

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

Nat. Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in Park Service Bulletin 16A, 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 any 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 WEIL-CASSISI HOUSE

other names/site number FMSF#AL 5707

2. Location

street & number 3105 Southwest Fifth Court N/A  not for publication

city or town Gainesville N/A  vicinity

state Florida code FL county Alachua code 001 zip code 32601

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.)

Missie Slade Lohau 9/30/15  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources, Bureau of Historic Preservation  
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 or Federal agency and bureau

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) \_\_\_\_\_

Josh Galt 11-9-2015  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

**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)

- buildings
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
1	0	structures
0	0	objects
2	0	total

**Name of related multiple property listings**

(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**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single residence

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**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single residence

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**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT: Mid-century Modern

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**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls WOOD

GLASS

roof BITUMINOUS

other

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1964

Significant Dates

1964

Significant Person

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Merritt, Harry

Brown, Ray

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

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 36) has been requested
previously listed in the National Register
previously determined eligible by the National Register
designated a National Historic Landmark
recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of Repository

#

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1 7	3 7 1 2 6 5	3 2 7 7 8 1 1
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2			

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
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 Murray D. Laurie;/Carl Shiver; Robert O. Jones, Historic Preservationist

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date October 2015

street & number 500 South Bronough Street telephone 850-245-6333

city or town Tallahassee state FL zip code 32399-0250

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

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

Additional items

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

Property Owner

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

name Nicholas and Elayne Cassisi

street & number 3105 Southwest 5<sup>th</sup> Court telephone 352-372-5408

city or town Gainesville state Florida zip code 32601

**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 amend listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

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

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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Section number 7 Page 1 **WEIL-CASSISI HOUSE, GAINESVILLE,  
ALACHUA COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**SUMMARY**

The Weil-Cassisi House is located at 3105 Southwest Fifth Court in Gainesville, Florida. The house was built in 1964 and designed by University of Florida (UF) professor of architecture, Harry Merritt. The Mid-century Modern two-story house is constructed of Ocala block and redwood, and has large areas of glass that offer unobstructed views of the enclosed front courtyard and screened terrace in the rear. The flat roof is supported by five massive wood beams that extend beyond the roofline. The home's many features exemplify modern architecture trends including clean and unadorned lines, the integration of the structure with its site, and visual continuity between indoors and outdoors. It retains a high degree of historical integrity in its workmanship, materials, design, feeling and association with the Modern Movement.

**SETTING**

The Weil-Cassisi House is sited on a gently sloping triangular shaped lot facing west at the end of a cul-de-sac within the Colclough Hills subdivision, a mile south of downtown Gainesville. This neighborhood was first platted in 1953 and consists of large lots, winding paved roads, and a pond surrounded by natural vegetation. The moderately expensive homes were built over time in a variety of styles, from traditional Neo-Colonial and Mediterranean Revival to contemporary Ranch and Mid-century Modern (Photo 1). Three mature live oak trees stand at the southwest verge of the lot, near the street (Photo 2). Inside of the high masonry wall that provides privacy from the street, is a large inner courtyard (Photo 3). In this private space another massive oak tree with a limb spread of over fifty feet in diameter became the focal point for the placement of the house, according to the architect<sup>1</sup> (Photos 4 & 5). A lawn rises to the east, at the rear of the house.

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

**Exterior**

The garden wall rises to a height of 6 feet 8 inches (Photo 2), and is a contributing resource to the property. Although the property slopes down to the street, the top of the wall is

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<sup>1</sup> Harry Merritt correspondence with Murry Laurie, November 19, 2014.

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level. It encloses the front courtyard, joins to the northwest corner of the house, and continues along the south elevation and turns north to provide a solid privacy wall for the terrace that spans the east elevation. A double-door gate with vertical wood slats spaced two inches apart is set on the street side of the wall, providing a glimpse of the front entrance from the street. The architect credits the influence of his time in Japan with inspiring the design of the gate (Photo 3). The front courtyard has been left in its natural state with a curve of local limestone boulders serving as an erosion control device for the slope of the land, and providing visual interest. The walkway is composed of cast concrete steps leading from the gate to the main entrance (Photos 3, 5).

The approach to the house through the courtyard allows one to see through the three main rooms on the first floor, the two-story glass box of the living room, as well as the adjacent dining room to the right of the front door and the family room to the left of the entrance, which have sliding glass doors (Photo 5). The house has a post and beam structure, which means that no walls are load bearing. The flat roof and the second floor are supported by sets of five evenly spaced boxed wood beams.<sup>2</sup> The wide roof overhang provides additional shade for the clerestory windows on the second floor. The most distinctive feature is the two-story living room with its three glass walls. The large glass panels are one-half inch thick and separated by narrow wood mullions.

The front entrance consists of double doors of redwood with full-length side-lights (Photo 5). A broad panel of vertically grooved redwood with a ribbon of clerestory windows set just below the roofline defines the wall of the second story and extends several inches from the main block of the house. Exterior walls of Ocala block<sup>3</sup> are laid with the joints deeply raked to provide shadow lines on the inside and outside. Vertical rows of wood-framed, operable single jalousie windows are set at the top and bottom of the glass panels on the west and east walls of the living room. The fireplace and exposed round chimney flue are set at the center of the south wall (Photo 6). On the east side of the house the open terrace,

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<sup>2</sup> Harry Merritt correspondence to Murray Laurie, December 23, 2014. Merritt explained that the “Stressed Skin” roof beams are 12” deep, 33’-4” long and span 20’ and cantilever 6’-8” on each end. Solid wood beams would have weighed much more and been very costly.

<sup>3</sup> “Ocala Block” a term associated with a product made in the 1950s and 1960s by Cummer, Inc. in Ocala, Florida, that contained locally mined aggregates of limestone and white cement that gave it a creamy, yellow color. Competitors began making a creamy/yellowish colored block that was commonly referred to as “Ocala Block.”

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which has a screen roof, extends across the entire elevation of the house. The terrace wall which is cut into the slope to the east, is made of Ocala block (Photo 7).<sup>4</sup>

The two-car garage with a flat roof is attached to the north end of the house (Photos 8, 9). To the rear of the garage is a one-story 10'x10' structure with a pyramidal, semi-transparent roof, used originally as a kiln room and now used as a greenhouse. At the front of the garage, to the west, a narrow planting bed is arranged between the front wall and the driveway.

**INTERIOR**

The double doors of the front entrance (Photo 10) open to a narrow foyer with a wall of Ocala block. To the right is the dining room and living room, and to the left is the family room. The space between rooms is open without doors. The dining room has a long, steel framed, terrazzo-topped table anchored to the floor in the center of the room (Photo 11), with only a low storage unit centered to the south, and opening on to the two-story living room (Photo 12). The north wall of the dining room is of Ocala block and there are sliding glass doors on the west and east walls. To the south, the drama of the glass-walled living room is immediately evident. The south wall is glass set above a six-foot-high block wall (to continue the view of the enveloping wall) with a flat expanse of marble centered above the fireplace (Photo 12). Looking upward in the living room one can see the wood framing the master bedroom on the second level of the north wall (Photo 13). As mentioned earlier, ribbons of wood-framed louvers are set at the top and bottom in the two-story high east and west glass walls (Photo 14).

The kitchen is located so that it serves the dining space, family room and the rear terrace (Photo 15). It still has the original redwood cabinetry and a functional pass-through to the terrace. The adjacent family room also has original redwood storage units and sliding glass doors on the east and west walls (Photo 16). A utility room and the greenhouse are accessed from the east side of the family room, and a small powder room is tucked into the hall leading to the garage from the west side of this room. The terrace is accessed from

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., Merritt commented: "The Contractor was Ray Brown and all the workman and subcontractors were local. This was the first "Modern" home they had ever built so I had to supervise the construction on a daily basis over the first month or so, but they finally got the hang of it."

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sliding glass doors in the dining room, the family room, and the pass-through from the kitchen. A three-foot-wide planter with tropical plants and trees, including tall banana trees and palms, stretches along the high wall that encloses the terrace (Photo 17). Paving blocks cover the floor of the terrace with the exception of a wood deck with a Jacuzzi installed at the south end (Photo 18). Narrow steps on either end of the terrace lead up to the back yard.

Four bedrooms located on the upper story are accessed from the enclosed stairway in the family room leading to the upstairs hall (Photos 19, 20). The master bedroom has folding, louvered shutters overlooking the living room below that can be closed for privacy, or left open to enjoy the light-filled living room below (Photos 21, 22). Adjacent to the master bedroom is a large office with an unusual closet that opens from either side that separates the two rooms (Photo 23). The walls in the upstairs are either plastered or paneled with the same redwood with vertical grooves that form the exterior walls. A ribbon of clerestory windows runs along the top of the walls in each room (Photo 24). A large bathroom is located next to the master bedroom. Another bedroom is located next to the office, and two smaller bedrooms share a bathroom at the north end of the second floor.

**ALTERATIONS**

Few changes have been made to the house and all were done under the architect's supervision. When the current owners acquired the house in 1974, they asked the architect to design a translucent roof for the small greenhouse, formerly an unroofed kiln room (Photo 8). A few years later they asked him to design the screened covering for the terrace, and to design the wood patio for the Jacuzzi at the south end of the terrace (Photos 7, 17, 18).



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**SUMMARY**

The Weil-Cassisi House is nominated to the National Register for local significance under Criterion C in the area of Architecture. Built in 1964, it is an excellent example of the Modern Movement design. The house is the work of architect Harry Merritt who taught architecture at the University of Florida. The Weil-Cassisi House exemplifies his high standards of modern architectural design related to its North Florida setting. This building retains a high degree of physical integrity of location, setting, design, materials and workmanship.

**HISTORIC CONTEXT**

Gainesville, the county seat of Alachua County, was founded in the 1850s when the Florida Railroad established a stop on its Fernandina to Cedar Key cross-state railroad. It was settled mostly by small farmers and cotton planters from other southern states. During the Civil War, Gainesville served as a distribution point for food and supplies for the Confederate Army. It expanded after the conflict was over as a center for agriculture and phosphate mining. The founding of the University of Florida (UF) in Gainesville in 1906, brought new residents to the city, many of whom built homes in the established neighborhoods near the center of town. Several of these older neighborhoods are now historic districts and exhibit an array of residential building styles that were popular throughout the country.<sup>1</sup> The University itself chose the traditional Collegiate Gothic style for the buildings on its campus, a dozen blocks west of the Alachua County courthouse. Part of the campus is now designated as a historic district.<sup>2</sup>

Following World War II, the UF, like universities throughout the United States, expanded rapidly as returning veterans enrolled and brought their families with them to Gainesville. In the mid-1950s, the College of Medicine and five other health-related colleges were established, adding further to the growth of the city. New subdivisions, some with mid-century modern architectural influences, were established near the University and to the

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<sup>1</sup> Northeast Gainesville Residential District (1980), Pleasant Street Historic District (1989), and Southeast Gainesville Residential District (1988), Florida Master Site File, Division of Historic Resources.

<sup>2</sup> University of Florida Campus Historic District (1989), Florida Master Site File, Division of Historic Resources.

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west of downtown Gainesville to accommodate the growing student and faculty population. The university chose to embrace modern architecture during this period, building modern dormitories, academic buildings, and medical school facilities that stepped away from the Collegiate Gothic as new areas of the campus were developed in the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>3</sup>

**ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT**

A number of young architects who had received their architectural training under masters of the Modern or International Style such as Walter Gropius, Mies van der Rohe, Louis Kahn, and Frank Lloyd Wright, located and practiced in the Gulf Coast Florida community of Sarasota between 1941 to 1966. They were eager to create innovative buildings that adopted the design concepts of the Modern Movement to Florida's climate and post-war, casual lifestyle, and found willing clients in the affluent Gulf Coast community. Other talented modernist architects like Alfred Browning Parker designed homes in the Miami area that drew national attention.<sup>4</sup> The renowned architect Frank Lloyd Wright brought his unique vision to the buildings he designed for Florida Southern College in Lakeland in the 1930s, and his principles of organic architecture, of fitting the design of the building to its site and its natural setting, had a lasting impact on architects in Florida. The International Style used the concepts developed in Europe that included the logical use and expression of structure, the separation of structure and enclosure, simple building form and detail, and the honest use and expression of details. The Sarasota architects blended these traits with a more humanistic approach that included respect for and adaptation to the environment and to the play of light and shadow.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Some of these buildings were included in an addition to the University of Florida Campus Historic District in 2008.

<sup>4</sup> Randolph C. Henning. *The Architecture of Alfred Browning Parker*. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2011) Parker also taught at UF, and his papers and drawings are part of the Smathers Library collection at the University of Florida; Jan Hochstim, *Florida Modern: Residential Architecture 1945-1970* (New York: Rizzoli, 2004).

<sup>5</sup> "Architectural Resources of the Sarasota School of Architecture," National Register Multiple Property Cover, 2007.

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Less scholarly attention has been drawn to architects in North Florida, both those who practiced in a region of the state more similar in climate, terrain, and traditional cultural values to other southern states than semi-tropical South Florida, and those who educated generations of architects who adapted modernist design principles to Florida's unique and varied environment. Jacksonville architect Robert Broward was a student of Frank Lloyd Wright, later taught at UF, and enjoyed a distinguished career. He was inducted into the Florida Artist's Hall of Fame in 2012.<sup>6</sup> Another prominent North Florida architect is William Morgan, a pioneer in researching the origins of architectural creativity, who received the honorary degree of Doctor of Arts from UF in 2012. After graduating from the Harvard Graduate School of Design and working in the offices of Paul Rudolph, he established a successful practice in Jacksonville in 1961. Morgan served as a visiting studio critic at UF in the 1960s and as the Beinecke-Reeves Distinguished Professor of Architectural Preservation from 1998-2000.<sup>7</sup>

**Architect Harry Merritt**

Harry Merritt, the architect of the Weil-Cassisi House, was born in 1929 and received his Bachelor of Science degree in architecture from Clemson University in 1951. After serving during the Korean War as an officer in the Army Corps of Engineers, he attended the Graduate School of Design (GSD) at Harvard University, where he studied under Walter Gropius, from 1953 to 1955. He received the Master of Architecture degree and upon the recommendation of Paul Rudolph, then a visiting critic at the GSD, he was invited to join the Winter Haven office of Gene Leedy, a prominent member of the Sarasota group of architects.<sup>8</sup>

A display of Harry Merritt's work at the Florida American Institute of Architects convention in 1959, attracted the attention of Turpin Bannister, dean of the College of Architecture at the UF.<sup>9</sup> The dean offered Merritt a one-year visiting professorship, which

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<sup>6</sup> Florida Artist's Hall of fame at <http://dos.myflorida.com> , accessed January 10, 2015.

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.dcp.ufl.edu/news/morgan> , accessed, January 10, 2015

<sup>8</sup> Harry Merritt provided the biographical information in this section.

<sup>9</sup> Turpin Bannister was the third dean of the UF College of Architecture and Fine Arts, from 1957 through 1965. The College was established in 1929.

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turned into a permanent appointment in 1960.<sup>10</sup> Professor Merritt became chairman of the UF Graduate Design Program in 1976, and retired in 1996. A number of his students became prominent Florida architects. One of these, Guy Peterson, commented that Merritt passed on the principles and appreciation of the International Style.<sup>11</sup> Merritt felt the strength of the UF program was its diversity that avoided the teaching of a “style.” Merritt designed thirty-six residences, multi-family structures, several churches, and twenty-two commercial buildings.<sup>12</sup> Buildings he designed still stand apart from their neighbors not only in Gainesville, but in the coastal towns of Cedar Key and Crescent Beach. The Weil-Cassisi House was featured in *Better Homes and Gardens* in 1975, (Figures 1, 2, 3) who called it “a truly breath-taking house.”<sup>13</sup>

Harry Merritt lectured throughout the southeastern states on land use policy and served on the Florida Housing Advisory Committee under Governor Bob Graham. He authored a book based on his method of drawing titled *Perspective Drawing: The Projected Image Method*.<sup>14</sup> In 2012, he received a Lifetime Achievement Award for excellence in teaching and architectural design from the UF School of Architecture.<sup>15</sup> Since his retirement as an Emeritus Professor, he has been active in architectural policy and education on an international scale. In the 1990s, after the fall of the Communist government, he assisted the government of Albania with urban design projects and curriculum development for the

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<sup>10</sup> Leland Shaw, interview with the author, January 30, 2015. Dean Bannister also brought in Dan Branch and Leland Shaw, young architects with academic backgrounds from graduate schools (Columbia and Berkeley, respectively) steeped in modernist theory in the 1960s to bring the UF program up to date. Shaw credits Harry Merritt with providing a strong influence on the UF graduate program in architecture and for his interest in the emerging field of ecological studies as it applied to the impact of buildings on the environment.

<sup>11</sup> Saxon Henry. *Four Florida Moderns* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2010) 216. 221-222. Guy Peterson, a student of Harry Merritt, is one of the four featured architects.

<sup>12</sup> The University of Florida Smathers Library holds a collection of more than two dozen architectural plans and renderings of buildings designed by Harry Merritt.

<sup>13</sup> *Better Homes & Gardens*, Spring/Summer, 1975.

<sup>14</sup> Harry Merritt. *Perspective Drawing: The Projected Image Method*. Gainesville: Culicidae Architectural Press, 2010.

<sup>15</sup> The program of the 2012 Awards Ceremony is in the collection of the Smathers Library at UF.

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College of Architecture in Tirana.<sup>16</sup> Merritt ended his practice of architecture in the 1990s, and he and his wife now live in Maine.

**ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE**

The Weil-Cassisi House exemplifies the Modern Movement architectural style that was introduced to Florida in the 1950s and 1960s. Geometric forms and the elimination of superfluous ornamentation, as well as an emphasis on the functional aspects of the modern home are hallmarks of domestic architecture influenced by the International Style are evident in the house. From the flat roof with wide eaves to moderate the intense Florida sun, the ribbons of clerestory windows that wrap the entire second floor, the architect has utilized Modern themes. The house embodies Modern design concepts that emphasized function and the visible expression of the skeleton of the building. The exterior elements of the home became part of a transition from the landscape to the interior with the use of building materials that are used for both exterior and interior surfaces. The same unpainted Ocala block that forms the exterior walls of the house and the high courtyard wall appear on the interior walls as well, as does the redwood paneling.

Modern Movement architects in Florida strove to integrate both the design and the function of their buildings with the local environment. Merritt drew a detailed diagram of the property and its natural features prior to designing the house, and the large oak tree in the western courtyard played a critical role in his concept. The tree not only provided a strong focal point from within the house, but its reflections and shadows brought the outside, inside. With the glass enclosed living room, the “natural front courtyard is visually and spatially connected to the smaller rear social courtyard through the interior two-story living area,” Merritt explained.<sup>17</sup> The house was also positioned so that the tree blocked the sun, greatly reducing the cost of electricity. The Weil-Cassisi House retains a high level of architectural integrity.

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<sup>16</sup> Under a grant by the USAID and The George Soros Foundation, Harry Merritt assisted the Albanian Government rewrite the curriculum for the College of Architecture in Tirana and organized a design studio of 15 Albanian architectural students and 2 UF College of Architecture graduate students. They produced a design for the urban expansion of the city of Tirana: the project was selected for Albania’s submission to Habitat II, an international conference held in Istanbul in 1996.

<sup>17</sup> Harry Merritt correspondence with Murray Laurie, November 19, 2014.

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Morgan, William, <http://www.dcp.ufl.edu/news/morgan>, accessed January 10, 2015.

Murtha, Mike, and Jim Painter, definition of “Ocala Block,” courtesy of the Florida Concrete and Products Association, and Florida Concrete Masonry Educational Council.

Northeast Gainesville Residential Historic District, 1980; Southeast Gainesville Residential Historic District, 1988; University of Florida Historic District, 1989; National Register districts on file with Florida Master Site File, Division of Historic Resources, Department of State.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 9 Page 2 **WEIL-CASSISI HOUSE, GAINESVILLE,  
ALACHUA COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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Saxon, Henry. *Four Florida Moderns: The Architecture of Alberto Alfonso, Rene Gonzalez, Chad Oppenheim and Guy W. Peterson*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2010.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 10 Page 1

**WEIL-CASSISI HOUSE, GAINESVILLE,  
ALACHUAL COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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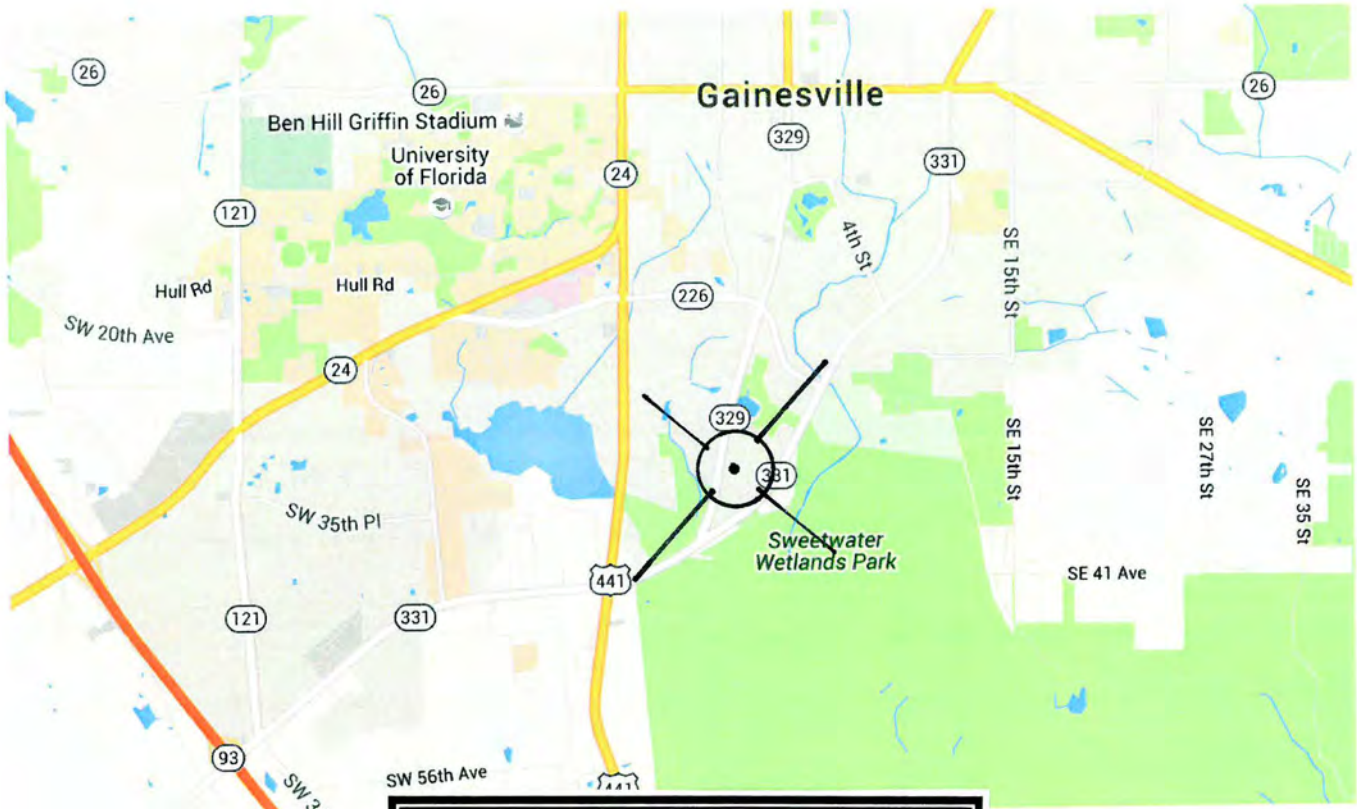
**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

D L CLINCH GRT COLCLOUGH HILL I OR 35/ 156 LOT 22 OR 841/788  
Parcel # 15700-022-000

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

This property is historically associated with the Weil-Cassisi House.





**WEIL-CASSISI HOUSE**  
Gainesville, Alachua County, Florida

**LOCATOR MAP**



WEIL-CASSISI HOUSE  
3105 SW 5<sup>TH</sup> COURT, GAINESVILLE, FL

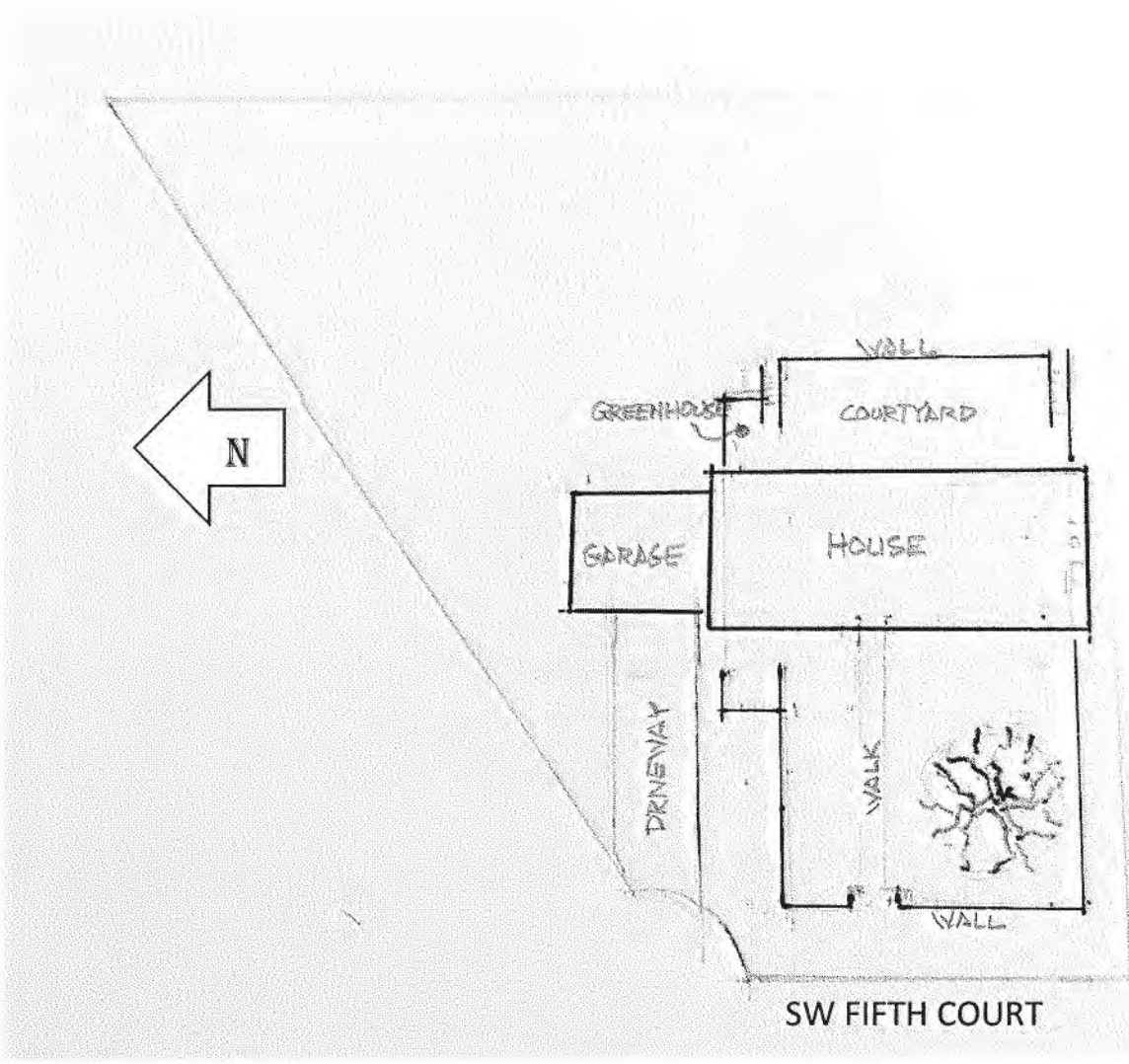
Latitude: 29°29'25.64"N  
Longitude: 82°19'47.16"W

UTM References

Zone	Easting	Northing
17R	371265	3277811



WEIL-CASSISI HOUSE  
Gainesville, Alachua County, Florida  
LOCATOR COORDINATES



**WEIL-CASSISI HOUSE**  
Gainesville, Alachua County, Florida

**SITE DIAGRAM**  
NTS

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number          Photos          Page   1  

WEIL-CASSISI HOUSE  
GAINESVILLE, ALACHUAL COUNTY, FLORIDA  
LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

---

**PHOTO LIST**

1. Weil-Cassisi House
2. 3105 SW Court, Gainesville (Alachua County), Florida
3. Murray D. Laurie
4. Murray D. Laurie
5. November, 2014
6. View of SW Fifth Court in front of Cassis House, facing southwest
7. Photo 1 of 24
  
6. View of Weil-Cassisi House and front wall, facing northeast
7. Photo 2 of 24
  
6. View of gate and path, inside of front courtyard, facing west
7. Photo 3 of 24
  
6. View of front façade of house, facing east.
7. Photo 4 of 24
  
6. View of large oak tree inside of courtyard, facing southwest
7. Photo 5 of 24
  
6. View of chimney and south side of house, facing west
7. Photo 6 of 24
  
6. View of rear of house showing screen over terrace, facing northwest
7. Photo 7 of 24
  
6. View of rear and north end of house, roof over greenhouse, garage roof, facing west
7. Photo 8 of 24
  
6. View of driveway, garage, and north wall, facing east.
7. Photo 9 of 24
  
6. View of front door, facing east
7. Photo 10 of 24
  
6. View of Dining room and part of living room, facing southeast
7. Photo 11 of 24

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number          Photos          Page   2  

WEIL-CASSISI HOUSE  
GAINESVILLE, ALACHUAL COUNTY, FLORIDA  
LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

---

6. View of south wall of living room, facing southeast

7. Photo 12 of 24

6. View of living room, pass-through to dining room, master bedroom above, facing north

7. Photo 13 of 24

6. View of south wall of living room and front courtyard, facing west

7. Photo 14 of 24

6. View of kitchen, facing northwest

7. Photo 15 of 24

6. View of family room next to kitchen, facing east

7. Photo 16 of 24

6. View of terrace, facing north

7. Photo 17 of 24

6. View of terrace and deck for Jacuzzi and glass wall of living room, facing south

7. Photo 18 of 24

6. View of staircase to second floor, facing south

7. Photo 19 of 24

6. View of second floor hall, facing north

7. Photo 20 of 24

6. View of master bedroom, door to hall on left and door to master bath on right, facing north

7. Photo 21 of 24

6. View of master bedroom, overlooking living room, with closet on the right, facing south

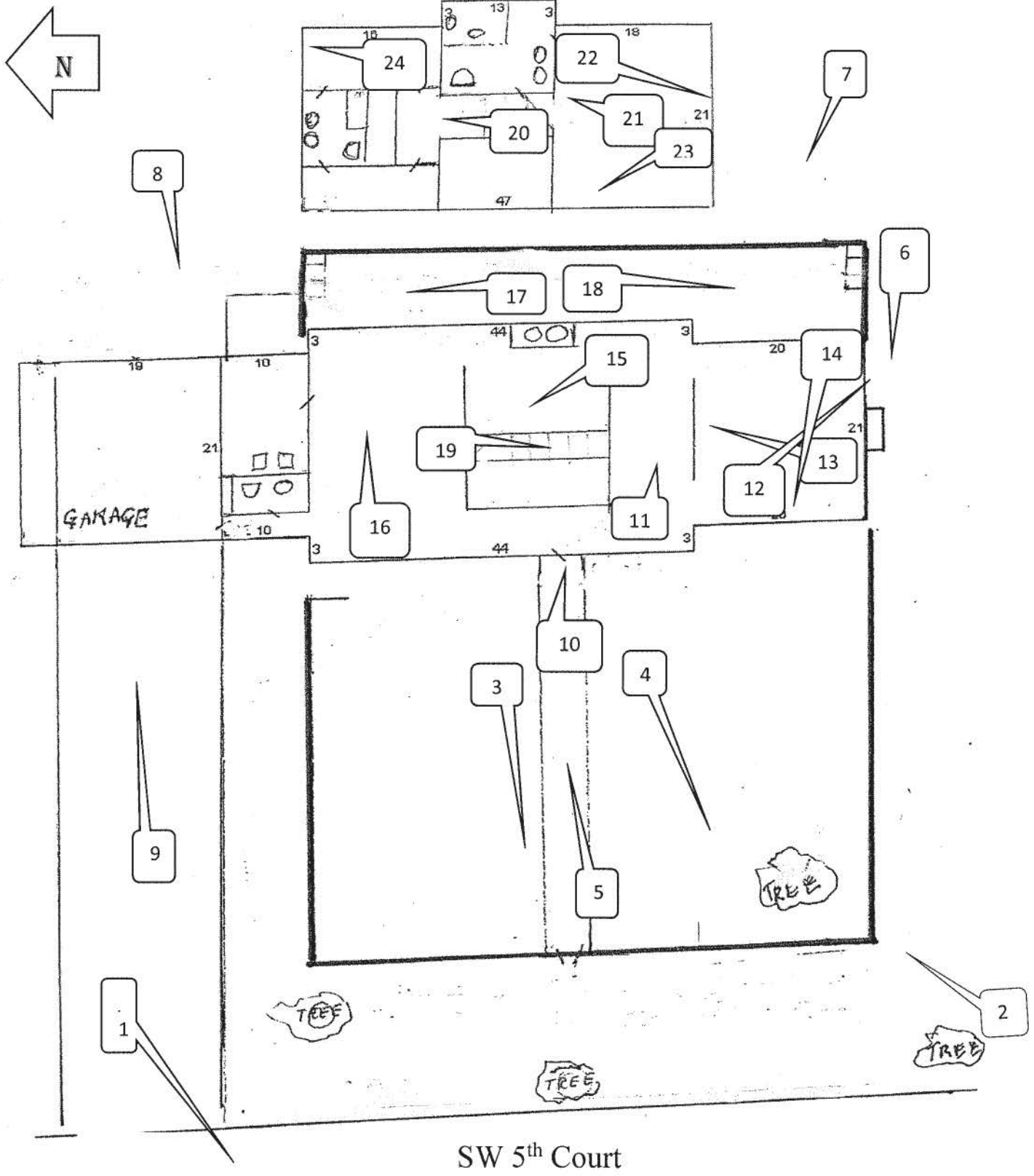
7. Photo 22 of 24

6. View of study next to master bedroom, facing northwest

7. Photo 23 of 24

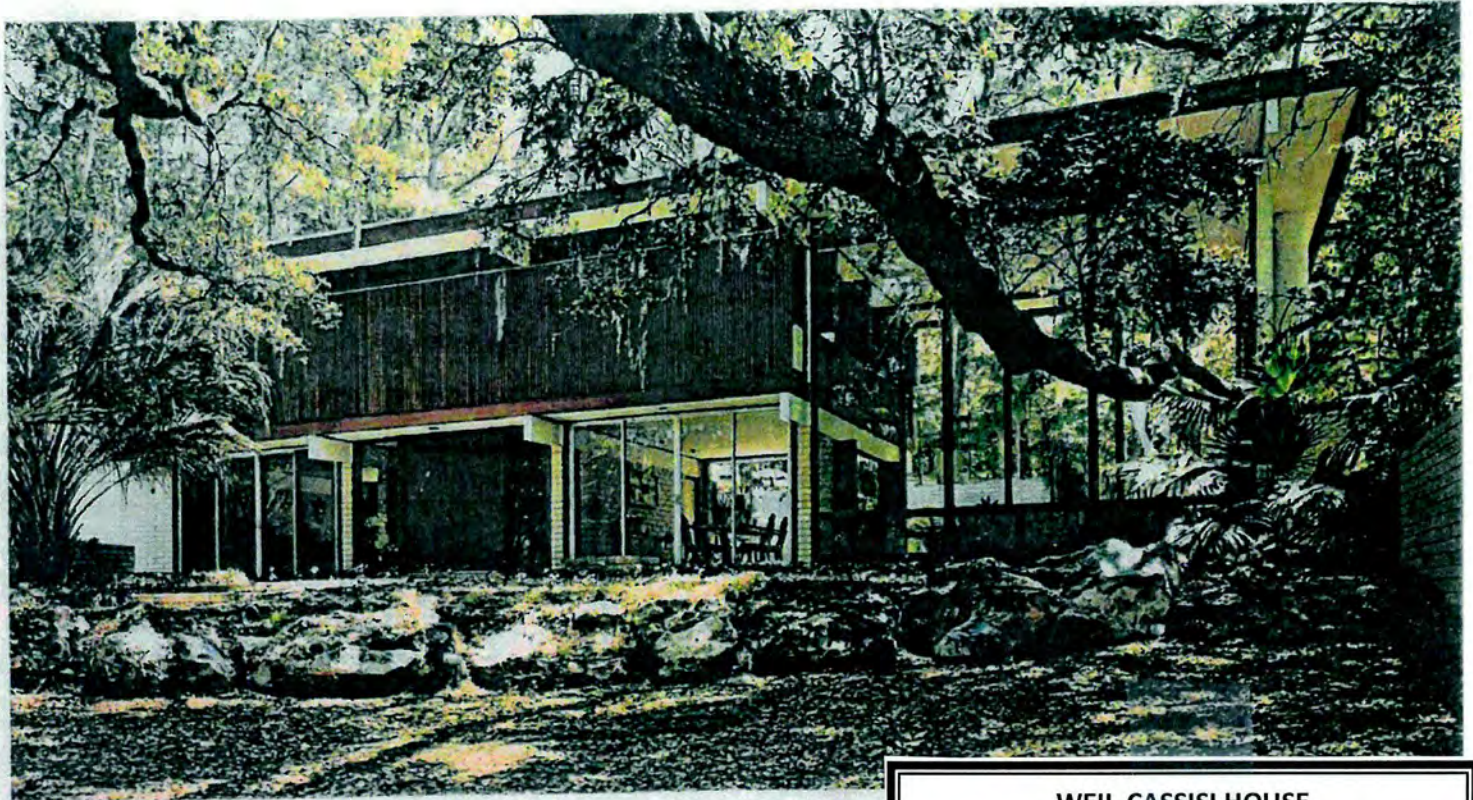
6. View of rear bedroom, facing northeast

7. Photo 24 of 24



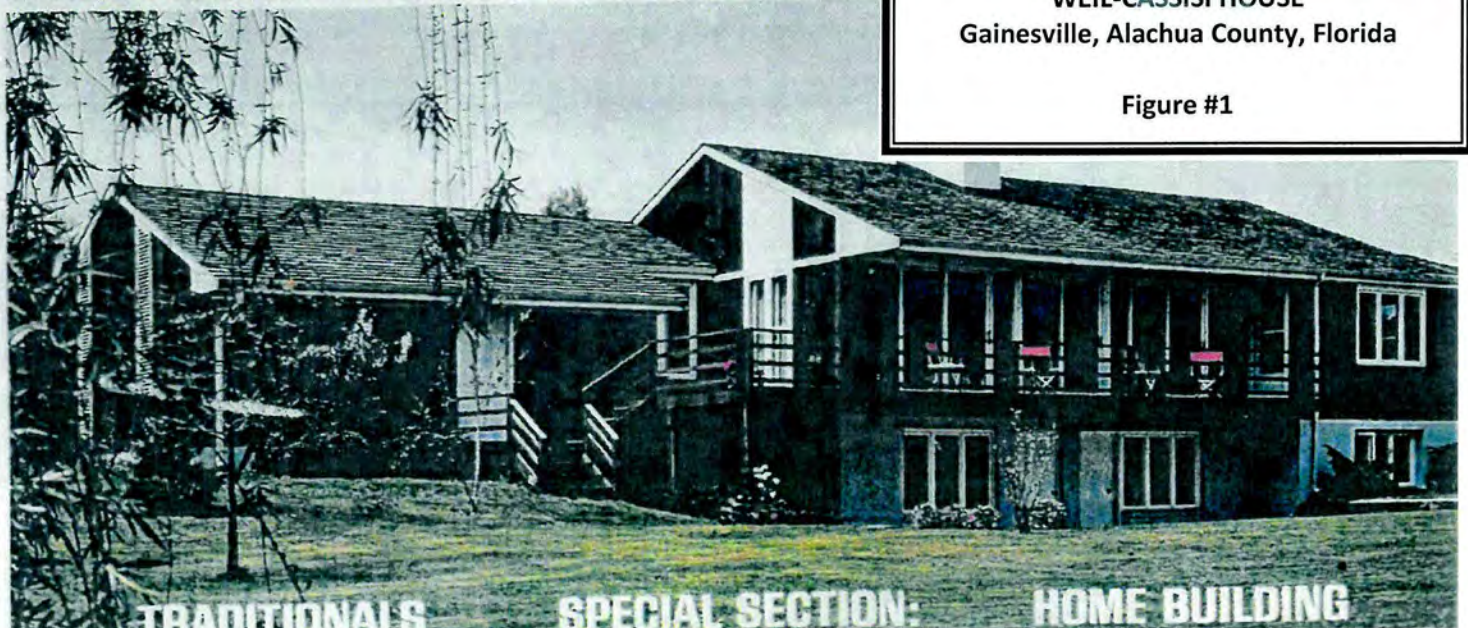
**WEIL-CASSISI HOUSE**  
 Gainesville, Alachua County, Florida  
**FLOOR PLAN & PHOTO DIAGRAM**

# BUILDING IDEAS



WEIL-CASSISI HOUSE  
Gainesville, Alachua County, Florida

Figure #1



TRADITIONALS

SPECIAL SECTION:

HOME BUILDING

# A truly breath-taking house

With walls which are mostly glass on the lower level and a two-story living room, this contemporary seems to float over its well-landscaped site. Brick walls around the perimeter turn the entire lot into a totally private indoor/outdoor environment.

To preserve an oak (said to be one of the South's largest), the house was located toward the rear of the lot (be-

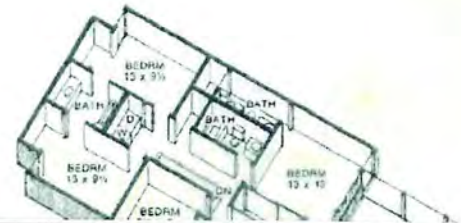
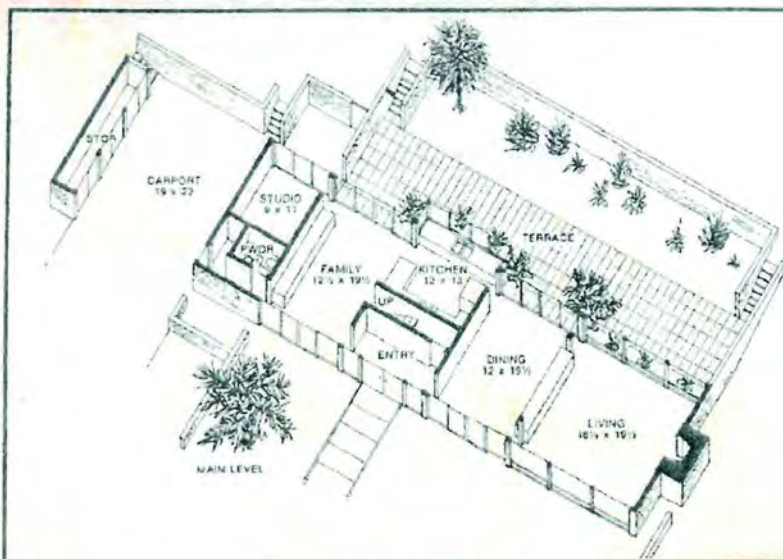
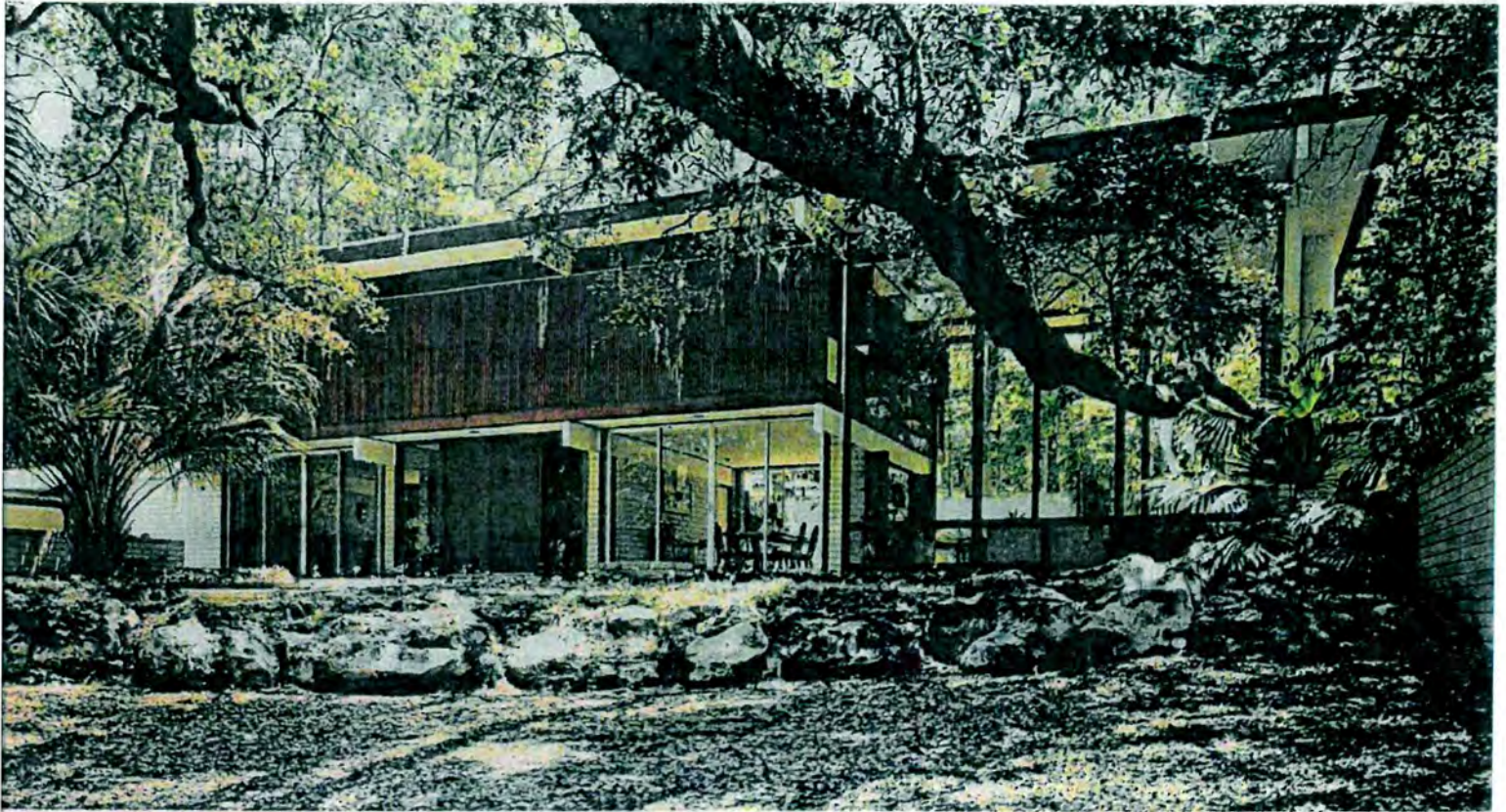
low). Dramatically simple post-and-beam construction lets the interior open wide, front and rear.

The big living room (right) visually borrows even more space from the dining area and the master suite upstairs. Shutters separate the areas when more privacy is desired.

A terrace stretches across the rear (opposite, lower left); it's accessible

from all main living areas. To catch light from three sides, one kitchen counter juts out onto the terrace (opposite, lower right).

In plan, the house is a simple tangle, with the upper level six feet wider than the one below. It has three bedrooms and a study upstairs as well as the three baths and centrally located laundry facilities.

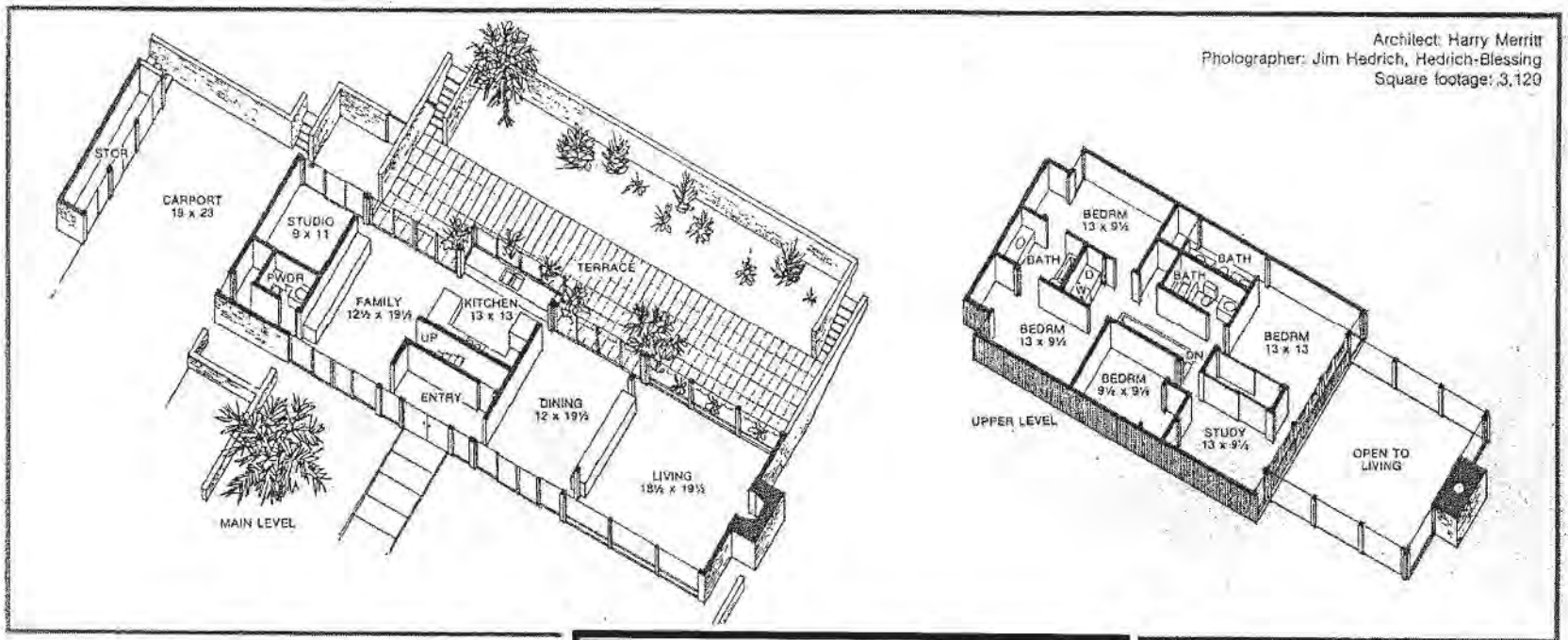


Architect: Harry Me  
Photographer: Jim Hedrich, Hedrich-Blessing  
Square footage: 2,100

**WEIL-CASSISI HOUSE**  
Gainesville, Alachua County, Florida

Figure #2





**WEIL-CASSISI HOUSE**  
 Gainesville, Alachua County, Florida

Figure #3











































SOMEWHERE OVER  
THE RAINBOW















National Register of Historic Places  
Memo to File

# Correspondence

The Correspondence consists of communications from (and possibly to) the nominating authority, notes from the staff of the National Register of Historic Places, and/or other material the National Register of Historic Places received associated with the property.

Correspondence may also include information from other sources, drafts of the nomination, letters of support or objection, memorandums, and ephemera which document the efforts to recognize the property.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: RESUBMISSION

PROPERTY NAME: Weil--Cassisi House

MULTIPLE NAME: ~~Sarasota School of Architecture MPS~~

STATE & COUNTY: FLORIDA, Alachua

DATE RECEIVED: 10/09/15      DATE OF PENDING LIST:  
DATE OF 16TH DAY:                      DATE OF 45TH DAY: 11/24/15  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 15000587

DETAILED EVALUATION:

ACCEPT       RETURN       REJECT      11-9-2015 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

*Makes a good case for Criterion C at local level  
Architect, while still living, retired in 1990s*

*Not part of MPS*

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept C

REVIEWER J Hubbard

DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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

**TO: Historic Preservation Board**

**Information Item: A**

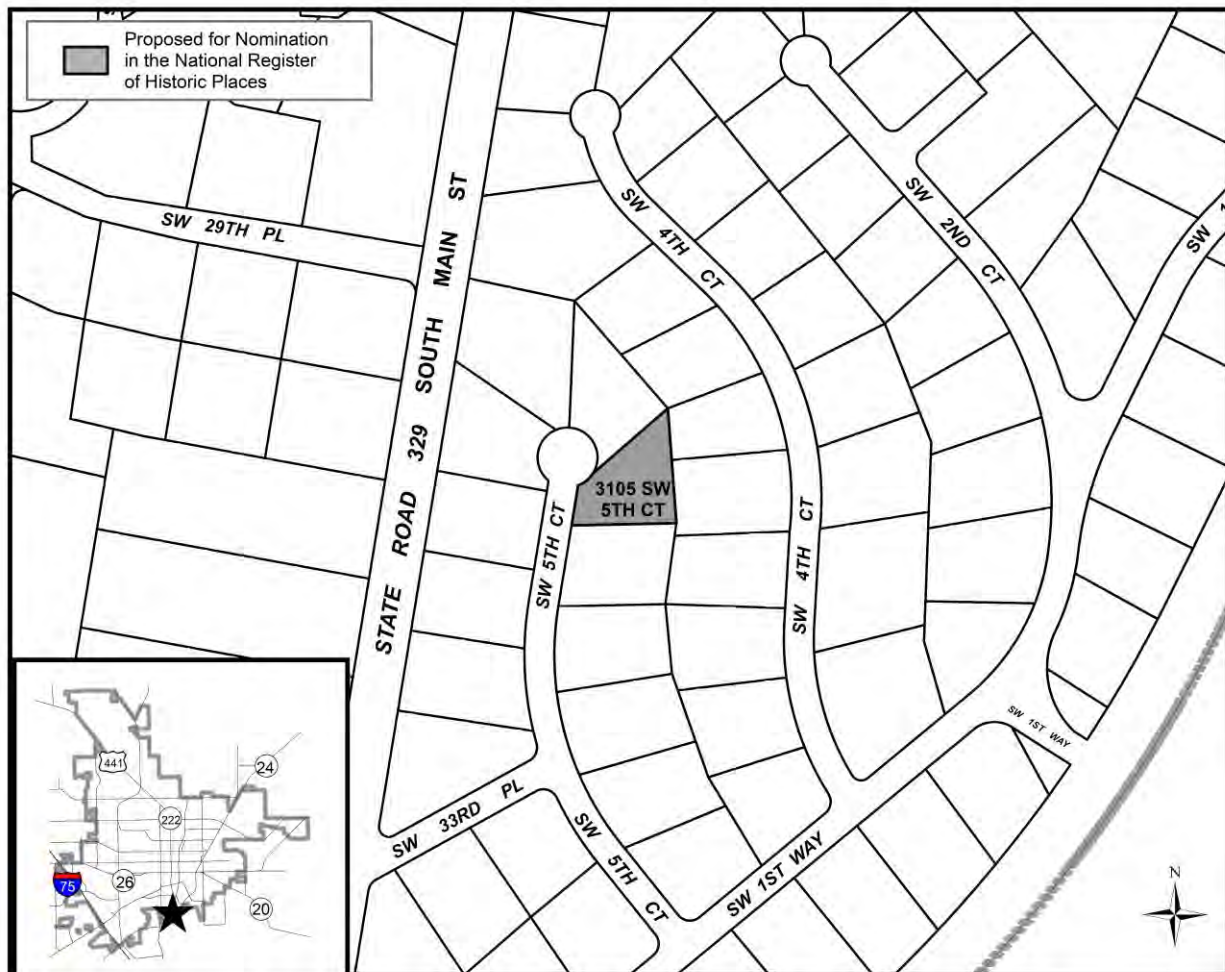
**FROM: Planning & Development Services Department  
Staff**

**DATE: May 5, 2015**

**SUBJECT: Information Item A. National Register Nomination: 3105 SW 5<sup>th</sup> Court.  
Murray D. Laurie, Agent. Nicholas and Elayne Cassisi, Owners.**

### Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Board support the nomination of this property to the National Register of Historic Places. In addition, HPB may provide official comments to the Florida Bureau of Historic Preservation as to whether or not this property meets eligibility criteria for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.



### **Project Description**

The property, located at 3105 SW 5<sup>th</sup> Court, has been nominated for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places by an agent of the owners. The nomination proposal will be reviewed by the Florida National Register Review Board in a public meeting on June 12, 2015. If the Review Board finds that this property meets the criteria for listing established by the National register, a formal nomination will be submitted to the Keeper of the National Register in Washington D.C., who will make the final decision (see **Exhibit 2**).

Inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places provides recognition that the property is deemed by the federal and state governments to be significant in our history at the national, state, and /or local levels.

### **Background**

“The Cassisi house, located at 3105 SW 5<sup>th</sup> Ct in Gainesville, Florida, was designed by University of Florida professor of architecture Harry Merritt and built in 1964. The modern two-story house is constructed of Ocala block and redwood and has large areas of glass that offer unobstructed views of the enclosed front courtyard and screened terrace in the rear. The flat roof is supported by five massive wood beams that extend beyond the roofline. The house has many features that exemplify the Sarasota School of Architecture modern architecture, including clean and unadorned lines, the integration of the structure with its site, and visual continuity between indoors and outdoors. It possesses a high degree of historical integrity.” (National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (see **Exhibit 3**).

Respectfully submitted,

Onelia Lazzari, AICP  
Principal Planner

Prepared by:

Salvatore Cumella

Information Item: A  
National Register Nomination: Cassisi House 3105 SW 5<sup>th</sup> Ct.  
May 5, 2015

**List of Exhibits**

**Exhibit A-1 Photos of Property**

**Exhibit A-2 Notification Letters from FL Bureau of Historic Preservation to Mayor  
Braddy and Planning Department**

**Exhibit A-3 National Register of Historic Places Registration Form**

**Exhibit A-4 Florida Master Site File 8FL5707**

May 6, 2015

Re: National Register Nomination of Weil-Cassisi House

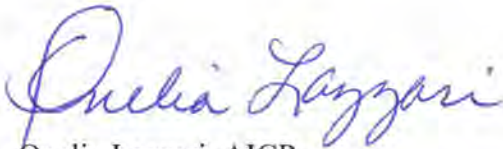
Desiree Estabrook, M.H.P.  
Historic Preservationist Supervisor for Survey & Registration  
Florida Department of State - Division of Historical Resources  
500 South Bronough Street  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

RECEIVED  
FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF  
HISTORICAL PRESERVATION  
2015 MAY -8 A 9:51 AM

Dear Ms. Estabrook:

This letter is to inform you that the City Of Gainesville Historic Preservation Board voted unanimously at their May 5, 2015 meeting to support the proposal for nomination for listing of the Weil-Cassisi House (3105 SW 5<sup>th</sup> Court) in the National Register of Historic Places. After discussion about the eligibility of the property under Criterion C, the Board voted in favor of supporting the nomination proposal. If we can be of any further assistance to this process, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,



Onelia Lazzari, AICP  
Principal Planner

Enclosures: City of Gainesville Historic Preservation Board May 5, 2015 Agenda

cc: Mayor Edward Braddy, City Commissioners, and Murray Laurie

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD AGENDA

May 5, 2015 5:30 PM  
City Hall Auditorium  
200 E. University Ave

- I. [Roll Call](#)
- II. **Approval of Agenda** (*Note: order of business subject to change*)
- III. **Announcements**
- IV. **Approval of Minutes:** [April 7, 2015](#)
- V. **Requests to Address the Board**
- VI. **Old Business**
- VII. **New Business**

1. **Petition HP-15-15**  
*Planning Division staff recommends approval of Petition HP-15-15 with conditions.*

Jay Reeves, agent for Clay Kallman & Lauren Groff. New construction addition to an existing single-family dwelling. Located at 317 NE 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave. This building is contributing to the Northeast Residential Historic District.

[Staff Report](#)

- [Exhibit 1](#) Historic Preservation Rehabilitation and Design Guidelines
- [Exhibit 2](#) Application and Photos, Form 8B
- [Exhibit 3](#) Florida Master Site File
- [Exhibit 4](#) Project Letter with Photos, Site Plan and Elevation

2. **Petition HP-15-20**  
*Planning Division staff recommends approval of Petition HP-15-20 with conditions.*

K. Strauss, agent for Eastwood Holdings, LLC. New construction of a single-family dwelling. Located at 625 NW 3<sup>rd</sup> Street. This building will be a non-contributing structure to the Pleasant Street Historic District.

[Staff Report](#)

- [Exhibit 1](#) HP-11-03 Staff Report & Backup Materials

**BOARD MEMBERS**

Chair: Bill Warinner      Vice Chair: Scott Gill  
Jay Reeves, Betsy Albury, Michelle Hazen, Anne Stacy, Charlotte Lake, Jason Straw, Sandra Lamme, Katie Jacob (Student Appointee)  
Staff Liaison: Jason Simmons



- [Exhibit 2](#) BP-12-00159 Demolition Permit
- [Exhibit 3](#) Excerpts from City of Gainesville Historic Preservation Rehabilitation and Design Guidelines
- [Exhibit 4](#) Site Analysis Using 1922 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps
- [Exhibit 5](#) City of Gainesville Land Development Code Section 30-52 *Residential low Density Districts (RMF-5 RC, and MH)*
- [Exhibit 6](#) Plans by K. Strauss Homes
- [Exhibit 7](#) Application
- [Exhibit 8](#) Revised Plans
- [Exhibit 9](#) Application for Modification of Existing Zoning Requirements

3. Request for waiver of demolition delay for house at 505 NW 2nd Avenue

#### **VIII. Information Items:**

- A. Nomination of Weir-Cassisi house at 3105 SW 5<sup>th</sup> Court to National Register

[Staff Report](#)

[Exhibit A-1](#) Photos of Property

[Exhibit A-2](#) Notification letter from the Florida Dept. of State to Mayor Braddy and Planning Department

[Exhibit A-3](#) Florida National Register Nomination Proposal

[Exhibit A-4](#) Florida Master Site File 8FL5707

- B. Discussion of demolition by neglect

[Pleasant Street Map &  
Address List](#)

[1217 NE 4<sup>th</sup> Street](#)

[1200 NE 4<sup>th</sup> Street](#)

- C. Update of Guidelines

D. Historic Stabilization  
Fund

**IX. Board Member Comments**

**X. Adjournment**

For further information, please call 334-5022.

If any person decides to appeal a decision of this body with respect to any matter considered at the above-referenced meeting or hearing, he/she will need a record of the proceedings, and for such purposes it may be necessary to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. Persons with disabilities who require assistance to participate in the meeting are requested to notify the Equal Opportunity Department at 334-5051 (TDD 334-2069) at least 48 hours prior to the meeting date.



# **Alachua County Advisory Board Program**

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## **Historical Commission**

**Mr. Ashley Wood, Chair**  
**Mr. William Breeze, Vice Chair**  
**Mrs. Karen Kirkman, Secretary**

May 13, 2015

Robert Bendus, Director of Historic Preservation  
Florida's National Register Review Board  
Division of Historical Resources  
500 South Bronough Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Dear Mr. Bendus,

The Alachua County Historical Commission voted today to support the nomination of the Weil-Cassisi House to the National Register. This modern architecture residence designed by UF Professor Harry Merritt is an important structure identified by "Gainesville Modern" and well documented. The significance of Prof. Merritt's work in Gainesville will be demonstrated by listing this building on the National Register.

The building is within the municipal limits of Gainesville, but as the Alachua County advisory board with the mission "To promote, preserve and protect Alachua County's historic resources," we are very pleased to add our support to including this very important structure to the collection of National Register listings within our County. We take pride in the large number and diverse examples of sites here.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ashley M. Wood". The signature is written in a cursive style with a loop at the end of the last name.

Ashley Wood, Chair

Xc: County Commission via Dr. Lee Niblock, County Manager

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations 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 any 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 WEIL-CASSISI HOUSE

other names/site number AL05707

2. Location

street & number 3105 SW 5th Court N/A  not for publication

city or town Gainesville N/A  vicinity

state FLORIDA code FL county Alachua code 001 zip code 32601

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.)

Alissa Slade Lotane 7/17/11 Deputy SHPO  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State Historic Preservation Officer, Division of Historical Resources  
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 or Federal agency and bureau

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
  - See continuation sheet.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

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)

- buildings
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	total

Name of related multiple property listings

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

Architectural Resources of the Sarasota School of Architecture

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

Returned

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Sarasota School of Architecture

Midcentury Modern

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Wood

Glass

roof Tarpaper

other

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1964

Significant Dates

1964

Significant Person

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Arch: Merrit, Harry

Bldr: Unknown

Returned

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

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 36) has been requested
previously listed in the National Register
previously determined eligible by the National Register
designated a National Historic Landmark
recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of Repository

#

WEIL-CASSISI HOUSE  
Name of Property

Alachua Co., FL  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one

### UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1	7	3	7	1	2	6	5	3	2	7	7	8	1	1
	Zone		Easting					Northing							
2															

3															
	Zone		Easting					Northing							
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 Murray D. Laurie/Carl Shiver  
organization Florida Bureau of Historic Preservation date July 2015  
street & number 500 South Bronough Street telephone (850) 245-6333  
city or town Tallahassee state Florida zip code 32399-0250

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

#### Continuation Sheets

#### Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

#### Photographs

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

#### Additional items

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

### Property Owner

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

name Nicholas and Elayne Cassisi  
street & number 3105 SW 5th Court telephone 352-372-5408  
city or town Gainesville state Florida zip code 32601

**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 amend 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 Reduction 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

WEIL-CASSISI HOUSE  
GAINESVILLE, ALACHUAL COUNTY, FLORIDA  
SIGNIFICANCE

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**SUMMARY**

The Weil-Cassisi house, located at 3105 SW Fifth Court in Gainesville, Florida, is a remarkable Modernist style residence influenced by the Florida-based Sarasota School of Architecture design principles. Built in 1964 for the Weil family, it was designed by University of Florida professor of architecture, Harry Merritt. By 1974, the property was sold to the Cassisi family, who have maintained ownership even since. The modern two-story house is constructed of Ocala block and redwood and has large areas of glass that offer unobstructed views of the enclosed front courtyard and screened terrace in the rear. The flat roof is supported by five massive wood beams that extend beyond the roofline. The house has many features that exemplify the Sarasota School of Architecture program of design, including clean and unadorned lines, the integration of the structure with its site, and visual continuity between indoors and outdoors. It possesses a high degree of historical integrity.

**SETTING**

The city of Gainesville is the county seat and largest city in Alachua County, Florida, and the principal city of the Gainesville, Florida Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). The population of Gainesville in the 2013 US Census was 127,488, a 2.4% growth from 2010. Gainesville is the largest city in the region of North Central Florida. Gainesville is home to the University of Florida, the nation's eighth largest university campus by enrollment, as well as to Santa Fe College. The Gainesville MSA was ranked as the number one place to live in North America in the 2007 edition of Cities Ranked and Rated. The city is characterized by its medium size and central location, about 90 minutes driving time from either Jacksonville or Orlando, two hours driving time from Tampa, and five hours driving time from either Atlanta or Miami.

The Weil-Cassisi house is sited at the front of a gently sloping lot. It faces southwest at the end of a cul-de-sac within the Colclough Hills subdivision, about a mile south of downtown Gainesville. This neighborhood was first platted in 1953 and consists of large lots, winding paved roads, and a pond surrounded by natural vegetation. The moderately expensive homes were built over time in a variety of styles, from traditional neo-colonial and Mediterranean-revival to contemporary ranch and mid-century modern (Photo 1). Three large, mature live oak trees stand at the southwest verge of the Cassisi lot, near the street (Photo 2). Inside of the high masonry wall that blocks the view of the house from the street and from adjacent neighbors is a large inner courtyard (Photo 3). In this private space another massive oak tree with a limb spread of over fifty feet in diameter became the focal point for the placement of the house, according to the architect, Harry Merritt<sup>1</sup> (Photos 4-5). A rendering of the house by the architect gives a grander sense of the placement of the tree in relation to the house. The house was featured on the cover of *Better Homes and Gardens* in 1976, drawing

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<sup>1</sup> Harry Merritt, email to the author, November 19, 2014.



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WEIL-CASSISI HOUSE  
GAINESVILLE, ALACHUAL COUNTY, FLORIDA  
SIGNIFICANCE

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attention to the modern features and the integration of site and structure<sup>2</sup> (Figures 1 and 2). The floor plan is from the same source (Figure 3). A grassy lawn rises to the east at the rear of the house, which sits on a triangular lot.

**EXTERIOR**

The garden wall built of Ocala block rises to a height of 6 feet 8 inches (Photo 2). Although the property slopes down to the street, the level of the wall is consistent. It embraces the house as it encloses the front courtyard on the west and continues around the house to provide a solid privacy wall for the terrace that stretches across the entire east side of the house. A double-door gate with vertical wood slats spaced two inches apart is set on the street side of the wall, providing a glimpse of the front entrance from the street (Photo 3). The design of the gate was influenced by the architect's time spent in Japan. The front courtyard has been left in its natural state, with a contour of native limestone boulders providing visual interest and an erosion control device for the natural slope of the land. The walkway, composed of cast concrete steps leading from the gate to the front entrance, is the only manmade element in the courtyard (Photos 3 and 5). The shadows cast by the giant oak tree within the courtyard continue to provide drama to the front facade with its two-story expanse of glass, wood, and Ocala block.

Before the house was built, the architect made a detailed study of the site and its natural features. The rendering details the house and its relation to the giant oak tree. As expressed by the architect: "Herein lays the contribution of the giant oak tree. Not only is the tree a delightful visual anchor to the living space, especially when lighted at night, but it completely blocks the sun from the south and southwest from the glass wall of the interior living area, saving thousands of dollars in cooling costs over the past fifty years."<sup>3</sup>

The approach to the house through the courtyard allows one to see through the three main rooms on the first floor, the two-story glass box of the living room, as well as the adjacent dining room to the right of the front door and the family room to the left of the entrance, which have sliding glass doors (Photo 5). The house is a post and beam structure, which means that no walls are load bearing. The flat roof is supported by five evenly spaced squared wood beams, and similar beams extend from the front and rear facades supporting the second floor.<sup>4</sup> The wide roof overhang provides additional shade for the clerestory windows on the second floor. The

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<sup>2</sup> *Buildings Ideas, Better Homes and Gardens*, 1976, Spring/Summer issue featured the house on its cover: "A truly breath-taking house."

<sup>3</sup> Harry Merritt, email to the author, November 19, 2014

<sup>4</sup> Harry Merritt commented on some technical details in an email to the author, December 23, 2014: The "Stressed Skin" roof beams in the Cassisi house are 12" deep, 33'4" long and span 20' and cantilever 6'8" on each end. Solid wood beams would have weighed much more and been very costly.

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most distinctive feature is the two-story living room with its three glass walls at the south end of the house. The large glass panels, separated by narrow wood spines, are one-half inch thick.<sup>5</sup>

The front entrance consists of double doors of redwood and wide, full-length side lights (Photo 5). A broad panel of vertically grooved redwood with a ribbon of clerestory windows set just below the roofline defines the wall of the second story and extends several inches from the main block of the house. Exterior walls of unpainted Ocala block are well crafted; the joints are deeply raked to provide pleasing shadow lines on the masonry surfaces inside and outside. Vertical rows of wood-framed, operable single jalousie windows are set at the top and bottom of the glass panels on the west and east walls of the living room. The fireplace and exposed round chimney flue are set at the center of the south wall (Photo 6). On the east side of the house the open terrace, which has a screen roof, extends across the entire side of the rear of the house. Ocala block forms the wall of the terrace, which is cut into the slope of the lot (Photo 7).<sup>6</sup>

The two-car garage with a flat roof is attached to the north end of the house (Photos 8-9). To the rear of the garage is a one-story structure (10x10) used originally as a sun room, now serves as a greenhouse, with a pyramidal, semi-transparent roof. At the front of the garage, to the west, a narrow planting bed is arranged between the garden wall and the paved driveway leading to the street.

## **INTERIOR**

The double doors of the front entrance open to a narrow foyer with a wall of Ocala block (Photo 10). To the right is the dining room and living room and to the left is the family room. An open floor plan allows occupants to freely circulate between the rooms, unencumbered by doors or partitions. The dining room with its long, terrazzo-topped table imbedded in the center of the room is open to the living room with only a low storage unit set at the center of the south wall, opening on to the two-story living room (Photos 11-12). The north wall of the dining room is of Ocala block and there are sliding glass doors on the west and east walls. The aesthetic impact of the glass-walled living room is pronounced. The south wall is glass set above a six-foot-high wall of Ocala block (to continue the view of the enveloping wall) with a flat expanse of marble centered above the fireplace (Photo 12). In this space, the wood framing the master bedroom on the second level of the north wall seems to float above the expanse of the living room (Photo 13). As mentioned earlier, ribbons of wood-framed louvers are set at the top and bottom in the two-story east and west glass walls (Photo 14).

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<sup>5</sup> Harry Merritt, email to author, December 23, 2014.

<sup>6</sup> Harry Merritt, email to the author, December 23, 2014. Merritt commented: "The Contractor was Ray Brown and all the workman and subcontractors were local. This was the first "Modern" home they had ever built so I had to supervise the construction on a daily basis over the first month or so, but they finely got the hang of it."

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WEIL-CASSISI HOUSE  
GAINESVILLE, ALACHUAL COUNTY, FLORIDA  
SIGNIFICANCE

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The kitchen is positioned to serve the dining space, family room and the rear terrace for social occasions. It still has the original redwood cabinetry and a functional pass-through to the terrace (Photo 15). The adjacent family room also has original redwood storage units and sliding glass doors on the east and west walls (Photo 16). A utility room and the greenhouse are accessed from the east side of the family room, and a small powder room is tucked into the hall leading to the garage from the west side of this room.

The terrace is accessed from sliding glass doors in the dining room and the family room and the pass-through from the kitchen. A three-foot-wide planting bed with tropical plants and trees, including tall banana trees and palms, stretches along the high Ocala block wall that encloses the terrace. Paving blocks cover the floor of the wide space between the plants and the house, with the exception of a wood deck with a Jacuzzi installed at the south end of the terrace (Photos 17-18). Narrow steps on either end of the terrace lead up to the back yard.

Four bedrooms located on the upper story are accessed from the enclosed stairway in the family room leading to the upstairs hall (Photos 19 and 20). The master bedroom has folding, louvered shutters overlooking the space below that can be closed for privacy, or left open to enjoy the light-filled glass box of the living room below (Photos 21 and 22). Adjacent to the master bedroom is a large office space, with an unusual closet that opens from either side that separates the two rooms (Photo 23). The walls in the upstairs are either plastered or paneled with the same rich-looking redwood with vertical grooves that forms the exterior walls. A ribbon of clerestory windows runs along the top of the walls in each room (Photo 24). A large bathroom is located next to the master bedroom. Another bedroom is located next to the office, and two smaller bedrooms share a bathroom at the north end of the second floor.

**ALTERATIONS**

Very few changes have been made to the house and all were done under Harry Merritt's supervision. When the current owners acquired the house in 1974, they asked the architect to design a translucent roof for the small greenhouse, formerly an unroofed kiln room (Photo 8). A few years later they asked him to design the screened covering for the terrace to make it more comfortable and to design the wood patio for the Jacuzzi at the south end of the terrace (Photos 7, 17-18). Under the care of the current owners, this house reflects compatible changes that enhance its function and aesthetic appeal, and does not detract from the original intent or design of the architect.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Harry Merritt, email to the author. November 19, 2014.

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WEIL-CASSISI HOUSE  
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SIGNIFICANCE

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**SUMMARY**

The Weil-Cassisi house is significant under Criterion C for its expression of the modernist style, influenced by the Sarasota School of Architecture, and for the broader context of architectural education in Florida. Architect Harry Merritt, who designed the Weil-Cassisi house, practiced with Gene Leedy from the Sarasota School of Architecture before joining the faculty of the University of Florida, where Merritt taught modern architectural theory and practice for thirty-seven years. The Weil-Cassisi house, built in 1964, exemplifies his high standards of modern architectural design related to its north Florida setting. This building retains a high degree of physical integrity of location, setting, design, materials and workmanship that reflect its significant historic associations.

**HISTORIC CONTEXT**

Gainesville, the county seat of Alachua County, was founded in the 1850s when the Florida Railroad established a stop on its Fernandina to Cedar Key cross-state railroad. It was settled mostly by small farmers and cotton planters from other southern states and reflected their culture and conservative political views. During the Civil War, Gainesville served as a distribution point for food and supplies for the Confederate Army. It expanded after the conflict was over as a center for agriculture and phosphate mining. The founding of the University of Florida in Gainesville in 1906 brought new residents to the city, many of whom built homes in the established neighborhoods near the center of town. Several of these older neighborhoods are now historic districts and exhibit an array of residential building styles that were popular throughout the country.<sup>8</sup> The University itself chose the traditional Collegiate Gothic style for the buildings on its campus, a dozen blocks west of the Alachua County courthouse. Part of the campus is now designated as a historic district.<sup>9</sup>

Following World War II, and like many universities throughout the United States, the University of Florida expanded rapidly as returning veterans enrolled and brought their families with them to Gainesville. In the mid-1950s, the College of Medicine and five other health-related colleges were established, adding further to the growth of the city. New subdivisions, some with mid-century modern architectural influences, were established near the University and to the west of downtown Gainesville to accommodate the growing student and faculty population. The University chose to embrace modern architecture during this period, building modern dormitories, academic buildings, and medical school facilities that stepped away from the Collegiate Gothic style as new areas of the campus were developed in the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Northeast Gainesville Residential District (1980), Pleasant Street Historic District (1989), and Southeast Gainesville Residential District (1988).

<sup>9</sup> University of Florida Campus Historic District (1989).

<sup>10</sup> Some of these buildings were included in an addition to the University of Florida Campus Historic District in 2008.

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SIGNIFICANCE

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**ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT**

According to the National Register of Historic Places nomination of the “Architectural Resources of the Sarasota School of Architecture,” a number of young architects who had received their architectural training under masters of the modern or international style such as Walter Gropius, Mies van der Rohe, Louis Kahn, and Frank Lloyd Wright found their way to the Gulf Coast Florida community of Sarasota between 1941 to 1966.

They were eager to create innovative buildings that adopted the design concepts of the modern movement to Florida’s climate and post-war, casual lifestyle, and found willing clients in the affluent Gulf Coast community of Sarasota. Other talented modernist architects like Alfred Browning Parker designed homes in the Miami area that drew national attention.<sup>11</sup> The renowned architect Frank Lloyd Wright brought his unique vision to the buildings he designed for Florida Southern College in Lakeland in the 1930s, and his principles of organic architecture, of fitting the design of the building to its site and its natural setting, had a lasting impact on architects in Florida. The International style reflected the Bauhaus school of concepts developed in Europe that included the logical use and expression of structure, the separation of structure and enclosure, simple building form and detail, and the honest use and expression of details. The Sarasota School architects blended this with a more humanistic approach that included respect for and adaptation to the environment and to the play of light and shadow.<sup>12</sup>

While the influence of the young Sarasota School architects in the mid-twentieth century and the venerated Frank Lloyd Wright has been studied in depth, less scholarly attention has been drawn to architects in north Florida. These architects practiced in a region of the state more similar in climate, terrain, and traditional cultural values to other southern states across the border, compared to semi-tropical south Florida, and many of these practitioners educated generations of architects who adapted modernist design principles to Florida’s unique and varied environment. Some of the architects cited in the “Architectural Resources of the Sarasota School of Architecture” were graduates of the architectural program at the University of Florida in Gainesville.<sup>13</sup> Jacksonville architect Robert Broward was a student of Frank Lloyd Wright, later taught at University of Florida, and enjoyed a distinguished career. He was inducted into the Florida Artist’s Hall of Fame in 2012.<sup>14</sup> Another prominent north Florida architect is William Morgan, a pioneer in researching the

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<sup>11</sup> Randolph C. Henning. *The Architecture of Alfred Browning Parker*. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2011) Parker also taught at University of Florida, and his papers and drawings are part of the Smathers Library collection at the University of Florida. Other Florida architects are discussed by Jan Hochstim in *Florida Modern: Residential Architecture 1945-1970* (New York: Rizzoli, 2004).

<sup>12</sup> Architectural Resources of the Sarasota School of Architecture Multiple Property listed on the National Register in 2007. This study closely follows the careers of 14 architects considered to be the leaders of the Sarasota School.

<sup>13</sup> Among those listed in the Architectural Resources of the Sarasota School of Architecture as having studied at University of Florida are Gene Leedy, William Rupp, Edward Seibert, and Carl Abbott.

<sup>14</sup> Florida Artist’s Hall of fame at <http://dos.myflorida.com>, accessed January 10, 2015.

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WEIL-CASSISI HOUSE  
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origins of architectural creativity, who received the honorary degree of Doctor of Arts from the University of Florida in 2012. After graduating from the Harvard Graduate School of Design and working in the offices of Paul Rudolph, he established a successful practice in Jacksonville in 1961. Morgan served as a visiting studio critic at University of Florida in the 1960s and as the Beinecke-Reeves Distinguished Professor of Architectural Preservation from 1998-2000.<sup>15</sup>

**ARCHITECT HARRY MERRITT**

Harry Merritt, the architect of the Weil-Cassisi House, was born in 1929 and received his BS in architecture from Clemson University in Columbia, SC, in 1951. After serving during the Korean War as an officer in the Army Corps of Engineers, he attended the Graduate School of Design (GSD) at Harvard University, where he studied under Walter Gropius, from 1953 to 1955. He received the Master of Architecture degree and upon the recommendation of Paul Rudolph, then a visiting critic at the GSD, he was invited to join the Winter Haven office of Gene Leedy, a prominent member of the Sarasota School of Architecture.<sup>16</sup>

A display of Harry Merritt's work at the Florida AIA convention in 1959 attracted the attention of Turpin Bannister, dean of the College of Architecture at the University of Florida.<sup>17</sup> The dean offered Merritt a one-year visiting professorship, which turned into a permanent appointment in 1960.<sup>18</sup> Professor Merritt became chairman of the University of Florida Graduate Design Program in 1976 and retired from teaching in 1996. A number of his students became prominent Florida architects and credit their success to his teaching and mentorship. One of his students, Sarasota architect Guy Peterson, commented that Merritt, a talented architect, passed on his understanding of the principles of Le Corbusier, Gropius and the Bauhaus in his classes at University of Florida and his appreciation of the logic, proportion, rhythm, and balance that is a synthesis of the International style.<sup>19</sup> However, Merritt commented that the strength of the University of Florida program was its diversity, one that avoided the teaching of a set "style." His own "Design Concept," an integral aspect of his instructional practice, was based on first arriving at the function of the space, which was worked out between

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.dcp.ufl.edu/news/morgan>, accessed, January 10, 2015

<sup>16</sup> Harry Merritt provided the biographical information in this section.

<sup>17</sup> Turpin Bannister was the third dean of the University of Florida College of Architecture and Fine Arts, from 1957 through 1965. The College was established in 1929.

<sup>18</sup> Leland Shaw, interview with the author, January 30, 2015. Dean Bannister also brought in Dan Branch and Leland Shaw, young architects with academic backgrounds from graduate schools (Columbia and Berkeley, respectively) steeped in modernist theory in the 1960s to bring the University of Florida program up to date. Shaw credits Harry Merritt with providing a strong influence on the University of Florida graduate program in architecture and for his interest in the emerging field of ecological studies as it applied to the impact of buildings on the environment.

<sup>19</sup> Saxon Henry. *Four Florida Moderns* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2010) 216. 221-222. Guy Peterson, a student of Harry Merritt, is one of the four featured architects.

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the architect and the client. That Design Concept would guide the architect in the placement of various spaces and the honest expression of the resultant forms.<sup>20</sup>

Like the Sarasota School architects, Merritt was known for his seemingly minimal wood, glass and concrete block structures that helped to define Florida's post-war, mid-century modern architecture in the early 1960s.<sup>21</sup> Many of his early buildings, such as the Weil-Cassisi House, drew on the International style that was devoid of ornamentation and used volume, light and shade to create spaces with an authentic regional aesthetic. Like Paul Rudolph, Merritt attended graduate school at Harvard and was highly influenced by the modernist design concepts of Walter Gropius, which emphasized geometrical forms, smooth surfaces, and modern materials rather than architecture based on historical precedents.

Gropius, former director of the Bauhaus, left Germany in 1937 and became the chair of Harvard's department of architecture, a post he held until his retirement in 1952. He introduced the Bauhaus design philosophy, which was very popular with his students and spread to other architectural schools in the U.S. The Weil-Cassisi House, like Gropius's innovative principles and the houses Paul Rudolph designed in Florida, separated a box into flat roof planes and floating platforms subdivided by simple screen walls.<sup>22</sup>

Harry Merritt maintained an active practice while teaching at University of Florida and designed thirty-six residences and multi-family structures as well as twenty-two commercial buildings.<sup>23</sup> Many of his clients were University of Florida faculty members and physicians associated with the College of Medicine who appreciated his distinctive modernist house designs. Buildings he designed still stand out not only in Gainesville, but in coastal towns like Cedar Key and Crescent Beach. The Weil-Cassisi House, built for a member of the faculty of the College of Medicine, was featured in a national publication in 1976 (Figures 1-3). Through his residential projects, including a high-rise apartment, several churches, and numerous commercial buildings, he has left a lasting legacy of modern design in the region.

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<sup>20</sup> Harry Merritt, email to the author, December 27, 2015.

<sup>21</sup> John Howey. *The Sarasota School of Architecture: 1941-1966*. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995), 3.

<sup>22</sup> Howey, 142; Henry, 216.

<sup>23</sup> The University of Florida Smathers Library holds a collection of more than two dozen architectural plans and renderings of buildings designed by Harry Merritt.

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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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“Architectural Resources of the Sarasota School of Architecture,” Multiple Property Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

Returned



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WEIL-CASSISI HOUSE  
GAINESVILLE, ALACHUAL COUNTY, FLORIDA  
GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

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**Verbal Boundary Description:**

The west boundary of Lot 22 in Colclough Hills subdivision, which comprises the entire property of this nomination, is formed by SW 5th Court and stretches south approximately 81 feet from the edge of the curve of the cul de sac. The south boundary stretches 210 feet from the road in an easterly direction to the corner of the lot, then runs approximately 227 feet to the northeast corner. The north boundary runs 200 feet south to the west boundary at the edge of the street at a sharp angle.

Tax Parcel: 15700-022-000 Township 10S, Section 0, Range 20E

**Legal Description:** D L CLINCH GRT COLCLOUGH HILL I OR 35/ 156 LOT 22 OR 841/788

**Boundary Justification:**

Lot 22 contains all of the resources of the Weil-Cassisi House nomination.

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WEIL-CASSISI HOUSE  
GAINESVILLE, ALACHUAL COUNTY, FLORIDA  
LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

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**PHOTO LIST**

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2. 3105 SW Court, Gainesville (Alachua County), Florida
3. Murray D. Laurie
4. Murray D. Laurie
5. November, 2014
6. View of SW Fifth Court in front of Cassis House, facing southwest
7. Photo 1 of 24
  
6. View of Weil-Cassisi House and front wall, facing northeast
7. Photo 2 of 24
  
6. View of gate and path, inside of front courtyard, facing west
7. Photo 3 of 24
  
6. View of front façade of house, facing east.
7. Photo 4 of 24
  
6. View of large oak tree inside of courtyard, facing southwest
7. Photo 5 of 24
  
6. View of chimney and south side of house, facing west
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6. View of rear of house showing screen over terrace, facing northwest
7. Photo 7 of 24
  
6. View of rear and north end of house, roof over greenhouse, garage roof, facing west
7. Photo 8 of 24
  
6. View of driveway, garage, and north wall, facing east.
7. Photo 9 of 24
  
6. View of front door, facing east
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6. View of Dining room and part of living room, facing southeast
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6. View of living room, pass-through to dining room, master bedroom above, facing north  
7. Photo 13 of 24

6. View of south wall of living room and front courtyard, facing west  
7. Photo 14 of 24

6. View of kitchen, facing northwest  
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6. View of family room next to kitchen, facing east  
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6. View of terrace, facing north  
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6. View of terrace and deck for Jacuzzi and glass wall of living room, facing south  
7. Photo 18 of 24

6. View of staircase to second floor, facing south  
7. Photo 19 of 24

6. View of second floor hall, facing north  
7. Photo 20 of 24

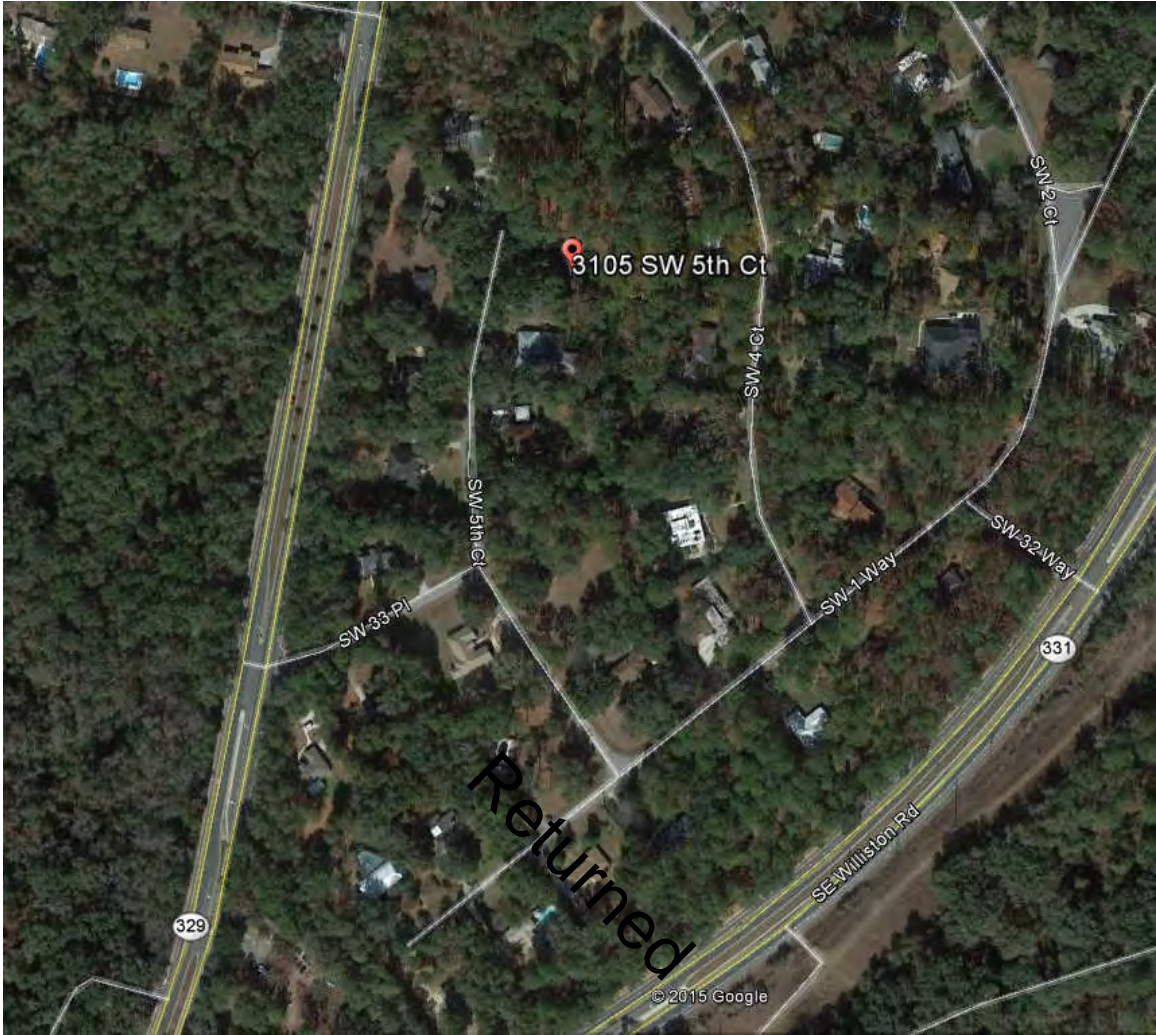
6. View of master bedroom, door to hall on left and door to master bath on right, facing north  
7. Photo 21 of 24

6. View of master bedroom, overlooking living room, with closet on the right, facing south  
7. Photo 22 of 24

6. View of study next to master bedroom, facing northwest  
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6. View of rear bedroom, facing northeast  
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WEIL-CASSISI HOUSE  
3105 SW 5<sup>TH</sup> COURT, GAINESVILLE, FL

Latitude: 29°29'25.64"N  
Longitude: 82°19'47.16"W

UTM References

Zone	Easting	Northing
17R	371265	3277811



# Better Homes and Gardens®

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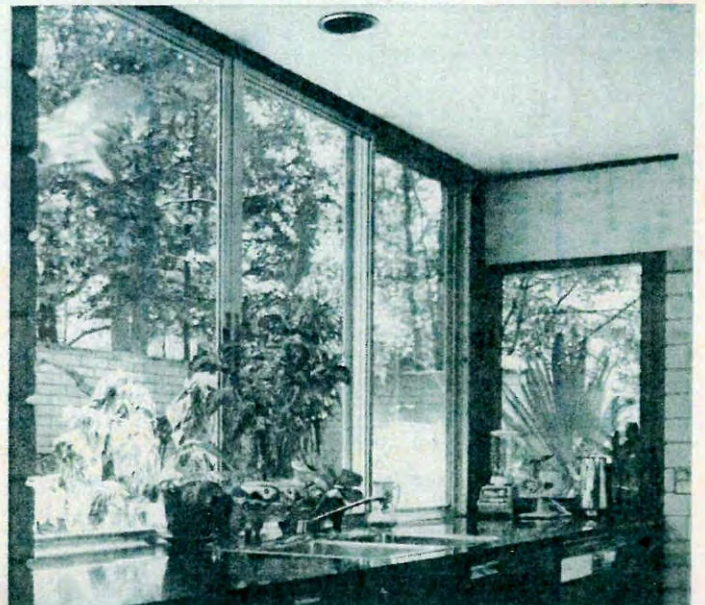
# BUILDING IDEAS



TRADITIONALS

SPECIAL SECTION:

HOME BUILDING



# A truly breath-taking house

With walls which are mostly glass on the lower level and a two-story living room, this contemporary seems to float over its well-landscaped site. Brick walls around the perimeter turn the entire lot into a totally private indoor/outdoor environment.

To preserve an oak (said to be one of the South's largest), the house was located toward the rear of the lot (be-

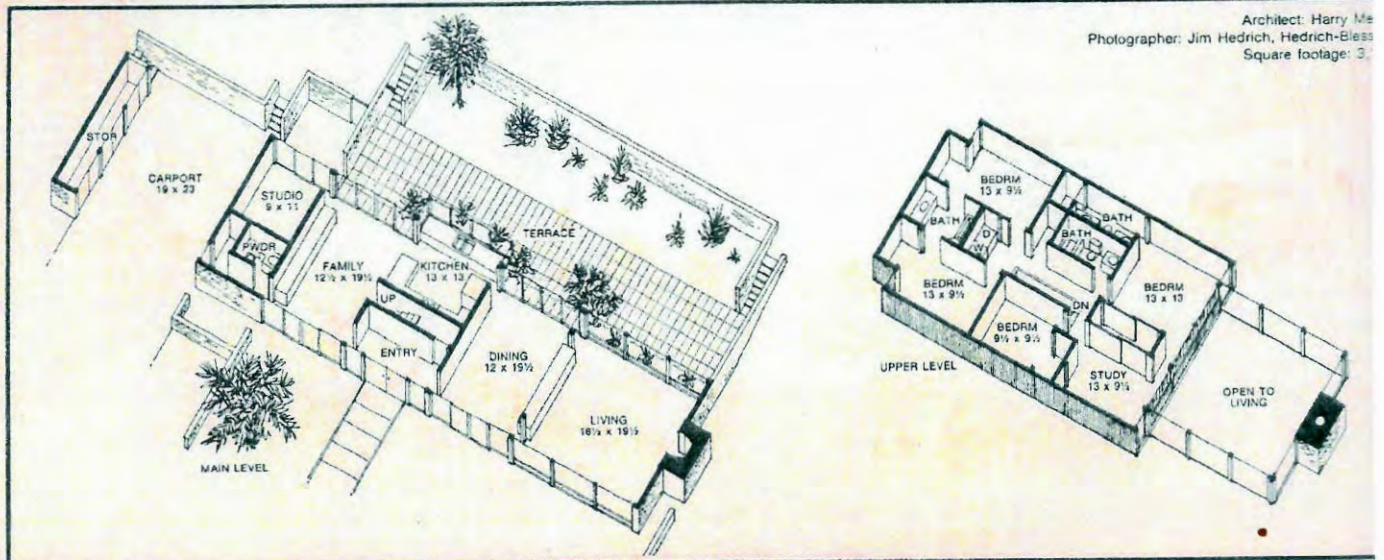
low). Dramatically simple post-and-beam construction lets the interior open wide, front and rear.

The big living room (right) visually borrows even more space from the dining area and the master suite upstairs. Shutters separate the areas when more privacy is desired.

A terrace stretches across the rear (opposite, lower left); it's accessible

from all main living areas. To catch light from three sides, one kitchen counter juts out onto the terrace opposite, lower right).

In plan, the house is a simple tangle, with the upper level several feet wider than the one below. It features three bedrooms and a study upstairs, the three baths and centrally located laundry facilities.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Weil-Cassisi House

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: FLORIDA, Alachua

DATE RECEIVED: 08/07/15      DATE OF PENDING LIST: 08/28/15  
DATE OF 16<sup>th</sup> DAY: 09/14/15      DATE OF 45<sup>th</sup> DAY: 09/22/15

REFERENCE NUMBER: 15000587

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

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

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT     RETURN     REJECT    9.15.2015    DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

*See Attached Comments*

*(Emailed to State)  
9-15-2015*

RECOM./CRITERIA Return  
REVIEWER [Signature]      DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_  
TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_      DATE [Signature]  
DOCUMENTATION see attsched comments Y/N

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





# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20240

## The United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

### National Register of Historic Places Evaluation/Return Sheet

Property Name: Weil-Cassisi House, Alachua County, FL  
(Sarasota School of Architecture MPS)

Reference Number: 150000587

#### Reason for Return

The Weil-Cassisi House appears to meet National Register Criterion C, but the nomination is being returned for substantive and technical revision.

The Weil-Cassisi House was submitted under the MPS for the Sarasota School of Architecture in Florida. The nomination notes that the architect, Harry Merritt, worked in the office of one of the fourteen names architects who comprise the Sarasota School, but does not explain how his philosophy was influenced or shaped by that experience. The registration requirements for Residential Buildings under the MPS state that: "They should reflect characteristics of the stylistic principles of Sarasota School of Architecture and have been designed by one of the fifteen architects associated with that movement or an architect that followed their stylistic principles." This nomination does not address directly how the Weil-Cassisi House reflects the "characteristics of the stylistic principles" nor does it discuss how Merritt "followed their stylistic principles." It notes that Merritt studied at Harvard under Gropius and that he instilled on his students at the University of Florida a philosophy of his own "Design Concept." This does not serve to tie Merritt to the Sarasota School, nor does it illustrate how he was influenced by or utilized the design concepts of that school, or how he might have been influenced by his time in Leedy's office. Please address the relationship of the architect and his work to the registration requirements of the MPS.

The nomination references the architect himself as a primary source of information. Typically, the National Register does not list properties where the associative significance is tied to a living person. If Harry Merritt is indeed still living, a resubmitted nomination should address his status as an architect. Is he

Property Name: Weil-Cassisi House, Alachua County, FL  
(Sarasota School of Architecture MPS)  
Reference Number: 150000587

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still working? Does this example of his work reflect a distinct period of design philosophy that is essentially over?

If you wish to submit this nomination under the Sarasota School of Architecture MPS, you will need to address the association to the registration requirements more closely. In doing so, in Section 8, you should also specifically address the property type from Section F that the house meets, and explain how it meets that property type. Or, you could resubmit it as a stand-alone nomination as a Modern Movement residential building in Gainesville. In either case, you will need to address the "living architect" issue.

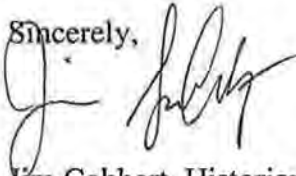
Technical Problems:

In section 5, the property is classified as a "district" with both private and local government ownership. Please correct.

In Section 7, please utilize the Architectural Classifications found in our Bulletin. In this case, the Weil-Cassisi House would be classified as MODERN MOVEMENT.

In footnote #6, on page 7-3, please change the word "finely" to "finally."

We appreciate the opportunity to review this nomination and hope that you find these comments useful. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. I can be reached at (202) 354-2275 or email at <[James\\_Gabbert@nps.gov](mailto:James_Gabbert@nps.gov)>.

Sincerely,  


Jim Gabbert, Historian  
National Register of Historic Places  
9/15/2015



## FLORIDA DEPARTMENT of STATE

RICK SCOTT  
Governor

KEN DETZNER  
Secretary of State

RECEIVED 2280  
OCT - 9 2015  
Nat. Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service

October 1, 2015

J. Paul Loether, Deputy Keeper and Chief,  
National Register and National Historic Landmark Programs  
Department of the Interior  
1201 Eye Street, N.W., 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Washington, D.C. 20005

Dear Mr. Loether:

The enclosed disks contain the true and correct copy of the revised nomination for the **Weil-Cassisi House (FMSF #8AL5707), in Alachua County**, to the National Register of Historic Places. The related materials (digital images, maps, and site plan) are included. This narrative text has been revised per the comments of our federal reviewer, Mr. James Gabbert.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at (850) 245-6333 if you have any questions or require any additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Desiree Estabrook".

Desiree Estabrook  
Historic Preservation Supervisor, Survey & Registration  
Bureau of Historic Preservation

### Division of Historical Resources

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850.245.6300 • 850.245.6436 (Fax) [fheritage.com](http://fheritage.com)

Promoting Florida's History and Culture [VivaFlorida.org](http://VivaFlorida.org)

