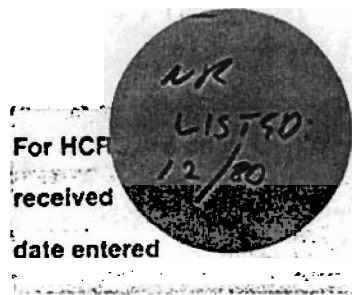


60-512-2100-61

United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service  
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 The Albert Retan House

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 506 North Elm not for publication

city, town Little Rock vicinity of congressional district

state AR code 05 county Pulaski code 119

3. Classification

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name W. E. Rector, Jr. & Susan C. Rector

street & number 506 North Elm

city, town Little Rock vicinity of state AR

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Pulaski County Courthouse

street & number Main and Markham Streets

city, town Little Rock state Arkansas

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records

city, town state

## 7. Description

### Condition

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

### Check one

unaltered  
 altered

### Check one

original site  
 moved      date \_\_\_\_\_

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Picturesquely situated at the top of a gently sloping hill on a generously landscaped corner site, the Retan House captures the architectural ideals of suburban dwelling that were so important in the development of the ambient Pulaski Heights neighborhood. The two and one-half story wood frame structure faced with narrow weatherboard siding and capped with cross-hip roofs with cross gables was constructed in 1893, just one year after the first lots in Pulaski Heights were platted. Its slightly asymmetrical massing and projecting porches and porte-cochere complement the rambling, almost pastoral, grounds on which the house sits. The building exhibits the influence of a strong interest in the Queen Anne style, but subtler characteristics of Colonial Revival derivation vest the house with a truly transitional flavor.

Though the Retan House is most satisfactorily viewed as a composition "in-the-round" because of its harmonious relationship with its site, the principal (east) facade of the house clearly establishes the style, proportions and details that distinguish the building. A projecting gable-roofed bay located at the center of the elevation, not the principal entrance itself, dominates the east facade; all other elements of this elevation seem to radiate from it. The first floor elevation of this projecting bay features a large picture window (the one large light is probably not the original glass) with a two-light transom surrounded by simple, unembellished window mouldings. Two two-over-two light rectangular windows appear above it in the second floor elevation, but they are enriched by the series of decorative wood panels, large panels corresponding to the window lights and smaller panels corresponding to the window frames, that are placed between them. An additional narrow panel is set above each window, appearing almost like a transom. Corner boards, base moulding and cornice moulding, details that appear on all of the building's facades, serve to crisply articulate this projecting bay. The gable end is faced with stucco and penetrated by a round arched window. Again, a series of four decorative panels, in this case located below and extending beyond the window, enrich the character of the opening. A pronounced moulding further articulates the window motif.

The principal entrance to the building is located at the far north of the east elevation, set back at the terminus of a long, rectangular shaped porch. A range of wood stairs, the same width as the porch, affords access to the porch and the building which is raised above grade on a water-table constructed of rusticated stone blocks. The porch is enclosed by a gable roof of much shallower pitch than the gable of the projecting bay, but possessing a similarly detailed crown moulding. A statement of "entrance" is clearly made by the front porch elevation. Sturdy bracketed columns, composed of square, beveled posts at the top and bottom extremities of the column with a round turned section in between, frame the entry stair landing and support the porch and its cornice with very decorative frieze comprised of spindles of alternating design. The cornice is surmounted by the gable end which is stuccoed and faced with wood trim screeds giving a half-timbered appearance, loosely reminiscent of Tudor architecture. The woodwork of the porch balustrade, though of equally fine craftsmanship as the acutely turned columns and spindles, is somewhat simpler and rectilinear, giving the effect of a basketweave pattern. Double wood doors with four panels and one light each set under a great transom comprise the entranceway. A porte-cochere which radiates of the north elevation perpendicular to the entry porch is also visible from the principal elevation.

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On the south extreme of the principal elevation light, airy porches juxtaposed against the central projecting bay relieve its relatively massive quality. A side porch, whose entrance is located on the south elevation of the building, wraps around to distinguish the first floor of the east facade. Capped by a shed roof with prominent crown moulding, it exhibits the same finely crafted wood bracketed columns, spindled frieze and balustrade that embellish the entry porch. One window framed in heavy Classically-derived moulding pierces this section of the east elevation. Almost floor-to-ceiling in height, its transom contains the only original beveled, leaded glass surviving in the building. A small gable-roofed second floor balcony under a heavy crown moulding located immediately south of the center bay, also reiterates the design and details of the two first floor porches. Still another balcony, a rather eclectic cupola-like element, projects from the second floor balcony roof. Its curvilinear balustrade is covered with imbricated shingles and this curve is repeated in its over-hanging roof.

The primary interest of the Retan House's south elevation is created by the relationship between its projecting gable-roofed bay and its one-story wrap-around porch that so enriches the south-east corner of the building. The entrance to the porch, just east of the projecting bay and affording a secondary means of access to the house, is articulated in a manner consistent with that of the principal elevation porch, including a gable with half-timber wood trim on the stuccoed gable end. This east end of the south facade features a series of decorative wood panels set between the entry door and a window on the first floor and between two windows on the second floor. Details of the windows are consistent with those on the principal elevation. The hip roof of this section of the building is penetrated by a chimney, originally brick, but now covered with stucco. The gable-roofed bay is also articulated like the principal elevation's projecting bay, including the design of second floor windows flanking decorative panels, with one notable exception. Here, a Palladian window with heavily articulated moulding appears in the stuccoed gable end. The west end of the building is also evident on the south elevation. This part of the building, like the entire west elevation, does not exhibit the rich wood details visible on the principal facades and its hip roof is slightly lower than adjacent roofs and lacking the crown moulding that caps the rest of the building.

The north elevation of the Retan house is almost a mirror image of the south elevation. It too features a central projecting gable roofed bay with the less distinguished west side of the house visible on the western extreme and the side elevation of the principal facade's gable-roofed bay forming the east end of the north elevation. The decorative paneling, Palladian window, and stuccoed chimney of the south elevation are repeated on this side of the building. The side

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elevation of the principal entry porch extends along the north elevation, but here the spindled frieze is missing. A steep gable-roofed porte-cochere which projects from the center of the elevation is clearly its dominant feature. Supported on massive rusticated stone piers, the north gable end of the porte-cochere is faced with vertical boards and defined by decorative wood trim in imitation of half-timbers.

The original fabric of the interior of the Retan house has not been as well preserved as the exterior. A series of minor interior renovations, largely corresponding to changes in ownership (during World War II, the building functioned as a rooming house) have detracted from the nineteenth century flavor of the house with a loss of mouldings, wood trim and original mantels. However, one original parlor mantel, some baseboards and some original moulded door trim with corner blocks survive on the first floor.

The essential configuration of the original plan of the house is evident. The principal entrance to the house leads into a large foyer containing the main staircase. Downstairs, a series of living room, parlors and dining room radiate directly off the foyer. Service space -- including the kitchen and service stairs -- is situated in the rear, west end of the house. Upstairs, bedrooms, though not in their original plan configuration, are located around the well-lighted stair hall.

The fine craftsmanship of the house's exterior woodwork is reflected in the design and execution of the paneled central stair. Its balustrade combines spindles with rectilinear elements that reiterate the lines of the stairs' risers and treads. The newel posts have an unusual, perhaps Oriental influenced, character. Essentially box-like piers, they are decoated with a series of panel-like indentations and topped with a series of torus-like elements where one might expect to find a urn. There is some speculation that these newel posts date to a 1912 renovation of the house.

A two-story carriage house is located on the far northwest corner of the property. This simple utilitarian building is a wood frame structure with the exception of its west wall which is composed entirely of stone.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" 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 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 1893

Builder/Architect

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

At the turn of the century, Little Rock's physical growth was restricted to the north by the Arkansas River and to the east and south by the flood plains of the river. For real estate developers, the land west of Little Rock stood as the only logical direction for the city to expand. A group of Michigan investors saw the potential of this area of rolling hills and pine forests as sound investment property and conceived the development of Pulaski Heights, Little Rock's first planned suburb. In 1891 this investment syndicate organized the Pulaski Heights Land Company and proceeded to purchase 800 acres located three miles west of Little Rock. Eight of the investors, including Albert Retan, brought their families to Arkansas to settle in the new suburb. Retan build his house in 1893 and it remains an important symbol of the founding, growth and success of the Pulaski Heights community. Architecturally, the structure represents a transitional style incorporating the fluent decorative woodwork of the Queen Anne in its sweeping porch with spindle frieze and the stately lines of the Colonial Revival mode in its hip roofs with projecting cross gables and its Palladian windows. The suburb attracted professionals and businessmen who desired an alternative to living in the central area of the city without forfeiting convenient access to their places of business in downtown Little Rock. Once established as a popular neighborhood, Pulaski Heights grew steadily. As a result, it was incorporated as a town in 1905 and soon after, in 1916 the "Heights" was annexed to the city of Little Rock. Never having suffered the decay that has threated many of Little Rock's other older neighborhoods, Pulaski Heights remains a prominent residential area in Little Rock's with the Albert Retan House surviving as an important reminder of the origins and history of the city's first planned suburb.

