

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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



MAR 25 1982

1. Name

historic W. T. Lawler House
and/or common Dawson House

2. Location

street & number 229 University Street N/A not for publication
city, town Martin N/A vicinity of congressional district Seventh
state Tennessee code 047 county Weakley code 183

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Mr. and Mrs. Cleo Dawson
street & number 229 University Street
city, town Martin N/A vicinity of state Tennessee 38237

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Weakley County Courthouse-Register of Deeds
street & number Courthouse Square
city, town Dresden state Tennessee 38225

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

The W. T. Lawler House, located on University Street, Martin, Tennessee, is a 1½ story frame Carpenter's Gothic cottage constructed on an ell plan. A one story porch extends across the facade and a verandah runs the length of two bays on the west elevation. There is a one story addition (ca. 1900) to the rear of the ell. There are two brick interior chimneys. The roof style is gable.

The house rests upon a full brick foundation which has been covered with concrete. The exterior walls are covered with weatherboarding and novelty wood siding. The two chimneys exhibit simple brick corbelling. Both service downstairs fireplaces. The gable roof on both the original section and the addition is covered with asphalt shingles.

The two prominent features of the cottage are the windows and porches. All first floor windows in the original section are floor to ceiling in height, round-arched, and double sash with two over four lights. An elaborately decorated bay window on the facade exhibits straight topped double sash windows with both upper and lower sashes glazed with plate glass. Upper story and dormer windows are four over four double sash with pointed arches. Windows in the 1900 addition are four over four double sash. All windows have wooden surrounds. Dormer windows have enriched consoles with pendants. The projecting bay is highly decorated with carved brackets, dentiling, stylized flowers, and ring-shaped molding.

The front porch is supported by paired posts with wide trefoil arches. Identical single posts and arches support the side verandah. Railings consist of ornamental perforated wooden disks attached to diagonal and straight balusters. Lattice work with wooden diamond-shapes decorates the frieze.

Other exterior architectural features include gingerbread vergeboards with pendants, decorative attic vents, and louvered shutters.

Interior features include cherry woodwork, mantels, and stairway; white poplar and sweet gum woodwork and doors retain the original oak graining. Interior transoms with two lights are located above all lower story doors in the original section.

Also on the property is a one story frame building constructed originally as the servant's quarters. It was converted to a one car garage by the present owner.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1880

Builder/Architect John Campbell, Carpenter

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph) Criteria C

The W. T. Lawler House, built in 1880, is a significant architectural resource in the northwest Tennessee area. Displaying a high degree of craftsmanship, this Victorian cottage is similar to many residences illustrated in A. J. Downing's pattern books, Cottage Residences and The Architecture of Country Houses. Although simple Victorian cottages exist throughout Weakley County, the Lawler House is the only notable example of Carpenter Gothic to be found. The cottage is unique for its display of gingerbread vergeboard, jigsaw porch ornamentation and an elaborately decorated bay window.

W. T. Lawler, son of Martin and Nancy Lawler, was born in Weakley County, Tennessee, in the year 1838. He was educated at a nearby school in the Mt. Pelia community. In May 1861, at the age of twenty-three, he enlisted in Company G, Ninth Tennessee Infantry, Confederate Army, at Gardner's Station in Weakley County. During the recruitment and formation of the company, Lawler was elected second lieutenant. He later served in Company I, 20th Tennessee Cavalry Regiment and was promoted to first lieutenant. During a battle in Athens, Alabama, September, 1864, Lawler was wounded in the right arm. The wound was so severe as to necessitate an immediate amputation in the field hospital.

Upon returning home, Lawler began to pursue the study of medicine. He entered the office of Dr. G. W. Dibrell in Mt. Pelia where he gained supervised experience for two years. After leaving Dr. Dibrell's office, he enrolled in two lecture courses at the Nashville Medical University where he graduated in the spring of 1868. He then returned to the community of Mt. Pelia to set up a practice for himself.

In 1871, Dr. Lawler married Frances McCain of Trigg County, Kentucky. By 1880, six children had been born to this union. In the same year, Dr. Lawler closed his office in Mt. Pelia and moved his family to the prosperous little town of Martin. He purchased a town lot on Mechanic Street (now University Street) where he had a fashionable Victorian cottage constructed. After settling in Martin, Dr. Lawler opened a drug store, was appointed to the Board of Aldermen, and was elected president of the Martin Planing Mills and Lumber Company. He remained active in these pursuits until his death in 1910.

In 1952, the house was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Cleo Dawson. Alterations to the house include a modern kitchen in the 1900 addition and the installation of a small bath in the original section. Due to a fire during the 1960s, the walls of one upstairs bedroom have been covered with wood paneling.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Corbitt, James, "The Doctors." Weakley County Press. Centennial Edition. June 28, 1973, p. 34.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Martin Tennessee

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	6	3	3	3	7	0	4	0	2	3	3	8	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

The nominated property occupies town lot number 25, group "G," tax map '73-L for the city of Martin, Tennessee. The property's boundaries are outlined in red on the accompanying property assessor's map, and conform to the dimensions of the lot on which the

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries building is situated.

state N/A code county N/A code

state N/A code county N/A code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Cate Hamilton, Historic Preservation Specialist

organization Northwest TN Development District date May 28, 1981

street & number P.O. Box 63, Weldon Drive telephone (901) 587-4213

city or town Martin state Tennessee 38237

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer signature Herbert L. Higin

title Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission date 2/11/82

For HCERS use only	
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.	Entered in the National Register
<u>Deloris Byers</u>	date <u>3/25/82</u>
Keeper of the National Register	
Attest:	date
Chief of Registration	