

County Seeks Buyer For Historic Home

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Hamilton County is looking for someone who will take loving care of one of the oldest and most historic houses in the county — putting an ante-bellum home to 20th Century use.

The Dent House, recognized as one of the purest remaining examples of early Greek Revival plantation architecture, is up for sale at the Bonny Oaks Industrial Park.

Also at the new industrial park, which was formerly the site of Bonny Oaks School, the chapel and administration building are being offered for adaptive reuse.

Developers who buy any of the three historic structures will be required to follow restrictive covenants that forbid tearing down the buildings or significantly altering them.

County Executive Dalton Roberts said saving the Dent House fulfills a promise he made to the late Sen. Cartter Patten, longtime chairman of the board of Bonny Oaks School.

Mr. Roberts said Sen. Patten on one occasion showed him through the house and told him its historical significance.

He said Sen. Patten told him that he was aware that the land use at the school was eventually going to change, and he wanted to be assured that the Dent House should not be torn down.

Becky Browder, manager of real property, said the plan to save the three Bonny Oaks structures is similar to one the county worked out earlier in connection with the James County Court-

house.

The county has transferred that historic building at Ooltewah to a private businessman, who has re-stored it and makes it available for public use on occasions.

Mrs. Browder said, "In order to preserve the heritage of the Bonny Oaks property, the county has designated almost 3 acres of the industrial and office park as a Preservation Area."

She said the Dent House was built before the Civil War and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. "With tax credits available as an incentive, the property could be completely re-stored and used for offices or perhaps even a restaurant."

Mrs. Browder said, "The Bachman Memorial Chapel, built in 1939, is not listed on the National Register but is historically significant to the heritage of Bonny Oaks. It is the county's desire that the chapel be sold and renovated using original design and materials as guidelines. The modest chapel has the appeal of oak flooring, exposed wood ceilings and beams, and beautiful wooden pews. It seats approximately 230



HISTORY FOR SALE — The Dent House, dating to before the Civil War, is being offered for sale by the county at its Bonny Oaks Industrial Park.

Becky Browder, real property manager for the county, stands in front of the historic house. (Staff photo by Laura Walker)