

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY
 RECEIVED JAN 30 1976
 DATE ENTERED MAR 26 1976

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC *Johnston*
Johnston, James' House
 AND/OR COMMON
Isola Bella

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER *S of Brentwood on US 31*
Route #6, Franklin Road
 CITY, TOWN Brentwood VICINITY OF
 STATE Tennessee CODE 47 COUNTY Williamson CODE 187
 NOT FOR PUBLICATION
 CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT Sixth

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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input 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 Mr. and Mrs. Dave A. Alexander
 STREET & NUMBER Route 6, Franklin Road
 CITY, TOWN Brentwood VICINITY OF STATE Tennessee

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Register's Office
 STREET & NUMBER Williamson County Courthouse
 CITY, TOWN Franklin STATE Tennessee

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
 DATE
 DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS
 CITY, TOWN STATE
 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

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

About 1840 James Johnston built the two-story brick house on the land he had inherited, adjacent to Franklin Pike. The finest examples of antebellum architecture in Middle Tennessee were built during the mid-century era. The economy of the region at that time was based upon agricultural crops and slave-owning. Large tracts of land were owned by planters who found the natural resources of the land, limestone and clay, suitable for making the salmon-red colored brick they used to build their homes. They used trained slaves to execute the basic construction. Few houses were built by traveling craftsmen who knew the exact Greek Revival forms. The predominant mid-Georgian style provided a geometric system of proportioning. This was the basic formula for classic symmetry. Greek Revival architecture called for special skills and tools that were not available to the builder-owner. Greek Revival style forms were applied to the Georgian style framework, and regional characteristics persisted due to the preferences of the owner. What may have been missing in formal detail was made up for in generous proportion and sturdy construction. The interior is surprisingly bare of original ornament and detail. The special refinements, carved wood Adam style mantels and decorative woods, were reserved for the formal parlor, library, dining room, three upstairs bedrooms and two formal halls. These are in evidence today.

The James Johnston house is located in a park-like setting. The large proportions and formal plantings tell of the wealth of the original owner. The house is well constructed of heavy timbers and double brick walls bearing on coursed limestone foundation walls which form the basement rooms. The plan is comprised of two equalized intersecting rectangular shape blocks which form the ell shape. The attached service wing projects back to the top of the ell, continuing the line of the north elevation in a reduced scale. The house has two formal entrances which feature full entablature, dentilated cornices, and Greek Revival style pedimented porticos. During the 1945 restoration, these porticos and columns replaced the original ones, which had deteriorated beyond repair. The entrance doors are paired. They have rectangular-shaped transoms and sidelight panels. The cantilevered, second-story balcony features a cast iron balustrade. The main entrance is enhanced by four free-standing colossal order Corinthian columns with fluted shafts and stone plinths. The main entrance is located at the center bay section of the west elevation. The north entrance is identical in form but reduced in scale. The four free-standing squared and tapered panel columns support the pedimented portico. All of the formal rooms are of equal size--twenty feet square. Where the style calls for higher ceilings and taller windows, there are twelve foot ceilings and higher ceilings in the second story, adding an extra foot height to the facade wall. The single bay depth allows for better ventilation and more light. The two-story veranda porch at the ell was designed to provide additional outdoor living space in the courtyard environment.

The smokehouse and service wing are built of brick in the style of the house. Both structures feature crab orchard slate tile clad gable roofs. The main roof is clad in standing seam crimped tin. The smokehouse is decorated with square pilasters, and there are round-headed transoms above each door. The service wing is attached to the house and contains the original kitchen which has been modernized. The rooms above form a suite with the bedroom located above the dining room. This section of the house appears to have the original sashes; other sashes have been replaced. The library features the original long-leaf pine floor, while other floors are ash.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

The design for the main staircase can be found in the 1786 Philadelphia Carpenter's Rule Book. The open newel design ascends the left wall, bridges the rear wall, and continues up the right wall to the open, balustraded hall. The hand-carved ramped handrail terminates in a one-revolution twist over the newel post. The slender balusters are taper cut and set two to a tread. The north stair is not reduced in form, but the detail is plain in form.

The house was vacant for many years before the previous owner restored it as his residence around 1945. The only major change in the original plan was the removal of the dining room wall, enclosing the adjacent porch, and adding the large bay window and door to the courtyard garden. The floor of the service wing was raised four steps to the present level of the dining room floor. Modern conveniences of heating and cooling were installed, and the owner traveled to Italy to locate the exact Georgian style, antique hand-carved woodwork and cove moldings which have been installed in every room. The dentilated cove moldings in the dining room is extremely ornate and every room features a different motif. The cabinets built across the fireplace wall in the dining room are Georgian design with broken pediments and hand-carved detail. The ornate chimney piece is Georgian, and it also is hand-carved. The 1,500-light crystal chandelier is Irish, Waterford crystal, and the Salatina floor is diagonal-set black and white Italian marble. The white onyx mantel in the parlor room came from Victor Hugo's Paris apartment. The courtyard garden has been re-planted in privets and boxwood shrubbery.

The house is restored in keeping with the Georgian architecture and Greek Revival style. The imported architectural features and antiques have been selected for the Georgian period which was popular somewhat earlier than the actual construction date of this house. The house is a fine example of plantation-style architecture in Middle Tennessee, and it remains a reflection of the taste and culture of its time.

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 checked="" 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 c.1840

BUILDER/ARCHITECT James Johnston

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The beautiful home built by James Johnston about 1840, or perhaps a few years earlier, was originally part of the lands belonging to David Johnston of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, whose earliest real estate transaction was recorded in Nashville in 1792 when this section was a part of Davidson County in the Territory South of the Ohio. James and his brothers were among the earliest settlers in the French Lick area, now the site of Nashville, and one of his brothers was killed there by the Indians in 1780. The family of James Johnston's mother had also been among the earliest arrivals in the Cumberland.

When David Johnston died in 1829, he willed to his grandson, James, the land upon which James built his home, which has remained an important landmark in the area for over a century and a quarter. It is located in an area which is rapidly developing as a thickly settled residential area. The house is significant architecturally because it is an excellent example of the type of houses built by those who had acquired positions of wealth and prominence. It is also important because it was the home of an early settler in the region that is now the Nashville area.

Since the house was built on the pike from Nashville to Franklin, it was in an area that saw considerable action during the Civil War. Cannon and wagons being moved from the Battlefield of Franklin in preparation for the upcoming Battle of Nashville in December, 1864, crossed the yard of the Johnston house. Family tradition has it that during this time, Confederate General John Bell Hood and his subordinates met in the Johnston house to discuss battle plans.

The house remained in the hands of Mrs. John Oman, Jr., whose husband did the restoration work in 1945, until her death last year at the age of 97. The present owners are intensely interested in the preservation of this important landmark.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Bowman, Virginia McDaniel Historic Williamson County, Old Homes and Sites (Nashville: Blue and Gray Press, 1971.)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 6

UTM REFERENCES See continuation sheet

A	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

B	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
D	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Gail Hammerquist, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION

Tennessee Historical Commission

DATE

1/76

STREET & NUMBER

170 Second Avenue North

TELEPHONE

(615) 741-2371

CITY OR TOWN

Nashville

STATE

Tennessee

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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Herbert E. Haysen

TITLE

Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission

DATE

1/29/76

FOR NPS USE ONLY

HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Active

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

3/26/98

ATTEST:

Charles A. ...
Active

DATE

3-26-76

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 1

Having no grid markings on the map, the latitude and longitude co-ordinates are:

Latitude	Longitude
35°59'47"	86°48'34"