



RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
MICHIGAN STATE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

SCOTT WOOSLEY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

July 31, 2013

Ms. Jill Thatcher
Preservation Planner
City of Ann Arbor, Building Department
100 N. Fifth Ave.
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Dear Ms. Thatcher:

Attached are National Register of Historic Places nomination forms for the William and Elizabeth (Boanzky) Muschenheim House and the Robert C. and Bettie (Sponseller) Metcalf House. In accordance with our Certification Agreement with the city, we request the city's review of these nomination at the earliest available meeting of the city's Historic District Commission. To provide a record of the city's review of the nominations, please complete and return to us the enclosed "Certified Local Government National Register Nomination Report" forms.

Please contact Robert Christensen, national register coordinator, by phone at 517/335-2719 or by email at christensenr@michigan.gov if you have questions.

Sincerely yours,

Brian D. Conway
State Historic Preservation Officer

Enclosure
BDC:roc

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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

1. Name of Property

historic name Muschenheim, William and Elizabeth (Bodanzky), House

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 1251 Heather Way not for publication

city or town Ann Arbor vicinity

state Michigan code MI county Washtenaw code 161 zip code 48104

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 X statewide ___ local

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register ___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register ___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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5. Classification

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

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

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

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	1	Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/Single dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/Single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: CONCRETE BLOCK
walls: CONCRETE BLOCK
ASBESTOS PANELS
PLYWOOD PANELS
roof: 3-Ply, Built-up, pitch and gravel roof
other: _____

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Narrative Description

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

Summary Paragraph

The William and Elizabeth Muschenheim House is a three level, concrete block and steel frame structure with a long, relatively narrow rectangular plan. The primary elevations face east and west and the low-sloped shed roof parallels the south-to-north-sloping topography of the property. Constructed in 1954, the house is a unique example of Modern style residential architecture designed by architect William Muschenheim for himself and his family. Muschenheim designed the house at the mid-point of his career when he relocated to Ann Arbor from New York City to take a teaching position at the University of Michigan. The design demonstrates Mushenheim's consideration of scale, texture, light, circulation and color to create a structure with a contemporary expression of form and surface treatments.

Above the painted concrete block foundation walls, the exterior walls are clad with gray, asbestos panels that have a striated surface. The windows are primarily large fixed aluminum units that incorporate groups of operable awning and jalousie windows for ventilation. On the facade, a series of large windows tucked under the roof fascia have been set high on the elevation to ensure privacy while at the same time allowing natural light from the evening sun to filter into the living room space. The home's entrance is located next to a two-vehicle carport that is partially recessed into the northern end of the façade. The single flush wood entry door has been painted bright blue and has a large fixed sidelight. A second flush wood entry door that accesses the bedroom areas is located near the southern end of the elevation. The rear elevation is more dramatic with large expanses of strategically placed windows and fully glazed curtain walls. An approximately 7' by 12' enclosed "porch" extension projects from the rear elevation. The three walls of the porch are fully glazed and the entire porch extension is painted bright yellow. There are three entrances on the rear elevation, one that leads to the basement level family room, a second at the first floor level that leads into the living room and a third at the north end of the elevation that leads into the stairway next to the kitchen.

The interior of the house contains approximately 3,300 sf of space on three levels. The spaces are organized around the large open volume of the central living room and dining area. The bedrooms are grouped at the southern end of the plan and elevated a half level above the living room. Below this, a half level below the living room, is a small study and an office that was added in the 1980s. To the north of the living room and dining room is the kitchen, which was remodeled in 1993. At the basement level is another living space and workshop which is connected back to the kitchen area by an open steel stair. The open plan and large glazed window walls provide natural light into the interior and allow expansive views. The interior retains many of its original features such as built-in shelving units, free-standing cabinets, and wood clad walls.

The Muschenheim House is located on a pie-shaped .66 acre lot in the Ann Arbor Hills neighborhood southeast of downtown Ann Arbor and the University of Michigan's central campus. Heather Way is a typical tree-lined residential street containing moderately sized houses centrally located on approximately one-half acre lots. The neighborhood contains a mix of traditional revivalist-style houses to the north and west and a significant collection of architect-designed, mid-century Modern style residences. A small non-contributing shed is located at the back of the property.

Narrative Description

Setting

The Muschenheim House is located at 1251 Heather Way, a two-lane, residential street that begins at Geddes Avenue and terminates just east of its intersection with Arlington Boulevard. Houses in the Ann Arbor Hills neighborhood, which is roughly bounded between Washtenaw Avenue on the south and west and the Huron Hills golf course on the north and east, were generally developed from north to south during the mid-twentieth century. The area to the north of Ann Arbor Hills just north of Geddes Avenue and east of Nichols Arboretum consists of large older houses built during the 1920s and 1930s. Today the Ann Arbor Hills neighborhood consists of a mix of revivalist-style residences, some newly constructed homes and a significant collection of architect-designed mid-century Modern style houses. When the Muschenheim House

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was constructed many of the roads in the neighborhood were unpaved. As more houses were constructed the roads were paved and curbing was added in some locations; however, some dirt roads still remain in the neighborhood.

The Muschenheim house is set back from Heather Way within the widest portion of the lot. Muschenheim oriented the house so the principal facades face east and west. The lot, which is roughly pie-shaped in plan, has been truncated at its eastern edge where it intersects a neighboring property. The topography of the property slopes from south to north. A line of trees along the north and south property boundaries provides privacy from the neighboring residences. The house is set back 42' from the western edge of the parcel and 48' from the southwest corner. The property is accessed by a short, newly poured concrete drive that extends east off of Heather Way. A portion of the drive extends north to the property line allowing room for additional parking while the remainder of the drive continues to the two-vehicle carport. South of the concrete driveway is an open lawn that rises to the south with the sloping topography. A low stepped retaining wall separates the lawn from the driveway and a set of concrete stairs leads to the front door. A gravel drainage strip is located around the base of the house widening along the north elevation. The gravel strip extends around to the rear elevation where there is an irregularly shaped patio. The patio, which was originally gravel, is made of square stone pavers and is divided into a number of sections by wood members. A broad set of stairs set against the rear elevation provides access to an entrance at the first floor level. A concrete block wall projects from the rear elevation to support the north end of the porch. Several drawings included in Muchenheim's digital archive collection suggest that significant consideration was given to the landscape features and plantings. It is unclear, however, what was actually installed. At least one drawing shows a rock garden in the midst of the existing pine, fruit and elm trees in the rear of the house, herbs along the path to the north of the house and peonies on the northern boundary of the property. Another rough sketch identifies numerous plantings including pines, euonymous, bridal wreath, catoniasta, pachysandra, a cherry tree, lilac, willow locust, mountain ash, multiflora roses, oaks, bolleana poplars, pyrocantha, hydranlea, arctic daisies, forsythia, iris, heather, rhododendrum, day lilies, bay berry, arctic willows, birch, forsythia, inigelea, lilies of the valley, dwarf barberry, arbor vitae, yews, ducia, funcia, mahonia, trumpet vine, blueberries, peonies, arbor vitae, viburnum, spruce, andorra, masnolia, scotch broom, magnolia, vegetans, azalea, and dogwood. An original site plan shows a line of trees along the northern boundary of the property including a willow tree, two mountain ash trees, 30 multi-flora roses and two bolleana poplars. An early historic image of the house shows a small grotesquely-shaped sculptural figure on a concrete pad behind the house while a later image shows a multi-colored iron sculpture made of thin bar stock located next to the rear patio. Neither of these sculptures are present today.

There rear yard is mostly lawn and there is a small non-historic outbuilding along the southern edge of the property at the back of the lot.

Exterior

The Muschenheim House is a split three-level, long, low shed-roof structure with a five-bay rectangular plan. Its simple, planar form is reminiscent of Muschenheim's early International Style inspired designs. The structural system is comprised of several elements including steel columns and open web steel joists and girders, concrete masonry units, precast concrete and wood. Macomber Incorporated supplied and manufactured the steel trusses used to support the long-span shed roof. Although Macomber was based in Canton, OH, steel for the house was purchased from the local Macomber distributor in Detroit. The house's built-up roof consists of a steel deck welded to the steel joists, with perlite fill, rigid insulation, felt and 3-ply built-up membrane and gravel ballast. Two plastic, rectangular shaped skylights penetrate the roof to provide natural light for two of the bathrooms. Wasco manufactured the "Wascolite Sky Dome," first introduced in 1951 as an aesthetically pleasing, practical solution for bringing natural daylight into buildings. The chimney is constructed of brown and tan brick and has a terra cotta flue lining. The steel framing for the house measures 88' long and 24' wide and 16' long and 12' wide for the carport. Macomber manufactured open web steel joists known as V-Lok Purlins that are welded to 5"x5" V-Lok Box steel columns to support the roof structure. The columns are anchor-bolted to the concrete block foundation wall.

The house's curtain-like exterior walls are constructed of concrete block at the foundation level, vertical "Colorbestos" siding, geometrically arranged aluminum windows, and Weldwood fascia and copper coping at the roof line. Colorbestos was a trade name for colored cement roofing and siding products manufactured in the mid-twentieth century by Johns-Manville, a leading asbestos product manufacturer during the period. Muschenheim's design includes sixty-two windows, providing natural daylight to the interior and views of the surrounding property. Among these are a mix of wood fixed-pane windows, aluminum awning windows and jalousie windows. The specified Ludman Auto-Lok aluminum awning windows were crank-operated; and the panes could be washed from the inside. Several windows were clad with Solex glazing,

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which was initially manufactured as environmental, green tinted, heat absorbing glass. Plate glass and double-strength glass were used for glazing as well. All operable windows were screened.

The floor of the house is made of a "Flexicore" precast concrete slab. The floor slab has cylindrical holes through the core that reduce the weight of the structure. The projecting roof of the carport is supported on 5"x5" steel columns, and has a Weldwood fascia, asbestos cement soffit with ventilated openings and built up copper coping.

North Elevation

The north elevation is similar to the south elevation in form and window placement. The elevation is clad in Colorbestos siding with a ribbon of windows set high on the elevation just under the roof fascia. The shed roof slopes to its lowest point on this elevation; therefore there is a large box gutter present to capture water at the roof edge. Two square downspouts distribute the run-off to a below grade drainage system.

South Elevation

The shed roof is at its highest point on the south elevation, yet because of the sloping topography the elevation measures only 10' from grade to the soffit. The roof overhangs several feet on this elevation to shade the bedroom windows from direct sunlight. The windows are symmetrically arranged each containing three fixed aluminum units with an integrated three pane awning unit for ventilation. The large windows are placed about three feet above grade and extend horizontally to the building corners.

East Elevation

The rear or east facing elevation contains a geometric composition of fixed, awning and jalousie windows and three flush wood entry doors. The composition of the wall and arrangement of windows and openings is different in each bay creating visual interest. In general the wall is comprised of painted concrete block at the basement level, Colorbestos siding at the first floor level and a wide plywood fascia at the roofline above. The basement-level windows are generally fixed-pane wood and aluminum units that provide light to the studio and office. Also at the basement level is a single flush wood door that provides access to the studio. Historic images show that this door was originally a fully glazed unit.

The windows at the main level are also a combination of wood fixed-pane units combined with aluminum awning windows. The windows are set tight up against the wide roof fascia and their heads are angled paralleling the slope of the roof. The east wall of the living room and the walls of the adjacent projecting porch are entirely glazed from floor to ceiling with a combination of fixed wood units and integral aluminum awning windows. The geometric arrangement of the muntins appears to be inspired by Mondrian's grid paintings. Several jalousie windows have been incorporated into the glazed walls of the porch, which is painted bright yellow. A blue, flush wood door set next to the porch provides access to the living room.

The windows at the northern end of the elevation are similar to the others providing natural light and views to the kitchen space. A third entry door, recessed back along the north elevation, provides access to an open stair landing at the half level between the kitchen and the basement.

West Elevation

The front of the house or west elevation faces Heather Way. A series of windows in the center of the elevation is set high on the wall between the painted concrete block foundation and the sloping roof fascia. Similar to those on the other elevations the windows are a combination of fixed wood units inset with integral aluminum awning windows. The positioning of the windows ensures privacy for the main living spaces but allows natural light from the evening sun to penetrate the interior. Like the windows on the rear elevation, the heads of the windows are angled, paralleling the slope of the roof. The roof fascia aligns with the exterior wall resulting in no overhang on the east and west elevations. Located south of the carport, the primary entrance to the residence is a single flush wood door with a large jalousie sidelight. A metal-clad door within the carport leads to the landing between the kitchen and basement level. A third flush wood door with a narrow sidelight is located near the southern, upslope end of the elevation providing access to the bedroom area.

With a few exceptions, most of the exterior colors, or some variation thereof, originally specified by Muschenheim remain present.

Interior

The interior of the house contains approximately 3,300 sf of living space on three levels. Spaces present today include three bedrooms, four bathrooms, living and dining room, kitchen, study, office and basement/shop space. The open floor

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plan is organized around the large central living and dining area with the bedroom wing to the south and the kitchen to the north. Original floor plans indicate the use of screens and curtains to enclose and define some of the spaces. For the most part these elements are no longer present and where indicated in the bedroom areas have been replaced by flush wood doors. In many areas, bookshelves have been constructed to conceal the raw finish of the concrete block walls. Much of the ceiling remains as designed with some additional light fixtures added including track lighting in various spaces and pendant lights in the kitchen.

The front entrance opens into a foyer created by a large freestanding closet that separates the entry from the adjacent dining area. Originally this feature had a natural wood finish; however, it has since been painted. The interior side of the front door is painted red and the concrete wall adjacent to it is painted bright yellow. South of the entry the concrete block exterior wall is covered with built-in wood shelving from the floor to the bottom of the windows. A niche in the center of the shelving unit originally accommodated a small upright piano. The flooring of the entry foyer and along the west exterior wall to the main stair was originally specified as concrete; however, the foyer flooring has been changed to square ceramic tiles. The flooring in the living room and dining area was originally specified as mastic tile but has since been changed to wood flooring.

A small, narrow fireplace, located against the south wall of the living room adjacent to the stair, is constructed of brick and has a projecting black metal hood. The wall adjacent to the fireplace was originally clad in pegboard panels, but has been covered with gypsum drywall. A cushioned sofa designed by Muschenheim remains present along the south wall of the living room. The natural light from the windows along the east wall was originally controlled with curtains which have since been removed. Because of the natural light that penetrates these spaces overhead lighting is limited to a few strategically placed recessed can lights. Plywood valences along the perimeter of the room were designed to conceal fluorescent light strips and curtain tracks. Muschenheim was an early innovator in the use of fluorescent lighting and thought of direct and indirect lighting as an important and integral element of his designs. The north dining room wall is finished with vertical cypress strips that have been painted white. The porch extension adjacent to the dining area creates a open space that projects into the rear yard with views to the exterior patio area. The jalousie windows help control airflow through the space and are placed to take advantage of southwesterly prevailing winds. Renovation of the original L-shaped kitchen in 1993 included the removal of the partition walls that concealed the rear stair. A small opening in the dining room wall east of the kitchen door allows items to be passed between the kitchen and dining area. Muschenheim designed the kitchen with a variety of finishes and incorporated a similar color scheme to the exterior of the house including red and black Linoleum and gray Formica counter tops and backsplashes, white painted built-in wood cabinets, wood shelves and Marlite panels for accents. Wall finishes included Marlite panels and fir plywood over insulating board with square wood cover moulds. Marlite, a manufacturer of wall panel systems, was founded in 1932 in Dover, Ohio. Renovation of the kitchen resulted in the removal of almost all of the original finishes and features within this space. The stair at the north end of the house, which was originally concealed by a wall, is now open to the kitchen. A metal pipe railing inset with plexiglass panels has been installed at the stair. The pipe railing was added in the early 1960s with plywood panel infill. The plexiglass was likely added during the 1990s kitchen renovation.

This bedroom area is elevated a half level above the living room providing a separation between the public and private areas of the house. The stair leading to the bedroom level has a streamlined oak rail with only a few balusters for support. Muschenheim designed a freestanding 5'-4" tall by 3' wide Vimlite screen at the top of the stair for privacy between the bedroom area and main living space. The screen is no longer present. Vimlite was a plastic manufactured by the Celanese Corporation of America. The walls of the hallway have radiuses at their corners and are finished with gum plywood. The master bedroom is slightly larger than the other bedrooms. Several windows along the east wall provide light to the space and there are a series of closets along the south wall. It appears that a wall of closets and small vanity shown on the original drawings along the north wall of the master bedroom were eliminated and the storage was moved to the south wall. The plywood wall finishes have also been eliminated or painted.

The two bathrooms on this level are on the interior of the floor plan and therefore natural light has been provided through overhead skylights. The southernmost bathroom has retained many of its original finishes and features while the bathroom adjacent to the master bedroom has undergone a renovation that resulted in the removal of most of the original fabric. Two sinks, a new bathtub, walk-in shower and new wall and floor tiles were added to the north bathroom.

The southeast bedroom was originally finished with Homasote panels on the east and west walls and a 3' high fir plywood dado with v-joints on the east, west and south walls. Sliding pressed wood panels were installed to cover storage niches above the closets on the north wall. The windows along the south wall are shaded by the extended roof overhang. The southwest bedroom was finished with fir plywood with v-joints on the north wall, fir plywood dado under the windows on the

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south wall and Homasote panels with a 3' high fir plywood dado on the east and west walls. Homasote panels were first introduced in 1916 and were commonly used in building applications for their insulation and weather-resistant properties.

The stair at the south end of the main living space also leads to the basement study and office. Within the study, a large, bank of floor-to-ceiling windows along the east wall provide natural light and views to the rear yard. A built-in bookcase with cabinets below is installed along the north wall. Originally there was a desk installed along the south wall. The office to the south of the study was added in the early 1980s by recapturing unexcavated space beneath the southern end of the house. Also during these renovations, additional storage shelves were installed along the west wall of the study. Since then a bathroom has been installed in this location. The office walls are covered with a built in desk, cabinets and shelving.

A set of cement steps in the northeast corner of the study leads to the lower basement level. The lower level basement space is a long narrow space with storage cabinets along the east and west walls. A partition wall divides the basement from the open stair at the north end of the house. The wood stair leads to an intermediate landing where there is access to the carport and rear yard.

Muschenheim designed the electrical and mechanical systems for his house as well. A gas furnace located in the northwest corner of the basement supplies heat. Also, the incinerator for the chimney is located in the center of the basement. Floor grilles supply air and wall and baseboard registers provide return air to the first floor and bedroom areas. The mechanical system has been upgraded. The original electrical layout included wall, ceiling and floor outlets, single, double and heavy duty outlets, thermostats, exhaust fans, multiple lighting switches, a door bell and telephone service.

Alterations

Alterations to the house are discussed in the narratives above but Muschenheim made several improvements to the house in the early 1960s, late 1970s and 1980s. Drawings available online in the Muschenhiem Digital Archive include documentation of many of these changes; however, it is not entirely clear which were installed and which remained unbuilt. Drawings indicate that in 1962, 1" square steel pipe handrails were added in several locations and in 1978 a curved handrail was installed at the exterior front entrance; however, this rail is no longer present

The drawings for the 1981 office addition beneath the southern end of the house and alterations to the study are available in the collection. These documents show changes were made to the foundation walls and floor to accommodate the new room. The existing vent on the south wall was reset to the center of the wall and a new 4'x2' fixed sash window was installed with a pre-cast concrete lintel. A new picture window and double-hung window were installed on the east wall of the new room. Underpinning was installed to support the existing foundation wall as needed and a new concrete slab on grade with a cement finish was poured after the excess earth was excavated. The new room is square-shaped in plan. A desk on the south wall in the existing study was moved westward to accommodate the entry door to this space. Also within the study, wood shelving was installed on the west concrete block retaining wall at 3'-8" above the floor. Holes were made in the pre-cast hollow core concrete slabs to receive ceiling diffusers for the new space. Drawings also show pressed wood panels and cabinets for drawing storage were installed within the new wood shelving in the office.

A stainless steel sink with a white Formica counter top was added on the west wall, but has since been removed. A new furniture system to match the existing wood shelves has been added to the 1980 room that includes ceiling-height wood shelving with cabinets below on the north and south wall, a table adjacent to the shelving on the south wall and a desk on the east wall. Alterations were made to an existing lavatory in the basement closet to include new Transite panels. Prior to the 1990s asbestos-containing Transite panels were commonly used in building applications for their fireproofing and thermal insulation properties.

Outbuildings

A non-historic shed-roof rectangular plan outbuilding is located along the southern property boundary near the back of the lot. The small outbuilding is clad with vertical wood siding and provides storage for tools and yard equipment. The entrance is oriented to the west and the roof slopes from west to east. A short ramp leads to a pair of double doors on the front of the building.

Integrity

The Muschenheim House has not experienced any significant changes to its exterior but some of the original interior finishes and features have been altered over the course of Muschenheim's occupation and that of subsequent owners of the house. With the exception of the most recent kitchen renovation and a few other changes, most of the changes made to the house were designed and their construction overseen by Muschenheim. The house retains its uniquely modern

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character and remains indicative of Muschenheim's work. The very minor changes and additions that were made over time do not diminish the overall understanding of the architecture.

The house's setting along Heather Way within the Ann Arbor Hills neighborhood has not changed significantly from the time of construction.

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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.)

Property is:

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1954-1990

Significant Dates

1954

1990

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

William Muschenheim

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

William Muschenheim - Architect

Albert Dukek - Contractor

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance for the Muschenheim House is established as 1954 -1990. This is inclusive of the original design and construction and spans the entire period that William Muschenheim lived in the house.

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Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

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

The William and Elizabeth Muschenheim House is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria B and C at the state level for its association with architect and educator William Muschenheim and for its demonstration of the Modern architecture movement in Michigan during the mid-twentieth century. William Muschenheim, who was among the first Americans to study modern architecture in Europe, designed the house for himself and his family after accepting a teaching position at the University of Michigan in 1950. Constructed in 1954, the Muschenheim House is significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as an important example of mid-twentieth century Modern style residential design exhibiting a straightforward and planar aesthetic expression derived from Muschenheim's European-based training. The house demonstrates the innovative use of a prefabricated steel structural system, generally reserved for industrial projects, the use of large expanses of glazing and the strategic application of color as an integral part of the design.

Born and raised in New York City, Muschenheim attended M.I.T and then, from 1925 to 1929, studied abroad at Peter Behrens' Master School of Architecture at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna, Austria. Returning to New York in advance of Walter Gropius' and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's arrival in America, Muschenheim applied his training in the design of a number of important early modern commercial and residential projects in and around New York City working first for Peabody, Wilson & Brown, then in the office of Joseph Urban before starting his own practice in 1933. (Muschenheim's design for the renovation of his father's house is recognized as one of the earliest examples of Modernism on Long Island.) For much of his early career Muschenheim was an active participant in the discourse that was taking place in the urban centers along the eastern seaboard during the seminal period when European modernism was being introduced to the United States. Through his work, both in New York and later in Michigan, his participation in avante garde organizations promoting modernist philosophy such as the Congres Internationale de Architectes Modernes (CIAM) as well as his commitment to educating generations of students in architectural theory and design at the University of Michigan, Muschenheim has made significant contributions to the field of architecture and the dissemination of modernism in America.

The Muschenheim House relates to the historic context *Modernism in Michigan*.

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

Criterion B

Significant Person

William Muschenheim was born on November 7, 1902 in New York City. His family lived near Times Square in a house attached to the Hotel Astor, which was originally conceived and then managed by Muschenheim's uncle, a successful restaurateur. Realizing some success, his uncle brought Muschenheim's father to America and sent him to college where he studied engineering at the Stevens Institute of Technology and then later participated in management of the hotel. William Muschenheim attended the Cutler School and Williams College while he was still in his teens before attending the Massachusetts Institute of Technology where he was enrolled in the architecture program from 1921 to 1924. At M.I.T, Muschenheim received a Beaux Arts oriented training but did not complete his studies before leaving on an extended tour of Europe, at which time he visited many of the most published modern buildings. During the course of his travels he spent a few hours at the Bauhaus in Weimar, Germany, which he said deeply affected him. While in Europe Muschenheim worked briefly in the office of Arthur Korn in Berlin and then applied to Peter Behrens' Master School of Architecture at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna, Austria. He had first become familiar with Behrens' program during a brief exchange he had with a German diplomat several years earlier who had recommended the Academy to him.

With this endorsement and impressed by Behrens' AEG factory buildings Muschenheim enrolled in the school, which he attended from 1925 to 1929. German architect and designer Peter Behrens was instrumental in the founding of the German Werkbund. He began his own architectural practice in 1907 and during the first decades of the twentieth century employed for short periods of time some of the most important architects of the Modern movement including Walter

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Gropius, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and Le Corbusier. Behrens assumed directorship of the Academy in 1922. While enrolled in the Academy, Muschenheim was recognized for his talents, winning the prestigious Peter Behrens Prize in 1927 for a theoretical project he designed for a site in Hampton Bays, New York entitled "House on the Dunes."

After graduating, Muschenheim married Elizabeth Bodanzky in Manheim Germany and then returned to the United States with the intention of starting a practice with classmate Earnst Plischke. This arrangement was not realized and Plischke eventually returned to Europe. During this same period Muschenheim organized the first showing in America of an exhibition of Peter Behrens work and the work of his fellow graduate students (the exhibition included four of his own student projects). The exhibition which had been previously shown in Vienna, Berlin, Essen and Hamburg was first presented in the United States at the Brooklyn Museum in New York. After its debut, the exhibit was widely distributed across the country introducing professional architects, educators and students to Behrens modern designs and the work his students were producing at the Academy.

A few years later in 1931, examples of Muschenheim's work were included in a "store-front" exhibit organized by Philip Johnson called the "Rejected Architects" highlighting the mostly un-built modern designs of several young architects that had been rejected by the selection committee for the Architectural League of New York's annual show. The Rejected Architects exhibit has been referred to as the first formal introduction of the International Style to this country.

In 1929 Muschenheim began working for the prominent New York architectural firm of Peabody, Wilson & Brown where he worked on the renovation of the Hotel Astor along with several residential projects. He stayed with the firm for only a short time and then took a position in Joseph Urban's office. Urban, who emigrated to the United States from Vienna in 1912, spent most of his early career as a theatrical set designer working for the Boston Opera Company, Ziegfeld Follies and the New York Metropolitan Opera. Urban's architectural practice grew significantly in the 1920s as he amassed a large client base of some of New York's most affluent citizens. Muschenheim joined the firm in 1930 and is credited for designing the dance laboratory in the New School for Social Research, one of Urban's most critically acclaimed projects. The design of the New School for Social Research departs from Urban's earlier more eclectic, Art Deco and Art Nouveau-inspired work and incorporates elements of the emerging Modern movement. In addition to Urban's talents as an architect, set designer and illustrator he was also known as an innovative colorist, which led to him being selected as Director of Exterior Color and consultant on lighting for the 1933 Century of Progress International Exposition. Recognized as the first large scale outdoor use of color as an architectural medium the application of color was meant to coordinate and give interest to the varied building types of the exposition and create a "gay atmosphere." In a 1933 *Architectural Forum* article Muschenheim is credited with designing the "entire color scheme for the first year of the Century of Progress Exposition." In the article Muschenheim states that "color, in order to create a positive mood, must be handled not as a pleasing decorative element, but for its intrinsic value as a medium having its own laws of rightness, balance, power, just as form and proportion have theirs. In this sense it should not be used as an adjunct but as an integral part of the architectural whole." It is without a doubt that Muschenheim's experience working with Joseph Urban and contributing to the design of the 1933 Century of Progress Exposition furthered his interest in the use of color as an architectural medium and its application in the design of his own home.

Joseph Urban died in 1933 and shortly thereafter Muschenheim left the firm to establish his own independent practice. He was engaged in private practice from 1934 until 1950 when he accepted a teaching position at the University of Michigan. Throughout the remainder of the 1930s and 1940s he worked primarily on residential projects in New York and Long Island but was also hired for several significant commissions including major alterations to the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum of Non-Objective Art in 1939 and 1947, and also the design of the Marine Transportation Building for the 1939 New York World's Fair (in collaboration with E.J. Kahn and Morrison Broun).

While practicing in New York, Muschenheim became involved in several professional organizations including the Architectural League of New York, the Beaux Arts Institute of Design and the Congres Internationale des Architects Modernes (CIAM). CIAM was an international society founded in 1928 by a group of over 20 European architects organized by Le Corbusier. The objective of the group was to promote and advance the principles of the Modern Movement through meetings and symposiums. The organization addressed a wide range of topics related to architecture, from landscape design to urban planning, and the publications they produced were influential and at times controversial. Muschenheim joined CIAM's American Chapter and would meet regularly for lunch with Walter Gropius, Luis Sert, Knud Lundberg-Holm, Friedrich Kiesler, Harwell Hamilton Harris, Stamo Papadaki and Sigfried Giedion among others.

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In addition, Mushenheim was also among the founders and editors of an architectural magazine called *Plus: Orientations of Contemporary Architecture*, a supplement to *Architectural Forum* that was meant to showcase the Modern Movement in America. The striking graphics for the bi-monthly issue were designed by Herbert Matter and the early issues featured contributions by many important modernist architects of the day including Josef Albers, Marcel Breuer, R. Buckminster Fuller, L. Moholy-Nagy, Richard Neutra, Walter Sanders, Edward Durell Stone, Philip Youtz and Le Corbusier among others. Unfortunately due to the onset of World War II, the magazine only produced three issues before it was discontinued.

Muschenheim's relationship with Knud Lonberg-Holm through CIAM would be instrumental in him being considered for and ultimately accepting a teaching position at the University of Michigan. Following the war, the university and its College of Architecture and Design was swelling in numbers due to the influx of returning veterans starting or resuming their education. Despite having convened a number of symposiums during the 1940s where several of the country's premier architects were assembled to discuss issues facing architects of the day including education (known as the Ann Arbor Conferences), Michigan's program grappled with its identity. Where most architectural schools across the country had by this time moved away from the Beaux Arts system and adopted a Bauhaus approach to architectural training, Michigan maintained a more pluralistic and versatile pedagogy continuing to adhere to the philosophy of "Pure Design" established decades earlier under former dean Emil Lorch. In 1948 Dean Wells Bennett initiated a critical review of the program that resulted in the hiring of several new faculty. At the urging of Lonberg-Holm, who had taught in Ann Arbor, Bennett recruited Muschenheim, along with Theodore C. Larson and Walter Sanders. Muschenheim was the last of the three to accept a position, first joining the faculty as a visiting professor in 1950, then becoming a full professor later that same year. Honored with senior titles, it is said that Muschenheim, Larson, and Sanders became the "design conscience" for the architecture program at Michigan.

In 1954 Muschenheim built his own home on Heather Way in Ann Arbor where he resided for over three decades while teaching at the university and maintaining a modest private practice focused primarily on residential commissions. Within the College of Architecture, Muschenheim taught a variety of courses in architectural history, research and design. He also developed an interest in researching how other institutions around the world approached architectural education, receiving a grant in 1958 to visit schools throughout Europe to review their curricula and student work. He continued this research during subsequent tours completed in 1964 and 1972 visiting architecture schools in all of the remaining continents. He became active in several organizations related to architectural education and authored a number of articles about his research and findings.

Through the work he produced as a student and during the early phases of his career and his participation in the discourse that was taking place in New York during the 1930s, William Muschenheim actively contributed to the introduction and dissemination of Modernism in America. His sphere of influence was expanded to Michigan when he relocated to Ann Arbor and continued to produce new work but also to teach modernist principles to a new generation of architects at the University of Michigan. He is associated with the "Ann Arbor School," a term used to describe the work of a number of architects practicing in and around Ann Arbor at mid-century as manifest primarily in the residential architecture they produced. Collectively these architects embraced the principles of the Modern Movement in their designs which are generally characterized by low-sloped or flat roofs, use of natural materials, the layering and overlapping of simple geometric forms and volumes, lack of ornamentation, strategic and expansive use of glazing to facilitate views and bring natural light into the interior and open and free-flowing floor plans. Many of the architects associated with this body of work shared a common connection with the University of Michigan and its College of Architecture and Design either as graduates of the program who had established their own private practices or like Muschenheim, as faculty who had trained elsewhere but were brought to Ann Arbor to teach. Several of these architects fulfilled dual roles as faculty practitioners working independently on design commissions within the community while at the same time maintaining a teaching appointment at the university.

In the post-war years, Ann Arbor and the surrounding communities realized an influx of new residents who came to the area to work at the university or for other research and technology-related private industry. The positive economic conditions, a shortage of housing and the presence of academics and progressive thinkers provided a steady stream of work for these small independent practitioners and a client base that was accepting of modernist ideals. The university also provided a source for inexpensive student labor but more importantly it served as an incubator for inspiration, collaboration and information exchange. The regular contact these professionals maintained with the university and each

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other enhanced and broadened their working relationships and ensured they stayed engaged with the latest trends and issues facing the profession.

Although examples of residences associated with the Ann Arbor School can be seen throughout the city and in several surrounding communities there is a significant concentration of architect-designed modernist houses in the Ann Arbor Hills neighborhood southwest of downtown and the University of Michigan's central campus. The make-up of the neighborhood illustrates the transition in architectural tastes that was taking place during the mid-twentieth century as many modernist works are intermixed with more traditional revivalist style residences. The work of several architects associated with the Ann Arbor School, including Muschenheim, is evident here demonstrating their contribution to the successful dissemination and acceptance of modernism in Ann Arbor.

In addition to William Muschenheim, other architects whose names are associated with the Ann Arbor School include George Brigham, Robert Metcalf, Walter Sanders, Theodore Larson, Tivadar Balogh, David Osler, Herbert Johe and several others. During the past several decades as land and real estate values have escalated, several residential works by members of this group were demolished in favor of new construction; however, a resurgence in the popularity and appreciation of mid-century design has resulted in the formation of a community-based preservation group and renewed and heightened interest in these architect-designed homes.

During the course of his career Muschenheim authored a number of books on architecture including *Elements of the Art of Architecture* in 1964, and *Why Architecture?* in 1980. He was recognized for his achievements as an educator winning the Sol King Award for Excellence in Teaching Architecture in 1971 and was named Professor Emeritus in 1973. In 1984 he was awarded the Michigan Society of Architects Gold Medal and a fellowship was established in his honor to bring "outstanding young architects from outside the university to teach design on the Michigan campus." He officially retired from the University of Michigan in 1972 but remained active in the academic community until his death in 1990.

Criterion C

Architecture

The Muschenheim House is significant for its association with architect William Muschenheim and as a notable example of Modern residential design. For many architects the design of their own home can be both a manifesto of their personal aesthetic tastes and a laboratory for the exploration of materials, technology and other issues of design. In this case, Muschenheim designed his home in Ann Arbor at the mid-point of his career during a period of transition when he chose to leave private practice in New York and dedicate the remainder of his career to teaching a new generation of architects at the University of Michigan.

Constructed in 1954, the Muschenheim House is significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as an important example of mid-twentieth century Modern Style residential design exhibiting a straightforward and planar aesthetic derived from Muschenheim's European-based training. The house demonstrates the innovative use of a prefabricated steel structural system generally reserved for industrial projects, the use of large expanses of glazing and the strategic application of bold colors as an integral part of the design. The design of the street facing elevation is somewhat restrained when compared to the rear, east-facing elevation which incorporates larger and more numerous areas of glazing and a brightly-colored, transparent projection. The numerous windows on this elevation allow the morning sun to penetrate the interior and provide expansive views of the rear yard.

It was a few years after his arrival in Ann Arbor that Muschenheim designed his residence on Heather Way for himself, his wife and his two teenage children. The house is unique among his residential work and illustrative of his European architectural training. It provides an elegant resolution for a residential program by creating a multi-level floor plan that responds to the sloping topography of the site. The interior arrangement features a single large open volume reserved for living and dining, while the bedrooms and bathrooms are sequestered a half level above, at the south end of the plan. The kitchen is also separated from the main living space accessed by a single doorway and small opening in the wall for transferring plated food to the dining area. A small den, recreation room and Muschenheim's office are located on the basement level.

Departing from his colleagues Larson and Sanders who were also designing and building their own homes in Ann Arbor at the same time, Muschenheim chose not to construct his house out of Unistrut components but instead utilized a steel

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structure with an open web steel joist roof system. Muschenheim's design also incorporates splashes of bold color set against a neutral backdrop both on the interior and exterior of the house (the design utilizes a palette of over 35 different colors). The house was built by local contractor Albert Dukek at a cost of approximately \$45,000.

Muschenheim lived in his house on Heather Way until his death in 1990.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

9. Major Bibliographical References

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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): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property .66

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>17</u>	<u>276508</u>	<u>4682962</u>	3	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	4	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

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

Parcel # 09-09-34-111-008

All of lot 27, Assessor's Plat No. 41.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries include the .66 acre parcel purchased by William Muschenheim in 1954. The house and full extent of the landscape features that contribute to the setting are included within this boundary.

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Rob Yallop
organization Lord, Aeck & Sargent Architecture date June 2011
street & number 213 South Ashley Street telephone 734-827-3930
city or town Ann Arbor state MI zip code 48104
e-mail ryallop@lasarchitect.com

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

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

Photographs:

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

Name of Property: Muschenheim, William and Elizabeth (Bodanzky), House

City or Vicinity: Ann Arbor

County: Washtenaw State: MI

Photographer: Rob Yallop

Date Photographed: April 12, 2012

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

- 1 of 16 View of Muschenheim House looking southeast from Heather Way.
MI_WashtenawCounty_MuschenheimHouse_0001.tif
- 2 of 16 View of Muschenheim House from Heather Way.
MI_WashtenawCounty_MuschenheimHouse_0002.tif
- 3 of 16 View of Muschenheim House looking northeast. .
MI_WashtenawCounty_MuschenheimHouse_0003.tif

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- 4 of 16 View south and east elevations looking north. .
MI_WashtenawCounty_MuschenheimHouse_0004.tif
- 5 of 16 View of rear, east-facing elevation.
MI_WashtenawCounty_MuschenheimHouse_0005.tif
- 6 of 16 View of non-contributing shed and rear of property.
MI_WashtenawCounty_MuschenheimHouse_0006.tif
- 7 of 16 View of basement office added in the early 1980s.
MI_WashtenawCounty_MuschenheimHouse_0007.tif
- 8 of 16 View of Studio looking northeast.
MI_WashtenawCounty_MuschenheimHouse_0008.tif
- 9 of 16 View of southeast bedroom.
MI_WashtenawCounty_MuschenheimHouse_0009.tif
- 10 of 16 View of Master Bedroom.
MI_WashtenawCounty_MuschenheimHouse_0010.tif
- 11 of 16 View of dining area and enclosed porch.
MI_WashtenawCounty_MuschenheimHouse_0011.tif
- 12 of 16 View of Living Room looking south.
MI_WashtenawCounty_MuschenheimHouse_0012.tif
- 13 of 16 View of remodeled Kitchen looking south.
MI_WashtenawCounty_MuschenheimHouse_0013.tif
- 14 of 16 .View Dining Room and main entry looking north.
MI_WashtenawCounty_MuschenheimHouse_0014.tif
- 15 of 16 View of main entry.
MI_WashtenawCounty_MuschenheimHouse_0015.tif
- 16 of 16 View of stair between basement and intermediate landing.
MI_WashtenawCounty_MuschenheimHouse_0016.tif

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Property Owner:

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

name Karl and Kristin Shaffer
street & number 1251 Heather Way telephone _____
city or town Ann Arbor state MI zip code 48104

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.410060 et seq.).
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.