

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only  
received FEB 22 1983  
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Wright, L. T., House

and/or common same

2. Location

street & number 342 Wilkins Avenue N/A not for publication

city, town San Antonio N/A vicinity of

state Texas code 048 county Bexar code 029

3. Classification

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name J. K. Investments

street & number 342 Wilkins Avenue

city, town San Antonio N/A vicinity of state Texas 78210

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Bexar County Courthouse

street & number Main Plaza

city, town San Antonio state Texas

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Nominated as City of San Antonio has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

Landmark  
date February, 1982  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records City of San Antonio Historic Preservation Office

city, town San Antonio state Texas

## 7. Description

**Condition**

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

**Check one**

unaltered  
 altered

**Check one**

original site  
 moved date \_\_\_\_\_

N/A

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The L.T. Wright House at 342 Wilkins Avenue, constructed in 1917, is a one-story, stucco-over-tile home executed in the Prairie style of architecture. It is located in the Alamosa Addition south of downtown San Antonio. Designed by George Willis, who worked for four years in the Oak Park, Illinois, studio of Frank Lloyd Wright, the home remains virtually unaltered. Particularly important are the classic Prairie-style, low-pitched hip roof with projecting eaves, bands of windows with some stained glass, interior and exterior lighting fixtures and hardware, and interior murals of San Antonio landscapes. Two rear wings form a "U" around a small paved courtyard on the south side of the house, with doors opening onto the space from adjoining rooms. Recently completed restoration work, including the reopening of a small back porch and the addition of a new wood-shingle roof, has returned the Wright House to its original condition and appearance.

The Prairie-style Wright House is a one-story structure with stucco-over-tile construction, with a wood-shingle, low-pitched, hipped roof and projecting eaves. The main portion of the house faces north. Two wings project southward from the rear of the house, and face a narrow courtyard. Three shallow, but wide, steps lead to a concrete porch from the front walk. Additional steps lead to the porch from the port cochere on the west side of the house. Both the front and side steps are flanked by projecting abutments with a stucco coping. Large windows on the front of the house in the living room and original bedrooms are in the Chicago style, and consist of a large central light framed by a smaller light at each side. A bank of high windows runs around the northwest corner of the house, ending at the exterior chimney on the west side. Window mullions are of dark wood. The port cochere is supported by two large, rectangular piers with articulated bases. Original wrought-iron fixtures light the front porch. The main doorway is wooden with heavy metal braces and hardware. The name L. T. Wright is faintly visible on the door.

The formal living room of the house runs east-west to the right of the main entry. It is partially separated from the entry hall by a screen wall which contains built-in, glass-front bookcases on the living room side. The wall is topped by two original globe light fixtures. Inset panels are decorated in a scroll pattern and form a wainscoting around the living room. A fireplace is set in a brick wall at the west end of the room. Rectangular stained-glass windows occur to one side of a mural of the Bolivar Lighthouse over the fireplace.

Important interior features of the Wright House are the hand-painted murals and stenciling by painter and fresco artist Fred Donecker. A dance scene adorns the entry. Scenes of the Texas missions, Brackenridge Park, and the Bolivar Lighthouse highlight the living room. A frieze of flowers, leaves, and fishes runs above the murals, while the coffered ceiling is decorated with scroll and flower motifs. The frieze and ceiling decorations are stenciled.

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Continuation sheet

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The dining room, in the west wing, is separated from the living room by double glass-paneled doors. It is decorated with a frieze of food and hunt scenes and a vine and leaf pattern. Original wall sconces light both the living and dining rooms. The south end of the dining room contains built-in china cabinets. The kitchen is located south of the dining room, is connected by a butler's pantry, and opens onto a small, covered back porch. Enclosed as a bathroom at one time, this porch has been restored, except for possible original screen or lattice work.

The dining room, entry hall and hallway in the east wing all open to the central patio through wood-frame and glass French doors. The patio is paved in concrete. The hallway in the east wing has a wide band of wood sash windows which are hinged at the top and open to the patio. The west wing has a wide projecting eave overhanging the patio.

The east wing of the house contains three bedrooms and two baths, although the bedrooms are now used as offices. Two bays project on the east side of the house and were designed as screened porches, but were later enclosed using casement windows.

The house originally had a wood-shingle roof stained green. A new shingle roof has been added and the original, recessed attic vents restored. The new roof is natural, not stained. Facia detailing, altered over the years, has been remade to match the original drawings. Renovation work revealed that reused, Victorian-period lumber was employed for floor joists, and Victorian molding was used as stripping on roof rafters. The original owner was a contractor who salvaged reusable materials.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below					
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)		
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention				

**Specific dates**      1917                                      **Builder/Architect**      George Willis, Architect  
**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**                                      Lawrence T. Wright, probable builder

Designed by George Willis and constructed in 1917, the L. T. Wright house represents one of the finest examples of Prairie-school architecture in Texas, and one of the most outstanding, documented, residential structures designed by this San Antonio architect. In its style it is one of only a very few houses in the state which reflects closely the early work of Frank Lloyd Wright, an architect with whom Willis had worked just after the turn-of-the-century. This building, which remains virtually unaltered, still contains many of its original features, such as its interior and exterior light fixtures, stained glass, and a series of murals of San Antonio landscapes by the local artist Fred Donecker. The house was built for, and probably constructed by, Lawrence T. Wright, a prominent San Antonio contractor, and his wife Rivarde.

Lawrence T. and Rivarde Wright purchased the lot where the L. T. Wright house stands, in the Alamosa Addition of San Antonio in 1914. Located just off Roosevelt Avenue, about one mile south of the central business district, this area was then being developed as a neighborhood of modest, one-story frame homes. The Wright House, itself, was apparently designed by George Willis sometime after this date and before 1917, the year in which he left the employ of the San Antonio architect, Atlee B. Ayres, in order to open his own practice. In that same year, the City Directory first lists L. T. and Rivarde Wright as living at 102 Wilkins, the original address of the present house.

The following year, 1918, the Wrights sold the property to Mrs. J. T. Nixon, who herself only held it for one year before selling it to J. W. and Pearl Oswald. Mr. Oswald was the manager of the Lone Star Truck and Traction Association, which opened its plant directly across Roosevelt Avenue in the year that he purchased the L. T. Wright House. This company, which pioneered in the manufacturing of vehicles in San Antonio, was later renamed the Blumberg Motor Manufacturing Company, and became Plant No. 2. The Oswalds owned the Wright House until 1922. After a succession of other owners the property was purchased by the architectural firm of De Lara-Almond, which presently uses the home for its offices.

George Willis, the designer of the L. T. Wright House, was born and educated in Chicago, attended public school there, and later studied architecture at the Armour Institute. In about 1901, he began as a draftsman in the studio of Frank Lloyd Wright in Oak Park, Illinois, where he worked with a number of important later practitioners of the Prairie style of architecture. At that studio Willis became versed in Wright's own architecture.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

- Davis, Ellis A. and Edwin H. Grobe. The New Encyclopedia of Texas. Dallas: Texas Development Bureau, n.d.
- Suttle, Catherine. "Texas Craftsman: A Study of the L. T. Wright House." Unpublished.
- Gutheim, Fred (ed.). Essays by Frank Lloyd Wright for Architectural Record, 1908-1952. New York: McGraw Hill, 1975.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property approximately one-half acre

Quadrangle name San Antonio East, Tex.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UTM References

A 

1	4	5	4	9	9	5	10	3	12	5	11	6	16	10
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C 

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D 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

E 

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F 

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G 

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H 

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

Lot 1 and part of Lot 2, NCB 3854.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state code county code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Maria Watson and Kenneth Breisch/Texas Historical Commission

organization date August 1982

street & number 315 Adams Street telephone 512/224-4734

city or town San Antonio state Texas

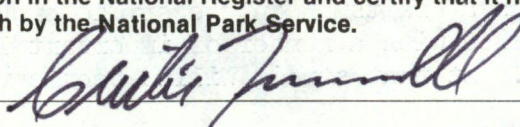
## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature



title State Historic Preservation Officer

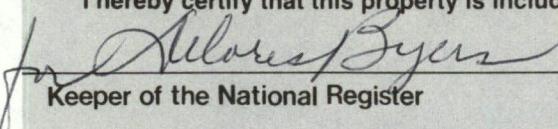
date 2/8/83

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the  
National Register

date 4/1/83

  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 1

About 1903, Willis left Wright's office and moved to California where he practiced for one year. From there he went to Dallas, where he stayed from 1904 until 1910. In 1910 or 1911 he began work as a draftsman for the San Antonio firm of Atlee B. Ayres. Robert Ayres, son of Atlee B. Ayres, believes that Willis is listed in the San Antonio City Directory as a draftsman for this firm until 1915, but in 1917 appears for the first time as head of his own office.

During the following years Willis designed such San Antonio landmarks as the Milam Building, Builders Exchange Building, and the Bexar County Courthouse addition, all of which are still standing. Other structures, no longer extant, include the Palace Theater, the San Antonio Country Club, the Standard Manufacturing Company Building, and the El Conquistador Tourist Hotel. He is also believed to have designed the homes at 212 East Mulberry and 828 Cambridge Oval in San Antonio. George Willis continued to be listed in the City Directory, with an office in the Transit Tower, until his death in 1959.

At the time that the Wright House was constructed, Lawrence Wright was Vice-President and General Manager of L. T. Wright and Company, Inc., General Contractors, and it is presumed that the house itself was constructed by this firm. Wright was born in Leavenworth, Kansas, in 1888, and was educated in engineering at the University of Kansas. He entered into the contracting business with L. E. Sanders in 1913. In 1916, J. T. Haile purchased Sanders' interest in the company. During their period of activity, L. T. Wright and Company was responsible for the construction of such buildings in San Antonio as the Aztec Theatre Building, the Central Fire and Police Building, the Travis Building, and Brackenridge High School. L. T. Wright continued in his profession until his death in the mid-1940s.

The L. T. Wright house itself represents a rare regional variant of Frank Lloyd Wright's Prairie House of the first decade of the 20th century. Although smaller in scale, and only one story high, Willis's San Antonio house has been derived stylistically from such Wright designs as his project for "A Home in a Prairie Town," which was published in the Ladies' Home Journal, in February 1901, or his first great masterpiece in this idiom, the Ward Willits House, which was constructed in Highland Park, Illinois, during the years that Willis served as a draftsman in the Wright Studio.

In particular, the dominant horizontality of Willis's composition, with the gently sloping, hipped roof, broad overhanging eaves, and extended porte cochere, harks back to the influence of Wright. Willis's use of stuccoed surfaces and casement windows might also have been in emulation of his mentor. Inside, the division of the walls into a series of flat panels, separated by wood trim and set beneath a continuous stringcourse also recall the work of Wright, as does the dominant brick hearth at one end of the living room.

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Although, at first glance, the murals and stenciling by Fred Donecker might appear somewhat incongruous in this setting, they, too, conform to Wright's dictum of 1908, that pictures should be decorative and incorporated in the general scheme as decoration. It is here, however, that Willis's adherence to Wright's principles ends, for the Rococo quality of the decoration in the L. T. Wright House clashes with the clear, geometric lines of the overall interior scheme.

The plan of the Wright House also reveals little of Frank Lloyd Wright's influence. Specifically, Willis's U-shaped scheme differs sharply from Wright's more sophisticated cross-axial planning. Willis' interior spaces, as a result of this and of his employment of numerous partition walls, do not flow together in the same way that Wright's do. Finally, Willis exterior composition lacks the fine sense of asymmetrical balance that is also so characteristic of the master's work.

In spite of these shortcomings, the L. T. Wright House remains one of the few examples of the pure Prairie school style in Texas. Along with the exception, perhaps, of the Henry Trost House in El Paso (National Register 1976), it represents one of the finest examples of this important American style of architecture in the state.

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Page 1

Ayres, Atlee B. Papers, University of Texas at Austin, Architectural Archives.  
(Original plans for the Wright House, dated 1914, show an elaborate  
scheme which was reduced by the time the house was constructed in 1917.)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Wright, L.T., House  
Bexar County  
TEXAS

Working No. FEB 22 1983

Fed. Reg. Date: 2-7-84

Date Due: 3/24/83 - 4/8/83

Action:  ACCEPT 4/1/83  
 RETURN  
Entered in the National Register  REJECT

Federal Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

- resubmission
- nomination by person or local government
- owner objection
- appeal

Substantive Review:  sample  request  appeal  NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Recom./Criteria \_\_\_\_\_  
Reviewer \_\_\_\_\_  
Discipline \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_  
see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for:  technical corrections cited below  
 substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
	Public Acquisition	Accessible	

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- alterations/integrity
- dates
- boundary selection

## 8. Significance

Period \_\_\_\_\_ Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates \_\_\_\_\_

Builder/Architect \_\_\_\_\_

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- applicable criteria
- justification of areas checked
- relating significance to the resource
- context
- relationship of integrity to significance
- justification of exception
- other

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

## 10. Geographical Data

Average of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_

Geographic name \_\_\_\_\_

USIT References \_\_\_\_\_

Verbal boundary description and justification \_\_\_\_\_

## 11. Form Prepared By

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

\_\_\_\_ national \_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## 13. Other

- Maps
- Photographs
- Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: 202 272-3504

Comments for any item may be continued on an attached sheet



L. T. Wright House

342 Wilkins Avenue, San Antonio, Bexar  
County, Texas

Photo: 1982

Neg. on file, DeLara-Almond Architects,  
342 Wilkins, San Antonio

View of front (north) facade, looking south

Photo 1 of 8



L. T. Wright House  
342 Wilkins Avenue, San Antonio, Bexar  
County, Texas  
Photo: 1982  
Neg. on file, DeLara-Almond Architects,  
342 Wilkins, San Antonio  
Oblique view of southwest corner and rear  
of house, looking northeast  
Photo 2 of 8



L. T. Wright House  
342 Wilkins Avenue, San Antonio, Bexar  
County, Texas  
Photo: 1982  
Neg. on file, DeLara-Almond Architects,  
342 Wilkins, San Antonio  
Oblique view of west wing and courtyard,  
looking northwest  
Photo 3 of 8



L. T. Wright House  
342 Wilkins Avenue, San Antonio, Bexar  
County, Texas

Photo: 1982

Neg. on file, DeLara-Almond Architects,  
342 Wilkins, San Antonio

View of northeast corner of house, looking  
southwest

Photo 4 of 8



L. T. Wright House  
342 Wilkins Avenue, San Antonio, Bexar  
County, Texas  
Photo: 1982  
Neg. on file, DeLara-Almond Architects,  
342 Wilkins, San Antonio  
View of dining room, looking into living  
room  
Photo 5 of 8



L. T. Wright House

342 Wilkins Avenue, San Antonio, Bexar  
County, Texas

Photo: 1982

Neg. on file, DeLara-Almond Architects,  
342 Wilkins, San Antonio

View of entry hall on left, living room on  
right

Photo 6 of 8



L. T. Wright House  
342 Wilkins Avenue, San Antonio, Bexar  
County, Texas  
Photo: 1982  
Neg. on file, DeLara-Almond Architects,  
342 Wilkins, San Antonio  
View of west end of living room  
Photo 7 of 8



L. T. Wright House  
342 Wilkins Avenue, San Antonio, Bexar  
County, Texas

Photo: 1982

Neg. on file, DeLara-Almond Architects,  
342 Wilkins, San Antonio

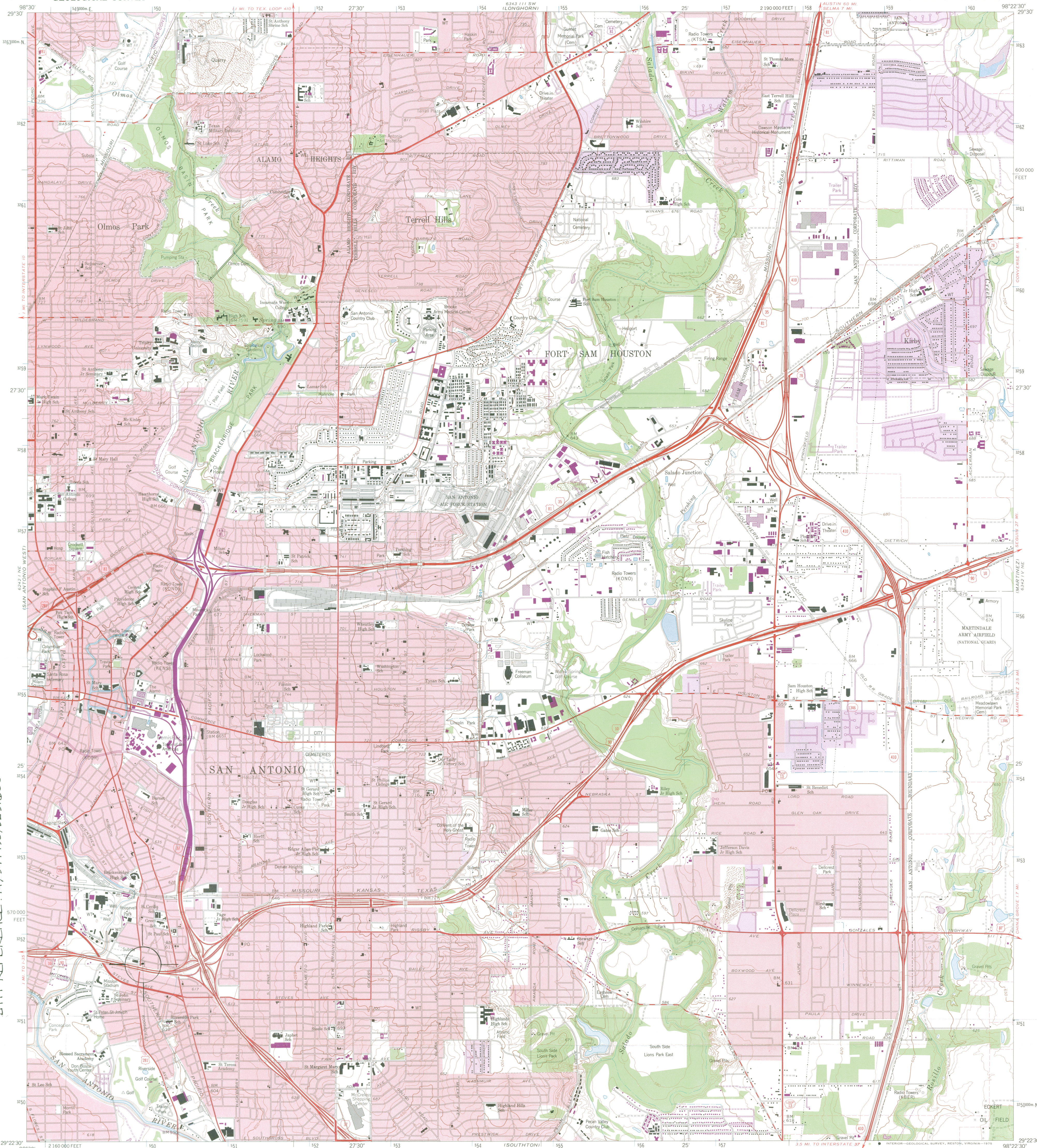
View of entry hall and mural

Photo 8 of 8

WRIGHT, I.T., HOUSE  
342 WILKENS AVENUE  
SAN ANTONIO, BEXAR CO., TEXAS  
UTM REFERENCE: 14/549450/3251660

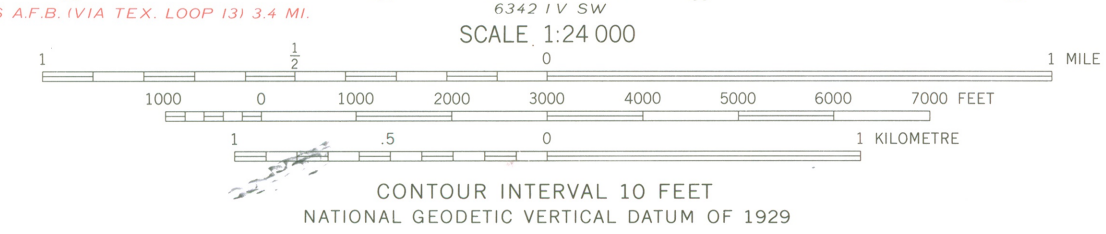
UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

SAN ANTONIO EAST QUADRANGLE  
TEXAS-BEXAR CO.  
7.5 MINUTE SERIES TOPOGRAPHIC



Mapped by the Army Map Service  
Edited and published by the Geological Survey  
Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA, and USCE  
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs  
taken 1952. Field annotated 1953. Revised by Geological Survey  
from aerial photographs taken 1966. Field checked 1967.  
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
10,000-foot grid based on Texas coordinate system,  
south central zone  
1000-metre Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,  
zone 14, shown in blue  
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown  
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence lines  
Revisions shown in purple compiled by the Geological Survey from  
aerial photographs taken 1973. This information not field checked

UTM GRID AND 1973 MAGNETIC NORTH  
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET  
01°17' 81°5'



ROAD CLASSIFICATION  
Primary highway, hard surface  
Secondary highway, hard surface  
Unimproved road  
Interstate Route  
U. S. Route  
State Route  
Light-duty road, hard or improved surface  
Unimproved road  
Interstate Route  
U. S. Route  
State Route



THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

2998-133

SAN ANTONIO EAST, TEX.  
N2922.5-W9822.5/7.5  
1967  
PHOTOREVISED 1973  
AMS 6342 IV NW - SERIES V882