### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
**INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

*(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)*

#### 1. NAME
- **COMMON:** Walter P. Chrysler Home
- **AND/OR HISTORIC:**

#### 2. LOCATION
- **STREET AND NUMBER:** 104 West Tenth street
- **CITY OR TOWN:** Ellis

#### 3. CLASSIFICATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>Ownership</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
<th>ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Occupied</td>
<td>Yes: Restricted</td>
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<tr>
<td>Site</td>
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<td>Unoccupied</td>
<td>Unrestricted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>Preservation work in progress</td>
<td>No</td>
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**PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate):**
- Agricultural
- Commercial
- Educational
- Entertainment
- Industrial
- Military
- Religious
- Park
- Transportation
- Other (Specify)

#### 4. OWNER OF PROPERTY
- **OWNER'S NAME:** City of Ellis
- **STREET AND NUMBER:** City Hall
- **CITY OR TOWN:** Ellis

#### 5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION
- **COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:** Register of Deeds
- **STREET AND NUMBER:** Ellis County Courthouse
- **CITY OR TOWN:** Hays
- **STATE:** Kansas

#### 6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
- **TITLE OF SURVEY:** Survey of Historic Sites and Structures in Kansas
- **DATE OF SURVEY:** 1957
- **DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:** Kansas State Historical Society
- **STREET AND NUMBER:** 120 West Tenth street
- **CITY OR TOWN:** Topeka
- **STATE:** Kansas
The Walter P. Chrysler boyhood home located on West 10th street in Ellis is a two-story, six-room white frame house with horizontal lap siding. The house is accented by a white picket fence which encloses the entire property and by its intersecting gable roofs. Rectangular frame doors and double hung windows provide the first floor fenestration for the building. Second story windows are double hung and occur either in the gable ends or in small gable-roofed dormers. Two wood columns provide support for the shingled front porch. A cornice of small vertical wood bars about one foot in length and spaced six inches apart encloses the front and west side of the porch. Colored glass windows flank the main entrance door.

The only protrusions above the horizontal roof line are two brick chimneys. The house was originally built in the shape of a "T" with the stem running east-west. The porch fills in the space at the northwest corner. Two small one-story frame additions have been added on the south. At the southwest corner a lean-to was added to shelter the outside cellar entrance. And the second addition extended the "T" to the south to provide space for indoor toilet facilities.

In 1954 the house was refinished as it might have been during the occupancy of the Chrysler family. However it was damaged by a flood in 1957, and restoration work had to be repeated on the floors, walls and furnishings.

The house was purchased by the Chrysler Corporation, donated to the City of Ellis in 1955, and is now operated as a museum. A few original Chrysler family possessions are in the house, and it is otherwise furnished as a family of their means might have had it.

A barn and a small shed still stand at the south end of the property.
### 3. SIGNIFICANCE

**PERIOD** (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- [ ] Pre-Columbian
- [X] 19th Century
- [ ] 16th Century
- [ ] 18th Century
- [ ] 20th Century

**SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)** 1889–1897

**AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE** (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- [ ] Aboriginal
- [ ] Historic
- [X] Agriculture
- [ ] Architecture
- [ ] Art
- [ ] Commerce
- [ ] Communications
- [ ] Conservation
- [ ] Education
- [ ] Engineering
- [ ] Industry
- [ ] Invention
- [ ] Landscape
- [ ] Literature
- [ ] Military
- [ ] Music
- [ ] Political
- [ ] Religion/Phil.
- [ ] Science
- [ ] Sculpture
- [ ] Social/Humanitarian
- [ ] Urban Planning
- [ ] Other (Specify)

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Walter Percy Chrysler (1875-1940) was born in Wamego, Kansas. When he was three, the family moved to Ellis, where his father was a locomotive engineer for the Union Pacific railroad. It was about 1889 that his father built the two-story house which is now known as the Walter P. Chrysler Home.

Chrysler went to work at the Union Pacific roundhouse in Ellis at age 15 as a sweeper and engine wiper and a few years later began a four-year stint as a shop apprentice. He left Ellis in 1897 and in the next eight years moved from one western railroad to another, gaining experience and building a reputation as a brilliant mechanic. He demonstrated his administrative talent by rising to the position of superintendent of motive power for the Chicago Great Western railroad by the age of 33.

In 1912 he became works manager of Buick Motor Company, then the most important unit of General Motors. He introduced new processes and efficiencies into an operation which was still following the practices of carriage makers. After a disagreement with William C. Durant, the head of General Motors, he resigned in 1920.

After successfully reorganizing a faltering Willys-Overland Co., he was persuaded to take over the Maxwell Motor Co., which was in desperate financial circumstances. Chrysler reconstituted the company, and in 1925 it became the Chrysler Corporation. The 1928 purchase of Dodge Brothers was the last major development needed to put the Chrysler Corporation in a position to challenge the automobile manufacturing leadership of Ford and General Motors.

The house is significant only because it was the home of young Chrysler from 1889 to 1897. From a five-cent-an-hour sweeper in the Union Pacific roundhouse at Ellis, he became one of the leaders of American industry. Few if any Kansans have surpassed his accomplishments in the industrial world. Although Chrysler's achievements occurred in various parts of the country, it is his boyhood home in Ellis which has been preserved by local citizens and officers of the Chrysler Corporation. It is this house which today offers the major tangible link to the life of Walter Chrysler.
9. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES


10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CORNER</th>
<th>LATITUDE</th>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>SE</td>
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<tr>
<td>SW</td>
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</table>

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: One acre

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>CODE</th>
<th>COUNTY</th>
<th>CODE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

11. FORM PREPARED BY

Richard Fankratz, Planner

KANSAS STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

120 WEST TENTH STREET

TOPEKA

September 8, 1971

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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 National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National [ ] State [X] Local [ ]

Name

Nyle H. Miller

Title

Executive Secretary, Kansas State Historical Society

Date

September 20, 1971

CHIEF, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register