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City of Madison Landmarks Commission
LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (1)

Name of Building or Site

Common

Jacobs House II

Historic (if applicable)

Second Herbert and Catherine
Jacobs House

Location

Street Address

3995 Shawn Trail

Aldermanic District

Ninth District

Classification

Type of Property (building, monument, park, etc.)

building

Zoning District

R1

Present Use

single-family residence

Current Owner of Property (available at City Assessor's office)

Name (s)

John and Elizabeth Moore

Street Address

3995 Shawn Trail
Middleton, WI 53562

Telephone Number

Legal Description (available at City Assessor's office)

Parcel Number

0708-222-0103-7

Legal Description

see page 2

Condition of Property

Physical Condition (excellent, good, fair, deteriorated, ruins)

excellent

Altered or Unaltered?

altered

Moved or Original Site?

original site

Wall Construction

sandstone and glass

City of Madison Landmarks Commission
LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (2)

Legal Description

Certified Survey Map No. 5030, recorded in Dane County Register of Deeds in volume 22, page 250 of Certified Surveys. That part of Lots 3 and 4 described as follows:

Beginning at the NE corner of Lot 4; thence south $00^{\circ}37'19''$ west 150 feet along the easterly line of said Lot; thence north $88^{\circ}46'39''$ west 306.60 feet; thence north $00^{\circ}35'41''$ east 137.90 feet along the westerly line of said Lot; thence north $88^{\circ}55'07''$ east 306.95 feet along the northerly line of said Lot to point of beginning.

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LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (3)

Describe Present and Original Physical Construction and Appearance.

The Second Herbert Jacobs House is of a type Frank Lloyd Wright called "solar hemicycles." It is a two-story structure with a semicircular shape broken by a circular utility core located in the eastern sector of the house. The northern facade is constructed of flat stone, and it is set into a berm-type earthen slope. Only the ribbon windows of the second story are exposed to the cold, northern winds. The approach to the house is from the north, and a tunnel takes the visitor through the slope to the entrance at the southern facade. This facade consists of plate glass windows set into a wooden framework. The ground floor windows are vertical rectangles, while the second floor windows are more square. The roof is flat with a broad overhang. It is dark colored and provides sharp contrast to the light color of the stone walls. A narrow terrace follows the contour of the southern facade and drops off into a large sunken garden. The garden walls were planted with a polychromatic ground cover.

The plan is built on modules of 6° sectors. For example, the bedroom windows have a width of two units, the fireplace width is two units, and the utility core has a width of four units. The ground floor is a continuous open space containing the kitchen, dining, and living areas. Wright said of this space, "Here in one room is the whole affair of good living--the warmth and invitation of a true home." The northern wall is of the same stone as the exterior. The floor is concrete, and the ceiling is nothing but the exposed structure of the second floor. The western sector of the room contains a circular reflecting pool which extends outside. The utility core contains laundry facilities on the ground floor, and a circular staircase leading to the bathroom and the five second-floor bedrooms. The partitions separating the bedrooms are faced with diagonal planking. Each room opens onto an interior balcony which overhangs the ground floor on the southern side of the house.

The Jacobs house fell into severe disrepair in the 1970s. In 1983 it was restored by William Taylor, who received a City-County Award for Historic Preservation for his work.

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LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (4)

Original Owner Herbert and Catherine Jacobs	Original Use single-family residence
Architect or Builder Frank Lloyd Wright	Architectural Style "Solar Hemicycle"
Date of Construction 1943-1948	Indigenous Materials Used sandstone

List of Bibliographical References Used

- The Architectural Forum, "Frank Lloyd Wright"; Vol. 94, January 1951; pp. 90-93, ill.
- The Architecture of Wisconsin, Richard W.E. Perrin; Pub. State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, WI, 1967. p. 156.
- Frank Lloyd Wright, Vincent Scully, Jr.; Pub. George Braziller, Inc., New York, NY, 1960. p. 30, ill. plates 110, 111, 112.

Form Prepared By:

Name and Title

Richard L. Cleary and Katherine Rankin, Preservation Planner

Organization Represented (if any)

City of Madison

Address

P.O. Box 2985
Madison, WI 53701-2985

Telephone Number

266-6552

Date Nomination Form Was Prepared

March 8, 1993

City of Madison Landmarks Commission
LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (5)

Significance of Nominated Property and Conformance to Designation Criteria:

The Second Jacobs House is the first of Frank Lloyd Wright's "Solar Hemicycle" houses. Subsequent examples can be found in Galesburg, Michigan; Bethesda, Maryland; Tallahassee, Florida; and Virginia Beach, Virginia. These houses were all designed with considerable attention to climactic conditions. They contain many characteristics of the earlier Usonian house type, and their expression marks the domestic application of Wright's theories on the use of curvilinear forms in architecture.

Most houses catch the sun on only one side at a time. "Solar hemicycle" houses are designed and situated to take maximum advantage of the sun's path so that most of the house is well lighted throughout the day. The Second Jacobs House was designed with Wisconsin's extremes of climate expressly in mind. The northern facade is insulated from both the cold winter and the hot summer weather by the earthen slope, while the sunken garden shelters the glass southern facade. During the summer months the bedroom windows and the ground floor windows can be opened for ventilation. The roof's broad overhang not only keeps snow and rain from the windows, but shades them from the direct sun.

Herbert and Catherine Jacobs, who commissioned the house, were also the clients for the first Usonian house (441 Toepfer Avenue, designated a Madison Landmark on May 20, 1974). A number of features of their first house were incorporated into his second house. These include the plan wrapping around a garden, the flat roof, the compacting of utilities, and the use of concrete for the floor. "Solar hemicycle" houses were not designed with the same budget limitations as the Usonian houses.

With the Johnson Wax Administration Building (1936) and the plan for Florida Southern College (1938-1954) Wright had experimented with curvilinear forms for a more organic and inviting expression of buildings than the traditional polygonal forms. Study of ancient Minoan structures and their symbolic use of curved and circular forms was one of the sources for Wright's thought. The Second Jacobs House was the first constructed domestic application of these ideas. As Vincent Scully has suggested, its form is evocative of an inviting cave or the security of the American pioneer's sod prairie house.

It is one of Frank Lloyd Wright's more innovative designs and one of the finest modern houses in the City of Madison. It is also significant for its magnificent uses of Madison's native sandstone.