

THE HOME OF DR. HOMER & MRS. JO-NEAL HARRIS
BY WILBUR MARK PERRAULT, DESIGNER-BUILDER

Section 1: Applicant information

Name	Charles Lehman	
Mailing address	4116 SW Tualatin Avenue	
City/State/Zip	Portland, Oregon 97239	
Phone Number	503-224-2770	E-mail scribe@hevanet.com

Section 2: Property Information

Historic Name, if known	Dr. Homer Harris	
Date of Construction	1957	
Street Address	4116 SW Tualatin Avenue	
City/Town	Portland	County: Multnomah

Section 3: Owner Information : N/A

Section 4: Application Type

Evaluate this property for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places

Section 5: Exterior Description

The Setting: location, lot, landscaping

The tree-lined western hills above Portland are quite steep but accommodate many curving streets that level at a thousand feet near the ridge top with homes, parks, and a rich variety of planted and native trees. Near the top of the hills overlooking the city, the two-story 2,754 sf. home of Dr. Homer & Mrs. JoNeal Harris was designed and built by Wilbur Mark Perrault in the architectural style called "Northwest" or "Regional"; his work was carried out in 1957 on a narrow .2 acre lot, block 18, Lot 11, N 26' of lot 12 (Appendix A 1, tax map) where, so the story goes, a retired sailor raised flowers commercially in the 1930s and 40's.

The sixty foot wide landscape runs east toward Mt. Hood from Tualatin Avenue for one hundred thirty feet, (Appendix A 2, site map). It was and remains ideal to take full advantage of morning sunlight. A wood fence surrounds the north, east and the southeast side of the lot, along with a gravel walkway across the east and part of the south side near the front of the property. The current wood fences and gravel walkway, are replacements of wooden originals except in the south garden area. Railroad ties used originally as tiered planting areas for low shrubs in the southeast garden are still in the same yard locale but are arranged as a low wall along the south concrete walkway.

Many of the shrubs in the original landscape design by Chandler Fairbanks, landscape architect, remain in the same locations indicated in his blueprint: daphne odora, roses, fern, clematis, rhododendrons, bamboo, azaleas, an alder and pine tree.

(Appendix C 2, general landscape plan, Appendix B 43-45, garden). Original concrete sidewalks with 2"X4" redwood dividers on both south and north sides of the house are connected by a gravel, originally wooden, walkway across the east side. Another gravel path meanders through the flower garden in the southwest section to the front of the yard where a small area of the original lawn remains surrounding cedar shrubs concealing the original azaleas.

Siding material(s). Original or replacement?

The second story siding on all sides is the original tongue and groove vertical cedar boards painted white. The ground floor foundation, reaching below ground level on the south and east walls and exposed on the north and west walls, was left without siding. (Appendix B, bottom sections of photos 16,17). Now portions of the north, west and south foundation have lap board: north wall foundation 60' X 6', south wall foundation 13' X 7', west wall foundation has lap board trim around the double garage door; it also has dark brown cedar shakes covering portions of the second story siding to complement the white vertical cedar tongue-and-groove siding. Shakes cover the upper half of the west end of the building and extend eight feet around the north side and ten feet around the south side. There is a protective fabric between the shakes and the original vertical cedar boards.

Window type(s) & material(s). Original or replacement?

(Appendix B, photos 13-19)

The original aluminum slider windows of the house have been replaced by Milgard natural wood-framed energy-efficient sliding windows of the same size; outside the frames are white vinyl.

Second story windows

south wall:

(bedroom at southwest corner) two sliding wood-framed windows located 53" up from floor: 45" X 30" with 3.5" wall space between

north wall:

(bedroom at northwest corner) two sliding wood-framed windows located 53" up from floor: 45" X 30" with 3.5" wall space between

(bathroom) one sliding wood-framed window located 48" from floor: 44.5" X 29.5" (kitchen/eating space) two fixed windows located 11" up from floor: 71" X 47" with 7.5" wall space between

(kitchen sink) one wood-framed slider window located above sink: 45" X 36"

(dining room ending at the north east corner) two fixed windows located 11" up from floor: 71" X 41" with 7.5" wall space between

east wall:

(living room) on the east wall ending at the south corner there are two fixed windows, located 11" up from the floor: 71" X 31" with 7.5" wall space between.

Three windows, 63" X 21" are part of the three-panel door in the center of the east wall which leads out to the fenced deck area. (Appendix B 18, three-panel door)

The east wall gable is shaped asymmetrically with triangular "lights", i.e. windows: six pieces of clear glass divided by 5" wide boards (the center board is 7" wide).

west wall:

The west wall gable is divided asymmetrically resulting in a triangular set of windows on each side under the roof beam. The two triangular spaces are filled with seven pieces of clear glass, "lights", divided by five inch wide mullions (the center mullion under the roof beam is seven inches wide). Four pieces are located to the south of the center mullion and three located to the north of the center. Measuring from the northwest corner toward the center mullion the three windows ("lights") are : 40", 40", 50" wide. Measuring from the southwest corner toward the center mullion the four windows ("lights") are : 38", 38", 38", 50" wide. The triangular pattern of gable windows from each direction (Appendix B 4-5, gable photos) begins in the corners and progress from zero up to 32" in height at the center under the roof beam.

In the interior (bedrooms) the windows on both sides of the roof beam are all shuttered by pairs of hinged shutters with vertical shafts of Port Orford cedar. (Appendix B 7, hinged shutters)

Ground floor windows

south wall:

(family room) two sliding windows located 55" up from the floor: 43.5" X 28" (to the east) and 44" X 28" (to the west) with a 4.5" wall space between. The set begins 40" from the east wall.

north wall:

(bedroom) two sliding windows located 52" up from floor: 45" X 30" with a 4.5" wall space between. The set begins 39" from the east wall.

(hallway) two sliding windows located 52" up from floor: 45" X 30" with a 4.5" wall space between.

(bathroom) one sliding window 52" up from floor: 45" X 30"

Section 6: Exterior Description, Continued

General Description:

Significant Architectural Features: How does your building stand out?

The Harris house exemplifies the key criteria of the Northwest style of architecture. These are extensive use of natural materials, simplicity of form, integration with landscape that emphasizes outdoor living, gable-ended exposed roof beam ceiling, walls of glass beginning near the floor line, simplest possible window trim, simple flush outside doors, tongue and groove vertical siding painted white, smooth sheet-rock walls, mud-set stone entry & hallways, tile floors, open-corner floor-to-ceiling brick fireplaces upstairs with raised hearths and one mosaic-walled fireplace downstairs.

The roof of the house is low-profile. Glass-filled gables under the roof beam allow light to the living area on the east and bedrooms on the west. The roof beam runs the distance of the house protruding slightly on both ends of the roof. Two large rectangular brick chimneys capped with cement slabs emerge near the center of the roof. The openings of the chimneys are screened. (Appendix B 9, chimneys on roof)

On the south side of the house, twelve concrete steps with white stone on the facing edges lead from the southwest corner of the house to the front door in the middle of the second story on the south side. (Appendix B 33, concrete steps with white stone facing)

A series of five curving concrete steps with white stone facing lead from the front driveway up to a 6' wood gate at the northwest corner of the house. From the northwest corner of the house the concrete walkway extends seventy four feet to the east corner of the house and there the original construction provided 66' of cedar board walkway around to the south side where a 58' concrete walkway continued on to join to a 42' gravel garden path leading to the west side front yard lawn.

A wooden porch extends halfway along the north side of the house from the back deck. Near the middle of the porch a door enters into the kitchen. At the same location the back porch stairs descends twelve steps to the concrete sidewalk along the north side of the ground floor. Nine steps lead from the southeast corner of the back deck on the east end of the house to the concrete walkway below. (Appendix B 31, steps SE corner to concrete walkway)

Criteria of The "Northwest Style of Architecture" Found in the Harris House

The "Northwest" style of design had by the 50's developed well-defined and documented characteristics. In their book *Classic Houses of Portland, Oregon 1850-1950*, William J. Hawkins, III, and William F. Willingham, the following twelve characteristics are cited by the authors. (Footnote 1) The appearance of each characteristic in Perrault's Harris house is specifically described in italics under each characteristic quoted below. (FOOTNOTE 3 "Please keep in mind not all the elements in all of the Northwest style houses were executed in the same way. Differences are everywhere throughout houses of this style." Dr. Ronald Savitt, Consultant, The Architectural Heritage Center, Portland, Oregon)

a. PLANS: asymmetrical plans connecting with gardens and landscapes. Interior spaces interconnected; open kitchen, dining room, living room, den, entry, and other rooms, without rectangular volumes.

Harris house: (Appendix C 1 "Ranch House Plot Plan") On the long .2 acre lot, the low-profile rectangular two-story house is shaped proportionately to the flat rectangular space. The original design for the house footprint (60'X27.5') was proportional to the shape of the lot (130'X60'), it is positioned on the north edge of the lot, making a wider space on the south side for landscaping of trees, plants, white stone-faced concrete steps and concrete walkways with redwood dividers.

(floor plan) While the bedrooms/bathrooms are "rectangular volumes", i.e. closed spaces, the rest of the interior spaces on both floors are interconnected without rectangular volumes. (Appendix C 3-4)

b. ROOFS: low pitched, gable-ended, or hipped, sometimes with truncated gables (Japanese influences). Open gable ends supported by posts. Recessed shed dormer. shingled.

Harris house: The low-pitched roof is open-gable ended with an exposed-beam ceiling. The roof beam runs the length of the house, the rafter-beams are sloped at c. 21 degrees and extend through the outside walls to support the eaves.

c. EXTERIOR FINISHES: smooth and uniform wall surfaces, predominantly covered with tongue-and-groove wood siding; plywood panels used under modular window system. Roman brick or field-stone walls. Exposed concrete terraces with cedar dividers.

Harris house: The exterior walls are "predominantly covered" with tongue-and-groove vertical cedar siding. Concrete sidewalks divided by redwood dividers alternate with gravel garden pathways around the house.

d. CHIMNEYS: field-stone or Roman brick. Low rectangular without articulation.

Harris house: Two chimneys emerge through near the center area of the roof without articulation; each of them is made of ordinary red brick capped with concrete slabs; metal screening defends against sparks escaping. (Appendix B 9, chimneys)

On the interior of the second story the chimney/island is made of ordinary bricks painted white, 8" X 2.25" with "raked" surface texture that begin at floor level and reach to the roof beam. The island on the second story is 281" long X 118" tall X 30" wide with raised dark green slate hearths protruding for a short distance below the fireplace at each end of the island, one to the living room and one to the kitchen eating area.

e. WINDOWS: ribbon windows, flush with the exterior wall plane; continuous bands with module, thin, vertical mullions; horizontal mullions only at tops of doors to support large panes above. Walls of glass to the floor line, with minimal detail. Glass stopped directly into the columns.

Harris house: (see "Windows" above)

f. WINDOW TRIM (exterior): the simplest possible detail, without visible trim or accent.

Harris house: windows on all sides of the house are designed in the style described above.

g. ENTRANCE DOORS: simple, flush wood or glass doors, without sidelights, transom, or decorative detail; located at perpendicular corners or wings. Often within modular ribbon windows, or covered with house siding.

Harris house: the main entrance door is made of solid wood painted red. It has a door handle, dead bolt and small viewing hole at eye level. The 82" h X 35.5" w front door is located in the middle of the south side of the house, facing the landscaped garden area, c. 32.5' from the south east corner of the building. People exiting the home through the main door immediately encounter the natural beauty of the garden on the south side while those entering the home experience that garden on the way in and bring it with them inside: a key objective of the Northwest style of architecture. (Appendix B 20, exiting the front door to garden scene)

Directly opposite the main entrance door on the north side a 3' hollow core door provides entrance to the kitchen eating area.

There is at ground level a 3' wide solid wood door which provides entrance to the family room from the garage.

h. VERANDAS/PORCHES: None, per se, but covered outdoor spaces under room over-hangs supported by posts. Supported gable extensions also often used to provide out-door living spaces.

Harris house: the addition of a deck to the original design is a variation of the Northwest style. A large fenced deck extends across the back east end of the house. it is made of tight-fit cedar boards. Glass wind-screens and cedar-post fencing surround the area of the deck and north side porch. The roof of the ground-level garden shed in the northeast corner of the lot is outside and below the deck. (Appendix B, photos 22-26)

Covered by the eaves, a narrow wooden porch begins outside the kitchen dining space and extends along the north wall around the northeast corner and joins the back deck area.

i. INTERIOR FINISHES: Tongue-and-groove vertical siding, flush-side-out. Plaster or gypsum-board walls are smooth finished; almost invariably painted white. Flush ceilings, walls, and details, without trim. Exterior finishes, such as brick floor pavers, brought within the interior. Cork, wood, concrete or tile floors.

Harris house: Flush, untrimmed, smooth-finished sheet rock walls appear throughout the house. Upstairs ceilings are sawed finish cedar boards with a transparent blue wash. The upstairs central hallway is mud-set dark green stones leading from the main doorway to the doorways of bedrooms, bathroom and kitchen areas. Floors throughout the upstairs bedrooms and living area are clear-finish light walnut. The kitchen and bathroom are ceramic tile.

j. INTERIOR TRIM: none. *Harris house: none*

k. STAIRS: minimal, as most houses of the style are one story without a basement.

Harris house: The interior stairs from the upper floor to the ground level floor have twelve wood-plank stair-steps suspended by narrow black-painted square steel bars under the floor above. Eleven of the steps are 45" wide, 10.5" deep and 1.5" thick. The final step next to the top is shaped to left which leads to the floor of the second story. The entire set of stairs has a wooden handrail which guides to the top of the steps and joins to the handrail along the entry hall. (Appendix B 34-36, interior stairs)

l. FIREPLACE FRONTS: simple rectangular openings in white plaster or field-stone walls. Sometimes open corners; pipe columns; raised hearths; and rectangular openings for storing wood. Metal canopy chimneys against a masonry wall, with raised hearth. Sometimes a minimal marble or stone surround (more horizontal than vertical) with shelf substituting as a mantel.

Harris house: There are three fireplaces in the home, one in the second story living room, one in the kitchen, and one downstairs in the family room. (Appendix B 37-39)

Second story fireplace fronts

(living room) open rectangular corner of the brick wall 43" wide X 19" deep X 33" high with a slate covered hearth raised 11" from floor, folding glass doors and sliding metal screen

(kitchen dining area) simple 39" wide X 30" high rectangular opening of the brick wall 11" from corner on a slate-covered hearth raised 11" from the floor, folding glass doors and sliding metal screen

Ground floor fireplace front

(family room) 34" wide X 23" high rectangular opening of the mosaic-covered wall 15" up from floor with 26" framed hearth on floor and a sliding metal screen

Alterations and Approximate Dates:

(Harris house) construction began in 1957; four years later, on July 3, 1961 the City of Portland issued a building permit to W.M. Perrault, the contractor, to add eight feet to the east end of the foundation, which enlarged what is now the living/dining space.

(FOOTNOTE 2 City of Portland Bureau of Development Services: Plan Review & Permitting Services: Contact: Patti Golebieski - Technician II)

07-14-59	alteration of plumbing to add second sink bar in ground floor	Permit 377257	
	Contractor: Kellog & Harmer		
07-03-61	add 8' to east end of present foundation	permit 391133	Contractor: Perrault
07-07-80	deck (on east end of building)	permit 534286	Contractor: Southwood
08-19-80	deck (on east end of building)	permit 535432	Contractor: Southward
08-18-80	add outside storage shed	permit 534610	Contractor: Southward

Section 7: Interior DescriptionSignificant features: How does your building stand out?Upstairs

The two-story rectangular house lies east-west with the landscape. Natural materials are used throughout. The roof-beam runs the length of the house with supporting 9" X 4" rough-cut rafter-beams. Exposed ceiling-boards covering the rafter beams are 1"X 5" rough-cut cedar which have been given a transparent blue wash. (APPENDIX B, 27)

Original flooring consists of Light English oak throughout living/dining and bedroom areas with deep mud-set tile in the mid-house hallway. Ceramic floor tile has replaced carpeting in the kitchen/bathrooms. Original decorative tile remains in the back-splash and wall areas of food prep/cooking as well as in the main shower.

Vertically louvered/hinged Port Orford Cedar framed shutters cover gable windows in the upstairs bedrooms and Milgard wood-framed slider windows in the downstairs hallway/bedroom; a ten foot long, curved wood valance covers wall-mounted fluorescent lighting on mahogany wall paneling in the downstairs living room area.

Downstairs

The downstairs ceiling is finished throughout with acoustic tiles. Flooring is ceramic tile in hallways and bathroom areas and laminate oak wood replaced the original carpet in

the living room and bedroom areas. A floor-to-ceiling mosaic-faced fireplace is located in the island area in the central area of the living room. The north side of the island houses the furnace/water-heater room.

Section 8: Building History Please explain what events and persons are associated with this property and if the resource's architecture or construction

As the designer of their family home, Dr. Homer Harris and his wife selected Wilbur Mark Perrault, a Montana rancher who worked after college during the Great Depression as a civil engineer and contractor building houses in Montana. Newly married in 1940, Perrault and his wife moved to Portland from Montana. (see biographical notes after page 10 of this application: Wilbur Mark Perrault, designer-builder of the Harris house. [://www.madisoniannews.com/former-owner-of-the-madisonian-lochttpal-historian-and-rancher-dies/](http://www.madisoniannews.com/former-owner-of-the-madisonian-lochttpal-historian-and-rancher-dies/))

In the 1940s Perrault designed and built a significant number of homes generally on the west side of Portland. Ads placed by Ward Cook, a prominent local realtor, marketed them through events akin to modern-day "street of dreams". Other than building permits on file at the City of Portland office there are no official documents surviving that analyze Perrault's work – he was one of several local designers working with the new style and like many pioneers he was understandably too busy to write about it.

Perrault's major contribution to architecture in the Northwest were the homes he designed and constructed – homes created in the emerging "Northwest" (or "Regional") style of architecture developed during the 1930s under the leadership of Henry Went, an instructor at the Portland Art Museum School, and John Yeon and Pietro Belluschi, architects. Although the principles of the new way to design houses had evolved in the 1930s association of young architects with Went, Northwest style of architecture itself and its characteristics was formally defined in a lecture by Pietro Belluschi at the Portland Art Museum in 1941 and was in a state of transition when Perrault embraced it.

Wilbur Mark Perrault Perrault is significant now as a designer-builder for two reasons: he was one of the first designers who successfully adapted the Belluschi/Yeon 1930's creative "Northwest" style to numerous smaller and less expensive homes. When he produced the set of blueprints for the Harris house he subtitled it "A Ranch House", enforcing his professional belief that the style "Northwest" or "Regional" was quite suited for less expensive middle class homes. Secondly, he is significant for the manner in which he did it with his masterful design for the Harris house that embodies in an inspired way virtually all the characteristics of the "Northwest" style listed in Hawkins & Willingham's *Classic Houses of Portland, Oregon 1850 – 1950* (page 524).

In 1951, Perrault designed and constructed his own professional office and residence in line with the Northwest style. It is located on the outskirts of Portland at 9000 NW Cornell Road. (Appendix B 46-57). The principles of the Northwest style of architecture required that beauty should be achieved through clean-lined simplicity with natural materials. Totally consistent with the interior and exterior criteria of Northwest style, the

large single story structure on a large treed lot remains today but now serves as a five-unit apartment house. Perrault's personal project anticipated his later master-work: "Northwest" style of architecture embodied in the plan for the Harris home – a rectangular building with a low-profile roof, open-beam ceiling with abundant glass to bring light and the natural beauty of landscaping inside, and generous use of wood in its natural appearing state.







