

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 Hutchison, Joshua K., House  
other names/site number Elcan House

2. Location

street & number 124 North Church Avenue NA not for publication  
city, town Brownsville NA vicinity  
state Tennessee code TN county Haywood code TN075 zip code 38012

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>1</u>	<u>1</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>1</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: NA  
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register NA

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.

Herbert L. Hayden 6/6/88  
Signature of certifying official Date  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission  
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.  
 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:) \_\_\_\_\_

Alana Bryan Entered in the National Register 7-7-88  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)  
 DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)  
 DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification  
 (enter categories from instructions)

Greek Revival  
 Italianate

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation STUCCO OVER BRICK  
 walls BRICK  
 roof ASPHALT  
 other WOOD

**Describe present and historic physical appearance.**

The Joshua K. Hutchison House is a free-standing two story residence, with a rear one story ell, that is situated atop a low rise facing North Church Street at its intersection with East College Street in Brownsville, Tennessee (population 9,307). The structure was designed and built in a transitional form of the Greek Revival and Italianate styles for Joshua Kelly Hutchison (1839-1903), a cotton factor and politician in Brownsville and Haywood County. The commanding presence of the structure upon its site and its fine design characteristics have made it a recognized local landmark since its construction in 1868. The finely proportioned portico of the front facade, its construction of brick masonry as a local rarity, and the impressive qualities of its interior detailing - especially its fine ornamental plaster work - all combine to justify its recognition as a place of architectural significance in the community. Though the Hutchison house was once located in a residential neighborhood that grew up around it in the nineteenth century, the property now establishes a dividing line between the strip commercial development along East Main Street and the remainder of the residential area north of the property along North Church and East College Streets.

The land on which the house stands was originally a large suburban lot on the city's edge but it has been reduced to 16,875 square feet following two subdivisions of the land in this century. The lot retains only a few characteristics of its original landscaping including the original herring-bone patterned brick walk that leads from the principal entry to East College Street. Oak, magnolia, locust, and red gum trees complement the landscaping of the site. While the property may have included plantings of these types in its original state, most of those extant appear to be second growth trees dating from the turn of the century.

In general, the Joshua K. Hutchison House was constructed of load bearing masonry laid in common bond upon a brick foundation that is covered with a dark red-brown stucco. A notable feature of this construction is that the principal (western) facade was constructed with a facing of expensive, high fired brick, while the remaining facades employed only a common, low-fired sand brick in their construction. The effect rendered by the superior brick on the western facade is a refined, smooth texture, which is enhanced by the thin, flush mortar joints. The exterior walls are joined on the northern and southern (side) facades by a type of quoining.

See continuation sheet

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The roof of the building is comprised of low-pitched gables on both the main block and on the ell. The original roof was covered with sheet tin that was replaced by asphalt shingles early in the twentieth century. Currently, the roofs are still covered with asphalt shingles.

The principle (western) facade of the structure is five bays wide, centered upon its finely proportioned pedimented portico. The portico is supported by four slender Doric columns with fluted shafts. Deterioration of the lower portions of the columns caused their remodeling in the 1930s. At that time, the lower thirty-six inches of the shafts were cut off and replaced by brick and concrete piers. Using photographic documentation dating from around 1900, the current property owner has recently had the shafts restored to their original length. At the same time as the columns are being repaired, corresponding work is being done to repair or replace parts of the porch structure and flooring.

The pediment of the portico is undecorated, save for its S-shaped modillions. A wide modillioned and dentiled cornice is featured on the entablature of the portico and continues across the length of the principal facade before terminating at returns on the side facades. The entrance features a wide architrave surround that combines moldings common to the Italianate period. The door is set behind a paneled reveal lining. A three-light transom is set above the double-leaf door, which is detailed with elongated octagonal panels. Above the entrance is a cantilevered porch, decorated with an unusual treatment of thinly-sawn balusters or fillers. Access to the porch is gained through a single segmental-arched window that contains a 4 X 4 double-hung sash. The remainder of the front facade features tall, segmental-arched windows that contain 4 X 4 double-hung sashes identical to the window above the porch. Arched shutters originally flanked each window of the facade. The shutters have temporarily been removed and await restoration. At the foundation level, four oval vents provide ventilation to a crawl space; the vents are covered with decorative cast iron insets. A final note should be paid to the foundation of the principal facade. Here, the stucco that covers the brick foundation is scored in imitation of stone, unlike the plain stucco coating of the other facades.

The northern and southern (side) facades of the main block of the structure contain no openings and are basically unadorned except for the brick quoins and the cornice returns noted previously. These gable-end walls do contain the endwall chimney stacks for the four fireplaces found in the house.

The eastern (rear) facade of the house features a variation of the modillioned and dentiled cornice seen on the front facade. The variation is

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that the dentils are rendered in bricks placed horizontally in the upper courses of the wall, rather than in wood as part of a wooden architrave as is seen on the front facade. While the width of this facade is the same as the front facade, only three of the window bays contain openings. The remaining bays contain the rear ell. Window bays of the eastern facade contain the same segmental-arched 4 X 4 double-hung sashes as are on the front facade. A single story shed roof porch runs across the eastern facade and joins a similar porch along the southern facade of the rear ell. Two segmental-arched windows with 4 X 4 double-hung sashes face out onto the porch; at the northern end, a four-panel door set in a segmental-arched reveal was built to provide access to the central hall. The porch appears to date from the 1930s, but there is physical evidence evidence that an earlier porch existed in this area before being replaced.

The rear ell was built as a part of the original plan of the house. It is likewise composed of load-bearing brick masonry with a gable roof and a single interior brick chimney. The ell extends three bays in length from the main block and is one bay wide. The windows of the ell are shorter than those of the main block, but continue the pattern of segmental-arched 4 X 4 double-hung sash lights set within segmental-arched reveals. The northern facade of the ell displays a modillioned cornice that employs S-shaped brackets similar to those of the main block. The southern facade, containing the porch, does not display these modillions. It is believed that a porch always existed in this place on the house; consequently, modillions may never have been featured as a part of the cornice design. The existing porch dates from the 1930s, as does the small bath addition and a storage area located on the eastern wall of the ell.

The plan of the Joshua K. Hutchison House is quite common for houses of the period. It features a single room on either side of a central hall on both floors. The main block of the structure is only a single room deep. The ell contains an additional two rooms in succession to the east of the main block. The plan of the structure centers upon the stair hall, which contains a finely detailed open well, U-shaped stair that is supported by the load-bearing walls that divide the center of the house. The stair retains its original turned balusters, newel post, rail and riser detailings. Also featured within the stair hall are fine original plaster moldings and a large ceiling medallion, not unlike those detailed within the stylebooks of Minard LaFever and Asher Benjamin. The medallion is distinguished by a circular spray of long, curving acanthus foliage rendered in deep detail. A circa 1960s reproduction lighting fixture hangs from the medallion. The cornice moldings are equally remarkable. The cornice is essentially composed of two bands: the first, a band of acan-

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thus and alternating four-leafed clover; the second, an unusual banderol that wraps oak and laurel leaves.

To the south of the hall lies the formal parlor that contains an overwhelming wealth of ornamental plaster work. At the center of the ceiling is a massive medallion created from overlays of Baroque 'C' and 'S' scroll motifs of acanthus leaves. The medallion is set off by a decorative molding to create an elaborate ceiling panel. The cornice is composed of three tiers of deep, foliated moldings that feature shamrocks, flowers, leaf patterns, and an unusual egg-and-flower motif. The mantelpiece of the parlor is a sophisticated, yet restrained, Italianate design that features a scrolled keystone. The fireplace was originally constructed to burn wood, later converted to coal, and then reconverted to ventilate gas heaters in the 1930s. The windows and doors of the parlor feature paneled reveal linings and an architrave trim surround..

To the north of the stair hall lies the living room of the home. Unlike the parlor or the hall, the decoration of this room is minimal. None of the elaborate plaster work is seen here, nor does it appear that any was ever in place. The decoration of the room is limited to another fine Italianate mantelpiece similar to the one seen in the parlor, but slightly more restrained.

The two rooms contained in the rear ell of the structure are accessible from the east wall of the living room. The first room of the ell may have served as the dining room of the home, particularly because the room contains an exterior door to the porch of the ell. The eastern most room may have contained the kitchen, though direct evidence is lacking. The room has been used as a kitchen at least since the 1930s and continues this function today.

The second floor of the Hutchinson House contains only two rooms within the main block of the structure. To the south of the hall lies the master bedroom, which contains its original flooring, baseboard, door, and window trim, which have also been retained throughout the rest of the house. The mantelpiece here is a simple, traditional Greek Revival style with scaled down architraves and pilasters. A circa 1905-1910 lighting fixture remains from when the house was electrified after the turn of the century. This bedroom is also the only room in the house to contain a closet. It is a narrow space built into the end wall between the chimney and southeastern corner of the structure.

Located north of the stair hall is another bedroom that mirrors the opposite room in detailing. This room, however, was altered in the 1930s for

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use as an apartment and contains small divisions for a bath, efficiency kitchen, and closet spaces. All of these alterations have not impaired the integrity of the original design and materials of the room, and may be easily reversed to their original appearance, if desired. Additionally, the room also contains another of the circa 1905-1910 lighting fixtures like that of the master bedroom across the hall.

Associated with the house is a small, single story garage of frame construction and covered with a gable roof. The garage dates from the 1930s and appears to have replaced an earlier structure on the same site. The garage is in a very poor state of repair; as such, it does not contribute to the significance of the property.

**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 NA

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance

ca. 1868  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates

ca. 1868  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation

NA  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person

NA

Architect/Builder

Unknown  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

The Joshua K. Hutchison House stands today as a well-preserved and finely crafted example of the architectural heritage of Brownsville, Tennessee. It is an excellent local example of the transition between the Greek Revival to the Italianate style, thus reflecting the slow evolution of architectural tastes from the classical to the picturesque "Victorian" style in portions of western Tennessee. The house demonstrates a high degree of design quality in features such as its portico and central stair. The level of design quality and craftsmanship rendered in its many details is equally remarkable, especially in the notable ornamental plaster work contained in the parlor and hall. Similar types of embellishments are not known to exist in any other residences in Brownsville. In addition, the house is an unusual structural type for the city, since only this and two other structures that employ brick construction during the nineteenth century are extant. In all, the Joshua K. Hutchison House is a notable example of design, construction, detail, and craftsmanship that maintains an important place in the architectural heritage of Brownsville.

The house was built in around 1868 for Joshua K. Hutchison (1839-1903) and his wife, Isabella Seymour Hutchison (1941-1909). Employing a part of their inheritance from the estate of Isabella's father, W.B. Seymour (1808-1866), the Hutchison's purchased a large suburban lot for \$1,200.00 on the northern city limit of Brownsville. It was an area that had so far seen little development.

Born in the Wellwood community in rural Haywood County, Hutchison was first employed as a store clerk in Brownsville before moving to Memphis to enter the wholesale grocery business. He returned to Brownsville in around 1860 to work in the employ of a cotton factor until the outbreak of the Civil War. He entered the Confederate Army as a private with the Sixth Tennessee Infantry and was paroled in May 1865 with the rank of captain.

Hutchison married Isabella Seymour soon after his return from his war service and, with his three brothers-in-law, began to represent the interests of W. B. Seymour's vast cotton plantation business. Hutchison was

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Elcan Family Bible and papers. In possession of Mrs. Beverly Travers, Weston, CT.  
Nunn, Mrs. J.C., Brownsville Historical Society. Interview 16 January 1988 and 8 March 1988.  
Rutledge, Helen I., transcr.: Brownsville City Directory, 1872-1873. Copy available at Main Branch of Memphis and Shelby County Library and Information Center. Transcribed 20 July 1938.  
States-Democrat (Brownsville), 18 September 1903, p.3. Joshua K. Hutchison obituary.  
Travers, Mrs. Beverly, Weston, CT. Interview, 19 November 1987.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): NA  
 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 # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:  
 State historic preservation office  
 Other State agency  
 Federal agency  
 Local government  
 University  
 Other  
Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of property Less than one acre

UTM References

A 1, 6 2, 9, 5 3, 7, 0 3, 9, 4, 1, 2, 4, 0  
Zone Easting Northing  
C \_\_\_\_\_

B \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing  
D \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Brownsville 422SE

Verbal Boundary Description

The property placed in nomination comprises a portion of Block K on the original corporation plat of Brownsville, TN, currently designated as Parcel #1, situated at the southeast corner of East College Street and North Church Avenue.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the remaining portion of the city lot historically associated with this structure.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title John Linn Hopkins/Preservation Consultant  
organization NA date March 11, 1988  
street & number 2175 Harbert Street telephone (901) 278-5186  
city or town Memphis state TN zip code 38104



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responsible for brokering the plantation goods through the Memphis spot cotton market and arranging its shipment to buyers via the rail connections of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad at Brownsville. By the time of W.B. Seymour's death in 1866, Hutchison had established a reputation in the agricultural business sector of Brownsville.

Hutchison had the house designed and built as a statement of his family's new-found position of influence within the Brownsville community. Construction of the Hutchison House began soon after the purchase of the lot in April 1868, for it was completed in time to appear on the Haywood County tax digest of 1870 as an improvement valued at \$4,657.00. The 1870 census also listed an improvement, although its value was placed at \$7,500.00. (The discrepancy perhaps indicates that the tax digest entry was that of an assessed value, rather than the full appraised value of the property and the house.) The imposing house was visible from the court square for many years until neighboring development obscured the view in later years.

The design of the Hutchison House was a departure from the residential architectural styles common in Brownsville prior to the Civil War, the majority of which were built in the Greek Revival style. Like its many predecessors, the Hutchison House maintained a familiarity with the form of the classical designs in its columned, pedimented portico and its bilateral symmetry. The manner that set it apart was the added influence of the Italianate. The transitional qualities of the house design differed from other Brownsville residences in many ways. Rather than the heavy fluted Doric columns supporting the portico, such as those on the Bond-Livingston-Trip House on West Main Street, the Hutchison House was built with tall, thin, almost frail columns. The arched windows of the facade share this same sense of proportion by emphasizing height rather than width. This sense of height is particularly evident, given that the house was constructed less than forty feet from the street, rather than much farther back as was common prior to the Civil War.

The construction of the Hutchison House in brick may have raised a good deal of interest in Brownsville at the time it was erected, given that only one other structure is known to have been built of brick in the city before this. Though the architect or master builder of this house remains unknown, it appears to be related stylistically to two other buildings in the city that were built soon after the Hutchison House. The first of these was the Howell House which was built on an adjoining lot to the south. This house was nearly identical to the Hutchison House in style and detail. Sadly, it was demolished in the late 1960s for a parking lot. The other known example is the McLemore-Thomas House on Key Corner Street (part of

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the College Hill Historic District (NR9/11/80). The brick portion of this house was constructed circa 1870 and possesses individual details identical to those on the Hutchison House. While brick construction was common for commercial buildings on the court square, the use of this construction material for residential architecture only occurred locally during this brief time period. Other than those mentioned, there are no other extant late nineteenth residential structures constructed of brick in the city.

The level of craftsmanship employed throughout the Hutchison House is its most important aspect, particularly in the ornamental plaster work of the entrance hall and parlor. The interior of the structure reflects a tremendous degree of sophistication in the use of this material. This type of ornamental plaster work is not known to be found in other residences in Brownsville. While many of the molding types and medallion designs are familiar to the stylebooks of the Greek Revival period, many of the particular floral and leaf forms employed in this structure seem unique. The identity of the plasterer responsible for the work may never be conclusively known, but may be the work of one Albert Carpenter, the only plasterer listed in the Brownsville City Directory of 1872-1873.

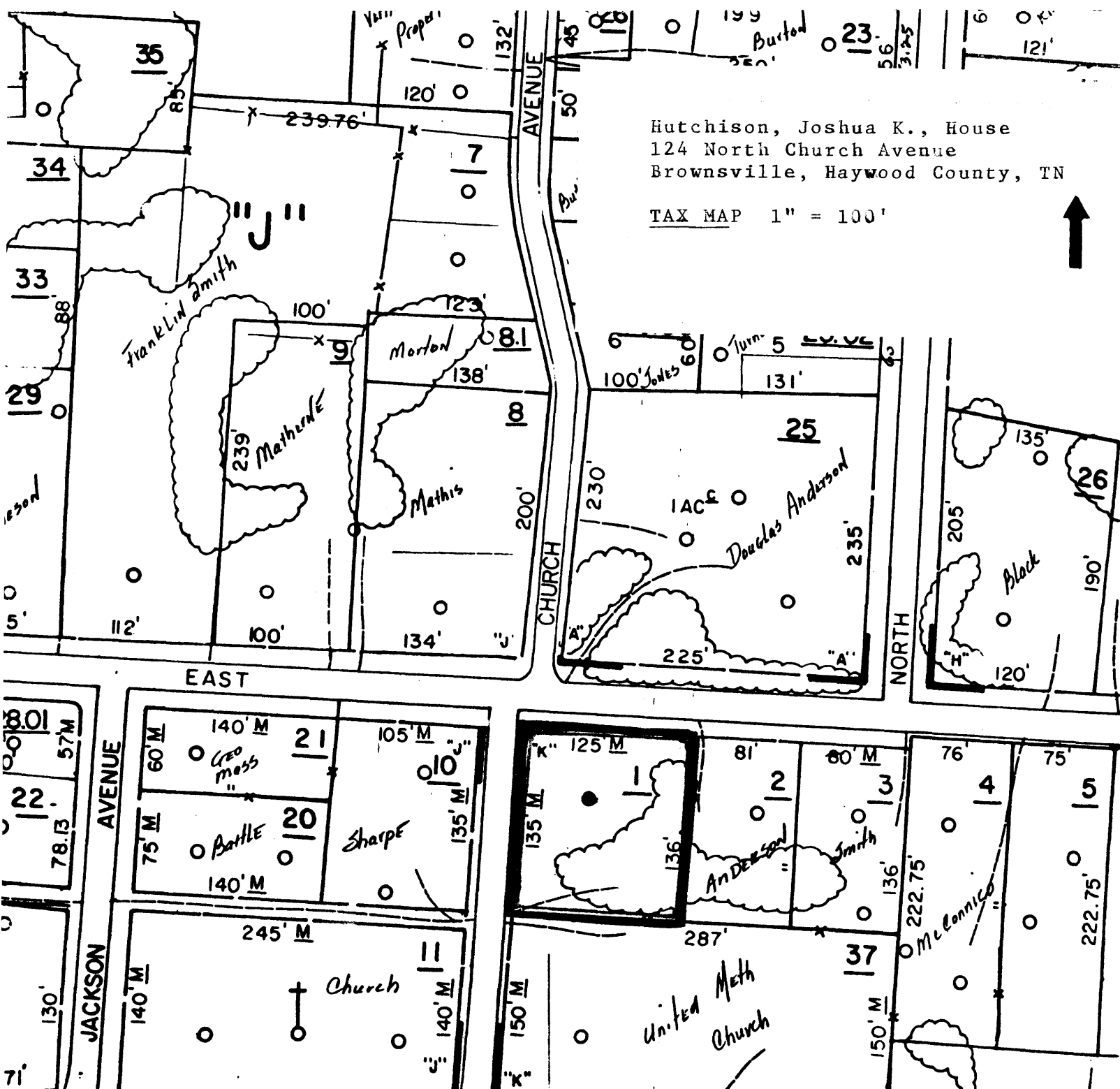
The significance of the architectural style and detail of the Hutchison House remains largely unmarred by alterations in its life. Minor alterations made to lighting fixtures in 1905-1910 and to heating fixtures in 1930-1935 have made few, if any, irreversible impressions upon these qualities. Evidence of its original paint colors, flooring, and other decorative features and finishes remain intact throughout the house. The restoration of this property to a semblance of its original appearance could easily be accomplished.

The preservation of the qualities of the Hutchison House is due largely to the continuous ownership of the house by descendants of Joshua K. and Isabella Hutchison until 1986. Following the death of Hutchison in 1903, the house was maintained by his wife until her death in 1908. The residence was then inherited by Lena Hutchison Elcan (1869-1929), the second daughter of the four Hutchison children. Following her death, the property was inherited by May Belle Elcan (born 1905), who kept the family house until 1986. It was then sold to the present owner who intends to restore the residence. In conclusion, the Joshua K. Hutchison House remains today as a remarkable example of the architecture of western Tennessee, both in its general characteristics of design as well as in the specific quality and character of its craftsmanship and detail.

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Hutchison, Joshua K., House  
124 North Church Avenue  
Brownsville, Haywood County, TN

TAX MAP 1" = 100'



31000

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Hutchison, Joshua K., House  
124 North Church Street  
Brownsville, Haywood County, Tennessee  
Photographs by: Photographic Services of Brownsville  
Date: June 1986  
Negatives: Tennessee Historical Commission  
Nashville, Tennessee

Facing east, west facade  
#1 of 15

Facing north, south facade  
#2 of 15

Facing generally north, east facade and south facade of rear ell  
#3 of 15

Facing west, east facade of main block and of rear ell  
#4 of 15

Facing generally west, east facade of rear ell and north facades of ell and  
main block  
#5 of 15

Facing generally southeast, north facade and part of west facade  
#6 of 15

Facing east, west facade: detail of entrance doors  
#7 of 15

Facing east, west facade: detail of portico  
#8 of 15

Facing north, south facade: detail of brick quoins at southwestern corner  
#9 of 15

Interior view of central stair hall  
#10 of 15

Interior detail of plaster work, central stair hall  
#11 of 15

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Interior detail of plaster work, formal parlor  
#12 of 15

Interior detail of mantle, formal parlor  
#13 of 15

Interior detail of mantle, living room  
#14 of 15

Interior detail of mantle, master bedroom  
#15 of 15

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Photographs

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Historic Photograph #1 of 2: Joshua K. Hutchison House

View of west and north facades  
circa 1885-1895

Original photograph in the possession of Mrs. Beverly  
Travers, Weston, CT

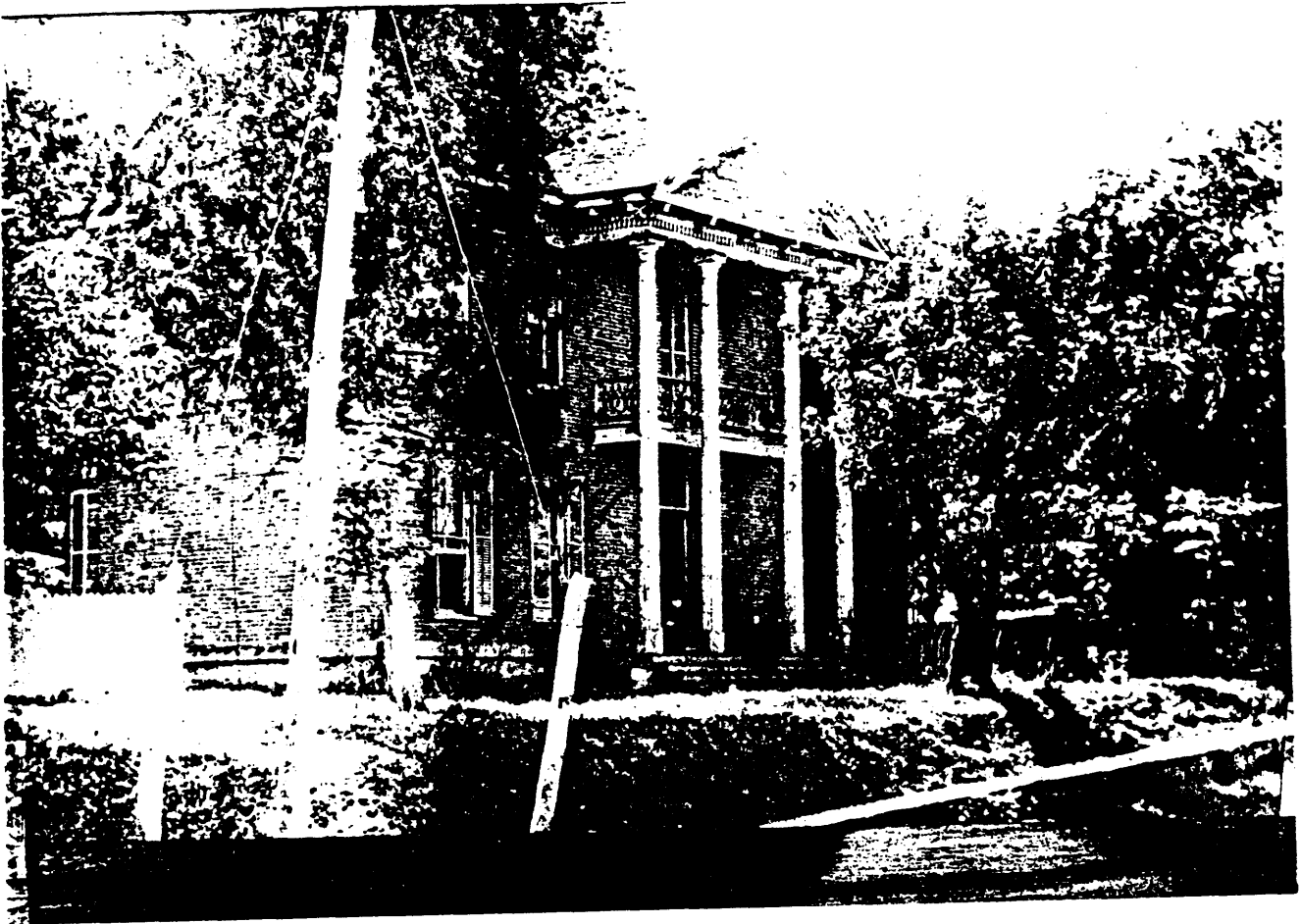
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Historic Photograph #2 of 2: Joshua K. Hutchison House

View of west and north facades circa 1905-1915

Original photograph in the possession of Mrs. Beverly  
Travers, Weston, CT