

Marshall's National Historic Landmark District (NHLD)

Facts & Historical Information

Information listed below comes from copies of letters, newspaper editorials and articles, personal conversations with Susan Collins and Judy Peters (both co-chairs of the 1990 original NHLD application committee), and emails with the National Parks Service (NPS) representatives, Dena Sanford and Patty Henry. [Compiled by Dan Stulberg, Oaklawn Marketing & Public Relations Director]

Marshall's NHLD 10/24/1990 application lists:

787 contributing buildings and 69 non-contributing buildings [91.9% contributing; "an unusually high percentage, even for NHLDs"]

3 contributing sites (East end Carver Park, Brooks Fountain Park, Monument Park at East Drive/Michigan Ave.)

4 contributing objects (Brooks Fountain, Carver Park Fountain, Anti-Slavery Monument, Railroad Union Monument)

NHLD Designation was awarded July 17, 1991

How has Oaklawn Hospital altered the structures in the present NHLD?

Prior to Marshall's application for NHLD status in October of 1990, the hospital had 3 homes moved. Two of those homes were listed as contributing structures in the NHLD application. The 3rd home was placed on property contiguous to the NHLD.

- a) 1985 moved Dean house from 108 N. Madison to 219 Forest. This home was later submitted and accepted as a contributing structure and appears on p.9 of application.
- b) 1986 Methodist Parsonage moved from 208 E. Mansion to 334 N. Marshall. This home was later submitted and accepted as a contributing structure and appears on p.8.
- c) 1990 Strong House moved from 303 E. Mansion to 211 S. Marshall. It now lies contiguous to the current NHLD.

Since the formation of the NHLD, this has been Oaklawn's involvement:

Two structures have been demolished. One does not appear as contributing and one was a carriage house/garage to a home we moved. The buyer declined to take the carriage house/garage.

- d) 1998 Tanner house at 121 High. It does not appear as a contributing structure in the application.
- e) 2010 Carriage house at 223 N. Madison. The house was moved, but buyer did not want garage.

Four structures have been moved.

- f) 1998 McNary house moved from 116 N. Madison to 341 N. Linden. Now lies one-half block north of NHLD.
- g) 1998 Humphrey house moved from 122 N. Madison to 502 N. Marshall. Now lies contiguous to the NHLD.
- 3) 2009 Moore/Kempf casket house from 215 N. Madison to N.Kazoo just south of F Dr.N. [Craig Kempf sold the home to the Boles family just prior to Oaklawn taking possession.]
- 4) 2010 Rental house moved from 223 N. Madison to 214 Forest. Now lies within the NHLD.

So Oaklawn has been involved in 8 contributing structures being moved or torn down.

2 homes moved prior to NHLD's formation are now contributing structures.

1 home was moved to a location within the NHLD.

3 homes have been relocated to neighborhoods just outside the NHLD.

1 home (that Craig Kempf sold) was relocated to Marshall Township behind funeral home.

1 carriage house was demolished when purchaser of adjoining house did not want it.

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In contrast to Oaklawn's handling of NHLD properties, 7 contributing structures have been impacted.

- 1) 1992 Stuart house at 115 W.Green, demolished by City
- 2) 1992 Tazelaar house at 219 N. Madison demolished by Kempf Funeral Home
- 3) 1994 Baty house at 216 W. Green demolished by City
- 4) 1996 Hess house at 302 N. Gordon demolished by T.Neidlinger
- 5) 1996 Needham house moved from 611 E. Mansion to 302 N.Gordon by T.Neidlinger
- 6) 1997 Chapman house at 307 W. Mansion demolished by Marshall Savings Bank
- 7) 2006 Jim's Barbershop at 123 S. Jefferson demolished by Heidenreich dental office

Of these 7 structures, six were demolished. The only one moved was by Dr. Neidlinger, a member of Oaklawn's board of directors. That house remains within the NHLD.

It has been stated on several occasions that "if a structure is moved from its original site it can never be considered contributing," however, the Dean house (1985) and the Parsonage (1986) were moved five and six years before the NHLD was established and were included as contributing in the application. In a 10/10/97 report to the mayor, Judy Peters, the chair of the NHLD committee at the time, included these remarks:

The Dean House (moved in 1985) and Methodist Parsonage (1986) are excellent examples to use in the future regarding "neighborhood integrity". Both these structures had been moved to their current locations 6 and 5 years respectively, prior to the NHLD designation. Because of the neighborhood intactness at the time of the designation, they were included in the contributing structure list, and approved by NPS.

Regarding the question: Have any NHLDs ever been de-designated?

In June 2009, Dena Sanford (our National Parks Service contact) told the hospital that she was not aware of any NHLDs ever losing their designation. On 11/16/2009 Patty Henry of the NPS responded in an email to Dena's comment:

"Dena was correct in her statement that we have never withdrawn the designation of a district. However, we have reduced and redrawn the boundaries for a historic district if we feel that integrity issues have impacted portions of the district. Beale Street in Memphis, Tennessee is an example of that as is the Coker Experimental Farms in South Carolina. Both had portions of their districts impacted by human actions and so we reduced the boundaries to exclude those portions which we felt had lost integrity."

Regarding the question: Does a structure being 50yrs old qualify it to be a contributing structure? (Dena Sanford explained responded in a 6/25/09 email.)

"No. Buildings are not automatically included in an NHL district (or even a National Register district) once they become 50 years old. The period of significance, 1831-1940 in Marshall's case, and the criteria for inclusion determine what resources will be included. Adding a resource that does not fit within the established period of significance would require a re-evaluation of the reasons for which a property was designated nationally significant, and require supporting additional information to justify changing that designation. The period of significance is based on national significance. Including buildings that are 50 years old or less requires justification of exceptional national significance."

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In 1997, as Oaklawn was proposing to build a parking structure to alleviate an extremely congested parking issue, the first phase involved removing two structures that remained on the SE corner of Madison and Mansion, where the current parking lot sits adjacent to the Franke Center. These were the McNary and Humphrey houses. About the same time, Marshall Savings Bank was seeking to sell or demolish the home at 317 W. Mansion to expand their parking lot. A great controversy arose over damage to the fairly new NHLD (established in 1991) with a great deal of coverage in the press and a number of local meetings of various interest groups. At one point William Nelligan, the Midwest National Historic Landmark representative of the National Park Service, visited and met with a large group of city officials and citizens to discuss the matter in mid August.

In an editorial to the Chronicle following the meeting, Judy Peters, then chair of the NHLD City Committee, wrote: "If those qualities which lead to the property's designation have been lost, the Landmark designation will be removed. The qualities on which our designation is based are, '*...the broad range of architectural types, periods, styles, and methods of construction found in Marshall combine to create an exceptionally intact collection of 19th century and early 20th century architecture in America. The exceptional nature of the NHLD derives from its tremendous quantity and remarkable quality of its standard and generic adaptations of some of America's most popular types and styles found in small-scale urban settings. The individual components of the district form a very extraordinary and exceptionally significant whole.*'"

2ndly, the editorial addresses the subject of moving houses and it states:

"Another area that seems to be very confusing is the moving or relocation of structures that are considered contributing to the Landmark district...I checked with the Michigan Historic Preservation Office for clarification on moving a contributing structure within the boundaries of the district...Their interpretation of the guideline is, '*If a structure is moved from its original lot, but located within the boundaries of the district, the historical integrity of the structure is damaged. However, if still architecturally intact with its significance (not damaged or altered in any way) the structure may still be considered to retain its contributing status. This is a case by case review.*'"

On 8/31/97, Mrs. Peters sent her editorial to William Nelligan, Architectural Historian and the National Park Service's Midwest representative for National Historic Landmarks, and asked Mr. Nelligan to comment on her editorial and confirm the MHPO's interpretation. Mr. Nelligan responded in a 9/03/97 memorandum with these remarks:

"Your emphasis on the cumulative effect of lost buildings is important, especially in Marshall's case where the nomination is based on the cumulative weight of 19th and 20th century architectural styles. Over time the continued loss of contributing structures could pose a problem for the district. You mention in your editorial that (losing these three structures would mean that) eleven buildings have been lost. To most people eleven out of 800+ structures doesn't sound like much, but if over time that eleven grows to 50 or 100 or even 200, then it may be too late."

"The information on moving buildings is generally correct. It is a classic case of "it depends" on the situation. The preferred solution is almost always to leave a structure in its original location. If that isn't possible then moving the structure is better than demolishing it."

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On 10/10/97, the Marshall NHLD committee co-chair sent the mayor a report regarding the history of structure demolition or relocation within the NHLD. Here are some remarks taken from that report:

The Dean House (moved in 1985) and Methodist Parsonage (1986) are excellent examples to use in the future regarding "neighborhood integrity". Both these structures had been moved to their current locations 6 and 5 years respectively, prior to the NHLD designation. Because of the neighborhood intactness at the time of the designation, they were included in the contributing structure list, and approved by NPS.

The Whitmore/Strong House may, at a future date, be considered for a contributing structure if the expansion of the current district should become a reality.

As you can see in looking at this list, a positive pattern of moving houses has occurred. The negative pattern would be to have demolished them.

From a January 5, 1998 letter from Marshall's NHLD office to Bill Nelligan, Midwest Coordinator for the NHL Office of the National Park Service, updating him on progress of community stakeholders in addressing 3 houses that were scheduled for demolition for additional parking.

Please be advised that the Chapman House, a contributing structure located at 307 W. Mansion Street, was demolished for additional parking by a local bank. If you will remember, this is one of the three houses that were in jeopardy when you were here in August. The other two houses, owned by Oaklawn Hospital, are still standing at this time. The hospital, I'm happy to say, has embarked upon a plan in which they are advertising these structures publicly for relocation...

I am very pleased with the progress made since August. As evidenced by the efforts of Oaklawn and the City regarding relocation efforts, I feel all entities are contributing towards reaching the common goal of balancing our growth and preservation.

A June 28, 1998 letter to Bill Nelligan from Marshall's NHLD co-chair announces the successful relocation of two Oaklawn properties:

This is to formally advise you of the status of the two properties, 116 and 122 N. Madison, that have been moved by the Marshall Historical Society. Both of these were contributing structures to our National Historic Landmark District and have been moved successfully to new locations. Both new locations are contiguous to our district boundaries, so hopefully in the future our endeavors to enlarge our district will once again enable them to be contributing.

Through the cooperation and support of Oaklawn Hospital, the City of Marshall, and the Marshall Historical Society and its volunteers, we have been able to once again save historic structures and yet accommodate the needs of our community in its growth.

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Since 1985, when Oaklawn moved its first home to make way for expansion, it has met with friction from some preservationists, and there appears to be growing sentiment that the hospital cares little or nothing about historical preservation, and yet nothing could be further from the truth. On two occasions Oaklawn has adapted historical structures for its medical operations. The Brooks Rupture Appliance Building downtown is now used for offices (upstairs) and a Dialysis Center downstairs. Several hundred thousand dollars were expended to historically restore the building, done in consultation with preservation consultants. Oaklawn HomeCare is housed in the former Brooks building at 122 High Street. Thousands of dollars were used to improve its appearance. And whenever it's medically appropriate, Oaklawn has established out-patient services in off-campus locations, often times taking over abandoned buildings and significantly improving their appearance.

When we proved the need for a parking structure, several hundred thousand dollars in additional costs were incurred in an effort to best blend the structure into the existing architecture of the area.

For many years Oaklawn was a major sponsor of Marshall's Annual Historic Homes Tour.

Since Oaklawn's mission is that of a hospital, our ultimate motivation is always to better serve the medical needs of the community, and our strategic planning is focused on how to do that and ensure that the hospital maintains a strong financial base. We cannot achieve those goals if we don't continually examine new services and new equipment. In doing that, continued expansion is inevitable. It should be noted, however, that with every expansion that has required removal of homes, we have gone to great lengths to preserve the structures and have them moved to the most suitable neighborhoods available. In every case the move has resulted in an improved appearance of the home and the maintaining of property value and income to the City.

While we are committed and focused on our own survival and well-being, we would challenge anyone to make a case that Oaklawn hasn't demonstrated continual concern and support for the well-being of Marshall and its citizens. We believe in this community and we value our architecturally historical character, charm, and reputation. But there needs to be a blend of historical preservation and provisions for economic expansion that includes the hospital.

Harold C. Brooks, unquestionably the greatest preservationist and philanthropist in Marshall's history, recognized this need in 1948 when he agreed to chair a drive to raise funds for a new Marshall hospital even though it meant demolishing the oldest brick home in Calhoun County and the former residence of Marshall's founder, Sidney Ketchum. Even then some suggested building a new hospital in another area of town, but he felt the hospital should remain in the center of town.

We steadfastly believe it is not economically feasible to relocate the hospital to another part of town. We also believe it would be devastating to our downtown district. Certainly not every business would suffer, but many would, and soon we'd have a number of empty store fronts.

We can continue to carry on as we have in the past, taking firm stands for or against hospital expansion, or we can come together to tackle this issue and work to arrive at consensus over how best to blend hospital expansion and historical preservation. We believe that a workable solution exists, and we're committed to working with this committee to that end. We believe it's in everyone's best interest to make this happen.