

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 an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Carney-Keightley House

other name/site number Jill O'Neal House

2. Location

street & town 930 Hawkins Road N/A not for publication

city or town Fenton x vicinity

state Missouri code MO county St. Louis code 189 zip code 63026

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.)

Mark A Miles MAY 26, 2010
Signature of certifying official/Title Mark A. Miles/Deputy SHPO Date

Missouri Department of Natural 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.
- 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)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
1	0	Total

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Function
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Function
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT/Wrightian

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation	concrete
walls	stone
	wood
roof	asphalt
other	

Narrative Description

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

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 7

8. Description

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.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

Areas of Significance

(enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1948

Significant Dates

1948

Significant Persons

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Carney, Richard Edgar

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 8

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other Name of repository: _____

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 9

Carney-Keightley House
Name of Property

St. Louis County, MO
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 2.25 acres

UTM References

(Place additional boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

1 1/5 7/1/9/5/5/7 4/2/6/4/5/2/5
Zone Easting Northing

2 / / / / / / / / / /
Zone Easting Northing

3 / / / / / / / / / /
Zone Easting Northing

4 / / / / / / / / / /
Zone Easting Northing

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Property Tax No. 29P230032

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 10

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jill O'Neal
organization owner date March 1, 2010
street & number 930 Hawkins Road telephone 636-343-3982
city or town Fenton state MO zip code 63026

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

name/title Jill O'Neal
street & number 930 Hawkins Road telephone 636-343-3982
city or town Fenton state MO zip code 63026

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

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

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Carney-Keightley House
930 Hawkins Road
St. Louis County, MO

Summary

The Carney-Keightley House is located at 930 Hawkins Road in unincorporated St. Louis County, near Fenton, Missouri. The south boundary of the property also marks the line between St. Louis County and Jefferson County. The steep, rocky property is heavily wooded, screening the house from the street and surrounding properties. The house is a one-story building, only 1,000 square feet in area, composed of native stone, cedar and redwood on a concrete slab, with large window expanses and careful detailing. The house and its setting have always been well cared for and remain in essentially original condition. The house is named for its designer and builder but is better known locally for its longtime owner, Jill O'Neal.

Setting

The one-story Wrightian style house is integrated into a steep hillside. It is built on one of the highest points in St. Louis County with a distant view that stretches for thirty miles.

There were originally twenty acres of heavily wooded land surrounding the house. Two and one-quarter acres remain. The property is long and narrow, heavily wooded, and supports a variety of wildlife. It has been almost totally isolated for much of the life of the house.

One mile west, in the 1950s and 1960s, summer houses accommodated St. Louis City dwellers. Established families lived on farms and hidden estates on large tracts of land. Later, middle-class housing began to develop, followed by upper-middle-class housing.

To the east of the Carney-Keightley House are two multimillion-dollar houses. Across the street are the upper-middle-class houses in the half-million-dollar range. To the west, half-acre sites have been approved for half-million dollar homes. Surrounding housing is traditional in style.

As land values continued to rise, zoning protections were challenged by developers. In 2004 and 2006, the St. Louis County Government granted the site limited protection from developers on the east and west boundaries. The house was designated a St. Louis County Landmark by the St. Louis County Historic Buildings Commission on November 21, 2006.

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The house is located approximately 200 feet from Hawkins Road. A long, curving driveway of about 150 feet is surfaced with pebble from the nearby Meramec River. The descending levels of the site create a sheltered, very private and unique setting with adjoining woodland gardens. The grounds serve as a wildlife sanctuary. The woodland has been preserved right up to the house. On three sides, trees and natural undergrowth come within ten to fifteen feet of the house. On the north front, the natural environment varies ten to twenty feet from the façade.

In a 2006 historic inventory form for St. Louis County Parks, Esley Hamilton, preservation historian for the county, described the environment: "The house is hidden below the level of a hill that descends to the south from Hawkins Road. The house is at the edge of a ridge, and the ground drops sharply from it to the southwest. The whole site is thickly forested. From the driveway, a stone and concrete-stepped walk descends to the front door."

Exterior

The house is only 1,000 square feet in area, which was common for houses of this style and era. The materials are glass, cedar, concrete, redwood, and native stone from the immediate site. All construction was by manual labor. The steep, rocky site prevents the use of equipment.

The house rests solidly on a concrete slab poured into a steep rock ledge that extends southwest to northwest. There is no basement. The roof type is shed. The eastern, slanted section is protected by black, architectural asphalt shingles with depth and dimension. The western section is flat and protected by black asphalt roofing. The peak of the shed roofline drops three feet to the flat roof. This three-foot west roof wall is lined with clerestory windows intended to cool the house and avoid air conditioning.

The east wall is largely buried in the side of the hill creating a partial earth house. Windows rise about the masonry wall on the east and southeastern sides. A combination of plate glass and left to right, sliding metal windows meet and turn the southeastern corner above the masonry wall imbedded in the hillside. South, southwestern, and west walls have black-brown cedar clapboards above and below window openings on all sides.

The east wall centers on a massive chimney stack (5 ft. wide by 3 ft. thick) of hand-poured concrete and large site stones. The chimney retains the natural colors of these materials. The

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west side of the chimney is three feet above the roof. The east side is a continuation of the east wall and is eight feet from ground level. A copper shield directs rain away from the chimney base. A copper facing protects exposed edges of the east and west eaves of the shed roofline. Dark fascia boards (10 inches wide) cross the north and south rooflines and extend sixteen inches beyond the edges to end in a single, twelve-inch, sawtooth-like cut. There are no gutters. Ceramic splash blocks, in the ground under the eaves, catch and direct rain away from the foundation.

A masonry wall with stone from the immediate site extends around the northeast corner of the house to become a principal feature at the façade of the house. This wall, which is one foot thick, is to the left of the front entrance. The façade is constructed of hand-poured concrete and large native stones selected from the immediate site and retains the natural colors of these materials. Above this stone wall are black-brown cedar clapboards. The entrance door is of heavy, dark walnut stained wood with a simple rectangular design constructed of bands of iron.

Two fixed floor-to-ceiling windows (4 ft. wide by 7 ft. tall) are to the right of the front door. Above these windows are smaller fixed windows (4 ft. wide by 1-1/2 ft. tall). These fixed floor-to-ceiling windows turn the west corner of the house continuing along the west wall under the verandah, creating a window-wall around two sides. The windows and moldings are original to the house.

A stone terrace (8 ft. wide by 16 ft. long) extends across the house front and covered verandah. The stone terrace continues along the southwestern side of the house under the covered verandah. Part of the verandah is enclosed. Five side-hinged wood windows (3 ft. tall) in an eight-foot long unit run across the west wall of the enclosed verandah. Wood exteriors are black-brown. The house (21.8 ft. wide by 44.6 ft. long) has been maintained and is in good condition.

Interior

The heavy front door, darkly stained, opens immediately into the living-dining area. The room is irregular, approximately 16 ft. by 20 ft. Window-walls form two sides with a spectacular view of distant hills. Floor-to-ceiling windows meet at the west corner. The corner molding at this meeting point is simple and strong, supporting the corner visually and structurally. All window

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framing and moldings are original. One window of this wall is a sliding door that opens to the outside verandah. A second window-door opens into the enclosed verandah. Above these window-doors is dark cross-timbering with a light ochre-brown background.

The two other exterior walls are thick masonry of hand-poured concrete and stone from the site. These are white and deeply textured with imbedded stones from the site. One dividing wall is of darkly stained, horizontal, five-inch cedar boards. A five-inch, darkly stained cedar board (the top molding) runs across the cedar wall and continues along the top of the two stone walls.

The fireplace-hearth is the principal feature. It is in the corner on the east wall adjacent to the cedar wall. Hand-poured concrete and large site stones create a deeply sculptured wall. A massive timber (three inches thick, ten inches wide and about 12 ½ feet long) supports the free-standing corner of the fireplace that extends two feet into the room from the masonry wall.

Timbers of the same size and thickness form two large shelves (7 ½ feet long and about 2 feet deep) to the left of the fireplace. The bottom shelf is concrete, adjacent and attached to the wall of the fireplace to provide storage for logs. The massive stone hearth emerges 2 to 3 inches from the stone floor. It is irregular, approximately 5 by 5 feet. It is from the immediate site and was manually moved, in one piece, to create the floor of the fireplace hearth.

The floors throughout the living-dining area, hallway, utility room, enclosed and open verandah are stone. The bedrooms, kitchen area, and bathroom floors are tile. The ceilings are different heights and treatments in every section of the house. An enclosed, darkly stained cross beam in the living room provides recessed lighting and continues over the open kitchen. One-half of the living room is a white flat cedar ceiling. The second half by the windows is flat with exposed darkly stained ceiling and rafters. Darkly stained rafters and cedar boards, below the flat section of the roof, continue over the kitchen. Living room and kitchen ceilings are part of the flat roofline and eight feet high.

An open bookcase, darkly stained (12 ft. long by 4 ft. high) separates the kitchen (10 ½ ft. long by 8 ½ ft. wide) from the living room. The kitchen is open to the living room across white counter tops with stainless steel and white fixtures. Exposed rafters, over the kitchen, are two feet above a floating, dropped ceiling from which the kitchen cabinets are suspended. Cabinetry is simple, without hardware. The backs of the cabinets are darkly stained on the living room side

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and stained burnt sienna in the kitchen. The tile floor is a muted rose color, matching the dark gray-rose, brick facing of the kitchen walls. A soft yellow door leads from the kitchen to the enclosed verandah, which has a stone floor and white wood paneling. The top half of the kitchen door is glass showing the enclosed verandah with a view of distinct hills through the verandah windows.

The hallway (17 ft. long by 3 ft wide) runs along the kitchen and rises 12 ½ feet to the ridgepole of the shed roofline. Below the ridgepole are clerestory windows to light the hallway. The dark, enclosed, crossbeam (1 ft. by 1 ½ ft.) from the living room continues below the clerestory windows. The reverse side of the cedar wall from the living room is plaster. Hallway walls are plaster and pale yellow, a color characteristic of the style.

The utility room and bathroom are created by dropping four feet below the shed roofline to form a second ceiling. The hall ceiling is darkly stained with exposed darkly stained rafters. The moldings are darkly stained. The ceilings of the utility room and bathroom are formed by this dropped ceiling. A one-foot-wide dark board runs along the top of the hallway wall. All the moldings are simple boards and darkly stained. Utility room cabinets are identical to the kitchen cabinets with brick facing below. Left of the utility room door, flush with the wall, a built-in, darkly stained cabined 1 ½-ft. deep and tall by 2 ½ ft. wide) is positioned three feet above the floor.

The flat ceiling (5 ft. by 3 ft.) in front of the bathroom drops four feet below the 12 ½ ft. high ceiling in the hall. It is plaster and pale yellow with dark moldings. A closet across from the bathroom door is 8 feet tall and 1 ½ feet wide with darkly stained 8-ft. tall double doors. The bathroom is wood paneled with a dropped ceiling above the sink for lighting. The wood-paneled walls are stained burnt sienna similar to the kitchen cabinets. The floor is brown tile identical to the design of the kitchen floor. There are dark brown shutters on either side of a large mirror (4 ft. wide by 3 ½ ft. tall) above the built-in sink and beige counter. A wooden, top hinged (2 ½ ft. tall by 2 ft. wide) glazed-glass window cranks open to the outside. The tub is customized to fit the below-standard space with a shower and sliding glazed-glass doors. Shower walls are finished in one-inch (white, beige, and brown) ceramic tiles. All fixtures are white. The bathroom is 7 ft. by 7 ft.

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The master bedroom (10 ft. by 10 ½ ft.) is adjacent to the bath. The bedroom door is a louvered door that slides into the wall separating the bedroom and bathroom. The bedroom ceiling rises 12 ½ feet to the ridgepole. Three clerestory windows are just below the ridgepole on the southwest-facing section of the interior shed roofline. Every room in the house is exposed to the sun at some point in the day.

The master bedroom is below ground with windows resting on the masonry walls of the east and southeast sides of the room. Windows meet and turn the east corner of the house. The windows are without mullions and provide an unobstructed view of the woods, which comes within ten feet of the house. There are three window openings on the east side. Each opening is 30 inches high by 40 inches wide. The center window is fixed plate glass. The two side windows on either side of the plate glass are sliding aluminum and open left to right.

Turning the east corner to the south wall are three larger windows (42 inches high by 44 inches wide). The center window is fixed plate glass. Two side windows on either side of the center window are sliding aluminum, opening left to right. Clerestory windows and east-south windows make the room bright and open to the woods. Windows are original. The walls of this master bedroom are wood paneled and soft yellow with simple wood moldings. There is wainscoting over the masonry walls below the windows on the east and southeast sides using three-inch cedar tongue-and-groove boards. The built-in wardrobe is 6 ½ ft. wide with an attached built-in dresser (3 ½ ft wide and 3 ½ ft. tall. The wardrobe is 10 ft. tall by 6 ft. wide with two (3 ft wide by 6 ½ ft tall) mirrored sliding doors. Just below the clerestory windows is a hidden section (top section of the wardrobe, 3 ½ ft tall by 6 ft wide) to accommodate heating pipes for the second bedroom. The ceiling, which is soft yellow, is part of the shed roofline with exposed rafters stained sienna brown. The same color is used for the upper third of the room above a 6-inch flat board that runs around the entire room. This finishing board is soft yellow as is the lower two-thirds of the room and louvered sliding door. The floor is wood-grained tile, also sienna brown.

The second bedroom is 8 ft. wide by 15 ft. long. It has white wood-paneled walls and a natural cedar ceiling (9 ft. high) with exposed rafters that are part of the flat roof section and natural cedar. One end of the room has a built-in wardrobe eight feet wide with sliding wood doors. The floors are wood grained tile, also sienna brown. There are two large windows, the one on the south is 4 ft wide and 3 ft tall. It is the same height from the floor as the windows in the

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master bedroom on the south side. It is aluminum, original, and opens right to left. The second aluminum window is larger (6 ft. wide by 3 ft. tall). This west-facing window is the same height from the floor as the south window and opens right to left. There are no mullions on any of the windows. They are plain, original to the house, and give an unobstructed view of the woods, which comes right up to the house and then drops sharply.

Condition

The house is almost totally preserved in its original design, setting, structure, detailing, and features, including the windows. Approximately 95% of the house is intact. Only the verandah has been partially enclosed. Otherwise, the exterior and interior are original and in good condition. This is perhaps due to the happy circumstance that three of the early owners – William E. Keightley, Robert A. Johan, and Thompson K. Weber – had an appreciation and/or connection with the design or the architectural community. Charles Norman Smith and his wife Gloria Jill O’Neal Smith purchased the house in 1968. They were co-owners of a national design firm. After they divorced, Jill O’Neal obtained full title to the house in 1985 and has lived in the residence for forty years. She is a design consultant serving companies with worldwide markets. The integrity of the house has been conscientiously preserved. Wright advocated searching for unique settings beyond towns and suburbs in the secluded countryside. This house is a textbook example of a Usonian house located beyond the suburbs in the far southwest regions of unincorporated St. Louis County.

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Carney-Keightley House
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Summary

The Carney-Keightley House is significant in the area of Architecture under Criterion C. It embodies the distinctive characteristics of the early modern period of residential architecture in the United States, and particularly the design features and methods of construction advocated by Frank Lloyd Wright in his Usonian houses, intended for homeowners of modest means. The principles and characteristics of the form are displayed in the setting, materials, design (interior and exterior), and in the location and natural state of the property. Houses of the Usonian type are intended to exist in intimate harmony with the site, to belong to the earth, and the success of this particular design evokes a poetic interpretation of this architectural philosophy. The house is unpretentious, modest, natural, economical, unassuming, authentic, and totally American.¹ It is unaltered and lovingly maintained. It is the only known design in this region, and possibly in the nation, that can be credited solely to architect Richard Edgar Carney, who subsequently played an important role in Frank Lloyd Wright's school, the Taliesin Fellowship. Carney worked closely with his clients William and Dorothy Keightley both in the design and physical construction of the house, whose location on a precipice prevented the use of most power equipment. Since the Keightleys remained in the house only a short time and the house's significance derives from its design rather than its ownership, it seems appropriate to include the designer's name in the official designation.² The period of significance, 1948, reflects the year of construction. The house's importance was recognized in 2007 by the St. Louis County Historic Buildings Commission, which designated it a county landmark.

Construction and Ownership

This house was designed in 1946 and 1947 and constructed in 1948. Richard Edgar Carney was then at Washington University School of Architecture. Carney became a Taliesin fellow in 1948, the year the house was constructed, and he served as personal aide to Frank Lloyd Wright from 1952 until Wright's death in 1959. Thereafter, Carney remained in Scottsdale, Arizona, serving in varying capacities with the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, the Frank Lloyd Wright School of Architecture, and Taliesin Architects. Born in Marshall, Texas in 1923, Carney served in the U.S. Army from 1942 to 1946 and studied at Culver-Stockton College before coming to St. Louis. He was chief executive officer of the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation from 1985 until his death in 1998.³ Aside from the work of William Bernoudy, this house is the only one in St. Louis County known to have been designed by an architect associated with Frank Lloyd Wright.⁴

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In 1946, Robert I. Miller bought a larger tract from seven members of the Hays family,⁵ borrowing \$2,500 in the process,⁶ and sold this lot on October 18, 1948, “together with all improvements thereon” for \$4,000.⁷ Apparently the improvements were farm buildings going back to the earlier use of the property. The buyers were William E. Keightley and his wife Dorothy, who borrowed \$2,500 to make the purchase.⁸ Mr. Keightley later visited the current owner, Jill O’Neal, and provided information on the design and construction of the house in 1948.

One of Wright’s primary goals with his Usonian houses was to keep the costs down, and the Carney-Keightley House certainly meets that goal. Wright wrote, “The house of moderate cost is not only America’s major architectural problem but the problem most difficult for her major architects. As for me, I would rather solve it with satisfaction to myself and Usonia, than build anything I can think of at the moment.”⁹ Usonian houses were intended for families of limited means. The term and the existence of such dwellings were known within the architectural community of the Midwest and beyond. Taliesin was located in southern Wisconsin only about 350 miles from St. Louis. To this day, St. Louis County residents still vacation in Wisconsin. Wright’s student, Carney was familiar with his work and design philosophy. A specific focus of the quest for affordable housing in postwar American was the returning veteran, and both Carney and Keightley were veterans. They were idealistic young men. They had a strong desire to achieve something special. They wanted to create an environment that was life-giving and not life-taking. This accounts for their dedication and determination to complete this project.

The land for the Carney-Keightley house was located in what was a virtual wilderness, well beyond the suburbs in far southwest St. Louis County. This accorded with Wright’s advice: “The best thing to do is go as far out as you can get. Avoid the suburbs – dormitory towns – by all means. Go way out into the country – what you regard as too far.”¹⁰ Land in such distant locations was more affordable. This particular site was heavily wooded with hundred-year-old trees, rock ledges, deep ravines, and hilltops that opened on vistas extending thirty miles or more. Hawkins Road runs along one of the highest points in the county. Originally the site had about twenty acres. Over the years the acreage was reduced through rezoning to higher density and selling separate parcels. When the present owner purchased the property in 1968, 2.25 acres remained. It was then still a remote location.

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The goal of the design of the Carney-Keightley House was organic, natural architecture that belongs to the earth, existing in intimate harmony with the site. “Usonian dwelling seems a thing loving the ground with the new sense of space, light, and freedom – to which our U.S.A. is entitled.”¹¹ “Conceive now that an entire building might grow up out of conditions as a plant grows up out of the soil and yet be free to be itself, to live its own life according to Man’s Nature. . . Let it grow up in that image. The Tree.”¹² Work done for Wright by Richard Carney while serving as his architectural aide from 1952 to 1959 is credited to Frank Lloyd Wright. After Wright’s death in 1959, Carney began to assume administrative responsibilities for the Taliesin Architects and the School of Architecture, finally becoming the managing trustee and chief executive officer for the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation in 1985, and serving until his death on January 19, 1998. Carney spent his entire professional life at Taliesin, first in Wisconsin and then in Arizona.

He was a student of architecture at Washington University in Louis from 1946 to 1948. He had more architectural training than Wright had when he joined Louis Sullivan’s firm. Keightley knew Carney wanted to become a Taliesin fellow. The house Carney designed for Keightley was not a student project. It was the fulfillment of a shared vision. Carney was Keightley’s friend. Keightley believed in Carney’s talent, respected his knowledge, and supported his enthusiasm for Wright’s approach to architecture. He depended upon Carney to make all the design decisions including the selection of a specific site for the proposed house. The particular site chosen was what Wright would have called the “brow” of the hill. This was a deep rock ledge that extended in width over a thousand feet or more. Huge boulders rose out of the steep hillside. The house is resting within a rock formation. It is a site that even today discourages conventional contractors.

Wright wrote, “The Usonian house, then aims to be a natural performance, one that is integral to site; integral to environment; integral to the life of the inhabitants.”¹³ The Carney-Keightley House is not visible from Hawkins Road. It hugs the ground below the top of the hill and grips the earth. To position the house below the top of the hill and at the very edge of the rock cliff required digging down about five feet to construct the east wall of stone and concrete. The concrete slab foundation and stone walls are still strong and stable after sixty-two years.

The house was built without the aid of contractors or skilled laborers. To save money, the young men planned to do the manual work and construction themselves. Carney managed the

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construction. Both men participated in the physical labor. No equipment was used. Keightley said that he learned you do not build a house, you dig it. There was no water on the site, so they had to carry water from a pond 300 feet away to mix concrete. They probably enlisted the help of friends. Wright would have approved of this as a way to control the costs and the design. He wrote, "With the limited budget of a G.I., you cannot pay a plasterer, mason, bricklayer, carpenter, . . . and . . . never be sure whether the work is done well. To build a low cost house you must eliminate, so far as possible, the use of skilled labor, now so expensive."¹⁴

The selection and positioning of the stones within the walls of the house and for the monumental chimney were by hand. Concrete was hand-poured. This required a clear vision and manual control. Stones used were from the site, which was cost-effective. The massive hearth stone (5 ft. by 5 ft.) was manually moved from another part of the property in one unbroken piece, probably using a skid. Native stones tied the house to the site in a way that honors the character of the land. The natural characteristics of the materials (concrete, native stone, wood, glass) bring beauty and uniqueness to the structure.

The Keightleys remained here only briefly, less than three months, selling the property on January 13, 1949, to William T. Sexton and his wife Doris, who lived in St. Louis.¹⁵ In the next twenty years, the house changed hands frequently. Since the property was in such a remote location, it was not included in county directories, so information about the owners' professions is not known at present. The Sextons transferred the property on April 2, 1950 to Robert B. Sexton of St. Francois County, possibly their son.¹⁶ He and his wife Harriett apparently moved to this house and remained there until early 1963. In 1959 they borrowed \$5,200 from the Fenton Bank, using this property as collateral.¹⁷ On January 31, 1963, they sold to Robert A. and Frances Johan.¹⁸ Robert A. Johan was a printing salesman and later a writer and producer for Gardner Advertising. The Johans moved here from Crestwood but sold the property in 1965 and moved to des Peres. The buyers were Thomson K. Weber and his wife Sally.¹⁹ At the time, he was an architectural delineator with Bank Building Company. Within a few years, the Webers designed their own house at 420 East Jackson Avenue in Webster Groves, another small but distinguished modernist design.

The rapid turnover of the property ended in 1968, when the Webers sold to Charles Norman Smith and his wife Gloria Jill O'Neal Smith.²⁰ The Smiths lived there until 1985, when they

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divorced. Mrs. Smith then resumed the name O'Neal²¹ and obtained full title to the house. She has remained the owner and occupant ever since.

In 2004, the setting of the house was threatened by development proposals on both the adjacent properties. The St. Louis County Council imposed certain conditions on the developers intended to preserve the setting of the house.²²

Wrightian Features: The Usonian House

The design and construction of the Carney-Keightley House follow Frank Lloyd Wright's precepts for the Usonian House. Wright's book, *The Natural House*, published by Horizon Press in 1954, covers the period between 1936 and 1954. Wright details his overall philosophy and the principles of design for the Usonian house. Wright had established many of these concepts in practice some years earlier. The terms natural, organic, and integral are used interchangeably by Wright.²³ The close relationships between Wright's descriptions of his Usonian houses, which he started building in 1936 with the first Herbert Jacobs House in Madison, Wisconsin, and the design principles embodied in the Carney-Keightley House are striking. The house here was completed in 1948 and predates most other Wright-inspired modern houses in St. Louis County, with the exception of a handful by Harris Armstrong and William Bernoudy.

The Carney-Keightley House follows principles of modern/Usonian architecture. Design characteristics, as advocated by Wright are: organic simplicity and continuity as expressed in: an open plan, spatial flexibility in the living-dining area which flows around the small kitchen and into the hallway; natural characteristics of materials to enhance surfaces; stones from the site used in construction to tie the dwelling to the site and express individuality of structure; no superficial ornament; openness to the outdoors, blending of the house with the slopes and gardens; broad expanses of glass and wraparound windows bring the outside to the inside. Liberal outside views on three sides become part of the interior, also advocated by Wright. The orientation of the house brings light into every room. Wright opposed dark sides to houses. No boxed rooms except for privacy in small bedrooms with wardrobes as advocated by Wright. Common to the Usonian houses and the Carney-Keightley House are: no basement, no attic, no complicated roofs, no wasted space, stained woods, sculptural use of concrete, stone for the floors, terrace and verandah; a large, generous chimney kept low on a gently sloping roof – a Wright precept. The stone and concrete chimney is monumental and sculptural. The fireplace is

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an important, central element integral to the house with no mantel or false decoration. Wright had a preference for flat or low-pitched roofs. The house has a flat roof combined with a low shed roof for interior spaciousness. He liked slab construction, with the concrete slab flooring integral with the foundation. The partially underground wall here is similar to berm-type walls of earth as described by Wright and provides insulation advantages. Recessed lighting and clerestory windows light the entire house. No central air-conditioning but use of clerestory windows for cooling. Wright questioned the benefits of air conditioning. The proportions are of a human scale advocated for Usonian houses. Wide eaves protect the house, and fascia boards extend the eaves visually. No gutters or downspouts are used, as Wright opposed them. A beautiful setting, natural materials, fine proportions, honest construction, organic simplicity and continuity follow Usonian principles. For domestic architecture, Wright advocated the horizontal his entire life. His principles embodied a reverence for the site and for nature. A Usonian house often turns its back to the street for privacy. Hiding below the hilltop, the Carney-Keightley House turns its back to the road.

Notes

1. These qualities are singled out by Frank Lloyd Wright in his book, *The Natural House* (New York: Horizon Press, 1954):

- unpretentious: “An irresponsible, flashy, pretentious or dishonest individual would never be happy in such a house as we now call organic because of this quality of integrity.” (p. 130).
- modest: “A modest house, this Usonian house, a dwelling place that has no feeling at all for the grand. . . .” (p. 89)
- natural: “The Usonian house, then, aims to be a natural performance.” (p. 134)
- economical: “To build a low-cost house you must eliminate, so far as possible, the use of skilled labor, now so expensive.” (p. 198)
- unassuming: “I hated grandomania then as much as I hate it now.” (p. 17)
- authentic: “A house integral with the nature of materials – wherein glass is used as glass, stone as stone, wood as wood – and all the elements of environment go into and throughout the house.” (p. 134)
- American: “There had been nothing at all from overseas to help in getting this new architecture planted on American soil.” (p. 18)

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2. The house is identified in its county landmark designation and in recent news reports as the Jill O'Neal House after its current owner, who has lived there for forty years; that designation seems to be inconsistent with National Register guidelines.
3. *Who's Who In The World* (Chicago: Marquis Who's Who, 1996); Bradley R. Storrer, "Richard E. Carney," *Journal of the Taliesin Fellows*, Issue 23 (Summer 1998).
4. Bernoudy was one of the first apprentices at Taliesin and brought Wright's design principles back to St. Louis in his postwar practice with Edouard Mutrux. See Osmund Overby, *William Adair Bernoudy, architect: bringing the legacy of Frank Lloyd Wright to St. Louis* (Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, 1999). Bernoudy's Czufin House was listed in the National Register in 2002. A few St. Louisans have studied at Taliesin in the years since Wright's death, most notably Tom Saunders.
5. St. Louis County Recorder of Deeds, Record Book 2154, page 573.
6. Ibid, book 2155, page 468.
7. Ibid, book 2499, page 257.
8. Ibid, book 2413, page 426.
9. Frank Lloyd Wright, *The Natural House* (New York: Horizon Press, 1954), p. 79.
10. Ibid, p. 139.
11. Ibid, p. 91.
12. Ibid, p. 46.
13. Ibid, p. 134.
14. Ibid, p. 198.

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15. St. Louis County Recorder of Deeds, Record Book 2545, page 372.
16. Ibid, book 2723, page 4992.
17. Ibid, book 5000, page 515.
18. Ibid, book 5021, page 180.
19. Ibid, book 5637, page 186.
20. Ibid, book 6320, page 2387.
21. Ibid, book 7848, page 1730.
22. *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*: Janet McNichols, "Company seeks zoning to build two houses at Hawkins Road site," South Post, June 17, 2004; McNichols, "Zoning is sought for housing on Hawkins at Loggers Trail," South Post, June 24, 2004; Phil Sutin, "Historic home owner, potential neighbors debate building plan, Jefferson County Post, October 4, 2004; Sutin, "Setting of home in county keys debate," South Post, October 7, 2004; Sutin, "Two houses get approval after buffer zone is set up," West Post, Nov. 18, 2004.
23. Frank Lloyd Wright, *The Natural House* (New York: Horizon Press, 1954), p. 51.

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Verbal Boundary Description

Part of Lot "D" in Share 4, as shown on plat attached to Commissioner's Report in Partition Suite Styled Felix A. Dunnivant, etal, vs. Joshua Heckman, etal, a certified copy of which is recorded in Book 325, page 117 of the St. Louis City (former County) Records, and being in U.S. Surveys 1330 and 2001, Township 44 North Range 5 East, St. Louis County, Missouri, and described as: Beginning at a point in the center line of Hawkins Road, 40 feet wide, at its intersection with the East line of Lot D-4 of H. Dunnivant Heirs, thence along the center line of Hawkins Road, North 80 degrees 46 minutes West 199.57 feet, thence Westwardly along a curve to the right having a radius of 500 feet, a distance of 161.44 feet and North 62 degrees 16 minutes West 18.57 feet to a point which is the Northeast corner of beginning tract hereby described, thence leaving said center road line and running South 7 degrees 50 minutes West 617.89 feet. to the line dividing St. Louis County and Jefferson County and being also the line dividing Townships 63 and 44 North Range 5 East, thence along said dividing line North 88 derees 44 minutes West 151.20 feet, thence leaving said dividing line and running North 7 degrees 50 minutes East 687.23 feet to the center line of Hawkins Road, 40 feet, thence along said center line South 62 degrees 16 minutes East 159.53 feet to the place of beginning, containing 2.247 acres, as per survey made by Kropp and Steele Surveying Company on August 13 and 14, 1948. Together with all improvements thereon, known and numbered as 930 Hawkins Road.

Boundary Justification

These are the boundaries of the property as it was purchased by the present owner in 1968.

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The following is true for all photographs:

Carney-Keightly House
St. Louis County, Missouri

Photographer: Jill O'Neal

Date: November 2009

Negatives on file with: Jill O'Neal, 930 Hawkins Road, Fenton, MO 63026

1. Approach to house, front (north-northwest elevation) of house facing south-southeast.
2. Front of house, facing south, southeast.
3. Front door, facing southwest
4. Chimney and ease elevation, facing west.
5. Buried Stone wall on east, southeast side of house, facing north northwest.
6. Interior, living-dining area showing fireplace/hearth on east wall, facing southwest.

Figure Log

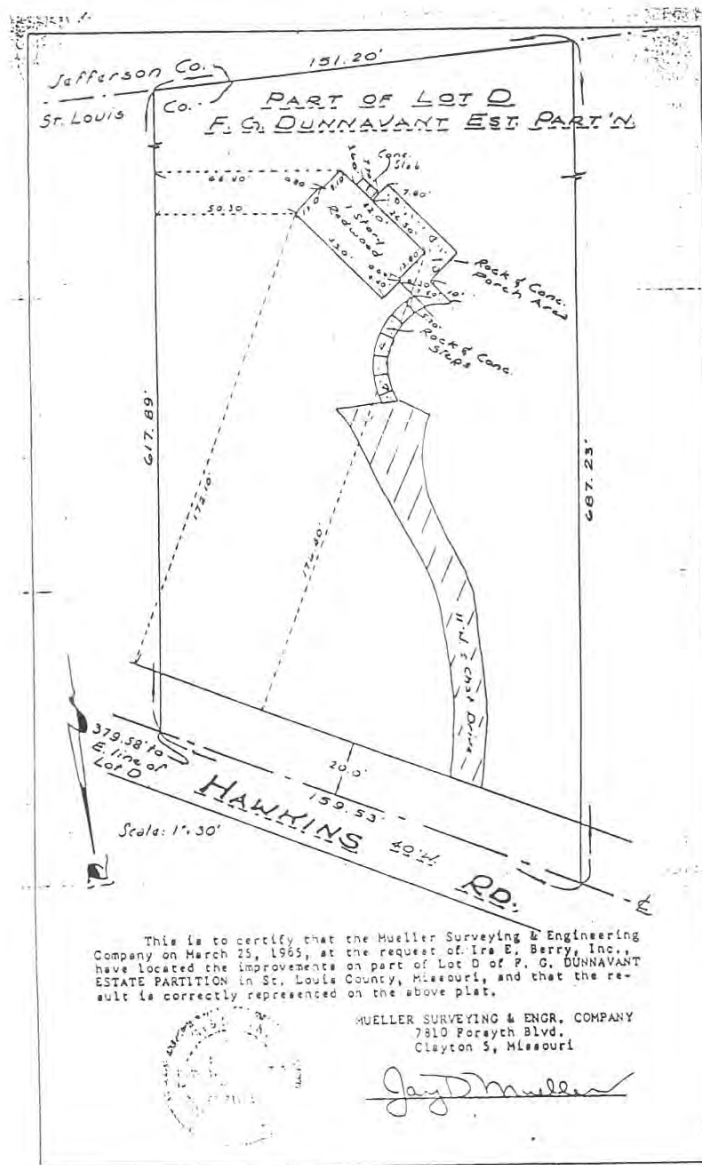
1. Lot survey with site plan.
2. Lot survey with contour lines.
3. Floor plan.

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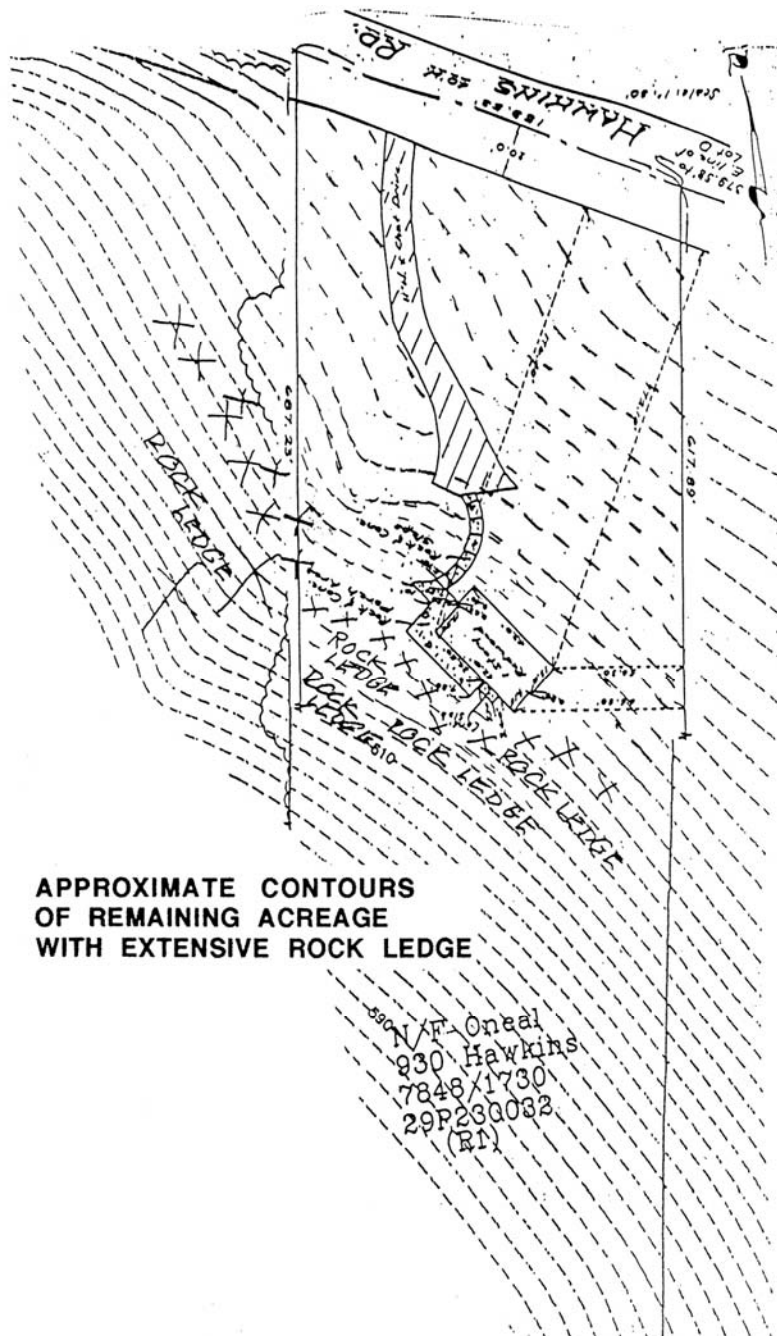
SURVEY WITH SITE DRAWING

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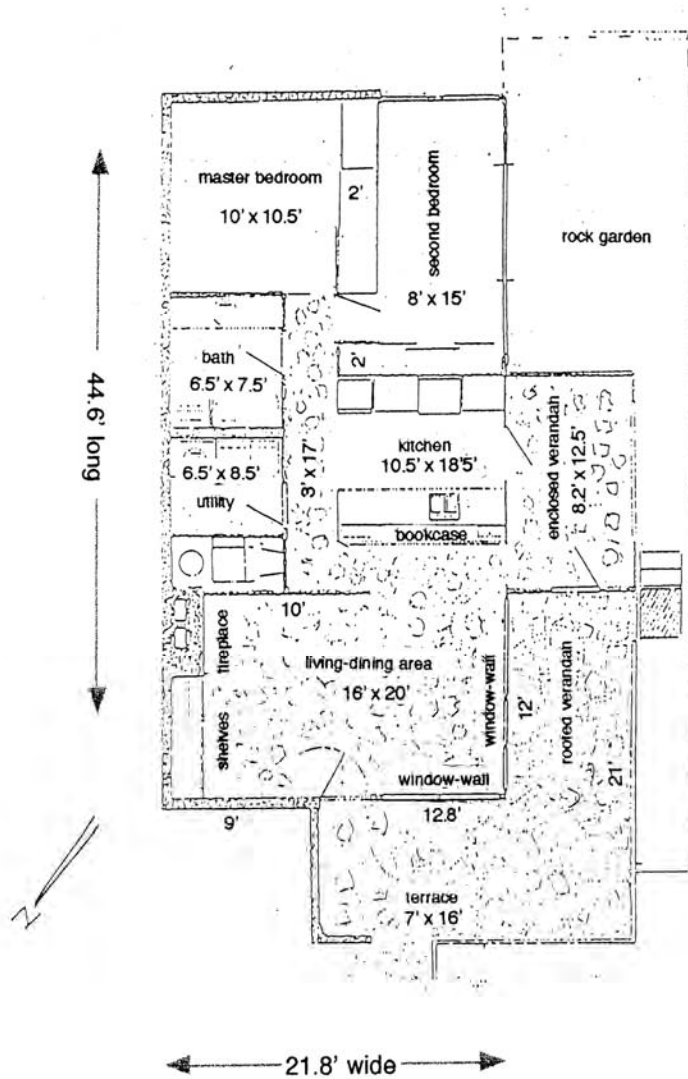


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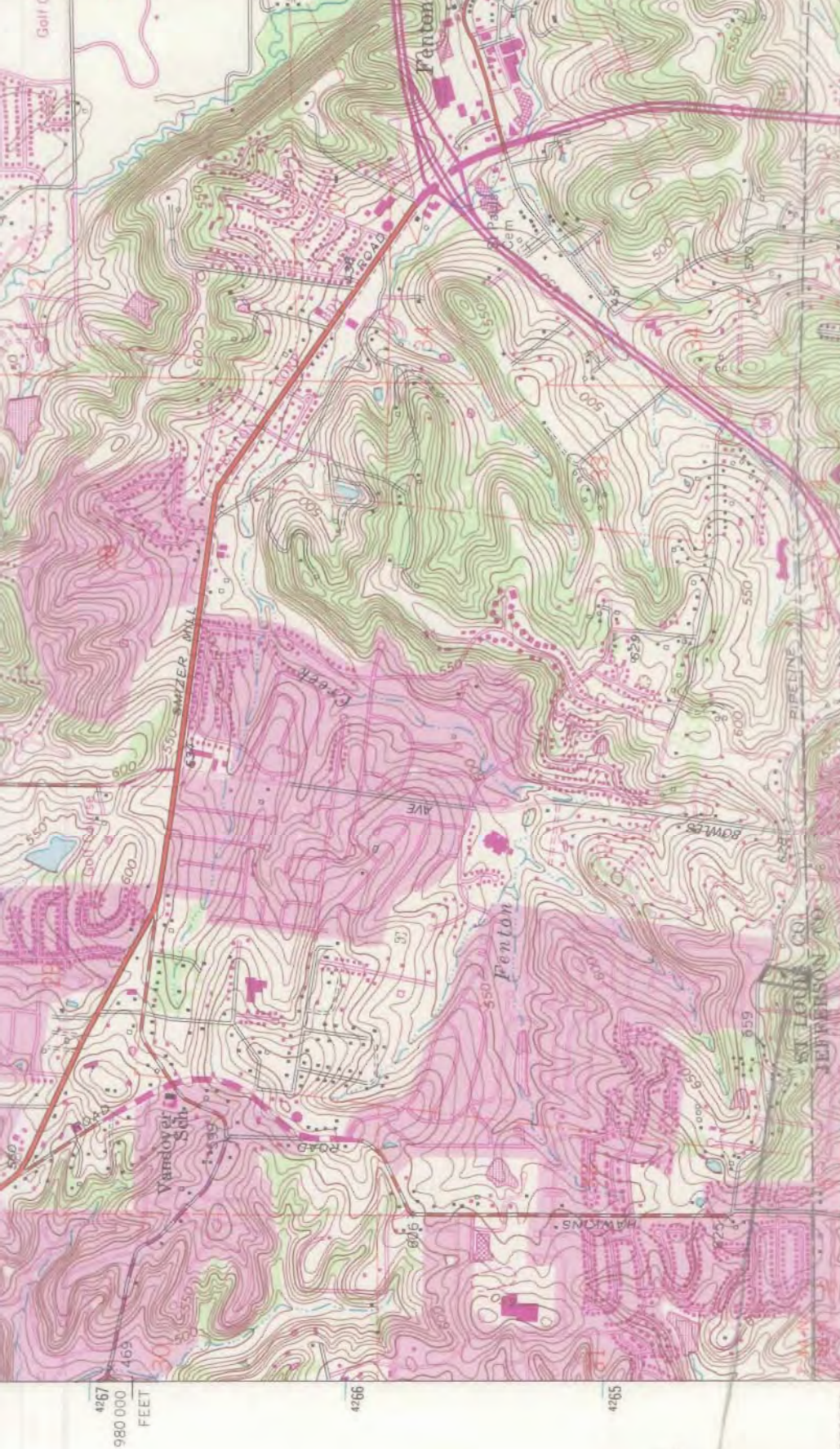
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FLOOR PLAN

approximate scale
2.5 millimeters = 1 foot
exterior: 44.6' long x 21.8' wide



UTM GRID AND 1993 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

1" = 18 MILS
1.36" = 28 MILS

GN

SCALE

1 1000 0 1000 2000

3 MI TO MO. 21
ARNOLD 6 MI.

CONTOUR IN NATIONAL GEODETIC

COMPLIES WITH U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER
AND THE DIVISION OF CONTOURING
MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS

Produced by the United States Geological Survey
Revised by the Army Map Service

Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA

Topography by planetable surveys 1933. Planimetric detail revised from aerial photographs taken 1952. Field checked 1954

Projection and 10,000-foot grid ticks: Missouri coordinate system, east zone (transverse Mercator)

1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 15, shown in blue

1927 North American Datum (NAD 27)

North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83) is shown by dashed corner ticks

The values of the shift between NAD 27 and NAD 83 for 7.5-minute intersections are given in USGS Bulletin 1875

There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map

Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown

Carney-Kerhtley House
930 Hawkins Road, Fenton, MO
St. Louis County, MO
15/719557/4264 525

HOUSE SPRINGS
7200 E. 1st St.







RESZCIE 1 000





