

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Ahern, Patrick J., House

other names/site number MI0041

2. Location

street & number 403 Laurel Street

not for publication N/A

city or town Texarkana

vicinity N/A

state Arkansas

code AR

county Miller

code 091

zip code 71854

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant

nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Carrie Matthews
Signature of certifying official/Title

12/3/04
Date

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See Continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

entered in the National Register.

See continuation sheet

determined eligible for the National Register.

See continuation sheet

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

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

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
1	0	objects
3	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/ single dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/ single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY

REVIVALS/Classical Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls CONCRETE

roof STONE/slate

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C moved from its original location.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Levels of Significance (local, state, national)

LOCAL

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1906, 1918, c. 1925

Significant Dates

1906, 1918, c. 1925

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

Architect/Builder

Burdsal Company, Architects

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:
Texarkana Museum.

Ahern, Patrick J., House
Name of Property

Miller County, Arkansas
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre.

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>15</u>	<u>403338</u>	<u>3698840</u>	3	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

2	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	4	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Benita Duvall, National Register Historian

organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date 9/28/2004

street & number Tower Building, 323 Center Street telephone 501-324-9789

city or town Little Rock state Arkansas zip code 72201

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Mrs. Eleanor Ahern-Harrigan

street & number 12737 Highwood Street telephone

city or town Los Angeles state California zip code 90049

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 listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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SUMMARY

The Patrick J. Ahern House, built in 1906, is an excellent example of a Classical Revival home located in Texarkana, Miller County. It has retained its original beauty in part because of consistent ownership by the Ahern family and its descendants. Only two minor changes have occurred since the house was built in 1906: enclosing an upper floor balcony in 1918 and enclosing the small back porch to create a utility room.

ELABORATION

Built to be a showplace of huge proportions, the Ahern House is perfectly situated on a corner lot. The North side of the building is placed very close to the property line and from there a beautiful symmetrical appearance is achieved. Space is needed for such a massive structure and the corner location leaves wide open spaces on the front and side elevations of the house.

The historic value begins at street level, with the original rock street extending from the modern pavement by approximately two feet, lending to the feel of the house. From the rock street begins a sidewalk which is intersected by another sidewalk a few feet from a 3 ½ foot tall concrete retaining wall. The retaining wall is important not only because it adds subtle height to the overall appearance of the house but also adds to the showmanship of the main entrance. Set in the wall are five concrete steps with an ornate metal railing that leads to the continued sidewalk that leads to another five concrete steps with a railing that leads up to the floor of the front porch and to the main entrance of the house. The house is constructed of concrete block, including the five chimneys. The hipped slate roof drops to a boxed-eave overhang, decorated with dentils.

Northeast Elevation

The northeast elevation, or front of the Ahern House, faces Laurel Street. The front porch extends to the southeast elevation of the home, as do the two-story Ionic columns and concrete balustrades. A column is situated at each corner of the home, with three in the middle. The porch floor is constructed of large square concrete slabs, and the porch ceiling is made of dark wood slats.

A dormer is centered above the doors on the roof. It contains two double-hung, one-over-one windows, and has a boxed-eave overhang. The original beveled, leaded, crystal full-rectangular transom and lights surround the downstairs main entrance and the upstairs balcony entrance. On each side of the balcony are two double-hung, one-over-one windows. The balcony is surrounded by wrought-iron, with matching braces at the side edges beneath. On the first floor level, the transom is decorated with the street address, and the side lights are decorated with a star on each side. It is unknown whether the stars are for Texas, which is mere streets away, or just for decoration. To each side of the entrance is one large double-hung, one-over-one window. Each window is the same width as the pair that is located directly above it.

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Southeast Elevation

The southeast elevation of the house is bordered by the same retaining wall as the front, with a sidewalk leading to four steps. The steps contain a railing made of the same iron-work as the front balcony, which lead to a side entrance to the wrap-around porch. The side-porch shares a column with the front, plus three others. The roof contains a dormer matching the one on the front, also containing two windows. An original balcony was enclosed in 1918, making a sleeping porch. The balcony begins at the second column on the southeast side and extends to the fourth. The middle column is still visible, extruding partially from the enclosure. Each end of the sleeping porch has two windows. The front of the sleeping porch has a ribbon pattern of windows, with four on each side of the middle column. All windows on the sleeping porch are double-hung, four-over-four windows. The interior of the sleeping porch has the original balcony wood floor, and the house walls remain the same.

Beneath the sleeping porch are two bays extruding from the house, made of the same concrete as the walls. Each bay contains three one-over-one double-hung windows. Located at the end of the porch, near the steps, Patrick Ahern, original owner of the house, carved "P.J.A. 4/10/06" into the concrete before it dried. Near the peak of the roof of this elevation is a chimney.

Past the porch, the wall recesses. On the side of the recession there are two one-over-one, double-hung windows, one directly above the other. An interior chimney is located on this recessed elevation. The remainder of the side contains three windows, one on the second floor, two beneath. The top window is centered, and all three are one-over-one double-hung windows.

A laundry room was made of an enclosed porch to the rear of the house, the side of which connects to the southeast elevation. The southeast side of the laundry room contains no windows and is constructed of wood. The four steps that once led to the porch now lead to the solid wall of the laundry room.

Southwest Elevation

The southwest elevation of the home has a dormer on the roof which matches the style of the others, except with only one window. Beneath the roof, on the original wall of the house are two one-over-one, double-hung windows. On the enclosed wooden laundry room are two two-over-two, double-hung windows, one on each side of the door. Outside of the room is a platform with four steps leading to the ground. At the west corner of the house is a covered area containing a door leading to the basement. The door opens up from approximately a 35 degree angle. Window weights, connected with a chain that runs through a loop in the ceiling before connecting to the door handle, aid in opening the door.

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Garage

A rectangular stucco garage, built circa 1925, is located to the western section of the southwest side of the house. It has a gable asbestos roof, and a continuous stucco covered foundation. The retaining wall which surrounds three sides of the house rises above ground level by more than five feet, then meets the garage at its southwest (street) elevation and continues on the other side to wrap around about half the length of the garage. The garage has two doors facing the back of the house. On its southeast elevation are two windows. On the southwest elevation is a modern garage door. On the northwest side are three windows, one toward the rear, and two near the northeast elevation. At the top of each of the gables is a white cross dropping down from the eaves.

Northwest Elevation

The northwest elevation of the home is flat, with no balconies or porches. A dormer matching that of the front of the house is located between two interior chimneys. Toward the back, above the kitchen, is a chimney which once led to the cook stove. The cook stove has since been removed. This elevation contains nine windows. Of the windows, four are on the second story, the fourth above the recessed porch in the back containing the door to the basement. The first floor has three windows located directly beneath the upper level windows. After the first set of windows toward the front of the house are two windows, one above the other, which are set lower. The bottom window is just below that of the other first floor windows, and the top is between the first and second stories. These windows are located at the staircase inside the home. All windows on the northwest elevation are one-over-one, double-hung windows.

Interior

The interior of the house is extraordinary. Not only is the floor plan and complete design from 1906 unchanged, but four large fireplaces framed handsomely with mantle pieces made entirely of hand carved oak and hand cut ceramic tiles are still intact. Six of the original eight gas and electric light fixtures are still in place, the upper tier of gas lights made to look like candles. Each of the same light fixtures has a lower tier of electric bulbs with a hand-blown translucent glass shade. In 1906 in Texarkana, electricity was not supplied on a 24-hour basis, so gas lights were used when electricity was not available. A modern electric power plant was built in Texarkana after 1910 and the gas lights were only used occasionally.

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The floors throughout the house are made of virgin edge cut pine in which the soft yellows and reds of the closely-grained wood are brought out with a light stain. A darker mahogany stain was used on the interior woodwork, pocket doors and staircases. The original finish is still intact. None of the interior wood work has ever been refinished. According to the last surviving child of Patrick Ahern, Mrs. Ahern personally cleaned the woodwork throughout the house.

The cabinets in the pantry are original, as well as much of the furniture still located in the home. Each of the bathrooms is still equipped with original fixtures, including claw-footed tubs. The attic still contains the original wallpaper, which is falling in most places. The house plans are still stored in the house, as well as a trunk containing Mrs. Ahern's wedding dress. The original owners' croquet set and baby basinet are also located in the attic among several of their other possessions.

INTEGRITY

The Patrick J. Ahern House, built in 1906, retains all seven elements of integrity. The location and setting have not changed, since the house is among several others of the same Classical Revival style built in the same era. The design, workmanship, feeling and association are also intact, due to the Ahern family's efforts in preservation. The Patrick J. Ahern house stands today as it did in 1906, a stately masterpiece that the builders would easily recognize as their own work.

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SUMMARY

Constructed in 1906, the Patrick J. Ahern House is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion C** as an excellent example of a Classical Revival style home in Texarkana, Miller County, Arkansas. Passed down in the Ahern family, the home remains much as it did when first built.

ELABORATION

The area now known as Miller County in the Southwest corner of Arkansas has a rich and colorful history. Old Miller County was established in Arkansas Territory on April 1, 1820. Because the boundary between the United States and Spanish Mexico was in dispute, much of Miller County was actually in Texas. The 1820 U.S. Census for Miller County was taken in the northeast corner of Spanish Texas. When the Republic of Texas was established in 1836, the boundary line was redrawn and Old Miller County ceased to exist. Present day Miller County was created in 1874 out of the western part of Lafayette County. This occurred just a few months after the founding of Texarkana in 1873.

Straddling the borderline between Texas and Arkansas and founded as a junction point for the Iron Mountain and Texas Pacific railways, early Texarkana sprang up virtually overnight. Within hours of buying the first lot, future Texas-side mayor A. L. Ghio made arrangements for the first building to be constructed. Within a few months, several wood-frame buildings were built along the main avenue, later named Broad Street. This avenue would later become the business heart of downtown Texarkana. The two other main streets at the time were Front Street, facing the newly-built train station, and State Line Avenue, laid out following the actual state line between Arkansas and Texas.

Texarkana boasts wonderfully eclectic immigrant ancestry. The town was founded not only by adventurous Americans moving westward but also by new arrivals from Italy, France, Russia, Germany, Spain, Mexico and Ireland. Men such as Patrick Ahern, who arrived in Texarkana shortly after immigrating to the United States, were instrumental in building the business district of the young city. Full of energy and ambition, Ahern not only helped establish one of the most successful mercantile companies in the city, but also proved to be a pioneer in the area real estate business.

The beautiful old homes representative of Texarkana's early boom years (1880-1915), have gradually disappeared. Few of those remaining have withstood the ravages of time and progress as well as the Ahern home. Stepping into this home is like walking through a portal to Edwardian Texarkana. Every room tells the

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story of Texarkana's gracious past. As an architectural landmark, the Ahern House serves as an exceptional example of the Classical Revival style and serves as a living document of the techniques and materials used during this period.

Texarkana's growth did not slow and by the Gas Light Era of the 1890s, brick buildings had completely replaced the frame structures. Texarkana had law and order, well attended churches, Vaudeville at several opera houses and an excessive number of saloons in the downtown area. In addition, the city continued to serve as an important hub for most of the major railroads.

Early in its history, Texarkana was known as the "Gateway to the Southwest," and the "Gate City." After the turn of the century, the discovery of important reserves of natural gas in East Texas gave new impetus to the boom in Texarkana. In 1908, Texarkana Board of Trade President Ben Forman said,

When we remember that Texarkana is less than 35 years old, it will be seen that in this time she has achieved no small measure of success. Texarkana has unequaled transportation facilities. The twin cities have nine trunk lines of railway employing 1830 men with a monthly payroll totaling \$201,436. Everyday 36 passenger trains come in and out of our city. An average of 158 freight trains also come in and out daily.

Patrick Ahern History

Patrick J. Ahern was born in Waterford, Dungarvan County, Ireland, March 16, 1861. He received his education at the Saint Joseph Christian Schools in Dungarvan. A fellow student, Roger O'Dwyer, immigrated to Texarkana in the 1870s and it was based on his glowing reports of the area that Patrick Ahern decided to immigrate to this new land. At the age of 21, he left his home to settle in Texarkana, Arkansas. On October 1, 1890 he became a naturalized citizen of the United States.

In 1884, he became a junior partner in the firm of O'Dwyer and O'Reilly Dry Goods Company of Texarkana, Arkansas. Ahern bought out O'Reilly's interest and became a full partner. At this time, the name of the company was changed to O'Dwyer and Ahern and was relocated to the 200 block of East Broad Street. The business grew rapidly and the firm once again moved to a larger building at 110-112 East Broad Street. The store building was comprised of three floors and a basement, accommodating both retail and wholesale trade.

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Patrick Ahern married Mary Olive Lansdale of Washington, D.C., on October 22, 1904. Located close to the downtown area on the Arkansas side of the state line, a large residential neighborhood became known as "Quality Hill." From east to west it covered an area of approximately twenty square blocks. In 1906, Patrick Joseph Ahern built his stately home at 403 Laurel Street, in the heart of Quality Hill.

The architects responsible for the design of the house based their plans on the floor plan designed by Mr. and Mrs. Ahern themselves. Mrs. Ahern was so anxious as to the details of construction, she had her husband rent a home one block away so that she might visit the construction site everyday to monitor the progress. The Aherns had six children, five of whom were born in the 403 Laurel home: Joseph (1905-2002), Mary (1907-2003), Ann (1910-1988), Catherine (1912-1931), John (1912-2004), and Eleanor (1917). All of the Ahern children have made an impact on Texarkana in some way, through business, charity work or music education.

Ahern bought out O'Dwyer in 1925 and became sole proprietor of one of the most respected businesses in Texarkana. At this time, Ahern also opened a second store designed specifically to meet the needs of the area's numerous farm families. This second store was located at the corner of East Broad and Laurel Streets, just a few blocks from the Ahern home.

For years, Patrick Ahern owned more land than anyone else in the city. Through his efforts and development plans, Texarkana continued to grow well into the 1930s. In addition to his mercantile and real estate interests, Ahern was also a member of the board of directors of the Texarkana National Bank, Texas Cotton Oil Company, Southern Furniture Company, Miller Land and Improvement Company, and many other very important industries in Miller County. Patrick Ahern passed away on July 30, 1932.

Ahern is remembered as a modest, quiet man, with a generous spirit. His charities extended in all directions irrespective of race or creed. He was a devout member of Saint Edward's Catholic Church. He and his wife, Mary Olive Lansdale-Ahern, were largely responsible for the successful completion of the plans establishing the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word. The Sisters oversaw the Michael Meagher Memorial Hospital (now Christus-Saint Michael's). During the construction of the convent, the sisters lived at the Ahern home.

Located next door to the Ahern House is the home of Mrs. Ahern's sister. Living some distance from the local businesses, yet past the route of public transportation, the sisters wanted to live near each other. Because of this, the Aherns changed their building plans to leave enough room for the sister's home which is only a few yards to the northwest side of the Ahern House.

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Through the years, the Quality Hill neighborhood of Texarkana has undergone many changes and a number of the large homes in the area have disappeared. Of the homes that remain, the Ahern House represents the best example of the Classical Revival style. The continuous ownership of the house by the Ahern Family has assured the preservation of the house through the years and allowed it to remain much as it was when finished in 1906.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Constructed in 1906, the Patrick J. Ahern House is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion C** as an excellent example of a Classical Revival style home in Texarkana, Miller County, Arkansas. Passed down in the Ahern family, the home remains much as it did when first built.

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Section number 9 Page 1

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ahern genealogy file, Wilbur Smith Research Library and Archives, Texarkana, Texas.

Centennial History of Texarkana, Texarkana Chamber of Commerce, 1973.

Chandler, Barbara Overton History of Texarkana and Bowie and Miller Counties, Shreveport: J. Ed Howe Publishers, 1939.

Ghio, Gus, Souvenir of Texarkana, New York: Albertype Company, 1904.

Leet, William, Texarkana: A Pictorial History, Norfolk: The Donning Company, 1982.

Oral History as told by *Ahern, Joseph*. Son of Patrick J. Ahern. 1998.

Oral History as told by *Ahern-Harrigan, Eleanore*. 2004.

Texarkana City Directory, Little Rock: Polk Company, 1899, 1904, 1906, 1910, 1917, 1924.

Title abstract provided by Stewart Title Company.

U.S. Federal Censuses, Miller County, Arkansas, Texarkana City. 1910, 1920, 1930

Ahern, Patrick J., House
Name of Property

Miller County, Arkansas
County and State

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lots 5 and 6, Block 47, Original city, Texarkana, Arkansas, Miller County.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries include all land historically associated with the Patrick J. Ahern House.



VT
°00
VS

Patrick J. Ahern
House
Texarkana,
Craighead Co.
Arkansas
UTM Reference:
15/403328/692242

°99
°98
25'

2°30' 4°00' E R 28 W 700 000 FEET (AR) 33°22'30" 34°00'

INTERIOR - GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA - 2004

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

- Primary highway hard surface ————
- Secondary highway hard surface ————
- Light-duty road, hard or improved surface ————
- Unimproved road - - - - -

- Interstate Route
- U.S. Route
- State Route



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

1	2	3	1 Barkman
			2 Ogden
			3 Homan
			4 Leary
4		5	5 Mandeville
			6 Wright Patman Lake
			7 Domino
6	7	8	8 Fouke

ADJOINING 7.5' QUADRANGLES
TX 3394-144

TEXARKANA, TX-AR
2001

NIMA 7150 I NE-SERIES V882

