

HISTORIC ILLINOIS BUILDINGS SURVEY

JOHN SCHMIDTKE HOUSE

HIBS K-2022-1

Location: The Schmidtke House is situated on a 5.83-acre site at 35W655 Tollgate Road in Elgin, Illinois. The residence is situated on a polygonal, 5.83-acre site on Parcel 1 within that part of the East Half of the Southwest Quarter of Section 33, Township 42 North, Range 8, East of the Third Principal Meridian in Kane County, Illinois.

USGS Quadrangle: Kane

Present Owner: High Street Logistics

Present Use: Vacant

Significance: The John Schmidke House was built in 1967 as an excellent, and rare, Modernist example of a Ranch house, a single-family dwelling type associated with American suburbia in the post-World War II era. The design of this Modernist jewel, tucked into a nearly six-acre wooded and grassy parcel at the northwestern periphery of Elgin, is based on precedents that include the European International Style of the 1920s and Frank Lloyd Wright's Usonian houses of the 1930s. Modernist elements of this one-story, L-shaped, 2,200 square-foot house with attached garage, include its flat roof with overhanging, boxed eaves; walls sheathed with brick, cedar boards applied vertically, and floor-to-ceiling glass panels; and open-plan living/dining room. The basement stairway originally featured metal balustrades that extended from the risers to the ceiling, another Modernist element. The house was designed by John C. Schmidke (1928-1996), a locally prominent architect who designed many private and public buildings in the Elgin area, where he lived and worked.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Date of construction: 1967
2. Architect: John C. Schmidtke

3. Original plans and construction

The John Schmidtke House was built in 1967 as a one-story, wood-frame, single-family house situated on a concrete slab with a partial basement. It had an irregular footprint with a main block and bedroom wing oriented on a northwest-southwest axis, and a family room/two-car garage/workshop wing oriented on a northeast-southeast axis. Walls were variously sheathed in common brick laid in a running bond, red cedar board siding applied vertically and accented by wooden posts, and floor-to-ceiling glass panels. Sliding glass doors were situated along various elevations of the house, which opened onto wooden decks and patios and provided views of the surrounding grassy lawn and wooded landscape beyond. The north wall of the living room/dining room was entirely comprised of glass panels/doors. The northeast-facing garage had an overhead metal door.

The flat roof of the house was punctuated with six small dome skylights of square or rectangular shape. The fascia was covered with black anodized aluminum panel boards. The roof had overhanging, boxed eaves and the fascia was flush with the wall planes on some elevations. Brick walls extended several feet beyond the house on various elevations. The brick wall on the easternmost elevation extended about sixteen feet southward, creating a courtyard-like area adjacent to the main entrance.

The floor plan of the house incorporated approximately 2,200 square feet and featured three distinct wings: a main block, a bedroom wing, and a garage wing linked to the main block by a family room “hyphen.” The main block and bedroom were on the same southwest/northeast axis and were internally connected by a continuous hallway.

The main block featured an open dining room/living room, stairway to basement, galley kitchen, three closets, one full bathroom, laundry room, and three hallways on its east side, and a master bedroom suite containing a bedroom, walk-in closet, and full bathroom on its west side. The adjacent bedroom wing had two bedrooms and two closets.

Ceilings were finished with drywall and walls were variously finished with drywall, sheetrock, exposed brick, cedar siding applied vertically, ceramic tiles (kitchen, bathrooms, laundry room), and concrete block (workroom). Flooring included wall-to-wall carpeting, red quarry tile, and exposed concrete. A wood-burning fireplace was set within the brick wall of the family room. The stairway to the basement was surrounded by squared metal balustrades painted black that extended from each riser to the ceiling. Interior dark wood doors with smooth surfaces extended from floor to ceiling. The

main hallway connecting the main block and bedroom wing had two niches with built-in cabinets.

4. Alterations and additions

The Schmidtke House has excellent architectural integrity and has experienced only very minor changes. The original May 1967 for this house shows the garage wing as a single open space. It is unknown whether the present-day workroom on the south side of the garage was original to the house or if the garage was later subdivided in half to include this space. The west wall of the family room was slightly extended in 1968 to create a larger space. The flashing that covers the fascia was altered in 1996.

The house operated as a wedding venue from 2018 to 2021, when it was sold to its present owner, High Street Logistics. It has been vacant since that time and has existed in a state of disrepair since April 1, 2022, the deadline by which the developer was willing to give the residence for free to anyone with willing to relocate it. All interior doors have since been removed, as have one of the built-in cabinets in the main hallway, the basement stairway's balustrades, and kitchen appliances (stove and refrigerator). The partial basement is filled with standing water.

B. Historical Context

1. Architect John C. Schmidtke, Jr.

The Schmidtke House, completed in 1967, was designed by John C. Schmidtke, Jr., (1928-1996), a locally prominent architect who designed many private and public buildings in Kane County, and especially the Elgin area, where he lived and worked.

John C. Schmidke was born on October 6 1928 in St. Louis, Missouri, the oldest child of Dr. John C. Schmidtke Sr. and Gladys (Krahn) Schmidtke. The Schmidtke family moved to Illinois by 1930, residing in a house in Palatine. In 1940, John Jr. lived with his parents and two brothers in a two-story Colonial Revival style brick house at 260 Grand Boulevard in Elgin, which is extant and faces Lords Park. His father, John Sr., was a prominent local surgeon who worked at both Sherman and St. Joseph Hospitals in Elgin.¹

Schmidtke attended Elgin High School and graduated from Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota, in 1950 with a B.A. He married Georgianna Thabes

¹ Ancestry.com. U.S., World War II Draft Cards for Young Men, 1940-1947; United States Census for Population and Housing, 1930, 1940; "Dr. John Schmidtke, Elgin," *Cardinal Free Press* (Carpentersville, Illinois), September 28, 1979.

(1930-2020), a fellow student at Carleton College, on June 9, 1952. Schmidtke's technical training was undertaken at Iowa State College, where he was heavily influenced by Richard McConnell, a Professor of Design who was a strong advocate for the International style of architecture and its principles. Schmidtke received a Bachelor of Architecture Degree in 1955 and began his architectural career that year working with Charles Klopp, AIA, and Walter Kroeber, AIA.²

In 1958, Schmidtke established a partnership with Robert Layer, an architect and structural engineer, called Schmidtke and Layer with an office at 28 N. Grove Avenue in Elgin. One of the firm's early commissions was for the Kane County Juvenile Home, which was built on a rural road south of Geneva in 1958 at a cost of \$178,000. A 1961 article in the *Daily Herald* called the one-story, T-shaped, brick building a "model facility." It included quarters for children as well as a cafeteria, day room, and a counseling room and library.³

Schmidtke and Layer designed a two-story, flat-roofed brick dormitory for girls at the Elgin Academy, 350 Park Street, which was built in 1962 at a cost of \$250,000. It provided accommodations for up to 64 students and additional classroom space in basement rooms.⁴ (See Figure 53.) In 1963, the firm designed a \$50,000 fire station for the Nunda rural fire protection district east of Crystal Lake. The building, located on the south side of Illinois highway 176, west of the Fox River, was of Modern design, with five bays for firefighting equipment.⁵ In 1965, the Elgin School Board selected Schmidtke as architect to remodel the Gospel Chapel on Chapel Street, across from Elgin High School, which it had recently purchased.⁶

John Schmidtke served as president of the Dundee Township library board in 1967, the year it was deliberating plans to build a new library near the planned Civic Center Plaza along the Fox River. The commission for the Gail Borden Library at 200 N. Grove Avenue was subsequently awarded to Schmidtke and Layer, and the one-story, flat-roofed Modernist edifice, built at a cost of \$1.3 million, opened in 1968.⁷ A full-façade portico comprised of squared, concrete columns provided a notable entrance to the facility, which was

² Ancestry.com. U.S., School Yearbooks, 1900-2016; Sheri Schmidtke, "The John Schmidtke Residence," Kane County Historic Landmark Nomination Form, July 17, 1996; "To Become June Bride," *Mt. Vernon Register-News* (Mt. Vernon, Illinois) (May 7, 1952); *American Architects Directory, Third Edition* (R.R. Bowker, 1970) 810.

³ "Kane County Juvenile Home is Model," *The Daily Herald* (February 23, 1961).

⁴ "Elgin Academy to Open Girls Dormitory," *Chicago Tribune* (August 16, 1962).

⁵ "Nunda District Votes to Build Fire Station," *Chicago Tribune* (January 13, 1963).

⁶ "Pick Architects for 2 Remodeling Jobs," *The Daily Herald* (May 13, 1965).

⁷ "Meeting to Study 3 Areas," *Chicago Tribune* (August 13, 1967); "Elgin Opens New Gail Borden Library," *Chicago Tribune* (October 13, 1968).

described in the December 1968 issue of *Library Journal* as “cool and efficient on the outside yet able to provide spacious and dramatic areas for its activities.” The article also noted that the building was “an interesting example of the suburban public library designed to meet the needs of a large and growing community.”⁸ (See Figures 51 and 52.)

In 1969, Schmidtke and Layer were hired by the DuPage County Board to design a detention facility for youths too young to be jailed. It was built on County Farm Road, between Manchester Road and the Chicago and Northwestern railroad tracks, in Wheaton. The 30-bed facility contain food services and educational spaces.⁹

Also in 1969, the firm created a 22-room school design for Elgin School District U46 that was intended to be used for two new buildings: the Parkwood Elementary School at 2150 Laurel Avenue in Hanover Park and the Century Oaks Elementary School at 1235 Braeburn Drive in Elgin. (See Figure 50.) They were two of the four elementary schools approved by voters in a December 1968 bond referendum. Schmidtke told the school board that the 42,000-square-foot design was planned to promote flexibility and easy movement of students and staff and to provide space for multiple purposes.¹⁰ The innovative design was described by a contemporary writer:

Geometrically speaking, the building looks like a circle within a triangle with the triangle forming the exterior walls. Looking down at the building from an elevated position, the building forms a triangle with two “sawed-off” points, with the third point extending into an oblong-shaped administrative wing.

Within the triangle (exterior walls) the classrooms form a ring around a library resource area located at the center of the circle. Between the classrooms and the library-resource center is a ring of planning and project rooms with corridors for access to the center.

...Topping the entire structure will be a radiating dome which will peak over the library-resource center.. Exterior walls will have a masonry face.¹¹

The combined bid for the general contract and mechanical work on the Parkwood and Century Oaks schools amounted to \$2,129,380, which was above the original \$2 million budget. As a result, changes were made in the type of heating and ventilation system to be installed, in the cabinets for the learning centers, and in the materials used for the roof decks. However,

⁸ “Magazine Features Gail Borden Library,” *Courier-News* (December 13, 1968).

⁹ “DuPage Youth Facility Design Phase Started,” *Chicago Tribune* (May 29, 1969).

¹⁰ “Board Sees School Design,” *The Daily Herald* (September 15, 1969).

¹¹ Ibid.

Schmidtke noted that the board of education was “not giving up anything in terms of satisfactory performance,” with the alterations suggested.¹²

Schmidtke and Layer also designed two additional schools in Elgin: Summit School at 333 W. River Road and Channing Elementary School at 63 S. Channing Street (1969). Schmidtke devoted over ten years of service as a board member of the Summit School. He also served two terms as president of the board of Jayne Shover Easter Seal and designed that organization’s building at 799 S. McLean Boulevard in Elgin, which was dedicated in October 1970 and received various additions over the years.¹³ He also designed the Taylor Branch Building of the YMCA at 50 N. McLean Boulevard in Elgin. (See Figure 54.)

Over the course of his career, John Schmidtke designed low-rise industrial buildings in the Elgin area for several firms, including the Elgin Sweeper Company at 1300 W. Bartlett Road, Elgin (1967); Fox Valley Manufacturing Company at 1600 Fleetwood Drive, Elgin (1968); the Lakeview Screw Company at 751 Schneider Drive, South Elgin (1972); Haeger Potteries on Fleetwood Drive, Elgin (1972); and Master Molded Products Corporation at 1000 Davis Road, Elgin (1972).¹⁴

Schmidtke’s residential work—in addition to the 1967 house he designed for his own family at 35W655 Tollgate Road in unincorporated Dundee Township—included two Modernist single-family houses in Elgin: the Dr. H.T. Perry House at 413 N. Alfred Drive and the Dr. Marvin Dickey House at 1206 Nottingham Lane. Both one-story houses were completed by 1972 as their property owners were listed as residing at these addresses in the Elgin phone directory for that year. The flat-roofed Dickey House had a front façade sheathed in vertical boards painted white and one of its wings featured floor-to-ceiling sliding glass doors sheltered by a full-façade portico with squared wood columns. The Perry House had brick walls, an attached garage, and a wing with clerestory windows. (See Figures 48 and 49.)

John C. Schmidtke practiced in the early 1970s under the firm name of Schmidtke and Associates following the departure of Robert Layer. In November 1973, Schmidtke and Associates merged with Lamp Construction

¹² “New Schools Cost High?” *The Daily Herald* (April 14, 1970); “Elgin Firm Gets Pact,” *The Daily Herald* (April 28, 1970).

¹³ “New 1-level \$160,000 building dedicated,” *Courier-News*, October 26, 1970

¹⁴ “New Plant Opens,” *Courier-News* (January 26, 1967); “\$250,000 square foot plant planned,” *Courier-News* (July 25, 1968); “Groundbreaking for Lakeview Screw Company,” *Courier-News* (July 22, 1972); “Haeger opens Elgin Plant on Fleetwood Drive,” *Courier-News* (March 30, 1973); “Groundbreaking for Master Molded Products Corporation,” *Courier-News* (August 20, 1973).

Company, which was founded in 1932 by Clifford Lamp, and the new entity was renamed Lamp Inc.¹⁵ Schmidtke served as vice president of design for this planning, design, and construction firm in Elgin until 1992. Much of his work focused on the supervision of design and detailing, the writing of specifications, cost interpretations, client relations, and on-site job supervision.¹⁶

In 1979, Schmidtke received an award from the Illinois State Council of the AIA for his design for the City of Elgin Fire Station No. 2 at 650 Big Timber Road, which the judges commended for achieving the client's primary goal of blending with its residential neighborhood through the massing and texture of the building and its site planning. The judges also highlighted the well-integrated interior of the brick building, which "alleviates an institutional feeling."¹⁷

Schmidtke, a member of the American Institute of Architects since 1966, was also a prominent civic leader, serving for decades on numerous local commissions that dealt with building, planning, and zoning issues. He served 10 years on the Kane County Regional Planning Commission, 17 years on the Elgin Planning Commission, 10 years on the Elgin Building Commission, over 20 years on the Elgin Board of Housing and Zoning Appeals, and he served two terms as president of the Elgin Chamber of Commerce.¹⁸ In 1974, he was presented with the Elgin Chamber of Commerce's "distinguished service award for outstanding leadership and community service."¹⁹

Schmidtke passed away on January 5, 1996, at the age of 67. He was survived by his wife, Georgianna, who passed away in 2020, and his three children.

2. History of the John Schmidtke House

In 1967, John and Georgianna Schmidtke purchased a 5.83-acre rural parcel at 35W655 Tollgate Road in unincorporated Dundee Township as the site of a new residence to be designed by John for their family of five, which included their children John E., Kurt, and Sheri. The property was situated to the northwest of the Interstate 90 and IL Route 31 (State Street) interchange and

¹⁵ "Merges with Schmidtke & Associates, architects," *Courier-News* (November 8, 1973).

¹⁶ Sheri Schmidtke, "The John Schmidtke Residence," Kane County Historic Landmark Nomination Form, July 17, 1996;

¹⁷ "3 architect firms here win awards," *Chicago Tribune* (April 26, 1979); Design earns award for J.C. Schmidtke," *Courier-News* (April 25, 1979).

¹⁸ Sheri Schmidtke, "The John Schmidtke Residence," Kane County Historic Landmark Nomination Form, July 17, 1996;

¹⁹ "Chamber lauds Schmidtke," *Courier-News* (January 17, 1974).

was a short drive from John’s architectural office on Grove Street in downtown Elgin.

The Schmidtke property was accessed via Tollgate Road, an approximately one-mile roadway that began off an IL Route 31 exit ramp and extended south and then westward, paralleling I-90. The roadway terminated at a cul-de-sac that opened onto driveways leading to four existing homesites, each of which featured a Ranch style house. One property—at 35W645 Tollgate Road—was the site of a nineteenth century farmstead that was originally accessed via a rural north-south roadway. Its 1960s Ranch house replaced an older farmhouse, although the property retained a wood-plank gambrel barn and silo. The other three properties were developed in the early 1960s, following the construction of both I-90 (then called Northwest Tollway) and Tollgate Road.²⁰

John Schmidtke produced drawings for his family residence dated May 10, 1967, under his firm name, Schmidtke and Layer. He acted as his own general contractor on the project, hiring all subcontractors, and personally oversaw the construction. He eventually built much of the home himself after its poured concrete foundation and wood-framing were completed, installing elements that included the wood siding and decking on the exterior as well as interior wood paneling, ceramic wall tile, quarry floor tile, and interior doors.

John E. Schmidtke—who was four years old at the time of construction—later recalled making frequent visits to the construction site where he watched the house take shape:

When I was 4 my family and I used to make the 15 minute drive from my house in Elgin to “The hole,” which was located in the middle of roughly six acres of flat horse pasture. My father, who liked to spend all of his free time there, would often include the entire family in a day of “enrichment” at the job site. As a child, it was fun playing out in the field and watching the progress as the workers poured the foundation, my father supervising the whole time. Soon, the walls were up and “the hole” began to look like a house. He worked tirelessly, laying drywall, tiling the floors, siding and painting the exterior. It wasn’t enough that he had designed it, he was determined to build it as well, which he did almost single handedly.²¹

The Schmidtke House was completed in December 1967, after nearly seven months of construction. It was oriented in a northeast/southwest direction and

²⁰ Historicaerials.com; Kevin McGowan and Marcy Prchal, “Archaeological Reconnaissance of a 32-Acre Industrial Development in Kane County, Illinois,” November 22, 2021.

²¹ John E. Schmidtke quoted in: Sheri Schmidtke, “The John Schmidtke Residence,” Kane County Historic Landmark Nomination Form, July 17, 1996.

set far back from the cul-de-sac, accessed via a long, winding driveway. The one-story Modernist house had an irregular, L-shaped footprint and was distinguished by its flat roof with overhanging, boxed eaves as well as its mix of wall materials: common brick and cedar planks. Walls also featured floor-to-ceiling plate glass windows and sliding glass doors which variously opened onto patios and wood decks. Small dome skylights of square or rectangular shape provided additional natural illumination. The open-plan living/dining room and adjacent galley kitchen were flanked by a master bedroom suite on one side, and a two-bedroom wing on the opposite side of the 2,200-square-foot house, which had a perpendicular wing containing a family room, two-car garage, and a workshop.

John E. Schmidt provided some thoughts on the design of his family's house:

One of the things I liked the best about our house versus other homes was its flat roof. This was my father's trademark...Another thing I noticed about other homes was that they were generally made out of the same material. My father believed in the important contrast and textural effects such as the combined use of natural wood, painted surfaces and solid brick walls, which were important in both the design and structural components of the house.

Once inside the house, other unique features become apparent. The house was constructed with the same standards of those used for commercial purposes. This fact is not surprising since my father specialized in the design and construction of such buildings and felt that the same principles, when integrated into a residence, provided the foundation for a superior product. The interior doors extend from floor to ceiling and are hung with commercial hardware on black custom jambs. Light switches are flush mounted fixtures which are not only easier to use and maintain but add to the contemporary design. Interior walls are a mix of natural siding and painted white surfaces and the floors are partially carpeted and tiled using heavy duty ceramic which is heated to keep the floor warm in the winter.²²

The low-slung Modernist house was intended to fit into its natural surroundings, the landscape of which was designed by John C. Schmidtke himself. Over the years he designed and installed extensive plantings on the acreage surrounding the house, including indigenous trees and grassy lawns on the three acres, achieving a carefully integrated composition of building and landscape. Floor-to-ceiling windows and sliding glass doors allowed for expansive views of the surrounding landscape. The wall of the living/dining room was entirely glass, allowing for sweeping views of an old growth forest in the distance. The forested area on the periphery of the Schmidtke property helped to buffer the house from I-90 to the south, which in 1967 consisted of a two-lane highway.

²² Ibid.

John E. Schmidtke also later commented on the setting of the house:

Last but not least, my father's design style didn't end with the house itself but extended into the various courtyards which surround the house. These courtyards serve as a buffer between the land and the house itself. Over time, much of the landscaping has been done on the six acre parcel the house sits on, most of which has occurred on the three acres which are closest to the house. The outer three acres have been left in their natural state. This blending of landscaping techniques which consists of highly controlled, manicured and predictable surroundings near the house, and a completely wild natural environment in the background helps to enrich the view from any vantage point.²³

Sheri J. Schmidtke provided some insight into her experience of growing up in the house:

The environment inside was very orderly. The beds could really only be one size and be put in one place in the bedrooms, the walls that weren't brick or paneling had to stay white. Picture frames were all hand-made in walnut or cherry wood by my father, and anything put on the walls had to be approved by him. There wasn't much on the white walls, since the glass windows provided a type of changing painting every day. But for the paneling or brick he usually favored a handmade piece of artwork from one of his children or antique clocks to commercial art. Many of the tables and cabinets he made himself when he couldn't find a piece to fit a certain way.

As time passed and things like fixtures wore out, they weren't ever replaced with second rate, but the best available. We were always included in the fix-it projects that Dad took on so we learned how things were built and put together. And when the house needed bigger repairs, only certain highly rated contractors were approved by our dad to work on it. He kept a number of books for us all to refer to on the library shelves that detailed all the work done on the house; 3-ring binders with labels like "Appliances," "Electronics," and "Heating and Plumbing." It's a virtual instruction manual for us on how to run the machine we call "home."

I think this is what I came away with from growing up there: It wasn't always cozy, the furniture had to be a certain style, the maintenance done a certain way, but we learned to pay attention to the level of integrity in the house. From the building materials to the furniture, from the use of natural bricks and wood to the expanses of glass—everything was done with thought, reason, aesthetics and design in mind.²⁴

The Schmidtke House was listed on the Kane County Register of Historic Places in 1996, the year of John Schmidtke's death, in recognition of its

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Sheri Schmidtke quoted in: Sheri Schmidtke, "The John Schmidtke Residence," Kane County Historic Landmark Nomination Form, July 17, 1996.

architectural significance. The nomination was prepared by Schmidtke's daughter, Sheri, and included narratives by various family members on the design and construction of the house as well as thoughts on what it was like to live in the residence, which are quoted in this essay.

As part of the nomination, Georgianna Schmidtke discussed her perspective of what made the house so special:

The flow of out-of-doors with the indoors, made possible and enhanced by the extensive use of sliding glass doors and skylights; the use of natural materials—wood siding, wood decking, common brick, quarry tile floors; structural columns exposed as parts of the décor; one carpet color and style throughout; all painted surfaces matte white; landscaping using indigenous trees and plants in a planned yet random manner around the site. All of these things make for a home that is part of the natural setting as opposed to a structure set on a piece of land. It is a well planned home, and the interior spaces related well to each other and to their designated functions. The open plan makes less square footage seem very spacious. It adapts well to the needs and interests that evolve as a family grows and changes, as opposed to being imposed on the natural setting, it blends with and compliments the land on which it is placed, in any weather, time of day, season of the year. It is a good place to live.²⁵

The environs of the Schmidtke house underwent transformative changes in the half-century following its completion. The Elgin Oaks Industrial Park was established on a four-acre site at the northwest corner of the I-90/IL Route 31 interchange by 1981, as evidenced by classified advertisements from that year.²⁶ Aerial photographs document the expansion of this industrial park westward toward the Tollgate Road subdivision over the ensuing decades. Industrial development also occurred just south of the Tollgate Road subdivision, across the I-90 tollway, which was itself expanded with additional lanes over the years.²⁷

The Schmidtke family sold their 5.83-acre property at 35W655 Tollgate Road to Andrea Macias and Jacob Dohm in 2018, who used the house as a wedding venue. Macias and Dohm sold the property to High Street Logistics, an industrial developer, in December 2021. High Street Logistics also purchased the five other properties in the Tollgate Road residential cul-de-sac in 2021, which included an additional house situated near the southeast corner of the 32-acre site that was built in the 1980s. The developer intended to replace all six houses on the site with two warehouse buildings totaling more than 435,000 square feet. This unincorporated area of Kane County was annexed to

²⁵ Georgianna Schmidtke quoted in: Sheri Schmidtke, "The John Schmidtke Residence," Kane County Historic Landmark Nomination Form, July 17, 1996.

²⁶ "Elgin Oaks Industrial Park," *Chicago Tribune* (July 17, 1981).

²⁷ Historicaerials.com.

Elgin by the end of 2021, which caused the Schmidtke House to lose its Kane County landmark protection.²⁸

In recognition of the Schmidtke House’s architectural significance and its eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, High Street Logistics announced in November 2021 that it was willing to give the house for free to a party willing to relocate it by April 1, 2022. The developer posted the offer on the popular “Cheap Old Houses” Instagram page, which generated attention, including an article in the *New York Times*. Moving the house posed challenges, however, and no one came forward by the deadline with a viable plan to do so.²⁹ Many interior elements in the vacant Schmidtke House were subsequently removed, such as all interior wood doors and the balustrades of the stairway leading to the partial basement, which filled with about a foot of water. The house was littered with debris and its landscape was overgrown by September 2022 when the photographs taken for this HIBS report were taken.

3. Modernist Ranch Houses and the Schmidtke House

The John Schmidtke House is an example of a Ranch house featuring a Modernist aesthetic, based on precedents that include the European “International Style” of the 1920s and Frank Lloyd Wright’s “Usonian” houses of the 1930s.

The Ranch house is a single-family house type associated with American suburbia in the post-World War II era, a period characterized by the subdivision of vast areas of land for new residential subdivisions. It was a form favored by developers, as such houses were modest in scale and could be built with prefabricated wall units and other mass-produced elements. Ranch houses offered modern amenities and designs, such as “open concept” plans and electric kitchens and were offered at prices affordable to the middle-class budget. From 1945 to 1970, the one-story ranch house and the informal way of living it sought to project gained national appeal.

Although there were a variety of plan types and regional styles, most Ranch houses built from the 1950s through the 1970s share basic similarities. They are one-story in height and designed with footprints that are rectangular, U-shaped, or L-shaped. They have low-pitched rooflines that are variously hipped, cross-gabled, or side-gabled. Windows are typically single-paned, and

²⁸ Joey Hadden and A.J. LaTrace, “This landmark mid-century modern house in the Chicago suburbs is free to anyone who can move it, but experts say relocating it may be a challenge,” in: <https://www.insider.com/illinois-elgin-midcentury-modern-for-free-house-home-schmidtke-2022-2> (Accessed November 6, 2022.)

²⁹ Matt Shaw, “A No-Cost Modernist Home, but No Takers Yet. It Needs Moving,” *New York Times*, February 23, 2022.

often arranged in pairs or in horizontal strips; a large, single-pane “picture” window illuminating the living room is a common design element. Ranch houses often have an attached garage or carport. Many Ranch houses lack ornament while others feature modest traditional features loosely based on historical styles. For example, Colonial Revival style ranch houses may include gabled dormers, bay windows, and/or double-hung, multi-paned windows, often with decorative shutters. Open floor plans characterize the public spaces of ranch houses, combining the kitchen, living room, and/or dining room into a single space.³⁰

Although most Ranch houses nationwide were built by developers, others, like the Schmidke House, were architect designed and exhibited a Modernist aesthetic, based on International style and Usonian house precedents. The term “International Style” entered the lexicon in 1932 with an exhibit organized at the Museum of Modern Art in New York by two American architectural historians, Henry Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson. The exhibit and its accompanying catalogue, *The International Style: Architecture Since 1922*, documented the recent work of European architects that included Le Corbusier in France, Walter Gropius and Mies van der Rohe in Germany, and JJP Oud in Holland. These well-known architects, and others, advocated for the creation of well-designed, mass-producible housing that was efficient, affordable, and featured new technologies and materials.

Such housing was on display at the Housing Estate (Weissenhof Siedlung) Exhibition held in Stuttgart, Germany, in 1927. This group of model apartment buildings, designed by a range of European architects, featured a minimalist aesthetic and similar design elements that were later categorized as the “International Style” by Hitchcock and Johnson. They included flat roofs, elimination of ornament and any references to the past, windows arranged in continuous horizontal bands of glass, rectilinear footprints, and smooth wall surfaces faced with stucco.³¹

Frank Lloyd Wright’s Jacobs House in Madison, Wisconsin, was completed in 1937 as the first of his many “Usonian” homes, a type that he intended as a low-cost option for middle class clients. Usonian homes are one-story in height and characterized by native materials (wood siding, brick and/or stone), flat roofs with large, cantilevered overhangs for passive solar heating and natural cooling, natural lighting with clerestory windows, radiant-floor heating, and carports adjacent to the front entrance. They often feature L-

³⁰ Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994) 477-481.

³¹ For contemporary examples of the International Style, see: Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994).

shaped footprints with an open plan living/dining room and a separate bedroom wing. Such elements are all featured in the Jacobs House, which also includes continuous floor-to-ceiling glass panels and sliding glass doors on its rear elevations that opened onto terraces.³²

Modernist Ranch houses typically have rectilinear or L-shaped footprints with attached garages and are distinguished by flat or shed roofs. Ornament is omitted, as are references to the past, including traditional roof (gable and hip) and window (double-hung) types. Some of the flat-roofed houses of this era can be considered derivations of the earlier International Style and may include horizontal bands of single-pane windows and smooth wall planes. Other flat-roofed Modernist houses feature Usonian elements, such as the use of natural materials, clerestory windows and/or groups of floor-to-ceiling glass panes, and cantilevered overhangs. An abundance of such houses can be found in Olympia Fields, one of Chicago's south suburbs.

The John Schmidke House is a Modernist version of a Ranch house that exhibits influences of Wright's Usonian houses. Built in 1967 on a nearly six-acre parcel, this 2,200 square foot Modernist jewel has an asymmetrical L-shaped footprint and a flat slab roof. Its overhanging boxed eaves require no gutters or downspouts. The exterior of the wood-frame residence is sheathed with cedar boards applied vertically, as well as common brick, a material also used for retaining walls that enclose decks and patios.

The use of common brick and cedar siding extends to the interior of the house, which has an open-plan living/dining room featuring a wall of floor-to-ceiling glass panels that allowed the family to enjoy the wooded surroundings. Similar glass panels are used in the home's three bedrooms—two of which are in a separate wing—and in the family room. The glazed openings illuminate the house with sunlight, while the overhanging eaves keep out the strong summer rays. A series of six small dome skylights of square and rectangular shape provide natural illumination to interior spaces, such as the galley kitchen, closets, and bathrooms.

Sliding glass doors in various spaces open onto a courtyard (front entrance), patios (master bedroom and family room), and a wood deck (living/dining room). Concrete floors are covered with wall-to-wall carpeting or red quarry tile. A fireplace is set into the family room's brick wall that separates this space from the garage/workshop wing, which is nearly windowless. The main hallway featured a built-in wood sideboard on one end, and a built-in cabinet

³² William Allin Storrer, *The Frank Lloyd Wright Companion* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993) 241-245.

and shelving on the other end, adjacent to the kitchen, likely used as a bar. The basement stairway featured squared metal balusters that extended from the risers to the ceiling, an unusual feature seen on other Modernist houses, such as Bertrand Goldberg's Gottschalk and Heimbach House in Blue Island, Illinois (1939).

The Kane County Landmark nomination report on the John Schmidtke House, authored by the architect's daughter, Sheri, provided some insight into his design inspirations:

The home Mr. Schmidtke designed for himself reflected some of the influences he had throughout his career. He felt the house had design elements similar to those of Mies van der Rohe, and materials that reflected a natural aesthetic, much like Frank Lloyd Wright.³³

Ranch houses exhibiting Modernist design features are unusual in the Elgin area. Exceptions include two houses designed by John Schmidtke—the Dr. H.T. Perry House at 413 N. Alfred Drive and the Dr. Marvin Dickey House at 1206 Nottingham Lane—both of which were completed by 1972. The flat-roofed, one-story Dickey House is sheathed in wood planks painted white and applied vertically (front elevation) and common brick (side elevations). Its front elevation features floor-to-ceiling glass panels and a flat-roofed portico like the one Schmidtke designed for the 1968 Gail Borden Library in Elgin (razed). The one-story, flat-roofed Perry House has overhanging boxed eaves, is sheathed in brick, and has an L-shaped footprint with attached garage. The street elevation is provided with clerestory windows for privacy while the entrance is situated on the side elevation. (See Figures 48 and 49.)

Other architect-designed Modernist Ranch houses in the Elgin area include the flat-roofed, one-story house at 1801 Hillcrest Drive in Sleepy Hollow, which has an L-shaped footprint, overhanging eaves with wood soffits and can lights, and floor-to-ceiling windows. A combination of stone veneer and wood planks applied vertically is used on both the exterior and the interior of the house. Directly across the street at 1802 Hillcrest Drive is a one-story house with a raised basement level that has an asymmetrical footprint, is sheathed with buff-colored brick walls, is illuminated by floor-to-ceiling glass, and features a flat roof with overhanging eaves detailed with exposed rafter tails.³⁴

³³ Sheri Schmidtke, "The John Schmidtke Residence," Kane County Historic Landmark Nomination Form, July 17, 1996.

³⁴ The list of Elgin-area Modernist houses identified in this essay was obtained from Christen Sundquist, Preservation Planner for the City of Elgin. Photographs of the houses 1801 and 1802 Hillcrest Drive can be found on the following websites: <https://www.redfin.com/IL/Sleepy-Hollow/1801-Hillcrest-Dr-60118/home/14156812>; https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/1802-Hillcrest-Dr-Dundee-IL-60118/4618072_zpid/.

The modest, flat-roofed, L-shaped house at 831 Goethe Street is sheathed with wood boards applied vertically. The house at 932 Meadow Lane is sheathed in wood boards applied vertically, has a low-pitched gable roof, and features floor-to-ceiling plate glass windows and doors. The split-level house at 1144 Morningside Drive has wings covered with butterfly and shed roofs, is sheathed in both brick and vertical planks applied vertically, and its fenestration consists of both clerestory and floor-to-ceiling glass panes.³⁵

In general, mid-twentieth century Modernism is not easily categorized as a “style,” as houses identified as such can be quite different in terms of appearance and influences, as noted by historian Pauline Saliga in her Forward to the book, *Modern in the Middle: Chicago Houses 1929-1975* (The Monticelli Press, 2020):

...important new research and monographs of the period defined different types of modernism in Chicago—Beaux-Arts modernism, Miesian structuralism, Wrightian organicism, Walter Netsch’s Field Theory of rotated squares, and Bertrand Goldberg’s innovative concrete mixed-use projects.³⁶

The Modernist label can be applied to mid-twentieth century houses of widely varying forms and heights. The *Modern in the Middle* book curates a selection of the most exemplary Modernist houses in the Chicago metropolitan area, only some of which are in the Ranch form. Together, they comprise an eclectic mix of design choices and inspirations. For example, the Doris Curry and Jacques Brownson House in Geneva (Jacques Brownson, 1952) has a steel structural frame and glass walls; the Alice Lieberman and J. Marion Gutnayer House in Wilmette (Josef Marion Gutnayer, 1957) is a concrete residence sheathed in stone and raised on pilotis that pays homage to Le Corbusier’s Villa Savoye in Poissy, France; and the Iris Smith and Paul Goldstein House in Harvard (Stanley Tigerman, 1975) has rounded corners and a rear façade featuring red, yellow, blue, and green rectangular panels interspersed with clear glass within a black grid.³⁷ Such noteworthy houses, and more modest versions tucked into suburban enclaves, display the eclectic nature of the “Modernist” label.

³⁵ Photographs of the houses at 831 Goethe Street, 932 Meadow Lane, and 1144 Morningside Drive can be found on the following websites: https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/831-Goethe-St-Elgin-IL-60123/4628337_zpid/; https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/932-Meadow-Ln-Elgin-IL-60123/4624584_zpid/; <https://www.redfin.com/IL/Elgin/1144-Morningside-Dr-60123/home/17004224>.

³⁶ Susan Benjamin and Michelangelo Sabatino. *Modern in the Middle: Chicago Houses 1929-1975* (The Monacelli Press, 2020) 6.

³⁷ *Ibid*: 176-179, 212-215, 262-265.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

This one-story, wood-frame, single-family house is situated on a concrete slab with a partial basement. It has an irregular L-shaped footprint with a main block and bedroom wing sited on a northeast-southwest axis, and a family room/two-car garage/workshop wing sited on a northwest-southeast axis. Walls are variously sheathed in common brick laid in a running bond, red cedar board siding applied vertically and accented by wooden posts, and floor-to-ceiling glass panels. Sliding glass doors are situated along various elevations of the house, which open onto wooden decks and patios. The flat roof of the house is punctuated with six small dome skylights and has overhanging, boxed eaves on some elevations. The fascia is covered with black anodized aluminum panel boards and placed flush with the wall planes on some elevations.

The floor plan of the house incorporates approximately 2,200 square feet of space and features an open plan living/dining room. Ceilings are finished with drywall and walls are variously finished with drywall, sheetrock, exposed brick, cedar siding applied vertically, ceramic tiles (kitchen, bathrooms, laundry room), and concrete block (workroom). Flooring includes wall-to-wall carpeting, red quarry tile, and exposed concrete.

B. Description of Exterior

1. Foundation

The house has a poured concrete foundation.

2. Walls

Walls are variously sheathed in common brick laid in a running bond, red cedar board siding applied vertically and accented by wooden posts, and floor-to-ceiling glass panels. Brick walls extend several feet beyond the house on various elevations. The brick wall on the easternmost elevation extends about sixteen feet southward, creating a courtyard-like area adjacent to the main entrance.

3. Structural system

Wood frame construction

4. Openings

a. Doorways and doors

Sliding glass doors are situated along various elevations of the house, which open onto wooden decks and patios. The north wall of the living

room/dining room is entirely comprised of glass panels/doors. The northeast-facing garage has an overhead metal door.

b. Windows

Fenestration is comprised of floor-to-ceiling glass fixed glass panels.

5. Roof

a. Shape, covering

The building has a flat concrete slab roof punctuated with six small dome skylights of square or rectangular shape. The roof has overhanging, boxed eaves. The soffits on some elevations have can lights. The fascia is covered with black anodized aluminum panel boards and on some elevations, it is placed flush with the wall planes.

C. Description of Interior

1. Floor plans

The floor plan of the house incorporates approximately 2,200 square feet of space and features three distinct wings: a main block, a bedroom wing, and a garage/workshop wing linked to the main block by a family room “hyphen.” The main block and bedroom are on the same southwest/northeast axis and are internally connected by a continuous hallway. The family room/garage/workshop are on a northwest/southeast axis.

The main block features an open dining room/living room, stairway to basement, galley kitchen, three closets, one full bathroom, laundry room, and three hallways on its east side, and a master bedroom suite containing a bedroom, walk-in closet, and full bathroom on its west side. The adjacent bedroom wing has two bedrooms, each with a closet, and a hallway closet.

2. Stairways

The house has a single stairway that descends to the basement and is covered with wall-to-wall carpet.

3. Flooring

Flooring includes wall-to-wall carpeting (living/dining room, bedrooms, closets), red quarry tile (kitchen, family room, laundry room, bathrooms), and exposed concrete (garage and workshop).

4. Wall and ceiling finish

Ceilings are finished with drywall and walls are variously finished with drywall, sheetrock, exposed brick, cedar siding applied vertically, ceramic

tiles (kitchen, bathrooms, laundry room), and concrete block (workroom). A wood-burning fireplace is set within the brick wall of the family room.

5. Openings

a. Doorways and doors

All interior doors have been removed from the house.

6. Mechanical equipment

a. Heating

A basement furnace provided gas-forced heat to the house through vents in the flooring.

b. Lighting

The ceilings of some spaces in the house have can lights.

c. Plumbing

The kitchen and laundry room each have a sink. The master bedroom suite has a sink in the dressing room area, a toilet and bathtub in the master bathroom, and an adjacent shower. The main hallway bathroom has a sink and a bathtub.

D. Site

1. General setting and orientation

The Schmidtke House is located on a nearly six-acre parcel at 35W655 Tollgate Road, near the northwest periphery of Elgin. It has an irregular L-shaped footprint with a main block and bedroom wing sited on a northeast-southwest axis, and a family room/two-car garage/workshop wing sited on a northwest-southeast axis. The house is reached via a winding concrete drive from a cul-de-sac that serves as the western terminus of Tollgate Road, which extends about a mile eastward to IL Route 31. The three acres closest to the house are landscaped with grass and some indigenous trees. The outer three areas of the parcel are forested.

The Schmidtke House is one of six houses accessed from the western terminus of Tollgate Road. These houses are located about a mile to the west of the I-90/IL Route 31 interchange. Together they are on 32 acres of land bounded by Interstate 90 to the south, wooded acreage to the north and west, and the Elgin Oaks Industrial Park to the east. I-90 through this area is comprised of six lanes, two shoulders, and a median.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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2. Secondary and published sources

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B. Sketch Plans

A sketch floor plan for this house is attached to this report. (See Figure 3.)

- C. Supplemental Material
A location map, site plan, current exterior and interior photographs of the house, and drawings/photographs of representative buildings designed by architect John Schmidtke are attached to the end of this report.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

- A. Research Strategy
The research strategy was to review a variety of primary and secondary sources, including books, newspaper articles, and historic photographs, to develop a thorough history of the John Schmidtke House, placing it within the context of American modern residential architecture. Site visits to the house were planned to undertake photographic documentation for both the HIBS photographic submittal and use in developing a physical description of the building.
- B. Actual Research Process
Research was undertaken at both the Elgin History Museum and the Gail Borden Library in Elgin in an attempt to find information on architect John Schmidtke, the house that he designed for his family, and on other Modernist houses in the Elgin area. The Elgin History Museum had some news clippings on Schmidke and citations to contemporary articles in the Courier-News, a local newspaper, which were reviewed on microfilm at the Gail Borden Library. The Newspapers.com database was another useful source for information on Schmidtke's career, as was an entry in the *American Architects Directory* (1970). The Ancestry.com database provided some additional information on Schmidtke and his family.

Most useful to this HIBS report was the 1996 Kane County landmark nomination form for the John Schmidtke House, which was authored by Schmidtke's daughter, Sheri, and included recollections by herself, her brother, John E., and her mother, Georgianna, about the house. High Street Logistics provided an original floor plan and elevation drawings of the house, which are included in this report. The nomination provided a list of some of Schmidtke's commissions in the Elgin area, some of which were reviewed and photographed. Dr. Guarino also contacted Christen Sundquist, preservation planner for the City of Elgin, regarding her knowledge of other Modernist houses in the area that are comparable to the Schmidtke House. Ms. Sundquist provided a list of several houses, which were reviewed as part of this nomination. A recent book by Susan Benjamin and Michelangelo Sabatino titled, *Modern in the Middle: Chicago Houses 1929-1975* (The Monacelli Press, 2020) provided good context for Modernist residential design in the Chicago metropolitan area.

- C. Archives and Repositories Used
Gail Borden Library in Elgin, Illinois
Elgin History Museum in Elgin, Illinois
- D. Project Team
1. Supervision
All aspects of this project were supervised and assembled by Jean L. Guarino, Ph.D., Principal of Guarino Historic Resources Documentation, Oak Park, Illinois. Dr. Guarino also served as project historian for this report and undertook digital field photography.
 2. Sketch Plans
Lucas Howser developed the sketch floor plan for this house using CAD. He also produced the site plan.
 3. HIBS photographer
All black and white HIBS photography was undertaken by Leslie Schwartz, Leslie Schwartz Photography, Chicago.

This HIBS documentation project was undertaken to mitigate the adverse effects of a proposed project by the High Street Logistics Properties to raze this building and redevelop its site. The terms of the mitigation were agreed upon and executed to ensure compliance with the Illinois State Agency Historic Resources Preservation Act (20 ILCS 3420).

INDEX TO BLACK AND WHITE PHOTOGRAPHS

Leslie Schwartz, photographer, September 2022

- K-2022-1.1 Exterior view, looking northwest.
- K-2022-1.2 Exterior view, looking northwest toward main entrance with garage on the left.
- K-2022-1.3 Exterior view, looking northwest with detail of entrance
- K-2022-1.4 Exterior view, looking southwest.
- K-2022-1.5 Exterior view, looking southeast toward sliding glass doors of living room/dining room.
- K-2022-1.6 Exterior view, looking northeast.
- K-2022-1.7 Exterior view, looking north.
- K-2022-1.8 Living/dining room, looking toward main entrance and stairs to basement with galley kitchen on the right.
- K-2022-1.9 Living/dining room, showing floor-to-ceiling sliding glass doors and exposed brick wall.
- K-2022-1.10 Master bedroom with wall of cedar siding, looking outside through sliding glass doors to wood deck.
- K-2022-1.11 Galley kitchen with original wood cabinets and skylight.
- K-2022-1.12 Family room with quarry tile flooring, fireplace built into the exposed brick wall, and a wall sheathed in cedar siding.
- K-2022-1.13 Family room, looking toward galley kitchen and living/dining room.
- K-2022-1.14 Workshop adjacent to garage, showing exposed concrete block wall and floor-to-ceiling windows.



K-2022-1.1



K-2022-1.2



K-2022-1.3



K-2022-1.4



K-2022-1.5



K-2022-1.6



K-2022-1.7



K-2022-1.8



K-2022-1.9



K-2022-1.10



K-2022-1.11



K-2022-1.12



K-2022-1.13



K-2022-1.14



Figure 1: Map showing location of the Schmidtke House in outlined in red, adjacent to the I-90 expressway to the south and the Elgin Oaks Industrial Park to the east.

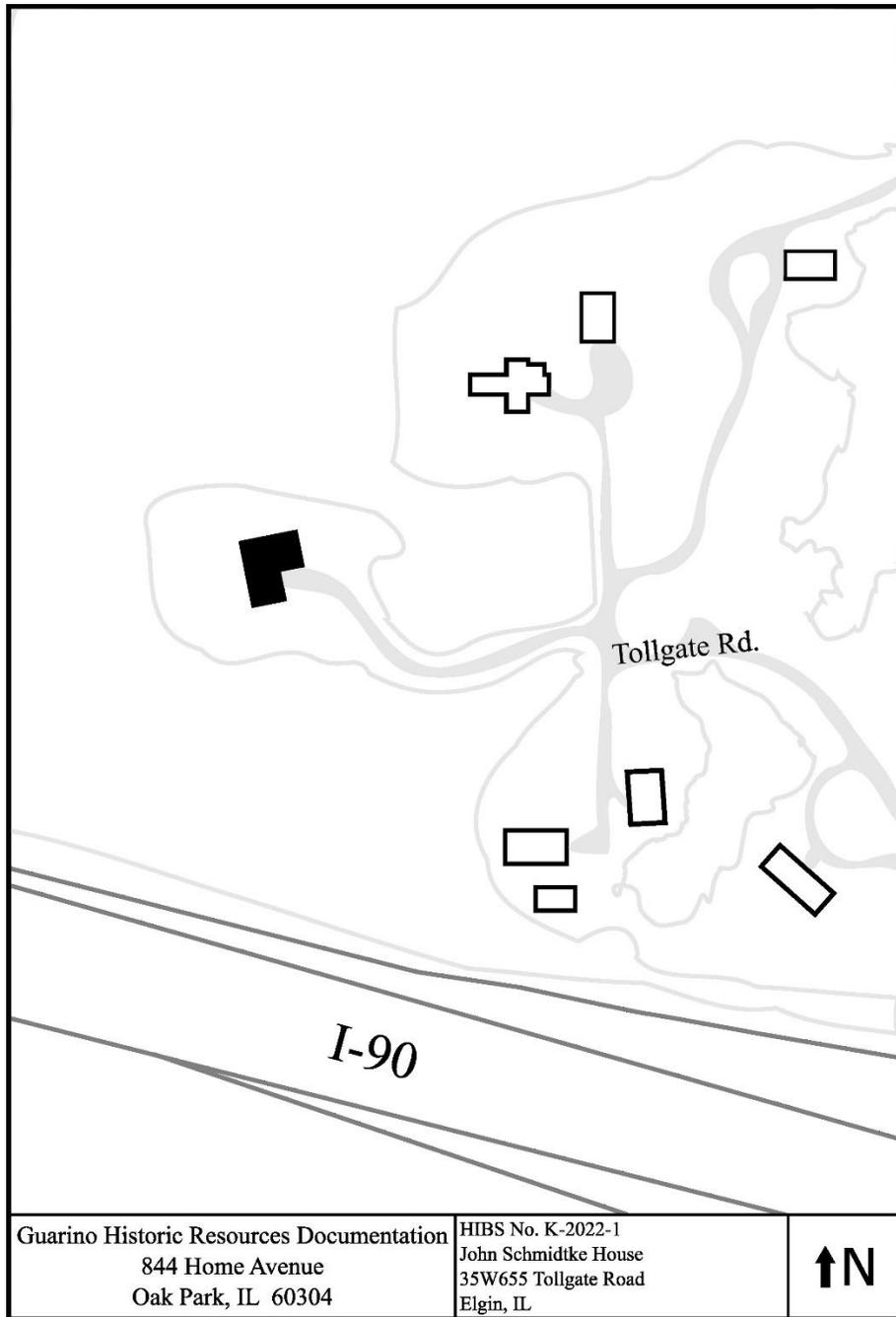


Figure 2: Site Plan for the Schmidtke House, shown in black, within its small subdivision off Tollgate Road. Drawn by Lucas Howser, November 2022.

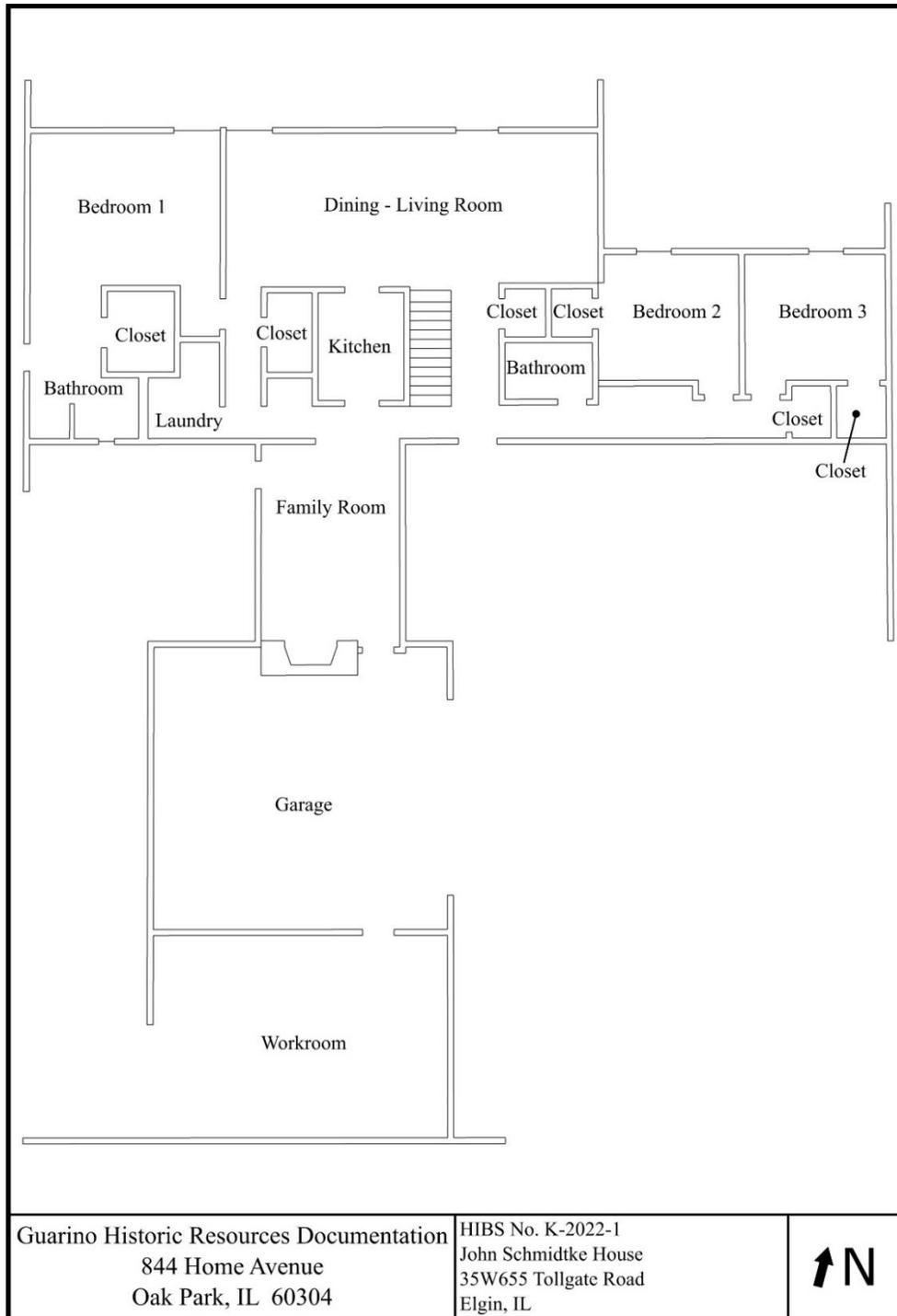


Figure 3: Floor Plan for the Schmidtke House. Drawn by Lucas Howser, November 2022.



Figure 4: View from driveway looking northwest.



Figure 5: Garage/workshop wing (left) and main entrance, looking northwest.



Figure 6: Detail of cedar siding, wood posts, projecting boxed eaves, and main entrance with sliding glass doors approached by wood deck.



Figure 7: View northwest showing garage/workshop wing on the left.



Figure 8: View north showing garage/workshop wing on right and main house block on the left.



Figure 9: View northeast showing the main house block (left), family room (middle), and garage/workshop wing (right).



Figure 10: Detail of sliding glass door and fixed window illuminating John Schmidtke's former workshop.



Figure 11: View northeast showing master bedroom on the left and sliding glass doors to family room on the right.



Figure 12: View southeast toward main block with living/dining room on the left.



Figure 13: View northeast toward living/dining room wall with continuous sliding glass doors and fixed glass panels.



Figure 14: Detailing of living/dining room wall with continuous sliding glass doors and fixed glass panels, cedar siding and wood posts, and wood decking.



Figure 15: View southwest toward bedroom wing (left) and projecting dining/living room (right).



Figure 16: Detail of bedroom wing's north wall, showing wood siding, wood posts, and boxed, overhanging eaves.



Figure 17: View southwest showing brick wall of bedroom wing (right) and garage/workshop wing (left).



Figure 18: Gable-roof wood-frame shed near west periphery of the property.



Figure 19: View from living/dining room toward main entrance, stairs to basement, and galley kitchen.



Figure 20: Living/dining room wall with sliding glass doors and fixed glass panels.



Figure 21: Living/dining room with exposed brick interior wall, view northeast.



Figure 22: Living/dining room, looking east toward closet and kitchen.



Figure 23: View from living/dining room toward kitchen and hallway (right) to master bedroom.



Figure 24: Bedroom No. 1 (master bedroom), view north.



Figure 25: Bedroom No. 1 (master bedroom), looking toward closet and bathroom.



Figure 26: View toward hallway niche with built-in hall cabinet (left) and kitchen.



Figure 27: Kitchen with quarry tile flooring and original wood cabinets, view toward living/dining room.



Figure 28: Kitchen showing skylight, view toward family room.



Figure 29: Bathroom adjacent to bedroom 2, off the main hallway.



Figure 30: Bedroom wing hallway with closet at its terminus, showing doorways to bedrooms 2 and 3 on the left, view northeast.



Figure 31: Bedroom 2.



Figure 32: Bedroom 3.



Figure 33: Hallway looking southwest from bedroom wing toward laundry room at its terminus.



Figure 34: Family room with quarry tile flooring and fireplace set within brick wall, looking southeast toward doorway to garage.



Figure 35: Family room, looking northwest toward sliding glass doors to patio.



Figure 36: Garage, view southeast toward doorway to workroom.



Figure 37: Workroom with exposed concrete block wall, view southwest.



Figure 38: Workroom adjacent to garage, view northeast.

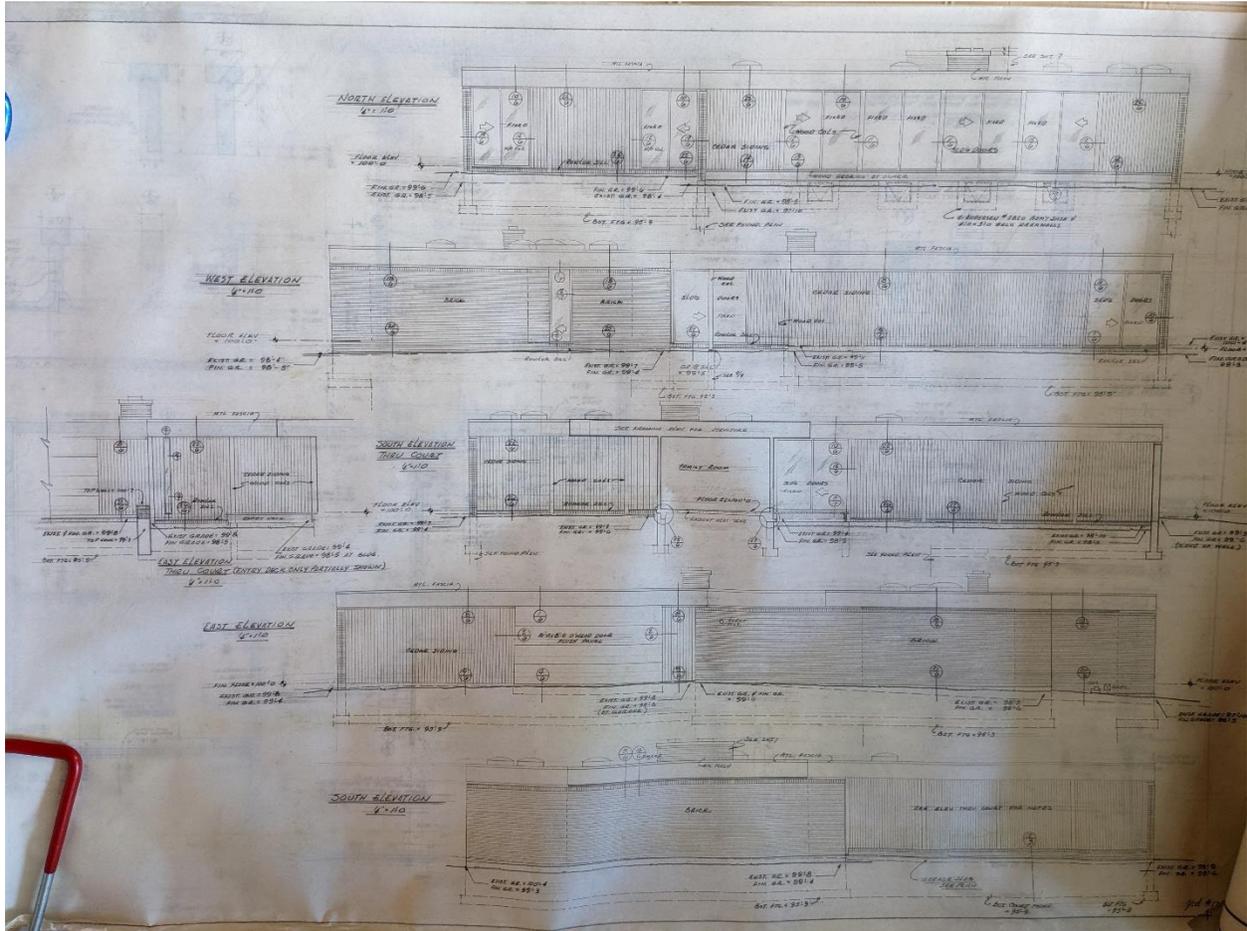


Figure 40: Schmidtke and Layer Architects, Mr. & Mrs. Schmidtke Jr. House, Elevations, May 10, 1967.

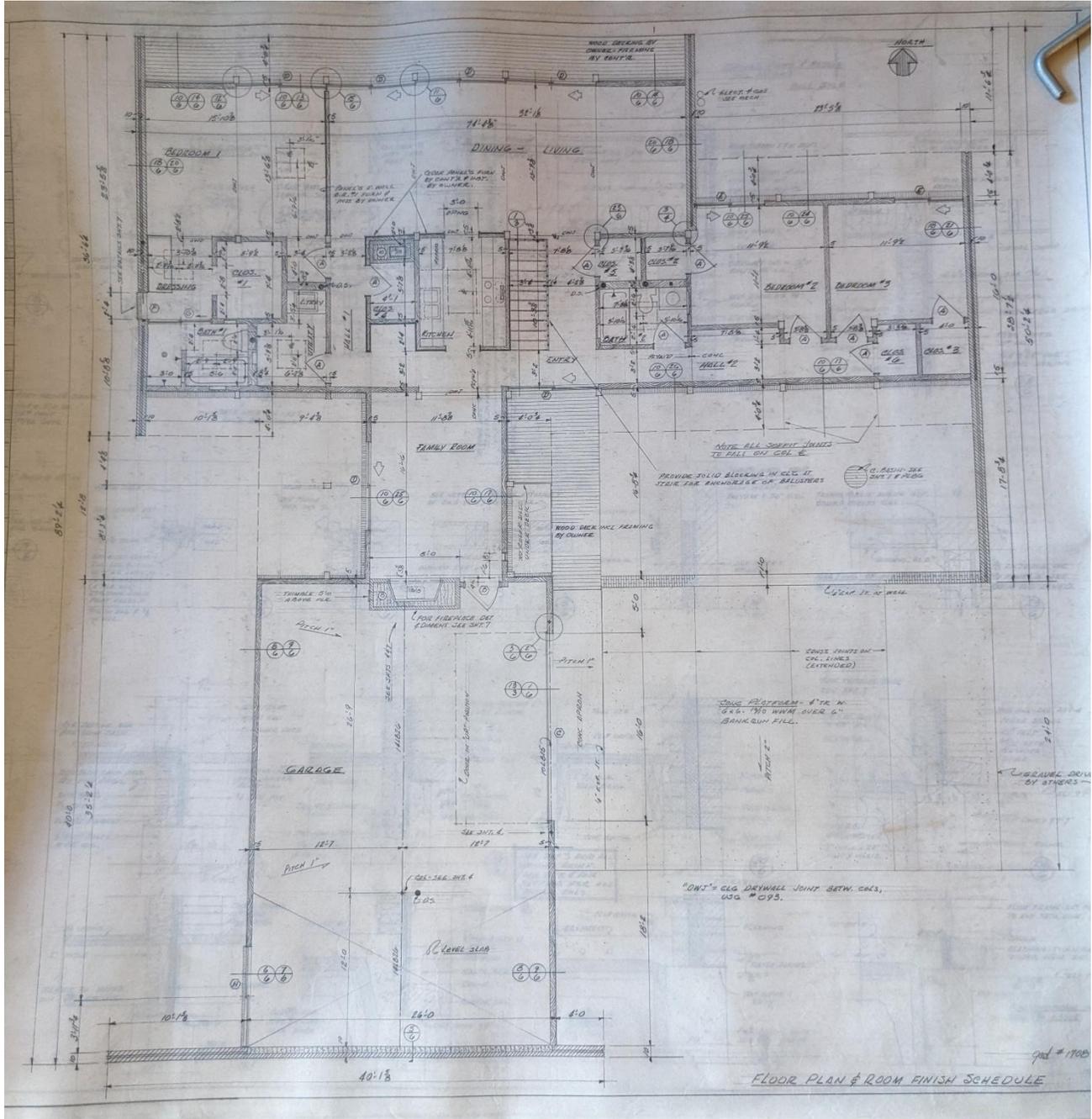


Figure 41: Schmidtke and Layer Architects, Mr. & Mrs. Schmidtke Jr. House, Floor Plan, May 10, 1967.



Figure 42: Schmidtke House, view southeast, taken in February 2021 before it fell into disrepair.
Courtesy High Street Logistics.



Figure 43: View toward main entrance of the Schmidtke House showing closet door (left) and basement stairway balustrades that have been removed. Photo taken by Julia Tavong in February 2022 when house was used as a wedding venue.



Figure 44: View of Schmidtke House living/dining room, taken in February 2022 when house was used as a wedding venue. Courtesy Julia Tavong.



Figure 45: View of the hallway niche with built-in cabinet adjacent to kitchen. Photo taken by Julia Tavong in February 2022 when house was used as a wedding venue.



Figure 46: View of hallway in bedroom wing with built-in cabinet and bulletin board above. Photo taken by Julia Tavong in February 2022 when house was used as a wedding venue.



Figure 47: Schmidtke House family room. Photo taken by Julia Tavong in February 2022 when house was used as a wedding venue.



Figure 48: Dr. H.T. Perry House at 413 N. Alfred Ave., designed by John Schmidtke, ca. 1965.



Figure 49: Dr. Marvin Dickey House at 1206 Nottingham Lane in Elgin, designed by John Schmidtke, ca. 1965.



Figures 51 (above) and 52 (below): Gail Borden Library at 200 N. Grove Ave., Elgin, designed by Schmidtke and Layer Architects, 1968 (razed).

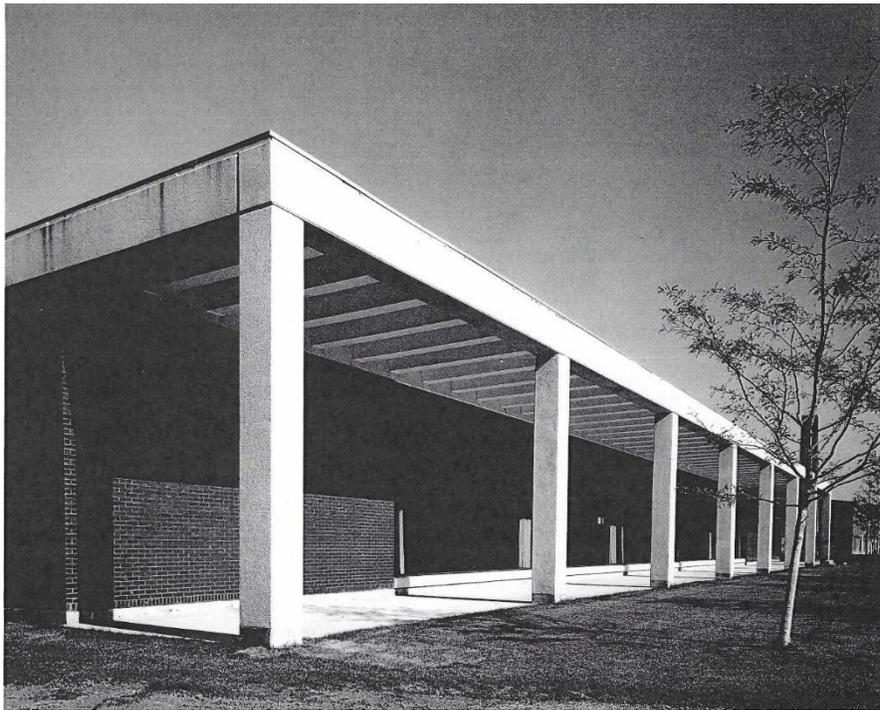




Figure 53: Girls' Dormitory (now North Hall) at the Elgin Academy, 350 Park Street, Elgin, designed by Schmidtke and Layer, 1962.



Figure 54: YMCA, Taylor Branch at 50 N. McLean Boulevard, Elgin, designed by John Schmidtke.