

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

563336

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: Towbin, Dr. Eugene, House

Other names/site number: Site #PU10536

Name of related multiple property listing:

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

2. Location

Street & number: 16 Broadview Drive

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

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

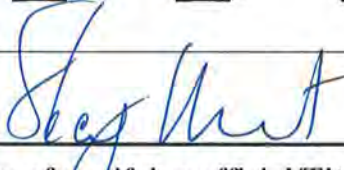
I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

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

___ national X statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___A XB XC ___D

	<u>10-12-18</u>
<hr/> Signature of certifying official/Title:	
<u>Arkansas Historic Preservation Program</u>	
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

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

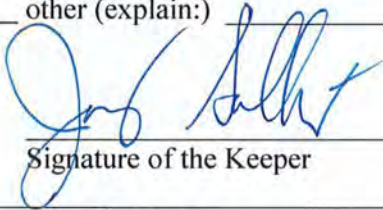
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4. National Park Service Certification

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

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> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>1</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: WOOD, ASPHALT, CONCRETE BLOCK

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 Dr. Eugene Towbin House, located at 16 Broadview Drive in Little Rock, Pulaski County, Arkansas, is a Mid-Century Modern house built in 1960 for Dr. Eugene Jonas Towbin and his wife, Catherine. The one-story house with basement is built on a continuous concrete-block foundation and the main floor's walls are sided with vertical board siding. The fenestration used in the house is a mixture of stationary windows and awning windows. The house is topped by a low-pitched side-facing gable roof covered in asphalt shingles. The house is located in a cul-de-sac at the end of Broadview Drive on a steeply-sloped lot.

Narrative Description

The Dr. Eugene Towbin House, located at 16 Broadview Drive in Little Rock, Pulaski County, Arkansas, is a Mid-Century Modern house built in 1960 for Dr. Eugene Jonas Towbin and his wife, Catherine. The house was designed by Hollis Beck. The one-story house with basement is built on a continuous concrete-block foundation utilizing two sizes of concrete blocks in alternating courses. The main floor's walls are sided with vertical board siding. The fenestration used in the house is a mixture of stationary windows and awning windows. The house is topped

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by a low-pitched side-facing gable roof covered in asphalt shingles. The house is located in a cul-de-sac at the end of Broadview Drive on a steeply-sloped lot.

On the main floor, the north end of the house contains the public spaces – living room, dining room, and kitchen – while the south end of the house has the bedrooms and bathrooms. A large recessed carport is also located at the north end of the house, and it is approached by the driveway. The driveway has a retaining wall along the south side due to the slope of the lot.

Front/Southeast Façade

The front façade of the Towbin House is divided into two sections. The north section is dominated by the house's carport. The façade in the carport is fenestrated by a pair of single-pane awning windows. Two wood posts act as supports along the north side of the carport. In addition, another wood post supports the roof at the north end of the main entrance projection. Proceeding south along the façade, the façade projects to the southeast for the main entrance, which consists of a solid wood door with a stationary, single-pane sidelight to its left.

The south half of the front façade consists of the bedroom wing, which is fenestrated on the main floor with a row of six single-pane awning windows. The basement level of the house, which is above ground under the bedroom wing due to the slope of the lot, is devoid of fenestration. The basement level is also recessed under the main floor.

Side/Northeast Façade

The northeast façade of the house, near the front of the house, encompasses the open north end of the carport. The north side of the area with the house's main entrance, which is recessed under the carport, as well as the area to the east of the main entrance, are both devoid of fenestration. Proceeding west along the façade, the façade has an entrance into the kitchen. The entrance has a wood door with two recessed rectangular panels in the bottom half and nine square panes of glass in the top half. The entrance also has a wood screen door with five wood slats in the bottom half.

To the west of the entrance is a pair of windows with stationary single panes in the top half and rectangular single-pane awning windows in the bottom half. To the west of the pair of windows is the north end of the rear porch, which is open with a single wood support post at the northwest corner.

In the gable peak of the façade is a triangular louvered attic vent.

To the north of the façade is a concrete retaining wall and a koi pond surrounded by fieldstones. At the northeast corner of the façade is a wood fence that screens the side yard from the front of the house.

Rear/Northwest Façade

Like the front façade, the rear façade of the Towbin House is divided into two sections, the section encompassing the public spaces, and the section encompassing the family areas. The northern part of the house, which is the living and dining rooms, projects from the main plane of

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the façade and has a front-facing gable roof. The façade is fenestrated by two pairs of windows with single panes in the top half and rectangular single-pane awning windows in the bottom half. An entrance into the living room is placed slightly off center to the south. It has a solid wood door and screen door that matches the screen door on the north façade. In the gable peak are six single-pane stationary windows that echo the shape of the gable peak.

In front of this part of the façade is an open porch. The porch has a gable roof and the north side is supported by two single wood posts while the south half is supported by a larger number of posts and also has a wooden railing with wood posts on metal rods. The railing is present due to the slope of the lot.

Just to the south of the projecting section of the façade is the stairwell, which is fenestrated by six large single-pane windows of varying sizes. To the south of the stairwell, the upper floor of the house is fenestrated by a row of four single-pane awning windows. The lower floor has an entrance with a solid wood door and screen door that matches the other screen doors on the house. Immediately to the entrance's south is a row of three windows that have single panes in the top half and rectangular single-pane awning windows in the bottom half.

At the south end of the house on the lower level is the greenhouse that Dr. Towbin built for his hobbies. The greenhouse has a wood frame and is covered in translucent fiberglass. Access to the greenhouse is through a central wood-frame door, also covered in fiberglass.

Side/Southwest Façade

The southwest side of the rear wing of the house is fenestrated on the upper level by three windows with single panes in the top half and rectangular single-pane awning windows in the bottom half. The lower floor is fenestrated by two windows with single panes in the top half and rectangular single-pane awning windows in the bottom half. To the right of the windows is a solid wood door that provides access into the lower level. Another solid wood door also provides access to the space under the rear porch.

The upper floor of the southwest façade is fenestrated by four single-pane awning windows. One window is near the front of the house and one is near the rear of the house, and the other two are slightly to the left of center of the façade.

The lower floor of the southwest façade is mainly covered by the southwest side of the greenhouse. Immediately to the east of the greenhouse, the façade is fenestrated by one single-pane awning window.

In the gable peak of the façade is a triangular louvered attic vent.

Interior

The main floor of the interior has a kitchen, dining room, living room, four bedrooms, and two bathrooms. The kitchen, dining room, and living room area features a vaulted ceiling with exposed beams, and bands of windows. The living room and the dining room are separated by a

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large built-in cabinet and fireplace with a floating hearth and exposed metal-pipe chimney. The kitchen has its original wood cabinets and formica countertops.

The bedrooms of the house feature original built-in bookcases, cabinets, and desks (which open up for vanities in the girls' room). As in the majority of the public areas, the bedrooms have original hardwood floors. The main-floor bathrooms also retain their original rectangular-tile surfaces and sinks.

The lower floor of the house, in the finished areas, features square floor tile, acoustical dropped ceilings and exposed concrete-block walls. The other unfinished area also have exposed concrete-block walls, but have cast-concrete floors. The original plans for the house indicate two bedrooms, hallway, a roughed-in bathroom, recreation room, mechanical/equipment room, and shop on the lower level.

Integrity

Overall, the Towbin House has excellent integrity from the time of its construction and the time that the Towbins lived in the house. Changes to the property have been minimal and the property still retains its original plan, built-ins, and design. Furthermore, changes to the house almost exclusively occurred under Dr. Towbin's ownership. The neighborhood around the Towbin House still reflects the character of the area at the time that the house was built. The Towbin House is still surrounded by single-family homes on generous lots. The Towbin House would still be recognized by Dr. Towbin today.

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.

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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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE
HEALTH/MEDICINE

Period of Significance

1960-1969

Significant Dates

1960

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Dr. Eugene Jonas Towbin

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Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Hollis Belk, Architect

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 Dr. Eugene Towbin 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 1960, the Towbin 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 Towbin House exhibits many of the characteristics of the style, including wide overhangs, contrasting wall materials and textures, and unusual window shapes and placements.

Additionally, the Towbin House is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **statewide significance** under **Criterion B** for its associations with Dr. Eugene Towbin. Dr. Towbin, who lived in the house from the time of its construction in 1960 until his death in 2003, was a national leader in the development of the study of geriatrics. Under the leadership of Dr. Towbin, the Little Rock Veterans Administration Hospital established the first Geriatric Research and Education Center in the United States in 1972. The work of Dr. Towbin and the establishment of the Center brought about the medical specialty of geriatrics, and the founding of other departments of geriatrics at other medical schools.

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

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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. 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.

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.

³ *Ibid*, pp. 192-193.

⁴ *Ibid*.

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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, Cliffewood, 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 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

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

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.

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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 up into the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, and it included the Broadview Addition, the location of the Towbin House, which was platted in 1957. The Broadview Addition was platted for Mrs. Bernie Babcock by civil engineer John P. Powers in September of 1957. It was a small addition, consisting of only 4.74 acres of land, and only encompassing four lots. Lot #4, which was the northwest lot of the four, was where Dr. and Mrs. Towbin had their house built in 1960.¹²

Dr. Eugene Jonas Towbin was born in New York City on September 18, 1918, to Morris and Elena Towbin who were Russian Jewish immigrants. Towbin received his early education in the public schools in New York, including Stuyvesant Science High School. In addition, at age 16, he started working at the American Museum of Natural History. After high school, Towbin attended New York University where he received a bachelor's degree in psychology and chemistry in 1941. He continued his studies, earning a master's degree in experimental psychology at the University of Colorado before enrolling in the graduate program at the University of Rochester. Towbin received his Ph.D. in psychology and his M.D. in 1948 from the University of Rochester.¹³

While at the University of Rochester, Towbin met Catherine Clancy, a student from Antioch College, who was serving an internship in at the University of Rochester physiology department. The couple married in October 1949 and eventually had four children. Their first child was born a month before Towbin finished his residency and internship in internal medicine at Duke University in June 1952. Once he finished his residency, Towbin enlisted in the U.S. Army as a first lieutenant and was stationed at Walter Reed Hospital from November 1952 until November

¹⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 28 and 32-33.

¹¹ *Ibid*, p. 34.

¹² Plat of the Broadview Addition to the City of Little Rock, 1957. In the files of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program.

¹³ Towbin, Lucy, and Joseph Bates. "Dr. Eugene Jonas Towbin." *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*. Found at: <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=7379>.

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1954.¹⁴ After being discharged from the Army, Towbin contacted Dr. Richard Ebert about a job at the VA Hospital in Little Rock. Towbin accepted a position with the VA and moved his family to Little Rock. In 1960 he became the associate chief of staff for research and education and he was promoted to chief of staff of the Little Rock VA Hospital in 1968. In addition, due to the fact that the VA Hospital worked closely with the University of Arkansas College of Medicine (now UAMS), Towbin also became associate dean of the College of Medicine.¹⁵

Towbin's leadership at the VA Hospital was second to none, and under his guidance the Little Rock VA Hospital became one of the VA's flagship facilities. Not only did it provide healthcare, but it also offered major medical research programs. When new VA hospitals were finished in Little Rock and North Little Rock in 1984, Towbin was asked to become the chief of staff for both hospitals and the North Little Rock VA Hospital was even renamed the Eugene J. Towbin Healthcare Center in his honor.¹⁶

During his career, Towbin understood that special knowledge and facilities were needed to provide care for the rapidly expanding number of senior citizens, and he became one of the first leaders in the country to speak about geriatrics. In fact, while Towbin was working at the VA, he established the first Geriatric Research and Education Center in the nation in 1972. This work led to the establishment of geriatrics as a medical specialty and the establishment of other departments of geriatrics around the country.¹⁷

Towbin ultimately worked for the VA Hospital for 45 years, retiring in 1998. Towbin died on September 1, 2003, after a twenty-year battle with prostate cancer. His ashes were buried in the Unitarian Church Memorial Garden, a church that he helped found.¹⁸

Although Towbin was very much immersed in the state's medical scene, it was by no means the only thing that he was interested in. Towbin seemed to be a true Renaissance man, involved in many activities and interests. According to the entry on him found on *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*, "He was an organic gardener, built his own greenhouse for orchids, built and refinished furniture, dabbled in oil painting, collected vintage musical instruments, played the recorder, developed his own recipes for bread and special candies, grew

¹⁴ Towbin, Lucy, and Joseph Bates. "Dr. Eugene Jonas Towbin." *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*. Found at: <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=7379>.

¹⁵ Towbin, Lucy, and Joseph Bates. "Dr. Eugene Jonas Towbin." *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*. Found at: <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=7379>.

¹⁶ Towbin, Lucy, and Joseph Bates. "Dr. Eugene Jonas Towbin." *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*. Found at: <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=7379>.

¹⁷ Towbin, Lucy, and Joseph Bates. "Dr. Eugene Jonas Towbin." *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*. Found at: <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=7379>.

¹⁸ Towbin, Lucy, and Joseph Bates. "Dr. Eugene Jonas Towbin." *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*. Found at: <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=7379>.

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his own grapes, and made wine. He and his wife were founding members of the Arkansas Chamber Music Society, and he was a supporter of the Arkansas Arts Center. ... He was also a founder of the Unitarian Church of Little Rock.”¹⁹

The house that the Towbins built at 16 Broadview Drive was a good example of the Mid-Century Modern style designed by Hollis Belk. Little is known about Belk’s life, but what is known is that Hollis Belk was born on December 21, 1923. It is not known what kind of education Belk received, but he was not an architect by training. According to Belk’s wife, he began working in a lumberyard in North Little Rock in the 1940s as a clerk, but then transferred to another lumberyard in Little Rock. By 1951 he was a salesman at Harlan-Noe-Benton Lumber Company. By 1953 he was an assistant manager at Retail Hardware and Lumber Company, and had moved on to Capitol City Lumber Company by 1956 where he was employed as a draftsman. Beginning in 1965, the Little Rock city directories listed Belk as a residential designer and he remained listed that way up through 1983. In 1984, he was listed as retired. Interestingly, it does not appear that Belk was ever licensed as an architect in Arkansas – at least he was not listed in the AIA directories – so exactly what role he played in the design of the Towbin House is not fully known. Belk died in October 1985.²⁰

Belk learned architecture from on-the-job experience and from working with contractors and builders who often referred clients to him. Clients also found their way to him after seeing houses that he had designed. According to his wife, “he enjoyed working with people and listening to what they wanted in a home and letting them if it was feasible to do.” Belk was a member of the Home Builders Association and the family remembers him working with three specific builders who were “Joe DeSalvo and Joe Hughes (or Hughs) during the 1970s and another builder by the last name of Hunt whose office was in the Donaghey Building across from Park Plaza on the corner of University and Markham.” Although many of Belk’s designs were built in the Little Rock area, at least one house was built in Brandon, Mississippi. In addition to houses, Belk also designed several African-American churches.²¹

The use of the Mid-Century Modern style for the Towbin House was not an unusual choice, since it was a style that was gaining popularity for modern buildings after World War II. 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-

¹⁹ Towbin, Lucy, and Joseph Bates. “Dr. Eugene Jonas Towbin.” *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*. Found at: <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=7379>.

²⁰ Information on Hollis Belk from www.ancestry.com, Little Rock City Directories, 1965-1984, and Linck Shelby. E-mail to the author. 6 September 2018.

²¹ Linck Shelby. E-mail to the author. 6 September 2018.

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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 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.²²

The Towbin 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 from the living room. 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.’”²³ Also, the Towbin House does withdraw from the street. The windows on the house’s front façade are much smaller than on the rear, and they are located high up on the wall.

The Towbin 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

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

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

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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 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.²⁴

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

Interestingly, since Towbin's death in 2003, the Towbin House has remained in the family, most recently being sold to his granddaughter, Elisa Towbin Jones, and her friend Clayton Belknap in April 2018.²⁵

The Towbin 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. In addition, the property has important associations with the life and work of Dr. Towbin from the time of his arrival in Little Rock until his death in 2003.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROPERTY

The design of the Dr. Eugene Towbin 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."²⁶

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.

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

²⁵ Information on the Dr. Eugene Towbin House in the files of the Pulaski County Assessor's Office. Accessed through www.arcountydata.com.

²⁶ Von Eckardt, Wolf. *Mid-Century Architecture in America*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1961, p. 21.

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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.”²⁷

The Towbin House clearly reflects the design trends that were impacting residential architecture in the Mid-Century Modern style after World War II. The house lacks the applied ornamentation that was so often used prior to World War II, and uses window placement and a variety of materials to give visual interest and ornamentation. As McAlester and McAlester point out with respect to the style, the Towbin 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.”²⁸

The design of the Towbin 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 Towbin 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 Towbin House is a good example of the Mid-Century Modern style, it is being nominated to the National Register with **local significance** under **Criterion C**.

The Dr. Eugene Towbin House is also significant for its associations with the life and work of Dr. Eugene Towbin. Dr. Towbin was an important figure in medicine during the latter half of the twentieth-century, and the influence of his work was felt all across Arkansas as well as beyond the state’s borders. His work with geriatric medicine during the 1960s, which led to the first geriatric research and education center in the United States in 1972, was groundbreaking and pioneering work in medicine. The establishment of the geriatric research center ultimately led to the establishment of other geriatric departments at medical schools across the country. Dr. Towbin’s work with medicine in Arkansas was recognized with several awards, including the Distinguished Service Award from the UAMS College of Medicine in 1988, the Exceptional Service Award from the Department of Veterans Affairs in 1992, and honorary Doctor of Science degrees from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock in 1992 and UAMS in 1996. In addition, Dr. Towbin was inducted into the UAMS College of Medicine Hall of Fame in 2004. For its associations with the life and work of Dr. Eugene Towbin, the Towbin House is also being nominated to the National Register with **statewide significance** under **Criterion B**.

²⁷ Von Eckardt, Wolf. *Mid-Century Architecture in America*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1961, p. 22.

²⁸ McAlester, Virginia & Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc, 1984, p. 482.

Towbin, Dr. Eugene, House
Name of Property

Pulaski County, Arkansas
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9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Information on Hollis Belk from www.ancestry.com.

Information on the Dr. Eugene Towbin House in the files of the Pulaski County Assessor's Office. Accessed through www.arcountydata.com.

Linck Shelby. E-mail to the author. 6 September 2018.

Little Rock City Directories, 1965-1984.

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 of the Broadview Addition to the City of Little Rock, 1957. In the files of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program.

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.

Towbin, Lucy, and Joseph Bates. "Dr. Eugene Jonas Towbin." *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*. Found at: <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=7379>.

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

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 # _____

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Primary location of additional data:

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

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): PU10536

10. Geographical Data

Acree 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: 559558 | Northing: 3847265 |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |

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4. Zone: Easting : Northing:

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

Lot #4 of the Broadview Rep Addition to the City of Little Rock – Parcel #43L2000000400.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

This 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: Arkansas zip code: 72201
e-mail: ralph.wilcox@arkansas.gov
telephone: (501) 324-9787
date: July 13, 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,

Towbin, Dr. Eugene, House
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Pulaski County, Arkansas
County and State

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: Dr. Eugene Towbin House

City or Vicinity: Little Rock

County: Pulaski County

State: Arkansas

Photographer: Mason Toms

Date Photographed: April 27, 2018

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

- 1 of 27. Southeast façade of the house, looking northwest.
- 2 of 27. Southeast façade of the house, looking north.
- 3 of 27. Fence at the northeast corner of the house, looking northwest.
- 4 of 27. Northeast façade of the house, looking southeast.
- 5 of 27. Northeast façade of the house, looking southwest.
- 6 of 27. North end of the northwest façade of the house, looking southeast.
- 7 of 27. North end of the northwest façade of the house, looking southeast.
- 8 of 27. North end of the northwest façade of the house, looking northeast.
- 9 of 27. Northwest façade of the house, looking southeast.
- 10 of 27. Northwest and southwest façades of the house, looking northeast.
- 11 of 27. Southwest and southeast façades of the house, looking northwest.
- 12 of 27. Kitchen of the house, looking northeast.
- 13 of 27. Dining room and kitchen of the house, looking east.
- 14 of 27. Built-in cabinet in the dining room, looking southwest.

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- 15 of 27. Dining room and living room of the house, looking southwest.
- 16 of 27. Living room of the house, looking south.
- 17 of 27. Living room of the house and the fireplace, looking northeast.
- 18 of 27. Bedroom #1 (girls room), looking east.
- 19 of 27. Bedroom #1 (girls room), looking southeast.
- 20 of 27. Bedroom #2 (boys room), looking southeast.
- 21 of 27. Bedroom #2 (boys room), looking northeast.
- 22 of 27. Bedroom #3 (master bedroom), looking southwest.
- 23 of 27. Bedroom #3 (master bedroom), looking northwest.
- 24 of 27. Study area of Bedroom #3 (master bedroom), looking northeast.
- 25 of 27. Foyer of the house, looking southeast.
- 26 of 27. Stairwell of the house, looking west.
- 27 of 27. Recreation room on the lower level of the house, looking southwest.

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Figure 1: Eugene Towbin with his wife, Catherine, at Rochester, New York, 1948. (From *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*.)

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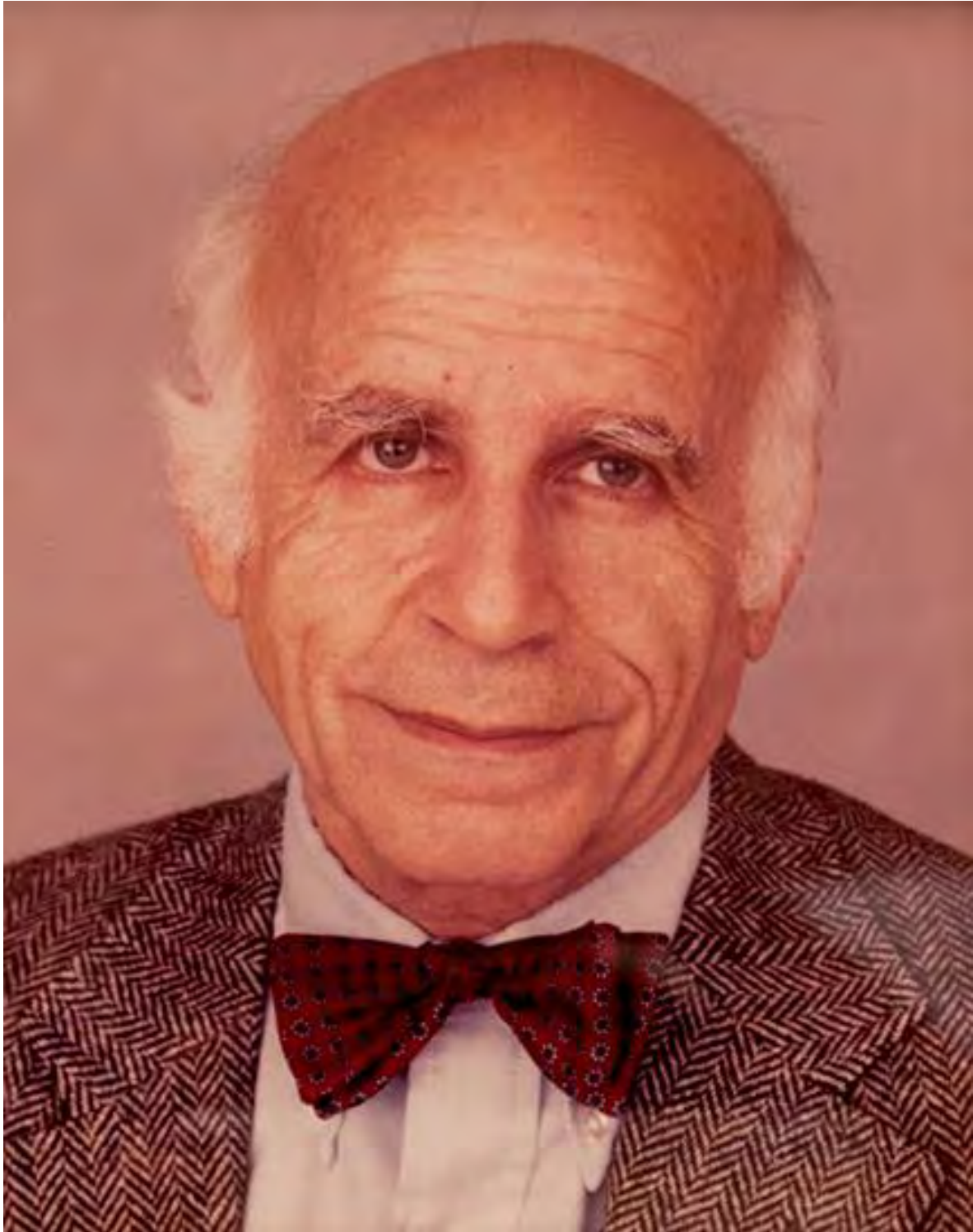


Figure 2: Eugene Towbin, c.1985. (From *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*.)

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Figure 3: Eugene Towbin with patient at the pediatrics clinic in Rochester, New York, 1948. (From *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*.)

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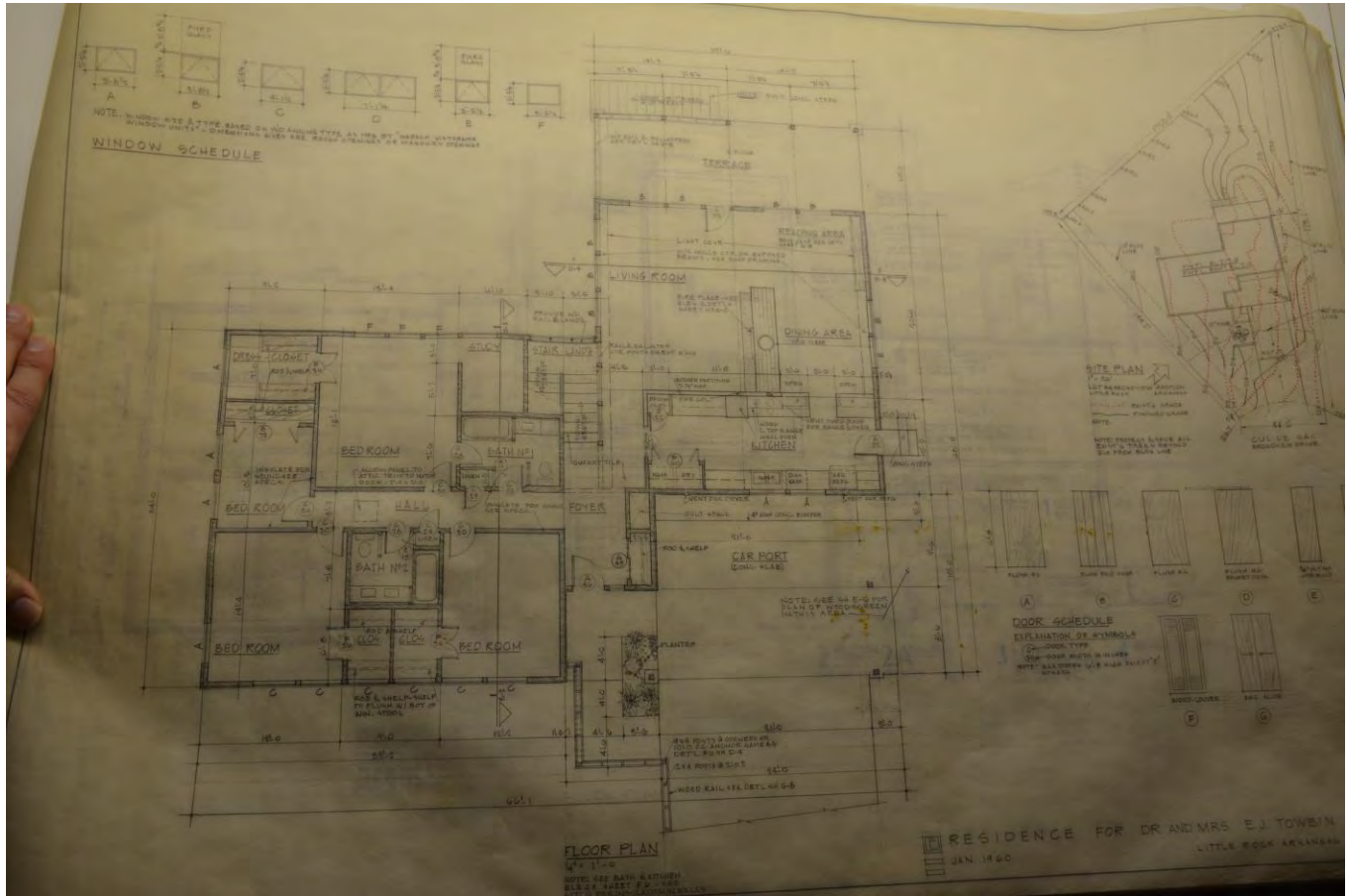


Figure 4: Main floor plan of the Towbin House. (In the possession of the current owners.)

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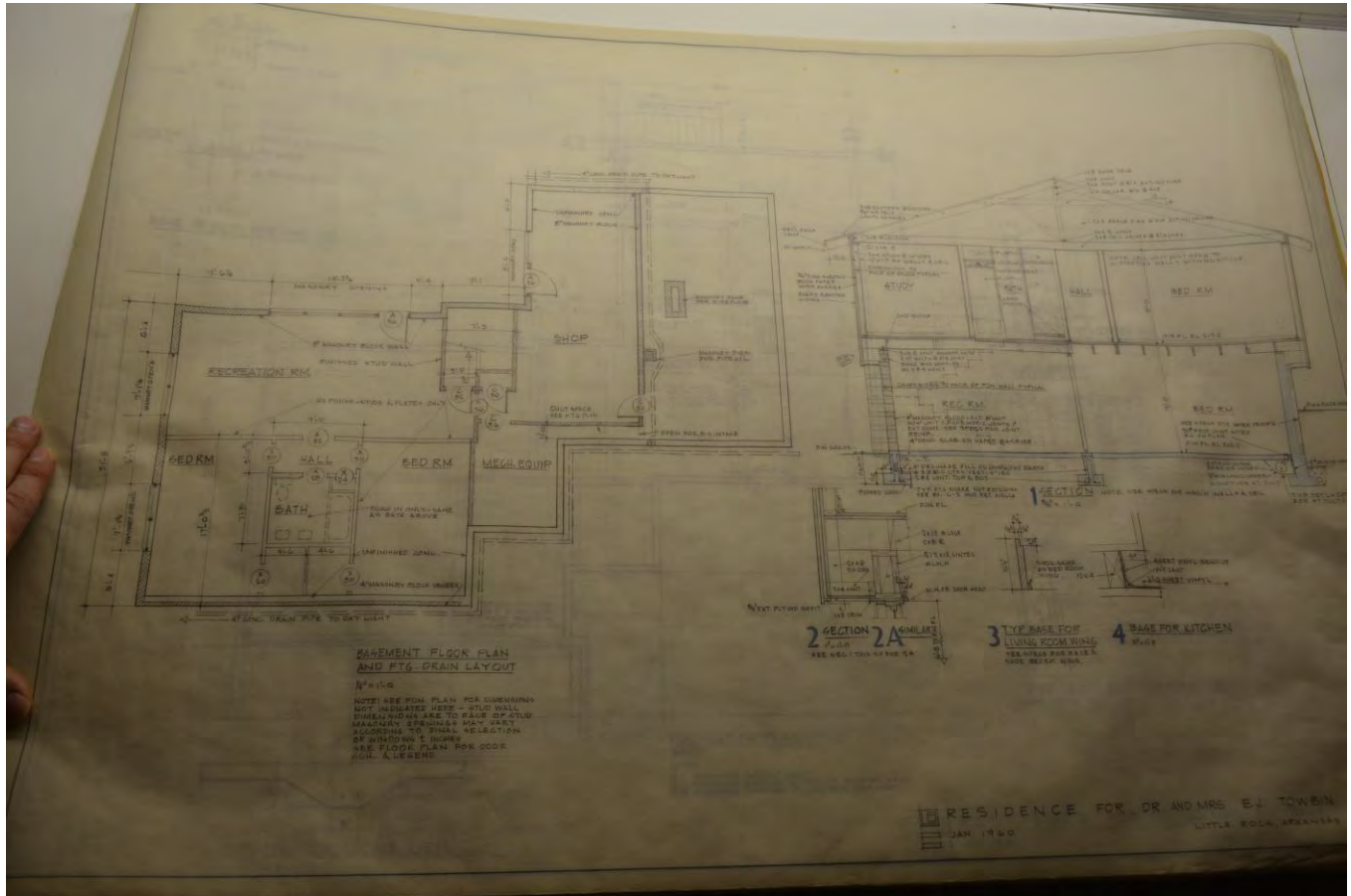


Figure 5: Lower floor plan of the Towbin House. (In the possession of the current owners.)

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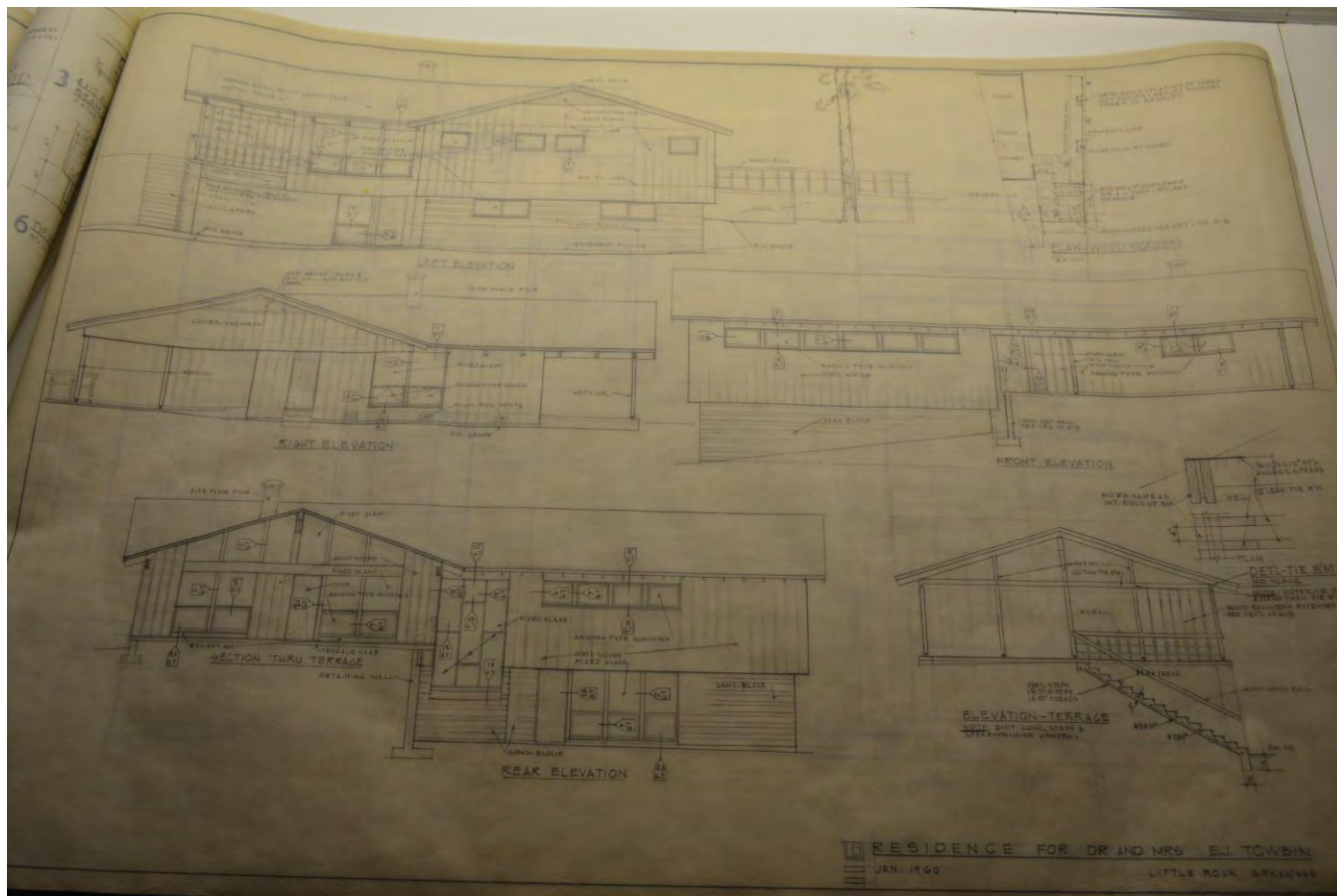


Figure 6: Elevation drawings of the Towbin House. (In the possession of the current owners.)

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.



|-----235'-----|

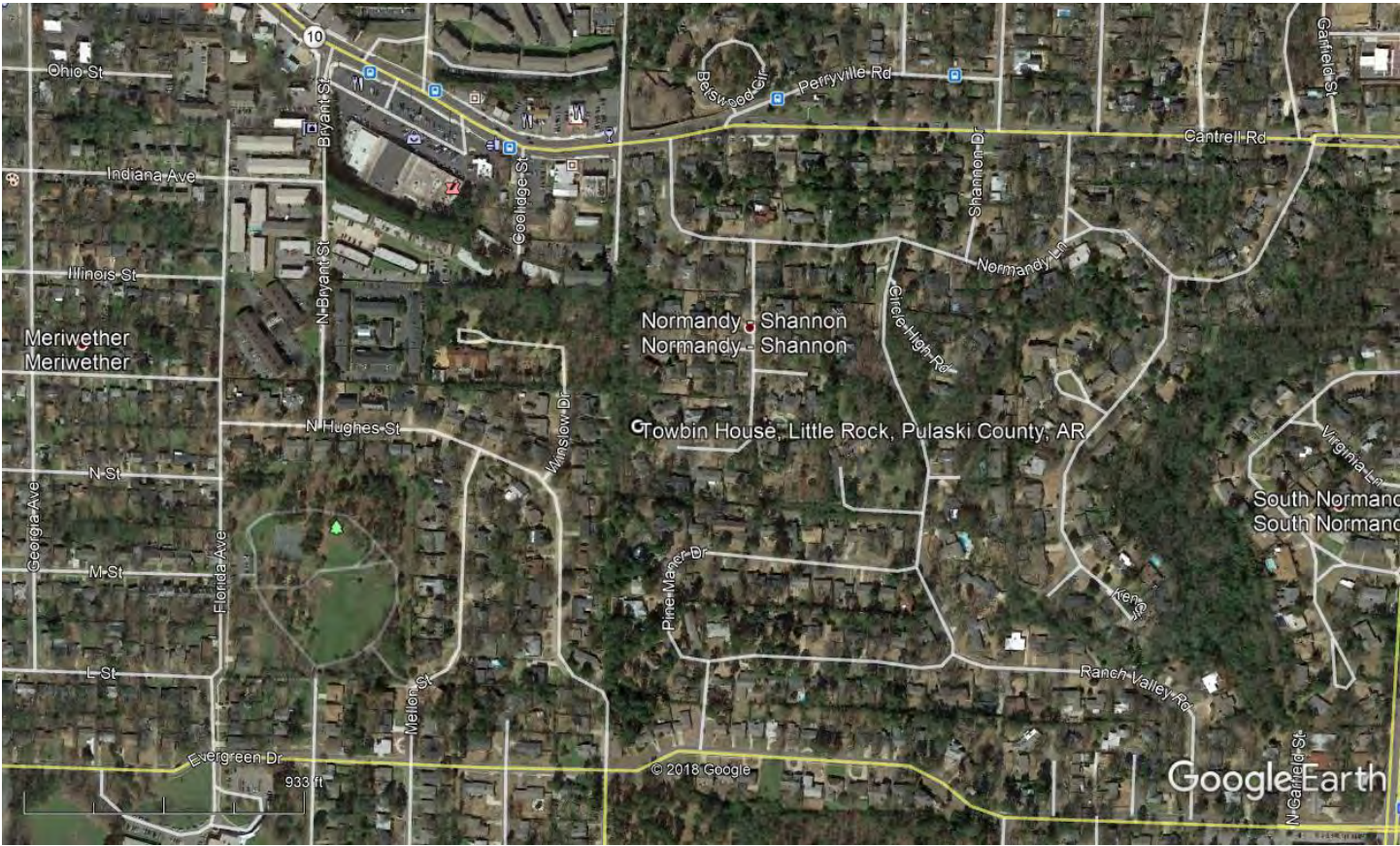
Towbin House

Little Rock, Pulaski County, AR

15 559558E 3847265N



North



|-----933'-----|

Towbin House

Little Rock, Pulaski County, AR

15 559558E 3847265N



North





















NO TRESPASSING





































UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: Nomination

Property Name: Towbin, Dr. Eugene, 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: SG100003336

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 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 / B & 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.



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: Dr. Eugene Towbin 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 Dr. Eugene Towbin 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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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:

Dr. Eugene Towbin House, 16 Broadview Drive, Little Rock, AR 72207

Name of Owner:

Clayton Belknap and Elisa Towbin-Jones

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:

Chair

Secretary/Staff

Date

Date

