NPS Form 10-900
(Oct. 1990)

OMB No. 10024-0018

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 *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Castle Rock

other names/site number Dr. A. Porter Davis House 209-2820-1960

2. Location

street & number 852 Washington Boulevard ☐ not for publication

city or town Kansas City ☐ vicinity

state Kansas code KS county Wyandotte code 209 zip code 66101

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ 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 ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Richard D Pankratz D-SHPO December 22, 1999
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is: Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

☐ 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:)

Castle Rock
Name of Property

Wyandotte County, Kansas
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- [x] private
- [ ] public-local
- [ ] public-State
- [ ] public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- [x] building(s)
- [ ] district
- [ ] site
- [ ] structure
- [ ] object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
2		Total

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: Single Dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: Single Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th & 20th Century Revivals

Other: (French Eclectic)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone: Limestone

walls Stone: Limestone, Brick

roof Asbestos

other

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Castle Rock
Name of Property

Wyandotte County, Kansas
County and State

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.)

Property is:

☐ **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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Ethnic Heritage: Black

Period of Significance

1938 - 1950

Significant Dates

1938

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Davis, Dr. A. Porter

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Buschhusen, Raymond J.

Narrative Statement of Significance
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography
(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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

Name of repository:

Castle Rock
Name of Property

Wyandotte County, Kansas
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	15	358920	4311250
2			
3			
4			

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title See Continuation Sheet #11/1

organization _____ date _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

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

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items
(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Mrs. Hazel Davis

street & number 852 Washington Blvd telephone 913-371-3889

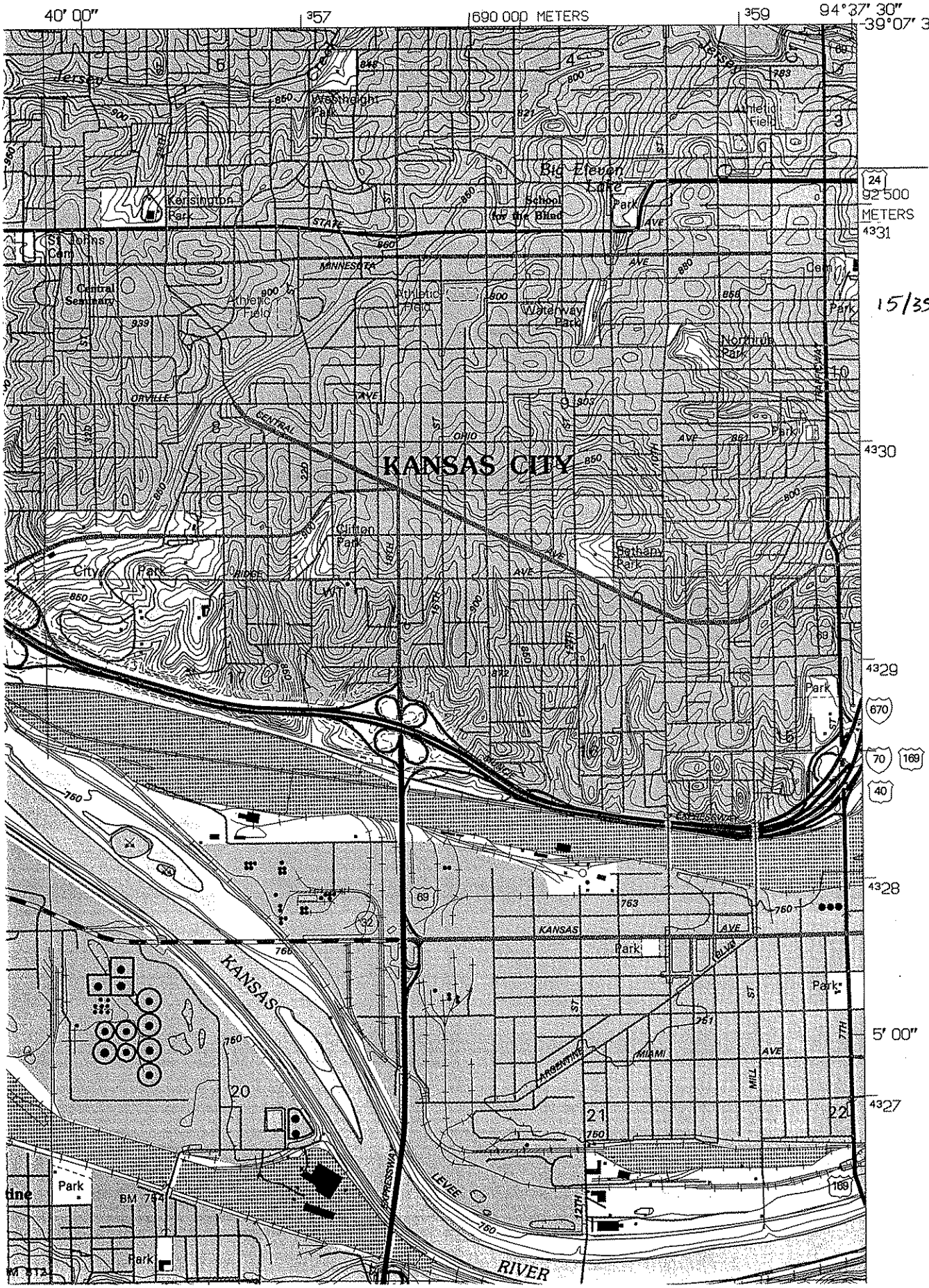
city or town Kansas City state KS zip code 66101

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. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

US GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1993 O - 350-416 QL 3

SHAWNEE QUADRANGLE
KANSAS
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)



CASTLE ROCK
KANSAS CITY/
WYANDOTTE Co.
KANSAS
UTM:
15/358920/4331250

Located on the northeast corner of Washington Boulevard and 9th Street in Kansas City, Kansas, "Castle Rock" is a two story, "L"-shaped, steel frame dwelling constructed in 1938. The steep slope of the gable roof, the L-shaped plan, the two story conical tower that rises within the junction of the gabled wings, and the rustic masonry veneer express the dwelling's French Eclectic architectural style. The wings measure 17x32 feet and 17x39 feet. Immediately north of the dwelling is a detached three-car garage of contemporary construction. Both the house and garage are virtually unchanged since their construction.

Rusticated limestone is the dominant building material used for the foundation and primary wall cladding. On the walls, limestone blocks of irregular shapes and sizes are interspersed with random patches of red and black scored brick. The south and west gable ends, as well as the roof surfaces are covered with wood-grained asbestos shingles. The shingles in the gable ends have been painted light gray. The cornice below the wide sloping eaves is composed of approximately three courses of red brick top a single course of black brick. All four courses are laid in running bond. Wide, hip-roofed wall dormers break the eave lines on the east and north sides of the dwelling. A small, single-bay hip-roof wall dormer breaks the eave line immediately south of the chimney on the front elevation.

Steel casement windows randomly pierce the walls of the dwelling at the first and second story. Arranged in a variety of configurations, the most common window unit has eight lights and is found singly, paired, tripled, and flanked by four-light sidelights. A band of four, six-light windows pierces the east wall of the living room, and a single and a pair of four-light windows illuminate the kitchen. Red and black header bricks (laid in random patterns dominated by the red brick) make up the window sills. The top corners of the window openings are marked by vertical bands of five bricks. The alternating red and black bricks feature an elongated central red brick.

The main entrance is located in the conical tower centered on the primary (southwest) elevation. The door has a pointed arch and is recessed in an arched stone vestibule. The interior surface of the vestibule stones is stippled. The heavy wood door is composed of vertical panels. An ornate brass door handle is placed on the right side. Centered in the door is a small window with leaded, diamond panes. Below the window is a circular doorknocker behind which is a small speaking hole that can be opened from the inside. Hanging above the doorway is a copper lantern. To the left (northwest) of the door is a small window. Set into the stone to the right (southeast) of the door are a rectangular, copper-framed light with white glass and a mail slot. The copper cover of the mailbox features an intricate geometric design. The stoop immediately in front of the door is inlaid with pastel colored tiles arranged in a random pattern. The front stoop, step and walk are edged with header courses of red and black bricks.

A back door is located at the east end of the north side of the dwelling. A modern wood door fills the original opening. A gabled door hood supported on wood knee braces marks the entrance.

Adjacent to the conical tower on the front of the dwelling is an exterior shouldered chimney. Three square ceramic pots cap the chimney. Decorative brickwork at the top of the stack features a course of black bricks laid in running bond, topped by a course of soldier bricks (red and black) regularly interspersed with limestone squares, and capped by three courses of red brick (running bond) that step out toward the top.

A smaller brick flue vent rises above the dormer on the rear (north) elevation. The top of the secondary stack is marked by bands of stepped bricks and courses of black bricks interspersed among the red. A single ceramic chimney pot and metal cap crown the stack.

Like the exterior, the interior of the dwelling has few alteration of its original design. While the chambers are generally square or rectangular, the "L" shape of the dwelling creates irregularly shaped passageways.

The first floor of "Castle Rock" has an open flowing floor plan. A foyer occupies the first floor of the conical tower. Arranged off the foyer are a living room (southeast corner) and dining room (northwest corner). A hallway leads to a small half bathroom on the east side of dwelling and to the basement doorway. A staircase leads to the second floor. A breakfast room/pantry on the north side of the first floor connects the dining room to the kitchen at the northeast corner. Openings between rooms on the first floor have pointed arches, echoing the arch of the main doorway.

The second floor hallways form a "T." Off the main (north) hall, the bathroom is centered between bedrooms in the east and west corners. The master bedroom is located at the southeast corner. A small "trunk room," used as a study by Dr. Davis, occupies the second story of the conical tower. Across from the trunk room, a ladder stair leads to the unfinished attic.

In the basement, a billiard room fills the southeast end of the "L" and a laundry room the northwest end. The remainder of the space includes a small, half-bathroom, mechanical equipment and a triangular bar area. A storage pantry occupies the base of the tower.

Oak floors throughout the house remain intact beneath carpet. The textured stucco walls have a smooth low relief. The ceilings are plaster. On the first floor they have recessed center panels. A simple, baseboard runs throughout the house. The steel casement windows are recessed in their openings

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toward the exterior of the stone walls and feature wide wood sills. On the first floor the gumwood trim is varnished. On the second floor the wood trim is painted. Maple doors throughout the house are varnished and have clear glass knobs. Small black metal heating vents with a honeycomb pattern sporadically pierce the walls and floors. The basement walls are generally exposed stone, but are finished with beaded knotty pine paneling in the billiard room. The floor is poured concrete and the ceiling is paneled with knotty pine. The original exposed ductwork runs along the ceiling.

All of the windows have their original "Alumilite" aluminum Venetian blinds. Specially treated, one side was designed to reflect sun during the hot summer months while the other side absorbs radiant heat during the winter. The *Kansas City Call* described the "clever, modernistic" blinds as "perhaps the most outstanding feature of the new house" (*Kansas City Call*, July 15, 1938, p. 13).

Massive floor-to-ceiling limestone fireplaces are found in the living room and in the billiard room. The living room fireplace has a robust form featuring rounded edges, an articulated mantel approximately half the distance between the floor and the ceiling, small protruding shelves immediately above and flanking the firebox opening, and an integrated mirror and articulated shelf between the mantel and ceiling. On either side of the fireplace are two metal, star patterned grates. Located immediately below the mantel and at floor level, these grates were designed to direct additional heat back into the room. The apron in front of the firebox is adorned with small ceramic tiles arranged in a geometric pattern. The square and rectangular tiles are muted shades of mustard, dark green, and red.

The basement fireplace is located in the northwest corner of the billiard room in the southeast corner of the dwelling. It also features star-patterned "heat-i-lator" grates in each side. The mantels and apron are each formed by a header course of red and black scored brick. The firebox opening is marked by a massive jack arch with an oversized keystone.

The walls of the pantry and breakfast nook are clad with beaded knotty pine paneling. The pantry in the south wall includes glass front cupboards, cutlery drawers and cabinets. A narrow broom closet is also built into this wall. North of the connecting passage is a nook to accommodate a table and chairs.

The north, south and west kitchen walls are clad with plaster and original structural glass tiles. A "Chinese motif " of white and marbled dark red tiles alternate in a checkerboard pattern. A matching red edge borders the tiles at chair rail height, increasing to nearly full height below the vent shaft above the stove. The east wall behind the sink is clad with white ceramic tiles. At the northeast corner, next to the back door, is a milk box, including the original dial for ordering dairy products. Immediately west of the back door, a concealed ironing board is built into the wall. Linoleum covers the floor in this room.

The long, narrow half bath on the east side of the first floor has patterned yellow, pink and white linoleum on the floor and pink tiles to chair rail height on the stucco walls. The lavatory, vanity and towel bar are also pink. A newspaper article written when the house was first constructed described the tile in this bathroom as "royal blue with black, yellow and ivory." While the tile was changed from its original, the style and color that currently exist suggest that this alteration was made in the 1950s.

The bold tile work in the second floor bathroom is very distinctive. Square "sun-tan ivory" tiles line the walls to chair rail height. A checkered border of "sea-green" and "sun-tan ivory" tiles runs along the top, and the edges are offset with black tiles. A matching black towel bar and soap holder are found in the tub area. The height of the tile work rises to approximately five feet in the bathtub enclosure. The bathtub itself is a matching oversized "sea-green" tub with a raised serpentine wave pattern in the bottom. The upper portion of the walls is painted textured, stucco.

The house is notable for the number of original built in features found throughout. In addition to the milk box, ironing board and broom closet in the kitchen, there is a varnished pine telephone nook in the north wall of the stairway to the second floor. An alcove for a phonograph occupies the northeast corner of the living room, and a radio recess is found in the second floor bathroom. Built-ins in the second floor bedrooms include four-drawer bureaus, "boudoir alcoves" (areas approximately one-foot wide with rods to hang clothing), and vanities (in two of the bedrooms), all in addition to closets. The master bedroom features "his" and "hers" closets and a drop-leaf desk. Many of the built-ins utilize small areas of otherwise wasted space, such as areas beneath stairs.

Approximately ten feet north of the dwelling is a detached three-car garage. Contemporary with the dwelling, the walls of the flat roofed garage are clad to match the dwelling. Above the stone, the cornice line is marked by a course of black scored bricks. Above this is a soldier course, featuring sections of four red bricks alternating with single black bricks. Ashlar limestone squares mark the outer corners of this course as well as the divisions between the garage bays. A final course of header brick, alternating colors in the same manner as the soldier course, caps the garage wall. Square limestone caps adorn the corners. A concrete stair with a pipe railing leads from the back door of the dwelling to the roof of the garage. The flat concrete roof serves as an outdoor patio. Originally, the garage doors could be automatically raised and lowered from both inside and outside the house.

"Castle Rock" is situated in the center of a double lot at the corner of Washington Boulevard and Ninth Street with its entrance facing the corner (southwest). The house has a front yard (Washington Boulevard) set back equal to that of the neighboring dwellings to the east. The garage is set back

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slightly farther than the adjacent building on 9th Street. A curvilinear, brick-lined, concrete walk leads from the sidewalk to the front door. An asphalt driveway provides access from 9th Street to the garage, and a narrow concrete path leads from the driveway to the back door.

The grassy lawn is punctuated by loose plantings of trees and shrubs. Flanking the entrance, set in beds covered with white landscaping rocks are several large and small shaped cedars. Scattered in the yard east of the dwelling are a large Magnolia and several rose bushes and yews. Lilac bushes mark the rear property line. A concrete, fish-shaped pond lies centered in the rear of the east yard.

"Castle Rock" is notable for the minimal alterations that have been made since its construction in 1938. Perhaps the most notable changes have been the retiling of the first floor half-bath, the replacement of the back door with a new wood door, and the installation of carpet over the original hardwood floors. The property's high integrity of design, workmanship, materials, setting, feeling and association have been preserved in part by the continued ownership of the property by Dr. Davis' family.

Castle Rock (1935-1938) is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places for its significance under Criterion B, in the area of ETHNIC HISTORY:BLACK for its association with the life of prominent African-American doctor, A. Porter Davis (1890-1976), and under Criterion C, in the area of ARCHITECTURE.

The significance of the property is ascribed in several ways. Most significant is the association with Dr. A. Porter Davis, whose life was full of firsts in his pursuit of medical, aviational, artistic, and political activities. Secondly, the dwelling is a unique expression of the French Eclectic architectural idiom in Kansas City, Kansas. Less common than its contemporary Tudor Revival, the French Eclectic style became popular after World War I. Very few dwellings constructed in this style are found in Kansas City, Kansas, and the design of the property has been subject to remarkably few alterations over the past sixty years. Coupled together, *Castle Rock's* design and association document two important facts: the presence of an African-American upper class in early 20th century Kansas City and that shared aesthetic preferences were determined by socio-economic status and transcended racial background.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

Dr. A. Porter Davis

Dr. A. Porter Davis, a physician and surgeon, was born in Palestine, Texas on November 13, 1890. He was the son of Dr. W. W. Davis and Louisa Craven. On September 1, 1926, Dr. Davis married Hazel White, a local schoolteacher in the Kansas City, Kansas, Public School System. To this union was born a daughter, A. Portia, on February 18, 1940. Dr. Davis had two daughters prior to his marriage to Miss White, Anita Paulina and Jacqueline Mazie, now both deceased.

After graduating from Lincoln High School in Palestine, Texas, Dr. Davis attended Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee, graduating in 1913. He received his medical license from the State of Kansas on June 20, 1913, and began his practice in Kansas City, Kansas. To keep abreast of current medical findings it was extremely important to acquire additional continuing education. At that time it was the trend for medical students to begin their medical training immediately after high school. Dr. Davis attended classes at Sumner Junior College and at the University of Kansas in Lawrence where he studied, among other things, Spanish grammar and applied psychology.[1]

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[1] Sumner Junior College was the Kansas City, Kansas, junior college for black students.

In Kansas City, Dr. Davis first established his offices in the Argentine neighborhood of Kansas City, Kansas. In an area with a large population of immigrant Mexican railroad workers, Dr. Davis' proficiency in Spanish enabled him to effectively communicate with the local population. Although Dr. Davis also had offices in the 18th & Vine neighborhood of Kansas City, Missouri, he finally located at 422 Minnesota, in downtown Kansas City, Kansas. With his office on the second floor, this building also housed some of the other ventures in which Dr. Davis was involved.

Among those ventures was the Davis Maternity Sanitarium for Unwed Mothers, which Dr. Davis founded. Opened in 1920, the maternity hospital was extremely important for its day for there were few other such facilities available nationwide for African-American women as there were for whites. Women were confined at the Davis Sanitarium in complete secrecy. They were able to continue their education and received top-quality pre-natal care. Many babies were successfully matched with adoptive families. The Davis Sanitarium operated until the early 1940's. It closed because of a declining need for such a facility.

Dr. Davis was the first African-American physician to be appointed Assistant Health Director in Kansas City, Kansas (1926-32); he twice served as Deputy Coroner of Wyandotte County, Kansas (1940-42 and 1950-52); he was Chairman of the Board of Trustees and served as President of the National Medical Association (1953). The National Medical Association was an organization of black physicians who were denied the right to join the American Medical Association because of race. Davis was on the staff at Wheatley-Provident Hospital (General Hospital #2) Kansas City, Missouri, and Douglas Hospital in Kansas City, Kansas. He was a member of the Society of Applied Psychology and many other professional, fraternal and civic organizations.

Dr. A. Porter Davis was a man with many interests and ambitions. Although well trained, well respected, and hard working in his medical practice, it appears that he had just as much talent and ambition in other areas of his life. In addition to the medical profession, he was involved in the aviation world, the arts, and the world of politics.

Dr. Davis pursued aviation with almost the same vigor as he did his medical career. He learned to fly at the Richards Air Field located at Seventy-first Street and Davenport Road in Kansas City, Missouri. His pilot's license (#3902) was awarded to him on May 16, 1928. (The government did not begin issuing licenses until 1927 with the passage of the Air Commerce Act on December 31, 1926.) It is because of the early issue of Dr. Davis' pilot's license that he is believed to be among the first African-Americans to receive certification for flying in the United States. This has been documented by the United States

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Department of Transportation (Federal Aviation Association) and The Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D. C.

The same day that Dr. Davis received his pilot's license he purchased his first airplane. It was one of three planes that he purchased over the next 13 years from Ed Porterfield, Jr., one of Kansas City's leading airplane manufacturers. (Owner and builder of American Eagle Aircraft.) Records indicate Dr. Davis received flying lessons at the Porterfield Flying School. This aviational coup was important because in the early years of flying few African-Americans held a pilot's license and most of those who did had to obtain their certification outside the United States. The degree of respect that Dr. Davis commanded was demonstrated when he was voted by the National Airman's Association to receive the Dwight H. Green Trophy in 1939 for most outstanding contributions to aviation for that year. In 1942 Dr. Davis was listed in *Who's Who in Aviation.*

Restrictions imposed at the on-set of World War II curtailed Dr. Davis' ability to fly recreationally. During these years he supplemented his medical work with a growing interest in real estate. In the mid-1940's Dr. Davis purchased between six and eight homes on the 800 and 900 blocks of Washington Boulevard and Nebraska Avenue (one block to the south). Davis renovated the homes and maintained them as rental properties. These homes were located within a block of his own residence and may have been an effort to bolster the neighborhood surrounding *Castle Rock.* In 1953, Dr. Davis' real estate speculation led him to establish a mobile home park at 59th and State Avenue in Kansas City. *Ebony Magazine* recognized the novelty of this development in 1956 with a feature story on Dr. Davis. This property has remained in the ownership of the Davis family through the late 1990s.

Dr. Davis believed in racial equality and should be considered an early civil rights worker. During the 1940s Dr. Davis was active in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored Persons (NAACP), and like many of his peers, he used his political influence to openly challenge large private and public employers for job opportunities for minorities. In 1941 Dr. Davis advocated jobs for minorities at the North American Aircraft Plant. In addition to speaking at a public rally at Memorial Hall, Dr. Davis traveled to Washington, D.C. to lobby this cause. He ran for several local political offices during the 1930s and 40s, and did much public speaking on behalf of those less fortunate. He served the community as Assistant Health Director of Kansas City, Kansas (1926-32) and twice as Deputy Wyandotte County Coroner (1941-42, 1950-52).

Currently there is a renewed interest in Black historic archival material. In his memorabilia there is published sheet music (1920) written by Dr. A. Porter Davis and arranged by another local, James Scott who could be considered the father of ragtime.

Kansas City, Missouri's 18th & Vine district was a mecca for jazz musicians as well as early African-American filmmakers. In 1921 Dr. Davis starred in a five-reel black and white silent film with Regina Cohee entitled "Lure of a Woman." This was one of the first African-American films produced and made in Kansas City, Missouri. This historical fact prompted the City of Kansas City, Missouri, to locate and purchase one of the two original remaining poster advertisements for this film. It is currently on display at the 18th & Vine Jazz Museum. Other artifacts of Dr. Davis are also on display at that location, made possible by a loan from members of the Davis-King families.

Construction of *Castle Rock*

The Abstract for 852 Washington Boulevard indicates that Dr. Davis purchased Lots 28 and 29 of Block 87 at a sale on the court house steps on August 14, 1928, for $498.20 (Wyandotte County Records, Journal 114, page 397). The previous owner, Harry B. Bronson, defaulted on a debt to Dr. Davis, and the Wyandotte County District Court required the sale of the property in the settlement of the case (Wyandotte County Records, District Court Transcript #3000). At that time a two-story frame dwelling was standing on the property. Dr. and Mrs. Davis initially lived in this dwelling, which had been constructed circa1905 for the Children's Orphan's Home (*Kansas City Call*, July 15, 1938, p. 12; Wyandotte County Records, Book 361, page 586).

Like many Americans, Dr. Davis experienced some financial difficulties in the early 1930s. From available records, it appears that creditors seized the property at 9th and Washington after a number of patients and clients of Dr. Davis were unable to pay for services rendered. Dr. Davis petitioned for bankruptcy in 1932 (Wyandotte County Records, Bankruptcy Petition #6428). The Aetna Building and Loan Association of Topeka (Aetna) was awarded the property by the District Court in 1935 (Wyandotte County Records, Book 871, page 189). By the fall of 1935, Dr. Davis' finances appear to have recovered and he placed an option to buy lots 28 through 31. This included the two lots occupied by the existing dwelling at the corner of 9th and Washington as well as the two vacant lots to the east (Wyandotte County Records, Warranty Deed #359467). Earlier that year he had commissioned plans from architect Raymond J. Buschhusen and announced the construction of a $14,000 dwelling (*Mid-West Contractor*, May 8, 1935, p. 12). It was during this period that the existing house at the corner was moved to the vacant lots further east on Washington Boulevard, and it was there that the Davises lived during the construction of *Castle Rock*. Building commenced in 1936 and was completed in July 1938

(*Kansas City Call*, July 25, 1938, p. 13). In August 1938 a Warranty Deed transferred Lots 28-31 from Aetna to Dr. Davis (Wyandotte County Records, Book 817, Page 299).

Upon completion of the dwelling, the Davises invited the public to view their new home. Approximately 400 people attended the open house (Davis, personal communication). A large article in the *Kansas City Call* extolled the virtues of the new dwelling (*Kansas City Call*, July 15, 1938, p. 13). Among the features described were the fireproof construction, the multiple phone "jacks" throughout the house (including in the bathroom), copper screens on all windows, including the basement, central heat and air conditioning, and wine cellar. While Dr. Davis had extensive hands-on involvement in the construction, the general contractor was J.J. Lindsey, stonework was performed by Ellis McKinely, and the brick mason was George Kitchen. The article concludes,

> That the attractive stone dwelling has been two years in the building is the cause of some chagrin for Mrs. Davis. But it is a permanently constructed, fire-proof house, calculated to last long past the lifetime of its owners. That alone was worth working two years to achieve.

Dr. Davis led a full and exemplary life, from his admission to medical school in 1913 until his health declined in early 1969. His remaining years were spent at *Castle Rock,* his home, with his family. He died in 1976. The house is still occupied by Dr. Davis' widow, Mrs. Hazel Davis.

Architectural Style

Castle Rock is an exceptional vernacular interpretation of Early 20th Century Revival (French Eclectic) architecture. Minimal changes to the dwelling have left the original picturesque design intact on both the exterior and interior. Characteristic of the style are the L-shaped plan, conical entry tower placed at the intersection of the "L" with articulated chimney, wall dormers, casement windows, mixed masonry wall treatments, steeply pitched gable ends, and arched front entrance and porch (McAlester, p. 388). The French Eclectic style shares many of these traits with its more common cousin, English Tudor Revival architecture. However, the L-shaped footprint, prominent conical entry tower, and wall dormers distinguish and accentuate the French roots of this design. Markings on the blue prints indicate modifications made to the original plans. These changes included: using steel casement rather than wood double-hung windows; omitting shutters; replacing a Classical wood mantel with a rustic stone mantel; substituting stone for tile in the fireplace aprons; adding small attic vents to the gable ends; and incorporating a flat rather than side gabled garage roof. The resulting effect was a design that more closely resembled its French counterparts than that originally conceived by the architect.

In the United States, high-style and vernacular interpretations of French Eclectic and Tudor Revival designs were popular in the 1920s and 1930s. Fighting in Europe during World War I, American soldiers were exposed to the picturesque architecture of France and England. In an age of rapidly changing aesthetics and industrial Modernity, the historical references and predictability of these revival styles was comforting to middle class homeowners (Ehrlich, p. 81-82). The masonry exteriors of French Eclectic and Tudor dwellings made these styles additionally attractive for their superior fire resistance over traditional wood sided dwellings. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, fires in urban areas were often devastating as a result of the dense siting of wood frame buildings. Building techniques for applying masonry veneer to frame dwellings also improved during the 1920s, making dwellings with masonry cladding increasingly affordable to the average homeowner (McAlester, p. 358). Contemporary technology produced other fire resistant materials as well, such as asbestos shingles (for roofs or siding) and steel windows. The design of *Castle Rock* maximized the use of these modern materials for its "fire-proof" design (*Kansas City Call*, 15 July 1938, p. 13).

Architect

Architect Raymond J. Buschhusen designed *Castle Rock*. Little information was uncovered about Buschhusen; listings in the *Mid-West Contractor* and *Western Contractor* trade journals show that he practiced architecture in Kansas City, Kansas, during the mid-1930s. The original architectural plans for the Davis home list the address of Buschhusen's office as the Chamber of Commerce Building, located at 727 Minnesota in downtown Kansas City, Kansas.

He first appears in the city directory in 1931 as a student. He is listed in the 1934 directory without an occupation, but is absent in 1936[2]. He reappears in 1938 with his occupation described as "Deputy US Marshal." Buschhusen worked as a US Marshal until 1941. From 1942 through 1952, the Butler Manufacturing Company in Kansas City, Missouri, employed Buschhusen as an engineer (P.L. Polk & Co., 1931 through 1952).

The Butler Manufacturing Company was an important defense contractor during World War II, producing innovative pre-fabricated steel structures for airplane hangers. Commonly described as "Butler Buildings," these same principles were adapted for farm buildings following the war. At this time, Butler Manufacturing also designed and produced economical two and three-bedroom all-aluminum houses

[2] Kansas City, Kansas directories are not available for all years.

(Kansas City Star, 1946, 1947a, 1947b). Buschhusen's role in this facet of Butler's product line is unknown.

In all of the city directory entries, Ray Buschhusen resided at the home of William and Della (presumably his parents) at 1901 Armstrong Avenue. This simple bungalow is located in a modest neighborhood of like dwellings. However, it was located only a few blocks from the grand and architecturally distinctive homes in the Westheight Manor subdivision. Ray Buschhusen disappears from the Kansas City, Kansas, City Directory after 1952. Review of the Kansas City, Missouri, and Johnson County, Kansas, directories failed to locate Buschhusen in subsequent years.

Entries in the *Mid-West Contractor* and *Western Contractor* trade journals suggest that Buschhusen worked actively in architecture between 1935 and 1937 (Hancks, personal communication). The first entry that appears is for the Davis home. A second residence designed by Buschhusen was built in 1935 for Mrs. Evelyn (Arthur L.) Guy at 1848 Oakland. This address is located in the prominent Westheight Manor subdivision. In 1937, the firm of Brown, Buschhusen and Luckett completed several commercial designs in Kansas City, Kansas, while Brown and Buschhusen completed a commercial garage and a residence in that same year. In 1938, *Western Contractor* attributes at least one project to Robert Brown without mention of his partner, Buschhusen. Another dwelling, (date of construction unknown) virtually identical to the Davis house, is located on North 54th Terrace. Next door is a smaller 1 ½ story side gabled cottage that also appears to be a contemporary design by Buschhusen.

Castle Rock in the Context of Early-20th Century Kansas City, Kansas

The role of Kansas in the 19th century abolitionist movement and Wyandotte County's place on the Underground Railroad fostered an atmosphere of relative racial tolerance in what was then Wyandotte City, Kansas, following the end of the Civil War. By the end of the 19th century, the community had a sizeable middle class African-American population and some moderately integrated neighborhoods (Millstein, et.al. 1993, p. 26).

However, after the turn of the century, Kansas City followed the pattern seen in other urban areas across the country. As the urban black population grew, fears of the dominant white population lead to an increase in restrictive policies. Businesses and public facilities became increasingly segregated, and restrictive covenants on new subdivisions often excluded African-Americans from owning property (Ibid). These policies limited the areas in which black families could live. As a result, the homes of college educated, African-American middle and upper-middle class professionals were clustered in older

areas of the city, unlike those of their white counterparts, whose homes were found increasingly in exclusive new subdivisions away from the urban core (Brown and Dorset, p. 184).

Dr. Davis constructed *Castle Rock* at the very visible intersection of 9th Street and Washington Boulevard in the predominantly black neighborhood north of downtown. This location faced the Metropolitan Baptist Church and Sumner High School. One story, single-family frame dwellings and two-story, brick duplexes dominated the surrounding neighborhood. Masonry church buildings were interspersed among the dwellings (Sanborn Map Co. 1931). A 1993 survey of downtown Kansas City found that a majority of these churches were designed in the first part of the century by well-known local architect, Ernest O. Brostrom, who specialized in church design (Millstein et.al., 1993 p. 20). The number of churches (over one-half dozen in the vicinity of Sumner School), their size and substantial construction, and the commissioned designs attest to the prosperity of the surrounding community.

In *Castle Rock,* Dr. Davis commissioned a unique design in a rare architectural idiom. The quality of the design is on par with that of contemporary houses constructed in prominent neighborhoods on both sides of the state line. Were he white, it is very possible that Dr. Davis might have constructed *Castle Rock* in a neighborhood such as Westheight Manor, which was among the most exclusive Kansas City, Kansas, neighborhoods in the 1930s. In fact, Buschhusen, Davis' architect, was subsequently commissioned to design a house that was constructed in Westheight Manor. However, segregationist policies limited the locations in which Dr. Davis was able to purchase property.

In its association with a prominent, affluent member of the African-American community, *Castle Rock* documents the presence of an African-American upper class in early 20th Century Kansas City, Kansas. Because available land for new construction was limited for African-Americans, Dr. Davis was unique among his peers in commissioning a new dwelling. Furthermore, the instance of a black individual hiring an architect to design a personal residence transcended the impediments of segregation. From its fire-proof construction to its modern appointments, the design of *Castle Rock* reflects the high end of American popular taste in the mid-1930s. The resulting dwelling is a superb example of its idiom and one that mirrors its owner's position in the community.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lots 28 and 29, Block 87, Wyandotte City, Wyandotte County, Kansas.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary of the National Register property includes the two lots occupied by "Castle Rock" and its garage.

Form prepared by:

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