Hayswood Hospital's beginnings date to the 1800s when the Wilson Infirmary, operated by May Peale Wilson, operated from the 1800s to 1908 in Maysville, Kentucky. The infirmary closed shortly after Wilson's death in 1908, and the building was subsequently demolished. Construction began on a new hospital, Hayswood Seminary, in 1915. In 1923, it was renamed to the Hayswood Hospital, and expanded with two additions in 1925 and 1971 that expanded patient capacity to 87. The landlocked and geographically-challenged hospital closed in 1983 after Meadowview Regional Medical Center opened on the outskirts of the city.(1)(6)

Post Closure

In 1993, the Hayswood Hospital campus was purchased by Ester Johnson of Classic Properties.(3)(4) The hospital was demolished soon after its purchase, and the land was sold for development. In 1999, Johnson announced plans for renovations through Classic Properties, although financing difficulties kept any renovation project at bay.(10) Another Classic Property, the former Maysville High School, was renovated into apartments during this time. The school renovation was considered a model for what the former hospital could be given enough funding.

In 2000, Classic Properties attempted to sell Hayswood Hospital to the city for $55,000, but the city declined based upon the estimated one million dollars in cleanup costs.(8)

Maysville Mayor David Cartmell testified before a U.S. House of Representatives subcommittee in September 2005 that was investigating the issue of brownfields. More specifically, the subcommittee was studying ways that brownfield sites could be redeveloped into active uses. The city explored the possibility of converting the hospital into a mixed-use building or a senior center, and commercial site that would complement the surrounding neighborhoods.(3) Marti Insko, owner of the Moon River Bed and Breakfast on Market Street, an earshot from the abandoned property, stated that “Having it be a parking lot, a nice parking lot, for low income or low use location on the hospital was not out of historical importance.”(3)

On February 9, 2006,(9) the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Environmental Protection Agency conducted a preliminary survey of the Hayswood Hospital property as part of Phase I of the Hayswood Hospital environmental assessment. This assessment included collecting samples and testing for various contaminants as part of Phase II on July 26.(7) The assessments noted that it would take an estimated $5 million to remedy the building site.(10)

A $23,000 geological survey was conducted on the Hayswood Hospital property in mid-2008.(10) The purpose of the survey was to determine the effects of demolishing the hospital would have on the hillside and locations behind it. The survey recommended that the hospital be demolished and the site be stabilized. In 2010, the City Commission applied for a $200,000 brownfield grant to help the demolition of the hospital. They were recommended to match 10% of the grant funding.(10) The money would be used to remove asbestos from the building. The application of the grant and other federal funding sources, could lower the demolition costs to just over $1 million.(10)