



079

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 determination for individual properties and districts. See instruction 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 Usher, Christian K., Lustron House

other names/site number

2. Location

street & number 1135 E. Moses [N/A] not for publication

city or town Cushing [N/A] vicinity

state Oklahoma code OK county Payne code 119 zip code 74023

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 [] nationally [X] statewide [] locally. ([] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title State Historic Preservation Officer Date 1-20-09

Oklahoma Historical Society
State or 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 certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- [X] 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
[] See continuation sheet.
[] other, explain
[] See continuation sheet.

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action 2/23/2009

Usher, Christian K., Lustron House
Name of Property

Payne County, Oklahoma
County/State

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
1	0	structures
0	0	objects
2	0	Total

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

Lustron Houses of Oklahoma

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register.

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Function
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: single dwelling

Domestic: secondary structure: garage

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: single dwelling

Domestic: secondary structure: garage

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: Lustron

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete

walls metal

roof metal

other _____

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

Usher, Christian K., Lustron House
Name of Property

Payne County, Oklahoma
County/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.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture
Engineering

Periods of Significance

1949-1950

Significant Dates

1949-1950

Significant Person(s)

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above).

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Blass and Beckman, architects/Hall and Abercrombie, builders

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:

Oklahoma Historical Society/SHPO

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet****United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**Usher, Christian K., Lustron House
Payne County, OklahomaSection number 8 Page 2**SUMMARY**

The Christian K. Usher Lustron House is located at 1135 E. Moses in Cushing, Payne County, Oklahoma. This two-bedroom Westchester model Lustron is located on the south side of East Moses Street, between North Highland and North Howerton. It is situated in the Stiles Addition, an older residential neighborhood in central Cushing characterized by 1920s to 1940s era bungalows. The lot immediately to the west of the residence is vacant. The houses in the neighborhood are set back from the street and sidewalks are present. This residence was built between September 1949 and April 1950 by the local Lustron dealership of Hall and Abercrombie. The Christian K. Usher Lustron House is one of two Lustron houses identified in the small town of Cushing in north central Oklahoma. It is the only Lustron in the community with a single car, detached Lustron garage.

Narrative Description

The Christian K. Usher Lustron House is a typical Westchester model 2-bedroom Lustron (see appendices). The Westchester model was the most popular Lustron model constructed across the country and is the only model found in Oklahoma. This particular Westchester is dove gray in color with a green roof. This single story residence features a side gabled roof clad in porcelain enamel coated steel panels designed to emulate shingles. The exterior walls are clad in 2'X2' porcelain enamel coated steel panels and the gable ends have off-white, vertical porcelain enamel coated steel panels. The house measures approximately 31' X 35' on the exterior with a 6' X 12' corner recess on the northeast corner that serves as an entrance porch (1,085 square feet). The porch is supported on the northeast corner by metal posts. The two-bedroom Westchester is distinguishable from other Lustron models by this corner recess. The single car, detached Lustron garage is located to the south and east of the residence. The garage features porcelain enamel clad steel wall and roof panels to match the house. The original garage door has been replaced with a more modern metal door.

The interior of the Westchester Lustron was designed to offer maximum storage and efficiency. This can be seen in the use of metal pocket doors and built-in metal cabinetry throughout the space. The Westchester Lustron featured a fairly open plan, with the entry opening to the main living, dining, and food preparation space, with the bedrooms and bathroom located off a small hallway in the middle of the home. The interior walls and ceiling were also clad with porcelain enamel steel panels. Innovative for its time, the house originally featured a radiant heating system and a large interior laundry and workroom.

Alterations/Additions

The Christian K. Usher Lustron House has been relatively well maintained and retains a high degree of historical and architectural integrity. The residence is currently a rental property and it was not possible to access the interior. However, according to the current owners, there have been relatively few interior alterations beyond updates to the kitchen and the heating and air conditioning systems. As for the exterior, the only notable alteration is a modification to the dining room window on the east to allow for the installation of a window air conditioning unit.

In order to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places as part of the *Lustron Houses of Oklahoma* Multiple Property Cover document, a Lustron must meet the following requirements: All associated Lustrons must retain their original porcelain enamel steel exterior wall and roof panels, as well as the majority of the original steel casement windows. Additions to the original home must not be easily visible from the street and should not obscure or overwhelm the original form. The interior should retain a significant portion of the original enamel steel ceiling and wall panels. Updates to heating and air systems or replacement of functionally obsolete items, such as the combination dishwasher/clothes washer do not detract from the overall integrity of a Lustron. Because most Oklahoma Lustrons are currently rental properties, it may difficult to assess the integrity of the interior. For that reason, if sufficient exterior integrity remains, the house will be considered eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet****United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

Usher, Christian K., Lustron House
Payne County, Oklahoma

Section number 8 Page 3

SIGNIFICANCE

The Christian K. Usher Lustron House is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Lustron Houses of Oklahoma Multiple Property Cover document. Lustron houses are significant in the areas of architecture and engineering for their association with important developments in post-World War II prefabricated housing. Lustrons are an excellent example of an innovative and unusual type of prefabrication employing assembly line production of all-steel building components including porcelain enamel steel panels, as well as for their early adaptation of the modern, gabled-roof ranch design. The Lustron house was a technologically advanced prefabricated answer to the housing shortage after the war. Lustron houses in Oklahoma that maintain their architectural and historic integrity are eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C, as a regionally rare and early example of a metal, prefabricated house designed to help alleviate the housing crisis in the post World War II era.

The Lustron Corporation operated between 1946 and 1950, offering a mass-produced, all-metal solution to the Post World War II housing crisis. There are nine known Lustrons in Oklahoma, all of which are the two-bedroom Westchester model. The Christian K. Usher Lustron was built in 1949/1950 by the Lustron dealership of Hall and Abercrombie. This dealership operated out of Cushing and Stillwater in north central Oklahoma, building two houses in Cushing after constructing their first Lustron at 2119 W Sherwood in Stillwater in 1949. The house at 1135 E. Moses in Cushing was purchased by Christian K. Usher, an employee of the Walters Furniture Company, in April 1950. According to Cushing city directories, Mr. Usher lived in the home until at least 1957 and he owned the property until 2001. The current owners purchased the property in 2006.

Historic Context

The Lustron house emerged in the 1950s as a practical, prefabricated solution to the post-World War II housing crisis. However, the concept of prefabricated housing is not new. Prefabricated building elements have been used in house construction since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution and in the early to mid nineteenth century, companies in England and in the United States were producing components for metal housing that were shipped around the world. These metal housing units were considered temporary, cheap, and completely inappropriate for long-term, single-family residences. World War II and the post war period, however, forced builders to reexamine the role of metal prefabrication in the production of single-family homes. Government estimates in 1946 announced that nearly 3,000,000 moderate and low priced units were needed to house returning veterans, with 10,000,000 units needed over the next decade. Traditional homebuilders simply were not equipped to meet such demand and prefabricated housing became a peacetime priority.

In response to public demand and outcries from veteran's groups, the federal government became actively involved in the private housing market. The Veteran's Emergency Housing Act of 1946 was passed to ensure that builders had adequate materials, factory space and financing. For buyers, the Veteran's administration and the FHA guaranteed mortgages for veterans and other low-income individuals. Under the stimulus of government support, nearly three hundred firms entered the prefab housing industry in the late 1940s. The Lustron Corporation was the most "successful" of these prefabricated housing companies and extant Lustrons remain a lasting, recognizable, and popular example of this attempt at metal prefabricated housing.

Lustron houses were the brainchild of Carl Strandlund, an immigrant and self-taught engineer. Working with architects Blass and Beckman of Illinois, Strandlund lobbied Congress and the president to gain support and financing for his pet project. His model houses were well received by the public and production estimates indicated that his prefabricated metal homes could efficiently and cost effectively be produced to help alleviate the housing shortage. Strandlund was eventually successful and production began in a former aircraft plant in Columbus, Ohio.

Strandlund crafted his business model on the automobile industry. He developed a nationwide dealer network and developed several different house models with a few different features designed to meet the varying needs of the public. There were three basic models: the Westchester, the Newport, and the Meadowbrook. Lustron also

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet****United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

Usher, Christian K., Lustron House
Payne County, Oklahoma

Section number 8 Page 4

developed a detached garage to match the houses. The houses were metal framed with all interior and exterior surfaces covered with enameled steel panels, making them durable, easy to maintain, and sleek and modern in appearance. The houses came with numerous innovative features, like built in cabinetry, a radiant heating system, and combination dishwasher/clotheswasher. And best of all, the house could be built on site in one to three weeks.

The all-metal Lustron house offered a modern alternative to traditional housing in the Cushing and Stillwater area after World War II. Prosperity in Cushing had long been tied to the oil industry, with several periods of rapid growth accompanying boom periods in the Cushing Oil Field in the early to mid-Twentieth century. Most of the extant housing in Cushing dated to either a period from 1900-1910 or from 1920-1930. These were primarily frame houses clad with traditional materials and built in a more traditional style, such as cape cod or bungalow. When Hall and Abercrombie unveiled their all-metal Lustron in October 1949, the public flocked to see it. The *Cushing Daily Citizen* of October 10, 1949 reports that 3,000 residents lined up to visit the home on its opening day. The comments of visitors printed in the paper illustrate that the modern style and conveniences offered in the house were very well received. Despite this initial reception, only two Lustrons were ever built in the community. The local newspaper is full of ads from local lumberyards and other builders advertising kit houses and plans for houses of comparable size that cost significantly less. The Lustron house that cost between \$10,000 and \$11,000 to complete simply could not compete with a house of similar size that retailed for less than \$7,000.

The appeal of the Lustron did not translate into economic success. Supply could not keep up with demand and the company sank further and further into debt. Without additional government loans, the company could not continue to function. After producing fewer than 3000 homes, the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, the government agency financing the company, took control of Lustron, forcing the company into receivership and bankruptcy. Lustron's assets were eventually offered at public auction.

Despite its financial failure, the houses designed and built by the Lustron Corporation and its dealer network that remain today are a living legacy to Carl Strandlund and his innovative solution to the post World War II housing crisis. The Lustron house is significant in architecture and engineering for its association with important developments in post-World War II prefabricated housing; as an excellent example of an innovative and unusual type of prefabrication employing assembly line production of all-steel building components including porcelain enamel steel panels; and for its modern gabled-roof ranch design. The Christian K. Usher house in Cushing, Oklahoma is a well-preserved example of a two-bedroom Westchester Lustron with detached Lustron garage.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Usher, Christian K., Lustron House
Payne County, Oklahoma

Section number 9 Page 5

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

Usher, Christian K., Lustron House
Payne County, Oklahoma

Section number 10 Page 6

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Block 5, lots 7 and 8 of the Stiles Addition to Cushing.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary includes the property historically associated with 1135 E Moses.

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

Usher, Christian K., Lustron House
Payne County, Oklahoma

Section number ___ Page 7

PHOTOGRAPH LOG

The following information pertains to all photographs:

Photographer: Kelli Gaston
Date of Photographs: 01 March 2007
Negatives: OK SHPO