

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

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Knoxville YMCA      Knox County, TENNESSEE

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION APPROVAL  
83004256

*Alton Byers* 7/15/53

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic Knoxville YMCA Building

and/or common Same

**2. Location**

street & number 605 Clinch Ave. N/A not for publication

city, town Knoxville N/A vicinity of

state Tennessee code 047 county Knox code 093

**3. Classification**

|   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| <b>Category</b>                                 | <b>Ownership</b>                            | <b>Status</b>   | <b>Present Use</b>                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> district               | <input type="checkbox"/> public             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied          | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture                  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private | <input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied                   | <input type="checkbox"/> commercial                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> structure              | <input type="checkbox"/> both               | <input type="checkbox"/> work in progress             | <input type="checkbox"/> educational                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> site                   | <b>Public Acquisition</b>                   | <b>Accessible</b>                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> entertainment                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> object                 | <input type="checkbox"/> in process         | <input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted              | <input type="checkbox"/> government                   |
|   | <u>N/A</u> being considered                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted | <input type="checkbox"/> industrial                   |
|   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> no                           | <input type="checkbox"/> military                     |
|   |   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> museum                       |
|   |   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> park                         |
|   |   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> private residence            |
|   |   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> religious                    |
|   |   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> scientific                   |
|   |   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation               |
|   |   |   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: recreation |

**4. Owner of Property**

name Young Men's Christian Association of Metropolitan Knoxville, TN

street & number P.O. Box 2776

city, town Knoxville N/A vicinity of state Tennessee 37901

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. City/County Building

street & number 400 Main

city, town Knoxville state Tennessee 37901

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title N/A has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date N/A N/A federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town N/A state N/A

# 7. Description

**Condition**

excellent

good

fair

deteriorated

ruins

unexposed

**Check one**

unaltered

altered

**Check one**

original site

moved

date \_\_\_\_\_

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

Located on the corner of Clinch Avenue and Locust Street in Downtown Knoxville, Tennessee, the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) building is a distinctive four story, brick building, set on a stone basement and executed in the style of an early Italian palazzo. Complete with interior courtyard and two fourth story loggias, this building falls into the general category of Mediterranean Revival styles, popular in the first half of the twentieth century. Early photographs confirm that despite the additions to the west side made in the late 1960's, the building retains much of its architectural and historical integrity.

The Knoxville YMCA commissioned the locally prominent architectural firm of Barber and McMurray to complete a structure to meet their needs which included providing lodging facilities for travelers and recreational facilities for men in the downtown area. This one hundred and ten room structure took one year to complete.

The brick for the body of the structure was laid in flemish bond. The basement water table and belt course between the first and second story are of coursed ashlar stone. A corbelled string course occurs between the third and fourth stories. The major roof structure is hipped and has a corbelled brick cornice. The east facade is nine bays wide. The central three bays house the entry while the flanking three bays on either side project and have stone quoins on either side of first three stories. The arched entry is flanked by an arched window on either side. Centered above the doorway, on the second level is coupled arched window with stone voussoirs and a wrought iron balconette. A two story gable roofed bay projects from the fourth story of the projecting three bays on either end of the facade, which is supported by a corbelled blind arcade. Stone quoins occur on all four corners of the projecting two story bays and the brick chimney rises through them. The projecting fourth story bays are flanked by a simple arched window and bays are connected by a fourth story open loggia.

The south facade is eleven bays wide and has a two story ell attached to the west side. The 1963 addition is attached to this ell. The basement level is pierced by windows on the west half of the facade and the ell as well. The entry on the first level is accessible by a double flight of steps with a stone landing and cheek block. The central entrance is flanked by three arched windows. The two bays on either end have a balcony on the second story supported by a blind corbelled arcade. The windows on these bays have stone flat arches and trim to the third story. The central three bays on the fourth story of this facade form a loggia with a wrought iron railing. The ell is two stories high and four bays wide. The fenestration on the first level has stone flat arches and trim. On the second story occur bull's eye windows with stone trim. The ell has a hipped roof.

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The north facade is quite plain. The regular fenestration consists of twelve double hung sash windows and is eight bays wide.

A flat roofed structure at the rear of the property houses the boiler room in the basement and an auxiliary gymnasium on the upper floors. This structure also has decorative stone quoins and an octagonal smoke-stack rises above the north side.

The interior courtyard is surrounded on three sides by arcaded eight light over eight double hung sash windows. The courtyard is now used as a playground.

The 1963 additions occur on the west side and are not included in the nomination. They are only two and three stories in height and do not impose on the historic structure. Despite the additions to the rear, the structure retains most of its architectural and historical integrity.

The interior of the original building is arranged around a paved central courtyard. On the first floor is a small lobby, offices, social halls, and two gymnasiums, Architectural details include hexagonal tile floors, stone door surrounds, and Romanesque, hooded mantels. The second, third, and fourth floors contain small dormitory rooms, showers, and bathrooms.

# 8. Significance

| Period                                    | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below    |   |   |   |
|---|--|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric      | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric  | <input type="checkbox"/> community planning     | <input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> religion                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499        | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic     | <input type="checkbox"/> conservation           | <input type="checkbox"/> law                    | <input type="checkbox"/> science                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599        | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> economics              | <input type="checkbox"/> literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> sculpture                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> education              | <input type="checkbox"/> military               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/humanitarian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799        | <input type="checkbox"/> art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> music                  | <input type="checkbox"/> theater                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899        | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy             | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation                 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900- | <input type="checkbox"/> communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government    | <input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)                |
|   |  | <input type="checkbox"/> invention              |   |   |

**Specific dates** 1929-30 **Builder/Architect** Barber and McMurray

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The Knoxville YMCA is being nominated under National Register criteria A and C for its importance in social/humanitarian activities in Knoxville and for its architectural significance as a locally outstanding example of the Mediterranean Revival style, popular in the 1920's as executed by the locally prominent architectural firm of Barber and McMurray.

The Young Men's Christian Association of Knoxville, Tennessee was organized in 1854, just ten years after the parent organization was founded in London, England. Originally quite religiously oriented, the group was organized through the Second Presbyterian Church. In order to achieve their goal of "helping to develop the Christian personality", monthly meetings were held to discuss topics of a religious nature. A librarian was hired to start a collection of books designed to encourage Bible study and education in general. The people of Knoxville were eager to support organizations oriented toward the needs of children and young adults. During the post Civil War period, several organizations of this type were sponsored by the community including a children's home (1875), the Florence Crittendon House (1896), which catered to unfortunate young women, and the Young Women's Christian Association of Knoxville (1899). The YMCA had disbanded during the Civil War and in the 1890's reopened in the T.E. Burns Building, on the corner of Market Street and Wall Avenue. By this time the nation wide organization had changed emphasis from a solely religious basis to providing recreation and lodging for young men in an atmosphere of Christian morality. The YMCA was one of the first national private organizations to change their constitution to eliminate racial segregation.

The Southern Railroad donated property to the Knoxville YMCA and they moved to the Depot Street location in 1900. In 1906, the organization moved into the former Palace Hotel at Commerce Avenue and State Street in downtown Knoxville. A successful building drive was held in 1928 and \$500,000.00 was raised to erect better facilities for the YMCA.

The locally prominent architectural firm of Barber and McMurray was contracted to design and construct the building.

The firm of Charles Barber and Benjamin McMurray was organized in 1915. Many of their buildings from the 1920's were executed in the Mediterranean Revival style based on typical Italian forms such as the villa for residential work in the W.M. Fulton House (1928) and the John Craig House (1926) and the palazzo for institutional and commercial buildings such as the Tennessee General Building (1926), the Knoxville YMCA (1929-1930) and the Knoxville YWCA (1926). Other examples of the work of this firm include the Earl Worsham House (1926), which was stylistically based on English

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property .85 acres

Quadrangle name Knoxville, TN

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UTM References

A 

|      |   |         |   |   |   |   |   |          |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|------|---|---------|---|---|---|---|---|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1    | 7 | 2       | 3 | 6 | 5 | 6 | 0 | 3        | 9 | 8 | 3 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| Zone |   | Easting |   |   |   |   |   | Northing |   |   |   |   |   |   |

B 

|      |  |         |  |  |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|------|--|---------|--|--|--|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|      |  |         |  |  |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Zone |  | Easting |  |  |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |

C 

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| Zone |  | Easting |  |  |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |

D 

|      |  |         |  |  |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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| Zone |  | Easting |  |  |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |

E 

|      |  |         |  |  |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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| Zone |  | Easting |  |  |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |

F 

|      |  |         |  |  |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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|      |  |         |  |  |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Zone |  | Easting |  |  |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |

G 

|      |  |         |  |  |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|------|--|---------|--|--|--|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|      |  |         |  |  |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Zone |  | Easting |  |  |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |

H 

|      |  |         |  |  |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|------|--|---------|--|--|--|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|      |  |         |  |  |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Zone |  | Easting |  |  |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Verbal boundary description and justification** The nominated property is roughly bounded on the north by a parking lot, on the east by Locust Street, on the south by West Clinch Avenue and on the west by the 1963 additions not included in the nomination. The property nominated includes only the land occupied by the structure built in 1929.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Robin Krawitz, Architectural Historian  
Holli Eckert, Research Assistant

organization Tennessee Historical Commission date 9-6-83  
Office of Eugene E. Burr, Archt-Planner date 7-18-83

street & number 701 Broadway telephone 742-6716  
121 West Jackson Ave. telephone 525-7731

city or town Nashville state Tennessee 37203  
Knoxville 37901

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer signature Herbert I. Singer

title Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission date 10/11/83

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

for Delores Byers  
Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the  
National Register

date 11/17/83

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Medieval precedents and the Church Street Methodist Church (1930), which was of the Collegiate Gothic style and was a collaboration between this firm and John Russell Pope, the nationally prominent architect of the Jefferson Memorial and the National Gallery of Art Building, both in Washington, D.C.

The Knoxville YMCA building is the most detailed of the institutional commissions executed by Barber and McMurray in the Mediterranean Revival style. Set on a coursed ashlar basement, the four story brick structure has an interior courtyard, indicative of an Italian palazzo.

Construction began in 1929 and the building opened in 1930. The basement and first floor house a swimming pool, two gymnasiums, exercise areas, social halls and offices. The upper three floors are devoted to dormitory space.

In 1968, an addition was made to the west side of the structure to accommodate a health club, locker rooms, steam room and sauna. The addition is not included in the nomination and it does not visually interfere with the larger and older structure.

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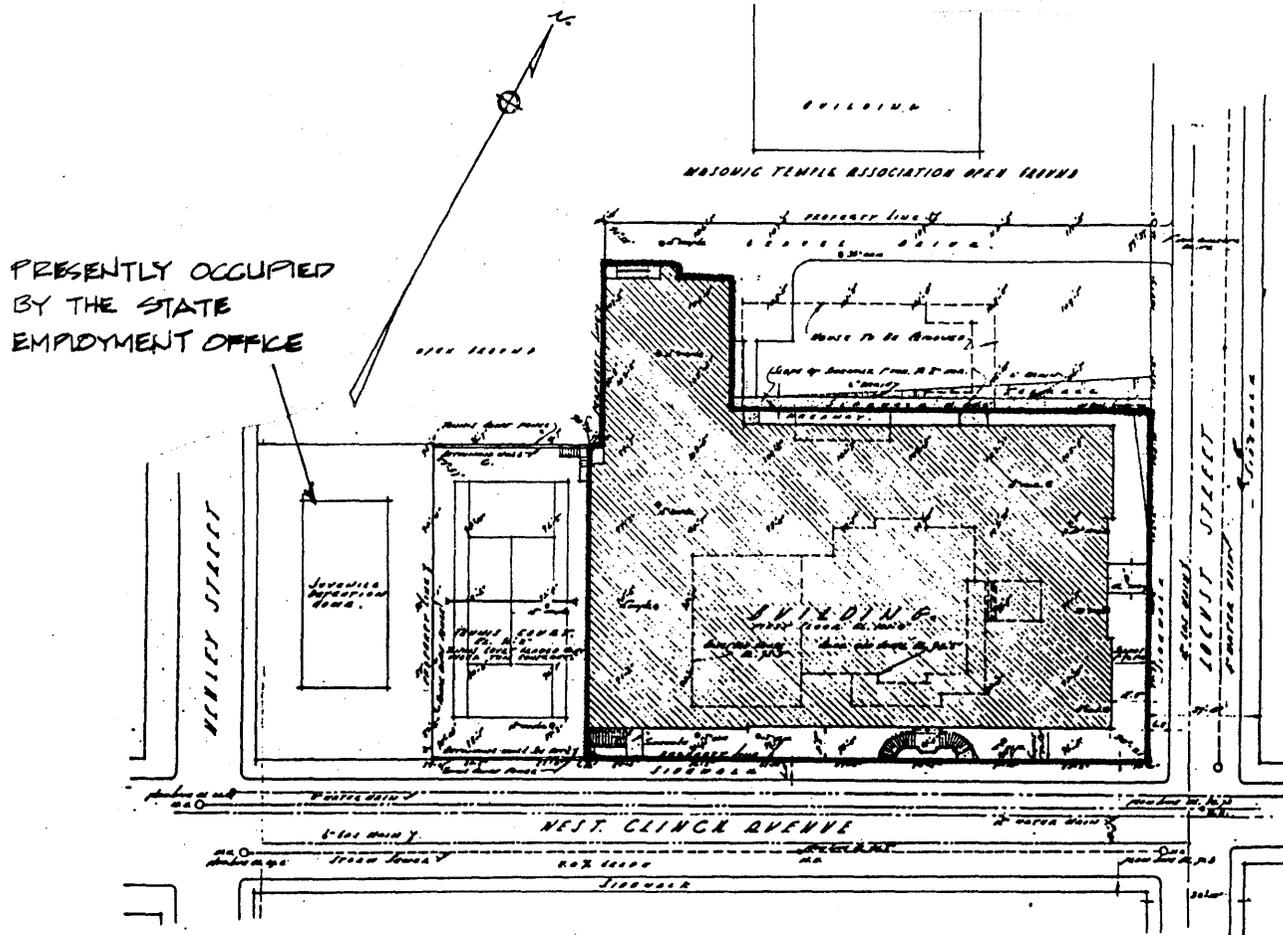
Item number 9

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Major Bibliographical References

Deaderick, Lucile. Heart of the Valley: A History of Knoxville, Tennessee. Knoxville: East Tennessee Historical Society, 1976

McNabb, William Ross. Architecture in Knoxville, Tennessee 1790-1940. Knoxville: Dulin Gallery of Art, 1974.



PLOT PLAN.  
SCALE 1" = 20'

Knoxville YMCA Building  
605 Clinch Avenue  
Knoxville, Knox County, Tennessee

SITE MAP 1" = 20'

NOMINATION TO THE NATIONAL REGISTER FOR:  
YMCA BUILDING  
KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE

DATE: 7/18/83 SHEET 1 OF 1  
OFFICE OF EUGENE E. BURR  
ARCHITECT - PLANNER  
121 W. JACKSON AVE. KNOXVILLE, TENN. 37902  
(615) 525-7731