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SUMMARY

Located in Mountain Home, Arkansas, Baxter County, the Mountain Home Commercial Historic District is comprised of 58 buildings, one of which is individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places (Baxter County Courthouse, NR listed 05-26-95). Of the 58 (including the individually NR listed courthouse), 37 resources (64%) contribute to the significance of the district, while 21 (36%) do not contribute to the district's significance due to the lack of architectural integrity or because they were not constructed in the district's period of significance from 1892 to 1960. The majority of the buildings in the Mountain Home Commercial Historic District are representative of vernacular twentieth century commercial architecture. The significant buildings in the district retain their overall massing and setback and contribute to the historic character of the district, validating the history and development of Mountain Home, Arkansas, as a governmental and commercial center in its setting in the Ozark Mountains of north-central Arkansas.

ELABORATION

Baxter County is located in the Ozark Mountain range of north-central Arkansas. The county contains approximately 554 square miles and is bounded on the north by Missouri, on the south by Stone County, on the east by Fulton County, and on the west by Searcy County. The county seat of Baxter County is Mountain Home, which is located near the center of the county. Situated on a plateau in the Ozark Mountain, Mountain Home has an elevation of 820 feet. The city covers ten acres with a population over 11,000 in 2000.

The first permanent white settler in the area that was to become Mountain Home was around 1810. A post office was established in 1857 and named Mountain Home. The "Male and Female Academy" opened in Mountain Home in 1853, but was burned during the Civil War along with most of the houses and businesses in town. Mountain Home and the Male and Female Academy were rebuilt after the war with the addition of several new businesses. Mountain Home was incorporated as a town in 1888. With its central location and strong educational background, Mountain Home became the county seat of Baxter County when it formed in 1873. The establishment of a college in 1893 further solidified the town as an educational center. Baxter County business was first conducted in a store at the edge of town in 1873, then in a former boarding house on Main Street. In 1882, the first official courthouse building was constructed on land donated by local businessman that had unofficially been used as the town square. A second courthouse was constructed on the town square in 1890. A third story was added in 1910. Construction of the current courthouse building by the WPA began in 1941 after the fire-damaged 1890 courthouse was razed.

A description of Mountain Home in 1879 indicated that there were a number of frame store buildings facing the square on all sides. A full array of businesses and services were offered in downtown Mountain Home including general mercantile store, shoe store, blacksmith shop, furniture and cabinet shop, attorney, doctor's office, drug store, and restaurant. All of the buildings from this period were frame and none remain, having all been replaced with masonry structures.

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From the 1850s to the turn of the century, Mountain Home received all of its goods from riverboats travelling up the White River. In 1903 a railroad line was constructed through the small town of Cotter, nine miles southwest of Mountain Home, providing the means to transport goods. Mountain Home grew slowly, but steadily during the first decades of the twentieth century.

The years of the Great Depression were particularly hard on Baxter County which suffered a devastating drought in 1930 and again in 1931, causing many people to lose their farms and move away in search of work. The federal programs of the 1930s put locals to work building bridges and a new county courthouse. In 1941 construction of the Norfolk and Bull Shoals dams on the White River was begun. The federally-funded project was to provide flood control and hydroelectric power. Norfolk Dam was completed in 1944 and Bull Shoals Dam in 1951. Mountain Home greatly benefitted during the construction period, being located mid way between the two projects. The town boomed in the 1940s with workers needing goods and services and places of residence. The creation of Norfolk and Bull Shoals Lakes transformed the area into a tourist and recreational region beginning the late 1940s. The Mountain Home area has become most well known as a vacation resort and retirement community.

The Mountain Home Commercial Historic District contains 56 buildings in the historic commercial center of the city. The majority of the buildings in the district face the courthouse square on E. 6th Street on the north, E. 7th Street on the south, and S. Baker Street on the east. S. Main Street (U.S. Highway 62) runs through the city on the west side of the courthouse square. Other buildings in the district are located in the blocks adjacent to the courthouse square. All but two of the resources are located east of S. Main Street.

1890s

The oldest building in the district is the Baker Building at 601-603 S. Baker Street. Constructed in 1892, the Baker Building was heralded as the town's first "modern" store building. The two story brick building is located on the northeast corner of the square and features Italianate style brick arched windows on the second story, decorative brick corbelling forming a cornice on the front (west), and a stepped parapet on both north and south walls. Three buildings located at the south end of the 600 block of S. Baker were constructed c. 1897. These one-story buildings are of similar design in their use of rusticated cut stone walls, featuring stone headers on cornices.

1900-1919

Mountain Home grew as the nearby railroad line constructed in 1903 provided dependable transportation to the area. Four buildings from the turn of the century are located in the district. Buildings at 607 S. Baker, 609 S. Baker, and 615 S. Baker are one-story and of stone construction. However the facades of these buildings are covered in fieldstone rather than rusticated cut stone. The People's Bank Building at 10-12 E. 7th Street was constructed c. 1902 and was the first masonry building on its block. The rusticated cut-stone building features a slight Italianate influence with its arched window surrounds on the second story of its front.

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Two buildings in the district were constructed in the 1910s. The building at 700 S. Main was constructed as a general store. Located on the corner of S. Main and W. 7th Street, the one-story rusticated cut stone building features a parapet on its north side that steps down. Although the storefront facing S. Main Street has been altered, the building retains its original form and important placement on the west side of the courthouse square. Constructed c.1918, the building at the corner of E. 6th and S. Main Street at 1 E. 6th Street is also constructed with rusticated cut stone and features stone corbelling on its cornice.

1920s

The fifteen buildings in the Mountain Home Commercial Historic District that were constructed in the 1920s comprise 27% of the district. The 1920s in Mountain Home were marked by the construction of masonry buildings replacing the remaining frame downtown business buildings. The majority of the buildings in the district constructed in this period are one-story stone or brick vernacular commercial design. The building at 22 E. 7th Street, at the corner of E. 7th and S. Baker, is one of several in the district with a cut-away corner containing the main entrance. This building features a combination of rough-cut stone block and red brick and has a stepped parapet on its eastern side. Brickwork creates the appearance of quoins on the front eastern corner of the building. Similar corner buildings constructed in the 1920s with beveled corner entrances are located at 101 E. 6th Street, 701 S. Baker Street and 801 S. Main Street. Other buildings from this period are one-story simple brick or stone with minimal ornamentation such as buildings at 16 and 18 E. 7th Street that appear to be one continuous building, but are separate structures.

1930s

The T.E. Robertson Building at 2 E. 7th Street was constructed in 1936 as a general store. It is a two-story brick building, constructed in standard early twentieth century commercial style. The front of the building features an elevated central portion of the brick parapet while the parapet on the west elevation facing S. Main Street steps down to the rear. The seemingly simple design features some decorative brickwork, including soldier and stretcher courses as well as rows of header bricks, all in light buff brick. An inset stone panel centered in the building's upper front wall is engraved with "T.E. Robertson."

1940s

During this decade, business in Mountain Home began to change as construction of two dams near the town began. New business buildings on streets adjacent to the courthouse square housed needed services for the increase in population due to a dramatic increase in employment opportunities. Buildings in Mountain Home's downtown commercial district constructed during this period are largely one and two-story brick or stone buildings with minimal architectural detail.

The most important building in the district constructed in this era is the Baxter County Courthouse. Built by the Works Progress Administration between 1941 and 1943, the courthouse was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on 05-26-95. Located on the courthouse square, the 1940s courthouse replaced a 1890 brick courthouse building that had been demolished due to extensive fire damage. The Baxter County Courthouse is a three-story building with buff brick walls resting on a rusticated cut stone foundation.

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Designed by architect T. Ewing Shelton of Fayetteville, Arkansas, the courthouse building features some design elements of the Art Deco style. Although the building does not feature elaborate decoration, the use of marble on stringcourses, pilasters, cornice, and quoins add character to the otherwise plain design.

The Baxter Theater Building, located in the 800 block of S. Baker Street, two blocks south of the courthouse square, was constructed in 1948. The two-story brick building features the decorative use of brick on the façade forming large diamond patterns. The original entrance and ticket office was located on the north end of the front of the building and although the theater marquee is gone, the original recessed entry arrangement remains intact. The Baxter Theater operated in the building until the mid 1970s. The building has been renovated for use by a bank.

Two resources in the district, now occupied by businesses, were originally constructed as single family residences. Located on the northern edge of the Mountain Home Commercial Historic District, the house at 107 E. 5th is a minimal traditional style house with Colonial Revival features, built on a stone foundation. Next door, the mixed masonry house at 113-115 E. 5th features fieldstone walls with dark red brick trim on corners, porch columns, and surrounding windows and doors.

1950s

The population of Mountain Home had more than doubled between 1940 and 1950 due to the influx of workers during the construction of the Bull Shoals and Norfolk dams. The dedication of both Bull Shoals and Norfolk dams in 1952 marked a period of rapid growth in Mountain Home. The formation of Bull Shoals and Norfolk lakes transformed the area into a tourist and recreational center and business boomed. The largest period of development represented in the Mountain Home Commercial Historic District is the 1950s when 17 (30%) of the buildings were constructed. All of the buildings in the district constructed in this era are located in the blocks adjacent to the courthouse square on S. Baker, S. Main and E. 5th, E. 6th, E. 7th and E. 8th Streets.

The largest of the buildings from this period is the First Baptist Church at 216 E. 6th Street. The building was constructed in 1951 and features light color fieldstone walls with red brick trim around windows and doors. A contemporary addition to the rear (north) of the building was constructed in 1971. Situated in the middle of the block, the buildings are now owned by Baxter County and are occupied by county offices.

Several of the buildings in the district from this era are constructed of concrete block, but have fronts veneered in brick. The two story building at 510-512 S. Baker is of concrete block construction with stucco covering side and rear walls and a façade veneered in dark red brick with inset panels of large buff brick. Glass block and metal Hopper windows were introduced to buildings in Mountain Home during this period, but are almost always located on rear or side walls as seen on the 510-512 S. Baker Street building.

In general the buildings in the district constructed in the 1950s are smaller than the older buildings, but retain similar setbacks and characteristics. The building at 800 S. Baker Street is simple low, one-story brick

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structure with a cut-away corner entrance similar to several of the 1920s corner lot buildings in the district. The building at 813 S. Main was constructed in the early 1950s adjacent to an earlier building. Although 813 S. Main Street is a concrete block building, its setback, form, and storefront is similar to adjacent buildings.

1960 to present

Only six buildings in the Mountain Home Commercial Historic District have been constructed since 1960. Constructed in the early 1960s, the Century Tel Building at 503 S. Baker Street is a long, one-story concrete block building faced in dark red brick on the north, east, and west elevations and covered with a flat roof with projecting eaves. Other buildings from this period are simple one-story with brick veneering such as seen at 703 S. Baker. A recently constructed small brick structure on the west side of the 500 block of S. Main Street contains an ATM machine.

The majority of buildings in Mountain Home's downtown commercial district remain occupied and in good condition. The non-contributing historic buildings in the district have been altered on their fronts, but most of these alterations are reversible.

The most significant characteristic of Mountain Home's historic commercial building stock is the materials of which they are made. The most prolific material used is stone. The abundant local supply of limestone and brown sandstone has been used in the buildings of all eras of construction in the city's downtown with limestone being the most dominant. There is a variety of stonework in the district; cut stone block, rusticated cut stone block, uncut fieldstone, flat flagstone, and stacked river rock, all in a variety of colors.

INTEGRITY

The Mountain Home Commercial Historic District is a cohesive group of buildings that represent, in their appearance, the eras of the city's development and use of indigenous materials. These buildings possess integrity of location and setting in their original setbacks and configurations. With 37 (64%) of the buildings in the district contributing to its significance, the display of original building materials and design conveys the workmanship used in their construction and validates their representation of Mountain Home's development.

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Mountain Home Commercial Historic District Property List:

<u>AR Resource #</u>	<u>Property Address</u>	<u>Construction Date</u>	<u>Contributing/Non-Contributing</u>
BA0045	1 E. 7 th St.	D1941-1943	NR Listed
BA0025	621 S. Baker St.	c. 1897	Contributing
BA0035	601-603 Baker St.	c. 1892	Contributing
BA0156	415-417-419 S. Main St.	D1953	Contributing
BA0157	505 S. Main St.	c. 1922	Contributing
BA0158	507-509 S. Main St.	c. 1920	Non-Contributing
BA0159	511 S. Main St.	c. 1920	Contributing
BA0160	500 block S. Main St.	c. 2000	Non-Contributing
BA0161	700 S. Main St.	c. 1910	Non-Contributing
BA0162	706 S. Main St.	c. 1920	Non-Contributing
BA0163	801 S. Main St.	c. 1928	Contributing
BA0164	809 S. Main St.	c. 1928	Contributing
BA0165	813 S. Main St.	c. 1953	Non-Contributing
BA0166	503 S. Baker St.	c. 1968	Non-Contributing
BA0167	507 S. Baker St.	D1942	Contributing
BA0168	508 S. Baker St.	c. 1948	Non-Contributing
BA0169	510-512 S. Baker St.	c. 1948	Contributing
BA0170	511 S. Baker St.	c. 1920	Non-Contributing
BA0171	605 ½ S. Baker St.	c. 1968	Non-Contributing
BA0172	607 S. Baker St.	c. 1902	Contributing
BA0173	609 S. Baker St.	c. 1908	Contributing
BA0174	615 S. Baker St.	c. 1908	Contributing
BA0175	617 S. Baker St.	c.	Contributing
BA0176	619 S. Baker St.	c. 1897	Contributing
BA0177	703 S. Baker St.	c. 1928	Non-Contributing
BA0178	707 S. Baker St.	c. 1962	Non-Contributing
BA0179	712-718 S. Baker St.	c. 1940	Contributing
BA0180	800 S. Baker St.	c. 1950	Contributing
BA0181	804 S. Baker St.	c. 1949	Contributing
BA0182	806 S. Baker St.	c. 1950	Contributing
BA0183	808 S. Baker St.	c. 1950	Contributing
BA0184	812 S. Baker St.	c. 1950	Contributing
BA0185	109 E. 9 th St.	D1947	Non-Contributing

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<u>AR Resource #</u>	<u>Property Address</u>	<u>Construction Date</u>	<u>Contributing/Non-Contributing</u>
BA0186	1 st block, E. 5 th St.	c. 1950	Non-Contributing
BA0187	101 E. 5 th St.	D1940	Non-Contributing
BA0188	107 E. 5 th St.	c. 1939	Non-Contributing
BA0189	113-115 E. 5 th St.	c. 1947	Contributing
BA0190	1 E. 6 th St.	c. 1918	Contributing
BA0191	5 E. 6 th St.	c. 1928	Non-Contributing
BA0192	19 E. 6 th St.	c. 1925	Non-Contributing
BA0193	21 E. 6 th St.		Contributing
BA0194	101-103 E. 6 th St.	c. 1920	Non-Contributing
BA0195	115-117 E. 6 th St.	c. 1947	Contributing
BA0196	119 E. 6 th St.	c. 1963	Non-Contributing
BA0197	216 E. 6 th St.	D1951	Contributing
BA0198	15 W. 6 th St.	c. 1950	Contributing
BA0199	2-8 E. 7 th St.	D1936	Contributing
BA0200	10-12 E. 7 th St.	c. 1902	Contributing
BA0201	16 E. 7 th St.	c. 1920	Contributing
BA0202	18 E. 7 th St.	c. 1920	Contributing
BA0203	22 E. 7 th St.	c. 1920	Contributing
BA0204	100 E. 7 th St.	c. 1920	Contributing
BA0205	104 E. 7 th St.	c. 1920	Non-Contributing
BA0206	106 E. 7 th St.	c. 1950	Contributing
BA0207	117 E. 7 th St.	c. 1980	Non-Contributing
BA0208	14 E. 8 th St.	c. 1950	Contributing
BA0209	18 E. 8 th St.	c. 1957	Contributing
BA0210	101-107 E. 8 th St.	c. 1928	Contributing