

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 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 PropertyHistoric name: Old U.S. 71, Ashdown SegmentOther names/site number: Site #LR0032, North Park Avenue

Name of related multiple property listing:

Arkansas Highway History and Architecture, 1910-1965

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

2. LocationStreet & number: North Park Avenue between East Main Street and U.S. 71City or town: Ashdown State: Arkansas County: Little RiverNot For Publication: ☐Vicinity: ☐**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

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

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

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

 national statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

 X A B X C DCathie Matthews10/30/12

Signature of certifying official/Title:

Date

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

State or Federal agency/bureau
or Tribal Government

Old U.S. 71, Ashdown Segment
Name of Property

Little River County, Arkansas
County and State

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

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 ☐

Old U.S. 71, Ashdown Segment

Little River County, Arkansas
County and State

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing

Noncontributing

buildings

sites

structures

objects

Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register _____

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

TRANSPORTATION/road-related (vehicular)/highway

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

TRANSPORTATION/road-related (vehicular)/highway

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Old U.S. 71, Ashdown Segment

Little River County, Arkansas

Name of Property

County and State

N/A

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Concrete

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 bypassed 1934 alignment of U.S. 71 in Ashdown is a two-lane concrete highway that runs on a straight alignment from the northwest side of Ashdown to the edge of the downtown area. Beginning at its northwest end at U.S. 71, it follows a straight alignment along North Park Avenue through a residential area to its end at the East Main Street and North Park Avenue intersection. The highway retains its original 1934 concrete pavement throughout. The highway retains its original roadway width.

Narrative Description

This bypassed section of old U.S. 71 is approximately 0.5 miles long and begins at U.S. 71 northwest of Ashdown. The segment proceeds in a southeasterly direction along North Park Avenue before ending at the North Park Avenue and East Main Street intersection. The segment follows a roughly flat alignment throughout its course, although it does pass through a depression in between East Fulton Street and Buck Wright Road.

The old alignment of U.S. 71 has a width of 18 feet for two lanes of travel and no paved shoulders. (For comparison, the current American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials Green Book indicates that a lane width of 11 feet 9 inches is desirable.) Each section of pavement is 9 feet wide and 50 feet long, and is composed of a tan stone aggregate mixed in the concrete. The alignment of highway passes through an area with several residences on the northwest side of Ashdown.

Old U.S. 71, Ashdown Segment

Little River County, Arkansas
County and State

Name of Property

INTEGRITY

Overall, the bypassed alignment of U.S. 71 in Ashdown has excellent integrity. The original 1934 pavement remains throughout the segment, and it retains its original dimensions. Although a small portion of the highway at the northwest end has been covered in asphalt, the asphalt did not alter the highway's original width. As a result, it is still easy to recognize the original 1934 construction. Additionally, the part of Little River County where the highway is located retains its small-town setting, and the surroundings still reflect the period of significance from 1934-1963

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- ☐ B. Removed from its original location
- ☐ C. A birthplace or grave
- ☐ D. A cemetery

Old U.S. 71, Ashdown Segment
Name of Property

Little River County, Arkansas
County and State

☐

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.)

Engineering

Transportation

Period of Significance

1934-1963

Significant Dates

1934

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Old U.S. 71, Ashdown Segment

Name of Property

A. C. Kennedy, Builder

Little River County, Arkansas

County and State

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.)

Old U.S. 71, Ashdown Segment, is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion C** for its engineering. Old U.S. 71, Ashdown Segment, is the longest and most intact portion of the old alignment of U.S. 71 in the Ashdown vicinity of Little River County. The Ashdown segment of U.S. 71, which is approximately 0.5 miles long, still retains its original 1934 concrete pavement. The highway section was the main automobile route in that part of Little River County from the time of its construction in 1934 until the current U.S. 71 bypass was built to the east of it c.1965. It is therefore eligible for nomination under **Criterion A** for its association with the development of Arkansas highway culture. Old U.S. 71, Ashdown Segment, is being submitted to the National Register of Historic Places under the multiple property listing "Arkansas Highway and Transportation Era Architecture, 1910-1965" in conjunction with the historic context "Arkansas Highway History and Architecture, 1910-1965."

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

Settlement began in the area that is now Little River County in approximately 1836. The first settlers in the area were hunters who camped around the county, and made a living by hunting and sending animal pelts down the Red River, ultimately to New Orleans.¹ Sevier County, just to the north, was officially created on October 17, 1828, by an act of the Arkansas Territorial Legislature and the county seat was established at Paraclifta just five days later on October 22.² (Little River County would be broken off from Sevier County on March 5, 1867.) By 1839, no roads existed in the area that became Little River County, although one road existed in Sevier County. It entered the county at Ultima Thule on the present Arkansas/Oklahoma border, proceeded southeast through Paraclifta and Pine Woods, before exiting the county just east of the Saline River.³

¹ *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Southern Arkansas*. Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1890, p. 523.

² *Ibid*, pp. 212, 214.

³ David H. Burr. *Map of Mississippi, Louisiana & Arkansas exhibiting the post offices, post roads, canals, rail roads, &c.* Map. London: J. Arrowsmith, 1839. (Paraclifta was located just west of Fall's Chapel, approximately four miles northwest of this highway segment.)

Old U.S. 71, Ashdown Segment

Little River County, Arkansas

Name of Property

County and State

By 1854, several roads had penetrated into Little River County. The majority of them originated at Lanesport on the Red River in the southwestern part of the county, and fanned out to the northwest to Indian Territory, to the northeast to the Paraclifta area, and to the east following the Red River into Hempstead County.⁴

The arrival of the railroad into the Little River County area also increased the area's settlement and development in the late nineteenth century. By 1895, the Texas and Fort Smith Railroad line had been constructed south out of Paraclifta all the way Texarkana.⁵ The arrival of the railroad in Little River County brought about additional settlement in the Ashdown area. Ashdown was originally known as Keller, nicknamed Turkey Flat by the area's early settlers, and was a direct result of the construction of the railroad in the area. Ashdown was incorporated in 1892 and chosen as the county seat in 1906. The number of businesses in the town, which included a cotton seed oil mill, fertilizer works, sawmills, planing mills, a handle factory, a bottling works, a brick plant, cotton gins, a flour mill, hotels, and several dry goods, grocery, and hardware stores, necessitated a good transportation system. Although the railroad provided good transportation initially, trucks and automobiles would soon give the railroad a run for its money.⁶

By the early twentieth century, as the popularity of the automobile increased, providing good quality roads became a fairly high priority around the state, and the same was true in Little River County. The *Third Biennial Report of the Department of State Lands, Highways and Improvements* stated that:

Little River County has been enthusiastic in her efforts both to improve her earth roads, and in the construction of permanent roads. Most of the main roads of the county have been graded, culverts have been placed, and the streams well bridged. Many of the graded earth roads are now being surfaced with gravel. A fine sentiment prevails in part of the county.⁷

It would not be long until road construction began in earnest in the Little River County area.

Once the legislature passed the Alexander Road Improvement Law in 1915, road construction did begin in earnest in Little River County, and Ashdown was one of the first communities to benefit from it. The *Third Biennial Report* stated that "The first permanent road built under the Alexander law was the road [from] Ashdown to Ogden and Richmond in Little River County. It is about 15 miles long and cost about \$60,000."⁸

⁴ Colton's railroad & township map of Arkansas. Map. New York, D. F. Shall, 1854.

Cram's Township and Rail Road Map of Arkansas. Map. Chicago, George Franklin Cram, 1895.

⁶ Little River County Celebrates 125 Years, Ashdown Celebrated 100 Years. Unknown publisher, 1992, p. 82, and Baker, Russell Pierce. *From Memdag to Norsk: A Historical Directory of Arkansas Post Offices, 1832-1971*. Hot Springs, AR: Arkansas Genealogical Society, 1988, p. 30.

Third Biennial Report of the Department of State Lands, Highways and Improvements. Publisher unknown, c.1918, pp. 56-57.

⁸ *Third Biennial Report*, p. 57.

Old U.S. 71, Ashdown Segment

Little River County, Arkansas

Name of Property

County and State

In 1916, parties of surveyors had arrived in neighboring Sevier County to survey a route for the Jefferson Highway, which was to span the country from the Canadian border to the Gulf of Mexico at New Orleans. In the Arkansas area, the Jefferson Highway was to come south from Kansas City to Fort Smith and then on to De Queen and Texarkana before proceeding on to Shreveport, following the current route of U.S. 71 in the northern part of the county and AR Highway 41 in the southern part.⁹ However, it does not appear that the Jefferson Highway followed U.S. 71 through Ashdown, although it is possible that the route of U.S. 71 through the Ashdown area was surveyed and built at the same time.

By the late 1920s, the Arkansas State Highway Commission was involved in a concerted effort to upgrade and improve the major highways across the state, and U.S. 71 was one of the highways targeted. The Ashdown portion of the highway (referred to as Section 4 of U.S. 71 by the State Highway Commission at the time), however, was not paved until 1934. The State Highway Commission advertised for proposals in late 1933, and hired A. C. Kennedy of Little Rock, Arkansas, for the job, which was State Job No. 3199 and Federal Aid Project No. NRH-166 (Part 1) and NRM-166 (part 2). Their proposal, which was received December 12, 1933, quoted a price of \$58,538.34 for 3.684 miles of grading, drainage structures, and Traffic Service Gravel, and 1.5 miles of concrete pavement between Ashdown and the Little River. The project also included \$5,853.83 of estimated engineering costs and contingencies for a total commitment of \$64,392.17. A. C. Kennedy also estimated that it would take 100 working days to complete the work. It is not known, however, how long the paving actually required, or what the final cost for the project was.¹⁰

Once U.S. 71 was completed in the vicinity of Ashdown, it made travel in the area a lot easier. The fact that this portion of U.S. 71 was the main route between Fort Smith and Texarkana meant that it was also a highly traveled road for both automobile and truck traffic. The amount of traffic using U.S. 71 ultimately led to the construction of the current U.S. 71 to the west. The new highway was opened to traffic in 1965.¹¹

Today the entire length of the old alignment of the U.S. 71 in Ashdown is still in use as North Park Avenue, and it is still possible to drive the entire segment of the alignment being nominated. Remarkably, all of the alignment retains the original 1934 concrete pavement. As a result, it is still easy to recognize the original 1934 construction.

U.S. 71 is currently the main highway between Fort Smith and Texarkana, and has been for many years. Due to the amount of traffic that uses the highway, much of the road has been upgraded to current highway standards. Early sections of the highway are rare, especially ones that are still drivable. As a result, the old alignment of U.S. 71 in Ashdown remains an

⁹ Although surveying of the Jefferson Highway took place in Arkansas, along with some road construction, other sources indicate that the route of the highway bypassed Arkansas to the west going through Miami, Muskogee, McAlester, and Durant, Oklahoma, along the current route of U.S. 69, before heading on into Texas.

¹⁰ Arkansas State Highway Commission. *Eleventh Biennial Report of the Arkansas State Highway Commission*. Publisher unknown, 1933, pp. 56-57.

¹¹ Scoggin, Bob. E-mail to the author. 12 July 2012.

Old U.S. 71, Ashdown Segment

Little River County, Arkansas

Name of Property

County and State

extremely intact example of early highway design and construction, and a tangible reminder of early highway travel in Little River County.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROPERTY

Old U.S. 71, Ashdown Segment, is significant because it illustrates the concerted efforts of the Arkansas State Highway Commission in the first part of the twentieth century to provide good roads across the state. Although efforts began in the 1910s, especially after laws such as the Federal Aid Road Act of 1916 and Arkansas's Alexander Road Law were passed and Road Improvement Districts were created, they continued throughout the first part of the century.

The paving of highways, such as Old U.S. 71, Ashdown Segment, in Arkansas during the 1910s through the 1940s, was significant in that it allowed motorists to more easily travel around their areas, especially in inclement weather. People in Ashdown and the surrounding rural area could now, via U.S. 71, travel in that part of Little River County even during wet weather. By the late 1940s, because of the extensive network of gravel, asphalt, and concrete highways, such as U.S. 71, that had been constructed and were under construction, one could much more easily travel across the state.

Old U.S. 71, Ashdown Segment, was not only significant for its role in the improvement of automobile transportation in the Ashdown area, but also because it represented a new direction in highway engineering in the first part of the 1900s. Although a few concrete highways had been built in the 1910s and early 1920s, it was not until the late 1920s and 1930s that the construction of concrete highways began in earnest. Concrete highways built in Arkansas during the first part of the twentieth century represented a great improvement over previous roads. With a pavement width of eighteen feet, roads like this segment of U.S. 71 were wide enough to handle the growing amount of automobile and truck traffic that would have been present in the area at the time. The width also reflects the standards of the day, and was a great improvement over previous roads, whose width was normally only about ten feet.

Because of the importance of the Ashdown Segment of U.S. 71 in illustrating the development of improved highway infrastructure in the Ashdown area in the 1930s and for illustrating the new and improved highways being built across Arkansas beginning in the 1920s and 1930s to accommodate more and larger automobiles and trucks, it is being nominated to the National Register under **Criterion A** with **local significance**. Also, as an intact example of an early-twentieth-century concrete-paved highway in Little River County, a new kind of highway engineering in Little River County in the 1930s, it is being nominated to the National Register with **local significance** under **Criterion C**.

Old U.S. 71, Ashdown Segment, is being submitted to the National Register of Historic Places under the multiple-property listing "Arkansas Highway and Transportation Era Architecture, 1910-1965" in conjunction with the historic context "Arkansas Highway History and Architecture, 1910-1965."

Old U.S. 71, Ashdown Segment

Name of Property

Little River County, Arkansas
County and State

Old U.S. 71, Ashdown Segment
Name of Property

Little River County, Arkansas
County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Arkansas State Highway Commission. *Eleventh Biennial Report of the Arkansas State Highway Commission*. Publisher unknown, 1933.

Baker, Russell Pierce. *From Memdag to Norsk: A Historical Directory of Arkansas Post Offices, 1832-1971*. Hot Springs, AR: Arkansas Genealogical Society, 1988.

Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Southern Arkansas. Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1890.

Burr, David H. *Map of Mississippi, Louisiana & Arkansas exhibiting the post offices, post roads, canals, rail roads, &c.* Map. London: J. Arrowsmith, 1839.

Colton's railroad & township map of Arkansas. Map. New York, D. F. Shall, 1854.

Cram's Township and Rail Road Map of Arkansas. Map. Chicago, George Franklin Cram, 1895.

Little River County Celebrates 125 Years, Ashdown Celebrated 100 Years. Unknown publisher, 1992.

McCommas, Betty. *The History of Sevier County and Her People (1803-1936)*. Dallas: Taylor Publishing Company, 1980.

Scoggin, Bob. E-mail to the author. 12 July 2012.

Third Biennial Report of the Department of State Lands, Highways and Improvements. Publisher unknown, c.1918.

West, Elliott. *The WPA Guide to 1930s Arkansas*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1987 reprint of 1941 publication.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

Old U.S. 71, Ashdown Segment

Little River County, Arkansas

Name of Property

County and State

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
☐ previously listed in the National Register
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☐ Local government
☐ University
☐ Other

Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): LR0032

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Approximately 1.4 acres

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: 33.676237 | Longitude: -94.128909 |
| 2. Latitude: 33.682880 | Longitude: -94.134899 |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Old U.S. 71, Ashdown Segment
Name of Property

Little River County, Arkansas
County and State

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☒ NAD 1983

1. Zone: 15	Easting: 395351	Northing: 3726830
2. Zone: 15	Easting: 394803	Northing: 3727572
3. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
4. Zone:	Easting :	Northing:

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

Beginning at the Park Avenue and Main Street intersection, the 1934 alignment follows Park Avenue for approximately 0.5 miles to the point where it rejoins U.S. 71. The width of the boundary includes 11 feet on either side of the 1934 highway centerline.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

This boundary contains the most intact portion of the 1934 U.S. 71 highway alignment in the Ashdown vicinity.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Ralph S. Wilcox, National Register & Survey Coordinator
organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
street & number: 1500 Tower Building, 323 Center Street
city or town: Little Rock state: AR zip code: 72201
e-mail: ralph@arkansasheritage.org
telephone: (501) 324-9787
date: August 8, 2012

Old U.S. 71, Ashdown Segment

Little River County, Arkansas
County and State

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Maps: A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Old U.S. 71, Ashdown Segment

City or Vicinity: Ashdown

County: Little River County

State: Arkansas

Photographer: Ralph S. Wilcox

Date Photographed: June 28, 2012

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

1 of 5. View northwest from the Main Street and Park Avenue intersection.

2 of 5. View northwest from the Park Avenue and Fulton Street intersection.

3 of 5. View southeast from the Park Avenue and Fulton Street intersection.

Old U.S. 71, Ashdown Segment
Name of Property

Little River County, Arkansas
County and State

4 of 5. View northwest from the Park Avenue and U.S. 71 intersection.

5 of 5. View southeast from the Park Avenue and U.S. 71 intersection.

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.



Old U.S. 71, Ashdown Segment
 Ashdown, Little River County, Arkansas
 Point #1: 33.676237, -94.128909
 Point #2: 33.682880, -94.134899
 Scale: |-----1012'-----|











