

# ZONING CHANGE REVIEW SHEET

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CASE NUMBER: C14H-2010-0001

HLC DATE:

February 22, 2010

PC DATE:

April 13, 2010

APPLICANT: Ian Reddy, owner

HISTORIC NAME: Louis and Flossie John House

WATERSHED: Blunn Creek

ADDRESS OF PROPOSED ZONING CHANGE: 1924 Newning Avenue

ZONING FROM: SF-3-NP to SF-3-H-NP

SUMMARY STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends the proposed zoning change from single family residence, neighborhood plan (SF-3-NP) district to single family residence – Historic Landmark – neighborhood plan (SF-3-H-NP) combining district zoning.

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION ACTION: Recommended the proposed zoning change from single family residence, neighborhood plan (SF-3-NP) district to single family residence – Historic Landmark – neighborhood plan (SF-3-H-NP) combining district zoning. Vote: 7-0.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The house is beyond the bounds of the Comprehensive Cultural Resources Survey (1984).

CITY COUNCIL DATE:

ACTION:

ORDINANCE READINGS: 1ST 2ND 3RD

ORDINANCE NUMBER:

CASE MANAGER: Steve Sadowsky

PHONE: 974-6454

NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION: South River City Neighborhood Association

BASIS FOR RECOMMENDATION:

Architecture:

The ca. 1937 stone-veneer house is an excellent example of Moorish-influenced Mediterranean Revival architecture. The house is rectangular-plan with a flat roof and a combination of steel casement windows and 1:1 wood-frame wood sash windows with divided light screens. A full-width one-story round-arched arcaded stone veneered flat-roofed independent porch extends along the front of the house; a smaller porch of identical design is located on the south side of the house. The open decks on top of the porches have decorative triangular stonework above the round-arched doorways, each containing a stone drip molding and semi-circular canopy with a cut stone veneer. Along the street frontages of the property is a 5-foot high stone wall. Iron gates in the wall and railings along the first floor of the porches

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were reportedly crafted by prominent local artisan Fortunat Weigl. A ca. 1939 one-story rectangular-plan hipped roof stone veneered frame garage and guest house is located at the south end of the property.

#### Historical Associations:

The house was built in 1937 for Louis and Vlasta (Flossie) John, who operated the Alamo Cash Grocery at 405 E. 6<sup>th</sup> Street at the time. Louis John was an immigrant from Lebanon, and represents the large immigration of Maronite Catholics from Lebanon to Austin in the 1910s. John had come from Lebanon in 1914, about the same time as several other prominent local Lebanese-American families, such as the Jabours, Nassours, Josephs, Tannouses, and others, moved to Austin. All were initially employed as peddlers, eventually opening their own groceries, liquor stores, confectionaries, and clothing stores. The Lebanese community in Austin lived within close proximity to each other, and many lived and worked in the vicinity of 6<sup>th</sup> Street and East Avenue. Several opened businesses on Congress Avenue, but the community appears to have centered on E. 6<sup>th</sup> Street in the early period of immigration. The 1920 U.S. Census shows Louis John as an unmarried 25-year old dry goods peddler, who with his older brother Joe, also a dry goods peddler, lived in the home of Charlie Bashara, another immigrant from Lebanon, at 511 East Avenue. Bashara owned a grocery business, and his household in 1920 included his own large family, the John brothers, Antonio Farris, and John Joseph, along with Joseph's son and brother. Joseph was a grocer; the other men were dry goods peddlers or grocery salesmen. All were listed as immigrants from Syria, which is how the area now known as Lebanon was typically listed in this census report. Louis John married his wife Flossie, the Texas-born daughter of Czech immigrants, in 1928; the 1930 U.S. Census shows them living in a rented house at 1413 Canterbury Street. John was listed as a merchant in the 1930 report.

By 1935, Louis and Flossie had opened their grocery and meat market at 405 E. 6<sup>th</sup> Street (later the home of Jabour's Liquor Store), and had moved to 507 E. Mary Street in South Austin. The 1935 Sanborn map shows a small one-story frame house on this site with an address of 2006 Newning Avenue, which corresponds to city directory listings for the Johns at the time. That house was likely demolished for the construction of the current house; the garage and guesthouse were built in 1939, according to city building and utility records; there are no records for the construction or utility connections at the main house. It is possible that the Johns lived in the small house shown on the 1935 Sanborn map prior to constructing this house; the city directory of 1939 shows the Johns at 1924 Newning Avenue; 2006 Newning no longer appears as an address. Louis and Flossie John lived in this house for the rest of their lives.

John eventually moved out of the grocery business and became a building contractor. The 1949 city directory lists him as a carpenter; by the mid-1950s, he was listed as a contractor, and reportedly built several houses in the Travis Heights area of the city. John passed away in 1958; Flossie continued to live here until her death in 2001. After her death, the guest house on the property was rented to a caretaker, but the house was unoccupied until purchased in 2006 by the current owner, Ian Reddy, from Flossie John's niece.

**PARCEL NO.:** 03020011220000

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LEGAL DESCRIPTION: Lots 5 and 6, Block 1, Blue Bonnet Hills

ANNUAL TAX ABATEMENT: \$10,066 (owner-occupied); city portion: \$2,000 (capped).

APPRAISED VALUE: \$725,103

PRESENT USE: Single family residence

CONDITION: Good

PRESENT OWNER: Ian Reddy

DATE BUILT: ca. 1937

ALTERATIONS/ADDITIONS: None.

ORIGINAL OWNER(S): Louis and Flossie John (1937)

OTHER HISTORICAL DESIGNATIONS: None.

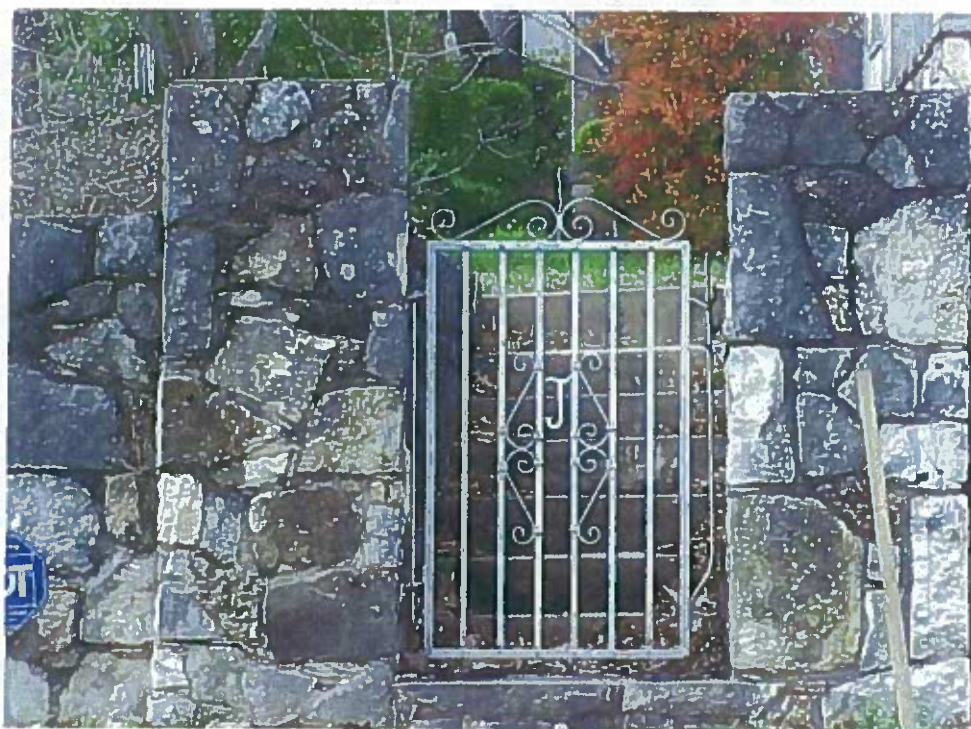




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Garage and guest house



Detail of gate on Newning Avenue – note the “J” for John in the ironwork



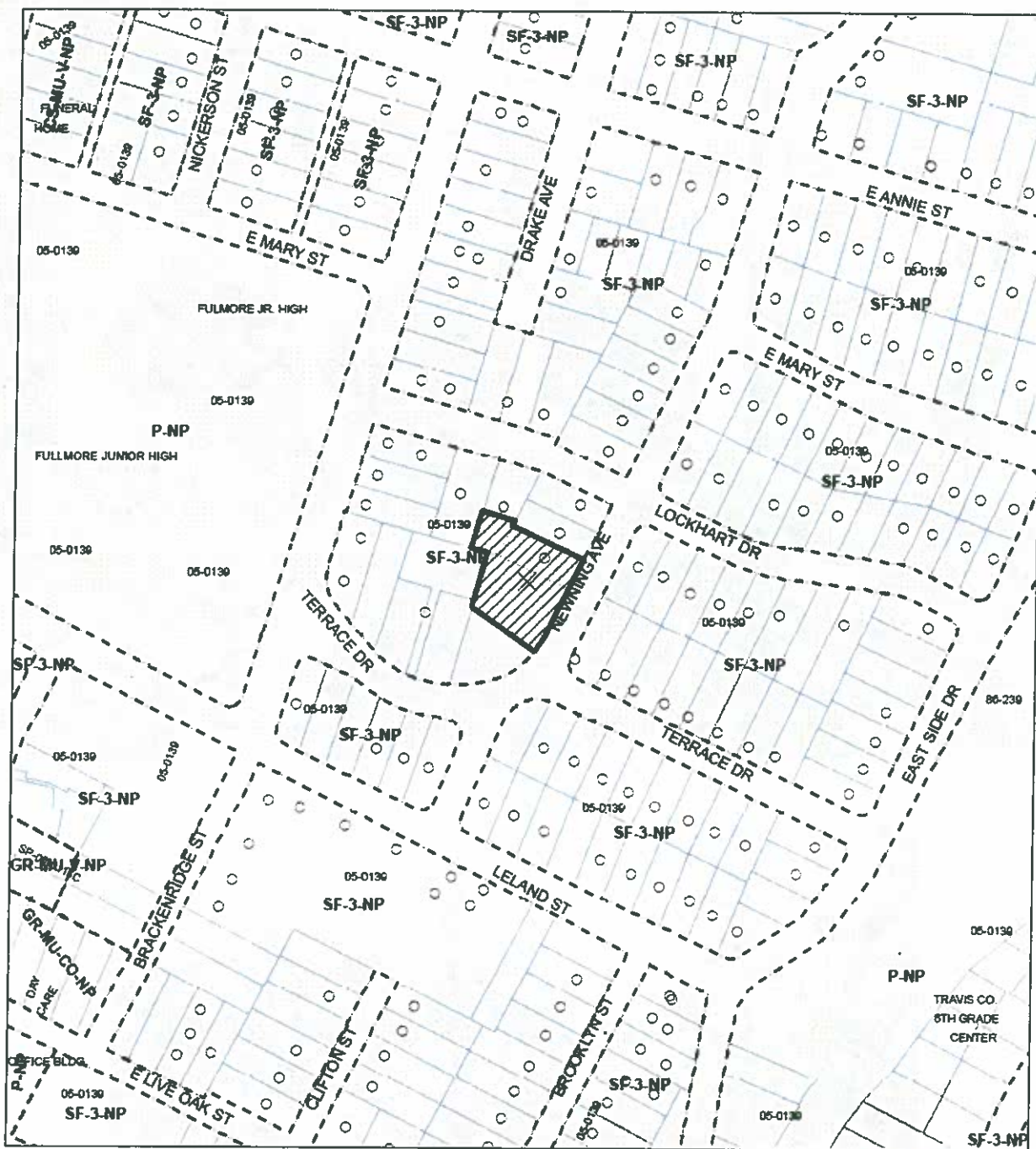


Detail of the upper story with the band of stone triangles at the cornice and the ironwork on the open roof deck






# LOCATION MAP

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1" = 200'

-  **SUBJECT TRACT**
-  **ZONING BOUNDARY**
-  **PENDING CASE**

OPERATOR: S. MEEKS

**HISTORIC ZONING**  
**ZONING CASE#:** C14H-2010-0001  
**ADDRESS:** 1924 NEWNING AVE  
**SUBJECT AREA:** 0.000 ACRES  
**GRID:** J20  
**MANAGER:** S. SADOWSKY



This map has been produced by G.I.S. Services for the sole purpose of geographic reference. No warranty is made by the City of Austin regarding specific accuracy or completeness.

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Louis Johns 1926a-b Newning Ave  
124 - 1 S.53' of 5 -

Blue Bonnet Hills

Rock veneer duplex garage apartment

265n - 3/27/39

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Building permit to Louis John for the construction of the garage and guest house (1939)

WATER SERVICE PERMIT  
Austin, Texas

124 N° 13829

Received of Louis John Date July 11, 1939

Address 1926 Newning Ave

Amount Two and 50/100 2.50

Plumber Oiesel 1 Size of Tap 1/2

Date of Connection 7/11/39

Size of Tap Made 1/2

Size Service Made 1/2

Size Main Tapped 6"

From Front Prop. Line to Curb Cock 5'

From 1/2 Prop. Line to Curb Cock 19'

Location of Meter CURB

Type of Box 12x14

Depth of Main in St. 12

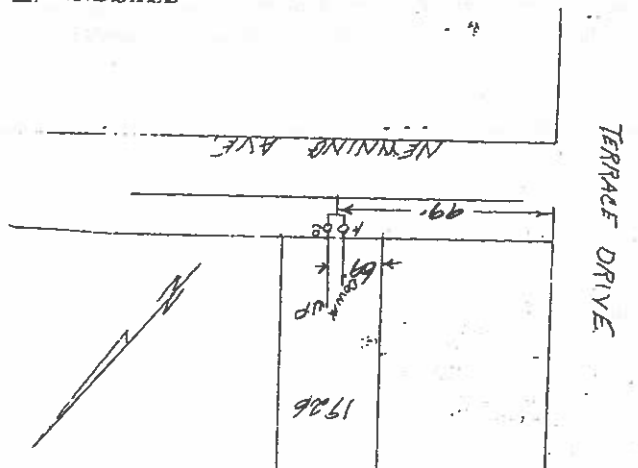
Depth of Service Line 12

From Curb Cock to Tap on Main 19'

Checked by Engr. Dept. 7-31-39

No. Fillings	Size	Curb Cock	Elbow	St. Elbow	Bushing	Reducer	Pipe	Lead Comp.	Nipples	Union	Plug	Te	Stop	Box	Lid	Valves	Job No.	Reg. No.

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Water service permit for the garage and guest house (1939)

Melanie Martinez  
1214 Newning Ave.  
Austin, TX 78704  
(512) 916-8088

December 20, 2009

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Steve Sadowsky  
Austin Historic Preservation Office  
Planning and Development Review Department  
P.O. Box 1088  
Austin, Texas 78767

Dear Mr. Sadowsky and City Staff,

I am so excited that Ian Reddy and Angela Reed are applying for historic zoning for their beautiful, 1937 Spanish Mission Revival home at 1924 Newning Avenue. I believe it is a valuable asset to our historic neighborhood of Travis Heights and the greater City of Austin both in terms of architecture and regarding the cultural relevance of its occupants' influence on the community.

As coordinator of the Travis Heights-Fairview Park Historic District project I have been involved in the very extensive survey of our historic properties and this one is definitely a jewel that merits special attention and protection, due to its architectural value alone. Our neighborhood may be one of the most diverse in Austin in terms of architectural styles, with a history that reaches back to Austin's first development south of the river. This house is one of the prime examples city-wide of its architectural style. The iron railings spelling out the original owner's name is particularly charming and worthy of note, as several other, smaller homes of the same style in Travis Heights feature this lettering or initials, as well, and may have also been built by Louis John, emphasizing the Johns' influence on our neighborhood's architectural history, not to mention the potential that this ironwork was created at our local Ironworks.

The history of The Johns' role in Austin society is also worth preserving. Their experience as first-generation immigrants from Lebanon and Czechoslovakia and their involvement in Austin's community owning a grocery store at several locations and Mr. Johns' later work as a builder and developer certainly merits a chapter in Austin's social and cultural history.

Our Historic District group enthusiastically supports the approval of this home as a registered City of Austin historic landmark.

Sincerely,

Melanie Martinez  
Travis Heights-Fairview Park Historic District  
[www.HistoricTravisHeights.org](http://www.HistoricTravisHeights.org)