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Central Block	Hamilton, Tenness	ee
Name of Property	County and State	
5. Classification, · UIVII		
Ownership of Property Category of Property (Check as many boxes as apply) (Check only one box)	Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)	
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	1 0	objects Total
Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)	Number of contributing resource in the National Register	
N/A	N/A	
6. Function or Use		
Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)	Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)	
COMMERCE/business	VACANT/NOT IN USE	
7. Description		
Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)	Materials (Enter categories from instructions)	
LATE VICTORIAN/Italianate	foundation <u>Brick</u>	
	walls <u>Brick</u>	
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	other <u>Sheet metal cor</u>	nice and
	trim	

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Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Name of Property

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- □ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- □ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- □ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- Property is: N/A
- □ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- \Box **C** a birthplace or grave.
- \Box **D** a cemetery.
- \Box E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- **F** a commemorative property.
- □ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibilography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- □ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- □ designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey
 #_____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Hamilton, Tennessee County and State

Areas of Sign (Enter categories	nificance from instructions)
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Architect/Build	
D-1-1-	Adrian (architect)

Primary location of additional data:

- X State Historic Preservation Office
- □ Other State agency
- □ Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Central	Block
Name of Property	/

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)



Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

Hamilton, Tennessee County and State

Chattanooga 105 SE



11. Form Prepared By

name/title Miranda R. Clements, Historic P	reservation Planner
Sally Betts, Chattanooga Histor	ic Zoning Commission
organization Chattanooga Hamilton County Regional	date <u>June 28, 1994</u> Planning Commission
street & number 200 City Hall Annex	telephone (615) 757-5216
city or town Chattanooga	state zip code 37402
Additional Documentation	

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Property Owner		
(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)		_
nameMicheal McGauley		
<pre>street & number C/O Fidelity Trust Company</pre>	telephone (615) 756-1071	
city or town Chattanooga		

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

NPS Form 10-900-a (8-36)	OM8 Approval No. 1024-0018
United States Department of the Interior National Park Service	RECEIVED 413
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet	FEB 2 7 1995
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Description

The Central Block Building, constructed in 1883, is a two part commercial block building located in downtown Chattanooga, Hamilton County, Tennessee. Designed in the Victorian Italianate style, the three story brick structure is one of the oldest commercial buildings in downtown Chattanooga. It is situated on the southwest corner of Market Street, the city's main commercial thoroughfare, and Seventh Street.

When the Central Block was constructed, Chattanooga's streets had not yet been paved and horse drawn wagons and street cars were the normal mode of transportation. Photographs from the 1880s show many Italianate commercial structures on Market and Seventh Streets. Most of these have been replaced with later buildings or parking lots.

The Central Block was constructed as a commercial building with retail uses on the ground floor and office and social uses on the second and third floors. The building is rectangular in plan on the ground floor and U-shaped on the second and third floors. As is typical of commercial structures, the Central Block has a flat roof.

The Central Block is divided into seven basic sections. The three bays on the facade facing Market Street and the three bays on the corner of the building feature rich detailing in comparison to the south facing facade on Seventh Street which is more restrained in its architectural ornamentation.

On the west facade, along Market Street, are three bays each divided by vertical brick pilasters. Each bay features a separate storefront. Originally, the storefronts consisted of cast iron columns and large single light display case windows and transoms. The <u>Chattanooga Times</u> on October 20, 1883 stated that "double French plate glass is being put in front of Block & Co.'s beautiful building." In the 1880s, the signs for the stores were located on narrow sign plates above the transoms, were attached to the awnings or were painted directly onto the display window. Large canvas awnings appeared on the two storefronts on the north end of the building and a canvas awning, arranged in a decorative manner, was attached to the storefront of the 636 Market Street address.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number ____7 Page ___2

Central Block Hamilton County, Tennessee

The storefronts have all been altered. Most alterations appear to date from the 1960s. The main storefront, encompassing 636 and 638 Market Street, now features a plate glass display window with the transom area enclosed with corrugated metal and a large sign advertising "Hill's Flowers". The storefront located at 636 Market Street features a metal and glass storefront with a corrugated metal covering over the transom area. The storefront at 632 Market features a ca. 1950s recessed storefront and also features a modern material covering the transom area.

The second floor of the building, including the three bays on Market Street and the three corner bays, feature one over one double hung wood windows with decorative sheet metal applied to the area between the second and third floor windows. The windows are in groups of four separated by vertical brick members simulating pilasters. The third floor windows are also one over one double hung wood windows with rectangular sheet metal hood The windows on the second and third floors of the outer molds. bays of the corner section of the building are in bands of three, are one over one double hung wood windows and feature an arched sheet metal hood mold over the middle of the three windows. On the true corner of the building, both upper floors have one over one windows with identical surrounds with the exception of an arched hood mold with a sunburst motif in the enclosed transom area of the third floor window. All of the original windows on the upper floors of the building remain, but have been painted the same green color as the exterior of the building.

The Central Block features an elaborate sheet metal Italianate cornice, with brackets and modillions. Between the cornice area and the third floor window surrounds, stepped brick dentil molding extends the length of the exterior of the building emphasizing the cornice. Originally, the vertical pilasters that separate each bay on the Market Street facade were topped with arched finials. The entrance of the building was accentuated by a triangular finial with the name "BLOCK" inscribed in a name plate below. The finial was surrounded by smaller finials and other architectural detailing. Only the triangular section remains today and the name is no longer visible.

The Seventh Street facade features a row of nine one over one, double hung wood windows with fairly modest sheet metal hood molds and plain stone sills. The ground floor originally featured approximately three foot and nine foot in length windows with plain surrounds. These have since been bricked in. Also, these windows originally opened onto a pocket area that was below

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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 Central Block

 Section number _____
 Page _____
 Hamilton County, Tennessee

street level and featured an iron railing dividing it from the sidewalk.

Toward the east end of the facade on Seventh Street, there are two side entrances. The first is a modest entrance to the corner store space. It has a double wood door with a transom above and is crowned with a simple sheet metal hood mold. The second, located on the east end of the building, is framed with brick pilasters. The name "Live and Let Live Drug Store" is set in tile in the portico of this entrance. The entrance features simple double doors with a five light narrow transom with a large three light transom above.

The north facade of the Central Block originally formed a party wall with a building next door. All of the buildings from the 1880s on the 600 block of Market Street have been replaced with newer buildings or parking lots. A new County Courts building is currently located on the corner of Market and Sixth Streets with a parking lot located directly adjacent to the Central Block. Opposite the Central Block, on Market Street, is located the Miller Brother's Building (NR 9-17-87), a recently restored commercial department store building that is now used as offices for the Blue Cross Blue Shield Insurance Company. To the south, on the north west corner of Market and Seventh Streets, is a two story commercial building with ca. 1950 alterations.

The Central Block consists of three full floors plus a basement. The main floor consists of three storefronts. The room located on the corner is the largest, measuring 3,706 square feet. This space features a corner entrance and has an open space plan. Bathrooms, a stair way to the basement and a rear room are located toward the rear of the space. The ground floor interior has no visible original architectural features remaining. The stores located at 634 and 632 Market Street measure 1,804 and 1,773 square feet respectively, and both feature open space plans that have been completely updated.

The second and third floor interiors appear to be largely unaltered. Both floors are arranged in a U-shape with a courtyard area formed toward the rear of the building which lets in light and air to the interior office spaces. The second floor consists of office rooms arranged around a T-shaped hall way. There are fourteen rooms ranging in size from twelve by sixteen feet to twenty-three by nineteen feet. The second floor is entered through a side door on Seventh Street and up a stairway with vertical wainscoting, a turned baluster railing,

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page ____

7

Central Block Hamilton County, Tennessee

and tongue and groove boards on the underside of the stairs. Approaching towards the front of the building from the stairs, there are three rooms on the right, the first being a bathroom dating from the early part of the twentieth century. The rest of the rooms on the second floor feature hardwood floors, a shoe mold of approximately fifteen feet, and plaster walls - some covered with wallpaper. The front rooms feature a chair rail. The hall way features a wood board ceiling, vertical board wainscoting, plaster walls covered with wallpaper and a hardwood floor. There is a secondary stairway from the second to the third floor on the north west corner of the building. This stairway is of a simpler design than the main one. Most rooms feature arched iron fireplaces (coal grates). Some rooms retain their mantles which are all identical and feature some decorative raised wood panels. Along the south side of the hall, one room features paneled wood office partitions, ca. 1920, with frosted glass windows. Most of the interior doors feature panelled wood doors with single or double surrounds.

The third floor consists of six rooms ranging in size from approximately twelve by twenty-three feet to forty by fifty-three feet. The most striking room is the largest, which is located off the main stairway. It appears to be a large hall with an oak floor laid in four triangular sections. This room features a chair rail, plaster walls and a picture rail.

The Central Block is almost identical in appearance on the upper two floors as it was in the 1880s, with the exception of green paint that has been applied to the exterior. The ground floor has experienced attempts at modernizing typical to many downtown commercial buildings that occurred in the mid-twentieth century in an attempt to compete with the emerging suburban shopping malls. The owner of the building and a new historic preservation nonprofit organization hope to rehabilitate the building so that it will once again be an outstanding asset to Chattanooga.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number <u>8</u> Page <u>5</u>

Central Block Hamilton County, Tennessee

Significance

The Central Block, a three story brick Italianate commercial building located in downtown Chattanooga, Tennessee, is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under National Register Criterion C for its significance to Chattanooga and Hamilton County in architecture. Constructed in 1883, the building is one of the earliest multi-use commercial buildings in downtown. The building features an elaborate Italianate projecting metal cornice, with brackets, modillions and a finial. Sheet metal window surrounds decorate the exterior wall surface and the cornice is accented by brick dentil molding. Located on Market Street, the main downtown thoroughfare, the building commands a grand presence and is one of the most prominent buildings in the commercial core.

The history of the Central Block dates to August 1882 when Dr. Marx Block and Prosper Lazard purchased two lots measuring 85 X 140 feet on the corner of Market and Seventh Streets for \$15,000. The corner site had been the location of the First Presbyterian Church during the Civil War. Dr. Block, a native of Alsace-Lorraine, came to the United States in 1857. He served as an assistant surgeon in the Union Army during the Civil War and settled in Chattanooga in 1866. Failing health caused him to abandon the practice of medicine and he entered into the drug business. Mr. Block resided at 308 High Street and had his wholesale drug business at 709 Market Street. He built the Central Block to lease out to other tenants.

Bids went out on April 25, 1883 for the construction of the Central Block and a month later the contract was awarded to Mr. H.C. Jackson for the carpentry of the "magnificent structure." (<u>Chattanooga Times</u>: May 6, 1883.) By September 1883, the building, referred to in the local newspaper as "one of the handsomest structures ever erected here", was ready for occupants. Chattanooga was enjoying prosperity in the 1880's and much building was taking place. 1883 saw the erection of nearly \$1,000,000 worth of new buildings. The Central Block cost \$30,000 and the adjacent McConnell Building \$10,000. The Daily Times regularly carried advertisements from four or five architects.

Unfortunately, the Central Block is the only building remaining from the 1883 building boom. The McConnell Block, located next door, was constructed in 1885. (The McConnell Block extended from the Central Block to Cherry Street, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number <u>8</u> Page <u>6</u>

Central Block Hamilton County, Tennessee

and 23 Seventh Street. Today, a portion of the building is extant and the name "McCONNELL BLOCK" appears on the brick between the cornice and the windows. It is a two story brick building with one over one double hung windows with arched brick hood molds and a decorative cornice with paired Italianate brackets and a triangular pediment above the name of the building. The first floor storefront has ca. 1960 alterations.)

There are a number of extant buildings dating from the 1890s, including the Miller Brothers Department Store (NR 10-17-87), located opposite the Central Block, on the north east corner of Market and Seventh Streets. Miller Brothers was built in 1898 Victorian Romanesque style. In the 1960s, a modern in the covering was applied to the exterior which was removed in 1986 when the building was converted to offices by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Tennessee. Other commercial buildings located downtown dating from the 1890s include the Milton Building on the south west corner of West Eight and Broad Streets, а Richardsonian Romanesque structure of a smaller size than the Central Block; the Trigg-Smartt Building, now named the Tivoli Center, (NR 6-26-86) at 701 Broad Street, also a Romanesque building that was adaptively rehabilitated in the 1980s for office space; the Park Plaza Building (Pickle Barrel), located at 1012 Market Street that was built in 1893 as offices for the Southern Railway; and the Dome Building (NR 11-17-78), а handsome Italian Renaissance designed building located on the corner of Eighth and Georgia Avenue.

The Central Block was designed by a local Chattanooga draftsman, Adrian Delisle, who advertised in the City Directories and local newspapers as an architect from 1882 until 1894. Delisle had offices in the McConnell Block, next door to the Central Block, from ca. 1885 until ca. 1894. He also designed the Chancellor T.M. McConnell House (NR 4-17-92) on East Fifth Street.

The Central Block was referred to in the City Directories as the "Central Block" from 1883 until 1910 when it was documented as the Live and Let Live Block. The name "Block" was inscribed in a name plate below the finial.

The Central Block has seen many different types of occupants and businesses in its one hundred and eleven year history. The first occupant of the corner room of the ground floor (636 - 638 Market Street) was the Hammell Furniture Store. The City Savings Bank located their offices in the prestigious location from 1885 until the bank failed in the financial panic of 1893.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____8 Page _____7

Central Block Hamilton County, Tennessee

The City Directories from 1888 until 1890, list the following businesses, as well as the bank, for 638 Market Street: The North Chattanooga Land Company, the Northside Land Company, the Northside Steamboat and Ferry Company, the Chattanooga Bridge Company and the Grand View Cemetery Company. Interestingly, the north side of the river was being developed at this time with many of the financial transactions occurring in the Central Block.

The next occupant of the corner room was The Live and Let Live Drug Store, a popular social gathering spot with a soda fountain and seating for seventy five. The Live and Let Live Drug Store appears to be the business that the Central Block is most associated with. The name "Live and Let Live" is set in tile in the side entrance of the building. The store was founded by Mark L. Morrison who sold it to George K. Brown, the former operator of the Palace, an ice-cream parlor located across the street from Live and Let Live, on the south east corner of Market and Seventh. The Palace was in business from 1907 until 1933 and was a very popular meeting place for young people. Saturday afternoons, both establishments were bustling with people.

The Live and Let Live Drug Store closed in 1919. It was purchased by the Liggett Drug Store, the largest drug corporation in America that had many branches across the country and headquarters in New York City. By the 1950s, Liggett's had merged with Rexall Drugs and was renamed the Liggett's Rexall Drug Company. In 1963, Liggetts closed leaving the corner space in the Central Block vacant. From 1970 until 1985, it was occupied by a ladies clothing store - the Holly Shop. From the late 1980s until 1994, the space was occupied by Hill's Flowers.

The other three storefronts - 632, 634, and 636 Market Street experienced numerous changes in tenancy throughout the years. The first listed tenant of 632 is a drug company, followed from 1888 until ca. 1899 by a meat market. From 1910 until around 1920, two soft drink companies occupied the space and from 1920 until the early 1960s, it was the home of various clothing and shoe stores. From ca. 1965 to ca. 1980, a financial company used the space as its office and during the 1980s, a jewelry, sun tan shop and wig boutique were the occupants.

The earliest tenant of 634 Market Street was a furniture dealer. From ca. 1888 until ca. 1900, the space was the home of a

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number <u>8</u> Page <u>8</u>

Central Block Hamilton County, Tennessee ,

clothes store. A paint company, sewing machine shop, pool room, cafe, clothes store, beauty supply store and, in 1994 the Wormser Hat Store, are included in the list of occupants for this space.

636 Market Street, until 1910 when it was incorporated into the corner space at 638 Market, also had several uses including a grocer and a boots and shoe store.

As is common with the two part commercial block buildings, the ground floors were characterized by public uses, such as retail, whereas the upper floors were the more private spaces, such as residential or office use. This is the case with the Central The original occupant of the second floor were the Key Block. and Richmond Attorneys at Law. Other occupants listed in the City Directories from the 1880s until ca. 1925 included physicians, dentists, an architect, a clearing house, realtors, loan and financial companies, a cigar manufacturer, lawyers, a medicine company and a mining company. The most common occupants included lawyers and physicians, which makes a case for the Central Block being prime office space.

The third floor of the building was designed with larger rooms more suited to institutional or club use than typical professional offices. The first listed occupant was a U.S. Claims agent in 1890; from 1905 until ca. 1915, the Knights of Pythias held meetings there. "The Knights of Pythias meet every Tuesday night at Castle Hall, Central Block." (City Directory, 1910.) The large "ballroom" with the intricate hardwood floor pattern, perhaps was what was referred to as "Castle Hall". The Macrea Social Club, formed in 1881, also had its headquarters in the Central Block, probably on the third floor.

For about ten years, from ca. 1915 to 1925, the third floor was the home of the Chattanooga Business College, which may have been the last occupant. The Miller Brothers Department Store, the most recent business to utilize the third floor space, used it for storage for several years before they closed in 1986. The rooms still have some remaining items from Miller Brothers, such as signs on rooms stating what was stored there - "Spring Room, Fall Room, etc."

The building is one of the most significant Victorian commercial buildings in Chattanooga. Although the exterior brick surface of the building has been painted an inappropriate green color, it has had very few irreversible alterations made, and retains

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page ____

Central Block Hamilton County, Tennessee

its architectural integrity. The interior of the second and third floors has had very few changes made. The ground floor storefronts, as almost always, have experienced several attempts at modernizing. Excellent photographic documentation exists, however, to enable the building to be restored. Strategically located in the heart of the central business district, between the recently revitalized Riverfront area and the Chattanooga Choo Choo (NR 12-20-73)/Warehouse Row (NR 4-5-84) area, the Central Block today is a vital link in the rejuvenation of Chattanooga's downtown and is featured as such in the recently prepared Downtown Plan.

The owners of the building announced early in 1994 that if a viable use with financial backing is not found, the building may be demolished. As a result, Cornerstones, a nonprofit historic preservation organization, formed in the summer of 1994, is working with the property owner to provide the gap financing necessary to make the development of the property feasible. The owners would like to save the building if financially and economically feasible, but are objecting to the National Register nomination.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number ____9 Page ___10

Central Block, Hamilton County, TN

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number <u>10</u> Page <u>11</u> Central Block Hamilton County, Tennessee

Verbal Boundary Description

See attached Hamilton County tax map 135MD, block D, parcel 12. The Central Block occupies approximately two-thirds of the lot.

Boundary Justification

The boundary consists of the part of the city lot occupied by the building.

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United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Central Block Hamilton County, Tennessee

Section number photos Page 12

Photographs

Central Block Market Street Chattanooga, Hamilton County, Tennessee Photographs By: Ken Fontaine Date: May 6, 1994 Neg: Tennessee Historical Commission Nashville, Tennessee -Southwest corner, facing northeast #1 of 30 -Detail of south facade, facing north #2 of 30 -Detail of south facade, facing north #3 of 30 -Detail of southside entrance, facing north #4 of 30 -Detail of window on south facade, facing north #5 of 30 -Detail of site plaque south facade, facing north #6 of 30 -Detail of southwest corner, facing northeast #7 of 30 -West facade, facing southeast #8 of 30 -West facade, facing northwest #9 of 30 -West facade, facing east #10 of 30 -West facade, facing east #11 of 30

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Central Block Hamilton County, Tennessee

Section number photos Page _13____

-Detail of window on southwest corner, facing northeast #12 of 30
-Detail of windows on south facade, facing north #13 of 30
-Detail of windows on south facade, facing north #14 of 30
-South facade, facing northeast #15 of 30
-South facade, facing northwest #16 of 30
-Detail of southwest corner, facing northeast #17 of 30

Interior

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-Stairway, looking towards the entrance on the south facade #18 of 30 -Stairway, looking towards the entrance on the south facade #19 of 30 -2nd floor hallway, looking west #20 of 30 -Detail of mantle #21 of 30 -Detail, second floor, interior rooms showing doors and transoms #22 of 30 -2nd floor front room, showing windows, looking southwest #23 of 30 -2nd floor front room, showing windows, looking west #24 of 30

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Central Block Hamilton County, Tennessee

Section number <u>photos</u> Page <u>14</u>

-2nd floor hall, looking east #25 of 30 -2nd floor hall, looking north towards secondary staircase #26 of 30 -Detail of mantle and coal grate #27 of 30 -3rd floor, front room #28 of 30 -3rd floor, looking northwest, large ballroom #29 of 30. -3rd floor, looking east, large ballroom. #30 of 30.



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Central Block Building Hamilton County TN 1"= 100 (Capprox)



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