

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name The Rockwell House

other names/site number House on a Bluff

Name of Multiple Property Listing N/A

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

2. Location

street & number 20841 Oak Lane Dr. not for publication

city or town Olympia Fields vicinity

state Illinois county Cook zip code 60461

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.
In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance: ___ **national** ___ **statewide** ___ **local**
Applicable National Register Criteria: ___ **A** ___ **B** ___ **C** ___ **D**

Signature of certifying official/Title: Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer Date

Illinois Department of Natural Resources SHPO
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register ___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register ___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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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 the count.)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2		buildings
1		site
		structure
		object
3		Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

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.)

Modernist Movement
Miesian
International Style
Brutalist Movement

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Concrete
walls: Glass
roof: Concrete with TPO membrane
River rock aggregate
other: {site; building exterior/interior}

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity).

SUMMARY PARAGRAPHS

The Rockwell House (also known as the “House on a Bluff”) is located at 20841 Oak Lane Drive in Olympia Fields, approximately 25 miles southwest of Chicago. It was designed in 1964 by H. P. Davis Rockwell, FAIA of the architecture firm Brenner-Danforth-Rockwell as his own home. In 1965 it won a Merit Award from the Chicago chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) for its excellence in architecture. The house is an important, high style example of a Modernist glass pavilion with strong Miesian influences, and is noteworthy for its early Brutalist design.

Strikingly situated on 2.5 forested acres at the top of a steep bluff, the house’s heroic concrete plinth and imposing concrete columns appear to “rise up” out of the earth overlooking a creek below. The upper-level glass pavilion is composed entirely of glass curtain walls framed by thin steel mullions. The house has a “floating” flat cement roof supported by just four monolithic exterior tapered concrete columns. A lower level contains private spaces for family.

A forecourt of river rock is set between the house and a low-slung, flat-roofed garage/pool-house clad in narrow, stained Cypress wood slats. The pool is no longer extant and was removed by a previous owner due to deterioration. Changes to the property over the years have otherwise been minimal and largely for restorative purposes, thus the site, house, and garage/pool-house convey excellent historic integrity.

The site’s plan and landscaping were designed by the architect. They are integral to the house’s transparent architecture and panoramic views, blurring the line between indoors and out with uninterrupted vistas. The continuity of exterior-interior textural river rock enhances the house’s harmony with its site. The site includes native plantings and trees; berms; woods with a natural trail; small and large boulders; the river rock forecourt; and a curved path connecting the house’s forecourt to the garage/pool-house. Hawthorn trees and long, low benches continue the house’s and site’s theme of horizontality. The forecourt is punctuated by a single dramatic boulder plunging diagonally through the northwest corner, creating sculptural interest via an architecturally organic element.

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LOCATION

The Rockwell House is located in Cook County, Illinois, in the southwest corner of Olympia Fields, a village located 25 miles southwest of Chicago. The property is sited within parts of Lots 10, 11, and 12 in the subdivision of parts of Section 23, Township 35 North, Range 13, east of the third principal meridian in Oak Lane Drive Estates. The estates, located in the southwest enclave of Olympia Fields, consist of 9 single-family residences, with the Rockwell property sited near the end of the L-shaped, dead-end Oak Lane Drive.

The village of Olympia Fields, established in 1927, is comprised of 2.94 square miles and, according to the 2020 census, has a population of 4,718 people. Olympia Fields is included among the 60 southern and southwestern suburbs that make up the "Chicago Southland," a region that includes 40,000 total acres of forests and numerous historic downtown shopping districts. To the north of Olympia Fields is the town of Flossmoor; to the south and west is Matteson; and to the east is Chicago Heights.

SETTING

The Rockwell property's house, garage/pool-house, and architecturally landscaped site comprise the three contributing resources situated on 2.5 total acres atop a steep bluff overlooking a creek. The very private and secluded wooded setting enters inside every room of the residence due to the house's glass pavilion architecture. The total shape of the multi-lot property is polygonal, angled toward and across historic Butterfield Creek, a gentle meandering tributary of Thorn Creek. Via Thorn Creek, the Butterfield Creek tributary is part of the Calumet River watershed which flows all the way to Lake Michigan, one of the U.S.'s five Great Lakes. Butterfield Creek measures 16 miles long in total and encompasses 26 square miles.¹ The total Butterfield Creek tributary area in Olympia Fields measures 2.8 square miles.

The Rockwell property extends across Butterfield Creek, with its southern edge adjoining the northwest corner of the site of the (former) historic Elliott's Amusement Park. A bird's eye view of the former park's setting (now Elliott Woods Park) and Butterfield Creek can be enjoyed at the top of the bluff where the Rockwell House is sited. In addition to a grove of towering mature oaks, the Rockwell site has evergreens, hawthorn trees, locust trees, pear trees, crabapple trees, wild cherry trees, plum trees, and a birch tree, among others. A tall locust tree stands regally outside the front entrance to the House on the river rock forecourt's southern edge. Also abundant throughout the site are large and small boulders.

¹ Thorn Creek: An Inventory of the Region's Resources. Accessed from <https://dnr.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/dnr/publications/documents/00000723.pdf> on December 7, 2023.

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The house is northeast-facing and is set back approximately 200 feet from the property's entrance on the southeast side of Oak Lane Drive. The garage/pool-house is oriented toward the northeast, parallel to and approximately 55 feet north of the house. It was designed and built concurrently with the house as a separate structure and solution for a glass pavilion residence. The two buildings are separated by a forecourt topped with 2" of Eau Claire, Wisconsin red flint river rock sized ¼"-½" and two landscaped beds with native plantings, outlined by a thin steel border in a fluid, organic shape.

To the northwest is a grassy area with a large berm and another large boulder. Both the house and garage/pool-house are sited amidst a wooded lot, offering seclusion and privacy from the road. Because Oak Lane Drive is a dead-end with no outlet, there is no through traffic, which offers additional seclusion. Oak Lane Drive, while still public, is primarily utilized by residents of the nine homes Oak Lane Drive serves, creating an even more private setting. The house is accessed via a long, curved driveway that leads to the river rock forecourt and the house's main entrance facing north/northeast. Privacy and seclusion are essential features of the site, selected specifically by the architect for a home built with glass.

ARCHITECTURE

The Rockwell House was designed by H. P. Davis Rockwell of the award-winning architecture firm Brenner-Danforth-Rockwell. The house's design is a superlative example of "International Style" architecture, true to Mies van der Rohe's principle of architecture-without-ornamentation and Mies's signature glass-and-steel-frame idiom. All three partners of the Brenner-Danforth-Rockwell firm were students of Mies at IIT and went on to work in Mies's office. By 1963, van der Rohe's architecture principles were firmly indoctrinated and adopted as some of Rockwell's own for his architectural design of his "house on a bluff."

Utilizing these principles—and surely drawing inspiration from the Edith Farnsworth House (1951) in Plano, IL—Rockwell combined his mentor's Modernist architecture de rigueur with exciting elements of a new subtype of post-war Modernism: *Brutalism*. As it stands today, the Rockwell House is an important elision of the Modernist and Brutalist architecture movements in equal measure. Its rarity is bolstered by its function as a single-family residence as compared to the commercial, civic, public housing, university, or church buildings that have overwhelmingly characterized the Brutalist architecture movement since its inception.

Exterior

Modernist and Brutalist design are exemplified in the Rockwell House's dual and equal emphasis on expansive Miesian glass curtain walls and its rough, raw exposed concrete—hallmarks of each architectural style, respectively. The concrete's opacity is tempered by the transparency of the glass. Thus, even with the house's heavy concrete massing, its architecture simultaneously conveys a visual lightness.

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These elements are evident in the glass pavilion and the four monolithic, exposed aggregate tapered concrete columns holding up the house's "floating" concrete roof. The top plate of a 4" steel pipe embed in each concrete column was welded *in situ* to another steel embed in the perimeter beam of the roof to form a "moment connection." This connection detail provides a small but critical aesthetic reveal between each concrete column and the roof, giving the roof its floating appearance while providing a strong, stable connection.² Because the four monumental exterior concrete columns are sufficient to support the roof, a clear span column-free interior is possible below. Please see **Figure 9** for a blueprint of the column-roof detail and **Figures 10-12** for photographs illustrating the unique reveal.

The house's concrete architecture and monumental scale is further unveiled as you follow its adjacent walks, terraces, and sunken patio designed in the same exposed concrete as its exterior columns. The architect demonstrates a masterful continuity of materials in his choice of the same Eau Claire river rock from the forecourt for all of the exterior concrete work's textured and interior (polished) aggregate. In total, the site is composed of 70,000 pounds of river rock used for the aggregate in the exterior concrete (forecourt, walks, terraces, plinth, and columns) and in polished form in the house's interior (terrazzo floor).³

On the northwest and northeast sides of the house, the walkways step down to a rectangular terrace on each side, and again on the southwest and southeast of the property to another terrace each, and once more until they meet at a sunken patio at the house's south elevation. Four concrete terraces and six concrete staircases in total unfold onto a hulking concrete plinth emerging from the steep bluff below, finally joining at the below-grade concrete sunken patio. Here, at the south elevation, the structure becomes sculpture. The overall impression of the house from its two-story creek-side elevation is that of a glass box raised onto its own Herculean concrete acropolis under a flat, floating concrete roof.

Approximately 1,700 square feet of quarter-inch glass panes make up the curtain walls of the glass pavilion. The pavilion is rectangular in shape, measuring approximately 56'2" by 31'7 1/2". Each of the glass panes are framed by thin steel mullions held in place by slotted, sunk, flat-head screws with 3/4"-diameter heads. The back, south elevation of the house has five glass curtain walls: three measuring 11'4" wide by 9'8 1/2" high and two measuring 11'2" wide by 9'8 1/2" high. The east and west elevations have three glass curtain walls each: two measuring 9'11" wide by 9'8 1/2" high, and a center curtain wall divided into four sections: a 11'4"-wide glass transom over a 3'-wide glass door below, flanked by two 4'-wide panes on either side. The front glass curtain walls measure the same as those of the south elevation, but similar to the east and west elevations, contains a center curtain wall divided into 4 sections comprised of a glass transom, glass door, and two glass panes on either side. There are no operable windows in the upper level, just the three glass doors that open to the outside and their matching screen doors.

² Explanation courtesy of Edward Peck, FAIA, Managing Director of edward PECK DESIGN and friend of the Rockwell House.

³ Invoices with quantities for many of the building materials, including the Eau Claire red flint river rock aggregate, are part of the Rockwell House's on-site archives.

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The reinforced concrete roof is flat with approximately two feet of overhang on the two long sides allowing for passive solar heating through the south-facing windows in the winter. There is a plain, steel band encompassing the entire perimeter of the top of the concrete roof. Two skylights allow light to enter the kitchen area below. The lower level of the house is earth-bermed on three sides and exposed only at the south elevation facing the bluff. Wood-framed push-bar outswing windows line the three lower-level bedrooms at the south elevation. The recreation room has floor-to-ceiling wood-framed windows and a glass walk-out door leading to the exterior sunken patio.

The garage/pool-house is rectangular in shape, measuring 33'9" deep by 22'6" wide. It is sheathed in narrow vertical stained Cypress wood slats. There are two skylights in the horizontal flat roof—one over each of the interior changing areas. Like the house, but made of wood, the garage/pool-house has a plain band encompassing the entire perimeter of the roof. A door of four horizontal wood panels encloses the front of the garage on the east and a service door leading out to the former pool opens from the west side. According to site blueprints, the former pool was the same dimensions of the garage with exposed aggregate concrete walks surrounding the pool's perimeter and abutting the northwest edge of the garage/pool-house.

Interior

The glass pavilion of the Rockwell House is rectangular in shape. It has 10 ½-foot ceilings and a column-free, clear-span open plan. Large glass curtain walls frame the exterior landscape, visually expanding the interior spaces. Both levels of the house are arranged into "thirds." The upper level's program can be conceived of as three equal areas, each measuring 18 ½ feet wide. To the west, is a 31-foot-long living room featuring a sleek, black steel built-in fireplace with an oversized 10-foot floating Norwegian green granite hearth in a dull honed finish below.

The middle "third" contains the "core," which "true to Miesian principles, efficiently conceals all of the mechanical systems" (Gand, 2010). Surrounding the core, is the kitchen and dining room, coat closet, pantry, bathroom, hall/stairwell, and foyer with a floating shelf made of the same honed Norwegian granite as the fireplace hearth. The kitchen island countertop is also made of the same granite and finish, reflecting the architect's strong continuity-of-materials vocabulary.

The final "third" has a free-standing, rectangular dual-sided closet separating the master bedroom from the study, where Rockwell did some of his drafting and design work. The closet is made of Burmese teak and has 6 panels with piano hinges on each of the long sides, and shelves and bars to hang clothing inside. On the west, short side of the free-standing closet is a recessed mirror with an overhead light and 14 built-in drawers underneath. On the east side is a large recessed mirror with a built-in make-up vanity featuring two drawers and strip lighting.

The garage/pool-house's vertical wood sheathing is replicated on the interior of the house's upper level. While composed of Burmese teak instead of Cypress, the same narrow tongue-and-groove design clads the entire central core facing outward toward the master bedroom,

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bathroom, study, foyer, living room, and dining room. The kitchen cabinets and countertops (except for the island's granite countertop) are also designed in Burmese teak.

The glass pavilion's flooring is poured-in-place concrete terrazzo, featuring the same exterior river rock aggregate in polished form, again emphasizing the architect's continuity of materials. Visually, the interior terrazzo river rock extends without interruption to the river rock in the exterior's adjacent walks, and to the river rock forecourt adjacent to the walks. Thin metal strips divide the interior terrazzo into approximately 44" expansive squares throughout the upper level.

A spiral staircase which leads to the lower level measures 5'6" wide by 9'6" tall with 1 1/8"-thick oak treads. It is accessed from a short hallway within the central service core between the kitchen and foyer. A swinging door connects the kitchen and small inner hall containing the staircase, while another door leading from the foyer can be shut (and even locked) to direct the flow of circulation throughout the glass pavilion's entertaining and living spaces.

Design of the lower level's floor plan was driven by function and is also divided into thirds. The Rockwells had two daughters and two sons, so the girls had their own "wing" to the west with one bedroom each and a shared bathroom across the hall. The boys occupied the east wing with a bedroom each and another shared bathroom across the east hall. All bedrooms are south-facing to harness the heat and light of the sun, creating bright, comfortable spaces. Each child's bedroom had a utilitarian built-in desk and drawers, with a heating element underneath the desk. Circa 1978, the architect combined the two east bedrooms into one large guestroom. Five-inch square quarry tile is used throughout the lower level's family spaces, while the north-facing windowless rooms (laundry, storage, and mechanical rooms) have bare concrete floors.

At the center of the lower level, where the two wings meet, is a sitting area and recreation room. Two floor-to-ceiling sliding teak doors can close off the recreation room if desired, which allows floor-to-ceiling window views and has a door to the exterior concrete sunken patio. Along the north walls of the lower level are a mechanical room and laundry room, as well as two storage rooms—one of which served as Rockwell's former workshop. Doors to each of the lower-level rooms are in stained wood with a seamless matching stained wood transom above to continue the floor-to-ceiling theme of the other elements of the house.

The two south-facing exposed aggregate concrete tapered columns supporting the house's floating concrete roof plunge through the common walls of the lower-level bedroom interiors from ceiling to floor. These elements again bring the exterior inside, and is an interior expression of the architect's Brutalist design idiom for the house. The concrete columns measure 15" deep at the narrowest, top point near the exterior of the roof and a substantial 45" deep at their lowest point at the base of the building. These columns contribute to the heavy massing and memorability as an image that define Brutalist architecture.

The house's position on the site with its south-facing glass curtain walls and modest roof overhang create passive solar heating in the winter when the azimuth of the sun is low, allowing light to flood the interior and warm the living spaces. In the summer months when the sun is high, the overhang prevents a portion of the sunlight from excessively entering the home. There

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are three entrance doors fashioned in bronze in the glass pavilion: one at the front of the house opening into the foyer, and two more at the west and east sides. Doors can be opened to facilitate cross-breeze ventilation.

The lower level has a door from the recreation room opening onto the back sunken patio, providing further ventilation. The lower-level bedrooms have awning-style windows that can be opened and closed with push-bars. Any remaining heating and cooling needed for comfort is facilitated by a two-zone HVAC system.

There are five main spaces on the interior of the garage/pool-house: a mechanical room for landscaping tools and equipment; a storage room; two changing rooms with benches and showers; and a large area in the center to park a car. The interior walls and ceiling are drywall. There is a double-sized automatic garage door at the east, and a walk-through door at the west end opening toward the site of the former pool.

INTEGRITY

The Rockwell House's retention of its original Modernist and Brutalist design features is excellent. A person from the past familiar with the property would instantly recognize the site, house, and garage/pool-house as they stand today. Changes over the years have been minimal without impacting integrity. The property has strong integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association as follows:

Location: The house remains in its original location where it was constructed in 1964, and due to the architect's choice of materials, design, and workmanship, will do so for many decades to come. It is still part of the small enclave of nine houses that make up the very private and secluded Oak Lane Drive Estates, which still function independently from any homeowners' associations just as the House did when it was originally constructed.

Setting: The house's setting retains remarkable integrity. Its original native plantings and trees—evergreen, hawthorn, locust, pear, crabapple, wild cherry, plum, and birch—all remain, as do its sculpted berms, boulders, woods, trail, and siting atop a bluff over Butterfield Creek. The house's setting from 1964 is just as much a part of its physical environment today and is integral to the site plan's indoor-outdoor continuity of design. The house is H. P. Davis Rockwell's response to its original natural setting and respects the architect's own site-house design maxim: "first the garden, then the 'tea house.'"

Design: The house's glass-and-concrete structure has excellent integrity. The significant design features that make it an important, high style example of both Modernist and Brutalist architecture are all intact and original. Its glass-pavilion Miesian curtain walls and original steel frame mullions remain, as does the exposed aggregate concrete structure that defines its unique, early Brutalist design. The Rockwell House's design is instantly recognizable when compared to its historic and museum archival photographs,

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and is as relevant to both architecture movements' post-war landscapes today as it was in 1964.

On the interior, the green granite hearth, kitchen island countertop, and foyer shelf are all original and intact. An original Noguchi saucer-shaped *akari* light sculpture still presides in the glass pavilion's living room. The curtains are in good condition and, according to a house invoice, appear to be the original drapery by the Modernist textile artist Ben Rose, "the go-to guy for all the famous architects and designers."⁴ The original quarry tile installed throughout the lower level's bedrooms and family spaces is original, intact, and has recently been restored by the current owners. Circa 1978, once the Rockwells' children were grown and had left the house, the architect combined the lower level's two east private bedrooms into one large guestroom. This change did not adversely affect the architectural integrity of the residence's design. The glass pavilion's poured-in-place terrazzo originally installed by John Caretti & Co. is also intact, but shows a few cracks near the in-floor vents. Bids have been obtained for its restoration.

The second owners of the house tastefully updated the glass pavilion's bathroom with architecture-forward fixtures, while keeping intact the original Miesian 5-by-7-foot utilitarian footprint. They also addressed the deteriorating pool, which was attracting wildlife and had become structurally unsound. Ultimately, they removed the pool and paid careful attention to reintegrate the site into the surrounding landscape. Today, there is no trace of the pool; just a continuation of the vast grassy area now in its stead.

The third owners addressed the faded millwork of the central core, kitchen, and free-standing closet on the interior of the glass pavilion. After 50 years of direct sunlight damage, a natural-looking charcoal-colored stain was uniformly applied throughout the upper level's affected woodwork to camouflage its uneven discoloration and prevent further damage. The same technique and color were used on the garage/pool-house, which suffered the same discoloration due to continuous direct sunlight. The result achieved was a continuity in color between structures, while leaving all original millwork intact and preventing future discoloration. In the lower level, the original millwork is all intact (doors, transoms, sliding recreation room divider doors) and retains its original stain shade as it was not affected by decades of direct sunlight.

In 2023, a new long-lasting, zero-profile TPO roof was installed that maintains the architectural integrity and original design of the house's Modernist flat roof. Asbestos linoleum and pipe insulation in the laundry and storage rooms were professionally removed in 2023 as well. Best efforts are being made by the current owner-stewards to ensure the safety and utmost architectural integrity of the Rockwell House.

⁴ Ben Rose, 88. Accessed from <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-2004-11-25-0411250204-story.html> on January 8, 2024.

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The house's siting in its natural surroundings and the site's original landscape design (with the exception of the pool) conveys remarkable integrity. The unique relationship between outdoors and indoors is as present today as it was in 1964. The boulders, river rock forecourt, berms, paths, wooded trail, trees, and plantings are all intact. The garage/pool-house has acquired a small amount of termite, woodpecker, and mold damage. Sensitive restoration is being planned by the current stewards in keeping with the garage/pool-house's original architectural integrity and low-slung Modernist design.

Materials: The original character-defining materials of the Rockwell House retain outstanding integrity due to the architect's choice of raw, honest materials and the materials' inherent permanence. From the river rock that makes up the forecourt and aggregate in the house's coarse exposed concrete structure, columns, walks, terraces, patios, and (interior, polished) terrazzo floor, to the simplicity of its expansive glass curtain walls and sleek steel frames, the Rockwell House retains the integrity of all of its original 1964 materials.

Workmanship: Perhaps the best testament to the Rockwell House's integrity of workmanship is the fact that the architect designed it as his own home, and was satisfied enough with the results to live there for over 40 years. Other support for its outstanding workmanship includes its technical and structural integrity. Rockwell's architecture firm was renowned for their commercial architecture, which is held to strict building codes, standards, and demanding briefs for constant daily function. His degrees in engineering from MIT and architecture from IIT lent a solid foundation for the construction, design, and scale of the house's defensive structure. Finally, his experience studying and working under the notoriously precise Mies van der Rohe further contribute to the house's superior workmanship and exactitude.

The strong integrity of workmanship is also reflected in the site, for which Rockwell served as landscape architect. Themes of horizontality are referenced in the shape of the site's hawthorn trees and long, linear exterior benches. Rockwell's standards for the workmanship of his 1964 house-on-a-bluff and surrounding site are all still present and immediately recognizable today.

Feeling: The house's Miesian glass curtain walls characteristic of the International Style and heavy concrete massing associated with the Brutalist movement convey a feeling of history, significance, and monumentality. The siting of the house within a woods atop a creek-side bluff convey a feeling of seclusion and contemplation originally intended by its architect. Its bold concrete presence juxtaposed with the ethereal translucency of its glass pavilion still elicit a feeling of awe from visitors and residents alike.

Association: The house demonstrates strong integrity for its association with the Modernist architecture movement. As a student and former employee of Mies van der Rohe, the house's Miesian influences are evident in its column-free, clear-span design and its use of Mies's signature glass-and-steel-frame idiom. Its association with and

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placement within the midcentury Modernist glass pavilion canon beginning with Philip Johnson's Glass House (1949) in New Canaan, CT and Mies's Edith Farnsworth House (1951) in Plano, IL is strongly merited.

The house also demonstrates excellent integrity for its association with the early Brutalist single-family residential architecture movement. While Brutalist design was becoming increasingly used in post-war urban renewal abroad, it hadn't firmly taken hold in the U.S. until the mid- to late-1960s. And once it did, its application was primarily in commercial, government, university, multi-family public housing, and ecclesiastical architecture. In an article for *Harvard Design Magazine*, Stevens's & McNulty's Lincoln House (built in 1965; demolished in 2001) was named as likely the earliest example of a single-family Brutalist residence using exposed concrete as its primary building material other than glass (Lefaivre, 2006). Lefaivre (2006) also identified "Harvard Five" member John MacLane Johansen's poured-in-place concrete Labyrinth House as the next earliest example (built in 1966; destroyed in 1988). The Rockwell House (1964) predates both of these noteworthy single family residences' similar uses of untreated concrete as both a primary building material and finish. This chronological distinction further highlights the Rockwell House's integrity for its association with the Brutalist movement. Moreover, both the Lincoln House and Labyrinth House are no longer part of our concrete built environment, while the Rockwell House is still standing and retains excellent integrity.

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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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1963 (designed) – 1964 (built)

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation (if applicable)

Architect/Builder

Brenner-Danforth-Rockwell
Rockwell, H. P. Davis

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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations).

SUMMARY

The Rockwell House is an important, high style example of both Modernist and Brutalist single-family residential architecture. It was designed in 1963 and built in 1964 by H. P. Davis Rockwell of the AIA award-winning architecture firm Brenner-Danforth-Rockwell. It is locally significant for its architectural value and meets Criterion C for listing on the National Register. Justification for its period of significance corresponds to the year it was designed (1963) and the year it was built (1964). Its vast expanses of glass curtain walls juxtaposed with hulking raw concrete earned an Award of Merit for Excellence in Architecture from the Chicago chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) in 1965. All three partners of Brenner-Danforth-Rockwell were students of Mies van der Rohe at IIT and went on to work in his office after graduation, thus the Rockwell House has strong Miesian influences. Its flat roof, lack of ornamentation, and large panes of glass in visible steel frames convey the defining features of the Modernist movement's International Style and the "Second Chicago School" of architecture.

The Rockwell House is also significant for its early Brutalist residential design, embodying its defining characteristics of memorability as an image, a clearly exhibited structure, and use of raw building materials for both its structure and finish. The site's landscaping was designed by H. P. Davis Rockwell, who studied under and worked for National Register-listed landscape architect Alfred Caldwell. The site and its natural relationship with the glass pavilion residence is integral to the overall indoor-outdoor design. Its natural environment and theme of horizontality are echoed in the low-slung expansive Cypress-clad garage/pool-house, with its wood slat cladding referencing the central core inside the house's glass pavilion. Native plantings and long, monolithic permanent exterior benches further reflect a Caldwellian vocabulary of horizontality throughout the site. With the exception of the original pool that was removed due to deterioration, changes to the property over the years have been minimal, thus the house, garage/pool-house, and site all have excellent integrity.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

HISTORY OF THE PROPERTY

The property dates back several years prior to the design and build (1963-1964) of the Rockwell House. Rockwell designed his residence specifically for the picturesque building site he had selected several years before.⁵ Rockwell's foremost focus was "first the garden, then the 'tea house.'"⁶ Indeed, the house's impeccable architectural design is rivaled only by its idyllic, wooded creek-side setting. Equal emphasis is given to the site and house, owing to the transparent design of its glass pavilion

⁵ Poore, N. (May 16, 1964). "Glass House." *Chicago Tribune*.

⁶ In-person interview with H. P. Davis Rockwell's son, Taylor Rockwell, March 26, 2023.

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architecture and relationship to the outdoors. Its panoramic views extend across the wooded landscape, and down to and across historic Butterfield Creek at the bottom of the bluff below. Rockwell's house-on-a-bluff took six months to build at a cost of approximately \$85,000.⁷ During its construction, Rockwell hired noteworthy architecture documentarian and activist-preservationist Richard Nickel to photograph the various stages of the house's build. These photographs are part of the Brenner Danforth Rockwell Records and the Richard Nickel Archive, both housed at the Art Institute of Chicago's Ryerson and Burnham Art and Architecture Archives. Please see **Figures 4-8** for a sample of Mr. Nickel's photographs taken during and after the Rockwell House's construction.

In May 1964, the Rockwell House was published in the *Chicago Tribune* as its "Home of the Week." The article included photographs, captioned "reinforced concrete pillars exemplify functional beauty of glass-walled structure designed by Architect H. P. Davis Rockwell as his family home," and text describing the "spectacular setting of the strikingly handsome glass house."⁸ In 1965, the Rockwell House was published in a 3-page editorial for *Arts & Architecture* magazine. That same year, *Architectural Record* included the Rockwell House within an "Architects' Own Houses" feature which showcased eleven noteworthy new residences designed by architects as their own homes. National in scope, the feature included architectural homes in Massachusetts, Texas, Ohio, Indiana, Connecticut, New Jersey, California, Maryland, Florida, Colorado (the National Register-listed Charles Deaton "Flying Saucer" Residence), and Illinois (the Rockwell House).

More recently, the Rockwell House was published in two books highlighting Modernist architecture—*Julius Shulman: Chicago Mid-Century Modernism* (Gand, 2010) and *Modern in the Middle: Chicago Houses 1929-1975* (Benjamin & Sabatino, 2020). In June 2023, The Rockwell House was included in the Edith Farnsworth House's second biennial Modernism tour of homes. The sold-out tour attracted over 300 architects, students, and enthusiasts from across the U.S. for docent-led tours of the Chicago Southland's best Modernist residences from the recent past. The glass-and-concrete Rockwell House was the grand finale of the 14-house tour.

MODERNIST ARCHITECTURE

According to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Modernist architecture is defined as "a design language with an emphasis on form rather than ornament; structure and materials rather than picturesque constructions; and the rational and efficient use of space" with Frank Lloyd Wright, Philip Johnson, Mies van der Rohe, and Eero Saarinen as key Modernist architects.⁹ The "International Style" of Modernist architecture was introduced in 1932 by Philip Johnson with historian Henry-Russell Hitchcock during their exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art. It showcased modern European architecture including designs by Mies van der Rohe and Le Corbusier, and led to a companion book which coined the name for this radical new type of architecture. The International Style's three defining principles are: "a complete absence of ornament; simple geometric forms,

⁷ Rockwell House on-site archives.

⁸ Poore, N. (May 16, 1964). "Glass House." *Chicago Tribune*.

⁹ Modern Architecture: Explore Icons of the Recent Past. Accessed from savingplaces.org/modern-architecture on November 30, 2023.

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especially flat-roofed horizontal ones; and the espousal of rationalism and functionalism, usually expressed through the frank articulation of structure as one of architecture's highest values."¹⁰ A year later, the Bauhaus school in Germany closed and Mies (its third and final director) took the school's Modernist design principles to the U.S., eventually landing a role as the director of the architecture program at the Armour Institute (now "IIT"), a position he held from 1938 to 1958. Mies, who was part of Johnson's 1932 exhibition, would interpret the International Style's fundamental principles into his own design language of flat roofs, no ornamentation, and large panes of glass in visible steel frames.¹¹ With Mies's IIT faculty post came carte blanche to design buildings for the campus including S. R. Crown Hall, home to IIT's College of Architecture. During Mies's tenure at IIT, the "Second Chicago School" was born which emphasized a strict lack of ornamentation and defiant rejection of historic architecture as its major guiding principles.

Meanwhile, from 1946-1951, Mies designed and built the Edith Farnsworth House (1951) in Plano, IL which is considered Mies's first, most significant project in the U.S.¹² Built as a country house for a busy Chicago nephrologist, the steel-frame-and-glass design for Dr. Farnsworth's weekend retreat was debuted in 1947 at the Museum of Modern Art in an exhibition again curated by Philip Johnson. Inspired by van der Rohe's designs for the forthcoming Farnsworth House, Johnson designed his own glass house in the International Style idiom. Completed in 1949, Philip Johnson's Glass House "is best understood as a pavilion for viewing the surrounding landscape."¹³ Measuring 55' long by 33' wide, and built in steel-framed glass with no internal walls, Philip Johnson's Glass House is credited as the first International Style single-family residence built in the U.S.¹⁴ Mies would formally collaborate with Johnson on their Seagram Building (1958) in NY, a "glass-box" Modernist skyscraper also built in the International Style. Both Mies and Johnson went on to win the AIA Gold Medal (Mies, 1960; Johnson, 1978), and both architects' glass houses would become National Historic Landmark museums, owned and operated by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Rockwell was a student of Mies while Mies was transforming IIT's campus, including the construction of National Register-listed S. R. Crown Hall (1956). Rockwell worked in Mies's office during the final construction of Mies's and Johnson's National Register-listed Seagram Building (1958) in NY and while Mies was designing National Register-listed Lafayette Park (1959) in Detroit, MI. Witnessing the design and construction of these three projects was a masterclass in Modernist architecture for Rockwell. Writes Rockwell of the Lafayette Park experience in a letter to architect Paul Schweikher:

"Had a fabulous, exciting, frantic, exhausting, crazy six weeks at Mies's office working on his scheme for redevelopment of Gratiot area of Detroit that Yamasaki, Stonorov & Gruen had previously done, gotten awards for & been unable to execute (couldn't find anyone to build it). It

¹⁰ National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, Philip Johnson's Glass House, New Canaan, Connecticut, National Register Information System, Reference #97000341

¹¹ Chicago Architecture Center. International Style. Accessed from <https://www.architecture.org/learn/resources/architecture-dictionary/entry/international-style/> on December 31, 2023.

¹² Edith Farnsworth House. Accessed from <https://savingplaces.org/places/farnsworth-house> on December 31, 2023.

¹³ Glass House, 1949. Accessed from <https://theglasshouse.org/explore/the-glass-house/> on December 31, 2023.

¹⁴ The Glass House. Accessed from <https://savingplaces.org/places/glass-house> on December 31, 2023.

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was an unforgettable experience that I hope can be followed sometime by more of the same.”¹⁵

The IIT campus and Lafayette Park projects also included landscape architecture by Alfred Caldwell, with whom Rockwell had worked and had been a student of at IIT. Caldwell’s designs for IIT included meadow-like open spaces with native plantings like elm, locust, and hawthorn trees.¹⁶ At Lafayette Park in Detroit, Caldwell’s naturalistic designs included open green spaces, curving walkways, and native planting schemes, which altogether, served to create a sense of a “suburb in the city,”¹⁷ much like the Rockwell House’s natural park-like site within a suburb of Chicago’s Southland.

Rockwell’s studies with both Mies and Caldwell—and his hands-on experience in both of their offices—proved to be profoundly influential to Rockwell. He incorporated Mies’s Modernist principles and column-free, clear-span design for his own house’s steel-framed glass pavilion. Rockwell also embraced Caldwell’s natural landscape idiom with native plantings, expansive green spaces, horizontality, and curving paths throughout the site. Low, oversized benches measuring 15” deep x 8” high x 120” long—each one crafted from a single continuous piece of wood—frame the forecourt on its west and south sides, further reinforcing the property’s theme of horizontality. From there, Rockwell forged his own path forward with his own dramatic use of exposed concrete, achieving a design that was distinctively his own.

Mostly obscured from the road, the Rockwell House is revealed after a purposeful procession designed by the architect. As one travels down the long curving driveway, the garage/pool-house is encountered first, which also initially obscures the house. Following the curve of the driveway, the garage/pool-house recedes from view to the right, finally revealing the house. Playing with this concept of procession, Rockwell drives the temporal and spatial experience of discovering the house to maximum effect. Suddenly, one comes upon a barely-there transparent house “floating” amongst monoliths of rough concrete perched precariously at the edge of a bluff.

Rockwell captured Mies’s Modernist simplicity and the openness of International Style architecture by designing a floating roof without use of any interior supporting columns. Inside the glass pavilion is an expansive, open floor plan where dining, kitchen, and living spaces flow seamlessly into one another. The open-plan feeling is further enhanced by the 10½-foot tall ceilings. The form of the House follows its function and the architect’s own problem-solution design brief:¹⁸

“DESIGN PROBLEM: House for a family with four children – on a site with a wooded ravine dropping to a creek on the southwest and with a large flat wooded area to the north. Necessity for a unified statement of architecture and landscape.

¹⁵ Paul Schweikher Collection, Design and the Arts Special Collections, Arizona State University Library.

¹⁶ S.R. Crown Hall National Historic Landmark Nomination. Accessed from npgallery.nps.gov/NRHP/NHLS/01001049_text on November 22, 2023.

¹⁷ Proposed Lafayette Park/Mies van der Rohe Historic District Final Report. Accessed from [https://detroitmi.gov/sites/detroitmi.localhost/files/2018-](https://detroitmi.gov/sites/detroitmi.localhost/files/2018-08/Lafayette%20Park%20Mies%20van%20der%20Rohe%20HD%20Final%20Report.pdf)

[08/Lafayette%20Park%20Mies%20van%20der%20Rohe%20HD%20Final%20Report.pdf](https://detroitmi.gov/sites/detroitmi.localhost/files/2018-08/Lafayette%20Park%20Mies%20van%20der%20Rohe%20HD%20Final%20Report.pdf) on January 8, 2024.

¹⁸ Rockwell’s description of his own home for the AIA Honor Awards. From the Rockwell House on-site archives.

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SOLUTION: The two level plan meets the varying needs of differing ages of family members, providing private spaces for the children below and expansive, exciting spaces for adult and family living above... Architectural continuity from the one story side of the building to the two story side is achieved through simplicity of structure and material... Exposed aggregate concrete was chosen because it fairly economically meets the varying requirements of structure, terraces, stairs, and presents a handsome appearance. The same gravel as used in the concrete is used loose in the forecourt and polished in the terrazzo floor of the upper level...

The two level solution furnishes the possibility of setting the building partially into the side of the hill. Thus, with gravel forecourt, walks, walls, steps, and treatment of glass, the building partakes of the landscape to the utmost, while maintaining its architectural integrity... The upper level, a glass-enclosed pavilion, affords a magnificent view of the ravine and creek to the south and southwest and oak woods on other sides... The use of berms and native plantings restore and enhance the natural surroundings, offering differing vistas and varieties of spaces, thus enriching inside and outside."

Rockwell's two-level solution is what sets it apart from other Modernist, International Style glass pavilions. When entertaining, adults could close off access to the lower level by shutting—or even locking—doors from the "central core." The second level afforded more space for a family as their functional, full-time residence vs. Edith Farnsworth's weekend retreat from the city or Johnson's self-described "half composition"¹⁹ glass house made whole by a secondary building of living space.

Other interior Modernist features include the free-standing wardrobe between the master bedroom and study, similar to those of the Edith Farnsworth House and Philip Johnson Glass House. Keeping up with the "no ornamentation" Modernist principle, all drawers and cabinets (wardrobe, kitchen, bedrooms) are flat-paneled and lack hardware, relying instead on voids and indentations as "pulls." Interior millwork was done by Altman Modern Woodwork in Burmese teak, including the vertical slat core from which the living room, dining room, master bedroom, and foyer radiate outward from.

The detached, expansive 750-square-foot low-slung garage/pool-house was Rockwell's functional solution for a Modernist glass residence. Its Modernist features include its flat roof, lack of ornamentation, and stained wood vertical slat exterior which references the house's "central core" of the same. This is yet another example of the architect's continuity of materials, both indoors and out.

The Rockwell House's Modernist features are writ large: its four exterior columns supporting a flat "floating" concrete roof; its expansive panes of glass curtain walls; its open, clear-span column-free

¹⁹ Philip Johnson conceived of his Glass House as a "half composition" completed by his Brick House, designed in tandem. The Glass House. Accessed from <https://theglasshouse.org/explore/the-glass-house/> on January 1, 2024.

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interior floor plan; its marriage of indoors and outdoors; its emphasis on raw exposed materials; and its lack of decorative ornament, all firmly plant the residence within the Modernist-Miesian “International Style” architecture movement. Its Modernist glass pavilion design is one half of its architecture; its monumental concrete massing betrays a concurrent and decidedly Brutalist design.

BRUTALIST ARCHITECTURE

Brutalism’s expressive concrete forms are considered by some to be a response to the International Style’s glass-box architecture and ubiquitous use of curtain walls (Rohan, 2007).²⁰ The term “Brutalism” became popularized throughout Europe and the U.K. by British architects Alison and Peter Smithson based on Le Corbusier’s use of *béton brut* (“raw concrete”) in his architecture.

Architecture critic Reyner Banham helped to further define the style in his seminal 1955 essay for *Architectural Review*. In it, he names Brutalism’s three chief characteristics: memorability as an image; clear exhibition of structure; and valuation of materials for their inherent qualities “as found”—or “being made of what it appears to be made of.” Banham (1966) would go on to debate whether the movement was born from an “ethical” mass-housing solution, or from architects’ “aesthetic” solutions to a design problem. Over the next few decades, Brutalist architecture would accomplish both of these intentions, often simultaneously.

Le Corbusier was introduced to reinforced concrete while working in the office of French architect Auguste Perret who pioneered its use as an architectural material from the 1900s-1950s. Perret’s initial use of the building material was predominantly in the style of structural classicism, but its strength in structure allowed for increasingly open-plan designs characteristic of the beginnings of the International Style. While Perret laid the groundwork for reinforced concrete as a structural and minimally decorative architectural material, Le Corbusier’s *Unité d’Habitation* (1947-1952) in Marseille, France is often considered the most significant founding work of Brutalist architecture.²¹

Designed as an equitable housing solution for the mass of people displaced after WWII in *béton brut*, each unit had a balcony and access to the building’s own array of shops and amenities. In addition to being an ethical solution for France’s working class and the post-war steel shortage, Le Corbusier’s first *Unité* showcased “the new splendor of bare concrete.” Driven by his own manifesto to “establish emotional relationships by means of raw materials,” and his belief that “passion can create drama out of inert stone” (Le Corbusier, 1986, pp. 4-5) his concrete designs took on an increasingly sculptural aesthetic in his ecclesiastical architecture throughout France (Ronchamp Chapel, 1954).

Other houses of worship sought Brutalist architects’ use of raw concrete and bold massing. Marcel Breuer’s St. John’s Abbey (1961) commission began with a progressive monk’s challenge for a modern architect to build a “bold” and “significant” building with “an honest use of materials” (Bergdoll, 2018). Breuer, a former student of Walter Gropius at the Bauhaus, was known for his themes that centered on a “lightness” in both furniture design and architecture. Next, he began to

²⁰ Rohan (2007) uses Paul Rudolph’s Blue Cross and Blue Shield Building (1960) as a case in point.

²¹ *Unité d’Habitation*, 1945. Accessed from <https://lecorbusier-worldheritage.org/en/unite-habitation/> on December 20, 2023.

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experiment with the heavy massing of concrete, ultimately reconciling these contrasting pursuits with buildings that “held heavy and light in remarkable equipoise” (Bergdoll, 2018). Like Breuer, Rockwell expressed themes of “heavy and light” using concrete and glass in his design for the Rockwell House (1964).

Inspired by Le Corbusier’s use of raw concrete, the Smithsons designed their Hunstanton Secondary Modern School (1964), Economist building (1964), and Robin Hood Gardens (1972) using a similar concrete design idiom. Architects like the Smithsons chose concrete as an “ethical” design material for social programs because of its economy and versatility while others chose it primarily as an “aesthetic solution.” Some architects, like Le Corbusier, embraced the raw honesty of concrete for sculptural designs that were both economical and artistic. According to Rockwell, his own choice of exposed concrete for the subject of this nomination was driven by both its economy and for the “handsome appearance” of the raw material.

Meanwhile, architect Louis Kahn created a program around a social need—medical research—using concrete for his architectural design. Together with Jonas Salk, developer of the polio vaccine, Kahn designed a monumental research institute according to Salk’s aesthetic brief: “create a facility worthy of a visit by Picasso.”²² For both the structure and finish of the Salk Institute (1963), Kahn used “pozzolanic” concrete, a mixture of cement and volcanic pumice aggregate first used by the ancient Romans.²³ Today, the historic-landmarked research institute contains expansive, open-plan laboratory spaces and faculty rooms housed in two mirror-image rectangular buildings flanking a contemplative center courtyard overlooking the Pacific Ocean.

A few years later, Kahn’s young apprentice Moshe Safdie chose a Brutalist design for the focal point of the 1967 World’s Fair in Montreal. Safdie called on concrete engineer August Komendant with whom he had worked in Kahn’s office to help develop a plan for Habitat 67, his pre-fabricated “concrete cube” urban housing complex. The daring design was an adaptation of his McGill University thesis project and consisted of 158 units in a staggered arrangement which allowed everyone to have their own rooftop garden. Still a functioning housing block today, Habitat 67 was designated a historic monument in 2009.

In Chicago, Bertrand Goldberg’s Brutalist “Marina City” and its residential towers were built (1960-1967), and at the time, were the tallest reinforced concrete buildings in the world.²⁴ Featuring landscape architecture by Alfred Caldwell, and conceived of as “a city within a city,” the mixed-use development was designed to create residential opportunities for people who worked in the city and wanted to live downtown. In addition to residences, the towers housed retail shops, a theater, and its first and most prestigious tenant, The National Design Center (1964), a showroom located on the first

²² History of Salk. Accessed from <https://www.salk.edu/about/history-of-salk/> on December 19, 2023.

²³ The Salk Institute: A building of wonder. Accessed from <https://www.salk.edu/about/buildings-of-wonder/> on December 19, 2023.

²⁴ Marina City. [Draft] Preliminary Summary of Information Submitted to the Commission on Chicago Landmarks in July 2015. p. 4. Accessed from https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/zlup/Landmarks/Marina_City_Prelim_Report.pdf on December 19, 2023.

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four floors introducing the latest in interior design, appliances, and other housewares.²⁵ Notably, Brenner-Danforth-Rockwell won the commission to design The National Design Center located in the (then-current) world's tallest concrete city-within-a-city.²⁶

Without question, these highly acclaimed architects have contributed much to our built environment and to the Brutalist architecture movement. Many of our significant civic, university, ecclesiastic, and multi-family/use complexes can be attributed to these pioneers in the structural and aesthetic use of reinforced concrete. This idiom was typically not used for single-family residential architecture.

While some consider the Lincoln House (Stevens & McNulty, architects; built in 1965; demolished in 2001) and the Labyrinth House (John MacLane Johansen, architect; built in 1966; destroyed in 1988) to be the first single-family residences using exposed concrete as its chief building material other than glass (Lefaivre, 2006), the Rockwell House (1964) precedes both of these early noteworthy examples. Secondary only to—or perhaps equal to—its principal building material of glass, the coarse concrete of its tapered pillars, roof, walks, plinth, and terraces co-anchors the Rockwell House in both the Modernist and Brutalist movements. Rockwell's expression of concrete is not limited to the building's exterior fabric; the exterior tapered concrete columns are expressed on the lower-level's interior as well. The architect's use of rough concrete on the exterior and interior prove concrete's function as both a building material and a finish, both structural and sculptural.

THE ARCHITECT

Harry Phillips Davis Rockwell (1926-2014) attended MIT, earning a Bachelor of Science in Industrial Relations and Mechanical Engineering in 1949. Afterwards, he moved to the Midwest, taking a job as a feeder in the cold rolling mill at Inland Steel in East Chicago, IN. In 1952, he commissioned National Register-listed architect Paul Schweikher of the prominent architecture firm Schweikher and Elting to build him and his wife Priscilla a 2,500-square-foot Modernist rectilinear house in Flossmoor, IL made of wood, concrete, and steel. The process was so inspiring to Rockwell that he changed career paths and enrolled in architecture school at the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT).

Rockwell studied under National Register-listed "Prairie School" landscape architect Alfred Caldwell and National Register-listed Modernist master Mies van der Rohe at IIT. Rockwell worked as a landscape assistant in Caldwell's office (1955-1957) and graduated with a Bachelor of Architecture from IIT in 1957. He then went on to work in Mies van der Rohe's office from 1957-1961. Both Mies's and Caldwell's influence can be seen in the design of the Rockwell House and throughout its architecturally landscaped site.

In 1961, Rockwell founded his architecture firm Brenner-Danforth-Rockwell at 646 N. Michigan Avenue in Chicago, IL with Daniel Brenner (1917-1977) and George Danforth (1916- 2007), both of whom had also been students and former employees of Mies. Both Brenner and Danforth also

²⁵ Ibid., p. 22.

²⁶ National Design Center signs lease. Accessed from https://www.marinacity.org/history/story/design_center.htm on December 19, 2023. The 10-year lease was signed for \$3 million.

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simultaneously held faculty posts at IIT while at the firm, with Danforth succeeding Mies as the head of IIT's architecture program from 1959 through 1975. Because of his partners' dual commitments, "Rockwell had full responsibility for the management and supervision of most office projects" at Brenner-Danforth-Rockwell.²⁷ One of the firm's first projects in 1961 was designing renovations for A. James Speyer's Ben Rose House (1953), including a wood terrace and plans for a wall removal. The architect-client respect proved mutual; Rockwell would later purchase 416 yards of Ben Rose fabric for the extraordinary volume of curtains he needed for his 1964 glass residence.

H. P. Davis Rockwell was a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects (FAIA), the architect of the Rockwell House, and its original owner for 42 years. While residing there, he would amass a strong portfolio of projects and win numerous architecture awards with his firm Brenner-Danforth-Rockwell. Some of their noteworthy projects other than the Rockwell House* include: the National Design Center at Bertrand Goldberg's Marina City*; three buildings at Lincoln Park Zoo; the original Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago; and renovation work for the Lake Forest Library, Art Institute of Chicago, Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts (Madlener House)* and 30 N. LaSalle (Old Stock Exchange)*. Asterisks indicate projects for which the firm won Merit Awards for excellence in architecture from the Chicago chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA).

THE OWNERS

H. P. Davis Rockwell and his wife Priscilla Huffard "Cil" Rockwell called their house-on-a-bluff home from 1964-2006. Within their village of Olympia Fields, Rockwell and his wife Priscilla were prominent members of their community. They hosted annual neighborhood Labor Day parties to encourage people of all walks of life to get to know one another. Rockwell also developed a special interest in the nearby community of East Chicago Heights, which at the time was one of the poorest towns north of the Mississippi River. He served on the board of the East Chicago Heights Community Service Center, writing funding proposals for them. He also worked with gang members to refocus their actions toward more positive goals and served as a mediator for architect-client disputes. In 1986, Rockwell moved his practice to his "house on a bluff" to work on architecture and landscape designs, including several pro-bono projects for the local community.²⁸

The second owners of the house (2006-2016) were incredible stewards of the property, having learned first-hand from the architect himself how to care for and maintain the Rockwell House. During their stewardship, they made no significant alterations to the residence except for tastefully updating the master bathroom and the installation of new dual-zone energy-efficient HVAC systems. On the exterior, they were charged with either replacing the deteriorating pool that was adjacent to the woods and attracting wildlife, or removing it and blending the void into the existing landscape. They chose the latter, which served to greatly open up the views and sightlines of the property.

²⁷ John Vinci, FAIA, Remember[s] Harry P. Davis (Deever) Rockwell, 1926-2014. Accessed from <https://chicagoarchitect.tumblr.com/post/94543943477/john-vinci-faia-remember-harry-p-davis-deever> on December 22, 2023.

²⁸ John Vinci, FAIA, Remember[s] Harry P. Davis (Deever) Rockwell, 1926-2014. Accessed from <https://chicagoarchitect.tumblr.com/post/94543943477/john-vinci-faia-remember-harry-p-davis-deever> on December 22, 2023.

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The third owners (2016-2019) were a husband-and-wife architecture and design team. During their ownership, they professionally stripped the upper-level's sun-damaged wood and stained it a natural charcoal color to camouflage its imperfections. This also enabled it to withstand future, ongoing sunlight that enters the vast expanses of glass curtain walls. For continuity, the same technique was performed on the vertical Cypress siding of the garage/pool-house, which had also been greatly affected by the sun.

The fourth owner (2019-2022) was an attorney, philanthropist, and human rights activist. He also owned a Mies condominium in downtown Chicago and purchased the Rockwell House as a weekend retreat from the city. In 2022, he passed away unexpectedly and new stewards for the Rockwell House were sought.

The fifth and current owners (2022-present) are husband-and-wife architecture enthusiasts who are very passionate about the house's history and architecture. They have replaced the roof, some of the plumbing, and restored the original quarry tile in the lower level. Restoration and preservation of the terrazzo floor in the glass pavilion is being planned, as is the restoration and preservation of the garage/pool-house.

MODERNISM IN OLYMPIA FIELDS & THE CHICAGO SUBURBS

Olympia Fields is largely characterized by traditional houses; a Greek Revival style commuter train station built in 1923 that serves the village's residents and its country club members; and the Olympia Fields Country Club's sprawling Tudor style clubhouse built from 1923-1924, listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2001.

After an ordinance was passed in the mid-1950s stipulating that no two houses could look alike, Edward Gray developed a subdivision specifically for custom homes designed with architectural integrity. The homes ranged in value from \$30,000-\$100,000 on lots averaging 1 acre each in size.²⁹ Located between Western Avenue, Vollmer Road, and Joe Orr Road, the layout of "Graymoor" was designed by Richard Hazekamp with University of Chicago students and originally consisted of 99 lots. This number increased to 141 in the 1970s when the southwest corner of the land was developed. Graymoor was one of the first subdivisions in the U.S. to have buried utilities in order to preserve its natural landscape. The subdivision has no curbs, gutters, or fences between neighbors to maximize shared views. It is composed of curving streets and cul-de-sacs, two water retention ponds joined together by a stream, and 30 acres of protected open expanses.

Within the Graymoor community of Olympia Fields are a handful of Modernist and Prairie-style homes, some of which were featured on the Edith Farnsworth House's 2023 Modernism tour of homes. Built in 1956 and designed by Edward Dart on .66 acres, [27 Graymoor Lane](#) is a steel-framed flat-roofed residence with limestone rock and floor-to-ceiling windows. It features 15-foot ceilings in the living room and 11-foot ceilings in the media room and great room. Nearby at [98 Graymoor Lane](#)

²⁹ Graymoor History. Graymoor Landowner's Association. Accessed from <https://graymoor.blogspot.com/2009/09/graymoor-history.html> on December 20, 2023.

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is another Modernist residence built in 1958, also designed by Edward Dart. Spread out over 3,200 square feet, the pitched-roof residence has an open floor plan and large covered deck on .76 acres.

Also in Graymoor at [13 Graymoor Lane](#) is the Lieberman House (1956), a 3,700-square-foot residence designed by Edward Humrich on almost one acre. Modernist in design with Frank Lloyd Wright influences, the house was built for the daughter of Edward Gray who developed the Graymoor neighborhood where the house is sited. The low-slung residence is built of cedar and Chicago common brick with expansive overhangs, skylights, and full-height windows. Featuring numerous custom built-ins for storage and entertaining, the house boasts a reflecting pool, 3-season room with built-in barbecue, and a long hallway of exposed, cathedral-like wood arches.

Outside the subdivision of Graymoor but still in Olympia Fields, is a Keck & Keck-designed residence at [28 Country Club Drive](#). The two-story cedar and glass residence was built in 1954 on a half acre. It has a wall of glass, trademark Keck & Keck window louvers, and 9-foot tongue-and-groove ceilings. In nearby Flossmoor ([1628 Sylvan Court](#)) is another Modernist Keck & Keck residence. Built in 1942, the brick, wood, and glass residence was featured in *Life Magazine* for its pioneering work in Thermopane glass. Later, an expansive screened entertaining patio off the living room was designed by Brenner-Danforth-Rockwell to maximize views of the serene 1-acre lot.

While there are a handful of Modernist houses in Olympia Fields and nearby Flossmoor, none are stylistically close to the Rockwell House. Even Rockwell's own previous, beloved Schweikher-designed 1955 Modernist residence at [8 Thornwood Drive](#) in Flossmoor does not compare stylistically to the Rockwell House, especially because it has undergone renovations that have compromised the home's architectural integrity.

Outside of Olympia Fields, but somewhat similar in style (including its celebrated 1974 David Haid-designed auto pavilion), is A. James Speyer's [Ben Rose House](#) located at 370 Beech St. in Highland Park, IL. Often mistaken for Speyer's "Ferris Bueller" house, the Rockwell House differs in that it is not built on pylons or cantilevered over its ravine below. While both houses overlook a deep wooded ravine, and have large expanses of glass curtain walls (with the Haid auto pavilion composed entirely of them like the upper level of the Rockwell House), the Rockwell House sits firmly on an exposed aggregate concrete plinth built into its site. Also, the Ben Rose House has a vertical Cypress wood front façade with a recessed fenestrated entry, while the Rockwell House's front façade is composed entirely of large steel-framed panes of glass. Both the Rockwell House and the Ben Rose House have strikingly similar low-slung detached garages oriented in front of the residence, and both are clad in vertical Cypress wood slats with a thin horizontal band at the top.³⁰ Both Speyer and Rockwell were students of Mies van der Rohe at IIT, as was David Haid, designer of the glass auto pavilion made famous in the 1986 John Hughes film "Ferris Bueller's Day Off."

Mies experimented with a mass-produced pre-fabricated design for a steel-framed glass single-family residence, the [McCormick House](#) (1952). The residence was built for Robert Hall McCormick III—a member of the prominent McCormick family of Chicago and one of the developers of Mies's

³⁰ "Cameron's House." Accessed from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ben_Rose_House#/media/File:Cameron's_House.jpg on January 11, 2024. Current status of the Ben Rose House's original detached garage is unknown.

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860-880 Lake Shore Drive Apartments (1951)—and his wife, the poet Isabella Stewart Gardner.³¹ In addition to a weekend retreat for McCormick and Gardner, the house—previously located at 299 Prospect Avenue in Elmhurst, IL with landscape design by Alfred Caldwell—was built as a prototype for a proposed collection of Modernist modular homes. Unfortunately, there was not enough public demand for the concept, but the house remains an important example in Mies’s steel-framed-glass oeuvre. In 1991, the then-current owners of the house (former Elmhurst mayor Ray Fick and his wife Mary Ann), sold it to the Elmhurst Fine Arts and Civic Center Foundation. Shortly thereafter, it was moved to the site of the Elmhurst Art Museum which now hosts tours and exhibitions of the house.³²

The closest stylistic comparisons to the Rockwell House are outside of the Chicago area: Mies van der Rohe’s [Edith Farnsworth House](#) (1951) located at 14520 River Road in Plano, IL, and Philip Johnson’s [Glass House](#) (1949) located at 199 Elm Street in New Canaan, CT. Both of these National Register-listed “house museums” are pavilions constructed of glass and steel frames with horizontal flat roofs. Each has a column-free open-concept floor plan with 360-degree panoramic views to the exterior landscaped site. However, the Rockwell House differs from both the Edith Farnsworth House and Glass House because of its lower level with private family spaces, and the architect’s expressive use of coarse concrete in the house’s pillars, plinth, and patios for their structure and finish.

BRUTALISM IN CHICAGO

The University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) campus was designed by lead architect Walter Netsch of Skidmore, Owings, & Merrill (SOM) to resemble “a stone dropped in water” and contains the highest concentration of Brutalist buildings in the Chicago area.³³ The campus design was driven by Netsch’s experiments with “Field Theory,” his design planning system formed from lattices of rotated geometric shapes with a “field” used as the spatial unit or “environmental module” to design the building.³⁴ While appearing at first to be a rigid design system due to its geometry, Field Theory instead allows great fluidity with nearly infinite additive potential for expansion. With this design approach, the building’s program could carry out what another visionary Brutalist architect, Louis Kahn, called “Existence of Will” or simply “EW:” what the building wants to be.³⁵

Other noteworthy examples of Chicago-area Brutalist buildings include Bertrand Goldberg’s Raymond Hilliard Homes (1966), Marina City (1967), Prentice Women’s Hospital (1975), River City (1986), and Wilbur Wight College (1986-1992); Harry Weese’s Seventeenth Church of Christ, Scientist (1968) and Metropolitan Correctional Center (1975); I. W. Colburn’s Henry Hinds Laboratory (1967) and Cummings Life Science Center (1970) at the University of Chicago; C. F. Murphy’s Schmitt Academic Center at DePaul University (1968) and Blue Cross-Blue Shield Building (1968, with Otto

³¹ History. Accessed from <https://elmhurstartmuseum.org/architecture/history> on January 3, 2024.

³² Ibid.

³³ Preservation Chicago Unveils the 2023 Chicago 7 Most Endangered: Taft Hall at University of Illinois at Chicago. Accessed from <https://www.preservationchicago.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Taft-Hall-Chi-7-2023-Final.pdf> on January 3, 2024.

³⁴ “Forms as Process.” Netsch, Walter. *Progressive Architecture* (March 1969), p. 94.

³⁵ “Spirit in the Architecture of Louis Kahn.” Accessed from <https://architecture.pratt.edu/articles/lobell-spirit-louis-kahn> on January 9, 2024.

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Stark); Walter Netsch's Joseph Regenstein Library at the University of Chicago (1970, with SOM), and Main Library at Northwestern University (1970); Edward Dart's Norris University Center at Northwestern University (1971); and I. M. Pei's O'Hare International Airport Control Tower (1971).

SINGLE-FAMILY BRUTALIST RESIDENCES: CHICAGO AREA

While numerous examples of university, ecclesiastical, and civic Brutalist buildings abound, there are only a few known examples of single-family residences in the Chicago area designed in the Brutalist idiom. Other than the Rockwell House (1964), these include the [Henrich House](#) (1964) located 24 Brinker Rd. in Barrington Hills, IL; the [Graham House](#) (1968) located at 2215 N. Cleveland Ave. in Chicago, IL; and the [Netsch Residence](#) (1974) located at 1700 N. Hudson Ave. in Chicago, IL.

The recent National Register-listed Richard E. and Charlotte Henrich House (1964) was designed by Edward Dart using Chicago common brick as its chief building material, left exposed on the exterior and interior, and concrete bands for the flat rooflines and parapet floors above forming terraces. It has a dramatic presence with a concrete canopy framing the front entrance, and facades of various widths and heights forming the different sections of the dramatic four-story house.

The Graham House (1968) was designed by Bruce Graham as his own personal residence and renovated by Wheeler Kearns Architects in 2006.³⁶ Graham lived there for 30 years and was an architect at Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) for 40 years, leading the design of Chicago's Inland Steel Building (1958), John Hancock Building (1969), and Sears Tower (1973).³⁷ Noteworthy features of the 4,000-square-foot Graham House include a cast-in-place concrete exterior with minimal fenestration facing the street, and expansive floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking an inner courtyard.

Walter Netsch, also an architect at SOM, used his "Field Theory" to design his personal residence that also served as a gallery-like space for his extensive art collection. From the exterior, the 3,500-square-foot Netsch Residence (1974) presents as an inconspicuous brick box with minimal fenestration, offset by a bay of windows angled outward from the building. The interior reveals an intricate series of diagonal levels of differing heights connected by open-riser stairs. The interior walls are made of exposed half cinderblocks, and the voluminous spaces are lit by well-placed skylights casting light that changes with the seasons. The house underwent a renovation in 2019 by SOM³⁸ and received both an exterior and interior landmark from the City of Chicago in 2023.

Taking together these four known single-family residential examples from the recent past designed in the Brutalist idiom (Rockwell House, 1964; Henrich House, 1964; Graham House, 1968; and Netsch Residence, 1974), it is instructive that all of them with the exception of the Henrich House were built by their respective noteworthy architects as their own personal residences. Moreover, these

³⁶ Bruce Graham Residence. Accessed from <https://wkarch.com/catalog/brucegrahamresidence/> on January 3, 2024.

³⁷ Skidmore, Owings & Merrill. Accessed from <https://www.artic.edu/artists/44312/skidmore-owings-merrill> on January 3, 2024.

³⁸ Netsch Residence – Renovation. Accessed from <https://www.som.com/projects/netsch-house-1700-n-hudson-avenue-interior-renovation/> on January 3, 2024.

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architect-owners lived in their Brutalist homes for 30 and as many as 40 years, as was the case for H. P. Davis Rockwell at his “house on a bluff.” These examples speak to both the significance of the Brutalist style in general, the enduring architectural integrity of each of these residences specifically, and the Rockwell House’s early place in the chronology of the local Brutalist built environment.

CLOSING STATEMENT

The Rockwell House meets Criterion C for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. It embodies distinctive characteristics of an architectural type (Modernist-Miesian/“International Style” and Brutalism) and period (designed in 1963, built in 1964), while demonstrating high artistic value and integrity. The Rockwell property’s two buildings (house and garage/pool-house) and its wooded, bluff-top landscaped site are contributing resources being nominated for listing.

The Rockwell House’s Modernist design is exemplified in its four exterior columns supporting a flat, “floating” concrete roof; its curtain walls serving as the glass pavilion’s skin and transparent boundary between interior and exterior; its open column-free interior floor plan; its marriage of indoors and outdoors; its emphasis on raw exposed materials; and lack of decorative ornament. These features firmly place the residence within the Modernist-Miesian architecture movement (and more specifically, “International Style” architecture) alongside Mies van der Rohe’s National Register-listed Edith Farnsworth House (1951) and Philip Johnson’s National Register-listed Glass House (1949). At the same time, it is the Rockwell House’s lower level and reinforced concrete design that merit distinction from both van der Rohe’s and Johnson’s glass house museums.

The residence’s glass pavilion is a counterpoint to its monumental concrete design typical of Brutalist architecture. Its heavy massing; rigid geometry; memorability as an image; clear exhibition of structure; and use of raw concrete as both a structural material and finish meet the defining features of Brutalist design. Built examples of single-family residences designed in the Brutalist idiom are an important resource locally and nationally, with the Rockwell House being one of its earlier examples.

Rockwell’s mentors included Caldwell and Mies, which is evidenced in the site’s and house’s design, respectively, but also National Register-listed Modernist architect Paul Schweikher. Schweikher galvanized Rockwell’s passion for architecture, inspired him to formally study it and eventually build his own Modernist home not far from his 1955 Schweikher-designed house. In addition to its integrity for its early association with the Brutalist architecture movement, the Rockwell House demonstrates excellent integrity of location, setting, design, materials, and workmanship. Recipient of a Merit Award for excellence in architecture by the Chicago chapter of the AIA, H. P. Davis Rockwell’s personal residence was undeniably his magnum opus, built for his most discerning client.

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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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Ryerson and Burnham Library at the Art Institute of Chicago

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 2.49

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage; enter "Less than one" if the acreage is .99 or less)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1	<u>41.510835</u>	<u>-87.704390</u>	3	_____	_____
	Latitude	Longitude		Latitude	Longitude
2	_____	_____	4	_____	_____
	Latitude	Longitude		Latitude	Longitude

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Parcel 1: Lot 4 in Oak Lane Drive Estates, a subdivision of Lot 5 in the division of parts of Section 23, Township 35 North, Range 13, east of the Third Principal Meridian, in Cook County, Illinois.

Parcel 2: Those parts of the east 12 feet of Lot 10 and of Lots 11 and 12 in the subdivision of parts of Section 23, Township 35 North, Range 13, east of the Third Principal Meridian as per document No. 3638070, Book 88, Page 16 described as follows: Beginning at a point 12 feet west of the northwest corner of Lot 11, thence 80.87 feet south on a line 12 feet west of the west boundary line of Lot 11, thence 354.63 feet in a southeasterly direction to the east boundary line of Lot 12 a distance of 163.72 feet south of the northeast corner of Lot 12, thence 163.72 feet north along the east boundary line of Lot 12 to the northeast corner of Lot 12, thence 344.82 feet west along the north boundary line of Lots 12 and 11, and of the east 12 feet of Lot 10 to the point of beginning, in Cook County, Illinois.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

Parcel 1 is according to the Plat of Survey by David A. Ring & Associates, Professional Illinois Land Surveyors, surveyed for H. P. Davis Rockwell on May 12, 1996, revised on March 2, 1999 and April 6, 1999, and updated on April 26, 2006 according to the signed update affidavit by Professional Illinois Land Surveyor No. 2921.

Parcel 2 is according to the Plat of Survey by David A. Ring & Associates, Professional Illinois Land Surveyors, surveyed for H. P. Davis Rockwell on March 2, 1999, revised on April 6, 1999, and updated on April 26, 2006 according to the signed update affidavit by Professional Illinois Land Surveyor No. 2921.

These boundaries were selected because they include the property and lots historically associated with the Rockwell House.

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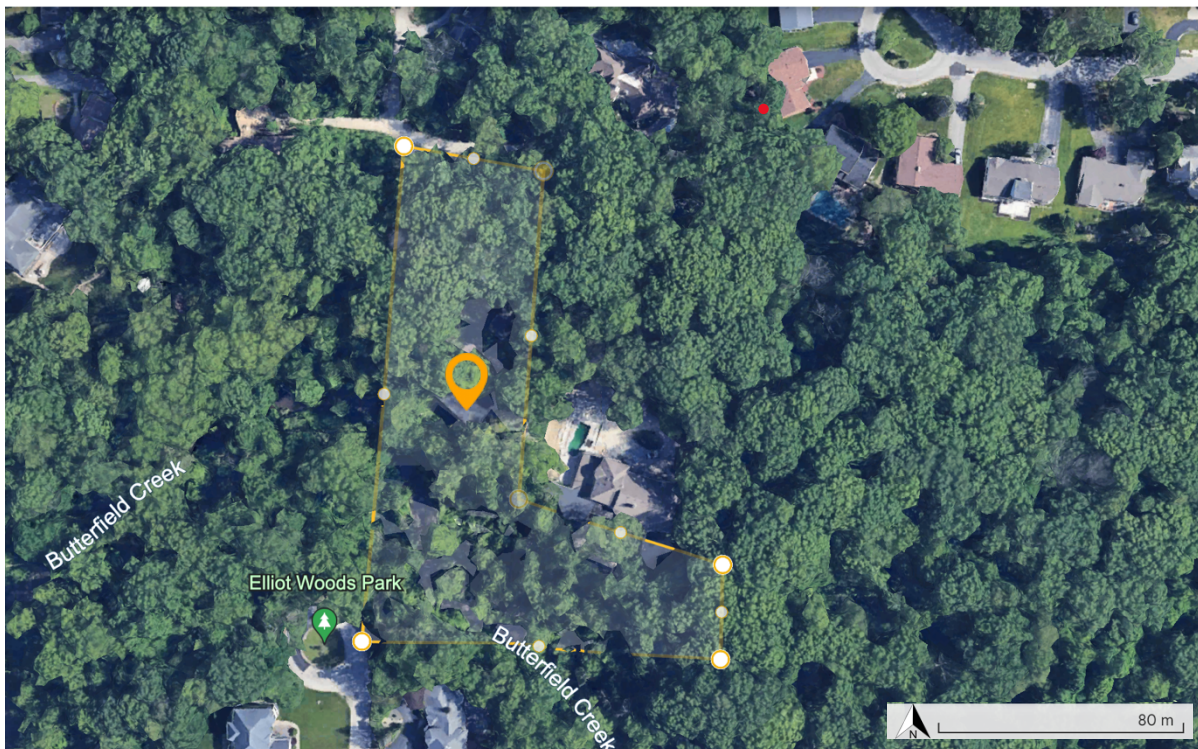
11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jenna Finwall Ryan, Ph.D. date 02/27/24
organization Owner of residence telephone 323-303-7803
street & number 20841 Oak Lane Dr. email JENNAFINWALL@YAHOO.COM
city or town Olympia Fields state IL zip code 60461

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **GIS Location Map (Google Earth or BING)**
- **Local Location Map**
- **Site Plan**
- **Floor Plans (As Applicable)**
- **Photo Location Map** (Include for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map and insert immediately after the photo log and before the list of figures).



Latitude: 41.510835 Longitude: -87.704390

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Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 3000x2000 pixels, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: The Rockwell House
City or Vicinity: Olympia Fields
County: Cook **State:** Illinois
Photographer: Jenna Finwall Ryan; VHT Studios
Date Photographed: 2018-2023

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

IL_Cook County_The Rockwell House_0001, North (front) elevation, view south. Jenna Finwall Ryan, photographer, July 2023

IL_Cook County_The Rockwell House_0002, Northwest elevation, view southeast. VHT Studios, photographer, 2018

IL_Cook County_The Rockwell House_0003, Southeast elevation, view northwest. Jenna Finwall Ryan, photographer, July 2023

IL_Cook County_The Rockwell House_0004, South (back) elevation, view east. VHT Studios, photographer, 2018

IL_Cook County_The Rockwell House_0005, Master bedroom with free-standing closet partition, view northeast. VHT Studios, photographer, November 2022

IL_Cook County_The Rockwell House_0006, Study with free-standing closet partition, view southeast. VHT Studios, photographer, November 2022

IL_Cook County_The Rockwell House_0007, Living room with built-in fireplace, view toward foyer and study, view southeast. VHT Studios, photographer, November 2022

IL_Cook County_The Rockwell House_0008, Living room, view southwest. VHT Studios, photographer, November 2022

IL_Cook County_The Rockwell House_0009, Kitchen, view toward dining room, view south. VHT Studios, photographer, November 2022

IL_Cook County_The Rockwell House_0010, Recreation room with door to sunken patio, lower level, view southeast. VHT Studios, photographer, November 2022

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IL_Cook County_The Rockwell House_0011, Sitting area with spiral staircase, lower level, view toward west hallway, view west. VHT Studios, photographer, November 2022

IL_Cook County_The Rockwell House_0012, Guest bedroom, lower level, view east. VHT Studios, photographer, November 2022

IL_Cook County_The Rockwell House_0013, Garage/Pool-House at center of lot, view west. Jenna Finwall Ryan, photographer, July 2022

IL_Cook County_The Rockwell House_0014, Garage/Pool-House at center of lot, view toward forecourt and House, view south. Jenna Finwall Ryan, photographer, July 2022

IL_Cook County_The Rockwell House_0015, Garage/Pool-House at center of lot, aerial view of landscape design, view east. VHT Studios, photographer, November 2022

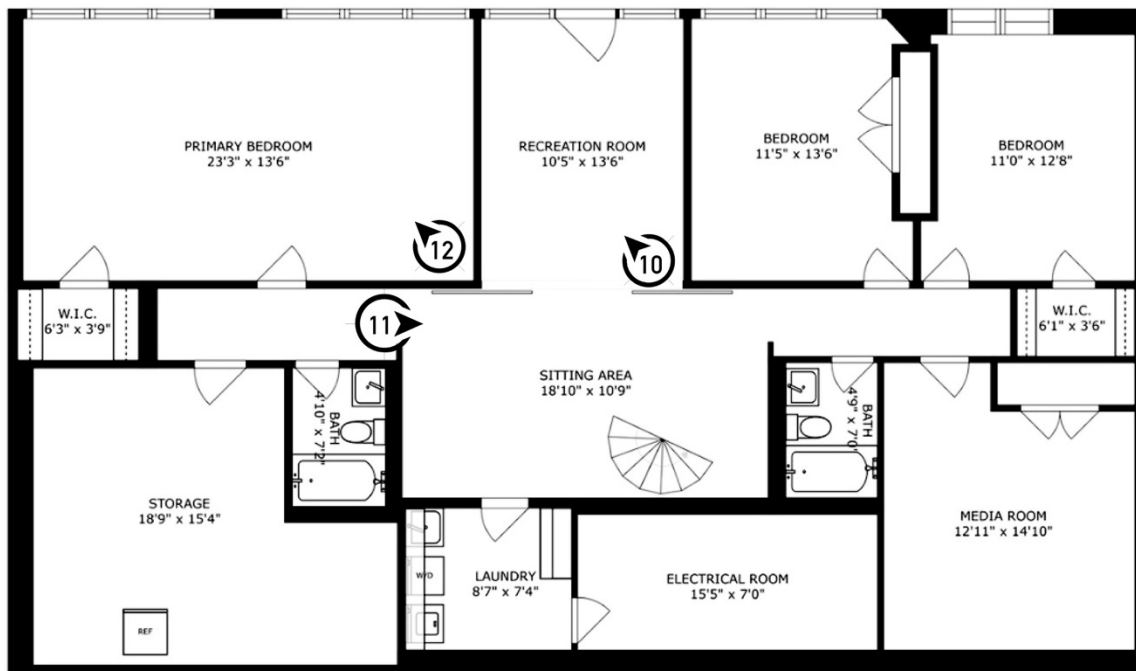
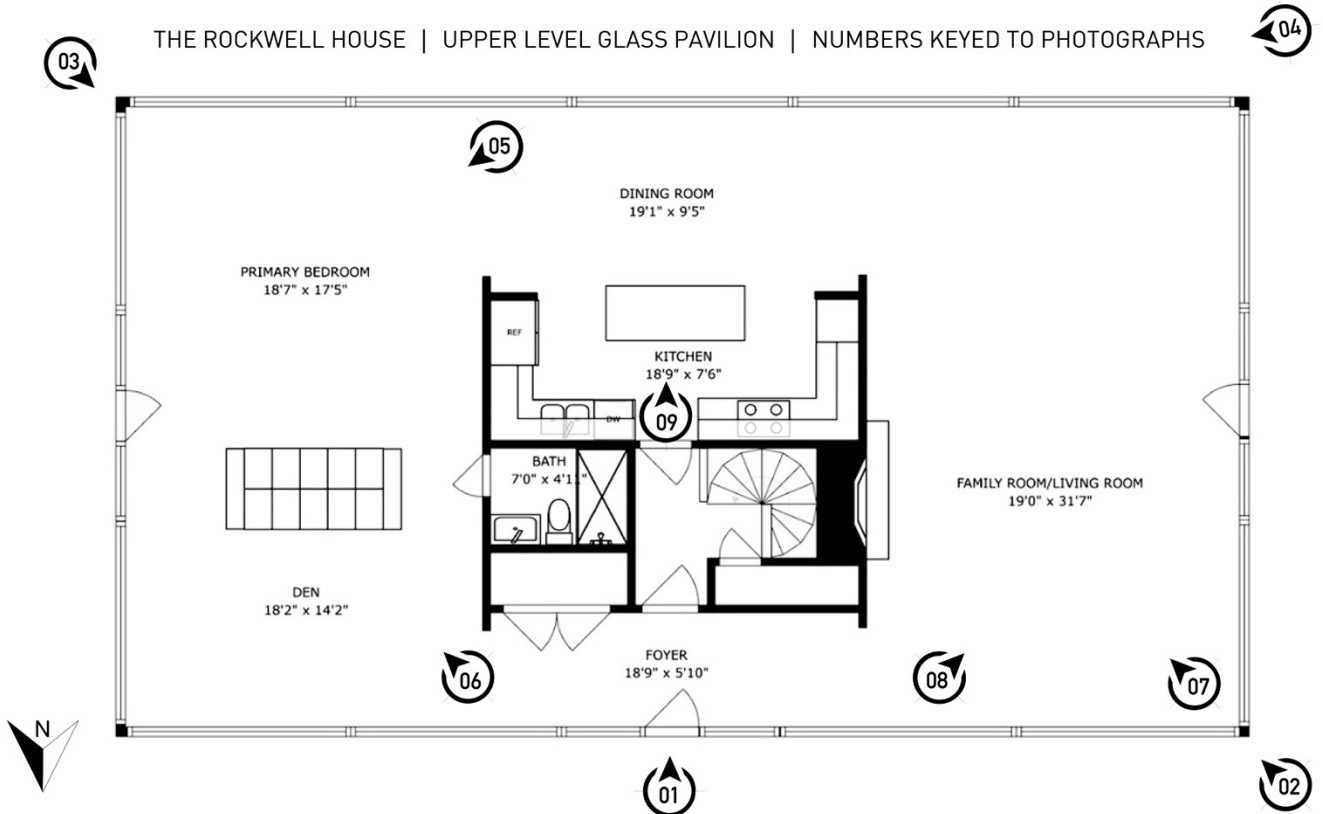
Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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THE ROCKWELL HOUSE | UPPER LEVEL GLASS PAVILION | NUMBERS KEYED TO PHOTOGRAPHS



THE ROCKWELL HOUSE | LOWER FAMILY LEVEL | NUMBERS KEYED TO PHOTOGRAPHS

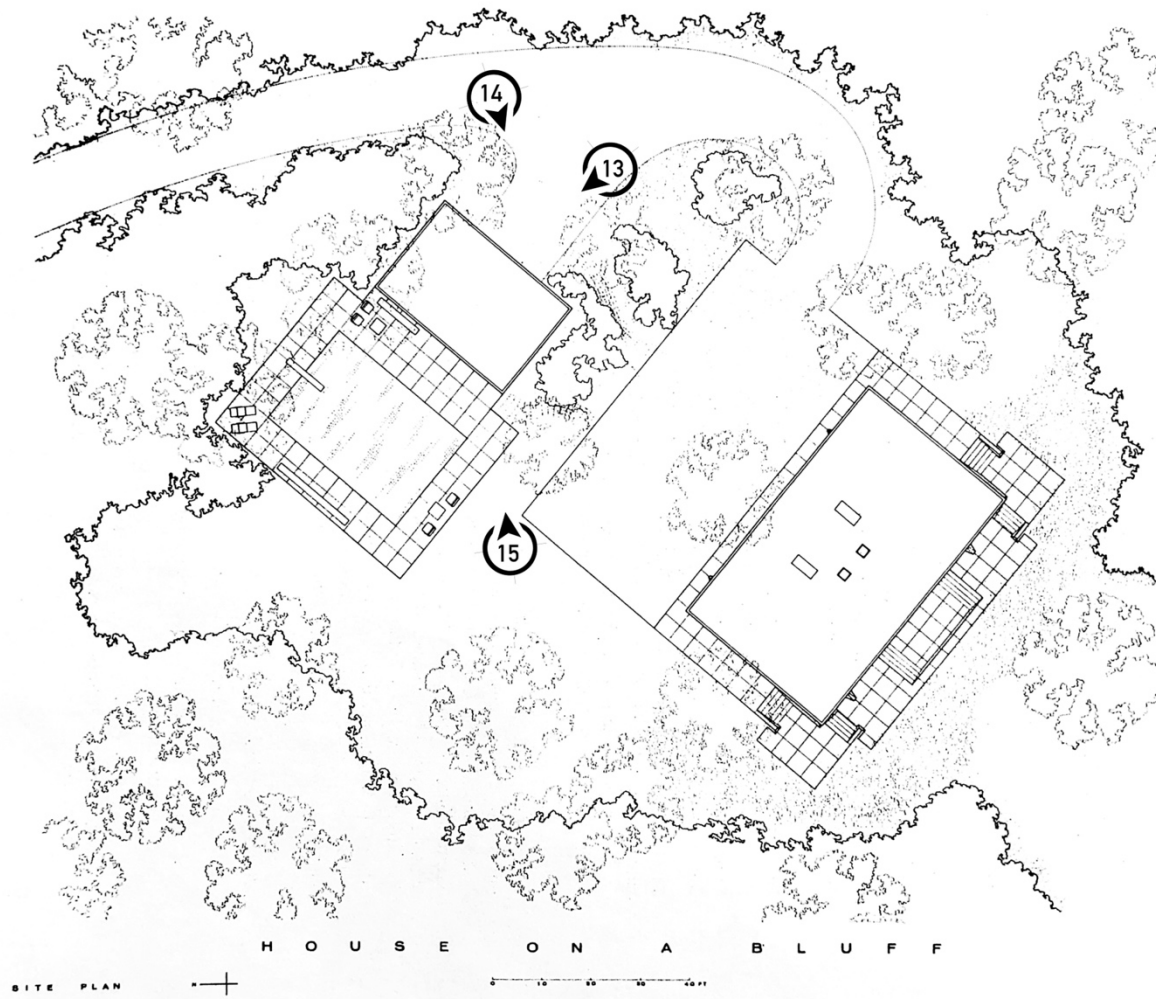
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THE ROCKWELL HOUSE | SITE PLAN | NUMBERS KEYED TO PHOTOGRAPHS



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IL_Cook County_The Rockwell House_0001, North (front) elevation, view south.



IL_Cook County_The Rockwell House_0002, Northwest elevation, view southeast.

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IL_Cook County_The Rockwell House_0003, Southeast elevation, view northwest.



IL_Cook County_The Rockwell House_0004, South (back) elevation, view east.

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IL_Cook County_The Rockwell House_0005, Master bedroom with free-standing closet partition, view northeast.



IL_Cook County_The Rockwell House_0006, Study with free-standing closet partition, view southeast.

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IL_Cook County_The Rockwell House_0007, Living room with built-in fireplace, view toward foyer and study, view southeast.



IL_Cook County_The Rockwell House_0008, Living room, view southwest.

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IL_Cook County_The Rockwell House_0009, Kitchen, view toward dining room, view south.



IL_Cook County_The Rockwell House_0010, Recreation room with door to sunken patio, lower level, view southeast.

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National Park Service

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IL_Cook County_The Rockwell House_0011, Sitting area with spiral staircase, lower level, view toward west hallway, view west.



IL_Cook County_The Rockwell House_0012, Guest bedroom, lower level, view east.

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IL_Cook County_The Rockwell House_0013, Garage/Pool-House at center of lot, view west.



IL_Cook County_The Rockwell House_0014, Garage/Pool-House at center of lot, view toward forecourt and House, view south.

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IL_Cook County_The Rockwell House_0015, Garage/Pool-House at center of lot, aerial view of landscape design, view east.

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National Park Service

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List of Figures

(Resize, compact, and paste images of maps and historic documents in this section. Place captions, with figure numbers above each image. Orient maps so that north is at the top of the page, all document should be inserted with the top toward the top of the page.)

Figure 1: AIA Chicago merit award winner, "House on a Bluff" (the Rockwell House), southeast elevation, Olympia Fields, IL (1964). Brenner-Danforth-Rockwell, architects.

Figure 2: The Rockwell House, north elevation, Olympia Fields, IL (1964). Brenner-Danforth-Rockwell, architects.

Figure 3: The Rockwell House, south elevation, detail, Olympia Fields, IL (1964). Brenner-Danforth-Rockwell, architects.

Figure 4: The Rockwell House, southwest elevation, concrete detail, Olympia Fields, IL (1964). Brenner-Danforth-Rockwell, architects.

Figure 5: The Rockwell House, southwest elevation, construction photo, Olympia Fields, IL (1963). Brenner-Danforth-Rockwell, architects.

Figure 6: The Rockwell House, south elevation, construction photo, Olympia Fields, IL (1963). Brenner-Danforth-Rockwell, architects.

Figure 7: The Rockwell House, column and roof plate, construction photo, Olympia Fields, IL (1963). Brenner-Danforth-Rockwell, architects.

Figure 8: The Rockwell House (aka "House on a Bluff"), north elevation, construction photo, Olympia Fields, IL (1963). Brenner-Danforth-Rockwell, architects.

Figure 9: Concrete column detail, floating roof, blueprint, the Rockwell House (1963). Brenner-Danforth-Rockwell, architects.

Figure 10: Concrete column, plinth, floating roof, exterior-interior perspective, west, the Rockwell House (2023). Brenner-Danforth-Rockwell, architects.

Figure 11: Concrete column, service core, exterior-interior perspective, east, the Rockwell House (2019). Brenner-Danforth-Rockwell, architects.

Figure 12: Concrete column, floating roof, exterior perspective, northwest elevation, the Rockwell House (2019). Brenner-Danforth-Rockwell, architects.

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Figure 13: The Rockwell House, from *Julius Shulman: Chicago Midcentury Modernism* (2010). Brenner-Danforth-Rockwell, architects.

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Figure 1: AIA Chicago merit award winner, “House on a Bluff” (the Rockwell House), southeast elevation, Olympia Fields, IL (1964). Brenner-Danforth-Rockwell, architects. Image: Hedrich-Blessing. Ryerson and Burnham Art and Architecture Archives, The Art Institute of Chicago.

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Figure 2: The Rockwell House, north elevation, Olympia Fields, IL (1964). Brenner-Danforth-Rockwell, architects. Image: Hedrich-Blessing. Ryerson and Burnham Art and Architecture Archives, The Art Institute of Chicago.



Figure 3: The Rockwell House, south elevation, detail, Olympia Fields, IL (1964). Brenner-Danforth-Rockwell, architects. Image: Hedrich-Blessing. Ryerson and Burnham Art and Architecture Archives, The Art Institute of Chicago.

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Figure 4: The Rockwell House, southwest elevation, concrete detail, Olympia Fields, IL (1964). Brenner-Danforth-Rockwell, architects. Image: Richard Nickel. Ryerson and Burnham Art and Architecture Archives, The Art Institute of Chicago.



Figure 5: The Rockwell House, southwest elevation, construction photo, Olympia Fields, IL (1963). Brenner-Danforth-Rockwell, architects. Image: Richard Nickel. Ryerson and Burnham Art and Architecture Archives, The Art Institute of Chicago.

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Figure 6: The Rockwell House, south elevation, construction photo, Olympia Fields, IL (1963). Brenner-Danforth-Rockwell, architects. Image: Richard Nickel. Ryerson and Burnham Art and Architecture Archives, The Art Institute of Chicago.



Figure 7: The Rockwell House, column and roof plate, construction photo, Olympia Fields, IL (1963). Brenner-Danforth-Rockwell, architects. Tapered concrete column supports a "floating" concrete roof. Image: Richard Nickel. Ryerson and Burnham Art and Architecture Archives, The Art Institute of Chicago.

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Figure 8: The Rockwell House (aka "House on a Bluff"), north elevation, construction photo, Olympia Fields, IL (1963). Brenner-Danforth-Rockwell, architects. Image: Richard Nickel. Ryerson and Burnham Art and Architecture Archives, The Art Institute of Chicago.

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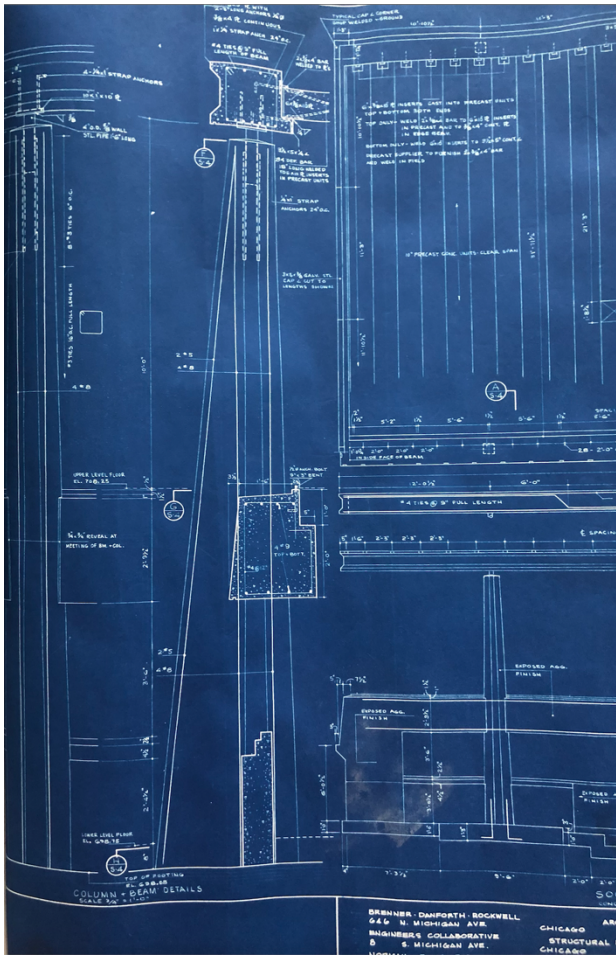


Figure 9: Concrete column detail, floating roof, blueprint, the Rockwell House (1963). Brenner-Danforth-Rockwell, architects.



Figure 10: Concrete column, plinth, floating roof, exterior-interior perspective, west, the Rockwell House (2023). Brenner-Danforth-Rockwell, architects.

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Figure 11: Concrete column, service core, exterior-interior perspective, east, the Rockwell House (2019). Brenner-Danforth-Rockwell, architects. Image: James Caulfield.



Figure 12: Concrete column, floating roof, exterior perspective, northwest elevation, the Rockwell House (2019). Brenner-Danforth-Rockwell, architects. Image: James Caulfield.

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Figure 13: The Rockwell House, from *Julius Shulman: Chicago Midcentury Modernism* (2010). Brenner-Danforth-Rockwell, architects. Image: Julius Shulman.