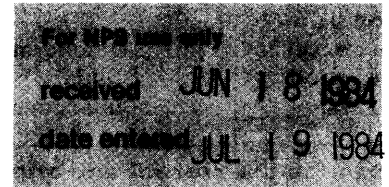


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections



1. Name

historic Hotel Overall  
and/or common  Walking Horse Hotel (preferred)

2. Location

street & number Spring Street N/A not for publication  
city, town Wartrace N/A vicinity of  
state Tennessee code 047 county Bedford code 003

3. Classification

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<u>N/A</u> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name George Wright  
street & number Walking Horse Hotel  
city, town Wartrace N/A vicinity of state Tennessee 37183

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Bedford County Courthouse  
street & number Courthouse Square  
city, town Shelbyville state Tennessee 37160

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no  
date N/A N/A federal  state  county  local  
depository for survey records N/A  
city, town N/A state N/A

## 7. Description

### Condition

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

### Check one

unaltered  
 altered

### Check one

original site  
 moved date \_\_\_\_\_

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Situated on the railroad square in the middle of the northeastern Bedford County market town of Wartrace, the Walking Horse Hotel is the largest building in Wartrace and the major focal point of the town's small business district. The three-story hotel is located on the south side of the main line of the L&N Railroad, just behind the site of the town's railway depot. Behind the hotel and slightly to the west are the stables, show ring, and grave of the first Tennessee Walking Horse Grand Champion, Strolling Jim.

The Walking Horse Hotel is a three-story rectangular structure constructed of a pale red brick, laid in stretcher bond; the soft mortar joints are penciled with white paint. The building rests on an ashlar cut limestone foundation, and is topped with a flat roof which slopes slightly to the rear. The hotel lobby, office, dining room, kitchen, inn-keeper's quarters, and two guest rooms are located on the ground floor, while the two upper floors together contain another twenty-two guest rooms, as well as kitchens, lounges, and baths. Recessed verandas on the north side of the upper two stories extend across the five central bays and are accessed from some of the rooms and the central hall. A plain low brick parapet at the roof line extends across the front of the building and slopes slightly on the two sides towards the rear.

The main or street elevation is nine bays wide and faces north to the railroad tracks and the row of commercial buildings that makes up the business district of the Town of Wartrace. Two bays at either end project slightly towards the front, and are connected by a recessed porch and verandas on the upper two floors. The verandas and the plain brick cornice are supported by four massive brick piers. On the ground floor, central double-leaf doors with beveled-glass panels open into the lobby; these doors are topped with a double transom of stained glass in a walking horse design. The windows are double-hung sash, topped with flat stone lintels.

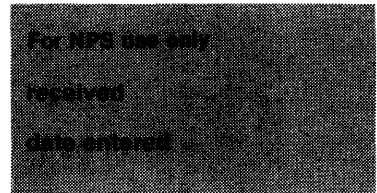
The east and west ends are three large rooms deep, with exit doors from the central hall at the middle of the ground floor levels. The double-hung windows are topped with the same flat wooden lintels featured on the front of the building; these on the west end open onto a primitive fire escape. The rear of the hotel faces pleasant meadows along Wartrace Creek, and close at hand the back yard and hotel stables. Seven windows and a wooden-panel door are located on the ground floor, and eight windows in paired groups extend across the upper two floors.

Two small features at the hotel roof line recall the hotel's association with horse trainer and hotel owner Floyd Carothers; on the parapet is a painting of his prize horse, the first Tennessee Walking Horse World Champion, Strolling Jim, and above it is a tin weathervane of Carothers on the horse.

Most of the original interior elements are still in place. The ground floor contains the principal public rooms. The spacious central lobby and wide hall beyond feature dark-stained beaded tongue-and-groove wainscoting on the walls to a height of about five feet. Some ceilings are plastered; others are covered with tongue-and-groove pine siding.

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Continuation sheet Walking Horse Hotel

Item number 7

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A large dining room, which can seat about fifty guests, is located at the back on the east side of the building, and two large guest rooms occupy the opposite end of the building. The hotel office and innkeeper's quarters open off the lobby at the front of the building. Each of the upper two floors contains twelve principal guest rooms, although three of the rooms on the third level are now used as lounges or small kitchens. Some alteration has occurred over the years, chiefly to provide for extra baths on the upper floors.

Also on the grounds are the hotel show ring and stable. The stable is a small frame structure and contains six stalls arranged in part around a central open passage. A flat porch supported by rough wooden posts provides shelter for access to the stalls. In a shady corner at the very back of the hotel lot is the grave of the champion walker, Strolling Jim.

The Walking Horse Hotel has passed through a number of different owners and has suffered some deterioration over the years. It is presently being rehabilitated by owner George Wright, who intends to make the inn an "Ultimate Southern Hotel."

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) Animal husbandry
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates	Builder/Architect
1917	Unknown

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The Tennessee Walking Horse Hotel in the northeastern Bedford County town of Wartrace is nominated under National Register criteria B and C for its associations with the development of the Tennessee Walking Horse, the breeding and sale of which has evolved into one of Tennessee's largest industries, and for its local significance to Wartrace and Bedford County in architecture and local history. The old railroad hotel is the largest and most imposing building in the Town of Wartrace, and was probably the finest hostelry in Bedford County when it opened in 1917. Hotel owner Floyd Carothers and others responsible for the breeding and development of the walking horse congregated in the hotel parlor to pursue their ambitions. The first Tennessee Walking Horse World Grand Champion, Strolling Jim, was trained and kept at the hotel stables, and is buried in a meadow on the grounds; the building has been intimately tied to the industry ever since.

The hotel was built in 1917 by Jesse Robert Overall, a Rutherford County innkeeper, who operated the Overall House in Smyrna with his wife, Nora. The Overall House had hot and cold water, and was the first inn in Smyrna to offer acetylene lamps. The Overalls heard from salesmen and other travelers that there was no lodging in the Bedford County town of Wartrace, where an important rail spur left the main Nashville-Chattanooga line for the county seat of Shelbyville. Because the railroad town had no hotel, travelers had to seek shelter in Shelbyville, eight miles away. The Overalls purchased a prominent spot facing the main downtown commercial row on the railroad by the bustling Wartrace Depot, and erected the Hotel Overall. In addition to serving travelers, the hotel had a number of permanent residents; these included many of the town's schoolteachers and a number of families.

The hotel was later purchased by Floyd Carothers and his wife, Olive, circa 1930, and renamed Floyd's Walking Horse Hotel. He built a small ring and stables behind the hotel and set out to make his hotel the center of attention for the new Tennessee Walking Horse industry, for which he and other area citizens were responsible.

The breed was developed by early owners and trainers who met at the hotel and together worked to establish the new line. These men included Albert M. Dement, recognized as the founder of the industry, and Harry Davis, who organized the Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration in Shelbyville, and Carothers, the greatest trainer of the day. Today, the Town of Wartrace is recognized as the "Cradle of the Tennessee Walking Horse."

The Tennessee Walking Horse has a high gaited step but provides the smoothest ride of the species. It was developed from the Thoroughbred, Standardbred, Morgan, and American Saddlehorse lines, and was originally bred as a plantation horse, valuable for its gliding walk which enabled overseers to stay all day in the saddle without discomfort. The horse is the only breed which incorporates a state name, and is the only horse which can do a running walk. The Wartrace breeders set out to refine the breed, and to train the best horses to perform with especial grace. Dement and the others showed off the new breed

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Ferguson, Roy. "Walking Horse Hotel". (typed copy). Wartrace: Wartrace Development and Advisory Committee, n.d.  
 Summerlin, Kristin. "There's Lots of Life Left in Old Hotel". Tempo, May 1983, 3. "There is Only One Tennessee Walking Horse" (pamphlet). Lewisburg: Tennessee Walking Horse Breeders' and Exhibitors' Association, n.d.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 3 acres

Quadrangle name Wartrace, Tennessee

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UTM References

A 

1	6	5	6	0	3	4	0	3	9	3	1	5	3	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

### Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation sheet.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Richard Quin, Historic Preservation Planner  
South Central

organization Tennessee Development District date April 1984

street & number P.O. Box 1346 telephone 615/381-2040

city or town Columbia state Tennessee

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

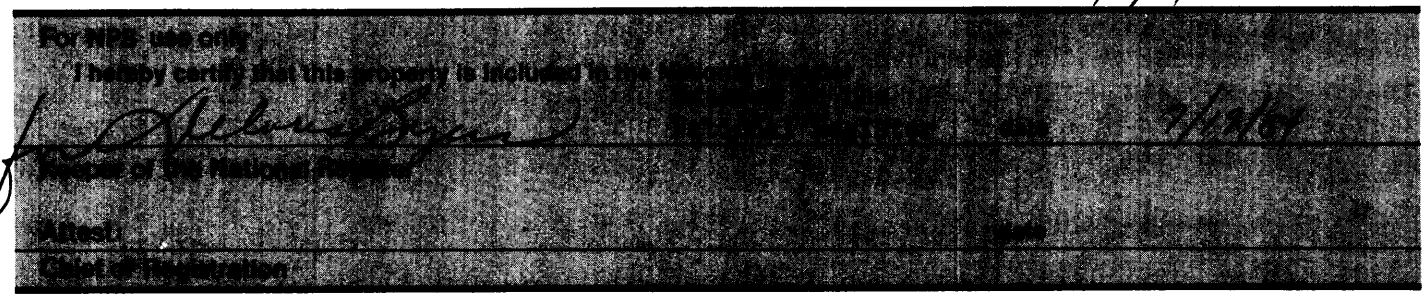
The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

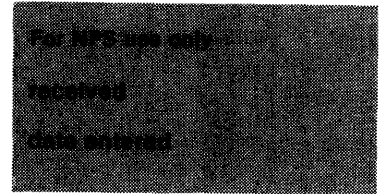
Deputy  
 State Historic Preservation Officer signature Herbert L. Harper

title Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission date 6/8/84



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in front of the hotel; Dement exhibited the "velvet smooth walk" of the horse by carrying a full glass of water, never spilling a drop. Even today, shows still feature a "water glass class" for some riders.

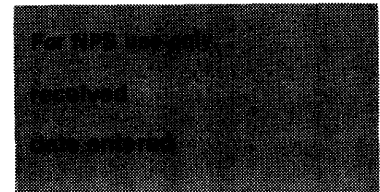
Carothers was a renowned horse trainer and owner of Strolling Jim, a plow horse he had purchased for \$350 and trained patiently -- the chestnut sorrel was selected the first Tennessee Walking Horse World Grand Champion in 1939. The horse was paddocked on the hotel grounds and trained on the small ring behind the hotel; he lived out his life in the rear meadows and is buried about 200 yards behind the hotel. The hotel was decorated with a wind-vane of Carothers and Strolling Jim, and a large painting of the champion was placed on the front above the third-floor gallery; both of these features are preserved in their original locations.

Floyd Carothers died in 1943. Olive Carothers operated the hotel until 1958, when it was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. J. T. Parker, who changed the name to the Wartrace Walking Horse Hotel. They operated the inn until 1974, when it was purchased by four Murfreesboro businessmen. In 1975, it was purchased by Nellie Williams, and renamed the Walking Horse Hotel.

On November 1, 1980, the hotel was purchased by George W. Wright. Mr. Wright is developing the hotel as a tourist attraction, a center for the interpretation of the story of the Tennessee Walking Horse. He has already renovated the first floor in a sympathetic manner, and is in the process of rehabilitating the upper two floors of hotel rooms. Tennessee Walking Horses are again paddocked in the repaired stables and are trained on the hotel ring.

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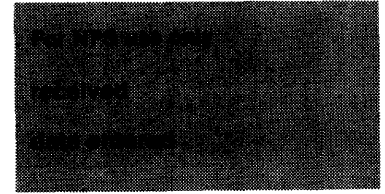
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"The Ultimate Southern Hotel" (pamphlet). Wartrace: Walking Horse Hotel, n.d.

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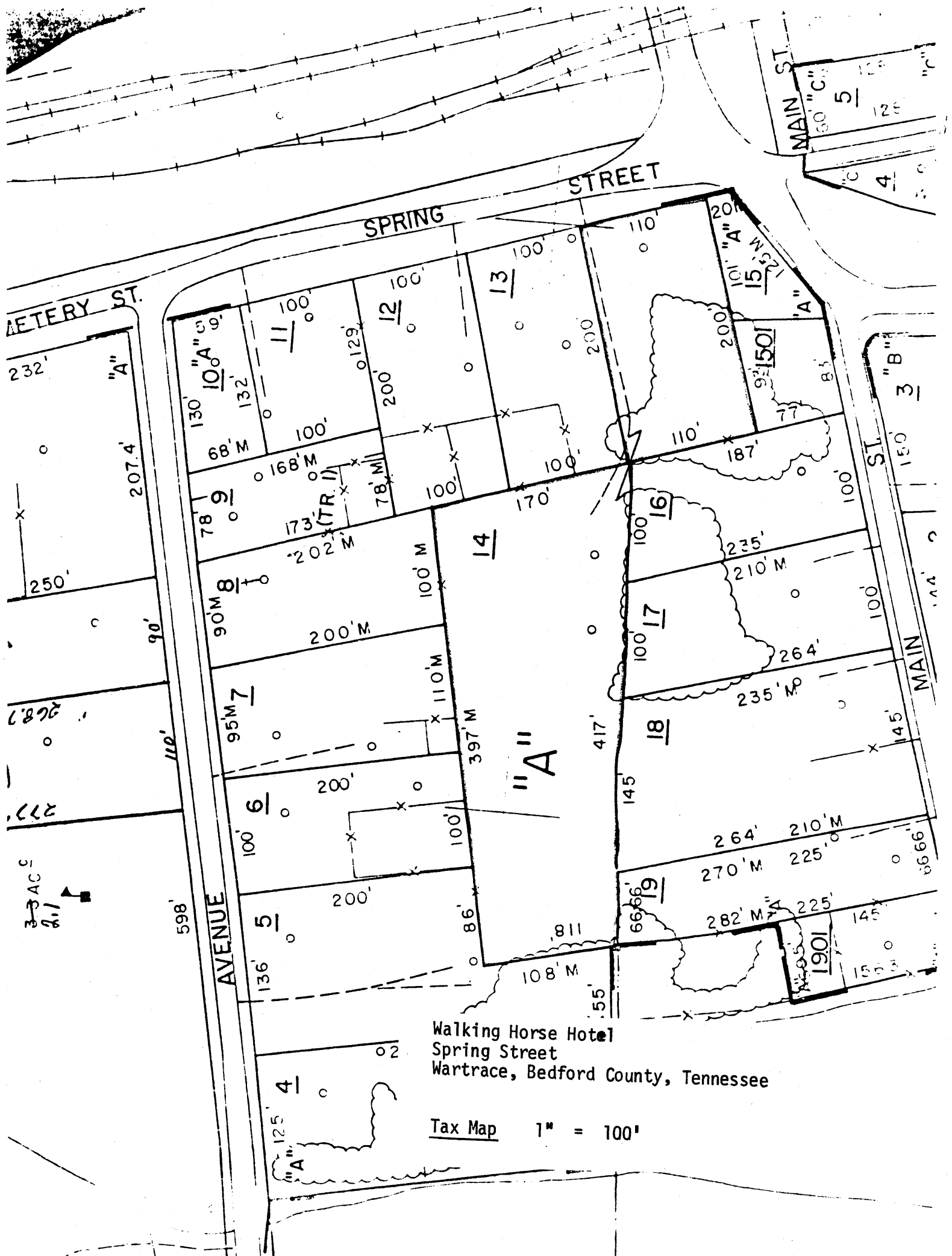
Continuation sheet Walking Horse Hotel

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The nominated property consists of two rectangular pieces of land connected by one corner in a diagonal fashion. The northern parcel is bounded on the north by Spring Street, on the east and west by adjoining property lines, and on the south by an adjoining property line and the other section of the nominated property. The southern section of the property is bounded on all sides by adjoining property lines. This area includes the minimum amount of land required to preserve the historic setting of the Walking Horse Hotel complex.





Walking Horse Hotel  
 Spring Street  
 Wartrace, Bedford County, Tennessee

Tax Map 1" = 100'

BATTERY ST.

SPRING STREET

MAIN ST.

AVENUE

MAIN ST.

"A"

"A"

33 AC  
 2.1

"A"

"B"

272

688

250

232

598'

110'

90'

207.4'

130'

132'

100'

100'

100'

100'

136'

100'

95M

90M

78'

130'

100'

100'

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

200'

200'

110M

200M

100'

100'

100'

100'

86'

100'

397M

100M

100'

100'

100'

100'

108' M

100'

110M

200M

100'

100'

100'

100'

66.66'

145'

417'

100'

170'

100'

100'

100'

108' M

100'

110M

200M

100'

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