

LOCAL HISTORIC PROPERTY DESIGNATION REPORT

This form is for use as part of the process of designating individual properties and districts under the Athens-Clarke County Historic Preservation Ordinance. Generally, instructions found in the publication "Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms" (National Register Bulletin 16) should be followed when completing this form. Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets. Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Fairhaven Tuberculosis Sanitarium
other names/site number Fairhaven Hospital, Athens-Clarke Sanitarium, Athens Tuberculosis Sanitarium, Memorial Park Recreation Facility, Benson Hall

2. Location

street & number 293 Gran Ellen Drive
city, town Athens **() vicinity of**
county Clarke **code** GA
state Georgia **code** GA **zip code** 30606

() not for publication

3. Classification

Ownership of Property:

- ☐ private
☒ public-local
☐ public-state
☐ public-federal

Category of Property:

- ☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property:

	Non-Contributing	Contributing
Developed Parcels		
Vacant Parcels		
Total Parcels		
Primary Structures		1
Secondary Structures		

Contributing resources previously designated as Local Landmarks: N/A

Name(s) of previous designation(s): N/A

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

4. Local Certification

As the designated authority under the Athens-Clarke County Historic Preservation Ordinance of 1987, I hereby certify that this designation report meets the documentation standards for designating properties under the Athens-Clarke County Historic Preservation Ordinance and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth for such designations. In my opinion, the property meets the criteria for local designations.

Signature of certifying official

Date

**Planning Director
Athens-Clarke County Planning Department**

In my opinion, the property () meets () does not meet the criteria for local designations.

Signature of commenting planning department staff member

Date

**Historic Preservation Planner
Athens-Clarke County Planning Department**

In my opinion, the property () meets () does not meet the criteria for local designations

Signature of Historic Preservation Commission Chairman

Date

In my opinion, the property () meets () does not meet the criteria for local designations

**Signature of Chief Executive Officer
Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County**

Date

5. Function or Use

Historic Functions: The building in question was a publicly owned hospital that was the result of a highly public campaign in 1924 to fund a Tuberculosis Sanitarium through a \$50,000 bond referendum. The building remained a hospital until it closed about 1938. In the 1940s, the building was renovated to become a recreation facility at Memorial Park. In the 1960s and 70s, the building was renamed Benson Hall, and became the “Teen Canteen,” a gathering place for Athens’ teenagers.

Current Functions: The building remains in use for recreational programs including Summer Day Camp (since the 1950s), the Athens Creative Theatre (since the 1960s), voting polls, special events (Zoo Day, etc.), a community space, and offices for park staff as well as the Athens-Clarke County Recreation Division Administration, now known as Leisure Services - first for the city of Athens, then for the Athens-Clarke County Unified Government.

6. Description

Architectural Classification: Spanish Colonial Revival (Spanish Eclectic)

Materials:

foundation brick

walls stuccoed masonry

roof The building has a flat roof with parapet walls with continuous narrow shed roofs (original tile) with brackets along the parapets of the main wings. The flat form renders it closer to Spanish and Pueblo prototypes.

other

Description of present and historic physical appearance:

The original building area has an “H”-shaped plan with minor irregularities at the front and rear of the passageway. The south elevation is the front of the building as it was designed. The central gable at the original front elevation is articulated with ornamentation believed to be terra cotta including a two-barred cross on a crest. The two-barred cross has been a logo of the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease since 1920 and speaks to the intended use of the structure. The arched entryway is delineated with cast concrete relief. The interior of the portico is flanked by two arched alcoves, which were a typical placement for statuary or plants. An arched transom over double doors, typical of the Spanish Colonial Revival style, is the designed primary entry. Also typical of the style are the stucco walls and barrel tile at the roofline parapets.

Its current orientation is such that the less elaborate east side of the structure functions as its front, with the more elaborate original façade facing an area that now houses basketball courts. The architectural integrity of the building’s exterior is relatively good. Replacement windows have maintained the original openings and light divisions. An addition on the west side of the building was made as part of SPLOST 2000 funding. Inspections completed for the west addition around 2001 found some settling and cracking of its brick foundation, although not unusual or severe for a structure of its age.

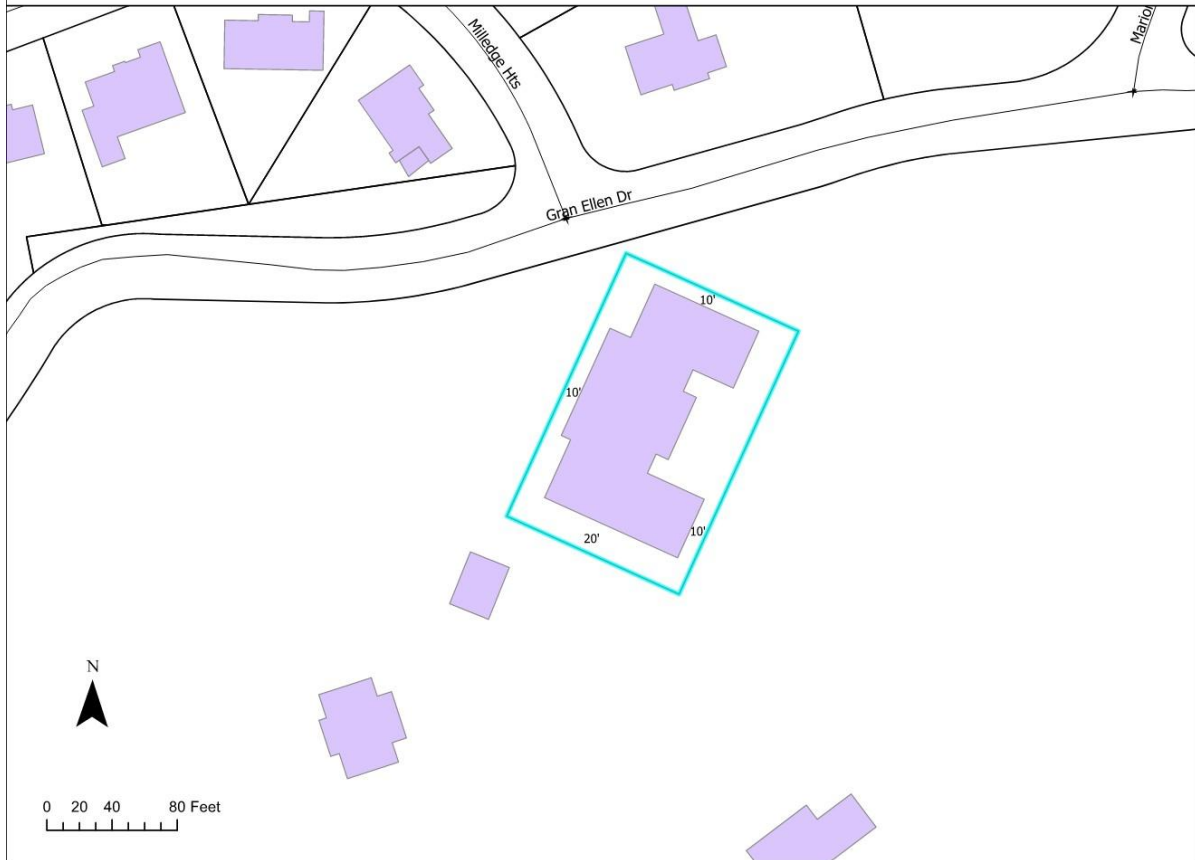
The addition is located within and beyond the northern courtyard of the original “H” shape of the building. It has been primarily used for the Athens Creative Theatre productions. Though it is attached to the historic building, the style is very different from the Spanish Colonial Revival style. It is

modern, contemporary, and highly glazed with a single roof sloping up to the west. It is easily differentiated from the original structure. The historic exterior remains inside the theatre space, including the window and door openings.

Proposed Landmark Designation Boundary - 293 Gran Ellen Dr



Proposed Landmark Designation Boundary - 293 Gran Ellen Dr



Proposed Landmark Designation Boundary - 293 Gran Ellen Dr



7. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally

Applicable National Register Criteria:

☒ A ☒ B ☒ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): ☐ N/A

☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions):

Architecture

Community Planning and Development

Health/Medicine,

Social History

Period of Significance: 1920s to present

Significant Dates:

- 1924: Clarke County bond referendum for \$50,000 to construct the TB Sanatorium
- 1925: Property selected for constructing sanitarium and construction plans made and executed
- 1926: opening of Fairhaven Sanatorium by Clarke County
- 1930: Clarke County Tuberculosis Association takes over operation of Fairhaven Sanitarium from Clarke County
- 1938: Fairhaven Sanatorium closes
- 1945: Athens Memorial Park Association formed to hold ownership of the property from Clarke County until the City of Athens could accept it
- 1949: University clubs and organizations plus the Athens Teen Age Club use the building for recreation
- 1950: Memorial Park deeded to the City of Athens from the Memorial Park Association
- 1958: Park building, former sanitarium, renamed as Howard Benson Hall

Significant Person(s):

Tuberculosis Sanitarium:

- Dr. Chester O. Middlebrooks, (1883-1954)- a founding member of the Clarke County Tuberculosis Association and directing physician of Fairhaven after the association took over operations in 1930.

- Mrs. Mary McCullough (E.R.) Hodgson, (1881-1967)- Chair of the Clarke County Sanitarium Building Committee; a founding member of the Clarke County Tuberculosis Association; Athens Women's Club member and on the committee for Christmas Seals sales to support the fight against tuberculosis.
- Miss Rose Magdalena "Lena" McGinley, (1886-1975)- First permanent nurse for the Clarke County Anti-Tuberculosis Association and vocal advocate for fighting TB who directed Fairhaven Sanitarium from a cottage on the grounds when it opened.
- Members of the Women's Club instrumental in the early hospital effort include: Mrs. E.R. Hodgson, Mrs. H.B. Ritchie, Mrs. Alex Davison, Mrs. T.F. Green, Mrs. A.S. Parker, Mrs. J.C. Hutchins, Mrs. Fred Davis, Mrs. Chas. Phinzy, Mrs. Frank Edwards, Mrs. Mary Haygood, and Mrs. E.K. Lumpkin. The club oversaw the local Christmas Seals sales to support the fight against TB but went beyond that level of support. They heard talks from local health officials about the local conditions and need for additional support. Their members included those who would be on the Anti-Tuberculosis Association board. Their support continued after the hospital was in operation with fundraisers to support local patients care.

Park:

- The first board of directors of the park included: W.H. Benson (Chair) (1888-1971), Carter Daniel (1893-1974), Harry Hodgson Sr. (1874-1971), John Stiles, W.G. Thornton, Ed Wier, and Paul Williams.
- William Howard Benson- (1888-1971)- Civic leader who spearheaded the creation of Memorial Park.
- Wayne Shields-(1917-1988) Superintendent of the Athens Department of Recreation when Memorial Park opened.
- Daniel D. Quillian, Jr.- (1928-2007) Recreation Department Director from about 1954-1960 having been director of the Trailside Zoo at Memorial Park prior to taking on the role of director. He oversaw many programmatic advancements as well as a renovation in 1958.

Cultural Affiliation:

Medical History: During the 1920s well-documented national, state, and local efforts were waged to ameliorate epidemic levels of tuberculosis. The hospital was the result of a highly public local campaign to address local issues around the spread of tuberculosis through the passage of a \$50,000 bond referendum to construct the hospital for Clarke County. The "H" shape of the building and large number of windows reflects the treatment plans for tuberculosis at the time placing a priority on air flow and sunlight.

Athens Women's History: Women's organizations including the Athens Women's Club and Athens Junior Assembly (later Junior League) were actively involved in public health issues at the time and played a significant role in the passage of the bond referendum.

African American History: According to James Reap, in his book *Athens: A Pictorial History*, in this 1925 structure, there were "thirty beds, equally distributed between black and white patients." The *History of Public Health in Georgia: 1733 – 1950*, describes a four-story structure constructed elsewhere in Georgia with a total of 250 beds, which was touted as the first institutional facility for the treatment of African Americans made available in Georgia. Fairhaven was the first municipal TB hospital that was designed for hospital beds to be equally distributed among white and black patients. Michael Thurman's text, *A Story Untold* describes the climate of the medical treatment of African Americans at this time, and his account seems to reinforce the idea that this was a 'cutting edge' hospital for its time.

Park History: The hospital closed sometime in 1938. While the Athens Recreational Park Department was established that same year, the city of Athens remained without a public park until this property began park function in 1945. W.H. Benson along with a group of six local citizens chartered the Athens Memorial Park Association to hold title of the property for Clarke County until the City of Athens was able to take ownership. In March of 1950, the property was deeded to the City of Athens. Prior to the existence of the park facility, there was only a scattering of children's playgrounds in Athens. It should additionally be noted that the evolution of Memorial Park parallels with the broader conservation movement and early park efforts nationwide. The former sanitarium became the seat of park programming for both programs at Memorial Park and for staff offices of the Parks Department, now Leisure Services, and remains so to this day.

Architect(s)/Builder(s):

Daniell & Beutell Architects: an architectural firm located in Atlanta known for their work on a variety of municipal buildings around the state including the Georgia State Tuberculosis Sanitarium in Alto, Georgia. Sydney S. Daniell (1889-1956) and Russell L. Beutell (1891-1943) were the primary partners. The floorplans for the Clarke County Sanitarium show that Daniell & Beutell drafted the plans in May of 1925.

Local Historic Property Designation Report Continuation Sheet

Section 8--Statement of Significance

Narrative statement of significance (areas of significance)

- **Architecture:** The Fairhaven Sanitarium was designed by Daniell and Beutell, an architectural firm in Atlanta from 1919 to 1943. They designed many buildings in the state that are still standing, several of which are on the National Register. The building was built in the Spanish Colonial Revival style, a style often built in Atlanta's suburban neighborhoods during the 1920s and 1930s.
- **Community planning and development:** The building was constructed for Clarke County as a locally funded and maintained hospital for the treatment of tuberculosis. The property that houses this building became the site of the city's first public park in approximately 88 years when opening about 1945. The early botanical gardens were the first public park.
- **Health/medicine:** The building was originally built to address the tuberculosis epidemic that was sweeping through the area after concerns were raised in the local newspaper regarding the rise in need for a place for treatment. The building shape and large number of openings reflect the treatment plan for tuberculosis at the time prioritizing air flow and sunlight along with rest. The original front entry cross gable at the southern elevation includes two crests with the two-barred cross symbol that directly relates to an international tuberculosis association since 1920.
- **Social history:** Housing patients under one roof from two different racial backgrounds was ground-breaking for the time, even if on separate wings of the building. Additionally, at least for the first few years, patients were taken in without requiring payments from them. So many patients were able to be treated who may not have been otherwise.

National Register Criteria

The Fairhaven Tuberculosis Sanitarium is eligible for local landmark designation under National Register Criterion A, B, and C.

- A.** Fairhaven is associated with the tuberculosis epidemic, an event that greatly impacted not just Athenians, but also the state and the nation.
- B.** Fairhaven Sanitarium and Memorial Park are associated with several prominent Athenians – Howard Benson, Carter Daniel, Harry Hodgson, John Stiles, Paul Williams, W. G. Thornton, and Ed Wier were all a part of the trust that held the property until it could be used under the ownership of the City of Athens. Wayne Shields was the first director of the park and Dan Quillian was a longtime director for the park.
- C.** Embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Spanish Colonial Revival Style commonly built in the 1920s and 1930s

Criteria Considerations (if applicable)

Local Historic Property Designation Report Continuation Sheet

Section 8--Statement of Significance

Period of significance (justification)

The period of significance starts in the 1920s when the when the need for a sanitarium was first gaining public awareness through when the building was built and operating as a sanitarium. It was an important hospital for the area and continued to be used by the city of Athens and Clarke County even as it transitioned from hospital use to public park use which continues to this day.

Contributing/Noncontributing Resources

The one structure included in the boundaries is a contributing resource.

Developmental history/historic context

- **Recreation** - The Public Recreation Movement is rooted in the reform era of the 19th and early 20th century. Prior to this movement, recreation space was common only on the private estates of the wealthy having grounds and formal gardens. Organizations such as the YMCA provided recreation and religious opportunity but often lacked the outdoor, natural areas that are often associated with the idea of a park. As cities grew and became more urban the need for this open and natural space as an amenity available to all became a more common call to reform.
- **Health** - Tuberculosis, often referred to as consumption, primarily affects the lungs and has been known to be present in human populations for thousands of years. The disease is caused by the M. tuberculosis bacteria as was discovered by scientist Robert Koch in 1882. However, germ theory was not widely understood at the time and antibiotics would not be discovered for many decades. Treatment for this disease was prescribed as rest, fresh air, sunshine and nutrition. Sanatoria were able to isolate patients, which in addition to the treatment they received, helped to slow the spread of the contagious disease. As general understanding of hygiene and necessity of clean living conditions improved, the number of cases fell quickly. The development of vaccines and antibiotics and a requirement for vaccination of school children in the 1950s vastly reduced the remaining impacts of the disease.

8. Major Bibliographic References

- Dillon, J.P. (2023). The Legacy of Fairhaven Tuberculosis Sanitarium. *Athens Historian*, Volume 22-23, pg 24-40
- Formal Opening Held At Memorial Park On Friday (31 August 1958). *Athens Banner-Herald*.
- Koenig, M.H. (1996). The Legacy of Memorial Park. *Athens Historian*, Volume 1, pg 4-11.
- Reece, Evelyn (2001). Preliminary Research for the Sanitarium at Memorial Park.
- Reap, James (1985). Athens: A Pictorial History.
- Thurmond, Michael L. (2001). A Story Untold: Black Men and Women in Athens History.

Previous documentation on file: () N/A

- () preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- () preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been issued
date issued:
- () 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 #

Primary location of additional data:

- () State historic preservation office
- () Other State Agency
- () Federal agency
- (X) Local government
- () University
- () Other, Specify Repository:

Georgia Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

9. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 73.71 acres; Area to be designated-0.47 acres.

UTM References

A) Zone 17 Easting 279399 Northing 3756689

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the landmark designation would extend 10 feet from the furthest associated building plane at each side of the building aside from the historic front, where the boundary would be 20' from the building plane.

Boundary Justification

The current surroundings of the large park area no longer reflect the conditions during the sanitarium use and have seen many changes while used as a park with future changes likely. The boundary includes the building and the immediate adjacent land to protect the building and any future connections to the structure.

10. Form Prepared By

name/title Molly Hackney DePriest/ Planner I
organization Athens-Clarke County Planning Department
street & number 120 W. Dougherty Street
city or town Athens **state** GA **zip code** 30601
telephone 706-613-3515 **date**

Consulting Services/Technical Assistance (if applicable) () not applicable

name/title
organization
street and number
city or town state zip code
telephone

() consultant
() regional development center preservation planner
() other:

Historic Property Designation Report Continuation Sheet

Historical Context

Name of Property: Fairhaven Tuberculosis Sanitarium/ Memorial Park
City or Vicinity: Athens
County: Clarke
State: Georgia
Photographer: Amber Eskew
Negative Filed: Athens-Clarke County Planning Department
Date Photographed: October 24 and 30, 2025

Description of Photographs:

The south elevation of structure, originally the front elevation and main entrance. Detail of the crest with the two-barred cross symbol and entablature as well as one of the matching entry niches.



Historic Property Designation Report Continuation Sheet

Historical Context

Description of Photographs:

East elevation, current front side of building



Historic Property Designation Report Continuation Sheet

Historical Context

Description of Photographs:

North elevation including view of addition.



Historic Property Designation Report Continuation Sheet

Historical Context

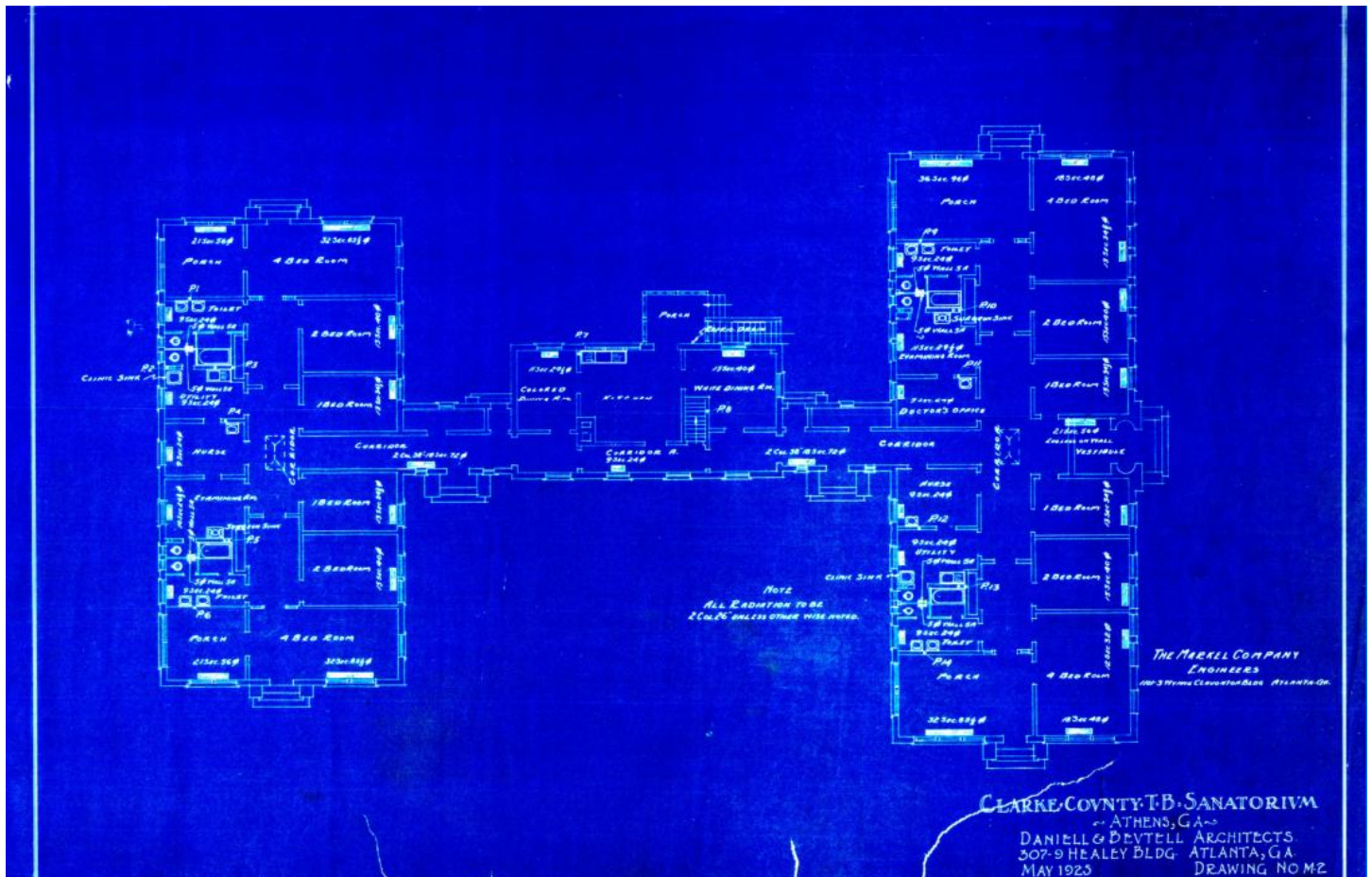
Description of Photographs:

West elevation including addition and connections to historic structure.



Historic Property Designation Report Continuation Sheet

Historical Context



Historic Property Designation Report Continuation Sheet

Historical Context



Clarke County Tuberculosis Sanitarium.

Historic Property Designation Report Continuation Sheet

Current Property Owners

**Athens-Clarke County Unified Government
325 E. Washington St.
Athens, GA 30601**