

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Susan Lawrence Dana House

AND/OR COMMON
Susan Lawrence Dana House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 301 Lawrence Avenue

CITY, TOWN Springfield VICINITY OF 20th
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE Illinois CODE Sangamon COUNTY CODE

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 type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Charles C. Thomas, Thomas Publishing Company (217-789-8980)

STREET & NUMBER 301 Lawrence Avenue

CITY, TOWN Springfield VICINITY OF Illinois STATE

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, Sangamon County Courthouse
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN Springfield STATE Illinois

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

136

7 DESCRIPTION

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 _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Dr. Paul Sprague has described the house in detail in Outdoor Illinois, Volume XII, Number 8, October 1973 (later transcribed to the National Register of Historic Places nomination form, as follows:

"The former residence of Susan Lawrence Dana, its attached library, and garage, stands on a large rectangular lot at the northwest corner of Lawrence and Fourth Streets in Springfield, Illinois. At the rear an alley separates the end of the walled yard and garage from a railroad. The garage is brick and except for some remodeling by Wright on the garden side, dates from the time of the original post-Civil War house built by Mrs. Dana's father. The siting of the house on the flat land was controlled by the position of the original residence around which the new house was built before demolishing the old one. The present house possesses a basement which is unusual in a design by Wright. The reason is because a basement already existed under the original house and could not very easily be removed. Thus, except for a new bowling alley added by Wright, the basement and foundation walls are those of the original Lawrence residence.

The exterior walls are a buff Roman brick, with the usual horizontally raked joints and flush verticals, apparently laid over an interior frame structure. They rise from a splayed limestone base. The walls of the second story are surfaced with a deep brown terra cotta embossed with geometrical designs. Capping the various masses are tile-covered overhanging open gable roofs of low pitch. The windows and doors contain large amounts of stained glass, some of it having purely geometric designs, the rest supporting designs of a geometric character but derived from plant-life of the prairie states.

The exterior is especially complex because of the contrasting yet highly disciplined interplay of solid and void, augmented by the open gables. Variety is also introduced by the mixture of materials of different textures and tones. These, (the buff of the brick, yellow of the limestone, brown of the terra cotta and green of the copper), give to the house an organic, somewhat autumnal quality.

The entrance on Lawrence Avenue leads into a grand stair hall opening through two stories and framed by galleries at the second floor level. In the entrance is a semi-stylized statue called "The Flower in the Crannied Wall" by Richard Bock, Wright's sculptor through about 1914. The ground floor level of the two-story hall is reached by a flight of stairs on either side of the statue. To the left a one-story space opens off of the hall in which there is a geometrically-ordered fountain also by Bock. Further on one reaches the magnificent two-story dining room with breakfast alcove behind. The room is richly detailed with some of the finest glass in the house, elegant bronze and stained-glass chandeliers, a built-in buffet and painted scenes of a Japanese-print-like character on horizontal stretches of wall between the first and second floors. Right of the dining room is a

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(Continued)

8 SIGNIFICANCE

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/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1902-1906

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Frank Lloyd Wright

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Dana House is one of Wright's masterworks of his early period--he lavished upon it all of his creative skill--and it still retains a great deal of original glass, tile and furniture, all custom made to the architect's specifications. It was the showplace of Springfield in its day and remains one of the most important examples of early 20th century architecture.

Paul Sprague writes: "One of Frank Lloyd Wright's grandest houses from his Oak Park period was designed in 1902 for the Springfield socilite Susan Lawrence Dana. Of the many rumors about her alleged eccentric personality only one, necessary to understand the most unusual part of the house, need be cited. It is said that her father, Rheuna Lawrence, willed to her the family home in Springfield but only on the condition that she retain it in any building schemes she might entertain. When the commission came to Wright his solution to this curious problem was to build the new house around the old, demolishing the latter as he went while preserving from the old house a single room in its original state.

Most writers on the house do not seem to know that the house was designed in 1902, and the library, three years later in 1905. The house originally terminated on the west side of the Lawrence Avenue front probably as an open porch. The library, when added, was connected to it by extending and enclosing the porch."¹

Grant Manson in his Frank Lloyd Wright to 1910 has the following to say about the family: "The Lawrences had been pioneers in the settlement of central Illinois, but by the twentieth century they were off the land, living in affluence at the State capital. Only 'Mother Lawrence', kindly remembered in 'An Autobiography' for her home--made blackberry jam and salt-risen bread, retained the simple tastes of pioneer days. Her daughter, Susan Dana, was a woman of ambition and far wider outlook. She came to Wright to place the commission for a new house at Springfield which would be not merely a residence but a family memorial and a setting for the suitable discharge of her obligations as a social leader of the community."²

¹Sprague, Paul. Outdoor Illinois, Vol. XII, No. 8, October 1973, pp. 12-18.

²Manson, Grant. Frank Lloyd Wright to 1910, pp. 120-121.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

(See Continuation Sheet)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 6	2 7 2 9 9 0	4 4 0 8 0 6 0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C			

B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

(See Continuation Sheet)

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Carolyn Pitts, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION

Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service

DATE

July 1975

STREET & NUMBER

1100 L Street NW.

TELEPHONE

202-523-5464

CITY OR TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C. 20240

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL X

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.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7

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small square room preserved complete with its detailing and fireplace from the pre-Civil War house. Beyond it is the living room which opens onto the porches at either side. The kitchen and service areas are on the other side of the dining room. Upstairs three bedrooms open onto balconies communicating with the upper parts of the hall and dining room. The master bedroom still contains much of the furniture designed by Wright for it.

The library is a separate building behind the house on the Lawrence Avenue side. It is connected with the house through a glass-enclosed gallery whose roof continues west from a small suite of rooms in the southwest corner of the house designed, it is said, for use by the mother of Susan Lawrence. Entry to the library is from the gallery by way of a stunning glassed-in prow-like space that extends into the rear yard or by a round-about stairway that enters the library on axis. From these stairs there is a breath-taking view of all levels of the spatially complex interior of the library. Slightly below grade is the library proper and above it, the two-story gallery with its arched ceiling. There are monumental fireplaces in both rooms, the one in the gallery being the more impressive because of its larger size and because of the balcony over it."

The Thomas Publishing Company has occupied the house since 1946 and maintain, repair and treat the house with great reverence.

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Susan L. Dana House, Springfield, Illinois

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ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

Of special note is the quality of the stained glass designed by Orlando Giannini, the sculpture by Richard Bock and the furniture by the master designer--cabinet maker, George Niedecken.* The Dana house can be considered a living museum of this period in American architectural history.

*Within the last few months two great collections of designs and drawings of Niedecken's furniture for Wright houses have been discovered by a young architect, Brian A. Spencer of Milwaukee. They have been deposited with the Milwaukee Art Center and a large exhibition--catalogue of this lost and unpublished material will be available in near future.

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PAGE 1

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Giedion, Sigfried. Space, Time and Architecture. 3rd ed. enlarged. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1954.

Hitchcock, Henry R. In the Nature of Materials; 1887-1941; the Buildings of Frank Lloyd Wright. New York, Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1942.

Manson, Grant. Frank Lloyd Wright to 1910, Reinhold Publishing Co., New York, 1958, pp. 119-126.

Sprague, Paul. Outdoors Illinois, Volume XII, Number 8, October 1973, pp. 12-18.

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ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 1

Legal Description:

Block 3 of W. H. Allen, lot 7, 8, 9, 10 and the vacated alley lying between said lots also all of that part of lot 6 and 11 and of the vacated alley lying between said lots which lie south of a line described as follows:

Beginning 29 and 66 one hundreths feet north of the southeast corner of said lot 11 and running thence westerly to a point 25 and 65 one hundreths feet north of the southwest corner of said lot 6, all in Block 3 of W. H. Allen's edition. Plat, City of Springfield, 1946.

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ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 1

Lots Seven (7), Eight (8), Nine (9), and Ten (10) and the vacated alley lying between said lots, also all of that part of Lots Six (6) and Eleven (11) and of the vacated alley lying between said lots which lies South of the line described as follows: Beginning 29.66 feet North of the Southeast Corner of said Lot Eleven (11) and running thence Westerly to a point 25.63 feet North Three (3) of W.H. Allen's Addition to the City of Springfield.