

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 of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Cranbrook
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 500 Lone Pine Road not for publication
city, town Bloomfield Hills vicinity
state Michigan code MI county Oakland code 125 zip code 48013

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>14</u>	_____ buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>14</u>	_____ objects
			_____ Total

Name of related multiple property listing: _____
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 14

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Education, Recreation and Culture

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

School

Museum

Church

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

English Tudor Revival

New Formalism

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation sandstone

walls brick, stone

roof slate and shingle

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Cranbrook is a complex of buildings located in Bloomfield Hills, a suburb of Detroit, Michigan. Situated on a 300-plus acre site that was once a working farm, the community today is made up of the Booth home, a primary and two secondary schools, an art academy and a science museum with a planetarium and a church.

In 1927 the Cranbrook Foundation was created. The first structures were the elementary and two secondary schools, one for boys and the other for girls, and they enjoyed excellent equipment and shops for arts and crafts. Soon, an organized art center, the Academy of Art, evolved. During the years from 1926 to 1943, the major components of Cranbrook were designed and built.

Cranbrook House, originally the Booth home designed by Albert Kahn, was finished in 1908. It is English Tudor and is built of concrete block, the first story faced with cut-stone trim and red brick, the second story faced with stucco. The interior has beautiful carved oak woodwork and mantles, particularly the library which has an elaborate set of panels representing the Medieval Guilds, especially the ones dealing with handwork and the arts. The house today is used for school administrative purposes.

In 1918, a second Tudor-style building was constructed as a meeting house for a community church but it was later given over to the Brookside primary school. Two years earlier an outdoor Greek theater was constructed for summer performances. It is classical in design.

Bloomfield Hills School (now called Brookside School Cranbrook) opened its doors to elementary students in 1922.

The church called Christ Church Cranbrook is Protestant Episcopal. English Gothic in design, it was the work of the firm of Bertram G. Goodhue. It was designed in 1926 (Goodhue died in 1924). The woodwork is particularly fine and was executed by John Kirchmayer and the tile and ceramic details were executed by Mary Chase Stratton, the same craftsmen who did the detailing on Cranbrook House. Katherine McEwen, a Detroit muralist, painted the frescoes on either side of the altar. The church is constructed of coursed rubble Nesahnook sandstone with Bedford ashlar and trim. The roof is covered with slate shingles.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D NHL #4

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Ethnic heritage (Finnish)

Period of Significance

1926 to present

Significant Dates

1926-1943

Significant Person

Architect/Builder

Saarinens, Eliel (1873-1950)

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Cranbrook is one of the most important groups of educational and architectural structures in America, a summary in the form of a group of buildings of the changing course of architecture in the first half of the 20th century. It is a monument to an extraordinary partnership between the architect, the Finnish expatriate Eliel Saarinen, and his patrons George and Ellen Booth, and with its teachers and students. The buildings are not dated and are as fresh and serene as if they were built yesterday. This enclave in Bloomfield Hills, 25 miles from Detroit, was one of the idealistic institutions meant to combat shoddy machine-age goods -- from the making of beautiful objects to the creation of an architectural setting with details of the finest quality.

This collection of structures, fountains, sculpture, trees and lawns was the result of the largesse of the philanthropists George Gough Booth and his wife Ellen Scripps Booth. George Booth and his father-in-law, James E. Scripps, founded and built the Detroit News, which became one of the major newspapers at the turn of the century. Booth, a Canadian by birth, became a naturalized American and, like many converts, became an avid American and Anglophile. He developed his country farm into a school to serve the public good and he built an Episcopal church to serve his neighbors. Saarinen, on the other hand, had been a visiting critic at the University of Michigan in 1923 when he met George Booth through his son Henry Booth, who was an architectural student. Apparently the Finn had long wanted to establish a school where related arts, sculpture and handcrafts would be included in the curriculum. This fitted Booth's philosophy and so he became Saarinen's "patron-for-life." Saarinen, for his part, left his European career behind to settle down in what became virtually an international settlement of artists in the Detroit suburbs.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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 # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Cranbrook Academy

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 300 acres

UTM References

A

1	7	3	1	6	4	2	0	4	7	1	6	0	6	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

1	7	3	1	4	7	2	0	4	7	1	4	9	5	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

1	7	3	1	6	4	2	0	4	7	1	4	6	4	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

1	7	3	1	4	6	1	0	4	7	1	5	9	0	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

This is the historical boundary of the original Cranbrook community.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Carolyn Pitts

organization History Division, NPS date 2/9/89

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During the years from 1926 to 1943 the close collaboration between George Booth and the great Finnish architect, Eliel Saarinen, gave the Cranbrook community four carefully planned building complexes. The first was the Cranbrook School for Boys (1926) in association with Robert F. Swanson, AIA. It was described as follows:

The plot plan of the school shows a rational grouping of buildings around well-proportioned courts. The elaborate structures are in beautiful scale relation to one another.

A major consideration in developing this design was Booth's stipulation that the original group of farm buildings on the site, which had no particular character, was to be remodeled and that additional buildings should harmonize with this group. The limitations thus placed upon the architect had a determining effect on the design. ...

Reaching out for a larger solution to the problem, pressed by the requirements of a rapid expansion and by the clients' increasing interest, Eliel Saarinen went on to extend his original scheme. For this larger design Loja Saarinen built a model of amazing fidelity and detail. When it was completed, the plan was presented to George G. Booth, and it was decided that the school would be developed to the extent to which the architect had visualized it. It was, in general character, to be sympathetic with the lines of the farm buildings and adjusted to the clients' profound interest in the arts and crafts movement. ... The proportions and arrangement of the buildings, the sensitive use of pattern in the brick, the decorative detail, reveal the designer's adaptability. Most interesting are his uses of personal and warm patterns upon pillars, archways, doors, and interiors. The experience of years of designing is expressed in these details.¹

The next buildings to go up were the Academy and the Arts and Crafts school. The original Academy buildings were to be used as an architectural office, library and museum and would house departments of architecture, design, decoration, drawing, painting, sculpture, drama, landscape design, music and artistic craftsmanship.

In 1928, Saarinen began designs for faculty housing and for his own residence on Academy Way. Eventually most of the beautiful interiors would be designed by Saarinen and his wife, Loja. Additions to both the Academy and studios were done in the late 1920's.

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By the year 1929, Booth suggested a school for girls to be designed by the architect and his entire family -- his wife, his son Eero and daughter Pipsan. Kingswood school is one of the great successes of the Saarinen:

Working in collaboration with George G. Booth and his wife, the Saarinen determined the particular needs of this school for girls, which was to be located on a site of unusual qualities: a lake fronted the area upon which the school was to be erected while in the background a wooded hillside offered an intimate enclosure.

Taking advantage of this setting, the designer planned the foundations with an eye to the functional aspects of the school. An easy circulatory system and an intelligent disposition of the dormitory and work areas were fitted to the form of the natural surroundings. The mass of the buildings is horizontal, in conformity with the general contour of the shore land, ascending and descending in a series of levels which takes cognizance of the gradual slope of the land.²

Loja Saarinen designed and made all the woven fabrics and rugs, Eero designed the furniture and Pipsan decorated the ballroom and auditorium.

In 1931-1933 the Cranbrook Institute of Science was built on an asymmetrical plan with an entrance on the south. Next to it is a large reflecting pool enhanced with Carl Milles' Fountain of the Tritons. In all there are some 70 sculptures by Milles at Cranbrook. In 1940, the grand peristyle that connects the art museum and art library was built as well as the two buildings themselves. The library and art gallery are much closer in style to the International School than Saarinen's early work. Forms are simplified in his last works but this complex conforms easily with the rest of the Cranbrook complex with open space, reflecting pools and Milles' sculptures.

Footnotes:

1. Albert Christ-Janer, Eliel Saarinen, Finnish-American Architect and Educator (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 72.
2. Ibid., p. 75.

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George and Ellen Booth had looked at the American Academy in Rome and took their educational credo from that institution:

The Academy is not a school; it is not for technical training or the teaching of any rudiments; it does not have classes nor does it even impose a very rigid, prescribed course. ... The primary object[tive] ... is to afford to persons of advanced training an opportunity for residence and study in Rome and Europe, generally under conditions such, that while they are given every freedom for individual development, each member is brought into contact with other members working the various allied arts. This fellowship of the students among themselves, and their informal contact with the members of the Faculty, are the means by which influence is brought to bear on them rather than by any formal instruction.¹

From these vague, but admirably altruistic beginnings developed the three schools for young people, out of which, it was hoped, talented artists would be chosen and joined together with promising students from elsewhere in the crowning institution of the whole complex: an academy of art. Although the Academy was not officially opened until 1932, it was always regarded as both the goal and physical center of Cranbrook. In fact, when Saarinen made his drawings for the school for boys, which was the first major building of the complex (1925 ff.), the Academy was conceived adjacent to it at a slightly higher ground level. ...

Although various details of the drawings and model bespeak the Scandinavian background of the designer, the overall result recalled English Gothic Revival quadrangles. Inevitable, therefore, is the analogy with work being done on American campuses in the first three decades of the century, especially at Princeton and Yale.

It was in 1903 that Andrew Fleming West, Dean of the Graduate School at Princeton, had written that the campus should consist of "quadrangles enclosing sunny lawns, towers and gateways opening into quiet retreats, ivy-grown walls looking on sheltered gardens, vistas through avenues of arching elms, walks that wind amid the groves of Academe."

Saarinen described his own vision more architecturally:

The general scheme is arranged to obtain a good mass-effect and rhythm of line in the landscape and harmonious and varied place-formations in conformity with the character of the buildings. ... In suitable places a richer form treatment has been suggested to further support a varied picturesqueness as a deviation from the symmetry and seriousness of the basic motif. ... The ornamental treatment ... will grow out of the production of the Academy in these arts. ...

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Thus the institution grows successively into a historic document of the work executed and of the currents that moved within the youth studying at the Academy.

So there was an organic principle in Saarinen's plan. Despite the exacting details of the model, there were to be modifications and additions as the complex evolved, as well as sculptural embellishments by faculty and students. In actuality, changes were sometimes made because of George Booth's fear of ostentation; more often they were made because of other demands on his funds. Some changes, however, reflected Saarinen's developing sense of an American architecture. Thus the Kingswood School (1937-42) has an air of Frank Lloyd Wright's prairie architecture and, even more interestingly, a similarity to Behrens' Wrightian buildings in Oberhausen, Germany (1921-25).

When the Cranbrook Library and Museum (1937-42) were finally built at the end of the foundation axis leading from Lone Pine Road, the open portico had the unmistakable air of European abstracted classicism of the 1930s. Close examination suggests, however, that this was not simply a gesture paralleling the spare compositions of totalitarianism. Rather, it is Arts and Crafts classicism that goes back to Viennese work of the 1920s--for example, the preliminary scheme by Josef Hoffmann for the Austrian Pavillion at the Paris Exposition of 1925.²

The most common comparison is with the famous Bauhaus School in Germany. Begun in the first years of the 20th century in Weimar as a new art academy, this institution was suspended during World War I, to be resuscitated by Walter Gropius who emphasized the importance of the crafts as proper training for architects. The Bauhaus School reached its zenith in the 1920's (it had been moved to Dessau), but it was finally closed by the Nazis. The idea of elevating public taste and joining the fine and applied arts as well as science and technology under one roof was most clearly realized at the American Academy in Rome where there is no curriculum and students and faculty live together on the Janiculum hill. This was Booth's intent at Cranbrook.

The Cranbrook Academy evolved slowly as an idea and as a working institution. Booth, in his Trust Indenture of 1927, had foreseen an arts and crafts school in conjunction with the Academy, the latter eventually to include departments of architecture, design, (interior) decoration, drawing, painting, sculpture, drama, landscape design, music, and artistic craftsmanship. By August 1930, he had formulated a concept of four master artists-in-residence: an architect, a painter, a sculptor, and a designer. These master artists would reside and work at Cranbrook, and "give general talks to students on art matters." They would also help in planning the

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architectural development of the immediate properties by "submitting schemes or sketches without charge for any work contemplated, but for actual work performed ... [they] would be fairly compensated."³

In April 1931, a full year before the Academy actually opened, Eliel Saarinen addressed the national convention of the American Institute of Architects at San Antonio on the subject of "the Cranbrook Development,"

[The purpose of the] Cranbrook Academy of Art ... is to afford talented and highly trained students the opportunity of pursuing their studies in a favorable environment and under the leadership of artists of the highest standing. ...

[It] is not an art school in the ordinary meaning. It is a working place for creative art. The leading idea is to have artists ... live at Cranbrook and execute their work there. Those artists form a more or less permanent staff of the Art Council. Besides these artists we will have ... visiting artists from various parts of the country or from foreign countries [who] will bring freshness and new impulses to the Cranbrook art life and will help us to a richer and closer understanding of the contemporary movement in various minds and in various countries. ...

Creative art cannot be taught by others. Each one has to be his own teacher. But [contact] with other artists and discussions with them provide sources for inspiration. ...

Many think the Academy with its Craft Studios tries to revive the medieval spirit of craftsmanship against our machine age. That is not so. The main idea ... is not to develop craftsmanship, but the design. ...

There is no use for skillful craftsmen if we do not know the form of our time. The first thing and the most important one is to develop an adequate design to express our contemporary life. And if the form is there, it is of minor importance if we use the hand of man or the machine. ... Both are necessary.⁴

Among the remarkable students studying at this remarkable school in the early years were Carl Fiess, Harry Weese, Fumihiko Maki, Charles and Ray Eames, Harry Bertoia, Florence Schust Knoll, Ben Baldwin, Ralph Rapson, Gyo Obata, Cesar Pelli, Kevin Roche and Edmund Bacon as well as Eero Saarinen.

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Cranbrook's finest hour came at the end of the 1930's just before the beginning of World War II when faculty and students made this magical enclave world famous:

The foundation laid by the older masters inspired and supported the new energies and ideas of the younger faculty and students. The staff for 1940-41 bears scrutiny. Eliel Saarinen was President, as well as Director of the Department of Architecture and Design. Carl Milles, who had come in 1931, was Director of the Department of Sculpture. The Department of Painting was headed by Zoltan Sepeshy, a Hungarian who also arrived in 1931. Other teachers and their titles were: Harry Bertola, Metal Craftsman; Charles Eames, Instructor of Design; Marshall Fredericks, Instructor of Modeling; Maija Grotell, Instructor of Ceramics and Pottery; Wallace Mitchell, Instructor of Painting and Drawing; Eero Saarinen, Assistant in the Department of Architecture; Loja Saarinen, "In Charge of the Department of Weaving" (a special title, because she was not officially a teacher); and Marianne Strengell, Instructor of Weaving.

Only three of the above were native-born Americans, and this did not go unnoticed by outsiders, some of whom also worried about the possibility of a "monastic mentality" at Cranbrook. Nevertheless, there was an impressive sequence of guest lecturers, and there were immensely productive days and nights in the Cranbrook studios. Although these glorious years were brief, they were stellar. The spirit and inventiveness of Eames and of Saarinen's son, Eero, who was his father's assistant, seem to have accounted for much of this period's verve.⁵

Among the visiting lecturers was Frank Lloyd Wright, normally a scathing critic of other architects, particularly his competitors, who commented on the high quality of building materials, both on exteriors and interiors, particularly at the Kingwood School for Girls. Every detail was accounted for--metal work, tiles and upholstery, window fabric, rugs, chairs and silver and table china. Kingwood's design was a family affair, father and mother and their very talented children. Pipsan, the daughter, became a nationally known interior designer and the son, Eero, was one of the 20th century's architectural masters. Loja, Eliel's wife, was an accomplished weaver and the weavers' shop at Cranbrook was under her direction. The fabrics and rugs she designed graced all the buildings at the school as well as a number of other Saarinen commissions.

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Kingswood, the Cranbrook girls' secondary school built in 1929-30, is an impressive example of Saarinen's growth. Here he began moving away from the historically influenced forms of the boys' school and toward something more original, and, in a sense, also more American. Kingswood's deeply overhung roofs, long, low projecting wings, and dramatic siting overlooking a man-made lake bring to mind the work of America's greatest architect, Frank Lloyd Wright. It led the architectural historian Henry-Russell Hitchcock to see Saarinen as "Wright's chief rival of his own generation on the American scene." That process of simplification culminated at Cranbrook in Saarinen's spare and almost Neo-classical design for the Academy of Art museum and library, his last great set piece at Cranbrook, completed in 1941.

What sets Cranbrook's decorative program apart is its clear and precise aim toward the users of the buildings. These imaginatively conceived and luxuriously executed works of decorative art--gate latches, banisters, light fixtures, and such--were carefully placed to catch the attention of the Cranbrook students who lived among and used these minor masterworks every day. They were cunningly intended to make the experience of art not a formalized event, but rather a normal and desirable part of daily life that would lead Cranbrook's students to invest their own work with the same degree of thoughtfulness, care, delight, imagination, and pride that the things around them showed.⁶

The deaths of the original patrons and artists brought this era to an abrupt end. Ellen Booth died in 1948. George Booth died in April 1949. Eliel Saarinen retired in 1946 and he died in 1950. Carl Milles returned to Sweden in 1951. Eero went on to a brilliant architectural career, but died at 51 in 1962, two years before Dulles airport was completed.

In the 1970's, Cranbrook celebrated its illustrious past with the restoration of the Saarinen house and other Academy buildings. The large retrospective exhibition in 1983 sponsored by the Detroit Institute of Arts and the Metropolitan Museum in New York, which travelled to Helsinki, Paris and London clearly shows in its arts and crafts and drawings the profound influence Cranbrook has had on the Arts in America.

The Cranbrook ideal was clearly expressed in this handsome series of buildings in the International Style. Like Frank Lloyd Wright, Eliel Saarinen re-emerges into the mainstream of contemporary developments in the 1940's because of his professional association with his son, Eero. His last buildings were elegant simple shapes that recalled the geometry of the International style but they also showed signs of a creative surge that would occur in architectural history during the 1950's. The next generation belonged to Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe.

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Footnotes

- 1 Christopher Grant La Farge, History of the American Academy in Rome (New York: 1915), p. 10, 12.
- 2 Detroit Institute of Art/Metropolitan Museum of Art, Design in America, The Cranbrook Vision (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1983), p. 27.
- 3 Ibid., p. 29.
- 4 Ibid., p. 31.
- 5 Ibid., p. 33.
- 6 Martin Filler, "Where the Teacher is Beauty," House and Garden 154, 4 (April 1982): 113-118.

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"Cranbrook," American Magazine of Art, XVIII (August 1927), 403-13.

Christ-Janer, Albert. Eliel Saarinen, Finnish-American Architect and Educator. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984.

Davies, Florence. "Christ Church, Cranbrook," American Magazine of Art, XX (June 1929), 311-25.

Detroit Institute of Arts and Metropolitan Museum of Art. Design in America, The Cranbrook Vision. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1983.

Ferry, W. Hawkins. The Buildings of Detroit. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1968.

Filler, Martin. "Where the Teacher is Beauty," House and Garden, 154, 4 (April 1982): 113-118.

LaFarge, Christopher Grant. History of the American Academy in Rome. New York: 1915.

"Museum and Library, Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan," New Pencil Points (December 1943), pp. 37-50.

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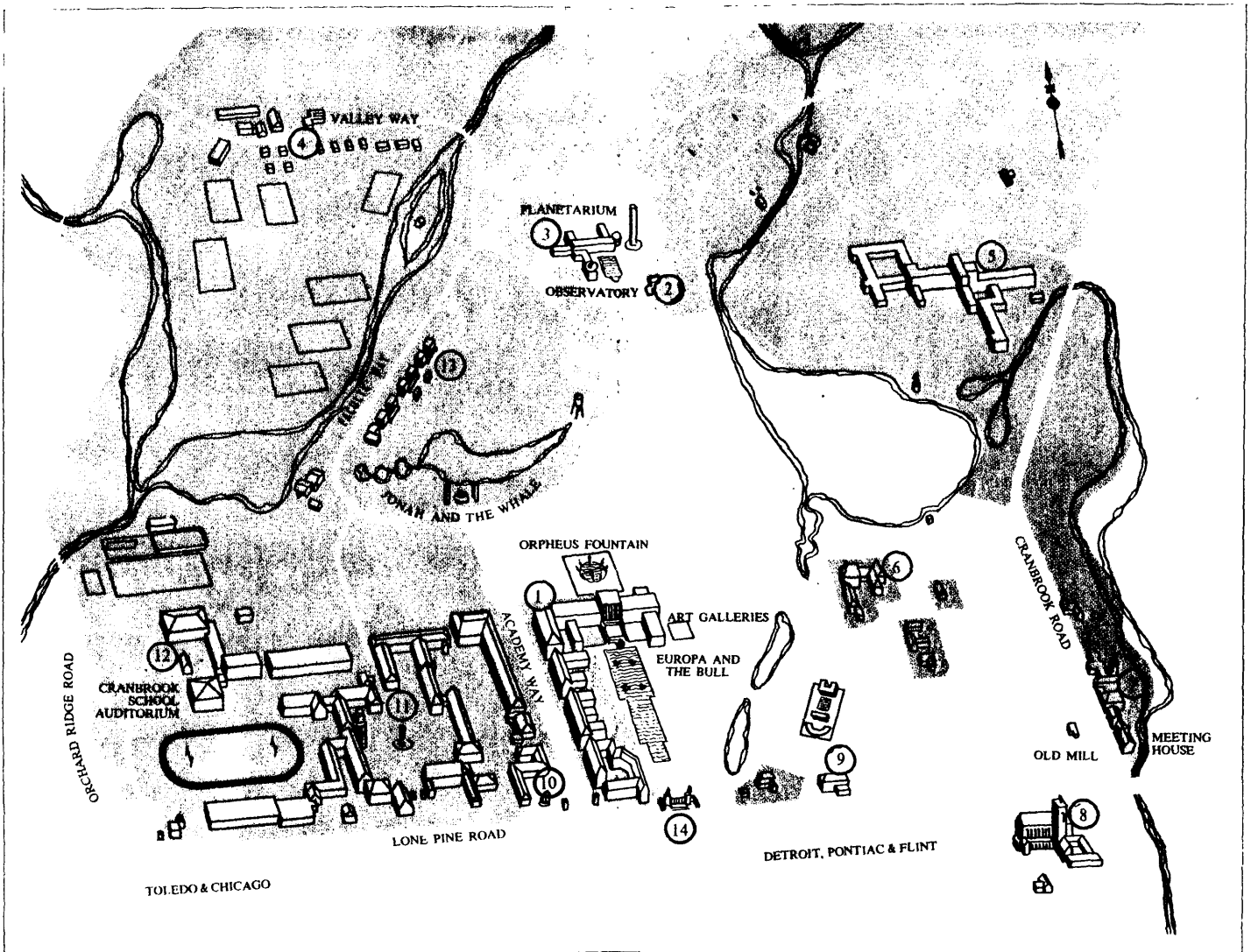
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The boundaries of the campus at Cranbrook can be described as: (on the west) the full length of Orchard Ridge Road, then northeast at its intersection with Hillcrest Drive around Hillcrest to Vaughan Road, along Vaughan northeast to Country Club Road; (on the north) a straight line from the corner of Vaughan and Country Club east to the corner of Cranbrook Road and Woodward Avenue; (on the east) south along Cranbrook to Brady Lane, a line from the corner of Cranbrook and Brady southeast to the intersection of Edgemere Court and Lone Pine Road; and (on the south) west on Lone Pine returning to Cranbrook Road south, on Cranbrook to Dunstan Road, west on Dunstan to Church Road, north on Church to Goodhue Road, west around Goodhue returning to Lone Pine, then west along Lone Pine to its intersection with Orchard Ridge Road.

CRANBROOK, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan



- | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Cranbrook Academy of Art | 8. Christ Church, Cranbrook |
| 2. Edison House | 9. Greek Theater & St. Dunstan's |
| 3. Cranbrook Institute of Science | 10. Cranbrook Foundation Office |
| 4. Buildings & Grounds Offices | 11. Cranbrook School |
| 5. Kingswood School Cranbrook | 12. Cranbrook School Auditorium |
| 6. Cranbrook House & Gardens | 13. Faculty Housing |
| 7. Brookside School Cranbrook | 14. Visitors Entrance |

