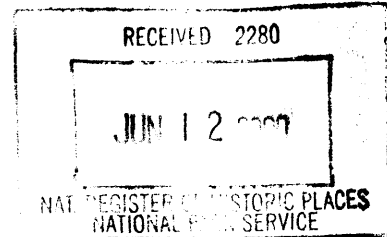


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

796



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 instruction. 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: Harold Hess Lustron House

other names/site number:

2. Location

street and number: 421 Durie Avenue

N/A not for publication

city or town: Closter Borough

N/A vicinity

state: New Jersey

county: Bergen County

zip code: 07624

3. State/Federal/Tribal 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

Date

Assistant Commissioner, Natural and Historic Resources/DSHPO

State or Federal agency and bureau

American Indian Tribe

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 or Federal agency and bureau

American Indian Tribe

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

- entered in the National Register.
 - See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register.
 - See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other. (explain:)

Patricia Andrews

7/25/00

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	1	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
2	1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

Lustrons in New Jersey

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

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic

Historic Subfunctions

(Enter subcategories from instructions)

Single Dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic

Current Subfunctions

(Enter subcategories from instructions)

Single Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Other

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Foundation Concrete
- Walls Steel
- Roof Steel

Narrative Description

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

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is

- A** owned by religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture
Industry

Period of Significance

1950

Significant Dates

1950

Significant Person

(Complete if criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Beckman, Morris
Better Living Homes Company
Blass, Roy

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

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

See continuation sheet for additional HABS/HAER documentation.

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
-
- Local Government (Repository Name: Closter Historic Preservation Commission)
-
-

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: .67 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	18	586900	4535820	3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2				4			

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: Patricia Garbe Morillo, Chairman
organization: Closter Historic Preservation Commission
street & number: 68 Taylor Drive
city or town: Closter Borough state: New Jersey
date: 1/2/2000
telephone: (201) 767-7974
zip code: 07624-

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

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

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property

Additional items

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

Property Owner

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

name: Harold Hess
street & number: 421 Durie Avenue
city or town: Closter state: New Jersey
telephone:
zip code: 07624-

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

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

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Harold Hess House
421 Durie Ave., Closter,
Bergen County, New Jersey

Description

The Harold Hess House was built in 1950 and is located at 421 Durie Avenue, Closter, Bergen County, New Jersey. It is an example of the two-bedroom Westchester Deluxe model with attached breezeway connecting to a one car garage (photos 1, 2, & 4). The house which measures 1,085 square feet, 31' x 35', is constructed entirely of prefabricated porcelain enameled steel. The structural steel panels rest on a concrete slab foundation. The rectangular yellow enameled steel house with dark gray tile roof was one of 2,498 manufactured and sold in the United States by the Lustron Corporation between 1948 and 1950. The house is located in a suburban residential neighborhood and the property retains a high degree of historic integrity and is in excellent condition.

The Westchester Deluxe model was the most popular of all Lustrons manufactured and this is a good example of the most common two-bedroom type. The two-bedroom Westchester is distinguishable from all other Lustrons by the 6' x 12' cutout located on the gable front (photo 3). The main entrance to the house is located under the cutout. The interior of the two-bedroom Westchester was originally constructed with built-in kitchen cabinets with a pass-through to the china cabinet in the dining room. Other features of the deluxe model were the built-in bookcase and cabinets in the living room, combination dishwasher-clothes washer in the kitchen, automatic water heater, built-in vanity and storage cabinets in the master bedroom, seven large closets and a radiant panel heating system. Most bathrooms in the Westchester and especially the three bedroom Westchester Deluxe model were outfitted with all essential elements for storage like a built-in (antennae like) projection for a washcloth in the shower, swiveling tooth-brush holder, and built-in tissue holder. All that was needed from the owner was a refrigerator, stove and furniture.

The interior doors are enameled steel, sliding pocket doors, which continues the streamline appearance and decreases the need for the space a swing door requires. The original floor covering was resilient asphalt tiles and these have been replaced in the Hess house by linoleum and a new asphalt tile floor in the kitchen. Because of the durability of the enameled steel, the majority of the original features have been retained in the Hess House. The most significant alteration has been the application of yellow paint to the exterior panels and a light coat of black spray paint to the roof tiles. However, just as the porcelain-enameled panels were intended to shed dirt they are now causing the paint to peel. Almost all the applied paint will soon disappear with no harm to the enamel coated original panels. All of the original gutters and down spouts have been replaced.

The house is a one-story, side gabled, ranch type erected on a concrete slab. The exterior of the house contains very little ornamentation. However, the exterior porcelain-enameled yellow steel panels, which measure 2' x 2', the brown enamel tile roof, enameled steel chimney panels, living room bay window and decorative spiral porch-roof support in the cutout, give this house its distinct appearance (photo 3). Gable ends have 1' wide panels placed vertically. All windows have their original aluminum sashes and have been retained. They are operated by small crank windows. All enamel window surrounds and curved lintels are extant. There are two original gray doors with glass inserts, and original locks. The original entrance porch lamp also remains.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Hess House
Bergen Co., New Jersey

The present front facade faces southwest and features a picture window in the dining room and the inset entrance cutout. This door which was traditionally the main entrance to the living room is not used and the primary entrance is through the intended rear door through the breezeway and utility area on the northwest side of the house. Generally Lustron site suggestion plans show what is the southeast side in the Hess facade as the main side facing the street (photo 3). This side features two picture windows. The main picture window for the living room is the bay window which was one of the upgraded features of the "deluxe" package. The other picture window is located in the master bedroom. The rear north side has 2 smaller windows, one in each bedroom (photo 4).

The side or northwest (traditional rear) facade features one window in the second bedroom and two, smaller, symmetrically-placed aluminum windows for the bathroom and kitchen, flanking the door. This side has the breezeway attachment to the garage and this is used as the primary entrance (photos 2 & 4). The breezeway was enclosed in 1952 with brick, wood and aluminum storm windows. The one car garage measures 15 by 21 feet, and unlike the Lustron house design, it is traditionally framed using balloon construction (photo 1). The matching yellow 2' x 2' steel panels and dark gray roof tiles were attached to this construction. Both the breezeway and garage were manufactured by the Lustron Corporation and were assembled with the house in 1950. Originally the metal tile-like roof of the breezeway was supported by three metal posts.

The interior of the house features a living room/dining room area, a kitchen, a utility room, a bathroom, two bedrooms, and closet space (photos 5-12). The interior is also covered with porcelain enameled steel panels measuring 2' x 8'. The panels are vertically scored to give a paneled appearance. The kitchen and bathroom panels are yellow and all other wall panels are a light gray. Ceiling panels throughout measure 4' x 4' and are white. Panels in the kitchen, utility room, and bathroom are yellow and measure two-feet square. All cabinets in the kitchen, bedroom and bathroom are light gray.

Design features include built-in wall furniture and closet space with sliding doors. Between the dining area and kitchen is a buffet with shelves and drawers on one side and kitchen cabinets with shelves and drawers on the other side (photos 5 & 6). The built-in steel unit between the living room and front (master) bedroom contains a mirrored bookcase on one side and a mirrored vanity and counter top with drawers and doors for closet space on the other side (photos 7, & 9-10). Exterior and interior wall corners are rounded and contribute to the clean, streamlined look of the Lustron home (photo 8).

The two bedrooms and bathroom have their original steel porcelain-enameled flush gray pocket doors which slide and roll on overhead tracks. All closet and storage doors are of the bypass sliding type. All doors and cabinet hardware throughout the house is original. The bathroom retains the original stamped steel bathtub measuring 5' 1/2", built-in three drawer counter, mirror and light fixtures, soap dish and other fixtures (photo

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National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

Hess House
Bergen Co., New Jersey

12). The sink and vanity have been replaced and shower doors installed. All of the kitchen cabinets and hardware are original. Only the "Phor" brand dishwasher-clothes washer was removed. The kitchen sink which was attached to this machine was likewise removed. The original gas Tappan range from 1950 still functions.

In the utility room the original Lustron hooks for drying laundry are still in place. The most often changed item in a Lustron house is the heating system and it has been replaced in the Hess House with a gas burner which connects to the old radiant heating system. The original system consisted of a small generator and furnace supplying radiant heat through duct work contained in the attic space located directly above the ceiling panels and through a plenum chamber radiates the heat into the interior of the house after heating the ceiling panels. The wall identification tag or builder's plate (similar to auto serial number plates) is extant but presently obscured behind new cabinets attached to the utility room wall above the washer and dryer units.

The Hess house is sited diagonally on a corner lot with main facade facing the intersection of Legion Place and Durie Avenue. The main facade is in line with the breezeway and garage (photo 1). This was not in accordance with the recommendations published in the Lustron "New Standard for Living," planning guide which covered site plans for placement of the houses. The side facing Durie Avenue with projecting bay window was the standard front of the Lustron (photo 3). Also because the rear of the house is now the side the breezeway and garage are also on the side. The standard planning guide always recommended placing the garage at the rear of the house.

An aluminum storage shed is located on the north side of the property line at the rear of the house and is painted yellow. This structure is non-contributing. The lot size is two thirds of an acre and the property is very threatened as a subdividable lot. The Hess House is located in close proximity to the Closter Historic District, a pre-automobile late nineteenth and early twentieth century railroad suburb of New York City. Several suburban houses nearby are of like circa 1950 date.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4

Harold Hess House
421 Durie Ave., Closter
Bergen Co., New Jersey

Significance

The Harold Hess House is an excellent example of the Westchester Deluxe model which was manufactured by the Lustron Corporation and built in 1950. It is significant under criteria A as a representation of the mass production of post-World War II housing. It is also significant under criterion C as an example of a new construction method for residential housing with its entirely enameled steel frame and body as well as its modern design and "ranch-type" open layout. In its day the Lustron house was touted as the most technologically advanced answer to the housing shortage after World War II.

According to Lustron Corporation sales records only sixteen houses were sold in New Jersey and all of these were probably the Westchester Deluxe models. Only 11 of these have been identified to date in the State and three are known from Bergen County. In 1998 the Lustron at 22 Division Street in Closter was demolished and only the Hess House at 421 Durie Avenue in Closter and the Hiorth House located at 19 Dubois Avenue in Alpine, Bergen County, remain. Both of the Bergen County Lustrons were purchased from the North Jersey Better Living Homes Company in Maplewood. This Lustron franchise was owned by Arthur Padula, a Newark builder, and it was the first and most important dealership in New Jersey.

The Harold Hess House retains almost all of its original historic fabric and it is an excellent example of the Westchester Deluxe model. Features such as the front bay window, easy-care enameled steel panels, space-saving shelves/bedroom vanity are some of the many architectural features used to create a comfortable, space-saving and modern home.

In 1949, Mr. Harold Hess, a returning World War II veteran and recently married, saw the Palisades Amusement Park model of the Lustron. In 1950 he purchased the "Westchester Deluxe" model with attached breezeway and one-car garage from Art Padula, owner of the Better Living Homes Lustron franchise in Maplewood, New Jersey. Originally he wanted the three bedroom, two-car garage models but felt fortunate to receive what he got, since the company was already headed into bankruptcy.

Mr. Hess, with Lustron engineer Jim Mortimer, faced 6 months (between the fall to spring of 1949-50) of endless planning and zoning board meetings in Fort Lee. They failed to obtain a permit and Hess turned to the northern sections of Bergen County which were less developed and relaxed building codes provided opportunities to build the novel construction of the all-metal, prefabricated house. Hess never lost faith and is still the proud owner in the year 2000. Having raised his family here he remains quite pleased with the house. Only noting that there were some adjustments, such as finding people with enough problem solving creativity to make repairs to a steel house. Other minor matters such as hanging family portraits with industrial magnets and interior spring cleaning with automobile wax were more easily solved.

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National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 5

Harold Hess House
Closter, Bergen Co.

Section 9--Bibliography

DeQueiroz, Holly. "Lustron Homes II." Historic Preservation Planning Bulletin, NJSHPO, Winter, 1998.

Geissler, Brian. "Lustron Homes: Did You Know . . . That there are Three Lustron Homes. . . . in New Jersey." Historic Preservation Planning Bulletin, NJSHPO, October-December, 1996.

Featherstone, Raymond M. National Register Nomination: Corbin, Roy & Iris, Lustron House, Indianapolis, Indiana. Indiana, 1997.

Keister, Kim. "Showing Its Metal." Historic Preservation. The Magazine of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. January- February, 1995.

Lewis, Raphael. "Handwriting on Wall for Quirky House: Histroians Struggle to Preserve Lustron." The Record, Hackensack, NJ. 6/5/98. "The Lustron Planning Guide." Promotional material published by the Lustron Corporation (undated).

Mitchell, Robert A. "What Ever Happened to Lustron Homes?" APT Bulletin, vol. XXIII, Number 2, 1991.

Raflo, Lisa. National Register Nomination: Lustron Houses in Georgia, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Historic Preservation Division, 1995.

Saxman-Rogers, Michelle C. National Register Nomination: Lustron Houses in South Dakota. South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office, 1997.

Wolfe, Tom and Leonard Garfield. "A New Standard for Living: The Lustron House, 1946-1950." Vernacular Architecture, Vol. 3, 1989, pp. 51-61.

Oral Interview and site inspection with Harold Hess: Lustron owner, 421 Durie Avenue, Closter, New Jersey.

Telephone interviews with John Winkler and Robert Boylan, former Palisades Amusement Park employees, Fort Lee, December 1999.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 6

Harold Hess House
Closter, Bergen Co., NJ

Section 10--Verbal Boundary Description:

The nominated property consists of Block 1003, Lot 21, in the Borough of Closter.

Boundary Justification:

The Hess House resides on the lot which has been historically associated with the building and originally purchased for the Lustron.

United States Department of the Interior
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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number PHOTOS Page 7

Hess House
Bergen County, New Jersey

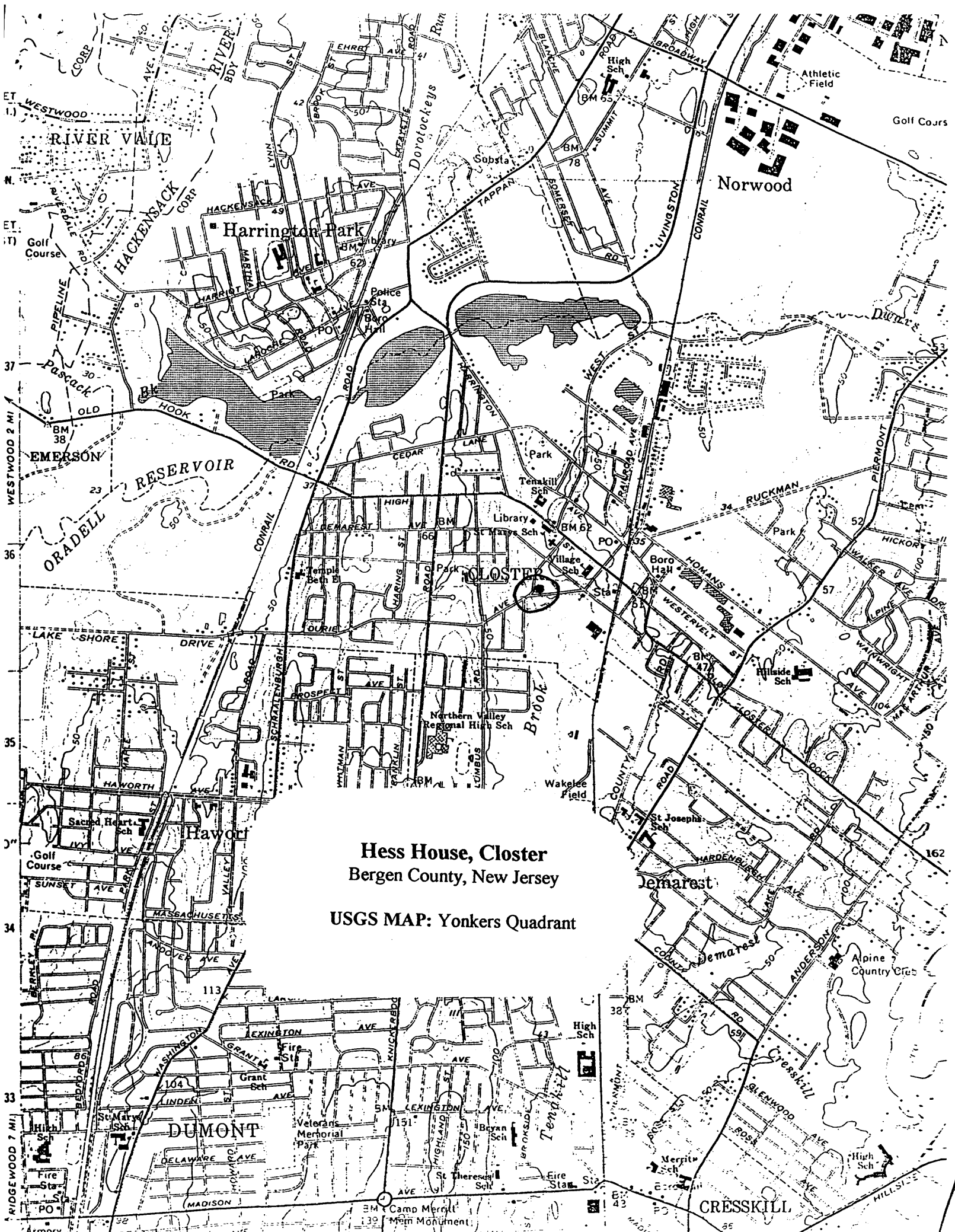
Photographs

The following information is the same for all photos submitted with the application:

1. Name of property—Harold Hess Lustorn House, 421 Durie Avenue, Closter
2. County and state where located—Bergen County, New Jersey
3. Name of photographer—Uma Reddy
4. Date of photographs—12/99
5. Location of photo negs.—Closter Historical Society, 68 Taylor Drive, Closter, NJ 07624

Description of each photo:

1. Front, southwest side elevation, camera facing northeast.
2. Front elevation with garage, camera facing east.
3. Southeast elevation, camera facing north.
4. Rear elevation, camera facing southwest.
5. Kitchen, camera facing south.
6. Dinette, and room divider with kitchen, camera facing west.
7. Living room, built-in mirrored book shelves, camera facing northeast.
8. Hall way, camera facing north.
9. Master bedroom, mirrored vanity, camera facing south.
10. Master bedroom, camera facing north.
11. Second bedroom, camera facing northwest.
12. Bathroom, camera facing west.



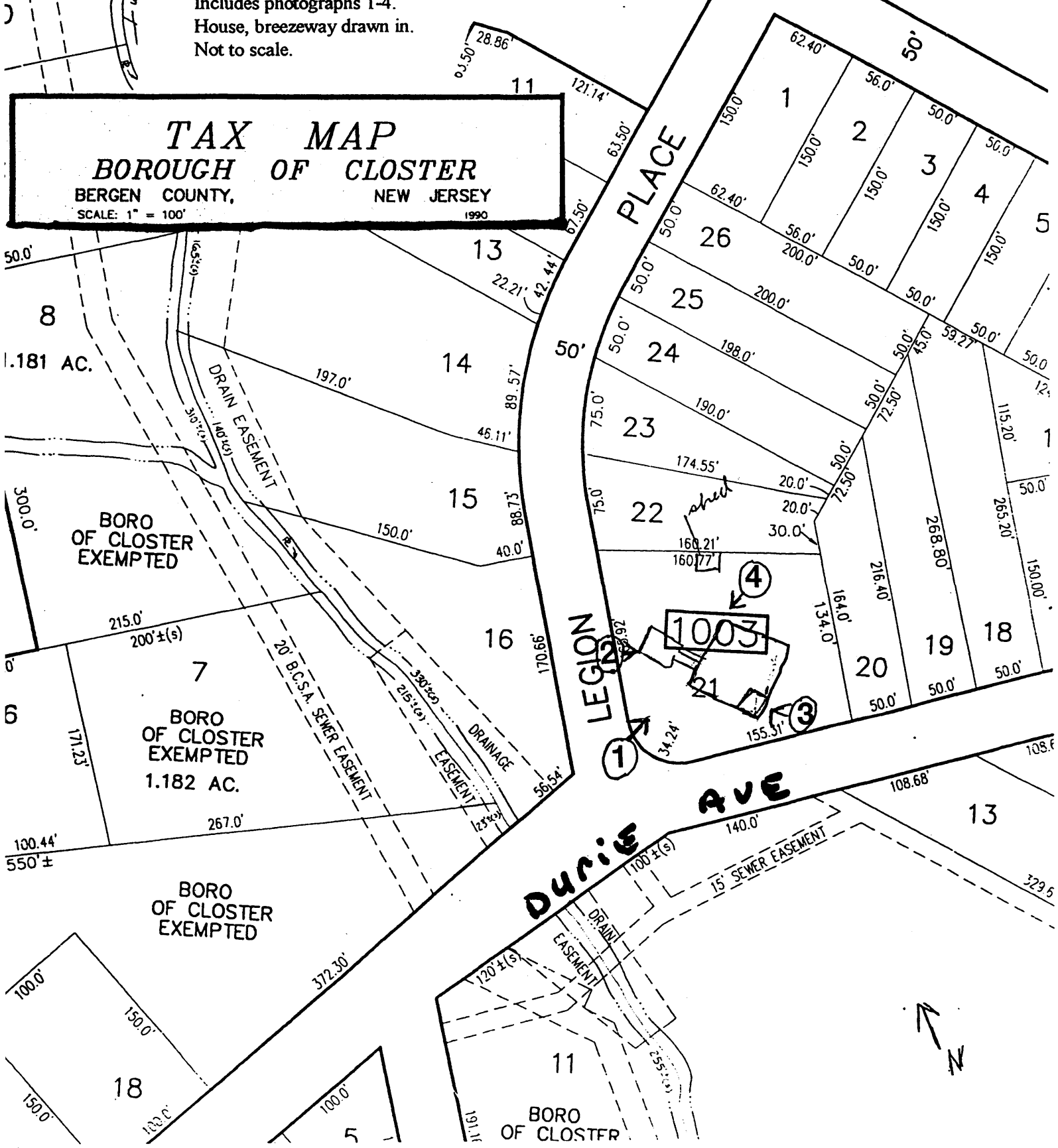
Hess House, Closter
Bergen County, New Jersey

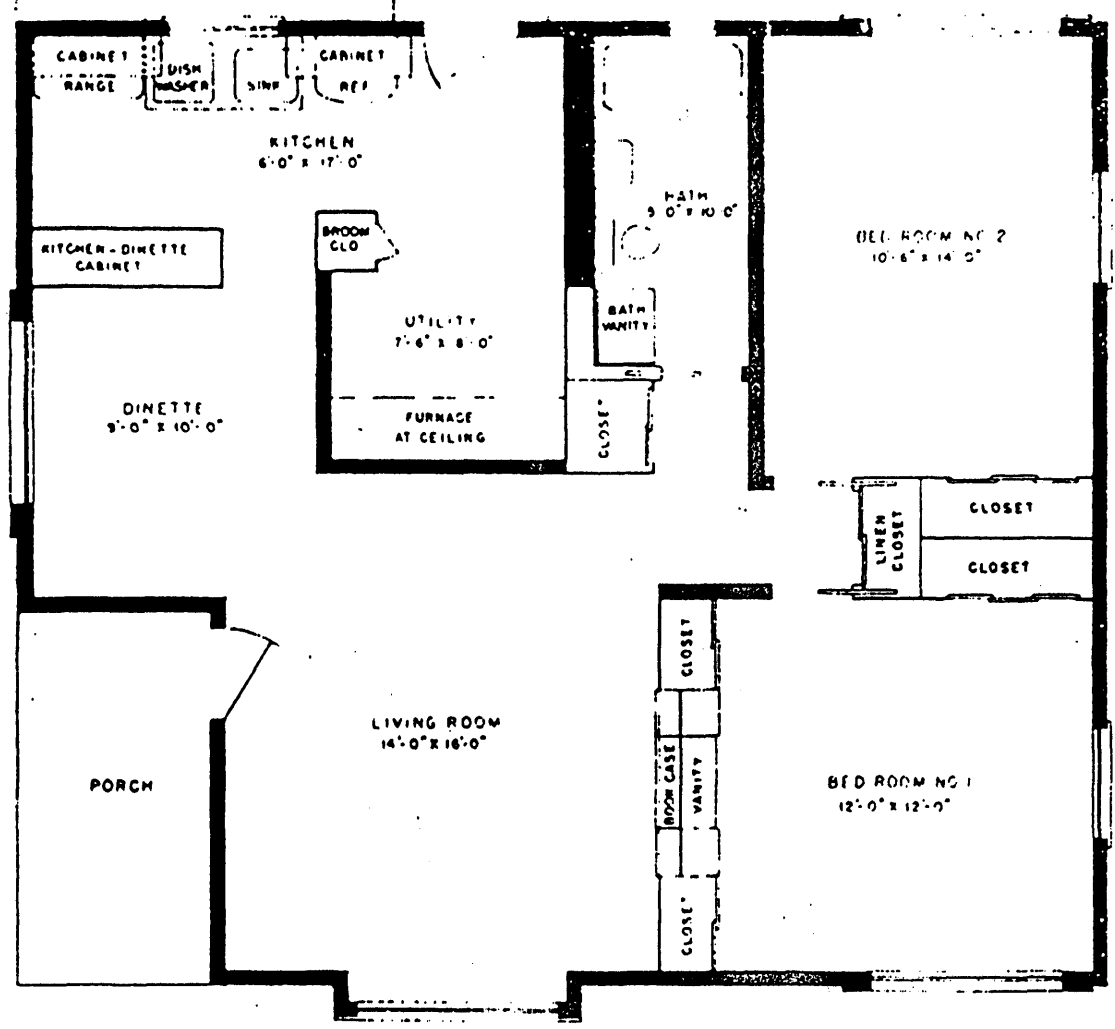
USGS MAP: Yonkers Quadrant

Harold Hess Lustron House
421 Durie Ave., Closter
Bergen County, NJ

BLOCK & LOT MAP
Includes photographs 1-4.
House, breezeway drawn in.
Not to scale.

TAX MAP
BOROUGH OF CLOSTER
BERGEN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY
SCALE: 1" = 100' 1990





Hess House
 421 Durie Ave.
 Closter, Bergen County
 New Jersey

Floor Plans for Westchester
 Deluxe Model

Lustron
 CORPORATION

ERECTION TITLE	FLOOR PLAN		MANUAL
PREPARED BY G B E	DATE 4-21-49	EFF 426 THRU 3000	DRAWING NUMBER EM-02-B-11.1

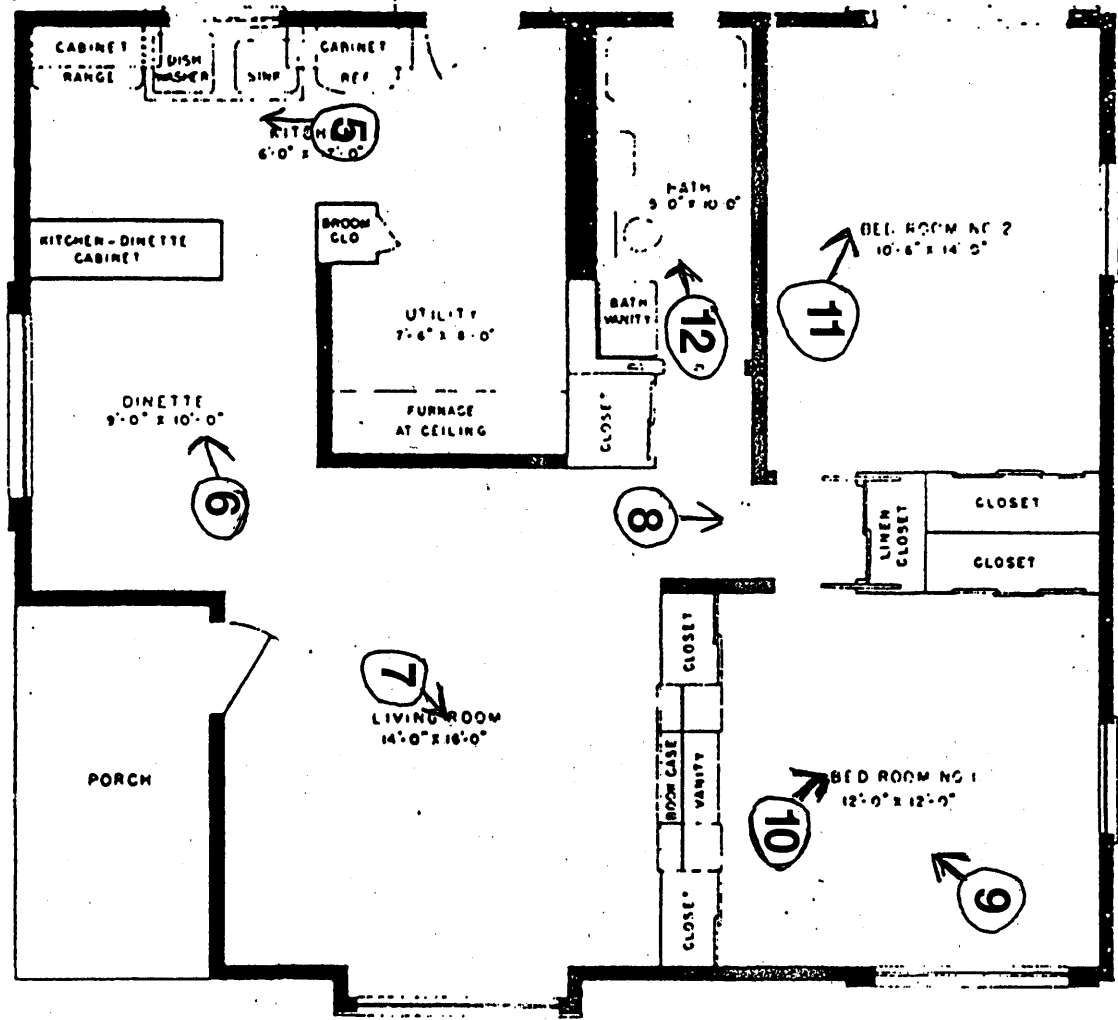
Though small by today's standards, the Lustron homes were promoted as well-planned and efficient. This two-bedroom Lustron home provided approximately 1,000 square feet of living area. (Photo courtesy Robert A. Mitchell, AIA, State Historical Society of North Dakota)

Hess House
 421 Durie Ave.
 Closter, Bergen County
 New Jersey

Floor Plans for Westchester
 Deluxe Model

PHOTO MAP

circled numbers correspond to photographs
 and arrows indicate direction



Lustron
 CLARIFICATION

ERECTION TITLE		MANUAL
FLOOR PLAN		
PREPARED BY G B E	DATE 4-21-49	EFF 426 THRU 3000
		DRAWING NUMBER EM-02-B-11.1

Though small by today's standards, the Lustron homes were promoted as well-planned and efficient. This two-bedroom Lustron home provided approximately 1,000 square feet of living area. (Photo courtesy Robert A. Mitchell, AIA, State Historical Society of North Dakota)