

# Bullitt House

1125 Harvard Avenue East,  
Seattle

Presented by  
Chrisanne  
Beckner (HRA)  
for Seattle Parks  
and Recreation  
July 16, 2023



*Bullitt House, 1956, courtesy of the University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections.*



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# Bullitt House

## 1125 Harvard Avenue E

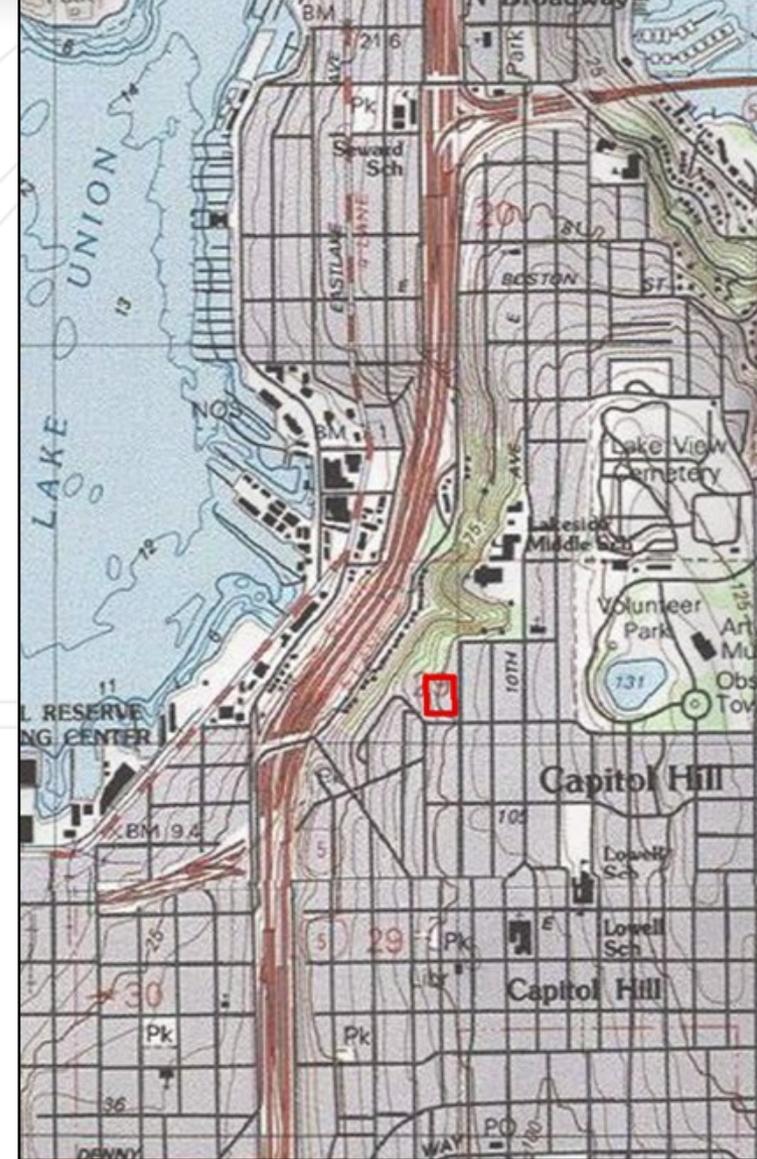
- Parcel 676270-0035: 1.58-acres
- Residence built 1955; addition 1956
- House designed by Fred Bassetti for Stim and Kay Bullitt
- Immediate landscape designed by Eckbo, Royston, and Williams (plan not fully implemented)
- Owned by Seattle Parks and Recreation, City of Seattle, who acquired the residence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



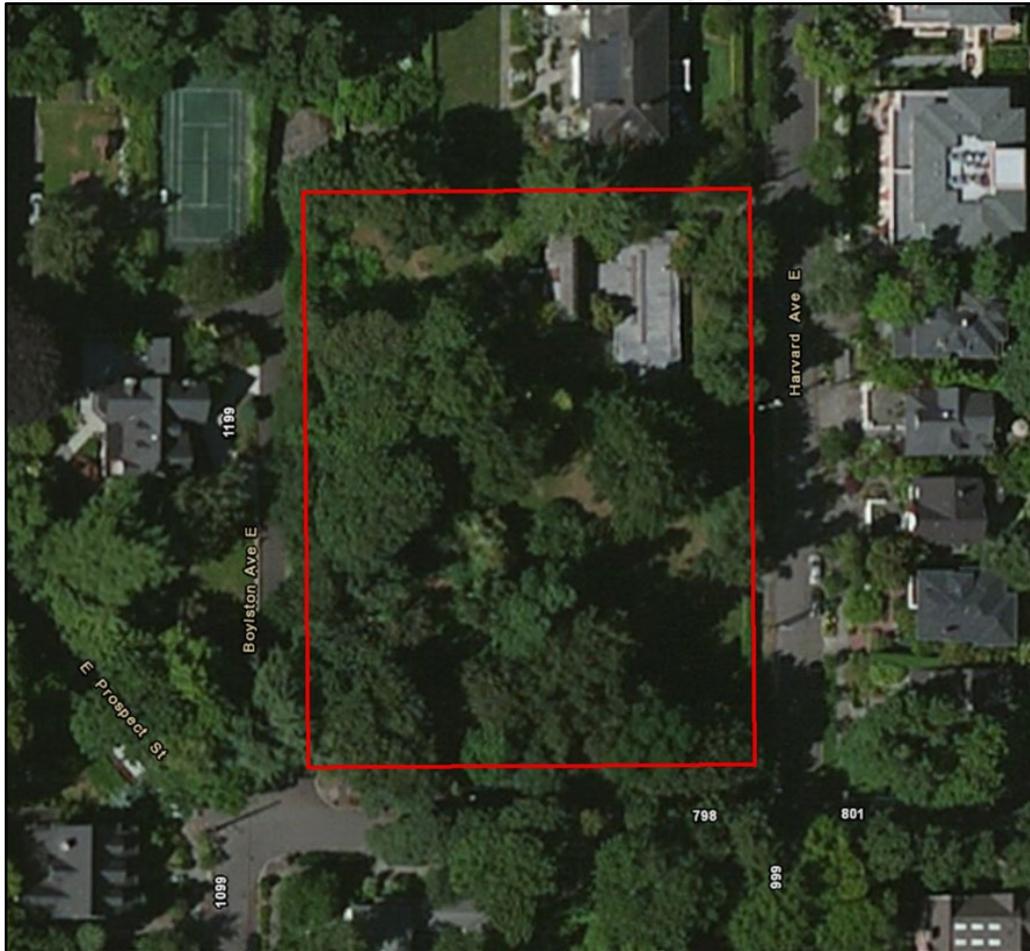
*Bullitt House, south elevation, 2022.*

# 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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# 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.

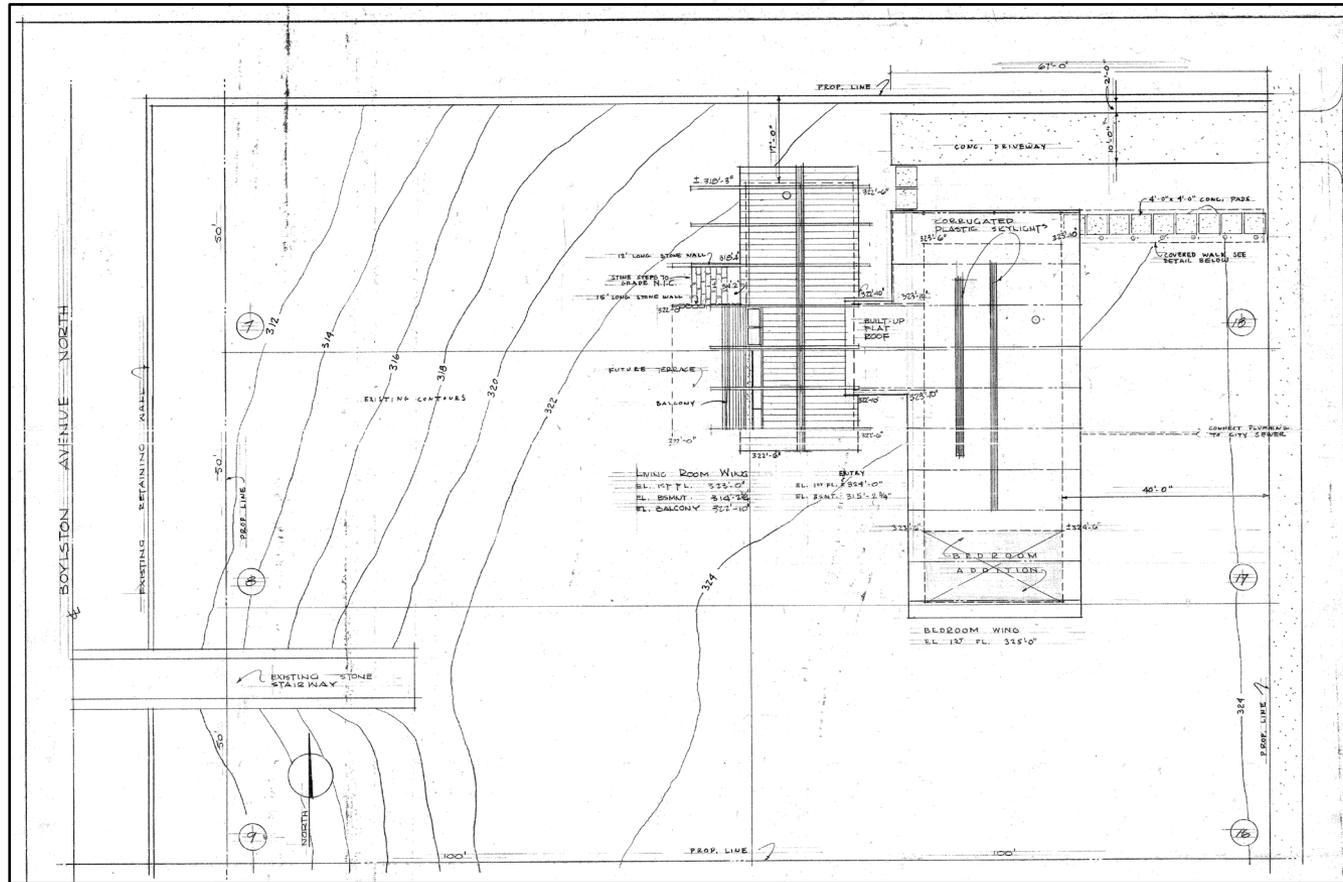


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# 1125 Harvard Avenue E: Fred Bassetti's Design



Fred Bassetti, Bassetti and Morse, 1955.

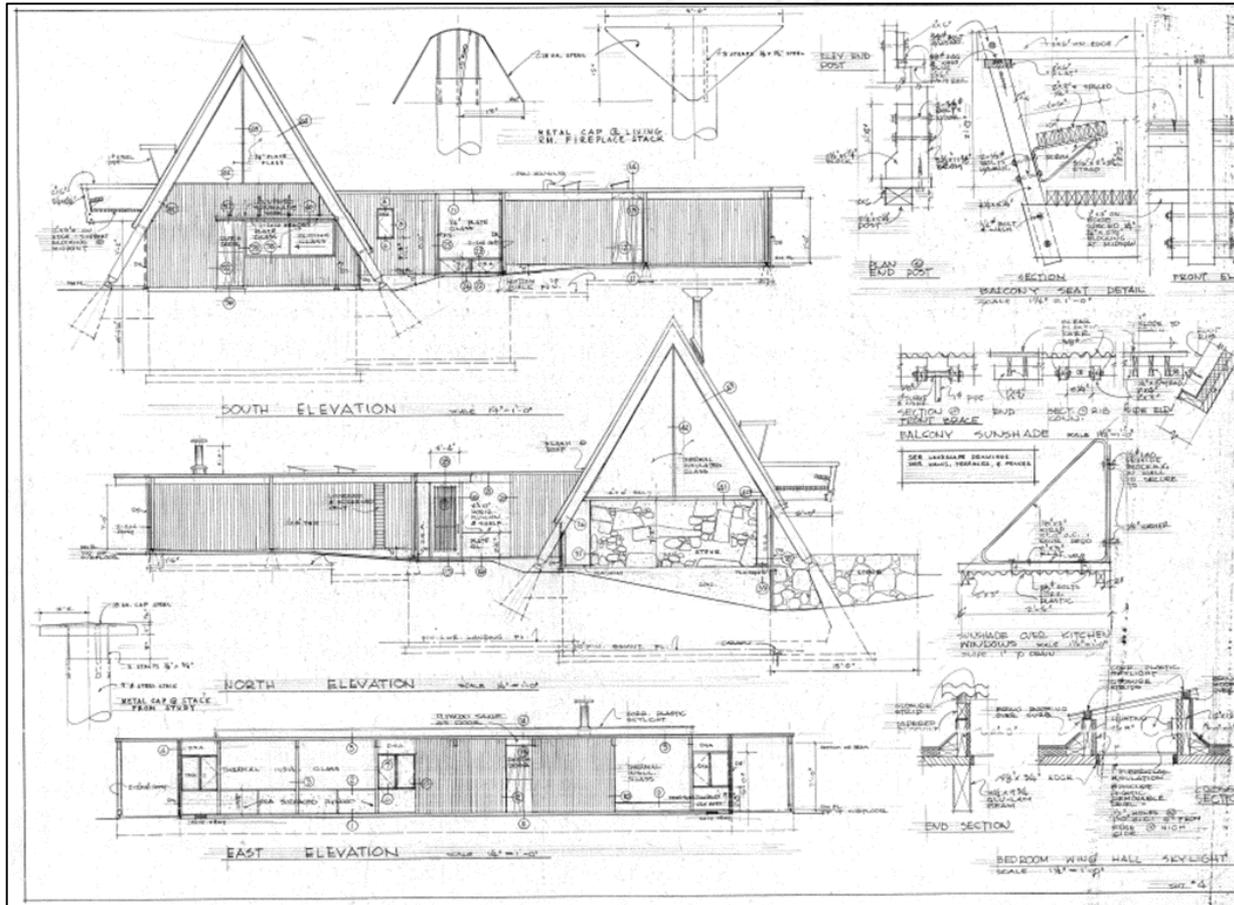


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# 1125 Harvard Avenue E: Fred Bassetti's Design



Fred Bassetti, Bassetti and Morse, 1955.



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# 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.*





*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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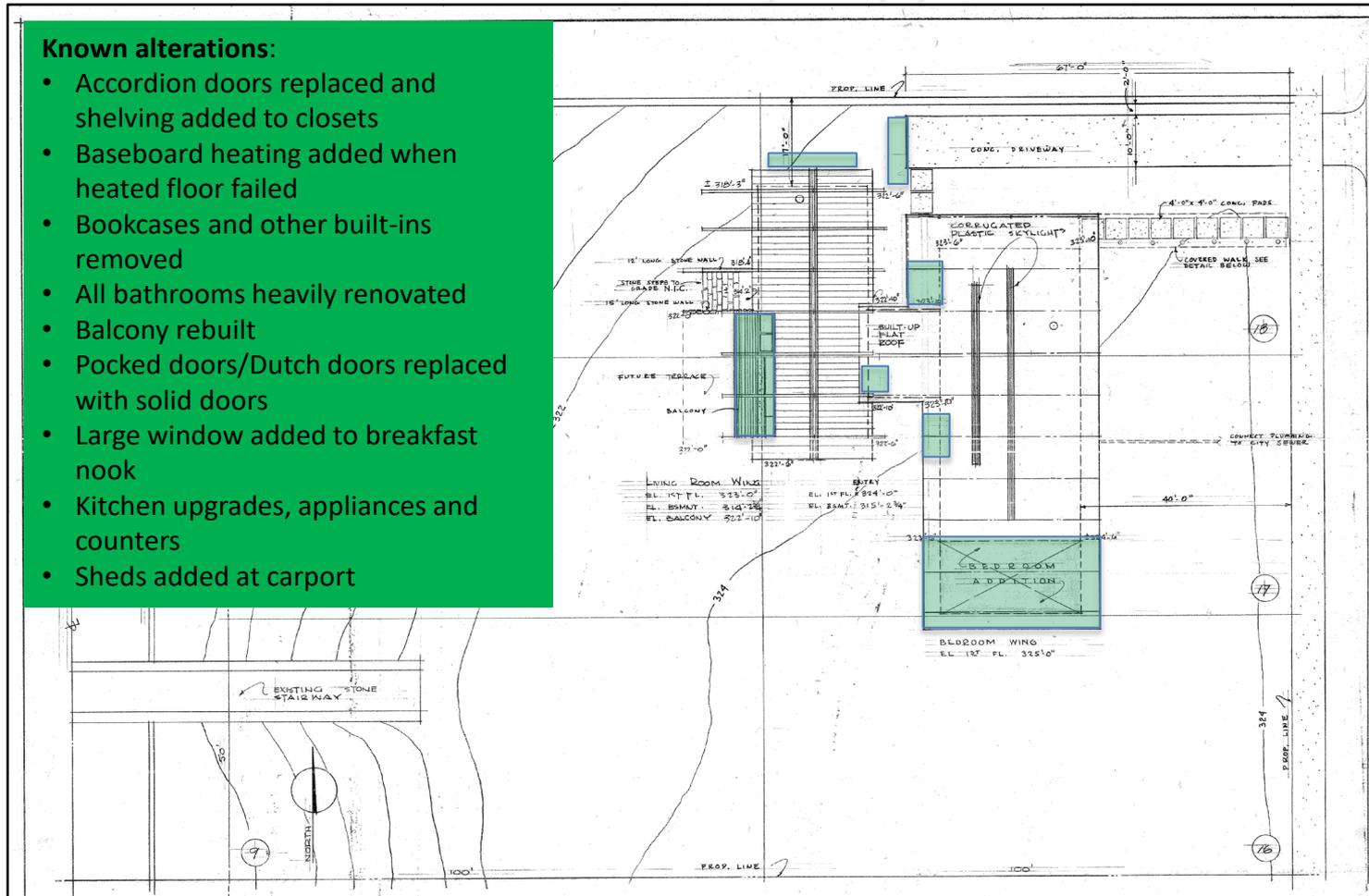


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# Alterations at 1125 Harvard Avenue E

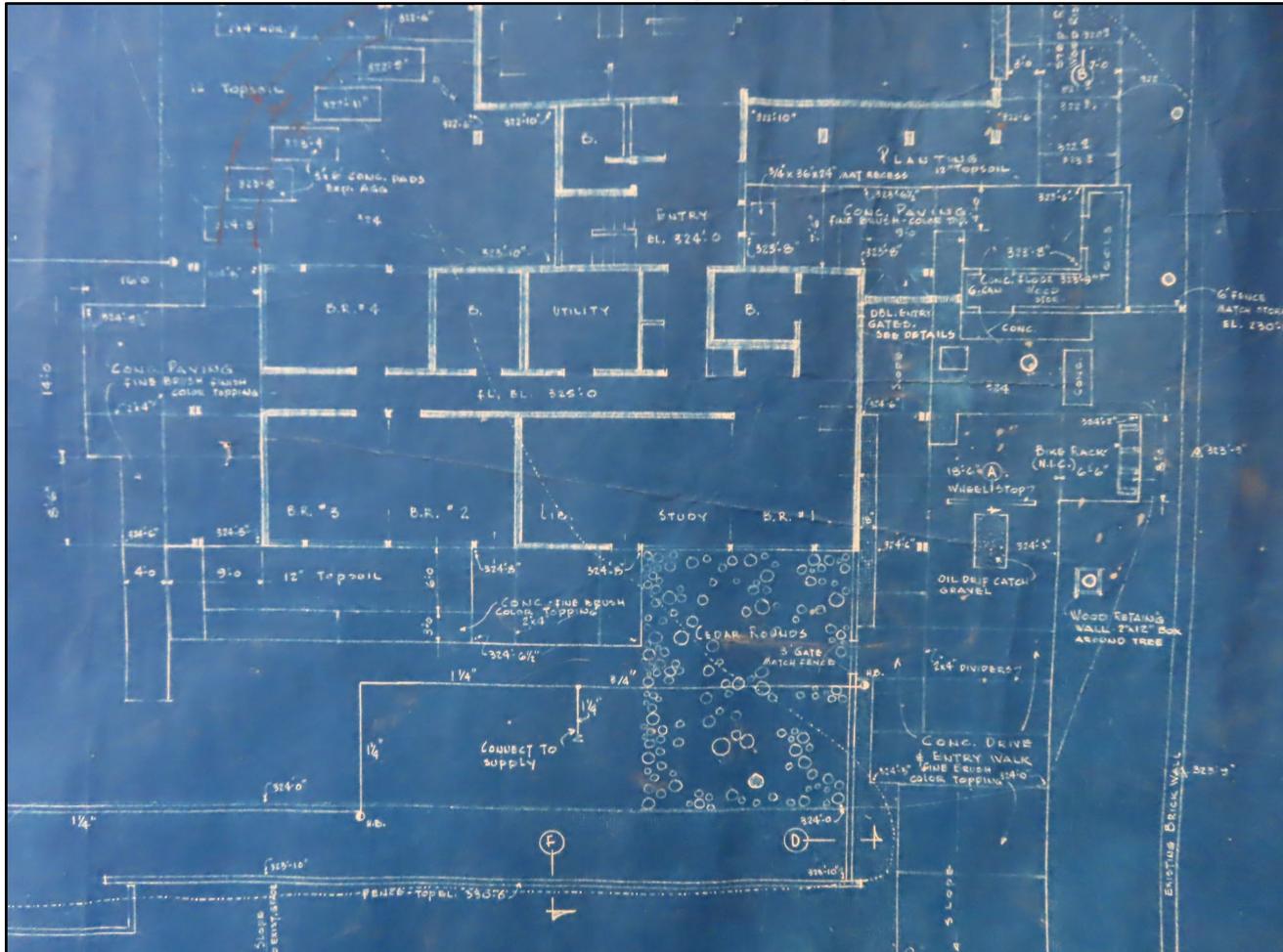
## Known alterations:

- Accordion doors replaced and shelving added to closets
- Baseboard heating added when heated floor failed
- Bookcases and other built-ins removed
- All bathrooms heavily renovated
- Balcony rebuilt
- Pocked doors/Dutch doors replaced with solid doors
- Large window added to breakfast nook
- Kitchen upgrades, appliances and counters
- Sheds added at carport



*Fred Bassetti, Bassetti and Morse, 1955.*

# Constructing 1125 Harvard Avenue E



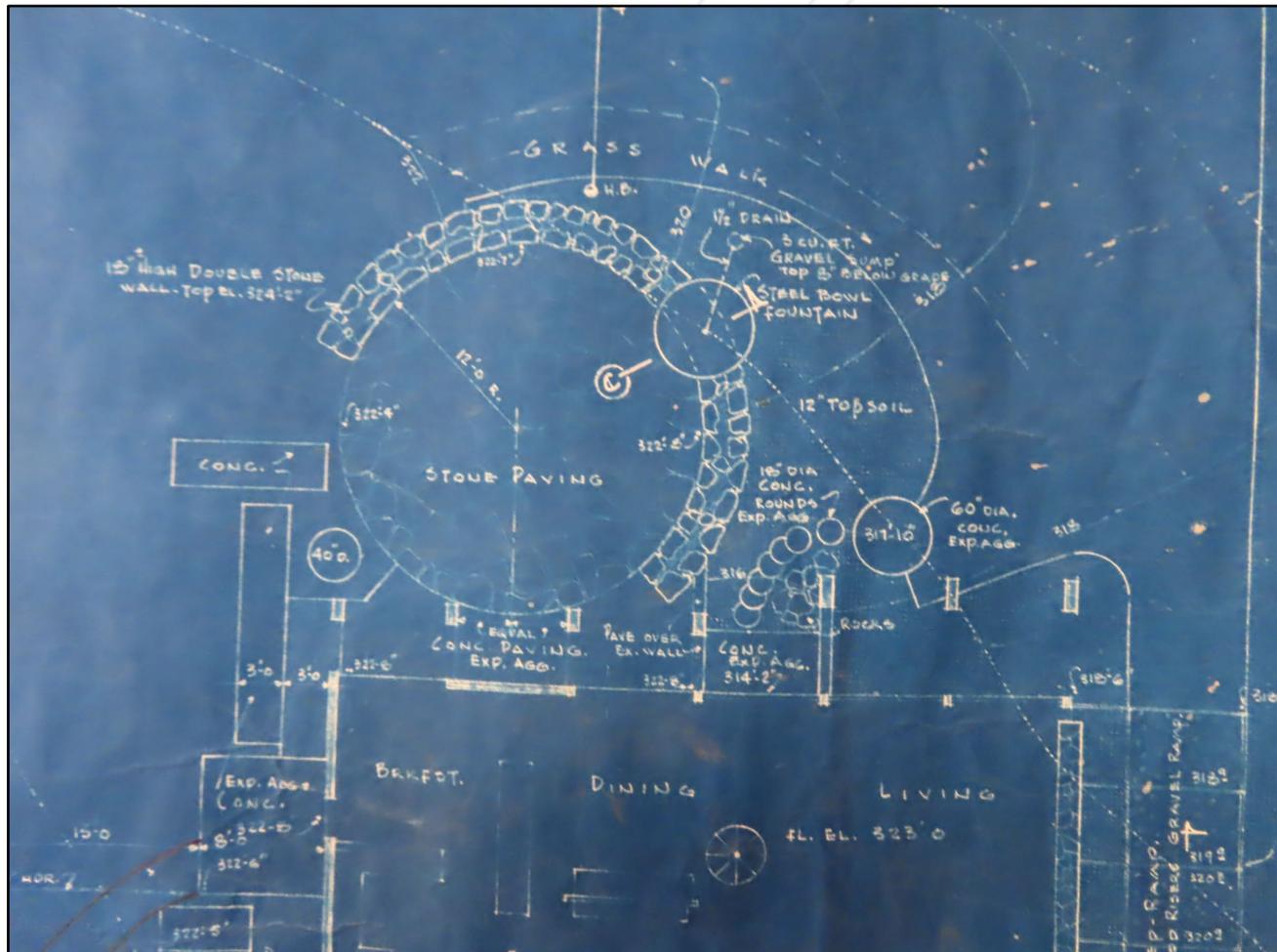
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*Eckbo, Royston, and Williams, 1955.*



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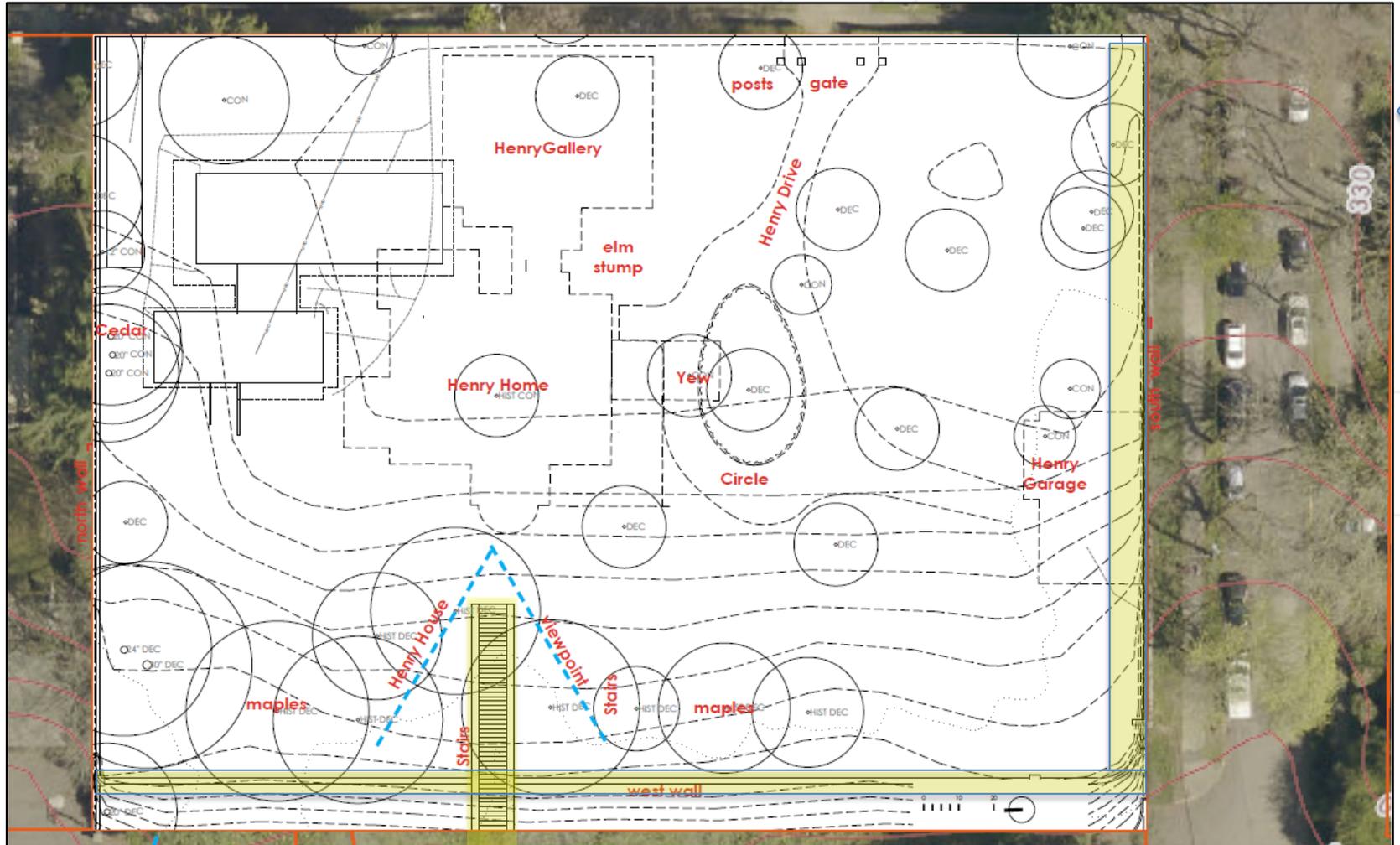
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*Eckbo, Royston, and Williams, 1955.*



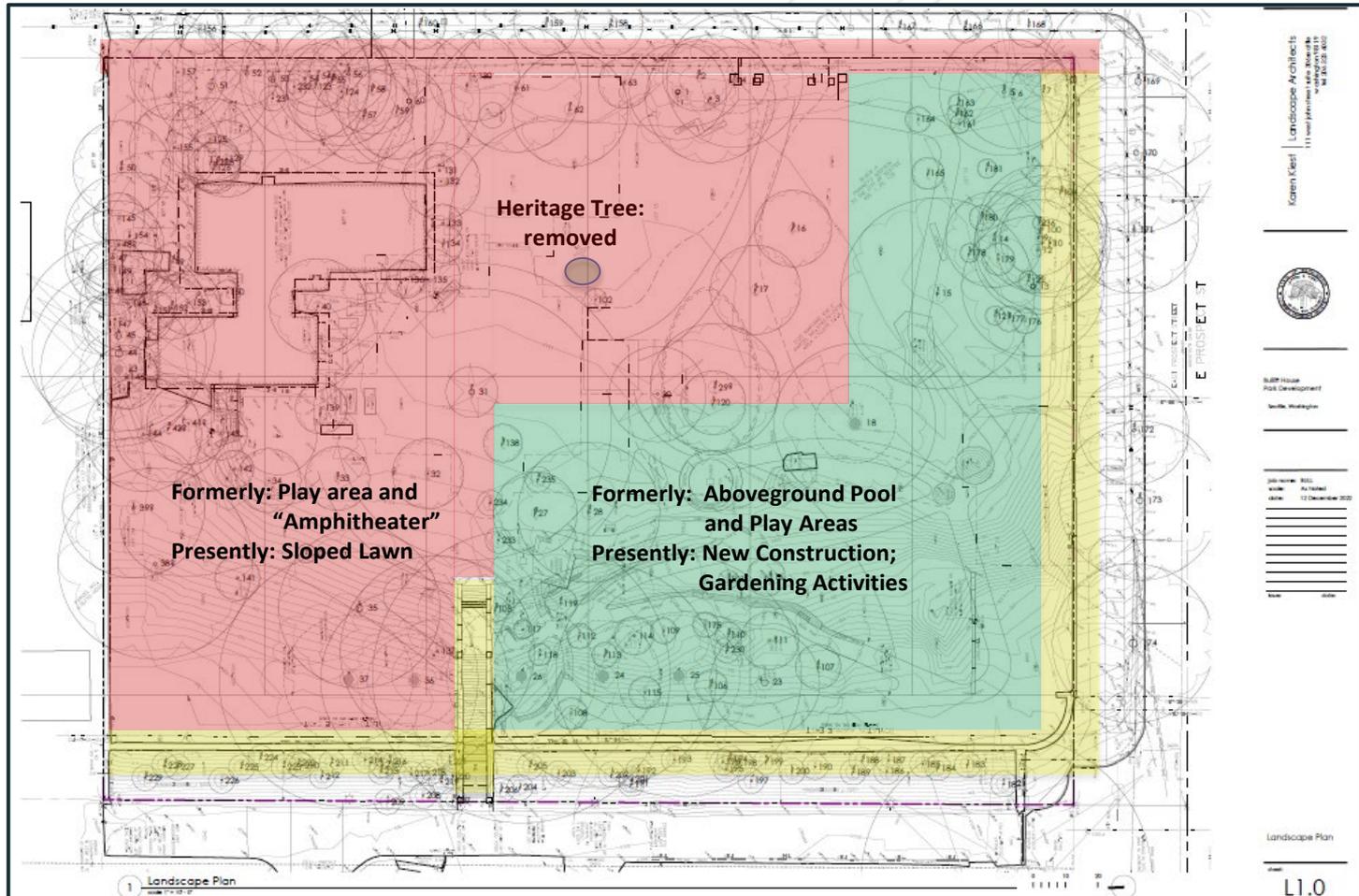
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# 1125 Harvard Avenue E: Henry Era Landscape



Site plan prepared by landscape architect Karen Kiest.

# 1125 Harvard Avenue E: Bullitt Era Landscape



Site plan prepared by landscape architect Karen Kiest.



# 1125 Harvard Avenue E: Recent Construction

Summer 2020

## The Cass Turnbull Garden Master Site Plan



Kathleen Day, Landscape Consultant, LLC

### North Garden Features

- Interpretive overlook
- Tool sculpture
- Promontory
- Throne room
- Contemplative space
- Benches

### South Garden Features

- Entry archway
- Habitat garden
- Meandering paths
- Terraced seating
- Outdoor classroom
- Garden art sculptures
- Benches
- Tool shed
- Compost bins

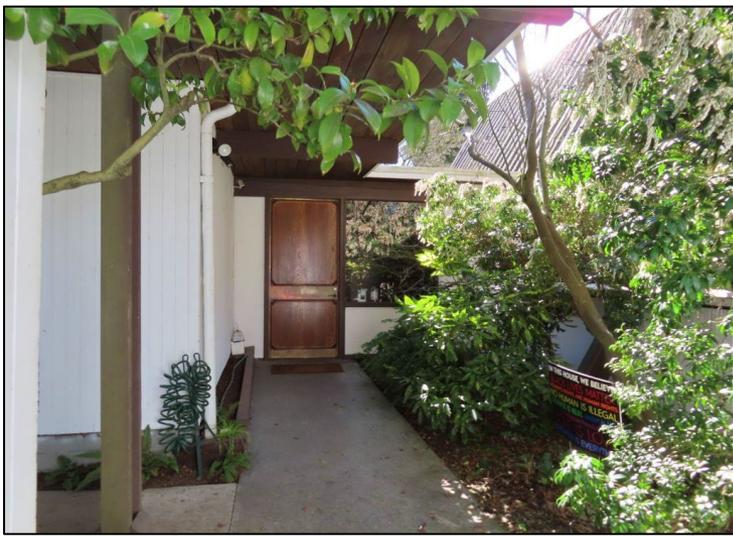
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*1125 Harvard Avenue E, 2022.*



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*1125 Harvard Avenue E, 2022.*



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# Designer: Fred Bassetti



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*Buildings designed by Fred Bassetti. See nomination for sources.*



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# Fred Bassetti, the Modernist

“I remember Bassetti once instructing me that his kind of modernism ‘felt good to the human hand.’ Put your hand down on a Bassetti design (railings, door handles, edges) and it feels warm and rounded, often because it's a lovely piece of wood – a reminder of his mother’s Norwegian heritage.

As for the regional references he also favored, they were subtle but not literal. He loved to articulate the way rainwater flowed down a roof and alongside buildings, using modern forms rather than historic references to barns or Indian longhouses. He liked buildings that tell the passerby how they were made, reflecting a simpler time of good craftsmanship and skilled Scandinavian carpentry.”

--Fred Bassetti's legacy: Modernism that feels good to the human hand.  
by David Brewster, *Crosscut*, December 5, 2013



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# Fred Bassetti, the Modernist

“Fred Bassetti belongs to the ‘Northwest School’: the collective drivers behind the new regional identity that began to emerge in the late 1940s, that included Arne Bystrom, Wendell Lovett, Gene Zema, and Ralph Anderson. Key features of the Northwest School's work are the influence of the Pacific Northwest climate and landscape on modern design, materials selection, and a legacy of environmental responsibility. Concrete and steel are hallmarks of modernism, but in the Pacific Northwest there was also a passion for natural materials.”

--University of Washington Department of Architecture Student Drawings.  
PH Coll 740.



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# Fred Bassetti, the Modernist

“Lorne McConachie, a principal at Bassetti Architects, said Fred Bassetti was known for architecture that focused on ‘humanism combined with modernism.’ ‘Much of our modern architecture has gone slick and kind of crispy — not very friendly to the human touch,’ said McConachie. ‘Fred never lost the sense of how people use the space.’”

Bassetti believed in modernist tenets for designing functional buildings where the structure was clear, said McConachie, but he also believed in regionalism: ‘understanding place, the climate, the people, the character of the landscape and how those aspects of the place were reflected in the buildings that we make.’”

--Bassetti ‘never lost the sense of how people use the space,’ *Daily Journal of Commerce* staff, December 9, 2013



# Fred Bassetti, the Modernist



Marshall Forrest house, 1947-1962. University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections: Dearborn Massar Photograph Collection. PH Coll 251



Marshall Forrest house, 1947-1962. University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections: Dearborn Massar Photograph Collection. PH Coll 251

# Fred Bassetti, the Modernist



Gerber house, 1953. University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections: Dearborn Massar Photograph Collection. PH Coll 251



Armbruster residence, 1947-1960. University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections: Dearborn Massar Photograph Collection. PH Coll 251



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# Fred Bassetti, the Modernist



Wertheimer residence, 1960. University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections: Dearborn Massar Photograph Collection. PH Coll 251



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# Thank you!



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