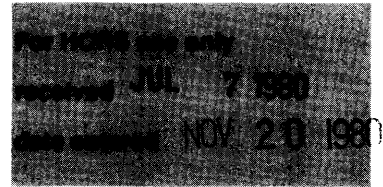


**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**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, I.G. House

and/or common McLeish House

2. Location

street & number 1604 Front Street _____ not for publication

city, town Fort Benton _____ vicinity of _____ congressional district 2

state Montana code 30 county Chouteau code 015

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> military
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input 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 City of Fort Benton

street & number 1204 Front Street

city, town Fort Benton _____ vicinity of _____ state Montana

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Chouteau County Court House

street & number 1308 Franklin Street

city, town Fort Benton _____ state Montana

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title State Inventory
Historic District of Fort Benton has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1968 and 1972 _____ federal state _____ county local

depository for survey records Montana Historical Society

city, town Helena _____ state Montana

7. Description

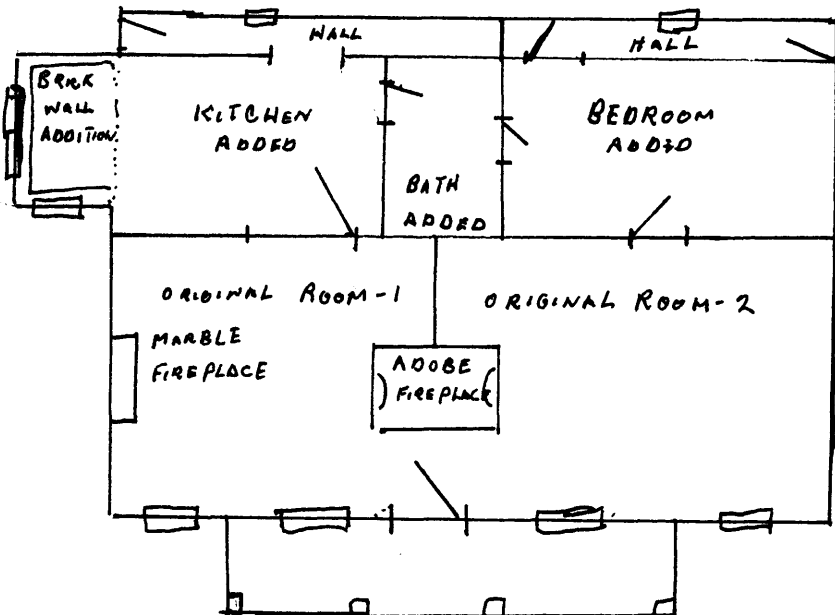
Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	date <u>November 8, 1979</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Situated on Front Street, the I.G. Baker House is a one-story four-room rectangular building of adobe covered with clapboard siding. 46 feet long by 38 feet wide, it has four windows across the front with a door in the center. It has a leanto or catslide gabled roof. A front portico extends almost across the front supported by four columns with a shed roof. An enclosed rear porch four feet wide has been added across the entire back which is under the main roof. On the left side the rear room has been extended five feet beyond the front to allow a window to face the front. Below is the floor plan showing the large double fireplace in the center of the two front rooms.

The original building was a two-room adobe building with four windows to the front, a front door and one rear door. The original roof was gabled with a very low pitch, boarded, then covered with sod. There was a large double-faced fireplace in the center to heat the two rooms. The first remodeling added two additional rooms to the rear of adobe and the gabled roof line was altered. The pitch was made steeper and the sod was removed; metal roof replaced it. The date of that remodeling is unknown, but probably occurred between 1867 and 1876. In 1876 the house again experienced remodeling with the addition of clapboard siding, shingle roof, and front portico; in the interior the walls were plastered, wainscoting added, stoves replaced the center fireplaces and a marble coal-burning fireplace was added to the front room on the left. At some time after this remodeling, probably after 1900, the extension of the kitchen was done and later yet the enclosed rear porch was added. The kitchen extension was probably the result of the addition of a bathroom between the two rear rooms since it was cut out of the kitchen.

Restoration has occurred on the house, with the exterior returned to the 1876 remodeling; restoration has not occurred in the kitchen extension nor in the enclosed rear porch. The interior has been returned to two periods; the room on the right is in its original whitewashed adobe walls with the adobe fireplace and original pole rafters of the roof (found under lathe and plaster in the rear room and returned to their original position) with the original roof line simulated under the outside roof. The room on the left is as it appeared in 1876: plastered adobe walls, marble fireplace on the south wall, lowered dry wall ceiling replacing lathe and plaster. The two rear rooms have undergone little or no restoration within their interior.



FLOOR PLAN
NOT TO SCALE

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 type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1867 - 1979 **Builder/Architect** I.G. Baker

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The I.G. Baker House built in 1867 is significant for its historic associations with two of the major mercantile families in Montana and in the Northwest. I.G. Baker and the Conrad family were two of the most prominent families to live and do business in Montana from 1865 to the 1900's. The house is also significant for the many historical figures who visited there and was the home of the first white child born outside the walls of the fort. It is also historically significant for being one of the first homes built in the town, and was constructed of adobe which was a very important early building technique used in the early settlement of Fort Benton.

The home was built by I.G. Baker, the last factor for the American Fur Company in Fort Benton. In 1865-1866 Baker and his brother George A. started a mercantile business in a log building along the levee. The following year his wife came upriver, so a two-room adobe house was built next door to the store for a residence. There on December 4, 1867 probably the first white child was born in Fort Benton to the Bakers. Earlier that year the Bakers entertained Acting Governor Thomas F. Meagher on that fateful day, July 1, 1867. Meagher ate his last meal here before going aboard the steamboat G.A. Thompson where later that night he fell into the Missouri and drowned. Through the early years of Montana's history many political and military figures were entertained at the Baker home as they arrived in Montana on the steamboats. This was the home in 1874 where the officers of the Northwest Mounted Police were received on their trek West and began the close association of the I.G. Baker Company with the Mounted Police. Baker and later the Conrad brothers called this residence home; the I.G. Baker Company grew to be Montana's largest mercantile enterprise through the 1870's and 1880's. For awhile it was also used as officers' quarters for the military at the fort, and later bought by the McLeish family, a large sheep-ranching family in the area. In 1972 the house was given to the Community Improvement Association of Fort Benton as a museum and since has had partial restoration by the National Park Service.

9. Major Bibliographical References

W.G. Conrad Account of I.G. Baker Company - "Great Falls Tribune" 1906
 Letter from Mrs. Benton Hall Pollock to Virginia Walter - Mont. Historical Society
 (Mrs. Benton Pollock is Frances Baker, daughter of I.G. Baker born in Fort Benton)
 "Benton Record" July 20, 1882; Nov. 7, 1879; Nov. 21, 1867; May 11, 1882
 Bradley Manuscript, Vol III, Mont. Historical Society Proceedings

10. Geographical Data

UTM NOT VERIFIED

Acreeage of nominated property Less than one acre

Quadrangle name Fort Benton

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	2	5	2	5	4	7	0	5	2	9	6	0	1	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing							

C

Zone		Easting				Northing							

D

Zone		Easting				Northing							

E

Zone		Easting				Northing							

F

Zone		Easting				Northing							

G

Zone		Easting				Northing							

H

Zone		Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

Westerly 22, 9 feet of Lot 15; all of Lot 14; north easterly 5 feet by 124 feet and south easterly 7.7 feet by 79 feet of Lot 13; Block 18 of the original townsite of Fort Benton

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state None code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title John G. Lepley, Curator

organization Fort Benton Museum date November 8, 1979

street & number 817 Main Street telephone 622-3278

city or town Fort Benton state Montana

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Marvella Steffy

title Deputy SHPO date originally report 2-21-80
6-26-80

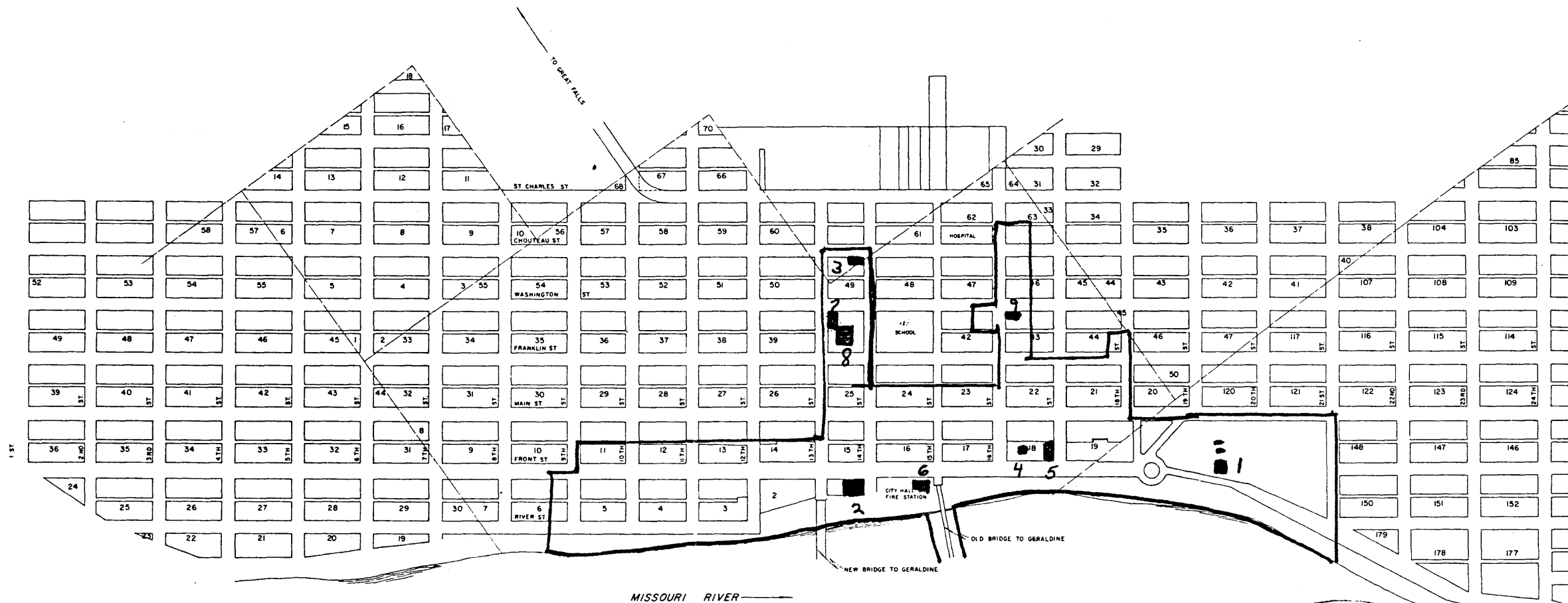
For HCRRS use only
 I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

John G. Lepley
 Keeper of the National Register date 11-20-80

John G. Lepley
 Agent date 9/17/80

John G. Lepley
 Chief

FORT BENTON, MONTANA



— FT BENTON HISTORIC DIST.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| ① FT. BENTON - HISTORIC LANDMARK | ⑦ CHOUTEAU CO. JAIL |
| ② GRAND UNION | ⑧ CHOUTEAU CO. COURT HOUSE |
| ③ ST. PAUL'S CHURCH | ⑨ HIRSHBERG HOME |
| ④ I.G. BAKER HOME | |
| ⑤ H.J. WACKERLIN CO. | |
| ⑥ FT. BENTON ENGINE HOUSE | |

