

KNOXVILLE HISTORIC ZONING COMMISSION  
DESIGNATION REPORT  
SOUTH HIGH SCHOOL - 801 Tipton Avenue/953 E. Moody Avenue – CLT  
#109GB01505  
April 29, 2011

Statement of Significance

South High School was designed by local architect Charles Barber and built in 1935-36. It was known as South Knoxville Junior High School when it opened, in 1937. The red brick building with Neoclassical design elements is typical of Barber's sensitive rendering of the revival-era styles so popular in that time period. He drew from the revival era styles to design both residential and public buildings, and was the primary architect of at least fourteen schools in Knox County prior to 1940.

The building served as a junior high school, and then a senior high school for almost forty years, until its last graduating class in 1976. Following that time, the building was used as storage by the school board, but was declared surplus property in 2004. It was vacant at the time it was declared surplus property, but had been used prior to that as storage by the Knox County School Board.

Preservationists and residents of South Knoxville have made the vacant building the subject of preservation efforts since 2002, and were instrumental in having the building declared surplus in 2004, in hopes that the building could be redeveloped as a community asset. The Knox County Commission auctioned the school to the highest bidder at a June 2008 auction.

South High School is significant for its representation of the Charles Barber's design work, and for its association with the South Knoxville community and the memories it holds for many of its residents.

Architectural Description

South High School is a Neoclassical design, one story red brick building with a raised basement. Constructed in a U-shaped plan, the building faces east with the formal entry centered on the east elevation of the building, at the base of the U-shape. The central entry is marked by an entablature with a full cornice return, with three doors flanked by engaged brick pilasters with Doric cast stone capitals resting on cast stone plinths. The entry doors throughout the structure are half view doors topped by transoms.

Twelve over twelve double hung wood windows with brick sills are found throughout the remainder of the building. The building is topped by a shingled roof, hipped at each end of the wings that form the "legs" of the U-shape. Dentil molding appears at the cornice line.

The northernmost leg of the U-shape on the east elevation is marked by three windows that are twelve over twelve, divided by engaged brick pilasters with stone capitals in a Doric design and by squared plinths that rest on a stone beltcourse. The southern leg is also divided by identical brick pilasters, but has brick panels without the windows that mark the rest of the building.

Centered on the south elevation is an unroofed concrete stoop that leads to a single entry door, recessed, and topped by a small light transom. On the north elevation is a similar centered entry, reached by a single flight of stairs from the sloping ground level terrain. There is also a single door entry at ground level on the north elevation, accompanied by smaller eight over eight double hung windows that lead into the basement of the primary building.

A one story brick addition at the rear (west elevation) of the building originally housed a workshop; although the roof has collapsed on this addition, the walls and window openings are still intact.

On the rear of the building, visible primarily from the south elevation, is a two story building constructed approximately 40 years old. Although this building is joined to the original, historic building, it is minimally joined through a single hall; severing the historic building from the newer building to the west would render the original building plan intact. The present owner, who acquired the building at auction in 2008, has replaced a portion of the deteriorated roof on the primary part of the structure. The rear portion of the structure remains unroofed and unprotected.

### Design Guidelines

Guidelines for alteration to the exterior of South High School shall be the Secretary of Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings* summarized below.

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site environment.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature

shall match the old design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical or pictorial evidence.

7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures should be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

**Email sent from Monte Stanley on May 4, 2011**

Please approve the rezoning of the Old South High School from R-1 to R-1/H-1 with Historic overlay and Design guidelines.\* The school was designed by famous local architect, Charles Barber, in 1935.\* Although neglected and abandoned since the 1970's, the 'bones' of the building are still intact and have great potential for restoration.\* The building has the possibility to become an asset to the community instead of a liability - aka Tyson Junior High and Park Junior High - as well as another revenue tax source for the city.

Thanks for your consideration,

Monte Stanley



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