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United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

MAR 14 1989

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 Weakley-Truett-Clark House
other names/site number Fairfax Hall

2. Location

street & number 415 Rosebank Avenue
city, town Nashville
state Tennessee code TN county Davidson code 037 zip code 37206

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: [X] private, [ ] public-local, [ ] public-State, [ ] public-Federal
Category of Property: [X] building(s), [ ] district, [ ] site, [ ] structure, [ ] object
Number of Resources within Property: Contributing (2, 1, 1, 4), Noncontributing (2 buildings, sites, structures, objects, 2 Total)
Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
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 [X] 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 [X] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. [ ] See continuation sheet.
Signature of certifying official: Robert L. Hays, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission
Date: 3/8/89
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:
[X] 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:)
Signature of the Keeper: Melona Byers
Date of Action: 4/13/89

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwellingDOMESTIC: secondary structure

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Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwellingDOMESTIC: secondary structure

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

ItalianateOTHER: Federal/Classical Revival

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Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Limestonewalls BRICK

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roof Tinother Wood porticoWeatherboard

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**Describe present and historic physical appearance.**

The Weakley-Truett-Clark House is a two story brick residence located at 415 Rosebank Avenue in Nashville, Tennessee. Constructed circa 1820, the Weakley House is a dignified example of early Davidson County residential architecture. The house, which is encircled by a flat board fence, sits back from the road and is situated on a thirteen acre lot in a suburban area surrounded by modern residences. The five bay structure features a prominent two story classical pedimented portico supported by Ionic columns. Originally built in the Federal style alterations to the house occurred at two key points in the structure's history and have subsequently added Italianate and Classical Revival features. The first alterations occurred in circa 1870 when the portico, arched windows, and classical details were applied to the structure. In 1936-37 the second major changes occurred when symmetrical one story wings were added at each end. Today, the structure still maintains much of its character, from all three periods of construction; the original circa 1820 form, the circa 1870 alterations and the 1936-37 additions that were completed in a manner consistent with the houses earlier appearance.

As a product of the Federal period of architecture, the structure still exhibits many of its original characteristics. Laid in a common bond pattern, the original brick house consists of a symmetrical plan; two rooms over two rooms with a central hall. The structure contains flush gable end chimneys on the east and west gable ends, a standing seam metal gable roof, and rests on a limestone foundation.

The main facade, which faces north, is divided into five symmetrical bays. The windows are round arched, four over four double hung sash, with matching round arched wood exterior shutters. Originally, the windows would have been rectangular, probably six over six sash, with wood lintels and sills. The front facade is dominated by the central entry which contains a two story portico. The gable roof of the portico features gable returns and a classical cornice with paired brackets. Within the pediment is a subtle sunburst motif. The portico is supported by two, two story, fluted Ionic corner columns. Within the portico is a second story cantilevered balcony with simple turned balusters supported by scrolled brackets. The portico and round arched-window treatments were executed in the 1870 alteration. The main entrance of the structure is highlighted by double leafed four panel doors surmounted by a segmentally arched fanlight

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Weakley-Truett-Clark House

with tracery. The doors are flanked by simple sidelights, four vertical panes in each. The entrance doors, fanlight, and sidelights appear to date from the original circa 1820 construction of the house.

Both the west and east elevations of the house retain their original appearance on the second story. Original window openings can still be found on the east, west and rear elevations. In 1936-37 one story, flat roof side wings were added to both the east and west elevations. The additions are constructed of common bond brick and are comprised of arched windows and shutters consistent with the rest of the structure. The bracket motif found on the cornice is continued on the side additions. The east facade differs from the west facade slightly; the one story wing extends an extra two bays to the rear of the structure.

The rear, or south elevation, of the structure has had extensive early alterations. The rear facade contains a two story addition constructed circa 1870. The addition provided space for a kitchen, which was modernized in 1936-37, on the first floor and contains storage space on the second floor. The hipped roof of the rear addition ties into the original structure at a point just below the cornice line. The brick cornice on this elevation remains unaltered from its original Federal appearance. In 1936, the rear elevation was extended further with the construction of a one story frame, weatherboard clad enclosed pantry/porch.

The interior of the house retains much of its original character. Typical of the period, the Federal plan consists of two rooms over two rooms on either side of a central hall. Ceiling heights are eleven feet on the first floor, nine feet on the second. The parlor features double leaf doors that swing into the room, rather than the traditional pocket doors commonly found on houses of this vintage. The parlor door is surmounted by a six light transom. The parlor also contains a chandelier and ceiling modillion that appear to date from the 1870s modernization of the house. The interior doors, fireplaces, mantels, and woodwork in the original portion of the house are original and are typical of the Federal style. The majority of doors in the house are four panel doors and the baseboards are the typical wide baseboards of the early nineteenth century. The central hall is characterized by an elegant original staircase that turns twice before reaching the second story. The newel post of the stair was replaced circa 1890.

In 1936-37, when the side wings were added, it was necessary to convert a window to the rear of each chimney into a door. This was done for each of the two wings. The west wing is used as a study, the east wing as a

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bedroom. Other 1936-37 alterations include the replacement of the original hardwood floor of the first floor with oak. The yellow pine floors on the second story are original.

There are two contributing and two non-contributing outbuildings located on the property. Contributing buildings include a log cabin and a garage/office building. The non-contributing buildings include a tenant house and a barn.

Flanking the Weakley House on the west side is a formal flower garden, established by Mrs. Clark in 1937. On the main axis of the garden is a contributing log cabin of an indeterminable date that was moved to the site in 1937 from the nearby Inglewood School. The cabin features a gable front, a shed roof front porch, and half-dovetail notching. The garden contains native Tennessee flowers and plants. The garden is a contributing landscape feature. To the rear of the main structure is a contributing, one story frame garage/office structure. Built in 1937, the structure has a hipped roof with recessed porch on the west side which leads to the entrance of a small office. The recessed porch is supported by turned wood posts. The structure also contains a two-car garage.

Approximately 350 feet to the south of the rear of the main structure is the servants quarters. The non-contributing tenant house was built circa 1940, this simple one story frame structure has gable ends, a shed roof front porch, and a central chimney. The building features board and batten siding on the west side with shiplap on the remaining three. The building rests on a brick pier foundation. Approximately 500 feet to the southwest of the main structure is the only barn remaining on the property. Built circa 1940, the non-contributing building has a gambrel roof and vertical wood siding.

Today, as the residence of the Sheffield Clark, Jr. family, the Weakley-Truett-Clark House stands as a visual reminder of early Davidson County architecture and history. The name of the house is derived from the three major periods in the house architectural history. Samuel Weakley constructed the original house in circa 1820, Ezekiel Truett a later owner modified the Federal style house with Italianate details, and the Clark family added the Classical Revival additions in 1936-1937. The house is an excellent example of a residence that has been modified over time.

**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)

ARCHITECTURE  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance

ca. 1820, ca. 1870,  
1936-37  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates

ca. 1820  
ca. 1870  
1936-1937

Cultural Affiliation

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder

UNKNOWN  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

The Weakley-Truett-Clark House is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under criterion C for its architectural significance as a fine example of a circa 1820 Federal house that was updated with Italianate-style architectural embellishments in the 1870s and Classical Revival additions in the 1930s.

The importance of the Weakley-Truett-Clark House is closely tied to the early settlement and development of Nashville and Middle Tennessee. Established in 1780, Nashville was a small town on North Carolina's western frontier when, in 1787, Samuel Weakley (January 11, 1768 - October 15, 1832) joined his older brother Robert (1764-1845) who had migrated here from Halifax County, Virginia in 1784. By 1800, seven of the nine Weakley children were living in the Nashville area. The promise of cheaply priced fertile land along the Cumberland River was the lure that attracted many settlers to Nashville, and the Weakley brothers were no exception. Having learned the valuable trade of surveying from their father, Robert Weakley (1720 - 1798), the Weakley brothers quickly set about surveying land for themselves and others in middle Tennessee.

Samuel Weakley continued the family tradition of land surveyor and farmer. Confusion caused by the inaccuracy of many early North Carolina land grants (1780 - 1796) resulted in constant litigation over conflicting boundary claims. Establishment of the early courts system was necessary in order to arbitrate these disputes. Samuel and Robert Weakley established themselves as trusted surveyors who played a significant role in the early planning and settlement of the Nashville area by helping to settle many of these land disputes. The Weakleys were also responsible for helping to plot out many of the early town sites such as Jefferson, the first county seat of Rutherford County.

In 1801 Samuel Weakley, purchased a 500 acre tract adjoining his brother Robert's 615 acres, where he would one day build his brick home. The exact date of construction of the house is not known. It may have been

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: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property 13 acres

UTM References

A 

1	6
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5	2	5	0	5	0
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4	0	0	4	7	2	0
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Zone Easting Northing

C 

1	6
---	---

5	2	5	2	4	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	0	0	4	4	8	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

B 

1	6
---	---

5	2	5	2	5	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	0	0	4	7	0	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Zone Easting Northing

D 

1	6
---	---

5	2	5	0	2	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	0	0	4	4	8	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Nashville East, Tennessee - 311 NW

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary for the Weakley-Truett-Clark House includes a thirteen acre parcel historically associated with the property as shown on Davidson County Tax Map P-83-B parcel number 8-8. See Tax Map.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes sufficient property to protect the historic setting of the house.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Stephen P. Rogers, Hist. Pres. Spec. & Mark Sturtevant, Arch. Hist.

organization T.H.C. & Metro Hist. Comm. date November 18, 1988

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Weakley-Truett-Clark House

constructed after the land purchase in 1801, however, Samuel was listed on the 1820 census as living in Montgomery County Tennessee, (present day Cheatham County). Samuel was appointed as the Davidson County surveyor for the years 1803, 1807, and 1823. It seems more probable that the Weakley-Truett-Clark House was built in the early 1820's. After the destruction of Robert Weakley's Lockeland, the Weakley-Truett-Clark House is the lone surviving significant structure associated with the Weakley family.

Samuel married Sarah Vaughn in Halifax County, North Carolina in 1797, and to that union were born eight children. Samuel's duties as surveyor required him to travel throughout middle Tennessee. It was on a surveying expedition in Montgomery County in 1832 that Samuel died. Samuel died intestate, and his brother Robert was appointed administrator of his estate. An inventory taken November 30, 1832, revealed Samuel had acquired a great deal of wealth, including 34 slaves valued at \$8,800. Samuel's house and land were later bought by his brother Robert in 1834 for \$44.80 per acre. After the land sale, Samuel's widow, Sarah, moved to Huntsville, Alabama, where she died in 1839. Robert Weakley retained ownership of property until his death in 1845, and during the division of his estate in 1851, the Samuel Weakley tract of 500 acres was divided among his heirs.

Robert, also an important early settler, pursued a dual career as surveyor/land speculator, and was actively involved in public service as eight term state legislator, and one term U.S. Congressman, and as a gubernatorial candidate.

In 1855, Ezekiel Truett acquired thirty-six acres "including the ancestral home of Samuel Weakley". It was here that Truett (1812 - 1872), established the successful Rosebank Nursery. The exact date the nursery was established is not known, while not listed in the city directories until 1877, the nursery was a thriving business prior to the start of the Civil War. Truett's Rosebank Nursery, along with L.C. Lischy's Nashville Nursery and Fruit Garden, and Langdon & Cherry's Fruit Tree Nursery serviced Nashville during the antebellum days. The Rosebank Nursery had a good regional reputation and shipped nursery stock throughout the Midwest and southeast. After disruptions caused by the war, Truett again built the nursery back into a thriving concern. With Truett's death in 1872, operation of the nursery was passed on to his two sons, Laban A. Truett, and William H. Truett. By 1877, the business had acquired an additional partner, Irby Morgan, and for the next decade, the Rosebank Nursery was one of five successful nurseries in the Nashville area. Truett's ownership in the nursery seemed to end by 1880, when Laban sold to H.W. Buttroff 10 acres "with a two story brick house and frame addition, together with the

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usual outbuildings." The present street name where the Weakley House is located takes its name from the nursery.

The reference to outbuildings may refer to buildings associated with the nursery. It may also refer to the presence of a slave house located on the property. Information taken from the 1860 Slave Census Schedule indicated the existence of five slaves and one slave house. The slaves were more than likely involved in the operation of the nursery. Because the acreage of the current tract is thirteen acres as opposed to the thirty-six acres bought by Truett, it is not possible to determine if the sites of the aforementioned outbuildings are situated on the property. The sites remain an unevaluated resource and would however, be considered as contributing elements if they were located on the nominated tract for their potential to yield significant archaeological information.

Ownership of the house changed hands several times after the Truett's ownership, until it was acquired Sheffield and Anna Lou Anderson Clark in 1935. His father, Sheffield Clark, Sr., established a firm that represents manufacturers in the wholesale and hardware trades. Begun in 1897, this family business continues in operation today under the leadership of Sheffield Clark III, grandson of the founder. The Clarks spent most of 1936-37 making necessary modifications to the Weakley House. The electrical system was rewired, and running water was brought into the house. One story wings were added to the east and west ends of the facade, and on April 14, 1937, a grand house warming ball was held. Renamed Fairfax Hall by cousins of the Clarks, the house was the scene for many social gatherings over the next fifty years.

Architecturally, the Weakley-Truett-Clark House is significant as one of two surviving examples of a Federal period house that was updated with Italianate-style details in the 1870's. A recently published book which surveyed all the Antebellum homes in Davidson County, identified only twenty-four two story brick houses. Of these twenty-four, only three were built in a five bay Federal style, with later Italianate detailing. In addition to the Weakley House, the two other houses included Grassmere, listed on the National Register 07/19/1984, and Mount Alban which was torn down in 1984. Both the Weakley-Truett-Clark House and Grassmere show comparable evolutionary development, and are the best examples of these type of house in Davidson County.

Built as an austere two story brick, five bay Federal style house, the Weakley-Truett-Clark House was embellished with the changing of the rectangular window and door opens to ones with round arches in circa 1870.



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The two story pedimented portico supported by two fluted columns with Ionic capitals complete the transition. Additionally, the wing additions built onto the facade during the 1936-37 remodeling are architecturally significant as excellent examples of 1930s Classical Revival style. They are compatible with the character of the house, and mimic those alterations made during the 1870's. The arched windows and shutters match the original, as do the paired scrolled brackets and standing seam metal roof.

The Weakley-Truett-Clark House serves as a metaphor, reminding one of Nashville's pioneer past, and its transformation to an economically important city in the mid-south in the days after the Civil War.

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- Clements, G. Paul, et al. A Past Remembered, A Collection of Antebellum Homes in Davidson County, Tennessee, Nashville: Clearview Press, 1987.
- Davidson County Census Records - Population Schedules 1850, 1860.
- Davidson County Census Records - Slave Schedule 1860.
- Davidson County Register of Deeds, Nashville.
- Weakley Family Vertical File - Reference Room Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville.
- Weakley, Samuel A., The Southern Virginia Weakley Family and Their Descendants. privately printed, 1965.



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Weakley-Truett-Clark House  
415 Rosebank Avenue  
Nashville, Davidson County, Tennessee  
Photo: Mark Sturtevant  
Date: November 1988  
Neg: Tennessee Historical Commission  
Nashville, Tennessee

North Facade, facing south  
#1 of 21

Portico Detail  
#2 of 21

North and West Elevations, facing southeast  
#3 of 21

East Elevation, facing southwest  
#4 of 21

East Elevation, facing west  
#5 of 21

East and South Elevations, facing northwest  
#6 of 21

South Elevation, facing north  
#7 of 21

South and West Elevations, facing northeast  
#8 of 21

Interior Detail, Main Entry  
#9 of 21

Interior Detail, Central Hallway Door into West Parlor with Six Light  
Transom  
#10 of 21

Interior Detail, Stairs  
#11 of 21

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Interior Detail, West Parlor  
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Interior Detail, East Parlor  
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Interior Detail, Upstairs West Bedroom Door with Three Light Transom  
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Interior Detail, Upstairs West Bedroom  
#15 of 21

Garden and Log House, facing south  
#16 of 21

Garden and Log House, facing south  
#17 of 21

Garage/Office, facing east  
#18 of 21

Garage/Office, facing south  
#19 of 21

Barn, facing south  
#20 of 21

Tenant House, facing southeast  
#21 of 21