

Spokane Register of Historic Places Nomination

*Spokane City/County Historic Preservation Office, City Hall, Third Floor
808 Spokane Falls Boulevard, Spokane, Washington 99201-3337*

1. Name of Property

Historic Name: Phillips, John F. and Barbara E., House
And/Or Common Name: Phillips House (preferred)

2. Location

Street & Number: 611 S. Montavilla Drive
City, State, Zip Code: Spokane, WA 99224
Parcel Number: 25234.4714

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
☒ building	☐ public ☐ both	☒ occupied	☐ agricultural ☐ museum
☐ site	☒ private	☐ work in progress	☐ commercial ☐ park
☐ structure			☐ educational ☒ residential
☐ object	Public Acquisition	Accessible	☐ entertainment ☐ religious
	☐ in process	☐ yes, restricted	☐ government ☐ scientific
	☐ being considered	☒ yes, unrestricted	☐ industrial ☐ transportation
		☐ no	☐ military ☐ other

4. Owner of Property

Name: Thomas W. Phillips
Street & Number: 611 S. Montavilla Drive
City, State, Zip Code: Spokane, WA 99224
Telephone Number/E-mail: 206-399-4455, tomwphillips1@me.com

5. Location of Legal Description

Courthouse, Registry of Deeds	Spokane County Courthouse
Street Number:	1116 West Broadway
City, State, Zip Code:	Spokane, WA 99260
County:	Spokane

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Title:
Date: ☐ Federal ☐ State ☐ County ☐ Local
Depository for Survey Records: Spokane Historic Preservation Office

7. Description

Architectural Classification

Condition

- ☒ excellent
☐ good
☐ fair
☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check One

- ☐ unaltered
☒ altered

Check One

- ☒ original site
☐ moved & date _____

Narrative statement of description is found on one or more continuation sheets.

8. Spokane Register Categories and Statement of Significance

Applicable Spokane Register of Historic Places category: Mark "x" on one or more for the categories that qualify the property for the Spokane Register listing:

- ☐ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of Spokane 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 history.
- ☐ E Property represents the culture and heritage of the city of Spokane in ways not adequately addressed in the other criteria, as in its visual prominence, reference to intangible heritage, or any range of cultural practices.

Narrative statement of significance is found on one or more continuation sheets.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography is found on one or more continuation sheets.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: < 1 acre

Verbal Boundary Description: 23-25-42: WOODLAND HEIGHTS 2ND ADD (AFN# 3100947) L2 B1 TOG W/ PTN L3 B1 OF SAID PLAT DAF: BEG AT NE COR OF L3 B1 OF SAID PLAT; TH N90°00'00"W 35FT ALG N LOT LN OF SAID L3; TH S03°47'00"W 48.17FT; TH S22°00'39"W 57.42FT TO A NON-TANGENT CURVE & TO THE N ROW OF MONTAVILLA DR; TH ALG N ROW OF MONTAVILLA DR A NON-TANGENT CURVE TO THE SW W/ RADIUS OF 50FT, A CENT ANGLE OF 01°50'01", ANARC LENGTH OF 1.60FT, A CHORD BEARING S61°58'31"E, A CHORD LENGTH OF 1.60FT; THN29°44'00"E 117.52FT ALG E LOT LN OF SAID L3 TO POB (PARCEL 'B' OF BLA Z15B0020BLA [AFN# 6382501])

Verbal Boundary Justification: Nominated property includes entire parcel and urban legal description.

11. Form Prepared By

Name and Title: Diana J Painter, PhD, Principal Architectural Historian

Organization: Painter Preservation

Street, City, State, Zip Code: 3518 N. C Street, Spokane, WA 99205

Telephone Number: 707-763-6500

E-mail Address: dianajpainter@gmail.com

Date Final Nomination Heard :

12. Additional Documentation

Additional documentation is found on one or more continuation sheets.

13. Signature of Owner(s)

14. For Official Use Only:

Date nomination application filed: _____

Date of Landmarks Commission Hearing: _____

Landmarks Commission decision: _____

Date of City Council/Board of County Commissioners' hearing: _____

I hereby certify that this property has been listed in the Spokane Register of Historic Places based upon the action of either the City Council or the Board of County Commissioners as set forth above.

Megan Duvall
City/County Historic Preservation Officer
City/County Historic Preservation Office
Third Floor – City Hall
808 W. Spokane Falls Blvd.
Spokane, WA 99201

Date

Attest:

Approved as to form:

City Clerk

Assistant City Attorney

SUMMARY STATEMENT

The Phillips House is a two-story house with an L-shaped footprint and a flat roof, with a one-story addition on the east side. All facades have deep overhanging eaves except the west side of the main house. An attached carport projects into the front (south) yard. The house is located toward the front of its largely rectangular, one-third-acre (11,854 square feet) lot and faces south, overlooking S. Montavilla Drive. The 1,878 square foot, wood-frame house is clad in vertical cedar boards and flush synthetic panels and has a concrete slab foundation and a built-up roof. Window walls are composed of a combination of fixed and hopper-style windows with aluminum and wood frames. A broad, centrally located, concrete block chimney rises from the rooftop. The Contemporary style house, which was designed by architect Warren C. Heylman, was constructed in 1955.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY

Location and setting

The Phillips House at 611 S. Montavilla Drive is located west and slightly south of downtown Spokane at the far east end (closest to the city) of the West Hills neighborhood, within the Woodland Heights 2nd Addition. South Montavilla Drive is an extension of W. 9th Avenue, and travels northwest to a point one lot west of the subject house. The subject house is also located just one lot (about 170 feet) west of the 3.5-acre Whittier Park and Playground. It is located south of S. H Street, significant because it was the westernmost city limit here from 1891 until 1948, and about 375 feet east of the 1935 Indian Canyon Golf Course. The house is sited north of S. Montavilla Drive and faces south, overlooking the street. The area is wooded, primarily with Ponderosa pines, and developed with single family homes on relatively large lots along Montavilla Drive and the parallel W. West Drive. Four houses along these parallel streets, including the Phillips House and Warren Heylman's own house, were designed by architect Warren C. Heylman.

Exterior

Front (south) façade. The house displays a modular design of four foot increments infilled with vertical cedar boards, flush synthetic panels, and window walls of fixed and hopper-style sash with wood and aluminum frames. A front entry door of wood with full-height glass is located in the fourth bay from the left (west) within the eight-bay façade. The eastern-most panel is solid cedar boards over its full height. The second and seventh panel (counting from the west or left) are identical, with solid panels and hopper-style windows below fixed lights. The first and sixth panels are also identical, displaying tall, fixed lights above solid panels. The third bay displays full-height glass, revealing the interior floating staircase, while the fifth bay contains only solid panels and a hopper style window below the ceiling on each floor.



Front (south) façade of main house, looking north

Five open fins project from the front façade of the house, marking the four building bays. They are composed of horizontal and vertical paired and bolted 2" x 10" boards, joined by a horizontal 2" x 12" horizontal board located at about the sill level of the upstairs windows. L-shaped brackets are bolted at the upper corners, which are located about six feet from face of the building. The horizontal portion is an extension of the beams that support the deep eaves. Each upright is mounted on concrete piers that sit on the gravel bed of the front yard.

The one-story addition to the east, which is used as a studio, is aligned with the front façade of the main house and has no window openings. A flush double door here is of the same material as the siding, which is rough-cut cedar siding, consistent with the main house. It is located slightly west of center on this addition. A door knob is essentially the only visible hardware here.

Projecting from the front façade of the studio is the two-car carport, which has a slab foundation, and features open beams supported by bolted double posts. On the east (right) side is an enclosed storage shed with a rectangular footprint and a single flush door of the same design as seen on the studio. Between the studio and the storage building is an opening that leads to the back yard.

East side façade. The east side façade of the studio is composed of a wide central bay of vertical board flanked by two bays with solid panels surmounted by fixed windows. Deep eaves cover this façade. The east façade of the main house, which has narrow eaves,



Rear (north) façade of main house, looking south

visible here. It features a double wood door with full-height glass that leads to the dining area.

Rear (north) façade. The rear façade of the studio is composed of six identically sized bays and one narrow bay. The outside bays are clad in vertical wood matching the wood seen elsewhere on the building. The three central bays have a tall, fixed light that extends to door height, surmounted by a fixed light and a solid panel of identical proportions. To the left (east) is one bay with a single wood door of full-height glass, topped by a single light and solid panels of the same proportions as on the central bays. The outside bay to the right (west) displays a flush solid panel topped by two hopper-style windows and another solid panel, all reflecting the same proportions as seen elsewhere on this façade. The hopper style windows have black metal frames and the fixed windows have wood frames.

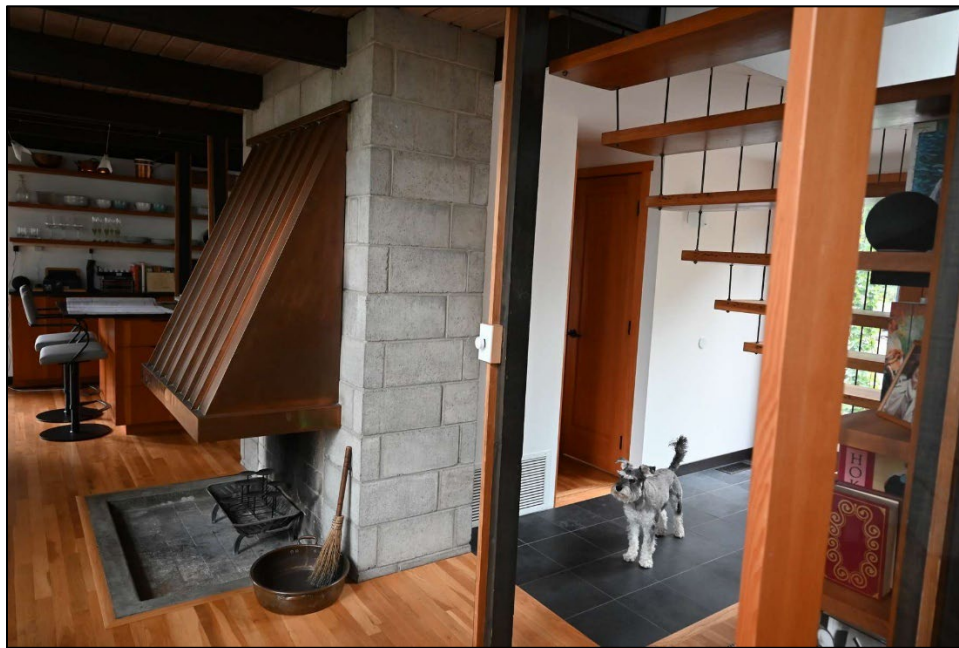
The rear façade of the main portion of the building is made up of a wide panel of vertical boards slightly offset from center, with two bays of solid panels, hopper style windows, and fixed windows on the left (east) and three bays, dominated by tall, fixed lights, on the right (west). The eaves above this façade are deep, supported by beams that match the placement of the fins on the front of the building and extend beyond the eaves.

West side façade. There are no openings on the west side facade, which is finished in vertical wood. It is covered by narrow eaves.

Interior

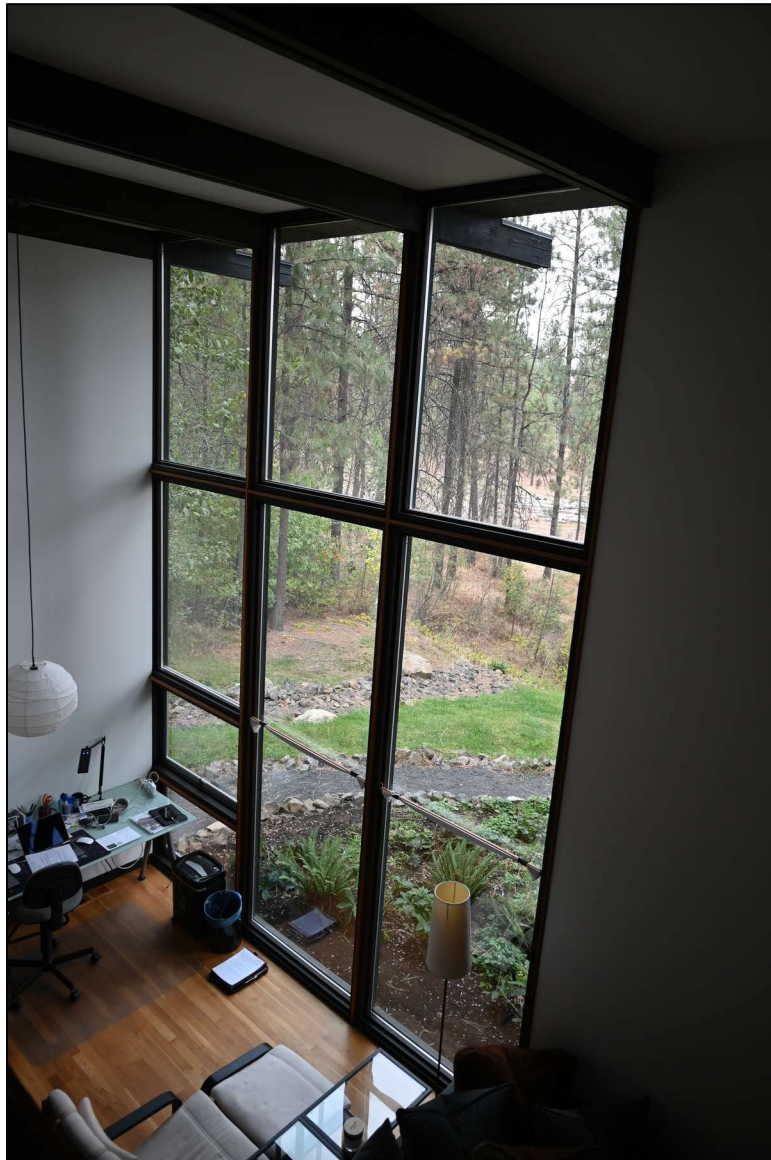
The front entry to the Phillips House opens into a foyer with an open, floating, straight-run stair with a raised landing at the bottom on the left, and a short hallway to the main portion of the house on the right. The foyer rises the full height of the house and features a large, paper globe light suspended from the ceiling, which is typical of the suspended fixtures found throughout the house. The left (west) wall here has simple bookshelves of 2" x 10" boards mounted on the wood-clad wall that rise about one-and-one-half floors and extend nearly the full length of this wall. The stairs are made of simple 2" x 12" boards and vertical slender steel rods; the hall floor is finished in slate.

At the center of the house, beginning at the end of the entry hall, is the large concrete block chimney that forms the back wall of the central hearth, which faces north into the main living space. The fireplace sits in front of the concrete wall, within a shallow recessed firepit, and is covered by a large, sloping, copper hood. The portion of the rear (north end) of the house above the living room and office area is open and rises the full height of the house. It includes a dining area in the northeast corner (at the end of the kitchen), a living room area in the center, and an office area in the northwest corner.



Main entry, fireplace on left, floating staircase on right

The rooms on the south side of this floor are one story in height. In the southeast corner is the kitchen, which features a large, centered, north-south island and is open to the dining area. A door to the studio is located on the south end of east wall here. Cabinets and open shelving, of the same simple design as other shelving in the house, line this wall. Behind the chimney, accessed from a short east-west hall, is a bathroom and a coat closet. In the



Main window wall, viewed from upstairs, looking northwest

southwest corner is a bedroom, accessed from the office and enclosed by narrow (22") double wood doors with full-height glass and two additional similar panels.

The studio, which is accessed from the interior by a door on the south side of the kitchen, is in essence one large room, with additional doors to the outside on the north and south sides. A loft on the west side of the room, accessed via a ladder, partially covers the floor. The north window wall lights the interior.

The second level of the house covers about two-thirds of the first level, allowing for light and views from the north window wall to reach the upper floor hall and master bedroom.

At the top of the stairs is an east-west hallway that accesses a bathroom and laundry just east of the stairway, adjacent to the chimney. At the east end is the master bedroom, which is enclosed with a solid rail of horizontal wood that allows for views over the central portion of the house and can be closed off with a Japanese style sliding screen. On the west end of this floor is another bedroom.

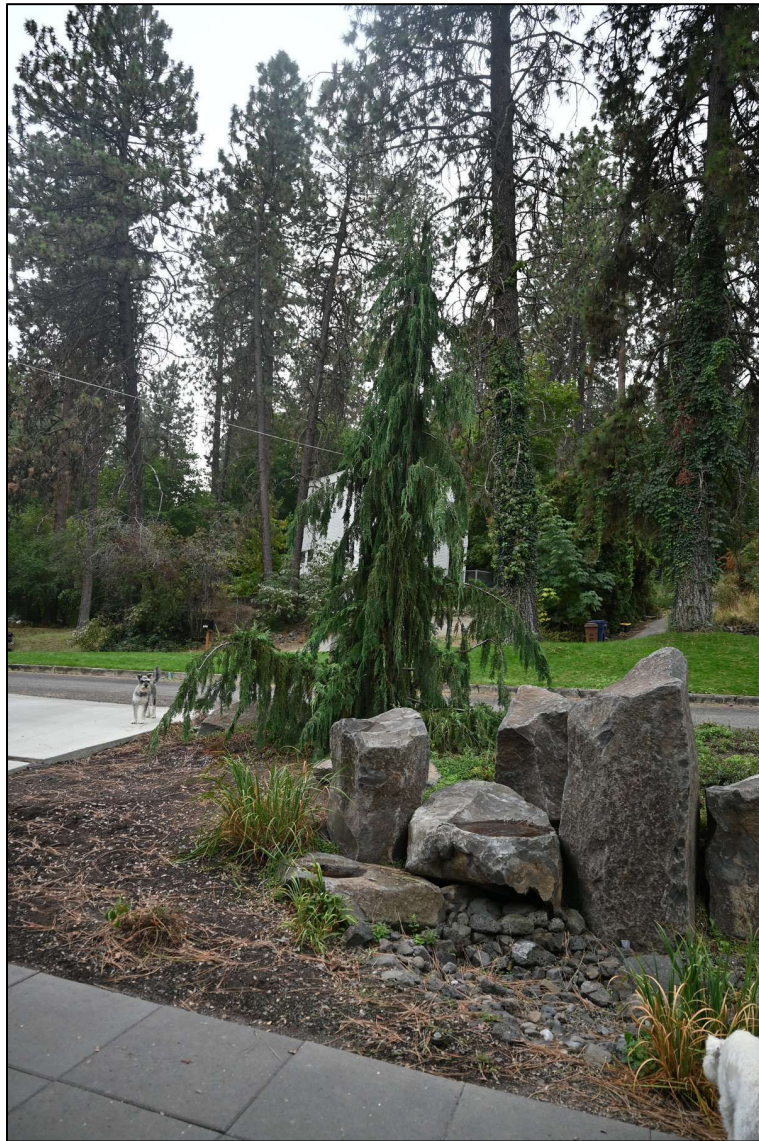
The materials and finishes within the house are as follows. Walls are typically painted sheetrock. A four-foot module is repeated throughout, emphasized with vertical strips of wood. A motif that is seen throughout is a 3-1/2" wide, black-painted board marking these divisions on which is centered a narrow strip of natural-colored wood. The proportions of these divisions are repeated in the window mullions. Ceilings are finished with wood decking or sheetrock with exposed beams.

The four-foot modules may also be marked with narrow vertical wood strips or 'pilasters,' columns or beams of paired 2" x 6" boards. The predominant colors are white (in the case of the painted sheetrock), black (for mullions, columns, pilasters, and beams), natural wood, for the applied woodwork, and gray, for the concrete block chimney. A few built-ins, such as in the master bedroom, provide storage. Doors, wood trim, the wall behind the main bookshelf (which is fir), shelving throughout, the main stair, kitchen cabinets, and the floors all have natural wood finishes. Ceilings are sheetrock, painted white, or unfinished wood decking with black exposed beams. Floors are hardwood, with maple on the ground floor and fir on the second floor. The overall impression of the house is one of openness with an underlying order reinforced by the proportions, design details, materials, and natural colors.

Landscaping

The yard around the house was landscaped between 2020 and 2025, resulting in the appearance that it has today. Originally the landscaping was fairly simple, with some lawn and a low perimeter stone fence in the front yard that bridged the levels of the yard. Today the yard continues to reflect the natural setting of the house, which is, simply speaking, a downward slope from the street toward the rear or north end of the largely rectangular lot. The areas around the house and garage are more finished than before, however. Materials are gravel, square pavers, basalt rock, native plants, introduced trees, and existing Ponderosa pines.

The front of the house is finished with gravel, defined by an informal border of stones and plantings. Adjacent to the driveway entry is an informal focal arrangement of basalt rocks, a Nootka cypress, and native plants. A combination of formal and informal paths of square pavers lead from the driveway to the front entry and from the carport to the front entry (the driveway is concrete, as is the parking pad in the carport). Two mature Ponderosa pines are located in the front yard. This area is also embellished with glass tiles set in the ground.



Focal arrangement in front entry yard, looking south

A path from the carport around the east side of the house is composed of square pavers set in gravel. Pavers are also used to create a patio in back of the studio and outside the dining room. Beyond the footprint of the house pavers are set in gravel. Another gravel bed defines the space for three raised wood planters and a mature Ponderosa pine. Behind the main portion of the house is a gravel walkway lined with stones around an informal planting bed. Informal terraces continue down the hill with a variety of trees. The rest of the sloped yard retains its natural appearance.

ORIGINAL APPEARANCE & SUBSEQUENT MODIFICATIONS

At one time the house had a large, full-width deck across the back (north) side with a simple perimeter bench around most of it. That was removed about 2015 and the site formally landscaped. An open screen of narrow slats covered one bay in front of the main entry door at one point. That has since been removed. Doors were changed from simple flush doors to wood doors with full-height glass. The largest change was the addition of the studio on the east side of the house and a new carport and shed, completed in 2020. In the course of that remodel a smaller one-car carport and existing shed were removed. The new carport has a slightly higher roof than the previous carport and exposed beams. The addition and new carport respect the materials and proportions of the original house and shed. The north window wall of the studio repeats the proportions of the north window wall of the house, but with greater symmetry, in contrast to the asymmetry seen on the house. On the interior, the master bedroom was enlarged by removing an interior wall between this bedroom and a smaller one to the south, resulting in the room that is there today. The kitchen was re-designed, resulting in a north-south orientation and greater openness than was there previously.

INTEGRITY

In order to be eligible for listing in the Spokane Register of Historic Places, a property must fulfill one or more of the categories under which it is significant and qualifies for listing. It must also retain integrity. Integrity is a function of the property's location, design, materials, workmanship, and association. The following outlines the ways in which the Phillips House possesses these aspects.

Location is the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred.

The house is in its original location.

Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property.

The design of the original house is intact. An addition and new carport were constructed in 2020 in a way that would meet the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, had they applied to this house when the addition was constructed, with a particular focus on Standards #9 and #10, which speak to new additions.¹ The new addition is consistent

¹ Standards #9 and #10 are as follows:

9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

with the main house in scale, materials, and design features. It is differentiated from the original house primarily in its symmetry, which contrasts with the asymmetry of the main house. Interior changes to the original house that were made in this same time frame are relatively minor and are consistent with the Standards for Rehabilitation.

Materials are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property.

The materials for the house are intact. The materials for the addition and new carport match the materials and construction methods for the original house.

Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory.

The workmanship for the house is intact. Changes to the main house re-used existing materials and features where possible and were matched to the original where that was not possible. The materials for the addition and new carport match the materials and construction methods for the original house.

Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property.

The association of the house is intact. Historically the house was used as a single family residence and it remains in that use today.

10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

Kate D. Weeks, and Anne E. Grimmer, *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring & Reconstructing Historic Buildings*. Washington DC: US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1955.

SUMMARY STATEMENT

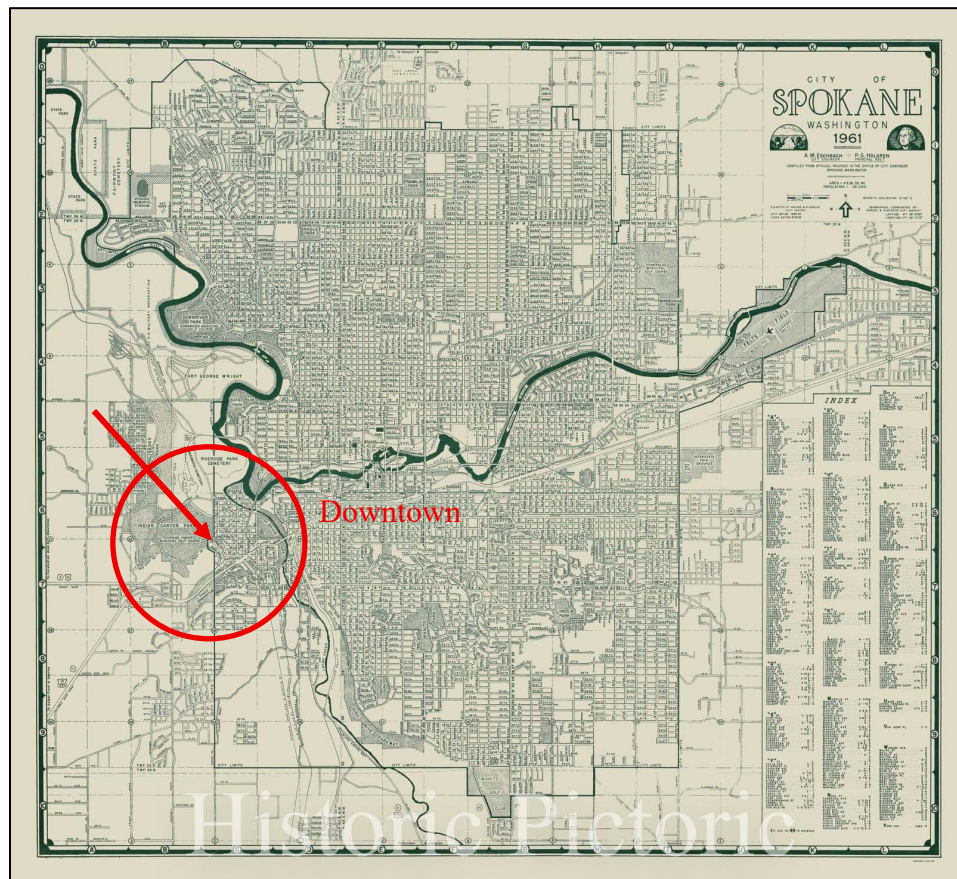
The 1955 Phillips House at 611 S. Montavilla Drive is significant and eligible for listing in the Spokane Register of Historic Places under Category C in the area of design, for possessing high artistic values, and for representing the work of a master. The single family house exemplifies the Contemporary style in Modern residential design, which was popular in the mid-20th century in Spokane and across the country. It embodies the Modern design characteristics found in residential design at this time, regardless of the specific style, including open floor plans; an attempt to “bring the outdoors in;” a generous use of glass; the use of natural materials and finishes or alternatively, new materials; and a strong connection to the landscape. The Phillips House is a unique example of Contemporary design, however, in part because of the use of the projecting fins across the front façade that expresses the organization of the design and interior and exterior integration. The addition to the house, constructed in 2020, respects the residence’s original design while adding its own unique symmetrical interpretation of the house’s exterior design features. The house was designed by Spokane architect Warren Cummings Heylman. Best known for his more flamboyant commercial and institutional properties, this residence (his first to be nominated to the Spokane Register) is more understated and is representative of his mid-20th century residential work. It retains excellent integrity. The house was constructed in an outlying neighborhood of late 19th century parks and cemeteries and the historic Fort George Wright, which began to be developed with residences in the post-World War II era, as this house was. Today the Phillips House is one of four residences on two short, parallel streets that were designed by Warren Heylman, including his own family house, which is still extant.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

The West Hills Neighborhood

The Phillips House is located at the east end of the West Hills neighborhood, as identified by the City of Spokane. It is near the end of Montavilla Drive, a one-third-mile drive that travels northwest from the west end of W. 9th Street to 604 S. Montavilla Drive, the last house on the street, which is close to the Indian Canyon Golf Course. The neighborhoods to the immediate east are Latah/Hangman and Peaceful Valley. Historically a remote area, it continues to have significant open spaces today, including parks, cemeteries, the Finch Arboretum (which historically included Garden Springs Park), the Indian Canyon Golf Course (the easternmost 17th green of the golf course is just one lot away), the Indian Canyon Natural Area, and the grounds of the historic Fort George Wright. A smaller open space is the 1951 Whittier Park and Playground, which is 3.5 acres in size and is one lot east of the Phillips House.

Part of the reason for the distinctively separate parts of the neighborhood is the presence of streams and roadways that separate the various areas, and the topography. Garden Springs Creek and Indian Canyon Creek run through the area. The Spokane River runs



Map of Spokane in 1961, showing location of Phillips House

east and north of the neighborhood. The east-west 1912 Sunset Highway was once the major road (State Route 12) south of the Indian Canyon Golf Course and the subject neighborhood. Today Interstate 90, constructed in this location in the mid-1960s, defines the south edge. Finally, wooded hillsides, for example, along S. Indian Canyon Drive, reinforce a sense of separation.

Despite its remote location, the West Hills neighborhood has been a part of the city since its earliest days. Historically the land was occupied by the Spokane Indians, including Chief Spokane Garry towards the end of his life.² It was farmed by Chinese immigrants in the 1880s, due to its ready source of water. The area east of H Street, which is directly north of the Phillips House, became part of Spokane as early as 1891, when the west city boundary was drawn here. Construction of Fort George Wright, a military post, began in 1897 and was completed in 1899; today it occupies the north end of the neighborhood. Indian Canyon Park, which was praised by the Olmsted Brothers when they designed the

² Chrisanne Beckman and Natalie Perrin, *National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, City of Spokane Parks and Boulevards (1891-1974)*, August 17, 2015:Section E, page 7. Jim Kershner, Jim, "Spokane Garry," *The Spokesman-Review*, September 21, 2008:39.

city's park system in 1908, was established in 1912.³ And land for the Finch Arboretum was purchased in 1913, although the arboretum was not established until 1947.⁴

The cemeteries, which are north of the Indian Canyon Golf Course and the subject property, also lend a sense of openness to the area. They are as follows: the 50-acre Riverside Memorial Park, opened 1907 and dedicated in 1914;⁵ the 151-acre Greenwood Memorial Terrace (85 acres are developed), founded in 1888; and the four-acre Jewish cemetery, Mount Nebo Cemetery, which is north of the Riverside Mausoleum.

The north-south H Street, which is directly north of the subject property, was the west boundary of the City of Spokane until 1948. The end of Montavilla Drive, which H Street would cross if extended, was included in the boundary, despite being located slightly west of it. Areas west and south of H Street were annexed to the city into the 1960s, while Fort George Wright, which today is the location of Spokane Falls Community College and the campus of the Mukogawa Women's University, was annexed in 1967 and 1990, respectively. Spokane International Airport, which today makes up the bulk of the land area of the neighborhood today, was annexed in 2012.⁶ While the area still has significant open spaces, it has taken on a more suburban appearance since the end of World War II.

The Phillips family

The Phillips House was commissioned by Jack and Barbara Phillips, a journalist and novelist, respectively, from the highly regarded Spokane architect Warren C. Heylman, their neighbor to the immediate west. Daughter Mary Ann, an artist and architect, inherited the Phillips House on her father's death in 2007 and began a renovation and addition that culminated in 2020. On Mary Ann's death in 2024 her brother Thomas Phillips, who is retired, bought the house and is the present owner.

³ Op cit., Beckman, *City of Spokane Parks and Boulevards* . . . , Section F, page 40.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Julie Y. Russell, "Riverside Cemetery," *Spokane Historical*, <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports/have-passport/renew.html#Step%20>, accessed October 2025.

⁶ "West Hills, Spokane," *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Hills,_Spokane, accessed October 2025.



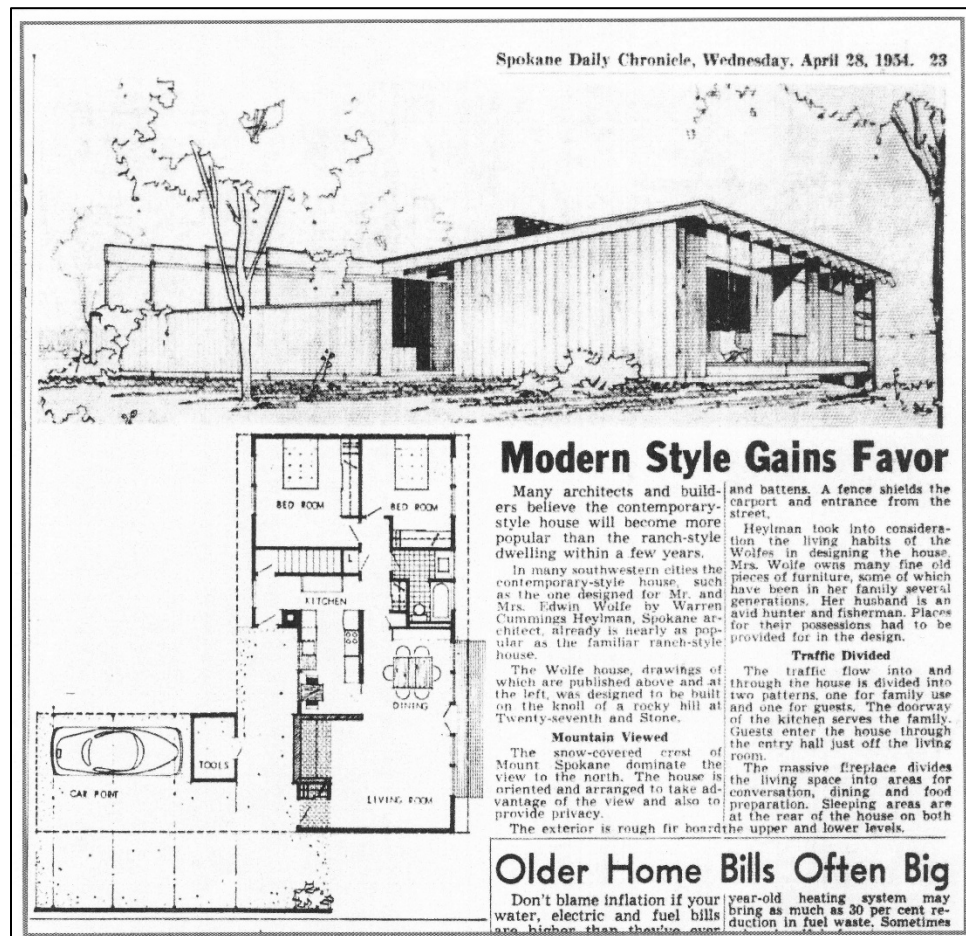
Phillips family and Phillips House construction photo, 1955

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

Modern residential design in Spokane

The Phillips House is designed in the Contemporary style, which occurred within the Modern Movement in architecture from about the 1950s to the 1970s.⁷ The Modern Movement itself took place from about 1930 to 1970 in the Pacific Northwest, and encompassed many substyles that found expression in residential, commercial, and industrial buildings. A simple definition of Modern architecture is as follows: “A loosely

⁷“Architectural Style Guide,” *Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation*.
<https://dahp.wa.gov/historic-preservation/historic-buildings/architectural-style-guide>, accessed October 2025.



Wolfe House by Warren Heylman, 1954

applied term, used since the late 19th century, for buildings, in any of [sic] number of styles, in which emphasis in design is placed on functionalism, rationalism, and up-to-date methods of construction; in contrast with architectural styles based on historical precedents and traditional ways of building.”⁸ In residential architecture, Modern design might encompass everything from high style, architect-designed houses to the ordinary, vernacular houses that often make up our subdivisions. Within the overall category are a number of specific styles.⁹

Pacific Northwest architectural historian Francis D.K. Ching refers to Modernism in general as, “A deliberate philosophical and practical estrangement from the past in the arts and literature occurring in the course of the 20th century and taking form in any of

⁸ Cyril M. Harris, *American Architecture, An Illustrated Encyclopedia*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc. 1998:217.

⁹ Contemporary houses such as the Phillips House which means contemporary to the post-war period

various innovative movements and styles.”¹⁰ In Europe Modernism had strong roots in the International Style, which reached Spokane through architects Royal McClure, Bruce Walker, and Bill Trogdon, who studied with German Bauhaus architect Walter Gropius at Harvard University. An example of an International Style building in Spokane is the 1949 Studio Apartments by architects McClure & Adkison.¹¹ Specific areas in the US developed regionally based modernist expressions, such as the American Southwest and the Pacific Northwest, where the use of regional materials was a particularly strong influence, such as adobe in the Southwest and wood in the Pacific Northwest.



Wells House by Warren Heylman, 1955

Modern architectural styles found in Spokane seen in residential design include Brutalism, Contemporary, Populux and Googie, Neo-Expressionism (a number of Heylman’s commercial buildings reflect this style), New Formalism, Pavilion, Ranch, Shed, and Wrightian (Heylman’s Norman and Dorothy Wells House is designed in the Wrightian style).¹² Modern design in Spokane is discussed in the historic context for Spokane’s mid-20th century architectural survey in terms of modern values.¹³ These

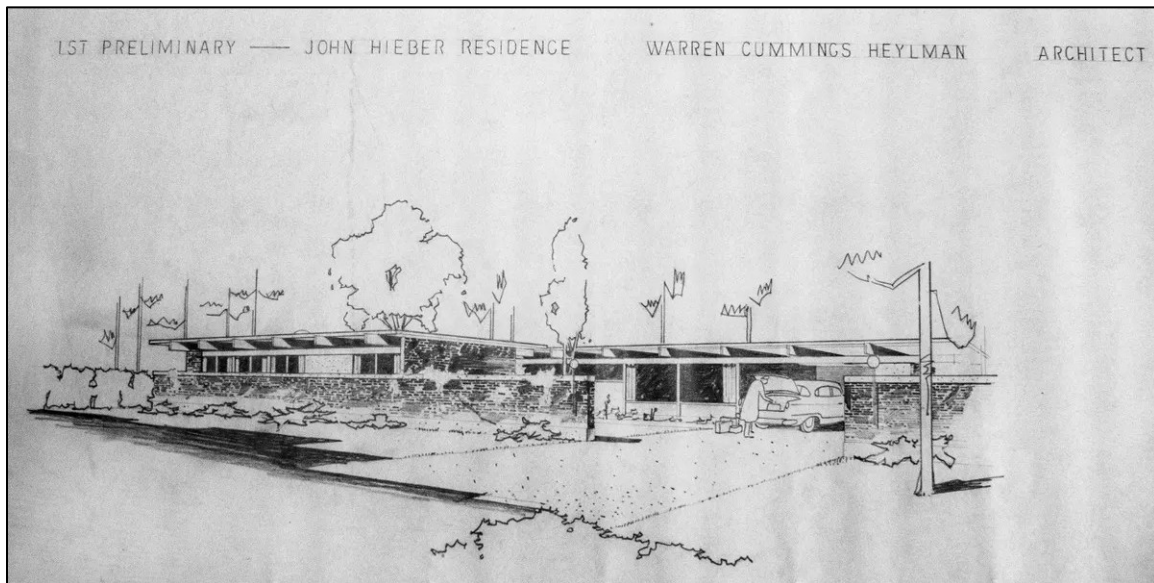
¹⁰ Francis D.K., Ching, *A Visual Dictionary of Architecture, Second Edition*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2012:139.

¹¹ Diana Painter and Aaron Bragg, *Spokane Mid-20th Century Architectural Survey Report, City of Spokane Mid-20th Century Modern Context Statement and Inventory*. Spokane, WA: City of Spokane, August 2013:21.

¹² Explanations and examples of these styles can be found in Diana Painter and Aaron Bragg’s . *Spokane Mid-20th Century Architectural Survey Report, City of Spokane Mid-20th Century Modern Context Statement and Inventory*. Spokane, WA: City of Spokane, August 2013.

¹³ Painter and Bragg, *Spokane Mid-20th Century Architectural Survey Report*.

include the importance of the three-dimensional arrangement of forms as part of the architectural expression; the importance of two-dimensional composition, which is often asymmetrical; and the use of pattern, texture, color, reflectivity, and other visual aspects of building materials in place of traditional decorative features. Modern design characteristics that are often found in residential design, regardless of the specific style, include open floor plans; an attempt to “bring the outdoors in;” a generous use of glass; the use of natural materials and finishes or alternatively, new materials; and a strong connection to the landscape.



The John Hieber House by Warren Heylman (no longer extant), rendering

The Contemporary style

Contemporary style houses were often architect-designed and placed an emphasis on formal geometric design. The following describes the style as it occurred in Spokane, adapted from the *City of Spokane Mid-20th Century Modern Context Statement and Inventory* by Diana Painter and Aaron Bragg:

“Contemporary” is a style name adopted in the post-war era for Modern, high-style houses. As an illustration of the use of the term, a *Spokesman-Review* article published on August 27, 1950 about the Meenach development homes by McClure & Adkison – including the Thomas J. Meenach Jr. house, entitled “‘Contemporary’ Homes Bring Modern Ideas to Spokane.” In the article Spokane architect Royal McClure offered the statement that these homes are “built in the spirit of today, the age of expression.” Contemporary houses offer few traditional stylistic features or details, relying instead on overall form and simple Modern details to convey their style. Materials can also play an important role, where their color and texture lend a richness and complement the composition of the building

façades. Contemporary houses were often designed by architects, in contrast to the more common Ranch-style homes of the era, which were the building blocks of post-war neighborhoods. Contemporary roofs typically have a low pitch and may include gable, shed, or flat roofs, or more expressionistic roof forms. Common characteristics include an emphasis on asymmetrical, two and three-dimensional compositions and expanses of glass, contrasted with clerestories above solid walls where privacy was important. Features of the Contemporary house that were shared by the Ranch-style house include an open floor plan, an orientation toward the rear yard, rather than front yard or street, and the use of windows, courtyards, and other devices to “bring the outdoors in.” The use of natural materials such as stained wood, brick, and stone is common. A post-and-beam house is a type of Contemporary house. This name reflects a construction method rather than a style per se, but it shares stylistic features with the Contemporary house. The open floor plan of the post-and-beam house required interior posts and beams for structural support. This left exterior walls free, which was expressed in extended beams supporting deep overhangs and expanses of glass to the eaves of the house. Post-and-beam houses are further characterized by low-pitched gable roofs; extensive use of wood, often with a vertical grain; and simple or rustic details.¹⁴

The difference between a traditional house and a Contemporary house is offered by eminent architectural historian Virginia Savage McAlester: “Earlier styles were generally defined by the types of decorative detail applied to their exteriors – on doors, windows, porch supports, wall surfaces, dormers, and roof-wall junctions. The Contemporary style rejects this approach and is instead more concerned with the spaces inside the house and the way in which each space relates to the outdoors.”¹⁵ Additional treatments mentioned by McAlester and found in the Phillips House include the incorporation of a carport (rather than a garage), which lends a more open appearance (this was a favored treatment by Frank Lloyd Wright) and a low, broad, masonry chimney, also favored by Frank Lloyd Wright, and the prominence of the hearth at the center of the interior.¹⁶

Heylman’s commercial design work is more dynamic in form, even flamboyant, and is a contrast to his Contemporary residential design work, especially as seen in the Phillips House, and is categorized as New Expressionism. Michael Houser, architectural historian for the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, uses the examples of the Liberty Lake Golf Clubhouse, the Whitman County Library, Cathedral Plaza, the Spokane County Social and Health Services Building, the Spokane International Airport, and the Parkade (note that the Parkade is actually a New Formalist building).

¹⁴ Painter and Bragg, *Spokane Mid-20th Century Architectural Survey Report*, 19.

¹⁵ Virginia Savage McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013:630.

¹⁶ Ibid.

A good description of Heylman's commercial design vocabulary can be found in the Spokane Register of Historic Places nomination for the Riverview Falls residential tower:

Heylman uses his characteristic curves to define and articulate the building. His use of the curved line reaches back to his earlier and smaller buildings: the Liberty Lake Golf Course (1957) and Hangman Valley Golf Course (1960) clubhouses, and the Whitman County Library in Colfax (1960, NRHP). The Parkade, only five blocks east, also uses the curve but with a formal symmetry and in a Classical format. His linework in these Neo-Expressionist buildings is more playful, perhaps quirky and most definitely unique to Eastern Washington.¹⁷

This nomination of the Phillips House allows for recognition of Heylman's 'quieter' expression of his mid-20th century residential work, seen here for the first time in nomination form.

Architect Warren Heylman

The Phillips House was designed by architect Warren Cummings Heylman. Heylman was born in Spokane on September 23, 1923 to William H. and Jane Heylman and attended Washington State College (now University). He was awarded an architectural engineering degree by the University of Kansas, where he was also enrolled in a V-12 Navy College Training Program, an officer's training program, in 1945. After receiving his degree he returned to Spokane, where he worked for architect G. A. Pehrson from 1945 to 1946, who was the architect for the Hanford Reservation and the Paulsen Medical and Dental Building in Spokane, among many others. He worked for the venerable architecture firm of Whitehouse & Price from 1946 to 1948, which "dominated architectural practice in the Inland Empire into the post-World War II period."¹⁸ And he worked for John P. O'Neill from 1948 to 1950, who was Director of the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) in Washington DC in the 1930s.¹⁹ He served as an officer in the Navy in World War II in 1945 and 1946 and then served again in the Navy in the Korean War from 1950 to 1952. He was discharged and returned to Spokane in 1952, where he immediately founded his eponymous firm of Warren Cummings Heylman & Associates.²⁰

¹⁷ Jim Kolva (Jim Kolva Associates, LLC), *Spokane Register of Historic Places Nomination, Riverfalls Tower*, November 8, 2021:Section 8, page 2.

¹⁸ The firm also designed the Hutton Settlement, a 300-acre children's home designed in the Tudor Revival style northeast of Spokane. Anna Harbine, "Hutton Settlement," *Spokane Historical*, <https://spokanehistorical.org/items/show/293>, accessed October 2025.

¹⁹ Amy Gilley, "Women's Contributions to the Historic American Buildings Survey, 1933-1941," *CRM Journal*, Summer 2008:39-63

²⁰ Michael Houser, "Warren C. Heylman 1923-2022," *Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation*, June 2010, <https://dahp.wa.gov/historic-preservation/research-and-technical-preservation-guidance/architect-biographies/bio-for-warren-c-heyman>, accessed September 2025.



Architect Warren Heylman in 1962

Heylman is perhaps best known for his commercial buildings. Among them are the Spokane International Airport with William H. Trogdon (1965); The Parkade Parking Garage (1967), which is listed in the Spokane Register of Historic Places; the Riverfalls Tower apartment building (1973), which is listed in the Spokane Register; two country clubs, the Liberty Lake Golf Course Club House (1957) and the Hangman Valley Golf Course Club House (1969); and the controversial Spokane County Social and Health



The Parkade Parking Garage, 1967

Services Center (1977). In addition to Riverfalls Tower, he designed several apartment complexes and residential towers in Spokane, including Cathedral Plaza and the Lincoln Heights Garden Apartments, and an apartment tower complex, Capital Lake Towers, in Olympia. The design of the 1972 BNSF railroad bridge, known as the Latah Creek Bridge, was a departure for Heylman into another property type. His only building that is listed in the National Register of Historic Places is the Whitman County Library (1960) in Colfax, Washington, although the Parkade's nomination has been forwarded to the Keeper of the National Register from the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation and is expected to be listed shortly.

By his own count, Heylman also designed more than twenty single family houses.²¹ The earliest house identified in the course of research was the 1950 Earl D. McCarthy house,

²¹ Nicholas Deshais, "Warren Heylman's architectural vision 'all over' Spokane," *The Spokesman-Review*, July 10, 2016.

close to Heylman's own residence on W. West Drive. His own family home was constructed in 1952. He continued to design houses throughout the mid-to-late 1960s, but his most prolific decade for house design was the 1950s. Interestingly, a duplicate of the Phillips House was constructed in 1955 in Lawrence, Kansas by the Zimmerman family, who used his plans to erect their own 'Phillips House,' which was evaluated and lauded for its historic significance, and listed as a local landmark in the Lawrence Register of Historic Places. The narrative read in part: "An outstanding example of contemporary architecture, this compact, steel post and beam two-story is the work of Warren Heylman, a noted Spokane, Wash.-based architect who designed the Spokane International Airport terminal and many other iconic examples of modernism in the Spokane area. Heylman's brother-in-law, Lee Zimmerman, owner of Zimmerman Steel in Lawrence, commissioned the house for his family."²² Back in Spokane, architect and historic preservationist Glen Davis said of him that his early residential work was his finest and that the John G.F. Hieber home stood out.²³

His residential designs often appeared in the local newspapers, the *Spokane Chronicle* and *The Spokesman-Review*. At least two articles were written by Heylman himself, with accompanying drawings and photos. Heylman wrote an article on the 1955 Dr. Harold Beaty home, illustrated with plans and a rendering, in 1955.²⁴ The Hollister House was published in *The Spokesman-Review* in September 1953.²⁵ Heylman's articles on the design of specific houses responded to some of the issues of the day and how he addressed them in his residential design work. The goal in the design of the Hollister house was to make an economic use of space for a young family on a sloping lot that they had already purchased, in a timely fashion: "Unity without monotony," utilizing a 4'-0" module and standard-sized building materials, was the way that Heylman proposed to achieve this with easy-to-maintain materials and finishes, as seen in the Phillips House.

The 1954 Edwin Wolfe House, with its careful siting to achieve a dramatic view of Mount Spokane, was published in the *Spokane Chronicle* in an article on the popularity of the Contemporary style: "Many architects and builders believe the contemporary-style house will become more popular than the ranch-style dwelling within a few years."²⁶ That the style was becoming increasingly popular in Spokane was evidenced by the planned development of 200 Contemporary and Ranch Style homes in a tract development in northwest Spokane called Westview. Architect Fred B. Pfeifer was presumably the designer for the Ranch Style homes and Heylman was the architect for the Contemporary homes.²⁷

²² "By the numbers: Zimmerman House," *Lawrence Modern*, <https://lawrencemodern.com/bakers-dozen/zimmerman-house/>, accessed October 2024.

²³ Nicholas Dechais, "Midcentury Gone Missing," *The Spokesman-Review*, October 17, 2018:a1.

²⁴ Warren Cummings Heylman, "House on Cliff Gives a Sweeping View," *The Spokesman-Review*, November 6, 1955:16.

²⁵ Warren C. Heylman, "Two-Level House Is Answer to Family Space Problem," *Spokesman-Review* on September 27, 1953:52.

²⁶ "Modern Style Gains Favor," *Spokane Chronicle*, April 28, 1954:23.

²⁷ "\$3,150,000 in New Homes Scheduled," *Spokane Chronicle*, February 24, 1956:1.



Zimmerman House by Warren Heylman, Lawrence, Kansas, 1955



Phillips House in 2018, before addition

Heylman wrote about his own house in a 1953 article in *The Spokesman-Review* that was published with plans and a photograph. In the article he wrote about how he worked with the difficult site, a challenging budget, and how he thought about the unusual design. This article illustrates how many features in the Heylman house are also seen in the Phillips House. He noted that the plan was laid out in 4'-0" modules, ". . . . that is, all window frames, door openings, partition centers, etc., are on 4'-0" grid lines. Thus, the skeleton frame's structural members form a pattern inside and outside the house."²⁸ This allowed him to also utilize the standard dimensions for plywood and sheetrock, as is the case with the Phillips House, which he designed not long after his own home. The Heylman house also resembles the Phillips House in that the fireplace is at the heart of the home. The importance of this feature was a central tenet of Frank Lloyd Wright houses.²⁹ The arrangement of the rooms, with the bedrooms on the second floor above the open living area, accessed off a balcony hall, is also seen in the Phillips House. The interior color scheme, which reflects the materials used, is also repeated in the Phillips House: "Structural members are stained black, designating strength, shingled surfaces outside are stained a light gray, and interior walls which are plasterboard, are painted bone white. All interior woodwork is finished in its natural color and waxed."³⁰

Heylman's residential and other work was also publicized beyond the local papers. The John G.F. Hieber home (no longer extant) appeared on the cover of *Masonry Building* magazine in 1957.³¹ This house, designed for Heylman's colleague John Hieber, was also published in *Sunset* magazine, *Pacific Builder*, and featured in the *Los Angeles Times*.³² Hieber built The Parkade garage with a consortium of local business owners, which is credited with helping to implement Spokane's urban renewal program in the 1960s.³³ Heylman also worked for Hieber on the rehabilitation of the Bennett Block, which is listed in the Spokane Register of Historic Places and is across the street from The Parkade. *Architecture/West*, a regional magazine, published the 1965 Robert Kramer residence in Mohler, Washington and the Blair Residence of the same year in Liberty Lake, Washington. The 1954 Norman and Dorothy Wells house and the 1959 Paul and Martha True house in Spokane were featured in the *City of Spokane Mid-20th Century Modern Context Statement and Inventory* in 2013, which also profiled Heylman. The *Spokesman-Review* also printed a major piece on the Wrightian Norman and Dorothy Wells House in 2013, the year it was featured in the Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture's annual Mother's Day tour.³⁴ The True home was also featured in a 2013 *Spokesman-Review* article covering the opening of a mid-century modern architectural design exhibit at the Museum of Arts and Culture.³⁵

²⁸ Warren Cummings Heylman, "Smart home on a hillside," *The Spokesman-Review*, April 19, 1953:105.

²⁹ Frank Lloyd Wright, *The Natural House*, New York, NY: Horizon Press, 1954.

³⁰ Heylman, "Smart home on a hillside," 105.

³¹ See also Dechais, "Midcentury Gone Missing," a1.

³² "Magazine Shows Home on Arthur," *Spokane Chronicle*, April 19, 1957:3. Deshais, "Midcentury Gone Missing," a1.

³³ "The Gala Garage," *AIA Journal*, August 1968, pp. 71-78. J. William F. Youngs, *The Fair and the Falls*. Cheney, WA: Eastern Washington University Press, 1996:153-155.

³⁴ "Architect pleased with home's owners," *The Spokesman-Review*, May 9, 2013:S1.

³⁵ "Modernism at the MAC," *The Spokesman-Review*, March 3, 2013:d1.

Heylman formed a partnership with his daughter, architect Ann Heylman Martin, which lasted 35 years.³⁶ Their office of Heylman Martin Architects was in Heylman's Parkade building. Heylman himself practiced architecture in Spokane for forty years, officially retiring from his firm in 1984. He had become a member of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) in 1954 and was elected a Fellow of the organization (FAIA) in 1983.³⁷ He was elected president of the Spokane chapter of the AIA in 1982. Over the years, he was awarded six AIA Spokane Chapter honor awards and received a national Concrete Institute Award for the Parkade.³⁸ His work was also featured in a *Spokesman-Review* article published on the occasion of winning a legacy award from the Spokane Preservation Advocates in 2018, the year of his 95th birthday. He was also active in a variety of community and civic affairs including the Spokane Allied Arts Commission. He died on August 19, 2022 at the age of 98, leaving behind an impressive and lasting legacy of both commercial and residential design in his native city.³⁹

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The 1955 Phillips House at 611 S. Montavilla Drive is significant and eligible for listing in the Spokane Register of Historic Places under Category C in the area of design, for possessing high artistic values and for representing the work of a master. The period of significance is 1955, coinciding with the construction date of the house. Designed by prominent Spokane architect Warren Cummings Heylman, this nomination offers an opportunity to see his lesser known but equally unique residential work, whereas his commercial and institutional work, such as The Parkade Parking Garage and the Spokane County Social and Health Services Building, are more widely known and visible in the Spokane cityscape. The Contemporary style of the house was popular in the mid-20th century, but not as commonly found, unlike its Modern counterpart, as the Ranch Style house. It was also typically an architect-designed house. The Phillips House exemplifies Heylman's design concerns, especially his considerations for and working methods with young mid-century families investing in their first residence. The Phillips House reflects Heylman's design philosophy, developed in conjunction with designing his own house, a valuable aspect of this house. The house has excellent design integrity, displaying the typical characteristics of the day, like a concern with site design and employing natural materials, while reflecting Heylman's unique vision for the Phillips family.

³⁶ Kip Hill, "Warren Heylman, architect behind Parkade, airport and other iconic Spokane designs, dies at 98," *The Spokesman-Review*, August 18, 2022.

³⁷ "Warren Cummings Heylman," *The AIA Historical Directory of American Architects Home*, <https://aiahistoricaldirectory.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/AHDAA/pages/35713952/ahd1019635>, accessed October 2025.

³⁸ Jim Kolva (Jim Kolva Associates, LLC), *Spokane Register of Historic Places Nomination, Parkade Parking Garage*, October 18, 2023:Section 8, page 28.

³⁹ Hill, "Warren Heylman, architect . . .

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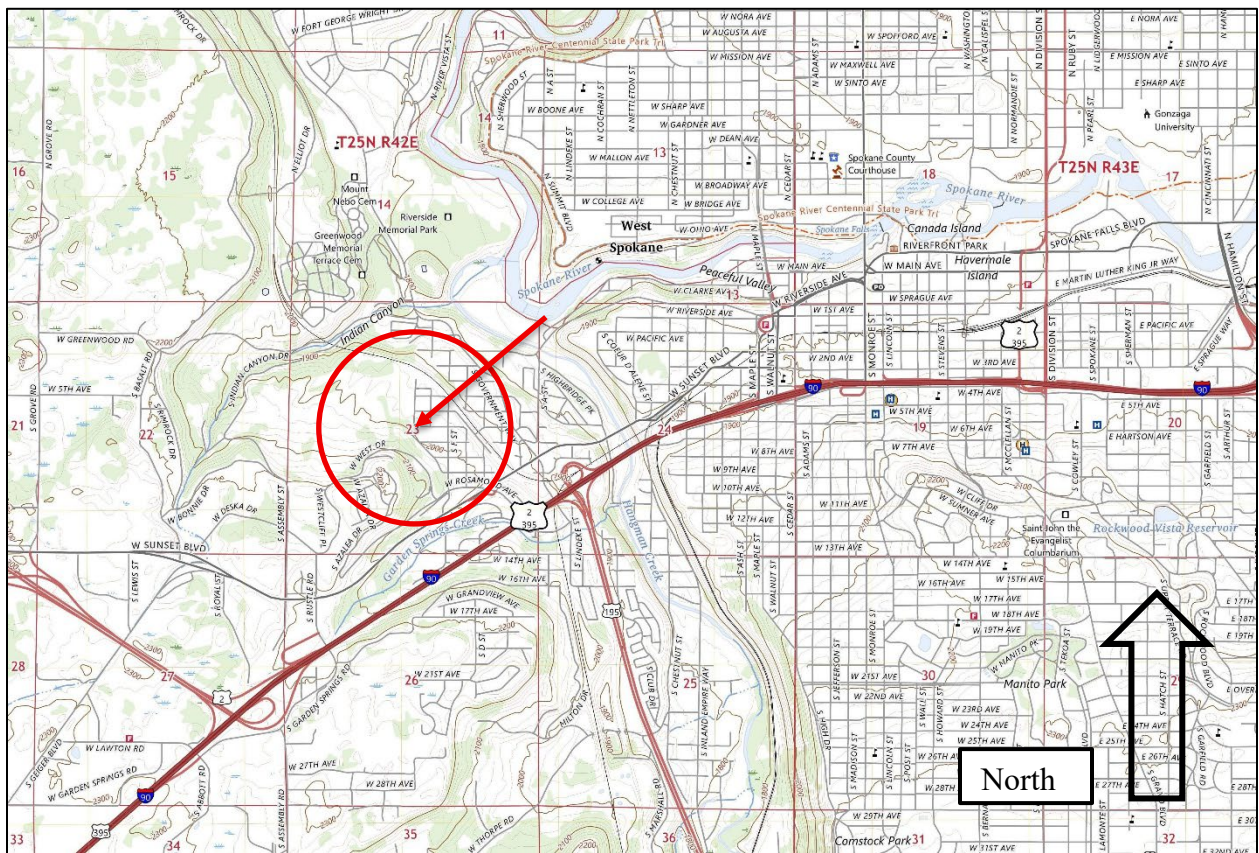
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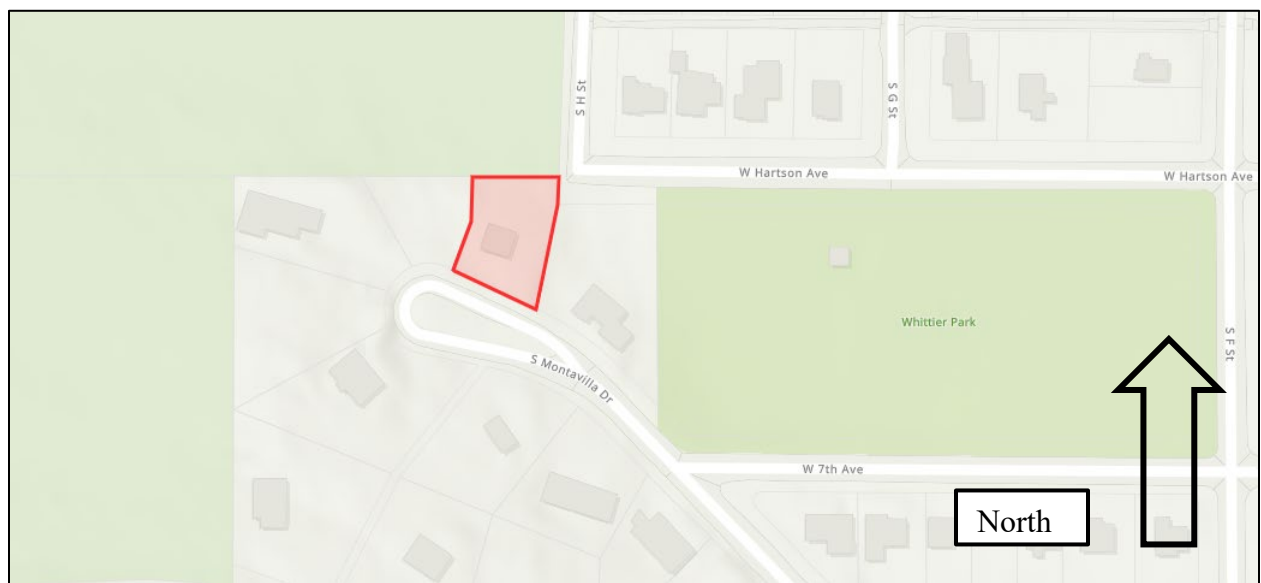
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Figure 1: Site location map, Spokane NW 7.5 minute quadrangle



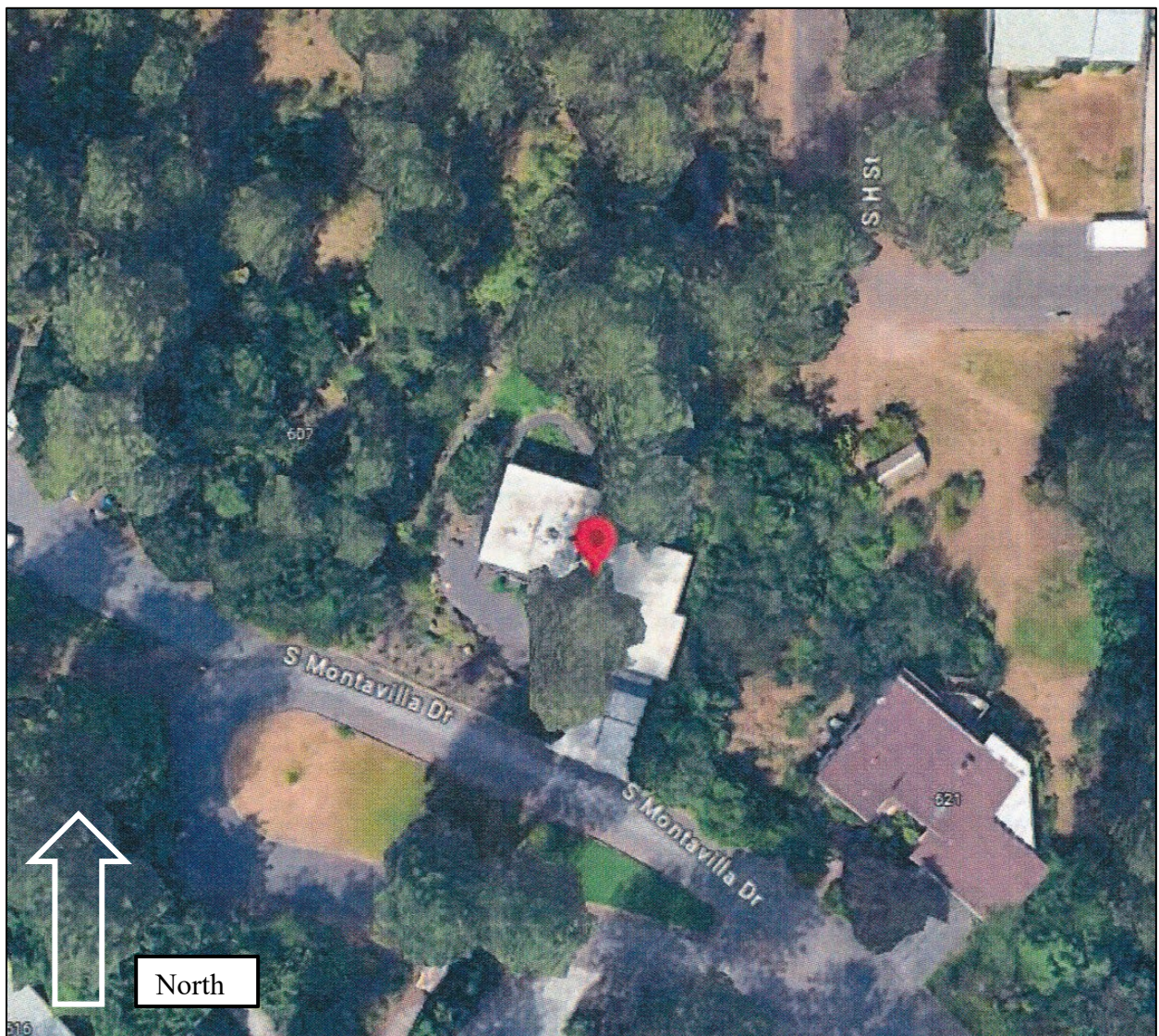
Source: USGS Topographical Maps

Figure 2: Site parcel map



Source: Spokane County Assessor

Figure 3: Aerial site plan



Source: Google maps

Figure 4: .Site plan showing 2015 addition

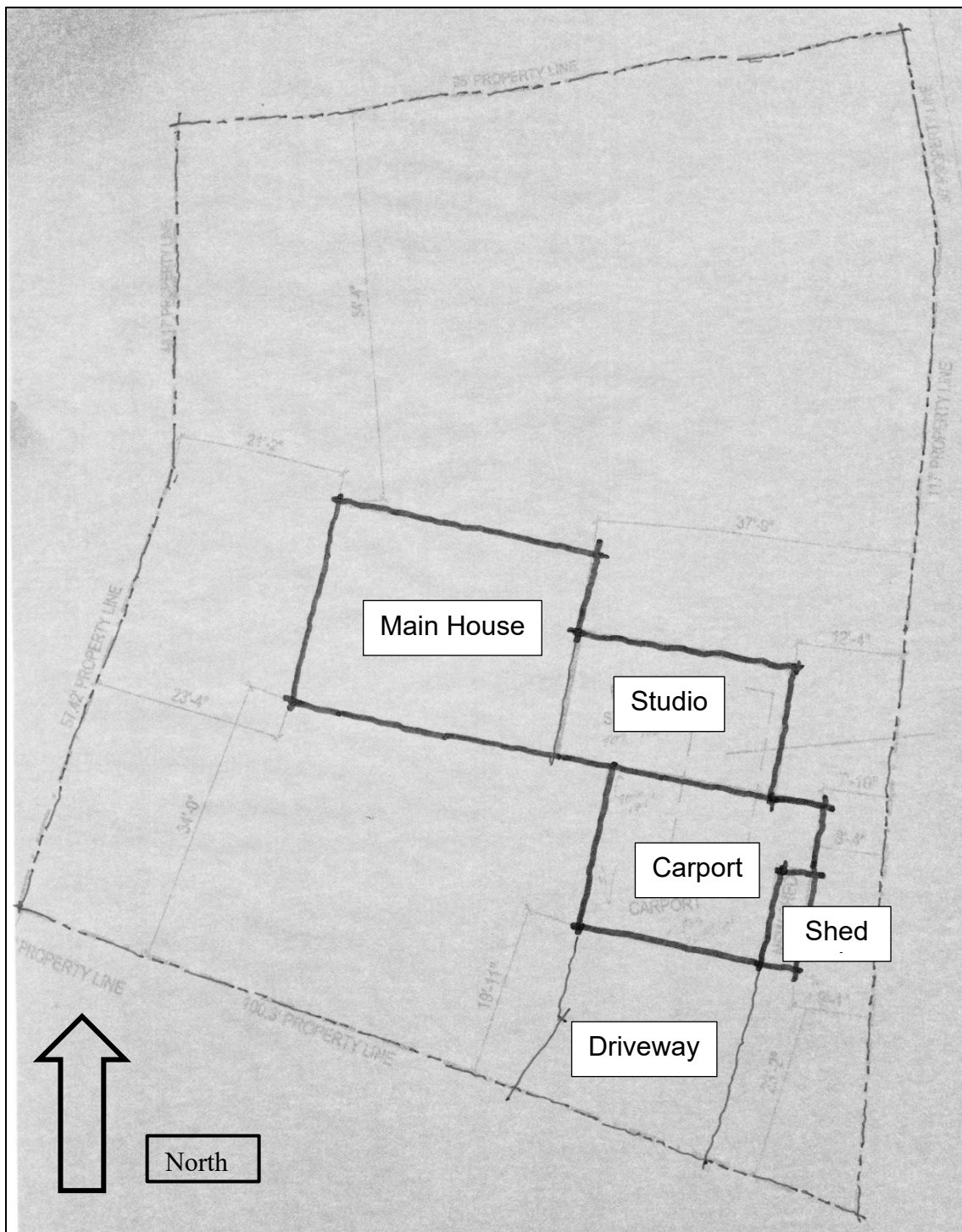
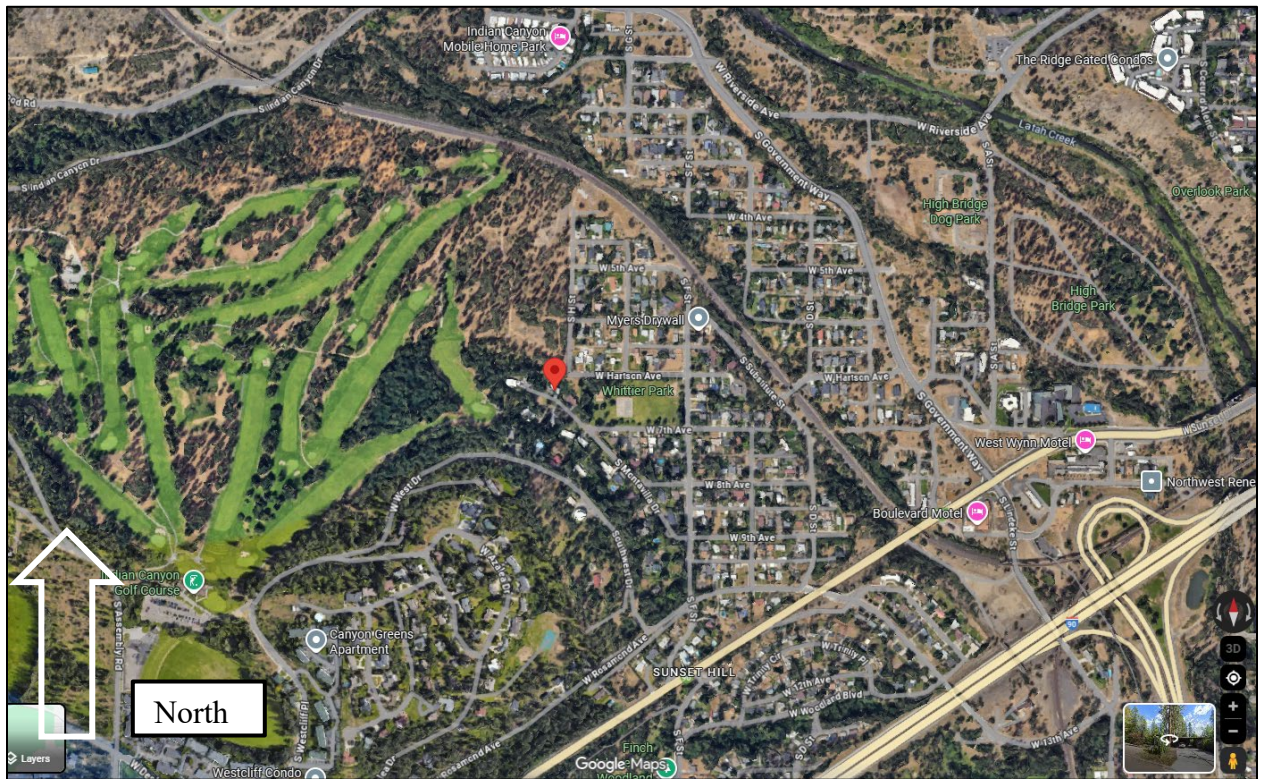
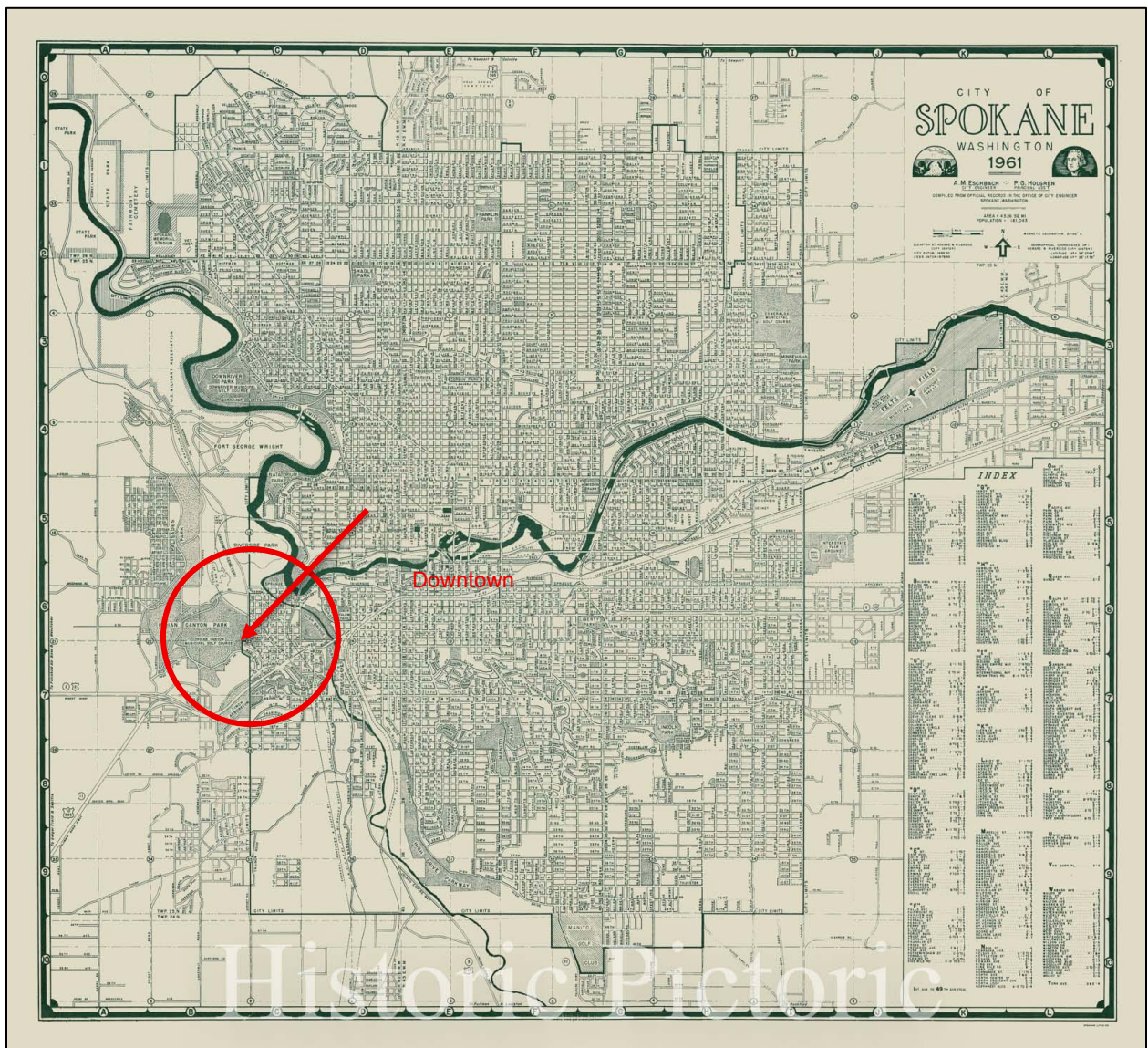


Figure 5: Neighborhood context



Source: Google maps

Figure 6: Map of Spokane in 1961, showing location of Phillips House



Source: Eschbach & Holgren, Spokane

Figure 7: Phillips family and Phillips House construction photo, 1955



Source: Phillips family

Figure 8: Warren Heylman and Phillips House construction photo, 1955



Source: Phillips family

Figure 9: Jack Phillips, no date



Source: Phillips family

Figure 10: Phillips House post-construction photo, 1956



Source: Phillips family

Figure 11: Photo showing rear deck of Phillips House, 1958



Source: Phillips family

Figure 12: Photo showing Phillips House prior to addition, 2018



Source: Phillips family

Figure 13: Photo showing Phillips House prior to renovation, 2018



Source: Phillips family

Figure 14: Contemporary house, Foltz House in Spokane, 1958



Source: City of Spokane Historic Preservation Office

Figure 15: Portrait of Warren Heylman, 1962



Source: The Spokesman-Review

Figure 16: Heylman House by Warren Heylman, 1953

Left: This is the author's new home at 3620 West Drive (near Indian Canyon golf course). Landscaping and roof extension plans have been drawn in. Below: The floor and elevation plans.

was done to achieve unity in the house and also eliminate the many half-filled paint cans left when many colors are used. Structural members are stained black, designating strength, shingled surfaces outside are stained a light gray, and interior walls which are plasterboard are painted bone white. All interior woodwork is finished in its natural color and waxed. The home reflects a philosophy of design, for each line on the plans and each nail in the house there is a reason. It is logical.

Smart home on a hillside

By Warren Cummings Heylman
Spokane Architect

WE'RE still painting, the car shelter and yard work aren't completed but the big job is done. We're in our new home. It's a small house, only 28'x32' on the main floor. Our goal was to create a sturdy, livable home with the greatest amount of "space" on a limited budget. I say "space" instead of area because I believe "space" or volume within an enclosure is as important as the amount of floor area.

We bought our lot several years ago, so I had the site with its many limitations well in mind before the design process began. The plot was a difficult one at best. It lies below West Drive, a road bordering Indian Canyon golf course. An old railroad grade, long abandoned, stretched across the upper part of the lot running east and west. This was the only level ground on the lot. To the north the grade drops off some 30 feet and to the south it climbs half that distance to West Drive. Tall pines and black rock outcroppings cover the hillside.

Our design problems were twofold. We had a limited budget and wished to get the greatest amount of "space" possible for the investment. Secondly the house site is most often viewed from a level about one and one-half story heights above the main floor line. The resultant structure was conceived and executed as a solution to the design problem based upon two fundamental theories. 1) The most economical cubage in conventional house construction is the "space" normally occupied by the attic, therefore, if a method could be devised to utilize this cubage without greatly increasing it, or necessitating the

employment of costly dormers, space could be gained at a low cost. 2) The most important single element in a structure viewed from above is the roof, therefore, the roof must be made the dominant design feature.

The photograph shows my solution in glass, metal, and wood. Sketched on the photograph is the covered passageway to the east and car shelter to the west. When completed the house composition will consist of a strong horizontal plane formed by the carport and covered by passageway in-

grid lines. Thus, the skeleton frame's structural members form a pattern, inside and outside the house. The modular system adapts itself to the efficient use of standard 4'x8' sheets of plywood and plasterboard.

The main floor is void of all unnecessary doors and partitions. Areas are arranged around the centrally located fireplace which is open through to both living room and family area. Circulation radiates from the entry hall vertically to the basement workshop and balcony bedrooms, horizontally to the living room and family area. The basement is devoted to our pottery, sculpting and woodworking shop. The bed-

CROSS SECTION

rooms are located above the kitchen-family area with access from the balcony hall.

Standard frame construction was employed in the house. The exterior doors were constructed by laminating three layers of fir flooring at 45 degree angles to each other. Beside the front door is a panel with glass Japanese fishing floats sandwiched between two layers of plywood.

We laid out our color scheme on the function of the material painted or stained, rather than an individual room basis. This

Tired of shoveling coal?

SWITCH TO
REALLY MODERN
ELECTRIGLAS
RADIANT
HEAT...

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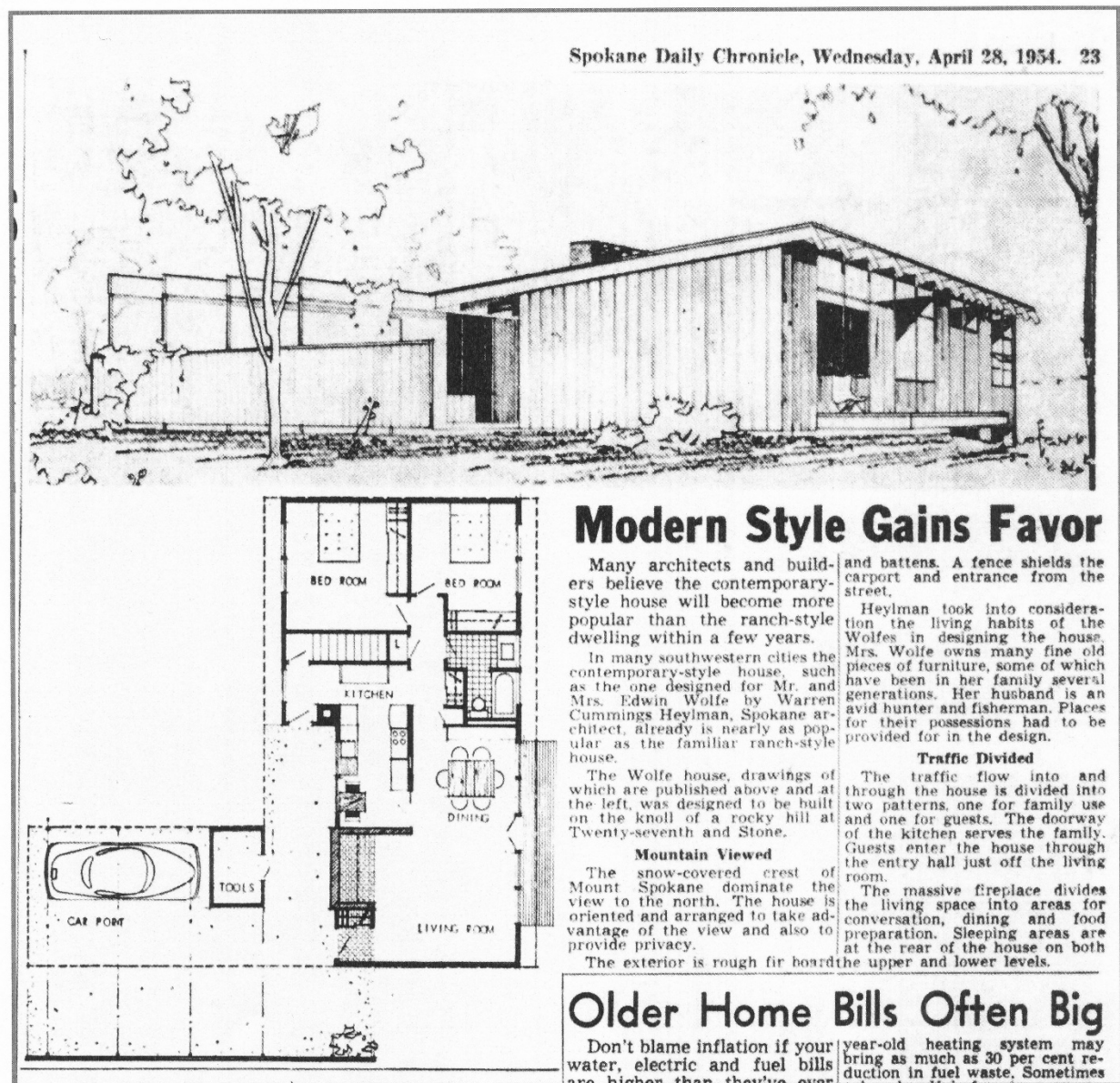
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Figure 17: Wolfe House by Warren Heylman, 1954



Source: Spokane Chronicle

Figure 18: Wells House by Warren Heylman, 1955



Source: The Spokesman-Review

Figure 19: Hieber House by Warren Heylman, 1956 (no longer extant)



Source: Washington Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation

Figure 20: Zimmerman House by Warren Heylman, Lawrence, Kansas



Source: Lawrence Modern

Figure 21: Liberty Lake Golf Course Clubhouse by Warren Heylman, 1959



Source: The Spokesman-Review

Figure 22: Whitman County Library by Warren Heylman, 1960



Source: Washington Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation

Figure 23: Spokane Airport Terminal by Warren Heylman & William Trogdon, 1960



Source: Washington Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation

Figure 24: The Parkade by Warren Heylman, 1967



Source: City of Spokane Historic Preservation Office

Figure 25: Illustration of The Parkade by Warren Heylman, 1967



Source: AIA Journal, August 1968