

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received MAY 29 1987
date entered JUN 25 1987

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

1. Name

historic Bristol Municipal Stadium

and/or common Stone Castle

2. Location

street & number 1112 Edgemont Avenue N/A not for publication

city, town Bristol N/A vicinity of

state Tennessee code 047 county Sullivan code 163

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" 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 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 type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Bristol Tennessee City Schools/City of Bristol Tennessee

street & number 615 Edgemont Avenue

city, town Bristol N/A vicinity of state Tennessee 37620

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Sullivan County Courthouse

street & number Main Street

city, town Blountville state Tennessee

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Bristol Municipal Stadium, commonly known as the Stone Castle, is situated on the campus of Tennessee High School in the City of Bristol, Tennessee. Bristol, Tennessee (population 23,986) is located in the extreme northeastern section of the State and shares a common boundary with the other half of the "Twin City," the City of Bristol, Virginia. The stadium appears to be designed after medieval castles, as is seen in its towers, battlements, and arches. Constructed of coursed rubble limestone, the walls of the building form an irregular quadrilateral and range in height from 12 feet to 30 feet. The present and original physical appearance of the stadium are similar since few alterations have taken place within the fifty years since its completion. Construction is believed to have begun on the stadium in June of 1934. Completion of the stadium was accomplished in 1936-1937 through a Works Projects Administration (WPA) project at a total cost of \$90,000.

Built of coursed rubble limestone which came from another relief project at nearby Beaver Creek, the Bristol Municipal Stadium is comprised of crenelated walls surmounted by flat concrete caps. Regularly spaced limestone pilaster strips and four circular corner towers with conical roofs are some of the distinguishing features of the building. Located on the campus of Tennessee High School, the stadium actually fronts on Holburn Street/Weaver Pike, although it has an Edgemont mailing address.

Nearly 200 yards long, the north facade varies in height from approximately 30 feet at the intersection of Edgemont Avenue to 12 feet at the intersection of Southside Avenue. This facade contains three entrances for spectators and one wide entrance for vehicles (at the eastern edge). Three ticket windows are located near the entrances. All of the spectator entrances and ticket windows are delineated by semi-circular or Norman arches. Entrances are denoted by walls that are taller than the remainder of the building. The central entrance to the stadium on this facade is embellished with corbeled stones set below segmental arches, stringcourses, and arched loopholes. A small plaque with "USA 1936-1937 WPA" is located above the batten wood doors. These double leaf doors are attached to the walls by metal hinges with trefoil trim.

The east elevation is set at an angle, giving the exterior of the stadium its irregular shape. It contains no openings and no crenelations. There is little variation in height on this wall, which faces Edgemont Avenue and a parking lot. The west elevation is designed similar to the east with no openings, although it does exhibit crenelations.

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Bristol Municipal Stadium

Facing Tennessee High School, the south elevation has three original entrances, one modern entrance, and ticket windows. Similar to the north facade, this wall varies in height, with the entrances being taller than the adjacent walls. The principal entrances are double leaf batten doors set below a round arch; buttresses flank the doors. Loop-holes and stringcourses are also seen on this elevation. The modern entrance is used primarily for participant access to the field, since it is the only entrance at ground/field level.

Inside the four limestone walls of the stadium are contained a football field (50 yards by 140 yards, including end zone), a paved oval running track which surrounds the football field, and 15 rows of bleacher seating on either side of the field. The seating extends from goal line to goal line (100 yards in length). Seating capacity is approximately 6,000.

Located in each of the four corners of the stadium walls are four circular towers approximately 10 feet in diameter. These were designed to be usable rooms for press boxes, VIP quarters, restrooms, concessions, storage, dressing, etc., and contain doors leading into each one from inside the stadium. The towers all have conical roofs sheathed with asphalt shingles and finials.

Some of the areas under the bleacher seating were originally closed-in to create dressing rooms and other auxiliary spaces. These areas have been redecorated at various times over the years. The concrete slabs which form the base for the raised seating are original, although the wooden boards for seating that are placed on top of the concrete have been replaced. The bleacher seating does not extend completely to ground level. The first row of seats is approximately four feet above ground level and is accessed from field level by steps at various locations.

Several small structures have been built within the stadium at various locations around the perimeter of the football field/track area. These additions and other alterations to the original structure are as follows:

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June - August 1970

- Portable bleachers were placed in endzone area.
- Cinder running track surrounding the football field was paved.
- A chain link fence was installed around the football field to separate it from the track area.
- Press box was remodeled and a second story was added to it.
- New light poles and light fixtures were installed.
- Concession stands and restroom facilities were constructed.

June - August 1980

- Dressing room areas located under bleachers were remodeled.

June - August 1985

- New scoreboard was installed.

These modernizations and alterations have not affected the overall integrity of the stadium. The Bristol Municipal Stadium still retains its essential design features and major architectural elements.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1934-1937 **Builder/Architect** Mr. R. V. Arnold

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Bristol Municipal Stadium is being nominated to the National Register under National Register criteria A and C for its architectural and historical significance to Bristol, Tennessee. Constructed between 1934 and 1937, the stadium is a unique example of an early twentieth century representation of Norman or Medieval Gothic architecture. No other building in Bristol, Tennessee has been constructed in this style. Crenelated walls, arched entries, and corner towers are the principal decorative features of the limestone building. As a Works Projects Administration (WPA) project of the New Deal era, the stadium is a memorial to the efforts at the local level to implement Federal programs designed to combat the effects of the Great Depression. The project provided employment for many people and resulted in the construction of the first municipal stadium in Bristol, Tennessee. The building has not been altered in any manner which would affect its integrity. However, some alteration, primarily in the form of additional convenience facilities inside the boundaries of the stadium walls, has occurred. Although the stadium is being nominated for its local significance, additional research (such as a survey of similar recreational facilities in Tennessee) may indicate that it has state-wide architectural significance.

The Bristol Municipal Stadium is a product of the Works Projects Administration (WPA), a federal relief program of the New Deal era, which provided work relief from 1935 to 1942. Semi-annual average employment figures for the WPA in Tennessee during this period ranged from 16,894 to 45,584 persons. The stadium project was one of the many projects of the WPA, which provided 318 new or improved playgrounds and athletic fields in Tennessee during its eight year life. An agreement was made between the City of Bristol, Tennessee and the WPA through two projects (numbers OP 65-44-1701 and 165-44-3003) for funding of the facility at a cost of approximately \$90,000, of which \$60,000 was provided by the WPA. The stadium was the first and only such municipal structure to be located in Bristol, Tennessee.

The application for the earliest WPA Project (number OP 65-44-1701) was approved on November 8, 1935. The budget page of this application included \$23,207.00 in federal aid and \$10,319.60 in local sponsor monies, for a total budgeted amount of \$33,526.60. Of this total, \$16,929.88 was projected for relief workers with the remaining line

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Approximately 4 acres

Quadrangle name Bristol, TN-VA 206SW

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	7	3	9	4	1	4	0	4	0	4	9	0	0	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing							

C

Zone		Easting				Northing							

D

Zone		Easting				Northing							

E

Zone		Easting				Northing							

F

Zone		Easting				Northing							

G

Zone		Easting				Northing							

H

Zone		Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet

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 Sam Witcher, Supervisor

organization Bristol Tennessee Board of Education date March 13, 1987

street & number 615 Edgemont Avenue telephone (615) 968-4171

city or town Bristol state Tennessee 37620

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 L. Hayden

title Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission date 5/22/87

For NPS use only

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

Herbert L. Hayden
National Register

date 6-25-87

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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items targeted for equipment, materials and supplies, non-relief workers, and "other." According to supplementary information attached to the application, the original project budget was amended at least two times.

The Bristol Municipal Stadium was begun under an Emergency Relief Act project (number 82-B4-4). When the WPA application was submitted, the stadium was approximately 50% completed. The first WPA application stated that the purpose of the project was, "Completing football stadium and athletic field. Seating capacity 4500 with extension to be made for 1500 additional seats. Stone and concrete construction." The second and final WPA project for construction of the stadium (number 165-44-3003) was approved on December 1, 1936. The purpose of this proposal was, "Completing football stadium and athletic field. Seating capacity 4500 with extensions to be made for additional seats. Stone and concrete construction. Continuation of work began under a WPA project number OP 65-44-1701." R. V. Arnold is noted as the architect of the stadium.

A resolution to issue bonds for the project in the amount of \$17,000 is recorded in the minutes of the City Commission of February 18, 1936. Deed books located at the Bristol, Tennessee Courthouse indicate that three parcels of land transferred to the City by the Woodlawn Land Company provided the primary location of the stadium area. These transfers took place in July of 1927, December of 1929, and June of 1938.

Two other major work relief projects occurred in Bristol during the era of the Bristol Municipal Stadium project. Both the Bristol Waterworks project and the Beaver Creek project had an effect on the construction of the stadium.

The Beaver Creek project was originally a Federal Emergency Relief Act project which was later transferred to the Civil Works Administration (CWA). The CWA was a Federal work relief program initiated in Tennessee in November of 1933 with C. C. Menzler as the first State Administrator. In his book Double Destiny, Robert Loving indicates that the Beaver Creek project was Project Number 1 of the CWA. The project was designed to clear and improve the channel of Beaver Creek which runs through the cities of Bristol, Tennessee and Bristol, Virginia in an effort to control flooding. According to several sources, limestone rocks which

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were removed from the channel of Beaver Creek were later used in the construction of the walls of the Bristol Municipal Stadium.

The Bristol Waterworks was a project of the Progress Works Administration (PWA) for the purpose of building and improving the water purification system which served the City of Bristol. Located approximately eight miles from the City on the South Holston River in the Emmett Community of Sullivan County, the waterworks were completed at approximately the same time as the stadium project. Mayor Fred Vance of Bristol, Tennessee addressed a meeting of the Sullivan County Court on October 5, 1936, at which time he urged the Court to appropriate additional monies for Bristol because "a large number of relief workers would soon be released from the waterworks and stadium." (Bristol Herald Courier, 6 October 1936).

Prior to completion of the Bristol Municipal Stadium, home football games for Bristol Tennessee High and Bristol Virginia High were played at Tenneva Field, located in Bristol, Virginia. Other school teams which used Tenneva Field for home games included Slater High and Douglas High (black high schools for Bristol, Tennessee and Bristol, Virginia, respectively), junior high teams of both school systems in Bristol, Tennessee and Bristol, Virginia, and King College located in Bristol, Tennessee.

Tenneva Field was a lighted field with bleacher seating. The major portion of the lighting for the new municipal stadium was provided by moving the lights and poles from Tenneva Field. This work was accomplished under the supervision of W. E. Rutherford of the East Tennessee Light and Power Company. Ten new lights were purchased to add to the fifty units moved from Tenneva Field. According to the Bristol Herald Courier of 28 September 1936, ten poles were used to distribute the lights evenly around the perimeter of the field. This was expected to insure a new lighting system which would result in "one of the best illuminated fields in the South." Other than the provision of lights and poles, no other monetary contribution by the City of Bristol, Virginia has been documented.

Upon completion of the Bristol Municipal Stadium, all of the football teams which had previously used the old Tenneva Field as a home field moved to the new facility. Mr. D. B. Lilly observed that "Tennessee High had played all of its home football games 'out-of-state' (at

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Tenneva Field) since 1921 and, beginning October 9, 1936, Bristol Virginia High would begin playing its home football games 'out-of-state' at the new Bristol Municipal Stadium."

During the week of October 4, 1936, several newspaper articles appeared in each edition of the Bristol Herald Courier concerning the new stadium and its upcoming dedication. There seemed to be a considerable amount of enthusiasm generated within the community about the opening of the stadium and the ensuing football games to be played there during opening week. On October 8, 1936, dedication ceremonies were held prior to playing the first game in the new stadium. Bristol Tennessee High and Science Hill of Johnson City, Tennessee were the first teams to use the stadium. Bristol Virginia High then played Erwin on October 9, and King College played Emory and Henry College on October 10.

A brief dedication ceremony, immediately preceding the first game, was attended by approximately 3500 fans. Dignitaries who participated in the dedication included Bristol, Tennessee Mayor Fred V. Vance, King College President Dr. T. P. Johnston, City Commissioner Arthur Green, Bristol, Tennessee School Superintendent John H. Arrants, and R. L. Morrison, Assistant Director of Tennessee District Number 1 of the WPA.

Commissioner Green is given credit for being the driving force behind the stadium project. WPA records indicate that Commissioner Green was responsible for the project applications. As Commissioner of Streets and Public Improvement, it seems reasonable that he would have assumed primary responsibility for decisions relative to priorities of public improvement and their supervision. One gets the impression from several newspaper articles about various aspects of the project and its progress that Commissioner Green was very involved and interested in the progress of the new stadium.

It is often generally assumed by those who have occasion to view the stadium that some relationship exists between the "Viking" school symbol and the architectural design of the stadium. This may be true, although no documentation has been found to substantiate the assumption. It has been documented that the "Viking" was adopted as the symbol (submitted by THS student Ed Rollins in a contest) for Tennessee High School in 1931 which predates the stadium construction. Constructed of coursed rubble limestone, and delineated by corner towers, the stadium does resemble medieval architecture.

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Historically, the Bristol Municipal Stadium has been used for many events other than football games and track and field meets, although football has always been its primary use. Events for which the stadium has been used include: bank festivals, special olympics, May Day dances, horse shows, beauty pageants, car shows, rallies of various types, 4-H Club field day events, Safety Patrol activities, fairs, dogwood festivals, etc. The stadium is available for use by organized community groups. Arrangements for its use can be made through the Bristol, Tennessee Superintendent of Schools.

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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1. Fleming, Philip B., et al. Report on Progress of the WPA Program, 1942.
2. Loving, Robert S. Double Destiny. Bristol, TN: The King Printing Co., 1955.
3. Marshall, Martha. A Golden Book of the History and Tradition of Bristol Tennessee High School 1915 - 1965.
4. Marshall, Martha. Saga of the Vikings of Tennessee High School. Rogersville, TN: East Tennessee Printing Co., Inc., 1983.
5. Bristol Herald Courier Newspaper Articles: "City asks Removal of Creek Obstacles," 27 August 1934; "Sullivan Relief Work Suspended," 1 September 1934; "Suspend All Tennessee Projects," 8 September 1934; "City Commission Meeting, Relief Work Discussed," 26 June 1935; "PWA, WPA Division of Work Arranged," 4 July 1935; "WPA is Absorbing Projects of FERA," 31 July 1935; "School Building Plans Discussed," 31 July 1935; "Floodlights Are Being Moved to New Stadium," 28 September 1936; "City Commissioners in Brief Session," 4 October 1936; "Bristol Preparing for King-Emory Classic," 5 October 1936; "Tennessee to Play Johnson City High," 5 October 1936; "Record Crowd is Indicated for King and Emory Game," 6 October 1936; "Bristol Briefs," 6 October 1936; "City Affairs Painted by the Several Officials," 6 October 1936; "New Municipal Stadium to be Dedicated Tomorrow at THS-Johnson City Contest," 7 October 1936; "Visiting Eleven is One of the Strongest in Its Conference," 8 October 1936; "Virginia and Erwin Will Battle Tonight in New Stadium," 9 October 1936; "McKellar Seeking PAW Grant for Schools," 4 June 1937; "Mayor Fred Vance Seeks Re-election," 8 June 1937; "Airport Plans to PWA Authorities," 18 July 1937.
6. Simpson, Walter L. Review of Civil Works Administration.
7. WPA Projects Files (Microfilm) T936-13, T935-65, T937-16, A1516, A1511. The National Archives of the United States. 1934.

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8. Interviews:

- a. Mrs. Emma Kate Wood, 205 Parkway Road, Bristol, Tennessee - Her father was Finance Commissioner during the time the stadium was being constructed.
- b. Mrs. Amelia Slack Copenhaver, 1158 Holston Drive, Bristol, Tennessee - Postmistress of the U. S. Post Office during the 1930s.
- c. Mr. Paul Nelson, Rt. 1, Bluff City, Tennessee - Former resident of the area where stadium was built.
- d. Ms. Martha Marshall, Johnson City, Tennessee - Former teacher at Tennessee High School.

Location of Bibliographical Listings:

University of Tennessee - Nos. 1, 6
School Administration Building - Nos. 3, 4, 7
Bristol Herald Courier - No. 5
Mary Jean Harrison, Private Collection - No. 2

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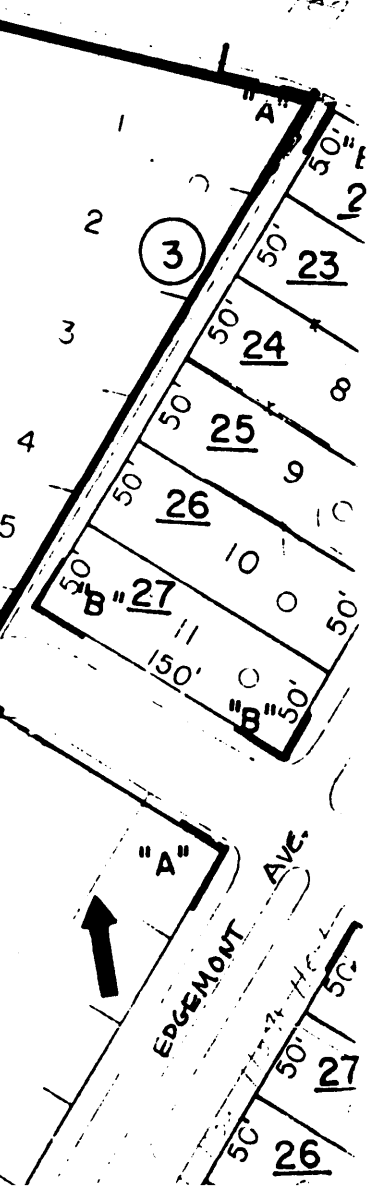
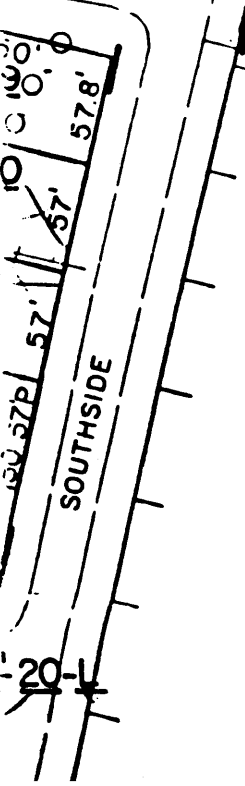
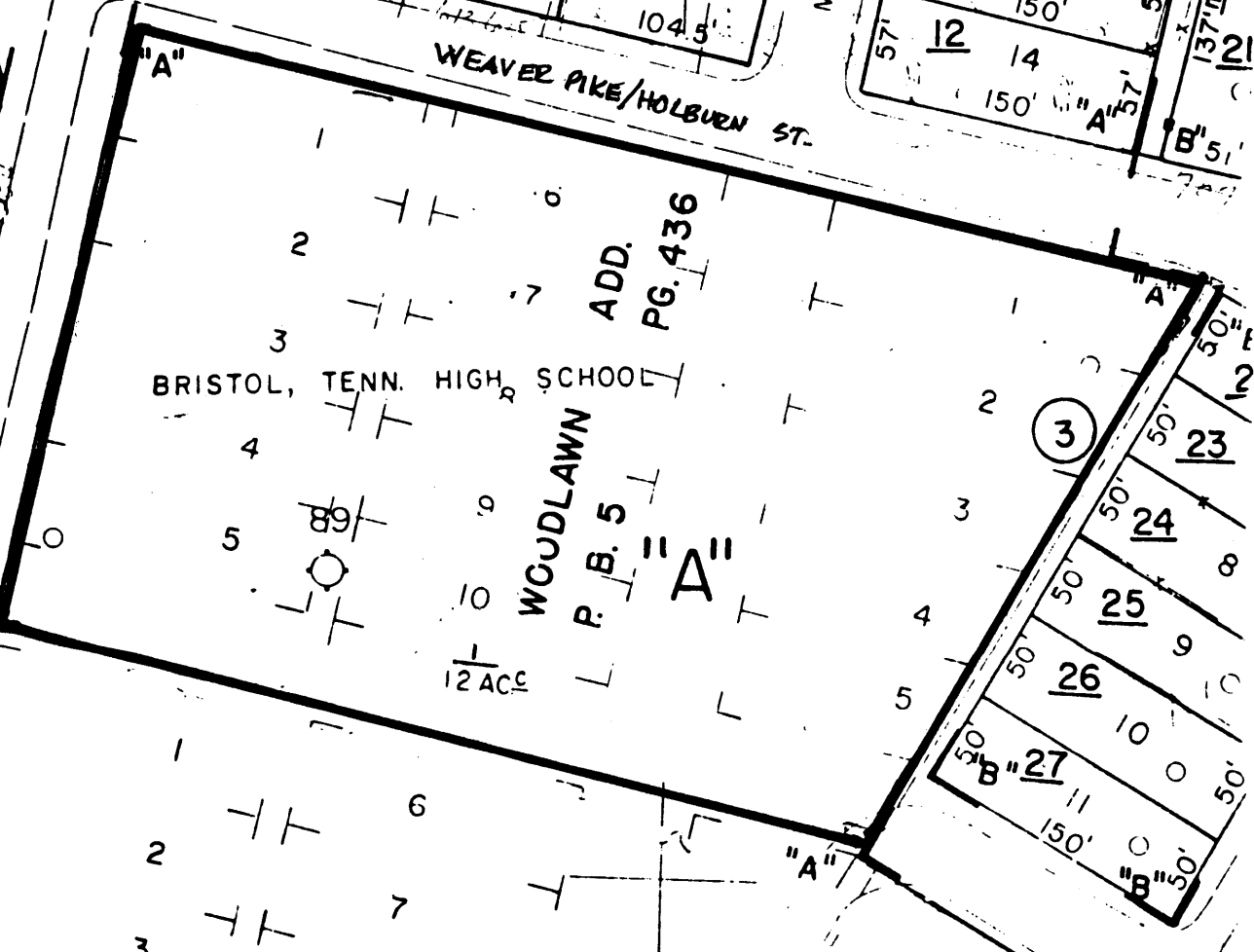
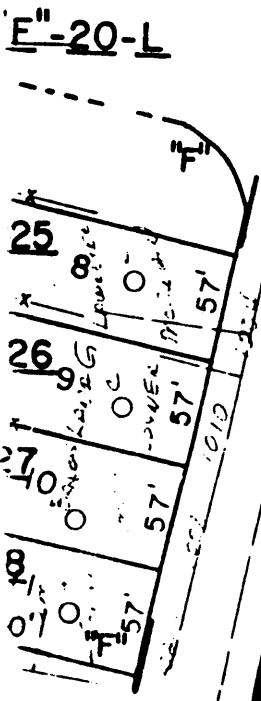
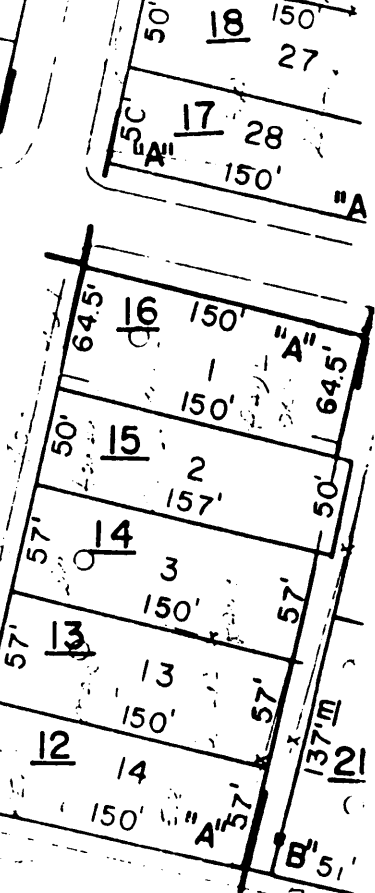
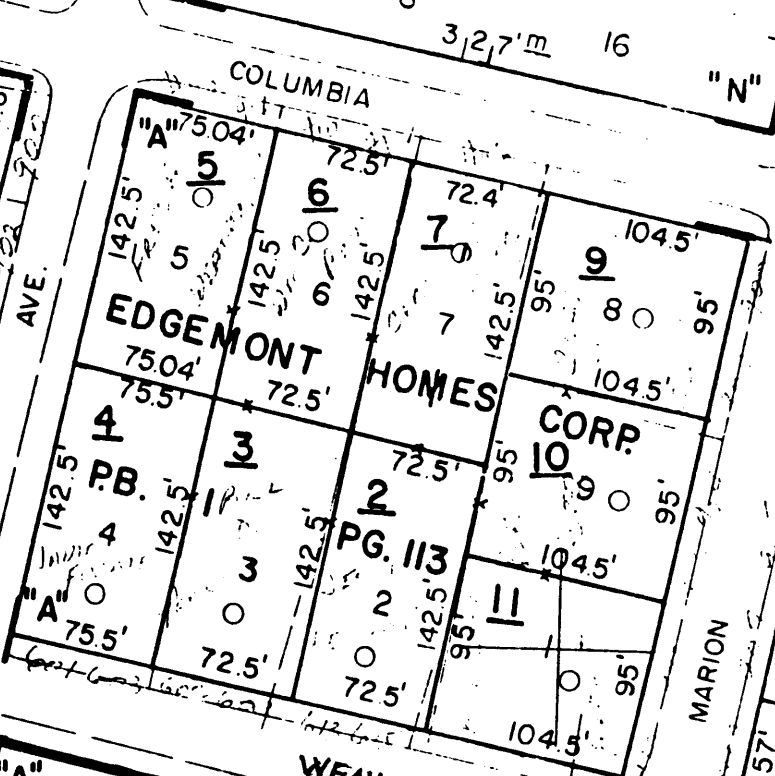
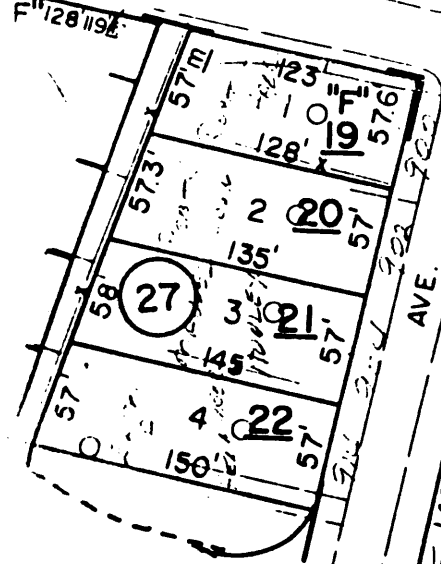
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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION AND JUSTIFICATION

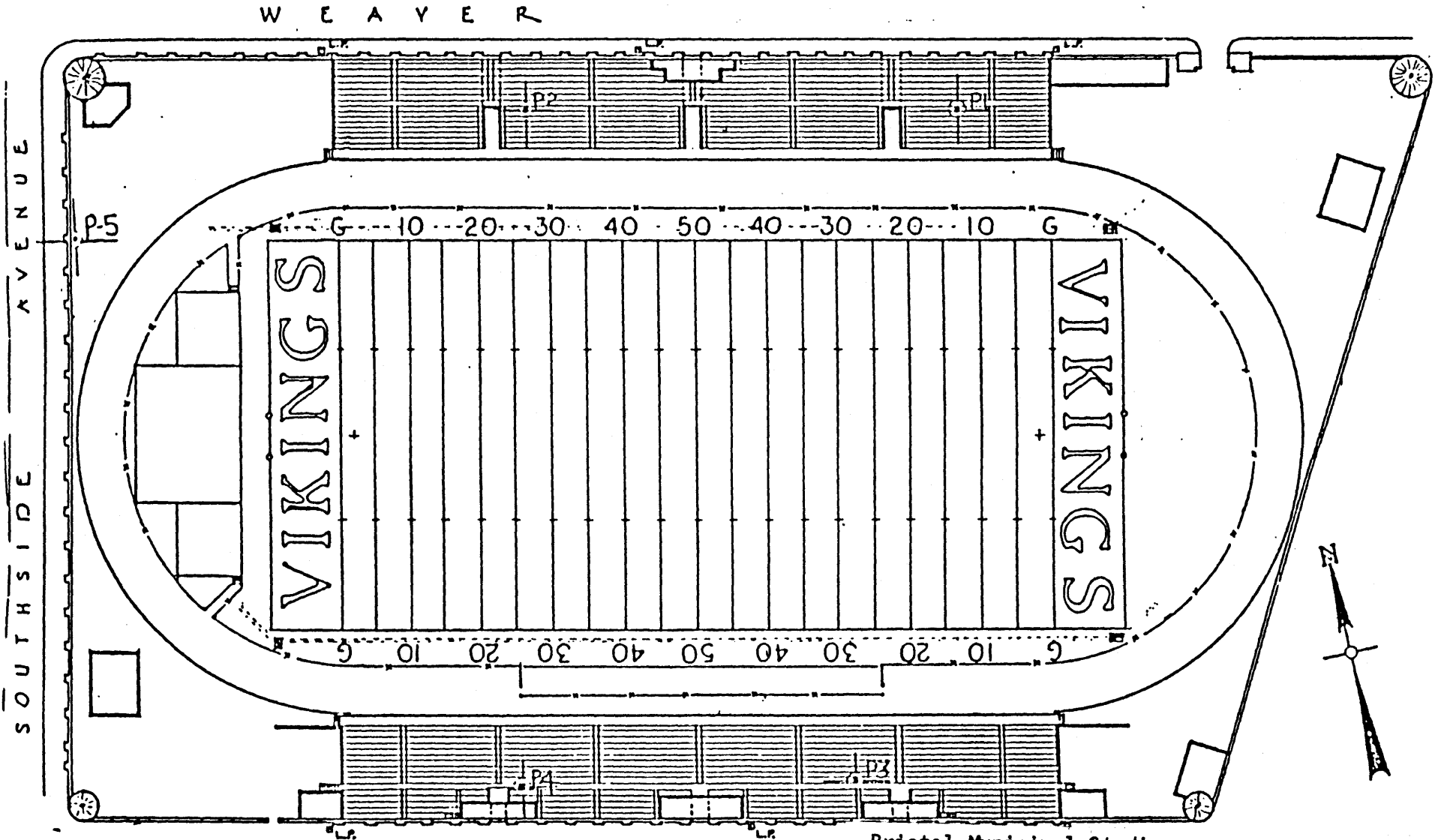
Bristol Municipal Stadium is bounded on the north by Weaver Pike/Holburn Street, on the east by an alley, on the west by Southside Avenue, and on the south by an imaginary line as shown on the accompanying tax map (1" = 100'). The boundaries are drawn to exclude non-contributing school property and adjacent parking space.



Bristol Municipal Stadium
 1112 Edgemont Avenue
 Bristol, Sullivan County, Tennessee

TAX MAP: 1" = 100'

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Bristol Municipal Stadium
 1112 Edgemont Avenue
 Bristol, Sullivan County, Tennessee

Floor plan of stadium

#2 of 2

NO SCALE