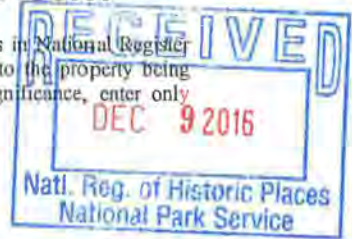


National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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: Minaret Manor
Other names/site number: Florida Mansion, Cox-Florida Mansion, MS0411
Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 844 W. Semmes
City or town: Osceola State: Arkansas County: Mississippi
Not For Publication: Vicinity: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:
X A B X C D

[Signature] 11-29-16
Signature of certifying official/Title: Date
Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
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

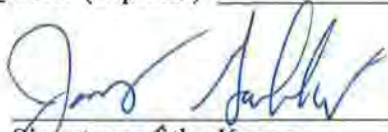
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4. National Park Service Certification

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
For

1-24-2017
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>3</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u>1</u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>3</u>	<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
DOMESTIC: Secondary structure

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling
DOMESTIC: Secondary structure

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: Tudor Revival

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: Late Gothic Revival

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Stone, Brick, Weatherboard

Narrative Description

Summary Paragraph

The Minaret Manor was built in 1948 as the residential center of a 15-acre building site in Mississippi County on what was the western edge of Osceola, Arkansas. The home is approximately 10,000 square feet and in the Tudor Revival style with some late Gothic Revival influences. This wonderful example of a Tudor Revival home was built by Andrew J. Florida, who was a noteworthy farmer, landowner, real estate developer, banker, and insurance agent in much of Eastern Arkansas and Memphis, Tennessee. Andrew J. Florida and his wife, Lennie Florida, traveled extensively throughout the world in the late 1930s and into the 1940s,¹ and brought architectural ideas back to Osceola, Arkansas, that they would like to see constructed for themselves. Those ideas were later applied to this lavish 10,000 square foot home, which would serve as a residence and entertaining venue for the Florida Real Estate and Loan Company.

Narrative Description

The Florida Family purchased the land for the 15-acre estate in the 1820s. Of those 15-acres, 5 acres remain associated with the original Florida Mansion. Though more than two-thirds of the acreage was sold over the years, the Minaret Manor and the remaining five-acres was eventually

¹ Though it seems illogical to travel during the Great Depression, the Florida's were able to travel throughout the world at this period of time, due to the amount of wealth he was continuing to bring in throughout this time period. It also seems illogical to travel to Europe during World War II but they continued to travel via luxury liners throughout the Atlantic Ocean.

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sold to help pay off back taxes, fines and interest following the downfall of the family. It was eventually sold to R.E. Cox, as a present for his wife Louis, c.1968.

The Cox family has essentially left the large 15-bedroom, 10,000 square feet, home just as it was upon buying it in 1968. There are eleven large rooms downstairs and four large bedrooms upstairs. The downstairs rooms include a library, dining room, breakfast room, larger service pantry, living room, solarium, powder room, rumpus room, kitchen with adjoining laundry room, and mechanical room.

Upon approaching the house through a pair of low, arching brick entrance gates and a brick laid circle driveway a large open front porch surrounds the front entranceway with a stone balustrade, a twenty-foot flagstone terrace and steps allowing access from the east and west elevations. The house is a large two-story structure, with a three-story tall tower or turret. The exterior cladding of the house consists of red brick in a stretcher bond pattern, with limestone detailing at the corners and around door and window openings. The stretcher bond pattern only changes when the brick is located within the half-timbering, which is located within the gable ends of the main structure. Within the half-timbering, the bond pattern changes to a basket weave bond pattern set on a diagonal. The large, predominant, gables on the west and east elevations along with the gables on the north and south elevations above the garage, consist of the half-timbering that contains the above mentioned diagonal basket weave brick pattern helping show off the detailing associated with the Tudor Revival style. Across a row, the shingles alternate between square and fish scale in a regular pattern.

The roof of the house features a main gable running east and west and cross gables on both the north and south elevations above the garage. There are six wall dormers, three on the front and three on the back, located above each pair of second story windows on the main portion of the structure. A flat roof is found on each of the turrets/towers, and a hexagonal roof on the breakfast room. A small multi-sided roof is located over a cant window that is split by a chimney. A small metal roof has been added over the solarium and from one of the second story bedrooms to allow for a covered, yet open, seating area on the second-story. All portions of the roof, except for the added roof over the solarium, are covered by a gray slate roofing shingle.

The main portion of the house is a rectangle with a three-story turret/tower on the front and a two-story turret on the rear. A small hyphen located on the east elevation connects the main portion of the house to the garage. A small one-story extension extends out of the west elevation creating the solarium. The main portion of the house runs east and west and the secondary wing faces north creating a cross gabled roof. The wing projecting towards the rear of the house has a large central entranceway surrounded by limestone detailing.

The house has five (5) porches/entrances into the house. There is one large entranceway centrally located on the front, with two small entrances, one located on entering the solarium and the other located within the hyphen connecting the garage to the house. The two entrances located on the north elevations are similar to those found on the south/front elevation. There is a larger centrally located entranceway, while a smaller covered recessed entranceway is located at the connection of the hyphen and the garage.

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The house has roughly a total of one hundred and nine (109) windows. There are forty-six (46) on the south elevation, thirteen (13) on the west elevation, forty-six (46) on the north elevation, and four (4) along the east elevation. All windows are either one-over one, casement windows, or single-pane stationary windows. Some of the windows have been replaced, but they were replaced with windows that mimicked the original pane arrangements. All windows are vertical in orientation, but vary in size. All windows and corners of the home are accentuated by quoining and decorative limestone.

The house has four (4) chimneys. All four are made of red brick that matches the rest of the home. Two of the chimneys are visible on the west elevation of the house and consist of a larger base while the chimney begins to narrow after moving above the roofline. Each of these two chimneys has extensive corbelling, which is done to create a multi-pointed star shape at the top of the chimney. The northernmost chimney on the west elevation has two flues that begin to narrow at the same point just above the roofline, while the southernmost chimney on the west elevation has alternating points at which it begins to narrow. The two chimneys visible from the east elevation are very similar to those on the west elevation and contain tall stacks with brick corbeling. However, unlike those found on the west elevation, the chimneys on the east elevation have a less pronounced corbeling and star shape to them. Also, the chimney that is located above the garage has a large chimney pot to help increase draft and disperse smoke.

As an example of both Tudor Revival and Late Gothic Revival influences, the house has more of the decorative detailing at the entranceways, which is associated with the castellated or parapeted subtype of Gothic Revival while the chimneys, chimney pots, and parapeted gable details are greatly influenced by the Tudor Revival Style. Other decorative elements that are present include: patterned brickwork within the half timbering of the large gable ends, the multi-pane windows, the strapwork found surrounding the entrances into the home, and the multiple shafts of the chimney representing flues for different fireplaces also associated with the Tudor Revival style of architecture.

Exterior Description

Due to the undulating nature of the home it is tricky to describe each elevation individually therefore, the description of the home will begin with the front, main body of the home and work counter-clockwise. The front façade of the Minaret Manor is asymmetrical because of the large central portion of the home with the turret and the two smaller wings located on each side, but it is comprised of four (4) bays delineated by the large centrally-located massing and turret. Centrally located on the largest mass of the home is the front entrance. The front entrance and foyer area protrude to the south off of the main body of the home. A decorative iron screen/security door is centrally located within this protruding wall space. A side light is located on either side of the central entranceway. Many of the details found around the front doorway are influenced by the Gothic Revival style especially the flattened archway and the castellated or parapeted roofline above the doorway. Also on either side of the front entranceway, there is a decorative wall sconce with Gothic detailing. Located directly above the pointed arched door, is an inset panel with a crest bearing a shield, crown, and a lion on either side of the shield. There are

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two inset panels located between the top of the entrance and the top of the decorative molding, which shows a vining leaf pattern. Located on either side of the protruding front entrance and foyer area and set back on the main portion of the home, are a set of paired stationary windows with limestone trim and a drip molded window hood. The second story of the main portion of the home consists of five windows or sets of windows that are evenly spaced along the second story. The central most windows consist of a pair of two-by-two, casement type windows with limestone trim and a drip molded window hood. The windows on either side of the central pair of windows are single, one-over-one, windows with limestone trim and a drip molded window hood. The two sets of windows farthest out from the center are identical and consist of two-by-two, casement type windows with limestone trim and a drip molded window hood. Evenly spaced and located above each of the second story paired windows are three wall dormers with a tall, narrow, louvered vent in each of the dormers. The edges of the wall dormers and vents are also adorned with limestone trim.

One of the most prominent features on the south elevation is the three-story tower/turret. All windows, corners and edges are adorned with limestone trim, while also continuing the use of the castellated or parapetted roofline. The tower/turret is shaped like an elongated octagon, with the central sides of the octagon stretched, while the "corners" are tapered and smaller and narrower. Of the eight sides of the octagon, four sides are visible, on the first floor and contain fenestration, while a fifth side is visible on the second and third floors. On the first floor of the tower/turret there are four, one-over-one, stationary windows with drip molded window hoods along the four visible sides of the octagon. On the second floor of the tower/turret there are two, one-over-one, stationary windows with drip molded window hoods located on the two larger sides, which are not the non-tapered corners. Located between the second and third floors, there is a limestone string course that encircles the octagon tower/turret. On the third floor, which is not all tall as the previous two floors of the tower/turret, there are five windows along the five visible sides of the octagon. On the larger sides, the windows consist of six-by-six, sliding windows, while the smaller tapered corners consist of six-pane stationary windows. Located between the top of the small third-story windows and the castellated parapet roofline is a limestone dripstone with dentil molding below the dripstone.

To the right of the tower/turret, are the hyphen connection and the south elevation of the three-car garage. The hyphen and garage are one and a half stories tall. Located along the first floor of the hyphen connecting the main portion of the home and the garage there are four, single-pane stationary windows, with two windows located on either side of a glass entranceway. Located on the clipped gabled roof of the hyphen, there are two evenly-spaced, gabled-roof dormers, with eight-by-eight windows. The south side of the garage extends out from the hyphen a few inches and consists of five, ten-pane casement windows. The two casement windows located farthest from the center are located near the far outside walls, while a grouping of three windows are centrally located on the elevation. Located within the gable of the garage is the half-timbering, which is infilled with the diagonally placed patterned brickwork. A grouping of three small windows is centrally located in the gable, with a small louvered attic vent located directly above the center window near the peak of the gable. This half-timbering is also located within the large gable end of the main portion of the home. Like the gable end of the garage, the large gable end

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of the large body of the house also has a grouping of three small windows centrally located in the gable.

Moving around the home in a counter-clockwise motion the next area consists of the garage door bays. Located along this elevation, and moving left to right, there are two garage doors with a Victorian sconce located between the two doors. To the right of the second garage door but near the ground line, there is a small louvered vent. To the right of the vent is an eight-by-eight, casement window. To the right of the casement window is a doorway leading into the garage space. A small section of unornamented wall space is located to the right of the door, but before the wall terminates at the corner. The half story of the garage on this side of the elevation consists of only the roof and a tall chimney located at the ridgeline of the gable of the garage roof and the clipped gable of the hyphen roofline. (See ornamentation details about the chimney previously described.)

Upon turning the corner, and coming to the northern elevation, much of the description of the garage and hyphen are identical to the south elevation. Working left to right across the elevation the garage consists of five, ten-pane casement windows similar to the south elevation. The two casement windows located farthest from the center are located near the far outside walls, while a grouping of three windows are centrally located on the elevation. Located within the gable of the garage is the half-timbering, which is infilled with the diagonally placed patterned brickwork. A grouping of three small windows is centrally located in the gable, with a small louvered attic vent located directly above the center-most window near the peak of the gable. To the right of the garage is a porch, where the porch post and shed roof are flush with the north elevation of the garage. The poured concrete slab porch sits on top of a brick foundation, with glazed yellow brick just below the porch slab. Wooden handrails, newel posts, and railing provide access to the porch. Set back on the porch and in the corner of the garage and the hyphen, is a single entranceway. To the right of the entranceway there are two adjacent pairs of eight-by-eight, casement windows with a drip molded window hood. Located within the half story of the hyphen on the northern elevation is another gabled roof dormer similar to those found on the south elevation of the hyphen. To the right of the casement window is a small section of unornamented wall space before the hyphen blends back into the main portion of the home.

Working left to right across the north elevation of the main portion of the house there is a small eight-by-eight, casement window with a drip molded window hood. To the right of the casement windows are the exterior walls of the breakfast room. The multi-sided room extends away from the main body of the house. The extension off of the main body of the house has sides with eight-by-eight, casement windows and an eight pane stationary window located above. The final side of the multi-sided room is only visible from within the adjacent porch to be described later. Located between each of the sets of windows at each of the corners there is a partial turned post that accents those corners. As previously noted there is a multi-sided roof covering the room. To the right of the extended room is another covered porch with a shed roof. The poured concrete slab porch sits on top of a brick foundation, with glazed yellow brick just below the porch slab. Wooden handrails, newel posts, and railing provide access to the porch. Set back on the porch and in the corner of the multi-sided room is a single entranceway before terminating in the corner. To the right of the inside corner there is a pair of single four-by-four, casement windows

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equally spaced within the porch area. To the right of the second window is another inside corner terminating this bay of the north elevation. Working left to right across the second-story of this bay of the main body of the home the first piece of fenestration consists of a single four-by-four, casement window with a drip molded window hood that is placed lower on the second floor than other second floor windows. To the right of the lower setting window is a pair of single-pane, casement windows with a drip molded window hood. To the right of the paired windows there is an unornamented brick space before coming to another single four-by-four, casement window with a drip molded window hood located near the corner of the main body of the home and the extension outward of the second large bay on this elevation.

Located on the first floor of the projecting, rear, central bay of the home on the wall that is extending out there is a single four-by-four, casement window with a drip molded window hood. Upon turning the corner and facing the projecting, central bay there is a large centrally-located rear entrance. The rear entrance is surrounded by a flattened Gothic limestone arch with inset panels located between the top of the flat door frame and the pointed, yet flattened archway, depicting a vine pattern inset in the corners. A side light is located on either side of the central entranceway. Many of the details found around the front doorway are influenced by the Gothic Revival style especially the flattened archway. Also on either side of the front entranceway, there is a decorative wall sconce with gothic detailing. Located on the second-floor is a large centrally located six-pane window with a drip molded window hood. Of the six-panes found in this window, all of the panes are the same width; however, the lower three panes are taller than those located in the upper portion of the window. Located within the gable end of the protruding bay of the rear elevation is a narrow, louvered attic vent. Upon turning the corner to the side of the projection returning to the main portion of the home is another single four-by-four, casement window with a drip molded window hood, before that portion of the wall is terminated at the corner and returning to main body of the home.

The next bay of the home is narrow due to another extension off of the home through the position of a second tower/turret. On the first floor of the narrow bay there is a single one-over-two casement window in which the bottom two panes pivot for the movement of the casement while the single-pane is stationary. This window is also covered by a drip molded window hood. Located on the second-floor of this bay, there are two, four-by-four, casement windows with drip molded window hoods, which are evenly spaced along this upper story.

To the right of this narrow bay, is a pronounced three-sided tower/turret. The first floor of the tower/turret consists of one, one-over-two casement window in which the bottom two panes pivot for the movement of the casement while the single-pane is stationary, located on each side of the tower/turret. Similarly the second-floor consists of one, ten-by-ten, casement window with a drip molded window hood on each of the three sides of the tower/turret. Located between the top of the windows and the castellated parapet roofline, is a limestone dripstone to deflect water from the windows.

The next bay is also narrow before terminating into an addition off of the west elevation. Within the first floor of this narrow bay is a single, one-over-two casement window in which the bottom two panes pivot for the movement of the casement while the single-pane is stationary. Similar to

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the second story of the tower/turret, the second-story of this narrow bay also consists of ten-by-ten, casement window with a drip molded window hood.

The final bay of the rear elevation is also part of the solarium which extends off of the west elevation. The first floor of the solarium contains two identical, evenly spaced, flattened arch windows. Within these identical windows there are seven panes of glass. The centrally located two panes of glass are part of a casement system while the other windows are all stationary. Of the stationary windows there is a stationary glass pane located on either side of the casement while there are three stationary glass panes within the flattened arch. Located on the second floor of the solarium, but near the floor line is a single scupper to allow for water drainage off of the original flat roof of the solarium. The second story does not contain windows, as it was originally open. However, a metal sloped roof has been added over the solarium room to provide shade from the western sun during the heat of the day. The roof is supported by four metal poles in total, with two located on this elevation. At the corner of the north and west elevation, on the second story of the solarium is a large, tall castellated limestone pillar.

Upon turning the corner the first floor consists of two identical, evenly spaced, flattened arch windows. Within these identical windows there are seven panes of glass. The centrally located two panes of glass are part of a casement system while the other windows are all stationary. Of the stationary windows there is a stationary glass pane located on either side of the casement while there are three stationary glass panes within the flattened arch. Located above and over these identical windows are two dog-eared metal awnings. As previously noted the second story is open and contains tall castellated limestone pillars on each of the two corners. Set all the way back against the building is a door to allow for access to the flat roof of the solarium. The door is located on to the far left looking from the outside back toward the house. To the right of the door, is a centrally-located chimney that extends above the ridgeline of the gable and has a corbeled multi-point star-shaped cap. To the right of the chimney is a stationary window with a drip molded window hood.

Upon turning the corner back to the south elevation on the solarium there are similarly designed windows. However, rather than having casement windows, the casement has been replaced by a glass doorway on the farthest west window and a single pane of glass on the second window. The second story is described in the previous sections. However, the solarium and another small extension set back from the main body of the house and are about half the width of the main body of the house. However, to the right of the identical windows on the first floor the building extends south a few inches and is accented by quoining, which visually shows the change from solarium to the other small extension of the home. Upon turning the small corner that extends southward, there is a large pair of one-over-one, stationary windows with a drip molded window hood before terminating into another corner. The second story of this section of the elevation consists of a pair of one-by-one, stationary windows. Unlike the solarium, which has a flat roof, this smaller extension of the home is covered by a smaller shorter gable roof than the main body of the home.

Upon turning the inside corner and located back on the main body of the home, there is a small cant window that is split by a chimney and is covered multi-sided shed roof. As the chimney

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extends to the roofline, there are two, one-by-one, stationary windows, with one located on either side of the chimney. Located above the window is the large gabled end with half timbering. Like the gable end of the garage, the large gable end of the large body of the house also has a grouping of three small windows, centrally located in the gable. Above the roofline, the chimney has staggering height chimney stacks that are terminated at the top by the corbeled multi-point star-shaped cap.

Interior

As mentioned previously, there are eleven large rooms downstairs and four large bedrooms upstairs. The downstairs rooms include a library, dining room, breakfast room, larger service pantry, living room, solarium, powder room, rumpus room, kitchen with adjoining laundry room, and mechanical room. Upon walking through the front entranceway, the floor of the entranceway is clad with gray and white blocks of Tennessee marble. The walls of the foyer are clad, floor to ceiling, in hand carved black walnut panels. To the left of the foyer is the library which is also clad in black walnut. Located between the interior walls and the ceiling is a large sweeping cove plaster molding which is then terminated by a fantastic intricate pargetting plaster design laid into the ceiling.

The rest of the interior description is best described in the June 12, 1948, *Memphis Press-Scimitar* when it states that...

To the right (of the foyer) is the dining room, same size, same paneling same ceiling (as the library). On beyond is the breakfast room, 15 x 15... Then there is a large service pantry and a screened-in dining porch.

Back of the entrance hall is the stair hall, 18 feet wide and 28 feet long, with a double pair of hand carved black walnut leading to a landing with an oriole² [*sic*] window overlooking the gardens and swimming pool.

Take a left off this hall (entrance hall) and there is the living room, 18 x 24 feet, which is to have silk tapestry on the side walls. Further left is the solarium, an 18-foot square marble floored room.

[Farther back and the right of the entrance hall,] is a service hall off of which opens a powder room, an automatically controlled elevator, a rumpus room measuring 14 by 26 and featuring an all-glass circular bay window and Rookwood designed tile floor. Next is the kitchen, all white tile... Finally along the hall of that wing there is a mechanical room... [and] two car garage.

Upstairs-... you will find four bedrooms, four baths, closets... all cedar lined and a sitting room 15 feet square.

² Oriol window.

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The master bedroom has a fireplace of marble combined with hand-carved birch. Atop the tower, which is the most distinguishing feature of the house, is a den or hobby room.

These features, including the hand-carved staircase and mantels add to the distinguished nature of this home. The hand crafted plaster and woodwork show the long hours of hard work skilled craftsmen put in to satisfy the Florida family. Still these features still exist within the home.

Integrity-

The Minaret Manor retains a great amount of integrity. Few of the windows have been replaced, but care was taken to replace the original windows with similar pane arrangements. Since its construction the whole house has been rewired and the original HVAC system has been replaced with a geothermal system. At the time the house was built the original HVAC system received attention in the newspapers for costing nearly \$50,000 to put in. A metal roof system has been placed over the second floor of the solarium but does not detract from the overall appearance of the home, and is barely visible, unless you are under it, due to its thin design.

Front Entrance Walls, Gates, Driveway, and Sidewalks - Contributing

On the south side of the house, are two large arching brick walls from which the entrance gates are attached. Within the large red brick walls, there is an interlocking diamond pattern created by the lack of bricks in the wall structure. The gate posts are also clad in brick and have a diagonal basketweave bond pattern similar to the pattern found within the half-timbering on the main house. The Wrought-iron gates are wonderfully handcrafted and are attached to the gate posts. As previously described, the driveway is a beautiful front entrance mall or approach, lined with pecan trees. The red brick, hand laid driveway measures 270 feet long and 130 feet wide and leads to a circular drive.

Swimming Pool- Non-Contributing

Located behind the house to the north is the former swimming pool. The once large, all tile swimming pool, with a circular spray fountain, has been infilled with sand and dirt, leaving only the oval appearance of what was once at this location.

Bathhouse- Contributing

The Bathhouse that was built to accompany the pool, measures 20 x 40 feet and is covered by a hipped roof. A recessed porch is located on the south elevation of the bathhouse and is located below the hipped roof while an entranceway into the men's and women's changing area is located along the inner walls of the recessed porch. On either side of the recessed porch is a wall dormer with a four-by-four, casement window located below the dormer. The east and west elevations are identical and only contain a single, four-by-four, casement window. The rear or north elevation contains a limited amount of fenestration. The middle bay of the back of the

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bathroom extends outward and consists of a slightly off-center to the left, four-by-four, casement window and a five-panel wooden door located near the right edge of the extension.

Garden Shed- Contributing

The garden shed is located on the west edge of the property. The garden shed is accessed via the hand laid red brick sidewalk. The sidewalk brings you to a set of double, wooden screen doors. Located on either side of the screen door there is a look-a-like stationary screen doors. These screened in areas resemble the doors, but are unable to swing open and shut. Working counter-clockwise around the building, the north elevation consists of only a single wooden screen door. A large sheet of plywood is covering an area that probably would have consisted of two more faux screen doors that do not swing open or shut. This is probable as the same design pattern is shown on the south elevation with the two extra screened in areas. The rear or west elevation consists of only a chimney with a large base. Within the base of the chimney there is small steel door and a smaller ash basin covered by another steel door.

Servants' House/ Garage- Contributing

The servants' house is located on the east side of the home. When built the downstairs consisted of an apartment with living room, bedroom, and bath, while the second floor consisted of two bedrooms and a bath. The building has two main masses with one mass consisting of the first and the second floor apartments covered by a gable roof, while the northern addition is only a single story and has a flat roof. The west elevation consists of a slightly off-center to the left doorway. To the right of the entrance is a small one-over-one, double-hung window located near the top of the first floor wall. Centrally located between the small window and the southwest corner of the building is a typical single-pane stationary window. To the left of the front door of the servants' house, is another centrally-located typical single-pane stationary window which is centrally located between the door and the original northwest corner of the building. At the original northwest corner the building steps back an inch for the addition that was added. Within the addition, there is a single, centrally-located four-by-four, casement window. Located on the second story of the main body of the servants' house are three dormers. The two outside dormers are smaller and contain a single, single-pane stationary window. The centrally-located dormer contains half-timbering with a basket weaved design between the timbers and a single, single-pane stationary window. There is no ornamentation on the south elevation except a louvered gable vent and no ornamentation on the east elevation. The west elevation contains the west elevation of both the one story addition and the second gable area of the main body of the servants' house. Located on the first floor of the addition is a small one-over-one-over one, triple-hung window off set to the left of center and a set of double steel doors off-set to the right of central. The second story gable area consists of a centrally-located doorway to allow access onto the flat roof of the addition and a louvered gable vent. Outside of the house near the addition there is a red brick outdoor bar-b-q pit.

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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

1948

Significant Dates

1948

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Hanker and Heyer (Architect)
John F. Highberger (Landscape Architect)
Ben White Construction (Builder)

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

The Minaret Manor exemplifies a myriad of architectural styles including Tudor Revival and Late Gothic Revival traditions within Mississippi County. It is not the only house in the area to have Tudor-Revival detailing, but it is a finest and most grand example of an American's interpretation of architectural styles found in England during this time period. Tudor Revival is commonly defined by the application of half-timbering and large decorative chimneys. The Minaret Manor is an elaborate example of the English or Tudor Revival in the Mississippi County and the Delta Region of Arkansas brought to the forefront by Andrew J. Florida in 1948. The Minaret Manor was built in 1948 as the residential center of a 15-acre building site in Mississippi County on what was the western edge of Osceola, Arkansas. The home is approximately 10,000 square feet and in the Tudor Revival style with some late Gothic Revival influences. This wonderful example of a Tudor Revival home was built by Andrew J. Florida, who was a noteworthy farmer, landowner, real estate developer, banker, and insurance agent in much of Eastern Arkansas and Memphis, Tennessee. Andrew J. Florida and his wife, Lennie Florida, traveled extensively throughout the world in the late 1930s and into the 1940s, and brought architectural ideas back to Osceola, Arkansas, that they would like to see constructed for themselves. Therefore, the Minaret Manor is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criteria C** for its expression of Tudor Revival and Late Gothic Revival architecture.

Narrative Statement of Significance

The Minaret Manor is located toward the northwestern edge of Osceola, Arkansas. While the property that makes up the Minaret Manor was outside city limits in 1948, today all of the property associated with the original 15 acres Andrew J. Florida developed for his home is located within the city limits.³ Osceola was founded in 1837 near the banks of the Mississippi river. For years the industry of Osceola was mixed. The diverse economy included produce farming, logging and trapping.⁴

The Florida family was original from Monroe County, Tennessee, where they owned a farm outright by 1900. The Florida family began when George T. Florida married Lillie Hale on June 12, 1890. They had their first child Susie in July 1891, nearly one year after their marriage. Followed shortly thereafter by daughter Jeannie, and sons Thomas, James, George and Andrew by 1906-1907, with the youngest daughter Lillian born by 1912. As the Florida family began to grow, George T. Florida decided to move the family from Sweetwater, Tennessee, in Monroe County to Monroe Township just to the west of Osceola, Arkansas, in 1918. At the time the family moved to the Osceola area, the oldest Brother Thomas Porter Florida was fighting overseas during World War I. Upon returning from World War I, Thomas' father and brothers

³ According to David Tucker Code Enforcement Officer for the City of Osceola the land associated with the Minaret Manor was annexed into the City of Osceola on May 10, 1961.

⁴ John Boyd Mitchell, "Osceola: A Delta Cotton Community," *The Delta Historical Review* 1.3 (Spring 1991): 36.

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were already “starting a family business which included farming, real estate and banking.”⁵ It is also at this time that Florida Real Estate was starting to break into the life insurance business where they represented the Jefferson Standard Life Insurance Company of Greensboro, North Carolina. This life insurance company was one of the strongest companies in the Mississippi River Delta at this point in time.⁶

The Florida family and the Florida Brothers and Company began to reap the harvest of the loans and insurance business while the investments of the 1920s were still strong. Riding the proverbial coat tails of their father’s great investments and farming business,⁷ the Florida Brothers kept the up the pace that George F. Florida had set until his death on December 11, 1929. His death came only a month and half after the Stock Market crash of October 24, 1929, though it is unrelated to his death. George F. Florida passed away after a ten-day battle with flu like symptoms.⁸ However, even with the drop in the stock market, the crashing of the financial institutions, and some of the driest years on record, the Florida Brothers were able to maintain a prosperous business and lifestyle during these hard economic times.

Even with the financial stability of the country falling in around the Florida family, the brothers seemed to not have a care in the world as they continued to live and spend lavishly on trips, material possessions, and in keeping up their business. This is noted in an article dated July 13, 1930, that states “George Florida and Andrew Florida of the Florida Real Estate Loan Company of Osceola and D.F. Taylor, Osceola attorney are on an extended motor trip through New England [that] states will combine business and pleasure. They expect to return about the middle of August....”⁹

With many of the business and pleasure road trips out of the way in New England, Andrew Florida was also getting ready to marry in October to a Miss Lennie Welch of Memphis, Tennessee. Lennie Welch was the daughter of Rev. and Mrs. C.E. Welch. The two quietly married in Jonesboro, Arkansas, where the bride was a student at the Baptist college.¹⁰ The ceremony was small and attended by only close family members.¹¹ Following the ceremony the two quickly left for a “ten day trip to St. Louis and other points of interest.”¹² Following the wedding and road trip, Andrew Florida and his wife returned to their new home known as

⁵ “Florida Brothers build empire at Osceola during the 1930s,” *Blytheville Courier News*, 18 September 1994.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ During George F. Florida’s time living in Tennessee, he farmed and raised pure bred horses and livestock. His prize winning stock is noted as winning many trophies and awards in state and interstate competitions. (“George Florida of Osceola Dies,” *Blytheville Courier News*, 12 December 1929, 1.)

⁸ “George Florida of Osceola Dies,” *Blytheville Courier News*, 12 December 1929, 1.

⁹ “Osceola Society- Personal,” *Blytheville Courier News*, 13 July 1930, 2.

¹⁰ This time Jonesboro had a Baptist college known as the Jonesboro Baptist College. The college closed in 1934 citing lack of funding for the closure. (Paul Batesel, “Jonesboro College,” *Lost Colleges*, <http://www.lostcolleges.com/#!jonesboro-college/c1iy/>)

¹¹ “Osceola Society- Personal,” *Blytheville Courier News*, 7 October 1930, 2.

¹² *Ibid.*

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“Granite Cove,” in what is today the front yard of the Minaret Manor at the corner of Ermen Lane and Semmes Avenue.¹³

By late 1930, the Florida Brother’s business must have been prospering during this economically shaken time, because by November 1930 they were moving into a large office located in the old Chevrolet Building in Osceola owned by James Driver. The cost to renovate the building was set at \$4,000. It was claimed at this point in time the new offices were some of the “handsomest office suites in the state.”¹⁴ The offices would have a spacious reception room, red gum floor and paneled walls. It seems that money was no object for the interior designers and contractors for these new offices for the “Fabulous Florida Brothers,” as they were often referred to. Still the Florida Brothers operation would not stay in this location very long.

Only six years after the Florida Brother’s business moved into the “Old Chevrolet Building” they were preparing to build a new building for the businesses operation. The new building now known as the Florida Brother’s Building, which was listed to the National Register of Historic Places in 1987, was started in late October or early November 1936 to house the Florida Brothers and Company investment banking firm operated by Thomas and James Florida while brothers George and Andrew were in the process of building a new \$40,000 home for the Florida Real Estate and Loan Company at the corner of Hale Avenue and US 61. Both buildings were to be completed by the beginning of 1937,¹⁵ but were not completed and furnished until June 1937.¹⁶ Consequently, as the office space became bigger, so did the staff, as multiple articles were printed talking about families moving into Osceola to work for the Florida Brothers.¹⁷ Though money remained tight for many families in the United States, and especially farmers in the Arkansas Delta, the “Fabulous Florida Brothers” continued to prosper.

By 1939, the Florida Brothers set out to incorporate the two businesses into one, with Andrew J. Florida being listed as the resident agent. At this point in time capital stock of the corporation was “placed at \$50,000 with \$500 as the beginning capital.”¹⁸ The larger corporation would be known as the Florida Brothers Real Estate and Loan Company.

With the incorporation of the business into one entity, Andrew J. Florida continued to spend lavishly on himself including taking his wife on an eight-week vacation to Miami, Florida, and Birmingham and Mobile, Alabama in 1941. These types of trips were disguised as business trips, probably to write them off of his taxes as will be shown in his business ventures throughout the 1940s and 1950s.¹⁹

¹³ “Osceola Today Is A City of Beautiful Tree-Shaded Homes,” *Blytheville Courier News*, 1 July 1936, 1-E.

¹⁴ “Florida Loan Company in Handsome Quarters,” *Blytheville Courier News*, 28 November 1930, 3.

¹⁵ “Florida Bros. and Co. Let Building Contract,” *Blytheville Courier News*, 29 October 1936, 1.

¹⁶ “Osceola Firm in Attractive New Quarters,” *Blytheville Courier News*, 8 June 1937, 3.

¹⁷ “Osceola Society- Personal,” *Blytheville Courier News*, 3 April 1937, 3.

¹⁸ Contrary to other articles that came after citing the incorporation as being found in 1942 (ie. “Florida Brothers build empire at Osceola during the 1930s,” *Blytheville Courier News*, 18 September 1994.), it was actually incorporated in 1939. (“Corporation To Deal In Realty Organized,” *Blytheville Courier News*, 24 April 1939, 1.)

¹⁹ “Osceola Society- Personal,” *Blytheville Courier News*, 28 May 1941, 3.

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By 1947, the Florida Real Estate and Loan Company was continuing to move in a strong direction with large real estate purchases yet to be made. In January 1947, the company pulled off a large transaction which included the purchasing of 16,000 acres of land in northeast Arkansas, nearly 4,000 acres of land in Southwestern Mississippi, and a large timber contract for areas around Memphis for a grand total of \$3.7 Million. It is noted at this time that this purchase was one of the largest real estate deals in the Mid South's history.²⁰

Things were continuing on the up and up for Andrew Florida as he would continue his rise in the company and in the community of Osceola and the City of Memphis. Later in 1947, the Brothers used their good-fortune and their fortune to help the City of Memphis construct 2,250 low-income homes in the South Memphis neighborhood in Memphis, Tennessee.

Only a year after purchasing the 16,000 acres from the Chapman-Dewey land holding, Andrew and George Florida sold the lumber interest back to some of the original owners in April 1948. As part of the transaction the lumber interest of the Mississippi Valley Hardwood Company that the Florida Brothers had bought earlier were also included. This sale of some of the lumber interest back to the original owners helped the Florida Real Estate and Loan Company receive back \$1 Million in this single transaction. It is with this sale, that Andrew J. Florida was able to pay for the construction of his new "English-Style Mansion."

In June 1948, is it quoted as saying that "Construction has been started by Mr. and Mrs. Andrew J. Florida of Osceola of one of the largest homes, a two-story English-style mansion, in Arkansas and perhaps the entire Southland."²¹

The home was designed by Hanker and Heyer of Memphis. The firm had worked on previous Florida Brother projects, but was also widely used in the Mid-South region during much of the late 1930s, 40s and 50s. The firm is "long identified with the commercial, industrial, and cultural progress of the Mid-South. The firm had its beginning in 1897 as Hanker and Cairns and had followed the growth and development of Memphis and the surrounding territory since that time."²² By 1937, Cairns had passed away and Carl Heyer, became Principal at the firm.

As part of the design presented to Mr. and Mrs. Florida, the mansion would sit on 15 acres behind the family's current home, "Granite Cove." The home was designed with 24 rooms which would

".... cover almost a half of a city block and [would] be 156 feet wide. The entrance will have a marble floor and the wall paneled in walnut, as well be the library....

²⁰ "Osceola Men Purchase 16,000 Acres in Northeast Arkansas In \$3,700,000 Transaction: Chapman-Dewey Interest Sell Lumber ad Realty Holdings," *Blytheville Courier News*, 3 January 1947, 1.

²¹ "Osceola Couple Builds English-Style Mansion," *Blytheville Courier News*, 17 June 1948, 1.

²² William J. Hanker and Carl C. Heyer, *Over Fifty Years of Architectural Achievement in the Mid-South* (Memphis: T.C. Toof, 1952), Forward.

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Features include an air conditioning and heating system which will cost about \$50,000 with temperature controls for each room; an inter-room communication system throughout the house; a burglar alarm which connects with each room and in the event of an alarm would automatically flood the entire state with electric lights.”²³

The outside of the mansion would also be well designed with a 9-hole golf course,²⁴ a Mediterranean blue tile swimming pool²⁵ and gardens designed by John F. Highberger, also of Memphis, Tennessee. By the time that the house was finished in its lavish decoration of the time, it was reported or estimated that the cost of the project ranged between \$250,000 and \$500,000.²⁶

The design of the Minaret Manor at 844 West Semmes Avenue is clearly derived from the romantic period styles which became popular in the late 1920s. English Revival in character, the house features a large tower /turret and pseudo half-timbering with patterned brickwork and decorative English Revival/Tudor Revival style castellated parapets. Yet, the most distinctive characteristic of the home is its brickwork. The dark red brick veneer covers the exterior walls and features limestone quoining at corners and around windows and doors throughout the exterior surface. This is really noticeable in the three story tall tower on the south elevation where this decorative brickwork is featured. The detailing in the brickwork is also shown between the half-timbering in the gable ends of the main body of the house and the garage. The diagonal basketweave detailing is common on the parapeted gable subtype of the Tudor Revival style of architecture. Though there are really six principal subtypes of cladding found on this style of home during this period, the parapeted gable subtype is the second most rare type among the six. McAlester states that...

“this distinctive subtype is based on the more formal English building traditions of Late Medieval times....Shaped Flemish gables are common as are flat roofed towers and bays having castellated parapets. Elaborate façade detailing of Gothic or Renaissance inspiration is quite common; half-timbering is unusual.”²⁷

Though half-timbering was unusual, the Florida’s applied the feature to the exterior of the home and in doing so that applied a more common practice of infilling the half-timbering with diagonal basketweave brickwork to this uncommon subtype. Though brick was the most common exterior wall material for Tudor Revival architecture, “walls of solid brick masonry were sometimes used on landmark examples.”²⁸ This not the case for the Minaret Manor, as it is not a “modest cottage,” but a large principal landmark in Northeast Arkansas.

²³ “Osceola Couple Builds English-Style Mansion,” *Blytheville Courier News*, 17 June 1948, 1.

²⁴ It is noted in the article and early references to the house that a 9-hole golf course was designed for the house, but the current owner states that it was only a 3-hole golf course that was built. More research would need to be conducted to properly track the change.

²⁵ “Fashion Show to Be Held,” *Blytheville Courier News*, 31 June 1950, 4.

²⁶ “Osceola Couple Builds English-Style Mansion,” *Blytheville Courier News*, 17 June 1948, 1.

²⁷ Virginia McAlester and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1984),356.

²⁸ Though brick was primarily used for the landmark buildings of this style by the 1940s, brick was being primarily used on even the most modest of Tudor Revival homes. *Ibid*, 355.

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Though the earliest American houses in this style date from the late 19th century, many of them were closely copied models of English homes with Renaissance detailing that was far less common than those models found between 1900 and 1920, which were viewed as “less pretentious” examples of English or Tudor Revival architecture.²⁹ Even though the Minaret Manor falls outside of the typical time frame for Tudor Revival architecture by roughly 10 to 15 years, for the more modest or less pretentious Tudor Revival homes, the more grand examples of this style and influence began in the late 19th century in the United States. It is noted by Virginia McAlester that these larger more grand examples...

“tended to be architect-designed landmarks which like the first American Queen Anne houses built twenty years earlier, rather closely copied English models. Many were patterned after late Medieval buildings... that were popular during the reigns of Elizabeth I (1558-1603) and James I (1603-1625), the Elizabethan and Jacobean era of English History.”³⁰

Scholars have proposed the architectural style for this period as the Jacobethan. Due to the Florida Family’s travels they specifically sought out a more Jacobethan style of for this Tudor style landmark.

What the Florida Family created and constructed in Osceola really is a landmark for Northeast Arkansas and the Arkansas Delta. Even with the beautiful 24-room mansion, there were only two people to live in this large house. Yet, this mansion would become the epicenter of many problems Andrew Florida would find himself in, in the years to come. As the wealth continued to roll in for Andrew Florida, his lavish lifestyle only continued to amaze the citizens of Osceola, Arkansas. In 1950, he hosted a fashion show in which 24 models displayed the latest fashions of Levy’s in Memphis as the models strolled from the bathhouse around the pool and along the flagstone terrace of the home all for the benefit of the Osceola Progressive Club.³¹

The fashion show was such an affair that it noted in the paper the day of the fashion show that all tickets were sold for the event and that the Osceola police would be on hand to direct traffic as to not cause traffic congestion on Highway 40. In total nearly 1200 people showed up to the fashion show and traffic and parking was diverted to the Osceola High School parking lot where four buses would be used to transport patrons to and from the event. This is not the only event that house was used for, given its size and stature in the community, it was frequently used as a wedding venue and entertainment spot for community members and business interests of Mr. Andrew Florida. It was not uncommon for businessmen to stay and be entertained while Mr. Florida was writing off the house as a business expense.

Following events like this and those mentioned previously in the name of social activism, Andrew J. Florida donated 6.7 acres of land in the Watson Addition to the City of Osceola for

²⁹ *Ibid*, 358.

³⁰ *Ibid*.

³¹ “Fashion Show to Be Held,” *Blytheville Courier News*, 31 June 1950, 4.

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use as a city park. However, that would be the last big philanthropic contribution Andrew Florida would be able to make before his lavish lifestyle began to fall apart and the empire that was built began to crumble.

Starting in 1954, Mrs. Andrew J. Florida filed for divorce citing indignities. At the time a property settlement had been agreed upon and Mr. Florida was not going to contest the divorce.³² As early as late 1956, many of the clients of the Florida Brothers operations come under great scrutiny of the Internal Revenue Service. It is stated by the Federal District Attorney that “six firms through which Andrew Florida is accused of defrauding the government were dummy operations.”³³ The initial Federal court case against Andrew Florida was held in Memphis, in which Andrew J. Florida was charged with evading payment of \$361,521³⁴ in income taxes over a two-year period from January 1952 to July 1954,³⁵ as he was operating several corporations out of his office in Memphis. Throughout the entire trial in Memphis Federal Court, Mr. Florida never appeared in trial, due to a “heart illness.” The Memphis trial date was set for April 21, 1958,³⁶ though it was postponed to September 8, 1958, due to Andrew Florida’s illness.³⁷

Only a month before the trial was set to begin in Memphis Federal Court, Andrew Florida was hit again with tax evasion charges from the U.S. Attorney’s office in Little Rock.³⁸ In the Federal Case in Little Rock, the court heard arguments that the Florida’s failed to pay \$133,000 in personal income in 1951. At the same time as the criminal court case, a civil case was also levied against George and Andrew Florida and their wives in which the government “seeks more than \$11 Million in back taxes, penalties and interest it claims is owed.”³⁹

With court cases still in limbo, Federal Judge J. Smith authorized that three firms operated by the Floridas be put in receivership, under Beverly J. Lampert, Jr., of West Memphis. Within three months of ordering the three firms into receivership, all of the properties owned and operated by George and Andrew Florida were also placed in receivership until all litigation was finalized.⁴⁰ By 1962, the original \$11.5 Million charge was lowered to about \$9.5 Million as some of it was duplication.

³² There is no current information regarding whether the divorce was ever finalized. Both Mr. and Mrs. Florida were brought up on tax evasion charges just months later. Mr. and Mrs. Florida are buried together in Memorial Park Cemetery in Memphis Tennessee. This seems to indicate that Mrs. Florida saw the tax evasion law suit coming and wanted to separate herself from the legal action. This is only a hypothesis, though.

³³ “A.J. Florida Lawyers Said Seeking Delay,” *Blytheville Courier News*, 14 January 1958, 1.

³⁴ Other news sources put the tax evasion closer to \$700,000 and that the time in which the evasion happened was between 1951 and 1953. (“East Arkansas Banker is Accused of Tax Evasion,” *Harrison Daily Times*, 14 January 1958, 1.)

³⁵ “A.J. Florida Lawyers Said Seeking Delay,” *Blytheville Courier News*, 14 January 1958, 1.

³⁶ “Andrew J. Florida Attorneys Rebuffed in Pleas to Judge,” *Blytheville Courier News*, 24 January 1958, 1.

³⁷ “Andrew Florida Again Charged with Evasion,” *Blytheville Courier News*, 15 March 1958, 1 and 3.

³⁸ The reasoning for the dual tax evasion cases as stipulated by the Federal officials in 1958 as “additional charge was filed against Andrew Florida here [Little Rock] because law requires that tax cases be tried in court in the district in which the violations occurred. They said that Florida filed his 1951 personal tax return with the Internal Revenue Service in Little Rock, while returns questioned in the Tennessee case were filed at Nashville, Tenn.” (“Andrew Florida Again Charged with Evasion,” *Blytheville Courier News*, 15 March 1958, 1 and 3.)

³⁹ “Court Grants Florida Request to Use Funds,” *Blytheville Courier News*, 16 March 1959, 1.

⁴⁰ “Declined to Stay Receiver Order,” *Hope Star*, 9 March 1960, 2.

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At the center of one whole day of the trial was the Minaret Manor and its use. In testimony on April 9, 1962, the central aspect taken up was the “claim by Andrew Florida that he should be allowed to deduct as business expense large sums spent dining and lodging business associates at his Osceola home.”⁴¹ Thomas Florida, Andrew Florida’s brother, testified that they called the Minaret Manor “the Florida motel” in relation to it being used frequently for visiting business executives.⁴² Multiple other acquaintances were brought in to testify on the use of the 24 bedroom home, with many of them stating that business executives from across the country were entertained and lodged at the home of Andrew Florida.

After years of delays due to illness and the slow court system, the verdict was finally handed down in December 1965. Of the original amount of some \$6.6 million in failed tax reporting between 1951 and 1954, the trial judge, Judge J. Smith ruled that the prosecution was only able to make a case for the fraudulent activity on \$3.4 Million. As part of the settlement, there would be the amount owed on the back taxes, a 50% fraud penalty and a 6% interest from the date the tax was due.⁴³ The grand total owed to the government after everything was settled would be \$6.4 Million.⁴⁴

Though the amount of the infraction was settled the paying off of the debt was not settled until late September 1967. At this time the both Andrew and George Florida were forced to sell their homes and other land assets to their brother Thomas for a total of \$2.3 Million. The \$2.3 Million that was received for the assets, was then used to help pay off part of the \$6.4 Million owed to the Federal Government. When the sale took place in 1967 to hand ownership over to Thomas Florida,⁴⁵ the Minaret Manor was appraised at \$342,000, “but government experts agreed that it might sell for less than \$102,000, because the market for such homes in Osceola is something less than active.”⁴⁶ Due to the selling off of many of Andrew and George Florida’s assets, the case was settled. Yet, the next couple of years were not any better to Andrew or his brother George. In October 1968, a year after the court cases were settled, George passed away while visiting family in Sweetwater, Tennessee, at the age of 67.⁴⁷ Only a year later, Andrew Florida would also pass away in June 1969, from the heart condition that plagued him throughout the entire trial.⁴⁸

By 1968, the Minaret Manor was up for sale in Osceola. It is at this time that Roy Cox purchased the Minaret Manor as a “gift for his wife,” Eloise.⁴⁹ Roy Cox was a successful farmer, gin

⁴¹ “500,000 Home Called a “Motel” at Tax Trail,” *Northwest Arkansas Times*, 10 April 1962, 9.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ “Tax Suit Lost By Osceolans,” *Blytheville Courier News*, 11 December 1965, 1.

⁴⁴ “Against Floridas \$6.4 Million Is Awarded,” *Blytheville Courier News*, 9 February 1966, 1.

⁴⁵ Contemporary authorship from local news agencies contradicts the selling of the house to Thomas Florida, but claim that the Federal Government put the home up for sale. At this point, the actual transaction from the Floridas to the Cox family is still unclear given the payoff of the debt by the Floridas.

⁴⁶ “Tax Case Settled For \$2.3 Million,” *Blytheville Courier News*, 13 February 1967, 1.

⁴⁷ “A.M. Round Up: George Florida,” *Blytheville Courier News*, 19 October 1968, 1.

⁴⁸ “Florida Services Tomorrow at 2,” *Blytheville Courier News*, 13 June 1969, 1.

⁴⁹ Arkansas Northeastern College, “Foundation Hosts Christmas Tour at Cox-Florida Mansion,” *Connections Magazine* (Fall/Winter 2011): 9.

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operator and farm implement dealer in most of the Arkansas Delta region with farmland located in Mississippi County; Dumas, Arkansas; and Lake Village, Arkansas. He also owned six gins at various times with locations in Luxora, Loudon, Bassett, Golden Lake, Lake Village, and Dumas. When not running the farmland or the gins, Roy Cox owned and operated an Allis-Chalmers and Minneapolis-Moline implement company in Bassett, Arkansas.⁵⁰

During the Cox family's time living in the mansion and growing up, the swimming pool was rarely used and the bathhouse was mainly used for storage causing these areas to begin to become rundown. Gene Cox is noted as saying that the large pool had become a large pond for turtles.⁵¹ Roy and Eloise lived in the mansion until Roy's death in 2004, when the mansion was inherited by his son Gene Cox. It is at this time that Gene Cox filled in the swimming pool with 19 truckloads of sand and dirt, though the outline of the pool is still visible.

Gene Cox has since endowed the Minaret Manor to the Arkansas Northeastern College. With the endowment, Arkansas Northeastern College owns the property, but Gene Cox continues to live on and care for the property until his death. At that point Arkansas Northeastern College will take over the property.⁵²

The beautiful Minaret Manor has been the centerpiece for lavish living, entertainment and extravagant court drama in the Arkansas Delta City of Osceola between 1948 and 1968. The Minaret Manor exemplifies a myriad of architectural styles including the Tudor Revival and Late Gothic Revival traditions within Mississippi County. It is not the only house in the area to have Tudor Revival detailing, but it is a finest and most grand example of an American's interpretation of architectural styles found in England during this time period. Tudor Revival is commonly defined by the application of half-timbering and large decorative chimneys. The Minaret Manor is an elaborate example of the English or Tudor Revival in the Mississippi County and the Delta Region of Arkansas brought to the forefront by Andrew J. Florida in 1948. This 10,000 square-foot mansion would become and continues to be the centerpiece of community activities for years to come. Therefore, the Minaret Manor is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion C** with **local significance** as an excellent example of large English or Tudor Revival home built in 1948, in Osceola, Arkansas.

⁵⁰ Sandra Brand, "Historic Home Endowed to ANC," *Blytheville Courier News*, 14 January 2011.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*

Minaret Manor
Name of Property

Mississippi County, Arkansas
County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography:

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- "Florida Brothers build empire at Osceola during the 1930s," *Blytheville Courier News*, 18 September 1994.
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- "Osceola Society-Personal," *Blytheville Courier News*, 7 October 1930, 2.
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- "Osceola Today Is A City of Beautiful Tree-Shaded Homes," *Blytheville Courier News*, 1 July 1936, 1-E.
- "Florida Bros. and Co. Let Building Contract," *Blytheville Courier News*, 29 October 1936, 1.
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- "Osceola Society-Personal," *Blytheville Courier News*, 3 April 1937, 3.
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- "Osceola Society-Personal," *Blytheville Courier News*, 28 May 1941, 3.
- "Osceola Men Purchase 16,000 Acres in Northeast Arkansas In \$3,700,000 Transaction: Chapman-Dewey Interest Sell Lumber and Realty Holdings," *Blytheville Courier News*, 3 January 1947, 1.
- "Osceola Couple Builds English-Style Mansion," *Blytheville Courier News*, 17 June 1948, 1.
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Minaret Manor
Name of Property

Mississippi County, Arkansas
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- “A.J. Florida Lawyers Said Seeking Delay,” *Blytheville Courier News*, 14 January 1958, 1.
- “East Arkansas Banker is Accused of Tax Evasion,” *Harrison Daily Times*, 14 January 1958, 1.
- “Andrew J. Florida Attorneys Rebuffed in Pleas to Judge,” *Blytheville Courier News*, 24 January 1958, 1.
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- “Declined to Stay Receiver Order,” *Hope Star*, 9 March 1960, 2.
- “500,000 Home Called a “Motel” at Tax Trial,” *Northwest Arkansas Times*, 10 April 1962, 9.
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- “Against Floridas \$6.4 Million Is Awarded,” *Blytheville Courier News*, 9 February 1966, 1.
- “Tax Case Settled For \$2.3 Million,” *Blytheville Courier News*, 13 February 1967, 1.
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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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

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

Minaret Manor
Name of Property

Mississippi County, Arkansas
County and State

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): MS0411

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 5.32

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: 16 | Easting: 230312 | Northing: 3955490 |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

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

PARCEL NO. 1:

Minaret Manor

Name of Property

Mississippi County, Arkansas

County and State

A tract of land in the NW 1/4 of Section 36, Township 13 North, Range 10 East, described as follows:
Beginning at the Southwest corner of the NW 1/4 of Section 36, aforesaid, thence North 30 feet; thence East 186 feet to the point of beginning; thence East 250 feet to a stake; thence North 680 feet to center of Bayou; thence run Northwesterly along the center of said Bayou 430 feet, more or less to a point where the center line of said Bayou intersects the East line of the gravel road bisected by Section line between Sections 35 and 36, Township 13 North, Range 10 East; thence South along the East side of said gravel road 510 feet, more or less, to a stake at the Northwest corner of the present A.J. Florida lot, thence East 156 feet to a stake; thence South 271 feet to the point of beginning, containing six acres, more or less.

LESS AND EXCEPT the following described tract:

A lot carved out of the SW 1/4 NW 1/4 Section 36, Township 13 North, Range 10 East, described as follows:

Beginning at the SW corner of the NW 1/4 of said Section 36, said Township and Range, running thence North 30 feet, thence East 336 feet for a point of beginning, thence East 100 feet to a stake; thence North 271 feet, thence West 100 feet, thence South 271 feet to the point of beginning.

LESS AND EXCEPT:

An irregular lot in the SW 1/4 NW 1/4 of Section 36, Township 13 North, Range 10 East, Osceola, Arkansas, being more particularly described as:

Beginning at a point which lies 692.60 feet North and 30 feet East of the Southwest corner of said SW 1/4 NW 1/4; thence from point of beginning run North along the East right-of-way line of Ermen Lane, 130.00 feet to the Southwest corner of Lot One, Block One of Northgate Addition; thence South 87°03'04" E and coincident with the South Line of Lot One, 90.50 feet to the common corner to Lots One and Two; thence South 87°13'21" E and coincident with the South line of Lot One, 58.25 feet; thence South 122.52 feet; thence West 148.56 feet to the Point of Beginning, and containing .430 acres, more or less, being subject to a 20 foot wide ingress and egress (road) easement across the South side, and subject to all easements and rights of way of record, also known as Lot 13 A according to Survey of Tim White, White Land Surveying, dated July 21, 1995.

LESS AND EXCEPT:

An irregular lot in the SW 1/4 NW 1/4 of Section 36, Township 13 North, Range 10 East, Osceola, Arkansas, being more particularly described as:

Beginning at a point which lies 594.70 feet north and 30 feet East of the Southwest corner of said SW 1/4 NW 1/4; thence from point of beginning run North along the East right-of-way line of Ermen Lane, 97.90 feet, thence East 148.56 feet; thence South 97.90 feet, thence West 148.56 feet to the Point of Beginning and containing .334 acres, more or less, being subject to all easements and rights of way of record, also known as Lot 13 B according to Survey of Tim White, White Land Surveying dated July 21, 1995.

LESS AND EXCEPT:

Minaret Manor
Name of Property

Mississippi County, Arkansas
County and State

A 0.49 acre parcel of land lying in the Southwest Quarter (SW /14) of the Northwest Quarter (NW, 114) of Section 36, Township 13 North, (T-13-N), Range 10 East (R-10-E) City of Osceola, Mississippi County, Arkansas and being a part of a survey done by White Land Company dated July 21, 1995, and filed in Plat Book 5, pages 35-36 in the office of the Circuit Court Clerk and Ex-Officio Recorder of Mississippi County (Osceola District), Arkansas, and being more particularly described as: Commencing at the Southeast corner of Lot 13 A of said survey recorded in Plat Book 5, pages 35-36, thence North 10.00 feet along the East line of said Lot 13 A to a point in the center of a brick drive, said point being the POINT OF BEGINNING, thence continue North 112.52 feet to the Northeast corner of said Lot 13 A, thence South 87.13'12" East 2.75 feet to the Southeast corner of Lot 2, Block 1, Northgate Addition, thence South 78.39'35" East 62.11 feet to the Southeast corner of Lot 3, Block 1, Northgate Addition, thence South 68.15'52" East 62.00 feet to the Southeast corner of Lot 4, Block 1, Northgate Addition, thence South 67.45'24" East 141.54 feet, thence South 00.06'11" West 46.64 feet, thence North 84.47'18" West 253.21 feet to the Point of Beginning, containing 0.49 acres, more or less and being subject to all easements, right of way restriction of record.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the mansion and outbuildings that have historically been part of the Minaret Manor. Extraneous land holds that have been sold off, are not included.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Travis Ratermann (Survey Historian)
organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
street & number: 323 Center St Suite 1500
city or town: Little Rock state: Arkansas zip code: 72201
e-mail travis@arkansasheritage.org
telephone: 501-324-9874
date: 11/30/2016

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.)

Minaret Manor

Name of Property

Mississippi County, Arkansas

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: Minaret Manor

City or Vicinity: Osceola

County: Mississippi County

State: Arkansas

Photographer: Travis Ratermann

Date Photographed: May 13, 2014

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

Photo#1 (AR_Mississippi County_Minaret Manor _0001)

Interior of the Minaret Manor. Camera facing west.

Photo#2 (AR_Mississippi County_Minaret Manor _0002)

Detail of the ceiling within the Minaret Manor. Camera facing up.

Photo#3 (AR_Mississippi County_Minaret Manor _0003)

Interior detail of the double central staircase. Camera facing north.

Photo#4 (AR_Mississippi County_Minaret Manor _0004)

Photograph of the details located around the interior door frame. Camera facing east.

Photo#5 (AR_Washington County_Skillen House _0005)

Photograph of the south elevation. Camera facing north.

Photo#6 (AR_Washington County_Skillen House _0006)

Photograph of the east side of the south elevation. Camera facing north.

Photo#7 (AR_Washington County_Skillen House _0007)

Photograph of the Turret/Tower on the south elevation. Camera facing northwest.

Photo#8 (AR_Washington County_Skillen House _0008)

Photograph of the north elevation. Camera facing southwest.

Minaret Manor

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Mississippi County, Arkansas

County and State

Photo#9 (AR_ Washington County_Skillen House _0009)

Photograph of the north elevation. Camera facing south.

Photo#10 (AR_ Washington County_Skillen House _0010)

Detail photograph of the basketweave pattern in the gable. Camera facing south.

Photo#11 (AR_ Washington County_Skillen House _0011)

Photograph of the north elevation. Camera facing southeast.

Photo#12 (AR_ Washington County_Skillen House _0012)

Perspective of the Southeast corner of the Minaret Manor. Camera facing northeast.

Photo#13 (AR_ Washington County_Skillen House _0013)

Detail photograph of the front entrance of the Minaret Manor. Camera facing north.

Photo#14 (AR_ Washington County_Skillen House _0014)

Photograph of the brick driveway leading from the Minaret Manor to the road. Camera facing south.

Photo#15 (AR_ Washington County_Skillen House _0015)

Photograph of the west elevation of the Servant's House. Camera facing east.

Photo#16 (AR_ Washington County_Skillen House _0016)

Photograph of the south elevation of the Pool House. Camera facing north.

Photo#17 (AR_ Washington County_Skillen House _0017)

Photograph of the west elevation of the Garden Shed. Camera facing east.

Photo#18 (AR_ Washington County_Skillen House _0018)

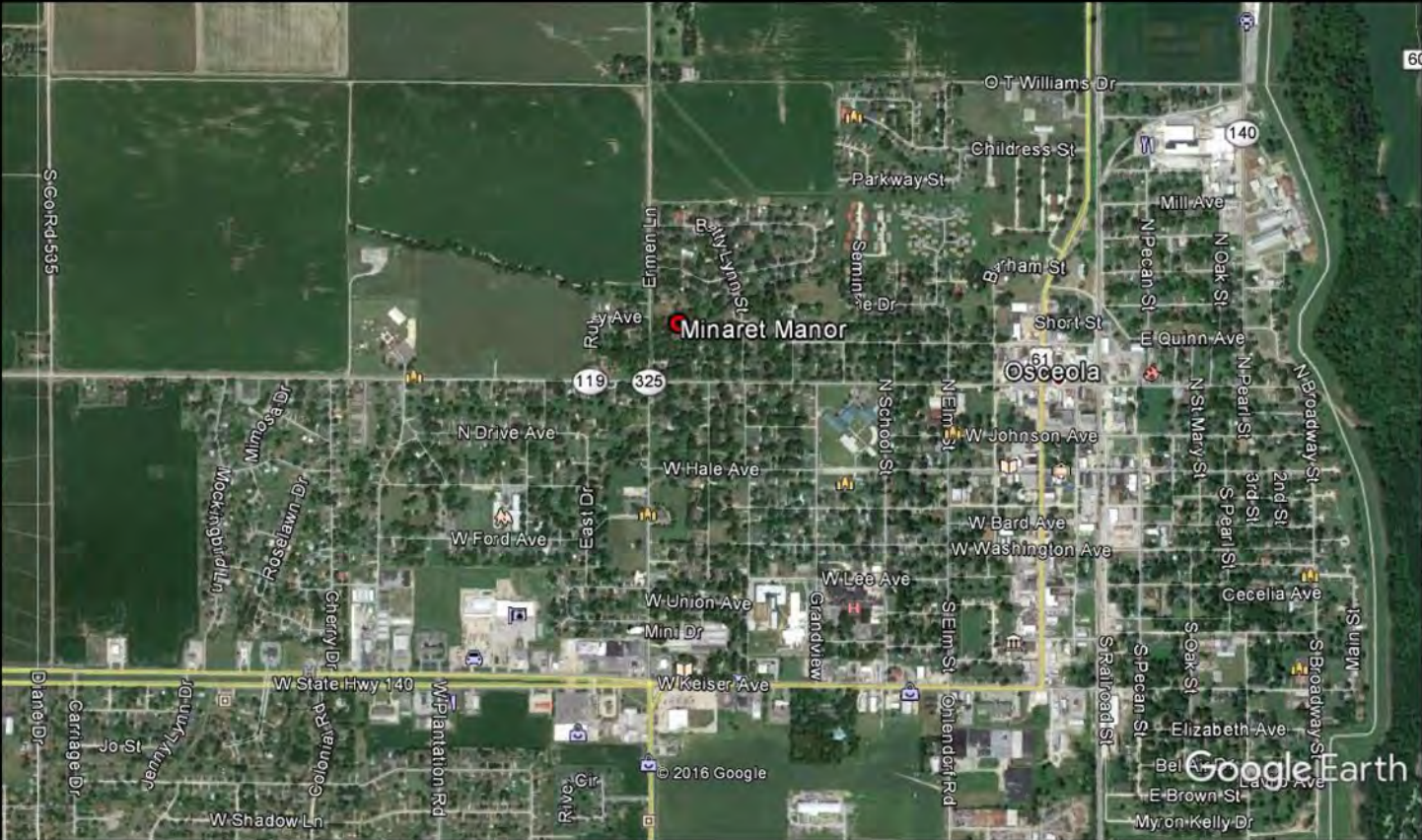
Photograph of the front retaining wall. Camera facing southwest.

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.



Google Earth





























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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: 12/9/2016 Date of Pending List: 1/11/2017 Date of 16th Day: 1/26/2017 Date of 45th Day: 1/24/2017 Date of Weekly List: 2/1/2017

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

Accept Return Reject 1/24/2017 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

December 7, 2016



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: Minaret Manor–Osceola, Mississippi 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 documentation for the Minaret Manor. 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 Travis Ratermann of my staff at (501) 324-9874. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,


Stacy Hurst
State Historic Preservation Officer

SH:clw

Enclosures

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



1100 North Street
Little Rock, AR 72201

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e-mail: info@arkansaspreservation.org
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THE DEPARTMENT OF ARKANSAS
HERITAGE

Asa Hutchinson
Governor

Stacy Hurst
Director

September 30, 2016

Ms. Glynda Thompson, Chairperson
Osceola Historic District Commission
c/o MCHGS
PO Box 483
Osceola, AR 72370

Re: Minaret Manor – Osceola, Mississippi County

Dear Ms. Thompson:

We are pleased to inform you that the above referenced property will be considered by the State Review Board of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, an agency of the Department of Arkansas Heritage, for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register of Historic Places is the federal government's official list of historic properties worthy of the preservation. Listing in the National Register of Historic Places provides recognition and assists in preserving our nation's heritage.

Listing of this property provides recognition of the community's historic importance and assures protective review of the federal projects that might adversely affect the character of the historic property.

Listing in the National Register does not mean that limitations will be placed on the property by the federal government. Public visitation rights are not required of property owners. The federal government will not attach covenants to the property or seek to acquire it.

We have enclosed a copy of the National Register nomination for your review. If you have any comments on the proposed nomination, please submit a letter with your comments, concerns, or concurrence to the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program at least 24 hours prior to the date of the State Review Board meeting.

You are invited to attend the State Review Board meeting at which the nomination will be considered. The board will begin meeting at 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, December 7, 2016 at the Old State House Museum at 300 West Markham Street, in Little Rock.

If you have any questions regarding the State Review Board meeting feel free to call Ralph Wilcox, Callie Williams or Travis Ratermann at (501) 324-9880.

Sincerely,

Frances McSwain
Director

-
- 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



National Historic
Preservation Act 1966-2016



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