

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

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

1. Name

historic Columbia Central High School

and/or common Old Central High School

2. Location

street & number West Eighth Street _____ not for publication

city, town Columbia _____ vicinity of _____ congressional district Sixth

state Tennessee code 047 county Maury code 119

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name County of Maury, Judge Taylor Rayburn

street & number Maury County Court House, Public Square

city, town Columbia _____ vicinity of _____ state Tennessee 38401

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Maury County Court House

street & number Public Square

city, town Columbia _____ state Tennessee 38401

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Architectural Survey by
title Tennessee Historical Commission _____ has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1979 _____ federal state _____ county _____ local

depository for survey records Tennessee Historical Commission, 4721 Trousdale Drive

city, town Nashville _____ state Tennessee 37219

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input 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

The Columbia Central High School is situated on a slight rise on the south side of Eighth Street in the heart of Columbia. Located on the site of the Old Columbia Athenaeum, the scene of local education in Columbia since 1852, the Columbia Central High School was completed in 1915. The roughly T-shaped flat roofed structure rests on a solid foundation of handcut limestone topped with a vertical row of bricks. The two story, reddish brown building is highlighted by the classic Tuscan Renaissance limestone entrance (north elevation). A nine course flight of concrete stairs leads to three pairs of metal doors which serve as the main entrance. A pair of casement windows flanks the doors on the main floor, and fan-shaped windows rest atop each window and door. Five sets of double hung sash 6 over 6 windows on the second floor complete the main entrance. The west elevation has a series of windows and is dominated by a metal fire escape which rises from the facade and meets the second floor in the middle of the building.

A wide lobby divides the symmetrical structure on the main floor. Six classrooms, principal's office, board of education room, two restrooms, and a large auditorium comprise the main floor. The large auditorium and balcony seat about 850 people. Coupled with the large stage, this auditorium was the focal point of activities for school plays, assemblies, and town gatherings. The most prominent feature of the auditorium is the six large Palladian windows. These triple hung sash nine pane windows were covered by brown velvet curtains. Most of the original seats and three of the original light fixtures remain in the balcony. Due to the overcrowded conditions which prevailed in the school, the auditorium was divided into three classrooms in 1968.

Twin staircases with a square newel and balusters and slightly rounded handrail rise to the second story. Three classrooms; a chemistry lab, a physical and biological lab, library, club room, and two restrooms form the second floor.

The floor plan for the basement includes home economics rooms, shops, cafeteria, boy and girl recreation areas, and entrance to the visitors gallery of the gymnasium in the rear. The boy and girl recreation area was remodeled in 1968 to provide additional office space and a temporary location for the board of education. The sub-basement includes the fuel and boiler room, girls and boys dressing rooms, and the gymnasium. The gymnasium is a single room measuring 50 x 84 feet. Covered by a gable roof, the gym consisted of a main floor and a second story gallery for spectators.

The east elevation is joined by a new two story brick addition that was built in 1956. Originally, this flat roofed, rectangular shaped new addition housed the cafeteria on the lower level and a series of classrooms on the second floor. Recently, the lower level was remodeled and now serves as the Maury County Board of Education.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input 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 type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Hart and Gardner, Architects

Specific dates	Built	Builder/Architect
	1915	Thomas F. Friel, Supervising Architect W. T. Willerford, Contractor

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Significant for its educational and architectural contributions to the city of Columbia and to Maury County, the Columbia Central High School building was the first high school built in Maury County after the union of city and county high schools in 1909. After the approval by the local citizenry of a bond for \$75,000 for school purposes, Columbia Central High School was built in 1915, and on September 21 of that year its first term opened.

The first high school in Maury County was created in 1892, and from its beginning the school had difficulty in attracting the young men of the county to higher education. In the first ten years of its existence, not more than 6 boys received diplomas. One of the primary goals of the new city/county high school was to encourage the attendance of boys; this goal was met when the first term of the school opened with an enrollment of 300 students, with an equal number of boys and girls.

Columbia Central High School was important to the secondary school system of Tennessee from its beginning. This was evident even at its dedication, when former U. S. Senator W. R. Bell, a pioneer in preparatory schools in Tennessee and the South, gave the opening address. Educational heads from throughout the state came to inspect the school and take notes in preparation for designing their own educational facilities. A wide range of studies was offered at Columbia Central High School: the Agricultural Department offered a four year course that would "enable the student to live a successful and satisfying life upon the farm" (Announcement: Session 1916-1917); a commercial course to train boys and girls in careers in business; Home Economics; a Manual Arts Department concentrating in carpentry and construction; Vocal Music Courses (required of all students) and a School of Music; a Department of Expression; and courses in Latin, French, and the sciences.

Among the distinguished graduates of Columbia Central High School were U. S. Representative Percy Priest, Tennessee Supreme Court Justice W. J. Harbison; Dr. Alice Dale Miller, designer of an early artificial heart machine; and Lindsey Nelson, nationally known sportscaster.

Architecturally, the Columbia Central High School is significant for its classical Tuscan Renaissance limestone facade, which Edward Meiers of Jordan and Meiers Architects has described as esthetically valuable and a definite contribution to the artistic and cultural atmosphere of the city. The floor plan of the school was the best designed and most functional of any previously constructed in Tennessee, and included a gymnasium considered the most outstanding in the state, and an auditorium, with impressive Palladian windows and curved interior, which seated 850 people. Columbia Central High School served as an architectural model for many other public schools in Tennessee.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Announcement: Session 1916-1917, Columbia City Schools and Central High School
 (Press of Maury Democrat, 1916).
 Fisher, Kitty, "Officials, Citizens Discuss Old Central Fate" (Columbia Herald,
 July 30, 1979).

10. Geographical Data UTM NOT VERIFIED

Acreeage of nominated property 3 1/2
 Quadrangle name Columbia **ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED** Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A	<u>1</u> <u>6</u>	<u>4</u> <u>9</u> <u>6</u> <u>2</u> <u>6</u> <u>0</u>	<u>3</u> <u>9</u> <u>4</u> <u>0</u> <u>9</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u>	B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

The property nominated is a tract which contains 3 1/2 acres. This boundary of the property is shown as a red line on the accompanying map which is located at the State Board of Equalization in Nashville, TN and is drawn on a scale of 100 feet/inch.

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

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Stephen T. Rogers
Ann Toplovich, Cultural Resource Surveyors
 organization Tennessee Historical Commission date January 1980
 street & number 4721 Trousdale Drive telephone (615) 741-2371
 city or town Nashville state Tennessee 37219

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Herbert L. Hays
 title Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission date 2/6/80

For HCPS use only

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

for W. Ray Price date 4/21/80
 Keeper of the National Register

John O'Connell date 4/17/80
 Chief of Administration

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	FEB 12 1980
DATE ENTERED	APR 21 1980

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Although Columbia Central High School closed as a high school in 1960, it was reopened in 1961 as Witthorne Junior High School and was used as such until 1976. Currently the wing added to the school in 1956 is used as the offices of the Maury County Board of Education. During the school year classes for pregnant women are also held in this wing.

Although the older part of Columbia Central High School has been vacant for some time, and some deterioration of the interior has occurred, there is much public interest in Columbia to preserve and restore the building as a community center and civic auditorium. In July of 1979, the Board of Education recommended that the Maury County Commission demolish the building and use the site as a parking lot. The Maury County Commission has delayed action in this recommendation until April of 1980, so that interested groups may demonstrate "meaningful progress" on plans to save the building. The Columbia Central High School retains its original integrity of location, design, setting, feeling, and association; if saved, it can once again become a vital part of the educational and cultural atmosphere of Maury County.

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY	
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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 2

Hickman, Bobby, "Delay Displeases Old Central Fans" (The Daily Herald
October 16, 1979).

The Signal, Columbia Central High School, Vol. 4, No. 1, 1915.