

**HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION
DECEMBER 14, 2015
DEMOLITION AND RELOCATION PERMITS
HDP-2015-1037
3108 GRANDVIEW STREET**

PROPOSAL

Demolish a ca. 1913 house.

ARCHITECTURE

One-story, rectangular-plan, front-gabled brick house with a palm-plastered exterior applied over the brick; partial-width front-gabled independent porch on monumental brick piers; single and paired 6:6 fenestration. The house is built into the slope of a hill, and has a basement level at the rear not readily discernible from the street.

RESEARCH

The house appears to have been built around 1913. The first people associated with the house are Charles E. Wood, a teamster, and Louise Jenkins, a widow. Little more is known about these two people, who lived here until around 1915. Clarence M. Crawford, a driver for a clothes cleaner, was the next resident of the house; he lived here until around 1917. The house was then rented by Thurston and Minnie Cloud until around 1919, followed by David and Hallie Preece until around 1921, and finally by Charles and Mary McCracken until around 1923. Thurston Cloud was a driver for the City Street Department, David Preece was a farm foreman for the Texas School for the Blind (who appears in the 1920 U.S. Census as resident on the school site), and Charles McCracken had no occupation listed in the city directory.

From around 1923 until around 1970, the house was owned and occupied by Ben and Maude Leifeste. Ben Leifeste was a native Texan who had been living in St. Petersburg, Florida where he was a brick mason for a contractor doing government work. He returned to Austin around 1920, and was living with his widowed sister, Dora Lang, on Pearl Street, before moving into this house. He was divorced at that time, and had 4 children of his own, all of whom had been born in Florida. By the time he moved into this house around 1923, he was married again; he and Maude raised 3 more daughters in this house.

Ben Leifeste was a brick mason by trade, and also a plasterer. There is no proof available at this time, but it could be that the palm plastering applied over the original brick walls of this house were his work. His sons, Herbert, and Homer, are listed as plasterers in the 1927 city directory, while Ben is listed as a bricklayer. He later listed his occupation as a plaster contractor in city directories. Leifeste had his business office here at the house, so it would be likely that he plastered the exterior of the house to advertise his trade and skill. Palm plastering was an art of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, where the plaster was applied by hand rather than by a tool, and gave a deeply articulated finish noted for its artistry and its texture. Although primarily applied as an interior finish, palm plastering was also used on exterior walls. This house represents possibly the only example of the artistic and exterior application of palm plastering in the city.

STAFF COMMENTS

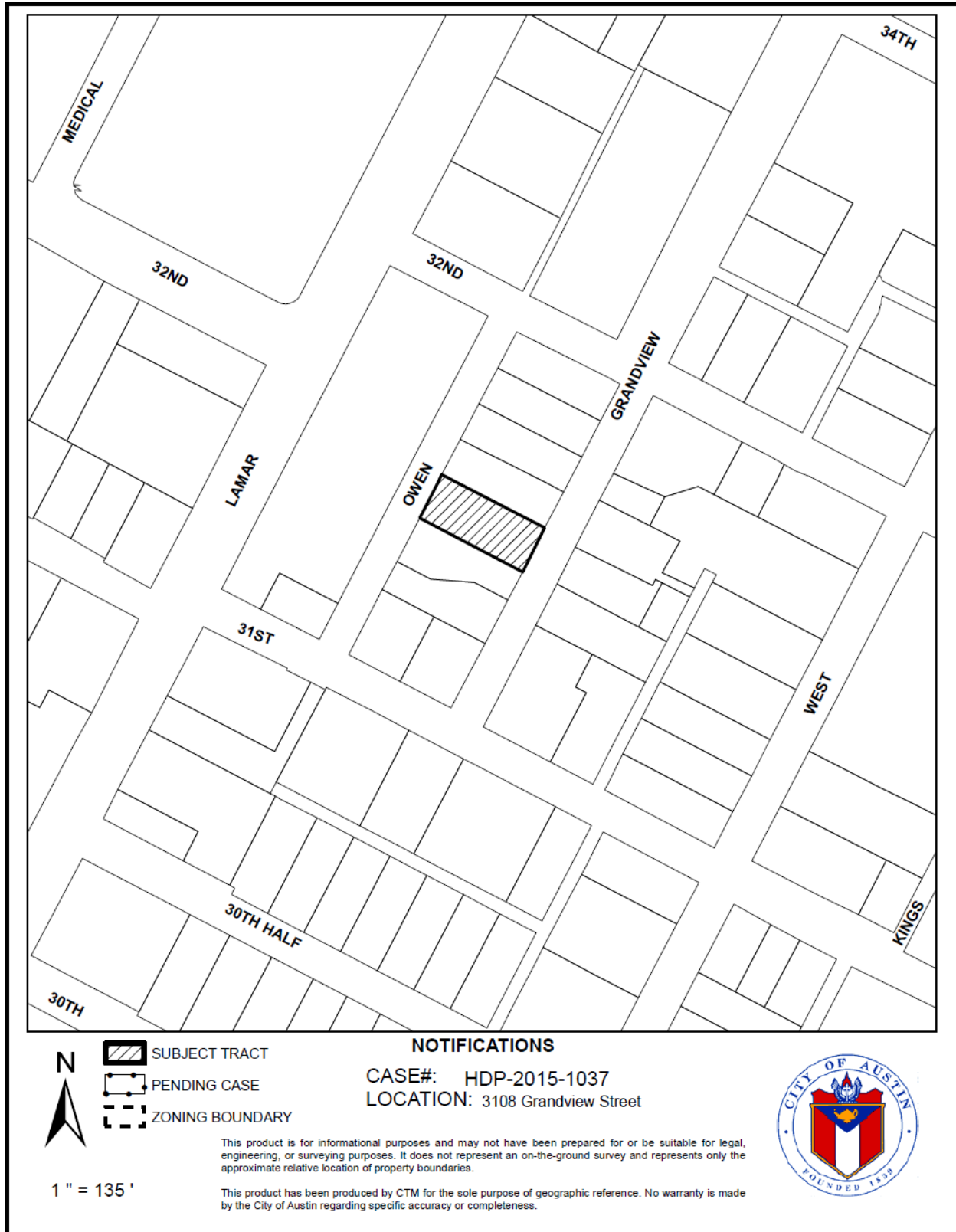
The house is not listed in any City survey.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Postpone to January 25, 2016 to fully evaluate alternatives to demolition. This house qualifies as a historic landmark at least under the criterion for architecture for its fine

representation of exterior palm plastering, an artistic treatment that is, if not unique, then extremely rare in the City. Staff encourages the applicant to make every consideration towards the preservation and rehabilitation of this house.

LOCATION MAP



3108 Grandview Street
ca. 1913





Details of the palm-plastered exterior of the house

OCCUPANCY HISTORY 3108 Grandview Street

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

1992	A:	No return
	B:	Mandy L. McClure, renter No occupation listed NOTE: The directory indicates that Mandy L. McClure was a new resident at this address.
	C:	Gregory H. Ward, renter No occupation listed
1985-86	A:	Cindy Pitts, renter Student

NOTE: The directory indicates that Cindy Pitts was a new resident at this address.

B: Bill Barminski, renter
Student

NOTE: The directory indicates that Bill Barminski was a new resident at this address.

1981	Pete Cyr, renter Student
1977	Robert Zinkle, renter No occupation listed
1973	David and Judy Gray, renters No occupation listed NOTE: The directory indicates that David and Judy Gray were new residents at this address.
1968	Maude Leifeste, owner Widow, Benjamin C. Leifeste Retired
1962	Maude Leifeste, owner Widow, Benjamin C. Leifeste No occupation listed
1959	Mary Leifeste, owner Widow, Benjamin C. Leifeste No occupation listed Also listed is Maud Leifeste, a nurse.
1955	Benjamin C. Leifeste, owner No occupation listed NOTE: Neither Maude nor Mary Leifeste are listed in the directory.
1952	Benjamin and Maude Leifeste, owners Contractor (office at the house)
1949	Benjamin C. and Maude Leifeste, owners Contractor (office at the house)
1947	Benjamin C. and Maud L. Leifeste, owners Contractor (office at the house) NOTE: The house is listed as 3110 Grandview Street.
1944-45	Benjamin C. and Maude Leifeste, owners Contractor (office at the house) Also listed is Margaret E. Leifeste, a clerk at E.M. Scarbrough & Sons, department store, 6 th Street and Congress Avenue.
1941	Benjamin C. and Maude Leifeste, owners Contractor (office at the house)

Also listed are Margaret E. Leifeste, a student; Jocelyn I. Leifeste, a student; and W. Russell and Inez M. Buzbee. W. Russell Buzbee was an electrician; Inez M. Buzbee was a milliner.

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| 1939 | Benjamin and Maude Leifeste, owners
Plaster contractor |
| 1937 | Benjamin C. and Maude Leifeste, owners
No occupation listed
Also listed is Leonard J. Leifeste, a student at the University of Texas. |
| 1935 | Benjamin C. and Maude Leifeste, owners
Plasterer |
| 1932-33 | Benjamin C. and Maude Leifeste, owners
Plasterer |
| 1930-31 | Benjamin C. and Maude Leifeste, owners
Contractor
Also listed are A. Stewart and Anita Higgins; he was an engineer. |
| 1929 | Benjamin C. and Maud Leifeste, owners
Plasterer |
| 1927 | Benjamin C. and Maud Leifeste, owners.
Bricklayer
Also listed are Herbert Leifeste, a plasterer; and Homer Leifeste, a plasterer. |
| 1924 | Benjamin C. and Maud Leifeste, owners
Contractor
Also listed are Herbert Leifeste, a plasterer; and Homer Leifeste, a plasterer. |
| 1922 | M. Charles and Mary McCracken, renters
No occupation listed
NOTE: Benjamin C. and Maud Leifeste are not listed in the directory. |
| 1920 | David W. and Hallie Preece, renters
Farmer, Texas School for the Blind |
| 1918 | G. Thurston and Minnie Cloud, renters
Driver, City Street Department |
| 1916 | Clarence M. Crawford
Driver, Leonard Baker, clothes cleaner, 3911 Guadalupe Street. |
| 1914 | Charles E. Wood
Teamster
Also listed is Mrs. Louise Jenkins, the widow of Tillman Jenkins; she had no occupation shown. |
| 1912-13 | The street is not listed in the directory.
NOTE: Charles E. Wood is not listed in the directory. There is a listing for a Charles E. Wood in the 1910-11 directory; he was a huckster living on the east side of S. 3 rd Street near Gibson Street in the Bouldin Addition of South Austin. |

NOTE: Louise Jenkins is not listed in the directory.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES:

David W. and Hallie Preece (ca. 1919 - ca. 1921)

David W. and Hallie Preece appear in the 1920 U.S. Census for the Texas School for the Blind. David W. Preece was 48, had been born in Texas, and was the foreman of the farm for the School for the Blind. Hallie Preece was 36, had been born in Texas, and had no occupation listed. They had 4 children: Richard, 14; Hattie, 11; Katherine, 9; and Lenora, 8. All the children had been born in Texas.

Benjamin and Maude Leifeste (ca. 1923 – ca. 1970)

His 1918 World War I draft registration card shows Benjamin Charles Leifeste living in St. Petersburg Florida. He was a bricklayer doing government work. He was of medium height and medium build, had blue eyes and grey hair.

The 1920 U.S. Census shows Ben C. Leifeste living with his sister, Dora Lang, a widow, at 2915 Pearl Street in Austin, a house she owned. Ben C. Leifeste was a 43, had been born in Texas, and was divorced. He was a brick mason. He had 4 children: Hazel, 19, a stenographer in an office; Herbert, 17, a delivery boy for a grocery store; Stella, 15; and Homer, 13. All of the children had been born in Florida.

The 1930 U.S. Census shows Ben C. and Maude S. Leifeste at this house, which is noted as 3110 Grandview Street. They owned the house, which was worth \$7,000. Ben C. Leifeste was 53, had been born in Texas, and was a plasterer in the building trades. Maude S. Leifeste was 40, had been born in Texas, and had no occupation listed. They had 3 daughters: Margaret, 6; Frances, 4; and Betty, 2.

Ben and Maude Leifeste appear in the 1940 U.S. Census as the owners of this house. Ben Leifeste is listed as a bricklayer in building construction. Maude Leifeste had no occupation listed. With them lived their daughters, Margaret, 16, Frances, 14, and Betty Jo, 13. None of the girls had an occupation listed.

The 1940 U.S. Census also shows another family as renters at this address: William and Inez Buzbee, and their 2 children, Jocelyn and Jack. William Buzbee was 44, had been born in Texas, and was an electrician for the LCRA. Inez Buzbee was 38, had been born in Texas, and had no occupation listed. Jocelyn Buzbee was 17; Jack Buzbee was 14. Both had been born in Texas and neither had an occupation listed.

His 1957 death certificate shows that Ben C. Leifeste was born in Texas in 1875 and worked as a brick mason. He was living at this house at the time of his death at the age of 81.

BEN C. LEIFESTE

Ben C. Leifeste, 81, a resident of 3108 Grandview, died in a local hospital Saturday. He was a retired Austin contractor and a member of University Methodist Church. He was a veteran of the Spanish-American War and had been a resident of Austin 40 years.

Survivors include his wife; one son, Herbert C. Leifeste of Houston; a step-son, Buford Royce of Houston; five daughters, Mrs. C. M. Statler of Laredo, Mrs. Mal-lord Kutch of Houston, Mrs. John L. Skeen of Austin, Mrs. Wallace Guess of Austin and Mrs. Noral N. Moore of San Antonio; a step-daughter, Mrs. Thyra White of Austin; 3 brothers, Irving Leifeste and Fred Leifeste, both of St. Petersburg, Fla., Leonard Leifeste of San Francisco; one sister, Mrs. Carrie Lehmberg of Kerrville; and 10 grandchildren.

Funeral services are tentatively set for 2 p.m. Monday at Hyltin-Manor Funeral Home. Burial will be in Austin Memorial Park.

Obituary of Ben C. Leifeste
Austin American-Statesman, April 28, 1957

LEIFESTE, Mrs. Maude Loretta, 89, 21 Waller, died Sunday. Services 1:30 p.m. today at Hyltin-Manor Funeral Chapel. Burial, Austin Memorial Park. Survivors: daughters, Mrs. Thyla White of Austin, Mrs. Margaret Kutch of Pearland, Mrs. Frances Odem of Tomball; sister, Miss Mae Florida of Austin; eight grandchildren; six great-grandchildren.

Obituary of Maude Leifeste
Austin American-Statesman, December 11, 1979