NPS Form 10-900 (Rev. 10-90)

1. Name of Property

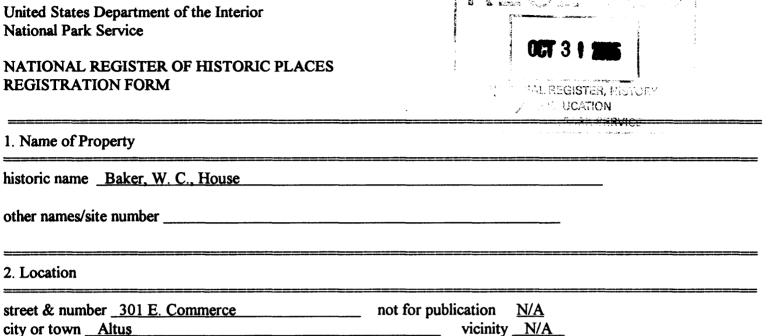
city or town Altus

2. Location

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES **REGISTRATION FORM**

state Oklahoma code OK county Jackson code 065 zip code 73522



OMB No. 1024-0018

3. State/Federal Agency Certification
As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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 \(\frac{\text{\text{M}}}{\text{meets}} \) meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide _\(\frac{\text{\text{N}}}{\text{N}} \) locally. (\(\frac{\text{N}/\text{\text{A}}}{\text{See}} \) continuation sheet for additional comments.)
10-2405
Signature of certifying official Date
Oklahoma Historical Society, SHPO 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 commenting or other official Date
State or Federal agency and bureau
4. 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): other (explain):
Signature of Keeper Date of Action

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form Baker, W. C., House Jackson County, Oklahoma	Page 3
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 Contributing Noncontributing buildings sites structures objects Total	
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0	

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

N/A

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6. Function or Use	
Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions) Cat: DOMESTIC Sub: Single Dwelling COMMERCE/TRADE Professional	
Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions) Cat: DOMESTIC Sub: Single Dwelling	
7. Description	
Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions) LATE 19 TH & EARLY 20 TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: Craftsman (Airplane Bungalow)	
Materials (Enter categories from instructions) foundation CONCRETE roof ASPHALT walls STUCCO	

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

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form Baker, W. C., House Jackson County, Oklahoma	Page 5
8. Statement of Significance	
Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or mor National Register listing)	e boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for
A Property is associated with events that have made a significant history.	cant contribution to the broad patterns of our
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significan	t in our past.
X C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or whose components lack individual distinction.	•
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information imp	portant in prehistory or history.
Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)	
A owned by a religious institution or used for religious pu	rposes.
B removed from its original location.	
C a birthplace or a 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

Period of Significance <u>C. 1917</u>

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8. Statement of Significance (Continued)	
Significant Dates	
Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)	
Cultural Affiliation	
Architect/Builder UNKNOWN	
Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation	sheets.)
9. Major Bibliographical References	
(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 _X_ State Historic Preservation Office Other State agency Federal agency Local government University Other Name of repository:	

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form Baker, W. C., House Jackson County, Oklahoma	Page ?
10. Geographical Data	
Acreage of Property <u>less than 1</u>	
UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)	
Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing 1 14 469710 3832880 3	
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 M. Brett Baker and Jim Gabbert, architectural historian	
organization date <u>8/31/05</u>	
street & number 301 E. Commerce telephone (580) 477-4227	
city or town Altus state OK zip code 73522	
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)	

Baker, W. C., House Jackson County, Oklahoma	Page 8
Property Owner	
(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)	
name M. Brett Baker	
street & number 301 E. Commerce telephone (580) 477-4227	
city or town Altus state OK zip code 73522	

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

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Baker, W. C., House
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The W. C. Baker House is located on the northeast corner of East Commerce Avenue and North Spurgeon Street. The house faces south and there are sidewalks on both streets. To the west, Commerce Avenue leads to the commercial core of Altus and there are a number of newer business buildings lining the street. To the east, Commerce Avenue is wholly residential, as is Spurgeon Street to the north and south of the Baker House. The houses in the area typically date from 1910 to 1930 and are set back off the street on wide lots. Typically, there are five houses per block. The topography is level and there are numerous mature trees throughout the area. The Baker House is a two-story, stuccoed Airplane Bungalow with multiple rooflines. It features original windows and doors and an intact interior. It exhibits the classic elements of the Craftsman style, including exposed rafters, battered columns, and ribbon windows. There are two small outbuildings, including a small garage behind the house.

Description

The Baker home is a two story, large grain concrete house built circa 1917 of the Airplane Bungalow/Craftsman design located near the heart of downtown Altus, Oklahoma. This home represents the epitome of the Airplane Bungalow in Altus. The interior and exterior possess a high degree of integrity. Most prominent are the gables, grand front porch, and forty four windows that adorn the house. American Elm trees surround the property and enhance its beauty.

As an Airplane Bungalow, the house is defined by the unique roofline. The low-pitched gables of the main body of the house are surmounted by a second story monitor – a room rising out of the core of the house a full second story. This room also has a low-pitched gabled roof with wide overhanging eaves. The rafters are exposed, as is the roof decking. Three roof beams are exposed on the gable end, one at the ridge and those that would be the wall plates. There is a raking fascia board through which these beams are let. On the front elevation, the main roof of the house features an offset gable to the east and an offset projecting porch to the west. The main gable and the offset gable each have details similar to the monitor roof. The porch and its roof are more elaborate, with ornamental stick-work in the gable, and is a focal point of the house.

The large (ten ft. by twenty ft.) porch contains two stuccoed piers with battered columns at the corners. The piers are six foot six inches and are capped with concrete capstones that overhang the top of the pier; the battered wooden columns are three foot six inches in height. The piers and columns support a single 23' header beam that spans the width of the porch. The header, in turn, supports open stickwork in the gable. The roof has exposed purlins and beams. The porch floor is concrete and there is a stuccoed knee wall across the front. This wall has a concrete capstone that slopes upward at the junction with the piers. The porch opens to the west side toward a two-track driveway.

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The front door is located in center of porch between two large, 5/1 ribbon windows. The walls of the house are stucco, with a rough texture. The main entry door is oak, with original brass hardware and four beveled glass lights. The windows and the door have simple flat surrounds with drip caps. To the west of the porch, under the wide eaves of the offset, lower front gable, is a tripartite window set consisting of a single 5/1 window flanked by 3/1 windows. A wooden belt runs above the windows, from the junction of the roof and the walls.

The monitor has four windows on its south elevation. These consist of two sets of sashes, separated by a 2' spandrel. The two outer windows in each set are rectangular 4/1 ribbon windows, while the inner windows are square, also 4/1. These windows are set at equal heights at the lintels, but are shorter to accommodate the slope of the main roof. A wide belt, or frieze, serves as a lintel that ties the two window sets together.

The west elevation faces Spurgeon Street. The front porch opens to the west side and driveway. Just behind, or north of the porch is a low cross gabled roof extension. Centered in this is an exterior stucco chimney that rises above the main roof to a height equal to the apex of the monitor roof. The chimney has square shoulders and is flanked by single sash, three pane windows. Midway down the west side is a trellised porte cochere extending out from the wall over the driveway. This trellis is flanked by two gables, one previously described and another, smaller one to the north. The trellis is supported by two piers with battered columns. These piers and columns are the same construction as the two which support the front porch. The trellised porch protects a large full length "picture" window with two full length sidelights. Apparently the large window was originally a French style door. The two original concrete steps remain in place today. The replacement of the French doors with a single pane fixed window is the only exterior change to the house and it is hidden below the trellis. To the north of the trellis, under the north-most side gable is a pair of 4/1 ribbon windows. The monitor has five windows, two paired sets of 4/1 ribbon windows are offset and a single, smaller window is off-center to the north.

The rear, or north elevation, has a small, gabled screened-in porch offset to the east. Screens cover the upper half while wood panels with hinged horizontal panels on the bottom walls for easy cleaning cover the lower half. Easy cleaning was no doubt important considering the property also contains an out-building which originally housed chickens and a cow. A pair of 5/1 windows is on the exposed portion of the wall, west of the screen porch. A single entry and 5/1 window opens into the porch from the house. The monitor's rear wall has the same configuration as the front wall, with four windows.

The east side contains eight windows and a side entrance door. The south-most window is 7/1, the rest are 5/1. The door opens to a hallway which contains a beautiful oak stairway with beautiful railing and fifteen steps which lead to the second story or "cockpit" of the airplane. Beneath the stairway is a door leading down to the basement which holds hot water heater, air conditioner and heating equipment and a large open area which was once used for storing "home canning" food supply and tools. The original cast iron coal burner vacuum furnace still remains in basement. The

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front of furnace reads, "Made by Boyd E. Rainey of St. Louis Mo." with patent date of December 21, 1915. The monitor has four windows, all clustered at the south end of the wall.

Interior

There are three bedrooms, a family room and a kitchen on the first floor, as well as a formal entryway, bathroom, and a screened porch. The second floor has two bedrooms and a half bath.

All rooms have oak hardwood flooring which is in excellent condition. All interior doors and trim are of golden oak. All door hardware is of original brass plates and brass knobs with exception of bathroom doors and northern most bedroom of which has original cut crystal design door knobs with brass plates. The main entry is into the formal living room. On the west side of the room is the original brick fireplace with lovely oak mantel flanked with built in bookcases of the same golden oak. Pristine ceilings in the formal entry area are of the "box beamed" design of quarter-sawn golden oak. To the east a set of glass paned, oak French style double doors lead to the master bedroom. The master bedroom closet and floor molding is of quarter-sawn golden oak. Inside the closet is a window offering natural lighting for the closet area. This closet has a pass-through doorway to a connecting bedroom, the second bedroom.

The entry to the family room from the formal living room is flanked by lovely golden oak columns. The family room ceiling is of same oak "boxed beamed" design as in the formal area. On the west side of this room is a large picture window (once a set of French doors) flanked by built in bookcases of oak with double glass paned doors. East of the family room is the second bedroom. Entrance is gained through either an oak door that opens to the family room or a second oak door on the north wall that opens into a hallway. The hallway leads to the east exterior exit door and also gives access to the basement. The walls of the hallway have two eight foot coat rails. On the north wall of the family room are two doors leading into the kitchen. One door opens into a breakfast area and the other opens directly into the working kitchen area. All kitchen cabinets are built in. The cabinet area is "L" shaped with four double door cabinets below the sink area. Above are two very large three and a half foot cabinets with a large, paired window at center. There is a framed opening from the working kitchen area to a breakfast dining nook with built in cabinets framing a window on the north side of room. Two more large windows compliment the west side of dining area. The northeast corner of the kitchen has an exit door to the enclosed porch area and back yard. East of the kitchen is the third downstairs bedroom. This room has two large easterly windows. On the north side of the room is a closet with window. The second floor monitor has two bedrooms separated by a half bath. The single small window on the east side lights the bath.

There are two outbuildings, a garage and a former outbuilding/apartment. The garage is located just northwest of the house. It is of stucco construction, with a front gabled roof with wide eaves. It has a modern overhead door. The garage is original to the house and is a contributing building.

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The W. C. Baker House is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C, as the best extant example of a Craftsman style Airplane Bungalow in Altus, Oklahoma. Indicative of the era of greatest growth in Altus, the Craftsman style is reflected in hundreds of small, frame houses along the residential streets of the town. A particular subtype, the Airplane Bungalow, stands out among its more numerous brethren. More numerous in larger cities such as Oklahoma City, the Airplane Bungalow is distinctive in its form, having a second story room centered above the low-pitched first floor roof. The W. C. Baker House, with the distinctive, low-pitched, multiplaned roofline typical of the Airplane Bungalow, is archetypical of the type and its unaltered condition makes it unique in the town.

Background

Altus is the county seat of Jackson County, located in southwestern Oklahoma. Jackson County originally was a part of Old Greer County, a disputed section of land between the Red River and the North Fork of the Red River. This area was considered a part of Texas from 1860 until the US Supreme Court awarded it to Oklahoma Territory in 1896. The town of Altus, though, had its beginnings in an 1885 settlement called Frazier, a promising settlement on the Great Western cattle trail. A flood in 1891 forced the occupants to seek a safer, dryer location. The name Altus was chosen for the new site, referring to the Latin word for "high place." The official plat for the town was not filed, though, until January 1901.

The area that is now Jackson County had first seen its wealth created through large ranches. Temperature and topography was ideally suited to monoculture crops and cotton became king in the area. Altus was at the forefront of this economic system. The large expanses of cotton fields also attracted railroads. The Kansas City, Mexico, & Orient Railroad received the first charter to build in the area and negotiated a deal with the townsite holders. However, it was the Oklahoma City and Western Railroad, led by Oklahoma City businessman Charles G. Jones, that first came into Altus in 1903. Running northeast to southwest, from Oklahoma City to Quanah, Texas, this line was soon absorbed by the Saint Louis & San Francisco (or Frisco) Line. The KC, M & O line, running north to south, did not come into town until 1908 and was later absorbed into the Atchinson, Topeka & Santa Fe (Santa Fe) line. The year 1910 saw the last railroad in Altus completed. Running northwest to southeast, the Hollis, Altus, and Wichita Falls line was absorbed by the Missouri, Kansas, & Texas (MKT or Katy) system. Three rail lines and a rich agricultural hinterland primed Altus for success.

During this period of railroad construction, the town grew. Between 1901 and 1910, there were twenty-seven additions to the original 160 acre plat. During this same period, the Twin Territories became the state of Oklahoma.

¹ Bryan, William; Grimes, Angie, et al, "Final Survey Report: Reconnaissance Level Survey of Certain Parts of the City of Altus," on file at Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, 1992. This context serves as the basis for the background history in this nomination.

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Old Greer County was divided into three new counties – Greer, Harmon, and Jackson. A county-wide vote in 1908 gave the county seat to Altus over neighboring Olustee. By 1910, the present courthouse was erected in the heart of the business district.

Supporting a population of nearly 5,000, by 1910 the town's infrastructure had grown until there were over five hundred buildings in the town, including cotton gins, compresses, and cotton oil mills. Old Greer County, of which Jackson County was a part, was the nation's second largest cotton producer and this trend only went upward. Wheat and alfalfa joined cotton as important products that were processed in Altus. The next decade, though, showed a consolidation of the town rather than a boom. Population numbers leveled off, although productivity in terms of agricultural products crept steadily upward.

Between 1920 and 1930, the population of Altus nearly doubled to 8,500 people. There it remained until construction of the Altus Army Air Corps (later Altus Air Force) base during World War II had a profound impact on the size of the town. During this growth boom, cotton production increased tremendously, peaking at nearly 250,000 acres of Old Greer County under production in 1929. The African American population of Altus went from just over 100 in 1920 to nearly 1,000 in 1930.

The first three decades of the 20th century saw a dramatic growth of the city of Altus. This growth could be directly attributed to the city's importance as a rail shipping center and an agricultural processing center. After the usual turndown of the depressed 1930s, growth in Altus could be attributed to the importance of the military facility located on the east edge of town.

W. C. Baker House

Around 1917, the W. C. Baker House was constructed in an area often referred to by locals as the "Silk Stocking District". This home is located in the original plat of the city of Altus. Once separated from the commercial core of town by other residences, it is now the first home on East Commerce at the east edge of the commercial area. It was and continues to remain the "entry" home to the expansion of the city of Altus. The first hospital in the city of Altus was diagonally across the street from 301 E. Commerce. Today the fire department sits in place of the hospital with the City of Altus Administrative Offices next door.

William Clarence Baker purchased the 301 E. Commerce home from his sister, who was the original owner. W. C. Baker was a prominent businessman and member of the first city council established in the city. During his tenure on city council, the town established its first library. He was the owner of Baker Machine Shop and Baker Cotton Gin. He inherited the gin from his father, William Urias Baker, who had been at the forefront of the cotton seed oil business.

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The Machine Shop building still stands on Pecan Street in Altus.

W.C. and wife, Marie had three of their four children after moving into in the home. The first born child was Dorothy (born in Hobart, OK), then Boyd, Donna, and William Baker (who were all born in the house). All the children lived in the home through their high school graduation and all later attended college. Their oldest son, Boyd "Pappy" Baker returned to Altus with wife Dolores after completing college at Oklahoma A&M with degrees in Agriculture and Law. He returned to Altus with his wife Dolores and son Michael Brett and opened a law office in the family home at 301 East Commerce. He was the oldest practicing attorney in the state of Oklahoma at the time of his death in 2001. The nickname "Pappy" came from a part he played in a junior high production and stuck throughout the remainder of his life. He and wife Dolores were well known for their expert dancing skills and life time commitment toward the support of the community and its growth. "Pappy" was an extremely active and talented man. His artful caricatures once graced the halls of Altus High School and one of Altus' revered Court Judges holds dear to her heart drawings he created expressly for her and the court. At age 70, he was still scuba diving and could be seen racing along the streets of downtown Altus on his roller blades. A man with great heart is spoken of and remembered today for his giving nature with contributions to the local college and his providing legal assistance pro bono to numerous citizens throughout his career. The home remains in the Baker family today. Michael Brett Baker, grandson of W. C. Baker and son of Boyd "Pappy" Baker and Dolores Baker lives in the family home with great pride for it's heritage and warm ambience.

Architectural Significance

The Craftsman style, derived from the writings of Gustav Stickley and the architecture of Greene and Greene in California, and influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement in England, was a reaction against the machine age standardization and the decorative excesses of the Victorian era. Of course, like most revolutionary ideas in fashion and taste, the initial ideals behind the movement were lost as the popularity of the ensuing style grew. "Honesty in materials and construction" was soon supplanted by massed produced, widely distributed examples of the decorative and architectural elements that characterized the design motif of the style.

Design elements typical to a Craftsman style bungalow include low pitched roofs with wide eaves, exposed rafter tails and purlins and often knee braces. The roof might have an Oriental flare at the eave. Walls might be rough-coated stucco or shingles or lapped siding or any combination. The bungalows have generous porches, usually a dominant feature of the house. Porch supports typically have a pier and post system. Floor plans are open, with builtins common. The typical bungalow is one story, although there are 1 1/2 story variants. Roofs might be hipped or gabled and are typically low-pitched. In many cases, cross gables or dormers add to the asymmetry of the typical roofline.

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By the time the W. C. Baker house was completed, circa 1917, the Craftsman style was at the peak of its popularity in Oklahoma. Literally thousands of bungalows sprouted up in the towns and cities that grew in the new state. The oil boom towns featured block after block of Craftsman style houses, the most modern of the day.

The Airplane Bungalow is a distinct subset of the typical bungalow. The Airplane Bungalow is defined by the second story, often a single room, that rises out of the middle of the plane of the main roof. The name is derived from the similarity in appearance to a biplane of the day. The low-pitched, wide-eaved roofs give the appearance of an airplane's wings, with the second story (sometimes referred to as a monitor) acting as a sort of cabin or cockpit. The second story room is generally used as a sleeping room. The location, above the usual reach of insects, is analogous to the more common sleeping porch. The typical Airplane Bungalow sleeping room makes use of the four exposed outer walls by incorporating ranks of windows on each wall. These allow the occupant to cross-ventilate no matter which direction the wind is blowing.

The Airplane Bungalow is most common in the warmer climes of the southern tier of states. The sheer number of them in Oklahoma has led some casual observers to think of them as endemic to the area, but examples are found in northern states as well. Altus, located in the hottest region of Oklahoma, does not have as many examples numerically as does the much larger city of Oklahoma City, but as a percentage of its 1910-1925 housing stock, they are probably equal.

A windshield survey of Altus identifies few two story houses that display Craftsman influence. Apart from the W. C. Baker House, there are only five. Most of these are located within two blocks of the Baker House. Three houses (one on Pecan Street, one on Broadway, and one on Navajo) are full two-story houses, differing in form from the Airplane Bungalow. The other two houses are Airplane Bungalows that are similar in design to the W. C. Baker House, but lack both the stylistic embellishment and the historic integrity of the Baker House. An Airplane Bungalow at the corner of North Hudson and Sutherland has a similar form – a rectangular, gabled monitor over a front gabled main roof. The footprint of this house differs from the Baker House in size and complexity. The Hudson/Sutherland house has a simple rectangular footprint and is about 25% smaller. The façade shows a main front gable with an offset, lower porch gable and a side-gabled porte cochere. This house is perhaps the simplest example of an Airplane Bungalow in Altus. It has minor integrity issues, most notably window openings on the front of the monitor that have been covered. The second Airplane Bungalow is located at 501 East Walnut. This example has rectangular monitor, a single main roof and an offset porch. The walls are stucco on the monitor and the gables, and random ashlar stone on the main body of the house. There appear to be some modifications to the first floor windows, but all in all, this is a good example of the type, albeit a bit smaller than the Baker House.

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The W. C. Baker House, with its multiple front gables, heavy pier and battered post porch supports, banded windows, and exposed roof frame is a prime example of the Craftsman style applied to the Airplane Bungalow type of house. Its stylistic embellishments, both interior and exterior, are archetypical of the style during the height of its popularity. In the universe of Craftsman style houses in Altus, there are few extant examples that could be considered Airplane Bungalows. Of these, the W. C. Baker House is the largest, most detailed example. It retains a high degree of historic integrity of location, design, materials, feeling, workmanship, and association. Its integrity of setting has only been compromised by the creep of commercial construction to the west, in what was formerly a residential area. Still, to the north, south, and west of the house, the neighborhood is intact. The W. C. Baker House is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C, as the best example of a Craftsman style Airplane Bungalow in Altus, Oklahoma.

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Morris, John W., Charles R. Goins, and Edwin C McReynolds. <u>Historical Atlas of Oklahoma</u>, 3rd Edition. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press. 1986.

Phillips, Steven J., Old House Dictionary. Washington DC: Preservation Press. 1994.

Sanborn Map Company. Philadelphia, PA. "Altus, Oklahoma." March, 1914; May, 1920; June, 1930.

Verbal Boundary Description

All of lot 7 and the west half of lot 8, block 18, Original Town plat of Altus.

Boundary Justification

Contains the entirety of the property historically associated with the W. C. Baker House.