

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

935



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 Block Realty-Baker House

other names/site number Site #PU5647

2. Location

street & number 1900 Beechwood

not for publication

city or town Little Rock

vicinity

state Arkansas code AR county Pulaski code 119 zip code 72207

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.)

Cathy Matthews  
Signature of certifying official/Title

8/11/08  
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:

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:)

Signature of the Keeper

Edson H. Beall

Date of Action

9.24.08

**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	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
1		objects
2		Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

**Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

**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 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS/Colonial  
Revival  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

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

**Narrative Description**

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

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

### SUMMARY

The Block Realty-Baker House, located at 1900 Beechwood, is a two-and-a-half story residence designed in the Colonial Revival style by noted Arkansas architect John Parks Almand. The brick house rests on a continuous concrete foundation and the brick walls are laid in a common bond. The house is topped by a gable roof covered in asphalt shingles. The roof also has four gable-roofed dormers, three located on the front façade and one located on the south façade over the garage. The property is located on three lots and is surrounded by landscaped grounds and a stone retaining wall, which also contributes to the nomination.

### ELABORATION

The Block Realty-Baker House, located at 1900 Beechwood, is a two-and-a-half story, five-bay wide residence located in the upscale Shadowlawn Subdivision of the Heights section of Little Rock. The property is located on three lots and is surrounded by landscaped grounds and a stone retaining wall, which also contributes to the nomination. Built c.1940, the house was designed in the Colonial Revival style by noted Arkansas architect John Parks Almand.

The brick house, which is roughly U-shaped in plan, rests on a continuous concrete foundation and the brick walls are laid in a common bond. Although the majority of the house is faced in brick, a rear addition, as well as a small bay in the dining room, are faced in horizontal wood weatherboard siding. The majority of the house's windows are wood-framed, double-hung, eight-over-eight windows. The house is topped by a gable roof covered in asphalt shingles. The roof also has four gable-roofed dormers, three located on the front façade and one located on the south façade over the garage.

#### *Front/East Façade*

The front façade of the house is five bays wide. On the first floor, the center bay contains the house's main entrance. The entrance, which is slightly recessed, has a six-panel wood door that is flanked on each side by wood panels and leaded-glass sidelights with decorative tracery. A string of seven square transom windows are located above the entrance. The entire entrance has a decorative surround, consisting of wood panels on the sides and a frieze and projecting cornice above. Decorative lights are also located on each side of the entrance.

The first floor entrance is flanked on each side by two wood-frame, double-hung, eight-over-eight windows with louvered shutters. The second floor is fenestrated by five evenly-spaced, wood-frame, double-hung, eight-over-eight windows with louvered shutters. The third floor of the house is also fenestrated by three gable-roofed dormers in the center three bays. The dormers are sided with horizontal wood weatherboard siding and have wood-frame, double-hung, four-over-four windows.

The front of the house also has a raised terrace that spans the center three bays.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

### *Side/North Façade*

The north side of the front section of the house is fenestrated on the first and second floors by a centered wood-frame, double-hung, eight-over-eight window with louvered shutters, while the attic floor has a rectangular louvered attic vent. The rear section of the house, which is a den addition, has no fenestration and is covered in horizontal wood siding. Unlike the front section of the house, the rear addition has a flat roof that is surrounded by a Chippendale balustrade.

The north façade of the south wing, which faces the inside of the "U," is fenestrated by two wood-frame, double-hung, eight-over-eight windows, while the second floor is fenestrated by a single wood-frame, double-hung, six-over-six window.

### *Rear/West Façade*

The rear façade of the house is divided into three sections, the two uprights of the "U" and the center part of the "U." The left section is the rear of the den addition, which is sided with horizontal wood siding. A stepped brick chimney is located in the center of the den's façade, and it is flanked on each side by a single wood-frame, double-hung, eight-over-eight window. The top of the den is surmounted by the Chippendale balustrade. The second floor of the house, above the den addition, is fenestrated by two wood-frame, double-hung, eight-over-eight windows.

The center section of the façade fenestrated on the first floor by a single wood-frame, double-hung, four-over-four window. To the right of the window, a small hipped-roof extension has a door on the north side and a fifteen-pane window on the west side. The second floor of the center section is fenestrated by a single wood-frame, double-hung, four-over-four window on the south end. A large gable-roofed attic vent is located on the roof above the façade's center section.

The south third of the rear façade is the rear façade of the house's service wing where the kitchen, garage, and former servant's quarters are located. The first floor is fenestrated at the south corner by a single eight-pane, wood-frame window. The window is located in a small section of the façade that is sided in horizontal wood siding rather than brick siding. The second floor of the façade is fenestrated at the north edge by a single wood-frame, double-hung, four-over-four window. Louvered rectangular attic vents are located in gable peak of the service wing as well as in the rear of the main section of the house.

In the center of the "U" formed by the rear façade is a brick terrace, which is bordered on the south by an iron fence supported by brick piers with concrete caps.

### *Side/South Façade*

Beginning at the west end of the south façade is the house's two-car garage. Although it was originally designed to have two separate garage doors, it now has a large single garage door. The second floor of the



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

house above the garage is also fenestrated by a single gable-roofed dormer in the center. The dormer is sided with horizontal wood weatherboard siding and has a wood-frame, double-hung, six-over-six window.

To the right of the garage is the rear-facing gabled section of the house. On the first floor of this section is an entrance with a wood-paneled door with a shed-roofed porch above it. To the right of the entrance is a single wood-frame, double-hung, eight-over-eight window with louvered shutters. The second floor of this section of the façade is fenestrated by a pair of wood-frame, double-hung, eight-over-eight windows with louvered shutters.

The last portion of the south façade is comprised of the side-facing gabled section of the main house. The first floor of the façade has a wood-sided, projecting, hip-roofed bay that provides additional space in the dining room. It is fenestrated by a band of windows consisting of a central wood-frame, double-hung, eight-over-eight window flanked on each side by a wood-frame, double-hung, four-over-four window. The second floor of this part of the façade is fenestrated by a wood-frame, double-hung, eight-over-eight window with louvered shutters. A louvered rectangular attic vent is located in the gable peak of this section of the façade.

### Stone Retaining Wall

Along the east and south sides of the property is a stone retaining wall. The wall is built out of fieldstone laid in a rough ashlar pattern. A set of stone steps also leads up to the yard and a walk leads to the front terrace. Decorative lamps are located on top of the wall to the right and left of the steps.

### Integrity

Overall, the Block Realty-Baker House retains excellent integrity. The largest change to the exterior of the house was the construction of the rear den addition, which is believed to have been done in the 1960s. However, it is small in scale compared to the overall mass of the house, and is hardly visible from the front of the house. Additionally, it was designed in a style that is harmonious with the Colonial Revival style of the original house. A comparison of the house currently with the original plans, which are in the current owner's possession, illustrates how little the house has changed since it was built c.1940.

The setting around the Block Realty-Baker House also reflects its historic period. The Block Realty-Baker House was built in the middle of the neighborhood's development period – many of the houses on the west side of Beechwood were built by 1939, although many of the houses on the east side of the street were built after 1950. However, the neighborhood retains its gracious upscale character of large homes on large landscaped lots, and is still one of Little Rock's most desirable neighborhoods.

**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)

Architecture  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

c.1940  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

c.1940  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

John Parks Almand, architect  
Little Rock Builders, builder

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

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

### SUMMARY

The Block Realty-Baker House is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion C** as an excellent example of the Colonial Revival style designed by noted Arkansas architect John Parks Almand. With its symmetrical front façade, gable roof with dormers, double-hung window sashes with multi-pane glazing, and accentuated front entrance with decorative crown, the Block Realty-Baker House is a textbook example of the Colonial Revival style. In addition, the Block Realty-Baker House is a good example of Almand's design work from the late 1930s and early 1940s, and is probably the most substantial house he designed for the Block Realty Company.

### ELABORATION

Settlement in the Little Rock area began shortly after the turn of the nineteenth century. Although surveying land and offering it for sale did not begin until 1815, a few settlers were in the area prior to then. Edmund Hogan, for example, who was originally from Georgia and came to Arkansas via Missouri, was living on the north bank of the Arkansas River opposite Little Rock where he operated a ferry by 1812. Another distinguished early settler was Wright Daniel who settled at the base of Big Rock Mountain prior to 1814 and opened a gristmill in 1815. When the Arkansas Territory was created in 1819, the state's first capital was at Arkansas Post. However, it was not the best location since it often flooded and was far away from the majority of the territory's population. In 1820, a new centrally-located site for the capital was chosen on the south bank of the Arkansas River at the Little Rock.<sup>1</sup>

Initial settlement and development in Little Rock was focused on the river. The original plat of Little Rock consisted of 88 square blocks stretching south from the river to what is now Eleventh Street. By the 1860s, however, the city began to expand beyond the original plat, notably with the platting of the Woodruff's and Masonic additions on the city's east side, the Wright's Addition on the south side, and the Capitol Hill Addition on the west side. Apparently, building sites on the city's west side were popular. An announcement in the November 21, 1872, issue of the *Arkansas Gazette* stated that "This property consists of twenty-seven full and fractional blocks, overlooking the Cairo and Fulton railroad as it leaves the city. ... This is a fine property, and from its geographical position, will soon become a portion of the city. Upward of one hundred lots in the addition have already been disposed of, and are at this time being improved."<sup>2</sup>

By the first part of the twentieth century as new development opened up west of the historic core of Little Rock, the new neighborhoods were platted using the latest principles in urban design. Throughout the nineteenth century, the grid was the pattern of choice for development. Although efficient, by the turn of the twentieth century it was beginning to be considered monotonous and dreary. As a result, neighborhoods and

<sup>1</sup>, F. Hampton, Sr., and Charles Witsell, Jr., with Cheryl Griffith Nichols. *How We Lived: Little Rock as an American City*. Little Rock: August House, 1984, pp. 12-14.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 19, 104.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

developments with curvilinear streets that followed the natural terrain became fashionable in the early 1900s. Moreover, having neighborhoods with curvilinear streets and larger lots, which created a more rural quality, was also a reaction to the conditions in big city slums.<sup>3</sup>

Although curvilinear streets created a more attractive neighborhood, by the 1920s they were also useful in slowing down automobiles. The popularity of the automobile increased dramatically by the 1920s making them more prevalent in residential areas. The use of curvilinear streets forced drivers to slow down and be more cautious in residential neighborhoods.<sup>4</sup>

The first neighborhood in Little Rock to use the idea of curvilinear streets in its design was Midland Hills, located on either side of Kavanaugh Boulevard where it branches off of Markham Street. The eastern portion of the neighborhood was platted in 1908 and the western portion was platted in 1911, and the whole area was developed by the Union Trust Company. Advertisements for the area made it clear that the neighborhood was special because of its design, stating:

Midland Hills is not laid out in the regulation way with the usual square blocks, but has been carefully platted with regard to the topography of the land. Its winding driveways follow the foothills and the hillcrests, giving this property a distinctive and most attractive appearance.

To plat in this irregular, attractive way demanded the sacrifice of many a lot to sell, but it has given Midland Hills the distinctive beauty for which such districts as University City in St. Louis, and Brookline, Mass., the richest city in the world, are famous.<sup>5</sup>

Although Midland Hills was a successful development, it was not until the 1920s that this type of development became common in Little Rock. The Pulaski Heights area of the city was home to the majority of these types of "residential park" developments in the 1920s, including Fairfax Terrace, Prospect Terrace, Cliffewood, Edgehill, and Shadowlawn.<sup>6</sup>

The development of Pulaski Heights began in the 1890s with the vision of Henry Franklin Auten and Edgar Eugene Moss, two attorneys from St. John's, Michigan. In March 1891, Auten and Moss acquired 800 wooded acres just west of Little Rock with the hopes of developing it. However, Pulaski Heights grew very slowly during the 1890s – only eight families settled there – because of a lack of good transportation from

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 192-193.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

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



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 3

downtown Little Rock. Although it meant that Pulaski Heights was a close-knit community, it did not do much for the area's profitability for the Pulaski Heights Land Company.<sup>7</sup>

The key to successful development in Pulaski Heights was going to be the establishment of a streetcar line to the area, and when the Little Rock Traction and Electric Railway Company was given a franchise on September 27, 1901, they were required to build a line to the Heights if they were first given "a graded roadway, a free right-of-way and certain 'other aid.'" Although various problems were encountered in completing the line, most notably completing a viaduct over the railroad line, the streetcar finally traveled to Pulaski Heights on Thanksgiving Day 1903 even though the line was not completely finished until the spring of 1904.<sup>8</sup>

Once the streetcar line reached the Heights, development occurred much more quickly with the Auten and Moss Addition being platted in 1903 and the Pulaski Heights (partial), Hollenberg, East Pulaski Heights and Mountain Park additions being platted in 1904. By early 1905, the Height's population was between 300 and 400 people, and on June 27, 1905, a petition was presented to incorporate the community. With one small adjustment to the proposed town's boundaries, the petition was granted and Pulaski Heights was incorporated on August 1, 1905.<sup>9</sup>

The reason for seeking incorporation for Pulaski Heights was to aid in providing public improvements, specifically paving streets and providing sidewalks. Although incorporation had been a popular idea in Pulaski Heights, by 1915 there was talk of consolidating Pulaski Heights with Little Rock. During the initial discussions on consolidation, Little Rock promised that they would build a fire station in the Heights, something that the community had wanted to do but had not accomplished. Little Rock also promised twenty-five fire hydrants and twenty-five streetlights. The Heights would also be given access to the services of all of Little Rock's city departments. The campaign to consolidate was a success and on January 13, 1916, Pulaski Heights became the Ninth Ward of Little Rock.<sup>10</sup>

Little Rock carried out its promises to the Heights – a fire station opened November 1, 1916, and the fire hydrants were being installed and the street lights were on hand awaiting installation. In the first few years after consolidation, only two small additions were platted in the Heights, Doyle Place in 1918 and the McGehee Addition in 1921. However, the boom of the 1920s brought intense development to the area and the establishment of eight new additions, including Fairfax Terrace, Prospect Terrace and Cliffewood in

<sup>7</sup> Nichols, Cheryl Griffith. "Pulaski Heights: Early Suburban Development in Little Rock, Arkansas." Master's Thesis. The George Washington University, 1981, pp. 14 and 16.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 19-20.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 23 and 28.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 28 and 32-33.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4

---

1924, Edge Hill and Oakwood Place in 1926, Shadowlawn in 1928, Pine View in 1929, and Normandy in 1930.<sup>11</sup>

Even though the Shadowlawn Addition was platted in 1928, by 1939 there were still twenty-six vacant lots in the addition, according to the Sanborn map. (It is possible that the onset of the Depression in 1929 and its effects in the 1930s contributed to the fact that so many empty lots remained in the Shadowlawn Addition by 1939.) The lots were scattered throughout the addition on North Jackson, North Monroe, North Spruce, Shadow Lane, and Beechwood, with the greatest concentrations on North Jackson south of Club Road and on Beechwood in between Echo Pass (now R Street) and Club Road. By 1950, however, when the Sanborn map was updated, only one vacant lot existed – the lot immediately to the north of the Block Realty House. (This lot remains vacant today, and is now part of the Block Realty-Baker House parcel.)<sup>12</sup>

John Parks Almand, who designed the Block Realty-Baker House, was born in Lithonia, Georgia, in 1885, and was the fourth of eight children. His early education was done in Lithonia before he entered Emory College in Oxford, Georgia, (now Emory University in Atlanta) in 1903. When Almand entered Emory College, he was undecided on whether to pursue a career in medicine or architecture, and it was not until he graduated from Emory in 1907 that he decided to go into architecture. After graduating from Emory, Almand entered Columbia University in New York to pursue a degree in architecture, which he received in 1911.<sup>13</sup>

Although Almand did not graduate from Columbia until 1911, his experience as an architect actually began while he was in school. For a couple of summers, Almand worked as a draftsman from the firm of Hentz, Adler, and Schultz in Atlanta. In addition, while a junior at Columbia, Almand designed a new Methodist church for his hometown of Lithonia, which was built for \$12,000 in 1910.<sup>14</sup>

Upon graduation from Columbia, Almand's first job was with the T. L. Hudson Company in Havana, Cuba, although Almand only stayed with the company for a year. Almand learned that Charles Thompson was looking to hire an architect, and he applied and got the position. Almand arrived in Little Rock on July 13, 1912, and was met at the railroad station by Frank Ginocchio of the firm. (Coincidentally, Almand and Ginocchio would both die on the same day – March 24, 1969.) Shortly after arriving in Little Rock, Almand met Miss Frances Reeve Edmondson, and they later married on November 4, 1914.<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, p. 34.

<sup>12</sup> Sanborn Fire Insurance maps for Little Rock, Arkansas: 1939 and May 1950.

<sup>13</sup> Almand, A. J. *John Parks Almand, Architect: A Biography of my Father*. Privately printed, 1976, pp. 2, 25, and 29.

<sup>14</sup> Almand, pp. 30-31.

<sup>15</sup> Almand, pp. 33-34.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 5

For the first two and a half years (July 1912 – December 1914) that Almand worked with Charles Thompson, he was a designer and earned \$2,000 a year. For the next year, he was promoted to a junior partner with Thompson. However, Almand wanted to go out on his own – he had been in charge of designing some buildings while working with Thompson – and he opened his own office in January 1916 in room 1107 of the State Bank Building (now the Boyle Building).<sup>16</sup>

Although Almand opened his practice during the 1910s, it was not until the 1920s that it really took off. He received many large commissions during the 1920s, including Arkansas Children's Hospital, First Presbyterian Church, and he was also the designing architect of the Little Rock High School (now Central High School). Although a lot of his work was centered in Little Rock, his practice grew to be statewide during the 1920s reaching from Paragould to Texarkana and from Bentonville to Wilmot. He also took on two associates during the 1920s (the only time that he ever would) – Van Valkenberg for a short period in 1925 and Elmer A. Stuck of Jonesboro in 1929 – 1930.<sup>17</sup>

In addition to designing buildings across the state, Almand also took a brief foray into development in the late 1910s. In 1919 Almand bought the land at the northeast corner of Center and 14<sup>th</sup> streets in Little Rock and built three speculative houses that he sold. He then bought the northeast corner of Spring and 14<sup>th</sup> streets for the same purpose. However, once the house at 324 W. 14<sup>th</sup> Street was completed, he decided to move his family in instead.<sup>18</sup>

As with most Americans, Almand and his family were severely affected by the Depression during the early 1930s. In June 1934, Almand moved to Washington, DC, where he had been hired as an architect in the Office of the Supervising Architect of the Treasury Department. The office was responsible for designing post offices, customs houses, mints and other federal buildings across the country. Even though Almand was in Washington, he kept a tie to Arkansas, designing the post office in Fort Smith.<sup>19</sup>

Almand returned to Little Rock in April 1936 to take charge of the Resettlement Administration's Inspection Division office, which covered Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi. As the director of the office, Almand was responsible for opening the office, organizing the work that the office would do, and he was also in charge of ten assistants. The Resettlement Administration was involved in the construction of dams, farm buildings, utilities, roads, trails and lodges, and projects in Arkansas included Lake Dick (NR-listed July 3, 1975) in Jefferson County and Mount Magazine.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Almand, p. 36.

<sup>17</sup> Almand, p. 37.

<sup>18</sup> Almand, p. 45.

<sup>19</sup> Almand, p. 48.

<sup>20</sup> Almand, pp. 49-50.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 6

In 1937, Almand was able to return to private practice in Little Rock, something that he truly enjoyed. It was also at the same time that Almand worked on the houses for Raymond Block of Block Realty, including the house at 1900 Beechwood. However, with the onset of World War II in the 1940s, private construction stopped, and Almand was forced once again to look at something other than private practice.<sup>21</sup>

In the fall of 1942, Almand began work as the construction engineer for Naval Air Stations being built in Traverse City, Michigan, and Corpus Christi, Texas. The work with the Navy lasted just over a year, and Almand returned to Little Rock again late in 1943. Although he was able to do some architectural work, the effects of World War II still plagued him. As a result, in order to supplement his family's income, Almand turned to raising broilers. He built a chicken house on the north side of the vacant lot east of his home on 14<sup>th</sup> Street and raised the chickens for about two years until the effects of World War II eased. Due to growing up on a farm, and also being involved in farming in the 1920s, Almand was able to make enough money from raising broilers to live comfortably.<sup>22</sup>

After World War II, Almand's practice returned to normal. As before the war, Almand's commissions during the 1940s and 1950s encompassed a wide variety of building types including churches, residences, educational buildings, as well as the North Little Rock Funeral Home. Also, as before World War II, Almand ventured a little bit into developing, specifically developing the East Palisades Addition in Little Rock in the mid 1950s. (Almand and his wife would move into a house he designed at 27 East Palisades in 1956.)<sup>23</sup>

Throughout his career, Almand was characterized as a very hard worker who demanded hard work from those he worked with. (In fact, on several occasions, he would require contractors to redo work if it did not live up to his standards.) However, in 1962, Almand suffered a slight stroke. Although he recovered, he suffered another stroke in mid-1963. He never fully recovered from it, and on March 24, 1969, John Parks Almand passed away as the result of a heart attack. After his funeral at First Methodist Church in Little Rock, he was buried in the Mount Holly Mausoleum. However, his legacy on Arkansas's built environment is significant, spanning a period of time of almost fifty years and reaching all across the state.<sup>24</sup>

Although Almand designed most of his residential commissions for specific individual clients, he did design at least six houses for Block Realty Company, apparently to be built as speculative houses. Block Realty Company was founded in 1923 by Raymond Block, Sr., and family lore is that in the early 1920s Block tried

<sup>21</sup> Almand, pp. 50 and 52.

<sup>22</sup> Almand, pp. 52-53.

<sup>23</sup> Almand, pp. 59-60.

<sup>24</sup> Almand, pp. 56, 62, and 65.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 7

to sell his house through a large realty company he had hired, but without success. After he put an ad in the newspaper, the house sold within a week. Because of his success, he decided to go into realty (he previously had a tobacco shop in downtown Little Rock), and Block Realty eventually grew into one of the three largest realty companies in Arkansas.<sup>25</sup>

In addition to Block Realty, the company had at least two subsidiaries, Block Mortgage, founded in 1948 with Abe Rosen as president, and Little Rock Builders, with Lewis Solomon Block, Jr., as president. Together, Little Rock Builders and Block Realty built many speculative houses and developed several Little Rock neighborhoods, including Plaza Heights and Northgate. Although it is not known exactly how Almand came to design the houses for Block Realty, it is likely that Little Rock Builders built the houses that Almand designed, including the one on Beechwood.<sup>26</sup>

By the early 1950s, Block Realty had its offices at 212 Spring Street in downtown Little Rock, and c.1965 they relocated to 723 W. Markham (the current location of the Little Rock Planning and Development Department). Raymond Block, Sr., died in 1968, but the business continued to be run by the family with Raymond Block, Jr., and his son, Glenn Block, all playing roles in the company's operation. The company remained family owned until approximately 1986, when it was sold to Independence Federal Savings & Loan, headquartered in Batesville.<sup>27</sup>

The houses that Almand designed for the Block Realty Company, including the house at 1900 Beechwood, were designed in the late 1930s shortly after Almand returned to private practice, and it is interesting to note that five of the six houses were built in the Shadowlawn Addition – 1916, 1920, and 1924 North Jackson, 1815 North Monroe, and 1900 Beechwood. The only house designed by Almand that was not built in the Shadowlawn Addition was built at 3700 Hill Road in the Pulaski Heights Subdivision.<sup>28</sup>

By the 1930s when Almand designed the houses for Block Realty, including the house at 1900 Beechwood, he, like many architects, favored the Colonial Revival style of architecture. The Colonial Revival style began its rise in popularity in the 1870s, and was specifically influenced by two events – the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition of 1876 and the widely publicized 1877 New England tour of the popular architects McKim, Mead, White, and Bigelow to study historic Georgian and Adamesque buildings first-hand. However, the early examples of the Colonial Revival style are rarely accurate copies of the eighteenth and nineteenth-century originals. Rather, they take colonial details and interpret them freely.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Block, Glenn. Telephone conversation with the author. 6 May 2008.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid* and Block, Glenn. E-mail to the author. 14 May 2008.

<sup>28</sup> Almand, pp. 50, 99.

<sup>29</sup> McAlester, Virginia and Lee McAlester. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1994, p. 326.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 8

However, by the early twentieth century, buildings built in the Colonial Revival style became more accurate interpretations of the historical precedents. Two publications in the first part of the era greatly influenced the development of the style. The first publication was *The American Architect and Building News*, which in 1898 started a large series titled “The Georgian Period: Being photographs and measured drawings of Colonial Work with text.” The second publication was the *White Pine Series of Architectural Monographs*, which began in 1915, and extensively documented colonial buildings through photographs. These two publications, among others, brought more accurate information on colonial buildings and styles, which allowed a wider audience to have a better understanding of the style. As a result, buildings designed in the Colonial Revival style during the 1915-1935 period tend to more accurately resemble colonial buildings than previous attempts at the style did.<sup>30</sup>

Although the style continued to be popular from the late 1930s through the 1950s, partially influenced by the activities at Williamsburg, Virginia, in the 1930s, later examples of the style tended to be simpler than the buildings from the early twentieth century. The simplification of the style was influenced by several factors, including the Depression, World War II, and changing fashions after World War II. As McAlester states in *A Field Guide to American Houses*, “These later examples are most often of the side-gabled type, with simple stylized door surrounds, cornices, or other details that merely suggest their colonial precedents rather than closely mirroring them.” The Block Realty-Baker House is a textbook example of a late 1930s Colonial Revival style residence.<sup>31</sup>

Design work on the Block Realty-Baker House began in 1939 and the plans from Almand are dated June 26, 1939. Even though the plans were finished in June 1939, minor changes were made later as evidenced by the hand-written notes that exist on them. Construction of the house likely began in late 1939 and was probably finished in early 1940.<sup>32</sup> The address first appeared in the 1942 city directory for Little Rock with Robert H. Baker being listed as the resident. According to the city directories, Baker continued to reside in the house up through 1965.<sup>33</sup>

The largest change to the house occurred c.1966 shortly after Moise B. Seligman, Jr., moved into the house. The Seligmans constructed a one-story den addition on the back of the house. Construction of the addition necessitated the enclosure of the original rear porch, but the addition’s design blends in with the architecture of the original house.<sup>34</sup>

---

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Original plans for the house in the possession of William and Peggy Marshall, the current owners.

<sup>33</sup> *Polk’s Little Rock – North Little Rock City Directories*, 1942 – 1965.

<sup>34</sup> *Polk’s Little Rock – North Little Rock City Directories*, 1966 – 1974.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 9

The Seligmans resided in the house up through 1974. In 1975 Dan Fuller was listed as the occupant and he lived in the house until 1988. J. W. Benafield was listed as the occupant in 1989 and William T. and Peggy Marshall, the current owners, were listed as the occupants beginning in 1990.<sup>35</sup>

The Block Realty-Baker House has been well cared for by its owners over the years and remains today a great example of the Colonial Revival style. It also remains a good example of the work of noted Arkansas architect John Parks Almand and a lasting tribute to his impact on Arkansas's architecture during the early and mid twentieth century.

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Block Realty-Baker House is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion C** as an excellent example of the Colonial Revival style designed by noted Arkansas architect John Parks Almand. With its symmetrical front façade, gable roof with dormers, double-hung window sashes with multi-pane glazing, and accentuated front entrance with decorative crown, the Block Realty-Baker House is a textbook example of the Colonial Revival style. In addition, the Block Realty-Baker House is a good example of Almand's design work from the late 1930s and early 1940s, and was probably the most substantial house he designed for the Block Realty Company.

<sup>35</sup> *Polk's Little Rock – North Little Rock City Directories, 1975 – 1990.*

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1

---

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

Almand, A. J. *John Parks Almand, Architect: A Biography of my Father*. Privately printed, 1976.

Block, Glenn. Grandson of Raymond Block, Sr. E-mail to the author. 14 May 2008.

Block, Glenn. Grandson of Raymond Block, Sr. Telephone conversation with the author. 6 May 2008.

McAlester, Virginia and Lee McAlester. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1994.

Nichols, Cheryl Griffith. "Pulaski Heights: Early Suburban Development in Little Rock, Arkansas." Master's Thesis. The George Washington University, 1981.

Original plans for the house in the possession of William and Peggy Marshall, the current owners.

*Polk's Little Rock – North Little Rock City Directories*, 1942 – 1990.

Roy, F. Hampton, Sr., and Charles Witsell, Jr., with Cheryl Griffith Nichols. *How We Lived: Little Rock as an American City*. Little Rock: August House, 1984.

Sanborn Fire Insurance maps for Little Rock, Arkansas: 1939 and May 1950.



Block Realty-Baker House  
Name of Property

Pulaski County, Arkansas  
County and State

### 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre.

#### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>15</u> Zone	<u>561809</u> Easting	<u>3847633</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 Ralph S. Wilcox, National Register & Survey Coordinator  
organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date May 16, 2008  
street & number 1500 Tower Building, 323 Center Street telephone (501) 324-9787  
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 William T. & Peggy T. Marshall  
street & number 1900 Beechwood telephone             
city or town Little Rock state AR zip code 72207

**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.

Block Realty-Baker House  
Name of Property

Pulaski County, Arkansas  
County and State

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 1

---

### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lot 134-R (formerly Lots 132, 133, and 134) of Block 0 of the Shadowlawn Subdivision (Parcel Number: 33L0280009501).

### BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary contains the land that is historically associated with the Block Realty-Baker House.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Block Realty-Baker House  
NAME:

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: ARKANSAS, Pulaski

DATE RECEIVED: 8/13/08 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 9/02/08  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 9/17/08 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 9/26/08  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 08000935

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT  RETURN  REJECT 9/24/08 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

**Entered in  
The National Register  
of  
Historic Places**

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_

REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_ DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.







BLOCK REALTY + BAKER HOUSE:

PULASKI COUNTY, AR

VAN ZINDEN

JANUARY 2008

ARKANSAS HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM, LITTLE ROCK, AR

EAST FACADE, LOOKING SOUTHWEST



BLOCK REALTY - BAKER HOUSE

PULASKI COUNTY, AR

VAN ZBINGEN

JANUARY 2008

ARKANSAS HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM, LITTLE ROCK, AR  
NORTH FACADE, LOOKING SOUTH





BLOCK REALTY - BAKER HOUSE

PULASKI COUNTY, ARKANSAS

VAN ZBINDEN

JANUARY 2008

ARKANSAS HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM, LITTLE ROCK, AR

WEST FACADE, LOOKING EAST







BLOCK REALTY - BAKER HOUSE

PULASKI COUNTY, ARKANSAS

VAN ZBINDEN

JANUARY 2008

ARKANSAS HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM, LITTLE ROCK, AR  
NORTH AND WEST FACADES, LOOKING SOUTHEAST



BLOCK REALTY - BAKER HOUSE

PULASKI COUNTY, ARKANSAS

VAN ZBINDEN

JANUARY 2008

ARKANSAS HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM, LITTLE ROCK, AR  
NORTH FACADE, LOOKING EAST.





BLOCK REALTY - BAKER HOUSE

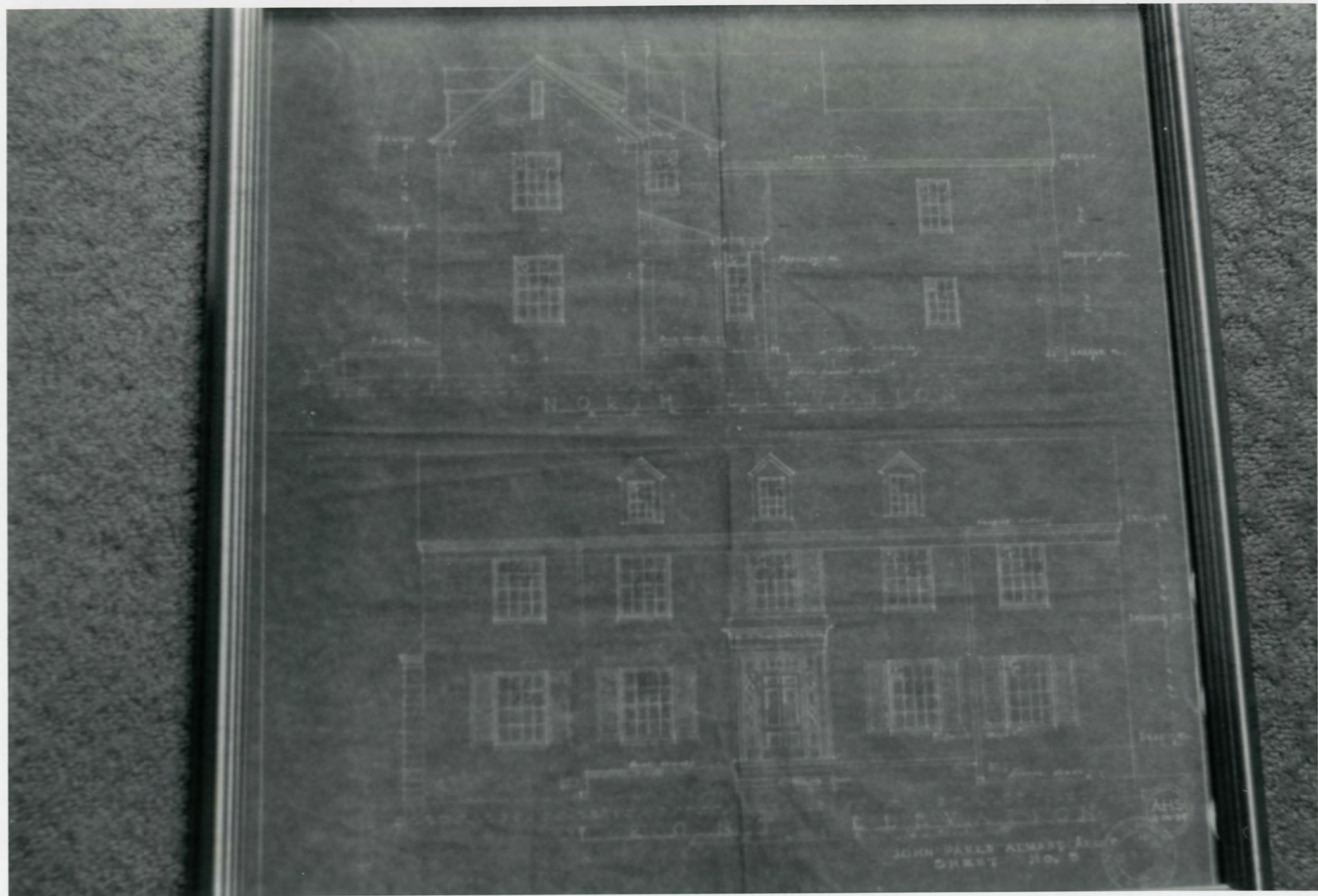
PULASKI COUNTY, ARKANSAS

VAN ZBINDER

JANUARY 2008

ARKANSAS HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM, LITTLE ROCK, AR  
SOUTH FACADE, LOOKING NORTHWEST







BLOCK REALTY - BAKER HOUSE

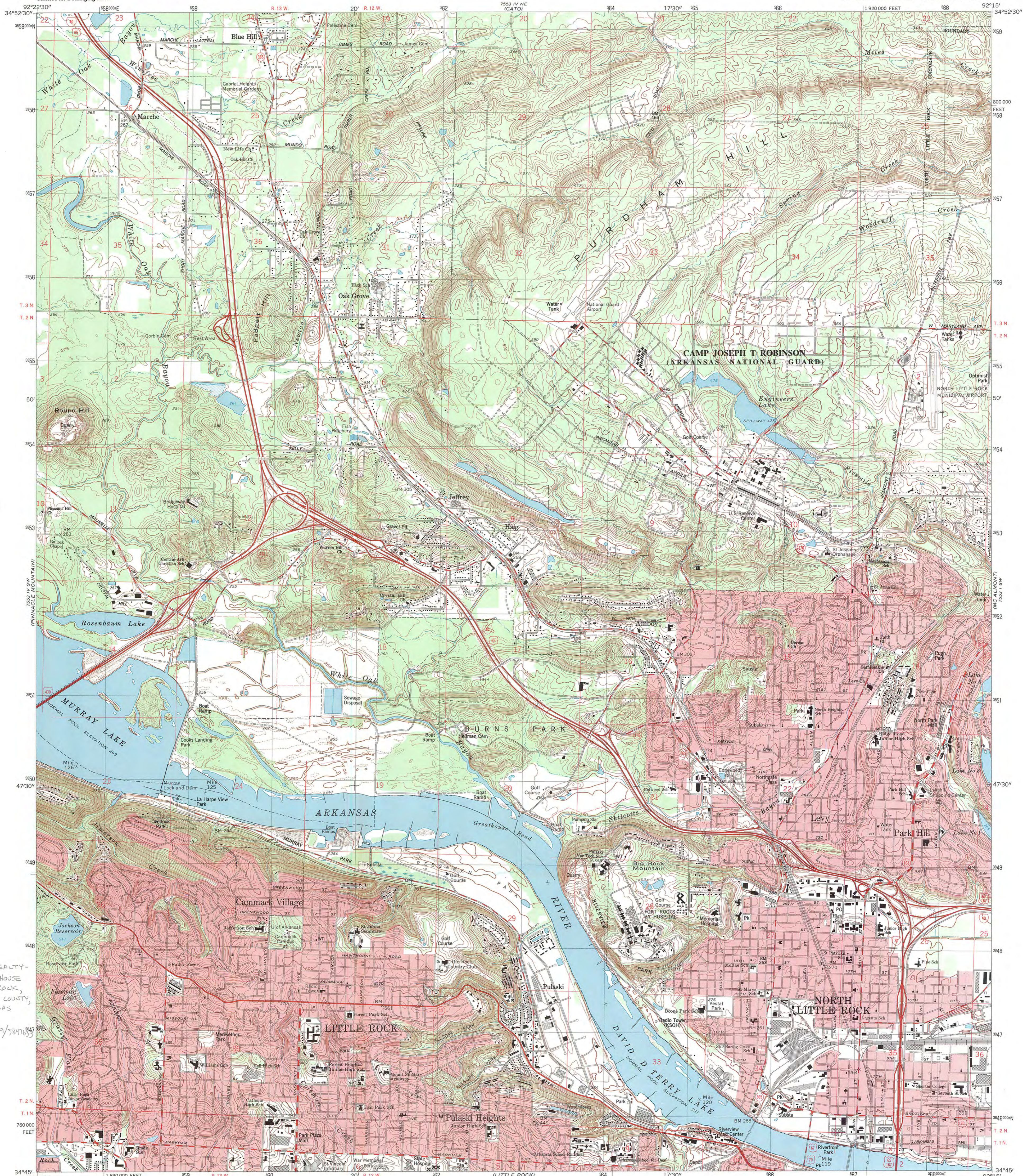
PULASKI COUNTY, AR

VAN ZBINGEN

JANUARY 2008

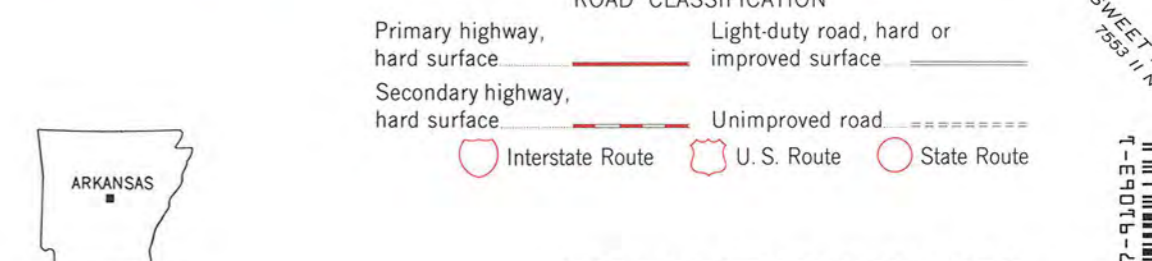
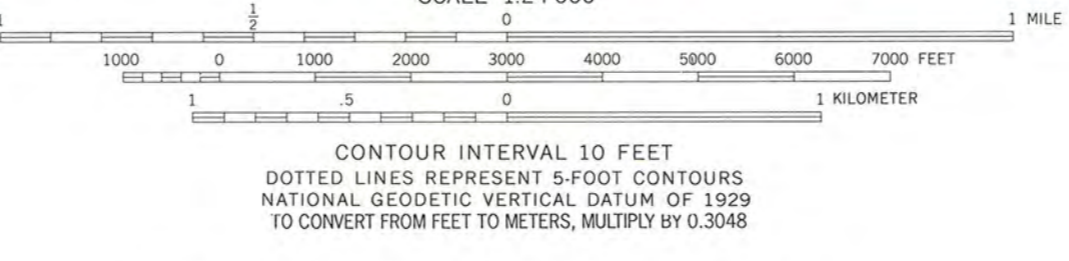
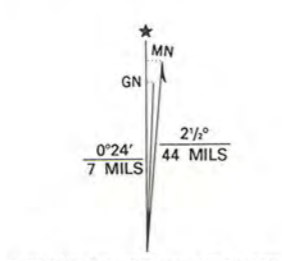
ARKANSAS HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM, LITTLE ROCK, AR  
ORIGINAL EAST AND NORTH ELEVATION PLANS





Block Realty - Baker House Little Rock, Pulaski County, Arkansas UTM: 15/561809/3841635

Produced by the United States Geological Survey. Derived from imagery taken 1984 and other sources. Photoinspected using imagery taken 1996; no major culture or drainage changes observed. PLSS and survey control current as of 1985. Boundaries, other than corporate, verified 1999. North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83). Projection and 10 000-foot ticks: Arkansas coordinate system, south zone (Lambert conformal conic) 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 15. North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83) is shown by dashed corner ticks. The values of the shift between NAD 27 and NAD 83 for 7.5-minute intersections are obtainable from National Geodetic Survey NADCON software. There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map.



THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, P.O. BOX 25298, DENVER, COLORADO 80225 AND ARKANSAS GEOLOGICAL COMMISSION, LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS 72204. A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST.

NORTH LITTLE ROCK, ARK. 1996 NIMA 7553 IV SE-SERIES V884







The Department of  
**Arkansas  
Heritage**

Mike Beebe  
Governor

Cathie Matthews  
Director

Arkansas Arts Council

\*

Arkansas Natural Heritage  
Commission

\*

Delta Cultural Center

\*

Historic Arkansas Museum

\*

Mosaic Templars  
Cultural Center

\*

Old State House Museum



Arkansas Historic  
Preservation Program

1500 Tower Building  
323 Center Street  
Little Rock, AR 72201  
(501) 324-9880  
fax: (501) 324-9184  
tdd: (501) 324-9811

e-mail:

[info@arkansaspreservation.org](mailto:info@arkansaspreservation.org)

website:

[www.arkansaspreservation.com](http://www.arkansaspreservation.com)

An Equal Opportunity Employer



August 6, 2008

Dr. Janet Matthews  
Chief of Registration  
United States Department of the Interior  
National Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service  
8th Floor  
1201 Eye Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20005

RE: Block Realty-Baker House – Little Rock, Pulaski County,  
Arkansas

Dear Dr. Matthews:

We are enclosing for your review the above-referenced nomination. The Arkansas Historic Preservation Program has complied with all applicable nominating procedures and notification requirements in the nomination process.

If you need further information, please call Ralph S. Wilcox of my staff at (501) 324-9787. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

Cathie Matthews  
State Historic Preservation Officer

CM:rs

Enclosure