

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Davidson, Julian Bunn, House
Other names/site number: Capitol Zoning District Commission Office
Name of related multiple property listing:

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



2. Location

Street & number: 410 South Battery Street
City or town: Little Rock State: Arkansas County: Pulaski
Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___ A ___ B X C ___ D

| | |
|---|---------------|
| <u>Martha Miller</u> | <u>2/3/14</u> |
| Signature of certifying official/Title: | Date |
| <u>Arkansas Historic Preservation Program</u> | |
| State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government | |

| | |
|---|---|
| In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria. | |
| Signature of commenting official: | Date |
| Title : | State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government |


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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)


Signature of the Keeper

3/10/2014
Date of Action

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

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

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

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.)

GOVERNMENT/Government office

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER/Contemporary

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: WOOD, BRICK, CONCRETE

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Davidson House is a one-story building located at 410 South Battery Street in Little Rock, Arkansas. It is the only remaining residential structure in the State Capitol complex, and a surviving example of contemporary architecture in the 1950s.

Narrative Description

The Davidson House was built in 1951 by local architect Julian Bunn Davidson as a single-family dwelling for him and his family. It was the only house he ever designed. The building is 1,850 total square feet with an irregular, though somewhat rectangular, floor plan of three bedrooms and two bathrooms. The third bedroom and second bathroom were added on the northeast corner circa 1955. The house has a concrete foundation, frame wall construction, and a flat, metal roof with no additional features. The building has an accentuated horizontal design, and the walls vary between primarily rough-sawn wood vertical boards, exposed concrete foundation, and brick. Stone, brick, and glass are additional materials used on the house and site features. Interior walls vary between drywall, paneling, and interior/exterior brick walls. The lack of exterior ornamentation, emphasized horizontal layout, internal/external walls, and use of

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building materials that organically suit the landscape of the property all fit 1950s contemporary residential architectural styles implemented by Frank Lloyd Wright nationwide and by Euine Fay Jones and Edward Durrell Stone in Arkansas.¹

Front/Southeast Elevation

The far right (north) side of the front (east) façade has a pair of adjacent, two-over two metal double-hung windows left of center on the wall. On a slightly inward angle there is a metal door with a small, single lite, and a small concrete stoop with three steps. One metal post on the right side of the door is fixed between the integral roof and a small stone footing. There are two single-pane, stationary windows side-by-side in a horizontal panel to the top left of the door. Both of these windows are made of wood and surrounded by wood trim. There is a wall to the left of these windows angled 90 degrees to the southeast. The wall has five stationary wood windows side-by-side in a horizontal panel with wood trim near the roof. The far left window in that panel is covered and painted. A walkway off the concrete patio and beside the house wall leads toward the south.

The house wall makes a 90 degree angle toward the southwest. There is a small brick wall with a concrete footing that begins just a few feet from the house corner. The brick wall continues parallel with the walkway and extends approximately 25 feet to the south before it leads down two steps to a slab walkway that wraps around the other side of the brick wall and leads to the front door that is centered on the house's southwest wall. There are two vertical stationary wood windows with wood trim to the right of the front door. A Holly tree in front of those windows is original to the property. To the left of the front door is another small brick wall that extends south about 10 feet. There are five brick steps and a small concrete footing to the left of the brick wall. Two concrete steps to the left of the brick steps extend up into the carport. This entryway between the front door and the carport is covered by a breezeway with a corrugated metal ceiling. At the bottom of the brick steps there are two vertical stationary windows and two metal posts on the same wall as the front door.

Side/Southwest Elevation

The wall takes a 90 degree angle to the northwest. There are two side-by-side vertical stationary wood windows with wood trim on the right side of the wall. There is a solid back door to the left of these windows and to the right of center on the wall that is not original to the house. To the left of the door are six vertical stationary wood windows with wood trim side-by-side, as well as three metal posts – one between the door and first window, the second and third window, and the fourth and fifth window. Wooden vents line the bottom of the windows. An interior/exterior brick wall connected to the furthest left window protrudes from the living room toward the southwest and ends approximately three feet onto the patio, which is covered by an integral roof. Six brick steps at the end of the patio lead down and parallel with the projecting wall. There is a decorative brick arrangement on the right side of the stairs. The concrete foundation is most clearly visible at the bottom of the stairs, and the basement can be accessed from a door on the far left side of the southwest façade. Above the basement level, there are three stationary wood windows with wood trim and one metal post between the furthest right and the middle window in

¹ "Projects by Job Number," Wittenberg, Delony & Davidson archives, 33.

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a small recessed area abutting the projecting brick wall. There are wooden vents underneath the windows.

Rear/Northwest Elevation

On this façade, the concrete basement is exposed along with three openings to ventilate the basement that are protected by metal grates evenly distributed along the façade. There is no fenestration on this side of the house.

Side/Northeast Elevation

The northeast elevation is dominated by a "U" shape with the main structure of the house to the right, and the 1955 addition on the left and center. A 90 degree angle inward toward the southeast begins the somewhat jagged "U" shape. There are six stationary wood windows with wood trim in the upper right portion of this section, and a metal grate over another basement opening below. The four windows farthest from the corner are covered and painted. There is a small, metal double-hung window in the center of the "U", and a built-in air conditioning unit on the left portion of the "U." A small stone wall parallel to the northwest façade has deteriorated. A 90 degree angle to the east off the left side of the "U" creates a small north façade with a two-over-two metal double-hung window centered on the wall.

Carport

The carport has a brick wall on its left side that is angled so the front of the wall is slightly higher than the rear. A 90 degree angle toward the house is formed by a small brick footing topped with wooden lattice that connects to the corrugated metal ceiling. The wall that is closest to the house has the same style of brick footing and wooden lattice up until where the concrete steps lead into the carport. The remainder of the right-side wall on the other side of the steps is wooden lattice only. Both sections of wooden lattice are covered in ivy.

Site Features

A stone retaining wall that outlines the driveway in front of the carport and along the walkway is in good condition. The stone retaining wall along the back, northeast façade is overgrown and partially eroded. There are remnants of two stone planters and 11 stone steps leading away from the house. The portion of the patio furthest away from the house is a mix of concrete and stone approximately two feet in length by 15 feet in width. A section of deteriorated brick and aged mortar approximately six feet in length by 15 feet in width connects to the concrete and stone mix. A section of newer brick approximately three feet in length by 18 feet in width connects the wall and the aged brick. The patio stairs are made of newer brick.

Integrity

The Davidson House is in good condition and currently occupied by the Capitol Zoning District Commission, a state government agency. Today, the building still retains a majority of the aspects of integrity – the most evident among them being location, materials, and workmanship. The Davidson House sits on its original location. The exterior has retained much of its original design because it has not experienced major exterior reconstruction or renovation aside from the circa 1955 addition. The building's structural integrity and features distinctive of 1950s contemporary architecture remain clearly evident.

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Setting is the most detracting aspect of integrity for the Davidson House. The building is no longer situated in its original context with other housing units in the area. The building's history indicates that a combination of urbanization, interstate development, and parking lot construction to accommodate increased vehicle traffic for commercial developments eliminated residences behind the State Capitol. A 1950 Sanborn map shows multiple houses and multi-family residences along Battery Street two years before the Davidson House was built on a relatively secluded lot at the end of the street. A map from the Capitol Zoning District Commission in 1978 shows only one other house on South Battery Street and a five-building apartment complex to the northeast of the Davidson House. The other properties were eventually demolished and converted into parking lots. Though its setting has changed, the argument exists that there is significance in the Davidson House being the last remaining residential structure in a downtown area heavily altered by urbanization and other trends relevant to the experience of downtown neighborhoods nationwide since the mid 1950s. Neither is the Davidson House devoid of its original setting. The train tracks to the northwest of the house, a critical factor in train-enthusiast Julian B. Davidson's decision to build the house on the site, are still in operation and visible from the house.² The materials on the exterior are authentic to the building's construction. Rough-sawn wood vertical board and red brick are visible and well maintained. Davidson's architectural expertise in the design of the house supports the workmanship aspect of integrity. While feeling and association are admittedly among the most subjective aspects of integrity, the house has an undeniably direct link to a noteworthy Little Rock architect and its design reflects architectural influences contemporary for his era.

² Sanborn Map, 1950. Little Rock, Ark., 233.

"Capitol Area – Little Rock, Arkansas," Capitol Zoning District Commission map, July 1978.

"Architect, 'genius' left mark on state," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, November 30, 1997.

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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.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1951, 1955

Significant Dates

1951, 1955

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Julian B. Davidson, Architect

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Julian Bunn Davidson House, located at 410 South Battery Street overlooking the railroad line in Little Rock, Pulaski County, Arkansas, is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion C** with **local significance** for its importance as a good residential example of Mid-Century Modern architecture. Built in 1951 with an addition constructed in 1955, and designed by the noted local architect Julian Bunn Davidson, the Julian Bunn Davidson House represented a departure from the other residential styles that had been used in the area. Referred to as the Contemporary style in McAlester's *A Field Guide to American Houses* the Davidson House exhibits many of the characteristics of the style, including wide overhangs, a flat roof (or in this case slightly sloped), contrasting wall materials and textures, and unusual window shapes and placements.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

HISTORY OF THE PROPERTY

Davidson was the first architect in Arkansas who was also licensed as an engineer. The Little Rock native worked as a courier for Wittenberg & Delony in 1920, the year after the architectural firm was founded. Davidson finished Little Rock High School (now known as Little Rock Central High School) in 1924, and graduated first in his class from Washington University in 1928. He became a registered architect in 1934 and pursued graduate work in structural engineering at MIT from 1940-1941 before he was drafted. During World War II, Davidson researched guided missile technology at Johns Hopkins University, and helped develop a device used on the atomic bomb. Davidson became a registered engineer in 1943. He was made a one-third partner of the firm, which became Wittenberg, Delony & Davidson, in 1946 after his time in the military. By that time the firm had transitioned from mainly residential designs in the 1930s and 1940s to more commercial and public buildings in downtown Little Rock and throughout the state.³

Once a partner in the firm, Davidson typically handled the specifications of commercial designs more than the original designs themselves. He was involved as his firm designed prominent mid-century style commercial structures throughout the state through the 1950s and 1960s.⁴

In 1951, Davidson's firm constructed the J.M. Peace Library at Southern Arkansas University in Magnolia. The building displays Colonial Revival style with its symmetrical design and prominent pediment and pillars. In 1958, Davidson's firm completed the Arkansas Power and Light Company building on the southwest corner of Ninth and Louisiana in downtown Little

³ "Julian Bunn Davidson," accessed June 5, 2013. http://honors.uca.edu/wiki/index.php/Julian_Bunn_Davidson.

"Wittenberg, Delony & Davidson architects history," accessed June 5, 2013. <http://www.wddarchitects.com/profile/history>.

"Architect, 'genius' left mark on state," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, November 30, 1997.

⁴ Gordon Wittenberg, oral interview, Aug. 1, 2013.

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Rock. The utilities office was a blend of 20th Century Standard Commercial and International styles. Elements such as glass curtain walls and accentuated horizontal layout typical of International style was a modern look in downtown Little Rock at the time. The building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1992. In 1963, Davidson's firm designed the Lanai Towers portion of the Majestic Hotel in Hot Springs – a Standard 20th Century Commercial structure with a vertical orientation and modern feel. Three years after that project, Davidson's firm handled the Arkla Gas Building on East Capitol in downtown Little Rock. The 20th Century Standard Commercial utilities office was a somewhat square layout with Brutalist influence. The Arkla Gas Building was determined eligible for the National Register in 2013.⁵ The Davidson House is just as contemporary as the prominent commercial structures his firm designed, yet less adhering to a particular style.

In 1951, Davidson built his house on Battery Street in a residential area behind the State Capitol. Davidson built the house so that he could watch trains traveling on the tracks visible from the master bedroom window on the southwest façade of the home. Davidson's design was a variation of Frank Lloyd Wright's influence on residential architecture. The Davidson House has an accentuated horizontal design, unornamented rough-sawn vertical board and brick façades that blend with the natural setting of the property, interior/exterior walls, a flat roof with overhangs, and a squared bay of large windows for natural lighting – features similar to Prairie School designs by Wright and his immediate associates prior to the Great Depression.⁶

The Davidson House on Battery Street was unusual in that it is the only documented Mid-Century Modern house in its part of the city. Although other architect-designed modern houses designed by Fay Jones and Edward Durrell Stone from the 1950s and 1960s have been documented, they were built further west in Little Rock, where most of the residential development was occurring during the period. Houses designed for the Blass Family at 1 Sunset Point and at 16 West Palisades from the early 1950s and Pine Knoll, designed by Fay Jones in 1964 at 2203 Pine Valley are all located west of University Avenue.

Although some development was occurring in the area of the State Capitol Building in the 1950s and 1960s, it was mainly focused on the construction of small office buildings for attorneys or other professional organizations that conducted business at the Capitol. Many of the buildings that were built were small and utilitarian in design, with only a few elements that hinted at Mid-Century Modern design. However, the design and the construction of the Davidson House was a unique case that brought the style to an area of the city that would not have likely been used for the style.

⁵ Gordon Wittenberg, oral interview, Aug. 1, 2013.

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, "Arkansas Architectural Resources Survey form, Arkansas Power and Light Co. Building," 1992.

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, "Arkansas Architectural Resources Survey form, Lanai Suites/Lanai Towers," 2003.

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, "Arkansas Architectural Resources Survey form, Arkla Gas Building," 1991.

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, "Arkansas Architectural Resources Survey form, Peace Hall," 2012.

⁶ PBS. "Usonian House 1939," accessed June 19, 2013. <http://www.pbs.org/flw/buildings/usonia/>.

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The lot that Davidson used for the construction of his house was a sloping site overlooking the railroad tracks that had never been developed previously. It was only because of Davidson's occupation and his love of trains that brought about the design and construction of the house. The design principles that Davidson used in designing his house, in certain respects, were specific to the site and his own whims, but they also reflected design principles that were being espoused by famous architects of the period, notably Frank Lloyd Wright.

Davidson's house eliminated some of the things that were often seen on houses, and that Wright felt could also be eliminated. For example, as Wright wrote in *The Natural House* "Visible roofs are expensive and unnecessary." Wright also said that "A garage is no longer necessary as cars are made. A carport will do, with liberal over-head shelter and walls on two sides."⁷ Notably, the Davidson House also had one characteristic that Wright encouraged in his Usonian houses, specifically "We must have as big a living room with as much vista and garden coming in as we can afford..." The wall-to-wall windows that Davidson had in his living room were specifically incorporated into the design to allow a vista over the railroad line below.⁸ Wright said of his Usonian Houses that "The Usonian House aims to be a natural performance, one that is integral to site, to environment, to the life of inhabitants, integral with the nature of the materials. ...Into this new integrity, once there, those who live in it will take root and grow."⁹

Davidson's House very much reflected Wright's principals for the Usonian House. The house was very much integrated into the environment, taking advantage of the view down the slope to the railroad line. It also integrated Davidson's interests into the design, being specifically designed around the railroad line.

Residential areas near the State Capitol experienced significant changes around the time Davidson built his house. The post-war era changed transportation, population, and zoning in ways that adversely affected the stability of downtown neighborhoods. Railroad use declined after the war and reduced Missouri Pacific operations in the area. In 1948, a Highway and Transportation Plan for Greater Little Rock called automobile traffic "one of the biggest obstacles to Little Rock's progress." Large tracts of downtown land were cleared in the 1950s for major highways and interstates, many of which cut through existing neighborhoods. The growth of suburban areas steadily drew residents away from downtown neighborhoods, and what little remained of the residences around the Davidson House received a final blow when the City of Little Rock rezoned the area for commercial use in the 1950s. The Davidson family moved to the Heights area of Little Rock in the mid 1960s. Government offices, commercial buildings, and their accompanying parking lots expanded until the Davidson House was the last remaining residential property in the State Capitol area. The State of Arkansas acquired the Davidson

⁷ Wright, Frank Lloyd. *The Natural House*. (New York: Mentor Books), 1963, p. 73.

⁸ Wright, Frank Lloyd. *The Natural House*. (New York: Mentor Books), 1963, p. 77.

⁹ Wright, Frank Lloyd. *The Natural House*. (New York: Mentor Books), 1963, frontispiece.

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House in 1966, and used the building as state government offices for the Vocational-Technical Education Board.¹⁰

Davidson retired from his architectural firm in 1980 and died in 1997. The Davidson House returned to its original function as a residence in the 1990s, when it became intertwined with one of the state's most unconventional political figures – W.J. “Bill” McCuen.¹¹

McCuen was Arkansas Secretary of State from 1985-1995, and his political career ended when he pleaded guilty to political corruption charges and was imprisoned for felonies. McCuen, a Democrat, was a native of Fort Smith who went from a career as an elementary school teacher and principal to politics. In 1991, McCuen moved to the state-owned Davidson House and lived at the house rent-free for four years under a special provision by the Arkansas General Assembly for Capitol officials not from Little Rock. During this time the house became colloquially known as the “Sugar Shack” because of the alleged wild parties McCuen held at the residence. The issue was addressed in several editorials in the state's most prominent newspaper, the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*. The term “Sugar Shack” was first used in the publication on April 12, 1991.¹² Later that year, the newspaper's executive editor, John Robert Starr, quipped in a Christmas Day column of holiday wishes to public figures, “To Secretary of State Bill McCuen: Many hours of fun and games in the Sugar Shack, the good-time digs he occupies at public expense on the western edge of the Capitol grounds.”¹³

McCuen was defeated by Sharon Priest in the May 1994 Democratic primary. With McCuen out of office, the Davidson House became the responsibility of State Building Services. The state government agency debated what to do with the building, and even made a passing mention of

¹⁰ Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, “Arkansas Architectural Resources Survey form, Julian B. Davidson House,” 1999.

Capitol Zoning District Commission. *The Capitol Area Framework Master Plan*. (Little Rock, Arkansas: Capitol Zoning District Commission, 1998), 10-13.

Roy, F. Hampton Sr. and Charles Witsell Jr. *How We Lived: Little Rock as an American city*. (Little Rock, Arkansas: August House, 1984), 205-222.

Susan Wilson, oral interview, June 25, 2013.

Gordon Wittenberg, oral interview, June 12, 2013.

¹¹ “Julian Bunn Davidson,” accessed June 5, 2013. http://honors.uca.edu/wiki/index.php/Julian_Bunn_Davidson.

“Architect, ‘genius’ left mark on state,” *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, November 30, 1997.

¹² It must also be said that McCuen was not alone in receiving free or reduced rent in the capitol city of Little Rock, Arkansas. The state legislature frequently receives reduced rent during the legislative session. It must also be stated that the “Sugar Shack” was not alone in being a place of political deal making or partying. At least one other location known as the “Chicken House” or shack predated the “Sugar Shack,” and was operated by the Arkansas Poultry Federation now known as the Poultry Federation following the “merger with organizations in Oklahoma and Missouri.” Yet, in this context, it must be stated that other locations existed around the Capitol Complex. (Max Brantley, “Poultry Federation to replace building,” *Arkansas Times Blog*, <http://www.arktimes.com/ArkansasBlog/archives/2011/12/21/poultry-federation-to-replace-building> (accessed December 5, 2013).)

¹³ Untitled article, *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, April 12, 1991.

“Bah humbug! Ho, ho, ho! to well-deserved persons,” *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, December 25, 1991.

“Future unclear for McCuen’s Sugar Shack,” *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, June 21, 1994.

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demolishing it. The Capitol Zoning District Commission, a state government agency, moved to the Davidson House in 1996 and has occupied the building since.¹⁴

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROPERTY

The design of the Davidson House is an excellent representation of the shift in residential design that was occurring across the country after World War II. The decorative pre-war revival styles, which were all the rage, were being pushed to the side by more functional and livable residential designs. Although some people after World War II still believed “that only shrunken colonial, Cape Cod ranches, or Cinderella homes properly represent the American way of life...a trend [had] now begun working the other way. ...[It was] slowly becoming apparent to people that architects working with builders can give them better, more thoughtful design for their money.”¹⁵

This post-World-War-II architecture moved away from an “over-decorative eclecticism to a less self-conscious expression.” Expression, rather, was manifest through window placement and design, placement of the home in the landscape, and also through interior space arrangement. Also, the Mid-Century Modern style greatly espoused the relationship between the indoors and the outdoors (which was partly expressed through the window placement and design).

The style and its design also put more emphasis on privacy. Privacy played a role in the design, both on the exterior – large amounts of glass more often appeared on the rear of the property, making it private from the street – as well as on the interior. “The interior, too, emphasizes privacy for the members of the family from each other. The children’s right to their noisy pursuits is recognized along with that of the parents *not* to hear Huckleberry Hound’s televised antics.”¹⁶

The Davidson House clearly reflects the design trends that were impacting residential architecture in the Mid-Century Modern style after World War II. The house lacks the applied ornamentation that was so often used prior to World War II, and uses window placement and a variety of materials to give visual interest and ornamentation. As McAlester and McAlester point out with respect to the style, the Davidson House “resemble[s] the International in having [a] flat roof and no decorative detailing. Furthermore, it “lack[s] the stark white stucco wall surfaces, which are usually replaced by various combinations of wood, brick, or stone.”¹⁷

The design of the Davidson House also reflects the increased relationship between the indoors and outdoors, as well as the issue of privacy in house design. The design of the Davidson House, with its large windows along the rear façade, encouraged residents and visitors to interact with the house’s surroundings. The placement of the large windows on the rear, as well as the use of smaller windows, some of which were placed high on the façade, on the front, also emphasized privacy for the house’s occupants from the street.

¹⁴ “McCuen’s Successor to kiss off tradition of having ‘Sugar Shack,’” *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, October 15, 1994.

Susan Wilson, oral interview, June 25, 2013.

¹⁵ Von Eckardt, Wolf. *Mid-Century Architecture in America*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1961. p. 21.

¹⁶ Von Eckardt, Wolf. *Mid-Century Architecture in America*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1961. p. 22.

¹⁷ McAlester, Virginia & Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc, 1984, p. 482.

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Since the Davidson House is an excellent example of the Mid-Century Modern style designed by the local architect Julian Bunn Davidson, it is being nominated to the National Register with **local significance** under **Criterion C**.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Primary sources

Maps

"Capitol Area – Little Rock, Arkansas," Capitol Zoning District Commission map, July 1978.
Sanborn Map, 1950. Little Rock, Ark. 233.

Newspapers

Untitled article, *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, April 12, 1991.

"Bah humbug! Ho, ho, ho! to well-deserved persons," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, December 25, 1991.

"Future unclear for McCuen's Sugar Shack," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, June 21, 1994.

"McCuen's successor to kiss off having 'Sugar Shack,'" *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, October 15, 1994.

"'Facts' stand in way of McCuen guilty plea," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, January 1, 1996.

"Attorneys for McCuen resolve snag," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, January 5, 1996.

"'Not a good day,' Bill McCuen says after guilty plea," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, January 6, 1996.

"McCuen sentenced to 17 years, fined," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, April 30, 1996.

"Architect, 'genius' left mark on state," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, November 30, 1997.

"Bill McCuen, 57, dies after bout with colon cancer," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, September 12, 2000.

Oral interviews

Susan Wilson. Arkansas Building Authority. Interviewed June 25, 2013.

Gordon Wittenberg. Wittenberg, Delony & Davidson. Interviewed June 12, 2013, August 1, 2013.

State Preservation Office Archive Material

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, "Arkansas Architectural Resources Survey form, Arkansas Power and Light Co. Building," 1992.

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, "Arkansas Architectural Resources Survey form, Arkla Gas Building, 1991.

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, "Arkansas Architectural Resources form, Julian B. Davidson House," 1999.

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Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, "Arkansas Architectural Resources Survey form, Lanai Suites/Lanai Towers," 2003.
Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, "Arkansas Architectural Resources Survey form, Peace Hall," 2012.

Other materials

"Projects by Job Number." Wittenberg, Delony & Davidson archives.

Secondary sources

- Capitol Zoning District Commission. *The Capitol Area Framework Master Plan*. (Little Rock, Arkansas: Capitol Zoning District Commission), 1998.
McAlester, Virginia & Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.), 1984.
Roy, F. Hampton Sr. and Charles Witsell Jr. *How We Lived: Little Rock as an American City*. (Little Rock, Arkansas: August House), 1984.
Von Eckardt, Wolf. *Mid-Century Architecture in America*. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press), 1961.
Wright, Frank Lloyd. *The Natural House*. (New York: Mentor Books), 1963.

Internet sources

- Honors UCA. "Julian Bunn Davidson," accessed June 5, 2013.
http://honors.uca.edu/wiki/index.php/Julian_Bunn_Davidson.
PBS. "Usonian House 1939," accessed June 19, 2013. <http://www.pbs.org/flw/buildings/usonia/>.
Brantley, Max, Arkansas Time Blog, The, <http://www.arktimes.com/ArkansasBlog/archives/2011/12/21/poultry-federation-to-replace-building> (accessed December 5, 2013).
Wittenberg, Delony & Davidson architects. "Wittenberg, Delony & Davidson architects history," accessed June 5, 2013. <http://www.wddarchitects.com/profile/history>.

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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Davidson, Julian Bunn, House
Name of Property

Pulaski, AR
County and State

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Capitol Zoning District Commission, Central Arkansas Library System, Wittenberg, Delony and Davidson

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): PU9754

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property Less than one

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 34.747128° | Longitude: -92.293987° |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|----------|----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |

Davidson, Julian Bunn, House
Name of Property

Pulaski, AR
County and State

3. Zone: Easting: Northing:

4. Zone: Easting: Northing:

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

PHILLIPS EXEMPT PT 1&2&ALL 3 THRU 11 & PT 12 BEG SW COR 5 E186 25'N250'
W119'TO PT 20' FROM C LN RR R/W SW ON R/W TO BG EXEMPT 26.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary is limited to the building and the property that has historically been associated with the Julian Bunn Davidson House.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Jim Stallings, Edited by Ralph S. Wilcox
organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
street & number: 323 Center Street, Suite 1500
city or town: Little Rock state: AR zip code: 72201
e-mail: ralph@arkansasheritage.org
telephone: 501-324-9787
date: 01/31/2014

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Davidson, Julian Bunn, House
Name of Property

Pulaski, AR
County and State

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Davidson, Julian Bunn House
City or Vicinity: Little Rock
County: Pulaski State: Arkansas
Photographer: Travis Ratermann
Date Photographed: 07/19/2013

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 9 – View of front of house and carport, facing west.
- 2 of 9 – View of front of house and carport, facing northwest.
- 3 of 9 – Carport, landscaping, and southwest façade, facing north.
- 4 of 9 – Southwest façade, facing northeast.
- 5 of 9 – Southwest façade, facing northeast.
- 6 of 9 – Northwest façade, facing southeast.
- 7 of 9 – Northwest façade, facing southeast.
- 8 of 9 – East façade, facing west.
- 9 of 9 – Interior view of sunken living room, facing west.

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 listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



Davidson, Julian Bunn, House
Pulaski County, Arkansas
Latitude: 34.747128 Longitude: -92.293987

|-----161'-----|

↑
North



Davidson, Julian Bunn, House
Pulaski County, Arkansas
Latitude: 34.747128 Longitude: -92.293987

|-----677'-----|

↑
North



410



410

FOR SALE
CALL 791-1111















Capitol Zoning District Commission
State of Arkansas

- 1) Preserve the scenic surroundings of the Capitol Building.
- 2) Ensure a quality environment of high visibility to the Capitol Area.
- 3) Preserve the architectural character of the Mainland Area.
- 4) Preserve historic and architecturally significant structures.
- 5) Encourage sustainable development within the District.

PLEASE
TURN OFF
YOUR
CELL
PHONE
DURING
MEETINGS

National Register of Historic Places
Memo to File

Correspondence

The Correspondence consists of communications from (and possibly to) the nominating authority, notes from the staff of the National Register of Historic Places, and/or other material the National Register of Historic Places received associated with the property.

Correspondence may also include information from other sources, drafts of the nomination, letters of support or objection, memorandums, and ephemera which document the efforts to recognize the property.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: RESUBMISSION

PROPERTY NAME: Davidson, Julian Bunn, House

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: ARKANSAS, Pulaski

DATE RECEIVED: 2/07/14 DATE OF PENDING LIST:
DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF 45TH DAY: 3/26/14
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 13001105

DETAILED EVALUATION:

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 3/10/2014 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

*Nomination addresses (somewhat) the Return Comments.
Good example of mid century residential design*

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept C

REVIEWER Jim Bubb

DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____

DATE _____

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



THE DEPARTMENT OF ARKANSAS
HERITAGE

December 4, 2013



Mike Beebe
Governor

Martha Miller
Director

Ms. Carol Shull
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

-
- Arkansas Arts Council
 - *
 - Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission
 - *
 - Delta Cultural Center
 - *
 - Historic Arkansas Museum
 - *
 - Mosaic Templars Cultural Center
 - *
 - Old State House Museum
-

RE: Julian Bunn Davidson House – Little Rock, Pulaski County, Arkansas

Dear Carol:

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,

Martha Miller
State Historic Preservation Officer

MM:rsw

Enclosure



Arkansas Historic
Preservation Program



323 Center Street, Suite 1500
Little Rock, AR 72201

(501) 324-9880
fax: (501) 324-9184
tdd: 711

e-mail:
info@arkansaspreservation.org
website:
www.arkansaspreservation.com

An Equal Opportunity Employer

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Davidson, Julian Bunn, House

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: ARKANSAS, Pulaski

DATE RECEIVED: 12/06/13 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 1/07/14
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 1/22/14 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 1/22/14
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 13001105

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: Y SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 1-15-2014 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

See attached comments

RECOM./CRITERIA Return
REVIEWER [Signature] 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.



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

1849 C Street, N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20240

IN REPLY REFER TO:

The United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Evaluation/Return Sheet

Property Name: Davidson, Julian Bunn, House, Pulaski County, AR

Reference Number: 13001105

Reason for Return

The Julian Bunn Davidson House nomination is being returned for substantive and technical revision.

The nomination does not provide a rationale for its nomination under Criterion C. The statement of significance states that it is being nominated "because of the modern design of the building" without providing any context on Modernist residential design in Little Rock. There are no comparables provided, no discussion of the extent of Modernist (Contemporary) style houses in Little Rock, or of any sort of recognition that this particular Modernist house might have achieved at the time of or subsequent to its construction. The nomination provides information on the designer/occupant of the house, perhaps in trying to make a case for "master" in order to justify the house's importance, but falls short in that, as well. There is no information provided that indicates that the architect was of any notable importance and nothing that places the house within the context of his work. Please provide the context necessary to evaluate this building as a significant example of Modernist design.

The period of significance is noted as 1951, the year of construction of the original house. The nomination notes a 1955 addition; this addition is substantial and prominently placed. If evaluation indicates that the addition is conforming to the original design intent, then the period of significance should include its construction date of 1955.

There was no map enclosed with this nomination. Please provide a locational map.

Davidson, Julian Bunn, House, Pulaski County, AR

There is no Verbal Boundary Description. The VBD provided is simply an address, but does not provide a boundary. Without a VBD, the Boundary Justification does not make sense. Please provide a descriptive VBD and Justification,

We appreciate the opportunity to review this nomination and hope that you find these comments useful. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. I can be reached at (202) 354-2275 or email at <James_Gabbert@nps.gov>.

Sincerely,

Jim Gabbert, Historian
National Register of Historic Places
1/21/2013



THE DEPARTMENT OF ARKANSAS
HERITAGE

February 3, 2014



Mike Beebe
Governor

Martha Miller
Director

Ms. Carol Shull
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

Arkansas Arts Council

Arkansas Natural Heritage
Commission

Delta Cultural Center

Historic Arkansas Museum

Mosaic Templars
Cultural Center

Old State House Museum

RE: Julian Bunn Davidson House – Little Rock, Pulaski County,
Arkansas

Dear Carol:

We are enclosing for your review the above-referenced **revised 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,

Martha Miller
State Historic Preservation Officer

MM:rsw

Enclosure



Arkansas Historic
Preservation Program



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Little Rock, AR 72201

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