

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

56-1648

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: Johnson-Portis House

Other names/site number: Hawthorne Place, Site #CT0187

Name of related multiple property listing:

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

2. Location

Street & number: 400 North Avalon Street

City or town: West Memphis State: AR County: Crittenden

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

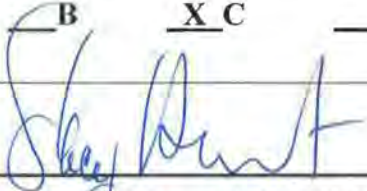
I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

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>7-18-17</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:)

Jon Edson H. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

9.21.17
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>2</u>	<u>3</u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>3</u>	<u>3</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
- DOMESTIC/secondary structure
- LANDSCAPE/object
-
-
-
-

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

- DOMESTIC/single dwelling
- DOMESTIC/secondary structure
- LANDSCAPE/object
- AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/animal facility
-
-

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/Tudor Revival

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: BRICK, STONE, TILE

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 Johnson-Portis House is a large-scale Tudor Revival estate on approximately 4.75 acres in a residential area to the northwest of downtown West Memphis. The main house, which is the centerpiece of the property is a two-story house with approximately 5,600 square feet that is approached by a semi-circular gravel driveway. The house is built on a cast-concrete foundation, and has walls of brick and half-timbering. Cut-stone trim is also found around some of the windows and the main entrance. The gable and hipped roof is covered in clay tiles that are meant to look like slate. Several large chimneys with decorative chimney pots punctuate the roof. The house's windows are a mixture of casements and leaded-glass windows with stained-glass inserts.

In addition to the main house, the property also contains several outbuildings, including a caretaker's cottage, guesthouse, and chicken coop. The caretaker's cottage and guesthouse are simplified versions of the Tudor Revival style, while the chicken coop is a utilitarian structure. In addition to the property's buildings, several brick walls and brick entrance gates are located around the estate.

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Narrative Description

Located at 400 North Avalon Street, the Johnson-Portis House is a large-scale Tudor Revival estate on approximately 4.75 acres in a residential area to the northwest of downtown West Memphis. When the house was built in the 1930s, the area was the western edge of West Memphis and the west side of North Avalon contained several large homes on large lots while the area to the east contained more modest homes and several vacant lots. The large lot of the Johnson-Portis House, which appears to have been even larger when the house was built, allowed for an extensive landscape plan to be done by the firm of Highberger & Park, although little was ultimately carried out.

The main house, which is the centerpiece of the property is a two-story house with approximately 5,600 square feet that is approached by a semi-circular gravel driveway. The house is built on a continuous cast-concrete foundation, and has walls of brick with half-timbering on some areas of the second floor. Cut-stone trim is also found around some of the windows, notably the bay windows on the rear façade and the main window on the front façade's center section, along with the main entrance. The gable and hipped roof is covered in clay tiles that are meant to look like slate. Several large chimneys with decorative chimney pots punctuate the roof of the house. The house's windows are a mixture of casements and leaded-glass windows with stained-glass inserts.

In addition to the main house, the property also contains several outbuildings, including a caretaker's cottage, guesthouse, and chicken coop. The caretaker's cottage and guesthouse are brick structures with hipped roofs, also covered in clay tile, that are simplified versions of the Tudor Revival style, while the chicken coop is a modern utilitarian frame structure with a gable roof. In addition to the property's buildings, several brick walls and brick entrance gates are located around the estate.

Main House – Contributing

Front/East Façade

The front façade of the Main House is divided into seven large bays. The northernmost bay is a hipped-roof section of the property with brick walls and it is fenestrated by a single six-pane casement window near the south end of the bay. The next bay to the south is a projecting, gable-roofed bay with half-timbered walls. The bay consists of the breakfast nook and is fenestrated on the east side by two pairs of eight-by-eight casement windows with a four-pane stationary window on each side of the pairs of casement windows. The gable on this section, along with the half-timbering, also has a triangular louvered attic vent.

Proceeding south, the third bay is slightly recessed and is the dining room area of the house. At the north end of the bay, on the first floor, is fenestrated by a central pair of eight-by-eight casement windows that are flanked on each side by a single eight-pane casement window. Above the casement windows are diamond-paned leaded-glass window transoms. The central transom, which is the largest, also has a decorative stained-glass roundel in the center. To the south of the east facing windows is a canted window that faces southeast and consists of a pair of

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eight-pane casement windows. The transom for this window is a diamond-paned leaded-glass transom with decorative stained-glass roundel in the center. The second floor of this bay, which is half-timbered, is fenestrated by four eight-pane casement windows. A triangular louvered attic vent is located in the gable peak.

The central bay of the front façade is located under the house's side-facing main gable and is recessed from the rest of the façade. Near the north end of the bay is the house's main entrance. The door has a shallow ogee arch top and a decorative wood panel door. The exterior screen door has decorative filigree, and the entrance is surrounded by a cut-stone frame with decorative stone carvings along the sides and top. To the left of the entrance in the center of the bay is a tripartite window with cut-stone surround. The bottom of the tripartite window is stair stepped, mirroring the interior staircase. The bottom section is comprised of four miscellaneous-sized casement windows. The casement windows have multi-pane transoms with decorative stained-glass panels in the center. Near the south end of the bay, near the bottom of the wall, is a four-pane casement window.

The next bay south along the façade projects out and has a front-facing gable roof. The wall of the first floor is brick while the second floor's wall is half-timbered. The bay is fenestrated on each floor by a central group of four eight-pane casement windows. Above the second-floor windows, in the gable peak, is a triangular louvered attic vent.

Continuing south along the façade, the next bay is recessed and has another front-facing gable. The walls of both floors are brick without half-timbering. The first floor of the bay is fenestrated by a two pairs of eight-by-eight casement windows. Each pair of windows has a four-pane transom window. The second floor of the bay is fenestrated by two pairs of eight-by-eight casement windows. The second floor windows on this bay have segmental arch lintels, where the other windows all have flat lintels.

The southernmost bay of the front façade consists of the open porch on the south end of the house. The porch has a hipped roof and is supported on the east side by four wood posts with knee braces at the top.

Side/South Façade

The south side of the house is dominated by the first floor porch. The porch has a hipped roof and is supported on the east side by four wood posts with knee braces at the top. Above the porch, the façade is dominated by a large brick chimney. To the east of the porch, the first floor is fenestrated by a pair of eight-by-eight casement windows with a twelve-pane transom window above. To the left of the chimney is an entrance into the house from the porch.

The second floor of the south façade above the porch to the left of the chimney is fenestrated by an eight-by-eight casement window while to the right of the chimney the façade is fenestrated by two sets of eight-by-eight casement windows.

The south façade of the kitchen nook, which is near the north end of the east façade, is fenestrated by three eight-pane casement windows. The south façade of the dining room, which

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is also near the north end of the east façade, is fenestrated by a pair of eight-pane casement windows. The transom for this window is a diamond-paned leaded-glass transom with decorative stained-glass roundel in the center. The second floor of this bay, which is half-timbered, is fenestrated by a pair of eight-pane casement windows.

The south façade of the study area of the house, which is near the south end of the house's east façade. The first floor has a wall of brick while the second floor's wall is half-timbered. The bay is fenestrated on each floor by a central pair of eight-pane casement windows.

On the west façade, near the north end, is another south-facing bay. The first floor of the bay has brick walls, while the second floor has half-timbered walls. The first floor is fenestrated by a pair of diamond-paned stationary windows. The second floor is fenestrated by a group of three eight-pane casement windows at the right edge of the bay.

Rear/West Façade

The rear façade of the house is divided into five large bays. The southernmost bay consists of the open porch on the south end of the house. The porch has a hipped roof and is supported on the east side by four wood posts with knee braces at the top.

Proceeding north along the façade, the next bay projects from the main plane of the façade and has a front-facing gable roof and brick walls on both floors. The bay is dominated by a central two-story bay window that is brick with cut-stone trim. The first floor of the bay window is fenestrated on the northwest and southwest sides by diamond-pane windows and a large single-pane window on the west side. All three windows have diamond-pane transoms with decorative stained-glass panels in the center. The second floor of the bay window, on the northwest and southwest sides is fenestrated by a pair of four-pane casement windows. The west side of the second-floor bay window is fenestrated by a pair of eight-pane casement windows with four-pane sidelights. The top of the bay window has shallow cut-stone crenellation. Above the bay window, in the gable peak, is a small six-pane casement window.

The central bay of the west façade is the largest and it is also recessed from the rest of the façade. The central bay is the west side of the house's gallery. The first floor of the bay has brick walls and has three evenly-spaced sets of French doors that access the outdoor terrace. Each set of French doors consists of wooden doors with eighteen panes of glass on the inside and metal screen doors with decorative filigree on the outside. The second floor of the bay, which is half-timbered, is fenestrated by three sets of eight-by-eight casement windows that are housed in hipped-roof dormers.

The next bay to the north also projects from the main plane of the façade and has a front-facing gable roof. This bay is the west side of the garage. The walls on the first floor of the bay are brick, except towards the northern end of the façade, which is half-timbered. The walls of the second floor are also half-timbered. The first floor of the bay is fenestrated by a group of three diamond-pane casement windows while the second floor is fenestrated by a group of three eight-pane casement windows. At the top of the gable peak is a louvered pentagonal attic vent.

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The northernmost bay of the façade, which is recessed from the façade's main plane, is the west side of the kitchen. This bay has a hipped roof, brick walls, and is only one story tall. The bay has an exterior door on the right side that is a wood panel door with a leaded glass window in the top half. A single-pane transom window is located above the door. To the left of the door is a group of three six-pane casement windows.

Side/North Façade

At the west end of the north façade is the house's two-car garage. The garage's right bay still retains the garage door, which is a wood panel door with a row of six rectangular windows near the top. The garage door in the left bay has been replaced with a set of double wood doors with decorative stained-glass panels in them. The doors are surrounded by stained-glass sidelights and transom. Above the garage doors is a row of brick laid in a herringbone pattern between the first and second floors. The second floor of the garage bay, which is half-timbered, is fenestrated by three sets of the windows. At the far right side of the bay is an eight-by-eight set of casement windows and at the left side of the bay is an eight-by-eight set of casement windows and a separate single eight-pane casement window. The second-floor fenestration is all located in a wide hipped-roof dormer.

To the east of the garage, the façade projects out into a hipped-roof bay for the kitchen. The walls of the bay are brick and are fenestrated by two groups of four, six-paned casement windows. The second floor of this bay has a hipped-roof dormer fenestrated with a pair of eight-paned casement windows.

On the east side of the house, the north side of the kitchen nook near the north end of the house is fenestrated by a group of three eight-pane casement windows, while the north side of the study near the south side of the house is devoid of fenestration on the first floor and fenestrated by a single eight-pane casement window on the second floor. On the west side of the house, the north side of the living room is fenestrated by an eight-by-eight casement window with a four-pane transom window above while the second floor is fenestrated by an eight-by-eight casement window.

Caretaker's Cottage – Contributing

The Caretaker's Cottage is a rectangular building located at the western edge of the property to the west of the main house and guest house. The one-story brick building has a hipped roof with clay tile and a central brick chimney. The east façade of the building has the main entrance near the northern end, and the entrance is flanked on each side by a single six-pane casement window. The north façade is fenestrated by a pair of one-over-one casement windows that are located slightly to the west of the façade's center point. The south façade of the building is fenestrated by a single, six-over-six, double-hung window.

Walls, Gate, Pergola, and Pool – Contributing

The Johnson-Portis House has several landscape features around the property that contribute to the property's significance. The east side of the property is fronted by a brick wall along the west side of North Avalon. Although the wall is mainly straight in its design, it does undulate near both the north and south entrances to the driveway. Decorative brick columns flank each

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entrance to the driveway, and square lanterns with decorative iron grilles top each column. Each entrance also has cross-buck wood gates. The other brick walls on the property are located to the south of the Main House, and are oriented north/south and east/west dividing the south lawn into rectangular spaces.

Also to the south of the Main House, just to the south of the outdoor patio, is a pool on the lower level of the lawn. The pool is concrete lined and has a curved south end. In addition, it is recessed into the brick retaining wall at the north end and has a top resembling half of a dome. A brick pedestal is located in the pool near the north end.

West of the house, near its north end is a pergola that connects the motor court area to the Guest House. The pergola consists of eight square brick columns with a lattice of wood beams on top of it. Vines are draped over the pergola.

Guest House – Non-Contributing

The Guest House is located to the west of the Main House and is a one-story brick building with a clay-tile hipped roof. Originally, the building was an open pavilion and was enclosed at a later date. A frame addition with board-and-batten siding was also added to the west side of the building to increase the living space of the building. The east façade of the Guest House has a central entrance with a door with a decorative stained-glass window. The west façade of the building has board-and-batten siding and is devoid of fenestration. The north façade of the building, near the east end has a large brick chimney that is flanked on each side by a rectangular, leaded-glass window with diamond-shaped panes. The west half of the building, which is the addition, has a single board-and-batten door. The original portion of the south façade of the Guest House has a central pair of French doors that are flanked on each side by a single, rectangular, leaded-glass window. The addition is fenestrated by a single, double-hung, six-over-six window.

Garden Shed – Non-Contributing

The Garden Shed is a one-story brick building located to the south of the Main House that was built c.2000. The north side of the building has a pair of board-and-batten-doors and the rest of the building is devoid of fenestration.

Chicken Coop – Non-Contributing

The Chicken Coop is a small rectangular structure located just to the northwest of the Caretaker's Cottage. The small building is of frame construction with wood and lattice walls. The structure is topped by a gable roof. The east façade is fenestrated with a large, multi-pane, round-topped window, and the gable end is fenestrated with a decorative stained glass window.

Integrity

The Johnson-Portis House has outstanding integrity from the time of its construction in the 1930s. Changes to the house itself have been minimal since it was built. One of the garage bays on the north side of the house has been enclosed, and the kitchen has been recently remodeled. Otherwise, the Main House has had its integrity maintained. With respect to the rest of the property, the biggest change has been the remodeling to the Guest House, which enclosed the

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building and added on to the west side. The neighborhood around the Johnson-Portis House still reflects the character of the neighborhood from the time that the Johnson-Portis House was built. The west side of North Avalon still has large homes on generous lots and the neighborhood to the east is still residential in character with more modest homes. Overall, the Johnson-Portis House does an excellent job of reflecting its period of significance and those qualities that make the property significant.

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

1936-1938

Significant Dates

1936-1938

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

George Mahan, Jr. & Everett Woods, Architects
Highberger & Park, Landscape Architects

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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 Johnson-Portis House, which was built in 1936-1938 and designed by the prominent architects George Mahan, Jr., and Everett Woods of Memphis, Tennessee, is an outstanding example of the Tudor Revival style in West Memphis. Built for Judge J. C. Johnson, the Johnson-Portis House has several outbuildings and landscape features creating an estate-like property on a large plot of land in the residential area of West Memphis. With its steeply-pitched, side-gable roof; façade dominated by prominent cross gables; decorative half timbering; groups of tall, narrow, multi-paned windows; and massive chimneys with decorative chimney pots, the house employs textbook characteristics of the fashionable Tudor Revival style. Because of its significance as an excellent example of a Tudor Revival-style house in West Memphis, the Johnson-Portis House is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion C**.

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

HISTORY OF THE PROPERTY

Crittenden County was formed by an act of the Territorial General Assembly on October 22, 1825, and was approved by Governor George Izard. It was named after Robert Crittenden, who was the first Secretary of the Territory of Arkansas. Originally, Crittenden County included all of the land between the Mississippi River west to the St. Francis River and the Missouri/Arkansas border south to approximately the location of Marianna, Arkansas, in neighboring Lee County. The size of Crittenden County shrank over the years as land was taken to form St. Francis County in 1827, Mississippi County in 1833, Cross County in 1862, and, finally, Lee County in 1873.¹

Although a city of West Memphis developed along the Mississippi River in the late nineteenth century, the current West Memphis developed in the early 1900s as river transportation declined and the railroad rose in prominence. George T. Kendal of Grand Rapids, Michigan, came to the West Memphis area in 1904 and purchased 1,000 acres near the current site of West Memphis. By 1911, Kendal was associated with William L. Johnson a Memphis resident, in developing the area.²

Kendal and Johnson saw possibilities in development and filed the first plat for development on February 12, 1912. The plat covered a 40-acre tract and had dedicated streets. Kendal and Johnson offered lots for sale with a price of \$1 for every foot of frontage. Johnson and Boone L. Williams completed the survey work and staked off the lots of the new West Memphis.³

¹ Woolfolk, Margaret Elizabeth. *A History of Crittenden County, Arkansas*. Greenville, SC: Southern Historical Press, Inc., 1993, pp. 2-3.

² Woolfolk, Margaret Elizabeth. *A History of Crittenden County, Arkansas*. Greenville, SC: Southern Historical Press, Inc., 1993, p. 272.

³ Woolfolk, Margaret Elizabeth. *A History of Crittenden County, Arkansas*. Greenville, SC: Southern Historical Press, Inc., 1993, p. 272.

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By 1920, William H. Hundhausen, who had come to the area from St. Louis, was responsible for getting a post office established. Hundhausen was also responsible for getting the first school established in West Memphis, a private school that utilized a one-room building on South 10th. The school later moved to South 8th Street where it operated until 1922.⁴

During the early years of West Memphis' existence, the Bolz Cooperage Company was the town's largest industry, and it remained so until it was liquidated in 1925. The growth of the Company brought about improvements in the area, including the construction of approximately 20-25 homes by Kendal on South 10th, 11th, and 12th streets for the employees and the construction of a two-story frame hotel, the West Memphis Hotel, at South 10th Street and Jefferson Avenue. After the Bolz Company was liquidated, the Federal Compress and Warehouse Company, which built its compress complex in 1923, became the largest industry in West Memphis. When it was built, it was the largest compress in the state, with a capacity of 165,000 bales and its own power plant and water well. The growth of West Memphis during the first decades of the 1900s led to its incorporation on February 28, 1923.⁵

By the 1930s at the time that the Johnson-Portis House was built, West Memphis had become a thriving city. In fact, the *WPA Guide to 1930s Arkansas* noted:

...the well-built stores, service stations, cafés, and tourist camps that stretch for more than a mile along US 70 have an air of being new and busy. At first glance the town appears to be a thriving suburban district of Memphis, but it has had an independent growth. ...Behind the façade of neon signs, elaborate gasoline stations, and fruit stands are the industries of the town – a sawmill, two gins, a large compress, and a cottonseed oil mill. West Memphis has grown so rapidly in the last decade that its population almost quadrupled between 1930 and 1940.⁶

It was during this period of prosperity in West Memphis that Judge J. C. Johnson and his wife decided to have a new home built. They chose a site on the west side of North Avalon Street at the far western edge of the city. According to the 1938 Sanborn map for West Memphis, the first map that illustrates the area of the Johnson-Portis House, there were several large homes on the west side of North Avalon in the 400, 500, and 600 blocks of the street. Furthermore, there were several empty lots in the neighborhood to the east of the house, indicating that the area was still under development. Even by 1949, the year of the last Sanborn map for West Memphis, the neighborhood to the east of the Johnson-Portis House was still not fully developed.⁷

⁴ Woolfolk, Margaret Elizabeth. *A History of Crittenden County, Arkansas*. Greenville, SC: Southern Historical Press, Inc., 1993, pp. 273-274.

⁵ Woolfolk, Margaret Elizabeth. *A History of Crittenden County, Arkansas*. Greenville, SC: Southern Historical Press, Inc., 1993, p. 274.

⁶ West, Elliott. *The WPA Guide to 1930s Arkansas*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1987 reprint of 1941 publication, p. 222.

⁷ Sanborn Maps for West Memphis, Arkansas, 1938 and 1949.

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Johnson soon hired Memphis architects George Mahan, Jr., and Everett Woods to design a large Tudor Revival house with outbuildings and landscape features. George Mahan, Jr., was born in Memphis, Tennessee, in 1887, and began his career at the age of fifteen when he became a student draftsman in the Memphis architectural firm of Shaw and Pfeil. Mahan's architectural style throughout his career was influenced by his time at Shaw and Pfeil.⁸

Mahan was recognized as the "dean of Memphis architects" and he was involved in the designing of a wide range of buildings in the Memphis area, including schools, banks, and other public buildings, including the Memphis Cotton Exchange and the King Cotton Hotel. In 1913, Mahan was also instrumental in founding the Memphis Architects' League, which eventually became the Memphis Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA). Before his death on February 19, 1967, Mahan practiced with several partners, including J. J. Broadwell, Arnold Shappley, Jr., and Everett Woods, with whom he designed the Johnson-Portis House.⁹

Like Mahan, Everett Woods was also a Memphis native, having been born in the city on June 8, 1890. His education included periods of study at Southwestern University in Memphis, Tennessee; Kentucky State University in Lexington, Kentucky; and the Alabama Polytechnic Institute in Auburn, Alabama. Woods served as a chief draftsman at the firm of McGehee & Lester and at Mahan & Broadwell & Associates, before forming the firm of George Mahan, Jr., & Everett Woods. It is not known how long the partnership lasted, but Woods organized his own firm, Everett D. Woods, Architect, in 1937. Also like Mahan, Woods was a member of the Memphis chapter of the AIA where he served as Secretary, Vice President, and Chairman of the Fee Recommendation Committee. Woods died on November 30, 1977, and is buried in the Memphis National Cemetery.

Mahan and Woods chose the Tudor Revival style for the design of the Johnson-Portis House, and it's a style that enjoyed a fair amount of popularity during the 1930s. The Tudor Revival style of architecture first appeared in the United States in the late nineteenth century, and the early examples of the style tended to be landmark examples of the style that were architect designed. The early examples of the style often mimicked late Medieval buildings with Renaissance detailing, styles that were popular during the reigns of Elizabeth I (1558-1603) and James I (1603-1625), known as the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods of English history.¹⁰ As Carole Rifkind notes in *A Field Guide to American Architecture*:

⁸ Knight, Mary. Finding Aid for the George Mahan, Jr., Collection at the Memphis and Shelby County Room of the Memphis Shelby County Public Library & Information Center, 1989. Found at: <http://memphislibrary.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p13039coll1/id/93>.

⁹ Knight, Mary. Finding Aid for the George Mahan, Jr., Collection at the Memphis and Shelby County Room of the Memphis Shelby County Public Library & Information Center, 1989. Found at: <http://memphislibrary.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p13039coll1/id/93>. Mahan & Shappley designed the Farmers & Merchants Bank at 101 N. Washington Street in Marianna, built in 1969. Mahan & Woods also designed the Lee County Courthouse at 15 Chestnut Street in Marianna, which was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on September 7, 1995.

¹⁰ McAlester, Virginia & Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1984, p. 358.

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The Period Revival dwelling of the period from 1910 to 1930 tends to be quaint and informal although carefully disciplined. It does, on occasion, reproduce historic precedent with accuracy, but more often it assimilates and combines diverse motifs for convenience, gracious living, and artistic effect.

...

Ornament tends to be underscaled and carefully executed. Fine effects are achieved through the handling of quality materials for color and texture – shingle or slate roofs with a weathered, hand-crafted appearance; dark-stained “hand-hewn” oak lintels, [and] tapestry brick laid to create a richly textured surface.¹¹

By the early 1900s, however, examples of the style tended to be less pretentious with Tudor detailing often applied to otherwise symmetrical façades. Wall materials for Tudor Revival homes from the first part of the twentieth century tended to be stucco, shingles, or weatherboard. After World War I, however, especially during the 1920s and 1930s, the style became much more popular, especially as techniques in constructing masonry veneers allowed even the most modest homes of the style to mimic the masonry exteriors of their British precedents. The façades of houses of this period know no limits to their overall shapes or roof forms, and the front façades often employ different materials on their various divisions.¹²

By the late 1930s, however, the popularity of the Tudor Revival style, along with many of the other revival styles based on European styles, quickly faded. A resurgence of the Tudor style did occur during the 1970s and 1980s, but the homes of that period made little attempt at accurately mimicking Medieval forms or detailing.¹³

The Johnson-Portis House represents a very late example of the Tudor Revival style, especially on such a large scale, and a very large example for Eastern Arkansas. However, even though the house was constructed near the tail end of the style’s popularity, it employed many of the “fine effects that are achieved through the handling of quality materials for color and texture – shingle or slate roofs (or, in this case, tile) with a weathered, hand-crafted appearance; dark-stained “hand-hewn” oak lintels, [and] tapestry brick laid to create a richly textured surface.”

In addition to hiring Mahan & Woods to design the house, the Johnsons hired the firm of Highberger & Park to do a landscape plan for the property. The firm of Highberger & Park consisted of John F. Highberger and Neil Hamill Park. John F. Highberger was born on June 21, 1892, in Colorado to T. A. and Kate (Armstrong) Highberger. Little is known of Highberger’s education or career, but it is known that he was practicing landscape architecture in Memphis, Tennessee, by the late 1920s when he was the landscape architect for Little Rock’s Central High

¹¹ Rifkind, Carole. *A Field Guide to American Architecture*. New York: Plume Books, 1980, p. 101.

¹² McAlester, Virginia & Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1984, p. 358.

¹³ McAlester, Virginia & Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1984, pp. 358 & 491.

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School.¹⁴ During his career, Highberger did designs for properties in at least three states – Arkansas, Tennessee, and Alabama – before his death on April 29, 1957, in Memphis, Tennessee.¹⁵

John Highberger's partner, Neil Hamill Park, was born in Lansing, Michigan, in 1904, and raised in Parkin, Arkansas, and was the first professionally accredited landscape architect in the State of Arkansas. Park received his Master's degree in Landscape Architecture from Cornell University in 1928, and he was named a fellow of the American Society of Landscape Architecture in 1963.¹⁶

In 1931, Park won the prestigious "Prix de Rome" in landscape architecture, after being a runner-up in the 1930 competition. The subject of the 1931 competition that Park won was the theoretical design of a memorial park, and Park's prize included two years of study in Rome.¹⁷

During the late 1930s, Park worked in Memphis, Tennessee, as a partner in the firm of Highberger & Park before he established his own practice in Memphis in 1939. Also, prior to his time in Arkansas, he worked on a variety of projects designing parks and recreation areas for the Tennessee Valley Authority. Park moved to Little Rock in 1943 and practiced landscape architecture throughout Arkansas until his retirement in 1976. Although the vast majority of Park's works were in Arkansas, he also completed designs for projects in Texas, Tennessee, Mississippi, and Alabama. The nature of his works included civic, commercial, educational, residential, and religious commissions.¹⁸

The plan that Highberger & Park drew for the Johnson-Portis House property, which was likely one of the last commissions undertaken by the partnership, included formal gardens immediately to the south and west of the house with lawns and scattered trees to the southwest, west, and further to the north. Additionally, to the west of the formal gardens was what appeared to be an orchard or pecan grove. However, little of Highberger & Park's plan was ultimately carried out.¹⁹

The Johnson-Portis House was built for Judge J. C. Johnson and his wife, Lola. Johnson served as the Crittenden County Judge from 1933 until 1938.²⁰ The Johnsons had no children and were originally from Earle, Arkansas. For the decoration of the house, the Johnsons only used the best fabrics and furniture and used Deneaux of Memphis, a company incorporated in 1904 with a capital of \$50,000 for "a general house furnishing business, for the decoration of the house. In

¹⁴ "Final General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement for Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site." Washington, DC: National Park Service, April 2002, p. 176.

¹⁵ Information on John Foster Highberger from www.findagrave.com.

¹⁶ "Landscape Architect Dies at 81." *Arkansas Gazette*. 6 February 1986, p. 12A.

¹⁷ "Landscape Architect Dies at 81." *Arkansas Gazette*. 6 February 1986, p. 12A.

¹⁸ "Landscape Architect Dies at 81." *Arkansas Gazette*. 6 February 1986, p. 12A.

¹⁹ The framed landscape rendering by Highberger & Park is in the possession of the current owner and hanging in the house's first-floor gallery.

²⁰ Woolfolk, Margaret Elizabeth. *A History of Crittenden County, Arkansas*. Greenville, SC: Southern Historical Press, Inc., 1993, p. 25.

Johnson-Portis House

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addition to serving as County Judge, Judge Johnson also owned the Ford Motor Company dealership in West Memphis.²¹

After the Johnsons occupied the house, it was lived in by Melvin and Chloe Dacus.²² Melvin Dacus served West Memphis as alderman from 1940 until 1943 and mayor for eight years and later took over the Dacus Lumber Company operations after the death of his father, Aubrey Dacus, in 1959. Dacus Lumber Company, which was originally known as Bragg's sawmill, was located on the east side of Missouri Street, and the lumber mill closed in 1972.²³ The Dacuses acquired the house on August 17, 1955, and lived in the house until the early 1970s when Mr. Dacus had a stroke and the family decided to sell the house.²⁴

Although the house was sold by the Dacuses in the early 1970s, it was never put on the market. Kent Ingram (whose parents were friends of the Dacuses) and his wife, Julanne, purchased the house on May 2, 1973, from the Dacuses. When the Ingrams divorced in 2011, Julanne (whose maiden name is Portis) became the sole owner of the property and continues to live in the house today.²⁵

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROPERTY

The construction and design of the Johnson-Portis House illustrates the growth and development of the Tudor Revival style in eastern Arkansas, and the influences of the latest architectural fashion throughout the first part of the twentieth century. The development of West Memphis and the lumber industry in the area during the early 1900s brought a lot of wealth to the area, which also allowed residents to hire the era's fashionable architects, such as Mahan & Woods, to design high-style residences using the latest architectural styles. The Johnson-Portis House represents an unusually large and well-detailed of the Tudor Revival style, especially in the West Memphis area.

The Johnson-Portis House is an excellent example of the Tudor Revival style. The house exhibits the identifying features of the style noted by McAlester and McAlester, notably a steeply-pitched roof; façade with one or more prominent cross gables, also usually steeply pitched; decorative half-timbering; tall, narrow windows, usually in multiple groups with multi-pane glazing; and massive chimneys with decorative chimney pots. In fact, the description of some of the Spanish Revival details in Virginia and Lee McAlester's *A Field Guide to American Houses* almost seem to have been written while looking at the Johnson-Portis House. With respect to brick examples of the style, the book states:

Walls of solid brick masonry were sometimes used on landmark examples early in this century, but brick became the preferred wall

²¹ Portis, Julanne. E-mail to the author. 23 May 2017.

²² Local legend is that Judge Johnson lost the house and a lot of the furniture in a Gin Rummy game. Apparently, Judge Johnson liked to drink and liked to play cards for large amounts of money, and the Johnsons entertained a lot in the house. Portis, Julanne. E-mail to the author. 10 April 2017.

²³ Beauregard, Michael A. *West Memphis*. Charleston, SC: Acadia Publishing, 2014, pp. 48-49.

²⁴ Portis, Julanne. E-mail to the author. 23 May 2017.

²⁵ Portis, Julanne. E-mail to the author. 23 May 2017.

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finish for even the most modest Tudor cottages after masonry veneering became widespread in the 1920s. Brick first-story walls are commonly contrasted with stone, stucco, or wooden claddings on principal gables or upper stories. False half-timbering occurs on about half the houses in this style, with infilling of stucco or brick between the timbers and, quite often, elaborate decorative patterns in the arrangement of timbers or brick.

...Large, elaborated chimneys are favorite Tudor details; these are commonly placed in prominent locations on the front or side of the house. The lower part of the chimney may be decorated with complex masonry or stone patterns and the top commonly has a separate chimney pot for each flue. Multiple shafts of the chimney itself, representing the number of flues contained within, are also used.

Windows are typically casements of wood or metal, although more traditional double-hung sash windows are also common. Windows are frequently grouped into strings of three or more, which are most commonly located on or below the main gable or on one- or two-story bays; small transoms are sometimes present above the main windows. Stone mullions may divide casements and transoms in high-style examples.²⁶

Because of its significance as an excellent example of the Tudor Revival style in West Memphis, the Johnson-Portis House is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion C**.

²⁶ McAlester and McAlester, pp. 357-358.

Johnson-Portis House
Name of Property

Crittenden County, Arkansas
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9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Beauregard, Michael A. *West Memphis*. Charleston, SC: Acadia Publishing, 2014.

“Final General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement for Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site.” Washington, DC: National Park Service, April 2002.

Information on John Foster Highberger from www.findagrave.com.

Knight, Mary. Finding Aid for the George Mahan, Jr., Collection at the Memphis and Shelby County Room of the Memphis Shelby County Public Library & Information Center, 1989. Found at: <http://memphislibrary.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p13039coll1/id/93>.

Koyl, George S., ed. *American Architects Directory*. New York: R. R. Bowker, Co., 1955. Found at: <http://public.aia.org/sites/hdoaa/wiki/Wiki%20Pages/1956%20American%20Architects%20Directory.aspx>.

“Landscape Architect Dies at 81.” *Arkansas Gazette*. 6 February 1986, p. 12A.

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

Portis, Julianne. E-mail to the author. 10 April 2017.

Portis, Julianne. E-mail to the author. 23 May 2017.

Rifkind, Carole. *A Field Guide to American Architecture*. New York: Plume Books, 1980.

Sanborn Maps for West Memphis, Arkansas, 1938 and 1949.

West, Elliott. *The WPA Guide to 1930s Arkansas*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1987 reprint of 1941 publication.

Woolfolk, Margaret Elizabeth. *A History of Crittenden County, Arkansas*. Greenville, SC: Southern Historical Press, Inc., 1993.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

_____ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested

Johnson-Portis House
Name of Property

Crittenden County, Arkansas
County and State

- 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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): CT0187

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Approx. 4.75 acres.

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: | Longitude: |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

1. Zone: 15 Easting: 755576 Northing: 3893388

Johnson-Portis House

Crittenden County, Arkansas
County and State

Name of Property

2. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
3. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
4. Zone:	Easting :	Northing:

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

Lot 1 of the Dashed Addition to the City of West Memphis. Parcel #358000000000.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes all of the land historically associated with the property.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Ralph S. Wilcox, National Register & Survey Coordinator
organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
street & number: 1100 North Street
city or town: Little Rock state: AR zip code: 72201
e-mail: ralph.wilcox@arkansas.gov
telephone: (501) 324-9787
date: May 23, 2017

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.)

Photographs

Johnson-Portis House
Name of Property

Crittenden County, Arkansas
County and State

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: Johnson-Portis House

City or Vicinity: West Memphis

County: Crittenden County State: Arkansas

Photographer: Mason Toms

Date Photographed: December 20, 2016

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

- 1 of 33 . View of the entrance gates at the northeast corner of the property, looking southwest.
- 2 of 33 . View of the north and west façades of the main house, looking southwest.
- 3 of 33 . View of the north and west façades of the main house, looking southwest.
- 4 of 33 . View of the east façade of the main house, looking west.
- 5 of 33 . View of the east façade of the main house, looking northwest
- 6 of 33 . View of the south façade of the main house, looking north.
- 7 of 33 . View of the terrace, steps, and sunken fountain at the south end of the main house, looking northwest.
- 8 of 33 . View of the south façade of the main house, looking northeast.
- 9 of 33 . View of the west façade of the main house, looking east.
- 10 of 33 . View of the west façade of the main house, looking east.
- 11 of 33 . View of the north façade of the main house's garage area, looking southeast.

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- 12 of 33 . View of the north façade of the main house, looking south.
- 13 of 33 . View of the front entrance of the main house, looking west.
- 14 of 33 . View of the first floor gallery, looking southwest.
- 15 of 33 . View of the first floor gallery, looking north.
- 16 of 33 . View of the first floor study, looking east.
- 17 of 33 . View of the woodwork in the first floor study, looking northwest.
- 18 of 33 . View of the first floor living room fireplace, looking south.
- 19 of 33 . View of the first floor living room, looking southwest.
- 20 of 33 . View of the first floor living room, looking northeast.
- 21 of 33 . View of the first floor dining room, looking west.
- 22 of 33 . View of the first floor dining room, looking northeast.
- 23 of 33 . View of the first floor garage space, looking northeast.
- 24 of 33 . View of the main staircase in the gallery, looking southeast.
- 25 of 33 . View of the second floor gallery, looking south.
- 26 of 33 . View of the motor court, looking northwest.
- 27 of 33 . View of the pergola west of the main house, looking west.
- 28 of 33 . View of the south façade of the guest house, looking north.
- 29 of 33 . View of the north and west façades of the guest house, looking southeast.
- 30 of 33 . View of the north and east façades of the caretaker's cottage, looking southwest.
- 31 of 33 . View of the east façade of the chicken coop, looking west.
- 32 of 33 . View of the yard south of the main house, looking southwest.
- 33 of 33 . View of the brick wall in the yard south of the main house, looking west.

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Figure 1: Photograph of the Johnson-Portis House, c.1940.

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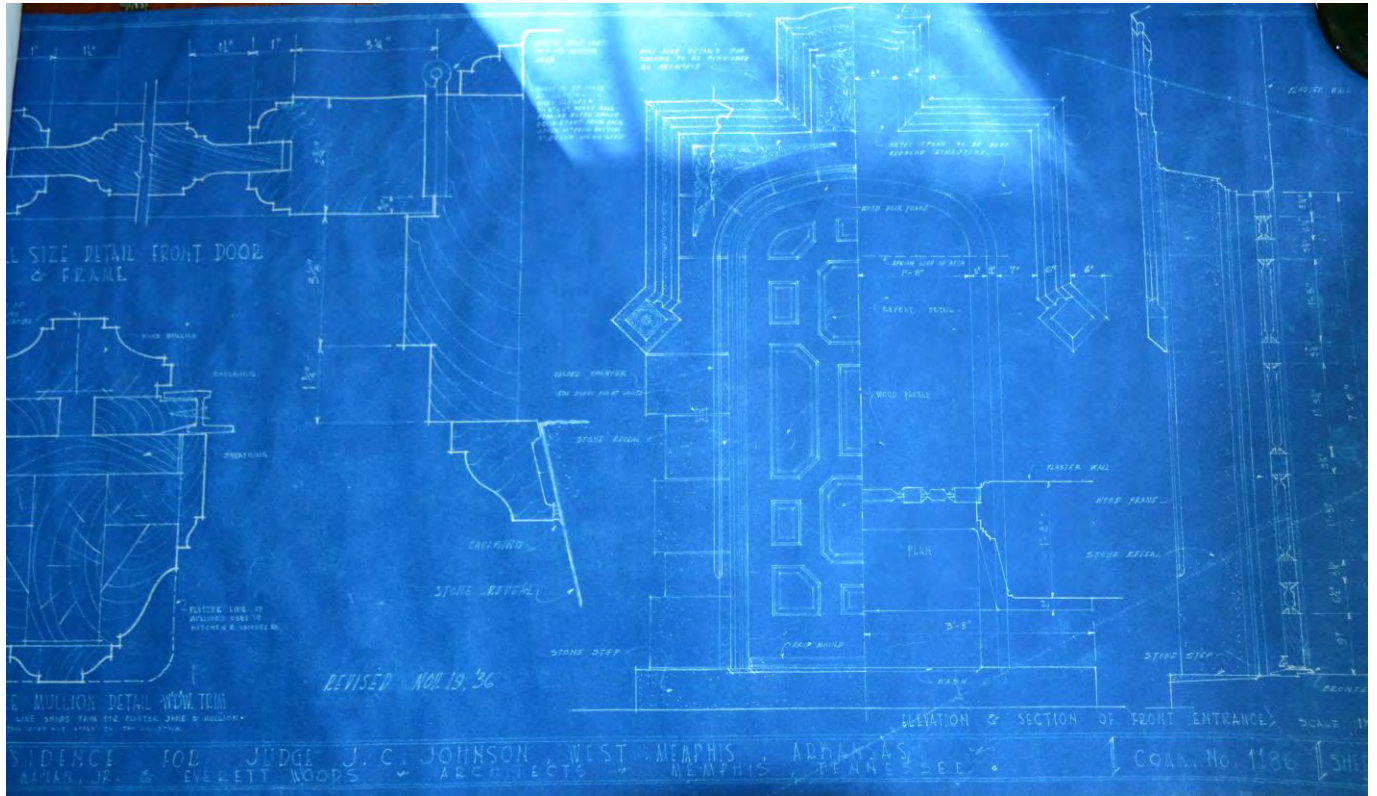


Figure 2: Door Details Drawing, Johnson-Portis House, 1936.

Johnson-Portis House
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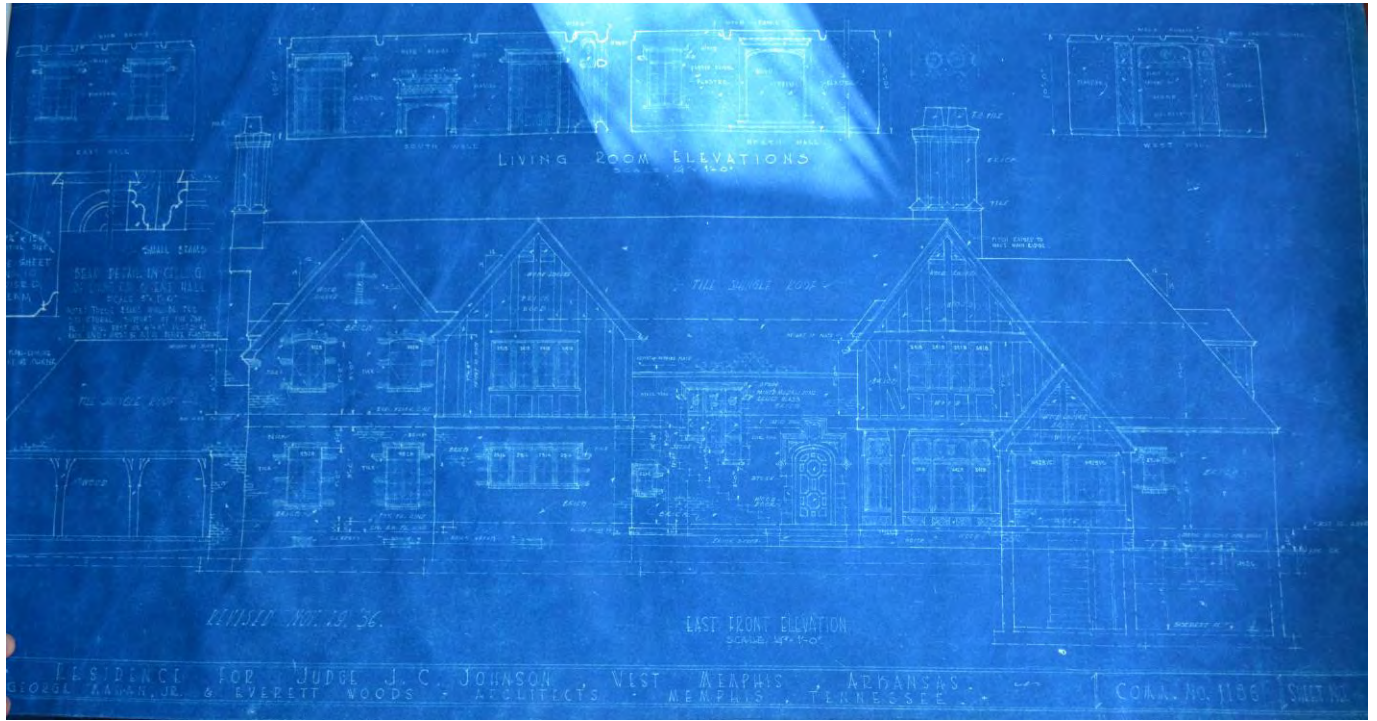


Figure 3: East Elevation Drawing, Johnson-Portis House, 1936.

Johnson-Portis House
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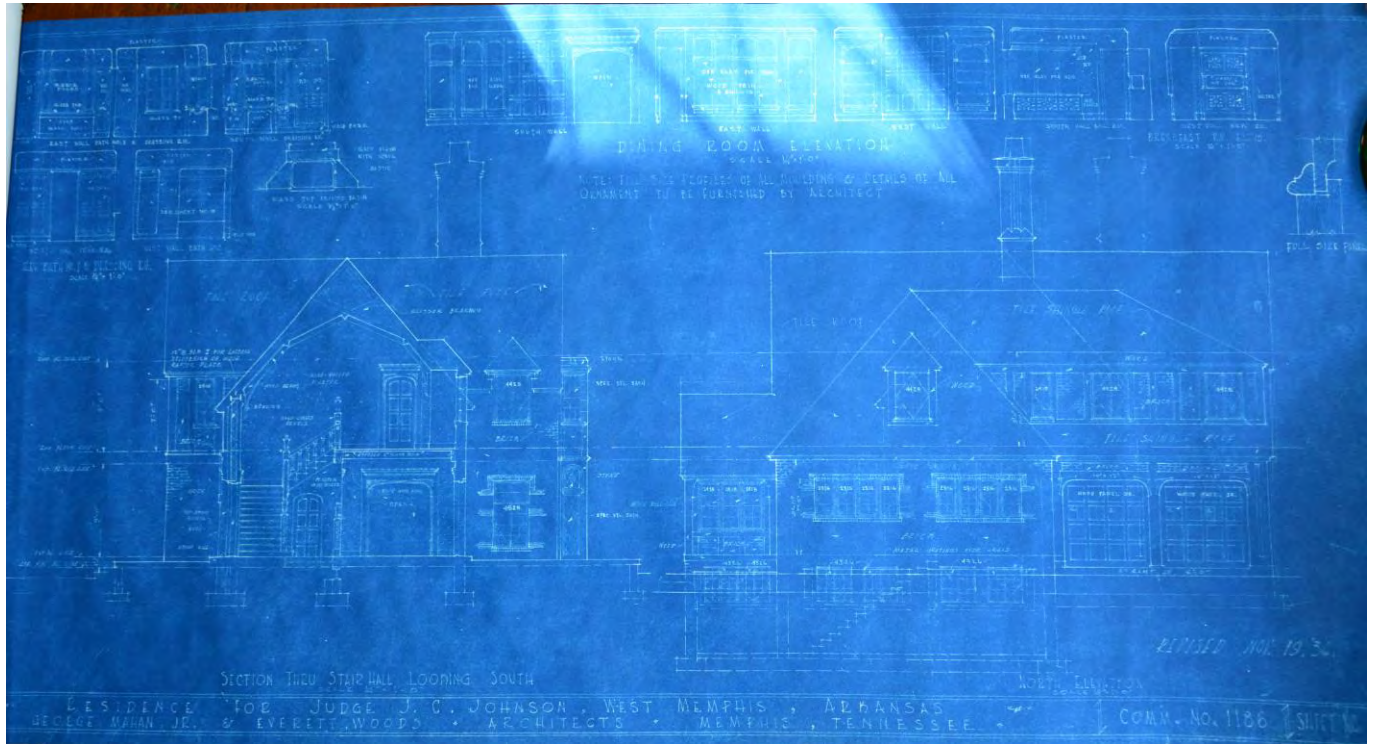


Figure 4: North Elevation and Section Drawing, Johnson-Portis House, 1936.

Johnson-Portis House
Name of Property

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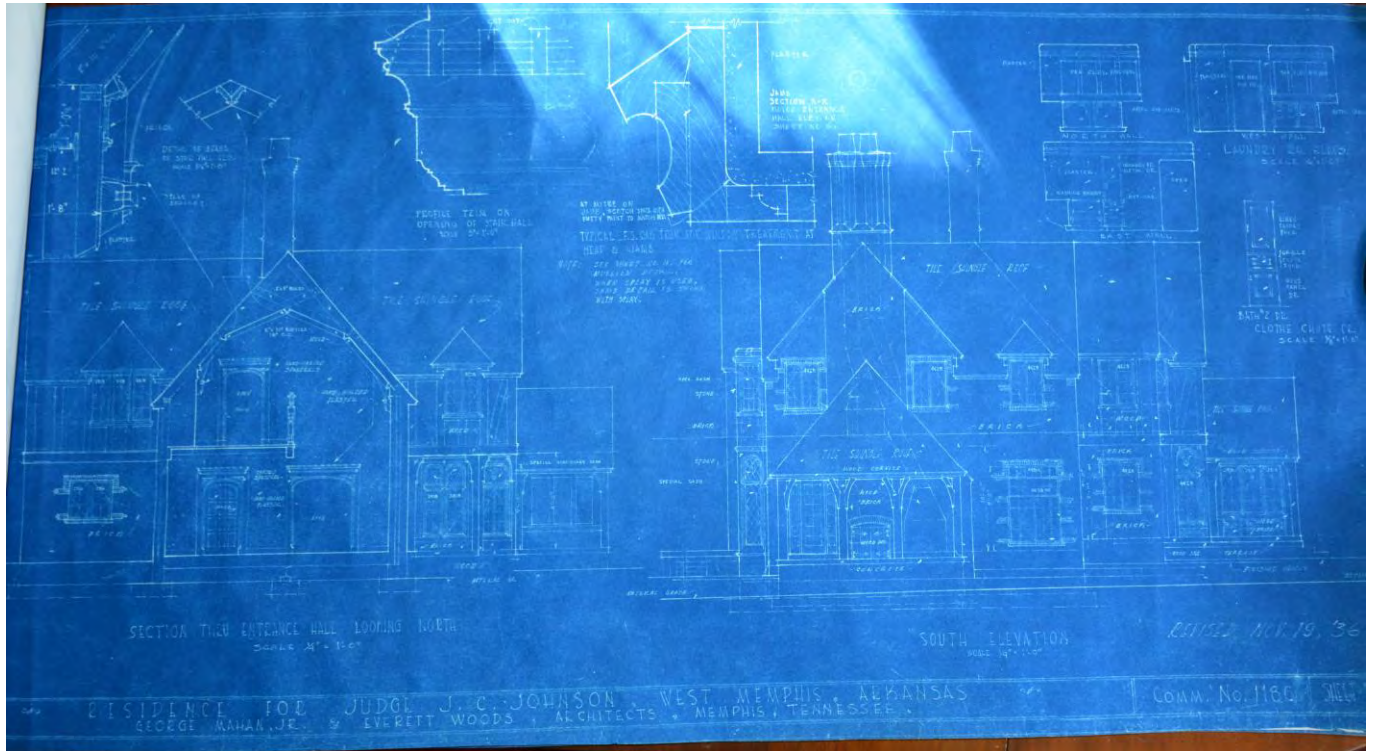


Figure 5: South Elevation and Section Drawing, Johnson-Portis House, 1936.

Johnson-Portis House
Name of Property

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County and State

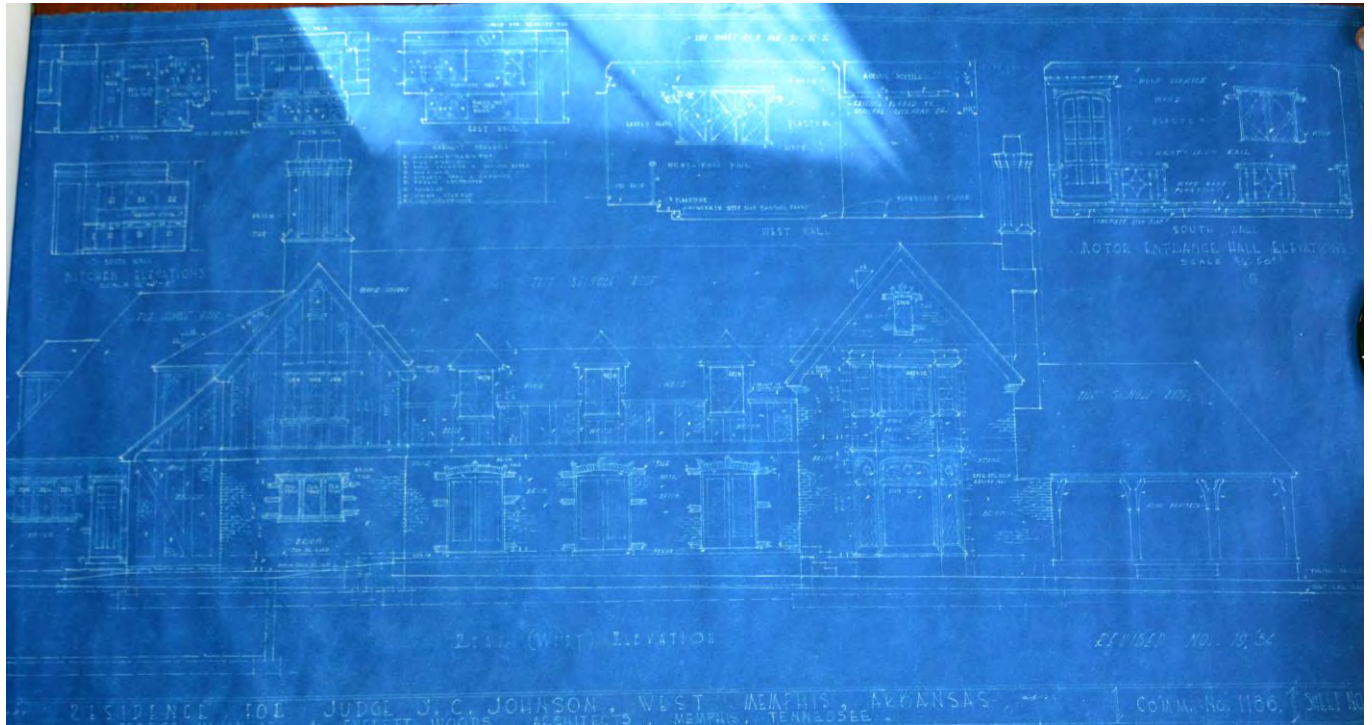
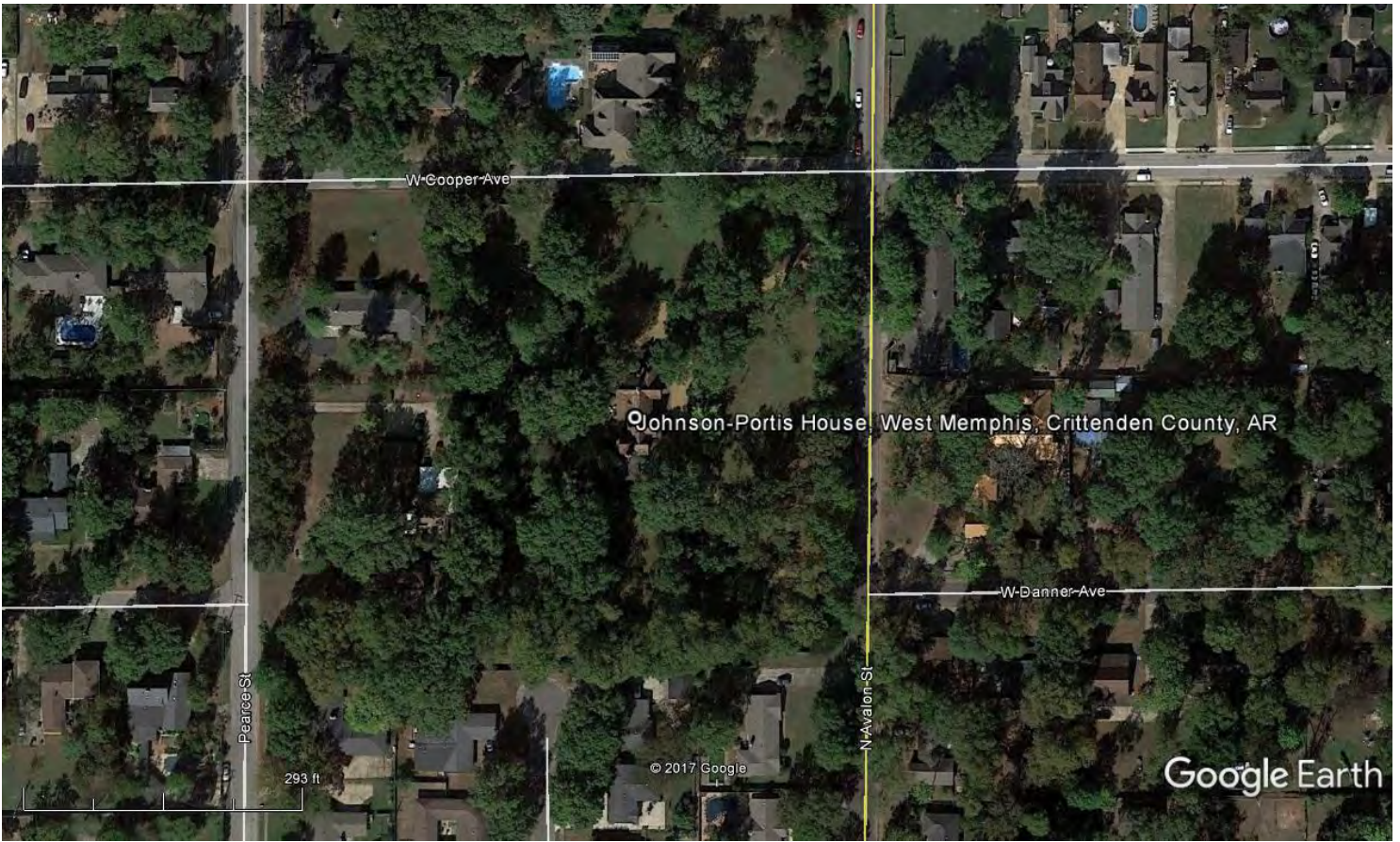


Figure 2: West Elevation Drawing, Johnson-Portis House, 1936.

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.



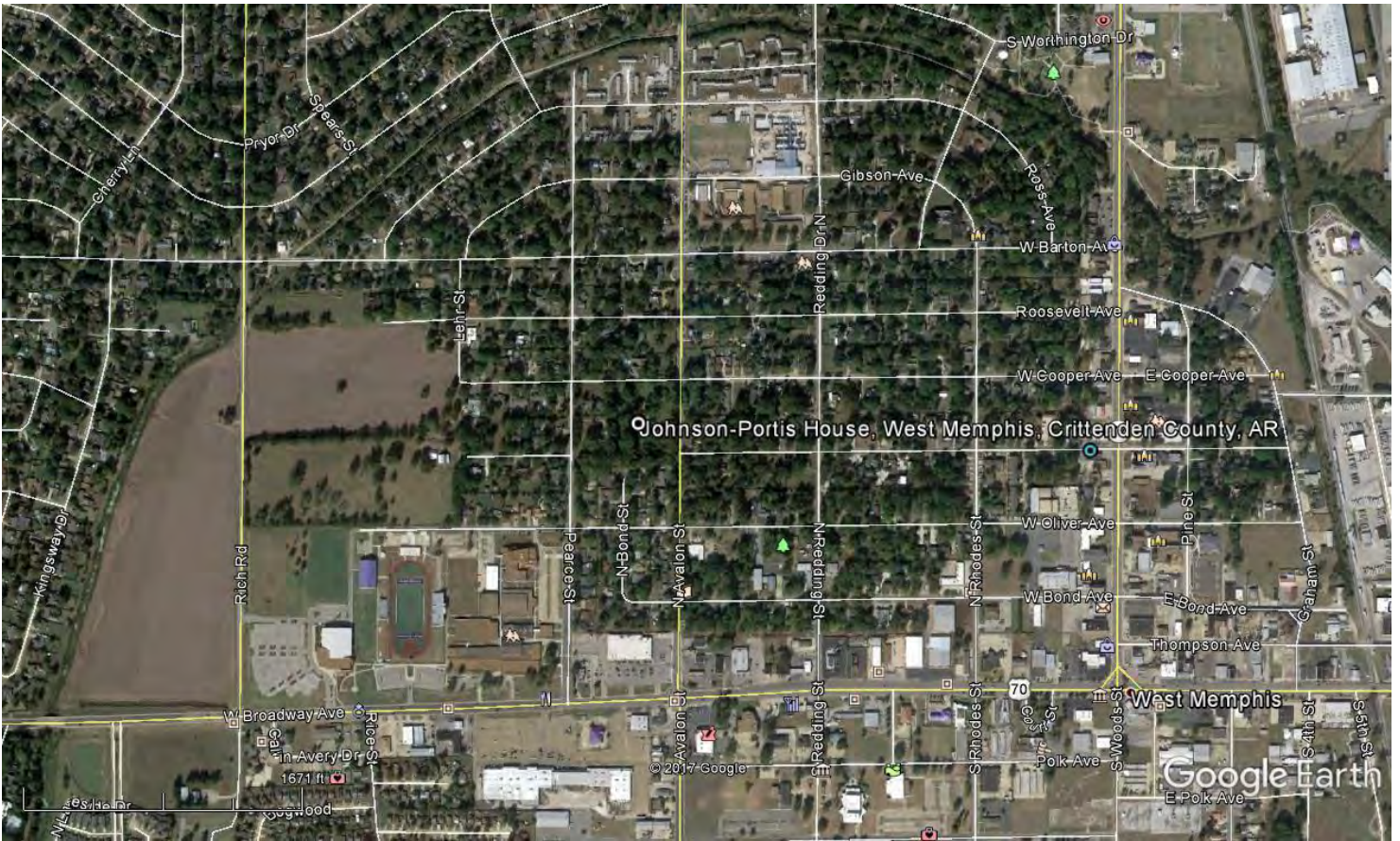
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Johnson-Portis House
West Memphis, Crittenden County, Arkansas

15 755576E 3893388N



North



|-----1671 feet-----|

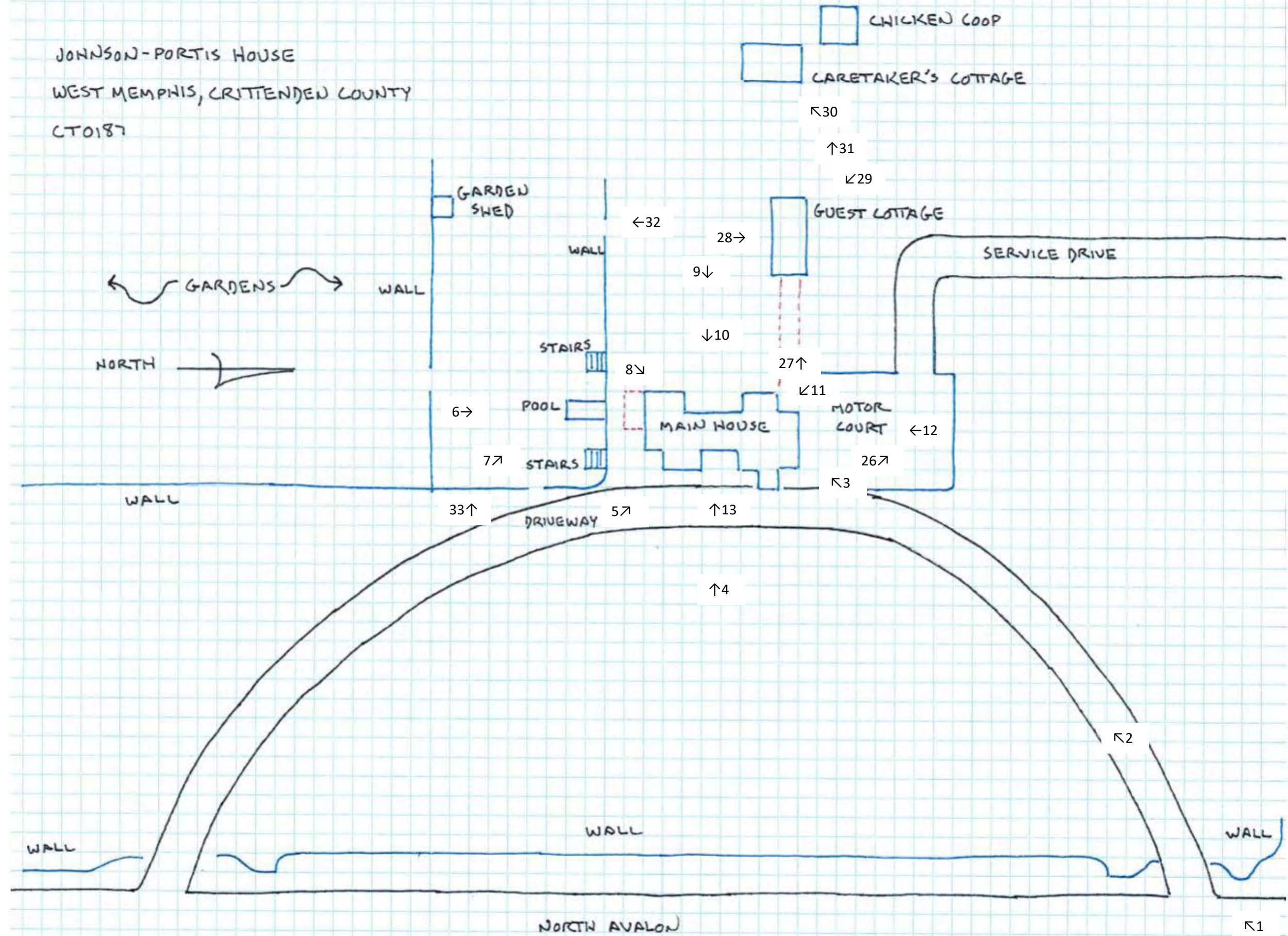
Johnson-Portis House
West Memphis, Crittenden County, Arkansas

15 755576E 3893388N



North

JOHNSON-PORTIS HOUSE
WEST MEMPHIS, CRITTENDEN COUNTY
CTO187





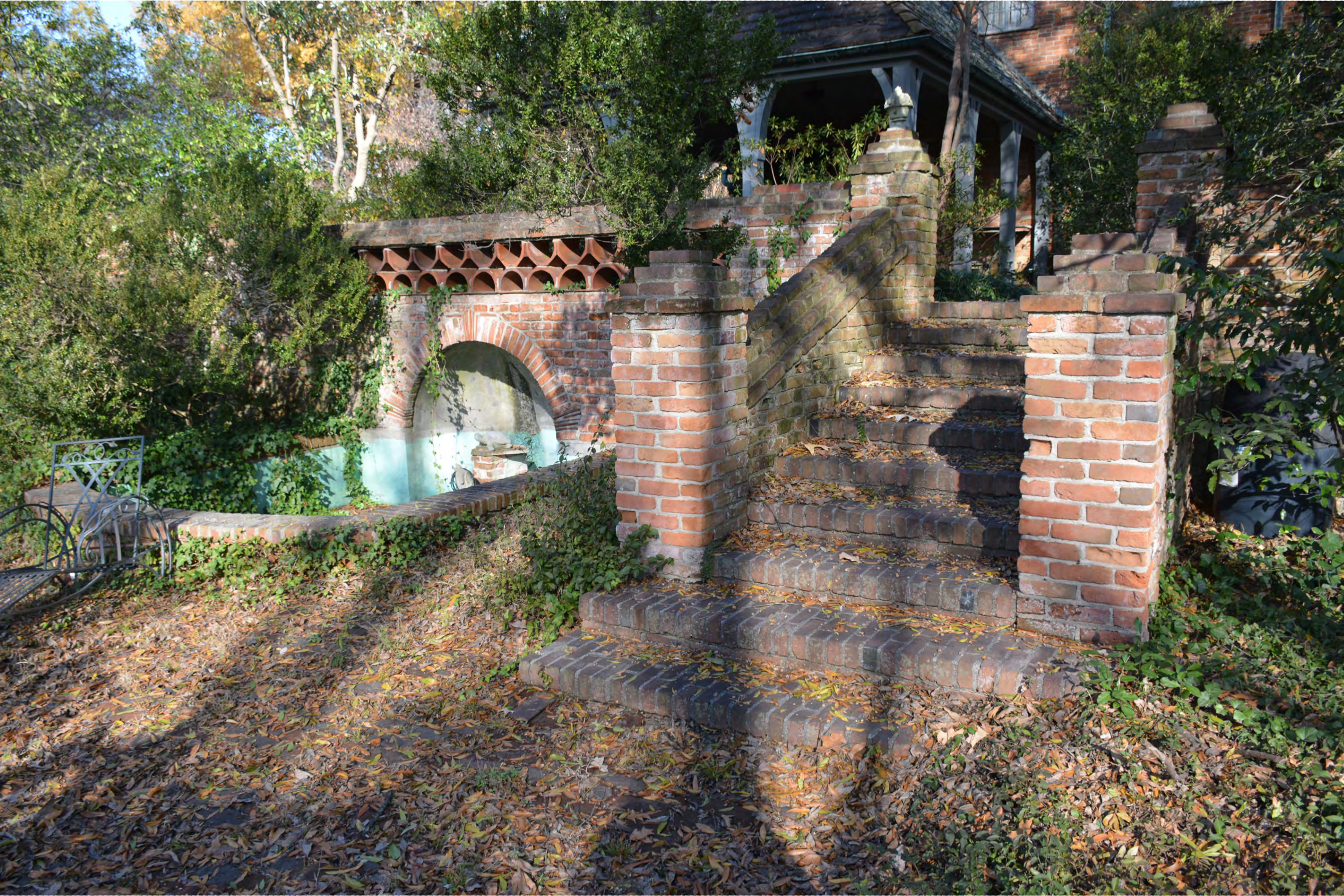
































































UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: Date of Pending List: Date of 16th Day: Date of 45th Day: Date of Weekly List:

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

Accept Return Reject Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:

Recommendation/ Criteria

Reviewer Jim Gabbert Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2275 Date _____

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



THE DEPARTMENT OF ARKANSAS
HERITAGE

Asa Hutchinson
Governor

Stacy Hurst
Director

August 2, 2017



J. Paul Loether, Deputy Keeper and Chief
National Register and National Historic Landmark Programs
National Register of Historic Places
1201 Eye St. NW, 8th Fl.
Washington D.C. 20005

RE: Johnson-Portis House – West Memphis, Crittenden County,
Arkansas

Dear Mr. Loether:

We are enclosing for your review the above-referenced nomination. The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the nomination for the Johnson-Portis House to the National Register of Historic Places. 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,

Stacy Hurst
State Historic Preservation Officer

SH:rsw

Enclosure

Arkansas Arts Council

•
Arkansas Natural
Heritage Commission

•
Arkansas State Archives

•
Delta Cultural Center

•
Historic Arkansas Museum

•
Mosaic Templars
Cultural Center

•
Old State House Museum



ARKANSAS HISTORIC
PRESERVATION PROGRAM



1100 North Street
Little Rock, AR 72201

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

e-mail:

info@arkansaspreservation.org

website:

www.arkansaspreservation.com

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