

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION
JANUARY 28, 2013
DEMOLITION AND RELOCATION PERMITS
2906 RIO GRANDE STREET
HDP-2012-0428

PROPOSAL

Demolish a ca. 1929 house.

ARCHITECTURE

One-story, rectangular-plan, front-gabled frame bungalow-style house with an enclosed, partial-width, projecting inset front porch, now with modern replacement windows; single and paired 1:1 fenestration.

RESEARCH

City utility permits and Sanborn maps reveal that the house was built in 1929 by Benjamin F. Lensing, who lived at 2914 Rio Grande Street, as a rental unit. Benjamin F. Lensing never occupied this house, and he died in 1929. The house was rented to a wide variety of tenants, the first being John McCoy, a laborer at Lone Star Ice Company, and his wife, Lucinda. The McCoy's lived here for about a year. There were frequent changes in the tenants of this property; in the early 1930s, the house was rented by UT instructor Melvin Thomas, Helmer and Bertha Rydberg (he worked in the display department at Scarbrough's department store), and William Butler, an engineer at the Austin Ice Company. The first time that there was a tenancy of more than a year or two in this house was in the 1940s, when the house was rented by C. Alfred and Elfrieda Anderson. He was a mechanic. Winnie Allen, who had been a teacher in the Austin public schools, and later an archivist at the University of Texas, rented this house in the 1950s.

STAFF COMMENTS

The house is listed in the Comprehensive Cultural Resources Survey (1984) but without a priority for research.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Release the demolition permit. The house has been modified, and has neither the architectural nor the historical significance to warrant individual designation as a historic landmark.

LOCATION MAP



SUBJECT TRACT



ZONING BOUNDARY

CASE#: HDP-2012-0428
LOCATION: 2906 Rio Grande



This product is for informational purposes and may not have been prepared for or be suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes. It does not represent an on-the-ground survey and represents only the approximate relative location of property boundaries.
This product has been produced by the Planning and Development Review Department for the sole purpose of geographic reference. No warranty is made by the City of Austin regarding specific accuracy or completeness.

2906 Rio Grande Street
ca. 1929



OCCUPANCY HISTORY
2906 Rio Grande Street

City Directory Research, Austin History Center
By City Historic Preservation Office
February, 2007

- | | |
|------|--|
| 1992 | Richard H. Chetham, owner
Retired |
| 1987 | Richard H. Chetham, owner
Chief radio tech, University of Texas
Also listed is Mrs. Marguerite E. Chetham, retired. |
| 1981 | Richard H. Chetham, owner
Chief radiology technician, U.T. Student Health Services
Also listed is Marguerite Chetham, retired. |
| 1975 | Richard Chetham, renter
Chief radiology tech, U.T. Student Health Services |

- 1969 Richard H. Chetham, owner
Chief X-ray technician, University of Texas
- 1963 William C. and Dorothy L. Haydon, renters
William: Student
Dorothy: Receptionist, Pacific Finance
- 1959 Winnie Allen, owner
Archivist, University of Texas
- 1955 Winnie Allen, owner
Archivist, University of Texas
- 1952 Winnie Allen, owner
Librarian
- 1949 Wayne I. and Frances L. Miller, owners
Wayne: Student, University of Texas
Frances: Student, University of Texas
- 1947 Byron E. and Myra L. Summers, owners
Clerk, State Department of Health
- 1944-45 C. Alfred and Elfreida Anderson, renters
Mechanic
- 1942 C. Alfred and Elfreida Anderson, renters
Mechanic
- 1940 Wilson M. and Lila M. Young, renters
Meat cutter, D.A. Shipwash Grocery, 2900 Rio Grande Street
- 1937 Frank S. Perry, renter
No occupation listed
Also listed are Frances V. Perry, Frank C. Perry, and Mary L. Perry, all students
at the University of Texas.
- 1935 William A. and Theo P. Butler, renters
Engineer, Austin Ice Company
- 1932-33 P. Helmer and Bertha Rydberg, renters
Display department, E.M. Scarbrough & Sons
- 1930-31 Melvin A. and Myrtle Thomas, renters
Instructor, University of Texas
- 1929 John and Lucinda McCoy, renters
Laborer, Lone Star Ice Company

NOTE: There are earlier listings for the address of 2906 Rio Grande Street, but these are for the house immediately to the north, now known as 2908 Rio Grande Street. The house was built in 1929 by Benjamin F. Lensing, who lived at 2914 Rio Grande Street with his wife, Elizabeth F. Lensing. The 1929 city directory does not list an occupation for Lensing, and he is

not listed in the 1927 city directory – his brother-in-law, N.A. Baker is listed as the owner of that house. The 1930-31 city directory shows Elizabeth F. Lensing, the widow of Benjamin F. Lensing, living at 2914 Rio Grande. She had no occupation listed.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES:

Benjamin F. and Elizabeth Lensing, the builders of the house

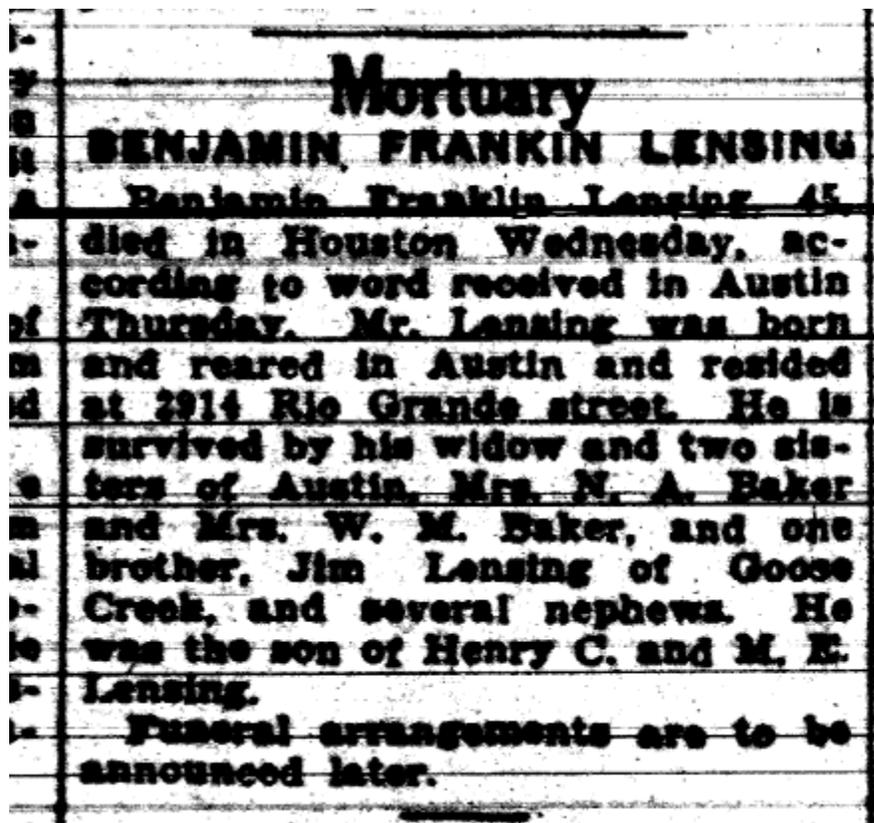
The 1900 U.S. Census shows Benjamin F. Lensing as the 15-year old son of Henry and Mary Lensing, who lived at 3006 Rio Grande Street. Benjamin Lensing had no occupation listed; his father, Henry, was a teamster. The 1930 U.S. Census shows Elizabeth F. Lensing as a 41-year old widow living in the home of her sister and brother-in-law, Noble and Helena Baker, at 2914 Rio Grande Street. Elizabeth Lensing had been born in New York and was a nurse in a private home. Noble A. Baker was a 55-year old Texas-born meat cutter. Helena Baker was 47 years old and had been born in Texas.

Melvin and Myrtle Thomas (ca. 1930- ca. 1932)

The 1930 U.S. Census shows Melvin and Myrtle Thomas as the renters of this house. Melvin Thomas was a 27-year old university teacher who had been born in Nebraska. Myrtle Thomas was also 27, and had been born in South Dakota to Danish-born parents. They had a young son, Stanley, who had been born in Utah.

Wilson and Lila Young (ca. 1940- ca. 1941)

Wilson and Lila Young appear as the renters of this house in the 1940 U.S. Census report. Wilson Young was then 33, had been born in Texas, and was a butcher in a retail grocery store. Lila Young was then 31 and had been born in Texas. They had a young son, Robert, who had been born in Texas.



Obituary of Benjamin F. Lensing, the builder of this house as a rental unit
Austin American, December 20, 1929

Winnie A. Allen

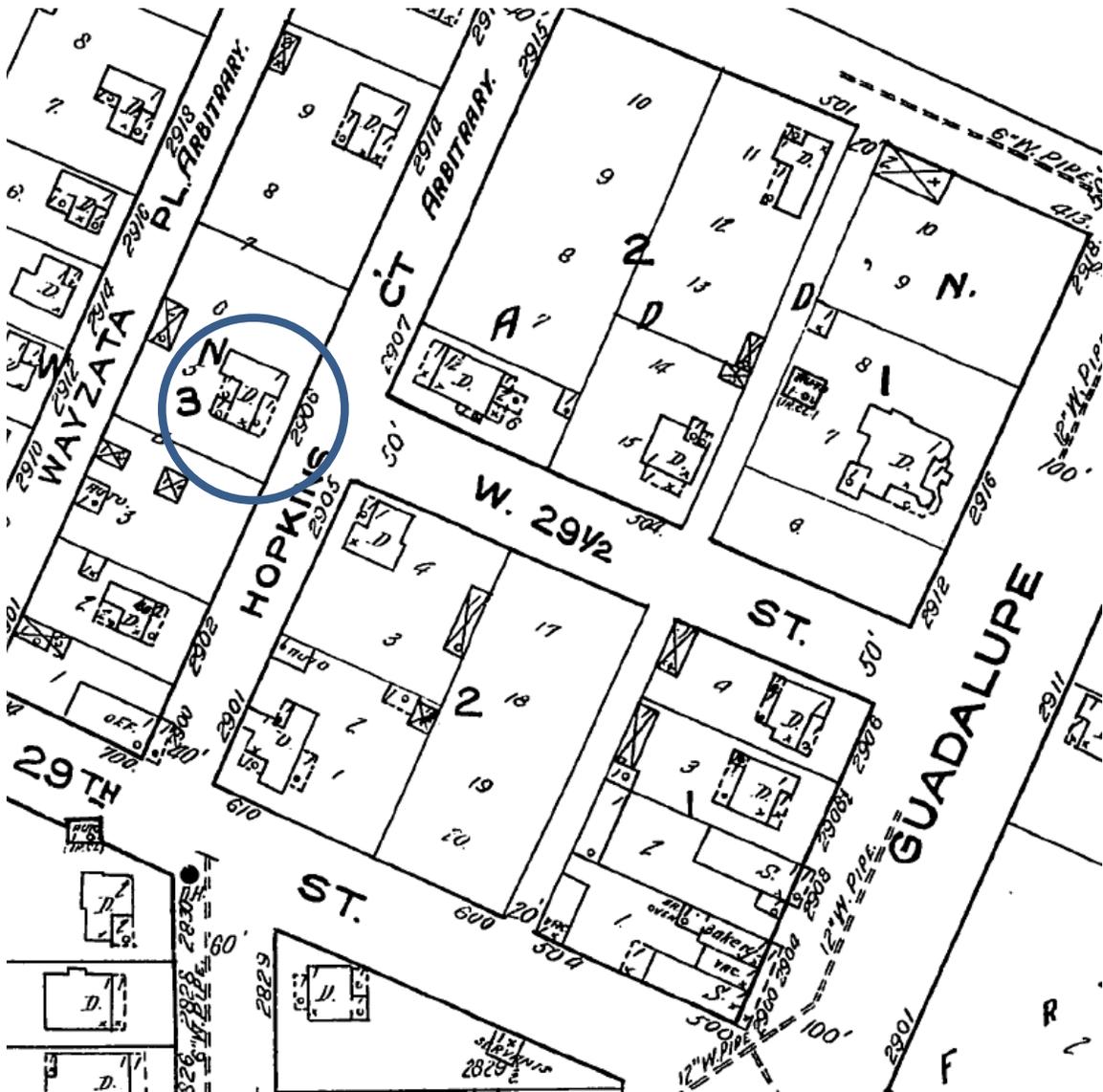
Winnie A. Allen, age 86, of Austin, formerly of Bertram, died Friday, July 26, 1996.

A retired Austin school teacher, she taught first grade at Riley Elementary School for 20 years. She was a lifelong member of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and a lifetime member of the Order of the Eastern Star.

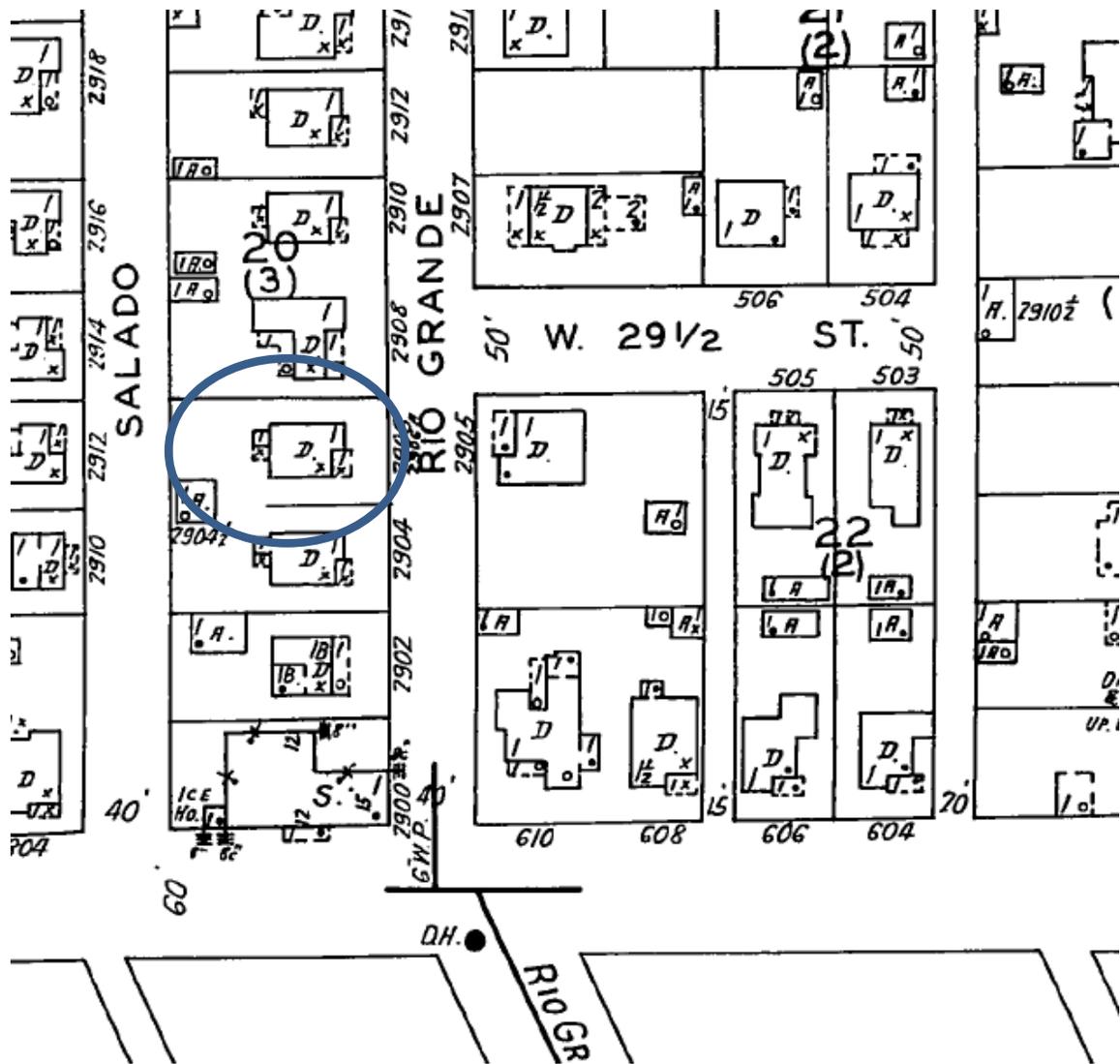
Survivors include her husband, Wilbur B. Allen; son and daughter-in-law, George and Peggy Allen of Austin; granddaughter, Shayna D. Otting and husband Chris of Austin; grandsons, Robert A. Allen and wife Cindy of Arlington, Tommy W. Allen and wife, Missy of Spring, and Sean E. Lamphere of Lubbock; great-grandsons, Seth Allen of Austin, Blake and Justin Allen of Spring and Zachary Otting of Austin; and nephew, Bob Insall of Austin.

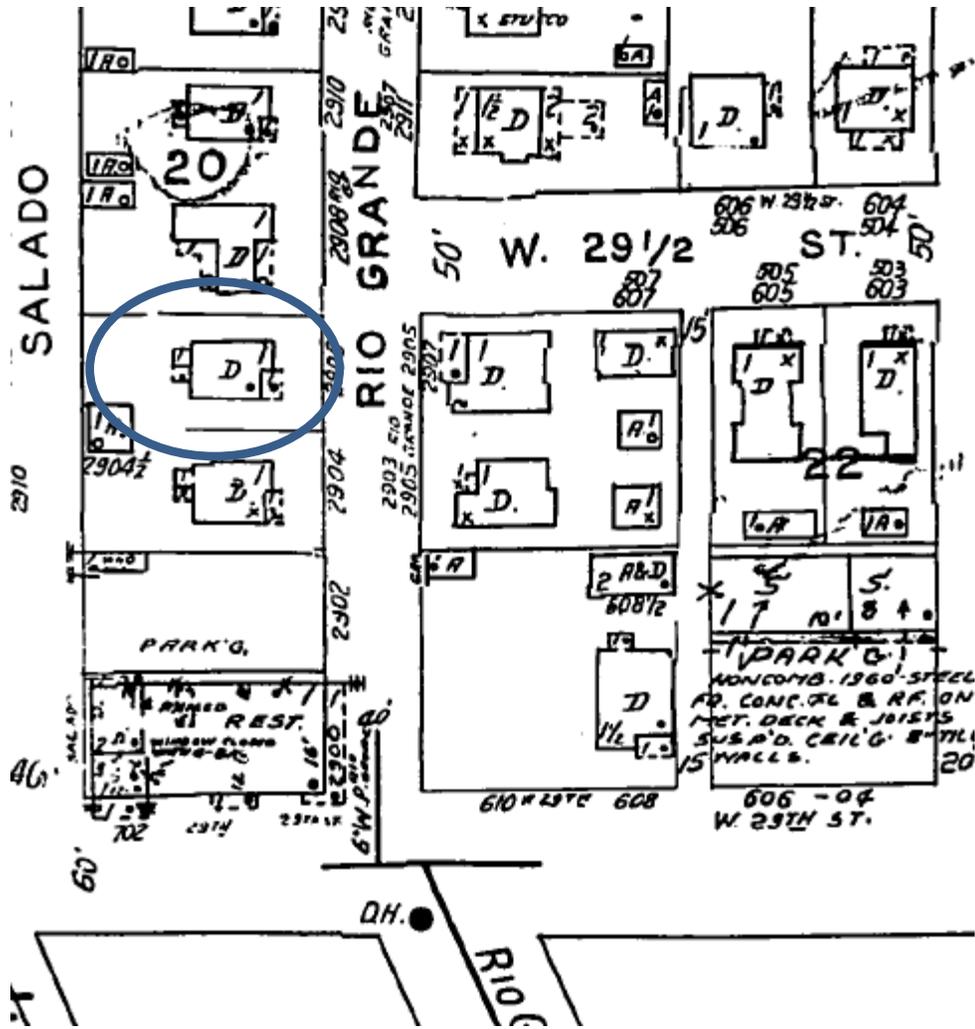
Funeral services will be held at 10:00 a.m. Monday in the Weed-Corley-Fish Chapel with Reverend Allen Grant officiating. Graveside services will be held at 12:00 p.m. Monday in the Bagdad Cemetery, Leander, Texas.

Arrangements by Weed-Corley-Fish Funeral Home, 3125 N. Lamar, 452-8811.



The 1922 Sanborn map shows a house with the address of 2906 Rio Grande Street, but this house is a little to the north of the current house, which was built in 1929. The same house appears on the 1935 Sanborn map below with an address of 2908 Rio Grande Street. City directories reveal that the house now at 2908 Rio Grande Street was built ca. 1910. Note that this section of Rio Grande Street was called Hopkins Court in 1922, but the name Hopkins Court never appeared in city directories.





The 1962 Sanborn map shows the same configuration and location of the house as was shown on the 1935 map above.

On sec. map shown
 CONNECTING CHARGE \$ 12.00
 APPLICATION FOR SEWER CONNECTION. No. 18063
 Austin, Texas. 10/8 - 1928

To the Superintendent of Sewer and Public Improvements,
 City of Austin, Texas.

Sir:-

I hereby make application for sewer connection and instructions on
 premises owned by B. S. Lensing
 at 2906 Rio Grande Street
Lot 4-BK 3 residence
 which place is to be used as a _____

In this place there are to be installed _____ fixtures.

I agree to pay the City Sewer Department the regular ordinance
 charge.

Respectfully, B. S. Lensing

Location of Public Sewer: by alley - 4 ft deep

Connected 10-25 1928

Size of Main 6 inches

Size of Service 4 inches

3 Feet Deep in ft.

22 Feet from Property Line

_____ Feet from Curb Line

Connection made by Spence
not ready
10-25-28

DIAGRAM
B-82

10/16/28

Application for a sewer connection for this address by Benjamin Lensing (1928)

Unless the Plumbing is done in strict accordance with City Ordinances, do not turn on the water.

No. A 2330

PERMIT FOR WATER SERVICE Austin, Texas

INDEXED

M. B.F. Lensing Address 2906 Redwood St.

Plumber Barney Lhuacourt Size of Tap 1/2 Date 4/8/29

Foreman's Report:

Date of Connection 4/9/29
 Size of Tap Made 3/4
 Size Service Made 3/4
 Size Main Tapped 6"
 From Front Prop. Line to Curb Cock 8'
 " " " " " " 12'
 Location of Meter at curb
 Type of Box lock
 Depth of Main in St. 3'
 " " Service Line 20"
 From Curb Cock to Tap on Main 8.6"

No. Fittings	Size	
1	3/4"	Curb Cock
1	3/4"	Elbow
1	3/4"	St. Elbow
1	3/4"	Bushing
1	1/2"	Reducer
1	3/4"	Pipe
1	3/4"	Lead Comp.
1	3/4"	Nipples
		Union
		Plug
		Tee
1		Stop
1		Box
1		Lid
		Valves
		Req. No. <u>3414</u>

Checked by Engr. Dept. 6-22-29
INDEXED
Tim

Foreman's Signature Barney Lhuacourt

Water service permit to B.F. Lensing for this address (1929)