

TALLAHASSEE-LEON COUNTY
ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD
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Tallahassee-Leon County Architectural Review Board
Meeting of May 6, 2026

STAFF REPORT

317 E. Call Street – Marshall House – Park Avenue Special Character District – Application for Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition

OVERVIEW

The Marshall House at 317 E. Call Street is a contributing resource to the Local and National Register listed Park Avenue Special Character District. Built in 1886, the Colonial Revival style house served as a residence before being divided into apartments in the 1940s and later used as offices. The house suffered a fire and was rebuilt with many alterations, and does not retain the original façade appearance. The building is situated at the corner of E. Call and N. Gadsden Streets.

The house is currently unoccupied and owned by St. John's Episcopal Church, and redevelopment for the site is planned. Several pre-application consultations have come before the ARB, where many suggestions were made as alternatives to demolition. Reports were requested and obtained describing the condition of the house and the cost to move or relocate and reconstruct the house. Two additional proposals for an architectural assessment by an architectural firm and an environmental assessment for asbestos and lead paint were also provided. Attached is a detailed timeline of this project's past appearances before the ARB. The proposed Certificate of Appropriateness application is for demolition of the house. All proposals for redevelopment of this parcel and new construction must be approved by the ARB going forward.

COMMENTS

Section 10-320, Certificates of Appropriateness, subsection (b)(4) of the Tallahassee Code of Ordinances, Land Development Code, Division 4, Architectural Review Board addresses demolition of historic buildings. Issuance of certificates of appropriateness for demolitions shall be guided by the following factors:

1. The historic or architectural significance of the building, structure, or object.
2. The importance of the building, structure, or object to the ambiance of the district.
3. The difficulty or the impossibility of reproducing such a building, structure, or object because of its design, texture, material, detail, or unique location.
4. Whether the building, structure, or object is one of the last remaining examples of its kind in the neighborhood, the county, or the region.
5. Whether there are definite plans for reuse of the property if the proposed demolition is carried out, and the effect of those plans on the character of the surroundings.
6. Whether reasonable measures can be taken to save the building, structure, or object from collapse.
7. Whether the building, structure, or object is capable of earning reasonable economic return on its value.
8. Failure of the architectural review board to issue a certificate of appropriateness granting demolition approval for any property within the designated historic preservation overlay district

shall temporarily stay the property owner's ability to demolish existing improvement for 12 months following action by the architectural review board.

The Marshall House has been significantly altered and does not retain its original historic appearance. Moving the home would destroy the setting and context of the building. Mitigation efforts to document and commemorate this property would be appropriate if demolition is approved. All proposals for redevelopment of this parcel and new construction must be approved by the ARB going forward.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Historic areas are about context; demolitions alter and destroy not only a particular resource but the viability of an entire historic area. A fundamental function of historic zoning is to prevent, limit, and control demolitions. The ARB has requested documents to provide current information about the condition of the building, including a structural engineering report and environmental assessment. At the time of this report, no such information has been received. The board cannot accurately assess the condition of the structure without these reports; therefore, the recommendation is to deny the submitted COA application for demolition. However, if demolition is approved, all future new construction on this parcel is subject to approval by the ARB. Proposed mitigation efforts for documentation and commemoration approved by the ARB would also be recommended.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No comments have been received as of the date this report was prepared.

Prepared by: Shannon Kuch, Historic Preservation Officer, 4/29/2026