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 of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking “x” in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter “N/A” for “not applicable.” For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property
   historic name  Arad Wood House
   other names/site number

2. Location
   street & number  407 Pontiac Avenue
   city, town  Cranston
   state  Rhode Island  code RI
   county  Providence  code 007
   zip code 02910

3. Classification
   Ownership of Property  Category of Property  Number of Resources within Property
   [ ] private  [x] building(s)  Contributing  1
   [ ] public-local  [ ] district  Noncontributing  structures
   [ ] public-State  [ ] site  Total
   [ ] public-Federal  [ ] structure
   [ ] object

   Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
   Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification
   As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination [x] 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
   Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission
   State or Federal agency and bureau

   In my opinion, the property [ ] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. [ ] See continuation sheet.

   ____________________________  ____________________________
   Signature of commenting or other official  Date
   State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification
   I, hereby, certify that this property is:
   [ ] entered in the National Register.
   [ ] See continuation sheet.
   [ ] determined eligible for the National Register. [ ] See continuation sheet.
   [ ] determined not eligible for the National Register.
   [ ] removed from the National Register.
   [ ] other, (explain:)

   ____________________________  ____________________________
   Signature of the Keeper  Date of Action
Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Erected c. 1858, the Arad Wood House is a two-and-a-half-story frame house, two bays wide, with a steep end gable roof facing the street. Surmounted by an octagonal belvedere, the house is sheathed with clapboards and set on a handsome dressed stone foundation. The house is three bays deep, with a two story ell four bays deep.

The principal entrance is through a Tuscan portico with a heavily bracketed entablature. In addition to quoins, brackets are the primary ornamentation of the structure. Deep ones run under the eaves of the house, with more modest ones on the belvedere and the window lintels and hoods of the principal facade.

On the principal facade the first- and second-story windows are identical--narrow-two-over-two sash flanking slightly wider two-over-two. This subtle tripartite arrangement is reflected in the location of the brackets above and below which continue the line of the muntins. There is a small Palladian attic window in the gable.

The east facade of the house includes a bracketed cross gable with an attic oculus. The first- and second-story windows in the first bay of the west facade are blind.

The Arad Wood House retains the side-hall floor plan typical of Rhode Island Greek Revival dwellings. The over-sized front door with side-lights and transom opens into the hall, off of which stand the parlor, sitting room, and dining room. An elegant cantilevered, dark wood staircase, decorated with foliate carvings on the stringers, dominates the hall. Handsome deep plaster cornices delineate the ceiling; a chandelier hangs from an ornate plaster medallion. The parlor and dining room have identical flat, black marble mantels, with ornate cast-iron inserts. The same mantels are in the front rooms of the second floor, but with open cast-iron coal grates. The rear ell was probably used as the kitchen and servants' wing; it displays
simpler woodwork and plain wooden mantels.

While the house has not been in residential use for many years, it is set back further from the street than the adjacent buildings from the early 20th century. This siting, together with the size and distinctive architecture of the house, distinguish it from the remainder of its environment. An 1890 bird’s-eye view indicates a large carriage house and barn; no evidence of these structures remains. The exterior changes have been few. The entrance portico is now partially enclosed by a window on each side to form a windbreak. The simple spindle side porch on the rear ell, shown in an 1875 photograph, was enclosed, probably c. 1890; the window enframes very closely resemble those of the body of the house.
visually confirm the Arad Wood House’s stature as a community landmark.
8. Statement of Significance

The Arad Wood House is one of Cranston's best examples of the Italianate style and a good example of the vernacular tradition of adapting architectural styles in Rhode Island. Originally built for an N. Thornton, it is one of the few remaining structures that pre-dates the 1869 construction of a nearby railroad round house, which precipitated the development of the village of Auburn.

Originally a farmhouse, the Arad Wood House is an especially elaborate one for its time and place. Much of the ornament—the brackets, quoins, belvedere—is clearly Italianate, yet the floor plan and massing of the house remain largely Greek Revival. Undoubtedly designed by a country builder, the design of the building has a certain dynamism. The quoins almost play the role of pilasters, the brackets of the portico correspond to the place of a frieze, while the horizontality of the windows so natural on a sprawling asymmetrical Italianate villa are tightly constrained by the form of the Greek Revival outline.

The house was passed down in the Thornton family until the 1890's when it was owned by Arad Wood, one of the wealthiest men in Cranston. His farm included hundreds of acres and stretched from the house to the site of the present City Hall. In the early twentieth century the building became the home of the Cranston Red Cross and was for many years known as the Red Cross Building.

Repai reded and restored by the current owners, the elegant rooms provide a backdrop for the insurance business that is transacted there as well as a convincing sense of how the house originally looked. Its location, set back from the street, its landscaping, with numerous mature trees screening it from surrounding buildings, and its fine state of restoration,
9. Major Bibliographical References


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:
☐ Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property less than one

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Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the Arad Wood House is the line surrounding Cranston Assessor's Plat 9/5, lot 138.

Boundary Justification

This boundary encompasses the resource and its immediate setting.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Vivian Lasky
organization: Consultant
date: 
telephone: 401-272-6692
state: Rhode Island
zip code: 02906
Dray Wood House
407 Pontiac Ave
Cranston, RI

Photo: Vivien Lasky
Date: June, 1981
Negative: RI HPC

View: Exterior, southeast corner, showing east facade & south elevation

Photo # 1
Grad Wood House
407 Pontiac Ave
Cranston, RI

Photog: Vivien Lasky
Date: June 1987
Negative: RI HPC

View: Exterior, west rear elevation

Photo # 2
Arad Wood House
407 Pontiac Ave
Cranston, RI

Photog: Vivian Lasky
Date: June, 1987
Negative: RI HPC

View: Interior, main stair

Photo #3
Arnold Wood House
407 Pontiac Ave
Cranston, RI

Photog: Vivien Lasky
Date: June, 1987
Negative: RIHP\C

View: Interior, parlor mantel

Photo # 4