

**NORTH CAROLINA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE**  
**Office of Archives and History**  
**Department of Natural and Cultural Resources**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**Ramsay, Sr., John E. and Jean Anne Ferrier, House**

Salisbury, Rowan County, RW2448, Listed 04/15/2025

Nomination by John E. Ramsay, Jr., Retired Architect, Ramsay, Burgin Smith Architects

Photographs by John E. Ramsay, Jr., April 2024



Main Entrance Drive & Carport – North Elevation



South Living Room and Sunroom

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: Ramsay, Sr., John E. and Jean Anne Ferrier, House

Other names/site number: Ramsay-Hurley House

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: 16 Pine Tree Road

City or town: Salisbury State: NC County: Rowan

Not For Publication:  Vicinity:

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

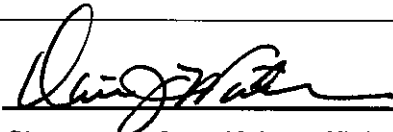
I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

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:

A B X C D

	<u>Feb. 24, 2025</u>
Signature of certifying official/Title: State Historic Preservation Officer    Date	
_____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

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

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**Signature of commenting official:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

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**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	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

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**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT

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**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

BRICK, FLAGSTONE, WOOD (Siding), GLASS

### 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.)

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### Summary Paragraph

Designed and built in 1951 and 1952, the John E. and Jean Anne Ferrier Ramsay, Sr. House is an example of Mid Century-Modernist Architecture. Located in Salisbury, Rowan County's seat of government, the Ramsay House is an innovative multilevel modernist structure specifically designed for a pie shaped, south facing and sloping site with limited road frontage. The structure conforms to but does not impose itself on the site. It seems to be nestled there, as if it had grown there alongside the towering native pines, both commanding the view of this adjacent golf course green yet breathing in the natural landscape and southern climate. Modern houses "are characterized by open floor plans, extensive use of glass, low-pitched roofs and aesthetic geometry."<sup>1</sup> For example, the extensive south facing glass windows working in conjunction with the roof overhangs and catwalk trellis, allow for maximum solar gain in the winter when the sun is low yet minimum solar gain in the summer shaded by both trees and the trellis. All the existing houses in the neighborhood situated along Pine Tree Road were built between 1930 and 1950

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<sup>1</sup> Undated personal correspondence between nomination author and George Smart, HAIA.

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and for the most part predated the post WWII Modernist movement. The Ramsay House was the first Modernist house built on Pine Tree Road and one of the first Modernist houses built in Salisbury NC.

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## Narrative Description

### Landscape / Setting

### One Contributing Site

The John Erwin Ramsay House built in 1951 occupies a 1.34-acre parcel combining what were originally two smaller pie shaped lots in the Pine Tree Road neighborhood in Salisbury, NC. The Pine Tree Road neighborhood was developed in 1926 concurrently with the construction of the Salisbury Country Club. Plans for the residential lots adjacent to a golf course, designed by legendary Golf Architect Donald J. Ross, (1872-1948) were dated August 25, 1926.<sup>2</sup>

The L-shaped, Modernist, split-level-plan dwelling built with Roman Brick and expansive south facing glass differs in architectural character and orientation from the neighboring dwellings, existing at the time, most of which are more traditionally styled houses typical in the 1950s. The neighborhood, which was bounded by the golf course on all sides is served by Pine Tree Road which terminates in a triangle shaped loop. The Pine Tree Road triangle includes twenty wooded lots that vary from .46 to 1.68 acres, averaging approximately .63 acres per lot.<sup>3</sup> The adjacent golf course occupies low lying flood plain. The Ramsay House site grade slopes significantly down to the south from the limited street frontage to the golf hole #1 green of the Country Club golf course (Figure 4: Site Plan).

Southern exposure, topography and golf course proximity influenced the Ramsay House orientation and design. The design maximizes connectivity with the natural environment via large plate-glass windows and sliding doors on the south and east elevations, a sunporch, sunroom, deck, and flagstone patios. The interior flagstone is contiguous with the exterior flagstone and visually appears to bring the outside in. The north elevation appears to be single-story when viewed from the street (Photo 1), but the elevation change allows for above grade lower-level walls on the south and east elevations (Photo 4).

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<sup>2</sup> Rowan County plat map. Club Development Company, Plan dated 1925. See Figure 1.

<sup>3</sup> Rowan County Tax Records. See Figure 3.

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Deciduous and evergreen trees, including Japanese maples, woody and flowering shrubs, including azaleas and perennials with English ivy groundcover accent the Ramsay House yard. The original landscape plan designed by the Architect has been supplemented over the years by the current owner.

### **Pergola**

### **One Non-contributing Structure**

Constructed ca. 1994 by the current owners (Hurleys), a free-standing wood frame pergola was added on the Southeast side of the house. The free-standing pergola is less than 50 years old and therefore Non-Contributing; the wood frame structure serves to conceal the more utilitarian (AC equipment) house components. Both the pergola design and construction are architecturally compatible with the house and site development.

### **Ramsay House**

### **One Contributing Building**

#### ***Exterior***

The property combines two pie shaped lots with limited street frontage on a sloping lot. This presented a construction challenge and was a property sale deterrent for the typical new homeowner who apparently wanted the house of the day which typically was a ranch or two-story brick colonial. Homes that maximized street frontage were preferred. The fact that the two sloping lots were located on the number one green of a Donald Ross designed golf course escaped most. The property was one of the last to sell in the neighborhood. None of these were concerns for young architect John Erwin Ramsay. He knew and understood the site's potential for passive solar design, and use of local materials. The lot challenges were an advantage to Ramsay. He golfed. He loved his native NC pines, and most of all, he knew he would be living cloistered from street traffic in the solitude of this site. He would make this his home (Figure 4: Site Plan).

The original L-shaped residence is sheathed with Roman Brick and both horizontal and vertical shiplap siding. The original roof was built-up asphalt felt and gravel but has been replaced with granulated architectural shingles. The open-ended gutters from the original design remain.

The low-pitched gable roof has deep eaves and a catwalk trellis on the southern exposure. North of the primary entrance, the roof extends to cover a two-bay carport with a brick foundation wall. A rectangular brick chimney rises from the roof ridge (Photos 1 & 5).

A flagstone entrance porch edged with brick connects the carport to the primary entrance. A single-leaf wood door and glass storm door are flanked with opaque glass sidelights and a trapezoidal transom which conforms to the sloping roof above. The flagstone continues through

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the front door into the interior vestibule. The kitchen service entrance, a single-leaf wood door is located down a flight of concrete steps from the entrance porch (Photo 2).

The expansive plate-glass windows and sliding doors on the east and south elevations open into the living room and dining room. Innovative ventilation and masonry massing helped keep the house comfortable year-round. Mechanical air conditioning was not added to the house until the early 1970's.

### ***Alterations***

The 1955 sunroom and east porch addition, also designed by Ramsay, includes full glass single undivided light windows as well. The south elevation of the sunroom is cantilevered 3'6" above the grade below (Photos 4 & 6).

At the east elevation of the 1993 master bedroom addition, wood steps rise to a wood deck with a simple wood railing that opens to the suite interior. The design of the addition is sensitive to the original structure maintaining the historic integrity. The north and west elevations are brick and wood sided with minimal windows for both energy efficiency and privacy.

### ***Interior***

The Ramsay House has a split-level plan characterized by staggered floor levels accessed by short sets of stairs. Once through the main entrance, the flagstone hall opens to a flight of open stairs protected by a custom iron stair rail descending to a dramatic living room with a large fireplace. A paneled wall hiding stereo equipment surrounds the large fireplace and hearth. The exposed masonry walls are laid with long narrow Roman Brick which emphasize the overall horizontal massing of the residence. During the winter months, the walls capture the sun's warmth and radiate the heat into the living room. Wood encased steel beams support the 17-foot-high living room ceiling that extends to the adjacent library/den on the upper level (Photo 9).

The east and south elevations incorporate maximum glass picture windows. Living area windows extend from floor to ceiling and conform to the sloped ceiling above. A horizontal row of operable transom windows between the upper and lower fixed glass windows and a sliding door on the lower level could be opened for ventilation (Photos 5 & 6).

A guest room and library/den are up an adjacent flight of stairs protected by the same custom iron stair rail. Wood encased steel beams support the 17-foot-high living room ceiling that extends into the adjacent library/den. The library/den has a built-in wall of bookshelves and overlooks the living area below. Mrs. Ramsay would sit at her desk writing notes and monitor



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the children's activities in the living room below <sup>4</sup>. The wood grain veneer on the storage room door in the library/den matches the adjacent wall paneling helping to conceal the door.

The guest room retains the original bathroom with marble bathtub surround and a built-in wardrobe. The exterior bedroom windows feature an all-glass corner window. In the winter of 1971, Mr. Ramsay's future daughter-in-law compared being in the guest room to living in a treehouse with snow swirling around the top branches of the sweet gum trees. <sup>5</sup>

The original bedroom wing had a Master Bedroom suite and two adjacent bedrooms separated by closets. A large three compartment bathroom with private spaces for tub/shower, twin lavatories and toilet served the bedroom wing (Figure 5; Floor Plan 1950). A 1993 addition/renovation by the current owner has modified the bedrooms and created two separate bathrooms.

Bedroom areas combine windows above storage cabinets below. The base of the cabinets could be opened to the exterior allowing for cross ventilation to cool the children sleeping in custom designed bunk beds. With the addition of central air conditioning, the original ventilation features are no longer used.

The interior of the central living and dining area retains many original character defining features. The use of natural materials maintains continuity between the interior and exterior. Flagstone floors continue from the interior to the exterior. Roman Brick walls continue at both the interior and exterior. Exposed ceiling beams, wood paneling above the fireplace, comfortable 6" rise and 12" tread steps between floor levels, and a sunporch with flagstone floors are original. Gypsum board walls have a smooth painted finish, while lapped ceiling panels are textured.

In the dining area under the library/den, many of the original built-in concealed storage cabinets remain. The cabinets have flat-panel doors, with drop-down doors and no visible hardware (Photo 8). In the living room, a flagstone hearth extends the length of the room (Photo 10). A continuous masonry mantel shelf extends across above the fireplace with paneling above that has concealed storage for AV equipment.

On the basement level, the stairs terminate in the mechanical equipment room which is adjacent to a work/storage room with high windows to the exterior. The space was originally used by the Ramsay family as a woodworking shop. In 1962, space under the carport was excavated and developed with masonry walls and ceiling as a home office for Mr. Ramsay. It could also be used as an emergency shelter. The space is no longer being used.

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<sup>4</sup> John E. Ramsay Jr recollection.

<sup>5</sup> Sue Hubbard Ramsay recollection.

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In 1993, the current owners, Jim and Gerry Hurley, commissioned Charlotte Architect Ron Morgan to design a new bedroom suite together with additions and renovations of the original bedroom and bathroom area. The 1959 kitchen was also renovated. New base and wall cabinets and appliances were added and a peninsula containing an oven separating the cooking area and breakfast dining area was removed. Air conditioning and a wet bar were added to the sunroom porch and some of the windows were replaced.

### *Assessment of Integrity*

The Ramsay House possesses the seven qualities of historic integrity; location, setting, feeling, association, design, materials, and workmanship considered important for National Register eligibility. The dwelling maintains integrity of location as it stands on its original site in an area that remains residential and retains integrity of setting. The wooded 1.34-acre lot provides appropriate surroundings in keeping with the dwelling's character, thus preserving integrity of feeling and association.

The Ramsay House also displays a high degree of integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. The interior retains a split-level plan and many original character-defining features, with the public rooms being the most distinctive. In those areas, paneled accent walls, built-in bookshelves, original Roman Brick interior and exterior walls (Photo 5) and flagstone floors remain. Although now painted, originally stained, wood ceiling beams span the living/dining room (Photo 9). The 1993 removal of the oven between the kitchen and breakfast room created a space similar to the original 1950 kitchen (See Figure 5; Main Floor Plan 1950). Additions to the sunroom included a bar at its west but its inset placement did not compromise the architectural integrity. Full height windows allow light to permeate the interior. Original full-height wood shelves fill most of the walls between the library and the guest bedroom. The guest bedroom retains the original bathroom fixtures, a built-in wardrobe and an all-glass corner window. Original elements in the bedroom wing include windows above storage cabinets.

The 1994 Master Bedroom Suite addition reflects the architectural character of the original structure. Other modifications during the 1993 renovations were largely cosmetic and do not adversely impact the character-defining features of the house's overall plan or form. High quality construction and craftsmanship, characteristic of the original construction, remains evident throughout.

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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**

1951-1955  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1951  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

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

**Cultural Affiliation**

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

**Architect/Builder**

Ramsay, Sr. John Erwin (Architect)  
Pinkston, Hugh D. General Contractor (Original Construction)  
\_\_\_\_\_

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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.)

The Ramsay House was one of the first modernist houses constructed in Salisbury, NC. Located at 16 Pine Tree Road, Ramsay's personal residence was his third design in the neighborhood following his first modernist design at 12 Oak Road which dates to 1947. The Ramsay House became a design laboratory for many of his future commissions. Rooted in the design ethos of Frank Lloyd Wright with Ramsay's own innovative ventilation techniques, the August 1952 issue of the *Architectural Record* featured the Ramsay residence. The house was given an Award of Merit by AIA North Carolina in 1955 (Figure 10: NC AIA Award of Merit). Other modernist houses by Ramsay were featured in both *Good Housekeeping* (January 1956) and *Southern Architect*, published by the North Carolina Chapter, American Institute of Architects, December 1962.

The locally significant John E. and Jean Anne Ferrier Ramsay Sr. House is eligible for individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C in the Area of Architecture for its embodiment of, at the time of construction, an innovative architectural design and the introduction of ground-breaking passive-solar technology to heat and cool the dwelling and the use of distinct characteristics of the Mid-Century Modernist aesthetic. The Period of Significance for the Ramsay House begins in 1951, the year of completion of the dwelling's construction and ends in 1955, the year of completion of the visually and stylistically compatible sunroom addition.

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

***John Erwin Ramsay, Sr. (1915-1991)***

John Ramsay demonstrated an aptitude for design and construction beginning in grade school. His first habitable structure was a log cabin built with some high school friends. He received an undergraduate degree in Fine Arts from the University of North Carolina in 1938 that paved the way for Ramsay's entry into Yale University's School of Architecture. While at Yale, Ramsay gained respect for the luminaries of the design world just before World War II, including Mies van der Rohe, Walter Gropius, and especially Frank Lloyd Wright. His credo became,

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“Significant architecture comes only from the aesthetic application of logic to housing the needs of man.”

“As a strong proponent of Modernist architecture, Ramsay designed many award-winning Modernist residences and buildings, including the Rowan County Health and Agricultural Building, Alderman Studios, the American Square showroom for American of Martinsville Furniture in Thomasville, the Robertson Community Center in Salisbury, and the striking Fairfield Building, now the Broyhill Convention Center in Lenoir, NC.

Ramsay's design talents extended to traditional structures as well, including the First Presbyterian Church and Rowan Public Library in Salisbury. He was president of the North Carolina Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIANC) in 1951 and became a Fellow (FAIA) in 1964. He served for many years as President of the NC Board of Architecture and was Vice president of the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards. Ramsay's architectural practice spanned 50 years. He retired from practice in 1989 and died in 1991. In Raleigh, most people don't know that in 1954, Ramsay designed the Chapel at Dorothea Dix Hospital. Two of his three sons, John and KC, became architects.”<sup>6</sup>

After his death, the *Salisbury Post* Editorial for November 19, 1991 had the following to say, in part, about John Ramsay.

*“When a proud old building falls, it leaves a big empty space against the sky. So, it is with John Erwin Ramsay, distinguished Salisbury Architect and Civic Leader. His death at age 76 still leaves a profound sense of loss in the community he served so ably.*

*To him, a building was not just a box in which to live or do business. It was the highest expression of human aspiration. There was about him the air of unrecognized genius, the profit not always adequately honored in his own town.*

*He surely did more than any other person to shape Salisbury's post-World War II appearance. When you talk about the First Presbyterian Church people worship in, the Rowan Public Library they read in, the Robertson College-Community Centre they entertain in, the YMCA they exercise in, or the Department of Social Services they help each other in, you're talking about John Ramsay.*

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<sup>6</sup> *John Erwin Ramsay FAIA: Portrait of an Architect* by Junita Bouser 1984

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*When others pass from the scene, you wonder what kind of monument to build them. That's not a problem in the case of John Ramsay. His Creations stand all around us as living, loving monuments to one man and his magnificent obsession."*<sup>7</sup>

"Ramsay's son John points out that if his house was evaluated by today's LEED guidelines it would receive points for Site Selection, Reduced Site Disturbance, Storm Water Management, Landscape and Exterior Design to reduce Heat Islands, Water Efficient Landscaping, Resource Reuse, Local/ Regional Materials, Increase Ventilation Effectiveness, Daylight & Views, and Innovation in Design. Ramsay was clearly ahead of his time."<sup>8</sup>

### ***Modernist Architecture Context***

"Modern architecture of the post-World War II period released a creative spirit in the profession and allowed architects to explore vast possibilities in design and construction. Stylistic rules for buildings, such as the Gothic or neoclassic revival, gave way to bold experiments in design, structure, and materials. The completion of the 1953 Dorton Arena in Raleigh, with dramatic intersecting parabolic arches, symbolized the ambition for progressive architecture in North Carolina.

The School of Design at NC State University served as the cradle of Modern architecture in North Carolina at mid-century, but several architects and firms embraced the principles of Modern design across the state."

"John Erwin Ramsay, Sr. (1915-1991), from Salisbury, North Carolina, was one of the architects who endorsed new ideas in architecture and sought to work with clients who shared his interests in the merits of contemporary design. Like many of the state's architects, however, Ramsay also offered design services to his clients in just about any style, depending on their needs and their preferences. His forty-year practice included restorations, and rehabilitations in historic Salisbury, in addition to Modern residences and commercial buildings.

### ***Modernist Architecture in Salisbury***

After serving in the US Navy between 1941 and 1946, Ramsay founded Salisbury's second architectural firm in 1946. Salisbury, which was established in 1753, remained a traditional town

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<sup>7</sup> *Salisbury Post* Editorial by Stephen L. Bouser, Editor, published November 19, 1991.

<sup>8</sup> NC Modernist. Modernist Archive Inc., George Smart HAIA, CEO

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proud of its history. Its architecture reflected its colonial and antebellum roots. Ramsay's interest in modern design did not always mirror the town Leaders' preferences in architecture. The challenges to this Modern architect in Salisbury ranged from a limited clientele to conservative financial institutions unwilling to back contemporary design projects.

Despite the opposition, Ramsay designed many buildings that reflected his devotion to progressive architecture. One of Ramsay's most rewarding projects was the College Community Centre at Catawba College in Salisbury. The building blended Modern design with a respect for the surrounding Georgian-style campus, offering a progressive colonnade surrounding two sides of the building."<sup>9</sup>

John Erwin Ramsay was a contemporary of NCSC School of Design faculty members Dean Henry Kamphoefner and George Matsumoto. Kamphoefner regularly sent students to Ramsay's office in Salisbury when he headed the school because he felt his students would benefit from Ramsay's work in contemporary architecture. Ramsay's son, John Jr. is a graduate of the NCSU School of Design and studied under both Kamphoefner and modernists Harwell Hamilton Harris. In addition to students, Ramsay employed architectural associates from England, Poland, Korea and Turkey. Most of the students and international associates were exposed to design details using thin, horizontal, Roman brick, naturally finished wood paneling, and extensive glass to effectively integrate interior and exterior spaces. Much like the residential work of Matsumoto's own modernist flat-roofed, box-like house, finished in 1954 (also a National Register Property), Ramsay's subsequent similar residential commissions during the same time period incorporated Frank Lloyd Wright's warm design principles and efficient Mies van der Rohe forms. The 1950 Ramsay House and subsequent Ramsay designs are carefully integrated into their settings and constructed with locally sourced organic materials.

Modernist Greensboro, NC Architect, Edward Lowenstein was an architectural contemporary of John Ramsay. The National Register Advisory Committee (NRAC), North Carolina's state review board, recommended the Edward and Frances Lowenstein residence (GF9184) in Greensboro for National Register listing. Charlotte architect A.G Odell and Raleigh Architects G. Milton Small and F. Carter Williams were professional associates and personal friends. Carter Williams and John Ramsay served together for many years while on the N.C. Board of Architecture when Ramsay was President.

Prior to 1940, there were no Modernist Architecture structures in Salisbury, NC. Most Salisbury subdivisions planned both before and soon after World War II contained only modest, traditionally styled dwellings.

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<sup>9</sup> Papers and Drawings of John Erwin Ramsay Sr., Acquired; David Jackson, Special Collections FOCUS North Carolina State University, 1998 Vol. 18, No,2



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Only a small number of Salisbury residences are truly Modernist in design, and each stands out in neighborhoods of more traditional houses. The earliest examples designed by Ramsay embody a softer, more organic approach to Modernism than the hard lines of the International Style. The low, horizontal residences blend in with their settings, reflecting the influence of Frank Lloyd Wright's Usonian Houses which were economical and efficiently planned buildings constructed of natural materials. Expansive windows and sliding-glass doors facilitated connectivity between the interior and exterior. Common interior features included expressed structural components, flagstone floors, wood wall and ceiling sheathing, built-in furniture and cabinetry, solar enhanced heating, and passive cooling. The 1950 Ramsay Residence incorporates all these components pioneering the Mid-Century Modernist Movement in Salisbury, NC.

“In 1941, Ramsay graduated from Yale University with a master’s degree in architecture. As part of his education, Ramsay was exposed to visiting professors like Wallace Harrison and Max Abramovitz. Students were urged to use their creative talents, not emulate traditional work. Ramsay rose to the challenge.

Ramsay found that he admired Frank Lloyd Wright as well as three representatives of the International School of Architecture; Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe and Walter Gropius. “The last three produce uncommonly efficient spaces.” Ramsay said, but he was also drawn to the warmth and character that came from the designs of Wright.

Ramsay adopted the planning skills of the International School of Architecture and the warmth of Wright.”<sup>10</sup>

### ***Country Club Neighborhood: Historical Background***

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<sup>10</sup> *John Erwin Ramsay FAIA: Portrait of an Architect*, by Juanita Bouser 1984, p.15

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After returning from WWII military service in the US Navy, John Erwin Ramsay opened an architectural practice in his hometown of Salisbury, NC. One of his first commissions in 1947 was the residence at 12 Oak Road designed for Mr. and Mrs. Robert Haungs, now owned by the Don Clement family. The house was designed to take advantage of passive solar heating and natural ventilation. The fireplace masonry had air intake openings at the bottom and air discharge openings above to maximize heating efficiency. The low-cost structure with a shed roof was characteristic of the International Style. The innovative structure, built among more traditional houses existing in the neighborhood, attracted a lot of derogatory comments and the original owner never moved in.



*Haungs-Clement House - 1947  
Photo by Grey Stout*

The 1949, a residence designed for Dr. J.R. Mc Cartney at 17 Oak Road featured many innovative energy efficient design features, but the design using a gable roof attracted admiration rather than derision and led to other Country Club commissions.



*McCartney House - 1949.  
Photo by John E. Ramsay Jr.*

The Country Club Golf course in Salisbury, NC was designed by the legendary Golf Architect, Donald J. Ross in 1925 (Figure 1: Club Development Company Plan). Residential lots were developed around the golf course starting in 1926. The majority of the residential lots are adjacent to the golf course. The golf course opened in 1929. All residential construction built around the golf course between 1930-1950 was traditional. No modernist homes were built in the neighborhood until John Ramsay introduced the Modernist Movement in 1947. The Ramsay residence at 16 Pine Tree Road is the third modernist home designed by John Ramsay.

As a young architect, Frank Lloyd Wright developed his early residential architectural style in the Oak Park neighborhood of Chicago, IL. Between 1949 and 1958, young architect John Ramsay,

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who admired the work of Wright, developed and refined his residential architectural style in the Country Club Golf course neighborhood of Salisbury, NC.

Many of the innovative design details used in his Pine Tree Road residence were incorporated into nine additional residential designs by Ramsay. Site planning to maximize the benefits of solar exposure, large windows to provide natural light and exposure to the exterior, and open plans with high ceilings anchored with large fireplaces were common design elements.

In 1981, the Ramsay House was sold to Jim and Gerry Hurley. The Hurley family were publishers of the *Salisbury Post* newspaper. Mrs. Hurley said when Jim walked into the house for the first time he exclaimed, "We'll take it!". She went on to report that after living in the Ramsay house for over 43 years, the house is growing on her.<sup>11</sup>

Later in 1981, after the sale of 16 Pine Tree Road to the Hurleys and approaching retirement, John and Jean Anne Ramsay bought the house he had previously designed in 1958 for Bill Stanback at 1722 Park Road. The master bedroom suite, living room, dining room and kitchen were all located on the same level. That arrangement especially appealed to Mrs. Ramsay.<sup>12</sup>



*Stanback House - 1961*

*Photo by John Erwin Ramsay Sr. FAIA*

### ***Historic Salisbury Foundation Endorsement***

To date, no formal study has been done, but largely because of Ramsay's architectural contributions to the Salisbury Country Club neighborhood, the Historic Salisbury Foundation is actively pursuing a historic district in the neighborhood that includes the Ramsay houses.

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<sup>11</sup> John E, Ramsay Jr. conversation with Gerry Hurley while taking photographs April 8, 2024

<sup>12</sup> John E. Ramsay Jr. recollection.

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***Statement of Archaeological Potential***

The North Carolina Historic Preservation Office solicited a statement of potential archaeological significance from the North Carolina Office of State Archaeology. Micheal Nelson, Assistant State Archaeologist offered the following:

“I have reviewed the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) nomination for the John E. & Jean Ferrier Ramsay, Sr. House (also known as the Ramsay-Hurley House) (RW2448), 16 Pine Tree Road, Salisbury Country Club, Rowan County, NC. There are no previously recorded archaeological sites located within the immediate vicinity of the house. The house was constructed in 1951 and is of the Modernist style (one of the first in Salisbury). The property is unlikely to contain intact and significant archaeological resources below the surface that either predate or contribute to the period of significance of the building due to the site’s location and modern development. As a result, I do not recommend a statement of archaeological potential for this National Register eligible property.”

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Bouser, Juanita, *John Erwin Ramsay FAIA: Portrait of an Architect*, 1984

Bouser, Stephen L. Editor, *Salisbury Post* Editorial, published November 19, 1991

NC Modernist. Modernist Archive Inc., George Smart HAIA, CEO  
<https://ncmodernist.org/Ramsay> Website accessed July 2024

Rowan County Department of Tax Administration. Real estate data

Papers and Drawings of John Erwin Ramsay, Sr., Acquired; Jackson David, Special Collections.  
FOCUS North Carolina State University, 1998 Vol. 18, No.2

Ramsay Family Archives (House Plans, Photos, News Clippings etc.). In possession of John E. Ramsay, Sr. descendants.

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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: N.C State University Library Special Collections  
Ramsay Family Archives

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** RW2448

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### 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** 1.34 acres

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: 35.684062 Longitude: -80.464829

2. Latitude: Longitude:

3. Latitude: Longitude:

4. Latitude: Longitude:

**Or**

#### UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or  NAD 1983

1. Zone: Easting: Northing:

2. Zone: Easting: Northing:

3. Zone: Easting: Northing:

4. Zone: Easting : Northing:

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

The nominated property consists of the Rowan County tax parcel ID # 041 016 and PIN 5760-11-57-0171 (1.34 acre), as indicated by the heavy solid line on the enclosed boundary map.  
Scale: one-inch equals approximately 192 feet.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nominated tract is the property historically associated with the John Erwin and Jean Anne Ferrier Ramsay House and provides appropriate surroundings in keeping with the dwelling's character and site significance.

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### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title: John E. Ramsay Jr.  
organization: Retired Architect: Ramsay, Burgin Smith Architects, Salisbury NC  
street & number: 809 Runnymede Road  
city or town: Raleigh state: NC zip code: 27607  
e-mail johnramsayjr@gmail.com  
telephone: (919) 602-4353  
date: July 2024

Note: In addition to being the son of the Architect, nomination author John E. Ramsay Jr. grew up in the Ramsay residence, and learned about architecture, while working with his father for many years. Lessons retained include, "Never settle for mediocracy". and "Don't confuse novelty with good design." Ramsay Jr. graduated from the NC State University School of Design with Honors in 1972 and has practiced Architecture for over 46 years.

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### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **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.)



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## 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: John E. & Jean Ferrier Ramsay Sr. House

City or Vicinity: Salisbury

County: Rowan

State: North Carolina

Photographer: John E. Ramsay, Jr.

Date Photographed: April 8, 2024

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

- 1 of 10. Main Entrance Drive & Carport - North Elevation
- 2 of 10. Main Entrance to Exterior Carport
- 3 of 10. Southeast Sunroom & East Porch addition (1955)
- 4 of 10. Southeast Dining & Kitchen below Library & Guest Room above
- 5 of 10. South Sunroom & Living Room
- 6 of 10. South Living Room & Sunroom
- 7 of 10. South - West with 1955 & 1993 additions
- 8 of 10. Dining Room with storage open
- 9 of 10. Living Room 1
- 10 of 10. Living Room 2

**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.

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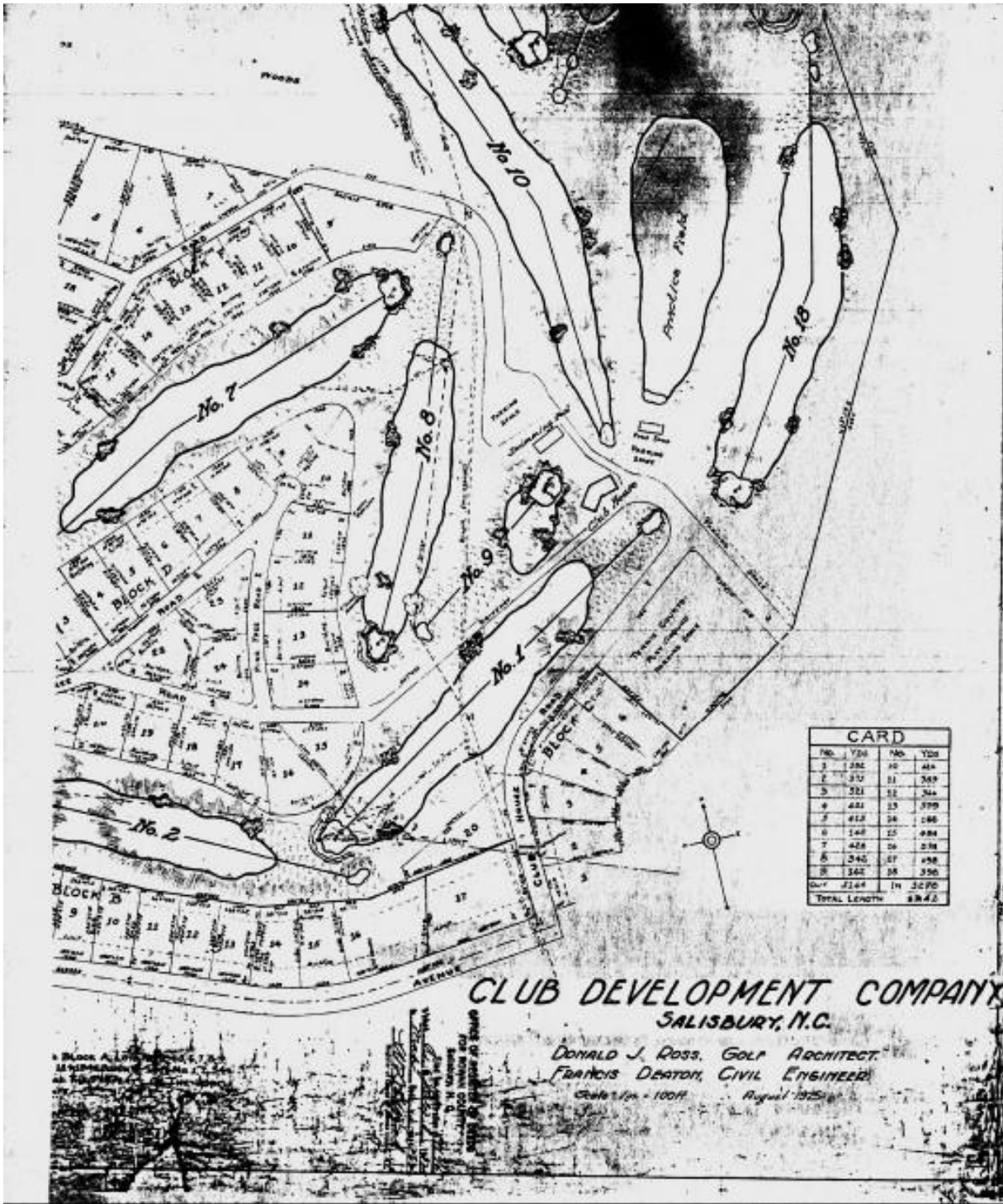


Figure 1: Club Development Company Plan 1925

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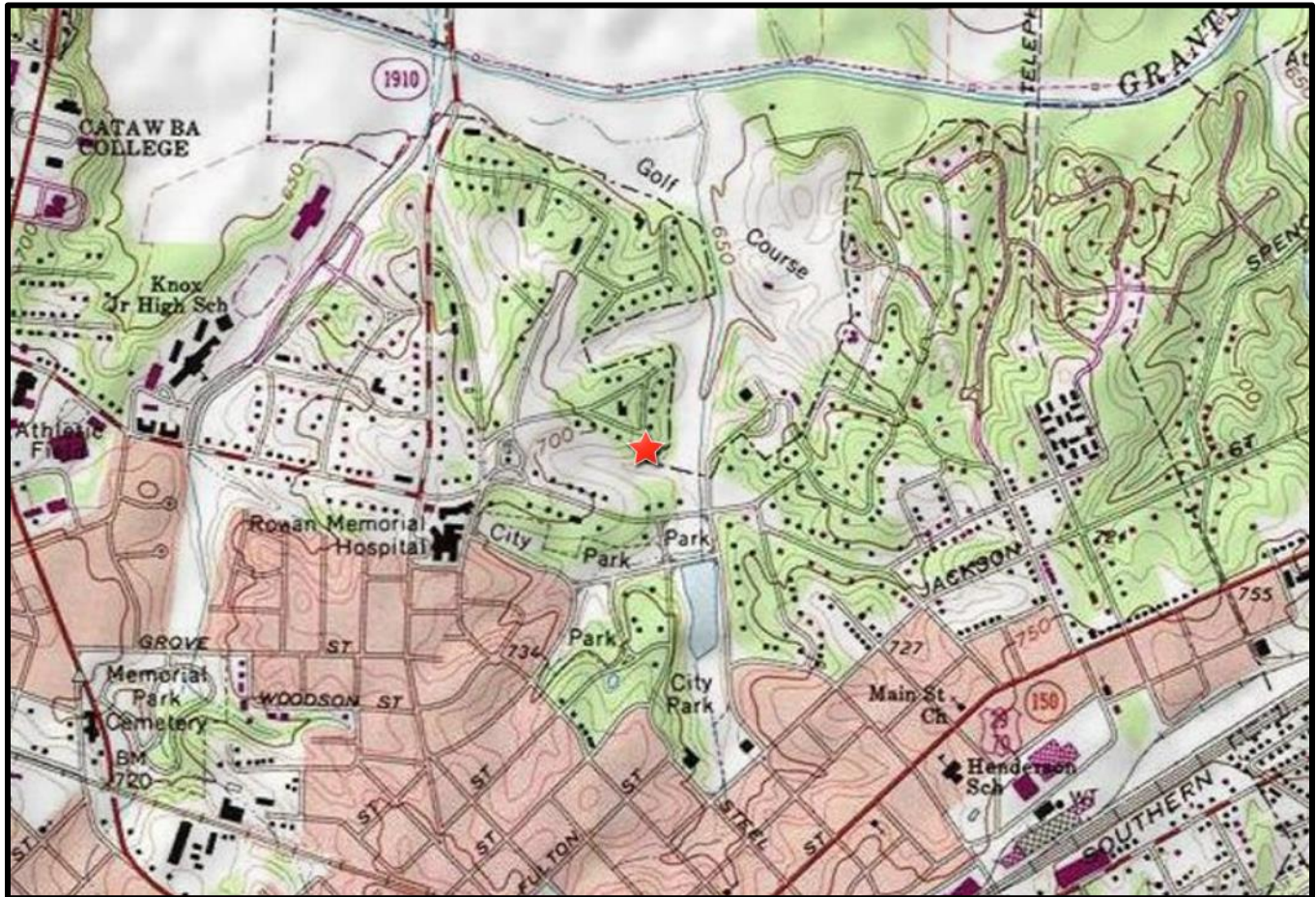


Figure 2: Location Map. John E. Ramsay, Sr. House

Map oriented to the North. Vertices are 35.684062 (lat.) / -80.464829 (long)

Red star indicates property location.

Map Source: ESRI, copyright 2013. National Geographic Society, i-cubed.

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Figure 3: National Register Boundary Map

The nominated parcel (Ramsay, John E. Sr & Jean Anne F. House) is delineated by the heavy red line. The basemap is from the Rowan County Tax Assessor’s Office.

Map oriented to the North. Vertices are 35.684062 (lat.) / -80.464829 (long)

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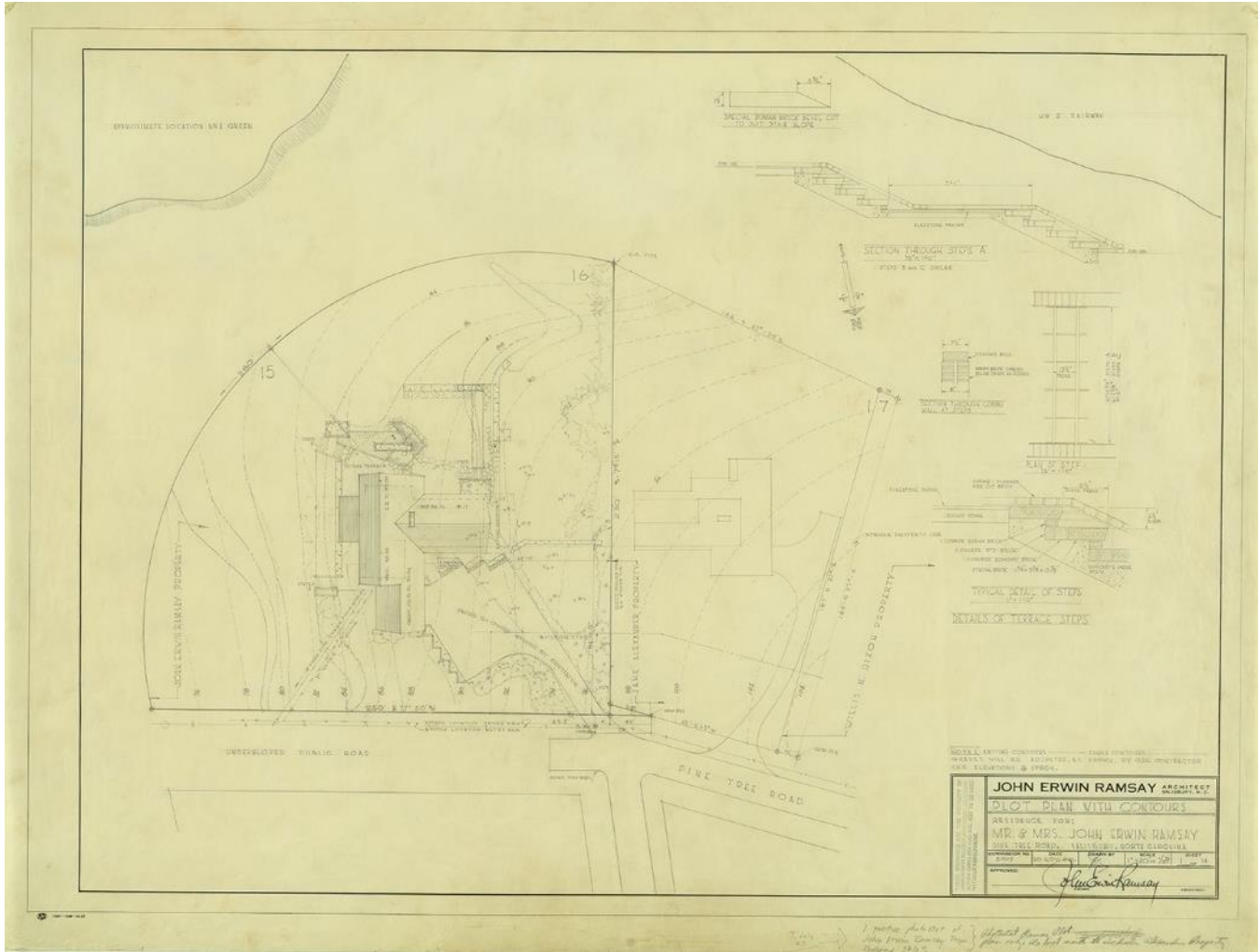


Figure 4: Site Plan 16 Pine Tree Road 1950

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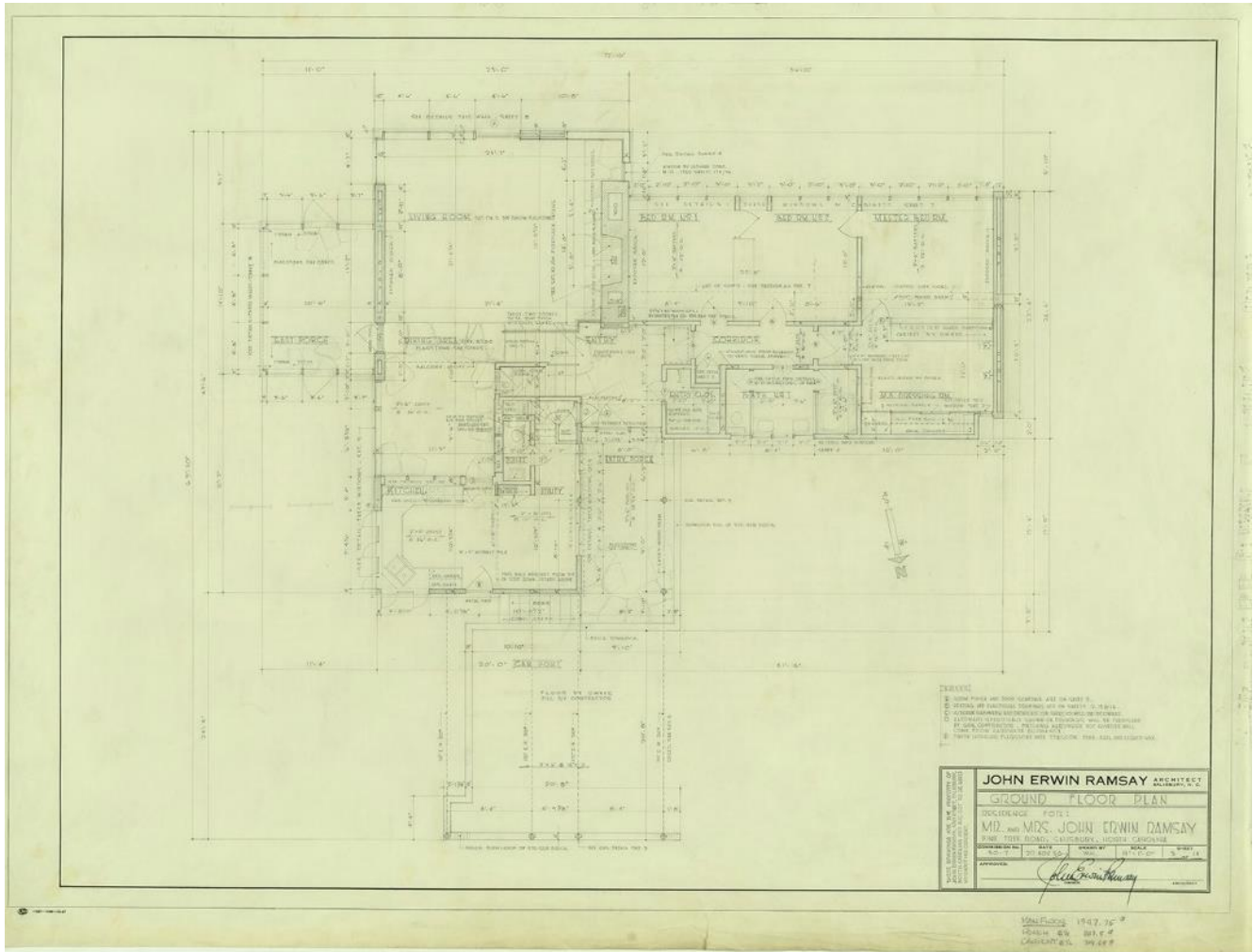


Figure 5: Main Floor Plan 1950

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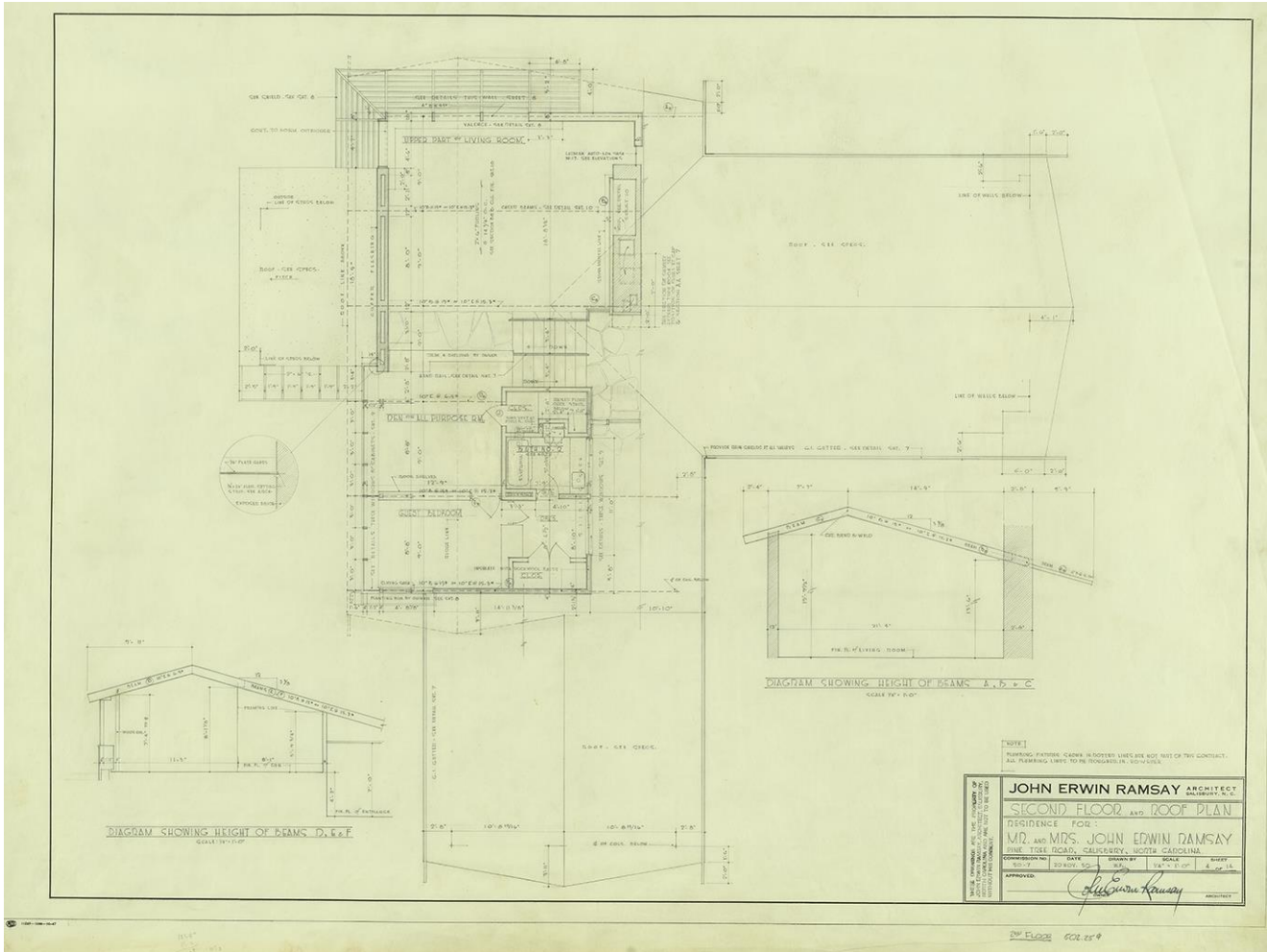


Figure 6: Upper-Level Floor Plan 1950

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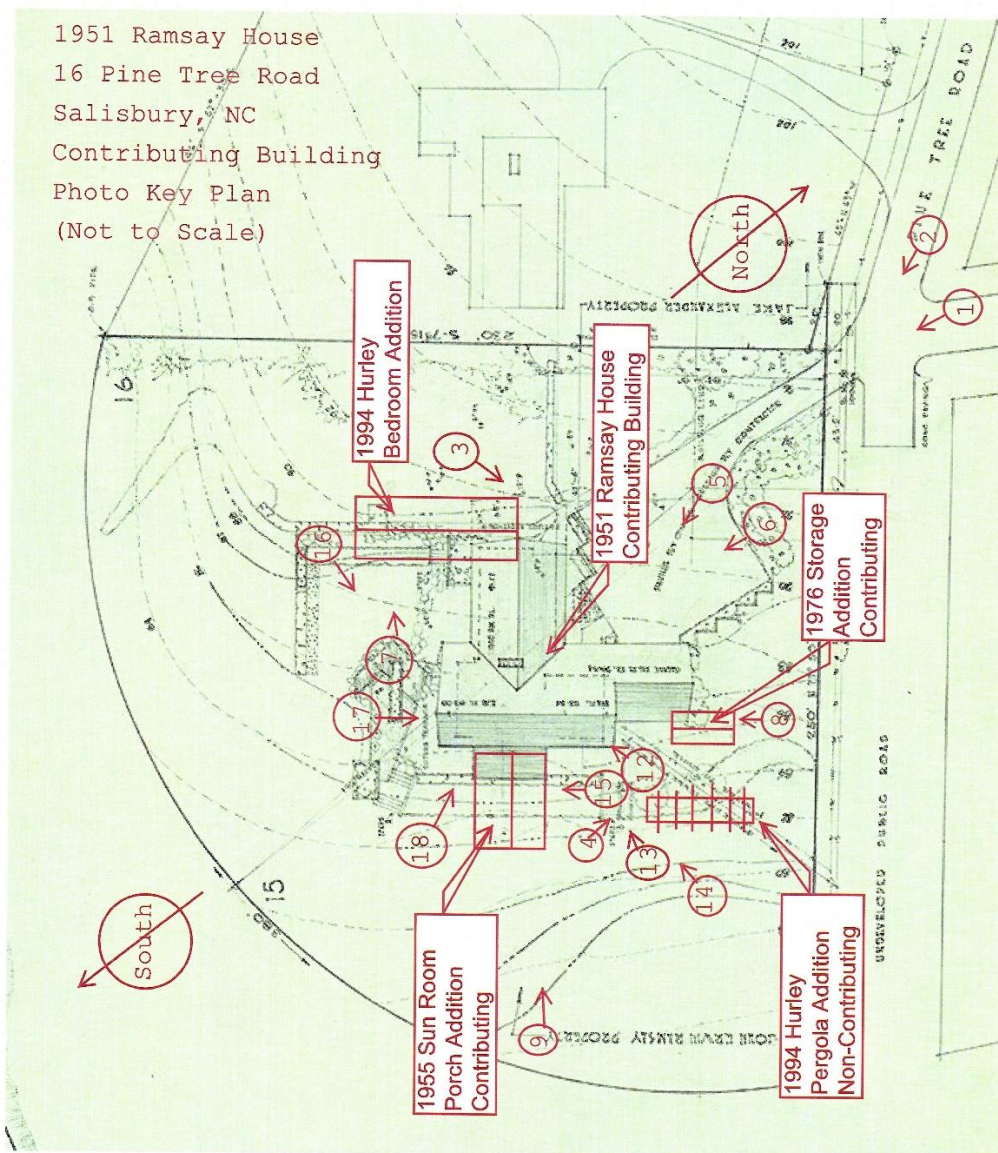


Figure 7: Site Plan & Exterior Photo Key

NOTE: Use of the term "addition" in relation to the free-standing Pergola does not imply that it is attached to the Ramsay House.



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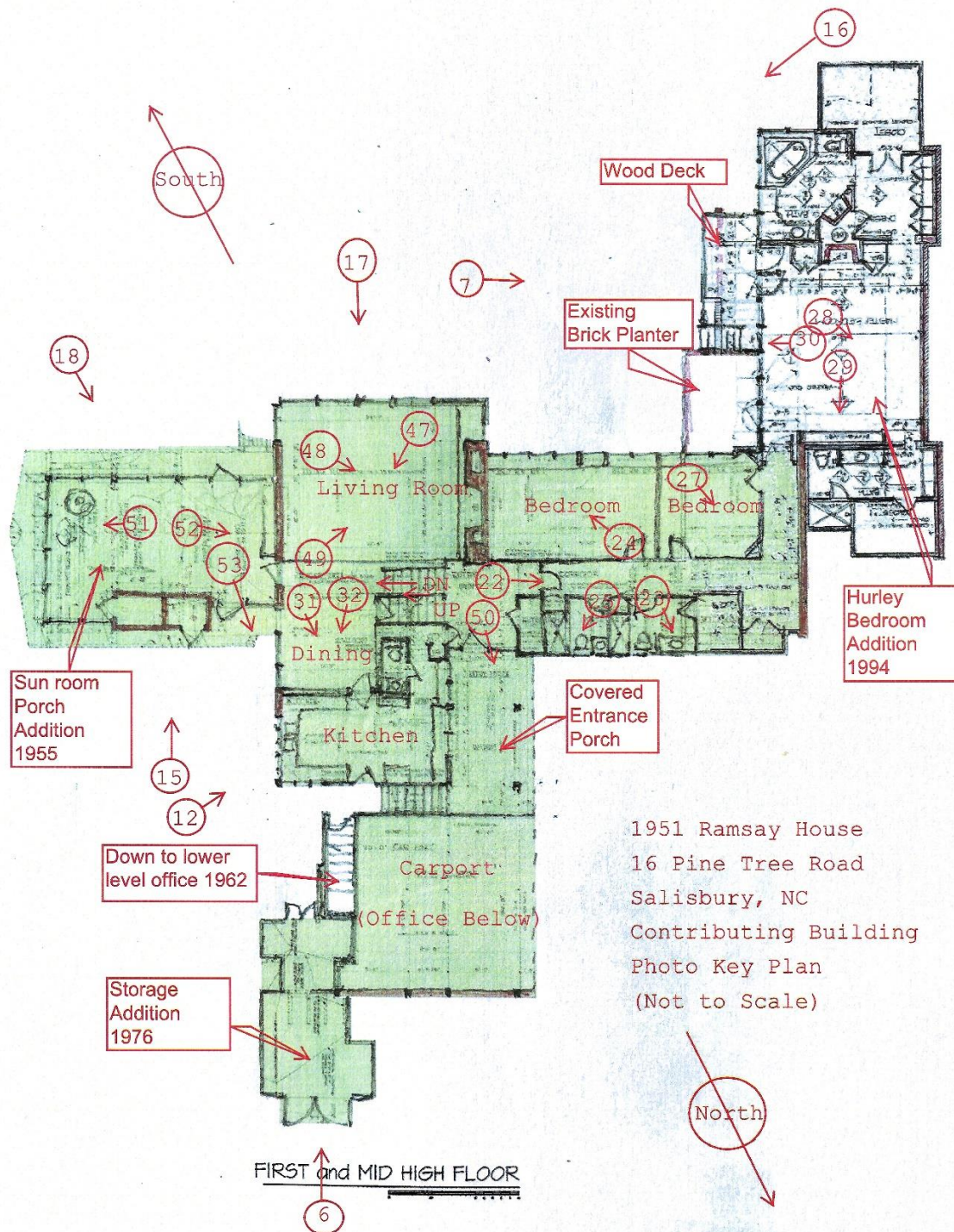


Figure 8: Main Floor Photo Key Plan

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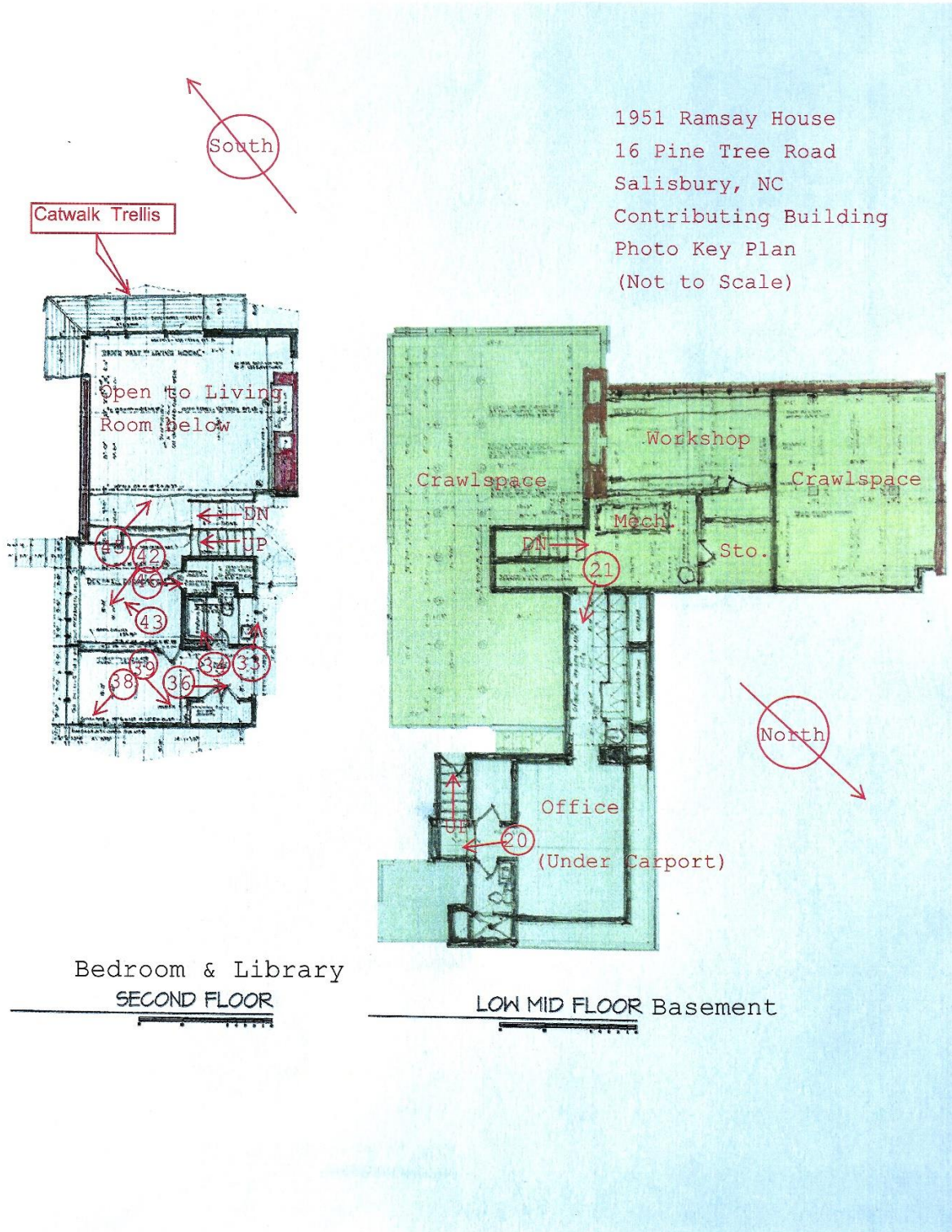


Figure 9: Upper and Lower-Level Photo Key Plans

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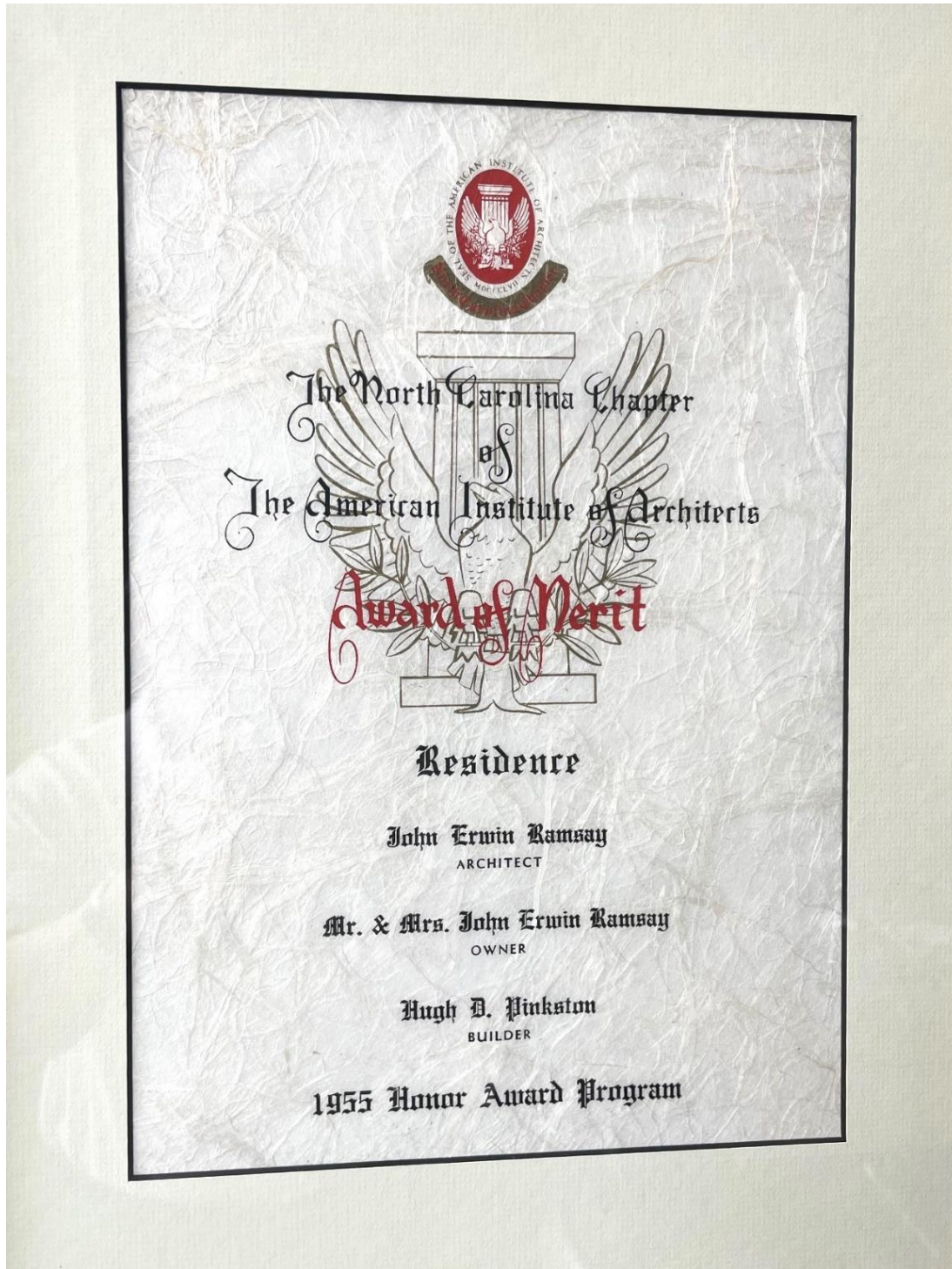


Figure 10: Ramsay Residence North Carolina AIA - Award of Merit - 1955

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**Photo #5 – Entrance Drive & Carport  
North Elevation**



**Photo #50 – Main Entrance to  
Exterior Carport**



**Photo #15 - Sunroom & East Porch Addition (1955)**

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**Photo #12 – Dining & Kitchen below Library & Guest Room above**



**Photo #18 – Sunroom & Living Room**

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**Photo #17– South Elevation - Living Room and Sunroom**



**Photo #16 – South - West with 1955 & 1993 Additions**

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**Dining Room 1955 - Photographer: Bill Calvert**



**Photo #31 - Dining Room April 2024**

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**Living Room 1955 - Photographer: Bill Calvert**



**Photos 47 & 48 – Living Room April 2024**