

CURRAN HOUSE HISTORIC STRUCTURE REPORT



This report commissioned by the Friends of the Curran House Committee.

Published May, 2010

Cover art 2009 photograph of the Curran House, taken by Susan Johnson, Artifacts Consulting, Inc.

Contributors

The authors of this report wish to express our gratitude for the contribution of the following persons and entities: the Western Washington Chapter of Documentation and Conservation of the Modern Movement; Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, particularly Michael Houser for sharing artwork and his knowledge of Robert Billsbrough Price's work; Tacoma Public Library, Northwest Room staff; and the Friends of the Curran House, including Cindy Bonaro, Karen Benveniste, Biz Lund and Linda Tanz.

Administrative Data

Name(s)

Charles and Mary Louise Curran Residence

(Also currently part of the Curran Apple Orchard Park,
which belongs to the City of University Place)

Location

4009 Curran Lane

University Place, WA

Pierce County parcel

0220163014

Proposed Treatment

Rehabilitation

Cultural Resource Data

1955, date of construction (per Pierce County Assessor) and
period of significance

Robert Billsbrough Price, architect

Modern Style

Individually eligible at the local level under criterion C for being a fine example of modernist residential design on the West Coast during the 1950's and for exhibiting advances in building materials in the post-war era. Furthermore, the house is a unique hybrid of speculative model houses and custom design elements by Robert Billsbrough Price, Tacoma's leading architect of the 20th century. The house and associated apple orchard are also significant under criterion A, representing the development of University Place with semi-urban lifeways.

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Overview

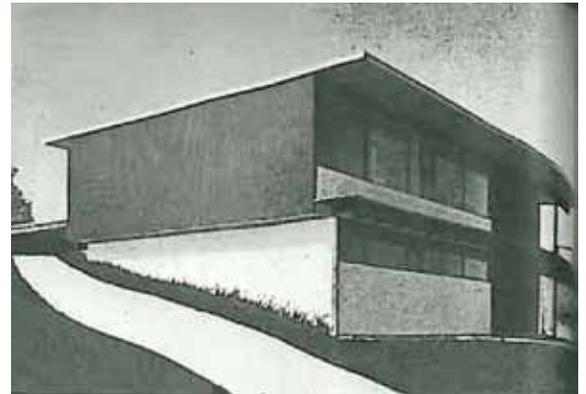


Image courtesy of Michael Houser, Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation.

Purpose of This Report

This Historic Structure Report is intended to guide contemporary modifications, reuse, or restoration of the Curran House in University Place, Washington. The report is prepared for the purpose of providing the basic information needed to make decisions related to maintenance, modifications, and continued use of the building. In narrative form, the document presents the architectural and historical significance behind the treatment levels ascribed to the building's spaces, materials, and structural system. Identification of these spaces and features facilitates their incorporation into future planning and design development. This report is based on a detailed survey performed to investigate the historic character of the building and to identify original, intact, significant elements of the 1955 architecture as well as alterations. The site visits and background research were conducted in 2010. Each space and building feature was examined and photographed, and the defining physical characteristics and condition were noted. Then, each character-defining feature and volume was categorized by architectural significance and level of public visibility. No destructive investigation measures were employed.

As this document is used in making programming and design changes, its content will guide decisions about which features and spaces are critical for retention, and will show the original design intent for these elements. This will allow the protection and preservation of the historic materials and spaces of the building and provide standards for new construction. The content of this report provides an understanding of the building as a historic landmark and is organized to facilitate the use of this report as a development and conservation planning tool. Treatment recommendations incorporate an understanding of historic preservation design guidelines, such as *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* (1995).

Summary of Report Contents

This report uses the conventions for content and organization of a Historic Structures Report identified in the National Park Service Preservation Brief No. 43, *Preparation and Use of Historic Structures Reports* (2005). This report includes an expanded exploration of the following subjects and chapters:

Overview: This chapter provides an executive summary for rapid consultation purposes. Sections include the following: Purpose of This Report, Summary of Report Contents, and Summary of Findings. The first two sections introduce users to the form and function of this planning document in order to facilitate its use during long-term planning. The two summary sections provide an overview of the report's contents and most critical data derived from the analysis of original design intent, changes over time, current condition, and extent of original character-defining features and spaces.

History: This chapter identifies the period(s) of significance for the building and addresses the criteria for designation of historic sites and landmarks as applied by the National Park Service and the National Register of Historic Places. Sections in this chapter include the following: Significance Statement, Background, Architectural Style, and Robert Billsbrough Price (a short biography on the architect). The historic narratives and background materials explore key events and individuals associated with the planning, construction, alterations, and use of the building. According to the Pierce County Assessor, the house was built in 1955 and altered in 1970. The design date has been attributed to as early as 1952, but this has not been confirmed by primary sources. Future archival research may prove a construction year between 1952 and 1955.

Physical: This chapter separates out the layers of character-defining spaces and building features by material and condition. Sections in this chapter include the following: Physical Description, Catalog of Spaces, Catalog of Features, and Condition Issues. The Physical Description presents the building and its spaces in their original and current form in order to communicate how those extensively changed spaces were originally intended. Levels of architectural significance are then assigned in the catalog based upon the period(s) of significance from which the element originates and the degree to which it remains

intact. This information will not only assist in determining the significance of individual spaces, but also will help to direct any future work to be done to the features or spaces and facilitate protection of remaining original elements.

Findings: This chapter provides the tools for guiding further changes to the building in a compatible fashion, which will respect and balance the historical significance of the building's original design, character-defining features, circulation patterns, and spaces while maintaining and improving functionality for new uses. These tools, organized by section, consist of a Summary of Findings, Analysis of Significance, Analysis of Public Visibility, and Treatment Recommendations. Maps and coded drawings included in the sections on Analysis of Significance and Analysis of Public Visibility illustrate the relative historic importance and level of original public visibility.

Supplemental: The Bibliography provides a detailed list of primary and secondary sources consulted for the project. Section 4.1 contains sketches of suggested roof alterations, drawn by Tim McDonald.

Summary of Report Findings

The following summarizes report findings for quick consultation. Refer to Chapter 3 for full text of the findings and the section references for further information.

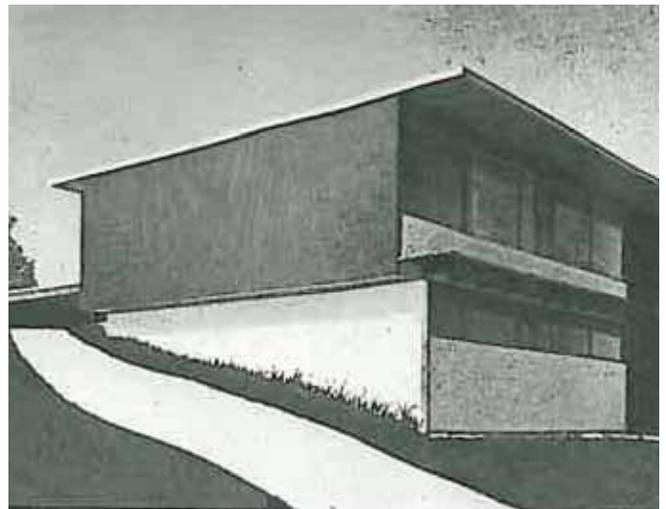
Eligibility: The building is at least fifty years of age, as of 2005. Under Criteria A and C, the building is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places for being significant at the local level for its historical association with the development of University Place and as a fine example of modern architectural design, specifically by noted regional architect Robert Billsbrough Price.

Condition: The building exterior and interior remain overall in good condition. Addressing roof drainage and interior water damage will be important for the long-term performance of this assembly. Replacing the deck and two broken windows are the primary safety/liability concerns. (See Chapter 2)

Significance: The building contains several important features and spaces (particularly the carport, kitchen and main floor living-dining areas). Most of the basement spaces and finishes have been altered or have low significance. (See Chapter 3)

1

History



Historic photo of the Curran House, undated. Courtesy of Michael Houser.

1.1

Significance Statement

The Curran House is significant under criterion C for being a fine example of modernist residential design on the West Coast during the 1950s and for exhibiting advances in building materials in the post-war era. Furthermore, the house is a unique hybrid of speculative model houses and custom design elements by Robert Billsbrough Price, Tacoma's leading architect of the twentieth century. The house and associated apple orchard are also significant under criterion A, representing the development of University Place with semi-urban lifeways, particularly after the reconstruction of the Narrows Bridge in 1950.



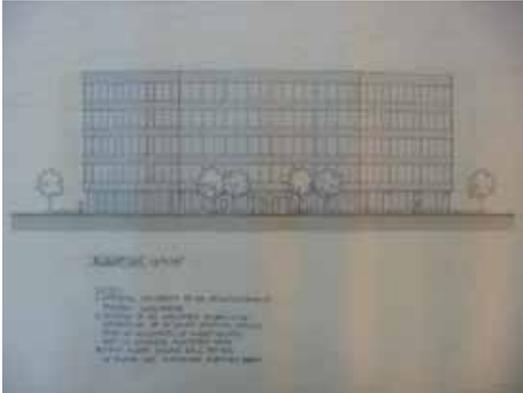
Sunset Magazine advertisement for the 1954 Chevrolet Bel Air.

Located at 4009 Curran Lane (formerly 4009 Ridge Road) in University Place, Washington, the house sits atop a knoll. At the time of construction, the Curran House setting featured woods and the growing apple orchard of Charles and Mary Louise Curran. As Charles and Mary Louise Curran continued to plant apple trees on most of the remaining site, the house overlooked the orchard from on high. In the mid-1950s, the unincorporated community of University Place counted a population of only several hundred. The city incorporated in the 1990s and the population has grown to more than 34,000.

Among the several hundred residents of University Place in the early 1950s were Robert Billsbrough Price and his wife, Joan Ardis Price. The Prices co-founded their Tacoma architectural firm in 1949. Together, Robert and Joan designed their own modern residence at 3814 Soundview Drive in University Place (designed 1950, built 1951). The Price residence is two blocks northwest of the Curran House, so the two residences share temporal as well as geographic proximity. Given that the Price firm designed the Curran House in ca. 1954, this property represents a relatively early example of their residential designs. In particular, the Curran House is an interesting hybrid of speculative model house ("merchant-class") designs the firm had completed in 1950, 1951 and 1954 with custom alterations to fit the unique site and the needs of the Curran family.

1.2

Architectural Style



Elevation drawing of Southcenter Office Building, designed by Price and Associates. Source: Tacoma Public Library.

Architect Robert Billsbrough Price was one of the first to utilize the emerging “Northwest Contemporary” style, one of the subsets of Modernism, in the 1950s in the Tacoma area. Modernism was in full force by the mid-1960s, and architects in Tacoma and throughout the country were designing buildings in the various styles of the Modern era.

The following text is from the Modernism 101 brief, written by the Documentation and Conservation of the Modern Movement, Western Washington Chapter (DOCOMOMOWEWA).

“Modernism is a broad term that is given to a range of design approaches in architecture. Generally, Modern architecture in the Pacific Northwest is defined by buildings constructed from about 1930 to 1970. Most historians can agree that Modern architecture was conceived as a reaction to the perceived chaos and eclecticism of the earlier 19th Century revival of historical forms. The Modern Movement began in Europe in the 1920s as an optimistic belief that science and the new technologies of industrialization would produce a genuine “modern age” architecture of universal principles. Much of this revolutionary philosophy emanated from a core group of young designers and artists in Europe such as Walter Gropius, Mies van der Rohe, and Le Corbusier.



Image of a Los Angeles house, featured in a 1954 Sunset Magazine issue.

The evolution of Modern architecture began with the “International Style,” a term coined in 1932 by an exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. The influential exhibition highlighted aspects of European architecture of the 1920s which represented a new direction and attitude towards architectural form. The first principle, “Architecture as Volume,” dealt with the creation of space by floors of a columnar structure, which allowed for flexibility in plan. The second principle, concerning regularity rather than axiality, stemmed from the structural ordering of the building. The third principle mandated the avoidance of applied decoration which was seen as an attempt to eliminate superficiality.

Despite the exhibition and recognition by the architectural community in the United States, these new design principles were limited by lingering provincial tastes and the debilitating impacts of the Depression. However, in the years following World War II, Modern architecture in the United States became a widespread ideological approach. Unprecedented economic prosperity, combined with a renewed availability of materials, new construction methods, and technical innovations, sparked a building boom across America, and Modern design reigned supreme. True to the origins of the Modern Movement, many mid-century architectural achievements were often experimental in their goal, using design to change the environment of everyday life.

Here in the Pacific Northwest, Oregon's Pietro Belluschi and Paul Thiry in Seattle (known as the "father of modernism" in Washington), had already gained national recognition for designing significant Modern buildings before World War II. With the war over, the post-war economy and the population boomed in Washington State (jumping from 1.7 million in 1940 to 2.3 million in 1950, to 3.1 million by 1970).¹

Mid-century Modernist buildings represent a spectrum of various styles, all encompassed by the "Modern" category. These styles include but are not limited to Curtain Wall, Geodesic Dome, Wrightian, Brutalism, International, New Formalism, Neo Expressionism, and Miesian.

For more information on the Modern Movement in Washington including the styles, the architects, tours, and preservation resources, check out DoCoMoMoWeWa's website at <http://www.docomomo-wewa.org>.

(Endnotes)

- 1 Modernism 101, DOCOMOMOWEWA, <http://www.docomomo-wewa.org/modernism.php>. Accessed 2 April, 2010.

1.3

Robert Billsbrough Price



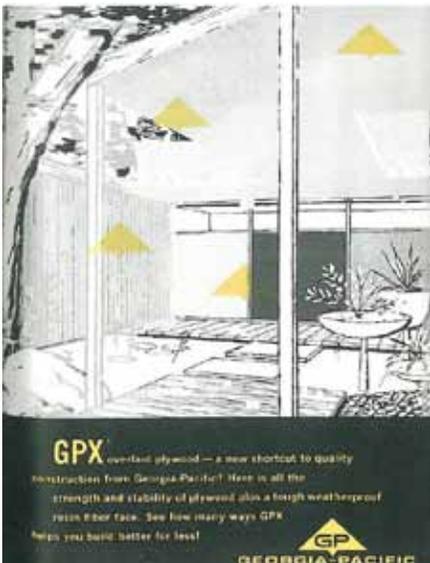
1950 image of Robert Billsbrough Price holding blueprints. Source: Tacoma News Tribune.

1.3.1 Overview

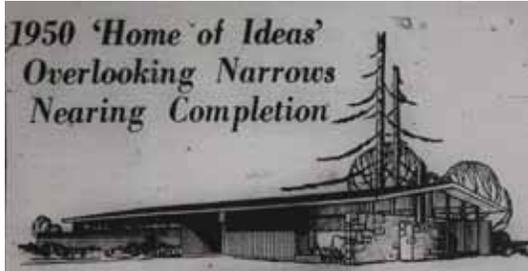
Born in Tacoma, Washington in 1915, Robert Billsbrough Price was perhaps the best-known architect in the Tacoma area from the 1950s into the 1970s, primarily for his contemporary Northwest residences, education-related buildings, and assorted commercial buildings. However, Price completed a wide range of work in various modernist styles and materials. In 1966, the American Institute of Architects (AIA) inducted Price as a Fellow, a high professional honor. Price became the first architect in the Southwest Washington Chapter of the AIA to receive that honor. According to the nomination statement, the recognition for his excellence in contemporary design came partly because his buildings “serve as an inspiration to lay people and other architects to aspire to a higher level of architectural design and beauty of buildings and communities.”¹ Many of the firm’s projects were featured in popular journals including *Sunset*, *House and Garden*, and *Architectural Record*. In his lifetime, Robert Price received fifty-nine awards for design excellence.

Price’s interest in using modern, affordable building materials, particularly plywood, was not unusual in the housing boom of the post-World War II era. What set his firm’s designs apart were the thoughtful, organized, comfortable treatment of spaces along with intelligent site planning. In one article, Price denied following any one particular school of thought. In his words, “to become simply a disciple of one of the ‘greats’ has no merit, much as I may admire and appreciate his work.” Thus, Price emphasized one of the tenets of American modernism – namely, the rejection of historic precedents.

A graduate of Stadium High School, Price attended the University of Puget Sound and began taking classes towards an architectural degree at the University of Washington. His studies were suspended during World War II, when he served in the Naval Air Corps in England, Pearl Harbor, Australia, India, and China. After the war, Price completed a bachelor’s degree in architecture from the University of Washington (1946) and a master’s from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (1948).



Artwork courtesy of Michael Houser.



Advertisement for the 1950 Tacoma Home Show, featuring the Home of Ideas by Price. Source: Tacoma News Tribune.

1.3.2 Early Career

After briefly working for Seattle architect James C. Gardiner, Price co-founded a new practice in Tacoma with his wife, Joan. Born in Seattle in 1925, Joan Ardis Price graduated from the University of Washington with a bachelor's degree in architecture. Some of the many projects she worked on are the Tubby Graves Athletic Building at the University of Washington, the former Seattle Art Museum (Seattle Center), and Temple Beth El in Tacoma. Joan is credited with interior designs for several of the firm's projects, including the "Calypso" model house (1959) and Mt. Tahoma High School (1961). Together, Robert and Joan designed their own modern residence at 3814 Soundview Drive in University Place (designed 1950, built 1951).



After photo of remodeled residence by Price. Landscape design by Halprin. Source: Sunset Magazine, March 1955.

In 1950, Robert B. Price also designed the model "Home of Ideas" at 1101 N. Jackson for the 2nd Annual Tacoma Home Show that year. Built to educate and inspire attendees on the emerging possibilities for contemporary residences, the house exhibited cutting-edge ideas on modern house design and building materials. The house was also the grand prize of the home show. Floor-to-ceiling windows in the south and west walls allowed for extensive natural light, as well as linking the interior and exterior. A brick "fireplace wall" occupied one half of the living room's gable end wall and was noted as a special feature of the design. The fireplace had an elevated hearth and a simple rectangular firebox opening, similar to the Curran House fireplaces. Ceilings and some interior walls were of cedar while the living room floor featured pecan wood in a parquet pattern. Materials and labor for the construction came from member firms and individuals of the Tacoma Master Builders' Association. The week-long exhibition drew hundreds of visitors from at least six states, and tours of the "Home of Ideas" were extended beyond the end of the home show due to popular demand.



Before photo of remodeled residence by Price. Source: Sunset Magazine, March 1955.

The 1950 designs of his own home, as well as the "Home of Ideas," are early examples of Price's work. The practice he and Joan founded in 1949 grew quickly, due in part to the popularity of their designs, the close ties they built with the Tacoma Society of Architects and Tacoma Master Builders' Association (TMBA), and the firm's mindfulness of its clients. Price's firm completed custom house designs for the more affluent in so-



Hope Lutheran Church, Tacoma. Source: Tacoma News Tribune.



Historic interior view of the TX101 home's kitchen and living-dining area. Source: Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation.



Historic exterior view of the TX101 house. Source: Tacoma Public Library, Pierce County Buildings Index.

ciety, as well as “merchant-class” house designs for builders to replicate in neighborhood or suburban developments.

Price designed more model houses, including one in 1951 for the Tacoma Society of Architects, one in 1954 (the TX101) for the TMBA, and the 1959 “Calypso” house for the Glenwood Acres subdivision in Lakewood, referred to by Price as the TX102. The TX101 name is a shortened version of “Tacoma Experiment--Year of the Washington State Centennial Plus One.” These model houses were of the “merchant-class” type, with the TX101 built by the Sherman Rowland Construction Co. at 1802 N. Shirley St. in Tacoma. In order to appeal to the target audience of young married couples with two children, Price was asked to keep the building costs low and the details simple, and to use standard building materials so the houses “could be sold competitively with the typical Speculative Builder’s house of the area.” At the time, the TX101 house achieved these goals. According to Price’s firm,

The finished product accomplished these two results. It showed the public that good contemporary design could be had for the same or less money, and it showed our builders that a well-planned and detailed house could be constructed economically and sold competitively. The house sold two weeks after completion for \$17,500, [which] included the property, the house (1,550 sq. ft.), appliances, patio and paving, fences, lawn and planting.

Although primarily known for new construction projects, the firm of Robert Billsbrough Price, FAIA also received recognition for remodels. In ca. 1952, the firm converted a 1906 Swiss Chalet style home at 718 N. G St. in Tacoma into a Modern-style residence, complete with landscaping by renowned landscape architect Lawrence Halprin. The collaborative transformation appeared in a feature article in *Sunset Magazine* in 1955.

According to Washington’s State Architectural Historian and Price biographer Michael Houser, the young firm grew to include six design professionals, including Robert and Joan, by 1956. That same year, *Progressive Architecture* magazine featured Price’s architectural practice, the youngest firm to receive that distinction at the time. The April 1956 issue featured the firm’s work on the Olympia Christian Science Church, a restau-



Historic photo of Hoyt Elementary School. Source: Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation.

rant in Puyallup, Sherman Elementary School, the Long House, the industrial branch of the National Bank of Washington, the Tacoma Fire Station No. 17, and the Gingko Museum.

The year 1956 also brought national recognition to Price in the form of an AIA Merit Award for the Mr. and Mrs. Joe Long Jr. House on American Lake. The house represents one of Price's custom designs, set on a challenging lot. Similar to the Curran House, the Long family had a teenager, as well as two younger children. Designed to incorporate the lake into the view from the living spaces, the Long House also reflects the interests and lifestyles of its builders. The Long House is another example of Price's collaboration with landscape architect Lawrence Halprin.

Price's work spanned a variety of building types, but his schools and education-related buildings comprised the bulk of his career portfolio. Beginning with Sherman Elementary in 1954, numerous projects followed in Western Washington during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. These included John S. Baker Junior High School in Tacoma (1955); George R. Curtis Junior High School in University Place (1957); Hunt Junior High School (1958), with Halprin as landscape architect; Hoyt Elementary School (designed ca. 1957, built 1958, awards received); Puyallup Jr. High School (ca. 1959); Aberdeen Senior High School (ca. 1960); Mount Tahoma High School in Tacoma, with Halprin as landscape architect (1961, demolished 2007); Olson Physical Education Building at Pacific Lutheran University (1969); and, the College Recreation Center (1972) and Recreation Pavilion (1973) at Evergreen State College in Olympia (1973). The Price firm also designed additional buildings and/or renovations to existing ones at Evergreen, Pacific Lutheran, the University of Washington, and Western Washington University. Price also designed Illahee and Sacajawea junior high schools in Federal Way.

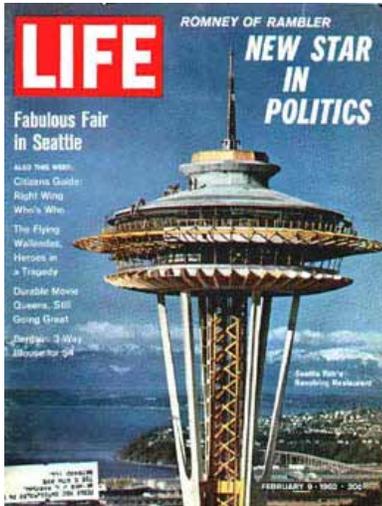
Price's firm became known for more than just houses or schools, though. Price won awards for his design of Tacoma Fire Station No. 17 (1955) and Hope Lutheran Church in South Tacoma (1956). In 1958, the Concrete Technology Corporation erected a new headquarters building at the Port of Tacoma, as designed by Price.



Exterior view of Mt Tahoma High School (demolished). Source: Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation.



Hunt Junior High School. Source: Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation.



1960s cover of Life Magazine, featuring the Space Needle from the Century 21 Exposition.



ca. 1960 postcard detail of the Seattle monorail, part of the Century 21 Exposition.



Concept design by Price for the Forest Products Display Building. Source: Tacoma Public Library.

1.3.3 Seattle's World Fair

For the 1962 "Century 21" World's Fair in Seattle, Price was commissioned to design multiple buildings, among them the World of Commerce & Industry Building 37 and the Forest Industries Display Theatre, part of the Forest Industries Exhibit. The theater building principally consisted of a small auditorium (approximately 110 seats) to show a short film on the "technique of producing and fabricating wood and its allied products in the twenty-first century." The theater building occupied a prominent site, just south of the monorail terminal and east of the Space Needle. Built to be a temporary installment, the theater building featured modern timber products in the projected film as well as in its construction. The building materials largely consisted of contemporary wood products, particularly plywood. Laminated wood beams and columns formed the structural system, covered by stressed skin plywood in the walls and roof. Cedar shingles clad the exterior walls. The World of Commerce and Industry Building also relied on laminated beams for structural support. The unusual pyramidal, plastic skylights provided daylight to the interior, as well as texture to the roof.

Between April 21, 1962 and October 21, 1962, approximately ten million people attended the Seattle World's Fair, also known as the Century 21 Exposition. Years of planning by the city's civic boosters, visionaries, and movers and shakers culminated in six months of celebration. By any definition, the fair was a huge success. Seattle was put on the national and world stage. The theme of "Century 21" was chosen because Seattle was looking to the future where anything was possible. Recognizing the importance that science and technology played in improving society for present and future generations, fair organizers chose science as the theme. This focus on science brought significant support from the U.S. government in the form of ten million dollars in order to create a major science pavilion and exhibit at the fair. The iconic Space Needle, built for the fair, remains as Seattle's most recognized and beloved structure.

The location of the fair was a 74-acre site located just beyond the northern edge of the expanding downtown in the lower Queen Anne neighborhood. The primary architect for the master plan was Paul Thiry, known as the father of Modernism in



Robert Billsbrough Price shown with his model for the World of Commerce & Industry Building 37. Source: Tacoma News Tribune.

Seattle. He asserted that since Century 21 was about the future, the structures built for the fair should be a part of this future, and not just the past. As described by Thiry in *Architecture West*,

“World fairs, stimuli for new ideas and for probing the future, are places of education, wonderment, excitement and amusement. They invariably indicate the trends of the time. The fairs of Chicago, New York and San Francisco are things of the past...In contrast, Century 21 Exposition is designed not only for excitement of the moment, but many of its structures and facilities are planned as a permanent adjunct to a projected Seattle Center of lasting significance. The termination of Century 21 Exposition will mark a beginning. Seattle World’s Fair is a phoenix among fairs, for from it will emerge a new phenomenon of plazas and buildings destined to provide pleasure for present and future generations.”²



1962 photo of the Forest Industries Display Theatre. Source: Tacoma Public Library.

Architecture was important for Century 21 and helped make the fair a success. Thiry deftly managed to incorporate new permanent and temporary structures with existing older ones. The involvement of the firm of Robert Billsbrough Price in designing buildings for the fair is a testament to Price’s standing in the Modernist architecture realm.

1.3.4 Expansion

A new office for Price’s architectural firm, located along Ruston Way, brought more space along with more recognition. The building won an award in 1963 and is featured in Woodbridge and Montgomery’s *Guide to Architecture in Washington State*. Another write-up in *Progressive Architecture* magazine occurred with the design and construction of the swimming pool building at Pacific Lutheran University (1965-1966). More buildings for the Pacific Lutheran University (PLU) campus in Parkland followed, including Tinglestad Hall (1967) and Olson Auditorium (1969).



1962 interior view of the Forest Industries Display Theatre. Source: Tacoma Public Library.

The firm of Robert Billsbrough Price, FAIA branched out into apartment buildings by the early 1960s. The Sky Terrace Apartments, built at 235 Broadway in 1961, are an early example of the International Style applied to multi-family housing in Taco-



Historic photo of the Sky Terrace Apartments, Tacoma. Source: Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation.

ma. In 1965 and 1967, the Tacoma Housing Authority constructed two apartment buildings designed by the Price firm, at 911 N. K and 1202 S. M streets, respectively. More apartment buildings followed in later years, including a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) complex at 1400 Market St., an all-concrete building rising seven stories and encompassing more than 84,000 square feet in downtown Tacoma.

In 1967, two partners joined the firm, which then became known as Robert Billsbrough Price, FAIA, and Associates. The newcomers were Gordon N. Johnston and Donald C. VanVolkenburg. Johnston, like Price, was a native of Tacoma and attended the University of Washington. Earlier in his career, Johnston designed the 1956 model house for the Tacoma Home Show, following in Price's footsteps. By 1967, Johnston had already served as president of the Southwest Washington Chapter of the AIA. VanVolkenburg, of Federal Way, also graduated from the University of Washington and served on the board of the Southwest Washington Chapter, AIA.



Historic interior view of the National Bank of Washington, Industrial Branch. Source: Tacoma Public Library.

In 1968, the Rome Company built the Price firm's design for Temple Beth El on South 12th Street in Tacoma.

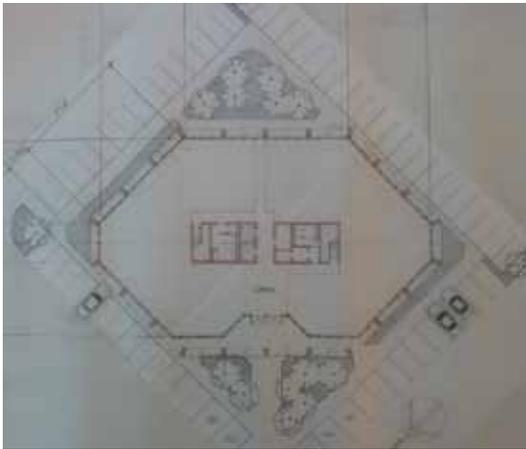
In the 1970s, Price's firm experimented with various modernist styles and massing innovations. Price's 1972 design for the Washington Mutual Savings Bank at 6616 Sixth Ave, near the Tacoma Narrows Bridge, features pre-fabricated brick walls. This is one of Price's later bank designs, executed in the Brutalist Style. The hallmarks of this style are seen in the weight of the massing, the flat roof, and the treatment of windows and doors as recesses or openings in the walls. In 1974, Tacoma's City Council hired the Price firm to design the Bicentennial Pavilion at 1313 Market St., built in 1975-1976. Another example of Price's use of the Brutalist Style, this poured concrete structure has a hexagonal plan for the principal mass. In ca. 1978, RPA designed the Southcenter Office Building in Seattle, an example of the International Style. The design drawings call for concrete spandrels separating the continuous window bands at each floor, giving the five-story building a strong horizontal emphasis. Following the nearly round footprint of the Bicentennial Pavilion, the Southcenter Office Building has an uneven octagonal plan. Price also explored round floor plans and contemporary architec-



Historic exterior view of the National Bank of Washington, Industrial Branch. Source: Tacoma Public Library.



Historic interior view of Tacoma's Bicentennial Pavilion. Source: Tacoma Public Library.



Floor plan for the Southcenter Office Building. Source: Tacoma Public Library.

tural styles with the Columbia Opticians medical office in 1978. This Modern-Geodesic Dome in South Tacoma may be the first example of that style applied to a commercial office building in Pierce County.

Other projects in the 1970s include the Tacoma Yacht Club (1971); a public house at 3327 Ruston Way (1972); and, the John Morgan Family YMCA on South Pearl Street (1977).

From 1968 to 1981, Price served as vice chairman of the King County Design Commission. He also served three years on the University of Washington's design commission. In his lifetime, Price received fifty-nine national, regional, and local awards honoring his architectural design excellence. He belonged to numerous groups, including the Tacoma Society of Architects, the Washington State Council of Architects, the Tacoma Art League, Allied Arts, Associated General Contractors of Tacoma, and both the Washington State and Southwest Washington chapters of the AIA. He passed away in September 1981. Joan A. Price continued to work as an architect until her retirement in 1990. She passed away in 2005.

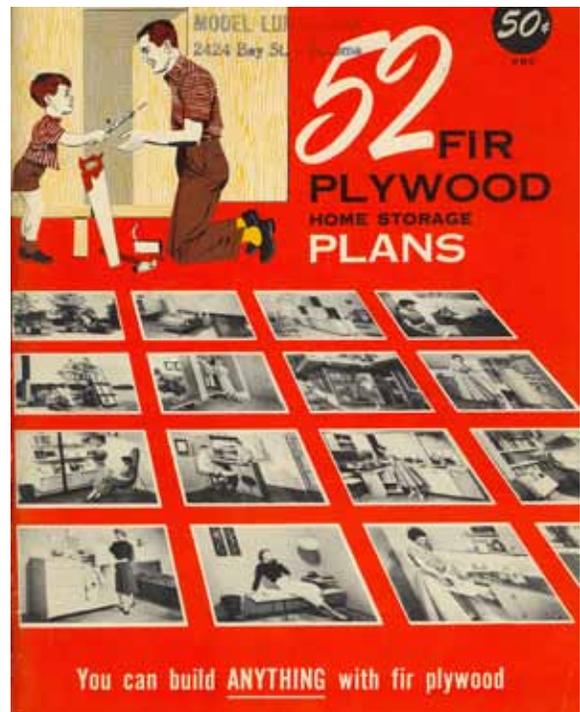
The firm of Robert Price & Associates (RPA) continued to operate after Price's death. Another office building, this time for the Port of Tacoma itself, was designed by RPA and constructed in 1982. In 1983, the Jones & Roberts Construction Co. of Olympia built the Tacoma Center YMCA, as designed by RPA.

(Endnotes)

1 "Architects Name Tacoma Man 'Fellow,'" Tacoma News Tribune, May 15, 1966.

2 Architecture West, April 1962.

2 Physical



Artwork courtesy of Michael Houser.

2.1 Physical Description

This narrative description sets forth from the standpoint of original construction in order to provide perspective for users and designers on the overall original character and design intent of the building prior to changes over time. Therefore, the author employs past tense in order to denote original features and spaces since removed and uses present tense when referring to intact original features and spaces.

2.1.1 Site

Built in 1955, the house sits on the highpoint of a sloping parcel of just over 7 acres in University Place. At the time of construction, the neighborhood of University Place belonged to unincorporated Pierce County. In 1994, University Place incorporated as a city of almost 8 square miles bordered by Puget Sound and the communities of Tacoma, Lakewood and Steilacoom. The Curran House and associated orchard now belong to the City of University Place and form the Curran Apple Orchard Park. Bordered by Curran Lane to the west, Rock Road to the southwest, Grandview Drive to the southeast, and 93rd Avenue to the northeast, the park also features a small storage building and an outdoor stage to the northeast of the house. Both the stage and the storage building are contemporary additions to the property.

The house's driveway is accessible from Curran Lane (formerly Ridge Road). The main door also fronts Curran Lane, but most of the window walls in the house face northwest and northeast, overlooking the apple orchard occupying most of the property. Originally, the Curran House provided approximately 1,550 square feet of living space for the Charles and Mary Louise Curran family.

The site features an altered, curvilinear planting bed outlined with brick adjacent to the front door. Other Price designed houses had rectangular planters.

2.1.2 Exterior

A poured concrete foundation acts as the base for the L-shaped footprint of the house. The flat-roofed, single-story post-and-



2009 view of the house's northeast facade and apple orchard. Source: Artifacts Consulting, Inc.



2009 view of the house's southeast and northeast facades. Source: Artifacts Consulting, Inc.



2009 view of the carport and house, looking due north. Source: Artifacts Consulting, Inc.



2009 detail of front entry. Source: Artifacts Consulting, Inc.



2009 view of the carport and house, northwest facade. Source: Artifacts Consulting, Inc.

beam structure rises from a semi-finished basement level, which is partially exposed due to the sloped site. Exterior walls are exposed concrete or clad with painted exterior grade hardboard panels on the basement level. On the main (upper) floor, exterior walls are clad with overlapping textured plywood sheets on most surfaces, with the exception of hardboard panels or new horizontal Hardyboard veneer below the smaller windows. Wide overhanging eaves and exposed beams add to the horizontal, anchored feel of the massing. The roofing is a relatively recent installation of single-ply membrane. Two skylights and a wide, low brick chimney perforate the house roof.

A breezeway connects the house to a rectangular carport to the southwest. The carport sits on a finished concrete slab and is open at either end. Textured plywood forms the southwest side wall of the carport, and a wooden screen runs along the northeast side.

Between the carport and the house, a tall cabinet provides storage space under cover of the breezeway. The cabinet is sided with textured plywood sheets identical to those on the main house.

The breezeway, which is missing an original wooden screen at the kitchen patio, visually and physically leads to the formal front entry. However, with the missing screen, the breezeway is also open to the informal entry at the kitchen. Both entries face Curran Lane, but the kitchen entry is obscured from the street by the carport and storage cabinet. The formal front entry, however, is at a visual crux from the street. The front door sits in the corner of two intersecting, perpendicular sections of the house. Originally, the bright orange front door combined with intact, rectangular, colored glass lites at the entryway further emphasized this public access point to the house by contrasting with the natural earth tones of the exposed beams and exterior walls. The exaggerated width and low mass of the brick chimney above adds to the visual focal point.

2.1.3 Interior

The layout and programming of interior spaces consists of two distinct areas—the main floor and the basements. The base-



Dining room view of fireplace, main floor. Source: Artifacts Consulting, Inc.



View of deck, looking north. Source: Artifacts Consulting, Inc.



View from kitchen into dining area, main floor. Source: Artifacts Consulting, Inc.

ment consists of a finished family room with fireplace, an original bedroom, an added bathroom, and utilitarian, unfinished spaces. The main floor consists of the primary living spaces.

Inside the front door, there is no defined vestibule. An open floor plan provides visual connection between primary main floor spaces, specifically the front entry, the living-dining area, and the kitchen. Large windows continue sightlines to the exterior, particularly in the living-dining area (north corner of main floor). While not as large, even the kitchen windows provide views to the southeast (across the breezeway) and across the property to the northwest.

Ahead and to the left of the front entry, the living-dining space is dominated by a free-standing brick fireplace. Open to both long sides and with an open pass-through firewood storage, this fireplace has a storage closet in the southeast east. Wrapped by a wide metal band, the cantilevered brick hearth stretches from the firebox to the wood storage slot. The fireplace wall rises through the ceiling and partially divides the space into the smaller dining and larger living spaces.

A wooden deck is reached through a wooden door in the northwest window wall, effectively extending the living-dining space to the exterior. At the time of construction, the Curran House sat alone, with no neighboring houses in view of the deck. Thus, the deck provided semi-private outdoor living space, as well as a view. The deck's original railing has been replaced with a modern, less open version. From the example of other Robert B. Price designed houses, the deck railing likely had continuous upper and lower rails with widely spaced vertical crossmembers, forming horizontal rectangles. The deck has a trapezoidal plan, extending to an acute point at the north end. The wooden bench is an addition.

The kitchen-laundry area, which is accessed either from the informal entry door off the breezeway or through the dining room, provided space for food preparation and general household operations. A breakfast bar extends along a portion of the southeastern wall. The laundry space retains the original sink but is missing a washer and dryer.



Detail of built-in desk in Bedroom 1, main floor. Source: Artifacts Consulting, Inc.



Detail of ceiling and stairwell light fixture, main floor. Source: Artifacts Consulting, Inc.

Directly adjacent, the kitchen retains the original layout, including a U-shaped counter with drawers. Double-sided, pass-through hung cabinets are intact and, along with the counter, function as partial dividers from neighboring spaces. Original, elongated can light fixtures have been replaced.

To the right of the front entry, an open stairwell descends to the basement. A pair of green and blue light fixtures, suspended over the stairs, are original features. Beyond the stairwell, the main floor corridor extends to the southeast and provides access to three bedrooms and two bathrooms. While the bathrooms have no exterior windows, each has one skylight, which allows for some natural lighting. The other main floor rooms all have exterior windows, including floor-to-ceiling glazing in the living-dining rooms.

Originally, the living-dining area and bedrooms all had deep brown asbestos floor tiles with muted speckles. Currently, wall-to-wall carpeting overlays this tile in all but the fireplace closet. Kitchen flooring is a replacement roll type. Bathroom #1 also has recent flooring. Bathroom #2 has linoleum flooring, which is consistent with the 1950s, and the same material forms the top layer of the built-in desks in bedrooms #1 and #2.

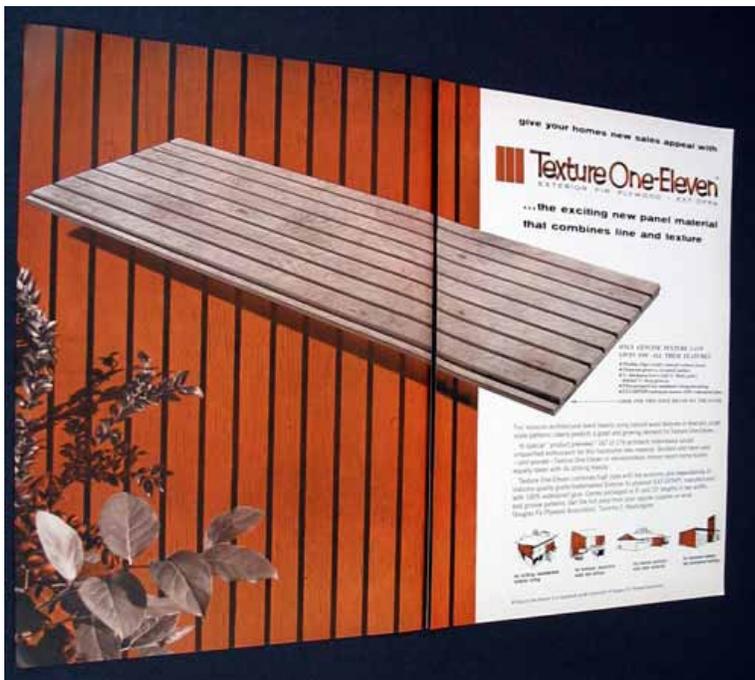
Walls on the main floor are comprised of gypsum board, a precursor to drywall. Interior doors are single-leaf, hollow-core types. Ceilings in the main floor spaces, with the exception of the bathrooms, consist of light stained wood decking supported by darker stained wood beams. The beams extend past the outer walls of the house, forming wide overhanging eaves. Bathroom ceilings are painted gypsum board interrupted by a nearly centered skylight.

Leading to the basement, the wooden stairs have been covered with contemporary carpeting, and handrails have been added. At the bottom of the stairwell, a doorframe and door have been added recently, allowing the basement and main floor to be separated as needed.

On the basement level and to the left (northwest), the basement family room is the less public version of the main floor's living room. The fireplace from the main floor is repeated in this basement space, except the firebox is only open to one

side. Again, there is a storage closet and an elevated hearth. The family room has exterior window walls and a door to the paved below-deck patio, connecting the room with the outdoors both visually and physically. Behind the fireplace, the furnace room and an unfinished, earthen-floor room store the mechanical systems for the house.

Directly across from the bottom of the stairs is bedroom #4, which belonged to Charles (Chuck) Curran Jr. Windows stretch across the exterior wall, providing natural light to this space. This bedroom, the corridor, and the family room all have added wall-to-wall carpet. Some original baseboard trim is intact in the bedroom, and the basement layout is intact apart from the addition of a bathroom along the corridor between the stairs and the storage room. According to Mr. Curran, the basement bathroom is a later addition, from a time when the family anticipated relatives to possibly move into the house. The relatives never moved in, but the bathroom was finished anyway. At the southeast end of the basement corridor, a large storage room features a band of windows in the northeast wall, a concrete floor, and exposed, unfinished walls.



Artwork courtesy of Michael Houser.

2.2

Catalog of Spaces

The purpose of the following catalog of character-defining spaces is to facilitate compliance with the two core goals of the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*:

- Preserve the building's historic spaces; and,
- Preserve the building's distinguishing visual and physical character.

The approach employed by Artifacts Consulting, Inc. in developing this catalog follows guidelines established in the National Park Service Preservation Brief 17 *Architectural Character: Identifying the Visual Aspects of Historic Buildings as an Aid to Preserving Their Character*. This catalog facilitates quick reference during space programming for rehabilitation projects in order to identify which spaces remain intact and are important to maintaining the character of the building, and which have been altered and as such are more adaptable to new uses. The building's floor levels, roof, vertical elements, and site serve as the organizational framework for this catalog. Within each grouping, spaces are listed alphabetically according to their original function. The data on each space provides information on general description, changes when known, level of significance, and small thumbnail images for identification.

The collection of character-defining spaces falls into two main groupings:

- Those individually attributed to the building's character; and,
- Those contributing collectively to the building's character.

Examples of the first category include the kitchen and living-dining area on the main floor. Examples of the second category include the bedrooms and bathrooms.

2.2.1 Main Floor

Bath 1 This is one of two bathrooms on the main floor. Features a shower, toilet, sink, and storage space (shelves, cabinet). Skylight provides natural light. Finishes include hexagonal tile on floor of shower stall. Original shelves intact over toilet. Original light fixture in shower. Alterations include replacing the sink and cabinets, toilet, flooring and ceiling vent. Fan cover replaced. Handrails added.

Minimal



Bath 2 This is one of two bathrooms on the main floor. Features a tub, toilet, sink, and storage space (shelves, cabinets, drawers). Skylight provides natural light. Finishes include linoleum tile flooring and gypsum board walls. Original shelves, sink, cabinetry and light fixtures intact. Alterations include replacing the tub, toilet and ceiling vent as well as adding waterproof paneling on two walls. Fan cover replaced. Towel rack missing.

Minimal



Bedroom 1 This main floor bedroom provided dedicated sleeping space for one of the Curran daughters. The space is located between the master bedroom (#2) and the living room. Continuous fixed pane and one casement window in the northeast wall overlook the orchard. Storage space includes the closets along the wall adjacent to the master bedroom. The built-in desk provided study space between the closet and the windows. A pass-through slot allowed the occupant to share a telephone with the master bedroom. Original finishes include asbestos tile flooring, gypsum board walls, and stained wood beams and decking as ceiling. Alterations include added wall-to-wall carpet.

Secondary



2.2.1 Main Floor

<p>Bedroom 2</p>	<p>This main floor bedroom provided dedicated sleeping space for Mr. and Mrs. Curran. The space is located at the northeast corner of the house. Continuous fixed pane and one casement window in the northeast wall overlook the orchard. Storage space includes closets and built-in drawers. The built-in desk provided work space, including a pass-through slot to share a telephone with the adjacent bedroom. Original finishes include asbestos tile flooring, gypsum walls, and stained wood beams and decking as ceiling. One wall also features dark stained textured plywood, similar to Bedroom 3. Alterations include added wall-to-wall carpet and added paint layers on the built-in drawers.</p>	<p>Secondary</p>	
<p>Bedroom 3</p>	<p>This is the smallest of the three main floor bedrooms, located at the south corner of the house. Windows face southwest, sharing a wall with the main entry and facing Rock Road West and the driveway. This bedroom provided dedicated sleeping space for one of the Curran daughters. Original finishes included dark stained textured plywood wall paneling on the southeast wall, gypsum board for remaining walls, asbestos tile flooring, and stained wood beams and decking as ceiling. Alterations include added wall-to-wall carpet. Casement window is broken.</p>	<p>Secondary</p>	

2.2.1 Main Floor

Corridor This circulation space provides access to the main floor bathrooms and bedrooms from the front entry and public living spaces at the other end. Configuration is intact. Original finishes included asbestos tile flooring, gypsum board walls and stained wood decking for the ceiling. Alterations include a replacement light fixture and added wall-to-wall carpet.

Secondary



Deck This wood framed, open-air external space is accessible from the living-dining rooms on the main floor and served as an extension of those interior spaces. The deck plan is original. Some original beams, joists and decking are intact. Replacement members are contemporary lumber. Alterations include the addition of reinforcing cross-members and a replacement balustrade around the deck perimeter. Added wood bench.

Secondary



Dining Room Located between the kitchen and living room on the main floor, the dining room is continuous with these spaces. The dining room is partially separated from the living room by the fireplace. The kitchen border is defined by a counter and hanging cabinet. Original finishes include the stained wood beams and decking in the ceiling and large fixed pane windows. Alterations included installing wall-to-wall carpet over the asbestos tile flooring, replacement light fixtures, and an added guardrail at the window wall.

Primary



2.2.1 Main Floor

<p>Kitchen</p>	<p>Located between the laundry area and the living-dining rooms, the kitchen is continuous with these spaces. The kitchen is defined by a u-shaped counter and hanging cabinets. Some drawers are metal-lined. All drawer pulls but two are original. Hanging cabinets have original sliding doors, opening to either side. Intact finishes include the stained wood beams and decking in the ceiling and large fixed pane windows. Alterations included new flooring, replacement light fixtures, new sink and appliances, and added paint layers on cabinets and drawers.</p>	<p>Primary</p>	
<p>Laundry</p>	<p>Located in the southwest corner of the main floor, the laundry area is continuous with the kitchen. Original sink is intact. Washer and dryer have been removed.</p>	<p>Primary</p>	
<p>Linen Closet</p>	<p>Located along the main floor corridor between the first two bedrooms, the linen closet served as storage space. Features built-in drawers and cabinets.</p>	<p>Minimal</p>	

2.2.1 Main Floor

<p>Living Room</p>	<p>Located at the north end of the main floor, the living room is continuous with the dining area and kitchen. The living room is partially separated from the dining room by a massive fireplace. This space, along with the deck, served to entertain guests as well as communal space for the family. Window walls overlook the orchard. Original finishes include the stained wood beams and decking in the ceiling and large fixed pane windows. Alterations included installing wall-to-wall carpet over the asbestos tile flooring, replacement light fixtures, and an added guardrail at the window wall. Window blinds added.</p>	<p>Primary</p>	
<p>Main entry</p>	<p>This space, on the inside of the formal entry door, is loosely defined by the stairwell balustrade to the south. However, the entryway is continuous with the living-dining area and main floor corridor. The entryway served as a small transition from outside into the public spaces of the main floor. Alterations include new flooring and added paint layers to the main door (originally orange).</p>	<p>Primary</p>	
<p>Stairwell</p>	<p>Located inside the front door, the stairs lead from the main floor down to the basement. Two original light fixtures are intact. Clear and colored glass panes adjacent to the front door provide visual interest and daylight to the stairwell. Alterations include a reconfigured balustrade, new handrails and carpeting on the steps.</p>	<p>Minimal</p>	

2.2.1 Main Floor

Storage Closet

Located in the east end of the main floor fireplace, this space features a single leaf wood door and asbestos tile flooring. No known alterations. The flooring visible in this closet is original and currently covered by carpet in the bedrooms, living and dining rooms.

Primary



2.2.2 Basement

Basement Bedroom

Centered along the northeast wall, this bedroom provided dedicated sleeping space for Charles Curran, jr. A band of windows overlook the orchard. Originally, the room had built-in bunk beds, desk and a cork bulletin board. Finishes included gypsum board walls, and exposed, dark stained wood beams in the ceiling. Portion of original baseboard trim intact, painted orange. Door features similar orange color under added paint layers. Alterations include the addition of a plywood closet, new carpeting, and changes to the wall adjacent to the family room.

Minimal



Bath 3

This bathroom, located across the hall from the basement bedroom, was added after the original construction. Subsequent remodels have removed any period finishes or materials.

None



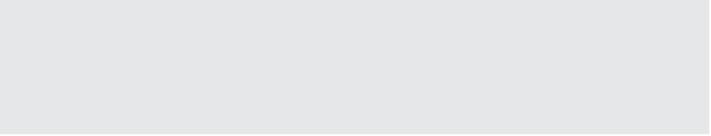
Closet

This storage space is located under the stairs to the main floor. Unfinished walls and ceilings. Poured concrete floor.

None



2.2.2 Basement

<p>Corridor</p>	<p>This circulation space provides access to all the spaces on the basement level except the furnace room and unfinished space. Finishes include carpeting and gypsum board walls. Alterations include a replacement light fixture and an added doorframe with contemporary door into the stairwell.</p>	<p>Minimal</p>	
<p>Family Room</p>	<p>Located in the north corner of the basement, this space was originally unfinished. The room has a single-sided fireplace and opens onto a hard surface patio below the deck. Finishes include acoustic ceiling tile. Alterations include the addition of guardrails along the window walls and wall-to-wall carpet on the floor.</p>	<p>Secondary</p>	
<p>Furnace Room</p>	<p>This utilitarian space, located in the west corner of the basement, houses the heating system. Finishes include a poured concrete floor.</p>	<p>None</p>	
<p>Storage Closet</p>	<p>This storage space is located in the southeast end of the basement fireplace. A single leaf wood door is intact. Carpeted floor.</p>	<p>Secondary</p>	

2.2.2 Basement

Storage Room

This utilitarian space, located at the southeast extent of the basement, occupies approximately one-third of the floor's square footage (not including the unfinished, earthen floor space). Band of windows in the northeast wall provides natural lighting. Poured concrete floor and exposed wood ceiling beams. Walls vary in level of finish.

None



Unfinished Space

Located in the far western corner of the basement, this space has a sloped, unfinished earthen floor. The space served as cool storage for apple harvests from the orchard for the Currans.

None

2.2.3 Site

<p>Breezeway</p>	<p>A breezeway, or covered walkway, connects the house and the carport. The exterior storage cabinet is also covered by the breezeway. No known alterations.</p>	<p>Primary</p>	
<p>Carport</p>	<p>Located southwest of the house, the carport sits at the top of the sloped, slightly curved driveway. Rectangular in plan, the carport functioned as a covered parking spot for the family vehicle. Typical of mid-century houses, carports are open-air evolutions of garages. The Curran House carport sits on a finished concrete slab and is open at either end. Textured plywood forms the southwest side wall of the carport, and a wooden screen runs along the northeast side. Alterations include the replacement of the plywood cladding and relocation of the roof drain to the southwest wall.</p>	<p>Primary</p>	
<p>Orchard</p>	<p>Planted by the Curran family, the orchard functioned as a semi-urban fruit farm from the 1950's through the 1990's. There are multiple varieties of apple trees, with new varieties still being planted by University Place park volunteers.</p>	<p>Primary</p>	

2.2.3 Site

Planting bed

Located adjacent to the front entry, this brick outlined planting bed is an added feature of the site. The curvilinear nature is not consistent with the 1950's.

None



Storage

Between the carport and the house, a tall cabinet provides storage space under cover of the breezeway. The cabinet is sided with textured plywood sheets identical to those on the main house. Original pulls. No known alterations.

Primary



2.3

Catalog of Features

The purpose of the following catalog of character-defining features is to facilitate compliance with the two core goals of the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*:

- Preserve the building's historic materials; and,
- Preserve the building's distinguishing visual and physical character.

The approach employed by Artifacts Consulting, Inc. in developing this catalog follows guidelines established in the National Park Service Preservation Brief 17 *Architectural Character: Identifying the Visual Aspects of Historic Buildings as an Aid to Preserving Their Character*. This catalog facilitates quick reference during rehabilitation projects to the original finishes, detailing, and assemblies of the building's character-defining features. Construction divisions (Composites, Glass, Masonry, Metals, and Wood) are listed alphabetically and serve as the organizational framework. Since character-defining features are not always space-specific or may have been moved, arrangement of the catalog by material affords the most reliable method to field-identify them. Within each division, features are listed alphabetically. The data on each feature provides information on general description including alterations when known, level of significance, and when available a small thumbnail images for identification.

The vast collection of character-defining features falls into two main groupings:

- Those individually attributed to the building's character; and,
- Those contributing collectively to the building's character.

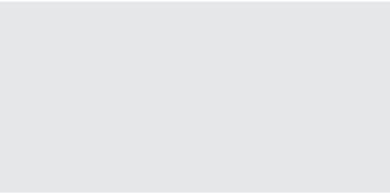
Examples of the first category include the front entry glass lites, window walls and wooden carport screen. Examples of the second category include the skylights and textured plywood siding.

Note, hardboard is the general term for a wood product consisting of wood fibers pressed into sheets, sometimes baked or tempered to increase durability. Masonite is one brand of tempered hardboard but the name is commonly used to refer to hardboard in general.

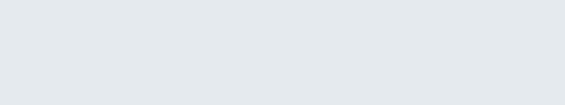
2.3.1 Composites

<p>Acoustical Tile</p>	<p>Characteristic of mid-century buildings, the Curran House employs a suspended acoustical tile ceiling throughout the finished basement level spaces.</p>	<p>Minimal</p>	
<p>Outlet Covers</p>	<p>Small outlet covers are located on the interior walls and on the main floor fireplace. Some outlet covers are broken or missing.</p>	<p>Minimal</p>	
<p>Vinyl Asbestos Tiles</p>	<p>Vinyl asbestos floor tiles were employed throughout most of the main floor, including the bedrooms, living and dining rooms. Remnants remain in the main floor storage closet, at the southeast end of the fireplace. Other sections have been covered with carpeting.</p>	<p>Primary</p>	

2.3.2 Glass

<p>Mirror</p>	<p>Non-edged mirrors are employed in the two original (main floor) bathrooms. Metal hinges allow the mirrors to open, revealing shelves behind.</p>	<p>Minimal</p>	
<p>Plate</p>	<p>Plate glass is employed in the window walls of the main floor living-dining space and basement level family room. Aluminum stops hold the glass in place.</p>	<p>Primary</p>	
<p>Stained</p>	<p>Unique colored lites at the front door highlight this as the main entrance to the house.</p>	<p>Primary</p>	

2.3.3 Masonry

<p>Brick</p>	<p>Common-bond bricks serve as finish materials on the chimney and interior fireplace walls and hearth. Both basement and main floor fireplaces have elevated, cantilevered hearths wrapped with a wide metal band. Open firewood storage boxes are located to the side of the firebox. Alterations include the addition of glass and metal firebox front plates.</p>	<p>Primary</p>	
<p>Ceramic Tile</p>	<p>Hexagonal tiles comprise the floor of the shower in Bathroom #1.</p>	<p>Secondary</p>	
<p>Floor Slabs</p>	<p>Employed in the basement and the carport, smoothed concrete floor slabs are now covered by wall-to-wall carpeting in the finished spaces of the basement. Exterior patio and breezeway spaces have large aggregate concrete floor slabs.</p>	<p>Minimal</p>	
<p>Foundation</p>	<p>Reinforced-concrete foundation walls support the building's superstructure.</p>	<p>Primary</p>	

2.3.4 Metals

<p>Drawer pulls</p>	<p>Round aluminum drawer pulls are intact on nearly all kitchen drawers and the outside storage cabinet (off the carport). Alterations include replacing two pulls in the kitchen.</p>	<p>Minimal</p>	
<p>Door Knobs</p>	<p>Round aluminum door knobs, with a simple aluminum rose design around the shaft, allow the opening and closing of doors.</p>	<p>Minimal</p>	
<p>Windows</p>	<p>Aluminum crank hardware on casement windows. Aluminum frames on most windows, including casement, slider, and fixed pane types.</p>		

2.3.5 Wood

Built-ins

Built-in storage cabinets, shelves and drawers consist of joined plywood and various wood species. These features originally exhibited a deliberate color scheme and are located in the kitchen, main floor bedrooms, main floor corridor and bathrooms. Alterations include the adding of subsequent paint layers to all remaining built-ins and the removal of the lower cabinets in Bathroom 1.

Primary



Cladding

Textured plywood sheets, with overlapping vertical joints, clad much of the house's exterior. Sheets were originally stained a dark color. Alterations include painting the original sections and replacing the siding on the southwest carport wall with a wider profile, T-1-11 type siding.

Primary



Doors

The house featured flush panel, single-acting doors. Alterations include repainting over the original color scheme and the addition of a new, multi-panel door at the bottom of the stairwell.

Secondary



2.3.5 Wood

Screen

A slatted, elevated screen forms the northeast wall of the carport. The screen is a visual device utilized by the architect in his 1950's house designs to add texture.

Primary



Walls

Textured plywood paneling forms the wall treatment of the southeast walls of Bedrooms 2 and 3. The paneling is stained black, similar to the original exterior cladding color.

Secondary



2.4

Condition Issues

The building remains overall in good condition, having benefited from only two tenants since its construction and the relatively young age of the structure. Examination of building materials and spaces for condition issues was limited to character-defining features and spaces. No structural assessment or evaluation of contemporary elements, spaces, or building systems (electrical, mechanical, plumbing, and communications) was undertaken. All digital photographs taken to illustrate condition issues were taken by Susan Johnson, Architectural Historian, Artifacts Consulting, Inc. during February 2010.

Maintenance issues are categorized into three priority levels: immediate, mid-term, and long-term. Immediate issues should be addressed within the next three years at most and are critical to occupant safety or the structural integrity of the building. Mid-term issues should be addressed in the next three to five years in order to keep the building in safe, stable condition. Long-term issues include recommended upgrades to improve building stability for the future. Refer to Section 3.5 for a complete list of treatment recommendations.



Detail of unfinished interior light well of skylight and mold on ceiling, bathroom #1. Source: Artifacts Consulting, Inc. 2010

The critical maintenance issue from a safety standpoint is the deck, which is currently unstable. Deterioration of the wooden structural system makes the deck currently unusable and a potential safety hazard.

- Remove the deck and replace with one of similar plan (footprint), but a stronger support system is needed. Framing members which are in good condition may be considered for reuse.

Future maintenance issues for the Curran House stem from roof form and materials, as well as the inherent thinness of building elements typical of mid-century construction. These thin materials have lower threshold tolerances for material deterioration due to water entry than traditional building materials (such as thick stone blocks or heavy timber construction).

- Redesign the roof plan in order to improve drainage and eliminate standing water.
- Replace homemade skylights with factory manufactured versions of a similar size and profile in order to eliminate water infiltration to the bathroom interiors. Proper joint sealant also



Basement bedroom door, showing added paint layer over original orange layer. Source: Artifacts Consulting, Inc. 2010



Detail of water damage at ceiling-light well junction in bathroom #2. Source: Artifacts Consulting, Inc. 2010

reduces water and air infiltration to interior spaces, improving energy performance.

General maintenance issues stem primarily from general wear and age. They include the following:

- Added paint layers over the original color palette. Examination of original paint layers in order to determine their character and condition would be beneficial as it might be possible to remove paint coatings and restore original finishes.
- Water infiltration at failing connections, including in bedroom #2's northeast wall and the bathroom skylights.
- Holes in the walls and doors, along with broken closet doors, should be repaired as funding allows.
- Interior features remain overall in good condition. The extent of previous alterations on the basement level has removed the majority of the interior original materials, with the exception of the fireplace in the family room. The stairwell railing and banister have been replaced and interior guardrails added to the window walls on both floors.

A breakdown of condition issues, organized spatially, is presented to give a thorough understanding to house stewards. A comprehensive, prioritized list of maintenance issues is given in section 3.5 Treatment Recommendations.

2.4.1 SITE

There is mulch in contact with plywood cladding along southwest wall of house, wicking moisture into the walls and deteriorating the cladding itself. Rain causes dirt to splash up onto plywood cladding, contributing to moisture retention against the wood and leading to deterioration.

There is soil in contact with the hardboard (Masonite) cladding along northeast wall of house, wicking moisture into the walls and deteriorating the cladding .

Consider removing the curvilinear planter bed along south wall or replace with a rectangular version. Curvilinear planter is not original.



Detail of water damaged wall below northeast window, bedroom #2. Source: Artifacts Consulting, Inc. 2010



Broken casement type window in bedroom #3. Source: Artifacts Consulting, Inc. 2010

2.4.2 FOUNDATION

The board-formed concrete foundation is in good condition. However, the posts supporting the deck are unstable due to inadequate bracing, alterations over time, and poor connections.

2.4.3 CARPORT

The carport's finished poured concrete floor is in good condition. Downspout directs water through the southwest wall; splash-trough added on the exterior. The southeast end beam in the carport ceiling structure has a large crack and shows weathering. Water is leaking from the central roof drain opening onto the ceiling beam below, causing water stains. Rot is not yet evident anywhere in the carport ceiling structure.

2.4.4 ROOF

The house and carport share a continuous low-slope roof with wide overhanging eaves. The roofing material is a relatively recent single-ply membrane. Fasteners from the previous roofing are evident below the membrane and will cause water infiltration problems in the future if the fasteners perforate the most recent roofing layer. The single-ply membrane is in fair to good condition. Insulation may have been installed below the current membrane. Chimney is in good condition. Bituminous roofing material present on the carport is deteriorating. New flashing at carport eaves is poor quality.

Vents are situated too low to the roof. Drains are poorly placed given the roof slope. Standing water extends along the southwest edge of house roof, readily blowing into vents and skylights. At least one drain has no downspout attached (along northwest wall of kitchen, between sink and dining room). Add roof drains at the west corner of the laundry room and in eave over main door approach (outside of southeast kitchen wall)

2.4.5 WINDOWS

Front/South entry: the leaded glass is in good condition. Muntins are in good condition at upper extents; lower extents

are experiencing natural weathering. Paint is cracking, (wood) muntins are slightly dried. Recommend light sanding and re-painting or staining of entire pieces.

North wall, master bedroom: water is infiltrating the wall below the picture window sill trim, resulting in deterioration of interior wall. From the exterior, the sill trim below the casement window shows possible deterioration as well.

Broken aluminum casement window is boarded over (bedroom #3). The broken picture window is boarded over (northeast corner of basement family room).



Detail of hole in door, bedroom #3. Source: Artifacts Consulting, Inc. 2010

2.4.6 DOORS

Main entry door is a solid single-leaf type, showing orange paint below added layers. The door is inoperable/stuck shut but otherwise is in good condition overall. The doorway has added exterior screen door jams, but the screen door is missing. Interior doors are in good condition except for a fist-sized hole in the hollow-core type door to bedroom #3 on the upper story. Closet doors in bedrooms #2 and #3 are solid wood and broken along the vertical grain. A pair of closet doors are also missing from bedroom #2.

2.4.7 WALLS, EXTERIOR

Textured plywood sheets clad most of the exterior of the carport, storage, and house, with the exception of tempered hardboard on the northeast facade. The textured plywood siding consists of vertically lapped sheets, measuring approximately 4' wide by 8' tall. All painted. Two below-window sections of contemporary veneer are present at the kitchen and bedroom #3 on the main floor. Southwest facade of carport cladding has been replaced with contemporary T1-11. Poured concrete foundation is exposed, especially along southeast and northwest facades.

Textured plywood siding is generally in fair condition, with normal weathering evident. The siding is heavily weathered on the house's southeast facade, with missing or peeling and cracked paint. The southeast wall of the storage unit between the house



New horizontal veneer cladding beneath window of bedroom #3. Source: Artifacts Consulting, Inc. 2010



Detail of hole in wall of basement family room. Similar hole evident in bedroom #3. Source: Artifacts Consulting, Inc. 2010



Intact cabinets, counter, sink and light fixture in bathroom #2. Source: Artifacts Consulting, Inc. 2010

and carport exhibits buckling textured plywood siding, likely due to water saturation.

2.4.8 WALLS, INTERIOR

Interior walls are comprised of painted gypsum board combined with large expanses of glazing, with the exception of impermeable wall sheeting on two walls in bath #2. Bedrooms have continuous bands of windows (combination of fixed and casement). There is a hole in the wall of bedroom #3. A section of the northeast wall in bedroom #2 is damaged from water infiltration. The paint is buckling, leaving the gypsum board exposed and soft. Brown mold is growing on the walls and ceiling of bath #1, especially around the skylight. In bath #2, the ceiling has a little damage to the gypsum board at the skylight. The skylights do not look original. Poor condition overall.

Ceilings in the main living and sleeping spaces on the upper story are characterized by expressed beams and stained wood plank decking. Ceilings in the basement rooms feature acoustic tile. The basement storage areas do not have finished ceilings.

2.4.9 FIXTURES

Bath #1 – hexagonal tile on the floor of shower stall; possibly original shower fixture; replacement sink. The toilet roll holder, handrail, and fan cover have been replaced. Original shelves are intact over toilet. Original light fixture present in shower. Flooring and toilet are new.

Bath #2 – original flooring, sink, light fixtures, shelves, and cabinets. The toilet, tub, fan cover (detached, on counter) and hardware, including toilet roll holder, faucets, and taps, have been replaced. The towel rack is missing except for one bracket. Cabinets and shelves are intact.

Kitchen – new appliances. The drawer and cabinet pulls are intact except for two. Some drawers are metal-lined. Laundry sink in the corner is original. The hanging cabinets have original sliding doors, opening to either side. The flooring is contemporary. The layout of kitchen is intact and significant.



Detail of post support, indicating where a breeze-way wooden screen once stood. Source: Artifacts Consulting, Inc. 2010

Pendant paired light fixtures inside the main entry are intact and original. Paired cylindrical light fixtures in bath #2 are intact and original.

2.4.10 FEATURES

Fireplaces on both floors are original and in good condition. Built-in drawers and cabinets are present in former master bedroom (bedroom #2). The upper-story hallway and bedroom #1 have original cabinets. Built-in desk and phone pass-through are intact and in good condition in bedrooms #1 and #2. The deck is in very poor condition. Sections of wooden joists and beams exhibit structural deterioration (portions missing) and biological growth (e.g., moss, fungus). Select framing members are contemporary replacements.

The wooden screen between the carport and house is intact and in good condition. One section of similar screen is believed to have been present across the kitchen patio, but it is missing now. The steel base remains.

The metal roof of the chimney is deteriorating.

2.4.11 FLOORS

The upper-story flooring consists of contemporary wall-to-wall carpet except for the kitchen and bathrooms, which have sheet linoleum. The lower-story flooring consists of finished poured concrete in the storage areas, contemporary wall-to-wall carpeting in the basement family room and bedroom, and dirt floor in the unfinished space adjacent to the furnace room.

Original linoleum tiles are visible in fireplace closet on the main floor. This same flooring is noted in the corner of one bedroom on the upper-story, where carpet was temporarily peeled back during the condition assessment. The extent and integrity of the original flooring is unknown. The carpet is stained in various locations. The kitchen and bathroom flooring is in good condition.

3

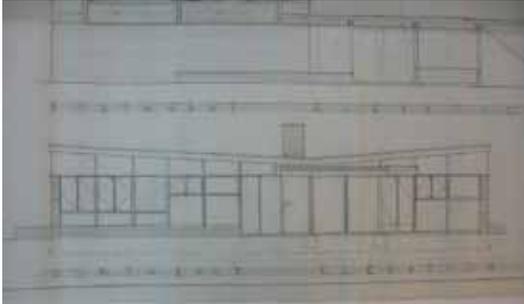
Findings



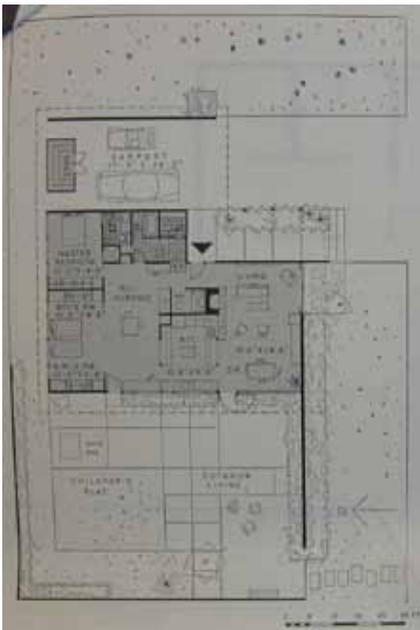
1950 Tacoma Home Show advertisement. Source: Tacoma News Tribune.

3.1

Summary of Findings



Northeast elevation of Price's 1951 model house for the Tacoma Society of Architects, showing the butterfly roof. Source: Tacoma Public Library.



Floor plan of the 1954 TX101 model house plan, as published in House & Home magazine, August 1954. Source: Tacoma Public Library.

The general conclusions that arise out of this report are organized under headings below. These conclusions address the specific historic preservation findings, conditions, and issues that exist currently and that should shape plans and policies for stewardship of the building. These conclusions should also be integrated into planning for the adaptive use and the design of physical modifications to the building. The overall recommended treatment for the building is rehabilitation. The 1955 date of construction constitutes the primary period of significance for maintenance and repair work, as well as the target period for any restoration or replacement of missing elements.

Summary: The Curran House is significant under criterion C for being a fine example of modernist residential design on the West Coast during the 1950s and for exhibiting advances in building materials in the post-war era. Furthermore, the house is a unique hybrid of speculative model houses and custom design elements by Robert Billsbrough Price, Tacoma's leading architect of the 20th century. The house and associated apple orchard are also significant under criterion A, representing the development of University Place with semi-urban lifeways.

The community of University Place and neighboring Narrows area of Tacoma, due to their relative isolation, did not draw many residents before the mid-20th century. The first Narrows Bridge, connecting west Tacoma with the Kitsap Peninsula, opened in July 1940. Mere months later, in November 1940, the bridge, nicknamed "Gallopig Gurdy," collapsed. The second edition of the Narrows Bridge waited ten years to be rebuilt. In 1950, the current Narrows Bridge opened not only highway access to the peninsula but also spurred a residential building boom in the immediate area. The Curran House, when built, was one of few residences in University Place. The community grew in population and density, incorporating as a city in 1994.

Built in ca. 1954, the Curran House property represents a relatively early example of the Price firm's residential designs. In particular, the Curran House is an interesting hybrid of speculative model house ("merchant-class") designs the firm had completed in 1950, 1951 and 1954 with custom alterations to fit the unique site and the needs of the Curran family.



Historic interior view of the TX101 house, ca. 1954. Photo shows living space, looking towards kitchen and patio. Source: Tacoma Public Library.

Residential Design Evolution: According to architectural historians Sally Woodbridge and Roger Montgomery, the Puget Sound region embraced the Modern movement thanks to a generation of architects that studied under Lionel Pries at the University of Washington. Robert Billsbrough Price was one of these students, and he became the most recognizable design name in Tacoma in the 1950s and 1960s. His contemporaries included Victor Steinbrueck, Alan Liddle, and the firm of Lea, Pearson & Richards, among many others.

In 1950, Robert B. Price also designed the model “Home of Ideas” for the 2nd Annual Tacoma Home Show that year. Built to educate and inspire attendees on the emerging possibilities for contemporary residences, the house exhibited cutting-edge ideas on modern house design and building materials. The house was also the grand prize of the home show. Floor-to-ceiling windows in the south and west walls allowed for extensive natural light as well as linking the interior and exterior. A brick “fireplace wall” occupied one half of the living room’s gable end wall and attracted attention as a special feature of the design. The fireplace had an elevated hearth and a simple rectangular firebox opening, similar to the Curran House fireplaces.



Historic interior view of the TX101 house, ca. 1954. Photo shows multi-purpose children's bedrooms and play area, with folding walls. Source: Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation.

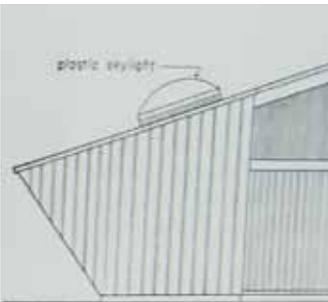
While Price’s 1950 model house had a low-rise gable roof, his 1951 model house design called for a butterfly roof (inverted gable). Around that time, however, the flat roof trend gained traction in Washington. Both the 1954 TX101 design and the Curran House exhibit flat roofs with wide overhanging eaves. The TX101, or “Tacoma Experiment--Year of the Washington State Centennial Plus One,” counts as one of Price’s “merchant-class” or speculative development house designs. These types of houses could be built economically by builders for new suburban developments. In order to appeal to the target audience of young married couples with two children, Price’s parameters meant keeping the building costs low, the details simple, and using standard building materials. At the time, the TX101 house achieved these goals. According to Price’s firm, the TX101 “showed the public that good contemporary design could be had for the same or less money, and it showed our builders that a well planned and detailed house could be constructed economically and sold competitively.” The sale price, in 1954, totaled \$17,500.



Historic exterior (patio) view of the TX101 house, ca. 1954. Source: Tacoma Public Library.



Historic interior view of the 1959 "Calypso" house's kitchen, and living-dining areas. Source: Tacoma Public Library.



Detail of a drawing of a Price designed house, featured in a January 1962 article in House & Home magazine. Source: Tacoma Public Library, Price collection.



1955 Chevrolet advertisement. Source: Sunset Magazine.

Skylights are standard features in Price-designed houses of the 1950s, with no known exceptions. In the Curran House, both main floor bathrooms have skylights, although they have a lesser degree of finish than expected. Price favored the use of extensive glazing, both for natural lighting and for making interior spaces feel larger, continuous with the natural setting. The structural post-and-beam system usually employed in his houses allows for large expanses of fixed single-pane windows, or window walls.

Carports are another feature of mid-century houses in the Northwest, not just in Price residences. The popularity of carports was due in part to the rapid increase in private automobile ownership after World War II. The traditional enclosed garage, deemed unnecessary due to the region's mild winters (west of the Cascade Range), underwent similar modernist redesigns as houses. According to Price's archives, the TX101's carport serves a practical, as well as aesthetic, role. That is, a carport "permits the convenience of entering or loading the car while under cover." To balance the loss of an enclosed garage, a "convenient storage area is provided at the end of the car shelter. The carport screen wall is perforated to add both light and texture." The Curran House has a similar storage area between the carport and the house, and the carport screen wall is intact. The breezeway connecting the house and the carport extends the above mentioned shelter against the typical rain of the Pacific Northwest.

A signature aspect of Price's single-family homes of the 1950s is the connection between the kitchen and the living-dining area. According to archives of the Price firm, the kitchen functioned as the "heart of the plan," from where "the housewife mother can watch the children in the patio, ... serve indoor and outdoor meals with a minimum of steps, visit with guests in the living-dining area even when preparing or serving dinner, and enjoy the outdoor view." When compared with residences of that period, the open floor plan became increasingly common but mostly in architect designed houses. Ranch Style house designs published in the 1950s still retain garages and a more traditional, divided floor plan.



Example of a traditional Ranch Style home design with divided floor plan and garage. Source: Tacoma News Tribune, 27 May 1956, B15.

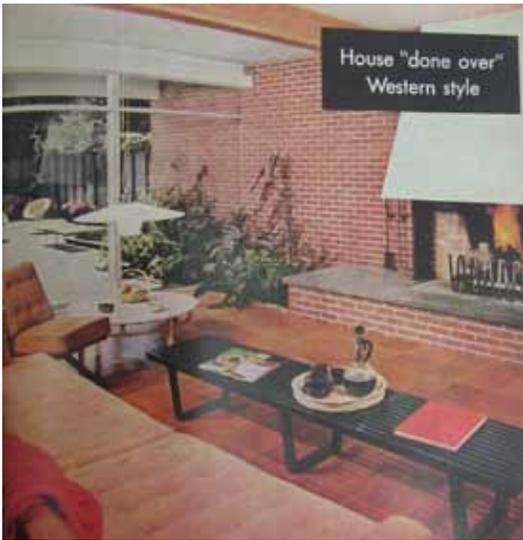
Curran House Compared to Other Price Houses: Considering the Curran House as a hybrid, the differences between it and the contemporary TX101 model home illuminate unique aspects in its design. For the TX101 house, Price sited a patio off the living-dining area “to increase living space while retaining privacy.” Price adapted his model house designs to a challenging location for the Curran residence. The sloping site of the Curran House, in contrast to the flat site of the TX101, necessitated a deck to extend the living-dining area instead of a patio. While the deck never had a screen wall, the extended living space was private at the time of construction due to the lack of nearby houses. Furthermore, the deck is located on the northwest side of the house, shielded from Grandview Drive and Rock Road, the two nearest roads in the 1950s.

Further contrasts between the TX101 and Curran House are the addition of a semi-finished basement and individual bedrooms for older children instead of an all-purpose play/sleeping area for young children. The TX101’s master bedroom was the only “inflexible closed off space,” while the Curran home has four bedrooms with solid, fixed walls and doors. However, the primary spaces (i.e., kitchen, living-dining area, deck) retained open sight lines. Features such as the kitchen cabinets and living room fireplace, which all open to on both length-wise sides, highlight the sense of transparency and accessibility given by the open floor plan and the window walls.

The hybrid nature of the Curran House, combining the best of Price’s model house designs but exhibiting special traits seen in some of his custom-built residences, are understandable in light



Allen Residence, Bainbridge Island. Courtesy of the Tacoma Public Library.



Cover photo from Sunset Magazine, March 1955 issue.

of the clients. The Currans did not fit the typical client profile for the speculative builder houses of the era (i.e., young couples with two young children), but neither did they belong to the affluent class. The Currans were a middle-class family, interested in developing their property into a small urban fruit farm. They had three children (ages 4 to 16 in 1955), chickens, one or two beef cattle and at least two horses. With the apple orchard already partially in place, the new house was destined to be a modern farmhouse. For example, unfinished basement space served as storage for the apple harvest and Charles Curran Sr. sold apples from the carport. Mrs. Curran kept a large vegetable garden west of the carport. Apricot and cherry trees provided other types of fruit for household consumption.

Born in 1909 in Pratt, Kansas, Charles Curran Sr. attended the College of Puget Sound along with his future wife. After graduation, Charles and Mary Louise Curran married in 1938. As did many people of their generation, they learned the value of frugality, self-sufficiency, and resourcefulness from living through the Great Depression. A lifelong Rotarian, Charles Curran, sr. also belonged to the University Place School Board from 1947 to 1971, through which he became familiar with Price's design work on Curtis Jr. High School. He worked as the secretary-treasurer for the Bakery Drivers and Salesmen Union until his retirement in the late 1970s. Charles passed away in 1998, survived by Mary Louise, their children, and grandchildren.

The Currans' appreciation for efficiency matched well with Price's design philosophies for residences. In a modest-sized Price house, interior spaces were designed to feel larger than they actually were. Color and material changes were minimized, in order to unify rooms. This is demonstrated in the TX101 model house, where floors and ceilings were continuous, smooth surfaces. Interior wood surfaces apart from the ceiling were stained dark brown. To contrast with the natural colors of the floors, walls, and ceilings, brighter colors emphasized the cabinets, doors, and shelves. Colors matched for like materials. Similarly, the Curran House's original colors and materials unify the spaces. Most of the main floor has (now carpeted over) deep brown speckled floor tiles, stained wood ceilings, and dark stained ribbed plywood paneling in bedroom #3. This natural color scheme was interrupted with bursts of orange, green, and



Award-winning design by Price. Mr. & Mrs. Joe Long, Jr. House, American Lake. Source: Tacoma News Tribune, 27 May 1956.

gold on doors, cabinets, and drawers. There are also lively colored glass lites at the front entryway.

The similarities between the Curran House and the model houses designed by Price in the early 1950s have been established. However, the needs of the Curran family plus a semi-urban, sloped site among woods and an orchard, led to some customizations. As such, the Curran House also shares some similarities with some of Price's custom-built residences. One of these is the award-winning Joe Long Jr. House (1956) on American Lake.

The Long House, which won a Merit Award from the AIA, was built for Mr. and Mrs. Joe Long Jr. Similar to the Currans, the Long family had a teenager, as well as two younger children. Designed to incorporate the lake into the view from the living spaces, the Long House reflects careful site planning, as well as the interests and lifestyles of its builders. Window walls and a wrap-around deck overlook the lake from a steeply sloped lot, with the basement level opening onto a patio. Ironically, Price called out the kitchen and utility area as "one of the nicest parts of the house." In the absence of walls in the kitchen area, the hung cabinets act as spatial dividers. All the bathrooms have skylights. Thus, the massing, orientation, program, and details such as the kitchen cabinets and bathroom skylights closely match the Curran House.

The Charles Allen residence on Bainbridge Island is another example of a custom-designed Price house. While the Allen residence has a more complex floor plan and a higher level of interior detail than the Curran House, the two houses closely resemble each other in massing, form, relationship of interior spaces, and use of a deck to maximize semi-private living space. Window walls support a flat roof with overhanging eaves. In particular, the kitchen of the Allen residence demonstrates open sight lines into the dining area and beyond, with hung cabinets dividing the spaces instead of solid walls. As in the Curran House, the kitchen sink is located by a large window with a view. The Long, Allen, and Curran houses all have main floors opening onto a deck; but, the Long House has an extended patio off the finished basement and the Allen deck wraps and has level changes. The Curran deck is only on one side of the house, and



A typical Price design feature, the open kitchen-dining plan with deck. Allen Residence, Bainbridge Island. Courtesy of the Tacoma Public Library.

the basement was originally unfinished, with the exception of bedroom #4 and probably the family room.

(Endnotes)

- 1 Sally B. Woodbridge and Roger Montgomery, *Guide to Architecture in Washington State* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1980), 29-30.
- 2 Pierce County Building Index, maintained by the Northwest Room of the Tacoma Public Library.
- 3 Speculative Builder's House, TX101 folder, Robert Price papers, Tacoma Public Library.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Interior walls of the light wells are unfinished, revealing the framing. Also, the skylights themselves are simply bowed sheets of plexiglass instead of typical manufactured lights.
- 6 Speculative Builder's House, TX101 folder, Robert Price papers, Tacoma Public Library.
- 7 Speculative Builder's House, TX101 folder, Robert Price papers, Tacoma Public Library.
- 8 Speculative Builder's House, TX101 folder, Robert Price papers, Tacoma Public Library.
- 9 Price designed at least one other house in University Place, near 19th and Ventura, with similar colored glass lites at the front entry.
- 10 "Designer Wins Coveted AIA Merit Award," *Tacoma News Tribune*, 27 May 1956.

3.2

Analysis of Significance

Historical and architectural significance and levels of original public visibility are the primary factors in evaluating a building's physical features, spaces, and setting in order to determine the level of historic integrity and relative priority of features and spaces. The building can be divided into areas of relative character-defining importance. The historic significance of these areas stems from the history of construction, past occupants and events, and quality and integrity of architectural details.

According to the level of contribution each makes to define the building's architectural character and historical significance, exterior building features and spaces are designated as Primary, Secondary, Minimal, or None. The basis for categorization stems from the following: the importance of the feature or space for the original inhabitants or the designer; whether the feature or space is original, or is a historically significant or contemporary addition; the extent of modifications and additions to the feature or space; and, the compatibility of finishes and building materials employed in the historic and contemporary changes to the feature or space. The intent is not to fragment the building into divisible parts that can individually be preserved, modified, or discarded in future planning; rather, it is to view the building as a collective resource of character-defining features and spaces and provide some direction for necessary treatments or alterations. The goal is to steer toward solutions that will permit continued improvements to areas with minimal or no significance, and to prevent eroding or adversely impacting those character-defining features and spaces with primary significance levels. Significance levels assigned through this analysis are plotted on maps within this section.

Primary: Features and spaces original to the building that display a high level of physical integrity, although possibly with minor changes or historically significant alterations designed to fit into the design or character of the original feature or space. At an architectural significance level, the finishes, design, and materials are of a high quality and assemblies well made. They convey a consciousness of setting, often public use, and typically exhibit design qualities defining the building's architectural style or trademarks of the architect. They reflect prevailing design influences during the building's period of construction. These elements would contribute to a building's eligibility for

listing to the National Register of Historic Places under criteria C (architectural character). At a historical significance level, they may also be noted for important historic events or significant occupants that would contribute to the building's eligibility to National Register of Historic Places listing under criteria A or B (association with historic events or persons, respectively). Their removal or extensive alteration would detract from the overall architectural and historical significance of the building. Primary spaces and features may exhibit either or both architectural and historical significance associations.¹

Secondary: Features and spaces are original to building, though likely to have undergone major changes and/or historically significant additions. They retain some historic character and significant features. They exhibit utilitarian, well-crafted, but not lavish, building materials or architectural features. At a historical significance level, they often served supporting roles to historic functions in primary spaces. Secondary spaces and features may exhibit either or both architectural and historical significance associations.

Minimal: Features and spaces have few distinguishing architectural characteristics. Alternatively, an extensive, non-compatible contemporary remodel might obliterate nearly all significant architectural features and spatial configurations through introduced contemporary features and spaces.

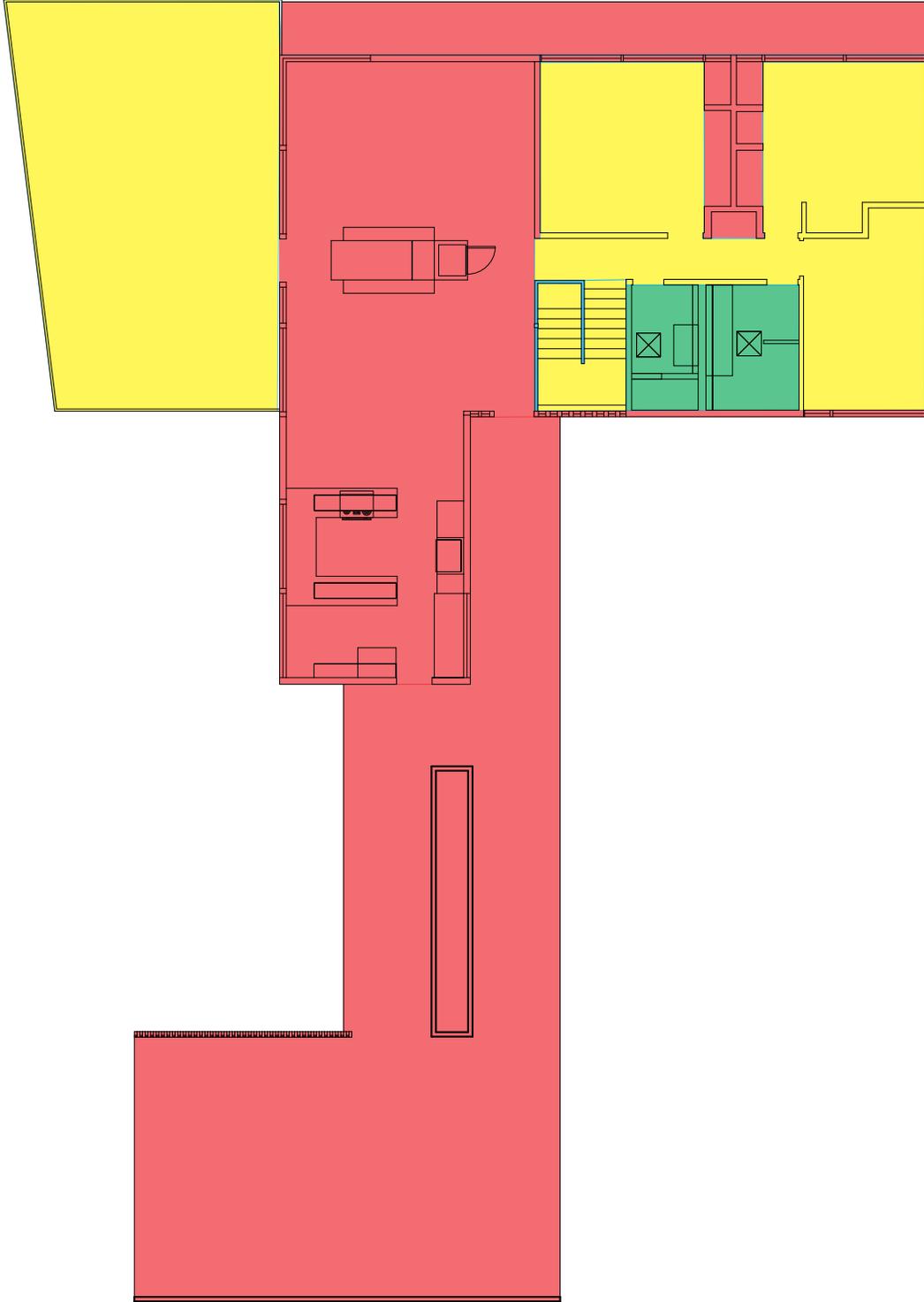
None: Features and spaces have no remaining architectural features or spatial configurations dating to either original construction or significant historical modifications, or are contemporary features and spaces that are not compatible with the original design. Due to the absence of original materials, configurations or architectural design elements, these spaces do not have historical associations.

Note, the house is oriented at a diagonal. All floor plans shown with north at the top left, south at the bottom right.

(Endnotes)

- 1 Note that, while primary features and spaces would contribute to National Register of Historic Places status, individually they do not

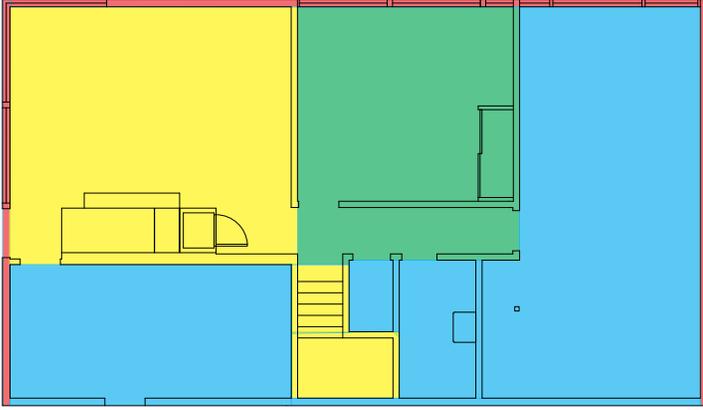
automatically qualify a resource for listing. Instead, they factor into the overall assessment, which includes but is not limited to date of construction, integrity, and historical and architectural significance. Formal eligibility determination is made by the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation and determination for listing by the Keeper of the Register, National Park Service.



- Primary
- Secondary
- Minimal
- None

First Floor | Significance Map

- Primary
- Secondary
- Minimal
- None



Basement Floor|Significance Map

3.3

Analysis of Public Visibility

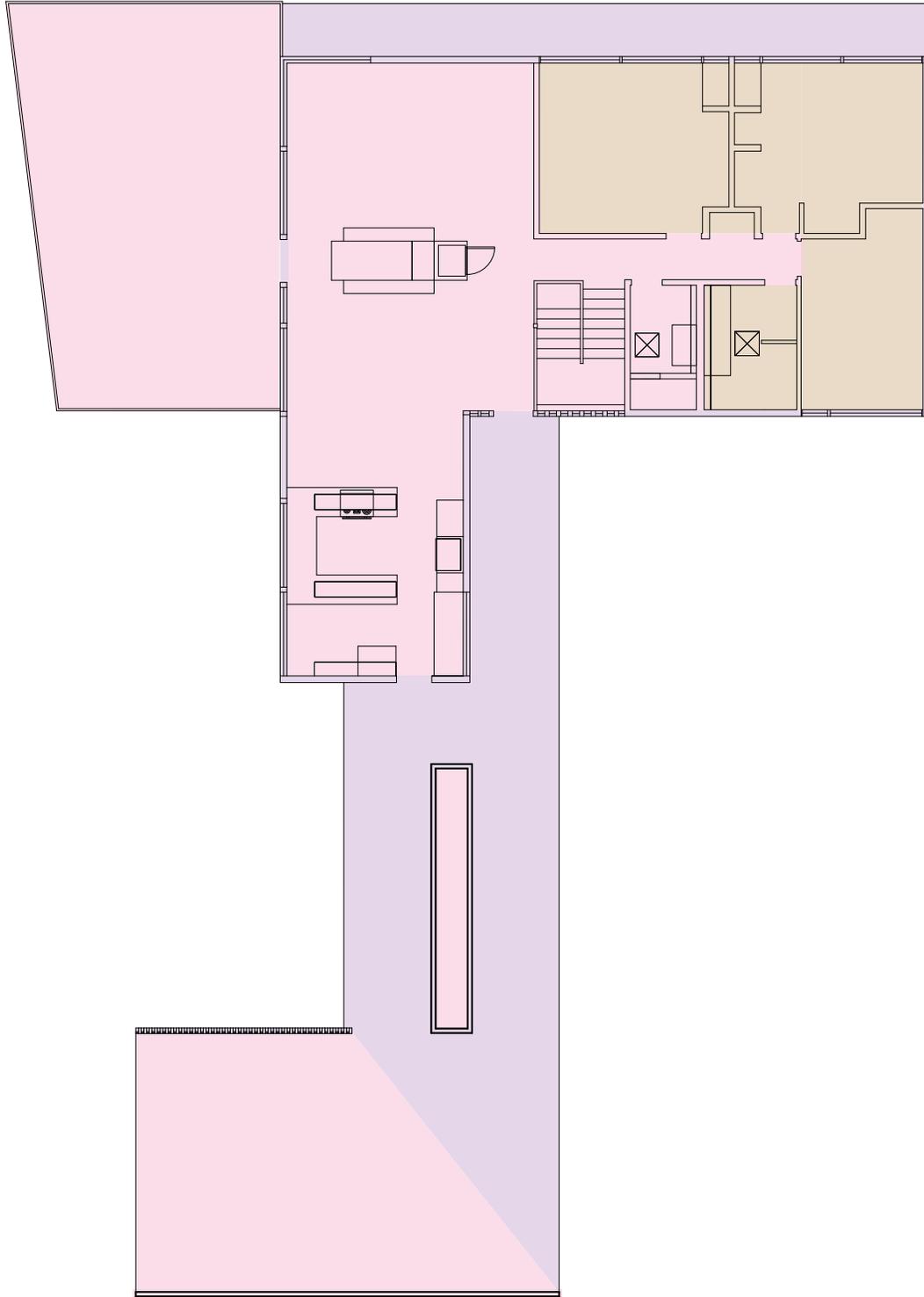
Public visibility complements the architectural and historical significance category by identifying which spaces and features were originally accessible to or visible by the public. Accessibility in this sense does not pertain to either the American Disabilities Act (ADA) or International Building Code (IBC) access; rather, it speaks to the user groups originally intended for these features and spaces. Distinguishing between levels of accessibility on the building exterior and interior identifies which features and spaces should receive increased attention to their preservation and interpretation due to their original public nature. There are three categories of public visibility applicable to the building: public, semi-public, and private. Public and semi-public spaces typically feature a higher level of architectural detailing and design than private family areas; they also generally have larger square footage, larger windows for natural lighting and view appreciation, and less physical divisions (ie, walls). Features and spaces that are primary and public are particularly important and deserve special attention due to their role in presenting the architectural style and design intent.

In order to assist in decision-making, the following public accessibility maps show these original levels of public accessibility layered over building floor plans. Matching spaces originally intended as public or private with similar new levels of access and functions preserves the interpretive value of the original function of the space, while facilitating the adaptive reuse of private spaces.

Public Areas: Features and spaces, to which any visitor originally might view or enter with no restrictions placed on ability to approach, move through, or occupy. Consequently, the role as a residential space was integral to the design process as reflected in the functions and design of the features and finishes, hardware, fixtures, furnishings, sizes, and proportions of interior spaces.

Semi-Public Areas: Features and spaces that were originally not in prominent view from exterior public right-of-ways or served as the connection between public and private spaces within the building. Visitors were welcome to view or temporarily occupy the space while visiting or being entertained by the Curran family.

Private Areas: Originally for family use. Visitors had access to these features and spaces only with the express permission of the Curran family.



Public



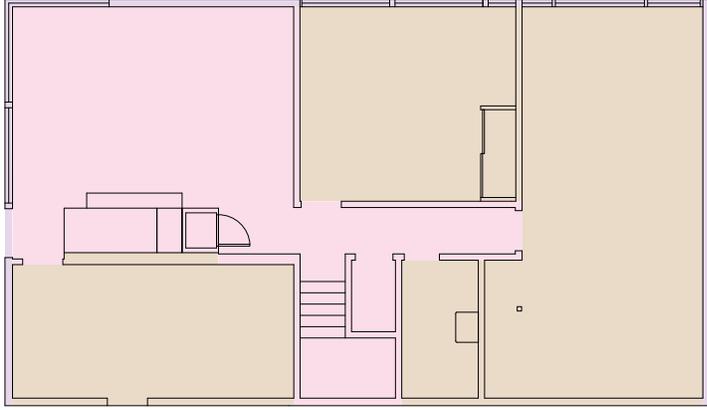
Semi-Public



Private



First Floor | Public Visibility Map



- Public
- Semi-Public
- Private

Basement Floor|Public Visibility Map

3.4

Decision-Making Matrix

The following decision-making matrix merges the elements of architectural and historical significance and current condition within the over-arching treatment recommendation of rehabilitation along a pathway that results in a recommended approach to the future treatment of the individual features, spaces, and the overall appearance of the building. In addition, the matrix can guide the organization of a future use program to best match existing spaces with future uses based on corresponding levels of architectural significance and public access. The more important, public, significant, and intact the space or feature, the more careful attention should be paid to its preservation and enhancement. Conversely, the more a space or feature has served a private role or been previously altered in a non-compatible manner, thus removing historic fabric, the more amenable this feature or space is to compatible new work in order to accommodate an adaptive new use. Thus, further changes should be consolidated to features and spaces already altered, thereby reducing the need for and extent of modifications to intact, historically and architecturally significant features and spaces.

Primary, public features and spaces should be preserved in their existing locations and conditions or restored to their original appearances at a specific pre-determined period in time in order to retain their value. Primary, private features and spaces should be preserved to the extent feasible within the context of adaptive reuse of the space or feature. Secondary, Minimal, and None public, semi-public, and private interior spaces and exterior features with less important architectural features and spaces or that are not character-defining would be eligible for rehabilitation in which modifications to the features or spaces will have less impact on the historic significance of the building. Rehabilitation of these spaces can balance retention and reuse of existing significant features and spaces while making the space more functional for its occupants.

The final element in the decision-making matrix is the treatment approach. As a general guide to the approaches and levels of treatment recommended, this Historic Structures Report utilizes the tools and terminology developed for Historic Structures Reports by the federal departments engaged in historic preservation policy and implementation. The historic preservation

community in the United States broadly follows guidelines established by the Secretary of the Interior of the National Park Service for treating historic properties. These guidelines delineate four different approaches that are generally accepted as standards for treating architectural spaces and features. They are preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction or replication. These four standards can be applied to the development of programs for the building and to inform design development for future tenants.

Preservation focuses on the maintenance and repair of existing historic materials and retention of a property's form as it has evolved over time. Protection and Stabilization are consolidated under this treatment. Preservation is defined in the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* (1995) as the "act or process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of an historic property. Work, including preliminary measures to protect and stabilize the property, generally focuses upon the ongoing maintenance and repair of historic materials and features rather than extensive replacement and new construction. New exterior additions are not within the scope of this treatment; however, the limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems and other code-required work to make properties functional is appropriate within a preservation project."

Restoration depicts a property at a particular period of time in its history, while removing evidence of other periods. Restoration is defined by the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* (1995) as the "act or process of accurately depicting the form, features, and character of a property as it appeared at a particular period of time by means of the removal of features from other periods in its history and reconstruction of missing features from the restoration period. The limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems and other code-required work to make properties functional is appropriate within a restoration project."

Rehabilitation (recommended) acknowledges the need to alter or add to a historic property in order to meet continuing or changing uses while retaining the property's historic character.

Rehabilitation is defined by the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* (1995) as the "act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values."

Reconstruction or Replication re-creates vanished or non-surviving portions of a property for interpretive purposes. Reconstruction is defined by the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* (1995) as the "act or process of depicting, by means of new construction, the form, features, and detailing of a non-surviving site, landscape, building, structure, or object for the purpose of replicating its appearance at a specific period of time and in its historic location."

3.4.1 Matrix

This matrix was developed in order to determine the appropriate approach to the character-defining features and individual spaces of the building and help match the spaces with compatible future uses. Using the *architectural* and *historic significance*, and *current condition*, this matrix shows which approaches are most likely to retain the history and usefulness of the building's spaces and features. The spaces of the building have different levels of architectural design and details. These may be the result of the form and use of the space, the type of building materials, and/or the complexity or simplicity of the design. Primary spaces and character-defining features should be protected from damage or removal in future work. Existing significant Secondary and Minimal features and spaces should be reused when possible during modifications to these spaces. None or intrusive elements should be removed when no longer needed or the originals restored to facilitate interpretation of the original design intent of spaces and features.

Current condition is determined by the amount of original material left in the feature or space and the care that has been taken to maintain it. Missing materials may need replacement. Damaged materials may require stabilization and repair. Intact details should be retained. Taking these criteria into consider-

ation leads to suggested appropriate future treatments and guides the formulation and design development for future work.

Four additional considerations in the philosophical approach to the stewardship of modern buildings stemmed from the Association for Preservation Technology (APT). These should be weighted with the relative level of significance of the building and features considered. Set forth in the APT's 2001, volume 4 Bulletin, these statements are:

- “Consider modern buildings as part of our heritage: Decisions regarding interventions should be made according to accepted principles of heritage conservation, and they should be based on a clear understanding of heritage character and significance.
- Consider the building as a whole: Understanding modern buildings in general requires a full understanding of design intent, form and design, construction technology, historical and sociological context, relationships between interior and exterior spaces and finishes, use and function, location and setting, and so on.
- Consider present-day values as well as original intent: Although the designers may not have been particularly concerned with extended service life or durability, an although materials and assemblies may have a limited life span, we should apply present-day cultural values, conservation ethics, and concerns about sustainability in making decisions about their future.
- Consider the impact on heritage character and significance in addition to performance and durability: Deficiencies in the original design warrant the same approach as that used for earlier heritage; potential benefits or modifications to improve performance and durability should be balanced against their impact on heritage character and significance.”¹

(Endnotes)

- 1 Susan D. Bronson, “Authenticity Considerations for Curtain-Wall Buildings: Seminar Summary,” Association for Preservation Technology Bulletin, 2001.

PUBLIC VISIBILITY	ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE	CONDITION OF SPACE/FEATURE	RECOMMENDED APPROACH
PUBLIC	PRIMARY	MISSING DAMAGED INTACT NO WORK	RECONSTRUCT RESTORE/REHABILITATE RESTORE/PRESERVE PRESERVE
	SECONDARY	MISSING DAMAGED INTACT NO WORK	REHABILITATE PRESERVE/REHABILITATE PRESERVE/REHABILITATE PRESERVE/REHABILITATE
	MINIMAL	MISSING DAMAGED INTACT NO WORK	REHABILITATE/NEW PRESERVE/REHABILITATE/NEW REHABILITATE/NEW NO WORK/NEW
PRIVATE AND SEMI-PUBLIC	PRIMARY	MISSING DAMAGED INTACT NO WORK	REHABILITATE REHABILITATE PRESERVE/REHABILITATE PRESERVE/REHABILITATE
	SECONDARY	MISSING DAMAGED INTACT NO WORK	REHABILITATE/NEW REHABILITATE/NEW REHABILITATE/NEW REHABILITATE/NEW
	MINIMAL	MISSING DAMAGED INTACT NO WORK	NEW/NO WORK REHABILITATE/NEW REHABILITATE/NEW NO WORK/NEW

ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

CONDITION OF SPACE/FEATURE

RECOMMENDED APPROACH

<p>PRIMARY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Original to building or site, though possibly with minor changes or historically significant additions designed to fit in to the design or character of the space or setting Finishes and materials of a high quality and well crafted Convey consciousness of setting and preferences during period of construction Removal or extensive alteration would debase architectural and historical significance of building and detract from overall visual and physical unity of site May be noted for historic events or occupants 	<p>NO WORK</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Material is intact and requires no work <p>INTACT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Material still exists, but may require cleaning/resurfacing <p>DAMAGED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Material is damaged, deteriorated, altered/modified <p>MISSING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Original features/spaces were removed or otherwise no longer exist 	<p>NO WORK</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No work is required. Repair or modify to meet user needs and maintain functions <p>NEW</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add new material as needed to accomplish task <p>RECONSTRUCT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replicate the original form, features and details of missing spaces, features and materials with new materials and/or new construction <p>RESTORE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Return the features and spaces to original condition at a particular period of time <p>REHABILITATE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repair, alter and add materials, features and spaces to make the item useful, while retaining its historic character <p>PRESERVE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply measures necessary to sustain existing form, authenticity and extant materials to protect and stabilize the features and spaces
<p>SECONDARY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Original to building or site, though likely to have undergone major changes and/or historically significant additions Retain some historic character and significant elements Exhibit utilitarian, well-crafted but not lavish building materials or architectural features No important history may have been made in the spaces 		
<p>MINIMAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Originally unused or constructed as service rooms with few distinguishing characteristics, or An extensive, non-compatible contemporary remodel obliterating original spatial configurations and nearly all significant architectural features through introduced contemporary spaces and elements <p>NONE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Features and spaces have no remaining configurations dating to either original construction or significant historical modifications Contemporary features and spaces that are not compatible with the original design 		

3.5

Treatment Recommendations

The over-arching treatment approach recommended for the building is rehabilitation due to the change in use and ownership. However, preservation of significant character-defining features and primary spaces is preferred given the relative quality of the design as a mid-century residence by a leading regional architect. The house is a fixture in University Place and the greater Tacoma area. The long-term best interest for the building resides with continued use in order to provide income for maintenance and repairs.

As the building takes on new uses and spatial needs, it is both possible and optimal to retain the key elements of its strong mid-century character. The relative architectural and historic significance of spaces and elements inside and outside the building create a practical pathway for thinking about future treatment and programming for the building. In order to help distinguish between the more significant primary public spaces and the amendable minimal and secondary private spaces, the following categories should underlie informal isolated physical changes, major building program changes during systems upgrades, and the formulation of maintenance practices.

Adaptive reuse of both floors for community meetings, rental events, educational presentations, or other income producing use would benefit from the use of Federal Investment Tax Credits. These credits amount to 20 percent of the amount spent on the rehabilitation project. Building owners or long-term lessees (if their remaining lease is 27.5 years for residential property or 39 years for nonresidential property) are eligible. Proposed work must be reviewed and certified by the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation and the National Park Service for consistency with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Properties*.

The recommendations in this report cover a wide variety of future work necessary to stabilize, maintain and restore the building, and that range in difficulty and expense. Recommendations are tailored toward the long-term goal of rehabilitating the building to provide continued community and/or compatible new uses. Establishing this organized approach is necessary to facilitate fund-raising and ensure that work proceeds in a logical sequence of mutually supportive tasks rather than compound-

ing future projects through repetition or reversing previous work. Tasks can be undertaken on an individual basis as funding permits or folded into a larger set of projects. It is also necessary to match specific tasks with the available skills of local volunteers and contractors.

Organization of the recommendations prioritizes projects on a immediate needs, mid-, and long-term basis according to the immediacy of stabilizing and maintaining the building in anticipation of continued use. Immediate needs projects are those that need to be done within the next one to three years in order to protect the safety and authenticity of the structure. Mid-term projects are those that generally should be done within the next three to five years to weatherize the building and improve overall site conditions, but are not immediately critical to the life safety and function of the building or site, and that require planning and fund-raising to accomplish. Long-term projects are those that should be implemented within the next five to ten years as substantial capital improvements, rehabilitation or restoration projects and may be delayed that long to allow for thorough planning and fundraising.

Immediate Needs (0-3 years)

- Remove soil from contact with exterior cladding, especially at southwest planter bed and along northeast facade.
- Scrape, sand and repaint textured plywood cladding, with the exception of the southwest carport wall which has contemporary replacement siding in new condition.
- Even though roofing material on main house is in fair to good condition, it should be removed. A new roof plan should be devised to provide positive drainage to the existing roof drains. This will require new sloped insulation and possibly perimeter flashing with a higher profile. The substrate should be completely cleaned and prepared for the new insulation and membrane roofing.
- Remove skylights. Treat wooden framing with sodium borate to kill any existing biological growth. Replace plexiglass with pre-fab residential operable skylights, for improved water seal and general ventilation.

- Replace broken windows. In the long term, consider replacing the fixed glass with double glazing. This would help with heating expenses and shouldn't change the visual character of the house. Additionally, with heavier glass, it might be possible to remove the non-original interior railings.
- Remove existing deck. Reconstruct with new lumber, maintaining the original layout (plan) and general design aesthetic.
- Remove deteriorated sections of wood (small sections) from carport entry beam, apply epoxy patches and paint. Paint all exposed house beams. (Possible alternative: Treat afflicted carport ceiling beam with sodium borate to kill any developing biological growth inside the crack.)

Mid-Term Needs (3-5 years)

- Find and repair leak under window in Bedroom #2.
- Repair or replace deteriorating metal roof on chimney.

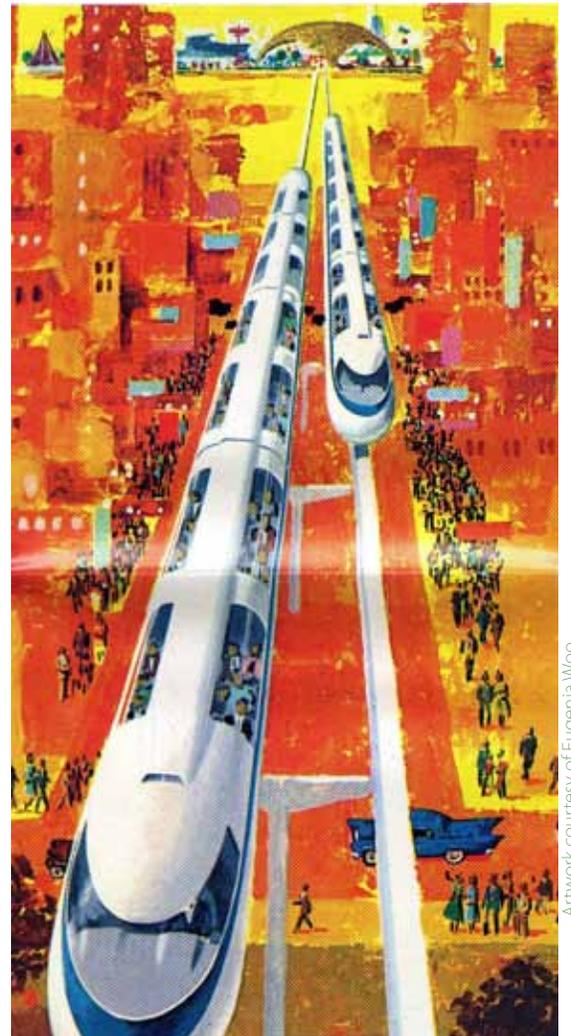
Long-Term Needs (5+ years)

- Structural upgrade for the house, tie in walls (seismic).
- Remove contemporary horizontal veneer from the two locations where present, under windows on the upper story. Replace with painted and tempered hardboard (Masonite), similar to that present along northeast facade.
- Remove carpet where original flooring is beneath. Where there is no linoleum or other finish flooring beneath an area of carpet, leave carpet intact or replace with desired flooring.
- Repaint front door with a deep orange, matching exposed original paint layers.
- Locate and install lighting fixtures appropriate to the era of construction.
- Keep kitchen cabinets and restore them.
- Rebuild stair railing to the era of construction, as long as current codes are met.
- Remove the added screen door jamb from the front (main) doorway.

- Repair holes in interior walls, first floor.
- Finish out the skylight wells in the upper floor bathrooms with green board and paint.
- Upgrade heat system.
- Remove fuel oil tanks (one freestanding, one below grade).
- Fix broken closet doors.

4

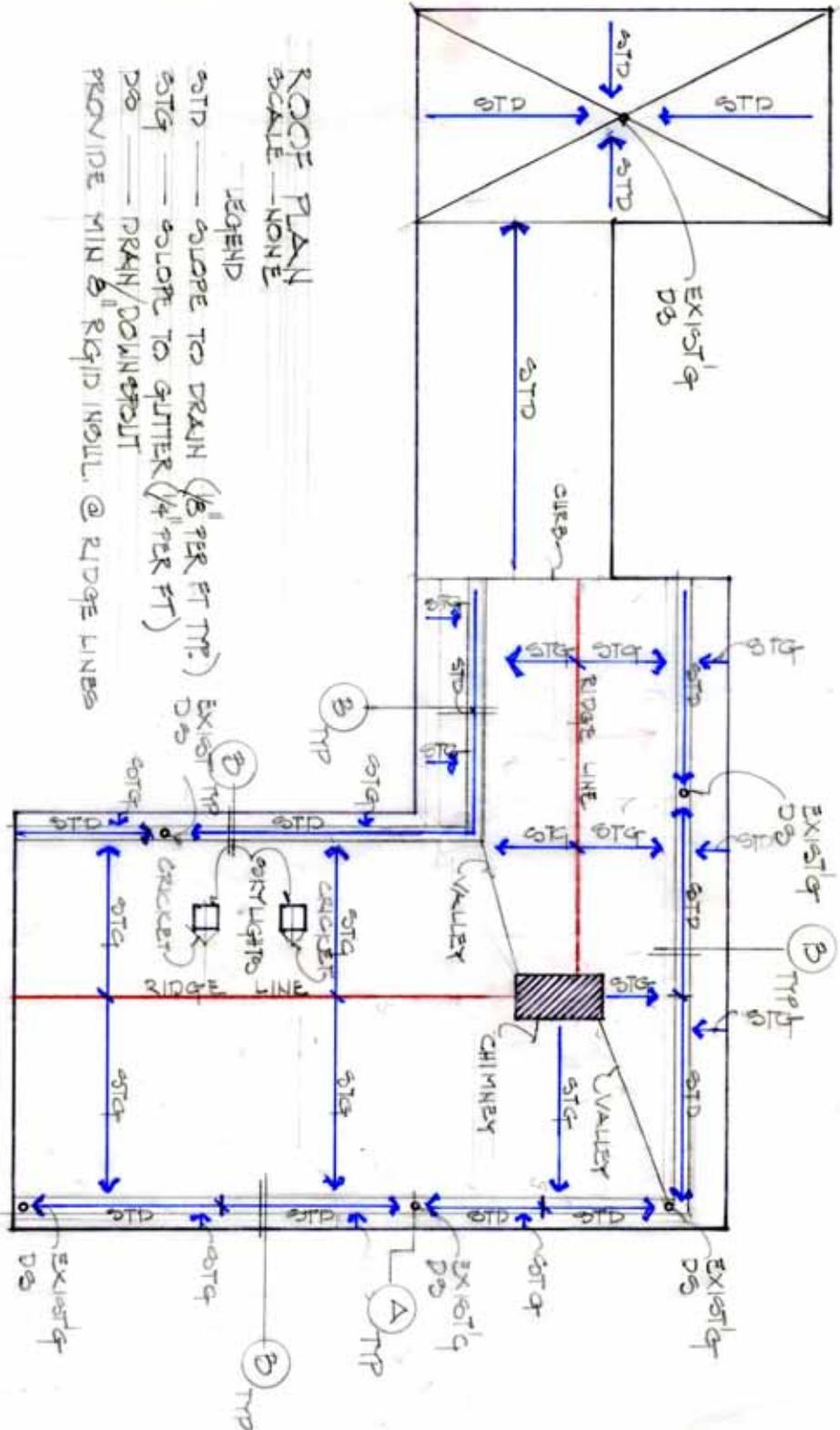
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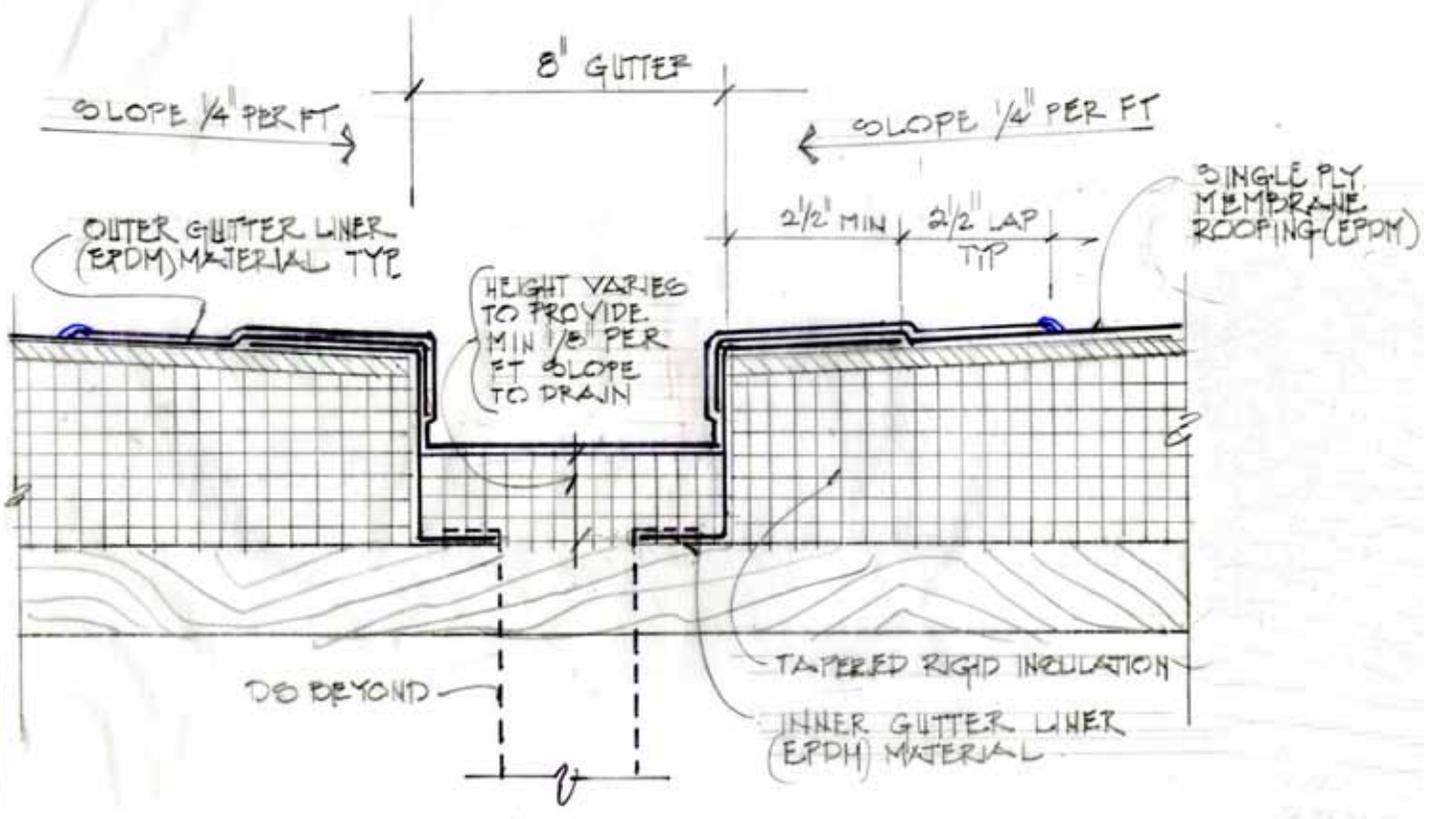
Artwork courtesy of Eugenia Woo.

4.1

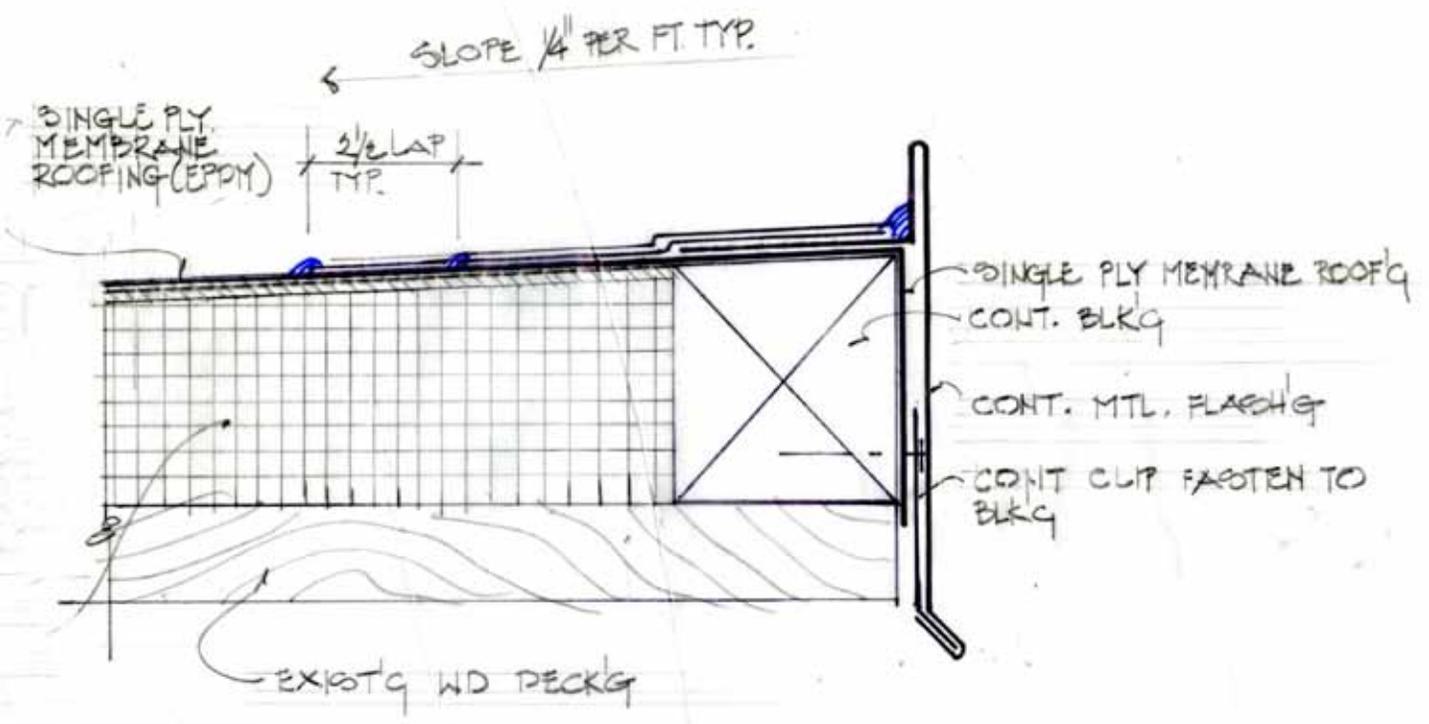
Drawings



Sketch of a suggested roof plan redesign. Blue arrows indicate future drainage directions, red lines indicate low-rise ridges. Next page: sketched section detail (A) of suggested new roof drain and gutter; sketched detail (B) of suggested roof edge flashing. Drawings by Tim McDonald, Artifacts Consulting, Inc. 2010.



A ROOF DRAIN & GUTTER DETAIL
SCALE NONE



B ROOF EDGE FLASHING DETAIL
SCALE NONE

4.2

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