

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 Property

Historic name: Elias, Barney L., House

Other names/site number: PU8672

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

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

2. Location

Street & number: 335 Goshen Avenue

City or town: North 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Not For Publication: Vicinity: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 statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

 A B XC D

<p style="font-size: 1.2em; font-family: cursive; margin: 0;"><u>Martha Miller</u></p> <p>Signature of certifying official/Title:</p> <p><u>Arkansas Historic Preservation Program</u></p> <p>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>	<p style="font-size: 1.2em; margin: 0;"><u>12/3/14</u></p> <p>Date</p>
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<p>In my opinion, the property <u> </u> meets <u> </u> does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
<p>Signature of commenting official:</p>	<p>Date</p>
<p>Title :</p>	<p>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>

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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

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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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT/Moderne

MODERN MOVEMENT/International Style

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: CONCRETE, BRICK, ASPHALT

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 Barney L. Elias House is a modernist residence located along Goshen Avenue in North Little Rock. It is a large residence, built by a local contractor for his family in 1949. It has masonry brick walls, resting on a continuous concrete foundation. It is located on a large, wedge shaped lot that slopes from Goshen Avenue to the north. This large house features flat planes and three-part decorative elements along its front façade and a large covered porch which extends to create a porte-cochere. It has retained much of its original fabric. The house, constructed in 1949, predates many modernist examples in Arkansas and is an excellent surviving example of the experimentation in aesthetics and construction techniques that characterize the modernist movement in Arkansas.

Narrative Description

The Barney L. Elias House is an early example of modernist architecture in Arkansas. Built in 1949, this house pre-dates the explosion of modernist designs in Arkansas during the 1950s, inspired in part by the creation of the new Architecture Department at the University of Arkansas. This house was designed and built with new construction methods including the use of poured concrete and metal windows. The house completely disregards many of the more traditional residential forms and instead relies on large flat planes of brick to create a very modernist aesthetic, especially on the front façade. These large planes are indicative of the earlier Art Moderne movement as well as the contemporary International Style movement. This

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house is a mix of both styles. The Art Moderne decorative patterning mixes with the flat facades and horizontal movements such as the porch that are indicative of the International Style.

The house sits on a wedge shaped lot that extends from Goshen Avenue to the north. The lot is roughly flat from the front to about mid-way along the lot to the north, and then it slopes downward to the back of the lot. The back half of the lot, encompassing the rear yard, is enclosed by a low wooden fence. The rear-yard includes a large, separate, rectangular, concrete pad that has always been a patio space. It originally includes concrete patio furniture and a built-in Bar-B-Q that has since been removed. The entire yard includes several large trees. The landscape of the front yard also includes three, narrow pine trees, shaped as tall cylinders, that are replacements for original trees that echo the repeated three band decorative pattern seen on many areas of the house.

The entire structure sits on a continuous concrete foundation. The house is supported by solid brick walls. The brick has been painted white since its construction. The roof of the entire structure, save for the exterior second-story patio, is flat with a tall parapet along the front façade and a gutter system that encompasses all of the facades. This guttering system is a later addition that solves some of the issues with the original, experimental roof drainage system. This system involved creating pools for standing water on the roof that would serve as a passive cooling system for the house. A valve in the upstairs bedroom could be turned on to flood the roof during a hot day and a pipe was installed to allow excess water to drain. This system was never truly successful and the roof had to be replaced multiple times before the creation of the gutter system.

South Façade

The main south-facing façade faces Goshen Avenue. A long, straight concrete sidewalk extends from the street to the covered front porch. The front façade is composed of three basic units, a two-story mass to the east, a slightly recessed two-story mass to the west and a projecting porch. The eastern portion of the front façade is pierced by two double-hung metal windows, one at the first-story level and the second directly above the first at the second-story level. The center of the western block of the façade has a small raised portion at the roof level, with three horizontal decorative bands. This small raised section is actually the top of the chimney stack, which was built to remain hidden along this front façade. The center of the façade features a vertical band of repetitive courses of extended brick, composed of nine horizontal bands, equally spaced, that run from the ground level to the roof level. Directly to the west of these bands, the front façade is stepped back slightly, creating a recessed space along the front porch. The stepped back wall of the western portion of the front façade features three vertical bands of decorative brick that extend from the porch roof to above the top edge of the roof line. Each of the three vertical bands is capped by an arched metal cap. These bands are centered above the door and evenly spaced. Between the bands, there are two small, narrow, horizontal windows at the second-story level. The porch extends from the center of the front façade, where the western section steps back slightly, to the west, well beyond the front façade, creating a covered porte-cochere. The eastern edge of the porch is supported by a brick wall that runs perpendicular to the front façade. This wall is pierced by three, equally-spaced, small rectangular openings, in a vertical column.

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The concrete roof of the porch is also supported by a group of three thin metal columns, located along the outer edge of the porch, in line with the western edge of the house. The far western edge of the porch is also supported by a brick wall, parallel with the eastern porch support wall. This western brick wall features a central opening, with four equally-spaced brick shelves, that extend beyond the wall to both the east and west. These shelves create three open spaces at the center of the brick wall and add a geometric decorative element to an otherwise blank wall. To the western edge of this wall is a low brick planter that is original to the design of the house. Another low brick planter is located in front of the three narrow metal columns that support the midpoint of the porch roof. The porch floor is made of cast concrete and is set slightly above ground level. Under the porch roof, three inset decorative bands run horizontally from the eastern porch support wall to the eastern edge of the front façade. These bands are interrupted by the front door. The original front door had three small circular windows. The current front door has a single porthole window and the house number along the bottom of the door. The mailbox is positioned alongside the front door. A small electric porch-light, which is original to the house, is located to the top left of the front door.

West Façade

This west-facing façade is located around the western corner from the main front façade. The west façade includes fourteen windows. This façade is two stories tall at the southern edge and one story in height at the northern edge. The façade is divided into three sections: the southern and central sections are two-stories in height while the northern section is only one-story in height. The porch roof wraps slightly around the southern corner of this façade. The southern section of this façade includes seven metal, double-hung windows of varying sizes. At the first floor level, from south to north is a single, small, one-over-one window and a set of three, equally-spaced, tall windows and a pair of large, two-over-two windows. The second story pair of windows includes a wider window to the north and a narrower window to the south. The central section of this west façade, which is slightly recessed, includes four, metal, double-hung windows. One of the two-over-two windows is centrally located at the first story level. A small one-over-one window is located at the second story level, to the south. To the north is a two-over-two window. A metal drainage down-spout is located along the southern edge of the central section.

On the one-story section of this façade, there are three windows; one pair of adjacent stationary windows to the south and a single, small, double-hung window to the north. The single story portion of this façade is adjacent to a small alleyway, created by the non-contributing, shed-roofed garage/shop-building directly to the west.

North Façade

The rear façade of the one-story portion of the house has no fenestration. Its only features are the utility hook-ups and a drainage down-spout from the gutter system.

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The two-story façade that attaches to the one-story section includes a one-over-one, wide, double-hung window at the second-story level and a pair of two-over-two, double-hung windows at the first-story level.

Turning an interior corner the last north-facing façade includes a very large single-pane, stationary window at the first-story level, flanked to the east by an extended brick decorative geometric panel. The second-story includes an adjacent pair of two-over-two, double-hung windows, centered above the lower larger stationary window.

East Façade

The east façade of the one-story section includes two, two-over-two, double-hung, metal windows. These are vertically aligned; one high, one low. This façade also includes a doorway to the south of the windows with an exterior screen-door. A set of three brick steps lead to this doorway.

The largest east-facing façade, located along the side of the house opposite the port-cochere and the garage building along the main two story section of the house, has two distinct sections; a narrow section to the north and a much wider, recessed section to the south. The northern section includes a single, wide, one-over-one window at the second-story level and three, equally-spaced, two-over-two, double-hung windows. The first-level of the southern section is given over to a five-bay, recessed, screened-in porch with an exterior awning and a flight of five concrete steps along the northern edge. The second-story includes a small, double-hung, two-over-two window at the northern edge and a larger, double-hung, two-over-two window just south of center, above the southern-most bay of the porch. A tall copper chimney flue exits the façade near the top edge and extends above the roof.

This last east-facing façade, which adjoins the front façade to the south, includes two pairs of adjacent, two-over-two, double-hung windows. These two pairs of windows are vertically aligned.

Interior

The interior of the Elias House has retained many of its original features. The entry-way of the Elias House is separated from the sunken living area by an elaborate floor-to-ceiling, wooden screen with rectangular, geometric details. To the west of the entry is a marble staircase with a sleek modernist aluminum hand-rail. Some of the floors, the staircase, the window sills and the back patio floor are composed of marble that was taken from a historic bank building in Malvern that Barney Elias was renovating at the time the house was built.¹ The kitchen is almost entirely original and features several units of well-maintained stainless-steel cabinets and countertops with red accent drawers.

¹ Carolyn Elias Interview, 2014.

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Garage/Shop-Building

The garage/shop-building is a later addition to the property. The foundation is a continuous concrete pad. It is a wooden frame building with vertical wooden exterior siding. The garage/shop-building has a steeply pitched and tall shed roof. The south facing façade has two overhead garage doors. The west façade has no fenestration. The north façade includes a door to the east, reached by a flight of four concrete steps. On this façade there are also two, one-over-one windows to the west of the door. The east façade has no fenestration.

Historic Integrity

The Elias House's main front façade is completely intact, save for the new front door. On the rear of the house, an early recessed porch was enclosed with screens not long after the house was finished. Also on the rear of the house, part of the second-story has been altered; creating an interior space out of what was originally an exterior patio. The second-story patio that now exists is also a later addition, created out of an originally flat roof on the house. The roof, due to its unique and somewhat experimental design, has been replaced several times. The exterior guttering system that now exists is a part of the remediation for the drainage issues of the original roof design. Only one window, above the sink in the kitchen, along the west façade of the house, has been replaced. This window was replaced with a similar metal window as the original. The garage/shop-building to the west of the house is a later addition, although it is designed to fit with the modern aesthetic of the house.

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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
- 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

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1949

Significant Dates

1949

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Barney L. Elias - Builder

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

The Barney L. Elias House is a unique, large-scale, surviving, early example of a combination Art Moderne and International Style residence in North Little Rock, Arkansas. Built by Barney L. Elias for his family in 1949, this home is a very personal project including experimental designs and construction similar to the contemporary Governor's Mansion project overseen by the Elias Family's construction company. The Barney L. Elias House is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C, with local significance, as an excellent example of modern architecture in central Arkansas and for the craftsmanship of its construction by the Elias family's construction company.

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

Goshen Avenue Development

The Elias House was built in 1949 along Goshen Avenue in what is now North Little Rock. The house is located at the top of a ridge that overlooks Lake One of the Lakewood Development, which lies to the northeast down a large slope. Built during the mid-20th century, this construction project falls between the filling up of lots in the Park Hill and Edgemont developments to the west and south and the later residential growth in the Lakewood additions. All of these additions were created by the real-estate developer Justin Matthews during the first half of the 20th-century.²

In 1901, Justin Matthews arrived in Little Rock and began a career as a salesman and developer that would change the face of Central Arkansas. In 1908, after selling out of a large cotton seed oil mill business, Justin Matthews began investing in property and land development.³ During the 1920s, Justin Matthew's development company, the Justin Matthews Company, developed large tracts of land north of the city of Argenta, now part of the city of North Little Rock. Echoing new subdivisions west of Little Rock, these new northern subdivisions were based on Justin Matthews belief that the car would become the main mode of transportation for the middle class and allow the area along the ridge above Argenta to become a prime area for new housing developments.⁴ Justin Matthews was correct about the rise of the automobile, and the housing development in Park Hill to the west of the Sylvan Hills Highway and Edgemont to the east grew quickly. Justin Matthews also built several speculative houses on land in both developments in hopes of advertising the area and the surrounding lots.

² Bradburn, Cary. *On the Opposite Shore: The Making of North Little Rock*. Walsworth Publishing Company, Inc.: Marceline, MO. 2004. 68.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

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The growth in Park Hill and Edgemont came to sudden halt after the stock market crash of 1929. The following years of economic depression left many open lots languishing in the area. The development of residential units in the Park Hill and Edgemont area began again in earnest with the onset of World War II and the development of a new Air Force Base in Jacksonville starting in the early 1950s.

In 1946 the Park Hill area was officially incorporated into the city of North Little Rock after the successful passage of a local ordinance in February.⁵ Also in 1946, the newly created Bralei Homes Company was created in order to meet the growing need for economical and quickly built housing in North Little Rock and the surrounding area. This company grew out of the Bracy Real Estate and Building Company that had been building homes in the Pulaski Heights neighborhoods during the late 1920s.⁶ Paul Leird of the Leird Lumber Company also helped to start the Bralei Homes Company and provided much of the raw material for the constructed homes. The Bralei Company used many well known Arkansas architects for its home designs, including Frank Ginocchio, Ed Cromwell, H. Ray Burks & Bruce Anderson, Yandell Johnson and the firm of Brueggeman, Swaim and Allen.⁷ This last firm was a well known fixture of Park Hill already, designing several projects in the area. Frank Ginocchio and Edwin Cromwell were responsible for the design of the Arkansas Governor's Mansion in 1949. By 1950, a majority of the homes built in Park Hill since the Depression years were built by the Bralei Homes Company.⁸

By the mid-1950s, Justin Matthews began the residential development of the Lakewood area of North Little Rock. This area, located to the north of the Park Hill and Edgemont Developments, was originally contemplated as a development area by Justin Matthews when he created the Lakewood Development Company in 1931. Dams were constructed to form recreational lakes for the area and several tourist attractions such as parks, sculptures and the "Old Mill", designed by Frank Carmean and ornamented by Dionicio Rodriguez (T. R. Pugh Memorial Park, NR 12.4.1986), were created to lure potential buyers to the area.⁹ Again, the Great Depression derailed Justin Matthews's plans for the area and building did not begin in earnest until the end of World War II.

The Barney L. Elias House was designed and constructed in the years that saw the Park Hill and Edgemont areas fill in many of their open lots and become fully developed with residences. Also, this time period saw the beginning of the development of areas to the north of the Park Hill area. The Elias House sits just at the edge of Park Hill's eastern edge, outside the boundaries of the area known as Edgemont. Edgemont was meant to be an upscale subdivision paralleling the Heights neighborhood in Little Rock. However, this upscale development was never fully realized due to the onset of the Great Depression 1929 and the ensuing years of stalled development. After the war years, the housing stock of the area tended to be smaller than originally hoped for by Justin Matthews. The uneven development of Edgemont influenced the

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Silva, Rachel. "Elias House: Sandwiching in History Tour." AHPP, 2014.

⁸ Silva, Rachel. "Elias House: Sandwiching in History Tour." AHPP, 2014., Carolyn Elias Interview, 2014.

⁹ T.R. Pugh Memorial Park National Register Nomination (NR 12.4.1986).

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later development of Goshen Avenue to the east, which now has a mixture of large-scale residences and low-scale, more modest homes.

Goshen Avenue saw sporadic development from the 1920s to the 1950s. Goshen Avenue is named after the Goshen family, who retained their property between Park Hill and Lakewood and farmed parts of this retained land. The Goshen land has since been developed for residential plots.

The Matthews House at 406 Goshen Avenue (NR 9.29.1983) is one of the earliest known, architect designed modernist residential homes in the state. Designed by Frank Carmean, it is a wonderful example of early modernist style. Other homes were built in the area before the Great Depression, but most of the development was to the west. In 1939, there were only five houses along Goshen Avenue, between Delmar Avenue and Skyline Drive, by 1950, there were 19 houses.¹⁰ This building boom was echoed all across the previously undeveloped areas adjacent to the park hill area of North Little Rock.

The Elias Family

The Elias Family moved to Little Rock in 1940, but their association with Little Rock had begun much earlier. Edward David Elias was the son of a Jewish dry-goods merchant in the small town of Okolona, Mississippi, located just south of Tupelo.¹¹ Edward "Ed" Elias met Ruth Levin, the daughter of a Little Rock, Arkansas Jewish dry-goods merchant during a trip to New York City in 1916. She had been accompanying her father on a buying trip to the city. After a whirl-wind romance, the two were married in Little Rock at the Levin home on October 23, 1917. The couple returned to the small town of Okolona, Mississippi, and worked in Ed Elias's store, the Chickasaw Dry Goods Company. During the next few years, the couple had two sons, Charlie in 1918 and Barney in 1921. Unfortunately, the Depression years were unkind to the Elias family, and the Chickasaw Dry Goods Company was forced to close in 1931. Ed Elias was appointed to be the city clerk of Okolona in 1933, which helped to provide the family a small income during the Depression years. During his time as city clerk, Ed Elias helped to restructure the city's finances.

In 1938, despite the financial hardship, both Charlie and Barney Elias entered college. Barney enrolled at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. In 1939, Edward Elias lost his job to a younger appointee and Barney was forced to leave college and return to Okolona due to the financial strains on the family. Charlie continued in college until 1941, when he volunteered for the US Armed Forces and served until his honorable discharge in 1946.

¹⁰ North Little Rock City Directories, 1939 and 1939-1950.

¹¹ Most of the Elias Family history cited here comes from the family papers of Charles Elias, Barney Elias's Brother. His papers, donated to the Butler Center: Arkansas Studies Institute includes a long and detailed history of Edward Elias and his sons Barney and Charles. "Charles H. Elias Papers Collection." Butler Center for Arkansas Studies: Arkansas Studies Institute. MSS 97-16.

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After Edward lost the job of city clerk, the Elias family decided to move to Little Rock. This would allow them to be near to Ruth's family and give them all an opportunity to start over. Soon after arriving in Little Rock, Edward Elias was able to find accounting work with a local general contracting firm. The first major project he helped with was the construction of the Silver City Courts, a federal housing project built in North Little Rock. In 1940, Barney also started to work for the same general contractor as his father, part time. By 1944, the general contracting firm that the Elias's worked for had disbanded. Edward and Barney decided to form their own construction company, the Tri-State Construction Company and started business in 1944. After Charlie was discharged from the armed forces, he joined the company in 1946.

Over the next decade, the Tri-State Construction Company built projects ranging from industrial buildings, public water and sewer facilities, schools, housing developments, communication facilities and fulfilled Department of Defense contracts.

The Building of the Governor's Mansion

In 1948, the Tri-State Construction Company won the low-bid on the new Governor's Mansion for the state of Arkansas. The new residence, which was to be constructed on the site of the former Arkansas Blind School, was designed by Ed Cromwell and Paul Ginocchio.¹² The Tri-State Construction Company's bid of \$94,235 was accepted as the low bid for the construction of the Governor's Mansion. However, this bid did leave out quite a few of the intended finishes and fixtures such as interior doors, light fixtures, bathroom fixtures, tile work, heating and the rear terrace. These items were classified as alternatives in the bid, to be added when money became available. Luckily, the legislature voted for additional appropriations so the mansion would be livable when completed.¹³

The construction of the Governor's Mansion included the use of a wide range of specialist craftsmen, all from Arkansas. Barney, who was the main construction manager for the Tri-State Construction Company, had good relations with all of his sub-contractors and most worked with only a hand-shake agreement.¹⁴ During the construction of the Mansion, Barney spearheaded the use of concrete throughout the project due to its durability and cost effectiveness. The most impressive part of the Governor's Mansion construction was the cantilevered concrete circular stairway that ran from the basement to the upper story. When asked how he achieved this feat, Barney Elias simply stated "I just did a lot of measuring."¹⁵ Mimicking the stairs of the Old State House, the Governor's Mansion stair was built without any central supports and the concrete treads extended at least 4 inches into the wall.¹⁶ The materials and techniques that Barney Elias employed in the building of the Governor's Mansion were echoed in the construction of his own personal residence in North Little Rock.

¹² Gill, John P. *Open House: The Arkansas Governor's Mansion and Its Place in History*. Butler Center for Arkansas Studies: Little Rock, AR. 2011. 6-9.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

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The Building of the Barney L. Elias House

The Barney L. Elias House, at 335 Goshen Avenue, was constructed from 1949-1950 by Barney Elias, using the resources available through his construction firm. Family members remember that Barney Elias did not necessarily care what the finished building looked like, he simply wanted a good architect to design it, wanted to keep the costs down and make sure it was built to last.¹⁷ Although Barney Elias wanted to keep the costs down, it appears that the house was actually expensive to build. A building permit for the construction of the Elias House is recorded in July 1949 for \$16,000, which is more than twice any other awarded building permit during the two week period before and after it was awarded.¹⁸ This was a huge amount for a building permit at the time.

The house was possibly designed by the Little Rock firm of Brueggeman, Swaim & Allen. Although no documentary sources have been found that definitively link the firm to the Elias House, the Tri-State Construction Company did have a working relationship with the firm and Guy Swaim lived nearby in Park Hill. The firm of Brueggeman, Swaim & Allen is also known to have designed other modernist buildings during the same time period in the area. St. Louis native Edward Frederick Brueggeman moved to Little Rock in 1928 and worked for the firm of Thompson, Sanders & Ginocchio until he opened his own practice in 1932. He expanded the firm in 1933 by joining with Little Rock native Guy Winfield Swaim, Jr. In 1936, Williams "Bill" Samuel Allen joined the firm, making it Brueggeman, Swaim & Allen.¹⁹ The firm had a hand in many landmark buildings in central Arkansas, including the VA Building on Roosevelt, the Federal Building on Capitol Avenue and the St. Vincent Infirmary at the intersection of Markham and University.

Built in 1949, this house pre-dates the explosion of modernist designs in Arkansas during the 1950s, inspired in part by the creation of the new Architecture Department at the University of Arkansas. This house was designed and built with new construction methods including the use of poured concrete and metal windows. The house completely disregards many of the more traditional residential forms and instead relies on large flat planes of brick to create a very modernist aesthetic, especially on the front façade. These large planes are indicative of the earlier Art Moderne movement as well as the contemporary International Style movement. This house is a mix of both styles. The Art Moderne decorative patterning mixes with the flat facades and horizontal movements such as the porch that are indicative of the International Style. The modernistic design elements of the Barney L. Elias House look backward in time at earlier Art Moderne forms with flat planes and curvilinear masses rather than the open look of later International Style and other mid-century modern architectural designs. The lack of large bands of fenestration on the front façade allows the building to remain much more private from the

¹⁷ Silva, Rachel. "Elias House: Sandwiching in History Tour." AHPP, 2014., Carolyn Elias Interview, 2014.

¹⁸ North Little Rock Building Permit Records, Butler Center: Arkansas Studies Institute. July 1949.

¹⁹ Silva, Rachel. "Elias House: Sandwiching in History Tour." AHPP, 2014., Carolyn Elias Interview, 2014.

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street, which is perfect for this large residential structure. Although the structure does draw on the modern construction methods and use of traditional techniques to create new forms common to the International Style and later mid-century modern buildings, its overall form is unique.

The rise of modernism and its influence on the architecture of Arkansas has been mostly overlooked in architectural histories of the area. As early as 1929, the International Style exhibit promoted by the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York City is seen by many historians as launching the Modernist Movement in the United States. The use of simplified forms and new building technology made the style popular in large scale commercial buildings in large metropolitan areas. In Arkansas, it wasn't until after World War II and the creation of the Architecture Department at the University of Arkansas that Modernism began to be seen throughout the state. The International Style Matthews House at 406 Goshen Avenue in North Little Rock (NR 9.29.1983), designed and built in 1928 by Frank Carmean for the Justin Matthews Company, was a unique, forward-thinking example that stood as one of the very few "Modern" style houses in central Arkansas until after World War II. The Knoop House of Little Rock, designed in 1936-1937 by Brueggeman, Swaim and Allen is also an Art Moderne style residence (NR 8.3.1990). The Knoop House, however, lacks the larger ornamental brick work patterns and the large concrete covered porch of the later Barney L. Elias House. The Bailey Allinder House, also in North Little Rock (NR 12.27.2002), is another example of an early modernist structure in the area, that was designed in as transitional style between the earlier simplified traditional residential style and the newly emerging ranch style. This house lacks the large, sweeping planes of the front façade of the Elias House. The Barney L. Elias House really stands as a relatively early and very artistic example of modernism in Central Arkansas. In the decade that followed its construction, modernist architecture would come to dominate the conversation on new building trends.

The house that Barney Elias built is a wonderful, early example of the influence of modern architecture in Arkansas. The project was most likely a true collaboration between Barney Elias and the architect, due to his extensive knowledge of the building trade. The house is an interesting mix of the Art Moderne and International styles of modern architecture. It combines the durability of masonry materials such as brick and concrete with the slick finishes of stainless steel and aluminum fixtures. The original stainless steel kitchen cabinets, which remain in the house, echo the original Governor's Mansion stainless steel kitchen. Formal elements, such as marble and tile also complement the interior spaces. It is thought that much of the marble in the house was from a bank project in Malvern.

Later Elias Family History

In 1954, tragedy struck the Elias family when Frances "Daphyne" Knight Elias was killed after an automobile accident in North Little Rock.²⁰ According to a newspaper report of the incident, the car that Mrs. Elias was driving was reportedly in multiple small accidents over the course of the evening of January 14th, 1954. After finally striking a utility pole just after 6pm near the intersection of Main Street and 26th street in North Little Rock, witnesses to the accident reported

²⁰ "Mother of 3 Electrocuted on North Side." *Arkansas Gazette*, January 15, 1954. 1.

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that Mrs. Elias was able to get out of the car after the accident, but was killed when she came in contact with live electric lines on the ground.²¹ Barney Elias was left with three children, Edward Knight Elias, Eve Elias and Barney O'Neal Elias. In 1957, Barney Elias remarried, to Carolyn Parrish. Barney and Carolyn Elias would eventually have two daughters, Kimberly and Kate.

In 1956, due to failing health, Edward Elias was forced to retire from the Tri-State Construction Company. Edward Elias passed away in 1958 in a local nursing home. Also in 1958, after Edward Elias's death, the Tri-State Construction Company went into a sharp decline and the company was defunct by 1960. Barney refused to take bankruptcy and worked for the next seven years on various construction projects and for various companies to repay the debt from the closing of his construction company.²² In 1969, Barney Elias moved to Jacksonville, Illinois, and started a new construction firm. He lived in Illinois until 1991, when he retired to Lake Hamilton in Hot Springs, Arkansas, to a vacation home he had purchased with his wife in 1978. Barney Elias passed away on June 5th, 2011, in Hot Springs.²³

Beginning in 1970, the house at 335 Goshen Avenue was owned and occupied by a variety of individuals and families. In 1970, William and Aubrey Roberts occupied the house. William Roberts was in the Air Force at the time.²⁴ In 1972, local architect Gordon Patterson and his wife owned the building.²⁵ They lived in it for at least a year. They then rented the property out for several years. During its rental days, it was something of a bachelor's pad and was known as a party house.²⁶ Others lived in the house until 1984, when the current owners purchased the property immediately after seeing a "For Sale" sign in the yard. Mark Mathews and his family, who currently own the property, grew up in Park Hill and he and his wife always admired this unique property.²⁷ The Mathews family has maintained the home in almost original condition and worked to keep it a stand-out structure in the neighborhood.

The Barney L. Elias House is a unique, large-scale, surviving, early example of a combination Art Moderne and International Style residence in North Little Rock, Arkansas. The Barney L. Elias House is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criteria C**, with **local significance**, as an excellent example of modern architecture in central Arkansas and the craftsmanship of its construction by the Elias family's construction company.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² "Interview with Barney and Carolyn Elias." Interviewer John Gill. Butler Center for Arkansas Studies: Arkansas Studies Institute.

²³ "Barney Levine Elias (1921-2011)." *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, June 8, 2011. Obituary Sec.

²⁴ North Little Rock City Directory, 1970.

²⁵ North Little Rock City Directory, 1972.

²⁶ Interview with Mark Mathews. Interviewer: Rachel Silva, Arkansas Historic Preservation Program. May 27, 2014.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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

“Barney Levine Elias (1921-2011).” *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, June 8, 2011. Obituary Sec.

Bradburn, Cary. *On the Opposite Shore: The Making of North Little Rock*. Walsworth Publishing Company, Inc.: Marceline, MO. 2004.

“Charles H. Elias Papers Collection.” Butler Center for Arkansas Studies: Arkansas Studies Institute. MSS 97-16.

“Edward D. Elias.” *Arkansas Democrat*, May 18, 1958.

Gill, John P. *Open House: The Arkansas Governor’s Mansion and Its Place in History*. Butler Center for Arkansas Studies: Little Rock, AR. 2011.

“Interview with Barney and Carolyn Elias.” Interviewer John Gill. Butler Center for Arkansas Studies: Arkansas Studies Institute.

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Interview with Mark Mathews. Interviewer: Rachel Silva, Arkansas Historic Preservation Program. May 27, 2014.

LeMaster, Carolyn Gray. *A Corner of the Tapestry: A History of the Jewish Experience in Arkansas 1820s – 1990s*. University of Arkansas Press: Fayetteville, AR. 1994.

“Mother of 3 Electrocuted on North Side.” *Arkansas Gazette*, January 15, 1954. 1.

“Mrs. Frances K. Elias To Be Buried Today.” *Arkansas Gazette*, January, 1954. Obituary Sec.

North Little Rock Building Permit Records. Receipt #6470. July 12, 1949.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps: 1939-1950.

Silva, Rachel. “Elias House: Sandwiching in History Tour.” Arkansas Historic Preservation Program: Little Rock, AR. 2014.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

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

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): PU8672

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property <1 (.63 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: | Longitude: |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

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Or
UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|---------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Zone: 15 S | Easting: 568528 | Northing: 3849335 |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

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

The Park Hill 1N Subdivision, East ½ of Lot 19 and all of Lot 20 and Lot 21.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

This boundary includes all of the property historically associated with this property.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Callie Williams, National Register Historian
organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
street & number: 323 Center Street, Suite 1500, Tower Building
city or town: Little Rock state: AR zip code: 72201
e-mail calliew@arkansasheritage.org
telephone: 501-324-9880
date: September 12, 2014

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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: Elias, Barney L., House

City or Vicinity: North Little Rock

County: Pulaski

State: Arkansas

Photographer: Callie Williams, National Register Historian, Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

Date Photographed: July 14, 2014

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

- 1 of 12: Front Façade, Porch and Porte-cohere, Photographer facing North.
- 2 of 12: Front Façade, Detail, Photographer facing North.
- 3 of 12: West (Side) Façade, Photographer facing East.
- 4 of 12: West (Side) Façade near Garage Building, Photographer facing South.
- 5 of 12: North (Rear) Façade, Photographer facing South.
- 6 of 12: East (Side) Façade, Photographer facing Southwest.

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- 7 of 12: East (Side) Façade Detail, Photographer facing West.
- 8 of 12: Garage Building (Front), Photographer facing North.
- 9 of 12: Garage Building (Rear), Photographer facing South.
- 10 of 12: Interior Stair Detail, Photographer facing West.
- 11 of 12: Interior Entry/Living Room Detail, Photographer facing South.
- 12 of 12: Interior, Kitchen, Photographer facing North.

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.

Barney L. Elias House, North Little Rock, Pulaski County, Arkansas



Google earth



UTM

NAD83

Zone: 15

Easting: 538528

Northing: 3849335

Barney L. Elias House, North Little Rock, Pulaski County, Arkansas



Google earth



UTM

NAD83

Zone: 15

Easting: 538528

Northing: 3849335



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0003



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0006



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