

In 1909 the construction of Lake Washington Boulevard along the water's edge was a current project, the segment connecting with the new Frink Boulevard, winding down through Colman Park, and ending with a turnaround loop at Charlestown and 43rd had been completed. The turnaround was located on the shore of the beautiful Wetmore Slough that extended nearly to the town of Columbia City, nearly a mile away. The east shore of the Slough was a steeply sloping headland with very little beach. However, the Boulevard Plan (by the Olmsteds) was to continue along the shoreline of Lake Washington "all the way" to a new park on Bailey Peninsula (Seward Park). So in 1912 a trestle was built across the Slough with a "hump" in it for boaters to enter the peaceful Slough, and the boulevard continued southward on planking, other trestles or macadam. The citizens of Columbia City had a big plan for the Slough: to dredge it and make their town into a seaport. But other big plans were under way: a ship canal from Lake Washington to Puget Sound. By design: it was to lower the level of the lake by 9' because a severe storm in 1867 flooded the tributary valleys to a devastating crest of 8'. So the 1917 opening of the canal drained the Slough - and dreams of Columbia City - and from the receding waters emerged an island/peninsula at the foot of the Slough's headland: during periods of "high water" it was an island because its "neck" was a low, narrow connection. In time the island developed a growth of willows. Filling of the Slough had actually begun with development of Rainier Avenue across it in the 1890s and the filling of Columbia Park and Rainier PF by 1920. A huge trunk sewer was built down the old Slough to the lake: it became an ugly, swampy valley.

The old boulevard trestle became unsafe, and was replaced with a fill by WPA in 1937. The growing community began to envision a playground in the "Slough" and put together a petition in 1945: the City bought the Slough and began filling it in 1947, a project that lasted until 1968.

The nearby Mount Baker Beach area was becoming over developed in its multiple uses: bathing beach, boat moorage and park district service area. When Stan Sayres won the Gold Cup hydroplane race in Detroit and brought the event to Seattle in 1950, it was headquartered in the Mount Baker Boathouse. So other sites were sought for the conflicting uses of "Mount Baker". Wetmore Island was chosen for the race headquarters, and new boat moorage - but the Mount Baker Club did not want to give up their "community" moorage.

So in 1957 the island was cleared and filled from dredging of the pit area, and full facilities developed for a race headquarters. But the man with "the slow smile and fast hydros" who had made roostertails a top sports event in Seattle had died the year before. The newly developed facility was named the "STANLEY S. SAYRES MEMORIAL PARK". (Stan Sayres (1896-1956) of Oregon, drove racing cars, bought a speed boat in 1926, then came to Seattle in 1931 as an automobile dealer. Powerboat racing was popularized by Guy Lombardo, Gar Wood (in Detroit) and Sir Malcolm Campbell (England), Harold Wilson, Jack Shafer and Don Arena; the Gold Cup race had originated in 1904 and never was held west of Detroit. Then Sayres took the cup in 1949 with a new unlimited-class powerboat named Slo-Mo-Shun IV and the race came to Lake Washington. His wife, Madeline, had named the boats. By 1954 Sayres had won five Gold Cups and set a new record of 178.47 mph. His crew included Ted Jones and Anchor Jensen, boat designer-builder, and drivers T. Jones, Lou Fageol, Joe Taggart and Stanley Dollar. In 1955 Joe Schoenith took the Cup back to Detroit. The following year Slo-Mo-Shun IV, "the grand old lady", flipped and sank in the Detroit River and Sayres died of a heart attack in his sleep that September.)

Caught up in Roostertail Fever, the Model Power Boat Club built a V-shaped breakwater across Wetmore Cove as a course for thier models. But they were beset with problems: seepage from the sanitary fill, floating debris trapped in the basin, complaints of "noise pollution" - the breakwater was removed in 1971. Their activities shifted to the "course" in Green Lake.

History: STANLEY S. SAYRES MEMORIAL PARK  
9/21/73

over

As intended, the facility began to serve many aquatic sports and events: water skiing, boat launching, power boat novice regattas, sailboat races, Sea Scouts, intercollegiate crew races, site of pumper demonstrations of Historic Society of Fire Fighters, and even a water-skiing elephant during the 1961 Seafair!

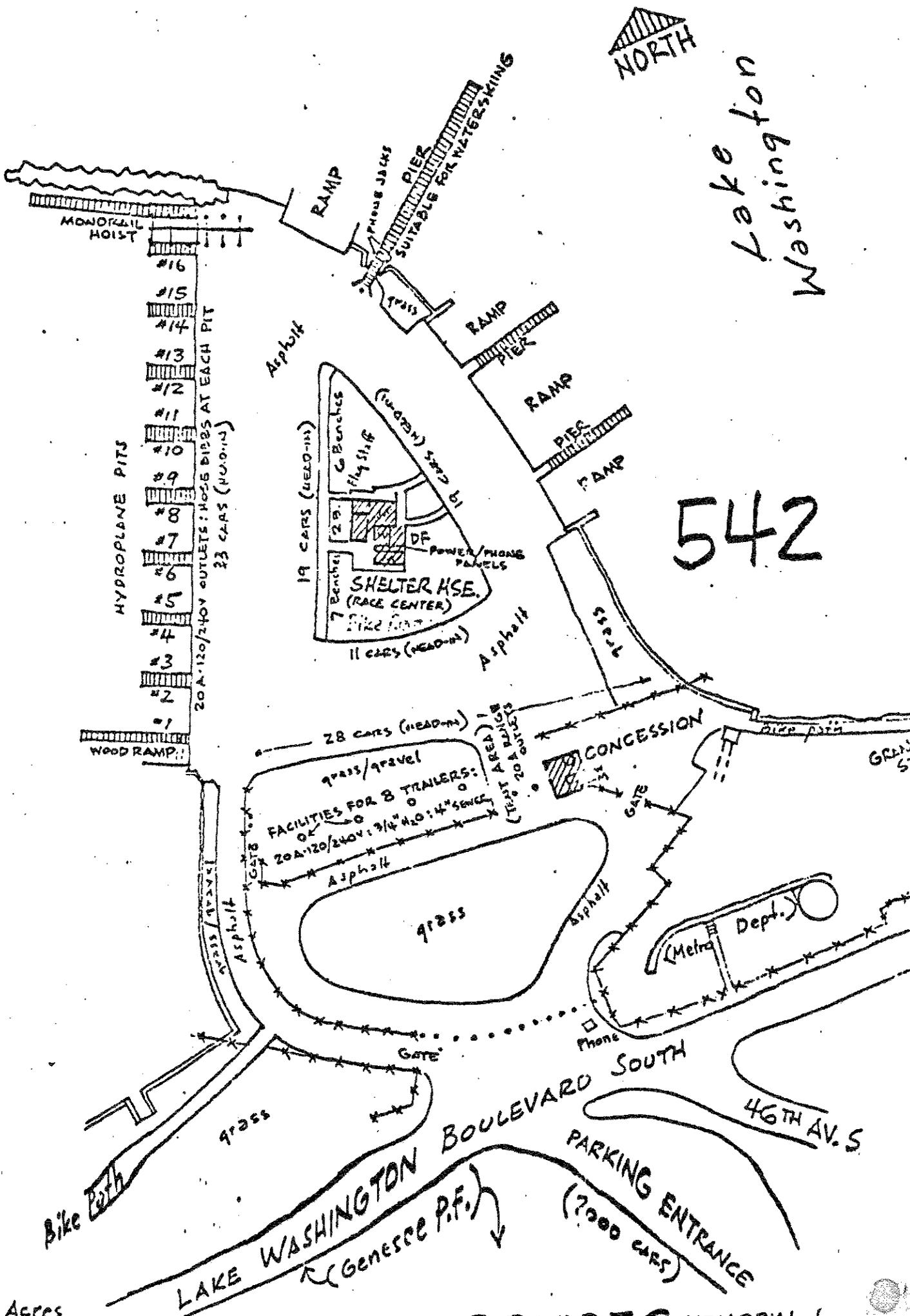
In 1965 the Chairman of Seattle's First Gold Cup Committee died: Clifford Cary Harrison - one of the first boosters of the roostertails in Seattle. (A newspaper man all his life: born in Oregon in 1890, he delivered papers in Portland as a boy, worked on Oregon Journal, Seattle Times, Star and P.I.; reporter, sports editor and Outdoors Editor of the P.I.; active in conservation, wild-life and fishing; member F & AM, Sigma Delta Chi, King Cojnty Sports Council, Humane Society, 101 Club, Trapshooters; a hydro trophy named "Harrison Inspiration Award:") Friends gave a flagpole and a plaque to his memory.



Wetmore Cove



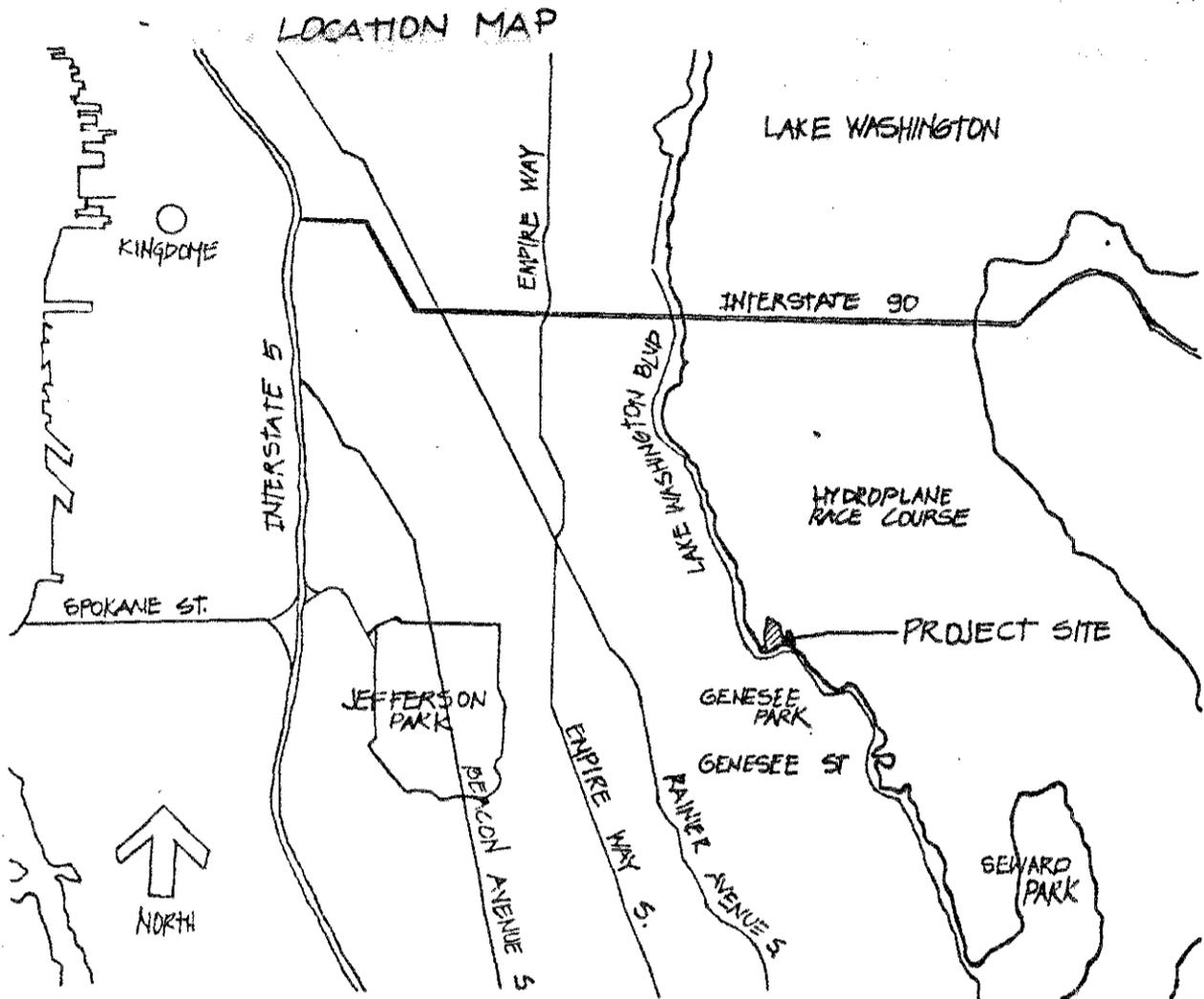
not to be used  
Lake on  
Washington



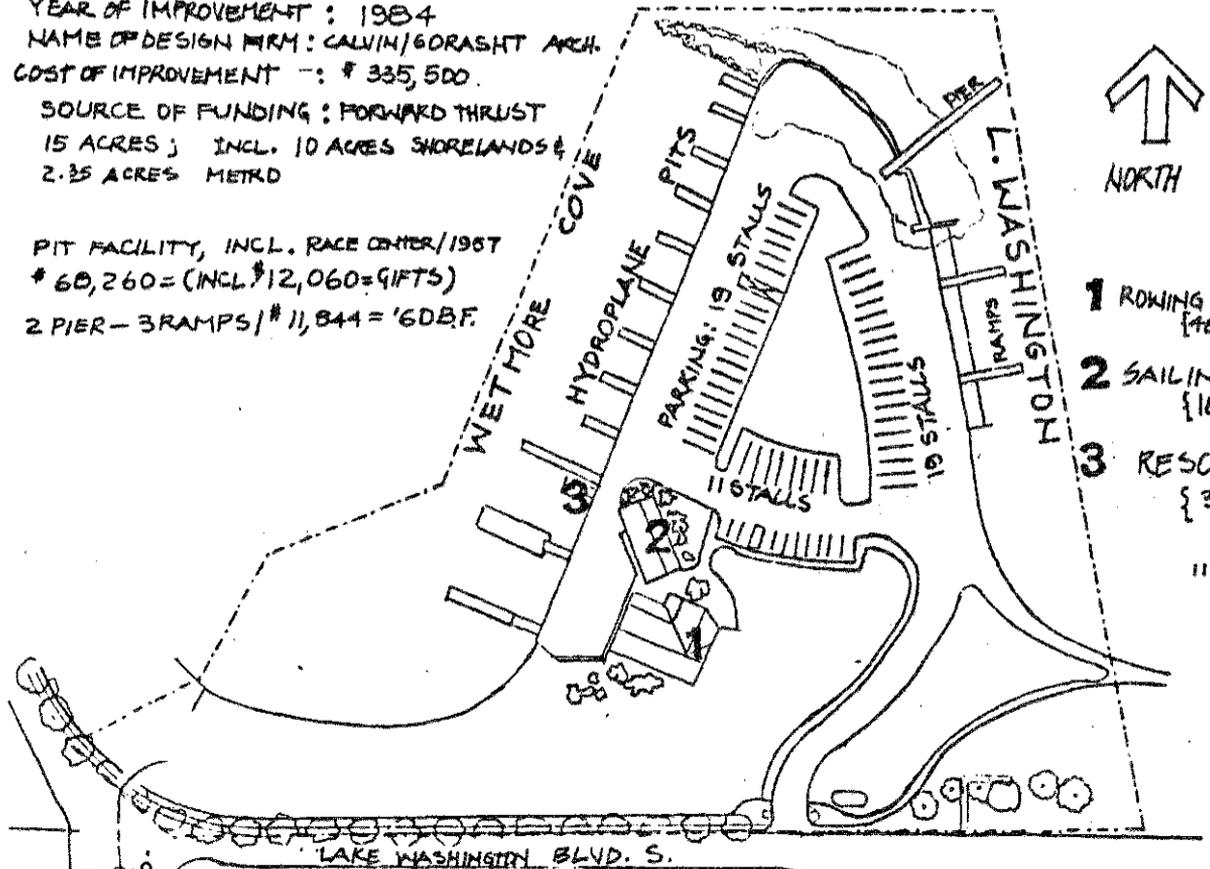
542

15 Acres  
Incl. 10 Ac. shore l'd  
9.7.35 Ac. Metro

STANLEY S. SAYRES MEMORIAL



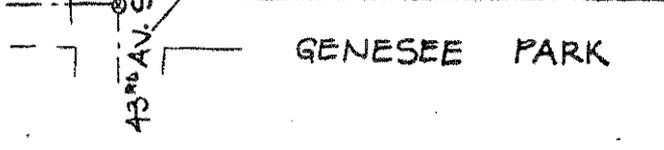
YEAR OF IMPROVEMENT : 1984  
 NAME OF DESIGN FIRM : CALVIN/GORASHT ARCH.  
 COST OF IMPROVEMENT : \$ 335,500.  
 SOURCE OF FUNDING : FORWARD THRUST  
 15 ACRES ; INCL. 10 ACRES SHORELANDS &  
 2.25 ACRES METRO  
  
 PIT FACILITY, INCL. RACE CENTER/1987  
 \$ 60,260 = (INCL. \$12,060 = GIFTS)  
 2 PIER - 3 RAMPS / \$ 11,844 = '6DBF.



- 1 ROWING STORAGE BUILDING {4875 SF}
- 2 SAILING STORAGE BUILDING {18916 SF}
- 3 RESCUE BOAT HOUSE {324 SF}

11 18 85

**542**



STANLEY S. SAYRES  
 MEMORIAL PARK  
 3800 L. WASH. BLVD. SO.