

Skinner-Hoke House Individual Landmark Designation Report



**Louisville Metro Historic Landmarks
and
Preservation Districts Commission
October 16, 2019**

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Individual Landmark

As defined by the LMCO 32.250, An Individual Landmark is a structure or site, including prehistoric and historic archaeological sites, designated as a local historic landmark by the Commission as provided in this subchapter or by action prior to the effect of this subchapter. A landmark structure or site is one of significant importance to the city, the Commonwealth, or the nation and which represents irreplaceable distinctive architectural features or historical associations that represent the historic character of the city, the Commonwealth, or the nation.

19-LANDMARK-0002

This case was initiated by a petition process including 200 signatures with at least 101 of the signatures coming from within the Council District the property is located. For this case, a petition was initially prepared by the Wolf Pen Preservation Association in November 2016 under 2012 Landmarks Ordinance requirements for the property located at 5605 Fincastle Trace (formerly 7607 Wolf Pen Branch Road). Prior to the official submittal of the petition for signature verification, a Standstill Agreement was created between the Property Owner and the Petitioner. During this period, both the property owner and petitioner worked to find a new owner for the property through various preservation groups.

The Standstill Agreement was renewed several times until July 31, 2019 without resolution. Pursuant to the agreement among the parties and their counsel that carried this case from 2016 to 2019 and with no additional extensions of that agreement after July 31, 2019.

On August 1, 2019, the petition requesting Individual Landmark Designation of the property at 5605 Fincastle Trace (formerly 7607 Wolf Pen Branch Road). The petition was verified under the Landmarks Ordinance in effect in 2016, and verification was completed on August 22, 2019 with 225 signatures in which 130 of the signatures were from residents in Council District 16 where the property is located.

With the revised Landmarks Ordinance in effect beginning on August 8, 2019, the processing of this petition request is now subject to the Individual Designation requirements in LMCO Section 32.260(J) though LMCO Section 32.260(R).

Property Description

Location and Key Elements

The Skinner-Hoke House (JF-0582) is located at 5605 Fincastle Trace (formerly 7607 Wolf Pen Branch Road) in Prospect, KY. The site is a part of the Fincastle Estate (7501 Wolf Pen Branch Road) which was originally an 144-acre estate. The site is on the north side of Wolf Pen Branch Rd. The Hoke house is located on the southeast corner of the Fincastle (JF-918) Country Estate close to Wolf Pen Branch Rd and alongside the driveway that leads to the Fincastle House near the banks of Harrods Creek. The entire 144-acre property was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2000. That nomination listed the Hoke House as “contributing” to the Fincastle property as a secondary structure on the Country Estate. This dwelling originally served as the primary residence for a middle-class farm, but was later subsumed by the Fincastle Country Estate in 1937 and was utilized as a Caretakers house.



Photo of the Skinner-Hoke House from the Fincastle National Register Nomination (2000)

Building Description

The Skinner-Hoke House is a vernacular Greek Revival-style home constructed circa 1850. The house is sited with the primary elevation facing in a southerly direction. The house is located on a sloping site and is surrounded by numerous trees in the domestic yard. It is a two-story, frame structure with a side-passage plan. Additionally, there is two-story ell along with a one-story wing which was likely constructed after the initial building campaign. The house rests on a parged limestone raised foundation and the original clapboard siding has now been covered with vinyl siding. The side-gable asphalt roof has an eave-return configuration on the side elevations with the cornice, eaves, and fascia board wrapped in aluminum. The 1977 Kentucky Historic Resources Inventory Survey Form describes “flower designs on the cornices” as well as dentils on the cornice line. These elements appear to either covered with synthetic siding or have been removed.

There is a 4-panel wood door with the entrance enframed by side-lights and a transom window on the three-bay front elevation. The window openings are 2/2 wood windows (most of the glass is broken) with aluminum-wrapped sills and lintels. Some window sashes are missing and it is not clear if the original sills and lintels are still intact. The 1977 Survey form referenced “shell molding” above the windows which appears to have been removed. Constructed on brick piers with more recently constructed concrete steps, an entry porch extends from the primary door and is with square columns and a plain entablature. The scrolled brackets described in the National Register Nomination are no longer extant. There is one remaining brick chimney on the north elevation. The east wall brick chimney described on 1977 Kentucky Historic Resources Inventory Survey Form is no longer extant.



South Elevation



East Elevation



North Elevation



West Elevation

History of the Skinner-Hoke House

Development of Skinner-Hoke House

While referred to as the Skinner-Hoke House on the original 1977 Kentucky Historic Resources Inventory Survey Form and on the Fincastle National Register Nomination, it appears from the more recent research completed by Corn Island Archaeology that the house was originally associated with J.H. Skinner. Through historic atlas research the property first appears in the 1858 Bergman Atlas and is associated with J.H. Skinner. Additional research for this report, described below indicates Skinner ownership of the property.

The land on which the Skinner-Hoke House is located was part of land owned by John H. Skinner (see **Image x** and **Image x**). Born in 1817 in Virginia, Skinner married Elizabeth Dehaven (1822-1907), sister of Oldham County Judge Samuel Dehaven, in 1838 in Jefferson County. Together John and Elizabeth had five children. According to the 1840 US Federal Census, John and Elizabeth were living in northern Jefferson County with one male child under 5 years of age and no slaves. In 1850, they were living in District 1 with four of their children (James Richard, Lucy, and Margaret) and two white boarders (Elizabeth Pettitt and Jane Cole, Elizabeth Skinner's sister). Skinner's real estate was valued at \$2,200. According to the US Federal Census Slave Schedules, in 1850, Skinner owned three slaves: a 17 year old female, 16 year old male, and 8 year old male. The 1858 *Map of Jefferson County, Kentucky* shows J.H. Skinner's property and a black dot for the current location of the Skinner-Hoke House (**Image x**). It is unclear exactly when they moved to their property near Harrods Creek, but it was sometime before 1840 as their neighbors in that census match those in the 1858 map.

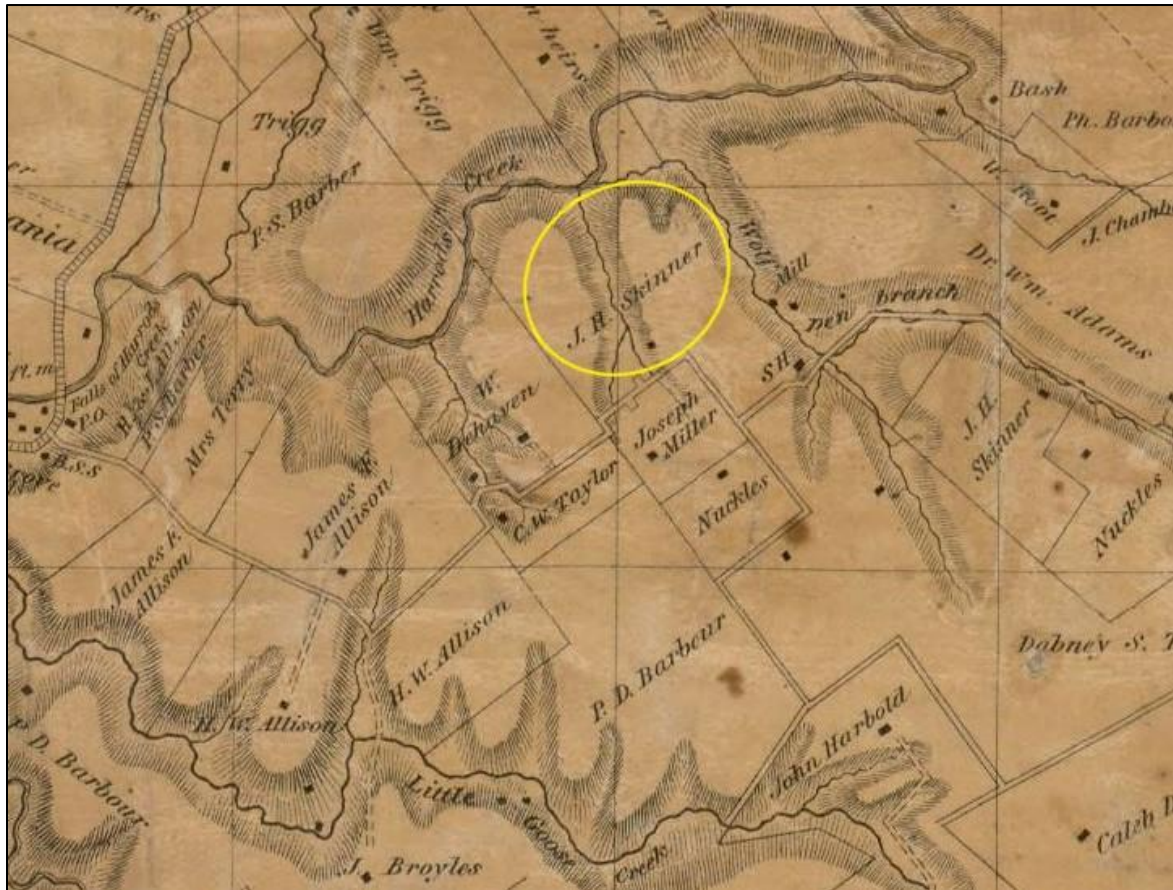


Image x. 1858 Map of Jefferson County, Kentucky showing the property of J.H. Skinner (yellow line) (Bergmann 1858).

According to the 1860 US Federal Census, John and Elizabeth were living in District 2 with the same neighbors as before. Also in their household were their four children and Esther Postlethwaite, a white boarder. Skinner's real estate was valued at \$16,000 and his personal estate was \$4,600. In 1860, John owned three slaves: a 50 year old male, 17 year old female, and 8 year old female. In 1869, the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky established an additional voting district in Jefferson County. This district moved the boundary line between the Harrods Creek Precinct and the Spring Dale Precinct and used the property line of Skinner and Peter F. Hoke as the boundary (Authority 1873). In the 1879 *Atlas of Jefferson and Oldham Counties, Kentucky from new and actual surveys*, the hashed line between the green and yellow circles is the precinct line and thus the property line (**Image x**). Therefore, Skinner had to have sold some of the property, including the Skinner-Hoke House, to Peter F. Hoke between 1860 and 1869. Furthermore, an extant house located at 7811 Wolf Pen Branch Road (JF-581) was larger house built by Skinner for his family. His daughter Susan Skinner Hunt lived there until her death in 1934. Census data from 1870 and forward lists Hoke in the Harrods Creek District and Skinner in the Spring Dale District. The 1879 atlas depicts another building on the Hoke property close to where his name is written. This building has been long demolished, so it is unclear if this is where Hoke resided.



Image x. 1879 Atlas of Jefferson and Oldham Counties, Kentucky from new and actual surveys showing the property of J.E. Skinner [sic] (yellow line), the property of Peter Hoke (green line), and the Skinner-Hoke House (red line) (Beers and Lanagan 1879).

The 1905 USGS topographic map does not have property owners; however, it does show building locations (**Image x**). The Hoke House is present, but the other house on Hoke's property that was shown in the 1879 atlas is not present. Conversely, the 1913 Louisville Title Company's *New Map of Louisville and Jefferson County* does not depict residences, but it does show property owners (**Image x**). Peter F. Hoke is still listed as the owner of this property. According to the 1910 US Federal Census, Hoke was living on his son Charlie's rental farm on Wolf Pen Branch Road. Both of these properties are shown on the 1913 map, so it appears Peter F. Hoke did not live in the Skinner-Hoke House. Furthermore, the 1920 US Federal Census lists Hoke as a boarder in Crestwood, Oldham County.

With the principal Skinner house at 7811 Wolf Pen Branch Road, the research indicates that the Skinner-Hoke House was likely used as tenant house after the family moved. The Skinner-Hoke House eventually was became a part of the Fincastle property when George W. Norton purchased the farm in circa 1936. From that point, the house was used as Caretakers house on Country Estate property. In 2005 the house was part of the purchase of Fincastle in which the property was planned to be subdivided.

Image 4. 1913 Louisville Title Company's *New Map of Louisville and Jefferson County* showing the location of Peter F. Hoke's property (yellow line) and Charles A. Hoke's property (green line).

Historic Significance

Greek Revival Architecture

The Greek Revival style is associated American domestic architecture during the period between 1830 – 1860. Reflective of the young democracy in the United States, this style derives its architectural language from classical Greek architecture. There are both rural and urban examples of the style. The urban style is typically in a townhouse form with a side passage entry. Rural examples usually found to be two stories, but can be one story with a central passage plan. Both masonry and frame style buildings in either an I-house form and double-pile can be found in the Greek Revival-style.

Key characteristics of the style include entry porches that either extend across the entire façade, or at the main entry. Doorways are predominant feature of Greek Revival houses, and usually have elaborate door surrounds or sidelights and transoms. The doors are typically a solid wood, panel door. Gable roofs are predominant with either front or side configurations to replicate a temple-like form. Cornice lines usually have a wide band of trim beneath the eave and may have undecorated boards, but can have ornamentation. Dwellings in the South are found to have bracketing on the cornice line after 1850, according to Virginia McAlester's *Field Guide to American Houses*. Porch columns are found to be the Classical styles of Doric, Ionic, or Corinthian which is defined by the capital and base. Interestingly, vernacular Greek Revival dwellings typically have square column shafts and typically do not have capitals which made the column less expensive. Window sashes are found to be multi-paned with less elaborate window surrounds.

In Jefferson County, a number of rural examples of Greek Revival provide a local context for the style. A majority of the buildings that have been identified by survey or listed on the National Register of Historic Places, are predominately masonry, central passage examples. Most have entry porches, Classical columns, decorative door surrounds, multi-paned windows, and gable roofs. There are some localized variants including hipped-roof, dormers, and cross-gables.

Ashbourne:

This building was built circa 1800-1830. Constructed of brick, this two-story house served as the house for a substantial farm. The building is located in the Harrods Creek National Register District.



Figure x. Ashbourne, 6328 River Road (PVA)

Barber House/Rosewell:

This building was built circa 1854-1855 and designed by Isaiah Rogers and Henry Whitestone in the Greek Revival Style. This two-story brick house has identical front and rear elevations. The house was part of a large farm. It is individually listed on the National Register.



Figure x. Barber House/Rosewell, 6900 Transylvania Avenue (PVA)

Bellevue:

This building was built circa 1855. This two-story brick house has two different facades—one for the river and one for River Road. This is indicative of the importance of land and river travel to the survival of the “gentlemen” farm. It is individually listed on the National Register.



William Bull House:

This building was built circa 1859. The one-story frame building features both Greek Revival and Italianate style details. It is individually listed on the National Register.



Figure x. William Bull House, 11918 Old Shelbyville Road (PVA)

Chrisler House:

This building was built circa 1850 on a substantial farm. The two-story frame building features Greek Revival style details. The building is located in the Country Estates of River Road National Register District.



Figure x. Chrisler House, 4508 River Road (PVA)

Diamond Fruit Farm/Dravo House:

This building was built circa 1814. This two-story brick house was part of a large farm. It later became the Diamond Fruit Farm, one of the county's largest. The remaining Italianate details were added to reflect changing architectural trends. It is individually listed on the National Register.



Figure x. Diamond Fruit Farm/Dravo House, 8323 Dravo Circle (PVA)

Andrew Hoke House:

This building was built circa 1828. This two-story brick house was part of a large farm and constructed in two separate time periods. It was a Federal Style I-house that evolved from a two-thirds or side-hall plan. It retains Greek Revival style details, which were added later to reflect changing architectural trends. It is individually listed on the National Register.

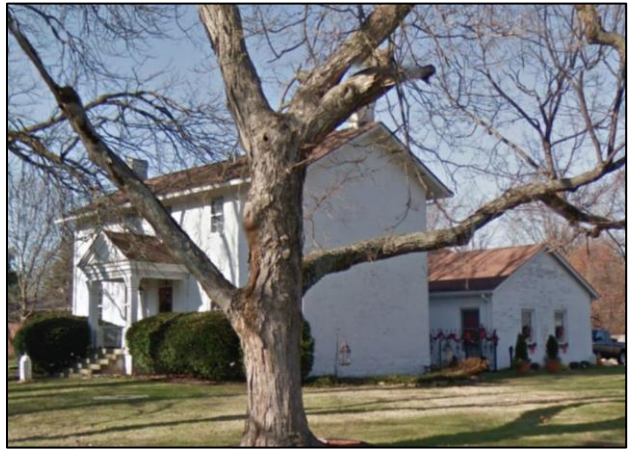


Figure x. Andrew Hoke House, 2700 Llandoverly Drive (Google)

Leatherman House:

This building was built circa 1830. This one-story brick house had a transitional design style with both Italianate and Greek Revival style details. It was not part of a large farm estate. It is individually listed on the National Register.



Figure x. Leatherman House, 3606 College Drive (PVA)

**Moses Tyler/Presley Tyler Farm
(Blackacre Nature Preserve):**

This building was built circa 1844. This two-story brick house had Greek Revival style details. It was part of a large farm estate. The building is located in the Tyler Settlement Rural National Register District.



Figure x. Moses Tyler/Presley Tyler Farm, 3200 Tucker Station Road (PVA)

Tyler-Sweeney Farm:

This building was built circa 1844. This two-story brick house had Greek Revival style details. It was part of a large farm estate. The building is located in the Tyler Settlement Rural National Register District.



Figure x. Tyler-Sweeney Farm, 12109 Taylorsville Road (PVA)

The Skinner-Hoke House is more indicative of a vernacular Greek Revival house with the use of square columns with no capitals. The house is built in a side-passage form which is unusual for a rural example since that type of dwelling would be more often found in an urban setting. The Skinner-Hoke House still retains the entry porch (though parts of it have been covered with synthetic material) and four-paneled front door including the side-lights and transom.



Skinner-Hoke House (looking northwest) is an example of a vernacular Greek Revival dwelling.



Skinner-Hoke House Porch and Entry showing the Greek Revival Details

Middle-class Farms in Jefferson County

Eastern Jefferson County's proximity to the Ohio River provided fertile ground for agricultural uses. Additionally, the Harrods Creek and Goose Creek watersheds run through the area. The eastern and northern portions of the county are well-drained soils. The historic context "Agriculture in Jefferson County, Kentucky, 1800-1930" establishes the theme of agriculture as rural ways of establishing livelihood from the land. "Agricultural practices include subsistence and general farming, cash-crop farming, stock farming, dairying, viticulture, sod/seed/soil sales, nurserying, horse farming, timbering, and tree farming, fisheries, and tuck farming. This theme is prominent in Jefferson County, as people with much good land, relatively excellent transportation

access, an a near-to-hand urban wholesale and end market, south to derive their livelihood from non-extractive use of the land.”

By 1800, early settlement in Eastern Jefferson County was occurring as the frontier existence became more permanent. The early log houses in the region were supplanted with I-houses and more substantial double-pile, central passage dwellings. These houses were located on rural farms that dotted the area around Wolf Pen Branch including Middle-class and Gentleman farm property types. The Skinner-Hoke House JF-582 is identified in the *Louisville Jefferson County Multiple Property Listing (MPL) Addendum* (1990) as a Middle-class Farm property type.

As identified in the historic context “Agriculture in Jefferson County, Kentucky, 1800-1930,” the Middle-class farm property type in Jefferson County is characterized by a durable, functional, and somewhat unadorned built and managed environment. Middle-class farms are distinguished from upper-class (Gentleman farms) in that the main dwellings were not architect-designed or that was a designed landscape. At the other end of the spectrum, Middle-class farms are seen as distinct from subsistence farms in terms of more sturdy and permanent structures. Middle-class farms in the antebellum period typically had at least 1 slave on the property according to the historic context “Agriculture in Jefferson County, Kentucky, 1800-1930.”

From the *Louisville Jefferson County Multiple Property Listing Addendum* (1990) Registration Requirements for the Middle-class farm property type include at least two of four components for *design*: a main dwelling, a domestic complex, an agricultural building and structure complex, and a managed landscape. The domestic space *setting* should have 4-8 acres, a main dwelling oriented towards and 1/16 to ¼ mile from a public road, and an apparently managed landscape. The *location* of the farm should not be on knobs or on the central slack-water plain. *Workmanship* is expected to be a vernacular type, both in style and technique. *Materials* should be from local sources which would be expected to be log or frame with weatherboarding. The *association* of Middle-class farms is generally with English or Germanic farmers, but Virginian or Pennsylvanian could also be expected. The *feeling* should convey a sense of rural living and production, as well as a sense of unity or compactness about the environment.

The Skinner-Hoke house today has lost some of the principal aspects of a Middle-class Farm Property Type since the 1990 MPL. The agricultural buildings, domestic complex and managed agricultural landscape are no longer extant. The main dwelling and domestic yard are still readable on the landscape. Alterations to the building have resulted in the loss of some exterior historic fabric and the feeling has been impacted by surrounding suburban development.



Skinner-Hoke House site with domestic yard.



Skinner-Hoke House site looking north with road to Fincastle House on the left.



Skinner-Hoke House site looking south to intersection with Wolf Pen Branch Road.



Photo of the Skinner-Hoke House Barn from the Fincastle National Register Nomination-*Demolished* (2000)

Archaeological Significance

Like other nineteenth century farms, the Skinner-Hoke House has high potential for containing significant archaeological resources. Remnants of domestic outbuildings and artifact middens associated with domestic activities are likely present on the property, as has been demonstrated by excavations conducted on similar properties throughout Jefferson County.

Extensive archaeological excavations have been conducted at Locust Grove (15Jf541), Farmington (15Jf574), Riverside, the Farnsley-Moremen Landing (15Jf531), and Johnson-Bates (15Jf538). Most of these projects have focused on locating and interpreting outbuildings. At Locust Grove, the springhouse (Granger and Mocas 1972), three slave cabins (Young 1995), a barn, and an agricultural building (DiBlasi 1997) were excavated. A kitchen (McBride and Bellhorn 1992) and a slave cabin (Slider 1998) were excavated at Farmington. A detached kitchen and wash house was excavated at Riverside, the Farnsley-Moremen Landing (Stottman and Watts-Roy 2000, Stottman and Prybylski 2005). At the Johnson-Bates farmstead an extensive investigation of several outbuildings was conducted (O'Malley 1987b). Limited excavations have taken place at several other historic sites in the county including Blackacre (15Jf681) (Stottman 2000), Stonybrook (15Jf676) (Stallings and Ross-Stallings 1999), the Conrad/Dravo farmstead (15Jf638) (Bader 1997), the Vulcan Rudy slave house (15Jf685) (Stottman 2001), the Hall-Standiford tenant house (15Jf571) (Stottman et al. 1992) and Oxmoor (Young 1997). This work indicates that sites such as the Skinner-Hoke House have potential to produce significant archaeological information. Given the subsequent agricultural land usage, however, there is a very high probability that intact and significant archaeological resources have survived.

An archaeological investigation conducted by professional archaeologist who met the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Professional Archaeologists was conducted on the site for the location of a possible cemetery in 2016. The investigation was prompted by notation on the Harrods Glen Preliminary Subdivision Plan from 2005. The location examined was a fenced in area adjacent to the site of the barn that is no longer extant.

Through this investigation it was determined that there was no historic cemetery at this site. Further research conducted for this report indicates that J.H. Skinner is buried in Worthington Cemetery along with other members of the Skinner Family. Peter F. Hoke is buried at the German Reformed Presbyterian Cemetery in Jeffersontown, Kentucky.



Area identified as having a potential historic cemetery.



Area investigated for a potential historic cemetery.

Historic Integrity

The definition described in the Landmarks Ordinance is: “The authenticity of a structure or site’s historic integrity evidenced by survival of physical characteristics that existed during the structure or site’s historic or prehistoric period. To retain historic integrity a site must possess some of the following aspects: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, or association.” Note that the integrity as applied by the Landmarks Ordinance is for the exterior of the structure since that is the extent of regulation if designated.

Integrity Assessment

The Skinner-Hoke House retains a high level integrity in location to support the historic significance of the structure as it relates to its association with the development of Middling farms in Jefferson County. The structure has not been moved from its original location and still has its historic orientation to Wolf Pen Branch Road.

As a vernacular Greek Revival house, the structure has a moderate level of integrity in terms of design. The form of the building is readable as a product of the period of original construction. A two-story, side passage structure with a rear ell addition is indicative of a mid-19th century building form. Even with one-story addition, the basic form of the house is intact.

The dwelling retains a moderate level of integrity in setting, feeling and association because of the surrounding suburban development on the Fincastle property. The area had been previously subdivided in 2006 which altered the view shed for the house to the west. Additionally, there is another suburban development on the east side of the property. Two barns that were previously near the house are no longer extant. While the existing domestic yard remains intact and screen by trees, the overall change to the area is evident. Thus, some of the character defining features of the Middle-class farm remain, but the site is not an intact complex. With a cumulative effect of loss of rural character as a Middle-class farm property type in terms of setting, as well as feeling and association.

The house possess a low level of integrity in materials and workmanship to support the historic significance of the structure. While the National Register nomination cited that the aluminum siding did not impact the integrity of the structure to make it contributing to the Fincastle property, when considered as individual significant, there should be a significant amount of historic fabric still intact. Since the National Register listing, vinyl siding was installed to sheath the building, and it appears that some original materials were removed. Architectural elements such as the sills and lintels appear to have been removed and replaced with vinyl trim. The rosettes and porch brackets described in the 1977 Historic Resources Inventory form are also missing. Exterior changes to the principal materials and character defining features diminish the quality of the Greek Revival features.

Designation Criteria Analysis

In accordance with Louisville Metro Code of Ordinances Section 32.260(O), considering the designation of any area, site, or structure in Louisville Metro as an Individual Landmark, the Commission shall apply the following criteria with respect to such structure, site, or area. An Individual Landmark shall possess sufficient integrity to meet criterion (a) and one or more of the other criteria (b) through (e).

A) Its character, interest, or value as part of the development or heritage of the city, the Commonwealth, or the United States.

Eastern Jefferson County where the Skinner-Hoke house is located has been associated with a number of rural property types including Gentleman Farms and Middle-class Farms, as well as the Country Estates which are identified as suburban property type. The Skinner-Hoke house was identified as a Middle-class farm in the Louisville-Jefferson County Multiple Property Listing 1990. Due to the loss of outbuildings, the principal dwelling is the only building that remains extant on the property to represent the Middle-class farm historic context. Additionally, the property has been subdivided over time causing a loss of connection to the agricultural fields.

B) Its location as a site of a significant historic event.

There are no known significant historic events associated with this property.

C) Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the culture and development of the city, the commonwealth, or the nation.

In consideration of significance associated with a person or persons, the evaluation relates to whether an individual's period of significant contribution or productivity occurred while residing or occupying a building, structure, or site. The Skinner-Hoke House has no known significant association with any person or persons who contributed to the culture and development of the City, the commonwealth, or the nation.

D) Its embodiment of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type or specimen; or its embodiment of a significant architectural innovation; or its identification as the work of an architect, landscape architect, or master builder whose individual work has influenced the development of the city, the Commonwealth, or the nation.

The Skinner-Hoke House is a vernacular Greek Revival side-passage dwelling. Greek Revival rural dwellings were found in Jefferson County throughout the time period that the Skinner-Hoke House was constructed. Many of these structures were central-passage, masonry dwellings, with a few frame buildings. The side-passage form of the Skinner-Hoke House is more indicative of an urban Greek Revival structure, which distinguishes the building from its rural counterparts. The level of Greek Revival details that remain on the exterior of the building has been greatly impacted by material changes over time.

The building does not represent a significant architectural innovation.

There is no identified history to connect this building with an architect, landscape architect, or master builder whose individual work has influenced the development of the city, the Commonwealth, or the nation.

E) Its historic significance is based on its association with an underrepresented history within the city, the Commonwealth, or the nation and broadens our understanding of these underrepresented histories.

In consideration of significance associated with underrepresented histories, the evaluation relates to inclusion and telling a comprehensive history. Based on current research, Census data indicated that the Skinner family consistently had slaves associated with the property during their ownership tenure. African-American occupation could yield some information about an underrepresented history associated with the Skinner-Hoke House. At this time it does not appear to be reflected in the building evidence extant on the property, however there could be unidentified cultural resources.

Boundary Justification

The property proposed for designation is located 5605 Fincastle Trace (formerly 7607 Wolf Pen Branch Rd.). According to the Jefferson County Property Evaluation Administrator (PVA), the property (parcel number 050J01660000) contains 1.12 acres of land. The proposed boundaries, if designated, for the Skinner-Hoke Individual Landmark designation area are represented on the LOJIC map (**Figure**). The designation boundary is outlined in yellow.



LOJIC aerial showing location of the designation boundary for the Skinner-Hoke House.

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