

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Burnham, John and Isabel, House  
other names/site number The Pagoda House

### 2. Location

street & number 2602 Lake Shore Drive  not for publication  
city or town Long Beach  vicinity  
state Indiana code IN county LaPorte code 091 zip code 46360

### 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 at the following level(s) of significance:  
    national     statewide   x   local

Signature of certifying official/Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Indiana DNR-Division of Historic Preservation & Archaeology

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government \_\_\_\_\_

In my opinion, the property     meets     does not meet the National Register criteria.  
Signature of commenting official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government \_\_\_\_\_

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:  
    entered in the National Register     determined eligible for the National Register  
    determined not eligible for the National Register     removed from the National Register  
    other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

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**5. Classification**

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

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

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

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	district
1	0	site
1	0	structure
0	0	object
3	0	<b>Total</b>

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

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

John Lloyd Wright in Northwest Indiana

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

**Current Functions**  
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

**7. Description**

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

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY  
 AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: Prairie School  
 MODERN MOVEMENT: International Style

**Materials**  
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: CONCRETE  
 walls: STUCCO  
 BRICK  
 roof: METAL: Copper  
 other: WOOD

**Narrative Description**

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(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

### Summary Paragraph

The John and Isabel Burnham House was designed by John Lloyd Wright in a blended interpretation of the Prairie Style and the International Style. The house was constructed in 1934 in the Lake Michigan resort community of Long Beach, Indiana for the owners of a local manufacturing company. The house is also referred to as the "Pagoda House". The house resembles a Japanese pagoda because its five floor levels are delineated by roofs and because of its position on the Lake Michigan shore. There are three contributing resources on the property: the house, site, and a pedestrian bridge (structure) designed by John Lloyd Wright.

### Narrative Description

#### *House site, 1934. Contributing*

Since Wright not only designed site features on the lot, but used the site to shape the house, the site contributes to the significance of the property. The house is situated on the northwest side of the sand dune ridge closest to Lake Michigan, between Lake Shore Drive and the Lake Michigan shoreline. Lake Shore Drive is the primary route through the community of Long Beach and generally has houses on each side of the road. Unlike most of the houses along the strip of ground between the road and the shore, the Burnham House does not set into or on top of the sand dune; rather, the main footprint of the house is at the base of the dune. A wood bridge and a reinforced concrete parking deck connect the house to the sand dune (seen on right side of photo 0004). Generally the house is oriented northwest toward the lake and southwest toward the street. Directions in this document refer to northwest as north, southwest as south, northeast as east, and southwest as west.

The site has extensive stone terracing on the lake side of the sand dune (seen in photo 0003). There are concrete sidewalks and steps to provide access to the beach at the base of the dune and to entry doors at various levels of the house. The parking deck connects the street level and top of the sand dune with the fourth level of the house (seen in photo 0004). The deck has a pent roof at its bottom north and south edges; these form low walls on each side of the deck. The pent roof is covered with copper; the copper is joined by standing seams. A wall is located on the south side of the parking deck. The wall is covered with stucco and has a long row of steel casement windows (seen in the left half of photo 0001). The wall is capped by a hipped roof that is covered with copper. Short brick piers terminate the pent roofs; they are located at the outside corners of the parking deck where it meets Lake Shore Drive (seen in photo 0001).

The stone terracing southwest of the house is a recent feature of the property. The terrace walls are composed of limestone ashlar and landscaping is located in the terraces. A concrete sidewalk is located at about the midway point on the west side of the dune. It connects to concrete steps near the west edge of the lot; the steps lead to the base of the dune. Stone terracing is also located beneath the concrete parking deck (seen in photo 0003). Stone steps lead from the parking deck to a wood bridge at the third level of the house. The wood bridge (contributing structure) has an oriental appearance and is painted bright red (seen in the middle of photo 0003 and in photo 0004). The bridge is an original design feature of the property. The stone terracing in this area is composed of rounded and more porous boulders; it is designed with a rock garden appearance and does not have landscaping. This terracing is part of the original design of the property. Additional stone terracing is located on the east side of the house (seen in photo 0003). Its walls are composed of limestone ashlar; the terraces form pools and fountains in this area with some landscaping. The terracing in this area is also part of the original design of the property, but was converted into a pool and fountain design by the current owner. A few mature trees are also located on this side of the house on the northwest side of the house.

Concrete steps lead from the south side of the third level to a long concrete sidewalk that is located along the east side of the second level of the house. The sidewalk forms a balcony that leads to an enclosed sun porch in the northeast corner of the house. It has a metal railing on its outside edge (right side of photo 0003). Concrete steps lead from the second level to the first level of the house on its east side. A concrete patio is located in the northeast corner of the house at its first level. The steps and patio are located beneath the overhanging third, fourth, and fifth levels of the house. The overhanging levels of the house are supported by tall brick piers on the east side of the house (left side of photo 0003).

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A concrete sidewalk is on the north side of the house and connects the steps on the west side with the patio. A concrete barrier, approximately 24" tall, is located on the outside edge of the sidewalk (bottom of photo 0002). The barrier acts as a breakwater against the lake. The land between the barrier and lake is a flat, sandy beach.

*House, 1934. Contributing  
Exterior (photos 0001-0004)*

The Burnham house is essentially a rectangular box that is five stories tall. Each story is divided by a short section of roof that appears like a pent roof overhang. The roofs delineate the floor levels. The house's walls are covered with stucco, except for a large section of the south wall that is covered with salmon-colored bricks. The stucco walls are painted a dark mustard color. The roof is a low-pitched hipped roof. The pent roofs and hipped roof are covered with copper. The copper is joined by standing seams. The soffits of the house are also covered with stucco. The house's windows are steel and glass and are mostly casement windows.

The house's elevations have a simple arrangement except for the street elevation. The street (south) elevation is complex due to the connections of entry doors with bridges, sidewalks, steps, and the parking deck (photos 0001, 0004). The street elevation has a large brick chimney on its south side. The chimney is wide and is located on the wall of the second through fifth levels of the house. Entry doors are located near the center on each of the street elevation's levels. The north sides of the second and third levels of the street elevation are beneath the cover of the parking deck. A garage is located in the north half of the street elevation on the fourth level. A balcony is located from about the center of the wall to the north side of the fifth level's street elevation.

From the street the house appears to only be two stories tall due to the parking deck that connects the street to the fourth level of the house. The deck forms a bridge to the fourth level from the street; the second and third levels are partially sheltered beneath the deck. The first level's south wall is buried into the base of the sand dune. It is composed of salmon-colored bricks and rises out of the ground to form a base for the second level. The second level's south wall is mostly covered with bricks; a large portion of this area is the base of a wide chimney. A wood door with a full window is located in the east side of the wall; it provides access from the second level to a sidewalk on the side of the dune. The south wall of the third level is also dominated by the chimney. The west side of the chimney is capped by a copper planter just below windows in the third level. There is a row of four casement windows in the west corner of the wall. Brick extends from the chimney and covers the middle of the south wall. A wood door with a full window is located in the brick wall. The door provides access to the wood bridge from the third level of the house. The remaining south wall of the third level, east of the door, is supported on its east corners by brick piers (photo 0003). This part of the third level overhangs an open space not occupied by the first and second levels. This wall is sheltered beneath the parking deck. A pent roof forms a base to this part of the third level. The wall has a casement window on its west end and two pairs of casement windows in its remaining wall.

The third and fourth levels are separated by a pent roof except where the parking deck forms the separation of the levels. The pent roof is interrupted by the chimney that rises from the third level. The pent roof forms a cover above the doors on the second and third levels below, then turns southward and forms a base to the parking deck's west side. Four casement windows are located on the west side of the chimney; they are aligned with the windows on the third level. The wall extends toward the street east of the chimney. A narrow casement window and a wide, wood entry door are located in this wall. The entry door has decorative iron grillwork on the outside. A wide garage door is east of the entry door and occupies the east half of the fourth level's south wall. The garage door is wood and is divided into four horizontal rows of twelve square panels. The top row of panels is glass and the first and twelfth panels in the row second from the top are also glass. The fourth and fifth levels are separated by a pent roof. The pent roof is interrupted by the chimney. The pent roof also extends southward to form a long arcade on the west side of the parking deck. The arcade is centered with the entry door and narrow casement window on the fourth level. Two pairs of casement windows, each above an awning window, are grouped together west of the chimney. They are aligned with the windows in the third and fourth levels. The east side of the chimney is capped by a copper planter. The pent roof that separates the fourth and fifth levels on the south elevation forms a balcony wall east of the planter (photo 0015). The balcony extends from the planter to the east edge of the south wall. Four casement windows are centered in the fifth level's south wall. A wood balcony door is in the wall east of the casement windows. A narrow casement window is in the wall east of the balcony door. A pair of casement windows is located in the east corner of the fifth level. The main portion of the chimney punctuates the overhanging eave and rises above the roof on the south elevation. The chimney has a tall concrete cap and three clay chimney pots.

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The north elevation faces Lake Michigan (photo 0002). Brick piers form the outside corners of the first level. The first and second floor levels do not extend to the east corner of the north elevation. This area is open to the terraced sand dune on the south side of the house. Courses of glass blocks create a ribbon of glass between the brick pier at the west corner and a section of brick wall that forms the enclosure of the first level. Rows of glass blocks also form a ribbon across the top of the brick wall section, between it and the base of the second level wall. The base of the second level wall is also brick. Copper trim and flashing is at the bottom and top of the second level's brick base. An enclosed sun porch is located at the east side of the second level's wall; no copper flashing is located on top of the brick base of the sun porch. The sun porch is enclosed with three large and one small jalousie windows. A pent roof separates the second and third levels above the sun porch. It extends to the brick pier at the northeast corner of the house, but does not extend west beyond the sun porch. The remaining second and third levels' north wall is dominated by a large window. The window is divided into four vertical and four horizontal rows of windows. The bottom row is composed of four casement windows. The remaining rows are composed of four square windows. The remaining third level's north wall, east of the large window, has two short windows. The windows are composed of two pairs of casement windows; each pair of casement windows is over an awning window.

The third and fourth levels of the north wall are separated by a pent roof. The fourth level's north wall has a row of four pairs of casement windows on its west side. The windows are aligned with the large window in the second and third levels below. The row of casement windows is in the north wall of the dining room. A pair of casement windows is in the wall east of the row of casements. A row of six short casement windows is in the east side of the fourth level's north wall. A pair of casement windows is in the east corner of the fourth level. It encloses a small porch off the east side of the kitchen. The fourth and fifth levels' north walls are separated by a pent roof. The fifth level's wall has three windows. The windows are composed of two pairs of casement windows; each pair of casement windows is over an awning window.

The west elevation (right side of photo 0002 and left side of photo 0004) appears to have a brick base; this is the first level wall. Brick piers form the outside corners of the first level. Courses of glass blocks create a ribbon of glass between the brick piers and a section of brick wall that is centered on the first level. Rows of glass blocks also form a ribbon across the top of the brick wall section, between it and the base of the second level wall. The base of the second level wall is also brick. Copper trim/flashing is at the bottom and top of the second level's brick base. The west wall of the second and third levels is the west wall of the two story living space inside the house. The section of wall is uninterrupted by a pent roof which typically separated the floor levels on the elevations. A vertical ribbon of windows is located near the north corner of the west elevation. It has a pair of casement windows just above the brick base; there are three large square windows above the casement windows. The top of the top square window terminates at the height of the soffit for the pent roof separating the third and fourth levels. The fourth level has a pair of casement windows aligned with the ribbon of windows on the second and third levels. Another pair of casement windows is on the opposite corner of the elevation. The fourth and fifth levels are separated by a pent roof. The fifth level has windows aligned with those on the fourth level and one centered in the wall. The windows on the fifth level are pairs of casement windows over a short awning window.

The east elevation is characterized by a cutaway of floor space on the first and second levels. The first and second levels' walls are sheltered by the overhanging upper levels of the house (photo 0003). The western two thirds of the first level's wall are brick and was part of the original design by Wright. The eastern third of the wall was intended to be open, but was filled in with wood, jalousie windows, and a wood door. The second level has the appearance of a brick base; copper trim is located at the bottom of the base. The second level creates a slight overhang for the first level's wall. The second level has an enclosed sun porch on its north side. The sun porch is enclosed with four jalousie windows. East of the sun porch is a balcony with a brick wall and metal railings. The balcony is supported by a section of brick that rises out of the sand dune. A narrow section of brick wall is at the south end of the east wall. No other windows are located on the second level's east wall. A wood door with a full window is located in the south wall of the sun porch; it leads to the balcony. Concrete steps are on the east side of the balcony and connect the second level to the first level's patio.

The third level extends toward the east and is supported by brick piers under each corner. The piers have vertical rows of brick panels that are recessed on their inside corners. A pent roof forms a base to the third level. The third level's east wall has three windows; the windows are pairs of casement windows over a short awning window. A pent roof also forms a base for the fourth level. The majority of the pent roof, except for a small section on the north corner of the wall, creates a balcony on the east side of the fourth level and thus a wide overhang for the level below. The north side of the fourth level's east wall is a small enclosed porch off the kitchen. The porch is enclosed by a group of three windows and a wood door with a full window. A pair of casement windows is located in the wall south of the porch. This area south of the

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enclosed porch is the east wall of the garage. The pent roof that forms the balcony on this level extends to the south and forms a low wall for the parking deck. The fourth and fifth levels are separated by a pent roof. The fifth level wall has a pair of casement windows near its north corner. The south side of the wall has two narrow windows; the windows have a small awning window in their bottom portions.

*Interior (photos 0005-0014)*

The interior of the house is arranged with a vertical core in the center of the house, on the street side. Utility rooms and bathrooms are located in the southeast corner of the house on the second through fifth levels. Living spaces are arranged in the west half of the house on the second, third, and fourth levels. Bedrooms are located in the northeast corner of the house and on the fifth level.

The first level, called the "Beach Level" by Wright, was originally open beneath the house; it is enclosed and is used for storage and recreation space. The only access to this level is an exterior door on the east side of the house off the patio (photo 0003). The level provides access to chases enclosed in brick walls located on the south side of the house. This level was originally created to allow the water from the lake to flow under the upper levels. The outside corners of the house are supported by pilings that were buried deeply into the beach. The pilings are covered with bricks to form square piers. A section of wall that is composed of bricks divides the first level and patio in the northeast corner of the house (middle of photo 0005). The wall has a large rectangular panel on its west side. The panel forms a ledge near the top of the wall. This wall was part of the original construction of the house. The first level was enclosed with walls composed of brick and glass block probably after the creation of the breakwater between the house and the lake. Glass blocks form vertical and horizontal ribbons that separate the original construction from the brick walls added later. The interior of the first level is one large room with some storage spaces constructed against the east wall.

The second level, called the "Living Room Level" by Wright, is dominated by one large living space in the west half of the level (photo 0007). The living space is two stories in height; it has tall windows in its north side (toward the lake) and a balcony in its south side. The balcony is accessed with a wide staircase along the living room's east wall. The ceiling of the living room beneath the balcony is short and forms an intimate "hearth room" in front of a fireplace in the south wall of the room (lower right side of photo 0007). An opening in the wall leads from the hearth room to the vertical core. A mechanical room and kitchenette is located on the east side of the core. The core has an entry door and small vestibule on its south wall. A door in the north wall of the living room leads to an enclosed sun porch in the northeast corner of the level. The porch has low brick walls and is enclosed with jalousie windows on its north and east sides (photo 0006). A porch door is located in its southeast corner and connects the porch to a balcony on the east side of the house. The sun porch's north and east walls were open in the original design of the house. However, likely due to safety concerns with the low brick walls, the porch was enclosed with windows in about 1960.

The third level, called the "Balcony Level" by Wright, is dominated by the open area of the living room below in the northwest corner of the level and a balcony in the southwest corner of the level (photo 0008). The vertical core connects the balcony with a hallway on the west side of the core on this level. The hallway leads to a guest bedroom in the center of the north side of the house and a service bedroom in the northeast corner of the level. The guest bedroom's west wall is almost all glass; it overlooks the living space (right side of photo 0008). A large bathroom and laundry room are located in the southeast corner of the level and are also accessed by the hallway. The core has steps on its north side and an entry door in its south wall. The entry is accessed by the wood bridge on this level (seen in photo 0009).

The fourth level, called the "Entry Level" by Wright, is at the same level as the parking deck and street. A garage is located in the southeast corner of the house on this level. A large public area is located in the west side of this level. The vertical core separates the garage and public area. A kitchen area is on the north side of this level. A small enclosed porch connects the garage and kitchen in the northeast corner of the house. The vertical core on this level is marked "entry" on Wright's plans. The entry door is located in its south wall (left side of photo 0010) and steps that lead to the third and fifth levels are located in the core's north side. A coat closet and doorway that leads to the public space is located on the west side of the core (right side of photo 0010). The public space was originally divided into two areas (north/south) by wood cabinetry and shelves that formed a wall; the wall did not extend to the ceiling. This casework was pivoted and turned against the west wall of the space in about 1960 (photo 0011). The south half of the room was called a library on Wright's plans and the north half (toward the lake) was called a dining room by Wright. The space essentially serves the same roles in its current configuration. The south wall of the space has a fireplace. The fireplace has travertine on the wall surrounding its opening, but no mantle. The kitchen has modern wood cabinetry (photo 0012).

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The fifth level is called the "Top Floor" by Wright. It contains most of the bedrooms in the house. The master bedroom (photo 0014) and bathroom are located in the east side of the level. A landing/hallway is located on the west side of the stairway in the vertical core (photo 0013). The landing leads to three bedrooms in the west side of the level. One bedroom is located in the center of the north side of the house; the other two bedrooms are located in the west corners of the house. A bathroom separates the two corner bedrooms. Large closets are located in each of the bedrooms. The bathrooms have some of their original porcelain fixtures; both have tubs with curved outside corners. A door in the core leads to a balcony on the south side of the house (toward the street). The balcony is fairly narrow and is mostly sheltered by the roof's eaves (photo 0015). The inside surface of the balcony walls is covered with stucco.

Original interior features of the house include wood doors, casings, and trim. The wood trim is oak and has a dark stain applied to it. The trim and casework have simple, square corners. Most of the trim around doors and doorways has a layered appearance with two boards that create a wide band of trim around the openings (photos 0009, 0010). The doors are flat and have no panels. The staircases have solid walls with a wide wood cap and a wood handrail that is centered on top of the cap (photos 0007, 0009, 0013). Wood light boxes are located above several of the doors to illuminate the area at the doorway (photo 0009). The doors have their original brass hardware; the handles are either rounded knobs or thick, rectangular handles. A small hatch in the entry door on the fourth level has a carved B on its outside face and allows the owners to see who is at the door without opening the whole door. Most of the walls and ceilings are finished with plaster; some of the walls are covered with wallpaper. Most of the floors are covered with carpet.

The house retains significant integrity despite a few alterations that occurred under the second owner of the home in about 1960. Exterior finishes remain intact, as does the organization of the elevations. The sun porch on the second level was enclosed; but it was enclosed with glass. The first level was also enclosed; however, the brick piers that contain the steel pilings which were at one time freestanding are distinguished from the enclosure. The brick wall sections added to enclose this level also mimic the brick wall Wright designed on the east side of the level. The interior floor plan remains as it was designed by Wright with the exception of the casework that once separated the library and dining room that has been moved to the west wall of the space (photo 0011). The only significant change in interior finishes is the modern kitchen cabinetry that was installed by the present owner.

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**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance**

1934

**Significant Dates**

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

**Cultural Affiliation**

**Architect/Builder**

Wright, John Lloyd

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**Period of Significance (justification)**

The period of significance includes the year of construction, 1934. It appears that the minor alterations made to the home happened after this time by following owners.

**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)**

Not applicable

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The John and Isabel Burnham House is eligible under National Register Criterion C. Architecturally the house represents the work of an accomplished and nationally known architect, John Lloyd Wright. It retains its architectural design features and integrity and its association with John Lloyd Wright qualifies it for Criterion C. The house derives its importance under Architecture as an exceptional example of Wright's unique blending of the Prairie and International Styles. Its vertical organization and pent roofs earned this unusual house the popular name "the Pagoda House". The property meets the associative and physical qualities specified in the registration requirements of the John Lloyd Wright in Northwest Indiana Multiple Properties Documentation Form.

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

When John Lloyd Wright struck out on his own architectural career and moved from his Oak Park, Illinois residence to Long Beach, Indiana the lakeside community was only a few years old. The only son of Frank Lloyd Wright who chose to work for his father was well-equipped with his own talent to begin a successful career as an architect to the affluent. Long Beach, Indiana had developed as a lakeside resort community for affluent business and community leaders of Chicago and Indianapolis. John Lloyd Wright established his studio in the heart of Long Beach and became the recipient of several commissions to design homes at first influenced by popular styles of the day but eventually conforming to his own style. The first half of his career was spent at Long Beach developing himself as an architect.

John and Isabel Burnham would have had thorough knowledge of Wright's work in the Long Beach community. Referred to as the John Burnham House in Wright's archives, the house was Wright's seventh residential commission in Long Beach since his arrival to the community in 1923. Wright had also designed the Long Beach School and Long Beach Town Hall located a short distance from the Burnham house when they contracted with him to design their house in 1934. Wright's architectural progression is seen in the house though it is evident earlier commissions had influence in the Burnham design. 1930 marked a transition for Wright when he visited Europe and returned with a passion to develop his interpretation of the International Style. The Burnham house in many ways married the Prairie School design influence of his father, Frank Lloyd Wright, with his new passion for the International Style.

The inspiration for the Burnham house, also known as the Pagoda house, may ultimately trace its roots to the time Wright spent in Japan while working for his father. Like Frank Lloyd Wright, it appears Japanese architecture also had an influence on John. The house's similar appearance to a Japanese pagoda is the most obvious connection to that influence. Aspects of the Long Beach Town Hall's vertical forms composed of salmon-colored bricks are evident in Wright's design of the south elevation of the Burnham house, also largely composed of salmon-colored bricks. The town hall's front wall's verticality is emphasized by sections of brick walls that form the appearance of piers. This is clearly present in Wright's treatment of the chimney on the Burnham house (photo 0004). Wright's previous residential commission, the Hoover-Timme house, has a strong use of horizontal lines to delineate levels. This was developed to the extreme in the Burnham house. The one project that appears to have influenced the design of the Burnham house most was Wright's design of the Dunes Arcade Hotel (1931) at the Indiana Dunes State Park in nearby Chesterton, Indiana. The hotel, demolished after the 1960s, had three levels that were separated by pent roofs in the same method as the Burnham house (photo 0002, 0004).

While many design elements of the house are characteristic of the Prairie Style, Wright's embrace of the International Style after his trip to Europe in 1929 is also evident. The clearly defined horizontal lines of the floor levels and the use of pent roof sections to create floating planes for balconies and the parking deck are clear elements of the Prairie Style (photo 0001). Wright also created an intimate hearth room sheltered beneath the interior balcony of the two story living space (right side of photo 0007). The compact nature of the vertical core's entries and their connection to public spaces in the house, including the hearth room, are also clear elements of the Prairie Style (photo 0010). These are, in fact, hallmarks of the style as developed by his father. The International Style is also represented in the house. Its sheer height and its rather simple box-like form are elements of the International Style. Without the introduction of horizontal pent roofs to separate the levels, the form would appear strongly European (photo 0002). Wright's introduction of the large two story living space is accentuated with the window wall toward the lake (photo 0008). The two stories of windows further demonstrate the International Style on the exterior of the house (photo 0002).

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The Prairie Style, which had been popularized by John's father, Frank Lloyd Wright, had a narrow period of popularity in the United States. It was used most frequently near Frank Lloyd Wright's home of Chicago in the Upper Midwest in the first few decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The style, which emphasized the horizontal lines of the Midwestern prairie in its architectural form, has few examples in the dunes area of Northwest Indiana. This is likely due to the full scale development of the resort communities after the popularity of the style started to wane. The dunes area set the stage for more modern architecture that included the Art Moderne, Art Deco, and International Styles. John Lloyd Wright's trip to Europe in 1929 occurred only a few years after the International Style appeared in the United States. Architects practicing in the new style favored buildings with a box-like appearance, and typically used metal casement windows with no decorative detailing.

While Wright had become particularly well-known for his ability to design sensitively into the topography of the sand dunes that characterized the Long Beach community, the Burnham house is a very different approach to site design. Many of Wright's buildings straddled dune ridges, or followed their slopes with interior levels. The Burnham house is almost independent of the sand dune. Built on 30' steel pilings, the house's only attachment to the dune is through the parking deck and a wood bridge on the third and fourth levels, respectively (photos 0003, 0004). Although the first level's south wall is pushed into the base of the dune, the house is essentially a tower on stilts that is connected to its surroundings by bridges and steps. The sand dune was still treated with respect by the construction of stone terraces and landscaping to prevent erosion (photo 0003); but the dune itself was not integral to the house like many of Wright's other projects.

The Burnham house was featured in *The Architectural Forum* in June, 1935 because of its unique style and construction. The article calls the style of the house "organic" because it could not be compared with any "critical canon".<sup>1</sup> The article featured all of the floor plans and photographs of the house under construction and in its completed state. The article mentioned Wright's introduction of a few innovative construction methods in the house. The house was constructed on 8" steel pilings that were 30' long and buried into the beach at the base of the dune. Homes in the dunes area were more typically built on top of large masonry or concrete retaining walls. The pilings were driven part way with water jets and the rest of the way with a steam hammer. Wright's only use of masonry walls was for wind bracing between two piers and to form utility chases. Wright also introduced structural steel and prefabricated "steel lumber" to frame the house. Wright covered the exterior with sprayed-on insulation and stucco. The floors were poured with lightweight concrete. The pent roofs, referred to as sloping skirtings between the windows on each level in the article, serve a functional purpose in air conditioning the house. Heated air is blown upward through ducts in the center of the house. From there it is delivered into the rooms through registers in the upper part of the rooms. Registers near the floor allow the air to pass into the space behind the pent roofs. From there air passes through the space created by the floor framing and back to the central shaft.<sup>2</sup>

Other interesting design features of the house include copper planters on either side of the chimney (seen at the balcony level in photo 0015). Copper tubing, enclosed in the brick wall, provides a water supply to the planters. The use of reinforced concrete to create a parking deck to connect the fourth level with the street is also a unique feature of the house.

#### *Registration Requirements*

The Burnham House meets the registration requirements of the John Lloyd Wright in Northwest Indiana Multiple Properties Documentation Form because it is a documented John Lloyd Wright work and it retains good physical integrity. Very little of the house has been modified from Wright's 1934 design and changes that were made do not negatively affect the overall significance of the property. With regard to the site some new stone terraces were constructed on the side of the hill beneath the carport. The primary interaction between the site and the house that Wright designed was the unimpeded views of Lake Michigan and the multiple levels from which entry is gained. These are extant, as well as the wood footbridge that was part of the original design.

With regard to the house few changes have occurred. The house retains its significant architectural features and finishes. Window openings and placement have not been modified from the original design. The exterior plaster and metal roof are also extant. The lowest level that was originally open to the beach was enclosed. A wall that separated the dining room

<sup>1</sup> *Architectural Forum*, June, 1935, pg. 535

<sup>2</sup> *Architectural Forum*, June, 1935, pg. 535

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and study was moved to the side of the rooms. New kitchen cabinets were added and some interior finishes are new, such as carpeting.

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**Developmental history/additional historic context information** (if appropriate)

Long Beach was a lake side residential enclave situated in the sand dunes along Lake Michigan. The area was developed as its own community for summer vacationers, primarily the elite, from Chicago and Indianapolis. The community was envisioned by a Michigan City retail bakery owner, Orrin Glidden, in partnership with a local coal and grain dealer, Orphie Gotto. In 1918 the Long Beach Company was established to develop this natural lakeshore into an elegant showplace community. Long Beach was incorporated as a separate municipality July 5, 1921 with its own police force, fire department, and school system. John and Hazel Wright made their home in the resort community in 1923.

The original owners of the Burnham home were John and Isabel Burnham. They were close friends of John and Hazel Wright and frequently attended parties in each others' homes. Elizabeth Wright, the daughter of John and Hazel, recalled spending a significant amount of time in the Burnham house when she visited the community several years ago.<sup>3</sup> Unlike many of the homes in Long Beach that are used as summer vacation homes, the Burnham house was used year-round by the Burnham family as their primary residence. After John's death his wife, Isabel, continued to live at the home until 1957. At that time she sold the property to the Millney family.

John Burnham was the son of Frederic H. and Alice Burnham. Frederic established the Frederic H. Burnham Company, Inc. at 1602 Tennessee Street in Michigan City in 1902. The company is still in operation. Burnham was attracted to the area because of the available labor of experienced glove makers. The company became a large manufacturer of gloves and mittens throughout the United States. In 1918 the company purchased Tecumseh Facing Mills. John Burnham became president of the company after his father passed away in about 1928. His mother, Alice, remained vice president of the company. By 1938 the company had grown to include three buildings that covered over 40,000 square feet. During World War II the company opened a plant in Missouri and reached its peak employment of 250 employees.<sup>4</sup>

Refer to *John Lloyd Wright in Northwest Indiana Multiple Properties Document* for additional contextual information on John Lloyd Wright and the Lake Michigan resort community of Long Beach, Indiana.

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Primary Sources

"House of Mr. and Mrs. John Burnham." *The Architectural Forum*, Vol. LXII, No. 6. June, 1935. Pages 535-548. Author unknown.

Napolitan, James and Sandra; interview with current owner who provided oral tradition of aspects of the house, February 3, 2012.

Nicewarner, Gladys Bull. *Michigan City, Indiana: The Life of a Town*. Roswell, GA: Whippoorwill Publication, 1980.

Secondary Sources

John Lloyd Wright Archives of the Chicago Historical Society, 1601 North Clark St., Chicago.

*LaPorte County Interim Report, Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory*. Indianapolis: Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana, 1989.

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<sup>3</sup> Napolitan interview

<sup>4</sup> Nicewarner, pg. 158



John and Isabel Burnham House  
Name of Property

LaPorte County, IN  
County and State

street & number 12954 6<sup>th</sup> Road telephone 574-936-0613  
city or town Plymouth state IN zip code 46563  
e-mail [kwgarner@kwgarner.com](mailto:kwgarner@kwgarner.com)

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **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. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

**Photographs:**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: John Burnham House

City or Vicinity: Long Beach

County: LaPorte State: IN

Photographer: Kurt West Garner

Date Photographed: March 7, 2012

Description of Photograph(s) and number: 0001 South (street) elevation, facing northwest

1 of 15.

Name of Property: John Burnham House

City or Vicinity: Long Beach

County: LaPorte State: IN

Photographer: Kurt West Garner

Date Photographed: March 7, 2012

Description of Photograph(s) and number: 0002 North (lake) elevation, facing south

2 of 15.

John and Isabel Burnham House  
Name of Property

LaPorte County, IN  
County and State

Name of Property: John Burnham House

City or Vicinity: Long Beach

County: LaPorte State: IN

Photographer: Kurt West Garner

Date Photographed: March 7, 2012

Description of Photograph(s) and number: 0003 Stone terracing beneath parking deck, facing south  
3 of 15.

Name of Property: John Burnham House

City or Vicinity: Long Beach

County: LaPorte State: IN

Photographer: Kurt West Garner

Date Photographed: March 7, 2012

Description of Photograph(s) and number: 0004 South and west elevations, facing northeast  
4 of 15.

Name of Property: John Burnham House

City or Vicinity: Long Beach

County: LaPorte State: IN

Photographer: Kurt West Garner

Date Photographed: March 7, 2012

Description of Photograph(s) and number: 0005 Interior of first level, facing northeast  
5 of 15.

Name of Property: John Burnham House

City or Vicinity: Long Beach

County: LaPorte State: IN

Photographer: Kurt West Garner

Date Photographed: March 7, 2012

John and Isabel Burnham House  
Name of Property

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Description of Photograph(s) and number: 0006 Enclosed sun porch (second level), facing northeast  
6 of 15.

Name of Property: John Burnham House

City or Vicinity: Long Beach

County: LaPorte State: IN

Photographer: Kurt West Garner

Date Photographed: March 7, 2012

Description of Photograph(s) and number: 0007 Main living room (second level), facing southeast  
7 of 15.

Name of Property: John Burnham House

City or Vicinity: Long Beach

County: LaPorte State: IN

Photographer: Kurt West Garner

Date Photographed: March 7, 2012

Description of Photograph(s) and number: 0008 Balcony (third level), facing north  
8 of 15.

Name of Property: John Burnham House

City or Vicinity: Long Beach

County: LaPorte State: IN

Photographer: Kurt West Garner

Date Photographed: March 7, 2012

Description of Photograph(s) and number: 0009 Entry (third level), facing south  
9 of 15.

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City or Vicinity: Long Beach

County: LaPorte State: IN

Photographer: Kurt West Garner

Date Photographed: March 7, 2012

Description of Photograph(s) and number: 0010 Entry (fourth level), facing south from staircase  
10 of 15.

Name of Property: John Burnham House

City or Vicinity: Long Beach

County: LaPorte State: IN

Photographer: Kurt West Garner

Date Photographed: March 7, 2012

Description of Photograph(s) and number: 0011 Library/Dining Room (fourth level), facing west  
11 of 15.

Name of Property: John Burnham House

City or Vicinity: Long Beach

County: LaPorte State: IN

Photographer: Kurt West Garner

Date Photographed: March 7, 2012

Description of Photograph(s) and number: 0012 Kitchen (fourth level), facing east  
12 of 15.

Name of Property: John Burnham House

City or Vicinity: Long Beach

County: LaPorte State: IN

Photographer: Kurt West Garner

Date Photographed: March 7, 2012

Description of Photograph(s) and number: 0013 Top of staircase/landing (fifth level), facing northeast

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13 of 15.

Name of Property: John Burnham House  
City or Vicinity: Long Beach  
County: LaPorte State: IN

Photographer: Kurt West Garner

Date Photographed: March 7, 2012

Description of Photograph(s) and number: 0014 Master bedroom (fifth level), facing northeast

14 of 15.

Name of Property: John Burnham House  
City or Vicinity: Long Beach  
County: LaPorte State: IN

Photographer: Kurt West Garner

Date Photographed: March 7, 2012

Description of Photograph(s) and number: 0015 Fifth level balcony on street elevation, facing west

15 of 15.

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**Property Owner:**

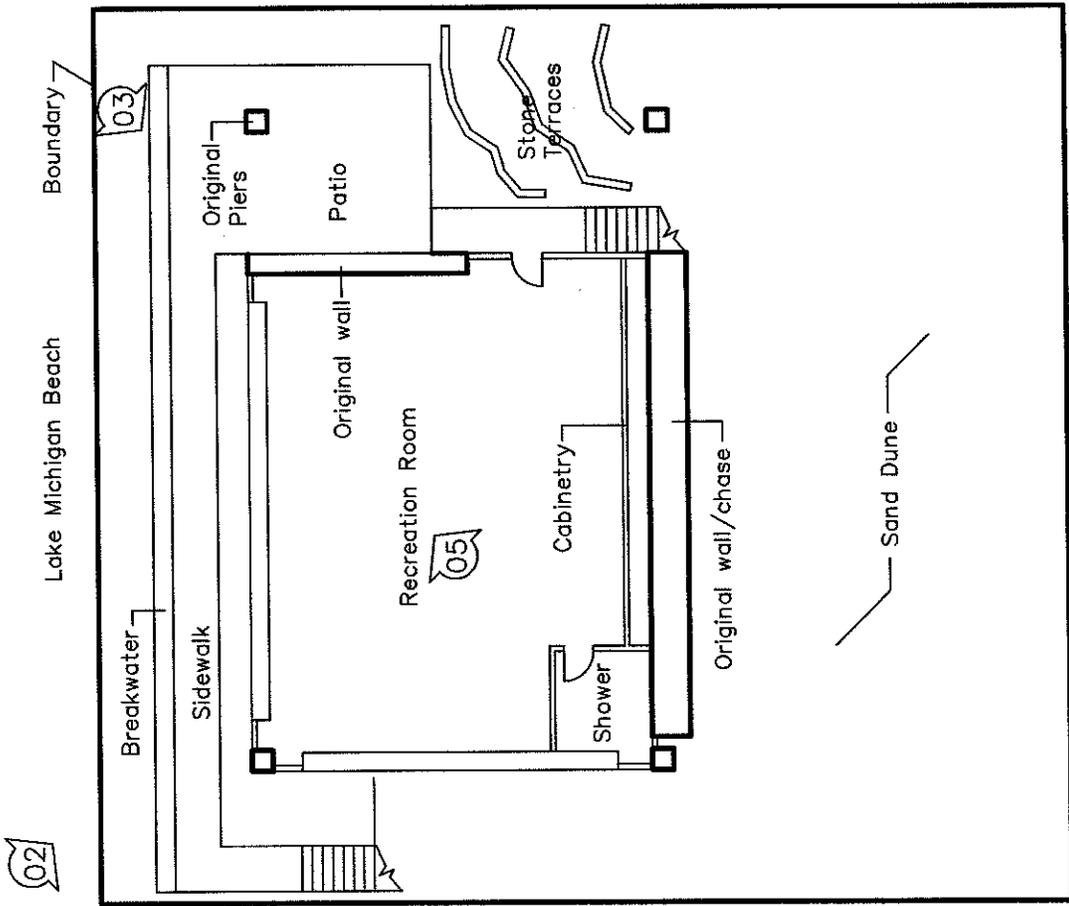
(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name James and Sandra Napolitan

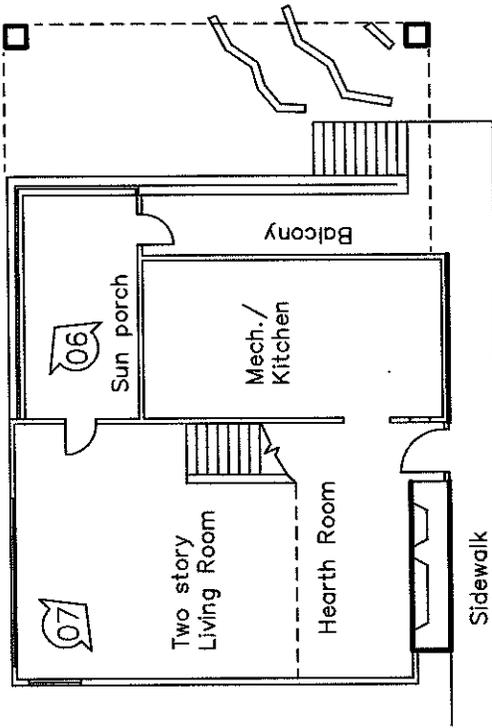
street & number 1816 N. Hudson Ave. telephone 312-943-7933

city or town Chicago state IL zip code 60614

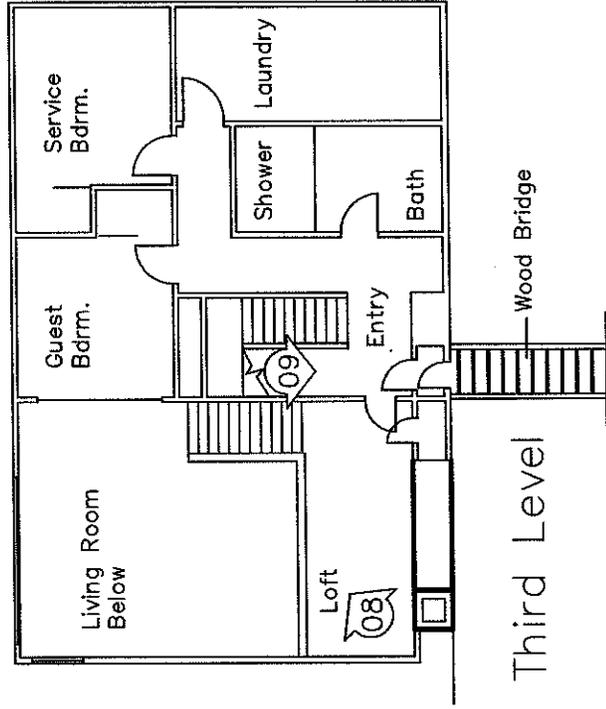
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**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



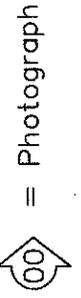
First Level



Second Level



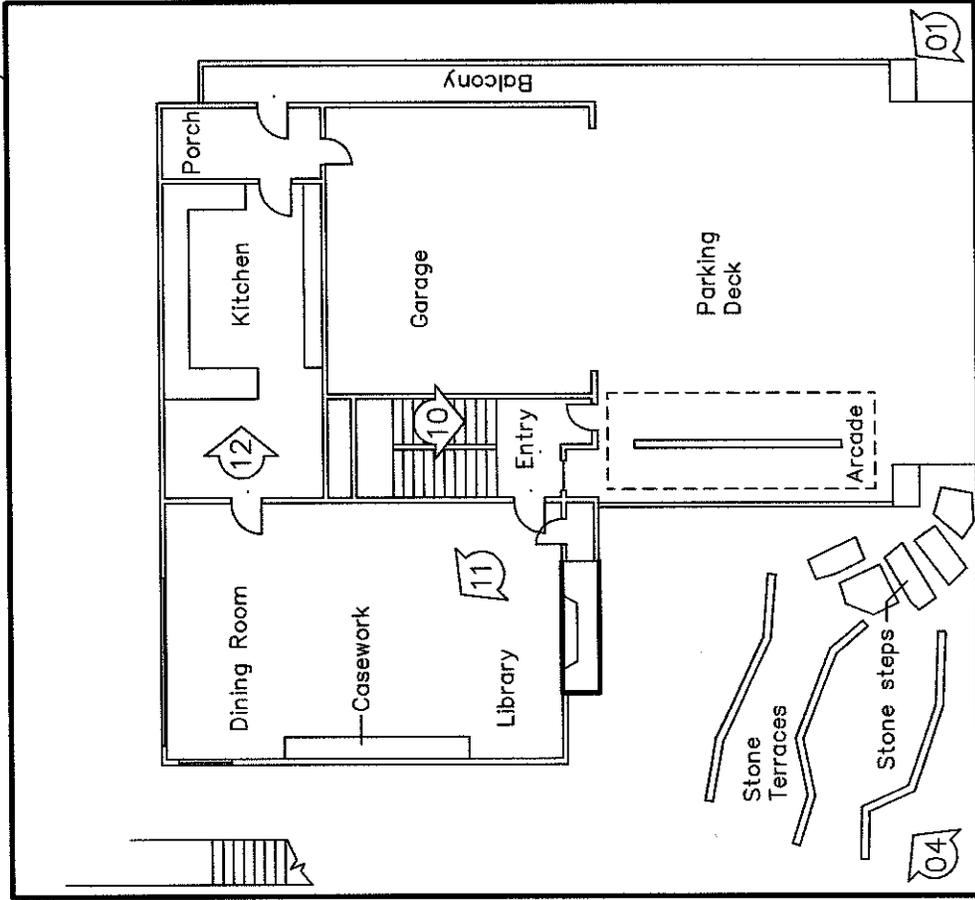
Third Level



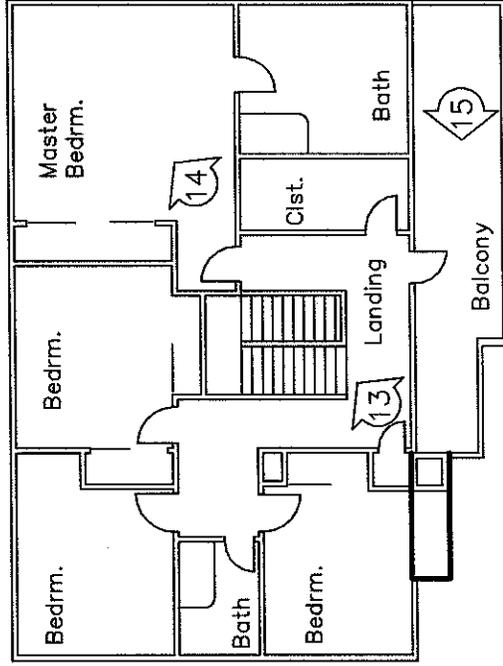
John and Isabel Burnham House  
Long Beach, LaPorte County, IN

Lake Michigan Beach

Boundary



Fourth Level



Fifth Level



John and Isabel Burnham House  
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 = Photograph



John and Isabel Burnham House, LaPorte County, IN #0002



John and Isabel Burnham House, LaPorte County, IN #0003



John and Isabel Burnham House, LaPorte County, IN #0004



John and Isabel Burnham House, LaPorte County, IN #0007



John and Isabel Burnham House, LaPorte County, IN #0008



John and Isabel Burnham House, LaPorte County, IN #0011