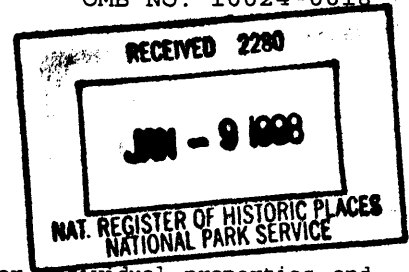


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United States Department of Interior
National Park Service



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 Ten Chimneys

other names/site number Fontanne, Lynn and Lunt, Alfred, House

2. Location

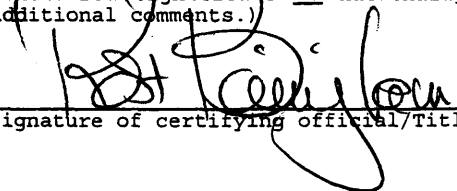
street & number S42 W31610 Depot Road N/A not for publication

city or town Town of Genesee N/A vicinity

state Wisconsin code WI county Waukesha code 133 zip code 53127

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.)


Signature of certifying official/Title

12/26/97
Date

State Historic Preservation Officer-WI
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 certifying official/Title Date

State of Federal agency and bureau

Ten Chimneys
Name of Property

Town of Genesee , Waukesha County, WI
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:)

Signature of the Keeper
Beth Boland

Date of Action
2/23/98

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (check as many boxes as apply)

- private
 public-local
 public-state
 public-federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
 district
 site
 structure
 object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>7</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>2</u>		sites
		structures
		objects
<u>9</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

None

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/Single Dwelling
Landscape/Garden

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/Single Dwelling
Landscape/Garden

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and Early 20th
Century Revivals

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone
walls weatherboard
log
roof metal
other wood
stone

Narrative Description

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

Ten Chimneys
Name of Property

Town of Genessee, Waukesha Co., WI
County and State.

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.)

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from
instructions)

Architecture

Performing Arts

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.

Period of Significance

1915-1948

Significant Dates

1915

1931

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

A owned by a religious institution or
used for religious purposes.

B removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or
structure.

F a commemorative property.

G less than 50 years of age achieved
significance within the past 50 years.

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is
marked above)

Fontanne, Lynn

Lunt, Alfred

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Dornbusch, Charles

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

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

Ten Chimneys
Name of Property

Town of Genes ee, Waukesha Co., WI
County and State

Previous Documentation on File (NPS):
data:

Primary location of additional

preliminary determination of
Office
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

State Historic Preservation
 Other State Agency
 Federal Agency
 Local government
 University
 Other
Name of repository: _____

Landmark
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 29 acres

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

1 <u>1/6</u> <u>3/8/7/6/0/0</u> <u>4/7/5/8/2/0/0</u>	3 <u>1/6</u> <u>3/8/7/9/2/0</u> <u>4/7/5/7/1/6/0</u>
Zone Easting Northing	Zone Easting Northing
2 <u>1/6</u> <u>3/8/7/9/6/0</u> <u>4/7/5/8/2/1/0</u>	4 <u>1/6</u> <u>3/8/7/4/0/0</u> <u>4/7/5/7/0/0/0</u>
Zone Easting Northing	Zone Easting Northing
	<input type="checkbox"/> 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 Jim Draeger-Division of Historic Preservation
organization State Historical Society of WI date 11/6/95
street & number 816 State Street telephone (608)264-6511
city or town Madison state WI zip code _____

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)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 1

Ten Chimneys

Town of Genesee, Waukesha County, WI

Ten Chimneys is a rural estate located in the Town of Genesee immediately outside the city of Genesee Depot, a small agricultural service center near the heart of Waukesha County. The estate encompasses land near the intersection of State Trunk Highway 83 and Depot Road. About 2/3 of the acreage is wooded, with another 1/3 as cleared farmland. The parcel consists of mostly glacial moraine and has a rolling topography.

The complex consists of a main house, cottage, studio and a number of ancillary structures: the main house is sited in a modest ravine with glacial hills rising to the sides and rear. The cottage sits at the crest of this ravine behind the main house. The secondary structures are all located over the top of this ravine and are not visible from the main house and its immediate grounds.

Main House

The house is wood frame construction on a raised brick foundation. Although technically a two-story house, the building contains four levels including the attic and basement. The main elevation faces south and is composed of a projecting gabled pavilion on the east side attached to a larger and taller side-gabled wing that extends to the west. A one-story gabled wing projects from the north end of the east facade and sits on a raised basement. Another two-story wing projects from the east end of the north facade of the main block, creating a rear wing.

The house is clad in both stucco and board and batten siding. Fenestration consists mainly of pairs of multi-light casements that are formally arranged in a symmetrically composition. Second story windows mirror the placement of the first story windows below them. The principal rooms have larger windows with fixed transoms above. All windows are flanked by operable louvered shutters.

EXTERIOR REAR

A two story rear wing extends northward from the main block of the house. It features two single garage doors on the first floor with living quarters above. The end bay projects to the west

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 2

Ten Chimneys
Town of Genesee, Waukesha County, WI

creating an end pavilion. It is similar in design to the main block with fenestration consisting of pairs of 6-light and 8-light casements. The first floor garages are sheltered under a broad standing seam metal pent roof. One bay north of the juncture of the main house the pent roof becomes a sheltered verandah and continues along the north side of the main house. The verandah roof is supported by overscaled wooden posts that are broadly tapered at the top and bottom. A second story balcony sits atop the verandah and features a cross-buck patterned wooden railing. This elevation also has a tall mortared fieldstone wall which encloses an expansive paved auto courtyard. The wall contains ornate metal gates with obelisk-like gate posts topped with urns.

Interior

The crowning jewel of Ten Chimneys is the finely decorated and furnished interior of the main house. Extensive mural work executed by Claggett Wilson is found throughout the house and gives the house a flavor more akin to the sceneographic painting of stage sets than conventional house decoration of the period.

The interior has 3 levels and the main entry to the house is located off the auto courtyard at the rear of the property. The visitor enters into a reception hall. A sitting room is accessed from the far right. A sweeping spiral staircase descends to the reception hall just to the left of the entry, creating a dramatic entry point for the Lunts to receive guests. The floor is laid in a diagonal pattern of black and white marble tile. The walls are painted with a series of floor to ceiling murals depicting English gentry with symbols of welcome and hospitality. These include figures holding keys, pineapples, wine, poultry, and desserts. The focal point of the entry is a large porcelain Swedish stove directly opposite the entrance.

Other than utility workspace, the only other room of note on the first level is the sitting room, which is relatively austere in comparison to the highly decorated spaces elsewhere in the house. The walls are plaster with a simple cove molding. The floor is red shag carpet. A Dutch door opening to the hall indicates that this was once an entry door to the house and that the sitting room is an addition. The sitting room has five sets of paired six-light French doors opening to an exterior courtyard. The room also contains a Swedish corner fireplace constructed of brick.

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 3

Ten Chimneys
Town of Genesee, Waukesha County, WI

The visitor ascends the spiral staircase to the second level. The staircase has a serpentine railing and squared, sawn balusters. The walls are adorned with an unusual decorative technique employing cut-out wallpaper creating a series of floral adorned columns. The ceiling medallion pieced together out of the same wall paper surrounds a crystal chandelier. Wrought iron radiator grill work repeats the floral motif of the entry gates. Two entries at the landing lead to the kitchen and the Flirtation room.

The Flirtation Room, as it was called by the Lunts, utilizes the same floral wall paper columns as the staircase, although the background color has been in-painted with a salmon color to match the overall tone of the room. This space likely functioned as a reception room for visitors. The centerpiece of the room is an elaborate rococo cast iron stove set in a marbled plaster niche. The room exhibits very heavy moldings on the doors, surrounds, and baseboards. The floor is a wide board oak plank that is pegged. The Flirtation room functions as a central circulation point for the house with doors leading to all the other main areas of the house.

The most dramatic and highly decorated room in the house is the Music Room. The room is accessed from the Flirtation Room by descending a short flight of stairs, creating a sense of drama and stagery upon entering the space. The large, broad space is characterized by plaster walls punctuated on the exterior elevation by a series of paired casement windows with transoms. The unusual flat board painted ceiling is a Swedish trait. The room is centered on a large fireplace with biblical theme tiles depicting Genesis, Samson and Delilah, Cain slaying Abel, and others. The room has a chair rail at sill level, below which the walls are painted as faux panels. Perhaps the most superb decorative feature of the house is the extensive mural work found in this room. Above the chair rail, the walls are split into a series of painted panels depicting biblical scenes. These scenes show a Parisian art deco influence, as well as Swedish imagery of bellcast towers and other buildings. The panels depict biblical stories such as Moses being found amongst the reeds, David and Goliath, Abraham being asked to slay his sons, and the story of the Golden Calf. The room also contains a hand painted grand piano with a edenic scene painted on the underside of the lid. A second stairs ascends from this space to the Library Room.

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Ten Chimneys
Town of Genesee, Waukesha County, WI

The oak paneled library is a sedate and formal room in comparison to the general flamboyant and unconventional decoration of the remainder of the house. It is lined on all four walls with bookcases. It has a red tile floor and a large fireplace with a wood mantelpiece. Portraits of Lunt and Fontanne hang on the walls. The most unusual feature of this room is a secret passage accessed through one of the bookcases which leads to a small chamber and a secondary entrance to the building.

The secondary entry of the library opens into a short hall connecting the Flirtation Room to the Study. A small bathroom with faux marble walls is located off this hall. The Study has plaster walls decorated with an applied Art Deco floral plaster ornament sometimes referred to as a "frozen fountain" motif. The plaster ornament divides the walls into a series of panels and also rings the windows. The focal point of the room is a fireplace with a decorative plaster surround flanked by oval windows. The other windows in the room are paired steel casements. A hand loomed rug covers the floor.

Traveling down the short hall and crossing through the Flirtation room, one enters the Dining Room. Like the Music Room, it is richly decorated with extensive mural work, this time on the plaster tray-type ceiling. The murals feature an extensive garland of vines and other floral motifs. The four corners of the ceiling exhibit fine female portraiture. The room is finely appointed with a crystal chandelier, delft tile fireplace, painted cabinets with fruit work motifs, and a woven deco rug that appears to have been designed for the space. Five sets of paired casements light the room. The floors are the same oak pegged floor as the Flirtation Room.

The Dining Room leads to an expansive Kitchen with wooden cabinets, stainless steel countertops, white tile backsplashes, and two double sinks. At the opposite end of the kitchen is a short hall leading to a small servant's suite and a back staircase.

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Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 5

Ten Chimneys
Town of Genesee, Waukesha County, WI

Returning to the Flirtation Room, another entrance opens to a staircase that leads to the upper hall connecting the suite of bedrooms located on the upper level. The plaster walls of the hallway are extensively painted with trompe l'oeil panels creating a wainscot panel base and cornice. The upper panels contain diminutive detailed murals depicting rural farms scenes featuring peasants occupied with beekeeping, sheep herding, cattle feeding, and grain harvesting. Smaller panels above the doors depict crickets, frogs, butterflies, squirrels, and other wildlife. Regency crystal chandeliers and sconces light the hall.

Lynn's Bedroom is located at the far end of the hall and is the most ornately decorated sleeping chamber. This room has plaster walls with a subtle cream-on-white daisy stencil pattern that has been overlaid with extensive cut-out wallpaper borders creating a series of panels around the room. The floor is covered with a wall-to-wall hand needlepoint rug. A tile Swedish fireplace is a focal point of the room. A small sun room with six sets of paired casement windows is located off the bedroom in addition to a dressing room and a bathroom.

The bedroom known as Alfred's Bedroom is smaller and simpler in design with floral wallpaper, a Swedish design corner brick fireplace, and a shared bath. The bathroom is shared with a small guest bedroom. The most notable feature of the room is a recessed wall niche at the head of the bed. It contains an arrangement composed of a trompe l'oeil pedestal and urn with a wallpaper floral arrangement comprised of individual flowers and garland cut out of wallpaper pieces pasted up to form a bouquet.

The last major room is the Helen Hayes Bedroom. It is decorated in a white-on-white motif with a marbleized fireplace, neutral wallpaper, and art deco style metal screens and grille. A watercolor portrait by Claggett Wilson is hung on the wall of this room as well as a number of Leon Bakst costume drawings. A bathroom with floral wallpaper adjoins the room.

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Ten Chimneys
Town of Genesee, Waukesha County, WI

Another remarkable feature of the house is the intact nature of its furnishings. The house retains rugs, draperies, linens, furniture, glassware and porcelains from the Lunts tenure in the house. The list of furnishings is much too extensive to address in this nomination, but adds greatly to the experience of this household. The furnishings are an eclectic, yet sophisticated, intermingling of Queen Anne, Empire, Regency, and Swedish designs.

Cottage

The cottage is a L-plan frame-construction building with a side-gabled roof and is sheathed with shiplap siding. It is built into the hillside so that the west portion has a raised basement story, while the east end is at grade. An extensive wooden deck stretches along the south facade and has a cross-buck railing and a lattice skirt underneath. A small gabled entry porch is located near the center of the south facade. The porch shelters built-in benches and has a scalloped fascia and a gable field decorated with a painted Swedish folk design. The house is composed of a two-story block on the east end connected to successively smaller one-story segments as the building progresses west. Windows are 6/6 double-hung sash and are set in groups of five along the south facade creating a nearly continuous expanse of windows. The east elevation contains secondary entrances, one at grade and the other at the second story -accessed by an open staircase. The rear of the building is composed mainly of single sash multi-pane windows. The cottage is connected to the rest of the estate by expansive stone slab steps and paths edged in fieldstone.

One enters the cottage via a small entrance vestibule. The kitchen is to the right. Straight ahead are doors leading to the second story bedroom and a bathroom tucked under the stairs. A great room space is accessed to the left. Continuing in this direction leads one to a library. The rear wing is accessed off the library via a short hall which leads to the master bedroom. A staircase in this hallway leads downstairs to servants quarters and utilitarian work spaces.

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 7

Ten Chimneys
Town of Genesee, Waukesha County, WI

Many features utilized in the design of the cottage are consciously modeled after traditional Swedish vernacular farmhouses. One of the most strikingly Swedish details is the incorporation of 4 distinctive corner brick fireplaces with characteristic sloping chimney wings. These brick and stuccoed fireplaces feature a squat square mass that place the hearth out in the room. The fireplace opening wraps around the corner of the fireplace mass and double slope chimney wings taper back to the intersection of the ceiling and wall.

The cottage also utilizes Swedish influenced ceiling treatments including extensive use of painted flat board ceilings. The library and great room incorporate tray style ceilings composed of a flat plane in the central section of the ceiling that intersects with a sloping plane at the edges creating a tray-like effect. The library's ceiling is extensively painted with peasant type folk painting. Other parts of the cottage incorporated Swedish language inscription, the kitchen being the most notable example.

This peasant motif folk painting is found throughout the cottage, with the most extensive and detailed work displayed in the vestibule, kitchen, library, hall, and master bedroom. This extensive floor-to-ceiling mural work was painted by Lunt.¹ The walls of the great hall are almost entirely covered with folk painted canvas panels that appear to be Swedish, but are of unknown origin. The cottage is primarily furnished with Swedish primitives, and Swedish reproductions, but also includes extensive collections of pewter and religious icons. In contrast to the predominant decor, the upstairs bedroom is furnished in a stylishly modern 1930s era white-on-white fashion. Of particular note is the room-sized floor rug of stitched sheepskins. Even this room shows Swedish influence in the motifs used in the artist signed dressing screen, the use of a Scandinavian-influenced cut-out balustrade, and incorporation of a tray ceiling.

¹"Design for Graceful Living-at home with Lynn Fontanne and Alfred Lunt," Women's Home Companion, November 1956, p. 102.

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Section 7 Page 8

Ten Chimneys
Town of Genesee, Waukesha County, WI

Pool Cabana

The pool house is a small V-plan one-story building. It has a low-pitched gable roof and board and batten siding. The pool house is lit by paired and tripartite groups of eight-light casements. At the junction of the two changing room wings is a massive stuccoed tower with porthole windows and a bellcast tower. Entrances to the changing rooms are in the ends of the building. Random flagstone walks lead from the changing room doors to the pool and wrap around the pool itself.

The design of the pool cabana is essentially a garden folly that combines the board and batten, casement windowed appearance of traditional Swedish town houses with a tower derived from Swedish castles of the renaissance period such as the Vasa family castles.²

Swimming Pool

The swimming pool is L-shaped and constructed of poured concrete. A skirt of random flagstone wraps around the pool and is juxtaposed against a nearby circular flagstone patio.

Studio

The studio is a one-and-a-half story, front-gabled Scandinavian hewn log building that was moved to the site and re-erected. The building was apparently a loft house and was constructed of horizontal hewn logs fastened together by squared double notched corners. It has an overhanging second story supported by large wooden scroll brackets. The overhang shelters the entrance. The attic story is clad in vertical boards that are held in place with wooden pegs. The roof is

² Thomas Paulsson. Scandinavian Architecture: Buildings and Society in Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden from the Iron Age until Today. London: Leonard Hill Unlimited, 1958 pp. 112-122.

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 9

Ten Chimneys
Town of Genesee, Waukesha County, WI

supported by exposed purlins and clad in a red tile characteristic of Swedish architecture. The building is lit with small multi-pane windows. A wood post fence landscapes the studio. The interior of the studio is a large open space with a wood-railed balcony at one end.

A low one-story wing projects from the right side of the building. The wing is also constructed of log but has an asphalt shingle roof. It appears to be an addition built around the time that the building was erected on this site. Large wood batten doors indicated it may have been used for machinery or equipment storage.

Greenhouse/chicken coop

These two structures are physically attached and are therefore counted as a single structure. The chicken coop is a one-story, stone, side-gabled, rectilinear-plan building. The roofline extends slightly at the entrance to form a sheltered entrance canopy. The stone work is random ashlar with large slabs of edge-bedded stone randomly placed for accent. The building is lit by 6-light casements and a large, multi-pane window group. It is topped by a louvered rooftop cupola vent. The greenhouse is a prefabricated gambrel-shaped metal frame with glass panels that sits on a low wall of random ashlar stone. A door leads from the chicken coop directly into the greenhouse. A second door leads from the greenhouse to what was formerly a cut flower garden edged with fieldstone retaining walls. Both structures were designed by Chicago architect Charles Dornbusch.

Garage

The garage is a large one-story, rectilinear plan stone building with a low-pitch, side-gabled roof. A pedestrian entrance is located in the west end and the north facade is composed of a series of garage bays. The stone construction is similar to the chicken coop and gatehouse. The building was used primarily for equipment and machinery storage. Charles Dornbusch was the architect.

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Continuation Sheet**

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Ten Chimneys
Town of Genesee, Waukesha County, WI

Barn

The barn is composed of a front log-constructed section with a is a one-story, wood-frame, square plan building with a gabled roof attached to the rear. The roof of the front portion is clad with tile similar to the studio, and it is believed that this portion of the building was also relocated from Sweden. The rear portion is clad in board and batten siding in a manner sympathetic to the design of the main house. A wood stave silo is attached to the side of the frame portion. It was used for farm machinery storage and housed several cows and horses.

Corn Crib

Near the barn is a small slatted, frame corn crib with a gable roof. Its precise date is unknown, but it appears to have been built around the same time as the other buildings and is considered to be contributing.

The grounds are extensively landscaped according to a landscape plan developed by Root and Holister.

A gate house constructed in 1947 is separately addressed as W314 S4151 State Trunk Highway 83. It is under separate ownership and is not included in this nomination. The gate house faces south and looks out onto an access road which leads west from STH 83 to the rear of the main grouping of buildings. Like the main part of the estate, the gatehouse grounds are extensively landscaped. It was designed by Charles Dornbusch.

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Continuation Sheet**

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Ten Chimneys
Town of Genesee, Waukesha County, WI

Building Inventory All buildings are contributing

<u>Building #</u>	<u>Building name</u>	<u>Date or circa date</u>
1	Main House	1915, 1933
2	Cottage	1924
3a	Cabana	1936
b	Swimming Pool	1936
4	Bunkhouse	ca. 1947
5	Greenhouse	1947
6	Garage	1947
7	Barn	1942
8	Corn crib	c. 1942

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 1

Ten Chimneys
Town of Genesee, Waukesha County, WI

The Ten Chimneys property is of national architectural and historical significance under the criteria of the State Register and National Register of Historic Places. The property is nationally significant in the area of performing arts for its association with Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne. From 1915 to 1983, the property was the primary residence for Lunt and Fontanne and a social and cultural center of the American theater. Throughout their careers as the "first family" of the American theater, during which they starred together in over 140 Broadway plays, the home served as a creative hearth and quiet refuge for themselves and a long list of theater friends, including Noel Coward, Helen Hayes, Laurence Olivier and Vivien Leigh. Plays were written, reworked, and honed on the estate during the summer months, before the couple returned to Broadway for the theater season. It is especially unique and rare because of the well-preserved and intact condition of the both the estate and its furnishings.

The property is of state-wide architectural significance as an assemblage of Period Revival historic buildings. The main house was designed by Alfred Lunt in 1915 and modeled after chalets he had seen in Scandinavia. The house was extensively remodeled in 1931, adding spaces and features of great architectural distinction. The house is particularly noteworthy for the excellence of its interior design. In the late nineteen-thirties the principal rooms were decorated with lavish wallpaper and mural work executed by set designer Claggett Wilson. These wall and ceiling murals are painted in a sophisticated French Art Deco fashion with motifs based on classical and Swedish folk models. The scale and broad, sweeping lines of the mural work are intentionally reflective of stage set design of the period.

The grounds contain a complex of other buildings erected during

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Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 2

Ten Chimneys
Town of Genesee, Waukesha County, WI

Lunt and Fontanne's tenure including a 1920s cottage built to house Lunt's widowed mother and other family members, a greenhouse reflecting Lunt's passionate interest in vegetable gardening, a swimming pool, gate house, and a finely crafted log studio that also served as off-season rehearsal space. The studio was dismantled and shipped from Sweden as a tribute to Lunt's Swedish roots, an interest that is reflected throughout the estate. Fences and walls built by Lunt create a naturalistic landscaped estate.

The period of significance, 1915-1948, begins with the erection of the 1st phase of the house by Alfred Lunt in 1915 and extends to 1948 when the complex reached its current state of development. In 1949 the couple moved from a rented New York apartment into a permanent New York residence, although Ten Chimneys remained their "true" residence, the New York residence marked a transition point in the development of the estate and therefore has been used to delineate the end date of the period of significance.³

HISTORIC BACKGROUND

Ten Chimneys was built in the Town of Genesee, a rural agricultural settlement in central Waukesha County. Stillman Smith is said to have been the first Euro-American to lay a claim in the present Town of Genesee; he did this in the spring of 1837. The following summer, he and his brother Horace became the first Euro-American settlers in the town when they built a house in Section 32.⁴

³Jared Brown, The Fabulous Lunts, New York, Atheneum, 1986, p. 365.

⁴C. W. Butterfield, History of Waukesha County, p. 741.

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By an act of the Territorial Legislature approved on March 8, 1839, the Town of Genesee was made and comprised the present towns of Genesee, Eagle and Ottawa. The present town boundaries were established on March 21, 1843. In 1851, the town was surveyed into school districts by E. Manning.⁵ The township continued to be primarily used for dairy agriculture until the 1960s when the suburban development of the Milwaukee urban region began to spread westward. That trend has accelerated recently, making this area one of the most rapidly developing in the region.

PERFORMING ARTS SIGNIFICANCE⁶

Lunt and Fontanne exerted a profound influence on twentieth century American theater. As America's most famous theatrical couple, they garnered an international reputation for their versatile and accomplished work in Broadway productions, one sound film (The Guardsman, 1931) and several television productions. With a dedication to theatrical perfection that verged on fanaticism, they appeared as a team in twenty-six plays, three films and four television programs. Their work was critically acclaimed. The duo received Tonys for their stage presentations, Emmys for their television performances and Oscar nominations for their sound film appearance. Lunt was considered by many to be one of the best directors in America.

⁵ Ibid., p. 741.

⁶ The performing arts context relies heavily on the comprehensive and detailed published biography, The Fabulous Lunts, written by Jared Brown.

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During their time, no theatrical performers were more influential or respected. As the "first family" of the American Theater, their careers were long-lived and successful. Lunt's acting career spanned fifty-three years; Fontanne's for a remarkable sixty-two. Their commitment to extensive theatrical touring of their Broadway productions helped keep theater in America alive at a time when its existence was threatened by the emerging motion picture industry. The success of American professional theater today stems in large measure from the influence and commitment of the Lunts.

The Lunts advanced the art of playwriting through their close collaboration with major playwrights of the era such as their close friend Noel Coward, S.N. Behrman, Booth Tarkington, Robert E. Sherwood, Maxwell Anderson, Howard Lindsay, and Russell Crouse. Hundreds of great actors, including legendary performers Helen Hayes, Carol Channing, Montgomery Clift and Edward G. Robinson, were inspired by realism of their performance style and were personally devoted to the Lunts.

Alfred David Lunt Jr. was born the son of a wealthy Wisconsin lumberman in Milwaukee on August 12, 1892. His father died in 1894, leaving a considerable fortune. Alfred's mother, Hattie received \$500,000. Alfred inherited \$30,000, the bulk of which was held in trust until he was twenty-one.⁷

Alfred's interest in the theater was lifelong, beginning at age three when his mother began taking him to performances. He claimed many of his earliest memories were of the theater. As a boy, he saw a broad spectrum of Milwaukee performances from Shakespearean tragedy at the Davidson Theater to vaudeville at

⁷ The Fabulous Lunts, pp. 12-13.

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the Alhambra.⁸ This early exposure was to have a profound influence on his life.

Alfred's mother married Dr. Carl Sederhohm, in 1900 when Alfred was 7. His new stepfather shared an interest in the arts as a theater goer and skillful piano player. Sederhohm encouraged Alfred's theatrical interest by taking the boy to opera performances in Chicago, kindling his lifelong interest in opera. He staged his first play at age 8, and apart from Latin and mathematics, his only grammar school enthusiasm was elocution.⁹

For several summers in a row, Alfred was given extended vacations on his aunt's farm in Neenah, Wisconsin. There he worked the farm and learned to love it. As an adult, his estate, Ten Chimneys, would furnish him once again with that same satisfaction.¹⁰

In the fall of 1906, Alfred started school at the Carroll College Academy in nearby Waukesha. His family moved from Milwaukee to the small village of Genesee Depot, where Dr. Sederholm established his practice. Alfred lived at home and commuted to school by train.

By 1907, the Sederholm family discovered that their financial situation had taken a turn for the worse, due to the gambling

⁸"Alfred Lunt, a Star of Broadway For Third of Century, Dies at 84," New York Times August 4, 1977, p. C16.

⁹ The Fabulous Lunts, p. 14 and New York Times, August 4, 1977, p. C16.

¹⁰ The Fabulous Lunts, p. 15.

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losses and poor investments of his stepfather and his mother's extravagances. The Sederholms moved the family to Finland to live with Swedish relatives, but Alfred returned in the fall to Wisconsin to continue his schooling at the Academy. He developed an lifelong affinity for Finland and Swedish culture and returned during the summers for the next several years. His stepfather died in 1909, forcing the family to leave Finland and return to Milwaukee in the summer of 1909.¹¹

In 1910, Alfred entered Carroll College in Waukesha. Interestingly he majored in oratory rather than dramatics, although in two years he appeared in 12 college plays. He also designed, built and painted the scenery, an early indication of his later comprehensive scope of involvement. While at Carroll, he developed a program of impersonations and comedy sketches used as intermission pieces for the Carroll Men's Glee Club with which he toured Wisconsin, Missouri, Kansas, Colorado, New Mexico, Nevada, Arizona and California.¹²

Lunt transferred in September 1912 to Emerson College in Boston, but quickly realized that his true interest in coming east was to begin his professional theater career. He impulsively entered the Castle Square Theater and was offered a position as a stock player. His first appearance was as a sheriff in *The Aviator*, and the date was October 7, 1912. He remained with the company for the next three years.¹³

¹¹The Fabulous Lunts, p. 19.

¹²The Fabulous Lunts, p. 27-28. *New York Times*, August 4, 1977, p. C16.

¹³The Fabulous Lunts, pp. 32-33, p. 54.

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His apprenticeship at Castle Square was typical repertory theater of the period - matinee and evening performances were given six days a week, and rehearsals held every morning for the new show of the following week. A 16-hour day was customary, and the regimen was calculated to develop versatility.

In 1915-16, he toured the country in a company headed by Margaret Anglin, a romantic actress who also played Greek and Shakespearean roles.¹⁴ There followed some short stints in vaudeville and stock companies before Lunt made his Broadway debut in October 1917 in a minor role as Claude Estabrook in William Hurlbut's *Romance and Arabella*. The engagement brought him to the attention of Alexandra Carlisle, the lead in Booth Tarkington's comedy *The Country Cousin*. Through her, Mr. Lunt was hired for a road tour of the play. Lunt had a major role and played to critical acclaim throughout the country. Tarkington, impressed by the actor's virile looks and his personality, wrote *Clarence*, to showcase Lunt's comedic talents.¹⁵ It opened in New York in September, 1919, and was an enormous success. It not only lasted 300 performances in New York, but was taken on a road tour until the spring of 1921. Lunt's work was so critically and popularly acclaimed that audiences shouted "Lunt, Lunt, Lunt" after the opening performance, the role made him a star and is seen today as one of his greatest works.¹⁶

¹⁴The Fabulous Lunts, p. 68.

¹⁵The Fabulous Lunts, pp. 77-78.

¹⁶The Fabulous Lunts, pp. 87-89.

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Lynn Fontanne was born December 6, 1887 in Essex county, England as "Lillie Louise Fontanne," the youngest of four sisters. Her father owned a printing foundry, which eventually failed, plunging the family into poverty.¹⁷ She showed theatrical aptitude at an early age, reciting Shakespeare by age five. By age six or seven, she was determined to be an actress.¹⁸ While in her early teens she was introduced to Ellen Terry, a famous British actress. The seasoned star coached Fontanne and arranged for her debut as a chorus girl in *Cinderella* in December 1905. Fontanne was also understudy to the Fairy Queen, and in a Cinderella-like turn of events, took the stage when the actress playing the part could not perform.¹⁹

Fontanne's career continued for six years with a series of small parts and her meager income forced her to work as an artist's model to supplement her income.²⁰ Her first lead role came in the 1914 touring production of *Milestones*.²¹

¹⁷The Fabulous Lunts, pp. 3-4.

¹⁸The Fabulous Lunts, p. 6.

¹⁹The Fabulous Lunts, p. 11.

²⁰The Fabulous Lunts, p. 36-37.

²¹"Lynn Fontanne is Dead at 95," New York Times obituary July 31, 1983 as printed in The New York Times Biographical Service, New York: Arno Press, Vol. 14, 1983, pp. 791-793.

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American actress Laurette Taylor had seen Fontanne's performance in *Milestones* and brought her to the United States, where she debuted in March 1916 in *The Wooing of Eve*.²² Fontanne achieved prominence in American theater through her role in the 1921 production *Dulcy*.²³

Despite the critical success of both Lunt and Fontanne, the couple were viewed at the time as odd eccentrics who would have limited range and would never reach the top of their profession. In 1920 playwright Robert E. Sherwood called them "gifted grotesques...sure to shine in the sideshow but doomed never to achieve prominence in the Main Tent."²⁴

It was love at first sight for Alfred Lunt, as he literally and figuratively fell for Lynn Fontanne, the first time they met. The place was backstage at the New Amsterdam Theater during rehearsals for *Made of Money*. Lunt was standing on an iron staircase and, as he bowed deeply and reached forward to take her hand, he stumbled and fell backward down the stairs.²⁵ Lunt later said "I was so exhilarated and happy...as though I had been drinking champagne."²⁶

Lunt's courtship of Fontanne had its share of uncertain moments,

²²The Fabulous Lunts, pp. 40-43.

²³The Fabulous Lunts, pp. 95-100.

²⁴Quoted in The Fabulous Lunts, pp. 99-100.

²⁵The Fabulous Lunt, p. 80.

²⁶The Fabulous Lunts, p. 81.

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largely the result of his close ties with his mother. Despite Hattie's cold opinion of Fontanne, the couple were married on May 26, 1922. Hattie regarded Lunt as the head of her family and was resentful of Fontanne, giving her a cold reception. The couple traveled to Genesee Depot for the summer and quickly set about remodeling the chicken coop as a "cottage," the main house being too small for the Lunts, Hattie and their extended family.²⁷

A year later, they appeared together for the first time on Broadway in a revival of *Sweet Nell of Old Drury*. Lunt was Charles II, and his wife played Lady Castlemain. As their individual careers blossomed and they received critical acclaim, they had not yet become "The Lunts" and dismissed their dream of always appearing together as unrealistic.²⁸ In 1924, they made their first appearance under the auspices of the Theater Guild in the play *The Guardsman* and their joint career took off.²⁹

Produced essentially as a benefit for the financially precarious Theater Guild, Lunt and Fontanne accepted about 1/3 of their customary fee and purchased their own costumes. During rehearsals for *The Guardsman* the Lunts began to experiment with a technique of overlapping dialogue for which they became famous. Lunt explained the technique as follows:

We would speak to each other as people do in real life. I would, for instance, start a speech, and in the middle, on our own cue, which we would agree to in advance, Lynn would cut in and start talking. I would continue on a bit...I must lower my voice so that she is still heard.³⁰

²⁷The Fabulous Lunts, p. 104.

²⁸The Fabulous Lunts, p. 118.

²⁹New York Times, August 4, 1977, p. C16.

³⁰Quoted in The Fabulous Lunt, p. 131-132.

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Critics were skeptical that the technique could be successful, but the play opened to rave reviews and overlapping dialogue became an accepted part of mainstream drama. *The Guardian* ran for 248 performances and the Lunts became famous. Critic Alexander Woollcott stated "...those who saw them last night bowing hand in hand, for the first time, may well have been witnessing a moment in theatrical history."³¹

The Lunts strove to make every performance seem natural and realistic at a time when theater was largely melodramatic and stylized. Alfred originated a technique at Carroll College of speaking with his back to the audience when addressing an actor upstage that was considered scandalous. The Lunts strove to get inside the character and understand their psyches in a manner similar to the method actors of today. Lunt explains his approach as follows: You have only to overdo the catering to a notion of what the public wants to discover that what the public emphatically doesn't want is trite entertainment . . . Nothing is too subtle for a theater audience if it is lifelike. It is the business of the actor to take the actor's truthful conceptions and put them over the footlights, and put them over truthfully, without resort on his part to the 'hokum' of obvious acting tricks.³²

The Lunts were legendary for their devotion to the minutiae of their performance. They rehearsed incessantly polishing minor nuances and gestures, the pursuit of perfection in the theater. No effort was too great, no rehearsal too long, no detail too

³¹Quoted in The Fabulous Lunts, p. 136.

³²Alfred Lunt as quoted in The Fabulous Lunts, p. 84.

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small for them in their unceasing attempts to give the finest possible performance on every occasion, in New York, in London, or on tour. The playwright S.N. Behrman observed that Lunt's performance changed from night to night bringing out different facets of a character. Jared Brown notes: "...it was necessary that they *rediscover* the meaning of every scene, every line of dialogue and every reaction at each performance, so that every moment would be vivid spontaneous, and real."³³ As a result their performances consistently improved the longer they ran.

Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne showed disdain for the "star machine" and shunned the notion that they were more important to the success of a play than the playwright and supporting cast. They refused star billing and insisted upon taking curtain calls with the entire ensemble going against the prevailing practice. They vigorously supported the Theater Guild and fought valiantly to reestablish repertory as a viable theatrical system in New York despite the financial losses they incurred. Their incessant touring served to maintain interest in the theater from audiences outside New York City. Jared Brown states:

It may reasonably be argued that the decentralization of American theater today, with the establishment of fine professional companies throughout the country (most of which offer plays in repertory and employ actors on a long-term ensemble basis) owes much to the efforts of the Lunts and a handful of other actors who refused to limit their appearances to New York when it would have been far easier (and far more profitable) to do so. If not for the dedication of these actors, interest in the legitimate theater outside New York might have been extinguished forever.³⁴

³³The Fabulous Lunts, p. 100.

³⁴The Fabulous Lunts, pp. 464.

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The Lunts relentless pursuit of perfection led them to take an interest beyond their own performances, keeping alive the tradition of the actor-manager. The Lunts assembled cast members, selected and commissioned plays, and exerted strong artistic control over their productions. Because they had attained such respect and popular acclaim they were able to exert strong control over their productions, "a tradition that dates back at least to the sixteenth century, when wandering troupes of *commedia dell'arte* performers in Italy were generally headed by the troupes' foremost actors."³⁵

The Lunts enjoyed an unparalleled success in American Theater for nearly forty years. They had enormous popular appeal and exerted a profound influence on the American Theater. As Jared Brown suggests:

In their time, no performers were more influential or more highly respected. Few theatrical personalities practiced their professions over as long a period. Lunt's career as an actor spanned fifty-two years; Fontanne was active for a remarkable sixty-one. ...They were regarded as America's greatest acting couple before *The Jazz Singer* became the first talking picture.³⁶

³⁵The Fabulous Lunts pp. 463.

³⁶The Fabulous Lunts, pp. 462-3.

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Upon Lunt's death on Thursday, August 4, 1977, the marquees of all Broadway theaters went dark for one minute in his memory beginning at 7:55 PM the following Friday.³⁷ Lynn continued to live at Ten Chimneys until her death on July 30, 1983³⁸ While the couple's fame as actors was world-wide, few today recall their acclaim and the profound influence they exerted on the American theater. Jared Brown states: "...it is the profoundest irony that these most versatile and accomplished of American actors should have so quickly faded into relative obscurity."³⁹

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

"I'm just a country boy who happens to be an actor. But fashionable parties and clever talk-all that sort of thing-well, y'know, it bores me stiff. I'd rather listen to my chickens clucking any time."⁴⁰

-Alfred Lunt 1956

Indeed, when Lunt retired he was given a tape recorder to record some of his reminiscences. He instead took it into the hen house and recorded chickens clucking,⁴¹ a characteristic response from a man who shunned his celebrity status.

³⁷"Alfred Lunt, a Star of Broadway For Third of Century, Dies at 84." New York Times, August 4, 1977, p. A.

³⁸"Lynn Fontanne is Dead at 95," New York Times Biographical Service, p. 791.

³⁹The Fabulous Lunts, pp. 462.

⁴⁰"Design for Graceful Living-at home with Lynn Fontanne and Alfred Lunt," Women's Home Companion, November 1956, p. 51.

⁴¹The Fabulous Lunts, p. 368.

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Many of Alfred's childhood memories were tied to Waukesha, Wisconsin and its surrounding countryside. He remembered taking picnics as a child in Genesee Depot, a village seven miles to the east of Waukesha. For a short time, he lived there with his family. It was there that he decided to make his own home and as the years passed the Lunts would always regard Ten Chimneys as their true home.

The Ten Chimneys property had a special connection to Lunt and Fontanne. They were intimately devoted to the creation and maintenance of their estate and in countless interviews expressed the notion of Ten Chimneys as a refuge from the tension and strain of their theatrical work.⁴² Carol Channing stated "Genesee Depot is to performers what the Vatican is to Catholics."⁴³

Lunt purchased the property in 1913 using inheritance money for three acres of land and erect a two-story wood frame house. The house was described by an early visitor as "one enormous room with staircases leading up to a gallery which had doors leading to bedrooms."⁴⁴ Lunt's mother lived in the house year-around, while Lunt returned for the summer months. When Lunt married Fontanne, the couple converted a chicken coop into a "cottage."

⁴²The Fabulous Lunts, p. 366.

⁴³Quoted by Libby Nolan in "Lunt-Fontanne: Magic names in American Theatre," *Landmark*, Waukesha County Historical Society, Vol. 24, No. 3, Autumn 1981, p. 29.

⁴⁴The Fabulous Lunts, p. 366.

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In 1924 they rebuilt the two-bedroom cottage on the proceeds of their first big duet success in *The Guardsman*.⁴⁵ The cottage became the residence for Alfred's mother Hattie, who had been living in the main house. The design was by Charles Dornbusch of Loeb, Schlossman and Demuth of Chicago.⁴⁶

Lunt and Fontanne continued to build and rebuild various elements of the estate. They lived frugally, saving their money for work on Ten Chimneys. Lunt and Fontanne used the income from *Idiot's Delight* in 1936 to build the swimming pool and cabana.⁴⁷

In 1938 they began major renovations to the main house, remodeling much of the house and adding a rear wing and other rooms to create servants quarters for the cook and housekeeper and additional living spaces for Lunt and Fontanne. An extensive three page handwritten list of changes to be made to the renovation plans gives an indication of the large scale of work that was to be done. It also demonstrates the extent to

⁴⁵"Design for Graceful Living-at home with Lynn Fontanne and Alfred Lunt," Women's Home Companion, November 1956, p. 51.

⁴⁶Little is known of architect Charles Dornbusch. No biographical information has been uncovered to date and no other Wisconsin commissions have been identified.

⁴⁷ "Design for Graceful Living," p. 51.

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which Lunt was involved in the details of Ten Chimneys' design.⁴⁸ Another indication of the scale of work on the main house may be seen in the tax valuation of the property which rose from \$3000 in improvements in 1930 to \$26000 in 1940.⁴⁹ The architect for this phase was also Charles Dornbusch.⁵⁰

In 1939, they added the ornamental metal gateway that encloses the auto court at the main house. The design was furnished by Charles Dornbusch.⁵¹

In the early 1940s Lunt and Fontanne began to add farm animals to their operations and expand the scale of their agricultural operations, much to the surprise of their farm manager Ben Perkins who stated "When I first received your letter about the cow I didn't think you were very serious about it. I thought it was a hangover from your visit to the circus. Now I believe you are serious." The letter goes on to discuss additional stone wall construction and other farm business. The correspondence

⁴⁸ Lunt and Fontanne papers, Box 7, Folder 2, "Final changes and corrections for Lunt House as agreed upon in N.Y. by Alfred Lunt and C.H.D. [Charles Dornbusch]."

⁴⁹ Tax Rolls for the Town of Genesee, 1930 and 1940, Milwaukee Area Research Center, Golda Meir Library, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

⁵⁰ Lunt and Fontanne papers, Box 7, Folder 2, "Mr. Holtz is framing the roof over the Garage and Loggia and he has rebuilt frames for the Living Room reset." 9/22/1938

⁵¹ Lunt and Fontanne Papers, Box 7, Folder 2. Letter to Robert Kruger. "I am enclosing herewith the blueprint of the gateway for the Lunt Residence..." 3 7/6/1939

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clearly indicates Lunt's involvement in the most minor details of the farm operations from the purchase of cows to what kind of strawberries to plant and when to plant them.⁵² Perkins sent snapshots of work to Lunt when he was away so that Lunt could keep abreast of work at Ten Chimneys. They talked frequently by telephone, and letters indicate a flurry of activities every April readying the estate for Lunt and Fontanne's return.

By 1942 the farm had acquired four cows, several pigs, and as many as 200 chickens. The operations included 6 acres of corn, 7 acres of oats, four acres of alfalfa, one acre of clover, and 3/4 acre of wheat. The farm also included orchards and extensive vegetable and cut flower gardens. Ben Perkins routinely sent butter, meat and other farm produce to Lunt and Fontanne in New York and elsewhere.⁵³ These more intensive operations required construction of a barn in 1942.⁵⁴

Lunt's strong interest in the design of the estate is evidenced in a November 9th, 1945 letter to Chicago architect Charles Dornbusch in which he said, "There were many things I wanted to discuss with you on Sunday but I could not think through that headache...I am now rampant with building ideas which I hope

⁵²Lunt and Fontanne papers, Box 6, Folder 10, letter dated November from Ben Perkins to Lunt.

⁵³Lunt and Fontanne papers, Box 6, Folder 10, Letter dated April 1, 1943, Perkins to Lunt.

⁵⁴Lunt and Fontanne papers, Box 6, Folder 10, letter dated September 5, 1942, Perkins to Lunt.

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will interest you." These ideas included a new "model hen house + a pretty one at that" as well as a house for hired hand Ben Perkins (Gatehouse) and a machinery building (Garage).⁵⁵ Correspondence indicates lengthy collaboration between Dornbusch and Lunt on the design and siting of the buildings. As was typical of Lunt stage work, no detail was too small to be considered. For example, the chicken coop was designed based on advice from Walter Spreiter a farm building specialist at the University of Wisconsin Agriculture Department and incorporated the latest theories for chicken farming.⁵⁶

Lunt's desire to get construction underway by the spring of 1946, conflicted with material rationing by the Civilian

⁵⁵Lunt and Fontanne papers, November 9, 1945 letter from Alfred Lunt, Box 7 Folder two.

⁵⁶Lunt and Fontanne papers, Box 6, Folder 9. There is extensive written discussion between Lunt and the architect and various contractors. For example in a letter to Lunt, Dornbusch states: "First, as to Ben's house, that was not the working drawing but only a sketch....The machinery building certainly can have three doors for the small wagons....I have finally received information from the U. of W. The things that go on in a chicken coop!....Anyway, the chicken house will be designed according to the latest concepts of chicken raising....As to the milk house, I placed it where it is so that it would compose better with the other buildings....I have been trying to arrange the buildings so as to have as much covered area as possible in going from one building to another and to have some kind of stepping-stone walk connecting the different approaches to the buildings." 5 2/4/1946

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Production Administration (CPA) which prohibited the construction of these buildings until the termination of the war.⁵⁷ Despite the curtailment of residential construction, Lunt and the architects continued to plan for the construction of these buildings, tinkering with details.⁵⁸ Construction commenced without a permit from the C.P.A. in June of 1946, but the chicken coop and green house do not appear to have been completed until 1947.⁵⁹ The gatehouse was erected in 1947⁶⁰

With the completion of the greenhouse, gatehouse, and garage in 1947, work commenced on landscape features to unify this design. Flagstone paths and retaining walls and landscape features were planned to connect these buildings with the already extensive landscape of the estate. These included the flagstone around the pool, and paths to the dairy building, chicken coop, and walks around the main house.⁶¹

⁵⁷Lunt and Fontanne papers, Box 6, Folder 9, Letter from Loebel and Schlossman, architects to Lunt dated April 5, 1946.

⁵⁸Lunt and Fontanne papers, Dornbusch to Lunt dated June 11, 1946. Box 6, Folder 9.

⁵⁹Lunt and Fontanne papers, Box 6, Folder 9. Letter from Lord and Burnham Corporation dated September 5, 1947. "We are in receipt of a letter from Mr. Root requesting the placement of an order for a 13-A-7Y ORLYT greenhouse...we know you are eager to begin the erection of the greenhouse."

⁶⁰Lunt and Fontanne papers, Box 6, Folder 10, letter dated May 13, 1947, Perkins to Lunt.

⁶¹ Lunt and Fontanne papers, Box 6, Folder 11, letter dated April 10, 1948, unknown author to Lunt.

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Ten Chimneys
Town of Genesee, Waukesha County, WI

The Ten Chimney estate is of statewide architectural significance as a uniquely intact and important example of the country house property type. The country house evolved in the period of 1870 to the late 1920s during which the wealthy elite moved into the county and built sprawling country estates. This phenomenon was noted by architectural critic Barr Ferree in 1904 when he described a typical estate as a sumptuous house built at large expense, often palatial in its dimension, furnished in the richest manner and placed on an estate, perhaps large enough to admit of independent farming operations, and in most cases with a garden which is an integral part of the architectural scheme.⁶²

The practice of building country estates was rooted in the traditions of landed gentry of Europe who built lavish summer homes in the fifteenth and sixteenth century and established the "gentile" concept of the "gentleman farmer." In the United States, early country estates were exemplified by Thomas Jefferson's Monticello, which gave the country house a connotation of intellectual enlightenment and sophistication. The notion of the estate as a refuge was likely encouraged by romantic authors of the nineteenth century such as Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau who equated rural life with spiritual enlightenment. The growth in popularity of country estates after the turn of the century was encouraged by improvements in transportation as passenger trains and automobiles increasingly improved travel brought the country house within easy reach of urban centers.⁶³

⁶²Barr Ferree quoted in "The Country Estate in Illinois," Historic Illinois, Vol. 10, No. 5, February 1988, p. 1.

⁶³ "The Country House in Illinois," p. 11.

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Ten Chimneys
Town of Genesee, Waukesha County, WI

Typical estates after the turn of the century were built on private sites, secluded from the street and neighbors. The house was usually large and two stories in height, not necessarily palatial in design. The grounds often exhibited flower and vegetable gardens and cultivated agricultural acreage. Oftentimes, country estates were centers for scientific agricultural experimentation, such as the Frederich Pabst estate and Gustave Pabst estate, both located in Waukesha County.⁶⁴ Site plans typically included clusters of buildings, each serving specific functions such as guest houses, servant houses, gate houses, elaborated agricultural buildings, recreational buildings such as bathhouses and greenhouses.

Ten Chimneys is exemplary of the country estate type. The buildings reflect the eclectic and artistically sophisticated taste of Lunt and Fontanne. Although Ten Chimneys was built on land immediately adjacent to Genesee Depot, the house was deliberately sated to maintain a distance from the community. Its buildings were sated deep within a wooded grove and placed within the topography, so that hills and woods screened them from public sight. The grounds were landscaped with stone paths and walls, gardens and statuary in a naturalistic manner such that the landscape was an integral part of the design of the complex. The buildings were intentionally set in a tight cluster to allow easy access. As was typical of county estates, much of the site was turned over to Lunt's passion for gardening: oats, hay and alfalfa were grown and cows, pigs, and chickens were raised on the grounds.

⁶⁴ Carol Cartwright, National Register of Historic Places nomination form for the Gustave Pabst Estate, Town of Summit, Waukesha County, Wisconsin, July 11, 1988.

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Ten Chimneys
Town of Genesee, Waukesha County, WI

Claggett Wilson

Claggett Wilson was born in Washington, D.C. in 1888 and had a lengthy career as a noted painter and set designer. Wilson studied art at the Art Students League of New York and the Julian Academy as well as Paris. He taught art at Columbia University in the early teens until the outbreak of WWI. He enlisted in the Marines, and was gassed and wounded receiving the Croix de Guerre, the Navy Cross and nine citations. His wartime experiences served as the basis for a series of painting depicting WWI battle scenes exhibited in New York in 1920. They were considered "America's most ambitious contribution in art to the memory of the Great War."⁶⁵

Wilson was exhibited at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and elsewhere. He spent much time painting in the Basque region of Spain. Wilson went on to make a name for himself as a stage set designer, and became associated with Lunt and Fontanne as set designer for many of their plays.⁶⁶

Summary of Significance

The Ten Chimneys estate embodies the important legacy of Lunt and Fontanne to the history of the theater and represents the international acclaim that the couple achieved in their 38 years of duet performance on the stage. The property reflects the sophistication, refinement and exuberance that the couple brought to their performances.

⁶⁵"War Paintings," Survey Graphic, Vol. XXIV, No. 3., March 1935, p. 104 and "Claggett Wilson Dies, American Mural Painter," New York Herald Tribune, May 21, 1952, p. 20.

⁶⁶New York Times, obit.

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Ten Chimneys
Town of Genesee, Waukesha County, WI

Alfred Lunt, Jr., the son of a Wisconsin lumberman, grew up in Milwaukee and began acquiring the Genesee Depot property in 1913. From 1922, when Lunt and Fontanne were married, until Lunt's death in 1977 and Fontanne's in 1983, ten Chimneys became their primary residence and a social and cultural center of the American theater. Plays were written, reworked, and honed on the estate during the summer months, before the couple returned to Broadway for the theater season. Throughout their careers as the "first family" of the American theater, the home served as a creative hearth and quiet refuge for themselves and a long list of performing arts and film legends - Laurence Olivier and Vivien Leigh, Clifton Webb, Kitty Carlisle, Uta Hagen, Sydney Greenstreet, Helen Hayes and Carol Channing; and prominent Wisconsinites Edna Ferber, Thornton Wilder and Robert LaFollette.

Criteria Consideration B

Two buildings were moved to the site during the period of significance. They were moved to the site by the Lunts, and are integral to the history of the property. Therefore criteria consideration B does not apply to this property.

Criteria Consideration G

The period of significance extends one year past the fifty year rule to recognize the continued importance and physical development of Ten Chimneys. In 1949, the relationship of the property to the Lunts changed when they purchased a New York townhouse, and Ten Chimneys ceased to be their exclusive residence.

Statement of Archeological Potential

Ten Chimneys is located in an area with no known prehistoric or historic archeological sites. Although no archeological survey has been undertaken, resources could be present, but yet undiscovered.

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Ten Chimneys
Town of Genesee, Waukesha. County, WI

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

1996 Legal Description
S42 W31610 DEPOT RD PT NW1/4 & NE1/4 SEC 21 T6N R18E COM CTR OF SEC N
311.20 FT THE BGN N 373.52 FT S89 28'E 66.51 FT N 99.20 FT S89 28'E 89.83
FT N 37.52 FT S89 23'E 169.34 FT N1 52'E 248.85 FT N 247.07 FT S89 41'W
324.89 FT S89 48'W 920.94 FT S1 17'W 567.73 FT S 504.52 FT S 228.77 FT S89
28'E 726.06 FT N68 49'W 99.23 FT N 276.20 FT S89 28'E 280 FT TO BGN 29.6514
AC EX R93/202 EX R638/283 EX CS 47/133 R2188/193

Boundary Justification

The Lunts owned extensive lands to the west and south of the nominated portion to the property, as well as a small portion to the east. These lands were not considered to be a part of the main grounds of the estate and do not contain any resources directly associated with the importance of the Lunts. The nomination boundaries contain the entirety of acreage considered to be the grounds of the estate and excludes extraneous acreage lacking in significance.

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Ten Chimneys
Town of Genesee, Waukesha, County, WI

Photo 1 of 10
Ten Chimneys
Town of Genesee, Waukesha County, Wisconsin
Photo by Jeff Dean, March 1996
Negative on file in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin
View of south-facing (front) facade of the main house of Ten Chimneys looking north

The information for the following photographs is the same as the above, except as noted.

Photo 2 of 10
Music room facing West

Photo 3 of 10
Dining room facing West

Photo 4 of 10
Lynn's bedroom facing West

Photo 5 of 10
Helen Hayes Bedroom facing South

Photo 6 of 10
Cottage facing North

Photo 7 of 10
Pool Cabana facing North

Photo 8 of 10
Studio facing West

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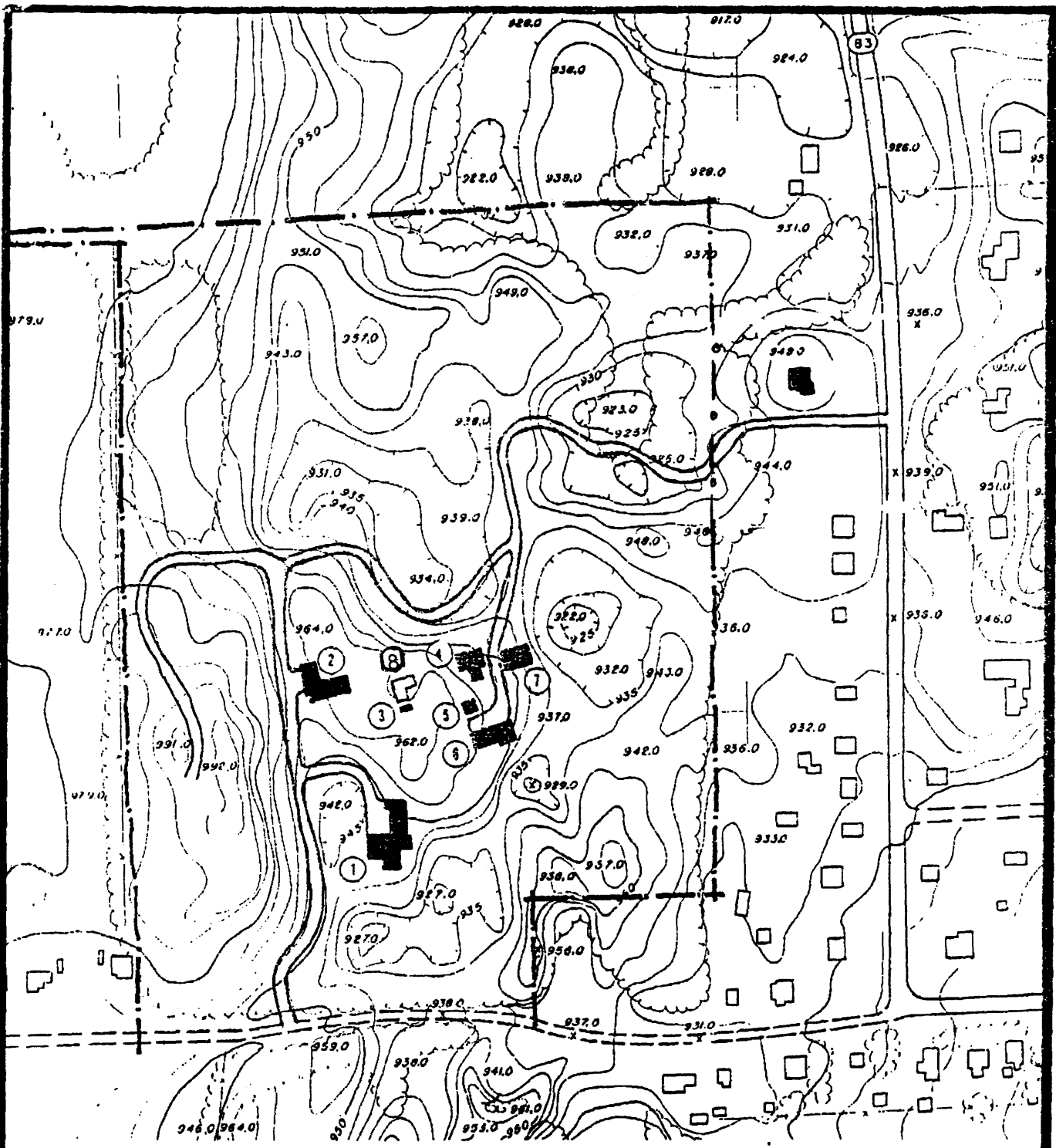
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Ten Chimneys
Town of Genesee, Waukesha, County, WI

Photo 9 of 10
Greenhouse/Chicken Coop facing Southwest

Photo 10 of 10
Barn facing West



TEN CHIMNEYS TOWN OF GENESEE, WAUKESHA COUNTY
EXISTING LUNT/FONTANNE ESTATE

- | | |
|--------------|---------------|
| ① MAIN HOUSE | ⑤ GREEN HOUSE |
| ② COTTAGE | ⑥ GARAGE |
| ③ CABANA | ⑦ BARN |
| ④ BUNK HOUSE | ⑧ POOL |

(all buildings and structures are contributing)

not to scale - - - - - boundary designation

