

# PRESERVATION: 2014

*Report to the Mayor  
City of Knoxville*



*Knoxville-Knox Metropolitan Commission  
April 16, 2015*



**2014 Historic Zoning Commissioners**

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***Knoxville-Knox County Metropolitan Planning Commission***  
*April 9, 2015*

***Knoxville-Knox County Historic Zoning Commission***  
*April 16, 2015*

***Knoxville City Council***  
*May 2015*

## **State of Historic Preservation in the City of Knoxville 2014**

### **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 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 including examples, recommendations for implementation of preservation strategies, 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.

## **Table of Contents**

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Historic Preservation Initiatives	1
Recommendations for Action	4
Historic Overlay Zoning District Background	5
Historic Zoning Commission Design Review	5
Adaptively Reused Historic Properties	6
Threatened Historic Properties	12
Demolished Historic Properties	16
National Register Nominations	18

## **Historic Preservation Initiatives**

### City Historic Preservation Fund

As part of the 2014-15 budget, City Council approved a \$500,000 historic preservation fund proposed by the Mayor to address some of the City's most difficult preservation challenges. The City's Community Development Department will be administering the new fund. A portion of these funds may be set aside for updating the city's historic properties inventory.

### Demolition-by-Neglect Ordinance

Funds for demolition-by-neglect properties, addressed by an ordinance more aptly referred to as a "proactive maintenance" ordinance, continues to be funded at \$100,000. This ordinance allows the City to order repairs on endangered properties with historic designation and to utilize property liens to gain reimbursement. This tool was utilized with South Knoxville High School to stabilize and repair the roof structure. The building is currently in the process of being acquired by the city. This is the first implementation of the ordinance and the administration plans to recommend continued funding.

### Tennessee Historical Commission Grant (award pending – May 2015)

In 2014, MPC staff applied for a Federal Historic Preservation Fund grant through the Tennessee Historical Commission to update the Historic Resource Inventory. Knoxville's original historic resource survey was completed in 1986, and partially updated in 1993. Since then, many structures have become worthy of adding to the inventory due to increased age (50 years old or older), or have been destroyed, or have fallen as victims of neglect. Although some of these changes in status have been noted during reconnaissance surveys for sector plans and for Section 106 Environmental Review Areas of Potential Effect, there has been no comprehensive update the survey since 1993. The goals are to:

- a. Update the historic inventory data base as a basis for nominating mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century suburbs to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP);
- b. Identify and record later historic resources constructed between the mid-1930s and 1965 (the 50-year-old year-mark for NRHP eligibility). Mid-century-modern architectural resources need to be assessed for NRHP eligibility in order to enable the use of federal rehabilitation tax credits; and
- c. Digitize spatial and historic data and digital photo images for historic resources to be added to the Knoxville Geographic Information System.

### Demolition Delay Ordinance Proposal

On September 2, 2014, the Knoxville City Council approved Resolution R-303-2014 titled “*A Resolution of the Council of the City of Knoxville respectfully requesting the Metropolitan Planning Commission to consider and make a recommendation to the City Council on amendments to the Zoning Code and Building Code regarding review of the demolition of residential structures built before 1865 and a demolition delay.*”

The stated intent of the proposed amendments to the Zoning Code and Building Code are (1) the City wants to encourage owners to seek alternatives to demolition of historic structures (i.e. – preservation, rehabilitation, restoration) and (2) establishment of demolition delay periods provide an opportunity to negotiate a preservation solution.

Metropolitan Planning Commission staff reviewed Resolution R-303-2014 regarding the potential code amendments that would change the process for issuing demolition permits for historic properties. MPC staff believes the proposed amendments are appropriate to implement with some adjustments suggested to simplify administration and to establish fair and consistent regulations for affected property owners. The proposed amendments will be presented to MPC on April 16, 2015.

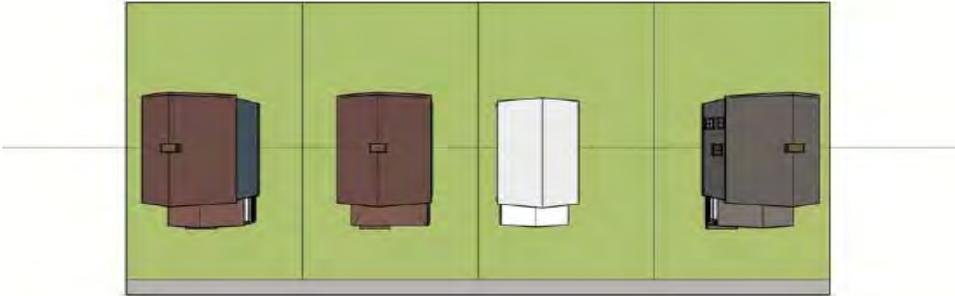
### Historic District Overlay Code Enforcement

Building Inspections Department has designated a staff member to respond to code issues within the historic district overlays (H-1) as a portion of that position’s work assignments. This is one of the most requested improvements stated at neighborhood public input sessions.

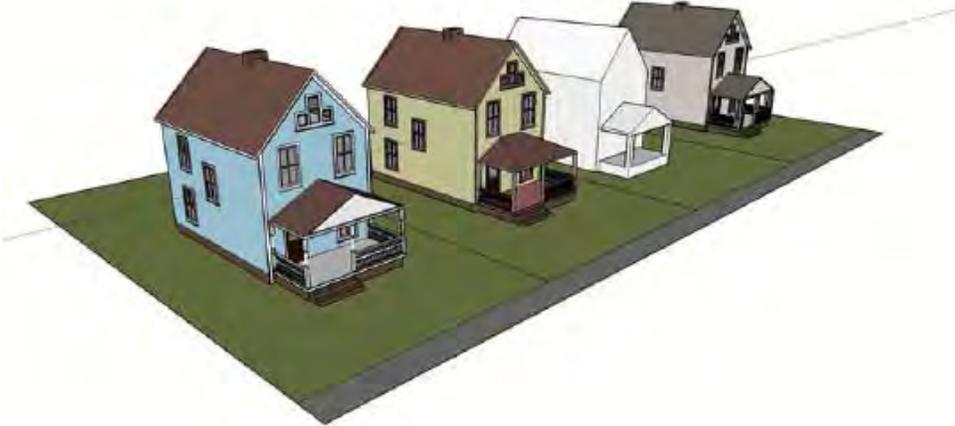
### Updated Design Guidelines for Historic Districts

A Historic Preservation Fund grant from the 2012 Tennessee Historic Commission is currently being implemented to update the historic district design guidelines. Public input sessions were held with the historic district property owners and residents in the spring and summer of 2014 and drafts of the guideline documents have been prepared for further stakeholder review. Examples of proposed illustrations are on the following page.

**Examples of new illustrations for proposed updates to Historic District Design Guidelines**



Spacing of infill structures – plan view



Spacing of infill structures – street view



Outbuilding locations

## **Recommendations for Action 2014-2015**

### **Proposed new action items:**

- Apply for and implement Historic Preservation Fund Grant from Tennessee Historical Commission (THC) to update the Historic Resource Survey
- Apply for and implement Historic Preservation Fund Grant from City of Knoxville to supplement THC funding for city Historic Structures update
- Implement proposed demolition delay ordinances for Knoxville's Historic Structure Inventory and for pre-1865 properties
- Utilize "demolition-by-neglect" funds otherwise described as "proactive preservation" for residential structures within historic district neighborhoods

### **Actions in progress to implement 2013 recommendations:**

- Consultant selected to assist with update of design guidelines to address new construction trends relative to items such as solar technology, sustainability, new building materials, window replacement, and accessory structures. Updated drafts have been prepared for public review.
- Designated Building Inspections Department staff member to respond to code issues within the historic district overlays (H-1) as a portion of that position's work assignments. This assignment will help to ensure more equitable and consistent enforcement of Certificate of Appropriate requirements.

## Historic Zoning District 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. Individual historic properties are also afforded protection under the historic zoning overlay.

## Historic Zoning Commission Design Review

The Knoxville Historic Zoning Commission and MPC staff reviewed 75 requests for a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) over the calendar year 2014. The Old North Knox and Fourth and Gill H-1 historic district owners submitted the most applications with a combined total of 37. There were eight denials of COA applications.

District	COAs Reviewed
Old North Knoxville H-1	22
Fourth and Gill H-1	15
Edgewood-Park City H-1	11
Individual properties H-1	11
Market Square H-1	7
Old Mechanicsville H-1	6
Ft. Sanders NC-1	3

## **Adaptively Reused Historic Properties**

### **White Lily Building 222 N. Central Street**

The White Lily Flour manufacturing plant opened in January 2015 after a 2014 renovation for adaptive reuse as a 46-unit residential apartment building. The main building retains its industrial character, and displays elaborate corbelled brickwork along the roof cornice. It was constructed in 1885 by James Allen Smith. Besides the primary production of a variety of flours, the company also manufactured shipping barrels. White Lily flour was produced in the building until 2008. “White Lily Flats,” as it is now known, will help to further the edges of downtown’s Old City area to the north.



*View of the White Lily Building from the N. Central Street side- façade restoration in progress*

**Patrick Sullivan's Saloon 101 S. Central Street and 100 E. Jackson Avenue**

The vacant corner building that once housed Sullivan's Saloon was purchased by a local developer in early 2013 and has been significantly renovated on the exterior. Interior renovation work has continued into 2015 to recreate a restaurant and pub. A small, non-descript one-story addition that housed a favorite local pub along the Central Avenue side was demolished to make way for an outdoor courtyard. The 1888 Old City landmark is a two-story Romanesque Revival/Queen Anne building constructed by Irish immigrant Patrick Sullivan. The building housed a saloon until 1907, when it was forced to close due to citywide Prohibition.



*Patrick Sullivan's Saloon prior to renovation as viewed from S. Central Street.*

## **Knoxville High School Building 101 E. 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue**

Following a County request for proposals, the sale of the county-surplused Knoxville High School building was finalized October 20, 2014 to a private development corporation. The corporation plans to convert Old Knox High into a senior living facility offering 75 units. The renovation is anticipated to begin sometime in 2015 and be completed in 2016. The developers plan to work toward attaining a level of LEED environmental certification while preserving the original character as much as possible. There are plans to include a museum to commemorate the former high school, as well as artists' studios within converted attic space. The school's "Doughboy" statue, which was erected in 1922 in honor of World War I veterans, is to be the focal point of a public park on the property. The building served as Knoxville High School from 1910 to 1951, and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It is also protected by a local zoning H-1 Overlay.



*Historic Knoxville High School (photo credit: Knox Heritage files)*

**Lakeshore Mental Health Institute Administration Building    Lakeshore Park**

The Public Building Authority is completing a renovation of the former Lakeshore Mental Health Institute Administration Building, a \$1.1 million project that includes more than 14,000 square feet of office space to be utilized by the City’s Parks and Recreation Department. Demolition of nine other buildings on the campus began in July 2014. The building was constructed in 1884 and the institute operated from 1886 to 2012. The front porch has been restored as closely as possible to the original design.



*Lakeshore Administration Building before renovation*



*Lakeshore Administration Building during renovation*

## **Slomski Tailor Building 430 S. Gay Street**

The former “Arby’s” building, now known as Tailor Lofts located at Gay Street and Union Avenue reopened in May 2014 to include nine residential units and a street-level restaurant. The building was constructed c. 1876 and is one of the oldest on Gay Street. The building survived a fire that took out many of the surrounding buildings during its early years. The newly renovated building was renamed Tailor Lofts since the Slomski Tailor business occupied a portion of the building during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.



*The Slomski Tailor Building during renovation.*

**Southern Railway Station    306 West Depot Avenue**

The former Southern Railway Station re-opened its doors in the summer of 2014 as a special event venue and a winery. The building had served as a venue for a winter food market and theatrical and musical performances, as well as private events such as weddings. An architectural firm and Old Smoky Railway Museum, long-time tenants, continue to occupy the building. The building was purchased by an LLC which purchased the building in April of 2014. Exterior renovations were approved by the Downtown Design Review Board.

The station was originally constructed during 1903 and 1904 for the Southern Railway Company and was designed by Frank Pierce Milburn, architect. The building was listed as a contributing resource to the Southern Terminal and Warehouse National Register Historic District in 1985. The last regularly scheduled passenger train left the terminal in 1970.



*Southern Railway Terminal as viewed from Gay Street viaduct.*

## **Threatened Historic Properties**

### **H. E. Christenberry House 3222 Kingston Pike Threatened**

The 1920s Craftsman house has remained threatened over the past few years due to pressure of potential multi-family development for this desirable site with a commanding vista over the Tennessee River. The house is exemplary in its elaborate Craftsman style and distinctive detailing.

A demolition permit was approved in December 2013 since the house is not protected by a historic zoning overlay. However, more recently potential developers have expressed interested in renovating the house for offices, and building residential units to the rear of the house. The Sequoyah Hills Homeowners' Association has registered their opposition to the re-development as multi-family due to concerns which include increased traffic congestion and the change from single-family character. The property is currently up for auction.



*The Christenberry House at 3222 Kingston Pike is threatened by future development.*

## **Pryor-Brown Parking Garage 314 W. Church Avenue Threatened**

A demolition permit issued allowed removal of asbestos from the building which began in September 2014. The Downtown Design Review Board (DDRB) had moved to deny a 2013 demolition request by the owners, who cited the poor condition of the structure as the reason for their request. However, the city law department determined shortly thereafter that no state enabling legislation existed to empower the DDRB with that authority.

Also in 2013, the MPC and City Council denied the owners' use-on-review request for the site's post-demolition use as a surface parking lot. The owner filed a lawsuit; however, in September 2014, there were potentially viable offers from developers who are interested in purchasing the site for re-development including adaptive re-use of the garage. The parking garage was constructed in 1925 and is one of the oldest in the country. It is eligible to be included within a National Register Historic District.



*The Pryor-Brown parking garage viewed from the corner of Market Street and Church Avenue*

**1302, 1308, and 1312 White Avenue Houses Fort Sanders NC-1 Threatened**

The Tennessee State Building Commission authorized the University of Tennessee (UT) to purchase and demolish three historic Queen Anne houses in the Fort Sanders Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District on a site where UT plans to construct a science classroom/laboratory building. The design for the new 220,000-square-foot facility on the site is now in process. Two of the houses were purchased by UT during 2013 and 2014, and in February 2015, the purchase of the third house, at 1302 Clinch, was completed. The owners had undertaken a significant restoration effort in more recent years.

In the 2001 Master Plan for the long-term development of the UT campus had anticipated no encroachment into the Fort Sanders residential neighborhood. However, in UT's 2011 Master Plan, the subject properties were identified as being within a potential campus expansion area. Although the houses are within the Neighborhood Conservation Overlay (NC-1), they are not subject to the local zoning that would prevent demolition since they are now owned by UT which is a state entity. Knox Heritage has stated that the only strategy left to preserve the houses at this stage is to relocate them.



*1302 White Avenue in Fort Sanders Neighborhood Conservation District*

**Pickle Mansion 1633 Clinch Avenue Fort Sanders NC-1 Threatened**

One of Fort Sanders's most distinctive structures, the Queen Anne/Richardsonian-style Pickle Mansion, was constructed in 1889. It was built by George Wesley Pickle who served in the confederacy during the Civil War from 1886-1902 as Tennessee's Attorney General and Reporter of the State. A fire in 2002 spared only a masonry shell of the structure. In 2013, after remaining in precarious vacancy for years, a group of developers purchased the Pickle Mansion with plans to convert the mansion to apartments. In April 2014, the developer's construction crew began removing debris and stabilizing the remaining brick shell. However, the renovation is currently on hold while the owners explore financing options. There are complicated financing as well as restoration challenges for the property. Knox Heritage worked with the developer during 2014 to attempt to identify additional investors; however, left in its current open and exposed state, the structure continues to deteriorate.



*Pickle Mansion-- complicated financing as well as restoration challenges remain.*

## **Demolished Historic Properties**

### **McClung Warehouse 525 W. Jackson Avenue destroyed by fire**

In November 2013, the City purchased, through an agreement with the bankruptcy trustee for the property, the last remaining McClung Warehouse structures located at 517 to 525 W. Jackson Avenue. On February 1, 2014 these structures (dating to 1911 and 1927) were destroyed by fire, the same fate suffered by three other W. Jackson Avenue McClung warehouses which burned in 2007. An assessment by a structural engineering firm following the 2014 fire recommended that the remaining remnants of the McClung structures be demolished for public safety reasons. The city had purchased the warehouses in 2013 with the hope of finding a buyer to redevelop them. The vacant sites will still be redeveloped following a public input process and the issuance of a request for proposals.



*McClung Warehouses prior to a 2007 fire*



*McClung Warehouses during the February 2014 fire*

**Sophronia Strong Hall University of Tennessee Campus substantially demolished**

In January 2014, the Sophronia Strong Hall building on the University of Tennessee’s campus was demolished except for a small portion for a science classroom and laboratory facility. The remaining 20,000 square-foot portion with its steeply-pitched roof and distinctive entryway arch will be incorporated into a nine-story 268,000-square-foot building. Constructed in 1925, the hall served as a residence hall for women until 2008. The stone wall and footbridge spanning Cumberland Avenue in front of the building has been retained. A small Queen Anne-style gardener’s cottage on the north corner of the site will be retained and restored.



*Remains of UT’s Sophronia Strong Hall -Photo by Michael Patrick of KNS used with permission*

## **National Register Nomination Properties**

### **Winstead Cottage, Confederate Cemetery, and Confederate Monument 1917 Bethel Avenue**

The Winstead Cottage (c. 1886) is significant as a unique local example of an architectural style, Italianate with Gothic Revival influences, of which very few examples still exist in Knoxville. Confederate Cemetery (1881) is significant for its place in local societal history during the period of Knoxville's involvement in the Civil War, and as representative of the subsequent Southern regional efforts of Ladies' Memorial Associations to commemorate Confederate dead. The Confederate Monument (1861) is significant as a notable design by local artist Lloyd Branson, who is otherwise known for painting and portraiture. A National Register nomination was completed for these structures by the Hazen Museum Board of Directors toward the latter part of 2014. An official designation is expected in spring of 2015.



*The Winstead Cottage (a.k.a. Winstead Mansion)*

