

26-09-4233-61

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Wildwood

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

808 Park Avenue

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Hot Springs

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Third

STATE

Arkansas

VICINITY OF

CODE
05

COUNTY
Garland

CODE
051

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Mr. and Mrs. Tom Ellsworth

STREET & NUMBER

11 Glen Street

CITY, TOWN

Hot Springs

VICINITY OF

STATE

Arkansas

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Circuit Clerk's Office

STREET & NUMBER

Garland County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Hot Springs

STATE

Arkansas

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Wildwood is considered to be the finest example of eclectic Victorian architecture constructed in Hot Springs. Designed by Phillip Van Patten and built for his brother-in-law, Dr. Harvey Prosper Ellsworth, in 1884, the house is a bulky collection of towers and pavilions, which enclose an extraordinary hardwood interior and an equally fantastic array of antique furnishings.

The style of the building is wedged somewhere between Stick Style and Shingle Style, or it can be fit into that common pool of eclectic, wooden architecture known as Queen Anne. The two-and-one-half-storey house features multiple-form, high-pitched roofing, a variety of exterior colors and textures, irregularity of plan and massing, a rounded corner turret, gabled dormers, porch and roof gables of severe angle, and a second-floor overhang or jetty on the southeast elevation.

A wealth of exotic detail graces the exterior of Wildwood. The ridge-line on the roof is shaped to resemble a long succession of shark fins. A large wooden plaque, which bears the inscription Wildwood, 1884, survives on the gable above the front porch. Highly articulated chimney stacks are found at odd locations on the structure. Vertical and horizontal boarding, as well as imbricated shingling, form the wall surfaces. Latticework fills a small porch gable on the east elevation. The foundation is composed of native novaculite or whetstone, a very hard native stone. The list of specific decorative details could be nearly endless.

Ornate features in the interior of Wildwood are no less abundant than those found on the exterior, the most notable of the features being the use of hardwood in every conceivable manner. A large variety of wooden mouldings and paneling covers the interior walls. The ceiling in the entrance hall is composed of maple veneer and cherry beams. Four elaborate hardwood mantels with tile-work around the openings are located in the major first-floor rooms. Cabinets and convenience furnishings, such as the shelving and a mirrored sideboard found in the dining room, are built into the walls. A magnificent cherry staircase, boasting huge newel posts carved from the solid trunks of cherry trees, is the most outstanding individual component in the house. The upper sections of the stairwell are screened with a spindle lattice. The exercise in wooden detailing is carried to such an extreme that a differing hardwood was used in each room of the ground floor, thus providing the house with its name of Wildwood.

Currently, Wildwood contains a fine collection of antique furnishings and dishware, most of which are heirlooms of the Ellsworth family. The building is operated as a museum by Mr. and Mrs. Tom Ellsworth, and every effort has been made to retain the authentic character of the building and its contents. No recent alterations have been undertaken, and those alterations which have modified the original 1884 structure are of interest in themselves. For

Form No. 101-300a
(10-74)

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example, the electrical system installed in the early twentieth century illustrates an interesting facet of the state's technological history.

The original estate surrounding Wildwood has been slightly reduced, but the trees, the surviving carriage drive, and the home's commanding position atop a steep rise all help to recapture the world which witnessed Wildwood's construction.

SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1884

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Phillip Van Patten

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

In 1878 Dr. Harvey Prosper Ellsworth purchased an undeveloped estate on the northern slope of North Mountain, then located beyond the city limits of Hot Springs. His intention was to build a new home on the site and thereby escape the fire hazard that continually threatened his present home in the cramped little city of Hot Springs. Ironically, the great fire of 1878 destroyed Dr. Ellsworth's Hot Springs home long before construction was scheduled to begin on his North Mountain home. After a stay of several years in a carriage house renovated for human habitation, the Ellsworths moved into their new North Mountain home which they called Wildwood. This 1884 house has since become one of Arkansas' most widely documented Victorian homes, noted for both its garish, inventive detail and for its first two occupants, Harvey and Sarah Ellsworth.

Dr. Harvey Prosper Ellsworth was born in West Hatley, Province of Quebec, Canada in 1838. Shortly before the Civil War, he graduated from the Rush College of Medicine in Exeter, Illinois, and during the war he served as a regimental surgeon for the Union Army. He settled in Arkansas after the Civil War, moving to Hot Springs after a short stay in Pine Bluff. At the time he was the city's only practicing surgeon. He became widely known for his efforts to establish standard educational requirements for the practice of medicine in Arkansas and for his promotion of the Arkansas Medical Society. His stand on medical education as well as incidents from his life were featured on the CBS radio program "Doctors Then and Now" in 1947. In 1873 Dr. Ellsworth married a woman no less active and civic-minded than himself, Sarah Van Patten (Ellsworth).

An accomplished artist and hostess, Sarah Ellsworth received state-wide attention for her work with the Arkansas Federation of Women's Clubs. As president of the Federation from 1908-10, she led a campaign to pr the proposed destruction of the Old State House after the completion of the new State Capitol. An offshoot of the campaign was the creation of the Arkansas State Flag, which was designed for use at preservation rallies. The fact that the Old State House is today a National Register structure attests to the success of her campaign.

Circumstances greatly favored the construction of the Ellsworth's home of Wildwood. The high quality hardwood timber and the hard novaculite stone (or whetstone) used in construction were taken directly from their North Mountain estate. The work carried out during construction was performed

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by highly skilled Irish masons and Pullman Company carpenters, all of whom were in Hot Springs for work on other special projects. And the architect for the house, Phillip Van Patten of Baltimore, was the brother of Mrs. Ellsworth.

Today, Wildwood is operated as a museum by the heirs to the estate, Mr. and Mrs. Tom Ellsworth, and every effort has been made to retain the authentic character of the building and its heirloom contents.

The style of the building is wedged somewhere between Stick Style and Shingle Style, or it can be fit into that common pool known as Queen Anne. The two-and-one-half-storey house features multiple-form, high-pitched roofing, a variety of exterior colors and textures, irregularity of plan and massing, a rounded corner turret, gabled dormers, porch and roof gables of severe angle, and a second-floor overhang or jetty on the south elevation.

A profusion of hardwood trim of every conceivable type best describes the interior. Wooden mouldings, mantels, ceilings, doors, paneling, stairways, lattice-work and built-in fixtures, all contribute to the ornate appearance of the interior.

The original estate surrounding Wildwood has been slightly reduced, but the home's commanding position atop a steep rise all help to recapture the world which witnessed Wildwood's construction.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Dunda, Mrs. (Wildwood tour guide). Interview conducted on September 9, 1975.
 Hempstead, Fay. Historical Review of Arkansas, Vol. II. Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1911.
 Hudgins, Mary D. "Historic Hot Springs Home Will Become Museum," Arkansas Gazette, August 18, 1963.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre
 UTM REFERENCES

A	0, 5	4, 9, 5, 4, 0, 0	3, 8, 2, 0, 5, 4, 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Mike Shinn, Historian

ORGANIZATION

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

STREET & NUMBER

300 West Markham

CITY OR TOWN

Little Rock,

DATE

3-9-76

TELEPHONE

501-371-1639

STATE

Arkansas

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL X

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-655), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE Anne Bartley

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

3-9-76

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I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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- Hudgins, Mary D. "In Those Elegant Eighties," Arkansas Democrat, November 23, 1947.
 . "Sarah Ellsworth Maker of Arkansas History," Arkansas Historical Quarterly, XI (summer, 1952).
- Moore, Maurice. "Ellsworth Home, Wildwood, Restored to 1884 Splendor," Arkansas Democrat, August 18, 1963.
- Scully, Francis J., M.D. Hot Springs Arkansas and Hot Springs National Park.
 Little Rock: Hanson Company, 1966.

