

PRESERVATION: 2016

*Report to the Mayor
City of Knoxville*



Presented to:

Knoxville-Knox Metropolitan Planning Commission

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2016 Historic Zoning Commissioners

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State of Historic Preservation in the City of Knoxville 2016

Executive Summary

The City's Charter, as amended in 2002, requires that an annual report on the state of historic preservation within the City of Knoxville be reviewed by the Metropolitan Planning Commission and presented to the City Mayor.

This purpose of this report is to convey the current state of historic preservation efforts and activities within the city and to report wins as well as losses. The topics covered include initiatives in historic preservation, recommendations for implementation of preservation initiatives, and Historic Zoning Commission activity. The Recommendations for Action are based on input from neighborhood groups, Knox Heritage Advocacy Committee, and the Knoxville Historic Zoning Commission.

Historic Preservation Initiatives 2016

Update of Knoxville's Historic Resource Inventory Completed

The update of Knoxville's Historic Resource Inventory (1986) conducted by the consultant, Thomason and Associates of Nashville, commenced in April 2016 and was completed in August 2016. A Federal Historic Preservation Fund grant obtained by MPC through the Tennessee Historical Commission, utilizing a City Historic Preservation grant as matching funds. The updated inventory paid particular attention to the growth and development of Knoxville in the years following World War II. Knoxville experienced a building boom in the 1920s with many early automobile suburbs developed such as Sequoyah Hills, Holston Hills and Westmoreland Heights. A total of 81 properties were intensively surveyed. Eight individual properties and three neighborhoods, Sequoyah Hills, Holsten Hills, and Little Switzerland, were recommended as eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Recommended for Multiple Property Documentation were Mid-Century Modern Houses in Knoxville, and the Stewart Fonde Weatherboard Block Concrete Houses.

New Pre-Application Review Procedure

A pre-application review procedure was adopted by the Historic Zoning Commission (HZC) for larger or more complex projects such as new construction and certain accessory structures. The purpose of the new procedure is to provide helpful feedback to the applicant early in the design process. The focus of the pre-application review is to provide guidance that will ultimately result in consistency of the project with design guidelines. Although it is the goal of the HZC to provide comments that will result in a project that will be recommended for approval by the HZC, those comments provided during the pre-application review are not binding, and the final decision of the HZC can be predicated on these comments. There is no fee for a pre-application review.

City Historic Preservation Grant Fund

City Council approved a \$500,000 historic preservation fund for the third year as part of the 2016-17 budget to support important historic preservation projects in need of gap funding. The City's Community Development Department administers the fund. A portion of these funds have been set aside for administrative projects such as National Register nominations.* The City's review panel is in the final stages of reviewing the submittals for 2017 awards. The 2016 awardees for restoration projects were:

- First Christian Church building – Fifth Avenue
- Mabry-Hazen House – Dandridge Avenue
- Lloyd Branson House – Branson Avenue
- Craighead-Jackson House – State Street
- Kern’s Bakery – Chapman Highway
- The Keener Building – Broadway
- The River House – Hill Avenue
- The Tennessee and Bijou theatres

Edgewood-Park City Historic Zoning Overlay District Expansion Study

This east Knoxville neighborhood was developed as a streetcar suburb for the city's professional class in the 1890s, incorporated as the separate city of Park City in 1907, and annexed by Knoxville in 1917. Today, the neighborhood is commonly referred to as "Parkridge." Some of the structures in this area are irreplaceable parts of our urban development history, but are not yet protected by a zoning overlay.

MPC staff worked in 2016 to document these unprotected areas generally located within the National Register district. Within the overlay, the activities of new construction, demolition, and changes to buildings would be reviewed by the Historic Zoning Commission to help ensure compatibility with the neighborhood's character. In 2017, MPC staff sponsored public input meetings on January 19th and February 17th at O’Connor Senior Center. Approximately 105 and 40 attended, respectively.

Potentially affected property owners expressed concern that extra costs would be associated with materials, labor, property taxes, and permit fees within a historic district overlay. Further discussion centered around the concern that wooden replacement windows would cost more than vinyl ones. However, it was noted that there is opportunity with the design guidelines update to consider materials other than wood in certain instances, at a lesser cost. The Historic Zoning Commission can also offer technical assistance on ways to reduce material and labor costs.

It was also noted that much renovation is occurring in the expansion area, so increased demand in the area and improvements will contribute to increased sales values, even without establishing the H-1 overlay. According to the Knoxville’s Director of Tax Assessments (DTA), property taxes will increase only gradually as the area revitalizes. It has taken forty years for other historic areas of the city to revitalize and achieve overall higher assessments. Also, according to the DTA, there would be no automatic property tax increase due to the H-1 overlay.

Historic Preservation Action Items for 2017:

- Continue study of potential expansion of the Edgewood-Park City Historic District Overlay based on National Register boundaries in response to City Council resolution
- Study potential establishment of Oakwood-Lincoln Park Historic District Overlay and/or Neighborhood Conservation District Overlay
- Continue to receive public input for and finalize the update of the Design Guidelines for Edgewood-Park City, Old North Knox, and Fourth and Gill historic district overlays

Actions in Progress to Implement Recommendations for 2016:

- Survey and documentation of potential expansion of the Edgewood-Park City Historic District Overlay completed. Potential boundaries proposed based on architectural eligibility. Public outreach effort initiated in the Parkridge Community.
- Reconnaissance survey completed for identification of study area for potential establishment of Oakwood-Lincoln Park historic district overlay or neighborhood conservation district overlay
- Update of Knoxville's historic resource inventory completed to include mid-century modern buildings and to make recommendations on further National Register nominations

Historic District Zoning Overlay Background

In 1991, residents of Mechanicsville joined forces to create the city’s first residential H-1 historic district overlay. Old North Knoxville followed suit in 1992. The establishment of those districts were followed shortly thereafter with those for the Fourth & Gill, Edgewood-Park City and the Market Square historic districts. Another form of overlay zoning, designed to protect historic buildings from demolition and assure new construction is compatible with the existing, is called a *Neighborhood Conservation Overlay* (NC-1) which designates the Tazewell Pike, Scenic Drive, Fort Sanders, Fairmont Park, and Gobbler’s Knob/Sherrod Road districts.

Historic Zoning Commission Design Review

The Knoxville Historic Zoning Commission (HZC) and MPC staff reviewed 103 requests for a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) over the calendar year 2016. This is slightly more than last year’s 98. The 2016 year featured the largest amount of work being done on individual landmark properties in five years. There were two COA denials: one denial was for the demolition of a building at 1717 White Avenue in Fort Sanders, and that denial is being challenged by the owner. The second denial is for an after-the-fact front porch enclosure, and mitigation is being negotiated.

HZC Certificate of Appropriateness Reviews

<u>DISTRICT</u>	<u>COAs</u>
4 th & Gill H-1	33
Old North Knox H-1	28
Individual Landmarks H-1	13
Edgewood-Park City H-1	10
Market Square H-1	8
Mechanicsville H-1	2
Scenic Drive NC-1	2
Jackson Avenue H-1	1
Fairmont-Emoriland NC-1	1
Tazewell Pike NC-1	1
	103 Total

Threatened Historic Properties

Knoxville College Historic District 910 College Drive Threatened

The campus is in urgent need of funding for stabilizing its buildings and for identifying new strategies to sustain an ongoing relevance in today’s environment. Unfortunately, enrollment has steadily declined over the decades and the school is unable to keep up loan payments and maintenance of the property. There have been several arsons there recently as well. Therefore, it has been included in the *Tennessee Preservation Trust's Ten in Tennessee Endangered Properties List Program*. The executive board for the college has created a Development Committee to evaluate the buildings and seek a development partner.

Ten buildings on the Knoxville College campus comprise the National Register Historic District. The campus is historically significant beyond its architecture. It provides critical information pertaining to the attempted assimilation of freed men and women into post-Civil War America as an important part of Knoxville’s history as well as that of the state of Tennessee and the country.



The roof and supporting wall on the rear of the 1876 McKee Hall Administration Building have collapsed.

Howard House

2921 N. Broadway

Threatened

The house is again for sale after an all-out effort by community activists and Knox Heritage to prevent its proposed demolition. It is being marketed by Wood Properties for \$575,000. An earlier plan by Polestar development group to develop the property with a Walmart grocery store was abandoned in September 2015 after public outcry and donations from the community to help save the house.

The Howard House, built in 1910, is an unusually elegant Craftsman house with Neo-classical elements and detailing. Currently the lot is zoned as office, which makes it vulnerable to re-development pressures. A historic zoning overlay (H-1) would protect this house from demolition.



The Howard House as seen from the northeast approach of the circular driveway.

In January 2017, the president of Saw Works Brewing Company announced plans to move the brewery from its current location at 708 E. Depot Avenue to the Standard Mill Building by the end of the year, possibly along with other tenants. The building has 400 million square feet of space.

The Standard Knitting Mill building located at 1400 Washington Avenue is a vernacular industrial building which housed an industry that employed thousands at its peak in the 1960s. This circa 1945 building is the only remaining structure associated with Standard Knitting Mill which was founded in 1900 with 50 employees. By the 1930s Standard was the largest textile and knitting mill in the city with over 4,000 employees. At one point, the Standard produced over one million garments a week and inspired titles for Knoxville as the “Underwear Capital of the World.” The earliest half of the building was destroyed in the early 1990s and the current building housed Delta Apparel until 2007. The building was purchased in December 2013 by a developer with plans for adaptive reuse; however, those plans were never implemented.



Adaptive Reuse of Historic Properties

Sanitary Laundry Building 625 N. Broadway Proposed Rehabilitation

The City acquired the property through a tax foreclosure in 2014 as part of the Downtown North Redevelopment Area. Recently, the City issued an RFP for its redevelopment; however, no satisfactory proposals were submitted. The building has begun to deteriorate more rapidly of late given that it has been unoccupied for several years now. It is a designated brownfield and the City has now issued an RFP for asbestos abatement, roof structure repair, and re-roofing for spring 2017.

In 2016, the city of Knoxville received a \$350,000 grant from the Federal Environmental Protection Agency for clean-up the brownfields at this site as well as for that of the former McClung Warehouses. The city will contribute a 20 percent match, a combined \$70,000 for the two sites. At the former laundry site, the contamination is related to the chemicals and solvents used in the dry-cleaning process. The 1925 building was listed as one of Knox Heritage's "Fragile 15" for 2015.



The Sanitary Laundry & Dry Cleaning Building was constructed in 1924.

The City solicited proposals from developers in August 2016 for adaptive reuse of the building and Dover Development Group was selected to convert the building into a senior living facility.

The former South High School building, located at 953 E. Moody Avenue and constructed in 1937, was approved for purchase by the City Council in February 2015. The building has been vacant since 1991.

At the urging of Vice Mayor Nick Pavlis, the City Council agreed to designate the property in May 2011 as H-1 historic zoning to protect it from demolition. Designed by legendary architect Charles Barber, the building has been listed on the Knox Heritage Fragile 15 list of endangered historic properties.



Proposals for re-use of South High as residential units were solicited by the City in 2016.

In November 2015, the City became the owners of the former Supreme Court Building and property. The City conducted a market study to determine the most appropriate uses and issued an RFP in early 2016 for redevelopment of the site while preserving the historic courthouse portion of the building. In October 2016, the City received four proposals for redevelopment of the site, and a purchase and sale agreement has been signed with Dover Development. The building, constructed in the 1950s, is a restrained example of the Art Deco style and has been vacant since 2003.



Bird's-eye view of Supreme Court Building

Knoxville High School Building 101 E. 5th Avenue Rehabilitation in Progress

This former school building is protected with an H-1 Overlay, and in May 2016, the Historic Zoning Commission reviewed and approved window replacement which has recently begun. The renovation of this former school building is anticipated to be completed late this year. Following a request for proposals, the county-surplus building was sold in 2014 to Dover Development Group. The corporation plans to convert Old Knox High into a senior living facility offering 75 units. The building served as Knoxville High School from 1910 to 1951. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, making the project eligible to take advantage of the federal income tax credit for certified rehabilitation of historic buildings.



Historic Knoxville High School 2016 – pre-renovation

Pryor-Brown Parking Garage 314-322 W. Church Avenue Proposed Rehabilitation

The city announced in June 2016 that the building will be adaptively re-used with a mix of retail and residential uses. The redevelopment project is referred to as “The Residences at Pryor Brown.” In December 2016, the city’s Downtown Design Review Board approved a design for exterior renovations including roof-top patios, submitted by Design Innovation Architects (DIA). A third party firm will determine if the developers will receive a tax incentive.

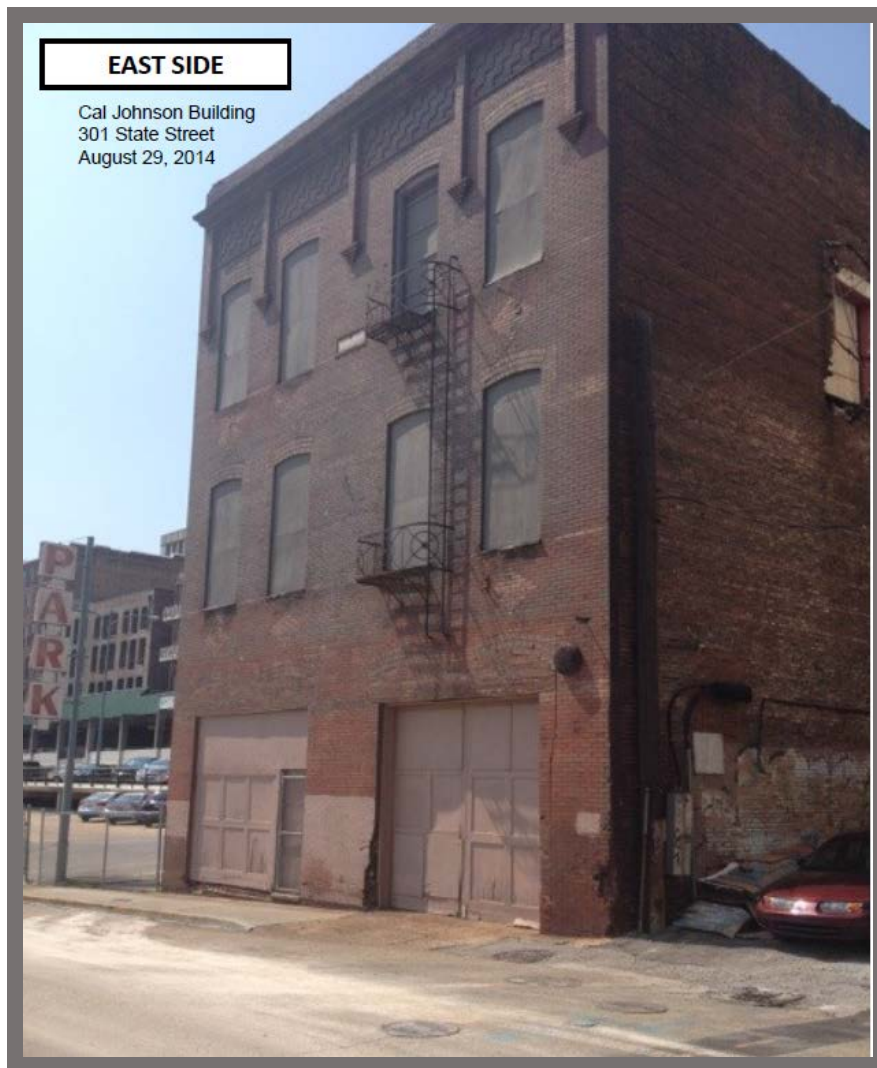
The garage, constructed in two stages in 1925 and 1929, is believed to be one of the oldest parking decks in the country. It is eligible to be included within The Market Street National Register Historic District. The City Council had denied through the lack of a motion the owners’ use-on-review request for a surface parking lot on the site following the DDRB’s attempt to deny demolition in 2013. In 2015, the northwest corner of the roof of the garage collapsed causing damage to the brick façade.



The Pryor-Brown parking garage viewed from the corner of Market St. and Church Ave.

The Knoxville City Council approved an H-1 historic overlay for building in July 2016, which has been in poor condition for a number of years. The building has been listed by Knox Heritage several times on its Fragile Fifteen list. In July 2016, plans to renovate the exterior of the building and install a new storefront were approved by the Downtown Design Review Board. The city will work with the property owner, the JED Corporation, to support restoration of the building.

Mayor Rogero initiated historic protection status for the Cal Johnson Building, constructed by a former slave in 1898. The building was formerly used as a clothing factory and named for Knoxville's most financially successful African-American resident of his time. Cal Johnson went on to serve as a city alderman. His businesses included several downtown saloons and a horse-racing track in east Knoxville.



Cal Johnson Building – front façade showing deterioration in 2016

National Register Nomination

Kern's Bakery Building 2100 Chapman Highway Rehabilitation

The Kern's Bakery Building was nominated to the National Register of Historic Places in spring of 2016. This nomination enabled the owner to take advantage of the Federal Income Tax Credit for Certified Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings. The front exterior renovations were completed in 2016 as approved by the Historic Zoning Commission. Tours of the building, which is being marketed for lease, were conducted by the Knox Heritage and the Urban Land Institute and in April 2017.

David Dewhirst, Mark Heinz, Tim Zitzman, and Dixon Greenwood partnered to acquire the former Kerns Bakery building in February 2015. The project was awarded funds for exterior renovation through the City's historic preservation fund grant in the spring of 2015. The building will house a mix of uses that will include restaurants, retail space, and residential. The brick Art Deco building was built in 1931 as the new home for Kern's Bakery and over the years became a Knoxville landmark and a successful regional bakery business.



The former Kerns Bakery building front façade as seen from Chapman Highway.

