

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**Bruce A. and June L. Elmore Lustron House**

Asheville, Buncombe County, BN5942, Listed 8/27/2013

Nomination by Sybil Argintar

Photographs by Sybil Argintar, March 2013



Front view



Rear view

**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 How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. 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 entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

**1. Name of property**

historic name Elmore, Bruce A. and June L., Lustron House

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Location**

street & number 70 Hampden Road not for publication N/A

city or town Asheville vicinity N/A

state North Carolina code NC county Buncombe code 021 zip code 28805

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this  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  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official                      Date

North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official                      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby certify that this property is:	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other (explain): _____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Elmore, Bruce A. and June L., Lustron House  
Name of Property

Buncombe, North Carolina  
County and State

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

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

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

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Domestic Sub: single dwelling  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Domestic Sub: single dwelling  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification** (Enter categories from instructions)

Other: Lustron House  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials** (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete  
roof other: enamel-coated steel  
walls other: enamel-coated steel  
other \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Elmore, Bruce A. and June L., Lustron House  
Name of Property

Buncombe, North Carolina  
County and State

**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 a grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

F a commemorative property.

G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture  
Engineering  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1949  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1949  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

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

**Architect/Builder**

Beckmann & Blass, Architects  
Lustron Corporation, Manufacturer

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary Location of Additional Data**

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository: Western Office Archives and History

Elmore, Bruce A. and June L., Lustron House  
Name of Property

Buncombe, North Carolina  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** .81 acres

**UTM References** (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing  
1 17 364380 3938580  
2     

Zone Easting Northing  
3       
4       
     See continuation sheet.

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Sybil H. Argintar

organization Southeastern Preservation Services date April 3, 2013

street & number 166 Pearson Drive telephone (828) 230-3773

city or town Asheville state NC zip code 28801

**12. Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**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.

**Photographs**

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

**Additional items** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

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

name Equity Trust Company, FBO Kurtis Alsko

street & number 6347 Thomapple Drive telephone (269) 948-8299

city or town Hastings state MI zip code 49058

**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. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number    7            Page   1            Elmore, Bruce A. and June L., Lustron House  
Buncombe County, North Carolina

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### Summary

The Bruce A. and June L. Elmore Lustron House, built in 1949, is located at 70 Hampden Road, on the east side of the city of Asheville, North Carolina, south of Highway 70, in the early-to-mid-twentieth-century Beverly Hills neighborhood. The house, facing south towards Hampden Road, is set within a wooded lot of .81 acres with a small level lawn in the front and a gently sloping wooded landscape to the rear and east. A small wood-frame storage shed is located on the east side of the house, set very close to the house. To the west and south of the property are additional homes within the neighborhood.

### **Bruce A. and June L. Elmore Lustron House. Contributing. 1949, ca. 1985.**

The Bruce A. and June L. Elmore Lustron House is a highly intact example of a one-story, side-gable-roof Westchester Deluxe two-bedroom-model Lustron House. The two-toned house is in excellent condition, with the only change being the ca. 1985 addition, to the rear (north), of a concrete block storage area built into the hillside below the main floor level. There is a door centrally located within this storage area and a concrete patio framed by pipe railing which serves as the roof. The house is of fireproof construction, clad in two-foot-by-two-foot enamel-finish steel panels, in a dove grey color, one of the colors available from Lustron. The exception to this is the wall at the northwest corner on the west elevation, which has green panels, another Lustron color. All door and window surrounds on the south, west, and north are molded green enamel with gray window surrounds on the east elevation. The original enamel-coated steel roof tiles are intact, as are two steel chimneys. The house features typical tripartite metal-frame picture windows, with a central, single, fixed light flanked by vertically oriented four-light casements. There is a square bay window on the front with the same configuration. Additional windows are three-light, double casements, set higher up in the walls than the tripartite ones. Gable ends are sheathed with vertical metal panels.

The façade (south elevation) of the house is three bays wide, with the recessed corner porch on the west end, a projecting bay window, then a picture window on the east end. The house is entered from the west elevation, from porch supported by an original metal “zig-zag” porch post/downspout feature at the southwest corner. The west elevation is two bays wide, with a picture window on the north end and the entry on the south end. The front door of the house has a single-light of rippled glass set into a metal frame. The north (rear) elevation is four bays wide, with a picture window on the east end, followed by a three-light casement window, then the rear single-light door with plain glass, and a paired three-light casement window on the west end. There is a metal pipe railing surrounding the concrete roof/porch floor of the rear addition. There is a second metal “zig-zag” bracket feature at the northeast corner of this elevation. The east elevation has two bays, each consisting of a paired three-light casement window.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number    7            Page 2            Elmore, Bruce A. and June L., Lustron House  
Buncombe County, North Carolina

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Inside, the two-bedroom plan features a connected living and dining room, kitchen, and utility room, as well as a bath, and two bedrooms off of a small hallway northeast of the living room. Ceiling tiles, four-feet-by-four-feet, are steel and walls are either enamel-coated steel vertical panels or square tiles. Walls in the main space have rounded corners. Other interior features include metal pocket doors at closets, bathroom, and bedrooms, built-in storage above the closets, and asphalt tile floors, all typical features of this model of the Lustron House. There are several original light fixtures in the house, including one in the kitchen, and wall sconces in the hallway and the bathroom. Typical of the Westchester Deluxe model, there is a built-in cabinet on the east wall of the living room and a china cabinet and pass-through counter on the north side of the dining room, into the kitchen. The kitchen retains its original metal cabinetry with sliding doors and sink, but appliances, including the stove and refrigerator, have been upgraded. A modern washing machine is placed in the back corner where the original stove was located. The utility room, to the east of the kitchen, features removable wall panels for access to utilities, and a built-in broom closet. There is a built-in vanity in the master bedroom, and a built-in storage cabinet in the bathroom with “lazy Susan” type shelving. The bathroom also retains all of its original fixtures, including a medicine cabinet inset into the wall, and cabinets with drawers. Walls in the bathroom are painted to look like marble, a later finish. There are no other interior changes to the house except for the replacement of the original furnace and water heaters with newer models, both of which are located in the utility room.

### **Storage Building. Non-contributing. ca. 1985.**

One-story, wood-frame, shed-roof storage shed with particle board walls and a door on the south side placed next to, but not attached to, the east elevation of the house.

### **Integrity Statement**

The Bruce A. and June L. Elmore Lustron House is an excellent example of the Westchester Deluxe model of Lustron Houses. It retains its original floor plan, with the only change being the addition of a concrete patio at the rear with a concrete block storage area below. Interior features are mostly intact, including all of the built-in cabinets, lighting fixtures, and sliding pocket doors, with the major changes being the replacement of appliances.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number    8            Page 3            Elmore, Bruce A. and June L., Lustron House  
Buncombe County, North Carolina

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### Summary

The Bruce A. and June L. Elmore Lustron House, with a period of significance of 1949, its date of construction, meets National Register Criterion C for architecture and engineering as an excellent example of a Westchester Deluxe model Lustron House, the top-of-the-line model for Lustron Houses. Lustron Houses, engineered to be built on site as modular homes, were designed for ease of transport and construction, built primarily of enamel-coated-steel panels that were fireproof and of low maintenance. Only thirty-nine Lustron Houses were built in North Carolina, and this house is the only known intact Lustron House in Asheville. The house retains its original enamel-coated-steel sheathing and roofing, metal windows and doors, interior metal sheathing, built-in cabinets, and floor plan.

### Historic Background

Beverly Hills, Incorporated, began operations as a real estate development company in Asheville, North Carolina, on October 15, 1925. Incorporating officers were L. B. Jackson, F. B. McCoy, and J. F. Jenkins.<sup>1</sup> Beginning in May 1926, the company began laying out roads for a planned subdivision in east Asheville, "Beverly Hills, The Master Suburb".<sup>2</sup> The company continued to lay out plats in the neighborhood through 1927. Central to this development was the Municipal Golf Course (NR 2005), located to the south and west of the Bruce A. and June L. Elmore Lustron House. In keeping with the overall real estate boom in Asheville in the 1920s, a flurry of sales of lots took place in 1926, with over one hundred lots sold, but only a handful of houses built.<sup>3</sup> However, these numbers dropped off significantly from 1927 to 1929, as the real estate market bottomed out.<sup>4</sup> It appears that the company changed its name to Beverly Hills Development Company in the 1930s, with many lots belonging to the company sold on the courthouse steps under foreclosure.<sup>5</sup> As local and national economics began to improve in the late 1930s, large portions of the Beverly Hills subdivision were re-platted in 1938, with the company again changing its name, this time to the Beverly Hills Company, with some sales of lots taking place through 1939.<sup>6</sup> Beginning in 1944, sales were booming again, a trend which continued into the late 1940s.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Buncombe County Corporate Record Book 8, p. 214.

<sup>2</sup> Buncombe County Deed Records Index, Beverly Hills. The name "Beverly Hills, The Master Suburb" appears on all plats from 1926.

<sup>3</sup> Buncombe County Deed Index, Beverly Hills, 1926 records.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 1927 to 1929 records.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 1930s records.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Buncombe County Deed Records Index, Beverly Hills, 1940s records.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number    8        Page 4        Elmore, Bruce A. and June L., Lustron House  
Buncombe County, North Carolina

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Despite the number of sales of lots that took place in 1926, very few houses were built in the late 1920s in Beverly Hills, due to the slow-down in the local economy during the Depression years. As in other neighborhoods in Asheville that were laid out in the early to mid-1920s, Beverly Hills' development stalled through most of the 1930s. It was not until the post-World War II construction boom that sold lots in Beverly Hills were built upon; during this period the Bruce A. and June L. Elmore Lustron House was constructed.<sup>8</sup> The Beverly Hills Company tried to market the Lustron House through company brochures about these houses but apparently with minimal success, since the Bruce A. and June L. Elmore Lustron House was seemingly the only one built in the neighborhood.<sup>9</sup> It does not appear that any other Asheville developers in the post-World War II time period were working with the Lustron Corporation. Since Lustron had sold so many houses in other parts of the country, the Beverly Hills Company must have felt it was a good product and envisioned selling many more than they did.

The lots for the construction of the nominated property were sold by the Beverly Hills Company to Bruce A. and June L. Elmore on November 28, 1949.<sup>10</sup> The property included Lots 49 and 50 and a portion of Lot 48 on Hampden Road.<sup>11</sup> Bruce A. Elmore, an Asheville attorney and World War II veteran, built his house on this property soon after. He chose to build a house from Lustron Homes, of which the Beverly Hills Company was a dealer.<sup>12</sup>

Elmore was born in Bryson City and attended Mars Hill College and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. When World War II began, Mr. Elmore dropped out of law school, temporarily, to serve in the war, returning afterwards to the university to finish his law degree. While he was still a law student, he was elected to the North Carolina General Assembly as a senator. He established his law practice in Asheville, serving a multitude of clients through the years with injury, health insurance, wrongful death, and medical malpractice legal issues. In the late 1970s, Mr. Elmore was nominated by President Jimmy Carter to the United States District Court for western North Carolina, which he declined due to family concerns. He did serve as a member of the Board of Governors of the sixteen-campus University of North Carolina

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<sup>8</sup> Buncombe County Deed Records Index for Beverly Hills, dating from 1926 through 1948.

<sup>9</sup> Although sales records indicate that two Lustron Houses were sold in Asheville, the Bruce A. and June L. Elmore Lustron House is the only documented and intact Lustron House in Asheville.

<sup>10</sup> Buncombe County Deed Book 685, p. 587.

<sup>11</sup> Buncombe County Plat Book 18, p. 24, Plat of Blocks A and B, Beverly Hills Company, 1938.

<sup>12</sup> "The Lustron Home" brochure was stamped with Beverly Hills Company name.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number 8 Page 5 Elmore, Bruce A. and June L., Lustron House  
Buncombe County, North Carolina

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university system and was on the Board of Trustees of the University of North Carolina at Asheville.<sup>13</sup>

The Elmores remained in the house until 1955, when the property was sold to Thomas E. Whitmire.<sup>14</sup> The Whitmires stayed there until 1964 when they sold the property to T. Edmund and Jean Webster Whitmire.<sup>15</sup> T. Edmund and Jean Whitmire sold the property to Edward Charles and Sylvia B. Thielecke in 1972, who in turn sold it to John R. and Elenora B. Newton in 1974.<sup>16</sup> The Newtons sold the property in 1982 to Patricia Girard, and Patricia Girard Campbell and Andrew Campbell sold it to Tommie Lynn Carter in 1985.<sup>17</sup> The current owner, Equity Trust Company, bought the property in 2012 from Tommie Lynn Carter.<sup>18</sup>

### Architecture and Engineering Context

The Lustron Corporation was founded as a direct result of reports of the critical need for housing for returning veterans of World War II. The Depression years of the 1930s had nearly stopped housing construction, and older homes were often considered to be "...substandard, with electricity, plumbing, and other systems that were outdated or nonexistent."<sup>19</sup> It was further estimated that this housing emergency would require the construction of 3,000,000 moderately and low-priced homes and apartments between 1946 and 1948.<sup>20</sup> Congress, in response to these housing crisis reports from committees, established, in May 1946, the Veteran's Emergency Housing Act, which began the Veterans' Emergency Housing Program.<sup>21</sup> This act required major government involvement in the housing industry, including control of materials and conversion of war-time factories into housing production facilities. However, private housing developers did not welcome this degree of government control, and went so far as to question the crisis level that the government projected. Regardless, there still remained a need for housing,

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<sup>13</sup> Obituary, Bruce A. Elmore Sr., *Asheville Citizen-Times*, December 2009.

<sup>14</sup> Buncombe County Deed Book 468, p. 243.

<sup>15</sup> Buncombe County Deed Book 761, p. 362.

<sup>16</sup> Buncombe County Deed Books 899, p. 42 and 1066, p. 173.

<sup>17</sup> Buncombe County Deed Books 1106, p. 513 and 1414, p. 257.

<sup>18</sup> Buncombe County Deed Book 4958, p. 1227.

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.lustronpreservation.org/meet-the-lustrons/lustron-history/post-war-housing-crisis>, July 28, 2012.

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.lustronpreservation.org/meet-the-lustrons/lustron-history/post-war-housing-crisis>, July 28, 2012.

<sup>21</sup> Congress, House, Committee of the Whole, *Director of Housing Stabilization*. 79<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> Sess. Report No. 1580 and Congress, Senate, Committee on Banking and Currency, *Veterans' Emergency Housing Act of 1946*. 79<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> Sess. Report No. 1130.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number 8 Page 6 Elmore, Bruce A. and June L., Lustron House  
Buncombe County, North Carolina

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and crisis or not, the Federal government set as a goal the construction of 250,000 prefabricated houses to be built in 1946, with an additional 600,000 to be built by the end of 1947.<sup>22</sup>

Carl Strandlund, within this context of a housing crisis and the need to build efficient, durable, affordable homes quickly, founded the Lustron Corporation in 1946. Born in Sunsvall, Sweden, in 1899, Strandlund immigrated to the United States when he was four years old. He grew up in Moline, Illinois, and studied engineering, an aptitude that ran in his family, with his grandfather being a prominent engineer in Sweden, and his father working as an engineer for the John Deere agricultural equipment manufacturer.<sup>23</sup> Carl Strandlund worked in his younger years, in the late 1920s, as a production engineer for Minneapolis Moline Power Implement Company, registering numerous patents there. He later became president of the Oliver Farm Equipment Company, greatly increasing the financial success of that company. Strandlund acquired great wealth in these endeavors.<sup>24</sup>

In the early years of World War II, Strandlund worked for Chicago Vitreous Enamel Product Company to help convert the company to war production. His ideas quickly improved the manufacturing processes for producing military equipment and he was promoted, in 1943, to vice president and general manager. In 1946, as the war was ending and production was converting back from defense operations to domestic production, Strandlund went to Washington, D.C., to seek an allocation of steel, still heavily controlled by the Federal government, to build gas stations. During these meetings, he saw that the government did not want to support that type of construction, but desperately wanted to address the housing crisis for returning veterans. Strandlund responded quickly and the Lustron House concept was begun.<sup>25</sup>

Strandlund took a fifty-percent pay cut in his position as head of Chicago Vitreous Enamel, and founded the Lustron Corporation in Columbus, Ohio, as a division of, but a separate entity from, Chicago Vitreous Enamel Product Company. Carl Strandlund and his wife Clara invested \$1,000, along with Carl's ideas and patents, in the company, took fifty-one percent of the stock, and began work. Lustron Corporation was granted a \$15.5 million loan from the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (a Federal entity), with Strandlund taking on personal liability for that loan. Strandlund's goal was to build 15,000 homes in 1947 and 30,000 in

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<sup>22</sup> <http://www.lustronpreservation.org/meet-the-lustrons/lustron-history/post-war-housing-crisis>, July 28, 2012.

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.lustronpreservation.org/meet-the-lustrons/lustron-history/meet-carl-strandlund>, July 28, 2012.

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.lustronpreservation.org/meet-the-lustrons/lustron-history/meet-carl-strandlund>, July 28, 2012.

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.lustronpreservation.org/meet-the-lustrons/lustron-history/meet-carl-strandlund>, July 28, 2012.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number    8        Page 7        Elmore, Bruce A. and June L., Lustron House  
Buncombe County, North Carolina

---

1948.<sup>26</sup> There were difficulties getting the company under way, but Strandlund did not give up. He spent many months selling the idea of the Lustron House, a kit featuring enamel-coated steel panel walls, marketing the idea from 1947 to 1950, and running up large expenses as he traveled the country. Many Lustron Houses were built in this time period, but the company eventually failed due to the enormous debt that Strandlund had personally acquired, not including the Federal government loan debt; the corporation declared bankruptcy in 1950 and collapsed.<sup>27</sup>

In spite of the short time that the Lustron Corporation was in existence, many of these kit homes were built all over the country, attesting to the fact that they could be produced and constructed quickly. However, only about 3,000 Lustron homes were built between 1948 and 1950, never coming close to the goals that Strandlund had set for production.<sup>28</sup> The houses sold for between \$8,500 and \$9,500, about twenty-five-percent less than conventional stick-built housing at the time. By the fall of 1949, the cost had risen to \$10,500.<sup>29</sup> The concept of the Lustron House was one of pre-fabrication, built of fireproof materials, and designed and engineered to last. Lustron Houses were available in several floor plans, including the two- or three-bedroom Westchester Standard, the Westchester Deluxe, the Newport, and the Meadowbrook. The two-bedroom Westchester Deluxe, which is the plan of the Bruce A. and June L. Elmore Lustron House, was by far the most detailed and most popular of the plans, with built-in storage cabinets and features that none of the other models carried. The Westchester Standard, while the same square footage as the Deluxe plan (1,085 square feet for the two-bedroom, and 1,209 square feet for the three-bedroom model), did not contain a china cabinet and pass-through feature, a living room bay window, a master bedroom built-in vanity, or a bathroom built-in cabinet with “lazy Susan” shelves, and the asphalt tile flooring was optional. It also did not have radiant panel heat, but instead had a radiant convection system like the other smaller floor plans. The smaller floor plans, the Newport (775 square feet for the two-bedroom, and 1,023 square feet for the three-bedroom model) and the Meadowbrook (713 square feet for the two-bedroom and 961 square feet for the three-bedroom model), had none of the features noted above, and also did not have connected living and dining rooms.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>Reiss, Robert. “When Lustron Lost Its Luster,” *The Columbus Dispatch*, 23 July 1978.

<sup>27</sup><http://www.lustronpreservation.org/meet-the-lustrons/lustron-history/meet-carl-strandlund>, July 28, 2012.

<sup>28</sup>Reiss, Robert. “When Lustron Lost Its Luster”, *The Columbus Dispatch*, 23 July 1978.

<sup>29</sup>*Columbus Dispatch*, March and November 1949.

<sup>30</sup>Boyd, Michelle Ann. “Preserving the Lustron House: Authenticity and Industrial Production,” Master’s Thesis, Columbia University, 2001.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number    8            Page 8            Elmore, Bruce A. and June L., Lustron House  
Buncombe County, North Carolina

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Designed as kit homes for maximum efficiency in construction and durability, as well as to fulfill the great need for housing for World War II veterans, Lustron Houses were built in many locations throughout the United States. It appears that the Bruce A. and June L. Elmore Lustron House is the only intact Lustron House in Buncombe County, and in the western part of the state. Lustron Houses were constructed in other parts of the state, but larger concentrations of them are found in the Midwest and Northeast.<sup>31</sup>

Lustron Houses, simple, one-story buildings in keeping with the popular Minimal Traditional and early Ranch styles of the day, were built in a factory with what were known as “straight line production methods,” similar to the automobile industry.<sup>32</sup> The Lustron House was considered by many to be the crowning achievement of the prefabricated housing industry in the late 1940s.<sup>33</sup> While Sears Roebuck and Company was still producing wood-frame kit homes in the late 1940s, the Lustron House was unusual in its fireproof construction and in the fact that it was produced in assembly-line fashion, ready to be shipped to the customer.

The idea of housing was not a new one in the post-World War II era. Pre-fabricated metal housing was a concept that was first presented during the Industrial Revolution of the late nineteenth century. Early attempts at this in the United States were not looked upon favorably. Residents considered them to be for temporary housing purposes only, and instead preferred the wood-frame designs of pre-cut lumber with elaborate jigsaw designs popularized by plan books of the time.<sup>34</sup>

However, housing shortages in the early twentieth century resulted in a second look at residential prefabrication. These included those developed by Weir and Atholl in England, and housing designed by American Buckminster Fuller known as the Dymaxion house. Several German companies also developed designs for pre-fabricated housing, but none of these were embraced by the American public.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>31</sup><http://www.lustronpreservation.org/lounge/locator/lustron-locator-map?stateId> , July 28, 2012 and <http://www.lustronregistry.org/HTML/statistics.htm>., July 28, 2012.

<sup>32</sup> “The Lustron Home.” Fact Sheet. January 17, 1950, with introductory letter from Carl G. Standlund.

<sup>33</sup> Ford, Gene A. “Lustron Houses in Alabama,” Multiple Property Documentation Form, 2000, p. E-1.

<sup>34</sup> Rosin, Elizabeth. “Lustron Houses of Kansas,” Multiple Property Documentation Form, 2000, p. E-4.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, p. E-5.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number    8        Page 9        Elmore, Bruce A. and June L., Lustron House  
Buncombe County, North Carolina

---

The Depression years of the 1930s began to change this outlook. Many could no longer afford traditional site built homes. A few companies began to experiment with metal pre-fabrication once again, exhibiting their designs at the 1933 Century of Progress Exhibition in Chicago.<sup>36</sup> Many of these designs were not lasting due to technical problems with insulation, condensation, and corrosion.<sup>37</sup>

When the next American housing crisis occurred after World War II the time was right for more development of pre-fabricated metal housing. In addition to the Lustron Corporation's production, the General Panel Corporation began production of the Packaged House, designed by German architects Walter Gropius and Konrad Wachsmann, in 1946. The company produced less than two hundred houses, and closed its doors in 1949. The time was right for the Lustron House to begin serious production in the United States.<sup>38</sup>

From an engineering standpoint, the "...design of the Lustron House was firmly grounded in the aesthetic of machine age modernity. Like planes, trains, and automobiles of the 1920s and 1930s, the all steel prefab evinced a no nonsense, practical functionalism indicative of the very machinery and industrial organization by which it was manufactured..."<sup>39</sup> Ingenious in its design, the Lustron House, as it was produced in the factory, consisted of "...twenty wall sections composed of vertical and horizontal steel members cross braced by diagonal rods..." to form the skeletal framework of the house.<sup>40</sup> Attached to this framework were a

...series of 2 ft. square, interlocking, porcelain enamelled panels, the interior shells of which were filled with 1 ½ in. thick fiberglass batting. To the interior of the framework were affixed 2 ft. wide by 8 ft. high porcelain enamelled panels. Ten steel roof trusses crowned the top of the walls. Panels of steel shingles measuring 1 ft. by 8 ft. served as the exterior enveloping roof membrane. Ceiling panels configured in 4 ft. squares were fastened to the under carriage of the roof trusses. The entire structure rested on a site built concrete slab (in some instances a concrete block foundation)...<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ford, Gene A. "Lustron Houses in Alabama," Multiple Property Documentation Form, 2000, p. E-6.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number 8 Page 10 Elmore, Bruce A. and June L., Lustron House  
Buncombe County, North Carolina

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All of the enamel-covered steel panels of the Lustron House for the roof, exterior, and interior were finished on both sides for durability. Foundations were a concrete slab and all of the framing was steel welded in the factory into pre-fabricated wall sections and roof trusses. When assembled, the steel panels were attached to this framing with concealed screws.<sup>42</sup> Insulation for energy efficiency was part of the design, with all walls and ceilings insulated with fire-resistant materials. Due to the design of all of the house components, the Lustron Corporation stated that their homes would never need painting or re-roofing, and would be nearly maintenance-free.<sup>43</sup> Additional construction specifications, applicable to all models, included five-foot, porcelain-enameled bath tubs, and eighteen-inch-by-twenty-inch sinks; fluorescent lighting in the kitchen, dining room, utility room, and hallway; and clothes/dish washers built into the kitchen.<sup>44</sup>

The Lustron Houses were designed by Morris Beckmann, of the Chicago architectural firm of Beckmann and Blass.<sup>45</sup> The pre-fabricated design idea was not new, but the assembly-line production and modular construction system was a new concept for the time. The homes featured steel framing, enameled-steel panels inside and out, and concrete slab foundations with no basements, assembled piece by piece from a Lustron Corporation delivery truck.<sup>46</sup> The houses were assembled by a team who worked for the local Lustron builder-dealer (in this case the Beverly Hills Company) who followed a special manual from the Lustron Corporation. The goal was that a house could be built in 360 man-hours.<sup>47</sup>

The exterior enameled panels in a Lustron House were available in several colors, including surf blue, blue-green, dove gray, maize yellow, desert tan, green, pink, and white. Windows were either of an aluminum-frame tripartite design with a central picture window flanked by multi-light casement, or three-light or square casements with ivory-color, or, in the case of the Bruce A. and June L. Elmore Lustron House, green, surrounds. The Westchester Deluxe model had a standard feature of a tripartite bay window, and there were additional tripartite windows in the dining room and bedrooms. The roof of all Lustron Houses was porcelain-enameled steel tiles installed like shingles. Front and rear doors were single light, with rippled glass for privacy. A signature detail of the exterior is the “zig-zag” porch support/downspout accents at the front and

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> “Lustron Master Specifications.” June 1, 1948.

<sup>45</sup> Prudon, Theodore H. M., *Preservation of Modern Architecture*, New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2008.

<sup>46</sup> <http://www.lustronregistry.org/HTML/statistics.htm>, July 28, 2012.

<sup>47</sup> Mitchell, Robert J. “Whatever Happened to Lustron Homes?” *APT Bulletin*, Vol. 23, No.2, 1991: 44-53.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number    8        Page 11        Elmore, Bruce A. and June L., Lustron House  
Buncombe County, North Carolina

---

rear corners of the building. Some of the Lustron Houses included garages, which were built to match the exterior color of the house. The garages, unlike the houses, were of wood framing, but still were finished in the Lustron Corporation wall panels and steel roof tiles. Carports and awnings were also available add-ons.

Interiors of the home were designed to be energy-efficient and easy to clean and maintain. Interior enamel panels were almost always gray in color. In the Westchester Deluxe plan, floors were asphalt tile, but in all other models, it was up to the builder to select a floor material. Pocket doors helped to save space, and metal cabinets, service and storage areas, metal ceiling tiles, and built-in wall units (in the Westchester Deluxe model) were some of the additional features. Some houses featured the Thor-brand clothes and dish washer (both in one machine), another high-tech time and space-saving device that was part of the kitchen sink cabinet. Homes were heated with an oil-burning furnace and a forced-air system that directed air into the space above the ceilings. All walls contained one inch of fiberglass wool insulation.

The Bruce A. and June L. Elmore Lustron House is an excellent example of the Westchester Deluxe model Lustron House. The brochure, "The Lustron Home," features this model, and is the one that the Beverly Hills Company was promoting in the late 1940s.<sup>48</sup> The Bruce A. and June L. Elmore Lustron House retains most of the features noted in this brochure, including the five-room-plus-bath floor plan, built-in features, such as the living room cabinets, china cabinet and pass-through, kitchen cabinets and drawers, vanity in the master bedroom, closets with sliding doors, bathroom fixtures and cabinets, and finish materials of enamel-covered panels on the walls. The fireproof construction of the house includes steel framing, interlocking porcelain enamel steel panels for the roof and exterior walls, with a plastic sealing strip compressed between the panels to form a weather-tight enclosure.<sup>49</sup> The only changes to the house are the addition of the concrete patio and storage room at the rear, below grade, a new furnace in the utility room, and painting of some of the interior walls. As of December 31, 1949, thirty-nine Lustron homes had been built in the state of North Carolina.<sup>50</sup> Of these, it appears that approximately thirty-two remain, although the condition of these remaining houses is unknown at the present time.<sup>51</sup> The nominated property appears to be the only intact Lustron House in

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<sup>48</sup> "The Lustron Home" company brochure, featuring the Westchester Deluxe model.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> "The Lustron Home." Fact Sheet. January 17, 1950, with introductory letter from Carl G. Standlund.

<sup>51</sup> <http://www.lustronregistry.org/HTML/statistics.htm>, July 28, 2012.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number    8            Page   12            Elmore, Bruce A. and June L., Lustron House  
Buncombe County, North Carolina

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Asheville. Further study would lead to a greater understanding of this house type in North Carolina.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number 9 Page 13 Elmore, Bruce A. and June L., Lustron House  
Buncombe County, North Carolina

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number 10 Page 14 Elmore, Bruce A. and June L., Lustron House  
Buncombe County, North Carolina

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### **Boundary Description**

The National Register boundary is shown by a heavy line on the accompanying tax map, at a scale of 1 inch equals 75 feet.

### **Boundary Justification**

The boundary includes all of the acreage historically associated with the house.

