

**NORTH CAROLINA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE**  
Office of Archives and History  
Department of Cultural Resources

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**Wilbur and Martha Carter House**

Greensboro, Guilford County, GF4960, Listed 8/13/2008  
Nomination by Cynthia de Miranda  
Photographs by Cynthia de Miranda, May 2007



Façade view, front entrance



Façade view



Rear view



Carport

**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 Carter, Wilbur and Martha, House  
other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Location**

street & number 1012 Country Club Drive n/a  not for publication  
city or town Greensboro n/a  vicinity  
state North Carolina code NC county Guilford code 081 zip code 27408

**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 for 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.)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
North Carolina Department of Cultural 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

Carter, Wilbur and Martha, House  
Name of Property

Guilford County, NC  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

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

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
3	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
3	0	Total

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

**Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

n/a

n/a

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

DOMESTIC/secondary structure

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

DOMESTIC/secondary structure

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls BRICK

WOOD

roof ASPHALT

other STEEL

**Narrative Description**

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

Carter, Wilbur and Martha, House  
Name of Property

Guilford County, NC  
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 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: n/a

- 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**

1951  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1951  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

n/a  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

n/a  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Loewenstein, Edward, architect  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Smith, Blair L., interior designer  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Brooks Lumber Company, builder  
\_\_\_\_\_

**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):** n/a

- 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: .  
Wilson & Lysiak, Inc., 1030 E. Wendover Ave., Greensboro

Carter, Wilbur and Martha, House  
Name of Property

Guilford County, NC  
County and State

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## 10. Geographical Data

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**Acreage of Property** 1.28 acres

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 17 607210 3995320  
Zone Easting Northing  
2 \_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing  
4 \_\_\_\_\_

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.)

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## 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title Cynthia de Miranda  
organization Edwards-Pitman Environmental, Inc. date January 4, 2008  
street & number Post Office Box 1171 telephone 919/682-2211  
city or town Durham state NC zip code 27702

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## Additional Documentation

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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.)

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## Property Owner

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

name Daniel and Kathy Craft  
street & number 1012 Country Club Drive telephone 336-686-1768  
city or town Greensboro state NC zip code 27408

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**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 listing. 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 20303.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Carter, Wilbur and Martha, House  
Guilford County, N.C.

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### DESCRIPTION

The Wilbur and Martha Carter House, a single-story Modernist dwelling built in 1951 in the mode's humanist strain, stands near the center of its parcel at 1012 Country Club Drive in Greensboro's Irving Park neighborhood. The Carter House is an L-plan dwelling much influenced by the Usonian houses of Frank Lloyd Wright. The side-gabled front wing faces south and features a deeply recessed, off-center main entrance toward its east end and a flat-roofed carport at its west end. A glass-walled sunroom fills the area between the entrance and the carport, contrasting with the wood-sided exterior walls of the master bedroom east of the front entrance. A rear wing with an intersecting gable roof extends north from the east end of the front wing. Exterior finishes include native bluestone, red brick, and wormy chestnut siding; all are repeated at the interior. Windows include metal awning-style and fixed-sash. A massive brick chimney rises through the north side of the roof slope in the center of the front wing. A brick driveway edges the front yard along its west side and leads to the carport. A brick-paved walk winds through the middle of the front lawn to the dwelling's off-center main entrance.

The interior plan places the public and some service spaces in the front wing, west of the entrance, and reserves the spaces north and east of the entry for the family's bedrooms, bathrooms, storage, and a children's playroom. Additional service spaces, including a maid's room and bathroom, closet, and mechanical room, are connected with the house but share the carport's flat roof. These rooms are in an enclosed section along the north side of the carport.

The residential parcel is generally flat with mature trees and lawn areas in the front, rear, and east side yards. A hip-height, skim-coated, concrete-block wall encircles the front yard, with single-leaf wood gates at the brick-paved front walk and at the top of the driveway near the carport. A shed and a small horse barn in the rear yard date to 1951 and are contributing buildings.

The house stands just beyond the west boundary of the Irving Park Historic District (NR 1994), a planned golf-course suburb that developed between 1911 and 1941. Architectural housing stock styles in and around the historic district includes Mission and Spanish Colonial Revival, Prairie School, Craftsman bungalows, Chateausque, and French Eclectic.

**Wilbur and Martha Carter House**  
**1951, with changes ca. 1955, 1960, 1970, 1980**

### Contributing Building

The broad, low-slung Carter House stands toward the center of its roughly one-and-a-quarter-acre parcel on the north side of Country Club Road. Lawns dotted with mature trees surround the dwelling on three sides and trees at the street edge of the front yard obscure the view of the house. A brick-

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paved driveway leads to a carport at the west end of the house. The winding front walk is likewise paved with brick.

A pair of gable-roofed wings joined at the dwelling's southeast corner form the L-plan. The front wing parallels the street and houses public rooms; a flat-roofed carport and service rooms are integrated at the west end of the front wing. A bedroom wing extends north at the dwelling's east end, and the off-center main entrance to the house separates the public spaces from the bedroom wing.

The dwelling's exterior generally features vertical wormy chestnut siding pierced with steel awning windows, fixed-sash picture and full-height windows, and single-light glazed doors or solid wood doors. The low-pitched gable roofs have wide eaves and exposed rafters. Trusses support the roofs, theoretically enabling the rearrangement or removal of interior walls without affecting structural integrity. Asphalt shingles cover the gabled roofs; a built-up roof covers the carport and service rooms.

A sunroom stretches across the facade between the main entrance and the carport. Floor-to-ceiling, steel-framed, single-light windows and sliding glass-and-steel doors form much of the south wall of the sunroom, where a native bluestone floor collects solar heat that radiates through the sunroom and adjacent living room and dining room. The west end of the south wall features a brick planter below three single-light steel-framed windows. The planter continues across the south side of the carport, and slender wood posts standing on the planter support the south end of the carport roof. A single-leaf door in the west wall of the sunroom opens to the carport. The east wall is brick with clerestory windows in the gable. The brick walls inside the sunroom have been painted white.

The off-center main entrance is recessed into the dwelling's footprint and is thus deeply sheltered beneath the main roof. This arrangement creates an exterior vestibule between the sunroom and the master bedroom that is housed at the south end of the bedroom wing. The brick east wall of the sunroom forms the west side of the vestibule; its east wall has wormy chestnut siding laid vertically. The north wall of the vestibule has a wide, single-leaf door flanked by fixed-sash, floor-to-ceiling windows and the floor is native bluestone. Brick, chestnut, and bluestone are all used again inside the dwelling.

The wide single-leaf front door leads into a small foyer that provides access to both wings. To the east and north of the foyer, three doors lead into bedroom suites. The master suite is to the right, occupying the southeast corner of the house. A small hall opens into the bedroom, which is lit by windows on the south and east sides. The north wall accommodates built-in closets below storage cupboards, both with sliding doors. A single-leaf door in the north wall of the master bedroom leads into a dressing room with a built-in vanity and additional built-in storage. A small full bathroom with original fixtures and colored ceramic tile is east of the dressing room.

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A second bedroom suite is north of the master suite. A full bathroom, also with original fixtures and colored tile, is east of the short hall that leads from the foyer into the suite. In the bedroom, at the north end of the hall, built-in closets and cupboards fill the west wall. A sleeping alcove built into the windowed east wall was added in the 1950s for the Carter's son and youngest child, born after the house was built. With its integrated bookshelves and trundle bed hidden beneath the main bed, the alcove is very much in keeping with the efficient and flexible organization of space and storage throughout the house.

The third doorway, roughly opposite the front door, opens to a long, narrow corridor lined on its east side with the same system of built-in closets and cupboards seen in the two bedroom suites. The hall opens into a light-filled playroom space; its west wall, composed of full-height fixed-sash windows and glazed single-leaf doors, overlooks the bluestone patio nestled into the crook of the ell. Two single-leaf doors toward the north and south ends of the playroom's east wall lead into two separate bedrooms, each with built-in closets, storage cupboards, and desks on their south and north walls, respectively. A shared bathroom separates the two bedrooms and features two vanities flanking a sink built into a formica countertop that lines the east wall of the bathroom. A door hidden behind sliding panels in the north end of the playroom leads into a storage room added around 1970.

In the front wing of the house, west of the main foyer inside the front door, the space expands into an open-plan living and dining area. The south wall of the open-plan area consists of wood-framed glass panels. Half are fixed and half slide on tracks to provide passage into the sunroom. Like the sunroom and outdoor vestibule, the open-plan living space and interior entrance hall all feature half-inch-thick native bluestone floors.

A brick hearth wall forms the west end of the living room; the south end of the wall features a wide firebox enclosed by glass doors. A cantilevered bluestone mantel surmounts the firebox and extends beyond it to the north, reaching toward the north wall of the house. As in the sunroom, the brick of the hearth wall has been painted white.

A door in the north wall of the dining room leads to a small den on the west side of the massive chimney; the den's fireplace in fact shares the massive chimney with the living room's hearth; here again the brick has been painted white. The den is also notable for its walls paneled in horizontal wormy chestnut. The west wall features built-in bookcases. A rectangular, fixed-sash bay window overlooks the back bluestone patio, and a single-leaf solid wood door provides egress to the patio.

A swinging door in the west wall of the dining room leads into the service areas of the house, including the kitchen as well as a mechanical room, storage closet, a bathroom, and a laundry room. The kitchen features lower cabinets and countertops arranged in a U-shape, providing space for a breakfast bar at

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the east side of the kitchen. A window over the kitchen sink at the base of the U-shape looks into the sunroom and a single-leaf door at the southeast corner of the kitchen provides egress to that space.

The mechanical room, storage closet, bathroom, and laundry room are accessed through a hall that extends west from the north end of the kitchen, space that originally housed the laundry room. The hall and service spaces are sheltered by the flat roof that creates the carport. Single-leaf doors in the south wall of the hall and the laundry room provide egress at two points from this service wing to the carport; these are in addition to the single-leaf door in the west wall of the sunroom.

*Changes since construction*

The Carter House has been continuously occupied since its construction. During the 1950s and 1960s, the dwelling housed a growing family; since new owners purchased the house in 2004, it is again home to a young family. The dynamic nature of family life requires that the living space adapt, and changes to the organization and décor of a dwelling are a common aspect of residential architectural history. Similarly, because some design elements of the Carter House related to the landscape that existed before the house was built—specifically, mature trees on the parcel—organic changes in that landscape required alterations to designed elements. The overall plan and design of the house has not been compromised, however, and the architectural integrity of the property remains intact.

Landscape-driven changes occurred first at the Carter House. The sunroom was built as a screened porch, and glass panels made up the south slope of the portion of the dwelling's roof over the porch. A pair of two-hundred-year-old oak trees originally shaded the porch in summer while bare branches allowed winter sun to shine through the glass roof, warming the bluestone floor and creating radiant heat. The trees died soon after construction, however, and were removed from the property for safety. Without the trees to regulate seasonal light, the screened porch quickly overheated in the summer months. The Carters replaced the screens with the glass-and-steel walls and doors in 1955 and, around 1960, replaced the glass portion of the roof with asphalt shingles to compensate for the loss of the trees. The interior ceiling treatment installed at that time matches the striated plywood used originally in the north half of the room. These changes are sensitive to the original design intent and preserve both the visual merging of indoor and outdoor space as well as the ability of the stone floor to collect and radiate solar heat in wintertime.<sup>1</sup>

The Carter family made other changes to the house and parcel as a result of emerging needs and to address storage and maintenance issues as the family grew and the house aged. The Carters installed

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<sup>1</sup> Details regarding changes made to the house are from e-mail correspondence with Lee Carter, the son of Wilbur and Martha Carter, in consultation with his father. Copies of the e-mails to Cynthia de Miranda and Jennie Alkire are in the survey file for the house maintained by the North Carolina Historic Preservation Office at the Archives and History Building in Raleigh.

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the sleeping alcove along the east wall of the second bedroom in the early 1950s for their third child, born after the house was built. The alcove is a built-in feature that does not obstruct or otherwise affect the original windows in the exterior wall of the room or compromise the open feeling of the bedroom space. With its integrated storage, featuring space for books, toys, and a trundle bed, the alcove is compatible with the overall idea of efficient and flexible living space throughout the house.

The brick wall that encloses the east side of the sunroom and the west side of the exterior vestibule originally extended, at an angle toward the west, several feet south into the front yard. The Carters removed the extended portion of the wall around 1955. The wall created a feeling of privacy in the sunroom by visually blocking from view those approaching or departing from the front entry of the house, but the Carters removed the wall because they disliked the way it divided the front lawn. The remaining portion of the wall does still serve the purpose of literally and visually dividing the entry from the interior space of the sunroom.

Changes in the service wing reflect trends in the affluent American household through the second half of the twentieth century. The present-day laundry room originally was part of a maid's suite, along with the surviving bathroom next to the room. Few families had live-in maids in the latter third of the twentieth century, and in 1970, this bedroom was converted into a laundry room. The original laundry room space became an extension of the kitchen. The family moved the refrigerator into this area from the northwest corner of the original kitchen space and installed a second oven and additional storage in the original refrigerator location. While there has been some reorganization of the space in this area, the wing remains a service wing with few physical changes.

The windowless storage room at the north end of the bedroom wing was added around 1970 to the windowless north wall of the wing, using exterior materials and details that closely match those of the house. The wall between the play room and the bedrooms was installed in 1980, after the Carter children were grown, replacing sliding panels that had allowed the bedrooms to merge with the playroom. While the loss of the sliding doors does not change the floor plan of the house, it does diminish the intent of openness in the wing. In neither case, however, do these changes to the north wing overwhelm or diminish original design features of the house.

Changes that were not or do not appear to have been driven by functional need have also been made to the house. In 1960, the rectangular bay window was installed in the north wall of the den; the window replaced a smaller window and provides slightly more floor area to the room. The window, however, does follow the flow of outside to inside as seen throughout the house. Brick pavement at the driveway and front walk dates to 1994, replacing the original concrete in the same location. Brick is one of the main interior and exterior materials in the house, however, and the introduction of brick for the pavement does not introduce a new material at the property.

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Changes to the original color scheme stray farthest from the original design intent. The interior brick walls were painted white after 2003, and other original colors in the house likewise do not remain. Much of this scheme was expressed through furnishings and textiles—a newspaper article mentions sofas covered with a cream and rust and cream and green prints, a “nubby” beige rug, and a Noguchi coffee table with a black wood base.<sup>2</sup> But the stone floors, brick walls, and wormy chestnut wall cladding inside and outside the house also contributed to the textured, earth-toned palette. The paint on the interior brick walls unfortunately obscures both some of the texture and color that Lowenstein originally infused into the interior. However, the stone floors in the public areas and the wormy chestnut siding in the den remain.

Overall, the house retains a high degree of architectural integrity. Lowenstein’s design was expressed through structure, spatial organization, and materials, and all remain. The influence of Frank Lloyd Wright’s Usonian designs is easily apparent, and the original materials remain evident inside and outside the dwelling. The immediate setting of the lawn dotted with mature trees and the larger setting of the affluent and traditional neighborhood are also intact, the latter providing a contrast to the new residential style Lowenstein introduced to Greensboro.

**Horse barn, 1951, Contributing Building**

Side-gabled, frame outbuilding with vertical plank siding and a pair of double-leaf, Z-braced swinging doors.

**Shed, 1951, Contributing Building**

Side-gabled, frame outbuilding with German siding, exposed rafter tails, six-over-six double-hung windows, and two single-leaf personnel doors.

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<sup>2</sup> “Room for Living,” *Greensboro Record*, January 12, 1952.

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Carter, Wilbur and Martha, House  
Guilford County, N.C.

### Summary of Significance

The 1951 Wilbur and Martha Carter House in Greensboro is locally significant under Criterion C as an intact early example of Modernist residential design produced by noted Greensboro architect Edward Loewenstein. The Carter House is the earliest identified Modernist house in Greensboro as well as Loewenstein's first Modernist residential commission in the city. In its plan and organization of space the house shows the influence of Frank Lloyd Wright's Usonian type and introduces themes later expanded and reinforced in Loewenstein's impressive body of Modernist residential work in Greensboro. The house, continuously in use as a residence since its construction, has seen some changes to adapt to changing family needs, as well as to the loss of mature trees on the landscape. Despite changes, the house retains architectural integrity and continues to represent the germination of both residential Modernism in Greensboro and of Loewenstein's individual Modernist expression. The period of significance is 1951, the year the house was built.

### Historical Background

In 1950, Wilbur Lee Carter Jr. and his wife Martha Sauvain Carter hired their friend Edward Loewenstein to design a house in Irving Park on land the family purchased from Ceasar and Martha Cone. The Irving Park neighborhood had been largely developed in the 1910s through the early 1940s, with deed restrictions requiring relatively expensive houses sited on large parcels surrounding a golf course. Period Revival housing stock predominates, particularly the Colonial Revival, Classical Revival, and Tudor Revival styles. The neighborhood attracted Greensboro's upper-middle-class families; the high number of insurance company executives in residence reflects the prominence of that industry in Greensboro. At the time of their move to Irving Park, Wilbur Lee Carter Jr. was vice-president of Greensboro's Southern Life Insurance Company. Martha Carter was very active in civic affairs.<sup>1</sup>

Loewenstein first produced drawings for a two-story Georgian house, which would have been very much in keeping with the established architectural character of Irving Park. The Carters, however, preferred a single-story dwelling and a desired a structure that could "bring in the outdoors" more than

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<sup>1</sup> Lee Carter (son of Wilbur Lee Carter Jr. and Martha S. Carter), e-mail correspondence with the author, June 23, 2007, and November 21, 2007, and with Jennie Alkire (student in the Interior Architecture department at UNC-G), July 11, 2003; Ceasar Cone and wife Martha Cone to Wilbur L. Carter Jr. and wife Martha S. Carter and Charles T. Hagan Jr. and wife Virginia Blair Carter Hagan, April 2, 1948, Book 1219, pg. 552 and Wilbur L. Carter Jr. and wife Martha S. Carter to Charles T. Hagan Jr. and wife Virginia Blair Carter Hagan, August 3, 1948, Guilford County Deed Book 1235, pg. 226 (accessed online on November 27, 2007), <http://rdlxweb.co.guilford.nc.us>; Laura A. W. Phillips, "Irving Park Historic District," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, 1994; "Room for Living," *Greensboro Record*, January 12, 1952.

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the Georgian plan permitted. The Carters admired the residential work of Frank Lloyd Wright and felt that the greater efficiency of Modernist houses would maximize their living space in part by eliminating closets in favor of built-in furniture. To guide the design, the Carters gave Loewenstein a copy of Georgia O'Keeffe's 1932 painting "White Barn," which depicts a long, low building not unlike several of Wright's Usonian dwellings, but topped with a gable roof.<sup>2</sup>

Loewenstein produced a final set of drawings for an L-plan Modernist house in January 1951. Like many of Frank Lloyd Wright's Usonian houses, the dwelling included a radiant heating system beneath the stone floor; a hearth near the center of the house; public spaces that flowed together on a diagonal; open spaces set off by a long, narrow corridor; and an outdoor patio defined by the wings of the house. At the facade, the house recreated the long horizontal line of O'Keeffe's side-gabled "White Barn," but Loewenstein's design was decidedly softer and more textured than O'Keeffe's vision. The variety of wall treatments at the Carter House facade included the open carport with low brick planter wall and wood support posts, the long screened porch across much of the elevation, the deeply notched front entrance, all contrasting with the solidity of the chestnut siding at the east end. Loewenstein also provided planting areas at the brick wall by the front entrance, softening the masonry there as well. Interior designer Blair L. Smith selected fabrics and furnishings for the living room and vibrant, natural colors for the house.<sup>3</sup>

The Carters were in residence by September 1951. Almost immediately, the house attracted the attention of the local and architectural press. The *Greensboro Record* featured the house in January 1952, printing several photographs and a short article and describing the house as "gracious, comfortable, and young." The article also describes the "semisolar" heating system: an outdoor thermostat regulated two indoor thermostats that controlled the radiant heating system. Wilbur L. Carter Jr. recalls that "people came by and stared at our house because it was so unusual for Greensboro" and notes that "there were no 'modernist' houses in Greensboro when we built our house."<sup>4</sup>

*Architectural Record* next featured the dwelling, publishing the floor plan and several photographs of the interior and exterior in November 1952. According to the accompanying text, the Carters had wavered in the middle of the design process, requesting a "traditional Georgian" design after seeing a "contemporary" house not designed by an architect and upon getting a cost estimate for Loewenstein's preliminary drawings for a Modernist house. Ultimately, according to the magazine, the costs for the Modernist house were lower, and the family reverted back to their original choice. Although

<sup>2</sup> Lee Carter e-mail correspondence with the author, June 23, 2007.

<sup>3</sup> *The Greensboro Record*, January 12, 1952.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*; Lee Carter e-mail correspondence with the author, June 23, 2007.

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*Architectural Record* documents the Carters' trepidation about selecting Loewenstein's Modernist design, the Carters do not recall having doubts or visiting another house.<sup>5</sup>

In 1955, the house received an Award of Merit with Special Commendation from the North Carolina Chapter of the American Institute of Architects. The 1955 awards were the first given by the state chapter, which was inspired to create the program following the national organization's institution of an honor award program in 1949. For the North Carolina program, a three-person jury evaluated submissions made by architects, who were encouraged to select their best work from the previous nine years. Juries were to include one architect practicing in the region, one architectural educator, and one architectural journalist; all three jury members were to be from outside North Carolina. The 1955 jury members were Thomas H. Creighton of New York, the editor of *Progressive Architecture*; Richard L. Aeck of Atlanta, a practicing architect; and Olindo Grossi, the dean of Pratt Institute's architecture school. All three were members of the American Institute of Architects. Twenty-one firms submitted fifty-two projects in 1955; the jury recognized fourteen buildings with awards, including nine given special commendations. *Southern Architect*, the journal published by the state chapter of the AIA, published photographs of the Carter House and a floor plan in honor of its award.<sup>6</sup>

Wilbur and Martha Carter lived in the house until 2003. Current owners and residents Daniel and Kathy Craft purchased it in 2004.<sup>7</sup>

**Architectural Context:**

**Edward Loewenstein and the Emergence of Residential Modernism in Greensboro**

Edward Loewenstein is recognized as Greensboro's most innovative post-war architect; his work has recently been the subject of scholarly study at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, resulting in the organization of a conference, house tour, and exhibit.

Loewenstein earned his bachelor of architecture degree at Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1935. He returned to his native Chicago and worked in 1935 and 1936 as a draftsman in two Chicago architecture firms. In 1937, he started his own firm in Highland Park, designing houses in the Georgian Revival style in that affluent Chicago suburb. Loewenstein served in the Army during World War II and moved to Greensboro in 1946, where he again established a solo practice. In 1952, he and Robert

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<sup>5</sup> "Residence for Mr. and Mrs. Wilbur L. Carter, Jr., Greensboro, N. C.," *Architectural Record* 112 (November 1952): 190-192; Lee Carter e-mail correspondence with the author, November 21, 2007.

<sup>6</sup> "Residence for Mr. and Mrs. W. L. Carter, Jr., Greensboro," *Southern Architect* 1 (March 1955): 21; Henry L. Kamphoefner, "A Short History of the Honor Award Program," *Southern Architect* 10 (April 1963): 9; "14 Buildings Selected for Awards in Architecture," *Southern Architect* 1 (February 1955): 13.

<sup>7</sup> Wilbur L. Carter, Jr. and wife Martha S. Carter to Daniel C. Craft and wife Kathryn K. Craft, March 3, 2004, Guilford County Deed Book 6048, p. 1719, viewed online at [http://gcgis.co.guilford.nc.us/guilford\\_new/](http://gcgis.co.guilford.nc.us/guilford_new/) on November 13, 2007.

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A. Atkinson established a firm known as Loewenstein and Atkinson; a successor firm, Wilson Lysiak, still practices in Greensboro. Loewenstein was active in the North Carolina chapter of the American Institute of Architects as well as in associated professional groups such as the Greensboro Preservation Society, the local chapter of the Archaeological Institute of America, and the Witherspoon Art Gallery. Beginning in 1958, Loewenstein also taught in the Department of Art at Greensboro Woman's College, where he annually directed the design and construction of a house as a class project.<sup>8</sup>

The firm took on commercial and residential work and Loewenstein designed houses across North Carolina—from Ahoskie to Blowing Rock—and in Virginia, West Virginia, and other states. The majority of his residential commissions were in Greensboro; a search in Wilson Lysiak's files identified at least fifty-eight local residential commissions before Loewenstein's death at age fifty-seven in 1970. Roughly thirty-five of these are in the Modern mode, others were Period Revival styles popular at the time and some were Ranch houses with Colonial Revival detailing. The Modernist residential designs in Greensboro begin with the 1951 Carter House.<sup>9</sup>

Loewenstein apparently enjoyed collaboration. He worked with local interior designers Otto Zenke Interiors and Blair L. Smith, the latter also a teacher at Greensboro Woman's College. For a number of residential projects in Greensboro, Loewenstein collaborated with Sarah Hunter Kelly Interiors, a New York-based design firm. Greensboro artist Gregory Ivy joined the architecture firm after more than two decades teaching at Woman's College and contributed significant design elements to the 1964 Greensboro Public Library, a high-profile commission.<sup>10</sup>

Loewenstein is also noted locally for his progressive hiring practices, employing African American architects in still-segregated Greensboro. W. Edward Jenkins, William Street, and Clinton Gravely all worked for Loewenstein's firm. Jenkins was the first African American to be licensed as an architect in Greensboro and he went on to design a number of notable Modernist buildings in Greensboro, including houses in the Ray Warren and Nocho Park neighborhoods as well as the Dudley High School Gymnasium (NRHP 2003).<sup>11</sup>

The Carter House is also the earliest identified Modernist dwelling in the city. Greensboro housing stock pre-dating 1950 included the Craftsman and Colonial Revival styles popular in the first decades of the century as well as the Period Revival styles of the 1930s; these trends are evident in neighborhoods like Glenwood, Nocho Park, Dudley Street, Sunset Hills, and College Park. In the

<sup>8</sup> *American Architects Directory*, 1<sup>st</sup> ed., s.v. "Edward Loewenstein;" *Greensboro Record*, July 13, 1970; Patrick Lee Lucas, "Modernist Architecture in North Carolina: The Loewenstein Legacy," brochure published in conjunction with the 2005 Loewenstein Legacy Conference, sponsored by the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

<sup>9</sup> Lucas, brochure text; Patrick Lee Lucas, interview with the author June 8, 2007.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> *Greensboro News and Record*, November 1, 2005.

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immediate post-war years, one-and-a-half-story Cape Cod and Minimal Traditional houses with modest Colonial Revival detailing predominated in neighborhoods like Starmount Forest and Lindley Park, while very simple single-story dwellings populated Guilford Hills and Garden Homes. An all-steel Lustron house at 2302 Lawndale Drive in the Kirkwood neighborhood was a departure from the stick-built clapboard-sided or brick veneered housing typically found in Greensboro at the time.<sup>12</sup>

In their 1960 publication chronicling the emergence of “contemporary” architecture in the South, architect and teacher Edward Waugh and architectural historian Elizabeth Waugh note that “some few Southerners in the 1940s began to demand dwelling houses which would express the contemporary idiom of the awakening mid-century South.” Indeed, across the state only a few Modernist dwellings had been built before 1950. Durham’s International Style Gamble House (altered) had been built in 1935, and Black Mountain College erected some low-cost Modernist faculty houses in the 1940s at Black Mountain College. The 1948 establishment of the School of Design at North Carolina State College in Raleigh brought Modernist architects to teach at the school, and they began building houses for themselves immediately. By 1951, Henry Kamphoefner, George Matsumoto, James Fitzgibbons, and Milton Small had all designed and built Modernist houses for themselves or clients in Raleigh.<sup>13</sup>

In the residential chapter of their book, the Waughs note three essential elements of a well-designed house: the provision of privacy, the arrangement of interior space into functional zones, and the placement of the house with sensitivity to topography and climate. Their definition of a “well-designed” house describes what typically interested Modernist architects working on residential commissions, revealing the authors’ bias in architectural taste. However, the Waughs also distinguish between a “formalist” Modernism and a more “humanist” or “romantic” version. Formalists followed the lead of Mies van der Rohe and his modular design or Le Corbusier and his sculptural enclosure of space. The humanist or romantic architect let the intended function of the space drive the design. The most famous of the humanist or romantic Modernists was Frank Lloyd Wright, who exerted enormous influence over residential design in the middle of the twentieth century. A 1958 book published by

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<sup>12</sup> Circa, Inc., *City of Greensboro Historic Architecture Survey Update, Phase 1A*, (prepared for the City of Greensboro and the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, September 2007),10-21.

<sup>13</sup> Edward and Elizabeth Waugh, *The South Builds: New Architecture in the Old South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1960), 25; Catherine W. Bishir and Michael T. Southern, *A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Piedmont North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 132, 204; Catherine W. Bishir, Michael T. Southern, and Jennifer F. Martin, *A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Western North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 305; “Raleigh: A Capital City,” National Register of Historic Places Travel Itinerary, viewed at <http://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/raleigh/> on December 19, 2007.

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*House Beautiful* declares that Wright's "architectural philosophy has become a major part of our living culture, an indispensable tool for our architects and builders."<sup>14</sup>

The Carter House clearly falls into the humanist strain of Modernism and in fact has much in common with the Usonian house type developed by Wright in the 1930s: a carport integrated into the facade; an orientation to outdoor spaces, particularly backyard patios; open-plan public spaces that flow diagonally rather than axially; sequestered bedrooms; a long, tight corridor that sets off the expansiveness of the public rooms; and sections of interior brick walls that help define sheltered space. Significant differences are Loewenstein's use of a shallow-pitched gable roof rather than a flat roof (except at the carport) and his lack of attention to the ceiling as an element that can modulate the feeling of expansiveness or shelter. Another notable difference is Loewenstein's use of an easily visible front entrance; Wright generally hid the entrance to his Usonians and created a sheltered pathway to the door.<sup>15</sup>

In the design for the Carter House, Loewenstein joined a public wing to a private wing in an L-plan, recalling the organization of space in the 1936 Herbert Jacobs House in Madison, Wisconsin, the first Usonian house. Specifics of the Carter House floor plan, however, are more similar to Wright's Goetsch and Winkler House of 1939, built in Okemos, Michigan. Like the Carter House, the Goetsch and Winkler House has a carport integrated into the end of a facade that is substantially composed of a window wall. Loewenstein's Carter House design featured a screened porch where Wright placed a fully enclosed "gallery," but the organization of space is similar. In both houses, the porch or gallery space is parallel to the larger living space and occupies the front of the house, creating a buffer between the street and the living room. Both houses also have a secondary space adjacent to the living room. In the smaller Goetsch and Winkler House, Wright calls the secondary space an alcove; it provides "refuge" space defined by a "low ceiling and fire[place], and with book shelves on the remaining two walls." Loewenstein added a den on the other side of the living room's hearth wall, providing a similar sort of refuge space as the alcove. Loewenstein defined the space in the den with walls, unlike Wright, who differentiated the living space from the alcove with a change in ceiling height. Both spaces, however, are adjacent to the living room and are small spaces dominated by fireplaces and walls of bookcases.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Waugh & Waugh, 25; Joseph Barry, *The House Beautiful Treasury of Contemporary American Homes* (New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc. 1958), 12; Chapter 8 (pp. 116-145) of Grant Hildebrand's *The Wright Space: Pattern and Meaning in Frank Lloyd Wright's Houses* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991) examines ten Usonian houses, including the seven "usually regarded as typical examples."

<sup>15</sup> Hildebrand, 116-145.

<sup>16</sup> Hildebrand, 121-124.

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Loewenstein's later houses in Greensboro continue to reflect the influence of Frank Lloyd Wright while intensifying the architect's own humanist strain of Modernism. Several features of the Carter House—some derived from the Usonian type—are repeated in Loewenstein's body of Modernist residential work in Greensboro: built-in storage, clerestory windows, L-plans dividing space by function, interior brick walls, narrow hallways contrasting with more expansive rooms, and outdoor spaces partially defined by the exterior walls of the house. In many cases, the ideas introduced at the Carter House are more fully explored in the later dwellings. While the ceilings of the Carter House hid the roof structure and roofline in all rooms but the screened porch, Loewenstein exposed ceiling beams in the main living spaces at the 1953 Bertling House at 2312 Princess Ann Drive, the 1959 Hyman House at 608 Kimberly Drive, and the 1965 Willis House at 707 Blair Street. He similarly opened the living room at the 1964 Steele House at 601 Woodland Drive to its full height under the gabled roof. In all these spaces, Loewenstein used clerestory windows that separated the wall from the roof; in so doing, he often highlights the slope of the roof by creating triangular or non-rectangular polygonal windows. This idea dates to the space Loewenstein created in the Carter House sunroom.

In later houses, Loewenstein also continued to use brick, wood, and stone inside and outside the house. Interior brick walls are used in the Bertling and Steele Houses and the 1955 Stern House at 1804 Nottingham Road and stone patios are found at Loewenstein's own house, built in 1954 at 2104 Granville Road. The interior/exterior brick wall of the Carter House becomes more dramatic in Loewenstein's own house, where it is rendered in Carolina fieldstone and curves elegantly to direct one's path from the living room to the dining room.<sup>17</sup>

Loewenstein's own house also beautifully shows the evolution of connected ideas introduced in the Carter House: the functional division of space, the use of built-in storage, the use of a narrow hall to contrast with larger rooms, and the notched front entry that provides a transition between outdoor and indoor space. In the Loewenstein House, a narrow hall actually separates the public and private zones, providing a strong contrast with the expansive living room at one end and the large master bedroom at the other. The hall in the architect's own house is further developed by replacing one wall with glass, overlooking a front terrace. This simultaneously provides the physical feeling of enclosure with the appearance of expansiveness. As in the Carter House, separate girls' bedrooms are connected by service spaces: built-in cabinetry and a bathroom. In Loewenstein's house, however, the placement of secondary corridors lined with storage help to insulate the bedrooms from the hubbub of the rest of the house. This organization of space is more complex and sophisticated than in the Carter House but is rooted in the idea expressed in the earlier design. The arrangement of space in the master suite at Loewenstein's house actually more closely parallels the suite that houses the girls' rooms connected by

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<sup>17</sup> Loewenstein's house was also featured in *Southern Architect*, which published several photographs and a floor plan: "Architect Designs Own Home," *Southern Architect* 1 (November 1954): 14-17.

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bathroom and playroom in the rear wing of the Carter House. Here, the master bedroom stands in for the playroom while separate dressing areas take the place of bedrooms with cabinet-lined walls flanking a shared bath. Finally, the small exterior vestibule of the Carter House is expanded into a roomy front terrace, defined on three sides by the exterior walls of the house in an area recessed into the otherwise generally rectangular footprint of the house.

In other design elements of his own house, Loewenstein also elaborates his expression of Modernism from the relatively simple presentation seen in the Carter House. To the established warmth of his residential style, Loewenstein adds the technology of commercial Modernism, employing steel beams and columns exposed in the living room to create a canted glass curtain wall. The glass curtain wall is also seen in the Stern and Hyman Houses. Later houses also show more complicated floor plans, with split-level plans as at the Stern House and two stories built into sloping parcels, like the Steele House.

Despite the greater drama and more sophisticated detailing at some of Loewenstein's later houses, the essential elements of his Modernist approach and aesthetic are in place at the Carter House. The dwelling's division of space into functional zones, strategic employment of corridors and walls of built-in storage, introduction of exterior materials at the interior, creation of partially defined outdoor living spaces that easily flow from the interior, and expansive use of glass and clerestory windows are all elements seen again in his residential commissions in Greensboro. In the Carter House, Loewenstein embarked on an exploration that brought a new architectural idea to Greensboro's neighborhoods and laid the foundation for his individual expression of the humanist strain of residential Modernism.

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### **Verbal Boundary Description**

The boundaries coincide with the legal bounds of parcel 000001180000200009.

### **Boundary Justification**

The boundary includes the 1.28-acre parcel historically associated with the house.

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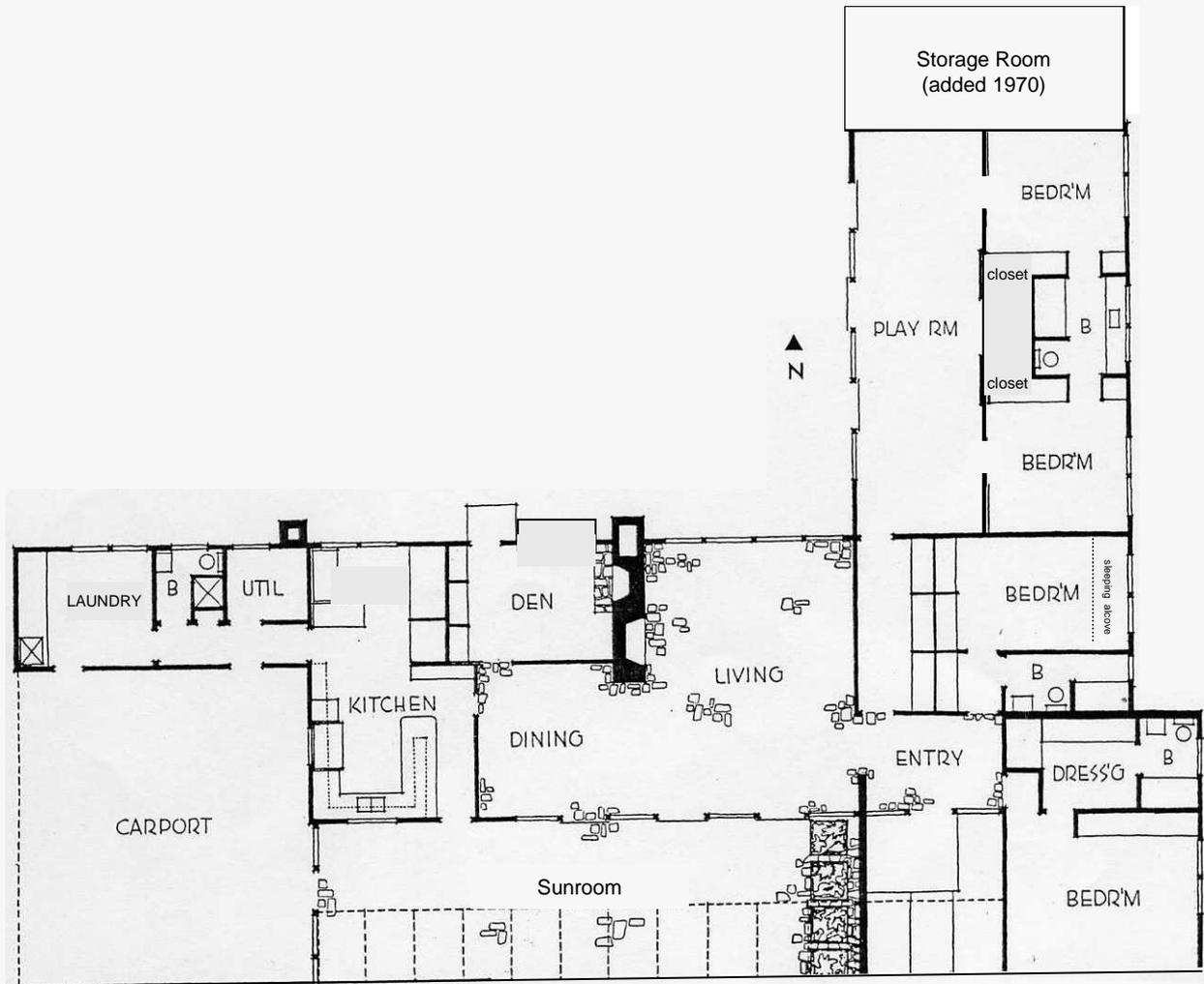
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**Photographs**

Wilbur and Martha Carter House  
Greensboro, Guilford County  
Cynthia de Miranda, photographer  
June 2007  
Negative on file at North Carolina Historic Preservation Office.

The above information applies to all photographs included in this nomination.

1. Front walk and front entrance, looking north.
2. East end of facade (south elevation), looking northeast.
3. West end of facade (south elevation) and carport, looking northwest.
4. Carport, looking northeast.
5. West end of rear elevation, looking southwest.
6. West elevation of rear wing, looking northeast.
7. North and west elevations of rear wing, looking southeast.
8. East elevation of rear wing, looking southwest.
9. Living room interior, looking northwest.
10. Movable glass wall between living room and sunroom, looking southwest.
11. Sunroom interior, looking southeast.
12. Hearth in den, looking northeast.
13. Den showing paneling and built-in bookcases, looking southwest.
14. Master bedroom, looking northeast.
15. Vanity and dressing area in master suite, looking southeast.
16. Alcove in second bedroom suite, looking northeast.
17. Storage closets in rear wing corridor, looking north.
18. Playroom in rear wing, looking southeast.
19. Built-in storage in rear wing bedroom, looking south.
20. Vanities in shared bathroom of rear wing, looking southeast.
21. Kitchen interior, looking south.
22. Horse barn, looking northwest.
23. Shed, looking north.



Floor Plan (not to scale)

Wilbur and Martha Carter House, 1012 Country Club Drive, Greensboro, Guilford County