

OF FAIRHOPE, AL.
(Multiple Resource)Owner: Paula Baker
63 Church Street
Fairhope, Al. 36532Historic name: Beckner House
Common name: Baker House

Location: 63 S. Church Street

Acreage: Less than one acre UTM: A-16/413/200/3376/660

Verbal boundary description:

Begin at a point 349.7 feet south of the southeast corner of De Le Mare and Church Streets, thence run south 66 feet to a point, thence run east 132 feet to a point, thence run 132 feet west to the point of beginning.

Date of Construction: 1906 Architect/Builder: E. D. Brann

Statement of Significance Period of Significance: 1906Criterion C-Architecture:

The Beckner Baker House is significant as an exceptional early example of a Fairhope house built for year round living where summer resort houses were the norm. Though other early houses survive (examples 10 and 12 Fels, 203 Fairhope Avenue) they reflect the vacation/resort environment (10 and 12 Fels). The Beckner-Baker House is also significant as a pristine example of the Fairhope house type, normally stuccoed during the 1920s such as 203 Fairhope Avenue.

Integrity:

The Beckner-Baker house retains its integrity of location, materials, and design. Exterior alterations include new concrete block piers covered by wood panel underpinning, stucco on the rear gable, a shed roof back porch added during the 1970s and a slate roof added during the 1930s. The house is at present unpainted and appears much as it did after construction in 1906.

Interior integrity is good although sheetrock replaces plaster in all downstairs rooms and there is no ceiling in the two rear rooms of the main plan. In addition, two square posts have been added for support in this area, delineating the space. The one story kitchen has been modernized and the shed roof back porch is recent. The fireplace in the NW front room has been redone.

The second floor integrity is good with original ceiling height, floors and walls. The original floor plan is preserved. Wallpaper has been added to the NW bedroom.

Description:

The Beckner-Baker house sits on the east side of Church Street across from Fairhope Elementary School. A large dirt playground lies to the south and a one story beauty salon to the north. The house itself is a one and a half story frame, cross gable, two by two bay structure. The front door is on the south half of the facade and a pair of 1/1 windows are on the north half. An attached hip roof porch with square posts and balusters covers the full facade. Paired 1/1 windows are in the gable above.

The south side of the house has a narrow 1/1 window (located on the stair landing) and a bay window with a pair of 1/1 windows. The north side has a pair of 1/1 windows to the front, a pseudo-Palladian window to the back and a pair of 1/1 windows in the gable above. The house has a central brick chimney with corbeled cap, slate roof and boxed cornice with closed returns. A one story, hip roof, frame addition to the rear serves as the kitchen. The rear gable of the main house above this is stuccoed. A modern shed roof addition is attached to the rear of the kitchen. Wooden walkways and rear sitting area are modern.

The main entrance leads into a side hall with a stairway on the south or right side. The basic floor plan consists of three square rooms and the hall on the first floor and three rooms and a hall on the second floor. Hardwood floors, four panel doors with original hardware, frame door and window surrounds, and baseboards are present throughout. Ceilings and walls are sheetrocked except in the two back rooms of the first floor where no ceiling is present and joists are exposed. The kitchen and bathroom are sheetrocked and have linoleum floors. The rear porch is modern with carpet and paneling. The second floor rooms have garreted ceilings, sheetrock, (plaster in the NE rear room), original doors and hardware and exposed lath in the SE rear room (a bathroom).

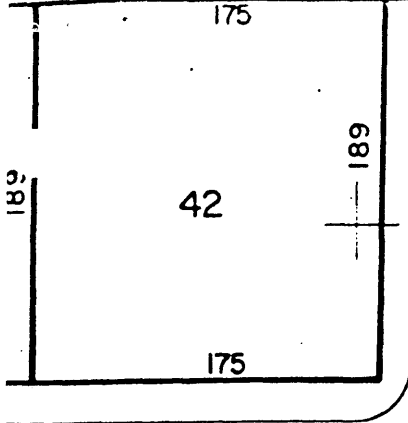
Historical Summary:

In March of 1905 the Fairhope Single-Tax Corporation purchased the De La Mare Tract, approximately five acres between Church Street and Section Street in the heart of town. In November of 1905 the Fairhope Courier noted that J. M. Beckner, his wife and daughter were planning to "get up a cottage on a lot" in the new tract. (Courier, 11/17/05). J. M. Beckner was a 63-year old Single-Taxer born in Indiana who came South to participate in the Fairhope experiment. He chose E. D. Brann, a contractor from Minneapolis, to build his new home. Brann served as local fire chief and had a good reputation in the community. By late January of 1906 the foundation had been laid and by April the house was finished. The Courier noted, "This is one of the most attractive and comfortable homes in Fairhope...and an ornament to the town." (Courier, 4/20/06). The Beckner's were in their new house only five months when the hurricane of 1906 struck, heavily damaging Fairhope. "Mr. Beckner's nice new home looks all serene from the outside ..." reported the Courier in an assessment of damage to the town. (Courier, 10/5/06). Nonetheless, some \$200-\$300 damage to the interior resulted from lashing rains penetrating through to the plaster walls. Since the 1906 storm, there have been no serious threats to the integrity of the house.

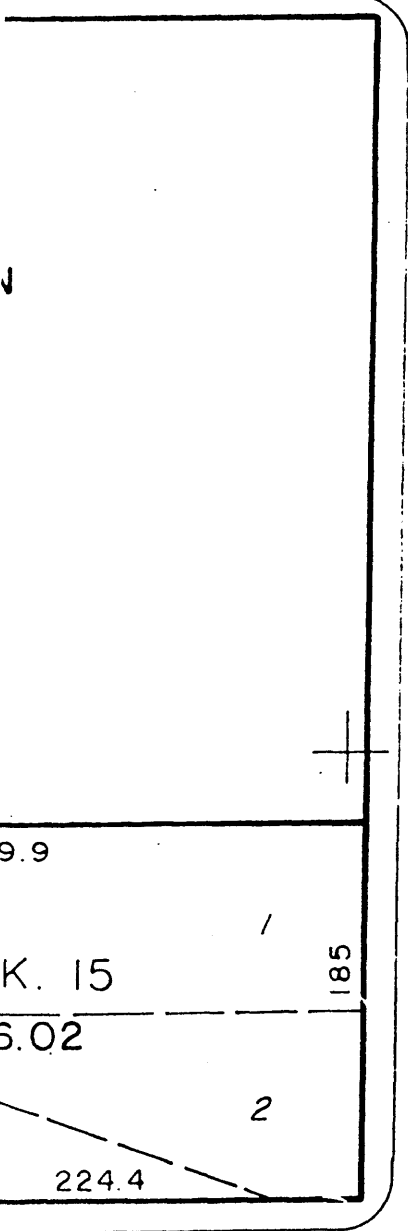
DE-LA-MARE ST. 60R/W

#10 Beckner-Baker House

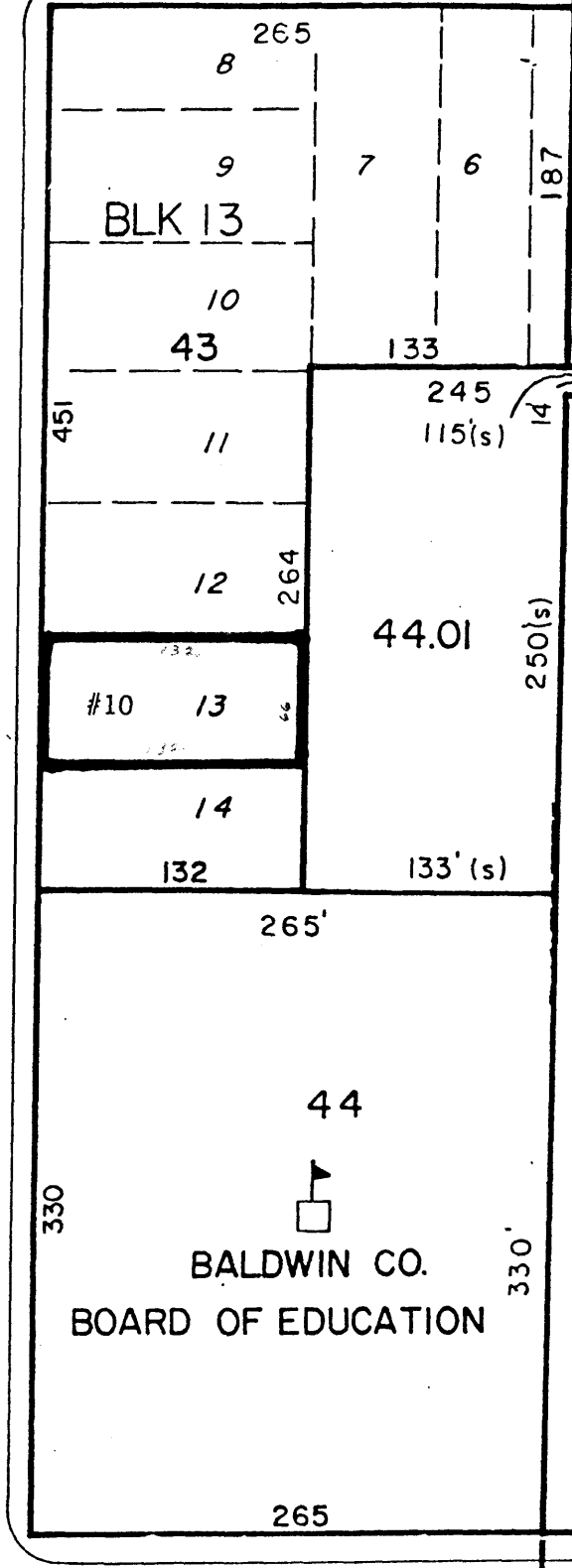
Fairhope, Alabama



R/W



AVE



60' R/W

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