

2025 RELEASE UNDER E.O. 14176
EXP. 12/31/84

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

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

For NPS use only
received FEB 22 1985
date entered MAR 21 1985

1. Name

historic Ossoli Circle Clubhouse

and/or common Same

2. Location

street & number 2511 W. Cumberland Avenue N/A not for publication

city, town Knoxville N/A vicinity of ~~Congressional District~~

state Tennessee code 047 county Knox code 093

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<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	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Clubhouse

4. Owner of Property

name Ossoli Circle Women's Club

street & number 2511 W. Cumberland Avenue

city, town Knoxville N/A vicinity of state Tennessee 37919

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Knox County Courthouse (City-County Building)

street & number Main Street

city, town Knoxville state Tennessee 37902

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Knox County Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1982 - 1985 federal state county local

depository for survey records Tennessee Historical Commission, 701 Broadway

city, town Nashville state Tennessee 37203

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Located at the west end of Cumberland Avenue in Knoxville, Tennessee, the Ossoli Circle Clubhouse is a one story, brick, Colonial Revival style building with a gabled roof structure and an asymmetrical facade. Built in 1933, the design for the structure was commissioned from Charles I. Barber of the prominent local architectural firm of Barber and McMurray by the Ossoli Circle Women's Club. The building is roughly rectangular in shape with the brick walls laid in common bond. Set to the rear of the lot, the area around the building is informally landscaped with shrubs. No structural additions have occurred to the building since 1933 and the Ossoli Circle Clubhouse retains its architectural integrity.

The front (south) elevation is six bays wide which are delineated by five 12/12 double hung sash windows with plain stone sills and jack arch lintels and the main entry which consists of a paneled double leaf door with decorative surround set below a multi-pane transom window that is capped by a segmental pediment. The main entry is covered by the large pedimented portico, supported by four Doric columns and two brick pilasters which rest on a brick deck. A frame cornice occurs across this facade.

Triangular pediments surmount the small projecting bays on the cross gabled sections of the east and west elevations of the building. A small gable roofed and pedimented ell extends from the south elevation. The fenestration along this elevation continues the stone sill and jack arch lintel motif of the front (south) facade and are 16/16 double hung sash. Basement windows have nine panes and brick lintels. A multi-pane bull's eye window trimmed with four stone keystones is located above a paneled door near the north corner of this facade.

The north (rear) elevation is similar to the south and east sides, having the same multi-pane windows and a narrow bay with a triangular pediment. Service entries and an enclosed ramp to the basement are located on this side.

The west elevation also has 12/12 double hung sash windows but without stone lintels, since the window heads are flush with the eave molding. In addition, a wide multi-pane casement window is located here.

Inside behind the main entry is a vestibule that projects into the main lobby. Vestibule doors and walls, lower than the lobby ceiling, consist of multi-pane windows above rectangular panels. Decorative wood urns rest on the top corners of the vestibule. A wood entablature that features a triangular shaped wood design encircles the lobby, as does paneled wainscoting. On the west wall of the lobby is a door flanked by fluted pilasters with Ionic capitals and an egg and dart design. This door leads to a hallway and the library, two classrooms, a dining room and a kitchen. Pine paneling and built-in bookcases, oak floors, and a fireplace with an elaborately molded mantle are distinguishing elements of the library. The classrooms, kitchen and dining rooms are small functional rooms with minimal detailing.

On the north wall of the lobby is a set of double doors surmounted by a triangular pediment. This leads to the auditorium (and stage) which is ornamented with pine wainscoting and a heavy ceiling cornice, both stained walnut. The auditorium has a seating capacity of 200 people.

The small east ell of the building contains the secretary's office, powder room and bath room. These are basically functional rooms with minimal detailing.

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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) Women's history
Specific dates	1933	Bullder/Architect	Sherman Cox/Charles I. Barber	

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Ossoli Circle Clubhouse is being nominated under National Register criteria A and C for its historical and architectural significance to Knoxville (pop. 174,587), Tennessee. Designed by prominent Knoxville architect Charles I. Barber of the firm Barber and McMurray, the clubhouse is a good example of the twentieth century Colonial Revival style. Historically, the Ossoli Circle Women's Club was a leader in advancing women's issues by working toward gaining rights and promoting the welfare of women in Tennessee and Knoxville. This building was constructed in 1933 to serve as the clubhouse for the Ossoli Circle and retains its historical and architectural integrity.

Historically, women's clubs which were often founded as literary or social organizations, began to help less fortunate women and their families to find employment and housing, and to lobby for protective laws and legal rights. In November 1885 thirteen women, wives of leading businessmen in Knoxville met at the East Tennessee Female Institute (non-extant) at the request of Mrs. Lizzie Crozier French to organize the Ossoli Circle. Named after Sarah Margaret Fuller, Marchioness Ossoli, a nineteenth century women's movement leader, author, editor and philanthropist, the organization began as a literary club. Under the guidance of Mrs. French the club soon became involved in promoting and working for social issues and women's rights. Mrs. French was an advocate of strong laws for the protection of women, proprietor of the East Tennessee Female Institute (a school for young women), and suffrage leader in Tennessee. She organized and was the first president of the Women's Educational and Industrial Union, president of the Tennessee Federation of Women's Clubs (1911) and president of the Ossoli Circle (1921-1922), when she worked to improve sanitary conditions around Market House (gone) including improved facilities for women selling goods there.

By 1889, when members of the Ossoli Circle attended the organizational meeting of the general Federation of Women's Clubs in New York City (and became a charter member in 1890), there were over ninety-four women's clubs in existence in the United States. The Ossoli Circle was instrumental in organizing the Tennessee Federation of Women's Clubs in 1896 and it has the distinction of being the oldest women's club in Tennessee and the oldest federated club in the south.

When the club had been in existence for nearly ten years it joined with the Women's Educational and Industrial Union to promote an Association for the Advancement of Women. Members of the Ossoli Circle were on the Women's Board of the Columbian Exposition in 1893 in Chicago and officers of the Tennessee Federation of Women's Clubs. In 1901-1902 the club began a program to help support summer schools in rural areas of Tennessee. The Ossoli Circle also worked for improved property rights of women and children, jail reforms and a Juvenile Court law, vocational education programs for delinquent women, a law to allow women on school boards and a child labor law.

Throughout its first forty-eight years of existence Ossoli Circle had various clubhouses. After renting rooms in the East Tennessee Female Institute (non-extant), Women's Building (non-extant), and scattered locations, and owning the Lyceum and Art Building until 1931 (non-extant), the Ossoli Circle began plans for a new building of their own. In 1932,

9. Major Bibliographical References

- Herndon, Joseph L. "Architects in Tennessee until 1930. A Dictionary." Master's thesis, Columbia University, 1975.
- Saxton, Sadie Boyd and Bowman, Elizabeth Skaggs, Highlights of Ossoli Circle's History 1885-1960.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Knoxville, Tennessee

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

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Verbal boundary description and justification The nominated property, rectangular in shape, is bounded on the south by Cumberland Avenue, and on the east, north, and west by adjoining property lines. This boundary includes all the land historically associated with the Ossoli Circle Clubhouse.

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 J. S. Rabun, AIA, PE

organization J. S. Rabun & Associates

date November 23, 1984

street & number 416 Kingston Park Drive

telephone 615/523-7064

city or town Knoxville

state Tennessee 37919

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 C. Harper

title Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission

date 2/11/85

For NPS use only

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

Entered in the
National Register

date

3-21-85

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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

**National Register of Historic Places
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received	
date entered	MAR 21 1985

Continuation sheet Ossoli Circle Clubhouse

Item number 8

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when the club first began functioning under the Welfare Charter of the State of Tennessee (now the club's constitution), plans for a new clubhouse were being finalized. Architect Charles I. Barber of Barber and McMurray in Knoxville was hired to design the building. Barber, son of architect George Barber, worked in his father's office in Knoxville after graduating from the University of Pennsylvania in 1911 with a certificate in architecture. In 1912 he formed the firm of Barber and Sehorn and in 1913 he formed the firm of Barber and Parmlee, who designed the First Christ Church in Knoxville. The firm of Barber and McMurray was formed in 1915. They designed the Bank of Knoxville, became nationally known for their church architecture, designed many educational buildings and produced residential designs in the 1920s for the new communities of Sequoyah Hills and West Knoxville. Barber died in 1962 but the firm still exists.

The Ossoli Circle has continued to work towards improved social conditions in Knoxville. As a strong proponent of women's rights and welfare laws, especially for working women, the Ossoli Circle is historically significant in Knoxville. The Ossoli Circle Clubhouse is the only extant representation of this group. Architecturally, the clubhouse is a good example of prominent local architect Charles I. Barber's work. The Colonial Revival structure's most outstanding feature is the pedimented portico supported by four massive Doric columns. A segmentally pedimented entry and multi-pane windows with jack arch lintels are other interesting exterior embellishments. The interior contains a decorative wood entablature, pilasters and paneled wainscoting. The building has retained both its architectural and historical integrity.