



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Abbott, Leslie V., House

other names/site number JF- EH4463

### 2. Location

street & number 2401 Newburg Road

NA

not for publication

city or town Louisville

NA

vicinity

state Kentucky code KY county Jefferson code 111 zip code 40205

### 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 at the following level(s) of significance:

national  statewide  local

6-6-13

Signature of certifying official/Title Craig Potts/SHPO

Date

**Kentucky Heritage Council/State Historic Preservation Office**

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

Signature of commenting official

Date

Title

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register

determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other (explain)

7.30.13

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

### 5. Classification

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Name of Property

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County and State

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

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

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

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
		district
		site
		structure
		object
1	0	<b>Total</b>

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

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

NA

NA

**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.)

Modern Movement

Streamline Modern

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Concrete

walls: Brick (exterior)

Concrete (interior)

roof: \_\_\_\_\_

other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

**Summary Paragraph**

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The Abbott House (JF- EH4463) sits at 2401 Newburg Road, on the corner of Trevilian Way and Newburg Road, in Louisville, Kentucky's largest city. The Abbott House displays Art Moderne or Streamline Modern styling with its wide overhanging eave, decorative porch railings, non-load bearing exterior porch columns and Art Deco glass-paneled front doors and garage door. Apart from the enclosure of the porch on the upper east elevation in the 1980s, the house remains nearly unchanged from its construction in 1949, as designed by its original owner, Leslie Vanarsdale Abbott. The house is being interpreted for its design values. The nominated property is .2947 acres, and includes just the main feature.

### **Surroundings and Character of Site**

To the east and north of the home is a hilly residential area with multiple cul-de-sacs and a variety of homes from different stylistic eras. Most of the homes in this area are neocolonial, minimal traditional, and craftsman styles, though there are sparse examples of rarer home types, such as a shed style home to the northeast. To the west of the home is Bellarmine University and to the south are the Louisville Zoo and more residential neighborhoods with predominantly ranch style houses.

The Abbot house occupies a corner lot, significantly set back from Trevilian Way to the north, and Newburg Road to the west, creating a large front and side yard. The south end of the lot, facing Newburg road, has several large pine trees, approximately six to eight feet back from the road, screening the large windows on the façade from traffic. The landscaping, including trees, were added to the lot when Abbott built the home, while the shape of the lot was predetermined by prior property lines.

### **Exterior Description**

The primary elevation of the home faces southwest, toward Newburg Road; for simplicity's sake that side will be referred to as the "south" side hereafter. The house's other more public façade faces westward, toward Trevilian Way. The south side is three bays wide and one story tall, in a complex asymmetrical design. Exterior brick walls have been painted white, and have decorative beveled molding at the cornice. The south side has a concrete porch, which spans two of the three bays. On the porch are three decorative black shaped-steel planters. These planters are secured to the base of the porch, but do not touch the streamline curved porch ceiling. They are circular steel, black, and tapered. They rise from the porch floor, almost reaching the porch ceiling, where they flare out to a series of curves around the circular interior planter. There is a similar planter on the west entrance porch.

The house has windows of similar type, of varying size, throughout. They move along a wooden track parallel to each other, so that one can slide out and in front of the next window. This style was used in some houses in the late 1960s and early 1970s, but never became popular due to the necessity of perfect design in construction to ensure the windows operated correctly (Vogel 2012). Each window opening consists of an interior window and an exterior storm window. The sliding interior windows are taller than wide, pairs of undivided wood sashes. The exterior storm windows express the interior sash form, but the storms have typically been divided into four glass units from top-to-bottom. The windows have a concrete sill.

The windows under the front porch are separated by a large wooden front door, in line with two concrete steps, which lead to the façade entrance from a stone walkway from the west. In front of a large turquoise wooden door is a glass storm door with thin black bands in geometric designs, breaking up the large glass pane.

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The coping extends around the house seamlessly from the porch ceiling and provides the base of a low-sloped cross-hipped shingle roof.

The porch covers about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the façade, making it asymmetrical, typical of a Streamline Modern building. The façade has 3 more sets of paired windows beyond the covering of the porch. The façade ends on the east with a right angle corner and a wide eave overhang. Along the base of the façade is a garden area with low maintenance bushes, marked by a sinuous mulch bed, which extends to the east elevation.

The east elevation is a series of non-congruous square and curved shaped walls with various setbacks and elevations. The first section is a single bay with a single paired window. About mid-way down this façade are a series of larger bushes and a painted, black steel four-foot fence that runs from the house to the next property lot. This begins the enclosed garden area. Where the gate meets the home there are two more paired sets of windows, wrapping the corner at a ninety degree angle. The wide eave overhang continues around this portion of the east façade. The roof at this point has a white brick chimney, and near that, a flat-roofed dormer with four windows lighting the attic.

On this east side, the one-story section joins the two-story section of the home by an outward curving wall with a large pane curved window, with crank opening. Above this curved section is another set of four 1x1 flat dormer windows.

The final section of the east elevation is one unit in width and two stories tall. The lower portion of this section is white brick. The upper section used to be an open balcony; it is now an enclosed room covered on its exterior with white siding. On the south portion of the lower unit is a door, similar to the entry door, whose storm door has decorative geometric designs; the interior door is wooden panel and painted turquoise. Approximately two feet further down the wall is a paired 4x1 crank operated window, which looks into the old boiler room. A prominent brick chimney stack, original to the construction, spans both the lower and upper unit. This provides an exterior fireplace for the garden area with no decorative mantel and a fireplace for the now-enclosed balcony.

The triangular portion of land formed by the north elevation and the property line, which is visible here via a black steel fence that runs around this side of the home, encloses a garden/patio area. The entrance gate is on the southeast section, and opens to a gray poured concrete patio area with large evergreen and flowering bushes and screening trees along the fence line. The original patio was stone, of the same design as the walkway to the west of the home. There is a small garden area, also filled with low maintenance bushes, ground cover vines, and flowering plants.

The two-story-tall portion of the house continues around to the north elevation. Farther down the west end of the upper northern elevation, where the exterior material changes from the vinyl addition to the white painted original brick, is single large pane window. The lower unit of the north elevation has three porthole windows.

The west elevation begins with a one-story attached brick garage. Its door contains a variety of glass sizes in rectangular and circular shapes. Running above the entire door is a streamline coping with a turquoise underside. Above the coping is the roof overhang. The garage and driveway sit on poured concrete sections that extend from the back of the garage to the road, with a car-width recessed area to the southwest of the driveway, which allows for a backing around area.

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After the garage, the west elevation recesses slightly where the laundry room and breezeway are located. The turquoise-colored coping extends around this area, though it is moved back up, to directly under the eaves. The wall turns ninety degrees, and is recessed again, where the turquoise entry door facing Trevilian Way is located. The door has a geometrically-shaped glass panel storm door. On either side of the door is a column of five marine glass shelves. Beyond the door, the wall curves outward, lit by a 5x4 immovable curved window that lights the kitchen. Farther on is a bump out for the living room whose windows are indicated by a prominent overhanging black and white striped canvas awning.

### **Interior Description**

The inside of the house contains many built-in features that testify not only to Abbott's design ideas, but also to his family's living preferences. The walls are of steel beam construction with poured concrete and a plaster finishing material, this is the main interior structural material in the home. The plastered walls are painted with white molding along the floor and doorways.

### **Entry from Trevilian Way:**

To the left of the entry door are a set of solid white wood French doors with decorative paneling. The floors are a glossy white tile, which continues through out the kitchen, hallway, dining room and laundry room. The tiles are accented in the kitchen and laundry room by black tiles.

To the right of the entrance in the kitchen is a semicircular black built-in bench seat. The covering was originally turquoise vinyl. Continuing the color scheme from the exterior, the ceiling is painted the same turquoise as the door, entrance wall, and underside of the porch ceiling. The south-facing wall contains cupboards, granite countertop, and stainless steel stove/oven. Past the stove is a buffet style cupboard in the same color scheme.

### **East-Facing Hallway (Downstairs)**

The dining room contains a large grey built-in buffet. This buffet is not on the original drawings of the home, it was put in during the original construction. The southern-facing wall, which parallels Newburg Road, has four sets of large 4X1 paired inline bypass casement windows, split by a large wooden doorway leading to the front of the house.

In the den, to the right and left of the entrance, are sets of L-shaped shelves above a similarly-shaped cabinet area, present on the original plan.

The final door on the right from the east-facing hallway is a bedroom. The flooring in this room is original light-grained hardwood. At the end of the east-facing hallway used to be another bedroom, which has been converted into a living area/sitting room. Again this room has light-grained hardwood flooring that is original and visually separates the bedrooms from the other rooms in the home.

### **North-Facing Hallway (Downstairs)**

To the left of the kitchen entrance is a sinuous hallway, which slopes down slightly as it terminates at the garage entrance. This hallway has a nautical feel to it and is reminiscent of a cruise ship design prevalent in the Streamline Modern movement. The walls in this hall are not merely straight and flat, but jut in and out, and gently curve, giving the space an almost wavelike feel.

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The only bedroom on the north-facing hallway is the largest in the house and follows the nautical-like curves present in the hallway. To the right of the entrance is a straight wall with a floor-to-ceiling built-in shelving unit, original to the house design.

The attached bathroom is a small area with the toilet. An approximately three-foot wall, with a black granite top and a glass pane with frosted square geometric designs, separates the toilet from a white square tub that also occupies half of the north-facing wall. This bathroom's walls are medium-sized grey tile, from floor to ceiling, with two thin dark red bands of tile running to the ceiling. The floor is made of octagonal off-white tile, and all doors. Where the tile meets the floor there is a small dark red molding.

The laundry room/breezeway contains a set of cabinets that were originally in the kitchen. Above the cabinets is a 1950s off-white refrigerator, now used as a cabinet. This refrigerator was discovered upon the current owner's purchase, and moved to this room. The north-facing wall is occupied by a washer and dryer and a large white ceramic two-basin country kitchen sink, set into black painted cabinets. To the left of the sink is a small shelving unit. The west wall, which runs parallel to Trevilian way and overlooks the driveway, has paired 3x1 windows.

#### **Attached Garage (Trevilian entrance)**

The north-facing hallway ends at a wooden door that opens to the attached garage. The door opens to a short narrow concrete staircase with a black steel banister complete with a decorative curl design on the underside at the end. All the interior walls of the garage are painted the same turquoise as the exterior doors and porch ceilings, and the kitchen ceiling.

#### **East-Facing Back Hallway**

The house was originally heated via radiant heating—water heated in a boiler and then pumped through copper pipes in the floors and walls. The remnants of this can be seen in the house's original boiler room. Though the boiler has been removed and the house is now heated through forced air heating, much of the remains of the old heating system can be seen. A 6' x 4' concrete pit with a drain near the south wall is evidence of the boiler; sealed copper pipes can be seen running along the south end of the pit.

#### **Stairway**

At the end of the curve in the north hallway is an open concrete staircase leading up to the second floor and attic door. Upon reaching the top of the staircase there is a short narrow hallway.

Off of this stair hall is an upstairs bathroom and bathroom with a floor of black concrete, with a shower in a white-tiled alcove. On the east wall of the shower, near the top, is the original chrome shower light fixture with cylindrical glass cover.

Also upstairs is an entertainment room with a 1950s oak bar and bar light as the centerpiece, as is another upstairs bathroom. The room contains built-in shelving, and the east wall opens up, via two sets of large French doors, to a shelving unit. These wooden French doors have three large rectangular glass panels inlaid to allow for maximum lighting, as this area used to lead to a balcony and faces east. Beside the French door, running up against the south wall is another recessed shelving unit.

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The French doors in the entertainment room lead onto the original open balcony, which was enclosed in 1980. Evidence of the original black steel railing can be seen in a small bit of steel visible at the base, where it was sawed off when the room was enclosed. The floor is laid red brick from when the balcony was not enclosed.

### **Attic**

The entire attic floor is unfinished concrete, including the three helix stairs that lead up to the large open room. The shape of the roof can be seen clearly, as the attic is unfinished. The stairs lead into a large open room with short walls and a slanted ceiling in form with the roof. The walls are unfinished poured concrete with steel reinforced beams, as through the rest of the house, except here there is no plaster cover on the walls. The ceiling has metallic silver drop panels, with the steel beam framing exposed. The beams are marked as originating from the Illinois USO.

The east-facing wall has a set of 1x1 ribbon crank open windows where the roof meets the wall. The attic contains a large room, a medium-sized unfinished room, and a small storage closet off the larger room.

### **Changes to the House since the Period of Significance**

The home has been altered little since its construction and despite the fact that it has changed hands three times since Abbott's family owned the property. The radiant heating boiler system has been removed and replaced with forced air heat that allows for both heat and airconditioning, a system that was not available with the boiler heater. There have been interior changes in the décor and appliances, especially in the kitchen to allow for the updating of appliances. The upper unit of the north square on the east elevation was originally an open deck area with a fireplace. It had a black steel railing that was secured to a poured concrete base with red brick flooring. In the 1980s the owners enclosed the deck. This is the only addition to the original home. Though the addition was enclosed with wood frame walls and vinyl siding, the original brick balcony floor and concrete rail ledges remain, along with the fireplace that runs from the first-floor exterior to the balcony. The interior of the home has been renovated, yet still retains much of its original feeling.

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**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1949  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1949  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

NA  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

NA  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Abbott, Leslie Vanarsdale (architect)  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance (justification)**

The Period of Significance is the year of construction, 1949, which follows the National Register convention for selecting the Period of Significance for an architecturally significant property.

Criteria Considerations: NA

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## **statement of Significance**

### **Summary Paragraph**

The Leslie V. Abbott House (JF- EH-4463) meets the first term of National Register Criterion C, as it possesses the distinctive characteristics of a type of construction. In this nomination, the type is an architectural style, Streamline Modern/Art Moderne. The significance of the house is evaluated within the context "Streamline Modern in Louisville, Kentucky." The Abbott House was designed by local architect, Leslie V. Abbott, and built in 1949 as his private residence. Abbott was best known for his work in designing functional constructions, such as local distilleries and Parkway Field (now demolished). The house has had three owners since the Abbotts, and has been altered little since its construction. The Abbott House remains a functioning example of locally rare type of residential architecture.

### **Historic Context: Streamline Moderne Design in Louisville, Kentucky**

The main design element present at 2401 Newburg Road is the Streamline Modern or Art Moderne style. This type of architecture was popular nationally in the 1920s and 1930s. Though less-often seen in domestic architecture, the style was prevalent in industrial and commercial projects.

"Moderne" style is used here as a blanket term to define many architectural variations that follow common themes, philosophies, and styles. "Aesthetically the objectivity of early modernism has 3 grounds – 1) ...austerely elemental shapes and...rationalistic ideals of order, 2) the alleged objectivity of those contemporary movements in painting which might be described as various kinds of purified cubism, 3) in shapes of machinery" (Jordy, 1963). Though the various types of modern architecture changed over time, a basic underlying philosophy and aesthetic are present throughout its many instance which allow us to observe some consistencies.

The Moderne Movement was focused especially on the Platonic idea of structure as pure form. Complex arrays of geometric shapes and industrial-strength building materials, were a large part of creating a moderne, visually stimulating structure.

The shape of the interior was also an important aspect of the Moderne Movement. "A modernist house was spacially open and, at least symbolically, socially transparent" (Benton 2006). As a result of these ideologies, Modernist homes in general were a series of squares, rectangles, and other geometric pure forms, put together in such a way as to create a standing artistic representation of cubist aesthetic. This was architecture which moved away from comfort and became focused on the ideas of progress, technology, and art (Benton 2006).

Though born in Europe, through various modifications, the Moderne Movement translated to the American continent during and after World War II, fostered by many European architects who escaped from Nazi-occupied areas to America before the 1940s.

In America, Modernism became an "economic and stylistic response to the effects of the Great Depression" (Trieschmann and Weishar n.d.). The Great Depression in America had led to a significant lack of private architectural growth. Even as the Depression ended, the effects of the intense poverty were fresh in the minds of the American public. Modernism allowed the construction of more austere practical buildings that could be aesthetically appealing, while still retain the art

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inherent in architecture. The modern movement that fit so well into the public psyche of the generation that lived through the Great Depression also spoke to the people who felt the effects of rationing created by America's involvement in WWII.

McAlester and McAlester define the following as the distinctive characteristics of Streamline Modern:

- smooth surfaces
- curved corners
- horizontal emphasis
- the feeling that an airstream could move smoothly over them; thus they were streamlined

The more general Art Moderne indicators are

- smooth wall surfaces
- flat roof
- horizontal lines
- asymmetrical façade
- one or more corners curved
- windows continuing around corners

Interior spaces in modernist homes are often large, with ample sunlight from ribbon windows. Whenever possible, "free standing furniture is replaced by built-in fixtures, which are ingeniously arranged to meet practical needs" (Benton 2006). The curved walls of the exterior are often reflected in the interior spaces.

The Modern Movement grew out of an early-20<sup>th</sup>-century disdain for applied decoration and revival styling, in favor of an aesthetic that connoted progress. During this period there was an emphasis on structural honesty (McAlester and McAlester 1984).

For some, the use of cylindrical or curved forms became a tribute to the progress ascribed to the Machine Age, alluding to large industrial figures such as grain elevators and smoke stacks (Ricciotti 1988).

### **Art Deco and Moderne Styling in Louisville**

Luckett observes about Louisville's early progressively-designed buildings erected 1941-1950, "lack most of the eclecticism and intricate ornamental work of the early Deco/Moderne periods. Instead, one finds gravitation towards either Streamline Moderne or Classic Moderne. In the previous decade, business and industry began to simplify their ornamentation as part of a no-frills lower-cost improved-productivity approach for their buildings... The emphasis during WWII on rationing reinforced a minimalist approach" (Luckett 2011). Coupled with this aesthetic that didn't rely on applied ornament, the move towards the Streamline and Classic Moderne motif was an "early post-war culture of celebratory consumerism and an embrace of new materials and techniques of moderne architecture" (Benton 2006).

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In Louisville, as in much of the nation, this celebration of consumerism was tempered by the recent past of the economic catastrophe. That resulted in a move away from the Deco/Moderne trend and into the more austere Streamline trend. Even in celebration of the nation's economic survival, a humbleness is revealed in the type of consumerism during this boom, especially in the architectural field. This trend is seen in the Abbott House.

There has been one survey completed in Louisville for Art Deco/Moderne architecture. It has been used by two local architects, Chris Gilbert and Dade Luckett, to support two nominations (Miller Paper Company Buildings and Jefferson Jacob School, respectively). The survey resulted in the identification of 66 Art Deco/Moderne building in Louisville, with a follow up investigation of 30 properties. Though this survey has various examples of commercial architecture, it does not include residential Moderne architecture, since at the time of the survey only two properties were identified as sufficient to research. Abbott, a self-taught architect, often studied other buildings to understand new architectural techniques and broaden his understanding of the field. He also worked often on commercial building in Louisville, and his home reflects this understanding of local architecture (Stong 2013).

The information that follows is drawn from Gilbert's and Luckett's work. Though lacking in the residential element, these examples allow the current nomination to sets Abbott House within the greater context of Modernist Architecture in Louisville.

#### **Deco/Moderne Buildings from 1931 to 1940.**

Louisville structures built during 1931-1940 appear more of a response to the social and economic forces at play than an effort to explore the style's aesthetic possibilities. Suffering through the Great Depression along with the rest of the nation, Louisville received WPA assistance for municipal and public buildings. Louisville was also impacted by the Great Flood of 1937, the worst flood in recorded history, that submerged 70% of the City, and that focused building resources on renovation. The main positive for the local economy was the lifting of Prohibition at the end of 1933, which spurred the construction of new distilleries and manufacturing plants.

The structures built during this time follow one or more of these general trends:

1. A continued associated of Deco/Moderne, via the WPA, with schools and public buildings. Generally, the details on these buildings become absorbed into the surfaces of the buildings, with greater emphasis placed on framed entrances and porticos. Some intricate detailing and patterning can continue, but only at the most street-level portion of the facade:
  - a. The Valley High School, where details become limited to, but highly emphasized at, main doors and cornice lines;
  - b. The more simplified lines and form of the Federal Court Building;
  - c. The modest survival of floral patterning, on the single story Fire Department Headquarters ;
2. A general association of Deco/Moderne, by Louisville businesses, with industry and modernization, coupled with a geographic push towards the rail yards laying outside the central business district. During this time, many of Louisville's most notable Deco/Moderne structures become parts of large scale manufacturing facilities located in newly created industrial parks. As a center for multiple rail lines, Louisville has different manufacturers

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locating at different rail yards. So, the new bourbon distilleries and soda bottling plants become dispersed over a much broader portion of the city.

- Introduction of Streamline Moderne elements—curved corners and horizontal emphasis, which create lines consistent with objects in fast motion, such as cars or airplanes;

Examples of Deco designed buildings from 1931-1940 in Louisville follow:

Deco Buildings from 1931 to 1940			
Current Name	Original Name	Constr. Date	Comments
Godsey and Associates Architects 2nd & Market NRHP #85000559	German (Liberty) Bank Bank and Annex	1932	* 1932 Annex Demolished since property became listed on NRHP  * original early 1900's (Beaux-Art style) still intact
Brown Forman Warehouse "A" 18th & Howard NRHP #89001144	same	1936	* modest Deco element of a single-story horizontal band near top of 11-story brick warehouse
Valley High School 10200 Dixie Highway	same	1936	* convex stone fluted columns "waterfalling" over the 3-story stepped projections of main entry * stone 1st floor, brick 2nd and 3rd
Manufacturing 2500 Seventh Street	Joseph E Seagrams Distillery Building	1936	* part of larger complex of buildings  * Headquarter buildings neo-classical  * more thorough use of ornamental limestone and metal accents
demolished 434 West Broadway	Greyhound Bus Terminal	1937	* Streamline moderne by WS Arrasmith, designer of similiary styled terminals across the US
Louisville Fire Dept Headquarters 1135 West Jefferson NRHP #81000283	same	1937	* stone with floral & geometric patterns above and trimming the truck and regular openings * symmetrically stepped façade * multi-hued terra cotta cornice trim
Fischer-Klosterman Building 822 S. 5th Street NRHP #83002634	Bernheim Distillery	1937	* more Streamline elements  * alternating horizontal stone & brick bands * rounded corners with glass block

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Deco Buildings from 1931 to 1940			
Current Name	Original Name	Constr. Date	Comments
Fiscal Court Building 531 Court Place	Fiscal Court Building	1938	* more simplified vertical emphasis and stepped volumes * brick patterns between windows * previous cornice ornament removed when extra floors added—10 total floors
Coca-Cola Distribution 1661W Hill Street	Coca-Cola Bottling Plant	1940	* more Streamline elements * alternating horizontal stone & brick bands * 2-story

**Deco/Moderne Buildings from 1941 to 1950.**

With the drop-off in both warehouse and WPA-related work, the remaining buildings in the Survey represent a sunsetting of stylistic trends:

The strong horizontal lines and asymmetrical forms of Streamline Moderne find small- and large-scale expression.

Deco Buildings from 1941 to 1950			
Current Name	Original Name	Constr. Date	Comments
Trinity High School Communications Art Center 4011 Shebyville Road	Armory of the Kentucky National Guard 149th Infantry	1941-2	* WPA project with greater visual emphasis on entrance and less detailing elsewhere
Louisville Fire Dept. Station #9 617 East Breckenridge	same	1946	* Streamline elements applied to non-truck volume of bldg * horizontal stone bands and curved cornice * vertical fluted flush columns
Courier-Journal Bldg. 525 West Broadway	same	1947	* strong Streamline emphasis with rectangular & zig-zag ornament * ribboned, horizontal windows * rounded primary bldg. corners
The Indatus Building 118-122 East Main St	Miller Paper Co.	1947	* strong Classical Moderne elements used for monumental effect * key transitional building leading into the rational, rectilinear elements of the International Style

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### **History of the house's architect and first resident, Leslie Vanarsdale Abbott**

Leslie Vanarsdale Abbott was born 1885 in Illinois, and died of a heart attack in 1953 on a business trip in Mississippi. He is buried in Cave Hill Cemetery.

He married Naomi Benson, and had five children. Naomi was his second wife; his first wife passed away. On May 15, 1906 he was initiated into the Scottish Rite Masons, listing his occupation as "clerk," and joined Morning Star Lodge #734 in Canton, Illinois. He achieved Master Mason on May 29, 1906.

Abbott's first construction projects were more functional than aesthetic. He was a self-taught architect, whose career thrived without the benefit of college education. His early projects concentrated on distilleries and the Knebelkamps gave him his start in Louisville after his move from Canton (Stong 2013). With national Prohibition of alcohol sales (1919-1934) curtailing the construction of distilleries in the US, Abbott found work in Canada—designing distilleries in Quebec, Montreal, Toronto, and Amherstburg.

In 1930 the Kentucky state legislature mandated that architects register. In November of that year Abbott became the 66<sup>th</sup> architect practicing in Louisville (Oberwarth 1987). While a member of the Louisville Masonic Lodge, he assisted in the design of the new Shelbyville Masonic Home (Wiser and Madryga 2010). He continued in the masons for 47 years, transferring to the Louisville branch on April 21, 1937 (Masons 2012).

He is best known in Louisville for his work on these industrial projects and his design of Parkway Field, a professional baseball field where both Babe Ruth and Jackie Robinson played, on Eastern Parkway. Abbott completed the construction of the field with his hand-picked crew in about 78 days, working throughout the night with spot lights attached to trucks in order to complete the project in time for the opening of the season (Stong 2013). The field was in operation until 1996, after which it was demolished (Wiser and Madryga 2010, University of Louisville, n.d.). He is known to be involved with the Bernheim and Brown Foreman distilleries, the Pepsico plant, a Lincoln and Chevrolte dealership, and designed a small gas station on Norris Place in the Highland District of Louisville. That construction is poured concrete, similar and near to the home he later built for himself (Lyons 2012).

In 1949, Abbott's home was constructed on Newburg Road from plans he had drawn. Of interest in the project is that the house shows Abbott had an eye for high style design, even though his professional output seems more functional than aesthetic.

Abbott's son, Leslie Vanarsdale Abbott, Jr., followed in his father's footsteps as a designer. He attended Georgia Tech's school of design and engineering, and was a member of an engineering honors fraternity, Tau Beta Pi. He also worked in Louisville as an architect.

Leslie Abbott, Sr.'s prominence as a local distillery architect led to his use as an expert witness in a dispute between John P. Dant and Pabst. He was called upon to assess the value of distillery warehouses and machinery for Meadow Lawn Distillery Company. The court transcripts describe his expertise as follows; "Architect and designing engineer who has practiced in Louisville since April 9, 1912 and who has specialized in large industrial work, mostly distilleries" (John P. Dant Distillery Co.

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Inc. Vrs. Pabst 1947). This court case acknowledges Abbott's contributions to the distillery industry in Kentucky, which created nationally-reconized products and his involvement with modern design techniques.

His daughter, Ann Abbott Stong, said of his construction, "Dad always made sure his buildings would last." He wanted to construct quality utilitarian buildings, not wanting to use design to call attention to himself. Ann stated that all of his construction crew were, "like a part of the family. Dad would have them over every Christmas, early, and give them gifts before they went home to have Christmas with their families." His men were always welcome at his home and often Ann would accompany her father on his projects. Abbott refused to hire union workers, which led to tension between him and the union men. He reasoned that he wanted his crew available at all times to complete a project whenever necessary. He also paid much better than the unions to compensate his men for not joining and allowing him to mandate work time and length (Stong 2013).

His family orientation showed through in his house construction, where many amenities, such as the radiant heating, were done for the sake of his wife, who was experiencing heart and lung problems. His choice to construct the home, itself was influenced by his wife's need to have first-floor access, as maneuvering stairs was becoming difficult for her, and her daughter says she and the rest of the family were consulted on the home's design and construction (Stong 2013).

The interior walls are three-foot-thick concrete with steel reinforced beams, while the exterior is white painted brick, both of which would be at home in the industrial vocabulary. What departs from the industrial aesthetic, though, are the house's streamlined curves, reminiscent of a cruise ship, as are the large double bypass windows facing Newburg Road.

### **Evaluation of the Architectural Significance of the Abbott House within its local architectural context of Moderne Design in Louisville, Kentucky**

Leslie Abbott's daughter remembers his insistence to his family that they should avoid any action that could be perceived as "snobbery" (Stong 2013). He followed his own philosophy in the construction of his family's home. The home reveals the tensions between the Modernist's high art ideals of a house and the pedestrian needs of a family home. These tensions were prevalent on a national scale during this time of rapid technological progress and change. The need for human comfort drove a wedge between residential architecture and commercial architecture, which resulted in the relatively small number of purely moderne homes built during the movement. Abbott's home stands as a cohesive joining of both the philosophy and aesthetic appeal of the Moderne movement and the needs of human comfort within their dwelling.

Buildings created in this era, including Abbott's home, reveal these tensions that permeated the nation, even in the midst of a new wave of patriotism and celebration. The difficult times seemed finally in the past, but not far enough in the past to allow the nation to forget the trials it encountered so recently.

If the Great Depression influenced austere decorative choices and the Streamline motif in general, new technological advances and the tensions that resulted from the good and destructive aspects of technology also had an influence on the design and machinery of the moderne home. While the world breathed a collected sigh of relief at the end of WWII, the beginning of the Cold War

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two years later created a more subtle, yet equally terrifying era in history. Even in Louisville, the tensions resulting the destructive capability of the atom bomb were intimately felt. This is best revealed in the comment by one of Abbott's neighbors during the construction of the home. Ann Abbott Stong remembers a neighbor a few houses down who often came to see the home as it was being built. He remarked that if anything were to happen he and the neighborhood would be moving in (Stong 2013). Such sentiment, over the looming threat of nuclear war, led many in the United States to construct bomb shelters employing similar thick concrete walls with steel beam support.

While the construction and materials chosen resembled a contemporary Safe House, the moderne home was also known for its use of the newest technologies. Abbott fully embraced the shapes and forms prevalent in the moderne movement. Anne Abbott Stong says her father's work typically displayed the curves, circles, innovative windows, and lasting building materials (Stong 2013). The movement's drive to utilize quality materials was another aspect that Abbott fully embraced. Moderne construction favored "smooth surfaces materials," such as concrete and steel. His industrial work acquainted Abbott with the virtues of poured concrete and steel beams. Abbott used a familiar medium in shaping his own home.

He also installed a radiant heating system that was novel for its time. Many of his doors were the modern pocket doors, which slid out of sight into the wall, allowing for a more open environment and ease of movement. Finally, Abbott utilized modern window construction, in the inline bypass windows, which relieved the house of the need for space for the windows to open out.

The home's exterior also displays many aspects of the high art Moderne Movement, such as the irregular geometric shape of the home and modern materials utilized in its construction. Abbott's house is a series of squares laid on a horizontal plane, joined by curved features, such as windows and porches. These features result in an irregular U-shape with an asymmetrical façade, a tribute to the Moderne Movement's attempt to move away from classic designs to create shapes and viewpoints never before seen in architecture. The house adheres to the moderne aesthetic of "an amalgamation of numerous square, rectangular, and curved blocks to create a visually stimulating multi-dimensional structure" (Trieschmann and Weishar n.d.). The shape of Abbott's home resembles outwardly the appearance of a cruise ship. These nautical influences were prevalent in early streamline modern architecture from the 1920s and 1930s, and though the final product of the home has a muted resemblance to this moderne motif, it is still present (Bayer 1992).

While the exterior shape and decorative choices adhere more to the high art moderne movement, Abbott made some interior choices that follow the philosophy of the moment as well. The most prevalent moderne motif inside the home is Abbott's choice to create as many built-in furnishings as possible to maximize the amount of living space. During the moderne movement, "free standing furniture was replaced by built-in fixtures which are ingeniously arranged to meet practical needs" (Benton 2006). Abbott created more living space in the kitchen by creating a built-in bench seat for the dining area. In the living room he created a built-in buffet with drawers and cupboards that encompasses the entire east wall. All of the bedrooms have built-in closets, various cupboards and three-foot-deep drawers. All of these choices made more room available for the family's daily activities.

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Though the Abbott house adheres to most of the criteria for Streamline Moderne stated above, it differs in that the exterior walls, instead of being completely smooth, are of brick construction. Moderne architecture favored smooth wall surfaces without texture, such as poured concrete or plaster. The interior walls also deviate from the normal moderne technique of making sure the structure is clearly visible and not hidden under other surfaces. The interior walls, though made of poured concrete are covered in plaster for a more home-like environment. The cold and austere uncovered poured concrete would not have created this effect. The types of interior choices that were made against the moderne aesthetic were essentially choices of comfort and the need to create a home environment, while still embracing the appeal of a modernist visual field.

The interior of the home, instead of having large open spaces, is split into smaller rooms, the largest of which is the dining/living room on the southwest portion of the first floor. This goes against the Moderne Movement's philosophy of large open spaces. These smaller spaces allow for privacy and a more intimate setting by limiting the number of people that can occupy one room at a time. The separation of floor materials, from concrete to hardwood, also visually separates the common living spaces from the private bedrooms. The hardwood itself lends a warmth to the sleeping spaces, though it isn't a "new" material most often used in moderne buildings.

The most visible alterations to the moderne aesthetic can be seen on the exterior of the home. The roof is of a low slope, and a cross-hipped variety, instead of flat and there are a few decorative elements that harken back to the recent Art Deco past of the Moderne Movement. The roofing choice, though probably somewhat a preference, may also have had a practical element. Louisville, while a city of the south more than the north, may still receive inclement winter weather. A completely flat roof would require more maintenance, an obvious disadvantage to an older couple. The slope to the roof allows precipitation to quickly run off the roof, extending the life of the roof and leading to fewer necessary repairs. This shows Abbott's affinity for utility in his buildings. His building shows an awareness of the art of architecture, as well.

The exterior decorations are reminiscent of the Art Deco movement of the 1920s and 1930s. Streamline Modern evolved from this style, losing most of the decorative elements, but retaining the popular shapes of Art Deco (Bayer 1992). The few decorations that remain—steel columned planters on the porches, geometric designed glass panel storm doors, and the unique garage door—add color and character to the home without drawing from the general appeal of the clean lines and geometric pattern. They are used as accent pieces instead of an overall decorative scheme. Along with the statuary, there are decorative color accents. The hues chosen have changed since the Abbotts owned the house, from a pale yellow to a turquoise, but they are located in the same places. Each of the exterior doors are painted, along with the underside of the south façade and west porch.

The house is one of Abbott's final standing pieces from a lifetime of work. It reveals the character of a prolific creator, the summation of what he learned throughout his time as a self-taught architect. It is a rare chance to glimpse his personal style and ambitions undiluted by the interests of a client. It also stands as a testament to its time; the tensions between utility and art within the Moderne Movement and the tensions within Post-war/early Cold War America as a whole. Abbott house is both the history of a man, a movement, a region and a nation. Built to last, it should be protected to be utilized as it was meant to be, as a home and a piece of living art.

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## Evaluation of the Integrity between the Abbott House's significance and its physical condition today

A building in Louisville meeting Criterion C, significant as a type of construction—streamline moderne—must have integrity of feeling if it is to convey the essential significance of its architectural type. A building in Louisville will be said to have integrity of feeling if it has at least integrity of materials and design. The Abbott House retains integrity of not only materials, design and feeling, but also integrity of location, setting, and workmanship.

A building will possess integrity of **Materials** if it retains the majority of its exterior surface materials that indicate the style's hallmarks. The materials used to construct Abbott House are such, that short of demolition, the house will always retain integrity. The interior walls are unchanged and unmoved, consisting of poured concrete, steel reinforced beams, and covered with plaster. The floors are also poured concrete. The exterior walls are painted white brick, the color scheme being retained from its original date of construction excepting the detailing colors of the porches and doors, which have changed from a pale yellow to turquoise. In the interior, tile floors have been laid over the poured concrete, but the hardwood present in the bedrooms original. All windows are also original to the home.

A building will possess integrity of **Design** if it retains the majority of its exterior features that form the style. With such durable construction materials used in Abbott house, all exterior features remain. The only exception is the addition of three walls on the second story, with white vinyl siding, of the east elevation, enclosing a balcony. This changes the design of the house somewhat, but does so in a non-jarring way. The replacement of the open space with a mass does reorient the effect.

The building retains integrity of **location** and **setting**, in that the house was built within a residential neighborhood, and though the area has been built up and more highly travelled since its construction and the addition of the zoo close by, the general residential zoning has not changed. The house has not been moved. It sits within its traditional landscaping and original site.

The buildings retain integrity of **workmanship** because it clearly embodies the work of an architect. It adheres to a general ideology and adheres to that ideology in both its aesthetic appeal and the materials used in its construction. Evidence of the quality of the building is exemplified by the upstairs hallway where the entrance to the attic is located. The opening of the attic door allows approximately an inch clearance between the door and the wall. This clearance has not diminished in the 60 years since its construction.

The building possesses integrity of **Feeling** because it retains integrity of Materials and Design. A building meeting Criterion C which has integrity of feeling becomes eligible for listing.

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### 9. Major Bibliographical References

#### Bibliography

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Stong, Ann Abbott, interview by Annelise Gray. *Leslie V. Abbott Life and Work* (January 30, 2013).

Trieschmann, Laura, and Paul: Schoenfeld, Andrea Weishar. *Streamline Modern Houses in Arlington County, VA: 1936-1945*. Nomination, National Historic Register.

Abbott, Leslie V. *Original House Plans*. The original plans are in the possession of the owner, framed and hung in the home.

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

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

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

Historic Resources Survey Number: JF-EH-4463 \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** .2947 acres \_\_\_\_\_

**UTM References**

Louisville East Quad  
Calculated by GIS (ArcGIS Explorer)  
Coordinates calculated according to 1927 NAD: Zone 16; Easting 613 785.26; Northing 4230 100.94

1	<u>16</u>	<u>613 782.40</u>	<u>4230 307.10</u>	3	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	4	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The Abbott House rests on a portion of land bordered South by Newburg Road and on the West by Trevilian Way. The North section runs from Trevilian way, down a hedge row beside the concrete driveway, to where the garden fence terminated at the East of the property. The East terminus of the land can be distinguished by extending the back garden fence to Newburg Road.

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**Boundary Justification**

This boundary contains the original home and landscaping created by Mr. Leslie V. Abbott. This is the original tract of land purchased and built upon by Mr. Abbott.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Annelise Gray  
organization \_\_\_\_\_ date February 2013  
street & number 201 Elm Street telephone 989 306 0516  
city or town Muldraugh state KY zip code 40155  
e-mail agrav04@hotmail.com

**Photographs:**

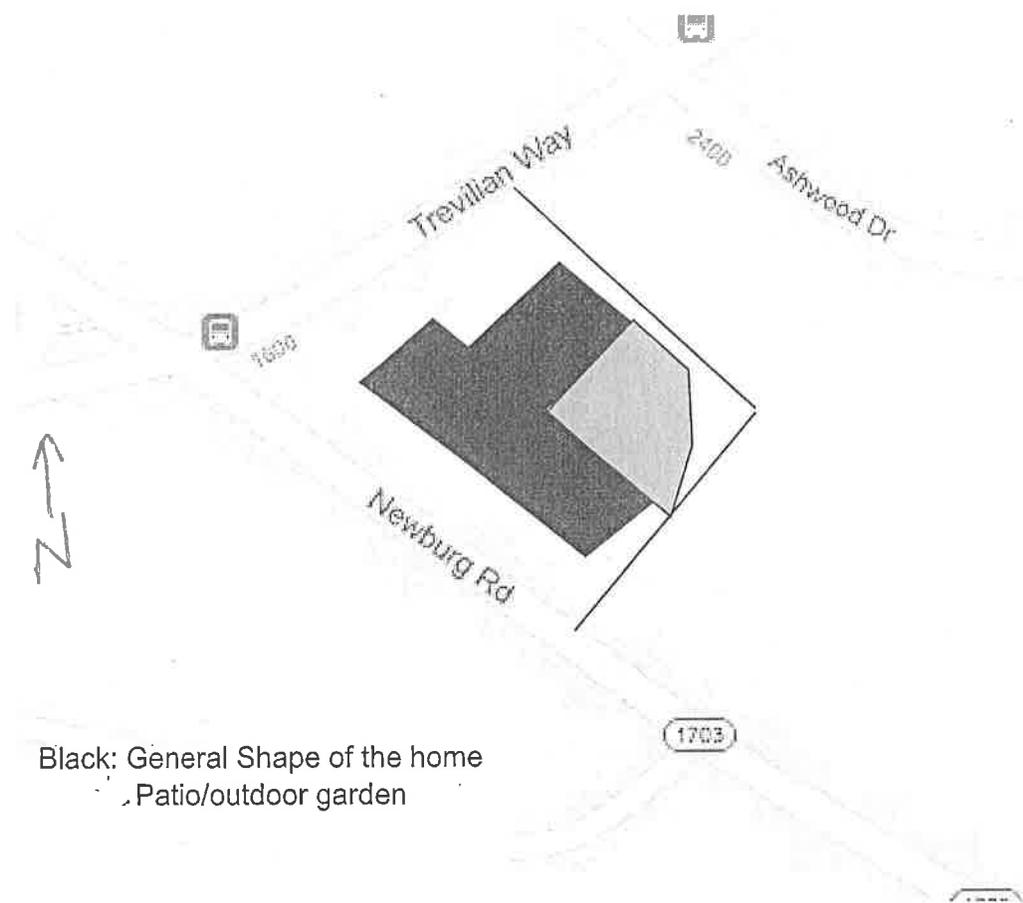
**Name of Property:** Leslie V. Abbott House  
**City or Vicinity:** Louisville  
**County:** Jefferson **State:** Kentucky  
**Photographer:** Annelise Gray (photos 1-3 and 5-10)  
Thomas J. Cannady (photo 4)  
**Date Photographed:** November 2012; July 2010

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

- 1 of 10: South elevation façade, camera facing northeast
- 2 of 10: East elevation, camera facing northwest
- 3 of 10: East elevation, camera facing southwest
- 4 of 10: North elevation, camera facing east
- 5 of 10: West elevation, camera facing east
- 6 of 10: West elevation, camera facing southeast
- 7 of 10: West elevation, camera facing east
- 8 of 10: Interior kitchen, camera facing west
- 9 of 10: Interior living room, camera facing east
- 10 of 10: Interior bedroom, camera facing east

**Property Owner:**

name Thomas J. Cannady  
street & number 2401 Newburg Road telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town Louisville state KY zip code 40205



Black: General Shape of the home  
Patio/outdoor garden

Leslie Abbott Home  
Jefferson Co., Ky



Leslie Abbott Hts.  
 Jefferson Co., Ky  
 Level 2 Plan

Sub Floor Plan Residence  
 for  
MR & MRS LESLIE V. ABBOTT  
ANDERSON ROAD & JEFFERSON HILL  
 ANDERSON - ANDERSON - GUYTON - MONT  
 LEVEL 2 - SECOND  
 DRAWING & ARCHITECTURE  
 UNIVERSITY - KENTUCKY  
 SCALE 1/4" = 1'-0"



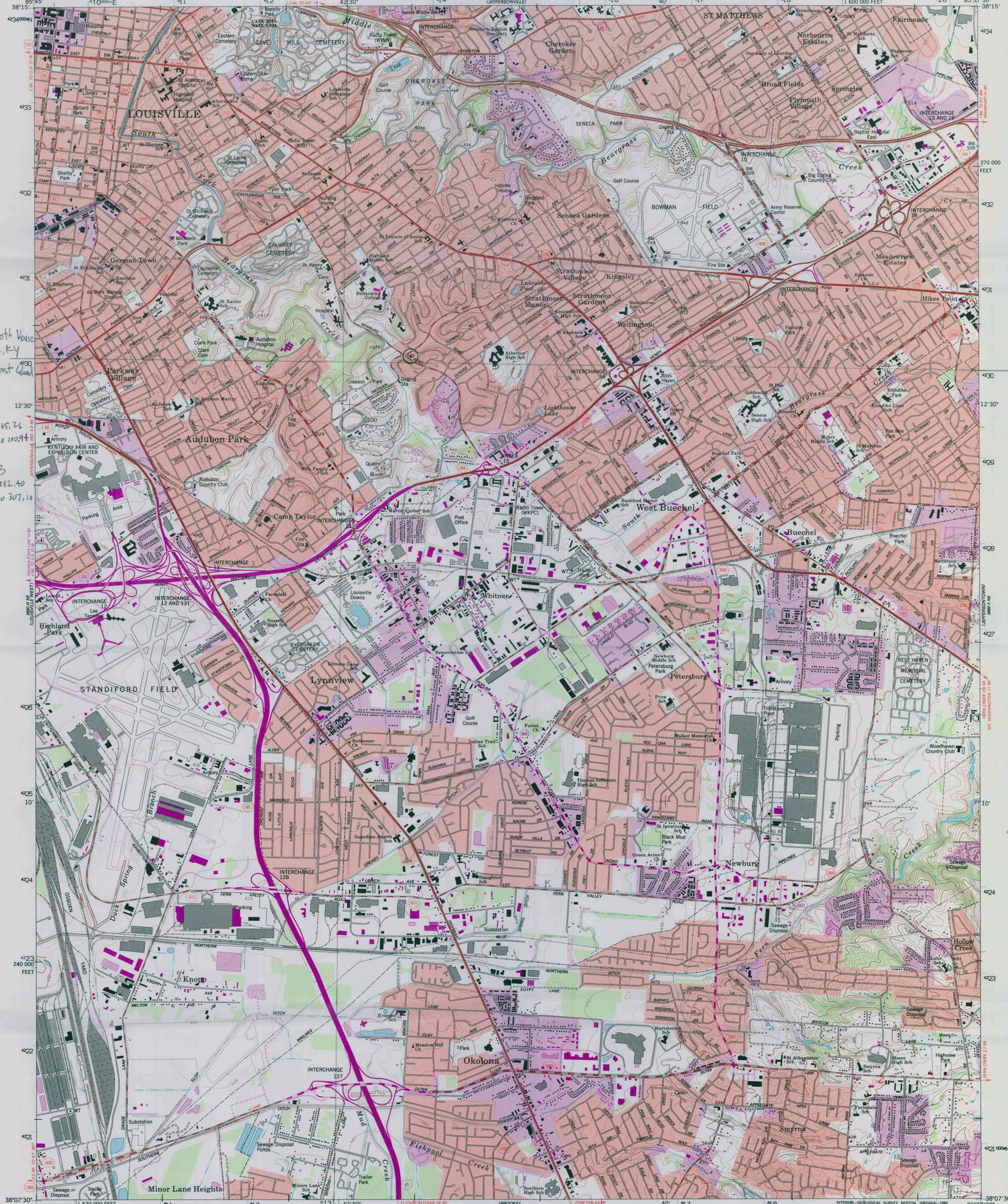
Leslie Abbott House  
 Jefferson Co, Ky  
 Level 1 Plan

FLOOR PLAN

NEWBERRY ROAD

For Plans and Specifications  
 See Mr. J. M. LITTLE, JR.  
 Architect, 1111 Broadway, New York  
 N. Y.

Leslie V. Abbott House Jefferson Co., KY Louisville East Quad Zone 16 NAD 27 Easting 613 785.26 Northing 4230 10094 NAD 83 Easting 613 782.40 Northing 4230 307.10



Mapped by the Army Map Service and the Geological Survey Revised by the United States Geological Survey

Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA, USCE, and the City of Louisville

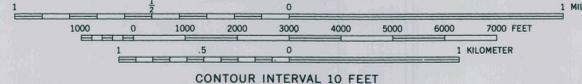
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1947. Field checked 1950. Revised from aerial photographs taken 1978. Field checked 1979. Map edited 1982

North American Datum of 1927 (NAD 27). Projection and 10 000-foot ticks: Kentucky coordinate system, north zone (Lambert conformal conic)

Blue 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator ticks, zone 16

North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83) is shown by dashed corner ticks. The values of the shift between NAD 27 and NAD 83 for 7.5-minute intersections are obtainable from National Geographic Survey NADCON software

Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown

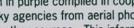


CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET DOTTED LINES REPRESENT 5-FOOT CONTOURS NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, P.O. BOX 25286, DENVER, COLORADO 80225 KENTUCKY GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY 40506 AND KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, FRANKFORT, KENTUCKY 40601 A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

ROAD CLASSIFICATION table with symbols for Primary highway, Secondary highway, Interstate Route, U.S. Route, State Route, Light-duty road, Improved surface, Unimproved road.

QUADRANGLE LOCATION



LOUISVILLE EAST, KY. 38085-66-TF-024

1982 REVISED 1994 DMA 3860 II NW-SERIES V853

Revisions shown in purple compiled in cooperation with State of Kentucky agencies from aerial photographs taken 1991 and other sources. This information not field checked. Map edited 1994. Information shown in purple may not meet USGS content standards and may conflict with previously mapped contours. Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas.





















