

46-61-7020-61

LISTED
8/29/80

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For HCERS use only

received

date

NR

LISTED:

8/29/80

1. Name

historic Alvah Horace Whitmarsh House

and/or common Whitmarsh-Steel House

2. Location

street & number 711 Pecan _____ not for publication

city, town Texarkana _____ vicinity of _____ congressional district 4

state Arkansas code 05 county Miller code 091

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name ^{James} ~~John~~ Davis and John Conner

street & number 711 Pecan

city, town Texarkana _____ vicinity of _____ state Arkansas

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Miller County Courthouse, Circuit Clerks Office

street & number 4th & Laurel

city, town Texarkana _____ state Arkansas

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Texarkana Local Ordinance District Sur. has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☐ nodate October 15, 1979 _____ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☒ local

depository for survey records City of Texarkana, Planning Division

city, town Texarkana _____ state Arkansas

7. Description

Condition

☐ excellent
☐ good
☒ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered
☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Prominently sited on the edge of one of Texarkana's oldest residential neighborhoods, the Whitmarsh House exerts a stately presence as an anchoring feature in a streetscape of fine houses built around the turn of the century. The two-story woodframe building capped by a hip roof with cross gables and a dominant tower, was built in 1894 by Alvah H. Whitmarsh, original owner of the house. Its rich embellishment and distinctive formal organization capture the spirit of the late Victorian period in their interpretation of the Queen Anne style.

Abundant decorative woodwork and an acutely verticle profile vest the principal (east) elevation of the Whitmarsh House with its distinctive character. A narrow one-story porch offset to the north of the facade offers access to the building. Though a relatively small component in this intricate elevation, the shed-roofed porch with centrally placed cross gable is enriched with turned bracketed columns on square wood piers carrying an entablature with spindled-frieze terminating in a box cornice. Although the gable end is undecorated and the entablature below it lacks spindlework, this entablature breaks to form a round-arched opening flanked by panels which frame the doorway to the house. The principal entrance door, constructed of paneled wood with one light, is set in a Classically delineated surround with transom. A second floor balcony whose balustrade and columns bear detailing that echoes that of the front porch is situated directly above the front porch's gable. The house is faced with horizontal weatherboard painted white.

Equally rich is the esthetic of the gable end (southeast corner) of the principal elevation. The corners of its second floor cantilever over the chamfered first floor bay and are articulated with brackets and a pendant. ~~Corner borads and cornice mouldings are articulated on both stories.~~ While the window located on the first floor of this bay is beautifully delineated with Classical moulding and cathedral light transom, the round-arched window that appears in the second floor of this elevation is one of the building's outstanding decorative elements. This window is composed of one large central pane flanked by two smaller panes with stained glass transoms infilling the arch. ~~Fluted pilasters separate the three divisions~~ of the window and extend up the elevation terminating under the projecting gable pediment. Carved wood panels with fan-like design frame the arch. The lavender stained glass transoms have an opalescent quality reminiscent of that of Tiffany glass. An attic window with cathedral lights, imbricated shingles and a carved panel with fan-like design embellish the gable end.

The vertical nature of the Whitmarsh House derives largely from its northeast corner. This section of the principal elevation is comprised of a half-hexagon bay with bevel-edged, transparent leaded-glass windows and is capped by an octagonal tower, an especially distinctive feature of the building. The tower, which terminates in a lofty, pointed roof covered with imbricated shingles, contains double-hung leaded-glass windows. A bracketed entablature runs below the cornice line and triangular wood panels with radiating, fan-like designs, appear above the cornice line in each segment of the tower roof.

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HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

Though less distinctive than the principal facade, the side elevations (north and south) of the Whitmarsh House reflect the esthetic established in the highly decorative front elevation. The north elevation is composed of three bays with the central bay (corresponding to an interior stair) projecting under a cross gable. The vertical orientation of the front of the house is recalled in the north elevation's two corbeled brick chimneys and, of course, in the silhouette of the tower. The south elevation features a projecting central bay with chamfered (half-hexagon) first floor and a one-story, hip roofed, side porch. Although the side porch is supported on the same turned bracketed-columns that appear in the front porch, its balustrade (partially destroyed) and entablature are greatly simplified, composed of unembellished bands of wood. A second floor balcony, located directly above the side porch, has been enclosed with casement windows to form a solarium. Irregularly placed double-hung rectangular windows appear in both sides of the house. Detailing of the side elevations is consistent with, if less elaborate than, that of the principal elevation as evidenced by the Classically-derived window surrounds, corner boards, cornice moulding, and imbricated shingles of the north gable end.

The rear (west) elevation of the house is dominated by a one-story kitchen and its entry ell which were added to the house in 1924. Originally, a rear porch occupied this space. Perhaps as a result of the early construction date, the gable end has box returns and corner boards that relate closely to the appearance of the rest of the house. Two windows, one of which is an attic window, and a secondary entrance in the ell penetrate this elevation.

Although the building is presently utilized as a law office, the fine woodwork that distinguished it as a residence is still in evidence. Richly carved and well preserved woodwork forms a wainscot in the entrance parlor and articulates the front bay window. The original hardwood floors remain intact. Pocket doors separate first floor rooms from the entry parlor. The craftsmanship of the fireplaces and their mantels reflects the careful attention to wood detail exhibited in the wall embellishment. The stairway features turned balusters and decoratively carved box-newel posts. Although the upstairs of the house is also given to office space, the second floor plan has not been altered.

Recent restoration work has contributed greatly to the richness of the first floor interior. The owners of the Whitmarsh House plan to proceed with further work on the exterior, including painting and reroofing, to insure preservation of the structure.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1894

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Outstanding in a streetscape of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century buildings, the stately Whitmarsh House exemplifies the type of residences that housed Texarkana's financially and socially prominent citizens around the turn-of-the-century. Built for Alvah H. Whitmarsh, a distinguished civic leader who served as general manager of the Buchanan Lumber Co. for 35 years until his death in 1923, and his wife the former Zella Coffey, also an active figure in Texarkana civic affairs, the Whitmarsh House stands as a fine example of the visually appealing Queen Anne architecture of the late Victorian era. Whitmarsh's connection with the lumber industry is reflected in the extremely rich woodwork that distinguishes both the exterior and the interior of the house, embodying the best of the decorative aspects of the Queen Anne style. The distinctive, vertically oriented formal organization of the building's principal facade with its prominent polygonal tower provides an exciting context for the Whitmarsh House's abundant embellishment. Especially outstanding are the front porch's bracketed-columns and spindled entablature, the triangular pediment-like carved panels that enrich the tower and the gable, and the arched window's fluted pilasters and carved panels. Cathedral lights and opalescent stained glass also contribute to the richness of this esthetic. Equally significant as the articulation of the principal is the fine wood detailing, including fireplace mantels, wainscoting, stairway, and door and window surrounds, that appears on the interior of the house. Today, the outstanding architectural features that established the Whitmarsh House as a fine residence serve to distinguish the house in its present function as a suite of law offices.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Jennings, Nancy Moore Watts, Texarkana Pioneer Families, Texarkana, Arkansas: 1962, Texarkana Pioneer Press
Texarkana City Directories--1890-1950, Texarkana, Arkansas: 1890-1950, Polks Southern Directory Company

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____


Quadrangle scale _____

UMT References

A

Zone Easting Northing

B



Zone Easting Northing

c

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification

Lot 4 and N. 7' of Lot 3, Block 14, Original Town of Texarkana

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ethel Goodstein, Architectural Historian/Donald R. Brown, Historian

organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date June 10, 1980

street & number	Suite 500, Continental Building	telephone	501/371-2763
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city or town Little Rock state Arkansas

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☐ national ☐ state ☐ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title	date
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For HCRS use only

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

