

## HOME

# Trading in the Southwest for the PNW



*Charlotte Pollard lives in her specially designed home just outside of Bellingham*

**By Elisa Claassen**  
For the Tribune

**C**harlotte Pollard's house is back amongst the trees, yet it is about 10 minutes from Bellingham. At 1,600 square feet, Pollard's home is surprisingly more spacious than the exterior would indicate. Possibly because many floor-to-ceiling windows in the main living space and her own take on



**Born and raised in Kentucky, Charlotte Pollard moved to New York City, then to New Mexico before moving to Whatcom County.** (Photos of home are courtesy photos. Photo of Charlotte Pollard by Bill Helm/Lynden Tribune)

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**Charlotte Pollard has art, maps and indigenous artifacts from her travels to 38 countries to display in her home. However, she did downsize a bit, as she gave away an estimated 500 books.** (Courtesy photos)

the great room concept applied to modern design.

With lots of windows and stark radiant-heated flooring, the home also has comfortable rugs, unusual light fixtures that don't only bring in light but also add to the art.

Born and raised in an old farmstead in Kentucky, Pollard moved to New York City for school and career. She eventually relocated to the blue skies and desert of New Mexico where she completed her professional career, then more recently to the woods outside of Bellingham.

Pollard, now 73, said she does not miss the sunshine of the southwest. "It should be the last move," she said.

#### Welcome to the PNW

Now retired, Pollard talks of the process

of designing a home that both contains what she wants and includes aspects for aging in place.

Possibly the hardest part of the process, Pollard said, was locating the property. First she searched Oregon, then Washington.

"Bellingham was the last place I looked," she said.

Pollard said she knew she wanted the site to contain forest, be outside a non-touristy city. She drove around for a while before engaging the services of Grady Smith of Coldwell Banker Bain, in Bellingham.

First, they spoke on the phone before driving to sites Smith had selected. Once Smith got a better feel for her needs, he found additional sites including this one. It had what she wanted as well as privacy.

"Grady and I went bushwhacking through nine properties in one day," Pollard said. "He promised to keep looking for a buildable lot, and I went home to New Mexico thinking I would never hear from him. Two weeks later he sent me three photos. I flew back to Washington and left having made a bid on one of the lots which was accepted."

Once she had the property, Pollard researched and interviewed potential home designers and architects and decided upon Haven Design Workshop, formerly in Fairhaven and now in Ferndale. Haven Design's portfolio contained modern residential designs, and the firm was willing to work on a project with a smaller scope but still full of style.

#### Knowing what you want

What was a key part of the designer/client process?

Pollard said that Sean Hegstad of Haven Design listened.

"Sean gave me a clever pictorial view of the design process he uses and then reviewed my crude floor plan sketch and list of must-haves that fit my design sense and aging in place needs," Pollard said. "He produced two conceptual designs. I liked elements of both, he drew up the new plan and then we moved to construction drawings. Three meetings total, and he provided good support during the construction process as well."

Hegstad, an architect, LEED AP, said many firms are so focused on creating their own reputation and impressive portfolio that they forget to hear the needs of the client. That is important to him.

Hegstad came up with two plans. Pollard took half from each to make the final plan. The process also meant being aware of her budget and when to keep something she loved - and when to let go of it. One thing she let go of was extra cabinets in the

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mud room area to go with a simpler organizational structure. They also looked at the ceiling height and it was lowered but still kept the feeling she sought.

Bellingham's Kota Construction is a general contractor. Pollard said that working with Kota Construction was as comfortable as working with Haven.

"Jesse Turgeon at Kota is also easy to talk to," Pollard said. "Jesse was the 12th of 13 (general contractor) who I interviewed. He was excited by the design, offered creative suggestions and turned in a budget quickly. He also had an excellent crew and everyone was fun to work with along the way. I think I am the only custom homeowner I know that can say "my contractor came in on time and slightly under budget."

**Varied tastes**

Pollard likes, irises, horizons, clouds, mountains, indigenous people and archaeology.

Construction started in January 2020. Kota would not only build the framework of the home but the cabinets, trim and counters.

Pollard, an accomplished professional, knows what she wants. In New York City, Pollard had two brownstone units combined into one larger unit. But this was the first time she had built a home.

In her working years she developed and utilized a skill set of being an organizational development consultant to help work teams get along long enough to make needed decisions.

At the time she started into that career, there weren't specific degrees geared specifically for that.



Since Charlotte Pollard enjoys entertaining, the kitchen peninsula opens space to allow visiting while completing meal preparation on the DeWard & Bode appliances. The kitchen also has an opaque frosted sliding glass door that creates a separation between meal prep and serving space. (Courtesy photo)



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She went through uncharted territory, made a few self-admitted mistakes along the way, and refined the process.

Her wasband, meaning her former husband, is an architect. Pollard said she learned a thing or two from being around him. She interviewed several potential firms for both the role of architect/designer and contractor. Pollard also got his opinion on occasion.

**Creative use of space**

Pollard has art, maps and indigenous artifacts from her travels to 38 countries to display in her home. However, she did downsize a bit, as she gave away an estimated 500 books.

Having lived in NYC, Pollard referred to some of her collectables as tchotchkes since they tend to be more decorative than strictly functional.

The house is big enough for a single woman, but the spaces can be redefined, such as an office to becoming a bedroom for a future occupant with the addition of a closet.

Since Pollard enjoys entertaining, the kitchen peninsula both opens the kitchen space to allow visiting while

completing meal preparation on the DeWaaard & Bode appliances.

This kitchen also has a unique feature which is more common in NYC. It is an opaque frosted sliding glass door that creates a separation between the often messy meal prep and the desired uncluttered serving space. Once the guests have said their good-byes and departed, Pollard can reopen the door to clean up.

A nook in the far end of the living space has the book and display cases, with objects from her travels abroad. The adjacent wall serves as art gallery. Beyond the wall, a hallway leads directly into the master bedroom. Around the corner is Pollard's office, also the master bath and the storage and utility areas near the garage. More sliding glass doors also beautifully hide things away.

A separate space has been created with arched entrances and exits between the living room and the bedroom to serve as a smaller den/TV room. It's a bit cozier to read, watch a show, or do cross stitch. A simple bar against the wall can be pulled out to



At 1,600 square feet, Charlotte Pollard's home is surprisingly more spacious than the exterior would indicate, with many large windows in the main living space and her own take on the great room concept applied to modern design. Pictured, Pollard's bathroom and tub. (Courtesy photo)

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utilize the space for exercise as well.

Although Pollard's bedroom has darker walls, the walls have several smaller windows higher up. This design not only lets light into the room but it also provides privacy. This is different than her office and bath areas, which have more windows to give the impression of the inside and outside spaces as one and the same.

Pollard's sofa has gone with her through her moves but with updated recovering each time. While she took some favorite furnishings with her, such as her bed, sofa, and a desk/console, Pollard did acquire a custom table with curved wood components under glass. The table was created by an artist she had met at an art fair. Since she likes asymmetry, the artist made the table with three legs, rather than four.

Around the exterior, the landscaping is young and designed to blend into the framework of the wooded setting. Pollard has added some whimsy for her enjoyment: small items of art in groupings and statuary from My Garden Nursery.

In Port Townsend, Pollard found a series of rocks with slits, which now sit along her walkway. Her shiny Airstream trailer is parked nearby and was where she lived during part of the construction.



**Charlotte Pollard's house is big enough for a single woman, but the spaces can be redefined, such as an office becoming a bedroom for a future occupant with the addition of a closet.**  
(Courtesy photo)



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