Dr. Evan Alexander Erwin House
Laurinburg, Scotland County, SC0354, Listed 4/19/2007
Nomination by Beth Keane
Photographs by Beth Keane, January 2006

Façade view

Rear view
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking “x” in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter “N/A” for “not applicable.” For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of property

historic name  Enwin, Dr. Evan Alexander, House
other names/site number

2. Location

street & number  520 South Main Street
not for publication  N/A
city or town  Laurinburg
vicinity  N/A
state  North Carolina
code  NC
county  Scotland
code  165
zip code  28352

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ______ nationally ______ statewide ______ locally. ( ______ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official  __________________________ Date  __________

North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ______ meets ______ does not meet the National Register criteria. ( ______ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official  __________________________ Date  __________

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

__________ entered in the National Register
__________ See continuation sheet.
__________ determined eligible for the National Register
__________ See continuation sheet.
__________ determined not eligible for the National Register
__________ removed from the National Register
__________ other (explain): __________________________

Signature of the Keeper  __________________________ Date of Action  __________
5. Classification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ownership of Property</th>
<th>Category of Property</th>
<th>Number of Resources within Property</th>
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<tr>
<td>(Check as many boxes as apply)</td>
<td>(Check only one box)</td>
<td>(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>X</em> private</td>
<td><em>X</em> building(s)</td>
<td>Contributing</td>
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<tr>
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<td>___ district</td>
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Name of related multiple property listing

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6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: DOMESTIC Sub: single dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: WORK IN PROGRESS Sub: 

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Classical Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick
roof Asphalt
walls Weatherboard
other Brick

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)
Erwin, Dr. Evan Alexander, House  
Scotland County, NC

### 8. Statement of Significance

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

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<tr>
<td><strong>A</strong></td>
<td>Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B</strong></td>
<td>Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C</strong></td>
<td>Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>D</strong></td>
<td>Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.</td>
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**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

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<td><strong>B</strong></td>
<td>removed from its original location.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>C</strong></td>
<td>a birthplace or a grave.</td>
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<td><strong>D</strong></td>
<td>a cemetery.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>E</strong></td>
<td>a reconstructed building, object, or structure.</td>
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<td><strong>F</strong></td>
<td>a commemorative property.</td>
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<td><strong>G</strong></td>
<td>less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.</td>
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### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

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<tr>
<td><strong>Architecture</strong></td>
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### Period of Significance

1939

### Significant Dates

1939

### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

Unknown

### Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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### 9. Major Bibliographical References

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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### Previous documentation on file (NPS)

<p>| | |</p>
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<td>previously determined eligible by the National Register</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #</td>
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### Primary Location of Additional Data

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<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
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Name of repository: __________________________________________
10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property  less than one acre  

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

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<th>Easting</th>
<th>Northing</th>
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<td>17</td>
<td>650540</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>3848540</td>
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Verbal Boundary Description  
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification  
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title  Beth Keane  
organization  Retrospective  date  December, 2006  
street & number  6073 Gold Creek Estates Drive  telephone  838-328-8147  
city or town  Hickory  state  NC  zip code  28601

12. Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps  
A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs  
Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items  (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner  
(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name  Dr. Matthew and Desiree M. Block  
street & number  613 South Main Street  telephone  910-277-5858 (office)  
city or town  Laurinburg  state  NC  zip code  28353

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:  This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended  
(16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement:  Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.
The Dr. Evan Alexander Erwin House is located on the northeast corner of South Main Street and Covington Street, approximately five blocks south of Laurinburg’s central business district. The area surrounding the house, once a residential neighborhood, has largely been redeveloped and is now comprised of a mix of banks, office buildings, medical facilities, in addition to a few residences. Set well back on the lot, the house faces northwest toward South Main Street. A ca. 1939 two-car garage is situated behind the house adjacent to Covington Street. The 300-foot long lot has a large backyard that extends east to Biggs Street. Several large shade trees enhance the rear of the property. For ease of description of the building orientation, the northwest direction will be designated as west, the southwest direction will be designated as south, the southeast direction will be designated east, and the northeast direction will be designated as north.

The 1914, 1924, and 1930 Sanborn Map Company maps of Laurinburg depict the Erwin House as a one-story house with three projecting polygonal bays – one on the north side of the façade and one on each of the north and south elevations. A front porch wrapped around the south side of the house. There was also a partial-width rear porch.

The original ca. 1904 Erwin house was enlarged and completely remodeled in the Neoclassical Revival style by Dr. Erwin in 1939. The stair hall and southern rooms of the first floor are the original house and they were incorporated into the 1939 remodeling. Currently the house is a double-pile, two-story, side-gable structure with one-story side-gable side wings on both the north and south elevations, in addition to several one-story rear wings. A partial-width, two-story front porch with a flat roof is supported by four square slender wood columns with Tuscan caps. The five-bay symmetrical façade of the main block of the house features a central door surrounded by leaded-glass sidelights and an elliptical fanlight. Two-story fluted pilasters mark the edge of the porch.

Windows throughout the house contain six-over-six double hung sash, with the first-story windows longer than the second-story windows. Fenestration of the north wing is comprised of one window on the façade and one window on the north elevation. The fenestration of the south wing features a secondary entrance on the façade surrounded by multi-paned sidelights and transom, a triple window on the south elevation, and a single window on the east elevation. Rectangular vents are centered in the gables of each wing, while arched vents are centered in the gables of the main block of the house. Cornice returns are featured in the gables of the one-story wings, the two-story central block, and the rear south-side wing.

A one-story square bay with a shed roof is positioned on both the north elevation of the main block of the house behind the one-story wing. A similar bay, but with a cantled corner, is situated behind the south-side wing. Two rear one-story gabled wings with centered rectangular vents are spanned by a flat roof. A shed-roof porch is attached to each rear wing. The previously open rear porch on the north side was enclosed as a family room in 1959.
The house has two interior-end chimney stacks which appear to be for decorative purposes only. An original interior chimney pierces the east slope of the roof. Another original interior chimney with a tall corbelled chimney stack is located in the south-side rear wing. One additional exterior chimney was added when the rear porch was enclosed in 1959. The brick used in the fireplace and exterior porch chimney came from the original foundation of the back porch. The entire roof of the house is covered with composition shingles.

The interior floor plan follows a typical double-pile Colonial Revival plan with a wide central hall featuring an open staircase and two rooms on either side. The stairs rise along the south wall to a landing, make a ninety-degree turn, and continue along the north wall to the second floor. The stair banister features turned balusters that spiral into a newel post at the bottom step.

The first-story hall and south rooms were part of the original ca. 1904 house and were incorporated into the enlargement of the house in 1939. The south-side parlor retains an original fireplace and mantel with a pale yellow tile fireplace surround and hearth. The mantel consists of fluted pilasters flanking the firebox and a flat mantel shelf supported by two scrolled brackets. A south-side sunroom, part of the 1939 enlargement, is accessed from the parlor. A short hall leads from the sunroom to a bedroom situated behind the parlor. This room also retains the original fireplace, mantel, and pale yellow tile surround. The mantel is very plain with a flat mantel shelf supported by two scrolled brackets. Two closets are situated on either side of the mantel. A third south-side room is positioned behind the bedroom and was originally the doctor’s office. It features a corner fireplace with the original 1904 mantel and pale yellow tile surround. The mantel in the office is also very simple, decorated only with a strip of molding outlining the fire box, while the mantel shelf is supported by five small scrolled brackets. A small enclosed porch with French doors surmounted by a multi-light transom is located behind the office. Original cast iron stove inserts remain in all three fireboxes.

A door off the rear of the central hall leads to a short passage, also part of the ca.1904 house. Steps on the north wall of the hall descend to the original basement. A bathroom on the north side of the hall is currently being renovated with all new fixtures. The narrow central passage leads to a rear porch that was enclosed as a family room in 1959.

The section of the house north of the central hall is part of the 1939 enlargement. A formal living room, measuring approximately thirteen by twenty-five feet, opens off the front of the hall. A fifteen- by twenty-foot dining room, which can also be accessed from a door located near the rear of the front hall, is located behind the living room. An approximate eleven- by fourteen-foot kitchen, currently undergoing complete renovation, is positioned behind the dining room. The family room can also be accessed through a door on the east wall of the kitchen. A fireplace with a brick surround and exposed brick chimney is located along the east wall of the room. French doors with multi-light transoms flank either side of the fireplace. Two new sets of French doors, also with multi-light transoms, have recently been added to the north wall of the room.
At the second story, the central hall is flanked by two bedrooms, each with its own closet, to the north and one bedroom and a large walk-in closet to the south. A spacious bathroom is located between the two rooms at the front of the house and is accessed from the hall. The stair banister curves around the stairwell in the upstairs hall landing.

The interior of the house has narrow-width pine floor boards throughout, with the southern section retaining the original ca. 1904 floors. In addition, plaster walls, eleven-foot- high ceilings (covered with sheetrock in 1959), nine-inch-wide baseboards, crown molding and six-panel doors are defining features of the house. A chair rail encircles the dining room, while complex molding surrounds the doors and windows.

The Erwin House is currently undergoing a substantial rehabilitation. Due to deterioration, the exterior siding has been removed and replaced with siding that was manufactured to replicate the original Eastern White Pine weatherboards. The house has a new composition shingle roof similar to the previous roof. Interior doors, window surrounds, and window sash have been retained, sanded, and repainted. Plaster walls have also been patched, sanded, and repainted. Original light fixtures are being replaced with new fixtures and the bathrooms and kitchen are being modernized with new fixtures, cabinets, and appliances.

A ca. 1939 two-car frame garage with a hipped, shingled roof sits approximately ten feet off the southeast corner of the house. The west-elevation garage doors have been removed. A five-panel pedestrian door and a single six-over-six sash window are located on the north elevation of the garage. Paired six-over-six sash windows are centered on the rear (east) elevation. The garage is covered with the original plain-edge weatherboards.
SUMMARY

The Dr. Evan Alexander Erwin House and associated ca. 1939 two-car garage, located several blocks east of Laurinburg’s commercial district, meet National Register Criterion C for architecture. The period of significance is limited to 1939, the year that the original ca. 1904 house was expanded and remodeled into the popular Neoclassical Revival style for owner, Dr. Evan Alexander Erwin. Initially, popularized in this country by the World’s Columbian Exposition held in Chicago in 1893, the Neoclassical and Colonial Revival styles remained the country’s number one choice for domestic architecture throughout the first half of the twentieth century. During the first two decades of the century, renditions of the style typically featured hipped roofs and elaborate, correct columns. The 1939 renovation and expansion of the Erwin House represents the later phase of the style’s popularity from about 1930 to the 1950s when the emphasis was placed on side-gable roofs and simple, slender columns. The house is one of a dwindling number of historic houses on Laurinburg’s South Main Street, an area where many of the town’s prominent citizens once lived in grand Queen Anne- and Colonial Revival-style houses but has become increasingly commercialized.

HISTORIC BACKGROUND

The first families, many of them Scotch immigrants, to settle in the area now incorporated as Laurinburg arrived in 1785. By 1840, the settlement still only consisted of three dwellings, a store, a saloon, and several small outbuildings. In 1853, the Wilmington, Charlotte, and Rutherford Railroad announced that it would build through Laurinburg and the first trains began running in 1851. During the Civil War, the railroad moved its railroad shops from Wilmington to Laurinburg. Although originally intending to remain in Laurinburg only until the end of the war, they later purchased additional land and remained until 1894 (Meyers, p. 8).

Laurinburg continued to thrive with the introduction of new industries, in particular a number of textile mills built factories in the town. The mid- to late 1890s generated a new spirit of civic pride through the political fight to gain the separation of Scotland County from Richmond County and to establish Laurinburg as its governmental seat. Created on February 20, 1899, Scotland County was cut from the eastern half of Richmond County. The same act also provided that Laurinburg be the county seat and it began to function in December 1900 (Keane, Laurinburg Commercial Historic District NRN, Section 8, p. 28).

The house referred to in this nomination as the Dr. Evan Alexander Erwin House was actually built for Robert Rowe Covington, but the property remained in his ownership for only a few years. Covington was one of Laurinburg’s most influential citizens, with large landholdings in the county. The Erwin House was built in ca. 1904 as a one-story frame house with a wraparound porch. William D. Tucker (1880-1949), master carpenter and contractor, was responsible for its construction (Erwin personal correspondence). A versatile builder, Tucker built in all the prevailing styles of the day and was responsible for many of the more impressive residences in Laurinburg, as well as the Gothic Revival-style First United Methodist Church.
Lula Erwin Dixon, wife of Rev. J. H. Dixon, acquired the property from Covington in 1907 (Deed Book G, p. 45). Her brother, Evan Alexander Erwin, a native of Mecklenburg County, purchased the lot and house on the corner of South Main and Covington streets in 1918 (Deed Book K, p. 517). Dr. Erwin was the son of Francis Lee Erwin and Margaret Alexander Erwin. He was born on November 29, 1884 at the “Home Place Steele Creek” in Mecklenburg County. He spent his childhood there and later attended the University of Georgia. After graduating from the Medical College of South Carolina in 1912, Erwin spent several months in New York doing graduate work. He then moved to Laurinburg and set up a general practice (The Laurinburg Exchange, Sept. 28, 1944). On January 10, 1917, he married Bessie Covington (b. 11/29/1884, d. 9/20/1944), daughter of Harriet and Robert Rowe Covington, and the following year moved into the house across the street from her parents. The couple had two children, Evan Alexander (Alex) Erwin, Jr. and Elizabeth Norment Erwin, who were raised in the house (Scotland County Heritage, p. 241).

In 1939, Dr. Erwin enlarged the house and remodeled it in the Neoclassical Revival style. In addition to expanding the first level considerably, he also added a second story and installed a full-height porch supported by slender wood Tuscan columns. The main block of the original cross-gable house was enlarged to a two-story, side-gable house with a five-bay façade flanked by one-story, side-gable wings and several rear one-story additions.

For more than thirty years Dr. Erwin was a highly respected Laurinburg physician. He served on the Board of Health and also worked as a county physician. In addition, he oversaw the cotton farm given to his wife by her father, R. R. Covington. Dr. Erwin died on September 28, 1944, at the age of sixty-six. Before his death, in a will dated August 30, 1944, he devised the property to his wife, Bessie (Record of Wills, No. 2, p. 412). On August 4, 1959, Bessie Erwin deeded the property to her son, Alex, and his wife, Maggie, for “natural love and affection plus $1.00” (Deed Book 3E, p. 381).

Dr. Alex Erwin and his wife, Maggie Sarah Jones, had two children: Evan Alexander Erwin III and Frank Woodson Erwin, both of whom grew up in the house. Alex and Maggie and their two children lived in the house until 1959 (Scotland County Heritage, p. 242). The property remained in the Erwin family until 2001, when Maggie Erwin sold the property to Dr. Matthew Block (Deed Book 691, p. 282). Dr. Block has recently undertaken a substantial rehabilitation of the Erwin home, restoring it to its previous grandeur.

ARCHITECTURE CONTEXT

The Neoclassical Revival style was a popular style for houses throughout the country during the first half of the twentieth century. The revival of interest in classical homes dates from the World’s Columbian Exposition held in Chicago in 1893. The classical theme of the exposition resulted in dramatic colonnaded buildings designed by some of the country’s well known architects. The popularity
of the Fair, along with the dissemination of the style through articles and photographs, helped to promote the Neoclassical Revival style country wide (McAlester, pp 344-345).

The houses built during the first two decades of the century emphasized hipped roofs and elaborate full-height, correct columns. A later phase, from approximately 1925 through the 1950s, accentuated side-gabled roofs and simple, slender columns. The earlier ones strived for accurate replications of historic buildings. In comparison, the Colonial or Neoclassical Revival house of the 1930s and 40s had simpler massing, less lavish use of materials, cruder detailing, and more economical scale. The restoration of Virginia’s historic Williamsburg in the early 1930s created a revived interest in “Early American” styles. Although some houses built during the 1930s and 40s were faithful reproductions, the majority made no direct reference to historical precedent but merely suggest it by motifs such as rigid symmetry, paired end chimneys or porticos of exaggerated proportions (Rifkind, p. 101).

Architectural magazines published in the 1920s and 30s helped to further popularize the style and disseminate its design throughout the country. In addition, articles and books on the colonial past were published in the tens of thousands during the first half of the twentieth century, thereby assuring the Colonial Revival style’s success as the national image for the home. Sears, Roebuck and Company also helped to popularize the style through their Modern Homes publication. By 1920 the company had established its own architectural division and at least one quarter of the houses in their catalog were Colonial Revival in style. In 1930, they produced a model called the “Jefferson” which had been designed along the same lines as historic Mount Vernon and described it as “a true example of Southern Colonial architecture.” Sears adopted Mount Vernon as its image, constructing full-scale reproductions for the 1931 international exposition in Paris and the 1931 Washington Bicentennial in Brooklyn (Wilson, pp. 101-102).

The Erwin House, which began as an early twentieth-century, one-story frame house with a wraparound porch, was updated and enlarged in an imposing two-story Neoclassical Revival-style house in 1939 by its owner, a prominent Laurinburg physician. By this time, the side-gable form with simple columns had replaced the previously popular rendition that featured a hipped-roof with elaborate and correct Ionic or Corinthian columns. The Erwin House, typical of those built after 1925 in the second phase of the style’s popularity, bears a striking resemblance to Mount Vernon, with its symmetry and two-story portico with a flat roof. The porch is supported by slender columns with simple Tuscan caps. The flanking one-story wings and central front door with sidelights and elliptical fanlight are reminiscent of the Federal-style houses. Dr. Erwin may have been influenced when deciding to enlarge his house by the architectural publications of the time and the promotion of the “Mount Vernon” style by Sears, Roebuck, and Company.

There are only two other examples of the Neoclassical Revival style in Laurinburg and they are both typical of the type built during the first two decades of the twentieth century. The Leonidas Benton House at 221 McRae Street was built ca. 1915 and is a classic rendition of the pre-1925 Neoclassical Revival style. The two-story frame house features a hipped roof with a central dormer and a full-height, curved semi-circular entry porch on a raised platform supported by four Corinthian columns. Two one-
story side porches are supported by Ionic columns. First- and second-level central entrances hark back to the Greek Revival style with their flanking sidelights and three-part transoms (NC Department of Cultural Resources Survey File for Leonidas Benton House [SC 13]).

The Dr. Luther Gibson House at 315 East Church Street, built ca. 1910, is also dominated by a full-height entry porch on a raised platform supported by four massive Corinthian columns. Two side porches and a porte cochere, all with flat roofs, are supported by slender Ionic columns. The steeply-pitched hipped roof features a central pediment (NC Department of Cultural Resources Survey File for Dr. Luther Gibson House [SC 84]).

Laurinburg’s Neoclassical-style houses were built for prominent citizens of the town. The style was meant to impress and to confer the status of the owners. The three houses are sited prominently along Church and Main streets, principal thoroughfares through the town. Although there are other examples of pre World War II-era Colonial Revival-style houses found in Laurinburg, the simplified two-story portico of the Erwin House is a distinct feature for a house built in the town during the 1930s. Dr. Erwin’s 1939 enlargement and updating of his early twentieth-century one-story frame house in the more imposing Neoclassical Revival style confirmed his reputation as one of Laurinburg’s most prominent, well-known, and wealthy citizens.
Bibliography

Erwin, Maggie personal correspondence dtd. December, 2005 to Dr. Matthew Block.


Scotland County Deeds, Scotland County Courthouse, Laurinburg, NC.

Scotland County Historical Assoc., Inc. and County Heritage Inc. *Scotland County Heritage, North Carolina,* 2003, published by: Scotland County Heritage Book Committee.

Scotland County Survey Files, Department of Cultural Resources, Division of Archives and History, Survey and Planning Branch, Raleigh, NC.

Scotland County Vital Statistic Records, Scotland County Courthouse, Laurinburg, NC.

Scotland County Wills, Clerk of the Superior Court Office, Laurinburg, NC.

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated parcel consists of Block 6, Lot 4 on Tax Map 54 of Laurinburg, Scotland County, North Carolina.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the property historically associated with the Dr. Evan Alexander Erwin House.
The following information applies to all photographs:

Name of Property: Dr. Evan Alexander Erwin House
County and State where property is located: Scotland County, North Carolina
Address: 520 South Main Street, Laurinburg, NC 28352
Name of Photographer: Beth Keane
Date of Photographs: April, 2006
Location of Original Negatives: North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh

Photographs:

Photograph 1: West elevation (façade); camera looking northeast
Photograph 2: West and south elevations; camera looking northeast
Photograph 3: East and north elevations; camera looking southwest
Photograph 4: Interior; central hall and staircase
Photograph 5: Interior mantel; first floor, doctor’s office
Photograph 6: Garage; west and south elevations; camera looking northeast