

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Hanna-Honeycomb House
other names/site number Paul R. Hanna House

2. Location

street & number 737 Frenchman's Road ☐ not for publication
city, town Palo Alto vicinity ☒ vicinity
state California code 06 county Santa Clara code 085 zip code 94305

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	1	buildings
<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	Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this 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:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Wrightian

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete slab

walls redwood and brick

roof copper (replaced by Heydite)

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Honeycomb House clings to and completes the hillside on which it is built. The floor and courtyard levels conform to the slope of this one and one-half acre site on the Stanford University Campus. The house is one story high with a central clerestory.

Paul Hanna's description of 1977 is still valid:

The wide-spreading roof, with generous overhangs, measures 75 squares. The concrete mat and terrace marked into hexagonal tiles extends beyond the house in every direction of the compass.

The house is constructed of native redwood board and batten screwed to 1 x 3 inch studs (interior and exterior walls identical), San Jose common brick, cement, and plate glass. The original copper roof has been replaced by Heydite.

The building complex ... consisted of the main house, the guest house, hobby shop, storage building, double garage, carport, breezeway, and garden house with pools and water cascade.

The Hannas worked with Mr. Wright on the house plans during 1935 and 1936. The construction was started in January 1937, on Phase 1 of the building plan. The complete complex of buildings was built in 4 phases, over a period of 25 years. However, Wright conceived the entire project and presented plans for all buildings in 1937. During the 25 years following, Mr. Wright and the Hannas reviewed the original plans and made minor revisions to conform to changing needs and circumstances.

The original main house was constructed in 1937 to accommodate a growing family living in a university community. It consisted of 4 bedrooms, three baths, a large playroom (later to become the dining room), a large living-dining room for university entertaining and seminars, a small music room, a kitchen, small study, and a spacious foyer.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

☒ nationally ☐ statewide ☐ locally

Applicable National Register Criteria ☐ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D NHL Criteria: 4

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

20th century

Significant Dates

1935

1961

Cultural Affiliation

Significant Person

Architect/Builder

Wright, Frank Lloyd

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Hanna-Honeycomb was Wright's first work in the San Francisco region. It is the first and best example of his innovative "hexagonal design" where the rooms flow together and, except for the kitchen and the baths, every room opens to extensive terraces and the outdoors. These concrete terraces connect with the water cascade and pools, the summer house, the carport, the guest house and the hobby shop. The house has been widely published and photographed and retains the highest level of integrity.

The main house was begun in 1937 and added to and expanded over 25 years. The Paul Hanna family donated it fully furnished with Wright pieces to Stanford University in 1974. Paul Hanna, who commissioned the design, described Wright's creation:

The main house is but one part of a complex of buildings, terraces, and gardens which are patterned after the honeycomb of the bee. The six-sided theme is carried out in the home furnishings and in the landscaping as well. Wright claimed that Hanna-Honeycomb House was the first building ever to use the 120 degree angle throughout.

The redwood, brick, and glass structures blend into the landscaped hillside. There are five fireplace chimneys which give support to the wide sheltering roof overhangs. Ancient oaks and a cypress define the positions of the buildings on the 1-1/2 acre site. ...

The living room is a comfortable and pleasing area in which to hold small group activities such as seminars or enjoy relaxed conversation in front of the vertical fireplace. The house is equipped with a Saville church organ which plays through 120 twelve-inch speakers distributed in a loft and in alcoves throughout the house. In the dining room the banquet table, side table, side board, and wall display cases were designed by the Hannas, approved by Wright, and partly constructed in the hobby shop.

☒ See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

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 # _____

☒ See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- ☐ State historic preservation office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☒ Other

Specify repository:

American Institute of Architects
Archives, Washington, DC

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 1.4

UTM References

A

1	0
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5	7	4	1	2	0
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4	1	4	1	2	1	0
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Zone Easting Northing

C

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B

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Zone Easting Northing

D

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☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Approximately a square lot bounded by Frenchman's Road on the west, by the residence of Professor John Dodds on the north, by Pine Hill Subdivision on the east, and by the residence of Professor I. James Quillen on the south.

☐ See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

This is the original lot on which the house was built and has never been subdivided.

☐ See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Carolyn Pitts, Historian

organization History Division, NPS date 2/9/89

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The openness of the interior space was planned to accommodate long views and easy traffic flow. Only the bedrooms and baths were built for privacy. The three floor levels reflect the gentle slope of the site and give the space interesting relief. A concrete vault below ground houses 3 forced-air gas furnaces with 3-zone controls, a water heater and water softener equipment. A tunnel, 4 feet by 4 feet (cross section), running the entire length of the house, contains heating ducts, plumbing, electric conduits -- all easily accessible for repair.

The kitchen, in the center of the house, and the bathrooms are all lighted and ventilated from clerestory windows and vents.

By 1950, Phase 2 of the construction was undertaken. A 1200-square-foot hobby shop, a guest house, and a storage room were added.

In 1957, Phase 3 was begun. The original 4 small bedrooms and study were converted into a spacious library, a master bedroom suite, and a small bedroom for a visiting grandchild.

Mr. Wright, in 1937, accepted the Hannas' request that the house plans provide for alteration of the interior space to conform to the needs of the parents after the young had departed. It was a relatively simple matter to unscrew the non-bearing walls between the bedrooms and the study. A fireplace was added in the new library, and another in the new master bedroom suite.

In 1961, Phase 4 was completed with the construction of a garden house at the south end of the extended concrete terrace, and two garden pools connected with a water cascade. Thus, after 25 years, the complex of buildings and the gardens and landscaping were completed. The attached floor plan reflects the Hanna-Honeycomb House as it grew to be in 1961.

The "living and growing" residence has one more phase contemplated. The Hannas gave their residence to Stanford University in 1974. The donors suggested a use for the residence which the university hopes to be able to achieve, namely, to obtain gifts to endow a professorial chair to be known as the Distinguished Visiting Professorship. A couple with world-wide visibility would occupy Hanna-Honeycomb for a year at a time. This plan requires that the hobby shop and guest house are converted to an apartment for a caretaker couple who would serve the distinguished visiting professor, maintain the property in mint condition, and interpret the architecture to visitors who desire to know more about Mr. Wright's organic architecture.

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Stanford has received a \$500,000 endowment fund for the preservation, management, and improvement of Hanna-Honeycomb House. The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation prepared the plans for the construction of the caretakers' apartment.¹

Today the hobby shop is used by the coordinator of programs for the house and the house itself is occupied by the Provost of the University.

The house today is one of the outstanding architectural sites on the University campus and stands complete as Frank Lloyd Wright and the Hannas planned it.

Footnote:

¹ National Register form written by Paul R. Hanna.

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The terraces are designed for entertaining guests. In the garden two nature-sculpted tree roots are sprayed with fine mist through which sunlight creates rainbows. In the background water cascading from the upper to the lower pool produces a softly flowing sound. Japanese snow lanterns and a seated Buddha enhance the landscape. Fruit trees furnish over thirty different varieties of fresh fruit throughout the year.¹

This structure used the hexagon as a unit--the basic module is one foot, one inch. Each redwood board and recessed batten observes this spacing and the other structural members are based on this same measured unit.

In spite of the seeming logical, mathematical plan of this house, Wright's work is basically romantic in spirit. Its free form and open planning--in a house that really brought the outside in, with space that flowed easily throughout the structure--place him squarely in an American tradition. He deplored the junk of technology and demanded a better balance between the realities of the developers' plans and the need for a better way of life. He insisted on idealism and made it work.

The Hanna house was designed for Paul R. Hanna and his wife Jean, both well known educators and for many years associated with Stanford University and the Hoover Institute. The project was begun while they were a young married couple and was expanded and added to over their professional careers. After living in the house for 38 years, the Hannas gave the property to Stanford University.

Wright designed over 500 homes and public buildings that were either admired by or scandalized other architects. Winthrop Sargeant has observed:

His architectural ideas -- a preference for spacious, low-slung designs with sweeping eaves and broad, hovering roofs, "married to the ground"; a love of big fireplaces and massive chimneys; a hatred of tacked-on fixtures, radiators, unnecessary partitions, inappropriate furniture and other gimcracks; a crusader's fervor for simplicity in ornament and for making building materials like stone and wood preserve their natural beauty undisguised by paint or plaster; an uncompromising insistence that houses be built from the inside out, "organically," their lines designed to express, naturally, the life that goes on within them -- all these things and many more Wrightisms have been imitated by countless other modern architects. But Wright's finest houses contain also an indefinable, personal quality that transcends theory and defies imitation. This quality has to do with taste and charm. It is found in the lavish sweep of massive slabs of brickwork, in the dramatic way in which low-ceilinged corridors open up into spacious rooms, in the uncanny appropriateness with which Wright houses fit into their natural setting. The quality has

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nothing whatever to do with the bare materialistic bones of functionalism. It is a purely personal expression, like the touch of a master pianist or the diction of a great actor. It causes confirmed Wright clients to love their houses with a devotion most people reserve for their wives and children.²

Even his critics credit Wright and admit that his best work ranks him as one of the greatest of contemporary architects.

Footnotes:

- 1 Paul R. Hanna, "How a Great Frank Lloyd Wright House Changed, Grew, Came to Perfection," House Beautiful (January 1963), p. 69.
- 2 Winthrop Sargeant, Geniuses, Goddesses and People (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1949), p. 223.

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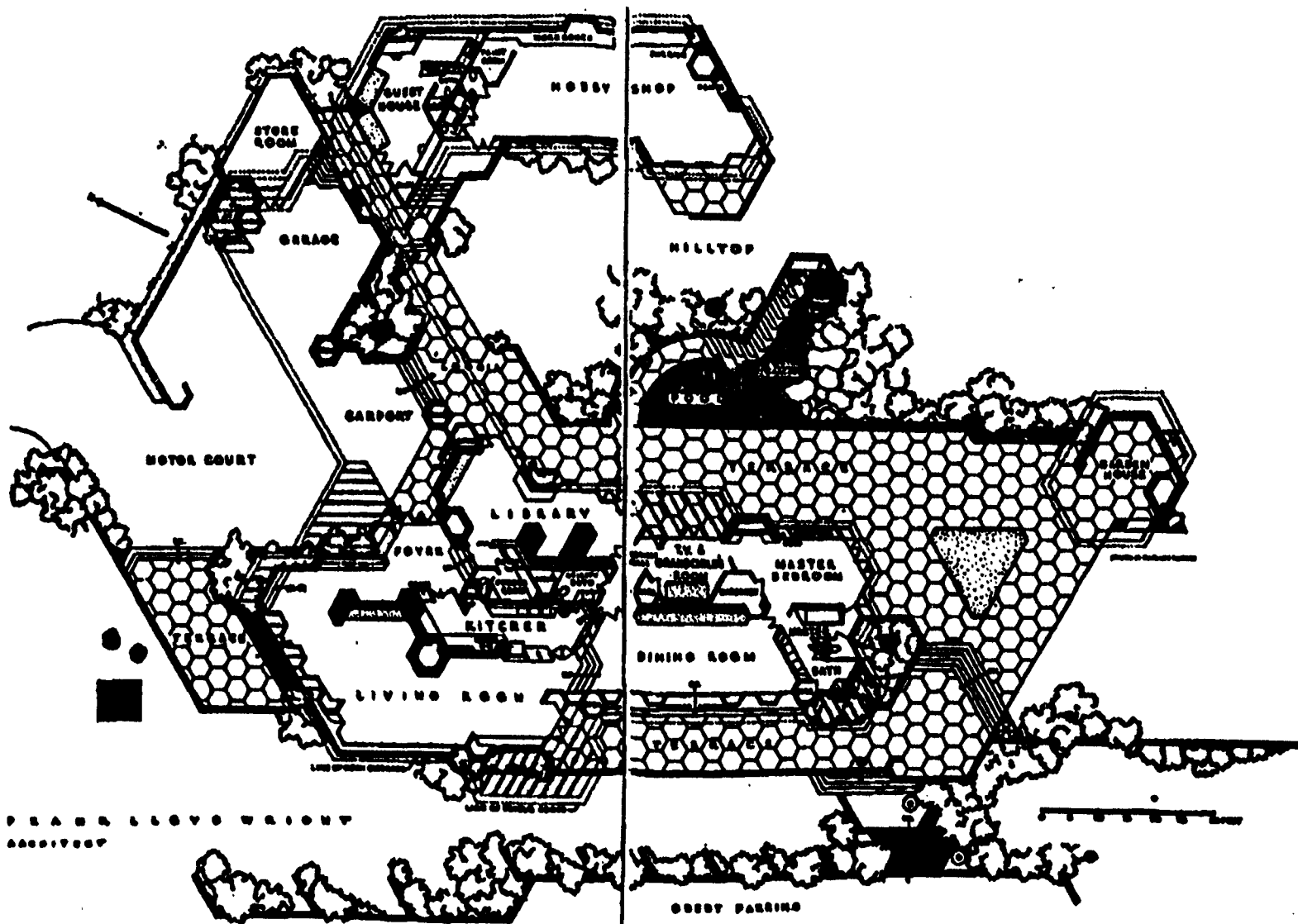
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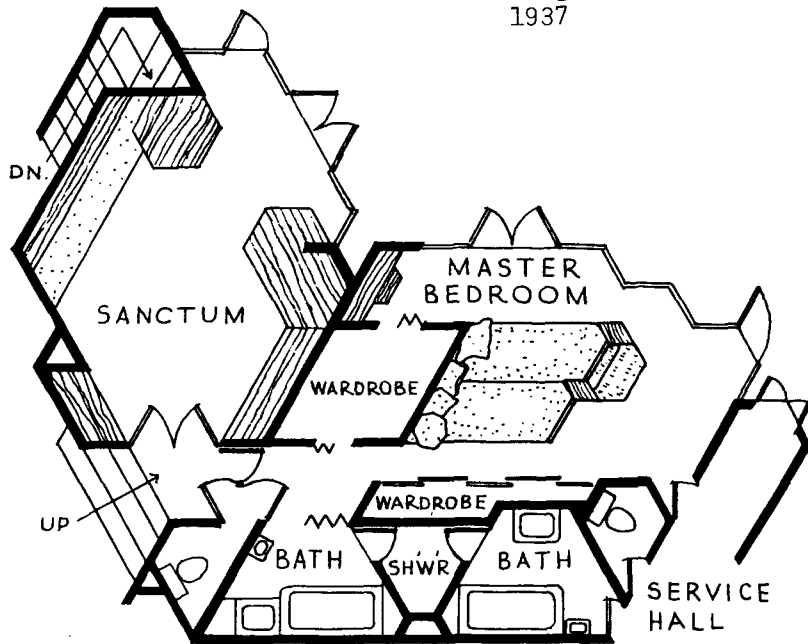
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P. A. M. LLOYD WRIGHT
 ARCHITECT

1. Original Plan
1937



2. Plan with partitions
removed. 1963

