

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

1. Name of Property

historic name Hammerman, Harry, House
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 219 Graybridge Lane [n/a] not for publication
city or town Ladue [n/a] vicinity
state Missouri code MO county St. Louis code 189 zip code 63124

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments [].)

Mark A. Miles

February 7, 2008

Signature of certifying official/Title Mark A. Miles / Deputy SHPO Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments [].)

Signature of certifying official/Title

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register
See continuation sheet [].
- determined eligible for the National Register
See continuation sheet [].
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register
- other, explain see continuation sheet [].

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form

Hammerman, Harry, House

St. Louis County, MO

5. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		contributing	noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	1	0
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district		building
<input type="checkbox"/> public-state	<input type="checkbox"/> site		sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure		structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object		objects
		1	0
			total

Name of related multiple property listing.

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register.

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Function

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Functions

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

MODERN MOVEMENT

Materials

foundation Concrete

walls Brick

Wood

Glass

roof Asphalt

other Aluminum

see continuation sheet []

see continuation sheet []

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

See continuation sheet [x]

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

ARCHITECTURE

Periods of Significance

1952

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person(s)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Hammerman, Harry

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State Agency

Federal Agency

Local Government

University

Other:

Name of repository: Landmarks Assoc. of St. Louis

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.74 acres

UTM References

A. Zone 15	Easting 728 640	Northing 4281 760	B. Zone	Easting	Northing
C. Zone	Easting	Northing	D. Zone	Easting	Northing

[] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Michael Allen/Research Associate

organization Landmarks Association of St. Louis date July 30, 2007

street & number 917 Locust Street, 7th floor telephone 314-421-6474

city or town St. Louis state MO zip code 63101

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

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.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Ray Simon

street & number 219 Graybridge Lane Telephone 314-776-5130

city or town Ladue state MO zip code 63124

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 1

Hammerman, Harry, House
Ladue [St. Louis], Missouri

Summary

The Harry Hammerman House is located at 219 Graybridge Road in Ladue, St. Louis County, Missouri. Built in 1952, the house is a one-story, asymmetrical Modern Movement building with an irregular footprint. Excluding the garage and enclosed porch, the house encloses 2,153 square feet of space. Detailing is minimal, coming mainly through the forms and materials of the house sections and elements. There are six rooms, a utility room, garage and enclosed exterior porch. Sitting on a concrete slab with no basement, the walls are primarily masonry punctuated by both wooden and glazed expanses; the garage is entirely frame construction. Wooden sections are clad in painted cedar tongue-and-groove siding with vertical seams. The house has three different sloped flat roofs with wide overhangs; the roof over the living room has the steepest slope, forming a clerestory at the high end. The overhangs make use of exposed brackets and tongue-and-groove soffit. Aluminum awning windows abound, with natural light increased by three skylights. The interior is finished with abundant wooden paneling, minimal decoration, built-in cabinets. Most rooms have tile floors, and the ceilings throughout have finished exposed beams between expanses of 2"x 6" tongue-and-groove boards. These beams are the roof beams, and the boards between constitute the roof deck. The house is carefully situated along a slope in land adjacent to a wooded area.

Site

Suburban Graybridge Road in Ladue is characterized by one and one-and-a-half story single-family dwellings situated with generous setbacks on moderately large lots. The houses represent a range of styles including the Modern Movement, but share a modest size and unobtrusive placement in the landscape. There has been no demolition near the Hammerman House in its lifetime, and the lane retains its historic character completely.

Exterior

Due to differences in setback, the front elevation is divided into the three sections (see photograph #1). The two leftmost (south) sections are under the same flat roof that slopes to the south. The leftmost section consists of a blank wall of polychrome brick under a deep bracketed roof overhang; wood tongue-and-groove board clad the eaves between brackets. Metal coping wraps the top of the roof and wooden fascia; the fascia was originally painted a gray-green color. The center section is recessed, with a

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projecting wall at right (north). Here, the roof is open with three exposed wooden rafters. This recess and the projecting wall are clad in painted wooden weatherboard with vertical seams. To the left is the north wall of the south section of the house; one anodized, unpainted aluminum window is divided into four awning-style sashes distributed vertically. The front-facing (east) section here features a wide doubled window at left (bearing two one-over-one windows of different widths) with a door opening at right. A slightly curved planter fills the southwest corner under these windows. In the door opening, a large solid wooden slab door with large circular detail around its lock is divided from a solid plate glass window to its right. The rightmost (north) section features a steep-sloped flat roof pitched toward the north. Three large fixed-pane windows are divided with vertical dividers and sit above a flat soldier course sill and brick wall section. A window divided into four awning-style sashes distributed vertically wraps this glass area around the corner onto the north elevation. To its west, the wall is blank brick with a chimney rising out of the wall plane immediately adjacent to this window. At the west end of this section of the house is a flat-roofed enclosed porch with wooden upright columns and wood-framed screen windows; a door opening is on its south elevation (see photograph #4).

On the south elevation of the home, the front wall's blind brick section projects outward to the edge of a deep roof overhang (see photograph #2). Recessed at left (west) is a brick wall bearing four symmetrically distributed window openings. These openings carry four-sash awning windows like the others previously described. Slightly recessed to the west of this wall section is the south wall of the house's garage, which is blind and clad with weatherboard. On the west wall, two garage door openings bear wooden roll-up doors. On the north elevation of the garage is a ribbon of five single-sash wooden awning windows (see photograph #5). East of the garage wall, the wall is recessed and bears a single one-over-one aluminum window. The west wall of the house's center section bears one paired set of one-over-one windows. Between the deep overhang of the south side of the porch roof and the wall plane of the south section of the house, the roof is open with four exposed rafters; weatherboard clads the walls that frame this recess.

Interior

The main entrance leads into a foyer, separated from the living room at right by built-in wooden shelves about six feet tall that face toward the living room (see figure #2). The foyer has a vinyl tile floor with a light-stained pine tongue-and groove ceiling punctuated

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by two circular skylight openings (see photograph #8). The skylights are plexiglass domes salvaged from World War II-era bomber planes; they sit within raised box cupolas (see figure #1). The wall at left is faced with redwood paneling that continues throughout the hall; all walls in the house are wooden-framed with drywall or paneling. At the head of the foyer, a hall leads to the left while a curved brick planter supports seven angled, L-shaped wooden columns that run to the ceiling and further screen the living room.

The living room is a large open space characterized by its sloping ceiling, the large wood-framed windows at each end and an exposed brick wall on the north side (see photographs #6 and 7). On the ceiling, five exposed beams divide a tongue-and-groove wooden ceiling with seams running laterally. The floor is concrete but was originally carpeted. Under the large glass windows, metal boxes conceal the hot water lines that heat the room. The glass wall on the east (front) elevation wraps to the west wall to meet the home's chimney. Inside here is a fireplace with its opening at the right of a raised brick platform; a simple band of limestone rises vertically at left and continues horizontally across the wall at the top edge of the fireplace opening. At the high end of the ceiling (the south wall) is a clerestory of wooden awning windows that runs the entire length of the house. To the right of the opening that connects to the foyer is a doorway that leads to the kitchen. On the west wall, double doors at left open onto an enclosed porch. The porch is framed in wood, and the screen window frames and its doors are painted wood.

The hallway maintains the paneling found in the foyer and the exposed-beam, tongue-and-groove wooden ceilings. In the private rooms of the house, the floors are all composite or cork tile. The ceilings are alike, continuing the exposed beam with tongue-and-groove cladding found in the hallway and living room (see photograph #8). Doors to these rooms are solid wooden slabs, while closet doors within rooms are hollow veneer-faced slabs; all hardware is matching nickel-plated steel. Baseboards and door casements are minimal, square-cut wood. Walls are drywall with two exceptions: In the study, the walls are darker wood paneling matching a built-in wooden desk, and in the largest bedroom, the west wall is clad with the same paneling found in the hallway. Windows have a narrow sill and are trimmed in wood (see photograph #9). The kitchen has a low drywall ceiling, concrete floor and wooden cabinets. The utility room and garage are finished with thin pine plywood walls.

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Hammerman, Harry, House
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Integrity

The Harry Hammerman House continues to exhibit its historic character, although the exterior shows some signs of disrepair due to its vacancy in the last six years. The original paneling, ceiling cladding, hardware, built-in fixtures and cabinets and windows are all present and well-maintained. The living room carpeting is no longer present, leaving a bare concrete floor. Overall, the Harry Hammerman House retains integrity of location, setting, materials, feeling, workmanship and association and reflects its historic appearance.

Figure #1: The Harry Hammerman House in the 1950's. (Source: Cirila Hans.)



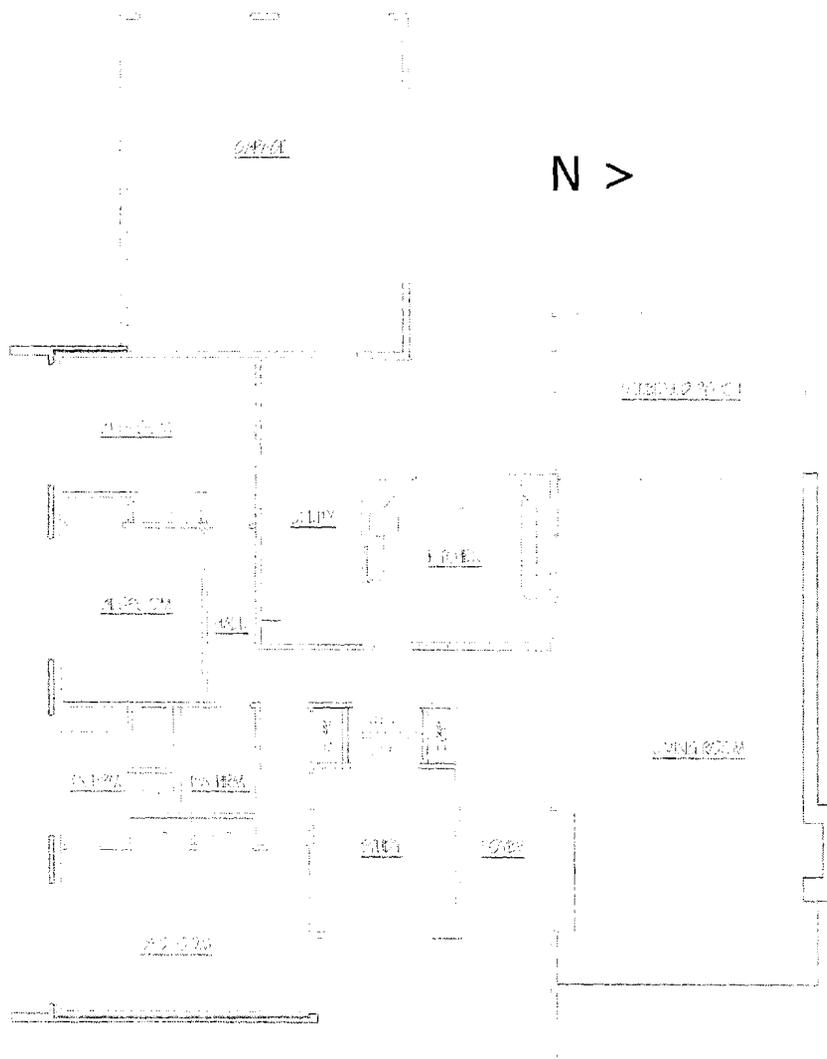
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Figure #2: Floor plan of the Harry Hammerman House. (Source: Ray Simon).



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Summary

The Harry Hammerman House is locally significant under Criterion C for ARCHITECTURE. Designed, built and occupied by architectural engineer Harry Hammerman in 1952, the one-story asymmetrical Modern Movement house in Ladue, Missouri is an outstanding example of a modest-scale Modern house possessing the strong influence of Frank Lloyd Wright's Usonian houses, the affordable homes the architect designed between 1936 and 1959. The house employs common Modern tendencies: sloped flat roofs, deep roof overhangs with exposed beams and brackets, restrained use of brick, wood and glass for the primary exterior materials, an attached garage, and an interior free from most decorative touches. However, the L-shaped floorplan, lack of basement, separation of active and passive interior spaces and use of commonly-available materials are all specific characteristics of Wright's Usonian homes. The house is the only known architectural work by Hammerman, whose career is associated with construction of some of St. Louis' most important urban renewal and postwar suburban construction projects. A recent guide to outstanding Modern Movement buildings in St. Louis County identified fifteen Modern houses in suburban Ladue, including the Harry Hammerman House. The Hammerman House is the only house on the distinguished list, which includes works by luminaries William Bernoudy and Isadore Shank, not designed by a practicing architect. Another important part of the house's history is its location on Graybridge Road, a subdivision laid out by Shank as an enclave of practitioners of architecture and the visual arts. Hammerman was one of several such people to build a home on the lane, but only he and Shank designed their own houses. The house retains strong historic character and integrity. The period of significance, 1952, reflects the year of construction.

The Growth of Ladue and the Development of Graybridge Road

Toward the middle of the twentieth century, the land-locked city of St. Louis saw both almost full development of its land and spreading decay. With the growing affordability of the automobile, many people responded by moving to new houses built around automobile-oriented roads in St. Louis County. Ladue was one of the suburbs in St. Louis County that saw growth before World War II ended. Originally a center of farming, Ladue incorporated as a village in 1928 and almost immediately began to see an influx of residents who purchased lots for their homes. Ladue's suburban growth maintained a consistent pattern, though: single-family dwellings set far from streets and

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each other on large woody lots; narrow tree-lined lanes; fancy but not showy residences for upper-middle-class and wealthy people who enjoyed mobility even at the onset of the Great Depression. In 1930, Ladue's population was 1,713.¹ When the village changed its incorporation status to city in 1936, the population stood at 2,392. Residential construction was consistent until World War II, when it momentarily declined. However, the national postwar housing rebound and continued out-migration from the city led to steady growth throughout St. Louis County from the end of the war into the 1980s. In 1955, Ladue's population was over 7,000 residents.² Remarkably, the character of development was consistent throughout the growth, and the city never saw modest tract housing, large commercial or retail centers and other hallmarks of postwar suburban growth that abounded in St. Louis County. Ladue enacted tough zoning laws to prohibit such building types.³

While much of the construction in Ladue's growth years was in keeping with popular revival styles, the city showed a notable interest in Modern Movement design. *Mid-Century Modern Architecture in St. Louis County: Outstanding Examples Worthy of Preservation* by Esley Hamilton lists sixteen examples of Modern Movement design in Ladue, all save one a residence. The examples listed in the guide were built between 1936 and 1961, mirroring the early explosive years of County residential growth, and represent some of St. Louis' best-regarded architects to work in the Modern Movement style: Shank, Harris Armstrong, Bernoudy-Muttrux, Nagle & Dunn and Hellmuth, Obata & Kassebaum.⁴

Graybridge Road was a unique part of the growth of Ladue. In 1939, noted modernist architect Isadore Shank and his colleague Jim Auer purchased 15 acres in Ladue to develop a subdivision where each would live. One brick farm house built in the 1860s, still standing, was the only building on the land. Noteworthy was that the owner of the land was an African-American servant with the last name Agee who had been gifted the land by a wealthy late employer.⁵ Shank and Auer each designed and built homes for

¹ Charlene Bry, *Ladue History*. Unpublished manuscript.

² Ibid.

³ Baxter, Karen Bode et al. National Register of Historic Places Inventory Form -- Nomination Form: Czufin, Rudolph and Dorothy C., House. Washington, D.C.: US Department of the Interior/National Park Service, 2002.

⁴ Hamilton.

⁵ Peter Shank, interview with Michael Allen, 24 September 2007.

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their families. Shank designed four more, including homes for his cousin and a physician friend. According to Shank's son Peter, the early residents were largely Jewish and included many practitioners of art and architecture. Many Ladue subdivisions at the time used restrictive covenants to prohibit Jewish families from building new homes, so Graybridge provided relative freedom to Shank and other Jewish residents.⁶ Peter Shank describes the early feeling of Graybridge as "very much like a commune." According to architecture critic Robert Duffy, "[t]hey never made a fuss about their philosophy, but there were utopian aspects to this Ladue subdivision."⁷ The houses, of which five were designed by Shank, were modern but not dogmatically modernist. In keeping with modern architecture's embrace of natural sites, Shank laid out five acres of forest land as permanent common space around the subdivision.⁸ Houses sat below or above the grade of the lane depending on existing topography. According to Peter Shank residents of Graybridge spent time together and most of the residents had some connection to the visual arts.⁹

Before World War II, residents built seven houses on Graybridge. After the war, additional houses were built, including houses designed by modernists Gustel Kiewitt and Meyer Loomstein (the Kiewitt-designed house was subsequently demolished). Also after the war, new lanes were added that connected Graybridge to adjacent subdivisions. When Harry Hammerman purchased his lot in 1952, though, most of the original residents remained. Among these residents were professional colleagues like Auer and Shank. Perhaps Hammerman, who was Jewish, also was attracted to Graybridge Road because it was one of the few Jewish enclaves of Ladue. Until a relatively recent demolition and replacement, Hammerman's house was the last built on the original 15 acres of the subdivision. The gently uniform character of Graybridge has survived to the present age. Of the homes there, Hamilton's guide lists both Shank's and Hammerman's houses among Ladue's noteworthy mid-century Modern Movement buildings.¹⁰

Mid-Century American Residential Architecture and St. Louis County

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Robert Duffy, "The House on Graybridge Lane." *St. Louis Magazine*, March 2007.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Hamilton.

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While commonly employed by 1952, the wide use of Modern Movement styles in American residential architecture was a relatively recent trend. Well into the Twentieth Century, American architects tended to employ revival or period styles for use in domestic architecture. The Modern Movement had flourished in Europe after World War I, where architects had been experimenting with mass-produced materials, lightweight construction, simplicity of both building and component form as well as avoidance of ornament and traditional attributes of "style." A breakthrough for American interest in the Modern Movement came in 1932, with the hallmark *Modern Architecture: International Exhibition* at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. America had already seen the wide use of the modern Art Deco style, especially for commercial buildings, but more streamlined design was very innovative. Still, its use for common residential design would come later. Critic Michael Webb notes that "as the Depression eased in the late 1930s, modernism began to gain momentum in American residential architecture."¹¹ Early residential endeavors in the style tended to be commissioned by wealthy clients interested in the cutting edge.

World War II slowed American construction considerably, but immediately after the war the nation entered rapid suburban growth. The victorious nation threw itself into remaking itself, giving itself a new image for new times. Federally-supported housing and transportation programs designed to remake urban areas in particular. The federal home loan program encouraged new single-family houses be built in suburbs, while federal housing funds favored high-rise mass apartment housing in the cities. Also, many cities were interested in remaking larger older sections. With so much rapid construction activity designed to give the nation a new look, American architects turned to the Modern Movement, which offered a confident, progressive style free of tired references that also made full use of America's significant war-fueled manufacturing capacity. Webb notes that architects "responded enthusiastically to the challenge of exploiting new materials and techniques, designing artifacts and houses that could be mass-produced in the factories that had churned out bombers and tanks."¹² Another factor was that the use of widely-available materials and new construction techniques like concrete and thin curtain walls made Modern Movement architecture affordable. That affordability was important to middle-class homeowners seeking to build a new home while raising a family.

¹¹ Michael Webb, *Modernism Reborn: Mid-Century American Houses* (New York: Universe Publishing, 2001), p. 10.

¹² Webb, p. 11

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Modern Movement residential architecture tended to be less highly stylized than commercial or industrial architecture. Virginia and Lee McAlester describe a type of Modern Movement American house built between 1940 and 1980 that they identify as “Contemporary.” Houses of this type fall into gabled and flat-roofed subtypes, with the gabled houses being more influenced by early American modernism like the Prairie School and the flat-roofed more influenced by the streamlined modernism of the European International Style. According to the McAlesters, the gabled subtype “features overhanging eaves, frequently with exposed roof beams.”¹³ In contrast, the flat-roofed subtype have “flat roofs and no decorative detailing, but lack the stark white stucco surfaces [of the International Style], which are usually replaced by various combinations of wood, brick or stone. Landscaping and integration into the landscape are also stressed....”¹⁴ Both subtypes tend to use the same types of materials, asymmetrical front elevation and share a tendency to be one story tall. The flat-roofed subtype is sometimes referred to as the American International style.¹⁵ Flat-roofed hybrids of these subtypes comprise many of the less idiosyncratic Modern Movement homes built in St. Louis County after World War II.

The Harry Hammerman House was built as the St. Louis area’s interest in Modern Movement residential architecture was reaching its peak years. According to architectural historian Eric Mumford, “by the mid-1950s, modern architecture had become the norm in St. Louis” with construction especially high in St. Louis County.¹⁶ This reflected the national acceptance of Modern architecture. Webb writes that “in the 1950s, most progressive architects took modernism for granted—it was the way you built, a basic syntax....”¹⁷ With growth in the suburbs of the county fueled by families seeking homes outside of the city, residential construction was a large part of new Modern architecture. Local interest in non-derivative design was not widespread before the war, when most new houses built in St. Louis County were built in revival styles. However, after the war architects in America began to implement the influence of the International Style, the Prairie School and other modern schools of architectural thought.

¹³ Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984), p. 482.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Eric Mumford, *Modern Architecture in St. Louis: Washington University and Postwar American Architecture, 1948-73* (St. Louis: School of Architecture, Washington University, 2004), p. 52.

¹⁷ Webb, p. 11.

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The hallmarks of new design were minimal detailing as opposed to referential ornament, asymmetry as opposed to formalism, use of mass-produced hardware and building materials as opposed to custom-built items.¹⁸ The Modern Movement had roots in early twentieth century designs that, according to historian Esley Hamilton, “rejected the popular historical styles of the time, in fact the whole idea of styles.”¹⁹ In more lavish and larger residences designed by well-known architects, these tendencies were more pronounced. More common homes moderated these tendencies against popular housing forms like the Ranch house. The Hammerman House definitely fits in better among the high-style Modern homes than the common ones due to its pronounced Usonian characteristics. However, its size and materials give it an affordability more consistent with average Modern houses of its time.

Mid-Century Modern Architecture in St. Louis County: Outstanding Examples Worthy of Preservation includes 35 houses built between 1935 and 1961. According to Hamilton, interest in Modern architecture in St. Louis County began in the 1930s and dwindled in the 1970s.²⁰ Architects who designed these houses include well-known Modern designers like Frank Lloyd Wright, Joseph Murphy, Harris Armstrong, William Bernoudy and Eduoard J. Mutrux. Notable is that the highest concentration is 15 houses in Ladue, including the Harry Hammerman House. This is not surprising given that high-style Modern architecture found its greatest support among those with an interest in ideas and sufficient money to commission prominent architects: private patrons, institutions and churches. Wealthy Ladue found many willing patrons, and at least two prominent designer-residents who designed their own homes.

Frank Lloyd Wright’s Usonian Houses

The Harry Hammerman House advances the native modernist influence of the American architect Frank Lloyd Wright. Specifically, the Hammerman House distinctly embodies many of the qualities of the small, affordable houses called “Usonian” houses that Wright began designing in the late 1930s. In January 1938, Wright published an article in *Architectural Forum* outlining the solution to what he identified as the “small house

¹⁸ Richard Weston, *Modernism*. London: Phaidon, 1996. p. 210.

¹⁹ Esley Hamilton, “Mid-Century Modern: A Preservation Crisis,” *Mid-Century Modern Architecture in St. Louis County: Outstanding Examples Worthy of Preservation* (Clayton, Mo.: St. Louis County Historic Buildings Commission, 2007).

²⁰ *Ibid.*

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problem” of the United States. Wright had just completed the Herbert Jacobs I House in Madison, Wisconsin (NR 7/31/2003). That 1,340 square-foot house was built for \$5,500 and demonstrated Wright’s ideas for developing a modern home affordable to the American middle class and appropriate for the suburban locations sought by the middle class. In the article, Wright discusses making “simplifications” to construction so that the Jacobs family could afford their house. Wright decided to utilize off-site pre-fabrication to keep materials and labor costs down. In design, he reduced the floor space common for a family house by consolidating the living room and dining room and placing all living space on one floor sitting on a concrete slab. He reduced more interior space by using natural light and window ventilation as well as radiant floor heating, writing that “it is necessary to consolidate and simplify the three appurtenance systems—heating, lighting and sanitation.”²¹

Figure 3: The Herbert Jacobs I House. (Source: *Frank Lloyd Wright: His Life and His Architecture.*)



Foremost, Wright sought to eliminate in the design of the Jacobs House parts of residential architecture that he considered needless or redundant. Here, Wright demonstrated a desire for great economy. The house was laid out on a 2-foot-by-4-foot grid pattern, which made it easier to use pre-fabricated materials (see figure #4). Materials were virtually limited to commonly-available wood, concrete, glass, brick and

²¹ John Sergeant, *Frank Lloyd Wright's Usonian Houses: The Case for Organic Architecture* (New York: Whitney Library of Design, 1976), p. 16.

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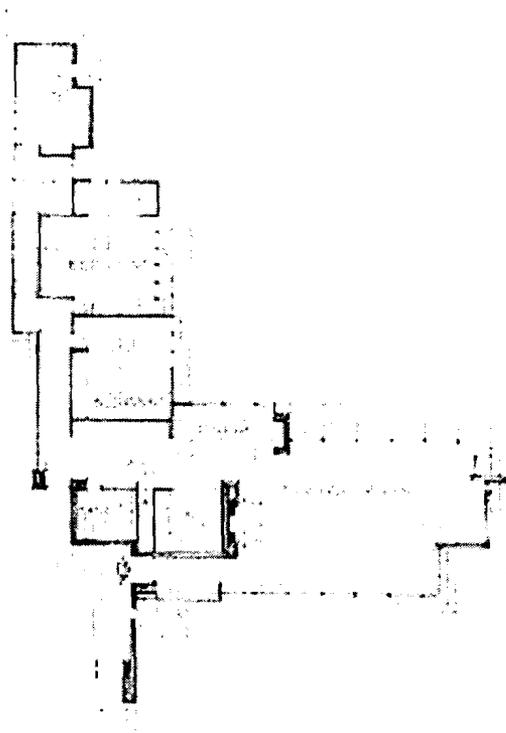
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some metal. Roof overhangs shaded large windows, while concrete floors hid services. At the Jacobs House, structure and exterior walls were revealed. As Wright explained, "it would be ideal to complete the building in one operation, inside and out."²² The total house was compact and modern but the interior spaces were spacious and open. The Jacobs House sat on a large lot where Wright barely disturbed the natural landscape, creating a balance between home and site as elegant as that of Wright's larger commissions. Wright used the Jacobs House as the model for a new type of middle-class American home he would develop for the next twenty years, the Usonian House. (Usonia was Wright's own term for his ideal democratic United States of America.)

Figure 4: Floor plan for the Herbert Jacobs I House. (Source: *Frank Lloyd Wright: His Life and His Architecture.*)



²² Ibid.

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Historian John Seargeant lists the following characteristics common to Wright's Usonian houses: slab foundation, sloped flat roofs, open planning in the living room, zoning of uses: maximizing the feeling of spaciousness; small bedrooms with built-in closets; construction on a grid; use of materials that did not require finishing or decoration.²³ William Allin Storrer notes that the kitchen is typically placed exactly between the bedrooms and the living room on an L-shaped plan, and that the whole configuration brings the passive functions traditionally located on the second floor of a residence to the first floor.²⁴ Usonian Houses are generally around 1,500 square feet, although the grid system makes expansion easy (a possibility Wright foresaw and encouraged). The corridors in the bedroom areas tend to be narrow with storage space (usually closets) lining the walls. The houses emphasize their horizontal nature, although many feature broken-gabled sections and other roof forms that rise from the flat-roofed bodies. Most have deep overhangs on the roof, wide use of glass, board-and-batten siding with horizontal seams and some masonry walls that are always structural. Most have radiant floor heating systems with pipes embedded in the foundation slabs. Wright's Usonian designs are pragmatic; a glass wall is for light and winter heat, while a brick wall section is there to hold up the roof. However, the Usonian houses are incredibly sensitive to natural surroundings.

Harry Hammerman

While not an architect, Harold "Harry" Hammerman was certainly familiar with the design and construction of Modern buildings through his long work with the Millstone Construction Company. Born in 1909 in St. Louis, Hammerman attended Washington University and graduated with a degree in architectural engineering in 1930. Hammerman entered his field at the onset of the period when modernism had a strong impact on American architects. In 1934, Hammerman took a job at the Millstone Construction Company, a firm founded in 1930 by I.E. Millstone. Millstone Construction Company was an active participant both in the arrival of Modern design in St. Louis and the rapid suburbanization that began in the Great Depression and boomed in the decades immediately after World War II. According to Millstone, the company

²³ Seargeant, p. 12.

²⁴ William Allin Storrer, *The Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright: Complete Catalog* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002) p. xix-xx.

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was successful early on due to its skill in building reinforced concrete structures, which were coming into fashion when Millstone set up the company.²⁵

At Millstone, Hammerman was involved in creating the engineering drawings for projects. During his long tenure, the company worked on numerous high-profile projects that helped shape postwar St. Louis. In short time, Hammerman rose to the rank of executive vice president for construction, a position he filled until retiring in 1995.²⁶ This work included building early suburban shopping malls like Crestwood Mall and Northwest Plaza, inner-city housing projects like the infamous Pruitt-Igoe (1950-1954) and the later-demolished, experimental Laclede Town (1962), the elevated sections of Highway 40 (US Interstate 64) in downtown St. Louis and Busch Memorial Stadium (1966). Millstone found itself collaborating with some of the leading modernist architects of the time, including Minoru Yamasaki, designer of Pruitt-Igoe, and Edward Durell Stone, who collaborated with Sverdrup & Parcel on the design of Busch Stadium. Millstone's success rested on "the automobile and reinforced concrete," as he recalled.²⁷ The firm made sure that the designs shaping the growing suburbs and the reinvention of the inner city were practical.

Hammerman was pivotal in the Millstone company's interactions with these designers, and became a knowledgeable practitioner of Modern Movement design. However, the house on Graybridge is his only recorded architectural design. Hammerman was known for other cultural contributions: Hammerman was an active member of Congregation B'Nai Amoona and a major benefactor to local Jewish organizations, and he endowed an annual scholarship at the Washington University School of Engineering and Applied Science.²⁸ Hammerman resided at the house at 219 Graybridge until his death in 2001.

The Harry Hammerman House

Hammerman's house was the only house other than Shank's on Graybridge designed and built by its occupant. While not the work of a master, the house is a high-style composition within the Modern Movement that holds its own among both the houses of

²⁵ Martin Van Der Werf, "To I.E. Millstone, what goes up or down isn't always the right thing." *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 28 October 2005.

²⁶ "Hammerman, Harry" (Obituary). *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 13 August 2001.

²⁷ Van Der Werf.

²⁸ "Hammerman, Harry."

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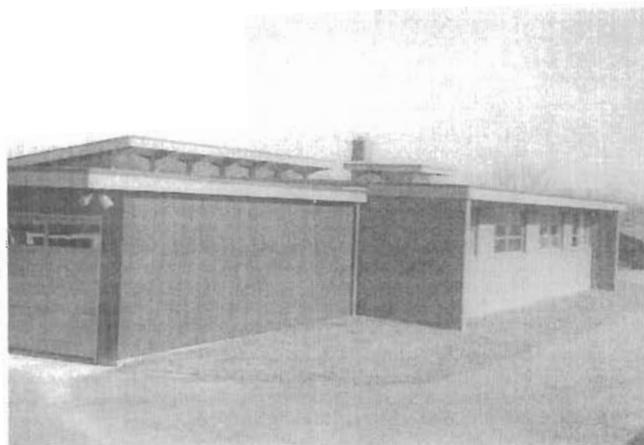
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its subdivision and contemporary Modern Movement houses. One local distinction the house has is Hammerman's implementation of characteristics of Usonian Houses. While the Harry Hammerman House presents many of the defining features of Modern Movement houses of the postwar years, mixing tendencies from both subtypes identified by the McAlesters, its Usonian characteristics are clear. The house clearly fits into the more specific stylistic idiom of Wright.

Figure 5: The Harry Hammerman House after completion in 1952. (Source: Cirila Hans.)



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Like the Usonian houses, the asymmetrical Harry Hammerman House employs a restrained arrangement of common mass-produced exterior building materials of its time: brick, weatherboard, plate glass, aluminum windows and coping. The Hammerman House sits on a slab foundation with a roughly L-shaped plan. Hammerman avoided alteration of the natural grade of the site, placing it on a relatively level spot set back from the street. The roof is flat with a deep overhang, except for the half-gable over the living room. The living room is large with ample natural light; there is no separate dining room. The bedrooms and bathrooms are separated from the living room by the kitchen, placed roughly in the center of the house. A narrow corridor with built-in closets further separates the bedrooms. The beams and deck of the roof structure are exposed through much of the house; the wooden ceiling boards are also the deck. Likewise, in the living room the exterior brick wall is exposed. The use of bomber plane gun turrets as skylights is a unique application of the Usonian principle of using non-custom mass-manufactured materials.

Hammerman's articulation creates functional differentiations between parts of the house expressed not only in spatial divisions but in exterior appearance. This tendency is in keeping with the Usonian form. The front face of the living area is marked by a large expanse of glass, for instance, while the entrance is recessed with weatherboard cladding. The bedrooms enjoy privacy on the front elevation, where they are marked by a blind brick wall; further privacy comes with the deep recess and roof overhang on the side elevation where the bedroom windows are located. The overhang also creates shade for the windows. The informal nature of both the garage and porch are indicated by placement at the rear of the house and by wooden cladding. Components like a large glass wall in the main living room, custom built-in wooden cabinets, austere interior design, attached garage with rear entrance are hallmarks of mid-century residential design in St. Louis County.

Hammerman's house shares other key Usonian characteristics. The radiant heating system pipes are embedded in the floor, save in the living room. There is no air conditioning, but rather an attic fan as well as clerestory windows for ventilation. The paneling and other exposed wood inside and outside of the house were dimensional material available at suppliers in St. Louis. Just as Wright anticipated expansion of his Usonian homes, Hammerman designed the garage to be able to be converted into another private room. Another tendency of Wright's that Hammerman shared was minimizing use of furniture through built-in components, including the desk in the study. What

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furniture Hammerman did purchase was obtained from suppliers of Modern furniture like Brno, Knoll and Robs John Gibbings (see figure #6). According to Hammerman's daughter Cirila Hans, until his death Harry Hammerman kept all of the furniture placed exactly as it was in 1952.²⁹ Also according to Hans, Hammerman chose a green living room carpet to match the lawn on the other side of the large glass window on the east elevation of the living room; he hoped to create the illusion of continuity.

In the years prior to Hammerman designing his home, Wright had built several Usonian homes. Among these are the Carroll Alsop Residence in Iowa (built 1948; NR 11/9/1988) and the Edward Serlin Residence in New York (built 1949). Wright had just begun construction of Broad Margin in South Carolina (built 1951-54; NR 12/8/1978). Hammerman had plenty of recent examples of the form from which to model components of his house. Overall, Hammerman's design makes skilled use of Usonian design principles, creating a house that is an exemplary model of small-scale mid-century residential design in St. Louis County. The current owner plans to reverse the decay of the last few years and occupy the house himself.

Figure 6: Living room with furniture selected by Hammerman. (Source: Cirila Hans.)



²⁹ Hans, Cirila, letter to Ray Simon, 28 July 2007.

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Hammerman, Harry, House
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Boundary Description

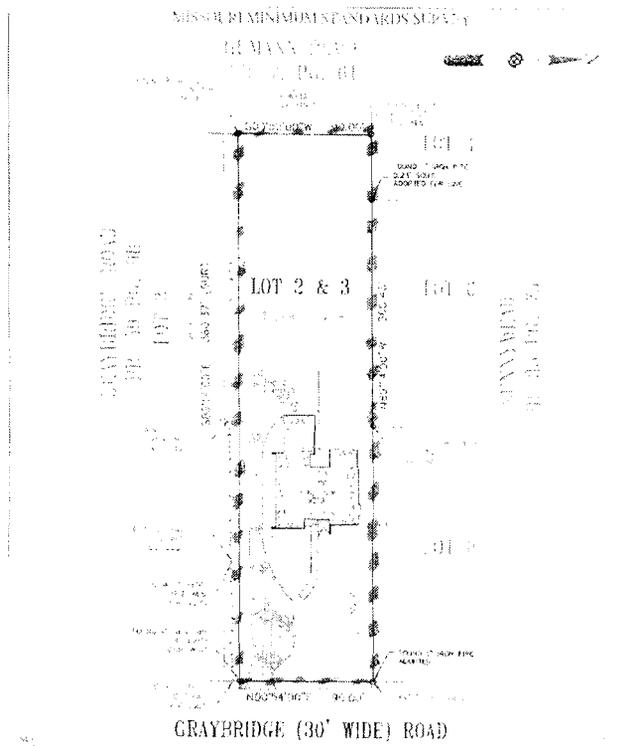
The nominated parcel is located at 219 Graybridge Road in the city of Ladue, Missouri. The site is legally known as Lots 2 and 3 of the Humann Place subdivision in St. Louis County, Missouri. The nominated property is indicated by a dashed line on the accompanying map entitled "Harry Hammerman House Boundary Map."

Boundary Justification

The nominated parcel includes all of the property historically associated with the Harry Hammerman House.

Harry Hammerman House Boundary Map

Source: James Surveying and Engineering Company



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Ladue [St. Louis], Missouri

Unless otherwise indicated, the following is true for all photographs submitted with this nomination:

Harry Hammerman House

219 Graybridge Road

Ladue [St. Louis]

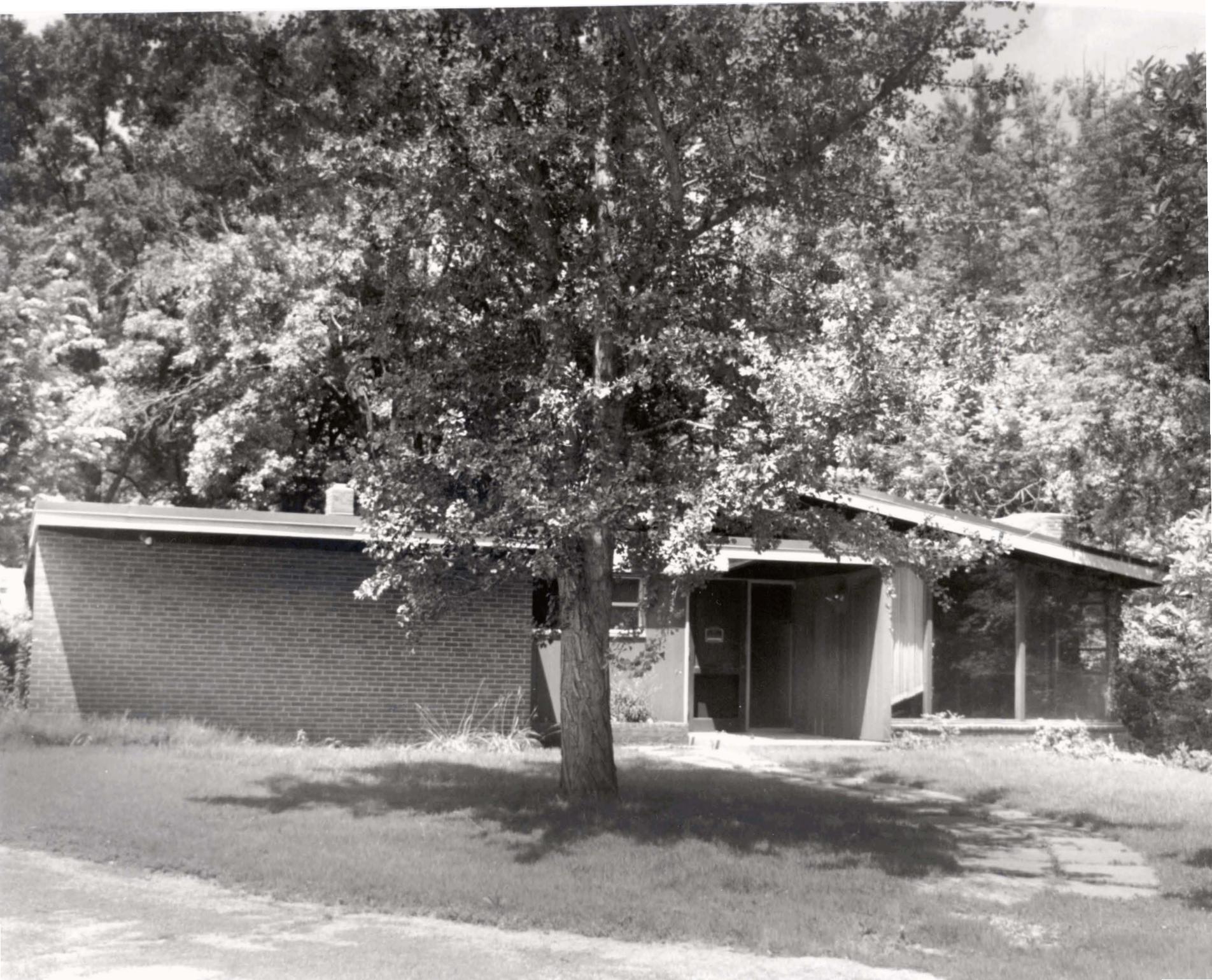
Photographer: Michael Allen

July 2007

Negatives on file at: Landmarks Association of St. Louis.

The descriptions of each photograph number are:

1. View toward house looking northwest.
2. View of south elevation.
3. View toward house looking northeast.
4. View toward house looking east.
5. View toward garage wing looking southeast.
6. View looking east inside living room.
7. View looking southwest inside living room.
8. View of entry foyer and hallway from front entrance.
9. View in one of the bedrooms, looking southwest.



















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