



June 5, 2020

Chairman Bruce Morton
City of Atlanta
Tree Conservation Commission
55 Trinity Avenue S.W., Suite 3800
Atlanta, GA 30303

Re: Historic and Landmark Tree Nomination

Dear Chairman Morton:

On behalf of the Midtown Neighbors' Association, we're writing to express support for the Historic and Landmark designation of the Spiller Magnolia Trees in Midtown.

Criteria for designation of Historic and Landmark Trees that pertain to the Spiller Magnolia Trees:

- Age: ~125 years old
- Historic Significance:
 - Trees located in the baseball park where Atlanta's Cracker and Black Crackers played
 - Only tree in baseball that has been in play (i.e., Spiller Magnolia Tree – south)
 - Babe Ruth and Eddie Matthews hit homeruns into the Spiller Magnolia Tree – south
- Location and Setting: Adds to the beauty of the Atlanta BeltLine Arboretum along the Eastside Trail in the Midtown Neighborhood
- Size or Habit: An exemplary representation of the Magnolia genus and Grandiflora species

We understand the Tree Conservation Commission's designation of Historic and Landmark Trees provides for the registration of the Spiller Magnolia Trees with the Commission but does not provide protection. We stand ready to assist the Commission to protect these trees and share their history with all Atlantans.

Please refer to our attached nomination form. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CR Smith'.

Courtney R. Smith
President

president@midtownatlanta.org

Cc: Felicia Moore, City of Atlanta Council President
Jennifer Ide, City of Atlanta Councilman, District 6
David Zapananick, City of Atlanta, Arborist Division
Kathryn Evans, City of Atlanta, Arborist Division
Greg Levine, Trees Atlanta, Co-Executive Director & Chief Program Officer



Historic and Landmark Tree Nomination Form

Organization:

Midtown Neighbors' Association

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 77112, Atlanta, GA 30357

Email:

history@midtownatlanta.org

Type of trees being nominated:

- Common name: Magnolia - Southern
- Genus: Magnolia
- Species: Grandiflora

Name of trees:

- (1) Spiller Magnolia Tree – north
- (2) Spiller Magnolia Tree – south [tree that was in the Cracker's baseball park]

Location of trees (address and closest cross streets):

Ponce de Leon Ave. & Atlanta BeltLine Eastside Trail

Are the trees on public or private property?

Public

Specific location:

The Spiller Magnolia Trees are located between the T.J. Maxx in the Midtown Place Shopping Center and the Atlanta BeltLine Eastside Trail.

Provide as much of the following information as is known about the trees (use extra pages if necessary):

1. Approximate age:

~125 years old according to a Trees Atlanta estimate in February 2020

2. Historic significance, if any (provide documentation if available):

- Located in the baseball park where Atlanta's Cracker and Black Crackers teams played
- Only tree in baseball that has been in play (Spiller Magnolia Tree – south)
- Babe Ruth and Eddie Matthews hit homeruns into it (Spiller Magnolia Tree – south)
- Witnessed the first integrated professional sporting event in Atlanta, when Jackie Robinson and the Brooklyn Dodgers played against the Atlanta Crackers
- Article that further highlights the [historic significance](#) of the trees
- Trees Atlanta [designated](#) the southernmost Spiller Magnolia Tree as a "Champion" tree in 2010. To note: Trees Atlanta refers to the trees as "Cracker Field Magnolia – north" and "Cracker Field Magnolia – south"

3. Significance of location:

The Spiller Magnolia Trees are located where, Ponce Springs, the Ponce de Leon Ballpark ("Old Poncey"), and the Spiller Stadium once stood, and now overlook the Midtown Place Shopping Center.

4. Approximate size (diameter of trunk 4.5 feet from ground):

DBH for both trees is over 30 inches, which meets the Tree-Protection ordinance for "species" trees: [Code 1977, § 10-2035](#) Art. II. Tree Protection, Div 1., Sec, 158-26, *Specimen Tree* (1).

5. Describe any exemplary characteristics of the trees:

The Spiller Magnolia Trees are located in the Midtown Neighborhood and add to the beauty of the Atlanta BeltLine Arboretum along the Eastside Trail.

6. Photos:



The Spiller Magnolia Tree – south (southernmost tree) below the Atlanta BeltLine Eastside Trail



The Spiller Magnolia Tree – north (northernmost tree) below the Atlanta BeltLine Eastside Trail



The Spiller Magnolia Trees (north, left; south, right)



Aerial view of the Ponce de Leon Ball Park in 1959. Note the magnolia tree in center field.

Citation: N06-086_a, Tracy O'Neal Photographic Collection, 1923-1975, Photographic Collection. Special Collections and Archives, [Georgia State University Library](http://www.library.gsu.edu/spcoll/).