

# **Historic Significance of the Proposed Landmark**

## **Introduction**

The Chattanooga School for the Arts and Sciences (CSAS) building is bounded by E. 3<sup>rd</sup> and Siskin Drive, adjacent to Mizpah Cemetery and Hamilton County Health Department located at 865 E. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street. The land for the school was purchased in 1917 and Wyatt Hall (the center section of the school we now call the Gallery) was completed in 1921. In 1935 the two wing additions were built by the W.P.A (Works Project Administration), a program created by the government to employ workers during the Great Depression. <sup>[1]</sup> First opened under the name Chattanooga High School, it is among the oldest surviving buildings in the Hamilton County school system. It is currently endangered due to deferred maintenance and proposed internal restructuring. In 2019, Hamilton County Department of Education (HCDE) hired consultant group MGT to create a plan to consolidate school facilities and mitigate spiraling deferred maintenance costs systemwide. MGT's proposal for CSAS was to move the current program to the current Brainerd High School location and sell the existing CSAS site. <sup>[2]</sup>

If the CSAS site is sold, the 100-year-old building's fate is almost certainly demolition due to the high value of the land, located adjacent to both University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (UTC) and Erlanger Hospital campuses. If the site is not sold and remains HCDE property, it may still meet the same fate as Eastlake Middle School (built 1926), another historic school building that was demolished in 2017. <sup>[3]</sup>

The building began its life in 1921 as Wyatt Hall, named for Chattanooga public schools system founder Henry D. Wyatt. In 1935, two wings were added to accommodate a larger student body at the growing school. <sup>[4]</sup> The facility was also operated under the names Chattanooga High School and Riverside High School during its use until 1983. Notable alumni attending school at the 865 E. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street location include local Medal of Honor recipient Charles H. Coolidge (class of 1939) <sup>[5]</sup> and actor Samuel L. Jackson (class of 1972). <sup>[6]</sup>

For a brief period, the building was used to house the UTC School of Nursing. In 1986, during the time it was being renovated to house the new CSAS Paideia program, the building was added to the National Register of Historic Places through an application written by Hugh K. Johnston, Project Coordinator for Chattanooga Public Schools. <sup>[7]</sup> The National Register nomination attached in the next section discusses the school's merit on the basis of architectural significance but neglects to address the significance of the architect himself and his influence on Chattanooga.

## **STATEMENTS OF SIGNIFICANCE**

### **Significance of the Architect**

The original Wyatt Hall and its 1935 additions were both designed by Reuben Harrison (R.H.) Hunt, a prolific architect that has been described as the “master builder of Chattanooga”.<sup>[8]</sup> Hunt’s career spanned five decades, and his portfolio includes between 400 and 500 structures located in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, and one Baptist school in China.<sup>[8]</sup> His firm specialized in the design of churches and public buildings, often shunning smaller projects. The R. H. Hunt Company produced work in a host of medieval and classical revival styles, and was best known for the Romanesque and Beaux-Arts genres.<sup>[9]</sup> R.H. Hunt’s significance in shaping Chattanooga’s built environment is profound. The following list are only his Chattanooga works that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places: Brainerd Junior High, Chattanooga Bank Building, Chattanooga Car Barns, Chattanooga Electric Railway, First Baptist Church Education Building, Fountain Square (with Bearden & Deacon) Hamilton County Courthouse, Highland Park Methodist Episcopal Church, James Building, Maclellan Building, Miller Brothers Department Store, City Hall, Northside United Presbyterian Church, Carnegie Library, Second Presbyterian Church, Soldiers & Sailors Memorial Auditorium, Tivoli Theater, Trinity United Methodist Episcopal Church, and the Solomon Federal Building (U.S. Post Office). In an editorial published at the time of his death, the architect was memorialized by someone who said, "no man's life has been more thoroughly woven into the progress of Chattanooga during the past half century than that of R.H. Hunt."<sup>[10]</sup>

### **Significance of the Architecture**

Chattanooga School for the Arts and Sciences, historically known as Wyatt Hall, is an exceptional representation of the Georgian Revival architectural style with a striking exterior faced with red brick contrasting against limestone trim and quoining. The dominant feature of the building is the grand four story, five bay entrance. A monumental staircase flanked by limestone balustrades leads to three multiple pane glass doors. The doors are surmounted by semi-circular fanlights and flanked by fluted columns and plain pilasters. A limestone pediment containing a cartouche with "WH" inscribed on it and a limestone balustrade are other decorative elements on this section. The taller entrance contrasts with the horizontal lines of the rest of the building. Secondary entrances along the facade complement the main entrance. Multi-pane sash windows and limestone quoins ornament the facade and other elevations, including the 1935 wings.<sup>[4]</sup>

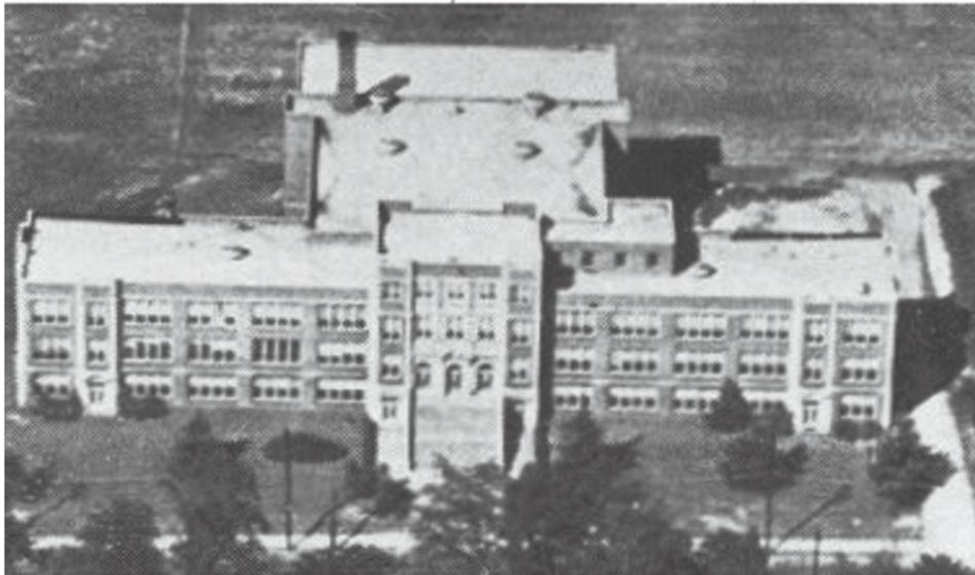
The interior contains approximately sixty classrooms, a 950 seat auditorium, a cafeteria, a library, a band room, music rooms and a gymnasium. The main lobby, at the second story level, and the lobby on the third story, are embellished by paneled pilasters and crown moldings with egg and dart and dentil trim. Wood lockers, doors capped by transom lights, and terrazzo floors line the corridors. A prominent feature of the interior is the auditorium. Large multi-pane windows flank both sides of the assembly area. The stage area is ornamented with acanthus leaf and floral motif designs. The original light fixtures and seats are extant. <sup>[4]</sup>

## **HISTORY**

The building was named in honor of Professor Henry D. Wyatt, the founder of the public school system in Chattanooga in which he was both a teacher and the first superintendent of schools. Dedicated in December of 1921 it was built during a period of expansion in the city school system. Enrollment in the high school had grown from 396 students in 1910 at the previous location to 1,025 students in 1921. During the same period the school budget had ballooned from \$90,000 to \$525,000. Both the architect R.H. Hunt and the builder George Beckham spoke at the dedication ceremonies. Beckham reported that over 1,000,000 bricks and 5,000 square yards of cement were utilized in the construction of the high school. <sup>[4]</sup>

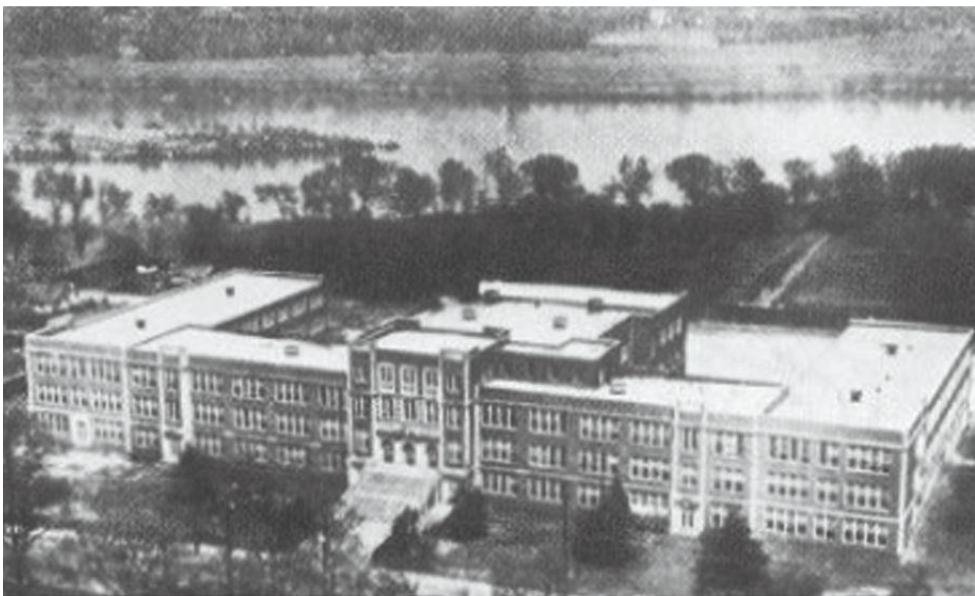
The National Register criteria recognizes seven aspects or qualities that, in various combinations, define integrity. These seven aspects include location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The rich history of what is now known as Chattanooga School for the Arts and Sciences encompasses multiple generations of memories spanning all the way back to the 1920s. Thousands of students' minds were formed within this building leaving them with a lifelong connection.

## HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPHS



*Wyatt Hall  
East 3rd. & Riverside Dr.  
1921 - 1937*

Image courtesy of Chattanooga Public Library



*Wyatt Hall - Added Wings  
East 3rd. & Riverside Dr.  
1937 - 1963*

Image courtesy of Chattanooga Public Library



1921 Image courtesy of Chattanooga Public Library - from scrapbooks compiled by the Chattanooga Half Century Club



1921 Image courtesy of Chattanooga Public Library - Paul A. Hiener Collection



**1921** Image courtesy of Chattanooga Public Library- Paul A. Hiener Collection

## VERBAL BOUNDARY AND JUSTIFICATION

The nominated landmark property is bounded by East Third Street, Siskin Road, and adjoining property lines. The school building and its corresponding secondary structures, field, and parking lots are located within one parcel shown in the image below. The lot is approximately 985' long (facing E Third St) and 480' wide.

GISLINK 033136P D 00300

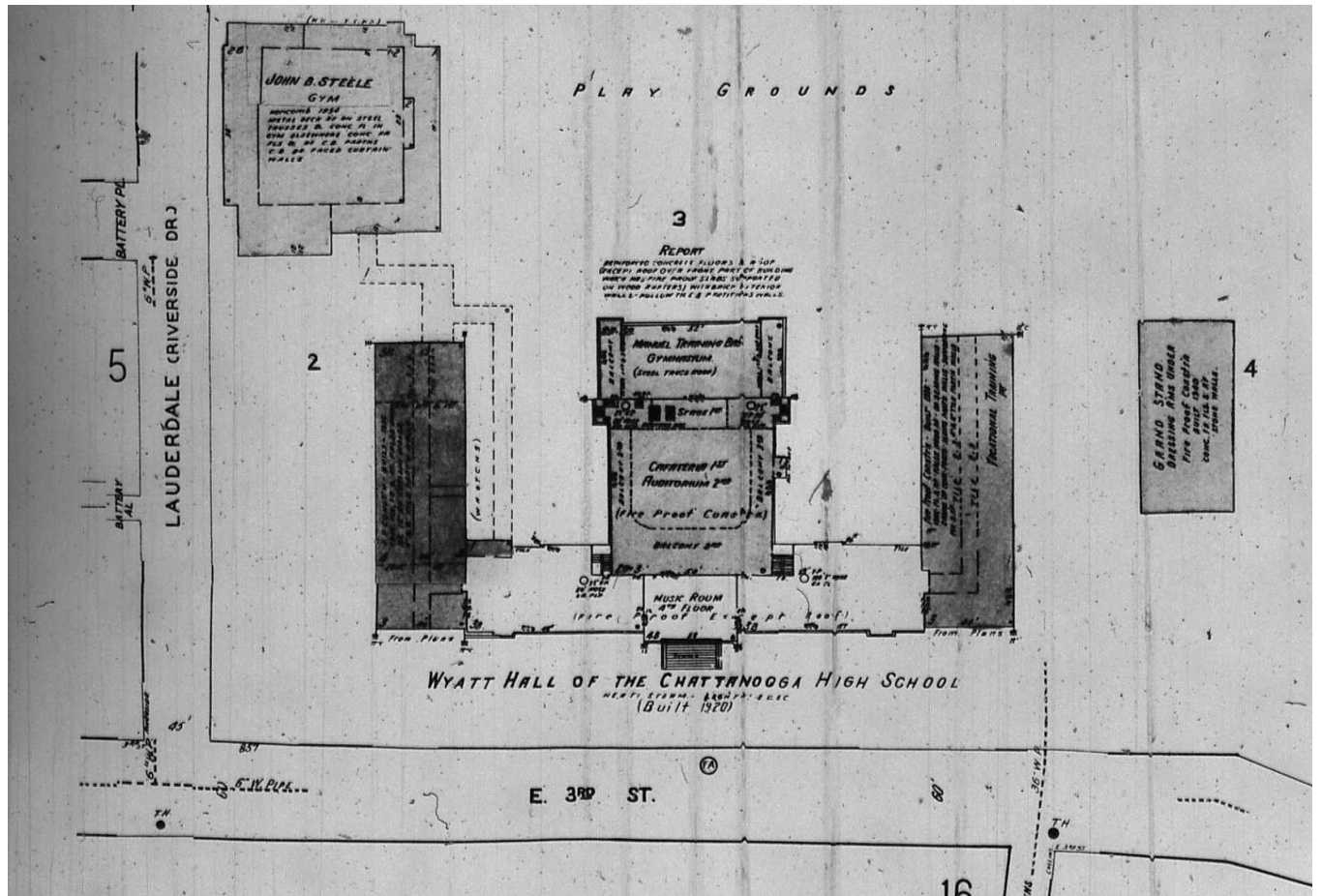
TAX\_MAP\_NO 136P D 003



**Address:** 865 E 3rd St, Chattanooga, TN 37403 - GIS Map June 2022 <sup>[1]</sup>

# 1965 SITE

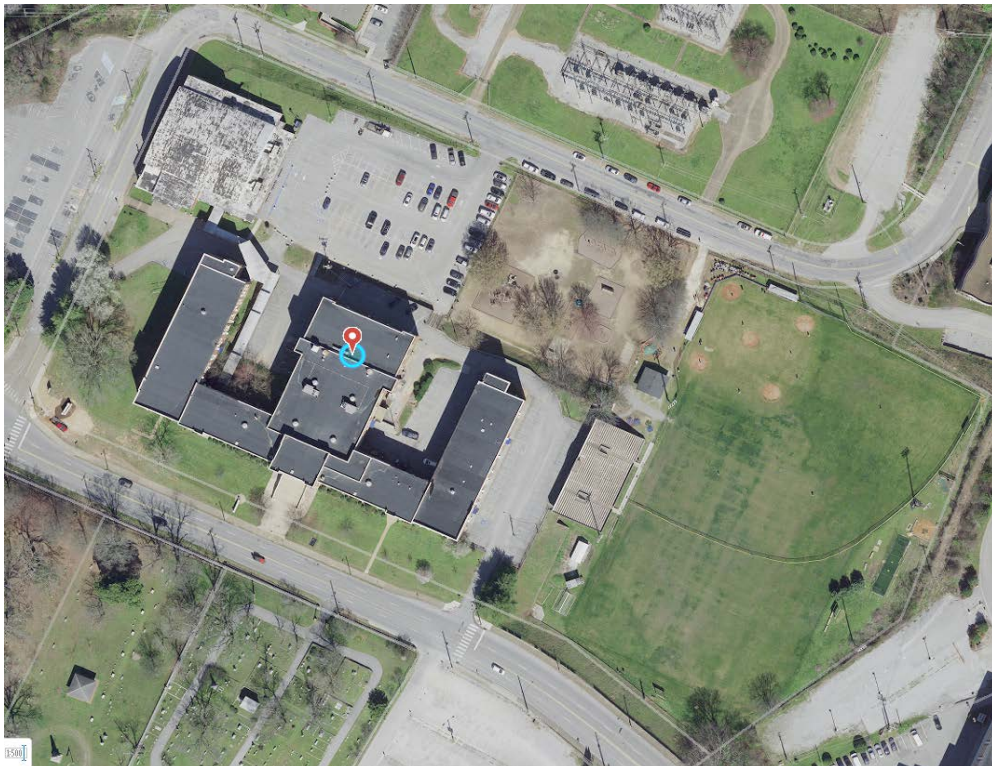
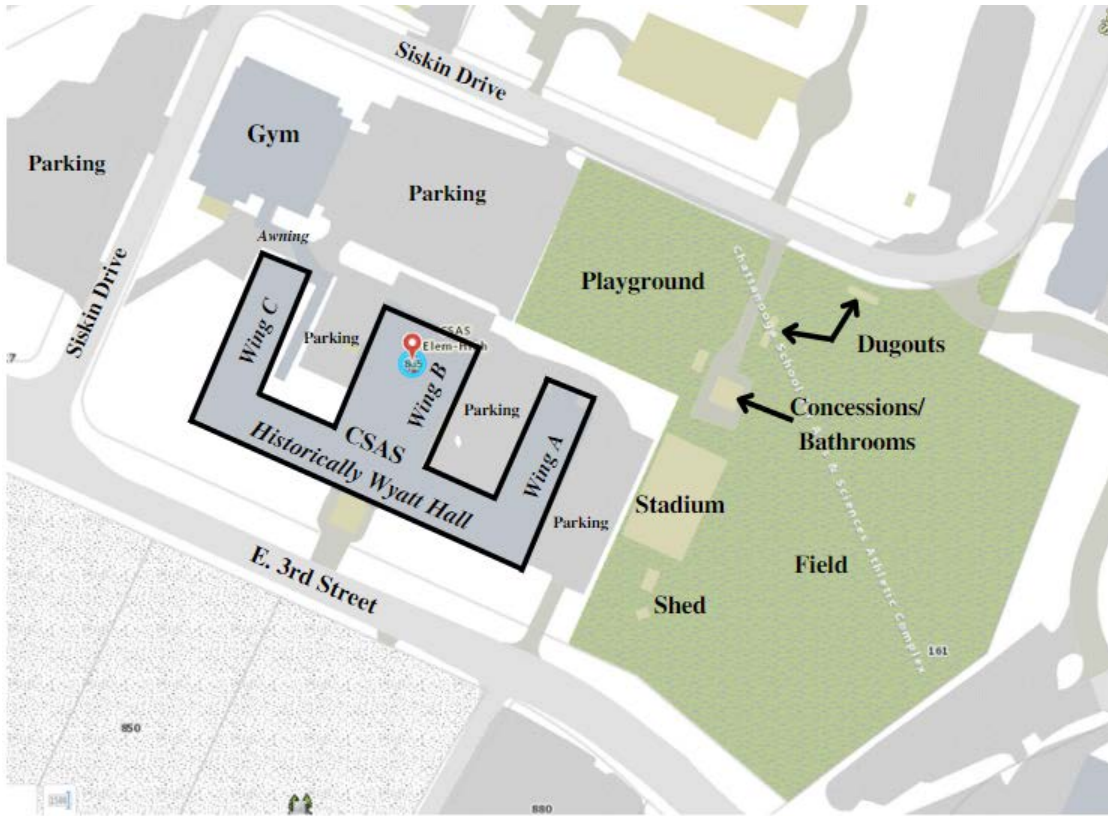
Sanborn fire insurance map 1965 - Library of Congress accessed at Chattanooga Public Library  
[16]





# 2022 SITE

GIS Maps June 2022 <sup>[11]</sup>



## **SITE CONTEXT & TIMELINE**

The imagery embedded above provides visual context for the relationship of various buildings and structures located upon the site; the most prominent centerpiece being the CSAS school building which is listed individually on the National Register of Historic Places.

The CSAS school building, once known as Wyatt Hall, was completed in 1921 with two large “winged” additions being added later in 1937. The original building as well as its additions were both designed by Reuben Harrison (R.H.) Hunt. Apart from the main school building there is a football stadium, concessions stand, storage shed, two dugouts, a playground, and gymnasium, located on the site. The Chattanooga High School Memorial Football Stadium was completed in 1941 and The John B. Steele Gymnasium was completed in 1955.

## **OVERVIEW OF SECONDARY BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES**

In most instances, secondary buildings, structures and landscape features are also present and contribute to the overall property, setting and historical context. (Refer to the Guidelines for Site Elements regarding landscape features.) In general, a secondary building or structure is historically or architecturally significant if it was:

- Constructed at the same time as the principal building on the site
- Constructed after the principal building on the site but was used for a significant function
- Representative of an important architectural design or construction method
- Associated with an important event or person related to the property
- Built incorporating distinctive characteristics of form, style, materials or detailing or shares those characteristics with other buildings on the site

**CURRENT PHOTOGRAPHY- JUNE 2022**



North oblique



North elevation- Front Facade including main building entrance



North entrance- Detail 1



North entrance- Detail 2



North entrance- Detail 3



North entrance- Detail 4



North entrance-Detail 5



Northwest oblique



West oblique



South elevation 1



South- Wing A (left) and Wing B (right) oblique 1



South- Wing A (left) and Wing B (right) oblique 1



South oblique- Wing B (center) and Wing C (right)





South elevation 2- Wing B (left) and Wing C (right)



South- Inside intersection of Wing C



South door- Detail 1



Awning detail 1- Next to Wing C



East elevation- Detail 1



East elevation-Detail 2



West oblique- Facing stadium and field



Chattanooga High School Memorial Football Stadium



Athletic field view



Stadium stands - Detail 1



Stands and athletic field



Athletic field



Storage shed



Stadium and Concessions



Concessions- Detail 1



Concessions- Detail 2





Dugouts



Playground



Awning detail - Connecting Wing C to John B. Steele Gymnasium



North elevation- Gymnasium



North details- Gymnasium entrance



South elevation-Gymnasium



East elevation- Gymnasium and Wing C



Northeast oblique - Image credit: Andrew Jameson 2010 <sup>[12]</sup>



Front signage 1- Image credit:  
Image source <sup>[13]</sup>



Front signage 2- circa 2011

## **COAs**

Any alteration, rehabilitation, relocation, or demolition of a LHL, whether privately or publicly owned, shall require a COA ( Certificate of Appropriateness).

*Applications for COAs.* Application for a COA shall be made on a form prepared by the Commission and available at the City of Chattanooga's PWLDO. Any application for a demolition permit or a building permit within a LHD or a LHL shall be forwarded by the Building Inspection Division to the CHZC within seven (7) days following receipt of the application. The Chief Building Official shall not issue the building or demolition permit until a COA or a CEH has been issued by the CHZC. Any applicant applying for a COA shall pay the fees authorized in the Chattanooga City Code Sec. 10-3(f).

*Application Requirements.* Applicants for COAs must submit the following documents, in triplicate, to the Commission staff, along with the application form and a fee based on the current annual cost as determined by the Chattanooga City Council by ordinance to manage historic zoning. All maps, plats, drawings and plans must be signed by the architect or draftsman. Draftsmen need not be licensed, and may be the applicant or the applicant's agent. The City of Chattanooga's PWLDO shall make all submitted materials available to the CHZC.

### ***Standards for Review.***

In considering an application for a COA, the CHZC shall be guided by the following general standards in addition to any district specific design guidelines in this ordinance.

- (1) The distinguishable original qualities or character of a building, structure or site shall not be destroyed. The removal or alteration of any historic material or distinctive architectural feature shall be avoided when possible.
- (2) All buildings, structures and sites shall be recognized as products of their own time. Alterations that have no historical basis and that seek to create an earlier appearance shall be discouraged.
- (3) Changes that may have taken place in the course of time are evidence of the history and development of a building, structure or site and its environment. These changes may have acquired significance in their own right, and this significance shall be recognized and respected.
- (4) Distinctive stylistic features or examples of skilled craftsmanship that characterize a building, structure or site shall be treated with sensitivity.
- (5) Deteriorated architectural features shall be repaired rather than replaced, whenever possible. In the event replacement is necessary, the new material should match the material being replaced in composition, design, color, texture and other visual qualities. Repair or replacement of missing architectural features should be based on accurate duplication of features, substantiated by historical, physical, or pictorial evidence,

- rather than on conjectural designs or the availability of different architectural elements from other buildings or structures.
- (6) The surface cleaning of structures shall be undertaken with the gentlest means possible. Sandblasting and other cleaning methods that will damage the historic building materials shall not be undertaken.
  - (7) Every reasonable effort shall be made to protect and preserve archaeological resources affected by, or adjacent to, any project.
  - (8) Contemporary design for alterations and additions to existing properties shall not be discouraged when such alterations and additions do not destroy significant historical, architectural or cultural material, and such design is compatible with the size, scale, color, material and character of the property, neighborhood or environment.
- (f) *Approval or Denial.* Following proper review of sufficient data, including a public hearing, the Commission shall approve or deny the COA within thirty (30) days. The COA may be issued with modification by CHZC. Written notice of the approval or denial of the application for a COA shall be provided to the applicant and to the Building Inspection Division if a building or demolition permit is needed. The CHZC shall state in the written notice any required modifications to the application, and conditions to which the certificate is subject, or reasons for the denial of the application.

The applicant may resubmit an amended application for a COA which takes into consideration the recommendations of the CHZC. The applicant may also apply for a CEH if they feel the decision of the CHZC has denied them a reasonable economic return or use of the property.

## **DESIGN GUIDELINES**

Upon creation of the Chattanooga Local Landmark Guidelines, modifications to this property will be subject to following and satisfying those outlined in the guidelines and criteria.

For current design standards guidelines for this historic building, reference the U.S National Parks Department Services- Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. Specifically, the *Standards for Rehabilitation and Standards for Preservation* <sup>[14]</sup>

These Standards are a series of concepts about maintaining, repairing, and replacing historic materials, as well as designing new construction or making alterations.

## **Standards for Rehabilitation**

The Standards will be applied taking into consideration the economic and technical feasibility of each project.

1. *A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces and spatial relationships.*
2. *The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.*
3. *Each property will 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 elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.*
4. *Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.*
5. *Distinctive materials, features, finishes and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.*
6. *Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.*
7. *Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.*
8. *Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.*



9. *New additions, exterior alterations or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.*
10. *New additions and adjacent or related new construction will 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.*

### **Rehabilitation as a treatment**

When repair and replacement of deteriorated features are necessary; when alterations or additions to the property are planned for a new or continued use; and when its depiction at a particular period of time is not appropriate, Rehabilitation may be considered as a treatment. The Guidelines for the Treatment of Historic Properties illustrate the practical application of these treatment standards to historic properties. The Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes apply these treatment standards to historic cultural landscapes.

### **Standards for Preservation**

The Standards will be applied taking into consideration the economic and technical feasibility of each project.

1. *A property will be used as it was historically, or be given a new use that maximizes the retention of distinctive materials, features, spaces and spatial relationships. Where a treatment and use have not been identified, a property will be protected and, if necessary, stabilized until additional work may be undertaken.*
2. *The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The replacement of intact or repairable historic materials or alteration of features, spaces and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.*

3. *Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Work needed to stabilize, consolidate and conserve existing historic materials and features will be physically and visually compatible, identifiable upon close inspection and properly documented for future research.*
4. *Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.*
5. *Distinctive materials, features, finishes and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.*
6. *The existing condition of historic features will be evaluated to determine the appropriate level of intervention needed. Where the severity of deterioration requires repair or limited replacement of a distinctive feature, the new material will match the old in composition, design, color and texture.*
7. *Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.*
8. *Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.*

### **Preservation as a treatment**

When the property's distinctive materials, features, and spaces are essentially intact and thus convey the historic significance without extensive repair or replacement; when depiction at a particular period of time is not appropriate; and when a continuing or new use does not require additions or extensive alterations, Preservation may be considered as a treatment.

The Guidelines for the Treatment of Historic Properties illustrate the practical application of these treatment standards to historic properties. The Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes apply these treatment standards to historic cultural landscapes.

### **CRITERIA:**

The proposed Chattanooga School for the Arts and Sciences, historically known as Wyatt Hall, appears to meet the National Register criteria A,B, and C:

**A.** The property must be associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

**B.** The property must be associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

**C.** The property must embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, represent the work of a master, possess high artistic values, or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

**Note:** Although the NRHP is a "national" register, historic properties can be eligible because of local, State, or National significance under any of the four criteria. Under criterion A, the applicable history could be local, statewide, or National. Under criterion B, the person could be a local, State, or National figure. Under criterion C, the architectural significance could be local, statewide, or National. <sup>[15]</sup>

*Local Historic Landmark (LHL).* A single property or structure, designated by the Chattanooga City Council, which is significant historically, architecturally, or aesthetically, and which meets one (1) or more of the following criteria:

- (1) Is associated with an event which has made a significant contribution to local, state, or national history;
- (2) Is associated with the lives of persons significant in local, state, or national history;
- (3) Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction;
- (4) Has yielded or may be likely to yield archaeological information important in history or prehistory; or
- (5) Is listed in the National or Tennessee Register of Historic Places. [Acts 1982 (Adj.S.), ch. 814, 1.]

The proposed Chattanooga School for the Arts and Sciences, historically known as Wyatt Hall, appears to meet the Local Historic Landmark nomination criteria 1,2,3, and 5.

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**Appendix:**

***Wyatt Hall NR Nomination & Listing***