

**BAKER HOUSE**

Form 10-300  
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: <b>Illinois</b>	
COUNTY: <b>Cook</b>	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

SECTION 10111

10th Cong. District-Congressman Samuel Young

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
**Walter H. Sobel House**

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
**Frank J. Baker House**

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**507 Lake Avenue**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Wilmette**

STATE <b>Illinois</b>	CODE <b>17</b>	COUNTY: <b>Cook</b>	CODE <b>031</b>
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**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Comments _____

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
**Walter H. & Betty Debs Sobel**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**507 Lake Avenue**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Wilmette**

STATE: <b>Illinois</b>	CODE <b>17</b>
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**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
**Recorder's Office, Cook County**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**118 North Clark Street**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Chicago**

STATE: <b>Illinois</b>	CODE <b>17</b>
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**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
**Illinois Historic Structures Survey**

DATE OF SURVEY: **1973**     Federal     State     County     Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
**Glessner House**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**1800 S. Prairie Avenue**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Chicago**

STATE: <b>Illinois</b>	CODE <b>17</b>
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STATE: ILLINOIS  
COUNTY: COOK  
ENTRY NUMBER:    DATE:    FOR NPS USE ONLY

**7. DESCRIPTION**

CONDITION	(Check One)				
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins
	(Check One)			(Check One)	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

**DESCRIPTION**

Frank Lloyd Wright's house for Frank J. Baker is a two-story dwelling having neither basement nor attic. Its walls are stucco on metal lath. Exterior trim is of undressed lumber originally stained but now painted. The roofs, low-pitched hips with gutters in the eaves, were originally covered with wood shingles.

The residence, facing north, is reached from the street by a walk and driveway on its west side. The latter leads to a two-car detached garage behind the house. The house is entered by a door in the center of its street front and by a door from the porte cochere.

Inside there is a clear division between the front T-shaped living area and the rear service area. The latter, which becomes Wright's substitute for a basement, houses furnace room, storage, servant's room and kitchen. The living area at front is framed by porches, formerly open but now enclosed, on the east and west. The entry with staircase is centrally located and separates the living and dining rooms. The former is two stories high and projects from the body of the building toward the street.

The second floor is mostly over the rear service quarters. It originally contained a master bedroom suite behind the upper part of the living room, and, on the west, two other bedrooms, a bath and servant's room. A balcony overlooking the living room is reached from the upper stair hall. Two bedrooms and bath over a lower floor were added at the rear in about 1920.

At the south end of the living room under the balcony is a large Wrightian fireplace of rose-colored Roman brick. The east and west walls of the living room are lined with seven-foot high bookcases. Above these are continuous windows under wide spreading eaves. The ceiling is pitched up in the manner of a tent. The north wall is two stories of glass set in mullions arranged as vertically-oriented rectangular panels. Radiators under these windows are concealed by an enclosure, the top of which passes visually through the glass wall to a planter outside.

Trim in the living room and dining room is white birch finished in a honey tone. The floors throughout are oak.

**HISTORY**

Little is known about the commission except that the design was intended for a William N. Guthrie of Sewanee, Tennessee. When that project of 1908 collapsed, Wright took advantage of the existing plans and submitted them in 1909 to Frank Baker. The situation was similar to that of the Isabel Roberts House which originally was designed to stand on the edge of a ravine at Mason City, Iowa, but eventually was built on the prairie at River Forest, Illinois.

The Baker House belongs to a series of similar houses having T-shaped plans and two-story living rooms designed by Wright in 1908-1909. The Roberts House was followed by the Guthrie, Baker, and Steffans Houses.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**8. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **1909**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation			_____

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

**SIGNIFICANCE**

As one of the large residences that belong to the crescendo of Wright's activity before his European trip and bring to a close his Oak Park period, the Baker House is of great interest. Its magnificent living room is one of only a handful of such two-story interior spaces by Wright that survive from this period. The good repair of the house and sympathetic care given it by various owners makes it one of the more representative buildings of Wright's Oak Park period.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Wright, Ausgefuehrte Bauten und Entwuerfe, 1910.  
 Hitchcock, In the Nature of Materials, 1941, pp.45-46, 117; figs. 158-159.  
 Manson, Frank Lloyd Wright to 1910, 1958, pp. 176-178.  
 Drexel, The Drawings of Frank Lloyd Wright, 1962, fig. 19.

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES					
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	LATITUDE			LONGITUDE		
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	° ' "	° ' "	42	04	42	87	41	41
NE	° ' "	° ' "						
SE	° ' "	° ' "						
SW	° ' "	° ' "						

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **Two-thirds of an acre**

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
**Mr. and Mrs. Walter H. Sobel**

ORGANIZATION: **Owners** DATE: **May 1974**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**507 Lake Avenue**

CITY OR TOWN: **Wilmette** STATE: **Illinois** CODE: **17**

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

**NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name: *Walter H. Sobel*  
 Director  
 Title: **State Historic Preservation Officer**

Date: **July 9, 1974**

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Keeper of The National Register

Date \_\_\_\_\_

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

ILLINOIS HISTORIC SITES SURVEY INVENTORY

0007

1. Name of Site:

Common

Sobel House

Historic

FRANK BAKER HOUSE

2. Location:

Street and Number

507 Lake Avenue

City or Town

Wilmette

County

Cook

Township

Section

Zip Code

Range

1/4 Section

3. Classification:

Category (check one)

- District
- Site

- Building
- Structure

Integrity (check one)

- Altered
- Moved
- Unaltered
- Original Site

4. Ownership:

- Private
- Public

Status (check one)

- Occupied
- Unoccupied
- Preservation work in progress

Access to Public

- Yes
- Restricted
- Unrestricted
- No

Present Use (check one or more)

- Agricultural
- Commercial
- Educational
- Entertainment
- Government
- Industrial
- Military
- Museum
- Park
- Private Residence
- Religious
- Scientific
- Transportation
- Other

5. Ownership of Property:

Owner's Name

Phone Number

Street and Number

City or Town

State

County

Zip Code

6. Description: Prairie School

- Excellent
- Ruins
- Good
- Unexposed
- Fair
- Deteriorated

Is there a program of preservation underway?

- Yes
- No

ARCHITECTURE

7. Historical Themes: (check one or more of the following)

- Archeological Site (Pre-Columbian)
- Archeological Site (Post-Columbian to 1673)
- French Influence (1673-1780)
- Illinois Frontier (1780-1818)
- Illinois Early (1818-1850)
- Illinois Middle (1850-1900)
- Illinois Late (1900-present)
- Famous People (give names & dates) F. L. Wright

8. Specific Date: 1909

Areas of significance (check one or more of the following)

- Aboriginal (historic)
- Aboriginal (pre-historic)
- Agriculture
- Architecture
- Art
- Commerce
- Communication
- Conservation
- Education
- Engineering
- Industry
- Invention
- Landscape Architecture
- Literature
- Military
- Music
- Political
- Religion/Philosophy
- Science
- Sculpture
- Social/Humanitarian
- Theater
- Transportation
- Urban Planning
- Other (specify)

Brief statement of significance: (include all names and dates)  
Use additional sheets if necessary. Natl. Register - designed at close of Wright's Oak Park period.

9. Form prepared by:

Name and Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 5/29/75

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Street and Number: \_\_\_\_\_

City or Town: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

During the course of the Survey we often find it necessary to search for a particular site. When filling out the Survey form, please list according to the following example, published references to the site for which forms are being completed. If a bibliography can be compiled, it will greatly deduct from the Survey's task.

Bibliography

Robertson, Robert, Of Whales and Men. New York, Alfred K. Knopf, Inc., 1954.

National Register form

