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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "NA" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Robert H. Sunday House
other names/site number Cassidy House

2. Location

street & number 1701 Woodfield Road | | not for publication
city, town Marshalltown | | vicinity
state Iowa code 19 county Marshall code 127 zip code 50158

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	1	0 buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	0	0 sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	1	1 structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	1	0 objects
		2	1 Total

Name of Related multiple property listing: Iowa Usonian Houses by Frank Lloyd Wright
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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. See continuation sheet, section _____ page _____.

James E. Jacob DSHPO
Signature of certifying official

Sept 23, 1988
Date

Bureau of Historic Preservation
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet National Register criteria.
 See continuation sheet, section _____ page _____.

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet, section 9 page 2

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

- Primary location of additional data:
- State historic preservation office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other

Specify repository:
University of Washington

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 2

UTM References

A 115 | 510 | 519 | 910 | 46 | 52 | 54 | 0
Zone Easting Northing

C | | | | | | |

B | | | | | | |
Zone Easting Northing

D | | | | | | |

See continuation sheet, section _____ page _____

Verbal Boundary Description See continuation sheet, section 10 page 2

Boundary Justification See continuation sheet, section 10 page 2

11. Form Prepared By

author/title Chery Peterson, Architectural Historian
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DESCRIPTION

The Sunday house, sixth of the seven Frank Lloyd Wright Usonian houses in Iowa, is a beautifully designed and constructed house. The Sunday house is characteristic of Wright's late Usonian style. With a substantial addition designed by Jack Howe, this house is one of the larger Iowa Usonians.

The Robert H. Sunday house is located in Marhsalltown, the county seat of Marshall County, in central Iowa. The house was built into a low, wooded, approximately two-acre site at the end of a quiet cul-de-sac street. It was built in the neighborhood called Elmwood Acres, a moderately affluent residential development begun in the mid-1950s. The house is private and sited out of view of its neighbors. From the driveway approach on the south, the house is set low into the slope of the site with its back to the steet; the living room of the Sunday house then opens to the woods with a northern orientation. A creek runs across the property just west of the house. There are no direct views from the Sunday house to any of the neighboring homes. At the street, lighting the driveway entrance to the Sunday house, there is a Wright-designed gateway-mail box. The other structure on the property is a small shed, not of Wright design, but with details similar to the house.

The Sunday house is built of dark red brick, concrete, Philippine mahogany, and glass. Steel beams are concealed in the broad, flat roof over the living room and in the roof of the carport. As an example of Wright's late Usonian work, the Sunday house possesses materials, details, and qualities similar to Wright's 1953 Usonian Exhibition House, the house which accompanied his "Sixty Years of Living Architecture" exhibit at the Guggenheim Museum in New York City. Photographs and a plan of the exhibition house are included in Wright's The Natural House of 1954. The design qualities of the exhibition house were described by The Architectural Forum as ". . . the design qualities Wright has talked about since the turn of the century: spaciousness and sunlight, human scale, warmth and solidity, a feeling of shelter, and a sense of the outdoors." (p. 118) The elegant Sunday house possesses each of these qualities.

The sense of the outdoors is particularly well developed in the Sunday house. The house is open both visually and physically to the surrounding woods. Every room opens to bring in natural light and ventilation; and, with the exception of bathrooms and the utility space, each room is open to wide outside views. Glass doors in the living room, master bedroom, and family room lead out to terraces, and the terraces step down and die into the lawn. Here are masterfully articulated transitions from interior to exterior, as spaces flow from the inside to the outside, protected by the deep, sheltering overhangs of the roof, with the materials of the interior continuing to the exterior in unbroken horizontal and vertical planes.

In typical Usonian style, a sense of solidity and strength is created in the Sunday house as materials normally associated with the exterior of a house, materials such as brick walls and concrete floor, are here brought to the inside of the house and

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left as "natural" and "unfinished" on the interior as on the exterior. A sense of warmth is produced by the dark red and warm brown hues of these materials.

Above all, the Sunday house possesses the quality of spaciousness. The gracious character of the Sunday house has been created with flowing open spaces and scale-manipulating ceiling heights. The entry, living room, dining room, and kitchen of the house are openly arranged around a central fireplace and utility room. Varying ceiling heights create varying degrees of intimacy or formality.

From the narrow, protected front entrance of the Sunday house, the low ceiling-ed entry area widens, opens to the gallery, and steps down three low steps into the great living room. There is here a dramatic transition from the dark, enclosed entry with its floor to ceiling height of only 7'-1" to the spacious living room where the ceiling is at 11'-9", where glass doors with high transoms fill two walls, and where the raised ceiling opens the room to light from all four sides.

The living room of the Sunday house as built is actually larger than originally designed. At the request of Mr. and Mrs. Sunday, against the advice of Mr. Wright, the plan of this room was increased one full 4'-0" bay in length. That is, the distance now measured for the entry to the opposite northwest living room wall is 4'-0" greater than originally designed by Wright. Mr. Sunday recalled his later regret at this decision. The living room is almost too large, and might have been a more comfortable room if it had been built to the smaller proportions.

Opening off the living room is the dining room addition. The dining room of the Sunday house is fully open on one side to the living room; its three exterior sides are wrapped with windows. While it is a very open room, it is also very intimate. Because of its small size and because it has a ceiling height of only 6'-8". The windows in this room reach to the ceiling from an approximate 2'-4" sill. Deep overhangs reinforce the private, protected character of this room.

Completing the progression of open spaces around the central fireplace is the kitchen, a small space which seems much larger because of its high ceiling and windows. The ceiling of the kitchen is continuous with that of the living room. Windows in the southwest wall extend from the height of the counter up to the high ceiling. To the southeast the kitchen is open to a small storage area and "back door"; the kitchen is also open, up three steps, to the entry.

Of the main living spaces, the family room is the most isolated and self-contained. With a lower ceiling than the living room, this room has a less formal character. It is a comfortable, well-lit room with views to the southwest and wide sliding glass doors opening to a terrace.

The ceiling height in the bedroom wing is a low 7'-1". The bedrooms and bathrooms are small, with built-in wardrobes, cabinets, desks, and shelves, and with thin wood

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walls between the rooms. The gallery of the Sunday house is lined with tall storage cabinets with a narrow band of windows above. The master bedroom has its own bathroom, fireplace, and glass doors to the outside.

The one-story Sunday house has typical Usonian planning, materials, and construction. Being a late Usonian, the Sunday house is larger and more expensively built than the earliest Frank Lloyd Wright Usonians, house such as the first Jacobs House and its type of the late 1930s. As mentioned above, the Sunday house shares materials and details in common with the 1953 Usonian Exhibition House. Specific details of the Sunday house which are similar to the Exhibiton house include a distinctive denticulated wood fascia; window "shutters" of geometrically perforated boards; flush, finished plywood interior partition walls; flush plywood ceiling panels whose joints mirror the unit module etched in the floor; and tall clerestory windows with deep, tapered, fin-like mullions.

The Sunday house is built on reinforced concrete grade beams which rest on gravel-filled trenches. The trenches are drained with clay tile. The floor of the Sunday house is a red concrete slab etched with the lines of the 4'-0" x 4'-0" grid. The terraces and walks outside the house are continuous extensions of the concrete floor slab. The driveway and carport floor are surfaced with red-colored crushed clay tile.

The walls of the Sunday house are of dark red brick. The brick is laid in running bond. Horizontal joints are raked, vertical joints are flush, and all of the mortar is red-colored. The exterior cavity walls are insulated with 1 1/2"-thick styrofoam. A low brick retaining wall runs the length of the entrance walk and continues around the northeast and southeast sides of the family room. On the northwest side of the house a brick retaining wall supports the living room terrace. Under the kitchen window there is a red brick planter. The planter, the retaining walls, and the window sills are each capped with a rowlock course. Masonry walls which extend above the roof planes include the kitchen walls, the utility room-fireplace walls, the master bedroom fireplace, and the end of the shop. Each of these walls is also finished with a rowlock course.

Unique among the Iowa Usonians are the brick piers of the Sunday house living room. The piers are along the northwest and northeast walls of the living room standing at right angles to the wall planes. These piers do more than support the living room roof. They contribute to the sense of solidity; and as they extend to the exterior, they create a transition zone between inside and outside.

The worst deterioration of the Sunday house has occurred to the unprotected retaining walls and living room terrace slab. The slab has settled some, and areas of the retaining walls show cracked and spalling bricks. The present owners, the Cassidys, are in the process of restoring these damaged areas.

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The roof of the Sunday house is a flat roof constructed primarily of 2" x 10" wood joists. The roof over the living room, kitchen, and utility space is raised above the main roof of the bedroom wing and family room; the roof of the dining room is lower than the main roof. All of these roofs have similar mahogany fascias. The top board of the fascia is wide and canted; beneath it are the decorative boards which form the brown color which contrasts with the red color of the masonry. The flat roofs, with their wide, dark-colored fascias and deep overhangs, join together the asymmetrical masses and the irregular plan of the Sunday house to create a balanced horizontal composition.

The roofs of this house have insulation between the joints; they are finished with built-up roofing and topped with crushed red tile similar to the crushed tile surface of the driveway. Drainpipes penetrate the roofs, regularly spaced around each perimeter. The roofing has never been replaced, and neither the Sundays nor the Cassids have experienced any major problems with the roofs.

Cut-outs in the roofs occur in the north corner of the high living room roof; over the southeast wall of the master bedroom; and in the projection of the family room roof which passes in front of the kitchen window, over the planter. The cut-out areas allow natural light to more easily enter the house. Outside the master bedroom, the cut-out openings form a trellis for vines (Figure 48). The finished inside edges of all these openings are similar to the roofs' denticulated fascia.

Throughout the Sunday house the ceilings and continuous roof soffits are finished with 4'-0" x 4'-0" flush panels of mahogany veneered plywood. The dark, glossy mahogany is very beautiful. The joints of the wood panels perfectly mirror the 4'-0" x 4'-0" unit module joints in the concrete slab. A subtle checkerboard pattern is created on the ceilings and soffits as the direction of the wood's grain is alternated. Down lights with brass cover plates are built flush into the paneled ceiling and exterior soffits, quite similar to the down lights of the 1953 exhibition house.

The roof over the entry area in the Sunday house extends into the living room as a simple ceiling deck or low shelf. A similar deck at the same height extends along the southwest wall of the living room from the wall of the kitchen to the living room's northwest wall; there are clerestory-type windows above the deck. Concealed in each of these decks are incandescent fixtures which cast light up to the high ceiling, providing soft, indirect lighting. The low ceiling of the dining room also projects into the living room. This ceiling deck has a more elaborately finished edge which is identical to the exterior fascia.

In the ceiling of the dining room special fluorescent lighting was designed by Mr. Howe. The lighting is recessed in a 4'-0" x 8'-0" opening in the ceiling, diffused by a decoratively perforated wood cover panel which is installed flush with the finished ceiling. This lighting device is strikingly similar to recessed lighting in the dining

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room of Mr. Wright's own 1889 Oak Park home, and of later Prairie School houses. In the living room of the Sunday house a chandelier designed by Mr. Howe and built by Mr. Sunday hangs in that room's west corner. The design of this fixture repeats at a smaller scale the grammar of the wood detailing throughout the house.

All of the Windows in the Sunday house were built with Philippine mahogany. In all rooms but the family room and dining room, the glass of the doors and windows in 1/4" polished plate glass, single pane. In the family room and dining room additions there are a mix of double-pane insulating windows and single-pane windows. Throughout the house, window spacing is based upon the 4'-0" x 4'-0" grid.

In the narrow window bands of the gallery, master bedroom, and family room, the glass is sandwiched between decorative perforated mahogany boards. The same geometric pattern is repeated in each window. The operable units in these narrow bands are awning-type windows. The window band of the children's bedrooms is wider, with a sill height of approximately 3'-4". Pairs of casements here are alternated with fixed windows. The dining room is similarly wrapped with casement and fixed windows; and, below the narrow window band with perforated boards on the southwest side of the family room, there is again a similar arrangement of casement and fixed windows. Mitered glass corners occur in the Sunday house in the master bedroom, the bedroom adjacent to the entry, in the dining room, and in the living room.

Door and window details in the living room are exceptionally fine. This spacious room opens to the outside with tall, mahogany-framed glass doors located between the brick piers of the northwest and northeast walls. The fixed sidelights and transoms die very simply into narrow recessed channels in the ceiling and in the sides of the piers. The north corner of this room is an inverted corner with single panes of floor-to-ceiling glass mitered together, similarly dying into the ceiling and into the piers. The only wood framing in the this corner is at the windows' base. Along the southwest wall, the fixed glass clerestories are divided by wood mullions with decorative tapered fins perpendicular to the glass. Again the glass simply dies into the ceiling. The outside becomes indistinguishable from the inside.

With its deep overhangs and breeze-catching doors and windows, the Sunday house is a cool house during the summer season. Moreover, masonry walls and concrete floors, being slow to gain or lose heat, work to the advantage of natural heating and cooling during the temperate months of the year. But in winter, the large expanses of glass in the Sunday house make this a very inefficient home to heat. This is true of all the Iowa Usonians and is probably the greatest design flaw.

The Sunday house, unlike the earlier Iowa Usonians, was built with a forced air heating system and not with radiant "gravity" heat. The furnace for the original rooms of the house is located in the utility room with ductwork run under the concrete floor

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slabs. Registers are all in the floor. The return air intakes in the walls of the utility room have decorative mahogany grilles similar to the perforated boards of the narrow window bands. The Sunday house also has central air conditioning.

The furnace for the family room and dining room additions is in the storage area at the south end of the family room. Again, ductwork is run under the slab and feeds registers in the floor. Between the family room and the dining room the ductwork is run under the concrete slab of the west terrace. Compared to the houses of this study which have radiant heat, the floors of the Sunday house are not as warm in the winter.

The interior wood partitions of the Sunday house are finished with 4'-0"-wide flush panels of mahogany veneer plywood. The joints between the panels line up with the joints of the ceiling panels and with the etched grid of the concrete slab. Interior doors and built-in furnishings of the Sunday house are all of mahogany, with brass piano-type hinges.

Original built-ins are still intact in the bedrooms, bathrooms, gallery, kitchen, although kitchen appliances have been replaced and new counters have been installed in the kitchen and bathrooms. In the living room there is an original built-in couch along the southwest wall with shelves above the built-in cabinets at either end. Originally the southwest wall of the living room met the wall of the kitchen and it was here in the living room that the dining table and chairs still exist but are in storage. Moveable pieces in the living room include two Wright-designed armless upholstered chairs of mahogany, with brass-tipped bases, and two Wright-designed hassocks.

In the dining room there are built-in cabinets under the windows of the southwest wall. In the family room a built-in desk, with cabinets below tailored to store art supplies, stretches the length of that southwest wall.

The magnificent fireplace, the symbolic center of the Sunday house, is of grand scale with cantilever masonry design. The brick hearth is at floor level. The fireplace of the master bedroom is of similar design and character but scaled down to the smaller proportions of the bedroom.

The Sunday house is architecturally significant as an example of Wright's late Usonian style; it is described by Storrer as "possibly the last of the brick Usonian homes." (p. 393) This house has typical Usonian planning and possesses materials and details similar to the 1953 Usonian Exhibition House. With a similar "grammar," the Sunday house speaks of similar qualities, "spaciousness . . . sunlight, human scale, warmth . . . solidity . . . shelter . . . a sense of the outdoors . . ." (Wright, p. 118) The later independent work of Wright-trained architect John Howe successfully woven into the original Wright design adds further interest to this house.

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Significance

One of Frank Lloyd Wright's final projects, the Sunday House was ". . . possibly the last of the brick Usonian houses." (Storrer, listing 393). Details of the completed brick and wood construction house were derived from the design of the 1953 Usonian Exhibition House which was built on the later site of the Wright-designed Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York City and was featured in Wright's 1954 The Natural House. A 1970 addition by John H. Howe, a well-known architect who rose up through the ranks of Taliesin to serve as ". . . one of Wright's most talented assistants. . ." (Wilson and Robinson, p. 102), is sensitively fitted to the original house. (Original construction supervision was by Howe.)

The Sunday house has been published in various Frank Lloyd Wright catalogues, and is well known in the community as the original owners lectured on Wright's work and opened the house to public tours. House and grounds are of continuing interest to architectural scholars, photographers, and historians.

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Mr. and Mrs. Sunday first contacted Mr. Wright around 1954. Storrer dates the design of the Sunday house from 1955. Mr. Sunday related in a 1985 interview that his initial interest in Mr. Wright's work was sparked by the architect's An Autobiography. Together Mr. and Mrs. Sunday visited Frank Lloyd Wright works throughout the Midwest. Mr. Sunday further recalled that "the magic began" after his first visit to Taliesin.

The house that the Sundays originally planned for their Marhsalltown site was a Usonian Automatic, a "natural concrete block house." Although the plans were later revised for brick and wood construction, the original Usonian Automatic was, in Mr. Sunday's opinion, architectural perfection. In theory, the Automatic system invented by Mr. Wright was versatile and economical, designed to save home owners the expense of high-priced labor while the nature of the block allowed for limitless variations. With the Usonian Automatic system, the walls and roof of a house were built of easily managed, 1'-0" x 2'-0" concrete blocks; windows were built into similarly sized concrete frames or built as expansive window walls. The owners of a Usonian Automatic could, ideally, cast all of the necessary blocks and assemble the house on their own,

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using steel reinforcing rods and grout to knit the blocks together. Mr. Wright's Usonian Automatics had a distinctive character, solid, cubistic, and somewhat ruin-like in appearance.

Mr. Sunday recalled that preliminary plans for his Usonian Automatic arrived within a month after his first interview with Mr. Wright. The preliminary plans were later followed by a complete set of working drawings, with a separate set of plans for the individual blocks. On his own, Mr. Sunday attempted to cast the concrete blocks, but eventually gave this up, convinced that the homemade blocks lacked the uniformity called for by the plans. Sunday then took the block plans to a commercial block manufacturer in Des Moines for an estimate on the project. The estimate he received for the custom blocks alone was a prohibitively expensive \$20,000. At this point, Mr. and Mrs. Sunday decided that they would have to use more conventional materials, giving up their dream of building a Usonian Automatic. Mr. Sunday estimated that the total cost of the completed brick-and-wood house was close to only \$20,000.

When the Sundays decided to change the design of their house, Mr. Wright revised the original plans to allow for the new materials. The unit module, or underlying grid, of the house was changed at that time from 2'-0" x 2'-0" to 4'-0" x 4'-0", but the plan itself was little changed; neither the planning of the interior spaces nor the revision was completed without an extra fee. The final set of revised working drawings, dated June 3, 1959, was signed by William Wesley Peters. The architects' fee for the Sunday house was \$2,500. Mr. Wright never visited the Sunday site.

Being in the construction business, Mr. Sunday acted as his own general contractor for the house, and he and Mrs. Sunday did much of the work themselves. According to Mr. Sunday, preparation of the site began in 1957 and the family moved into the completed house in the autumn of 1960. John Howe, Mr. Wright's representative for this project, made occasional visits to the site during construction. In 1958 Howe had designed his first house independent of Mr. Wright; this was the Denniston house in Newton, Iowa, 30 miles south of Marshalltown. With the Sunday house and the Denniston house under construction at the same time, Howe could easily visit both houses on his trips to Iowa.

The family room and family room terrace and the dining room of the Sunday house were later additions; they were designed by John Howe in 1969 and constructed by the Sundays in 1970. Although the final 1959 drawings of the Sunday house did not indicate future additions, the Howe additions are so skillfully designed and fit so naturally with the original house that they do seem to have been anticipated. The Howe-designed additions changed the original "L-shaped" plan of the Sunday house into the current "T-shaped" plan.

In 1964, previous to the house additions, Howe also designed the Marshall Lumber building for Mr. Sunday. Sunday is the owner of Marshall Lumber in Marshalltown.

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The Sunday house, now over 25 years old, has been well maintained and has never been detrimentally altered. In 1984 Mr. Sunday sold the house to Dr. and Mrs. Cassidy. The new owners are knowledgeable admirers of the work of Frank Lloyd Wright and enthusiastic about the Sunday house.

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Frank Lloyd Wright, An Autobiography (New York: Horizon Press, 1977). First edition 1932.

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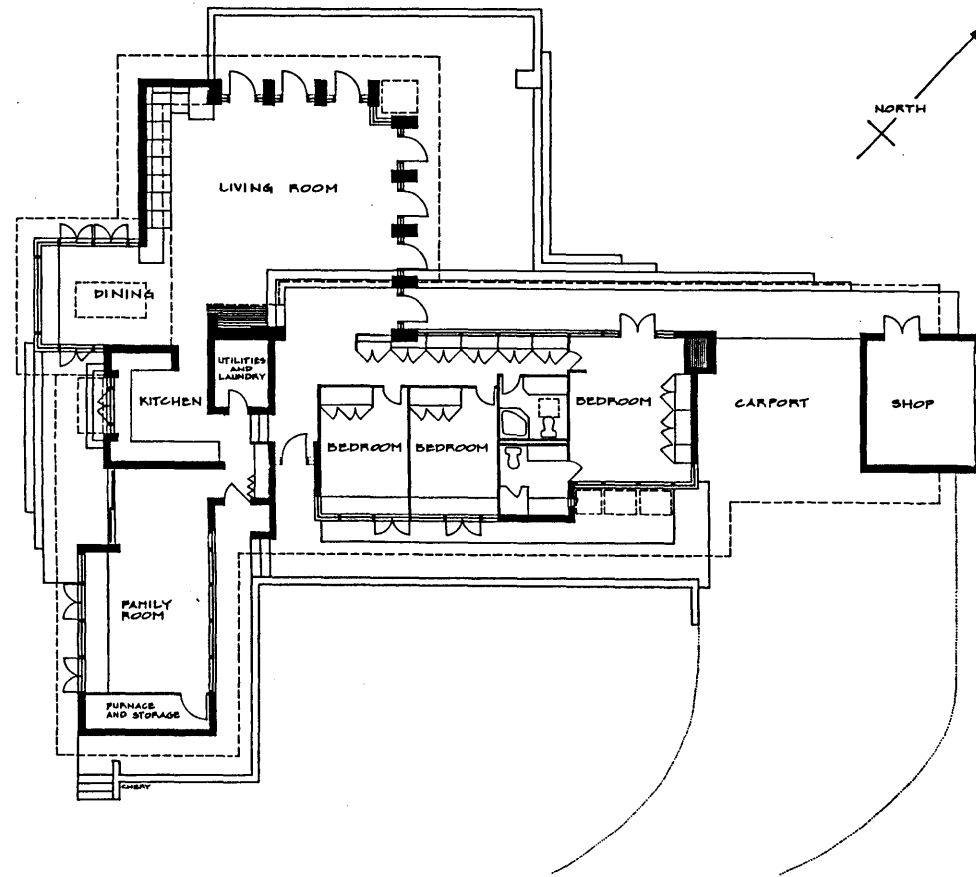
Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated property consists of Elmwood Acres, Block 18, Parcel 3, Lot 23.

Boundary Justification

The boundary described above contains approximately 2 acres and consists of the Sunday House, its objects, and surrounding acreage. It is being nominated in its entirety because site was an integral part of usonian design in terms of Wright's philosophy of living in harmony with nature.

SUNDAY HOUSE, MARSHALLTOWN, IOWA.



from Frank Lloyd Wright's Iowa Usonian
University of Washington Master's Thesis
by Cheryl Peterson