

**HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION  
APRIL 22, 2013  
DEMOLITION AND RELOCATION PERMITS  
604 AND 606 RIO GRANDE STREET  
HDP-2013-0098 AND HDP-2013-0099**

## **PROPOSAL**

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Demolish three structures: a ca. 1901 (or ca. 1925) house, a ca. 1925 house, and a ca. 1937 garage apartment.

**UPDATE:** THE WINDOWS ON THE HOUSE HAVE BEEN LOST, BUT THE COLUMNS HAVE BEEN REPLACED AS PER THE COMMISSION'S REQUEST.

## **ARCHITECTURE**

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The main structure on the site is now a combination of the ca. 1901 (or ca. 1925 – see discussion below) house and the ca. 1925 house; they were joined together with a roofed connector in the 1970s.

The main building is a one-story, rectangular-plan, pyramidal hipped roof, stuccoed duplex with 1:1 fenestration and double front doors, each with a round-arched entry hood over the door. The building which historically bore the address of 604 Rio Grande Street, but which is now connected to the former duplex at 606 Rio Grande, is a one-story, rectangular-plan, hipped-roof, stuccoed frame structure with an almost-full-width inset porch with a central, round-arched “eyebrow” at the entry to the house. The house has single, 2:2 fenestration on the front.

The garage apartment, which was constructed in 1937 over the existing one-story garage, is a two-story, rectangular-plan, side-gabled, brick garage apartment with a full-width, shed-roofed, integral balcony with plain, square wood posts and a square wood baluster railing. Fenestration is minimal, but consists of 2:1 windows. The ground floor of the building is taken up with former automobile garage bays.

## **RESEARCH**

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City directories going back to 1903 show that John H. Mettenheimer, the manager of the seed department at the Austin Oil Company, a cottonseed oil mill at 5<sup>th</sup> and Chicon Streets, lived here, although it may not have been the same house. The 1900 Sanborn map shows another frame house on this site, but it does not match the existing building, so it may be assumed that the house shown on the 1900 map was demolished or otherwise removed for the current house to be built. The existing house (606 Rio Grande Street) may originally have been a frame house that was stuccoed over at some point, but it also could be that the house shown on the 1900 Sanborn map remained here until around 1925, when it was demolished and the current stucco duplex and small side house were constructed. John Mettenheimer was a young Kentucky-born widower; he lived on this site until around 1905, and died in Dallas in 1920.

The next occupants of the site were Joe and Pearl Key. Joe Key was a partner (with A.J. and Ben Thorp) in a dry goods, clothing, and shoe store at 217 E. 6<sup>th</sup> Street. He is listed only in the 1906-07 city directory; after that, it is only Pearl Key who is listed. The 1910 U.S. Census shows Pearl Key as a divorced woman, but she is listed in later census reports and in city directories as a widow. There is no indication of what happened to Joe Key – there is no death record for him from the period before 1910, and there are a couple of people named Joe Key who died in the 1920s and 1930s, but none in Austin, and their

obituaries are not available to determine which of these (if any) was married to Pearl in Austin.

Pearl Key lived here for the rest of her life - she died at 101 years old in 1970. She never had an occupation listed in the city directories or later census reports, but she always had at least one of her children living with her, as well as her mother, Elizabeth Barkley, the widow of a Confederate Army major. Several of her sons were involved in real estate – Rickey also served on the city’s Board for the Equalization of Taxes in the 1950s. After Pearl died in 1970, Ricky continued to live here until the mid-1970s, when the house was converted to commercial use (law offices), and in the 1990s, to restaurant use.

There is some confusion as to the date of the duplex – it is not clear whether the old frame house was remodeled into a duplex or simply replaced with the current duplex, and what year that occurred. Beginning around 1925, Pearl had a duplex here – she lived on one side and rented out the other. She also apparently built the small house that historically had the address of 604 Rio Grande around 1925, which is now connected to the duplex with an architectural connector. If an older house was remodeled into the duplex, then that occurred around 1925 as shown by city directory records indicating a duplex use here, but city water permits for the duplex were not issued until 1933. The 1935 Sanborn map shows the structure as a duplex, but it is not noted as being stucco – and the 1961 Sanborn map clearly shows the duplex and smaller side house as stuccoed. Either way, the duplex clearly has 1920s architectural style, so whether it was a remodel of an older structure or a new structure, the current appearance of the duplex indicates a 1920s construction date. There is no building permit in the city records to indicate when the transformation occurred.

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#### **STAFF COMMENTS**

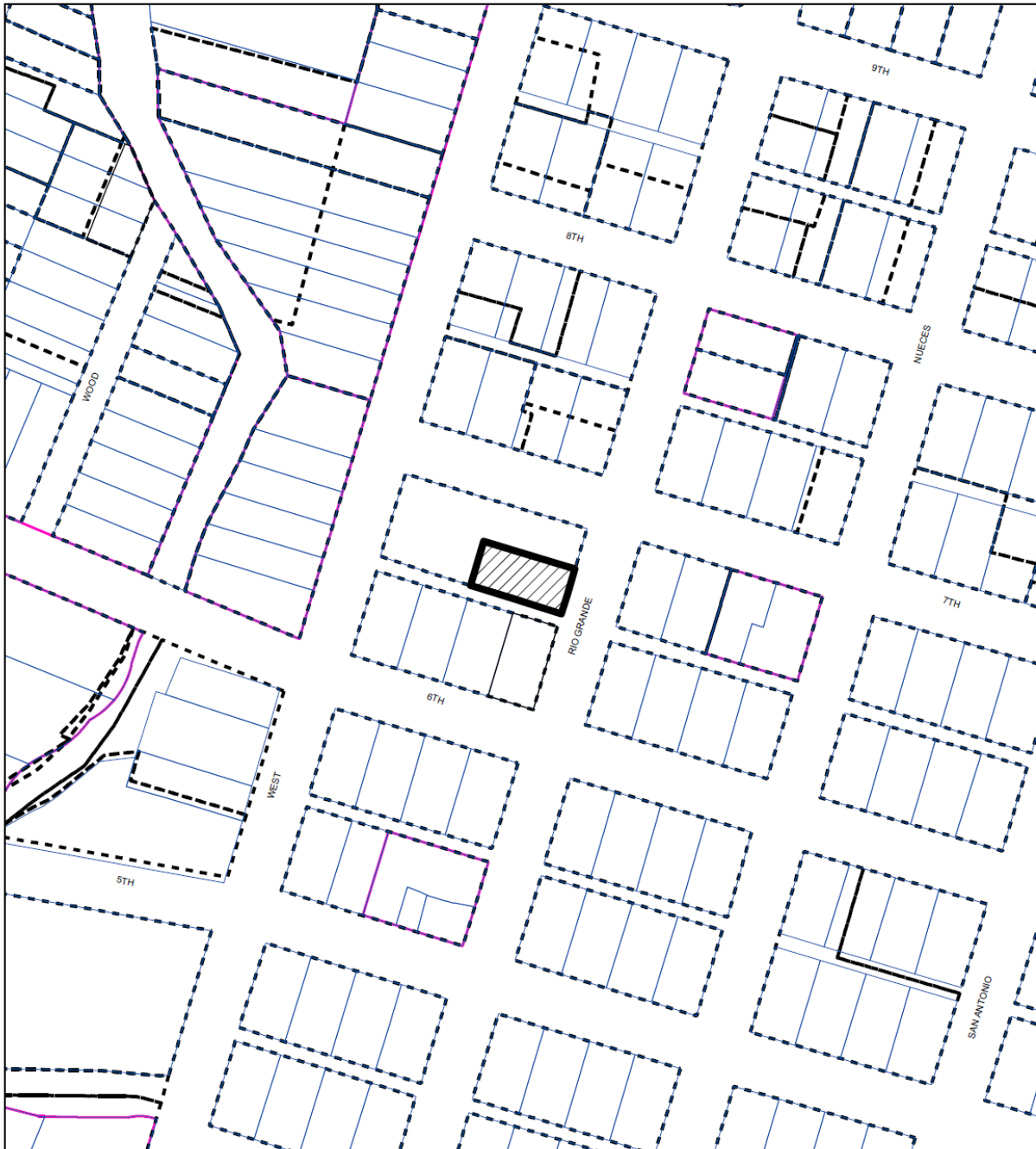
The house appears in the Comprehensive Cultural Resources Survey (1984) but without a priority for research.

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#### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Release the permits upon completion of a City of Austin Documentation Package consisting of photographs of all elevations, a dimensioned sketch plan, and a narrative history of the house, for archiving at the Austin History Center. The buildings have neither the architectural nor this historical significance to warrant individual designation as historic landmarks.

## LOCATION MAP



SUBJECT TRACT



ZONING BOUNDARY

CASE#: HDP-2013-0099  
LOCATION: 606 Rio Grande Street



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.



604-606 Rio Grande Street  
ca. 1901 [?] or ca. 1925



Duplex





Duplex and small house that historically had the address of 604 Rio Grande Street





The former 604 Rio Grande Street



ca. 1937 garage apartment – built over an older garage.





ca. 1937 garage apartment

## OCCUPANCY HISTORY 604-606 Rio Grande Street

City Directory Research, Austin History Center  
By City Historic Preservation Office  
March, 2013

1992	604:	The address is not separately listed.
	606:	Vacant

1985-86	604:	The address is not separately listed.
	606:	Vacant

1981	604:	No return
	606:	Jerry C. Saegert Lawyer
		Jim Walsh Lawyer
		Byrd W. Chapman Lawyer
		Leon Pope Lawyer

1977	604: Jerry Box Realty 606: Jerry C. Saegert Lawyer  John D. Woodell Lawyer  Imaginative Communications, Inc. Jerry Sargent, manager
1973	604: The address is not separately listed. 606: Ofelia Nix, renter Cashier, Holy Cross Hospital, 2600 E. 19 <sup>th</sup> Street. 606½: Rickey G. Key, owner Retired
1968	604: No return 606: Johanna Hughes, renter Retired 606½: Pearl R. Key, owner Retired
1962	604: Vacant 606: Dora Cook, renter Widow, J.V. Cook No occupation listed 606½: Pearl R. Key, owner No occupation listed Also listed is Rickey Key, no occupation stated.
1959	604: Vacant 606: Kenneth Foster, renter No occupation listed 606½: Pearl R. Key, owner No occupation listed Also listed is Rickey Key, no occupation stated.
1955	604: Travis County Tuberculosis Association 606: Dorothy C. Lowrie, renter Widow, Arthur Lowrie No occupation listed Also listed is Dorothy R. Lowrie, a clerk with the State Employment Commission. 606½: Pearl R. Key, owner No occupation listed Also listed is Rickey Key, real estate (office at the house).



1952	<p>604: Travis County Tuberculosis Association</p> <p>606: Lwynton and Martha H. Estes, renters Salesman</p> <p>606½: Pearl R. Key, owner No occupation listed Also listed is Rickey Key, a member of the City Board of Equalization of Taxes.</p>
1949	<p>604: Travis County Tuberculosis Association</p> <p>606: Vacant</p> <p>606½: Pearl R. Key, owner No occupation listed Also listed is Rickey Key, a member of the City Board of Equalization of Taxes.</p>
1947	<p>604: Vacant</p> <p>606: Morris Polsky, Physician NOTE: Morris and Zelda Polsky lived at 511 W. 18<sup>th</sup> Street.</p> <p>606½: Pearl R. Key, owner Widow, Joseph H. Key No occupation listed Also listed are Jack H. Key, vending machines (at the house); and Rickey Key, real estate (office at the house).</p>
1944-45	<p>604: Samuel W. and Hattie L. Montgomery, renters Clerk, State Unemployment Commission</p> <p>606: Hudson G. and Aldeen Anderson, renters Station attendant</p> <p>606½: Pearl R. Key, owner Widow, Joseph H. Key No occupation listed Also listed are Joseph Key, no occupation stated, and Rickey M. Key, real estate (office at the house).</p>
1941	<p>604: Samuel W. and Hattie L. Montgomery, renters Clerk</p> <p>606: Hudson G. and Aldeen Anderson, renters Attendant, Lawson C. Wallace, filling station, 601 W. 6<sup>TH</sup> Street.</p> <p>606½: Pearl R. Key, owner Widow, Joseph H. Key No occupation listed Also listed are Jack H. Key, real estate; and Robert M. Key, real estate (office at the house).</p>
1939	<p>604: Grace Kincaid, renter Stenographer, Cities Service Oil Company Also listed is Elaine Kincaid, a student at the University of Texas.</p> <p>606: Bluford and Edna Link, renters Book-keeper, State Parks Board</p> <p>606½: Pearl R. Key, renter Widow, Julius H. Key No occupation listed Also listed is Robert M. Key, real estate (office at the house).</p>

- 1937      604:    E.A. and Lilla Ross, renters  
              No occupation listed  
              606:    Edna Linnell, renter  
              Stenographer, R.W. Byram & Company, oil reports, 104 E. 13<sup>th</sup> Street.  
              606½: Pearl R. Key, owner  
              Widow, J.H. Key  
              No occupation listed  
              Also listed are Jack H. Key, no occupation stated; and Robert M. Key, real estate (office at the house).
- 1935      604:    Clay E. and Selma Davis, renters  
              Book-keeper  
              606:    Robert H. and Vera V. Lawrence, renters  
              Engineer  
              606½: Pearl R. Key, renter  
              Widow, J.H. Key  
              No occupation listed  
              Also listed are Jack Key, no occupation stated; and Robert M. Key, real estate (office at the house).
- 1932-33    604:    Perry and Mary Lou Paschall, renters  
              Clerk, Alamo Hotel  
              606:    Vacant  
              606½: Pearl R. Key, renter  
              Widow, J.H. Key  
              No occupation listed  
              Also listed are Jack Key, no occupation stated; and Robert M. Key, no occupation stated.
- 1930-31    604:    Trinity Laboratories, Inc.  
              G.B. Boon, manager  
              606:    Walter H. and Nelia Wear, renters  
              Salesman  
              606½: Pearl R. Key, renter  
              Widow, J.H. Key  
              No occupation listed  
              Also listed are Jack Key, no occupation stated; and Robert M. Key, no occupation stated.
- 1929      604:    Horace P. Haldeman, renter  
              Inspector, State Fire Insurance Department  
              Also listed is Margaret Haldeman, a typist at the State Fire Insurance Department.  
              606:    George B. and Miriam I. Terrell, renters  
              Salesman  
              606½: Pearl R. Key, owner  
              Widow, J.H. Key  
              No occupation listed
- 1927      604:    James P. and Jennie Tobin, renters  
              Secretary-treasurer, Tobin's, stationery, office furniture, printers, engravers, embossers, blueprinting, rubber stamps, and seals, 803 Congress Avenue.

	606: Samuel K. and Winifred Mullis, renters Salesman
	606½: Pearl R. Key, owner Widow, J.H. Key No occupation listed Also listed is Jack Key, no occupation stated.
1924	604: The address is not listed in the directory. 606: Pearl R. Key, owner Widow,, Joseph Key No occupation listed Also listed is Jack Key, no occupation stated.
1922	Pearl R. Key, owner Widow, Joseph Key No occupation listed
	T. Roy and Leila Cook, renters Classer, E.H. Perry and Company, cotton exporters, 304 E. 5 <sup>th</sup> Street.
1920	Pearl R. Key, owner Widow, Joseph Key No occupation listed Also listed is R. Morris Key, nio occupation stated.
1918	Pearl R. Key, owner Widow, Joseph Key No occupation listed Also listed are Jack Key and R. Morris Key; neither had an occupation listed.
1916	Pearl R. Key, owner Widow, Joseph Key No occupation listed Also listed are Bess Key, no occupation stated; Jack Key, a student; and R. Morris Key, a student.
1914	Pearl R. Key, owner Widow, Joseph Key No occupation listed Also listed are Bess Key, no occupation stated; and Morris Key, a student.
1912-13	Pearl R. Key, owner Widow, Joseph Key No occupation listed Also listed is Elizabeth Key, no occupation stated.
1910-11	Pearl R. Key, owner Widow, Joseph Key No occupation listed
1909-10	Pearl R. Key, owner Widow, Joseph Key No occupation listed



- 1906-07      Joseph Key  
Proprietor (with A.J. and Ben Thorp), Key & Thorp, dry goods, clothing, and shoes, 217 E. 6<sup>th</sup> Street.  
Also listed is Charles E. Key, the sales manager for Key & Thorp.
- 1905          John H. Mettenheimer  
Manager, seed department, Austin Oil Company, cottonseed products, 5<sup>th</sup> and Chicon Streets.  
NOTE: Joseph H. Key is listed as living at 204 E. 10<sup>th</sup> Street; he was the proprietor (with A.J. and Ben Thorp), of Key & Thorp, dry goods, clothing, and shoes, 217 E. 6<sup>th</sup> Street.
- 1903-04      John H. Mettenheimer  
Manager, seed department, Austin Oil Company, cottonseed products, 5<sup>th</sup> and Chicon Streets.  
NOTE: The address is listed as 604 Rio Grande Street.
- 1900-01      John H. Mettenheimer is listed as boarding at 304 W. 8<sup>th</sup> Street; he was the manager of the seed department at Austin Oil Company.

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

### John Mettenheimer (ca. 1901 – ca. 1905)

John and Polly Mettenheimer appear in the 1900 U.S. Census as lodgers at 106 W. 6<sup>th</sup> Street, along with their infant son, John, and John's mother Kate. John Mettenheimer was a 26-year old Kentucky-born assistant manager at the oil mill. Polly Mettenheimer was then 27, and had been born in Texas. Kate Mettenheimer was a 63-year old Kentucky-born widow.

John H. Mettenheimer appears in the 1910 U.S. Census as living at 1002 Rio Grande Street. He is listed as a 36-year old Kentucky-born widower, who was the general manager of an oil mill, which corresponds to the city directory listings showing him as the manager of the seed department at the Austin Oil Company, a cottonseed oil mill. With him lived his 10-year old son, John, born in Texas, his mother, Kate, a 73-year old Kentucky-born widow, and his sister, Anne, 37. John Mettenheimer died in Dallas, October 10, 1920.

### Joseph and Pearl Key (ca. 1905 – ca. 1970)

Joe and Pearl Key appear in the 1900 U.S. Census report as living at 205 E. 10<sup>th</sup> Street in Austin. Joe Key was then 42, had been born in Alabama, and was a merchant. Pearl Key was then 31 and had been born in Texas. She had no occupation listed. They had three children: Bessie, 7, Morris, 3, and Oliver, 1. With them also lived Pearl's mother, Elizabeth Barkley, a 62-year old Kentucky-born widow; and the family's cook, 21-year old Hattie Cleveland, an African-American woman who had been born in Texas.

Pearl Key appears in the 1910 U.S. Census as a divorced woman living at this address – 606 Rio Grande Street. She was then 38 years old, and had her "own means" as her occupation. With her lived her daughter, Bess, 17, son, Robert Morris, 13, and son Jack, 10, as well as her widowed mother, Elizabeth Barkley, who was then 72. They had a lodger, a 48-year old dressmaker from Tennessee whose last name was Thompson.

Pearl Key and her son, Robert Morris Key, appear at this address in the 1920 U.S. Census. Here, Pearl is listed as a widow. Neither Pearl nor her son had an occupation listed in the census report.

The 1930 U.S. Census also shows Pearl Key as a widow, and shows that she owned the house at 606 Rio Grande, which was worth \$7,000. With her lived her sons, Robert Morris, 28, and Jack, 25. Both were real estate "traders."

The 1940 U.S. Census shows Pearl and Robert Morris Key at 606 Rio Grande. She was then 70; Robert Morris, 42, was a real estate salesman.

# Longtime Austinite, 101, Dies

A 101-year old Austin woman, the daughter of a Confederate Army major, died Friday in a local hospital.

Mrs. Pearl R. Key of 606½ Rio Grande St., daughter of Maj. and Mrs. John Barkley, was born in Bryan Jan. 7, 1869.

She moved to Austin in 1908.

Funeral will be at 2 p.m. Saturday at the Cook Funeral Home, Rev. Charles Sumners officiating. Burial will be in Austin Memorial Park.

She is survived by a daughter, Mrs. Webb Chewning and son, Rickey Key, both of Austin; a grandson, Dr. John B. Chewning of Cincinnati, O., and three great-grandchildren.

Obituary of Pearl R. Key  
Austin American-Statesman, March 14, 1970

**MRS. PEARL R. KEY**

Funeral for Mrs. Pearl R. Key, 101, of 606½ Rio Grande, was Saturday at Cook Funeral Home, Rev. Charles Sumners officiating. Burial was in Austin Memorial Park.

Mrs. Key died Friday.

Funeral notice for Pearl R. Key  
Austin American, March 15, 1970

**JACK H. KEY**

Jack H. Key, of 606½ Rio Grande, died in a local hospital Sunday. He was a lifelong resident of Austin, attended Austin Public Schools and Columbus Military Academy; and handled investments before his retirement.

Survivors include his mother, Mrs. Pearl R. Key; a sister, Mrs. C. W. Chewning; a brother, Rickey Key, all of Austin; and a nephew, Dr. John B. Chewning of Cincinnati, O.

Private funeral services will be held Monday at 4 p.m. from Cook Funeral Home with Rev. Charles Sumners officiating. Burial will be in Austin Memorial Park.

Obituary of Jack H. Key  
Austin American, July 13, 1964



## **Rickey Key**

**Rickey Key, 92, of Austin, died Sunday, March 26, 1989.**

**Mr. Key was a member of St. Davids Episcopal Church, a charter member of The Austin Club, a member of the Austin Board of Realtors, and served on the Board of Equalization.**

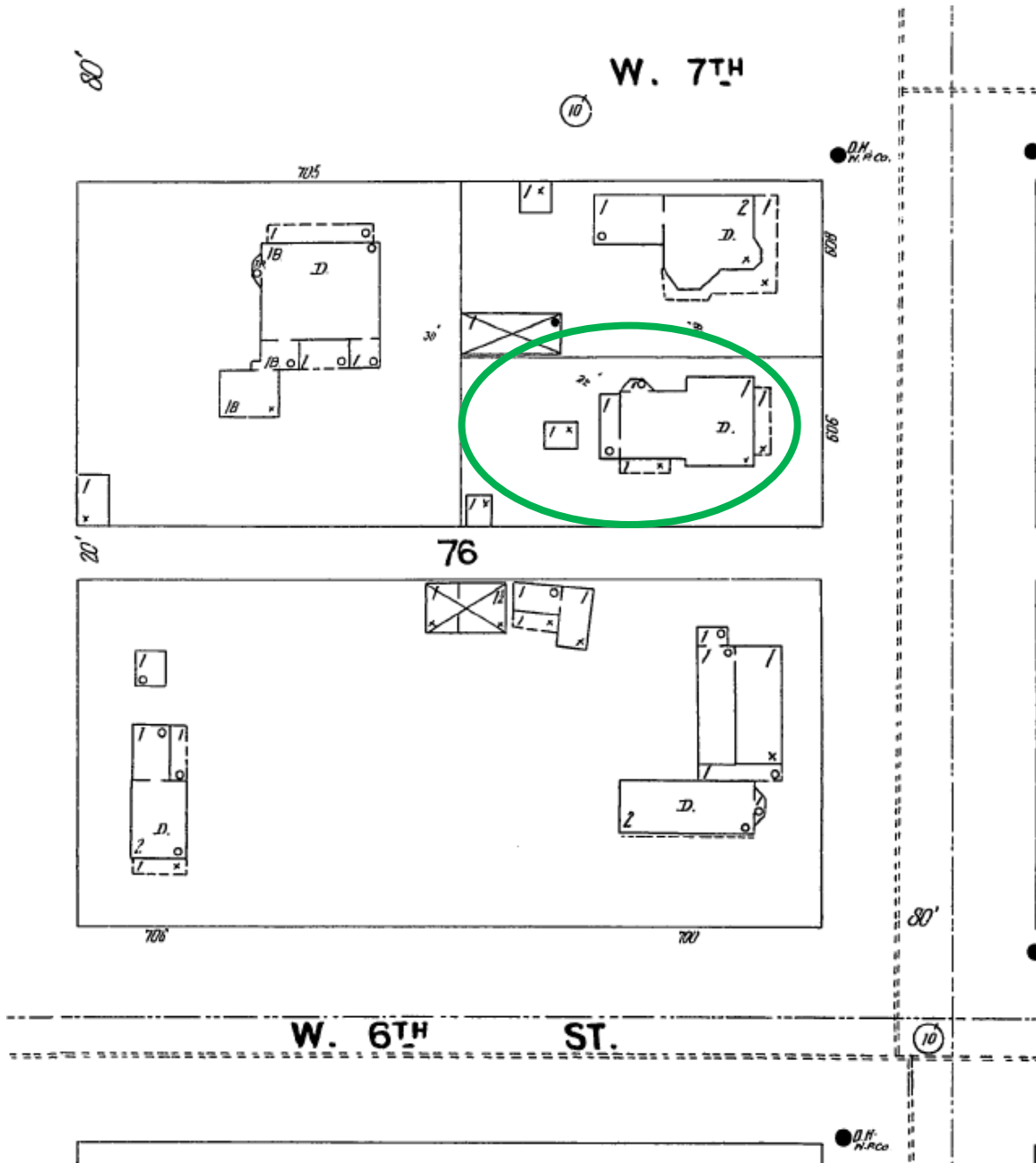
**Funeral services will be held at 3:30 PM, today in the Davis Chapel at Cook-Walden Funeral Home, Lamar location, with the Reverend Dr. T. James Bethell and Dr. Paul Spellman officiating. Interment will be in Austin Memorial Park.**

**He is survived by a nephew, Dr. J.W. Chewning of Cincinnati, Ohio; and several cousins.**

**Arrangements by Cook-Walden Funeral Home, Lamar location.**

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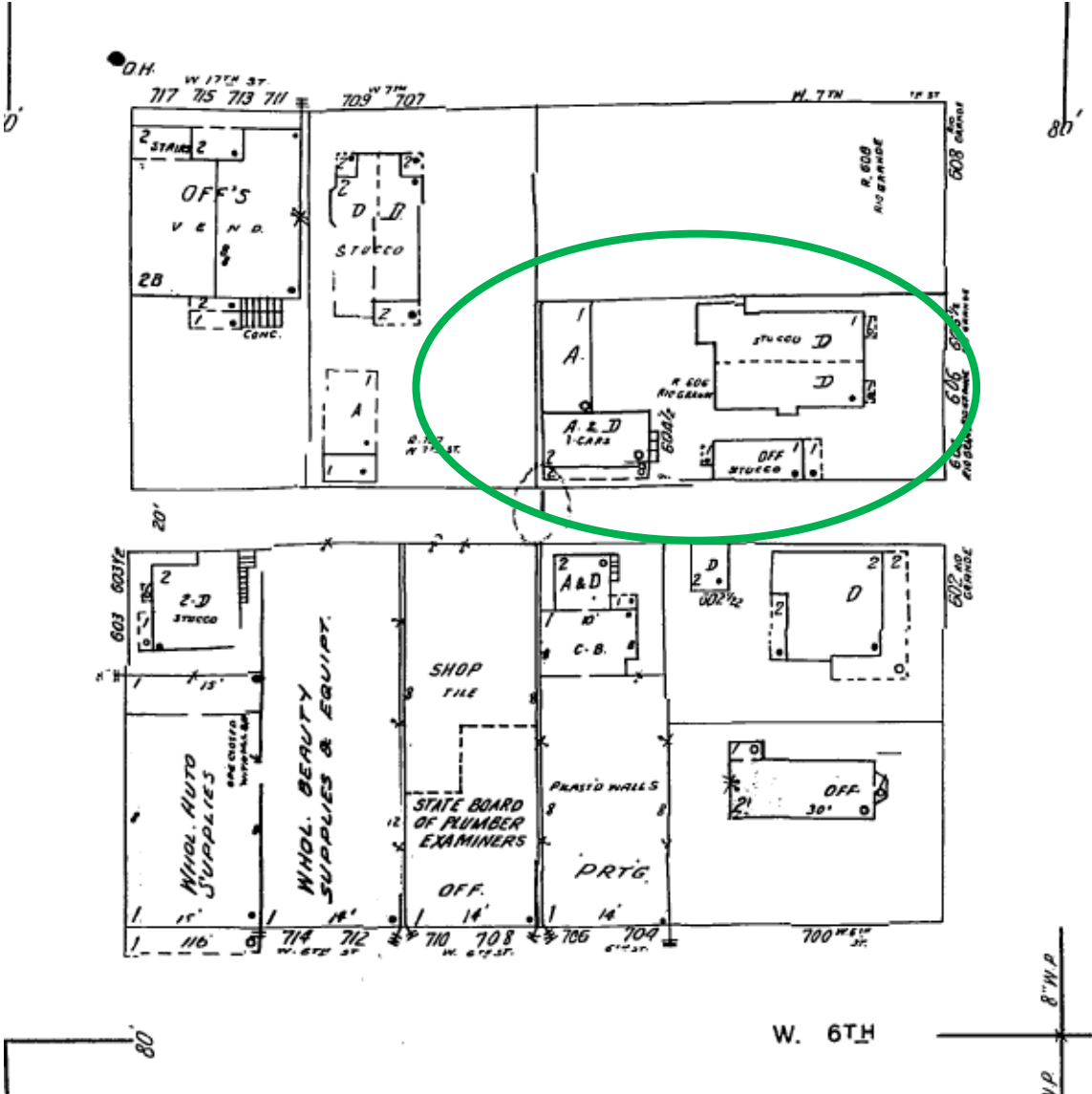
Obituary of Rickey Key  
Austin American-Statesman, March 28, 1989



The 1900 Sanborn map shows a large one-story frame dwelling on his site with a partial-width front porch, a projecting bay on the north side, and porches on the south and west sides of the house.







W. 6TH

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

# PERMIT FOR WATER SERVICE

AUSTIN, TEXAS

No. 8236

M.

Address

606

Plumber

Size of Tap

3/4"

Date

3-28-33

## Foreman's Report

Date of Connection 3-28-33

Size of Tap Made 3/4"

Size Service Made 3/4"

Size Main Tapped 2"

From Front Prop. Line to Curb Cock 14'

From North Prop. Line to Curb Cock 29'

Location of Meter inside curb

Type of Box Lock

Depth of Main in St.

Depth of Service Line

From Curb Cock to Tap on Main over main

Checked by Engr. Dept. 4-3-33 JCA

INDEXED

No. Fittings	Size	Req. No.
1 Curb Cock	3/4"	
Elbow		
St. Elbow		
Bushing		
Reducer		
1 Pipe 3/4" cap. complete		
Lead Comp.		
Nipples		
Union		
Plug		
Tee		
Stop		
Box		
Lid		
Valves		

Foreman's Signature

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

# PERMIT FOR WATER SERVICE

AUSTIN, TEXAS

No. 8235

M.

Address

606 1/2 Rio Grande St.

Plumber

Size of Tap

3/4"

Date

3-28-33

## Foreman's Report

Date of Connection 3-28-33

Size of Tap Made 3/4"

Size Service Made 3/4"

Size Main Tapped 2"

From Front Prop. Line to Curb Cock 14'

From North Prop. Line to Curb Cock 20'

Location of Meter inside curb

Type of Box Lock

Depth of Main in St.

Depth of Service Line

From Curb Cock to Tap on Main over main

Checked by Engr. Dept. 4-3-33 JCA

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No. Fittings	Size	Req. No.
1 Curb Cock	3/4"	
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1 Pipe 3/4" cap. complete		
Lead Comp.		
Nipples		
Union		
Plug		
Tee		
Stop		
Box		
Lid		
Valves		

Foreman's Signature

Permits for water service for 606 and 606 1/2 Rio Grande Street (1933)

Connect Charge 12.00  
 Application for Sewer Connection. N<sup>o</sup> 13289 4

Austin, Texas, 4-5 1937

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 MRS. PEARL R. KEY  
 at 604 B. RIO GRANDE Street,  
 (Rear)  
 further described as lot 5.6, block 76, outlot  
 subdivision \_\_\_\_\_, division \_\_\_\_\_, plat 7  
 which is to be used as a GAR-APT

In this place there are to be installed 6 fixtures.

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

2-DEEP AT PL Respectfully, John Wetherges  
 Stub Out

Connected 4/7 1937 Con 1-End

Size of Main 6 inches. 1/2" x 1/2"

Size of Service 4 inches. of 1/2"

25 Feet Deep alley that has

10 Feet from Property Line

Feet from Curb Line B-451

Inspected by Harold N. Johnson

Connection made by John Wetherges

Application for a sewer connection made by Mrs. Pearl R. Key for the garage apartment at 604-B Rio Grande Street.

OWNER Saegert Bldrs. ADDRESS 606 Rio Grande

PLAT 99 LOT S. 64' of 5 & 6 BLK \_\_\_\_\_

SUBDIVISION Original City

OCCUPANCY Office and Residence

BLD PERMIT # 137162 DATE 7-10-73 OWNERS ESTIMATE \$3,800.00

CONTRACTOR Harold N. Johnson NO. OF FIXTURES \_\_\_\_\_

WATER TAP REC # exist SEWER TAP REC # exist

Remodel 2 residential bldgs to create comm. bldg.

Building permit to remodel the buildings to create a commercial building (1973)