

Survey Number LR0026Owner Rockworth AssociatesProperty Name Gus Blass Department StoreAddress 324 Main StreetLittle Rock, AR 72201

Original Name \_\_\_\_\_

Location 318-24 Main StreetConstruction Date 1912

## ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The seven-story Gus Blass Department Store, one of Little Rock's earliest "skyscrapers", is a good example of Sullivanese architecture with Neo-classical details. Its architect, George Mann, took pains to clearly delineate the three elements of the Sullivanese style. The two-story base is clad, on its east and south elevations, in decorative white terra cotta that features ornaments composed of eagles encircled by wreaths. The base is framed with egg and dart molding. In stark contrast with the base, the shaft is simply finished in buff brick. Both the spandrel panels and vertical components of the facade were kept narrow, thus emphasizing the building's verticality and permitting large windows. The shaft rises four more stories and is terminated by a horizontal terra cotta band between the sixth and seventh stories. Large terra cotta cartouches and dentil work accent this band. A row of small attic windows and an imposing copper-clad cornice which is supported by massive brackets, "crown" this impressive structure. During 1975 renovation, the street-level store fronts and the primary entrances, located in the east and south facades, were recessed. The original double-hung windows have been replaced throughout the Blass Building with stationary panes; on the upper floors, the three-part division of the new windows is similar to the original.

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Designed by George R. Mann, the most distinguished Arkansas building designer of the early 20th Century, the Gus Blass Department Store was built in two phases during 1912-13. One half of the structure was completed and occupied while work continued on the other half. Significant from an engineering standpoint, the Blass Department Store was one of the earliest examples of two-way flat slab concrete construction in America. Later, it was the first Arkansas department store to be air conditioned (1936) and to have an escalator (1948). The original tenant, the Gus Blass Company, was founded in 1871 and remained in business until the early 1970's. It was the state's largest department store for many years, and played an important role in the downtown retail community. The property, owned by members of the David D. Terry family since 1868, was sold in 1974 to First American Bankstock Corporation (FABCO) who adapted the upper floors of the store for office use.

Level of Significance: State

Verbal Boundary Description Lot 7, 8, Block 76, Original CityAcreage Less than oneQuadrangle Name Little Rock, ArkansasQuadrangle Scale 1:24000

UTM Reference

Zone 15Easting 566720Northing 3844840

NOV 13 1986

OCT 1 - 1986

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet

Item number

Page

Multiple Resource Area  
Thematic Group

dnr-11

Name Little Rock Main Street MRA  
State Pulaski County, ARKANSAS

Nomination/Type of Review

1. Albert Pike Memorial  
Temple

Substantive Review

for Keeper

Attest

Date/Signature

11/13/86  
William B. Bushong

11/13/86  
Bruce J. Noble, Jr.

2. Rose Building

Substantive Review

for Keeper

Attest

11/13/86  
William B. Bushong

11/13/86  
Bruce J. Noble, Jr.

3. Fulk Building

Substantive Review

for Keeper

Attest

11/13/86  
William B. Bushong

11/13/86  
Bruce J. Noble, Jr.

4. Gus Blass Department  
Store

Substantive Review

for Keeper

Attest

11/13/86  
William B. Bushong

11/13/86  
Bruce J. Noble, Jr.

5. Taylor Building

Substantive Review

for Keeper

Attest

11/13/86  
William B. Bushong

11/13/86  
Bruce J. Noble, Jr.

6. St. Andrews Catholic  
Cathedral

Substantive Review

for Keeper

Attest

11/13/86  
William B. Bushong

11/13/86  
Bruce J. Noble, Jr.

7. First Presbyterian Church

Substantive Review

for Keeper

Attest

11/13/86  
William B. Bushong

11/13/86  
Bruce J. Noble, Jr.

8. Worthen Bank Building

Substantive Review

for Keeper

Attest

11/13/86  
William B. Bushong

11/13/86  
Bruce J. Noble, Jr.

9. Donaghey Building

Substantive Review

Keeper

Attest

DOE/OWNER OBJECTION

10. State Bank Building

Substantive Review

Keeper

Attest

DOE/OWNER OBJECTION



86003122

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Substantive Review

Gus Blass Department Store (Little Rock Main  
Street MRA)  
Pulaski County  
ARKANSAS

Working No. OCT 1 1986

Fed. Reg. Date: 2/2/88

Date Due: 10/1/86 - 11/15/86

Action: ACCEPT 11-13-86

RETURN

REJECT

Federal Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ resubmission  
☐ nomination by person or local government  
☐ owner objection  
☐ appeal

Substantive Review: ☐ sample ☐ request ☐ appeal ☒ NR decision

Reviewer's comments: *The Gus Blass Department Store was designed by George R. Mann, Arkansas' most distinguished building designer during the early 20th century. The original tenant, the Gus Blass Company, was founded in 1871 and was the state's largest department store for many years prior to closing in 1971.*

Recom./Criteria Accept - A, C

Reviewer Noble

Discipline Historian

Date 11/7/86

see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for: technical corrections cited below  
substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership Public Acquisition	Status Accessible	Present Use
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4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☐ no

7. Description

Condition	Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
		<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- ☐ summary paragraph  
☐ completeness  
☐ clarity  
☐ alterations/integrity  
☐ dates  
☐ boundary selection

## 8. Significance

Period \_\_\_\_\_ Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates \_\_\_\_\_

Builder/Architect \_\_\_\_\_

Statement of Significance (*in one paragraph*)

- ☐ summary paragraph
- ☐ completeness
- ☐ clarity
- ☐ applicable criteria
- ☐ justification of areas checked
- ☐ relating significance to the resource
- ☐ context
- ☐ relationship of integrity to significance
- ☐ justification of exception
- ☐ other

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_

UTM References \_\_\_\_\_

Verbal boundary description and justification \_\_\_\_\_

## 11. Form Prepared By

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

\_\_\_\_\_ national \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature \_\_\_\_\_

title \_\_\_\_\_

date \_\_\_\_\_

## 13. Other

- ☐ Maps
- ☐ Photographs
- ☐ Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_





Gus Blass Department Store- LR0026

Little Rock Main Street MRA

Little Rock, Pulaski Co.

Photographed by Sarah Brown, 1985

Negatives on file at AHPP

OCT 1 1986

Please refer to the map in the  
Multiple Property Cover Sheet  
for this property

Multiple Property Cover Sheet Reference Number: 64000028