

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

LISTED
5-3-88

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

1. Name of Property

historic name John W. White House

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 1509 W. Main Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Russellville

N/A vicinity

state Arkansas

code 05

county Pope

code 115

zip code 72801

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

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

Category of Property

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

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>2</u>	_____ buildings
<u>1</u>	_____ sites
_____	_____ structures
_____	_____ objects
_____	_____ Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official State Historic Preservation Officer

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.

N/A

Signature of commenting or other official _____

Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

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)

Prairie; Craftsman

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete

walls brick

roof ceramic tile

other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The John W. White House, built in 1916 by a wealthy Russellville merchant, banker, and coal magnate, is the finest historic house in the town. The exterior shows influences of both the Craftsman and Prairie styles, while the interior employs a more eclectic blend of styles, including the Neo-Classical and the Art Nouveau.

ELABORATION

The house sits on a large lot and faces north on Russellville's West Main Street. It has the profile of a classic foursquare, with projecting sunporch wings to the east and south. Brick facing with limestone trim covers the exterior, with green clay tile cladding the roof. A carriage house/garage located slightly southeast of the main house utilizes the same materials, and borrows the pyramid roof form from the main building.

The front (north) facade features a deep raised porch, supported by stone piers springing from a stone wall, running the length of the first floor. Centered on the roof of the porch is a second-floor balcony. Both the upper and lower porch feature decorative urns. The lower porch also has mosaic tile floors, moulded ceiling trim, and heavy moulded beams spanning its depth.

The formal entrance is centered in the porch. The door has inlaid glass in an Art-Nouveau design, and is flanked by sidelights of similar size and design. Inlaid-glass transoms top each of the sidelights and door. To either side of the entry is a single window, with a stationary upper sash with inlaid glass in a Prairie motif. The lower sash is larger, with a single light, and is movable.

The second floor arrangement is identical. The central door gives access to the second floor balcony. Glass patterns and window types are the same as on the first floor. Above this floor is a wide roof overhang, with decorative moulded mock-rafters. The pyramid roof rises above, slightly flared in the eaves, with a somewhat Oriental appearance. Centered in the roof is the classic foursquare dormer, pyramid-roofed with three double-casement windows. These windows have an "X" pattern, dividing the glass into smaller panes.

The eastern end of the north facade is the side of the east sunporch block. The first level has a door with inlaid glass, with flanking sidelights of about the same size. The door and sidelights have transoms above. The glass design is

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Prairie style. The second floor of this block features a pair of double-casement windows. The first floor has a one-story, one-bay porch which shelters the entrance to the sunporch. This porch is supported by a single stone pier.

On the west facade, a massive chimney stands near the northwest corner. Long, narrow, double-hung windows flank the chimney on both floors. South of the chimney, a first floor bay protrudes out from the wall. The bay has three large double-hung windows. The bay is topped with a hipped roof clad in green clay tile. Two different-sized windows occur above the bay on the second floor. Another dormer aligns with the bay at the roof level; it is identical to the north dormer. South of the bay is another chimney, and beyond this, several identical windows are irregularly-spaced. Also on this facade are several small basement windows; all of them are small-paned casement-type.

The rear (south) facade features a projecting rear wing at the western end, with two windows on the second floor, two on the first, and two on the basement level. A chimney stands between the two window rows. East of this wing is the sunporch block, which projects from the main block. It features two sets of double-casement windows, eight lights each, on the second level. On the first level is a back entrance, and east of the door, a pair of eight-over-eight double-hung windows. The basement level has two windows, and a dormer rises from the roof above the sunporch block.

East of this block, on the south facade, is the side of the east sunporch. It has two pairs of double-casement windows on the first floor, and a double-hung window on the set-back second floor.

The east facade, from south to north, has the projecting sunporch at the lower level, with a pair of casement windows. Above this section, the wall steps back, and there is a double-hung window with a stationary, inlaid-glass top sash. North of this, the projection rises the full two stories, with two pairs of casement windows on each floor. Another stationary top sash window is located north of this block on both levels.

The garage on the southeast corner of the property is of the same materials and style as the house. The double door openings are trimmed with stone, and have triangular transoms above. The second floor of the garage, once the chauffeur's quarters, has small casement windows, two on each side. A chimney is centered on the west elevation.

The grounds were planned as well. The house occupies a full block of street frontage, and sits on a small rise in the center of the block. Walkways lead from the northeast corner and the north to the front entrance. Sidewalks encircle the

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house's exteriors. The main walkway, from the north, is emphasized by two lion statues flanking the walk. Closer to the house, concrete urns are located to either side. Beyond the urns, trees and shrubs are symmetrically planted to emphasize the entrance.

The interior of the house is eclectic. The first floor contains the formal entry hall and suites of formal rooms. The eastern suite has the music room and a family den, with access to the east sunporch through the den. The western suite contains the parlor and dining room, with the kitchen at the back (south) of the dining room. Directly south of the entry is the central formal stair, which rises to a curved landing and splits into two flights flanking the first. Behind the landing is a large, one-and-one-half story stained glass window picturing a pastoral scene. This window can be backlit through the rear (south) sunporch, or electrically. The side panels are hinged, to allow cross-ventilation.

The first floor features elaborate woodwork-- Neo-Classical columns separate the formal rooms from the entry hall and the entry from the stair hall. French doors with beveled glass inlays open into the den and dining room, and the east sunporch. Inlaid beveled glass pocket doors separate rooms in each of the suites. The staircase is of the same wood, and is flanked by mirrored doors (one opening on a closet, the other on a bathroom).

The east sunporch has a mosaic tile floor; those in the rest of the first-floor rooms are wood. The rear (south) sunporch houses the back stairs and an elevator, and gives access to the kitchen to the west.

Other significant features of first-floor rooms include: wooden wainscoting and trim (formal rooms); tiled fireplaces (parlor and den); Prairie-style recessed stained glass light fixture in dining room; original, nouveau-style brass light fixtures on stair newel-posts. Additionally, all of the formal rooms once had hand-painted canvas murals covering the walls. Unfortunately, these deteriorated beyond repair and were removed quite some time ago.

The second floor houses the sleeping and bathing areas. The split-stair ascends to an upper central hall, with a glass door and sidelights giving access to the front balcony. Access to the bedrooms is along the sides of the hall. The bedrooms are arranged in suites with bathrooms between. There are six bedrooms on the floor; those without direct access to a bath have sinks in the room. Second floor areas are fully plastered, and feature plaster cornice mouldings. Patterns of the mouldings differ in each room.

The third floor houses a large attic ballroom space. This space has a lower ceiling--around 7' rather than 12', which is standard on the first and second levels. There are windows in dormers on the north, west, and south sides of the room.

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The basement houses the laundry facilities and another large bath. The floor is mosaic tile and the ceiling height is 8'. There is another large ballroom space with a fireplace located on this level. Access is via the back stairs. The most interesting feature of the basement is now gone. The basement once housed two bowling lanes; these were removed when flooding warped the wooden floor of the lanes.

8. Statement of Significance

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

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

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

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Period of Significance

Significant Dates

Architecture
Landscape Architecture

1916

1916

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Frank M. Blaisdell (architect, landscape architect);
Olaf S. Nelson (contractor);
Paul M. Heerwagen (interior designer)

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

SUMMARY

The John W. White House, which includes the house itself, separate garage, and landscaped grounds, is significant as an entity which represents the finest local example of a World War I-era residence. The primary architectural influence is Prairie/Craftsman, but remnants of previous styles are incorporated into the design as well. Prominent Arkansas designers and builders were connected with the house, which was constructed for a leading Russellville merchant, banker, and coal mine operator.

ELABORATION

The John W. White House in Russellville (Pope County) was constructed in 1916. White had been born in Logan County in 1860, where his father later operated a mercantile establishment. In 1872 the family moved to Pope County and settled in Russellville, which had been incorporated as a town two years earlier. Here the elder Mr. White and W.J. (John's brother) established another general merchandising operation. Following completion of high school and studies at Bethany College in West Virginia, John W. joined his father and brother in the mercantile company. This association ended in 1890 when John joined People's Exchange Bank as a cashier, serving in this position for the next fifteen years. He resigned in 1906 in order to take charge of the Southern Anthracite Coal Company, of which he eventually became the sole owner. In 1910 he leased the mine on a royalty basis, but subsequently bought back the lease with three other investors. Later the Bernice Investment Company, in which John W. also had an interest, took over the coal company.

By 1910 John White was again affiliated with and had become a director of the People's Exchange Bank in Russellville. At this time he was also serving as vice president of the Dardanelle and Russellville Railway Company.

John's brother, W.J. "Bud" White built his home on Russellville's Main Street in 1908 (NR 12/13/78). At the time of construction, it was the grandest house in town. Family members spoke of a sibling rivalry between John and "Bud," and said that John

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wanted to out-do his brother when he built his house. Construction on John's house on Main Street had begun by November of 1915. Work continued through most of 1916, and the house was ready for occupation by the end of that year. The house received statewide publicity in August of 1916 in a Little Rock trade publication which referred to the house as "one of Arkansas most palatial residences." The same article gave a figure of \$50,000 as the cost of the house. Other sources claim that the cost was closer to \$100,000 but there is no documentation to back up such a claim.

Several prominent Arkansas designers and builders are known to have been associated with the design of the property. The house was designed by Frank M. Blaisdell, who had been active in Russellville several years prior to the construction of the White House. Blaisdell also planned the grounds for the house, the design of which remains intact and complements the principal residence (see #7: Description). Blaisdell was a civil engineer, architect, and landscape architect and was connected with a number of important projects both in and out of Arkansas. These included landscape design for the Arkansas State Capitol grounds, and design of original buildings on the campuses of Arkansas Tech University at Russellville and Arkansas State University at Jonesboro. He also assisted in the design of the west wing of the Army and Navy Building and the Washington Monument in Washington, D.C.

The contractor for the house was Olaf F. Nelson of Russellville, a Swedish immigrant who built many private and public buildings throughout the state. Nelson had been contractor for "Bud" White's house, and later was involved in the construction of St. Mary's Hospital in Russellville, Nyberg Sanitorium in Booneville, and T.H. Barton Coliseum in Little Rock.

Paul M. Heerwagen of Fayetteville, Arkansas, designed the interior of the John W. White House and painted the canvas murals which once covered the walls in the formal rooms. Heerwagen, a German immigrant who had settled in Arkansas in 1891, was very active in the state at the time the White House was built. He was the decorator for many fine buildings in the state, including the Capitol Hotel (NR 7/30/74) and the Hotel Marion (now demolished) in Little Rock; the Hotel Pines (NR 8/10/79) in Pine Bluff, and the Arkansas State Capitol (NR 6/28/74).

The White House shows Prairie/Craftsman influence in the design of the exterior, but the interior is more eclectic. The interiors retain many significant features: ornate woodwork (done by the C.T. Abeles Company of Little Rock); original light fixtures; a large stained glass window, hinged to open for cross-ventilation; beveled glass windows, pocket doors, and French doors; the remains of bowling lanes in the basement; a Prairie-style stained-glass recessed lighting fixture in the dining room; and moulded plaster cornices in the second-floor rooms. The interiors are a good example of the transition in style from the Victorian era to the modern era at the beginning of the twentieth century.

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The house has remained in the White family since it was built, and is remarkably well-preserved. According to the family, even the varnish on the woodwork is original. The only changes made in the house since its construction are: removal of the bowling lane floors in the basement; removal of the deteriorated canvas murals in the formal rooms, and addition of an elevator in the rear sunporch.

The John W. White House remains very much as it was when it was first built. It, along with the garage and landscaping, are being nominated under Criterion C as an excellent example of an early-twentieth century residence.

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8. Russellville Weekly Courier-Democrat, April 22, 1915, p. 5
Ibid., November 11, 1915, p. 2
Ibid., September 16, 1916, p. 2
Ibid., August 17, 1916, p. 4
Ibid., March 15, 1917
9. Who Who's in Little Rock, p. 26

9. Major Bibliographical References

1. Arkansas Gazette, November 16, 1921, p. 18
Ibid., November 17, 1921
Ibid., March 27, 1939, p.1
2. Arkansas and Its People, Vol. II, p. 65
3. Centennial History of Arkansas, Vol. II, p. 65
Ibid., Vol. III, pp. 270-271
4. Hempstead, History of Arkansas, 1911, Vol. III, pp. 1407-1408
Ibid., pp. 1546-1547
5. Little Rock City Directory, 1915
6. Little Rock Trade Record, August 9, 1916, p. 2
7. Pope County Historical Association, History of Pope County

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- 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

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Between 2 and 2 1/2 acres.

UTM References

A 15 486670 39004130
 Zone Easting Northing

C

B
 Zone Easting Northing

D

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Block 28, Lots 1-12.

See continuation sheet

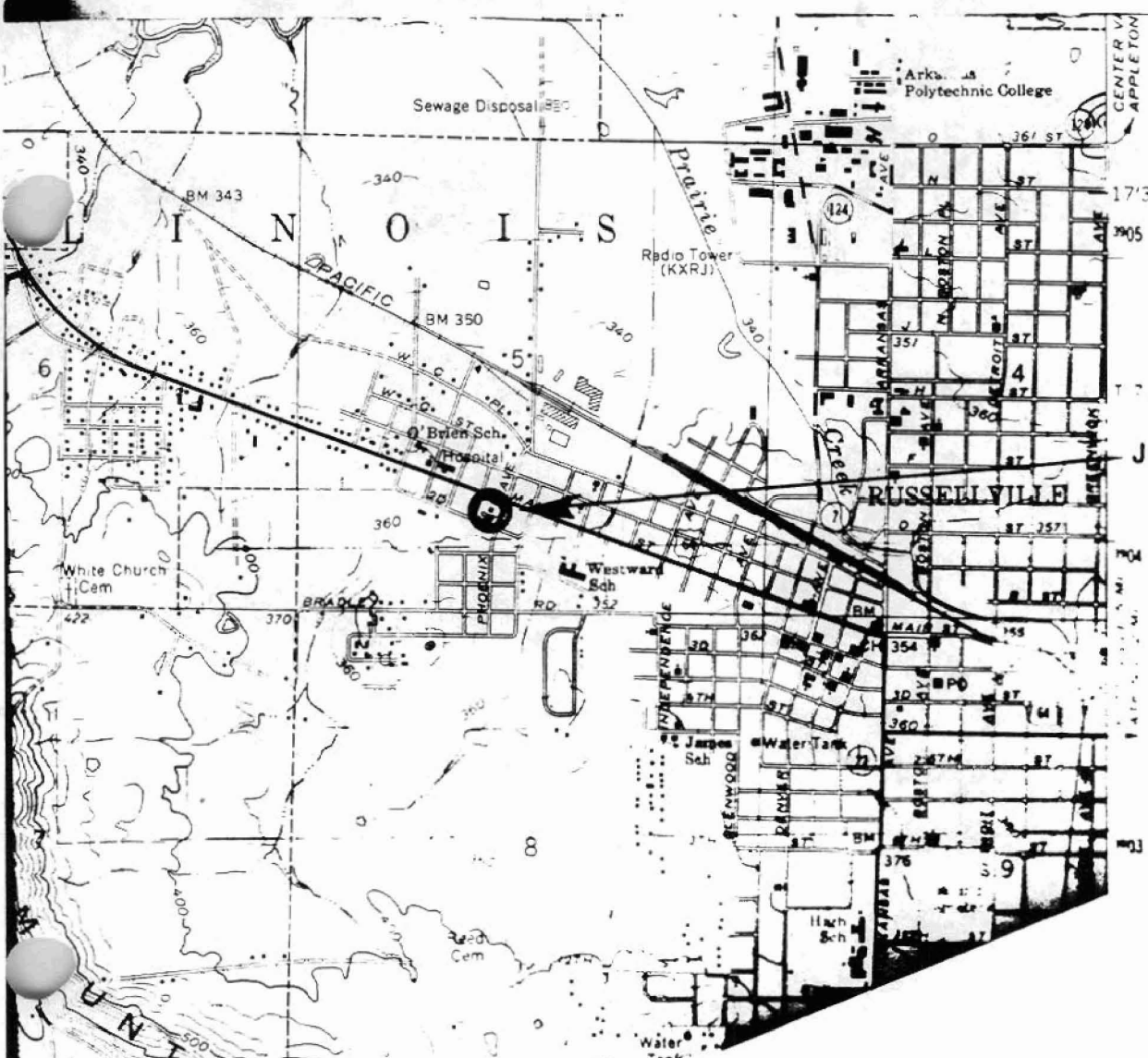
Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire city block that has been historically associated with the property.

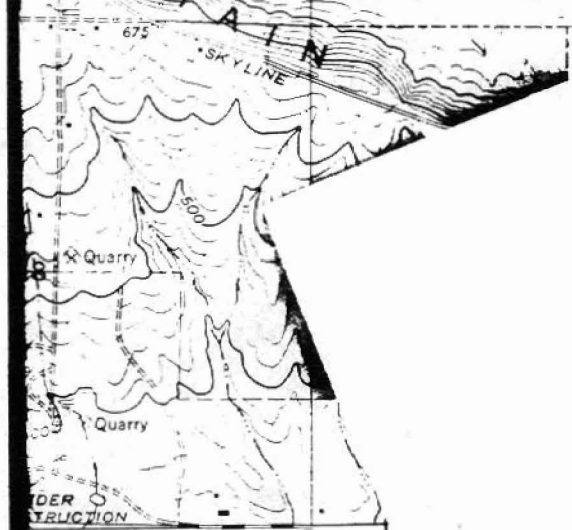
See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

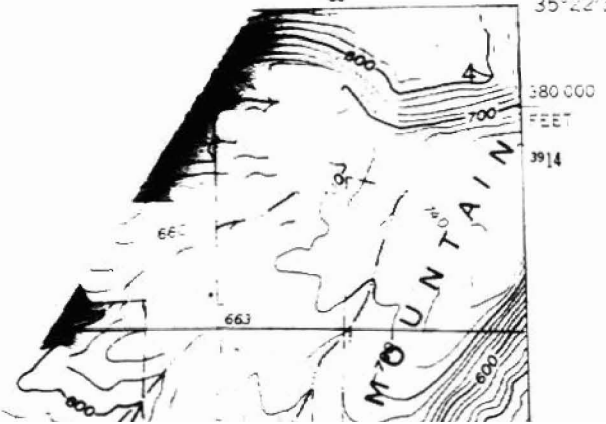
name/title Jennifer Polk
 organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date January 27, 1988
 street & number Suite 200, Heritage Center, 225 E. Markham telephone (501)-371-2763
 city or town Little Rock state Arkansas zip code 72201



John W. White
House
Russellville
POPE CO.



ADRANGLE
(TOPOGRAPHIC)
T154 LINE
(COVER)



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RECORDED

MAY 16 1988

AI:PP

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SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 88000524
White, John W., House
Property Name

Date Listed: 5/5/88
Pope County
County AR
State

N/A
Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Wm Schlager
Signature of the Keeper

Date/of Action

=====

Amended Items in Nomination:

There was a typographical error for one UTM coordinate. It should be 3904130.

Discussed and concurred in by Arkansas SHPO on May 6, 1988.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)











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