



# Knox Heritage Quarterly

Summer 2007

ADVOCATING FOR THE PRESERVATION OF PLACES AND STRUCTURES WITH HISTORIC OR CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE.

## KNOXVILLE'S FRAGILE FIFTEEN

Every year in May, National Preservation Month, Knox Heritage announces The Fragile Fifteen, its list of the most endangered historic buildings and places, in order to educate the public and local leaders about the plight of significant historic resources.

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 for 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. More information about this year's Fragile Fifteen can be found at [www.knoxheritage.org](http://www.knoxheritage.org).

### 1. The McClung Warehouses 501-525 W. Jackson Avenue

Only three buildings remain from the Feb. 7<sup>th</sup> inferno that destroyed half of the McClung Warehouse complex. This fire illustrated the



McClung Warehouses

worst-case scenario for vacant and blighted historic buildings. Knoxville lost warehouses significant to understanding our city's important role in the late 19th century as a wholesale center. Our community lost the opportunity to redevelop

the buildings into loft and retail space, thus improving the tax base for all Knox County residents. A structural analysis of the remaining buildings conducted at the request of the City of Knoxville has revealed they are sound and suitable for redevelopment. We call upon KCDC and the City of Knoxville to facilitate securing a viable developer for the remaining buildings immediately. This must be the last "great downtown fire" of this generation and only decisive action by property owners and local leaders can ensure that.

### 2. French Broad River Corridor

The French Broad River was one of the earliest settlement paths in Knox County. By the mid 1780's, homes and industries were located

on both sides of the river, linked by ferry crossings. Francis Alexander Ramsey settled in this corridor and the 1797 Ramsey House still stands today. This area includes some of



French Broad River Corridor

Knox County's best architectural examples that tell the story of a river that acted as a highway for commerce and social interaction. Because of its relative isolation and lack of urban infrastructure, the French Broad River corridor retained its historic places, bucolic scenery, breathtaking views and vistas. Knox County Commission's recent approval of rezonings that allow industrial and commercial development at the Midway Road

interchange with I-40, combined with increasing development pressure from Sevier County, threaten the survival of one of Knox County's signature places. We call on Knox County government leaders to act with haste to develop innovative measures that protect this endangered treasure in east Knox County.

### 3. University of Tennessee Conference Center (formerly Rich's Dept. Store) 600 Henley Street

This Mid-Century Modern commercial building with structural



UT Conference Center

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# Knox Heritage Happenings

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## DOUBLE DONATION WITH FRIENDS OF BARBER HOUSES CHALLENGE GRANT

Knox Heritage aims to raise \$150,000 for the Restore America project, and we need your help to reach that goal! Gifts of any amount will help restore these historic Parkridge homes back to their original grandeur.

An anonymous donor has offered Knox Heritage this challenge: the donor will match dollar-for-dollar up to \$10,000 all donations directed to the Restore America George Barber houses. This is a chance for Knox Heritage members and all friends of historic preservation to join together and make a difference!

To participate in The Friends of the Barber Houses Challenge Grant, send a tax-deductible donation by personal check to Knox Heritage and note "Barber Challenge Grant" on the envelope or check memo line. Or, call the Knox Heritage office with your credit card information and mention that your gift is to be applied directly to the Barber Houses Challenge Grant. The donor is offering this matching grant until December 31, 2007, so please don't delay. Double your dollar's value and help Knox Heritage meet this exciting challenge by becoming part of the Restore America project!

## SUMMER SUPPERS PHOTOS AVAILABLE

Hancock Photography, the official photographer of the 2007 Summer Suppers, has pictures from each event available online. Visit Hancock Photography at <http://www.hancockphoto.com/recentlife.htm> and scroll down to the bottom of the page to access each supper's photos. You will be asked for a password to view the photos and the password is: supper1.

You can purchase any photo shown. A portion of the proceeds from sales will be donated to Knox Heritage. This will continue for the remainder of this year's Summer Suppers series, so if the supper you're attending hasn't happened yet, check back for updates. Thanks to Kevin and Sandie Hancock for their terrific pictures of these parties!

## SPEND A WEEKEND IN THE ATTIC WITH KNOX HERITAGE & HGTV'S TIM LUKE

Have you been wondering what that family heirloom, stashed away between furniture blankets or in a shoebox, is worth? Are you ready to bid on some not-so-standard auction items that pay tribute East Tennessee's rich cultural traditions and pastimes? Are you looking for a fun activity with great food and entertainment at a historic downtown venue? Well, we have the perfect solution, and it's a benefit event for Knox Heritage too!

HGTV, Dewhirst Properties and Hancock Photography present Knox Heritage's "Weekend in the Attic" featuring HGTV's Cash in the Attic host Tim Luke on Friday and Saturday, October 12 & 13, at the L&N Station in downtown Knoxville. Sponsorships are still available; call KH at 523-8008 for information.

The weekend begins with 'Cocktails in the Attic' on Friday, October 12 at 7 p.m. Enjoy live music, heavy hors d'oeuvres, wine, and a surprise signature cocktail while bidding on the exclusive auction items and destinations that highlight our region's culture, arts, and leisure activities. Tim Luke will be the auctioneer for the items to be purchased and also will provide behind-the-scenes insights into HGTV's popular program, Cash in the Attic.

Tickets for Friday's 'Cocktails in the Attic' are \$75 per person for Knox Heritage members or \$100 for non-members.



Purchase tickets now by visiting our web site at [www.knoxheritage.org](http://www.knoxheritage.org) or calling the office at 523-8008.

On Saturday, October 13, from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m., antique appraisers Tim Luke and Greg Strahm will be on hand to offer verbal appraisals for your treasured items. Pay just \$10 per item (limit 4 per person) to get an idea of the value of those pieces proudly displayed in your home—or crowding your closets. Appraisals are given on a first come, first served basis, so arrive early. Please note that no guns, knives, coins or stamps will be appraised. Appraisals will not be televised, and no written documentation will be provided.

All proceeds of Weekend in the Attic support Knox Heritage's mission. Polish your silver—and your dancing shoes—and make plans now to attend this fun event!

# PRESERVATION BRIEFS

## Permit Fees Waived for Qualifying Residential Projects within the Empowerment Zone

On July 17, Knoxville City Council approved a resolution allowing for the waiver of plan review and building permit fees for qualifying projects in the Historic Overlay (H-1), Infill Historic Overlay (IH-1), and Neighborhood Conservation Overlay (NC-1) Districts within the Knoxville Empowerment Zone. This development incentive intends to encourage rehabilitation and new construction of owner-occupied, single-family homes in these areas. This resolution affects the First, Fourth, and Sixth City Council Districts and includes a four-year sunset provision. The resolution can be re-enacted or extended by Council.

As work continues in core neighborhoods throughout the Empowerment Zone, neighborhoods are strengthened by home ownership. This resolution represents a clear signal that investment in owner-occupied residences in these critical areas is a city priority. The resolution was requested by the Department of Policy Development and Councilmember Rob Frost. "It's a pat on the back, saying that [the city] believes in what you're doing and you've got our support," Frost said.

For a residential home project to qualify for waiver of plan review and building permit fees, the following criteria must be met:

- Property must be located in an H-1, IH-1 or NC-1 overlay district within the designated Knoxville Empowerment Zone area;
- The project must involve the rehabilitation or new construction of an owner-occupied residential house; and
- The project must meet the requirements of all applicable City codes and zoning regulations.

Bill Lyons, Director for Policy Development, noted that this fee waiver is a relatively small part of the cost of construction or rehabilitation. "It won't make a difference in restoring a home or not, but it's a statement of how the city sees this as a good thing."

Frost also mentioned the resolution is "quasi-experimental," with the possibility of its being expanded to other residences within the H-1, IH-1, and NC-1 overlays, but outside the Empowerment Zone.

## THC Names New Executive Director

E. Patrick McIntyre Jr. became executive director of the Tennessee Historical Commission on March 19, 2007. Formerly, he served four-and-one-half years as the executive director of the Tennessee Preservation Trust (TPT), a non-profit preservation advocacy organization that is Tennessee's Statewide Partner of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

A native of Montgomery, Alabama, McIntyre grew up there and in San Antonio, Texas, a city known for its historic preservation efforts. Before coming to Nashville in 2002 to work for TPT, McIntyre had served three years as Endangered Properties Coordinator for the Alabama Historical Commission. Prior to that he worked as a private consultant specializing in architectural surveys and historic property nominations. In Montgomery, he served as president of a local historical society and as a board member and vice president of the Alabama Preservation Alliance, the statewide historic preservation organization.

In 1992, McIntyre was graduated from the University of Alabama with a B.A. in Anthropology. Three years later, he earned an M.A. degree in Southern Studies from the University of Mississippi. He has been through several additional training courses, including the regular and advanced editions of the National Trust's Preservation Leadership Training Program. He is on the Board of Directors of Preservation Action (the national lobbying organization for preservation issues), and the Belmont Mansion Association in Nashville. He also serves on the Board of Advisors of Scenic Tennessee and the Tennessee Civil War Preservation Association.

*Reprinted courtesy of The Courier, June 2007, a publication of the Tennessee Historical Commission.*

## CALENDAR

VISIT OUR CALENDAR ONLINE AT [WWW.KNOXHERITAGE.ORG](http://WWW.KNOXHERITAGE.ORG) FOR OTHER HISTORIC-MINDED EVENTS IN OUR COMMUNITY.

<p><b>SEPTEMBER 8</b> Preservation Network Time Warp Tea Room 1209 Central Avenue 10:00 a.m.</p>	<p><b>SEPTEMBER 15</b> George Barber Trolley Tours 10 am, 1 pm, &amp; 3 pm \$10 mem/\$15 non</p>	<p><b>SEPTEMBER 20</b> Lunch &amp; Learn The Foundry 747 World's Fair Park Dr. 11:30 a.m. \$10 mem/\$15 non</p>	<p><b>OCTOBER 12 &amp; 13</b> Weekend in the Attic</p>	<p><b>OCTOBER 13</b> Preservation Network Time Warp Tea Room 1209 Central Avenue 10:00 a.m.</p>	<p><b>OCTOBER 27 &amp; 28</b> Restore America Open House Weekend and Home Tour Parkridge Neighborhood</p>	<p><b>NOVEMBER 2</b> Downtown Art &amp; Architecture Tour</p>
<p>Fourth &amp; Gill resident Melynda Whetsel will share her experience, including challenges and triumphs, of restoring her historic home. This event is FREE and open to the public.</p>	<p>A behind-the-scenes look at the Restore America houses and the restoration progress, followed by a guided trolley tour featuring many more George Barber houses. Call KH at 523-8008 for reservations.</p>	<p>Steve Cotham, Knox County Historian &amp; Manager of the McClung Historical Collection will speak on topics covered in his new book, "The Great Smoky Mountains National Park." Call KH at 523-8008 for reservations.</p>	<p>Please see the article on page 2 of this newsletter or visit us online at <a href="http://www.knoxheritage.org">www.knoxheritage.org</a> for more information.</p>	<p>Mark DeVol of DeVol Millwork speaks about his work in custom windows, doors, and millwork for historic houses. This event is FREE and open to the public.</p>	<p>Join us as we reveal the work of the Restore America Design Team and celebrate the history of the Parkridge Neighborhood. Watch for more details coming soon.</p>	<p>Gather for a cocktail and take a walking tour of downtown Knoxville. Learn little-known facts and stories about your favorite historic structures. Watch for more details coming soon.</p>

# KNOXVILLE'S FRAGILE FIFTEEN, CONTINUED...

glazed tile, polychrome glazed brick, glass enclosed corner towers and undulating concrete canopies has seen many uses, but its signature elements remain intact. The beauty of the building is contained in its proportions and the interaction of its architectural elements. The ca. 1954 building received a design award from the America Institute of Architects when it was originally unveiled.

The character-defining features of the building seem jarring when compared to the subtleties of earlier architectural periods, but they reflect the cutting edge architectural thinking of the mid-20th century and are the very features that are increasingly valued today by preservationists across the country. The University of Tennessee occupies the building and has invested heavily in the interior rehabilitation. We call upon UT to improve maintenance of the exterior and insure any future construction preserve the architectural details of the building.

## 4. Vacant Historic Knox County School Buildings

### a. South High School 801 Tipton Avenue

South High was designed by noted local architect Charles Barber. For almost forty years, the building served as a junior high school and then a high school until the last class was graduated in 1976.



South High School

After three years of community interest and action, culminating in a request for redevelopment proposals, 2005 saw a local developer's \$3 million plan rejected by the Knox County Commission. Since that time, under the leadership of Mayor Mike Ragsdale, Knox County has maintained the building and issued a new request for proposals. Renaissance Property Group is proposing to spend more than \$5 million converting the school to offices for design professionals.

We urge the Knox County School System to work with Knox Heritage and the developer to overcome the last major hurdle – parking. Knox Heritage calls upon South High alumni and citizens throughout the community to contact their Knox County School Board representatives and interim Superintendent Roy Mullins to support the preservation of South High School.

### b. Brownlow Elementary School 1305 Luttrell Street



Brownlow Elementary School

Brownlow Elementary School was built in 1913 and enlarged in 1926. The Neo-classical style school building was named for Col. John Bell Brownlow, who was one of the developers of the neighborhoods surrounding the school.

The school closed in 1996, and Knox County made it available for redevelopment through a

request for proposals. The chosen developer was unable to complete restoration in a timely manner. A new owner has received a certificate of appropriateness for the proposed restoration of the exterior. Knox Heritage encourages the current owner to proceed with construction immediately and ensure the building is secured against trespassing by vagrants.

### c. Oakwood Elementary School 232 E. Churchwell Avenue

This Oakwood neighborhood icon is currently owned by the Knox County School System and is used for storage. The later addition is occupied by the Teacher Supply



Oakwood Elementary School

Depot. The Knox County School System has moved most of its activities out the building and has discussed plans to sell it for private development. Due to the rapid deterioration of the building, Knox Heritage calls upon the School Board to act immediately to either make necessary repairs to the historic portion of the building or put the building out to bid for private development. Time is quickly running out for Oakwood School due to neglect and the resulting water damage occurring in the building.

### 5. 26 Market Square

The A.L. Young Dry Goods Store occupied this building from 1880 until 1900. Dry goods merchants

such as the McBee Trading Company and J.H. Webb continued to occupy the building until 1950. After that



26 Market Square

time the building housed several businesses, including a ladies clothes shop, a beauty shop, a record store and Mavis Shoes. Market Square has experienced an incredible renaissance in recent years and what was once an empty, abandoned city center has been transformed with specialty shopping, restaurants, residential units, offices and a seemingly endless parade of public events. Until recently, the building at 26 Market Square stood out as a glaring exception to the rule. We are encouraged that the owners are moving forward with plans to repair and redevelop the building so it can once again contribute to the future of downtown Knoxville.

### 6. Walker-Sherrill House 9320 Kingston Pike

The Walker-Sherrill House and its 104-acre tract is owned by the heirs to the estate of Max Sherrill. The two-story house was built ca. 1849 of handmade brick in the Federal style with Georgian Revival influences. The house has been included on Knox County's list of

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# KNOXVILLE'S FRAGILE FIFTEEN, CONT'D...

National Register eligible buildings since the completion of the Historic Sites Survey in 1984.



Walker-Sherrill House

We are pleased to report Andrews Properties of Atlanta plans to purchase the site and restore the house as part of its proposed mixed-use development. After working with Councilwoman Barbara Pelot, neighbors adjacent to the property, and Knox Heritage, they have announced their intention to protect the house with Historic Overlay Zoning (H-1) as part of their rezoning request. We look forward to seeing the house restored to its prominence on Kingston Pike and welcoming a new generation of Knoxville residents.

## 7. Fort Higley

Civil War battles often were not dependent on forts built with permanent construction, and this is especially true of Fort Higley, where temporary earthen trenches are the only visible reminders. From the earthworks on this South Knoxville hill, Union soldiers commanded the river and helped protect the southern and western approaches to the city. The potential of these places to teach important lessons to future generations and increase heritage tourism in our area is being lost to redevelopment.



Fort Higley Site

Fort Higley and the 105 acres of land around it are now listed for sale for \$3.8 million. Knox Heritage calls upon the owners of the property to formulate a plan that preserves this irreplaceable example of Knoxville's Civil War history. We call upon Knoxville government leaders to proceed immediately to adopt historic overlay zoning for the entire site, with the understanding that archeological exploration could reduce its boundaries to a smaller size, allowing development on portions of the site that are not of similar importance. This will protect the site as well as the vistas seen from downtown Knoxville.

## 8. Knoxville College National Register Historic District 901 College Street

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. Knoxville College has significantly contributed to the educational and spiritual welfare of the African-American population in Tennessee since 1875.



Knoxville College National Register Historic District

The ten historic buildings at Knoxville College are a tribute to the creativity and resourcefulness of the student body. While pursuing their education, students designed and constructed these buildings using bricks they manufactured at the campus. With

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## CORRECTION

### NASH HALL A UNIQUE MARRIAGE OF GEORGIAN AND VICTORIAN STYLES

In our spring 2007 newsletter, Knox Heritage reported on the Patron's Party held at the home of UT President Dr. John D. Petersen and his wife, Carol. The article stated that the house, known as Nash Hall, "was dismantled and moved from its original site on west Main Street when the federal government decided to build the post office and federal building downtown."

A few alert and knowledgeable readers contacted Knox Heritage with more accurate details. Although the story of the original home's relocation is widely circulated, the Nash's Victorian house on the corner of Walnut and Main was destroyed. Only key interior elements were preserved and used in their new house on Cherokee Boulevard.

Dr. Walter Starnes Nash, a Knoxville surgeon, wanted a Georgian house and was particularly interested in one designed by A.B. Baumann, Jr., for Benjamin Morton, a banker, merchant, and civic leader. Nash approached Baumann with the intent of purchasing the existing Morton plans at a reduced price.

When Baumann respectfully declined, Nash went to Charles Barber of Barber McMurry and asked for a spectacular Georgian design that would trump Morton's residence.

Barber provided what Dr. Nash desired—but his wife Eva Nash, the founder of the Knoxville Woman's Club, had her own ideas as well. Mrs. Nash insisted that the familiar and ornate details of her glorious Victorian home be saved. Barber surely knew that the two styles had little in common, but he fulfilled her wishes. Beautiful woodwork such as fireplace mantels, paneling, bookcases, massive columns, and a stairway are among the features that were placed in the new house.

What resulted is a unique combination of elaborate Victorian interiors enveloped in a stately Georgian residence. Thanks to the University of Tennessee, which acquired Nash Hall for the president's residence, one of Knoxville's treasured historic homes will be preserved.

## TN Chapter of American Society of Interior Designers Participates in Restore America

The Restore America houses on Washington Avenue are changing daily now, with work rapidly progressing inside and out. In a few months they will be completely returned to their former glory and welcome new owners to the Parkridge community.

As those who have ever renovated a home or even a single room know, the countless decisions to be made on the design details can be overwhelming. For these George Barber houses, the Tennessee Chapter of the American Society of Interior Designers (ASID) is taking the lead in the design decisions. Headed by TN Chapter of ASID President Susan Ballard, ASID of Smee+Busby Architects, teams of interior designers will be assigned to each room and to the exterior of the houses to choose all finishes, fixtures, and details. The designers, soliciting donated materials and supplies, will take cues

from Barber's original plans and the appropriate styles of the time period while incorporating many modern conveniences and amenities.

Ballard hopes to get as many local ASID affiliates as possible to take part in the Restore America Project. Other professionals guiding the design are Randall De Ford of C. Randall De Ford Architecture; Dwane Dishner, Allied Member of ASID and President of Dwane Dishner Designs; and Robert Marlino of Smee+Busby Architects. Award-winning kitchen designer Ester Golightly, ASID, will contribute her talents to the homes' kitchens. Golightly has been on several HGTV programs and has been published in Signature Kitchens and Baths. Margaret Ann Jeffries, PhD, Dept. Head of Engineering and Media Technologies at Pellissippi State Community College, is selecting the paint colors for the houses' exteriors. Jeffries has degrees in Interior

Design and Historic Preservation and has done extensive research on color selections for houses of this era. Daniel Smith, a student at Pellissippi State, is also part of the team.

The TN Chapter of ASID has adopted the Restore America Barber houses as its Community Service Project for this year and will submit it as an entry in the national organization's Professional Awards competition. ASID bestows annual honors in recognition of design excellence and service to the Society.

Make plans now to visit the Restore America George Barber houses during the weekend of October 27-28, during the Parkridge home tour. This will be a chance to see the homes in their nearly-completed state, including the design elements contributed by the collaborative efforts of the Tennessee Chapter of ASID.

### Meet Becky Hancock, Our New Development Director



Knox Heritage welcomes Becky Hancock as its new Development Director. Her first day was June 4.

Becky comes to Knox Heritage with a personal and professional appreciation for historic preservation. She was General Manager of the Tennessee Theatre from January 2001 until May 2007, a time that included the planning and execution of the \$25.5 million restoration and renovation of "Knoxville's Grand Entertainment Palace." She served on the Building Committee with design and construction professionals and Tennessee Theatre board members. Specifically, she provided insight related to daily operations of a busy performing arts and entertainment venue, ensuring the re-opened theatre would serve its patrons, artists, rental clients, and staff well.

During the construction phase and after re-opening, Becky conducted numerous tours of the theatre for donors and special groups, such as Knox Heritage members. "It was a thrill to have experienced such a monumental project from an internal vantage point," Becky says. "It taught me a lot about fundraising and perseverance. Knoxville should be proud of preserving the Tennessee Theatre for future generations to enjoy."

Before managing the Tennessee Theatre Becky lived in New York City for six years, her longest stint away from her hometown of Knoxville. In New York she worked for a small public relations firm that served the needs of musicians and organizations in the field of classical music.

Becky looks forward to cultivating new members and corporate support for Knox Heritage as she brings a love of writing and experience in special event coordination to the organization. Becky says, "Knox Heritage has a loyal and supportive membership, and I am eager to help Kim, Hollie, and the board spread the word about the organization's varied and worthwhile endeavors to more people in our community."

In 2004, Becky moved into a ca. 1885 Queen Anne cottage in the Old North Knoxville neighborhood. In addition to her work at Knox Heritage, she is passionate about rowing, and she and her husband Steve enjoy working on their historic home as well as restoring and riding vintage motorcycles.

# National Trust's Spring Retreat Held in Knoxville



photo: Robert Stockdale

KH Board President Dorothy Stair (center) tours the Restore America Houses with (L to R) HGTV President Judy Girard, NTHP VP Dolores McDonagh, NTHP Exec. VP David Brown, and Linda Dishman, Exec. Dir. of Los Angeles Conservancy.

Every other year the National Trust for Historic Preservation presents the national Spring Retreat for the Statewide and Local Partners. Representatives from state and regional historic preservation organizations meet together to share best practices and models for organizational development, discuss issues and concerns facing preservation organizations, learn about emerging preservation issues and other important topics, and network with colleagues from across the country. Another important aspect of this meeting is the opportunity to view first-hand the historic places and sites in the host city and to learn about current preservation issues there.

Knox Heritage was the proud host for the 2007 Spring Retreat, which took place April 19-22 in downtown Knoxville. There were representatives from 40 organizations located in 27 states. They came from as far away as Vermont and California, Florida and Washington, and Minnesota and Texas. This retreat also boasted a record-setting six vice presidents in attendance from the National Trust offices in Washington, DC;



photo: Robert Stockdale

Dean Barber, relative of architect George Barber, stands outside the homes on Washington Avenue and talks to the Spring Retreat attendees.

- Peter Brink, Senior VP of Programs
- David Brown, Executive VP
- David Cooper, VP of Resources Development
- Paul Edmonson, VP of Law & General Counsel
- Dolores McDonagh, VP of Membership Development
- Emily Wadhams, VP of Public Policy

Knox Heritage coordinated all of the on-site events and entertainment for the retreat attendees. The weekend included an opening reception at the "Restore America" George Barber houses in Parkridge with HGTV's president, Judy Girard; workshops and breakout sessions at the East Tennessee History Center; a walking tour of downtown, including peeks inside The Holston, the former S&W Cafeteria, and the Gallery Lofts; a guided in-depth tour of the Tennessee Theatre (its restoration project was done in cooperation with the National Trust Community Investment Corporation); and dinner at the home of Knox Heritage Board President Dorothy Stair. Attendees also had time to explore Knoxville on their own, frequenting shops, restaurants, and other favorite local haunts on Gay Street, Market Square, and in the Old City.

The National Trust has been an influential partner with Knox Heritage encouraging positive change in downtown Knoxville. John Leith-Tetrault, President of the Trust's



photo: Robert Stockdale

NTHP VP's Paul Edmonson and Emily Wadhams (R) speak with a Spring Retreat attendee.

NTCIC noted almost all of the progress in the center city has occurred since he first visited here in 1999.

The attendees were amazed by downtown Knoxville and the surrounding neighborhoods. Many declared it the best partners meeting ever, and Knoxville is now a model for many who attended. Congratulations to Knoxville and its advocates of historic preservation for making a positive impression on preservation organizations nationwide!



## THE WORT HOTEL

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# KNOXVILLE'S FRAGILE FIFTEEN, CONTINUED...

their fine craftsmanship and solid design, the buildings are deserving of support from the entire community and their preservation is a critical part of the rebirth of the college. Knox Heritage and its members stand ready to assist the college in its efforts to preserve its architectural heritage, and we encourage Knox County residents to support the college's efforts.

## 9. Minvilla 447 N. Broadway

Minvilla was built in 1913 as thirteen row houses, with three units facing North Broadway and ten units facing West Fifth Avenue. At that time, Knoxvilleians were moving away from downtown where the first residences had been. As development continued to spread away from the central city, these buildings were converted to office uses. By the 1960s a concrete block, one-story façade covered the porch bays and the buildings were renamed the Fifth Avenue Motel.



Minvilla

Knox Heritage commends the City of Knoxville and Volunteer Ministry Center for their plans to preserve Minvilla for residential use. By using a combination of federal funding and Historic Preservation Tax Credits, they are using the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation to return the row houses to their original design. We are pleased to see progress on this ambitious but worthwhile project.

## 10. The Cal Johnson Building 301 State Street

This State Street building (ca. 1898) was built in the Vernacular Commercial style and was originally used as a factory for sewing overalls. It was constructed by Cal Johnson, Knoxville's first African American millionaire and is most likely Knoxville's largest remaining commercial structure built by a former slave.



Cal Johnson Building

This is another downtown building endangered by neglect that causes concerns about accidental or arson fires. It could be a featured site in current efforts to encourage heritage tourism related to Knox County's African American residents and their ancestors. Knox Heritage calls upon the property owners to make long-overdue repairs and hopes the current level of downtown redevelopment will spur the repair and reuse of this important structure before it is too late.

## 11. Colonel John Williams House 2333 Dandridge Avenue

The Colonel John Williams House was built in 1826 by Williams and his wife, Melinda White Williams, the daughter of Knoxville founder James White. It is significant for its architecture, as the home of a prominent Knoxville politician



Colonel John Williams House

and for its later use as the "Negro Division of the Tennessee School for the Deaf and Dumb." The architecture of the Williams House is typical of Federal style houses in East Tennessee, but is distinguished by its unusual pediment with a fanlight at the roofline.

It is now owned by descendants of Williams who recognize the historical significance of the house, and have begun to take steps to correct the degradation that occurred while the house was owned by the State of Tennessee. The potential for restoring this significant building still exists, and we are anxious to see their plans come to fruition. Recent efforts will preserve the family's legacy as embodied in this structure.

## 12. Williams-Richards House 2225 Riverside Drive

The oldest part of this house was built in 1842 by John Williams, II, in the Federal style. Williams was the grandson of James White, founder of Knoxville, and he was the great-grandfather of playwright Tennessee Williams, who was a visitor to the house. He called the plantation Marbledale, and reportedly entertained such dignitaries as President Andrew Johnson.

When the property was purchased by John Richards in 1899, it was remodeled and renamed Colonial

Hall, and it acquired its current Neo-classical appearance at that time. The house was featured locally on postcards and china as late as 1910.

The house is endangered by the inaction of its current owners. Knox Heritage encourages the owners to stabilize the property



Williams-Richards House

and, if necessary, work to find a sympathetic new owner to restore the house to the prominence its heritage deserves.

## 13. The Glencoe Building (615 State Street) & The Elliott Hotel (201 W. Church Street)

These former residential hotels speak to the time when downtown Knoxville was the rail center for the Southeast and, like today, city-center living was in style.

The Glencoe was built in 1906 in the Neo-classical style. It was designed by the Knoxville firm, Gredig &



The Glencoe Building

*continued on page 9*



# KNOXVILLE'S FRAGILE FIFTEEN, CONT'D...

Lynn Architects. Its architectural features include two half-octagons forming a central recess, which incorporates a three-story porch.



The Elliot

The Elliot was built in 1907 as The Whitfield Apartments and is in the Neo-classical style.

These buildings were condemned by the City of Knoxville for building and safety code violations. The buildings also suffer from years of deferred maintenance. They are part of the Gay Street National Register District and eligible for preservation tax incentives. Their rehabilitation will restore these beautiful buildings to their rightful prominence in downtown. Knox Heritage encourages the current owners to make the needed repairs and proceed with planned redevelopment as quickly as possible.

## 14. J. C. Penney Building 412 S. Gay Street

This building was constructed as the Sterchi Brothers Furniture store in 1898 after the "Million Dollar Fire" of 1897. Because it previously was endangered by a lack of maintenance, the building has been listed on the Fragile 15 for several years. The building now has been stabilized by new owners whose work has revealed the spectacular original façade. We

are hopeful that the restoration or reconstruction of the original facade will complement the historic streetscape and character that has returned to the 400 block of Gay Street, as evidenced by the beautiful restoration of the Hope Brothers Building and The Phoenix Building.

The J. C. Penney Building is part of the Gay Street Commercial Historic District, a designation that carries the potential for rehabilitation tax credits. The National Register status of the district is precarious because so many buildings have been demolished. Restoration of the original façade of the J. C. Penney Building could help assure survival



The J.C. Penney Building

of the district, which is crucial to redeveloping many of the Gay Street buildings. We call upon the owners to execute a façade design that is respectful of neighboring historic structures and recognizes the building's context and unique original architecture.

## 15. Edelmar 3624 Topside Road

This house built in 1914 was the summer home of prominent Knoxville, C.B. Atkin. It is named after Atkin's three daughters Edith, Eleanor and Marion. Atkin was the proprietor of several local



Edelmar

businesses, including the Fountain City Railway Company. He founded a furniture company that crafted furnishings for some of Knoxville's finest homes, and a business that manufactured fireplace mantles for elegant mansions nationwide. Atkin developed a large portion of Knoxville's Oakwood and Fountain City suburbs, and built two hotels and two theatres in downtown Knoxville.

The 30-acre estate overlooking the Little River portion of Lake Loudoun was recently subdivided into smaller lots and auctioned to the highest bidder. The new owner requested and then withdrew a rezoning in order to develop the site. The MPC staff report, prepared in conjunction with the proposed rezoning of this property, calls for historic zoning to be placed on the 6600-sf Atkin family home and the surrounding parcel in order to guarantee preservation of this significant building. We are hopeful that the new owners will include the preservation of Edelmar in their development plans for the site.

• • •

**Please join us in our efforts to save our endangered heritage through advocacy and action. More information about this year's Fragile Fifteen can be found at [www.knoxheritage.org](http://www.knoxheritage.org).**

## How To Contact Knox Heritage

### Physical Address:

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Knoxville, TN 37917

### Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 1242  
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### Office Phone:

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[www.knoxheritage.org](http://www.knoxheritage.org)

### General E-mail:

[info@knoxheritage.org](mailto:info@knoxheritage.org)

# Knox Heritage Membership Benefits

## Standard Membership Benefits (all levels)

- *Knox Heritage Quarterly* newsletters
- Membership in our online discussion group where you can discuss preservation issues and benefit from referrals to restoration craftspeople (to join, send an e-mail to [bhancock@knoxheritage.org](mailto:bhancock@knoxheritage.org))
- Invitation to the Annual Meeting & Preservation Awards and all Preservation Month events
- Discount on the purchase of salvage donated from structures that could not be saved
- Invitation to hear noted historic preservation speakers
- Discounts at participating Preservation Partners businesses (see below for current list)
- Notice of upcoming Preservation Network meetings and access to a library of information collected from these workshops
- Access to our professional staff for assistance and information

## Friend Members (\$25 or more)

Receive standard benefits.

## Supporter Members (\$40 or more)

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## Patron Members (\$100 or more)

Receive standard benefits plus an invitation to attend the annual Patrons' Party in the spring.

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If you are not already a member, please fill out the membership form located on the back of this newsletter or visit [www.knoxheritage.org](http://www.knoxheritage.org) and click on the Membership button for a secure online donation page.

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