

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received JUL 2 1986
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Wright, Robert Llewellyn, House

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 7927 Deepwell Drive N/A not for publication

city, town Bethesda N/A vicinity of Eighth Congressional District

state Maryland code 24 county Montgomery code 031

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
			<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Mrs. Robert L. Wright

street & number 7927 Deepwell Drive

city, town Bethesda N/A vicinity of state Maryland 20817

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Montgomery County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Rockville state Maryland 20817

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Maryland Historical Trust
title Historic Sites Inventory has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1985 federal state county local

depository for survey records Maryland Historical Trust, 21 State Circle

city, town Annapolis state Maryland 21401

7. Description

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Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date <u>N/A</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Number of Resources

Contributing	Noncontributing	Number of previously listed
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> buildings	National Register properties
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites	included in this nomination: <u>0</u>
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> objects	Original and historic functions
		and uses: residential
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u> Total	

DESCRIPTION SUMMARY:

The Robert Llewellyn Wright House is a two-story concrete-block structure located near Bethesda in suburban Montgomery County, Maryland. Designed by architect Frank Lloyd Wright, the house is composed of intersecting and concentric segments of a circle, or "hemicycles." Its basic form comprises two intersecting arcs, resulting in a configuration reminiscent of a ship's hull. The house is sited on a sloping lot, overlooking a stream. The north facade faces up the slope and holds the entrance; the south side, overlooking a wooded ravine, is almost entirely defined by large casement windows and plate-glass doors, serving a semicircular terrace and two second-floor balconies. Exterior and interior woodwork is Philippine mahogany, and many of the furnishings are Wright-designed.

8. Significance

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Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1953; 1957-1958 ~~XXXX~~ **Builder/Architect** Frank Lloyd Wright, architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Applicable Criteria: B, C
 Applicable Exceptions: G
 Significance Evaluated: state

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY:

The Robert Llewellyn Wright House is significant for its association with Frank Lloyd Wright, who designed the house in 1953 for his sixth child. The building exemplifies the "hemicycle" phase of the architect's late work in its plan, based upon concentric and intersecting segments of a circle. Although it is less than 50 years old, the Wright house is exceptionally significant in representing the last stylistic phase of the architect's career; Wright designed only a dozen hemicyclical houses between 1941 and 1957. Furthermore, this is the only building of its type in Maryland, and one of only two Wright-designed structures in the state (the other, the Joseph Euchtman House of 1940 in Baltimore County, exemplifies Wright's earlier "Usonian" form).

9. Major Bibliographical References

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See Continuation Sheet No. 5

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Approximately 2 acres

Quadrangle name Rockville, MD-VA

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	8
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3	1	2	3	5	0
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4	3	1	9	6	5	0
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B

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C

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet No. 5

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Peter E. Kurtze, Assistant NR Administrator

organization Maryland Historical Trust date February 18, 1985

street & number 21 State Circle telephone (301) 269-2438

city or town Annapolis state Maryland 21401

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

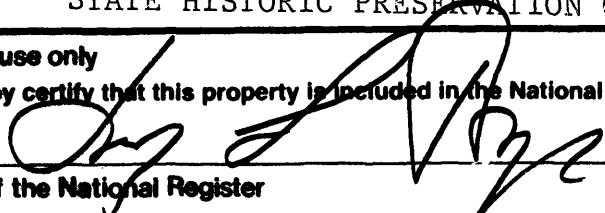
As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature  date 6-25-86

title STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER date

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

 date 8/12/86

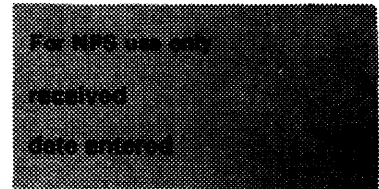
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
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Wright, Robert Llewellyn, House
Montgomery County, MD.

Continuation sheet

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GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

The Robert Llewellyn Wright House is a two-story residence designed by Frank Lloyd Wright in 1953. It is sited on a wooded slope overlooking Cabin John Creek in suburban Bethesda, Montgomery County, Maryland, on the edge of a mid-twentieth-century residential development which is primarily characterized by conservative Colonial-influenced dwellings.

The house is typical of Wright's later residential designs in that its plan is based upon segments of a circle, or "hemicycles" in the architect's term. The basic form of the building is defined by two intersecting arcs, resulting in a configuration resembling a ship's hull. The north wall defines an arc of approximately 70 degrees; the south wall comprises an 85-degree segment. A circular form intersects the arc on the north side and houses the kitchen, bath, plumbing, heating, and ventilation facilities. A semicircular terrace extends from the south side. In contrast to these circular elements, the elevations emphasize horizontal lines both in the overall composition and in the treatment of surface materials.

The building rests on a smoothly finished poured concrete slab with subterranean footings. Red "Colorundum" pigment was mixed with the concrete, and the slab - which was left exposed as the surface for the ground floor - is scored with arcs and radiating lines reflecting the unit system on which the house was designed. The arcs, which center on a point south of the house, have radii whose lengths are multiples of three feet; the radiating lines are drawn on 7-degree intervals. The walls are constructed of concrete block; vertical joints are finished flush, while horizontal joints are deeply-raked.

The north (entrance) facade faces up the slope, away from the ravine. It is approached by a curving drive terminating in a broad, graveled court (see site plan). This elevation is two stories in height; its overhanging flat roof is defined by a cornice with a fascia of lapped Philippine mahogany boards. The recessed entrance is roughly centered at ground level, consisting of a solid mahogany door surmounted by a plate-glass transom. To the right of the entrance, the circular utilities core forms a tower, breaking the cornice and rising about three feet above the roof line. The curving wall of this core forms the right side of the entrance recess; to the left of the door, a mitred plate-glass window located high in the wall lights a small lavatory. An angled planting box projects below the lavatory window. A series of vertical fixed windows at the ground floor level of the utility core lights the kitchen; two of these

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GENERAL DESCRIPTION (continued)

openings are carried up to the second story. Philippine mahogany is used for all exterior woodwork, including door and window frames and siding. A series of small windows runs below the overhanging fascia, to the left (east) of the utility "tower," consisting of vertical casements alternating with groups of three small fixed horizontal lights stacked one atop another. The east end of the north facade is sheathed in lapped boards on the upper story, and terminates in a mitred plate-glass window.

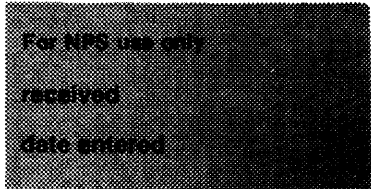
The south elevation, overlooking the wooded ravine, features a semicircular terrace across the western half; the terrace has a retaining wall of concrete block, with a pattern of openings and protruding blocks worked into the upper courses. On the first story, eight plate-glass doors open onto the terrace, and a band of large casement windows continues across the eastern half of the facade. A recessed balcony is centered at second-floor level, and a large curved platform is cantilevered out from the west end; the lapped-board sheathing of their parapet walls extends across the facade. The two balconies are served by plate-glass doors, and a continuous ribbon of casement windows runs below the overhanging lapped-board cornice.

The main entrance door opens into a low-ceilinged hall, with the doorway to the workspace on the right (west) and a narrow passage on the left leading past a small lavatory and coat closet to the stair. Opening to the south from the entrance hall, the living room occupies most of the ground floor space, which is entirely open except for the intrusion of the circular workspace enclosure on the northwest. The broad expanse of glass in the south wall creates a strong orientation toward the terrace and beyond. Other focal points are the fireplace, set into the south wall of the workspace; a dining area at the west end of the building; and the east end of the living room, which is lined with seating and cabinets designed by Wright. Masonry remains exposed on the interior walls; ceilings are finished in buff-tinted, sand-textured plaster, and all interior partitions and cabinetwork utilize Philippine mahogany plywood.

The upper floor comprises three bedrooms opening off a passage which runs from the stair at the east, along the northern wall, and turns south at the central core. The eastern half of the circular core houses a bathroom. The master bedroom, opening off the southern extension of the passage, occupies roughly the western half of the floor. It incorporates both dressing and sleeping areas, and features its own balcony off the west end; it also has access to the southern recessed balcony through the

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GENERAL DESCRIPTION (continued)

dressing area. A modification of the original plans allowed for a master bath in the north segment of the utilities core. A smaller bedroom shares the south balcony with the master bedroom. At the east end of the floor, the third bedroom is lighted by a band of windows facing south, with a mitred window at the east corner. All the bedrooms have built-in cabinets, shelving, tables, bed platforms and other furniture constructed of Philippine mahogany to Wright's designs. Flooring on the upper story is hardwood, ceilings are plastered, partitions are of mahogany plywood, and the concrete block is expressed as the interior surface of the masonry walls. The interior of the balcony parapets are finished with lapped boards in a manner similar to the exterior facia.

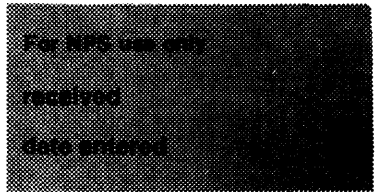
Comparison of the original working drawings and the house as built shows some slight divergences from Wright's conception. The north segment of the circular utility core was apparently intended to be open a full two stories above the ground floor workspace; as noted above, plans were changed to insert a master bath in this space on the second floor. The north facade of the utility "tower" is shown in the plans with three vertical window openings rising from the ground floor to the cornice, rather than two; in construction, the central opening was eliminated above the ground floor. The height of the balcony parapets, and the overall height of the house were reduced slightly. A carport was planned to extend north from the utility core; this was not realized, and a low wall was substituted.

The entrance to the curving drive which approaches the house is marked by a low wall, constructed of concrete block laid in the same manner as the house. This wall incorporates a mailbox and a Wrightian metal sculpture. The grounds were landscaped by Lloyd Wright, son of the architect, in 1960.

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HISTORY AND SUPPORT:

Frank Lloyd Wright designed the Robert Llewellyn Wright House in 1953, as the residence for his sixth child and family. The architect worked from a plan of the sloping, wooded building site, and did not actually visit the house until after its completion. The house was constructed in 1957-1958; Robert Beharka, a Taliesin fellow, was assigned to supervise the construction. Beharka had also served as supervisory architect for another of Wright's houses, the Martin House (1952) in nearby McLean, Virginia.

According to Storer's authoritative catalog of Wright's work, only eleven residences were executed in the hemicycle mode. (An early 1941 hemicyclical design, for the Lloyd Burlingham House in El Paso, Texas, was never realized.) These houses, and a handful of institutional buildings including the Guggenheim Museum, represent the final stylistic phase of the architect's career.

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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES:

Heinz, Thomas A. Frank Lloyd Wright (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982).

Kaufman, Edgar, and Ben Raeburn, eds. Frank Lloyd Wright: Writings and Buildings (New York: Meridian Books, 1960).

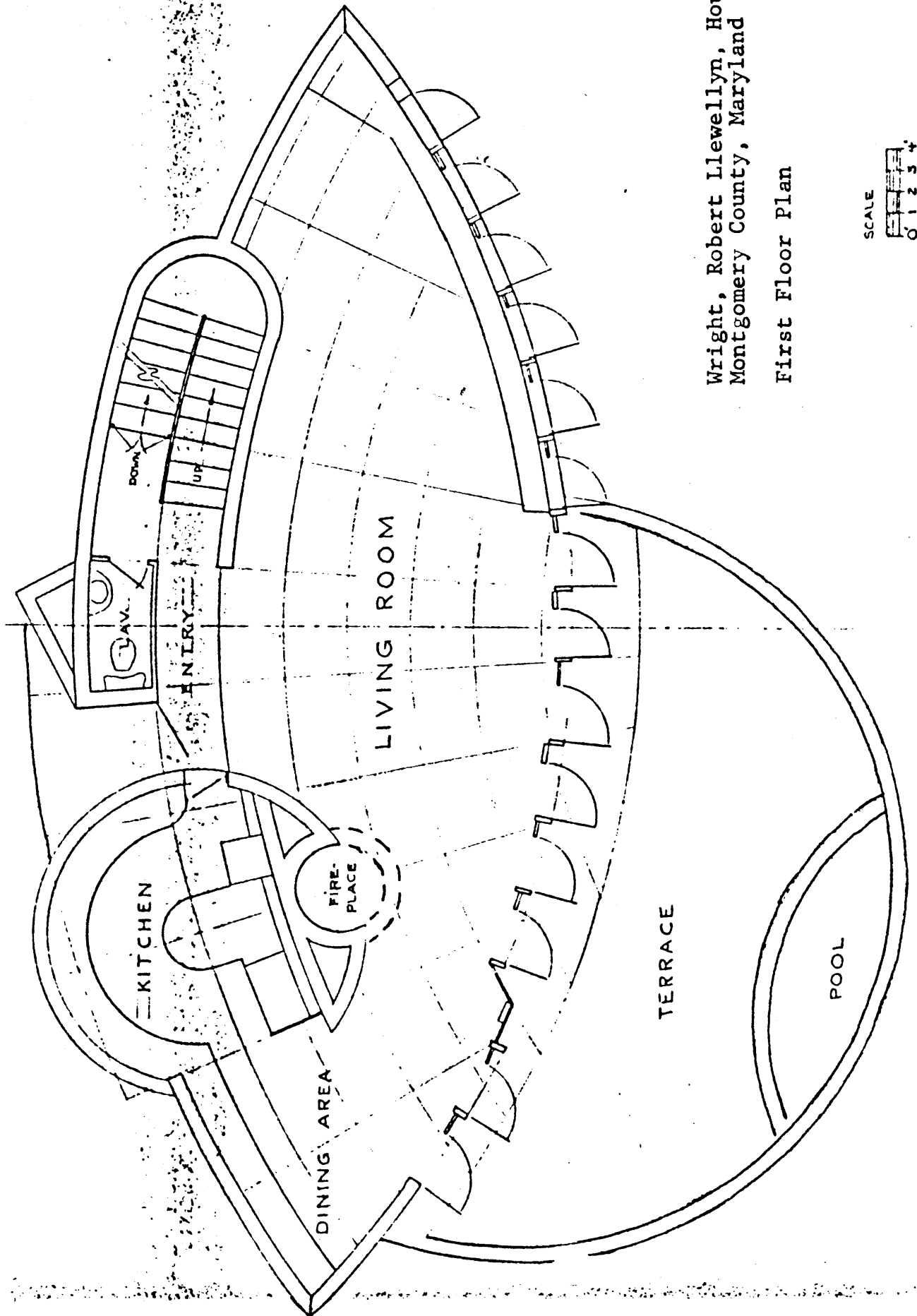
Storer, William Allin. The Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright: A Complete Catalog (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1974).

interviews: Mr. & Mrs. Robert L. Wright, 2/85
Mr. Robert Beharka, 12/85

working drawings in possession of the owners; copies on file at Maryland Hall of Records, Annapolis, MD

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION/JUSTIFICATION:

The nominated property, approximately 2 acres, comprises the resource within the setting which played an integral part in its design. Boundaries are depicted on the attached plot plan.



Wright, Robert Llewellyn, House
Montgomery County, Maryland

First Floor Plan

SCALE
0 1 2 3 4