

**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 Poinsett Lumber and Manufacturing Company Manager's House  
other names/site number Singer House, Singer Manor, Singer Mansion / Site # PO0034

**2. Location**

street & number 512 Poinsett Avenue  not for publication  
city or town Trumann  vicinity  
state Arkansas code AR county Poinsett code 111 zip code 72472

**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: Signature of the Keeper \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_  
 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:) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

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

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2		buildings
		sites
	1	structures
3		objects
5	1	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)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

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

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> REVIVALS/Tudor Revival  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE  
\_\_\_\_\_  
walls BRICK, STONE, WOOD  
\_\_\_\_\_  
roof ASPHALT  
\_\_\_\_\_  
other \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

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

**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)

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT  
INDUSTRY

**Period of Significance**

1934-1960

**Significant Dates**

1934-1960

**Significant Person** (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation** (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Architect: Phillips, Edwin B.

**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: \_\_\_\_\_

PL&M Company Manager's House  
Name of Property

Poinsett County, Arkansas  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreeage of Property** 2.8 Acres

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>15</u> Zone	<u>724733</u> Easting	<u>3950691</u> Northing	3	<u>          </u> Zone	<u>          </u> Easting	<u>          </u> Northing
2	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	4	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>

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 Larry and Georgia Henderson; Edited by Van Zbinden, National Register Historian  
organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date 19 October 2009  
street & number 323 Center Street, Tower Building 1600 telephone (501) 324-9880  
city or town Little Rock state AR zip code 72201

## 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 SHPO or FPO.)

name Larry and Georgia Henderson  
street & number 512 Poinsett Avenue telephone             
city or town Trumann state AR zip code 72472

**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 listing. 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 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 Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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## Summary

The Poinsett Lumber and Manufacturing Company Manager's House was constructed in 1935. The home is now commonly referred to as the Singer House as the Poinsett Lumber and Manufacturing Company (PL&M) was a wholly owned subsidiary of the Singer Manufacturing Company. Built in PL&M's 4<sup>th</sup> Addition to the city of Trumann, the home was built adjacent to the sprawling veneer mill to the east.

As was common for lumber companies of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, PL&M provided housing for its many employees. It is unknown, at this time, the existence or location of a manager's home prior to this home. Regardless, when PL&M built the manager's home they constructed a home worthy of many company presidents.

## Elaboration

The Singer House, as it is commonly referred to in Trumann, is a Tudor Revival, one-story brick home. Across the United States the Tudor Revival, or Tudor form, was immensely popular during the 1920s and 1930s. It is no surprise that architect Edwin B. Phillips chose this style to construct a modern, high-style home. The lot on which the house sits is a three acre parcel to the east of the former Poinsett Lumber and Manufacturing Company plant. Indicative of the importance of the manager's position within the company and in an attempt to convey that to all who saw the home, it is set like a large English cottage well away from the road. This setting, back on a wooded lot, gives a sense of privacy and seclusion, exaggerates the size of the lot, and imparts a slightly imposing mystery. Employee housing, frame houses on small crowded lots, provided by the company would not have this same feel or setting.

As is typical of Tudor Revival style houses it has varied eave-height lines, overlapping gables, the use of multiple materials in exterior cladding, arched entryways, and patterned brickwork chimney. When constructed, the home had false, half-timbered gables. The original home is clad primarily in brick, set in both common and English row-lock bonds. Ashlar, square-cut stone with natural face and set in irregular courses dominates the main form of the home.

Multiple overlapping gables exaggerate the height of the home with their steeply pitched rooflines. The roof is covered in asphalt, architectural shingles. Windows in the home appear to be a concession to economics and highlight the realities of construction during the Great Depression. Though in ribbons, the width and mullion material is incongruous with more correct Tudor window forms. However, this highlights the eclectic and sometime vernacular nature of this popular architectural style. Phillip's choice of casement windows was both a concession to climate and economics while at the same time attempting to maintain the style.

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One of the more significant changes made to the home was the extension of the home toward the rear. This frame, shed-roofed addition to the rear provided additional space for two bedrooms and a bath. The addition is clad in ashlar, square-cut, rubbed finish stone set in irregular course. It is readily apparent that it is an addition to the home. Though it is unknown when this addition was made, it is believed to be a historic addition.

Of note is the unseen foundation and basement of the home. The water table in Poinsett County is relatively high and historically much of the county was swampland. PL&M made a substantial investment in the home by driving piers down to solid clay and pouring the foundation on top of these piers. Company engineers then designed a basement for the home; this remains one of few basements in Trumann.

Adjacent to the home is a two-car garage. The garage faces the rear of the home and is connected by a porte-cochere. Again, the form emphasizes the English manor feel of the home. On the northeast corner of the property is a servants/care takers quarters. This two-story structure is of frame construction in an English cottage style.

### East Façade/Front

The Poinsett Lumber and Manufacturing Company House was built facing east. Across Poinsett Avenue was the veneer mill and manufacturing plant of the Poinsett Lumber and Manufacturing Company. As a company home it is no surprise that it was oriented toward the factory. The home is asymmetrical, typical of the Tudor style. The east façade clad in both ashlar, square-cut stone with natural face and brick. It sits on a concrete foundation and is topped by shallow enclosed eaves under an asphalt shingle roof.

Comprised of five bays, the frontispiece has a long profile that magnifies the size of the home. The first bay on the south, or left, side of the façade is a porch fenestrated by a pair of six-light casement windows and a pair of wooden doors also with six-light windows. These doors lead to a low concrete step on the east of the home and sidewalk that gently curves from the drive. This bay is anchored by ashlar stone with a concrete water table band. On the southeast corner an ashlar cut, stone pier rises to the roofline. The casement windows in this bay are set on a concrete sill atop a common bond brick panel.

The next bay to the north, or right, is the most prominent bay of the façade. This front facing gable with its steeply pitched roof accentuates the height of the house and provides a vertical element. This bay extends approximately ten feet farther west than the adjacent bay to the south. It too is clad in ashlar cut stone set in an irregular pattern. The four-part window of the bay is a complex installation of paired, six-light, casement windows. Behind the casement windows are a set of double-hung, one-over-one windows. Above the four casement windows is a ribbon of four two-over-two stationary windows. This window installation protrudes from the home and has a concrete sill on common bond brick panel.

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Above the window is an overhanging gable with dentils. Originally this gable was stucco with half-timbers and fenestrated by two narrow, two-over-two windows. It is now clad in vinyl siding with horizontal orientation and the vergeboards are clad in siding as well.

Adjacent to the right is a second front-facing gable. Multiple front-facing gables are a common feature of the Tudor form. This lower gable is clad in brick set in an English rowlock pattern. To the gable, the bay is clad in the same ashlar stone as the rest of the façade. The only fenestration is the doorway; slightly inset creating a shallow porch. An aluminum screen door has been replaced by a decorative iron door. The main door of the home is a multiple panel, unlit wooden door.

To the right, again north, of the entry porch is a bay with one large picture window. Highlighting the often eclectic nature of the American Tudor form, the main fenestration of this bay is a three-part window. On each side of the large single-pane picture window are six-light, casement windows. This three-part installation is topped by an eleven light transom. The bay is recessed from the two adjacent bays to the south but like those it is clad in common bond brick and the window sits on a concrete sill.

The fifth bay on the east façade is dominated by a protruding stucco and half-timbered room. The parapet of this flat-roofed section stands in contrast to the gables on the home and seems almost tower like. The square room sits on ashlar stone topped by a concrete water table band. Atop the water table band is a stucco and half timbered panel. The bay is fenestrated by three six-light casement windows. Originally the half-timbers of the lower panel continued to the parapet. The parapet is now clad in vinyl siding and this architectural detail has been lost.

### North Elevation/Side

Largely obscured by the adjacent garage, the north elevation is comprised of three bays. The first, that on the east, is a side facing gable clad in common bond brick. The bay is fenestrated by a pair of double-hung, four-over-four windows and one door. A second bay, fenestrated only by a single, paneled door and clad in vinyl siding, is largely hidden by the porte-cochere. The third bay of the elevation is the north side of the rear cross gable. This long extension to the west is fenestrated by four double-hung, one-over-one windows. The bay is clad in common bond brick.

### West Elevation/Rear

Looking on the home from the west there are five separate bays of the west elevation. Two bays on the north side are clad in vinyl siding and fenestrated with one double-hung, one-over-one window in each bay. The first bay on the north protrudes from the adjacent bay by approximately five feet. The main body of the home is the end facing gable of the central, or third, bay.

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This third bay is clad in common bond brick. The brick wall rises to a shallow eave on the gable-on-hip-roof. In the gable are four two-over-two windows. As with the other gables on this home, the stucco and half-timber and vergeboards have been covered in vinyl siding. The bay is fenestrated with one pair and two separate double-hung, one-over-one windows. Like the rest of the windows in this home, these sit on concrete sills.

To the south of this main bay is the west elevation bay of the undated addition to the home. This elevation is not fenestrated and is clad in ashlar, square-cut, rubbed finish stone. Unlike the original stone on the home this stone is of a very different color tone. Combined with the different finish, though it is a compatible material, it is readily noticeable as an addition. Above the bay is a second rear facing gable. This gable is symmetrically placed in-line with that on the east façade. As with the other gables the original half-timber and stucco has been covered in vinyl siding.

The last bay of the elevation is the rear elevation of the porch. This bay is fenestrated with three six-light casement windows and one six-light, paneled door. Like the east elevation, this bay sits on ashlar cut stone with a concrete water table. The windows sit on a concrete sill in a common bond brick panel.

### South Elevation/Side

The south elevation has three bays. From the west side of the house they are the undated addition to the house, the porch, and a short wall on the east side. The first bay is clad in ashlar, square-cut, rubbed finish stone. Unlike the original stone on the home this stone is of a very different color tone. Combined with the different finish, though it is a compatible material, it is readily noticeable as an addition. This bay is fenestrated with a pair of wood, double-hung, six-over-one windows. The original wall of the home in this bay is clad in ashlar cut, rough-faced stone and has one six-light casement window.

The south bay of the porch is similarly constructed to the rest of the porch. It sits on ashlar cut, rough-faced stone with piers of similar material on the east and west corners. The windows are set in a ribbon atop a concrete sill in a common bond brick panel. There are five windows in the bay each are six-light casement windows. As on the other gables the stucco and half-timber gable has been covered in vinyl siding.

A short, south facing wall on the east side of the home is the last bay of the south elevation. This wall is clad completely in the home's original ashlar stone and is fenestrated with one six-over six, double-hung window.



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#### **Interior**

The interior organization of the home is a traditional organization based on a T-shape. A central hall runs along the north-south axis of the home and a second hall runs along the east-west axis of the home as well. As a home constructed by a manufacturing and veneer company the interior is well appointed. The home was designed to be a show place and as much a public relations tool as the home of the plant manager. Therefore the interior finishes are all elegant and in keeping with the English manor house theme. The breakfast room is finished in Maple and the dining room in Oak. The living room walls are full-height Cherry panels with exposed beams on the ceiling. The library is finished in an elegant, dark Walnut paneling.

All the floors in the home are wide-planked, Oak and Pine; the exception being the kitchen, breakfast room, and service areas which are a ceramic tile. The home has all its original hardware; it has glass door handles on all the doors in the bedroom wing and brass door handles in the rest of the house.

#### **Garage**

To the north of the home is a two car garage. Essentially a plain-traditional structure, it does maintain the Tudor form though it lacks Tudor architectural details. The garage was located like a traditional English carriage house. Like the home, the garage sits on a concrete foundation and is clad in common bond brick. Entry is made by driving through a columned and arched porte-cochere between the house and the garage. To minimize the automobile's impact on the design of the home, the garage doors face the rear of the property. A carport has been added to the rear of the garage adding additional parking capacity.

The front of the garage, or east side, is comprised of two bays. The first is the front facing gable on the southern end of the garage. The bay is fenestrated with one large double-hung, one-over-one window. To provide additional privacy, and a decorative element, the current owners have hung a large stained glass window in this opening behind the existing window. To the north, the adjacent bay is not fenestrated and is set back from the adjacent bay.

On the north elevation the garage is fenestrated with one centrally placed, double-hung, one-over-one window. The common bond brick extends into the gable. The west elevation of the garage is largely hidden by the carport, however it is clad in brick and fenestrated by two four-light, paneled, swing-up garage doors. The south elevation is covered by the roof of the porte-cochere and includes one door toward the west of the elevation.

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### Care Taker's House/Servant's Quarters

At the northeast corner of the property, along Poinsett Avenue is a one-and-one-half story care taker's or servant's quarters house. Oriented toward the house, this servant's quarters is oriented east-west with a very slight southwest facing. The frame building sits on a concrete foundation and is clad in wood paneling with shingled gables. The steeply pitched roof features two dormers on both the north and south elevations.

The south elevation faces the main house. The elevation is fenestrated with one solid wood door on the west side of the elevation. To the east of the door are two equally-spaced, double-hung, nine-over-nine wooden windows. The front door is topped by a simple, shed roof porch with wood columns. Two dormers with four-light windows are equally spaced on the roof.

The east elevation is fenestrated by one stationary, six-light window on the first floor and one stationary four-light window in the gable. At the northeast corner is a gable roof shed with a multi-panel door. The north elevation has a centrally located door. This door is louvered and provides direct access to the upper floor of the building. The first floor is fenestrated by one double-hung, nine-over-nine wooden window and one stationary, two-light window on the east and west sides of the door, respectively. The upper floor is lit by two gable-roofed dormers. These dormers have four-light windows. The west elevation is fenestrated with one two-light window and one double-hung, nine-over-nine window on the first floor. The gable is fenestrated by two equally-spaced, four-light windows.

### Concrete Structures, Fountain

As the home of the company manager, the home was meant as much for public relations and company relations as much as it was a home. Therefore the grounds of the home were as much an investment as the home itself. A unique, and still operating, irrigation system was installed to water the grounds. However, the most unique of the objects placed on the grounds are a set of concrete sculptures and one fountain and grill.

Two cast concrete objects can be found on the property. The first is a picnic bench with two chairs and two benches. The second work is a bar for serving drinks complete with foot-rail. Designed to look as if they were made of trees, both are proportionally correct to be constructed of logs and both have extensive bark relief to accentuate their rustic form. This natural style has examples that date to 1780 in France and is most commonly referred to as rustic, *trabajo rustico* (rustic work), or *faux bois* (imitation wood).

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In the United States, it was popularized by A. J. Downing as early as 1840 with published examples by George Woodward in 1869. Landscape architect Calvert Vaux had designed shelters and bridges in the rustic style for New York City's Central Park in 1854.<sup>1</sup>

The concrete works designed to look like wood are highly detailed. The wood grain, bark, and structural forms are often quite lifelike. Though made of concrete the sculptures often have the appearance of being very delicate. Rustic work became very popular in Arkansas and the Memphis, Tennessee, area in the 1930s. It was during this time that a highly skilled Mexican artisan by the name of Dionicio Rodriguez was constructing sculptures in North Little Rock, Arkansas, Hot Springs, Arkansas, and Memphis, Tennessee. It is unknown if Rodriguez or one of his assistants completed these sculptures and barring further examination by experts in Rodriguez's work we will not know. However, these works are very good examples of what in Arkansas is a rare art form.

The picnic table set includes a bench anchored on each end by a large stump. Two chairs designed to look as if carved from a single log are at each end of the table. The table itself has bark edging and is supported on two log supports. The bar is slightly U-shaped and has the appearance of being made from a series of vertically placed logs. The top of the bar has the appearance of being made of two hand-planed boards.

The water fountain and grill are of substantial size and scale. Both are made of rough-cut stone set in an irregular pattern. The grill is on the east end of the structure and the fountain is in the middle. The fountain is approximately six feet tall and features three pools through which the water cascades, the last emptying into a kidney shaped pool that covers almost 40 square feet. The fountain and grill structure is slightly L-shaped and is approximately thirty-five feet long.

### Shed

There is one non-contributing shed structure on the property. This shed is a frame structure clad in modern press wood with asphalt shingles. It is fenestrated on the front by two press wood doors and two aluminum, sliding, one-over-one windows.

<sup>1</sup> Patsy Pittman Light, *Capturing Nature: The Cement Sculpture of Dionicio Rodriguez* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2008), 3-5.

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### Integrity

There are several key architectural details that define the Tudor, or Tudor Revival style. Some of these are just applied details and others are key to the form. The use of varied eave-height lines, overlapping gables, side-gables with one or more prominent cross gables, steeply pitched roofs, massive chimneys, and tall narrow windows are common to the Tudor form. Architectural details like the use of stucco and half-timbering in the gables, decorative brick work on the chimneys, false thatched roofs, parapets, and decorative vergeboards are but a few common to the style.

While one may remove the architectural detail and retain the form of the style, it is the architectural detail that defines the home. To use an analogy from the art world; if Pablo Picasso painted the Mona Lisa, the form would be the same; we would still know it's the Mona Lisa. However the details would be dramatically different. So too with Tudor architecture, covering the half-timbered and stucco gables removes a key architectural element of the style. We still know that this is a Tudor by its form but an important architectural detail has been lost by the application of vinyl siding.

For many architectural historians, stucco and half-timber gables are a defining feature of the Tudor style; without these elements the home is simply a Plain-Traditional American home. Aside from giving the home an interesting visual detail, half-timbering accentuates the gables and exaggerates the height of the home and the roof profile. The application of vinyl siding removes these details and reorients the gables horizontally, making them look wider and shorter. Also, for an architectural style based upon Medieval and Renaissance antecedents the use of polyvinyl chloride is not compatible with the natural materials used in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

We know that the vinyl siding was applied to the home at some point after 1988. The vinyl siding detracts from the style by the loss of important architectural details. Due to the loss of these details, the Tudor style is compromised and in the opinion of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program the home cannot be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C for architectural significance. However, it should be noted that this home is only known home in Trumann of the Tudor style. Additionally, it is the only known home to have a connection with the Poinsett Lumber and Manufacturing Company. The home also retains its original setting and ancillary structures in good condition therefore it can not be as easily dismissed as a significant property in Trumann's history.

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### Summary

The Poinsett Lumber and Manufacturing Company established a manufacturing plant and veneer mill in Trumann in 1911. The company quickly established itself at the center of daily life in Trumann. Over half of the population of Trumann worked for the company at the mill and in the woods. The company whistle ordered daily activities and the company provided the town's electricity, water, school, and fire service. Poinsett Lumber and Manufacturing Company (PL&M) employees sat on the city government. PL&M was Trumann and the people of Trumann often referred to the company as "Ma Singer."

When constructed in 1935, the Poinsett Lumber and Manufacturing Company manager's house was the finest home in the city of Trumann. Built as both the home of the plant manager, in this instance akin to a company president, and a public relations tool, it was designed in one of the most popular styles of the time. The interior featured elaborate finishes common to the finest homes. The expansive grounds, the sculptural concrete work, the garage, and caretaker's quarters, reflected the home of a person of wealth and importance within the community. The location of the home and its orientation reflected a home that was subservient to the needs of the company and a home that was closely tied to the manufacturing operations of the Poinsett Lumber and Manufacturing Company.

As one of the few houses in Trumann with a known connection to PL&M, the home is a good example of the company's role in dictating the layout and organization of the town of Trumann. Though it has lost, through the addition of vinyl siding, important architectural detail, it is still the only known form of Tudor architecture in Trumann. Constructed during the depths of the Great Depression, the home reflects the company's wealth and the company's efforts to survive the Depression as well as revealing architectural modifications made in the name of economy. The Poinsett Lumber and Manufacturing Company Manager's House in Trumann, Arkansas, is being submitted for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion A** with **local significance**.

### Elaboration

Prior to the arrival of the Poinsett Lumber and Manufacturing Company, the small, unnamed spot hidden in the deep woods of Arkansas's Mississippi River Delta was the home of the sawmill of G. R. Minnick and Company. The mill and village came into existence as the location of a spur on the Kansas City, Fort Scott, and Memphis Railroad in 1883. Interestingly, what we now see as thousands of acres of cultivated, treeless land was heavily forested. By the early 1890s, these swampy woods of East Arkansas became attractive to northern and mid-western lumbermen looking to replace cut-over lands in other parts of the country.

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In 1889, a writer for Goodspeed Publishing Company wrote, “the lumbering industry of Poinsett County is and will be a great source of income.”<sup>2</sup>

As early as 1894, there was a lumber mill in the vicinity of what would become Trumann. The Springfield Cooperage Company bought up timberlands and used a tram railroad to bring lumber to its barrel manufacturing operation. At that time the place was colloquially known as Mosher; named after one of the company's managers. Two years later the town applied for and received a Post Office in the name of Mosher.

In 1902, Mosher sold his interest in the company and left town. The local population lost interest in celebrating Mosher and changed the name of the town to Weona—a lumber company in the area. The post office took the new name but the railroad did not and the town was known by two names. Not surprisingly, there was a good bit of confusion. It took two years but in 1904, the Postmaster and the railroad compromised and the name was changed to Trumann.<sup>3</sup>

In 1903, the Singer Manufacturing Company acquired the mill and timber holdings of the Minnick Company. It continued to acquire timberlands in Poinsett, Cross, and Lee counties in Arkansas as well as some timberlands in Louisiana. By 1911, the Singer Manufacturing Company held over 150,000 acres of land. Singer Manufacturing Company formed a wholly owned subsidiary, the Poinsett Lumber and Manufacturing Company, in 1911 to begin harvesting these timberlands. Poinsett Lumber and Manufacturing was, like its parent company, chartered in the state of New Jersey. Operations began in 1912 and were primarily concerned with the initial stages of raw material preparation. Logs and unfinished lumber were brought to the mill at Trumann by the St. Louis and San Francisco Railroad or by the company's own Arkansas Short Line Railroad.<sup>4</sup>

Certainly, there was a lively town prior to the establishment of the Poinsett Lumber and Manufacturing Company. With the cooperage mill there was sufficient local income to support the Dry Goods stores of the Mitchell Brothers and Wood and Warren.

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<sup>2</sup> Goodspeed Publishing Company, *The Goodspeed Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Northeast Arkansas* (Chicago: Goodspeed Publishing Company, 1889; reprint, Easley, SC: Southern Historical Press, 1978); 575.

<sup>3</sup> Poinsett County Historical Society, *Poinsett County History and Families* (Paducah, KY: Turner Publishing Co., 1998); 143. Hereafter referred to as PCHS. See also, Russell Pierce Baker, *From Memdag to Norsk: A Historical Directory of Arkansas Post Offices, 1832-1971* (Hot Springs: Arkansas Genealogical Society, 1988); 153, 221, 233.

<sup>4</sup> Ray Knight, Edward Mitchell, and John Sadler, “Poinsett Community Club,” 8 September 1986, TD, National Register of Historic Places nomination on file at the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program. Also, Bettye Sue Boyd, “The Singer Company – Wood Products Division, How it Began – How it Grew,” *Craighead County Historical Quarterly* Volume VI, No. 4 (Autumn 1968); 12; and PCHS, 143.

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At the beginning of the twentieth century the town saw a number of business additions including the general store of Robert S. Lady and the Trumann Ice and Coal Company. While this early business development grew in association with the success of the cooperage mill, it was not directly connected. However the first doctors in town were company physicians for the Springfield Cooperage Company. Dr. George O. Campbell arrived in Trumann in 1902 and served as the doctor for both the sawmill and the town.<sup>5</sup>

Trumann grew into a company town. After PL&M began operations they gradually made additions to their operations and to the city of Trumann. Throughout these early years of operation the plant and its associated buildings grew rapidly. The Singer sewing machines were immensely popular not only in the United States but around the world. Production at plants in South Bend, Indiana; Cairo, Illinois; Elizabeth, New Jersey, and others, numbered in the thousands of units per week. Like all traditional company towns, Trumann became Poinsett Lumber and Manufacturing Company's.

Poinsett Lumber constructed a number of four room houses for its employees with families. These four-room houses were once so ubiquitous that the road now known as Speedway was once called 4-Room Row. In addition to the single family homes or duplexes, PL&M built two boarding houses for unmarried employees and visiting managers. An employee who began work at the company in 1947, remembers that there was one boarding house for female employees and one for males; each of these were furnished with "Western Stickley Furniture."<sup>6</sup> They were nicknamed the Boy's Clubhouse and the Girl's Clubhouse. The Girl's Club was on South Main at the end of the extension of Gum Street. The Boy's Club was in the middle of the block on Elm between Harrison Avenue and South Main Streets. Each were adjacent to the mill on its southwest corner.<sup>7</sup>

These four-room houses were in three additions to the city of Trumann platted by the Poinsett Lumber and Manufacturing Company. Each of the three additions were adjacent to the mill and included much of the company housing and company buildings. Poinsett Lumber and Manufacturing Company's 1<sup>st</sup> Addition to the city was bounded by Front Street on the east, South Main on the north, Poinsett Avenue on the west, and Harrison Avenue on the south. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Addition was larger than the first and triangular in shape. It was bounded by Poinsett Avenue and the mill on the east, Harrison Avenue on the south, and the city limits at Pine Street (originally West Avenue) on the west. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Addition is located on the northwest side of the mill and is only four blocks, bound on the east by Parkway Avenue, on the north by Speedway, and on the west by Pine Street (originally West Avenue). Each of these additions to the city of Trumann had been platted by 1926.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> PCHS, 143.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 144.

<sup>7</sup> Sanborn Map Company, *Truman June 1926, Sheet 2* [map]. 1 inch=50 feet. New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1926.

<sup>8</sup> Sanborn Map Company, *Truman, June 1926 Sheet 1* [map], 1 inch=600 feet. New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1926.

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Poinsett Lumber company's first addition was directly across from the railroad freight house on Front Street. It included much of the non-company related growth in the city, including several commercial buildings. It was here that the drug store, auto mechanics, movie theatre, and grocery stores were located. This addition also included the Methodist Episcopal Church. Each of the additions are similar in housing stock; small four-room houses with porches front and back interspersed with long shotgun houses. Lots in the first and second addition are larger than those in the third; the third being the most densely populated addition and the most industrial addition. The third addition was the only Poinsett Lumber and Manufacturing addition with integral, company-maintained fire hose stations. In 1926, PL&M's second addition was largely empty with company houses along Poinsett Avenue and along West Avenue. The north portion of the addition where the Manager's House would later be located is empty.<sup>9</sup>

Aside from designing and platting several large portions of the town of Trumann the lumber company provided a number of community services. From the start of operations in 1912 to the installation of a municipally owned water system in 1951, Poinsett Lumber and Manufacturing Company provided water for the town of Trumann. It was not cheap, the company charged \$2.00 a month regardless of how much water was used. PL&M also provided electricity to the city, prior to the arrival of Arkansas Power & Light. In 1912, the company provided the funding for the construction of a new brick school building. In 1925, the company built the Poinsett Community Club which was open to all the citizens of Trumann with an annual membership of fifty cents per year. In a town where approximately half of the people worked for one company it is not surprising that many of the city's officials also worked for Poinsett Lumber and Manufacturing Company. One man strongly encouraged his employees to take active roles in city government and making the town of Trumann a great place to live. In fact, this man, as superintendent of the mill, was largely responsible for many of the decisions that defined Trumann. That man was Alfred Carlson.<sup>10</sup>

Alfred Carlson was called by many the Count because of the control he had over the town. Poinsett Lumber and Manufacturing Company was referred to by most people in Trumann as, and remains to this day nicknamed, Ma Singer. Carlson came to the plant about 1922 as an engineer hired to supervise the installation of new veneer finishing equipment. He was born in Bear Lake, Michigan, in 1885, and received his degree in Electrical Engineering from the University of Michigan in 1912. After joining the Singer Manufacturing Company in 1919, at South Bend, Indiana, he was quickly promoted.

<sup>9</sup> Sanborn Map Company, *Truman, June 1926* [map], 1 inch=50 feet. New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1926.

<sup>10</sup> PCHS, 144.



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In 1925, Carlson was promoted to General Superintendent of the Poinsett Lumber and Manufacturing Company and in 1935 was promoted to Works Superintendent. Both of these promotions put Carlson at the head of the company. The later placed him in charge of all the company's operations in Arkansas and Louisiana.<sup>11</sup>

Carlson was an active man who apparently took genuine interest in the quality of life in the town of Trumann and his employees. He actively fought corruption within the company and within both city and county government and urged his employees to take an active role in local government. Yet, he was a company man and was anti-union. When the union went on strike at the plant in South Bend, he began manufacturing cabinets in the plant at Trumann to show the union that the company could continue operations without their plant. His work was once rewarded with an assassination attempt that left a bullet wound in his chest. It is unknown if it was his anti-union stance or his fight against local corruption and lawlessness that won him this unwanted award.<sup>12</sup>

Long term operation of the plant in Trumann was one of Carlson's key objectives. At its peak the company employed 2,500 people in Trumann. Indeed, this was fewer than the 3,000 people employed at Singer's South Bend Plant and not even half of the 7,000 at the Elizabeth, New Jersey, plant but these positions were immensely important locally. During slow periods in production Carlson would begin updating the mill facilities to keep employees at work. He was known to receive permission to repair a building and in the process would completely rebuild the structure. In the 1940s and 1950s when sales slowed Singer called for company wide layoffs including at Poinsett Lumber and Manufacturing Company. Company managers were called to New York to present their lay-off plans and cost saving plans. Carlson went with a plan to update facilities, reduce labor costs, and maintain employees. A new assembly plant, veneer drying building, and shipping plant followed.<sup>13</sup>

It was under Carlson's direction and with his modernization efforts that in 1930 the work of the Cairo, Illinois, Singer veneer mill was moved to Trumann. Manufacturing of finished cabinets began in 1937. A second modernization program began in 1949 that culminated in winning the production of cabinets from the South Bend plant in 1954 (the South Bend plant was subsequently closed). In 1959, the Poinsett Lumber and Manufacturing plant at Trumann became the only Singer woodworking operation in the United States.

<sup>11</sup> Dallas T. Herndon, Ed., *Annals of Arkansas, 1947* (Little Rock, AR: The Historical Record Association, 1947), 1333. Also, PCHS, 144.

<sup>12</sup> Herndon, 1333; PCHS, 144.

<sup>13</sup> PCHS, 144.

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PL&M never reached the capacity of the South Bend plant, which at one point had a capacity of 10,000 cabinets per day, but it did produce a respectable 750 cabinets of the 40 and 56 models per week in the late 1940s.<sup>14</sup>

Though it was a wholly owned subsidiary of the Singer Manufacturing Company, the Poinsett Lumber and Manufacturing Company operated as its own company. With manufacturing plants in Trumann and Helena, Arkansas, and timberlands in Arkansas and Louisiana it was a sizable operation. Carlson was in many ways equal to a company president and the home the company built for him in 1935 reflected that position. A portion of PL&M's second addition was re-platted as Poinsett Lumber and Manufacturing Company's 4<sup>th</sup> Addition. Third Street was removed and a number of lots in blocks 12 and 13 were consolidated to give the home a large lot.

The lot on which the house sits is a three acre parcel to the east of the former Poinsett Lumber and Manufacturing Company plant. Indicative of the importance of the manager's position within the company and in an attempt to convey that to all who saw the home, it is set like a large English cottage well away from the road. This setting, back on a wooded lot, gives a sense of privacy and seclusion, it exaggerates the size of the lot, and imparts a slightly imposing mystery. The expansive grounds, the sculptural concrete work, the garage, and caretaker's quarters, reflected the home of a person of wealth and importance within the community. Employee housing, frame houses on small crowded lots, provided by the company would not have this same feel or setting. However, the location of the home and its orientation toward the plant reflect a home that was subservient to the needs of the company and a home that was closely tied to the manufacturing operations of the Poinsett Lumber and Manufacturing Company.

It is no surprise that architect Edwin B. Phillips chose this style to construct a modern, high-style home. Edwin Brewster Phillips received a B. S. in architecture from the University of Pennsylvania in 1913. He worked in Pennsylvania and North Carolina before moving to Memphis, Tennessee, in 1919. Much of his work in this period was commercial and he was a partner in the firm of Allsup and Phillips from 1919-1921. That partnership dissolved and Phillips joined the firm of Spence and Williams from 1925-1927. In 1937, Phillips assisted in the design of the Lauderdale Courts and the Dixie Homes housing projects in Memphis. This six million dollar project is considered as one of the first Modern style projects in Memphis.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*; Boyd, 12, 13.

<sup>15</sup> Judith Johnson, "The Art of Architecture: Modernism in Memphis, 1890-1980," *Memphis Heritage*, Memphis Heritage, Inc. Available on the internet at <http://www.memphisheritage.org/MHIHost/Read-ModernismInMemphis.html>. Accessed 23 October 2009.

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The Poinsett Lumber and Manufacturing Company Manager's House was apparently one of many projects completed in Arkansas by Phillips. Though only this home and the First Presbyterian Church in Helena are known by the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program.

Built at a cost of \$16,000, the home was of a thoroughly modern Tudor, or Tudor Revival, style.<sup>16</sup> As is typical of Tudor Revival style houses it has varied eave-height lines, overlapping gables, the use of multiple materials in exterior cladding, arched entryways, and patterned brickwork chimney. When constructed, the home had false, half-timbered gables. The original home is clad primarily in brick, set in both common and English row-lock bonds. Ashlar, square-cut stone with natural face and set in irregular courses dominates the main form of the home.

Multiple overlapping gables exaggerate the height of the home with their steeply pitched rooflines. The roof is covered in asphalt, architectural shingles. Windows in the home appear to be a concession to economics and highlight the realities of construction during the Great Depression. Though in ribbons, the width and mullion material is incongruous with more correct Tudor window forms. However, this highlights the eclectic and sometime vernacular nature of this popular architectural style. Phillip's choice of casement windows was both a concession to climate and economics while at the same time attempting to maintain the style.

As a home constructed by a manufacturing and veneer company the interior is well appointed. The home was designed to be a show place, and as much a public relations tool as the home the plant manager. Therefore the interior finishes are all elegant and in keeping with the English manor house theme. The breakfast room is finished in Maple and the dining room in Oak. The living room walls are full-height Cherry panels with exposed beams on the ceiling. The library is finished in an elegant, dark Walnut paneling.

The grounds of the home were as much an investment as the home itself. A unique, and still operating, irrigation system was installed to water the grounds. However, the most unique of the objects placed on the grounds are a set of concrete sculptures and one fountain and grill.

Two cast concrete objects can be found on the property. The first is a picnic bench with two chairs and two benches. The second work is a bar for serving drinks complete with foot-rail. Designed to look as if they were made of trees, both are proportionally correct to be constructed of logs and both have extensive bark relief to accentuate their rustic form. This natural style has examples that date to 1780 in France and is most commonly referred to as rustic, *trabajo rustico* (rustic work), or *faux bois* (imitation wood).

<sup>16</sup> National Council of Architectural Registration Boards Application for Certificate of Registration, Edwin B. Phillips, DS [photocopy]. Architects Files, Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, Little Rock, Arkansas.

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In the United States, it was popularized by A. J. Downing as early as 1840 with published examples by George Woodward in 1869. Landscape architect Calvert Vaux had designed shelters and bridges in the rustic style for New York City's Central Park in 1854.<sup>17</sup>

The concrete works designed to look like wood are highly detailed. The wood grain, bark, and structural forms are often quite lifelike. Though made of concrete the sculptures often have the appearance of being very delicate. Rustic work became very popular in Arkansas and the Memphis, Tennessee, area in the 1930s. It was during this time that a highly skilled Mexican artisan by the name of Dionicio Rodriguez was constructing sculptures in North Little Rock, Arkansas, Hot Springs, Arkansas, and Memphis, Tennessee. It is unknown if Rodriguez or one of his assistants completed these sculptures and barring further examination by experts in Rodriguez's work we will not know. However, these works are very good examples of what in Arkansas is a rare art form.

The picnic table set includes a bench anchored on each end by a large stump. Two chairs designed to look as if carved from a single log are at each end of the table. The table itself has bark edging and is supported on two log supports. The bar is slightly U-shaped and has the appearance of being made from a series of vertically placed logs. The top of the bar has the appearance of being made of two hand-planed boards.

The water fountain and grill are of substantial size and scale. Both are made of rough-cut stone set in irregular pattern. The grill is on the east end of the structure and the fountain is in the middle. The fountain is approximately six feet tall and features three pools through which the water cascades, the last emptying into a kidney shaped pool that covers almost 40 square feet. The fountain and grill structure is slightly L-shaped and is approximately thirty-five feet long. These outdoor gardens served well for the company picnics and company gatherings held on the grounds by Carlson and his family.

In the late 1930s Arkansas Power and Light brought commercial electricity to Trumann. In 1948, the four-room and shotgun company houses were sold to the employees. In 1951, the city of Trumann began operating its own water and sewer system. For the next few decades the Poinsett Lumber and Manufacturing Company gradually became just a manufacturing plant in the town of Trumann. In 1963, the Poinsett Lumber and Manufacturing Company was formally merged with the Singer Company, becoming The Singer Company—Wood Products Division.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Patsy Pittman Light, *Capturing Nature: The Cement Sculpture of Dionicio Rodriguez* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2008), 3-5.

<sup>18</sup> Boyd, 13.

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Certainly, the plant continued a very successful and important operation employing 1,700 and making approximately 23,207,550 square feet of veneer in 1968 alone.<sup>19</sup> By the early 1980s the Singer Company was more focused on diversification and the electronics field. No longer convinced of the necessity of the Wood Products Division, the Singer Corporation closed the plant at Trumann in 1982.

### Statement of Significance

Plant manager Leon Massey purchased the Poinsett Lumber and Manufacturing Company Manager's House in 1968. From that point it has been a private residence and the Massey family owned the home into the early twenty-first century. Though it lost its connection to the mill in 1968 many people in the community continued to call it the Singer House. To this day the home is referred to locally as the Singer House or Singer Manor and many still associate this home with the prosperity felt during the height of company operations.

A manufacturing operation still exists on the site of the old Poinsett Lumber and Manufacturing Company. The success of PL&M and the Singer Company in keeping the mill at Trumann operating for almost a century meant a continuous process of modernization. There are no known structures associated with this current site that date to the historic period of the PL&M operations in Trumann.

In 1986, the Poinsett Community Club was listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NR listed 10/09/1986, NRIS 86002847). This Craftsman influenced building was purchased by Arbor Incorporated in 1983 as part of their acquisition of the plant. Listed for its significance in community recreation and entertainment it helps to complete the story of the Poinsett Lumber and Manufacturing in Trumann.

There has been no comprehensive survey of houses in Trumann. It is unknown how many four-room and shotgun houses built by PL&M still exist and retain integrity. This manager's home though is still associated by the community with the company. Its location in PL&M's 4<sup>th</sup> Addition and its orientation toward the factory (a factory remains in that location) reveal a history intimately connected to, and subservient to the needs of industry in Trumann. Poinsett Lumber and Manufacturing Company's 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> Additions all remain intact. Though housing patterns and commercial patterns have changed slightly, the historic pattern set in place by the company almost a century ago continues to define land use patterns in the city. Indeed the operations of the company continue to define land use patterns well outside of Trumann as well. Land use patterns defined by the company's Arkansas Short Line Railroad can be seen as far south as McDonald in Cross County. Here the wye and connection tracks with the Missouri Pacific Railroad created a curved land use pattern evident today.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

PL&M Company Manager's House  
Name of Property

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This home is only known home in Trumann of the Tudor style. Additionally, it is the only known home to have a connection with the Poinsett Lumber and Manufacturing Company. The home retains its original setting and ancillary structures in good condition and therefore it can not be as easily dismissed as a significant property in Trumann's history.

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### Verbal Boundary Description

Lot one, Block 13 of Poinsett Lumber and Manufacturing Company's 4<sup>th</sup> Addition to the city of Trumann. More particularly as follows: commence at the northwest corner of the intersection of Maple Street and Poinsett Avenue; thence north 46 degrees, 15 minutes west 701.77 feet to the southeast corner of said Block 13, the Point of beginning proper; thence south 87 degrees, 14 minutes west 30.25 feet; thence south 9.9 feet; thence south 64 degrees, 0 minutes west 463.6 feet; thence north 0 degrees, 4 minutes west 440.4 feet; thence south 64 degrees, 54 minutes east 166.6 feet; thence south 4 degrees, 33 minutes east 470.8 feet to the point of beginning proper.

### Boundary Justification

This is all the land historically associated with the Poinsett Lumber and Manufacturing Company Manager's House in Trumann, Arkansas.