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 How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property
   ----------------------------------------------------------------------------------
   historic name Acres, The
   
   other names/site number Galesburg Country Homes, Galesburg Country Homes Acres
   
   
2. Location
   ----------------------------------------------------------------------------------
   street & number 10036, 10069, 11090, 11108, and 11185 Hawthorne Drive not for publication N/A
   city or town Charleston Township vicinity N/A
   state Michigan code Mi county Kalamazoo code 077
   zip code 49053

3. State/Federal Agency Certification
   ----------------------------------------------------------------------------------
   As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this _X_ 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 _X_ meets ____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant _X_ nationally / statewide ____ locally. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)
   
   Signature of certifying official Date 4/1/04
   
   M I SHPO
   State or Federal Agency/ or Tribal government

   In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

   Signature of commenting official/Title Date

   State or Federal agency and bureau
4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

____ entered in the National Register

____ See continuation sheet.

____ determined eligible for the National Register

____ See continuation sheet.

____ determined not eligible for the National Register

____ removed from the National Register

____ other (explain): ______________________

____________________________________  ______________
Signature of Keeper  Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

_X_ private

____ public-local

____ public-State

____ public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

____ building(s)

_X_ district

____ site

____ structure

____ object

Number of Resources within Property

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Contributing</th>
<th>Noncontributing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>buildings</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sites</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>structures</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>objects</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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

____N/A____________________________________
6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)
Cat: Domestic Sub: single dwelling

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)
Cat: Domestic Sub: single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)
Wrightian/Usonian

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)
foundation concrete
roof asphalt
walls concrete
other

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See Section 7 Continuation Sheets.
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)

[X] 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.

[X] 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 a grave.

[ ] D  a cemetery.

[ ] E  a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

[ ] F  a commemorative property.

[X] G  less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture
Community Planning & Development
Landscape Architecture

Period of Significance 1947-1961

Significant Dates 1947-1954
1961

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
N/A
USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form
The Acres
Kalamazoo County, Michigan

Cultural Affiliation  N/A

Architect/Builder  Frank Lloyd Wright, John Howe, Wesley Peters, Francis Willsey

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)
See Section 8 Continuation Sheet(s).

9. Major Bibliographical References
(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)
See Section 9 Continuation Sheet(s).

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  #

Primary Location of Additional Data
X State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State agency
___ Federal agency
___ Local government
___ University
___ Other
Name of repository: ____________________________________________________________

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property  71 & 1/4 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing
1 16 630850 4680020 3 16 631610 4679640
2 16 631610 4680040 4 16 630860 4679610
___ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)
11. Form Prepared By

name/title  Pamela Hall O'Connor

organization  Preservation Practices  date  November 30, 2003

street & number  471 W. South Street, #508  telephone  269-342-4608

city or town  Kalamazoo  state  MI  zip code  49007

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps
A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property’s location.
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs
Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name  SEE CONTINUATION SHEET 10

street & number  __________________________ telephone  __________________________

city or town  __________________________ state  ____  zip code  __________

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. 470 et seq.). A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a validOMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the 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 Keeper, National Register of Historic Places, 1849 "C" Street NW, Washington, DC 20240.
The Acres is a residential subdivision that was designed by Frank Lloyd Wright in 1947 and 1948, and developed between 1949 and 1951. The Acres occupies a rectangular tract of seventy-one and one-quarter acres of land that is comprised of a platted homelot area and a large undeveloped and naturally landscaped area owned in common.

The platted area is comprised of twenty-one, one-acre house lots, each one forming a circle 114 feet in diameter, which are collectively set roughly into the southern half of the parcel, with a small portion reaching up into the parcel’s northwest corner. The lots are clustered along both sides of the narrow, driveway-like Hawthorne Drive, the development’s only road. Small spaces between the lots, along with some larger open spaces in the platted area that are identified as “parks” are also owned in common, along with all unbuilt lots except #3 and #10. Five houses--four of them designed by Wright and a fifth by one of his pupils--were built on lots in the platted area, which is adjacent to the access road that runs along the property’s west boundary. Most of the northern portion of the parcel remains undeveloped.

The Acres is located in the southwest corner of Section 30 of Charleston Township in Kalamazoo County. First settled by William Harrison (son of first Kalamazoo County settler Basil Harrison) in 1830, the township is comprised of thirty-six mile-square sections and located at the county’s eastern edge. Its terrain is generally level in the north half, while the southern part is more undulating. Approximately forty percent of the township is occupied by the Fort Custer Recreation Area. Of the remainder, much remains agricultural. Low-density residential development is growing, but so far has not intruded near the subject property. The township’s population stands at under 1,800.

The approach from the north on 37th Street to Hawthorne is wooded on both sides, with several large homes set well back from the street on the west. The immediate approach from the south on 37th Street is also wooded, although there are also farms and open land in the area. The development’s road, Hawthorne Drive, is narrow and curving. Both sides of Hawthorne are intermittently open, with trees and low scrub growth, and then more heavily wooded in places with mature and younger trees, including the western side of the parcel, beyond Hawthorne’s end. Trees found here include Apple, Aspen, Cedar, Elm, Hickory, Oak, Sassafras and Willow. In the north central part of the property is a large pond, formed when The Acres’ members dammed a spring-fed stream. The landscape also includes a low, marshy area that encircles the pond, and moves west several hundred yards and slightly south.

Along Hawthorne Drive and proceeding east, lawn spaces and wooded areas surrounding and in-between the home sites open up to, and in some cases, frame views of the houses. In other cases, they provide short vistas of the curving, slightly rolling road ahead. There is no formal delineation between building lots. The informal landscaping continues across building lot boundaries into the undeveloped lots in between and beyond into the unplatted area. The Weisblat home site is in part planted along its entry with low-growing shrubs suggested by Wright or one of his associates. Others, including the Meyer and Eppstein homes, have a long-established climbing shrub that moves up garden walls. These appear to be the extent of the “formal” landscaping efforts, with the remainder of the space left untouched, or landscaped in a way that appears as though it is naturally occurring. There are several mowed grassed paths on the platted and unplatted portions of the parcel, ranging in width from eight to thirty feet wide, maintained for walking through the wooded and open spaces that occur throughout.

As one turns east onto Hawthorne Drive, the first structure seen is a combination Signpost and Mailbox. Although some sort of sign and mailbox has been present in this general location throughout most of the life of the development, it appears from a reading of the Association’s meeting minutes that this most recent iteration of
mailboxes and signpost date from the later 1980s and early 1990s. The structure consists of three courses of laid-up hand-cast block, about six feet wide and five feet high. On top of this sits a wood, open-style mailbox with six niches alongside one another, five niches for mailboxes and one for packages. Set into the west end of the block, two wood boards extend from the southwest corner approximately five feet to the southwest, where another course of block supports the opposite board end. The upper board bears the words "The Acres" wood-burned into it, and the text is bookended by two wood-burned and painted red blocks, approximately two inches square each. The lower wood piece's text is also woodburned and reads "Hawthorne Drive." Its condition and integrity are very good, although its age makes it non-contributing to the district.

Heading east on Hawthorne from 37th Street, the first Acres' home that comes into sight on the south side (right) is the Wright-designed Eric and Pat Pratt House on Acres' Lot #6, at 11036 Hawthorne. In February, 1948, the Pratts wrote to Wright, requesting that he design a home for them. He responded in the affirmative, asking about their specific desires. They responded that they would build the house themselves, and asked that he design it to be built in stages, so they could add on as their family grew. He did, and they did. The Pratts began their home in 1950, moved there in September 1951, and then continued to work through the fall of 1954, adding additional bedrooms and a family room.

From a taller central mass on the principal facade, the Pratt House forms a long line oriented generally east-west. It stretches west along a gallery hall, off which bedrooms, baths and the study are located. The tall central mass holds another bath, part of the dining room, a laundry and "workspace," which was the term Wright used for kitchen. Stretching south and east from the central mass are the living area, studio and carport. Exterior materials are hand-made solid and perforated concrete block, and Honduran mahogany, which surrounds the majority of its windows and entrances. The Pratt House's perforated block is in a pattern that joins a single horizontal cut along one edge, paired with a second cut that is parallel, a bit shorter, and has an L-shaped tail. The lower roof sections of the exterior have Wright's characteristic deep eaves, and the house sits on a concrete slab, into which its hot water gravity heating system is incorporated. The roof is flat.

Characteristically, the Pratt home does not reveal its secrets to the street. Beginning with the tall central mass on its north facade, the concrete block is perforated to allow light, but not sight into the workspace. Moving west, all casement windows are pushed up underneath the deep eaves. A door near the end of the principal facade allows entrance to the study. After rounding the narrow west end of the home, which is solid block, the back side of the study becomes transparent with floor to ceiling windows and doors. Where the study ends and the gallery hall to the east begins, the windows are once again shoulder height, pushed up underneath the eaves. Moving again toward the central mass of the house, the facade jumps out south about twelve feet, and again becomes floor to ceiling glass outside the dining area. Proceeding further east, the full height windows are reduced by half, to about waist height. These windows round the corner, the wall steps back several feet, and the windows return again to the upper section of the wall only. The wall steps back once again to its former depth as windows line the south wall of the studio. Solid block forms the east end of the house, and follows around to the north, where it continues under the carport and over a patio. There it is punctuated by another series of floor to ceiling glass windows and door, with more shoulder height windows following it west, back to the taller central mass.

Off the northeast corner of the carport is a 1957 garden storage Shed that the Pratts designed and built using sympathetic materials: hand-cast concrete block and wood. The shed is set into the rising earth on the east, and has windows on the north, west and south sides, along with single and double doors on the west facade. All are sheltered by deep eaves. The shed contributes to the district.
The Pratt House received a sensitive, multi-year restoration and renovation in the middle 1990s, when poorly planned work carried out by another owner was corrected. At this same time, a wall was removed from between the third bedroom and study to create a single larger bedroom. Insulated glass has replaced the original, and Plexiglass replaced original glass behind the perforated textile blocks in the workspace. A formerly exposed boiler unit in the kitchen was enclosed as well. Overall, the integrity and condition of the Pratt House are excellent.

If you turn your back on the Pratt home’s principal facade, you look down a long drive that curves and drops gently toward the northwest and then disappears. Just around this curve and slightly below sits the earthbound Gunther and Anne Fonken House, on Lot 2, at 11069 Hawthorne Drive. The Fonken House is the only non-Wright designed home in The Acres development. Wright died in 1959, and about that same time, the Fonkens decided to build their home at The Acres. They first consulted with Lee Kawahara, but settled on former Taliesin fellow Francis "Will" Willsley to design their house.

The Fonken House was built in 1960, and is set deeply into an earth berm on most of the north side. In fact, earth covers about thirty percent of its exterior. It has a T shaped plan, with the main living space forming the T’s stem, and the bedrooms and carport forming the cross member. Its roof is hipped with a low pitch, and from the intersection of the two sections rises a concrete block enclosure that holds heating and ventilating stacks and equipment. All walls are concrete block with mahogany sash and trim.

The cross member of the T is oriented generally north-south, with the carport forming the southern half. As you round the carport and then move north along the east facade, you see one group of casement windows just after the carport walls. Shortly after these windows, the exterior wall turns northwest. Set into this angled wall are windowed doors from the master bedroom inside. The footprint and walls of the patio mimic a ninety-degree corner that the home’s exterior walls would have taken if the corner of the house had not been cut off. Below the patio the ground drops away dramatically.

Moving up and around to the north end of the T to the west facade, the wall is solid, with a large, indented alcove that is utilized for stacking firewood. Moving to the north facade of the T’s support, a continuous line of windows sits just above ground level under the eave. This wall, as well at the north half of the T, are where the house is most deeply enveloped by the ground. One standing inside the home would see these windows at about shoulder height, and look almost directly onto the ground outside. The line of windows stops short of the bottom end of the T, and as you move to the front facade, the height of the ground against the walls begins to drop. Along the south facade of this section there are seven sets of casement windows, about four feet wide each, spaced evenly just underneath the eave, like those on the opposite side.

Uninhabited for about a year at this writing, and neglected for some time prior, the Fonken house suffers from deferred maintenance. Its integrity is good; its condition is fair.

Returning to Hawthorne and proceeding east, a drive just beyond the Pratt House heads up a slow grade in a southeasterly direction. At its end, it loops north, and then back onto itself. On the east side of the loop sits the Curtis and Lillian Meyer House, on Lot 11, at 11108 Hawthorne. The Wright-designed Meyer House was constructed in 1950 and 1951, and is The Acres’ only solar hemicycle design. It is constructed of what appears to be commercially produced concrete block and mahogany. At first glance from the drive, it appears as though there are two curves that open to the east and slightly south that are connected at their inside tips. In reality, this is a two story
home, and the curve on the right (or south side) serves primarily as a carport. One entry to the house is accessed from the drive as it passes the house; the other is hidden in the northeast corner of the carport.

The mass of the house takes the shape of a drum and curved wing, with the wing's lower living level below the grade of the principal (west) facade. Beginning at the primary entrance, if one moves south and east around the carport, which is supported on its south end by a small storage room, the land drops away and the central drum's two levels and the wing are revealed on the east facade. The drum encloses the utilities and a stair that proceeds past the ground-level workspace (kitchen) and up to the bedrooms. Light enters the workspace by an opening fitted with side-by-side casement windows. Then, just below the drum's roof line, a cantilevered deck erupts from the drum, whose roof points northeast, covering a deck with waist-high walls. The deck continues along the top of the lower level of the drum, which holds the dining area. The deck roof then steps back, and transforms into a deep eave that tops the wing's entire two-level, glassed inner curve. As you move along the curve and around its northeast tip, around the corner and beyond the glass wall, a tree pierces the roof line at the same place a tall and thin ground-level window relieves the solid block wall. Moving around to the outer or west side of the wing and returning to the "front" door, second story windows are tucked tightly up under the deep eaves in a long band, providing light into the bedrooms upstairs, while a series of small, square, ground level windows allows evening light from the west into the wing's lower living area.

The varnished mahogany trim on the home's exterior was painted brown by an earlier owner. Inside, some original built-in benches were also removed by an earlier owner, but the Wright-designed dining table remains, as well as other pieces. Despite these losses, the integrity and condition of the Meyer House are very good.

The Meyer garden Shed stands on the slope southeast of the house, less than 200 feet away. It is a small rectangular building of concrete block with a low-pitched gable roof covered in rolled-on material. It measures about ten by eighteen feet. There was no attempt to make this garden shed fit the existing architectural scheme of The Acres, unlike other sheds that were built there. The construction date is not known, but the remaining original Acres' resident believes it dates to The Acres' earlier years. Its condition is fair.

Returning to Hawthorne along the Meyer House drive, you pass The Acres' Tractor Shed on your left. It is constructed of hand-made concrete block, and dates from approximately 1953. It has a slightly pitched shed roof, with a double door on its north facade, and high fixed sash windows on the east and west facades. There is evident deterioration along the northwest corner roof and eave, and the building is now covered by vines. Its integrity is good, but it is in poor condition.

Returning to Hawthorne and turning east, the facade of the Wright-designed Samuel and Dorothy Eppstein House comes into view, on Lot 7 at 11090 Hawthorne. Started in 1951, it forms an in-line plan oriented north-south, almost perpendicular to the Pratt House. A low, cantilevered carport that extends west from just north of the home's midsection fills the view as one approaches from the street. Its exterior materials are hand-made solid and perforated concrete block and mahogany.

This house was also built in several stages, similar to the Pratt House. In 1953, the Eppsteins moved into a finished first phase, which included living and dining rooms, workspace, master bedroom and bath. Over the following several years, the remainder of the south end was completed. The Eppsteins added a family room, basement and terrace, continuing the in-line plan, in 1959; these additions, according to Storrer, deviate from Wright's original plan (p 307).
The home's active areas, living, dining and workspace rooms are on the north end. But because the house sits on a rise, this placement facing Hawthorne was achieved without sacrificing the Eppsteins' privacy.

The main entry is under the carport. As you move south along the west facade, otherwise solid block walls with two rows of perforated block allow light into the gallery hall from underneath the eave. At this point, a separate roof section jumps up about a foot as the site rises, and the eave to ground solid wall is punctuated halfway down the west wall of the family room by shoulder-height windows. Rounding the corner to the short south facade, multiple glass doors fill most of the wall and provide access to a small terrace. Continuing on around the southeast corner, the walls again hold shoulder-height windows as you move north. Continuing north, you approach a terrace which begins outside the master bedroom with another set of full length glass doors. Continuing, another door leads from the living room to the terrace, and then the windows are again tucked underneath the eave until you reach the home's northeast corner.

The north section of the home's roof, over the living, dining and workspace rooms pitches upward and the building's north facade is almost entirely glass, allowing indirect light into the active area all day. Surrounding the northeast corner of the house is the circular terrace that is surrounded by a wall of the same concrete block material as the house. The walled terrace wraps itself about the northeast corner of the house as the ground falls away to the north; it begins roughly at the master bedroom, then runs north and around the front, where it concludes and meets the northwest corner of the home. Between that northwest corner of the house and the beginning of the carport on the west facade, the home's exterior walls are of both solid and perforated concrete block.

The Eppstein Pool (non-contributing) was constructed twenty to thirty feet outside the southeast facade of the house; it is surrounded by a concrete pad. Between the house and pool, nearer the pool's south end, stands a wood sun deck that is enclosed with a wood railing. Directly south of the pool in the backyard is a wood Pool House (non-contributing) with a footprint of roughly eight by twelve feet, in wood, with a catslide roof. The pool and shed were constructed by an earlier owner. It is not possible to determine the actual condition of the pool, as it has a cover and layers of leaves and organic matter that have collected on its surface. The pool shed appears to be in good condition.

At this writing, the Eppstein House has been unoccupied for about five years, following its purchase by a non-resident owner. Its immediate landscaping is overgrown, there is a large open crack in the wall that surrounds the patio of the northeast corner of the house, and roof and carport cantilever problems are developing. During 1998 and 1999, the present owner invested considerable time and expense removing inappropriate paint and discoloration from the interior of the home's textile blocks, and working on parts of the interior floor. However, no significant work has been accomplishing since that time. The house is in only fair condition, while its integrity is good.

Returning to Hawthorne Drive from the Eppstein drive and turning east (right), almost immediately on the north is The Acres' 1958 Tennis Court. It stands approximately twenty yards from the road, and runs north-south. Not used or maintained for some time, it is somewhat overgrown. Its condition is fair.

Minning almost to the east end of Hawthorne Drive, you arrive at the David and Christine Weisblat House, on 9, a 11185 Hawthorne on the north (left) side of the street. The Weisblats moved into their Usonian in 1951; it was the first Acres home completed. Like the Eppstein and Pratt homes, it was designed using Wright's "in-line" plan. The workspace, living and dining areas are again nearer the street toward the southern end of the plan, while the bedrooms and baths are lined up along a gallery running north. In 1961, John Howe worked with Wesley
Peters to design a wing extension that runs toward the northeast, and added an additional bedroom, laundry room, bath, second (larger) study, potting shed and greenhouse--with a basement underneath.

The Weisblat House is also of handmade, solid and perforated concrete block and mahogany. In this case, one half of the block is grooved with a chevron-like design. Alongside the chevron is a small triangle that almost opens up to one edge of the block. The original house has a low-sloped, hipped roof with asphalt shingles. The addition has a flat roof. As one approaches from the street, a glass-enclosed living room comes into view at the home's southwest corner first. Using this area as a starting point and moving east, the wall becomes solid, and then holds several shoulder-height casement windows outside the dining area's south wall. At the southeast corner, there is a small, walled yard. Moving north, another set of shoulder-height casement windows sit underneath the eaves on the east wall of the dining area. Moving on up the east facade, a small entry is cut into the workspace projection that sits between the dining area and the carport.

Continuing north along the solid east workspace wall, you pass underneath the carport. The main entry is tucked under its northwest corner. At this point on the east facade, the gallery side of the original bedroom wing is bermed into a rise in the earth--so much so, that the two rows of perforated windows tucked up underneath the deep eave appear to almost sit on the ground. The original house terminates here, and the addition wing bends 120 degrees northeast as it begins. It holds a series of small casement windows about four feet apart along to the end of the study. The glass greenhouse is attached to the north end of this addition, and is roughly nine by thirteen feet in ground dimensions.

Rounding the greenhouse and proceeding south along the west side of the addition, you pass the potting shed with an entry door, and then another door that enters the study on a short wall that widens the building to the west. Continuing down the west wall, there are continuous casement windows at waist height along the study, and then the windows rise to shoulder height again once the bedroom walls begin. The addition ends and the original wing begins and proceeds more directly south, and a continuous band of higher windows begins again, opening further along onto the enclosed patio. Outside the enclosed patio is a larger open patio, walled with hand-cast blocks.

Returning to the house, the wall jumps out to the west again, signaling the beginning of the deeper living room space, with a solid wall for about six feet, then the ceiling to floor windows begin again.

Inside the Weisblat house, the only major room without windows is the workspace. Its door to the small, walled yard at the southeast corner of the house allows some light inside, but its primary light source is a skylight that was part of the original Wright plan.

Other than the 1961 addition, no other changes were made to the Weisblat House. All interior and exterior surfaces retain their originally specified finishes. The condition and the integrity of the Weisblat home are excellent, and the house retains all of its Wright-designed free-standing and built-in furniture, including dining table and chairs, benches, hassocks, desks, dressers, bedside tables, stereo cabinet, shelves and curtain rods.

On the east side of the lot sits the c1980 Weisblat garden Shed. The shed has a low pitched hipped roof with a deep eave all around. It is primarily constructed of standard concrete block, but its main facade is constructed with hand cast block that matches the house. Under its northwest eave is a waist high, fixed corner window. Although it is non-contributing due to its young age, it complements the character of the main house in its design. The condition and integrity are excellent.
The small Weisblat Frog Pond, located southwest of the house, was dug in 1961, at the same time the addition was made to the house, and has a footprint of approximately fourteen by twenty feet.

Northwest several hundred yards from the Weisblat House is the Acres’ Pond. In 1954, the owners decided to dam the spring-fed stream running across the north half of the property to create a pond of approximately four acres. This was a slight deviation from Wright’s original site plan, which called for several terraced ponds. Used in the earlier days as a swimming and fishing hole before it silted up, the pond is still fished from time to time, and stands primarily today as a haven for waterfowl and wildlife alike.

Since The Acres development was first laid out and construction completed, there have been no changes to the landscape, except that it has filled in with maturing trees and scrub growth. Large grassy areas are still cut on a regular basis, but with the passing of time, and diminished activity of the children who grew up there in the 1950s-1960s, more of The Acres’ terrain now holds mature growth.

Overall, The Acres’ integrity is excellent. No additional lots, beyond those for the five homes, have ever been built on, and all other lots except two, lots 3 and 10, are held in common by Acres resident owners. Lots 3 and 10 are owned by earlier Acres members who, for whatever reason, still own the lots, but never built on them. Wildlife is present and can frequently be seen and heard during the day and evening, and, despite the presence of Interstate 94, which runs parallel to The Acres’ northern boundary about a mile north, the development remains the rural haven its creators envisioned and produced.
# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
## CONTINUATION SHEET

**Section 7**  
**Page 8**  
**The Acres**  
**Kalamazoo County, Michigan**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building/structure/objects (see map)</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Map Key</th>
<th>Contributing</th>
<th>Non-Contrib.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acres Sign &amp; Mailbox (structure)</td>
<td>Hawthorne and 37th St.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>X (c1990)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pratt House (building)</td>
<td>11036 Hawthorne Drive</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>X (1950-1954)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pratt Shed (building)</td>
<td>11036 Hawthorne Drive</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>X (1957)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fonken House (building)</td>
<td>11069 Hawthorne Drive</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>X (1960)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eppstein House (building)</td>
<td>11090 Hawthorne Drive</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>X (1951-1953)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eppstein Pool (structure)</td>
<td>11090 Hawthorne Drive</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>X (c1972)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eppstein Pool House (building)</td>
<td>11090 Hawthorne Drive</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>X (c1972)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acres Tractor Shed (building)</td>
<td>alongside drive to Meyer house</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>X (c1953)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meyer House (building)</td>
<td>11108 Hawthorne Drive</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>X (1950-1951)</td>
<td>X (c1955)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meyer Shed (building)</td>
<td>11108 Hawthorne Drive</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennis Court (structure)</td>
<td>across Hawthorne N of Eppstein House</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>X (1958)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weisblat Frog Pond (object)</td>
<td>11185 Hawthorne Drive</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>X (1961)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weisblat House (building)</td>
<td>11185 Hawthorne Drive</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>X (1950-1951)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weisblat Shed (building)</td>
<td>11185 Hawthorne Drive</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td>X (c1980)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acres Pond (object)</td>
<td>n-nw of Weisblat home</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>X (1954)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Acres is nationally significant as the most fully and purely realized example of American master architect Frank Lloyd Wright's eight, middle twentieth-century, organic community landscape designs. Its progressive use of open space and subdivision location; its topographically sensitive siting of homes and other landscape features, as well as its architecture and design, which employed new house forms, floor plans, and planning and construction methods, were developed by Wright in his effort to provide affordable, well-designed housing in a naturalistic setting for the United States' middle class. The Acres is the only such development that was actually built as planned, with intense involvement by its cooperative members. The Acres contains four of Wright's Usonian homes, and one other by a Taliesin Fellow. The period of significance corresponds with the period during which The Acres was built. There are no other known collections of Usonians like it in the United States.

In 1946, a group of Upjohn Company scientists from Kalamazoo and their families joined together, embracing the idea of cooperatively building modern, affordable homes in a rural setting. The group identified the subject site, then known as the Bilotta Farm, about twelve miles east of Kalamazoo. Then used as cow pasture, with some contoured areas cultivated in alfalfa and corn, the land was interspersed with stands of trees, and had a spring-fed stream running across its north half.

Some of the group felt this site was too rural, and about half of them amicably split and formed a second group to look for a parcel nearer Kalamazoo. The remaining members of the original group purchased the Charleston Township farm in 1947 and nicknamed it "The Acres." The second group located a parcel near the southwest corner of Kalamazoo's city limits, bought it, and named it "Parkwyn Village." Some of both cooperatives' members had come to admire Frank Lloyd Wright's work and, again working in cooperation, they approached the architect about designing their respective parcels. He agreed, and visited the area in March, 1947, to walk the lands for planning purposes.

The Period
Hundreds of thousands of military and non-military returned home following the end of World War II to attend school, marry and start or complete families. Money was tight; the war had followed on the heels of the Great Depression. Affordable, middle-class housing was scarce, and the federal government was guaranteeing mortgages for new homes. In addition, the automobile was making it easy for people to get around and to live outside of town. New homes went up in "postwar suburbs," sometimes at distances well outside traditional communities, with others just beyond existing, earlier-established neighborhoods. These new suburbs were often designed and laid out similar to the familiar grid pattern that had been used for decades and decades. In other locations, the new homes were built in newly platted areas well outside town, as well as along older rural, secondary roadways. Containing two, sometimes three bedrooms, these homes very often looked like scaled-down versions of the older generation of American homes. "Minimal" Tudor Revival and Colonial Revivals were quite popular, and later, "Ranch" and "Split Level" styled homes began to appear--low-slung and on larger lots.

In his 1954 book, *The Natural House*, Frank Lloyd Wright said: "The house of moderate cost is not only America's major architectural problem but the problem most difficult for her major architects." The Usonian was Wright's answer to the small house challenge. He had worked on the "affordable" housing question since the 1920s. William Storrer said in his *Frank Lloyd Wright Companion* that "Usonian grew out of Prairie when Wright attempted to turn an architecture suited to a Victorian American upper class and the rich into a Democratic American architecture..." (p xii).
Claiming that smaller homes should not simply be small copies of larger homes, and that his new homes shouldn’t be placed in neighborhoods of traditional design, Wright embarked upon an early-middle twentieth century experiment that, characteristically, pushed architecture’s comfortable design envelope. He questioned conventional neighborhood planning and home building materials, and then he tucked his new approach into a natural landscape.

The Usonian Communities
From a landscape design perspective, a review of the sum of Wright’s other multiple-family projects reveals The Acres to be the most purely realized and unchanged of these efforts. The Broadacre City plan (1934) was Wright’s best-known effort at community planning. Though never built, it appears to have influenced all of his later subdivision plans in its attention to the existing landscape, its efforts toward affordability, and Usonian building design.

Suntop Homes (1938) in Ardmore, Pennsylvania, used a spiral layout to achieve compact, multi-level apartments in four-unit modules in this suburban Philadelphia area. It was a resurrected Broadacre City model design, which provided four-level apartments that were visually separated from one another with privacy walls, enhancing the relationship between indoors and outdoors for every unit. Just one of the four planned, four-unit buildings was completed, as nearby property owners objected to multiple family housing, fearing a population density increase.

Usonia I (1939), designed for Okemos, Michigan, just outside East Lansing, was commissioned by a group of Michigan State University faculty for a seventeen acre site. Because of its unconventional plan that overlapped garden and orchard plot walls with property lines, and the violation of several other Federal Housing Authority (FHA) standards, the FHA denied its subsidy for the project. Only the Goetsch-Winckler Usonian house was constructed there.

Cloverleaf Housing (1941-1942) in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, was designed for the Federal Works Agency of Defense Housing. It used an enhanced Suntop Homes design, putting twenty-four, four-unit buildings together, with green spaces between groups of buildings. Although the government initially expressed significant interest, it is believed that politics and Wright’s own attitude about siting, as well as his positive sentiments about Japan just a short time after the attack on Pearl Harbor, killed this project before it began.

The Cooperative Homesteads (1942) were commissioned by a group for a site just north of Detroit, Michigan. Also taken from a plot plan for Broadacre City, this development plan paid homage to the landscape in its layout of homes on different size lots, set along a series of dead-end roads. The proposed rammed-earth construction was unique, and maximum attention was given to the natural setting, prevailing winds and the energy-conserving nature of these bermmed homes. Wright turned the project over to an apprentice to carry out, and after several months, during which the prototype was begun, the apprentice was drafted into the Army Air Corps. Without a supervisor and the promised cooperative work at the site by those who commissioned the project, it failed.

The Acres in Charleston Township, and its nearby Kalamazoo neighbor, Parkwyn Village, were designed beginning in 1947. At the same time, Wright also designed Usonia II in Pleasantville, New York. Though different in parcel size, all three of these Usonian communities were designed with the same ideals: the naturalistic siting of circular, one-acre lots throughout, with some natural or planted buffer areas in between and around, community-use areas for ponds, pools, parklands and the like, and narrow, gently curving roads to discourage high-speed auto traffic.

Though both substantially built out, Parkwyn Village and Usonia II have two items in common that distinguish them from The Acres. In both Parkwyn and Usonia II, Wright’s circular lots were later reconfigured into polygons, squares and
rectangles to conform with local ordinances and FHA financing requirements. Because Acres residents felt the circular lots were integral to the overall setting, they searched for and found alternative financing, and were successful in getting their parcel platted as planned. (This conflicts with authors Aguars' claim that all three communities' lots were reconfigured, which is incorrect.) Further, Usonia II and Parkwyn each have a relatively high percentage of non-Wright designed homes. Parkwyn Village holds four Wright designs, while the rest of the built lots are occupied with buildings designed by others. Usonia II, by plan, was to have five Wright-designed homes, and Wright was to consult on plans for the remaining approximately fifty, insuring that they held to Usonian design principles and siting. However, only three Wright designs were realized at Usonia II, with the remaining forty-seven homes designed by others, with Wright consulting on only about half of the remainder as a result of what appear to be misunderstandings on both parts—the architect and the cooperative. Clearly, by adhering to its originally designed circular lot shape and landscape design, The Acres stands out among all other Usonian communities as the most fully realized example of Wright's work in this field.

The Homes
Although Wright claimed before he died that his early 1920s "block" homes (Millard, Storer, Freeman, and Ennis) in California were his first Usonians, architectural historians most often claim that his first of this type was Usonia I, completed in 1936 for the Jacobses, a middle-class Madison, Wisconsin, couple. During his transition between Prairie and Usonian, scholar Robert Twombly points out, Wright experimented with different aspects of the emerging type in several homes. Wright's 1929 house for Richard Lloyd Jones in Tulsa was more vertical than later Usonians, but experimented especially with the use of block and large expanses of glass, and the 1934 Wiley House in Minneapolis was more horizontal, and for the first time, joined the kitchen and living spaces.

Wright, who by 1936 had entered the second major developmental stage of his career, had just seen Fallingwater completed in Bear Run, Pennsylvania; architecture interests throughout the U.S. and the world were again focused on what Wright was conjuring up. Over the next several decades, marked roughly by the end of the Great Depression and the Korean War, he designed a relatively small number of Usonians, roughly estimated at between 150 and 200, each of which expressed the ideal that middle-class families could have affordable homes that were functional, well-designed and imbued with a sense of belonging to their sites.

Usonian design and siting was--and was not--all that different from Wright's earlier Prairie designs. Although the California "block" houses were multi-level, Usonians were most often arranged on a single floor. By moving the second floor functions (mostly bedrooms and baths) to the ground level, substituting an open dining "area" for a dining room between the workspace (kitchen) and living area with a window wall (thereby making everything look larger), then stretching the bedrooms and baths along a long hall (Wright called it a gallery) that continues a straight line or forms an "L," and then putting it all on a concrete slab foundation with gravity hot-water heat, you had a Usonian. A masonry "core" was usually employed. This was where Wright placed utilities, and the core provided a center for roof support to masonry piers at the buildings' perimeters.

Wright used three basic forms for most of his Usonians: The "L" form, in various angles (60-90-120 degrees); "in-line"; and the two-story solar hemicycle. Each of these layouts was created using a variety of floor grid shapes: squares, hexagons, equilateral triangles, parallelograms and circles, which were ascribed a set number of degrees and repeated. These grids were used in almost endless combinations to create a custom plan for every individual client.

There are cases when two Usonians are reversed, flipped or only slightly modified, but even these, when set into their individual unique sites and constructed with different materials, appear very different from one another.
Wright's clients built their Usonians: 1) using material that Wright thought was the best (and sometimes failing miserably); 2) using material already established as the best, or; 3) according to a client's budget. If one could not afford quarried stone for the masonry core and walls, one could cast concrete, or "textile" blocks, and even assemble the structure themselves, as several Acres families did. If the client could not afford stone or cast blocks for interior walls, a "sandwich" of three boards screwed together served the purpose.

Because Wright believed that architecture powerfully influenced the way people live, and that his organic designs promoted harmony, it seems appropriate that he supported the "cooperative" living concept. The cooperative building-living idea hatched from Wright's early 1930s unrealized Broadacre City plan that provides insight into his new theory on home location, size, sifting, design and the way life should be lived. All of these elements worked together in an expression of the architect's belief that a person's land and home best represented his/her individualism, and that homes for groups of individuals could be located outside of the "traditional" city, and in a less dense manner than the former urban model. These homes would still be close enough to each other to be a "community," while far enough apart to respect everyone's individuality.

The Acres' members came together to create an affordable, cooperatively-built residential community, one in which all could benefit by purchasing materials in large quantities and then working together on construction. In this way each could make contributions to the effort that best suited his or her talents.

During Wright's early visits, he walked the Parkwyn and The Acres properties, discussing development plans with each group. Both sites had gently rolling hills and woods with some mature trees and water on them or nearby. Working with a topographical map produced by The Acres' members, Wright clustered their building lots roughly into the southern half of the parcel along Hawthorne Drive, and then designed a "naturalistic" landscape for the remainder, allowing much natural growth to remain. After The Acres' members selected their individual building sites by lottery, Wright completed and sited designs for their lots.

Circular lots were planned for both developments, but the Parkwyn group experienced difficulty with the FHA because of the unconventional shape, and was forced to replan the subdivision with more typical lot shapes. The Galesburg group arranged its financing without the FHA, and its lots remained circular. In both cases, the land in-between the lots and the surrounding unplatted and designated "park" property became commonly owned.

Construction commenced in both developments just before mid-century, and over the next approximately half-decade, four Usonians were built in each. While the Parkwyn Village development now contains a significant number of homes designed by others, including Kalamazoo's Norman Carver Jr., The Acres remains almost completely Wright-designed. A single non-Wright home, the Fonken house, was designed by Francis "Will" Willsey, who had studied with Wright as a Taliesin fellow from 1945 to 1947.

As was the case with a number of other Usonian homeowners, many of The Acres' members were involved in their homes' construction, from carrying out plumbing and wiring, to preparing footings, pouring concrete slab floors, and casting, coloring and curing the multiple shapes of solid and perforated concrete textile blocks that are integral to the design and engineering of The Acres' buildings.

In all, five lots in The Acres were developed with houses, two on Hawthorne's north side and three on the south. Of these, three can be easily viewed from the road: the Pratt, Eppstein and Weisblat houses. The Fonken House sits at
the end of a long driveway that runs north off of Hawthorne near its eastern end, and the Meyer House sits at the end of a long driveway that curves away and up from Hawthorne to the southeast. In the winter, the Meyer house can also be partially viewed from Hawthorne, about mid-way along the road proceeding east. Four of the homes, the Pratt (Lot 6), Eppstein (Lot 7), Meyer (Lot 11) and Weisblat (Lot 9), are Wright Usonian designs. The Weisblat House also has a John Howe-Wesley Peters designed addition. All homes follow Wright's "Usonian" principles in terms of siting, design and massing, layout and materials.

Of the four Wright designed homes in The Acres, all employ "in-line" plans with the exception of the solar hemicycle Meyer House.

Christine Weisblat recalled beginning their relationship with Frank Lloyd Wright. From Laura Chamberlain's Frank Lloyd Wright's Usonian Communities. (p. 16):

The Weisblats went to Taliesin once with the Pratts for the weekend and stayed in the guest quarters. They admired the terraces and the built-in shelving very much. Of meeting Mr. Wright, Mrs. Weisblat says, "It was very exciting to be at Taliesin and meet the apprentices and... our visit with Mr. Wright was purely business and we were so much in awe of him that we were more comfortable on that basis."

They spoke with him about the changes to the presentation drawing at this time. [Weisblat continues] "I remember when... he took the plan and unrolled it on the drawing bench and said: 'Well, that looks like shelter, doesn't it?'

During the early, pre-construction years and later, the minutes from The Acres' homeowners' association meetings demonstrate their deep involvement in this modern housing experiment. At first, the members met almost weekly, and their meetings often went well into the evening. They discussed approaching Wright to design their development, follow-up requests, Wright's visits to Kalamazoo, the costs associated with road-building through the development and the underground installation of utility lines. The minutes also provide insight into how the members chose their lots, planted trees, levied annual assessments, determined how to best carry out the casting of the concrete block for their homes, purchased the equipment to carry out this work, and so on. Every decision was made by the cooperative, working together.

Most original Acres residents have recounted their personal experiences at The Acres in either interviews or written memoirs, but the most comprehensive account was drafted in 2003 by Eric and Pat Pratt. They joined the association after its original formation, and built their home in stages, as designed by Wright. They also acted as their own contractors for most tasks. Mr. Pratt carried out the majority of the work on their Usonian once the blocks were cast, while Mrs. Pratt attended to their rapidly growing family over the next several years.

The Pratts had written to Wright in 1948, asking that he design a home for them. He replied: "Please send your requirements. We are glad to add you to the Galesburg family." Before he mailed the letter, though, Wright neatly crossed out the word "family" and substituted "victims" before his signature (Pratt, Chapter 2).

In their narrative, the Pratts also provide a detailed explanation of making the Usonian Automatic textile blocks--determining the number needed, making the multiple molds required, determining the proper concrete mix, stiffness and pigment, and experimenting at each stage. They further describe laying the footings for their home, placement of the copper tubing in the floor for hot-water gravity heat, and generally preparing for construction of their walls. Of
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET  

Section 8  Page 6  

The Acres  
Kalamazoo County, Michigan  

this activity, the Pratts said: "With a little practice, laying them [the blocks] was quite easy and successful, just as Mr. Wright had promised" (Pratt, Chapter 4).  

Dorothy and Samuel Eppstein also built much of their home, beginning with casting textile blocks, a job they later delegated to college students. They washed the completed blocks in hydrochloric acid, laid them up, poured their own floors, and later built their own furniture (Chamberlain, p. 23-24).  

While construction of the Wright homes at The Acres was not closely supervised by either Wright or assistant John Howe, both visited after construction began. During a rare visit Mrs. Weisblat remembered, Wright looked at the walls, and instructed the crew: "Don't be too precise as you lay up the blocks. We want to see the warp and the woof." She continued that Dr. Weisblat did not approve of this approach: "He was a chemist and thought everything should be as precise as possible" (Chamberlain, p 17).  

John Howe visited more frequently, particularly when there were major questions that needed attention. Mrs. Weisblat remembered working with Howe: "We were very fond of him," she said; Wright "was not approachable the way Jack was" (Chamberlain, p. 18).  

Wright died in 1959, a quarter-century after he began designing Usonian homes. About that same time, Gunther and Anne Fonken began working with Taliesin fellow Francis "Will" Willsey on a design for a home they wished to build at The Acres. They worked initially with Lee Kawahara, another designer who was also a Taliesin apprentice. They liked Kawahara's design, but the designer suddenly left the area without notice. The Fonkens also talked to others who had been at Taliesin with Wright, but were not pleased with the designs they produced.  

Then they discovered Willsey, an architect and landscape architect then working at a Kalamazoo architecture firm. A University of Michigan graduate, Willsey worked in Lansing for a period of time after he completed school. There a librarian friend introduced him to Wright's work. He was soon drawn to Taliesin, and spent several years there between 1945 and 1947, along with his wife, Virginia. Returning to the Kalamazoo area after Taliesin, he joined the Kalamazoo firm, doing mostly landscape work, while moonlighting extra jobs on the side.  

Willsey's design for the Fonken house was not rejected, but the Fonkens felt that the eave was too deep. They couldn't see out the windows. Willsey modified the design, which the Fonkens accepted. The Fonkens moved into the home in December, 1960. The architect, who now lives at Silver Lake near Traverse City, Michigan, is still a Wright enthusiast. In a recent interview, he exclaimed: "Once you understand the work of Mr. Wright, there really is not anything else."  

The Fonken House was the last home built at The Acres. Because it stands on one of the original round lots and was designed by a former Taliesin apprentice in Wrightian style, the Fonken House should be viewed as fulfilling a part of Wright's vision for the subdivision. Thus it is considered a contributing resource, despite the fact that it falls short of being fifty years old.  

For some period before and after the Fonkens built their home, the original Acres owners actively solicited additional members, including sharing a booth one year with the Parkwyn Village group at a local "house fair." The text of a cooperative advertisement printed and distributed at the fair read, in part:
The Parkwyn Village Association and the Galesburg Country Homes Association are the realization of one common dream....

The opportunity to work out by an individual family its aims and ideals in a new home—one that is well designed, comfortable and homely and not necessarily expensive—located in an area that is spacious for maximum privacy, yet among congenial neighbors with similar ideals who join together when the need arises to work out economically plans and developments to get the most in better living at minimum cost to all.

The Acres' members later decided they liked things the way they were, with just five homes, and have not marketed additional lots for some time, although two undeveloped lots are still owned by early members of the cooperative. The owners continue to meet regularly to make decisions that affect The Acres, but in the recent past are more likely to have only a single, annual meeting.

With the completion of the Fonken house, followed closely by a John Howe designed addition to the Weisblat house in 1961, construction at The Acres came to an end. The development remains as it was then, although with a more mature landscape.

Because there have been few changes to The Acres' buildings, and the landscape has matured with time, the development retains its strong cohesiveness in layout, design of the individual buildings, and relationship between the houses. Houses that were placed in areas easily seen from the main drive remain so. Those that were not remain hidden from view. All take maximum advantage of their individual sites to accomplish Wright's organic approach.

Although as built, it is only a portion of Wright's original plan, The Acres in its landscape design and architecture remains today one of the most complete and intact of Wright's subdivision designs of the 1930s and 40s, reflecting in its overall plan and in the architecture of its four Usonian houses more closely than nearly anyplace, Wright's vision of Usonian "organic" development planning principles.

When compared to other suburban developments of the time, The Acres and its related Usonian counterparts stand out as bold experiments undertaken by individuals whose interests and values took them in a decidedly different direction than the American majority of the period. Christine Weisblat recalls that once The Acres group formed, they spent many Sunday afternoons looking for suitable sites. They looked in particular, at one slightly earlier “experimental” housing development in Kalamazoo Township known as Ingersoll Village.

Ingersoll Village was developed by the Ingersoll Steel Company, primarily to showcase their steel "utility core." The company invited a number of architects to design homes for this "modern" community, including Hugh Stubbins, Edward Durell Stone, Alden Dow and George Fred Keck. The members of Kalamazoo's newest cooperative were drawn to this development as innovative and refreshing. Weisblat recounts: "We realized that we were regarded as oddballs, and it didn't bother us a bit."

But what drew this group of "oddballs" together? Initially, their employment at the Upjohn Company brought them to Kalamazoo. While Curtis and Lillian Meyer were older and established in their careers before they moved to the area, the others were fresh out of graduate programs and this was their first real employment. They were all in the same boat, having moved to a place in the Midwest called Kalamazoo, of which no one at home had ever heard, and they bonded together as newcomers.
The second factor was financial. Newly employed, The Acres’ members were not making a lot of money. The group understood that they could get more for the money they could spend through bulk purchasing and sweat equity. They were clearly taking a non-traditional approach, and directly seeking a non-traditional architect and design professional who was willing to work with them on such a project.

The third factor that brought the group together was education. This group was young, well-educated, and subsequently willing to take some greater measure of personal risk to get something different, something they wanted, rather than accepting the status quo. This was also a socially active group, as evidenced by their community involvement as they lived at The Acres. Eric Pratt served as the township building official for a time, and Dave Weisblat served on the township planning commission, helping to guide it through its first comprehensive planning process. Chris Weisblat supported David’s efforts there, and served as a member of the Friends of the Library in nearby Galesburg for years. Gunther Fonken played for the Battle Creek Symphony, and Curtis and Lillian Meyer regularly opened their home for gatherings of various types.

Wright’s Usonian buildings represent roughly thirty-five to forty-five percent of the architect’s work constructed during his lifetime. Michigan holds the largest number of Usonians of any state, twenty-two by one estimate, and Kalamazoo County holds eight of these in its two Usonian cooperative developments. The Acres members’ selection of Wright as their architect, and their conscious collaboration in developing The Acres and building their houses resulted in a neighborhood subdivision that is unique among Wright’s work in the 1940s and early 50s, with Wright’s original plan at least partially carried out, and its houses all designed by Wright or his pupils.
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 9  Page 1

The Acres
Kalamazoo County, Michigan

Books

- Aguari, Charles, and Berdeana Aguari.  
  Wrightscapes: Frank Lloyd Wright's Landscape Designs.  
- Durant, Samuel W.  
  History of Kalamazoo County, Michigan, with Illustrations and Biographical Sketches of its Prominent 
  and Pioneers.  
- Heinz, Thomas.  
- Houghton, Lynn, and Pamela O'Connor.  
  Kalamazoo: Lost & Found.  
- Illustrated Atlas of Kalamazoo County, Michigan.  
  Detroit: William C. Sauer, 1890.
- Jacobs, Herbert, and Katherine Jacobs.  
  Building With Frank Lloyd Wright.  
- Reisley, Roland, with John Timpane.  
  Usonia, New York--Building a Community with Frank Lloyd Wright.  
- Sergeant, John.  
  Frank Lloyd Wright's Usonian Houses: Designs For Moderate Cost One-Family Homes.  
- Storrer, William.  
  The Frank Lloyd Wright Companion.  
- Twombly, Robert.  
  Frank Lloyd Wright: His Life and His Architecture.  
- Wright, Frank.  
  The Natural House.  

Periodicals

- Kalamazoo Gazette.
  "Famed Architect Frank Lloyd Wright Blasts 'Escapist Houses'"  June 26, 1947, Section 2, pg. 1.
  "Frank L. Wright Completes Plans for Galesburg Plat"  October 12, 1947.
  "Wright Visits Development at Parkwyn"  May 29, 1949, pg. 1.
  "Cooperative Groups Manufacture Unique Blocks at Parkwyn Village"  October 1, 1949, pg. 6.
  "AIA notes Wright designs here"  December 13, 1984, Section B, pg. 1.
  "The Wright projects"  December 25, 1989


Interviews
• Telephone. Between Pamela Hall O'Connor and Gunther Fonken on September 26, 2003.
• Telephone. Between Pamela Hall O'Connor and Francis "Will" Willsey on September 29, 2003.
• Telephone. Between Pamela Hall O'Connor and Pat Pratt on August 8, 2003 and October 12, 2003.

Papers and Unpublished Materials

Other
• Building Permits for all five Galesburg Country Homes Acres properties. 1950-1965. Charleston Township Hall records.
• Parkwyn Village Homes Association...Galesburg Country Homes Association; Frank Lloyd Wright, Architect. Undated print advertising piece. Kalamazoo Public Library, Local History Room Collections.
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 10 Page 1
The Acres
Kalamazoo County, Michigan

Verbal Boundary Description
"The south half of the southwest fractional quarter of Section 30, Town 2 South, Range 9 West, containing 71 & 1/4 acres more or less." (From the parcel deed, recorded as below.)

Boundary Justification
This boundary contains the entire parcel purchased by the cooperative, The Galesburg Country Homes Association, from Gregorie and Vincenzina Bilotta. The deed for this sale was recorded in Kalamazoo County on October 14, 1946; and includes:

1) the platted portion of the parcel, including lots 3 and 10, which are still owned by early association members who did not build homes; and all other unbuilt lots and spaces in between which are owned in common by the members; and

2) the unplatted land, also held in common by the members, which includes the remaining larger "natural" area, generally north of the platted portion.

Property Owners at The Acres

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weisblat House</td>
<td>11185 Hawthorne, Galesburg, MI 49053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christine Weisblat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fonken House</td>
<td>212 West Wilbur Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martha Castillo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meyer House</td>
<td>11108 Hawthorne, Galesburg, MI 49053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doug LeBrecque</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pratt House</td>
<td>151 E. Adams, Elmhurst, IL 60126-4408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arlene Moran</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eppstein House</td>
<td>15888 Durham Way, Granger, IN 46530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew Kane</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undeveloped Lot #3</td>
<td>2001 Sheffield C.t., Ft. Collins, CO 80526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Harry A. Meyer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undeveloped Lot #10</td>
<td>5400 Glen Arbor Dr., Kalamazoo, MI 49009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James &amp; Agatha Johnson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>