

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Davis, Howell J., House
other names/site number DA-OB-3

2. Location

street & number 3301 Veach Road NA not for publication
city, town Owensboro NA vicinity
state Kentucky code KY county Daviess code KY059 zip code 42301

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>1</u>	sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure		structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object		objects
		<u>4</u>	<u>1</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A ; See Note on page 8 - 1
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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 forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official David L. Morgan Date 6-27-90
State Historic Preservation Officer, Kentucky
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register. Entered in the National Register. Mark J. Baker August 3, 1990
 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:) _____
Signature of the Keeper _____ Date of Action _____

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic - Single Dwelling
Landscape
Health Care - Medical Office

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic - Single Dwelling
Landscape

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Greek Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete
walls wood

roof tin
other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1939 - 1940

Significant Dates

1939 - 1940

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Significant Person

NA

Architect/Builder

Roberts, Walter Scott

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

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

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 6.95

UTM References

A 116 491101010 4117651710
 Zone Easting Northing

C _____

B _____
 Zone Easting Northing

D _____

Sutherland Quad

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

Significant development has taken place around the Davis House in recent years. A subdivision has been built to the rear, east of the property boundary. A large frame Victorian farm house was removed from the lots to the north of the Davis house by its owner, and the lots sold to developers. Two large brick houses have been built on those lots in the last five years. Large brick condominiums have been built on the southern boundary of the property. The nominated area of 6.95 acres is the property which has See continuation sheet contained the significant resources since the construction of the main house in 1940.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Donna M. Neary date May 1, 1990
 organization Historic Preservation Consultant telephone (502) 456-2239
 street & number 1923 Richmond Drive city or town Louisville state Kentucky zip code 40205

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Daviess County, KentuckyNational Register of Historic Places
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The Davis, Howell J. House, (DA-OB-3) is located at 3301 Veach Road, near the southern boundary of Owensboro, in Daviess County, Kentucky. The property is situated approximately five miles due south of downtown Owensboro which is perched on the banks of the Ohio River. The nomination area consists of the entire 6.95 acres of the property (the original lot size), including the professionally landscaped mature trees and plants. Four buildings are included within the boundaries of the nomination area. The site contains four contributing elements: the main house, a dog shed, a stable, and the site itself. The servants house is a non-contributing building.

1. C The Davis House

The Davis House sits on a slight rise, protected from Veach Road by a screen of mature trees, spanning the approximately 412 feet of the front (western) boundary of the property. A curving, tree lined driveway from Veach Road leads to the house, set back approximately 500 feet from the public road. The line of trees continues in an easterly direction, the full length of the property, approximately 750 feet.

The Davis House, built in 1939 - 1940, was designed for Drs. Howell J. and Alice Whittinghill Davis by Architect Walter Scott Roberts of Owensboro. The one and one-half story, frame house that was modelled after an Owensboro landmark, and property listed on the National Register of Historic Places the Haphazard House (DA-157) built circa 1820. A landscape plan by Hillenmeyer Nurseries of Lexington, Kentucky, for the extensive grounds of the Davis House was developed simultaneously with the house plan. The landscaper worked closely with Alice Davis to develop the plans for the houses grounds. The original architects plans and the landscape plans are in the possession of the current owners.

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The Davis House was built on a smaller scale than the earlier Greek Revival Haphazard and there were some differences in the design. Whereas Haphazard had evolved over a roughly twenty year period, the Davis House was modeled after the finished product, borrowing the main features of that house and adding new elements according to the owners' tastes.

The Davis House is situated 94 feet from the northern boundary of the property, and faces due west. The house is composed of a central section, flanked by one story wings. The entire structure is clad in wood siding. No significant changes have been made to the house since its construction. The house retains an excellent level of integrity. One change to the rear porch will be addressed with that section of the house.

The five bay house sits on a full concrete foundation. A side-gabled roof on the central section is accented by lower, side-gabled rooves on the north and south wings. A full-facade entry porch on the main (west) facade displays a central pediment with entablature. A fanlight rests in the gable peak. Ten, wooden doric columns support the porch, which is fitted with a tin roof.

Central paired wood-panel doors are protected by paired wood-and-glass storm doors. A broken transom and sidelights accent the entrance. A variety of window configurations were used in varying combinations on all facades of the house. Four ten-over-fourteen double-hung sash windows, with wood panels beneath the sashes, flank the doorway of the main facade. The windows are fitted with wooden louvered shutters.

The main facade of the north wing is fitted with a single double-hung sash window and paired double-hung sash windows. The southern wing is fitted with two double-hung sash windows, one being slightly larger. All windows are fitted with wooden louvered shutters.

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Four evenly spaced pedimented dormers occupy the upper half-story of the main facade. Eight-over-ten double-hung sash windows rest in the dormers. All windows are fitted with wooden louvered shutters. Asphalt shingle roofing covers the dormers, the central section of the house, and the wings. Two exposed end chimneys pierce the roof.

The rear (east) facade of the house is similar in design to the main facade. A full-facade porch is supported by four doric columns. The porch sits on a brick foundation, which replaced the original wood flooring circa 1960. The porch is screened-in and a central wood and screen door provide access from the yard to the porch. A central wood panel door framed by a broken transom and sidelights provides entrance to the house. The door is flanked by four double-hung sash windows. A central pedimented dormer rests in the upper half-story, fitted with a central double-hung sash window, flanked by four smaller double-hung sash windows.

The rear facade of the north wing is occupied by two differently sized double-hung sash windows. The rear facade of the south wing is occupied by a central double-hung sash window. Two aluminum garage doors with lights occupy the area below the south wing. These doors replace the original wooden doors.

A wood-and-glass door with bracketed wood overhang provides entrance to the north side of the house through the wing. A double-hung sash window rests to the east of the entrance. Louvered vents rest in the gable peak, and west of the entrance. A louvered vent rests in the gable peak of the central section of the house. Three double-hung sash windows flank an exposed chimney. Two double-hung sash windows occupy the upper half-story. A portable air-conditioning unit occupies the westernmost upper-story window.

The south side facade of the house is composed of two evenly spaced double-hung sash windows on the wing, with a central louvered vent resting in the gable peak. Three double-hung

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sash windows flank an exposed chimney on the central section of the house. Two double-hung sash windows occupy the upper-story, the westernmost window occupied by a portable air-conditioning unit. A louvered vent rests in the gable peak of the central section of the house. A radio antenna is attached to the south facade, which extends approximately fifty feet above the roofline.

2. NC The Servant's House

The Servant's House is southeast of the main house. It was constructed circa 1942 - 1945 modeled on the main house. The one-story, single-pile, side-gabled frame house is clad with wood siding. A screened porch on the main (north) facade shields the entrance to the house. The easternmost end of the main facade houses two garage doors. Two six-over-six double-hung sash windows on the western facade are accented by louvered shutters and flower boxes. The rear south facade is composed of four evenly spaced double-hung sash windows. Two six-over-six double-hung sash windows occupy the east facade. No changes have been made to this residence since its construction, so it retains its original integrity.

3. C The Stable

The Stable is located near the southeastern boundary of the property. A one-story, shed-roofed board and batten building, it was constructed circa 1939 - 1940. The five bay stable contains a tack room and four stalls. Wood brackets support the roof. The building is in a state of disrepair, however it retains its original integrity.

4. C The Dog Shed

The Dog Shed, built circa 1939 - 1940 is located in the side yard (north of the house) approximately thirty feet from the

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house. The small, shed-roofed, board and batten frame building housed Mr. Davis' hunting dogs. Three evenly spaced two-over-two double-hung sash windows occupy the western facade. A wood panel door and two-over-two double-hung sash window occupy the south facade. A fenced run is attached to the rear (east) of the building. The building retains its original integrity.

5. C The Site

The site for the Davis House has changed somewhat from its original state. The house was originally constructed on land zoned agricultural. That designation remained with the property at least until 1961. 1 The house and its outbuildings were fairly isolated from other buildings.

Significant development has taken place around the Davis House in recent years. A subdivision has been built to the rear, east of the property boundary. A large frame Victorian farm house was removed from the lots to the north of the Davis house by its owner, and the lots sold to developers. 2 Two large brick houses have been built on those lots in the last five years. Large brick condominiums have been built on the southern boundary of the property.

Recently, the City of Owensboro has made plans for a roadway that will negatively impact on the Davis House and grounds if completed. The City's plan calls for a 55 foot wide road to be cut from Veach Road in an easterly direction to the eastern border of the Davis House grounds. The City is proposing to take the ground for the road exclusively from the northern edge of the Davis House property. If carried out this road would obliterate the entire line of mature trees which now form the northern boundary of the Davis House property, and could deminish the integrity of the landscape plan so carefully designed and executed by Alice Davis and the landscapers. At the time of nomination this landscape feature constitutes a contributing site.

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NOTE: The Davis House does not represent historic contexts defined in the Owensboro M.R.A. While the house has an Owensboro mailing address, it stands outside the city limits, the area covered by the M.R.A. (listed 3/28/86). The M.R.A. discusses architectural significance in Owensboro only until 1930, ten years prior to construction of the Davis House. Therefore, this nomination outlines the relevant historic context, below, as a means to evaluate the property's significance.

The Davis, Howell J., House, built 1939 - 1940, is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria C, for its excellent portrayal of residential architecture in Owensboro, Daviness County, Kentucky, during the period from 1930 to 1940. The house is a good example of Greek Revival residential architecture. The Davis House is executed in an exclusively Greek Revival style, rather than being an eclectic mix of Colonial Revival details, like many of the other Owensboro houses built from 1930-40. The choice by the architect, Walter Scott Roberts of Owensboro, to maintain a purity of design for the house is much less common in the Colonial Revival houses of the period. 1 However, the fact that the Davis House was inspired by an Owensboro landmark, the Haphazard House (DA-157) built circa 1820, may explain the single style choice of design.

Compared with other residences built in Owensboro during the period 1930 to 1940, the Davis House stands out as an exception to architectural choices of that period. The Great Depression of the 1930s led most architects to design simpler Colonial Revival house designs than had been seen previously. This trend toward simplification continued into the post World War II years of the 1940s and 1950s. 2 Modest inner city bungalows were also a popular choice of architects and homeowners in Owensboro. Moreover, Robert's design for the Davis House countered this trendy simplification, and closely mimicked the details and ornamentation of the original Greek Revival period, which occurred in the United States circa 1825 - 1860.

Colonial Revival architecture became associated with romanticized notions about early American lifestyle and architecture. The style had become associated with wealth and position during the first half of the twentieth century. 3 Drs. Howell J. and Alice Whittinghill Davis had the Davis House designed and built in 1939 - 1940, shortly after their marriage. Both Davis' were established physicians in Owensboro. Their situation also allowed Mr. Davis to select a rural site on the edge of town with plenty

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of room to house the hunting dogs that he trained, and the horses that he raised.

Alice Davis took personal interest in designing the landscaped grounds for the house. The house had been completed and most of the landscaping had been planted, when Alice Davis, a pediatrician, died in childbirth in 1941 with the Davis' only child Ann. By this time, all but the formal garden at the rear of the house had been completed. The garden was to possess a symmetrical configuration (consistent with the house plan) lined with shrubs and rose bushes. The current owners plan to complete Alice Davis' original landscape plan for the formal garden.

The landscaping plan included a vegetable garden, a grape arbor, raspberry patch, several varieties of fruit trees the large deciduous trees which form the boundaries for the property and small ornamental trees such as lilac, and forsythia. Some of the original trees have been lost due to lightning and disease. Some other volunteers have also added to the landscape. The original plan remains today with only few changes.

The house and grounds were designed simultaneously as an integrated plan for the future home of the Davis family. The house was maintained by the Davis Family until 1989 when the heirs of Howell J. Davis sold the house to Dr. and Mrs. Meldrum Harvey.

Howell Davis was a multifaceted man. The house contributed to Davis' adaption of the lifestyle of the country gentleman of an earlier era. Davis was an avid outdoorsman and hunter. He traveled the world to hunt wild game and fowl. He cured his own country hams, which he hung in the attic space of the house. 4 He also had an extensive woodworking shop in the basement, and he maintained the plants and trees on the property.

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Mr. Davis also had an office in the house for conducting physical exams for airline pilots. 5 An 8' x 10' map of the world is still mounted on the wall, where the doctor would presumably locate the destinations of his pilot patients.

Mr. Davis married Evelyn (nee unknown) in the mid-1940s. The couple had three girls over the next several years. Evelyn died in the early 1980s. Mr. Davis married Mary Ellen Triplett Davis, his sister-in-law, about a year after Evelyn's death. 6

Dr. Davis served as a flight surgeon in the United States Army Air Corps during World War II. He took his family with him when he was stationed away from Owensboro. During that time the house was rented out. 7

Mr. Davis died in 1987. His daughter Ann lived in the house for a period and maintained the home until it was sold in September 1989 to Dr. Meldrum and Mrs. Joan Harvey.

The current owners are anxious to preserve the house and the landscaped grounds. The prospect of cutting a road within forty feet of the Davis House threatens its integrity of feeling as a country house on the outskirts of town. The proposed demolition of the landscaped trees on the northern property line would have a negative impact on the original, cohesive plan laid out by the Davis' for their home and grounds. The house and grounds would retain their significance, but the site would be affected. The Harvey's are currently following all avenues to preserve the present state of their home, the Davis House.

The efforts to preserve the entire site of the Davis House are related to a tradition in the Davis family of action toward the preservation and conservation of the natural environment. The sister of Howell Davis, Grace Davis Rash formerly of 2100 Fredricka Street, protested the chopping down of a large tree on Fredricka in the mid-1950s for the placement of a road. When her verbal appeals were

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unsuccessful, she held off the highway department with a shotgun to prevent them from cutting the large old tree down. Following her show of tenacity, the highway department found an alternate route around the tree. The tree is still standing. 8

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Endnotes

Section 7

1

Peleske & Associates. Master Plan for the City of Owensboro and the Unincorporated Municipal Area. (Louisville: By the author, 1961) p. M-4.

2

Interview with Mrs. Joan Harvey, Howell J. Davis House, Owensboro, Kentucky, 1 April 1990.

Section 8

1

Virginia and Lee McAlester, A Field Guide To American Houses (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986) p. 324.

2

Ibid., p. 326.

3

Clifford Edward Clark, Jr. The American Family Home 1800-1960. (Chapel Hill, N.C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 1986) p. 187.

4

Joan Harvey.

5

Interview with Dr. Meldrum Harvey, Howell J. Davis House, Owensboro, Kentucky, 1 April 1990.

6

Joan Harvey.

7

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Joan Harvey.

8
Telephone interview with Ann Davis Nunemacher, April
1990.

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Section number 9 Page 1

Bibliography

Clark, Clifford Edward, Jr. The American Family Home 1800-1960. Chapel Hill, N.C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 1986.

Empire Collection Agency. Owensboro, Daviess County, Kentucky "The Friendly City". Owensboro: By the author, 1931.

Harvey, Joan. Howell Davis House, Owensboro, Kentucky. Interview, 1 April 1990.

Harvey, Dr. Meldrum. Howell J. Davis House, Owensboro, Kentucky. Interview, 1 April 1990.

Hayes, William Foster. Sixty Years of Owensboro: 1883-1943. Owensboro: Messenger Job Printing Company, 1943.

Lemaster, Stan W. Unique Moments in Local History. Owensboro Area Museum Board, 1970.

Nunemacher, Ann Davis. Telephone interview, April 1990.

The Owensboro Messenger-Inquirer, various issues.

Peleske & Associates. Master Plan for the City of Owensboro and the Unincorporated Municipal Area. Louisville: By the author, 1961.

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Potter, Hugh O. A History of Owensboro and Daviess County, Kentucky. Owensboro: Daviess County Historical Society, 1974.

Potter, Hugh O. Daviess County Sesquicentennial Historical Factbook. Owensboro: Radio Station WOMI, 1969.

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Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at a stake in the Veatch (sic) Road, corner to No. 3, thence S. 14 W. 6.25 gunter chains to a stake in the road corner to Hughes and Alexander, thence with their line S. 61-1/2 E. 11.37-1/2 chains to a stake corner to Owen's in Hughes and Alexander's line corner to No. 3, thence with line of No. 3 N. 61-1/2 W. 11.37-1/2 chains to the beginning, containing 6.95 acres.

(Recorded in Deed Book 584 page 236, Daviess County, Kentucky, Clerk's Office)

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Section number Photos Page 1

Photo List

1. Davis, Howell J. House
2. Daviess County, Kentucky
3. Photographer, Donna M. Neary
4. Date: April, 1990
5. Negatives on file with the Kentucky Heritage Council, Frankfort, Kentucky

(The above information is the same for all 18 photographs submitted with this nomination. Below the photographs are listed in the order of their photographic numbers.)

1. Southwest facade (main facade) of house; photographer facing northeast.
2. West facade (main facade) of house; photographer facing east.
3. West facade (main facade) of house; photographer facing southeast.
4. Northwest facade (main facade) of house, and line of trees on north boundary; photographer facing southeast.
5. Southwest facade (side and main facades) of house; photographer facing northeast.
6. Southwest facade (side facade) of house; photographer facing north.
7. Southeast facade (rear facade) of house; photographer facing northwest.
8. East facade (rear facade) of house; photographer facing west.

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9. North facade (side facade) of house; photographer facing south.
10. Southwest facade (main facade) of dog shed; photographer facing northeast.
11. North facade (side facade) of house; photographer facing south.
12. Northwest facade (main facade) of house; photographer facing southeast.
13. Western view of site; photographer facing northwest.
14. Western view of site; photographer facing northwest.
15. Northwest facade (main facade) of servant's house; photographer facing southeast.
16. South facade (rear facade) of servant's house; photographer facing north.
17. North facade (main facade) of stable; photographer facing south.
18. Northeast facade (main facade) of stable; photographer facing southwest.