

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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 Lawrenceburg Commercial Historic District  
other names/site number N/A

### 2. Location

Roughly bounded by N. Military St., Public Square, E. Gaines St.,  
street & number E. Pulaski St. N/A not for publication  
city, town Lawrenceburg N/A vicinity  
state Tennessee code TN county Lawrence code 099 zip code 38464

### 3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<u>35</u>	<u>11</u> buildings
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>      </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u> structures
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>38</u>	<u>12</u> objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object		<u>      </u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A  
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

### 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 E. Hays 2/28/92  
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. Entered in the National Register  
 See continuation sheet. 4/14/92  
 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)

COMMERCE: department store  
GOVERNMENT: postoffice  
RECREATION & CULTURE: monument

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE: department store  
GOVERNMENT: postoffice  
RECREATION & CULTURE: monument

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

CLASSICAL REVIVAL  
OTHER: two-part commercial block  
one-part commercial block

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK, CONCRETE, STONE  
walls BRICK  
roof ASPHALT, ASBESTOS  
other STONE

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Lawrenceburg Commercial Historic District is located in the city of Lawrenceburg (current estimated population 10,000), the seat of government for Lawrence County, Tennessee. Lawrence County is located in the geographic area known as the Highland Rim and the average elevation of the county is 700-800 feet above sea level. The county was established by an act of the General Assembly in 1817, but not organized until May of 1818. Lawrence County is named in honor of Captain James Lawrence, who commanded the Chesapeake in the War of 1812.

The city of Lawrenceburg is situated on a 400 acre tract of land which the North Carolina legislature granted to John Thompson on April 14, 1792. An act of the General Assembly of Tennessee, passed on November 23, 1819, later confirmed this initial land claim. When the new county's seven commissioners (including David Crockett) selected a seat of government in 1819, they chose Thompson's parcel, largely because it laid squarely on the route of the Military Road, an important federally-supported 516 mile long thoroughfare from Columbia to New Orleans. The land also stood only four miles southeast of the county's geographic center.

The new town was arranged around a central square, two acres in area, being sixteen poles wide (east to west) and twenty poles long. (This makes the public square a rectangle, actually.) The four main streets branching from the square were each four rods, or 66 feet, wide. Streets and lot lines were run at magnetic variation of 13 degrees north, rather than oriented to true north. The four main streets were Pulaski (headed eastward), Waterloo (headed westward), and running north to south, North and South Military streets. At the center of the square, where the streets would meet, stood the county courthouse lot. The initial courthouse was a two-story brick courthouse that was first occupied in 1821.

The square initially was divided into sixteen large lots, with those on the north and south sides having a frontage of 49 1/2 feet wide by 132 feet deep while those on the east and west sides were 66 feet wide and 99 feet in length. The lot arrangement currently found in the public square dates to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when several of the initial large city lots were subdivided into smaller parcels to make way for new businesses and offices.

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Another factor spurring new development on the public square was the arrival of a railroad. The Columbia, Lawrenceburg, and Florence Railroad was chartered in 1879 and the railroad (now the Tennessee Southern) was constructed soon afterwards. The new transportation link ran just to the east of the east side of the public square, and bisected Pulaski Street. During the 1880s and 1890s, the railroad brought about a new wave of economic and industrial growth in Lawrenceburg. It also spurred the development of new architecturally stylish homes along Pulaski Street.

The nominated district includes all of the historic public square area. Ironically the most important missing element is the courthouse itself. In the 1960s, the county demolished a circa 1905 courthouse, replacing it with a strikingly modern courthouse on West Gaines Street. The lot for the courthouse, along with historically significant monuments to David Crockett and the Mexican War, is still intact in the center of the square. This area presently serves as a city park, complete with landscaping, a fountain, and park benches.

The move of the courthouse to West Gaines Street was a logical decision for the county government, considering the importance of Gaines Street as a modern transportation and commercial artery. U.S. Highway 64 runs through Lawrenceburg as Gaines Street and this highway, not the much older Military Road of the nineteenth century, serves as the county's primary transportation corridor. As the importance of Highway 64 became more pronounced in the 1920s and 1930s, the focus of commercial activity began to shift from the public square to the two blocks directly north of square, especially where Highway 64 bisected North Military Street. This more recently developed commercial area, which is directly linked to the square by North Military Street, completes the Lawrenceburg Commercial Historic District.

Dates of construction with the nominated district range from 1850 to the 1960s. But most of the properties were built at the turn of the century, in period of 1890 and 1920, when Lawrenceburg enjoyed a generation of population and economic growth. In general, the nominated properties share similar types of building materials (brick predominating), height (mostly two-story), massing, and setback, creating a strong sense of cohesiveness within the district. The resources further share a similar architectural orientation. In stylistic terms, the vast majority would fall into the broad category of vernacular commercial. Using a more modern interpretive scheme, that of Richard Longstreth in his study of America's Main Street architecture, these buildings are invariably examples of the two-part commercial block. In his The Buildings of Main Street (National Trust for

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Historic Preservation, 1987), Longstreth observed that "the two-part commercial block is the most common type of composition used for small and moderate-sized commercial buildings throughout the country" and it was particularly "prevalent from the 1850s to the 1950s." (p. 24)

Several examples of what Longstreth identifies as the one-part commercial block are found in the district. He states that "the one-part commercial block is a simple box with a decorated facade and thoroughly urban in its overtones." (p. 54) The building at 206-208 North Military Street, constructed circa 1927, is an example of a one-part commercial block. This is a one story brick structure with a brick false front and tile coping. As Longstreth states, one-part commercial blocks dating from the post-World War II era are less flashy and "more restrained in appearance" than earlier buildings. (p. 65) An example of this can be seen at 31 Public Square.

Several of the commercial buildings in the district have false fronts. In his essay, "False-Front Architecture on Montana's Urban Frontier" featured in Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture, III (University of Missouri Press, 1989), Kingston Wm. Heath defines a false front as a rectilinear facade hiding a gable or shed roof." (p. 200) False fronts can be seen at 210-212 North Military Street as well as at 6 Public Square. A false front is different than a parapet, which Steven J. Phillips defines as a low wall often used along the edge of a roof. (Old House Dictionary. American Source Books, 1989).

A few properties exhibit significant stylistic influences. Romanesque arches highlight the commercial building at 38 Public Square. The Classical Revival influence is apparent at the post office at 218 North Military and Art Deco styling can be found at 106 and 214-216 North Military as well as the old Princess Theater at 29 Public Square.

Fine examples of Victorian commercial blocks are located at 32-34 Public Square, 35-36 Public Square, 38-39 Public Square, and 40-42 Public Square. These blocks are two-story, brick with segmental arched windows along the first floor facade and radiating brick voussoirs along the second floor facade. Dogtooth brick dentils accentuate the cornices. These blocks are more ornate than other buildings along the square. Longstreth states that the Victorian commercial block expressed "a new taste for decoration and the increasing desire to have buildings themselves perceived as ornaments to the community." (p. 31)

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Unless otherwise noted, all of the commercial buildings in the inventory have flat roofs. Only if the foundation of the buildings are constructed of a material that is different from the material that the exterior sidings are made of, is this stated in the inventory.

The nominated district contains properties in the one and two hundred blocks of North Military Street, the Public Square, the one hundred block of West Gaines Street, and the one hundred block of West Pulaski. The district has a total of forty-seven properties that have a total of fifty individual resources associated with them. Forty-five buildings continue to or have served commercial functions and one serves as a public building (a post office). Of the fifty buildings, thirty-eight are contributing resources to the district while twelve are non-contributing resources. These figures include the courthouse square located in the center of the public square, as well as the monuments in the square.

Contributing resources (C) are significant to the commercial and architectural development of the district, possess compatible design elements, and maintain the scale and use of the district. Non-contributing resources (NC) have little or no architectural significance, have lost their integrity or they do not fall within the period of significance. In the inventory, the current name of the building is given first and the historic name, when known, is listed second.

NORTH MILITARY STREET

1. 106 North Military Street  
King's Lighting  
Schade Building  
1938  
Art-Deco influence. Two-story brick, rectangular plan, stone foundation, brick and concrete accents, dogtooth brick cornice, date stone carved "1938 Schade", recessed metal and glass replacement storefront, transoms covered. (C)
2. 108-110 North Military Street  
Discount Fabrics  
Former Sterlings 5 to 10  
ca. 1960  
One-part commercial block. One-story brick, concrete block foundation, rectangular plan, 1/1 light, recessed entry, metal and glass storefront. (NC due to date)

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3. 109 North Military Street  
Vacant  
ca. 1920  
Two-part commercial block. Two-story brick, stone foundation, rectangular plan, 1/1 light windows, aluminum storefront. (C)
4. 111 North Military Street  
Vacant  
ca. 1890  
Two-part commercial block. One-story brick, stone foundation, rectangular plan, aluminum slipcover storefront, one Mesker iron post. (NC due to removal of second floor)
5. 115 North Military Street  
Vacant  
ca. 1940  
Two-part commercial block. Two-story brick, rectangular plan, stone foundation, segmental arched 3/3 light windows, corbeled brick cornice, recessed entry. Aluminum siding bulkhead. (C)
6. 116-118 North Military Street  
Vacant  
Former O. K. Drug Store  
ca. 1945  
Two-part commercial block. One-story brick veneer, altered recessed entries, tile coping on parapet. (NC due to alteration and date of construction)
7. 117 North Military Street  
Gobble Law Offices  
ca. 1900  
Two-part commercial block. Two-story brick, rectangular plan, altered carrera glass storefront, recessed entry, metal awning on windows second floor, tile roof coping. (C)
8. 120 North Military Street  
WDXE Radio  
Former Broyle's Studio  
ca. 1900  
Two-part commercial block. Two-story brick, stone foundation, stuccoed brick walls, 1/1 light segmental arched windows second floor, cornice removed, carrera glass storefront. (C)

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9. 121 North Military Street  
Lawrence County Advocate  
Former Parks Ford Motor Company  
ca. 1925  
One-part commercial block. Large, brick, one-story corner building, stone foundation, rectangular plan, brick parapet walls with clay tile coping, display windows covered. (C)
10. 122 North Military Street  
Vacant  
ca. 1920  
Two-story brick, rectangular plan, stone foundation, stucco brick walls, parapet wall with tile coping, faux marble storefront. (NC due to alterations to facade)
11. 200-202 North Military Street  
Downey & Jones/Gift Box  
ca. 1950  
One-part commercial block. One-story brick, concrete slab foundation, rectangular plan, altered aluminum storefront, intrusive canopies. (NC due to date)
12. 204 North Military Street  
Fox Sports  
ca. 1925  
Two-part commercial block. Two-story brick, stone foundation, rectangular plan, metal awning windows second floor, original storefront, transom windows painted, canvas awning. (C)
13. 206-208 North Military Street  
Office Supply Company  
ca. 1927  
One-part commercial block. One-story brick, stone foundation, rectangular plan, brick parapet with tile coping, somewhat altered storefront. (C)

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14. 210-212 North Military Street  
Lino-Lithic Printers  
ca. 1936  
Two-part commercial block. Two-story brick veneer, false front, rectangular plan, recessed entry, one of two storefronts altered, paired 1:1 light sash windows on second floor, transom windows intact on original storefront, recessed entries. (C)
15. 214-216 North Military Street  
Hays Building  
1936  
Art Deco detailing. Two-story brick veneer, rectangular plan, recessed entry, one of two display windows altered, paired 3:1 light sash window on second floor, arched central entry to second floor, transom windows intact, date stone marked "Hays 1936." (C)
16. 218 North Military Street  
United States Post Office  
1935  
Neoclassical Revival. One-story brick, rectangular plan, arched entry, cast concrete or sandstone eagles and trim, flat radiating brick voussoirs over 16:16 light sash windows, stone steps. Louis Simon, Supervising Architect; Neal A. Melick, Supervising Engineer; John Winthrop Wolcott, Jr., Architect. (C)

PUBLIC SQUARE

17. 1 Public Square  
First National Bank Building  
ca. 1952  
Classicism Influence. Two-story cut stone with black marble veneer at street level, concrete foundation, 3 bays, recessed entry. (NC due to date)
18. 3 Public Square  
White's  
Former Lawrenceburg Opera House and Gibbs & Belew store  
ca. 1865

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Two-part commercial block. Two-story brick, rectangular plan, hipped roof, corbeled brick cornice with sawtooth and dogtooth brick detail, 6 segmental arched windows on second floor, altered storefront with recessed entries, transom windows covered, brick foundation. (C)

19. 6 Public Square

Frame Master

ca. 1900

One-part commercial block. One-story brick, false front, rectangular plan, brick foundation, glass storefront added in ca. 1965. (C)

20. 8 Public Square

Doerflinger's Law Offices

Former Pepper's Market

ca. 1890

Two-part commercial block. Two-story brick, rectangular plan, hipped roof, dogtooth brick cornice, two second story windows that have been boarded over, altered recessed entry, brick foundation. (C)

21. 9 Public Square

Irvin's 5 & 10

Former Joe Hershkowitz store

ca. 1900

Two-part commercial block. Two-story brick, rectangular plan, stuccoed second floor, brick bulkheads, altered storefront, side double-leaf entry to second floor, 1/1 double-hung sash windows with boarded transoms, parapet with tile coping. (C)

22. 10-12 Public Square

Holland's Drugs/Seavy's Gifts

Former Bentley Row

ca. 1850

Two-part commercial block. Two-story brick, rectangular plan, 9 bays with 3 storefronts, tile roof coping, 1/1 segmental arched windows on second floor, altered storefronts, two recessed. (C)

23. 13 Public Square

Mac's Florist

Former Bell's Harness Shop

ca. 1900

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Two-part commercial block. Corner two-story brick, rectangular plan, stuccoed second floor, original glazed brick and glass storefront with recessed canted corner entry, tile parapet coping, 10-light casement windows on second floor. (C)

24. 14-18 Public Square  
Carrell Block  
1905-6

Two-story brick corner building, Romanesque arches, stone foundation, rectangular plan, stone quoins. Two stores in three bays; original wood and glass storefront survives in larger department store section, tin and wood cornice, transom windows covered, some second floor windows altered, side windows sealed. (C)

25. 19-21 Public Square  
Gallaher Block  
ca. 1910

Two-part commercial block. Two-story brick, stone foundation, rectangular plan, large block with stores in each of three bays, tin cornice with "Gallaher" on parapet, Mesker Iron Works storefronts, intact on two bays, recessed entries, one altered storefront, transom windows covered. (C)

26. 23 Public Square  
ca. 1905

One-part commercial block. One-story brick, concrete block foundation, rectangular plan, stuccoed walls, Mesker Iron Works storefront, clay tile cornice, recessed entry. (C)

27. 24 Public Square  
ca. 1945

One-story brick, concrete block foundation, rectangular plan, transom glass covered. (NC due to date of construction)

28. 25 Public Square  
Third National Bank  
ca. 1977

New Formalism style. Two-story brick building, rectangular plan, concrete grill. (NC due to date)

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29. 26 Public Square  
Parks-Belk Building  
ca. 1940  
One-part commercial block. One-story brick, rectangular plan, black carrera glass false front. (C)
30. 29 Public Square  
Princess Theater  
ca. 1930  
Art Deco style. Two-story brick, stone foundation, rectangular plan, carrera glass storefront, central pylon projecting through parapet, transom windows covered, second story windows sealed. (C)
31. 30 Public Square  
ca. 1950  
Two-part commercial block. Two-story brick veneer, concrete block foundation, rectangular plan, aluminum wainscot on front, 2/2 light metal windows second floor. (NC due to date of construction)
32. 31 Public Square  
Merle Norman Cosmetics  
ca. 1960  
One-part commercial block. One-story concrete block with brick veneer storefront. (NC due to date of construction)
33. 32-34 Public Square  
Welch's  
Former McClannan and Wall Furniture  
ca. 1890  
Victorian commercial block. Two-story 12-bay front, segmental-arched windows with double brick courses, radiating brick voussoirs on second floor, dogtooth brick dentil, bulkhead below display windows bricked over. (C)
34. 35-36 Public Square  
Cotton Patch/Grissom's  
Former White's Hardware  
ca. 1910

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Victorian commercial block. Two-story common bond brick, stone foundation, rectangular plan, iron storefront, segmental arched windows with double coursed arched and radiating brick voussoirs on second floor, dogtooth brick dentil, transom windows boarded, segmental arched side windows sealed. (C)

35. 38-39 Public Square

Kelly and Coffman Block  
ca. 1914

Victorian commercial block. Two-story brick corner building, stone foundation, rectangular plan, parapeted cornice with "Kelly" and "Coffman" in thin letters, cut sandstone block trim, paired 1/1 light sash windows with flat radiating voussoirs and keystones on second floor, somewhat altered storefronts, one-story rear section has side windows sealed. Sign on Waterloo Street side of building from previous 5, 10, 25 store and names of those who fought at the Alamo with David Crockett have been written on the wall possibly in connection with "Homecoming 86" celebrations. (C)

36. 40-42 Public Square

42 is vacant  
Former Massey Dry Goods  
1919

Victorian commercial block. Two-story brick, stone foundation, rectangular plan, recessed entries, black carrera glass storefronts, 1/1 segmental arched windows second level, dogtooth cornice. Original interior detailing. (C)

37. 43 Public Square

Vacant  
ca. 1950

One-story brick, stone foundation, rectangular plan, segmental arched entry with heavy metal burglar door, display window boarded, cornice removed. (NC due to date of construction)

38. 45 Public Square

Mail Drop, Granny's Attic  
Former M. Richardson Hardware  
ca. 1900

Two-part commercial block. Two-story brick, stone foundation, rectangular plan, recessed entry, 1:1 arched windows on the second level. (C)

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39. 46 Public Square  
Flea Market  
Former Sherman Craft/Ellick George store  
ca. 1940  
Two-part commercial block. Two-story brick veneer, stone foundation, rectangular plan, remodeled carrera glass storefront, recessed entry with double-leaf wood and glass doors, metal hopper windows on second floor. (C)
40. 47 Public Square  
Former Tom Springer store  
Beckham's Drug Store  
ca. 1938  
Two-part commercial block. Two-story brick, rectangular plan, recessed double-leaf entry, paneled brick cornice, original interior with pressed tin ceiling and display cases. (C)

WEST GAINES STREET

41. 111-115 West Gaines Street  
Bubba's Sports Cards/ New South Publishing  
Former Colonial Cafe  
ca. 1920  
One-part commercial block. One-story brick, rectangular plan, four stores in one building, unaltered storefronts with wooden bulkheads, tile coping on parapet wall. (C)
42. 117 West Gaines Street  
Democrat Union Offices  
ca. 1884  
One-part commercial block. One-story brick, rectangular plan, stone foundation, unaltered wood and glass storefront with transom glass, paneled brick cornice, tile coping on parapet wall. (C)
43. 119-121 West Gaines Street  
Mountain Assembles of God/Korean Tae Kwan Do Assoc.  
ca. 1940

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One-part commercial block. One-story brick, rectangular plan, 2 stores in one building, stone foundation, altered tile storefronts, recessed entries, tile coping on parapet wall. (C)

WEST PULASKI STREET

44. 112 West Pulaski Street  
Former Stribling Law Office  
ca. 1910  
Two-part commercial block. Two-story brick, rectangular plan, brick foundation, clay tile coping, stepped brick detail at first floor, elaborate brickwork at cornice level, main transom blocked in. (C)
45. 114 West Pulaski Street  
ca. 1910  
Two-part commercial block. Two-story brick, rectangular plan, brick foundation, metal window frames, transoms covered, concreted bulkheads. (C)
46. 116 West Pulaski Street  
Former Smith Hardware and Caperton Insurance  
ca. 1910  
Lawrenceburg Main Street office  
Two-part commercial block. Two-story brick, rectangular plan, brick foundation, paneled wooden bulkheads, second floor windows covered by shutters, and second floor front has been stuccoed in ca. 1940. (C)
47. Courthouse Square  
An oval shaped green space in the center of Lawrenceburg's public square which was once the location of the Lawrence County Courthouse. A fountain is centrally located in the square. Under the fountain there are two restrooms accessible on the north and south sides of the fountain. A sidewalk connects the north and south ends of the square and a sidewalk connects the east and west sides of the courthouse square. (C)

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Three monuments are located on the square:

Colonel David Crockett Monument. Located on the south end of the square. Stone, four-sided, statue of Crockett on top of pedestal. Erected in 1922 by W.M. Dean Marble Company. (C)

American Legion Monument. Located approximately fifteen feet north of the Crockett monument. Stone, horizontal slab topped with vertical stone slab. Dedicated to war veterans. Dedicated November 11, 1976. (NC due to date.)

Mexican-American War Monument. Located on north end of square. Stone, six tiers of stone make up the base, which is approximately four feet in height. Erected in 1895. (C)

**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    N/A

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)  
COMMERCE

Period of Significance  
1850-1940

Significant Dates  
N/A

Cultural Affiliation  
N/A

Significant Person  
N/A

Architect/Builder  
multiple; unknown

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

The Commercial Historic District of Lawrenceburg, county seat of Lawrenceburg, Tennessee, is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under criterion A for its local significance in commerce. The district, which includes fifty resources in the public square and sections of North Military, West Gaines, and West Pulaski streets, contains good local examples of commercial buildings that have been embellished by few stylistic elements. The earliest documented significant building was constructed by 1850; the latest significant building dates to 1940. The area contained within the district has been the center of the county's commercial activity since the town of Lawrenceburg was established and designated as the county seat in 1819, two years after the initial founding of Lawrence County.

Documented commercial activity dates to 1819 when a county commissioner began a tavern on the newly designated public square. Since the square was laid directly on the path of the federal Military Road, a 516 mile route that connected Columbia with New Orleans, this was an advantageous location for a tavern to serve travelers. In 1820, Joshua Borders (or Bowdry) opened the first mercantile store. But sustained commercial development did not start until the county finished the first courthouse in 1821. In that year, Dr. Obediah Stribling opened the town's first medical office. The following year, Lawrenceburg was large enough to receive a federal post office as well as its first resident attorney. In 1825, Colonel Joseph Terrell opened the town's first hotel, a sign of continued population and faith in the settlement's future.

A more concrete sign of this optimism came that same year when, on November 30, 1825, property owners incorporated the town and selected a mayor and a board of aldermen. For the next generation, Lawrenceburg grew, but remained a quiet small rural trade center. Eastin Morris' 1834 Tennessee Gazetteer, for example, listed no commercial activities in the town. But prospects began to change in the late 1840s. During 1847, the Columbia and Waynesboro Turnpike was completed through Lawrenceburg, helping to end its

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A  
 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:

Center for Historic Preservation

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of property approximately 9 acres

UTM References

A 

1,6	4,6,9,5,3,0	3,8,9,9,8,7,0
Zone	Easting	Northing

  
C 

1,6	4,6,9,5,7,0	3,8,9,9,4,3,0
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B 

1,6	4,6,9,7,6,0	3,8,9,9,8,0,0
Zone	Easting	Northing

  
D 

1,6	4,6,9,4,0,0	3,8,9,9,4,9,0
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See continuation sheet

Lawrenceburg 52NE  
Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title C. Van West, Caneta Hankins, Jennifer Martin, from a draft by Richard Quin  
organization Center for Historic Preservation date October 1991  
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city or town Murfreesboro state TN zip code 37132

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relative commercial isolation. The town also established a telegraph link to Columbia. The next year, the town's first bank, the Lawrenceburg Bank of Tennessee, was incorporated.

By 1850, the town was poised for its first sustained period of economic development. "King Cotton" had come to dominate the thoughts, and land use, of farmers and planters throughout the Middle Tennessee region. Although Lawrence County itself produced little cotton, Lawrenceburg was blessed with an abundance of water power, especially from adjacent Shoal Creek. So the town soon became a center for the region's cotton textile industry. Among the cotton mills built during this decade were the Hope Mills, Eagle Mills, and Sykes Factory on Shoal Creek, and the Glenn, Oak, Crescent, Parker, and Clay factories on Crowson Creek. While cotton production dominated, grist mills, saw-mills, and other light industries also benefited from the town's accessibility to water power. One commercial block survives from this period of growth, the circa 1850 Bentley Row at 10-12 Public Square.

The 1860 census indicated that citizens of Lawrence County were engaged in a wide variety of trades and professions. Workers here were blacksmiths, shoe makers, tanners, carpenters, merchants, wheelwrights, harness makers, brick masons, stone masons, millers, wagon makers, stage drivers, preachers, iron-masters, hatters, tailors, printers, druggists, carders, coopers, lawyers and doctors. Almost all of the professions, tradesmen, and business houses were located in Lawrenceburg, in the area contained within the historic district.

The Civil War affected Lawrenceburg only indirectly as no significant military action took place in the vicinity. However, the destruction of markets, the lack of manpower, and wartime economic disturbances sent the local cotton textile industry into a decline. Before the war, the county produced 20% of the finished cotton goods in the state. In the reconstruction period, that figure decreased due to lack of capital to restart businesses as well as the depressed cotton market throughout the south. Considering the lack of commercial growth during these years, it is not surprising that today's downtown business district contains only one building, the former Opera House at 3 Public Square, that was built during the 1860s and 1870s.

Economic recovery and eventual expansion in Lawrence County dates to the 1870s. In 1870, J. B. Juep of Cincinnati established the "German Catholic Homestead Association" to relocate German immigrants into the wilds of lower Middle Tennessee. The Association eventually acquired 25,000 acres

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and hundreds of homesteaders moved to the county, encouraging the establishment of new businesses in Lawrenceburg. Perhaps the most important catalyst to recovery, however, was the construction of the Columbia, Lawrenceburg, and Florence Railroad in 1879-1880. The railroad ran directly to the town square, with the tracks paralleling the rear of the east side of the public square. Once the railroad was completed, many of the old cotton mills were reopened and in 1882, a group of local entrepreneurs established the Marcella Falls Woolen Mills. The town's textile industry was back on its feet and would serve as a major component of Lawrenceburg's economic development from the mid-1880s into the twentieth century.

By the 1890s many businesses flourished in Lawrenceburg, including a bakery, three saloons, two jewelry stores, six general stores, ten groceries, seven dry goods stores, a furniture store, a drug store, three livery stables, three boot and saddle shops, a cigar factory, a stove factory, a stove and tin shop, and two hotels. Agricultural colonization continued as a Norwegian colony moved into the county in 1894. These new developments naturally led to changes in the urban built environment of the town square. New building blocks, such as those at 8 Public Square and the huge Welch's building at 32-34 Public Square, were constructed. But man-made disasters also spurred new changes in the commercial built environment of Lawrenceburg. On January 20, 1891, a fire in the northeast corner of the square destroyed the Sims and McGee saloon, Tripp's drug store, a law office and a restaurant along with a brick yard and several other businesses just off the square. Seven years later, on October 6, 1898, a much more dangerous fire devastated the northeast side of the square and damaged several businesses on the northwest side.

The fires called for the construction of new business blocks, now invariably built of brick. But town boosters and rural real estate agents also boomed in Lawrenceburg, and Lawrence County, as the center of a potential farming paradise. The area certainly was ripe for such a booster campaign. As late as 1886, only 18% of the county's land was under cultivation; there was virgin farmland ready for the plucking for those industrious enough to clear it--and the timber was valuable as well. From 1900 to 1910, the county grew more proportionately than any other county in the state, a population boom that also had a remarkable impact on the built environment of Lawrenceburg's commercial district. In 1905, for example, a new courthouse was constructed and gas lamps were installed on the square. In 1909 the Lawrenceburg Bank and Trust company (now the Boatman's Bank Building) opened its doors. Today there are sixteen buildings in the proposed historic district which date from the years 1900 to 1910.

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The commercial momentum created during 1900 to 1910 carried into the next decade too. The Kelly and Coffman Block, perhaps the district's most architecturally distinctive commercial block, was constructed at 38-39 Public Square in circa 1914. In 1917, the city replaced its gas lamps with electric lights around the square as well as grading and macadamizing the square road. Two years later came the Massey Dry Goods store at 40-42 Public Square.

During the 1920s and 1930s, however, commercial activity began a slow shift from the square to the axis created by the intersection of Gaines Street and North Military Street one block north of the square. This was due to the increasing importance of the Pulaski-Waynesboro Highway and of automobile traffic. Of the ten properties in the 100 block of North Military, seven were built after 1920. This commercial shift northward became even more pronounced after 1929-1930, when Gaines Street became part of the James K. Polk Highway (Tennessee Highway 15, now U. S. Highway 64). Indeed, the commercial development of the 200 block of North Military is clearly dependent on the construction of the new federal highway, with such important buildings as the 1936 Classical Revival post office at 218 North Military quickly becoming a new center of activity.

After the Second World War, the suburban movement combined with the popularity of automobile traffic to decrease the commercial significance of the original downtown business district of Lawrenceburg. Like so many other communities, consumers increasingly turned to shopping centers along the major highway arteries. But for the period of 1850 to 1940, the downtown business district was the only significant focal point for commercial activity in Lawrenceburg. The district still retains the historic integrity of this period and stands as a significant physical artifact of past patterns of commercial activity and economic development.

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### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Lawrenceburg Commercial Historic District boundaries are the public square, the 100 block of North Military Street, the even numbered side of the 200 block of North Military Street, the 100 block of West Pulaski Street, and the odd numbered side of the 100 block of West Gaines Street up to 121 West Gaines Street. The district also includes the courthouse square area of the public square.

### BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries include all the historic property lines associated with the Lawrenceburg Commercial Historic District. The area is surrounded by non-contributing buildings and/or modern buildings. The district forms an intact collection of historic resources associated with the commercial development of Lawrenceburg.

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Lawrenceburg Commercial Historic District  
Lawrenceburg, Lawrence County, Tennessee  
Photos: Richard Quin/C. Van West  
Date: March 1991/October 1991  
Negatives: Tennessee Historical Commission  
Nashville, Tennessee

100 block of West Pulaski, facing northwest  
#1 of 27

114-118 West Pulaski, facing north  
#2 of 27

Crockett Monument, Public Square, facing north  
#3 of 27

Crockett Monument, South Military Street streetscape, facing south  
#4 of 27

Crockett Monument, east side of Public Square, facing northeast  
#5 of 27

26-32 Public Square, facing south  
#6 of 27

32-36 Public Square, facing southwest  
#7 of 27

Waterloo Street streetscape, from Public Square, facing west  
#8 of 27

38-39 Public Square, facing west  
#9 of 27

40-47 Public Square, facing northwest  
#10 of 27

38-42 Public Square, facing west  
#11 of 27

100 block (odd) North Military Street streetscape, facing northwest  
#12 of 27

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100 block (even) North Military Street streetscape, facing northeast  
#13 of 27

1-6 Public Square, facing north  
#14 of 27

1-6 Public Square, facing north  
#15 of 27

8-13 Public Square, facing east  
#16 of 27

14-21 Public Square, facing southeast  
#17 of 27

14-21 Public Square, Crockett Monument, facing east  
#18 of 27

East side of Public Square streetscape, facing south  
#19 of 27

23-25 Public Square, facing southeast  
#20 of 27

Mexican-American War Monument, public square, facing southwest  
#21 of 27

121 North Military Street, facing northwest  
#22 of 27

100 block of North Military Street (even numbers), facing southeast  
#23 of 27

200 block of North Military Street (even numbers), facing northeast  
#24 of 27

Hays Block, 214-216 North Military Street, facing east  
#25 of 27

U.S. Post Office, 218 North Military Street, facing east  
#26 of 27

111-121 West Gaines Street, facing southeast  
#27 of 27