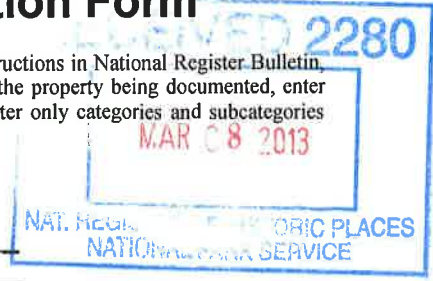


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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# 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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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.



### 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Walser, Joseph J. House

Other names/site number: J.J. Walser House

Name of related multiple property listing:  
N/A

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

### 2. Location

Street & number: 42 N. Central Avenue

City or town: Chicago State: IL County: Cook

Not For Publication:  Vicinity:

### 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 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 at the following level(s) of significance:

national  statewide  local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A  B  C  D



DSHPO

3-4-13

Signature of certifying official/Title:

Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

State or Federal agency/bureau  
or Tribal Government

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**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)

*Jon Edson H. Beall*  
Signature of the Keeper

4.23.13

Date of Action

**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

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**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>2</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>2</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC / Single Dwelling

DOMESTIC / Secondary Structure

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC / Single Dwelling

DOMESTIC / Secondary Structure

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19<sup>th</sup> & EARLY 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS

Prairie School

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: concrete foundation, wood and stucco walls,  
asphalt roof

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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#### Summary Paragraph

Built in 1903 by architect Frank Lloyd Wright, the Joseph J. Walser House is located in Chicago, Illinois, at 42 N. Central Avenue. The building stands in Chicago's Austin community area approximately one-half mile north of Columbus Park, one mile north of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Expressway, and nine miles west of the Loop central business district (see Figure 1 in Section 8 for a current context map). The Walser House is a two-story wood frame structure clad in white stucco and dark-painted pine wood trim topped by an asphalt-shingled hipped roof, with massing and details that exhibit classic Prairie School features. Cruciform in plan, the home's center two-story block contains living spaces on the first floor with five bedrooms and one bathroom on the second. The house's north wing contains the reception room (main entry) with a kitchen and storage spaces in the south wing. An independent wood-frame, one-story stucco-clad garage at the rear of the property was also probably designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, was built c.1903, and exhibits design elements typical of Wright and the Prairie School.

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## Narrative Description

### Site

(See Figure 4 in Section 8 for a current site plan)

The Walser House is located on a long open lot with its main façade facing Central Avenue to the east. The size of the home and its placement on the site approximately fifty feet back from the street reflect the early suburban residential character of the Austin community. The Walser House today is located along a busy stretch of Central Avenue three blocks south of an active commercial district anchored by the CTA Central Green Line Stop. In the immediate proximity of the home, Central Avenue is lined with two-to-three-story walkups and three-to-four-story apartment houses dating from the 1920s to the 1950s, leaving the Walser House as one of the few reminders of the area's history as a late-nineteenth century suburban community.

The Walser House property is bordered by Central Avenue to the east, a c.1950 four-story apartment building to the south, a c.1925 two-story apartment building to the north, and a shared alley to the west. The home's original detached garage is located to the rear of the home at the northwest corner of the property facing a public alley lined with the garages and backyards of adjacent single-family houses and multi-residential buildings. A deep grass lawn separates the home from the Central Avenue public sidewalk with scattered shrubs planted along the front façade and in the back yard (there is no evidence of an original Wright-designed landscape plan). A narrow concrete sidewalk along the property's south perimeter leads visitors to the front door located in the home's one-story south wing. Another narrow concrete sidewalk runs along the property's north perimeter, leading to a back patio, to the home's kitchen and rear family room doors, and to the rear garage.

### East (Central Avenue) Façade

(See Figure 11 in Section 8 for an image of the original 1903 drawing of the east façade)

The play of material and form on the Walser House's Central Avenue façade is an excellent example of Prairie School design from Frank Lloyd Wright's early career. The main façade is dominated by a two-story center living and bedroom block topped by a low-pitched hipped roof with deep overhanging eaves. The white stucco of the center block's first floor is perforated by a large window assembly composed of a large center picture window flanked by two outswinging casement windows. This window grouping inspired by Chicago-style windows of the period is lined with wide dark-painted pine wood trim. A massive stucco planter projects from below this center window composition.

Along the second level bedroom story is a horizontal band of five square casement windows, framed in thin dark-trimmed wood jambs between a painted pine belt course and the roof eave above. Taken together, these two systems of glazing – large picture and casement windows punctured through a field of white stucco on the first floor and ribbons of uninterrupted casement windows on the second – dictate a major theme of the home's exterior and of Prairie School residential architecture in general. At the Walser House as in most early Prairie School residential structures,

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there is a visible emphasis placed on the weight of the lower level, juxtaposed by the lightness of the upper level, above which floats a broad hipped roof that appears to hover unsupported.

Balanced on each side of the center block are one-story wings, recessed far beyond the face of the front of the house. Projecting forward from these wings are two identical one-story stucco-wrapped porches, which were roofed and enclosed after 1903 (see Figure 13 in Section 8 for a c.1903 view of the home before the porches were enclosed). The east faces of both enclosed porches are lined with four elongated out-swinging wood casement windows whose finish, profile, and hardware match those of the original 1903 house. These casement windows rest on the original 1903 wood porch sills. Both enclosed porches are covered in very low-hipped roofs. A low concrete foundation wall, a continuous tapered wood base circling the base of the building, a projecting stucco water table at the base of the side porches, and a continuous belt course separating the first and second floors assert the overriding horizontality of the facade's design.

#### South Elevation

(See Figure 12 in Section 8 for an image of the original 1903 drawing of the south elevation)

The Walser House's south elevation has the continuation of the horizontal pine base, water table, and second level belt course elements of the main façade. When interrupted by grade-level basement windows, the wood base wraps up and over these windows, creating a unifying design element common in Prairie School design.

At the far east side of the south elevation is the southeast enclosed porch lined with five elongated out-swinging wood casement windows whose finish, profile, and hardware match those of the original 1903 house. These casement windows rest on the original 1903 wood porch sills. The enclosed southeast porch extends to but stops just short of the east wall of the one-story entrance wing, a large cube of white stucco punctured by a horizontal band of casement windows on the wing's south wall and corresponding grade-level hopper windows at the basement level. The west wall of the one-story entrance wing has a large single casement window with a corresponding grade-level basement hopper window below. An eye-level wood water table circles the south wing and wraps up and over window and door openings, tying the facades into one controlled, singular composition.

The main entrance to the home remains intact on the east side of the one-story entrance wing. The main entry area is hidden from street view (a common Prairie School gesture at ensuring privacy), nestled behind the southeast porch's stucco water table, and covered by the porch roof extending west to meet the roof of the south wing. An original exterior lamp remains at the south wing's southwest corner, signaling to visitors the location of entry to the home. Carved into the solid stucco mass of the south wing, a shallow arched recess terminates in the original round-arched wood front door whose clear glass infill remains but has been painted over for security reasons. A contemporary metal security gate has been installed on the outside face of the front door. Just north of the entry are wood stairs that step up onto a wood-slatted terrace that once led to the now-enclosed southeast porch.

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Penetrating the stucco on the west side of the center block's first floor south wall is a triple casement window system, providing direct sunlight into the home's dining room. Below this window are corresponding grade-level hopper basement windows.

Six ribbon windows are centered at the second floor of the original south elevation, separated by stretches of white stucco from single casement windows at the east and west ends of the elevation. The profile and pattern of the second floor windows continues those seen on the main façade.

### North Elevation

(See Figure 12 in Section 8 for an image of the original 1903 drawing of the north elevation)

The Walser House's north elevation has changed little since a photograph of the north and west elevations was published in a September 1905 article in House Beautiful (see Figure 12 in Section 8). The massing of the north elevation closely matches that of the south elevation with its casement window-enclosed northeast porch, large projecting north wing with triple first floor and basement windows on its north wall, its ribbon-window systems on the second floor of the center block, and its continuous pine wood water tables, belt courses, and deep overhanging eaves.

Interrupting the second floor windows on the east side is a large stucco chimney which rises through the roof of the northeast enclosed porch. An enclosed passage just west of the chimney connects the porch to the low one-story wing enclosing the home's kitchen. Like the south wing, the kitchen wing is clad in white stucco, wrapped with an eye-level water table. Resting on the water table is one casement window at the east elevation and three casement windows at the north elevation with corresponding grade-level hopper windows at basement level. The kitchen wing is topped by a low-slung hipped roof.

An original shallow service porch on the west end of the kitchen wing has been enclosed in glass and is accessed by a set of concrete steps framed by a stucco cheek wall that rises to the level of the window level water table. Adjacent to this first level kitchen porch is a west-facing ground level contemporary wood door giving interior stair access to the basement. Continuing west, a first floor level stucco wall terminates at the west addition.

At the second level, ribbon casement windows line the façade between the wood belt course and roof eaves. Six casement windows at the center of the north elevation open into the second level stair hall with one window at each end of the elevation serving the east and west bedrooms.

### West Addition

The home's west addition, built of wood frame construction sometime after 1903, is not visible from the front of the building. The addition is one-room deep and its exterior mimics the primary materials and horizontal elements of the earlier building including the raised concrete foundation, base water table, wood belt courses, and overhanging hipped roof.

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Above a white stucco water table, the addition's first level is clad in white vinyl siding. A fixed square picture window is centered at the addition's north and south elevations. At the west elevation, two fixed square picture windows flank a contemporary screen door and contemporary wood entry door accessed by a contemporary set of concrete steps flanked by two concrete cheek walls.

A wood belt course not seen on the original building creates a stucco spandrel separating the first floor vinyl siding from the bank of ribbon windows above. Above a second wood belt course (a continuation of the same belt course seen on the original building), the ribbon windows continue from the original building to the east. These windows wrap the entire second story of the west addition and are similar in profile to those seen on the original building.

An extension of the original building's hipped roof covers the west addition. The roof fascia profile is identical to that of the original building, as is the white finished stucco seen on the underside of the roof eave. The northwest corner of the addition's roof eave is clipped at a diagonal, possibly to allow for additional light to penetrate the original kitchen porch.

A stucco planter along the south face of the west addition resembles an identical planter at the front of the home. It is possible that this was the west elevation's original planter, seen in a September 1905 House Beautiful magazine photograph (see Figure 12 in Section 8) was relocated to this location after the west addition was completed.

### First Floor Interiors

(See Figures 7 and 8 in Section 8 for images of the original 1903 first floor plan and the current first floor plan)

The Walser House encloses approximately 3,200 total square feet, 2,400 square feet of which are first and second floor living spaces, the remaining 800 square feet basement storage and service spaces. Except for the addition at the west end of the home and the enclosure of the east porches, the original plan layout designed by Wright has been left almost completely unaltered.

Inside the original main front door is the reception room. Two coat closets with their original doors flank the front door along the east wall. A low built-in bench with storage below lines the west wall. The reception room's high ceiling still shows its original wood trim, including repetitive horizontal banding at the four steps to the north.

Up these four steps to the north of the reception room is the home's sole dedicated living space, a fifty-foot long room with large window groupings at its east and west ends. Wright assigned three separate functions to this long first floor space: living, dining, and circulation.

At the east end of the home's large first floor living space is the original living room whose Chicago-style window overlooks the front lawn and Central Avenue beyond. The focus of the room is a large fireplace along the north wall, characteristic of Prairie School in its combination of simple materials and geometries. The fireplace is constructed in brown Roman brick with a more delicate wood



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mantelpiece projecting out from the brick supported at each end by wood piers. Two spindly wood columns tie the mantelpiece to the plaster ceiling above. Along the north and south ends of the living room are windows and doors leading into the now enclosed front porches; the south porch is now a storage room, the north porch a breakfast room and passage to the kitchen to the west.

At the west end of the home's large first floor living space is the original dining room. The original window grouping along the dining room's west wall is still intact and lends credence to the possibility that the later west addition was originally an outdoor porch. Today this window ensemble visually connects the dining space with the west addition's family room and back door that is accessed by a new door opening to the south. Three large casement windows line the south wall. A small opening in the north wall connects the dining room to the kitchen to the north. Dominating the dining room's north wall is a contemporary built-in sideboard; according to the home's original design drawings, a large millwork sideboard was to occupy this location though it is unclear if it was ever constructed.

The center hall is separated from the living and dining rooms by four original wood piers clad in original chevron-pattern wood trim. These piers stop short of meeting the plaster ceiling and are topped with wood caps. Original wood shelves span the tops of these piers, creating bridge elements that define but do not enclose the center hall. These bridges align with the plate rails in the adjoining living and dining rooms and add elements of continuous horizontality and continuity to the larger space. Original low partition walls and bookcases tie the piers to the living space's perimeter walls. The center hall serves as the home's primary circulation space, connecting the home's main first floor living spaces with the kitchen to the north and by stairway with the bedroom floor above.

Along the north end of the center hall is a stylized railing screen constructed of square wood posts installed in an alternating orthogonal/rotated pattern, a play on geometric shapes popular among Prairie School architects. Beyond the screen is another primary circulation element: the home's only staircase connecting the first floor living area to the second floor bedrooms above. A short flight of two steps leads up to a stair landing separated from the living room by another semi-transparent railing screen. A lavatory alcove with a contemporary sink is at the landing. A reverse stair continues up to the bedrooms above.

North of the center hall and staircase is the north wing containing the kitchen. Connecting the dining room and kitchen is a narrow corridor housing an original telephone alcove and a doorway leading down to the basement. The walls of this corridor are clad in mid-twentieth-century pink glass tiles.

The original wood cupboard at the east end of the north wall has survived and is still in use. The kitchen's floors are today covered in laminate sheet flooring, the walls are clad in mid-twentieth-century pink glass tiles, and the ceiling is covered in acoustical ceiling tile. Two original glass cabinets survive, reinstalled in the passage between the kitchen and the enclosed northeast porch.

An enclosed stairway just south of the kitchen leads down to the basement. A small passage just west of the kitchen contained the original icebox (now occupied by a modern refrigerator) and gives access through the original rear door to the now glass-enclosed kitchen porch.

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The home's two enclosed porches are accessed from the living room. The northeast enclosed porch is accessed by a doorway just east of the living room fireplace (the original glass door has been removed). The northeast porch, today used as a breakfast room, still shows its original stucco terrace wall. The walls are stucco and plaster and the ceiling is plaster. The floors are covered in contemporary vinyl tile. The older casement windows that wrap the northeast porch are covered by a contemporary metal interior security screen. The southeast porch, today used as a sunroom, is accessed from an original glass door with adjoining original casement window along the south wall of the living room. The walls, ceilings, and window security screens are similar to those in the northeast porch. The southeast porch floor is covered in contemporary carpeting.

The family room west of the dining room is clad in mid-twentieth century wood paneling, laminate floor tiles, and acoustical ceiling tiles. A mid-twentieth century hollow core wood door along the west wall gives access to the property's back yard. No original detailing is visible other than the original exterior wood trim at the window facing into the original dining room.

The first floor retains its original 1903 cast iron radiators in their original locations. Original exposed radiators are located beneath the living room's east window and beneath the dining room's original west window. Two enclosed radiators are in the reception room, one beneath the casement windows along the south wall and another within the low built-bench along the west wall. More contemporary baseboard fin tube radiators are installed along the south wall of the northeast enclosed porch and along the west wall of the family room.

### Second Floor Interiors

(See Figures 9 and 10 in Section 8 for images of the original 1903 second floor plan and the current second floor plan)

The four original second floor bedrooms and bathroom are linked together by a hallway that branches out from the window-lined central stair hall located along the north side of the house. The stair railing on the second floor is the same stylized wood post rail seen on the first floor. The stair hall contains its own original storage closet at the top of the stairs and an original built-in linen cabinet along the hall's east wall. Just east of the stair hall is the home's original (and only) bathroom. The bathroom's fixtures and finishes -- ceramic tile floor and walls, an acoustical tile ceiling, and lavatory, toilet, and bathtub-- are contemporary.

The east bedroom (bedroom 1), designed as a master bedroom, occupies the entire east end of the home, its bank of east-facing ribbon casement windows overlooking the front lawn and Central Avenue beyond. The master bedroom contains a closet and built-in wardrobe and the only upstairs fireplace, an original Prairie School-inspired composition constructed of brown Roman brick that remains completely intact. The home's two south bedrooms (bedrooms 2 and 3) contain original built-in wardrobes. These bedrooms are generously glazed and, with their intact south-facing windows, would have seen ample sunlight before the large adjacent apartment building was constructed.

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Bedroom 4 at the west end of the upstairs hall serves as a single bedroom with an original closet and built-in wardrobe. The second floor of the west addition to the home is accessed through the original this bedroom space. The west wall with its bank of ribbon casement windows survives, separating the original house from the addition. The addition, lined on all sides with its own casement windows resting on what might have been an original stucco terrace wall, may once have served as a sleeping porch or as an additional bedroom as it serves today (bedroom 5).

The second floor retains its 1903 cast iron radiators in their original locations. Exposed radiators are located along the railing in the stair hall, beneath the east windows in bedroom 1, and beneath the south windows in bedrooms 2 and 3. A more contemporary electric heater system is installed beneath the west windows of bedroom 5.

### Attic

The attic under the Walser House's broad hipped roof is accessed by a hatch in the ceiling of the second floor hallway. The attic space is unfinished and unoccupied, leaving the roof's wood frame construction exposed.

### Basement

(See Figures 5 and 6 in Section 8 for images of the original 1903 basement floor plan and the current basement plan)

Though the use of the Walser House basement spaces have changed since the home's initial construction in 1903, the basic room configuration of the basement remains. The interior stair leads down to the central heater room, surrounded by service spaces: the laundry room to the north, the storage room to the south, the coal room to the east, and the work room and storage room to the west. A small water closet is located adjacent to the interior stair. Just west of the laundry room is a stair leading up to an exterior door at the northwest corner of the building. The basement floors and perimeter walls are of concrete, the ceilings plaster, and the interior walls of thin makeshift wood frame construction clad in wood slats or plaster.

### Walser House Garage

The c.1903 garage is approximately twenty-five feet square, built of wood frame construction, and clad in white stucco similar to the home. The garage's square hipped roof is today covered in asphalt shingles. The wood roof fascia has been replaced but is similar in profile to the fascia of the Wright-designed home to the east. At the west elevation, a large contemporary electric-operated garage door has replaced the original garage doors. Pairs of original awning windows line the north and south elevations. The east elevation facing the home has one original awning window and a contemporary hollow metal access door.

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The interior of the garage has an open plan with a concrete floor with unfinished walls and ceiling. The garage's original wood framing system remains visible, as does the underside of the roof's framing system.

Several details on the garage's exterior show evidence of a Prairie School provenance. The profile of the wood roof fascia and the finished white stucco at the underside of the roof eaves are similar to those seen on the main house. Similarly, the profile of the wood trim that wraps the windows resembles that seen on the main house.

### Integrity

The Joseph J. Walser House retains sufficient integrity for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Though it has seen some wear and changes since its completion in 1903, the Walser House retains nearly all of the Prairie School elements that made up Wright's original vision as demonstrated in the surviving construction drawings (see Figures 5, 7, 9, 11, and 13 in Section 8).

There have been changes to the home's exterior since 1903. The home's original roof has been replaced with a contemporary asphalt shingle roof. Though almost all of the home's exterior wood trim and fascia remains, some damaged portions require refinishing. The home's stucco cladding is intact, though some damaged portions to the rear of the property have been patched with concrete. The east façade's two side porches have been enclosed (date unknown, but prior to 1930), though the wood enclosure windows are similar in profile, material and finish to the home's original windows.

The west end of the Walser House once terminated at the dining room's west wall and had a façade composition identical to that on the east Central Avenue façade (see Figure 11 in Section 8 for an image of the original 1903 drawing of the west elevation; see Figure 13 in Section 8 for a c.1903 view of the original west elevation). Though there is no corroborating evidence as to its date of construction, its Prairie School detailing demonstrates the possibility that this addition was added by the Walser family. It is also possible that it was designed by Frank Lloyd Wright for the Walsers as an outdoor living area with an upstairs sleeping porch. Although the date and builder of the addition are not known, it shows similar materials, window placement, and window profiles to those seen on the original home, possibly demonstrating both the porch enclosures and the west addition as having a Prairie School provenance.

Despite these changes to the exterior, the integrity of the home's original material palette and massing remains intact and still clearly conveys the home's significant Prairie School features.

Among the most significant changes in the home has been the removal of the home's original art glass. According to the house plans, the casement windows were originally art glass, and the bookcases in the library and dining room had art glass panels. It is not known whether the built-in sideboard in the plans was ever constructed, but if so, it would have had them as well. It is known that Wright designed art glass specifically for the home and that it was indeed installed when the home was constructed (art glass is visible in two c.1903 photographs of the home – see Figures 12 and 13 in Section 8). Most of the home's interior and exterior art glass survived intact and in-place until the 1960s, when the then-owner removed all of the interior and exterior art glass and sold it to

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local art dealers. The original exterior wood windows remain but are today infilled with clear glass; the interior glass cabinets have not been replaced. Though the Wright-designed glass is certainly a major loss, the original Walser House windows and their hardware remain. While the removal of the home's original art glass is unfortunate, the overall features that identify the home as Prairie School are still intact.

As in most of his Prairie School designs, the operable glazing units Wright designed for the Walser House were casement windows. The Walser House's out-swinging casements were opened and closed using sill level mechanical operators, thus allowing the free operability of the casements during the summer months when insect screens were fitted along the inside face of the windows. Though the windows are no longer fitted with screens, most of the home's original metal window operating and locking hardware remains intact.

Few of the home's interior elements have been changed or removed though many of the finishes have been changed or covered. Though no documentation survives of the Walser House's original first floor living area, it is probable that all of the primary first floor living spaces were originally lined with wood floors, plaster walls and ceilings, and pine wood base trim, ceiling trim, and millwork. Most of these original elements including all first floor's original single-paneled doors and original hardware, window and door casings, painted wood baseboards, plate rails, and wall trim remain intact. The original floors have been covered by contemporary carpeting. Most of the first floor's white plaster walls are intact though some isolated wall areas have been covered in contemporary paneling.

The first floor living spaces still show the main living spaces unimpeded by walls or doors as originally planned. Similar floor and wall treatments are used between spaces, creating interior and exterior chevron-pattern art glass (since removed and replaced with clear glass) used throughout the home, and wrapping the living room, dining room, and center hall in similar wood baseboards and plate rails. In the original design drawings, Wright also intended an uninterrupted ceiling trim element to span from the east wall of the living room, through the center hall to the west wall of the dining room, emphasizing the east-west axis of the home and linking the home's three primary public spaces with a common overhead element; a contemporary plaster ceiling has been added below the original ceiling so it is unclear if the original unifying ceiling element survives or if it was built at all.

The home's original lighting has been replaced and as previously noted, the art glass windows and cabinet doors have been removed and replaced with clear glass versions. It is unclear if Wright was the designer of any removed fixtures. The original doors, wood trim, and interior finishes have in some cases been covered over or repainted. The 1903 kitchen, stair landing lavatory alcove, and second floor bathroom were remodeled c. 1960. The sideboard along the north wall of the dining room has been replaced. The original first floor ceiling has been covered over with textured paint. Despite these changes to the interior, the configuration of spaces, the original wood doors and millwork, and both first and second floor brick fireplaces have remained unchanged since the home's completion in 1903.

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Though no documentation survives of the Walser House's original second floor, it is probable that the entire second floor was originally lined with wood floors, plaster walls and ceilings, and painted pine wood base trim. Most of these elements --the original single-paneled doors and hardware, door and window casings, painted wood baseboards and wall trim , built-in wardrobes, and Prairie School fireplace in bedroom 1 remain intact. Some floors are now carpeted and some walls are covered in contemporary paneling but many of the original finishes remain uncovered and intact. In the plan, a single bedroom occupied the whole of the west end of the home's second floor and was intended to be similar in size to the master bedroom to the east. It is known from a letter that Wright wrote to another residential client Darwin Martin on August 28, 1903, that the west bedroom space was reconfigured during construction and was instead divided into two smaller bedrooms, including one for domestic help.<sup>2</sup> Today the dividing wall has been removed and the space serves as a single bedroom as originally intended.

As a secondary service building, the Walser House garage (c.1903) has seen changes since its construction. The east access door has been replaced with a contemporary hollow metal door and a large roll-up door has replaced the original alley-facing door. As is seen on the main house, the garage roof has been replaced with a contemporary asphalt shingle roof. Its wood fascia has also been replaced in a manner similar to the fascia of the home. Regardless, the garage retains Prairie School characteristics including its simple cubic massing, its hipped roof, and its original wood windows. Although the exact date of the garage is unknown, it does appear in its present location in a 1908 Sanborn Fire Insurance map (see Figure 3 in Section 8). Due to its Prairie School massing and detailing, the surviving one-story garage at the northeast corner of the Walser property was probably constructed shortly after the home's completion in 1903.

Despite these changes, the Walser House and garage remain almost completely intact and retain the sense of openness and flexibility so important to Wright's design and his vision for modern American living.

<sup>2</sup> Jack Quinan, Frank Lloyd Wright's Martin House: Architecture as Portraiture (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2004), 68.

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### 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 is 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 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 the 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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**Areas of Significance**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
ARCHITECTURE  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

\_\_\_\_\_  
1903  
(date of construction)

**Significant Dates**

\_\_\_\_\_  
1903  
(date of construction)

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Frank Lloyd Wright  
\_\_\_\_\_



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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Joseph J. Walser House meets Criterion C of the National Register of Historic Places Criteria for it “embod[ies] the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction,” namely the Prairie School of architecture popular in America between 1890 and 1920. The house was designed in 1903 by the internationally-renowned American architect Frank Lloyd Wright (1867-1959). The Walser House is an exemplary local example of an early Prairie School work in the Austin Community Area and displays intact architectural qualities – an economy of material and ornamentation, emphasis on horizontality, and spaciousness and efficiency in interior spatial organization – that have come to be synonymous with Wright’s work and that of his fellow Prairie School architects. The home’s exterior shows several hallmark characteristics of the style of American design that was new at the time, including heavy and abstracted formal massing, accentuation of horizontality, expansive roof eaves, honest expression of structure, and a simple Japanese-inspired material palette of white stucco and wood trim. Inside the Walser House, Wright’s spacious open plan anticipates the new spatial and social informality that would come to dominate American residential architecture in the twentieth century. Shortly after its construction, the Walser House was recognized for its important design in photographs published in the September 1905 issue of House Beautiful and in one of the influential Wasmuth portfolios of Wright’s work that brought the architect international fame. The home has also been designated as a local landmark by the Commission on Chicago Landmarks in recognition of its progressive design and its associations with Wright.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

1. The Joseph J. Walser House and the Prairie School

Designed by Frank Lloyd Wright and completed in 1903, the Joseph J. Walser House is an excellent example of an early Prairie School work.<sup>3</sup> Primarily developed by turn-of-the-century Chicago architects and seen primarily in structures built in the American Midwest between 1890 and 1920, the Prairie School Style nevertheless made a lasting impact on twentieth century architects and designers throughout the world.

Though there are numerous examples of extant Prairie School structures in Chicago today, the Walser House is among only a few structures in the city that survives from the movement’s formative early years (approximately 1890 to 1905). Even fewer early Chicago Prairie School structures survive that were designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, the architect who did the most to popularize the style and whose name has become synonymous with the Prairie School. Early Prairie School structures in Chicago comparable to the Walser House’s style, date of construction, and significance include the Isidore Heller House (completed 1896; NR # 72000450; designated a

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<sup>3</sup> The term “Prairie School,” originally coined by historian H. Allen Brooks in the 1950s, refers both to the specific architectural style and to the circle of architects and designers who worked in the style.

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Chicago Landmark), also designed by Wright, and the King-Nash House (completed 1901; NR #83000311; designated a Chicago Landmark) designed by George Washington Maher (1864-1926).

Architecture in the Prairie School Style was distinct in its rejection of popular historic revivalist architectural elements, its exploration of nature-inspired “organic” forms and materials, its simplicity in architectural massing and planning, and its emphasis on the accentuation of horizontal design elements, all purportedly inspired by the flat prairie landscapes of the rural American Midwest. All of these defining traits of the Prairie School are evident and intact in the Joseph J. Walser House.

#### A. Development of the Early Prairie School

A building idea based on the integration of natural forms and materials, the Prairie School house was for Wright and other Prairie School followers a response to the needs of industrial age American families and is believed by some to be the first representation of a uniquely American style of architecture. Though they wished to break away from the design ideas of the past, the Prairie School was in many ways inspired by architecture of both the distant and recent architectural history.

Many Prairie School architects including Frank Lloyd Wright modeled their early ideas off of the revolutionary aesthetic and social principles of England’s late-nineteenth-century Arts & Crafts Movement (approximately 1860 to 1900), led by artists and architects including William Morris (1834-1896), Charles Voysey (1857-1941), and Charles Robert Ashbee (1863-1942). Followers of the English Arts and Crafts Movement rejected industrially-manufactured and mass-produced building materials and decorative arts. Instead Arts and Crafts thinkers sought to reeducate designers in traditional handicraft techniques and to cultivate a market for custom-designed buildings, furniture, art glass, and decorative items. Prairie School architects initially embraced these ideas from across the Atlantic and began the Chicago Arts and Crafts Society in 1897, using Jane Addams’ Hull House Settlement House on the city’s West Side as a forum for lectures and discussions on progressive art, architecture, and social and economic thought. Though many Prairie School architects later broke with Arts and Crafts Movement principles, including Wright who famously embraced industrially-produced building materials in his 1901 address “The Art and Craft of the Machine,” the Arts and Crafts Movement’s push for thoughtful, user-oriented modern design using simple natural materials continued to be a driving force among later Prairie School architects and designers.

Early Prairie School designers also found inspiration in the material and programmatic simplicity of traditional Japanese architecture. The end of Japan’s economic and cultural isolation in the 1850s and 60s prompted a wave of American interest in Japanese art, creating an enormous consumer market for Japanese decorative arts and prints. For many American architects like Frank Lloyd Wright, their interests in Japan extended to its pre-modern architecture, characterized by the absence of industrially-produced building components, its honest expression of structure, its minimalist aesthetic, and its use of moving interior screen walls to create flexible floor plans. Many elements of the Walser House including its cantilevering hipped roofs, its conservative display of interior and exterior ornament, its simple composition of wood, stucco, and glass, and its radically open and flexible interior layout show the impact the handmade, organic qualities of traditional Japanese architecture made on the developing American Prairie School Style.

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Although much of the style's inspiration came from abroad, it was the work of two American-born architects – Henry Hobson (H.H.) Richardson (1838-1886) and Louis Sullivan (1856-1924) – that had the most impact on the development of the distinct Prairie School aesthetic. Working at his professional height about twenty years before the development of the Prairie School, H.H. Richardson's buildings borrowed their massing and detailing from Western Europe's early medieval churches and fortifications. His emphasis on massive exterior forms and medieval-inspired interiors inspired its own architectural moniker, "Richardsonian Romanesque." Two of Richardson's most influential structures, the John J. Glessner House (completed 1891; NR #70000233) and the Marshall Field Wholesale Store (completed 1887, demolished), were both built in Chicago where their organic elements were studied and copied by the city's early Prairie School architects. The Richardsonian Romanesque ancestry of Wright's Walser House design can be seen in the weighted quality of its ground level massing and in the low arch framing the home's entry, a reference to the Syrian ("Richardsonian") arch found in many Richardson structures.

Chicago-based architect Louis Sullivan was himself inspired by Richardson as can be seen in the stark geometric play on the facades of Adler & Sullivan's Wainwright Building (St. Louis, Missouri; completed 1891; NR #68000054) and Auditorium Building (Chicago, Illinois; completed 1889; NR #70000230), drawings for which the young Frank Lloyd Wright was a draftsman. Unlike Richardson's designs, however, Sullivan's mature work was distinctly ahistoric in character, instead concerned with complex plays of pure geometries with fluid ornament both inside and outside his designs. Though his best-known works and writings focus on the burgeoning skyscraper type, it was Sullivan's overarching philosophy of organic modern design that inspired his disciples to look beyond historic precedents to create progressive architectural solutions at both large and small scales. Sullivan served as a professional mentor to many followers of the Prairie School, most notably Frank Lloyd Wright who worked as a young man in Sullivan's office and who called Sullivan his "lieber meister" ("beloved master"). Wright included many "Sullivanesque" elements in his design for the Walser House, most notably in the overarching rule of geometry in the home's elevations and plans.

Evidence of a distinct "Prairie School" of architecture can be seen in the earliest individual works of Frank Lloyd Wright. After leaving the firm of Adler & Sullivan in 1893, Wright began his own Chicago-based practice working primarily on single-family residential commissions including the William Winslow House (River Forest, Illinois; completed 1894; NR #70000242) and the Isidore Heller House (Chicago, Illinois; completed 1896; NR # 72000450). These Wright works from the 1890s display a stylistic separation from Richardson's historicism and from Sullivan's sometimes florid ornamental designs, but are still infused with his forebearers' respect for uncomplicated forms. Wright's residential designs from 1893 to about 1900 show a gradual distillation of Sullivan's own experimentation with pure geometric forms, organic materials, and spatial interconnectivity. Wright's works from just after the turn-of-the century such as the B. Harley Bradley House (Kankakee, Illinois; completed 1900; NR# ), the Frank Thomas House (Oak Park, Illinois; completed 1901; NR #72000455), and the Joseph J. Walser House (1903) show an architect working with a truly new group of ideas, forming a new architectural style with a new set of aesthetic and planning principles that would come to be known as Prairie School.

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Chicago became home to the best-known architects associated with the Prairie School, most notably Wright who worked as an architect in the Chicago area between 1887 and 1910. Many artists and designers later famous for Prairie School designs, including Richard Bock (1865-1949), Walter Burley Griffin (1876-1937), Marion Mahony Griffin (1871-1961), William Drummond (1876-1946), and Barry Byrne (1883-1967), John S. Van Bergen (1885-1969) were associates of Wright's and spent part of their early careers working as draftsmen in Wright's Oak Park, IL, studio. Prairie School concepts of "organic design," sometimes inspired by Wright's own work, can be also seen in the work of other Chicago architects including George Washington Maher, Dwight H. Perkins (1867-1941), Robert C. Spencer, Jr. (1864-1963), Hugh M.G. Garden (1873-1961), William Purcell (1880-1965), and George Grant Elmslie (1871-1952).

#### B. The Joseph J. Walser House and the Prairie School Home

Of all the Prairie School's output over its three decades of popularity, the structures that most fully captured the public's attention and imagination were the School's single-family residential designs. Prairie School homes marked a clear departure from American residential architecture of the past, not only in their unique appearance but in the openness and informality of their plans. For its followers, the Prairie School was not only an aesthetic break with historic residential design; the style presented radical domestic solutions for American families living in a new century.

In 1901, Frank Lloyd Wright gave a national voice to the Prairie School philosophies of living and building in two articles he penned in the Ladies' Home Journal: "A Home in a Prairie Town," published in the February 1901 issue, and "A Small House with 'Lots of Room in It,'" published in the July 1901 issue. In these widely-read magazine pieces, Wright expressed how the new Prairie home whose design was driven by efficiency of construction and use could be a desirable residential alternative for many Americans trapped in rigid Victorian dwellings. The model homes Wright envisioned were placed away from the dirt and crime of the city in the fresh air of an imagined semi-rural Midwestern suburb, the stratified lines of the houses joining them to the rejuvenating power of their natural prairie setting. Within these homes, open plans revolved around central hearths, reinforcing household unity as both structural and spiritual anchors. Sunlight and fresh air streaming in through traditional casement windows would physically and spiritually disinfect the family space, and built-in furniture and cabinetry eliminated the need for Victorian clutter. To many of the movement's followers, an honestly and straightforwardly designed Prairie School house could and would produce honest and straightforward occupants, modern architecture heralding the return of traditional American families and values.

Wright's Walser House design showed many of the elements of a typical Prairie School home. In 1903 the home's original site, an open lot in Chicago's newly annexed Austin neighborhood close to Wright's own Oak Park, Illinois studio, still maintained its suburban semi-rural character so idealized by Prairie School designers. The home's accentuated horizontal lines, both inside and out, tied it to its semi-prairie landscape. The free-flowing efficiency of the first floor living spaces, the handcrafted built-in furniture, and the overall simplicity of construction showed that for all of its modern notions, the Prairie School, with its associations with nature and rediscovered artisanal building craft, sought a return to traditional building and living.

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### C. Prairie School Characteristics of the Joseph J. Walser House

The Joseph J. Walser House demonstrates all of the hallmarks of the American Prairie School:

- Exterior Massing

The Walser House's original 1903 massing has been left almost completely intact. In the Walser House as in his other Prairie School compositions, Frank Lloyd Wright rejected historic revivalist planning and ornamentation, choosing instead to compose a building whose internal function was expressed externally with the use of pure geometric forms. Wright's massing of the Walser House remains simple and straightforward: a two-story rectangular bar containing living and sleeping spaces is placed perpendicular to Central Avenue with a one-story bar containing secondary entrance, circulation and kitchen spaces bisecting the living block at its midpoint. Expansive hipped roofs top both the center living block and side wings. Wright's geometric assembly is left almost completely unadorned, forbidding even a minimum of external and internal decoration to obscure its purity. Changes to the Walser House's exterior, namely the enclosure of the east porches and the two-story addition at the rear of the property, have disturbed little of Wright's original geometric massing.

The exterior of Walser House displays all of the compositional features typically associated with Wright's early career and the Prairie School style. The first floor's wide panels of white stucco punctured with square and rectangular windows with the second floor's almost-exclusive use of ribbon windows demonstrate Wright's interest in the play of solid against void, opacity against transparency, stucco against glass. Wright's repeated use of horizontal elements on the Walser House's exterior elevations – base trim, water tables, string courses, ribbon windows, the far reaching wood roof fascia with its overhanging eaves, the low-hipped roof – creates a stratified appearance that unifies all elements of the façade, emphasizing the weight of the low-slung structure, and linking the structure to its site and to the Prairie School's idealistic notions of the flat Midwestern prairie.

- Materials

The Walser House's two-toned exterior palette of white painted stucco and darkly-painted pine wood trim draws inspiration from the medieval English timber frame house celebrated by the English Arts and Crafts Movement and by the natural materials used in traditional Japanese construction. The interior's dominant palette of white plaster walls framed in simple wood trim (designed by Wright) is repeated from room to room on both living floors (some interior finishes are today covered over by contemporary materials but the original finishes beneath them remain intact).

- Interior Elements

The Walser House's Prairie School play on horizontality continues inside the home, most notably in the first floor living space. The open plan living room/center hall/dining room is tied together in part by use of similar finishes throughout but also by a stratified system of wood baseboards and plate rails that circle the entire first floor living space, tying the three separate living zones into one cohesive expression of Prairie School design. The horizontal banding lining the reception room steps, the chevron-patterned center hall piers, and the

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center hall's stylized stair railing screen assert Wright's and the Prairie School's interest in geometric play.

- **Open Plan**

The openness of the Walser House first floor plan reflects the qualities of informality and flexibility that epitomized the Prairie School notion of the rationally-designed American home. The axial relationship of the home's living room, dining room, and center hall linked all three rooms into one large multi-functional family living space. The placement of the first floor's secondary spaces, the reception room and kitchen, at cross-axis with the main living space made for a more efficient plan and allowed for Wright's expression of the home's programmatic hierarchy on the exterior of the building. The axial and cross-axial organization of the Walser House's main living spaces along with the disintegration of its spatial divisions and their substitution with more subtle delimiting elements like screens, free-standing piers and changes in floor level and ceiling heights anticipate later spatial compositions found in such classic Wright Prairie School homes as the Darwin Martin House (Buffalo, New York; completed 1905; NR #86000160) and the Frederick Robie House (Chicago, Illinois; completed 1909; NR#66000316).

#### Additional Prairie School Characteristics of the Walser House

In addition to the Walser House's overarching Prairie School themes discussed above, the location of and relationships created by the Walser House's main entrance share elements found in other Wright and Prairie School residences. In Wright's original design, the primary Walser House entrance door was positioned in the home's south wing, obscured from view from Central Avenue by the stucco water table of the southeast porch. An attempt at securing privacy for the home's residence, the hidden character of the Walsers' entrance door was seen in later Prairie School homes, most notably Wright's Frederick Robie House, whose entrance is located not along the home's iconic east primary façade but at the center west end of the home, arguably at the property's rear. The Walser House's main entrance remains obscured behind the now-enclosed southeast porch.

The home's two intact fireplaces, found in the living room and in the upstairs master bedroom (bedroom 1), show distinct Prairie School geometric massings. Both fireplaces are primarily constructed with Roman brick, whose long horizontal proportions made the masonry unit a favorite of Prairie School designers. Whether used as exterior cladding or in interior decorative applications as at the Walser House, Roman brick was a crucial material in the Prairie School architect's design palette.

Other intact Prairie School elements seen in Wright's Walser House design include his use of Chicago-style windows at both ends of the first floor living space. Seen on early Chicago skyscrapers, Wright and his fellow Prairie School architects embraced the multi-component window type which allowed for ample natural light and for uninterrupted views out of the center fixed window, using the slender operable side windows (casements at the Walser House but more commonly sash windows) for efficient natural ventilation. The Prairie School's affinity for built-in furniture is reflected in the reception room's west wall bench and the bookcases that help define the spaces of the Walser House's first floor living area. The string of ribbon casement windows that

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wrap the second level of the home is also a defining characteristic of Wright's early work and of the Prairie School.

Past owners of the Walser House removed the art glass that Wright designed for this home but left the home's original casement windows intact. Casement windows, popularized by the English Arts and Crafts Style movement in the late nineteenth century, were commonplace features in American Prairie School architecture. Almost all of the Walser House's original wood casements survive along with their original metal hinge and operating hardware.

## 2. The Joseph J. Walser House and Frank Lloyd Wright

The Joseph J. Walser House is one of only seven surviving Frank Lloyd Wright-designed single-family Prairie School houses in the city of Chicago. Only one surviving home, the William and Jessie M. Adams House (completed 1900; designated a Chicago Landmark) was built earlier than the Walser House. The other surviving homes are the Raymond W. Evans House (completed 1908), the Frederick Robie House (completed 1909; NR#66000316), the Emil Bach House (completed 1915; NR #79000821), and two "American System Built Houses" -- the Guy C. Smith House (completed 1917; designated a Chicago Landmark) and the H. Howard Hyde House (completed 1917; designated a Chicago Landmark). Apart from these residential projects, the only prominent Prairie School work by Wright that survives in Chicago is the lobby of the downtown Rookery Building (NR #70000238), a space Wright renovated in 1905.

Born in Spring Green, Wisconsin, in 1867, Frank Lloyd Wright came to Chicago when he was nineteen and became a draftsman in the architectural office of Adler & Sullivan. Louis Sullivan became the young architect's mentor and Wright's hand can be seen in some of Sullivan's most important works including the Auditorium Building (Chicago, Illinois; completed 1889; NR #70000230) and the James Charnley House (Chicago, Illinois; completed 1891; NR #70000232). Wright left Sullivan's firm in 1893 and set up his own practice with an office in downtown Chicago and later a studio at the home he built for himself in Oak Park. In the decade after his departure from Adler & Sullivan, Wright's projects were limited mostly to upscale residences in the Chicago area, but his works in the last years of the nineteenth century show his progressive shift toward a design philosophy focused on the unification of building and site, the integration of exterior spaces and materials into the interior realm, and the abstraction of formal complexities.

The years preceding Wright's 1903 Walser House commission saw several highly-praised Wright designs realized in the nearby villages of Oak Park and River Forest from which the architect enjoyed newfound celebrity. Among the works the Walsers might have seen were the William H. Winslow House (River Forest, Illinois; completed 1894), Wright's own Studio (Oak Park, Illinois; completed 1898), the Frank Wright Thomas House (Oak Park, Illinois; built 1901), and the Arthur Heurtley House (Oak Park, Illinois; built 1902). The praise afforded to these designs would certainly have influenced Joseph J. Walser in his choice for architect to design a new Chicago home for his young family.

In the Joseph J. Walser House as in many of his early Prairie School residential designs, Wright sought to create a model of a rationally-inspired functional home affordable to most American

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families. The Walser House was one of the first of many Prairie homes that retained their design integrity (a “small house with ‘lots of room in it’”) yet could be constructed within a modest budget. The Walser House became a template for some of Wright’s other small homes of the Prairie period, including the K.C. DeRhodes House (South Bend, Indiana; completed 1906) and the L.K. Horner House (Chicago, Illinois; completed 1908, demolished). The Walser House also displays many of the aesthetic and planning elements that would become famous in his much larger Prairie School homes, notably the Darwin Martin House (Buffalo, New York, completed 1905) and the Frederick Robie House (Chicago, Illinois, completed 1909).

Within a year of the home’s construction, the versatile Walser House design was used as the basis of another Wright home, the George Barton House (Buffalo, New York; completed 1905, NR #86000160). Darwin Martin reviewed several Wright designs when commissioning a home for his sister Delta and her husband George Barton. Martin chose to simply replicate the Walser design because it was in Martin’s words it was “a simple, inexpensive house which [Wright] can furnish blueprints of with no work on his part.” Martin upgraded most of the interior and exterior finishes, replacing the Walser House’s wood frame, stucco, and wood shingles with more expensive Roman brick and clay roof tiles. However, Martin did retain the basic composition of Wright’s Walser House, literally copying the Walser plans, elevations, and even art glass windows.

Wright and the Prairie School gained acclaim in the century’s first decade with the successes of both his private residential commissions and his public works, most notably the Larkin Building (Buffalo, New York, built 1904, demolished) and Unity Temple (Oak Park, Illinois; completed 1906; NR # 70000240). More importantly, with the 1911 publication of Wright’s extensive monograph portfolios by German publisher Ernst Wasmuth, images showing the Prairie School’s programmatic informality and abandonment of traditional classical architectural language were widely circulated in Europe. The iconoclastic spirit of Wright’s work helped to inspire the European Modern Movement whose members, including Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (1886-1969), Walter Gropius (1883-1969), and Le Corbusier (1887-1965), would come to dominate twentieth century architecture. The simple massing and materials and informal spatial composition seen in designs like the Joseph J. Walser House helped make Wright and the Prairie School household names and influenced twentieth-century architecture worldwide.

### 3. History of the Joseph J. Walser House (1903)

Joseph J. Walser and his wife Grace purchased the property at 42 N. Central Avenue on February 20, 1903 from Mr. and Mrs. Arthur A. Crafts. Neither the cost to purchase the property nor the existence of any structures on the property were recorded (see Figure 19 for an image of the original 1903 record of property sale).

Why Joseph Walser came to choose the property at 42 N. Central Avenue for his home is undocumented though the site was an ideal choice for the young businessman. Jacob Walser, Joseph’s father and employer, had by 1903 become a prominent real estate developer in Austin and would have probably encouraged his son to purchase his own property in the growing Austin market. As is seen in a photograph of the home from a September 1905 article from House Beautiful (see Figure 13) and in a later 1908 Sanborn Fire Insurance map (see Figure 3), Central Avenue was a



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largely undeveloped street, almost empty of houses even five years after the Walsers moved into their Wright-designed home, and the neighborhood in 1903 still retained much of the pastoral seclusion that had made early Austin such an attractive settlement for Chicago business commuters.

The site of Joseph Walser's new home was also ideal for maintaining his growing professional and family life. The property was three blocks south of the Lake Street Elevated Railroad station where he could board the commuter train to his offices in Chicago, and one block south of his childhood home at 145 N. Central (312 S. Central until 1909) where his father, mother, and sister Lizzie still lived in 1903 (see Figure 3).<sup>4</sup>

The circumstances that brought Frank Lloyd Wright the commission to design Joseph J. Walser's house at 42 N. Central Avenue are unknown. It was not uncommon however for such a prominent Chicago family as the Walsers to hire a prominent Chicago architect like Wright to design their home. Their many local business and real estate connections would have provided multiple opportunities for Wright's and the Walsers' paths to intersect. It is probable that Joseph Walser was introduced to Wright through his father Jacob who, as a developer and builder himself, would have known the work of residential architects in the area, among whom Wright was a rising figure.

Though little documentation survives of the home's origins, what is known is that in 1903, Joseph J. Walser commissioned Frank Lloyd Wright to design for him a new residence at 42 N. Central Avenue (417 S. Central until 1909) in Austin, the scope of which included not only a modern-style house but also custom-designed interior built-in furniture and specially-designed leaded art glass windows (it is not known whether Wright designed free-standing furniture for the home). The original building permit for the Joseph J. Walser House, number 6953, was issued by the City of Chicago on May 22, 1903 and construction would have commenced shortly after (see Figure 20). Information on the building contractor varies: "C. Iverson" is listed as contractor on the original permit but Thomas A. Heinz's Frank Lloyd Wright Field Guide instead cites Elmer E. Andrews as contractor on the Walser House project (Andrews' brother-in-law was William Heath, vice-president of the Larkin Soap Company and a future client of Wright's for whom the architect would design a home in Buffalo, NY in 1905). The home's original building permit shows the overall cost to build the Walser House was \$4,000. The Walser House was completed and occupied by the close of 1903.<sup>5</sup>

The house was soon published as a model Wright home. Two years after its completion, a photograph of the Joseph J. Walser House appeared in a September 1905 House Beautiful article, "Plaster Houses and their Construction," authored by Wright's friend and fellow Prairie School architect Robert C. Spencer, Jr. (see Figure 13). A photograph of the Walser House was also included in Frank Lloyd Wright - Chicago: Aches Sonderheft der Architektur des zwanzigsten

<sup>4</sup> Robert C. Spencer, Jr., "Plaster Houses and their Construction," House Beautiful (September 1905), 25. Cook County, Illinois, Tract Book Entry - 42 N. Central Avenue, Chicago.

<sup>5</sup> Building Permit, 417 S. Central Avenue (later 42 N. Central Avenue), Chicago, Illinois, dated May 22, 1903, Commission on Chicago Landmarks Collection.

Thomas Heinz, Frank Lloyd Wright Field Guide, (Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 2005) 343.

Henry Russell Hitchcock, In the Nature of Materials, 1887-1941: The Buildings of Frank Lloyd Wright (De Capo Press: USA, 1975), 113.

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Jahrhunderts (1911), one of German publisher Ernst Wasmuth's famous publications of Wright's work that later inspired the development of the European Modern Movement (see Figure 14).<sup>6</sup>

The Walser House's original residents were Joseph J. Walser, his wife Grace, and their infant daughter Gretchen. Two more Walser daughters, Sally and Ruth, were born during the Walsers' occupancy. The only known photograph of the home's interior during the Walser family's occupancy, an image showing Joseph J. Walser with his young daughters Gretchen and Sally, was taken c.1908 (see Figure 21). A view of a center hall pier with its chevron-pattern wood trim suggests the group was photographed in either the home's living room or dining room.<sup>7</sup>

The Walser family lived in their Wright-designed home for only seven years. In 1910, Joseph J. Walser sold the house at 42 N. Central Avenue to George Donnersberger and relocated his family six blocks west to a much larger home designed for them by architect William Harlev at 5946 W. Washington Avenue.<sup>8</sup>

Since 1910 the Joseph J. Walser House has had twelve different owners. Subsequent owners have left their mark on the home with minor additions and changes. Sometime before 1930 when a surviving photograph was taken of the façade of the home (see Figure 15 for a 1930 image showing the porch enclosures), the side porches along the Central Avenue elevation were enclosed with glass. An extra bedroom was added to the rear of the home sometime after 1905, possibly by the Walsers themselves. The porch below this bedroom was later enclosed and today serves as the family room. Later owners remodeled the kitchen and second floor bathroom, removed and replaced some of the original windows and doors, and combined two back bedrooms into one. In the late 1960s a former owner removed the home's original interior and exterior art glass.<sup>9</sup>

Hurley and Anne Teague purchased the home in 1970. The now-widowed Mrs. Teague has maintained the house almost completely in the state in which she and her husband found it. Only minor interior cosmetic changes have been made, most completed by Mr. Teague himself. These changes included the painting of the interior wood trim, carpeting on both living floors, and the updating of bathroom and kitchen appliances and cabinetwork.

In recognition of the home's influential architect, its significance to the Austin community, and its rarity as a surviving Wright structure in Chicago, the Joseph J. Walser House was designated a Chicago Landmark by the Chicago City Council in 1984.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>6</sup> "Plaster Houses and their Construction," 25.

Frank Lloyd Wright, Frank Lloyd Wright - Chicago: Aches Sonderheft der Architektur des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts (Berlin: Ernst Wasmuth, 1911).

<sup>7</sup> Sarah Taggart, Seven Generations in Ann Arbor: The Riggs and Walser Families (USA: iUniverse, 2008), 32.

<sup>8</sup> U.S. National Archives, National Archives and Records Service, General Services Administration; Federal Decennial Census, 1910, Cook County, Illinois, Chicago.

U.S. National Archives, National Archives and Records Service, General Services Administration; Federal Decennial Census, 1920, Washtenaw County, Michigan, Ann Arbor.

"Jacob J. Walser's Estate Inventories at \$1,151,577," Chicago Daily Tribune (November 27, 1913), 17.

Jack Quinan, Frank Lloyd Wright's Martin House: Architecture as Portraiture, (USA: Princeton Architectural Press, 2004), 69. U.S.

<sup>9</sup> Cook County, Illinois, Tract Book Entry - 42 N. Central Avenue, Chicago.

<sup>10</sup> Commission of Chicago Landmarks.

Joseph J. Walser House  
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#### 4. History of Chicago's Austin Community

The Joseph J. Walser House is located along the eastern edge of the Austin community on Chicago's West Side, approximately seven miles west of the Loop. The area that is present-day Austin was first settled in the early nineteenth century but did not see organized mass settlement until several separate landholdings were purchased in 1865 by Henry Austin (1828-1889), a representative of the New York-based Gould Manufacturing Company. Austin, who had settled in the area himself, consolidated and developed his local landholdings and by the early 1870s had established a town he called "Austinville," later simply "Austin," around a new stop on the Chicago and North Western Railway.

Although Austin's railroad depot made the town an ideal home for industrial development, the community's proximity to both local railroads and to the industrial hub of Chicago instead soon transformed Austin into a primarily residential neighborhood and one of Chicago's earliest railroad suburbs. Austin was a major relocation destination after the 1871 Great Chicago Fire which drove many Chicagoans to seek new homes in the areas west and north of the city unaffected by the disaster. By the 1880s, many middle- and upper-class Chicagoans fleeing the crime, grime, and social disorder of the growing metropolis relocated with their families to smaller and more pastoral communities like Austin and neighboring Oak Park, both alcohol-free ("dry") towns dominated by single-family homes on lots much larger than could be found in Chicago proper. Most attractive to

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<sup>27</sup> U.S. Social Security Administration, Death Master File - Grace L. Walser, 15 April 1970 (Alexandria, Virginia: National Technical Information Service, ongoing).

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the new arrivals was Austin's growing rail network which working men like Jacob and Joseph Walser could utilize to travel to their businesses in Chicago on workdays and to return to their suburban homes in the evenings and on weekends.

Despite its close social and economic ties to the city of Chicago, late nineteenth century Austin developed its own unique community institutions, including several elementary schools, secondary schools, and religious congregations, and dozens of social clubs, most importantly the Oaks Club of which Jacob Joseph Walser was an early member. Austin's prosperity of the late 1800s attracted several wealthy settlers, most notably the Walsers of the Goss Printing Company and Emory B. Moore (1845-1922), founder of the future Benjamin Moore Paint Company. Chicago's rapid expansion west resulted in the city's annexation of Austin in 1899. Development of the community continued into the second decade of the twentieth century, culminating in the creation of Chicago's Columbus Park on the area's last parcels of open farmland. The construction of numerous multi-unit apartment buildings in the 1920s signaled a rapid increase in the community's population density and a change in the ethnic and economic makeup of the community from upper class white residents to working-class Irish, Italians, and later African Americans, prompting the relocation of most of Austin's older and wealthier residents by mid-century.

Among those impacted by the Chicago-based Prairie School movement were architects working in the Austin community. In addition to the Walser House, other extant Prairie School buildings in Austin from this period include First Congregational Church of Austin designed by Wright's apprentice William Drummond (5701 W. Midway Park, completed 1908), a single family residence by architect Douglas S. Pentecost at 207 N. Menard (built 1915), a single family residence by architect Frederick Schock at 5849 W. Midway Park (built 1911), and a multi-residential structure at 5900 W. Adams (built 1924). Completed in 1903, the Joseph J. Walser House is Austin's earliest Prairie School structure, its best surviving example of Prairie School residential architecture, and its only extant structure to have been designed by Frank Lloyd Wright.<sup>27</sup>

## 6. Conclusion

Though the neighborhood around the home has changed dramatically since its construction, Chicago's Joseph J. Walser House survives as a rare and intact reminder of the Austin community's suburban origins and as an excellent representation of Prairie School design principles so critical to the story of twentieth-century architecture. With its simple massing and material palette, horizontally-accentuated forms, and innovative spatial organization, the Joseph J. Walser House clearly expresses the ideas of the nascent Prairie School and of its leading figure, architect Frank Lloyd Wright.

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- Figure 2 1908 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Austin community, Chicago. Jacob J. Walser and Joseph J. Walser properties shaded.  
Source: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Chicago, Illinois, 1905-1951, Vol .8, 1914, Sheet 34.
- Figure 3 1908 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Joseph J. Walser property (house and garage at top)  
Source: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Chicago, Illinois, 1905-1951, Vol .8, 1914, Sheet 34.
- Figure 4 Joseph J. Walser House current site plan. Numbered arrows correspond to photos attached to nomination.  
Source: John D. Cramer
- Figure 5 Original 1903 Joseph J. Walser House basement floor plan  
Source: Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation
- Figure 6 Joseph J. Walser House current basement floor plan  
Source: John D. Cramer
- Figure 7 Original 1903 Joseph J. Walser House first floor plan  
Source: Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation
- Figure 8 Joseph J. Walser House current first floor plan. Numbered arrows correspond to photos attached to nomination.  
Source: John D. Cramer, modified from Walser House plan from William Allin Storrer's Frank Lloyd Wright Companion
- Figure 9 Original 1903 Joseph J. Walser House second floor plan  
Source: Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation
- Figure 10 Joseph J. Walser House current second floor plan. Numbered arrows correspond to photos attached to nomination.  
Source: John D. Cramer, modified from Walser House plan from William Allin Storrer's Frank Lloyd Wright Companion
- Figure 11 Original Joseph J. Walser House east elevation (bottom left), west elevation (top left), and building sections (right)  
Source: Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation
- Figure 12 Original Joseph J. Walser House north elevation (top) and south elevation (bottom)

Joseph J. Walser House  
Name of Property

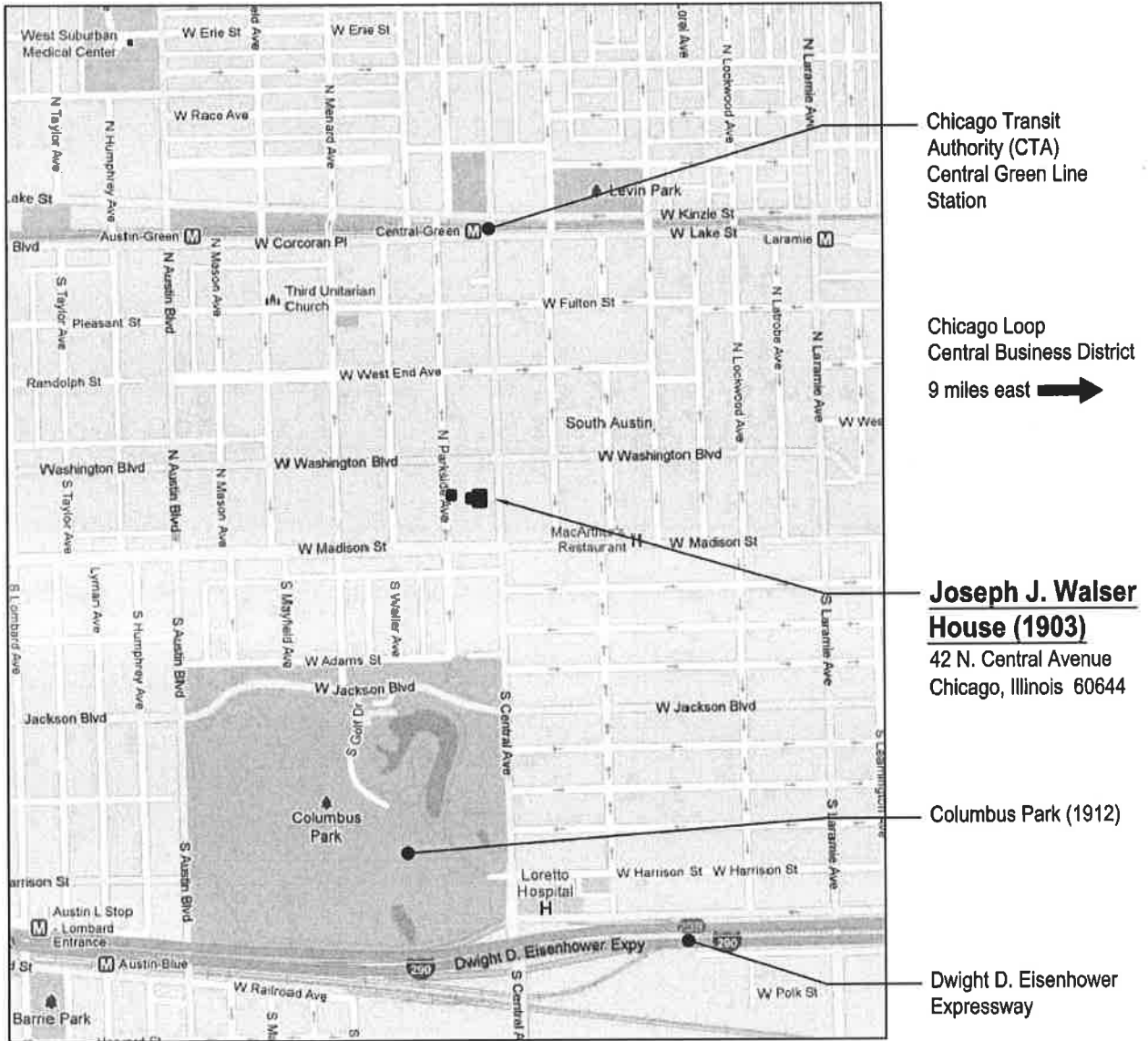
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Source: Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation

- Figure 13 Photograph of the north and west elevation of the Joseph J. Walser House, c. 1903  
Source: House Beautiful, September 1905
- Figure 14 Photograph showing the north and west elevation of the Joseph J. Walser House, c.1903  
Source: Frank Lloyd Wright - Chicago: Achtes Sonderheft der Architektur des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts, 1922
- Figure 15 Photograph showing the east facade of the Joseph J. Walser House, c.1930  
Source: Gilman Lane Collection, Oak Park Public Library (Oak Park, Illinois)
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- Figure 19 Record of "Jos. J. Walser & wf"'s purchase of Lots 28 and 29 on March 10, 1903 and "Joseph J. Walser & wf"'s sale of property to "Geo. Donnersberger" on November 9, 1910.  
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- Figure 20 Record of building permit for Joseph J. Walser House dated May 22, 1903.  
Source: Commission on Chicago Landmarks
- Figure 21 The only known image of the Walser House interior during the time the Walsers occupied the home. Joseph J. Walser sits in either the downstairs Living Room or Dining Room with his daughters Gretchen (left) and Sally (right), c.1908. A wood-trimmed Center Hall pier is faintly visible in the background.  
Source: Seven Generations in Ann Arbor: The Riggs and Walser Families, Sarah Taggart, 2008
- Figure 22 The Joseph J. Walser family c.1918. From left, Gretchen, Ruth, Grace, Sally, Joseph, and Mary Walser.  
Source: Seven Generations in Ann Arbor: The Riggs and Walser Families, Sarah Taggart, 2008
- Figure 23 View of Walser House, looking west toward entrance (1981).  
Source: The Commission on Chicago Landmarks.

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### Joseph J. Walser House - Current Context Map

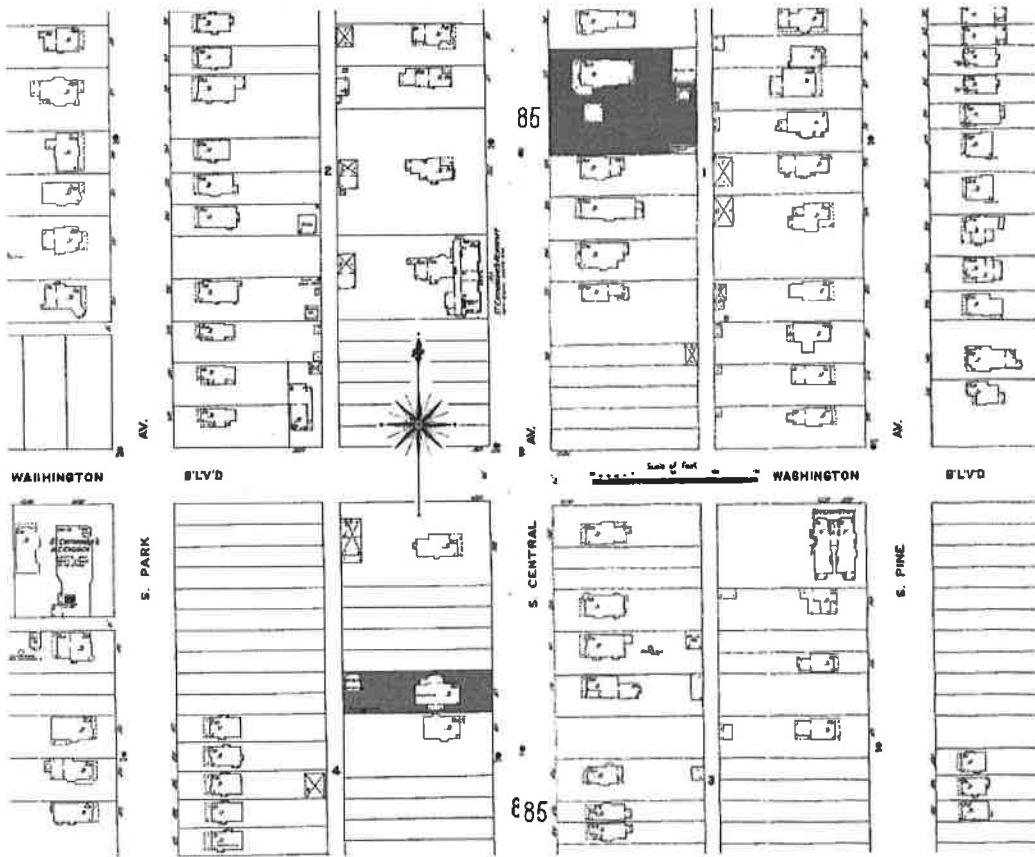
Not to scale



Figure 1 Joseph J. Walser House current context map

Joseph J. Walser House  
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Jacob J. Walser House  
 145 N. Central  
 (312 S. Central until  
 1909, demolished)

Joseph J. Walser House  
 42 N. Central  
 (417 S. Central until  
 1909)  
 Enlarged image below

Figure 2 1908  
 Sanborn Fire

Insurance Map of Austin community, Chicago. Jacob J. Walser and Joseph J. Walser properties shaded.  
 Source: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Chicago, Illinois, 1905-1951, Vol .8, 1914, Sheet 34.

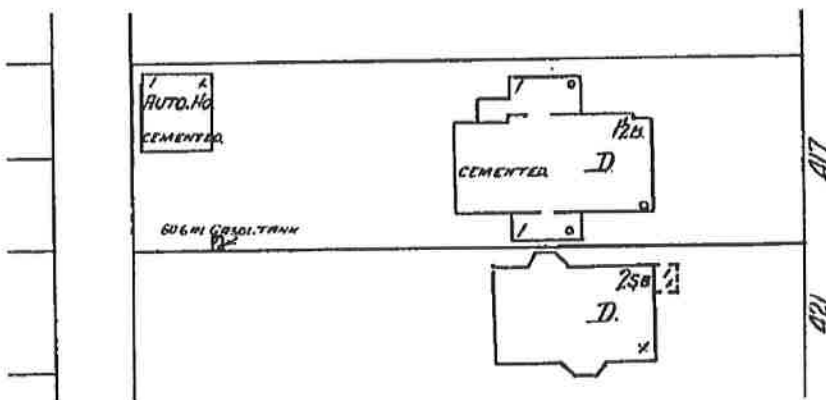
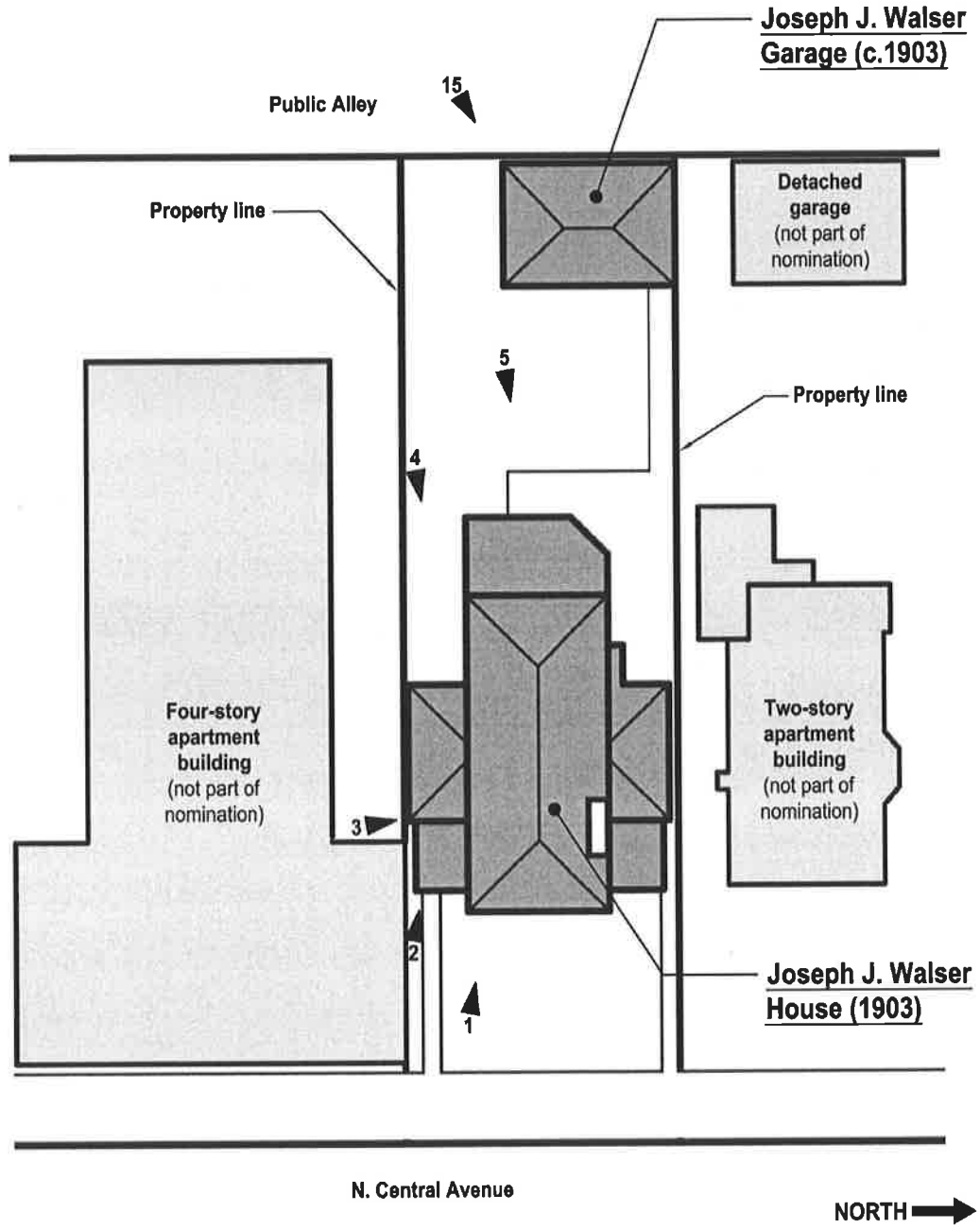


Figure 3 1908 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Joseph J. Walser property (house and garage at top)  
 Source: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Chicago, Illinois, 1905-1951, Vol .8, 1914, Sheet 34.



Joseph J. Walser House  
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**Joseph J. Walser House - Current Site Plan**

Not to scale

NORTH →

XX →  
Corresponds to photos in nomination

Figure 4 Joseph J. Walser House current site plan. Numbered arrows correspond to photos attached to nomination.  
Source: John D. Cramer

Joseph J. Walser House  
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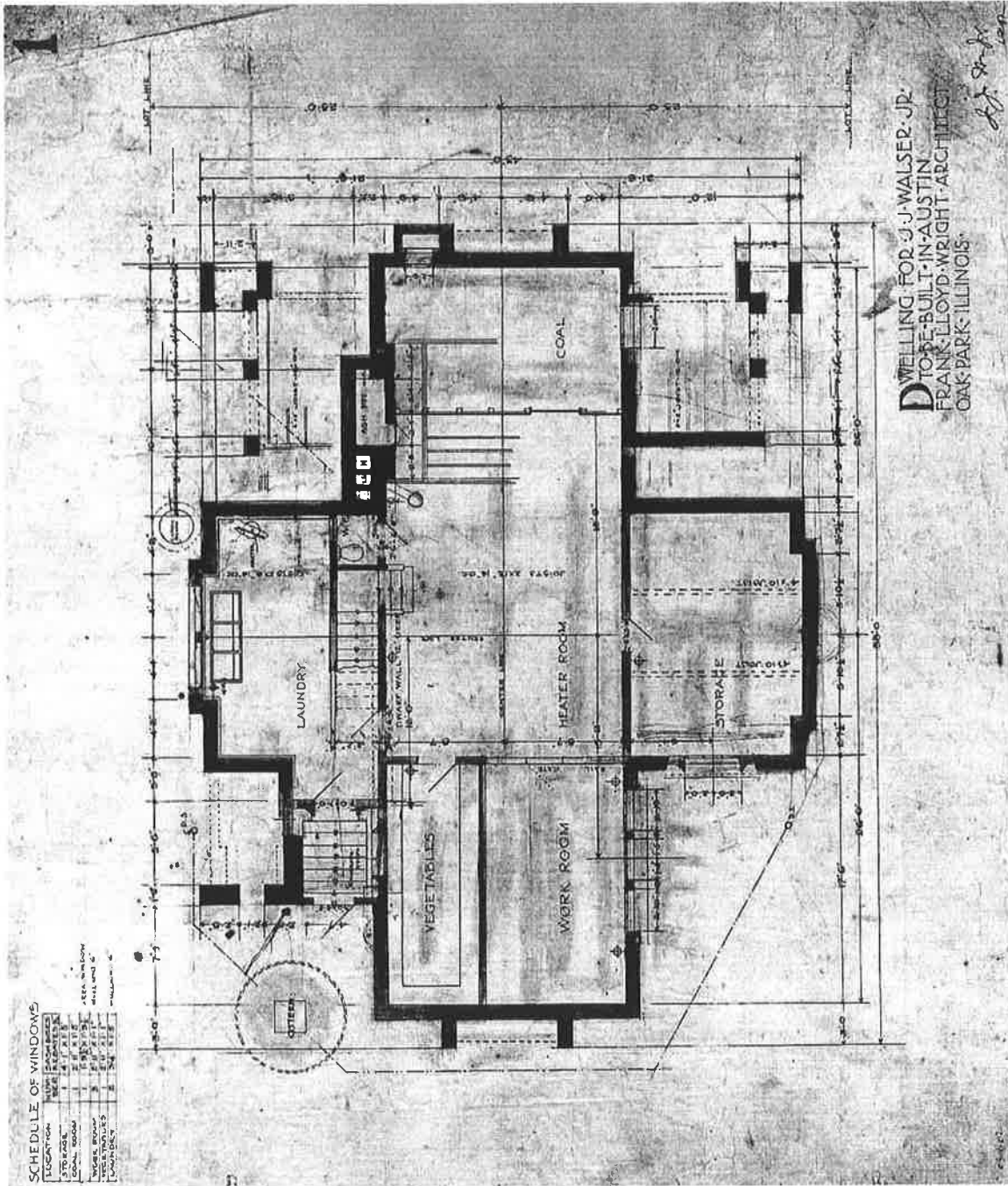


Figure 5 Original 1903 Joseph J. Walser House basement floor plan  
 Source: Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation

Joseph J. Walser House  
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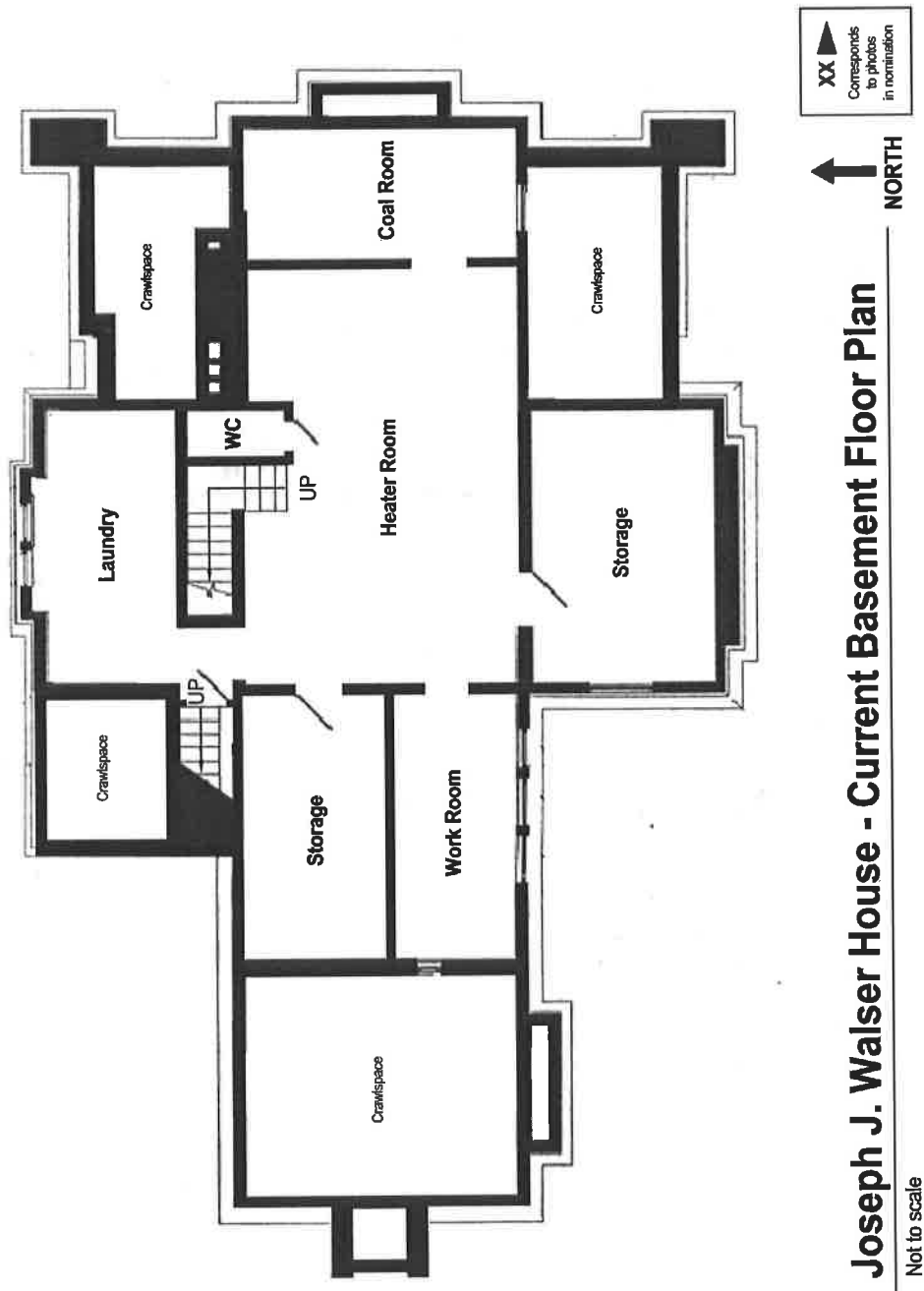


Figure 6 Joseph J. Walser House current basement floor plan  
Source: John D. Cramer

Joseph J. Walser House  
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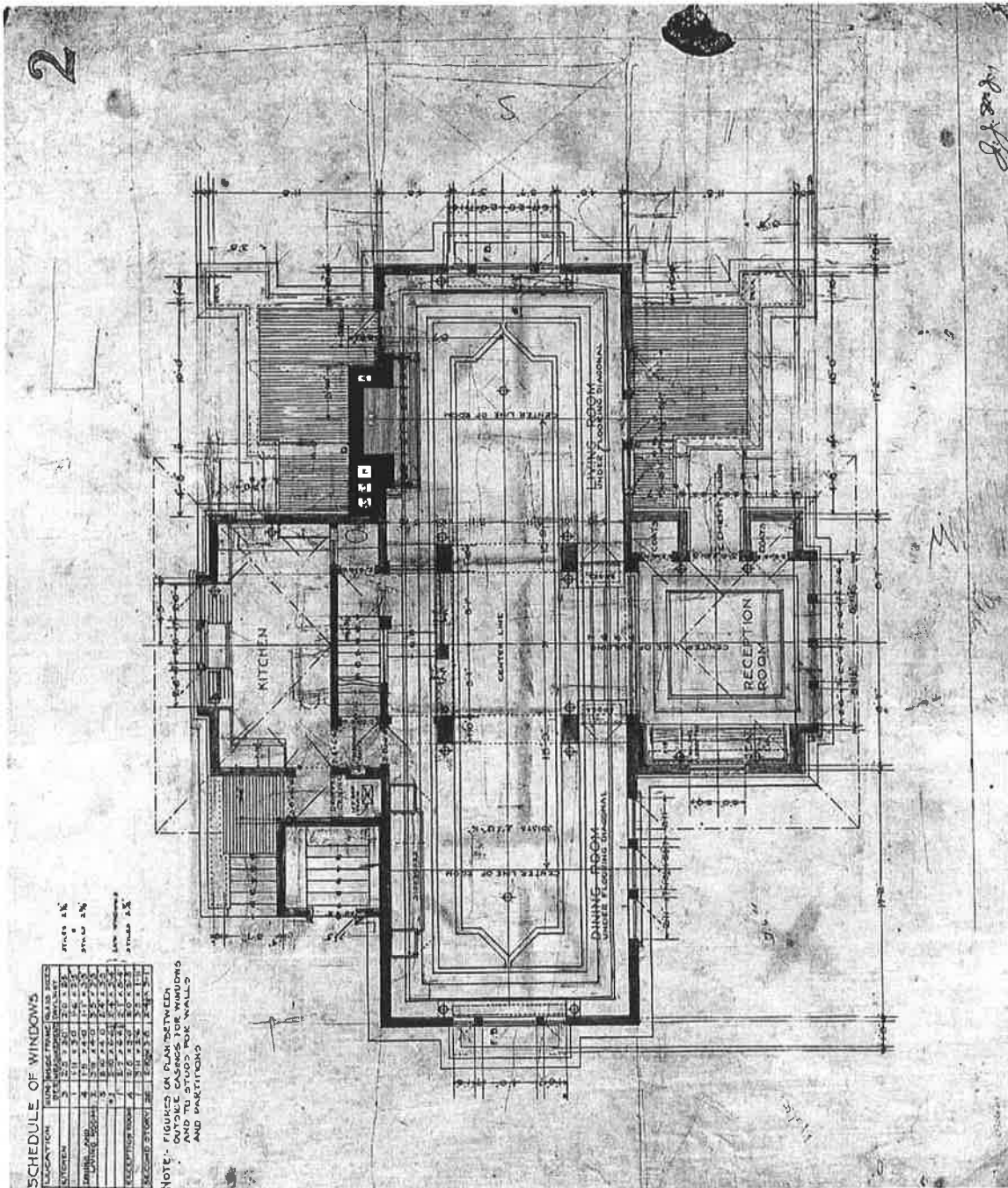


Figure 7 Original 1903 Joseph J. Walser House first floor plan  
 Source: Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation

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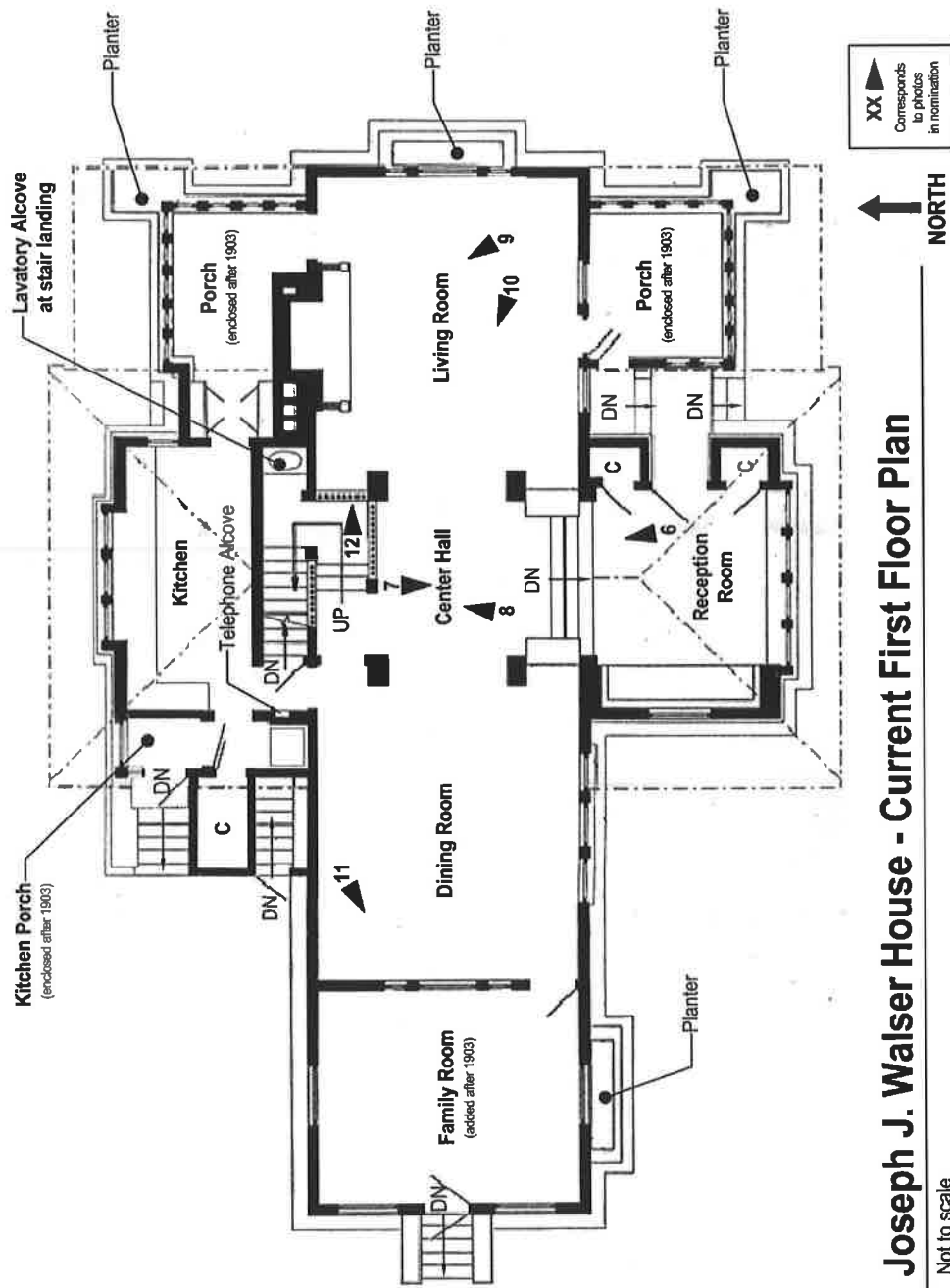


Figure 8

Joseph J. Walser House current first floor plan. Numbered arrows correspond to photos attached to nomination.  
Source: John D. Cramer, modified from Walser House plan from William Allin Storrer's Frank Lloyd Wright Companion

Joseph J. Walser House  
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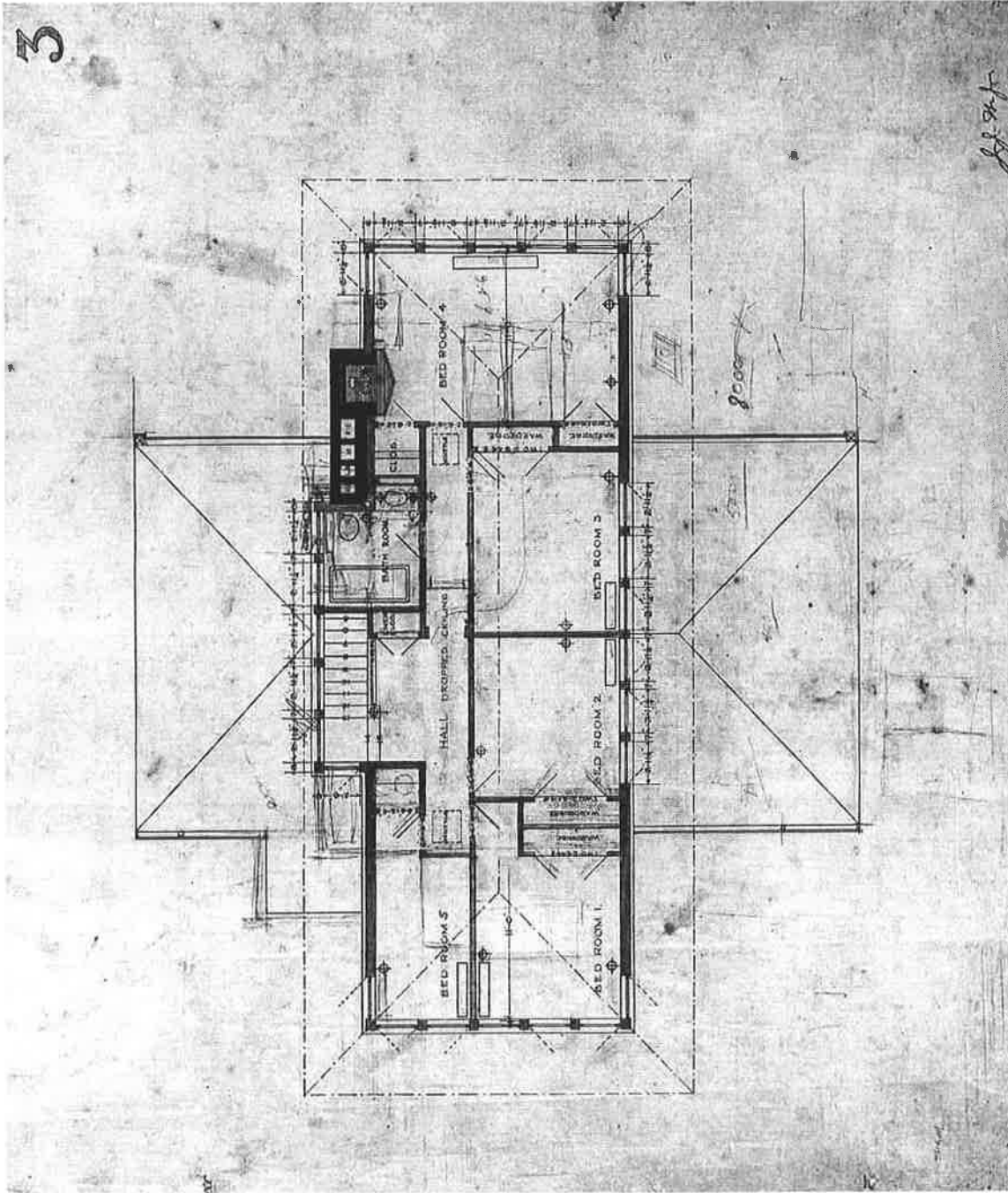


Figure 9 Original 1903 Joseph J. Walser House second floor plan  
Source: Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation

Joseph J. Walser House  
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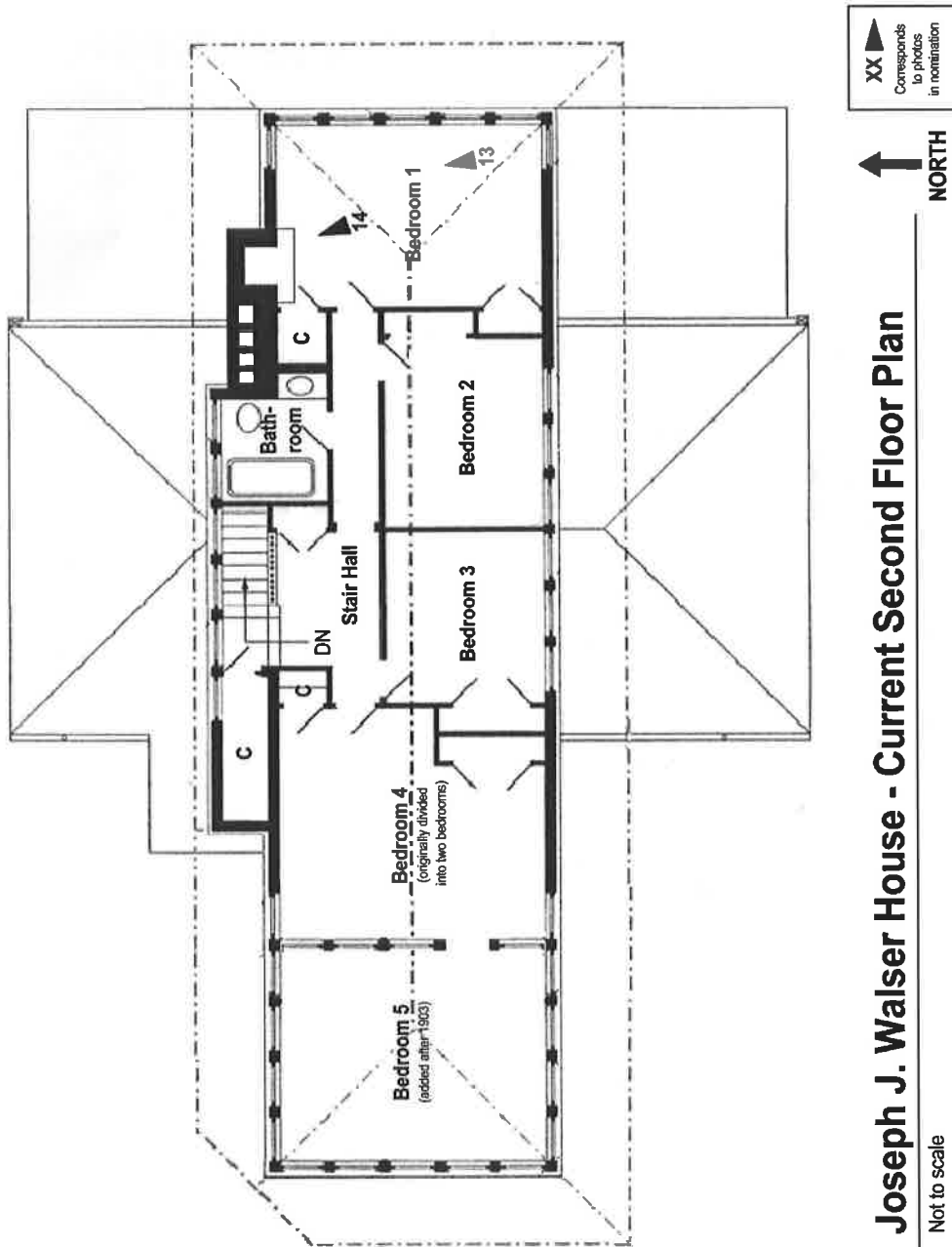


Figure 10 Joseph J. Walser House current second floor plan. Numbered arrows correspond to photos attached to nomination.

Source: John D. Cramer, modified from Walser House plan from William Allin Storrer's Frank Lloyd Wright Companion



Joseph J. Walser House  
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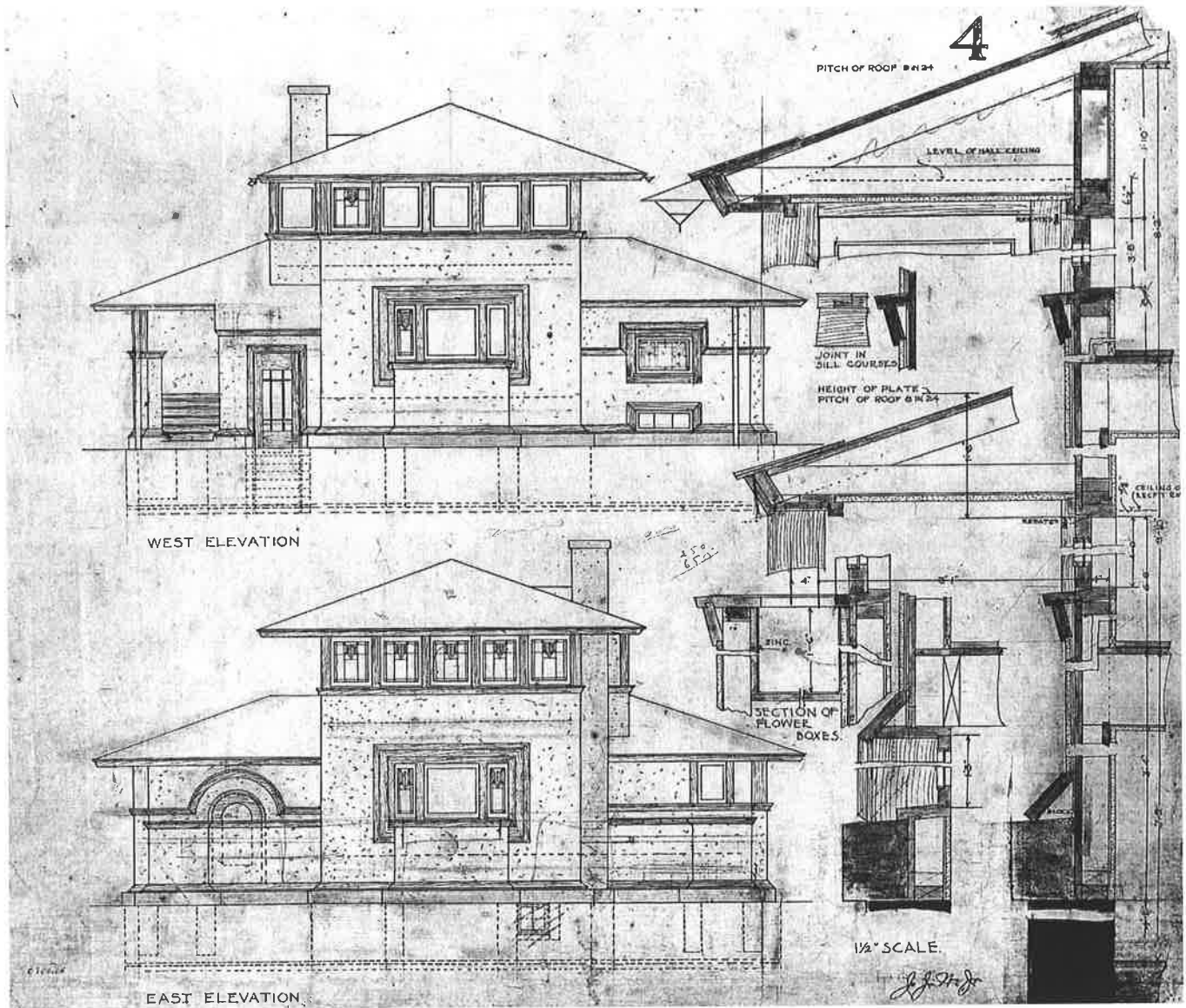


Figure 11 Original Joseph J. Walser House east elevation (bottom left), west elevation (top left), and building sections (right)  
Source: Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation



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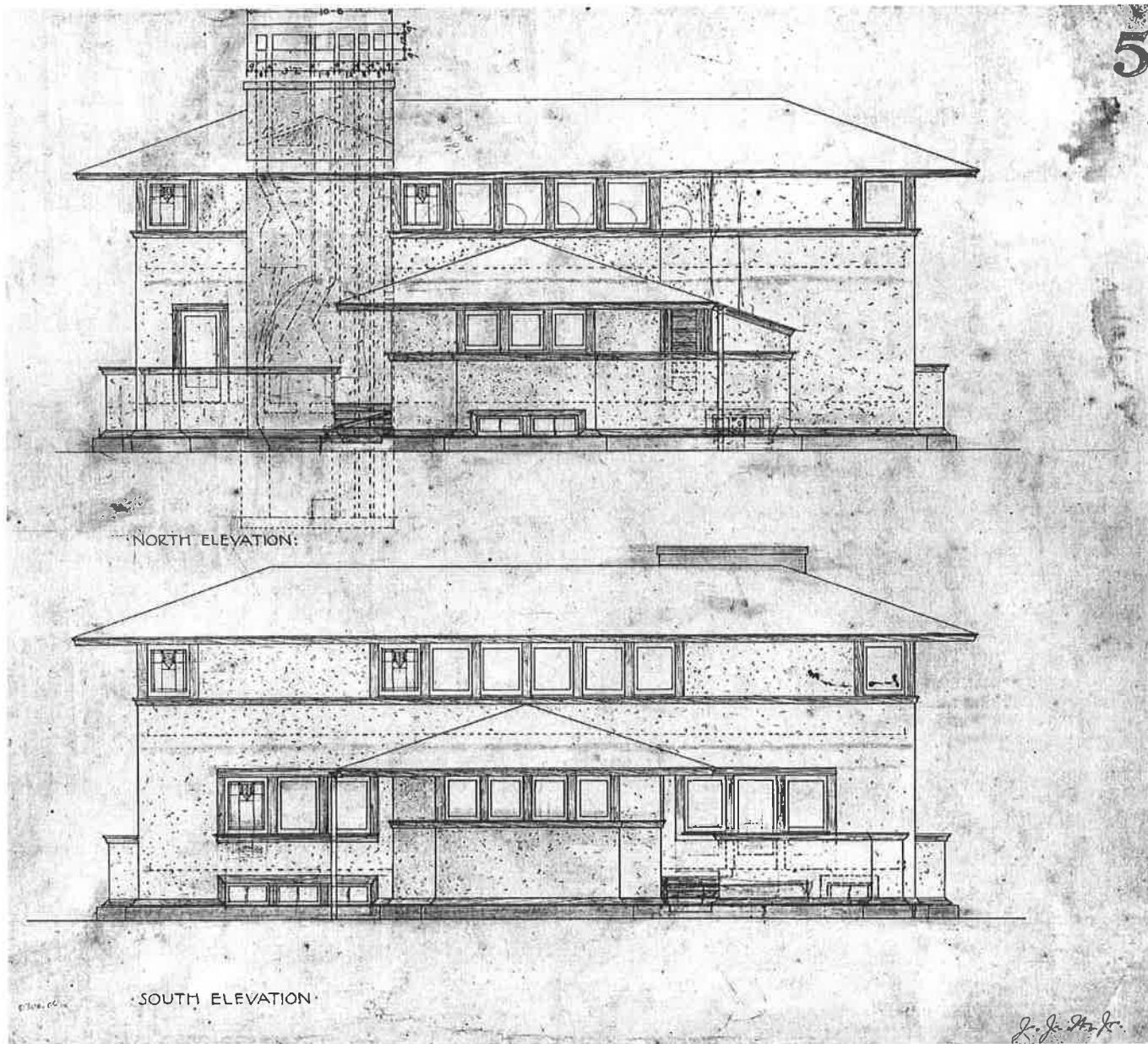


Figure 12 Original Joseph J. Walser House north elevation (top) and south elevation (bottom)  
Source: Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation

Joseph J. Walser House  
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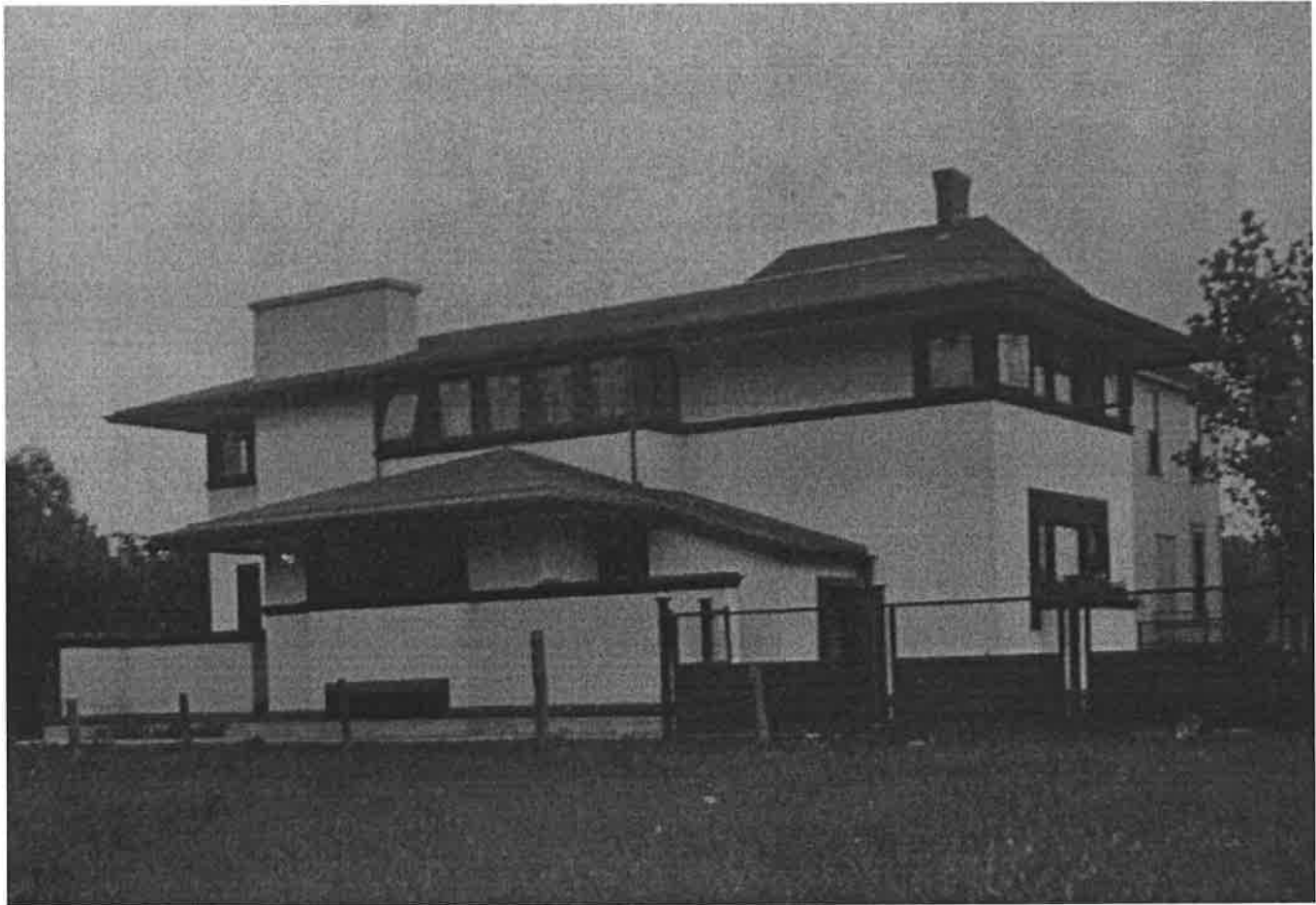


Figure 13 Photograph of the north and west elevation of the Joseph J. Walser House, c. 1903  
Source: House Beautiful, September 1905

Joseph J. Walser House  
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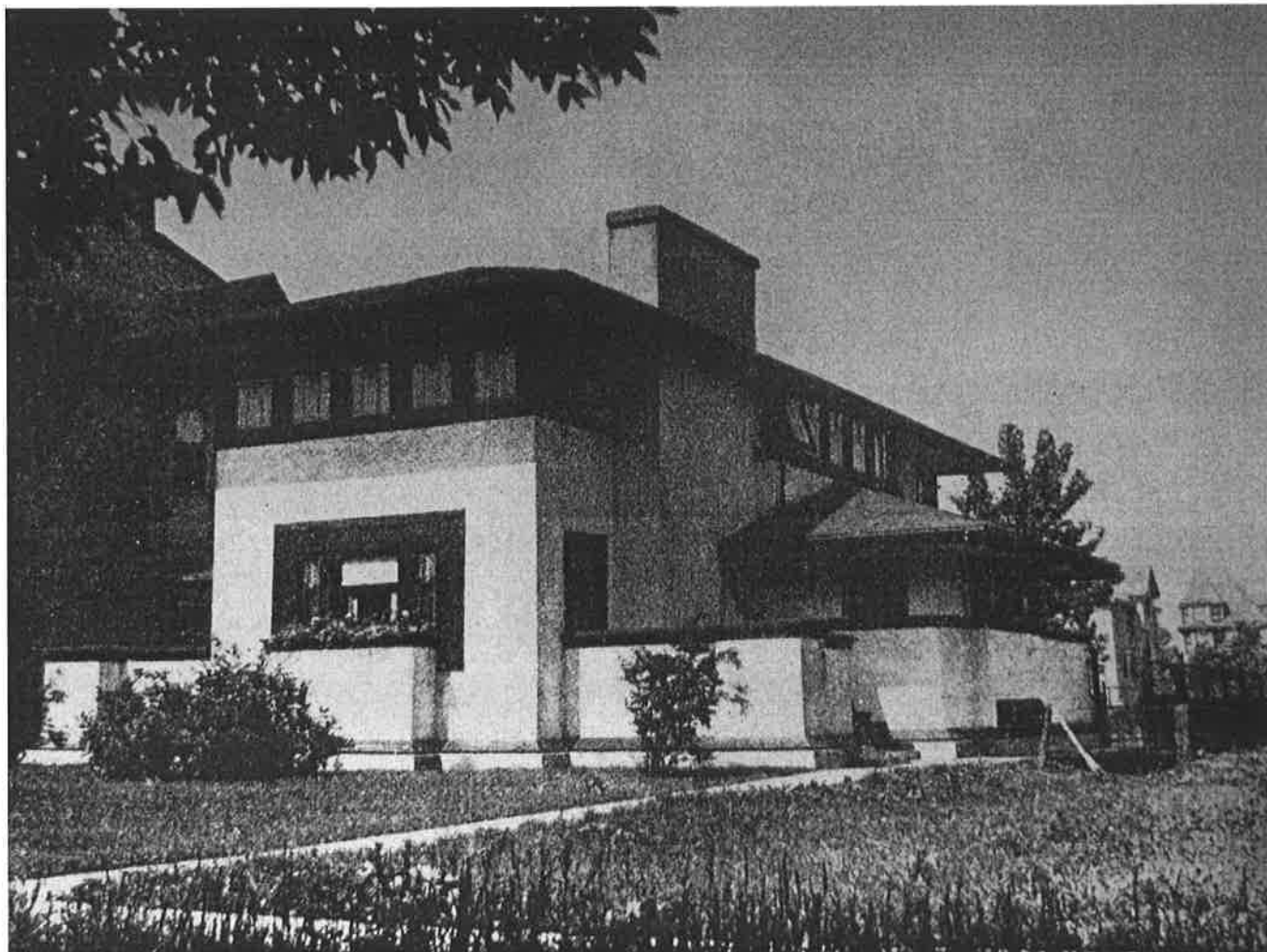


Figure 14 Photograph showing the north and west elevation of the Joseph J. Walser House, c.1903  
Source: Frank Lloyd Wright - Chicago: Achtes Sonderheft der Architektur des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts, 1922

Joseph J. Walser House  
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Figure 15 Photograph showing the east facade of the Joseph J. Walser House, c.1930  
Source: Gilman Lane Collection, Oak Park Public Library (Oak Park, Illinois)

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THE NATIONAL CYCLOPEDIA OF AMERICAN BIOGRAPHY

Figure 16 Jacob J. Walser, father of Joseph J. Walser and president of the Goss  
Printing Company  
Source: The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography, 1922



Joseph J. Walser House  
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Figure 17 Joseph J. Walser in 1900  
Source: University of Michigan 1900  
Yearbook, Ancestry.com

Figure 18 Joseph J. Walser Obituary, 1922  
Source: Editor & Publisher, January 8,  
1922

## J. J. WALSER, TREASURER OF GOSS PRESS, DEAD

**Trip to Florida in Search of Health in  
Vain—Had Contributed Many In-  
ventions to Newspaper  
Machinery World**

*(Special to EDITOR & PUBLISHER)*

CHICAGO.—Joseph J. Walser, treasurer of the Goss Printing Press Company and active in that institution for 21 years, died January 1, at Lake Worth, Fla. Mr. Walser had been in ill health for the past year and a half and had recently gone to Florida in hopes of recovery. He was born in Chicago, April 20, 1878, and made city his home until 1916, when he moved to Ann Arbor, Mich. He took his engineering degree at the University of Michigan in 1899.



J. J. WALSER

Immediately after leaving college, he entered the employ of the Goss Company, his father, Jacob J. Walser, then being the president and general manager of that corporation. Many patents that have meant much for development in the newspaper world were taken out in his name and in conjunction with others. He was made treasurer of the Goss Printing Press Company in 1913, and served in that capacity until his death.

Mr. Walser was a member of the University Club of Chicago, also a 32° Mason and member of the Oriental Consistory, and Medinah Temple, A. A. O. N. M. S., Chicago. He was a member of the Phi Kappa Psi Fraternity and it was due principally to him that its club house at Ann Arbor was financed and built. He is survived by his wife, Grace Florence Walser, four daughters, Gretchen, Sally, Ruth and Mary; his mother, Mrs. Mary Walser, and his sister, Mrs. Lizzie W. Oliphant.

Joseph J. Walser House  
 Name of Property

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HENRY WALLER'S SUBDIVISION OF C. 400 AC. OF LAND SEC. 8, 33, 70

419

BLOCK 6 LOTS 28 to 32

DOCUMENT	GRANTOR	GRANTEE	INST.	DATE OF INSTRUMENT	DATE OF FILING	DESCRIPTION
1263998	Julia F. Kraft & hus	Arthur A. Kraft	W.D. Rec	24 29 May 6 90		28, 29
3361032	Arthur A. Kraft & wif	Jos. J. Walser & wif	W.D. Rec	20 03 Mar 10 03		28, 29
4660796	Joseph J. Walser & wif	Geo. Donnersberger	W.D. Rec	9 10 Nov 11 10		28, 29
4661686	Geo. Donnersberger & wif	Henry W. Austin	J.D. Rec	11 10 Nov 14 10		28, 29

Figure 19 Record of "Jos. J. Walser & wf"'s purchase of Lots 28 and 29 on March 10, 1903 and "Joseph J. Walser & wf"'s sale of property to "Geo. Donnersberger" on November 9, 1910.

Source: Cook County, Illinois, Tract Book Room

Record of Building Permits for Permanent Structures

Permit No.	Date	Name of Owner	Dimensions of Building		Area of Building	
			Feet	Feet	Sq. Feet	Sq. Feet
6758	5/29	Carl Huth	21	40	840	
6759	5/29	J. J. Walser	43	58	2494	
6754	5/29	Frank Schradel	71	57	4047	
			22	15	330	

Permit No.	Date	Name of Owner	Address	Area
360	5/29	Jas. Blaker	360	
260	5/29	Fred Gump	260	
1720	5/29	C. Gump	1720	
3190	5/29	Jas. Blaker	3190	
2450	5/29	C. A. Perkins	2450	

Figure 20 Record of building permit for Joseph J. Walser House dated May 22, 1903.

Source: Commission on Chicago Landmarks

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Figure 21 The only known image of the Walser House interior during the time the Walsers occupied the home. Joseph J. Walser sits in either the downstairs Living Room or Dining Room with his daughters Gretchen (left) and Sally (right), c.1908. A wood-trimmed Center Hall pier is faintly visible in the background.  
Source: Seven Generations in Ann Arbor: The Riggs and Walser Families, Sarah Taggart, 2008



Figure 22 The Joseph J. Walser family c.1918. From left, Gretchen, Ruth, Grace, Sally, Joseph, and Mary Walser.  
Source: Seven Generations in Ann Arbor: The Riggs and Walser Families, Sarah Taggart, 2008



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Figure 22 View of Walser House, looking west toward entrance, 1981.  
Source: Commission on Chicago Landmarks, 33 N. LaSalle Street,  
Suite 1600, Chicago, IL 60602

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- "Wright House for the Right Buyer." AIA Journal (January 1970): 68.
- "Wright House in Danger of Dissection." Progressive Architecture v. 51 (January 1970): 25.

Joseph J. Walser House  
Name of Property

Cook Co., IL  
County and State

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository: Commission on Chicago Landmarks  
Chicago Historic Resources Survey

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** N/A

Joseph J. Walser House  
Name of Property

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreeage of Property** Less than one acre

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- 1. Latitude: 41.881532                      Longitude: -87.765383
- 2. Latitude:                                      Longitude:
- 3. Latitude:                                      Longitude:
- 4. Latitude:                                      Longitude:

**Or**

**UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927    or     NAD 1983

- 1. Zone:                      Easting:                      Northing:
- 2. Zone:                      Easting:                      Northing:
- 3. Zone:                      Easting:                      Northing:
- 4. Zone:                      Easting :                      Northing:

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Lots 28 and 29 of Block 6 of Henry Waller's Subdivision of the South 43 3/4 acres of the East 1/2 of the Southeast 1/4 of Section 8, Township 39 North, Range 14 East of the Third Principal Meridian, in Cook County, Illinois.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary encompasses the Walser House's original city lot property lines. The boundary includes the Joseph J. Walser House (contributing), the independent garage at the west end of the property (contributing), the front and back yards, and the north and south concrete walks that have historically been part of the Walser House property.

Joseph J. Walser House  
Name of Property

Cook Co., IL  
County and State

---

### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title: John D. Cramer  
organization: \_\_\_\_\_  
street & number: 1020 N. Campbell Avenue, Apt. 3  
city or town: Chicago state: IL zip code: 60622  
e-mail johndcramer@gmail.com  
telephone: 337.781.1180  
date: November 15, 2012

---

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

### Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### Photo Log

Name of Property: Joseph J. Walser House

City or Vicinity: Chicago

County: Cook

State: IL

Name of Photographer: John Cramer

Date Photographed: March 2010 – May 2011

Location of Original Digital Files: 1020 N. Campbell Avenue, Apt 3, Chicago, IL 60622

Description of Photograph(s) and number

1 of 14      IL\_Cook Co\_Joseph J. Walser House\_0001 Southeast exterior view (March 2010)

Joseph J. Walser House  
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- 2 of 14 IL\_Cook Co\_Joseph J. Walser House\_0002 Exterior entrance view (March 2010)
- 3 of 14 IL\_Cook Co\_Joseph J. Walser House\_0003 Southwest exterior view (March 2010)
- 4 of 14 IL\_Cook Co\_Joseph J. Walser House\_0004 West exterior view (March 2010)
- 5 of 14 IL\_Cook Co\_Joseph J. Walser House\_0005 Interior view looking northwest from Reception Room into Center Hall (March 2010)
- 6 of 14 IL\_Cook Co\_Joseph J. Walser House\_0006 Interior view looking north from Reception Room into Center Hall (March 2010)
- 7 of 14 IL\_Cook Co\_Joseph J. Walser House\_0007 Interior view looking south from Center Hall into Reception Room (March 2010)
- 8 of 14 IL\_Cook Co\_Joseph J. Walser House\_0008 Interior view northwest to Living Room fireplace (May 2011)
- 9 of 14 IL\_Cook Co\_Joseph J. Walser House\_0009 Interior view of Living Room looking west to stair grill, Center Hall, and Dining Room (May 2011)
- 10 of 14 IL\_Cook Co\_Joseph J. Walser House\_0010 Interior view of TV Room looking east to original Dining Room window (March 2010)
- 11 of 14 IL\_Cook Co\_Joseph J. Walser House\_0011 Detail view of stair grill looking east from stair landing (March 2010)
- 12 of 14 IL\_Cook Co\_Joseph J. Walser House\_0012 Interior view of Bedroom 1 looking north (March 2010)
- 13 of 14 IL\_Cook Co\_Joseph J. Walser House\_0013 Detail view of Bedroom 1 fireplace (March 2010)
- 14 of 14 IL\_Cook Co\_Joseph J. Walser House\_0014 Southwest view of the Walser House garage (May 2011)

**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.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



**J. J. Walser House**  
41.881532° -87.765383°





Google earth





































UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Walser, Joseph J., House

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: ILLINOIS, Cook

DATE RECEIVED: 3/08/13      DATE OF PENDING LIST: 4/03/13  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 4/18/13      DATE OF 45TH DAY: 4/24/13  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 13000185

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      4-23-13 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.





**Illinois Historic  
Preservation Agency**

1 Old State Capitol Plaza • Springfield, Illinois 62701-1512 • [www.illinois-history.gov](http://www.illinois-history.gov)



March 5, 2013

Ms. Barbara Wyatt  
National Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service  
1849 C Street NW Suite NC400  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Ms. Wyatt:

Enclosed for your review are the following National Register Nomination Forms that were recommended by the Illinois Historic Sites Advisory Council and signed by the Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer:

**Pure Oil Station (Geneva, Kane County)**  
**320 W. Oakdale (Chicago, Cook County)**  
**Joseph J. Walser House (Chicago, Cook County)**  
**Marshall Business Historic District (Marshall, Clark County)**

Please contact me at the address above, or by telephone at 217-785-4324. You can also email me at [andrew.heckenkamp@illinois.gov](mailto:andrew.heckenkamp@illinois.gov) if you need any additional information or clarification. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Andrew Heckenkamp  
National Register Coordinator

Enclosures