1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Heller, Isidore, House

Other Name/Site Number: Heller Residence

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 5132 Woodlawn Avenue Not for publication:__

City/Town: Chicago Vicinity:__

State: Illinois County: Cook Code: 031 Zip Code: 60615

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property		Category of Property	
Private:	X	Building(s):	X
Public-Local:	__	District:	__
Public-State:	__	Site:	__
Public-Federal:	__	Structure:	__
		Object:	__

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
__	__	sites
__	__	structures
__	__	objects
1	1	Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 1

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing:

4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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.

Signature of Certifying Official Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

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

Signature of Commenting or Other Official Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ Entered in the National Register
___ Determined eligible for the National Register
___ Determined not eligible for the National Register
___ Removed from the National Register
___ Other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper Date of Action

6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: Domestic Sub: Single Dwelling

Current: Domestic Sub: Single Dwelling

7. DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification: Late 19th Century American Movement: Prairie School

Materials:

Foundation: Stone
Walls: Brick
Roof: Tile
Other: Plaster (frieze and colonnades), Indiana limestone

Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

The Isidore Heller House was designed by Frank Lloyd Wright in 1896. Built in 1897, the Heller House is a free-standing domestic structure located at 5132 Woodlawn Avenue on the south side of Chicago in an area known as Hyde Park. The Heller House, an unusual, large, rectangular structure, was designed to fit a long and narrow Chicago city lot. It sits roughly in the center of this lot with the main entrance on the side away from the street. There is a brick garage located at the back of the lot, which was probably constructed in 1924. Documentation exists that Frank Lloyd Wright designed a stable for the Heller family on this property, but there is no evidence that it was ever constructed. The house is surrounded by other domestic structures, from apartment buildings to other single family houses, development that is similar to the rest of the relatively densely built Hyde Park area.

The overall appearance of the three-story house from the street is rather simple and severe, with its neutral tones and basic geometric forms. It is a one-room-deep plan with exterior dimensions of a 26 foot front, 98 feet deep, and 41 feet high. The total square footage of the house is 9267 square feet. The garage is approximately 25 feet by 26 feet deep. The exterior of the house remains largely intact and is executed in buff and gray Roman brick; the first story is composed of buff brick while the second and third stories have alternating buff and gray bricks. The mortar joints are buff colored in the vertical and are gray in the horizontal, which helps emphasize the horizontality of the house design. The house includes several unique exterior details to juxtapose the simple massing and colors. These include a monitor roof, Romanesque columns at the entry, a colonnaded second story loggia, and the ornate plaster frieze of maidens on the third floor.

The monitor roof is one of the unique forms Wright used in the Heller House. In this roof type, a third story is smaller than the other stories and is capped with it's own hipped roof. It was added above the main eaves of the house. The main entrance of the house, located on the south façade, is a square-headed opening ornamented with Romanesque columns at each side, that are surmounted by a paneled motif that has been described as a vaguely Arabic design.[1] Above this entrance, on the second story, is a piazza or loggia, embellished with a row of elaborate plaster colonnades that support the deep cornice and the third story.

The sculptural frieze of draped female figures on the third story was sculpted by Richard Bock, a well-known Chicago sculptor. These beaux arts female figures were modeled after Frank Lloyd Wright's design for the title page of *The Eve of Saint Agnes*, a book published in 1896. The figures were simplified slightly in the translation from Wright's title page drawings to the Heller House frieze, probably due to the nature of the material, which was hand modeled and cast plastered. The figures are thought to represent angels, which was a popular motif in the late nineteenth century.[2] The influence of Louis Sullivan can be seen in details such as this frieze.

The Heller House is an example of what is termed Wright's "in-line house" or an "I-plan." In this type of plan the living room is situated on one side and the dining and service areas are on the other with a stair hall in between. Other examples of Wright's in-line house include the McAfee house of 1894 and the Husser House of 1899.[3] The approach to the Heller House from the street runs from east to west and is accessed by a stepped

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[1]David Hanks, *The Decorative Designs of Frank Lloyd Wright* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1979), 170.

[2]Ibid., 170.

[3]Paul Laseau and James Tice, *Frank Lloyd Wright: Between Principle and Form* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1992), 76.

terrace that runs perpendicular to Woodlawn Avenue. The main entrance to the house is located on the south, is at 90 degrees to the body of the house, and intersects it at midpoint, between the living room, which faces the street and the dining room which faces the side yard.[4] The space is intended to draw one in from the entry hall to the larger living and dining quarters.[5]

The interior of the Heller House also remains largely intact and is a beautiful example of Wright's choices in the use of space, color, and materials. The three story with basement house includes, living, dining, and service spaces on the first floor, bedrooms and bathrooms on the second floor, and a third floor that was originally designed as a children's playroom and later renovated into a five-room apartment space. There is a full basement, portions of which were converted into a photography laboratory for the current owners.

The house was originally trimmed in quarter-sawn oak.[6] The primary rooms on the first floor--the living room, dining room, and stair hall– have oak woodwork that frames the ceiling and wall spaces. The windows on the first story are one over one sash and the walls in the primary rooms on the first floor are finished in sand plaster and repainted to replicate original colors identified through paint analysis.

The entry vestibule of the house was originally connected to the reception room by a door to the west, which was later filled by a large bookcase and mirror. Evidence of this alteration from the original plan includes oak baseboards that do not match the original quarter-sawn oak of the rest of the house. The newer baseboard was inserted in front of the original threshold between the two rooms.

Through the entry vestibule is the long broad center hall running east to west that includes stairs to the second floor finished with closely spaced oak balustrades. The stair hall, finished in orange paint to match the original color scheme, opens into the dining room, living room, reception room, and service hall.

The living room, located on the east and facing Woodlawn Avenue, includes a brick fireplace framed in oak and built-in bookcases with delicate filigree work on their sides. This room originally included brass light standards that were subsequently removed.[7] The outlines of the bases of these standards remain on the floor in the living room. The room is finished in green, gold and yellow paint, to replicate the original finish color scheme.

The dining room, to the west and slightly south of the stair hall, has another brick fireplace framed in oak, with open cabinets on either side and small wooden columns upon which light standards are set. It has one over one windows on the south and west and is painted in red to replicate the original finish color.

The dining room is connected to the pantry which then leads through to the kitchen. The servants' areas–the pantry, kitchen, and servant's hall--on the first floor are all finished with pine woodwork. On the north side of the house, behind the stair hall and adjacent to the servants' hall, is an elevator that was designed by Frank Lloyd Wright around 1909 which is currently in working condition.

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[4]Ibid., 76.

[5]William Allen Storrer, *The Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1974), 38.

[6]Heller House Drawing, Plate from "The Work of Frank Lloyd Wright" *Architectural Review* 7 (1905), plate 22.

[7]Ibid.

To the east of the elevator, also on the north side of the house, is a wood-framed porch with glass windows. It is not known whether the porch, all or some of its parts, is original to the house or was a later addition. While it is not likely to be original because it does not appear in any of Wright's drawings of the house, it may relate to Wright's elevator addition around 1909 or the other alterations that occurred in 1924.

The main stairway of the Heller House leading to the second floor is illuminated by large art glass windows, a signature design of Wright's. These art glass windows are excellent examples of the totally abstract type of art glass windows that Wright was designing in the early years of his practice.[8]

The second floor includes a long hallway leading to four bedrooms and a sewing room. A number of upstairs rooms are also highlighted with art glass windows. The master bedroom is located on the east end of the house above the living room. It contains a recently restored fireplace, the evidence for which was discovered by the current owners during their renovation of the adjacent master bathroom.

A stairway from the second floor hall leads up to the third floor. This level is composed of a five room apartment space. It was originally intended as a children's playroom according to Wright's plans, but was later divided into an apartment. Original finishes remain in some of the this space along with original bead boards in the area of the long children's playroom.

The Heller House physically reflects its period of significance because it retains so much of its original materials and designs. The overall form, structure, plan, style and materials have been left unchanged and while minor alterations have occurred, original materials and forms remain intact. The exterior brick, limestone, and plaster are still in place; the original plan is unaltered; and the interior woodwork, plaster, sash, and art glass windows all remain.

The Heller House has had ten owners, including the Hellers and the current owners, Judith Bromley and Serafino Garella. Isidore Heller owned the house for approximately sixteen years and sold it after his wife's death to a man named Francis Bickett. Bickett sold the house within a year to Charles McFarlane. In 1924, the Heller House was acquired by Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Mayer, who owned it until 1939 at which point they sold it to Mr. and Mrs. Wilfred Fox. It is believed that the Foxes made the alterations to the third floor. The Foxes sold the house to George Watson in 1948 who owned the house for twenty-five years, which was the longest period of ownership. They sold the house to Lewis Bradford in 1972. During their ownership, the Bradfords were responsible for sandblasting the exterior of the house and renovating the original kitchen. In 1977, the Bradfords sold the house to Victor and Danielle Barcilon, who undertook exterior masonry repairs including re-pointing. He also sold some of the loggia colonettes and the fretwork to museums and dealers. After their ten-year ownership, the Barcilons sold the Heller House to David and Catherine Epstein, who later sold it to the current owners, Serafino Garella and Judith Bromley, in 1995. The current owners continue to exhibit a great deal of reverence and interest in Wright's design. During their ownership, they have restored a bathroom, the master bedroom fireplace and the elevator, and have investigated the original interior finishes.

The Heller House has been occupied as a private dwelling ever since its construction which adds to its value and integrity. Still used and loved as a private residence today, the Heller House has successfully been maintained for its original function, a middle class private dwelling.

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[8]Hanks, *The Decorative Designs of Frank Lloyd Wright*, 54.

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:
Nationally: X Statewide: _ Locally: _

Applicable National Register Criteria:	A_ B_ C X D_
Criteria Considerations (Exceptions):	A_ B_ C_ D_ E_ F_ G_
NHL Criteria:	4
NHL Theme(s):	III.. Expressing Cultural Values 5. architecture, landscape architecture, and urban design
Areas of Significance:	Architecture
Period(s) of Significance:	1896-1897
Significant Dates:	1896-1897
Significant Person(s):	
Cultural Affiliation:	
Architect/Builder:	Wright, Frank Lloyd
Historic Contexts:	XVI. Architecture S. Wrightian

State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

The Isidore Heller House is the most important surviving example of Frank Lloyd Wright's quest for a new style of geometric architecture, independent of historic styles. Designed in 1896, the Heller House was created in the years after Wright left the architectural office of his master, Louis Sullivan. (The rich sculptural detail of a frieze on the monitor arcaded roof echoes Wright's experiences in Sullivan's office.) The Heller House tells the story of Frank Lloyd Wright's development between the time he left the office of Louis Sullivan and the time that he achieved his famous Prairie style. In the Heller House he "abandons the more picturesque and traditional styles of the day, substituting his own strongly geometric style along with the decorative richness of his mentor and former employer, Louis Sullivan."[9] This transitional house clearly shows Wright's new simplified Prairie style that will appear after 1900 as his first mature personal architectural statement.

The house exhibits a number of unique details on both its exterior and interior which mark its distinctive character among other Frank Lloyd Wright domestic structures. The "monitor" roof is an essential part of the Heller House form. It "represents a small inner category of domestic design" characteristic to the formative years of Wright's career.[10] In addition, the living room and dining room appropriated the cruciform shape which would later reappear time and again in his Prairie style houses. This is evidenced by the short rectangular projections visible in the exterior of the wall "corresponding to one arm of the cross within."[11] Moreover, the characteristic second floor added to the structure as a "sort of glazed loggia" is a feature in Wright's domestic design which first emerged in the Heller House, one that would resurface in other Prairie Houses of the later Oak Park period.[12] The Heller House has been described as the key link between Wright's early natural houses and the mature Prairie House. "Changes have been introduced that make the house seem more horizontal and prairie hugging...the roofs appear to hover as though over a void. We seem to have crossed some invisible threshold from the Wright of the nineteenth to the Wright of the twentieth century."[13]

Paul Sprague, retired professor of Architectural History at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, has said that "the Heller House is of special significance because it is the finest of a group of buildings that initiate, in 1897, a transitional period in Frank Lloyd Wright's work, a period that would culminate, in 1900, in a style of architectural design that was entirely Wright's own."[14]

By the mid-twentieth century,

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[9] Chicago Landmarks, "Heller House," City of Chicago Department of Planning and Development, Landmarks Division, http://egov.cityofchicago.org/Landmarks/H/HellerHouse.html (accessed 2002).

[10] Manson, *Early Work of Frank Lloyd Wright*, 76.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid., 183.

[13] Carol R. Bolon, *The Nature of Frank Lloyd Wright* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1988), 8.

[14] Susan Benjamin, *Isidore H. Heller House National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, National Register, History and Education, 1970), Section 8. Paul Sprague was also one of three Wright specialists whom the NHL Survey asked, in 1998, to compile a list of all the Frank Lloyd Wright designs that may qualify for NHL designation. The other two panel members were Dr. Paul S. Kruty of the University of Illinois and Mr. Randolph C. Henning, AIA, of Winstom-Salem, North Carolina. The Heller House was on this list.

> Wright's reputation had been solidified with numerous museum retrospectives documenting his architectural achievements, and a number of full-length publications were released featuring his work. In 1940, the Museum of Modern Art mounted a major retrospective devoted to Wright, and the following year an anthology of his writings, *Frank Lloyd Wright on Architecture: Selected Writings, 1894-1940,* edited by Frederick Gutheim was published. Also in 1941, Wright received the Royal Gold Medal for Architecture from Great Britain. *In the Nature of Materials: 1887-1941*, an in-depth study of Wright's work by the prominent architectural historian Henry-Russell Hitchcock was published in 1942, and in 1943 the revised edition of Wright's *An Autobiography* was published. In 1949, Wright received the prestigious Gold Medal from the American Institute of Architects and published his *Genius and Mobocracy*. In 1951, "Sixty Years of Living Architecture," a major retrospective of Wright's work, opened in Florence. The exhibition traveled to Zurich, Paris, Munich, Rotterdam, Mexico City, New York and finally Los Angeles, where it closed in 1954.[15]

In 1895, the Hellers purchased a long narrow lot on Woodlawn avenue from Jonas Hamburger. In 1896, Isidore Heller commissioned Frank Lloyd Wright to design a house for his family to fit a long narrow lot in the neighborhood of Hyde Park. Heller was part owner of Wolf, Sayer, and Heller Packer's and Butcher's Supplies located at 212 Fulton Street just northwest of Peoria on the northwest side of Chicago.[16]

The lot was enlarged in 1906 when an additional twenty-five feet were added to the south of the original lot. Chicago building records indicate that a permit was issued to Isidore Heller for a three-story brick dwelling of 26 feet front, 98 feet deep, and 41 feet high on 5130 to 5132 Woodlawn Avenue in 1897. William Adams is recorded as the contractor, and the estimated cost for the house was $12,000.[17]

What is known about the Heller family is extracted from census data and city directories. Isidore Heller was born in Austria in 1847 and his wife, Ida, was born in Wisconsin in 1857. The Hellers had three children. At the time of the 1900 census, they had two servants and in 1910, they had one servant.[18] Death records indicate that Ida Heller died on October 11, 1909 from heart disease and shock resulting from an accidental fall at home.[19] Ida's funeral was at the Heller's house on Woodlawn Avenue and by 1915, city directories indicated

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[15]See Frederick Gutheim, ed., *Frank Lloyd Wright on Architecture: Selected Writings, 1894-1940* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1941) and Henry-Russell Hitchcock, *In the Nature of Materials: 1887-1941* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1942). In 1945 the Milwaukee Art Institute organized a major exhibit of the architect's work, and in that same year Wright or one of his designs was featured in at least 23 articles, books or national publications. In 1946 the number rose to 32, by 1949 there were at least 53 and the number of publications by or about Wright continued to escalate throughout the rest of his life and since. The direct quote is courtesy of Isthmus Architecture, Inc., 613 Williamson Street, Suite 203, Madison, Wisconsin from page 16 of the National Historic Landmark nomination for the FIRST UNITARIAN SOCIETY MEETING HOUSE in the Village of Shorewood Hills, Wisconsin written by Isthmus Architecture in 2002. (A copy is available in the National Historic Landmark Survey files, National Park Service, National Register, History and Education, Washington, DC.)

[16]1904 Chicago City Directory.

[17]Record of Building Permit for the Heller House, Chicago, 1897.

[18]Census data from Woodlawn Avenue from 1900 and 1910.

[19]Death Certificate of Ida Heller.

that Isidore Heller resided in Silver Lake and no longer lived at the house on Woodlawn Avenue.[20]

Wright moved to Chicago in 1887 and began working in the office of Joseph Lyman Silsbee, who had been the architect employed by Wright's uncle, Jenkin Lloyd Jones. The next year, Frank Lloyd Wright moved to the office of Dankmar Adler and Louis Sullivan, where he remained until 1893. While working in the studio of Adler and Sullivan, Wright was a frequent visitor to the Chicago World's Fair of 1893, where he was exposed to a great variety of foreign architecture and design. This early exposure to international design was a major influence on Wright's creativity. In 1893, Wright opened his own architecture practice after his departure from the office of Louis Sullivan.

During the years between 1893 and the early 1900s, Wright experimented with a wide range of architectural types and styles. Chicago, as the center of the Midwest, was experiencing unprecedented growth in the decades following the great fire of 1871, allowing for great opportunities for architects. Living in the Chicago suburb of Oak Park, Wright was in a situation where he was able to create and develop innovative designs for an enclave of wealthy clients, many of whom were self-made businessmen.[21] Overall, Wright's clients respected his genius and enjoyed his personality, and often recommended him to their friends and colleagues as an excellent architect.[22] The design for the Heller House occurred at an interesting and formative time in Frank Lloyd Wright's development. During this early period in Wright's career it illustrates his own definitive style, while still borrowing from his earlier influences. (The character of the Heller House design is derived from the James Charnley House (NHL, 1998), built in 1891-1892, also in Chicago, Illinois, and designed by Louis Sullivan, Wright's early mentor, and Wright.)

It has been stated that the greatness of Wright's architecture is dependent on his very conservative commitment to the institution and tradition of the middle class private family.[23] To this end, the Heller House is significant because Wright included elements that he felt were necessary in the private home. In the planning of a house, Wright believed at this time, that the only rooms upon the ground floor, aside from the service areas, should be a hall, a living room, and a dining room, all of ample dimensions, intimately and beautifully related, with a small reception room near the entrance.[24] The Heller house is designed with this plan.

The most significant aspect to the house is the plan, making the Heller House essential in the development of Frank Lloyd Wright's designs. The houses designed by Wright between 1893 and 1900 are considered to be autonomous individual designs in which he was investigating a wide variety of spatial arrangements and formal treatments.[25] For the Heller House, the "inline plan" or "I-plan" is described as a neat enclosure of interlocking parts within a predetermined oblong shape. Other examples where Wright used this plan are the Peter Goan House of 1894, the McAfee House of 1894, the Goodrich House of 1896, and the Husser House of 1899. In this type of plan, the elongated building form is accentuated by a symmetrical and hierarchical living room terminus, an entry approached off the primary axis and to one side, and an internal tripartite division. Wright

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[20]1915 Chicago City Directory.

[21]Grant Carpenter Manson, *The Early Work of Frank Lloyd Wright* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1982), 7.

[22]Donald W. Hoppen, *The Seven Ages of Frank Lloyd Wright* (Santa Barbara, CA: Capra Press, 1993), 20.

[23]H. Allen Brooks, *Writings on Wright* (Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 1981), 191.

[24]Robert Spencer, Jr., "The Work of Frank Lloyd Wright" *The Architectural Review* (June 1900): 67.

[25]Grant Hildebrand, *Pattern and Meaning in Frank Lloyd Wright's Houses* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991), 18.

would continue to develop these formal elements in the house plan for several decades.[26] It is believed that one of the major issues that Wright was facing during these years was the idea of spatial continuity, its effect on the exterior form and the expression of the space in the building.[27] Therefore, what makes the plan of the Heller House particularly significant is not only the "I-plan," but the expansion within this plan. The space of the rooms breaks out of the long oblong mass into a cross axis at the dining room bay and into a similar subordinate mass echoing the main mass at the front living room bay. From this point forward, Wright's houses included the new relation of interior volumes and the exterior mass compositions as counterparts of each other.[28]

In 1911, Frank Lloyd Wright had the honor of having a "large, beautiful portfolio of his works published in Germany by the Wasmuth press. Included in this collection were renderings of the Heller House."[29] The Heller House was recorded by the Historic American Buildings Survey in 1964, made a Chicago landmark in 1971, and placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1972. These recognitions indicate that the house has been identified for its significant architectural design for many years.

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[26]Laseau and Tice, *Frank Lloyd Wright: Between Principle and Form*, 76.

[27]Vincent Scully, Jr., *Frank Lloyd Wright* (New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1960), 15.

[28]Henry-Russell Hitchcock, *In the Nature of Materials* (New York: Duell, Sloan, and Pearce, 1942), 28.

[29]Benjamin, Section 8, continuation sheet.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

__ Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
_X_ Previously Listed in the National Register.
__ Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
__ Designated a National Historic Landmark.
_X_ Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: #No. Ill-1046, 8 photos, 4 drawings
__ Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: #

Primary Location of Additional Data:

__ State Historic Preservation Office
__ Other State Agency
__ Federal Agency
__ Local Government
__ University
__ Other (Specify Repository):

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: 4.8 acres

UTM References:

Zone	Easting	Northing
16	450420	4627700

Verbal Boundary Description:

The nominated property is bounded to the east by Woodlawn Avenue, to the west by an alley, to the north by the boundary with the residential property at 5130 Woodlawn Avenue and to the south by the boundary with the residential property at 5134 Woodlawn Avenue.

Boundary Justification:

The boundaries are the historical boundaries of the Isidore Heller House property and correspond to the lot that was purchased by Isidore Heller in 1895.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

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Date:

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DESIGNATED A NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK
August 18, 2004