

NRListed: 12-27-02

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 an 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 Ozark Courthouse Square Historic District

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number Buildings on W. Commercial, W. Main, 2nd and 3rd Streets, Courthouse Sq. not for publication

city or town Ozark vicinity

state Arkansas code AR county Franklin code 047 zip code 72949

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 for 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/Title

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 for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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

Name of Property

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 count.)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
32	9	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
32	9	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

2

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/trade

GOVERNMENT

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/trade

GOVERNMENT

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Italianate

Late 19th Century/Early 20th Century Vernacular
Commercial

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation Stone, Brick, Concrete

walls Brick, Stone

roof Asphalt

other

Narrative Description

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

Name of Property

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.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance.
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.

Levels of Significance (local, state, national)

Local

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Commerce

Community Planning & Development

Period of Significance

1890-1930

Significant Dates

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

N/A

Architect/Builder

Frank Gibbs, Architect

J. Frieze, Claude Talley, Builders

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:

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Summary

The Ozark Courthouse Square Historic District contains a total of forty-three (43) buildings located on and around the streets surrounding the Franklin County Courthouse. The buildings found in the district reflect the growth and commerce of Ozark, Arkansas, during its most affluent period from 1890 to 1930. All but one of the buildings are fifty years old or older, thirty-four (79%) of which contribute to the significance of the district and nine that have been significantly, although not irreparably, altered from their historic appearance. Constructed of materials indigenous to the region, these buildings reflect vernacular commercial adaptations of architectural styles common to the district's period of significance. Two examples of this construction approach within the district are individually listed on the National Register- the Franklin County Courthouse (NR 9-22-95) and the Bristow Hotel (NR 2-18-99).

The streetscape of the Ozark Courthouse Square Historic District and the buildings themselves appear much as they did during the forty-year period of Ozark history most reflective of its development (1890-1930). Almost all of the buildings are occupied and the area contained in the district remains a busy center of regional commerce and local government.

Elaboration

The Ozark Courthouse Square Historic District contains a total of forty-three (43) buildings located on four principal streets (West Commercial, West Main, Second and Third Streets) that surround the district's centerpiece, the Franklin County Courthouse. The courthouse presents a minimal style appearance reflective of its reconstruction in 1944-45 following a damaging fire. The remaining forty-two buildings in the district are one, two, and three-story vernacular adaptations of commercial styles common in the county during their time of construction. Adjacent to the district is the Arkansas River, one block south, and two buildings individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the 1910 Missouri Pacific Railroad Depot and the 1914 Franklin County Jail, both constructed of rusticated native limestone.

Locally quarried limestone is a dominant building material within the district. The light colored stone contributes to the district's distinctive character. Although not elaborate, the appearance of the buildings in the district strongly conveys a sense of time and place as Ozark's commercial and county governmental center much as it appeared during its strongest period of growth from 1890 to 1930.

West Commercial Street (U. S. Highway 64)

The building located at 109 W. Commercial is a narrow one-story structure constructed c.1900. The building features distinguished brick-arched windows flanking a center entry. Originally the building at 110 West Commercial faced North 2nd Street, but was remodeled in the 1940s with a brick facing and oriented to face West Commercial. A cast iron post is visible on the front north end of the 2nd Street elevation of this building.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

The Franklin County Courthouse is located at 211 West Commercial. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places (9-22-95), the three-story courthouse was originally constructed in 1904 and rebuilt in 1944-45 after a fire severely damaged the building. Arkansas architect Frank Gibb designed the original courthouse building, constructed in 1904 in the Italian Renaissance style. The reconstructed courthouse building was designed by architect T. Ewing Shelton from Fayetteville, Arkansas. The brick building was reconstructed with flat roof, shortened corner towers and minimal detail.

The north side of the 200 block of West Commercial Street contains a row of nine commercial buildings that appear much as they did in the late 1920s. Seven of the buildings in this block (200-202, 204, 208, 210, 212, 214, and 216 West Commercial) were constructed at the same time and although separate buildings, are identical in height, storefront layout, building materials and design. These one-story brick buildings, originally constructed in the early twentieth century were re-constructed c.1927 adding a new brick façade with plate glass storefronts topped by transom windows. Simple brick cornices feature recessed brick panels, denoted by decorative brick banding and brick pilasters denoting the separation between buildings.

The building located at 218 West Commercial is a two-story brick structure that, although the façade (south elevation) was re-bricked following a fire in 1926, has characteristics indicative of its original early twentieth century Italianate style influence exhibited in slightly arched second story windows. The Arkansas Valley Bank Building at 220 West Commercial is a two-story brick structure with main entry and small recessed second story balcony set into a beveled corner. Bands of cut stone run above the first and second story windows and also below the second story windows. First floor windows feature cut stone sills. A decorative frieze features decorative terra cotta decoration.

300 Block West Commercial

The Maxey Hardware Store Building located at 300 West Commercial is a two-story brick building with Italianate style characteristics in its second story round-arched windows and decorative brick banding in recessed panels. The two buildings at 302 West Commercial are spanned by brick cornices with zigzag pattern. Although both buildings feature arched windows topped by hood moldings and small arched vents above second story windows, distinctive differences distinguish the character of each building.

The two-story buildings located at 308 and 310 West Commercial were refaced in the 1940s. A small, one-story brick and stone building at 312 West Commercial infills the space between the two-story 308 and 310 buildings and the large building on the end of the block, 318 W. Commercial. Constructed around 1920 on the eastern end of the block, the building at 318 West Commercial is one-story of rusticated cut limestone construction and features a recessed cut out corner entry. Seven buildings located on the south side of the 300 block of West Commercial are one story, of brick and cut stone and constructed between 1915 and 1920.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

West Main Street

West Main Street features three buildings, two of which are historic. The buildings at 207 and 215 West Main Street were constructed c.1915, but have been significantly altered from their original appearance with changes to portions of their façades. The building at 221 West Main Street was constructed c.1980 and houses the Franklin County Assessor's offices.

South Second Street

Four buildings on South 2nd Street face the east elevation of the Franklin County Courthouse. The Hunt-Siemens Building at 100-101-103 South 2nd Street was constructed in 1885 and is a two-story brick structure with virtually unaltered storefronts. The 106 South 2nd Street building is a small one-story cut stone-faced structure with minimal detailing. The Bristow Hotel, located at 112 South 2nd Street is a two-story rusticated stone building constructed in 1909. The Bristow Hotel was listed on the National Register of Historic Places (2-18-99). Two one-story concrete block buildings on the southern end of the 100 block of South 2nd Street have been altered from their original 1940s appearance with the addition of metal storefront cornice.

North Second Street

Three c.1900 one-story brick buildings are located on the east side of North 2nd Street and remain much as they appeared originally. Similarly styled, these building feature simple brick recessed panels below the cornice lines. A Coca-Cola advertisement is painted on the upper portion of the building at 106 North 2nd Street.

South Third Street

South 3rd Street contains six historic commercial buildings. At the southwest corner of South 3rd and West Commercial Streets is a one-story brick building, constructed c. 1885. Originally two-stories, the building contained a confectionary and drug store. The storefront is remarkably intact although aluminum panels have covered upper portions of the building. The E. W. Blackburn Drug Store Building at 107 South 3rd Street was constructed c.1908 by local builder Claude Talley, who constructed many of the stone buildings in Ozark's commercial district. A pocket park is located in the middle of the 100 block of South 3rd Street where a former two-story structure stood. Two large, two-story brick buildings at 111 and 113 South 3rd Street have been remodeled and do not contribute to the historic significance of the district.

Integrity

The Ozark Courthouse Square Historic District possesses a strong sense of place reflective of the period of historic significance of the district (1890-1930). The majority of the forty-three (43) buildings appear much as they did during this era of the city's history, retaining original architectural features and materials used in their construction and displaying the workmanship employed by former local buildings utilizing stone native to the area. The forty-three (43) buildings within the Ozark Courthouse Square Historic District present a

Ozark Courthouse Square Historic District

Name of Property

Franklin County, Arkansas

County and State

United States Department of the Interior

National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

significant and cohesive grouping of structures defining the city's early progress and forward-looking unity through strong preservation activities.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

Summary

Including the Franklin County Courthouse and forty-two buildings on the four surrounding streets, the Ozark Courthouse Square Historic District is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with local significance, under Criterion A and C. As a collection, the buildings in the Ozark Courthouse Square Historic District exhibit local craftsmanship in the construction of vernacular commercial architecture as the city grew and developed in its most significant historic period, 1890 to 1930.

Elaboration

Ozark, Arkansas, is a small town, population roughly 4,000, situated between the edge of the Ozark Mountains and the bank of the Arkansas River in Franklin County. The terrain of the northern part of the county is rolling to mountainous, while the southern part is flat to gently rolling hills. The Arkansas River bisects Franklin County near the middle, providing a broad valley of rich alluvial soil. Because the river divides the county, residents of the northern one-half primarily transact business in Ozark, the county seat of the northern district of the county, while residents of the southern portion of the county transact business at Charleston, the county seat of the southern area of Franklin County.

Ozark is located forty miles east of Fort Smith, the nearest large city, and 130 miles west of Little Rock, the capital city of the State. Ozark is on the main line of the Missouri Pacific Railroad, between Kansas City and New Orleans, the main highway US 64 from Little Rock to Fort Smith and the main route north to Missouri, Arkansas Highway 23. Brochures advertising the city in the 1930s boasted that eight roads lead into the city from every part of the county and adjacent towns.

Early in the 1830s two hunters, Judge David Walker and Archibald Yell wandered upon a view of the Arkansas River from the northwestern heights and decided that it would be a good site for a town. As shrewd lawyers and astute businessmen, they had in mind a possible location for the seat of justice of Franklin County that was then in the making. They approached William Hail, a businessman who had purchased a large portion of the land, which would become Ozark. In 1836, the three men proceeded to lay out the town. A year later when Franklin County was created, Ozark became the county seat. Ozark (from the French name for the area, *Aux Arc*, the most accepted translation of which means *big bend*, in reference to the sharp, nineteen-mile bend that the Arkansas River makes at this point) was an important area for river commerce, both northwest to Fort Smith and southeast to Little Rock. A landing place for boats on the Arkansas River was secured and the construction of business buildings was begun. The new town was advertised in newspapers as far away as New Orleans announcing that lots would be sold at a big barbecue.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

The town of Ozark experienced a steady growth in the period from 1840 to 1860. Many brick buildings were constructed in this era, in particular a two-story brick courthouse in the center of the town site. Settlers in northern part of the county obtained most of their supplies through the steamboat landing at Ozark. This was possible in large part to an early road from Ozark to Huntsville that was "good enough for wagon travel." The many customers of the Ozark merchants were scattered up and down the Arkansas River and over miles of the Ozark Mountains.

Ozark was severely affected by the Civil War; nearly the entire town was burned. The brick courthouse was used as a Federal magazine, and portholes were dug in its walls. Although devastated by the Civil War, Ozark recuperated rapidly following the end of the war. Businesses rebuilt beginning in the courthouse square area. The arrival of the Little Rock and Fort Smith Railroad in Ozark in January 1876 heralded a significant period of growth in the city. The downtown commercial district grew, reflecting the two major sources of transportation and its status as the center of government in the southern region of Franklin County. In 1885, stone sidewalks were constructed around the town square, although most of the buildings were of frame or brick construction.

A devastating fire in 1904 destroyed many commercial structures in the downtown area. Following this fire several buildings were constructed from the locally quarried native limestone. Local builders, J. Frieze and Claude Talley were responsible for the construction of several of the stone buildings built in Ozark in the first decades of the twentieth century.

In the early years of the twentieth century, Ozark became the center of several coal-mining operations. The minerals found in Franklin County include coal, clay, iron and shale. The United States Geological Survey tested the coal deposits and proclaimed it the best quality of coal west of West Virginia. The Philpot Valley Coal Field, located six miles northeast of Ozark produced many tons of coal. Franklin County, Arkansas was advertised for its varied resources with agriculture, mining operations, and river and rail traffic. Discovery and production of natural gas also helped to contribute to the growth of the community.

Agricultural enterprises abounded in the area; good soil and climatic conditions provided excellent growing opportunities. Nearby a group of German settlers established vineyards and successful winery. A brochure published by the Ozark Chamber of Commerce in the early 1930s enticed that the area "...will furnish you as many different ways of earning a livelihood, or making an investment, as any county in the state. We can satisfy you, with either, Agriculture, Horticulture, Dairying, Poultry, Live Stock, Fruit, Truck, Mining, Lumbering, opportunities for Business Investments, Sports and Fishing, Hunting and Vacationing." In the first decades of the twentieth century, Franklin County was extensively advertised as "The Land of a Million Smiles", and "The Playground of America." Tourists flocked to the area in the summer, to take advantage of the "Loveliest Scenic Spot in Arkansas."

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 3

Significance

The Ozark Courthouse Square Historic District is a collection of commercial buildings surrounding a traditional courthouse square. All but one of the buildings is over fifty years of age and 34 (79%) of the buildings contribute to the historic significance of the district. The buildings in the district best reflect the growth and development of Ozark from the period 1890 to 1930 and have changed little since their date of construction. Native limestone, quarried nearby, is commonly used in the construction of many of the buildings in the district. Although simple vernacular versions of popular American commercial architecture, they display local craftsmanship and a small town's entrepreneurial spirit.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1

Bibliography

The Goodspeed Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Northwestern Arkansas. Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1889.

Insurance Maps of Ozark, Arkansas. New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1892, 1897, 1904, 1914, 1924, 1924/1932.

Lemke, W. J. "The Paper of Samuel Evans of Ozark." Arkansas Historical Quarterly. Volume XIII (Autumn 1954).

Wilson, Jo Luck. Arkansas Tourism Development Profile: Franklin County. Published by Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism. 1988.

Works Progress Administration Flies. Arkansas History Commission, Little Rock, Arkansas. Information compiled and written by Virginia Gates, Fort Smith Division of the Federal Writer's Project, August 5, 1936.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 1

UTM References

1. 15 424912E 3927185N
2. 15 425135E 3927155N
3. 15 425125E 3827028N
4. 15 425064E 3926992N
5. 15 424972E 3927008N
6. 15 424901E 3927058N

Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at a point at the intersection of W. Commercial Street (U.S. Highway 64) and 4th Street, the boundary runs north along N. 4th Street to the alley behind (north) of the buildings in the north side of the 300 block of W. Commercial Street. At this point the boundary turns and runs east along the alley, across N. 3rd Street to the alley north of the buildings in the 200 block of W. Commercial to the intersection of the alley and N. 2nd Street. At this point the boundary runs east across N. 2nd Street and east on the alley north of the building located at 106 N. 2nd Street. The boundary turns and runs south behind (east) of the property lines of the 100 block of N. 2nd Street. At the point where the boundary intersects Commercial Street, it continues to run due south along the rear property lines (east) of buildings in the 100 block of S. 2nd Street to its intersection with Main Street. At Main Street, the boundary runs west to S. 2nd Street where it turns to run south to the rear property lines of buildings in the 200 block of Main Street. At the point where the boundary intersects S. 3rd Street, it turns to run north on S. 3rd Street to the intersection of Main Street. At S. 3rd and Main Streets, the boundary turns and runs west to S. 4th Street where it turns and runs north along S. 4th Street to the intersection of W. Commercial Street and the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification

The boundary was decided through a study of the downtown core of buildings in Ozark, Arkansas. The boundaries of the Ozark Courthouse Square Historic District define the most contiguous and historic portion of the downtown.