

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

For NPS use only

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

received JUN 26 1985  
date entered JUL 25 1985

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

**1. Name**

historic Little Sisters of the Poor Home for the Aged

and or common Belmont Health Care Center

**2. Location**

street & number 1400 18th Avenue, South N/A not for publication

city, town Nashville N/A vicinity of

state Tennessee code 047 county Davidson code 037

**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 type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" 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	<u>N/A</u> 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 type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Belmont Health Care Corporation

street & number 1400 18th Avenue, South

city, town Nashville N/A vicinity of state Tennessee 37212

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Davidson County Courthouse

street & number Public Square

city, town Nashville state Tennessee 37201

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

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

date 1978  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Metropolitan Nashville Historical Commission

city, town Nashville state Tennessee

## 7. Description

**Condition**

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

**Check one**

unaltered  
 altered

**Check one**

original site  
 moved date \_\_\_\_\_

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

The Little Sisters of the Poor Home for the Aged is a four-story masonry and steel building located at 1400 18th Avenue, South in Nashville, Tennessee. The building was constructed in 1916 and is a notable example of the vernacular Renaissance Revival style. In addition to the main building there are also two two-story brick outbuildings on the grounds of the home. This building complex is located on a 2.2 acre urban lot and is oriented towards Horton Avenue between 17th and 18th Avenues.

The main building of the complex is a large four-story structure sixteen bays in width with horizontal massing. The building is constructed in an "E" shape with the central and flanking sections of the building extending beyond the main block of the structure. The building rests on a cut limestone foundation with the basement level finished in a dark brown brick finish. Separating the basement level and the first story is a wide stone belt course. The surface of the upper three floors is composed of glazed yellow brick laid in a stretcher bond pattern.

Windows in the building are two-over-two rounded arched sash on the first floor and rectangular two-over-two sash on the basement level and second and third floors. Above the rectangular windows is brick jack arching. Beneath the windows on six of the central bays are heating and cooling vents which are the only major alteration on this facade. Above the fourth story is a large sheet metal cornice. The hipped roof on the building is covered with the original slate shingles with a terra cotta tile ridgeline. On the main (north) facade are four hipped roof dormers with paired two-over-two sash windows.

The main entrance is located on the first floor of the north facade and is reached by a stone and brick staircase. At the entrance is a large segmental pediment supported by Tuscan columns. In the stone frieze above the columns is the inscription "Home for the Aged". The original central entrance is composed of paired frame and glass double doors with an elliptical transom. Over the transom is brick relief arching with a stone keystone. Over the entrance on the top story is a recessed stone niche with a decorative stone surround. This niche originally contained religious statuary which has been removed.

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On the west facade is a four-story bay window and two hipped roof dormer windows. On the rear (south) facade are five large rounded arch windows on the central bays. At the roofline are four hipped roof dormers and a small rectangular tower in the center of the roofline. Also on this facade is an original two-story extension which contained the chapel for the building. The chapel contains large rounded arch stained glass windows with Italianate designs. On the east facade is a four-story addition added ca. 1945. This addition carefully matches the original building in brick color and texture on all four floors. The only change in appearance with the original building was the addition of casement instead of sash windows.

The interior of the building still retains many of its original features despite its remodeling over past years. Once covered with black and white tiles on all floors only the first floor retains its original white and black rectangular tile floor while other floors have been covered by carpeting. The basic layout of the interior has been retained with a central hallway separating the individual rooms for the residents. Dropped ceilings have been added in most areas along with new lighting and HVAC units.

The most significant interior space is that of the chapel which has not been altered. The chapel displays a large barrel vaulted ceiling with the balcony and altar area intact. Along the walls are Ionic pilasters with egg and dart molding. The sanctuary contains recessed niches with inset Ionic columns and arched molding. The original glazed tile floor is extant as are the stained glass windows.

At the rear (south) facade of the main building are two outbuildings which originally served as a laundry and housing for the Sisters. The laundry is a two-story brick structure with a hipped roof and dormer windows. The building has rounded arch two-over-two sash windows on the first floor and rectangular two-over-two sash on the second floor. At the top of the building is a rectangular tower. In addition to the laundry is a two-story gable roof structure which served as housing and storage for the Sisters. This brick building has been altered with an added garage but most of its original features are intact.

The entire building complex is surrounded by a stone fence with large gate posts at the entrances. A grass lawn

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surrounds the building on three sides with several rock grottoes extant which originally contained religious statues. At the rear of the building is a large parking lot for residents, employees and guests.

## 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 type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1916–1935      **Builder/Architect** Barnett, Haynes and Barnett

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Little Sisters of the Poor Home for the Aged is located along Horton Avenue between 17th and 18th Avenues in Nashville, Tennessee. The home is an architecturally and historically significant structure of the early 20th century. The building complex is being nominated under criteria A and C for its historical and architectural significance in Nashville, Tennessee. Built in 1916 it is significant as an excellent example of vernacular Renaissance Revival architecture and historically significant for the social/humanitarian role it had in Nashville in the early 20th century.

The Little Sisters of the Poor is a Catholic relief organization which was founded in 1839 in France. It was formed by a group of nuns in Brittany to administer to the needs of the homeless and the elderly poor. In 1849 the first home was built in Rennes, France and provided shelter and food for those in need. The work of the Little Sisters became highly regarded and during the 1850s homes were built throughout France. Also during the 1850s the group established homes in Belgium, England, Scotland and Ireland. Author Charles Dickens was impressed with their work and publicised the activities of the order through numerous magazine articles.

In 1868 a group of seven sisters arrived in New York to open homes in America. The first homes were opened in New York, Cincinnati and New Orleans with the Sisters receiving large donations from the public in each city to open and maintain their homes. During the late 19th century the order opened homes in many other cities across the country. The Sisters relied primarily on donations from the public to conduct their work. Members of the order often went door to door requesting money or food to feed and shelter the elderly poor. The Sisters were one of the most effective charitable organizations of this period and fastest growing.

In 1900 Bishop Bryne of the Nashville diocese asked the Little Sisters to establish a home in Nashville. After a wait of several years, Mother Andrew and five other sisters arrived in Nashville from Chicago on December 22, 1903.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 2.2 acres

Quadrangle name Nashville West, Tennessee

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UTM References

A 16 518385 3999400  
Zone Easting Northing

B                    
Zone Easting Northing

C                  

D                  

E                  

F                  

G                  

H                  

**Verbal boundary description and justification** The nominated property is rectangular in shape and 2.2 acres in size, bounded by Horton Avenue on the north, on the east by 17th Avenue, South, on the west by 18th Avenue, South and on the south by an alley. It contains all the land historically associated with the Little Sisters of the Poor Home for the Aged.

### 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 Philip Thomason, Consultant

organization Thomason and Associates

date April 4, 1985

street & number 1700 Hayes Street, Suite 202

telephone 615-320-5732

city or town Nashville

state Tennessee 37203

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

   national    state X 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. Hays

title Executive Director Tennessee Historical Commission date 5/31/85

### For NPS use only

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

for Alloway Byers  
Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the National Register

date 7-25-85

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Their first home was an old orphanage located on Murfreesboro Road which has since been razed. The Sisters immediately began soliciting funds for their work by going door to door in the city. Within a few weeks enough money had been solicited to equip and furnish the home. On January 1, 1904 the first resident of the home was admitted and by the end of the month there were six residents.

The Little Sisters quickly outgrew this home and in late 1904 a large home was purchased in East Nashville near St. Columbia's Church. Here the group administered to hundreds of needy during the early 1900s. The order occupied this building until it was destroyed in the famous East Nashville fire on March 22, 1916. After the fire the Little Sisters sought to find sufficient land to build a new home. On May 24, 1916 the order purchased a two acre lot along 17th Avenue, South for \$20,000. In addition to this cost the order also raised money totalling \$123,000 for the construction of their modern brick facility.

The cornerstone for the main building was laid in 1916 but the complex was not completed and occupied until early 1917. The complex consisted of a large four story main building to house the residents of the home, a separate two-story building containing living quarters for the Sisters and a large two-story brick building to serve as a laundry and storage area. The interior of the main building was subdivided into separate rooms opening onto central hallways. A main feature was the large chapel at the rear of the structure which displayed a barrel vault ceiling and Ionic pilasters. In addition to the buildings small rock grottoes with religious figures were also constructed on the grounds of the home.

The building was designed in a vernacular Renaissance Revival style and it is one of the largest buildings constructed in this style in Nashville. The main building has many details associated with Renaissance design. Characteristic of the style is the wide hipped roof of slate tiles with hipped roof dormer windows. The building rests on a raised basement which has a separate brick texture and is separated from the first floor by a wide stone belt course. Windows are both rectangular and rounded arched. The main entrance is reached by a large staircase and the doorway displays a segmental pediment supported by Tuscan columns. The architects for the building were an out of state firm, Barnett, Haynes and Barnett, with Nashville's Christian Asmus serving as supervising architect.

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When the home opened in 1917 it contained accommodations for one hundred persons. The home was directed by a superior and a council of Sisters. The council would receive the application for admittance and decide to accept or reject those who desired residency at the home. The council also managed the resources of the home and solicited funds from the general public. The Little Sisters generally accepted persons who were 65 years of age or over with no private income. The Sisters would accept all denominations, however, only whites were allowed admittance until the 1960s.

The home of the Little Sisters was an important part of the charitable relief organizations which existed in Nashville during the early to mid 20th century. The home was often filled to capacity with a large waiting list for admittance. After the Depression the increasing needs of the home resulted in the four-story brick addition at the southeast corner of the main building. By 1949 the home had a capacity of approximately 160 residents.

The work of the Little Sisters in Nashville continued until 1968 when the home was closed. This was due to both the increased role of federal welfare relief for the elderly and a reduction in the number of Sisters who became members of the order. Following the closing of the home the complex stood vacant until 1975 when it was purchased and converted into a nursing home. Alterations occurred to the interior during this remodeling but the basic plan and layout of the interior was maintained. No major changes have occurred to the exterior of the building. The outbuildings of the complex have also not been greatly altered.

The Little Sisters of the Poor were an important relief organization of Nashville during the early 20th century. They played a major role in the privately funded welfare agencies which were prominent prior to the introduction of federally funded relief programs. The home served the needs of thousands of elderly poor in Nashville from 1903 until they closed in 1968. The building is a fine example of the vernacular Renaissance Revival style and has not been significantly altered. Together with the other buildings of the complex the home remains a unique architectural and historical resource of the city.

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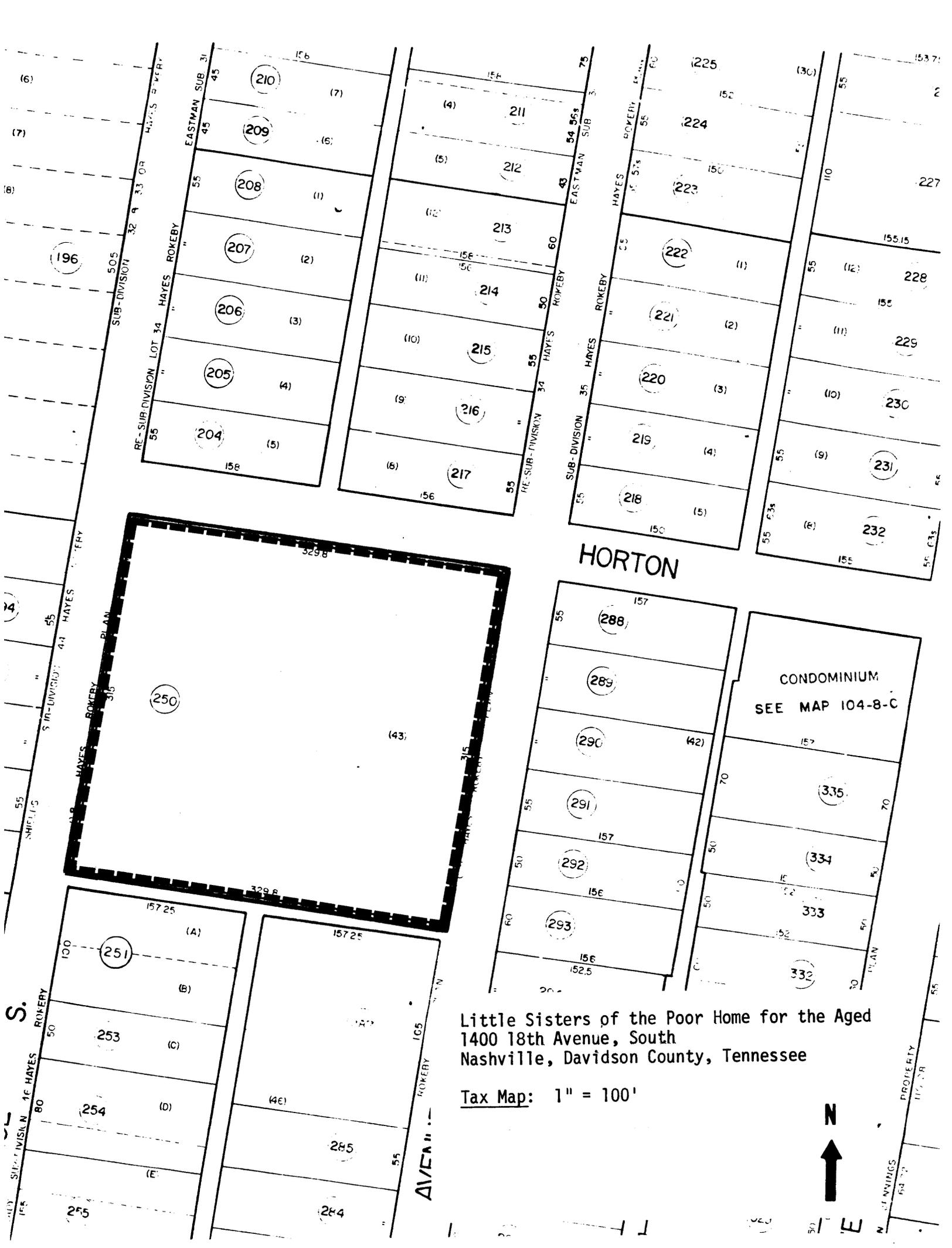
Flanigan, Rev. George, ed. Catholicity in Tennessee. Nashville: Ambrose Printing Company, 1937.

Nashville City Directory. 1903-1917.

Nashville Directory of Community Services. Nashville: Private Printing, 1949.

Nashville Tennessean. 27 May, 1916, 27 August, 1916, 3 September, 1916.

Nicholson, Ann. Historian, The Catholic Center. Nashville, Tennessee. Interview, 5 August, 1984.



RE-SUB-DIVISION LOT 34 HAYES ROKEBY  
 SUB-DIVISION 32 & 33 OR HAYES ROKEBY  
 EASTMAN SUB 31  
 EASTMAN SUB 3

HAYES ROKEBY  
 EASTMAN SUB 5  
 HAYES ROKEBY  
 SUB-DIVISION 35 HAYES ROKEBY  
 HAYES ROKEBY  
 SUB-DIVISION 34 HAYES ROKEBY

**HORTON**

CONDOMINIUM  
 SEE MAP 104-8-C

Little Sisters of the Poor Home for the Aged  
 1400 18th Avenue, South  
 Nashville, Davidson County, Tennessee

Tax Map: 1" = 100'



AVENUE

PROPERTY