

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

DRAFT

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Walker, Mrs. Clinton, House

Other names/site number: Cabin-on-the-Rocks, Walker House

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

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

2. Location

Street & number: Scenic Road approximately 1/4 mile southwest of Martin Way

City or town: Carmel-by-the-Sea State: California County: Monterey

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

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

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A B C D

<p>_____</p> <p>Signature of certifying official/Title:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>Date</p>
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<p>In my opinion, the property <u>meets</u> <u>does not meet</u> the National Register criteria.</p>	
<p>_____</p> <p>Signature of commenting official:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Title :</p> <p style="text-align: center;">State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>Date</p>

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

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

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

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

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT: Wrightian

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: WOOD: Cedar

STONE: Carmel stone

METAL: Steel and Copper

Concrete and Glass

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

Occupying a rocky promontory overlooking Carmel Bay in Carmel, California, the Mrs. Clinton Walker House (Walker House) is the only Usonian design completed by Frank Lloyd Wright in a coastal environment. The house rests on a concrete pad atop a triangular Carmel stone masonry wall system that appears as a ship's prow growing out of the rocky landscape. The house's most prominent feature is its hexagonal living room space framed in reverse-stepped glass panels that afford panoramic views of the Carmel coastline. Bedroom spaces are located in small wings toward the rear of the composition, creating an overall arrow-shaped plan. The house employs a cedar-framed structural system with Carmel stone exterior wall cladding, a cantilevered metal roof and steel-framed, vented windows. A large, boxy chimney punctures the hexagonal living room roof and establishes the fireplace as the living room interior's focal point. The only alteration to the building occurred in 1960, with the addition of a bedroom space off the southeast building envelope, in scale, massing, and design of the original building. The property is in excellent condition and retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The primary condition issue is undermining of the Carmel stone ship's prow wall by wave action. This condition needs to be addressed to ensure preservation of the building.

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Narrative Description

Site and Setting

The Walker House property is a 9,170 sq. ft. triangular lot located north of Scenic Road, approximately ¼ mile west of Martin Way, in Carmel-by-the-Sea, California. The building site is a finger of rocky outcropping, projecting north of Scenic Road and jutting out into the Pacific Ocean. The 1,200-sq. ft. residence rests on a concrete pad atop Carmel stone masonry walls shaped like a ship's prow rising above the Pacific Ocean. A cypress hedge and low redwood fence with Carmel stone piers runs down the southern property boundary along Scenic Road. An asphalt driveway leads from Scenic Road down to the house. An entry gate designed by architect Frank Lloyd Wright and built to his specifications in 1999 is set within the redwood and Carmel stone fence at the southeast end of the driveway, at Scenic Road. To provide adequate privacy, Wright had the lot lowered four feet to enable the house to melt into the landscape, and planted a cypress hedge along the south property line that runs down Scenic Road. The Walker House is the only completed private house designed by Frank Lloyd Wright overlooking an ocean environment.

Physical Description

The Walker House has an irregular, arrow shaped plan with the head of the arrow expressed as a hexagonal roof form resting on triangular-shaped, Carmel stone walls that resemble a ship's prow projecting into the Pacific Ocean. The hexagonal section of the plan contains the public spaces of the small house and affords 180-degree views to the north, south, and west. Bedroom quarters are located in wings that comprise the tail of the arrow to the south and east.

The single-story, wood-framed building has Carmel stone exterior wall cladding. A rectangular, Carmel stone chimney punctures the hexagonal, living room roof and gives a vertical element to the low-slung horizontal composition. The house has cantilevered metal roofs with horizontal bands to provide the juxtaposition of horizontal and vertical elements that characterize Wright-designed Usonian compositions. This juxtaposition is most evident when the house is viewed from Scenic Road looking north (**Photo 1**).

The most dramatic element of the house is the ship's prow expressed in Carmel Stone and jutting into the Pacific Ocean. The hexagonal-shaped living room space, framed in stepped glass, rises out of the stone walls of the ship's prow and affords panoramic views of the surrounding ocean environment. Wright employed steel-framed windows in a vented, reverse-stepped pattern to allow the windows to drain naturally. The windows are set between low Carmel stone building walls and nestle beneath the cantilevered hexagonal roof (**Photo 2**).

The north elevation facing Carmel Beach and the Pacific Ocean is a low-slung, horizontal expression of Carmel stone walls with grouped ribbons of steel-framed windows set beneath the cantilevered roof (**Photo 3**).

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The southeast elevation encloses the bedroom spaces of the house and features few windows for privacy, as this elevation faces Scenic Road. The composition includes a second Carmel stone chimney constructed at the southeast portion of the arrow's tail, as part of a bedroom addition in 1960. A Carmel stone wall flanks the driveway to the southeast of the site and contains a replaced gate installed in 1999 to drawings and specifications made by Wright (**Photo 4**).

Significant site character defining features include the Carmel stone walls rising from the sea to create the ship's prow; the Thomas Church-designed landscape consisting of large stones, raked gravel and Coastal plants; the redwood and Carmel stone landscape walls; the cypress hedge along the south property line; and the circa 1999 replaced driveway gate.

Significant exterior character defining features include the irregular, arrow-shaped plan that terminates into a hexagonal mass at the west elevation; the loggia opening out to a stone deck and Thomas Church-designed landscape on the south elevation; the Carmel stone foundation walls, building walls, and chimney; the hexagonal, cantilevered copper roof system; the reverse-stepped, steel-framed windows within the hexagonal building mass; the banked and horizontal steel-framed windows on the remaining elevations; and the Carmel stone chimney at the southeast building corner, installed as part of the 1960 addition.

Significant interior character defining features include the open floor plan with seamless borders between interior and exterior spaces; the full-height Carmel stone fireplace; Carmel stone interior walls; cedar wood paneling; red-tinted concrete flooring in hexagonal pattern; and built-in furniture.

Construction Chronology and Alterations

Original construction began in 1951 and was completed in 1952. The original roof was an indigo blue, painted metal roof arranged in interlocking triangular panels, installed in 1952 (**Figure 12**). The roof was replaced in 1956 with a copper roof, and replaced again circa 1997 with horizontal banding to the same 1956 specifications in the same configuration (**Photographs 1-4**).¹

In 1956, a studio addition was designed by Wright at the southeast building corner, with extant plans drawn by the architect (**Figure 15**). Wright's 1956 plan was used for an expanded master bedroom addition with aluminum slider doors by Mrs. Clinton Walker's grandson, the architect Sandy Walker, in 1960. The addition included a study/guest bedroom with additional chimney at the southeast building corner. Descendants of the current owners, the Henderson Family, removed the aluminum slider doors, replacing them with Douglas fir French doors in the 1980s.²

The original redwood fence anchored by Carmel stone piers deteriorated and was replaced by the redwood and Carmel stone fence in 1999. The replaced fence also included construction of the Wright-designed driveway gate according to plans drawn as part of the Walker House's original drawings (**Figures 13 and 14**).

¹ Richard Janick, *The Cabin on the Rocks: Letters between Della Walker and Frank Lloyd Wright Concerning the Walker House, 1945-1959* (Los Angeles, CA: J. Paul Getty Museum, 1994).

² Ibid.

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Historic Integrity

The seven aspects of integrity are evaluated as follows.

- **Location.** The Walker House remains in its original location on the triangular outcropping of rock north of Scenic Road and retains integrity of location.
- **Design.** The Walker House is in largely original condition with respect to Frank Lloyd Wright's original design and retains nearly all of its character defining features as designed by the architect. The 1960 southeast building addition utilized Wright's 1956 plan and is designed using compatible scale, massing, and materials.
- **Setting.** The dramatic siting of the Walker House rising from the rocky coastline above its triangular Carmel stone walls remains intact. No encroachments to the site and setting north of Scenic Road have occurred. The surrounding neighborhood, that retains its original setting of large lots with prominent houses sited to take advantage of the Pacific Ocean views, remains intact.
- **Materials.** Original materials as constructed remain on the building, giving it integrity of materials. The 1960 building addition and 1999 driveway gate were designed using the same materials as originally specified for the building.
- **Workmanship.** The house retains sufficient integrity of workmanship, as expressed in original construction techniques in both the interior and exterior of the building. Examples of workmanship include the Carmel stone foundation walls, building walls and chimneys; the vented, reverse-stepped steel windows; interior scored concrete floors; cedar wood paneling and built-in furniture.
- **Feeling.** The house retains sufficient exterior and interior character defining features to retain integrity of feeling as a Wright-designed Usonian house.
- **Association.** The house retains sufficient exterior and interior character defining features to retain integrity of association as a Wright-designed Usonian house.

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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.)

- 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

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1952 I

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Wright, Frank Lloyd (Architect)
Green, Aaron (Supervising Architect)
Bain, Miles; Olds, Walter (Contractors)
Church, Thomas (Landscape Architect)

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Mrs. Clinton Walker House is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion C in the area of Architecture, as an intact example of Wright's Usonian house design principles, described as Organic Architecture by the architect. Usonian design elements include the use of natural and local materials, the construction of the building based on a modular unit, and the prioritization of nature by the integration of interior and exterior spaces opening out to views of the surrounding landscape. This example of Wright's Usonian design grows from and is a part of the landscape with strong horizontal emphasis, wide roof overhangs, and large expanses of glass. The Walker House is a later example of Wright's Usonian house design and is the only example overlooking a dramatic ocean environment. The period of significance is 1952, the year construction was completed.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Carmel-by-the-Sea: Early History

Carmel was founded toward the end of the nineteenth century, in reaction to a tourist influx on the Monterey Peninsula. Precipitated by the success of the Pacific Grove Methodist campground established in 1875, tourists arrived in greater numbers thanks to the arrival of the Southern Pacific Railroad in 1880, and its subsequent construction of the Del Monte Hotel in Monterey. A by-product of this expansion in the late 1880s was a popular movement to restore the old Carmel Mission. This effort, coupled with the projected extension of the Southern Pacific Railroad around the Peninsula to the Carmel River, led local entrepreneurs to develop plans for a Catholic religious retreat modeled after Pacific Grove's example.

The proposed railroad extension and the restoration of the Carmel Mission failed to materialize. Those factors, coupled with a major economic depression in the early 1890s, curtailed Carmel's development until the early twentieth century.

In 1902, San Francisco attorney Franklin Powers and Franklin Devendorf, a professional real estate broker, formed the Carmel Development Company, promoting the regions physical beauty and salubrious climate and offering very reasonable rates for land purchase and payment. They encouraged "School Teachers and Brain Workers" as well as creative artists of all types to populate the newly named Carmel By-The-Sea.³ The village's only hotel was moved down the main street closer to the beach, and a small group of Western false-fronted commercial houses developed as the initial business core of the community.

The 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire prompted a rapid influx of creative and independent people. Many constructed their own homes, most in the woodsy Arts & Crafts tradition that was

³ Kent Seavey, *Carmel: A History in Architecture* (San Francisco, CA: Arcadia Publishing, 2007), 7.

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emerging in the San Francisco Bay Area. Perfectly suited to Carmel's physical setting, the Craftsman Style became the architectural style of choice well into the 1920s and beyond.

By 1916 it was clear to Carmel's residents that Monterey County could not provide the necessary land use controls to protect the emerging community's unique character and natural beauty. An election was held in the fall of that year to establish a city government. Once formed, two political factions emerged: art interests and business interests. They continue as opposing forces in the ongoing development of the community.

By 1922 a formal planning department was in place. The Depression slowed building in Carmel. However, civic improvements like the Sunset School and Auditorium and a new fire station were constructed without any concession to the high standards of design quality the community had come to expect.

Modernism Arrives in Carmel

Carmel's introduction to the Modern Movement came appropriately through 1930s residential design, evolving from San Francisco Bay Regionalism into the "soft modernism" of William W. Wurster, Harwell Hamilton Harris and others. Master builder Hugh Comstock adopted the style into a Western Ranch mode, leading him to develop his Post-Adobe construction method, in which California Ranch-style houses could be constructed in a modular manner, using locally made adobe bricks as wall infill between Redwood posts.⁴

After World War II, buildings designed using principles of the Modern Movement were executed by a bevy of architects, such as Frank Lloyd Wright, who had now established himself as a cutting edge architect of national recognition. Wright hired budding Modernist Jon Konigshofer to superintend the construction of one of his early designs. Initially, Wright had three individual residences planned in the area for the following clients:

- John Nesbitt, Cypress Point, Pebble Beach, California (1940 – plans completed but not executed);
- Stuart Haldorn, Carmel Point, Carmel, California (1945 – plans completed but not executed); and
- Mrs. Clinton Walker, Carmel Beach, Carmel, California (1948 – plans completed and project constructed in 1951-1952).⁵

Only one was completed. Wright's Walker House became the vehicle for the architect's later Usonian ideals, expressed on the rocky promontory at the southern edge of Carmel Beach.

Frank Lloyd Wright (1867-1959): A Summary

Frank Lloyd Wright was one of the most influential and controversial architects of the twentieth century. A true iconoclast who never earned a degree in architecture, Wright developed his

⁴ Ibid., 117.

⁵ David Gebhard, *Romanza: The California Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright* (San Francisco, CA: Chronicle Books, 1988), 59.

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maverick architectural style over a working life of 60 years. His willingness to experiment and pioneer a new way of building began with the development of the Prairie School style in the Midwest, and culminated in some of the most daring designs of the Modern Movement.

By close observation, study of the natural world and the exploration of traditional vernacular building techniques from a variety of cultures, Wright derived and applied a set of design principles that integrated nature with architectural design to develop a truly American form of organic architecture.

In early childhood, Wright's mother provided him with a set of educational geometric wood blocks developed by Dr. Frederick Froebel. At an early age, these simple shapes became Wright's principal design tool. By 1937, this child's creative tool evolved into Wright's simplified grid or unit system that served as a modular dimensioning system for his Usonian designs. Certain forms recur in all of Wright's work, including circles, cubes, hexagons, and triangles. These basic shapes became the planning modules for Usonian commissions, such as the use of the hexagon as the building module for the Walker House.

After working as a draftsman in the office of Louis Sullivan in Chicago for six years (1887-1893), Wright opened his own practice. He translated Sullivan's unique decorative vocabulary of curvilinear floral motifs into the flattened and geometrically stylized forms expressed in Wright's early twentieth century Prairie School designs.⁶

Unlike the popular and frilly Victorian homes of the day, Wright's Prairie School houses were low to the ground, with horizontal planes resting harmoniously within their surroundings. The architect was thinking ahead to his dictum, "No house should ever be on a hill or on anything. It should be of the hill, belonging to it." This concept, as well as an open plan and the use of cantilevered roof forms that integrate interior and exterior spaces would all become integral to his later organic Usonian designs, of which the Walker House is an intact example.⁷

In 1911 Wright built a home and studio on 600 acres at Spring Green in his native Wisconsin. He called it Taliesin and developed his own school of architecture there in 1932, in a communal context of working apprentices who were in tune with his vision of a new American architecture. The Taliesin Fellowship at Spring Green expanded in 1938 to the desert outside of Phoenix, Arizona with a second campus, Taliesin West. Over time, a number of apprentices became Taliesin Fellows and some remained to advocate and practice Wright's doctrine of Organic Architecture. Others developed their own individual practices founded under Wrightian principles and assisted Wright in various building projects worldwide. An example is Aaron Green of San Francisco, who became Wright's construction supervisor for the Walker House in Carmel. Green was later the supervising architect of the Marin County Civic Center and completed the project for Wright following the architect's death in 1959.⁸

⁶ John Sergeant, *Frank Lloyd Wright's Usonian Houses* (New York: Watson-Guptill, 1984), 183.

⁷ Gebhard, *Romanza*, 59.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 111.

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Wright championed the plasticity of concrete, poured into wood forms to create concrete masonry units with naturalistic decoration, as in the Hollyhock House (1921) in Pasadena, California. As a structural innovator, Wright also employed concrete in his cantilevered roof forms and for his foundations and flooring. Poured concrete slab foundations made possible the use of radiant heating, with hot water running through copper tubes set within the flooring. Wright had successfully employed the heating system, derived from traditional Korean building practices, in his Imperial Hotel in Tokyo, built between 1918 and 1922. As in the Imperial Hotel and the Walker House designed over 30 years later, Wright scored his concrete floors with the geometric pattern of the house's planning grid. Floors were also stained and polished as a decorative interior finish. This type of polished decorative concrete remains extant at the Walker House.⁹

Although a success artistically and professionally by the early 1930s, the Great Depression slowed Wright's career, and his number of completed commissions dwindled. In 1935, Wright designed what many regard as his residential masterpiece—Fallingwater—a stunning example of organic design built above a waterfall in Bear Run, Pennsylvania. Mrs. Clinton Walker's daughter commented on Fallingwater's dramatic beauty in a letter to her mother in 1945. Fallingwater integrated a house with its bubbling riparian environment. On the Carmel coast, Wright later integrated a house with the tempestuous Pacific Ocean.

Wright's Usonian Organic Designs

During the Great Depression, Frank Lloyd Wright proposed the word Usonian as a substitute for the term American to express his personal vision of modular planning in architectural design. Wright endeavored to create an affordable and efficient single-family dwelling for the American middle class. Wright's Usonian House would allow for an easy and maximal use of a small, but unique site. A primary tenet of the architect's Organic principles was the joining of the structure to its site by a series of terraces that reached out into and reordered the landscape, making it an integral part of the resident's experience.¹⁰ Accordingly, all components of the building should be Usonian, with all aspects of the building and its surroundings unified—the natural and the created—as though they belong together. Nothing should be attached to the building without considering the effect on the entire composition, for both the building and its landscape. To unify the house to its site, the architect often used large expanses of glass, as in the Walker House, to blur the boundary between indoors and outdoors, as visual access to nature was an essential characteristic of all Usonian homes.¹¹

Usonian homes were of the land. They were constructed with native materials, took advantage of natural light with large expanses of glass, and featured flat roofs with wide cantilevered overhangs for passive solar heating and natural cooling. Wright's Usonian interiors featured built-in furniture and shelving, reminiscent of his earlier Prairie Style houses, with the main

⁹ Alan Hess and Allan Weintraub, *Frank Lloyd Wright Mid-Century Modern* (New York: Rizzoli, 2007), 85.

¹⁰ "The Genius of Frank Lloyd Wright," *American Treasures of the Library of Congress*, (<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/treasures/tri004.html>). (Accessed 8/15/2015).

¹¹ Lync Voice UC Industry News. "The Textile Block System (Concrete International)," (<http://www.lyncvoiceuc.com/news/2012/04/14/6258593.htm>). (Accessed 8/11/2015).

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living area focused on the fireplace. Living space was maximized, as the kitchen became a workspace, the formal dining room eliminated, bedrooms kept small, and bathrooms the size of closets. Usonian houses provided the country with a new model for independent living. Many sources suggest that Wright's Organic Usonian design played a part in the aesthetic origins of the Ranch-style houses popular nationally in the 1950s.

By the end of the Depression, Wright began to build a series of his Usonian houses nationwide. One of the first, constructed in 1936, was the Paul and Jean Hanna House, on the campus of Stanford University in Palo Alto. This was Wright's first California house since the 1920s, and the first Usonian house to employ a hexagonal planning grid. The Walker House employed the hexagon as the elemental symbol for its plan.¹²

According to one of his biographers, Robert C. Twombly, Wright had only completed two buildings between 1928 and 1935, one for a family member and neither for pay. With the success of Fallingwater and wide publication of his Usonian organic building concept in the popular and professional press, Wright completed 36 buildings between 1936 and 1943. In 1940 alone, he completed 12 commissions.¹³

In April 1940 radio and film personality, John B. Nesbitt, purchased the textile-block Ennis House in Los Angeles, designed by Wright in 1926. Nesbitt wrote the architect requesting a set of plans of the house for his files, to which Wright agreed. Nesbitt had previously purchased a prime parcel of oceanfront land at Pebble Beach on the Monterey Peninsula in late 1939. By August 1940, Nesbitt had engaged Wright to build him a new home on the Pebble Beach property. The house was to be called "Sea Garden," but was never constructed.¹⁴

Later in 1944, wealthy Monterey Peninsula resident Stuart Haldorn engaged the architect to design a home near the end of Carmel Point. His wife, Enid Haldorn, noted in her initial correspondence, "I cannot feel happy to put just any unimaginative house on this rare location. As my taste runs toward the extreme modernism, I think only of you, with your creative genius."¹⁵ Wright accepted the commission for the house that the architect called "The Wave;" however, it was never constructed. Of the three Monterey Peninsula designs created by Wright, only the Walker House was constructed.

Frank Lloyd Wright was a fiercely independent iconoclast, whose architectural designs and innovations were well ahead of their time and continue to resonate. He was never a member of the American Institute of Architects (AIA), yet the organization finally awarded the architect with a Gold Medal when Wright was 81. He was still working on the Guggenheim Museum

¹² Sergeant, 32.

¹³ Robert C. Twombly, *Frank Lloyd Wright: An Interpretive Biography* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), 203.

¹⁴ Letter dated April 15, 1940, from John Nesbitt & Frank L. Wright, Frank Lloyd Wright Archives & Special Collections, J. Paul Getty Center for the History of Art, Santa Monica, CA.

¹⁵ Letter dated Oct. 17, 1944, from Enid Haldorn to Frank Lloyd Wright, Frank Lloyd Wright Archives & Special Collections, J. Paul Getty Center for the History of Art, Santa Monica, CA.

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when he died in April 1959. Wright was again recognized by the AIA in 1991 as “the greatest American architect of all time.”¹⁶

Wright’s Client Relationships Revealed through the Walker Correspondence

By 1940, Frank Lloyd Wright had an expanding client base that sought him out because they had seen the residences—or illustrations of them in the popular press—and were aware of the type of house he was likely to produce for them. One of Wright’s noteworthy biographers, John Sergeant states, “All his clients were surprised at the rapid and personal treatment they received. They experienced the attention, loyalty, and ultimately the mutual respect that characterized Wright’s client relationship.”¹⁷ By the time of the Walker House’s construction, the architect had become too busy to visit individual building sites, and relied on a supervising architect to oversee the work. Wright’s personal relationships among these building contractors was considered tantamount, and the architect’s relationships with his builders were fostered over Wright’s lengthy career. Wright also employed topographic surveys of each site and a complete list of the owners’ requirements prior to commencing work.¹⁸

The architect met with his clients, generally at one of the Taliesin workshop settings, where they spent time together getting to know one another and discussing their goals and aspirations. A review of Wright’s correspondence with clients evokes, for the most part, a very amicable approach to their common purpose. Examination of the correspondence between Mrs. Clinton Walker (née Della Brooks), the client for Cabin on the Rocks, and Wright reveal the type of relationship to which biographer Sergeant was referring.

A native of Illinois who attended the University of Minnesota and the Pratt Institute, Della Brooks was a respected artist when she married Minneapolis lumber executive Clinton Walker. Walker was a successful businessman and the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis was a product of his family’s philanthropy. The couple relocated to Piedmont, California in 1904 and lived there for 40 years prior to Mr. Walker’s passing in 1944.¹⁹ Mrs. Della Walker moved to Carmel and rented a stone cottage close to the beach near Ocean Avenue, designed by local architect C. J. Ryland. Della’s sister Alma married Clinton’s brother Willis J. Walker, who owned a large tract of the former Mission Ranch in Carmel. Alma Walker deeded the oceanfront parcel with its rocky outcropping to her sister, as a gift so that Della could build her home.²⁰

The initial correspondence between Della Walker and Wright in 1945 set the tone for their client/architect relationship. On June 3rd Mrs. Walker wrote to the architect:

¹⁶ Brewster, M., “Frank Lloyd Wright: American Architect,” *Business Week Magazine*, McGraw-Hill Companies: New York, 7/28/2004.

¹⁷ Sergeant, 106.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 189.

¹⁹ “Obituary for Della Brooks Walker,” *Carmel Pine Cone* 2/23/1978, 20.

²⁰ Linda L. Paul, *Cottages by the Sea: The Handmade Homes of Carmel* (Milford, CT: Universe Publishing, 2000), 156.

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I own a rocky point of land in Carmel, Calif. extending into the Pacific Ocean. The surface is flat, it is located at the end of a white sand beach... I am a woman living alone—I wish protection from the wind and privacy from the road and a house as enduring as the rocks but as transparent and charming as the waves and as delicate as a seashore. You are the only man who can do this—will you help me?²¹

On July 2nd, 1945, Wright wrote back:

Dear Mrs. Walker: I liked your letter, brief and to the point. My requirements are few but I do not want to make changes after starting. The placing of the cabin, its lines and relation to surroundings, I am sure of, with you in charge.

Mrs. Walker replied by describing the setting and climate of her future home's surroundings:

For my pleasure it must be simple and direct, easy to take care of, high ceilings, bedrooms, linen closets, pleasant kitchen, as I spend much time there, a protected outside sitting place, and my living space protected from the glare from the sun or the ocean. We do not have to consider any warm days. They are too few and far between... There is almost a constant wind from the N.W. – a frost only once in many years... If there is sunshine, and one can be out of the wind, it is pleasant to be out all of the year. There are many gray days.

On October 26th, 1945, Wright responded:

Dear Mrs. Walker. We are coming to Taliesin West near Phoenix, Arizona about December 1st and will be glad to meet you and talk over your house.

On November 3rd, 1945, Mrs. Walker wrote the architect:

My daughter is most enthusiastic on my having you plan the cabin, she sent me a picture from New York of Mr. Kaufmann's house (which I have seen) and said "If Mr. Wright did this for a stream, what will he do for an ocean!!"²²

What followed was a continuous series of letters in which Della Walker gave her design preferences and the architect responded with beautiful renderings and his typical direct style. Wright's first rendering (**Figure 2**) was completed in 1948 and featured the carport and entrance on the east side of the lot, and the loggia and garden with access to the

²¹ Richard Janick, *The Cabin on the Rocks: Letters between Della Walker and Frank Lloyd Wright Concerning the Walker House, 1945-1959* (Los Angeles, CA: J. Paul Getty Museum, 1994). All correspondence from Mrs. Clinton Walker & Frank Lloyd Wright, Courtesy: Frank Lloyd Wright Archives & Special Collections, J. Paul Getty Center for the History of Art, Los Angeles, CA.

²² Ibid.

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beach, located on the north side. Mrs. Walker was not pleased with Wright's first iteration and requested the loggia opening up to a garden on the southwest side to enjoy the southern ocean views. Wright submitted a revised rendering in 1950 according to his client's wishes (**Figure 3**).

With the house's plans and elevations complete by 1950 (**Figures 5 and 6**), Monterey County Zoning Permit Application # C-46 was granted on April 24, 1950. It listed a 2,000 sq. ft. building on a 9,170 sq. ft. lot, with Wright listed as architect and Miles Bain, contractor.²³ Construction began in April 1951. Original specifications listed the use of "desert masonry" walls, as in Taliesin West. After an unsuccessful attempt to employ this type of masonry in the design (**Figure 7**), Mrs. Walker requested Carmel stone be used for the primary walls. The stone was provided by the DeMaria Brothers and quarried in Carmel Valley, a feature of local buildings dating back to the 1792 Royal Presidio Chapel, Monterey.

The architect and client wrangled over design details throughout the house's construction period of 1951-1952. In 1952, Mrs. Walker requested a small window and access door to her kitchen (for a garbage can) added onto the east elevation. Wright objected strenuously and wrote her that "it (the garbage can) would look as foolish as a hen resting where you ought to find a seagull! I am unwilling to spoil my charming sea-bird and substitute the hen."²⁴ In the end, Mrs. Walker had her way (**Figure 9**). Similarly, the living room fireplace became a source of concern because of its design and the flue operation. Wright historically designed tall fireboxes that burned 3-4 ft. vertical logs. Mrs. Walker tried small horizontal logs that smoked up the entire house. Eventually modifications to the flue damper solved the problem (**Figure 10**).

The roof was installed by 1952. It consisted of interlocking, indigo-colored triangular panels designed by Wright and fabricated by the Ross Roofing Company of Oakland, which the Company called a Ludowich-Celadon Roof (**Figure 12**). Indigo was considered a strategic material during the Korean War. Wright suggested enamel blue paint of various shades as a substitute, which resulted in constant replacement of panels from 1952-56 due to erosion and leaking. In 1956, Mrs. Walker requested the metal roof be replaced with a copper roof fabricated by the P.M.C. Roofing Company, Pacheco, California. The company fabricated a new copper roof in 1997 that remains in place.

In 1956, Mrs. Walker asked Wright to design a studio addition to the southeast of the house for her own craftwork and weaving. Wright responded with a plan of the addition (**Figure 15**). Eventually this was expanded by her grandson and architect John "Sandy" Walker, into a master bedroom with fireplace in 1960, that made the house a symmetrical composition on its east elevation. With the exception of the driveway entry gate constructed in 1999 (**Figures 13 and 14**), all work executed for the Walker House commission was the result of a meticulous collaboration between architect and client.

²³ Permit # C-46, Monterey County Assessor Records.

²⁴ Richard Janick, *The Cabin on the Rocks*.

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The Walker House as a Representative of Wright's Usonian Paradigm

The Walker House was widely revered in the popular press, with articles and photographic spreads by leading architectural photographers appearing in *House and Home* (1954: **Figures 4, 10, and 11**); and *California Homes Illustrated* (1955).

Wright influenced a group of eager young Carmel modernists. Architects such as Jon Konigsfhofer, Rowan Maiden, and Albert Henry Hill constructed buildings derived from Wright's Usonian design principles espoused at the Mrs. Clinton Walker House.

Precedent for the Walker House's use of a hexagonal grid was already set when Wright employed the hexagon in his Hanna House (1936), located in suburban Palo Alto. Like the Walker House, the Hanna House used a hexagon as the plan module for the building that also featured a hillside location, with integrated interior and exterior spaces that looked out onto the landscape.²⁵ Perhaps Wright's closest comparable commission in California would be the Robert Berger House (1950), located at 259 Redwood Road, in San Anselmo, California. The prow-like nature of the primary elevation, the integrated use of local stone, jagged roofline, and similar Usonian interior layout resemble the Walker House.²⁶ Of all of Frank Lloyd Wright's constructed body of work, the Mrs. Clinton Walker House is the only completed and virtually intact commission overlooking an ocean environment. No commissions executed by Wright were rendered in such a dramatic landscape: the rocky bluffs overlooking the thunderous surf of Carmel Beach.

Associated Builders and Designers

Aaron Green, Supervising Architect

Aaron Green was appointed Frank Lloyd Wright's West Coast representative in 1951. A native of Mississippi, Green grew up in Alabama, and took his architectural training at Cooper Union in New York City, returning to Alabama to develop an architectural practice in 1939. Approached by Stanley and Mildred Rosenbaum to design a residence for them, he suggested they instead contact Wright for the commission, to which the master architect agreed, making Green his client liaison during design and construction of their Usonian house.

Green was asked by Wright to become a Taliesin apprentice, and did, as well as becoming a lifelong friend of the architect. After service in WWII, Green worked in the Los Angeles office of Raymond Loewy, before opening his own practice in San Francisco, Aaron G. Green Associates, Inc.

Between 1951 and Wright's passing in 1959, Green worked on 40 projects with his mentor. The Walker House in Carmel was the first of these projects (**Figure 8**). In 1957 he was designated by Wright to serve as his Associate Architect on the Marin Civic Center, which he completed after Wright's passage in 1959. A Fellow of the AIA, Aaron G. Green was the first recipient of the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation's Gold Medal in 2001.²⁷

²⁵ Gebhard, *Romanza*, 37.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 71.

²⁷ "Aaron G. Green Associates, Inc.," undated promotional brochure, San Francisco, California.

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Thomas Church, Landscape Architect

Mrs. Walker hired Thomas Church, a renowned Bay Area landscape designer who had designed Harriet Henderson's (Mrs. Walker's daughter) garden for a house designed by William Wurster in Hillsborough, California in 1932. The garden featured large "Zen-like" stones and raked gravel. Mrs. Walker planted many different types of trees and shrubs for screening behind the fence, plants that all died in the damp ocean air. Eventually Cypress bushes were planted that survive and to a certain extent dominate Church's original garden. Wright wrote a caustic letter to Mrs. Walker about destroying his design with a "worse than Wurster shack and professional side-kick landscape."²⁸ Mrs. Walker responded firmly that she had known Tommy Church since he was a child and had planted 2000 succulents (ice-plant) herself with a man-eating clam shell on top.²⁹ The original Church-designed garden was typical of his Modernist designs (**Figure 11**).

Thomas "Tommy" Dolliver Church was educated at the University of California (UC), Berkeley and Harvard University and traveled extensively in Europe following his graduation in 1922. Upon his return to the United States, he began teaching landscape architecture at UC Berkeley. In 1929, he opened his own office in San Francisco where he practiced until his retirement in 1977. Church's most important works were the Dewey Donnell garden, El Novillero, in Sonoma, California (1948); the Martin residence beach garden in Aptos, California (1948); the General Motors Technical Center in Warren, Michigan (1956); portions of the campuses of Stanford University and the University of California at Berkeley and at Santa Cruz (1950s).³⁰

Walter Olds, Supervising Contractor

A native of Corning, Iowa, Olds learned carpentry from his grandfather while attending high school. He attended Iowa State University, studying engineering. He was greatly influenced by an article written by Frank Lloyd Wright in a 1938 issue of *Architectural Forum*, but did not actively make connection with the architect until 1947, when he was admitted as an apprentice in the Taliesin Fellowship. He was Wright's supervising senior apprentice for the V.C. Morris Building in San Francisco in 1948, and worked on the Walker House in 1951-52. After leaving Taliesin, Olds became the first employee of the San Francisco architectural firm Anshen and Allen, later joining Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, where he was employed for 40 years. In 1990 Mr. Olds restored the Wright designed Buehler Usonian house he helped build in Orinda in 1948.³¹

Miles Bain, Local Contractor

Miles Bain, designer/builder was best known in Carmel for his work on the Frank Lloyd Wright House and Nathaniel Owings' "Wild Bird" in Big Sur. Bain came to Carmel in the 1920s at the

²⁸ Richard Janick, *The Cabin on the Rocks*.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ "Church, Thomas D.," *Environmental Design Archives, University of California, Berkeley, California*. <http://archives.ced.berkeley.edu/collections/church-thomas>. (Accessed 9/22/2015).

³¹ Martin Snapp, "Architect Walter Olds Dies at 89 in Berkeley," http://www.eastbaytimes.com/ci_6825887 9/7/2007. (Accessed 8/10/2015).

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suggestion of contractor George Mark Whitcomb, a former Navy friend, to work as Whitcomb's estimator. In the early 1930s Bain became a licensed contractor and went off on his own, designing and building a number of Carmel residences. Just after WWII, Bain rejoined his friend Whitcomb and went to Saudi Arabia with the Bechtel Corporation to build oil pumping stations. After his return he worked on building projects for F.L. Wright, Nathaniel Owings, Ansel Adams and Neil Weston.³²

Angelo DeMaria, Master Stonemason

Master mason Angelo De Maria was a member of Monterey's stonemasonry dynasty, consisting of the Chappells, DeMarias and Marottas, all from the same nuclear family. Angelo came to the United States from his native Marseilles, France in 1919 and began working with his uncles on Hearst's San Simeon Castle. DeMaria was an expert on the use of Carmel stone. On the Monterey Peninsula he worked on a number of properties from the 1920s to the 1970s. They included several homes along Carmel Point; where in 1951-1952 he did the stonework for Frank Lloyd Wright's Walker House.³³

John C. "Sandy" Walker, Architect for 1960 bedroom addition

Sandy Walker, a well-known San Francisco architect, was Della Walker's nephew. It was he who expanded Wright's 1956 proposed studio plan for the Walker House into the existing 1960s bedroom at the southeast end of the residence. Walker received his architectural training at UC Berkeley, graduating in 1957. He was architectural advisor to Grace Cathedral in San Francisco and the Graduate Theological Seminary in Berkeley. The architect was on the board of directors of the San Francisco Art Institute and the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He was a principal in the design firm of Walker & Moody Architects.

³² Kent Seavey Architectural Archives.

³³ Ibid.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

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Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository: Monterey Area Architectural Resource Archive (MAARA)

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property less than one acre

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 36.544785

Longitude: -121.931401

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The site is located approximately ¼ mile southwest of the intersection of Scenic Road and Martin Way, in Carmel-by-the-Sea, California. Scenic Road provides the southern boundary of the triangular lot. The lot projects north of Scenic Road, with Carmel Beach providing the site's natural boundaries to the east and west.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

Scenic Road provides the primary southern border of the site, with the natural features of rock outcroppings and Carmel Beach providing the remaining boundaries.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Kent Seavey, Preservation Consultant

organization: Monterey Area Architectural Resource Archives

street & number: 2460H Garden Road

city or town: Monterey state: CA zip code: 93940

e-mail klseavey@sbcglobal.net telephone: (831) 375-8739 date: November 2015

Revised 2016 by Seth A. Bergstein, PAST Consultants LLC, P.O. Box 721, Pacific Grove, CA 93950, (415) 515-6224, seth@pastconsultants.com

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Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Mrs. Clinton Walker House
City or Vicinity: Carmel-by-the-Seas
County: Monterey
State: California
Photographer: Kent Seavey: Photographs 1-4, 9-10 (exterior)
Date Photographed: September 2015
Photographer: Seth Bergstein: Photographs 5-8 (interior)
Date Photographed: January 2016

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

1 of 10	South elevation looking northeast from property line
2 of 10	West and north elevations looking southeast from beach
3 of 10	North elevation looking southwest from beach
4 of 10	East elevation looking northwest from Scenic Road gate
5 of 10	Interior: living room looking southwest
6 of 10	Interior: living room fireplace detail
7 of 10	Interior: kitchen detail looking northeast

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- 8 of 10 Interior: master bedroom detail
- 9 of 10 Exterior loggia detail looking southeast
- 10 of 10 Exterior detail of southwest building corner

Photo Key



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- Figure 2 of 15 Walker House First Plan Rendering, 1948 (*Courtesy: Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives, Talesin West, Scottsdale, AZ., Permission granted to Richard J. Janick for "Cabin on the Rocks: the Mrs. Clinton Walker House," 1994; hereafter, referred to as Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives*)
- Figure 3 of 15 Walker House Revised Plan Rendering, 1950 (*Courtesy: Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives*)
- Figure 4 of 15 Walker House Floor Plan, 1954, from March 1954 *House and Home* (*Courtesy: Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives*)

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- Figure 5 of 15 Elevations, 1950 (*Courtesy: Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives*)
- Figure 6 of 15 Living Room Section, 1950 (*Courtesy: Frank Lloyd Foundation Archives*)
- Figure 7 of 15 Walker House under construction with first desert masonry wall cladding and Wellington (Hendy) Henderson Jr. (*Photographer Unknown, Courtesy: Henderson Family Archives; Permission granted by Henderson Family, September 25, 2015*)
- Figure 8 of 15 Circa 1951 image of Aaron Green, Supervising Architect, with Alma Walker (Della Walker's daughter, Harriet Henderson's sister) standing in Walker House living room under construction (*Photographer Unknown, Courtesy: Henderson Family Archives*)
- Figure 9 of 15 Circa 2010 photograph of east elevation and kitchen door and window by Jules Schulman (*Courtesy: Henderson Family Archives*)
- Figure 10 of 15 Circa 1954 photograph of Walker House fireplace by Ezra Stoller (*Courtesy: Henderson Family Archives*)
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- Figure 13 of 15 Circa 1950 drawing for fence and gate (*Courtesy: Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives*)
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- Figure 15 of 15 November, 1956 drawing of studio and bedroom addition (*Courtesy: Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives*)

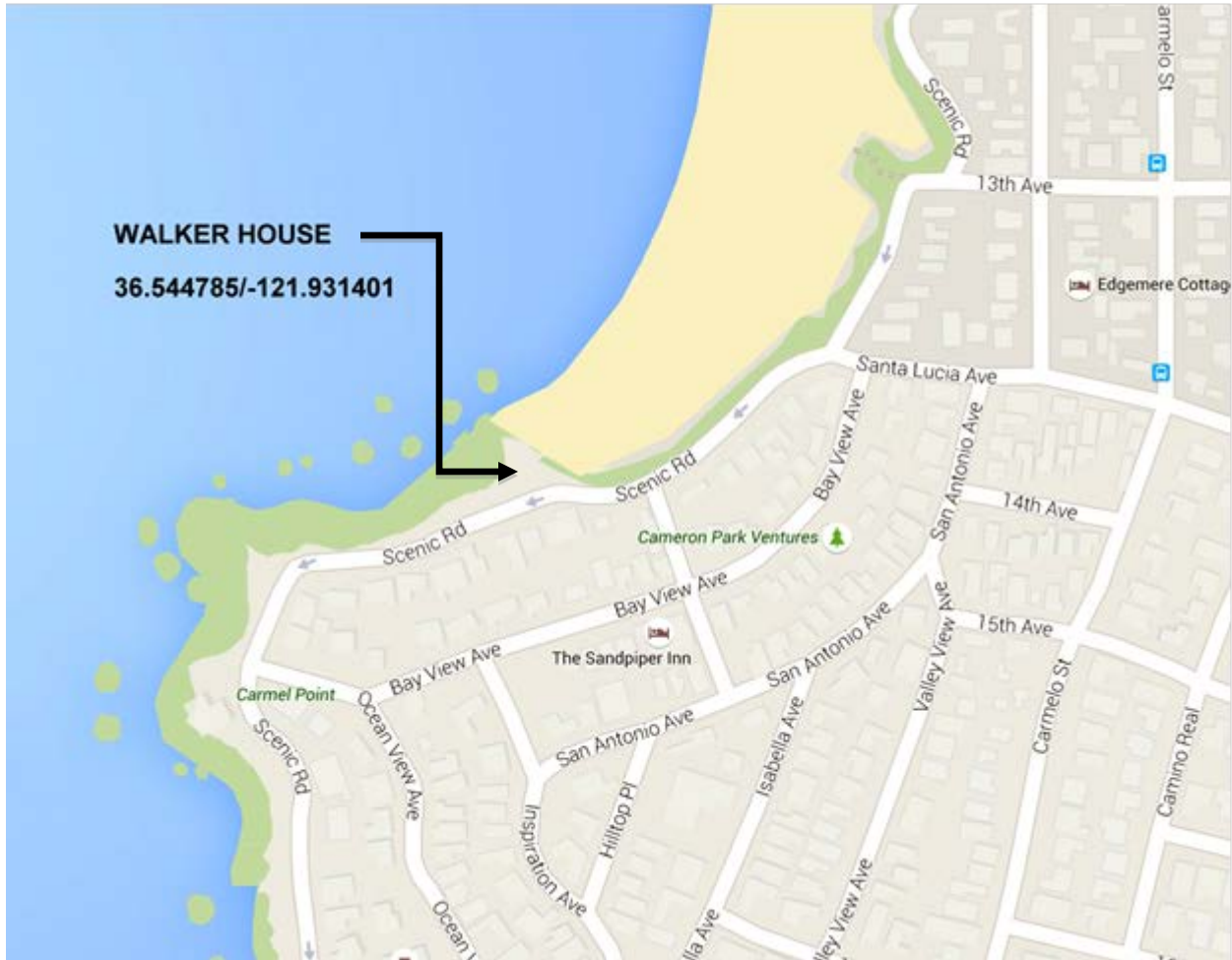
Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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Figure 1. Location Map



Source Map Google: North ↑

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Figure 2. Walker House First Plan Rendering, 1948



Figure 3. Walker House Revised Plan Rendering, 1950



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Figure 4. Walker House Floor Plan, 1954

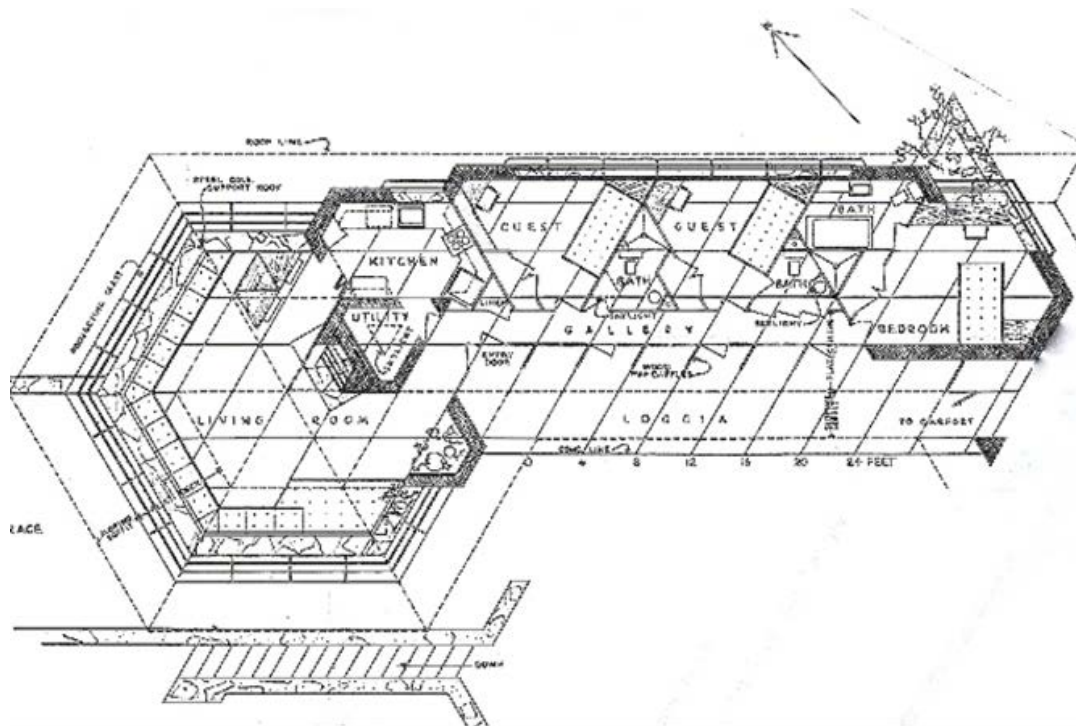
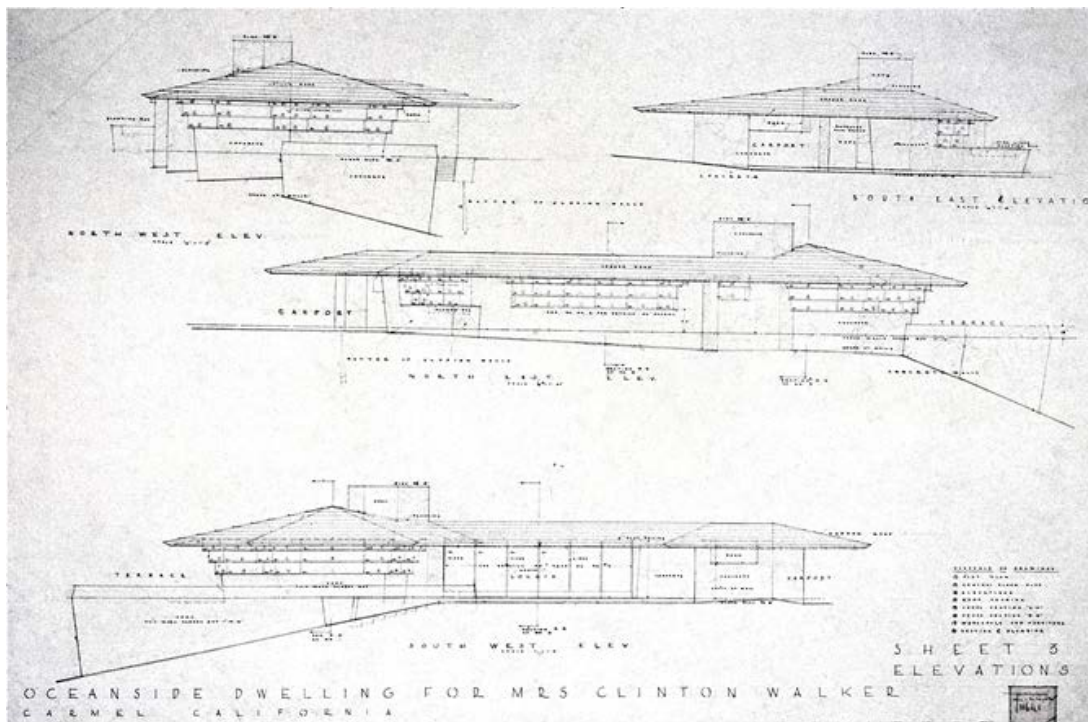


Figure 5. Elevations, 1950



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Figure 6. Living Room Section, 1950

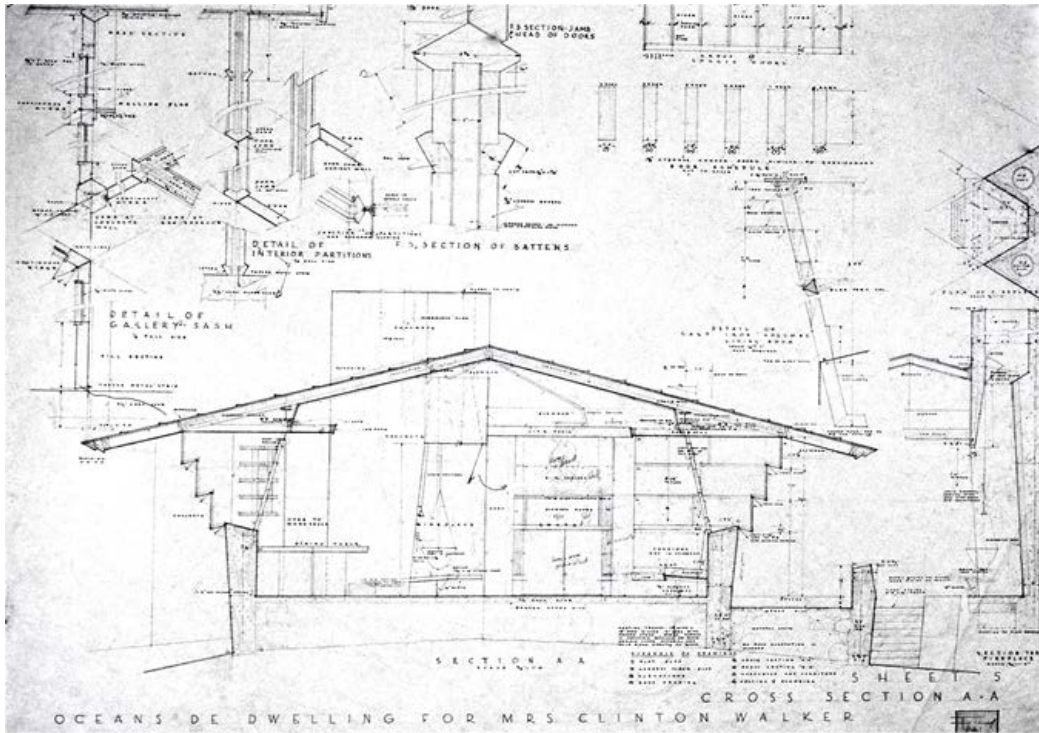


Figure 7 Walker House under construction with first desert masonry wall cladding and Wellington (Hendy) Henderson Jr.



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Figure 8 Circa 1951 image of Aaron Green, Supervising Architect, with Alma Walker



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Figure 9 Circa 2010 photograph of east elevation and kitchen door and window by Jules Schulman



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Figure 10 Circa 1954 photograph of Walker House fireplace



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Figure 11 Circa 1954 view of Thomas Church-designed garden



**Figure 12 Still image of original metal roof of the Walker House,
taken from the film *A Summer Place***



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Figure 13 Circa 1950 drawing for fence and gate

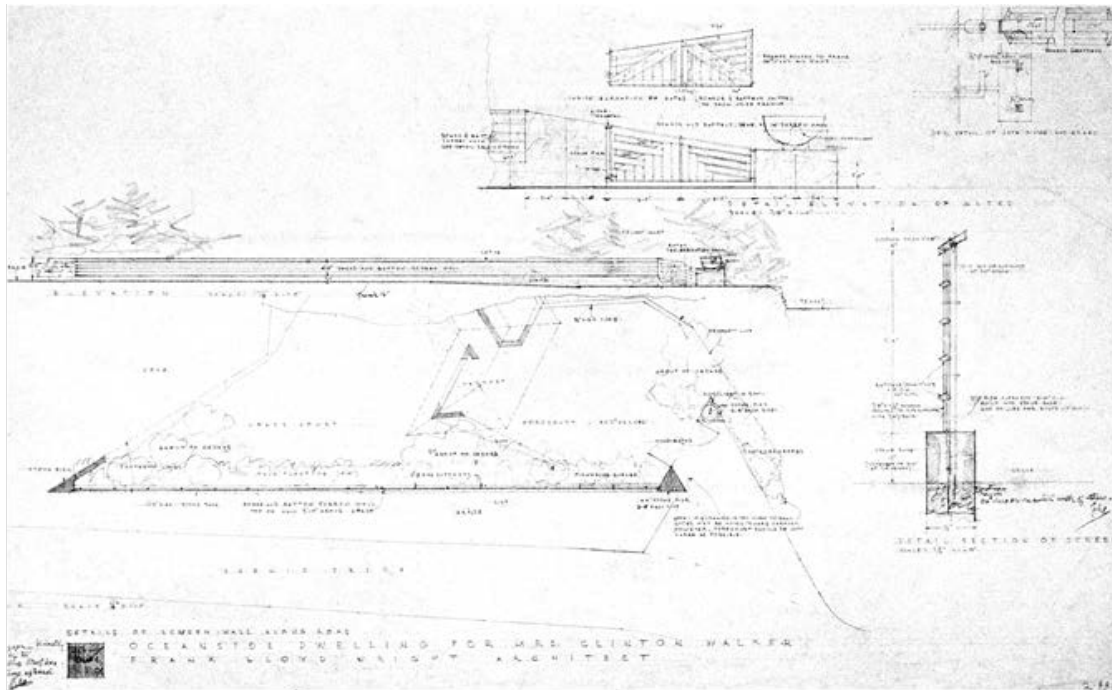


Figure 14 Circa 2000 image of rebuilt fence and gate



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Figure 15 November, 1956 drawing of studio and bedroom addition

