

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Schwert, Drs. George W. & Margaret, House

Other names/site number: Schwert House, FAL-666

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

2. Location

Street & number: 3316 Braemer Drive

City or town: Lexington State: KY County: Fayette

Not For Publication: NA Vicinity: NA

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X 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 X 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 x local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___ A ___ B x C ___ D

<p>_____ Signature of certifying official/Title: Craig Potts/SHPO Date _____</p> <p><u> </u> Kentucky Heritage Council/State Historic Preservation Office _____</p> <p>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>

<p>In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.</p> <p>_____ Signature of commenting official: Date _____</p> <p>_____ Title : State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>

Drs. George W. & Margaret Schwert House (Schwert House)

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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

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

Domestic/single dwelling

Current Functions

Domestic/single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

Modern Movement/California or Ranch Style

Materials:

Principal exterior materials of the property:

Wood/vertical wood paneling

Stone (vener)

Bitumen membrane (roof)

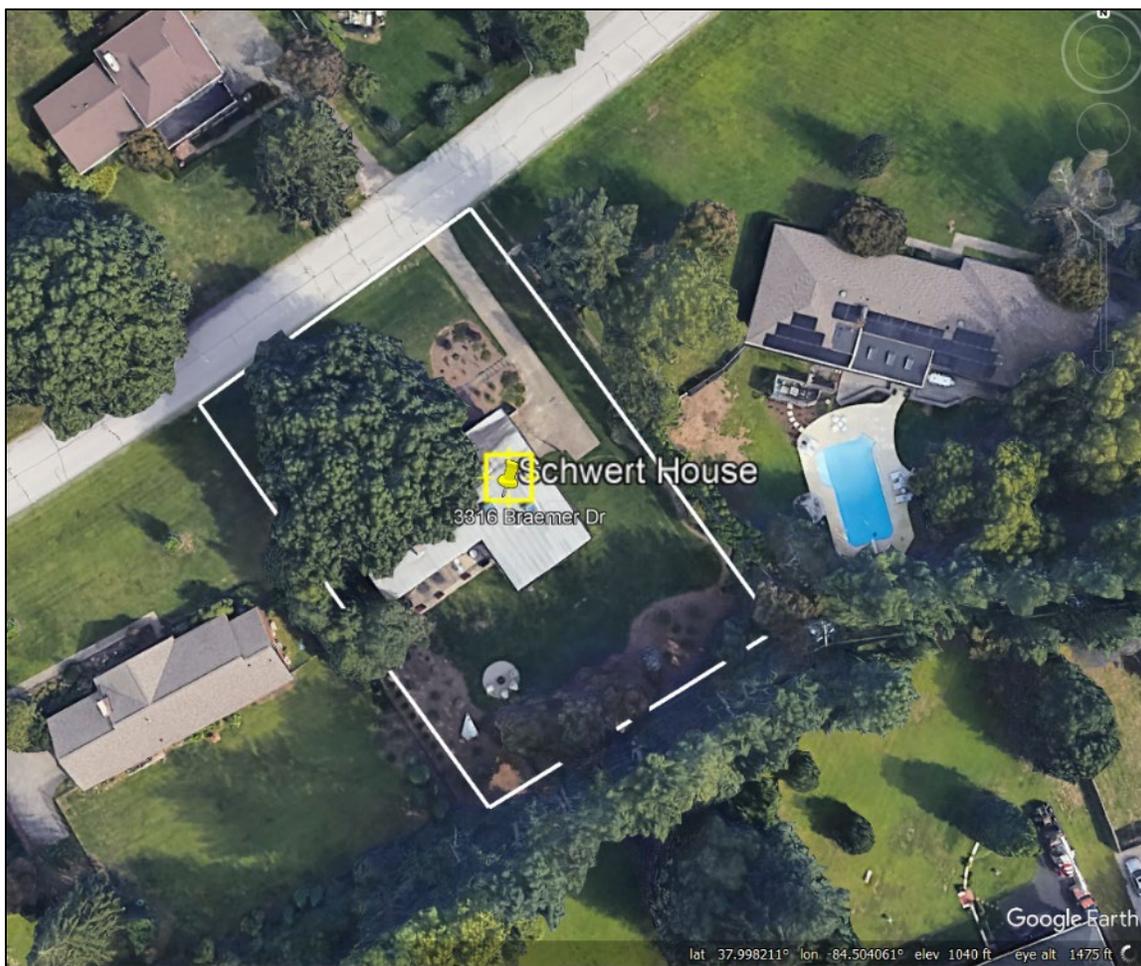
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Narrative Description

Summary Paragraph

The Schwert House is a single-story, Ranch type residence with a raised concrete partial basement foundation located at 3316 Braemer Driver in the Lansdowne Subdivision, approximately 3.5 miles due south of downtown Lexington, Kentucky. The approximately 3,050 square foot, rectangular building was constructed in 1960 for Drs. George and Margaret Schwert as a residence after Dr. George Schwert was appointed the founding biochemistry department chair at the then newly created University of Kentucky Medical Center. The Schwert House has undergone some alteration, beginning with the construction of a rear ell designed in a sympathetic manner by the original architect (ca. 1980), and modest interior renovations (2007 and 2018). It retains most of its original exterior and interior architectural features. The area proposed for listing is .67 acres and includes one contributing building.



Schwert House, Fayette County, KY: Latitude: 37.998211°, Longitude: -84.504061° (Google Earth 2023).

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Setting

The Schwert House is located in the Lansdowne subdivision of Lexington, Kentucky. Most of the residences in the surrounding neighborhood were all constructed in the early 1960s, and many have undergone some form of alteration since that time (new siding, roofs, windows/doors, and/or additions). The area on which the Lansdowne subdivision was created was originally farmland until the mid-1950s, when it was redeveloped for suburban residential use as part of Lexington's post-war expansion south of downtown along Bates Creek and Nicholasville Roads.

The Schwert House faces northwest, parallel to Braemer Drive, which extends generally northeast to southwest along the north (front) of the parcel. The property parcel sits on a terraced landform that generally falls away from the southwest to the northeast and from the rear to the street. It is surrounded on three sides by other residential properties, with mature trees and landscaping that generally shield the properties from each other. A straight concrete drive extends at a ninety-degree angle from Braemer Drive, along a portion of the eastern edge of the parcel, leading to the basement garage and a small parking area at the southeast corner of the residence. A set of concrete stairs with a wrought-iron railing lead from the driveway to a curvilinear concrete sidewalk, which leads to another set of curved, concrete steps with a wrought-iron railing a small concrete stoop at the front entrance. A large oak tree in the front yard shades the northwest corner of the house and much of the front lawn.



The Schwert House Property Map (PVA 2023).

Exterior

The Schwert House, as originally constructed, was two large rectangular volumes supported by a post-and-beam structural system, infilled with frame wall sections atop a concrete, walk-out partial basement foundation. The two volumes are separately covered by vertical, stained redwood board-and-batten wood panels and stacked, fieldstone veneer (Photograph 1, next page). The off-center front gable roof is covered by a bitumen roof system and is pierced by several skylights (east half) and an interior stone chimney (rear slope of the west half). The ends of the major roof beams project slightly below the fascia boards supporting, in some areas, four-foot-deep overhanging eaves. The area under the eave is covered by landscaping gravel maintained with metal lawn edging (Photograph 2, next page). The full width of the front gable is filled by a multi-section, triangular clerestory window consisting of large, polygonal, single-light casement sashes. The rear gable of the original section of the house has a similar, partial-width clerestory window.

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Photographs 1 & 2: Schwert House, main elevation (left), and overview of the stone exterior under the eave (right) (Unless otherwise noted, all photos by Patrick Thompson, 2023).

The front (northwest) elevation is defined by both foundation/basement and main floor levels, and by the two exterior wall sections, the latter separated by the off-center front entry, which is filled with a single-leaf wood door with a two-light transom and a large, single-light sidelight to the right (west) of the door that is approximately as large as the door itself. The section to the right (west) of the front entry is covered in randomly stacked, fieldstone block veneer, which continues along the basement foundation wall to the northeast corner of the house. The exposed, above-ground basement and foundation walls encompassing the rest of the house are covered in the same fieldstone veneer. Fieldstone-veneered wingwalls, approximately ten feet long, extend beyond the northwest and northeast front corners of the house, to shield the private spaces off the dining room (west) and basement-level garage (east) from the public right-of-way. The section of the main floor's front elevation to the left (east) of the front entry, as well as the exterior walls of the eastern section of the house, are covered by the vertical wood paneling. On the front elevation, this section projects approximately four feet proud of the basement foundation wall below.

The side (northeast) elevation of the original section of the house is divided into a walk-out basement at ground level and the main floor above, with the ca. 1980 rear ell addition (described below) extending beyond. The basement level features paired, overhead metal garage doors in the northeast corner, partially shielded from the street by the wingwall described above. Adjacent to the garage doors is a narrow, horizontal window filled with paired, single-light casement sashes. Above the basement-level garage doors, the main floor of the original section of the house features three windows; all are filled with ribbons (four) of single-light casement sashes (Photograph 3).

The ca. 1980 rear ell addition in the southeast corner of the house creates a partially enclosed terrace along the rear (southeast) elevation of the original section of the house. The concrete terrace is divided into upper and lower sections, stepping up to the southwest corner of the house. The exterior of the rear elevation of this original house is covered by the fieldstone veneer, and features three sets of large sliding-glass doors: two open from the living room onto the lower section of the terrace, while one near the southwest corner opens from the family room onto the

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upper section of the terrace. The clerestory window fills the rear gable above the sliding glass doors as on the front gable, terminating at the southwest elevation of the ca. 1980 rear ell addition (Photograph 4).



Photographs 3 & 4: Schwert House, 1980 addition, southeast corner (left) and rear patio (right).

The side (southwest) elevation of the original section of the house is similarly covered in the fieldstone veneer, and features a sliding glass door near the northwest corner, similar to those on the rear elevation. This door opens from the dining room onto a small side yard, which is shielded from the street by the projecting wingwall discussed above.

Ca. 1980 Rear Ell Addition

Beginning on the side (northeast) elevation, the rear ell addition has a basement foundation wall seamlessly covered in the same fieldstone veneer as the rest of the foundation, and features two windows, while the main floor above has one window. The windows are all filled with ribbons (four) of single-light casement sashes, similar to those described above. The main floor of the addition is covered on all three sides by the same vertical wood paneling as described above.

The rear (southeast) elevation of the addition projects approximately 4 feet beyond the foundation wall below, similar to the front elevation. This elevation features a large window filled with a ribbon (six) of tall, single-light casement sashes with polygonal transoms. The roofline of the addition follows that of the original section of the house, creating a shed-style roof over the ell addition. A short retaining wall covered with fieldstone veneer like the foundation, extends at a right angle from the southwest corner of the addition. The side (southwest) elevation of the addition, has two windows that overlook the rear terrace, both filled with vertically stacked, single-light casement sashes.

Interior – Public and Private Spaces

The interior of the Schwert House is distinctly divided between public and private sections contained within rectangular sections that form an L-shaped building: the public spaces (living, dining, and family rooms and kitchen) are contained within the rectangular section to the right

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(west) of the front entrance, covered by the fieldstone veneer exterior. The private spaces (bedrooms and bathrooms, including the ca. 1980 rear ell addition) are contained within the rectangular section to the left (east) of the front entrance, covered by the vertical wood paneling.

Public

The front entry hall is a small rectangular space open to the living room beyond. It has a gray tile floor and features a replacement pendant light fixture hanging from the ceiling. Beyond the entry hall, one could step into three different spaces. Turning left (east), one steps up through a door into the hallway leading into the private side of the house. Straight ahead (south), one steps down into the large, open living room space. Turning right (west), one continues on the same plane as the entry hall along an approximately three-foot-wide open “hall” that leads to the kitchen and dining/family room spaces. This open hall is divided from the living room space by a built-in, wood cabinet. Two square wood columns extend up from the cabinet to help support the beams above (Photograph 5).

The living room retains original wood floors and walls and ceilings covered in gypsum board, with wood and stone details, such as exposed roof beams, wood cabinetry, and the large, free-standing fieldstone fireplace with the short stone wall extending to the exterior wall, which serves to separate the living and family rooms. The paired sliding-glass doors which open onto the lower section of the rear terrace from the living room are surmounted by sections of the clerestory gable windows above. The room is lit by a combination of recessed non-historic can lights, track, and pendant fixtures (Photograph 6).



Photographs 5 & 6: Overviews of the Schwert House living room, facing west (left) and south (south).

Adjacent to the fireplace, a single step leads up to the dining and family room spaces from the living room. The dining and family rooms are open to each other and have the same general architectural details and materials found in the living room. The dining room has natural lighting from a section of the front gable clerestory window as well as the sliding glass door near the northwest corner (Photograph 7). The family room space, smaller and more intimate than the living room, features the other side of the double-sided fieldstone chimney. The sliding-glass door which opens onto the upper section of the rear terrace from the family room are surmounted

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by the clerestory gable window above. The rooms are lit by non-historic track and pendant light fixtures.

The kitchen is a rectangular space immediately west of the front entry, and originally featured full-height walls up to the ceiling, and had two doors opening into it: one from the entry hall, and another from the open hall leading to the dining/family room spaces. The U-shaped work space/cabinetry included the oven, stove, and sink near the west end, with the refrigerator and freezer on the north (exterior) wall, and a washer/dryer in a semi-enclosed alcove at the east end of the room. The room is lit by original pendant fixtures and non-historic can lights on the underside of the beam (Photograph 8).



Photographs 7 & 8: Overview of the Schwert House dining room (left) and kitchen (right).

Private

One accesses the private space with a step up through the door from the entry hall into an approximately four-foot-wide, L-shaped hallway that leads to the original four bedrooms and two bathrooms which retain many of their original features and details. Immediately adjacent to (east of) the entry hall are two, back-to-back bathrooms, which appear to retain their original bathtub or shower, vanities/sinks, and tile. The largest bathroom, likely intended as the main bathroom for the Schwert children and guests, has a bathtub, toilet, and a large vanity and sink (Photograph 9). It features a non-historic skylight and is lighted by non-historic pendant fixtures over the mirror. The smaller, en-suite bathroom attached to the original master bedroom (“Bedroom 1” in the original plans) contains a built-in shower stall, toilet, and a vanity and sink. It is lit by an original vanity mirror light. Bedroom 1 also features paired closets. This former master suite, in the northeast corner of the house, features clerestory gable windows, and the bedroom is lit by a non-historic central ceiling fan and lamps (Photograph 10). The window on the northeast wall overlooks the garage/parking area below. All the bedrooms feature similar details: replacement wood floors, gypsum board walls and ceilings, non-historic light fixtures, and original wood doors.

As the hallway turned at a right angle, the ceiling is pierced by a non-historic skylight. Two bedrooms approximately the same size (“Bedrooms 2 and 3” in the original plans) are on the east (left) side of the hallway. The windows on the northeast walls of both rooms overlook the

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garage/parking area below. Bedroom 4, the smallest bedroom, is on the west side of the hallway. It features an unusual stacked, vertical window in its southwest corner, overlooking the lower end of the patio at the back of the house. The rest of the private space includes a stair leading down to the garage and basement, and paired linen closets across from the main bathroom.



Photographs 9 & 10: Main bathroom (left), and Bedroom 1 (former master bedroom (right)).

Garage/Basement

The stairs from the hallway above lead down to the west end of the two-car garage (Photograph 11). An enclosed workshop room adjoining the garage space is located in the southeast corner of the basement, with an adjacent room (located approximately under the east end of the addition) that was intended for additional workshop and utility space. The current owners have converted some of this space to create a home gym and office (Photograph 12) and the rest is devoted to storage and utilities. The rest of the area under the main floor remains unexcavated crawl space.



Photographs 11 & 12: One bay of the two-car garage (left) and the basement gym/office.

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Ca. 1980 Rear Ell Addition

The ca. 1980 rear ell addition, identified in plans as a painting studio/hobby room, was constructed onto the southwest (rear) end of the house, requiring alterations to the interior hallway and Bedrooms 3 and 4. During this project, the original roof cladding was removed and replaced with a rubber roofing membrane, and the Schwerts installed two skylights: one in the main bathroom and another in the hallway outside the bathroom (Luhan 2023). The 22 x 28-foot or 784 square-foot addition required the removal of the back-to-back closets for Bedrooms 3 and 4 to provide access to the new space from the L-shaped interior hallway. The new addition included new closet spaces for both rooms, and required the window on the southwest wall of Bedroom 3 to be moved onto the northeast wall. To construct the closet for Bedroom 4, the window in that southwest wall had to be removed as well, and to provide for emergency egress and natural light, two casement windows were stacked vertically in the southwest corner of the room, overlooking the lower concrete terrace along the rear of the house.

The interior of the addition consisted mainly of a studio and a hobby room with similar finishes as the rest of the house: wood floors, gypsum-board covered walls and ceilings, but also included various storage closets, and even a third bathroom with a shower, which was also accessible from Bedroom 3. The new bathroom and the entrance area to the new studio/hobby room were lit by two skylights above. The addition's northeast wall features a window similar to that in Bedroom 3, while the southwest wall was dominated by a large window filled with ribbons of single-light sashes and transoms as described above. Another vertically stacked window on the southwest wall overlooks the lower terrace outside. Besides being practical, this detail was likely added to balance the similar window in Bedroom 4. The basement of the addition was a single unimproved room accessed from the original workshop space; it features two windows similar to other basement windows described above in the northeast wall. A stone veneer retaining wall projects straight from the southwest corner of the addition.

2007 Interior and Exterior Alterations

In 2007, the present owners (Professor Gregory Luhan, a member of the faculty of the University's College of Design at the time, and his wife, Ms. April Pottorff, FAIA or Luhan/Pottorff) undertook a series of renovations. In the interior on the public side of the house, Luhan/Pottorff removed the coat closet in the entry hall and covered the floor by same gray tile used in the renovated kitchen. The door between the entry hall and kitchen was enclosed to provide more cabinet space on the kitchen side. The kitchen, which up to this point retained its original 1960 configuration and cabinetry, was almost fully gutted. The original cabinets were salvaged and partially re-installed in a new basement office (in the former work room space), and a new configuration of kitchen cabinets, appliances, fixtures, and finishes were installed. The sections of the kitchen walls between the upper cabinets and the ceiling were removed to allow more light from the clerestory gable window into the living room, the doorway from the open hallway into the kitchen widened, and the wood paneling along the open hall was removed and salvaged (Photographs 13 & 14). The kitchen's west end wall, between it and the dining room, originally featured a pass-through window over a built-in dining room serving cabinet. This wall was almost completely removed to create a large open doorway into the dining room (Photographs 15 & 16). The built-in dining room serving cabinet was salvaged. On the private

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side of the house, the owners removed some of the full-height cabinets and partitions in the non-historic studio/hobby room space to create a fifth bedroom (Luhan 2023).



Photographs 13 & 14: Schwert House living room before (Luhan 2007) and after (right) in 2023

On the exterior, beyond painting of wood paneling, tuck-pointing the stone, and installation of copper gutters and related infrastructure, Luhan/Pottorff replaced the ca. 1980 rubber roof membrane with rigid insulation and a white multi-layer modified bitumen roof membrane system. The project included replacement of the two skylights previously installed by the Schwerts during the ca. 1980 roof project, those from in the studio/hobby room and its bathroom installed as part of the ca. 1980 addition, as well as the installation of another, new skylight in Bedroom 4. The renovations included refinishing the original oak floors in the living, family, and dining rooms, and replacing the flooring in the bedrooms and hallway. The Schwert House's mechanical/utility systems were upgraded or replaced as necessary, and all light fixtures except for that in the kitchen, were removed/replaced and salvaged (Luhan 2023).



Photographs 15 & 16: Schwert House dining room before (Luhan 2007) and after renovation (right) in 2023.

2018 Alterations: Studio/Hobby Room

In 2018, Luhan/Pottorff completed the work started in 2007 with the renovation of the non-historic studio/hobby room to become a new master suite. The bathroom and part of the larger studio space was renovated into a full master bathroom with a large shower, toilet, double

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vanity/sinks, and a free-standing bathtub and adjacent dressing area. This closed off the entrance to the bathroom from the hallway and Bedroom 3, and opened it only to the new master bedroom (Photographs 17 & 18). In the basement, the Schwerts' basement work room was renovated into a home office and gym space.



Photographs 17 & 18: The former studio/hobby room after conversion into a new master bedroom (left) with ensuite bathroom (right).

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

Criteria Considerations

- 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

Areas of Significance

Architecture

Period of Significance

1960

Significant Dates

1960 (construction)

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Significant Person

NA

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Architect/Builder

Isenhour, Richard (architect)

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Statement of Significance

Summary Paragraph

The Schwert House (FAL-666) meets the second term of National Register Criterion C: it is the work of a master designer, architect Richard B. Isenhour. It is significant as an excellent example of a suburban Ranch residence with Modernist details in Lexington, Kentucky. Because the Ranch House type takes many forms in Lexington, the historic context “Richard B. Isenhour’s Residential Designs: 1952-1988,” will be the tool through which the significance of the Schwert House is understood. The Schwert House is significant as an important early example of the organic and evolving design aesthetic of its architect, Richard B. Isenhour, a prolific Lexington architect who designed over 80 residences in his over 30-year long career, which spanned the period of Lexington’s explosive post-war suburban growth. The Period of Significance, 1960, is the year of its construction. The Schwert House combines the suburban Ranch house form, nationally popular during the post-World War II period until ca. 1975, with the Modernist architectural style and its so-called “Atomic Ranch” subtype. The Schwert House embodies Isenhour’s interpretation of the character-defining features of the Ranch form: asymmetrical façade, horizontal orientation, lack of significant exterior ornamentation, and single-level, open floorplan with a clear separation of interior public and private spaces. The Schwert House and Isenhour’s other designs introduced Lexington to a wider Modernist vocabulary for Ranch House suburban design possibilities. His work differs from the great many Ranch Houses in the city, which display revival features. The fact that he continued to receive commissions from clients gives evidence of Lexington’s awareness of and interest in housing forms that went beyond a reworking of residential motifs that in some cases are now 200 years old.

Lexington’s Post-World War II Suburban Development Boom

The coming development boom in Lexington Kentucky was foreshadowed by a small news story only 14 days after the announcement of V-J Day in August 1945, when the *Lexington Herald* reported the sale of *The Meadows*, the 304-acre farm of Dr. Elisha Warfield (breeder of famed racehorse “Lexington”) on the north side of Loudon Avenue and west of Bryan Station Road for development of a new subdivision (Lexington Herald 1945-a). That same day, the Savage Lumber Company announced that beginning on September 30, with the coming end of war-time restrictions on the use of building materials, it planned to construct 35 houses in the Castlewood subdivision, and the Perry Lumber Company jointly announced construction of another 52 houses elsewhere, with returning veterans being given first preference on all of them (Lexington Herald 1945-a). This was only partly a euphoric expression of optimism due to the War’s end. It demonstrated that a pent-up demand for housing had been building in the heart of the Bluegrass.

During the Great Depression, Federal agencies like the New Deal’s Federal Housing Administration (FHA) created programs to assist homeowners to keep and remain in their homes. During World War II, FHA and other programs involved the Federal government in national housing policy, and these programs – especially FHA – remained on the books long after the Great Depression and the war ended. Amendments to the law establishing the FHA altered the financing of privately financed mortgages by insuring the loans so long as the investment was determined economically sound. To determine the soundness of its investments,

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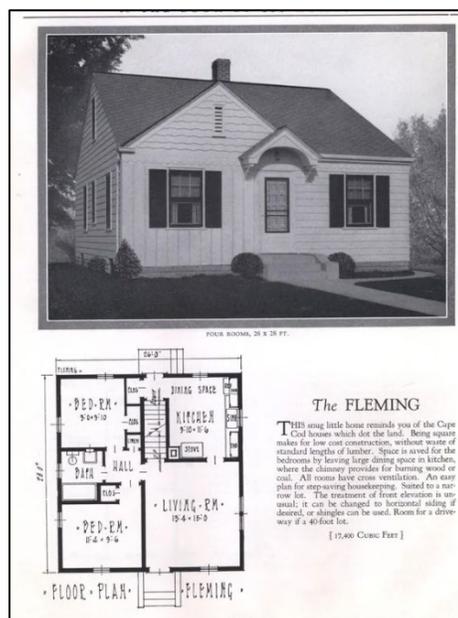
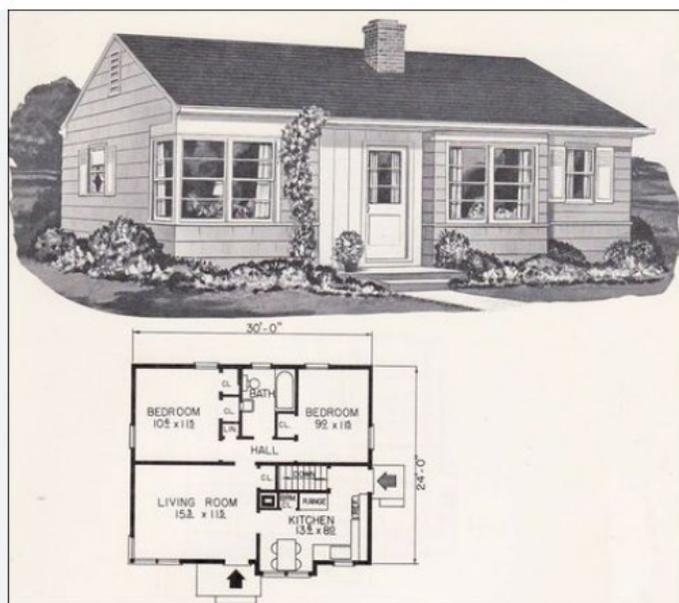
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the FHA established guidelines, which were followed closely by post-war suburban real estate developers around the nation. In 1944, the Serviceman's Readjustment Act, better known as the GI Bill, extended home mortgage insurance to veterans: the Veterans Administration (VA) guaranteed housing loans and allowed veterans to borrow the full price of a house without a down payment or mortgage insurance. Although separate from the FHA program, the VA followed many of FHA's policies and guidelines (Mead & Hunt 2012).

Houses designed per FHA guidelines during the 1930s were small and featured simplified details of the then-nationally popular Colonial Revival style, with modern, efficient interior configurations; this house form is today referred to by a couple of names, Minimal Traditional and American Small House being just two. These smaller houses, however, lost favor with the bigger families of the post-war baby boom period in favor of the Ranch form, which featured more bed- and bathrooms and came with an even more open or "rambling" interior configurations. These larger houses, in turn, occupied the larger suburban lots available during the post-war period, and thus came to dominate suburban development by the mid-1950s (Mead & Hunt 2012).

Because many of the suburban houses built during the nation's post-war construction boom were nationally popular architectural styles and forms, their very popularity led to a great degree of homogeneity where large groups of houses in any one city would often look similar to not only each other but to those in another city or region. This likely had its roots in strict adherence to FHA guidelines, standardization of building materials, and the influence of national advertising that promoted specific architectural ideas. Early FHA homes, considered ideal for their livability, were prototypes of the "Ranch" homes that came to dominate suburban architecture during this period, with their casual floorplans and easy access to the outdoor living spaces like patios and rear yards (Mead & Hunt 2012).



Two examples of Minimal Traditional Houses, paired with their floor plans.

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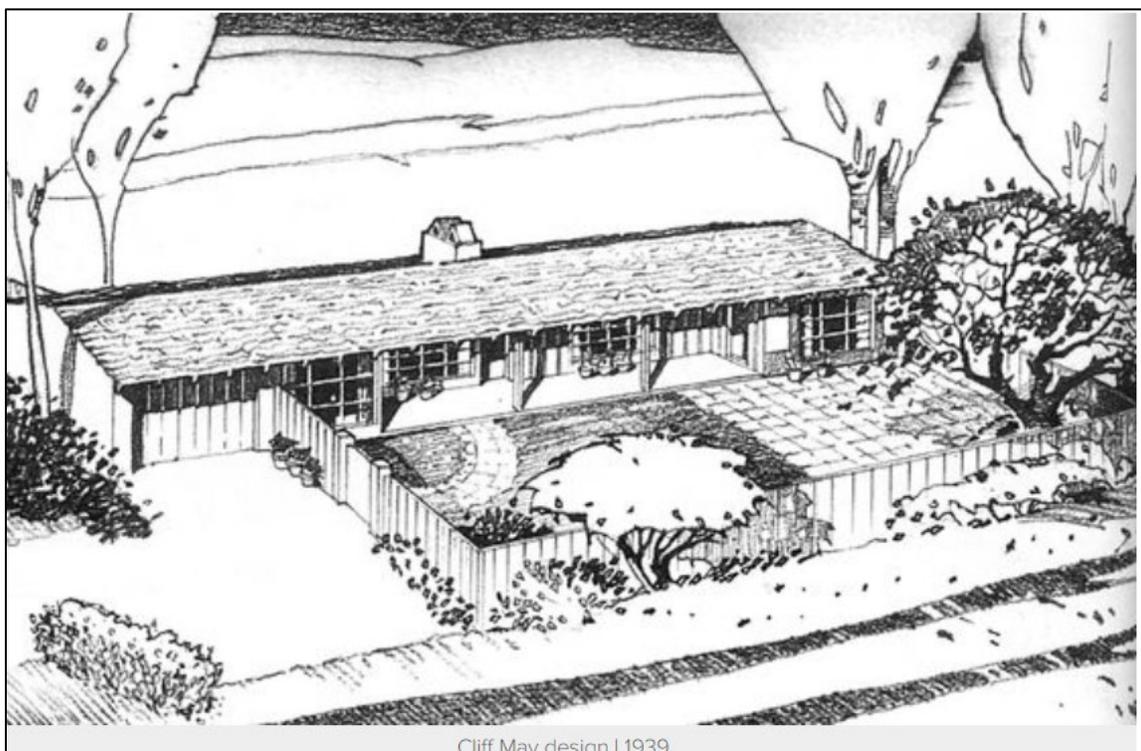
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Cliff May: The Development of The Suburban Ranch House Form

The simple Ranch house that formed the basis for millions of residences constructed during the nation's explosive post-war suburban development had its origins in southern California, and derived from the architecture of the colonizing Spanish *rancheros*. The houses built by these early settlers were low and ground-hugging buildings, largely due to the limitations of local materials and lack of foundations. They mostly had unornamented facades and focused on interior courtyards with more lavish decoration, such as it was, within the courtyard and interiors, a precedent derived from Moorish influences in Spanish domestic architecture. These early residences separated various activities into compartmentalized blocks, with main living spaces in the front, and bedrooms and working or utility spaces in wings off to the side, either in a straight line or forming an ell (Sunset 1997).

Cliff May, a California architect who designed and developed tracts of post-war suburban Ranch residences, is often credited as the father of the modern Ranch house. May focused on the 'livability' of the homes he designed, and refrained from exterior ornament: his residences often featured blank walls facing the public right-of-way. As May himself explained in a 1936 interview, "...early Californians...built for seclusion and comfort of their families, for the enjoyment of relaxation in their homes. We want to perpetuate these ideas of home building" (Kramer 2017). During and after the war, May continued to develop and refine his version of the ranch house as a "populist" type of modern house that "bridge[d] the gap between custom one-of-a-kind homes and mass-producible, popularly accessible prototypes (Adamson et al 2002).



Cliff May design | 1939
Drawing of a typical Cliff May suburban residence (1939).

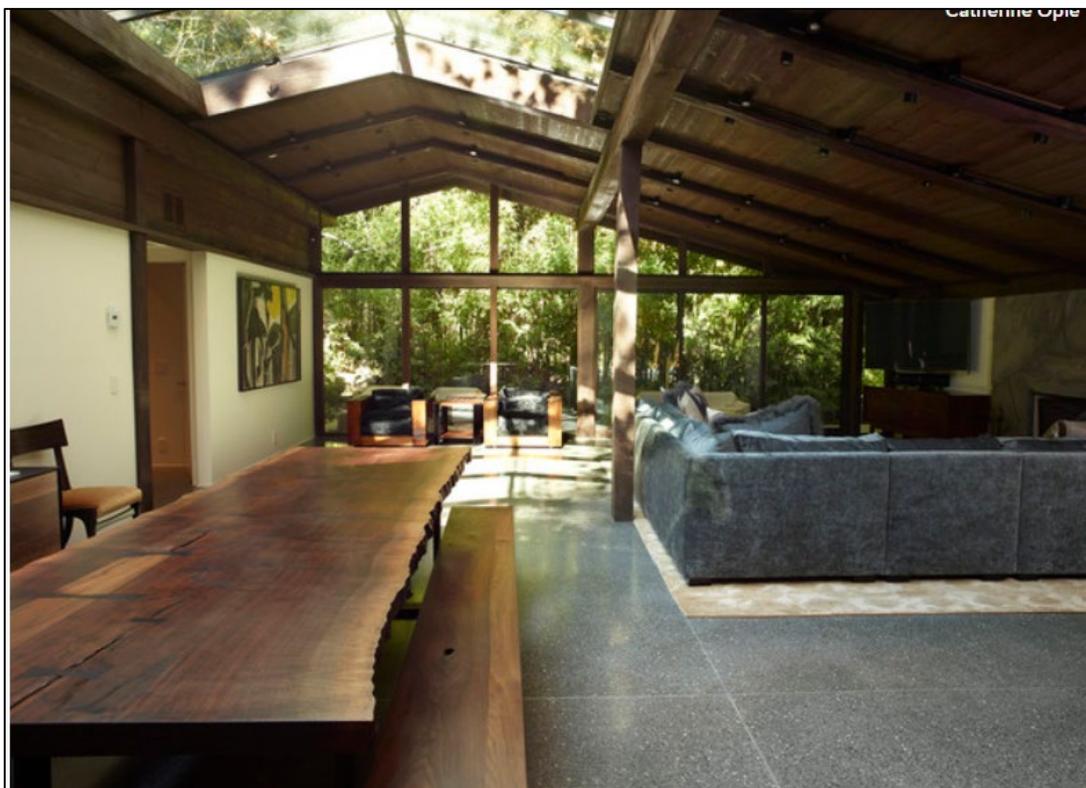
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May and other architects during this period took rustic details from the California bungalow and the open interior configurations of Prairie-style houses and rearranged the historic Ranch form to create “a hospitable Modernism” (Hess 2004). These houses differed from previous forms and styles by being willfully asymmetrical, suggesting an interior configuration based on practical needs. A typical May-designed Ranch was horizontal in its massing, and simple, natural materials – wood, particularly board-and-batten, and masonry – contrasted with more refined surfaces, especially on the interior to make cleaning and maintenance easier. The open main living area was often subdivided by a low planting bed or partition walls or built-in cabinetry to separate functions within a large, otherwise open space. The interior often included informal or ‘rustic’ details like open trusses or exposed roof beams, among others. Living space extended outside onto large patios, separated by large glass walls; often, gables were filled with clerestory windows to flood the interiors with light (Sunset 1997).

Once they proved popular, other builders, designers, and developers distilled May’s basic designs to their essential essence that made the suburban “Ranch house” so ubiquitous for the next thirty-plus years: an open interior configuration (living/dining/kitchen) with bedrooms secluded within a separate section, all within a rectangular box, the size of which expanded or contracted as the owner’s budget allowed or number of bed- and bathrooms changed. Roof configurations and architectural details and ornament from earlier styles (i.e., Colonial) were often applied interchangeably. Many of these Ranch houses featured a variety of windows – including large picture windows – facing the public right-of-way, in defiance to May’s original designs presenting a blank wall to the public right-of-way.



Overview of the interior of a Cliff May-designed house.

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Soon after the end of World War II, some of the first references to the suburban “Ranch house” in Lexington newspapers seemingly applied “ranch” as more descriptive than the name of a specific form or style: an example illustrated in the newspaper featured an exterior with numerous windows facing the street, and the roof includes a large, dominant front-facing cross gable that would become a popular detail on many modest Ranch houses and recalls the pre-war Tudor Revival architectural style more than May’s designs. What appears to be a stucco exterior features exposed “stone” peeking through, and the roof is covered by red-brown asphalt shingles, likely meant to recall historic, red-clay tile roofs. While the interior configuration does include the general separation of public living and private sleeping spaces, it lacks the open interior configuration seen later in Isenhour’s designs (Lexington Herald 1945-b).

By 1951, however, the more pervasive “Ranch house,” a single-floor, rectangular plan with two to three bedrooms, was one of the most popular house types in Lexington. As previously described, these Ranches differed greatly from May’s original vision. As one builder explained at the time, “This is ‘colonial’ territory, so it is only natural that many of the ranch houses [would] include hooded entrances, gables, and other colonial features” (Herald-Leader 1951). This would further indicate the Schwert House was a radical departure from the typical Lexington suburban residence constructed during the 1950s and 1960s, while at the same time it was a return of sorts to the general design principles of Cliff May’s original Ranch form: the blank front façade, with the open-plan interior focused outward to the patio and the back yard.

Frank Lloyd Wright’s *Usonian* Houses: The Roots of Organic Modernism

Frank Lloyd Wright was one of the most well-known American architects during the first half of the twentieth century. Faced with little work on larger projects already in progress and fewer new commissions during the Great Depression, Wright soon seized on a new professional project: resolving the lack of modern, accessible housing by the American middle and upper middle classes. He designed simple houses using what he termed a “building system” that would standardize many of the necessary materials and features while allowing for some customization: walls sections could be prefabricated, shipped to the building site, and simply installed, dramatically lowering construction costs. Wright developed his *Usonian* designs throughout the 1930s. An early prototype – the Willey House – included a new concept: a kitchen (which Wright called *the workspace*) open to the living-dining areas (Futagawa 2002).

While many of Wrights earlier residential designs had, of course, included an opening living-dining area around a central hearth, opening the kitchen to the living area and making it part of the central focus of the home was a dramatic change. So, too, was the *Usonian* house’s use of materials: built-in furniture and the elimination of plaster walls both lowered the cost of construction and furnishing, and meant the interior finishes were dictated by the materials (in the case of Wright’s houses – mainly wood, brick, cement, paper, and glass). Wright would later use some *Usonian* ideas for designs for his more affluent clients: board-and-batten walls and a glazing system using French doors and clerestory windows, built-in cabinetry, and including the kitchen within the integral living space instead of being closed off and relegated to another part of the house as an afterthought (Futagawa 2002).

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Wright's *Usonian* houses would inspire Joseph Eichler, a future merchant builder near San Francisco. Eichler admired the Wright's designs for addressing issues involving economy and modernist design, and even lived for a time in a one of Wright's *Usonian* houses, the Bazett House. The experience left Eichler with a deep impression of how modernism could be used to improve residential designs. While Wright's organic designs greatly influenced Eichler and his architects, Eichler wrestled with Wright's contention that the Usonian approach could be standardized. Eichler felt Wright's solutions were too individually tailored to his client's needs. Eichler gave effort to find models that would work for large-scale duplication, houses that would serve the post-war suburban boom, express the spirit of Modernism, yet remain affordable to the home-buying public (Adamson et al. 2002).



Frank Lloyd Wright's Jacobs House, Madison, Wisconsin (left) and an Eichler-designed suburban residence (right) in the Greenmeadow Subdivision of Palo Alto, California.

Joseph Eichler: Modernist California Styling

If Cliff May was the father of the modern Ranch house, a style rooted in early, vernacular examples, then Joseph Eichler was that of suburban Modernism. A Californian like May, Eichler was a post-war merchant builder from San Francisco who shunned the more popular styles of the time (i.e., Cape Cods or Colonials) in favor of modern designs. Despite many builders turning away from modernist design because it was considered hard to sell and difficult to construct due to unfamiliar construction methods, Eichler and his progressive team of architects designed and aggressively marketed his Modernist designs to successive generations of Californians into the 1970s, by which time his patrons' own growing affluence led them back to the more traditional, historic styles favored by wealthier elites (Adamson et al. 2002).

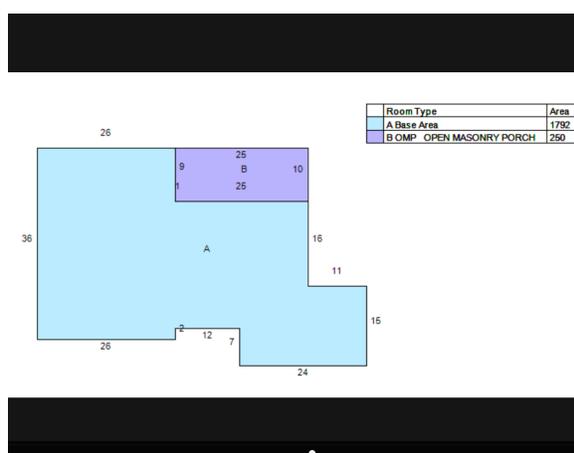
California's long history as a 'place to start over' gave it a sense of both personal and social freedom, the latter exemplified by Eichler's open-plan house with glass walls that seemingly brought the exterior into the house. This feeling of a large open space on the interior was made possible by Eichler's use of post-and-beam structural members. Large glass windows and/or sliding doors could – and often did – fill the large spaces between the vertical posts. The strong laminated wood beams allowed for the large open interiors without the need for load-bearing walls or interior posts. The beams continued to support wide eaves to shield the clerestory windows (often in gables) from harsh direct summer sun, while letting in the slanted winter sun (Ditto et al 1995).

In the first half of the 1950s, Richard B. Isenhour likely became intrigued by the nascent Modernism of Eichler's residential designs through references in the national print media,

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especially trade journals and house/home magazines to which he probably subscribed. In 1955, Isenhour and his young family traveled by car to California for a three-week vacation. Isenhour likely also visited and perhaps toured examples of Eichler’s (and no doubt, others’) Modernist designs in person. The next year, Isenhour began incorporating post-and-beam construction with large expanses of glass into his designs, most notably with his own new house at 310 Blueberry Road, Lexington. He used the house as an opportunity to experiment. While this design did not yet recall May’s blank, monolithic front wall facing the public right-of-way, the low-pitched roof and projecting beams are plainly visible, as is the exterior’s general lack of ornament in favor of a spare, Californian Modernism (Mattone 2020).



310 Blueberry Road, Lexington.

Photo and plan from Fayette County PVA office

Richard B. Isenhour’s Residential Designs: 1952-1988

Richard B. Isenhour is a locally significant architect in Lexington who helped shape the suburban residential landscape of Lexington, Kentucky from approximately 1952 to 1988 (Table 1). His innovative Modernist and Contemporary designs offered an alternative to the more mainstream suburban Ranch designs of the same period. Isenhour’s architectural career unfolded during Lexington’s explosive post-World War II growth as it transformed to Kentucky’s second-largest city and a statewide and regional center for education, healthcare, and manufacturing from its earlier status as a county seat and college town with an economy largely based on regional agriculture. The majority of Isenhour’s residential designs were built within Lexington’s growing suburbs from the mid-1950s and 1960s, when the city experienced its greatest economic and demographic growth. Isenhour continued to design suburban residences through the 1980s, during which he continued exploring further ways of expressing Modern design in residential forms.

Table 1: Partial List of Residential Designs by Richard B. Isenhour: 1952 - 1988

Job Number	Original Owner	Address	Date*
2	Johns	230 Albany Road, Lexington	Dec 1952
4	Shankland	195 Jesselin Road, Lexington	Dec 1953
5	M. Carr	213 Jesselin Road, Lexington	Mar 1956
19	James Lough	222 Glendover Road, Lexington	Oct 1954
20	Frank Russell	318 Glendover Road, Lexington	Jun 1954

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Job Number	Original Owner	Address	Date*
21	David Estes	322 Glendover Road, Lexington	June 1955
23	W.A. Rominger	346 Glendover Road, Lexington	Apr 1957
24	Robert Bain, Jr.	350 Glendover Road, Lexington	Apr 1956
25	Norman A. Fildes	342 Glendover Road, Lexington	Feb 1956
26	R.B. & Lenora Isenhour	310 Blueberry Road, Lexington	Jul 1956
27	Charles F. Elton, Jr.	Holly Springs Drive, Lexington	Oct 1956
28	Dean Bullard	314 Blueberry Lane, Lexington	Oct 1957
32	Elsworth Mills	Mt. Vernon Drive, Lexington	Oct 1957
33	S.C. Hite	341 Blueberry Lane, Lexington	Nov 1957
34	W.M. Pederson	342 Blueberry Lane, Lexington	Feb 1958
35	Carl L. Fugmann	1700 Tarleton Road, Lexington	May 1958
36	Clayborn H. Seay	3209 Breckenwood Drive, Lexington	Mar 1958
38	E.S. & Chris Dummit	3216 Breckenwood Drive, Lexington	Jul 1959
41	P.R. & Martha Schuetie	349 Jesselin Drive, Lexington	Sep 1959
42	Wendell Kingsolver	250 Shepherd Hill	Jun 1959
44	G.W. & M.H. Schwert	3316 Braemer Drive, Lexington	Oct 1959
45	E.C. & M.W. Troutman	3416 Belvoir, Lexington	Nov 1959
46	Louis Zechella	345 Jesselin Drive, Lexington	Jul 1960
48	Vernon D. Jarvis	342 Jesselin Drive, Lexington	Aug 1961
49	A.D. & M.N. Winer	337 Jesselin Drive, Lexington	Jul 1962
50	Silvia O. Thompson	Huntertown Road	Feb 1961
51	B.T. & T.R. Mead	334 Jesselin Drive, Lexington	Apr 1961
52	W.S. & M.K. Krogdahl	3493 Castleton Way, Lexington	May 1961
53	J.E. & J.W. Cohn	4008 Mayflower Lane, Lexington	Aug 1961
55	R.L. & E.L. Lester	318 Jesselin Drive, Lexington	Nov 1961
56	Frank Spencer	1261 Colonial Drive, Lexington	Nov 1961
57	R.B. & M.M. Menguy	1265 Colonial Drive, Lexington	Dec 1961
61	D. & Mary C. Weiss	1269 Standish Way, Lexington	Jul 1963
64	Sheldon & N.C. Rovin	341 Jesselin Drive, Lexington	Feb 1964
66	J.L. & A.M. Wesley	635 Nakomi Drive, Lexington	May 1964
67	Art & Dixie Gallaher	3167 Roxburg Drive, Lexington	Apr 1964
69	Borys & Frida Surawicz	806 Overbrook Circle, Lexington	Oct 1964
73	W.K. & P.T. Elwood	755 Bravington Way, Lexington	Apr 1966
78	E.W. & J.B. Weidner	802 Overbrook Circle, Lexington	Dec 1965
79	P. & M.H. Mandelstam	333 Jesselin Drive, Lexington	Feb 1966
81	R.V. & C.K. Davidge	3465 Lanette Lane, Lexington	May 1966
82	W.T. & M.N. Smith	1273 Standish Way, Lexington	Nov 1966
86	H.F. & M.B. Parks	837 Cahaba Road, Lexington	Mar 1967
87	Jan & Phyllis Hasbrouck	2125 Hart Court, Lexington	Apr 1967
88	J.R. & M.E. Jones	2129 Hart Court, Lexington	May 1967
90	W.R. Proffitt	3130 Lamar Drive, Lexington	Nov 1967
91	Leonard Geties	2017 Lakeside Drive, Lexington	Nov 1967
119	Gary Maynard	292 Hightower Road, Lexington	Sep 1968
125	Dale Farabee	2538 Westmoreland Court, Lexington	Aug 1968
127	Stanford Smith	3367 Sutherland Drive, Lexington	Dec 1967
129	J. Hollingsworth	2049 Lakeside Drive, Lexington	Dec 1968
130	Irving Kanner	955 Edgewater Drive, Lexington	May 1969
138	Ted Richardson	1289 Maywood Park, Lexington	May 1970

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Job Number	Original Owner	Address	Date*
144	Wesley Allen	2025 Lakeside Drive, Lexington	Feb 1971
147	R.B. & L.H. Isenhour	2064 Bridgeport Drive, Lexington	Jan 1972
148	R.A. & C.J. Kielar	491 Seeley Drive, Lexington	Jun 1972
150	R.S. & A.C. Heard	2105 Bridgeport Drive, Lexington	May 1972
158	T.A. & L.A. Chapman	223 Jesselin Drive, Lexington	Apr 1974
161	John Ray	2068 Manor Drive, Lexington	Aug 1974
168	Kromer	2079 Manor Drive, Lexington	Dec 1974
179	Robert Dickson	3221 Pepperhill Road, Lexington	Sep 1976
180	James & Phyllis Lorman	3617 Gloucester Drive, Lexington	Jun 1977
189	Gustave & Karen Wolff	3213 Hobcaw Lane, Lexington	Oct 1978
192	W.H. & C.T. Brooks	735 Lakeshore Drive, Lexington	Jan 1978
195	James Wieland	2043 Manor Drive, Lexington	Jun 1979
208	Halperin	517 Bayberry Bend, Lexington	Jun 1979
211	W.E. & M.A. Burnett	3140 Warrenwood Wynd, Lexington	Jun 1981
213	Fred & Diane Stahmann	2040 Manor Drive, Lexington	Nov 1979
238	C.L. & M.W. Everett	3760 Dicksonia Drive, Lexington	Aug 1983
239	Harry & Nancy Derderian	3501 Winding Drive, Lexington	Jul 1983
243	Dennis Brixius	2309 The Woods Lane, Lexington	Sep 1984
244	Harry & Patricia Cooper	1151 Tanbark Road, Lexington	Jul 1984
252	G.W. & D. Brockopp	2365 The Woods Lane, Lexington	Aug 1986
259	Lawrence T. Helm	993 Rockbridge Road, Lexington	Jun 1988
261	Glenn & Sarah Moore	3504 Castlegate Court, Lexington	Sep 1988

* Based on the Schwert House plans, this date likely represents completion of final sets of drawings, not construction dates.

Isenhour was born in Tennessee in 1924, and grew up in Charlotte, North Carolina. He enlisted in the U.S. Navy during World War II, after which he returned home to attend North Carolina State University, earning a degree in chemical engineering in 1947. That same year, Isenhour married Lenora Henry, daughter of Central Kentucky home builder and real estate developer, A.R. Henry. Moving to New York after his marriage for a job with DuPont Chemical, the family remained there for three years until Isenhour was transferred by DuPont to back to North Carolina. Realizing the nature of his job would require his young family to move frequently, Isenhour left DuPont and moved his family to Lexington, where he began a second career as an architect-builder under the guidance of his father-in-law (Mattone 2020). Isenhour's residential designs proved popular with a segment of Lexington's prospective homeowners, especially during the 1950s and 1960s, during which time he studied architecture part-time at the University of Kentucky, completing his degree in 1968 (Sloan 2006).

Isenhour's designs changed over time as he gained experience while continuing his architectural studies part-time, and as nationally popular architectural residential forms and styles changed. His earliest homes were what is now called the Minimal Traditional form with Colonial Revival-style details, like one of the first residences Isenhour designed, built, and sold under his own name at 328 Albany Road, Lexington, in 1952 (Lexington Herald 1952). Houses like this contain few of the architectural flourishes Isenhour would later use in the Schwert House and later designs, and may be considered variations on more off-the-shelf, transitional designs that were

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built by the hundreds of thousands across the country during the early post-war period and led to the larger, more open Ranch forms that followed. They featured compact, efficient interior configurations, and like 328 Albany Road, usually with one or one-and-a-half stories within rectangular or L-shaped plans, asymmetrical fenestration, low- to moderate-pitched, side-gable roofs with little or no overhanging rake or eaves (Mead & Hunt 2012). Isenhour's version at 328 Albany Road included a detached garage, but attached garages were also common.



Partial overview of Isenhour designs in proximity to the Schwert House, 3316 Braemer Drive (center near bottom). The group north of the Schwert House is contained by Glendover Road (north) and Albany Road (south), between which are Jesselin Drive and Blueberry Road.

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328 Albany Road, Lexington (left) and 322 Glendover Road, Lexington (right) (both: PVA).

Even in the early part of his career, his vision went beyond the limits of the local architectural vocabulary. Two blocks away from Albany Road, on Glendover Road, he erected 6 houses from 1954-1957. Five of them resembled 328 Albany Road, but the residence at 322 Glendover Road was quite different, with features that become more common on his 1960s houses: clerestory windows in the living room, asymmetrical façade, large brick massing, and an efficient carport. As the Minimal Traditional form fell out of favor with the larger post-war families, national preferences turned to the larger and more “rambling” Ranch form, which Isenhour appeared ready to re-interpret for the Lexington housing market. In the mid-1950s, Isenhour’s design aesthetic began to shift to the Ranch form and the more horizontal and organic Modernist architectural concepts as developed by Frank Lloyd Wright, particularly with his Usonian designs, and borrowed from residential designs he’d seen during family vacations in California (Mattone 2020, Sloan 2006).

Isenhour’s organic designs included organic principles such as integrating the building into the existing site and creating indoor spaces that open directly onto the outdoors. Other concepts Isenhour adopted include zoned living spaces that separate private (sleeping/bathing) and public (living/eating) functions and areas, with the latter areas having an open floorplan connected by a central hearth. This organic architecture included the use of natural materials (wood and stone), with deep eaves that highlighted the building’s horizontal orientation and provided thermal protection to the interior. These houses resembled their Eichler-inspired constructions in California, are often called “Atomic Ranches” and locally, have been referred to as “Isenhours” (Mattone 2020). Besides the Schwert House, other examples of this shift include the residences at 342 Blueberry Road (1958) and 345 Jesselin Drive (1960), Lexington. Both of these residences feature separate volumes clad prominently in stone and vertical wood panels, gables filled with glass, and prominent, front-facing carports instead of garages. At 342 Blueberry Road, the carport is nested under the long, continuously sloping roof of the house itself, while that at 345 Jesselin Drive is set perpendicular to the front façade itself, partially shielding the carport from the street.

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342 Blueberry Road, Lexington (left) and 345 Jesselin Drive, Lexington (right) (both: GoogleMaps).

By the mid- to late-1960s, Modernist architecture had evolved and, with his architecture degree in 1968, Isenhour's designs evolved as well. Moving away from the simple organic forms and styling on his exteriors, his later designs became more volumetric Contemporary forms. They resembled simple, rectilinear blocks, with nearly flat or steeply pitched, shed-style roofs and, like his earlier Minimal Traditional residences, little or no eave and rake extensions. Isenhour attached the now *de rigueur* garage or connected it to the house via a covered walkway. He still covered his new designs in local limestone and/or vertical wood panels. Even Isenhour's later designs, however, retained his open-plan interior configurations with specifically designated public and private spaces (Mattone, 2020).

One of the earliest examples of this shift is the residence at 837 Cahaba Road, Lexington (1967). Like his earlier designs, this house features separate volumes, one clad in limestone and the other in vertical wood panels. The single-story eastern end includes an attached garage; the western end appears to feature a split-level interior space that rises above the eastern section atop a raised basement clad, like that of the Schwert House, in limestone. Isenhour's use of Contemporary forms is perhaps best exemplified in the residence he designed for he and his family, at 2064 Bridgeport Drive (1972). It features three or more interconnected shed-roofed sections clad in limestone to form a roughly L-shaped building. An off-center, vertical wood-paneled entrance with a large single-light transom dominates the front façade; the attached garage, itself with a dramatic shed roof, is perpendicular to the front façade, forming a small entrance court.



837 Cahaba Road, Lexington (left) and 2064 Bridgeport Drive, Lexington (right) (both: PVA).

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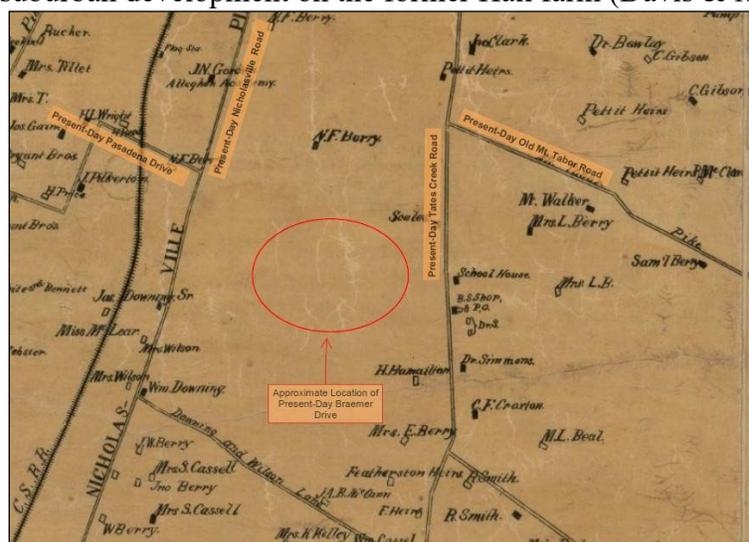
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Isenhour continued to work in this overall Contemporary form for much of the rest of his career, although later designs were more restrained than some of the examples described above. The residence at 1152 Tanbark Road (1984) is a rather simple set of three interconnected single- and two-story blocks with side-gable roofs, with sections clad separately in brick and horizontal siding. Interestingly, it includes elements that recall the Schwert House: a basement-level garage, and brick wingwalls on each end of the main façade. Isenhour retired from active participation in his design/build company – Isenhour, Inc. Architects and Builders – in the 1990s, and he died in 2006 (Sloan, 2006).

Schwert Property History

During the latter half of the nineteenth century, the property that includes present-day Braemer Drive within the Lansdowne subdivision was part of the Nathaniel Pettit (N.P.) Berry farm. At his death in 1885, Berry was one of the largest land owners in Fayette County (Find-a-Grave 2012) (Lexington Leader 1905). Berry’s son, Nathaniel Farra (N.F.) Berry was “one of the most prominent breeders of registered Jersey cattle in the country” (Lexington Leader 1905). An 1891 map of Fayette County, Kentucky illustrates N.F. Berry’s large land holdings southeast of downtown Lexington, between present-day Nicholasville and Tates Creek Roads, and north of present-day Wilson-Downing Road (Wallis 1891).

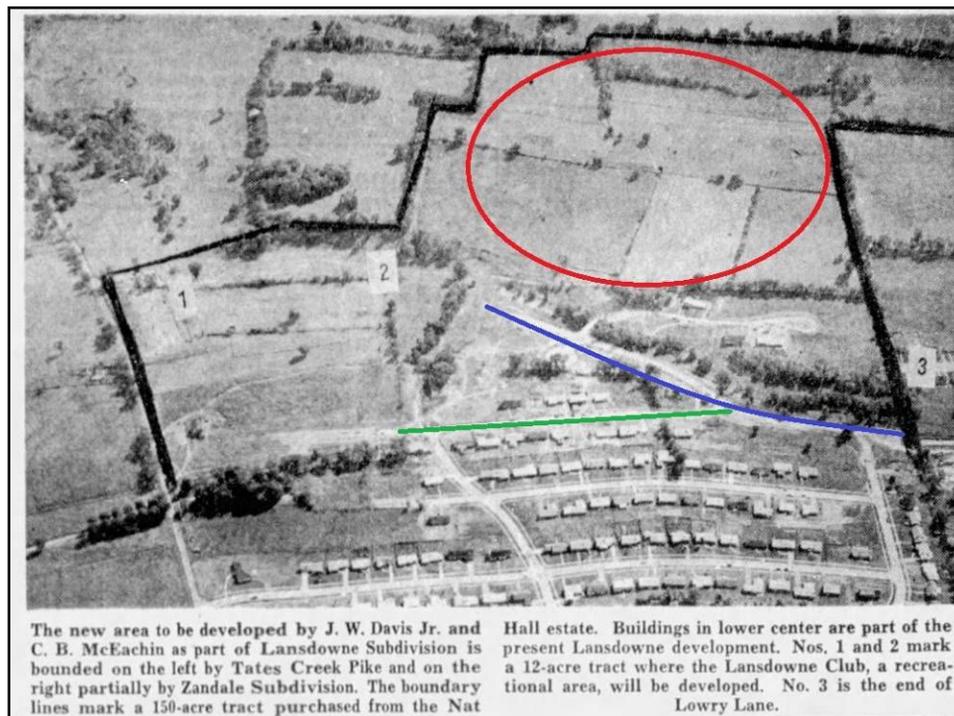
After N.F. Berry’s death, the farm was subdivided into smaller farms for his children, with a portion that included the present-day location of Braemer Drive eventually passing to his grandson, Nat Berry Hall, who died in 1956 (Lexington Leader 1956). Real estate developers and home builders J.W. Davis, Jr. and C.B. McEachin, who had previously constructed early suburban development in other parts of Lexington and in particular along the west side of Tates Creek Road (Albany and Robin Roads) north of the Hall farm, purchased a 150-acre tract from Hall’s estate in 1957. This tract extended between Tates Creek and Nicholasville Roads and in April 1958, Davis and McEachin filed the plat of the Braemer and Brookhill Drives section of their Lansdowne suburban development on the former Hall farm (Davis & McEachin 1958).



Detail of the 1891 Wallis map, showing the approximate location of present-day Braemer Drive.

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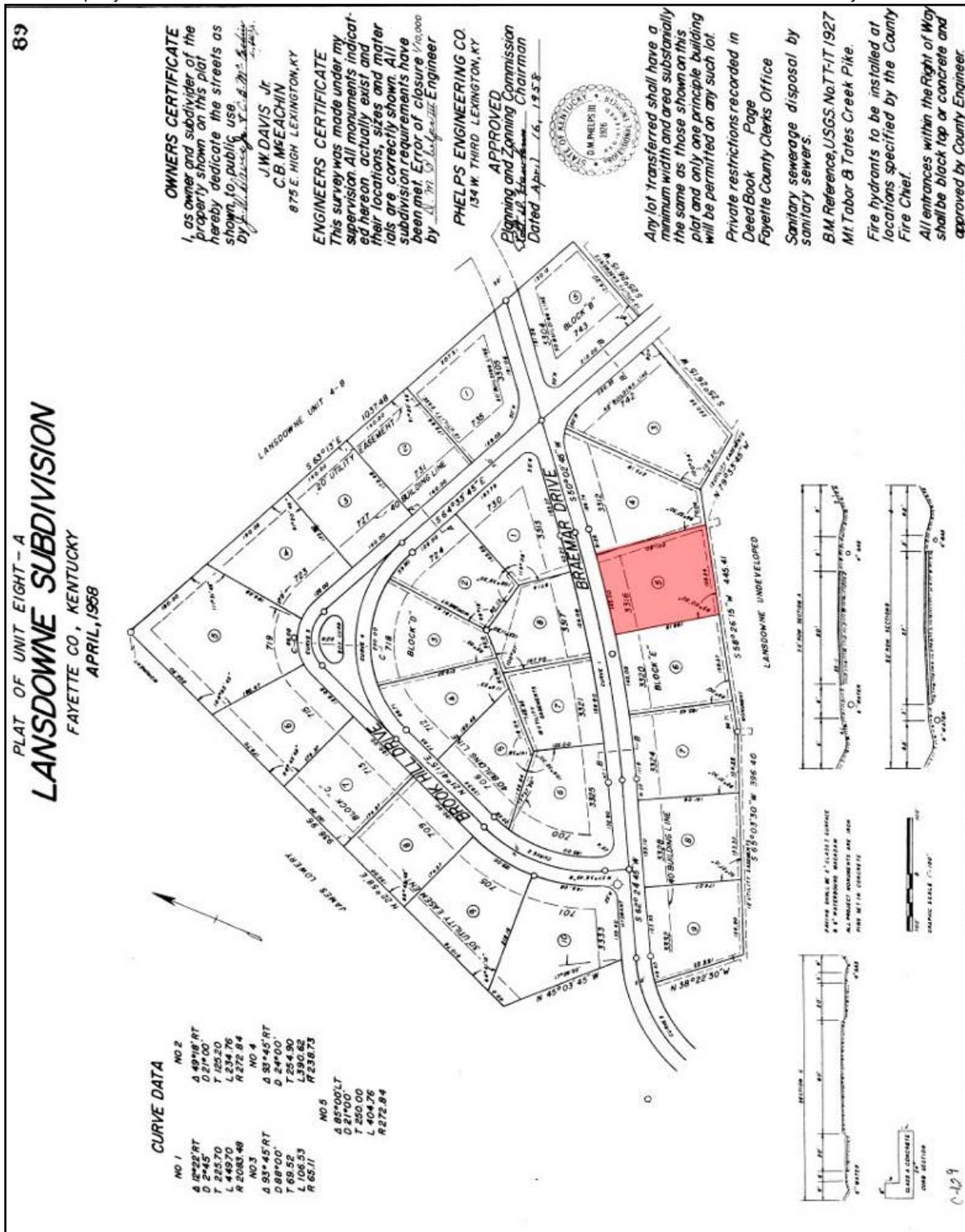
Newspaper clipping showing the former Hall farm under partial development in 1957 (Herald Leader 1957). Note the area of present-day Braemer Drive indicated by the red circle, with present-day Zandale Drive shown in blue and present-day Hildee Drive in green.

After Dr. George Schwert was recruited from Duke University to join the faculty at the University of Kentucky Medical Center/College of Medicine, he and his wife, Dr. Margaret Schwert, purchased the lot at 3316 Braemer Drive in the fall of 1958 (Fayette County [Kentucky] Clerk, 1958). The Schwerts came to Lexington with plans for a much different house designed by North Carolina architect John D. Latimer: a split-level, post-and-beam residence with an asymmetrical inverted or “butterfly” roof, a brick exterior, and expansive glass walls. For unknown reasons, the Schwerts abandoned the Latimer design and commissioned Isenhour to design a different house which proved to be approximately 500 square feet smaller, with less glazing, and fewer rooms, suggesting the new design may have been a response to either budgetary or material availability concerns (Mattone, 2020).

The Schwert House was completed in 1960, and the Schwert family lived there for the rest of their lives. Dr. Margaret Schwert died in 1975 (Lexington Herald-Leader, 1975), and Dr. George Schwert later remarried. Few alterations were made to the house until c. 1980, when Dr. and Mrs. Schwert commissioned Isenhour to design and build a studio/hobby room space on the northeast rear corner of the residence (Mattone, 2020). After that addition, no other significant changes are known to have been undertaken until after Dr. Schwert died in September 2006 and his widow and family sold the residence to Professor Luhan and Ms. Pottorff, who made the alterations described above in 2007 and 2018 (Lexington Herald-Leader 2006; Fayette County [Kentucky] Clerk, 2007; Mattone, 2020).

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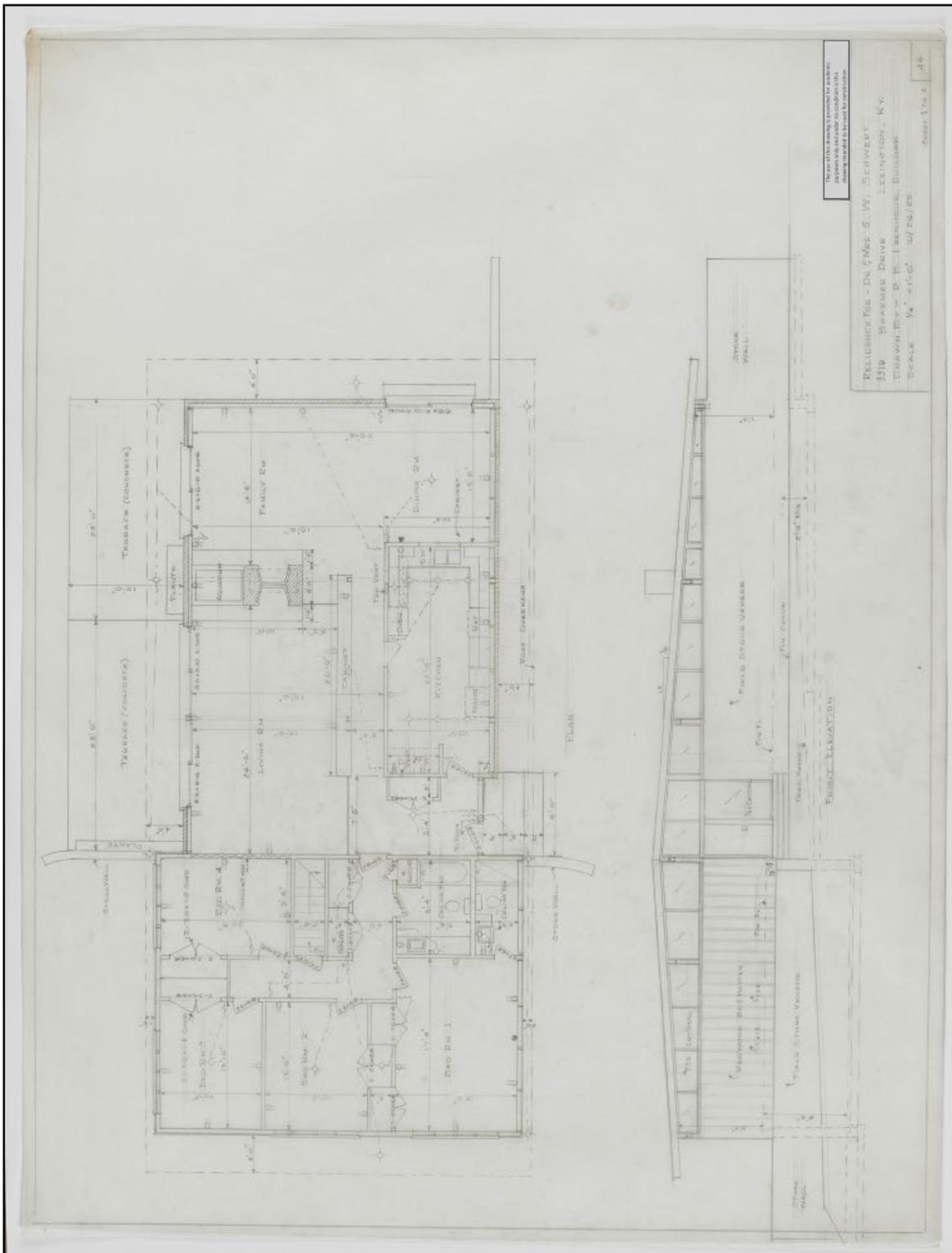
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Plat of the section of Landsdowne Subdivision that includes 3316 Braemar Drive (highlighted) (Davis & McEachin 1958).

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Original plans of the Schwert House, dated October 1959 (Isenhour 1959). The plans show (top to bottom) the original floorplan and front façade.

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Evaluating the Architectural Significance of the Schwert House within the context of Isenhour's Body of Work as well as the Ranch House in Lexington

The Schwert House embodies the character-defining features of the Ranch form with its single-story living space and a basement-level two-car garage, open interior configuration, and separation of the interior public and private spaces into separate blocks. It further embodies the particular innovations that Isenhour introduced to the local architectural context, which are seen as character-defining features of Modernist or the "Atomic Ranch" sub-type, in its use of the post-and-beam structural system, exposed beams, and the open interior configuration of its public spaces - living/family/dining rooms – separated into separate spaces by built-in cabinets and a large stone-veneer fireplace. The significance of the Schwert House, and Isenhour's other work, was in bringing nationally popular architectural forms to Lexington, where contemporaneous house designs seemed generally more conservative by contrast.

Nearly all the residences adjacent to the Schwert House appear to be more traditional Ranches: rectangular, single-story residences with brick or ashlar stone exteriors, gable (side or cross gable) or hipped roofs, and attached garages. Some exhibit architectural details from specific architectural styles, such as a general symmetry, shutters, and cornice returns (Colonial Revival), while others appear to feature a symmetrical façade, and a finished second floor with gabled dormers (Cape Cod). The Schwert House, despite its Modernist style, is still fairly typical in overall form to other suburban Ranch houses constructed before and after the period of significance: it is a single-story, rectangular residence with an attached garage constructed in an auto-centric post-war subdivision like its neighbors.

The Schwert House, however, stands in contrast with these other houses in important ways. It features no architectural details from another local style, and no significant exterior ornament of any kind. Perhaps the Schwerts and Isenhour thought the contrast of the horizontally stacked stone and vertical wood paneling of the two exterior sections was the only exterior treatment necessary. Isenhour's use of natural materials on many of his designs, including the Schwert House exterior, recalls both May and Wright, who used batten board paneling. Recalling May's early Ranch designs, the Schwert House has no fenestration on its main façade facing the public right-of-way except for its slightly off-center entrance and sidelight. Like May's designs, Isenhour took advantage of site topography and added projecting north and south wingwalls to lend the Schwert House a greater sense of privacy. The Schwert House's post-and-beam construction allow for the nearly full wall of glass overlooking the back yard; the exposed beams carry the low-pitched front-gable roof with its wide, overhanging eaves and gables filled with glass, directly recalling Eichler's California designs.

While both Eichler's designs and Wright's *Usonian* houses prominently feature carports for the family automobile, the Schwert House, unlike many of its neighbors, has a partial basement that includes the requisite two-car garage, albeit set at a 90-degree angle, so that it is tucked out of general view from the street and partially hidden by the wingwall. This feature distinguishes the Schwert House from its neighbors in its otherwise auto-centric neighborhood. Many of the neighboring houses proudly place their garages as a prominent feature of their sites, which

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served the owner's growing status that resulted from announcing the possession of the newest vehicle model or the ownership of multiple vehicles. Many of the surrounding houses feature garages, either facing to the side or boldly toward the street on the same level as the main living areas. Since Isenhour's own designs and many of the houses adjacent to the Schwert House often included garages on the same level as the main living areas, it's possible that the Schwerts requested this deviation.

The Schwert House's interior configuration, too, embodies the character-defining features of the Ranch form as interpreted by Isenhour. The main living areas are all on a single level, and like all Ranches, it strictly separates the public (living/family/dining rooms and kitchen) from the private (bed- and bathrooms) spaces. Unlike many contemporaneous Ranches, however, Isenhour moved the kitchen to the Schwert House's front: the rear part of the house, overlooking the yard, was intended by Isenhour as the central focus of the living spaces, similar to Eichler. Since the front wall had no fenestration, it was a natural location for kitchen cabinets and appliances. Unlike Wright's *Usonian* designs, Isenhour's kitchen was not open to the rest of the living spaces, aside from an original pass-through over the built-in server in the dining room. This pass-through was eliminated in favor of an open doorway to the dining room during the 2007 remodeling project, when the kitchen walls above the upper kitchen cabinets were also removed to allow more light from the clerestory front gable window into the living spaces. Similar to Wright's built-ins, Isenhour employed a long, low built-in cabinet-shelf unit to separate the hall/walkway along the kitchen space from the living room. The stone fireplace brings the rough textured stone into an otherwise sleek interior and further separates the family and dining rooms from the living room. The private side of the Schwert House retains its original configuration of bedrooms and bathrooms, altered only by the ca. 1980 addition as the east end of the original hallway.

Evaluation of the Integrity between the Significance of the Schwert House and the Physical Condition of the Schwert House Today

The Schwert House at 3616 Braemer Drive in Lexington, as any building that has survived at least 50 years, has undergone changes. The house has had two long-term owners, and both chose to alter the building. The first owners, the Schwerts, hired Isenhour to design the house after rejecting a set of plans they had previously obtained from a different architect. During research for a National Register nomination, one does not usually have knowledge of the original owners' agency in choosing the design. We often attribute all design choices to the architect. And clearly, this nomination emphasizes Isenhour's design as the basis of this property's significance, because we have a strong record of his aesthetic choices, and Isenhour's designs collectively are important if we wish to understand Lexington's post-World War II suburban cultural landscape. Still, the National Register asks us to reflect upon the impact of the property's changes as part of our evaluation of the building's value.

The question of this property's integrity, as the National Register defines the word, calls for more than a mere notice of physical change. The National Register defines Integrity as "the ability of a property *to convey* its significance." Integrity is not a mere measure of materials, but is the judgment on whether a **relationship** exists between our thoughts of a property's significance, on one hand, and the physical property as it exists today, on the other. In the first

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step of evaluating significance, we determine what is the basis for the property's significance, and *then* we ask whether the property physically can support our view of the property's significance. If there are physical changes, the question is whether we can "see" what we think is significant about the property, even with those changes that we can also see. If what we think is significant matches up with what is physically present well enough, then there is an **integrity** between what we think is valuable about the property and that property's physical identity on the landscape today.

The main event affecting this property's relationship, between Isenhour's significant 1960 design and its physical ability to convey the importance of that design, is the Schwerts' choice to change the property ca. 1980. There are many factors about this remodeling episode that lead us to see a great deal of continuity in the design quality that remained after the remodeling. First, the two main participants in the ca. 1980 changes are the same people who were responsible for the original design of the building in 1960: Dr. George Schwert and Isenhour. (Note that by 1980, Dr. Schwert's first wife had died, and his second wife likely helped inform the design of the addition). Both parties exhibited strong design intentions in 1960. It seems plausible that what they chose ca. 1980 is an architectural solution that would be compatible with what was achieved in 1960. Had either party wanted to make a new architectural statement, those parties could have chosen very differently. The Schwerts had the financial resources to choose a new house site had they wanted to launch into a new design direction. If Isenhour had wanted to impose his new design ideas upon the project ca. 1980, it would have had to be with the Schwerts' consent. What seems to have emerged ca. 1980 are design choices where strong clients and a strong architect found a solution that respected what the owner and architect had accomplished in 1960. They agreed to expand the house in a manner that was subservient to the design qualities and aesthetic character that was good in 1960 and continued to be satisfying when they finished the project ca. 1980.

To evaluate the integrity between the significance of Isenhour's 1960 design and the way the building today conveys that significance, the building must retain an **integrity of feeling** of Isenhour's design qualities from this transitional point in his career evolution, where he was moving away from the Minimal Traditional house forms and decorative schemes, toward the more open Ranch House expressions, particularly with features found in houses designed by May, Wright, and Eichler. We have found that the Schwert House retains integrity of location, setting, and sufficient amounts of material and design integrity, to support the conclusion that that house retains an overall integrity of feeling with Isenhour's design quality. That conclusion is explained below.

The Schwert House retains **integrity of location** since the house has not been moved from its original, automobile-centric suburban location. The Schwert House retains a high degree of **integrity of setting**. Its location within the 1960s suburban neighborhood is key to its architectural value. It sits within a large suburban neighborhood in Lexington that was developed during Isenhour's early and middle career. Many of his early commissions became houses in this neighborhood. The Schwert House is still surrounded by the original residential buildings that were constructed contemporaneous to it, along the curvilinear Braemer Drive. The street and the surrounding neighborhood retain their overall early- to mid-1960s, automobile-centric suburban

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character. A good bit of Isenhour's contribution to Lexington's landscape is how his suburban residences fit into the local post-war landscape. The Schwert House's location and surroundings help tell the story of Isenhour's houses widening Lexington's suburban design spectrum. The contrast between the Schwert House and the neighboring houses helps tell the story of his design accomplishment.

The Schwert House retains **integrity of materials** since enough of its original materials remain, and its non-historic materials are quite compatible with the original materials, that ca. 1980 and 2007 changes do not constitute a radical new building identity such that we have lost the property's 1960s identity. A similar statement can be said about the current design in reference to its 1960 design. When the building was changed ca. 1980 and 2007, thought was given to making the resulting building one which respects and is at home with the 1960 design. The ca. 1980 and 2007 projects, the materials that were used and the designs which resulted, are not at war with Isenhour's 1960 aesthetic. The ca. 1980 changes were his changes, the product of his choices in collaboration with the Schwerts.

The changes to the house ca. 1980 provided the site with something that is within the Ranch house vocabulary that stretches back to Cliff May, and to the *rancheros* that inspired him. The ell extension of the Schwert House gave the plan one leg of the U-shape that some of May's Ranch houses had. The U-shaped plan created a private space in the back of the property for the family who occupied the house. At the Schwert House, that ell extension resulted in a patio space that resembled the classic California Ranch House from which Isenhour was drawing inspiration in the late 1950s.

The interior house changes, both ca. 1980 and 2007, retained the character-defining features of Ranch house design that was present in the 1960 house: open floor plan, the lack of formal spaces so as to promote a casual lifestyle, prominent structural features such as long wooden beams at the ceiling, and non-rectangular windows at the cornice level, skylights to let in natural light, and the quality of privacy given to the residents. The near total absence of windows from the front of the house has been a feature of it since 1960, signaling that privacy is an important quality for the people inside. This privacy gives the dwelling a freedom to arrange the interior space in any number of ways. In California Ranch houses, that freedom often resulted in an open floor plan and an emphasis upon a central feature such as a fireplace or hearth, as well as large expanses of glass at the rear of the house, allowing natural light into the interior. These aspects of design were present in the Schwert House interior from the beginning, and remain today.

The kitchen pass through (see "before" and "after" photos 13 and 14) was replaced by a large opening into the kitchen and walls which did not reach the ceiling. By stopping short of the ceiling, this change preserved the feeling of openness in the interior space. The current owners have renovated and reconfigured the kitchen for modern living, and removed the original cabinets from the kitchen, as well as having removed the built-in serving cabinet in the dining room. They salvaged and partially re-installed that cabinetry elsewhere in the house for future scholars of Isenhour to have access to original kitchen hardware that rarely survives at all in historic houses. The house's public spaces retain their original form and finishes after the two remodeling campaigns. Weighing what was in the house in 1960, what was changed ca. 1980

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and 2007, the present house strongly communicates its original materials and design. The house, thus, can be said to have sufficient **integrity of materials and design** because we can still perceive what was valuable about the house in 1960.

The Schwert House retains a high degree of its **integrity of workmanship**. The exterior's vertical, stained redwood board-and-batten paneling and fieldstone veneer and interior stone chimney/fireplace and post-and-beam structural members with exposed roof beams in the main living areas of the house have been persevered. The same exterior treatments were applied where necessary to the ca. 1980 addition.

Because the Schwert House retains an integrity of location, setting, materials, design, and workmanship, it can be said to have **integrity of feeling**. Its exterior and landscaping are similar to when the house was constructed in 1960. The current owners enjoy the same expansive views out to the back yard, with privacy afforded by the parcel's topography and landscaping, and the quiet environment of a low-density, suburban development within a few miles of downtown Lexington and the University of Kentucky. The ca. 1980 addition and the relatively modest interior changes are compatible with Isenhour's Modernist design and the general feeling of the original design has not been compromised.

The property has one additional integrity factor that is not always part of a Criterion C argument: **integrity of association**. Isenhour's designs have a unity of expression, and differ from the more conservative Lexington house designs of the 1950s-1980s. The houses he designed are recognizable as his own. There are no other architects that are known for having a distinctive Modernist style in Lexington that was applied to suburban housing. His houses are known by many as "Isenhours," a fact enhanced by their relative high numbers in such a small area. The current popularity of mid-century modern design trends makes his houses more recognizable because so few of Lexington's contemporaneous suburban houses express the pliability of the era's styling as much as Isenhour's houses did. Nothing about the changes to the Schwert House ca. 1980 or 2007 have reduced the local perception of this house as one of his designs. The Schwert House is still easily associated with Isenhour's body of work.

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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

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Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property .67 acre

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 37.998211

Longitude: -84.504061

2. Latitude:

Longitude:

3. Latitude:

Longitude:

4. Latitude:

Longitude:

Verbal Boundary Description

The proposed boundary for this listing is a four-sided parcel on Braemer Drive, Lexington, Fayette County, Kentucky, and is more specifically defined by the legal parcel boundary of the property, bounded on the north side generally by Braemer Drive. The parcel is identified by the Fayette County Property Valuation Administrator as Parcel 55666400 and that office gives the legal description as C-129 Lansdowne Unit 8-A, Lot 5.

Boundary Justification

The boundary above includes all property historically associated with the property. The yard around the house is a significant part of the architectural significance of the property.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Patrick Thompson and Matt Mattone

organization: _____

street & number: 243 Abbey Road

city or town: Versailles state: KY zip code: 40383

e-mail dpatrickthompson@gmail.com

telephone: 859-537-2563

date: December 22, 2023

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Photographs

Photo Log

Name of Property: Drs. George W. & Margaret Schwert House (Schwert House)
City or Vicinity: Lexington
County: Fayette
State: Kentucky
Photographer: Patrick Thompson
Date Photographed: December 11, 2023

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

Photograph 1 of 30, overview of Schwert House exterior, view to the south.

Photograph 2 of 30, overview of Schwert House exterior under front eave, view to the northeast.

Photograph 3 of 30, overview of front elevation of Schwert House, view to the southwest.

Photograph 4 of 30, detail of front entrance of Schwert House, view to the southeast.

Photograph 5 of 30, overview of north side and part of rear elevations of the east side of Schwert House, view to the northwest.

Photograph 6 of 30, overview of the rear elevation of west side of Schwert House, view to the northwest.

Photograph 7 of 30, overview of the west side elevation of Schwert House, view to the north.

Photograph 8 of 30, interior entry hall and detail of front entrance, view to the northwest.

Photograph 9 of 30, overview of the hall, built-in cabinets, and living room, view to the east.

Photograph 10 of 30, overview of the living room overlooking the rear patio, view to the south.

Photograph 11 of 30, overview of the living room and fireplace, view to the west.

Photograph 12 of 30, overview of the family room overlooking the rear patio, view to the southeast.

Photograph 13 of 30, overview of the dining room, view to the northwest.

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Photograph 14 of 30, overview of the kitchen, view to the northeast.

Photograph 15 of 30, overview of the main bathroom, detail of the vanity and lavatory, view to the northeast.

Photograph 16 of 30, overview of the original master bathroom, detail of the vanity and shower, view to the west-northwest.

Photograph 17 of 30, overview of the original master bedroom (Bedroom 1), view to the north-northeast.

Photograph 18 of 30, overview of the original master bedroom (Bedroom 1), detail of closets, view to the southeast.

Photograph 19 of 30, detail of a non-original skylight in the private space hallway, view to the west.

Photograph 20 of 30, overview of original Bedroom 4, view to the southwest.

Photograph 21 of 30, overview of the stairs between the main living space and the garage and lower level, view to the west.

Photograph 22 of 30, overview of the south side (bay) of the two-car garage, view to the west-southwest.

Photograph 23 of 30, overview of original "work room" space off the garage, view to the northeast.

Photograph 24 of 30, overview of the renovated "work room" annex under the ca. 1980 addition, view to the east.

Photograph 25 of 30, overview of former "work room" space renovated for storage, view to the east-southeast.

Photograph 26 of 30, overview of the renovated former studio/hobby room space in the ca. 1980 addition (present master bedroom), view to the east.

Photograph 27 of 30, overview of the present master bedroom, view to the west-northwest.

Photograph 28 of 30, overview of the present master bedroom dressing room/bathroom space, view to the north-northwest.

Photograph 29 of 30, overview of the present master bathroom shower, view to the northwest.

Photograph 30 of 30, overview of the present master bedroom vanity and double lavatories.

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