

**United States Department of Interior  
National Park Service**

**SENT TO D.C.**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form**

3-4-08

Re-Submitted 7-23-08

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900A). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

**1. Name of Property**

historic name **Schiller, Alfred A., House**  
other names/site number

**2. Location**

street & number	734 Lenox Road							not for publication
city or town	Glen Ellyn							vicinity
state	ILLINOIS	code	IL	county	DuPage	code	043	zip code
								60137

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

*William L. ...* 15415  
Signature of certifying official/Title

3-7-2008  
Date

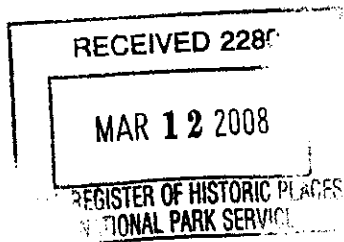
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  
( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau



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United States Department of Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

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state ILLINOIS code IL county DuPage code 043 zip code 60137

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*Walter L. ... 15/1/08*  
Signature of certifying official/Title

*3-7-2008*  
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  
( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

Name of Property **Schiller, Alfred A., House**

County and State **DuPage County/Illinois**

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that the property is:

entered in the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

**5. Classification**

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

private  
 public-local  
 public-State  
 public-Federal

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

building(s)  
 district  
 structure  
 site  
 object

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

contributing	noncontributing
1	buildings
0	sites
0	structures
0	objects
1	total

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

N/A

**Number of contributing resources is previously listed in the National Register**

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

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

Domestic/Single Dwelling

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

Domestic/Single Dwelling

**7. Description**

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

International Style

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation	Concrete
Walls	Brick/Wood/Glass
Roof	Asphalt
Other	

**Narrative Description**

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

See Continuation Sheets

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**  
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for the National Register listing.)

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

**Criteria Considerations**  
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

**Criterion C: Architecture**

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**Period of Significance**

**1954; 1964**

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**Significant Dates**

**1954 (date of construction)**

**1964 (date of alterations)**

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**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

**N/A**

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**Cultural Affiliation**

**N/A**

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**Architect/Builder**

**Paul Schweikher & Winston Elting**

**George Fred Keck & William Keck**

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**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See Continuation Sheets

Name of Property **Schiller, Alfred A., House**

County and State **DuPage County/Illinois**

### 9. Major Bibliographic References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

See Continuation Sheets

**Previous Documentation on File** (National Park Service):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State Agency
  - Federal Agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository: **Ryerson & Burnham Library; Glen Ellyn Historical Society; Newberry Library**

### 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property less than one acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

2 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

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

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

See Continuation Sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

**11. Form Prepared By**

<b>name/title</b>	<b>Katharine Keleman</b>	<b>date</b>	<b>September 23,</b>
<b>organization</b>			<b>2007</b>
<b>street &amp; number</b>	<b>6618 N. Glenwood Avenue</b>	<b>telephone</b>	<b>312-307-5907</b>
<b>city or town</b>	<b>Chicago</b>	<b>state</b>	<b>IL</b>
		<b>zip code</b>	<b>60626</b>

Name of Property **Schiller, Alfred A., House**

County and State **DuPage County/Illinois**

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**                    A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
                              A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**        Representative black and white photographs of the property.

**Additional Items** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

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

<b>name/title</b>	<b>Matthew Nordloh</b>	<b>date</b>	<b>July 24, 2007</b>
<b>organization</b>		<b>telephone</b>	<b>630-743-9281</b>
<b>street &amp; number</b>	<b>734 Lenox Road</b>	<b>zip code</b>	<b>60137</b>
<b>city or town</b>	<b>Glen Ellyn</b>	<b>state</b>	<b>IL</b>

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects, (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Schiller, Alfred A., House  
DuPage County, Illinois

Section number 7 Page 1

### 7. NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

“A square doughnut.” “A house without windows.” This is how some have described the house that renowned architect Paul Schweikher designed for Dr. and Mrs. Alfred A. Schiller in 1953, located at 734 Lenox Road in Glen Ellyn, Illinois. The original design consisted of a single-story brick residence with a central atrium and a freestanding garage. Noted architects Keck and Keck designed the 1964 addition, which connected the two structures.

Deeply set back and lacking exterior windows, this unusual house turns away completely from the street. The original residence faces east and is situated at the rear of the lot, which measures fifty feet wide by 160 feet deep. The square house, forty feet on each side, is set back almost one hundred feet from the sidewalk. The house is clad in Chicago common brick, a favorite material of Schweikher, laid in a simple running bond. Exterior trim is California redwood. A cylindrical chimney projects above the roofline at the northeast corner of the house, offering a foil to the straight, stark lines of the house. The garage is located along the lot's southern boundary, set back fifty feet from the sidewalk. It is twenty feet wide and twenty-two feet deep, has a flat roof, and is clad in horizontal tongue-and-groove redwood.

As noted in a 1954 award citation in the journal *Progressive Architecture*, the Schiller House was designed to “protect the client from having to view the environment, which is his wish,”<sup>1</sup> and indeed it did. The house completely lacked exterior fenestration with the exception of a narrow sidelight at the front door, which was originally located on the front (east) elevation, inset about five feet from its northern edge. A screen door made of redwood louvers, resembling a large shutter, shielded the front door.

The surface treatment of the Schiller House's interior is noteworthy. The floors throughout are warm-toned terrazzo. Every wall, ceiling, and door is clad with ¾ inch, amber-colored African mahogany paneling. Mrs. Schiller's father, George N. Lamb, who was the executive secretary of the Mahogany Association,<sup>2</sup> is believed to have given the wood to Mr. and Mrs. Schiller as a gift.<sup>3</sup> Schweikher designed the recessed ceiling lights throughout the house. They are simple wood-framed squares and covered with translucent panels that are flush with the ceiling. This is a design that Schweikher used frequently in many of his residences.

A sixteen-by-thirteen foot central landscaped courtyard provides the sole light and view to the interior.<sup>4</sup> The walls of the atrium are plate glass and are supported by eight wood columns. One post is placed at each corner, and the others are on the east and west walls, inset three feet from the corner. This arrangement visually balances the two doors accessing the atrium at the southwest and northeast corners. The north and south walls

<sup>1</sup> “Award Citation,” *Progressive Architecture* 35 (January 1954): 129.

<sup>2</sup> “Obituary—No Title.” *Chicago Tribune*, 29 May 1965.

<sup>3</sup> This information was taken from a letter from the home's second owner's daughter, Abigail Eddy, to the current owner, Matthew Nordloh, dated May 23, 2006.

<sup>4</sup> The original drawings note that the owner would provide a copper screen dome to cover the atrium. It is unknown whether the dome was ever built.



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Schiller, Alfred A., House  
DuPage County, Illinois

of the atrium are uninterrupted spans of glass, each capped with a strip of four transom windows running the length of the wall.

In addition to providing light, ventilation, and vista, the atrium also divides the house into four legs. The northern leg holds the entryway, kitchen and dining areas, and utility room; the living area and study occupy the eastern leg; the southern segment holds the master bedroom; and the bathroom and two bedrooms comprise the western section. Schweikher strove to achieve fluid, uninterrupted space in his designs, and to reduce partitions as much as possible. The distinctness of the wings in the Schiller House practically eliminates the need for walls and allows one space to flow into another, both spatially and, by virtue of the atrium, visually.

Throughout his oeuvre, Schweikher used elements other than walls—such as built-ins, screens, hearths, and stairs—to give definition to interior spaces. This technique is evident immediately upon entering the Schiller House, where Schweikher uses the cylindrical fireplace to define the entrance hall. The massive fireplace is five feet in diameter and clad in common brick laid in a stacked header bond. Schweikher turned its rear towards the doorway, indicating the separateness of the entryway from the living room. It is located slightly south of the front door, obstructing a direct path and view into the rest of the house. A closet along the northern wall once had sliding doors, which have been lost.

The hearth opens into the living room, a thirty-eight-by-fourteen-foot room whose western wall looks into the courtyard. A large skylight, added by the current owner, provides additional light. The southern end of the room was intended to function as a study. A spherical paper light hung from the ceiling.<sup>5</sup> Built-in mahogany shelves line the southern wall, and a wing wall encloses the space.<sup>6</sup> These elements help define the study as a somewhat separate room.

The wing wall also helps to enclose the master bedroom, measuring twelve by fourteen feet, to the south of the atrium. A matching wing wall, enclosing the bathroom, is located opposite along the bedroom's western wall. Additional partial walls, flush with the east and west walls of the atrium, make an alcove originally designed for the bed against the glass atrium wall. Curtains blocked the view into the bedroom from the courtyard and the other rooms of the house. Doors on either side also provide privacy. Sliding doors (now lost) screened the closet, which ran the length of the room along the southern wall.

The children's bedrooms, eight by ten feet each, occupy most of the western leg of the house. A sliding wall between the rooms opened to create one large space.<sup>7</sup> Each room had a full-width closet with sliding doors and a moveable mahogany chest. The sliding wall and closet doors have been removed, and only one chest remains.

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<sup>5</sup> Alma Jilek's article, "Here's a House with No Outside Windows!" in the newspaper *DuPage Suburban Life*, dated 23 October 1958, noted that a large "bubble light" was located in the living room. The current owner removed but retained the light. It is unknown whether or not Schweikher designed this fixture.

<sup>6</sup> The plans seem to indicate that a sliding wall was located here that could have enclosed the study. However, there is no evidence to suggest that this feature was ever built.

<sup>7</sup> The current owner notes that the closet doors were used to create the partition wall between the bedrooms. One door would be removed from each closet and positioned on the tracks.

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Schiller, Alfred A., House  
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For privacy, screens may be slid to enclose the bedrooms' eastern walls, creating a hallway parallel to the glass atrium wall. These screens, which survive, are made of translucent plastic with wood battens laid in a lattice pattern. They are designed to resemble a Shoji screen, a wood and rice paper screen traditionally used in Japanese homes. Each bedroom has a small square skylight for additional air and light.

Along the house's northern leg is the kitchen and dining area. Appliances and mahogany-veneered drawers and cabinets line the entire northern wall. The cabinet doors slide, matching the doors in the rest of the house (only some of the cabinet doors remain). When it was built, the kitchen had all the modern appliances of the era: refrigerator, stainless steel double sink, dishwasher, built-in oven and countertop range. The countertop is rock maple. Space for a dining table is along the southern glass wall, looking onto the courtyard.

Schweikher placed rooms requiring the least amount of light in the corners of the house. In the southwest corner, a sliding door leads into the bathroom. Heavy swinging doors segregate the toilet from the rest of the room. This small room also features its original fan and built-in magazine rack. Swinging doors, now removed, led to the bathtub/shower, located in the rear of the bathroom. Like the rest of the bathroom, the shower stall was paneled in mahogany, but, due to rot, the current owner installed tile. Twin sinks sit in a rock-maple countertop. The sinks and tub are original; they are pale blue-gray porcelain and designed by Henry Dreyfuss, noted designer of the Princess telephone, Honeywell thermostat, and Big Ben, an alarm clock manufactured by Westclox. Built in towel racks are against two walls, resembling large wooden ladders. Tucked into the northwest corner of the house is an eight-by-ten utility room, intended to double as a darkroom. A trap door leads to the small basement, and a back door, located directly opposite the identical front door, leads to a narrow rear terrace. The remaining two corners of the house contain the entrance hall and the study.

Mary Moulton, a landscape architect who later became the librarian at the Morton Arboretum in Lisle, Illinois, was the designer of the courtyard and gardens.<sup>8</sup> A rectangular pond is located at the north end of the atrium, running its full length. A large rock functioned as a steppingstone when entering the courtyard from the northeast door. The pool is covered by a three-foot overhang to block summer sun, yet allow low-angle winter sun. A dwarf crabapple tree, dwarf mugho pine and dwarf irises were planted in this Japanese-inspired garden (none remain). The rear terrace was laid with paving stones and bordered by a rock garden. Many elm trees dotted the front yard before they were killed by Dutch elm disease.<sup>9</sup>

### Keck and Keck Addition

The second family to own the Schiller House, the Kabérons, had five children and found that an addition was necessary. Schweikher, who was then head of the architecture school at Carnegie-Mellon University, recommended the firm Keck and Keck to design the addition, which was designed in 1962 and built in 1964.

<sup>8</sup> This information was taken from a letter from the home's second owner's daughter, Abigail Eddy, to the current owner, Matthew Nordloh, dated November 29, 2006.

<sup>9</sup> This information came from a letter from the home's second owner's daughter, Abigail Eddy, to the current owner, Matthew Nordloh, dated May 23, 2006.

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George Fred Keck had been a close friend and colleague of Schweikher. Due to the position of the house on its lot, the addition could be added only to the front. Keck and Keck connected the two original structures, the house and the garage, to create two additional bedrooms and bathrooms, a play area, and a foyer.

Keck and Keck succeeded in designing a sympathetic addition by keeping the planes, proportions, and materials consistent with the original house. The firm extended the northern wall of the house eastward; the garage abutted the southern end of the new front (east) elevation. All exterior walls were clad in Chicago common brick, an exact match with the original house. The brick was left exposed on the interior, responding to but not mimicking Schweikher's design. The remaining walls were wood-paneled, which have been replaced with drywall with mahogany baseboard. The floor was covered in nine-by-nine-inch vinyl tile; it has been replaced with similar twelve-by-twelve-inch vinyl tile.

The addition eliminated the original front entry, which was moved to the north elevation. Keck and Keck duplicated the original sidelight and reused Schweikher's front door, which was paneled with redwood on the exterior and mahogany on the interior to match the respective trim, and detailed with vertical iron straps on either edge. The new entry leads into a small foyer with the original doorway—sidelight intact—leading to the main house on the right. The brick exterior wall of the original house is used as the western interior wall of the addition. To the left of the door was a small full-height closet. The current owner removed it and created a built-in planter box/bench with a limestone cap. It is paneled in mahogany that was recycled from the deteriorated shower stall. The floor is slate tile. Two sets of several stairs lead from the foyer to the rest of the addition. A bedroom and bathroom are located to the south, and to the east is the playroom.

The playroom (now a sitting room) is a long, narrow space along the northern wall of the addition. At the northern end of the front (east) elevation of the house, Keck and Keck inserted a window looking onto the drive and the street beyond. The window is positioned at the former location of the original entrance, and it is the exact reverse of Schweikher's design: it consists of a fixed-pane window adjacent to a full-height strip of redwood louvers. It is the precise opposite of Schweikher's louvered screen door with sidelight, a clever reference to the original design. On the interior, small doors, similar to cabinet doors, open to allow ventilation through the louvers.

A short hallway ran along the east and west walls of the addition, each accessing a bedroom and bathroom. The bathrooms and closets make up a central core between the two bedrooms. Unlike the northern wall of the addition, which is flush with the northern wall of the original house, Keck and Keck recessed the southern wall to allow for an adjacent terrace. Each bedroom has continuous windows along its southern wall and a door leading out to the terrace. The windows are large and fixed, with transoms above. The current owner closed off the doorway to the eastern bedroom, making the southern wall of the playroom continuous. He converted the eastern bathroom to a half bath, and located the new door to the bedroom where the shower had been. He also added a door along the eastern wall of this bedroom to provide access to the garage.

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### 8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Schiller House is an excellent example of the post-World War II residential architecture of two of the Chicago area's most renowned modernist firms: Schweikher and Elting and Keck and Keck. The house is unusual because of its location in an established, traditional area, and because it represents the work of two nationally-known luminaries of modernist architecture. This noteworthy house, in which the International Style is interwoven with Japanese design and the textured modernism of the Prairie School, is being nominated for National Register designation based on Criterion C for the uniqueness of its architecture.

#### Architect Paul Schweikher

Paul Schweikher (1903-1997) is a distinguished modern architect who based his practice in the Chicago metropolitan area for the first half of his career. He built his reputation on his residential designs, which comprised the bulk of his work during the first decades of his practice. Schweikher's architectural idiom blends elements of the Prairie Style, European modernism, and Japanese design. His houses are noted for their forthright, sensitive handling of materials, fluidity of space, and merging of exterior and interior. In 1953, Schweikher left Chicago to become chairman of the Department of Architecture at Yale University; he moved to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1957 to head the Department of Architecture at Carnegie-Mellon University. Schweikher maintained a private practice while he held academic posts. He designed almost exclusively institutional buildings, nearly abandoning residential architecture. His buildings of these decades became more geometric, rigorous, and volumetric. Schweikher moved to Sedona, Arizona, in 1969 and died in Phoenix in 1997.



Paul Schweikher in 1984

Schweikher was born in Denver in 1903 to musician parents. Following high school, Schweikher went to the University of Colorado, Boulder, for one year, 1921-22. Apparently not yet drawn to architecture, he studied electrical engineering and chemistry. He followed his wife-to-be, Dorothy, to Chicago in 1922, where he began

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to study drafting in the evenings at the School of the Art Institute. Soon after, Schweikher sought a job in an architectural office, winding up with the firm Lowe & Bollenbacher in 1923.

Initially, Schweikher cleaned the office and filed drawings, but soon he progressed to drawing details and supervising construction. At that time, the firm was designing revivalist houses and Gothic churches. Schweikher remained at the office (which had since become Granger & Bollenbacher) for two-and-a-half years before he left for the office of David Adler, a prominent Chicago architect who chiefly designed refined mansions in suburban Chicago's North Shore.

The years Schweikher spent at Adler's office were formative. "I really learned to see and to know what I was looking at," he said. "This could be historically, it could be in proportion, certainly in scale, the relationship of one thing to another or especially to human use."<sup>10</sup> Schweikher had deep admiration for Adler, whose taste and sense of scale seemed impeccable to him. He often said that he considered Adler a master, and it was during his time at that firm that Schweikher's passion for architecture blossomed. While with Adler, Schweikher worked on the Marshall Field House in New York City, the McCormick Blair House in Lake Bluff, Illinois, and the Cable House in Winnetka, Illinois.

During this period Schweikher joined the Chicago Atelier on Prairie Avenue and was meeting other young, ambitious architects and draftsmen.<sup>11</sup> Matters of style and authenticity were beginning to occur to him. "I was just getting used to the idea that there was something wrong, something impure, about doing a Gothic interpretation of a commercial building," he said about that time.<sup>12</sup> At least conceptually, Schweikher was beginning to form an architectural expression that was truthful to the age, location and function of his buildings.

In the late 1920s, the architectural world was on the brink of an important shift. Most American architects and architecture schools adhered to the philosophy of the *École des Beaux-Arts*, the oldest and most influential school of art and architecture in the nineteenth century, located in Paris. The school's conception of architecture rested on a classically-inspired, well-proportioned plan; the institute was generally opposed to modernism. Simultaneously, a new spirit of architecture was emerging in Europe, which came to be known as the International Style. Physically, the style was characterized by restrained ornament, a focus on volume rather than mass, and a regular rather than symmetrical plan. Typical features included exposed structure, smooth, taut curtain walls, strip windows, and *pilotis*, or stilts, though the style had many modulations. While greatly inspired by advances in engineering, much of it American, and by the work of Frank Lloyd Wright, this movement was principally western European. The style emerged just after World War I, and married a new

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<sup>10</sup> Paul Schweikher, *Oral History of Robert Paul Schweikher*, (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 2000), 24.

<sup>11</sup> The atelier system provided space for young architects and draftsmen to practice their technical skills and hold discussions. Schweikher continued to be involved in the local ateliers when he returned from studying at Yale. He became the president of a new atelier in 1939. It was known as the Chicago School of Architecture and was located in the Pelouze Building at 230 E. Ohio Street, as noted in the article "A.I.A. Starts Atelier on the Near North Side," *Chicago Tribune*, 15 October 1939.

<sup>12</sup> Paul Schweikher, *Oral History of Robert Paul Schweikher*, (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 2000), 17.

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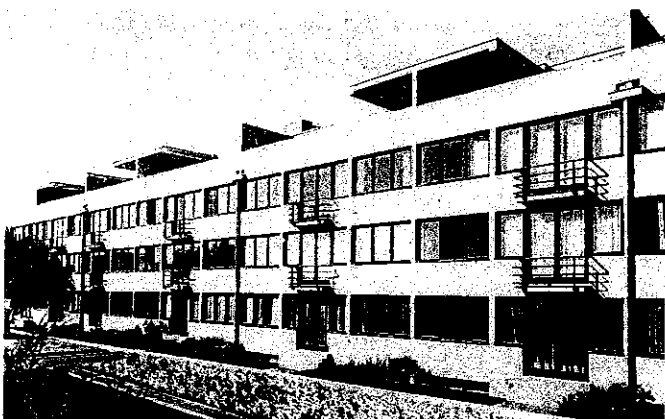
Schiller, Alfred A., House  
DuPage County, Illinois

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aesthetic with social aspirations. Pioneers included Le Corbusier, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Walter Gropius, and J.J.P Oud. The International Style began to reach avant-garde America circles in the mid 1920s, especially following the translation of Le Corbusier's book *Toward an Architecture* to English in 1927. By the 1930s, American universities had abandoned the Beaux-Arts approach to architecture, and several of Europe's most influential modernists were heading American architecture schools, such as Walter Gropius at Harvard and Mies van der Rohe at the Illinois Institute of Technology.

Paul Schweikher's formal education coincided with these changing times. In 1927, he left Adler's office to study architecture officially at Yale University where he was trained in the Beaux-Arts tradition, still the dominant canon despite the fledgling infiltrations of European modernism. Although Schweikher was not an iconoclast, he noted, "Our student work was beginning to change... We began to rebel, even in our work. It was no longer Renaissance, it was no longer classically related."<sup>13</sup>

Because of his training in architectural offices and the experience he had gained in evening work at two of Chicago's ateliers, Schweikher graduated from Yale in two years. He was awarded the Matcham Traveling Fellowship from Yale and left for Europe with his wife for almost a year. There he saw important early examples of what came to be called the International Style. Schweikher visited the Van Nelle Tobacco Factory in Rotterdam by Dutch architect Leendert van der Vlugt and the Weissenhofsiedlung, an exhibition of working class housing built at Stuttgart, Germany, by a group of progressive European architects. These significant works were already icons of European modernism.



Mies van der Rohe's apartment block at the Weissenhof Estate, Stuttgart, 1927.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 40.

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Upon returning to Chicago in 1928, Schweikher worked briefly for the architect Russell Walcott<sup>14</sup> whom he met through his friend Leland Atwood. Atwood was one of Walcott's chief draftsmen; he left for the office of George Fred Keck in 1933. Walcott and Atwood were fascinated by European modernism. Schweikher later recalled that he and Atwood would study Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's designs, especially the Barcelona Pavilion, and marvel at the spare forms and flat roofs.

Walcott also introduced Schweikher and Atwood to Buckminster Fuller, the designer of the geodesic dome. They were captivated by Fuller's Dymaxion House, an octagonal or circular house suspended from a central shaft and constructed of prefabricated steel parts. In the evenings, Schweikher and Atwood assisted Fuller in drawing plans for the Dymaxion House.<sup>15</sup> Fuller, whom he identified as a source of inspiration throughout his career, helped solidify Schweikher's interest in efficiency, prefabrication, and simplicity.

From 1931 to 1933, Schweikher worked as chief designer in Philip Maher's office, where he worked on Maher's Art Moderne commissions at 1260 and 1301 North Astor Street in Chicago. During Chicago's 1933 World's Fair, "A Century of Progress," Schweikher worked for Howard T. Fisher, an architect who sold prefabricated homes through his company, General Homes. Schweikher designed several model homes for an exhibit of modern housing at the fair. As a designer and site planner, Schweikher helped to design a wood house and to furnish Fisher's steel house.<sup>16</sup>

Meanwhile, Schweikher was laying the foundation for an independent practice. His first great success came when his work was featured in an exhibit at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson, curators at the museum, made a splash with their 1932 show, "International Exhibit of Modern Architecture." Although the show did feature the work of American architects, its emphasis was on European modernism. In 1933, Hitchcock and Johnson curated a follow-up to that exhibit called "Work of Young Architects in the Middle West." Several of Schweikher's designs were put on view, including a corrugated steel house and drawings for a housing development he had done with Keck (neither were built). Their design for a four-story, steel-framed apartment building made use of standard and prefabricated parts to increase economic feasibility. With bedrooms facing east, living rooms facing west, and the buildings oriented for greatest light, the plan exhibited sensitivity to site and climate. Indeed, Schweikher and Keck sought help

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<sup>14</sup> Leland Atwood had been working as a draftsman for Russell Walcott since 1924. In 1928, Walcott formed a partnership with Robert Work. Work had been in partnership with David Adler from 1917-1928. Thus, Schweikher and Work must have known each other from Adler's office. Taken from Robert Boyce, *Keck & Keck*, (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1993), 54.

<sup>15</sup> An original drawing of the Dymaxion House survives with Atwood's signature, and Schweikher had an original copy of Fuller's proposal. When he joined Keck's office, Atwood helped to design the House of Tomorrow for A Century of Progress World's Fair, inspired by the Dymaxion House. Keck's biographer, Robert Boyce, claims that a 1926 design by Atwood for a prefabricated house actually inspired the Dymaxion House, making Atwood Fuller's inspiration rather than vice versa. Taken from Neil Jackson, *The Modern Steel House* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1996), 33-35; Robert Boyce, *Keck and Keck* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1993), 46-47.

<sup>16</sup> Robert Boyce, *Keck and Keck* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1993), 36.

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from the Adler Planetarium to compute sun angles in order to maximize winter exposure. The show marked a significant landmark for Schweikher, and gave the young architect national recognition.

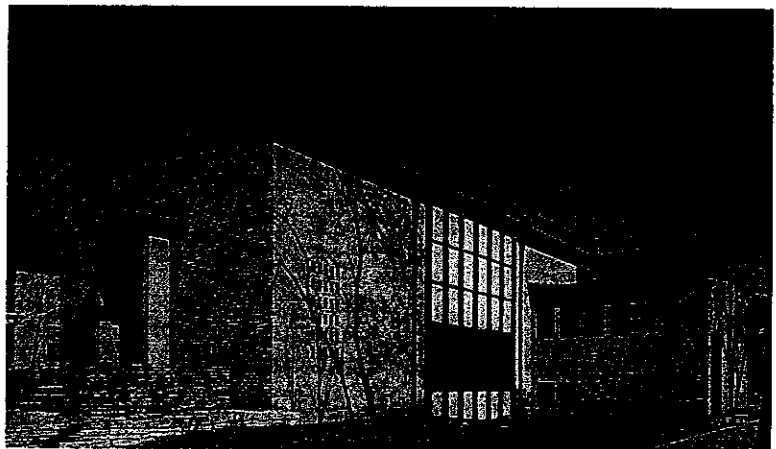


The Steel House at the Century of Progress World's Fair, 1933-34



Philip Maher's 1301 Astor Street, Chicago

Following this exhibit, Theodore Lamb, a friend from Yale, joined Schweikher in partnership and a string of highly successful designs ensued. Among them were a winning entry in a national design competition in 1935; the Third Unitarian Church (1936) in Chicago (recently nominated to become a Chicago landmark), a spare brick rectangle with a gabled roof and a brick and fir interior; and the Loewenstein House (1936) in Highland Park, a redwood- and brick-clad house defined by an arrangement of three shed roofs. These buildings and various others were published in prominent architecture journals, earning the firm acclaim.





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Loewenstein House, Highland Park

Third Unitarian Church, Chicago

Schweikher's own home and studio, located in Roselle (now Schaumburg), Illinois, is widely considered the most spectacular work of his early career. The T-shaped house, clad in California redwood, is ground-hugging and solidly weighted with a flat roof and wide chimneys. It was entered in the National Register of Historic Places in 1987, immediately after reaching the minimum age requirement of fifty years. The Roselle house is especially noteworthy for its fluid sense of space and straight-forward, sensitive treatment of materials, two qualities for which Schweikher's architecture became widely admired.

Schweikher preferred to use natural materials in a direct and sympathetic manner that expressed their functional purpose as well as their intrinsic beauty. "I wanted to let the color of the brick stand," Schweikher said. "We wanted to let the natural color of the wood stand for itself. It was just a kind of simplicity and directness that we hoped to introduce."<sup>17</sup> The texture, color, and tactility of the material helped determine the design, and the exposure of its nature and function allowed it to act as ornament. Schweikher's particular fondness for redwood and brick lent his designs a warm and rustic quality, especially in his pre-war houses.

Even Schweikher's earliest plans were remarkable for their openness, but none had achieved the fluidity of the Roselle house. By forming three distinct wings—work, living, and sleeping—Schweikher practically eliminated interior walls. In addition to the International Style, the free plan is a hallmark of the Prairie School. Schweikher had a direct link to the work of Frank Lloyd Wright through William B. Fyfe, one of his most trusted draftsmen, who was among the first graduates of Wright's Wisconsin school, Taliesin. It is therefore possible that a Wrightian influence entered his office through Fyfe. But a trip to Japan just before designing the Roselle House may account most of all for its openness. Schweikher admired "the extension of one space into another, done partly by folding screens or the lack of screens, and lower walls, that is walls that didn't

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<sup>17</sup> Paul Schweikher, *Oral History of Robert Paul Schweikher*, (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 2000), 89.

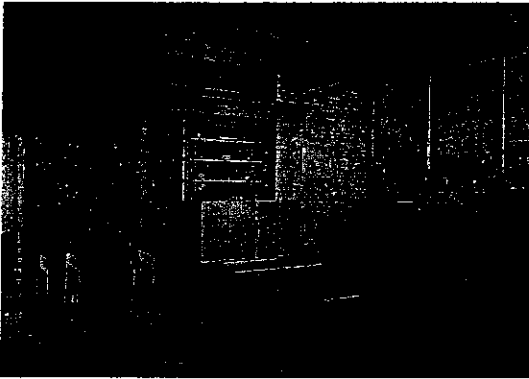
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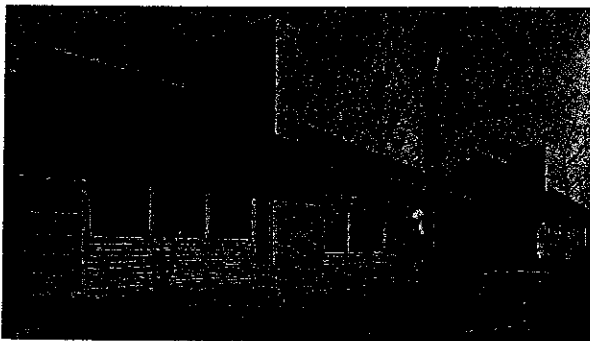
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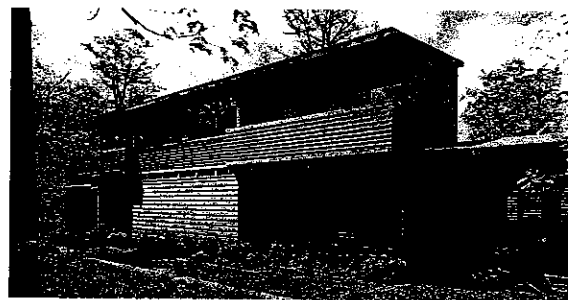
Interior views of Schweikher's own house in Roselle, Illinois.

necessarily go from floor to ceiling<sup>18</sup> in Japanese architecture. At his own house, Schweikher allowed spaces to merge, and he used fireplaces, open shelves, or paper screens rather than walls to suggest "rooms." He also appreciated the blending of interior and exterior space in Japan, which he achieved at his house by carrying brick pavers from the terrace into the interior and by using floor-to-ceiling windows to blur the distinction.

Schweikher's use of material, manipulation of space, and sensitivity to site, so eloquently expressed at his Roselle house, continued to characterize his work throughout his career. Some of the best examples of his work during the early 1940s are the Rinaldo House in Downers Grove, Illinois (1941; demolished); the Lewis House in Park Ridge, Illinois (1940; demolished); and Redwood Village (1938-1941), a cooperative development of eight houses in Glenview, Illinois.



Redwood Village, Glenview, Illinois



Rinaldo House, Downers Grove, Illinois

<sup>18</sup> Paul Schweikher, *Oral History of Robert Paul Schweikher*, (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 2000), 123.

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A third architect, Winston Elting, joined Schweikher and Lamb's practice in 1940. Elting graduated from Princeton and studied at the École des Beaux Arts, but Schweikher never found him an inspiring creative partner. They remained partners until Schweikher left Illinois to become chair of Yale University's architecture school; Elting mostly managed the logistical business of the firm. In 1942, the three men closed their office to join the war effort. Schweikher enlisted in the United States Naval Reserves, though he never went overseas. Ted Lamb was killed when the *Yankee Clipper* crashed in Lisbon in 1942. The firm reopened as Schweikher and Elting in 1945.

Following the war, Schweikher's architecture lost much of its neo-Prairie rusticity. His designs became "less organic, more geometric, boxier," as characterized by his interviewer, Betty Blum, in an oral history of Schweikher conducted in 1984. He relied less on rough, raw materials and began wrapping his buildings in tight skins of brick, streamlining them with long boards of redwood, and encasing space in concrete walls. He retained his concern with material, but these later designs reflect an interest in *manufactured* material: "[W]e were taking industrial equipment as an established constant and making a design with and of it."<sup>19</sup> His architecture became much more volumetric as he layered, projected and recessed planes.

By this point, the German architect and former director of the Bauhaus, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, had settled Chicago to head the Illinois Institute of Technology. Schweikher and Mies were both closely involved in the Arts Club, an exhibit space and social club in downtown Chicago. Schweikher also formed a friendship with László Moholy-Nagy, a Hungarian painter and photographer who had also immigrated to Chicago. Schweikher's postwar architecture may be the result of an instinctive, economic, or cultural shift, but it also may have been influenced by his friendships with these important modernists.

Schweikher began to emphasize volume, rather than mass, in his architecture. This tendency is quite apparent in his increasing institutional designs. At the Fine Arts Building at Maryville College in Maryville, Tennessee, Schweikher designed a complex arrangement of geometric forms, allowing the exterior to express the separate functions of the building (auditorium, classrooms, library and administration). He left the structure exposed, and the administration wing hovered above the ground on stilts. The First Methodist Church (1949-1942) in Plainfield, Iowa, was a low cube of space tucked beneath an angled slab roof. At the Unitarian Church (1956) in Evanston, Illinois, dramatic concrete buttresses enclosed an open auditorium. Schweikher deeply recessed the walls beneath the frame of his buildings, amplifying the appearance of a container of space. A further example of this effect is Faith United Protestant Church (1958) in Park Forest, Illinois.

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<sup>19</sup> Paul Schweikher, *Oral History of Robert Paul Schweikher/interviewed by Betty J. Blum; compiled under the auspices of the Chicago Architects Oral History Project, Department of Architecture, the Art Institute of Chicago*, (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 2000), 171.

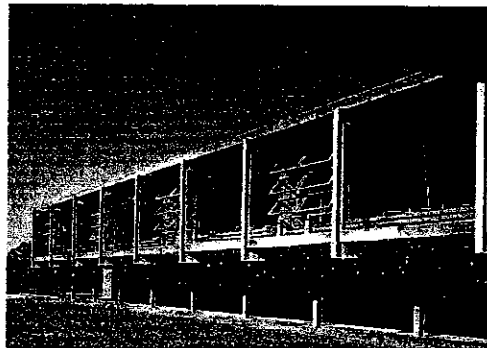
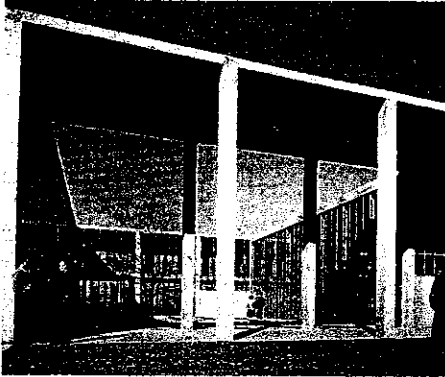
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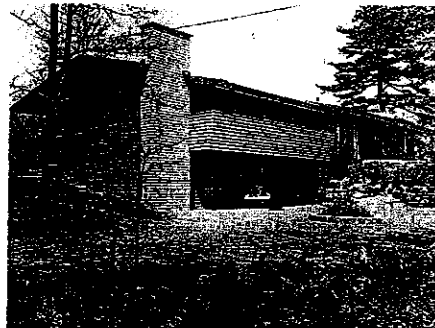
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Two views of the Fine Arts Center at Maryville College

Schweikher's postwar residential designs also took on a more geometric, volumetric aesthetic. He traded in pitched roofs in favor of slabs, and he began to layer forms. Terraces were cantilevered and upper stories projected over lower stories, as seen at the Watts House (1949) in Westchester County, New York.<sup>20</sup> The chimney seemed to function as an additional geometric character rather than as an anchor as it had in his earlier homes, such as the Beatty House (1949) in Lake Forest or the Lew House (1951) in Westchester County. Although he still favored redwood and brick for his residential architecture, Schweikher began to give these materials a more precise and geometric treatment. He laid his brick in a stack bond and used smooth, even boards of redwood that made his houses resemble schooners. Many of his houses adopted the look of a box of space enveloped in a skin, such as the Rockwell House in Flossmoor, Illinois.



The Watts House (left) and the Lew House (right), both in Westchester County, New York.

<sup>20</sup> This house and the Lew House were built near Pleasantville, New York, as part of a cooperative development called Usonia. Frank Lloyd Wright was enlisted as the architect to help design a postwar utopian community for which Schweikher and Elting designed at least two houses. More can be read on this development in Roland Reisley's book *Usonia, New York* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2001).

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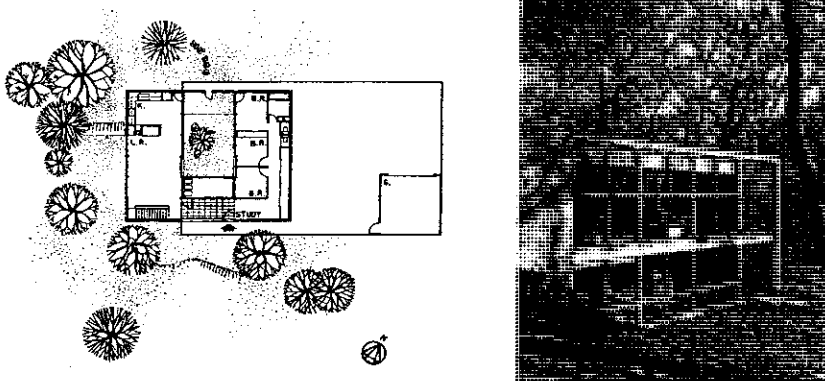
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The Rockwell House is also an excellent example of the use of enclosed courtyards, which Schweikher employed frequently in his postwar designs. Only the entrance and the rear elevation of the house, overlooking a ravine, incorporate glass—the remaining walls are blank. Schweikher inserted a landscaped courtyard with a small rectangular pool into the center of the plan. The Frazel House (1954) in Wayne, Illinois, used multiple courtyards contained within the walls of the house, allowing light and view to every room. Schweikher also used this technique in institutional buildings such as the First Universalist Church (1954) in Chicago. The church turned smooth, blank walls of yellow brick to the street, but all rooms faced inward to a central courtyard with garden, pool, and sculpture. The blank masonry walls of Grace Lutheran Church (1955) in Teaneck, New Jersey hid three interior courtyards.



The Rockwell House plan and exterior view.

The Schiller House is an excellent example of Schweikher's work during this period. It is boxy and geometric with a taut brick veneer and extensive use of off-the-shelf materials. The original arrangement of the house and garage resulted in a layering of forms, and the cylindrical chimney added a dramatic geometric play. With its wood sheathing and central court, the interior maintains Schweikher's characteristic warmth and tactility. The unusual floor plan nearly eliminated interior walls, permitting fluid, overlapping space. Shoji-like screens used to separate the bedrooms and the landscaping of the atrium reflect a Japanese influence. With the interior atrium Schweikher successfully blended interior and exterior space, incorporating the outdoors not just physically but visually.

The Schiller House holds a distinguished place in the varied architectural landscape of Glen Ellyn. Moreover, it represents the work of two great local modernists who earned national reputations for their indelible marks on the modern movement.

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### Keck and Keck

The Schiller House's addition was designed by Chicago firm Keck and Keck, which consisted of George Fred Keck and his brother, William Keck. The firm became famous for its simple, functional, efficient, and affordable homes—and for the sheer scale of its output. Keck and Keck raised the general acceptance and appreciation of modern design. Its work was widely published in books and journals and became iconic of Chicago modernism.

Keck and Keck's addition to the Schiller House is a fine example of the firm's post-World War II work—and it is the only confirmed house of their design in Glen Ellyn. Like many of Keck and Keck's homes, the Schiller House addition emphasizes fluid space, rectangular forms, and large fixed windows with wood louvers for ventilation. It also incorporates southern windows for passive heating, a trademark of the firm. While the Schiller House exhibits typical elements of Keck and Keck's work, it also is sympathetic with Schweikher's design. The addition mimics the original home's materials, massing, and even its fenestration. Schweikher's front façade featured a blank brick wall with a louvered screen door and sidelight. Keck and Keck's façade has a fixed window with a louvered sidelight—a nod, in reverse, to the original design. On the interior, the addition was sheathed in wood paneling to match the original home's interior walls. Overall, the Schiller House addition is both true to Keck and Keck's philosophy and sensitively meshed with Schweikher's design.

Constructed in 1964, the addition is shy of the customary age of fifty years to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. However, scholars already understand Keck and Keck's significance. For example, the International Solar Engineering Society honored Keck and Keck in 1979 for their early use of solar energy in architecture. In 1980, George Fred Keck (who was head of the architecture department at the Institute of Design in Chicago from 1937-1944) was awarded the first Distinguished Service award of the Chicago chapter of the American Institute of Architects for his fifty years of exceptional and innovative architecture. The firm's significance will not diminish in the next six years, when the Schiller House addition reaches fifty years.

George Fred Keck (1895-1980) was born in Watertown, Wisconsin, the son of a German furniture manufacturer. He attended the University of Wisconsin for one year, and finished his degree at the University of Illinois. In the mid-1920s, Keck worked for such notable firms as Daniel H. Burnham and Co., John Ebersohn, a designer of movie palaces, and Schmidt, Garden and Martin. In 1926, Keck went into private practice, designing houses in popular styles such as Colonial and English cottage. In 1929, Keck designed his first modernistic building, the Miralago Ballroom and Shops in Wilmette, Illinois, a white stucco building that merged the International and Art Deco styles.

Keck came to recognition with two houses that he designed for A Century of Progress World's Fair in 1933: the Crystal House and the House of Tomorrow. Both were part of the Home and Industrial Arts Exhibit, a group of twelve affordable and modern model homes. Most took their cues from European modernism and eschewed

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ornament, sloped roofs, basements and maids' quarters and embraced new materials, open floor plans, and terraces. The House of Tomorrow was a steel-framed, twelve-sided house sheathed in tinted plate glass. Its two stories were cantilevered from the central core, which housed the staircase and utilities. The Crystal House, built in 1934, was a three-story glass cube with open-web steel framing. The plan was almost completely open.

Following the fair, Keck built a number of Art Deco-style residences in the Chicago area. Many of his designs employed white stucco walls, flat roofs, glass bricks, and geometric forms. Houses of this period include the Herbert Bruning House (1935-36) in Wilmette, Illinois, and the Bertram J. Cahn House (1936) in Lake Forest, Illinois.

Keck is most famous for his attunement to site and environmental factors and for his emphasis on solar energy. He began studying solar paths in the late 1930s, which led to eaves on the south side of homes that blocked direct sunlight in summertime but admitted winter sun. Keck and Schweikher's 1933 design for a housing project that was exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art and A Century of Progress was an early example of the exploitation of solar angles for both architects.

Keck used expanses of glass on southern façades and little glass on northern façades to discourage heat loss. In 1940, Thermopane windows were introduced. From then on, all Keck and Keck houses had large Thermopane windows protected by wide eaves. The firm also used roof pools to reduce heat transmission and radiant floor heating for efficiency.

The Howard Sloan House (1940) in Glenview, Illinois, was an important house in Keck's solar design. It was stretched out for maximum southern exposure and had shingled shed roofs to block summer sun. Secondary spaces such as garage, hallway, and staircase were located on the northern façade. Sloan, a real estate developer, commissioned Keck to design Solar Park, a development of homes in Glenview in the early 1940s. All houses employed flat roofs, broad overhangs, radiant heating, solar orientation, and fixed windows with ventilation louvers below. The development sold out quickly, and commissions poured into Keck's office.

Like many other architects, Keck's postwar architecture focused on prefabrication. Building materials, especially plywood, became standardized, and allowed for rapid construction of affordable housing for returning soldiers and young families. Keck devoted some of his time to a prefabricated housing company called Ready-Built for whom he designed the Ready-Built Solar House, a prefabricated modular house that made use of overhangs, radiant heating, and water-carrying roofs. The first house was constructed in 1945 near Rockford, Illinois.

Although Keck experimented with a more organic sensibility in the late 1930s, as seen in the Dr. Maurice Rice House (1940) in Stevens Point, Wisconsin, his style always remained clean-edged with heavy hints of the International Style. The Sidney H. Davies House (1946) in Northfield, Illinois, is a good example of Keck's work during the late 1940s. Its principle rooms were located along the glazed southern elevation and secondary

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and service spaces were to the north. The house made use of overhanging eaves, fixed windows, ventilation louvers, radiant heating, and a simple plan with plenty of built-ins. His occasional large homes, such as Jerrold T. Kelly House (1947) in Barrington, Illinois, also incorporated these features.

In the 1950s, Keck produced a huge number of houses, most of which were modestly priced solar designs. However, better heating and cooling systems and cheaper energy allowed Keck to use expanses of glass on every elevation, not only the southern. He continued to use overhangs, radiant heat, and landscape-oriented siting. A further theme is Keck's introduction of a central courtyard or service core to orient his plans. Using this method, he achieved distinct interior spaces. The Walter Gray House (1954) in Flossmoor, Illinois, exhibits Keck's use of the central core to organize the layout, where the kitchen and utility room segregate the living and sleeping wings.

Throughout his career, Keck designed many multi-family dwellings, both for private developers and government agencies such as the Chicago Housing Authority. The firm also designed public buildings such as community centers and grocery stores. Keck and his brother, William (1908-1995), who joined the firm in 1931 and became a partner in 1946, lived in Hyde Park, where many of their community projects were located.

George Fred Keck and Paul Schweikher knew each other and collaborated on several projects in their early careers. They met through their mutual friend, Leland Atwood, in the late 1920s. Atwood began working for Keck as a draftsman in 1933. The three architects collaborated on furniture design in the early 1930s. Marianne Willisich, a member of the Austrian cooperative of artists and architects known as the Werkbund, settled in Chicago in the early 1930s. With Schweikher, Willisich organized the Chicago Workshops, a cooperative based on the Austrian Werkbund, which designed and sold custom-made modern furniture. Willisich designed the interiors of many Keck houses throughout his career.

As mentioned previously, Schweikher and Keck co-designed a solar housing project that was exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art and A Century of Progress, Chicago's 1933 World's Fair. The pair later was hired by the Federal Works National Housing Agency to design defense housing near Rockford, Illinois. The result was Kishwaukee Homes Housing Projects, constructed in 1942. However, this project seems to have been handled chiefly by Schweikher's partners. The Schiller House, therefore, represents the only house that includes the work of both these significant firms. Furthermore, it is among only a handful of high-style modern residences in Glen Ellyn.

### The History of the Schiller House

The Schiller House is located northeast of downtown Glen Ellyn in a rolling, shady neighborhood called Lake Ellyn. The house is one door south of Oak Street on Lenox Road, which runs along the western edge of Lake



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Ellyn Park, the former site of a Victorian resort hotel. The lots are broad in this neighborhood, and the houses tend to be set back on large lawns. The streets are lined with houses of various styles—Tudor cottages, brick Colonials, American Foursquares, Craftsman bungalows—most dating from the early decades of the twentieth century. In recent years, many have been demolished to make way for contemporary residences.

In addition to the predominant architectural styles, fire insurance maps also reveal that this section of Glen Ellyn was well established by the 1920s. The 1929 Sanborn Fire Insurance map shows that most blocks in Lake Ellyn were developed, though no houses had yet been built on the three lots on Lenox Road just south of Oak Street.<sup>21</sup> By 1946, the lots were nearly all filled in, with only a few undeveloped parcels remaining. The Schiller House is positioned on the northern half of a wide divided lot. In the 1930s, a dwelling and a small outbuilding (both demolished) were built on the southern half.<sup>22</sup> The northern half, the site of the Schiller House, was still vacant in 1946. Thus, it seems probable that the Schiller family was the first to develop this property.

Dr. Alfred A. Schiller and his wife, Elizabeth (Lamb) Schiller,<sup>23</sup> purchased the property in 1953 from Harriet A. Adams and her husband, David S. Adams.<sup>24</sup> Alfred Schiller, of Chicago, was a young professor of physiology at the medical college at the University of Illinois, and Elizabeth Schiller, of Wilmette, Illinois, was a trained artist. The couple commissioned Schweikher to design an unusual contemporary home in the traditional neighborhood of Lake Ellyn. Plans for the house were drawn in the summer of 1953, and construction was completed in 1954. The Schillers lived in the house with their two daughters, Paula Caroline and Julie Johanna, only for a short time: Dr. Schiller died unexpectedly at age 39 while visiting San Francisco in April 1955.<sup>25</sup> Mrs. Schiller remarried soon after to Charles Wegener, a humanities professor at the University of Chicago, and moved to 5649 S. Blackstone in Chicago with her children to live with her new husband.

Mrs. Wegener rented the Schiller House briefly, and then put it on the market. A flyer advertising a "Prize-Winning Contemporary Home" attracted the attention of Louis Kaberon, who loved the house immediately. Kaberon and his wife, Louisa, were both children of Jewish immigrants who had grown up in Chicago, Mr. Kaberon on the west side and Mrs. Kaberon in Humboldt Park. They had lived in Hyde Park with their two sons before purchasing the Schiller House in 1957.<sup>26</sup> In 1962, the Kaberons asked Schweikher to design an addition. Schweikher, then living in Pittsburgh, recommended Keck and Keck. That addition was completed in

<sup>21</sup> <sup>21</sup> *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map: Maps of Glen Ellyn (DuPage County)*. New York: Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, 1929, 9.

<sup>22</sup> *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map: Maps of Glen Ellyn (DuPage County)*. New York: Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, 1940 (corrected to 1946), 14.

<sup>23</sup> Schweikher's partner, Ted Lamb, grew up in suburban Chicago. The firm designed several houses for members of the Lamb family, mostly in the 1930s when Ted was still alive. Although it could not be confirmed, Elizabeth Lamb may be a relative of Ted Lamb.

<sup>24</sup> DuPage County Recorder of Deed's Office. Tract Book 691, page 523.

<sup>25</sup> "Obituary 2--No Title," *Chicago Tribune*, 24 April 1955.

<sup>26</sup> DuPage County Recorder of Deed's Office. Tract Book 890, page 205.

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1964. The Kabérons—who had three more children—lived in the house until their deaths. The current owner purchased the house in 2004.

The house's appearance in contemporary publications is noteworthy. It was granted an award citation in the prominent architectural journal *Progressive Architecture*<sup>27</sup> in 1954, and it was profiled in two newspapers: the *Chicago Tribune*'s "Home of the Week" column in 1957<sup>28</sup> and *DuPage Suburban Life* in 1958.<sup>29</sup> The Schiller House is also significant because it is one of Schweikher's last commissions before he moved to New Haven, Connecticut, in 1953. Up to that time, the vast majority of Schweikher's work was residential and primarily located in the Chicago area. Most of his following work was institutional. Moreover, the Schiller House is the only residence that incorporates the work of both Schweikher and Keck and Keck. These two firms are among the best and most well-published of the Chicago modernists; both were nationally-known names in the progressive architectural world.

### A Brief History of Glen Ellyn and the Neighborhood of Lake Ellyn

Glen Ellyn is an upper-middle-class, traditional town west of Chicago. Its architecture and planning reflect the 19<sup>th</sup> century suburban ideal of a pastoral refuge from the city. Like Riverside, the nearby Frederick Law Olmsted-designed suburb, Glen Ellyn has a park-like quality with curving streets, large yards, parks, and many rustic revival-style buildings. Modern architecture—especially high-style designs by very important architects—is uncommon there. Although Schweikher and Keck both designed numerous houses in the Chicago area, the Schiller House is quite significant in Glen Ellyn.

The opening of the Erie Canal brought scores of East Coast settlers to Chicago and the surrounding area in the early 1830s. The first settlers of Glen Ellyn arrived in 1833 via an Indian trail. Portions of that trail still survive, now known as St. Charles Road, which was officially platted in 1843. The point where St. Charles Road and several other Indian trails converged was called "the Corners." Many early homes and buildings were built at this intersection, which was about a day's trip from Chicago.

A general store, a wagon shop, a Baptist church and a blacksmith shop anchored the intersection in the 1840s. A settler from Massachusetts, Moses Stacy, built an inn and tavern at this spot in 1846, and it quickly became a hub of town life and a meeting place for travelers. This section was known as Stacy's Corners. Stacy's Tavern still stands and was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974.

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<sup>27</sup> "Award Citation" *Progressive Architecture* 35 (January 1954): 129.

<sup>28</sup> Louise Hutchinson, "The Home of the Week," *Chicago Tribune*, 7 December 1957, 11.

<sup>29</sup> Alma Jilek, "Here's a House with No Outside Windows," *DuPage Suburban Life*, 23 October 1958.

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The Galena and Chicago Union Railroad laid tracks through Glen Ellyn in 1848, and a commercial center grew around the railroad station. Hotels, grocery stores, a blacksmith, a tobacconist, a cobbler, a lumber shop and a milliner clustered around this new nucleus of the town. However, the village earned a seedy reputation for drunken brawls and brothel hotels.

In 1874, the village changed its name to Prospect Park in an effort to remedy its disrepute, but it was Thomas E. Hill, a politician, author, and developer, who effected true change. Hill and other developers, including Seth Baker, Seth Riford, and A.E.G. Goodridge, bought options on 600 acres of land in 1889 and dammed the stream that ran through town. The lake that formed was called Lake Glen Ellyn (now known as Lake Ellyn) in honor of Mr. Hill's wife, and the village became known as Glen Ellyn in 1891. Mineral springs to the east of the lake were reported to have therapeutic qualities; the water was bottled and served on the Chicago and North Western Railroad. The Lake Glen Ellyn Hotel, a grand resort overlooking the lake, opened in 1892.

The resort was a financial failure. It changed hands several times before burning to the ground when it was struck by lightning in 1906. But it brought tremendous growth to Glen Ellyn, aided in part by advertisements in the *Ladies Home Journal* and New York newspapers. In 1891, sixty-seven new houses were built in the village.<sup>30</sup> Many new residents were attracted to the blocks that bordered Lake Glen Ellyn and the surrounding park. People who bought land from the Glen Ellyn Hotel and Spring Company were entitled to boat in the lake and to have water from the springs. A prosperous, elegant neighborhood developed. As one historian observed, "the name Glen Ellyn became at once the symbol for beautiful woods and pleasant homes overlooking the lake and glen."<sup>31</sup>

In the 1880s, the gentlemen of Glen Ellyn began regularly commuting to Chicago to work. The Chicago Aurora, and Elgin Railway was completed to the town in 1901. By then, nearly every man in Glen Ellyn was a commuter—the town was officially a suburb. Between 1900 and 1920, Glen Ellyn added concrete sidewalks, gas and water systems, telephone and electrical wiring, a library, a bank, a high school, and postal service.

Following World War I, Glen Ellyn experienced another boom. The good transportation and bucolic setting attracted new families. By 1931, the population of the village was over 7,600, double what it was in 1920. Many commercial buildings were constructed in the 1920s, such as the Glen Theatre (1926) and the Glen Ellyn State Bank Building (1929), mostly in the half-timbered English country style, which was encouraged in the business district. Farmland was subdivided and developed with homes in Revivalist styles on large lots. On the rolling, tree-lined blocks of the Schiller House's neighborhood of Lake Ellyn, tasteful homes were set back

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<sup>30</sup> This fact was taken from page 67 of the book by Frederick S. Weiser, *Village in a Glen* (Glen Ellyn: The Anan Chapter, National Society of Daughters of the American Revolution, 1957). He gleaned it from an 1891 article in the paper the *Illinoian*.

<sup>31</sup> Frederick S. Weiser, *Village in a Glen* (Glen Ellyn: The Anan Chapter, National Society of Daughters of the American Revolution, 1957), 68.

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from the road on expansive lawns. But the Depression brought the economy to a halt, and, as in the rest of the country, few buildings were constructed in Glen Ellyn during the Depression and World War II.

After World War II, the population of Glen Ellyn (and DuPage County overall) soared by over fifty percent, thanks in large part to the G.I. Bill, which provided low-interest home loans to returning servicemen, and to the expansion of roadways. The Congress Expressway (now the Eisenhower) was begun in 1951, resulting, eventually, in the failure of the Chicago Aurora & Elgin Railway. The East-West Tollway opened in 1958. Farmland was converted into subdivisions that spread north and south of the historic central village. Although Glen Ellyn resisted the construction of prefabricated homes by passing zoning laws, "vacant lots disappeared so rapidly that presently Glen Ellyn was scurrying about for parking lots and parks and school sites," recalled Frederick Weiser, a Glen Ellyn historian. "Even water scarcity was a problem until a second artesian well was dug on South Newton in 1956."<sup>32</sup> The population of the village was nearly 16,000 by 1960 and it swelled again by forty percent in the following decade.

The Schiller House exemplifies the integration of modern houses into historic neighborhoods following the war. The house is located adjacent to Lake Ellyn Park on a street that runs along the park's western edge. This land was originally owned by the Glen Ellyn Hotel and Spring Company. John A. Brown, a Chicago developer, purchased the land in 1907 from the hotel's receivers after it had gone into bankruptcy. None of the current streets, including Lenox Road, were yet laid out in this section of Glen Ellyn. In 1914, Brown sold the fifty-four acre tract to two developers, Collins and Gauntlett. By that point, Lenox Road and neighboring streets had been platted. Oak Street and other east-west streets were extended into the new subdivision. These streets already existed west of Park Boulevard in subdivisions that had been developed earlier. The new blocks were divided into large lots that measured one hundred feet wide by one hundred and sixty feet deep.

Due to its proximity to the park and lake, Collins and Gauntlett's Lake Glen Ellyn subdivision was desirable and thus rather densely developed. The block of Lenox Road on which the Schiller House is located, for instance, had three vacant lots and eleven developed lots in 1946; the block just south had none. The blocks west of the Schiller House, which lacked views of the park and lake, had more vacant parcels and fewer divided lots. Following World War II, most available lots were quickly developed to accommodate the post-war boom, and many of the remaining large lots were divided. The Schiller House, tucked into the narrow northern half of a lot, illustrates this trend.

Although modern architecture does exist in Glen Ellyn, homes designed by noted architects are few. In addition to the Schiller House, Schweikher designed other houses in Glen Ellyn.<sup>33</sup> Paul Schweikher designed the Donald Berg House, located at 1001 Crescent Boulevard, in 1947. The sloping site allowed Schweikher to situate the house above the garage, which is located at street level. Like the Schiller House, the Berg House turns away

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 78.

<sup>33</sup> Paul Schweikher in fact designed five houses in Glen Ellyn, but only three remain.

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from the street. A narrow ribbon of windows under the deep eaves and a broad common brick chimney break the streamlined exterior of horizontal bands of beveled redwood. But in the rear, two glassy perpendicular wings enclose a wooded yard. Schweikher is also the likely architect of the house just west of the Berg House, located at 987 Crescent Boulevard. It was built in 1953, also for Donald Berg (allegedly for his mother). The house and freestanding garage are small shed-roofed structures, clad in horizontal redwood boards. Although these houses share an architect with the Schiller House, they are each decidedly distinctive from one other.

George Fred Keck reportedly designed the house at 21W325 Crescent Boulevard, though it does not appear in the exhaustive index of Keck homes in Robert Boyce's book, *Keck & Keck*.<sup>34</sup> Clad in common brick with a low-pitched roof, the house is two stories with a garage linked to the main house by a covered breezeway. Narrow louvers border the large fixed-glass windows. Although the Schiller House employs similar windows and common brick cladding, the houses are quite unlike in their massing and overall character.

In addition to being a rare example of high-style modernism in Glen Ellyn, the Schiller House is also significant because it bookends the first period of Schweikher's distinguished career. Following his move to the East Coast in 1953, Schweikher essentially abandoned residential design. Institutional buildings—principally churches and campus buildings—comprised the vast majority of his commissions. Furthermore, Schweikher designed only a handful of buildings in the Chicago area after 1953. Thus, the Schiller House is significant not only for the uniqueness of its design, but also because it concludes the celebrated, imaginative, and prolific first era of Schweikher's career, a career which helped define Chicago's progressive and distinctive brand of modernism.

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<sup>34</sup> If this house is a Keck home, it is most likely the Robert Butters House (1964-65, Milton Township) or the Don Smith House (1958, Valley View, Glen Ellyn). These are the only houses in Glen Ellyn listed in Robert Boyce's book, *Keck & Keck*.

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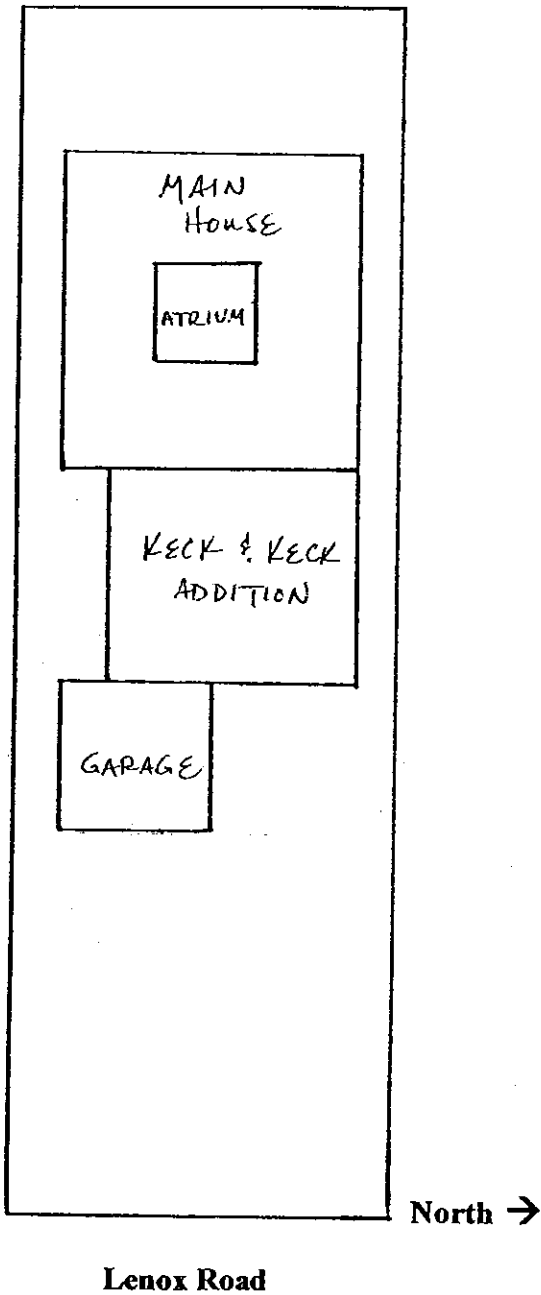


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## Schiller House Site Plan



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### 10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

#### Verbal Boundary Description

The North half of lot seven (7) in Collins and Gauntlett's Lake Glen Ellyn, being a subdivision of lots twenty-two (22) to twenty-nine (29) and thirty-three (33) to sixty-eight (68), all inclusive, in John A. Brown's Addition to Glen Ellyn, in Section eleven (11), Township thirty-nine (39) North, Range ten (10), East of the Third Principal Meridian, in DuPage County, Illinois.

#### Boundary Justification

The boundaries for the Alfred A. Schiller House in Glen Ellyn were chosen because they encompass the lot of land historically associated with the house.

#### UTMs

Zone 16  
412022E 4637514N

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Photographs

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### Key to Photographs for the Alfred A. Schiller House, DuPage County, IL

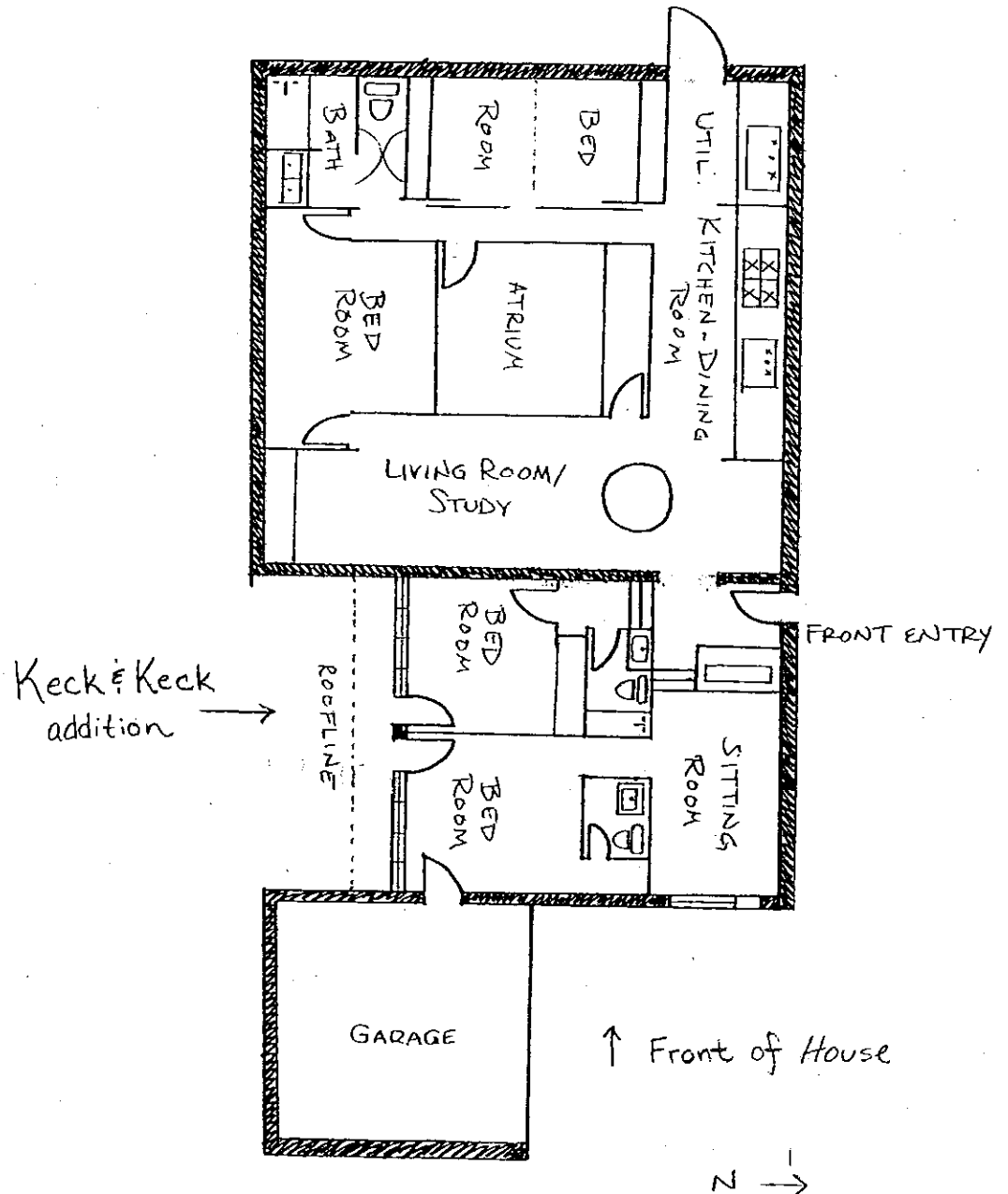
Photographs were taken by author Katharine Keleman in September 2007.

1. East (front) elevation, facing west
2. East and north elevations showing walk and entrance, facing southwest
3. Fireplace, facing northeast
4. Living room and study with courtyard and master bedroom beyond, facing southwest
5. Master bedroom showing wing wall, view into courtyard, and clerestory windows, facing northwest
6. Bathroom sinks with towel rack visible in mirror, facing south
7. Screens enclosing bedrooms, facing south
8. Kitchen, facing northwest
9. Courtyard, with view of master bedroom and bedroom screens, facing southwest
10. Fireplace with view of kitchen and courtyard, facing north
11. Playroom/sitting room in Keck & Keck addition, facing east
12. View of vestibule showing original door and entryway with fireplace, kitchen, and back terrace visible beyond, facing west from playroom/sitting room
13. Western bedroom in Keck & Keck addition showing exposed brick wall and band of windows, facing southwest
14. Donald Berg House I, facing southwest
15. Donald Berg House II, facing south
16. 21W325 Crescent Boulevard, facing south

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GEORGIA, BROOKS COUNTY,  
Harris–Ramsey–Norris House,  
1004 W. Lafayette St.,  
Quitman, 08000832,  
LISTED, 9/05/08

ILLINOIS, COOK COUNTY,  
Ravenswood Manor Historic District,  
Between Sacramento Ave., N. branch of the Chicago river, and alleys S. of Lawrence Ave. and  
N. of Montrose Ave., Chicago, 08000836, LISTED, 9/05/08

ILLINOIS, DU PAGE COUNTY,  
Schiller, Alfred A., House,  
734 Lenox Rd.,  
Glen Ellyn, 08000326,  
LISTED, 9/03/08

LOUISIANA, LAFOURCHE PARISH,  
Lefort House,  
1302 Hwy. 1,  
Thibodaux vicinity, 08000843,  
LISTED, 9/04/08

MICHIGAN, WASHTENAW COUNTY,  
Delhi Bridge,  
E. Delhi Rd. over Huron River,  
Scio, 08000844,  
LISTED, 9/04/08

MISSOURI, JACKSON COUNTY,  
Colonnade Apartment Building at 4302 Oak Street,  
4302 Oak St.,  
Kansas City, 08000857,  
LISTED, 9/04/08  
(Colonnade Apartment Buildings of Kansas City, MO MPS)

MISSOURI, MARION COUNTY,  
Culbertson-Head Farmstead,  
7178 Co. Rd. 402,  
Palmyra, 08000838,  
LISTED, 9/04/08

NEW JERSEY, MORRIS COUNTY,  
Campfield, Dr. Jabez, House,  
5 Olyphant Pl.,  
Morristown, 08000837,  
LISTED, 9/04/08

OKLAHOMA, CANADIAN COUNTY,  
Lassen, Henry, House,