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DEC 13 1995

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

AHPP

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1. Name of Property

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Historic Name: T. E. Olmstead & Son Funeral Home

Other Name/Site Number: CE 0066

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2. Location

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Street & Number: 108 S. Fourth St.

Not for Publication: N/A

City/Town: Heber Springs

Vicinity: N/A

State: AR County: Cleburne Code: AR 023 Zip Code: 72543

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3. Classification

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Ownership of Property: Private

Category of Property: Building

Number of Resources within Property:

| Contributing | Noncontributing | |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|
| <u>1</u> | <u>1</u> | buildings |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | sites |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | structures |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | objects |
| <u>1</u> | <u>1</u> | Total |

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

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

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4. State/Federal Agency Certification
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As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination _____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. _____ See continuation sheet.

Cathryn A. Slatr _____ 10-20-95
Signature of certifying official Date

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
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

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5. National Park Service Certification
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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 Keeper Date of Action

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6. Function or Use

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Historic: Funerary Sub: Mortuary

Current : Recreation and Culture Sub: Museum
Commerce Specialty Store

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7. Description

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Architectural Classification:

Other: Ozark Cut-stone Commercial

Materials: foundation Stone roof Asphalt
walls Stone other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance:

Summary

Located at 108 South Fourth Street in Heber Springs, the T. E. Olmstead and Son Funeral Home is a stone-constructed commercial building that was built in 1910 in a traditional style. Although the storefront was modernized in the late 1960's, the original recessed entrance flanked by wooden bulkheads and plate glass display windows has recently been reconstructed by the current owner, Tom Olmstead.

Elaboration

Located at 108 South Fourth Street in Heber Springs, the T. E. Olmstead and Son Funeral Home is a single-story, commercial building constructed of quarry faced, ashlar stone laid in regular courses. The structure rests upon a continuous stone foundation and is covered by a sloping flat roof behind a parapet.

The front, or eastern, elevation features a recessed central single-leaf entrance that is flanked by wooden bulkheads and large, single-pane plate glass display windows. A narrow transom is located above the four windows and the wood-framed, glass door. Underneath each of the four windows is a long, horizontal painted sign. The two bevelled bulkheads have signs advertising "Coffins," the northern window bulkhead promotes "Embalming," and "Undertaking" is found underneath the southern window.

In the late 1960's, the storefront was modernized with a straight plate-glass display window wall and a single-leaf entrance at the north end of the facade. The current storefront as described was reconstructed in 1994-1995 by the current owner, Tom Olmstead, who joined the family business in 1951.

The southern elevation of the original building is not fenestrated, and the stonework is more roughly finished than on the front elevation. In 1918, the rear addition to the building was added when T. E. Olmstead returned from war service. According to family lore, the addition was constructed with Olmstead's "mustering out money." The addition was primarily used as a garage to park the hearse and for coffin storage. On the southern elevation of the addition, a sixteen-pane, metal-frame window with an eight-pane center awning is located at the east end, and a large double-leaf garage door is placed to the west.

The north elevation is a party wall.

The interior consists of one large room with stuccoed walls and the original pressed-tin ceiling, which is painted black. The interior was never partitioned except with curtain screens hung on wire. Today, the building is used as a museum, and the historic hearse is displayed in the front room along with other undertaking paraphernalia.

Within the past year, a metal-frame, gable-roof building has been placed at the rear, or western, elevation for use as a detail shop. This building does not affect the historic integrity of the historic funeral home and can be easily removed.

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8. Statement of Significance
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Verifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: Local

Applicable National Register Criteria: A, C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

Areas of Significance: Social History
Architecture

Period(s) of Significance: 1910 - 1939

Significant Dates: N/A

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Unknown

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

Summary

The T. E. Olmstead & Son Funeral Home is locally significant under Criterion A for its association with the only historic and present funeral home in Heber Springs and for its ability to reflect the funerary practices of the first half of the twentieth century. Under Criterion C, the funeral home is also significant as one of the better extant cut-stone commercial buildings in Heber Springs and is representative of the commercial building phase that followed the early, sometimes hastily constructed, frame buildings.

Elaboration

The area now occupied by the town of Heber Springs was first settled in 1835 by John Magness, who homesteaded a 40-acre tract on which free-flowing sulphur springs were located. The Magness property was located near an inverted cone mountain, called Tonawanda by the Indians, but known as Sugar Loaf Mountain by the white settlers. In 1837 Magness sold his land to John T. Jones, Richard B. Lee, Richard D. C. Collins, and William McKim who intended to capitalize on the springs by developing a resort community. Responding to a proposal by Jones, the General Assembly of the state of Arkansas approved an act in 1838 to incorporate the White Sulphur Springs

Company. Governor James Sevier Conway signed the act which recognized the group's desire to improve the land "for the purpose of making it a convenient and healthy resort for the good citizens of Arkansas."

The land and springs, however, remained undeveloped. Jones secured sole ownership of the land through a series of transactions and purchased an additional 50 acres west of the original site. Jones, who had entered politics and was serving as circuit judge, sold the entire tract to Max Frauenthal in 1881, with the exception of one acre in the vicinity of the springs. Frauenthal was a prosperous Jewish merchant with holdings in nearby Conway and in Memphis, Tennessee. A month after purchasing the property, he organized the Sugar Loaf Springs Company and sold stock to ten shareholders. The new company, which was more interested in establishing a town than building a resort, did set aside four city blocks (ten acres), which they designated as Spring Park.

The town of Sugar Loaf Springs grew quickly based on the healing reputation of the mineral waters and achieved the distinction of being incorporated in the same year it was founded. When the townspeople submitted their request for a post office however, the name "Sugar Loaf" was rejected because there was already another post office in the state by that name. The town fathers instead chose to honor Dr. Heber Jones of Memphis, the son of the long-time owner of the town site, John T. Jones. Like many other towns in Arkansas, the separate names of the post office, Heber, and the town, Sugar Loaf, were used interchangeably until 1910 when the names of both institutions were officially changed to Heber Springs.

Spring Park, of course, became the principal attraction of the new town. An 1886 booklet entitled, *The Famous Health Resort of Sugar Loaf Springs and Cleburne County*, the author described the springs in relation to their location in the park:

These [the springs] are found in the spring park, which corners upon the hotel lawn. The first reached are five in number, White Sulphur, Arsenic, Chalybeate, Iron and Freestone, being all found in a few steps of each other; then the Red Sulphur, Saltpetre, Powder and Eye Springs, only a few yards from the first, and then comes the best and last, the Black Sulphur, making ten in all.

The benefit from partaking of these waters was ". . . a sure cure for dyspepsia, headache, biliousness and hundreds of other ailments." Today, only seven of the springs are recognized and maintained (absent the Chalybeate, Freestone, and Saltpetre springs).

In 1892, a visitor to the town wrote:

Nestled at the foot of the Ozark mountains, in the Little Red River valley, it is a surprise to the traveler who has made a day's drive from the railroad through a thinly settled country. The town is thirty miles from the nearest railroad point, but during the ten years of existence its population has reached 500 and is continually increasing. The most peculiar features of the town are its mineral springs, which have attracted no small amount of attention in the State [sic], though unknown outside of Arkansas.

Though it would be another sixteen years before the Missouri & North Arkansas railroad connected Heber Springs with the rest of the world, the town grew steadily around the tourism industry associated with the sulphur springs. The various hotels became centers of social life, and the activities conducted there were reported with great frequency in the local newspaper, *The Jacksonian*. The summer months were the most popular among the tourists, who would usually stay for weeks at a time to drink and enjoy the medicinal waters.

Still, the medicinal waters were not enough to prevent people from dying of natural causes, and a need for an undertaker was realized. In 1896, Thomas Edward Olmstead moved to Sugar Loaf from Brooks, Indiana. He soon opened a furniture and hardware store in a frame building structure on the site of the current building. A turn-of-the-century photograph of the store reveals the entire false front was devoted to advertising. "T. E. Olmstead & Son" was painted along the top. "Furniture, Hardware and Wall Paper" was listed to the left of the central four-over-four window, and "Building Materials & Paints" on the right. The actual storefront, however, promoted an altogether different line of services. The wooden bulkhead below the display windows were emblazoned with "Undertaking," "Coffins," and "Embalming." Sometime later, Olmstead sold the hardware business to M. M. Irwin and concentrated on undertaking. In 1909, the wood structure burned, and the nominated property was constructed a year later.

This building was constructed of cut stone, perhaps in deference to the fire which destroyed its predecessor. With the exception of the employment of modern, single-pane plate glass instead of the older four-pane sash in the display windows, the storefront of the new building essentially replicated the first building. Even the bold bulkhead signage was retained. In 1923, T. E. Olmstead died and his son, Ralph Wayne Olmstead, assumed leadership in the family business. At this time, the name was simplified to the Olmstead Funeral Home. In 1939, Ralph Olmstead constructed a new funeral home on Main Street, and the nominated property became a rental property for the family. During the past year, the old building was restored by the third generation owner, Tom Olmstead, for its new use as funerary museum.

The T. E. Olmstead & Son Funeral Home is locally significant under Criterion A for its association with the only historic and present funeral home in Heber Springs and for its ability to reflect the funerary practices of the first half of the twentieth century. Under Criterion C, the funeral home is also significant as one of the better extant cut-stone commercial buildings in Heber Springs and is representative of the commercial building phase that followed the early, sometimes hastily constructed, frame buildings.

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9. Major Bibliographical References
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Berry, Evalena. Sugar Loaf Springs: Heber's Elegant Watering Place. Conway, Arkansas: River Road Press, 1985.

Berry, Evalena. Time and the River: A History of Cleburne County. Little Rock, Arkansas: Rose Publishing Co., 1982.

Information submitted by Tom Olmstead, January, 1994 & August, 1995.

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:

- X State historic preservation office
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository:

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10. Geographical Data
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Acreage of Property: Less than one

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing
A 15 587740 3927760 B
C D

Verbal Boundary Description:

South Half of Lot 2, Block 45 of Original City of Heber Springs.

Boundary Justification:

This boundary includes all of the property historically associated with this resource that retains its integrity.

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11. Form Prepared By
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Name/Title: Patrick Zollner, Architectural Historian

Organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program Date: October 20, 1995

Street & Number: 1500 Tower Bldg., 323 Center St. Telephone: (501) 324-9880

City or Town: Little Rock State: AR ZIP: 72201

T. E. Olmstead & Son Funeral Home
Heber Springs, Cleburne Co., Ark.

UTM: 15/58774-1/3927760

HEBER SPRINGS QUADRANGLE
ARKANSAS-CLEBURNE CO.
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

7655 III SW
(GREENS FERRY DAM)



