



United States Department of Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

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

1. Name of Property

historic name Manson, Charles L. and Dorothy, House
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 1224 Highland Park Boulevard N/A not for publication
city or town Wausau N/A vicinity
state Wisconsin code WI county Marathon code 073 zip code 54403

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 nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Jim Dalgren
Signature of certifying official/Title

2/15/16
Date

State Historic Preservation Officer-Wisconsin

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

Manson, Charles L. and Dorothy, House

Marathon

Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

entered in the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the

National Register.

See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the

National Register.

See continuation sheet.

removed from the National

Register.

other, (explain:)

Alexis Oberst
Signature of the Keeper

4/5/16
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many boxes as
as apply)

private

public-local

public-State

public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

building(s)

district

structure

site

object

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

contributing

1

noncontributing

buildings

sites

structures

objects

total

1

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

N/A

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

0

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)

Prairie School

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Brick

Weatherboard

roof Asphalt

other Wood

Narrative Description

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

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for the 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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1941

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Wright, Frank Lloyd

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographic References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous Documentation on File (National Park Service):

- 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 #

Primary location of additional data:

- X State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

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

1 16 294070.3 4982564.3
Zone Easting Northing

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing

2 _____
Zone Easting Northing

4 _____
Zone Easting Northing

See Continuation Sheet

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	David G. Wood	Date	January 3, 2015
organization		telephone	325-227-6331
street & number	2009 Shamrock Drive	zip code	76904
city or town	San Angelo	state	TX

Manson, Charles L. and Dorothy, House

Marathon

Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

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

name/title	David G. Wood	date	January 3, 2015
organization		telephone	325-227-6331
street & number	2009 Shamrock Drive	zip code	76904
city or town	San Angelo	state	TX

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

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects, (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 1

Manson, Charles L. and Dorothy, House
Wausau, Marathon County, Wisconsin

Start description on line below

Location and Setting:

The Charles L. and Dorothy Manson House constructed in 1941, is located at 1224 Highland Park Boulevard in Wausau, Wisconsin. Highland Park Boulevard is a quiet, horseshoe shaped, residential street, in an established neighborhood at the northeast edge of downtown Wausau. The Manson property is on the west side of Highland Park Boulevard. There are no sidewalks in this section of Highland Park Boulevard. The closest house to the south is located about 25 feet away. There are no houses in the immediate areas facing west or north. There is a house located on the east side of Highland Park Boulevard.

The southeast corner of the Manson house, and the highest elevation point, is placed about 15 feet from Highland Park Boulevard and approximately 10 feet lower than the street. The northeast corner of the house is about 40 feet from Highland Park Boulevard and is approximately 15 feet lower than street level. The long axis of the property runs from south to north and the house faces north and east. This orientation ensures that the house receives sun all morning. Looking out from the living room windows facing north affords a dramatic view of the wooded area surrounding the house.

At the south end of the property at street level, there are approximately 15 red concrete steps descending to the main entrance door. These steps are original and have not been altered. A two vehicle parking pad was built years ago at the north end of the property at the same elevation as the street. Descending about 10 steps made from red granite from the parking pad, one reaches a red concrete sidewalk, which leads down to the living room area.

Although a one car carport was built at the south end of the house, a driveway was never built and thus the Mansons enclosed the carport. Lawn surrounds all four sides of the house. Large pine and oak trees are located sporadically on the property.

General plan:

The Charles L. and Dorothy Manson House is based on the 3'6" square module. The rooms are in line along the length of the building. The house rests on a three tiered concrete foundation. The highest elevation, the south end, contains the main entrance door and coat closet. Descend down two levels of steps to reach the main level where the master bedroom and bath are located on the left hand side. On the right hand side, two steps is a bathroom and two bedrooms. Continuing down the main hallway and at the end, the kitchen is on the right (after descending two steps), and the living room is straight ahead, again descending two more steps. At the kitchen door entrance, turn right and there is wooden stairs leading to the second floor. The house does not have a basement. Under the concrete foundation is the copper radiant heating pipes laid in a gravel bed.

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Section 7 Page 2

Manson, Charles L. and Dorothy, House
Wausau, Marathon County, Wisconsin

Exterior:

Above the concrete foundation there are rows of locally made red bricks (called "Ringle Bricks") to about 4 feet in height. Typical of Usonian, the walls above the bricks are sandwich compositions of plywood and tidewater red cypress board and batten. To protect the house against fierce winters, Wright sandwiched two extra layers of tar paper into the walls.

The flat roof is called "built up" and consists of a layer of asphalt with pebbles on top to aide in preserving the roof condition. In some areas of the roof there is an overhang of approximately two to three feet, while in other areas, there is no overhang at all. The soffits are of cypress. Two massive chimneys emerge from the roofline – one at the south end of the property, over the master bedroom, and one near the north end, at the living room.

The principal entrance to the house is located in the southeast corner of the house. Red concrete steps descend from Highland Park Boulevard to the base of a wide, open concrete porch. The main door is a four step descent from the porch. The door is solid wood, with a vertical glass panel installed for easy viewing of the outside. The porch is sheltered by cypress board and batten.

The east facade features the windows from two bedrooms, a bathroom, the dining room, living room, and the kitchen door. The bedroom, bathroom, and dining room windows are approximately three feet tall, while the living room windows are approximately six feet tall. Also from the east one can view the windows of the second floor bedroom and bathroom. All casement wood windows are single glass panels and are original. Storm windows have been built for all windows to help insulate the house in the winter.

The north end of the house, which faces the woods, contains three, large, 11 feet high wood casement doors containing original glass panels. Storm windows have been built for these doors to assist in the winter. A large red concrete patio is located outside the doors and was designed using the 3'6" grid lines to follow the same lines as the interior. A series of four steps at the end of the patio descends down to the grass lawn.

To shelter the house from the bitter cold, the northwest side of the house has very few windows. There are a few well-placed clearstory windows with perforated wood screens; these windows are original. Continuing along the west side, there is a wood casement window for the master bathroom and another wood casement window for the toilet room (the toilet is in a separate room, adjacent to the master bath). There is a set of wood French doors at the southern end, 11 feet high that lead from the master bedroom to the outside. There is no concrete patio outside the master bedroom. All windows and doors are original.

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Manson, Charles L. and Dorothy, House
Wausau, Marathon County, Wisconsin

Interior

The one-and-a-half story, 2,462 square foot house has 4 bedrooms and 3 bathrooms. Three bedrooms and 2 bathrooms are located on the main floor, with one bedroom and one bathroom (originally designed as the domestic servant's quarters) located on the second floor. The interior of the Charles L. and Dorothy Manson House is finished in red tidewater cypress board and batten. The floors on the main floor are tinted concrete, while the floors on the second floor are wood. The house contains no plastered or painted surfaces. The ceilings are cypress and board and batten paneling. All of the interior and exterior walls are again cypress and board and batten. Most of the swinging doors, including those on closets and cabinets, are fastened with full-length piano hinges, as specified by Wright. As in other Frank Lloyd Wright houses, much of the furniture is built-in. This approach to interior design is evident by the built in benches along the main hallway which extend from the entrance of the house to the living room area. Additional examples include shelving and wardrobes. Upholstered seats and dining room table as were designed for the Manson house were installed by the current owners. The house enjoys abundant natural light for most of the day, especially in the mornings due to the large number of east-facing windows. Artificial lighting is provided by light boxes along the ceiling in the master bedroom, living room, and central hallway as designed and implemented by Wright.

Entrance Foyer:

The guests would enter the house through the main entrance next to the carport. After completion of the house in 1941, the Mansons enclosed the carport. Fortunately, the walls of the enclosed carport were made of the same materials (tidewater red cypress) with the same pattern (board and batten) as the rest of the house. Upon entry, guests arrive at a foyer with a large coat closet with a skylight and clearstory window to provide natural light to the space.

To the right of the foyer are closets. The rear section was once a tool room with a separate outside entrance, which is still visible. The construction method is visible inside the closet; layers of wood with sheets of tar paper, for insulation, inside.

From the foyer, there is a long spacious gallery running almost the full length of the house with clearstory windows with perforated wood screens. Moving towards the living room, Wright manipulated the ceiling height to provide a cozy feeling upon entry, but later the ceiling height soars to more than 11 feet in common areas.

The concrete floor of the foyer has a "grid" base - the house is geometric in plan and built on a grid of squares, 3'6" by 3'6". The grid, in re-tinted concrete, extends from outside the front entrance, throughout the first floor of the house, to the terrace outside the living room. Actual size of the squares differs, some being slightly smaller or larger.

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Manson, Charles L. and Dorothy, House
Wausau, Marathon County, Wisconsin

Above at the entrance are ceiling level narrow windows which Wright called “perforated boards.” These windows tie the house together decoratively. There are 30 of these windows, most often set horizontally, but also used vertically with as many as 12 of the cutouts assembled together. The windows are layers of plywood with a cypress veneer. Each is one-of-a-kind because each was hand-cut-out. There have been multiple attempts to interpret their design, which Wright did not explain, including: a pattern similar to those used by the Native Americans of the Southwest; an abstracted pine tree or Sumac; or a recent suggestion that each of the elements, as seen from the exterior, represents one of Wright’s initials. These theories incorporate what is known about his influences, as well as these incorporated in his previous designs.

The balance of the rooms is a two-step descent from the foyer.

Master Bedroom and Bath:

The master bedroom suite consists of the bedroom itself, with adjoining toilet chamber and bathroom, the latter with eight different wall surfaces. Of the original built-in furniture, only the bathroom vanity remains. The original bathtub, sink, and faucet are still being used. The beds and a desk were removed from the bedroom. The current bookshelves have been re-constructed according to the original design. Electric lighting is indirect and behind a wood screen. Current owners installed electric heating in the overhead light area. The fireplace has been recently restored to the original plans of the house. In addition, the Mansons installed a large window in the master bedroom which was not part of Wright’s design. The window has also been removed and walls repaired.

Gallery:

Exiting the master bedroom suite and turning left, leads to the Gallery. The 44-foot-long gallery leads dramatically to the living room. It is a space for hanging pictures and for resting on the original window seat, which has storage space beneath. To the left is a linen closet with folding doors on brass piano hinges. It’s now used as a laundry. On the wall to the right is a peek space into one of the children’s bedrooms. This was added at the request of the Mansons.

Bathroom and Children’s rooms:

On the right hand side of the Gallery, after ascending two steps, the bathroom straight ahead, and two children’s rooms on the right, for the Manson’s two daughters. They have their own corridor with original wooden book shelves. Both bedrooms had built-in single beds. All of the walls and ceiling are of the original red tidewater cypress board and batten system. The built-in wardrobes have full length piano hinges on the doors with built in shelving. Tinted concrete floors show the grid pattern, which is throughout the first floor. The wooden casement windows from these three rooms face east with abundant sun in the morning hours. In the bathroom, one side of the bath tub utilizes the original

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Manson, Charles L. and Dorothy, House
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Ringle bricks. In the first bedroom, part of the ceiling is lower than the portion adjacent to the outside windows. The second floor bedroom and bath are immediately above this bedroom.

Utility room:

Upon leaving the bathroom and children's rooms, turn right along the gallery. Immediately on the right is the placement of the utilities behind the door. There is about a two foot drop in the foundation to reach this area. The hot water boiler has been recently replaced. Much of the old, copper radiant heating pipes can be found in this area. Also, the old incoming pipe from the previously used oil tank can be found along the base. The current owners removed the oil tank from the yard, outside of this area.

Continuing down the gallery, towards the living room, the ceiling lifts and opens in preparation for the large area ahead. Above are nonfunctional support beams which house artificial lighting.

Domestic servant's room, darkroom:

On the right hand side of the gallery, there is a set of narrow, wooden stairs leading to the second floor. The small second floor is a room with a bath for the maid, a darkroom for Charles L. Manson and his photography hobby, and the bedroom. All walls and ceilings are evident of the red tidewater cypress board and batten system. The darkroom equipment has been removed and shelving is now in place so that the room can serve as the closet to the bedroom. The sink, faucet, and shower controls are original. The current owners have restored the shower to a working condition, after several decades of disuse and non-functional. Windows from the bathroom and bedroom face east, again for abundant morning sun. There are clearstory perforated windows along the top of the bedroom continue with the same pattern as in the balance of the house.

Workplace:

After descending the stairs, to the right is the workplace. In the heart of the masonry core is the kitchen, called the "workplace" by Wright. Some of the cabinetry is original, others are added. The lighting is indirect. Above, in the storage space, is the clothes dryer Wright designed for the house. Countertops and all appliances have been recently replaced by the current owners. The door leading from the kitchen to the outside patio is original.

Dining Room:

To the left of the workspace is the dining room. All of the cabinetry is original and full length piano hinges are used for the cabinet doors. At the base are a set of drawers which can be opened on either end of the cabinet. The dining room table and chairs have recently been built in accordance with the original blueprints of the house.

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Manson, Charles L. and Dorothy, House
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Living room:

The dining room leads into the living room. One can also gain access to the living room from the main gallery hallway. A typical reaction of first-time visitors is surprise and pleasure at the space, which draws you to the corner grouping of perforated panels set vertically. The hearth is the core of the Usonian house. The fireplace, modified at the bottom and top of the opening, rises from floor to ceiling. The lighting is indirect. Built-ins are the table, the rows of book-shelves, the record player cabinets, and speaker box completed by architectural apprentices about a year after the house was finished. The original furniture, including chairs, a coffee table and dining table, designed for the house are in private collections elsewhere. All of these have recently been built by the current owners based on the original plans for the house. Because the floor heating system does not work, the owners heat the house with the wood stove. The living room contains an abundant amount of red tidewater cedar board and battens. The ceiling contains a fine example of the expert craftsman used at the time to fit all the angles together into a pleasing pattern.

Abundant natural lighting can be found in the living room due to the large section of floor to ceiling doors/windows, and other large windows. All of these are wood casement style, single glass pane windows and doors.

Alterations:

The original radiant heating system failed about 40 years ago, and the prior owners installed baseboard heating throughout the house. They also installed a Norwegian-style wood burner insert into the fireplace opening in the living room. There are no signs of deterioration on any portion of the property other than what normally you would expect from a well-maintained 74 year old house.

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Section 8 Page 1

Manson, Charles L. and Dorothy, House
Wausau, Marathon County, Wisconsin

Significance

The Charles L. and Dorothy Manson House is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C, in the area of Architecture, as a fine local example of the Usonian style house. The house was designed by Frank Lloyd Wright and constructed between 1938 and 1941. The house incorporated three major construction features that are known to be design characteristics of the Usonian style: the board and batten walls; a planning grid (which simplified both architect's and builder's work); and a novel form of underfloor heating now called in-floor radiant heading.¹ The Manson House is an early example from Wright's Usonian period.

Wausau: Historical Background

Wausau was called Big Bull Falls when George Stevens arrived in 1839 to build the first sawmill. Huge mature white pine trees became available because of the 1836 treaty whereby the Menominee Indians transferred a strip of land, three miles on either side of the Wisconsin River, to the federal government. The lumber camp was considered a temporary settlement in the "Pinery." Walter McIndoe came to Big Bull Falls in 1848 with the intention of settling here. He was responsible for changing the name in 1850 to Wausau, a Chippewa word meaning "faraway place." Also, through his efforts, Marathon County was formed that same year; originally the county stretched all the way up to Lake Superior. McIndoe named the county Marathon, and Wausau became the county seat. Because of his efforts, McIndoe has been called the "Father of Wausau." Hints of permanence began gradually - a post office opened; a newspaper, *The Central Wisconsin*, began in 1857; a school was built in 1860; and a road was cut south of the county line.

Heavy German immigration began in earnest during the 1860s and a fine Greek Revival courthouse was erected in 1863 in the center of town. A city charter was granted in 1872, and August Kickbusch was elected first mayor. He was responsible in part for the heavy German immigration, because he personally went to Pomerania, Prussia and recruited people to move to Marathon County.

The arrival of the railroad, the Wisconsin Central, in 1874, made a great impact on the development of Wausau. By 1880, the population had doubled and manufacturing was springing up, mostly wood related.

By the turn of the century, the white pine had been logged off and the economy of many lumbering towns in Wisconsin was in question; however, a group of men, mostly wealthy lumbermen, decided that Wausau was a wonderful place to settle and raise their families. They knew that the economy had to be diversified so they decided to invest their money and create a stabilized economy. This group

¹ Sergeant, John. *Frank Lloyd Wright's Usonian Houses*. New York: Watson-Guption Publications. 1976.

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Manson, Charles L. and Dorothy, House
Wausau, Marathon County, Wisconsin

became informally known as the Wausau Group. They started the paper mills, the utility companies, and several manufacturing companies. One noteworthy company that they started was Employers Mutual, later known as Wausau Insurance. They started the company on September 1, 1911; the same day legislation was passed in Wisconsin for the first Worker's Compensation Act in the United States. With this company they moved from just a local business to a nationwide business.

Usonian Houses

During the years of the Depression architects had few commissions, so Wright and his apprentices worked on a utopian scheme that Wright called Broadacre City. The single family house, set on about an acre of land, was the standard unit for housing. These theoretical house designs evolved into the Usonian House. Wright wrote that the Usonian house "aims to be a *natural* performance, one that is integral to the site; integral to the environment; integral to the life of the inhabitants." It was also to be integral to the nature of materials.² Examples of Usonian houses were constructed across the country from the 1930s until the late 1950s. These houses differed from Wright's earlier Prairie Houses in that they were generally smaller and designed for families without household servants. In many cases the workstation/kitchen is centrally located so that the housewife could supervise and be involved in family activities. The houses, in general, open up to the side or the rear and are tied to the site. The broad overhangs and a unity of materials tend to tie the interior and the exterior of the houses. Technical innovations became part of the house, as well. Radiant heat was supplied through pipes laid in the concrete floor and most walls consisted of masonry or of wood sandwich-panels. Many of the Usonian houses were built on a modular plan; some were based on a simple rectangle, while other used more complex geometric shapes such as the hexagon. Because the houses tended to be small, they incorporated built-in furniture in the form of benches, tables, and writing desks.

Wright first thought of the word "Usonia" a euphonious acronym for the United States of North America. Later, Wright would attribute the word to Samuel Butler's utopian novel Erewhon. Wright first uses the word in 1923 and explained it later as: "The United States did not appear to (Butler) a good title for us as a nation and the word 'America' belonged to us only in common with a dozen other countries. So he suggested Usonian, the word in the word unity or in union. This seems to me appropriate. So I have often used this word when needing reference to our country or style."³

The architect wrote about the problems of architecture in America in his book "The Natural House", published in 1954. He stated that the biggest problem was cost, but that people do not really know how to live. He also felt that most people copied other people's "tastes" and tried to imitate. Wright wrote:

² Frank Lloyd Wright, *The Natural House* (1954), in *Frank Lloyd Wright: Writings and Buildings* (New York: New American Library, 1974): 294

³ Alvin Rosenbaum, *Usonia: Frank Lloyd Wright's Design for America* (Washington, D.C: The Preservation Press, 1993),39.

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Manson, Charles L. and Dorothy, House
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"What is needed most in architecture today is the very thing that is needed in life ...integrity. Just as it is in a human being, so integrity is the deepest quality of a building.⁴ He goes on to say: "In designing the Usonian House, I have always proportioned it to the human figure in point of scale of the human figure to occupy it. The old ideas of buildings was to make the human being feel rather insignificant, developing an inferiority complex in him if possible. The higher the ceilings were then the greater the building was. This empty grandeur was considered to be a human luxury.

With the Usonian house, Wright created a system or kit that could be used and reused to suit the site and his client. It was also a simplification of design and construction. It was a prototype that could be applied universally. "Like the Model T, the Usonian House was designed to be in pieces, to be assembled at the site, as the car was assembled at regional depots." The early Usonian also inspired to meet another test of American success; the establishment of a widely recognized brand name and widespread favorable publicity.⁵

The 1937 Herbert Jacobs house in Madison, Wisconsin was the first Usonian house built. Wright felt that his Usonian house would not only provide a moderate priced house; but also, it would simplify the lives of the inhabitants who resided therein. Wright felt that his Usonian houses gave freedom by freeing the house of all unnecessary materials and construction. He accomplished this freedom by removing attics, basements, garages, and light fixtures. The furniture, he felt, could be built in along the walls to streamline and give added space.

After World War II, labor rates and building costs started to rise sharply. Many of the building materials that Wright was using, such as cypress, became prohibitively expensive. Furthermore, as noted by John Sargeant, "The Usonian kit ceased to be used in its pure form and while Wright built in a similar way throughout the 1950s, many of his clients during the last decade of his life had large sites for which they required large homes. The designs that resulted could not be regarded as answers to the small house problem."⁶

The Usonian house was intended to be a residence for the common man, an affordable, small house. The Usonian Automatic was the conceptual continuation of the earlier Usonian principles. Wright wrote, "In the Usonian Automatic we have limited the need for skilled labor by prefabricating all plumbing, heating and wiring, so that appurtenance system may come into the building in a factory-made package, easily installed by making several simple conversions provided during block

⁴ Frank Lloyd Wright, *The Natural House* (New York: Horizon Press, Inc., 1954), 121.

⁵ Rosenbaum, *Usonia*, p. 167.

⁶ John Sargeant, *Frank Lloyd Wright's Usonian Houses: The Case for Organic Architecture* (New York: Watson-Guption Publications, 1976),81.

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Manson, Charles L. and Dorothy, House
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construction.⁷

The Automatics were, in theory, to be owner built to Wright's plans using concrete blocks manufactured in Wright designed forms. In the process, hollow concrete blocks were formed with grooves around their edges so they could be threaded on reinforcing bars. In reality, these were too difficult for an untrained person to build, resulting in higher construction costs; however, while the concept proved difficult, the name continued to be associated with blockwork houses from his late period.

At the same time that Frank Lloyd Wright published his 1954 book, *The Natural House*; his houses were becoming popularized by magazines. *Architectural Forum*, *House Beautiful*, and *House and Home* were publicizing his non-traditional houses. Through these publications it was possible for Wright to reach a larger, often female, public and to convey his principles of organic architecture.

Architectural Significance

The board and batten system was used by Frank Lloyd Wright and integrated with the detailing in a direct and very clear way. The dimensions of board and batten gave a regular "stripe" or vertical module, and this controlled the heights of window transoms, sills, and the "decks" for concealed lighting, bookshelves, eaves, clerestory windows, and chimneys. Elements of millwork were interwoven like basketry so that upper battens were aligned through the head of door frames, while the boards overlapped their jambs. For the Charles L. and Dorothy Manson House, some areas with lower ceiling height have six board and batten units, while other areas in the house have nine units.

To adjust to the topography of the site (which slopes down from the street level to a heavily wooded ravine), Frank Lloyd Wright designed the house with multiple floor levels and ceiling heights. Mr. Wright employed his trade-mark technique by exposing the guests to a more confined space with a lower ceiling height, then to an expansive space with a greater ceiling height. Compared to the foyer, gallery, bedrooms, and bathrooms, the greater ceiling height in the living room gave people the illusion of a larger space than it actually is. For the functional perspectives, the ceiling height in the workspace (kitchen) is even higher than the living room to provide both for ventilation and clerestory lighting.⁸ Wright designed a system of indirect lighting through the use of perforated boards/screens. Those perforated boards provide additional visual interests to the north facing wall, and privacy for the south facing wall that faces the street.

Frank Lloyd Wright pioneered the use of the radiant heating system. For this approach the piping was

⁷ Wright, *The Natural House*, pp. 203, 207.

⁸ Larken, David and Pfeiffer, Bruce Brooks. *Frank Lloyd Wright The Masterworks*. New York: Rizzoli International Publications and The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation. 1993.

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Continuation Sheet

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laid directly on the gravel bed, more than half buried in it, and the concrete mat was laid on top.⁹ The radiant heating system is common in Usonian houses, and it was used for the Charles L. and Dorothy Manson House as well; however, the radiant heating system for the house failed about 40 years ago.

Departing from his early Usonian houses with right-angle corners, Frank Lloyd Wright experimented on using a square unit system but incorporating 30 and 60 degree angles for the Charles L. and Dorothy Manson House. As a result the house varied from a typical I or L plan house and paved the way for Wright to further investigate triangles and parallelograms in his future design.

Although there have been a few minor alterations (i.e., implementation of baseboard heating, installation of a window, and the carport enclosure), these have not detracted from the integrity and the architectural significance of the house.

Common Elements of the Usonian

The Charles L. and Dorothy Manson House, being a Usonian, contains many of the common features of Usonians. These include flat roofs, lack of gutters, board and batten walls, grid pattern of house plans, car ports, cantilevered roofs, and radiant-floor heating.

Frank Lloyd Wright also designed and built another Usonian home in Wausau for Duey and Julia Wright (no relationship) on Grand Avenue and was Wright's last residential design, constructed two years before his death in 1959. The elongated "L" design of the home overlooks the Wisconsin River and is still owned by the Wright family. Today it houses a communications corporation.

Manson House Construction

The idea for the house originated in March 1938 with a letter from Charles L. Manson to Wright, and concluded nearly four years later with the Manson and their two daughters moving in, elated with the beauty of their new house, but concerned because it wasn't all working just right.

On March 14, 1938, Charles L. Manson of Wausau wrote to Frank Lloyd Wright at his home Taliesin near Spring Green, Wisconsin. "The Frank Lloyd Wright issue of the *Architectural Forum* raised the hope that in some way the happy ideas you have developed in the treatment of the small home might be made available to us who must carry our ideas as far as possible on a limited budget. We would like to have the services of some one of your pupils, if that is possible, or such suggestions as you may be kind enough to offer us. We have some lots which should lend themselves to skillful (sic) treatment. Our expenditure for all building costs would have to be \$7500. We shall be grateful for any help you can give us".

⁹ Jacobs, Herbert and Katherine. *Building with Frank Lloyd Wright*. California: Chronicle Books.

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Frank Lloyd Wright responded: "We will build your house for you, literally. Come to Taliesin and see us and talk it over about April 20th."

With that simple exchange, design of Frank Lloyd Wright's Usonian house in Wausau began. The house would not be completed until the late winter in 1941. What occurred between was an extended discussion, in words and drawings, of what the house should contain, how it should look, and what it should cost. The end result was a masterpiece showing Wright in transition from his famous Prairie style houses to the sleek Usonian house.

Wright designed the house after talking with the Mansons during their several visits to Wright's home near Spring Green, and after seeing photos and topographical maps of the site. Though he did not come to Wausau during construction, he visited the house twice after completion, first in June 1941 and again in September 1942.

The house echoes earlier Wright houses, including the Prairie style houses of the early 1900s. Elements long used by the architect are the floor-to-ceiling fireplace, and exposed light bulbs. The evolved aspects include suspended beams, a built-in bench in the gallery, and a brick planter. These three seem variations on Wright's beamed ceilings, his use of the arts and crafts inglenook, and the urn, respectively.

The Mansons continued to correspond with Wright after the house was finished. They sought advice on adjustments. In 1944 they wrote Wright about an addition to the house. This latter correspondence, concerning a woodshed and enlarging the master bedroom, concluded in the early 1950s when the Manson's decided they could not afford the \$5,000 estimated by Wright.¹⁰ Other Manson correspondence mentions the possibility of the architect designing homes in Wausau and the Wausau area for Chan Parsons, Edward Fromm, and Martin Baum; none of these projects materialized. In 1958, Duey and Julia Wright completed their house at 904 Grand Avenue in Wausau. Designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, it is one of the architect's last residential designs.

Frank Lloyd Wright

Frank Lloyd Wright was born in Richland Center, Wisconsin, on June 8, 1867. He died in Phoenix, Arizona, on April 9, 1959, at the age of 91. He was descended, in part, from a large Welsh family of farmers and ministers who settled the valley outside Spring Green, Wisconsin. He returned to the area to establish his famed Taliesin Estate and School.

¹⁰ Aucutt, Donald M. *50th Anniversary Open House Brochure*. Wausau/Northwoods Wisconsin Architectural Museum, Friends of Wausau Historic Landmarks. 1991

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Wright spent his formative years in Madison, Wisconsin after his family settled there in 1878. He worked in the architectural office of Allan Conover and briefly studied engineering at the University of Wisconsin. From 1888-93 he worked in Chicago for the famed architect Louis Sullivan, his mentor and greatest influence, before they parted ways and Wright established his own architectural practice in Chicago and Oak Park, Illinois. During these years Wright developed his Prairie style houses, and he began to use native materials as an integral aspect of his style. In 1911, in the midst of personal turbulence, Wright returned to Spring Green and began the construction of Taliesin. In 1928, the year he married Olgivanna Lazovich Hinzenberg, Wright first built a desert camp near Phoenix; this was the forerunner for his Taliesin West. In Wisconsin in 1932, the Wrights founded the Taliesin Fellowship, the school that would provide training for apprentices in architecture, construction, music, art, and dance. The school continues to this day. 1936 proved a breakthrough year for Wright's career; he received the commission for the Kaufman House (Fallingwater) in Pennsylvania and was asked to submit a design for a new administration building for S.C. Johnson and Son in Racine, Wisconsin. Between 1936 and his death in 1959, Wright designed hundreds of buildings, a large number of them in his home state of Wisconsin. William Allin Storer identified 26 constructed buildings in Wisconsin designed by Wright between 1936 and 1959.¹¹ The scope of works in the state was extensive; it included some of his earliest commissions for friends and relatives (many of them demolished), as well as some of his very last works.

In the late 1940s and the 1950s Wright was involved in many commissions throughout the country. Among these were continuations of his study of helixes, seen at the Morris Gift Shop in San Francisco (1948-1950) and at the Guggenheim Museum in New York (1943-1945, 1956-1959). Other large scale projects from this period include the 1957 Marin County Civic Center in California. In Wisconsin, works from this late period include the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church (1956, Wauwatosa), the First Unitarian Society Meeting House (1947-1951, Shorewood Hills), the Wyoming Valley School (1956, Town of Wyoming), and a large number of houses.

Wright's architecture, derived from his belief in a truly indigenous American architecture based on the democratic ideals of personal freedom and human dignity, has stood the test of time. More than one-third of his more than 1,100 works are listed on the National Register of Historic Places or are in National Register Historic Districts. Fourteen of his buildings are National Historic Landmarks.¹²

Benjamin Dombar (1916-2006) – Supervising Architectural Apprentice

Wright appointed Benjamin Dombar to be the supervising architectural apprentice responsible for overseeing the completion of the Manson House. A student of Wright's at Taliesin Architectural

¹¹ William Allin Storer, *The Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright*. 2nd ed. (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1982).

¹² National Park Service, "*National Historic Landmark Nomination: Duey and Julia Wright House*," prepared by Mary Jane Hettinga, 1998.

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School, Dombar visited Wausau often, traveling by bus from Spring Green. Dombar later was an architect in Cincinnati.

Charles Leighton “Fritz” Manson

Charles was a descendent of one of the early pioneer families who settled in Wausau. Rufus P. Manson, his grandfather, came to Wausau from New Hampshire in 1851 to work as a lumberjack. He married a Canadian named Catherine Nicolls and together they had 12 children.¹³

Charles Leighton “Fritz” Manson was born April 26, 1899 in Wausau, Wisconsin, to John and Helen Manson. Charles attended Beloit College and graduated from the University of Wisconsin School Of Journalism. After college he worked for newspapers in Kansas City, Los Angeles, and Honolulu. Unexpected events changed the career of Charles. His father died in 1920 and his eldest son, John Jr. took over the insurance company. When John Jr. died unexpectedly in 1923, Charles came back to Wausau from Honolulu to take over the J.N. Manson Insurance Agency established by his father. His community activities included the Wausau Chamber of Commerce, Federated Charities (predecessor of United Way), and the Marathon County Historical Society. During World War II, he was a member of the U.S. Citizen’s Civil Defense. When the Mansons left for Madison in 1959, they kept their house. Several years after Dorothy passed away; Charles came back to Wausau and lived in the house until his death.

Dorothy (West) Manson

Dorothy Manson was an activist and a leader and from 1925 to 1959. The Wausau area benefited from her considerable energies. A native of Washington, D.C., Dorothy West graduated from Smith College and taught in Honolulu, Hawaii before marrying Charles Manson in 1925 and moving to Wausau where they raised two daughters.

During the 1930s she worked with a group in the vocational school matching women who needed work with those who wanted work done. From 1932 to 1938 she held office and served on the board of directors of the Wausau League of Women Voters and was the group’s president from 1948 – 1952. She held a position on the League’s state board as well. She was particularly interested in international affairs and served as head of the YWCA’s Foreign Affairs Committee and the American Association of University Women’s International Relations Committee. An example of her attempts to “bring home” a world focus is the series of Marshall Plan teas she and Mary Freund organized in 1948 to spur local understanding and discussion.

One of the founders of the Wausau Civic Music Association, she was on its board for many years.

¹³ Hettinga, Mary Jane Uecker. *Wausau Chronicles*. Birch Lake Press. Wausau, Wisconsin. 2002.

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Nearly all the artists who came to Wausau to perform during the 1940s and 1950s were entertained in the Mansons' lovely Frank Lloyd Wright home, which served as something of a cultural and intellectual center in mid-Wisconsin.

Dorothy was on the mental health committee of the Marathon County Social Welfare Coordinating Council, an involved supporter of the state radio station, the United Nations Association, and various other literary and music study groups, as well as a member of the First Universalist Church, which her husband's family helped to found.

In 1959, Charles was appointed Wisconsin's Insurance Commissioner, he left the family business, Manson Insurance Agency, and they moved to Madison where Dorothy died in 1963 after a long illness.

Owner Chronology

1. Charles and Dorothy Manson – 1938-1969
2. Manson daughters – Joanna (Mandt) and Mary Kidd – 1969-1973
3. Gary Libman – 1973-1979
4. John and Leslie Schranz – 1979-1979
5. Jeffrey Hertz – 1979-1980
6. Robert Reinertson and Sally Scinto-Reinertston (now live next door) – 1980-1987
7. Mark Toenies – 1987-1990
8. Donald Michael and Yun S.J. Aucutt – 1990-2014
9. Bryan Hung and David Wood – 2014-date

Summary of Eligibility

The Charles L. and Dorothy Manson House is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C, locally significant in the area of Architecture as an excellent example of the Usonian style.

Period of Significance

The period of significance is 1941, the year the Charles L. and Dorothy Manson house was completed.

Integrity

The house retains excellent integrity having few changes to the design or original materials. The original radiant heating system failed about 40 years ago, and the prior owners installed baseboard

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Manson, Charles L. and Dorothy, House
Wausau, Marathon County, Wisconsin

heating throughout the house. They also installed a Norwegian-style wood burner insert into the fireplace opening in the living room. There are no signs of deterioration on any portion of the property other than what normally you would expect from a well-maintained 73 year old house.

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Manson, Charles L. and Dorothy, House
Wausau, Marathon County, Wisconsin

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National Park Service**

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Continuation Sheet**

Section 10 Page 1

Manson, Charles L. and Dorothy, House
Wausau, Marathon County, Wisconsin

Verbal Boundary Description:

Parcel# 291-2907-254-0029

HIGHLAND PARK ADD
LOT 10 BLK 3 INCL S 10' OF
VAC HAMILTON ST LYG N OF
SD LOT ALSO PT OF NE SE
SEC 25-29-7 DESD AS LOT (1)
OF CSM VOL 10-157(2684)

Boundary Justification:

The nominated property consists of the entire lot that has been historically associated with the property (see above legal description).

___End of Boundary Descriptions

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Section photos Page 1

Manson, Charles L. and Dorothy, House
Wausau, Marathon County, Wisconsin

Name of Property: Charles L. and Dorothy Manson House
City of Vicinity: Wausau
County: Marathon County
State: WI
Name of Photographer: You-jou Hung
Date of Photographs: January 2015
Location of Original Data Files: Wisconsin Historical Society, Historic Preservation Division, Madison, WI
Number of Photographs: 9

Photo#1 (WI_Marathon County_Charles L. and Dorothy Manson House_0001)
South (Front) Façade

Photo #2 (WI_Marathon County_ Charles L. and Dorothy Manson House_0002)
East (Right Side) Facade

Photo #3 (WI_Marathon County_Charles L. and Dorothy Manson House_0003)
North (Rear) Facade

Photo#4 (WI_Marathon County_Charles L. and Dorothy Manson House_0004)
West (Left Side) Facade

Photo#5 (WI_Marathon County_Charles L. and Dorothy Manson House_0005)
Interior – Living and Dining Room

Photo#6 (WI_Marathon County_Charles L. and Dorothy Manson House_0006)
Interior – Living Room

Photo#7 (WI_Marathon County_Charles L. and Dorothy Manson House_0007)
Interior – Gallery (Hallway)

Photo#8 (WI_Marathon County_Charles L. and Dorothy Manson House_0008)
Interior - Bathroom

Photo#9 (WI_Marathon County_Charles L. and Dorothy Manson House_0009)
Interior - Foyer

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

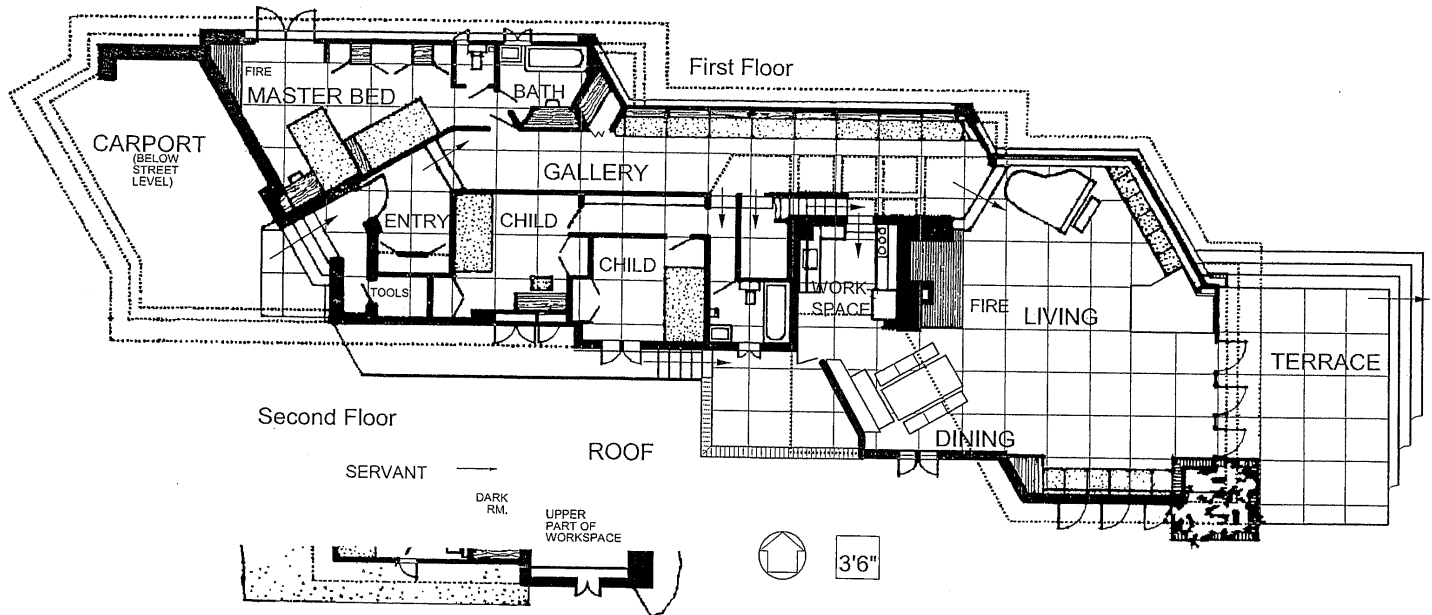
**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section figures Page 1

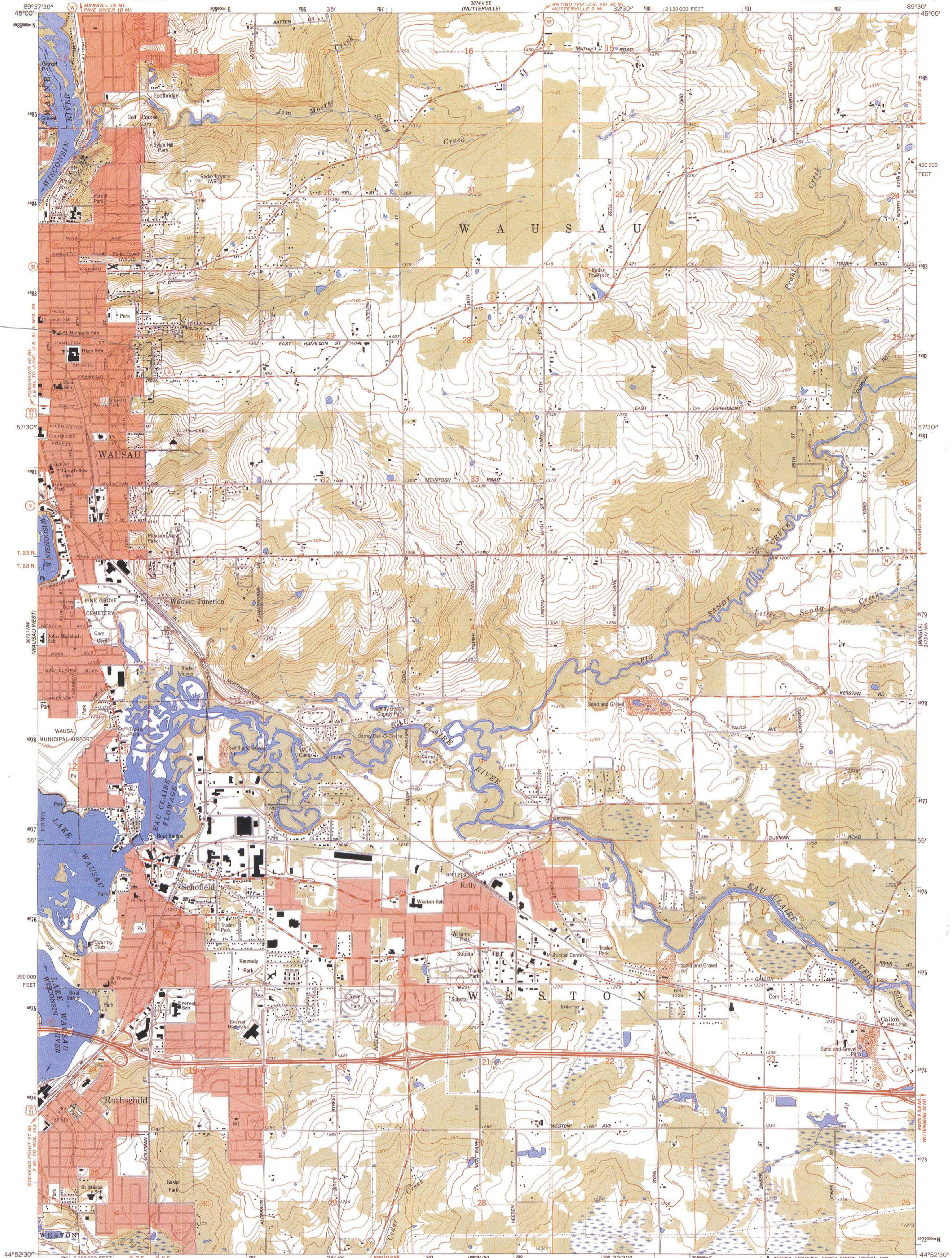
Manson, Charles L. and Dorothy, House
Wausau, Marathon County, Wisconsin

S.249 Charles L. Manson Residence

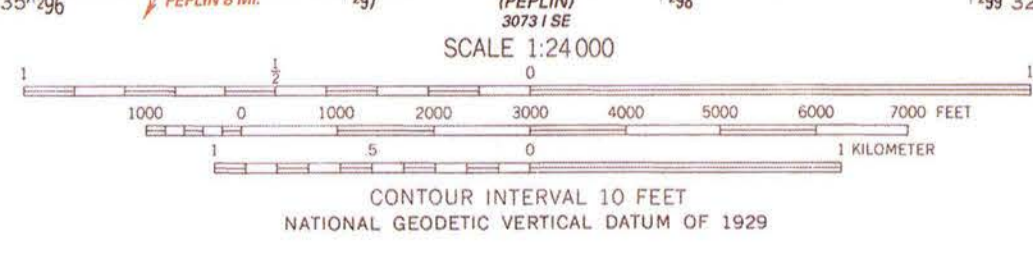
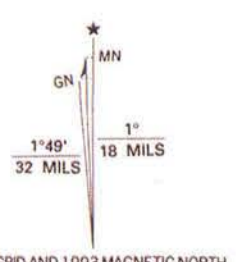
These drawings originally produced for publication in
The Frank Lloyd Wright Companion.
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by a grant from the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts.



*Manson, Charles and Dorothy's House
Marathon County
Wausau, WI
UTM Reference: Zone (16) Easting (294070.3)
Northing (4982564.3)*



Produced by the United States Geological Survey in cooperation with the Wisconsin Division of Highways and Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey Control by USGS and NGS/NOAA
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1962. Field checked 1963. Revised from aerial photographs taken 1990. Field checked 1992. Map taken 1993
Projection and 10,000-foot grid ticks: Wisconsin coordinate system, central zone (Lambert conformal conic)
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 16, shown in blue 1927 North American Datum (NAD 27)
North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83) is shown by dashed corner ticks
The values of the shift between NAD 27 and NAD 83 for 7.5-minute intersections are given in USGS Bulletin 1675
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway, hard surface	Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Secondary highway, hard surface	Unimproved road
Interstate Route	U.S. Route
	State Route



THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
AND WISCONSIN GEOLOGICAL AND NATURAL HISTORY SURVEY, MADISON, WISCONSIN 53706
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

WAUSAU EAST, WIS.
NE 1/4 WAUSAU 15' QUADRANGLE
44089-H5-TF-024
1993
DMA 3073 1 NE - SERIES V861



















&a20CUNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
&a30CNATIONAL PARK SERVICE

&a22CNATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
&a29CEVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Manson, Charles L. and Dorothy, House

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: WISCONSIN, Marathon

DATE RECEIVED: 2/19/16 &pW DATE OF PENDING LIST:
DATE OF 16TH DAY: &pW DATE OF 45TH DAY: 4/05/16
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 16000149

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

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

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 4/5/14 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

&a4L

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

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

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

**TO: Keeper
National Register of Historic Places**

FROM: Peggy Veregin

SUBJECT: National Register Nomination

**The following materials are submitted on this 16th day of February 2016,
for the nomination of the Manson, Charles L. and Dorothy, House to the National
Register of Historic Places:**

1 Original National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form

1 CD with NRHP Nomination Form PDF Document

 Multiple Property Nomination form

9 Photograph(s)

1 CD with electronic images

1 USGS map(s)

1 Sketch map(s)/figure(s)/exhibit(s)

 Piece(s) of correspondence

 Other: _____

COMMENTS:

 Please insure that this nomination is reviewed

 This property has been certified under 36 CFR 67

 The enclosed owner objection(s) do _____ do not _____
constitute a majority of property owners.

 Other: _____