

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

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

For NPS use only

received OCT 11 1984
date entered NOV 8 1984

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

1. Name

historic Bleak House

and/or common Confederate Memorial Hall

2. Location

street & number 3148 Kingston Pike N/A not for publication

city, town Knoxville N/A vicinity of

state Tennessee code 047 county Knox code 093

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"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input 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	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 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 Chapter #89, United Daughters of the Confederacy

street & number 3148 Kingston Pike, SW

city, town Knoxville N/A vicinity of state Tennessee 37919

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Knox County Courthouse

street & number Main Avenue, SW

city, town Knoxville state Tennessee 37902

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Knox County Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1979-1984 federal state county local

depository for survey records Tennessee Historical Commission, 701 Broadway

city, town Nashville state Tennessee 37203

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Built in 1854-58 of handmade bricks fired on the grounds, Bleak House is a two-story building with basement. It exhibits features of the Italian Villa style, in which it was originally designed, and influence of the Georgian/Renaissance Revival with additions dating from the early 1900s. Located in a residential area of elegant early-twentieth-century houses facing a major thoroughfare in Knoxville, Kingston Pike, it is nestled on 3½ acres of land and surrounded by formal gardens. Although altered by the additions and remodelings, it remains in good condition.

Designed in the Italian Villa style, the house features asymmetrical massing, low-pitched hip and gable roofs that cover the various sections of the house, a three-story tower on the east elevation and both rectangular and arched windows. The rectangular windows are either 8/8 or 6/6 double hung sash with stone lintels. Round-arched windows are found in the tower, solarium and hallway, all on the east elevation. Originally the main entrance was located beneath the tower. When the solarium was built in the early 1900s, the entrance was moved to the north elevation facing Kingston Pike. This entrance--a single leaf door with semi-circular transom--is framed by an elaborate stone door surround consisting of a dentilled pediment and decorated pilasters.

The two-story Bleak House was originally irregularly shaped and featured a three story tower on its southeast corner. Porches on the south elevation, southeast corner and in the L of the north elevation were flat-roofed with square posts and balustrades. Windows were rectangular 6/6 light on all sides, except for the tower and north elevation which had round-arched windows.

Alterations to the original house primarily have consisted of Georgian/Renaissance Revival additions made soon after the John Scruggs Browns purchased it in 1906. The Browns added: the two-story addition with rectangular 6/6 light windows to the rear (south) elevation which wraps around the southeast corner and half of the east elevation; the one-story solarium with paired double-hung sash windows capped by fanlights extending from the two-story addition on the east elevation; a one-story addition to the southwest corner with a recessed open porch and three round-arched openings; and a round-arched porte-cochere with vaulted ceiling on the northwest corner.

The Browns also built a multi-level, ca. 1910s Roman garden extending to the river. Each level of the garden is enclosed by an ornate concrete wall. A central walk from the main gate leads down through the graduated levels and beneath an arbor and gazebo with boxwoods and overhung with wisteria. In the center of the garden is a large pool or fish pond with a central island containing a circular pavilion. A lion-head motif graces the entrance gates to the house and fountain on the patio at the back of the house.

Presently the garden and house have been made available, under close supervision, to wedding parties. To provide additional security for the premises and needed revenue for maintenance, the bedroom and bath on the first floor back wing and the apartment in the basement are rented to reliable male tenants. Both of these accommodations have private entrances so that access through the house is unnecessary.

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Bleak House

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Since its purchase in 1959 by Chapter 89, United Daughters of the Confederacy, some re-decorating has been done to the interior. The latest, completed in 1977, was the redecoration of the formal dining room and small family dining room. Evidently some of the interior design has been altered, but the interior walls remain exactly as they were built. Limestone and marble mantels, ceiling cornices and molding around doors, windows and floors remain from the original house and are combined with decorative finishes added during the early 1900s by the Browns. The original staircase with oversail handrail, decorative style brackets, and two balusters per riser remains intact.

The present owners have rebuilt the small stairway leading from the second floor to the tower in order that the tower may be seen by visitors to the house. The tower has blood-stains on the walls and a drawing of three faces with arrows pointing to two of the faces and the words, "these two soldiers were killed here."

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 checked="" 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1854-58, c. 1906 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Bleak House is nominated under National Register criteria B and C for its local architectural significance and its association with prominent Knoxville citizens, in particular businessman John Scruggs Brown (1857-1934). The current appearance of the house is a unique local example of the very skillful early-twentieth-century remodeling of a mid-nineteenth-century Italian Villa residence into a Georgian/Renaissance Revival style building. The alterations to the house were done around 1906 for John Scruggs Brown, who made a fortune perfecting and manufacturing innovative thermostats and other heat control devices from the turn of the century to the 1920s. Brown was an avid amateur gardener and was probably responsible for the design of the locally important, extensive formal gardens at Bleak House. From 1936 to 1951, the building was the home of Roy Nicholas Lotspeich (1882-1951), businessman and influential newspaper publisher of the Knoxville Journal.

Named by its original owner after Charles Dickens' novel, Bleak House was constructed between 1854 and 1858 for Robert Houston Armstrong (1825-1896), a prominent East Tennessean and Unionist, who represented Knox and Sevier Counties in the 31st and 33rd General Assemblies. While owned by Armstrong, the house was the headquarters of Confederate General James Longstreet in his futile attempt to retake Knoxville in November of 1863. Evidence of the house's use as a Confederate headquarters during this period can still be seen. The tower, which afforded the invading Confederates an excellent view of Federal troops positioned on the hill approximately 2500 yards away toward Knoxville and of the Federal forts across the Holston River, bears many shell and rifle scars. At least three Confederate sharpshooters were shot in the tower. In the formal parlor may be seen a large hole where a 20 pound cannon ball lodged. A rifle bullet hole in the stairs was made by a Confederate sentry guarding the Armstrong family, which was placed under house arrest and confined to the upper story during Longstreet's military occupation of the house.

In 1906 Bleak House was purchased by John Scruggs Brown, who invested \$15,000 in Weston M. Fulton's sylphon, a seamless metal bellows used to control the damper in oil fired furnaces which revolutionized the automatic control field. He soon undertook the management of the Fulton Sylphon Company and in 1926 sold his interests to the Reynolds Metal Company for \$2,387,000. During World War I the Fulton Sylphon Company supplied the U. S. Navy with devices for detonating depth bombs.

After Brown's death in 1934, Bleak House was bought by Roy Nicholas Lotspeich in 1936. Lotspeich had founded the Appalachian Mills Company in Knoxville in 1910 and had built it into one of the city's leading employers by the time he sold the company in 1938. Two years before in 1936, he purchased the city's 115 year old newspaper, the Knoxville Journal. Under Lotspeich's leadership the Knoxville Journal became one of the most influential newspapers in the South and at the time was one of the few Republican papers in the South.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 3.5 acres

Quadrangle name Knoxville, Tennessee

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	7	2	3	3	3	5	0	3	9	8	2	1	9	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 Nissa Dahlin Brown
Lloyd Ostby
organization East Tennessee Development District
Tennessee Historical Commission date July 1984
street & number P. O. Box 19806 (ETDD)
701 Broadway telephone 615/584-8553
Knoxville Tennessee 37919
city or town Nashville state Tennessee 37203

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.

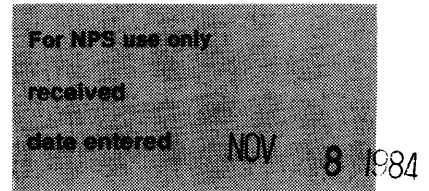
Deputy
State Historic Preservation Officer signature Herbert L. Byers

title Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission date 10/3/84

For NPS use only
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register
for Deborah Byers
Keoper of the National Register
Entered in the National Register
date 11-8-84
Attest: _____ date _____
Chief of Registration

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Research has not yet uncovered the architect of the original house or of the later alterations, but the resulting building is one of the best early-twentieth-century examples of the Georgian/Renaissance Revival style in Knoxville. In addition, the extensive gardens, which date from the same time as the remodeling, are among the very few historic formal gardens in the city. The five terraced Roman garden extends down to Fort Loudoun Lake. Each terrace is buttressed with concrete walls and steps leading to the terrace below. Concrete rose trellises, patios, tables, seats, urns, lily pools, bird baths, nymphs and fountains are interspersed with extensive plantings.

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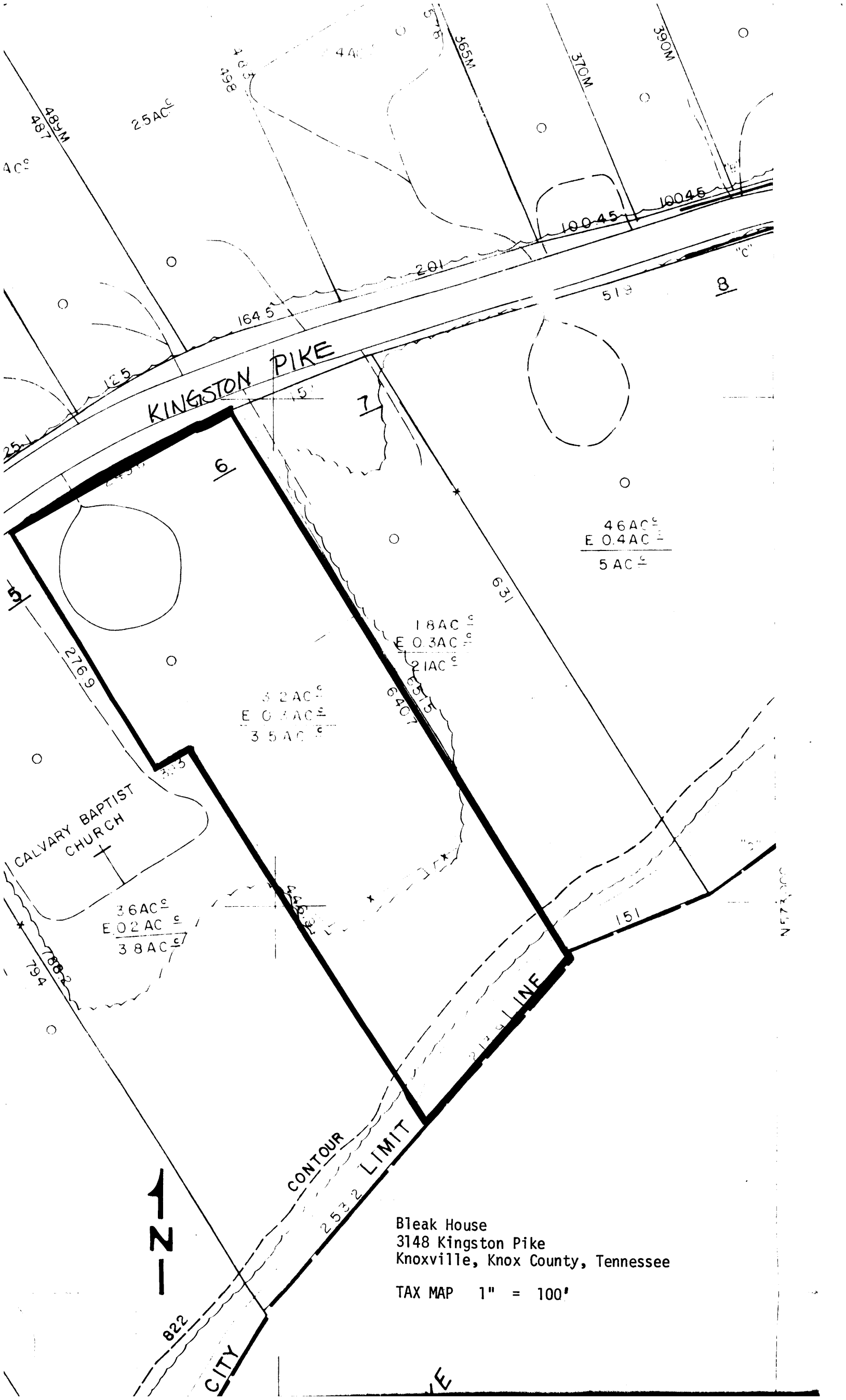
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Bleak House property is approximately 3½ acres. Bounded on the north by Kingston Pike, the east by Dulin Art Gallery, the south by Lake Loudoun, and on the west by Calvary Baptist Church, as outlined in red on the attached map. These boundaries conform to the dimensions of the lot occupied by the house and include the gardens at the rear of the property.



KINGSTON PIKE

CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH

CONTOUR LIMIT

CITY

46 AC^c
E 0.4 AC^c
5 AC^c

18 AC^c
E 0.3 AC^c
21 AC^c

32 AC^c
E 0.4 AC^c
35 AC^c

36 AC^c
E 0.2 AC^c
38 AC^c

Bleak House
3148 Kingston Pike
Knoxville, Knox County, Tennessee

TAX MAP 1" = 100'



489M
487

25AC^c

4AC^c

365M

370M

390M

10045

10045

201

519

8

125

1645

5'

7

6

631

18 AC^c
E 0.3 AC^c
21 AC^c

6407

6407

32 AC^c
E 0.4 AC^c
35 AC^c

3113

794

36 AC^c
E 0.2 AC^c
38 AC^c

151

N 573,000

822

E