

**HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION  
APRIL 25, 2016  
DEMOLITION AND RELOCATION PERMITS  
HDP-2016-0219  
4405 RAMSEY AVENUE**

**PROPOSAL**

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Demolish a ca. 1939 house.

**ARCHITECTURE**

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One-story, wing-and-gable plan frame house with single 6:6 fenestration; partial-width inset porch.

**RESEARCH**

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The house was built during the winter of 1939-1940. The first occupants of the house were Harold H. and Leta Webber, who were associated with the University of Texas. Harold Webber was a geneticist at the University of Texas, and a native of Massachusetts. He and Leta returned to New England, where Webber was the founder and president of Groton Bioindustries, and was a geneticist for the National Cotton Council in Memphis, Tennessee. At the time of his death in 1996, his obituary in the Boston Globe identified him as an international expert on aquaculture. Harold and Leta Webber rented this house until around 1943. From 1943 until around 1950, the house was rented by Walter and Josephine Pondrom. Walter Pondrom was a native of Beaumont, and was an assistant professor at the University of Texas in physics from 1941 to 1951. He and Josephine moved to southern California where he worked for Rockwell International.

The house had a series of renters in the early- to mid-1950s, before being purchased by Ross Griner Brite and his wife, Monte. Griner Brite was an accountant from Del Rio who later went on to become a paymaster for a highway construction company; Monte S. Bright was the office manager for a local drive-in restaurant. They lived here from around 1957 until around 1987.

**STAFF COMMENTS**

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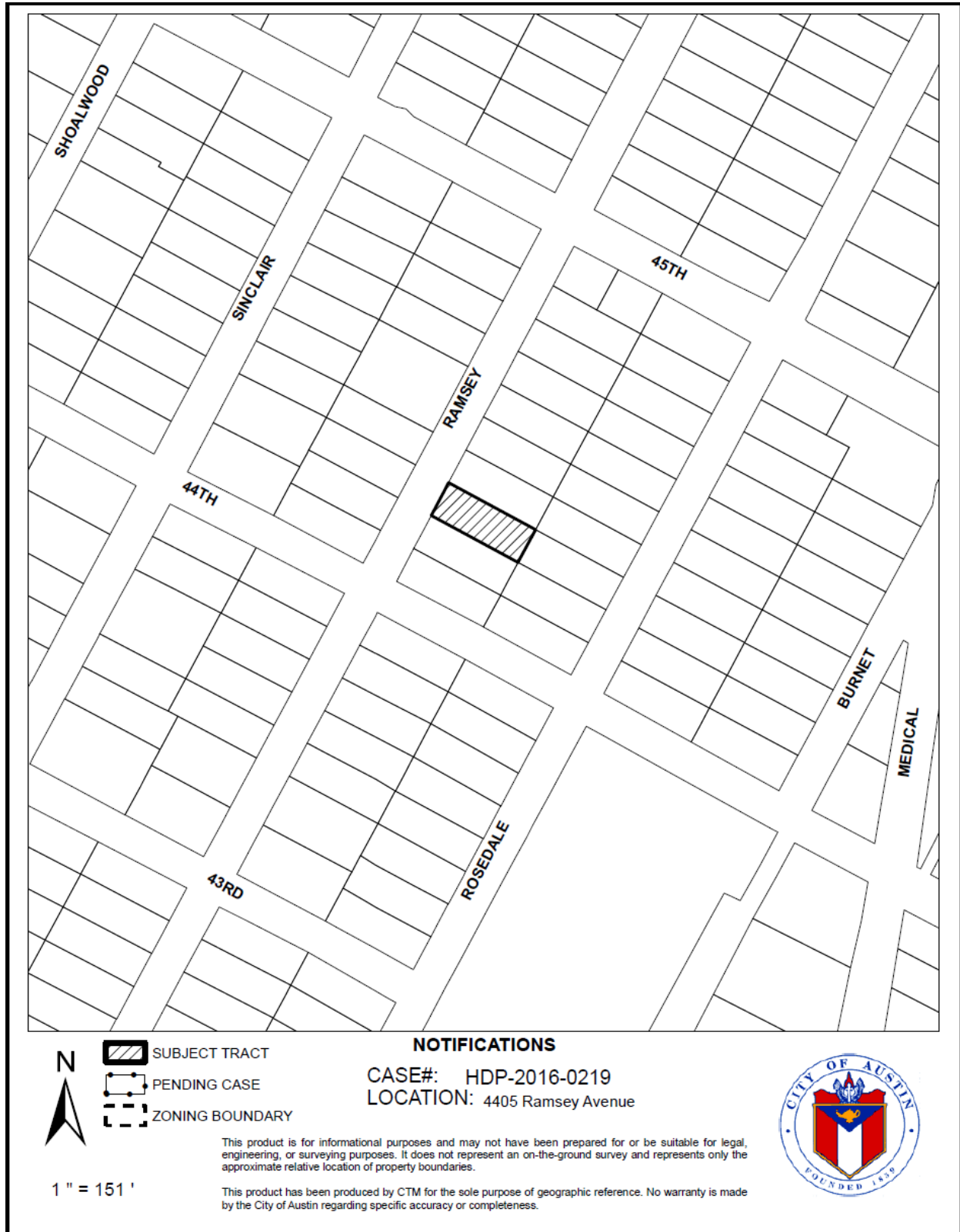
The house is beyond the bounds of any City survey.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

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Encourage rehabilitation and adaptive re-use, but release the permit upon completion of a City of Austin Documentation Package, consisting of photographs of all elevations, a dimensioned sketch plan, and a narrative history, for archiving at the Austin History Center. The house is a typical Rosedale cottage, and every consideration should be given to retaining the style and form of this house on the street.

## LOCATION MAP



4405 Ramsey Avenue  
ca. 1939



OCCUPANCY HISTORY  
4405 Ramsey Avenue

City Directory Research, Austin History Center  
By City Historic Preservation Office  
April, 2016

1992	Jan Demetri, owner No occupation listed NOTE: The directory indicates that Jan Demetri was a new resident at this address.
1985-86	Griner Brite, owner Retired
1981	Griner Brite, owner Retired
1977	Monte S. Brite, owner Retired NOTE: Griner Brite is not listed in the directory.
1973	Griner R. and Monte S. Brite, owners Retired
1968	Griner R. and Monte S. Brite, owners Retired

- 1962 Griner R. and Monte S. Brite, owners  
 Griner: Paymaster, U.S. Luckie, Inc. (not listed in the alphabetical section of the directory.  
 Monte: Office manager, 2-J Quik System Drive Inn, restaurant, 3918 N. Lamar Boulevard.
- 1959 R. Greiner and Monte S. Brite, owners  
 R. Greiner: Accountant  
 Monte: Office manager, 2-J Quik System Drive Inn, restaurant, 3918 N. Lamar Boulevard.
- 1955 Robert R. and Hildy E. Childers, Jr., renters  
 Teacher, public schools  
 NOTE: Griner and Monte Brite are not listed in the directory.
- 1952 Holleman and Alice Keith, renters  
 Superintendent, Schuhmacher Company (E.H. Moerbe, manager), wholesale groceries, 400 San Antonio Street.
- 1949 Walter L. Pondrom, Jr., owner  
 Assistant professor, University of Texas  
 NOTE: The alphabetical section of the directory shows Walter L. Pondrom, Jr. at 4411 Ramsey Avenue.
- 1947 Walter L. and Josephine Pondrom, Jr., owners  
 Physicist, University of Texas
- 1944-45 Walter L. and Josephine Pondrom, Jr., owners  
 Instructor, University of Texas
- 1941 Harold H. and Leta Webber, renters  
 Geneticist, University of Texas  
 Also listed is Melvin M. Webber, a student at the University of Texas.  
 NOTE: Walter and Josephine Pondrom are listed at 805½ E. 47<sup>th</sup> Street. He was a tutor at the University of Texas; she was a bookkeeper at the University of Texas.  
 NOTE: The 1942 city directory shows Harold and Leta Webber at 803 Park Place; he was a research associate at the University of Texas. Leta Webber was not separately listed. With them lived Melvin M. Webber, a student at the University of Texas.
- 1940 The address is not listed in the directory.  
 NOTE: Harold H. Webber is listed as a student at the University of Texas. He lived at 407 W. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street.

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

### Harold H. and Leta Webber (ca. 1940 – ca. 1943)

The 1940 U.S. Census shows Harold and Leta A. Webber as the renters of this house. Harold Webber was 25, had been born in Massachusetts. Leta A. Webber was 35, had been born in Arizona. Both were research workers at the University of Texas. They had no children listed with them.

**Harold H. Webber** of Tyngsborough, an international expert on aquaculture, died Wednesday in Apple Valley Continuing Care Center in Ayer. He was 81.

Mr. Webber was born in Springfield. He earned a bachelor's degree and a doctorate in biology and genetics at the University of Texas.

He was the founder and president of Groton Bioindustries and Groton Associates and he did consulting work on aquaculture projects throughout the world for the United Nations.

The founding director of the research foundation at Lowell Technological School and the former president of the World Aquaculture Society, he was a geneticist for the National Cotton Council in Memphis and taught at the University of Vermont.

Partial obituary of Harold H. Webber  
Boston Globe, March 30, 1996

### **Walter and Josephine Pondrom (ca. 1943 – ca. 1950)**



— **Walter Lewis Pondrom Jr.**  
Walter Lewis Pondrom  
June 30, 1916 - March 24, 2001

Walter Lewis Pondrom Jr., BS '31 MS '38, PhD '51, died Saturday, March 24, 2001.

His wife of almost 60 years, Josephine Kolar Pondrom, died nine months to the day before. Born in Beaumont June 30, 1916, Pondrom loved the Big Thicket country and often laughingly referred to himself as a swamp rat. From 1941 to 1951, he worked as an assistant professor at the University and researcher with the Military Research Laboratory there. In 1951, he moved to Whittier, CA, where he worked for North American Aviation, later to become Rockwell International. In 1962, he returned to Rockwell, from which he later retired as lead theoretician in laser gyro development. In 1983, Pondrom was named "Engineer of the Year," Rockwell's highest honor for engineering achievement. His fascination with the mysteries of the universe never waned. After retirement, even up to the afternoon of his hospitalization, Walter continued to work on his own ideas about relativity.

### **Ross Griner and Monte S. Brite (ca. 1957 – ca. 1987)**

Griner Brite appears in the 1940 U.S. Census as the 36-year old son of Annie G. Brite of Del Rio, Texas. He had been born in Texas and was a bookkeeper for a road construction firm.

The 1930 U.S. Census shows Griner Brite as the 22-year old son of Dan H. and Anne Brite of Del Rio, Texas. Griner was a salesman for a lumber company; his father was a ranchman.

**R. GRINER BRITE**

R. Griner Brite, 66, 4405 Ramsey Ave., died Monday. Austin resident, 19 yrs. Retired Highway Construction Paymaster; member, St. Louis Catholic Church, Knights of Columbus; veteran, World War II, U.S.A.F.

Survivors: wife, Mrs. Monte S. Brite, Austin; father, Dan H. Brite, Arlington; daughter, Mrs. Ray B. Durden, San Pedro, Calif.; sisters, Mrs. Parke Moore, Harlingen, Mrs. A. V. Endress, Tucson, Ariz.; one grandson.

Rosary, 8:00 P.M. Tuesday, Hyatt-Manor Chapel, recited by Father Joseph Schmitt. Requiem Mass, celebrated by Monsignor Edward C. Matocha, 10:00 A.M. Wednesday, St. Louis Catholic Church. Burial, Mount Calvary Cemetery.

Obituary of Griner Brite  
Austin American-Statesman, April 2, 1974



## **Monte S. Brite**

**Monte S. Brite, age 83, of Austin died Friday.**

**She was a member of the St. Louis Catholic Church and was preceded in death by her husband, Ross Griner Brite in 1974.**

**Survivors include her daughter and son-in-law, Dean Durden and Ray Durden of Rancho Palo Verdes, California; a grandson, Robert Ray of San Pedro, California; nieces, Dorothy Booker of Houston, Marie Sellars of Tyler, Margaret Bowman of Brownwood; and nephews, Walter Daniel of Weatherford and Dr. Ray Morgan of Houston.**

**Rosary will be recited by Monsignor Edward A. Matocha at 7:00 PM, Monday at the Hyltin-Manor Funeral Chapel.**

**Requiem Mass will be celebrated by Father Donald Moss at 10:00 AM, Tuesday at the St. Louis Catholic Church. Interment will be in Mount Calvary Cemetery.**

**Those who wish may make memorial contributions to the Texas Lighthouse for the Blind.**

**Arrangements by Hyltin-Manor Funeral Chapel, 3000 No. IH-35 at 30th Street, 476-5387.**

Obituary of Monte S. Brite  
Austin American-Statesman, October 19, 1987

Geo. F. Oatman

4405 Ramsey Ave.

187

-

B

18

-

Rosedale C

frame res. &amp; box garage

290n - 10-9-39

5

Building permit to George F. Oatman for the construction of the house (1939)

**WATER SERVICE PERMIT**  
Austin, Texas

N. 14366  
See 107

Received of Geo. F. Oatman Date Oct 6, 1939

Address 4405 Ramsey Avenue

Amount Two and 50/100 - - \$ 2/50

Plumber Smoot Size of Tap 1/2

USED 1/2 OF STUB 6793

Date of Connection 10/12/39

Size of Tap Made 3/4

Size Service Made 3/4

Size Main Tapped 2 1/2

From Front Prop. Line to Curb Cock 8'6"

From S Prop. Line to Curb Cock 20'

Location of Meter C. L. 439

Type of Box C. L. 439

Depth of Main in St. \_\_\_\_\_

Depth of Service Line \_\_\_\_\_

From Curb Cock to Tap on Main \_\_\_\_\_

Checked by Engr. Dept. 11-21-39 LE

No. Fittings	Size	Job No.	Req. No.
Curb Cock			
Elbow			
St. Elbow			
Bushing			
Reducer			
Pipe			
Lead Comp.			
Nipples			
Union			
Plug			
Tap			
Stop			
Box			
Lid			
Valves			
		<u>639-1018</u>	<u>49416</u>
			<u>BEULSON</u>

Water service permit to George F. Oatman for this house (1939)



Connection Charge \$ 1654 No. 16207B  
 APPLICATION FOR SEWER CONNECTION.

Austin, Texas, 10-6- 1939

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 Geo. F. Oatman  
 at 4405 Ramsey Ave ~~Street~~  
 further described as lot 18, block 8, outlot \_\_\_\_\_,  
 subdivision Resdale "C", division \_\_\_\_\_, plat 187,  
 which is to be used as a Res

In this place there are to be installed 5 fixtures.

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

2 1/2 DEEP Respectfully,

AT PL Austin Plumbing Co  
 Stub Out

Connected 11-10 1939 Per Pd

Size of Main 6 inches. 10-6-39

Size of Service 4 inches. 11-7-39

2 1/2 Feet Deep in ST

12 1/2 Feet from Property Line Stub out

Feet from Curb Line 10' N of

Inspected by Photo. E. E. 5 LL

Connection made by Chas. J. [unclear] A-1069

12327 Sewer in Ramsey Ave.  
L. H. B. inc.

Sewer connection application by George F. Oatman for this house (1939)