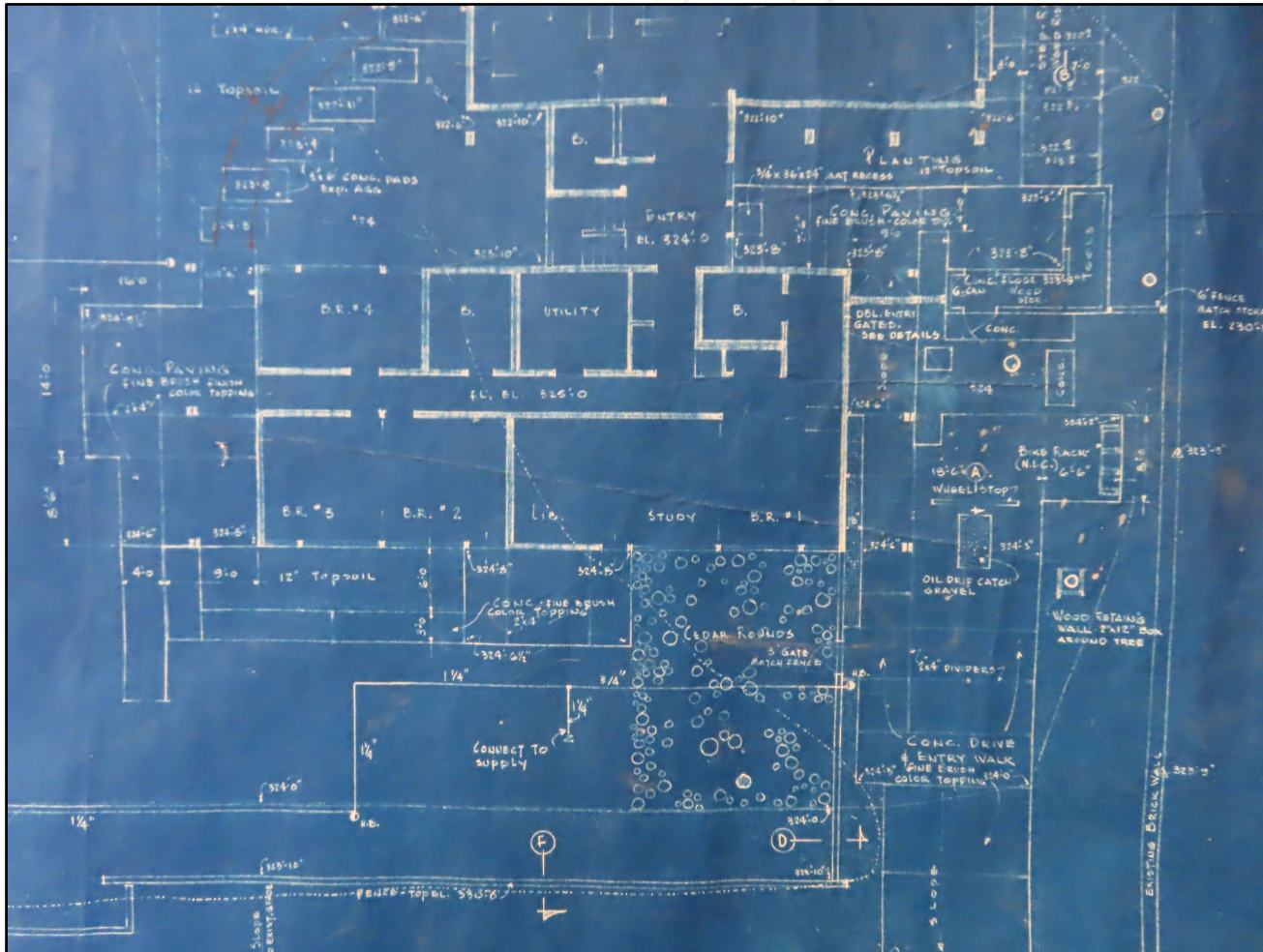


Classic design for a low-budget A-frame

This skillfully detailed version of the once radically different A-frame has been worked out to give you maximum living space and convenience on a minimum building budget. The plans call for a slightly elevated structure with a dramatic glass outlook to bring the whole view inside the house. The living area is centered around a fireplace (plans call for a prefab unit) and the kitchen area is close by. The plan is laid out for one bedroom down and a spacious sleeping loft up. Texture One-Eleven plywood (panels with deep parallel grooves) is applied with the textured face down to provide a handsome ceiling effect.



Constructing 1125 Harvard Avenue E



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Eckbo, Royston, and Williams, 1955.



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1125 Harvard Avenue E, loft, 2022.

Life at 1125 Harvard Avenue NE

1972: Stim and Kay Bullitt establish a life estate that gives the property to the City of Seattle for a public park on the event of the last resident's death.

1979: Stim and Kay Bullitt divorce; Kay remains at 1125 Harvard Avenue NE.

1980 on: Kay Bullitt continues to host family and friends, to open the doors to her house and yard, and to continue her activism from 1125 Harvard Avenue NE.

2009: Stim Bullitt dies.

2021: Kay Bullitt, the last resident of 1125 Harvard Avenue NE, dies, and the City of Seattle acquires the house and grounds.



Life at 1125 Harvard Avenue NE

- A home for the Bullitts and their six children.
- A gathering place for the extended family and the wider community.
- Housing for recovering friends and visiting dignitaries alike.

Headquarters for Stim and Kay's social and political activism:

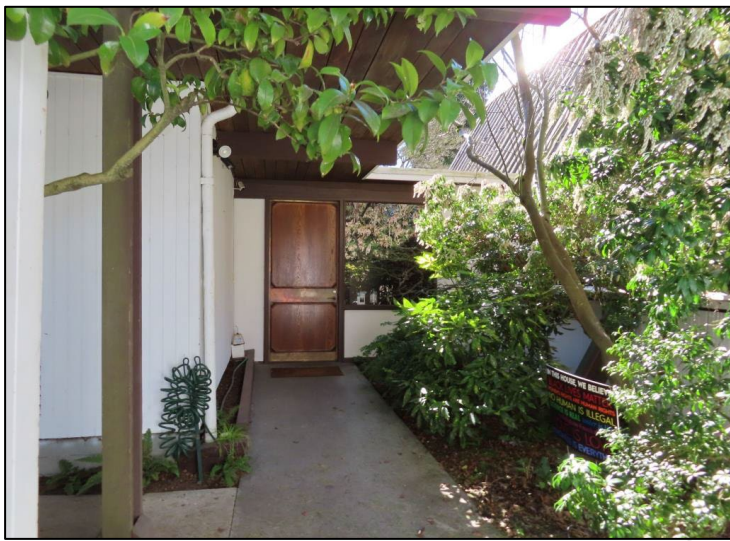
- Keechelus Group, which grew into the Metropolitan Democratic Club
- Summer picnics for the neighbors and political associates
- Summer camps that promoted racial equity
- Volunteer Instruction Program
- Coalition for Quality Integrated Education
- Mayor's Arts Festival of 1971, which grew into Bumbershoot
- Urban League and Save Pike Place Market
- Japanese American Citizens League
- Washington State Advisory Committee to the U.S Commission on Civil Rights
- Sound Savings and Loan



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Designer: Fred Bassetti



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Buildings designed by Fred Bassetti. See nomination for sources.



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Thank you!



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