

Spokane Register of Historic Places Nomination

*Spokane City/County Historic Preservation Office, City Hall, Sixth Floor
808 W. Spokane Falls Boulevard, Spokane, WA 99201*

1. Name of Property

Historic Name

WALTER & BARBARA FOLTZ HOUSE

2. Location

Street & Number 2116 East 35th Avenue
City, State, Zip Code Spokane, WA 99223
Tax Parcel Number 35332.2302

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both		<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> residential
	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes, restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes, unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other

4. Owner of Property

Name Barbara M. Foltz
Street & Number 2116 East 35th Avenue
City, State, Zip Code Spokane, WA 99223
Telephone Number/E-mail 535-3277, barbamfoltz@aol.com

5. Location of Legal Description

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

6. Representation of Existing Surveys

Title City of Spokane Historic Landmarks Survey
Date Federal____ State____ County____ Local____
Location of Survey Records Spokane Historic Preservation Office

Final nomination reviewed by SHLC on October 21, 2009

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(see nomination, section 8)

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

Check One
☒ unaltered
☐ altered
Check One
☒ original site
☐ moved & date _____

8. Spokane Register Categories and Statement of Significance

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

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

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography is found on one or more continuation sheets.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property	Less than one acre.
Verbal Boundary Description	Inwood Park Resurvey Addition, west 10 feet of L2, all of L3, east 20 feet of L4, Block 9.
Verbal Boundary Justification	Nominated property includes entire parcel and urban legal description.

11. Form Prepared By

Name and Title	Linda Yeomans, Consultant
Organization	Historic Preservation Planning
Street, City, State, Zip Code	501 West 27 th Avenue, Spokane, WA 99203
Telephone Number	509-456-3828
Email Address	lindayeomans@comcast.net
Date Final Nomination Heard	October 21, 2009

12. Additional Documentation

Map	City/County of Spokane current plat map.
Photographs and Slides	Black & white prints, CD-ROM color images.

13. Signature of Owner(s)

Name

Name

14. For Official Use Only

Date Received

Attest

Date Heard

City Clerk

Commission Decision

Approved as to Form

Assistant City Attorney

Council/Board Action

Date

We hereby certify that this property has been listed in the Spokane Register of Historic Places.

For the Mayor City of Spokane
or

Thomas E. Danek, Jr.
City Administrator
City of Spokane

CHAIR, Spokane County Commissioners

CHAIR, Spokane City/County Historic Landmarks Commission

OFFICER, Spokane City/County Historic Preservation Officer
Spokane City/County Historic Preservation Office

Third Floor, City Hall, W. 808 Spokane Falls Boulevard, Spokane, WA 99201



2116 E. 35th Avenue, Spokane, WA (Spokane County Tax Assessor Photo, 2004)

DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY

Built in 1958, the Walter & Barbara Foltz House is a fine example of a Mid-Century Modern home designed in the Contemporary style with Miesian influence. Located in the Resurveyed Inwood Park Addition in southeast suburban Spokane, Washington in the vicinity of 35th and Crestline, the Foltz House is characterized by the home's contemporary long, low, single-story asymmetrical design; flat roof; attached garage and breezeway; combination exterior cladding with vertical cedar board siding, smooth round river rock veneer and wide floor-to-ceiling window "curtain walls"; indirect lighting; custom-designed Bangkok teakwood wall paneling, room dividers and built-ins; mantle-less fireplaces; and well-groomed grounds and gardens at the front and back yards. Immaculately preserved in excellent condition with only one exterior modification since it was built, the Foltz House retains the highest degree of original exterior and interior architectural integrity in original location, design, materials, workmanship, and association as a Mid-Century Modern single-family home built during the 1950s in Spokane, WA.

CURRENT APPEARANCE & CONDITION

Site

The Foltz House is sited on all of Lot 3 and parts of Lots 2 and 4, Block 9 in the Resurveyed Inwood Park Addition in southeast Spokane. Together, the lots measure a total of 80 feet wide and 139 feet deep and are sited on the south side of East 35th Avenue. The home is built on a nearly level grade that rises slightly uphill and south to

the back south border of the property behind the house, and slightly downhill and west to the west border of the property. The property is framed by a wood fence in the backyard, mature pine and deciduous trees, manicured lawn, and a variety of flowers and flowering shrubs. A concrete-and-cobblestone aggregate pathway with wood steps leads uphill to the southwest corner of the back yard where a small secluded patio is located. The patio area is surrounded by trees and shrubs and looks down onto the rear south elevation of the house. The property is bounded by 35th Avenue to the north, single-family homes to the south, east, and west, and is surrounded by a large post-World War II, suburban residential neighborhood which was developed during the 1950s through the 1970s with mostly Mid-Century Modern homes that reflect Ranch, Split-Level, and Contemporary styles.

House Exterior

The Foltz House is a wood-frame single-story dwelling with a full basement and an irregular L-shaped footprint which measures approximately 64 feet wide and 50 feet deep. The home faces north onto East 35th Avenue and is located in the center of the parcel on which it is built. The exterior of the house is clad with a combination of vertical cedar board siding, smooth round river rock veneer, and floor-to-ceiling plate-glass window walls and sliding glass doors. The roof is covered with built-up tar, and the foundation is made of poured concrete. Painted metal coping accentuates the roof's minimal parapet. An attached breezeway connects the house to a single-car garage at the east elevation, and the roof on the house extends over the breezeway and garage, forming one continuous 64-foot-wide flat roof from east to west. The facade design of the home is asymmetrical, fenestration patterns are asymmetrical, and windows and sliding glass doors are a combination of original c. 1958 horizontal and vertical double-paned, plate-glass "Thermopane" picture and sliding units with aluminum sash. A large rectangular chimney clad with round river rock extends from the flat roof at the west half of the house.

North Facade

The north façade of the house is prominent with an attached single-car garage, a covered breezeway that connects the garage to the house, a flush front entrance, and a combination of vertical cedar board siding and river rock veneer. The front entrance is flanked by river rock veneer to the east and a large floor-to-ceiling, plate-glass, fixed-pane, tall, vertical picture window to the west. A single-story, front-facing wing extends forward 28 feet from the front of the house at the northwest corner (contains bedrooms). The wing measures 18 feet wide and is clad with vertical cedar wood boards. A tall, vertical 1/1 aluminum-sash window with a transom light is located just east of center in the north face of the wing. Like the house, the attached garage is also clad with vertical cedar board siding, and has an overhanging metal garage door on the north façade. Set back from the face of the house, a seven-foot-tall, Japanese-influenced, wood lattice screen with a matching sliding gate is attached to and connects the west elevation of the garage to the east elevation of the house in the center of the breezeway. The floor of the

breezeway is made of formed concrete aggregate, and the ceiling is eight feet tall. A Plexiglass-covered skylight allows for natural skylit illumination of the breezeway.

East Elevation

The east elevation of the garage and house are clad with vertical cedar board siding. A horizontal aluminum-sash sliding window is located just south of center at the east elevation of the garage. A flush wood side door is located at the east elevation of the house under the covered breezeway, and an aluminum-sash sliding window is located just north of the door. A white-pained metal security grid covers the window by the door.

West Elevation

The west elevation of the garage faces the inside area of the covered breezeway and is clad with vertical cedar board siding. A wood entrance door is located at the south end of the west elevation of the garage. The west elevation of the house is also clad with vertical wood board siding and features nine windows. Five of the windows are located in the basement which is partially exposed just above grade due to a slight downhill slope at the west side of the house. Three of the basement windows are horizontal aluminum-sash sliders and two of the windows are fixed-pane aluminum-sash units. A floor-to-ceiling vertical 1/1 window with a transom light is located just south of center at the west elevation of the house, and three horizontal aluminum-sash sliding windows are located north of the vertical window.

South Elevation

Although it is located at the rear of the property and cannot be seen by any public right-of-way, the south elevation of the house is a focal point of the property due to a prominent window wall that covers the west half of the south elevation from side to side, floor to ceiling. The window wall is made up of three adjoining, equally sized plate-glass windows which flank the west side of a three-part sliding glass door. Each of the six glazed window and door segments measures 50 inches wide and 96.6 inches high, and is held by aluminum sash and aluminum frame. The principal flat roof of the house extends forward eight feet over and past the window wall to form a flat covered back porch. The porch is supported by square painted wood posts, and the porch deck is made of poured concrete aggregate. A 13-foot-wide family room wing was built in 1962, four years after the house was erected, and projects forward eight feet from the southeast corner of the first floor at the south elevation of the house to the outside edge of the covered porch. The roof over the porch and wing are part of the principal roof of the house and retain a continuous band of metal coping along the parapet. The south elevation of the garage is clad with vertical cedar board siding.

House Interior

The first floor and basement of the Foltz House hold 1,385 square feet each for a total of 2,768 square feet. The first floor contains a reception hall, a formal living room/dining room, kitchen/family room, two bedrooms, one bathroom, and an open stairway that

descends to a finished basement. A flush-mounted solid wood door at the home's north façade opens into a reception hall which is eight feet deep and 13 feet long. The floor is covered with slate, the ceiling is covered with painted sheetrock, and the walls are clad with the finest vertical board, tongue-in-groove teakwood paneling from Bangkok. The reception hall opens east into a kitchen, north to a bedroom wing, and west into a formal living room which is finished with sheetrock walls/ceiling and plywood floor which is covered with wall-to-wall carpet. A fireplace with a slate hearth, cobblestone surround, and no mantel is located on the north wall. The focal point of the living room, the south wall is designed as a "window wall" which features three picture windows that extend side-to-side and floor-to-ceiling for a full view of the groomed grounds in the backyard. As one large space, the living room opens eastward and unobstructed into a formal dining room. In contrast to the living room, the dining room floor is covered with slate. Matching the reception hall, the interior north wall of the dining room is made of fine floor-to-ceiling, vertical tongue-in-groove teakwood paneling upon which is built a custom-designed Contemporary-style teakwood buffet with a black Formica top. Like the south wall of the living room, the south wall of the dining room is a continuation of floor-to-ceiling plate-glass windows which flank a sliding glass door. The door and flanking windows are all the same size as the three windows in the living room which together form a continuous 25-foot-wide "window wall" which commands a full view of the backyard. The east wall of the dining room is finished with a built-in teakwood room divider with cabinets, bookshelves, and black Formica which matches the built-in buffet. The room divider separates the dining room from a kitchen/family room which is located at the east end of the house. The kitchen is in the northeast corner of the house and is open to a family room which is in the southeast corner of the house. The kitchen/family room is finished with painted sheetrock walls and ceiling, and the floor is made of linoleum. Kitchen cabinets are made of red birch and Formica with a kitchen cabinet and hanging cupboard dividing the kitchen from the family room. A fireplace is centered on the south wall of the family room and features a slate hearth and no mantel. Custom-designed built-in cabinets made of white birch and teakwood flank the fireplace. A custom-designed teakwood kitchen table is located in the kitchen/family room, and a skylight illuminates the kitchen.¹

The reception hall at the front of the house also leads northwest to a first-floor wing which contains two bedrooms, one full bathroom, and a hallway with an open staircase that descends to a finished basement. The stairway is finished with a plain painted steel balustrade, an open stringer, and deep open treads. A skylight illuminates the stairwell. The basement has an unfinished furnace-laundry-storage room and two finished bedrooms, bathroom, recreation room, and hallway with staircase. A mantel-less fireplace clad with round river rock is located on the north wall in the recreation room and has a slate hearth. All door and window surrounds and woodwork (except where specified as teakwood) are made of painted wood. Ceiling heights are eight feet, walls and ceilings are finished with painted sheetrock (except where specified as finished with

¹ The kitchen table was designed and made by Walter Foltz, the home's architect and original homeowner.

teakwood paneling), and floors are covered with a combination of slate, linoleum, and wall-to-wall carpeting.

ORIGINAL APPEARANCE & SUBSEQUENT MODIFICATIONS

Built in 1958, the Foltz House is 51 years old and has had only one exterior modification to date: a first-floor family room wing built at the rear southeast corner of the home in 1962.² The rest of the home's exterior demonstrates the highest degree of architectural integrity in original location, design, materials, workmanship, and association as a Contemporary-style single-family home built during the Mid-20th-Century Modern period in a large suburban neighborhood in southeast Spokane. Except for the 1962 wing, the interior of the Foltz House is also original with a c. 1958 floor plan, design, materials, and workmanship.³ To summarize, the Foltz House readily conveys its historic and architectural significance as a fine example of the Contemporary style and the designs, materials, and workmanship that were popular during the time it was built in the 1950s.

² The southeast corner wing, which houses a family room, cannot be seen from any public right-of-way as it is located at the south rear elevation of the house.

³ Preserved original blueprints and specifications for the Foltz House were located with the property owner at the time of this writing.

Areas of Significance	Architecture
Period of Significance	1958-1959
Significant Dates	1958
Built Date	1958
Architect	Walter W. Foltz
Builder	Gil Bauer, Bauer Construction

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Summary Statement

Built in 1958, the Walter & Barbara Foltz House is an excellent Mid-Century Modern example of the Contemporary style with strong Miesian influence. Contemporary-style characteristics include the home's 1958 built date, long low horizontal plan, flat roof, attached garage and breezeway, metal sash windows, combination vertical cedar board siding/smooth round river rock veneer, and a selective use of Bangkok teakwood for interior paneling and built-ins. Miesian-style influence is especially illustrated by the home's open floor plan and by a full 25-foot-wide "window wall" at the rear of the house which offers a broad view of the backyard gardens, seemingly bringing the outdoors into the house. The home was designed by prominent Spokane architect, Walter W. Foltz, for his wife Barbara Foltz, their family, and himself. Spokane contractor, Gil Bauer of Bauer Construction, was responsible for erecting the house. A principal architect of the prominent award-winning Spokane architectural firm of Walker, McGough, Foltz, Lyerla (WMFL) for 21 years and an employee of the company for 31 years, Walter Foltz was praised in his obituary for his professional and long-standing "commitment to the profession of architecture" and as "a remembered teacher and mentor to many young architects."⁴ At WMFL, a winner of more than 65 prestigious architectural awards in less than three decades, Walter Foltz was trusted as "the partner in charge of production," "the orderly and timely execution of all project documents," cost and quality control, and construction supervision.⁵ The Foltz House is significant under Category C in the area of "architecture" as the self-designed home of master architect, Walter Foltz, who lived at the property from 1959 to his death in 1995, a time period in which he achieved his highest professional success as an associate architect and then principal partner of WMFL from 1956 to 1987. The Foltz House is further significant as a very fine, intact Mid-Century Modern example of the Contemporary tradition. Historically and architecturally significant, the Walter & Barbara Foltz House is nominated to the Spokane Register of Historic Places under Category C.

⁴ "Foltz, Walter W. Obituary." *Spokesman-Review*, 25, Nov 1995.

⁵ WMFL, 1970.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT***Resurveyed Inwood Park Addition***

A remote, undeveloped prairie landscape with scattered basalt rocks, trees, and wild grasses, the Resurveyed Inwood Park Addition in southeast Spokane was so far from downtown Spokane that it seemed to be located in the hinterlands when it was platted in 1909. Located on Spokane's South Hill three miles southeast of the city's central business district, the Resurveyed Inwood Park Addition in the vicinity of East 35th Avenue and South Crestline Street wasn't developed as a residential neighborhood until the 1950s after World War II. In 1950, Spokane developer Robert Ferris purchased land in the Resurveyed Inwood Park Addition, and in 1953 Ferris and fellow developer Peter Dix formed the Pine Meadows Development Company, which they reorganized in 1958 as Pineview Homes, Incorporated. During that year, Pineview Homes, Inc. sold the west ten feet of Lot 2, all of Lot 3, and the east 20 feet of Lot 4, Block 9 in the Resurveyed Inwood Park Addition to Walter & Barbara Foltz for \$2,400.⁶ A registered associate architect with the Spokane architectural firm of Walker & McGough at that time, Walter Foltz designed a one-story, single-family home for his wife, Barbara Foltz, his family, and himself. He hired Spokane contractor, Gilbert Bauer of Bauer Construction, to build the house which was completed at the end of 1958. The home faced north onto East 35th Avenue and was one of the first homes built in the Addition. Walter Foltz lived in the house for 36 years until his death in 1995, and at this writing, his widow, Barbara Foltz, continues to maintain the property as her home.

Suburban Building Boom

Along with other homes built the same year, the construction of the Foltz House in 1958 proved to be a catalyst for a domestic building boom trend in Spokane that saw increased residential development in the Resurveyed Inwood Park Addition and surrounding suburban neighborhoods where hundreds of single-family Mid-Century Modern homes were erected during the 1960s-1970s. Most of the homes were built as tract houses with both small and large Mid-Century Modern examples that represented Minimal Traditional, Ranch, Split-level, Contemporary, and Shed styles. The tract houses were interspersed with a few custom-designed homes which were not similar in design but were similar in high quality to the Foltz House, and were built around a few remaining 1900-1920s bungalows and vernacular farm houses which were built before the 1960s-1970s building boom. In addition to the construction of single-family suburban homes in the area, private schools, public schools, churches, a public library, and a fire station were erected in the area as suburban southeast Spokane was developed and settled.

Transportation Trend

During this time, a strong nation-wide transportation trend towards private automobile ownership was demonstrated in the Resurveyed Inwood Park Addition and surrounding residential suburbs as evidenced by a gridwork of paved streets and roadways, covered carports, and private garages which were constructed onto houses. Illustrated by

⁶ Spokane County warranty deed and tax assessor records. Spokane County Courthouse, Spokane, WA.

its design which includes an attached garage and breezeway, the Foltz House is a tangible expression of this popular trend that saw the adoption and facilitation of modern private automobile transportation in the 1950s-1960s-1970s, and the shelter which became necessary to protect that costly but beloved American commodity, the “family car.”

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Category C

As outlined in *National Register Bulletin 15*, registration requirements for Category C of the Spokane Register of Historic Places apply to “properties significant for their physical design or construction, including such elements as architecture, landscape architecture, engineering, and artwork.”⁷ To be eligible for historic register listing under Category C, “a property must meet at least one of the following requirements:”⁸

1. Embody distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction.
2. Represent the work of a master.
3. Possess high artistic value.
4. Represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.⁹

The Walter & Barbara Foltz House is architecturally significant under Requirement #1 of Category C because it is a fine example of the Contemporary style with Miesian influence, a tangible expression of “distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction,” and “refers to the way in which a property was conceived, designed, or fabricated by a people or culture in past periods of history.”¹⁰ The home is further significant under Requirement #2 of Category C as the representative work of master architect, Walter W. Foltz.

Walter W. Foltz (1923-1995)

Walter W. Foltz was born in Ririe, Idaho in 1923. Trained as a carrier pilot, Foltz served in World War II in the Naval Air Corps. After the war, he attended the University of Idaho, graduated with a degree in Architecture, set up his own practice, and was hired by the Spokane architectural firm of Walker & McGough in 1956. For 10 years from 1956 to 1966, Walter Foltz worked as an associate architect for the firm, and in 1966 when the firm was enlarged and reorganized to Walker, McGough, Foltz, Lyerla, Foltz was made a principal partner. An article and photograph of Foltz was featured in a 1966 *Spokesman-Review* newspaper:

⁷ *National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*. Page 17

⁸ *Ibid*, p. 17

⁹ *Ibid*, p. 17

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 17

Appointments Are Made by Architectural Firm

New executive appointments to accommodate projects in progress and long-term construction industry trends were announced Saturday by Bruce M. Walker and John W. McGough, founding partners of the Spokane and Seattle architectural firm of Walker & McGough. Walter W. Foltz of Spokane and Robert J. Nixon of Seattle have been appointed partners. Foltz, 2116 East 35th Avenue, will head the contract administration division... Foltz joined the firm in 1956 as an associate and has been a project coordinator since that time. He holds a bachelor of science degree in architecture...and has been granted architectural registrations in Washington, Idaho, and Oregon. He is secretary-treasurer of the Washington State Council of Architects.¹¹

Walter Foltz worked for Walker & McGough for 10 years, and for WMFL for 21 years, for a total of 31 years until his retirement in 1987. As told in 2009 by Barbara Foltz, widow of Walter Foltz, WMFL was dedicated to and placed “great importance on ‘the team’ and its involvement at all levels” where “each project was the result of a coordinated effort in all stages of planning and execution for every commission.”¹² During his time with WMFL, Walter Foltz was described in a 1970 WMFL promotional project booklet as “the partner in charge of production” who was “responsible for the orderly and timely execution of all project documents.”¹³ A 1983 WMFL promotional project booklet reported that “as a principal with WMFL since 1966 and with over 30 years experience in architecture, Mr. Foltz has been responsible for the production of contract documents” and “cost and quality control as well as construction supervision. He has directed all cost control for WMFL projects since 1956.”¹⁴

A very busy, polished professional and prominent architectural firm in Spokane, WMFL was honored with over 65 prestigious architectural awards in less than three decades from 1959 to 1983. As an architect and the firm’s construction supervisor and cost control/contract specialist for 31 years, Walter Foltz’s efforts helped the firm win those awards and honors. A sample selection of award winning projects with which Foltz was associated at WMFL include awards for the following:

- Central Pre-Mix Concrete Company, Spokane, WA
- Farm Credit Bank Building, Spokane, WA
- Washington/Jefferson Elementary School, Walla Walla, WA
- Intercollegiate Center for Nursing Education, Spokane, WA
- Safeco Insurance Company Divisional Office Building, Redmond, WA
- Bernard’s Women’s Apparel, Spokane, WA

¹¹ “Appointments Are Made by Architectural Firm.” *Spokesman-Review*, 1966.

¹² Foltz, Barbara, 2009.

¹³ WMFL Project Booklet, 1970.

¹⁴ WMFL Project Booklet, 1983.

- Ramsey Court Juvenile Service Center, St. Paul, MN
- Seattle First National Bank Building, North Spokane Branch, Spokane, WA
- State of Washington Maximum Security Facility, Monroe, WA
- Evergreen State College Communications Lab, Olympia, WA
- Spokane Opera House & Convention Center, Spokane, WA
- St. Luke's Hospital, Spokane, WA
- State of Oklahoma Assessment Reception Center, Oklahoma City, OK
- Montana State Correctional Facility, Deer Lodge, MT
- Spokane County-City Public Safety Building, Spokane, WA
- Temple Beth Shalom, Spokane, WA
- Purdy Treatment Center for Women, Purdy, WA
- Convent of the Holy Names, Spokane, WA
- University of Washington Padelford Hall, Seattle, WA
- University Art Center National Competition, Berkeley, CA
- Washington State Correction Center, Shelton, WA
- Ridpath Motor Inn, Spokane, WA
- Seattle's 1962 World's Fair, Buildings 1,2,3, World Commerce & Industry
- Central Operating Facility, Washington Water Power Co, Spokane, WA¹⁵

In addition to his partnership as a principal with WMFL, Walter Foltz was at different times during his career an active member of the American Institute of Architects (AIA), president of the Spokane Chapter of the AIA, president of the Washington State Council of Architects, certificate holder from the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards, and a registered architect in numerous states, including Washington, Idaho, Oregon, Iowa, Hawaii, Colorado, California, and Nevada.

Mid-Century Modern

"Mid-Century Modern" is a term used to describe an architectural movement in a 40-year time period from about 1945 to 1985 in which various architectural modes loosely called "modern architecture" became popular. Mid-Century Modern has also been identified as an "architectural, interior, and product design form that generally describes mid-20th century developments in modern design, architecture, and urban development."¹⁶ Jonathan Clancey in his book, *The Story of Architecture*, described the Mid-Century Modern movement as "Americanized spirit."¹⁷ He said Mid-Century Modern is "not really a style" but rather "a way of designing and building that fused the indigenous energy and highly efficient prefabricated building skills of US industry and architects, and the influence of European architects and designers, notably those from the Bauhaus,

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia*, 2009. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mid-Century_modern

¹⁷ Clancey, Jonathan. *The Story of Architecture*. London: DK Publishing, 2000.

and above all, Mies van der Rohe, who arrived in the States from Germany via London in 1937.”¹⁸ Clancey further stated that “this, however, was not the whole story.”

There was another, earlier European Modern tradition that had developed independently in California. Here, young architects in the 1920s and 30s were widely influenced by two Viennese émigrés, Richard Neutra (1892-1970) and Rudolph Schindler (1887-1953) who designed a number of serene, single-story, open-plan houses in and around Los Angeles and Palm Springs. With their sliding glass walls and carefully considered relationship with nature, these houses connected the world of Japanese Zen Buddhism to the great American outdoors via the open-plan architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright and the functional sensibilities of the early Modern Movement. In short, they were a near perfect marriage of form and function—architectural sonnets.¹⁹

British architectural historian, Bradley Quinn, who authored the book, *Mid-Century Modern*, wrote that the aforementioned influences helped render new domestic exterior and interior designs and “actively shaped the distinctive style[s] of the 1950s as designers with backgrounds in architecture, fine art, [and] graphic design pioneered the use of new materials, sculptural forms, novel colors, and fluid motifs.”²⁰ Styles that were developed in the Mid-Century Modern period strove to simplify, create more living space in the home, and eliminate clutter, “or at least hide it behind beautifully streamlined doors.”²¹

The architectural minimalism of the 1950s was coupled with the organic modernism of the 1940s, resulting in an open-plan layout, showcasing sleek structural elements crafted in natural materials. Houses shrank in size as parlors, formal dining rooms, and grand entrance halls, now deemed superfluous, were absorbed by the open plan, ironically creating a greater sense of space as a result... Contemporary minimalism took the United States by storm...²²

As professed by many American architects, designers, builders, and homebuyers, both interior and exterior designs of Mid-Century Modern Ranch-style, Split-Level-style, Shed-style, and Contemporary-style homes were the epitome of the “American Dream.”

Sleeker décor, more space, less clutter—the interiors of the 1950s presented a fresh vision of what houses could be, and changed forever the idea of what the home should look like. The rich textures, colorful tints,

¹⁸ Ibid, p. 184.

¹⁹ Ibid, p. 184-5.

²⁰ Quinn, Bradley. *Mid-Century Modern*. London: Conran Octopus Ltd, 2009, p. 6.

²¹ Ibid, p. 6.

²² Ibid, p. 6.

and polished wood grains of the mid-century home created a sense of exuberance and vitality that continued to have an impact for many decades to follow. Modern equipment gave the home a high-tech feel and made domestic tasks less onerous, enabling the occupants to enjoy more leisure time in their spacious, open-plan interiors. A happy family and a big car completed the comfortable, carefree lifestyle that became known as the “American Dream,” and the home was its very embodiment.²³

Beginning in 1946 after World War II, returning GIs who needed a place to live and were then-eligible for federally-backed home loans through the United States Veterans Administration, flooded American housing markets, including Spokane. To help offset the critical need for housing at this time, row upon row of small frame homes that resembled little boxes were built in Spokane and throughout the country as suburban tract housing. Plain vernacular residential examples along with Minimal Traditional-style dwellings were erected and dominated the domestic housing market in the late 1940s and early 1950s.²⁴ By the mid 1950s, the small boxy houses were being replaced by larger, long, low, rambling single-story homes designed in the Ranch style, also called the “California Ranch style.” Low-pitched roofs, porch and roof supports, and decorative shutters embellished the Ranch style homes and were loosely based on Colonial Revival-style precedents.

Contemporary Style

As the late 1950s dawned, another modern domestic design in America captured the attention of architects, builders, and homebuyers. It was called the Contemporary style, which completely eschewed traditional form and detail and was particularly favored in architect-designed houses that were built in the late 1950s and the 1960s and 1970s. The Contemporary style was strongly influenced by the previous sleek and radical International style of the 1920s, 30s, and 40s, but was softened by the organically influenced designs of America’s most famous Prairie School architect, Frank Lloyd Wright. Wright emphasized large open interior spaces and large expansive windows that brought the outdoors inside, and used natural products like oak, cedar, pine, brick, and stone for exterior cladding and interior walls and floors. Another professional designer, world-renowned Mid-Century Modern European architect, Mies van der Rohe, designed complete walls of glass, sometimes called “curtain walls,” that extended windows from side to side and floor to ceiling. These massive walls of plate-glass afforded panoramic views of distant vistas, private patios, grounds and gardens, effectively rendering the home “one with nature.” The Mid-Century Modern Contemporary style, often called the “California Modern style” in the Western states, was somewhat less common than the Ranch style but nevertheless enjoyed a modicum of popularity. Bradley Quinn has predicted in his 2009 book, *Mid-Century Modern*, that “mid-century design was not just a fleeting historical phenomenon but an aesthetic that will have allure well into the future,”

²³ Ibid, p. 15.

²⁴ McAlester, Lee & Virginia. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Knopf, 1989, p. 477.

and will be “remembered for revolutionizing the way people lived...an optimistic view of life.”²⁵

Identifying Features of the Contemporary Style

Alluding to the architectural mantras, “back to nature” and “form follows function,” authors Marilyn Klein and David Fogle, *Clues to American Architecture*, described and summarized stylistic elements of the Contemporary style as “architectural forms that evolved from plans carefully tailored to clients’ needs.”²⁶

Emphasizing natural materials of wood and stone, the Contemporary [style] house was closely related to its site, oriented to sun and shade, softened with planting that reinforced its naturalness, and discreetly blended into the landscape. Roofs were gently sloped and sheltering, with exposed beams and rafters. Sliding glass walls and wooden decks or patios on the back or side of the house extended the living areas outdoors but away from the street, assuring privacy. High...clerestory windows and skylights were often used to create unexpected patterns of light and shadow and to bring the outdoors in without sacrificing solid walls where needed.

Identifying elements of the Contemporary style include the following:

- Built dates roughly 1945-1985
- Usually single-story homes with asymmetrical design and minimal embellishment (reductionist aesthetic)
- Long, low, horizontal forms
- Flat roofs, or very low-pitched roofs with broad, low-pitched, front-facing gables
- Façade design sometimes very plain and uncluttered with minimal or no windows
- Rear elevation design often private and prominent with rows of windows or a “curtain/window wall” of floor-to-ceiling windows that span full width of house
- Widely overhanging roof eaves or roof extensions over window walls to cover porches/patios
- Exposed structural members and supporting beams
- Contrasting wall materials and textures (example: vertical wood cladding with brick or stone veneers)
- Unusual window/door shapes and placements (tall fixed-sash units with transoms or clerestory windows, narrow horizontal sliding or awning-type windows, “curtain/window walls” of double-pane glazing, and sliding glass doors)
- Flush-mounted plain wood or metal exterior doors

²⁵ Quinn, p. 11.

²⁶ Klein, Marilyn and David P. Fogle. *Clues to American Architecture*. Wash DC: Starrhill Press, 1986, p. 54.

- Prominent front-facing automobile garages attached to house; paved driveways at front of house from garage to street
- Interior:
 - uncluttered open space plans, large multi-purpose rooms (living/dining room and/or kitchen/family room)
 - recessed lighting
 - interior teakwood and other wood built-ins that divide rooms and illustrate modern furniture design (example: Danish modern furniture designs)
 - linoleum-wood-flagstone-tile-concrete aggregate flooring
 - minimal or no woodwork
 - mantel-less fireplaces
 - wood paneled and/or cobblestone walls and fireplace surrounds
 - Formica countertops and cupboard door panels
 - high-tech equipment (stereo, TV, kitchen/laundry appliances, etc)
 - window blinds/shades vs heavy drapes
 - open-tread stairs
 - plain floor-to-ceiling doors
 - wood paneled ceilings
 - kitchens at front of house and living/dining/family rooms at rear of house

Foltz House

The Foltz House is a fine representation of the Mid-Century Modern Contemporary style and illustrates the following identifying stylistic features: an uncluttered minimalist/reductionist linear design, single-story, flat roof, prominent front-facing attached garage and covered breezeway, widely overhanging eaves and roof extension at the rear elevation (covered patio), façade with minimal windows and one plain flush-mounted door, exterior cladding combination of vertical cedar boards and cobblestone veneer panel, walkways and patio of concrete aggregate, combination of vertical and horizontal windows with aluminum sash, and a style-defining prominent 25-foot-wide “window wall” at the rear of the house with fixed-metal sash windows and sliding-glass doors that render panoramic views of backyard grounds/gardens. Interior elements include an open space interior plan, minimal woodwork, mantel-less fireplaces, teakwood paneling and built-in room dividers, a combination of flagstone-linoleum-carpeted floor coverings, c. 1958 “modern” kitchen with built-in appliances-cupboards-cabinets-counters,²⁷ Formica kitchen countertops and door panels, cobblestone fireplace surround, open-tread staircase, skylights, and an interior floor plan which puts the kitchen at the front of the house and living/dining/family room at back of house, a room-arrangement tenet of the Contemporary style. Natural materials were prominently used at the Foltz House and include vertical cedar board siding, cobblestone veneer²⁸ and fireplace

²⁷ Some of the 1958 appliances which were considered modern when the house was built have been updated and replaced.

²⁸ According to Barbara Foltz, Walter Foltz personally culled smooth, round river rocks from the banks of the Spokane River for use in his home.

surrounds, flagstone flooring, high-quality teakwood wall paneling, teakwood built-in room divider, and a teakwood kitchen table. Miesian influence is found in the prominent use of glazing constructed as a continuous 25-foot-wide window wall at the back of the house which allows full natural illumination and a broad, private view of the grounds.

Not too many Contemporary-style homes like the Foltz House were built in Spokane. The Foltz House can, however, be compared to at least three Contemporary-style residences that resemble the design and Miesian-influence of the Foltz House. In chronological order:

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------|
| • J. Kimball & Sheri Barnard House | 1703 E. Pinecrest | Built in 1952 |
| • Kenneth & Edna Brooks House | 723 W. Sumner Avenue | Built in 1956 |
| • Walter & Barbara Foltz House | 2116 E. 35 th Avenue | Built in 1958 |
| • Donald & Dottie Murray House | 611 W. Sumner Avenue | Built in 1965 |

All four homes were custom-designed by Spokane architects as their principal residences, all four homes are fine examples of the Contemporary style, and all four homes have strong Miesian influence which is especially seen in prominent “window walls” of plate-glass. The window walls in all four homes are privately located at the rear of each residence and cannot be seen from a public street in front of the house. And finally, all four homes were designed by prominent Spokane architects who were principals of firms that were responsible for award-winning, cutting-edge, commercial design work in Spokane and the surrounding region during the 1950s-1960s-1970s-1980s.

Summary

The Walter & Barbara Foltz House is nominated to the Spokane Register of Historic Places for its architectural significance as a product of Spokane master architect, Walter Foltz, and as a tangible example of the Mid-Century Modern Contemporary style with Miesian influence. The Foltz House is well preserved and retains the highest degree of original exterior and interior architectural integrity in original location, design, materials, workmanship, and association as a single-family residence built in Spokane, Washington during the 1950s.

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Appointments Are Made by Architectural Firm

New executive appointments to accommodate projects in progress and long-term construction industry trends were announced Saturday by Bruce M. Walker, and John W. McGough, founding partners of the Spokane and Seattle architectural firm of Walker & McGough.

Walter W. Foltz of Spokane and Robert J. Nixon of Seattle have been appointed partners, and Edward M. Musgrove, senior associate. All are members of the American Institute of Architects.

Foltz, E2116 Thirty-fifth, will head the contract administration division. Nixon will continue as head of Walker & McGough's Seattle office, a position he has held since June 1963.

Musgrove, E7208 Marietta, will be senior project manager.

Joined Firm in 1956

Foltz joined the firm in 1956 as associate and has been a project coordinator since that time. He holds a bachelor of science degree in architecture from the University of Idaho, and has been granted architectural registrations in Washington, Idaho and Oregon. He is secretary-treasurer of the Washington State Council of Architects.

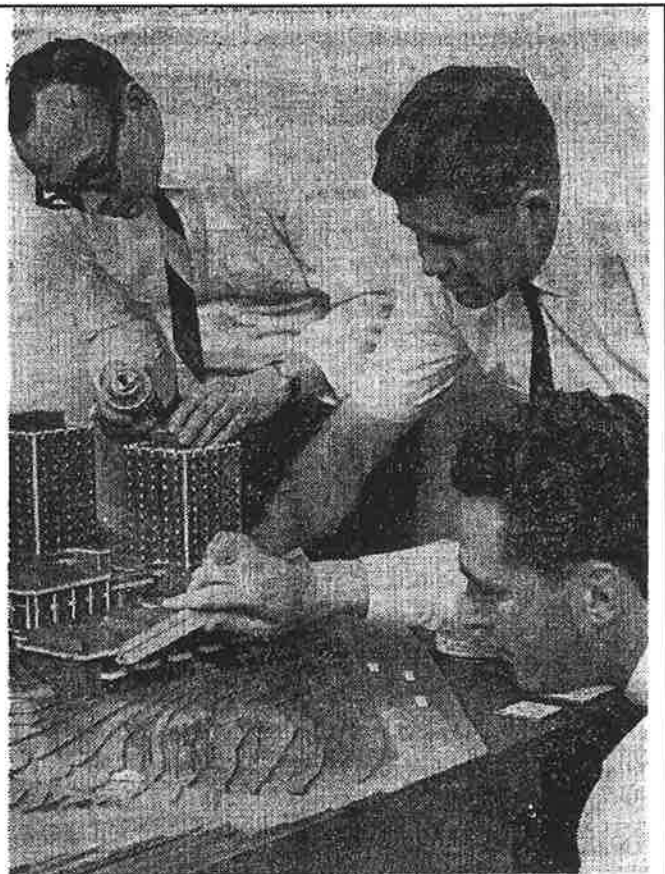
Nixon has been an associate

for the firm since 1963, having joined the organization in 1959. A graduate of the University of Idaho with a bachelor of science degree in architecture, Nixon is a corporate member of the Seattle chapter, AIA.

In Construction Council

Musgrove joined the firm in 1960 and has been an associate since 1963. He is a director of the Spokane Construction Council. He is a registered architect, State of Washington.

Walker & McGough was founded as a partnership in Spokane in 1953. Current projects include: Courthouse and Federal Office Building, a joint venture, Spokane; campus planning consultants, University of Washington; comprehensive planning study for the Capitol, State of Washington; coeducational dormitories for Washington State University, as well as a number of church, educational, professional and business buildings.

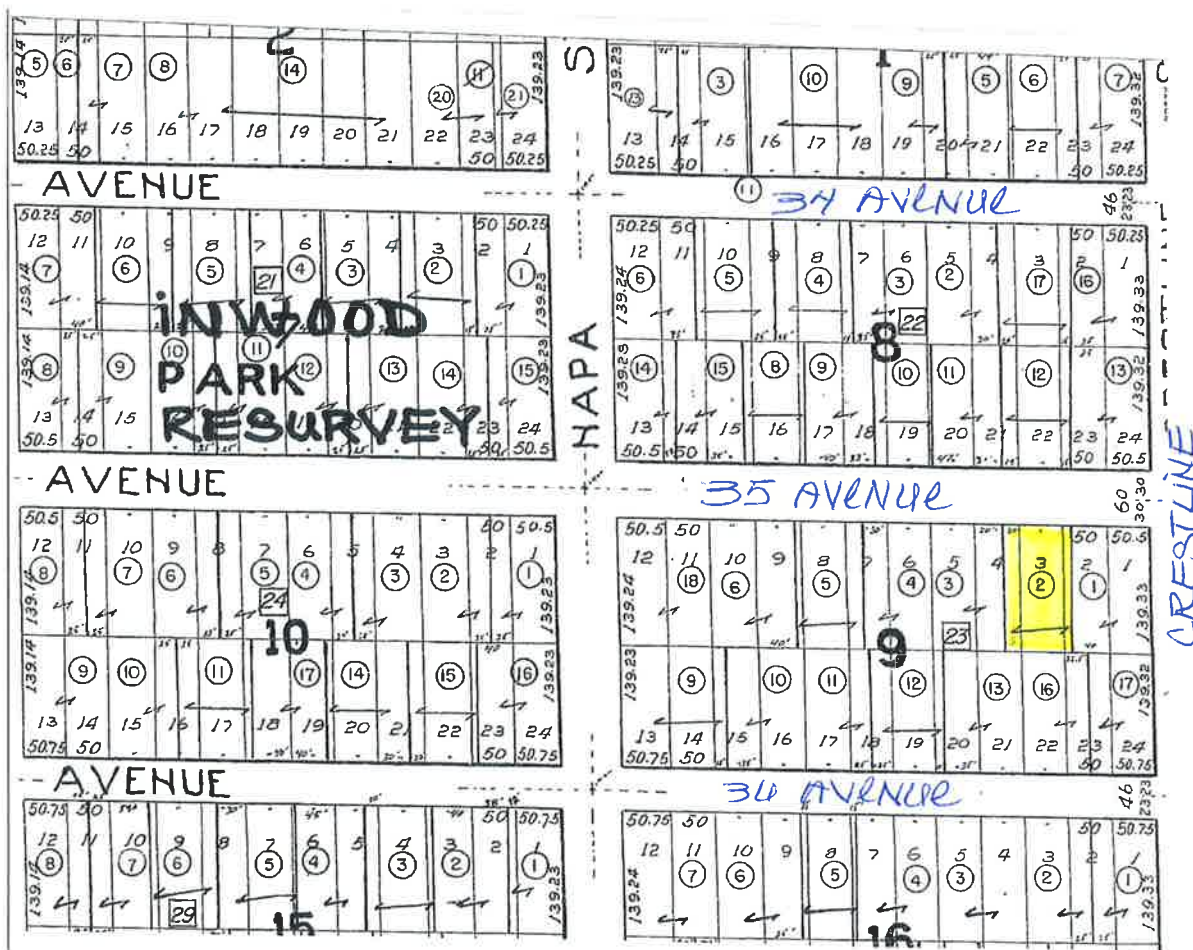


Staff Changes Announced
Design firm shift: Musgrove, Foltz and Nixon.

Spokane City/County Register of Historic Places Nomination Continuation Sheet
WALTER & BARBARA FOLTZ HOUSE **Section 10**

PLAT MAP

Spokane County Assessor plat map, 2009

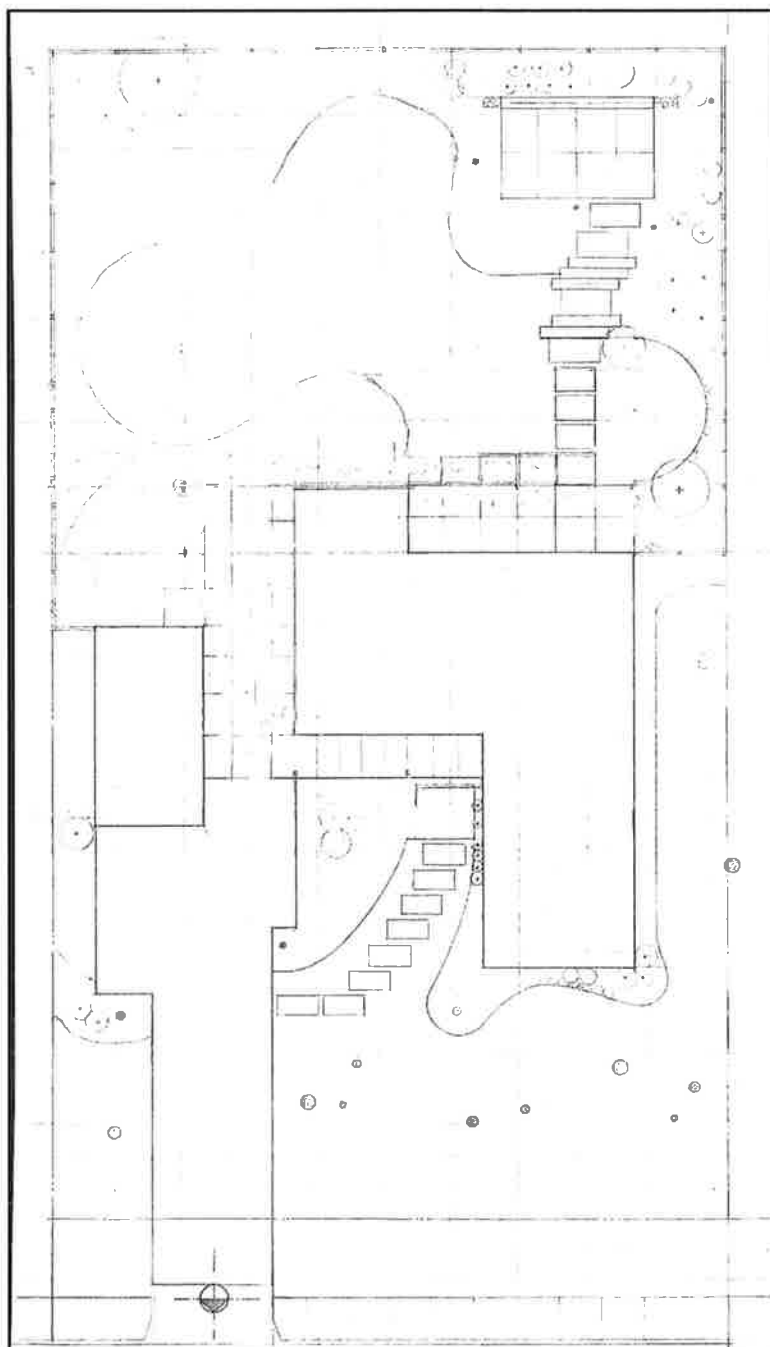


NORTH ↑

Spokane City/County Register of Historic Places Nomination Continuation Sheet
WALTER & BARBARA FOLTZ HOUSE **Section 10**

SITE PLAN

Walter Foltz site plan, c. 1958

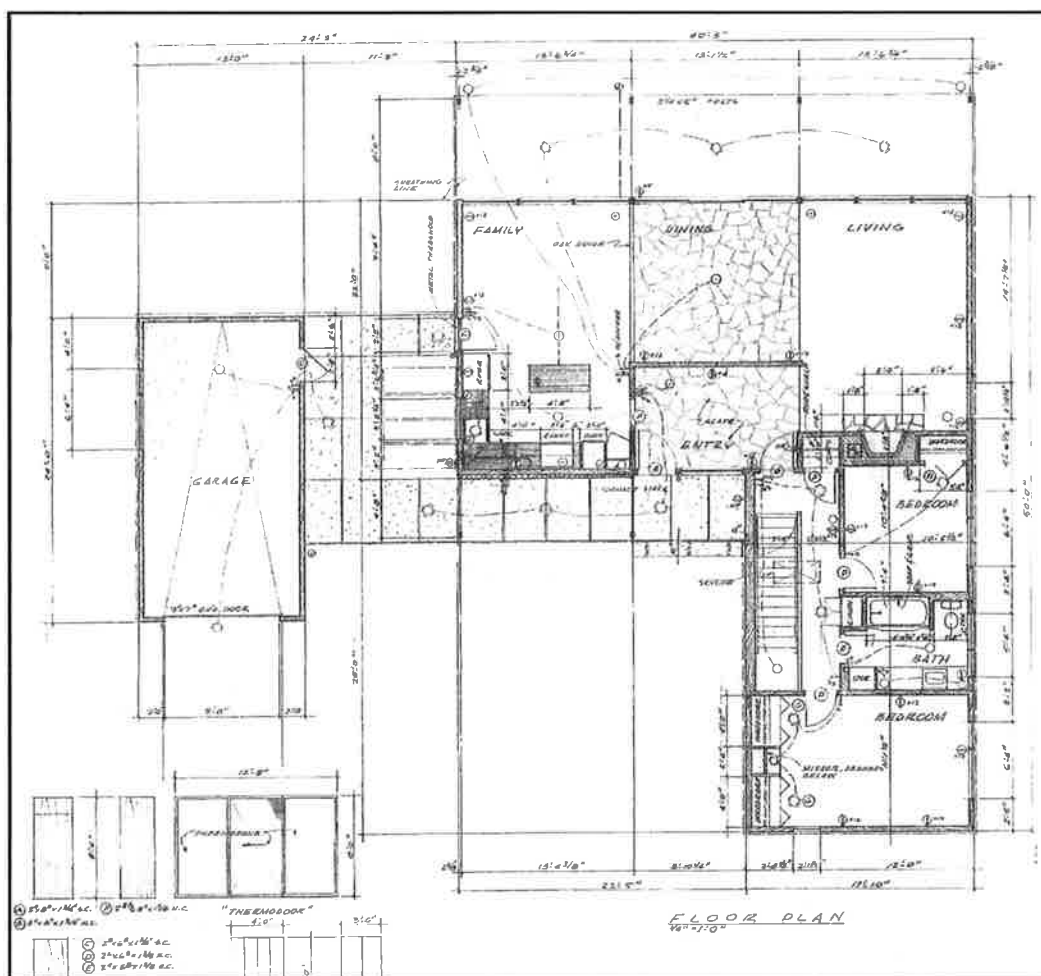


ELEVATIONS, GAVE DETAILS		
RESIDENCE FOR MR & MRS. WALTER W. FOLTZ		AND
WALTER W. FOLTZ ARCHITECT, A I A		4

Spokane City/County Register of Historic Places Nomination Continuation Sheet
WALTER & BARBARA FOLTZ HOUSE Section 10

PLANS

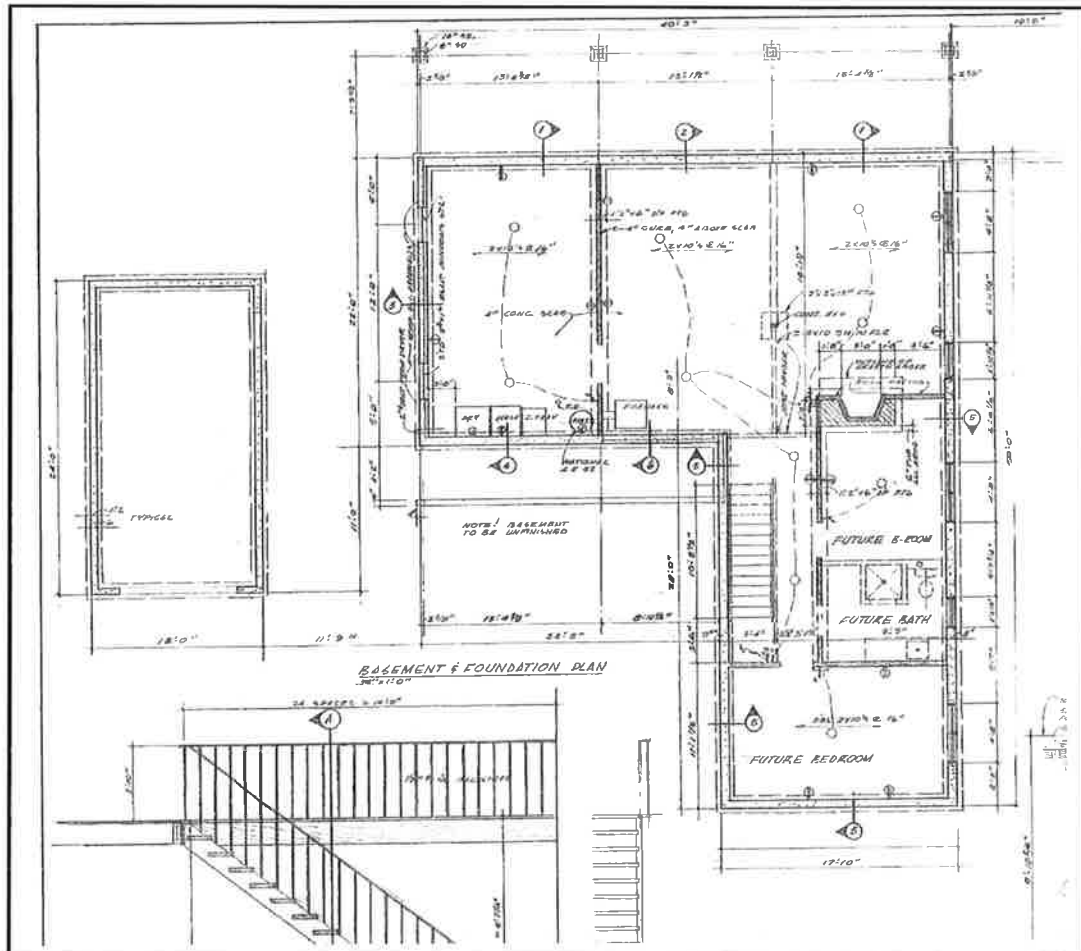
Walter Foltz first floor plan, c. 1958.



Spokane City/County Register of Historic Places Nomination Continuation Sheet
WALTER & BARBARA FOLTZ HOUSE **Section 10**

PLANS

Walter Foltz basement floor plan, c. 1958.



Spokane City/County Register of Historic Places Nomination Continuation Sheet
WALTER & BARBARA FOLTZ HOUSE **Section 10**

Photo 1 North façade of house in 2004 (Spokane County Assessor file).
Photo 2 North façade of house in 2009.



Spokane City/County Register of Historic Places Nomination Continuation Sheet
WALTER & BARBARA FOLTZ HOUSE **Section 10**

Photo 3

Front porch at north façade in 2009.

Photo 4

Breezeway at north façade in 2009.



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WALTER & BARBARA FOLTZ HOUSE **Section 10**

Photo 5

West elevation of house in 2009.



Spokane City/County Register of Historic Places Nomination Continuation Sheet
WALTER & BARBARA FOLTZ HOUSE **Section 10**

Photos 6 and 7

South elevation of house in 2008.



Spokane City/County Register of Historic Places Nomination Continuation Sheet
WALTER & BARBARA FOLTZ HOUSE **Section 10**

Photos 8

Breezeway at south elevation in 2008.



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WALTER & BARBARA FOLTZ HOUSE **Section 10**

Photo 9

View of living room, looking west in 2008.

Photo 10

View of living room and backyard through windows in 2008,
looking south.



Spokane City/County Register of Historic Places Nomination Continuation Sheet
WALTER & BARBARA FOLTZ HOUSE **Section 10**

Photo 11

Looking east at dining room in 2008.



Spokane City/County Register of Historic Places Nomination Continuation Sheet
WALTER & BARBARA FOLTZ HOUSE **Section 10**

Photo 12 Stairway from first floor hallway to basement level in 2008.
Photo 13 Stairway from basement to first floor in 2008.

