

Myers Park Historic District background:

Before the creation of the Myers Park Historic District in 2001, two earlier studies recommended preserving the neighborhood.

In 1974 the Historic Preservation Master Plan for Tallahassee recognized Country Club Estates Neighborhood as an early 20th century neighborhood that should be preserved as an historic district.

The Country Club Estates subdivision is recognizable by its curvilinear streets and irregular lot shapes and is one of Tallahassee's first planned subdivisions. It is bounded north-south by Van Buren and Palmer and east-west by Golf Terrace and Meridian.

The subdivision was platted by the engineering firm of Armes and Withrop to maximize natural beauty and take advantage of the green spaces into which it was nestled, including Myers Park, a 47.74 acre plot purchased by the city, and the golf course at the Tallahassee Country Club. Development began in 1926.

In 1986 the Historic Tallahassee Preservation Board, an agency within the Florida Department of State, conducted a survey of the larger Country Club Estates area—including portions of Woodland Drives and other nearby subdivisions as well as multiple municipal green spaces. It pointed to the area's green spaces and oak trees, rolling terrain, and curvilinear streets as well as its distinctive history and architecture.

This 1986 survey also recommended the creation of the residential historic district.

It noted the recent introduction of multifamily units on Golf Terrace and Oakland and worried that

New multi-family buildings will bring increased traffic flow along the main corridors of East Country Club Drive, Golf Terrace Drive, and Myers Park Drive and perhaps make smaller side streets... busier and noisier. There may also be a higher incidence of local crime as a result of high density rental development....

It concluded that the district should be listed, adding

Because the Country Club Estates Neighborhood is an attractive inner city area, and considered a very desirable location to live, property values in the area are high. These values will continue to increase if the quality of future restoration is consistent with the neighborhood's original architectural style and character.

Concerning future action of the city and county, the 1986 survey said

The comprehensive plan should encourage the revitalization of older housing stock and historic neighborhoods because they enable Tallahassee to distinguish itself through aesthetic diversification of its built environment. WHILE IT IS IMPORTANT TO TARGET PLANNING POLICIES TOWARD DISCOURAGING URBAN SPRAWL, IT IS ALSO IMPORTANT TO HAVE POLICIES THAT PRESERVE THE LOW-DENSITY CHARACTER OF HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT INNER-CITY NEIGHBORHOODS THE QUALITIES OF THESE LIMITED HISTORICAL AREAS ... ARE UNFAIRLY WEIGHED AGAINST GENERAL PLANNING POLICIES WHEN REZONING, TRANSPORTATION, OR UTILITY ISSUES COME BEFORE THE PLANNING COMMISSION. (emphasis added.)

Forward to the late 1990s. Developers were permitted to bring in prefabricated 6-exterior-door, 5-kitchen, 4-bedroom “single family” homes on the western edge of the neighborhood along Palmer, Gadsden, and Harrison because of a loophole in city policy.

The neighborhood mobilized and contributed to the passage of the rooming house ordinance and to the creation of new zoning areas intended specifically to accommodate student housing projects.

The neighborhood also began a several-year process that resulted in the creation of the MYERS PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT. The Tallahassee-Leon County Planning Department conducted 5 workshops with property owners, including one with the consultant who updated the 1986 survey and drew the boundaries of the proposed district. More than a majority of property owners supported listing the district, and following a three-hour hearing before the city commission in which resident owners spoke unanimously in favor of the district, city commissioners present voted unanimously to approve on October 24, 2001.

The district includes 8 municipal green spaces and includes the Parks and Rec site.

Subsequently the city and county made changes in the land development code and the comprehensive plan that take steps to protect residential historic districts, among them the definition of such a district as a “low-density” area.

New construction in the Myers Park Historic District has been exclusively single family, including four new houses in the Country Club Estates subdivision, in the 21st century.