

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. Name of Property

historic name Robinson, George R. and Elsie, House

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 443 East Argonne [N/A] not for publication

city or town Kirkwood [N/A] vicinity

state Missouri code MO county St. Louis code 189 zip code 63122

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)

 12 August 02

Signature of certifying official/Title Claire F. Blackwell/Deputy SHPO

Date 0

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:

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:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

**Robinson, George R. and Elsie, House
St. Louis County, Missouri
Historic Resources of Kirkwood, Missouri**

5. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources Within Property		
		Contributing	Non-contributing	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	1	1	buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	0	0	sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	0	0	structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	0	0	objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	1	1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing.

Historic Resources of Kirkwood, Missouri

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register.

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

DOMESTIC/ single dwelling
DOMESTIC/ secondary structure

Current Functions

DOMESTIC/ single dwelling
DOMESTIC/ secondary structure

7. Description

Architectural Classification

20th Century Revivals/ Tudor Revival

Materials

foundation Brick
 walls Wood
 Stucco
 roof Asphalt
 other Wood

Narrative Description See continuation sheet [x].

See continuation sheet []

**Robinson, George R. and Elsie, House
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Historic Resources of Kirkwood, Missouri**

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

See continuation sheet [x].

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

See continuation sheet [x].

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

Areas of Significance

Architecture

Period of Significance

ca. 1919

Significant Dates

ca. 1919

Significant Person(s)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State Agency

Federal Agency

Local Government

University

Other:

Name of repository:

Kirkwood Planning and Development Office

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Historic Resources of Kirkwood, Missouri**

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References

A. Zone	Easting	Northing	B. Zone	Easting	Northing
15	726680	4273320			
C. Zone	Easting	Northing	D. Zone	Easting	Northing

[] 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 See Continuation Sheet
 organization _____ date _____
 street & number _____ telephone _____
 city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

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

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

Photographs

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

Additional Items

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

Property Owner

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

name Tony Sansone
 street & number 443 East Argonne Dr. telephone (314) 727-6664 x 329
 city or town Kirkwood state MO zip code 63122

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Robinson, George R. and Elsie, House
St. Louis County, Missouri
Historic Resources of Kirkwood, Missouri

SUMMARY: The George R. and Elsie Robinson House is located at 443 E. Argonne in Kirkwood, St. Louis County, Missouri. The building, constructed sometime between 1912 and 1920, is a high-style example of the Tudor Revival style. It is a highly refined example of Property Type E. Twentieth Century Styled Residences, Subtype: Tudor Revival. It meets the registration requirements for that property type set forth in the MPS Cover document "Historic Resources of Kirkwood, Missouri." The large, two-and-a-half story frame house has many features typical of this style, such as the steeply pitched side gable roof with two prominent cross gables on the facade, decorative half-timbering on the second story, arched doorway, and massive exterior chimneys with ornamental profiles and corbeled tops. The house sits in the middle of a large square lot on the northwest corner of East Argonne and North Woodlawn streets. The yard contains a wide variety of mature plantings, as well as a swimming pool and a non-contributing garage. The garage has two sections; one is roughly the same age as the house, another, larger part, is modern. The Robinson house is in excellent condition, and maintains integrity in all areas of consideration: design, materials, workmanship, location, setting, feeling, and association.

ELABORATION: The Robinson house, one of the largest in the historic core of Kirkwood, was constructed between 1912 and 1920. It is an excellent representation of the Tudor Revival style. Its irregular floorplan is composed of numerous projecting bays and wings, which combine with the Medieval influenced details to get a classic "Tudor" look.

The two-and-a-half story building has a brick foundation. It is clad with wood shingles on the first story, while the second and attic levels have false, decorative half-timbering with infill panels of stucco. The house is composed of a large, rectangular central portion with side-gable roof, from which wings, additions, and bays project outward. To the west is a two-story, lower side-gable wing which has two bays on the front elevation. The main entrance to the house is on the western end of this wing, and is reached by two brick steps. The entry is set within a large rectangular frame, which contains a single door, sidelights, and transom lights within a heavily molded arched surround. The door itself has three lower vertical wood panels, with twelve lights above. Above the arched molding, filling in the remainder of the rectangular frame, are decorative panels with floral patterns. Immediately above the entry on the second story is an oriel bay, which contains wood multi-pane casement windows, with wood surrounds and a continuous wood sill. This oriel is visually supported by decorative flat wood brackets.

The central portion of the house has two, two-and-a-half story projecting bays, each with a steeply-pitched front-facing gable, wide flat fascia boards with flared ends, and a simple pendant in the peak. The second stories of these bays overhang the first, and there are decorative flat wood brackets beneath. There are two projections from the plane of the east elevation of the central portion of the house. At the south end of the east elevation is a one-story, semi-circular bay; to the north of

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this is a shallow, one-story rectangular bay. A one-story, hip roof rear addition of uncertain construction date forms an "L" at the northwest corner of the house, where a raised wood deck is located. The rear frame addition is covered with wood shingles, and has two sets of paired wood doors with multiple glass lights on the west elevation leading to the deck.

There is a great variety in the in size and design of the windows throughout the house. Many are six-over-one, double-hung sash, although there are several fixed and casement windows as well. Many of these have multiple panes, and one group of three on the west elevation is set within a flattened pointed arch opening. Several windows are set within groups, from two to four, and some windows have rectangular transoms with multiple panes above. There are two prominent chimneys, both with ornamental shafts and flared, corbeled brick caps.

The square lot is approximately nine-tenths of an acres, and is relatively level. The house is in the middle of the yard, which contains several mature deciduous shade trees, as well as numerous shrubs and smaller flowering trees. A brick sidewalk leads from Argonne Street to the front door. A driveway leads from Woodlawn to the paved parking in the rear, as well as to the frame garage. The westernmost portion of the garage is early, and possibly as old as the house. It has similar detailing, with wood siding, multi-paned windows, and half timbering in the gable end. To that older section is a long gabled addition with two, double-car doors. The large garage addition is modern, and the garage is counted as a non-contributing building. Just east of the garage is a swimming pool and fence, installed in 1965.

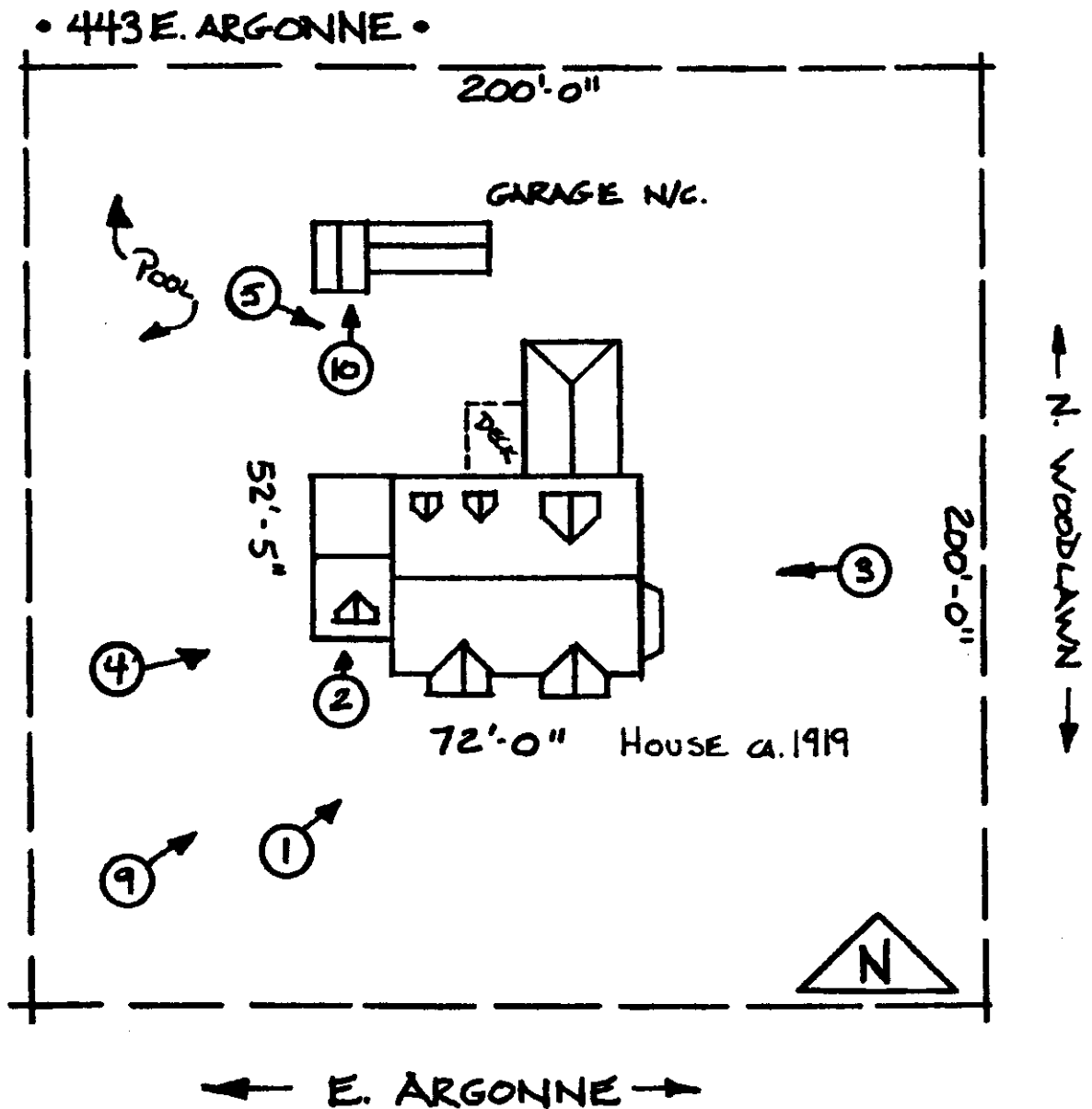
The Robinson House is one of the largest and most refined examples of the Tudor Revival style to be identified during the early survey of the area, and it has seen no alterations of note in the eighty-some years it has occupied this corner lot. It is in excellent condition and immediately recognizable to its period of significance. ◊

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Figure One. Site plan and photo key.



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Robinson, George R. and Elsie, House
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SUMMARY: The George R. and Elsie Robinson House, at 443 E. Argonne, is significant under Criterion C in the area of ARCHITECTURE as a large, highly intact example of a Tudor Revival style house. The steeply pitched side-gabled roof with prominent front cross gables, and decorative half-timbering on the upper stories are typical of Property Type E. Twentieth Century Styled Residences, Subtype: Tudor Revival. The house meets the registration requirements for that property type set forth in the MPS Cover document "Historic Resources of Kirkwood, Missouri," and falls under the context "The City of Kirkwood: Transition to An Automobile Suburb--1899-1952." This is one of the largest and most intact examples of the Tudor Revival style in the historic core of Kirkwood. The property gains further significance for its association with George Robinson, one of the founders of the company which would later be known as the Ralston Purina Company. It was built for Robinson between 1912 and 1920, on a lot which had been subdivided from an earlier residential property. The period of significance for the property corresponds to the construction date of ca. 1919. The house is in excellent condition, and exhibits a high degree of integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

Elaboration: The Robinson house is a large, refined example of the Tudor Revival style, which is a subtype of the Twentieth Century Styled Residences property type.¹ Like most of the houses of that property type in Kirkwood, this house has ample proportions and shows strong evidence of being professionally designed. It is a good example of the Tudor Revival subtype, with an eclectic combination of architectural features borrowed from Medieval English prototypes. In addition to the character-defining massing and ornamental half-timbering, the house also features tall, multi-paned windows, some of which are grouped or combined with transoms, and prominent chimneys which feature decorative forms. This house, which was in place by 1920, is a relatively early example of the Tudor Revival Style in Kirkwood; most Tudor Revival houses there were built between 1920 and 1930.

The house also reflects a common pattern of early twentieth century suburban development in Kirkwood, in that it was built on a lot which was subdivided from a larger residential property which had been developed a half century earlier. The lot at 443 E. Argonne was purchased in 1912 by Elsie Hewitt Robinson and George R. Robinson from Ellen P. Gill. The Robinson property was carved off of a larger residential lot associated with the Romanzo Bayley house. The lot for the Bayley house originally encompassed the entire north half of that block. (The Bayley house is also being nominated individually with this submission.) Mrs. Gill purchased that house and property from Bayley in the 1860s, and therefore would have been elderly when she sold the corner of the lot to the Robinsons. The deed for that transaction reflects her desire to maintain the residential quality of the neighborhood. There was no building on the new lot at the time of this sale, and the deed stated that

¹ See MPS Cover document "Historic Resources of Kirkwood, Missouri, Section F, Associated Property Types," for more discussion of the Twentieth Century Styled Residences Property Type.

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"No building is to be erected on said property which shall be used for any other purpose than that of a private dwelling . . . for a period of 20 years."²

This house was built by the Robinsons sometime between 1912, when they bought the lot, and the publication of the 1920 county directory. At this time, the Robinsons were listed as living at 101 North Woodlawn, another address for this house. The construction date has thus been set at ca. 1919. Later directories list the Robinsons at the Argonne address, which is more accurate, as the front door of the house faces Argonne.

George Robinson was born in St. Louis County, and was educated in its public school system. He began working at the age of fourteen in an auditor's office of the Missouri Pacific Railroad. When he was about twenty years old, he entered the feed business. He gradually worked his way up until he became vice-president of a forage business. In 1893, Robinson and William H. Danforth organized the Ralston Danforth Commission Company, with Robinson serving as president at the time of its formation. The company was established on the idea that balanced rations would produce better poultry. The company's name was later changed to the Ralston Purina Company, and continued to grow until it became a multi-million dollar corporation. Shortly before World War I, Mr. Robinson retired from active service in the company. He reportedly sold his common stock, but retained most of his preferred stock.³

During the war, Mr. Robinson was the St. Louis County Food Administrator. In that capacity, he urged the residents of Kirkwood to conserve food on the home front. He had a great love for music, and served as manager of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra from 1925 to 1927. For a time during the early years of the St. Louis Municipal Opera, Mr. Robinson served as a director of that organization as well. He also later served as a director of the St. Louis Symphony Association. Mr. Robinson was an active promoter of the Community Fund Campaign and was especially active in Boy Scout work. He opened his home for countless social functions for the young people of Kirkwood. In 1930, the Kirkwood School Board decided to honor George R. Robinson, who had died the previous year, by naming a new elementary school at Couch and Rose Hill Avenues for him.⁴

The Robinson house today looks very much as it did when the Robinson's moved in; it has seen no changes of note and is in excellent condition. It is a large, apparently professionally designed, example of the Tudor Revival style which reflects the fact that Kirkwood continued to be a residential area of choice more than a half century after the formation of the Kirkwood Association. ◻

² Book 296, page 176, at the Recorder of Deeds Office of St. Louis.

³ June Wilkinson Dahl, A History of Kirkwood, Missouri: 1851-1965, (Kirkwood, Missouri: The Kirkwood Historical Society, 1965), p. 314.

⁴ Dahl, p. 314.

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St. Louis County, Missouri
Historic Resources of Kirkwood, Missouri

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Dahl, June Wilkinson. A History of Kirkwood, Missouri: 1861-1965. Kirkwood, MO.: The Kirkwood Historical Society, 1965.
- Northwest Publishing Company. Plat Book of St. Louis County. Des Moines: IA, Northwest Publishing Company, 1909.
- Polk's St. Louis County Directory. 1917, 1920, 1922, 1923, 1926, 1927, 1928, etc.
- Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, Map of Kirkwood, 1926.
- St. Louis County Deed Records. Recorder of Deeds Office, Clayton, MO.

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Robinson, George R. and Elsie, House
St. Louis County, Missouri
Historic Resources of Kirkwood, Missouri

Verbal Boundary Description

Part of Block "B" of East Kirkwood and part of the Northeast quarter of Section 1 Township 44 North Range 5 East, Kirkwood, in St. Louis County, Missouri fronting 200 feet on the North line of Argonne Drive by a depth Northwardly of 200 feet; bounded East by Woodlawn Avenue, (part of above property is sometimes called part of Block 82 of East Kirkwood), known as and numbered 443 East Argonne, having a total acreage of 0.918 acres.

Boundary Justification

The current boundaries encompass all of the land currently and historically associated with the house.

Photographs

The following information is the same for all photographs:

Robinson, George R. and Elsie, House

443 East Argonne

Kirkwood, St. Louis County, MO

1-8, taken by Linda Stockmann, 139 South Kirkwood Rd, Kirkwood, MO, 63122; date: 1990

(The house was filed checked in 2002 to ensure the 1990 photos are still accurate.)

9-10, taken by Debbie Sheals, 406 West Broadway, Columbia, MO 65203; date: 2002

Negatives are on file with the City of Kirkwood Dept of Planing and Development, 139 South Kirkwood Road, Kirkwood, MO 63122, 314-822-5808.

List of Photographs

See photo key for indication of camera angles.

1. Facade, south elevation, from Argonne.
2. Detail, front doorway.
3. East elevation, from Woodlawn
4. Northeast corner, from Woodlawn.
5. Rear, north, elevation.
6. Detail, interior door.
7. Interior, stairhall.
8. Interior, with fireplace and ceiling molding.
9. Facade, from Argonne.
10. Garage, looking north.

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Robinson, George R. and Elsie, House
St. Louis County, Missouri
Historic Resources of Kirkwood, Missouri

11. Form Prepared By

Name Linda Stockman
organization Kirkwood Landmark Commission date 1990
street & number 139 South Kirkwood Road telephone (314) 822-5808
city or town Kirkwood state Missouri zip code 63122

Name Deon K. Wolfenbarger
organization Three Gables Preservation date 1992
street & number 9550 N.E. Cookingham Drive telephone (816) 792-1275
city or town Kansas City state Missouri zip code 64157

Name Debbie Sheals
organization Independent Contractor date May, 2002
street & number 406 West Broadway telephone 573-874-3779
city or town Columbia state Missouri zip code 65203





443











