

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name William Landsberg House

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 5 Tianderah Road [] not for publication

city or town Port Washington [] vicinity

state New York code NY county Nassau code 059 zip code 11050

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 as 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.)

Kerth A. Perpenz
Signature of certifying official/Title

DSHPO

6/19/14
Date

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

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

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) _____

Signature of the Keeper

date of action

Ethan W. Beall

8.18.14

Name of Property

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	TOTAL

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/ single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Stone, Cypress, Glass

roof Asphalt

other _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

William Landsberg House

Nassau County, New York

Name of Property

County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property 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 that 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

(Mark "x" in all boxes that apply.)

- 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:

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance:

1951-1964

Significant Dates:

1951, 1962-63

Significant Person:

Cultural Affiliation:

N/A

Architect/Builder:

William Landsberg (architect)

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical 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 Building 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 repository: _____

William Landsberg House
Name of Property

Nassau County, New York
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property .49 acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 18 6110056 4520987
Zone Easting Northing

3 18
Zone Easting Northing

2 18

4 18

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jennifer Betsworth (NY SHPO)

organization New York State Historic Preservation Office date March 31, 2014

street & number P.O. Box 189 telephone 518-237-8643 ext. 3296

city or town Waterford state NY zip code 12188

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 SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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

name Estate of William Landsberg, Nina Bernstein, executor

street & number 5 Tianderah Road telephone 516-944-7929

city or town Port Washington state NY zip code 11050

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, D.C. 20503

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Section 7 Page 1

William Landsberg House
Name of Property
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Narrative Description of Property:

The William Landsberg house is located near the intersection of Tianderah Road and Central Drive in the Village of Baxter Estates within the Town of Port Washington in Nassau County. Central Drive, the primary road through Baxter Estates, begins at Manhasset Bay and is lined with early twentieth century residences to the north and bordered to the south by village parkland. The parkland, much of which is at the base of steep hill, includes Baxter's pond and stream. Short retaining walls control the path of the stream. The William Landsberg house occupies an irregular lot in the middle of the slope, which was graded to accommodate the house, and looks over the parkland to its north and west. The house is slightly built into the hill on the south. Only one other house, located on the east side of Tianderah Road, is located on the sloping hill; a number of early twentieth century houses on Locust Avenue are visible at the top of the hill. The William Landsberg house is surrounded by mature trees and has bushes lining the driveway to create a small, private courtyard. The nominated parcel is the .49-acre lot historically associated with the William Landsberg house.

The house, built in 1951, was designed by architect William Landsberg for his family. The rectangular, flat-roofed house is divided into a basement floor, which is partially built into the hill, and a cantilevered, overhanging main floor covered in cypress paneling. The basement floor has a concrete slab foundation and concrete block walls on the north, west, and south; the wall is only visible on the north elevation. The house originally had a porch extending from the rear (west) elevation. In 1962-1963, a seamless addition was incorporated on the east side of the house to create more interior space; the porch was removed at that time and replaced with the current stone patio.

On the façade (east) elevation, the basement has a central entry porch flanked to the south by two cypress garage doors and to the north by a projecting Manhattan schist (subway stone) veneer panel. A stone stoop and metal post mark the entrance door and vertical sheet glass window. The main floor of the façade has a single vertical window and a large block of windows. All of the windows in the house were custom designed; generally, they are organized as casement windows or a solid pane over an elongated, horizontal rectangular pane. The block of windows on the façade has three casement windows, to allow for cross-ventilation, and two solid panes. Instead of a glass pane, the elongated horizontal window section of the southernmost window has a white asbestos cement board panel.

The basement floor of the north elevation is punctuated by a sliding glass door and a casement window over a horizontal glass pane. The main floor has two separate window blocks located in the western corner. The rear (west) elevation has the projecting addition on the north with darker colored cypress, and several small vertical rectangular windows on the south. The addition has a large, fixed rectangular window over a narrow rectangular pane in the northernmost corner which is flanked to the south by two sets of sliding glass doors. A slightly overhanging roof shades the addition.

The south elevation wall is inset and is boxed in by cantilevered walls on three sides. A long, rectangular panel of white asbestos cement board is directly under the roofline. The wall is set back underneath this panel; the light asbestos board reflects natural light into the block of five windows. A panel of white asbestos cement

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William Landsberg House
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board covers the remainder of the wall under the windows; Landsberg painted these panels blue, yellow, and orange over time before returning them to the original white. The cypress walls of the east and west elevations also project several feet past the wall to create additional privacy.

The basement floor is primarily devoted to the garage. The remainder is divided into the entrance hall, staircase, a lounge room, a small studio, and storage and utility space. The entrance hall has horizontal solid wood-paneled walls and a sealed flagstone floor with radiant heating. A custom cabinet with sliding shelves projects from the southern wall. The door to the coat closet is directly across from the entrance. To the right (north), a hallway leads to the lounge and studio. The lounge has a dropped ceiling and built-in shelving. The small studio, located on the left (south) side of the lounge, is lit by a small, rectangular window and has drafting tables and easels used by Landsberg for his architectural and artistic projects. A floating staircase leads to the second floor. The first half-flight of stairs, which is enclosed underneath to create storage space, leads to an open landing lit by a large window. The second half-flight of stairs reaches the second floor. Both flights are connected to central, vertical beams that end in a horizontal rail at the top of the stairs.

All of the primary rooms are located on the main floor. It is divided into a large, open living and dining room, a central kitchen, and three bedrooms. A small, built-in desk nook and closet are located at the top of the stairs. To the right, a white wood screen of exposed studs and white-painted brick chimney define the edge of the living and dining room. The living and dining room is a large, undivided space that takes up the entire northern end of the house. The living room section, located on the east side, is defined by a large, rectangular fireplace block. Small alcoves are built into either side of the fireplace. A solid teak book and record shelf with a built-in record player and a central pass-through to the kitchen is located on the south wall. The dining room section, located in the northwestern corner, is lit by windows on both sides. The kitchen is adjacent to the dining room. It has custom cabinets made of solid walnut and sliding doors covered in orange laminate. Several features were built into the kitchen, including a stainless-steel range hood, in-counter blender, warming tray, and clock. The walls are covered in early 1960s Schumacher wallpaper featuring an orange tree pattern. A hallway to the left of the staircase leads to the three bedrooms and a hall bathroom. Each of the bedrooms features built-in furniture and modern-style light fixtures. The master bedroom has a large closet with sliding doors, a built-in headboard with sliding cabinets, a private bathroom, and a built-in vanity.

The William Landsberg house, which has survived unchanged since 1963, has a remarkable level of integrity. Original finishes, materials, and fixtures have been retained on both the exterior and interior; much of the modern furniture shown in early photographs is still present in the rooms. The original design and its relationship with the surrounding landscape remains intact.

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William Landsberg House

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Statement of Significance:

The William Landsberg House, built in 1951, is significant under C as an excellent example of modernist residential architecture on Long Island. Designed by William Landsberg, a modernist architect and associate of Marcel Breuer, the house received national and international attention. Landsberg was educated in Harvard's first class of graduate students under Walter Gropius and Marcel Breuer, and later worked for both men professionally. As head draftsman and Director of Design, Landsberg helped Breuer launch his architectural practice in New York City. During his eight-year tenure in the office, Landsberg worked on projects of regional, national, and international importance, including the MoMA House in the Garden, the Grosse Point Public Library, and the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris. Landsberg also operated a successful Long Island-based architectural practice; his designs incorporate Breuer-esque details, but distinctly feature Landsberg's preference for openness, simplicity, efficiency, and natural materials. Built in the years after World War II, the William Landsberg house marks a transition in modern architecture on Long Island from second and beach homes to primary residences. Tucked into a sloping site within the established neighborhood of Baxter Estates, the two-story, cypress and glass house floats within the wooded landscape. Though finished modestly, the house included state-of-the-art conveniences and was well-designed to maximize interior space and create a feeling of openness. Remarkably intact to its 1951 construction and 1963 addition, the house clearly and consistently represents Landsberg's design preferences and intent.

Early Twentieth Century History of Port Washington and Baxter Estates

Cow Neck peninsula was initially settled during the late eighteenth century. The community of Port Washington developed around Manhasset Bay, and the local economy revolved around farming, fishing, shipbuilding, and sand mining. The Long Island railroad, largely constructed and consolidated during the late nineteenth century, allowed for faster and easier transportation between New York City and Long Island and dramatically transformed communities across Long Island.¹ Port Washington's station on the Long Island railroad opened on June 28, 1898. The small community, which had about 1000 residents in 1890, grew rapidly. Wealthy families built large summer homes on Sands Point and middle-class commuters and vacationers were attracted to Port Washington's rural landscape and easy railroad access.²

To accommodate these new commuters, local landowners and developers began creating residential suburbs with winding roads, lush landscaping, and stylish homes. Baxter Estates was laid out after 1900 on land formerly owned by the seafaring Baxter family. The sandy soil had made for poor farmland, and nineteenth century sand mining operations left dramatic hills. The developers of Baxter Estates built homes in revival styles within the varied landscape and advertised the neighborhood's natural beauty.³

¹ George L. Williams, *Port Washington in the Twentieth Century: Places and People* (Port Washington, N.Y.: Cow Neck Peninsula Historical Society, 1995), 1-2; Elly Shodell and the Port Washington Public Library, *Port Washington* (Charleston, S.C.: Arcadia Publishing, 2009), 7; Edward J. Smits, *Nassau Suburbia, U.S.A.: The First Seventy-Five Years of Nassau County, New York, 1899-1974* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, 1974), 3-4.

² Smits, *Nassau Suburbia, U.S.A.*, 3-4, 13; Shodell, *Port Washington*, 7.

³ Williams, *Port Washington*, 10; Village of Baxter Estates, "History," available at <<http://www.baxterestates.org/history.html>>.

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By 1932, Port Washington had reached a population of 12,000 and had grown into a modest north shore community. Residents sought to manage change and establish more control. In response to Nassau County's charter that allowed villages to establish their own zoning laws, a flurry of village incorporations were finalized during the 1920s and 1930s. Among these was Baxter Estates, which was incorporated in 1931.⁴

Modern Residential Architecture

By the turn of the twentieth century, American and European architects were beginning to face the same problem. Industrialization had created a sense of prosperity and opportunity, as well as better and stronger materials, but prevalent theories of architectural design remained rooted in the past. The primary school of thought in architectural education and design, which was promoted by the École de Beaux-Arts in Paris, emphasized the importance of understanding historic designs and materials. Students studied, drew, and copied centuries-old structures and developed thorough understandings of their construction. However, new technologies and materials made many of the old forms obsolete. Some architects compromised, giving their new buildings a modern, steel skeleton and a façade covered in historic details. Others rejected this half-solution, and slowly began to develop designs that reflected and celebrated modern materials.

Initiated in part by Louis Sullivan and his student Frank Lloyd Wright in Chicago, American modern architecture emerged as a result of the problem of skyscraper design. The new building type required a new approach that celebrated its verticality, structure, and the modern materials that made such tall buildings possible. By the 1920s, modernist design began to emerge in Europe in a coherent form. A cadre of architects, including Walter Gropius, Mies Van der Rohe and Le Corbusier, broke with tradition and began designing sleek buildings that reflected new materials and possibilities. They emphasized the simplification of structure and form; honesty of materials; functionality; the necessary relationship of a design to its intended purpose; and horizontal and vertical geometries. Decoration for its own sake was rejected, and instead they sought out industrial and innovative materials as a platform for new ways of conceptualizing design. These core concepts of modern design had become well-established by the time Philip Johnson coined the term "International Style" to describe them in 1932.

Many early modern architects were commissioned to design residences, and this intimate building type became a playground of sorts as a result. The house was reconceptualized as a "machine for living," and traditional forms were swept away by architects seeking to design a modern lifestyle in addition to a modern building. Modern houses tended to be designed in stark, geometric shapes. Many had flat roofs, large expanses of glass, and used metal and new materials heavily. These "glass boxes" blurred the boundaries between indoor and outdoor space and were often carefully sited to suit the landscape.

⁴ Joel H. Joseph, "History of the Incorporation of the Village of Port Washington North," typescript on file at the Port Washington Public Library, Port Washington, New York.

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As a summer and vacation destination since the mid-nineteenth century, Long Island provided plentiful opportunities for architects to design homes in the latest styles. Even clients that preferred traditional styles for their year-round homes often allowed their architects a degree of freedom when designing their summer or weekend home. Prominent modern architects began designing Long Island beach homes during the 1930s and drew inspiration from the long, low profile of the beach. Though some architects created large-scale resort designs that hearkened back to Long Island's turn-of-the-century estates, most modern designs were compact and simple. Modern houses on Long Island from the 1930s–1950s are defined by their small size and elongated shape, experimental design and materials, interaction with the beach landscape, optimization of the view, open, airy interiors, and spaces for outdoor living. Year-round, modern residences were rare, and most designs were not insulated for all seasons until the late 1950s.⁵

In the decades following World War II, suburban development and residential construction increased nationwide. The scarcity of the economic depression and subsequent war had all but halted new construction. However, postwar economic prosperity, lack of urban housing, the increase in automobile ownership and highways resulted in high demand for suburban housing. Long Island offered an ideal suburban location for families commuting to New York City, and developers began building on an unprecedented scale. Beach land was rarer, and many planned communities were set further inland in close proximity to the new parkways intended to speed and simplify travel to New York City. Public interest in modern homes increased, and clients began seeking out architects to design permanent, rather than seasonal, homes on Long Island. Though it was more common in individual designs rather than in large suburban developments, modern residential architecture flourished on Long Island through the 1970s.⁶

William Landsberg's Early Career

William Landsberg was born in Bensonhurst, Brooklyn in 1915. He excelled in school and earned a scholarship at age 16 to study architecture the Carnegie Institute of Technology in Pittsburgh (now Carnegie Mellon). He graduated from Carnegie in 1936 with a B.A. in architecture at the top of his class; he earned the Alpha Rho Chi bronze medal, which is awarded to graduating seniors, for his efforts. After graduating, he worked at architectural firms in North Carolina and Florida. As a student, Landsberg had become interested in modern design but saw few opportunities to pursue this interest. Soon after reading that Walter Gropius and Marcel Breuer would be teaching at Harvard, Landsberg sent a letter to the school requesting an application.⁷

In an attempt to revolutionize Harvard's architecture program, Joseph Hudnut, the dean of the School of Design, had traveled to Europe to interview leading modern architects in 1936. He finally chose Walter Gropius, the founder of the Bauhaus school of design. Gropius's function-based approach to teaching architecture and design

⁵ Alastair Gordon, *Long Island Modern: the First Generation of Modernist Architecture on Long Island, 1925-1960* (East Hampton, N.Y.: Guild Hall Museum, 1987), 6-8, 16, 22.

⁶ Kenneth Wayne, Erik Neil, and Sandy Isenstadt, *Long Island Moderns: Art and Architecture on the North Shore and Beyond* (Huntington, N.Y.: Heckscher Museum, 2009), 67-71.

⁷ "William Landsberg," obituary, *Port Washington News*, October 28, 2013; Nina Bernstein, interview with author, Port Washington, New York, February 25, 2014.

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offered a dramatically different learning experience than the Beaux-Arts approach, which emphasized copying traditional forms. In addition to teaching, Gropius was also encouraged to remain actively engaged in architectural practice.⁸

After he accepted the position, Gropius soon requested that Harvard also hire Marcel Breuer, his former student and professional colleague. Breuer, a native of Hungary, became interested in design as a young man. He initially studied at the Academy of Fine Art in Vienna, but left to study at the more compelling Bauhaus. The Bauhaus's informal curriculum suited Breuer; he became adept at furniture design and often studied closely with Gropius. In 1926, Gropius hired Breuer as a master interior designer for the school. Gropius encouraged and supported Breuer, whose design sensibilities he respected. Hudnut was delighted by the opportunity to have Breuer teach at Harvard and work in Gropius's firm, and he created a two-year grant-funded position for him.⁹

Gropius and Breuer soon re-centered the international focus on modernism to the Harvard University Graduate School of Design. Gropius helped build a new faculty, curriculum and courses; he also led master classes for upper-level students that centered on the examination of a design problem. Landsberg was thrilled to be in the first class of graduate students to work with the men, and he quickly established a relationship with the younger, more approachable Breuer.

After he graduated from Harvard in 1938, Landsberg briefly worked as a draftsman for Gropius and Breuer's architectural firm in Cambridge. The two professors tended to hire their most promising students to give them additional professional experience. Though Gropius and Breuer collaborated on all designs, Breuer tended to work as the firm's primary designer. As a result, Landsberg and the other draftsmen worked largely under Breuer. The partnership between Gropius and Breuer ended in 1941 after the two architects had a falling-out.¹⁰

By that time, Landsberg had been hired by the architectural firm of Shreve, Lamb & Harmon (SLH). The firm is best known for its New York City skyscrapers and office buildings, particularly the Empire State Building (1931), but was involved in a number of other regional projects. Early in his tenure at SLH, Landsberg worked with Paul L. Weiner on the Brazil Pavilion for the 1939 Worlds Fair in Queens; Landsberg supervised the installation of the Jose Luis Sert panels on the interior. The firm began to take on military commissions during the early 1940s. Soon after he married Muriel Ginsberg in 1942, William Landsberg's work with SLH sent the young couple to Newfoundland; they lived there for about a year while he worked on the design and construction of a United States military base. Upon the completion of the project, Landsberg joined the military and served in the 1253rd Engineer Battalion of the 9th army for the remainder of the Second World War. His unit

⁸ Jill E. Pearlman, *Inventing American Modernism: Joseph Hudnut, Walter Gropius, and the Bauhaus Legacy at Harvard* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2007), 66-69.

⁹ Pearlman, *Inventing American Modernism*, 82-85, 108; Robert F. Gatje, *Marcel Breuer: A Memoir* (New York: Monacelli Press, 2000) 14-17, 23.

¹⁰ Pearlman, *Inventing American Modernism*, 112; Gatje, *Marcel Breuer*, 24.

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was primarily tasked with quickly building and dismantling temporary bridges; he took part in the battle to cross the Rhine in March 1945.¹¹

Landsberg worked with Gordon Bunschaft at Skidmore, Owings & Merrill after he returned from the war. The Chicago-based firm, which was established in 1930 and opened its New York City office in 1937, had quickly established a reputation for its modern designs. SOM's early commissions in New York City were for several public housing projects and the 1939 World's Fair in Queens.¹²

Breuer was commissioned by the New York City Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in 1948 to create the inaugural design for its House in the Garden series and happened to run into Landsberg on Madison Avenue. Breuer remembered his former student and hired him on the spot to help with the project. Landsberg later recalled that Bunschaft was supportive of the move and stated "Well, if it was anyone else you were leaving to work for, I'd try to convince you to stay." The House in the Garden series was envisioned as a platform for modern architects to create affordable, expandable residential designs that could suit the average American family. Breuer's house was divided into different zones for different uses, had natural materials throughout, and his distinctive butterfly roof. While the design for the House in the Garden was primarily Breuer's, Landsberg completed all of the drawings for the project and aided Breuer with his correspondence. At the end of the exhibition, Landsberg oversaw the dismantling of the house and determined how to best divide it for its move to the Rockefeller property in Pocantico Hills. The visibility and publicity surrounding the exhibition attracted a number of clients and helped spur Breuer's architectural career.¹³

Impressed by Landsberg's work on the House in the Garden project, Breuer hired Landsberg as the director of design for his architectural firm. Landsberg continued to produce drawings and finalize designs and worked on a number of Breuer's residential commissions resulting from the MoMA exhibition, including the Hanson House and the Witalis House on Long Island. Breuer traveled frequently, and Landsberg was responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of the firm. Landsberg was also heavily involved in Breuer's residential commissions in New Canaan, Connecticut, the first Gagarin house, the Grosse Point public library, the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, and the Ferry Cooperative Dormitory at Vassar.¹⁴

Landsberg worked closely with Breuer's designs and internalized his vocabulary and design sensibility. Though he increasingly took on commercial, industrial, and institutional commissions, Breuer enjoyed the intimacy and opportunity for creativity allowed by residential commissions. In plan, he generally designed houses with "long" or "bi-nuclear" plans. Long houses include the living area on one end, a central kitchen and utility space, and

¹¹ Caroline Rob Zaleski, *Long Island Modernism: 1930-1980* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2012), 86; "William Landsberg," obituary, *Port Washington News*, October 28, 2013; "Muriel Landsberg," obituary, *Port Washington News*, October 27, 2011; Nina Bernstein, interview with author, Port Washington, New York, February 25, 2014.

¹² New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, "Manhattan House", Designation Report, 2007, 4.

¹³ Zaleski, *Long Island Modernism*, 86; Gatje, *Marcel Breuer*, 29, 302-303.

¹⁴ Zaleski, *Long Island Modernism*, 68; Nina Bernstein, interview with author, Port Washington, New York, February 25, 2014; Marcel Breuer's letters, drawings, and project files are included online in the Marcel Breuer Digital Archive. The projects which include Landsberg's work are tagged with his name. Available at: <<http://breuer-test.syr.edu/>>.

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bedrooms at the other; in his bi-nuclear houses, he separated living and sleeping areas more distinctly in the plan. Breuer's residential commissions also tended reflect a number of design features: a minimized entrance; a balance of transparent and solid materials; a blending of interior and exterior space; contextual designs that respected local landscape and materials; earthbound yet "floating" buildings; and sloping sites.¹⁵

William Landsberg House, 1951

By the late 1940s, William and Muriel Landsberg began looking for a place to establish a home. In addition to seeking out a welcoming community for their young family, they also wanted land that would allow Landsberg the freedom to design a modern home. In 1950, they found the ideal place in Port Washington. The "unbuildable," sloping and somewhat swampy lot within the early twentieth century suburb of Baxter Heights only cost the Landsbergs \$2,500. After some bulldozing to flatten out the building site, the lot was ready.¹⁶

When it was completed in 1951, the William Landsberg house reflected the architect's own preferences, desires for functionality, and his idea of what was most important in good modern design. Using Breuer's efficient long house concept, he laid out the primary floor in groupings of living space, service space, and sleeping space. Landsberg also maximized the basement floor, incorporating an inviting entryway, additional living and storage space, and a two car garage. Though he generally chose modest materials and options, such as the custom windows divided into smaller sections (rather than large, unbroken panes of glass), cement board panels, and colored laminate, he spared no design element that would contribute to the beauty, efficiency, and experience of the house. The cypress on the exterior was desired for both its beauty and durability; the Manhattan schist offered the same, as well as a tie to the local context. The light-filled, floating staircase, screen wall of exposed studs, and panoramic windowed living area offered a sense of openness. Perhaps most importantly, by placing the house on a level of the sloping hill that lined up with no other houses, Landsberg created a remarkable sense of privacy. The expanses of glass contribute to this private atmosphere, creating a sense that the house is floating amongst the trees.

Finally, the siting and year-round residential use of the William Landsberg house distinguishes it from many other modern houses on Long Island being built during this early period. By building his home on a sloping, wooded lot, Landsberg demonstrated his awareness of and affinity for national and regional trends that emphasized the incorporation of landscape into architectural design. It also reflects his familiarity with this style of siting through his work with Breuer. Where the typical Long Island beach house was set on the sand and oriented to consume the view, the Landsberg house is grounded into the hill and creates its own view by floating within the trees.

The William Landsberg house was well-received in contemporary architectural publications. The *Architectural Record* included a profile of the house in its June 1953 issue. The editors praised the architect for adding "several new twists to ways of gaining more real and illusory space from a compact plan, and at a relatively low

¹⁵ David Masello, *Architecture Without Rules: the Houses of Marcel Breuer and Herbert Beckhard* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1993), 14-16.

¹⁶ Zaleski, *Long Island Modernism*, 87; Nina Bernstein, interview with author, Port Washington, New York, February 25, 2014.

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William Landsberg House

Name of Property

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cost.” In addition to its efficiency and cost-effectiveness, they note the house’s privacy, feeling of spaciousness, and outdoor space. A number of international architectural publications also included it as an excellent example of simple, efficient, and well thought-out residential design.¹⁷

After over a decade of living in the house, Landsberg decided to slightly expand and improve upon his design. In 1962-1963, he expanded part of the house to the west by nine feet. Rather than creating more rooms, he left the plan itself the same. The living room and kitchen simply grew to fit the new available space, and a new patio was built at the rear of the house. The extension of the roof and north and south walls was completed seamlessly and in keeping with the original design.¹⁸

William Landsberg’s Later Career

William Landsberg began taking on outside design commissions while he was working as Breuer’s director of design. In many cases, Landsberg’s clients were directly referred by Breuer himself. Perhaps the most notable of these commissions are the 1953 Rudolph and Mildred Joseph house in Freeport and the 1954 O.E. McIntyre plant. The Josephs, who had initially met with Breuer, worked with Landsberg to design an L-shaped house that incorporated a medical office. They commissioned Landsberg again three years later to design a larger home nearby. Randall and Angus McIntyre contacted Breuer’s office in 1954, when Breuer was busy with the design for the UNESCO headquarters. The McIntyres, who owned a successful direct-mail business, needed a new Long Island office building. Landsberg’s design for a modern, rectangular office building with an open plan, southern exposure, and outdoor terrace offered a dramatic, modern vision for the predominantly traditional-style Westbury industrial park.¹⁹

As Landsberg began to develop a name for himself and his own commissions began to grow, he decided to leave Breuer and open his own firm in 1956. His design for the Randall McIntyre House in Deer Park, Long Island, was spotlighted by the *Architectural Record* as one of its “Record Houses of 1957.” The two-level residence, covered in cedar, glass, and colored panels, is built into the sloping site. The open, glass-walled living and dining space was centered on a massive brick chimney and took up the majority of the upper floor; the lower floors were primarily divided into bedrooms. He also designed a home for Angus McIntyre nearby. The 1961 Crichton house was Landsberg’s only commission in New Canaan, Connecticut. The one-story, flat-roofed house has a number of similarities to Landsberg’s own house, including its glass walls with sliding doors, casement windows, cypress siding, and cantilevered ends. By the early 1960s, architectural tastes were

¹⁷ “Raised Basement Expands Hillside House,” *Architectural Record* June 1953, 162-165; “Casa Sulla Collina,” *Vitrum, Lastre di vetro e cristallo* 48 (Oct. 1953), 34-35; “Habitation à Port Washington,” *L’architecture d’aujourd’hui* 52 (Jan.–Feb. 1954), 15-16; “Designed for a Hillside,” *The American Home* (Apr. 1956), 164-167; Helmut Borchardt and Volker Traub, *Einfamilienhäuser in den USA* (Munich 1952).

¹⁸ Construction drawings from the 1962/1963 addition to the Landsberg House in the collection of Nina Bernstein, Port Washington, New York.

¹⁹ Zaleski, *Long Island Modernism*, 88-90.

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William Landsberg House

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changing. Concerned that the number of his commissions was beginning to taper, Landsberg decided to close his firm in 1964 (Please see Appendix A for a complete list of all of Landsberg's known commissions).²⁰

Between 1964 and 1982, Landsberg worked as a project manager for a series of architectural firms, including Edward Durell Stone, Kahn & Jacobs, and Welton Beckett. During that time, he was involved in several large-scale projects, including the Veterans Administration hospital in Northport, One Central Plaza in Boston, and an air mail facility at Kennedy International Airport. In addition, William Landsberg took on occasional architectural commissions; many were from previous clients. For example, while the project was never completed, he developed plans for a second Crichton house. He had enjoyed painting as a hobby and creative outlet since the 1930s. After retiring, he enjoyed spending more time painting and explored modern and traditional styles and subjects freely. Landsberg continued to live at his home in Port Washington until his death in October 2013.²¹

Though never well-known on a national scale, William Landsberg is significant for his involvement with national figures and his work on the east coast, particularly Long Island. Through his close relationship with Breuer, Landsberg was able to develop his own successful practice. Over the course of his career, Landsberg developed a consistent preference for simple, functional design, a balance between natural and modern materials and a clear relationship of a building to its site. Perhaps one of the best, and most intact, remaining examples of his work, the Landsberg House offers a clear representation of William Landsberg's design philosophy for modern living.

²⁰ Zaleski, *Long Island Modernism*, 90-92; Glenn Fowler, "The Contemporary Home – A Piece of Landscape Enclosed for Shelter," *The New York Times* June 23, 1957; National Trust for Historic Preservation, "Crichton House," *Modern Homes Survey: New Canaan, Connecticut*. Available at < <http://www.preservationnation.org/travel-and-sites/sites/northeast-region/new-canaan-ct/sites/crichton-house.html>>.

²¹ "Who's Who: Mod Long Island," *DoCoMoMo New York – Tri-State* (2010), 1.

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William Landsberg House

Name of Property

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William Landsberg House

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Section 10 Page 3

William Landsberg House

Name of Property

Nassau County, New York

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Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary for this nomination is shown as a heavy black line on the accompanying map.

Boundary Justification

The boundary incorporates the entire lot on which the William Landsberg House has historically been located.

United States Department of the Interior
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William Landsberg House

Name of Property

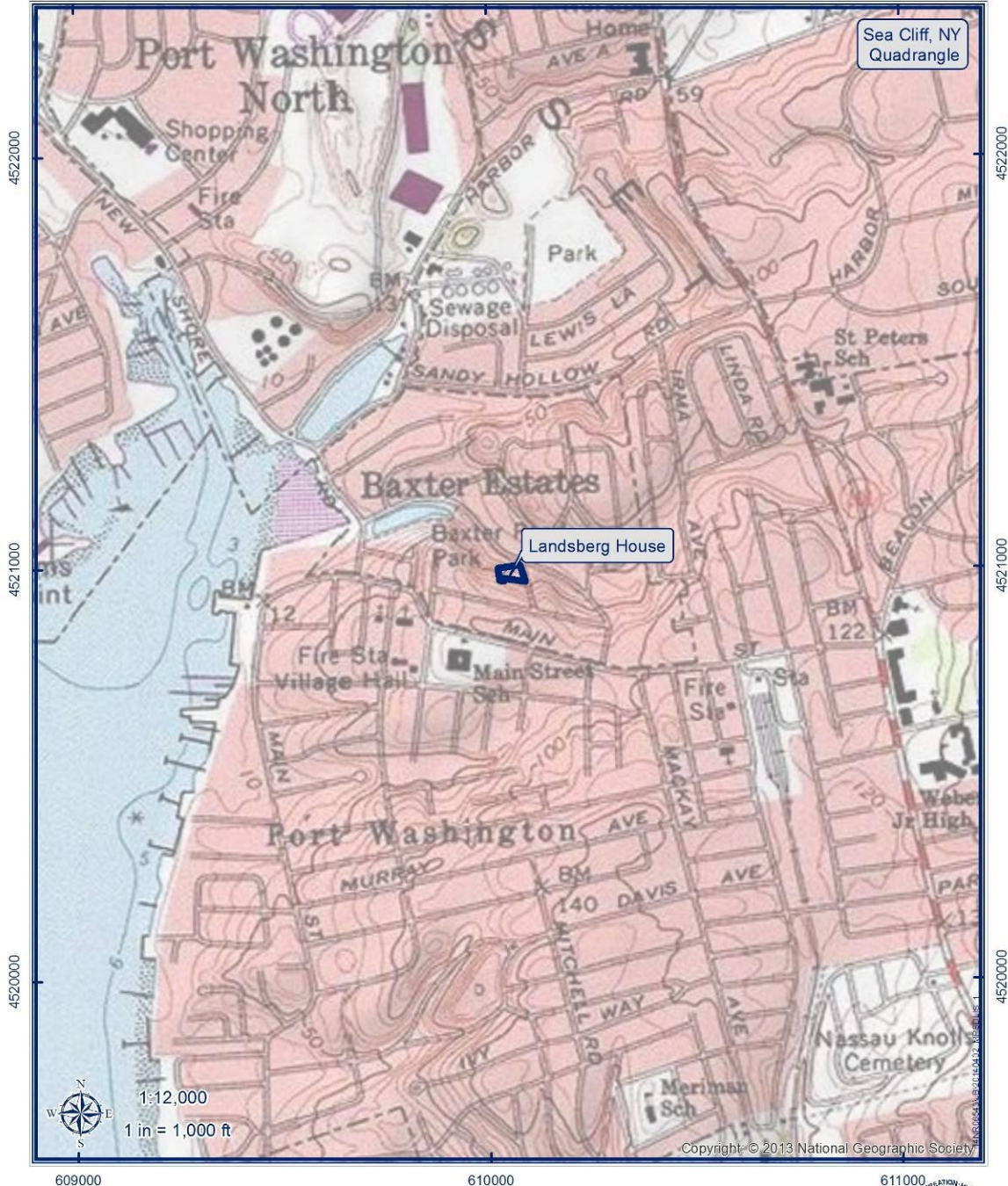
Nassau County, New York

County and State

Section 10 Page 4

William Landsberg House
Baxter Estates, Nassau Co., NY

5 Tianderah Road
Baxter Estates, NY 11050



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter



Landsberg House

Tax Parcel Data:
Nassau Co, RPS
nassaucountyny.gov



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Continuation Sheet

William Landsberg House

Name of Property

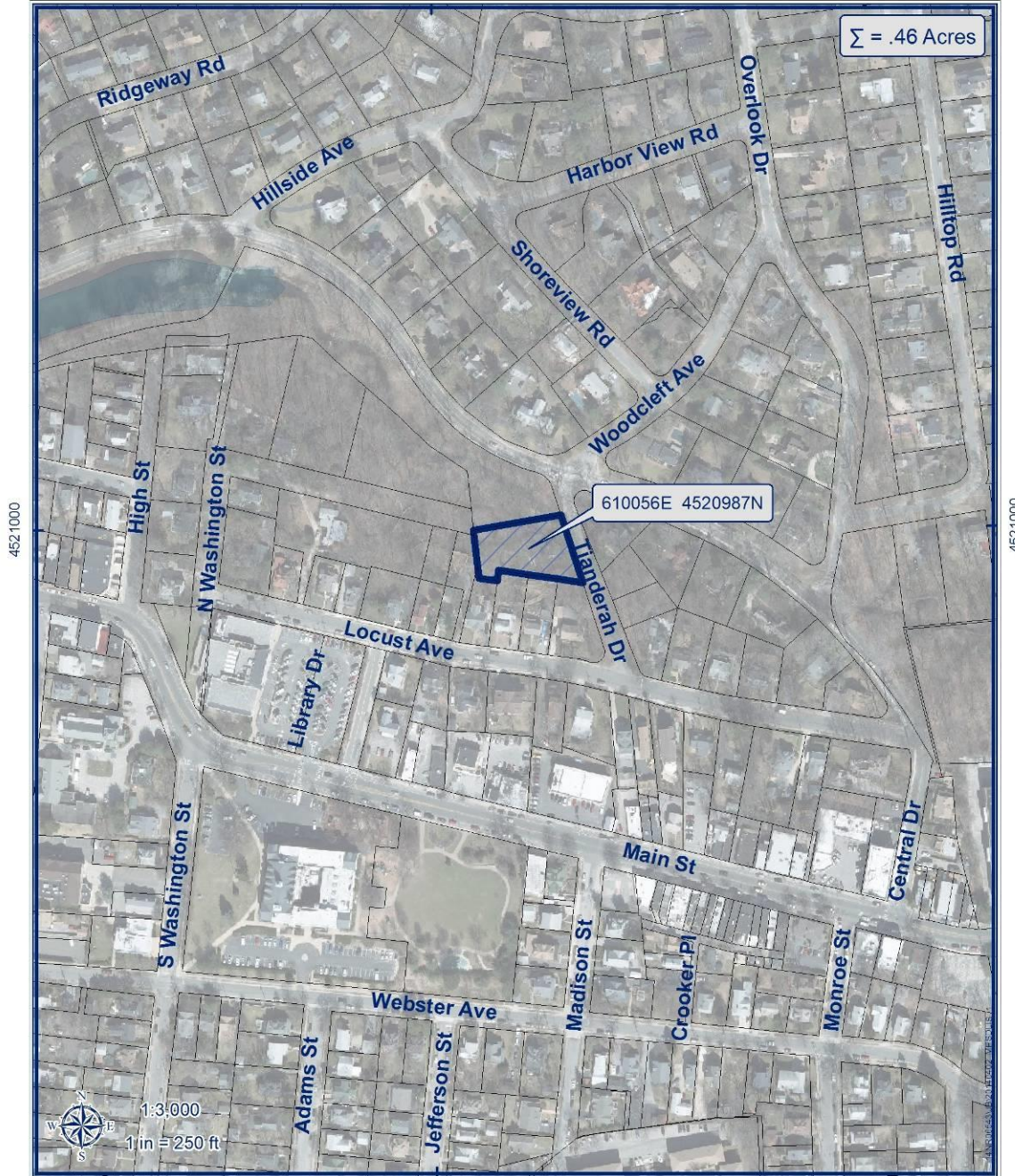
Nassau County, New York

County and State

Section 10 Page 5

William Landsberg House
Baxter Estates, Nassau Co., NY

5 Tianderah Road
Baxter Estates, NY 11050



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter



Landsberg House

Tax Parcel Data:
Nassau Co, RPS
nassaucountyny.gov



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William Landsberg House

Name of Property

Nassau County, New York

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Additional Information

Photo Log

Name of Property:	William Landsberg House
City:	Port Washington
County:	Nassau
State:	NY
Name of Photographer:	Jennifer Betsworth and Nina Bernstein
Date of Photographs:	February and May 2014
Location of Original Digital Files:	NY SHPO

NY_NassauCo_LandsbergHouse_0001
Façade and north elevation, facing southwest

NY_NassauCo_LandsbergHouse_0002
Façade, facing west

NY_NassauCo_LandsbergHouse_0003
Façade and south elevation, facing northwest

NY_NassauCo_LandsbergHouse_0004
Entry hall and staircase, facing south

NY_NassauCo_LandsbergHouse_0005
Staircase, facing east

NY_NassauCo_LandsbergHouse_0006
Desk alcove, facing west

NY_NassauCo_LandsbergHouse_0007
Living room, facing northeast

NY_NassauCo_LandsbergHouse_0008
Living room, facing southwest

NY_NassauCo_LandsbergHouse_0009
Living room, facing east

NY_NassauCo_LandsbergHouse_00010
Dining room, facing north

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William Landsberg House

Name of Property

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NY_NassauCo_LandsbergHouse_00011
Kitchen, facing northeast

NY_NassauCo_LandsbergHouse_00012
Bedroom, facing east

NY_NassauCo_LandsbergHouse_00013
Bedroom, facing southeast

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William Landsberg House

Name of Property

Nassau County, New York

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Façade, William Landsberg House, *Architectural Record*, 1953

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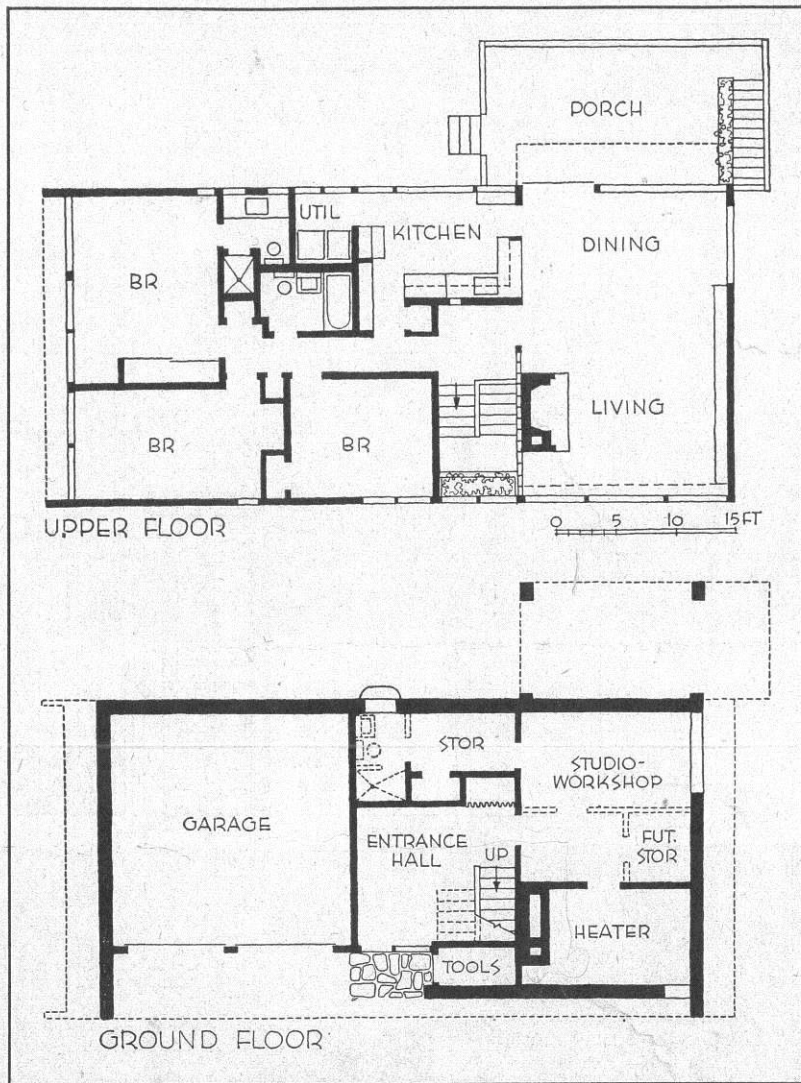
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William Landsberg House

Name of Property

Nassau County, New York

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Floor Plan, William Landsberg House, *Architectural Record*, 1953

Property Name	Location	Year	Project Type	Present Status	Notes
Berman, Bud	Great Neck, NY	1959	Office Building	Plans only	
Berman, Dr. Milton	Roslyn Heights, NY	1960	Residence, Addition and Alteration	Plans only	
Bernstein, Warren and Nina	121 Harbor Road, Sands Point, NY	1992	Residence, Addition and Alteration	Completed	
Bildner, Albert and Patsy	Yorktown Heights, NY	1957	New Residence	Completed	
Blumenthal, Abram and Elizabeth	Baltimore, MD	1949	New Residence	Extant	
Borden, Dr. A.	5 Central Drive, Port Washington, NY	1961	Residence, Alteration and Doctors Office Addition	Completed	
Brennan	Port Washington, NY	1965	Residence, Alteration	Plans only	
Chais	Sands Point, NY	1964	Residence, Alteration	Completed	
Crichton, John and Zula (I)	98 Thayer Pond Road, New Canaan, CT	1961	New Residence	Extant	
Crichton, Zula	Marshall Ridge Road, New Canaan, CT	1969-78	New Residence	Plans only	
Diamond, Edwin	Sands Point, NY	1958	Residence, Alteration	Plans only	
Diamond, Edwin	Port Washington, NY	1963	Residence, Alteration	Completed	
Ethical Culture Society	Garden City, NY	1958-59	Headquarters Building	Extant	
Ethical Culture Society	Garden City, NY	1961	Headquarters, Alteration	Completed	
Fields	Greenvale, NY	1962	Residence, Addition and Alteration	Completed	
Fishgold	Little Neck, NY	1959	New Residence	Completed	
Friedman	Roslyn, NY	1961	Residence, Addition and Alteration	Plans only	
Gannet, Leonard	Morris Township, NJ	1997	Residence, Addition and Alteration	Plans only	
Genn	28 Westervelt Ave., Tenafly, NJ	1959	New Residence	Extant	
Getler	Roslyn Heights, NY	1958	Residence, Alteration	Plans only	
Glasser	Great Neck, NY	1959	Residence, Alteration	Completed	
Hanson, John and Bea		1956	Residence, Addition and Alteration	Plans only	
Hecht, John	Kings Point, NY	1964	Residence, Addition	Completed	
Jericho Office Building	Jericho, NY	1962	Office Building	Plans only	

Property Name	Location	Year	Project Type	Present Status	Notes
Joseph, Dr. Rudolph and Mildred	137 West Seaman Avenue, Freeport, NY	1954-55	New Residence	Completed	
Joseph, Dr. Rudolph and Mildred	261 Prince Street, Freeport, NY	1959	New Residence	Completed	
Keevil, Mr. and Mrs. Norman	Bacon Road, Westbury, NY	1961	New Residence	Demolished	
Landsberg, William and Muriel	5 Tianderah Road, Port Washington, NY	1951	New Residence	Extant	
Landsberg, William and Muriel	5 Tianderah Road, Port Washington, NY	1962	Residence, Addition and Alteration	Extant	
Leonard, Eugene and Doris	8 Sloanes Court, Sands Point, NY	1962	New Residence	Extant	
Lutzker, Mr. and Mrs. Lester	East Hills, NY	1962	Residence, Addition	Completed	
Mayer, Dr. Klaus	Riverdale, NY	1961	New Residence	Completed	
McIntyre, Angus and Bobbie	Deer Park, Long Island, NY	1958	New Residence	Demolished	
O.E. McIntyre, Inc.	Westbury, NY	1955	Publishing Plant	Demolished	
O.E. McIntyre, Inc.	Point Pleasant, IA	1963	Office Building, Alteration	Completed	
McIntyre, Randall and Helen	Deer Park, Long Island, NY	1957	New Residence	Demolished	
Moore, Edgar and Helen	Great Neck, NY	1962	Residence, Alteration	Completed	
Nightingale, Dr. Arthur	100 Meadowbrook St., Garden City, NY	1951	New Residence	Extant, Cosmetic Alteration	
Noble, Jack	East Hills, NY	1964	Residence, Addition and Alteration	Plans only	
Noble, Sam	Roslyn Heights, NY	1950	Residence, Addition and Alteration	Plans only	
North Shore Community Arts Center	Roslyn, NY	1960	Cultural Arts Complex	Plans only	
Patron	Sands Point, NY	1964	New Residence	Plans only	
Perry	Sherman, CT		New Residence	Completed	with Herbert Beckard
Raffner, Harold and Bernice		1959	Residence, Addition and Alteration	Completed	
Rimsky, Robert	Sands Point, NY	1963	Residence, Addition and Alteration	Plans only	
Ritt, Dr. Robert and Alyce	Long Beach, NY	1950	New Residence	Completed	
Robberson, Elbert	Port Washington, NY	1959	Addition	Plans only	

Property Name	Location	Year	Project Type	Present Status	Notes
Rosenkranz, Jill	Martha's Vineyard, MA		New Residence	Plans only	
Rosenthal, Robert and Ruth	Sands Point, NY	1963	Residence, Addition and Alteration	Completed	
Roslyn Animal Hospital	1050 Northern Blvd., Roslyn, NY	1958	Hospital Building	Extant	
Rostock, Edward	Hollis, Queens, NY	1955	New Residence	Completed	
Rowen, Phillip	Roslyn Heights, NY	1961	New Residence	Plans only	
Sachs	Port Washington, NY	1956	New Residence	Plans only	
Seff, Mrs. Lenore	Great Neck, NY	1960	Residence, Addition and Alteration	Plans only	
Selden	Quogue, NY	1955	New Residence	Plans only	
Senie, Mr. B.J.	Greensboro, NC	1938	New Residence	Plans only	
Scharf	Sands Point, NY	1960	Residence, Addition	Completed	
Schlifka, Dr. Samuel	East Meadow, NY	1961	Residence, Alteration	Plans only	
Sheffield Building Corp (Eugene Farrow and Philip Kallenberg)		1954	Design for Multiple-home subdivision / development	Plans only	
Stone, Raymond	Great Neck, NY	1962	Residence, Extension	Plans only	
Syosset Doctor's Office - Dr. Howard L. Kantor	Syosset, NY	1959	Pediatrician's Office	Plans only	
Trattler	Kings Point, NY	1955	New Residence	Plans only	
Wachtel, Harry	Kings Point, NY	1962	Residence, Alteration	Completed	
Weinstock	Sherman, CT		New Residence	Completed	
Westchester Reform Temple	Scarsdale, NY	1960	Synagogue	Completed, subsequently altered	Marcel Breuer, consulting architect
White, Erwin and Rochelle	Roslyn Heights, NY	1967	Residence, Alteration	Plans only	
White, Peter J.	Lloyd Harbor, NY	1956	New Residence	Extant	
Zeta Beta Tau, Penn State	State College, PA	1958	Fraternity House	Plans only	with Herbert Beckard









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MAY 2012



















UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Landsberg, William, House

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NEW YORK, Nassau

DATE RECEIVED: 6/30/14 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 8/04/14
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 8/19/14 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 8/16/14
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 14000490

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 8.18.14 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Division for Historic Preservation
P.O. Box 189, Waterford, New York 12188-0189
518-237-8643



Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor

Rose Harvey
Commissioner

20 June 2014

Alexis Abernathy
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
1201 Eye St. NW, 8th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20005

Re: National Register Nomination

Dear Ms. Abernathy:

I am pleased to enclose the following four National Register nominations, all on discs, to be considered for listing by the Keeper of the National Register:

Public School 60, Erie County
William Landsberg House, Nassau County
Violet Avenue School, Dutchess County
Philip Livingston Junior High School, Albany County

Please feel free to call me at 518.237.8643 x 3261 if you have any questions.

Sincerely:

Kathleen LaFrank
National Register Coordinator
New York State Historic Preservation Office