

NR LISTED

MAY 28 1999

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

AHPP

=====

1. Name of Property

=====

Historic Name: Green House

Other Name/Site Number: PU9825

=====

2. Location

=====

Street & Number: 1224 West 21st Street

Not for Publication: N/A

City/Town: Little Rock

Vicinity: N/A

State: AR County: Pulaski

Code: 119

Zip Code: 72206

=====

3. Classification

=====

Ownership of Property: Private

Category of Property: Building

Green House
Name of Property

Pulaski County, Arkansas
County and State

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
<u>1</u>	_____	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: Historically Black Properties in Little Rock's Dunbar School Neighborhood

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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. _____ See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

Green House
Name of Property

Pulaski County, Arkansas
County and State

=====

6. Function or Use

=====

Historic: DOMESTIC

Sub: Single Dwelling

Current : DOMESTIC

Sub: Single Dwelling

=====

7. Description

=====

Architectural Classification:

Bungalow/Craftsman

Materials: foundation Brick roof Other/Composition Shingles
walls Metal/Aluminum other Gables: Stucco

Describe present and historic physical appearance:

SUMMARY

Situated on a sloping lot at the northeast corner of 21st and Pulaski Streets, the one-story Green House is a Craftsman bungalow. While exhibiting many typical features of the Craftsman style, such as broadly-pitched, gabled rooflines with exposed rafter ends, the house is somewhat different in plan from the "average" bungalow in Little Rock.

ELABORATION

Located in a section of the Dunbar School Neighborhood where the hilly terrain seems to have determined which lots were occupied originally by white residents (the higher ones) and which by black residents (the low-lying ones), the Green House sits on a sloping corner lot that is considerably higher in front than in back. Behind the house, running through the center of the block from east to west, is one of the creeks

that criss-cross this section of the Dunbar neighborhood.

A one-story, frame Craftsman bungalow, the Green House has a shallow front yard and narrow side yards, but a generous lawn in the rear slopes down to the creek behind the house. Oriented to the south, the house faces 21st Street with two broad gable ends, one belonging to the main roofline and the other to the roofline of a section that projects forward and is slightly offset from the main block of the house. Both gable ends are stuccoed, and both roofs have exposed rafter ends. The gable of the projecting section "flares" at its east end, where a triangular knee brace is situated under the eave.

Rather than the more usual arrangement of a chimney on the side of the house, often flanked by small windows, the Green House features a brick chimney in its main (south) façade. The chimney rises through the peak of the gable of the projecting front section and is flanked by full-size three-over-one, double-hung windows. To the right (east) of the windows and chimney is the main entrance, a multi-paned door reached via a flight of concrete steps and sheltered—in the absence of the usual front porch—by a canvas awning. In the portion of the main block of the house that is visible behind and to the east of the projecting front section is a pair of three-over-one, double-hung windows, the window configuration that is used throughout the house.

At the south end of the west side of the house, overlooking Pulaski Street, is a small porch, now screened. Its broadly-pitched roof with exposed rafter ends and stuccoed gable end echoes the main roofline. The porch roof is supported at each outside corner by a grouping of three square, wooden columns. The columns in each grouping are connected by decorative X-shaped braces, a motif that is repeated in the wooden balustrade that encloses the porch. A canvas awning shelters the west side of the porch.

Across the rear (north) of the house is a utility porch that has a hipped roof with exposed rafter ends. The bands of small aluminum, double-hung windows that encircle this porch suggest that it originally may have been an open back porch (and the windows were added when it was enclosed). At the top of a steep flight of concrete steps, a door leads into the west end of the porch.

The Green House has been covered with 8" aluminum siding, but all door and window trim and other decorative details remain visible and intact.

Green House
Name of Property

Pulaski County, Arkansas
County and State

=====
8. Statement of Significance
=====

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: _____.

Applicable National Register Criteria: B

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

Areas of Significance: Ethnic Heritage/Black
Education

Period(s) of Significance: 1957-1958

Significant Dates: 1957-1958

Significant Person(s): Ernest G. Green, Jr.

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above:

SUMMARY

Built about 1916 for William Alexander, a letter carrier, the Green House was purchased in the late 1930s by Mr. and Mrs. Ernest G. Green, Sr. Their son, Ernest, Jr., became the first African-American graduate of Little Rock Central High School in 1958. The home's significance derives from its association with Ernest Green, Jr. and the tumultuous 1957-58 school year, when nine black students entered Central High.

ELABORATION

The Craftsman bungalow at 1224 West 21st Street was built about 1916 as the residence of William E. Alexander, an African-American mail carrier.

Within a few years, however, the house had become rental property. Between the early 1920s and the late 1930s, it was occupied by a succession of tenants, including a porter, a carpenter, a laborer, and a stonemason. In the late 1930s, the house was purchased by Ernest and Lothaire Green. At the time, Mr. Green was a custodian at the post office, and Mrs. Green was teaching at Dunbar High School.

A few years later, in 1941, the Greens became parents of a son, Ernest G. Green, Jr. Like other African-American children of the era in Little Rock, the young Ernest Green grew up attending all-black schools. Unlike most of his peers, however, Ernest Green made the decision to enroll in previously all-white Central High School when the opportunity presented itself.

After the U. S. Supreme Court's 1954 *Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka* decision, which stated that "in the field of public education the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place," the Little Rock School District began planning for desegregation. Initially, the district conceived an approach that would have resulted in substantial integration beginning at the grade school level. The plan that actually was adopted, however, provided for only token desegregation, beginning in the fall of 1957 at one senior high school, Little Rock Central. Limited desegregation would be phased into junior high and elementary schools over several subsequent years.

Through various means, including a rigid screening process, the school district restricted the number of black students who were eligible to enroll at Central. In addition, not all black students were interested in leaving familiar surroundings in order to further the cause of integration, particularly when they were told that they would not be able to take part in extracurricular activities at Central.

The decision to attend Central reportedly was one that Ernest Green, Jr. made on his own. Daisy Bates, president of the Little Rock chapter of the NAACP in the late 1950s, recalled Ernest's mother telling her that when "Ernest announced to the family that he was going to enroll at Central, we knew it was useless to try to talk him out of it." Ernest Green, Sr. had died in 1953, perhaps contributing to his son's maturity, which Mrs. Bates described as "beyond his years."

The Little Rock School Board ultimately gave approval for about twenty-five black students to enroll at Central, but by the time school was scheduled to begin in the fall of 1957, the number had dwindled to nine. Sixteen-year-old Ernest Green was the only senior among the "Little Rock Nine."

School opened in Little Rock on September 3, 1957, but segregationists, supported by Arkansas Governor Orval Faubus, prevented the Nine from entering Central, thus setting the scene for the first major test of the *Brown* decision. When negotiations between the state and federal

governments failed to resolve the situation, President Dwight Eisenhower ordered 1,200 members of the 101st Airborne Division—the "Screaming Eagles"—to Little Rock from Fort Campbell, Kentucky. On September 25, these federal troops surrounded Central High School, and a small detachment escorted the Nine into the school to attend classes for the first time. Some of the paratroopers remained on hand at Central until Thanksgiving. For the rest of the school year, the federalized Arkansas National Guard was responsible for maintaining order.

Unfortunately, "order" during the 1957-58 school year was a relative term. While the Nine knew that attending Central would mean leaving behind friends and extracurricular activities, at first they had not realized that it also would mean braving a daily gauntlet of hostile white adults outside the school and being tormented, verbally and physically, inside Central by white students. The crowds of segregationists (many of whom were not from Little Rock) eventually dispersed, but throughout the year, the Nine were subjected inside the school to name-calling, spitting, and physical assaults. (One of the Nine was expelled from Central early in 1958 after she succumbed to the pressure and lashed out at a tormentor. The other eight finished the school year.) All of the black students' parents suffered also, worrying about their children's safety and being threatened themselves by the loss of jobs.

Throughout this year of turmoil, Ernest Green, Jr. lived at 1224 West 21st Street with his mother, who by then was teaching in a black elementary school, and his younger brother, Scott. At the end of the school year, Ernest became the first African-American to graduate from Central High School. He received his diploma on May 27, 1958—the only black student in a class of 602. Among the 4,500 people on hand in Central's Quigley Stadium for the commencement ceremony was Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Following graduation, Ernest Green left Little Rock to attend Michigan State University, where he received bachelor's and master's degrees in sociology. He then moved to New York to work for an organization that helped put African Americans and other minorities into the skilled construction trades, serving for several years as the organization's executive director. In January 1977, President Jimmy Carter appointed him Assistant Secretary of Labor for Employment and Training, and he held that post until 1981. After several subsequent years as a consultant, he went to work as an investment banker for Shearson Lehman Brothers, Inc., where today he is managing director.

The pivotal role that Little Rock Central High School played in the civil rights movement and, more specifically, in public school integration in the United States led to its designation as a National Historic Landmark in 1982. The Green House—which Ernest Green, Jr. has owned since his mother's death in 1976—is deserving of recognition as the home of Central's first African-American graduate.

=====

9. Major Bibliographical References

=====

Bates, Daisy. *The Long Shadow of Little Rock*. New York: D. McKay, 1962; reprint ed., Fayetteville, Arkansas: The University of Arkansas Press, 1987.

Beals, Melba Pattillo. *Warriors Don't Cry: A Searing Memoir of the Battle to Integrate Little Rock's Central High School*. New York: Washington Square Press, 1994.

Douglas, Carlyle. "Ernest Green: Vigil On The Labor Front." *Ebony* 31 (March 1976): 84-92.

"Ebony Update: Ernest Green." *Ebony* 43 (December 1987): 72-76.

Little Rock City Directories: 1915 through 1956.

Pulaski County Real Estate Records: 1915 through 1921.

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 -- Specify Repository:

=====

10. Geographical Data

=====

