

November 7, 2024

NR ITEM NO.: THREE

FILE NO.: NR2024-007

NAME: West 14th Street Overpass

LOCATION: W Daisy L. Gatson Bates Drive between Jones Street and Woodrow Street

APPLICANT/AUTHORIZED AGENT:

Ralph Wilcox
Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
1100 North Street,
Little Rock, AR

OWNER:
City of Little Rock
500 W Markham
Little Rock, AR



Figure 1. W 14th Street Overpass, 2024.

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AREA: N/A

NUMBER OF LOTS : 0

WARD: 1

HISTORIC DISTRICT: Near the Central High School Neighborhood Historic District

HISTORIC STATUS: DOE May 27, 2020

CURRENT ZONING: I2, Industrial; Central High Design Overlay District

A. BACKGROUND

Location

The subject structure is located on W Daisy L Gatson Bates Drive between Jones Street and Woodrow Street

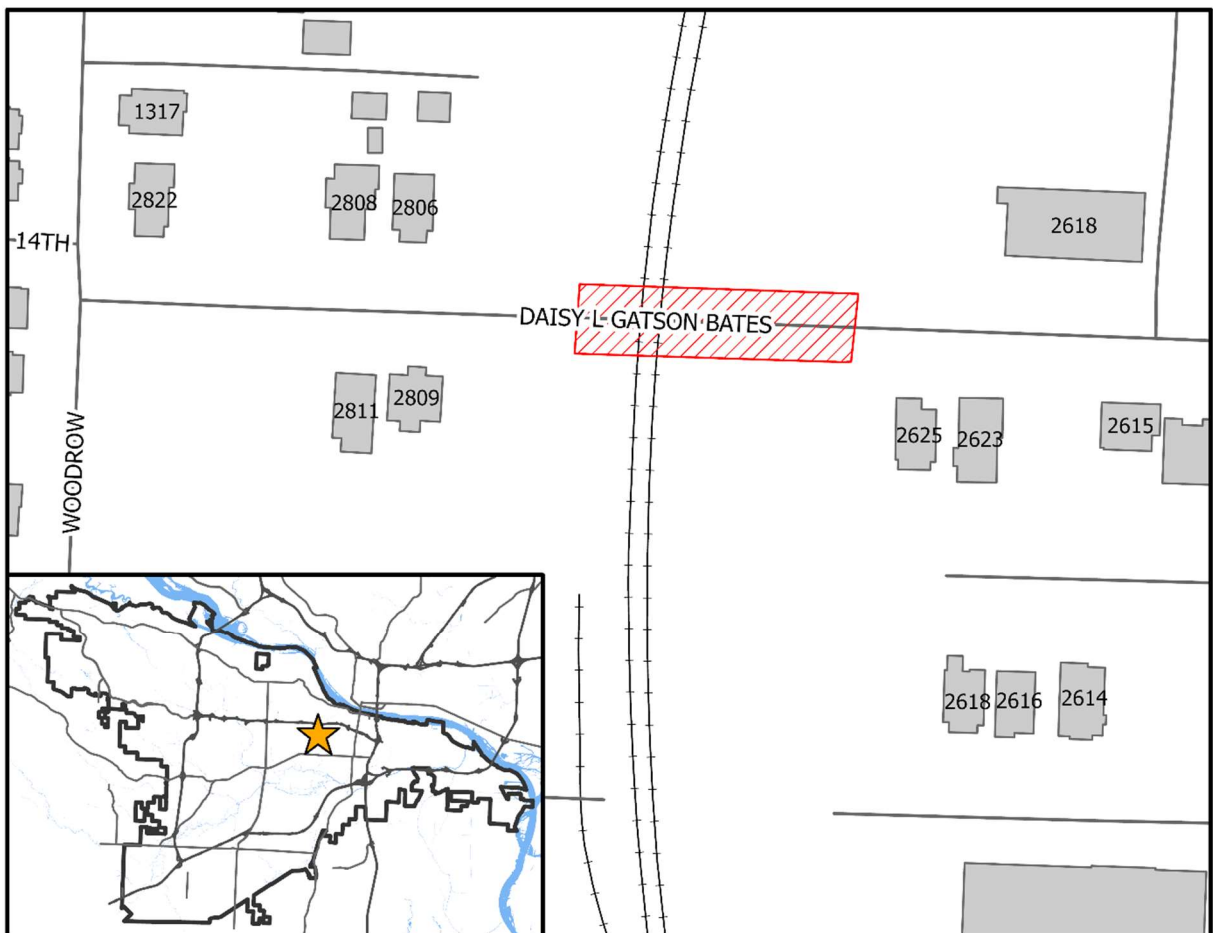


Figure 2. Location of the W. 14th Street Overpass.

B. PROPOSAL/REQUEST/APPLICANT'S STATEMENT:

The application requests to nominate the West 14th Street Overpass to the National Register of Historic Places for local significance under Criterion A for its association with the efforts during the twentieth century to provide updated highway infrastructure around the state. The area of significance is Transportation. The period of significance is 1936.

C. EXISTING CONDITIONS:

See photos in Nomination (Attachment A).

D. DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:

Public Works: Inspection reports for the bridge have not been acquired, and as a result, necessary improvements are currently undetermined. For this reason, it is requested that the bridge not be nominated at this time in order to reduce the potential regulatory requirements that may increase cost and administrative burdens for maintenance and improvements.

E. NEIGHBORHOOD NOTIFICATIONS AND COMMENTS:

All neighborhood associations registered with the City of Little Rock that surround the site were notified of the public hearing.

At the time of distribution, there were no comments regarding this application.

F. ANALYSIS:

The Nomination's Statement of Significance summary section states:

"The West 14th Street Overpass, which was built in 1936 by the E.E. Barber Construction Company of Forth Smith, Arkansas, to carry West 14th Street over the Union Pacific (originally the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific and the Missouri Pacific) railroad line, is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A: Transportation with local significance for its association with the efforts during the twentieth century to provide updated highway infrastructure around the state. The bridge also reflects the state's efforts to provide safe and updated grade crossing separation in order to help to eliminate accidents between cars and trains at grade crossing. Even today, as an elevated crossing that carries 14th Street, a major

east-west street in Little Rock, over the railroad line on the historically western side of Little Rock, the West 14th Street Overpass is an important part of the area's transportation infrastructure.”

The Arkansas Historic Preservation Program has set forth the “Arkansas Certified Local Government Procedures.” In Section V of this agreement, “Certified Local Governments Participation in the National Register Nomination Process,” Little Rock Historic District Commission's role is identified:

“B. CLG involvement in the National Register process

- 1. Within 60 calendar days of receipt of the nomination, the CLG shall inform the AHPP by submission of a report (see section V-A) as to its opinion regarding the eligibility of the property. The CLG shall also inform the property owner(s) using National Register criteria for evaluation, as to its opinion regarding the eligibility of the property.*
- 2. In the event a nomination is received by the AHPP before submission to the CLG, the AHPP will forward a copy of the completed nomination to the CLG within 30 calendar days of receipt.*
- 3. If both the commission and chief elected official recommend that a property not be nominated because it does not meet the National Register criteria for eligibility, the CLG will so inform the property owner(s) and the State Historic Preservation Officer, the property will then not be nominated unless an appeal is filed with the SHPO in accordance with appeal procedures outlined in 36 CFR 60. Appeals must be received by the SHPO within 30 calendar days of the date the property owner receives notification by certified mail that the property has been determined ineligible for nomination by both the CLG and the Chief elected official. This is in accordance with Section 101[c] 2 of the NHPA.*
- 4. If the commission or the chief elected official of the CLG recommend that a property should be nominated, the nomination will be scheduled for submission to the Arkansas State Review Board. Scheduling will be in accordance with notification time constraints as set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.*
- 5. The Arkansas State Review Board, after considering all opinions, including those of the commission and the chief elected official of the*

CLG, shall make its recommendation to the State Historic Preservation Officer. Either the local preservation commission or the chief elected official may appeal the SHPOs final decision.

6. *When a National Register nomination, that has been reviewed by a commission, is submitted to the National Park Service for review and listing, all reports or comments from the local officials will be submitted along with the nomination.*

7. *The AHPP and the CLG will work together to provide ample opportunity for public participation in the nomination of properties to the National register. All reports submitted by the CLG to the AHPP regarding the eligibility of properties shall include assurances of public input. The CLG shall retain a list of all persons contacted during the evaluation period and note comments that were received. If a public meeting was held, a list of those attending shall be included in the report.”*

Staff finds the nomination meets the National Register criteria for eligibility in the National Register of Historic Places.

The nomination is scheduled to be heard at the December 4th, 2024 State Review Board meeting.

G. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the nomination of the West 14th Street Overpass meets the criteria for listing in the National Register of Historic Places for local significance under Criterion A and the submission of the nomination to the State Review Board.

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Attachment A

Nomination



Sarah Huckabee Sanders
Governor
Shea Lewis
Secretary

September 27, 2024

Hannah Ratzlaff, Urban Designer
City of Little Rock
723 West Markham Street
Little Rock, AR 72201

Re: West 14th Street Overpass – Little Rock, Pulaski County

Dear Ms. Ratzlaff:

We are pleased to inform you that the above referenced property will be considered by the State Review Board of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, an agency of the Division of Arkansas Heritage, for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register of Historic Places is the federal government's official list of historic properties worthy of the preservation. Listing in the National Register of Historic Places provides recognition and assists in preserving our nation's heritage.

Listing of this property provides recognition of the community's historic importance and assures protective review of the federal projects that might adversely affect the character of the historic property.

Listing in the National Register does not mean that limitations will be placed on the property by the federal government. Public visitation rights are not required of property owners. The federal government will not attach covenants to the property or seek to acquire it.

We have enclosed a copy of the National Register nomination for your review. If you have any comments on the proposed nomination, please submit a letter with your comments, concerns, or concurrence to the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program at least 24 hours prior to the date of the State Review Board meeting.

You are invited to attend the State Review Board meeting at which the nomination will be considered. The board will begin meeting at 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, December 4th, 2024, at the Department of Arkansas Heritage headquarters at 1100 North Street in Little Rock.

If you have any questions regarding the State Review Board meeting feel free to call Ralph Wilcox, Travis Ratermann, or Megan Willmes at (501) 324-9880.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Scott Kaufman'.

Scott Kaufman
Director

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: West 14th Street Overpass

Other names/site number: Site #PU11262

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: West 14th Street over the Union Pacific Railroad Line

City or town: 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:

 X A B C D

<p>Signature of certifying official/Title: <u>Arkansas Historic Preservation Program</u></p> <p>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</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>Title :</p>	<p>Date</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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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
_____	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____1_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
_____1_____	_____	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)

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

TRANSPORTATION/road-related (vehicular)

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER/Reinforced Concrete Bridge

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 West 14th Street Overpass is a six-span reinforced-concrete deck girder bridge that is 211.25 feet long and spans the Union Pacific (originally the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific and the Missouri Pacific) railroad line on the west side of Little Rock, Pulaski County, Arkansas. The bridge was built by the E. E. Barber Construction Company of Fort Smith, Arkansas, in 1936. The bridge has a total of six spans supported by cast-concrete piers and it also rests on cast-concrete abutments. The guardrails on the bridge consist of evenly-spaced cast-concrete uprights connected by inset panels of shallow arch-shaped openings. The guardrails have Art-Deco-style solid concrete pylons at their ends.

Narrative Description

The West 14th Street Overpass is a 211.25-foot long reinforced-concrete deck girder bridge, which spans the Union Pacific (originally the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific and the Missouri Pacific) railroad line on the west side of Little Rock, Pulaski County, Arkansas. The bridge's deck has an approximate width of 40 feet. Like several of the overpasses, the West 14th Street Overpass has a sidewalk on both sides of the street, but it's not surprising given the fact that the bridge is west of downtown Little Rock.

The bridge was built by the E. E. Barber Construction Company of Fort Smith, Arkansas, and erected in 1936. The West 14th Street Overpass is a six-span bridge that is 211.25 feet long and

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approximately 40 feet wide, including the street. The bridge's deck is also constructed out of concrete. The bridge rests on cast-concrete piers and it also has cast-concrete abutments.

The guardrails on the bridge consist of evenly-spaced cast-concrete uprights connected by inset panels of shallow arch-shaped openings. The guardrails have solid concrete ends with Art-Deco-style pylons at the ends of the guardrails. The bridge also has metal plaques set into the northeast and southwest ends of the guardrails with information about the bridge name, builder, and date of construction. The builder's plate reads: "Mo. P. R. R. & C. R. I. & P. Ry. / E. E. BARBER CONST. CO./ CONTRACTOR. / ARKANSAS / STATE HIGHWAY COMMISSION / AND THE / UNITED STATES / BUREAU OF PUBLIC ROADS / 1936 / BRIDGE NO. _____"¹ Plaques located at the northwest and southeast ends of the guardrails read: "1936 / ERECTED BY / ARKANSAS STATE / HIGHWAY COMMISSION / AND / UNITED STATES BUREAU / OF PUBLIC ROADS / AND / CITY OF LITTLE ROCK / ----- / R. E. OVERMAN / MAYOR."

Setting

The setting around the overpass is wooded along the railroad lines at each end of the overpass. The development in the vicinity of the overpass is varied. The area around the bridge, which is located in the historically western part of Little Rock, is mainly flat and urban in its character. Immediately adjacent to the bridge are residential buildings along West 14th Street, with the exception of a garage building on the north side of 14th Street east of the bridge and vacant lots on the north side of West 14th Street west of the bridge. The areas to the north and south of 14th Street are mainly residential with some scattered light industrial buildings, especially along the railroad line. The area directly underneath the overpass is open with the gravel ballast and the railroad lines leading to the north and south.

Integrity

The West 14th Street Overpass retains excellent integrity. The bridge is virtually unaltered from the time of its construction in 1936. The bridge still exhibits its original construction and still possesses all of its original characteristics. The setting around the bridge also reflects its period of significance. The area around the bridge, which is located in the historically western part of Little Rock, is mainly flat, with commercial, residential, and light industrial buildings and a few vacant lots in the area around the bridge. The overpass even retains its original concrete road surface.

¹ Although there is a space for a bridge number on the plaque, it was left blank.

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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.)

TRANSPORTATION

Period of Significance

1936

Significant Dates

1936

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

E. E. Barber Construction Company, 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 West 14th Street Overpass, which was built in 1936 by the E. E. Barber Construction Company of Fort Smith, Arkansas, to carry West 14th Street over the Union Pacific (originally the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific and the Missouri Pacific) railroad line, is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion A: Transportation with local significance** for its associations with the efforts during the twentieth century to provide updated highway infrastructure around the state. The bridge also reflects the state's efforts to provide safe and updated grade crossing separation in order to help to eliminate accidents between cars and trains at grade crossings. Even today, as an elevated crossing that carries 14th Street, a major east-west street in Little Rock, over the railroad line on the historically western side of Little Rock, the West 14th Street Overpass is an important part of the area's transportation infrastructure.

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

HISTORY OF THE PROPERTY

European settlement in the Little Rock area began shortly after the turn of the nineteenth century. Although surveying land and offering it for sale did not begin until 1815, a few settlers were in the area prior to then. Edmund Hogan, for example, who was originally from Georgia and came to Arkansas via Missouri, was living on the north bank of the Arkansas River opposite Little Rock where he operated a ferry by 1812. Another distinguished early settler was Wright Daniel who settled at the base of Big Rock Mountain prior to 1814 and opened a gristmill in 1815. When the Arkansas Territory was created in 1819, the state's first capital was at Arkansas Post. However, it was not the best location since it often flooded and was far away from the majority of the territory's population. In 1820, a new centrally-located site for the capital was chosen on the south bank of the Arkansas River at the Little Rock.²

Initial settlement and development in Little Rock was focused on the river. The original plat of Little Rock consisted of 88 square blocks stretching south from the river to what is now Eleventh Street. By the 1860s, however, the city began to expand beyond the original plat, notably with the platting of the Woodruff's and Masonic additions on the city's east side, the Wright's Addition on the south side, and the Capitol Hill Addition on the west side. Apparently, building sites on the city's west side were popular. An announcement in the November 21, 1872, issue of the *Arkansas Gazette* stated that "This property consists of twenty-seven full and fractional blocks, overlooking the Cairo and Fulton railroad as it leaves the city. ... This is a fine property, and from its geographical position, will soon become a portion of the city. Upward of one hundred lots in the addition have already been disposed of, and are at this time being improved."³

² Roy, F. Hampton, Sr., and Charles Witsell, Jr., with Cheryl Griffith Nichols. *How We Lived: Little Rock as an American City*. Little Rock: August House, 1984, pp. 12-14.

³ *Ibid*, pp. 19, 104.

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By 1891, when the earliest known topographic map was completed for Little Rock, the location of the West 14th Street Overpass over the railroad line was near the western edge of the city. Blocks in the area were only somewhat developed, and those adjacent to the railroad line tended to be undeveloped.⁴ From the earliest part of the twentieth century, Little Rock was also located on some of the area's most important roads, including Highway C-31 (now Arkansas 365) and Highways A-1 (now U.S. 70 east of Little Rock), A-2 (now U.S. 70 west of Little Rock and Arkansas 5), A-3 (now U.S. 65), and A-5 (now U.S. 167 south of Little Rock) by 1924. In addition to state highways, some of the city's streets had developed into major or important thoroughfares, including West 14th Street, which provided direct access to the north side of Little Rock High School (now Central High School).⁵

Upgrading and improving West 14th Street over the railroad line on the west side of Little Rock made sense since West 14th Street directly connected Little Rock High School to the areas of the city west of the railroad line. The earliest map that shows a detailed view of the location of the overpass is a Sanborn map that dates to 1913. (Although Little Rock had Sanborn maps completed as early as the 1880s, the area of the West 14th Street Overpass would have been on the edge of the city until the early twentieth century.) The map shows a "steel viaduct" illustrating that the crossing was already significant enough by then to warrant an elevated crossing. The plans for the West 14th Street Overpass described the previous bridge as follows:

Existing Bridge at W. 14th Street:

Four spans @ 16', treated timber viaduct trestle, and one 32' I-Beam span, all timber deck, 23' clear roadway, and two 7' sidewalks with pipe handrail. Substructure consists of concrete abutment and timber bents on concrete pedestals.

Bridge over C.R.I.&P. Ry. Tracks; same as bridge over Mo.Pac. R.R. tracks except timber floor is covered with 1" asphalt surfacing.⁶

However, the 1939 Sanborn map shows the current overpass, which was labelled a "conc. viaduct" on the map. The Sanborn maps also illustrate that the bridge crossed three separate railroad tracks with the western two lines comprising the Missouri Pacific lines and the eastern line belonging to the Chicago, Rock Island, and Pacific Railroad. The configuration of the crossing remained the same on the 1939 and 1950 Sanborn maps.⁷

Since West 14th Street was an important east-west street in Little Rock, and West 14th Street directly connected Little Rock High School with those areas of the city west of the railroad line, the West 14th Street crossing in Little Rock was a perfect candidate for the construction of a new

⁴ Little Rock, Ark., 1:125,000. Map. Washington, DC: U.S. Geological Survey, 1891.

⁵ Arkansas State Highway Maps, 1916-1936. In the files of the Arkansas Department of Transportation.

⁶ Arkansas State Highway Commission. "Layout Overpass over Mo.Pac. & C.R.I.&P. Railroads at West Fourteenth Street, Little Rock, Ark. 1936.

⁷ Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for Little Rock, Pulaski County, Arkansas. 1913, 1939 and 1950.

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and updated overpass. As a route that connected Little Rock High School with areas of Little Rock west of the railroad line, it was obviously an important transportation route in Little Rock. Building the West 14th Street Overpass also fit into the Highway Commission's goal of addressing dangerous railroad grade crossings. Although the route of the street didn't change, the crossing would have been dangerous since the previous steel viaduct was likely built in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century. The construction of a modern, up-to-date overpass would have meant much safer conditions for motorists on the highway since a new overpass constructed of concrete and steel would have been much better able to handle the increase in traffic and the heavier cars and trucks, and especially school buses, that would have been using the crossing by the late 1930s.

During the late 1920s and 1930s, the State Highway Commission embarked on a large-scale campaign to upgrade Arkansas's roads. As a result, many miles of roads were paved or rebuilt and many bridges were built. At the same time, the Commission examined the issue of railroad grade crossings, which were becoming increasingly dangerous with the increased number of automobiles using the state's highways.

The dangers inherent with railroad crossings was an issue that the Highway Commission had already been looking at by the early 1920s. In the *Sixth Biennial Report*, in the section on traffic rules and regulations, railroad crossings were addressed. The *Biennial Report* noted that:

Certain Vehicles to Stop at Railway Crossings. The operator of any motor vehicle carrying passengers for hire; the operator of any school bus; and the operator of any motor truck carrying explosive substances or explosive or inflammable liquids as a cargo or part of a cargo, when upon a State Highway, shall, before crossing at grade, the track or tracks of any steam or interurban railway, bring his vehicle, bus or truck to a full and complete stop within not less than ten feet and not more than fifty feet from the nearest rail or the track nearest to the front of such vehicle and after such stop and while so stopped shall both look and listen in both directions along such track or tracks for approaching trains, engines, cars or vehicles using such tracks.⁸

By the mid-1920s, the railroads and Highway Commission were already teaming up to build overpasses or underpasses at some crossings. In the *Seventh Biennial Report of the Department of State Lands, Highways and Improvements* an overpass on Arkansas Highway 1 between Marianna and Forrest City was pictured as was an underpass on U.S. 67 in Pulaski County.⁹

⁸ *Sixth Biennial Report of the Department of State Lands, Highways and Improvements*. Conway, AR: Conway Printing Co., 1924, p. 136.

⁹ *Seventh Biennial Report of the Department of State Lands, Highways and Improvements*. Conway, AR: Conway Printing Co., 1926, after p. 88.

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Eliminating grade crossings continued to be an effort of the Highway Commission during the rest of the 1920s and beyond. In their *Ninth Biennial Report*, the Arkansas State Highway Commission wrote:

Realizing the dangers and evils attendant [sic.] to railroad grade crossings, considerable effort has been made during the progress of the present improvement program toward the elimination of this hazard. Since January 1, 1927, we find that the Commission has been successful in eliminating a total of 121 dangerous crossings, 105 by relocation of highways and 16 by structures, of which 3 were underpasses and the balance overhead crossings.

A recent survey indicates that 481 railroad grade crossings on the State Highway System are still existent. It is evident from the number cited that it is impracticable from a financial standpoint to eliminate all such crossings and that some burden of responsibility is upon the motorist to observe due care and caution that accidents be held to a minimum.

Careful and continued study is being given to this problem not only by the State Highway Commission but by the railroad companies as well, who have rendered cordial support and assistance in practically all instances where grade separations have occurred. Where the elimination of a grade crossing has necessitated a structure, agreements have generally been reached with the railroad that the cost of construction be shared equally with the state.¹⁰

Evidence indicates that the State Highway Commission seemed to prefer eliminating grade crossings through relocation rather than by constructing new structures. The Commission eliminated six crossings through relocation during the 1932-1933 program, 23 crossings in the 1933-1934 program, and it was estimated that they would eliminate eight crossings in the 1934-1935 program. On the other hand, no crossings were eliminated by structures in the 1932-1933 program, eight crossings in the 1933-1934 program, and it was estimated that they would eliminate only two crossings in the 1934-1935 program.¹¹

Prior to the construction of the West 14th Street Overpass, a steel viaduct existed at the overpass' site. However, it would still have been an important crossing to construct since it would have eliminated a steel bridge that may have dated to the late nineteenth or early twentieth century on a route that connected Little Rock High School to the areas of the city west of the railroad line, and it would have also provided a stronger crossing that was wider than the previous crossing and would have been better able to handle modern cars and trucks and, most importantly, school

¹⁰ Arkansas State Highway Commission. *Ninth Biennial Report of the Arkansas State Highway Commission*. Russellville, AR: Russellville Printing Company, 1930, p. 32.

¹¹ Arkansas State Highway Commission. *Eleventh Biennial Report of the Arkansas State Highway Commission*. Publisher unknown, 1934, p. 15.

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buses. It also would have been an important crossing to upgrade, especially as automobile and truck traffic increased around the state in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s. Due to the increase in traffic, by 1935, the Arkansas State Highway Commission began the process of coordinating a project to build the West 14th Street Overpass.

Many of the overpasses that were constructed during the 1930s and beyond were partially funded by the Federal government, specifically through relief through the various New Deal programs that existed or emerged out of the Great Depression. The West 14th Street Overpass was no different. According to the *Arkansas Department of Transportation Historic Bridge National Register Eligibility Evaluation Form* for the Rison Overpass, it was noted that:

...By 1935, the Federal Government stepped in with the U.S. Works Program Grade Crossing Project funded through the Provision of the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act of 1935 to improve crossing safety and reduce fatalities. Per the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act of 1935, Arkansas was allotted \$3,574,060 for grade separation projects. Grade separation projects were occurring in both rural and urban environments. As such, the location of each bridge informed the construction style and design. Rural bridges tended to be more simplistic in design while urban bridges often had ornamentation. The number of projects increased as the volume of automobiles grew, and traffic made such construction a necessity. During WW II, the money allotted, and the number of grade separation projects were reduced.¹²

By late-December 1935, proposals were being received by the State Highway Commission for the construction of the West 14th Street Overpass. One of the entities who submitted a proposal for the project was the E. E. Barber Construction Company of Fort Smith, Arkansas. Their proposal for the West 14th Street Overpass was received by the State Highway Commission on December 19, 1935. The E. E. Barber Construction Company was ultimately awarded a contract for State Job No. 6205 [Federal Aid Project No. WPGM 422-A] for \$47,948.89. (For the original plans for the overpass, see Figures #1-4.) The project not only included the reinforced concrete overpass, it also included earthen embankments, earth approaches and the concrete pavement. The concrete overpass encompassed 211.25 feet while the approaches encompassed 0.073 miles of work. It was estimated that it would take 210 working days in order to finish the project, meaning that the construction of the bridge was likely finished late in 1936.¹³

The Bureau of Public Roads also aided in the construction of the West 14th Street Overpass. The Bureau of Public Roads provided funding through the Works Progress Administration to aid in the construction of new bridges, including several in Arkansas. The Bureau of Public Roads was

¹² Langmyer, Michael. "Arkansas Department of Transportation Historic Bridge National Register Eligibility Evaluation Form for the Rison Overpass." In the files of the Arkansas Department of Transportation. July 7, 2020.

¹³ Arkansas State Highway Commission. *Twelfth Biennial Report of the Arkansas State Highway Commission*. Publisher unknown, c.1936, pp. 100-101.

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created in 1918, and its task initially was to build roads in national parks and forests and assist states with road construction. It also helped to beautify highways and conduct transportation studies.¹⁴

However, during the New Deal, the Bureau of Public Roads' role in road building increased tremendously, encompassing two main types of projects under the Roosevelt Administration. First, the Bureau was involved in "work-relief highway projects," and it received funding for materials and equipment from the Public Works Administration, and funding for labor initially from the Federal Emergency Relief Administration and later from the Works Progress Administration. Second, the Bureau worked on "loan-and-grant highway projects" which were projects in which federal money was loaned or granted to a state and the state would hire a private contractor to complete the work.¹⁵

The Bureau of Public Roads had a tremendous impact on America's highway infrastructure during the 1930s. Between 1934 and 1939, the Bureau "supervised and administered at least 7,000 miles of work-relief highway projects and 17,000 miles of loan-and-grant highway projects." In 1939, the Bureau of Public Roads was renamed the Public Roads Administration and placed under the Federal Works Agency. The Bureau continued to exist until 1970 when its functions fell under the newly-created Federal Highway Administration.¹⁶

Since the completion of the West 14th Street Overpass in 1936, it has remained an important and heavily travelled crossing of the railroad line in Little Rock. Today, the bridge still crosses the railroad, and has allowed a safe and easy way for motorists and school buses to cross the railroad line for over seventy years. The West 14th Street Overpass is an important part of the transportation network in Little Rock and a reminder of the role of the Arkansas State Highway Commission in upgrading and improving highway infrastructure, including railroad overpasses, during the 1930s and 1940s.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROPERTY

When it opened in 1936, the West 14th Street Overpass was an important part of Little Rock's street system. The bridge provided a new and improved crossing of the Missouri Pacific and Chicago, Rock Island, and Pacific railroad lines, especially given the fact that the previous crossing consisted of a steel viaduct that likely dated to the late nineteenth or early twentieth century. However, by the 1930s automobile traffic was increasing in Little Rock and on the highways through the community, especially given the fact that it was the state's capital city. The West 14th Street Overpass, which employed concrete construction and a modern design, was an important part of Little Rock's infrastructure when it was completed, replacing a steel viaduct that likely no longer met current highway standards. In addition, since it was built on West 14th

¹⁴ Information on the Bureau of Public Roads found at: <https://livingnewdeal.org/glossary/bureau-public-roads-bpr-1918/>.

¹⁵ Information on the Bureau of Public Roads found at: <https://livingnewdeal.org/glossary/bureau-public-roads-bpr-1918/>.

¹⁶ Information on the Bureau of Public Roads found at: <https://livingnewdeal.org/glossary/bureau-public-roads-bpr-1918/>.

West 14th Street Overpass

Name of Property

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Street, which still provides direct access to Central High School from the areas of the city west of the railroad line, it has remained an important crossing of the railroad line ever since.

Due to its importance in the transportation history in Little Rock, the West 14th Street Overpass, which was built in 1936 by the E. E. Barber Construction Company to carry West 14th Street over the Union Pacific (originally the Missouri Pacific and Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific) railroad lines, is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion A: Transportation with local significance**. The West 14th Street Overpass is being nominated with a period of significance of 1936 to coincide with when construction of the bridge occurred.

West 14th Street Overpass
Name of Property

Pulaski 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, 1934.

Arkansas State Highway Commission. "Layout Overpass over Mo.Pac. & C.R.I&P. Railroads at West Fourteenth Street, Little Rock, Ark. 1936.

Arkansas State Highway Commission. *Ninth Biennial Report of the Arkansas State Highway Commission*. Russellville, AR: Russellville Printing Company, 1930.

Arkansas State Highway Commission. *Twelfth Biennial Report of the Arkansas State Highway Commission*. Publisher unknown, c.1936.

Arkansas State Highway Maps, 1916-1936. In the files of the Arkansas Department of Transportation.

Information on the Bureau of Public Roads found at: <https://livingnewdeal.org/glossary/bureau-public-roads-bpr-1918/>.

Langmyer, Michael. "Arkansas Department of Transportation Historic Bridge National Register Eligibility Evaluation Form for the Rison Overpass." In the files of the Arkansas Department of Transportation. July 7, 2020.

Little Rock, Ark., 1:125,000. Map. Washington, DC: U.S. Geological Survey, 1891.

Roy, F. Hampton, Sr., and Charles Witsell, Jr., with Cheryl Griffith Nichols. *How We Lived: Little Rock as an American City*. Little Rock: August House, 1984.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for Little Rock, Pulaski County, Arkansas. 1913, 1939 and 1950.

Seventh Biennial Report of the Department of State Lands, Highways and Improvements. Conway, AR: Conway Printing Co., 1926.

Sixth Biennial Report of the Department of State Lands, Highways and Improvements. Conway, AR: Conway Printing Co., 1924.

West 14th Street Overpass
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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: Arkansas Department of Transportation

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): PU11262

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Less than one acre.

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: |

West 14th Street Overpass
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Or
UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Zone: 15 | Easting: 563683 | Northing: 3844203 |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

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

Beginning at a point 50 feet west of the western end of the West 14th Street Overpass at UTM Point 15/563641/3844200, proceed easterly to a point 50 feet east of the eastern end of the West 14th Street Overpass at UTM Point 15/563737/3844200. The boundary includes 30 feet on either side of the West 14th Street centerline.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes the West 14th Street Overpass and its immediate surroundings.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Ralph S. Wilcox, National Register & Survey Coordinator
organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
street & number: 1100 North Street
city or town: Little Rock state: AR zip code: 72205
e-mail: ralph.wilcox@arkansas.gov
telephone: (501) 324-9787
date: August 14, 2024

West 14th Street Overpass
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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: West 14th Street Overpass

City or Vicinity: Little Rock

County: Pulaski County State: Arkansas

Photographer: Ralph S. Wilcox

Date Photographed: September 17, 2024

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

NOTE: Due to the vegetation and the steepness of the terrain under the bridge and above the railroad tracks, the underside of the bridge was inaccessible for photography.

1 of 14. Detail view of the builder's plaque at the west end of the southern guardrail, looking southeast.

2 of 14. View of the pylon and builder's plaque at the west end of the southern guardrail, looking southeast.

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- 3 of 14 . View of the pylon and plaque at the east end of the southern guardrail, looking southwest.
- 4 of 14 . View of the West 14th Street Overpass, looking northwest.
- 5 of 14 . View of the West 14th Street Overpass, looking west.
- 6 of 14 . View of the West 14th Street Overpass, looking south from West 13th Street.
- 7 of 14 . Close-up view of the West 14th Street Overpass, looking south from West 13th Street.
- 8 of 14 . View of the West 14th Street Overpass, looking southwest.
- 9 of 14 . View of the West 14th Street Overpass, looking southwest.
- 10 of 14 . Detail view of the northern guardrail, looking northwest.
- 11 of 14 . View of the pylon and plaque at the west end of the northern guardrail, looking east.
- 12 of 14 . View of the West 14th Street Overpass, looking southeast.
- 13 of 14 . View of the West 14th Street Overpass, looking east.
- 14 of 14 . View of the West 14th Street Overpass, looking northeast.

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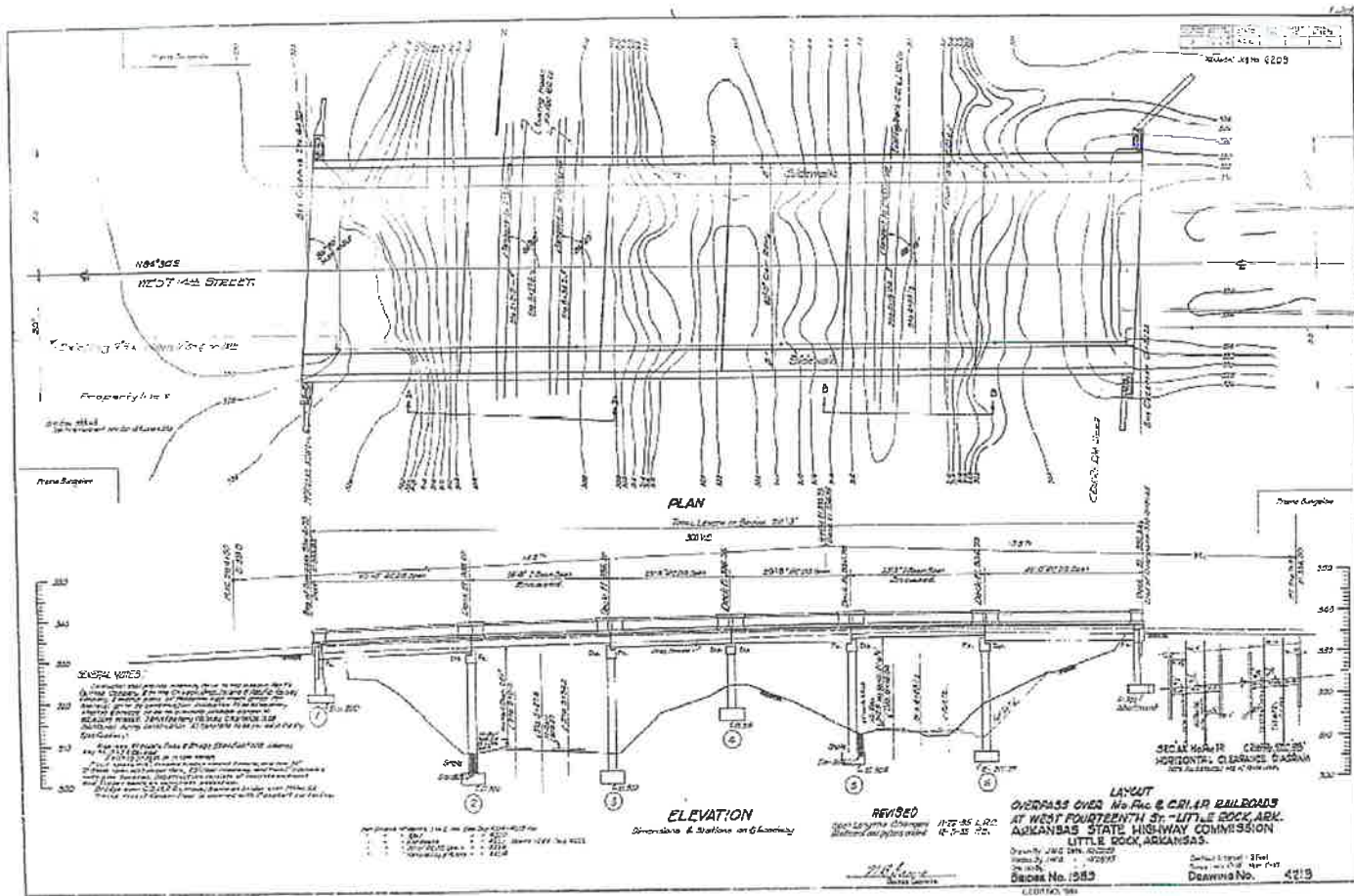


Figure 1: Sheet #1 of the original plans for the West 14th Street Overpass, 1936. Courtesy of the Arkansas Department of Transportation.

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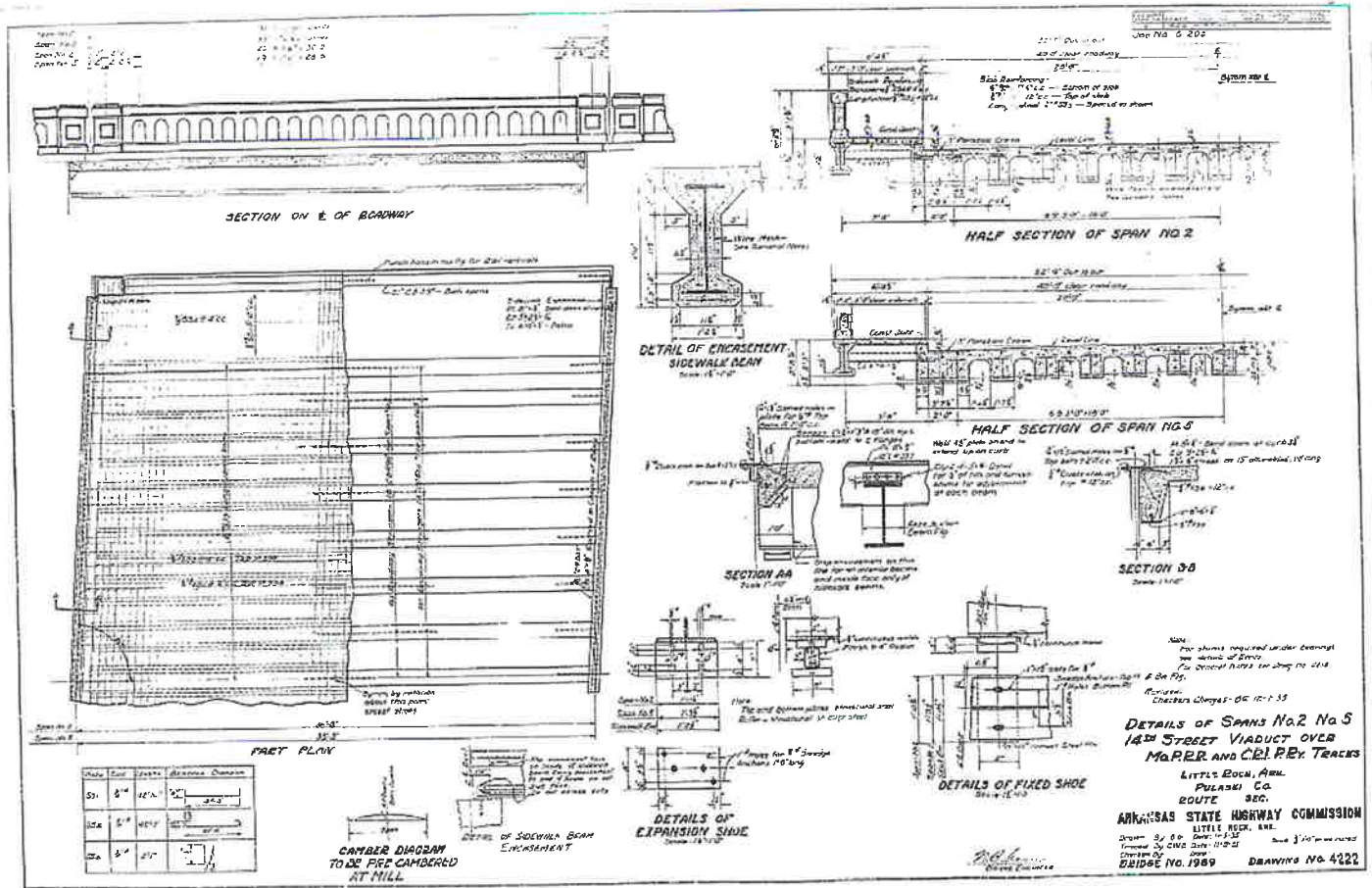


Figure 3: Sheet #3 of the original plans for the West 14th Street Overpass, 1936. Courtesy of the Arkansas Department of Transportation.

West 14th Street Overpass
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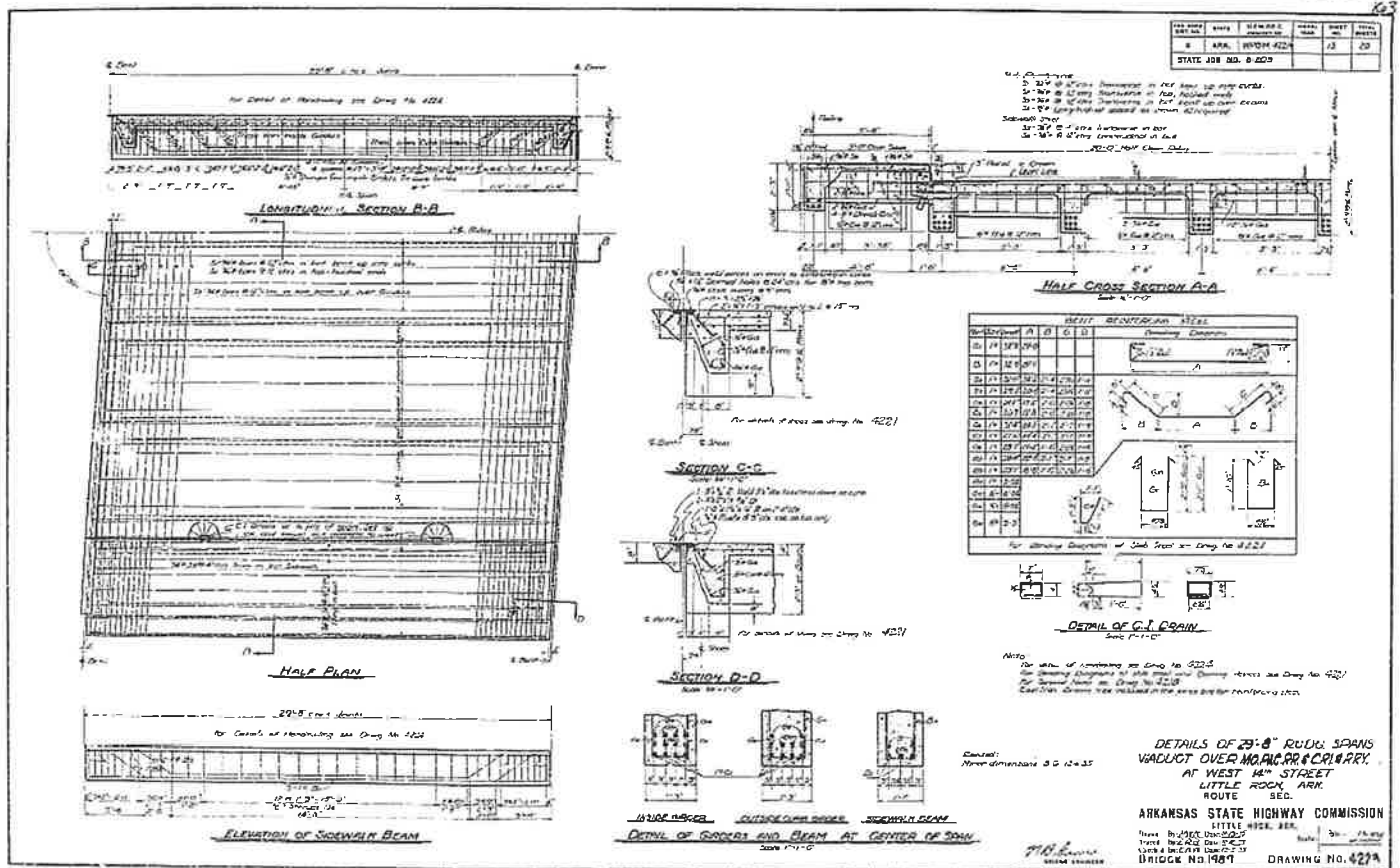
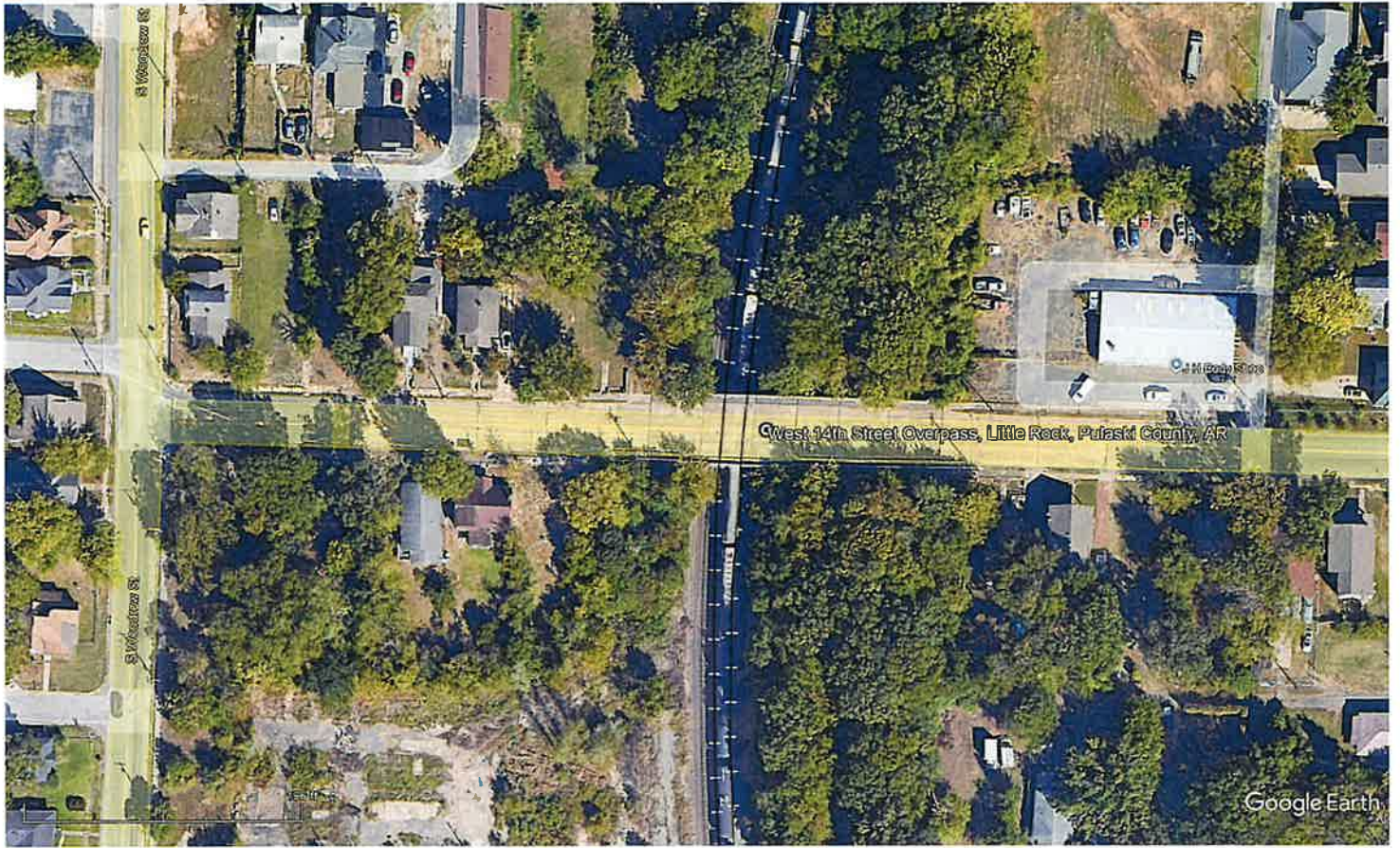


Figure 4: Sheet #4 of the original plans for the West 14th Street Overpass, 1936. Courtesy of the Arkansas Department of Transportation.

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.



|-----190'-----|

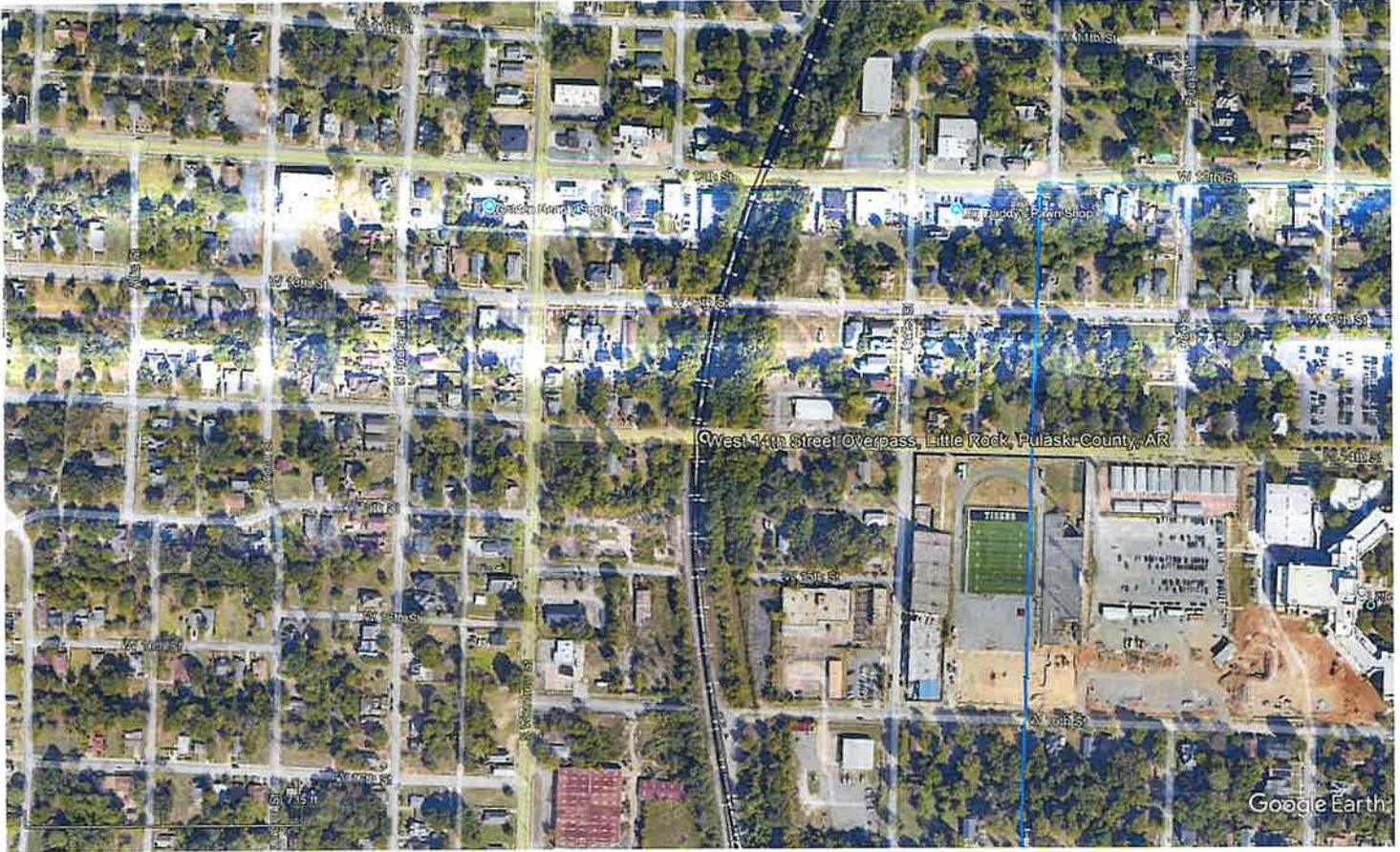
West 14th Street Overpass

Little Rock, Pulaski County, AR

UTM 15 563683E 3844203N



North



|-----735'-----|

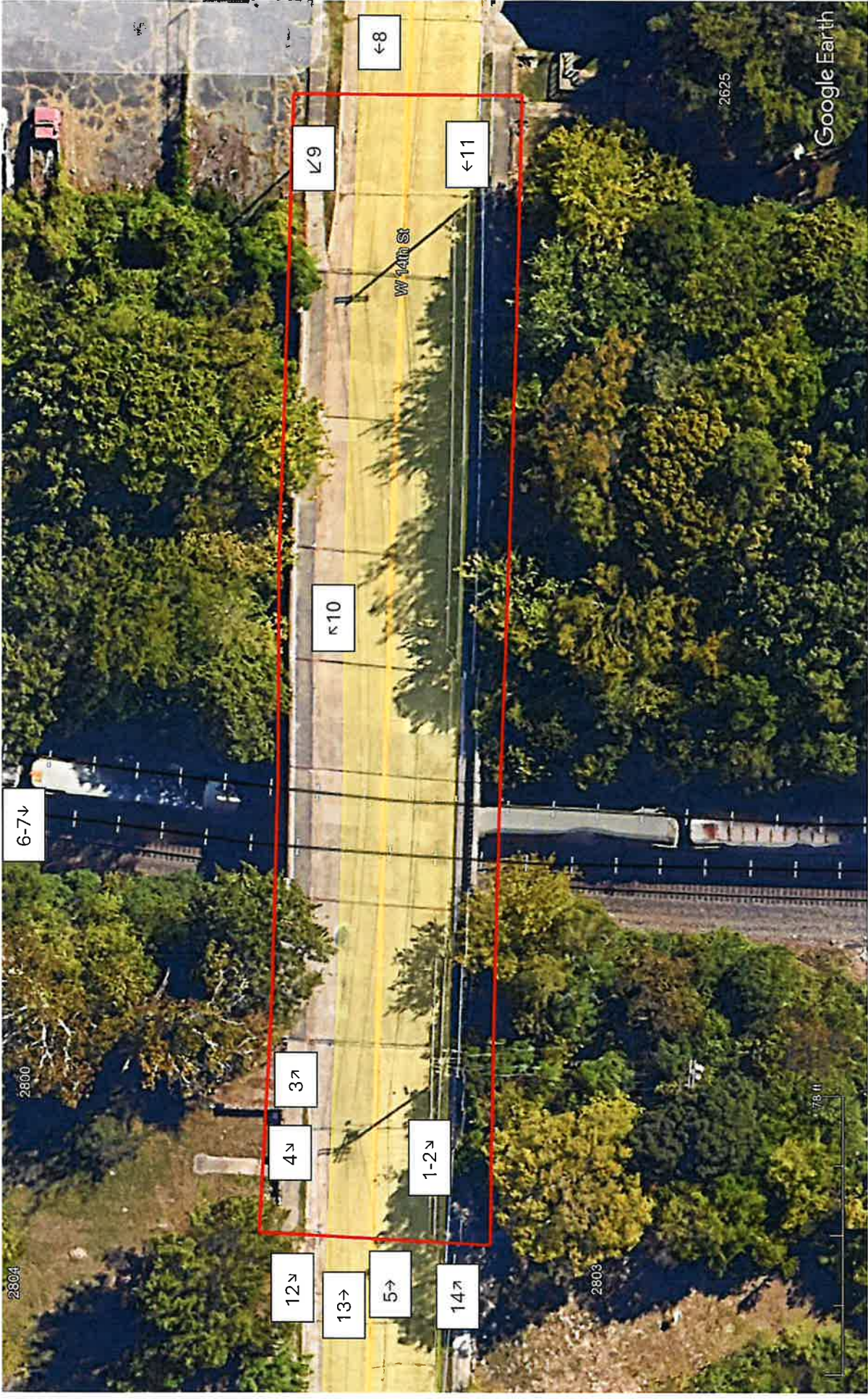
West 14th Street Overpass

Little Rock, Pulaski County, AR

UTM 15 563683E 3844203N



North



West 14th Street Overpass
 Little Rock, Pulaski County, AR
 Photo Location and National Register Boundary Map

— = National Register Boundary 1 → = Photo Location and Direction

GEORGE W. BROWN
BORN FEBRUARY 1860
DIED MARCH 1940
AGE 80 YEARS
MAY 1940



























November 7, 2024



DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

723 West Markham Street
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201-1334
Phone: (501) 371-4790 Fax:(501) 399-3435
www.littlerock.gov

CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATION REVIEW

Name and Address of property:

W 14th Street between Jones Street and Woodrow Street, Little Rock, AR, 72204

Name of Owner:

City of Little Rock
500 W. Markham,
Little Rock, AR 72201

Project Sponsor:

Ralph Wilcox, Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

CLG Name:

City of Little Rock, Arkansas

Date of Public Hearing by CLG:

November 7, 2024

Applicable Criteria:

Criterion A (Historic Events)

Criterion B (Important Person)

Criterion C (Architecture)

Criterion D (Archaeological)

The Little Rock Historic District Commission hereby recommends the above stated property for nomination.

Attest:

Chair

Date

Secretary/Staff

Date