

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

For NPS use only

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

received OCT 24 1984

date entered NOV 23 1984

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

**1. Name**

historic Peabody High School

and/or common Old Peabody High School

**2. Location**

street & number South College Street N/A not for publication

city, town Trenton N/A vicinity of

state Tennessee code 047 county Gibson code 053

**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	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Vacant

**4. Owner of Property**

name City of Trenton, Tennessee

street & number c/o City Hall

city, town Trenton N/A vicinity of state Tennessee

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Register of Deeds, Gibson County Courthouse

street & number Courthouse Square

city, town Trenton 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

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

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

Situated on South College Street in Trenton (population 4,686), Tennessee, the Peabody High School (1917) is a two-story, rectangular, flat roofed, Neo-Classical style building set on a raised basement. The main building consists of a central projecting portico with a three-bay, two story wing on either side. The exterior walls of red pressed brick laid in running bond. The foundation is brick and poured concrete which was coursed to simulate stone. A stone watertable separates the basement and first floor levels. The school building is located on a large, gently rolling lot on the corner of South College Street and Nineth Street. Despite the additions to the original building the Peabody High School retains its architectural and historical integrity.

The main building, designed by Rueben A. Heavner, was constructed in 1917 and reflects the Neo-Classical style of architecture. The raised two-story Neo-Classical portico is supported by four coupled monumental Tuscan columns with elaborate Ionic capitals. The simple entablature is topped by a paneled and capped parapet with coupled parapet posts separating the panels. The recessed main entrance, located in the central bay, consists of paneled double-leaf doors with nine lights in each; multi-paned sidelights, cornerlights, and transom complete the door unit. Above the recessed entrance is a simple entablature which features a stone panel with a datestone inscribed "1917." The second bay of each wing consists of a double-leaf door unit flanked by pilasters supporting a simple entablature. Above each is a stone panel simply inscribed "GIRLS" and "BOYS". The second bay also features a bull's-eye window set in a modified squared-frame. A garland of leaves, fruits, and flowers is located above the window; keystone-shaped pendants are attached to the frame below the window. Although windows vary slightly in size, the style is a large one-over-one sash. Window trim consists of molded concrete sills with those windows in the central projecting bay having radiating voussoirs and separated by recessed panels. A brick parapet, which imitates the lines of the central stone parapet, surrounds the building. Additions to the main building occur on the north and south elevations. The gymnasium addition (1947) is of red brick and is attached to the north elevation. Its fenestration employs both multi-paned and 1/1 sash windows. The main entry on the north elevation has a decorative, classically inspired stone surround. The auditorium addition (c.1960) is also of red brick and has a large metal case-ment windows. Both of these additions have flat roof structures and are set back from the main (east) elevation. A small brick storage building (1975) is attached to the west elevation and auditorium addition. A detached, L-shaped, gable roofed brick building was also constructed in 1975 to provide more classroom space.

Interior alterations to the Peabody High School have been minimal with much of the original material being retained. The interior space consists of many classrooms connected by a wide hall with access to the basement and second story by interior stairs. Both the interior and exterior have received slight non-structural damage which can be corrected through repairs.

## 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)

**Specific dates** 1917

**Builder/Architect**

Rueben A. Heavner

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Located on South College Street in Trenton, Tennessee, the Peabody High School is being nominated under National Register criteria A and C for its historical and architectural importance to this west Tennessee city. The Peabody High School was designed by Rueben A. Heavner, a regionally important architect who specialized in school buildings and residences beginning in the early twentieth century. Built in 1917, the structure served as the primary high school for the young people of Trenton for over sixty years.

In 1876 Professor Gentry R. McGee began laying the foundations for the establishment of public education in Gibson County, Tennessee. After securing \$1,000.00 from the Peabody Education Fund, an endowment established by George Peabody to aid education in the South, a public school building was constructed in Trenton.

By early 1917, the original Peabody School building was inadequate to serve the growing number of students in Trenton and the surrounding area. A five member commission composed of locally prominent citizens was appointed by the Trenton City Council to study the need for the construction of a new building. The committee held its first meeting in February 1917 and decided to notify architects in Jackson, Memphis, and Nashville for submittal of tentative plans for a school building pursuant to the issue of bonds by the city in the amount of \$50,000.00.

Selected as the building's architect was Rueben A. Heavner, a prominent architect from Jackson, Tennessee, who had designed high schools for the towns of Jackson, Tennessee, and Lexington, Tennessee. Heavner began his career as a woodturner in his father's architectural firm in Jackson. He soon established himself as a very productive young architect and, by 1910, had formed his own architectural firm. Heavner's designs take their significant architectural features from Greek or Roman classicism, although several of his designs from the 1920s display Moorish elements. Examples of Heavner's work are found in the Jackson (TN) City Hall, New Southern Hotel (Jackson, TN), First National Bank (Jackson, TN), Old Jackson (TN) High School, and many buildings erected at Fort Pillow, Tennessee.

Peabody High School is an example of Heavner's building designs which reflect the Neo-Classical features which were popular during his early career. Noteworthy features on the building include the paired giant ionic columns which sit on a raised ashlar basement and support a full entablature, and the stone door surrounds on the wing entrances. In 1931 a gymnasium was added to the school but was destroyed by fire in 1944. The gym was rebuilt in 1947 with additional classrooms for the agricultural courses. The auditorium was built in 1960 and is attached to the main building.

Throughout the years, Peabody High School has remained one of Trenton's most significant structures. Few alterations have been made to the facade of the building and it retains its early 20th century architectural character. The high school is located within two blocks of a National Register residential district in Trenton. Future plans for the building include restoration of the exterior and the rehabilitation of the interior into multi-family housing units as well as the restoration of the auditorium for use by the Nightlight Theatre, a local drama troupe.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

- 1) Culp, Fred. Gibson County Past and Present.
- 2) Minute Book, Peabody High School Building Committee. 1917-18.
- 3) Ross, Charles. Personel interview. May 1984.
- 4) Trenton Herald Gazette. March, 1917, April 1917, February 1918.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 6.62 acres

Quadrangle name Trenton, Tennessee

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A 

1	6
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3	2	4	9	0	0
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3	9	8	2	1	0	0
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 Zone Easting Northing

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 Zone Easting Northing

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**Verbal boundary description and justification** The nominated property is bounded on the north by Ninth Street, on the east by College Street, on the south by Tenth Street and on the west by High Street. This is all the property historically associated with Peabody High School.

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 Cathie J. (Cate) Hamilton

organization Northwest Tennessee Dev. District

date July 16, 1984

street & number P.O. Box 63

telephone (901) 587-4213

city or town Martin

state Tennessee

## 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 10/15/84

For NPS use only

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

Entered in the  
National Register

date

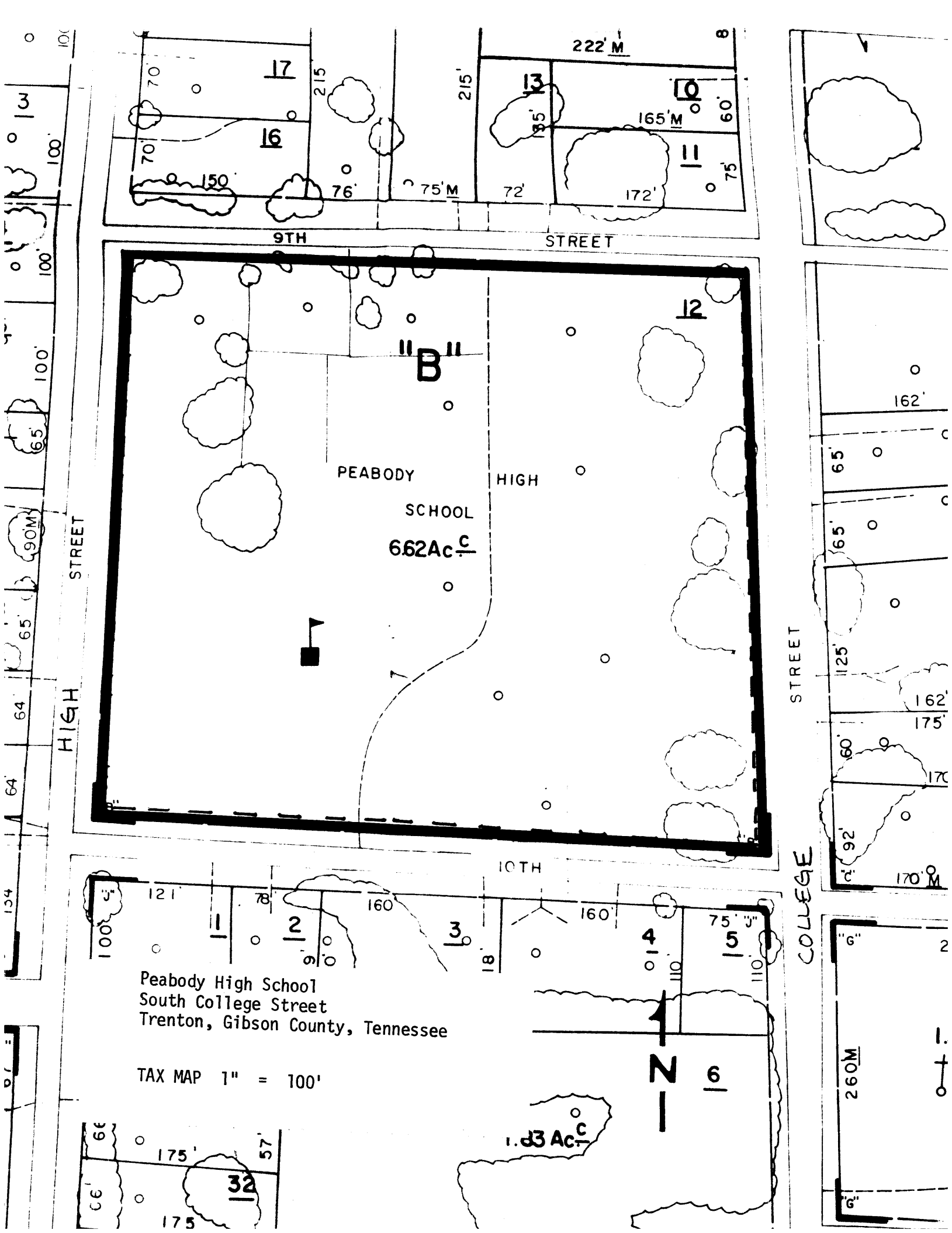
11/23/84

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration



Peabody High School  
 South College Street  
 Trenton, Gibson County, Tennessee

TAX MAP 1" = 100'

