

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

For NPS use only

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

received NOV 15 1984

date entered DEC 13 1984

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

1. Name

historic Hewitt, Austin, Home

and/or common Hewitt House

2. Location

street & number 322 East Washington Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Pulaski

N/A vicinity of

state Tennessee

code 047

county Giles

code 055

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 type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: <u>Retirement Center</u>

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple Ownership

street & number N/A

city, town N/A

N/A vicinity of

state N/A

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Giles County Courthouse

street & number Public Square

city, town Pulaski

state Tennessee 38478

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

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

date 1978-79 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 type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" 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

The Austin Hewitt Home is situated at 322 East Washington Street in Pulaski, Tennessee, about four blocks northeast of the Giles County Courthouse. The structure, which dates to the 1830s, is one of the largest brick structures in Pulaski. The original part of the structure dates to the 1830s, and served as part of a local female academy. In the 1850s the building was remodeled to serve as a fashionable private residence. In 1924, it was remodeled to serve as a home for indigent local women and much enlarged, the front being extended to eleven bays. When the home closed in 1981, it was rehabilitated for use as a retirement center. The building is impressive in scale, features a monumental pedimented portico, a side carriage porch, recessed near verandah, pedimented dormers, and a central cupola with pyramidal roof.

The building is sited on a two-and-one-half acre lot on the north side of East Washington Street, two blocks east of the Columbia Pike. The building is surrounded by mature trees, boxwoods, and informal garden plantings. A wide lawn extends from the rear of the building to street. A small branch flows across the western edge of the property.

The original structure consisted of what is now the eastern wing of the enlarged building. This section, which served as the female academy, was, according to accounts, a two-story brick building facing the Columbia Pike. In the 1850s, one or two decades after its construction, it was remodeled as an elegant private residence. The monumental Greek Revival portico may date from this period. The house was laid out on the central-passage plan so common in the region, a dog-leg staircase with turned balusters, and gable-end chimneys.

In the early 1920s, the house was extensively remodeled for the home for indigent women established by the Austin Hewitt trust. The front of the structure was extended to a full eleven bays. The front of the building was moved to the center of the new south wall and portico was re-erected at this point. A recessed balcony was constructed along the east wall. The interior was enlarged to thirty-two rooms.

The building is of soft local brick, laid in Flemish bond three courses deep, on a limestone foundation. A full story fruit cellar is located under the eastern end of the building. Floor joists are of heavy timbers supported by stone piers. A hipped roof of composition shingles features six shallow pedimented dormers and a square wooden central cupola with louvered sides and a pyramidal roof. Windows are double-hung sash with 9/1 lights.

The main front faces south to East Washington Street. The long front is eleven bays wide. From its center extends the original pedimented portico, supported by four monumental Doric columns with fluted wooden shafts and molded capitals. A second-story balcony with wooden balustrade is sheltered under the pediment. The exterior corbeled brick chimneys are located to the sides.

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

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

For NPS use only

received

date entered DEC 13 1984

Continuation sheet Hewitt, Austin, Home

Item number 7

Page 2

The north front is twelve bays wide. A recessed porch supported by square paneled wooden columns resting on brick piers extends across the central seven bays. The porch posts are connected by a wooden balustrade with plain balusters. An exterior wooden staircase under cover of the porch provides access to the upper story. Two tall corbeled chimneys are located at the sides of the front, and a small, one-story shed section against the wall on the western half shelters a basement entry.

The east front is the back wall of the original academy structure. It is six bays deep, though the divisions are not arranged symmetrically. A tall exterior brick chimney rises from near the center of the wall. Stone steps lead down to the old fruit cellar under this section, and an iron fire escape rises to a six-panel door on the second level.

The west face of the building faces towards the Columbia Pike a block away. A one-story gable-roofed porte-cochere supported by reeded square wood columns extends from the center. The double-leaf doors are set in a deep paneled entry and are topped by a blind transom and a heavily molded segmental-arch hood mold with corbel stops.

The interior of the building is divided into fourteen rooms on the first floor and eighteen on the second, laid out along central cross halls. The original rooms at the west end of the structure are left intact; these now consist of a parlor, a central stair hall, and two rooms downstairs, and a parlor and four rooms on the second. The wide winding wooden staircase with molded banister and turned spindles has been left intact. A parlor and small office are located in the center part of the first floor, and a dining room and kitchen are located on the same level at the opposite end of the building. The upstairs consists primarily into fourteen bedrooms, but also includes two small parlors and two short halls leading to the upstairs porch.

After the Austin Hewitt home sold in 1981, it was rehabilitated the following year by Brindley Construction Company of Pulaski. The deteriorated brick walls were cleaned, tuck-pointed, and repainted, and the hipped roof was repaired and rebuilt. Fire resistant doors and drywall were installed where necessary to meet local codes. The original restrooms were largely gutted during the 1982 rehabilitation; the fixtures were completely replaced and the rooms retiled, but the baths were not structurally altered. The fire sprinkler system was repaired, and the old furnace was disconnected and a new central system installed. Original interior elements, including fireplaces, mantels, and interior cornices, were all retained. No walls were removed or other major changes carried out, and the work generally attempts to convey the character of the original structure.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1839, 1850s, 1924 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Austin Hewitt house is being nominated under National Register criteria B and C for its significance to Pulaski and Giles County, Tennessee, in architecture and local history. The house has served a variety of uses, having been a school for young ladies, residence of prominent families, a home for elderly women, and now a retirement center. The two-story eleven-bay brick building is one of the largest and most finely detailed structures in Pulaski. The building was constructed in the Greek Revival style, and, though much enlarged in the early 1920s, retains the monumental Doric portico and other classical design elements and remains faithful to the style. The large brick structure was erected in 1839 as a part of the Pulaski Female Academy. After 1839 the house became the home of some of the principal residents of Pulaski until its conversion to the Austin Hewitt Home, a home for local elderly women, in the early 1920s. The Hewitt Trust exhausted in 1981, and the deteriorated structure was purchased by Robert W. Brindley, who with James W. Ayres, had the building carefully rehabilitated for use as a retirement center. The property was the only institution of its type in the region, providing care for the indigent and elderly women, and is also significant for its associations with Austin Hewitt bequest, the largest example of private philanthropy in the county's history.

The first owners of the property, John M. Bass of Davidson County and his brother, Eli E. Bass of Boone County, Missouri purchased six acres and 144 poles of land on East Washington Street from the Pulaski city commissioners. In Marcy, 1832, the Bass brothers wold the unimproved lot to Lunsford M. Bramlett, A. M. Ballentine, Ben Carter, Thomas Martin, and Fountain Lester, who purchased the lot for use as the Female Academy, for which they received a charter from the state legislature on November 26, 1825. At the time the charter was granted, the state legislature also authorized a lottery to raise money to purchase property and erect suitable buildings. The trustees apparently purchased property on West Washington Street before acquiring the Bass lot on East Washington. These same trustees, who also appear to have been stockholders, then sold their shares of Lot 1 to Thomas Martin. The deed stated the lot included " a brick house formerly occupied as a female academy and other houses thereto belonging."

Martin apparently rented out the property until selling it in 1852 to Joseph B. Childers. Childers was the father of E. J. Childers who purchased the Childress Place farm in Wales in 1887. The Childers lived in the brick house on East Washington and probably were responsible for the conversion of the two-story building from a girl's school to an impressive private residence. At Childer's death, the property was purchased from his estate by J. H. Ragsdale, Mayor of Pulaski and a real estate dealer. He sold off a portion of the property behind the residence; this area was known locally as Childers Addition, later Childers Street. Ragsdale lived in the old residence with wife, Lizzie Bull Ragsdale, and daughters Clarissa and Mary Lambeth for thirteen years. In 1917 he traded the property to W. Frank Ewing for the Crescent View Farm in the southern part of the county. Ewing was an important local citizen whose influence with the state legislature helped to direct the Louisville & Nashville Railroad to construct a new line through the eastern part of Giles County; the village of Frankewing east of Pulaski named for him.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 2.13 acres

Quadrangle name Pulaski, Tennessee

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	6	4	9	7	5	2	0	3	8	9	5	1	6	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 is irregular in shape and bounded on the north by Woodring Street, on the south by Washington Street and on the east and west by adjoining property lines. This area includes all the land historically associated with the Austin Hewitt Home.

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 Richard Quin, Historic Preservation Planner

organization South Central Tennessee Development District date August 15, 1984

street & number P.O. Box 1346 telephone 615/381-2040

city or town Columbia state Tennessee 38402-1346

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. Hoyer

title Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission date 11/5/84

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the National Register

date 12-13-84

for Alloway Byers
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

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

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

For NPS use only	
received	
date entered	DEC 13 1984

Continuation sheet Hewitt, Austin, Home Item number 8 Page 2

In 1919 Ewing sold the property to Polk Comer who immediately sold it to N. S. Beasley and his wife. The Beasleys were the last family to live in the house as a private residence, occupying it until 1924.

At the death of Pulaski businessman Austin Hewitt in 1921, his will left \$200,000 for the purpose of establishing a home for the indigent women of Giles County.

His will dictated: "I desire that the whole of my estate be used for founding and maintaining a home for indigent old women of Giles County, the said home to be located at Pulaski, Tennessee, and if practicable, upon the property now owned by me, on West Hill. The said Board of Trustees, hereinafter named, shall use as much of the fund as is necessary in constructing and furnishing buildings proper for the purpose, and the remainder shall be used as an endowment, and the interest, rents, and profits on the same, shall be used for the maintenance and improvement of said property. The said Trustees, may, if they think proper, incorporate said institution under the laws of Tennessee, said institution to be known as the "Austin Hewitt Home." The said endowment fund hereinabove provided for, shall be invested, and reinvested, under the direction of said Board of Trustees, and their successors, so as to provide perpetually for a comfortable home for the old women of Giles County."

The first board was organized in 1923 and consisted of John M. Harwood, Sr., Thurman Smith, W. J. Yancey, John M. Harwood, Jr., T. W. Pittman, Thomas R. Preston (of Chattanooga), and B. F. McGrew. The trustees decided against building on the West Hill property, and in 1924, purchased the lot on East Washington Street from the N. S. Beasleys for \$14,000.

The old Greek Revival house was much enlarged at this time. A long wing was extended from the original west, or principal front of the house. The new addition follows the original central passage plan, incorporating the original structure at the east end and extending the new south front to a full eleven bays. The original monumental Doric portico with balcony was moved to the new south front, and the new construction of this period follows the design of the old. The enlarged building contained large living and dining rooms, and a kitchen and wash rooms in addition to the twenty-five or so bedrooms. The only parts of the house left unchanged were the entrance hall and the room to its left.

The resulting structure is eleven bays wide, constructed of local brick laid in Flemish bond, rests on a stone foundation, and is topped by a hipped roof with four shallow pedimented dormers and a central cupola. The main entrance is from Washington Street to the south; here the central portico is centered on the facade around a sidelighted and transomed entry. A recessed second story porch extends across most of the north, or rear, elevation, and a one-story porte-cochere at the west end. A number of public rooms occupied much of the ground floor, and the upstairs was largely divided as apartments. Both floors are laid out along a lateral hall.

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

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

For NPS use only
received
date entered DEC 13 1984

Continuation sheet Hewitt, Austin, Home **Item number** 8 **Page** 3

The Austin Hewitt home once held twenty-one residents. Initially, the elderly women only had to pay a one-time fee of \$150 to entitle themselves to perpetual care at the home. This fee was later raised to \$500, and finally to \$2,000. The house was managed by matrons, beginning with Mrs. J. A. LaRue, wife of Dr. LaRue, the first house physician. She was followed in this capacity by Hattie Herbert, then by Minnie Dobbs, who served for twenty-five years. In 1973, Eunice Foster became the matron, and continued until the home closed several years later; she lived in an apartment on the ground level with her husband, Jack. Dr. W. K. Owen was house physician for forty years. The board was composed at this time of Robert Smith, Tom Moore, C. G. Davis, J. E. Roe, Jack Abernathy, Sr., Tommy Gordon, and Stacey A. Garner.

Individuals and local organizations provided funds and sundries to supplement the trust. Church groups would help by donating curtains, wallpapering bedrooms, and providing other similar assistance. The ladies of the Minor Hill Church of Christ in the southern part of the county would bring a cake each time a resident celebrated a birthday. The bequest was increased by gifts from Mrs. Pearl Wells, J. M. Davenport, Mrs. Ed Reynolds, David Blow, and D. H. Witt.

The home never produced any real income to sustain the trust. The number of residents declined, and interest income gradually became depleted. State fire codes led to the installation of a \$27,000 fire sprinkler system shortly before the home was closed, and the upstairs was closed to residents by other regulations. The eventual need to enclose the stairwells and purchase a new furnace led to the sale of the property.

The board in 1981 announced that 11 of the income from the Austin Hewitt trust had been exhausted. They filed with the Giles County Chancery Court to close the home and abolish the original trust, and were directed as to how to legally proceed with the placement and perpetual care of the remaining occupants. No attempt was made to persuade the state to acquire the home, the residents, some of whom had lived in the home for more than thirty years, were relocated to Meadowbrook Nursing Home. Mrs. Betty White, who had been a resident for thirty-seven years, said at the time "There has never been or ever will be another place like Hewitt Home. It was wonderful. It was home."

The property was auctioned on September 26, 1981. The building and lot were purchased by Robert W. Brindley for \$47,000; sales of furnishings brought another \$18,000. The funds raised have been used by the Hewitt trust to provide care for the surviving residents.

The deteriorated building was carefully rehabilitated by Brindley and his partner, James W. Ayres. The building now serves as Hewitt House, an elegant retirement center.

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

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

For NPS use only
received
date entered DEC 13 1984

Continuation sheet Hewitt, Austin, Home

Item number 8

Page 4

The property home is significant for its associations with the Austin Hewitt trust, which maintained the home for elderly and indigent women at a time when no other agencies or institutions provided such care in the area. The home was the only facility in Pulaski which could provide for the ladies until the advent of nursing care facilities in the 1950s. The establishment of the Hewitt trust was one of the earliest and largest examples of private philanthropy in the South Central Tennessee region. The rehabilitated home still performs a similar function in its role as a retirement center, and continues to bear evidence of Austin Hewitt's bequest.

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

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

For NPS use only

received

date entered DEC 13 1984

Continuation sheet Hewitt, Austin, Home Item number 9 Page 2

"Bradley Buys Hewitt Home." The Giles Free Press, 30 September, 1981.

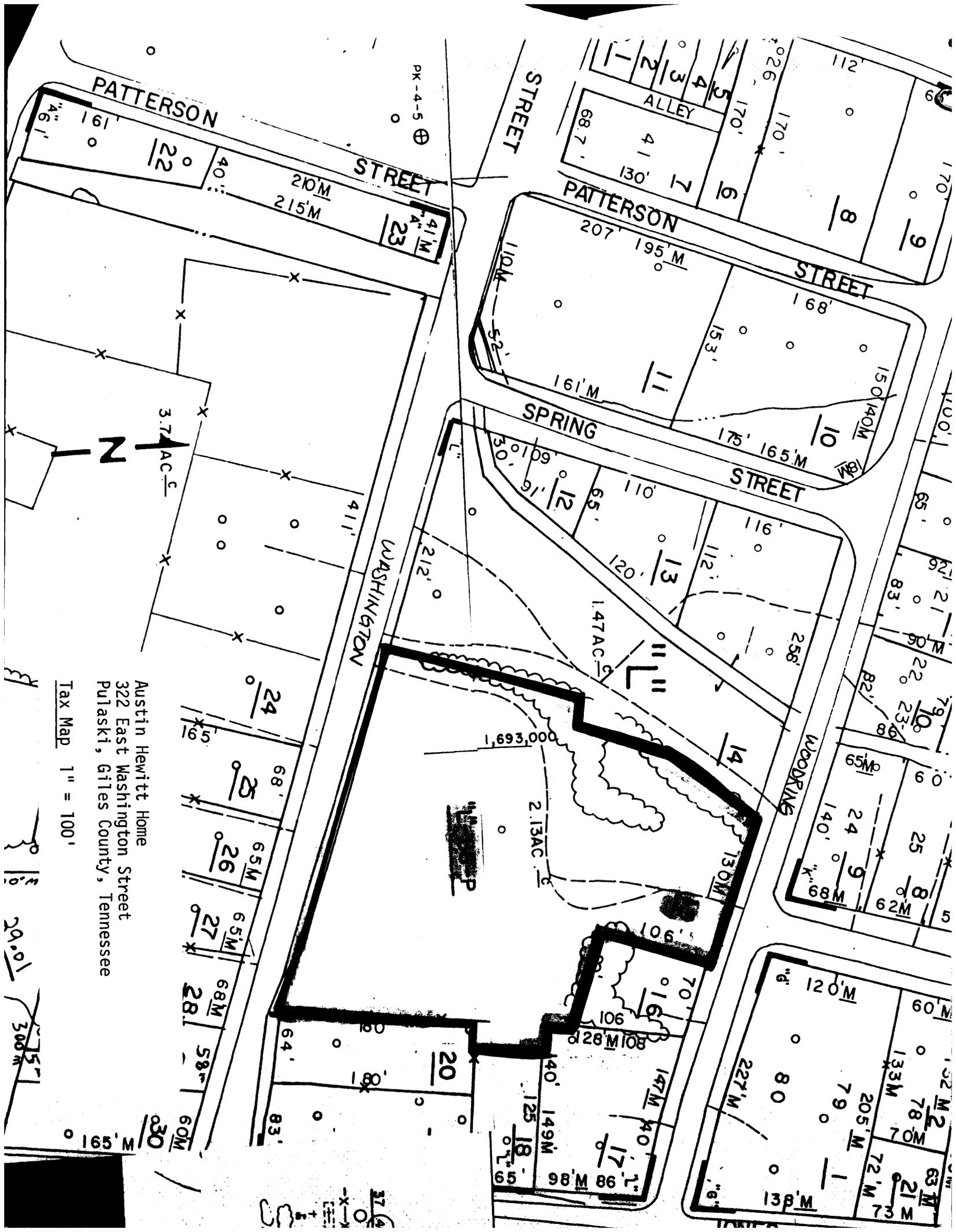
Butler, Margaret. "History of the Austin Hewitt Retirement Center."
MSS, 1983.

Cook, Carol. "The Hewitt Home: End of an Era." The Giles Free Press,
23 September, 1981.

"Hewitt Home Auction Set." The Giles Free Press, 9 September, 1981.

"Hewitt Home (to) Be Sold; 7 Residents will be Relocated at Closing Time."
Pulaski Citizen, 15 July, 1981.

"Hewitt Home will be sold at Auction Saturday, Sept. 26." Pulaski Citizen,
9 September, 1981.



PATTERSON STREET

STREET

STREET

PATTERSON STREET

STREET

SPRING STREET

STREET

WASHINGTON STREET

WOODRUFF STREET

Austin Hewitt Home
 322 East Washington Street
 Pulaski, Giles County, Tennessee

Tax Map 1" = 100'

PK-4-5

N

3.7 AC ±

1,693,000

2.13 AC ±

901.06

801.82

P

29.01

300.51

37.4

165'

60M

30

64'

83'

20

140'

125'

149M

18

98M

86'

17

147M

40'

17

106'

106'

70'

16

140'

128M

108'

17

147M

40'

17

106'

106'

70'

16

140'

128M

108'

17

147M

40'

17

106'

106'

70'

16

140'

128M

108'

17

147M

40'

17

106'

106'

70'

16

140'

128M

108'

17

147M

40'

17

106'

106'

70'

16

140'

128M

108'

17

147M

40'

17

106'

106'

70'

16

140'

128M

108'

17

147M

40'

17

106'

106'

70'

16

140'

128M

108'

17

147M

40'

17

106'

106'

70'

16

140'

128M

108'

17

147M

40'

17

106'

106'

70'

16

140'

128M

108'

17

147M

40'

17

106'

106'

70'

16

140'

128M

108'

17

147M

40'

17

106'

106'

70'

16

140'

128M

108'

17

147M

40'

17

106'

106'

70'

16

140'

128M

108'

17

147M

40'

17

106'

106'

70'

16

140'

128M

108'

17

147M

40'

17

106'

106'

70'

16

140'

128M

108'

17

147M

40'

17

106'

106'

70'

16

140'

128M

108'

17

147M

40'

17

106'

106'

70'

16

140'

128M

108'

17

147M

40'

17

106'

106'

70'

16

140'

128M

108'

17

147M

40'

17

106'

106'

70'

16

140'

128M

108'

17

147M

40'

17

106'

106'

70'

16

140'

128M

108'

17

147M

40'

17

106'

106'

70'

16

140'

128M

108'

17

147M

40'

17

106'

106'

70'

16

140'

128M

108'

17

147M

40'

17

106'

106'

70'

16

140'

128M

108'

17

147M

40'

17

106'

106'

70'

16

140'

128M

108'

17

147M

40'

17

106'

106'

70'

16

140'

128M

108'

17

147M

40'

17

106'

106'

70'

16

140'

128M

108'

17

147M

40'

17

106'

106'

70'

16

140'

128M

108'

17