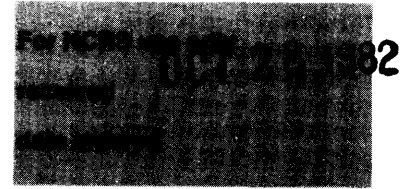


United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections



1. Name

historic Baker, James B., House

and/or common Baker House

2. Location

street & number 452 West Bel Air Avenue N/A not for publication

city, town Aberdeen vicinity of congressional district First

state Maryland code 24 county Harford code 025

3. Classification

| Category | Ownership | Status | Present Use |
|---|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> district | <input type="checkbox"/> public | <input type="checkbox"/> occupied | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied | <input type="checkbox"/> commercial |
| <input type="checkbox"/> structure | <input type="checkbox"/> both | <input type="checkbox"/> work in progress | <input type="checkbox"/> educational |
| <input type="checkbox"/> site | Public Acquisition | Accessible | <input type="checkbox"/> entertainment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> object | <input type="checkbox"/> in process | <input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted | <input type="checkbox"/> government |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> being considered | <input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted | <input type="checkbox"/> industrial |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no | <input type="checkbox"/> military |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> museum |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> park |
| | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> religious |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> scientific |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> other: |

4. Owner of Property

name David W. Walden

street & number 452 West Bel Air Avenue

city, town Aberdeen vicinity of state Maryland 21001

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Harford County Courthouse

street & number Main Street

city, town Bel Air state Maryland 21001

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Maryland Historical Trust
Historic Sites Inventory has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date October 1980 federal state county local

depository for survey records Maryland Historical Trust, 21 State Circle

city, town Annapolis state Maryland 21401

7. Description

HA-1559

| | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| Condition | | Check one | Check one |
| <input type="checkbox"/> excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good | <input type="checkbox"/> ruins | <input type="checkbox"/> altered | <input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fair | <input type="checkbox"/> unexposed | | |

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

DESCRIPTION SUMMARY

The James B. Baker house is a large three story frame residence constructed in 1896 in the Queen Anne style. It is irregular in plan and form, with multiple gables, projections, dormers, and balconies enlivening its essentially square form and high hipped roof. The ground story is sheathed with clapboards, with applied vertical boards at corners and openings; the upper stories are clad in fishscale shingles. A one-story porch wraps around part of the north and east facades; second and third-story porches appear on the north and south. A truncated turret adorns the northeast corner, and a three-sided bay window rises the full height of the east facade. Double-hung windows have a large pane surrounded by eight small lights in the upper sash. The interior retains virtually all its ornament unaltered and in good condition, including oak baseboards, cornices, architraves, and chair rail, paneled doors and staircase, elaborate fireplace surrounds and overmantels. Ornate windows of leaded and colored glass light the stair landings.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The James B. Baker House, located at 452 West Bel Air Avenue in Aberdeen, Harford County, Maryland, is a large three story frame residence constructed in 1896 in the Queen Anne style. The house displays the irregular plan and massing, complex roof form, variety of textures, and elaborate interior and exterior ornament which typify the style. The form of the house is based on a cube with a high hipped roof, but this essential form is obscured and enlivened by a myriad of projecting bays, gables, balconies, and dormers.

The ground story of the building is sheathed with clapboards, with applied vertical boards at corners and openings suggesting the underlying framing. The upper stories are clad in fishscale shingles. A one-story porch supported on paired columns runs halfway across the principal (north) facade and wraps around the east side. On the northeast corner, a gable-roofed projection comprises a truncated turret which terminates in a third-floor balcony. Second-story porches, accessible through tall windows, appear on the north and south facades. A three-sided bay window rises the full height of the east facade, and is capped by a jerkinhead extension of a broad cross gable. Windows throughout the house have Queen Anne style sash, with one or two large clear panes in the lower sash and a large pane surrounded by eight small lights in the upper sash. Three tall chimneys rise above the steeply-hipped roof; the roof ridge has decorative cresting and finials.

The double entrance doors, decorated with multiple lights of colored glass, open into a small vestibule, which leads to a wide central hall flanked by the living room on the west and parlor and dining room separated by sliding doors on the east. Behind the living room is the stair hall. To the rear of the house is the kitchen, pantry and servants' stair. The main paneled staircase has ornate leaded and colored glass at the landings between the two upper floors. Over the living room is a bedroom and bath. On the east are bedrooms with the

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

HA-1559

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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received **OCT 28 1982**
date entered

Continuation sheet Baker, James B., House, Aberdeen
Harford County, Maryland Item number 7 Page 1

GENERAL DESCRIPTION (Continued)

master bedroom over the dining room. Long windows in some bedrooms allow access to second and third floor porches. Servants quarters are to the rear of the second floor. On the third floor are storage rooms and bedrooms.

The interior of the Baker house retains virtually all its original ornament. The typical Queen Anne oak woodwork, including baseboards, cornices, paneled doors, architraves, and chair rails, is intact, mostly unpainted, and well-maintained. Each of the several fireplaces has brightly-colored glazed tile surrounding the opening. The oak mantels are elaborate and have integral overmantel mirrors, applied carved decoration, and miscellaneous shelves. In the living room the mantel is supported by stylized Ionic columns. The large mirror is flanked by panels and candle stands. Its carved decoration is typical Queen Anne with sunburst and garlands. The parlor has the most elaborate mantelpiece with a beveled mirror in the center flanked by two smaller mirrors over carved panels. Fireplaces on the second floor are similar but less ornate. The stair has a large square newel supporting a figurine holding an electrically lit torch. The string is heavily molded and stocky; closely set balusters support the handrail. On the first floor there is some spindle work over doorways and mantels. Throughout the house are original radiators and interior shutters.

Two outbuildings contemporaneous with the house remain on the property. The stable/carriage house, 24' X 58' overall, is two stories in height with two large ventilators on the ridge of its gable roof. Behind the stable is an unidentified 1½ story structure measuring 14' X 18'. Both are of frame construction with board-and-batten siding.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The house and outbuildings stand on two city lots, comprising 1.59 acres in total.

8. Significance

| Period | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below | | | |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> community planning | <input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> religion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499 | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic | <input type="checkbox"/> conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> law | <input type="checkbox"/> science |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599 | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> economics | <input type="checkbox"/> literature | <input type="checkbox"/> sculpture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> education | <input type="checkbox"/> military | <input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799 | <input type="checkbox"/> art | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> music | <input type="checkbox"/> theater |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900- | <input type="checkbox"/> communications | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government | <input type="checkbox"/> other (specify) |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> invention | | |

Specific dates 1896 **Builder/Architect** unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Applicable Criteria: B and C

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

The significance of the James B. Baker House in Aberdeen, Harford County, derives from two sources. First, as the residence of James B. Baker, a leading entrepreneur in the canning industry and a son of Harford County's pioneer canner, the house is associated with the life of a person who figured prominently in an industry that was a major factor in the economic development of Harford County in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Secondly, the James B. Baker house is significant for its architecture: as a provincial example of the Queen Anne style which was commonly associated in the late 19th century with high-status, urban properties, it expresses the prosperity which the canning industry brought to the Baker family and to the community of Aberdeen. The house embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Queen Anne style in its irregular massing, complex roof form, variety of siding textures, stained and leaded glass, and interior ornament. It is in good condition and remains essentially unaltered, and as such is probably the best surviving example of a large Queen Anne residence in Harford County.

HISTORY AND SUPPORT

From 1880 through the beginning of World War I, canning of fruits and vegetables was the third most important industry in Maryland. (Walsh and Fox, p. 403). Harford was one of the counties which led the state in the industry. George T. Baker (James B. Baker's father) is credited with establishing the canning industry in Harford County; he built the first canning house in the county in 1867, and recorded a production of 900 cases of corn in 1874. During the next half-century, the canning industry grew rapidly, until over 50 canneries were engaged in preserving the abundant corn and tomatoes grown in central and southern Harford County. Each of George T. Baker's five sons owned and operated a cannery (Wright, p. 163). In addition to his cannery, James B. Baker (born 1845) owned a factory in Odessa, Delaware, and two farms nearby; he was also Aberdeen's first postmaster.

