

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

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received DEC 19 1984
date entered JAN 18

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

1. Name

historic Harold Bell Wright, Estate

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 850 North Barbara Worth

N/A not for publication

city, town Tucson

N/A vicinity of

state Arizona

code 04

county Pima

code 019

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input checked="" 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A 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 Dr. Barry Friedman

street & number 850 North Barbara Worth

city, town Tucson

N/A vicinity of

state Arizona

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. City of Tucson

street & number 250 West Alameda

city, town Tucson

state Arizona

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town

state

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" 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

SUMMARY/CONTEXT

The three stuccoed buildings of the Harold Bell Wright estate: house, guest house, and garage, built in 1922, are located in the foothills of the Catalina Mountains northeast of Tucson, Arizona. The buildings are Pueblo Revival style and feature walled courts, tile-roofed porches, irregular massing, and wrought iron details. Large windows frame views to the desert vegetation of the estate and the Santa Catalina Mountains beyond. The vegetation was maintained and enhanced by Harold Bell Wright. The buildings are reached by a steep drive.

BUILDING DESCRIPTION

Main House

The Pueblo Revival-style main house, designed by Harold Bell Wright, is a large, irregularly massed, one story structure characterized by planar wall surfaces and parapet roofs. The building is constructed of concrete and concrete masonry covered in rough textured stucco and painted an earthen brown color. Wright chose the exterior colors, feeling that they were characteristic of the desert and of Pueblo architecture.¹ The exterior color scheme has been maintained by subsequent owners.

The house is roughly "U"-shaped, surrounding a central courtyard. Wright appears to have carefully planned the house's vistas, with all major windows opening onto a controlled view of a patio or walled area and a vista towards the mountains.

The front (south) facade is composed of four major sections: the carport, the west wing, patio wall, and east building mass.

The carport is a stuccoed, post-and-beam form, lower in height than the adjoining building mass. The carport is enclosed on three sides; the north and west are walled, and the east enclosure is formed by the house. Access is from the front (south) through large, double wooden doors and from a door in the building facade opening into the east of the carport. A second arched entrance, with a gate, also penetrates the south facade to the right of the double doors.

The south facade of the western building wing extends beyond the plane of the carport and is penetrated by a single, centrally placed steel casement window covered with a wrought iron grille. The facade is also adorned with two symmetrically placed iron canals that punctuate the parapet wall at roof level.

The patio wall is the major focal point of the south facade. The wall is penetrated by a large, arched opening enclosed by a heavy wrought iron gate. To the right a bench, sculpted from local rocks and concrete, is shaded by a small, projecting lean-to porch. The porch is constructed of heavy timbers with a Spanish tile roof.

(Continued on Continuation Sheet 1)

1 "Harold Bell Wright Intrigues Those Who Read Novels to Live Stories", Tucson Star, July 13, 1924.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input 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 1922 **Builder/Architect** Harold Bell Wright

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

SUMMARY

Built in 1922 and designed by Harold Bell Wright, the Harold Bell Wright Estate is historically significant as the home of Harold Bell Wright, a popular American novelist of the 1910's, 1920's, and 1930's. Many of his most popular novels were written at this house. The growth of Tucson's general popularity in the 1920's, based on its healthful climate, has been partially attributed to the writings of Harold Bell Wright.

BACKGROUND/CONTEXT

Harold Bell Wright was born on May 4, 1872 in New York State. Mr. Wright's family was poor and moved frequently. At the age of twenty, Mr. Wright established residency in Ohio. In 1892 he enrolled at Hiram College in Ohio, where his studies focused on religious training.

Soon after completing his General Studies Degree, Wright moved to the Ozark Mountains for his health. He began preaching and was assigned his first pastorate in the Christian Church of Pierce City, Missouri. In order to reach the people of his community in a broader scope, Mr. Wright began writing his first book, That Printer of Udell's, a series of essays on practical Christianity, published in Missouri in 1903. The essays were meant to be read by his congregation; however, their outside popularity grew quickly. He wrote a second book deliberately for commercial publishing which elaborated his ideas on the sincere ministry of man through everyday behavior.¹ His early writings spawned his successful literary career.

Mr. Wright's health worsened until he was finally forced to retire from his pastorate in 1904. He moved with his family to Imperial Valley, California, where his health improved. He began riding the range as a cowboy with Arizona and California ranchers and eventually became partial owner of the Cross Anchor Ranch in Arizona. An accident in 1915 caused a serious setback in his health, and he developed tuberculosis. He subsequently moved to Tucson in 1915 to recover from the illness.

In 1915, while living in a tent in the Santa Catalina Mountains north of Tucson, Wright began to use the Southwest as settings for his novels. When a Man's a Man (1916); The Mine with the Iron Door (1923); A Son of His Father (1925); and The Devil's Highway (1932) reflected a true love of the desert. His books painted alluring pictures of the desert and "surrounded (Tucson and the desert) with a fabric of romance."²

(Continued on Continuation Sheet 4)

1 "From his beautiful desert home ... sends to you this message for making life better." Tucson Star, December 28, 1930.

2 "Harold B. Wright intrigues those who read novels to live stories." Tucson Star, July 13, 1924.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet No. 6

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 6.8

Quadrangle name Tucson East Quad

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	1	9	5	1	1	3	9	1	3	1	0	3	1	5	6	1	6	1	1	5	1	0
Zone			Easting						Northing													

B

Zone			Easting						Northing													

C

Zone			Easting						Northing													

D

Zone			Easting						Northing													

E

Zone			Easting						Northing													

F

Zone			Easting						Northing													

G

Zone			Easting						Northing													

H

Zone			Easting						Northing													

Verbal boundary description and justification Book 9 of Maps and Plats, Page 52 Section 7 Township 14 South Range 15 East. Lots 124 and 125 shown as excluded on the plat of Harold Bell Wright Estates, a Subdivision of Pima County. Arizona Map in Record of Pima County Recorders Office.

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 PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES (Edited by SHPO staff)

organization Lisa Smith date February 27, 1984

street & number 705 North Seventh Avenue telephone (602) 624-1717

city or town Tucson state Arizona

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 Donna J. Schover

title SHPO date November 14, 1984

For NPS use only

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

Entered in the National Register

date 1-18-85

for Melores Byers
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

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Original light fixtures are found on this building facade, as well as on the northern and western facades. The fixtures are rectangular, with geometric ironwork protecting the glass. The sculptured geometric forms resemble Southwestern Indian designs found on textiles and pottery.

The eastern sections of the south facade are an original bedroom wing and a small later addition. The facades are enclosed by a fenced pool yard. The ca. 1950 addition is of the same scale, materials, and style of the original house and is indistinguishable on both the interior and exterior without careful examination. The addition does not jeopardize the overall integrity of the building. This facade is divided into two sections: one-third is set back and is punctured by one centrally located steel casement window; the remaining section is punctured only by double doors to a pool storage room.

The east side of the house is composed of two projecting masses that define a small walled courtyard. The multi-leveled courtyard is defined by brick decks and planting beds and contains large palo verde trees. Beyond the low wall of the courtyard, the lush desert vegetation grows freely. The main east wall of this facade is punctured by a large, steel-framed window with a large, central light flanked by side lights. A door that leads to the south bedrooms also punctures this wall. A small original window has been enclosed; the sill is still visible within the wall. The south, east, and north walls of the northerly projection are punctured by large, multi-paned, fixed steel frame windows.

The north side of the building is dominated by a walled patio. The building is set on the very edge of the knoll, and the ground falls away quickly at the outside edge of the three foot patio wall. (Full facade photo of north elevation is impossible due to topography and vegetation.) This northern patio is terminated on the east by a steep projecting building mass. This building portion contains an exterior stair leading to the roof. The major section of the north facade is a planar form broken only by two large windows and a single door. The windows are steel framed with a single large central panel flanked by side lights. The windows are inoperable. The patio turns the corner on the western end of the building, forming a wider patio area accessible from the dining room and kitchen. This patio area is "roofed" by a pergola of four, heavy, roughly hewn beams supported by columns of the same fashion. Originally, the beam system supported canvas awnings.

Directly to the west of the dining patio is a yard area defined by flagstones and a stone barbecue, which is an original feature. Original light fixtures and wrought iron wall ornaments are attached to the north wall (back carport wall).

Entry to the house is through the large central gate inside the south courtyard. The courtyard is paved with brick and contains non-desert vegetation.

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The walls of the courtyard are articulated by iron canals and large windows. The east facade, partially covered by vegetation, is broken by one door and small horizontal strip windows. Originally the servants wing, this wing, which was modified in 1982, now contains childrens bedrooms. The exterior remains unaltered. A south wall is punctured by a single wood frame door and, just to the right, a living room window. The window is a single-plate, fixed sash window in a wood frame. The facade's roof line is broken by a battered fireplace chimney that rises one-half story above the house.

The building mass facing west is flanked by a large porch that runs the length of the facade. This porch provides protection and shade to the large front door and to a large bedroom window facing west. The porch is constructed of large, roughly hewn timbers supported by log columns. The porch soffit is constructed of saguaro ribs, a technique typical of Southwestern architecture, often found in Spanish Colonial and Pueblo Revival style structures.

Although the interior has been altered by the updating of kitchen and baths, and lighter color schemes, the overall integrity of the interior remains intact. Original doors, wrought iron hardware, window seats, and radiator grills remain intact. Significant major rooms, including entry room, living room, dining room, library, and writing room, are only slightly changed in the 62 years since the building's construction.

The large living room and adjoining dining room run east-west, with large windows opening onto the southern courtyard and northern patio. The large rectangular rooms feature hardwood floors and ornate mahogany box-beam ceilings. The original ceilings and floors are in excellent condition. Mahogany window seats conceal radiators. Twisted wrought iron grillework on the front of the window seats allow air movement from the radiators.

The entry hall and library that form part of the eastern wing of the building have original hardwood floors. The library is ornately finished with hardwood wainscoting, baseboards, and picture mouldings.

The northern projection of the east wing of the building is Harold Bell Wright's original writing room. The large room is reached from the library by three steps (down). The room is flooded with light from the five large, multi-paned, steel frame windows. These windows view south into the small eastern court. The simple room has a scored concrete floor and plastered ceiling, simple wood window sills and wood window seats. A large walk-in safe terminates the west end of the room; the six foot door of the safe is adjacent to the stairs to the library.

The remainder of the house contains bedrooms, baths, and a large kitchen. The spaces retain the original plaster walls and ceilings; however, modern floor coverings and fixtures have been added.

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Garage

The estate also contains a large, three-car garage, built in 1922. The stuccoed brick masonry building has a large parapeted roof, with three sets of double wood doors on the east facade. The north wall is penetrated by a single wood frame double-hung window. The west and south facades are unbroken by openings. The interior is unfinished, with exposed brick walls, open wood roof structure, and concrete floor.

Guest House

A guest house, located just south of the garage, completes the estate complex. It is a small stuccoed brick cottage focused around an east-facing porch. The sloping porch is constructed of heavy timber beams and columns with a Spanish tiled roof. A single door and two wood frame, double-hung windows puncture the east facade, opening onto the porch. The north and south facades are identical and are composed of two sections. The front wall section features a sloped parapet, reflecting the slope of the porch concealed behind it. Two wood vigas project from the wall. The back wall section is slightly lower than the front parapet. This section is punctured by two symmetrically placed wood frame, double-hung windows. The west wall is unbroken by openings.

The interior of the cottage has been altered: walls and ceilings are plastered; floors have modern floor coverings of carpet and tile.

INTEGRITY

The exterior of all three buildings exhibits a high level of architectural integrity. Minor alterations and repairs have been executed with care, and the building's forms, detailing, and colors remain almost exactly as Harold Bell Wright originally constructed and finished them. The integrity of the interior spaces is also well preserved in spite of some modernization. The buildings show little deterioration and are in excellent physical condition.

BOUNDARIES

The original boundaries of the Harold Bell Wright Estate comprised approximately 160 acres, bounded by Wilmot Road to the west, Speedway Boulevard to the north, and other large estates on the east and south. In 1950, Mary Gardner, the new owner of the property, along with Tucson developer L. A. Romine, subdivided all of the estate except the knoll surrounding the house, leaving an approximately nine acre site. The condition of the knoll has been preserved by all subsequent owners, effectively maintaining the natural desert vegetation and undisturbed natural quality as Harold Bell Wright had envisioned and enjoyed it.

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"Wright's success was phenomenal. Twelve of his books became best sellers, and eight were made into movies. By the end of 1918 he had earned \$734,000 from book sales. After his death, total sales of Wright's books were estimated at over ten million copies, and Irvington Harlow Hart ranked Wright sixth among the one hundred leading authors of best sellers between 1894 and 1944."³

"One of the most read and most ridiculed writers of his generation," Harold Bell Wright received extreme measures of popular applause for his novels. Literary editor and critic, Grant Overton, wrote in 1923 that sales of Wright's books exceeded "those of any other living writer anywhere"; indeed for almost twenty years they were surpassed only by the Bible. "Millions of readers avidly embraced their message of social gospel and return to the values of pioneer America."⁴

It was in 1918, while he was at the height of his popularity, that Mr. Wright found the site for his Tucson home and began to plan the house. Wright completed the house in 1922 and lived there with his family until approximately 1941 when he moved to California again for his health. Harold Bell Wright's love of the desert affected not only his writing but also his concepts of dwelling and site. Mr. Wright chose his homesite because of its abundant vegetation and dramatic views of eleven mountain ranges. Care was taken to protect all the desert vegetation during construction.

Wright designed the large one story, central court, Pueblo Revival style structure himself, with emphasis on site relationships. Wright is said to have chosen a Pueblo style because he felt it reflected the concepts of desert living.⁵

HISTORIC ASSOCIATION

Harold Bell Wright was a significant force in the development of Tucson as both a health center and a winter retreat of the West. His influence was felt locally through his financial and public support of St. Joseph's Hospital and Comstock Children's Foundation. He often acted as guest speaker for the institutions and helped in local fund raises. However, the scope of his influence was not limited to Tucson. Close to one hundred articles were published by or about Mr. Wright from 1910 to 1934. The articles, such as "Why I Did Not Die", Success Magazine, July, 1926, in which Wright talks about Arizona and his recovery from tuberculosis, appeared in nationwide publications and often contained photos of his home. Filmed versions of his books, such as "The Mine with the Iron Door", filmed near Tucson, also brought the city national acclaim.

3 Tagg, Lawrence V., "Dedication to Harold Bell Wright", Arizona and the West: A Quarterly Journal of History, Bruce J. Dinges, ed. (Tucson, University of Arizona Press, Winter, 1980), p. 30.

4 Ibid.

5 "Harold B. Wright intrigues those who read novels to live stories." Tucson Star, July 13, 1924.

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The location of Wright's home aided in the development of the surrounding eastern area of Tucson. Although it was the first home to be built that far east, Wright's estate established the area east of Country Club Road as ideal for large estates. By the early 1930's, the area contained approximately ten mansions with their surrounding estates and grounds, two exclusive subdivisions, and a resort hotel, the original El Conquistador. By 1930, the area was recognized as unique in Tucson. A 1929 Tucson newspaper article discussed the phenomenon, giving credit to Wright. Today approximately five of the large mansions remain, including Villa Carondelet and the Pond and Mitman houses. However, the Harold Bell Wright Estate is one of only a few remaining in residential use. The Villa Carondelet is now a nursing home and the Pond home is a restaurant; many others have been destroyed. The Villa Carondelet and the Harold Bell Wright mansions are adjacent to each other and were the two largest mansions of their time.

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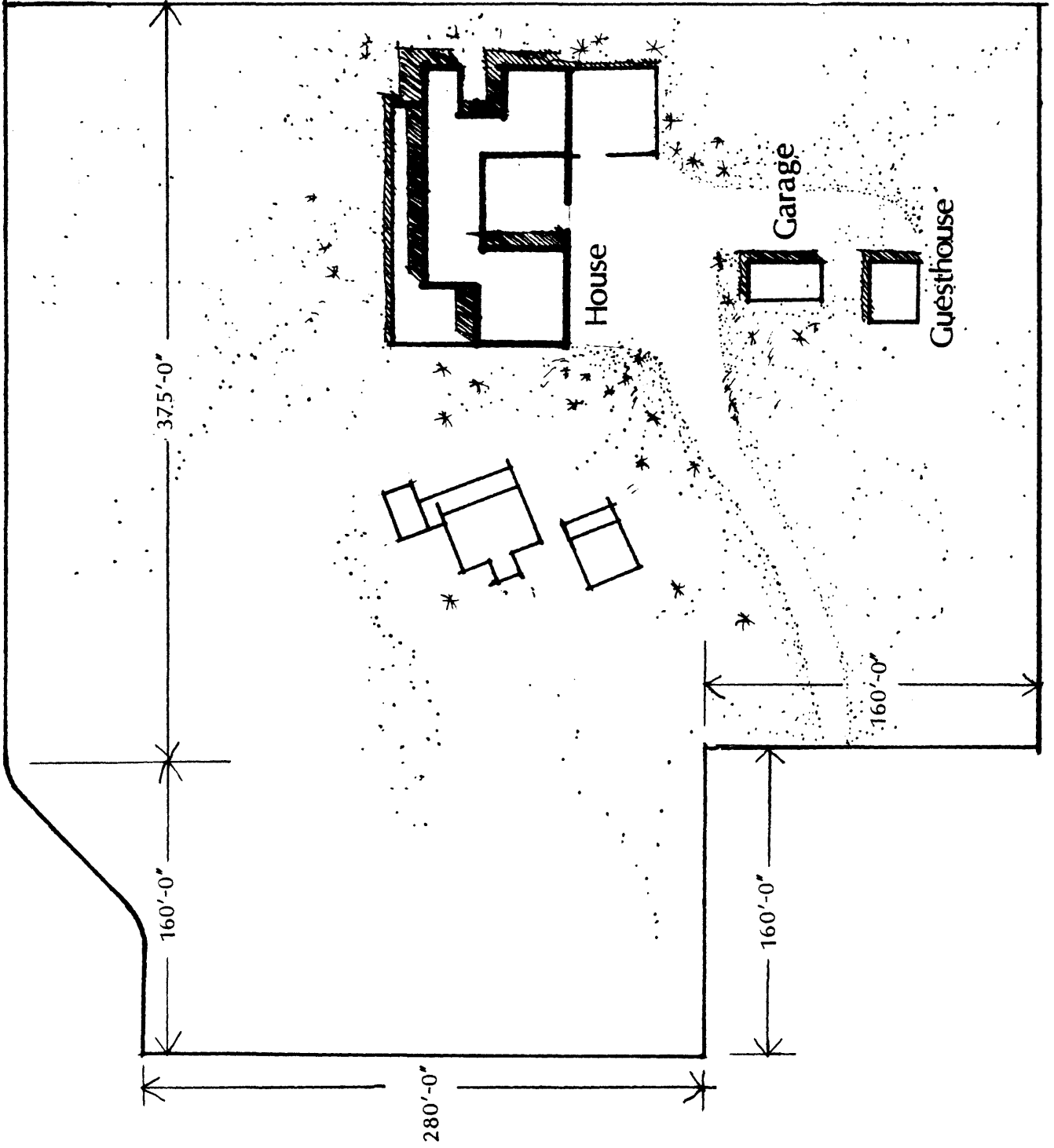
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Wright, Harold B. "Why I Did Not Die", The American Magazine, June, 1924.

HAROLD BELL WRIGHT ESTATE



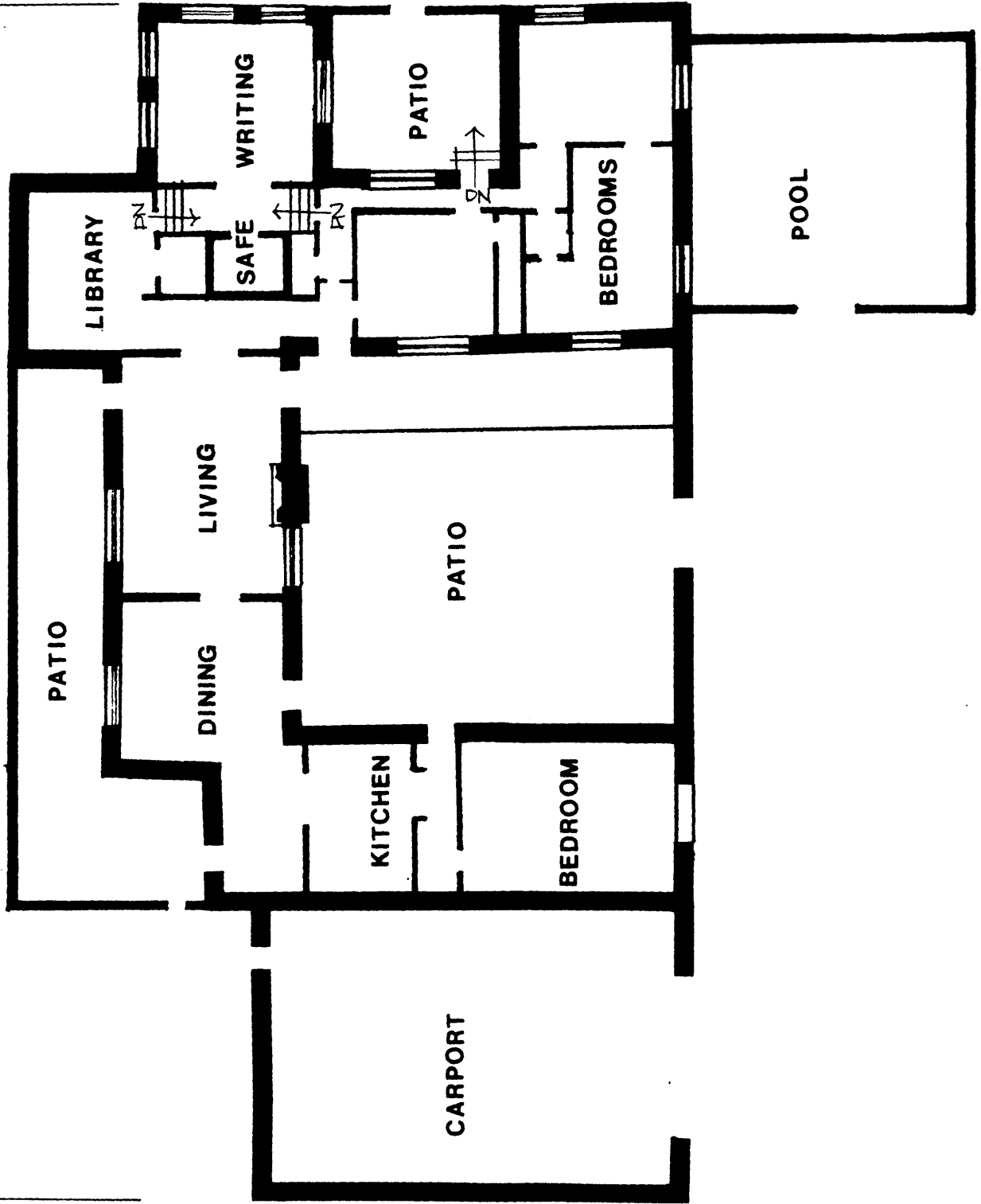
Site



Scale is approximate 1" = 30'-0" NORTH

139'-0"

87'-0"



Scale is approximate Plan is schematic

Building Plan



NORTH