

March 3, 2025

NR ITEM NO.: ONE

FILE NO.: NR2025-001

NAME: Gibson & Company's Blue Star/ Horizon Home

LOCATION: 7012 Shamrock Drive

APPLICANT/AUTHORIZED AGENT:

Ralph Wilcox & Mason Toms
Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
1100 North Street,
Little Rock, AR 72201

OWNER:

Nathan W Smith
7012 Shamrock Drive
Little Rock, AR 72205



Figure 1. Gibson & Company's Blue Star/ Horizon Home.

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AREA: 0.58 acres

NUMBER OF LOTS: 1

WARD: 3

HISTORIC DISTRICT: None Adjacent

HISTORIC STATUS: DOE August 15, 2018, PU10558

CURRENT ZONING: R2, Single-Family

A. BACKGROUND

Location

The subject structure is located at 7012 Shamrock Drive.

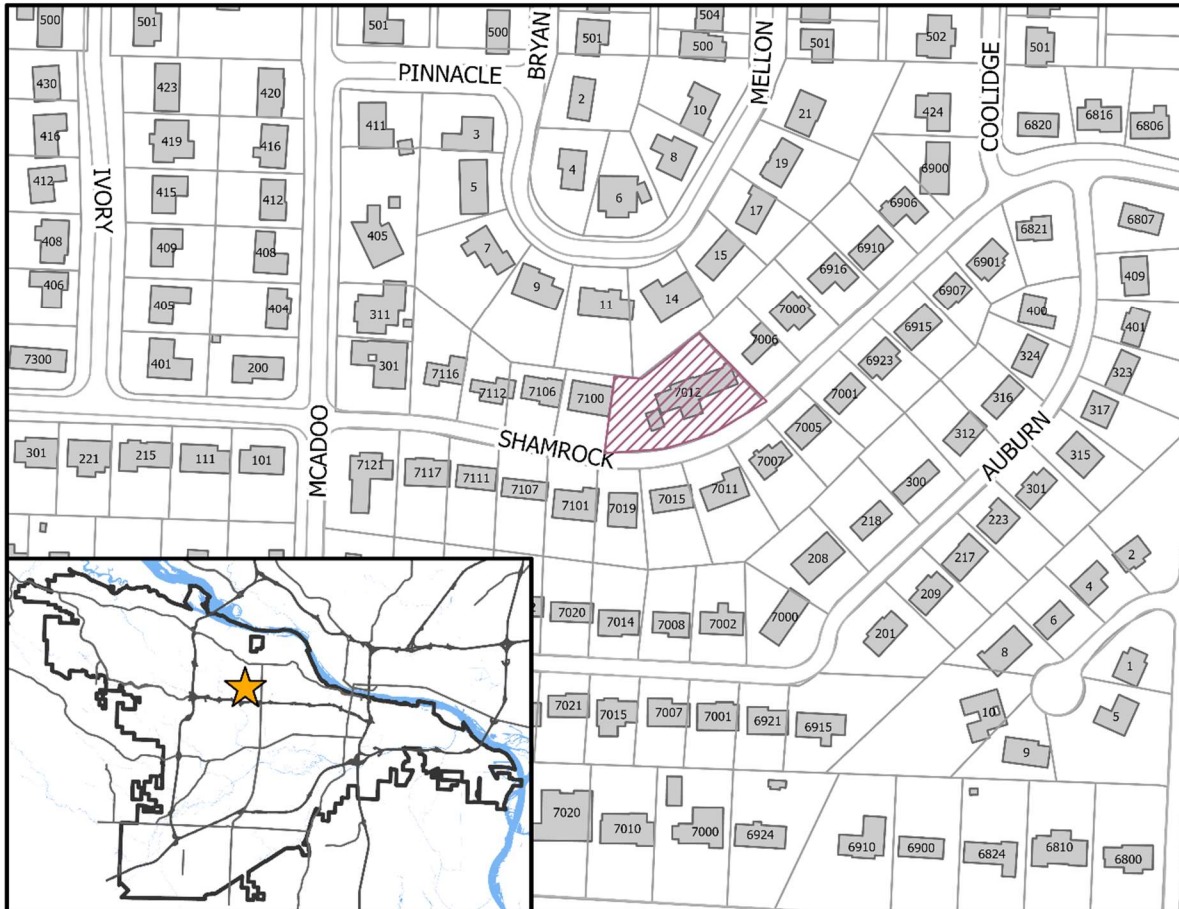


Figure 2. Location of the Gibson & Company's Blue Star/ Horizon Home at 7012 Shamrock Drive.

B. PROPOSAL/REQUEST/APPLICANT'S STATEMENT:

The application requests to nominate the Gibson & Company's Blue Star/ Horizon Home to the National Register of Historic Places for local significance under Criterion C due to its unique building methodology and use of concrete, and as an award-winning design in the Horizon Home program. The area of significance is Architecture. The period of significance is 1964. The home was designed by F. Eugene Withrow and constructed by J.L. Gibson (Gibson & Company).

C. EXISTING CONDITIONS:

See photos in Nomination (Attachment A).

D. DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:

None

E. NEIGHBORHOOD NOTIFICATIONS AND COMMENTS:

All neighborhood associations registered with the City of Little Rock that surround the site were notified of the public hearing.

At the time of distribution, there were no comments regarding this application.

F. ANALYSIS:

The Nomination's Statement of Significance summary section states:

"Built in 1964, the Gibson & Company's Blue Star/ Horizon Home is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with local significance under Criterion C: architecture/method of construction. Built as part of the Horizon Home program, which encouraged the use of concrete in construction, the Gibson & Company's Blue Star/ Horizon Home, utilized concrete in several different ways in its construction, and was a regional winner in the Horizon Home program. The Gibson & Company's Blue Star/ Horizon Home was the second Horizon Home built in Central Arkansas, with the first Horizon Home having been built in North Little Rock in 1961, and is the only Horizon Home known to have been built in Little Rock."

The Arkansas Historic Preservation Program has set forth the "Arkansas Certified Local Government Procedures." In Section V of this agreement, "Certified Local Governments Participation in the National Register Nomination Process," Little Rock Historic District Commission's role is identified:

“B. CLG involvement in the National Register process

- 1. Within 60 calendar days of receipt of the nomination, the CLG shall inform the AHPP by submission of a report (see section V-A) as to its opinion regarding the eligibility of the property. The CLG shall also inform the property owner(s) using National Register criteria for evaluation, as to its opinion regarding the eligibility of the property.*
- 2. In the event a nomination is received by the AHPP before submission to the CLG, the AHPP will forward a copy of the completed nomination to the CLG within 30 calendar days of receipt.*
- 3. If both the commission and chief elected official recommend that a property not be nominated because it does not meet the National Register criteria for eligibility, the CLG will so inform the property owner(s) and the State Historic Preservation Officer, the property will then not be nominated unless an appeal is filed with the SHPO in accordance with appeal procedures outlined in 36 CFR 60. Appeals must be received by the SHPO within 30 calendar days of the date the property owner receives notification by certified mail that the property has been determined ineligible for nomination by both the CLG and the Chief elected official. This is in accordance with Section 101(c) 2 of the NHPA.*
- 4. If the commission or the chief elected official of the CLG recommend that a property should be nominated, the nomination will be scheduled for submission to the Arkansas State Review Board. Scheduling will be in accordance with notification time constraints as set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.*
- 5. The Arkansas State Review Board, after considering all opinions, including those of the commission and the chief elected official of the CLG, shall make its recommendation to the State Historic Preservation Officer. Either the local preservation commission or the chief elected official may appeal the SHPOs final decision.*
- 6. When a National Register nomination, that has been reviewed by a commission, is submitted to the National Park Service for review and listing, all reports or comments from the local officials will be submitted along with the nomination.*

7. *The AHPP and the CLG will work together to provide ample opportunity for public participation in the nomination of properties to the National register. All reports submitted by the CLG to the AHPP regarding the eligibility of properties shall include assurances of public input. The CLG shall retain a list of all persons contacted during the evaluation period and note comments that were received. If a public meeting was held, a list of those attending shall be included in the report.”*

Staff finds the nomination meets the National Register criteria for eligibility in the National Register of Historic Places.

The nomination is scheduled to be heard at the April 2, 2025 State Review Board meeting at the Division of Arkansas Heritage headquarters at 1100 North Street in Little Rock.

G. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the nomination of the Gibson & Company’s Blue Star/ Horizon Home to the National Register of Historic Places for local significance under Criterion C and the submission of the nomination to the State Review Board.

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Attachment A

Nomination



Sarah Huckabee Sanders
Governor
Shea Lewis
Secretary

January 31, 2025

Hannah Ratzlaff, Urban Designer
City of Little Rock
723 West Markham Street
Little Rock, AR 72201

Re: Gibson & Company's Blue Star / Horizon Home - Little Rock, Pulaski County

Dear Ms. Ratzlaff:

We are pleased to inform you that the above referenced property will be considered by the State Review Board of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, an agency of the Division of Arkansas Heritage, for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register of Historic Places is the federal government's official list of historic properties worthy of the preservation. Listing in the National Register of Historic Places provides recognition and assists in preserving our nation's heritage.

Listing of this property provides recognition of the community's historic importance and assures protective review of the federal projects that might adversely affect the character of the historic property.

Listing in the National Register does not mean that limitations will be placed on the property by the federal government. Public visitation rights are not required of property owners. The federal government will not attach covenants to the property or seek to acquire it.

We have enclosed a copy of the National Register nomination for your review. If you have any comments on the proposed nomination, please submit a letter with your comments, concerns, or concurrence to the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program at least 24 hours prior to the date of the State Review Board meeting.

You are invited to attend the State Review Board meeting at which the nomination will be considered. The board will begin meeting at 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, April 2, 2025, at the Department of Arkansas Heritage headquarters at 1100 North Street in Little Rock.

If you have any questions regarding the State Review Board meeting feel free to call Ralph Wilcox, Travis Ratermann, or Megan Willmes at (501) 324-9880.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Scott Kaufman'.

Scott Kaufman
AHPP Director/SHPO

cc: Marty Ryall, DAH Director
Laura McClellan, DAH Deputy Director

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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Gibson & Company's Blue Star / Horizon Home

Other names/site number: ARKLA House, Site #PU10558

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

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

2. Location

Street & number: 7012 Shamrock Drive

City or town: Little Rock State: Arkansas County: Pulaski

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this 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

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A ___ B X C ___ D

<p>_____ Signature of certifying official/Title: <u>Arkansas Historic Preservation Program</u> State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>	<p>_____ Date</p>
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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

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

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Structure

Object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing

Noncontributing

1

1

buildings

sites

1

1

structures

objects

2

2

Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

LANDSCAPE/street furniture/object

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

LANDSCAPE/street furniture/object

DOMESTIC/secondary structure

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT/Wrightian

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: GLASS. CONCRETE. ASPHALT

Narrative Description

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

Summary Paragraph

The Gibson & Company's Blue Star / Horizon Home is located at 7012 Shamrock Drive in the Shannon Hills East Subdivision of Little Rock, and it was built in 1964. Located approximately 4.5 miles west of downtown Little Rock, the Shannon Hills East Subdivision is one of several neighborhoods that were developed west of University Avenue during the 1950s and 1960s. The Gibson & Company's Blue Star / Horizon Home is built on three lots in the subdivision, and it's located on a prominent site in the neighborhood that is above the street level and overlooks the neighborhood to the south. The house is Wrightian in its design and presents a long, low profile. It is built on a cast-concrete foundation and has concrete floors, reflecting the nature of the Horizon Home program, and is fenestrated with continuous bands of windows on the front and rear façades. The walls are comprised of a mixture of brick¹ and cast-concrete panels, and the front-facing gable section of the house is dominated by a cast-concrete balcony and large, floor-to-ceiling windows. The house is topped with a low side-facing gable-on-hip roof with a cross gable that is covered in asphalt shingles. A concrete circle drive with concrete steps on its west-facing slope provides access to the house.

¹ Although the description of the house refers to the construction material as brick, they are actually concrete blocks that were made to look like brick. This helped the house qualify for the Horizon Home program given the requirements for the amount of concrete used in a house's construction that the program had.

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Narrative Description

The Gibson & Company's Blue Star / Horizon Home is located at 7012 Shamrock Drive in the Shannon Hills East Subdivision of Little Rock, and it was built in 1964. Located approximately 4.5 miles west of downtown Little Rock, the Shannon Hills East Subdivision is one of several neighborhoods that were developed west of University Avenue during the 1950s and 1960s. The plat for the lots on Shamrock was completed in June 1959 and the final approval of the plat was granted in late July 1959. The Gibson & Company's Blue Star / Horizon Home is built on three lots, Lots 25-27, in the subdivision, and it's located on a prominent site in the neighborhood that is above the street level and overlooks the neighborhood to the south.

The house is Wrightian in its design and presents a long, low profile as it spreads out across the three lots. As a Horizon Home, concrete was used extensively in its design and construction.

The house is built on a cast-concrete foundation and has concrete floors, reflecting the nature of the Horizon Home program. In addition, the walls are constructed out of precast-concrete panels and brick that Withrow refers to as "cast concrete brick" on the house's plans. The house is fenestrated with continuous bands of large windows on the front façade and with bands of mainly smaller windows on the rear façade. The front-facing gable section of the front of the house is dominated by a cast-concrete balcony and large, floor-to-ceiling windows and sliding glass doors. The house is topped with a low cross-gable roof that is covered in asphalt shingles. A concrete circle drive with concrete steps on its west-facing slope provides access to the house.

MAIN HOUSE – Contributing

Front/Southeast Façade – (PHOTOS #6-8 and 10-13)

The southeast side of the house is divided into three parts – the west and east parts of the façade, which have side-facing gable on hip roofs, and the projecting center section of the façade with a front-facing gable roof. The western part of the façade on the main level is fenestrated by a band of eight single-pane windows with cast-concrete panels below them. The concrete panels are separated by wood battens. The roof has wide eaves with a dentil detail all around the house that provides shade to the windows. At the west end of the band of windows is a narrow window that is butt-jointed to the west facing window around the corner. There is also a recessed blank brick wall at the west end of the façade. The lower level of the western part of the façade is fenestrated at the east end by a row of three, single-pane, plate-glass windows. To the left of the windows are three full-size panels followed by a narrow panel. The panels are separated by wood battens. To the north of that is a recessed area which has an entrance to the lower level.

To the west of the lower level of this part of the façade is a carport that is supported by brick columns at the northwest, southwest, and southeast corners. The northeast corner is supported by the cast-concrete retaining walls. The carport has a flat roof with beveled eaves with a dentil detail that matches the eaves on the rest of the house.

The central part of the façade is essentially symmetrical in its composition. At the east and west ends of the section are brick masses – the western one houses the fireplace and chimney while the eastern one houses the stairwell. The upper level of the central section of the façade has a sliding glass door in the center with single-pane sidelights on either side. The sidelights and the

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sliding glass door also have transom windows that follow the house's roofline. To the east and west of the sidelights are brick columns that support the roof beams. Proceeding outward on this part of the façade, on each side there are two large, plate-glass windows with transom panels above. The outer windows and transom panels are butt-jointed to the windows on the sides of the projection. The projecting part of the façade is also surrounded by a cast-concrete balcony.

The lower level of this part of the façade is recessed back to the two brick masses on either side of this part of the façade. The upper story's brick columns are free-standing pillars on the lower level. The main entrance to the house is located on the lower level here, and it contains a wood-framed door with a plate-glass window on the right side. On the left side is a single-pane, stationary window. The entrance is approached by a single concrete step.

The eastern part of the façade on the main level is fenestrated by a band of seventeen single-pane windows with cast-concrete panels below them. The concrete panels are separated by wood battens. The roof has wide eaves with a dentil detail all around the house that provides shade to the windows. At the east end of the band of windows is a narrow window that is butt-jointed to the east facing window around the corner. There is also a recessed blank brick wall at the west end of the façade.

Side/Northeast Façade – (PHOTO #14)

At the south end of the northeast façade is a single, stationary window that is recessed from the main plane of the façade. Below the window is a single cast-concrete panel. The central part of the façade is devoid of fenestration and is constructed out of brick. The northern part of this section of the façade also has a single-pane stationary window, although this one is a floor-to-ceiling window.

The northeast side of the living room projection is fenestrated by a band of five, single-pane, stationary, floor-to-ceiling windows. The façade also has the solid concrete wall of the balcony, which is followed by the northeast side of the house's brick mass.

At the rear of the house, the northeast side of the main bedroom's wing is a solid brick wall devoid of fenestration.

Rear/Northwest Façade – (PHOTOS #15-22)

Like the front façade, the rear façade is divided into three sections. Beginning at the eastern end of the house, the eastern section of the façade is the rear façade of the house's bedroom wing. At the eastern end, the façade is fenestrated by a band of four, stationary, single-pane, floor-to-ceiling windows, which are followed by a sliding-glass door. Proceeding east along the façade, there are nine bays of cast-concrete panels with single-pane windows at the upper edge of the façade under the roof's eave. At the eastern end of the façade is a pair of solid wood doors.

The central section of the rear façade encompasses the master bedroom area of the house. It has a front-facing gable. This part of the façade is symmetrical in its composition. At the center of the façade is a single, stationary, floor-to-ceiling window, and it is flanked on each side by a sliding-glass door. Proceeding out along this section of the façade, there are three stationary,

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single-pane, floor-to-ceiling windows. Transom windows that are shaped to fit under the roofline are above each sliding-glass door or window. Two brick columns are located in front of this part of the façade to support the projecting roof.

The western section of the façade encompasses the kitchen area of the house. At the eastern end is a single bay with a wood panel that projects out from the façade. This bay was originally a door, but was enclosed and expanded to accommodate a larger refrigerator. Proceeding west there is a small area of brick that is followed by five panels. The second and third panels are now wood, and a single-pane, square window is located at the divider of the second and third panels. The other panels are still the original cast-concrete. At the west end of the façade is a small area of brick.

Side/Southwest Façade – (PHOTO #23)

On the south side of the house is the projecting dining room, and on the west side it is fenestrated by five, single-pane, plate-glass windows. The northernmost of the windows is narrower than the other four. This part of the façade is also spanned by the cast-concrete balcony. To the north of the balcony is the west side of the chimney mass.

The southwest façade of the main part of the house is divided into two main bays. The southern bay, which projects from the other one is comprised of a blank brick wall. The northern bay, which is recessed has an entrance with a solid wood door on the south end with a single-pane window immediately to its left. The rest of the bay is comprised of a blank brick wall.

At the rear of the house, the cross-gable part of the house projects to the north from the main plane of the façade. The southwest façade of this part of the house consists of a brick wall that is devoid of fenestration.

Interior – (PHOTOS #25-40, and Figures 16-18)

The house is built on two levels although the lower level is much smaller in area than the main upper level. Originally, the lower level only consisted of the entrance, which has built-in planters, and a small mechanical room with an open carport to the west. Today, the original spaces are still in place, but the original carport has been enclosed and turned into living space. However, it was done early, since the bathroom fixtures in the new bathroom match the original bathroom fixtures in the rest of the house. The floor in the entrance is white terrazzo and the walls and ceilings are sheetrock.

A floating metal staircase with decorative metal and wood railing and terrazzo treads connects the lower level with the upper level. The central section of the upper floor consists of the living room in the front of the house, the dining room in the center, and the master bedroom in the rear. The living room projects out from the rest of the house and is surrounded by floor-to-ceiling windows and sliding-glass doors and the balcony. The room, along with the dining room and family room, has terrazzo floors and the living room, along with the dining room to the north, also has a vaulted ceiling supported by two wood beams. The dining room also has a two-sided fireplace in the southwest corner that is shared with the family room. The family room is open to the kitchen and its walls are a mixture of sheetrock and brick. The ceilings are also sheetrock.

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The kitchen is a galley style kitchen, and it still retains its original cabinets and some of the original appliances. The walls are a mixture of sheetrock and brick and the ceiling is sheetrock. The floor in the kitchen is terrazzo and matches the other terrazzo floors in the house.

The bedroom spaces in the house are mainly located in the east wing of the house, although the master bedroom is located in the rear of the house's central section. The floors are currently surfaced in cork tiles, which was put in by the current owner, and the walls are a mixture of exposed brick and sheetrock. The ceilings, which are vaulted, are also sheetrock. The finishes in the gallery, which runs along the rear of the house in the bedroom wing, matches the finishes in the bedroom. The bathrooms in the bedroom wing also still retain many of the original fixtures and the original tile.

DECK/HOT TUB STRUCTURE – Non-Contributing – (PHOTO #41)

The Deck/Hot Tub Structure is a T-shaped structure that was built by the previous owner. The top of the "T" is unsheltered, and the leg of the "T" is where the hot tub is located. It's also sheltered by an Asian-inspired gable roof that is supported by eight wood columns. The west end of the "T" is walled in loose-fitting horizontal boards. A railing that is constructed of wood spindles and a flat board on top surrounds the entire deck. Since the Deck/Hot Tub Structure is not original to the house and does not reflect the property's concrete construction, it is considered to be non-contributing.

STORAGE SHED – Non-Contributing – (PHOTO #42)

The storage shed is a small one-story frame shed with a gambrel roof. It's date of construction is unknown, but it appears to be recent in its construction. It is built on concrete-block piers. The shed is sided in processed wood board, and has no fenestration. A pair of doors with a crossbuck design are located on the southeast façade. The other sides are devoid of fenestration. Since the Storage Shed is not original to the house and does not reflect the property's concrete construction, it is considered to be non-contributing.

RETAINING WALL/DRIVEWAY – Contributing – (PHOTOS #1, 5, and 9)

The circle driveway is located in front of the house and is constructed of slabs of heavy-aggregate concrete. Cast-concrete steps are located on the south side of the west end of the driveway and lead from the street to the top of the driveway's hill. The driveway and hillside are bordered on the south by a brick retaining wall. The retaining wall and driveway were built at the same time as the house, and employ concrete construction, so they are considered to be contributing.

Setting

The Gibson & Company's Blue Star / Horizon Home is located in the Shannon Hills East Subdivision in what is today Mid-Town Little Rock. However, when the neighborhood was platted in the late 1950s, it was near the far western edge of the city. Like many subdivisions of the mid-century period, it consists of curvilinear streets, although some of the streets to the north of the house do approximate a grid pattern. The area around the house is exclusively residential with the closest commercial development located approximately ½ mile to the east along

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Markham Street and University Avenue. The houses in the area are located on relatively generous wooded lots and date to the 1950s and 1960s. Ranch and Split-level designs are common in the area.

The immediate setting around the Gibson & Company's Blue Star / Horizon Home is largely wooded. Several large trees are located in front of the house. The hillside down to the street is covered in ground cover. Foundation plantings are located along the front of the house and some grass is located between the house and the driveway. Trees and ground cover are also located to the east and west of the house and a large deck is also located to the west of the house. The hillside behind the house, due to its steepness, also has ground cover and trees.

Integrity

The Gibson & Company's Blue Star / Horizon Home retains excellent integrity from the time that it was built in 1964. With respect to the house's location, it remains in the same location where it was built. The house has had some changes to its design, with the largest changes encompassing the enclosure of the original carport to provide additional living space and the removal of the wall between bedrooms #2 and #3 in order to create a larger bedroom. The previous owner had also added a large greenhouse to the rear and northeast side of the house (see Figures #12-15). However, the current owner has removed the greenhouse to restore the original rear and northeast façades. Other changes to the design have been cosmetic in nature, such as replacing floor materials in the bedrooms and limited replacement of fixtures in the bathrooms and kitchen.

The setting around the Gibson & Company's Blue Star / Horizon Home still reflects the house's setting when it was built. The Shannon Hills Subdivision has always been residential in nature, with houses located on wooded lots along curvilinear streets that follow the neighborhood's topography. That remains the current setting of the house today, with the house being surrounded by residential properties that were built during the same period as the Gibson & Company's Blue Star / Horizon Home.

For the most part, the Gibson & Company's Blue Star / Horizon Home still retains its original materials. Although a few of the house's cast-concrete panels have been replaced with wood, it has been limited to the rear of the house in the vicinity of the kitchen. The house still retains the majority of its concrete construction, and replacement of materials has mainly been limited to the interior cosmetic finishes. As a result, the house is still very much able to convey its 1960s workmanship and the feeling both inside and outside the house of its 1960s aesthetic is still very prevalent. As a result, it is also still able to convey its association with the period of its construction and the characteristics that were important to the Horizon Homes program.

Even though the Gibson & Company's Blue Star / Horizon Home has had some changes to it since it was built in 1964, the changes do not detrimentally affect its historic integrity, and the property is still easily able to convey those properties that make it significant.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

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

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1964

Significant Dates

1964

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

F. Eugene Withrow, Architect

J. L. Gibson (Gibson & Company), Builder

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

Built in 1964, the Gibson & Company's Blue Star / Horizon Home is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion C: architecture/method of construction**. Built as part of the Horizon Home program, which encouraged the use of concrete in construction, the Gibson & Company's Blue Star / Horizon Home, utilized concrete in several different ways in its construction, and was a regional winner in the Horizon Home program. The Gibson & Company's Blue Star / Horizon Home was the second Horizon Home built in Central Arkansas, with the first Horizon Home having been built in North Little Rock in 1961, and is the only Horizon Home known to have been built in Little Rock.

The Gibson & Company's Blue Star / Horizon Home was designed by Little Rock architect Frank Eugene Withrow, and the design that he created is an excellent example of Wrightian architecture in Little Rock. According to Marcus Whiffen's book, *American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles*, characteristics of Wrightian architecture include:

A prevailing horizontality is one characteristic of nearly all of it; another is the importance given to the roof as a character-giving feature, whether it is a flat slab or of some pitched or "folded" form. In many designs the plan form is echoed in the elevations and also in any ornament there may be; a building with a plan based on the hexagonal figure will have diagonal glazing bars and a sloping roof ridge, for example, and a circular building a series of segmental arches. Battered walls are much employed; balcony parapets are often inclined outward; piers frequently taper downward. Wood siding is most often horizontal, reinforcing the horizontality of the building as a whole; stone walling may imitate the natural stratification of the rock to the same effect. Concrete is either finished smooth or plastered and painted; in the Southwest and West "desert concrete," consisting of natural boulders held together by a great quantity of cement, is much employed. When two structural materials are used together, their textures are often strongly contrasted.²

The Gibson & Company's Blue Star / Horizon Home reflects the characteristics of Wrightian design in its horizontality, the character-defining features of the roof and its eaves, the plastered appearance of the house's concrete panels, and the contrasting textures in the home's materials, even though most of the material is concrete.

² Whiffen, Marcus. *American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1996, pp. 267-268.

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The period of significance for the Gibson & Company's Blue Star / Horizon Home is 1964, which encompasses the construction of the house.

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

HISTORY OF THE PROPERTY

European settlement in the Little Rock area began shortly after the turn of the nineteenth century. Although surveying land and offering it for sale did not begin until 1815, a few settlers were in the area prior to then. Edmund Hogan, for example, who was originally from Georgia and came to Arkansas via Missouri, was living on the north bank of the Arkansas River opposite Little Rock where he operated a ferry by 1812. Another distinguished early settler was Wright Daniel who settled at the base of Big Rock Mountain prior to 1814 and opened a gristmill in 1815. When the Arkansas Territory was created in 1819, the state's first capital was at Arkansas Post. However, it was not the best location since it often flooded and was far away from the majority of the territory's population. In 1820, a new centrally-located site for the capital was chosen on the south bank of the Arkansas River at the Little Rock.³

Initial settlement and development in Little Rock was focused on the river. The original plat of Little Rock consisted of 88 square blocks stretching south from the river to what is now Eleventh Street. By the 1860s, however, the city began to expand beyond the original plat, notably with the platting of the Woodruff's and Masonic additions on the city's east side, the Wright's Addition on the south side, and the Capitol Hill Addition on the west side. Apparently, building sites on the city's west side were popular. An announcement in the November 21, 1872, issue of the *Arkansas Gazette* stated that "This property consists of twenty-seven full and fractional blocks, overlooking the Cairo and Fulton railroad as it leaves the city. ... This is a fine property, and from its geographical position, will soon become a portion of the city. Upward of one hundred lots in the addition have already been disposed of, and are at this time being improved."⁴

As Little Rock continued to grow throughout the twentieth century, the city did the majority of its growth to the west, and by the 1950s development began to really take off west of University Avenue, one of the city's major north-south streets. Among the neighborhoods that were platted in the area beginning in the 1950s was the Shannon Hills East Subdivision, which was platted in 1959 and consisted of 101 lots on Pinnacle Point, Pinnacle Drive, Shamrock Drive, Auburn Drive, Amherst Drive, and Amherst Cove. The neighborhood's street plan consisted of curvilinear streets that followed the area's topography along with one cul-de-sac, Amherst Cove, which was located at the far southeastern corner of the development. The development's highest point was located along Pinnacle Point near the northwest corner of the development and the topography sloped to the south and southeast from there.⁵ Three lots along Shamrock Drive, Lots 25-27, which had a dramatic slope and were located on the inside of a curve giving them a

³ Roy, F. Hampton, Sr., and Charles Witsell, Jr., with Cheryl Griffith Nichols. *How We Lived: Little Rock as an American City*. Little Rock: August House, 1984, pp. 12-14.

⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 19, 104.

⁵ Plat Information for the Shannon Hills East Addition to the City of Little Rock. Found at: <https://www.pagis.org/WebDocuments/ScannedPlats/917.PDF>.

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dramatic presence were ultimately chosen for the construction of Gibson & Company's Blue Star / Horizon Home.

The Horizon Homes for Better Living Competition was created as a joint partnership between the National Concrete Masonry Association, the National Ready-Mixed Concrete Association, and Portland Cement Association. It also had the American Institute of Architects and the National Association of Home Builders as cooperating organizations.⁶ The program ran from 1961 until 1965 with the goal of promoting the versatility and livability of concrete residential construction. Announcement of the competition appeared in the January 1961 issues of *Architectural Record*,⁷ *Progressive Architecture*,⁸ and the *Journal of American Institute of Architects*.⁹ The requirements for an entry were pretty simple, with only five criteria for entry. First, it had to be a single-family house, though this changed in the last year of the program. Second, the house had to be at least fifty-one percent concrete or concrete product, which was no small task when considering that the other forty-nine percent included the roof, windows, and doors. Third, the builder had to be a member of the local Home Builders Association and the designer had to be a licensed architect and member of the American Institute of Architects. The fourth requirement was that the house either had to be exhibited for at least ten days or be entered into the local "Parade of Homes." Lastly, the program required that the construction cost of the model homes be no more than \$25,000.¹⁰ The program divided the country into six regions, Western, South Central, Southeastern, Rocky Mountain, Midwestern, and Eastern. Each year winners were selected regionally in the categories of design and marketing. From those regional winners, a best overall project was selected. The submissions were evaluated for design by a panel of architects from the American Institute of Architects and for product marketing by the Portland Cement Association. Then representatives from both groups would select the best overall project.¹¹

In 1963, the Portland Cement Association took the winning projects from the first two years of the program and selected fifteen that were deemed the best of the best. These fifteen designs were displayed with photographs and basic plans in a glossy paged book that the Portland Cement Association published entitled *Horizon Homes for Better Living*.¹² Interestingly, the program ran for another three years, but it does not appear that any other books were ever published to show later works. In fact, the Portland Cement Association has no other records of the program beyond this one book. Nor does the American Institute of Architects have any records of the program. Despite this lack of information from sponsoring and cooperating parties, newspaper archives tell us that participation in the program came from all over the

⁶ "Cement Homes Program Planned in New Mexico." *The Albuquerque Tribune*, Albuquerque, New Mexico. 9 January 1961, Pg. C-4.

⁷ "Concrete Industries Horizon Homes Program." *Architectural Record*, January 1961, Pg. 208-209.

⁸ "Concrete Industries Horizon Homes Program." *Progressive Architecture*, January 1961, Pg. 16-17.

⁹ "Concrete Industries Horizon Homes Program." *The Journal of the American Institute of Architects*, Vol. XXXV, No. 1, January 1961, Pg. 88-89.

¹⁰ "Builders to Have Contest." *Arkansas Democrat*, Little Rock, Arkansas. 19 April 1962, Pg. 19.

¹¹ "1963 Award Winners, Concrete Industries Horizon Home Program." *Architectural Record*, December 1963, Pgs. 194-195.

¹² Portland Cement Association. *Horizon Home for Better Living*. Chicago, Illinois: Portland Cement Association, 1963.

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country, from New Jersey¹³ to Hawaii.¹⁴ Additionally, the program received a relatively high level of participation. In 1961, alone, there were at least 130 entries in the program.¹⁵ However, despite the program expanding to Canada, participation in the program had significantly dropped by 1965, with only sixty designs constructed as part of the program.¹⁶ This led to the program not being continued in 1966.

The decline in national participation was likely influenced by the visibility of the competition in architectural publications, despite the commencement of the competition being published in at least three major periodicals. Following this, both *Progressive Architecture* and *Architectural Record* continued to publish materials related to the competition throughout 1961 and 1962, while the *Journal of the American Institute of Architects* only did the initial announcement. *Architectural Record* had the most extensive coverage of the program, regularly publishing materials related to it into 1965. However, *Progressive Architecture* stopped publishing material on the Horizon Home Program after 1962, with the exception of brief mentioning of the top competition winner for 1964 in a 1965 issue.

The ultimate goal of the Horizon Home program was to “show how a house could be built inexpensively with concrete, as well as to promote creative new ways to use the product.” The Horizon Homes program resulted in the construction of approximately 150 homes across the country, although the program didn’t result in the use of concrete for home construction as much as had been hoped. According to author Ted Wells, “concrete homes did not really take off to the degree anticipated. The houses were too different, and most lenders didn’t want to finance anything modern.”¹⁷ With the decline in attention from national architectural publications, the competition became less appealing to larger firms. In the later years of the competition, all of the media attention for the program was local, rarely making an appearance in media outside of the city where the house was constructed. All of this combined was likely the single largest influence of the reason the program was ultimately terminated.

In Arkansas, there were only three known houses constructed as part of the Horizon Homes program. The first of these was constructed in North Little Rock developer John Toland to help promote his new residential development, called Arrowhead Manor (See Figures 6-8). It was designed by local architect Richard W. Groh, A.I.A., and it was completed in 1961.¹⁸ This house, located at 1901 Arrowhead Road, represented a variation of the popular Ranch Style design, with a shallow hipped roof and minimal detailing. As Toland was a pioneer in concrete block residential construction,¹⁹ the house was, understandably, constructed primarily of

¹³ “Jersey to Get Horizon Homes.” *The Record*, Hackensack, New Jersey. 4 March 1961, Pg. 13.

¹⁴ “Foster Village Site Chosen for Model Concrete Home.” *Star-Bulletin*, Honolulu, Hawaii. 5 February 1961, Pg. 2.

¹⁵ “Knox Parade of Home All-Concrete House in National Builders’ Contest.” *Grainger County News*, Rutledge, Tennessee. 13 July 1961, Pg. 4.

¹⁶ “Granger Builder Wins Trips Around World.” *The Magna Times*, Magna, Utah. 9 December 1965, 1.

¹⁷ Thornburg, Barbara. “Recasting Concrete.” *Orlando Sentinel*, date unknown. Found at: https://digitaledition.orlandosentinel.com/tribune/article_popover.aspx?guid=dd01785e-05f9-4b83-9937-47fad584a9f8.

¹⁸ “John D. Toland Presents Horizon Home No. 17.” *Arkansas Democrat*, Little Rock, Arkansas. 24 September 1961. Pg. 107.

¹⁹ “Concrete Block House.” *Journal of Housing*. Vol. 17, No. 2, February 1960. Pg. 73.

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reinforced, insulated concrete block walls. The house also featured decorative concrete breezeblock and an open carport. In order to better promote the house, Toland had his Horizon home included in the 1961 North Little Rock Parade of Homes.²⁰ While Toland's efforts garnered a plethora of local attention in the press, there is no known evidence that Groh's design garnered any attention from national sources, including the judges of the Horizon Homes competition.

In preparation for the second annual Horizon Homes contest in early 1962, the *Arkansas Democrat* reported:

Arkansas homebuilder-architect teams are being sought to enter the American concrete industries' second annual Horizon Homes contest.

John D. Toland, North Little Rock builder, and Richard W. Groh, Little Rock architect, produced the state's first Horizon Home in 1961 and are receiving nationwide publicity on the concrete masonry dwelling which is located at Arrowhead Drive and Lynn Lane, North Little Rock.

Only builders who are members in good standing of the National Association of Home Builders may enter. Architects must be members of the American Institute of Architects or associated with AIA firms.

The contest homes, which must be exhibited for at least 10 days or entered in parades of homes during 1962, must have exteriors of at least 51 per cent in concrete or concrete products.

The 1962 contest requires that cost of the model home be kept at \$25,000 or below, exclusive of lot, appliances, carpets, etc.

Allen R. Henson, Little Rock structural engineer in Arkansas for the Portland Cement Association, one of the program sponsors, may be contacted for details of entry and construction.

Other cosponsors of the competition are the National Ready Mixed Concrete Association, National Concrete Masonry Association, Asbestos Cement Products Association and Prestressed Concrete Institute.

Both the builder and the architect will compete for trips for two anywhere in the world. Seven regional prizes also are offered.²¹

Although the Horizon Home in North Little Rock was not an award winner, Arkansas received its first award-winning Horizon Home in 1963. The *Arkansas Gazette* reported that "The [Horizon Home] program was started in 1961 and Arkansas has had one regional winner. Robert

²⁰ "Contest Design Has Unified Theme." *Arkansas Gazette*, Little Rock, Arkansas. 24 September 1961, Pg. 18F.

²¹ "Builders To Have Contest." *Arkansas Democrat*, 19 April 1962, p. 19.

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Wanslow of Fort Smith won a \$500 regional award last fall for the design of his own home."²²
Wanslow's house, located at 2815 South Q Street in Fort Smith, was listed on the National Register on January 26, 2018 (See Figure 9).

The third and last known Horizon Home constructed in Arkansas was Gibson & Company's. As previously noted, it was completed in 1964 and designed by Eugene F. Withrow. Withrow's design perched a sprawling residence atop exposed aggregate concrete retaining walls. The house, itself, is clad in split concrete block, meant to resemble large Roman bricks, and smooth concrete panels. The house was topped with a shallow, cross-gabled roof. A monumental chimney, constructed of the same brick as the cladding, sits at intersection of the cross gables. Unlike the North Little Rock Horizon Home, Withrow's design makes a definite architectural statement. The long, horizontal lines and wrapping ribbons of glass give the residence a distinct appearance of Frank Lloyd Wright-inspired Organic architecture. The quality of the design set it apart from the other entries in Arkansas's region for the Horizon Home Program. As such, it was awarded the South-Central Regional Design Award for 1964.²³

The date for the start of construction of the Gibson & Company Blue Star / Horizon Home is not known but it would have been either late in 1963 or early in 1964, and it was completed by June 1964, when it was opened to the public. The home was open only to invited guests beginning on Friday, June 5, 1964, and then opened to the general public for tours on Sunday, June 7, 1964. Since the home was the first Horizon Home built in Little Rock, the opening of the home was covered extensively by the *Arkansas Gazette* and the *Arkansas Democrat*. For example, an article in the *Arkansas Gazette* on June 6, 1964, reported:

The first Arkansas entry in the Blue Star-Horizon Home contest will be open Sunday for public inspection. Invited groups toured the house Friday and others will see it today.

The house at 7012 Shamrock Drive was built by J. L. Gibson and designed by F. Eugene Withrow. The Portland Cement Association, the National Ready Mix Concrete Association, National Concrete Masonry [sic.] Association, Asbestos Cement Products Association and the Prestressed Concrete Institute sponsor the competition each year as part of a program to develop new uses for concrete in home construction.

The Gibson entry features pink concrete split block exterior and slab-on-grade and suspended concrete floors and has several concrete "extras" which conform to the requirements of the contest. The builder also qualified for the Blue Star Award by meeting the specifications of the American Gas Association. The Arkansas Louisiana Gas Company supervised the installation of gas appliances and air conditioning.

²² "Showing Set Sunday For Blue Star Home." *Arkansas Gazette*, 6 June 1964, p. 15.

²³ "Gibson Co. Cops Award For Home." *Arkansas Democrat*, Little Rock, Arkansas. 15 November 1964, Pg. 3D.

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The builder-architect-utility team will compete regionally with similar combines in Arkansas, Louisiana and Texas and the winner in this region will enter the finals with six other regional winners. The winner will receive a free trip for two "anywhere in the world. ..."²⁴

Another article in the June 7, 1964, *Arkansas Democrat* gave an extensive description of the home and its layout and furnishings, and included photographs of one of the bedrooms and the home's exterior (See Figure 5). Additionally, the article noted that "The public will get its initial look today at Arkansas' first Horizon Home, which its creators hope will inaugurate a new era in home design. It is described as an all-concrete structure. Mayor Byron Morse will snip the ribbon at the Horizon Home at 7012 Shamrock Drive at 2 p.m. Hours of the week-long open house will be 2 - 8 p.m. today, 5 - 8 p.m. Monday - Friday and 2 - 8 p.m. next weekend."²⁵

Advertisements for the home, which included a rendering of the building, ran in the newspaper throughout the period that it was open to the public, and they touted the cutting-edge design of the house (see Figures 3-4). The advertisements noted:

There's a whole houseful of new ideas in every Horizon Home! Each is designed to make the most of modern concrete's versatile and gracious livability. Each is designed to show the important part played by concrete for important structural elements, as well as intriguing decorative effects.

Here you'll see concrete in its newest forms. Modern colors...interesting textures...new shapes that offer home builders a freedom of expression never before known.

Inside the house and outdoors, too, modern concrete makes home owning more fun. There's less work and upkeep expense. Durable concrete is so easy to care for.

See this Horizon Home today!²⁶

Advertisements for the house also touted all of the gas appliances that were used in the house, including "all-year air conditioning, range-oven, gas dryer, gas water heater, Gasgrill barbecue cooker and Gaslites [that] were chosen especially for this home."²⁷ Visitors to the home could also enter for a door prize, and Mrs. John D. Van Hook of 227 North Mississippi was "the lucky winner of a Norge Gas Dryer presented as a door prize during [the] open house, June 5 through 14, at the Blue Star / Horizon Home."²⁸

²⁴ "Showing Set Sunday For Blue Star Home." *Arkansas Gazette*, 6 June 1964, p. 15.

²⁵ "'Horizon Home' Scheduled To Open to Visitors Today." *Arkansas Democrat*, 7 June 1964, p. 8. Although the article incorrectly notes that the house was the first Horizon Home in Arkansas, the house was the first Horizon Home in Little Rock.

²⁶ Advertisements for the Gibson & Company's Blue Star / Horizon Home. *Arkansas Gazette*, 14 June 1964.

²⁷ Advertisements for the Gibson & Company's Blue Star / Horizon Home. *Arkansas Gazette*, 14 June 1964. Gaslites were low lights placed along the side of the sidewalk/driveway (see Figure #11).

²⁸ Advertisement for the Gibson & Company's Blue Star / Horizon Home. *Arkansas Democrat*, 17 June 1964.

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The primary sponsor of Gibson & Co.'s Horizon Home was the Arkansas & Louisiana Gas Company, better known as Ark-La Gas Co. As such, the Horizon Home Program was not the only national program that the house was involved in. Given the sponsor, it was only natural for the house to also be a part of the Blue Star Home program. This program was sponsored by the American Gas Association and was created in 1959. It was meant to act as counter-initiative to the "Living Better Electrically" program. Unlike the Horizon Home program, there was no competition aspect to the program. Instead, it was more of a marketing program that essentially advertised the amenities of the house. In order to qualify as a Blue Star Home, there were a series of requirements that house had to have. The first requirement was that the home had to contain at least three American Gas Association approved gas appliances, such as "a modern gas range with automatic cooking features, a gas storage water heater having the ability to deliver 81 gallons of hot water through a 100 degrees rise in the first two hours of use with minimum storage capacity of 30 gallons, and gas house heating." The second requirement was that the house had to have at least one optional outlet for either a gas refrigerator, gas dryer/washer-dryer, gas smokeless-odorless disposer, or gas air-conditioning.²⁹ The last requirement was a bit more subjective than the first two. According to newspaper articles "the builder must fulfill certain functional design requirements that make for more modern and comfortable family living. The kitchen and utility areas, for example, must meet the approval of the local utility." Exact requirements for these spaces appeared to differ in various parts of the country. As such, no formal description(s) of appropriate arrangements/layouts were found. A Blue Star certified home could be identified by their Blue Star Home sign out front and many of these houses also featured a "soft-glowing gaslight" in the front yard.³⁰

Due to the fact that the Blue Star Home program was strictly a promotional program, there are no known surviving records that detail the number of houses within any given year that were constructed as part of it. Given that entire neighborhoods would be constructed as Blue Star Homes,³¹ it can be assumed that hundreds, if not thousands, of houses in Arkansas were constructed as part of the program. However, unlike all of the other Blue Star Homes that appeared in the newspapers, the Gibson & Company's Blue Star – Horizon Home was constructed as a model home to convince perspective new home buyers that gas appliances were the way to go, even if the design and location of the model house was not to their liking. To this end, the house was equipped with gas all-year air conditioning, a gas range/oven, gas clothing dryer, gas water heater, an outdoor gas grill, and exterior gas lights.

The design of the Gibson & Company's Blue Star / Horizon Home was the brainchild of Little Rock architect Frank Eugene Withrow. Withrow was born in Little Rock on January 19, 1925, and served in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers between 1943 and 1945 before studying architecture at Washington University. He received his Bachelor of Architecture degree in 1950.

²⁹ "Follow A Blue Star To Happier Family Living." *Atlantic City Press*, Atlantic City, New Jersey. 30 September 1962, Pg. 41.

³⁰ "Standards Must Be Met To Earn Blue Star Symbol." *Northwest Arkansas Times*, Fayetteville, Arkansas. 15 May 1962. Pg. 11.

³¹ "Windamere, Little Rock's New All-Gas Addition." *Arkansas Gazette*, Little Rock, Arkansas. 20 September 1964. Pg. 12C.

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In 1954, Withrow organized his own firm and the Tower Building in downtown Little Rock (National Register listed September 23, 2011), which was the tallest building in the state at the time of its construction, was his first principal work. Withrow would later design a wide variety of buildings around the state, in addition to the Gibson & Company's Blue Star / Horizon Home, including Western Hills Elementary School in Little Rock (1967), Newton County Hospital in Jasper (1968), Woodruff County Hospital in McCrory (1969) and an addition to the Lee County Courthouse in Marianna (1969). Withrow died on November 24, 2022.³²

The home's interior features that Withrow included in the design were also touted in the advertisements for the building's open house. One advertisement noted that:

Imagination has endowed Little Rock's new Horizon Home with a warm personality and a practical floorplan for carefree family living and entertaining. Both indoors and out, the home is as picturesque as the curving hillside on which it was built. The ascending drive sweeps to an entrance level with marquee and double carport.

In the foyer are indoor gardens and an open staircase leading to the living-dining-gallery with two large glass panels opening onto a regal balcony that commands a breath-taking view of distant scenery. An open fireplace wall separates the living-dining-gallery from the family room where informal meals may be served conveniently from the adjoining kitchen. The master suite is uniquely arranged with dressing room, sunken tub bath, study area, and glass wall that opens onto the rear patio. A long gallery with louvered storage wall leads to three other bedrooms and adjacent baths. For a preview of newest ideas in modern home design...visit the Horizon Home today!³³

Although the Gibson & Company Blue Star / Horizon Home did not win the top prize in the Horizon Home competition in 1964, it did win one of the regional prizes. The *Arkansas Democrat* reported that "Gibson & Co., headed by J. L. Gibson, Little Rock home builder, has been named one of seven regional winners in the nationwide Horizon Homes contest sponsored annually by the Concrete Industries of America. The award includes a \$500 cash prize. The Little Rock entry, presented as the Blue Star-Horizon Home, was co-sponsored by Arkansas Louisiana Gas Co. ... The announcement was made by Thomas D. Shiels of Austin, Tex., manager of the South Central Region of [the] Portland Cement Association, one of the five national sponsors of the competition. ... Contest rules required that the Horizon Home entries have exteriors of concrete masonry, or other concrete products, and that it have a concrete slab on grade floor, concrete walks and drives as well as interior and exterior features of concrete products."³⁴ (For photographs of the award presentation, see Figures 1-2.) A similar article,

³² Gane, John F., AIA, ed. *American Architects Directory, 3rd Edition*. New York: R. R. Bowker, Company, 1970.

³³ Advertisement for the Gibson & Company's Blue Star / Horizon Home. *Arkansas Democrat*, 14 June 1964.

³⁴ "Gibson Co. Cops Award For Home." *Arkansas Democrat*, 15 November 1964, p. 51.

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which included a photograph of the house, was included in the *Arkansas Gazette* (See Figure 10).³⁵

After the open house, the Gibson & Company Blue Star / Horizon Home became a single-family home, and was initially owned by Wes Hall and his family, the owners of the Minute Man Restaurant chain. In 1971, the house was sold to Dr. Robin Richard Jones, and after his death on April 25, 2023, the house was purchased by the current owner, Nathan Smith. Smith is currently working on restoring the house and preserving this significant Little Rock example of Wrightian architecture.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROPERTY

During the first part of the 1960s, the Horizon Home program was instrumental in promoting the use of concrete and concrete products in the construction of homes. From 1961 through 1965 the ultimate goal of the Horizon Home program was to “show how a house could be built inexpensively with concrete, as well as to promote creative new ways to use the product.” The Horizon Homes program resulted in the construction of approximately 150 homes across the country. Although the program didn’t result in the use of concrete for home construction as much as had been hoped, it was still a significant program in that it did illustrate how architects and builders could be creative with their use of concrete and concrete products.³⁶

Throughout the life of the Horizon Home program, only three houses were built in Arkansas, one each in North Little Rock, Fort Smith, and Little Rock. Of the three houses that were built, two of the houses, including the Gibson & Company’s Blue Star / Horizon Home, were regional award winners. The Gibson & Company’s Blue Star / Horizon Home, utilized concrete in several different ways in its construction, including concrete blocks that looked like Roman Brick, concrete panels for the walls, cast-in place concrete used for the balcony, and large cast-concrete retaining walls and foundation. Furthermore, the architect, Frank Eugene Withrow, used concrete to create an excellent example of Wrightian architecture, a style that was not necessarily known for its use of concrete. The Gibson & Company’s Blue Star / Horizon Home reflects the characteristics of Wrightian design in its horizontality, the character-defining features of the roof and its eaves, the plastered appearance of the house’s concrete panels, and the contrasting textures in the home’s materials, even though most of the material is concrete.

When the house was built in 1964, due to its innovative use of concrete as part of the Horizon Home program, along with the use of gas appliances as part of the Blue Star program, it was widely publicized in the local newspapers and was open to the public for several days during June 1964. It was also notable as the only Horizon Home built in Little Rock, and only one of two award-winning Horizon Homes in Arkansas. Due to its significance in the use of concrete in its construction, and as an award-winning design in the Horizon Home program, the Gibson & Company’s Blue Star / Horizon Home is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion C: architecture/method of construction**.

³⁵ “Design Wins National Prize.” *Arkansas Gazette*, 15 November 1964, p. 46.

³⁶ Thornburg, Barbara. “Recasting Concrete.” *Orlando Sentinel*, date unknown. Found at: https://digitaledition.orlandosentinel.com/tribune/article_popover.aspx?guid=dd01785e-05f9-4b83-9937-47fad584a9f8.

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"Showing Set Sunday For Blue Star Home." *Arkansas Gazette*, 6 June 1964, p. 15.

"Standards Must Be Met To Earn Blue Star Symbol." *Northwest Arkansas Times*, Fayetteville, Arkansas. 15 May 1962. Pg. 11.

Thornburg, Barbara. "Recasting Concrete." *Orlando Sentinel*, date unknown. Found at: https://digitaledition.orlandosentinel.com/tribune/article_popover.aspx?guid=dd01785e-05f9-4b83-9937-47fad584a9f8.

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"Windamere, Little Rock's New All-Gas Addition." *Arkansas Gazette*, Little Rock, Arkansas. 20 September 1964. Pg. 12C.

Gibson & Company's Blue Star / Horizon Home
Name of Property

Pulaski County, Arkansas
County and State

York, Keith. "San Diego's Horizon Home Contest Houses." Modern San Diego. Found at:
<https://modernsandiego.com/article/san-diegos-horizon-home-contest-houses>.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): PU10558

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Less than one acre.

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- 1. Latitude: _____ Longitude: _____
- 2. Latitude: _____ Longitude: _____
- 3. Latitude: _____ Longitude: _____

Gibson & Company's Blue Star / Horizon Home

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County and State

Name of Property

4. Latitude: _____ Longitude: _____

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

1. Zone: 15 Easting: 559262 Northing: 3846054

2. Zone: Easting: Northing:

3. Zone: Easting: Northing:

4. Zone: Easting: Northing:

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

Lots 25, 26, and 27 of the Shannon Hills East Subdivision.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes all of the land historically associated with the property.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Ralph S. Wilcox, National Register & Survey Coordinator and Mason Toms,
Architectural Historian

organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

street & number: 1100 North Street

city or town: Little Rock state: AR zip code: 72201

e-mail: ralph.wilcox@arkansas.gov

telephone: (501) 324-9787

date: December 12, 2024

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Gibson & Company's Blue Star / Horizon Home
Name of Property

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

Photographs

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

Photo Log

Name of Property: Gibson & Company's Blue Star / Horizon Home

City or Vicinity: Little Rock

County: Pulaski County

State: Arkansas

Photographer: Ralph S. Wilcox

Date Photographed: December 9, 2024

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

1 of 42. View of the southeast and northeast façades of the house, looking northwest.

2 of 42. View of the southeast façade of the house, looking northwest.

3 of 42. View of the southeast façade of the house, looking northwest.

4 of 42. View of the southeast and southwest façades of the house, looking northeast.

5 of 42. View of the driveway and carport, looking northeast.

6 of 42. View of the western section of the southeast façade, looking north.

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- 7 of 42 . View of the central section of the southeast façade, looking northwest.
- 8 of 42 . View of the eastern section of the southeast façade, looking northwest.
- 9 of 42 . View of the driveway and retaining wall, looking southwest.
- 10 of 42 . Detail view of the foundation on the eastern section of the southeast façade, looking northwest.
- 11 of 42 . Detail view of the concrete panels on the eastern section of the southeast façade, looking northwest.
- 12 of 42 . View of the central section of the southeast façade, looking northeast.
- 13 of 42 . View of the carport, looking northwest.
- 14 of 42 . View of the northeast façade, looking southwest.
- 15 of 42 . View of the eastern section of the northwest façade, looking southwest.
- 16 of 42 . View of the eastern section of the northwest façade, looking southwest.
- 17 of 42 . View of the eastern section of the northwest façade, looking southeast.
- 18 of 42 . View of the eastern section of the northwest façade from the central section of the facade, looking southeast.
- 19 of 42 . View of the central section of the northwest façade, looking southeast.
- 20 of 42 . View of the central section of the northwest façade, looking southeast.
- 21 of 42 . Detail view of the columns on the central section of the northwest façade, looking northeast.
- 22 of 42 . View of the western section of the northwest façade, looking southeast.
- 23 of 42 . View of the southwest façade, looking east.
- 24 of 42 . View of the stairway to the lower level at the southwest end of the house, looking southeast.
- 25 of 42 . View of the house's stairway, looking southeast.
- 26 of 42 . View of the living room, looking southeast.

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- 27 of 42. View of the dining room side of the fireplace, looking southwest.
- 28 of 42. View of the family room side of the fireplace, looking southeast.
- 29 of 42. View of the family room, looking southwest.
- 30 of 42. View of the home's original oven, looking southeast.
- 31 of 42. View of the kitchen, looking northeast.
- 32 of 42. View of Bedroom #1, looking northwest.
- 33 of 42. View of Bedroom #1, looking southeast.
- 34 of 42. View of Bath #2, looking southeast.
- 35 of 42. View of Bedroom #2-3 (now one large room), looking southwest.
- 36 of 42. View of the Gallery, looking southwest.
- 37 of 42. View of Bath #3, looking southeast.
- 38 of 42. View of Bedroom #4, looking northeast.
- 39 of 42. View of Bedroom #4, looking southeast.
- 40 of 42. View of Bedroom #4, looking northwest.
- 41 of 42. View of the deck/hot tub structure, looking northwest.
- 42 of 42. View of the storage shed, looking northwest.

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Figure 1: F. Eugene Withrow being presented the “1964 Special Design Citation...South Central Region For Outstanding Design and Execution of the Model Horizon Home, Little Rock, Arkansas.” The award was presented by the Portland Cement Association, National Ready Mixed Concrete Association, National Concrete Masonry Association, Prestressed Concrete Institute, and the Mineral [illegible] Products Bureau. (From the files of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program.)

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Figure 2: “For building one of seven top concrete or concrete masonry homes in the nationwide Horizon Homes contest for 1964, J. L. Gibson, extreme right, Little Rock home builder, won a \$500 cash award given to each of the regional winners. Presenting the award, on behalf of Regional Manager T. D. Shiels, Austin, Texas, is George S. Brewer, Oklahoma City, district public relations representative of the Portland Cement Association, one of the sponsors of the annual competition.

“From left to right are H. B. Medlock, division sales manager for Arkansas Louisiana Gas Company, Little Rock co-sponsor of the Blue Star-Horizon Home open house at 7012 Shamrock Drive last June; and F. Eugene Withrow, Little Rock architect, who designed the home.

“Gibson’s home was adjudged the outstanding home in the South Central Region of the Portland Cement Association, which is comprised of Oklahoma, Arkansas, Texas and Louisiana.” (From the files of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program.)

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THERE'S A BLUE STAR ON LITTLE ROCK'S HORIZON

You are Invited

GIBSON & COMPANY
specially invites you to attend the
FINAL SHOWING TODAY
2-8 P.M.
BLUE STAR / HORIZON HOME
of Little Rock's first
built by J. L. Gibson, at
7012 SHALMOCK DRIVE

HORIZON HOME

inspiration has ordered Little Rock's new Horizon Home with a warm personality and a practical design for modern family living and entertaining. Both indoors and out, the home is an epitome of the styling trends on which it was built. The surrounding drive sweeps to an entrance hall with marble and dark wood accents.

In the large sun-drenched garden and on open concrete leading to the dining-living gallery with two large glass panels opening into a rear balcony that commands a breath-taking view of scenic nature. An open fireplace wall separates the dining-living gallery from the family room where informal meals may be served comfortably from the adjoining kitchen. The recessed table is completely equipped with dining room, kitchen table, study desk, and glass wall that opens onto the rear garden. A long gallery will feature recessed wood paneling, built-in bookshelves and adjacent balcony for a private retreat where in modern home design...with the Horizon Home history!

DESCRIPTION

7012 SHALMOCK DRIVE - Drive and West driveway to double garage - front porch - front deck - fireplace... two right and left - about three acres

FINANCIAL COUNSEL when you purchase home is provided by J. L. Gibson, President, Gibson & Company, Inc., Little Rock, Arkansas.

ALL-YEAR GAS AIR CONDITIONING

GAS

ALL GAS KITCHEN

GIBSON & COMPANY - BUILDER / REALTOR
7416677 75284 80113166 / MOBILE 3-6228

Figure 3: Advertisement for the Gibson & Company Blue Star / Horizon Home from the Arkansas Democrat, June 14, 1964.

Gibson & Company's Blue Star / Horizon Home
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See It Today!

Gibson & Company's

HORIZON HOME



Designed by F. Eugene Withrow, AIA

There's a whole household of new ideas in every Horizon Home! Each is designed to make the most of modern concrete's versatility and gracious livability. Each is designed to show the important part played by concrete for important structural elements, as well as intriguing decorative effects.

Here you'll see concrete in its newest forms. Modern colors... interesting textures... new shapes that offer home builders a freedom of expression never before known.

Inside the house and outdoors, too, modern concrete makes home owning more fun. There's less work and upkeep expense. Durable concrete is so easy to care for.

See this Horizon Home today!

PORTLAND CEMENT ASSOCIATION 1407 West National Bldg., Okla. City, Okla. 73102
A national organization to improve and extend the uses of concrete

**Last Public Showing
2 to 8 P.M. Today
7012 Shamrock Drive**

Drive east West Meridian to *Maiden*... then north two blocks to Shamrock... turn right and follow Model Home sign.



via all-gas, all-concrete and concrete masonry home. A Blue Star, Horizon dwelling is the final word in modern construction. It features six bedrooms, three baths and scores of modern features in outdoor and indoor concrete design. Many natural gas appliances—all-year air conditioning, range-oven, gas dryer, gas water heater, Gasgrill barbecue cooker and Gasites were chosen especially for this home.

Figure 4: Advertisement for the Gibson & Company Blue Star / Horizon Home from the *Arkansas Gazette*, June 14, 1964.

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HOME SITS ON BROW OF HILL
... All-concrete structure

Figure 5: View of the Gibson & Company's Blue Star / Horizon Home from the *Arkansas Democrat*, June 7, 1964, p. 8.

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Contest Design Has Unified Theme



Arkansas's only entry in the Horizon Home contest for houses not exceeding \$20,000, exclusive of lot, is in Arrowhead Manor, North Little Rock. Architect Richard W. Groh designed this contemporary plan built by John D. Toland from light aggregate concrete blocks, a relatively new concept in home construction. Keyed to a basic color scheme of aqua-marine with darker turquoise accents, it presents a cool out-

look both inside and out. The facade is simple in principle. A small courtyard across the front is defined by a decorative hollow tile wall. Double floors were hand-rubbed with turquoise to blend with flanking opaque glass panels of the same shade. A rear courtyard is almost entirely paved, with swimming pool centered here. Eaves extend to form a long shaded area protecting the glassed-in portion of the living area.

Figure 6: View of John D. Toland and Richard W. Groh Horizon Home from the *Arkansas Gazette*, September 24, 1961, p. 76.

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FIRST SHOWING SEE IT TODAY!

JOHN TOLAND'S

HORIZON HOME

*Designed by Richard W. Groh, A.I.A.
Concrete Masonry by F. and F. Concrete Products Co., Conway, South-West
Concrete by Cox & Shaver, Inc., North Little Rock.*



Overhead Road and Lawn Lane, Overhead Lane, South Little Rock.

MODERN CONCRETE helps create a **NEW** concept in design and livability

What's new and different about a Horizon Home? Lots of things . . . especially the important part played by modern concrete for vital structural elements, as well as for intriguing decorative effects. Here you see fresh ideas come alive with today's concrete for modern living. No other basic material is so versatile, offers the home designer such freedom of expression. In its many new forms, modern concrete offers virtually unlimited colors, textures, dimensions and shapes. You'll see smart examples of concrete's "new look," both inside and outside the Horizon Home!

Modern concrete for modern living has warmth, charm and real livability . . . plus the well-known durability that keeps home upkeep low, happiness high! Where you see the Horizon Home sign, you're sure to see the quality of modern concrete. See this new Horizon Home today!

Here's how MODERN CONCRETE adds beauty and quality to this HORIZON HOME

Automatic entry Merry is the Concrete Industries MERRY/OC MERRY created . . . 5-6" concrete slab foundation . . . light-weight concrete masonry walls and partitions (some filled with insulate for greater heating and cooling efficiency) . . . concrete swimming pool . . . concrete color brown patio walk, concrete walks, doors and screens. This is "Living Concrete" in all its warmth, beauty and charm . . . the truly astounding Parade Home of 1961!

PORTLAND CEMENT ASSOCIATION
1609 New National Bldg., Oklahoma City 2, Oklahoma A national organization to promote and expand the use of cement

Figure 7: View of John D. Toland and Richard W. Groh Horizon Home from the *Arkansas Gazette*, September 24, 1961, p. 77.

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Figure 8: View of John D. Toland and Richard W. Groh Horizon Home from Google Earth, November 2023. The concrete-block screen that originally stood in front of the house has been removed and the carport, which was originally open, has been enclosed into a two-car garage.

Gibson & Company's Blue Star / Horizon Home
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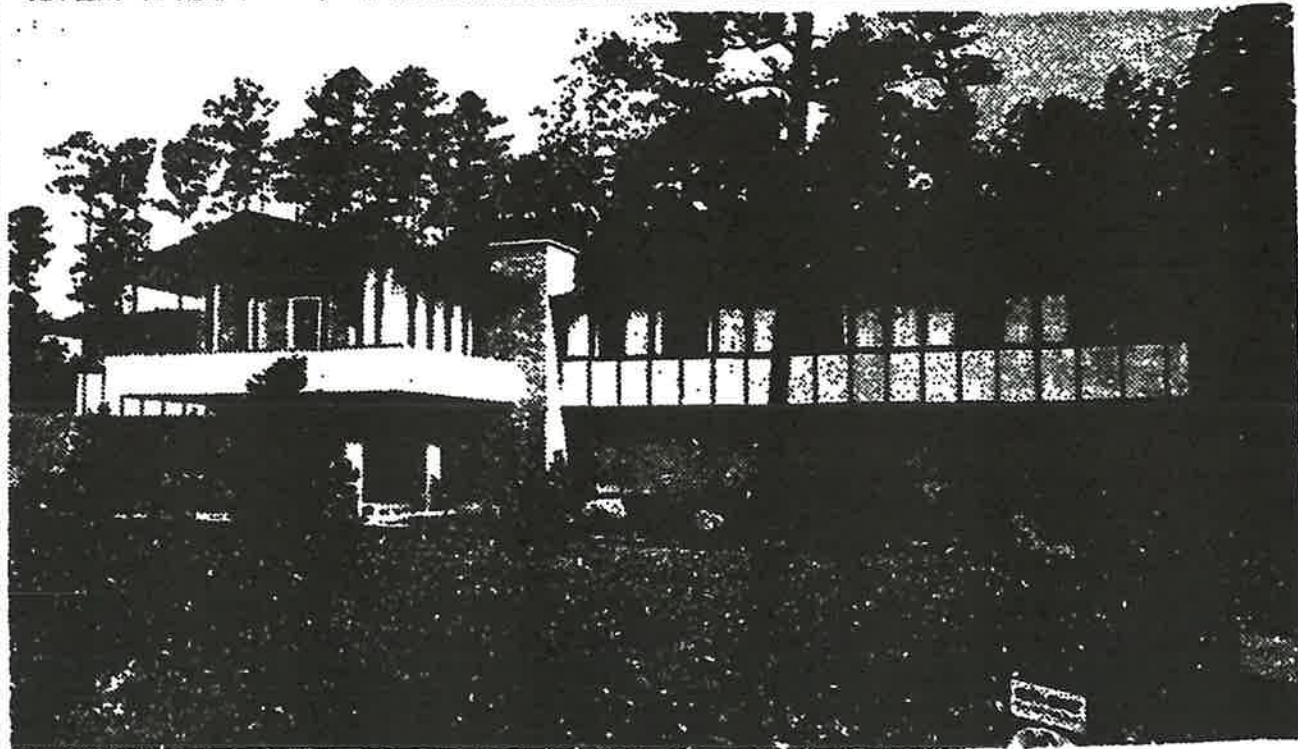
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Figure 9: Robert Wanslow House, Fort Smith, Sebastian County, Arkansas. Photo from the files of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, March 22, 2017.

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Design Wins National Prize

Gibson & Co.'s Blue Star-Horizon Home at 7012 Shamrock Drive is one of seven regional winners in the national Horizon Homes Contest. John L. Gibson, the builder, will receive a \$500 prize. The national winner will receive a free trip anywhere in the world. The Arkansas Louisiana Gas Company and Gibson sponsored the entry and F. Eugene Withrow designed the structure. The contest is sponsored by the Portland Cement Association.

Figure 10: Article from the *Arkansas Gazette* announcing the Horizon Homes Contest award for the Gibson & Company's Blue Star / Horizon Home. November 15, 1964.

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Figure 11: Photo of the Gibson & Company's Blue Star / Horizon Home shortly after its completion, c.1964.

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Figure 12: Photo of the rear/northwest façade of the Gibson & Company's Blue Star / Horizon Home prior to the removal of the greenhouse, looking southeast, August 16, 2018.

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Figure 13: Photo of the rear/northwest façade of the Gibson & Company's Blue Star / Horizon Home prior to the removal of the greenhouse, looking southwest, August 16, 2018.

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Figure 14: Photo of the side/northeast façade of the Gibson & Company's Blue Star / Horizon Home prior to the removal of the greenhouse, looking northwest, August 16, 2018.

Gibson & Company's Blue Star / Horizon Home
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Figure 15: Photo of the side/northeast façade of the Gibson & Company's Blue Star / Horizon Home prior to the removal of the greenhouse, looking southwest, August 16, 2018.

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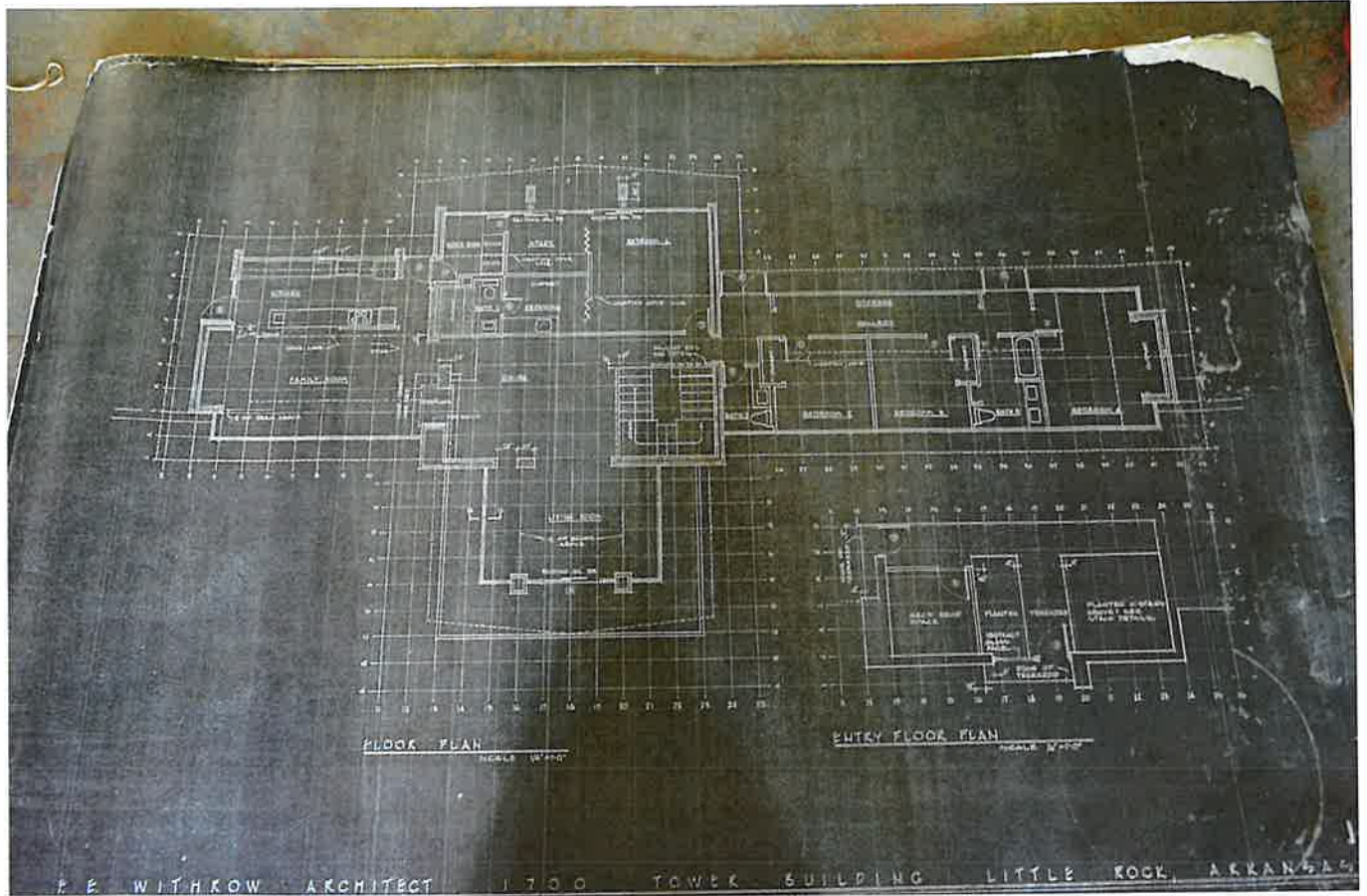


Figure 16: Original floor plans for the Gibson & Company's Blue Star / Horizon Home.

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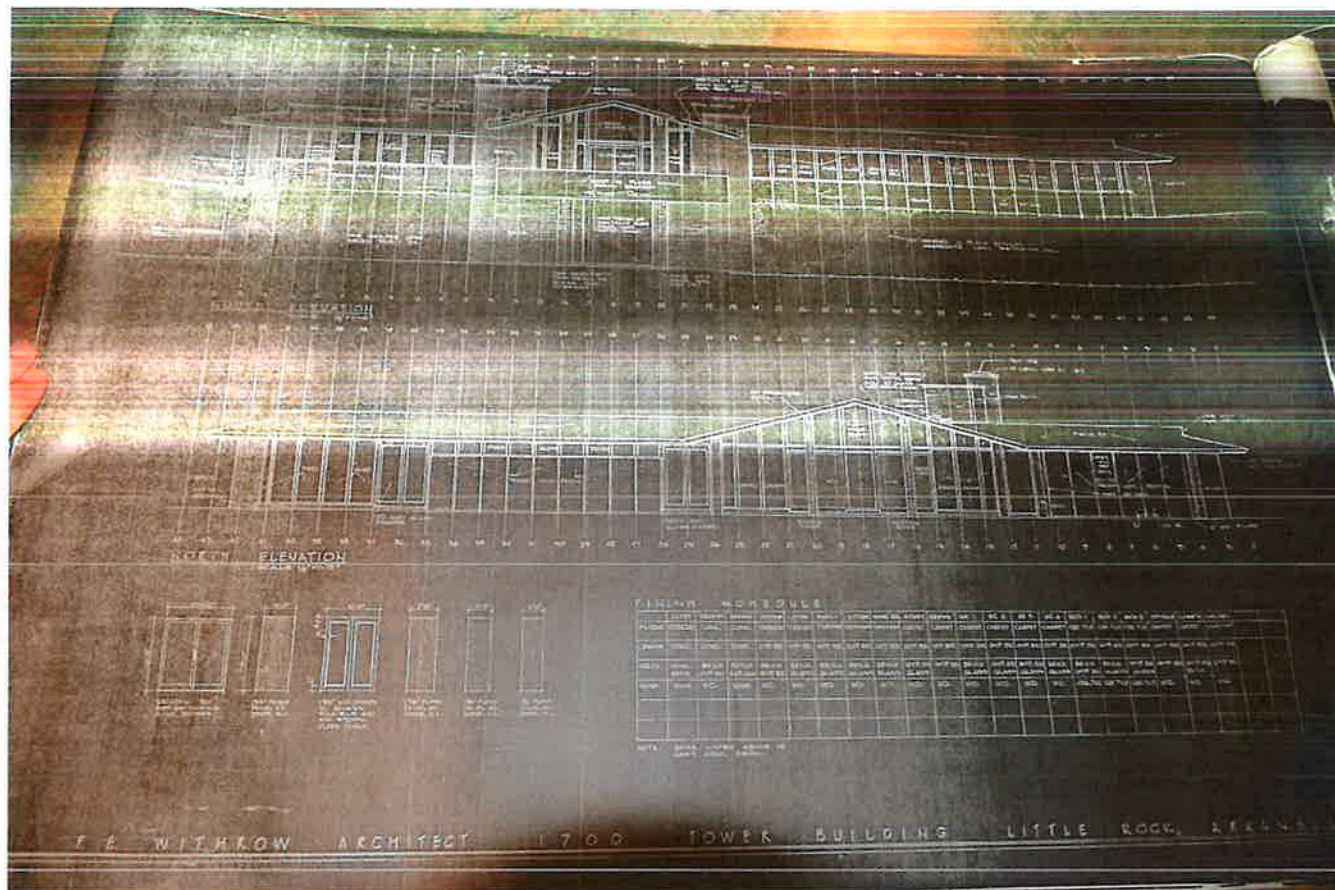


Figure 17: Original front and rear elevation drawings for the Gibson & Company's Blue Star / Horizon Home.

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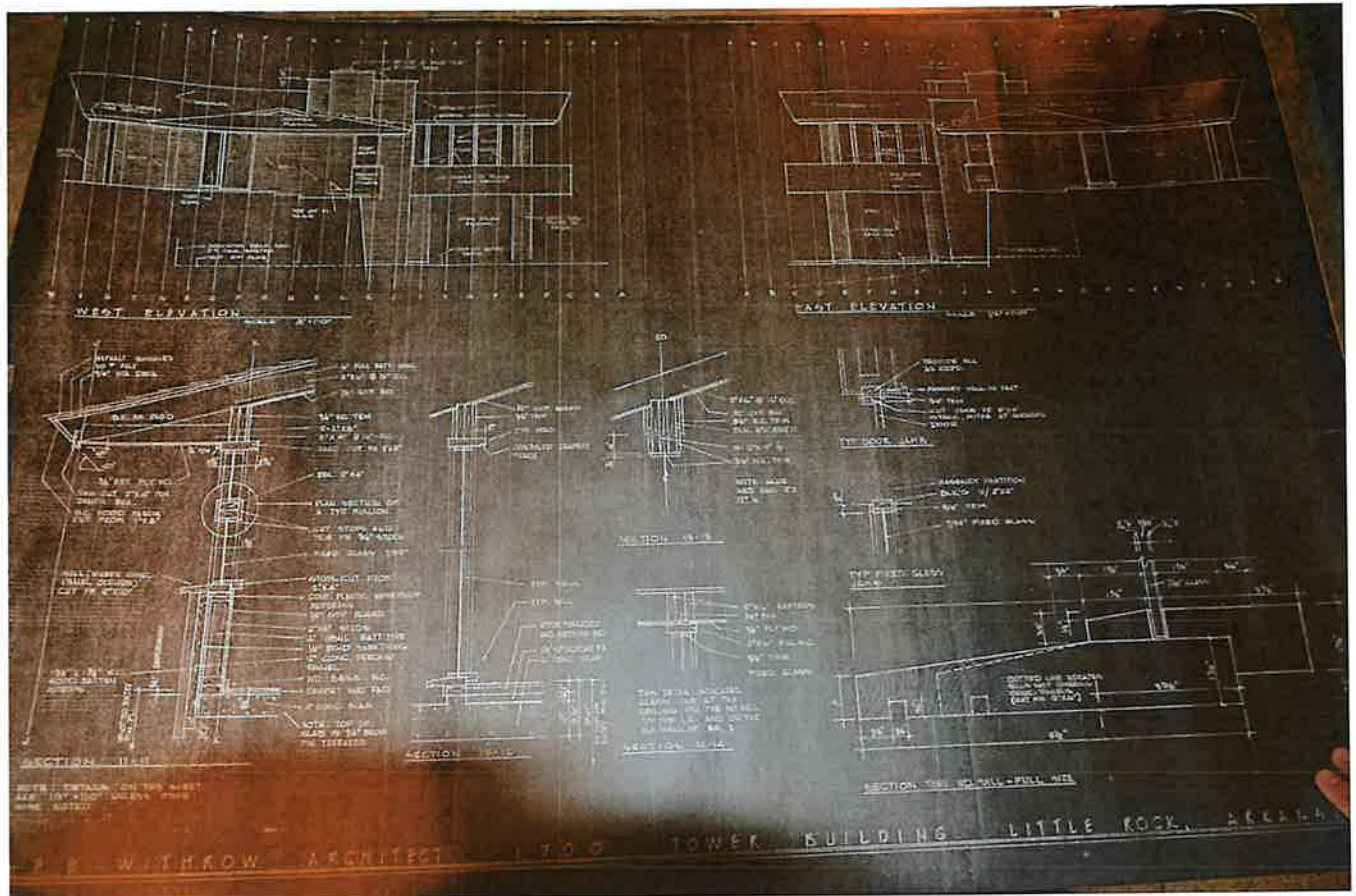


Figure 18: Original side elevation drawings for the Gibson & Company's Blue Star / Horizon Home.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

- Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
- Tier 2 – 120 hours
- Tier 3 – 230 hours
- Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.



|-----174'-----|

Gibson & Company's Blue Star / Horizon Home

Little Rock, Pulaski County, AR

UTM 15 559262E 3846054N



North



|-----534'-----|

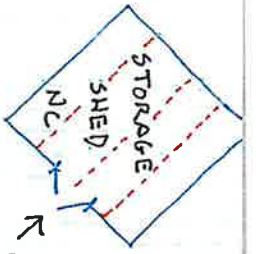
Gibson & Company's Blue Star / Horizon Home

Little Rock, Pulaski County, AR

UTM 15 559262E 3846054N



North

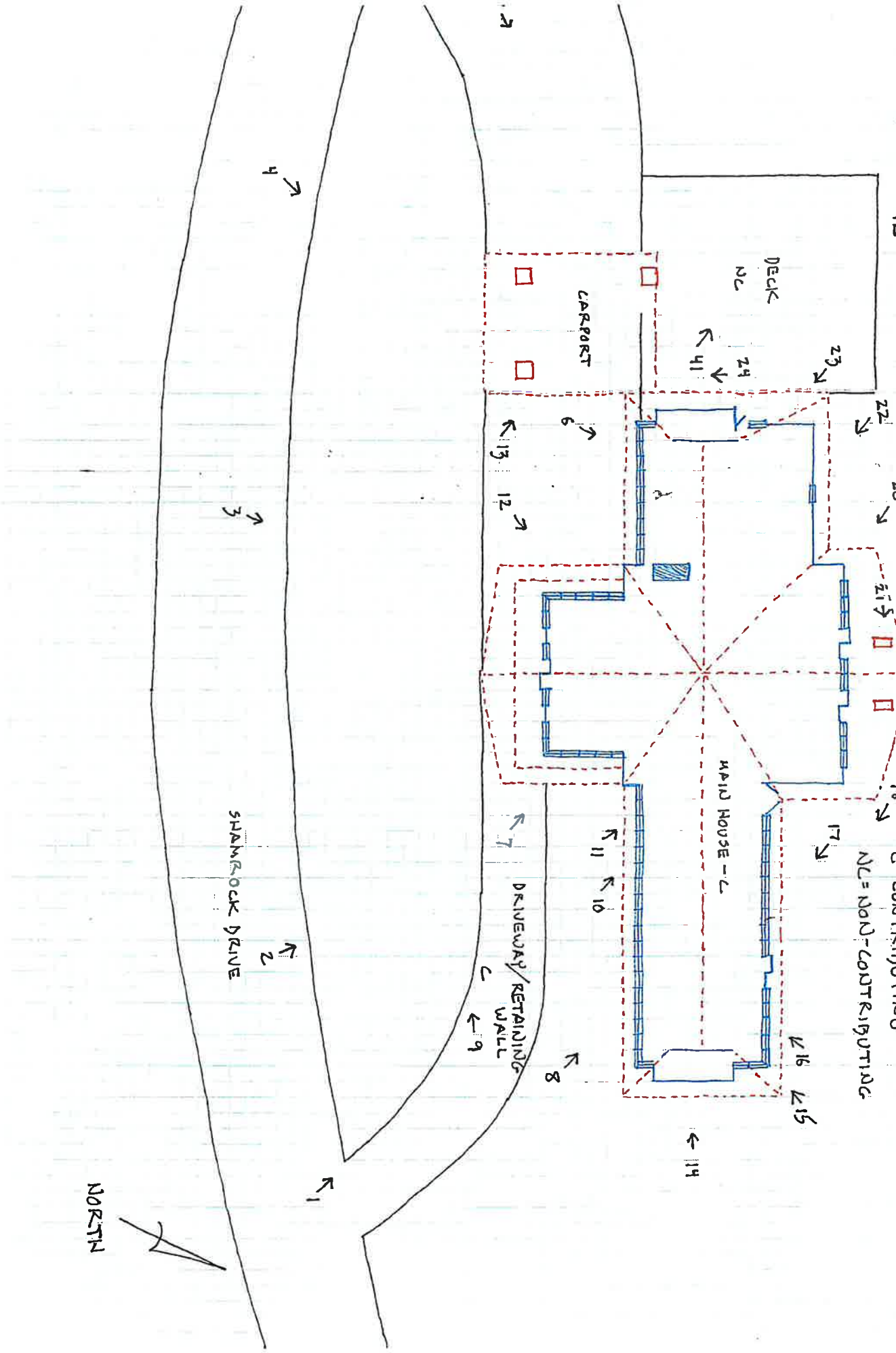


GIBSON + COMPANY'S BLUE STAR/HORIZON HOME
 LITTLE ROCK, POLASKI COUNTY, AR
 EXTERIOR PHOTO / C + NC MAP

1 → = PHOTO NUMBER AND LOCATION

C = CONTRIBUTING

NC = NON-CONTRIBUTING



NORTH

Gibson & Company's Blue Star / Horizon Home

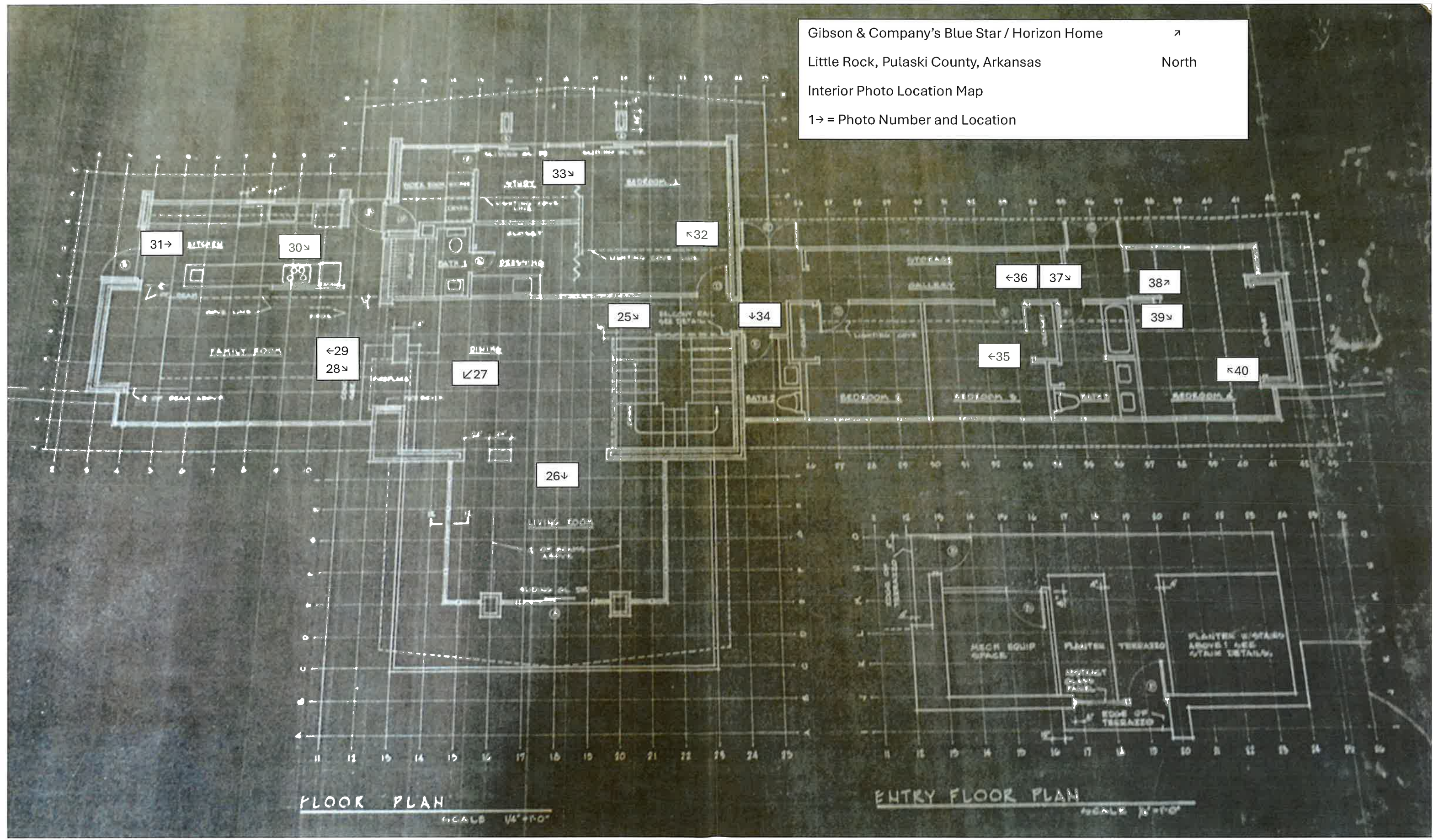


Little Rock, Pulaski County, Arkansas

North

Interior Photo Location Map

1→ = Photo Number and Location



FLOOR PLAN
SCALE 1/4" = 1'-0"

ENTRY FLOOR PLAN
SCALE 1/4" = 1'-0"











































































