1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name:

PRINCIPIA COLLEGE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Other Name/Site Number:

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: N/A

City/Town: Elsah

Not for publication:____

State: IL County: Jersey

Code: 083

Zip Code: 62028

Vicinity: X

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property	Category of Property
Private: X	Building(s):
Public-local:	District: X
Public-State:	Site:
Public-Federal:	Structure:
	Object:

Number o	of Resources within	Property	
	Contributing	Noncontribu	uting
	24	23	buildings
			sites
			structures objects
	24	23	Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register:_____

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing:

4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria.

Signature of Certifying Official

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property _____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I, hereby certify that this property is:

Entered in the National Register _____

- Determined eligible for the National Register
- ____ Determined not eligible for the _____
- National Register
- Removed from the National Register
- Other (explain):

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

Date

6. FUNCTION OR USE

- Historic: Education Education Education
- Current: Education Education Education

- Sub: College Education related Research facility
- Sub: College Education related Research facility

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Revivals: Tudor Revival; Colonial Revival

MATERIALS:	
Foundation:	Concrete
Walls:	Brick and stone
Roof:	Ceramic tile
Other:	Wood concrete

Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

Principia College Historic District includes 47 buildings that service the operation of the only college in the world dedicated to the educational needs of young Christian Scientists. The school is set on spectacular limestone bluffs overlooking the The campus is laid out as an English village Mississippi River. that follows the landform of the hills. The college buildings include eleven structures designed by Bernard Maybeck of San Francisco, and a number of other structures designed by Maybeck's chosen successor for the college work, Henry Gutterson and other San Francisco architects who worked in Maybeck's office. In addition, there are six buildings designed by the St. Louis architectural firm of Smith-Entzeroth during the 1970s. The original plan for the college was developed in the middle 1920s for a lakeside site in Overland, Missouri. From 1923 to 1930, the offices of Maybeck and White prepared plans for a chapel, classroom buildings, and a number of dormitories. In 1930, the Principia Corporation decided not build their new college on the Missouri site, so they purchased several thousand acres of bluffland along the Mississippi River in Elsah, Illinois, in November of that year. Bernard Maybeck had been hired by Frederic E. Morgan, the Director of Principia College in the 1920s and 1930s, after extended contacts in California. They worked closely together for more than 15 years on the college plan, including a driving trip east in 1925 to look at churches and college buildings.

The college landscape plan derives from a road system that was in place at the time of purchase in 1930. The campus had been the summer home of a wealthy St. Louisan, Lucy V. Semple Ames, but her large stone mansion, Notchcliff, had burned in 1911. The principal planner and landscape architect was Butler Stevens Sturtevant, a graduate of the University of Southern California and the Harvard School of Landscape Architecture. His best known commissions had been Normandy Park, Washington, and the new rose gardens, Butchart Gardens, Victoria, British Columbia.

Eleven of the original Maybeck buildings now survive. Two structures (intended to be temporary when built)--the wood-frame, shingle-clad dining hall attached to a brick octagonal kitchen, and one of two wood-frame, shingle-clad classroom buildings--were razed in 1968 and 1982 respectively. The Maybeck buildings constructed between 1931 and 1938 are nearly all steel-framed and include a good deal of concrete work on the interiors.

The buildings were located by Frederic Morgan with architect Bernard Maybeck. There is an extensive archive at the college which details their collaboration over 17 years. The architects in Maybeck's office who worked on the project, such as Edward Hussey, can also be documented. Much of the finishing of construction and implementing of Maybeck's designs was carried out by a well-known California architect, Henry H. Gutterson, who had the requisite experience and the trust of the architect to complete Bernard Maybeck's designs. A note about Henry H. Gutterson, AIA: Born in Minnesota, he was educated at the University of California and the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris. He worked in the offices of Daniel H. Burnham, Willis Polk and John Galen Howard, and formed his own office in 1913, often collaborating with other architects. Gutterson designed the Sunday School in back of Maybeck's First Church of Christ Scientist in Berkeley, the small neighborhood complex nearby called Rose Walk (also with Maybeck), and did the Second Church of Christ Scientist in Berkeley in his own studio.

The Mistake House (1931): The first structure built at Elsah by Maybeck was an experimental building originally named the Sample House, and now known as the Mistake House. Between April and June of 1931 Maybeck personally supervised the construction of this reference-point for the new college construction. It was his intention to use the Sample House as a basis for written instructions coming from his San Francisco office to the architects and construction supervisors in Elsah. The little building includes all kinds of construction techniques including half-timbering mixed with brick, concrete, and stone. In order to imitate the effect of thatch in an English village, Maybeck used gunite on the north slope of the Mistake House roof with poured concrete dormers and a concrete chimney. Principia administrators required that the architect experiment with terra cotta tile on the south slope, the method ultimately adopted for the executed dormitories. (Contributing)

The College Chapel (1931-1934): From the very 2. beginning of the planning of Principia, the student body had requested that the Chapel be the first building constructed, and they asked that it be American Colonial in style. After studying meeting houses and churches in Massachusetts and the exposed site high on a bluff overlooking the river, Maybeck carefully selected a design that involved the use of steel, concrete, and Bedford Indiana limestone. The interior of the Chapel is faced in random width boards. Maybeck worked very closely with Frederic Morgan on the design for this central feature, hoping to embody the ideals of solidity and individuality. In order to avoid the "institutional effect," Maybeck placed the windows with uneven spacing. He often referred to the Chapel as his favorite building at Principia. (Contributing)

3. Howard House (1931-1932): This women's dormitory was the first of the campus residence halls to be completed, and Maybeck was relatively free to use stone, brick, and half-timber throughout. He even included a concrete roof on the steel frame. This three-story building sets the manorial scale for the residences, and it is especially rich in its combined use of concrete, stone, half-timber, and brick. The interior includes a fine concrete Gothic stairway and hallways that evoke a mood of mystery. (Contributing)

4. Buck House (1931-32): In this men's dormitory, Maybeck was also reasonably free to use all the building materials he wanted, but the concrete roof was not used here. However, the framing of the concrete stair hall is remarkable. This two-story dormitory reflects the scale of cottages on a country roadside. The roof shows the first experiments with coloristic effects with tile. (Contributing)

5. Anderson Hall (1931-1934): This large, brick women's dormitory contains Maybeck's most spectacular interior on the campus, a concrete great hall with an amazing set of trusses that include his wife's monogram in Gothic letters. Here, the coloration of the roof tile creates the impression of water washing the ridge and leaving moss growing at the eaves. (Contributing)

<u>6. Rackham Court (1931-1934):</u> This men's dormitory has a couple of intimate courtyards and a separate living room. The mixture of brick and half timber is similar to that of Anderson Hall. The rubble stone surrounds on the living room windows imply repairs to the existing Tudor forms. The main interior stairway has Gothic iron banisters and lavish use of wooden forms. (Contributing)

7. Watson Laboratory (1934-1974): This one-story, science facility was constructed of yellow tile during the fall of 1935 before the college students arrived at the Elsah campus. There have been a number of additions to the building, including a bulky lecture hall and some unfortunate aluminum sheds in the 1970s. (Contributing)

8. Radford House (1934-35): A single-story, wooden classroom building that Maybeck prepared just before the college students came to Elsah in 1935. In 1954, the structure was moved to its present site along the bluffs. The new location puts Radford as close to the Chapel as it was on its original site. The building now relates well to its neighbor, Buck House. After a 1987 interior fire, it was converted into an art studio and gallery. (Contributing)

<u>9. Morey Field House(1937):</u> This combination of a gymnasium and auditorium was one of Maybeck's final buildings at Elsah. It is a large, single-story, steel and concrete structure carefully sited in a hollow. The rear exterior walls are covered with the same type of tiles used in Watson laboratory, thus relating the two buildings. (Contributing) 10. Brooks House (1938-1945): This small, brick, men's dormitory has a central living room with wings around a courtyard. It was built in two stages, with the south wing coming to completion after World War II. On its west elevation, the building is two stories, but the east front is only a single story. Brooks House was designed by Maybeck. (Contributing)

<u>11. Sylvester House (1931-1946):</u> This large, women's house was designed as a men's house on the site of Brooks House. The complex Maybeck plan was adapted to the present hillside by Henry Gutterson in 1946. This Maybeck-designed building, dating from 1946, has been evaluated as contributing to the district and is the most fully realized Maybeck design at Principia. (Contributing)

The following buildings were part of the original plan as Maybeck intended and were executed by his office:

<u>12. Hutchinson House (1932):</u> This is a two-story, stone and half-timber residence designed by St. Louis architect Guy Study for the Dean of the College. It has a 1981 porch. (Contributing)

<u>13. Knolltop House (1935):</u> This one-story, shingled house was designed by Ed Hussey of the Maybeck office. (Contributing)

<u>14. Gamble House (1935):</u> This wooden cottage was designed as a faculty residence by Ed Hussey. (Contributing)

<u>15. Gertsch House (1935):</u> This one-story, clapboarded house was designed by Ed Hussey for the Dean of Men. (Contributing)

<u>16. Notchcliff A (1935):</u> This two-story, Tudor brick apartment for faculty and staff was designed by Guy Study of St. Louis. (Contributing)

<u>17. Robertson Home (1936):</u> This is a two-story, clapboarded faculty house. (Contributing)

<u>18. Cox Cottage (1940):</u> The campus infirmary is a one-story, concrete building, with a hipped roof and a provincial flavor, designed by Berkeley architect Henry Gutterson. (Contributing)

<u>19. Morgan Cottage (1940):</u> This was the home of the College's founder. It is a single-story, shingled house designed by Ed Hussey of the Maybeck office. (Contributing)

<u>20. Beeman House (1940):</u> This one-story, brick residence for single staff was designed by Henry Gutterson of Berkeley. (Contributing)

<u>21. Duplex (1940):</u> A shingled cottage by Henry Gutterson. (Contributing)

<u>22. Laughlin Home (1941):</u> This is a two-story, brick faculty residence. (Contributing)

23. Hitchcock (1946): This concrete and half-timber, two-story residence for staff was designed by Henry Gutterson. Both of the small staff residences done by Henry Gutterson in 1946 are listed as contributing because they were done when he was revising Sylvester House, and they are compatible to Maybeck's earlier buildings. (Contributing)

<u>24. Williams House (1946):</u> This two-story, brick residence for staff was designed by Henry Gutterson. (Contributing)

<u>25. Notchliff B (1946):</u> This is a two-story, brick apartment building intended for married veterans. (Non-Contributing)

<u>26-28. Piasa Point Houses (1947):</u> These three identical tract houses were for faculty. (Non-Contributing)

<u>29. Marshall Brooks Library (1955):</u> This is a three-story, steel and brick building by Kenneth Wischmeyer of St. Louis. (Non-Contributing)

<u>30. School of Nations (1958):</u> This is a two-story, steel and brick classroom building by Kenneth Wischmeyer. (Non-Contributing)

<u>31. Voney Art Studio (1962):</u> This is a frame art studio by Risley Gould of Los Angeles. (Non-Contributing)

<u>32. Cox School of Government Building (1964)</u>: This is a three-story, steel and brick office and classroom building by Kenneth Wischmeyer. (Non-Contributing)

<u>33. Cox Auditorium (1964):</u> This is a steel and brick auditorium by Kenneth Wischmeyer. (Non-Contributing)

<u>34. Gehner House (1964):</u> This is a steel and brick, two story men's residence by Risley Gould. (Non-Contributing)

<u>35. Notchcliff C (1965):</u> This is a two-story, cinderblock faculty apartment building by a local Alton contractor. (Non-Contributing) <u>36. Ferguson House (1966):</u> This is a steel and brick, two-story men's residence by Risley Gould. (Non-Contributing)

<u>37.</u> Lowrey House (1966): This is a steel and brick, two-story women's dormitory by Smith-Entzeroth. (Non-Contributing)

<u>38. Hay Field House (1967):</u> This is a steel and brick men's gymnasium by Kenneth Wischmeyer. (Non-Contributing)

<u>39. Howard Center (1968):</u> This is a steel and brick dining room, bookstore and student center by Smith-Entzeroth. (Non-Contributing)

<u>40. Clara McNabb House (1969):</u> This is a steel and brick, two-story women's residence by Smith-Entzeroth. (Non-Contributing)

<u>41. Joseph McNabb House (1970):</u> This is a steel and brick, two-story men's residence by Risley Gould. (Non-Contributing)

<u>42.</u> Davis Drama-Music Building (1970): This is a three-story, steel and brick performing arts building by Kenneth Wischmeyer with a 1991 wing by Lawrence Partnership. (Non-Contributing)

<u>43. Gate House (1971):</u> This is a small, brick gate house by Smith-Enzeroth. (Non-Contributing)

<u>44. Maintenance shed (1970):</u> This is a steel multi-purpose building. (Non-Contributing)

<u>45. Guest House (1979):</u> This is a two-story, frame guest facility by Smith-Entzeroth. (Non-Contributing)

<u>46. Football shed (1985):</u> This is a standard steel dressing room. (Non-Contributing)

<u>47. Hexberg Tennis Center (1986):</u> This is a standard steel indoor tennis arena. (Non-Contributing)

During several of his visits to Elsah, Maybeck lived in the village. In 1931, he helped the Spatz brothers construct a small, stone filling station on LaSalle Street which he believed would be compatible with the old stone houses across the street. (Now the Christian Science Reading Room). In his letters, Maybeck urged the contractors and architects to study the stonework on the filling station as a model for the kind of masonry he wanted on the college dormitories, so there was an important relationship between the vernacular architecture of Elsah and the construction of the English village on the bluff land above.

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: Nationally: <u>X</u> Statewide: <u>Locally:</u>

Applicable National Register Criteria:			В	c <u>x</u>	D			
Criteria Considerat (Exceptions):		<u>X</u>	B	c	D	E	 F	G_X_
NHL Criteria:	2,4							
NHL Criteria Exception:	1, 8							
NHL Theme(s):			tectur Period 3. T	Reviv	al			
Areas of Significan	ce:		Archit	ecture				
Period(s) of Signif	icance:		1931-1	946				
Significant Dates:			1940					
Significant Person(s):		Bernar	d Mayb	eck			
Cultural Affiliatio	n:							
Architect/Builder:			Bernar Henry	-		•		

State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

The Principia College Historic District represents the final phase of the career of Bernard Maybeck (1862-1957) as a designer of houses and public buildings, and as an architect significantly involved in campus planning and design for educational institutions. A recent poll of the American Institute of Architects rated Maybeck ninth on a proposed list of the ten greatest architects this country has produced. As early as 1949, Lewis Mumford said, "But for Bernard Maybeck's fine reticence, his work would have been hailed long ago as the West Coast counterpart of Wright's prairie architecture."

In 1983, Richard Longstreth summed up his views on Maybeck's importance:

Maybeck also had an impact on the future. His individualism has been a major source of inspiration to designers in the Bay area from the early twentieth century to the present. His rustic buildings in particular have fostered a local tradition. At its best, this tendency has furthered San Francisco's role as an architectural center... San Francisco has been one of the few places where several generations of modernists have looked to a tradition-oriented architecture from the recent past for new ideas.¹

In spite of the lack of emphasis given to Maybeck's work with Principia College, this commission was a principal focus for his career from 1923 until he severed his connection with the college in 1940. Maybeck worked on three academic communities during his long career. Early in his practice he administered the international competition for the Phoebe A. Hearst Architectural Plan for the University of California. He did not produce a master plan himself, but he did design several buildings for the University early in his career--most notably the faculty club-and he collaborated with Julia Morgan on the Hearst Memorial Gymnasium. In the early 1920s, he sketched out a plan for Mills College in Oakland, but almost none of his ideas were actually used.

The Principia College commission, on the other hand, kept Maybeck's office functioning through the Great Depression, and the plan was carried out in spite of major differences, including a change of site. Maybeck designed 13 buildings that were constructed at Elsah, Illinois, between 1931 and 1946, and 11 of those structures are still standing. The concentration of Maybeck buildings on the Elsah bluffs rivals the collection of houses of his design still surviving in the Berkeley Hills.

¹ Longstreth, Richard. On the Edge of the World: Four Architects in San Francisco at the Turn of the Century. Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1983. MIT Press, p. 354. Maybeck's active career spanned the years from 1885 to 1937, and he is best known for his domestic work in San Francisco (particularly the Roos House of 1909), and his work at the Panama-Pacific Exposition of 1915, including the Palace of Fine The Palace has been described by Reyner Banham as the only Arts. eclectic building that rivals the Boston Public Library. His First Church of Christ, Scientist, Berkeley (1910) (designated a National Historic Landmark in 1977), is considered by many to be his masterpiece in his craftsman style. In the 1920s, Maybeck carried out several commissions for Earle C. Anthony, including a large, French medieval house in Los Angeles in 1928. From 1923 onward, his career evolved around the Principia College commission, and in the early 1930s the work at Elsah was the mainstay of Maybeck's office. He wrote ecstatic letters to Principia Director Frederic Morgan about how important this commission was for him--a chance to design a college where graduates could get the refinement that would help them "save the pieces when the world seems to go to smash."² The archive at the college shows, through drawings and letters, the evolution of Maybeck's thinking on the buildings, particularly the chapel. He convinced the college administrators that an English village would "express the spirit of home, of peace, and of absolute harmony with [its] physical surroundings." Also, Principia College was intended to foster the individuality of each student by offering dormitory rooms that were different from each other, thus avoiding "the institutional effect."³

Bernard Ralph Maybeck has been described as an architect of "mood," and he also was a pioneer in bold construction techniques, and a believer in making the ideas of the past relevant to the present. The executed buildings at Principia College show all these facets of Maybeck's approach--from the classical Chapel to the vernacular aspects of the little Mistake House on the Chapel Green. He clothed his historical references in modern materials--steel, concrete, gunite, and even glass blocks.

The Principia College commission is exceptionally well-documented because it grew out of an association between Maybeck and Frederic E. Morgan, the Director of Principia college in the 1920s and 1930s. They originally met in Montecito, California, where Maybeck designed a home for Morgan's father-in-law, A.E. Bingham. After conferences in the Bohemian Grove of Redwoods, north of San Francisco, Morgan and Maybeck developed a remarkable architect-client relationship. The physical distance between St. Louis and San Francisco meant that the two men had an extensive correspondence about all aspects of this commission. The files at Principia College include 17 years of letters, a number of transcripts of taped interviews with Frederic Morgan and the architects who worked in Maybeck's

² Letter from Bernard Maybeck to Frederic Morgan, 1931. Archives, Principia College.

³ Ibid., 1933.

office, many working drawings and pastel renderings representing all stages of planning the buildings, and hundreds of photographs of the construction process. In 1973 Robert M. Craig, who now teaches architectural history at Georgia Tech, prepared a 700-page dissertation at Cornell entitled "Maybeck at Principia."

During the construction phase at Elsah, Maybeck was assisted by Edward Hussey, a graduate of the University of California School of Architecture, who worked for nearly ten years with the Berkeley architect Julia Morgan. Hussey communicated regularly with Maybeck during the middle 1930s as the architect's representative in Illinois. Hussey had a considerable influence on the construction and design phases of Anderson Hall and Morey Field House. As Maybeck retired from the supervision of the Principia College project, he turned over much of the later work to a Berkeley architect he knew and trusted, Henry Higby Gutterson, a graduate of the University of California who also attended the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. Gutterson reworked Maybeck's design for Sylvester House, and also designed a number of the smaller buildings on the west side of the campus: Cox Cottage, the duplex, Beeman, Williams, and Hitchcock, in particular. His work was not as bold as that of Maybeck, but it maintained the scale and English atmosphere of the older buildings.

Although two of the wooden buildings are now gone, the administration of Principia has been very careful in its maintenance of the Maybeck heritage. The college has recently replaced the tile roof of Rackham Court at great expense, using tile similar to the material used for the original roof.

Often Maybeck referred to himself as an artist and a lover of beauty. He believed the rolling hills of Elsah gave him a site that rivalled Heidelberg in Germany and West Point in the United States. He consciously selected an English village as the right concept to embody Principia's educational system that would produce constructive thinkers. Most of the executed buildings are dormitories, and they do indeed appear to have a positive effect on the students who live in them. These large buildings are located in such a way that they appear to have grown into position (in spite of the fact that a number of them were adaptations of designs for the campus that was to have been in Missouri). A careful reading of the Craig dissertation, combined with a visit to the Principia campus, reveals the way in which a romantic architect and his sympathetic client were able to design and locate buildings that were intended to embody and transmit ideals.

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES 9.

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Banham, Reyner, "The Plot Against Bernard Maybeck," Journal of the Society of Architectural Historian, (March, 1984).

Craig, Robert M., "Maybeck at Principia, A Study of An Architect-Client Relationship," Ph.D. Dissertation, Cornell University, 1973

Jordy, William H., American Architects and Their Buildings: Progressive and Academic Ideals at the Turn of the Century; Anchor Press/Doubleday, Garden City, New York, 1976. Vol. 3.

Longstreth, Richard., On the Edge of the World: Four Architects in San Francisco at the Turn of the Century, Cambridge, Mass., 1983. MIT Press and the Architectural History Foundation, New York.

Maybeck, Jacomena, Maybeck, The Family View; Berkeley, California, 1980. Berkeley Architectural Heritage, Associates.

McCoy, Esther, Five California Architects, New York, 1960. Oxford University Press.

Reinhardt, Richard, "Bernard Maybeck," American Heritage (August/September, 1981).

San Francisco Museum of Art, Domestic Architecture of The San Francisco Bay Region, San Francisco, 1949.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- Previously Listed in the National Register.
- Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
- Designated a National Historic Landmark.
- Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey:
- Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record:

#

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency

- Local Government University X Other(Specify Repository): Principia College

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property:	2	290 acres	
UTM References:	Zone	Northing	Easting
1	A 15 B 15 C 15 D 15		729030 730030 730110 729040

Verbal Boundary Description:

Starting at the northwest corner of the northeast $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 20, Elsah Township, Jersey County, Illinois, the boundary line for the Principia College Historic District proceeds due east along the section line 550 feet, then following the north edge of the Principia College entrance drive continue 175 feet east northeast and then 250 feet east southeast, then turn due east and proceed 650 feet, then turn south 2,250 feet to the bluff line, then turn northwest following the bluff line for 2,375 feet, then turn due north for 1,125 feet to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary line is drawn to encompass the property historically associated with Principia College, that contains the historic buildings on the campus, including the historic entrance drive and river bluff. The north boundary line is drawn along the north line of Section 20, and it jogs slightly to the north to specifically include the entire entrance drive, and exclude modern buildings to the north of the drive.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

Name/Title:	Charles B. Hosmer, Jr., & Jay P. Walker
Org.:	Principia College
City/Town:	Elsah
State:	Illinois
ZIP:	60628
Telephone:	(618) 374-5083
Date:	October 1, 1992
Edited by:	Carolyn Pitts, Architectural Historian National Park Service, WASO, Hitory Division (418)



PRINCIPIA COLLEGE HISTORIC DISTRICT



PRINCIPIA COLLEGE HISTORIC DISTRICT