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Contact: Kim Trent at 523-8008 or 705-1397 or kimtrent@knoxheritage.org

KNOX HERITAGE ANNOUNCES
2015 “FRAGILE 15” LIST OF ENDANGERED HISTORIC PLACES

Knox Heritage announced its 2015 list of the most endangered historic buildings and places in Knoxville and Knox County on May 15, 2015. The announcement took place at Historic Westwood – 3425 Kingston Pike.

Every May during National Preservation Month, Knox Heritage releases its list of the most endangered historic buildings and places in Knox County to inform the public and local leaders about the plight of significant historic resources. Often, the endangered buildings and places are representative of issues that endanger other centerpieces of our heritage across the community.

The historic places included on the list are selected by the Knox Heritage Board of Directors from nominations received from members of Knox Heritage and the general public. The list provides a work plan for the organization over the next 12 months. Preservation strategies are developed for each site on the list and can include working with current property owners, government officials, citizens and/or potential new owners to preserve these important parts of Knox County’s heritage. Knox Heritage is committed to acting as an advocate for the endangered properties we identify each year. We invite the community to join us in our efforts to save our endangered heritage through advocacy and action. To volunteer, please contact Knox Heritage at 523-8008 or info@knoxheritage.org.
2015 Fragile Fifteen

1. The Paul Howard House – 2921 N. Broadway

2. Historic Fort Sanders Neighborhood

   Representative Properties:
   
   a. Fort Sanders Houses & Grocery – 307 18th Street, 1802, 1804, & 1810 Highland Avenue
   
   b. White Avenue Houses – 1302, 1308, 1312 White Avenue
   
   c. The Pickle Mansion – 1633 Clinch Avenue

3. The H.C. Christenberry House – 3222 Kingston Pike

4. Knoxville College Historic District – 901 Knoxville College Drive

   Representative Properties:
   
   a. McKee Hall
   
   b. Wallace Hall
   
   c. Elnathan Hall
   
   d. McMillan Chapel
   
   e. Giffen Memorial Gymnasium
   
   f. President’s House

5. Standard Knitting Mill - 1400 Washington Avenue

6. The Eugenia Williams House – 4848 Lyons View Pike

7. Sanitary Laundry – 625 N. Broadway

8. Magnolia Avenue Corridor

   Representative Properties:
   
   a. Burlington Commercial District
   
   b. Magnolia Avenue United Methodist Church – 2700 E. Magnolia Avenue
   
   c. Rabbit & Poultry Barn – Chilhowee Park – 3301 E. Magnolia Avenue

9. Historic School Buildings
Representative Properties:

a. South High School – 801 Tipton Avenue
b. Rule High School – 1901 Vermont Avenue
c. Giffin School – 1834 Beech Street

10. **French Broad River Corridor**

11. **University of Tennessee - Knoxville Campus**
   
   Representative Properties:
   
   a) Melrose Hall – 1616 Melrose Avenue
   b) Estabrook Hall – 1012 Estabrook Road

12. **Isaac Anderson Cabin** - Creekrock Lane – Shannondale Valley Farms

13. **Pryor Brown Garage** - 314 & 322 W. Church Avenue

14. **Tennessee Supreme Court Building** – 617 Cumberland Avenue

15. **Legg-England House** – 8010 Rutledge Pike
1. The Paul Howard House – 2921 N. Broadway

This elegant 1910 Craftsman style house was considered a model when it was designed in 1910 by local architect Charles Hayes. Built in an era when many prominent Knoxvillians lived on Broadway, it has been home to two City Councilmen, a Knox County Trustee, and a Knoxville City Manager—that last post was held by Charlton Karns, a powerful figure in 1920s and ’30s Knoxville. During the era when Broadway was becoming known as part of the national Dixie Highway, the house served for several years as the Minton Tourist Home. For more than 60 years, it has been owned by the Howards, a prosperous plumbing-supplies family.

The home is a North Knoxville icon and is one of the finest examples of Craftsman style architecture still standing in Knox County. It has a rich history and has received Knox Heritage awards on two occasions for the quality maintenance and care by its previous owners, Mr. and Mrs. Paul E. Howard.

This historic North Knoxville icon is now a part of an estate which requires the residence be sold. It is currently under contract to a developer who represents a national big box retailer and their plans call for its demolition. The property is currently zoned for office use, so a rezoning will be required for any retail or commercial use.

This stretch of Broadway in Historic North Knoxville is already cluttered with development that detracts from the historic neighborhoods in the area and the loss of this beloved historic property will be detrimental to efforts to improve the area and surrounding residential property values. In addition, there are other sites in the area that are more appropriate for this type of development and do not contain historic buildings.

Knox Heritage is currently in discussions with the developer in an effort to find an alternative to the destruction of the Howard House. If those efforts fail, we ask citizens to join us in opposing the rezoning of the property if it is requested through MPC and City Council.

2. Fort Sanders Neighborhood

Fort Sanders, at about 130, is one of Knoxville’s oldest neighborhoods, and especially famous for its association with the Pulitzer-winning novel A Death in the Family by James Agee (as well as one notable composition by Samuel Barber) and is one of the first National Register-listed neighborhoods created in Knoxville. However, it has been affected by its adjacency to the University of Tennessee, Fort Sanders Regional Medical Center and Children’s Hospital. These forces have created a neighborhood that is a mix of residential owners, apartment complexes, and other uses that accompany these major institutions. An alarming number of properties in the neighborhood are threatened by deterioration, demolition or conversion to institutional uses. Even so, these properties
retain their overall historic style, and are representative of the Fort Sanders Historic District.

The Fort Sanders Neighborhood stands at a crossroads as opportunities and threats converge to determine the future of East Tennessee’s most densely populated and eclectic neighborhood.

Opportunities: The rebirth of downtown Knoxville is spilling over into surrounding neighborhoods as developers can barely meet the demand for downtown housing that appeals to students, young professionals and empty nesters. Large numbers of students are abandoning the Fort for new rental properties in downtown and in South Knoxville, opening up opportunities for new residents attracted by its central location and urban amenities. More and more KnoxFillians are opting for housing that features walkability and access to public transit and greenways – and this includes University, hospital and downtown business employees. Historic preservation projects in center city neighborhoods are at an all-time high. The City of Knoxville’s long-awaited Cumberland Avenue improvements are underway in the neighborhood’s commercial district.

Threats: Most of the absentee property owners who have mined the neighborhood rental market for decades are blind to the opportunities presented by the influx of young professionals to downtown and its surrounding neighborhoods, so few offer options that appeal to this market. The University of Tennessee is again encroaching farther into the National Register-listed area north of Cumberland, and has adopted a master plan that calls for demolition of historic structures inside the Neighborhood Conservation District. Fort Sanders Regional Medical Center / Covenant Health continues to purchase and demolish historic properties, even though those properties are outside areas zoned for hospital expansion and are protected by the Historic Zoning Commission.

The time is now for residents, local government and institutional stakeholders to work together to make the neighborhood a vibrant and safe community that is an extension of downtown and an asset rather than a liability to the economic success of everyone invested in it. Knox Heritage seeks to work in partnership with the City of Knoxville, University of Tennessee, Fort Sanders Regional and Children’s Hospital, residents and other stakeholders to take advantage of the current opportunities and eliminate the threats to the neighborhood’s future. The same level of energy and vision the community focused on downtown in recent years should be directed at the residential portion of “Downtown’s Front Porch” neighborhood. If this is accomplished, Fort Sanders will become a model for communities across the country, as well as an amazing place to live, work and visit.

**Specific Properties Threatened:**

a. Fort Sanders Houses & Grocery – 307 18th Street, 1802 & 1810 Highland Avenue
These historic structures on the southwest corner of the 1800 block of Highland Avenue comprise one of the few remaining dividing lines between the residential and medical uses in the Historic Fort Sanders Neighborhood. They all were purchased by Fort Sanders Regional Medical Center in February of 2008. Though the houses have been protected by Neighborhood Conservation (NC-1) Zoning for almost 15 years, they are currently boarded up and deteriorating, thus the future of the historic structures is still uncertain.

307 18th Street
This Commercial Vernacular style building was constructed circa 1923 as the W.T. Roberts Grocery Store, but for many years has been known as the 18th Street IGA. Roberts owned and operated the store from 1923 until 1950, and afterwards it was owned by Fred McMahan, who lived on the second floor of the building. It was a viable and familiar market until the recent era of the hospital’s ownership.

1802 Highland Avenue
This Victorian style house was built circa 1891 for Ranson D. Whittle (1852-1932) who owned and founded the Whittle Trunk and Bag Company; the Whittle Springs neighborhood is named for his family. From 1914 until 1950 William T. Roberts, owner of the 18th Street IGA around the corner lived in the house.

1804 Highland Avenue
This Victorian Cottage was built c. 1898 and the first owner was Methodist Reverend Isaac Van Dewater.

1810 Highland Avenue
This Victorian style home was built circa 1895 for Dr. Henry Patton Coile, a prominent surgeon and physician, who lived there from 1895 until 1900. His son Samuel A. Coile, the first pastor at Fort Sanders Presbyterian Church, became the owner of the family home, and left it to become president of Tusculum College in Greeneville. Later, it was the home of Jeremiah Work, dean of Knoxville College and a Presbyterian scholar and author.

These four properties offer the opportunity for a new era of cooperation between Fort Sanders Regional Medical Center and neighborhood residents. Knox Heritage seeks to partner with the hospital and residents to preserve the buildings or sell the buildings to a new owner interested in restoring them. The best solution will be the retention of the neighborhood grocery while restoring the residential properties for single family occupancy. That outcome will further stabilize the neighborhood, as opposed to the permanent damage that will result from the demolition of these four highly visible historic buildings located in the Neighborhood Conservation District.

b. The White Avenue Houses – 1302, 1308, and 1312 White Avenue
These three Victorian houses form part of the southern boundary of the Fort Sanders National Register Historic District and Neighborhood Conservation District. They present a unified picture of the residential development common in the neighborhood 100 years ago when it was known as West Knoxville. Since that time development pressure from the University of Tennessee and the student housing market has threatened their survival. The current threat is a proposal in the University’s master plan that calls for the demolition of the houses to make way for an academic building.

Knox Heritage is engaged in a dialogue with the University in an attempt to craft an alternative to demolishing these privately owned properties. The University and the City of Knoxville can pursue alternatives that will preserve these properties and the southern portion of the Fort Sanders Neighborhood. The University, which is no larger, in terms of its total student body, than it was 40 years ago, can end further expansion into the Fort Sanders National Register District by instead creating denser development on land it already owns on the south side of Cumberland Avenue.

1302 White Avenue
This Queen Anne-style house was built around 1896 for Cooper D. Schmitt. A much-beloved professor of mathematics, Cooper became dean of the University, a position he held until his death in this house in 1910. However, his son Bernadotte Schmitt, who grew up in the house and lived there for several years after his father’s death, became much better known, as winner of the 1930 Pulitzer Prize for History, for his book about World War I, The Coming of War. This is Knoxville’s only existing house so strongly associated with a Pulitzer Prize winner. UT rightfully boasts of its Pulitzer Prize winners and Rhodes scholars. Schmitt, who lived in the house for almost 20 years, is the only alumnus who was both.

Successive residents of the home include Hal H. Clements, a lawyer, and Walker E. Mynderse, a real estate developer who is credited with promoting Island Home, one of Knoxville’s prominent residential subdivisions.

1308 White Avenue
This 1894 Queen Anne-style house was built for James E. Ross, who was involved with Knoxville Marble; as ownership of the home changed over time it housed Gay Street merchants and UT faculty. Later, it was home to James Maynard, Jr., a progressive city politician who died suddenly in the house in 1917.

It’s commonly known as the “Judge’s House,” since it was the home of Judge Charles Hayes Brown, who lived there from the early 1920s until his death in 1949. Judge Brown served as Knoxville Chancellor from 1920 to 1926. In the late 1970s, “the Judge’s House” was threatened by an office-building project, and became a community cause célèbre, ultimately saved, preserved, and for many years one of the neighborhoods more coveted residences.

1312 White Avenue
Prominent local attorney William M. Meek was the first owner of this circa 1896 Queen Anne-style house and lived there with his family until 1905. Its most prominent resident was Charles E. Ferris, who served as Dean of the College of Engineering at the University of Tennessee. Ferris Hall, still a well-known building at UT, is named for him.

c. The Pickle Mansion – 1633 Clinch Avenue

The Pickle Mansion was built in 1889 in the Queen Anne style by Confederate veteran G.W. Pickle. It features solid masonry construction with a brick veneer wall covering of glazed brick. Typical of grand houses of the Queen Anne era, it boasted a hip roof with lower cross gables, a turret, elaborate attic vent windows, window arches, transoms and large front and side wrap-around porches.

Originally called Fort Sanders Hall, it was built adjacent to the surviving ramparts of the fort, and was probably the first historical reference to Fort Sanders in this community which was then better known as “West Knoxville.”

G.W. Pickle was born in Knox County as one of eleven siblings and he joined the Confederate forces at a young age. He went to Princeton and eventually started the law firm, Pickle, Turner and Kennerly. He was elected as Attorney General for the state of Tennessee for two, eight-year terms and served from 1886 until 1902. He lived out his remaining days in this grand house, dying here in 1917.

In the early 1920s, Frank A. Weiss, his wife Katherine, and their daughter moved into the house. Weiss, after working for the railroads for many years, was one of the founders of Holston Manufacturing Co. Shortly after his death, Katherine moved to Tampa, Florida, but she retained ownership of the house and often spent summers here. In her absence, the Delta Tau Delta fraternity called the space home for several years.

In the late 1930s, it was divided into apartments with one reserved for Mrs. Weiss and the others rented out to TVA employees, UT professors, and retail professionals. By the 1940s, the house was known as Westover Apartments and continued to house people in the professional world much more often than students. One such resident in the 1950s was Dr. Roscoe David Case, the president of Knoxville College. Case came to Knoxville from California in 1949. He worked at the College, and lived at Westover, until his death in 1952. Like most apartment houses in the Fort, student residents started filling the space in the 1970s.

The house was the victim of a disastrous fire in August of 2002, and suffered extensive damage. The last owners undertook a necessary subdivision process which resulted in separate parcels for the Pickle Mansion, the Brighton Apartments behind it, and a vacant lot to the east. A design for completing an extensive restoration of the house’s signature exterior elements were completed, but work to get the house under roof and stop its deterioration was not.

The Pickle Mansion now has new owners who have already rehabilitated the Brighton Apartments. The new owners began stabilization efforts this spring, but plans to restore the structure for residential use have falter and its future is in doubt. Knox Heritage and
the owners are now working together to determine the feasibility of its long-term preservation.

3. The H.E. Christenberry House – 3222 Kingston Pike

This prominent craftsman residence along Kingston Pike was built in 1925 for James D. Varnell, a dry goods businessman in Knoxville and longtime treasurer and co-founder of Miller’s Department Store. Varnell lived in the house with his elder daughter, Katherine Varnell Rose, and her husband Mr. Daniel Morton Rose, Jr. Rose was associated with his family lumber manufacturing firm, D.M. Rose & Company. Varnell’s wife, Lucy, died right before the house was built in 1924, after a short illness. Varnell and his family lived in the house until 1946.

From 1947 until his death in 2005, the house was associated with Dr. Henry Edward Christenberry, Jr. Christenberry begin his medical career in 1935, joining is father, a prominent physician, in his downtown Knoxville medical practice, the Christenberry Infirmary & Hospital on Church Avenue. Christenberry retired in 1988 and died in 2005.

This stately home on Kingston Pike sits on over four acres and overlooks the Tennessee River. The property recently sold to new owners who plan to build a new residence along the riverfront. No plans have been announced about the fate of the house as of yet.

Knox Heritage looks forward to working with the new owners of the property on a plan that preserves the Christenberry House in order to maintain the neighborhood’s historic residential character.

4. Knoxville College Historic District – 901 Knoxville College Drive

Knoxville College was founded in 1875 as part of the missionary effort of the United Presbyterian Church of North America to promote religious, moral and educational leadership among freed men and women. The National Register District is composed of ten buildings, eight of which contribute to the district. Knoxville College has significantly contributed to the educational and spiritual welfare of the African American population in Tennessee since 1875. The campus was the first African American college in East Tennessee and hosted prominent figures such as Frederick Douglass, Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. DuBois and Martin Luther King, Jr. The buildings at Knoxville College are a tribute to the creativity and resourcefulness of the student body. While pursuing their education, students assisted in the design and construction of these historic buildings using bricks they manufactured at the campus. This spirit of involvement continues today, even as Knoxville College struggles to continue its mission. The historic buildings, with their fine craftsmanship and solid design, are deserving of support from the entire community and their preservation is a critical part of the rebirth of the college.

The situation at Knoxville College has continued to dramatically deteriorate and several campus buildings are either condemned or suffering from a lack of maintenance. The school is mired in debt and the very survival of the historic campus is in doubt. Recent reports indicating the college may engage a master developer without experience in this scale of historic redevelopment, combined with a lack of community input, are troubling. A wiser course should include broader community involvement in creating a redevelopment plan that benefits the surrounding neighborhood and includes a transparent process to
select qualified development partners. Knox Heritage and its members stand ready to assist the college in its efforts to preserve its architectural heritage.

Specific Properties Threatened:

a. **McKee Hall**
McKee Hall is the oldest building on campus, originally built in 1876, largely rebuilt in 1895 following a fire. The building is named for the Reverend O.S. McKee, who had established the first school for African-American children in Nashville in 1862. This building currently houses administration offices and is suffering from structural damage.

b. **Wallace Hall**
Wallace Hall was built in 1890 as an orphanage. This building is named for Eliza B. Wallace, the school’s principal of female students from 1877–1897.

c. **Elnathan Hall**
Elnathan Hall was built in 1898 following the destruction by fire of the original Elnathan Hall, and altered in 1905 and 1971. This building has served variously as a women’s dorm, administration building, and classroom building.

d. **McMillan Chapel**
McMillan Chapel, built in 1913, was designed by Knoxville College alumnus, William Thomas Jones. Along with church services, the chapel served as the campus’s primary performance venue. Notable guests who have delivered speeches at the chapel include George Washington Carver, Countee Cullen, W. E. B. Du Bois, Jesse Owens, William H. Hastie and Jackie Robinson

e. **Giffen Memorial Gymnasium**
Giffen Gym was built in 1929.

f. **President’s House**
The president’s House was built in the late 1880s. The house was originally had wood siding, but brick siding was added in 1905.

5. **Standard Knitting Mill** - 1400 Washington Avenue

This circa 1945 building is the only remaining structure associated with Standard Knitting Mill. Standard was founded in 1900 with 50 employees. By the 1930s Standard was the largest textile and knitting mill in Knoxville, and employed over 4,000 Knoxvillians. Standard eventually produced over one million garments a week and inspired Knoxville’s title as “Underwear Capital of the World.”

The future continues to be uncertain for the remaining building left from the original Standard Knitting Mill complex. Located in the industrial swath of land between the historic Parkridge and Fourth and Gill Neighborhoods, the original portion of the mill was in place along Washington Avenue by 1903. Later additions almost doubled the size of the complex, but the earliest portion was destroyed in the early 1990s. The current footprint still comes in at over 400,000 square feet and was the home of Delta Apparel until 2007.
The mill is owned by Henry & Wallace, LLC, who have announced plans to rehabilitate the property, but progress has yet to materialize and the building continues to deteriorate. Knox Heritage is ready to provide assistance that will encourage the preservation of its historic character while utilizing available tax incentives. A mixed use development combining office, retail and residential tenants would have a positive impact on the surrounding community. Plus, its redevelopment will add to the city’s tax base, and spur on the renaissance underway in the surrounding historic neighborhoods.

6. The Eugenia Williams House – 4848 Kingston Pike

Eugenia Williams was born to Dr. David H. Williams and Ella Cornick Williams in January 1900. Dr. Williams was a prominent physician and one of the original financial backers who introduced Coca-Cola to East Tennessee. In 1940, Eugenia commissioned her childhood friend, John Fanz Staub, to design her new residence. Staub, a native Knoxvillian from one of the city’s prominent families, is best known for designing homes for many of the wealthiest and most influential Texans, with a little over half of his design work located in Houston. He was also the architect for the well-loved Hopecote on the UT Knoxville campus. Miss Williams’ Regency-style home sits on 24 acres bordering the Tennessee River and Lyons View Pike and features a three-car garage with automatic garage door openers, which was a novelty in 1940. In 1998, the house was willed to the University of Tennessee as a memorial to Eugenia’s father. For many years after her death, Miss Williams’ house was plagued by vandals and a lack of basic maintenance, but its character-defining details remain and the house is still solid.

The University of Tennessee has issued a request for proposals seeking a long-term lease agreement for the property, but an interested party has failed to appear and the home continues to deteriorate. Knox Heritage stands ready to assist the University in navigating the legal means available to sell the property to a private buyer interested in fulfilling Miss Williams’ wishes that the house and property be preserved while benefitting the University and honoring her father.

7. Sanitary Laundry – 625 N. Broadway

The Sanitary Laundry & Dry Cleaning Building was built in 1925. V.L. Nicholson served as engineer and building contractor, using mill work furnished by Knoxville Lumber & Manufacturing Company.

Located in the area now known as Downtown North, this neighborhood was still the northern part of an uninterrupted downtown business district when this brick building was built, and several streetcars per hour squealed past the building on their way toward Fountain City. Nearby Emory Place, named for a beloved minister who was a victim of the 1904 New Market Train Wreck, was Knoxville’s first urban public park.

The building has been allowed to deteriorate to a point that it is endangering surrounding structures and detracting from the revitalization efforts underway in
Downtown North, which has been designated as a redevelopment area by the City of Knoxville. The City has acquired the property and will soon issue a Request for Proposals for its redevelopment. Knox Heritage stands ready to assist a new owner with efforts to transform this important building into a hub of activity in this quickly revitalizing area of town.

8. Magnolia Avenue Corridor

Representative Properties:

a. Burlington Commercial District

b. Magnolia Avenue United Methodist Church – 2700 E. Magnolia Avenue

c. Rabbit & Poultry Barn – Chilhowee Park – 3301 E. Magnolia Avenue

The Magnolia Avenue Corridor began with the industrial expansion that followed the 1855 construction of the East Tennessee & Virginia and East Tennessee & Georgia railroads. Workers drawn by that economic boost located in newly developed residential neighborhoods east of downtown. The development of Lake Otossee (now Chilhowee Park) in 1875, urged urban expansion farther to the east.

In 1890, Fernando Cortes Beaman, with William Gibbs McAdoo, extended an electric streetcar line to Chilhowee Park, with additional lines along McCalla Avenue to Burlington, and the conversion of a horse drawn line to electric streetcars on Washington Avenue. Park City became a strong residential area, with Chilhowee Park as a venue for concerts and fairs. It also hosted baseball and football games, including the 1907 Kentucky-Tennessee game. Magnolia was lined with large homes, and schools and churches also located in the corridor, including Park City Junior High School (1925) and Standard Knitting Mills (1910). Exclusive apartment complexes such as the Aston (2736 E. Magnolia) and the Lakewood (2736 E. Magnolia) were also built in the trolley era.

The next era of growth for the corridor came after World War II, when automobiles and their related commercial uses eclipsed the use of trolleys. Magnolia was designated a Federal Highway (Asheville Highway) and businesses such as the Pizza Palace (3132 E. Magnolia) and the bus terminal (100 E. Magnolia) are reminders of that transition.

The construction of I-40 split the neighborhood, separating Park City from other neighborhoods that had grown up along Broadway and were from the same era, and removed a large portion of the traffic that had created the demand for auto-oriented business. That isolation has continued; the corridor awaits reinvestment and redevelopment, with a focus on preserving the significant historic buildings that remain. The following properties have been singled out as being important examples of the type of consideration that should be given to Magnolia Corridor properties.
Specific Properties Threatened:

a. Burlington Commercial District

This early 20th-century “downtown” has lost a great deal in recent decades, both in terms of businesses and buildings, but it still has an appealing, homey, walkable feeling. Originally located at the end of Knoxville’s first streetcar line, it was a place where people stepped off the trolley to go to Chilhowee Park and also to Cal Johnson’s Racetrack, whose oval outline is still evident in nearby Speedway Circle.

This area is ripe for development that will restore its historic buildings while providing needed retail and restaurant options for the surrounding neighborhood. Knox Heritage looks forward to working with the City of Knoxville and the community to encourage investment in the heart of the Burlington neighborhood.

b. Magnolia Avenue United Methodist Church – 2700 E. Magnolia Avenue

This 1927 building is the third home for the Magnolia Avenue Methodist Church; the congregation relocated to the corner of East Park (now Magnolia) Avenue and Harrison in 1902 and constructed the current building when the original church building on that site was destroyed by fire. Generations of prominent Knoxvillians have belonged to the congregation, including actress Patricia Neal.

Members of the congregation nominated the building to the Fragile 15 list to highlight the need for additional resources to maintain the important building and make needed repairs to its roof. In addition to church services, the congregation provides services to the low-income and homeless Knoxville residents.

Knox Heritage has worked with the East Tennessee Community Design Center and the church to review the condition of the property and identify needed improvements. We encourage other local congregations and businesses to help with the church’s efforts to stabilize its building and fully utilize its facilities.

c. Rabbit & Poultry Barn – Chilhowee Park - 3301 E. Magnolia Avenue

The Rabbit & Poultry Barn was built in the 1930s and incorporated wood salvaged from the dismantled roller coaster built for the 1910 Appalachian Exposition and reused windows from the 1910 Exposition Building. A section added in the 1950s housed the rabbits. The existing wood floor was laid over a pond and fountain that provided a location for fish and ducks.

During the 2011 Tennessee Valley Fair, the barn housed approximately 1,300 poultry exhibits and over 400 rabbit exhibits. The current Poultry/Rabbit Barn is approximately 9,000 square feet and is one of the most visited buildings during the
Tennessee Valley Fair. Through this site, the public gains an educational awareness of poultry and rabbit farming.

The building is now in need of significant repairs in order to continue as one of the most recognized and visited historic structures remaining in Chilhowee Park. The building is owned by the City of Knoxville. Knox Heritage pledges to work with the City to determine cost-effective ways to restore and use this unique historic structure.

9. Historic School Buildings

Knox Heritage believes that historic buildings can play a vital role in encouraging redevelopment that includes their rehabilitation. To that end, Knox Heritage has worked with allied preservation organizations across the state to garner approval of state legislation that will allow local governments to enter into contracts with private non-profit entities that wish to insure the preservation and reuse historic buildings; we encourage the local governments to take advantage of that legislation when seeking to dispose of historic structures. Knox Heritage looks forward to working with Knoxville and Knox County to devise a plan for preserving our community’s heritage while being good stewards of these valuable assets.

Specific Properties Threatened:

a. **South High School** – 801 Tipton Avenue
   South High was designed by noted local architect Charles Barber and was built in 1935-1936 as South Knoxville Junior High School. The school opened in 1937. Barber was the primary architect of 14 schools in Knoxville and Knox County prior to 1940. South High served as a junior high school and a high school until the last graduating class in 1976. The building sustained serious roof damage over the next three decades and that water infiltration harmed the structural integrity of parts of the building.

   Preservationists and residents of South Knoxville began their efforts to save historic South High in 2002. In 2004, the Knox County School Board surplused the building to Knox County so it could be redeveloped as a community asset. County Commission voted to auction the building to the highest bidder in 2008. The high bidder at the June 2008 auction was Bahman Kasraei. Mr. Kasraei expressed his intent to preserve the building, but construction was delayed. A portion of the building’s roof was replaced, but the rear of portion of the building stood open to vandals until the City of Knoxville secured the property this spring through its Demolition by Neglect powers.

   The City of Knoxville recently purchased the building and plans to issue a request for proposals for its redevelopment. Knox Heritage is committed to working with the City, residents and a new owner to restore the building to its role as an asset to the surrounding neighborhood.

b. **Rule High School** – 1901 Vermont Avenue
Rule High School was named after Captain William Rule, a former Union Army Captain who went on to become the mayor of Knoxville, as well as publisher and editor of the Knoxville Journal from 1885 until his death in 1928. Rule High School was built in 1926-1927 and opened in the fall of 1927. The school closed in 1991 and is currently owned by the Knox County School Board. The school continues to languish in a deteriorated state and the resources for its preservation are lacking. The East Tennessee Community Design Center prepared a feasibility study on potential for reuse of the property and the School Board is considering issuing a Request for Proposals to identify potential developers.

Knox Heritage encourages the Knox County School Board to continue its efforts to identify a new owner who will make the necessary investment to restore the property for a new use. Or, if one cannot be identified, seriously consider the campus as a new headquarters for the Knox County Schools administration. In the interim, the School Board and Knox County should secure the property and identify ways to stop further deterioration that is increasing the cost of redevelopment every day.

c. Giffin School – 1834 Beech Street

The school was named for Mr. Andy Giffin, who donated the land for the original building. Construction of a physical plant for the new school was started in 1919 and the original section of the school building was completed in 1920 and designed by Barber & McMurry and included seven classrooms. The original section was used from 1920 until 1928, when at this time, the community served by Giffin continued to grow and it was necessary to increase the size of the school building. The addition was most likely also designed by Barber & McMurry, as it looks almost identical to the original section. The addition was opened in the Fall of 1928 and adding three more classrooms. After a number of years, once again the school building proved to be too small again and in an effort to correct the overcrowding, one more addition was added in the late 1940s. This addition added six more classrooms, a gym, and a cafeteria. The final addition opened in the Fall of 1950 and was designed by the Knoxville architectural firm of Rutherford and Painter Architects.

Until recently the school was occupied by the non-profit group Remote Area Medical, although it was still owned by Knox County. The building is located in South Knoxville, an area that is seeing renewed energy and investment in the wake of efforts surrounding waterfront redevelopment and the Urban Wilderness. Knox Heritage is purchasing the campus from Knox County and has issued a request for proposals from developers interested in restoring and preserving the school. That developer will be announced soon and Knox Heritage will place a permanent preservation easement on the property so it will never be demolished.

10. French Broad River Corridor

The French Broad River was a significant settlement area for prehistoric peoples, and was one of the earliest settlement paths in Knox County after European-related settlement began. By the mid-1780s, early homes and industries were located on both
sides of the river. The French Broad was the highway for commerce and social interaction, with ferry landings on both of its banks. Francis Alexander Ramsey settled in this corridor and the stone Ramsey House still stands today. There is evidence to suggest that James White built his first house in the area. In *The Annals of Tennessee* by Dr. J.G.M. Ramsey, the French Broad Corridor is described as the home of Alexander Campbell; the large Georgian style house he built still stands. On both sides of the French Broad are some of the most intact architectural examples of early Knox County including a mill, churches, homes built using the technique of noggin construction, a cantilevered barn, log homes, and early cemeteries and ferry landings.

The French Broad River corridor, because of its relative isolation and lack of urban infrastructure, has retained its historic places, scenery, breathtaking views and vistas and its glimpses of Knox County history during the 18th and early 19th centuries and for centuries before. Some of its buildings are well-maintained, and still utilized by descendants of the families prominent in the 18th and 19th centuries. Others are vacant or deteriorating; if they are lost, a large portion of this portrait of early Knox County will also be lost.

*The East County Sector Plan approved by Knox County Commission calls for protection of the river corridor's historic resources through historic overlay zoning. The Metropolitan Planning Commission is in the early stages of implementing this important tool and Knox Heritage encourages them to make that process a priority in order to protect this endangered treasure in east Knox County from being destroyed by rampant development.*

### 11. University of Tennessee

Founded as Blount College in 1794, designated East Tennessee College in 1807, then East Tennessee University in 1840, and eventually the University of Tennessee in 1879, this local institution is tightly woven into the history and geography of Knoxville. Its first home was on Gay Street, but in 1826, construction began atop “The Hill” just west of downtown. The Civil War devastated the campus and its buildings were occupied by both Union and Confederate troops, but it survived and by 1904, there were 16 buildings on the campus. The 20th century saw a rapid expansion of the campus as it overtook surrounding historic residential neighborhoods and many historic buildings were demolished. As a result, even though the university boasts a campus with a 185-year history, only four buildings under its control remain that were constructed before 1900, two of which were originally private residences.

Recent efforts, such as the restoration of Ayres Hall; the completion of a Getty Trust-funded Campus Preservation Plan; and the nominations of Ayres Hall, Tyson House and Hopecote to the National Register of Historic Places, show an apparent evolution in the university’s appreciation for its architectural history, but historic buildings on and off
campus are still threatened with demolition or neglect and the preservation plan has not been truly integrated into the new UTK Campus Master Plan.

As UTK strives to enter the ranks of the top 25 public research institutions in the country, it should be noted that preservation is a priority for the majority of those top universities and a significant factor for students as they choose where they will study, especially the millennial generation. History and preservation add a weight and sense of place to university campuses and can create strong bonds with alumni and donors considering financial support of those institutions. In addition, in the current economic environment the maintenance and re-use of existing structures is a fiscally prudent path to take considering the amount of taxpayer funding used to finance construction on campus.

Historic buildings are valued and utilized by top universities around the world. Knox Heritage will continue to work with the administration and the State of Tennessee to devise innovative and cost effective strategies that will preserve the campus while enhancing the learning experience for students and benefiting the entire Knoxville community. Included in those strategies must be rehabilitation that is architecturally sensitive to the historic structures that are its subject, a diminishing role for demolition, and a commitment to ongoing maintenance that values the architectural features of the remaining historic buildings on campus.

**Specific Properties Threatened:**

**a. Melrose Hall – 1616 Melrose Avenue**

Built in 1946 and designed by Knoxville architects Barber & McMurtry, the building serves as a dormitory and offices. Melrose is one of the last great Collegiate Gothic designs at the university. It represents an important part of the university’s expansion west of the Hill in the postwar era and reflects the increase in student enrollment following World War II. The UTK Campus Master Plan calls for the demolition of Melrose Hall, but

**b. Estabrook Hall – 1012 Estabrook Hall**

Estabrook Hall was built in 1898 and named for Mr. Joseph Estabrook, the fifth president of University of Tennessee from 1834 until 1850. Estabrook led the movement to change the name of school from East Tennessee College to East Tennessee University in 1840. The building has a strong association with the Engineering program at the school, housing classrooms, offices, and an engineering experiment station in 1921. During the 1930’s, TVA associate and nationally recognized chemical engineer, Harry Curtis kept an office here. Estabrook Hall is also associated with the school’s architectural program, having been the main home for the program before the Art & Architecture building was constructed in 1982.
Estabrook Hall was used by Summer School of the South from 1902 until its closing in 1918. It and South College are the only UT buildings left from the Summer School, which had a national impact. Started in 1902, Summer School of the South was a major instrument of regional educational improvements that over the years instructed over 32,000 teachers in the art of education.

In 1906, an addition was added to the building, and this marks the first university facility to have state appropriated funds obtained for its construction.

University representatives have expressed a willingness to preserve both buildings if building code and security issues can be addressed in a cost effective manner. Knox Heritage stands ready to assist in this process and connect UT with experts in the reuse of historic academic buildings in order to determine a strategy for incorporating the historic structures into the University’s future.

12. Isaac Anderson Cabin – Creekrock Lane – Shannondale Valley Farms

In 1802, Isaac Anderson’s family constructed this two-story log house on their land in north Knox County. Anderson had recently been named the pastor for Washington Presbyterian Church, and during his tenure at Washington Presbyterian, built a large, two-story log school building near the home. That school has since been demolished. Anderson named his school Union Academy, but it was known to many as Mr. Anderson’s Log College. The academy operated there until 1812 when Anderson moved his school to Maryville and became pastor of New Providence Presbyterian Church. His school became the nucleus for Maryville College, which he founded in 1819.

The hewn-log Anderson cabin survived for the next 200 years before residential development literally encircled it and put its future in jeopardy. It now stands in the backyard of a modern suburban house.

Although moving historic buildings is rarely recommended, Knox Heritage supports efforts to move this building to an appropriate new location, since it is unlikely to survive in its present location. We encourage East Tennessee residents to work with the preservationists spearheading this effort to identify funding to relocate and restore the structure.


A model mixed-used parking garage with several retail spaces along both Market Street and Church Avenue, Pryor Brown Garage was built in two stages, the first in 1925 and the second in 1929. Its builder was Pryor Brown, a Knoxville businessman who was born around 1849 on Brown’s Mountain in South Knox County. After the Civil War, Brown moved to Knoxville and found work in local livery stables. By the 1890s, he was running his own stable on this site along Church Avenue. After a fire in 1916, Brown rebuilt his stable with concrete floors capable of accommodating cars, and ran the Pryor Brown
Transfer Company. Following the popularity of the automobile, in 1925 Brown built the first section of the garage along Market Street and in 1929 expanded the garage, covering the area of his old livery stable. The parking garage, which operated for more than 80 years on the site of what had been a livery stable and served a comparable purpose in a previous century, makes for a remarkable story of continuity on one site.

Pryor Brown Garage was known for many years as “The House of Brown” and is thought to be the first ramp-style parking garage in Knoxville. It is also one of the oldest garages still standing and in use in the United States.

In the last year the garage came perilously close to being demolished before its owners altered their plans and are now exploring the re-use of the building. Knox Heritage is working with the owners to consider other options that will save the building while benefitting them and downtown as a whole.

**14. Tennessee Supreme Court Building** – 617 Cumberland Avenue

The Tennessee Supreme Court Building was design by the Knoxville architectural firm of Baumann and Baumann, and was constructed with $4.7 million appropriated by the Tennessee legislature in 1951. The building was dedicated in 1954, and its noteworthy design includes large expanses of East Tennessee marble, glass walls, and other characteristics of Mid-century Modern architecture. The building and surrounding site that covers an entire city block was recently the subject of a Request for Proposals for redevelopment. The proposal chosen for implementation has since been withdrawn and the City of Knoxville has opted to delay a second RFP until next year.

Knox Heritage offers its assistance to any eventual purchaser to help retain and adaptively reuse the courtroom section of the building, which is located in the front portion of the building facing Locust Street and includes its most noteworthy design elements. This portion of the structure lends itself well to adaptive reuse, while the site would be large enough to allow for additional construction to accommodate a new use.

**15. The Legg-England House** – 8010 Rutledge Pike

This Federal style home was built in 1846 for John Wesley Legg. The house was a tavern, inn, and early stage coach stop, as Rutledge Pike was located on the early stage coach route to Washington DC. It is rumored that the stage stop entertained prominent politicians such as James Polk, who later became President of the U.S. The house was inherited by Legg’s daughter, Mary Jane, who married Payne England. Civil War battles were reportedly fought in the immediate area with the house serving as a command post and field hospital.

The house currently sits on over 17 acres of land.

Although the house sits on a large parcel, it is near a front corner of that parcel which could be subdivided to give the house a parcel of its own and allow it to be restored. Knox Heritage encourages MPC, the Knox County Historic Zoning Commission, and the Knox County Commission to work with the owner to place the house under a protective HZ overlay, and secure a positive future for this significant property. In addition,
appropriate site archeology prior to any redevelopment of the larger site should be undertaken.

Knox Heritage advocates for the preservation of places and structures with historic or cultural significance. Founded in 1974, Knox Heritage is the non-profit historic preservation organization for Knoxville and Knox County. It is governed by a board of directors with representatives from across our community. Knox Heritage carries out its mission through a variety of programs and encourages community support through education and advocacy.

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