

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 100003333

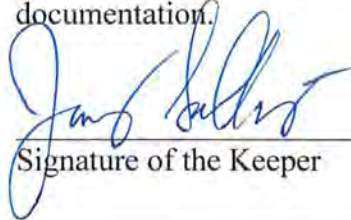
Date Listed: 1/24/2019

Property Name: Blass, Noland, Jr., House

County: Pulaski

State: AR

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.



Signature of the Keeper

2-25-2019

Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

Section 8: Period of Significance

The Period of Significance is hereby changed to **1952**

The nomination does not address the period of significance. The landscape changes done at a later date may be important, but there is no discussion of their importance as related to the Criterion. The period of significance remains that of the construction date for the house itself.

The Arkansas State Historic Preservation Office was notified of this amendment.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file**
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)**

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

SG 3333

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: Blass, Noland, Jr., House

Other names/site number: Site #PU10537

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: 217 Normandy Road

City or town: Little Rock State: AR County: Pulaski

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

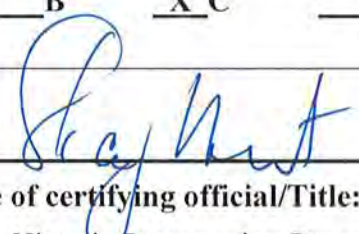
I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

 A B XC D

	<u>10-12-18</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 <u> </u> meets <u> </u> does not meet the National Register criteria.	
<hr/> Signature of commenting official:	<hr/> Date
<hr/> Title :	<hr/> State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

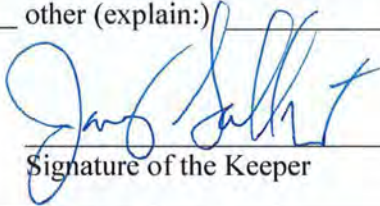
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4. National Park Service Certification

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

1-24-2019
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
Public – Local
Public – State
Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box.)

- Building(s)
District
Site
Structure
Object

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>2</u>	<u> </u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER/Mid-Century Modern

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Brick, Wood, Glass, Tar

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 Noland Blass, Jr., House, which is located at 217 Normandy Road in Little Rock, Pulaski County, Arkansas, is a Mid-Century Modern house designed in 1952 by noted Arkansas architect Noland Blass, Jr. The house rests on a cast-concrete foundation and features walls of brick and vertical wood board. Much of the back of the house is glass, allowing unobstructed views of the outside. The house is topped by a shallow side-facing gable roof covered in asphalt shingles. The house is surrounded by lush landscaping and the backyard features an in-ground pool, terrace, and pergola that also contributes to the nomination.

Narrative Description

The Noland Blass, Jr., House, which is located at 217 Normandy Road in Little Rock, Pulaski County, Arkansas, is a Mid-Century Modern house designed in 1952 by noted Arkansas architect Noland Blass, Jr. The Normandy Addition, where the house is located, consists of curvilinear streets with large houses set on generous lots. Although the neighborhood was platted in 1930, there were still a few vacant lots in 1950 when the last Sanborn map for Little Rock was completed. Architecture in the neighborhood is mainly Colonial Revival and other period revivals in style, although a few later homes, including the Blass House, feature Mid-Century Modern or Ranch architecture.

The Blass House rests on a cast-concrete foundation and features walls of brick and vertical wood board on the front and sides. Much of the back of the house is glass, either windows or

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doors, allowing unobstructed views of the outside. Many of the windows in the house are large-pane jalousie windows, although the house also has a few double-hung and stationary windows. The house is topped by a shallow side-facing gable roof with wide eaves that is covered in tar. The house is surrounded by lush landscaping and the backyard features a terrace, pergola, and in-ground pool that was put in in 1965 and also contributes to the nomination.

MAIN HOUSE – Contributing

Front/Northwest Façade

The front façade of the building is divided into two main halves. The northeastern half of the façade, which projects out, has two bays with the right-hand bay containing the garage. The wall above the garage opening is sided in vertical wood board siding. To the right of the garage opening is a small section of brick wall and to the left of the garage opening, the other half of this section of the façade is a blank brick wall. Large wood beams support the wide eaves of the roof across the façade.

To the right of the garage is the recessed main entrance. The main entrance has two louvered wood screen doors in front of the solid wood entrance doors. Above the entrance is another pair of louvered wood panels that mimic the screen doors. Three rectangular wood columns support the roof overhang above the porch. To the right of the entrance are six large, plate-glass windows, while to the left of the entrance, on the southwest-facing wall is a solid door with a plate-glass window above. To the right of the plate glass windows, on the northeast-facing wall, are two sections of screen brick. The upper section is covering a two-over-two, double-hung window, while the lower one is the crawlspace vent.

The other half of the façade has a slightly recessed section of brick wall on the left followed by a projecting cantilevered section. The projecting section is sided with vertical wood board siding and is divided into six bays with the right two bays fenestrated by large, four-pane jalousie windows. A two-over-two, double-hung window is located on the northeast side of the projecting section of the façade. The façade below the projecting section is sided in brick and has a section of screen brick to provide ventilation to the crawlspace. Large wood beams support the wide eaves of the roof across the façade.

Side/Southwest Façade

The southwest façade is divided into two large sections, and the northwest part of the façade, which projects out and is cantilevered from the brick foundation on two large beams, is sided in vertical wood board siding. The eave of the roof projects to a point at the gable peak. The northwest part of the façade is devoid of fenestration. The southwest part of the façade, which is also covered in vertical board siding, is also devoid of fenestration.

Rear/Southeast Façade

At the southwest end of the house, the projecting part of the southwest façade is fenestrated by a pair of large four-pane jalousie windows. The southwest part of the main part of the façade consists of two levels. Beginning at the southwest end, the upper level is fenestrated by a large, four-pane jalousie window, with a section of vertical board siding underneath it, which is followed by a pair of wood French doors with plate-glass windows. The set of French doors is

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followed by two sets of large, four-pane jalousie windows, with sections of vertical board siding underneath them, which are followed by a pair of wood French doors with plate-glass windows. After the last set of French doors, a final set of large four-pane jalousie windows completes the fenestration on the upper level. A wood deck with vertical balusters that is supported by seven rectangular wood columns spans this part of the façade. The lower level of the southwest section of the façade is fenestrated by several large plate-glass windows and a set of large sliding-glass doors that open up the wall to the outside terrace. Large wood beams support the eaves all across the façade.

The northeast section of the façade begins to the northeast of the deck with three bays of large, five-pane jalousie windows above single-pane stationary windows. Proceeding northeast along the façade it projects out, and on the southwest side of the projection is a pair of wood French doors with plate-glass windows and a single-pane rectangular transom window above. The southeast side of the projection is fenestrated by a group of three large five-pane jalousie windows with vertical wood board siding below and wood weatherboard siding above. To the right of the band of windows is a blank brick wall.

Side/Northeast Façade

The northeast façade of the house at the southeast end is sided in brick and is devoid of fenestration. Proceeding northeast along the façade, the façade projects out and is sided with vertical wood board siding. The southeast facing part of the projection is fenestrated by a single-pane window. The northeast part of this projection is fenestrated with a band of three, large, three-pane jalousie windows. To the right of the band of windows is an entrance into the house that has a wood entrance door with a single-pane window in the top half. The entrance is flanked on each side by a sidelight of large, three-pane jalousie windows, and a single-pane transom is located above the entrance.

To the right of the entrance is a blank section of wall sided in vertical wood board siding that is followed by another façade projection. The southeast side of the projection has an entrance with a solid wood door and wood screen door. The northeast side of the projection is fenestrated with a band of three large, three-pane jalousie windows with vertical wood board siding below them.

The small section of façade to the northeast of the second projection is faced in brick and is devoid of fenestration.

Interior

The interior of the Blass House is a split-level arrangement, and inside the main entrance, the level has the kitchen, dining room, living room, and quarters for the help. The interior of this level features an original built-in buffet in the dining room along with original built-ins in the breakfast nook off the kitchen. Original woodwork and floors are also found throughout the house. The upper level of the two-level section of the house has the bedrooms and two bathrooms. The bedrooms, like the rest of the house, have original woodwork and built-ins, in some cases, and the bathrooms also retain some original fixtures and finishes. The lower level of this section of the house is dominated by a large recreation room with a fireplace, and it also has a bathroom and the secondary utility spaces.

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POOL/PERGOLA – Contributing

To the southeast of the house is an irregularly-shaped in-ground swimming pool with a terrace and brick walls that surround it. In addition, to the west of the pool is a curved wood pergola with decorative wood screen on the west side. The pool was installed in 1965 during Blass' residence in the house.

Integrity

The Noland Blass, Jr., House has outstanding integrity from the time of its construction in 1952. The house's exterior is unaltered although the grounds were changed in 1965 when the in-ground pool and the pergola were constructed. The interior of the house is also virtually unaltered from the time of its construction, and features original features and finishes. The neighborhood around the Blass House also has not changed since the 1950s when the house was built. The neighborhood retains its curvilinear streets with large homes on generous lots, so the setting of the Blass House still retains its integrity.

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
-

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- 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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1952, 1965

Significant Dates

1952, 1965

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Noland Blass, Jr., Architect

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

The Noland Blass, Jr., House is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion C** for its Mid-Century Modern style of architecture. Built in 1952, the Blass House, which was designed by noted Arkansas architect Noland Blass, Jr., as his own house, illustrates many characteristics of the Mid-Century Modern style. Referred to as the Contemporary style in McAlester's *A Field Guide to American Houses* the Blass House exhibits many of the characteristics of the style, including wide overhangs, contrasting wall materials and textures, and unusual window shapes and placements.

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

HISTORY OF THE PROPERTY

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

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

By the first part of the twentieth century as new development opened up west of the historic core of Little Rock, the new neighborhoods were platted using the latest principles in urban design. Throughout the nineteenth century, the grid was the pattern of choice for development.

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

² *Ibid*, pp. 19, 104.

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Although efficient, by the turn of the twentieth century it was beginning to be considered monotonous and dreary. As a result, neighborhoods and developments with curvilinear streets that followed the natural terrain became fashionable in the early 1900s. Moreover, having neighborhoods with curvilinear streets and larger lots, which created a more rural quality, was also a reaction to the conditions in big city slums.³

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

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

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

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

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

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

³ *Ibid*, pp. 192-193.

⁴ *Ibid*.

⁵ *Ibid*.

⁶ *Ibid*.

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Pulaski Heights was a close-knit community, it did not do much for the area's profitability for the Pulaski Heights Land Company.⁷

The key to successful development in Pulaski Heights was going to be the establishment of a streetcar line to the area, and when the Little Rock Traction and Electric Railway Company was given a franchise on September 27, 1901, they were required to build a line to the Heights if they were first given "a graded roadway, a free right-of-way and certain 'other aid.'" Although various problems were encountered in completing the line, most notably completing a viaduct over the railroad line, the streetcar finally traveled to Pulaski Heights on Thanksgiving Day 1903 even though the line was not completely finished until the spring of 1904.⁸

Once the streetcar line reached the Heights, development occurred much more quickly with the Auten and Moss Addition being platted in 1903 and the Pulaski Heights (partial), Hollenberg, East Pulaski Heights, and Mountain Park additions being platted in 1904. By early 1905, the Height's population was between 300 and 400 people, and on June 27, 1905, a petition was presented to incorporate the community. With one small adjustment to the proposed town's boundaries, the petition was granted and Pulaski Heights was incorporated on August 1, 1905.⁹

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

Little Rock carried out its promises to the Heights – a fire station opened November 1, 1916, and the fire hydrants were being installed and the street lights were on hand awaiting installation. In the first few years after consolidation, only two small additions were platted in the Heights, Doyle Place in 1918 and the McGehee Addition in 1921. However, the boom of the 1920s brought intense development to the area and the establishment of eight new additions, including Fairfax Terrace, Prospect Terrace, and Cliffewood in 1924, Edge Hill and Oakwood Place in 1926, Shadowlawn in 1928, Pine View in 1929, and Normandy in 1930.¹¹

Development in the area continued throughout the 1930s and up into the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, and it included the Normandy Addition, the location of the Blass House, which was platted in 1930. The Normandy Addition was platted by Frank A. Pritchett, Engineer, and was

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

⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 19-20.

⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 23 and 28.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 28 and 32-33.

¹¹ *Ibid*, p. 34.

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filed for record with the county on April 7, 1930. The plat was officially recorded on April 9, 1930. The Normandy Addition consisted of 127 lots along Q Street (now Cantrell Road), Garfield Street (now Normandy Road and Normandy Lane), Cleveland Street, Arthur Street (now McMillen Trail), and Normandy Road. In addition to the 127 lots, it also included a public park on Garfield Street and three park and playground areas behind lots on Normandy Road.¹² It was on Lots 95 and 96 and part of Lot 97 that Noland Blass, Jr., built his house, choosing the Mid-Century Modern style for the house, an unusual choice for the neighborhood.

Noland Blass, Jr., was born on May 28, 1920, to Noland and Isabel Blass. Blass knew from the age of twelve that he wanted to be an architect, after he figured out that he needed a career that he would enjoy working at every day. After graduating from high school in Little Rock, Blass attended Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, where he earned his bachelor's degree in Architecture, graduating in 1941. While studying at Cornell, Blass received a gold medal award for his senior thesis. After Blass graduated from Cornell, he volunteered for the Army and during World War II he served in Germany and the Philippines before being discharged in 1946 as a Major with the U.S. Corps of Engineers.¹³

Blass began his architecture career when he returned to Little Rock in 1946, starting out as a draftsman with the firm of Erhart, Eichenbaum, and Rauch. The firm of Erhart and Eichenbaum was founded in 1930 by Frank Erhart and Howard Eichenbaum, who, like Blass, were natives of Arkansas who had degrees from architecture schools outside the state. Blass would remain with the firm for his entire professional career, eventually becoming principal designing architect. Although the firm had completed limited work on Moderne architecture before Blass was hired, it was Blass' influence that caused the firm to look more towards Mid-Century Modern as a design inspiration.¹⁴

Shortly after beginning work with Erhart and Eichenbaum, Blass married Elizabeth Weitzenhoffer in October 1947. Interestingly, they married only three months after they met when she visited Little Rock. Her visit was a suggestion of Blass' mother after she had seen her photograph at a friend's house in Memphis. Their marriage would produce two daughters and last over 50 years.¹⁵

In 1955, Blass became a partner in his firm, and the name was changed to Erhart, Eichenbaum, Rauch & Blass. Over the next several years, Blass worked to expand the focus of the firm to large-scale projects that used many designers, architects, engineers, and even other firms. Since Blass was the firm's principal designer, he left a significant and extensive architectural legacy in the state, including the Worthen Bank Building (now Bank of America), the State Justice

¹² Plat for the Normandy Addition to the City of Little Rock. Found at: <http://www.pagis.org/WebDocuments/ScannedPlats/894.PDF>.

¹³ Williams, Callie, and Mason Toms. Lecture on the life and work of Noland Blass, Jr. Held at the Arkansas Arts Center, Little Rock, Arkansas, May 9, 2017.

¹⁴ Williams, Callie, and Mason Toms. Lecture on the life and work of Noland Blass, Jr. Held at the Arkansas Arts Center, Little Rock, Arkansas, May 9, 2017.

¹⁵ Williams, Callie, and Mason Toms. Lecture on the life and work of Noland Blass, Jr. Held at the Arkansas Arts Center, Little Rock, Arkansas, May 9, 2017.

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Building and Supreme Court Rotunda, the Baptist Medical Center, and several projects on the UAMS campus. Although he completed many residential designs as well during his career, they are not as well known. Even though Blass retired in the late 1980s, he continued to “moonlight” and design projects for family and friends.¹⁶

Blass’ long and varied career also brought him many accolades. Blass was a two-term president of the Arkansas Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) and also served on the University of Arkansas School of Architecture Professional Advisory Board and the advisory council of the Cornell University College of Architecture, Art and Planning. Blass was named a Fellow of the AIA in 1968, and his career of outstanding work was awarded the Gold Medal of the Arkansas Chapter of the AIA in 1989.¹⁷ In addition, a photograph of the interior of the house was featured in the 1955 publication of *Year*.

After Blass retired, Blass and his wife spent up to four months a year at an artists’ colony in Mexico. He also studied at the Art Institute in San Miguel de Allende, a popular art school in central Mexico for students from different countries. Blass continued to work on architectural projects and pursue his artistic endeavors until his death in 1998.¹⁸

The use of the Mid-Century Modern style for the Blass House was not an unusual choice, since it was a style that was gaining popularity for modern buildings after World War II. It also made sense for Blass to use the style given his previous experience with it. The AIA reported in the early 1960s that a shift was occurring where people were starting to embrace modern architecture, especially for business buildings, but still even to a certain degree for homes. The book *Mid-Century Architecture in America* states:

No sooner has America embraced the new architecture than it has blossomed out into richness and inventiveness that must, in retrospect, astound even its most daring prophets. It’s stark, bare, and square austerity, largely a gesture of protest against over-decorative eclecticism, has given way to a less self-conscious expression.

Taking up the fundamental tenets of the earlier “modern,” a new modified modern with three basic characteristics has developed. These characteristics are:

First, a totally new emphasis on the interior spaces of a building in terms of their usefulness, comfort, and beauty and their inter-relationship. In the past, rooms within a building were rigid compartments. Interior spaces are more flexible and sometimes

¹⁶ Williams, Callie, and Mason Toms. Lecture on the life and work of Noland Blass, Jr. Held at the Arkansas Arts Center, Little Rock, Arkansas, May 9, 2017.

¹⁷ Williams, Callie, and Mason Toms. Lecture on the life and work of Noland Blass, Jr. Held at the Arkansas Arts Center, Little Rock, Arkansas, May 9, 2017.

¹⁸ Williams, Callie, and Mason Toms. Lecture on the life and work of Noland Blass, Jr. Held at the Arkansas Arts Center, Little Rock, Arkansas, May 9, 2017.

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can be divided at will. They open and flow into one another in a dynamic rather than static relationship.

Second, there is a new indoor-outdoor relationship. The use (some complain the overuse) of glass has made it possible to bring nature's plants and greenery into the building, and extend the building out into nature. Planted plazas, interior courts, and terraces have brought nature even into our urban working environment.

Third, our buildings appear lighter, often buoyant. Skyscrapers soar effortlessly into the air. Other buildings rest lightly on the ground as though to disturb it as little as possible. Even where they hug the earth and adapt to its contours, they avoid being massive and ponderous.¹⁹

The Blass House reflects these characteristics of the style, especially the usefulness and inter-relationship of the interior spaces and the indoor-outdoor relationship, which is best manifested in the large windows and doors that allow access to the rear deck and pool area from several rooms in the house. Furthermore, *Mid-Century Architecture in America* states that all of the AIA award-winning houses "...share an emphatic withdrawal from the bustle of the street and from ostentation as well." "If one word were to summarize the aspiration of American architecture at mid-century, that word would be 'liveability.'"²⁰ Also, the Blass House does withdraw from the street. The windows on the house's front façade are much smaller than on the rear.

The Blass House also perfectly illustrates the description of the style in McAlester and McAlester's *A Field Guide to American Houses*, which they call "contemporary." They describe the style by saying:

This style was the favorite for architect-designed houses built during the period from about 1950 to 1970. It occurs in two distinctive subtypes based on roof shapes: flat or gabled. The flat-roofed subtype is a derivation of the earlier International Style and houses of this subtype are sometimes referred to as American International. They resemble the International in having flat roofs and no decorative detailing, but lack the stark white stucco wall surfaces, which are usually replaced by various combinations of wood, brick, or stone. Landscaping and integration into the landscape are also stressed, unlike the pristine white International house that was meant to be set upon the landscape as a piece of sculpture.

The gabled subtype is more strongly influenced by the earlier modernism of the Craftsman and Prairie styles. It features

¹⁹ Von Eckardt, Wolf. *Mid-Century Architecture in America*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1961. pp. 21-22.

²⁰ Von Eckardt, Wolf. *Mid-Century Architecture in America*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1961. p. 22.

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overhanging eaves, frequently with exposed roof beams. Heavy piers may support gables. As in the flat-roofed subtypes, various combinations of wood, brick, and stone wall cladding are used and traditional detailing is absent. Both subtypes are most commonly one-story forms although two-story versions are not infrequent.²¹

The comments on the gable-roof subtype also apply to the Blass House.

Noland Blass, Jr., moved out of his house c.1990 and after that the house passed through a series of different owners until it was purchased by the current owners in May 2017. Today, the Blass House represents a good example of the Mid-Century Modern style of architecture in Little Rock. The interrelation between indoors and outdoors, the lack of ornamentation, and the use of windows to allow privacy were hallmarks of the style. Also, the property is significant as a design by the noted Arkansas architect, Noland Blass, Jr.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROPERTY

The design of the Blass House is an excellent representation of the shift in residential design that was occurring across the country after World War II. The decorative pre-war revival styles, which were all the rage, were being pushed to the side by more functional and livable residential designs. Although some people after World War II still believed “that only shrunken colonial, Cape Cod ranches, or Cinderella homes properly represent the American way of life...a trend [had] now begun working the other way. ...[It was] slowly becoming apparent to people that architects working with builders can give them better, more thoughtful design for their money.”²²

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

The style and its design also put more emphasis on privacy. Privacy played a role in the design, both on the exterior – large amounts of glass more often appeared on the rear of the property, making it private from the street – as well as on the interior. “The interior, too, emphasizes privacy for the members of the family from each other. The children’s right to their noisy pursuits is recognized along with that of the parents *not* to hear Huckleberry Hound’s televised antics.”²³

The Blass House clearly reflects the design trends that were impacting residential architecture in the Mid-Century Modern style after World War II. The house lacks the applied ornamentation that was so often used prior to World War II, and uses window placement and a variety of materials to give visual interest and ornamentation. As McAlester and McAlester point out with

²¹ McAlester, Virginia & Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1984, p. 482.

²² Von Eckardt, Wolf. *Mid-Century Architecture in America*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1961, p. 21.

²³ Von Eckardt, Wolf. *Mid-Century Architecture in America*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1961, p. 22.

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respect to the style, the Blass House has “no decorative detailing.” Furthermore, it “lack[s] the stark white stucco wall surfaces, which are usually replaced by various combinations of wood, brick, or stone.”²⁴

The design of the Blass House also reflects the increased relationship between the indoors and outdoors, as well as the issue of privacy in house design. The design of the Blass House, with its large windows and easy access to the large back deck encouraged residents and visitors to interact with the house’s surroundings. The placement of the large windows away from the street also emphasized privacy for the house’s occupants from the street.

Since the Blass House is a good example of the Mid-Century Modern style designed by noted Arkansas architect Noland Blass, Jr., it is being nominated to the National Register with **local significance** under **Criterion C**.

²⁴ McAlester, Virginia & Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1984, p. 482.

Blass, Noland, Jr., House
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9. Major Bibliographical References

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

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

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

Plat for the Normandy Addition to the City of Little Rock. Found at:

<http://www.pagis.org/WebDocuments/ScannedPlats/894.PDF>.

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

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

Ward, Baldwin H., ed. *Year (1955)*. New York & Los Angeles: Simon & Schuster and Year Incorporated, 1955.

Williams, Callie, and Mason Toms. Lecture on the life and work of Noland Blass, Jr. Held at the Arkansas Arts Center, Little Rock, Arkansas, May 9, 2017.

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

Blass, Noland, Jr., House
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Pulaski County, Arkansas
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Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): PU10537

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Less than one acre.

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: 559990 | Northing: 3847438 |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

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

Parcel #43L1910005700, more specifically described as "Lots 95 & 96 & 97 except that part of 97 beginning at the NE corner of Lot 97 then W along the N boundary line of Lot 97 47' in a southerly direction 142' to S boundary line of Lot 97 to a point 12' W of SE corner of said Lot then easterly along S line of said Lot to the SE corner of said lot then northerly along the E line of said Lot 141.4' to the point of beginning."

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Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary contains 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: August 10, 2018

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

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: Noland Blass, Jr., House

City or Vicinity: Little Rock

County: Pulaski

State: AR

Blass, Noland, Jr., House
Name of Property

Pulaski County, Arkansas
County and State

Photographer: Mason Toms

Date Photographed: May 21, 2018

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

- 1 of 33 . Main entrance area on the northwest façade, looking southeast from Normandy Road.
- 2 of 33 . Main entrance area of the northwest façade, looking south.
- 3 of 33 . Main entrance, looking east.
- 4 of 33 . Garage area of the northwest façade, looking southeast from Normandy Road.
- 5 of 33 . Northeast façade looking south from the northeast corner.
- 6 of 33 . Northeast façade, looking west.
- 7 of 33 . Northeast façade, looking northwest.
- 8 of 33 . Northeast façade, looking northwest from the southeast corner.
- 9 of 33 . Northeast section of the southeast façade, looking northwest.
- 10 of 33 . Southeast façade, looking northwest.
- 11 of 33 . Southeast façade, looking north from the south side of the pool.
- 12 of 33 . Southeast façade, looking northeast from the southwest corner.
- 13 of 33 . Southeast façade, looking northeast from the southwest corner.
- 14 of 33 . Southwest façade, looking northwest from the southwest corner.
- 15 of 33 . Southwest and northwest façades, looking southeast from the northwest corner.
- 16 of 33 . Southwest section of the northwest façade, looking southwest from the main entrance.
- 17 of 33 . Kitchen, looking northeast.
- 18 of 33 . Breakfast nook, looking northeast.

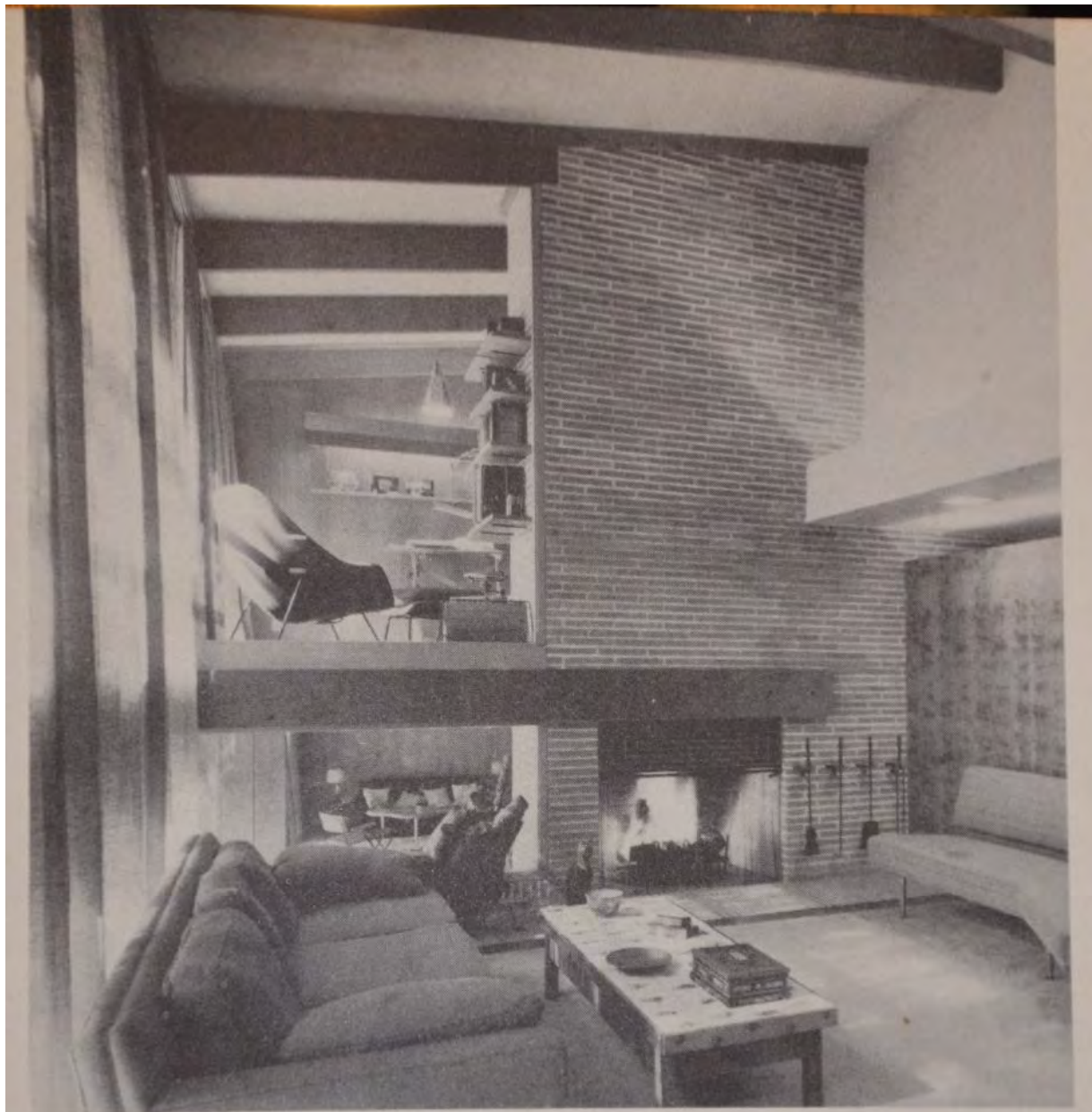
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- 19 of 33 . Built-in sideboard in the dining room, looking northeast.
- 20 of 33 . Dining room, looking southwest.
- 21 of 33 . Living room, looking west towards the fireplace with the upper-level office at the upper left and the lower-level recreation room at the lower left.
- 22 of 33 . Foyer inside the main entrance, looking southwest.
- 23 of 33 . Fireplace in the lower-level recreation room, looking northeast.
- 24 of 33 . View of the lower-level recreation room, looking southwest to the pool and pergola.
- 25 of 33 . Built-in cabinets in the upper-level office, looking north.
- 26 of 33 . View of the living room and dining room from the upper-level office, looking northeast.
- 27 of 33 . View of the built-in light fixture in the upper-level office, looking west.
- 28 of 33 . View of one of the upper-level bedrooms at the rear of the house, looking southeast.
- 29 of 33 . View of the built-in closet in one of the upper-level bedrooms at the rear of the house, looking northeast.
- 30 of 33 . View of the in-ground pool from the upper-level deck, looking southeast.
- 31 of 33 . View of the in-ground pool from the upper-level deck, looking south.
- 32 of 33 . View of the pergola west of the pool, looking northwest.
- 33 of 33 . Detail view of the pergola west of the pool, looking northwest.

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SPLIT-LEVEL HOUSES made for variety of interior interest, maximum use of floor space under one roof. Beyond living room, which is on one-story level with entry, is two-story portion, including study-workroom (*above*), lanai (*below*). Same windows serve three rooms.

Figure 1: View of the Noland Blass House living room. From: Ward, Baldwin H., ed. *Year* (1955). New York & Los Angeles: Simon & Schuster and Year Incorporated, 1955, p. 119.

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Figure 2: View of the Noland Blass House Kitchen, c.1952. From: Earl Saunders, Jr., Photographic Collection, UALR Center for Arkansas History and Culture. Series 1, Item #1952-09-08.

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Figure 3: Front and side façades of the Noland Blass House, c.1952. From: Earl Saunders, Jr., Photographic Collection, UALR Center for Arkansas History and Culture. Series 1, Item #1952-09-08.

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Figure 4: Rear and side façades of the Noland Blass House, c.1952. From: Earl Saunders, Jr., Photographic Collection, UALR Center for Arkansas History and Culture. Series 1, Item #1952-09-08.

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Figure 5: Noland Blass House Kitchen, c.1952. From: Earl Saunders, Jr., Photographic Collection, UALR Center for Arkansas History and Culture. Series 1, Item #1952-09-08.

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Figure 6: Noland Blass House Living Room and Dining Room, c.1952. From: Earl Saunders, Jr., Photographic Collection, UALR Center for Arkansas History and Culture. Series 1, Item #1952-09-08.

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Figure 7: Noland Blass House Living Room, c.1952. From: Earl Saunders, Jr., Photographic Collection, UALR Center for Arkansas History and Culture. Series 1, Item #1952-09-08.

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Figure 8: Noland Blass House Bedroom, c.1952. From: Earl Saunders, Jr.,
Photographic Collection, UALR Center for Arkansas History and Culture. Series 1, Item
#1952-09-08.

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Figure 9: Noland Blass House Master Bedroom, c.1952. From: Earl Saunders, Jr., Photographic Collection, UALR Center for Arkansas History and Culture. Series 1, Item #1952-09-08.

Blass, Noland, Jr., House
Name of Property

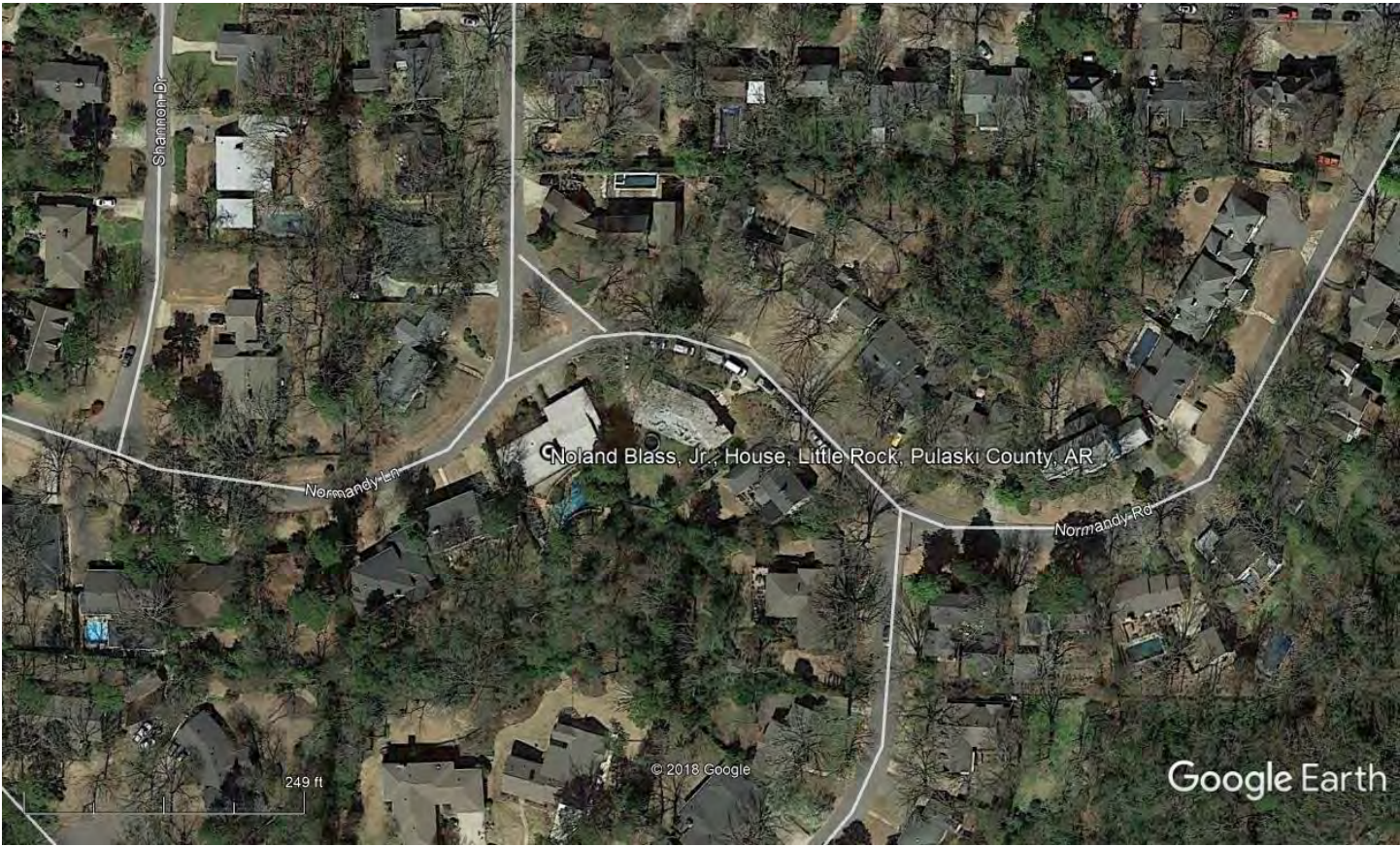
Pulaski County, Arkansas
County and State



Figure 10: Noland Blass House Master Bathroom, c.1952. From: Earl Saunders, Jr., Photographic Collection, UALR Center for Arkansas History and Culture. Series 1, Item #1952-09-08.

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.



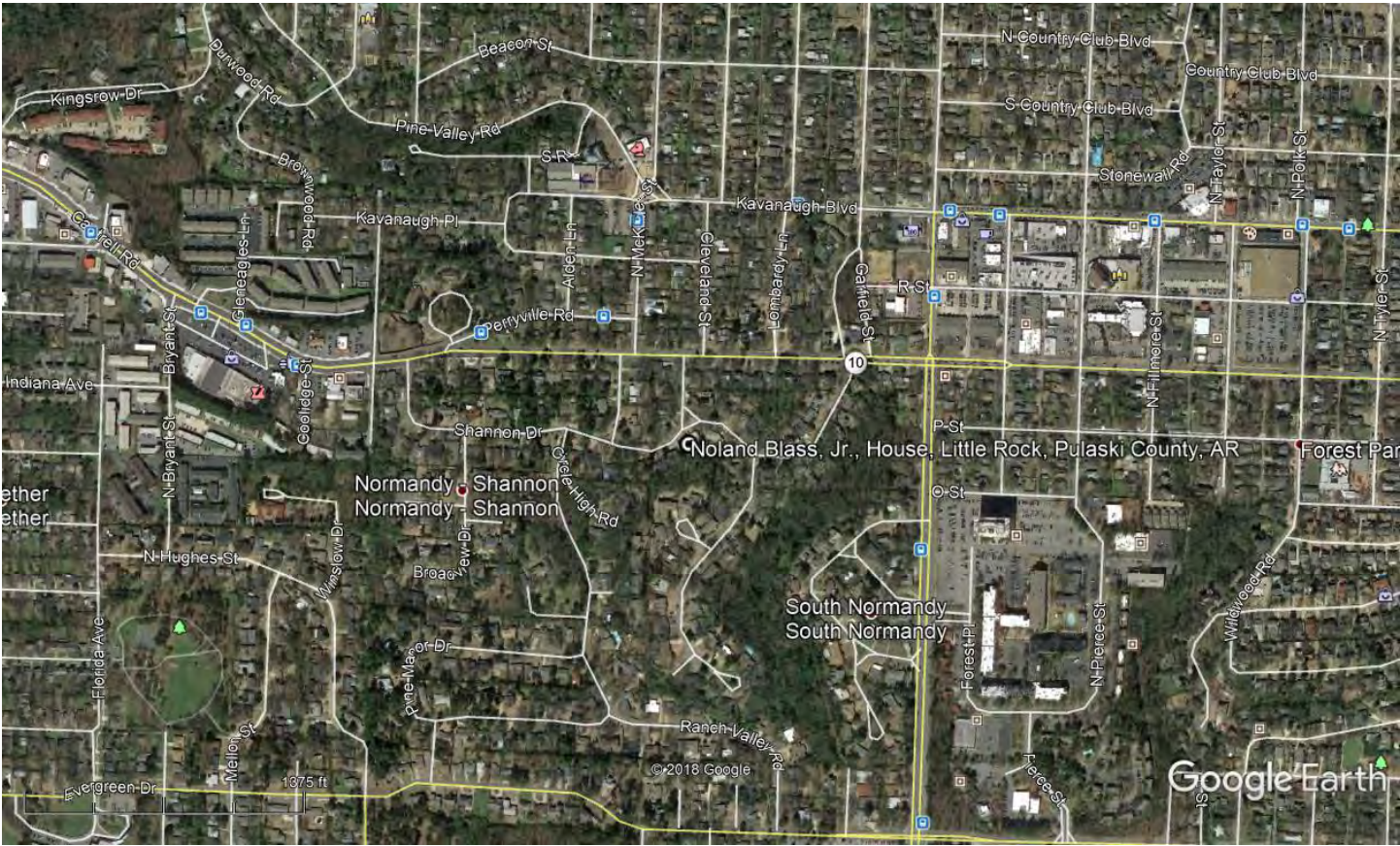
|-----249'-----|

Noland Blass, Jr., House
Little Rock, Pulaski County, AR

15 559990E 3847438N



North



|-----1375'-----|

Noland Blass, Jr., House

Little Rock, Pulaski County, AR

15 55990E 3847438N



North





217





217

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978 VUC

SKD



























































UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: Nomination

Property Name: Blass, Noland, Jr., House

Multiple Name: _____

State & County: ARKANSAS, Pulaski

Date Received: 12/10/2018 Date of Pending List: 12/28/2018 Date of 16th Day: 1/14/2019 Date of 45th Day: 1/24/2019 Date of Weekly List: _____

Reference number: SG100003333

Nominator: Other Agency, SHPO

Reason For Review:

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal | <input type="checkbox"/> PDIL | <input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waiver | <input type="checkbox"/> National | <input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource | <input type="checkbox"/> Period |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other | <input type="checkbox"/> TCP | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CLG | |

Accept Return Reject 1/24/2019 Date

Abstract/Summary Automatic listing due to Federal Government shutdown
Comments: _____

Recommendation/ Accept / C
Criteria

Reviewer Jim Gabbert Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2275 Date 1-28-2019

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.



DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

723 West Markham Street
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201-1334
Phone: (501) 371-4790 Fax: (501) 399-3435
www.littlerock.gov

CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATION REVIEW

Name and Address of property:

Nolan Blass Jr House, 217 Normandy Road, Little Rock, AR 72207

Name of Owner:

Carla Y Pumphrey

Project Sponsor:

Ralph Wilcox, Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

CLG Name:

City of Little Rock, Arkansas

Date of Public Hearing by CLG:

November 5, 2018

Applicable Criteria:

Criterion A (Historic Events)

Criterion B (Important Person)

Criterion C (Architecture)

Criterion D (Archaeological)

The Little Rock Historic District Commission hereby recommends the above stated property for nomination.

Attest:

A blue ink signature of the Chair, written over a horizontal line.

Chair

A blue ink signature of the Secretary/Staff, written over a horizontal line.

Secretary/Staff

A blue ink signature, likely of the date, written over a horizontal line.

Date

The date "11-5-2018" is handwritten in blue ink over a horizontal line.

Date



THE DEPARTMENT OF ARKANSAS
HERITAGE

Asa Hutchinson
Governor

Stacy Hurst
Director

December 5, 2018

Joy Beasley, Keeper and Chief
National Register and National Historic Landmark Programs
National Register of Historic Places
1849 C Street, NW
Mail Stop 7228
Washington D.C. 20240

Arkansas Arts Council

Arkansas Historic
Preservation Program

Arkansas Natural
Heritage Commission

Arkansas State Archives

Delta Cultural Center

Historic Arkansas Museum

Mosaic Templars
Cultural Center

Old State House Museum

RE: Noland Blass, Jr., House – Little Rock, Pulaski County,
Arkansas

Dear Ms. Beasley:

We are enclosing for your review the above-referenced nomination. The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the nomination for the Noland Blass, Jr., 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



1100 North Street
Little Rock, AR 72201

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

info@arkansaspreservation.org
www.arkansaspreservation.com

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