

Lichgate cottage still is awaiting a new lease on life



MARK WALLHEISER/Democrat

Several groups have vied for ownership of the Lichgate cottage off High Road over the past six months — so far with no luck.

The Laura Jepsen Institute, named for the home's former owner, is the latest to negotiate for the quaint but run-down property.

By Chandra Snell
DEMOCRAT WRITER

For now, the Lichgate cottage is still orphaned.

Since its original owner, retired FSU Professor Laura Jepsen, died more than a year ago, the 41-year-old English Tudor-style house owned by The Nature Conservancy has been waiting for a buyer. Several groups have vied for ownership during the past six months, so far all unsuccessfully.



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Broken windows bear testament to vandalism suffered by the cottage after its former owner was hospitalized in 1994.

The Laura Jepsen Institute, founded in July by many of Jepsen's former students, colleagues and acquaintances, is the latest group to begin negotiations to purchase the property, nestled off High Road behind one of the state's

oldest patriarch oak trees.

"Whether our proposal is accepted or not, we will continue with the Laura Jepsen Institute, and we would cooperate with whoever's proposal is accepted," said Carl Allen, a founder of the institute and owner of Black Cat News Exchange on South Monroe Street. "We had decided this from the very beginning."

Allen declined comment on details of the negotiations.

Lichgate, a 20-by-26-foot redwood house, was built in 1955 and includes handmade windows and a stone chimney. Wall-to-wall Florida cypress paneling runs inside, and the floor boards — some 22 inches long — are from a 233-year-old frame house.

Please see LICHGATE, 7B