NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME
   HISTORIC ✗ FALLINGWATER
   AND/OR COMMON Edgar Kaufman House

2 LOCATION
   STREET & NUMBER West of Pennsylvania Route 381
   CITY TOWN Mill Run
   STATE Pennsylvania
   CODE
   VICINITY OF
   COUNTY Fayette
   CODE 26th

3 CLASSIFICATION
   CATEGORY DISTRICT
   BUILDINGS
   STRUCTURE
   SITE
   OBJECT
   OWNERSHIP PUBLIC ✗ PRIVATE
   BOTH
   PUBLIC ACQUISITION
   IN PROCESS
   BEING CONSIDERED
   STATUS ✗ OCCUPIED
   UNOCCUPIED
   WORK IN PROGRESS
   ACCESSIBLE ✗ YES: RESTRICTED
   YES UNRESTRICTED
   NO
   PRESENT USE ✗ AGRICULTURE
   COMMERCIAL ✗ PARK
   EDUCATIONAL ✗ PRIVATE RESIDENCE
   ENTERTAINMENT
   RELIGIOUS
   GOVERNMENT
   SCIENTIFIC
   INDUSTRIAL
   TRANSPORTATION
   MILITARY
   OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY
   NAME Western Pennsylvania Conservancy
   Mr. Thomas M. Schmidt, Director of Administration
   STREET & NUMBER 204 Fifth Avenue
   CITY TOWN Pittsburgh
   STATE Pennsylvania
   VICINITY OF

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION
   COURTHOUSE: OFFICE OF RECORDER OF DEEDS
   REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Office of the Recorder of Deeds
   STREET & NUMBER Fayette County Court House
   CITY TOWN Uniontown
   STATE Pennsylvania

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
   TITLE Joint State Government Commission of Historical Sites
   DATE 1965
   FEDERAL X STATE
   COUNTY LOCAL
   DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS William Penn Memorial Museum
   CITY, TOWN Box 1026, Harrisburg
   STATE Pennsylvania
Falling Water is located on 500 acres of rolling woodland. The main house is sited on the north of Bear Run, above the upper waterfall. It is oriented toward 150 degrees on the compass, or 7.5 degrees east of South-Southeast. The principal entrance is at the back (north side) through a loggia leading off a driveway between the house and a rock cliff about 16 feet high. A secondary entrance to the kitchen is at the northwest corner of the house, also from the driveway.

The main house, built in 1936 and 1937, is three stories high; average stream level is 1298' above sea level, the first-floor level is at 1311.7' and the top of the chimney is 30' 10 1/2" above the first-floor level. The first story comprises a large central living room, with dining table and glazed hatch leading down steps to the stream, the kitchen, and a small entry alcove. Steel and glass doors open from the living room to terraces on the east and west. The second story is occupied by a master bedroom and terrace (above the living room); Mr. Kaufman’s dressing room (above the kitchen) opening onto a terrace to the west; and a guest bedroom (above the east side of the living room). The third story is taken by a bedroom (above Mr. Kaufman’s dressing room) west balcony stairs leading down to the west terrace and a "gallery" opening onto a terrace above the center of the house. The bedroom is now furnished as a library, and the gallery—originally conceived as a connecting passage to a pedestrian bridge over the driveway—now leads to an alcove furnished as a small bedroom.

The structure of the main house consists of native sandstone retaining walls, piers, walls, and chimney core, with floors of cantilevered slabs of reinforced concrete. Window and door sash is of steel. Floors, indoors and out, are finished with 2" flags of native sandstone. Millwork is of black walnut plywood.

Wright designed all of the furniture that came with the house with minor exceptions. He used walnut veneer extensively on the interior furnishings, especially for cabinets and in the bedrooms. He chose other appropriate furnishings and sculpture for the house. Most of the furniture is of the built-in variety and thus stationary. The furniture serves the purpose of complementing the room rather than filling the space of the room.

Edgar Kaufman, Jr. described the structure in an article thus:

"Wright fixed the great chimney mass on top of a large boulder, its natural upper surface becoming the living room hearth, set above the finished floor. Around this point Wright swung his spaces: to the south the living room cantilevering over the falls; to the east the entrance spaces, to the west the kitchen, and to the north narrow strip for stairs and dining, all organized by four massive low piers that define the center bay of the living room. The north side of the house is almost sheltered by a steep cliff; the driveway runs narrowly between cliff and house."
The structure is so unusual that, although it is accurately expressed, more familiar preconceptions lead most people to 'read' the house wrongly. They think of tall stone walls from which the reinforced concrete projects. In fact, Wright conceived the house as a series of horizontal concrete trays upturned, stiffening edges; these trays are merely spaced one above the other by short stone masses. Wherever stone and concrete meet, the latter is continuous. Each concrete tray is structural on its lower surface; above this, in many areas, is an air space divided by small concrete walls that support a wood floor, finished in flag stones from the nearby quarry . . . Wright kept talking about the continuity of all surfaces on either side of the glass line. Floors must be at the same level, in the same stone flagging; ceiling surfaces were to be continuous and their color, uninterrupted.

The guest wing and servants' quarters, built in 1939 on the hill above the main house, at about 1340' above sea level, is connected to the main house by a semi-circular walkway of stone protected by a cantilevered canopy of reinforced concrete. The guest wing is composed of a bedroom and lounge, with swimming pool to the east; the servants' quarters consist of two single rooms and one "double" sized room on the second story, above the four-place carport, and a chauffeur's room at the south end of the carport level. Structure and millwork are of same character as main house.

There have been few changes. In 1946 the kitchen was extended to the west to provide a servants' sitting room. At the same time, a separate furnace was installed for the guest wing. In 1954 the east part of the cantilevered roof slab above the guest bedroom terrace of the main house was rebuilt. After a flood in 1956 the hanging stairs to the stream were rebuilt with two additional steel ties into the bedrock of the stream. Incandescent lighting was changed to fluorescent lighting by the original occupants of the house in 1938 and 1939.
"Falling Water" on Bear Run is a summer house built for Pittsburgh millionaire Edgar Kaufman, Sr. Wayne Andrews has called it the "most famous modern house in the world" while Vincent Scully proclaimed it "one of the complete masterpieces of twentieth-century art." The house, cantilevered over a waterfall, has come to be one of America's most renowned buildings, appealing not only to architects, but to the general public as well.

Kaufman, a Pittsburgh department store owner, gave Wright the commission for a dream house retreat—a beautiful home, elevated over a waterfall, resembling a soaring bird or plane, its wings reaching out into the air, at once part of the natural landscape but also separate from it. Its relationship to its surroundings is like that of a nest in a tree, a made thing that is utterly natural. Wright himself writing in Architectural Forum (1938) stated that this house "has no limitations as to form." "Falling Water" is almost impossible to describe and very difficult to photograph—the site is spectacular, the house changes from different vantage points and the scale is elusive.

"Falling Water" exploits the site as few other structures have before or since—secured to a rocky plateau, the massive cantilevered balconies covered by a slab roof canopy float in the space over the swiftly moving stream. Equally beautiful when approached on ground level, the three stories of the main house combine visually with the massing of the guest house above to produce a sort of monumentality, even in its domesticity. Visitors are surprised by its comparatively few rooms—a massive living room, three bedrooms and service rooms all extended by balconies, terraces and canopy slabs that project off the house in all directions.

The interior spaces are as beautiful as the exterior. Wright did not believe, as have many architects before and since, that a house should be an empty stage for human action, capable of being changed at will. He set the stage and was also the director. Wright built in the furniture, used fluorescent lighting as an aesthetic element which mimics daylight or is used as indirect light when it is not needed as direct illumination for reading or at a desk. Structural materials are generally the same on both interior and exterior, the flag paved living room floor continues to a stair dropping to a plunge pool beneath the house. The windows at the corners hold glass sealed against glass so there is no visual interruption (they sometimes leak) and reveal the area Edgar Kaufman, Jr. describes as combining "the beauty of a mature forest, massive sandstone boulders, a wild, free-flowing stream, and a forest understory covered with native rhododendro
laurel, and typical Appalachian wildflowers.

"Falling Water" exemplifies Wright's own dictum--"Architecture is the triumph of human imagination over materials, methods, and men." The house enhances and then transcends the site and has become symbolic of man's struggle with nature and his final acceptance of a partnership with the environment.

The house was given to the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy by Edgar Kaufman, Jr. in October 1969. They maintain and interpret the house for visitors (by appointment).
10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY

UTM REFERENCES

A [1,7] [633,2] 569 4,418,872,0
ZONE EASTING NORTHING
C [1,7] [633,0] 444 4,417,541,0
See continuation sheet

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See continuation sheet

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>CODE</th>
<th>COUNTY</th>
<th>CODE</th>
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</thead>
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11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE
Carolyn Pitts, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION
Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service

DATE
1/26/76

STREET & NUMBER
1100 L Street, NW.

TELEPHONE
202-523-5464

CITY OR TOWN
Washington, DC 20240

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL ___ STATE ___ LOCAL ___

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

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

76


ALL that certain lot or parcel of ground in the
Township of Stewart, County of Fayette and Commonwealth
of Pennsylvania, being bounded and described as follows:

BEGINNING at a planted square stone with an "x"
on top at a corner common to lands now or formerly of
John H. Stark, lands now or formerly of Jacob Stull
and lands herein described; thence along said Stull
lands, the following seven (7) courses and distances,
each of said courses being to a planted stone with an
"x" on top: South 51° 35' West 562.73 feet, North 34°
16' West 109.51 feet, North 62° 19' West 223.00 feet,
North 22° 20' West 179.63 feet, North 4° 50' East
165.34 feet, North 48° 32' 30" West 115.43 feet and
South 45° 41' 40" West 131.81 feet to a planted stone
with an "x" on top at the southeasterly corner of lands
now or formerly of William Gormley; thence along said
Gormley lands, the following four (4) courses and dis-
tances: North 22° 51' 40" West 438.57 feet to a post
with pointers painted red, South 79° 15' West 200 feet
to a point on State Route 381, thence leaving said
State Route 381 and following an old county road,
South 10° 30' West 90 feet, more or less and South 8°
30' East 670 feet, more or less, to a point on the
easterly side of said old county road at line of lands
now or formerly of said Jacob Stull; thence along said
Stull lands, South 6° 8' 20" West 333.00 feet to a
corner common to said Stull lands and lands now or
formerly of E. R. Clarkson; thence along said Clark-
son lands and crossing said State Route 381, North 53°
33' 20" West 1830.61 feet to a point on line of other
lands now or formerly of said E. R. Clarkson; thence
along said other Clarkson lands, North 55° 15' West
849.75 feet to a corner common to said other Clarkson
lands and lands now or formerly of J. A. Smiley; thence
along said Smiley lands, the following two (2) courses
and distances: North 11° 30' West 193.67 feet to stones
and North 46° East 181.5 feet to a planted square stone
with an "x" on top, said point being also the beginning
point used in the description of that tract, known
locally as, and hereinafter called, the "Camasco Country
Club Tract", as described in that certain deed from
Investment Land Company to Liliane S. Kaufmann, dated July 26, 1933, and recorded in the Recorder's Office of Fayette County, Pennsylvania, hereinafter called the "Recorder's Office", in Deed Book Vol. 519, page 439, part of said Masonic Country Club Tract being part of the lands herein described; thence continuing along said Smiley lands the following two (2) courses and distances: North 23° 46' 10" West 580.06 feet and South 76° 46' East 230.60 feet to a point on the east bank of the Youghiogheny River; thence along the east bank of said river, North 21° 50' West 350.69 feet to a point on line of other lands of said J. R. Smiley; thence along said other Smiley lands the following five (5) courses and distances: North 76° 46' East 362.90 feet, North 10° 22' West 402.47 feet to a planted stone with an "x" on top, North 21° 16' East 1015.77 feet to a planted stone in a mound of stones at the edge of a field, said point also being on line of lands conveyed to Edgar Kaufmann by Joe H. May and Etta Jean May, his wife, by deed dated October 3, 1937 and recorded in the Recorder's Office in Deed Book Vol. 900, page 348, hereinafter called the "May Tract", part of said May Tract being part of the lands herein described, due West 1040 feet, more or less, to a chestnut and North 22° West 660 feet to a gun at a corner common to said other Smiley lands and lands now or formerly of Fred Bowers; thence along said Bowers lands, North 64° East 1643.5 feet to a point; thence through the May Tract, South 35° East 3750 feet to a point in the center line of said State Route 331, said point being South 5° East 50 feet from the southeast corner of lands now or formerly of Paul A. Beag; thence along the center line of said State Route 331, South 17° West 658 feet, more or less, to a point at the intersection of said center line with the westerly line of lands conveyed by Rebecca Tissue et al. to Edgar J. Kaufmann and Liliane S. Kaufmann, his wife, by deed dated December 16, 1940 and recorded in the Recorder's Office in Deed Book Vol. 553, page 16, hereinafter called the "Tissue Tract"; thence continuing along said center line, South 42° West 990 feet, more or less, to the easterly corner of lands.
now or formerly of the Trustees of the Church of the
Brethren; thence along said lands of the Trustees of
the Church of the Brethren, the following three (3)
courses and distances: North 40° West 290 feet; South
40° 15' West 115 feet and South 25° East 231 feet to a
point in the center line of said State Route 381; thence
along said center line, South 46° West 118.8 feet to
corner common to the Masonic Country Club Tract and
the Tissue Tract; thence along the dividing line between
the Masonic Country Club Tract and the Tissue Tract,
the following four (4) courses and distances: South
16° 46' 20" East 1929 feet, more or less, to a point
at a stone fence, South 15° 46' 30" East 873.52 feet
to a copper ball in a boulder, North 73° 12' 13" East
684.50 feet to a planted stone with an "x" on top and
North 43° 40' East 1670.65 feet to a planted stone with
an "x" on top; thence through the Masonic Country Club
Tract, South 33° East 1320 feet to a point; thence South
7° West 3600 feet, more or less, to a corner common to
lands now or formerly of Howard L. Sparks and lands now
or formerly of John H. Stark; thence along said Stark
lands, the following two (2) courses and distances:
North 45° 59' 45" West 30.00 feet, more or less, to a
planted stone with an "x" on top and South 30° 37' 30"
West 428.51 feet to the point at the place of beginning.

CONTAINING 515 acres more or less.

EXCEPTING therefrom and thereout the following
described parcel belonging now or formerly to Jacob
F. Stull, conveyed to said Jacob F. Stull by deed of
Grant Dulc, dated July 24, 1930 and recorded in the
Recorder's Office in Deed Book Vol. 519, page 282:

BEGINNING at a planted stone with an "x" on top
located North 45° East 66.1 feet from the beginning
point used in the description of the Masonic Country
Club Tract in said deed from Investment Land Company
to Malinbe S. Kaufman; thence along the 3.592 acre
portion of the Masonic Country Club Tract excepted
and reserved in said deed the following two (2) courses and distances: North 56° 01' 45" East 361.50 feet to a planted stone with an "x" on top and North 08° 01' 45" East 635 feet more or less to a stone at the northerly corner of the first tract described in said deed from Donald H. Woodmancy and Ruth C. Woodmancy, his wife, to Edgar J. Kaufmann, dated July 29, 1933, and recorded in the Recorder's Office in Deed Book Vol. 519, page 435; thence along said first Woodmancy Tract South 15° 45' East 597.90 feet to a planted stone in a mound of stones on line of the third tract described in said Woodmancy deed; thence along said third Woodmancy tract South 36° 34' West 619.03 feet to a planted stone in a mound of stones at a corner common to said third Woodmancy tract and lands conveyed by R. R. Clarkson to Edgar J. Kaufmann, by deed dated September 15, 1948, and recorded in the Recorder's Office in Deed Book Vol. 668, page 61; thence along said Clarkson lands North 59° West 975.48 feet to the point at the place of beginning.

CONTAINING 14.831 acres more or less.

State Route 381 bisects the above-described tract of land on an axis which runs approximately north to south. National Landmark Status is given only to that portion of the above-described tract of land which lies to the east of said State Route 381.