

Raleigh Department of City Planning  
One Exchange Plaza  
3<sup>rd</sup> floor  
Raleigh, NC 27602  
919-516-2626

[www.raleighnc.gov/planning](http://www.raleighnc.gov/planning)

Fee	_____
Amt Paid	_____
Check #	_____
Rec'd Date:	_____
Rec'd By:	_____
Completion Date:	_____

**(Processing Fee: \$257.00 - valid until June 30, 2009 - Checks payable to the City of Raleigh.)**

## RALEIGH HISTORIC LANDMARK DESIGNATION APPLICATION

This application initiates consideration of a property for designation as a Raleigh Historic Landmark by the Raleigh Historic Districts Commission (RHDC) and the Raleigh City Council. It enables evaluation of the resource to determine if it qualifies for designation. The evaluation is made by the Research Committee of the RHDC, which makes its recommendation to the full commission. The historic landmark program was previously administered by the Wake County Historic Preservation Commission but has been transferred back to the city; procedures for administration by the RHDC are outlined in the Raleigh City Code, Section 10-1053.

Please type if possible. Use 8-1/2" x 11" paper for supporting documentation and if additional space is needed. All materials submitted become the property of the RHDC and cannot be returned. Return completed application to the RHDC office at One Exchange Plaza, Suite 300, Raleigh or mail to:

Raleigh Historic Districts Commission  
PO Box 829 Century Station  
Raleigh, NC 27602

1. Name of Property (if historic name is unknown, give current name or street address):

Historic Name: Paul and Ellen Welles House

Current Name: Paul and Ellen Welles House

2. Location:

Street 3227 Birnamwood Road Raleigh, NC 27607

Address:

NC PIN No.: 0794493798

(Can be obtained from <http://imaps.co.wake.nc.us/imaps/>)

3. Legal Owner of Property (If more than one, list primary contact):

Name: Anne Clark Dahle

Address: 3227 Birnamwood Road

City: Raleigh State: NC Zip: 27607

Telephone No: ( ) ( )-( ) Fax No. ( ) ( )-( )

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Applicant/Contact Person (If other than owner):

Name: Raleigh Historic Districts Commission  
 Address: PO Box 829, Century Station  
 City: Raleigh State: NC Zip: 27602  
 Telephone No: (919) (832)-(7238) Fax No. ( ) ( )-( ) ( )  
 E-Mail: rhdc@rhdc.org

5. General Data/Site Information:

Date of Construction and major additions/alterations: 1956

Number, type, and date of construction of outbuildings: 1 garage/carport, c.1990

Approximate lot size or acreage: 1.85 acres

Architect, builder, carpenter, and/or mason: Pruden and Scott, Architects; Jim Edwards Company, contractor

Original Use: domestic/residential

Present Use: domestic/residential

6. Classification:

## A. Category (check all that apply):

Building(s) ☒ Structure ☐ Object ☐ Site ☐

## B. Ownership

Private ☒

Public ☐ Local ☐ State ☐ Federal ☐

## C. Number of contributing and non-contributing resources on the property:

	Contributing	Noncontributing
Buildings	1	1
Structures	0	0

Objects	0	0
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D. Previous field documentation (when and by whom): \_\_\_\_\_

National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, M. Ruth Little, Longleaf Historic Resources, Inc., January 29, 2009

E. National Register of Historic Places Status:

Check One:

Entered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Date: January 29, 2009	Nominated <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Determined Eligible <input type="checkbox"/> Date:	Determined Not Eligible <input type="checkbox"/> Date:
Nomination Not Requested <input type="checkbox"/>	Removed <input type="checkbox"/> Date:

7. Reason for Request: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Is the property income producing? Yes ☐ No ☒

9. Are any interior spaces being included for designation? Yes ☐ No ☒

10. Supporting Documentation (Attach to application on separate sheets. Please type or print):

A. Photographs/Slides:

At least two sets of current exterior archival-grade photographic prints (minimum print size 5"x7") of all facades of the building and at least one photo of all other contributing and non-contributing resources. If interior spaces of the property are being considered for designation, please include two sets of photos for these features. Prints may be created by using archival-grade black and white film photography and processing or digital photography. The minimum standard for a digital print is 5x7 at a resolution of 300 pixels per inch (ppi). This translates into a pixel dimension of 1950 x 1350. Digital images must be printed with an acceptable ink and paper combination as determined by the National Park Service. This list can be found at:

<http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/policyexpansion.htm#digital> All photographs must be labeled with the name of the structure, address and date the photograph was taken with pencil or archival-approved photo pen. In addition to prints, all digital images should be submitted on a CD-R in TIF or JPG format. Any additional exterior or interior views and views of other structures on the property (color, black and white, or slides) will be helpful.

B. Map:

Please include a map showing the location of the property. A sketch map is acceptable, but please note street names and number. Any other structures on the property should also be shown. Please include a "North" arrow. Map should be no larger than 11" x 17".

A tax map with boundaries marked is preferred, which can be found at:

<http://imaps.co.wake.nc.us/imaps/>.

C. Architectural Significance:

Describe the property, including exterior architectural features, additions, remodelings,

and alterations. Also describe significant outbuildings and landscape features. If the owner is including interior features in the nomination for the purpose of design review protection; describe them in detail and note their locations. Include a statement regarding the architectural significance of the property.

D. Historic Significance:

Note any significant events, people, and/or families associated with the property. Include all major owners. Note if the property has ever been recorded during a historic building survey by the City of Raleigh or by the NC State Historic Preservation Office. If so, who and when? (See application item 6.D.) Please include a bibliography of sources. Information regarding prior designations can be found by contacting the Survey & Planning Branch of the NC State Historic Preservation Office at 919/733-6545 or at: <http://www.hpo.dcr.state.nc.us/spbranch.htm>.

Section 10A: Photographs



Façade View (NW corner)



Façade – Main House (NW corner)





Garage (NW elevation)



Façade (NE corner)





Garage (Rear/SE elevation)



NE corner (view of façade and east/side elevation)



Welles, Paul and Ellen House  
Landmark Application  
March 2009



SE corner (view of rear and east/side elevation)



Rear/SW elevation





Front entrance



Eave detail on rear/SW elevation





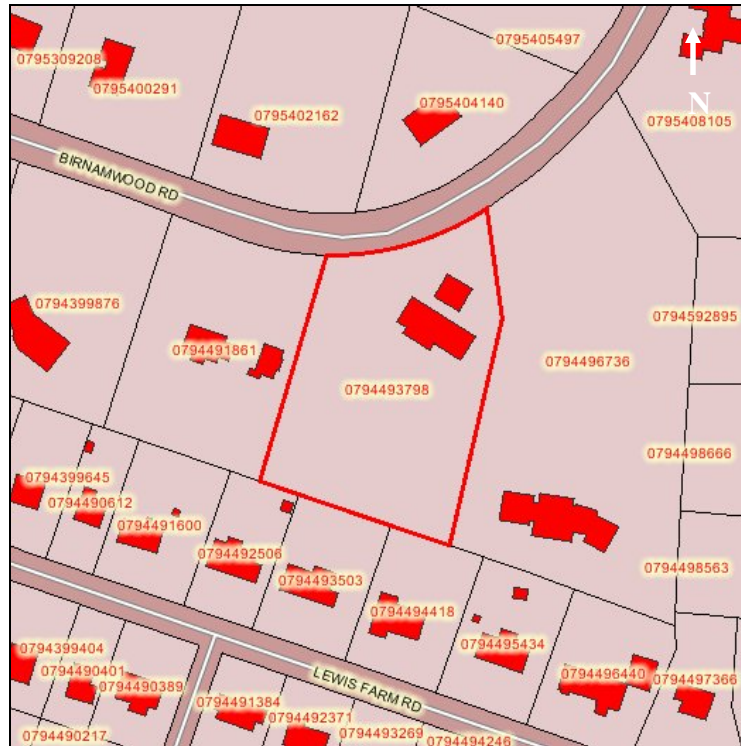
Detail of Rear/SW elevation (rear deck and stair)



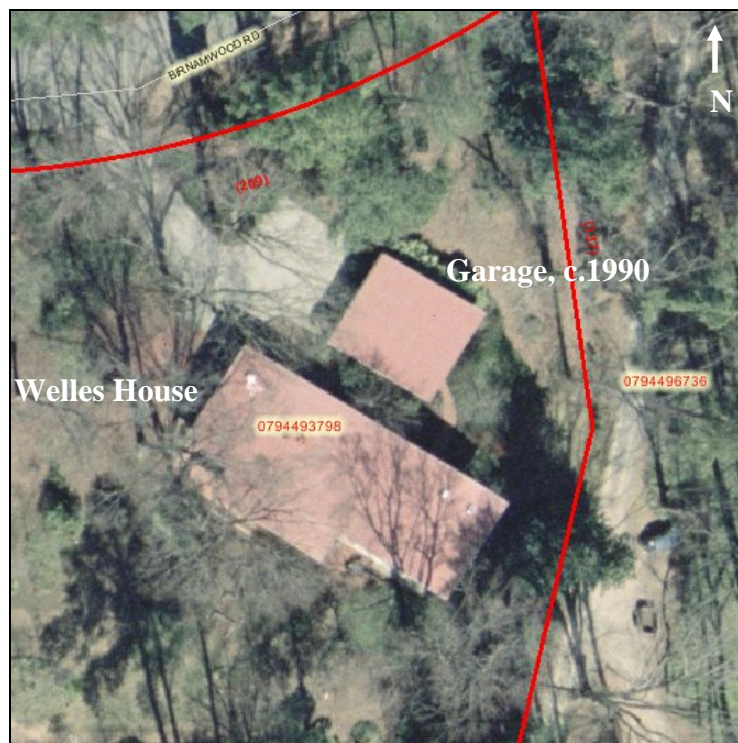
Eave and rear deck/stair detail (SE corner)



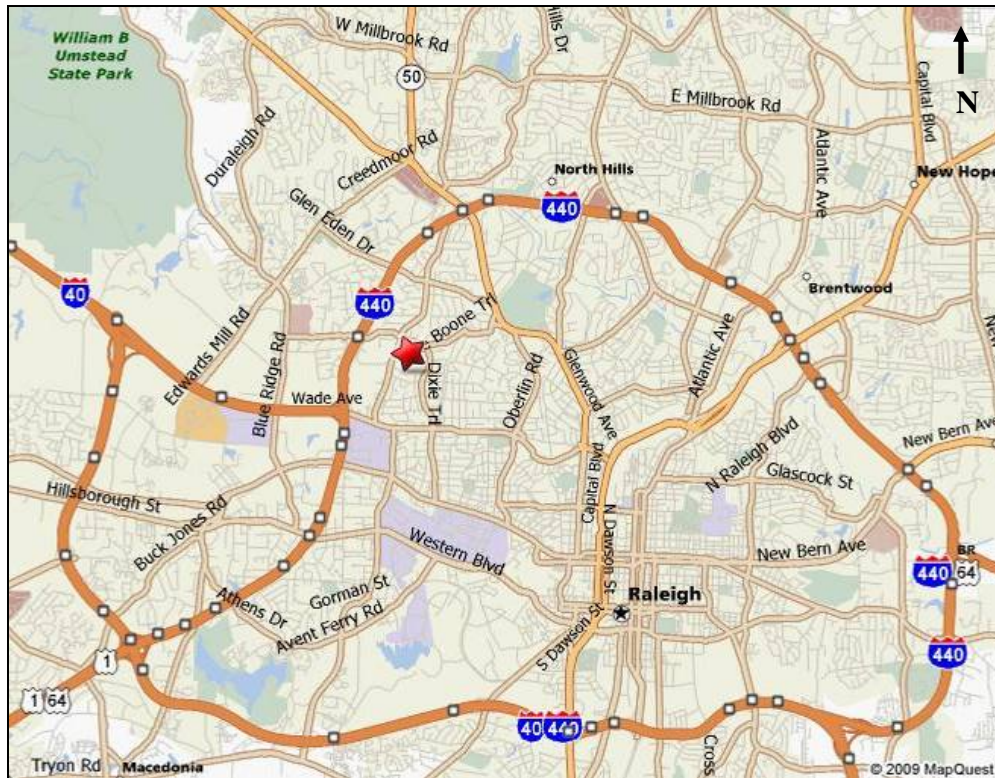
Section 10B: Maps



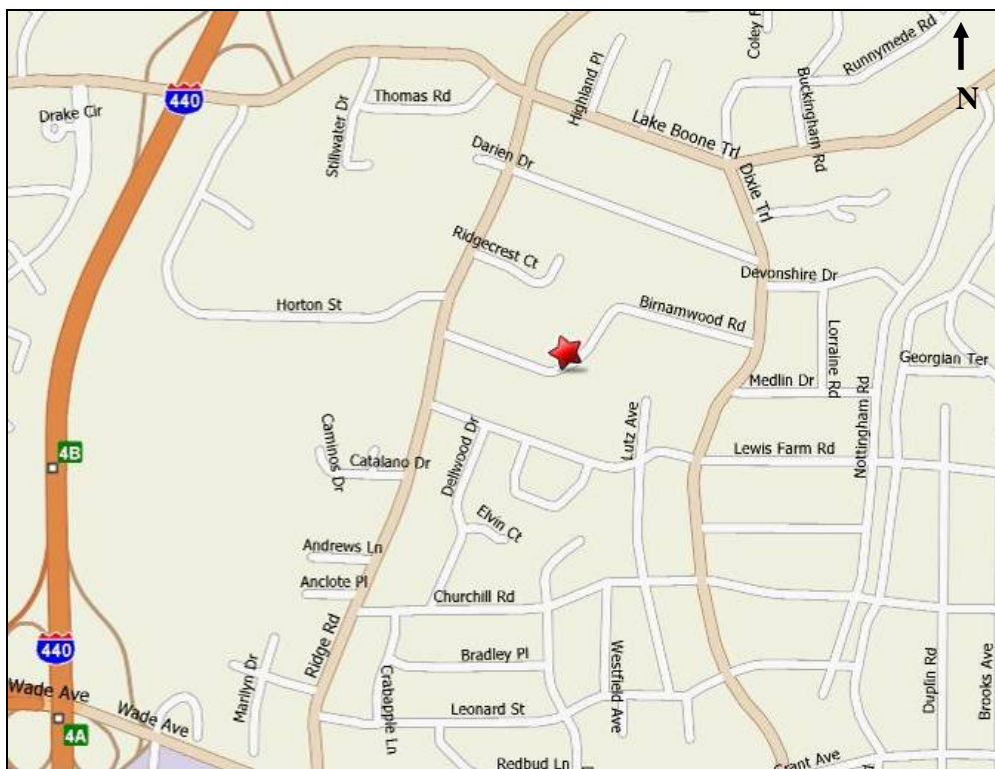
Tax Map



Site Map



Location Map 1



Location Map 2



Section 10C: Architectural Significance

\* See attached National Register Nomination Form

Section 10D: Historic Significance

\* See attached National Register Nomination Form

Boundary Description

The proposed landmark boundary follows the parcel identified as PIN # 0794493798, containing 1.85 acres. The entire parcel is historically associated with the house since its construction in 1956, and provides an appropriate setting.

**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 Welles, Paul and Ellen, House

other names/site number Robert and Anne Dahle House

**2. Location**

street & number 3227 Birnamwood Road not for publication N/A

city or town Raleigh vicinity N/A

state North Carolina code NC county Wake code 183 zip code 27607

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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  
nationally statewide X locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official Date

North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby certify that this property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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):



Welles, Paul and Ellen, House  
Name of Property

Wake County, N.C.  
County and State

## 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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

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

N/A

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

N/A

## 6. Function or Use

### Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>Domestic</u>	Sub: <u>single dwelling</u>
<u>Domestic</u>	<u>secondary structure</u>
<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>

### Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>Domestic</u>	Sub: <u>single dwelling</u>
<u>Domestic</u>	<u>secondary structure</u>
<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>

## 7. Description

**Architectural Classification** (Enter categories from instructions)

Modern Movement  
Other: split level  
                    

**Materials** (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick  
roof rubber  
walls brick  
wood  
other aluminum  
                    

### Narrative Description

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

Welles, Paul and Ellen, House  
Name of Property

Wake County, N.C.  
County and State

## 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 a grave.

☐ D a cemetery.

☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

☐ F a commemorative property.

☐ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

architecture  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Period of Significance

1956  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Significant Dates

1956  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Architect/Builder

Pruden & Scott, architects  
Edwards, Jim, Company, contractor  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

### Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

### 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

☒ State Historic Preservation Office

☐ Other State agency

☐ Federal agency

☐ Local government

☐ University

☐ Other

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

Welles, Paul and Ellen, House  
Name of Property

Wake County, N.C.  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 1.88 acres

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

Zone Easting Northing  
1 17S 709465 3965340  
2

Zone Easting Northing  
3  
4  
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 M. Ruth Little

organization Longleaf Historic Resources date August 5, 2008

street & number 2312 Bedford Avenue telephone 919.412.7804

city or town Raleigh state N.C. zip code 27607

## 12. 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 Anne Clark Dahle

street & number 3227 Birnamwood Road telephone 919.782.6173

city or town Raleigh state N.C. zip code 27607

**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.).

**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 the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

**Section 7 Page 1**  
**Welles, Paul and Ellen, House**  
**Wake County, N.C.**

**Section 7: Description**

The dwelling built for Paul and Ellen Welles in 1956 at 3227 Birnamwood Road in the Highland Gardens subdivision on the western outskirts of Raleigh, Wake County, North Carolina is a dramatic, contemporary Split-Level with five bedrooms, four baths, and an open floor plan with soaring ceilings and large areas of glass. The house nestles into a hillside on a spacious wooded 1.88-acre lot in the subdivision, bounded by Ridge Road, Darien Drive, Dixie Trail, and Lewis Farm Road. It sits close to Birnamwood Road, with the north front façade partially concealed by the free-standing garage-carport built ca. 1990. Architect Kenneth Scott actually considered the rear elevation as the front because it overlooks a large meadow that covers most of the site. While the Welles House is virtually unaltered, surrounding mid-twentieth century houses are gradually being replaced with large new residences.

The approximately 3,000 square foot house is generally rectangular in form, with an asymmetrical side-gable roof with wide overhanging eaves. At the east end the house stands two stories tall, with a brick-veneered lower level that is partially sunken into the ground at the rear and a slightly cantilevered upper level sheathed with board-and-batten siding. The ridge of the side-gable roof is situated in the middle of the east section and slopes over five bays to the west wall. The west one-story section, sheathed with board-and-batten siding, contains the living room, dining room, kitchen, and screened porch. The wide board-and-batten siding of rough-milled lumber is stained a dark brown. Windows are a combination of fixed glass and aluminum casements. All single doors are glazed, with wooden frames. All double doors are either wood or sliding metal types. An interior brick chimney divides the entrance foyer from the living room. The roof, originally of tar and gravel, is now covered with a rubber membrane.

The north elevation facing Birnamwood Road is six bays wide. The main entrance, in the next-to-last bay on the west end, is recessed to create a shallow porch. The bay contains a wide single door flanked by fixed panes of glass and a glazed transom separated by wide flat finish boards. Double and triple-paned aluminum sliding windows flank the entrance bay. In the center of the elevation is a single door into the kitchen, with a tall transom window above it. The eastern bay contains a door and adjacent set of five-paned windows in the lower level and a set of five-paned windows with transoms in the upper level.

The south elevation opens to the scenic meadow behind the house through the fully glazed walls of the one-story section. A shallow gabled wing projects from this elevation, containing an extension of the living room in the west half and a screen porch in the east half. A den (originally intended as a mother-in-law bedroom) occupies the east end of the house. The south walls of the den, living room, and dining room are fully glazed with two sliding wooden doors flanked by fixed full-height panes of glass, with glazed transoms above. Some of the transom panes are trapezoidal in shape to follow the shape of the roofline, and bring additional light to the interior. On this elevation the lower level at the east end has small sliding glass windows and is partially sunken into the ground. A cantilevered wooden stair rises from the side door of the screen porch to a cantilevered wooden balcony running along the upper bedroom level. Two sliding doors provide access to the children's bedrooms and the master bedroom. A three-paned window with a fixed center pane and flanking

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

**Section 7 Page 2  
Welles, Paul and Ellen, House  
Wake County, N.C.**

casements in the children's rooms and glazed transoms provide additional light.

The narrow east elevation consists of the unfenestrated brick veneer wall of the lower level and the board-and-batten wall of the upper elevation with a centered double-pane casement window. The narrow west elevation has board-and-batten siding and a centered double-pane sliding window.

Original contemporary hardscaping relates the house to its site. A four-foot wide brick walkway extends around three sides of the house. In the front, this walkway is elevated, with brick terraces extending down the slope to the driveway. In the rear, the walkway widens into a brick patio beside the living room.

Original plans called for a two-car flat-roofed free-standing carport to be centered in front of the house, at the end of the driveway that curves off Birnamwood Road. Because this was not built, the second owners, the Dahles, constructed a combination one-car garage and open carport in the same location about 1990. In order to relate it visually to the house, the outbuilding has similar rough-cut board-and-batten siding, a low shed roof, and solid wooden carport posts. Due to its age, this outbuilding is noncontributing, but its design harmonizes with the house architecture.

The interior plan and finish is almost completely unaltered. The floor plan from the original blueprints shows the main and upper levels (see Figure 1). The main level contains an entrance foyer, living room, dining room/kitchen, and a suite consisting of a den and bathroom. The upper level contains a master bedroom and bath, two children's bedrooms divided by a wooden accordion wall, a fourth bedroom, and a hall bathroom. The lower level is labeled recreation room on the blueprints. Short flights of stairs ascend to the upper level and descend to the lower level. Floors are carpeted except for hardwood in the master bedroom and den and linoleum in the foyer, kitchen, and baths. Walls are of sheetrock with the exception of the partition wall of the foyer and living room, made of unpainted antique pine salvaged from the flooring of Mrs. Welles's childhood home in downtown Raleigh and laid horizontally. Ceilings are of sheetrock with the exception of the antique pine ceiling in the dining room. All ceilings in the main level and upper level consist of the underside of the roofline, thus ceilings in the center section containing the kitchen, dining, and living rooms are high and dramatic.

Entering into the foyer, one faces the wide expanse of brick chimney that soars through the ceiling. A double closet built of antique pine sits to the left of the chimney. The living room contains a wood-burning fireplace with exposed brick chimney stack, as well as side and rear walls of full glass, overlooking the back yard. To the right of the living room is a large den, with an entertainment center (in place of the original utility kitchen) concealed behind closed doors along one wall. Adjacent to the den, in the front right corner of the house, is a full bath and laundry room. To the left of the living room, the adjacent kitchen and dining room form one large space with a soaring antique pine ceiling. The galley kitchen, overlooking the front yard, contains its original birch plywood cabinetry, constructed on site. One section of cabinetry runs along the front wall. A parallel section of cabinetry forms a divider, with open shelves above the lower cabinets for the storage of tableware that allow views through to the dining room, and three pass-through openings with drop-leaf shelves. In the



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Welles, Paul and Ellen, House  
Wake County, N.C.**

dining room, the east wall contains built-in closets and drawer storage. One section originally contained a fold-down table, but this has been converted into open shelving. To the rear of the dining room, a screened porch provides access to the outdoor terrace.

The upper bedroom level has double-loaded bedrooms flanking a narrow hall. On the front side of the hall is a single bedroom, then a hall bathroom, and, at the end of the hall, a master bedroom with adjoining master bath with dressing area. Along the rear side of the hall are two small bedrooms with a wooden folding divider between them. Above the divider is a glazed transom. One wall of these bedrooms contains built-in storage consisting of closets and drawers.

Down another half-flight of stairs below the main level is the lower level, originally left with stud walls dividing the space into two bedrooms, a bath, and a recreation room. In 1977 when the current owners purchased the house, they sheetrocked and finished these rooms for their originally-intended functions.

The integrity level of the 1956 Welles House is quite high, for only a few alterations have been made. The current owners replaced the original tar and gravel roof with a membrane roof, made some minor reconfigurations of some of the storage walls, and constructed a garage and carport in front about 1990.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

**Section 8 Page 4**  
**Welles, Paul and Ellen, House**  
**Wake County, N.C.**

**Section 8: Statement of Significance**

The Paul and Ellen Welles House, a dramatic and intact Modernist Split-Level house constructed in 1956, stands at 3227 Birnamwood Road in the subdivision of Highland Gardens in Raleigh, Wake County, North Carolina. Durham architect Kenneth McCoy Scott designed the house; the Jim Edwards Company served as contractor. Summer camp operator and sailing enthusiast Paul Welles Jr. and his wife Ellen built the house on land subdivided from the farm of Ellen's parents, George W. and Mary Mordecai. The Welles House meets Criterion C for its local architectural significance as a striking and well-preserved 1950s Modern residence. Its design was greatly influenced by the Modern design theory taught by professors at the School of Design, established at North Carolina State University in Raleigh in 1948 under dean Henry Kamphoefner. The progressive faculty, including George Matsumoto and Milton Small, designed a number of Raleigh buildings, especially houses for themselves and other faculty members. Because the house was built for both Paul and Ellen Welles, "Jr." has been left out of the historic name.

Kenneth McCoy Scott belonged to the first class of graduates of the School of Design who disseminated the Modernist aesthetic, characterized by the relation of the building to site, the flowing organization of space, and the interrelationship of interior space with the outdoors. The Welles House, one of Scott's finest designs, exemplifies this aesthetic. The house features an embedded placement at the base of the large sloping lot that allows a sweeping vista through rear glazed walls to a meadow; an open plan with cathedral ceilings; and copious built-in storage. Scott's modernism, like that of his faculty mentors Matsumoto and Small, combined Frank Lloyd Wright's interest in orientation to site and economic construction with Mies van der Rohe's use of the selective use of rich interior finishes. In the case of the Welles House, the interior accents are antique nineteenth-century flooring re-milled into walls, ceiling, and storage cabinets, as well as natural birch cabinets.

A free-standing carport planned by the architect in front of the house was never built. Instead, a shed-roofed one-car garage and carport, sheathed with similar board-and-batten siding to the house, was constructed in the same location in 1990. This newer outbuilding's contemporary design, scale, and materials harmonize with the main house.

**Historical Background**

The following history of the construction and occupation of the house by the Welles family was related to Ruth Little in a telephone interview with Paul Welles Jr. on July 18, 2000. Mr. Welles died on March 22, 2008. His obituary stated that his greatest legacy was his nurturance of his six children in their various professional pursuits.<sup>1</sup>

In 1955 a young Raleigh couple, Paul Welles Jr. and his wife Ellen Faison Welles, needed a house for their growing family. Paul, raised in Virginia, built and operated a residential summer camp for children, Camp Triton, at Lake Gaston, and founded Triton Yacht Sales at Oriental, North Carolina (now owned and operated

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<sup>1</sup> Obituary of Paul Welles Jr., *The News and Observer*, Raleigh, March 25, 2008.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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CONTINUATION SHEET**

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by his son Paul Welles). He married Ellen Faison Mordecai of Raleigh in 1950 and they started a family in 1952. Ellen's mother Mary Faison Mordecai and her brothers George W. Mordecai and Samuel Fox Mordecai had developed the rolling, wooded farmland bounded by Ridge Road, Dixie Trail, Lake Boone Trail and Lewis Farm Road into the Highland Gardens subdivision. The subdivision consisted of large lots with a number of restrictive covenants insuring that sizeable houses would be built thereupon and that the lots could never be subdivided. George W. Sr. and Mary Mordecai's farm had been located on this land. The earliest known subdivision plat is dated 1938 [Map Book 1938, page 109] and contains only one street, called Central Road. By 1941 five houses had been built, and the property owners and Mrs. Mordecai amended the covenants in this year to allow the construction of stables providing they were well-maintained and far enough away from adjoining residences.<sup>2</sup> In 1947 the subdivision plat was revised to add the new street of Birnamwood Road and to change the name of Central Road to Darien Drive. Darien Drive and Birnamwood Road extended between Ridge Road and Dixie Trail, flanked by rectangular lots of one-and-one-third to two acres in size.<sup>3</sup> The unusually detailed deed covenants specified that one single-family house of no more than two and one-half stories could be built, costing no less than \$5,000, and having a minimum of 1,250 square feet for a one-story house or 900 square feet for the ground floor of a multi-story house. A minimum setback of fifty feet from the front property line was required, and a garage for not more than three cars was allowed.<sup>4</sup>

In 1955 Mary Mordecai gave Ellen and Paul lot 20 and a small strip of land on adjacent lot 21 on Birnamwood Road in the Highland Gardens subdivision west of the city of Raleigh.<sup>5</sup> The Welles lot was located in the pronounced dogleg curve of Birnamwood Road, halfway between Ridge Road and Dixie Trail. Ellen and Paul's family was growing and their objective was to build the largest, most inexpensive house they could afford. They hired Kenneth Scott, a young graduate of the School of Design, to design a house that would include a mother-in-law suite and an above-ground basement, and specified no particular style. The blueprints, drawn after Scott had affiliated himself with architect Jack Pruden in Durham, were completed in October 1955 by Scott himself, with no assistance from Pruden. The Split-Level plan allowed for a raised basement, a private bedroom wing, and dramatically high ceilings in the center public spaces. Scott explained to the Welleses that he designed the long shed roof to "keep the house from looking like two separate houses," as Split-Level designs often did. One of Scott's most original features is his use of rough-milled wooden board-and-batten siding, which conveys a rustic barn-like character to the sophisticated modern form. The juxtaposition of the soaring chimney, large areas of glass, and the salvaged antique pine walls and ceilings create a similar surprise on the interior. The Jim Edwards Company served as contractor. The foreman, a Mr. Napouser, was a skilled carpenter who built the kitchen cabinets himself.

The Welles raised six children in their house. They designed the suite at the east end of the house for Ellen's mother Mary Mordecai, but she passed away before the house was completed, and the room has always been

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<sup>2</sup> Mary Day Mordecai et al. to P.E. Moose & Wife et al., agreement dated Oct. 1, 1941, copy in Dahle papers.

<sup>3</sup> "Highland Gardens near Raleigh, N.C.," May 1938. C. M. Lambe Civil Engineer. Book 1940, page 601. Revised plat Book 1947, page 57. Copy in Anne Dahle papers.

<sup>4</sup> Wake County DB 1212, 305.

<sup>5</sup> Wake County Deed Book 1212, page 304.



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used as a den. Paul laid the brick walkway around the house himself. One of his numerous business projects during the years he was in residence on Birnamwood Road was a plant in Wake Forest that produced dehydrated corn and alfalfa pellets for animal feed. In 1977 they sold the house to Robert D. and Anne Dahle.<sup>6</sup> Robert (Bob) taught in the department of agriculture at North Carolina State University; Anne directed the re-entry program in Meredith College's Department of Continuing Education. The Dahles raised their two children in the house, not only maintaining its Modernist design but actually bringing the original design of the house to completion. The Dahles finished the two bedrooms, bath, and recreation room in the lower level, and refinished the kitchen cabinets. On the site where the carport had been planned, they built the sympathetically-styled garage. Anne, an accomplished gardener, has filled the yard with many different varieties of shrubs and flowers.

**Architectural Context: Early Modern Residences in Raleigh Associated with the North Carolina State University School of Design**

The Welles House, a Split-Level contemporary residence built in 1956 from a design by Kenneth McCoy Scott, is eligible for the National Register for its significance as one of a group of early modern buildings in Raleigh associated with the North Carolina State University School of Design in Raleigh from 1948 to 1972. The design school was established in 1948 under dean Henry Kamphoefner, who hired an innovative and influential group of practicing architects as faculty, including George Matsumoto, Edward W. Waugh, James W. Fitzgibbon, and Eduardo Catalano. In addition to teaching, they designed local buildings, including public and commercial commissions. The most important manifestation of their concepts were a series of residences designed for themselves, for other faculty members, or for a small group of clients interested in new ideas in architecture. The earliest residences were strongly influenced by the American aesthetic of Frank Lloyd Wright, but by the early 1950s the European International Style concepts of Mies van der Rohe became increasingly important. Built for the most part on relatively ample, wooded suburban lots on the outskirts of the city, these residences exhibited a careful integration of the house with its site, the integration of outdoors and indoors through large glazed wall surfaces, passive climate control, an open organization of space, and new definitions of roof, wall and floor planes.<sup>7</sup> A climate of collaboration between the faculty, Raleigh architects, and design school students existed during this era. For example, Dean Kamphoefner recruited architect G. Milton Small from Chicago to work in Raleigh architect W. H. Deitrick's office. Small subsequently taught at the School of Design and operated his own firm in Raleigh for many years.

Kenneth McCoy Scott (1925-1980), raised in Charlotte, North Carolina, graduated in 1950 as a member of the first graduating class of the School of Design. Scott absorbed the Modernist aesthetic of the school's professors, especially George Matsumoto and Milton Small. He practiced in Raleigh for a few years, then moved to Durham and went into partnership with architect Jack Pruden, also a modern designer. In 1958 he established his own firm, Kenneth McCoy Scott, Inc. in Durham and practiced for twenty-two years until his death. The

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<sup>6</sup> Wake County DB 2566, page 319.

<sup>7</sup> Black, "Early Modern Architecture in Raleigh Associated with the Faculty of the NCSU School of Design, Raleigh, N.C." unpublished multiple property documentation form, 1994. N.C. Historic Preservation Office, Raleigh. E. 10-14; F. 1.

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Kenneth McCoy Scott Papers in the Special Collections Research Center at North Carolina State University Libraries contain documentation of over 400 different design projects, primarily in Durham, but also in Raleigh, Chapel Hill, Greensboro, Fayetteville, Roxboro and other central North Carolina locations. Scott's oeuvre included residences, churches, schools, commercial buildings, and multi-family residential projects.

Architect George Matsumoto, on the faculty at the School of Design from 1948 to 1961, was Kenneth Scott's chief mentor during his student years and his early career. Scott assisted Matsumoto on the design of two houses in Chapel Hill: the Julian House and the Dewitt House, both built in 1960. Matsumoto's residential designs were carefully integrated into their sites, which often sloped steeply. Matsumoto's own house at 821 Runnymede Road, finished in 1954, contains the main living space on the upper level and auxiliary space for bedrooms, dens, and offices on the lower level. His ca. 1955 house for Dr. George Poland at 3929 Arrow Drive follows the same arrangement.<sup>8</sup> The Bill Weber House, 606 Transylvania Drive, Raleigh, designed in 1954 by architect Bill Weber in collaboration with Matsumoto, is the earliest known contemporary Split-Level house in Raleigh. (A Split-Level's floors are separated by half-levels rather than by full levels.) Arranged under a dramatically-sloping shed roof oriented parallel to the street, the Weber House's middle level contains living, dining, and kitchen spaces, with bedrooms in the upper level and a carport in the lower level.<sup>9</sup> In 1960 Scott assisted Matsumoto in the design of the Cecile and Bryce Dewitt House, 702 Old School Road, Chapel Hill. The five-bedroom, 3,300 square foot ranch on fifty-five acres was built for two University of North Carolina physicists and their four daughters. The Dewitt House features almost continuous wall glazing, a wide eave overhang, and patios and walkways that extend the space out into the yard. The North Carolina chapter of the American Institute of Architects gave the residence a Merit Award in 1960.<sup>10</sup> The low gabled roof may reflect Scott's design input, since Matsumoto's trademark roof was flat.

Scott evolved during his twenty-seven year career into a flexible designer who worked in both modern and traditional styles. His extensive working papers indicate that the form of each building, whether residence, apartment building, or college classroom building, was determined by the floor plan. Early in his career he was active in the North Carolina chapter of the American Institute of Architects, serving as its secretary in 1957.<sup>11</sup> Scott's earliest known design, a house for his family on a golf course lot on Country Club Road, in the Country Club Hills subdivision in Raleigh, 1953, presents a pure interpretation of Mies van der Rohe's International Style. The two-story flat-roofed rectangular dwelling featured a dramatic contrast of solid and void. This house was apparently never built.

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<sup>8</sup> Black, "Early Modern Architecture in Raleigh Associated with the Faculty of the NCSU School of Design, Raleigh, N.C.," MPDF, N.C. HPO, E 10-14; F.1. The Poland House was moved in 2002 to Bahama, N.C.

<sup>9</sup> Little, "The Development of Modernism in Raleigh, 1945-1965," unpublished multiple property documentation form, 2005. N. C. Historic Preservation Office, Raleigh.

<sup>10</sup> Jackson and Brown, *History of the North Carolina Chapter of the American Institute of Architects 1913-1998, an Architectural Heritage*, 110; [www.trianglemodernisthouses.com/matsumoto.htm](http://www.trianglemodernisthouses.com/matsumoto.htm). (Web site of George Smart Jr., accessed on April 22, 2008); email from David Black to author, April 21, 2008, copy in NCHPO National Register file.

<sup>11</sup> Jackson and Brown, *History of the North Carolina Chapter of the American Institute of Architects 1913-1998, an Architectural Heritage*, 152.

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During Scott's early career, in the 1950s and early 1960s, much of the work that he did on his own was for private residences, including his own residence, Raleigh (1953); the MacNider House, Chapel Hill (mid-1950s); the Welles House, Raleigh (1956); and the Billings House, Durham (1962). His 1953 residence at 3126 Eton Road in Raleigh, a Modernist Ranch with vertical siding and a lower living level on one side, has been demolished. A small house Scott designed for Sallie MacNider was published in the *Southern Architect*, the magazine of the North Carolina chapter of the American Institute of Architects, as an example of a contemporary house designed to harmonize with the owner's antique collection. The front-gabled cottage with wide eaves, cathedral ceilings, and floor to ceiling windows featured a central chimney with fireplaces in both the living room and the kitchen.<sup>12</sup> Although larger, the 1956 Welles House shares the soft contemporary vocabulary of the MacNider House, and has a rustic theme based on the use of salvaged floor boards from a nineteenth-century dwelling in partition wall, ceilings, and entrance foyer closet. Scott continued the rustic motif by using wide rough sawn board-and-batten siding, with a dark stain, on the exterior walls. In 1962 Scott designed the William and Shirley Billings Residence, 1628 Marion Avenue, Durham. The Modernist Ranch features a shallow side-gabled roof, glazed walls across the rear elevation, and cathedral ceilings with exposed joists.<sup>13</sup>

Despite Scott's collaboration with George Matsumoto, his particular mode of modern design seems more closely akin to that of Milton Small, who practiced architecture in Raleigh from 1948 to the 1980s and taught briefly at the School of Design. Small, who studied under Mies van der Rohe, disseminated the Miesian style through a number of important Raleigh commissions.<sup>14</sup> Design elements of the Welles House echo the houses of Milton Small. These include an open interior plan with large fireplace stack, the use of exposed brick and natural wood, the integration of outdoors and indoors through large expanses of glazing, the integration of the building into the site, the private street side with few openings and garden side that opened onto terraces, the concern for solar heating and cooling, and ample built-in furniture.

The Welles House is one of the finest residences that Scott designed on his own. Two of the house's most striking design elements--a dramatic asymmetrical-gable roof and rustic board-and-batten siding—are not combined elsewhere in Raleigh's early modern architecture. The earliest known asymmetrical-gable roof house in Raleigh is the Arndt House, 1428 Canterbury Road, a single-level house designed in 1959 by F. Carter Williams, a Raleigh architect trained at the University of Illinois. The gable peaks above the main entrance, sheltered by a recessed front porch across the central three bays of the façade. The walls are covered with alternating areas of vertical siding and brick. The rustic board-and-batten siding of the Welles House does not occur in any of Raleigh's other modernist residences, which generally have smooth vertical-sided walls. Although Scott may not have known about the Low House in Bristol, Rhode Island, a famous Shingle Style house with an asymmetrical-gable roof and wood-shingled walls designed by New York City architects

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<sup>12</sup> "A Contemporary House Full of Antiques," *Southern Architect*, December 1959, 16-17.

<sup>13</sup> [www.trianglemodernisthouses.com/scott.htm](http://www.trianglemodernisthouses.com/scott.htm). (Web site of George Smart Jr., accessed on April 22, 2008).

<sup>14</sup> Black, "Early Modern Architecture Associated with the Faculty of the North Carolina State University School of Design, Raleigh, North Carolina," E.12, 31-33.



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McKim, Mead and White in 1887, the combination of roof form and rustic siding forms a striking parallel to that of the Welles House.<sup>15</sup>

In 1963 Scott designed a house for Frank Walser, a building contractor who had built many of the modernist houses in Raleigh, and his wife Ellen, at 1911 McDonald Lane in Raleigh. The residence appeared as one of the “Editor’s Choice” homes in *Better Homes and Gardens*. By this time Scott’s modernism had softened to appeal to his mostly conservative clients in central North Carolina. Described by the editors as a “clean-cut traditional with contemporary styling inside,” the one-story house has a low Ranch-style form with traditional hipped roof. Contemporary elements are the deep roof overhang and narrow floor-to-ceiling windows across the façade.<sup>16</sup>

A handful of other houses built in the Highland Gardens subdivision during the 1950s and 1960s are Modernist in design, but most are brick Ranches with rambler wings that suit their large suburban parcels. These are beginning to be demolished as replacement infill houses are constructed. In a survey of mid-twentieth-century architecture in Raleigh conducted in 2006, three other Highland Gardens houses, in addition to the Welles House, were Modernist: 3125 Darien Drive, 3208 Darien Drive, and 3208 Birnamwood Road.<sup>17</sup> Since then one of these has been demolished or substantially remodeled. The house at 3125 Darien Drive, a large Contemporary, was designed in 1950 by an unknown architect who trained at North Carolina State University’s School of Design. Original owner Edward G. Turlow was the dean of the landscape architecture department at the college. The original one-story house had board-and-batten and Roman brick walls and a shed roof facing to the rear with a clerestory. The south side of the house had continuous full-height fixed windows. To the left was a carport addition; to the right a board-and-batten bedroom addition. The house was demolished in 2006 and replaced with a new contemporary residence designed by Raleigh architect Frank Harmon. At 3208 Darien Drive, a 1948 Contemporary designed by architects Holloway & Reeves for North Carolina State University professor Lowell W. Nielson has a central shed-roof core, flat-roofed flanking wings that create a small courtyard entrance, and German and vertical siding. Windows on the street front are generally small casements, while across the rear are large fixed windows. The house at 3208 Birnamwood, built in 1964, is a low-pitched shed roof Contemporary with weatherboard walls over a cement block wainscoting.

Just as the Modernist dwellings in Highland Gardens subdivision are now being demolished, the intense residential development pressure in Raleigh threatens the entire group of mid-twentieth-century Modernist houses associated with the School of Design.

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<sup>15</sup> Hitchcock, *Rhode Island Architecture*, figure 67.

<sup>16</sup> [www.trianglemodernisthouses.com/scott.htm](http://www.trianglemodernisthouses.com/scott.htm). (Web site of George Smart Jr., accessed on August 4, 2008.)

<sup>17</sup> Little, Raleigh Survey Update, 1945-1965, 2006.

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**Section 10: Boundaries**

**Boundary Description:**

The nominated parcel of 1.88 acres is shown in on a survey plat prepared in 2008, at a scale of one inch = sixty feet.

**Boundary Justification:**

The nominated acreage is the entire parcel associated with the house since its construction in 1956, and provides an appropriate setting.



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**Photographs:**

The following information pertains to all photographs:

Name: Paul and Ellen Welles House

Location: 3227 Birnamwood Road, Raleigh, Wake County, NC

Photographer: M. Ruth Little

Date: 2008

Location of Negatives: State Historic Preservation Office, Raleigh, North Carolina.

1. View of rear wall of living room looking out to meadow.
  2. View of living room with fireplace.
  3. View of entrance foyer.
  4. View of dining room and kitchen.
  5. Front view, with garage/carport at left, looking south.
  6. Closeup front view, looking south.
  7. Overall front view, looking west.
  8. Rear view, looking east.
  9. Overall side view, looking southeast.
  10. Overall rear view from rear meadow, looking east.
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