

LUSTRON HOUSE  
(Schulhof House)  
Beverly Shores Century of Progress  
Architectural District  
103 Lake Front Drive  
Beverly Shores  
Porter County  
Indiana

HABS NO. IN-258

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IND  
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
P.O. Box 37127  
Washington, DC 20013-7127

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

LUSTRON HOUSE  
(Schulhof House)

HABS No. IN-258

Location: 103 Lake Front Drive, south-west corner of Lake Front Drive and West Fairwater (mailing address: 350 West Fairwater), Beverly Shores, Indiana. Lot 11, Block 200 of Robert Bartlett's subdivision addition to Unit I.

Significance: Lustron homes, first created to alleviate the post-World War II housing crises, were considered a viable test of prefabricated residential construction. The homes illustrate innovative material applications and new manufacturing techniques. An interest in prefabricated steel and porcelain enamel houses links the Lustron houses at Beverly Shores to their neighbor and predecessor, the 1933-34 Century of Progress Exposition Armco-Ferro House, a frameless structure built of load-bearing steel and enamel panels.

Description: The Schulhof Lustron is a Dove Grey Westchester Deluxe three-bedroom house with white trim (Model 03) measuring 31' x 39.' The most noticeable addition is a large screened-in wood and corrugated plastic porch that surrounds the northeast corner of the house projecting 6.5' and covering 18' of the east facade and projecting 16' along 24.4' of the north facade. The house is not visible from Lake Front Drive as it is located behind a dune. Steps on Windsor Place lead to an entrance on the eastern facade. The north gabled end contains a second entrance that leads into the living area. This house was originally located across Lake Front Drive closer to the lake. In 1956 it was moved across the street due to the high lake that threatened to flood the house.

The house is currently occupied by Katherine Yoder, granddaughter of the original owner, Serrita Schulhof. Serrita Schulhof and her husband Kamil purchased lakeside property in Block 204, Lot 9 from Robert Bartlett on May 12, 1949 and built their Lustron house shortly thereafter. Because of beach erosion, the Schulhofs purchased Lot 11, Block 200, a property on the other side of Lake Front Drive, from Ben H. Peck, Selma Peck, Meyerhill Peck and Inez Klein Peck on February 19, 1955; they moved their Lustron home across the street to this new property on May 15, 1956. On April 12, 1976, Serrita Schulhof sold the house and the property to the U.S. government for use in the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. Schulhof retained a twenty-five year Reservation of Use Agreement (ROU) that expires March 8, 2001. She has transferred ownership of the ROU to Katherine and Eric Yoder.

The house is a rectangular box on a concrete slab foundation with a gabled roof covered in green enameled-steel shingles. Porcelain enamel modular steel panels over a structural steel frame serve for both interior and exterior finishes. An entrance leading to the living/dining space is on the northern gabled end. There is

a second entrance through the screened-in porch on the eastern side of the house off of the utility room. One small casement window on the facade indicates the bathroom and a large tri-partite window marks one of the three bedrooms. The west facade has two large tri-partite windows with a central fixed light framed by three vertically stacked lights and one double casement window with three lights each. The southern facade has two smaller casement windows each containing four lights.

The plan of the house consists of a main entrance on the north side that leads into the living area. Off to the left but part of an open plan is the dining area leading into the kitchen, utility room and laundry area. Behind the living area are the sleeping quarters. A hallway leads to the bathroom on the left and a bedroom on the right. Two addition bedroom branch off to the right and left further down the hall. In plan, the living/kitchen areas are identical to the two-bedroom model. The arrangement of sleeping space is also similar although in the three-bedroom model, the rear of the house is extended, the corridor is lengthened and an additional room is added across from the bathroom.

The house has the original built-in closets, washing machine, and radiating heating system.

History: The Lustron Company was founded in 1946 by Carl Strandlund, vice president and general manager of Chicago Vitreous Enamel Products Company. Having been refused a steel allocation by the federal government to produce gas stations for the Standard Oil Company, Strandlund developed a steel house that was sponsored by the government in their effort to alleviate the post-World War II housing crisis. The Lustron Corporation, the largest of 280 prefabrication companies existing at the end of 1946, (Wolfe and Garfield 51) produced about 2500 all-steel homes between 1946 and 1950 when the company declared bankruptcy.

The original Lustron home was designed by architects Roy Burton Blass and Morris H. Beckman of Wilmette, Illinois (Mitchell 46). Aimed at a middle-class market, the house had many modern characteristics: stripped-down forms, 20th-century materials, and prefabricated building units. It continued to have traditional detailing, however, such as the gabled roof with enameled-steel "shingles." The basic five-room house had a 32'x36' open plan that used 20% of available space for built-in closets, dressers and closets (Wolfe and Garfield 58). Heat was supplied to the house through a radiant ceiling plenum system located under the gabled roof (Mitchell 48). The house was assembled on site by local craftsmen using an instruction manual provided with the unit.

Sources: Jandl, H. Ward. "Lustron, the All-Metal Dream House,"  
Chap. in Yesterday's Houses of Tomorrow.

Washington, D.C.: Preservation Press, National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1991.

Historical summary with special attention to the political and financial aspects of Lustron's creation, implementation, and later modification by Carl Koch. Illustrated with advertisements, pages from erection manuals, photographs during production and assembly, and photographs of completed homes.

Jane, John A., M.D., Ph.D. to Maria F. Ali (author). 11 August, 1994. Notes of HABS project IN-258.

This letter answers questions posed by the author regarding the purchase of the original lot, transportation across the street, and construction of the porch.

Mitchell, Robert A. "What Ever Happened to Lustron Homes?" Bulletin of the Association for Preservation Technology, 1991, 44-53.

Concentrates on materials, conservation techniques and recording existing Lustron homes in North Dakota. Also includes brief history.

Snyder, Tim. "Lustron." Fine Homebuilding. (Volume 22) August/September 1984, 26-30.

Includes detailed discussion of construction techniques and evaluation of performance thirty-five years after erection. Includes axonometric drawings of heating and structural systems and construction details of wall panels.

Wolfe, Tom and Leonard Garfield. "'A New Standard for Living': The Lustron House, 1946-50." In Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture, III, ed. Thomas Carter and Bernard L. Herman, 51-61. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1989.

Provides detailed history and establishes context for prefabricated housing.

Interviews: Jacob, Elizabeth, owner of Lustron home. Interview by author, 20 June 1994.

Morrow, Jim, owner Lustron home in Chesterton, IN. Interview by author, 8 June 1994.

PROJECT INFORMATION:

Documentation of the Beverly Shores Century of Progress Homes and Historic District was undertaken in the summers of 1993 and 1994 by the Washington Office of the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) of the National Park Service, Robert J. Kapsch, HABS/HAER Division Chief, and Paul D. Dolinsky, Chief of HABS. The project was cosponsored by the Midwest Regional Office of the National Park Service, Andrew Ketterson, Chief of Cultural Resources and Craig Kenkel, Regional Historic Architect. Additional support was provided by Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, Dale Engquest, Superintendent and William Supernaugh, Assistant Superintendent.

The project was directed by Frederick J. Lindstrom, HABS Supervisory Architect. The field documentation was completed by Project Supervisor, Judith E. Collins and Field Foremen: Joseph A. Boquiren and Laura J. Culberson, with Architecture Technicians: Bert V. Calhoun, II, Eric T. Helgoth, David M. Lefton, Michael J. Seibert, Lillian M. Smith and Lori A. Smith. The historical report and written building surveys were produced by Project Historian Maria F. Ali, under the direction of Catherine Lavoie, HABS Senior Historian and Sarah Allaback, HABS Historian. The large format photography was produced by HABS staff photographer Jack E. Boucher in 1994. Recognition must also go to the individual residents of the houses and the staff of Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore for their cooperation and assistance.