

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Faulkner County – Conway
Reuben W. Robins House
508 Locust Street
NR 09/28/05

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Robins, Reuben W., House

other names/site number FA0323

2. Location

street & number 508 Locust Street

☐ not for publication

city or town Conway

☐ vicinity

state Arkansas code AR county Faulkner code 045 zip code 72034

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Cathie Marden
Signature of certifying official/Title

8/8/05
Date

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

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 certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

☐ 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): _____

Robins, Reuben W., House
Name of Property

Faulkner County, Arkansas
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in count.)

Contributing

Noncontributing

1

buildings

sites

structures

objects

1

Total

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

**Number of Contributing resources previously listed
in the National Register**

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/ single dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/ single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/Spanish
Colonial Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls STUCCO

roof CERAMIC TILE/STEEL

other

Narrative Description

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

8. Statement of Significance**Applicable National Register Criteria**

Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

☐ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

☒ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

☐ **B** removed from its original location.

☐ **C** birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance.

☐ **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.

Levels of Significance (local, state, national)

LOCAL

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

LAW

COMMERCE

Period of Significance

1928-1949

Significant Dates

1928-1949

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

Reuben W. Robins

Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion D is marked)**Architect/Builder****Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References**Bibliography**

(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:

☒ State Historic Preservation Office

☐ Other State Agency

☐ Federal Agency

☐ Local Government

☐ University

☐ Other

Name of repository: _____

Robins, Reuben W., House

Name of Property

Faulkner County, Arkansas

County and State

10. Geographical DataAcreage of Property Less the one.**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>15</u>	<u>551008</u>	<u>3882646</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

3	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

☐ See continuation sheet**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 Byname/title Brian Robertsonorganization date 5/03/05street & number 16 W. Rockwood Drivetelephone (501) 336-0905city or town Conwaystate ARzip code 72034**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

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name	<u> </u>
street & number	<u> </u>
city or town	<u> </u>
state	<u> </u>
zip code	<u> </u>
telephone	<u> </u>

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

SUMMARY

The Robins House is located in a residential neighborhood, part of Asa P. Robinson's Plan, in the city of Conway, Faulkner County, Arkansas, approximately 30 miles northwest of Little Rock. The house is situated near the boundary between commercial and residential areas in downtown Conway. It is located one block west of the Union Pacific railroad tracks. Built in 1928, the Robins House is a two-story, stucco veneered Spanish Revival building. It features all of the classic details of the style including a low-pitched red tiled, hipped roof, arched windows, and an enriched doorway.

ELABORATION

The Robins house is located on a corner lot in downtown Conway. The house faces west and is located on the east side of Locust Street. The property is bounded to the south by College Avenue. It is approximately a block and a half west of St. Joseph's Catholic Church.

The house was built in 1928 and is an excellent example of the Spanish Revival style. The wood framed house is covered with a rough stucco finish. The foundation is continuous and is made up of concrete block. The main body of the house has a hipped, red tile covered roof, while a wing off the south side and a projection off the east have flat steel roofs. The rear of the house also features two additional hipped red tile covered sections which tie into the main roof line.

Front/West Facade

The main entrance to the Robins House is located slightly off center of the main block of the front facade. The heavy wood ten paneled front door is flanked by ornately carved pilasters. A four pane transom window is above the door. Another feature of the entryway is a wood entablature which incorporates a painted wrought iron balustrade. Above the balustrade is a pair of narrow four-over-four double-hung windows.

On the lower level of the right half of the main body is a pair of eight-over-eight double-hung windows. Positioned above these, are two decorative terra cotta tile rectangular shaped insets. The second floor of the main body has two six-over-six double-hung windows.

To the left of the main entrance are a series of three staggered arched casement windows. These provide light to the interior stairway going up to the second floor. Below the highest arched window and at only about four feet off the ground is a six-paned casement window with a quatrefoil surround. To the left of these and on the first level is a ribbon of six-over-six casement windows. Above these on the second floor are two more six-over-six casement windows.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Off to the right side of the main body of the house is a one story wing with a pair of French doors leading out to a curved faux balcony. The balcony is trimmed with a painted wrought iron railing. Above the doors are two recessed semi-circle shaped decorative features. Inset on a diagonal are two terra cotta colored tiles. The roof of the wing has a series of brackets extending out from it in an effort to imitate a garden pergola.

Side/South Façade

The one story wing projects off the south facade. On this side of the wing are three six-over-six double-hung windows. On the second floor of the main body are two six-over-six double-hung windows which overlook the one story wing below. Centered between these two windows is a large stucco-covered chimney.

Also on the south façade is a second entrance which leads to the back of the house. At the top of a set of stairs is a small recessed porch with an arched entryway. Originally, the porch was much larger. Sometime during the late 1950s-early 1960s, the porch was enclosed to provide additional living space. There was also a second door which lead from the living area of the house onto the porch. This was closed off at the time of work on the porch.

Above the arched entryway of the first floor porch is a pair of six-over-six double hung windows. These were added when the second floor sleeping porch was enclosed in 1956.

Rear/East Façade

The left third of the rear façade is made up of the two enclosed porches. There are three fixed single-pane windows on the lower level enclosure. Above these on the second floor is a pair of doors leading into the area of the former sleeping porch. The porch was enclosed in 1956 and the space turned into two kitchens for a set of apartments which were created out of a portion of the second floor living space. To the right of the two doors are two six-over-six double-hung windows. Attached to this section of the house is a wood and wrought iron stairway which provided access to the former apartments.

On the lower level of the middle third of the rear façade are three six-pane casement windows. There is also a four pane transom window above each of these. And like the set of French doors off the front façade, there are also three more of the semi-circle shaped recessed decorative features with inset tile. On the second floor of the middle section are two six-over-six double-hung windows.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

The right third of the rear façade is only one story, and it projects slightly away from the main body. This portion of the façade has a flat metal roof. On the south side of the projection is a window that has been covered up. On the east side of the projected space is a two-over-two double-hung window. There was originally a larger window in this spot and the extra space has been filled in with panel. To the right of this window is a very narrow two-over-two double-hung window. And to the right of this is a doorway leading into the interior. The door is accessed by a set of stairs.

Side/North Façade

On the lower level of the main body on the north façade is one slightly off center six-over-six double-hung window. There is also a much smaller six-over-six double-hung window near the left edge of the main body. On the second floor is another six-over-six double-hung window. Beneath the flat roofed projection is a pair of single pane double-hung windows. There is also a small double-hung window which has been inserted into what was originally a space for a much larger window. Entrance to the cellar is gained by a set of stairs off of this north façade.

Integrity

The Robins House possesses a high degree of historical integrity and features many characteristics of the Spanish Revival style. The stucco exterior, red tile, hipped roof, arched windows, and enriched doorway are all classic traits of the style. Although a few of the windows have been replaced and the two porches enclosed, all of this was done on the rear of the house and does not significantly detract from its overall merit. The Robins House is a solid representation of the Spanish Revival style.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

SUMMARY

The Robins House is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion C** for its Spanish Revival style architecture. The house is an excellent example of the style, and is one of the few examples of the style in Conway. In addition, the Robins House is also being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion B** for its association with Reuben W. Robins. Robins, who had the house built and lived there until his death in 1949, was a prominent local attorney and later a state supreme court justice.

ELABORATION

The Robins House was built in 1928 for local attorney Reuben W. Robins. Born in Conway on May 21, 1883, Reuben was the second son of John W. and Minnie Freeman Robins. Reuben's father was a native of Shelby County, Tennessee, and moved to Conway in 1880. The elder Robins engaged in the lumber and sawmill business for several years before becoming publisher and editor of the *Log Cabin* in 1893. Reuben's older brother, Frank E. Robins, eventually took over management of the paper and served in that capacity for over forty years.

Young Reuben attended public schools in Conway before entering Hendrix College in 1896. At the time, he was the youngest student enrolled there. After two years at Hendrix, Reuben decided upon a vocation and transferred to the University of Arkansas Law School. While a law student, he was fortunate to be under the tutelage of the venerable Judge Samuel Frauenthal. During the course of his studies, Reuben also found time to serve a short stint as an editor for his brother's paper, the *Log Cabin Democrat*.

Reuben completed his studies in 1904 and was admitted to practice before the Arkansas Supreme Court in 1909. During that time, he went into business with his former mentor, establishing the firm of Frauenthal & Robins. The firm was successful for several years before Frauenthal left in 1909 to accept a position on the state supreme court. Reuben practiced under his own name for awhile before later partnering with George W. Clark.

From 1906-07, Reuben served as the Deputy Prosecuting Attorney for Faulkner County. He also served as secretary for the Faulkner County Democratic Central Committee.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

On July 31, 1909, Rueben married Miss Beatrice Powell of Milan, Tennessee. Miss Powell came to Conway in 1908 to teach Expression and Music at the recently established Arkansas Normal School (now the University of Central Arkansas). The two met while at a reception for the school's faculty. The couple eventually had two daughters--Beatrice born June 21, 1911, and Virginia born September 12, 1912.

Reuben continued to be a steadfast supporter of the Democratic Party. In 1910 he presided over the Faulkner County Democratic Convention and was also elected as a delegate to the state convention. With the outbreak of World War I, Reuben assisted his country by serving as Government Appeal Agent and also chairman of the Speakers' Bureau.

The new decade of the 1920s saw his stature continue to rise within the city and region. Throughout this time, he continued to remain active in many civic affairs by his support of various professional and fraternal organizations. In addition, Reuben also served as a member of the local School Board and city attorney.

Perhaps one of Reuben's biggest accomplishments as a Conway supporter was his part in keeping Hendrix College and Central Baptist College from leaving the city in 1929. At that time, the two schools were in serious financial trouble. The Methodist conference was considering moving Hendrix and the Baptist convention was contemplating closing that institution. Realizing the economic losses that would likely result from their departures, the Conway Chamber of Commerce proposed a \$150,000 donation to Hendrix with the stipulation that the school raise sufficient monies to qualify for a gift from the General Education Board of New York and that the school be permanently located in Conway.

After the Methodist board governing the college agreed to the proposal, it was up to civic leaders to find a way to come up with the \$150,000. Several weeks passed, and efforts to raise the money seemed destined for failure. At that time, Reuben, George W. Clark, and Frank Farris hatched the idea of issuing bonds against the earnings of the municipal electric system. The plan proved successful, and on May 6, 1929, the Conway Corporation was established. Reuben's brother, Frank, was elected the first chairman, and Reuben was chosen to serve as one of two attorneys for the new organization. In the end, not only was Reuben instrumental in saving the two colleges, but he also played a key role in establishing the Conway Corporation, which continues to this day to serve the utility needs of the community.

Reuben's acumen for business again shown through when in 1933 he assisted in organizing the First National Bank of Conway. Gripped in the throes of the Great Depression, the city had seen three banks close their doors, the last one going under in January 1933. As a result, the city was left without banking services. In April of that year, Harvey C. Couch, Jr., came to the city with plans to start a new bank. Local support was strong and on July 1, 1933, the First National Bank opened for business. Reuben was chosen as its first president, a position he held for five years.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 3

Though his status in the community would have certainly supported it, up to this point Reuben had eschewed any thoughts of running for public office. However, that is not to say he did not have an interest in politics. He continued to be active in the Democratic Party and in 1932 and again in 1936, Robins served as an Arkansas delegate to the Democratic National Conventions.

The bug finally bit him in the spring of 1942 when he announced his candidacy for the Arkansas Supreme Court. He was elected and served as an associate justice until his death on June 30, 1949.

With the death of Mrs. Robins on July 4, 1954, the two daughters (Virginia and Beatrice) took over ownership of the home. In 1955, they sold the house to two sisters, Jewel and Hazel Lasley. It is still owned by Hazel, and she continues to live there.

SIGNIFICANCE

The Robins House is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion C** for its Spanish Revival style architecture. The house is an excellent example of the style, and is one of the few examples of the style in Conway. In addition, the Robins House is also being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion B** for its association with Reuben W. Robins. Robins, who had the house built and lived there until his death in 1949, was a prominent local attorney and later a state supreme court justice.

Robins, Reuben W., House
Name of Property

Faulkner County, Arkansas
County and State

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Dolen, Doris B., Hattie Ann Kelso, Corinne H. Robinson, eds. *Faulkner County: Its Land and People*. Conway, AR: River Road Press, 1986.

Gellner, Arrol. *Red Tile Style: America's Spanish Revival Architecture*. New York: Viking Studio, 2002.

McAlester, Virginia and Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1995.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Conway, Arkansas, 1926, 1931.

Robins, Reuben W., House

Name of Property

Faulkner County, Arkansas

County and State

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 1

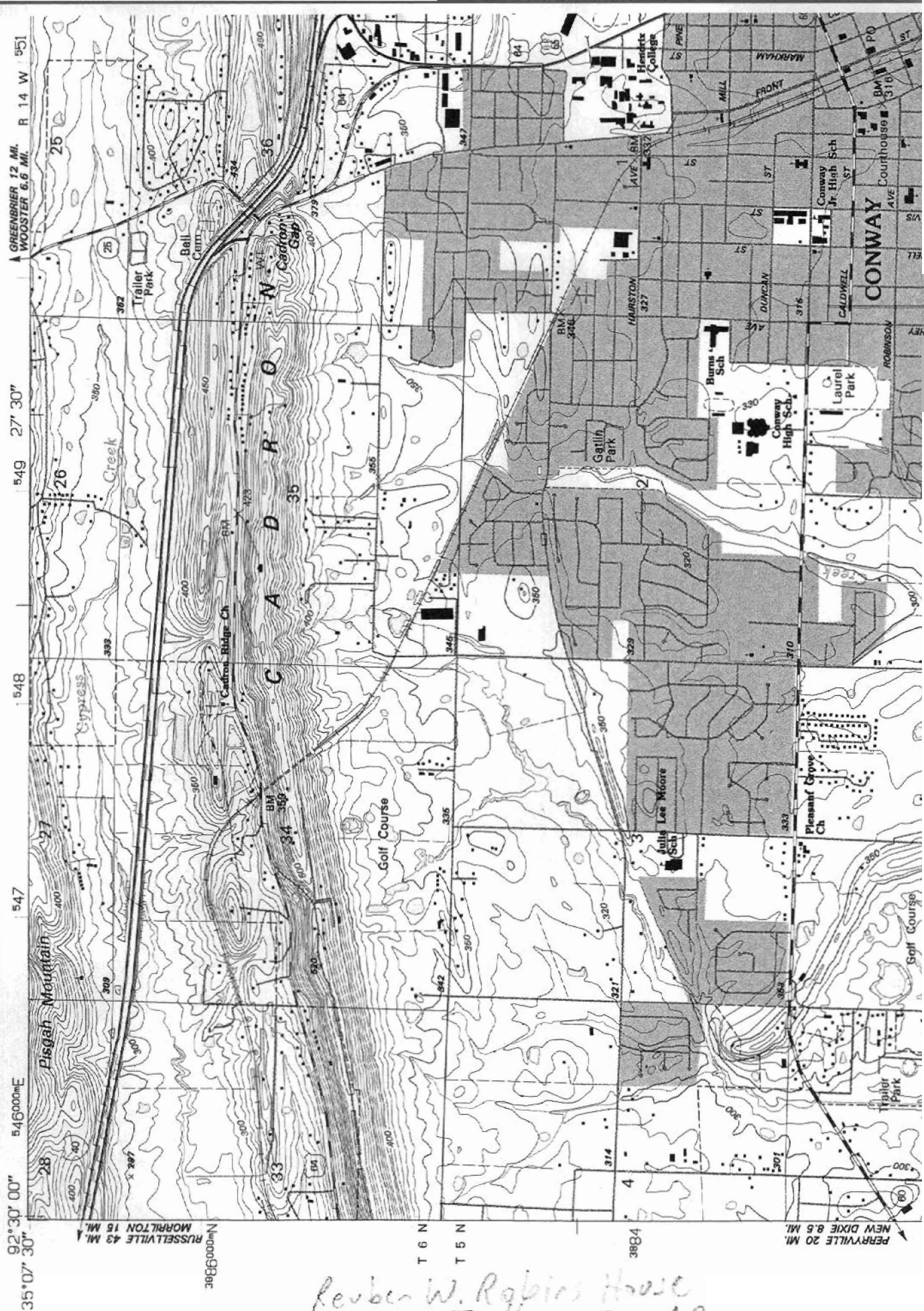
Verbal Boundary Description

Lot 24, Section 12, T5N, R13W.

Boundary Justification

The boundary contains the land that is historically associated with the Reuben W. Robins House.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY



Reuben W. Robbins House
Conway, Faulkner Co., AR
15/551008/3882646

