

**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 Faxon-Thomas Mansion

and/or common Hunter Museum of Art

2. Location

street & number 10 Bluff View Ave. not for publication

city, town Chattanooga vicinity of _____ congressional district Third

state Tennessee 37403 code 047 county Hamilton code 065

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Chattanooga Art Association

street & number 10 Bluff View

city, town Chattanooga vicinity of _____ state TN 37403

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Hamilton County Courthouse

street & number Georgia Avenue

city, town Chattanooga state TN 37403

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Chattanooga-Hamilton County
title Landmarks Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1976 federal state county local

depository for survey records Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission

city, town Chattanooga state TN 37402

Also, survey by the TN, Historical Commission in 1972; records from this survey are on file with this agency in Nashville.

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Faxon-Thomas Mansion is an outstanding example of the Georgian Revival. It is located on a knoll above the cliffs of the Tennessee River on a site known as Signal Hill during the Civil War. Built in one of the oldest residential areas in Chattanooga, it is adjacent to the historic Walnut Street Bridge and Bluff Furnace Site. The house was used as a private residence until 1951 when it was adapted for use as an art gallery and museum.

Built in 1906-08, the house is a striking example of the Georgian Revival. Rectangular in shape, the house features a double or twin facade - one overlooking the river, the other facing Bluff View Street. Generally, the house is symmetrical in appearance, is two stories in height, and has one story wings on either side. The east side also has a one-story circular bay. The roof is flat with a set-back hipped portion containing oval-hooded ("eyebrow") dormers.

The Bluff View Street facade's most prominent feature is its two-story circular portico. Displaying fluted Corinthian columns, the portico is topped with an elaborate cornice and balustrade which is identical to that which encircles the house. Flanking the portico are three sets of windows. On either side, the outermost two sets of windows are rectangular in shape and have stone surrounds. These on the first floor level have decorative balconies. The innermost sets of window, immediately flanking the portico, are somewhat different; the first floor level has arched windows featuring stone surrounds with a keystone while the second floor level contains a large stone medallion rather than a window. On either side of this set of windows are Corinthian pilasters. Within the portico is the entrance area which contains double doors flanked by miniature pilasters. Above the doors is a large rectangular window.

The river facade or rear continues the architectural theme of Georgian Revival but is different in execution. The most prominent feature is a two-story portico and a marble tiled porch which extend the length of the house. Supporting the portico is a colonnade of eight fluted Corinthian columns. Centrally located within the portico is a two story entrance area; on the first floor level are double doors and above them is a large window. Flanking the entrance area are three sets of windows. On the ground floor, these windows serve as French doors; above each is a transom. The second floor windows are traditional double sash windows with one-over-one panes.

The side elevations of the building are similar in appearance. Each side contains a pair of exterior end chimneys. Attached to the sides is a one-story brick wing which has Ionic columns and is topped with a balustrade. Each of these wings is surrounded by a stone enclosed patio area. A second story addition was constructed in the mid-1960's to the wing on the west side - the only major alteration to the exterior of the house. A one-story circular bay window is on the eastern side.

Although the spatial arrangement of the interior has been somewhat altered to accommodate the needs of the museum, the Georgian Revival influences are evident. While the second story rooms are relatively plain, the first story level contains elaborate Classical features. One of the most striking elements is a double staircase flanking

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

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DATE ENTERED **NOV 25 1980**

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the facade's entrance area. The foyer contains fluted Roman Doric columns and pilasters with egg-and-dart detailing. Between pilasters are stylized medallions with human faces and hanging fruit. Also, an elaborate molding encircles the foyer with a series of triglyphs and metopes. Above these elements are guttae panels. Although individual room treatments vary, the rooms are elegantly designed and exhibit marble/wood mantels, wood moldings, wainscotting, and other wood trim.

Due to expanded facilities required by the museum, an addition was constructed in the early 1970s. Officially opened in 1975, the addition is located to the north and east of the house. Of concrete construction, the facility was designed to accentuate the limestone bluffs above the river. Thus, the structure is set into the bluff and is partially underground. The roof of the underground portion serves as a sculpture garden or back yard for the old mansion. Encircling this garden is a stone fence designed for the museum by Albert Paley. This fence was featured in a special P.B.S. documentary "Albert Paley: Behind the Iron Fence." It was decided that stylistically the design of the addition should not imitate the mansion. Thus, the style is modern and attempts to complement the natural surroundings of the river and bluffs and the mansion itself such as through its physical placement below the level of the house, through vertical lines reinforcing the columnar impression, and through the bay window reflecting the bay window of the house. Connected to the house underground, the addition - even though providing four times the floor space as that of the mansion - in no way overpowers the mansion. This careful design and placement has been recognized by various groups. In publications, the addition was the subject of a feature article in Southern Living in 1978 and was included in a 1980 three-volume guide to American Architecture published by the Museum of Modern Art and Doubleday. Also, it won the first place design award in 1977 from the Concrete Reinforcing Steele Institute of Chicago, the Architectural Excellence Award from the Gulf State Regional Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, and the Build America Award (for construction achievement) from the Association of General Contractors.

The boundary lines for this nomination are those of the legal parcel containing the house: County Assessor's Parcel Map No. 135-L-E3.

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

Specific dates 1906-08

Builder/Architect Abram Garfield

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Construction for the house currently used as the Hunter Museum of Art was begun in 1906. The house was built as a residence for Ross Steele Faxon, a leader in the insurance field in Chattanooga. Faxon lived in the house until 1918 when he moved to California. The house was then occupied for three years by Walter A. Henson, Vice-President of the Osage Cotton Company. The house was then sold to Mrs. Anne Thomas, widow of B.F. Thomas who was the founder of the Coca-Cola bottling industry. Mrs. Thomas lived in the house until her death in 1938. She left the house and the bulk of the Thomas fortune to her husband's nephew, George Thomas Hunter who lived in the house until his death in 1951. The house was then bequeathed to the Benwood Foundation which presented the house to the Chattanooga Art Association which in turn opened the house in 1952 as the Hunter Gallery of Art.

The mansion derives some historical significance from its associations with the Thomas family. In 1899 B. F. Thomas originated the concept of bottling a soda drink named Coca-Cola. What seemed at that time to be a daring venture resulted in Thomas's initial investment of \$2 - 3,000 becoming several million dollars over the next few years. Today, as one of the leading industries in Chattanooga, the Coca-Cola bottling industry is a vital component of the economic community in this area. Also, it was this fortune that enabled Mrs. Thomas, and later their nephew, Mr. Hunter, to participate in various beneficial philanthropic activities such as the Benwood Foundation.

The house derives its primary significance from its architectural excellence. The house was designed by Cleveland architect, Abram Garfield, son of ex-President James A. Garfield, and is an outstanding example of the Georgian Revival. Presenting a symmetrical appearance, the Hunter Museum gives a monumental impression due to its two-story circular portico and rear colonnaded portico which are features common for this style. Also typical is the use of Corinthian and Ionic orders for the columns, pilasters, and decorative details. These Classical detailings include an elaborate cornice and interior moldings as described in the architectural statement.

In summary, the Hunter Museum derives some historical significance from its associations with the Thomas family. As the originator and developer of the concept to bottle Coca-Cola, the Thomas family have made invaluable contributions to Chattanooga and its continued economic vitality. Also significant is the architectural merits of the house. An outstanding example of the Georgian Revival style, the house is a tribute to its architect, Abram Garfield.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Chattanooga City Directories.
 Chattanooga Plat Maps.
 Chattanooga News-Free Press, 20 August 1955.
 Chattanooga Times, 6 April 1938; 29 Aug. 1975; 21 Feb. 1977; 4 Jan. 1978; 9 Aug. 1979.

10. Geographical Data

UTM NOT VERIFIED
ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

Acreege of nominated property 1.4
 Quadrangle name Chattanooga, Tennessee Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A	<u>116</u>	<u>651451010</u>	<u>31881031410</u>	B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

The parcel being nominated is rectangular in shape and is listed as County Assessor's Parcel Map No. 135-L-E3.

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

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title M.A. Carver, Preservation Planner
 organization Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission date July 1980
 street & number 200 City Hall Annex telephone 615/757-5216
 city or town Chattanooga state TN-37402

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. Hagen

title Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission date 9/24/80

For HCRS use only
 I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register
W. Ray Luce date 11/25/80

Keeper of the National Register
 Attest: Leola Hunt McCalland date 11-24-80
 Chief of Registration