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HISTORIC PRESERVATION

May 9, 2011

Mark McDonald
Metropolitan Planning Commission
400 W. Main Street
Knoxville, TN 37902

Dear Mark,

I am writing on behalf of the Knox Heritage Board of Directors to support the proposed historic overlay zoning for Historic South High. At Thursday's Metropolitan Planning Commission meeting the fate of historic South High and the potential for a major investment in the future of South Knoxville will be in the commissioners' hands. I am writing to share some information about this issue and all of the work community residents have done to get to this point.

Knox Heritage has worked with South Knoxville residents, Knox County, the City of Knoxville and the Knox County School Board to preserve South High since the summer of 2002 and we are as dedicated as ever to preserving the school and seeing it re-used in a way that benefits Knoxville and Knox County taxpayers. We are willing to work with the current and/or future property owners to structure a financially feasible plan for its redevelopment while working with MPC, HZC and City Council to ensure the building is protected from demolition.

Here are some points that are important to consider prior to the vote:

- During the initial efforts to save the school, over 1,000 residents signed a petition supporting the preservation of the school building.
- The preservation of the building has the potential to result in a high quality project that will benefit South Knoxville and the surrounding neighborhoods while strengthening the community's tax base.
- The preservation of the building will keep it on the tax rolls and benefit both Knox County and the City of Knoxville in the long term.
- Public meetings held to discuss the future of South High revealed South Knoxville residents' preferences for market rate residential development, senior housing or an office use – not demolition.
- The South High Task Force, chaired by South Knoxville residents, worked cooperatively with Knox County to preserve and determine an appropriate use for the building.
- If the proposed demolition of the building proceeds, it will once again spark a public outcry and destroy a local landmark deemed eligible for individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places.
- This historic building was designed by noted local architect Charles

Barber in 1935-36 as South Knoxville Junior High School. The school opened in 1937. It served as a junior high school and a high school until the last graduating class of 1976.

- The school has sat vacant for almost twenty years and was only used for storage by the Knox County School System after the school closed.
- The building is an advanced state of disrepair that was not alleviated after the current owner purchased it at auction. Even though he did invest in a new roof, the building stands open to the elements and vandals.
- Protecting the building with historic overlay zoning we allow more time to work with the owner and others to repair and re-use the building. We have models in this community that show the potential for South High, including Brownlow School, Tyson Junior High, Perkins School and Park Junior High. All of these beloved local landmarks were saved and are now contributing to the economic and cultural vitality of Knoxville and Knox County.

In closing, I am hopeful MPC's commissioners will support the historic overlay zoning since it is of such importance to the neighborhoods surrounding the school and the thousands of Knox County residents who value the preservation of our community's history. Please let me know if you need more information or if I can answer any questions. Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kim Trent". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Kim Trent
Executive Director

From: <spber@comcast.net>
To: <mark.donaldson@knoxmpc.org>
Date: 5/10/2011 9:52:59 PM
Subject: Support for H-1 Overlay for South High School

To Mark Donaldson please forward to all Knox County Commissioners:

Please support the H-1 Overlay for South High School. Years ago I remember walking through the school hoping the Charles Barber school would be saved. I helped clean out the school knowing with the right person the building could be saved. The school was not in as bad a shape as what was being said and I know buildings in worse shape were being saved and reused for positive living. The community will only benefit from this building being given a H-1 Overlay and renovated. That is why I and many others volunteered to help clean the building out and I pleased to see a roof added and thought the owner would be true to his word and renovate, but his word was not true and the building is still empty. This historic piece of South Knoxville should continue in splendor, not be demolished.

Please vote yes for H-1 overlay for South High School.

Thank You,
Patricia A Berrier
807 Phillips Ave
Knoxville, TN 37920

CC: <spber@comcast.net>