

NR listed  
10-3-85

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

received \_\_\_\_\_  
date entered \_\_\_\_\_

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

## 1. Name

historic Joseph M. Frank House

and or common \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Location

street & number 912 West Fourth

N/A not for publication

city, town Little Rock

N/A vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_

state Arkansas

code 05

county Pulaski

code 119

## 3. Classification

### Category

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

### Ownership

- public
  - private
  - both
- Public Acquisition**
- in process
  - being considered
  - N/A

### Status

- occupied
  - unoccupied
  - work in progress
- Accessible**
- yes: restricted
  - yes: unrestricted
  - no

### Present Use

- agriculture
- commercial
- educational
- entertainment
- government
- industrial
- military
- museum
- park
- private residence
- religious
- scientific
- transportation
- other:

## 4. Owner of Property

name Walter Murray, Attorney-at-Law

street & number First Commercial Building

city, town Little Rock

\_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_

state Arkansas

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Pulaski County Courthouse

street & number Spring and Markham Streets

city, town Little Rock

state Arkansas

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A

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

#### Summary

The Joseph M. Frank House is a two-story frame residence, finished in brick veneer, and is a fine example of the turn-of-the-century "free classical" style. Its plan, configuration and exterior massing are typically Queen Anne, while the majority of the details -- inside and out -- are Classical Revival in nature. The asymmetrical floor plan, corner turret, and varied window configurations are indicative of the continuing popularity of the Queen Anne style -- introduced to America twenty-five years earlier -- when this house was constructed in 1900.

#### Elaboration

The Joseph M. Frank House eloquently illustrates the persistent use of Queen Anne features at the beginning of the twentieth century. Characteristics of this popular style are combined with those of the Classical Revival, resulting in a significant synthesis of the two. Irregular in plan and massing, this two-story residence has a frame structure clad in brick veneer.

The Classical Revival front porch retains its original details, including the Roman Ionic columns with Erechtheum-style capitals and Attic-style bases. The entablature features dentils which match those present at the turret and the south and west gables. A side porch was removed in the late 1920's when the property was converted to apartments and replaced with a two-story stucco and brick addition. The latter, in turn, has recently been removed and rehabilitation plans call for the reconstruction of a porch which is similar in character to the one on the front.

The steeply pitched (12/12), interesting gable roof is clad in deteriorating slate shingles and has 40 lb. tin box gutters. At the ridge there is a strip of elaborate sheet metal cresting. The original chimneys remain; although they are in poor condition, they exhibit elaborate brick patternwork and corbelling. The two-and-a-half story turret is rotated 45 degrees and sits at the southeast corner of the structure. It is topped by a highly ornamental metal finial.

The brick exterior is decorated with white limestone bands on the three front gable bays and the turret. The same material is also used for the sills and lintels for the windows; the latter include segmental arches with decorative wood panels at the heads of the windows. Terra-cotta ornamentation is found at the south and east gables, as well as the turret and the southwest chimney. The west end gable features decorative vertical slate shingles and a circular ornamental window. Other gables are punctuated with small square or rectangular windows with patterned lights. All the main windows that are original to the house are one-over-one single-hung sash.

The entry door is located between the turret and the front gable bay. It opens into a reception area with the main stair to the east and the front parlor to the west. The middle parlor and dining room are to the north followed by what appears to have been a rear stair, service area, and pantry, with the rear porch and kitchen behind. Upstairs, the original configuration consisted of a front sitting room and bedroom, bedrooms at the east and west gables, a rear stair, service area, bathroom and porch. Another bedroom was located in the north gable and a full attic was present above.

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The interior features 11' ceilings on the first floor and 10' 8" ceiling heights on the second. Walls and ceilings were constructed of plaster on wood lath. Wood panel doors were used throughout the house; some were equipped with operable transoms. Three pairs of large pocket doors made it possible for major spaces to be combined for entertaining. Flooring is narrow strip oak which was laid over the original during the late 1920's renovation of the house.

Many original interior details remain. All five fireplaces have decorative tile and oak mantels; all the mantels have Classical detailing and those in the downstairs parlors are, with their beveled mirrors and complex lathework, among the most elaborate seen in Little Rock. Existing hardware on doors and windows appears to date from both the original construction and the 1920's renovation. The doors and windows in the front two-thirds of the house have classically-inspired trim and egg-and-dart molding; in the rear, more simple trim prevails with bull's eye corner blocks and base plinths. The original stair has been partially removed and substantially altered.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below					
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation		
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)		

Specific dates 1900

Builder/Architect Unknown

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

#### Summary

The Joseph M. Frank House, a fine example of the "free-classical" style, is an important remnant of the once-prosperous Capitol View neighborhood of downtown Little Rock. The size of the Frank House, as well as its fine attention to architectural detail, attest to its first owner's desire to be modern and fashionable -- important prerequisites to living in a residential area which was, from the 1870's to shortly after the turn of the century, home to many of the town's most prominent merchants and businessmen. Since then, the expansion of the central business district and proliferation of commercial uses in the vicinity of the State Capitol have reduced to a small handful the number of historically or architecturally significant properties in this neighborhood which are representative of the affluence enjoyed by the relatively new, upper-middle class in late Victorian Little Rock.

#### Elaboration

When well-known Little Rock businessman Joseph M. Frank built his home at 908 West 4th Street in 1900, it certainly was an indicator of the success he had achieved. The 1901 Pulaski County tax records testify to Frank's considerable wealth by showing that his house was one of the most expensive structures in the upper-middle class Capitol View area. That was quite an achievement, since among his prosperous neighbors were men such as Zeb Ward, Soloman Gans, Daniel Fones, and George Baucum.

The Frank House was built strictly according to the fashions of its day. Its transitional style -- partially Queen Anne, partially Classical Revival -- superbly illustrates the architectural ambiguity of the period. Clad in high-quality brick, laid-up with thinly buttered joints, and ornamented with deep red terra-cotta and white limestone, the Frank House was the equal of any of its late 19th century counterparts.

Joseph Frank had moved to the city during the Reconstruction Era and operated a prosperous meat business for several years. By the late 1890's, he was a stockholder in many local commercial enterprises. A life-long bachelor, Frank was active in charity work and at the time of his death in 1920, was recognized as a leading philanthropist. Among his contributions was a donation to the City Hospital Fund of property and cash totalling \$20,000. He also made a \$20,000 gift to the B.P.O.E. for the construction of the Elk's new home at 4th and Scott Streets.

In 1908 Joseph Frank sold his home to an equally respected member of the Little Rock business community, William W. Wilson. He was president of the W.W. Wilson

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Stave Company, located at Argenta (North Little Rock); it produced 30,000 barrel staves a day and was considered one of the area's most important industries. Wilson was also a member of the Board of Trade and active in the Masons. The Wilson family resided in the 4th Street house for ten years.

After a series of short-lived single-family ownerships, the property was converted to apartments in 1929. The renovations included a two-story addition to the southeast corner of the house, a new rear porch, and the extensive repartitioning of the second floor. The house was used as a multi-family dwelling until 1977, when it was bought by an insurance agency and turned into offices. In 1984, the house was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Walter A. Murray.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property Less than one acre

Quadrangle name Little Rock, AR

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A 

1	5	5	6	6	0	8	0	3	8	4	5	4	2	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

B 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

C 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

D 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

E 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

F 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

G 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

H 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

Verbal boundary description and justification

West 1/2 of lots 7, 8, 9, block 253, Original City of Little Rock

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state code county code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ralph J. Megna, Executive Vice President

organization The Renaissance Corporation

date July 3, 1984

street & number 1008 Cumberland

telephone (501) 371-0654

city or town Little Rock

state Arkansas

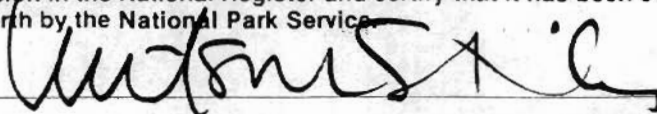
## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature



title Arkansas State Historic Preservation Officer

date 9-20-85

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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Arkansas Democrat, May 26, 1920.

History of Arkansas, Fay Hempstead, 1911, Vol. II, p. 745.

REA PLANNING  
JLASKI COUNTY

LITTLE ROCK QUADRANGLE

ARKANSAS

7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

7553 1 SW  
(MC ALMONT)

SE 1910 000 FEET 177300 WOODLAND HEIGHTS 3.5 MI (10) CONWAY 3.2 MI (VIA U.S. 65) 0.5 MI TO JUNC. U.S. 65 AT 7 MI TO NORTH TERMINAL INTERCHANGE 92°15' 34'45"



Joseph M. Frank House  
Little Rock, Pulaski County  
Quadrangle Name: Little Rock  
Scale: 1:24000  
UTM Reference  
15 566080 3845420



3843 750 000 FEET 3844 3845





