

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

I.N. AND BERNARDINE HAGAN HOUSE

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United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: HAGAN, I. N. AND BERNARDINE, HOUSE

Other Name/Site Number: Kentuck Knob

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 3/4 of a mile SW of the intersection of SR 2010 & SR 2019

Not for publication: N/A

City/Town: Chalk Hill (Stewart Township)

Vicinity: N/A

State: PA County: Fayette Code: 051

Zip Code: 15427

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

Private: X

Public-Local: ___

Public-State: ___

Public-Federal: ___

Category of Property

Building(s): X

District: ___

Site: ___

Structure: ___

Object: ___

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

1

1

Noncontributing

5 buildings

___ sites

___ structures

14 objects

19 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 0

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing: N/A

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4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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.

Signature of Certifying Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

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

Signature of Commenting or Other Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. 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 of Keeper

Date of Action

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6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: Domestic

Sub: Single Dwelling

Current: Recreation & Culture

Sub: Museum

7. DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification: Modern Movement (Wrightian)

Materials:

Foundation: concrete

Walls: sandstone

Roof: copper

Other: wood (tidewater red cypress)

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Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

The Hagan house stands in the Kentuck District of Stewart Township, one of several rural mountainous townships of southeastern Fayette County. The township takes its name from the original landowner, Andrew Stewart, who once owned half the township's land. From its formation to the present, Stewart Township has been sparsely populated since the bulk of it is mountainous, making transportation and development difficult.¹ Late eighteenth century settler David Askins intended to move to Kentucky, but remained in Fayette County, naming his tract of land Little Kentuck, which subsequently became the Kentuck District, the location of the Hagan house and Kentuck Knob.²

Chestnut Ridge and the north-flowing Youghiogheny River traverse Stewart Township. In the center of the township the Youghiogheny River's dramatic "S" curve drops ninety feet in less than two miles. Adjacent to this is the commercial center for Stewart Township, Ohio Pyle, historically known as Falls City. It was laid out by heirs of Andrew Stewart in 1868.³ In September of 1891, the borough of Ohio Pyle was incorporated, apparently because another Falls City already existed on the rail line. Ohio Pyle's name is taken from the Native American word for white frothy water or "Ohiopehhele."⁴

The Hagan house is a one-story Frank Lloyd Wright-designed dwelling situated on Chestnut Ridge, the western-most ridge of Pennsylvania's Allegheny Mountains. Located four miles south of Fallingwater near the Youghiogheny River Gorge, the Hagan house stands at the end of a quarter mile long driveway south of SR 2010. The house is recessed into the southern side of Kentuck Knob's 2,050 foot peak with seventy-nine mountainous acres surrounding it that originally composed a farm. The Hagans planted much of the hilltop property with tree seedlings providing both privacy and a wind break. In addition to the house, other buildings and objects are on the property including a greenhouse, a non-contributing building, located northwest of the house near the intersection of SR 2010 and the entry drive. North of the house, along SR 2010, is a small farm complex consisting of a two-story frame farm house, wood bank barn, and two wood frame sheds, all non-contributing. The Lord and Lady Palumbo, the present owners, have installed fourteen non-contributing art objects during their ownership. Since 1996, the Palumbos have balanced their occupancy of the Hagan house and property with a public tour program, a method of historic property management more common to their native England than the United States. The Hagan house is in excellent condition with little alteration since construction between 1954 and 1956, and, besides Fallingwater, it stands as western Pennsylvania's only other Wright-designed building.

Wright's crescent-shaped house curls around a west facing courtyard, blending comfortably into the contours of the land. The anchor of the design is a hexagonal stone core that rises from the hipped roof at the intersection of the living and bedroom wings. The walls of the flat-roofed

¹H. Graham Netting, *Fifty Years of the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy* (Privately printed, 1982), 132, 136.

²Franklin Ellis, *History of Fayette County Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: L.H. Everts and Company, 1882), 775.

³*Ibid.*, 778.

⁴Netting, 132-136.

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carport and studio burrow into the knob and define the courtyard's eastern side. A stone planter terminates the low retaining wall on the west side of the courtyard, and it features a copper light fixture accented with a triangular-shaped shade. To the south, the house extends beyond the hillside on 10" thick stone-faced concrete ramparts. As with other houses Wright designed during this period, the Hagan house plan is based upon a module system, in this case, an equilateral triangle measuring 4'-6" to a side creating an outside 240 degree L-plan house.⁵

The sandstone to build the house was quarried on the site and laid in rough-cut irregular courses to resemble the rugged natural rock strata. The stone core is capped with a large translucent skylight and contains the kitchen and adjoining chimney. A secondary chimney is located further north at the intersection of the bedroom wing and the carport. The long, low profile of the copper roof is further accented with horizontal battens. The flat roofs of the carport and studio are covered in gravel, and they have triangular roof drains flashed in copper. Similarly, the exterior lighting consists of light bulbs recessed into triangular openings providing indirect illumination, a common feature of Wright's style.

Wright's design shows a practical sensitivity to the natural setting. The house is essentially closed on the north with only a narrow clerestory and wide eaves, but it is open to the south with multiple sets of glazed doors and cut-out eaves. The clerestory consists of a band of decoratively cut-out cypress boards screening the inward-opening glazed sash and further emphasizing the house's horizontal lines. The motif of the clerestory echoes the rise and fall of the surrounding mountain terrain. On the south and west elevations, and a portion of the east elevation, the cypress eaves are cantilevered from three to ten feet. The eaves have hexagonal openings that allow the low rays of the winter sun to penetrate the interior, but not the summer sun. The openings help air to circulate, and they prevent uplift during high winds.⁶ The detailing of the eaves features fascia set at a 30 degree angle decorated with 2 inch milled dentils.

The east, south, and west elevations are comparatively open. These elevations have long bands of windows and doors of various sizes and shapes providing good light. Full-height glazed doors provide the greatest degree of openness from the main living room on the south side of the house. The wood casement windows and full height glazed doors have a single layer of 1/4" plate glass, brass fittings and piano hinges. Wright incorporated an environmental measure, radiant floor heat, that allows for uniform heating of the open spaces in addition to the two fireplaces. Radiant heat requires no wall space for registers opening the design to free placement of interior walls. Since the heat is concentrated at the floor level, less heat is lost when combined with large expanses of glass. The house's radiant heat originates from 1 1/4" iron pipes embedded into concrete beneath the floors.

Two large terraces integrate the house with its rugged, sylvan surroundings. The main terrace, adjacent to the living room, is composed of randomly-laid flagstones, and extends to the stone-faced concrete rampart walls to the south and west. Another terrace extends from the juncture of the living and bedroom areas and affords more privacy. The perimeter of the bedroom terrace is defined by a retaining wall which terminates in a planter to the south. This terrace, also paved

⁵William Allin Storrer, *The Frank Lloyd Wright Companion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 273.

⁶Norman Tyler, "Comparison Study of the I.N. Hagan House, Frank Lloyd Wright, Architect, November 1983."

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with randomly-laid flagstone paving, has a trapezoidal fountain where the north retaining wall joins the house, a landscape feature the Hagans installed in the late 1950s.⁷

In contrast to many of Wright's entrances, which are obscured, the entrance to the Hagan house is set in the southwestern end of the courtyard at the crux of the living and bedroom wings, clearly marked with a set of cascading flagstone steps and protected by a small flat-roofed projection. Common to Wright's architecture, fixed glass panels emanate from the stone walls towards the double door, making the delineation between interior and exterior spaces unclear. The cypress doors have full-height glazed panels. West of the entrance is Frank Lloyd Wright's signature terra cotta tile while a flagstone walk extends east of the front door steps along the bedroom wing to the three-stall carport. Triangular-shaped piers define the entry to each of the angled stalls.

Interior

The plan of the Hagan house is compact with an entrance that opens into a small foyer at the crux of the house. Behind the foyer is a kitchen contained in the hexagonal stone core. The dining room, south of the core, opens to either the south or the east. The living room is to the west of the core, and it opens to the south terrace described earlier. Northeast of the core, a three foot wide gallery provides access to the bedrooms, bathrooms and basement access.

Wright's belief in what he described as the "honest use of materials" is clearly evident in the design of the Hagan house. The palette of interior finish materials is similar to that used on the exterior. Wright designed all the woodwork and built-in furniture, fashioning it from tidewater red cypress, a wood typical to his 1940s and 1950s designs. Wright specified this wood for its appearance and resistance to rot. Almost all of the built-in furniture and woodwork was scribed to fit around the stonework of the house. The ceilings are paneled in cypress boards. As with the exterior hardware, the interior hardware is brass including piano hinges. Irregularly-laid flagstones quarried in Maryland are laid over a concrete slab to compose the floors.

The cross section of the Hagan house is characteristically developed. Wright uses dramatically tall space, low soffits with a central ridge peak serving to both direct the eyes up into the room and out to the landscape. Extended eaves supported on a glass wall of doors blurs the interior and exterior. Along the north wall of the living room is a twenty eight foot long bench of built-in seating with upholstered cushions that lift to allow for storage underneath. Above the seating is a series of cantilevered cypress shelves scribed to fit along the stone walls and operable clerestory windows. Adjacent cabinets conceal space for a television, radio, and record player. The kitchen has no windows, but the tall space draws attention to the hexagonal skylight.

In the living room, a large chimney extends up along the west wall of the house's hexagonal stone core with the fireplace lintel cantilevered into the room at a slight angle. Built-in cabinets adjacent to an indoor/outdoor stone planter are on the living room's western end. A large sheet of plate glass divides the planter into two portions: interior and exterior. The glass is channeled directly into the stone, appearing to have no separation, similar to the glass described earlier at the entry. The southern side of the room opens via the five glazed sets of cypress doors, to the

⁷Mrs. Bernardine Hagan. Interview with Richard Cleary and Robert S. Taylor, 15 August 1988.

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terrace. A large portion of the living room has a beige Moroccan carpet. The present carpet, installed after the fire of 1986, is similar to the Hagan's original Moroccan carpet that was specifically designed for the room with an angled cut-out on the eastern end of the room approximately three feet back from the fireplace opening to prevent sparks from burning or scorching the fibers.⁸

At the eastern end of the living room is the dining room. The rhythm of hexagonal openings in the eaves from the south terrace is continued through this space. Here they are covered with double glazed acrylic to create skylights. The dining room contains a built-in sideboard on the eastern wall with an integral cypress table whose angles echo the equilateral triangle module Wright used as the basis for the house's design. The southeastern corner of the room has a mitered glass corner window. Adjacent to the dining room, at the center of the house, is the kitchen. A large kitchen by Wright standards, it has a fifteen foot high ceiling and hexagonal domed skylight to which the Hagans subsequently added a translucent screen. The kitchen cabinets are cypress with stainless steel counter tops, back splash, and sink. The space retains its four original pull-down burners by Frigidaire. The floor is covered in cork tiles.

Three bedrooms extend to the northeast from the central core; each bedroom opens from the narrow gallery. The gallery has cypress shelves along the west wall with the clerestory and cut-out boards above. Each bedroom contains tidewater red cypress finishes on the ceilings, walls, built-in shelves, cabinets, bed frames and Wright-designed wardrobes. The guest room, nearest the dining room, is distinguished by its casement windows that open outward to reveal no corner supports. The bedroom has a trap door in the ceiling to the attic crawl space and a private bathroom with Wright-designed cabinets. The middle bedroom has a long band of windows overlooking the east terrace. At the end of the gallery is the master bedroom. It has a corner fireplace which has a hexagonally-shaped firebox, the chimney itself being triangular. On the west side of the bedroom is the clerestory with cut-out cypress boards and windows behind as in the living room. On the east side of the room are larger bands of windows, some with mitered glass corners to define the interior from the exterior. Similar to the guest bedroom, the master bedroom has a trap door in the ceiling to access the attic crawl space. The master bedroom shares a bathroom with the middle bedroom.

Basement, carport, and studio

Unusual to a Wright house is the basement. Located off the eastern side of the gallery, a wide door opens to a set of angular steps to the basement. It was originally configured with two small rooms: one for laundry and mechanical equipment and the other for a storage pantry. The current owners added a third storage room, in the 1980s. At the same time, they installed cypress cabinets in the storage pantry.

As in many of his designs, Wright provided a carport rather than a garage for the Hagans. The three stalls in the carport are constructed of sandstone and lined with pea gravel. They have a narrow concrete ledge at the rear, along the sandstone wall. The studio is north of the stalls and accessible through cypress doors. Inside, is a large room with a clerestory of decoratively cut-out

⁸Susan Waggoner, Kentuck Knob Administrator. Personal Communication with Clinton Piper, 26 August 1999.

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cypress boards. This clerestory is similar to that of the main house with operable windows. On the eastern end of the studio is a storage closet.

Fire

The Hagan house was damaged by fire on 26 May 1986, a few months after the Palumbos purchased it. The fire began in the studio on the northside of the courtyard, spread across the flat-roofed carport, reaching as far as the master bedroom. The roof on the carport and a small part of the master bedroom roof were heavily damaged as a result. The remainder of the house suffered smoke damage. The damaged portions of the house were carefully restored through study of an extensive collection of Hagan photographs, the Historic American Buildings Survey photographs taken months before, and the original drawings for the house obtained from the Taliesin Fellowship. The Palumbos were faithful to the original design in restoring the house through use of these images. Similar materials, similar construction details, and methods were used to repair the damaged portions of the house. The two year restoration required cleaning the stone and in some instances finding new sandstone and a comparable source of cypress to return the interior to its original appearance. Some alterations were made to improve building performance and safety such as the inclusion of fireproofing with installation of drywall firestops in the ceiling and the installation of ventilation to the eaves.⁹

Site

The property contains a number of non-contributing buildings surrounding the house. The Hagans purchased the greenhouse from Fallingwater and moved it to their property circa 1964.¹⁰ It stands 1,200 feet northwest of the house along the entrance drive. The one-story rectangular building has a gabled roof of glass and sits on a concrete base with a stone knee wall. A small concrete block addition was made on the greenhouse's northern end to serve as a gift shop and reception area for visitors in 1996, when the house was opened to visitors. Along SR 2010, approximately 800 feet east of the entrance to the property, is a late-nineteenth/early-twentieth century complex of four non-contributing buildings including a two story frame farm house with a stone foundation, a frame bank barn, and two frame outbuildings. The farm house presently serves as administration offices for the tour program. The outbuildings are used for equipment storage.

The Palumbos installed fourteen non-contributing art objects of varying sizes and materials on the property. Near the greenhouse is *Apple Core* by Claes Oldenburg, a London telephone box, and an Edward VII mail box. A section of the Berlin Wall, *Two Charred Menhirs* by David Nash, *Corinth* by Sir Anthony Caro, *Final Blossom*, also by Caro, *Jute* by Nicola Hicks, *Tonal Sculpture* by Harry Bertoya, and *Troilus* by Wendy Taylor are all near the house. Approximately 800 feet southwest of the house is a large meadow the Hagans used as a paddock for horses that now has a French pissoire, a Garum Distiller by Alvar Guillichson and a large installation called *Red Army* by Ray Smith. In the adjacent forest to the west is *Wall* by Andy

⁹Richard Cleary and Robert S. Taylor. "The Restoration of Kentuck Knob," The Fourth Annual Frank Lloyd Wright Owners Conference, 1988.

¹⁰Lynda Waggoner, Fallingwater Director, Personal Communication with Clinton Piper, June 1999.

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Goldsworthy. The installation of these objects has not affected the integrity of the property which appears essentially as it did during the Hagan ownership.

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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

Nationally: X Statewide: Locally:

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A B CX D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions):

A B C D E F G X

NHL Criteria:

4

NHL Criteria Exception:

8

NHL Theme(s):

III. Expressing Cultural Values
5. Architecture, landscape architecture, and urban design

Areas of Significance:

Architecture

Period(s) of Significance:

1954-1956

Significant Dates:

1956

Significant Person(s):

N/A

Cultural Affiliation:

N/A

Architect/Builder:

Wright, Frank Lloyd

Historic Contexts:

XVI: Architecture
S. Wrightian

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State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

The Hagan house is a nationally significant work of American architect Frank Lloyd Wright, and one of only two such works in western Pennsylvania. While Wright designed many houses during his prolific career, only a few high-end, more customized examples based upon the Usonian model exist. Of these examples, the Hagan house is a particularly intact, well-maintained, and solidly constructed example executed in native stone, tidewater cypress, and copper. The house stands as an excellent example of residential design from the final decade of Wright's career. The Hagan house has often been overlooked due to its proximity to Fallingwater (NHL, 1976), yet both these houses stand as important and related examples of his work in Pennsylvania.

Following the early twentieth century Prairie houses, Wright's residential work evolved into designing Usonian houses between 1930 and his death in 1959. The Usonians were a fresh and innovative approach to low-cost single family houses, using a single, compact floor plan with no basements or attics. The designs were typically based on a modular grid system. In many cases, the floor was scribed with the basic module upon which the design was based. In the Hagan house, the module is an equilateral triangle measuring 4'-6" to a side, although the pattern was not scribed onto the floor. Other characteristics include the use of radiant heat in the concrete floors, brick or stone walls with board and batten panels, a "workspace" rather than a kitchen, living and dining rooms distinctly separate from the bedrooms, a carport with stalls rather than a garage, and a flat, hipped or gable roof.

The Usonian house represented a change in Wright's programming assumptions for a house that reflected both a gradual shift in culture and his target audience. He no longer assumed that owners would have domestic help. In the Usonian house, Wright envisioned the owners maintaining the house themselves.¹ The interiors were less formal, using an open floor plan that served a number of functions. Once Wright had the components of the Usonian design in place, he was able to adapt it to nearly any setting and attract a much broader audience and client base than before. This reinforced Wright's ideas that good design and aesthetics were attainable by all classes of society.²

Writer and author Donald Hoffmann calls the Hagan house a "child of Fallingwater".³ Isaac Newton "I.N." Hagan operated the family dairy business in Uniontown, Pennsylvania, the county seat, southwest of Fallingwater. Pittsburgh department store owner Edgar Kaufmann, Sr., approached Hagan about bottling milk from dairy farmers of the Mountain Top Cooperative, just east of Uniontown, for distribution in Pittsburgh. This acquaintance resulted in several trips to Fallingwater in which Bernardine Hagan recalls gradually becoming more intrigued with Wright's innovative and organic design. She remembered that, ". . . each time we came, Fallingwater became more impressive, until finally it got through to us that this was a very

¹William Allin Storrer, *The Frank Lloyd Wright Companion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 219.

²Terence Riley, ed., with Peter Reed, *Frank Lloyd Wright, Architect* (New York: Harry N. Abrams for the Museum of Modern Art, 1994), 72.

³Donald Hoffmann, "Frank Lloyd Wright's House on Kentuck Knob," unpublished manuscript in the files of Susan Waggoner, Kentuck Knob Administrator, 1998, 1.

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beautiful, unusual place.”⁴ I.N. Hagan had a similar sentiment expressed in a letter to Wright, “With each subsequent visit, this great house of yours [Fallingwater] becomes more entrancing to us.”⁵ Both I.N. and Bernardine Hagan had also read Wright’s autobiography.⁶ The Hagan’s son, Paul, studied architecture at Princeton and was also interested in Fallingwater.⁷

The admiration the Hagans developed for Wright’s architecture represented a departure from the architectural styles they knew in 1950s Uniontown. Their late nineteenth-century traditional brick house, located within the boundaries of Uniontown, was similar to hundreds of other middle and upper middle class houses. Mrs. Hagan recalls that many of their tastes for earthy pottery and textiles did not fit with their Uniontown house.⁸ Already having an interest in art and nature, the Hagans observed how Wright effortlessly combined these elements at Fallingwater. The Hagans hoped Wright could provide a similar connection between the house and a seventy-nine acre tract of land south of Fallingwater they purchased in July of 1953. (It was increased freedom of travel provided by the automobile and the natural beauty that brought the Hagans from Uniontown and made it possible for them to establish a permanent residence in the mountains while still maintaining a business in town). They consulted Edgar Kaufmann, Sr., who encouraged them to telephone Wright to discuss their ideas.⁹

After telephoning Wright, I.N. and Bernardine went to Wisconsin late in the summer of 1953, to meet Wright and discuss their interest in constructing a new house. They wanted a much less elaborate house than Fallingwater, but wanted the same organic feeling. To Wright, they described a one-story house with three bedrooms, two bathrooms, built of wood and stone.¹⁰ By the end of the day, Wright and the Hagans had agreed to proceed with the project. On their return trip to Pennsylvania, at Wright’s suggestion, they visit various buildings, including the Johnson Wax Buildings (NHL, 1976), the Herbert Jacobs house, the Richard Smith house, and the Unitarian Meeting House. Of these, they especially admired the details of the Smith house and the Unitarian Meeting house. Both buildings incorporated native stone and were designed with a plan of 60 and 120 degree angles. The Smith house’s eaves have trellis openings with wood dentils, and the copper roof of the meeting house is hipped with battens. Wright incorporated these elements into the design for the Hagan house after they conveyed their appreciation for these details.¹¹ In their desire to see more of Wright’s work, the Hagans visited a Usonian House exhibition in New York City where they observed common Usonian details

⁴Sarah Beyer. “From Cows to Cantilevers: Kentuck Knob and the Kaufmanns” Friends of Fallingwater Newsletter #15 (October 1996):1- 3.

⁵Hoffmann, 7.

⁶Mrs. Bernardine Hagan. Interview with Richard Cleary and Robert S. Taylor. 15 August 1988.

⁷Beyer, 1-3.

⁸Mrs. Bernardine Hagan Videotape Interview with Lynda Waggoner and Joseph White, Fallingwater Archives, Circa 1985.

⁹Hoffmann, 4-9.

¹⁰Ibid., 1.

¹¹Ibid., 9-14.

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that Wright incorporated into their design, such as a living room with a glass wall on one side and a clerestory and built-in furniture on the other side.¹²

In February of 1954, Wright sent an initial set of plans to the Hagans. They proposed changes to the house making it larger and more finely detailed than most Wright houses of the era. The Hagans requested a larger living and dining room. To accomplish this, Wright added several more modules to increase the size of the living room and enclosed a portion of the south terrace to increase the size of the dining room. They wanted a flagstone floor like Fallingwater's rather than a painted concrete floor scribed to follow the lines of the equilateral triangle. Mrs. Hagan recalls that the original plans indicated that the kitchen would also have an adjacent utility room, but this too changed when they asked for basement food storage due to the house's remote location.¹³ In the kitchen cork was used on the floor rather than the red Micarta Wright intended to use.¹⁴ Other changes to the kitchen included the installation of a stainless steel sink and eventually a screen over the kitchen's dome to reflect the heat. In the master bedroom the Hagans requested closets on the west wall for additional storage. As an artist, Bernardine Hagan needed a studio to paint. This resulted in a space attached to the carport which gradually increased in size over the course of several design iterations.

Although Wright did make several changes to the house's design based on the Hagan's wishes, there were some features he convinced them to leave intact. The Hagans wanted to use insulated window units despite their expense, but Wright insisted on plate glass convinced that greater transparency created a stronger connection between inside and outside.¹⁵ Concerning the basement, Wright indicated that since the house was to be constructed on a slope, he could provide a basement, but not as large as the Hagans envisioned.¹⁶

In siting the house, Wright did not select the top of the knob, which would have provided commanding views of the Youghiogheny River Gorge and mountains to the northeast. Instead, he selected a more challenging and less obvious site immediately south of the knob. The house is nestled into the side of the knob, a common practice for Wright, allowing the building to appear organic and harmonious with the landscape rather than dominating it. The house was oriented to the south and west for the best light throughout the year, something Wright often did when not limited by a city lot.

Construction of the Hagan house began in the summer of 1954. With sandstone taken from the Hagan property, Jesse Wilson, a stone mason from nearby Markleysburg, constructed the stone walls. Herman Keys, a local builder, served as the contractor.¹⁷ The pattern in which the stone was laid is similar to Fallingwater with some stones randomly extending beyond the other stones to give a more natural appearance. The stone walls are a veneer over concrete retaining walls which contain dirt and fill for the podium under the main floor. These walls measure ten inches thick until they reach the first floor level, then double stone walls separated by two inches of

¹²Ibid., 13.

¹³Mrs. Hagan Videotape Interview circa 1985.

¹⁴Hoffmann, 42.

¹⁵Ibid., 9, 22.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid., 24-26.

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insulation extend to the rafters.¹⁸ The stonework was apparently so well-executed that the Hagan house's stonework was featured throughout a how-to book about masonry in 1976.¹⁹ The book includes details of the south elevation, the carport, the front steps, and an interior detail of the living room fireplace.²⁰

As the house reached completion, the Hagans soon realized the need for chairs, tables, and textiles in addition to the built-in furniture. Wright suggested the Hagans consider the "Taliesin Ensemble" of pieces he designed for the Heritage Henredon collection, but the Hagans opted instead for Scandinavian furniture.²¹ To assist, they called upon Edgar Kaufmann, Jr., (sic) and designer Paul Mayen. The Hagans, along with Kaufmann and Mayen, visited the George Jensen shop in New York and purchased pieces by Denmark designer Hans Wegner. They chose Jack Lenor Larsen fabrics for the built-in Wright seating area. They also ordered Moroccan rugs for the living room and bedroom from the Kaufmann department store.²² An article in the *New York Times* led the Hagans to George Nakashima of New Hope, Pennsylvania.²³ Nakashima designed most of the walnut furniture including a coffee table, a cabinet for the foyer, a cushion chair, a stool, an ottoman, and six chairs for the dining table. They also used a Nakashima table for the dining room rather than the cypress table Wright designed. Many of the Nakashima pieces selected included 60 degree angles, similar to those of the house. The Hagans also commissioned a geometric screen from Eugene Masselink at Taliesin, but Wright apparently liked it so well that they did not have the piece until after Wright's death when it was sent to the Hagans and placed in the master bedroom.²⁴ The Hagans moved into the completed house in July of 1956.²⁵

Beyond the house, the Hagan's aesthetic interests extended to enhancing the natural site around the house. The Hagans asked Wright about planting trees on the site, and he agreed with their plan. They planted approximately 8,000 seedlings which eventually transformed the open farm fields into a forest and provided a substantial wind break and privacy.²⁶ In addition to painting, Bernardine, an avid gardener and member of the local garden club, worked to landscape the site over the course of many years. This work included terracing the earth southwest of the house and constructing a flagstone path to the top of Kentuck Knob north of the house, an especially cool spot in the summer. Through gradual experimentation, Bernardine Hagan was able to find plants that grew well on Kentuck Knob since those she had grown in nearby Uniontown did not always grow in the mountain climate.²⁷ In late 1950s, they added a small decorative fountain with native rocks to the east bedroom terrace to blend the house with the setting. The Hagans purchased the Kaufmann greenhouse circa 1964 from the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy

¹⁸Ibid., 25 and Notes, 13.

¹⁹Ken Kern, Steve Magers and Lou Penfield, *The Owner Builders Guide to Stone Masonry* (Oakhurst, CA: Owner Builder Publications, 1976).

²⁰Ibid., 25, 33, 104, 167, 178.

²¹Mrs. Bernardine Hagan Videotape Interview.

²²Hoffmann, 28-30.

²³Mrs. Bernardine Hagan Videotape Interview.

²⁴Norman Tyler, 29.

²⁵Hoffmann, 31.

²⁶Ibid., and Notes, 3.

²⁷Norman Tyler, "Comparison Study of the I.N. Hagan House, Frank Lloyd Wright, Architect, November 1983," 5.

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(WPC) to grow plants and start seedlings. It was placed along the driveway to the house. The site has been further developed by the Palumbos with the present sculpture park, but the Hagan's landscaping is intact.

The Hagans resided in the house until the early 1980s when it became apparent that they needed to be closer to Uniontown due to I.N.'s deteriorating health. The house was sold to the Palumbos in 1985. Peter Palumbo, a London-based businessman, art dealer, and collector of architecturally significant buildings, visited Fallingwater and learned that the Hagan house was for sale. He arranged to see the house and subsequently purchased it. The house unfortunately caught fire in 1986 while the Palumbos were preparing to move into it. In 1996, the Palumbos, who only use the house for part of the year, opened the house to the public. Palumbo's other American house is Mies van der Rohe's Farnsworth house in Plano, Illinois, which is also open to the public.

Context in Wright's Career

Among the houses Wright designed and constructed in the latter part of his career, the Hagan house stands out for its excellent integrity of design and setting. Wright designed hundreds of houses, among these are several that are clearly related to the Hagan House. An early example based on the 60-120 degree equilateral triangle is the 1941 Wall house or Snowflake house in Plymouth, Michigan. This one story house, named for its similarity to a snowflake when viewed from the air, is larger than the Hagan house and constructed of brick and cypress. Similar to the Hagan house, it has a core containing the work space or kitchen, living and dining rooms. Wings extend from the core with bedrooms to the south and a guestroom and carport to the west. As with the Hagan house, the Wall house has masonry walls that extend from the main house into the landscape to unite the house with the site. The integrity of this design has been compromised by a subsequent addition, not designed by Wright, for the master bedroom wing containing a nursery, bathroom and full basement.²⁸

Other relatives of the Hagan house include the 1949 Howard Anthony house in Benton Harbor, Michigan, and the 1950 Smith house, in Jefferson, Wisconsin, which the Hagans visited on their trip from Wisconsin. Both of these houses are similar in size to the Hagan house, having a core with wings that extend out and embrace their surroundings. Each house achieves connection to its site in a different way. The Anthony house sits above a river and opens onto a courtyard as the Hagan house. It is also constructed of stone and uses an equilateral triangle as the module. In contrast to the Hagan house, the limestone used to build the house has badly deteriorated, causing a loss of integrity. The entrance elevations of the Smith house, like the Hagan house, have little glass providing considerable privacy to the occupants since the house is located on a city lot. In contrast, the south side of the house opens to the site with a courtyard and plunge pool. It was at this house that the Hagans noted the deep eaves, decorative soffits, and hexagonal openings. The windows Wright incorporated on the public side of the Smith house are small cut-outs that lack the continuity of the Hagan house's band of cut-out cypress boards imitating the rise and fall of the surrounding land. The Smith house underwent major restoration in the early 1990s due to deterioration of its structure and its flooring.²⁹

²⁸William Allin Storrer, 290.

²⁹Ibid., 328, 357.

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In 1960, the magazine *House and Home*, grouped the Hagan house with several other Wright houses in a ten page layout. Among these were the Davis house of Marion, Indiana, and the Palmer house of Ann Arbor, Michigan, both built in 1950.³⁰ The Hagan house is comparable in size, scale and setting to the one-story brick Palmer house. Like the Hagan house, the builders of the Palmer house were inspired by a Wright house they had seen, La Miniatura in California. Based on an equilateral triangle, the concrete floors of the house are scribed with the outlines of the modules. As with the Hagan house, the exterior walls, extending eaves and terraces connect the house with the hilly terrain. Inside, Wright used cypress for both the paneled ceiling and built-in seating, just as he did at the Hagan house. The Palmer house is nestled into the land near the top of a hill and is in good condition, but does not blend into the site as well as the Hagan house since brick rather than native stone was used.³¹

In the painted concrete block Davis house, a fir tree served as the inspiration of Wright's design. As with the Palmer house, the painted block of the Davis house does not unite the house organically with the site as the native stone of the Hagan house does there. Based on an equilateral triangle, the house has a dramatic central octagonal section with a tepee-shaped roof clad in cedar shingles. The core contains the kitchen/workspace, dining room and living room. Like many Wright houses, cypress wood was used throughout the house. The projecting western wing contains the bedroom off a narrow gallery similar to the Hagan house. A subsequent northern wing, designed under Wright's supervision, contains additional bedrooms. Once the original owners sold the house, several small additions were made and room functions were changed, causing loss of integrity.³²

Wright's early work with the aforementioned examples provided opportunities to thoroughly experiment with Usonian ideals. By the time he designed the Hagan house, his work had matured. The Hagan house is a culmination of these ideas in which he had thoughtful and receptive clients and a dramatic setting as his palette. The Hagans had seen enough Wright houses to know that many were not solidly constructed, however their house exhibits fine craftsmanship from the stonework to the interior cypress built-ins. Clearly, the Hagans captured Wright's attention with their connections to Edgar Kaufmann, and Wright was attentive to their needs, providing a quality design.

The I.N. and Bernardine Hagan house is an excellent example of Frank Lloyd Wright's final decade of Usonian residential architecture, of which only a handful of examples remain intact. The Hagan house is not only intact, but it continues to be in good condition with a dramatic setting that makes it a complete picture of a Wright house. Among other comparable Wright houses, the Hagan house stands out for its quality and harmonious connection to its rural mountainous site. According to David DeLong, Professor of Architectural History at the University of Pennsylvania, "Kentuck Knob is a late Wright house of the very highest quality and integrity, and it is an excellent example of the hexagonal plan. This small-scale house is beautifully sited on the rolling hills across from Wright's famous Fallingwater. In fact, it was Edgar Kaufmann, Jr., the owner of Fallingwater, who first pointed out this house to scholars. It responded beautifully to the local topography and in spite of its reclusive owners, is well-known

³⁰"A Portfolio of Houses by Frank Lloyd Wright," *House and Home*, September 1960, 113-123.

³¹William Allin Storrer, 352.

³²*Ibid.*, 342.

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among Wright scholars.”³³ The Hagan house is an important work of American architect Frank Lloyd Wright, that together with Fallingwater, contribute to the nation’s architectural heritage.

³³DeLong, David, University of Pennsylvania. Phone conversation with Carolyn Pitts, Architectural Historian, National Historic Landmarks Survey, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, February 9, 2000.

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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: #PA-5347
- Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: #

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other (Specify Repository):

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: 79 acres

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	17	626380	4414670
B	17	626960	4414500
C	17	626240	4413320
D	17	625820	4413600

Verbal Boundary Description:

Beginning at a point in the southwestern corner of the property, thence northeast 2818.13 feet to a point; thence southeast 1188.0 feet to a point; thence northeast 408.89 feet to a point; thence southwest 2347.05 feet to a point; thence southwest 775.50 feet to a point; thence northwest 404.25 feet to a point; thence southwest 518.52 feet to a point, the place of the beginning. Containing 79.1666 acres. Recorded on the undated Kentuck Knob Properties map commissioned by Peter Palumbo.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary includes the Hagan house, historically associated buildings, fields, and woodlands belonging to the nominated parcel since the Hagan ownership in July 1953.

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