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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in 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. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Murphy, Charles and Peggy House

other names/site number n/a

### 2. Location

street & number 320 North Wilton Road

not for publication

city or town New Canaan

vicinity

state Connecticut code CT county Fairfield code 001 zip code \_\_\_\_\_

### 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

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

CCT / SHPO

7-8-10

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

### 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:)

[Signature]

Signature of the Keeper

9/16/10

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

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	0	buildings
0	0	district
0	0	site
0	0	structure
0	0	object
2	0	<b>Total</b>

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

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC - Single dwelling  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC - Single dwelling  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: CONCRETE; STONE  
walls: WOOD - Shingle  
\_\_\_\_\_  
ASPHALT; SYNTHETICS-Rubber;  
roof: OTHER- Built-up Tar and Gravel  
other: \_\_\_\_\_

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### **Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

#### **Summary Paragraph**

The Charles and Peggy Murphy House is an individualized representative example of Modern residential architecture designed by Wrightian architect Allan J. Gelbin in 1964. Gelbin, a Taliesin protégé of Frank Lloyd Wright, derived an irregular pinwheel-shaped plan for the one-story house organized around a hexagonal central room. The resultant organic form of the house is comprised of a series of low, elongated triangular sections defined by acute corners and overlapping horizontal planes. This triangular theme is echoed throughout every architectural element and interior fixture of the house, from projecting angled decks to pyramidal skylights and triangular drawer pulls. The Murphy House occupies a remote, four-acre wooded lot in New Canaan, Connecticut and is sited on a rock ledge overlooking a natural brook and small pond. The irregular plan of the house allows for uniquely framed scenic views from every elevation. The property includes a shed and an addition to the house designed by Gelbin in 1971 and 1974.

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### **Narrative Description**

#### **Setting**

The Murphy House is located off North Wilton Road in the northeast corner of town, near the state border of Connecticut and New York. The topography of the property consists of rocky terrain at an elevation of 500 feet above sea level. A natural stream flows south from the state line through the east side of the property into a small pond formed by a concrete dam. The house is set back more than 300 hundred feet from the road with the longest elevation facing west. It is accessed by a gravel driveway that winds through the west half of the property and terminates in a buffered parking area, located near a former carport that has been incorporated into the living space of the house. A one-story storage shed in the parking area faces south. The majority of the property is densely forested, creating a feeling of privacy and seclusion. The land immediately west and north of the house is cleared and incorporates a moss-covered open space, terraced stone patio, and stone retaining walls. The patio extends into a pathway of stone pavers that continues around the house to a wood deck on the north elevation. A subtle, curved gravel walkway traverses through the open lawn. Landscape architect Wesley Stout designed the walkway and a gravel drainage strip around the house between 2002 and 2005. His work also included the reconstruction of the stone walls. The stone path, drainage strip and low shrubs follow the triangular outline of the house. The Murphy House is located in relatively close proximity to three other Modern style houses, including the Daine House to the north (1954) and the Alan Goldberg House (1977) and John Black Lee House I (1952) on Laurel Road to the south. There are more than 90 extant architect-designed Modern style houses in New Canaan.

#### **Exterior**

The irregular triangulated form of the Murphy House stems from its complex plan, which is expressed on the exterior through dynamic shifting wall and roof planes. The house is constructed of a simple wood-frame set on a concrete slab that is not visible above grade, and is sheathed in dark-stained wood shingles intended to blend in with the surrounding landscape. It was erected by Walter Smith of Wilton to Allan Gelbin's specifications. The overall plan of the house consists of a right-triangle with the hypotenuse forming the west elevation. The sides of the triangle are broken up with recessed jogs and projecting angled decks or rooms. The center of the house is formed by an approximately 30 foot by 30 foot square covered by a low-pitched, asphalt shingled pyramidal roof with a pyramidal skylight at the apex. The eaves of the central square are one foot higher than the surrounding, tar-and-gravel flat roofs that cover the rest of the house. The flat roofs feature deep, outward pointing overhangs finished with recessed lights and rectangular or triangular cut-outs in the soffits. A rectangular wing that extends from the south side of the house contains an original storage room and carport converted into living space by Allan Gelbin in 1974 and a simultaneous 28 foot by 20 foot, one-story addition by the same architect. The 1974 renovations included the addition of a low 379 square foot second story located above the

former storage room. The second story has a flat roof covered with a rubber membrane and is sheathed with wood shingles to match the rest of the house. Two interior fieldstone chimneys rise from the center of the house and a third identical chimney is located in the former carport, adjacent to a pair of pyramidal skylights. Additional bubble skylights and bands of original fixed and casement wood sash windows light the house. Most of the glazing is vertically oriented and emphasized by a pattern of thick vertically laid wood trim that contrasts with the low, horizontal form of the walls. The multiple entrances typically consist of pairs of narrow; single-pane doors designed as part of the glazed wall systems.

The west elevation faces the terraced stone patio and open lawn. The main entrance consists of a single door located at the north end of a 24 foot long glazed wall between the core of the house and the former carport. The entrance is slightly shielded by an acute, projecting triangular room to the north. Expansive glazing continues around the core of the house, which is defined by the intersecting edges of the central square. The west corner of the square is exposed on the exterior and is clad with fieldstone that matches the chimneys. A continuous band of clerestory windows lights the upper portion of the square and echoes the glazing of the angled walls below. Two entrances with paired doors to the north side of the square provide access to the yard. The northwest corner of the house converges as a dramatic, acute triangular point repeated by the overhanging roof, soffit cut-out, planter box, trim board, and gravel drainage strip. A four-inch by four-inch post and groups of two-inch by four-inch studs set on an angle support the extended eaves.

The north elevation of the house consists of a partially glazed wall set at grade that opens up at the east end where the house overlooks the natural brook that crosses through the property. The east corner of the house is defined by a 39 foot long triangular, open wood deck. The sharply pointed tip of the deck appears as if it is floating on the pond below evokes the feeling of the bow of a boat. The plank decking and outward slanted plank railings complete this aesthetic. The triangular deck abuts a second, identically constructed, polygonal shaped wood deck along the east half of the elevation. The second deck is a 1974 enlargement and reconstruction of an original open terrace at this location. The triangular deck is set a few feet below continuous decks on either side of it. Two pairs of original glazed doors on the north elevation provide access to the exterior spaces. The doors located off the original terrace are accented by square cut-outs in the roof above, which frame views of the main chimney.

The east elevation is almost completely glazed to maximize views of the pond and brook. The triangular deck continues in a four foot wide strip around the corner of the house and connects to an irregular, 15 foot by 14 foot deck to the south. Concrete and stone retaining walls rise above the edge of the deck. Three sets of paired, glazed doors open to the exterior. The overlapping horizontal planes of the various roofs are clearly visible near the south end of the elevation, which incorporates the lower heights of the carport and addition, and the interior loft above. The south elevation is only 20 feet wide and is comprised of a slanted, seamlessly glazed wall. Continuous sheets of plate glass span between vertical planks laid perpendicular to the glass. The planks straddle the interior and exterior, and minimize the presence of a wall.

## **Interior**

The interior of the house contains 3,432 square feet including five bedrooms, three bathrooms, and the 379 square foot upper level. It is finished with drywall, recessed lighting, a variety of floor surfaces, and wood built-ins and decorative trim. Most rooms feature prominent triangular elements. The main entrance opens to a 24 foot long hallway created by the enclosure of an exterior stone patio in 1974. The original stone floor of the patio is intact and communication between the exterior and interior is achieved through the glazed west wall and retention of the original roof overhang cut-outs, which are covered with bubble skylights. The hall provides access to the former carport and addition to the south and the core of the house to the north. The interior plan consists of a series of rectangular rooms organized around the central square.

An elongated hexagonal kitchen inserted within the central square is the sculptural showpiece of the house and demonstrates Gelbin's mastery of Frank Lloyd Wright's interior designs. The pyramidal skylight in the middle of the ceiling opens to a geometric, three-dimensional wood art piece integrated into the exposed timber-framing of the roof. The art piece features a diamond-shaped pendant intersected by wood beams running in both directions that are braced with lateral trusses arranged in a triangular pattern. The tip of the suspended diamond is aligned with the triangular corner of the massive stone chimney comprising the majority of the east wall. A six-inch tall dropped ceiling plane extends over door openings to either side of the chimney and continues over hung cabinets along the south wall. Four

narrow, vertical cut-outs, angled at the top, add aesthetic interest to the north wall of the room and offer views into the adjacent dining space. The kitchen is finished with original horizontally laid red-stained wood paneling and orange terra cotta floors. All of the original kitchen furnishing and fixtures are intact, including banks of smooth wood cabinets with triangular knobs and a triangular pendant light hung over the dining table. The table legs and surrounding chairs are constructed of plywood sheets cut and intersected at angles. Wright developed the triangular backed version of these chairs in approximately the 1950s, which resemble his previous "Prairie School" and "Lounge" chairs. A seating bench is built along the north wall and matches an identical dining room bench on the opposite side of the wall. The dining room continues the interior finishes of the kitchen. A bank of identical cabinets flanks the angled north wall and the floor is covered with terra cotta tile. The change in roof heights between the central square and flat roofed section of the house are addressed in the dining room through a dropped ceiling over a portion of the room that incorporates triangular cut-outs along one edge.

The expansive glazing and angled walls create focal points throughout the rest of the house and the floors are primarily covered with original oak plank. A group of three compact bedrooms accessed by a linear, northwest-southeast hallway occupies the northwest end of the house. Two living rooms are situated in the northeast corner of the house and have access to the multiple decks. The easternmost room is sunken and features a triangular hearth on the opposite side of the angled fieldstone chimney which is oriented so that its triangular corners face both rooms. The hearth is flush with the floor and the chimney shaft continues through a rectangular cut-out in the ceiling to the roof above. The walls are finished with vertically laid oak boards and the floors have been recently replaced with luminescent white vinyl tiles. An L-shaped seating bench is tucked into the corner so as not to disrupt the dramatic views of the bow-shaped deck outside, which seems to project from the living room floor. Three steps at the south end of the room ascend to the second living space, which is accessible from the main hallway and a corridor adjacent to the kitchen. The corridor also provides access to bathroom and closet spaces. The south wall of the room and hallways were altered by the removal of dividing walls to enable greater circulation after the main hallway was created from the formerly exterior patio. The expanded living room consumed space formerly occupied by a master bedroom and music room.

A quarter-turn stairway at the south end of the main hall provides access to the second story bedroom, added to the house by Gelbin in 1974. The stairway is primarily enclosed, but incorporates vertical cables along one side. A set of five stone steps adjacent to this stairway descends into a linear hallway through the former carport, which contains a master bedroom and bathroom suite on the east side. The carport was converted into living space in 1974 and changed into a master bedroom in 2001. The transition of the space into a master bedroom involved the construction of a privacy partition wall that created the hallway. The wall terminates two feet below the ceiling and the space is filled with glass. The adjacent storage space was converted into a master bathroom in 2001 as well. Architect Juergen Rheim of 1100 Architect in New York City designed the 2001 renovations. The south addition, erected in 1974, remains an open space and is currently used as an office. Gelbin designed the house with an intercom system, which is intact. Its operability is unknown.

### **Alterations**

Alterations to the Murphy House are primarily limited to renovations to the south end of the house completed in 1974 and 2001. In 1974, the original architect Allan Gelbin, converted the original carport into living space, constructed a 20-foot long addition adjacent to the garage, and constructed a compact second story addition above the former storage room. He simultaneously enclosed a patio off the main entrance. In 2001, the program of the former carport was changed again and the layout of the area was modified to include a privacy wall and hallway.

### **Outbuildings**

#### *Shed, contributing (1971)*

The one-story shed on the property is located west of the building and faces the parking area at the end of the driveway. Allan Gelbin designed the building for the original clients in 1971, before he converted the carport into living space in 1974 (Gelbin 1971). The shed is a discreet rectangular building that measures approximately 16 feet long and four feet deep. It features a flat roof with a deep overhang on the facade (south elevation) and is finished with stained wood

shingle that blends in with the landscape and the house. The shed is a contributing resource to the property, designed by the original architect for the original clients within the period of significance.

**Integrity**

The Charles and Peggy Murphy House retains its innovative Wrightian form, intentionally set within the natural landscape. The integral features of the woodland setting, including the secluded feeling and natural brook are intact and the minor landscape work from 2001 does not impact the understanding of the house or the property. Despite the 1974 renovations and small additions completed by the original architect of the house for the original clients, and the minor alterations completed in 2001, the overall massing, sculptural concepts, and architectural features of the house are completely intact. All of the strikingly Wrightian interior design elements are impeccably preserved and the majority of the plan and original materials are intact. The house emanates its feeling as a high style organic and geometric sculptural space and retains its mid-twentieth-century built-in furniture and triangular decorative motif. A few pieces of movable furniture designed by Gelbin for use in the house are located in a private collection.

**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.)

Property is:

- 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.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL HISTORY

ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance**

1964-2001

**Significant Dates**

1964: House constructed

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Gelbin, Allan J. (architect, house/1974 renovations)

Smith, Walter (builder)

Rheim, Juergen (architect, 2001 renovations)

**Period of Significance (justification)**

The period of significance begins in 1964 when the house was designed and completed, and ends in 2001 when the original owners sold the property. This timeframe encompasses a period of continuous use by the initial clients and incorporates all of the renovations completed by the original architect Allan J. Gelbin.

**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)**

The Charles and Peggy Murphy House meets Criteria Consideration G for its exceptional significance at the state level as the only known triangular-themed, mid-twentieth-century Modern residence in Connecticut designed by Taliesin-trained architect Allan Gelbin. Five of celebrated national architect Frank Lloyd Wright's more than 260 completed houses were

erected in New England, including two in Connecticut. Allan Gelbin is one of two Taliesin apprentices who studied with Wright and subsequently opened an architectural practice in Connecticut.

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Charles and Peggy Murphy House is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C at the state level for its associations with progressive mid-twentieth-century domestic lifestyle trends, architectural social milieu, and demonstration of Modern residential architecture during the mid-twentieth century. The building possesses significance under Criterion A in the category of Social History for its association with the development of efficient homes that implemented new ideas about open, integrated interior and exterior spaces, and demonstrated the local growth and acceptance of the non-traditional Modern style. Under Criterion C, the building possesses significance in the area of Architecture as an innovative residential work of Taliesin-trained architect Allan Gelbin that exhibits a unique, organic triangulated form directly derived from Frank Lloyd Wright's designs during the latter decades of his career. The house demonstrates Gelbin's adoption of Wright's fascination with geometric patterns, interlocking and overlapping planes, and holistic, seamless treatment of interior and exterior design. The house is complete with original Wrightian furniture designed and constructed by Gelbin. The Murphy House meets the requirements for listing under property type Number F.3 Geometric II, as defined in the Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern Residences in Connecticut Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) and contributes to the Modern Architecture Movement in United States, 1920–1979 and Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern Residential Architecture in Connecticut, 1930–1979 historical context themes described in the MPDF.

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

**Areas of Significance: Criterion A**

**Social History**

Charles and Peggy R. Murphy bought the property lot on January 17, 1963 for \$20,000 and subsequently hired local architect Allan J. Gelbin to design their ideal Modern style house, which he completed in 1964 (Town of New Canaan 2010). Although the Modern style, which was distinctly different from traditional designs often met opposition from the general population upon introduction, the progressive architectural climate was already well established in New Canaan by the early 1960s and was becoming more widely accepted throughout the country. The Murphys were familiar with the more than 70 Modern houses erected in the town since 1947, including Frank Lloyd Wright's organically derived Tirrana/Rayward House (1955), where Allan Gelbin supervised the construction. The established enclave of Modern style architects who were living or working in and around New Canaan during the period created opportunities for the realization of their experimental designs and often attracted clients seeking artistic contemporary work.

Charles and Peggy Murphy arrived in New Canaan, Connecticut in 1960. The Murphys were already familiar with the Fairfield County area by this time and had previously lived in West Norwalk before Charles Murphy's job was transferred out of state. They chose to move to New Canaan after returning in 1960, simply because the town offered good schools, easy commuting to New York and they were able to quickly find a rental property to live in (Murphy 2010). They rented a house designed by notable local architect Victor Christ-Janer on Turner Hill Road before purchasing land to build the Murphy House. Charles Murphy (1926–2008) worked as a lead accountant for advertising firms in New York for more than 50 years. He was born in Winchester, Massachusetts in 1926 and served in the military during World War II before graduating from Amherst College in 1949. Murphy became a star baseball pitcher at Amherst and played for the Brooklyn Dodgers minor league team for one year following graduation. His advertising career began in the early 1950s and he held notable positions in leading national and international marketing agencies based in New York City, including the DR Group, SSC&B, McCann-Erickson, and BBDO (*Kent Good Times Dispatch* 2008; *New Canaan Advertiser* 2008). Peggy Murphy was a housewife and raised their three children in the New Canaan home. The 1974 carport conversion, and ell and loft additions to the house were not conceived as part of Gelbin's original design for the house because the Murphys did not anticipate the need for later expansion. However, the Murphys hired Gelbin again



to complete the alterations so that they would be compatible with the original design (Murphy 2010). The Murphys moved to Kent, Connecticut after selling their New Canaan property to Ronald Meckler and Jacqueline Shapiro on March 16, 2001 (Town of New Canaan 2010).

The Murphy House demonstrates the dissemination of modernism in Connecticut and specifically New Canaan in the mid-twentieth century. Allan Gelbin studied under renowned American architect Frank Lloyd Wright at Taliesin East in Spring Green, Wisconsin. Wright, who more frequently worked in the Midwest and Southwest, completed two Modern style houses in Connecticut—the Frank S. Sander House in Stamford (1952) and the Tirranna/Rayward House in New Canaan (1955). Upon the completion of Wright’s Tirrana, New Canaan touted residential examples of many of the premier Modernist architects working in the country, including Marcel Breuer, Landis Gores, John Johansen, Philip Johnson, Carl Koch, and Eliot Noyes. Annual house tours of high style Modern residences designed by a variety of nationally and regionally known architects showcased their work as models of innovative architecture. Gelbin became familiar with the Modern architecture scene of Fairfield County, Connecticut while overseeing the construction of Tirrana. His subsequent relocation to Ridgefield, Connecticut illustrates the spread and continuation of Wrightian architecture to the state and New England region. The construction of the Sander House in Connecticut was overseen by Morton Delson (Hess and Weintraub 2005:532).

Post-World War II American domestic culture developed out of an unprecedented emphasis on family life, individuality, and the ideal that the average citizens, especially returning veterans, could strive for their own private utopia in the form of an affordable single-family suburban house with a comfortable amount of interior and exterior space for enjoyment (Wright 1989:253). This renewed interest in an enhanced quality of life, paired with the development of innovative new construction materials and mechanized conveniences, revolutionized preferences for residential design. By the early 1960s, many contemporary homes incorporated Modern inspired design concepts such as of open-plan living spaces, picture windows or glazed walls with views of a natural or suburban setting, and the placement of rooms to promote privacy and efficient child rearing. Bedrooms and play areas were located in specific zones, separate from a spacious living room and kitchens typically defined the center of the house, to provide efficient access to every domestic work space. Views from the kitchen often allowed observation of the yard and communication with the main dining and living rooms. The emergence of consumer marketing targeted at the “professional housewife” and related growth of the industrial and interior design professions amplified the popularity of the Modern aesthetic and desire for mechanized household appliances (Massey 1990:163–165). Allan Gelbin celebrated the kitchen as the functional and decorative heart of the Murphy House, with children’s bedrooms linearly organized to one side. The living room is set on the same level as the exterior deck and appears to seamlessly continue through the glazed wall. Gelbin clearly defined the function of each space with built-in furniture, fixtures, and varying qualities of surface treatments.

#### **Area of Significance: Criterion C**

##### **Architecture**

The Charles and Peggy Murphy House is an exemplary demonstration of Taliesin-trained American architect Allan Gelbin’s mid-twentieth-century Modern style residential work, designed during the peak of his independent career based in Ridgefield, Connecticut. The house illustrates Gelbin’s strikingly parallel continuum of Frank Lloyd Wright’s design paradigms and is his only residence in Connecticut based on a triangular plan. Gelbin followed nearly every artistic interest and inspiration of Frank Lloyd Wright’s, from geometric architecture, to furniture design, consistent use of natural materials, scenic landscapes, and utopian urban planning. However, Wright never designed a completely triangular themed house. The unique plan of the Murphy House is the result of Gelbin’s application of Wright’s design philosophies to the Murphy House site and the Murphy family’s needs in a residence.

Charles and Peggy Murphy both possessed a lifetime admiration for Frank Lloyd Wright’s work and were familiar with his designs prior to moving to New Canaan (Murphy 2010). Peggy Murphy first gained exposure to Wright as a child living in Wisconsin and supported Wright’s belief that building designs should be organically derived from the surrounding landscape, with minimal visual impact on the natural environment. The Murphys purchased the New Canaan

property because of the stream and pond on the site. They initially intended to hire renowned landscape architect James Rose (1913-1991) to complete a design for the whole property and planned to erect a house on the site afterwards (Murphy 2010). James Rose is a notable Modernist landscape architect who was expelled from the Harvard Graduate School of Design in 1937 for refusing to produce standard Beaux Arts landscape designs. After World War II, he which focused on private gardens, including his own home and studio in Ridgefield, NJ (Cultural Landscape Foundation 2010, James Rose Foundation 2010). The Murphys ultimately decided to search for an architect who could design a Wrightian house, which Peg Murphy noted was not easy to find in Connecticut. The Murphys were considering hiring Edgar Tafel, a well-known Taliesin-trained architect based in Rye, New York at the time, but were then introduced to Allan Gelbin through a realtor (Murphy 2010). The Murphys were not previously familiar with Gelbin, but commissioned him to build their ideal house after visiting his own Wrightian home in Ridgefield and others that he designed nearby (Murphy 2010). Gelbin employed local builder Walter Smith to construct the house. Although most contractors were not willing to build a residence with such a complex and unusual plan, Walter Smith became interested in because of the challenge (Murphy 2010). Smith later constructed Gelbin's Leuthold House in New Canaan. James Rose completed minor landscaping work on the Murphy property after the house was built, but the plantings became overgrown before the Murphys sold the house and Rose's design is not likely extant (Murphy 2010).

Allan J. Gelbin (1929–1994) trained with Frank Lloyd Wright (1867–1959) as an apprentice at Taliesin East in Spring Green, Wisconsin, and established his own residential architectural practice in Fairfield County, Connecticut, designing Wrightian Modern style houses primarily in New England and New York. Gelbin was born and raised in and around New York City and attended the School of Architecture at Carnegie Institute of Technology in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania from 1947 to 1949. In 1949, Wright lectured at the school and sparked Gelbin's fascination with his organic architectural theories. That same year, Gelbin began photographing many of Wright's buildings. He left Carnegie to apprentice with Wright at Taliesin East from 1949 to 1953, toward the end of Wright's career and continued working for him as a construction supervisor through 1955 (The Art Institute of Chicago 2010). Wright believed that formal, indoctrinated education restricted creativity and instead favored learning opportunities based on experiences and observations (Wright 1936). Gelbin, like Wright received his architectural training through apprenticeship. Gelbin drafted preliminary plans for a ski lodge at Taliesin West in 1949 and assisted with the design and construction processes of Wright's Adelman "Usonian Automatic" House in Arizona (1951) and Dobkins House in Canton, Ohio (1953) (The Art Institute of Chicago 2010). He oversaw the construction of two more houses in Canton Ohio – the Rubin House (1952) and Feiman House (1955) before supervising a team of assisting architects during the construction of the Rayward House/Tirrana in New Canaan, Connecticut (1955, extant).

After leaving Taliesin, Gelbin settled in Ridgefield, Connecticut where he opened a private architectural practice in 1957. He continued to produce his own expressions of Wright's designs and his houses share many similar, if not identical characteristics with Wright's, including interlocking and overlapping spaces, varied ceiling heights related to the functional arrangement of the plan, and fluid relationships between designed interior and exterior spaces (*Architecturra* 1993:506). Gelbin completed more than 40 new residential construction projects in addition to fulfilling numerous furniture commissions, and designing miscellaneous items such as cereal bowls, silkscreens, and the "House of Japan" exhibited at the New York World's Fair in 1964. The exhibit was a continuation of Wright's late fascination with Japanese design. Gelbin channeled Wright's urban design interests through the publication of a book about city planning, entitled *Sun, earth, and sky: ideas for a new city* in 1989.

Gelbin received a large number of commissions for residential additions and renovations during the mid-1960s through the 1980s and entered a design competition for Yale University's Mathematics Building in 1970. He built three houses for himself in each location that he frequented at different times during his life. Gelbin designed his first house for himself in Ridgefield, Connecticut between 1957 and 1959, and a second house in nearby Weston in 1965. He erected a residence and studio in Norwich, Vermont in 1973, followed by a country house in Wake Forest, North Carolina five years later (1978). His final project was the construction of his residence in Oak Creek, Arizona near Taliesin West in 1994. He died the same year.

Allan Gelbin designed at least 18 new single-family houses in Connecticut, including: the Allan J. Gelbin Speculative Residence (Ridgefield, 1957–1959); Johnson House (Danbury, 1957–1959); Breitbart House (North Wilton, 1959–1960); Doan House (Ridgefield, 1959); Hart House (West Cornwall, 1960); Carey House (Ridgefield, ca. 1962); Durniak House

(Candlewood Lake, New Fairfield, 1962); Murphy House (New Canaan, 1964); Trinkaus House (Weston, 1964); Allan J. Gelbin House and Studio (Weston, 1965); Haynes House (New Canaan, 1965); Kaltman House (Westport, 1965); Leuthold House (New Canaan, 1966); Mead House (Easton, 1967); Whitlow House (New Canaan, 1969); Kaltman House (Greens Farms, Westport, 1975); Gish Studio (Greenwich, 1976); and the Lawlor House (Westport, 1983) (*Architettura* 1993; Ennis 1962; Fowler 1961; The Art Institute of Chicago 2010).

The majority of these houses demonstrate plans derived from a right-angled grid and forms comprised of additive, sliding or interlocking rectangular volumes set at various heights, partially in response to the terrain of the site. The Trinkaus House is a low composition of variously oriented and scaled solid blocks pierced with glazed reveals and covered by numerous, horizontally emphasized cantilevered planes (WHS 2010). The house is built into a steep slope. Gelbin's own house and studio completed the following year illustrate his mastery of the simple, L-shaped Usonian form, erected on a 2-acre level lot (Sotheby's 2010; WHS 2010). The Stockmayer, Johnson, Brietbart houses and Gelbin's studio in Vermont also employ rectangular forms with L-shaped or elongated linear plans. The Carey House is a low, compact 900 square ft house comprised of two rectangular sections derived from right-angled grids and attached diagonally (*Architettura* 1993). Gelbin's experimentation with freer forms is shown in the sprawling, circular-themed Leuthold House and more compact Kaltman House, which consists of a concave semi-circle juxtaposed with rectangular spaces to one side (*Architettura* 1993). The circular Leuthold and triangular Murphy houses, both in New Canaan and built within two years, are a paired, expressive local sampling of Gelbin's most innovative geometric abstractions, designed during the peak of his career. The Leuthold family hired Gelbin after visiting the newly completed Murphy House and commissioned him to build a residence to showcase their art collections (Murphy 2010).

The Murphy house is an exercise in the application of Frank Lloyd Wright's organic philosophy that living spaces should be part of a holistic environment, which involves the interpretation of the natural setting around and throughout the house. Wright used the shape of local natural terrain and prominent landscape features as inspiration for his house forms and carried the sculptural volumes of the exterior seamlessly into the interior planes. Gelbin's triangular design of the Murphy House, which is reminiscent of Wright's experimentation with oblique and acute lines, was intended to "relate as closely as possible to the surrounding environment" and "offer the most spectacular views" (*Architettura* 1993). The Murphys requested that Gelbin place the house close to the water and maximize views of the landscape from every location within the house. They also wanted a central kitchen and spaces appropriate for their three children, such as a dining/playroom and children's bedrooms that were separated from the master bedroom (Murphy 2010). Gelbin designed the cut-outs in the wall between to the kitchen and dining room so that adults could keep watch of children in the dining/play space from the kitchen. Peg Murphy noted that Gelbin's "star-shaped" house plan was an organically derived solution to the specific parameters of the site that enabled him to create stunning views, capture natural lighting, and extend the house out from the central kitchen (Murphy 2010).

Gelbin lived by Wright's teachings, but interpreted them in his own way in response to the client goals and features of each particular site. The cantilevered, overlapping horizontal roof planes of the Murphy House juxtaposed with vertical divisions of glazing is a typical characteristic of Wrightian design. The use of natural, regionally prevalent materials inspired by the landscape is consistent with nearly all of Wright's houses. Peggy Murphy encouraged Gelbin's use of stone on the Murphy House, much of which was harvested from fields and stone walls (not extant) on the property. Gelbin's plan for the Murphy House incorporates Wright's interest in hexagonal shapes through the design of the kitchen and references his formation of fluid spaces. Wright celebrated human individuality through the creation of seemingly continuous interior spaces with porous perimeters, like the Murphy House kitchen/dining and living/porch areas. He achieved this through partial walls that do not reach the ceiling or span the full width of a space, open cut-outs in solid walls or ceilings, and the continuation of planes through multiple subtly defined spaces. The use of cut-outs in roof overhangs, and cantilevered dropped ceilings occasionally completed with geometric edges shown in the Murphy House are design tools of Wright's. Peggy Murphy noted that Gelbin masterfully incorporated natural lighting into the design through the arrangement of glazed walls and skylights. The lighting effect created a spiritual feeling when inside the house and light patterns from the pond often reflected on the ceiling (Murphy 2010). Other Wrightian characteristics demonstrated by Gelbin include subtle level changes and the incorporation of the horizontal interior boards as part of the construction system. The wood wall finishes in the Murphy House, in addition to the built-in furniture, pendant lamp, and dining room chairs are nearly identical to such features designed by Wright and his Taliesin apprentices. However,

Gelbin elevated Wright's repletion of selected geometric patterns or motifs to a new extreme with the constant manifestation of the triangle in every element of the Murphy House.

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**Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)**

The following additional information is provided to place Alan Gelbin's importance as a Taliesin apprentice in context with the work of Frank Lloyd and broader history of other Wrightian apprentices who worked in the region.

**Frank Lloyd Wright**

Frank Lloyd Wright (1867–1959) was an influential master architect responsible for cultivating an American Modernist aesthetic during the first half of the twentieth century with a legacy that continues today. His abstraction of architectural volumes and plans, flexibly defined fluid spaces, focus on interior craftsmanship, and integration of buildings with the natural landscape significantly contributed to the architectural culture of the United States during the first half of the twentieth century. Wright was born in Richland Center near Madison, Wisconsin in 1867. His childhood experiences developed into sources of his later professional inspirations. Wright's preference for natural materials and aspiration to blend living spaces into the landscape is derived from the appreciation of the natural environment he fostered while working on his uncle's farm in Spring Green Wisconsin. Wright's parents, Anna Lloyd Jones of Wisconsin and William Carey Wright of Massachusetts, were independent thinkers, who encouraged Wright's creative development. His mother fostered his future career through early exposure to architectural images and building concepts. She purchased architectural Froebel wood building blocks for Wright at the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia in 1876, which he frequently assembled into a variety of abstract compositions. Freidrich Froebel of Germany was the inventor of educational children's toys (called Froebel Gifts) designed to encourage self-directed play. Wright noted that after receiving the blocks, "a small interior world of color and form became within grasp of [his] smallfingers" that encouraged him to be inventive and discover the "shapes that lay hidden behind the appearances [surrounding environment] all about" (Wright 1977 [1932]:34). Wright's mother took lessons in the instruction of Froebel educational methods, which she applied to constructive play with the Wright children (Wright 1977 [1932]:34). Besides his career as a minister, Wright's father taught music and transferred his appreciation for the art to his children.

Wright's lack of formal design training enabled him to break free of the strong classical architectural traditions in vogue at the time and create new geometric volumes. Wright briefly studied civil engineering at the University of Wisconsin in Madison before moving to Chicago in 1887 at the height of the American Beaux-Arts movement. He initially found employment as a draftsman for the architectural firm of Joseph Lyman Silsbee, but soon left to apprentice under Louis Sullivan. From 1890 to 1893, Wright oversaw all of Adler & Sullivan's residential work, while accepting private commissions. Sullivan fired Wright after discovering his moonlighting and Wright subsequently established his own practice in Wisconsin focused on commissions for single-family residences. Wright completed more than 50 projects by 1901.

When the European Modernist architects arrived in the United States in the early twentieth century, Frank Lloyd Wright had already nationally introduced some of the tenets of Modern style design through his organic, sculptural forms and integration of buildings with the natural landscape. Wright's Prairie houses constructed between 1900 and 1917 displayed low horizontal massing, the replacement of ornamentation with form, deep overhangs, and open floor plans. The horizontality of the block-like buildings paralleled the flat horizon of the local landscape. He finished the Prairie houses with regional materials. Wright's approach to Modernism progressed in the 1930s through the experimental construction techniques and more abstract forms of Fallingwater (1934–1937) and his Usonian houses (1936–1950s). By the 1930s Wright began advancing from his earlier additive, interlocking rectangular forms by expressing innovative volumes based on geometric shapes he observed in nature. He derived a variety of abstracted floor plans through the use of grids based on textile blocks, hexagons, octagons, wing shapes, diagonal lines and triangles, hemicircles, and circles. Wright repeated these organic geometric themes in the development of his freestanding and built-in interior furnishings, sculptural details, and architectural glasswork.

Wright's achievements inspired him to write an autobiography and establish Taliesin East in Wisconsin to train students in his design philosophies in 1932. He initially invited 23 apprentices to live and work with him as members of the Taliesin Fellowship. Wright's Taliesin curriculum included instruction in architectural, furniture, and textile design in addition to construction methods, printing, photography, music, small crafts, and philosophy regarding a harmonious lifestyle (Hess and Weintraub 2005:184). Wright retained control as the primary designer for work completed by his office, but assigned his students as construction managers for ongoing projects because he considered it a good learning experience and because his students understood his designs in ways that general contractors did not (Marty 2009:197). Wright designed approximately 430 constructed buildings, including 260 houses. Five of those houses are located in New England including the Theodore Baird House in Amherst, Massachusetts (1941) Frank S. Sander House in Stamford, Connecticut (1952), Isadore and Lucille Zimmerman House in Manchester, New Hampshire (1952), Tirranna/John Rayward House in New Canaan, Connecticut (1955), and the Touffic Kalil House in Manchester, New Hampshire (Hess and Weintraub 2005:528-533). Wright began construction on a second school, Taliesin West in Arizona, in 1937. Although he died in Arizona in 1959, both schools continue to train architects in Wrightian concepts. By 1959, Wright "had personally exposed hundreds of apprentices to his ideas (Guggenheimer 1995)." Many of Wright's early apprentices went on to build successful architectural careers of their own, including Richard Neutra and Rudolph Schindler on the West Coast as well as Allan Gelbin, Robert Carroll May, and Edgar Tafel on the East Coast.

### **Robert Carroll May**

Robert Carroll May (1914-2000) grew up in Urbana, Ohio and attended Taliesin West from 1939 to 1942, after receiving a B.S.A.A. from the University of Michigan. May first became familiar with Wright's work as a college freshman and noted that he had been "unconsciously seeking" Wright's design philosophies (Holmes 2010). May explained that Wright's "lofty ideals of beauty and honesty, his sense of interrelatedness of architecture with every other part of life, his concept of developing a building as an analogy to natural growth, his love of the land, and their embodiment in his extraordinary buildings became the focus of my [May's] aspirations (Holmes 2010)." Following naval service during World War II, May settled in Hartford, Connecticut in 1947. Between 1947 and 1958, he designed at least 15 Wrightian inspired residences. Nine of the residences were located primarily in central Connecticut, including the Clarke (1947), Ford (1948), Bassevitch (1951), Kirsch (1953), Hackenburger (1950s), Wolf (1950s), Salisbury (1954), Lavitt (1955-1956), and Carpenter (1958) houses. May designed six residences for the University of Connecticut in Storrs, including the Wood (1951), Gerson (1950s), Moore (1950s), Hilding (1950s), Orr (1950s), and Owen (1950s) houses (Holmes 2010). May's designs illustrate Wrightian characteristics in his use of low, elongated rectangular forms, natural materials, and varied, cantilevered roof forms that project from the edge of the buildings to embrace the landscape. May left Hartford in 1960 to work for the architectural firm of Perkins and Will in Westchester, New York. He remained in New York until 1971, when he relocated to Springfield, Pennsylvania. May died on October 7, 2000 (Holmes 2010).

### **Edgar Allen Tafel**

Edgar Allen Tafel (1912-2008) is one of Wright's most well known apprentices. He studied with Wright for nine years and participated in several of his major commissions before opening his own practice. Tafel was born in New York and attended New York University for one year before enrolling at Taliesin East in October 1932, at the age of 20 (Henning 1992:314). Tafel oversaw the construction of Fallingwater (the Liliane and Edgar J. Kaufmann House) in Mill Run, Pennsylvania in 1935 with fellow apprentice Robert Mosher. At about the same time, May was involved in the design and construction of Wright's Johnson Wax Headquarters in Racine Wisconsin. The following year, May and apprentice John Lautner supervised the construction of Wright's Herbert Johnson (Wingspread) House in Wind Point Wisconsin. After this extensive experience with the construction of Wright's innovative building forms, Tafel served as the primary supervisor for the construction of the Lloyd Lewis House (Libertyville, Illinois, 1939) and the Bernard Schwartz House (Two Rivers, Wisconsin, 1939) (Hess and Weintraub 2005:527-528). Despite Wright's dismay, Tafel left Taliesin in 1941 to pursue his own practice in the New York area (Henning 1992:314). Tafel had an office in Rye, New York in the early 1960s when the Murphy House was designed and built (Murphy 2010). He designed a house at 9 Outer Road in Norwalk, Connecticut in 1954 that is comprised of attached rectangular and angled sections (Bryant 2010). Tafel also designed the Silver House in Racine, Wisconsin (1947), an addition to the First Presbyterian Church on Fifth Avenue in New York City, and the master plan for the State University of New York (SUNY)'s Geneseo campus. He was

additionally known for his publications and lectures regarding Wright and Taliesin. Tafel continued to work from his office at 14 East 11<sup>th</sup> Street in New York City as late as 2006. He died in 2008 (Bryant 2010).

### Additional Taliesin Apprentices of Note

A small group of Taliesin students had connections with Connecticut. Architects Allan Gelbin, Robert Carroll May, and Edgar Tafel completed Wrightian inspired residential work in the state. Renown urban designer and theorist Kevin Lynch (1918-1984) attended Taliesin from 1937 to 1939 before studying at Yale University in New Haven, the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in New York, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge, Massachusetts (Henning 1992:312). James McArthur Thomson (born ca. 1912) was originally from Farmington, Connecticut and attended Taliesin East from October 1934 to 1939 (Henning 1992:314). Thomson returned to Connecticut after studying at Taliesin and later became an active local historic preservation advocate. He served as the chairman of the Farmington Historic District Commission and helped protect several local historic resources, including the eighteenth-century Gridley-Case Cottages, which he purchased and restored. William Fyfe, (born ca. 1911) grew up in Oak Park, Illinois and studied at Antioch College and Yale University before attending Taliesin from June 1932 to September, 1934 (Henning 1992:311). It is unknown if Fyfe, nicknamed "Beye" by Wright who knew the Fyfe family, ever designed any buildings near Yale or elsewhere in Connecticut.

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**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: \_\_\_\_\_

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): \_\_\_\_\_



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### 10. Geographical Data

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**Acreage of Property** 4.02 acres  
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

**UTM References**  
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>18</u>	<u>0625668</u>	<u>4561050</u>	3	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	4	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

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

The property boundaries encompass the legally recorded lines of Lot 7, shown on Map 40, containing 4.02 acres.

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

The boundaries include the house, shed, and full extent of the landscape and features that contribute to the setting and appearance of the property as perceived by Allan Gelbin.

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### 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title	<u>Jenny Fields Scofield, AICP/Architectural Historian and Virginia H. Adams/Sr. Architectural Historian</u>	date	<u>May 2010</u>		
organization	<u>PAL, Inc.</u>	telephone	<u>401.728.8780</u>		
street & number	<u>210 Lonsdale Avenue</u>	state	<u>RI</u>	zip code	<u>02860</u>
city or town	<u>Pawtucket</u>				
e-mail	<u>jscofield@palinc.com; vadams@palinc.com</u>				

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### Additional Documentation

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

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

**Photographs:**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

**Name of Property:** Charles P. and Peggy R. Murphy House

**City or Vicinity:** New Canaan

**County:** Fairfield **State:** Connecticut

**Photographer:** Jenny Fields Scofield, PAL, Pawtucket, RI

**Date Photographed:** December 15, 2009

1 of 5. View of west elevation looking east from yard.

2 of 5. View of west and north elevations looking southeast from yard.

3 of 5. View of triangular deck looking southeast.

4 of 5. View of east elevation looking southwest from deck.

5 of 5. View of Wrightian features looking east in kitchen, showing ceiling sculpture and skylight, dropped ceilings, triangularly oriented chimney, boarded walls, and furniture.

**Property Owner:**

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

name Ronald Meckler and Jacqueline Shapiro

street & number 320 North Wilton Road telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town New Canaan state CT zip code 06840

**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 18 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.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

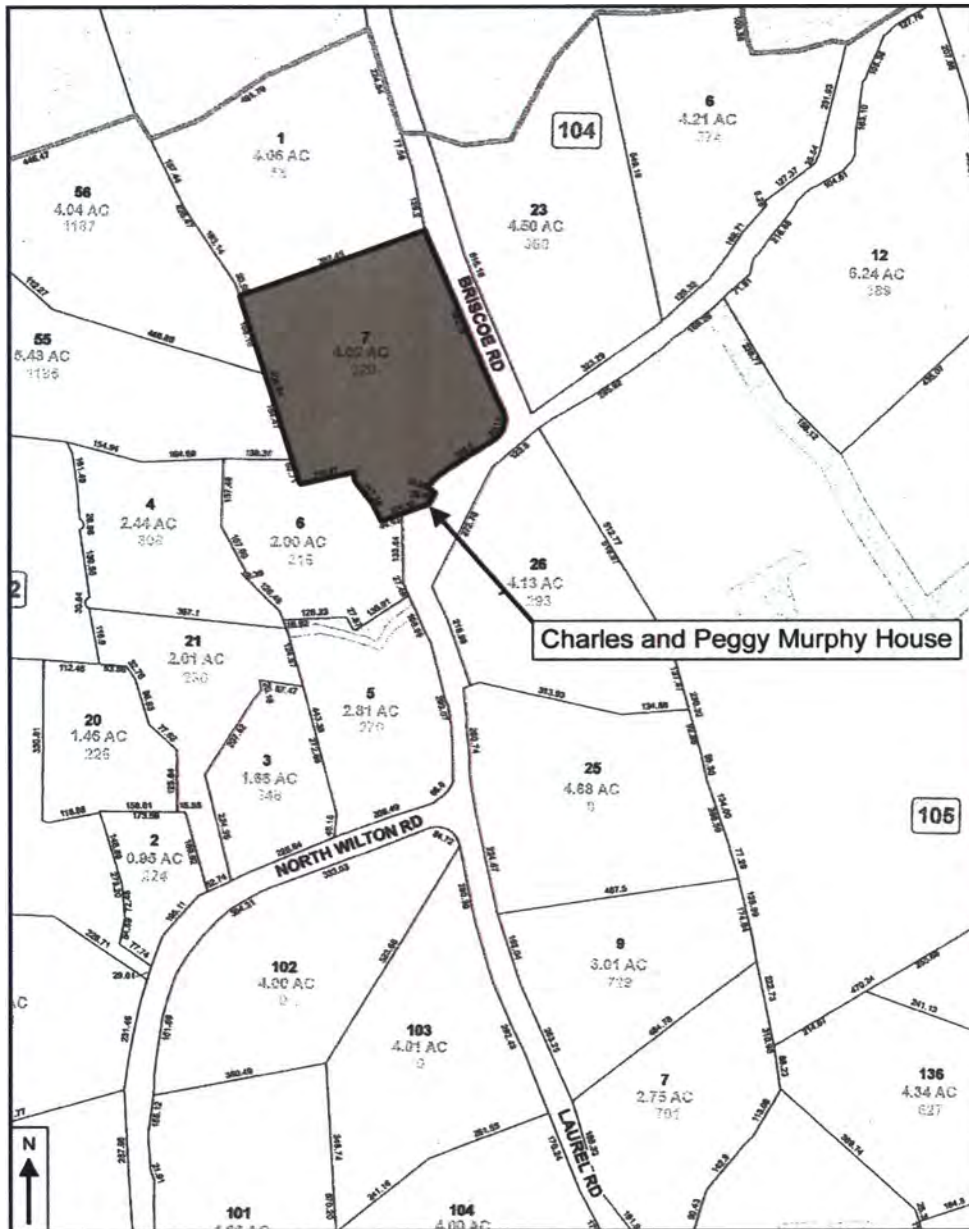
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Murphy, Charles and Peggy House

Fairfield County, Connecticut

Mid-Twentieth Century Modern Residences in  
Connecticut, 1930 – 1979

Town of New Canaan Assessor's Map Number 40



(Assessor's Map source: New Canaan Tax Assessor 2010)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Murphy, Charles and Peggy House

Fairfield County, Connecticut

Mid-Twentieth Century Modern Residences in  
Connecticut, 1930 – 1979

Site Plan of the Murphy House Property



(Base map source: <http://www.maps.google.com>. Accessed March 2010).

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

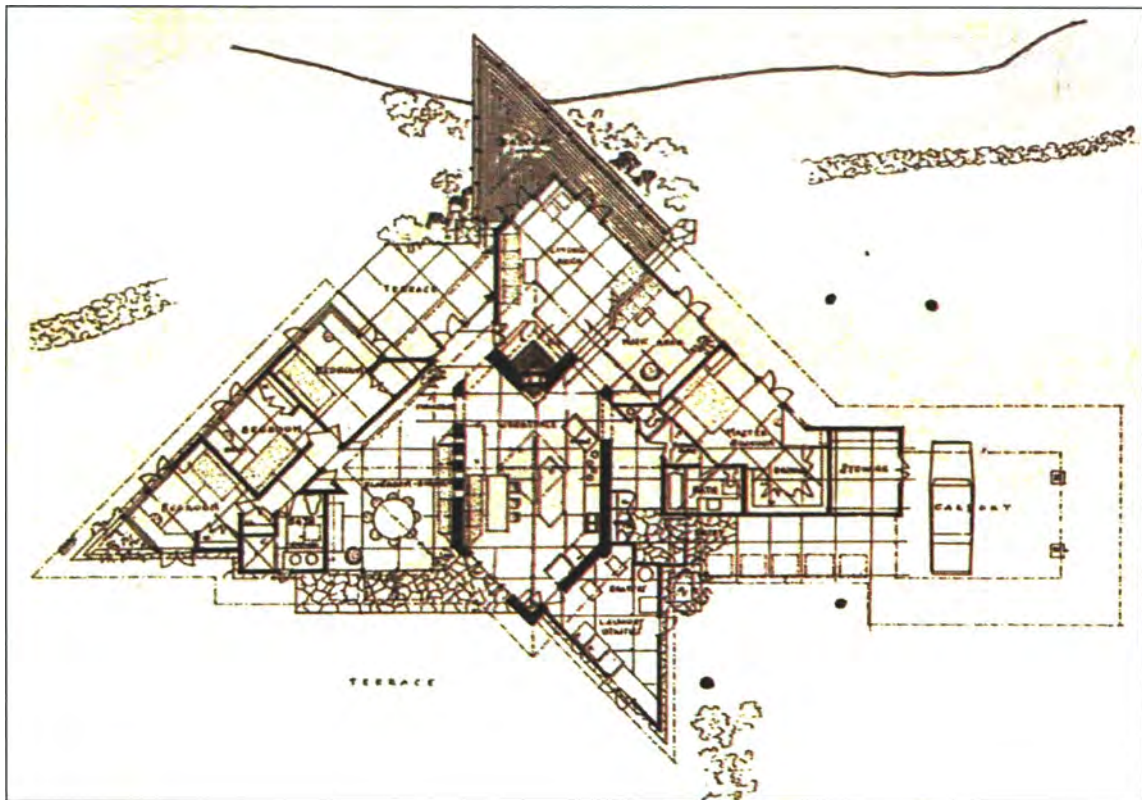
**National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

Murphy, Charles and Peggy House

Fairfield County, Connecticut

Mid-Twentieth Century Modern Residences in  
Connecticut, 1930 – 1979

**Building Plans**



Murphy House Plan (source: *Architettura* 1993).

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

**National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

Murphy, Charles and Peggy House

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Fairfield County, Connecticut

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Mid-Twentieth Century Modern Residences in  
Connecticut, 1930 – 1979

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**Historic Images**



4. Murphy house, New Canaan, Conn.

East Elevation, ca. 1993 (source: *Architettura* 1993)



North Elevation, ca. 1993 (source: *Architettura* 1993)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Murphy, Charles and Peggy House

MULTIPLE NAME: Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern Residences in Connecticut 1930-1979, MPS

STATE & COUNTY: CONNECTICUT, Fairfield

DATE RECEIVED: 7/12/10      DATE OF PENDING LIST: 8.18.10  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 9.2.10      DATE OF 45TH DAY: 8/28/10  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 10000563

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

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

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT     RETURN     REJECT    \_\_\_\_\_ DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

*See Attached Sheet*

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_

REVIEWER *[Signature]*

DISCIPLINE *Historic*

TELEPHONE *206-354 2278*

DATE *August 25, 2010*

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments  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.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: RESUBMISSION

PROPERTY NAME: Murphy, Charles and Peggy House

MULTIPLE NAME: Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern Residences in Connecticut 1930-1979, MPS

STATE & COUNTY: CONNECTICUT, Fairfield

DATE RECEIVED: 9/14/10 DATE OF PENDING LIST:  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF 45TH DAY: 10/29/10  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 10000563

DETAILED EVALUATION:

ACCEPT  RETURN  REJECT \_\_\_\_\_ DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

The house is one of at least 18 designed by Gelbin in Connecticut after he opened his own office in 1957. The justification for state level of significance would have been stronger if a more in-depth comparison to his other designs.

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_

REVIEWER *[Signature]*

DISCIPLINE Historic

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE 9/16/10

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









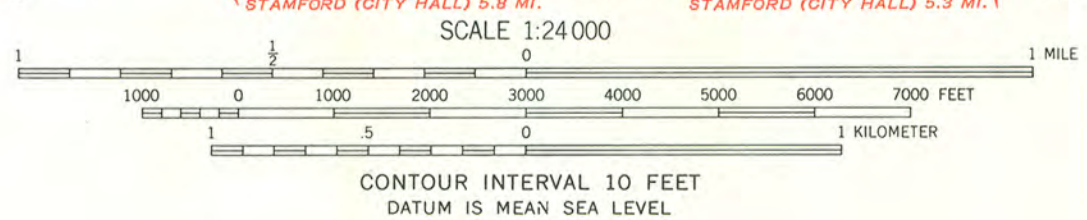
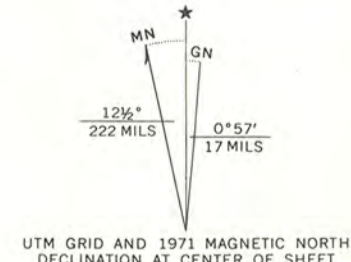






Charles and Peggy Murphy House  
New Canaan, Fairfield County, CT  
UTM Coordinate:  
18.0625468E, 4561060N

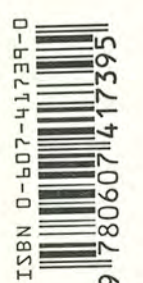
Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
Control by USGS, USC&GS, USCE, and Connecticut Geodetic Survey  
Topography from aerial photographs by photogrammetric methods  
Aerial photographs taken 1949. Field check 1951. Revised 1960  
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
10,000-foot grids based on New York coordinate system, east zone  
and Connecticut coordinate system  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,  
zone 18, shown in blue  
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where  
generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked  
Revisions shown in purple compiled in cooperation with  
Connecticut Highway Department from aerial photographs  
taken 1971. This information not field checked



ROAD CLASSIFICATION  
Heavy-duty ——— Light-duty ———  
Medium-duty ——— Unimproved dirt ———  
○ State Route  
○ Interstate Route  
**POUND RIDGE, N. Y.—CONN.**

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D. C. 20242  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

N4107.5—W7330/7.5  
1960  
PHOTOREVISED 1971  
AMS 6266 II NE—SERIES V821





MEMORANDUM

Arts  
Tourism  
Film  
History

One Constitution Plaza  
Second Floor  
Hartford, Connecticut  
06103

860.256.2800  
860.256.2811 (f)

**TO: Roger Reed  
National Register of Historic Places**

**FROM: Stacey Vairo, National Register Coordinator**

**DATE: July 9, 2010**

**SUBJECT: Mid-Twentieth Century Modern Residences in CT, 1930-1979**

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The following materials are submitted for nomination of the **Murphy, Charles and Peggy, House, New Canaan, Fairfield County, CT** to the National Register of Historic Places:

- National Register of Historic Places nomination form
- Multiple Property Nomination form
- Photographs
- Original USGS maps
- Sketch map(s)/figure(s)/exhibit(s)
- Pieces of correspondence
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**COMMENTS:**

- Please review
- This property has been certified under 36 CFR 67
- The enclosed owner objections do \_\_\_\_\_ do not \_\_\_\_\_ constitute a majority of property owners.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_



## Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism

### Film Division

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