

Raleigh Department of City Planning  
 One Exchange Plaza  
 3<sup>rd</sup> floor  
 Raleigh, NC 27602  
 919-516-2626

[www.raleighnc.gov/planning](http://www.raleighnc.gov/planning)

Fee	_____
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Rec'd By:	_____
Completion Date:	_____

**(Processing Fee: \$266.00 - valid until June 30, 2011 - Checks payable to the City of Raleigh.)**

## RALEIGH HISTORIC LANDMARK DESIGNATION APPLICATION

This application initiates consideration of a property for designation as a Raleigh Historic Landmark by the Raleigh Historic Districts Commission (RHDC) and the Raleigh City Council. It enables evaluation of the resource to determine if it qualifies for designation. The evaluation is made by the Research Committee of the RHDC, which makes its recommendation to the full commission which in turn makes its recommendation to the City Council. Procedures for administration by the RHDC are outlined in the Raleigh City Code, Section 10-1053.

Please type if possible. Use 8-1/2" x 11" paper for supporting documentation and if additional space is needed. All materials submitted become the property of the RHDC and cannot be returned. Return completed application to the RHDC office at One Exchange Plaza, Suite 300, Raleigh or mail to:

Raleigh Historic Districts Commission  
 PO Box 829 Century Station  
 Raleigh, NC 27602

1. Name of Property (if historic name is unknown, give current name or street address):

Historic Name: Paul O. and Elsie Stahl House  
 Current Name: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location:

Street Address: 3017 Granville Drive, Raleigh, NC 27609  
 NC PIN No.: 0795948418  
 (Can be obtained from <http://imaps.co.wake.nc.us/imaps/>)

3. Legal Owner of Property (If more than one, list primary contact):

Name: Paul and Carol Stahl  
 Address: 3017 Granville Drive,  
 City: Raleigh State: NC Zip: 27609  
 Telephone No: (919) (838)-(2019) Fax No. ( ) ( )-( )  
 E-Mail: postahl@bellsouth.net

4. Applicant/Contact Person (If other than owner):

Name: Cynthia de Miranda, Mdm Historical Consultants, Inc., for Raleigh Historic Districts Commission  
 Address: PO Box 1399  
 City: Durham State: NC Zip: 27702  
 Telephone No: (919) (906)-(3136) Fax No. ( ) ( )-( )  
 E-Mail: cynthia@mdmhc.com

5. General Data/Site Information:

Date of Construction and major additions/alterations: 1956

Number, type, and date of construction of outbuildings: One prefabricated shed, added ca. 1994

Approximate lot size or acreage: .87 acres

Architect, builder, carpenter, and/or mason: Milton Small, architect, and Frank Walser, general contractor

Original Use: dwelling

Present Use: dwelling

6. Classification:

A. Category (check all that apply):

Building(s)       Structure       Object       Site

B. Ownership

Private       Public       Local       State       Federal

C. Number of contributing and non-contributing resources on the property:

	Contributing	Noncontributing
Buildings	1	1
Structures	0	0
Objects	0	0

D. Previous field documentation (when and by whom): Ruth Little, 2006

E. National Register of Historic Places Status:

Check One:

Entered <input type="checkbox"/> Date:	Nominated <input type="checkbox"/>
Determined Eligible <input type="checkbox"/> Date:	Determined Not Eligible <input type="checkbox"/> Date:
Nomination Not Requested X	Removed <input type="checkbox"/> Date:
Significant changes in integrity since listing should be noted in section 10.B. below.	

7. Reason for Request: For the recognition and retention of an historically significant resource.

8. Is the property income producing? Yes  No X

9. Are any interior spaces being included for designation? Yes  No X

10. Supporting Documentation (Attach to application on separate sheets. Please type or print):

A. Photographs/Slides:

At least *two sets of current exterior archival-grade photographic prints* (minimum print size 5"x7") of all facades of the building and at least one photo of all other contributing and non-contributing resources. If interior spaces of the property are being considered for designation, please include two sets of photos for these features. Prints may be created by using archival-grade black and white film photography and processing or digital photography. The minimum standard for a digital print is 5x7 at a resolution of 300 pixels per inch (ppi). This translates into a pixel dimension of 1950 x 1350. Digital images must be printed with an acceptable ink and paper combination as determined by the National Park Service Go to: <http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/publications/bulletins/photopolicy/index.htm>. All photographs must be labeled with the name of the structure, address and date the photograph was taken with pencil or archival-approved photo pen. In addition to prints, all digital images should be submitted on a CD-R in TIF format. Any additional exterior or interior views and views of other structures on the property (color, black and white, or slides) will be helpful.

B. Boundary Map:

Please include a map showing the location of the property. A sketch map is acceptable, but please note street names and number. Any other structures on the property should also be shown. Please include a "North" arrow. Map should be no larger than 11" x 17". A tax map with boundaries marked is preferred, which can be found at: <http://imaps.co.wake.nc.us/imaps/>.

C. Architectural Significance:

Describe the property, including exterior architectural features, additions, remodelings, and alterations. Also describe significant outbuildings and landscape features. If the owner is including interior features in the nomination for the purpose of design review protection; describe them in detail and note their locations. Include a statement regarding the architectural significance of the property.

D. Historic Significance:

Note any significant events, people, and/or families associated with the property. Include all major owners. Note if the property has ever been recorded during a historic building survey by the City of Raleigh or by the NC State Historic Preservation Office. If so, who and when? (See application item 6.D.) Please include a bibliography of sources. Information regarding prior designations can be found by contacting the Survey and Planning Branch of the NC State Historic Preservation Office (NCSHPO) at 919-807-6570, 919-807-6573 or at: <http://www.hpo.dcr.state.nc.us/spbranch.htm>.

E. Special Significance Summary:

Include a one to two paragraph summary of those elements of the property that are integral to its historical, prehistorical, architectural, archaeological, and/or cultural importance.



Overall view from front lawn, showing shed (L) and facade of house (C)



Facade and NE elevation, view from E



Facade, showing windowwalls (L) and front entry at recessed porch (center R)



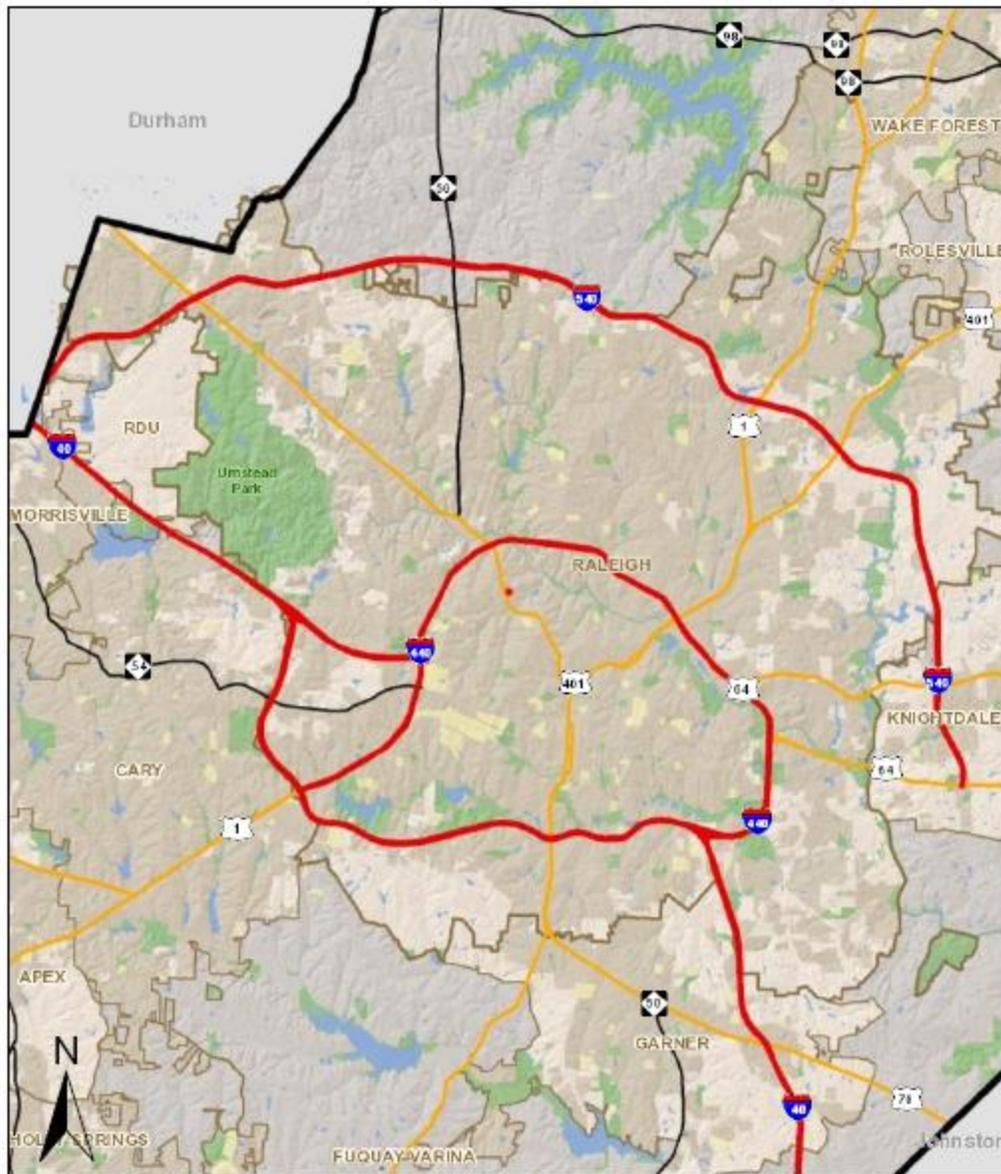
Rear elevation, view from N



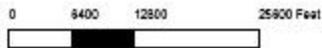
Rear Elevation, view from W

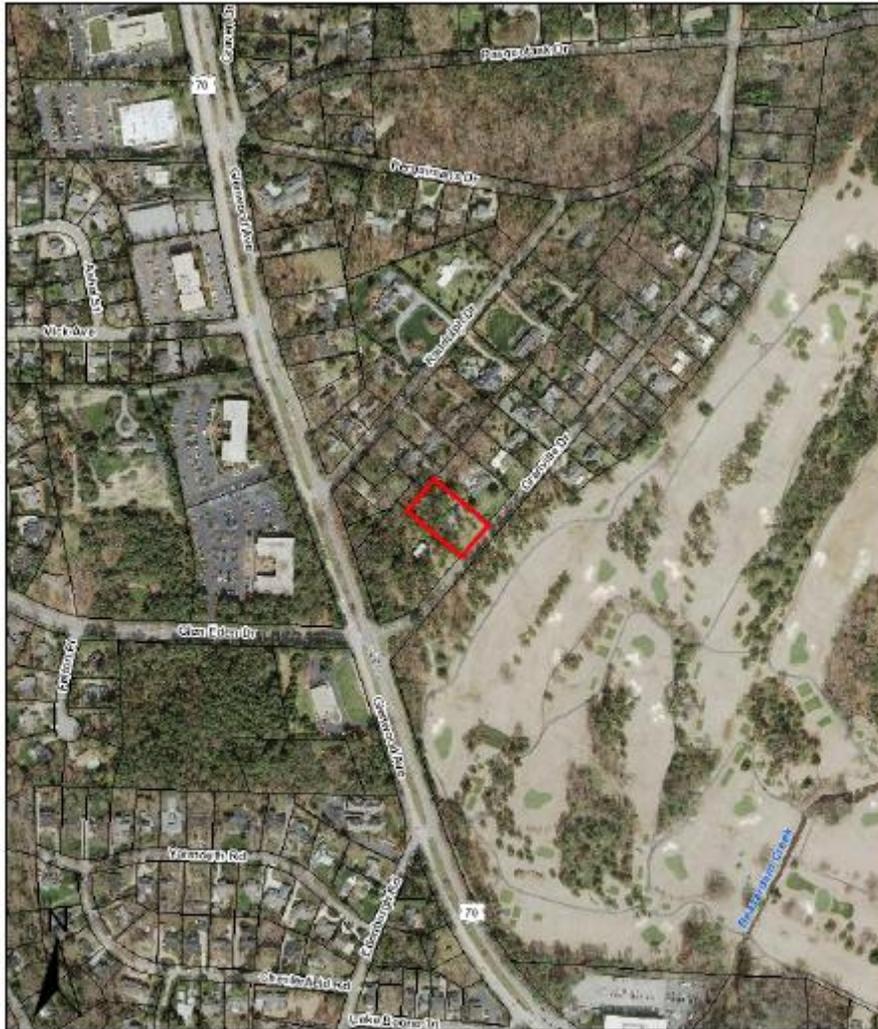


SW elevation and facade, view from S



City-wide Location Map for 3017 Granville Drive



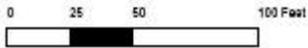


Location Map for 3017 Granville Drive





Paul and Elsie Stahl House, 3017 Granville Drive, Raleigh, Wake County



## **Description**

The Stahl House is an excellent and intact example of a Contemporary Ranch; its defining features include window walls, an open and flexible interior floor plan, front and back patios, an integrated carport, post-and-beam construction, and a low-pitched side-gable roof. The 1956 house, designed by local architect Milton Small, stands across Granville Drive from the Carolina Country Club golf course in the Country Club Hills neighborhood of Raleigh, northwest of the downtown commercial district. Curving roads, rolling hills, and a mature tree canopy characterize the neighborhood, which is generally populated by mid-twentieth-century dwellings in both contemporary and traditional styles. The Stahl House faces southeast and is set in the middle of a generously deep parcel. Mature pines tower over the house in the grassy front and back yards. Islands of azalea bushes also dot the back lawn; more azaleas line the perimeter of the rear yard. At the southwest side of the house, the parcel's grade slopes down to expose a partial basement. A straight paved drive along the northeast edge of the parcel leads from Granville Drive to the northeast side of the house. The drive flares at its terminus, providing paved parking beneath the carport.

Trussed wood roof rafters with a thirty-six-foot span enable an open interior plan. Post-and-beam construction supports the rafters and allows for the distinctive window walls along the facade and rear elevation. Posts and beams are four-by-four wood columns; posts are set every four feet across the facade and rear elevation and beams are set into steel channels for reinforcement. The entire construction is exposed at the exterior, creating a steady rhythm of slender verticals across the width of the house—a nod to the Miesian style Small generally employed. The unpainted wood of the structural elements, however, differs from Mies's customary metal and marble and contributes a warmth and naturalness that complement the verdant surroundings. The house also features vertical wood siding painted dove gray, cement-asbestos panels in both dove gray and a contrasting lemon yellow, and a broad end chimney of Wake County stone at the northeast side elevation.

Roughly half of the facade is recessed behind the supporting posts, creating an engaged front patio at the northeast end. The patio is paved with concrete, excepting an island planting area in the center. The recessed portion of the facade wall holds the front entrance—a full-height wood door—at its left edge. A fixed, floor-to-ceiling window is to the right of the door and fills a single bay between support posts; a matching window is at the northeast end of the facade. Vertical wood siding painted dove gray sheathes the three blind bays between the windows. Left of the front entrance, in the remainder of the facade, two window walls light a pair of bedrooms. Each window wall occupies three bays and features fixed-glass in the upper two-thirds and a hopper window below. A single blind bay between the window walls features vertical wood siding.

Vertical wood siding also appears at the gable walls of the side elevations, with cement asbestos board in the gable ends themselves; all is painted dove gray. The southwest

elevation has a large louvered vent in the center bay of the gable end and a slightly off-centered pair of hopper windows in the wall below.

The similarly off-center stone chimney dominates the northeast elevation and replaces the windows seen at the opposite elevation. The roof extends five bays beyond the northeast elevation, creating the attached carport. The gable end of the carport matches that of the dwelling's southwest elevation. A small shed occupies the north corner of the carport and features repeats the dove gray wood siding, adding louvered wood doors for access.

The dramatic rear elevation is nearly all glass. Moving from left to right, the first four bays feature full-height, single-light glass walls, two fixed and two sliding. The next four are a combination of windows and yellow cement-asbestos panels, followed by another pair of full-height windows, including another sliding glass door. The final three bays, at the back bedroom, repeat the window-wall pattern of the front bedrooms. A concrete patio stretches across the entire rear elevation.

The interior is a classic Ranch floor plan, with the bedrooms at one end of the broad, single-story house and public spaces at the other end. As at the exterior, distinctive architectural elements and materials set the house apart from the typical Ranch. Interior as well as exterior doors are full-height, an elegant touch that also facilitates airflow throughout the dwelling. Partial, pierced, or movable walls of fir and maple paneling define functional space in the open-plan public areas and provide flexibility while maintaining the fluidity of the space.

At the front entrance, a nearly-full-height custom-built cabinet creates a foyer and divides the dining room from the foyer. The cabinet holds a coat closet behind hinged doors on the foyer side and shelving behind a sliding panel on the dining room side. The sliding panel is adorned with a large "X" rendered in wood molding. Uplighting on top of the cabinet provides indirect lighting.

The dining room wall opposite the cabinet is a full-height paneled wall with a centered cutout that functions as a pass-through from the kitchen, on the other side of the wall. The pass-through can be closed off from the kitchen, creating a recessed nook on the dining room side. A floor-to-ceiling sliding wood panel forms the southwest wall of the dining room; when this panel slides away, the dining room opens into an informal dining area adjacent to the kitchen. The dining room is completely open to the living room, which occupies the northeast end of the house.

The informal dining area overlooks the back yard through the three-bay-wide full-height window wall at the rear elevation; the center window panel is a sliding door, providing direct access to the back patio and yard beyond. The galley kitchen spans three bays of the rear elevation between the informal dining area and the living room. The placement of kitchen cabinets along the exterior wall corresponds to the yellow cement-asbestos panels at the exterior. Window glass between cabinets and countertops keeps the kitchen bright and maintains the transparency of the rear elevation. Additional cabinets and a novel range occupy the kitchen side of the wall shared with the dining room. Each burner

of the electric range is set into an individual hinged block that flips up into the wall, clearing the countertop for additional workspace when the burners are not in use. Countertops are black formica and yellow ceramic tile, and cabinets are unpainted wood.

The bedrooms, clustered in the southwest end of the house, are accessible either from a hall leading from the front foyer or from a transverse hall between the informal dining area and the bedrooms. Two smaller bedrooms are at the front of the house; they each have a window wall and as well as a built-in dresser and closet with floor-to-ceiling doors on their shared wall. The window wall in the master bedroom overlooks the rear yard. The wall opposite has closets and the door into the master bathroom. A second bathroom is in the transverse hall, situated between the master bedroom and the front bedrooms. Across the hall is a door leading to the partial basement, which houses storage and mechanical systems. An exterior door in the basement opens to a brick exterior stair that leads back up to grade.

The Stahl House possesses a level of architectural integrity very rarely seen, likely due to its continued ownership by the same family. The house has seen no alterations to its design, no significant replacement of materials or architectural elements, and has had no additions. Original materials and finishes, light fixtures, bathroom and kitchen fixtures, and even kitchen appliances remain. Many pieces of original furnishings also remain. Mechanical systems have been updated and carpeting has been installed over original floors.

### **Significance**

The house is significant in the development of post-war residential architecture in Raleigh as an excellent and intact example of a Contemporary Ranch house. The house and this architectural type were identified locally in Ruth Little's survey update of historic architecture in Raleigh, completed for the Raleigh Historic Districts Commission in 2006; the report resulting from the survey is "The Development of Modern Architecture in Raleigh 1945-1965."

The report describes the Contemporary Ranch as possessing "innovative forms such as groupings of large windows, post-and-beam frameworks, wide eaves with exposed joists, clerestory windows, and the integration of the house into the site through exterior living spaces such as terraces, porches, and carports." In other words, a Contemporary Ranch—or any other "Contemporary" dwelling—follows the tenets of Modernism. The Stahl House does not possess all of the listed elements; however, any Contemporary Ranch would likely include many but not all of the elements. Indeed, the report goes on to identify the Stahl House as a good example of the type.<sup>1</sup>

The house is significant because of its contemporary architectural design and not as an example of the Ranch type. As Little's report notes, hundreds of Ranch houses populate Raleigh's post-war suburbs, and the vast majority are not architecturally significant.

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<sup>1</sup> Ruth Little, "The Development of Modern Architecture in Raleigh 1945-1965," survey report produced for the Raleigh Historic Districts Commission, August 2006, 29-30.

Houses with contemporary design, however, are rare in Raleigh and intact examples like the Stahl House are significant as representatives of an important architectural trend in the post-war period.<sup>2</sup>

In fact, the relative unpopularity of Contemporary dwellings in the city belies the strong interest that Raleigh's architectural community had in Modernism. Beginning in 1948, the new School of Design at North Carolina State College attracted top-notch professors who were all Modernists and who maintained architectural practices in addition to their teaching workloads. Milton Small was a non-faculty architect who came to Raleigh on the recommendation of the School of Design's Dean Henry Kamphoefner to work in the office of William Henley Deitrick. Small had worked in the office of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe in Chicago and was heavily influenced by Mies and the International Style. He soon established his own firm in Raleigh. He designed both downtown and suburban office buildings, institutional buildings (notably on the campus of N.C. State), and residences.<sup>3</sup>

A number of buildings designed by Milton Small have already been granted Local Landmark status, including his own office building (at 105 Brooks Avenue) and his own home (at 310 Lake Boone Trail). These buildings show the strong influence of Mies on Small. The Stahl House shows another side of Small's work: It is a softer, more organic version of Modernism that turns to wood and stone rather than Miesian steel and marble. Here, Small applies Modernism's astylistic architectural treatment to a ubiquitous house type to create a higher version of that type. The house illustrates Small's ability to meet a client's needs by delivering a simple, popular house type while remaining true to his Modernist sensibilities.

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<sup>2</sup> Little, 13.

<sup>3</sup> Little, 13-14; David Black, "Early Modern Architecture in Raleigh Associated with the Faculty of the North Carolina State University School of Design, Raleigh, Wake County, North Carolina," Multiple Property Documentation Form, 1994, Section E, pages 32-33.

## History

The Stahl House was designed by Raleigh architect Milton Small and built by local general contractor Frank Walser for Paul O. Stahl Sr. and his wife Elsie H. Stahl in 1956. Paul Stahl designed and installed HVAC systems and co-owned the Stahl-Rider Heating and Air Conditioning Company; larger projects included buildings throughout the campus of North Carolina State University and at North Hills Mall. Milton Small was one of Raleigh's most notable architects of the period and a dedicated Modernist, and general contractor Frank Walser and his highly skilled workers built most of the Modernist dwellings in Raleigh. As noted above, the Stahl House was recorded during the 2006 survey update of Raleigh's architecture, which culminated in the report authored by Ruth Little entitled "The Development of Modern Architecture in Raleigh 1945-1965."<sup>4</sup>

In 1953, the Stahls purchased two adjoining partial lots in the new neighborhood of Country Club Hills, one of the first upper-middle-class postwar suburbs established in Raleigh. The development, platted in 1947, "provided ample lots and a modern suburban atmosphere where a series of modern houses were designed by faculty and former students of North Carolina State University."<sup>5</sup>

Paul Stahl, a mechanical engineer, attempted to design a house for his family, drawing a plan and taking it to Milton Small with the family's domestic requirements. Stahl and Small may have known each other professionally; both did extensive work on the campus of North Carolina State University. The Stahls found Small's first attempt at consolidating all of the family's ideas into a cohesive plan unsatisfactory; there was just "too much house," as the *Raleigh Times* quoted Stahl's reaction. Small's second version distilled the Stahls requests, finding the essentials and arranging the living space graciously and efficiently. The family found it perfect, both upon seeing the plans and after four years of living in the house.<sup>6</sup>

Interiors were designed by M. Van Buren of Charlotte, who furnished the house with classic Modernist furnishings, including Eero Saarinen's Womb Chair and Russell Woodard patio furniture. The original color scheme was gray with accents in blue, black, and "melon" yellow. The colors survive at the exterior and in the tile finishes of the bathrooms and kitchen. Stahl, not surprisingly, designed the heating and air conditioning systems, which have recently been replaced. A control panel for the original system remains in the shelving storage area in the cabinet that divides the living room from the foyer. Stahl personally built the panel, using one of his wife's cake pans as the housing for the controls.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Paul O. Stahl Jr., interview with the author, August 2, 2010; Little, 14-15, 29-30.

<sup>5</sup> Stahl, Paul O. Jr. to Paul O. Stahl Jr. and Carol K. Stahl, January 11, 1994, Book 5967, page 657, Wake County Deeds, accessed online at <http://web.co.wake.nc.us/rdeeds/> on August 8, 2010; Little, 10.

<sup>6</sup> Stahl interview; *Raleigh Times*, September 10, 1960.

<sup>7</sup> M. Van Buren to Elsie Stahl, November 14, 1962; *Raleigh Times*; Stahl interview.

The Stahls left the house to their son, Paul Stahl Jr., who returned to his childhood home as the second owner in 1994. He and his wife Carol Stahl have owned and lived in the house since then.

### **Bibliography**

Black, David. "Early Modern Architecture in Raleigh Associated with the Faculty of the North Carolina State University School of Design, Raleigh, Wake County, North Carolina." Multiple Property Documentation Form, 1994.

Little, Ruth. "The Development of Modern Architecture in Raleigh 1945-1965." Survey report produced for the Raleigh Historic Districts Commission, 2006.

Stahl, Paul O., Jr. Interview with the author, August 2, 2010.

Smith, James Arthur, and Edna E. Smith to Paul O. Stahl and Elsie H. Stahl, July 16, 1953, Book 1132, page 92, Wake County Deeds. Accessed online at <http://web.co.wake.nc.us/rdeeds/> on August 8, 2010.

*Raleigh Times*. September 10, 1960.

Van Buren, M. to Elsie Stahl, November 14, 1962, letter in the personal files of Paul and Carol Stahl, Raleigh.

Stahl, Paul O., Jr. to Paul O. Stahl Jr. and Carol K. Stahl, January 11, 1994, Book 5967, page 657, Wake County Deeds. Accessed online at <http://web.co.wake.nc.us/rdeeds/> on August 8, 2010.

## **Statement of Significance**

The Paul and Elsie Stahl House, a contemporary Ranch designed by Milton Small and built by Frank Walser in 1956, is locally significant for its architectural design. The house is an excellent and intact example of a popular house type rendered in the Contemporary style, a term synonymous with Modernism that is applied to residential architecture. Houses with contemporary design are rare in Raleigh and intact examples like the Stahl House are significant as representatives of an important architectural trend in the post-war period.