

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Washington, James W. Jr. & Janie, Home & Studio  
other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Location

street & number 1816 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue  not for publication  
city or town Seattle  vicinity  
state Washington code WA county King code 033 zip code 98122

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,  
I hereby certify that this X nomination     request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

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

X national     statewide     local

Applicable National Register Criteria

    A     X B     C     D

Signature of certifying official/Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
WASHINGTON STATE SHPO  
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

Signature of commenting official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Title \_\_\_\_\_ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

    entered in the National Register     determined eligible for the National Register  
    determined not eligible for the National Register     removed from the National Register  
    other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

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**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- private
- public - State
- public - Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only **one** box.)

- building(s)
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing
1	buildings
	site
2	structure
	object
3	<b>Total</b>

**Name of related multiple property listing**

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

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

None

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: Single Family

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: Single Family

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY AMERICAN

MOVEMENT: Bungalow/Craftsman

MODERN MOVEMENT

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: BRICK, CONCRETE

walls: ALUMINUM

roof: ASPHALT

other:

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### **Narrative Description**

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

#### **SITE:**

The James Jr. and Janie Washington Home & Studio sits on a steeply sloped site, on mid-block parcel, within the Central neighborhood of Seattle, Washington. The site encompasses two city lots. The home faces West and fronts 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue. To the rear of the lot is an alley easement that provides access to the studio. The site slopes down from the west to the east. The house is located in the southwestern corner of the site, adjacent to the street with little to no front yard space. To the north of the house is an open-sided carport (1961). Behind is a small Japanese style garden which includes a mature pine tree, rhododendron, a stand of bamboo, a pond and scattering of artwork. At about the midpoint of the parcel the property begins to steeply slope down to the east. A wooden stair and walkway connects the house to the studio (1966) located in the northeastern corner of the site. CMU retaining wall units support the slope to the west of the studio. Concrete stairs to the southern side of the studio continue down to the alley level of the property. The studio building was sited adjacent to the former alley for ease of delivery of materials and stone. Other ancillary structures on the site include a small toolshed (1952) and fiberglass greenhouse (1952).

The entire site is enclosed with chain link fencing, which is infilled with wooden slats on the western side of the property. Sitting adjacent to the fence line, facing the street, is a large granite sign carved with an animal figure, a bird figure, and is inscribed "Dr. James Washington Jr., Home & Studio, designated City of Seattle Landmark 1992, Dr. James Washington Jr. and Mrs. Janie Rogella Washington Foundation, Established 1997."

#### **HOUSE: 1918 - contributing**

The house is a one and a half story craftsman dwelling, and measures approximately 29' wide by 36' deep. The rectangular shaped building sits on poured concrete and brick foundation enclosing a full daylight basement. Due to the slope of the site, the eastern side of the house is daylighted, and is two stories tall. The home has a front facing gable roof, with a secondary front facing gable covering a partial width front porch. The roof is covered in asphalt shingles and, as is typical of the Craftsman style, the eaves have exposed rafter-tails and the gable ends are supported by large knee braces. On south side of the house is a narrow brick chimney capped with projecting row locks at the corners of the upper four courses and an exposed terra cotta chimney liner. The house is clad in aluminum siding, installed in the early 1960s. Windows are a combination of wood and aluminum sash units, most with decorative security bars.

#### **West Façade**

The western façade is the primary elevation, with one story gable end facing the street. The barge boards at the rake have flared ends with decorative end cuts. Craftsman style brackets support the barge boards and are marked with rectangular prism cut medallions at the face of the barge board. The porch roof is supported on tapered wooden columns that sit on the concrete caps of square brick piers. A wood cased three-centered arch spans between the porch columns. Concrete stairs with wrought iron railings are centered on the porch and flanked by concrete capped brick cheeks.

The porch and front door are situated on the northern end of the façade flanked on the south by a tripartite living room window. The front door is a six light flush panel wood door flanked on either side by  $\frac{3}{4}$  height wood sash sidelights. The living room window consists of three double-hung cottage-style sash with beveled leaded glass panels in the upper sash mullied together. The central window is large and is flanked by two narrower windows.

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### North Façade

The northern façade faces a side yard containing a garden and carport. Here a projecting bay window with tripartite window is located on the western portion of the façade. A small square wood sash entry hall window is located on the wall portion west of the bay. The tripartite bay consists of three equally sized double hung wood sashes mulled together. East of the bay are two smaller double hung wood sash bedroom and bathroom windows. The eastern kitchen window and basement windows are aluminum sash units. At the east corner is an open riser wood stair with a wrought iron railing leading to the kitchen. Access is via a two-panel wood door.

### East Façade

The eastern façade (rear) is two stories tall due to the steeply sloped lot. Here, an original rear porch was enclosed to expand the kitchen in 1961. As such the main floor of the dwelling projects approximately 5 feet to the east over the lower story and is supported by 6x6 columns. The extension is accessed via a small porch on the northeast corner. Here a set of wooden stairs with wrought iron railings leads to the side yard. Fenestration at the main floor consists of a large sliding aluminum sash window and two wood sash windows mulled together. The basement level contains aluminum sash windows on either side of a flush aluminum basement access door. Due to the steep sloped site, the basement level is also above grade and the basement do is accessed via a small porch that expands a quarters of the façade. Below, the foundation is exposed board-formed concrete.

### South Façade

The southern façade faces a small side yard approximately 8' wide. A large projecting bay window with quatrpartite wood-sashed windows are located on the eastern portion of the façade. West of the bay, on either side of the chimney, are two small leaded wood sash window units allowing light into the living room windows. These windows boast green stained glass in a banner and shield design. Centered is an exterior brick chimney which pierces the deep overhanging roof. The brick foundation begins west of the chimney.

### Interior

The interior of the house is also characteristic of the craftsman style, with simple wide back banded trim, wood doors, both oak and fir flooring, built-in cabinetry, and wood paneled walls in selected locations. Besides the characteristic wood flooring, the house also features non-original red carpeting at the dining room and hallway, linoleum flooring at the bedroom and bathroom, and sheet vinyl flooring at the kitchen.

The interior plan is organized with the entry, bedroom, bathroom, and kitchen on the northern side, and the living room, dining room, and study on the southern side. The entry, located in the northwestern corner of the plan is paneled and leads to the southern living room or front room. The living room has green painted plaster walls under a picture rail, and a white plaster ceiling. The main feature of this room is the decorative tiled fireplace on the south wall. Featuring a variety of tile patterns, the tile covers the entire fireplace surround and has a simple wood mantel. Separating the living and dining areas is cased opening with built-in bookcases on either side. The dining room has wood paneled walls and boasts a small built-in buffet at the southwest corner. The buffet glass doors are leaded glass with a lozenge pattern. Adjacent to the dining room, at the rear of the house is a small study which has wood paneled walls. Lighting in the living room and kitchen are salvaged chandeliers installed by Dr. Washington. The kitchen, renovated in the 1960s from a design by Seattle architect Wendell Lovett, has typical plywood cabinetry with brass round knobs, a tiled backsplash, period brown appliances, yellow Formica countertops and a linoleum floor.

### **STUDIO: 1966 - contributing**

Located off the alley at the bottom of the site, is a one-story rectangular building with a full basement. The structure measures approximately 30'x 23'. It has a shallow shed roof which slopes to the south terminating in a simple 8" overhang. The rest of the roof has zero overhang, albeit a small ledge to direct water to the south. Per plans, the basement level was enclosed sometime after the original construction. The façades are clad with vertical T & G cedar siding, its rhythm broken by windows and full-height plywood spandrel panels. The

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studio does not have a primary façade, but utilizes details on each façade which serve best for the function that they perform.

The west façade, facing the house, is the main entry to the building. It is connected with wooden stairs and a small bridge that links the building to the upper site. Here the roof projects out to the west approximately 3' to provide a covered entry. The entry door is a flush panel wood unit featuring three custom items: a peep hole, a cast door knocker in the shape of an eagle, and a custom-made bronze entry handle. North of the entry door, at approximately 4' intervals are two vertical plywood spandrel panels, each with aluminum sash casement windows set at a lower level. In the upper spandrel of the vertical panel closest to the door is also a circular exhaust.

The southern façade contains one vertical spandrel panel at the eastern end of the wall. The panel contains stopped in glazing forming the window at the upper level of the studio. This window is protected by simple security bars. At the foundation level, directly below the vertical plywood panel, a wire glass window is inset into the poured in place foundation wall. The southern façade contains a wooden trellis to support vegetation on the western end and brown painted aluminum downspouts extending the length of the wall at either end. The southern end of the roof has no gutter, the downspouts drain directly from the roof.

The eastern façade faces the alley and is the working side of the building. It has a non-original replaced garage door at the southern end of the basement level and the walls have been infill unpainted Masonite at the northern end. The infill portion contains two sliding vinyl sash windows, one on either side of an access door. The main body of the studio above contains a tall, centered, French door extending the height of the upper façade. A steel "I" beam extends out of the doors by approximately 5'. The beam was used for hoisting monumental stones to the level of the main studio space. The French doors are flanked by two spandrel window units.

The northern façade faces a narrow side yard and functions to bring natural light into the tall studio space at the interior. Here a ribbon of seven fixed wire glass panes, framed in wood, allow light into the studio space. These are protected at the exterior by decorative metal security grill matching those at the house.

At the interior, the studio has two levels, The upper mezzanine level contains a small office/reception area. Below is a small restroom and storage/work room. The office/reception area overlooks the studio via a half wall on the north and has walls of vertical paneling. Trim at the half wall and windows is painted light blue. A set of green painted stairs descends to the studio area. The flooring is beige linoleum.

The main studio space is one-and-a-half tall high. The Gypsum wall board wall and ceiling are painted white. The steel "I" Beam terminated at a rectangular column descending into the brick wall behind a wood stove. The wood stove and brick wall face the tall blue painted French access doors on the eastern wall. The French doors are secured by a green painted cross bar and bolt slides at the floor. The stove sits on a brick plinth, and is backed by a brick wall. Inset with the wall a single large natural stone near the top, as well as a cut marble slab on the northern end. Flooring in the studio is also beige linoleum. On the western side of the studio space is an enclosed work room with relight and glass shield for protection while tooling stone. A workbench with a sink sits on the northwestern corner of the room. Lighting consists of both modern era fixtures and salvaged chandeliers provided by Dr. Washington.

The basement level contains additional workspace as well as a single car garage.

### **CARPOR: 1961 - contributing**

Located in the north side yard is an open-sided carport with simple front facing gabled roof. Recessed from the sidewalk via a Hollywood style driveway (the inside strips which has been filled in with brick), the carport has a poured concrete floor. Supported by eight 6"x6" columns, the carport has an open framed roof system and exposed raft tails.

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**TIMELINE OF ALTERATIONS:**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Permit #</b>	<b>Description</b>
5-18-13	122174	Erect tent 14x20 owner Erick Gustafson
3-20-14	130957	Erect tent 14x24 owner C. E. Edwards
5-19-18	166438	Build Res. Owner E. A. Gustafson
8-4-52	415883	Construct Tollhouse, greenhouse and patio adjacent to one family res. (No Commercial Use) Contractor: Frank J. Madison
8-4-61	490959	Construct detached carport accessory to existing dwelling per plan, Contractor Radrick Construction Co.
8-7-61	190996	Enclose exist rear porch of Res.-Subject to Field Inspection.
8-7-61	490996	Enclose exist rear porch or res-Subject to Field Inspection. Contractor: Frank Hoover, Modern Kitchens. Architect: Wendell Lovett
8-28-62	498168	Re-side existing single family dwelling Contractor: Central Service Co.
5-8-66	516451	Construct an accessory building to be used as an artists studio Contractor: R.S. Turner, Architect: Bain & Overturf, (Note: Not to be used as separate living quarters or sold as such.)
12-15-15	6501973-FR	Single-Family/Duplex Furnace Permit
01-24-12	6306923-EL	Electrical Permit: Over the Counter
09-20-16	6501977-EL	Electrical Permit: Over the Counter
10-27-15	6501977-EL	Electrical Permit: Over the Counter
07-31-18	6681100-EL	Electrical Permit: Over the Counter
10-01-20	6803451-EL	Electrical Permit: Over the Counter
07-31-18	6681100-EL	Electrical Permit: Over the Counter
12-15-15	6501976-RF	Refrigeration Permit

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**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

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

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

**Criteria Considerations**

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

Property is:

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

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ART  
ETHNIC HERITAGE: Black  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1945-2000  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1945  
1966  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Washington, James W. Jr.  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Bain & Overturf (Architect)  
Gustafson, Erick A. (Builder)  
Turner, R.S. (Builder)  
\_\_\_\_\_

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### **Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

The James W. & Janie R. Washington Home and Studio in Seattle, Washington is a historically significant under criteria "B" for its direct connection to Black artist, James W. Washington Jr.. Influenced by his deeply felt religious and spiritual convictions, through his art, Washington sought to show the link between the spiritual and physical/ material world. He was largely self-taught, rising from simple roots within the deep south, reaching to the pinnacle of the art world later in life. He moved to the Pacific Northwest at the age of 36, and over the course of his career 80+ year career, Washington rose to the halls of the selective art galleries (Guggenheim, Smithsonian, Whitney) across the United States, all while breaking down racial barriers and challenging the ideas of traditional art. By the time of his death in 2000, his work (first as a painter, then as a sculptor) was sought after by collectors and museums across the United States, and his public art had become an integral part of the cultural fabric of the Pacific Northwest.

The period of significance begins in 1945, the year the house was purchased by the Washington's, and ends in 2000, the year Washington passed away. As such, the resource is also being nominated under special criteria consideration "G". Washington carved his last sculpture in 1997 and began making preparations to pass his legacy to a new generation. The nominated home and studio are the one and only extant place in the state where Washington lived and practiced his craft. Due to his reach beyond the boundaries of Washington State, the home and studio are significant at the national level.

The home itself was completed in 1918 during the Arts & Crafts era, and displays characteristics of the Craftsman style, albeit covered by later cladding (installed by the Washington's). To the rear of the lot is Washington's modern studio, designed and completed in 1965 by family friend and noted local architect William J. Bain Sr. and his partner Harrison J. Overturf.

The first owner of the home was local Swedish builder, Erick Gutafson. Building permits note the cost for the house was \$2,000. Erick lived in the home until his death in 1941 and his wife, Annie, a seamstress, remained at the home until 1944 when the house was sold to A. N. Sandridge. Sandridge then sold the home to the Washington's a year later.

### **James W. Washington Jr.**

Born on November 10, 1908 in the rural sawmill town of Gloster, Mississippi, James Winston Washington Jr. was the fourth child of six, born to Baptist minister, Rev James Winston Washington, Sr., and Elizabeth "Lizzie" Washington.<sup>i</sup> His parents were innovative religious intellectuals who weren't subservient to the laws of Jim Crow.

During his childhood and early adolescence years, his family endured financial hardship due to the unexpected absenteeism of his father in 1914. His dad fled the community over fears of violence from the Klu Kux Klan,<sup>ii</sup> Due to financial insecurity and the absence of their father, hard decisions were made. At the time Lizzie was an expectant mother, and she sent all of her children to reside with neighboring family members and friends. Washington Jr., then age 8, was sent temporarily to live with a family friend, Mrs. Amanda McDowell, before eventually being sent to Winstonville, Mississippi to live with his grandmother.

While living with his grandmother, he established a deep "spiritual" awareness by attending the local church. This would greatly affect his art later in life. After his mother remarried in 1917, Washington returned to Gloster, Mississippi. Stories persist that when Washington was 14, after his mother observing his skill of talking apart and putting back together a shoe, she managed to find Washington a job as an apprentice cobbler. This gave Washington the opportunity to expand his creativity using shoe repair as a form of expression. It also gave him money to buy art supplies.

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<sup>i</sup> Dr. Washington's Personal writing papers, 2022.

<sup>ii</sup> Dr. Washington's Personal writing papers, 2022.



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Perhaps more important is that the shoe apprenticeship, and proficiency he acquired, also provided Washington a skill he could build upon later in life. During the 1920s, as a teen in Mississippi, Washington moved from job to job in order to make a living – among the jobs: shoe repair, landscaping, lumber mill work and fruit peddling.

It was during this time that he was formally introduced to art. Washington briefly studied at the Amite County Training School in Gloster. Unfortunately, due to the lack of money, he was forced to discontinue his studies. However, Washington continued to study art independently. He began to take an interest in colors and textures, often traveling four miles north of Gloster to a water spring called the *Woodsmen Springs* where he sought quietness among a clean flowing water source.<sup>iii</sup> There he completed his first noted painting; an image of the town of Gloster's urban landscape all executed in color crayons. Previously, Washington had used crayons to create his first art on concrete and invited others to join him.

By the mid-1930s, Washington had begun to make a name for himself as an artist in Vicksburg, Mississippi. His first major break came in 1938 when the Works Progress Administration (WPA) invited him to work as an artist and recreational assistant at the Vicksburg YWCA. While there he created what he later described as "the first Negro art exhibition sponsored by the WPA in the state of Mississippi." This pro-active response, to a lifelong struggle of discrimination, became a hallmark of his career.

While the WPA gave him a significant, professional boost, it was short-term. Still not yet having the means to become a full-time artist, in 1941 Washington moved to Little Rock, Arkansas and eventually acquiring a job at the local military base, Camp Robinson. He was hired to work in the Quarter Master Clothing Equipage, in their orthopedic shoe repair department. At the time, reportedly Washington became the highest paid civil worker among both his black and white counterparts. On the side he continued his art, honing his craft and acquiring new skills. It was in Little Rock that Washington started to become more actively involved in civil rights causes.

While in Little Rock, Washington met and married his first wife, Mary Sampson, in April of 1941. However, the marriage was short-lived, and they divorced in less than a year. He then met his life-long partner Janie Rogella Miller, a local restaurant waitress. After a short courtship, they married on August 29, 1943.

By then, Washington had come to view his government job as a means to support his artistic avocation, looking ahead to the day when he could devote himself entirely to painting. He was already, in his own mind, an artist. The Washington's decided to leave the South due to racial inequality and moved to the Pacific Northwest seeking a better life. In 1944, the Civil Service Department granted Washington's request to transfer to the Puget Sound Naval Ship in Bremerton, Washington. There he worked as a journeyman electrician. While the Washington's valued the African American community in a segregated military housing project in Port Orchard, they longed for home ownership. Eventually they found a property they could afford in the red-lined Central District of Seattle – the nominated house.

Due to restrictive covenants in the city, many Blacks were forced to primarily reside in the Central area of the city. However, for the Washington's it was a perfect location. Their new home was near Mount Zion Baptist Church, and they soon became members of the progressive church. Washington volunteered and mentored young Black boys in the segregated establishment of Boy Scouts of America (Troop No. 14). More importantly he became the driving force behind the church's annual art show which sought to highlight the artistic work of across the city. It eventually became one of the premier art shows in the city.

By day, Washington continued to commute to work by ferry from Seattle to Bremerton's Naval Shipyard, and by night he worked on his art. Washington later recalled: "that my time spent crossing Puget Sound was in sketching seagulls in flight or picking up food from the ferry. Sometimes using my newspaper as a sketchpad, and then mounting paper on to silk with glue."

<sup>iii</sup> Ibid., 18-24.

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Still commuting to Bremerton, he also actively pursued connecting with the local arts community and continued learning his craft of painting. After a visit to the Gallery of Northwest Painters in Seattle's Frederick & Nelson's Department Store, Washington approached the director about displaying his own work. Impressed, Director Theodora L. Harrison, gave him a two-person show with fellow artist Leo Kenney in January 1946. This marked Washington's first official show in the Pacific Northwest. More followed at various locations outside of the state including the "Northwest Paintings Go East" exhibit in Chicago, Illinois at Marshall Field's Art Gallery/Northwest (1946); and an exhibit at the Urban League's People's Art Center (now called the Saint Louis Art Museum) in St Louis, Missouri (1946).

Nineteen forty-six also marked the year when Washington began to explore a new medium, sculpture. His first piece, The Chaotic Half (1946), and a few pieces thereafter, was carved in wood. Later Washington would transition to stone as a preferred canvas, eventually this facilitated the need for a larger workshop when his projects grew in size and in scope.

To make ends meet, Washington continued to pursue additional employment opportunities on the side. An attempt to open his own shoe repair shop failed after he was repeatedly denied a union card (most likely on a racial basis). His persistence to seek other union membership opportunities finally paid off when in 1946 he successfully in obtained membership to the Brotherhood of Painters, Decorators, & Paperhangers of America, Local Union – No. 300. When he wasn't working in Bremerton, Washington took odd jobs at the Boeing Aircraft plant in Seattle as a skilled painter. As the only Black man hired on assignment, Washington's talent and skill earned him a great praise among his boss and co-workers. He remained a member of the union for nearly forty years.

Finally, in August 1948 Washington request to transfer from Bremerton Navy Shipyard to Seattle's Fort Lawton was granted. He still worked in the Quartermaster office repairing shoes. However, working closer to home gave him more time to work on his art; which he mainly did in the evenings and on weekends in the basement studio of his home. Washington maintained a regular, full-time, forty-hour workweek as a civil service worker for another 10+ years. However, by 1954 his employment opportunities became short-termed assignments. He was initially transferred from Fort Lawton to Kenndale (WA) and then went on to serve at the Auburn General Depot in Auburn (WA), where he worked as a sign painter.

Meanwhile Washington continued to paint in oil and watercolor, and he took every opportunity he could to gain artistic training and travel. He studied with noted painter Mark Tobey for three years. They became lifelong friends and colleagues in the small community of Northwest Artists. In 1951 Washington had a life changing trip to Mexico City. While there he met noted muralist Diego Rivera, and painter David Alfaro Siqueiro. After spending time with them in their studios, they encouraged Washington to continue his pursuit of art but to try different art mediums. Reportedly while touring the pyramids at Teotihuacan, Washington picked up a volcanic stone from the remnants of the *Avenue of the Dead*. This stone would later become the inspiration of a new art medium for him, stone carving. It took Washington five years to develop his first stone sculpture piece, *Young Boy of Athens* (1956). Later that year he sold his first two stone sculptures, The King, and Head of Job at the Chi Omega Arts Collector's Tea event held at the University of Washington. From then on, stone became Washington's new art medium and remains so for the rest of his life. Finding his true craft, Washington went on to receive numerous awards, accolades, purchases and commissions. He readily attracted the attention of many museums, galleries as well as art patrons and philanthropists.

Venues included the:

- Chong Wa Benevolent Association Hall – Seattle, WA (1951)
- Campus Music Gallery – Seattle, WA (1956)
- Seventy-six Annual Painting & Sculpture Exhibit of the San Francisco Arts Associates - San Francisco (1957)
- M.H. de Young Memorial Museum in San Francisco, California (1959);
- Hall-Coleman Gallery – Seattle, WA (1960)
- Haydon Calhoun Galleries - Dallas, Texas (1962)
- Woodside Gallery – Seattle, WA
- Nexus Gallery – Boston, MA

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- Les Nordness Gallery - New York, NY
- Grosvenor Gallery - London
- Barrack Gallery - Wichita Falls, Texas (1962)
- State Capitol Museum – Olympia, WA (1963)
- Pogue's International Art Gallery - Cincinnati, OH (1964)
- Governor's Invitational Art Show – Olympia, WA (1965)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Creative Fair of the Euthenics Club - Seattle (1968)
- Expo '70 - Osaka, Japan (1970)
- Space Needle – Seattle, WA (1970)
- Kiki Gallery of Fine Arts – Seattle, WA (1972)
- Foster-Richard White Gallery – Everett, WA (1973, 1983)
- Bellevue Art Museum – Bellevue, WA (1975)
- Rainbow Express Gallery – Alberni, BC, Canada (1990)

Individual pieces were sold to various companies, museums and municipalities across the United States including the Guggenheim Museum in New York; The Smithsonian; The Whitney; the Seattle Art Museum; the Art Bank in San Francisco, California; the State of Washington; the Bothell Library; Seattle First National Bank; several Seattle area schools; and the Museum of History & Industry – Seattle.

For Washington, a stone was never just a stone. Instead, it was a source of meditation. During a 1987 Smithsonian interview he said: "I can pick up a stone of any shape, and I can work with it [for] about five minutes and tell you it's potential." In the interview, speaking from his studio, he described the process by which he imbued cold, still stones with vitality. "If there's a spiritual force, I'm trying to see how much of that force I can use ... to really make that thing come alive." Paul Karlstrom, West Coast Regional Director Smithsonian Institution, Archives of American Art, wrote, "What is so impressive about artists such as Washington is the perfection with which fundamental humanism, generosity of spirit, and depth of emotion are embodied in their simple and humble forms. It is this quality that emanates from Washington's sculptures of birds and other small creatures. What sets them apart from a host of other animal sculptures is the inexplicable, yet undeniable, spirit in the stone." Over the course of his career Washington worked mostly with granite river builders, which he acquired from various locations, near and far.

Greater accolades followed him after he switched his medium to stone. In 1961 he was appointed by Washington State Governor Albert D. Rosellini to the Washington State Art Council. He was also listed in American Negro Art (1960); Who's Who in American Art (1963), the Dictionary of American Art (1968); the International Who's Who in Art and Antiques (1972), Who's Who Among Blacks in America (1977); 250 years of Afro-American Art: An Annotated Bibliography (1981); and the Dictionary of American Sculptors (1984). In 1973, Governor Dan Evans declared Washington as the State "Artist of the Year". Two years later he received an honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts degree from the Graduate Theological Union Center for Urban Black Studies in Berkley, CA (1975).

His success as an artist also resulted in numerous speaker requests. Over the years, Washington lectured at a variety of venues from churches, to community events, to social clubs. His lecture circuit included the Creative Fair of the Euthenics Club (a non-profit organization of home economists) (1968); the Holy Trinity Church of God in Christ (1970); the Friends of the Educational Opportunity Program at the University of Washington (1972); the Mercer Island Visual Arts League (1972); Seattle Pacific University (1977); the Home of the Good Shepherd (1980); and Plymouth Congregational Church (1984).

Thanks to his wife's financial support as a nurse, Washington was finally able to quit his civil service job in 1960 and he became a full-time artist. Janie had initially worked as hospital attendant and performed clerical and reception duties. After taking classes at Seattle Central Community College, she was promoted to nursing assistant. With his newfound freedom, reportedly by 1965 Washington had created over six hundred stone sculptural pieces. Needing additional space to work, he asked his architect friend William J. Bain Sr. to design a new, custom studio for him.

WASHINGTON, JAMES JR. & JANIE, HOME & STUDIO

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At the time, Bain was at the top of his career (already having been deemed a Fellow of the AIA in 1947). During the war years Bain had formed a partnership with several other architects to garner large federal contracts. Officially formed in 1943 as NBBJ, the partnership with Floyd Naramore, Clifton Brady, and Perry Johanson informally became known as the "The Combine". Each partner brought a specialty to the firm; and combined they could offer specialties in housing, health care, and education. This gave the firm a multidisciplinary, collaborative approach to projects that proved widely popular with postwar clients.<sup>iv</sup> By the mid-1950s, the firm had become one of the largest architectural firms in the Pacific Northwest.

Bain's specialty was housing. However as "The Combine" attracted more and larger architectural projects, he needed an outlet for his love of single-family residential design and small projects. As such, on the side he formed a boutique secondary partnership with architect Harrison Overturf. The two remained partners for almost 30 years (1946-1972). Washington's Studio was one of their projects.

Bain was a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, and Overturf had studied architecture at the University of Oregon and at the University of Washington, but did not receive a diploma from either institution.<sup>v</sup> Together the two mainly focused on residential projects, however they did do some non-residential work such as Thurmond's Central Realty (1955); the L.H. Butcher Co. Office & Warehouse (1959); the Bonney-Watson Funeral Home (1961, demolished); and the Bonney-Watson Mortuary at Evergreen Washelli Cemetery (1965, demolished).

Their design for Washington's Studio went through several iterations, each one less radical in concept. The built structure is a practical modernist box serving the needs of a unique client, while being sensitive to the budget of a struggling artist. The studio is a one-story space with a full basement. Entry to the studio is through a door at a mezzanine level which faced the rear of Washington's house. Concrete and wooden steps flowed down the hillside from the house; then additional steps flowed up the hillside from the rear alley into this same door. The basement level of the studio was only accessible from the alleyway and/or the exterior of the building. It served as storage and mechanical space. The small mezzanine level of the studio housed an office space and small show room. Below the mezzanine was a small bathroom, and enclosed sandblasting room. The light-filled studio space has high ceilings and a continuous row of large north facing windows. On the east wall a set of large double doors was installed to accommodate a steel beam with a hoist and pulley system that allowed Washington to move stones from the rear alleyway in and out of the studio space. The opening of the studio, noted in the local newspaper, was celebrated by three formal invitation only tours sponsored by the Friends of the Crafts Inc. Each open houses was "hosted" by members of the group.

The new studio allowed Washington to create large pieces, most of which weighed several tons. Between 1967-70, he was commissioned thirteen larger sized stone sculptures by a variety of public and private organizations. These included the V. Obelisk installed at Meany Middle School in Seattle; the Woodchuck Sunning installed at Lowell School in Seattle; the Rotunda of Achievements installed in a minority owned shopping mall in Philadelphia (1969); the Mysteries of Life installed on the lawn of the State Highways Department in Olympia (1973), and the Oracle of Truth at Mount Zion Baptist Church in Seattle (1987).

Washington continued to sculpt up until the late 1990's. His last stone was commissioned in 1997. He passed away on June 7, 2000 at the age of 91. His wife died three months later on September 9th. Both are buried at the Evergreen-Washelli Cemetery in Seattle.

While creating his art, on the side, Washington was actively involved in the civil rights struggle in Seattle. He was a lifelong member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and became labor chairman of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). He also helped organize picket lines against stores that continued racist hiring practices and made banners for demonstrations. Early on he was asked to be delegate to the National Artists Equity Association meeting in St Louis, Missouri (1953). At the

<sup>iv</sup> Deitz

<sup>v</sup> Michael Houser, "Harrison J. Overturf" <https://dahp.wa.gov/historic-preservation/research-and-technical-preservation-guidance/architect-biographies/bio-for-harrison-j-overturf>

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local level he was elected the Seattle Chapters Vice President (1960), and the following year became chapter President.

Before their deaths, the Washington's established their own art foundation for the sole purposes of preserving the home and studio as a museum, as well to continue the legacy of the studio as an art space that could continue to be used by visiting artists. Today the house is time capsule. They left behind an extensive collection; from their personal effect items of every piece of paper, their furniture, penciled handwritten letters, photographs, Christmas and wedding and anniversary greeting cards, nearly 2,000 books, and even errand ledger notes on recycled paper. Still remaining in the studio are Washington's original tools and various printing and carving machines used by him.

WASHINGTON, JAMES JR. & JANIE, HOME & STUDIO

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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"William J. Bain Sr.;" Heidi Dietrich; Seattle, WA; September 27, 2002, p. 4.

Seattle Post Intelligencer; Seattle WA.

"Top Architect William Bain Sr. dies in Seattle;" January 22, 1985.

Seattle Times; Seattle, WA.

"Church to hold Art Exhibition," July 6, 1948.

"Paintings Displayed," March 12, 1949.

"Mt. Zion Art Show Will Close Tonight," April 27, 1950.

"International Art Exhibition," August 5, 1951.

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- "He Paints By Night," May 18, 1952.
- "With the Artists," Aril 27, 1952, Pg 47.
- "Women's Group to Hear Educator," February 4, 1953.
- "Church Prepares Its 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Art Show," April 22, 1953, pg 33.
- "NW Art, Sculpture Exhibit Opens Today," December 15, 1957, pg 12.
- "Seattle Artists Will Have Works in S.F. Show," December 11, 1959.
- "Gallery Opens New Exhibition," August 2, 1960.
- "Artists' Equity Elects Officers," February 16, 1960.
- "18 Names to State Art Board," July 28, 1961.
- "Architects to Honor Artist, Craftsmen." April 6, 1961.
- "NW Sculptors Find a "home At Fairgrounds," March 22, 1962, pg 27.
- "Mt. Zion Baptist Sets Open House," July 25, 1964.
- "Arts, Crafts On Show At Spring Festival," March 6, 1964.
- "Evans Names Art Committee," October 31, 1965.
- "Grouse Baby in Granite," October 27, 1966.
- "Sculpture Has New Studio, New Show," November 18, 1966, pg 21 & 29.
- "The Friends of the Crafts Inc., will sponsor.....," November 30, 1966.
- "Church to Note Its 11<sup>th</sup> Year," April 1, 1967.
- "Museum Guild to View Art as Language," March 15, 1967.
- "Seattle Assistance League Sets Art Luncheon, Sale," October 22, 1968.
- "Display Fashions, Interest at Fair," April 28, 1968.
- "Junior League Volunteer Project Cover Spectrum," April 28, 1968, pg 101.
- "Join Revolution or Be Cast Aside, Middle-Class Nego Women Told," July 1, 1968, pg 26.
- "It was a large wooden sculpture.....," November 13, 1969.
- "Turnbull, Benjamine Frank," obituary; October 19, 1969.
- "Group Announce Speakers," February 15, 1969.
- "Tall One's Dedication Ceremony Due Friday," March 23, 1969.
- "James W. Washington Jr.: Views on the Creative Force," October 26, 1969, pg 161.
- "Needle Will Salute Arts In Special Day April 21," April 9, 1970.
- "Sculptor to Be Headliner On Salute to Arts Day," April 16, 1970.
- "Honored for Art," February 4, 1973.
- "Seattle artist will get award from governor," January 31, 1973.
- "The fading of a Seattle landmark," Ed Kohnstamm; June 10, 1973; Pictorial, p. 9-11.
- "Sculptor to speak on Creative Life," April 20, 1972.
- "Beliefs hewn in stone," June 14, 1975, pg 8.
- "The art of making stone live," December 26, 1975, pg 22.

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"New times are hard times for fraternal societies;" Paul Andrews; September 19, 1977, p. C2 & C3.

"The Washington and Scaylea Show," July 6, 1980, pg 183-184.

"Museum celebrate black history with special dedication, reception," February 22, 1983.

"William Bain, architect of city skyline, dies;" January 23, 1985.

"Pilgrim House Open Today for Inspection," 1956-11-04, p.8.

"Entre Nous," 1937-03-27, p.7.

"Washington expands horizons from painting to poetry," Deloris Tarzan Ament; September 12, 1993.

"Sculptor's home is his spiritual castle," Chuck Taylor; April 11, 1991. Sect. C, p.3.

San Mateo Times

"Art Association Announces 76<sup>th</sup> Exhibition Winners." March 6, 1957.

Fort Worth Star-Telegram

"The Barrack Gallery in Wichita Falls will..." January 14, 1962.

Tulsa World

"Hatchett in Dallas Show," April 15, 1962.

The Olympian

"Four Arts Commission Members Display Works," August 4, 1963.

"Artist of the Year," February 4, 1973.

Cincinnati Enquirer

"Art Beats June in Bustin' Out All Over," May 17, 1964.

"Progue's New Show," May 17, 1964.

Kitsap Sun

"Orchestra Given A House," November 18, 1969.

Everett Daily Herald

"Sculpture '73 a show of quality," June 9, 1973.

"Sculptor mixes Northwest roots, spiritual bent," March 23, 1989.

Enterprise Journal

"Gloster folks rolling out red carpet for native son," April 20, 1994.

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)  
 previously listed in the National Register  
 previously determined eligible by the National Register  
 designated a National Historic Landmark  
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_  
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_  
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

State Historic Preservation Office  
 Other State agency  
 Federal agency  
 Local government  
 University  
 Other

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): \_\_\_\_\_



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### 10. Geographical Data

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**Acreage of Property** Less than one acre  
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

**UTM References**      NAD 1927 or      NAD 1983

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1                 
Zone Easting Northing

3                 
Zone Easting Northing

2                 
Zone Easting Northing

4                 
Zone Easting Northing

**Or Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**  
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1 47.618236° -122.298260°  
Latitude Longitude

3            
Latitude 1. Longitude 2.

2            
Latitude Longitude

4            
Latitude 3. Longitude 4.

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

The nominated area is located in Section 28, of Township 25, Range 04 East of Willamette Meridian, in King County, Washington, and is legally described as Lots 5 & 6 of Block 25 of Henry Yesler's 2<sup>nd</sup> Addition. It is otherwise known as Tax Lot 98282019900.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nominated property encompasses the entire urban tax lot that is occupied by the home and studio.

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### 11. Form Prepared By

---

name/title Ellen Mirro & Monette Hearn (Edited by DAHP Staff)

organization Studio TJP & Guided Methods date February 2025

street & number 1212 NE 65<sup>th</sup> Street telephone 206-523-1618

city or town Seattle state WA zip code 98115

e-mail ellen@tjp.us

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**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

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



**Google Earth Map**

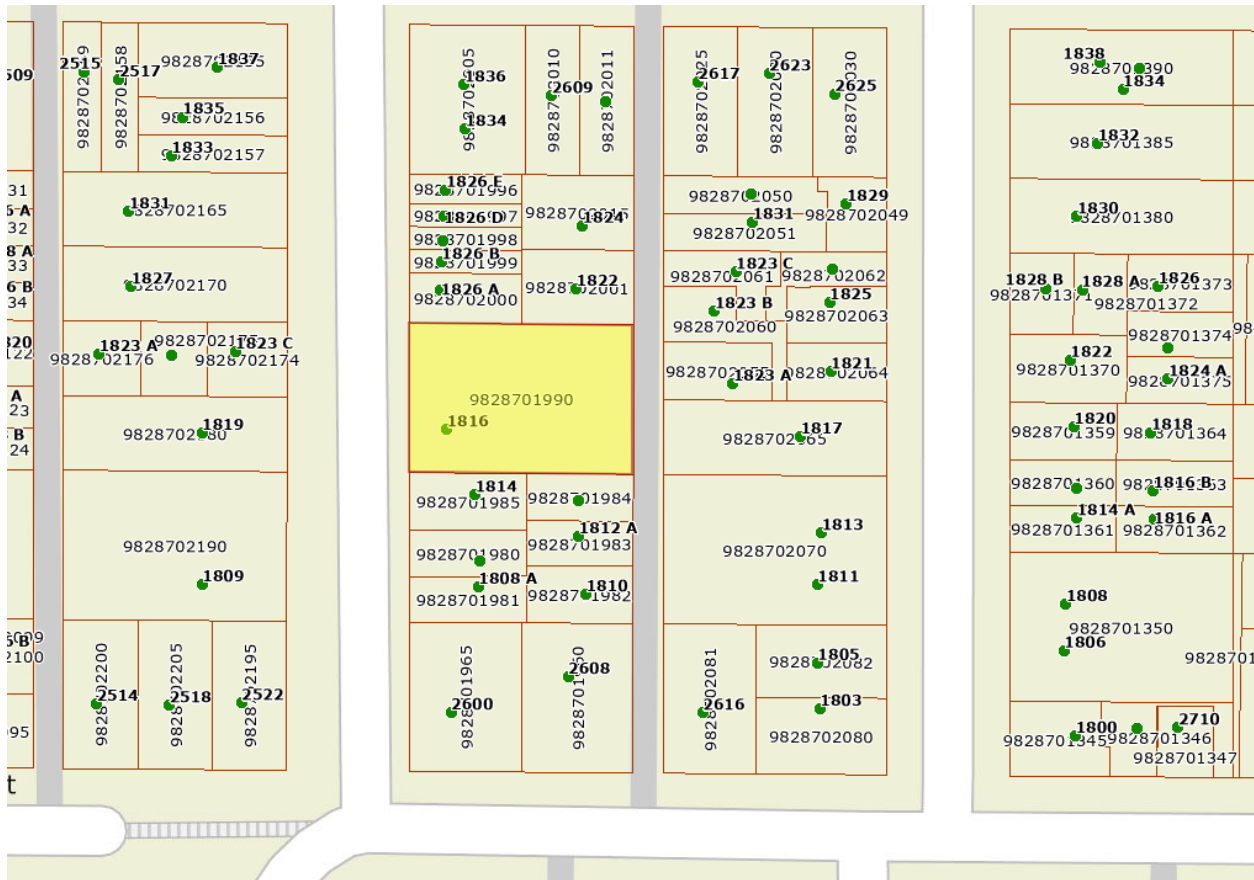
James Jr. & Janie Washington House & Studio  
1816 26<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Seattle, WA

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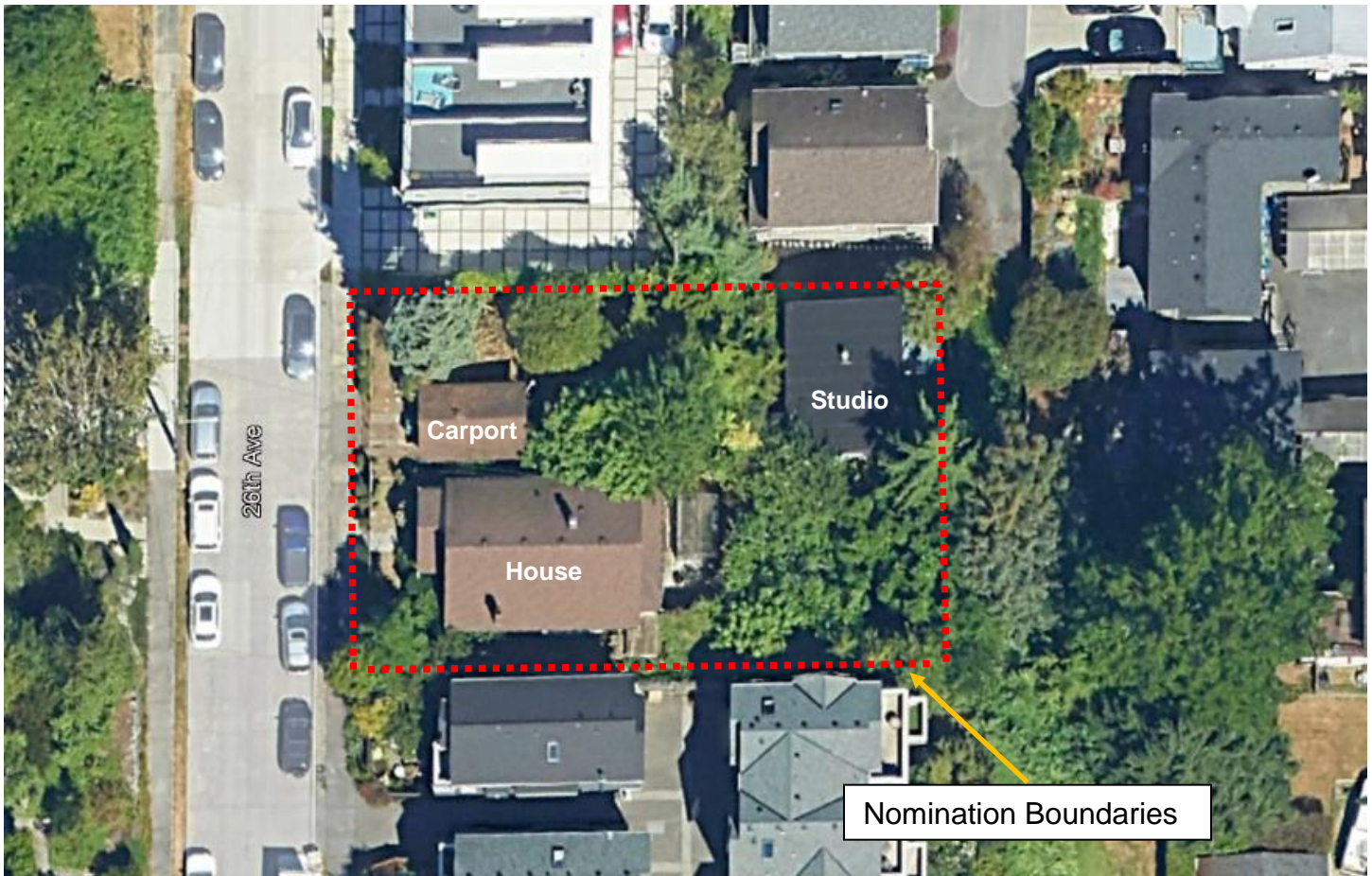
# King County Tax Assessor Map

James Jr. & Janie Washington House & Studio  
1816 26<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Seattle, WA

Parcel No. 982870-1990

WASHINGTON, JAMES JR. & JANIE, HOME & STUDIO  
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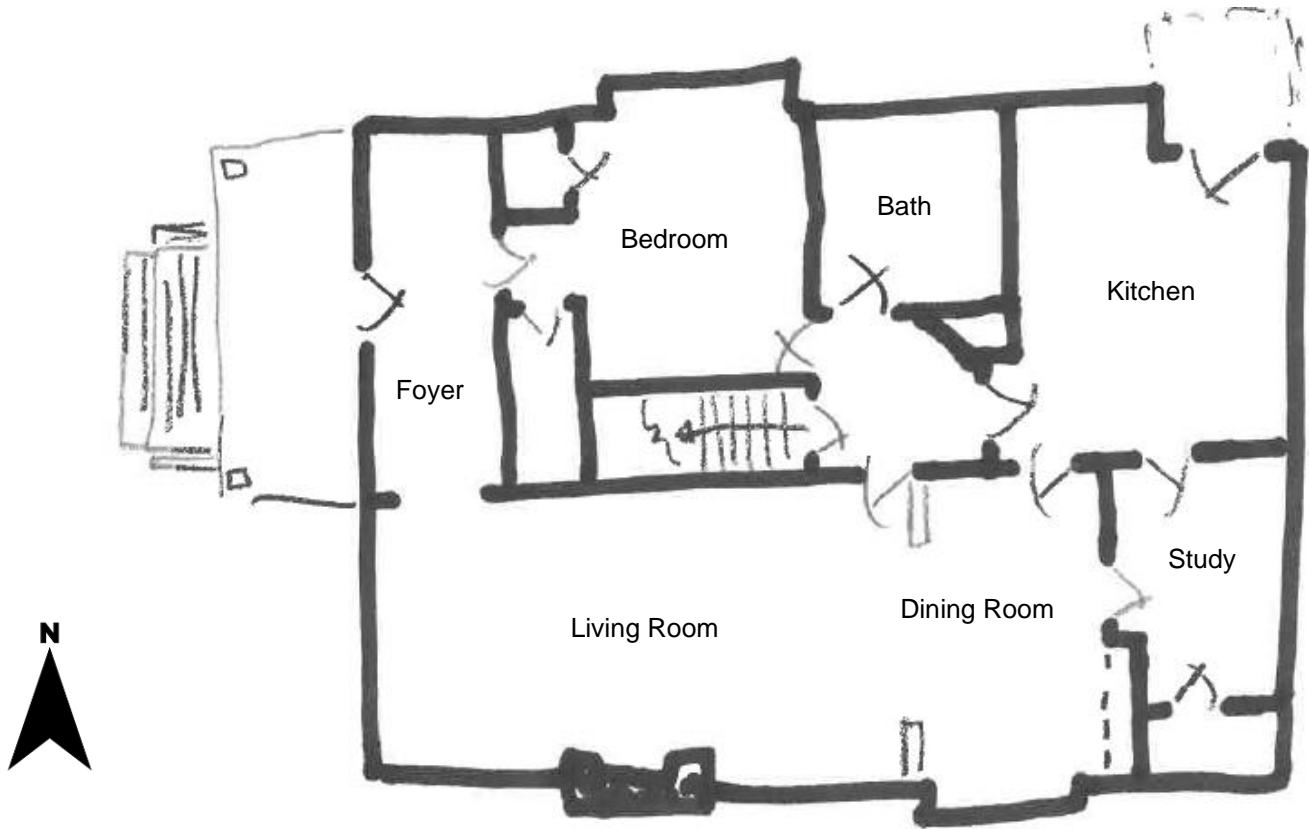
## Site Map

James Jr. & Janie Washington House & Studio  
1816 26<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Seattle, WA



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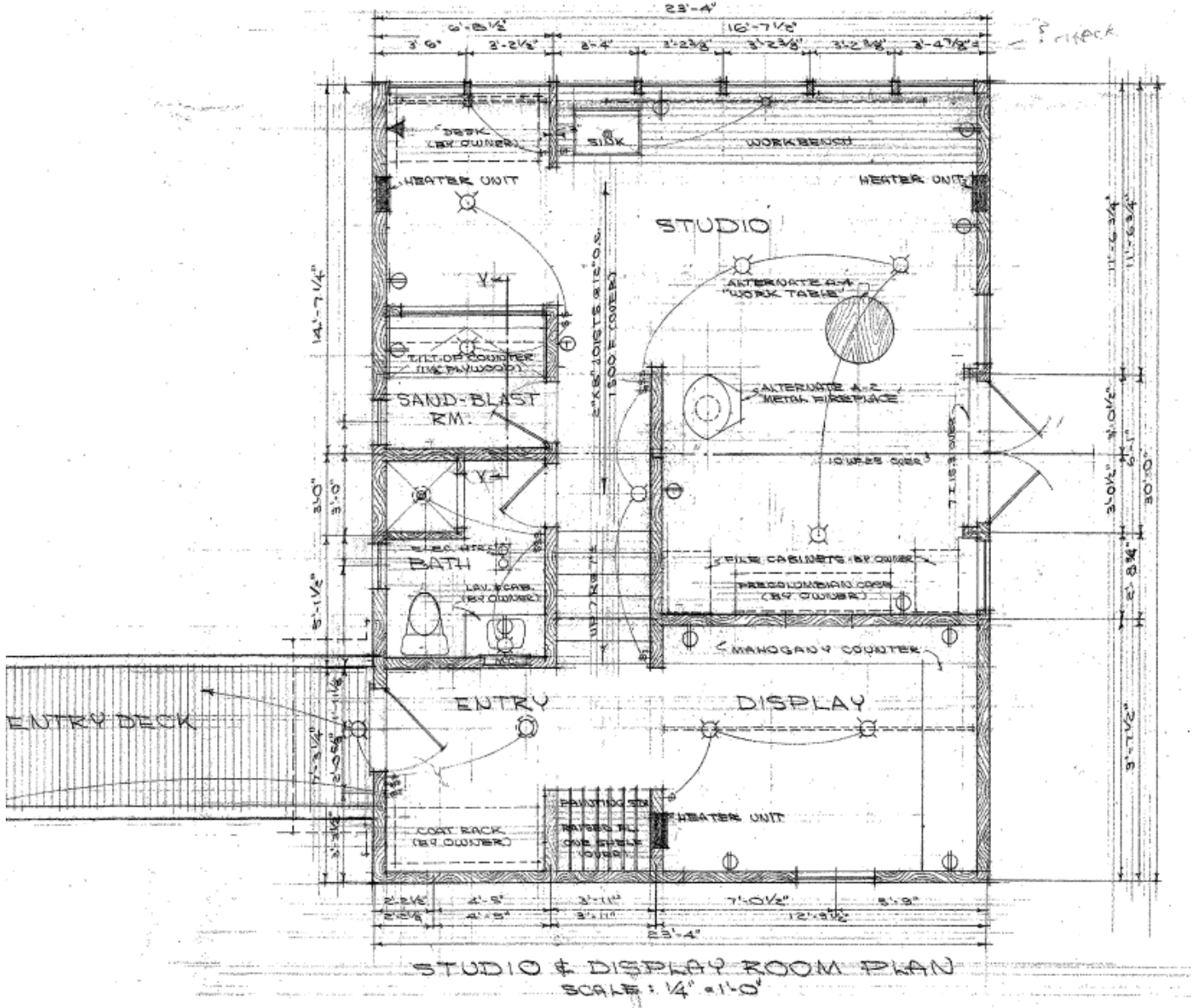


### House Floor Plan

James Jr. & Janie Washington House & Studio  
1816 26<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Seattle, WA

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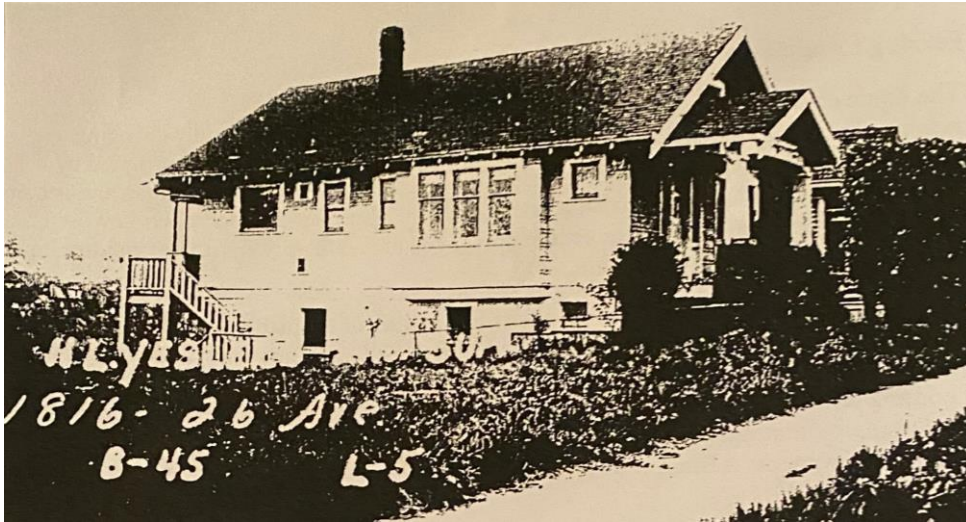
**Studio Floor Plan** (Bain & Overturf – 1966)  
James Jr. & Janie Washington House & Studio  
1816 26<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Seattle, WA

WASHINGTON, JAMES JR. & JANIE, HOME & STUDIO

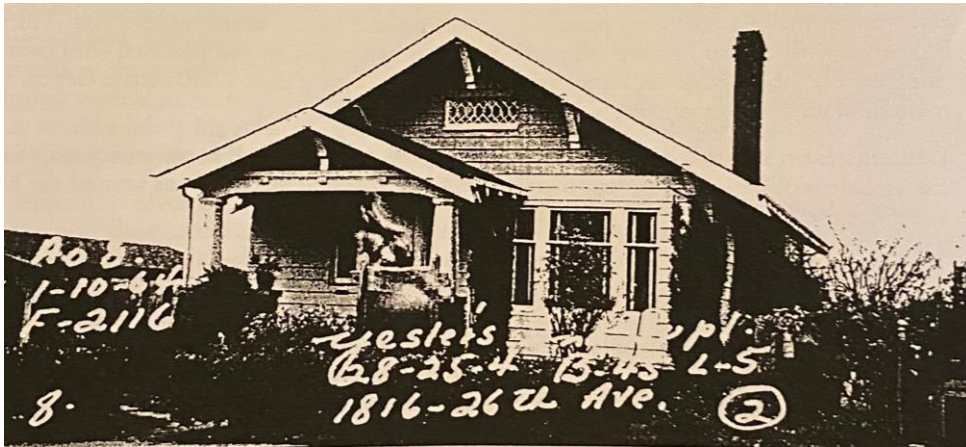
KING CO., WA

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King County Assessor Card – c. 1937



King County Assessor Card – c. 1964

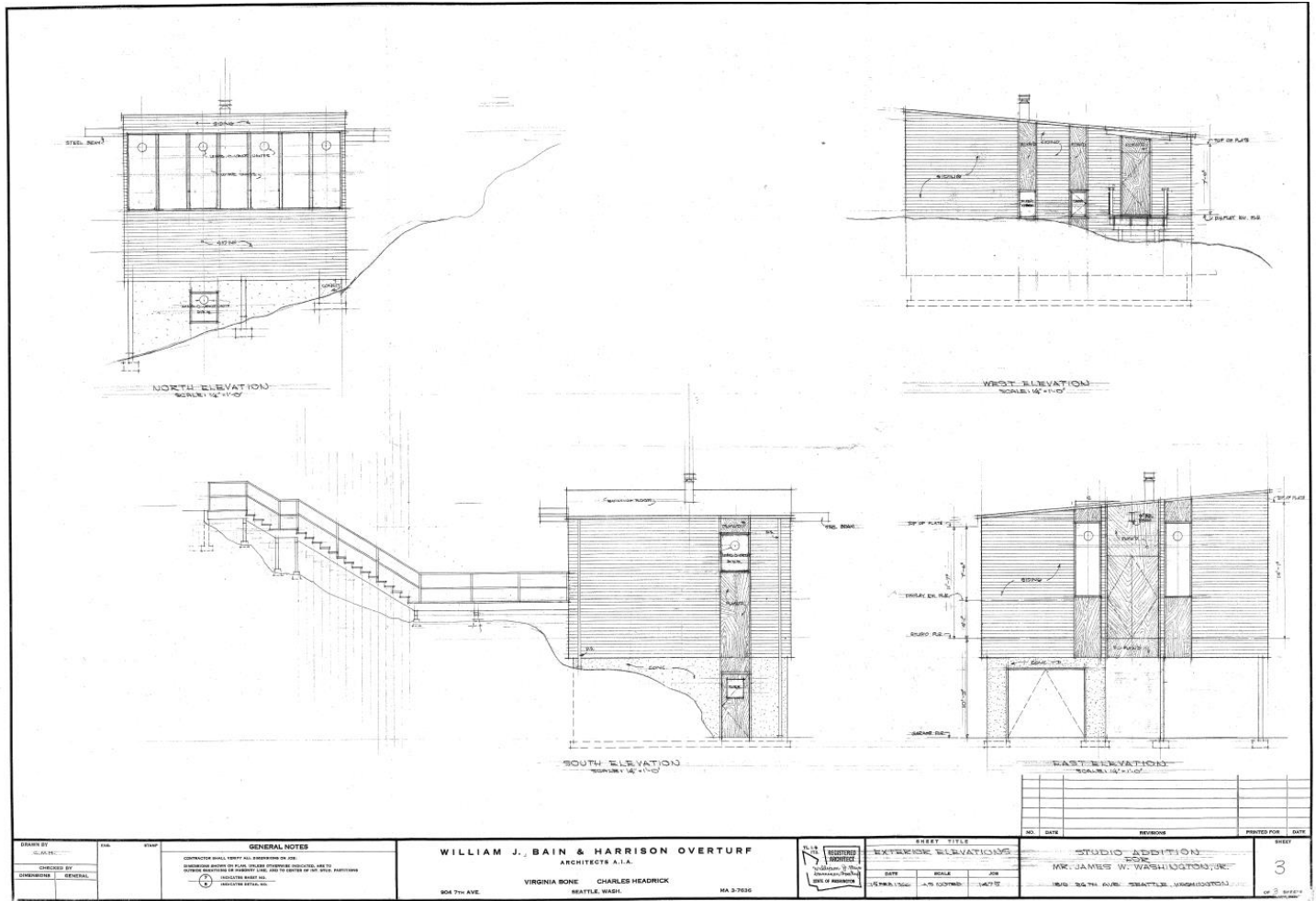


King County Assessor Card – c. 1964 showing Studio



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Studio Elevations – Feb 15, 1964. Note sloping shed roof (not executed in final design).



James W. Washington posing outside his home and studio – March 1967  
 Courtesy of University of Washington – Mary Randlett



James W. Washington posing inside his studio – 1967  
 Courtesy of University of Washington –

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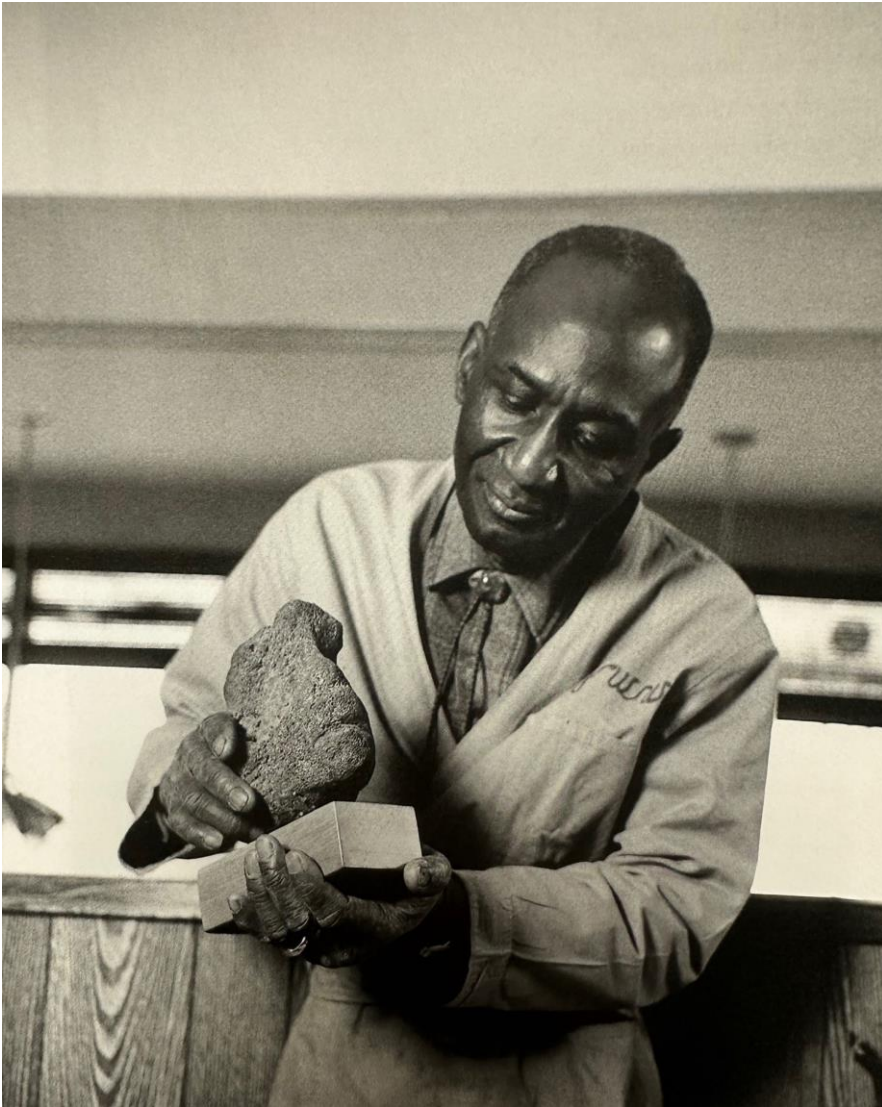
James W. Washington inside his studio – March 1967  
Courtesy of University of Washington – Mary Randlett

WASHINGTON, JAMES JR. & JANIE, HOME & STUDIO

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James W. Washington inside his studio – March 1967  
Courtesy of University of Washington – Mary Randlett



"Bird Family" Sculpture – Stone on wood base – 1973  
Courtesy of Steven S. Powers Gallery



"Thrasher" Sculpture – Stone on driftwood base – 1966  
Courtesy of Steven S. Powers Gallery

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"Wren" Sculpture – Stone and wood – 1976  
Courtesy of Steven S. Powers Gallery



"Young Queen of Ethiopia" Sculpture – Limestone on wood base – 1976  
Courtesy of Smithsonian American Art Gallery



"Creation Series" Detail of Stone Bench,  
Seattle First National Bank Tower, Seattle – 1969  
Courtesy of Historylink.org



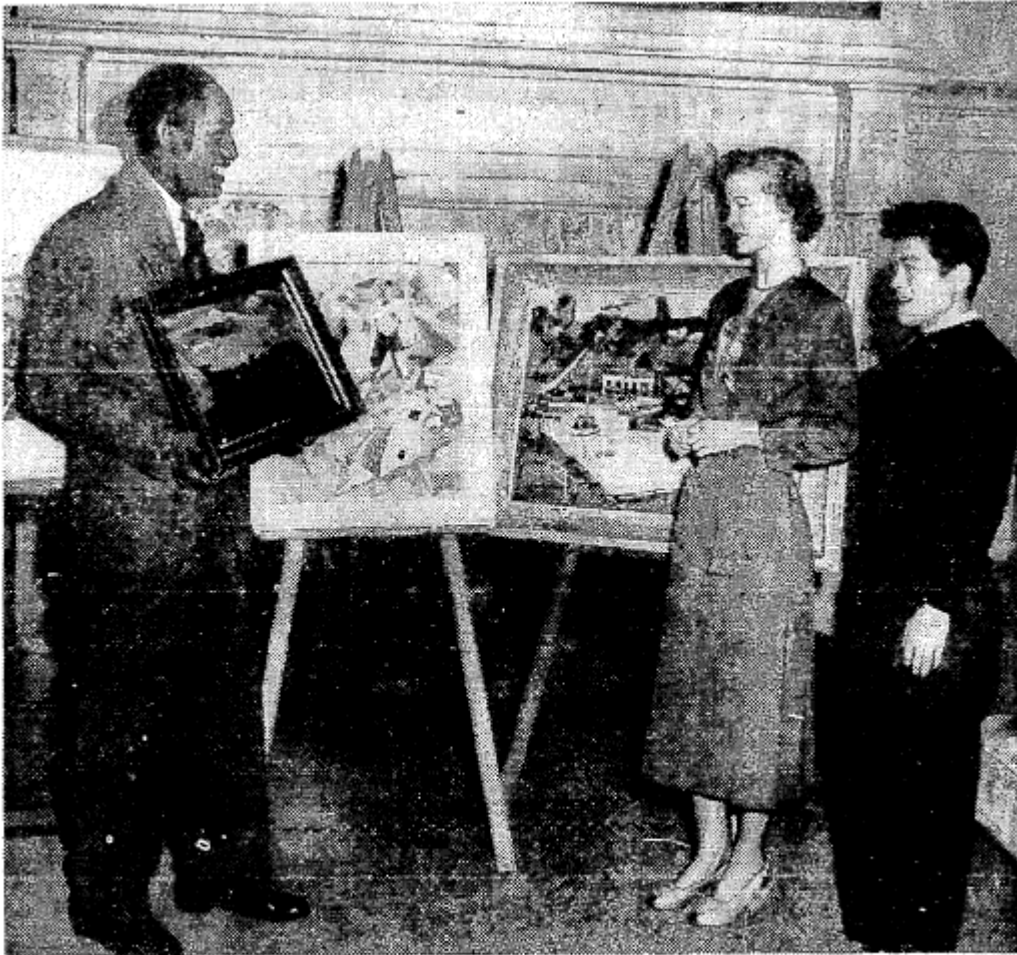
"Mysteries of Life" Sculpture – East of State Highway Building, Olympia  
– Stone – 1973  
Courtesy of DAHP

WASHINGTON, JAMES JR. & JANIE, HOME & STUDIO

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**PAINTINGS DISPLAYED:** Peggy Curran and John Matsudaira, Seattle artist, inspected a painting held by James W. Washington, Jr., which will be exhibited at the Beaux Arts Costume Ball tonight in the Y. W. C. A. Miss Curran is chairman of the dance. Paintings by Nick Dasmascus, Andrew Chinn, Mrs. Fred Marshall, Matsudaira and Washington will be on display.

James W. Washington exhibit at Beaux Arts Costume Ball – YWCA – March 12, 1949  
Courtesy of [Seattle Times](#)



"Rhythm of Colors" – 1950  
Courtesy of [Cascadia Art Museum](#)

WASHINGTON, JAMES JR. & JANIE, HOME & STUDIO

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**Photographs:**

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

**Name of Property:** James Jr. & Janie Washington House & Studio

**City or Vicinity:** Seattle

**County:** King **State:** WA

**Photographer:** Ellen Mirro, Michael Houser

**Date Photographed:** March 8, 2022 & January 9, 2025



1 of 31

Main façade of Washington House – View facing east.

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**2 of 31**  
Main façade of Washington House – Detail of front entry porch.



**3 of 31**  
Main façade of Washington House – Detail of front entry porch corner.

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**4 of 31**

North façade of Washington House.



**5 of 31**

North façade of Washington House – Detail of rear entry porch into kitchen.



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**6 of 31**  
Northeast corner of Washington House – View from studio entry towards house.



**7 of 31**  
Southwest corner of Washington House – View of south facade.

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**8 of 31**  
Interior of Washington House – Detail of front entrance hall, view to north.



**9 of 31**  
Interior of Washington House – Living room, view to west.

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**10 of 31**  
Interior of Washington House – Detail of fireplace.



**11 of 31**  
Interior of Washington House – Dining room, View to east to study.

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**12 of 31**  
Interior of Washington House – Bedroom, view to north.



**13 of 31**  
Interior of Washington House – Study, view to east.

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**14 of 31**  
Interior of Washington House – Bathroom



**15 of 31**  
Interior of Washington House – Kitchen

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**16 of 31**  
Main façade of Washington House – Detail of front entry porch.



**17 of 31**  
Studio south façade showing stair access from alleyway and up to main entry at north side of building.

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**18 of 31**  
Studio east façade showing access from alleyway.



**19 of 31**  
Studio north façade showing full width window wall.

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**20 of 31**

Interior of Studio, mezzanine level show bronze statue of James W. Washington Jr. (since image taken installed elsewhere).



**21 of 31**

Interior of Studio, view from mezzanine level to the north.



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**22 of 31**

Interior of Studio, view to the north.



**23 of 31**

Interior of Studio, view wood stove wall showing crane & pulley system.

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**24 of 31**  
Sidewalk view of house showing street context.



**25 of 31**  
Detail of exterior signage.

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**26 of 31**  
Covered carport on north sideyard



**27 of 31**  
View of small Japanese garden area.

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**28 of 31**

View of stair and walkway system from house to studio.



**29 of 31**

View of yard sculpture. Maybe plynth for unfinished project.

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**30 of 31**

View of stairs from allways up towards studio entry.



**31 of 31**

Stone remnant at side yard. Maybe unfinished project.

WASHINGTON, JAMES JR. & JANIE, HOME & STUDIO  
Name of Property

KING CO., WA  
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**Property Owner:** (Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

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name Dr. James and Janie Washington Cultural Center  
street & number PO Box 22952 telephone (206) 709-4241  
city or town Seattle state WA zip code 98122

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

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