NPS Form 10-900
(Oct. 1990)

OMB No. 10024-0018

FINAL

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 Woodside

other names/site number Davis, Dr. & Mrs. Richard, Residence #S-324 and #S-324-A

2. Location

street & number 1119 Overlook Road N/A ☐ not for publication

city or town Marion ☒ vicinity

state Indiana code IN county Grant code 053 zip code 46952

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 36CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☒ statewide ☐ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title — Date: 11-5-97

Indiana 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:) _____		

Woodside
Name of Property

Grant IN
County and State

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
- ☐ district
- ☐ site
- ☐ structure
- ☐ object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	1	buildings
0	0	sites
1	0	structures
0	0	objects
3	1	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 Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Usonian

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: CONCRETE
walls: CONCRETE
GLASS
roof: ASPHALT
other: WOOD

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

Woodside
Name of Property

Grant IN
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

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

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

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

Property is:

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

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1955-60

Significant Dates

1955
1960

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Wright, Frank Lloyd
Davidson, Alan
Stafford, John

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

9. Major Bibliographic 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:

Taliesin West (Scottsdale AZ); Lilly Library Archives

Woodside
Name of Property

Grant IN
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approx. 2 ac.

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	16	612180	4493760
2	16		
3	16		
4	16		

☐ 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 Donald & Susan Heuchert / Paul C. Diebold

organization owner / DHPA date 9-30-96

street & number 1119 Overlook Road telephone

city or town Marion state IN zip code 46952

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

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

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

Photographs

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

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

Property Owner

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

name Matt Harris

street & number 1119 Overlook Road telephone

city or town Marion state IN zip code 46952

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.

Section 7-Description

Frank Lloyd Wright named this Usonian house *Woodside*, after its wooded creek side location. Dr. and Mrs. Richard Davis, first owners of the house, commissioned Wright to design a modern and practical family dwelling in 1950. The main portion was built from 1952 to 1955, as was the independent guest house building. Three years later, the Davises commissioned Wright to design a "teenage wing" extending north from the main tepee mass. The wing was completed shortly after Wright's death in 1960. Also on the site is a seemingly trivial yet original structure, a dog house Wright designed for Zeno, the Davis family St. Bernard. Dr. Davis built a garage (not to any FLW plans) on the property in about 1965. There are several temporary sheds on the lot as well. In all, the lot has three contributing buildings; house, guest house, dog house, and one non-contributing building; the 1965 garage. The sheds are not counted.

When Dr. Davis approached Wright to engage his services, Wright suggested to Davis that he purchase a wooded lot in a suburban setting, in Shady Hills subdivision. The subdivision had been platted in 1945 and gradually filled with ranch type homes in the 1950s, 60s, and 70s. The Davises selected a two acre lot with a small creek running across it. The site was formerly part of the Matters family "Maple Camp" and had many maple trees, as well as buckeyes, walnut, oak, Osage orange, crab apple, and pine trees. A dense screen of trees developed along the west property edge as a visual barrier to the adjacent golf course. Wright took advantage of the site, placing the home away from the street, and placing the main living area of the home on the brow of a gentle rise to provide a good vantage point. As few mature trees as possible were removed. Aside from these considerations, Wright did not provide any landscaping plans for the property. Mrs. Elaine Davis created an oriental garden in the west yard. Using local limestone, she laid out a waterfall leading to a stone-lined pond. A meandering path that appears to be a dry creek bed leads from the pond, and she strategically placed a few cast-iron oriental lanterns light and ornament the garden. The garden was completed just before Mrs. Davis died in 1962.

Like many of Wright's Usonian designs, Woodside uses simple and relatively inexpensive building materials. The floor slab is of poured concrete, scored with a lozenge grid and worked with iron oxide compound to a deep red. The slab penetrates inside and outside the house, exposed on terraces, forming the interior floor within the walls. Masonry walls are formed of concrete block, painted a cream color and laid up so that every third block up is recessed 3/4 of an inch with only horizontal joints raked out. According to Dr. Davis, the Veterans Administration requested that he use Haydite, a special type of concrete block made from lava to be less porous than ordinary block (Davis had a 4% V.A. construction loan on the property). Wright approved of the Haydite block. Wooden details or elements were all of tidewater cypress, most of which was originally coated with Marine Spar Varnish, including the windows, doors, board and batten walls around the laundry room, and lights. Roof boards, the guest house, and the dog house were left to weather as Wright hoped. The plan of the house derives from the 60° to 120° grid of four foot lozenges Wright laid out to organize the home. Two wings project from a

hexagonal central core, one to the southwest, one to the north. Wright borrowed the idea of a central tepee-like mass from his own plans for a resort for Lake Tahoe planned, but never built, in the 1920s.

The east side of the house is most often depicted in publications. Here, the salient design features are seen to best effect. The hexagonal central mass is anchored to the earth by the battered concrete block walls. A walled semi-hexagonal terrace extends out from under the lower roof on the due east face of the large hexagonal mass. Angled wooden struts cantilever out to support the lower hipped roof around this section. Large fixed windows angled outward 30° fit between the struts and open the central core to the outdoors. A ribbon of narrow, horizontal, clerestory windows encircles the upper level of the core. The original cypress-framed windows remain in place on the central core; storm windows and double insulated glass have been installed to improve thermal efficiency. From the top of the clerestory level springs a steep pitched hexagonal roof with a massive concrete block chimney at the center. The broad sides of the chimney face east and west. The roof was clad in overlapping cypress plank originally, which emphasized the natural feeling of the house and its horizontal lines. Later owners removed the cypress board and installed conventional asphalt roofing shingles because of water penetration. Another exterior alteration on this side of the house was the changing of a bay-like window which faced onto the small semi-hexagonal terrace. Originally, this semi-hexagonal bay was created by three floor to ceiling sheets of plate glass mitered at the corners. Later owners installed windows that follow the bay configuration, with conventional wood frames and low kick panels at the bottom. Pairs of large single light French doors flank the bay.

The original bedroom wing extends to the southwest. Wright expressed the function of this wing on the exterior by using a linear plan and high-set, small windows for privacy. The windows across this side are sixteen inches wide and all sash and frames were of tidewater cypress, covered with clear varnish originally. Windows along the south wall were replaced with commercial frames and double glass windows recently. Some of the windows are fixed, and some are crank operated casements, with wooden framed brass window screens. This wing terminates in a polygonal hip roof punctured by a concrete block chimney that serves the master bedroom. At the south junction of the original bedroom wing and the central core stands a sunroom addition to the house. Wright planned for a wall to extend and partly enclose a grass lawn terrace at this point, which was built as a screened porch, continuing the angled braces of the house, but having a flat roof. Later, this porch was glazed in and became a sunroom. A contemporary, wooden, two-level deck extends off of the sunroom and steps down, forming a polygonal area. It abuts the house along the south edge where the sunroom and south wall of the original bedroom wing meet. From the street, the deck is partially hidden by gentle changes in the grade of the site.

Circling around to the north side of the house, the hallway on the original bedroom wing is expressed by a very narrow, high-set ribbon of windows. The original windows are cypress, but these along the north side of the original bedroom wing retain the original cypress frames and were altered by adding double

glazed insulated glass recently. The original bedroom wing and central core meet, and in typical fashion, Wright understated the main entrance, placing it in a recessed area. The front door is solid construction with four small six-inch hexagonal lights along the outside edge. The doorway has a cypress frame storm door with fittings for window inserts and an interchangeable center which can accommodate a brass screen or window.

Dr. Richard and Mrs. Elaine Davis asked Wright to design an addition to their home in 1958, only three years after the original portion was complete. Wright provided plans for a low extension to the north, similar in character to the southwest bedroom wing. The same treatment was duplicated for the block walls, roof structure, and fenestration pattern. Like the prow of a ship, this wing extends to the visitor approaching from the street. Low slung walls enclose a private terrace in the form of a parallelogram in plan. The terrace had been demolished by a later owner and replaced with a wooden deck. The current owners rebuilt the terrace walls and concrete slab to recreate the Wright design. Formerly, the terrace was accessible only from inside the house, but in rebuilding the terrace, the present owners left an entrance with red concrete steps and gate through the terrace wall at its southwest junction with the house. The angled wall of the house within the terrace has a recessed wooden French doors with large single lights. The left side wall of the terrace section of the house rises to become a tapered, massive, square chimney. The east face of the teen wing has a ribbon of casement windows similar to those on the original bedroom wing. Recently, storm windows were added to the teen wing windows. The windows along the east face of the teenage wing are original. At the point where the east wall of the teen wing meets the original hex core, an original mitred corner window remains, with the two plate glass sheets beveled at the outside corner. The lower walls of the teen wing are more exposed to view than those of the original bedroom wing, due in part to changes in grade, but also because several basement windows were cut into the lower wall in the 1960s. These simple casement windows were placed toward the north end of the wing.

Wright also designed a guest house for the Davises as part of the 1950 design package. This odd, laterally symmetrical hexagonal structure has an overhanging shed roof pitched toward the house, providing privacy for both house and guest house, with only one small window facing toward the house. The patio area around the guest house has the Wright trademark red-stained concrete slab forming a stoop and a small garden work area underneath the eaves to the rear of the guest house. The guest house retains its original cypress board roof. Its walls are horizontal cypress board-and-batten siding, originally specified to have no finish, but now painted. The northeast facing wall facet has the sidelighted front door, and the north face has a bank of casement windows. The interior has a large single room, a small 3/4 bath, and closet. The interior is finished in floor-to-ceiling light wood paneling with cypress trim.

The interior of the Davis House provides practical, entertaining, private, and storage spaces within its extended plan. Like so many of his Usonian designs, Wright zoned uses in the home for both aesthetic

and functional considerations. The Cherokee red floor slab is visible throughout the interior, unifying the spaces. The low-ceiling entrance foyer leads to the central core and the living room area. Here, the visitor encounters the dramatic, lofty space of the living room, with its clerestory lighted ceiling.

The living area occupies roughly half of the hexagon, with the large concrete block chimney and fireplace anchoring the center of the room. A brass hood marks the top of the fireplace opening, and originally, a massive metal grate could hold four foot long Yule logs. The grate was replaced by a small metal enclosure with blower motor by later owners. Outside walls have tidewater cypress built-in cabinets forming a ledge for the angled windows. Built-ins and other original furnishings are made of tidewater cypress veneer with mahogany cores. Details such as pulls carry the triangle theme throughout the house. Thought of as a pair, the pulls would fit together and form parallelograms, echoing the angled grid which organizes the house.

Chinese red painted wedge-shaped braces divide window pairs, and wooden members angle through the lower ceiling to meet the red braces and tie the tepee roof structure together. Beside (north) of the fireplace is an original built-in sofa, book cases, and end table. A ten foot tall pair of single-light French doors opens to a small terrace. Between these is the previously described altered bay window. On the interior, this bay originally had a flush planter, closing off the semi-hexagonal area from the living room. This was removed by past owners and the living area expanded into the semi-hexagonal area.

Just as Wright opened the connection between the living and dining room in his Prairie designs, he continued to do so in his Usonian period. The dining area is essentially common to the living area, simply around the bend from it, on the south side of the hexagon. The original dining table and chairs were auctioned off by a previous owner and bought by the Montreal Museum of Decorative Arts. Using original drawings, the table and chairs have been recreated and add to the feeling of the interior. Among the many subtle details of the living space are triangular lights recessed into the counter tops along the perimeter of the room. The Bulldog Electric Company gained permission of both Wright and Dr. Davis to install an innovative, 24 volt relay system to control lighting throughout the interior and exterior from three strategic locations. Strip outlets in special locations freed the interior appliances and lamps from traditional, fixed outlets. The firm hoped to gain national attention by advertizing the system in a publication called ***House and Home***, along with a planned feature article about *Woodside* in the same issue. This system is still in place and working.

Opening off of the dining area is a sunroom, an enclosed addition. A short wall section of concrete block was removed from the original core wing of the house to open the sunroom into the dining area. The sunroom was, at first, a screened in porch, but was enclosed as a year-round room recently. Double sliding doors open from the sunroom to the double-tiered deck.

Wright labeled the kitchen "workplace" and it occupies the center of the core section of the house. No

original fixtures or cabinetry remain in the kitchen. A small hexagonal area encloses the small boiler room just north of the kitchen. Just southwest of the kitchen was the study. Originally, this room had a built-in desk, shelving, and bench which were removed at some point and the room turned into an informal dining space, with access through the south (former exterior) wall to the sunroom, since part of this wall was removed. The Chinese red dividers which formed part of the wall remain in place as a screen between the rooms. The northwest quadrant of the central core is given over to utility room, with a small half bath next to it.

Stepping down to the southwest hall of the original bedroom wing, the character of the house changes quickly to that of a private, sheltered, quiet area. Ceilings follow the contours of the low gable roof. The narrow side hall is lined with cypress board and batten wood planks, and hall doors continue the paneling as well, each being flush with minimal hardware and brass piano hinges. Triangular recessed lights line the hall ceiling. The far end of the hall next to the master bedroom is lined with built-in storage units. Two pair of the original hall closet doors in the house have been replaced with hollow-core oak finish doors. The ribbon windows are roughly at shoulder level. The bedrooms are small and each has bulkhead indirect florescent lighting as Wright intended. Interior and partition walls in the bedrooms are of the same board and batten cypress paneling as the hall, while exterior walls are concrete block. The same style of wooden wedge window divider and window styles similar to the central core are used in the bedrooms throughout the house. The first room was a children's bathroom; it retains its original sunken bathtub. Two small bedrooms were intended to be next to the children's bath, but these were built as one larger bedroom. Next is another bathroom, serving the master bedroom. A shower stall and single sink have been enlarged to Jacuzzi-type tub and a pair of sinks. The master bedroom terminates the wing, due to changes in grade it is actually three feet below grade on the exterior. The master bedroom was intended to be larger than the two small bedrooms and has a fireplace.

Returning to the central core, and passing through the entry area, the visitor can move into the teenage wing, as Wright called the 1958-60 addition to the house. The character is very similar to that of the original bedroom wing: a narrow, side-loaded corridor reaches down the wing, lined with board-and-batten cypress wood on the inside wall, and the angled ceiling with triangular recessed light fixtures. The bank of windows on the outside concrete wall is set higher than in the other wing (seven feet up, rather than shoulder height, due to a difference in the floor level; not visible from the exterior). Another difference in this wing is evident in the quality of materials; by the time this wing was being finished, cypress was in great demand and the boards could no longer be hand-selected for color and finish, as they were for the original section of the house.

Wright laid out a series of parallelogram-shaped bed and bath rooms along the east side of the teenage wing. Like the other wing, each has built-in storage and other furnishings, and all partition walls are cypress board. Each also has indirect florescent lighting in wall bulkheads, like the other bedroom wing rooms. From the south, first is a bedroom, then, wedged in tightly are two bathrooms. These two

polygonal half baths share an odd-shaped common shower stall accessible from either bathroom. Another bedroom is then wedged in north of the baths. The hall terminates into a "teenage lounge." Echoing the master bedroom wing, this semi-public room completes this wing of the house. It also has a fireplace and built-in furniture, such as bench seats, tables, and cabinets.

An enclosed staircase in the southwest corner of the teen lounge leads down to the basement. Wright almost never advocated basements in private homes; even in his Prairie phase forty years prior, he favored their elimination from house plans. Dr. Davis convinced Wright that a basement was needed as a tornado shelter. The basement extends under about 2/3 of the teen wing, and houses a boiler room for this wing, family room, and a small workshop. Two basement windows on the east wall were added by later owners.

Another typical Usonian feature, common to the entire house, is the heating system. Wright pioneered the use of indirect radiant heat, and the Davis House retains its original system. Just below the floor slab, a serpentine pattern of two and four inch iron pipes, spaced eighteen inches apart, were placed over a bed of crushed stone, welded, and pressure checked prior to pouring of the floor slab. The bottom of the slab contacts the crown of the pipes. The boiler just off of the kitchen heats the water circulating through the system. Heat radiates up, through the slab, and into the house. The teen wing uses the same principal, but has its own boiler in the basement, and has copper pipes imbedded into the floor slab. Additional zoning control is available by means of electric valve controls, hidden in an access panel in the floor of each room. The boiler off of the kitchen now runs on natural gas, while the teen wing boiler was installed as a natural gas burning unit. Wright further controlled heat gain and loss by sensitive orientation of the plan and exposures.

In about 1965, the Davises built a detached two car garage on the property. Aside from its now painted cypress board-and-batten siding, the garage is a conventional building, and is not thought to be from Wright's hand. It is counted as a non-contributing building.

The Davis family dog, Zeno, needed shelter as well. Wright is thought to have produced drawings for the existing dog house on the property. It is a four foot by six foot wooden structure, sided in cypress board-and-batten, with a broad, overhanging gable roof. The plank cypress roof was replaced with asphalt shingles at some point. Originally, a wooden, three-board fence surrounded the dog house area; now a chain-link fence encloses it. The dog house is counted as a contributing building.

The Huecherts acquired the house in 1992 and began to reverse some the post-Davis family alterations to the house. Many of the changes have been mentioned throughout this text, but some specific projects include removal of tile from the entrance foyer, stripping painted window frames, and refinishing interior woodwork. Despite some unfortunate changes to the house, it still retains much Wrightian character.

Section 8-Statement of Significance

Woodside, originally the home of Dr. Richard and Elaine Davis, meets Criterion C as an unusual example of the late work of America's undisputed master of modern architecture, Frank Lloyd Wright. During his Usonian phase, Wright brought his ideas of modern design, living, and convenience to middle class Americans, and the Davis House, built from 1952-1960, embodies the best of the elements of his late works. *Woodside* is unique among Usonian homes. While it and others Wright was working on at the time of his death culminated his career, *Woodside* looked back to his early years as well: the hexagonal central tepee structure was borrowed from Wright's own never built Lake Tahoe cabin project of 1922. Because of its exceptional significance, and its place within the body of late works by a master architect, the Davis House meets Criterion Consideration G (less than fifty years of age).

Frank Lloyd Wright (1867-1959) first earned recognition during his Prairie period from 1900 until 1914. Though he would stray from the traditional looking Prairie style, Wright laid the basis for much of his later works during this time. His ideals of integrating, controlling, and coordinating site, building, furnishings, and fittings into a complete design would remain, and, in fact, come to the forefront during his late career. During the teens and twenties, Wright suffered through a series of personal crises, and his works became introspective and experimental. A series of tapestry concrete block homes, for example, marked his 1920s works. The Depression cut into the number of commissions, and Wright, having accomplished much and being over sixty years old, could easily have decided to retire.

Beginning in the mid 1930s, however, Wright reemerged as an influential architect, thanks to two important commissions: Fallingwater (Edgar Kaufmann House) in 1935 and the Johnson Wax Administration Building in 1936. Wright had long hoped to reshape American domestic architecture and urban planning, and it was at this time that he designed and advocated Broadacre City. This suburban village was centered on the free-standing, single family home placed on a spacious one-acre lot. Wright rejected urban America, and his selection of a remote site, his former family home, for the Taliesin Fellowship in Wisconsin in 1932 reflects this outlook. Wright enjoyed spending the winter months in a warmer climate; he initiated a winter program for the fellowship in the desert just outside Scottsdale, Arizona in 1937. In the midst of these events, Wright first conceived his *Usonian* house; a middle class, practical dwelling intended to harmonize with its site. Samuel Butler created the term *Usonia* as a description of the United States in his Utopian novel of 1872 titled ***Erewhon***. For Wright, the Usonian house was to provide middle class American families with tasteful, modern housing for free and simple living, in touch with nature.

Catalogers and studiers of Wright's residential work from 1936 until his death in 1959 usually describe his homes from this period as Usonian. Herbert Jacobs first commissioned Wright to design a Usonian home in 1936 for a site near Madison, Wisconsin. The Jacobs House has the trademarks of Usonian design: modular design, integrated landscaping, no basement (floor slab construction), no garage, banks

of glazing opening to the exterior, and simple building materials, such as brick, concrete block, or reverse board and batten wood, left unfinished. Usonian homes were never as modular and uniform as Wright first hoped; each took on a custom-designed character, yet, these design features remained fairly constant within his late residential works.

Wright hoped to design clusters or communities of Usonian homes, but was unable to find such a commission. Instead, these homes remained individual and specialized works. World War II held up residential work for Wright, but in the fourteen years after the war, many people turned to him for new house plans. About 120 Usonian-type houses were designed by Wright. This mature phase of his career represents a culmination of his organic architecture ideals given new authority by his experience and interest in affordable, but artistic, housing.

Woodside is significant within this body of work in several ways. Primarily, it is unique because of its dramatic, tepee like central core, the design for which Wright revived from a decades-old conceptual design for a series of Lake Tahoe cabins (1922). Wright rarely used dramatic vertical elements like this on his residential designs, but he did occasionally revive older, failed schemes for new projects. One notable example from this period is the Price Company Tower in Bartlesville, Oklahoma (1952), derived from the never executed 1929 St. Mark's Tower design. Wright seldom mined his own works for residential designs, yet, in 1951, he created a house for Nathan Rubin in Canton, Ohio which was a mirror image, with revisions, of a never-built portion of a University of Michigan teacher housing unit from 1939. Wright possibly viewed some residential commissions as an opportunity to prove the worth of designs which otherwise would remain unfulfilled. Woodside is a good example of a Usonian home, and it still retains the essential characteristics of a Frank Lloyd Wright design.

Indiana has no significant body of work from Wright's career, either from his early periods or late work. He designed eight buildings in Indiana. A recently identified house in Gary was one of several stock designs he created for a catalog/kit builder, American System-Built, and dates from about 1915. The DeRhodes House, 1906, stands in the West Washington Street Historic District (NR). The other five, including the Davis House, are Usonian types.* One of these, the Christian House in West Lafayette, was the first individual National Register listing for a Wright-designed house in Indiana (6-16-92). Because of its completeness of design and integrity, the Christian House is the standard by which other Indiana Usonians are judged by the SHPO. Since the Davis design does not match the integrity of the Christian House, it is best considered for statewide significance, rather than national significance as was the Christian House.

Family history no doubt played a role in Richard Davis' fascination with Frank Lloyd Wright. In 1936, his parents built a modernistic house at 723 Euclid Avenue in Marion. Mrs. Davis admired Wright's designs, and was also inspired by the homes displayed at the Century of Progress World's Fair of 1933 in Chicago. One of the homes was a ranch style dwelling with walls of Rostone, an experimental artificial

stone named for Purdue alumnus and benefactor David Ross. Richard's mother was one of three members of the design committee for the Indiana building at the Fair. She designed the 1936 house with a flat roof, corner windows, open spaces, and a terrace patio. The elder Davises chose Rostone for the exterior walls. Ross was a friend of the Davis family and had provided a grant to Purdue University to develop the artificial stone.

Richard Davis first met Frank Lloyd Wright by chance. The son of Marion, Indiana surgeon, Davis interned at Philadelphia General Hospital, then served a 1 ½ year residency at the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota. Davis then served 2 years in the Army Medical Corps before returning to Mayo to finish two more years of residency in surgery. In 1950, Dr. Davis became junior staff and First Assistant to Dr. Mayo. With two months left in his assignment, fate brought Davis and Wright together; Wright was in for gallbladder surgery under Davis' care. In course of his stay, Wright offered to design Davis a home if he wished. The next month, Wright invited the Davises to Taliesin in Spring Green, Wisconsin for the weekend and to plan a new house. Dr. and Elaine Davis wanted to return to Richard's home town, Marion, Indiana so that Dr. Davis could practice medicine with his father and brother Joseph. Wright had suggested that the Davises buy a wooded lot of at least two acres, with hills and a creek if possible. The Davises purchased the nominated lot, and provided lot plans and grade elevations to Wright. Wright suggested that the Davises visit the Mossberg House, a Wright design in South Bend, Indiana, for planning ideas, and the Davises followed Wright's advice. Wright quickly furnished initial plan and perspective drawings for home he called *Woodside* before the Davises moved away from Rochester. Complete architectural plans, elevations, and detail drawings followed.

In 1952, Dr. Davis started construction on *Woodside*. Wright seldom traveled to building sites at this stage of his life, but Alan Davidson, an apprentice and Taleisen fellow, supervised the construction of the house, coming initially to set up construction and periodically to monitor work. Dr. Davis installed a phone on a tree on the site; they contacted Wright each morning at 7:00am to report on progress. A local contractor was chosen to build the house, however, the firm backed out of the job after the block walls were completed with fears that the elaborately counterbalanced wood roof system of the house would collapse. Since the contractor quit, Dr. and Elaine Davis lost their V.A. loan and were forced to refinance. Dr. Davis' father and mother fully supported his choice of a Wright design, encouraged him to proceed and offered to assist in refinancing. Wright avoided hiring a new contractor, making the Davises the contractor. The Davises hired a local master carpenter and cabinet maker, John Stafford, as subcontractor. The original portion of the house and the guest house was complete in the fall of 1955. Stafford used the guest house as a workshop. When Stafford removed the support cradle for the lower roof, after the upper roof was complete, the wisdom of Wright's design was evident. A transit trained on the roof structure showed that the structure shifted the width of a pencil dot when the support was removed.

Three years later, Dr. and Elaine Davis re-approached Wright for designs for additional bedrooms and

guest house. Wright recommended that a long low wing extend from the north facet of the central core hexagon, and he termed the new addition a "teenage wing." Wright continued to provide advice to the Davises after his 1958 addition plans were complete, right up to his death at age 92 in 1959. The Davis family completed the addition in 1960. Elaine Davis died of cancer in 1962, but Dr. Davis soon remarried, to Madelyn Pugh. At the time, Pugh and Bob Carroll were co-writers for the popular television series *I Love Lucy*, and they used the Davis guest house as an office for writing show scripts. In 1966, Dr. Richard and Mrs. Madelyn Davis moved to Los Angeles, California. From 1966 to 1973, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas McClain owned the house, selling to Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Dillon, who lived here until 1976. The Dillons sold the property to Dr. and Mrs. G. David Ball, now of Indianapolis. Various owners altered the house; these changes are detailed in the description. The Heucherts have owned the house since 1992 and restored many of its original features. In April of 1997, the Heucherts sold the house to Matt Harris. Harris is related to Dr. Davis. Matt's mother was married to Richard Davises cousin, George Merrill Davis. Ironically, Matt Harris bought the former Davis family home on Euclid Avenue (described above) but sold it to purchase *Woodside* in 1997.

***Frank Lloyd Wright Buildings in Indiana, tentative list**

name	date	location	notes
DeRhodes House	1906	South Bend	NR District, altered interior
Wynant House	c.1915	Gary	American System-Built, not in Storrer
Armstrong House	1939	Odgen Dunes	Usonian
Mossberg House	1948	South Bend	Usonian, several additions
Haynes House	1952	Fort Wayne	Usonian, very intact
Davis House	1953-60	Marion	Usonian, Wright-designed additions
Christian House	1954	West Laf.	NR ind. listing, Usonian

Section 9-Bibliography

Constantino, Maria. *Frank Lloyd Wright*. Greenwich, CN: Bromptin Books Corp., 1991.

Davis, Dr. Richard. *E-mail letter to Paul Diebold*, 5-21-97.

Davis, Dr. Richard. *E-mail letter to Paul Diebold*, 6-17-97.

Davis, Dr. Richard. *E-mail letter to Paul Diebold*, 6-19-97.

Heuchert, Donald and Susan. Various interviews with past owners of the Davis House.

Pfeiffer, Bruce Brooks and Gerald Nordland. *Frank Lloyd Wright in the Realm of Ideas.* Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1988.

"'A Pine Tree House' for Indiana," (Portfolio of Four Houses by Frank Lloyd Wright), *House and Home*, September 1960, Vol. 18, No. 3, pp. 113-123.

Storrer, William Alan. *The Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991.

Storrer, William Alan. *The Frank Lloyd Wright Companion.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993.

Wright, Frank Lloyd. Various papers, correspondence, renderings, elevations, and drawings of "Woodside, Residence for Dr. & Mrs. Richard Davis, Marion, Ind." Lilly Library Archives, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.

Wright, Frank Lloyd. Various renderings of "Woodside, Residence for Dr. & Mrs. Richard Davis, Marion, Ind." Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, Taliesen West, Scottsdale, AZ.

"Wright House Discovered in Indiana," *Bulletin* (Quarterly Newsletter of the Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy) Vol. 4, No. 4, Winter, 1996, p. 16.

Section 10-Geographical Data-Verbal Boundary Description

Lot number 38 in Section I of Shady Hills subdivision, in Pleasant and Center Townships, Grant County, Indiana. Also see lot survey map.

Boundary Justification

This is the historic boundary of the property, consisting of the lot the Davises purchased for the project.