

Considering the Future
of the
Franklin P. Blue Municipal Building
McMinnville, Tennessee



Prepared for the City of McMinnville
as a Public Service by the
Center for Historic Preservation at Middle Tennessee State University

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Preface and Acknowledgements

In January of 2008, the Center for Historic Preservation at Middle Tennessee State University was invited by the City of McMinnville, along with the Heritage Alliance, Inc., the Warren County Historical Society, and Citizens Who Care to visit and assess the former City Hall, also known as the Blue Building, and provide a “report on the condition of the building and architectural conservation recommendations on appropriate preservation and restoration methods.” This letter also included a request to review visions for possible use of the building and methods for achieving those options.

Having worked on a number of projects in Warren County and McMinnville over the past 25 years, the Center is pleased to provide this report, without cost as a public service, for the consideration and action of the citizens and local government.

Center staff acknowledge David Rutherford, City Administrator; Shane Brock, President of Main Street McMinnville; Chris Wilson, Executive Director, Main Street McMinnville; Jimmy Haley, President of the Heritage Alliance, Inc.; and Rachel Killebrew, Chair of the Citizens Who Care Committee.

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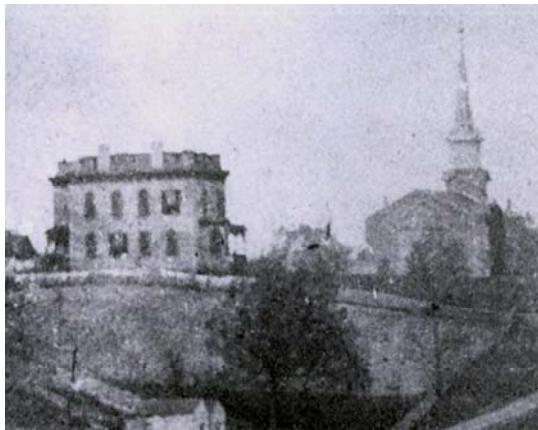


Tennessee Civil War National Heritage
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The Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area is a partnership unit of the National Park Service and is administered by the MTSU Center for Historic Preservation.

A Time for Decision

The history of the lot and the Franklin P. Blue Building has been well documented by James Dillon. The site and the building is a significant part of McMinnville's continuing story from early settlement through the Civil War and Reconstruction, when the Pickett House, part of which remains at the core of the Blue Building, was built, to its use as a public school from 1916 until 1977. In the 1970s, renovations converted the former school into the Administration Building for the City of McMinnville. In 1978, the building was named for Franklin P. Blue, mayor of McMinnville from 1963-70, 1973-79, and 1983-85. City offices continue to occupy the space at present while new spaces are readied at the former Regions Bank building at Court Square.



Historic Image of the Pickett House and Town



Present Day View of the Blue Building with the Pickett House at its core

The residents of the City of McMinnville and Warren County face decisions. The primary questions are these:

- What is the best use of the place and this space?
- How will this decision affect the taxpayers?
- How will this decision affect the community-- its appearance, heritage, economy—in 5, 10, 15 years and beyond?

The Community Response

In each and every community, people have different visions. This is to be expected. Residents come from diverse backgrounds, have varying concerns and priorities, and simply look at options and opportunities from a range of perspectives. To achieve goals, to reach a compromise that most everyone can tolerate, and to spend the available tax dollars and private donations, as well as time and effort, in the most beneficial way takes research, study, listening to assorted ideas, and ultimately, considering what is best for the community, not only immediately, but for the future.

First and foremost, the wishes of a majority of the citizens and taxpayers should be taken into consideration. For several months now, the question at hand has been debated in conversation, in public meetings, and in the pages of the *Southern Standard*. Opinions, as may be expected, range from calls to demolish the building and build a park to pleas to retain the historic building for use by the community. Some advise selling the building outright and hope for the best while others think it might be wise to sell some parts and retain other pieces of the property.

An online reader survey by the *Standard* posed the question, "What do you think McMinnville officials should do with city hall, also known as the Blue Building?" In the November 7, 2007, issue **55.2% called for renovating the building**, 10.4% wanted to demolish the building, and 34.4% called for no improvements. The number of responses on which these percentages are based was not provided.

In December of 2007, Citizens Who Care circulated a petition calling for the immediate stabilization of the building to prevent further deterioration and to follow with a plan that would insure the conservation of the building. Several hundred people, in the city and county, signed the petition.

As the debate continues, it is important to consider the options with reason rather than emotion; to be aware of what other communities have decided when faced with similar situations and learn from them; and to move ahead based on informed choices.

Renovation or Demolition? : Economic and Environmental Considerations

The decision to demolish a historic public building almost always raises questions and invites debate. Do tradition and stability interfere with new ideas and progress? Isn't it more efficient to start from scratch than continue to build on an old foundation? Are older buildings capable of meeting modern needs? Will the demolition and/or reconstruction contribute to community improvement?

Although these and other issues are valid concerns, comparing the costs (monetary and otherwise) of preservation to those of demolition is essential to the decision-making process. Viewing the project in economic terms is more useful when other relevant factors are examined and put into perspective. Of course, pertinent social and cultural matters must also be addressed at the same time.

The following topics should be considered in relation to the renovation vs. demolition of the Blue Building:

Energy Saving – A large amount of energy (from both natural resources and labor) was expended when the building was originally constructed and remains embodied in that building. Demolition of an existing structure wastes this energy. Replacing the old building with a new one uses additional natural resources while releasing pollutants and greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. Even a highly energy-efficient replacement building would take decades to recover the energy lost when an existing structure is demolished.

Waste Disposal – Demolition produces a huge amount of solid waste which must be gathered and transported to a landfill. Besides costly fuel consumption, air pollution, and traffic congestion, precious landfill space is used up much more rapidly and will require an expensive successor that meets strict environmental requirements. New landfills will place additional fiscal burdens on local governing bodies. Building renovation is an important recycling strategy to help minimize these disposal costs.

Urban Sprawl – Space that can be redeveloped and reused downtown is space that does not have to be built anew in suburban areas. Buildings situated downtown can make use of existing utilities and support systems and contribute to their greater efficiency. New or extended infrastructure is expensive and mostly paid for with tax dollars.

Utilization of Existing Resources – A considerable amount of public funds already have been expended for water and sewer lines; telephone, electric, and cable systems; streets, sidewalks, and parking; and other related infrastructure.

Unused buildings and empty lots waste these publicly-owned assets. The reuse of existing buildings provides a continuing return on previous infrastructure investments.

Time Saving – Time is money, and new construction means many dollars have to be spent long before any return can be realized. Renovation of an existing building can significantly reduce the time devoted to construction. Also, regulatory processes regarding the removal and replacement of structures, such as feasibility studies, rezoning applications, demolition and building permits, and other related paperwork usually take more time to resolve than those pertaining to renovations.

Increased Property Values – Real estate does not exist in a vacuum; it is an interrelated asset. Much of its value comes from its association with other properties. Within this reciprocal relationship, the value of any one parcel is affected by the buildings, public improvements, and activities that surround it. Architecturally significant structures are economically valuable to the vitality and quality of life in the neighborhood. Since other owners, tenants, nearby businesses, and local government share in the benefits or the liabilities of the individual properties, all have a stake in the outcome. Reinvestment in historic buildings reinforces the value of existing real estate.

Heritage Tourism – Tourists are attracted by unique and interesting places. People will not travel to destinations that are just like home; they are seeking new experiences. Cultural resources, particularly buildings, are among the strongest community assets for drawing the interest of out-of-town visitors. Historic structures help to sustain and create the sense of place so desired by heritage tourists that they will drive miles to experience it.

Increased Tax Dollars – Tourism is central to the state's economic growth. The revenues generated by visitors are substantial and include sales, gasoline, hotel room, amusement, liquor, cigarette, and other taxes. Most of these visitors only receive a fraction of the services that residents require, yet effectively pay a tax of between ten and twenty per cent of every dollar spent on their vacation. The extra money then can be returned to the communities by the state for various local uses.

Who Benefits from a Revitalized Commercial District?

(Information Provided by the National Trust for Historic Preservation Main Street Center Website)

Stakeholders	Benefits
Merchants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater opportunity for growth and expansion Expanded customer base Less financial risk
Property Owners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stable or higher rents Increased occupancy rates Improved marketability of property Higher property values
Financial Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expanded business customer base Expanded residential customer base Improved public image and goodwill Fulfillment of community reinvestment mandate
Professionals and Service Businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ready-made customer base of district employees Location near government, banks, post office, and other institutions Nearby amenities for clients and staff
Chamber of Commerce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential new member businesses Healthier overall business climate Potential partnerships on joint projects
Residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local accessibility to goods and services Opportunities for volunteerism and leadership development Preservation of community for future generations More employment opportunities Stronger tax base to support other community aspects (schools, parks, etc.)
Local Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased sales and property tax base Protection of property values and infrastructure investment Reduced cost of services, such as police and fire protection Reduced pressure for sprawl development
Community Partners (CDCs, BIDs, civic clubs, historical societies, historic preservation organizations, religious institutions, senior citizens, arts groups, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved quality of life in the community New membership potential among new residents Achievement of common goals Preservation of community history
Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth involvement in civic projects Use of commercial district as "classroom" for school projects Potential employment and business opportunities More places to go and activities for youths
Businesses Outside the Commercial District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased visitor traffic to the community Improved municipal services throughout community Increased business from overall healthier economy Additional amenities for employees and clients
Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved quality of life makes recruiting and retaining employees easier

Immediate Preservation Needs

The top priority for the Franklin P. Blue Building should be the stabilization of the structure. This means that the structure should be protected from the weather, birds, vermin, and vandalism while its future is being decided. For obvious reasons, the results of any of these conditions would have a profound negative impact on the building.



Roof

- 1) One of the aluminum ridge vents is missing. This type of vent is obsolete because newer variations provide better protection and longevity. For the present, however, either one section of this vent should be reinstated immediately, or, at a minimum, two layers of 20# roofing felt could serve as temporary protection.



- 2) One of the aluminum eave vents is also missing. This vent must be replaced or the hole filled in with a piece of plywood and then shingled over. Roofing felt should not be used to cover the hole because of safety concerns.



- 3) There are a number of broken or missing shingles that need replacement. In some cases, the underlying felt is extremely worn and may be admitting water to the structure.



- 4) The neoprene seal of this flashing boot has lost its resiliency and needs replacement. A careful application of roofing cement (tar) would serve as a temporary repair in many situations, but this solution will only last for a short time.



- 5) The cricket (the raised section left of the chimney) and flashing of this chimney needs to be totally redone. Roofing cement can be used as a temporary fix.



- 6) At the intersection of the theater roof and the wall of the main structure, the counterflashing has failed. This situation is due to faulty workmanship and needs to be redone. Roofing cement will work for a short time.



- 7) The intersection of the theater, main house, and wing is an awkward junction. Installation of the proper flashing is a difficult job and must be done by an expert roofer. The entire area needs to be redone and there is no easy solution. In addition, a leader draining toward the edge of the roof should be attached to the downspout to reduce the amount of water flowing onto the roof from above. Note broken shingle.

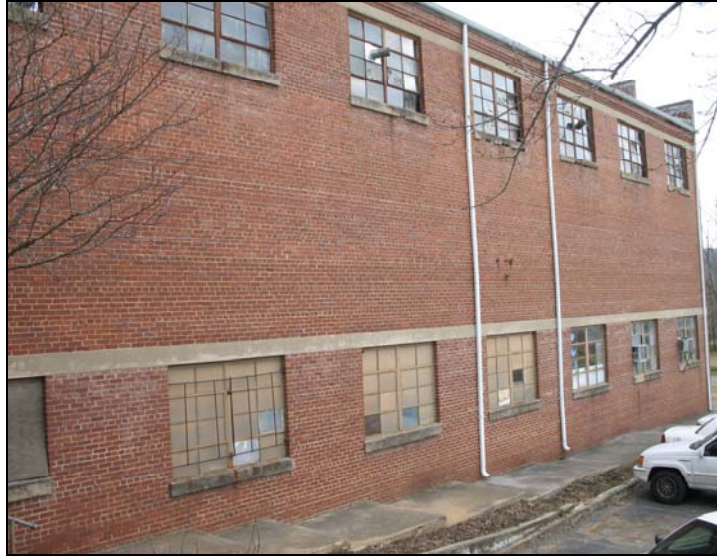


Bird Infiltration

- 1) The chimney should have a close-fitting sheet metal cap to keep rainwater, birds, and other things out of the building. It can be attached with the proper fasteners at the mortar joints.



- 2) There are a number of broken windows on the building. Each one should be replaced. Plexiglas could be considered as a temporary replacement because it resists breakage considerably more than glass does. These repairs not only will keep the birds out, it will lessen the chances of future vandalism.



Conclusion

These suggestions are offered only as emergency repairs to prevent more damage being done to the building. Most of the work that is described above can be done with a minimum of time and materials. Permanent reconstruction and/or restoration should be undertaken as soon as it is feasible.

What Have Other Communities Done When Faced with Similar Decisions?

Selected Tennessee Case Studies

Historic schools from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century are typically two-story buildings on large lots located in the center of their communities. When no longer needed as schools, their size, siting, and location can provide both challenges and opportunities when looking for a different use. Often, it is the city government who is called upon to look to new and creative options for extending the life of a building that is beloved by generations of citizens.

Recent preservation and adaptive use projects across Tennessee show that former school buildings can be and have been successfully transformed into a wide variety of new uses. Many new uses capitalize on the characteristic design of historic schools with their large rooms, wide hallways, windows, gymnasium, and/or cafeteria space. Some of these new uses for former educational institutions include: museum, event venue, arts center, community center, theater, offices, condominiums, and long-term care facilities.

There is no magic formula for determining what will be a successful new use for a former school building. Size, location, community need, and, most importantly, community support are critical factors for determining long-term success. Sometimes it is not one new use but many new uses and many partners or occupants that make a project viable. As the City of McMinnville decides whether to retain the Blue Building as a public building, sell or lease to a non-profit for a community use, or sell for private development, the following case studies may provide some ideas and contact information.

MUSEUM/ EVENT VENUE

Bradley Academy Murfreesboro, TN

The site of Bradley Academy in Murfreesboro has served as an educational center since the early 1800s. The current school building, dating to 1917, remained open as a school for African American children until 1955. This National Register-listed school also served as a community center for African Americans in Murfreesboro. In 1990, almost forty years after the school closed its doors, the Bradley Academy Historical Association (BAHA) was formed in order to restore the building and once again make it part of the community. With the help of the City of Murfreesboro, the MTSU Center for Historic Preservation, the Tennessee Historical Commission, and Congressman Bart Gordon, the BAHA succeeded in renovating the building. Funding came from a variety of sources including the Christy-Houston Foundation, the Tennessee General Assembly, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The

building was opened to the public in 2000, and now holds exhibits dedicated to honoring the history of Rutherford County and its African American citizens. It also has an auditorium and meeting room available as rental facilities, and hosts special events throughout the year to attract more visitors.



Link:

<http://www.bradleymuseum.org/>

**ARTS CENTER/ COMMUNITY CENTER/ MUSEUM/ THEATER
Brownsville Baptist Female College
Brownsville, TN**

The College Hill Complex, administered by the Haywood County Parks and Recreation Department, is made up of several historic school buildings and serves a wide variety of community uses. The Ann L. Marks Performing Arts Theater seats 420 people. This building, which is one of the county's oldest, is used for various activities such as high school plays, dance recitals, gospel singing, and various other activities that the Brownsville-Haywood County Arts Council sponsors and brings into the community. The Arts Council has received grants from the Tennessee Arts Commission to help fund many events. Grants have helped with programming, technical assistance, touring artists and Tennessee artists. The College Hill Center has a full kitchen and a meeting room that will seat from 90 to 110 people. It houses three museums, the Felsenthal Lincoln Collection, the Haywood County Museum and the Haywood County Sports Museum. The College Hill Cafeteria, which also has a full kitchen, has seating capacity of about 120 people. It also has several offices that are used by Southwest Human Resource Agency for Head Start classes. In addition, the College Hill Center has another building which houses the Brownsville-Haywood County Senior Center, and it has four tennis courts with lights, and one ball field.



Link:

<http://www.haywoodcountybrownsville.com/haywoodcounty/ParksAndRecreation.aspx>

ARTS CENTER

Robert E. Lee School

Paris, TN

The National Register-listed Robert E. Lee School was built in 1848 as a private academy. In 1893, it was enlarged and began serving as a public school for Henry County. The school closed in 1975 and stood vacant until recently. In 2001 the Robert E. Lee School Association was founded in order to preserve the historic building as well as find a contemporary use for it. The association sought advice from the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area, MTSU's Center for Historic Preservation, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation for assistance in a feasibility study. The citizens of Paris and Henry County combined their efforts and donations to reuse their former school building as an arts center. The Robert E. Lee Academy for the Arts now offers a variety of classes in painting, drawing, dance, and music while still preserving the history of the Lee School.



Link:

<http://www.schoolforthearts.org/index.html>

LONG-TERM CARE FACILITY

Claiborne Institute

Franklin, TN

This school originally opened in 1888 through the work of the Freedmen's Bureau and was called the Claiborne Institute. It operated from 1888 to the late 1960s under a variety of names including Franklin Colored School, Franklin Training School, and Natchez High School. Around 1967 the school's students integrated with the all-white Franklin High School, and the building became an

annex. It served as such until 1982, when it underwent remodeling for its new use as a long-term care facility. The current building dates to 1949 and is now occupied by the locally-owned Claiborne Hughes Health Center, which honors the building's history by using the name of the original school constructed there, Claiborne, as well as one of its first principals, Hughes.



Link:

<http://www.claibornehughes.com/>

CONDOMINIUMS
Park Place School
Chattanooga, TN

Park Place School was an elementary school constructed in 1924 to serve the five-block African American neighborhood on Martin Luther King Boulevard in Chattanooga. The school closed in 1950 due to a lack of funding, and the building, vacant for a long period of time, fell into disrepair. However, the non-profit historic preservation organization, Cornerstones, Inc., took interest in the building and provided a structural assessment that determined the building was sound and could be used for future purposes with the proper renovations. The building was given to the Lyndhurst Foundation, which was aiding the revitalization process in the M. L. King historic district in order to boost growth and enhance the appearance and safety of the neighborhood. The foundation sold the building to Chattanooga architect and developer Thomas Johnson who

has turned the school into condominiums. The renovations began in early 2004, and the remodeling process was finished in fall 2005. It contains studio lofts, one and two-bedroom apartments, and is on the Tour of Downtown Living as a renovation success story.



Links:

<http://www.cornerstonesinc.org/>

[http://www.chattanooga.gov/General Government/62 HistoricNeighborhoodinDowntown.htm](http://www.chattanooga.gov/General_Government/62_HistoricNeighborhoodinDowntown.htm)

<http://mlkweednseed.com/>

OFFICES

**Perkins Elementary School
Knoxville, TN**

Although it is now used as an office building, One Perkins Place used to be known as Perkins Elementary School and was part of the public school system in Knoxville, TN. Located on Portland Street, the school served the Marble City neighborhood until 1982 when it closed down. The building then stood vacant for roughly ten years, before the accounting and consulting firm of Pershing, Yoakley, and Associates bought and renovated it for the firm's headquarters. Fortunately the company recognized the school's historical significance and kept many of the original features. They retained the school gym, the doors and windows, and the flagpole were all formerly part of the school. The company also pays tribute to the origins of its current residence by hanging reproductions of the school's blueprints on the walls and by placing a plaque next to the front entrance that commemorates Perkins Elementary School.



Links:

<http://www.knoxnews.com/photos/galleries/2007/aug/05/success-story-perkins-elementary-school/>

<http://www.pyapc.com/>

OFFICES

**Tyson Junior High School
Knoxville, TN**

The New Deal's Public Works Administration completed the Tyson Junior High School in 1938. The school was named after General Lawrence D. Tyson, a U. S. Senator from Tennessee in the 1920s. The school remained open until 1986, then sat vacant and fell into disrepair due to neglect. Ten years after its doors closed, Sam Furrow, a prominent real-estate developer and preservationist in Knoxville, bought the rundown school and decided to renovate it into office space. It was placed on the National Register of Historic Places that same year, and once the renovations were completed it was sold to a local law firm, Holbrook and Peterson, and renamed Tyson Place.



Link:

<http://www.hpestatelaw.com/history.html>

**COMMUNITY CENTER/LIBRARY/ART CENTER
Nathan L. Bachman School
Walden, TN**

Nathan L. Bachman Elementary School was initially known as Fairmount Academy or Fairmount Grammar School and was founded in 1858. It was the first state-authorized public school in Hamilton County. The original school building stood until the 1930s, when the Board of Education approved a construction plan for a new building. Designed by Reuben Harrison Hunt, funded by New Deal agencies, and completed in the summer of 1937, it was named in honor of U.S. Senator Nathan L. Bachman. The school remained open until the late 1990s, and underwent several modernizations throughout its life span including the addition of indoor restroom facilities, several more classrooms, and a cafeteria. It served mostly grades 1-8 while open, but in later years was limited to only K-3 to limit overcrowding. It officially closed its doors as a school in 1999, although luckily it did not sit vacant for long. In 2000, the Bachman Center Council, Inc. leased the building to create a community center. With help from local churches and organizations along with contributions from the Community Foundation of Chattanooga and private donors, they were able to replace the leaking roof and gutters, and make the place fit for use. It now houses several different clubs and groups such as the Mountain Art Guild, the Signal Mountain Girl Scouts, and the Tutus and Tapshoes Dance Studio. In addition, the Bachman Community Library is located there. The building, now listed on the National Register, is truly an asset to the city of Walden and a tribute to its history.



Link:

<http://www.sigmtn.com/organizations/bachman/index.php>

ARTS CENTER/COMMUNITY CENTER

Rose School Morristown, TN

Built in 1892, the Rose School was Morrystown's first coeducational public high school. It was named after Judge James G. Rose, who was a Civil War hero and the Chairman of the School Board when the school's construction began. The school closed in 1975, at which point a local group of citizens raised funds to replace the roof and make other necessary repairs in order to re-open it as a museum and cultural center. The grand opening was part of Hamblen County's celebration of the nation's bicentennial. Today it is referred to as "The Castle" and offers a wide variety of classes and events for children and adults alike. It also has meeting spaces, art exhibits, and displays such as the Historic Classroom, which gives a glimpse of what early schooling was like. Due to the early date of the school's construction, numerous improvements have been necessary over time in order to keep the facility updated. Climate control was added to all rooms, new restrooms were built, renovations were made to the ceilings and walls, and the hardwood floor was re-finished. In addition, the school's former gym and auditorium were renovated after a major fundraising drive to make them usable once again. This beautiful building continues to serve the community as a tourist attraction, cultural center, and historical museum.



Link:

<http://www.rosecenter.org>

**ARTS CENTER/ COMMUNITY CENTER/THEATER
Signal Mountain Elementary School
Signal Mountain, TN**

The Hamilton County Board of Education built Signal Mountain Elementary School in 1927, and it was one of the first public buildings in Signal Mountain. It closed in 1998, due to the newly-constructed Nolan Elementary, but luckily, some local citizens immediately formed an organization to save the building from abandonment or demolition. They decided to turn the building into an arts and community center that would house a variety of classes and events as well as rental facilities for local clubs and organizations. The group transformed the auditorium into a suitable venue for the community theatre group, and purchased major art equipment such as weaving looms and a pottery wheel for art classes. The renovated building opened in the fall of 1999 as the Mountain Arts Community Center (MACC). It is maintained by the Friends of MACC whose main purpose is to generate financial support for the Center. They do so by hosting several fundraisers every year as well as applying for grants, which have resulted in several key renovations such as replacing the roof, updating the restrooms, and purchasing lighting equipment for the theatre. Additionally, a portion of the property taxes in Signal Mountain goes directly to support the community center. The backing of the community is really what helped prevent this building from turning into a liability for Signal Mountain, and their assistance has been rewarded by a thriving community center.



Link:

http://www.sigmtn.com/organizations/mountain_arts_community_center/index.php

Selected Funding Sources

Below are listed compilations of funding sources as well as a few specific sources of funding that could be explored for this project.

A Grantseekers Guide to Tennessee Funders

The Center for Nonprofit Management
44 Vantage Way, #230
Nashville, TN 37228
(615) 259-0100

This publication is a powerful tool your organization can use to put you in touch with more funding sources. Each funder listed in the guide includes an address, phone number, contact person, board members, samples of grants awarded, contact procedures, geographic area served, financial data about assets and total grants awarded, and the areas of interest to the funder. Deadlines for proposals are also included where applicable.

Fundsnet

<http://www.fundsnet.com>

This site provides a comprehensive directory of foundations and funders on the web, including international foundations, categorized alphabetically and by area of interest.

The Foundation Finder

<http://fdncenter.org/>

The Foundation Finder is a searchable database for private foundations, corporate grant makers, grant making public charities, and community foundations.

Humanities Tennessee

Tennessee Community Heritage Grants
Melissa Davis
1003 18th Avenue, South
Nashville, TN 38212-2104
(615) 320-7001 x.16
<http://www.tn-humanities.org/grants.htm>

Humanities Tennessee offers Tennessee Community Heritage grants, which provide support for community-based educational programs on the history and cultural life of Tennessee communities. Through these programs, Humanities Tennessee hopes to help Tennesseans build stronger communities, enriched by

an understanding of the past and the cultural lives of the peoples who share these communities.

Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee, Inc.

210 23rd Avenue, North
Nashville, TN 37203-1502
(615) 321-4939
1-888-540-5200 toll-free
(615) 327-2746 Fax
<http://www.cfmt.org/>

The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee, Inc. is a publicly supported, tax-exempt organization designed to foster and encourage philanthropy and charitable giving in Middle Tennessee. Foundation grants are made in areas such as animals, health, human services, education, arts, conservation, and preservation.

Tennessee Arts Commission

Rich Boyd, Executive Director
401 Charlotte Avenue
Nashville, TN 37243
(615) 741-1701
(615) 741-8559 Fax
<http://www.arts.state.tn.us/>

The Tennessee Arts Commission was created to ensure that the citizens of Tennessee have access to and participate in the arts. The TAC receives an annual appropriation from the Tennessee General Assembly and additional federal funds from the National Endowment for the Arts. The TAC also raises money from the sale of specialty license tags.

American Express Foundation

<http://www.arts-history.mx/amex/home2.html>

AutoZone

http://www.autozoneinc.com/about_us/community_relations/index.html

Program details: All grant proposals must be submitted to the address found on the Web site. Proposals are not accepted through fax or email. Deadline: Proposals should be received in February to be considered for funding in AutoZone's next fiscal year, which begins in September.

Burger King
Program type: donations of money or food
Web site:

<http://www.mcdonalds.com/corp/values/socialrespons/community2.html>

Program details: All contribution requests should be mailed to Burger King Corporation. The request should include a program description, expected outcomes and program milestones. Address: Attn: Corporate Contributions, 5505 Blue Lagoon Drive, Miami, FL 33126

Dollar General Web site:

<http://www.dollargeneral.com/community/communityinvestments.aspx>

Program details: Dollar General offers two kinds of grants – community grants and back-to-school grants. Applications for both programs can be found online. The deadlines for community grants are March 5 and June 5.

Summary Opinion

Given its prime location in the heart of McMinnville, the history of the Blue Building and its role in the life and times of many Warren County residents, and the generally overall well-maintained and good condition of the building, the staff of the Center for Historic Preservation recommends that this building be given every opportunity to continue to contribute to the sense of place and the everyday life of McMinnville. Further, as evidenced by the information provided, demolition, both in outlay of cash and to the environment, can be extremely costly.

With the recent loss of the opera house to fire, does McMinnville and Warren County willingly, in this case, choose to destroy another piece of its history? Case studies are contained within this report that illustrate the choices other communities in Tennessee have made with regard to their public buildings. Several of these towns are similar in size to McMinnville and some are much smaller and have far less revenue.

With regard to revenue, and the stewardship of public monies should always be a concern, funds that have been earmarked for extensive feasibility studies may want to be reconsidered. Would these funds be better utilized to rehabilitate, for example, the gymnasium which is apparently still needed and used, even in its current condition?

If necessary, a division of property could be made with the City retaining ownership of the gymnasium for varied uses, some of which could be revenue-producing to support utilities and maintenance, while leasing the Blue Building for a combination of business/office space/apartment living. Leasing downtown buildings for different purposes is a long-standing tradition in city cores and could actually produce revenue for the City, as is the case in a number of the case studies provided.

Structurally, the weakest part of the complex is the theatre wing. While restoration may be possible and even desired, it may also be that this part could be demolished, using the bricks and other salvageable materials in paving, landscaping, and in other ways. Between and around the gymnasium and the Blue Building there is room for a park-like setting for various events. This would still allow the gymnasium to serve the public and the Blue Building could remain as a place of multi-uses or be leased to a company for appropriate development that will sustain its place in the life of the town.

McMinnville has a proud heritage and its buildings, constructed over time, in different styles, and used for different purposes, contribute to the uniqueness of the town and to its ability to draw visitors and provide good amenities for its

residents. Many communities have made much more out of far less an architectural resource than the Blue Building. Once a building is gone, it is too late to reconsider what might have been and how that building could have continued to play a vital role in the economy, lifestyle, overall appearance, and sense of place that sets one community apart from another.



Streetscape and Fountain in Downtown McMinnville, Tennessee

Courtesy of Main Street McMinnville Website