

St. Mark AME Church – Emergency Stabilization

491 James P. Brawley Dr – Fulton County District 6

Summary To authorize the release of an amount not to exceed \$15,000 of the Fulton County increment set aside in the Westside TAD to aid in the emergency stabilization of the historic St. Mark AME Church located in the English Avenue neighborhood.

Funding Source Westside TAD

Location 491 James P. Brawley Dr W Atlanta, GA 30314
Council District: 3 **NPU:** L
APS District: 2 **Fulton County District:** 6

Project Type Emergency Stabilization - Historic Preservation

Ownership Entity/Developer Atlanta Preservation Center

Description St. Mark AME Church, a Stone Mountain granite structure built in 1920, is one of the most prominent and historic landmarks in English Avenue. After decades of decline, fires, and the removal of its roof and interior, the property now survives as a stabilized stone shell and as of 2023, a designated City of Atlanta Landmark ruin. Incremental, volunteer-led preservation has prevented collapse, but critical wall capping, drainage improvements, and temporary shoring are urgently required to protect the structure and ensure public safety. In July 2025, the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation awarded its inaugural \$20,000 Wade and Mary Lu Mitchell African American Heritage Preservation Grant to the old St. Mark AME Church building for urgently needed masonry repairs. Subsequently, it was discovered that more significant damage and conditions were present at the southeastern part of the building and additional funding

was needed to fortify the structure to prevent further shifting. The requested TAD support will complete this critical phase of stabilization and allow the property to advance toward full architectural and engineering assessment for future adaptive reuse.

Stabilization Budget

Sources

GA Trust for Historic Preservation Grant	\$20,000
Westside TAD Grant	\$60,000
Total Sources	\$80,000

Uses

Structural Repairs	\$70,000
Preservation Oversight/Management	\$10,000
Total Sources	\$80,000

Community Benefits

- Stabilizes one of the most historically significant buildings in the city of Atlanta
- Contributes to the revitalization of the Westside and English Avenue / Vine City
- Protects public safety at a highly visible community gathering place
- Supports ongoing community revitalization, aligning with the 2017 Westside Land Use Framework Plan

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Approval to Release Fulton County Portion of Westside TAD Funds for Historic Preservation

Background

Originally built in 1920 as Western Heights Baptist Church and later acquired by the St. Mark AME congregation in 1948, the building embodies a layered, multi-racial, and multi-era history of Atlanta's Westside. The building was a significant "New South" architectural statement built by masons from across Georgia. It served as a major African American worship center and site of important community events, including AME conferences and Booker T. Washington High School ceremonies, and remains a testament to neighborhood transitions shaped by segregation, redlining, demographic shifts, and disinvestment.

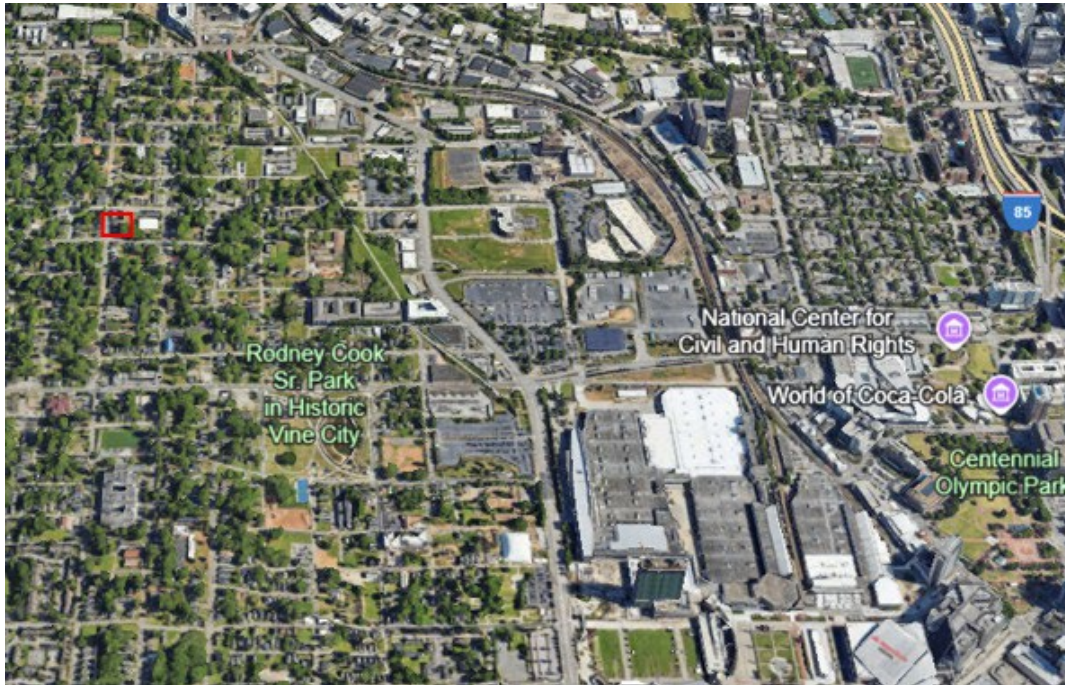
After abandonment in 1976 and severe deterioration, including fire damage, Pastor Winston Taylor acquired the property in 1995 and began decades of grassroots stabilization work. In partnership with the Atlanta Preservation Center and Georgia Institute of Technology, St. Mark became Atlanta's first designated Landmark ruin in 2023. The site now hosts community events, a pollinator garden, and preservation education programs, demonstrating its ongoing value as a civic resource. The 2017 Westside Land Use Framework Plan designates St. Mark AME as a core anchor site for neighborhood revitalization, calling for its adaptive reuse and integration into mixed-use redevelopment at the intersection of Cameron M. Alexander Blvd. and James P. Brawley Drive, an area in which Invest Atlanta has made considerable investment through use of the Westside TAD.

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Project Location



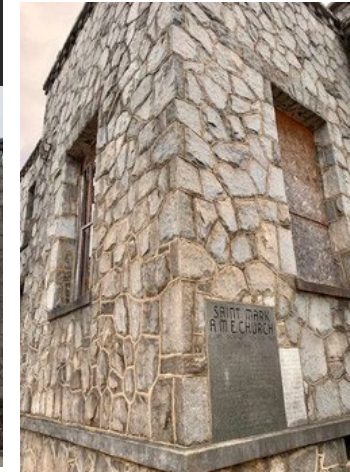
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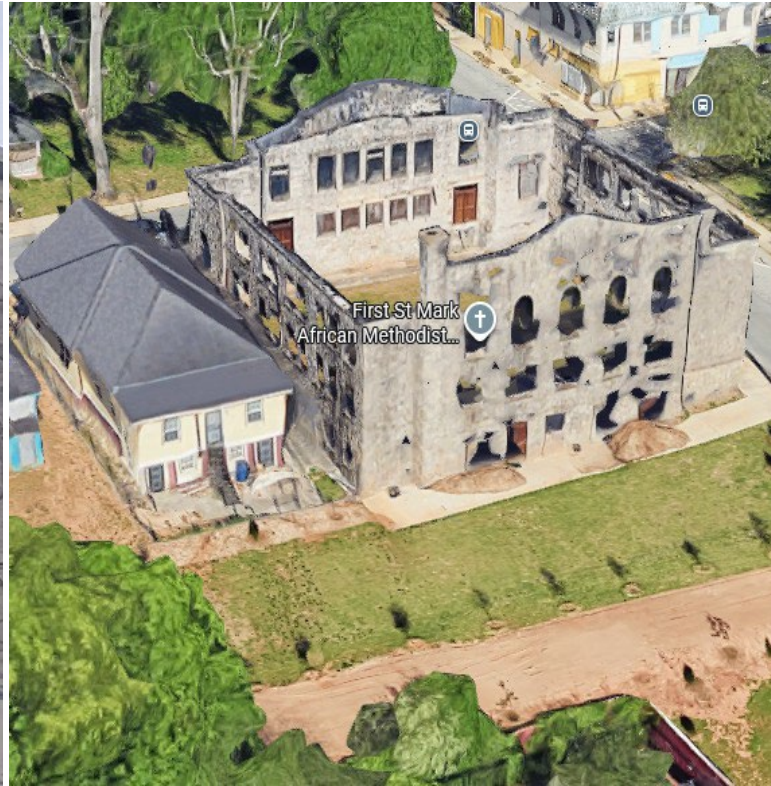
Old St. Mark AME Church gains historic landmark designation



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