

**HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION  
OCTOBER 26, 2015  
DEMOLITION AND RELOCATION PERMITS  
HDP-2015-0903  
1404 BOB HARRISON STREET**

**PROPOSAL**

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Demolish a ca. 1915 house.

**ARCHITECTURE**

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One-story, rectangular-plan, hipped-roof frame house with a partial-width inset porch with turned wood posts and ornamental brackets; single and paired 1:1 fenestration with a large, fixed-sash picture window in the front (obscured by solar screens); synthetic siding.

**RESEARCH**

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The house appears to have been built in 1915, and has a continuous history as a home for African-American families in East Austin. The first known occupant was Ruth James, a young, divorced woman who worked as a laundress. She lived here from around 1915 to around 1917. The house was then owned and occupied by a woman and what appears to have been a succession of husbands: William and Lizzie Green are listed as the occupants of the house in the 1918 city directory. William Green worked as a laborer for John L. Martin, the proprietor of one of the largest plumbing, heating, and electrical supply contracting businesses in the city, while Lizzie Green worked as a cook. The 1920 city directory shows the house occupied by George and Lizzie Willis, and they are listed as the owners of the property. George Willis was a laborer; Lizzie Willis had no occupation listed. By 1922, the house was owned and occupied by Lizzie McDade, who had no occupation listed. Belief that Lizzie Green, Lizzie Willis, and Lizzie McDade were all the same person is corroborated by the 1920 U.S. Census which shows Lizzie Green as a widow; her step-son was Isaac McDade. The 1924 city directory shows the house owned by Lacy and Lizzie Price. Lacy Price had no occupation listed; Lizzie Price was a domestic for the Presbyterian Theological Seminary. Other documents note that neither Lacy nor Lizzie Price were literate – they had each made their “mark” on documents, indicating that they could not sign their own name. Lacy and Lizzie Price moved from this house around 1926 to another house on E. 9<sup>th</sup> Street. Comparing the estimated value of these two houses in the census reports, the house on 9<sup>th</sup> Street was worth considerably less than this house on Bob Harrison (then 14<sup>th</sup> Street). It may be inferred that this house was owned by Lizzie Green Willis McDade Price from around 1917 to around 1926, as each city directory listing shown a Lizzie and her husband as the owners of the house. It is more likely that the house was owned by Lizzie all that time during her series of marriages. However, further research may be necessary to determine the chain of title of this property and to determine if all of the women named Lizzie in the city directories of that period were the same person.

The house was rented in the late 1920s to a man who worked as a janitor at Gregory School, an African-American institution. Then, from around 1928 to 1942, the house was owned and occupied by Jesse and Meddie Amos. Both Jesse and Meddie Amos worked for hotels in downtown Austin – he as a bell boy and she as a maid. They worked for the Texan and Capitol hotels on W. 7<sup>th</sup> Street, both of which were owned by the same company. Meddie Amos went to work as a maid for the Alamo Hotel on Republic Square around 1940, while Jesse Amos went into yard work, according to the 1940 U.S. Census. They eventually moved to Abilene, Texas, where they lived for many years, but both were buried in Evergreen Cemetery in Austin at their deaths in the 1960s.

Daniel and Serena Bailey owned and occupied the house in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Daniel Bailey was a laborer, while Serena Bailey worked ironing clothes in a laundromat. Only Serena Bailey is listed at this address in the city directory of 1952; she was a maid.

From around 1957 until the early 2000s, the house was owned and occupied by George and Girlie Mae Wallace. At the time they moved into this house, George Wallace was working as a porter for Carr's Motor Sales, the local Lincoln and Mercury dealer. He went to work as a driver for the Austin National Bank around 1960, and then worked as a porter and parking lot attendant for American National Bank on W. 6<sup>th</sup> Street around 1970. He and Girlie Mae are listed as retired in city directories from the mid-1980s onward.

#### **STAFF COMMENTS**

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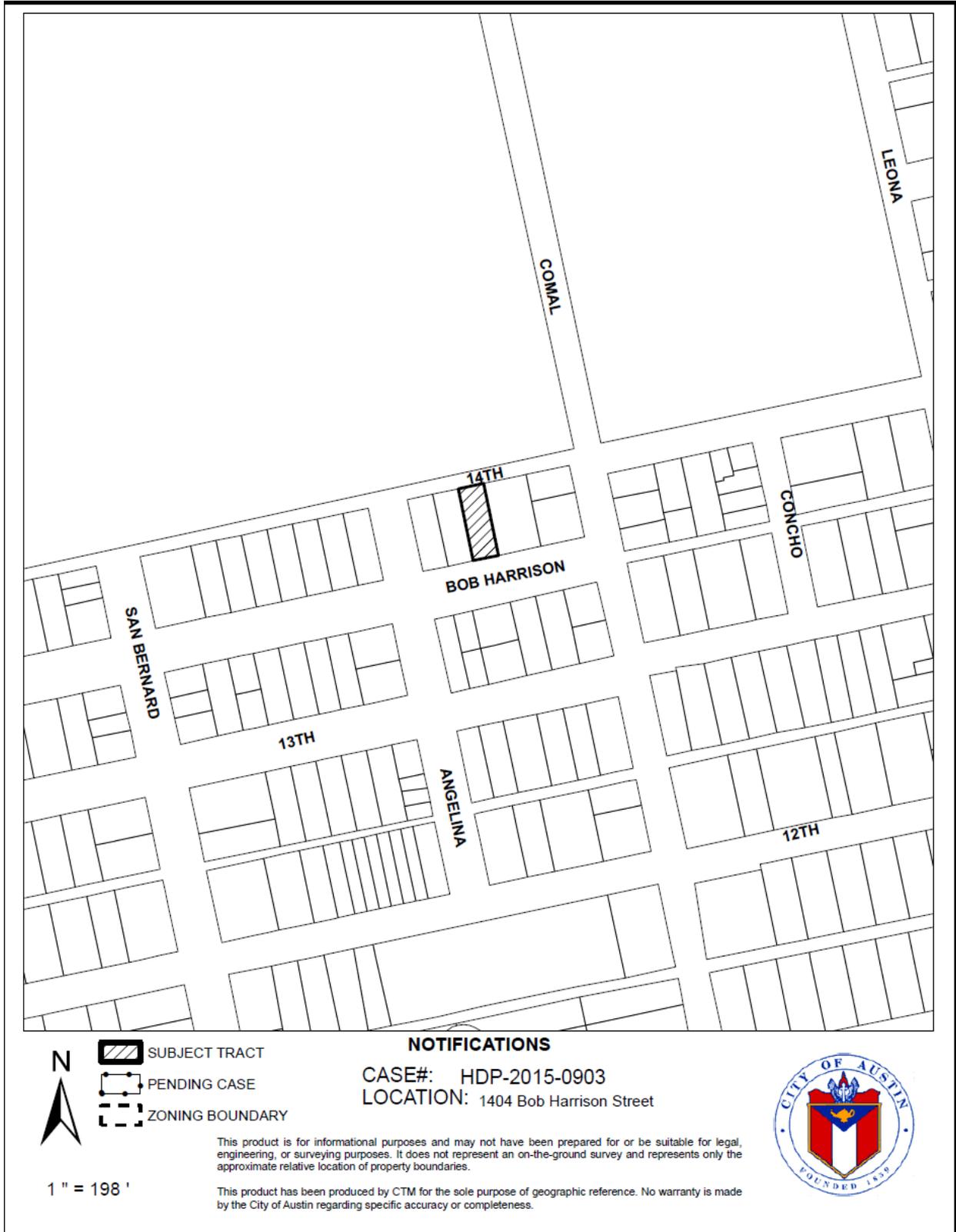
The house is listed as a medium priority for preservation in the Historic Resources Survey of East Austin (2000).

#### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

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Postpone to November 16, 2015 to fully evaluate alternatives to demolition of this 100-year old house. The non-historic modifications to this house are reversible, and this house would be a good candidate for restoration if the structure is also sound. Bob Harrison Street was once lined with houses of this vintage, and represented an intact collection of vernacular housing for middle-class African-American families in East Austin. Many of the houses on the street have been demolished and replaced with much larger, two-story structures, and the history and context of this street and neighborhood are being obliterated. Staff strongly encourages the applicant to fully consider alternatives to demolition, which would include restoration of the historic appearance of the house. While this house may not rise to the level of an individual landmark, it has architectural, cultural, and community significance, all of which should be weighed in the decision whether to demolish or restore this house.

LOCATION MAP



1404 Bob Harrison Street  
ca. 1915



OCCUPANCY HISTORY  
1404 Bob Harrison Street

City Directory Research, Austin History Center  
By City Historic Preservation Office  
October, 2015

- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| 1992    | George W. and Girlie M. Wallace, owners<br>Retired  |
| 1985-86 | George W. and Girlie M. Wallace, owners<br>Retired  |
| 1981    | George W. and Girlie M. Wallace, owners<br>Porter, American National Bank, 221 W. 6 <sup>th</sup> Street.             |
| 1977    | George W. and Shirley M. Wallace, owners<br>Parking attendant, American National Bank, 221 W. 6 <sup>th</sup> Street. |
| 1973    | George W. and Girlie M. Wallace, owners<br>Driver, American National Bank, 6 <sup>th</sup> and Colorado Streets.      |
| 1968    | George W. and Girlie M. Wallace, owners<br>Porter, Austin National Bank, 5 <sup>th</sup> Street and Congress Avenue.  |
| 1962    | George W. and Girlie M. Wallace, owners<br>Driver, Austin National Bank, 5 <sup>th</sup> Street and Congress Avenue.  |

- 1959 George W. and Girlie M. Wallace, owners  
Porter, Carr's Motor Sales, 501 W. 6<sup>th</sup> Street; used cars, 604 W. 6<sup>th</sup> Street.
- 1955 George and Julia M. Wallace (not listed as owners)  
No occupation listed  
NOTE: George W. and Girlie Wallace are listed at 1804 Rosewood Avenue; he was a porter for Carr's Motor Sales, Lincoln and Mercury dealers, 501 W. 6<sup>th</sup> Street.
- 1952 Serena Bailey, owner  
Maid  
NOTE: There are no listings for George Wallace in the directory.
- 1949 Daniel and Serena Bailey, owners  
Daniel: Laborer  
Serena: Ironer, ABC Washateria, 1511 North Street.  
NOTE: Leroy and Ella M. Hendricks are listed at 1172 Bedford Avenue; he was a porter.
- 1947 Leroy and Ella M. Hendricks, renters  
Leroy: Porter, Kappa Alpha Fraternity, 2211 Red River Street.  
Ella: Proprietor, Mae's Beauty Shop (at the house)
- 1944-45 Roy and Lula M. Landley, renters  
No occupation listed
- 1941 Jesse and Meddie Amos, owners  
Jesse: Laborer  
Meddie: Maid, Alamo Hotel, 402 W. 6<sup>th</sup> Street.
- 1939 Jesse and Meddie Amos, owners  
No occupation listed
- 1937 Jesse and Meddie Amos, owners  
Bellman, Texan Hotel, 121 W. 7<sup>th</sup> Street.
- 1935 Jesse and Meddie Amos, owners  
Bellman, Capitol Hotel, 103 W. 7<sup>th</sup> Street.  
NOTE: The Capitol and Texan Hotels were under the same ownership.
- 1932-33 Jesse and Meddie Amos, owners  
Jesse: Porter, Texan Hotel, 115 W. 7<sup>th</sup> Street.  
Meddie: Maid, Texan Hotel, 115 W. 7<sup>th</sup> Street.  
NOTE: The address is listed as 1304 Bob Harrison Street.
- 1930-31 Jesse and Meddie Amos (colored), owners  
Jesse: Bellboy, Texan Hotel, 115 W. 7<sup>th</sup> Street.  
Meddie: Maid, Texan Hotel, 115 W. 7<sup>th</sup> Street.  
NOTE: The address is listed as 1304 E. 14<sup>th</sup> Street.
- 1929 Jesse and Meddie Amos (colored), owners  
Bellboy, Texan Hotel, 115 W. 7<sup>th</sup> Street.

- 1927 Isaac and Bettie Craig (colored), renters  
Janitor, Gregory School  
NOTE: Jesse and Mettie Amos are listed at 1216 E. 14<sup>th</sup> Street; neither had an occupation listed in the directory.  
NOTE: Lacy and Lizzie Price are listed at 2215 E. 9<sup>th</sup> Street; he was a porter; she had no occupation shown.
- 1924 Lacy and Lizzie Price (colored), owners  
Lacy: No occupation listed  
Lizzie: Domestic, Presbyterian Theological Seminary, 104 E. 27<sup>th</sup> Street.
- 1922 Lizzie McDade (colored), owner  
No occupation listed  
NOTE: Lacy Price is not listed in the directory.
- 1920 George and Lizzie Willis (colored), owners  
Laborer
- 1918 William and Lizzie Green (colored)  
William: Laborer, John L. Martin, plumbing, heating, and electrical supplies, 408 Congress Avenue.  
Lizzie: Cook
- 1916 Ruth James (colored)  
Laundress  
NOTE: There are two William Greens listed in the directory and it is not clear which, if either is the William Green who lived in this house in 1918. One William Green was a laborer who lived at 1302 San Bernard Street; the other was a laborer for the City Sewer Department who lived at 2620 San Pedro Street.
- 1914 The address is not listed in the directory.  
NOTE: Ruth James is listed as a laundress living at 609 East Avenue.

## **BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES**

### **Ruth James (ca. 1915 – ca. 1917)**

The 1920 U.S. Census shows Ruth James as a roomer in the home of Tom and Della Collins at 608 E. 1<sup>st</sup> Street in Austin. Ruth James was a 30-year old Texas-born divorcee who worked as a laundress for a laundry company.

### **(William and) Lizzie Green (ca. 1917 – ca. 1920)**

Lizzie Green appears in the 1920 U.S. Census as the owner of this house, which is listed as 1304 E. 14<sup>th</sup> Street. She was a 42-year old widow who had been born in the United States and worked as a laundress. With her lived her step-son, Isaac McDade, 31, who had been born in the United States and was a farmer. They had 2 lodgers: Ethie Moore, a 28-year old U.S.-born widow with no occupation listed; and Jerry James, a 40-year old U.S.-born widower who worked as a fireman in a boiler.

### **Lacy and Lizzy Price (ca. 1923 – ca. 1926)**

Lacy and Lizzy Price are listed in the 1940 U.S. Census as the owners of the house at 2115 E. 9<sup>th</sup> Street in Austin. The house was worth \$800. Lacy Price was 56, had been born in Texas, and had no occupation listed. Lizzy Price was 67, had been born in Texas, and had no occupation listed. They had an adopted son, Bobby Limis, 2, who had been born in Texas. They also had a family of roomers: Frank and Pearly May Canada, and their son, Frank, Jr.

Frank Canada was a 25-year old African American who had been born in Texas and worked as a janitor. He had lived in rural Travis County in 1935. Pearly May Canada was 21, had been born in Texas, and was a maid for a private family. She had lived in LaGrange, Texas in 1935.

The 1930 U.S. Census shows Lacey and Lizzie Price as the owners of the house at 2233 [?] E. 9<sup>th</sup> Street in Austin. Lacey Price was a yardman for a private family; Lizzie Price was a servant for a private family. They owned their house.

According to his 1917 World War I draft registration card, Lacy Price was living at 417 W. Mary Street; he was born in 1890 at Bluff Springs, Texas. He worked as a laborer. He was not able to write, so made his mark on the registration card. He was of medium height and had a stout build.

Lacy Price died in Travis County on August 7, 1944. He was living at the house on E. 9<sup>th</sup> Street at the time of his death. He was a common laborer who worked at various jobs. He had been born in Travis County, and his wife was Lizzie Price. He is buried in Evergreen Cemetery in Austin. Lizzie Price applied for a U.S. military veteran's headstone for him in 1944. Lacy Price had served as a private in the 16<sup>th</sup> Company of the 165<sup>th</sup> Depot Branch in the summer of 1918. Apparently, Lizzie Price was also unable to read or write; she signed the headstone application with her mark, which was witnessed.

#### **Jesse and Meddie Amos (ca. 1928 – ca. 1942)**

The 1940 U.S. Census shows Jesse and Meddie Amos as the owners of this house, which was worth \$1,800. The house is listed as 1404 Bob Harrison Street. Jesse Amos was a 34-year old cedar chopper. Meddie Amos was a 34-year old hotel maid. Their 2 children, Jesse, Jr., 14; and Betty Joan, 11, had no occupations listed.

The 1930 U.S. Census shows Jesse and Meddie Amos as the owners of this house, which was worth \$550. The house is listed as 1304 E. 14<sup>th</sup> Street. Jesse Amos was 23, had been born in Texas, and was a bell boy at a hotel. Meddie Amos was 24, had been born in Texas, and was a maid at a hotel. They had 2 children: Jesse, Jr., 4; and Bettie J., 1, both of whom had been born in Texas. With them lived Jesse's brother, Bennie Amos, 21, who had been born in Texas and had no occupation listed.

The 1920 U.S. Census shows Jessie Amos as the 13-year old son of Joe and Billie Amos, who rented a farm in Williamson County, Texas. Joe Amos was listed as a Texas-born general farmer; Jessie Amos had no occupation listed. The 1910 U.S. Census shows Jessie Amos as the 4-year old son of Joe and Bettie Amos, who lived in Marble Falls, Texas, where Joe Amos was a laborer in a lumber yard. Bettie Amos was a washerwoman at home.

Meddie Hodge Amos died in Abilene, Texas August 9, 1966. According to her death certificate, she had lived in Abilene for 20 years. She was a married housewife who had been born in Austin, Texas. She was buried in Evergreen Cemetery in Austin. Jesse Amos died April 29, 1999 in Doddridge, Miller County, Arkansas.

#### **Leroy and Ella Mae Hendricks (ca. 1946 – ca. 1948)**

The 1940 U.S. Census shows Leroy and Ella Mae Hendricks as renters at 2211 Red River Street, which is the Kappa Alpha Fraternity House. Leroy Hendricks was 34, had been born in Texas, and was a porter for the fraternity; Ella Mae Hendricks was 26, had been born in Texas, and worked as a maid for a sorority. They had no children listed with them.

#### **George W. and Girlie Mae Wallace (ca. 1957 – ca. 2003)**

**WALLACE, George Sr., 80, of Austin died Friday. Services 1 p.m. Thursday, Mount Zion Baptist Church. Burial Cook-Walden/Capital Parks Cemetery, Pflugerville. Arrangements by King-Tears.**

Obituary of George Wallace  
Austin American-Statesman, February 11, 2003

#### **Girlie Mae Wallace Obituary**

**Girlie Mae Wallace** Girlie Mae Wallace, 87, retired school district employee, of Austin died Tuesday. Visitation noon Friday, King-Tears Mortuary. Services 1 p.m. Saturday, Grant African Methodist Episcopal Worship Center. Burial Cook-Walden/ Capital Parks Cemetery, Pflugerville.  
Austin American-Statesman, February 24, 2012