

KENTUCKY HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY Site No. Wa-193
 Warren County Multiple Resources Area Addition

1. Historic Name(s) Walnut Lawn		22. ADD/County Barren River/Warren 114	
Original Owner Josiah Wright William E. Hobson		23. Zoning Classification Magisterial District	
2. Present Name Walnut Lawn		24. U.S.G. S. Quadrant (15'/75') Bowling Green South 069	
3. Owner's Name Margaret Hobson		25. UTM Reference 16 544880 4094000	
4. Owner's Address P.O. Box 672 Bowling Green, Ky. 42101		Zone Easting Northing	
5. Location One mile west of Bowling Green on Morgantown Road,		26. Prehistoric Site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building Historic Site Structure	
6. Open to Public Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	7. Visible from road Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	27. District Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
9. Local Contact/Organization Landmark Association		Name: 	
8. Ownership Private <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> Federal <input type="checkbox"/>		28. Significance Evaluation <input type="checkbox"/>	
10. Site Plan with North Arrow See attached maps.		29. Status National Landmark <input type="checkbox"/> National Register <input type="checkbox"/> Landmark Certificate <input type="checkbox"/> Kentucky Survey <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> May 15, 1979 Local Landmark <input type="checkbox"/> HABS/HAER <input type="checkbox"/>	
11. Architect		Date	
12. Builder Bittner family 1885		30. Theme Primary Politics/Govt. V Secondary Architecture C Other	
13. Date 1805/1885 25		31. Endangered Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
14. Style A. Eclectic <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> B. <input type="checkbox"/>		32. <p align="center">ATTACH PHOTO</p>	
15. Original Use Residence A			
16. Present Use Residence			
17. Condition Good B			
18. Description See reverse.			
No. Stories Two 1			
Single Pile <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NA <input type="checkbox"/>			
Double Pile <input type="checkbox"/>			
Floor Plan T-plan N			
Structrual Fabric Log A Frame D 1			
Decorative Fabric Weatherboard J			
B. <input type="checkbox"/>			
Roof Form Gable/Irregular			
19. History See attached sheet.		Roll No. _____ Picture No. _____ Direction _____	
20. Significance See attached sheet.		33. Tape No. _____ Negative No. _____	
21. Source of Information See attached sheet.		34. Prepared by: Kevin A. Hunter	
		35. Organization Landmark Association	
		36. Date 15 Feb. 1983	
		37. Revision Dates 05 May 1983	
		38. Staff Review	

DESCRIPTION

Walnut Lawn, located on 300 acres of an original land grant of 400 acres, is a two story, frame, T-plan structure with an ell addition. Exhibiting an Eastlake influence on the exterior while classic details predominate the interior, the house with its attendant buildings and garden, have remained virtually unchanged since 1885. Walnut Lawn is one of Warren County's few late 19th century country estates remaining in its original environment.

This farm is bounded by Glen Lily Road on the north, Jennings Creek on the east, Morgantown Road on the south and Willoughby Lane on the west. Access to the house is gained via a private road with a formal entrance on Morgantown Road. A picturesque approach to the house prevents a clear view of the structure until arrival at the front walk. Facing east, the house is sighted directly toward College Hill, Bowling Green's most prominent geographic landmark. A 50 acre front lawn slopes away from the house to Jennings Creek,¹ running parallel to the building. Many of the walnut trees, for which the farm is named, are still found on the property. A large flower garden occupies an area adjacent to the house on the south side.²

The present structure incorporated the original 1805 log house with its ell addition when remodeled in 1885. Eclectic in nature, the building's exterior features exhibit an Eastlake influence while classic details are found throughout the interior. Surface decoration is most prominent on the more visible south and east facades, particularly on the gable ends and front porch. A continuity of design is carried out on window and door facings, canopies, bay windows, balconies, gable panels, brackets, posts, rails and balusters. This decoration is carried out to a lesser degree on the west and north facades. Original lattice work remains on the upper tier of the rear porch. Although primarily gable in character, the roof is irregular due to the 1885 remodeling. This roof contains three chimneys.

Related outbuildings include a "V" notched log kitchen 30 feet to the south and a circa 1900 springhouse 40 feet to the north. The 10 foot by 10 foot one story kitchen has a gable roof with horizontal weatherboarding at the gable ends, a single window on the south side and a door on the north side. A chimney once stood at the west side. The two story 30 foot by 30 foot frame springhouse stands on a limestone foundation over a natural spring 20 feet below ground level. A pyramidal roof replaced the original cypress tank.

¹Jennings Creek is fed by Lost River, an important nearby landmark. Jennings Creek is also the location of Dishman Mill site. The mill site forms a part of the property boundary and was once an important mill for area farmers.

²This garden contains a portion of the original stone fountain (1871-1881) once located in Bowling Green's Fountain Square Park (Wa-B-70) and three of the town's original cast iron gas lamp posts.

HISTORY

Josiah Wright, a linen merchant from Scotland, obtained a 400 acre land grant and built a two story log house on the property in 1805. A second owner, Dr. John Briggs, sold the property to Robert Ogden, a prosperous slave trader, in 1842. Ogden added over 100 slave cabins to the horse farm and later willed \$150,000 to Ogden College, now a part of Western Kentucky University.

Weldon Hunt, a prominent horseman, bought the property from Ogden and built a race track that attracted such horsemen as Andrew Jackson. Col. Atwood G. Hobson (Riverview-National Register) bought the farm from the Ogden estate (Hunt had failed to fully pay for the property) in 1872 and in turn gave the farm to his son and granddaughters in 1885.

Upon acquisition of the property in 1885, Col. William E. Hobson incorporated the original two story log house and ell addition into the present structure. Currently owned by William's daughter, Walnut Lawn has remained unchanged since 1885.

SIGNIFICANCE

Built during Warren County's post-Civil War period of industrial and agricultural growth, Walnut Lawn represents the accomplishments of Col. William E. Hobson. Although the basic plan of the house is common to the area, the building's Eastlake and classic features are atypical of rural estates in the county.

Walnut Lawn's significance is based upon the farm's association with Col. William E. Hobson. William's career began during the Civil War when he was commissioned Major of the 13th Kentucky Volunteers. He soon became the youngest Colonel in the army at the age of 19. Late in 1864, he was assigned to Bowling Green as post commander. In appreciation for maintaining law and order in a town divided by conflicting loyalties, a citizen's petition asked that he be retained at his post.

Hobson's service to his community after the war had a more lasting effect. Upon graduation from law school in 1867, William centered his law practice in Bowling Green. Some of his clients included former slaves, a factor that later caused him denial of political appointments. For a time he edited the Bowling Green Republican, a local newspaper, was appointed postmaster and served as Assessor of Internal Revenue. Active in local, state and national politics, William's concerns revolved around free trade, foreign imports, civil service, agriculture and mining.

Walnut Lawn was rebuilt during this second phase of Hobson's career and reflects the personal successes of his life. Built by the Bittner family¹, Walnut Lawn exhibits quality craftsmanship and design. Virtually unchanged since 1885, the house and its environmental context are a fine example of 19th century picturesque principles found in few other country estates in the county.

¹The Bittner family was also responsible for the construction of A.G. Hobson's Riverview (National Register) and College Street home (no longer standing).

KENTUCKY HISTORIC RESOURCE INVENTORY SUPPLEMENT
BOUNDARY AND LOCATION INFORMATION

Historic Property Name Walnut Lawn Site #Wa-193

Multiple Resource/Thematic Nomination Title Warren County Multiple Resources
Area Addition

U.T.M. Coordinates - List multiple UTM's if property is ten or more acres.

A. 16 544880 4094000 D. _____

B. _____ E. _____

C. _____ F. _____

Verbal Boundary Description Acreage 5.5

Walnut Lawn and its two dependencies are located within a 5.5 acre fenced domestic space which also includes a formal garden. The boundary begins at a point @200 feet south, southeast of the house, and proceeds west, northwest 400 feet in a line parallel to the Morgantown Road, thence north, northeast along the fence west of the house 600 feet to the fenced corner of the domestic space, thence east, southeast 400 feet to the northeast corner of the domestic space; thence south, southwest 600 feet to the point of origin.

Sketch of Site Plan (Showing outbuildings, structures, landscape features and the site boundary as described above.)

See attached maps.

Official Courthouse Property Reference:

Warren County Courthouse
429 East 10th
Bowling Green, Ky. 42101

SOURCE OF INFORMATION

Beard, Mary Hobson. Old Homes in and Near Bowling Green, Kentucky.

Sumpter, Irene. An Album of Early Warren County Landmarks.

Daily News, Bowling Green, Ky. June 21, 1981; Dec. 19, 1982; Feb. 6, 1983.

Margaret Hobson, Bowling Green, Ky.

Peggy Bush, Bowling Green, Ky.

Deed Books. Warren County, Ky.