

DATE of SUBMISSION:



# Application for Certificate of Appropriateness for a City Landmark or Local Historic District

Adopted December 2012

<b>Permit Information</b>	
<b>For Office Use Only</b>	BP- _____ PR- _____ C14H/LHD - _____
	Property Name or LHD: _____ Contributing/Non-contributing _____
	<input type="checkbox"/> RELEASE PERMIT <input type="checkbox"/> DO NOT RELEASE PERMIT <input type="checkbox"/> HLC REVIEW _____ FEE PAID: \$ _____
	HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE _____ DATE: _____
<b>Property Information</b>	
Address: 603 W. 8th Street - Gilfillan House	
<b>Scope of Work</b>	
Exterior restoration and interior rehabilitation of the historic house and construction of a new office building on the site. See attached Scope of Work	
<b>Applicant</b>	
Name: Tere O'Connell, O'Connell Architecture LLC	
Address: 1405 W. 10th Street	
City/Zip: Austin, Texas 78703	
Phone: 512/751-1374	
Email: tere@ocpreservation.com	
<b>Owner</b>	
Name: 2015 Eureka Gilfillan LP	
Address: 3001 Knox Street, Suite 400	
City/Zip: Dallas, Texas 75205	
Phone: 214/363-2628	
Email: mrogers972@gmail.com	
<b>Architect or Contractor Information</b>	
Company: Thomas Phifer & Partners LLP, Architect	
Address: 180 Varick St., #1110	
City/Zip: New York, NY 10014	
Phone: 212/337-0334	

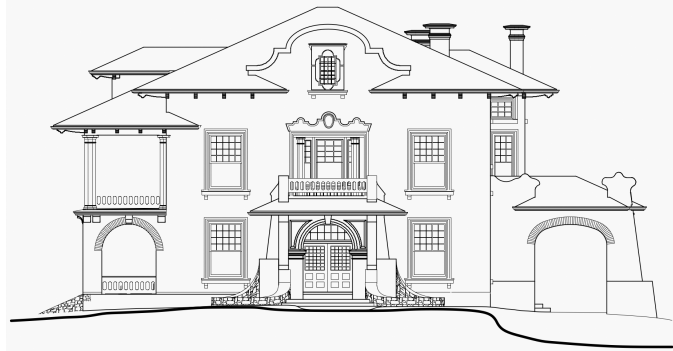
Owner's Signature: 2015 EUREKA GILFILLAN LP Date: 6/30/16
 Applicant's Signature: Tere O'Connell Date: 6/30/16

## W. L. Gilfillan House, Austin Landmark

603 W. 8<sup>th</sup> Street, at Nueces

Application for Certificate of Appropriateness

Presentation Date: July 11, 2016



### History

The Gilfillan House was designed by prominent and prolific architect Charles H. Page in the Prairie School style. It was constructed in 1905 for William Lambertson Gilfillan, his wife, and two children. Gilfillan was a furniture store owner from Franklin, Pennsylvania, and a descendant of a banking family. The family moved to Austin in the late 1880s where he became one of the founders of Austin National Bank, opened a furniture store, and sold property insurance. They lived at 8<sup>th</sup> and Rio Grande prior to the construction of this home. See the attached National Register nomination for a very complete description of the architecture of the home and family history.

The Travis County Appraisal District identifies the property as having 7,742 SF of living space, in addition to several porches and terraces. Although historic Sanborn maps from 1935-1971 show several outbuildings lining the south property line, these structures were removed prior to 1980. In fact, the National Register nomination of 1980 reveals that one of these earlier structures was a stone and plaster carriage house with living quarters above.



Figure 1 - Sanborn Map from 1935 showing the Gilfillan home and outbuildings, outlined with a red box.



## W. L. Gilfillan House, Austin Landmark

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As early as 1906 the home was featured in a souvenir book of Austin public architecture, businesses, and grand residences.



Figure 2 - The newly constructed Gilfillan Home is featured at the bottom left of this singular page of Austin homes in "Souvenir of Austin", 1906. Image courtesy of the Austin History Center.

It was again featured in a similar publication, "Austin Texas - City of the Violet Crown," in 1917. Gilfillan sold the home in 1924 to state employee Charles Mayfield. The 1935 Sanborn map shows the house and three outbuildings lining the alley along the south property line. (Fig 1)

Swedish-born mason Julius G. Knape acquired the property in 1937. His son served under Patton in WWII, and was Missing in Action for a period of time. He died in 1947, and is buried in a family plot in Oakwood Cemetery.

By 1961, the house had been converted to apartments, as evidenced by the Sanborn Map of that year. Several outbuildings remained along the south property line, immediately adjacent to the alley.

By 1975, the house had fallen in to disrepair. Local artist and property owner Anne Cofrin Baldeschwiler undertook repairs in 1979-1980, resulting in a much-celebrated restoration.



Figure 3 - Restoration underway in 1979. Flory, Linda C. [Gilfillan House, (Northwest oblique)], Photograph, December 1979; (<http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph675181/> : accessed February 23, 2016), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <http://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting Texas Historical Commission, Austin, Texas.

The house was designated a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark, National Register, and Austin Landmark in 1980-1981. The Texas Historical Commission, Texas Historical Foundation, and Heritage Society of Austin hosted events at the house, and the completed restoration received an award from the Heritage Society in 1981.

The house was designated an Austin Landmark in 1980 under several criteria, including

- It's associations with architect C.H. Page, businessman William L. Gilfillan, and mason Julius Knappe, architect and owners who exemplify the economic and social heritage of the City.
- Stylistic elements that embody architectural design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant architectural innovation
- It's proximity to the Bremond Block, Boardman House, Sampson House, and others, contributing value to the neighborhood, community, and city, and
- It's value as an aspect of community sentiment and public pride.

Attorneys John C. and Doyle Kuhn acquired the property in 1992 and operated a law firm within the house until 2015.

The new owners, 2015 Austin Gilfillan LP, plans to develop the property as a collaborative office space for downtown Austin. Their plans include exterior restoration of the historic house, interior rehabilitation for commercial office use, and the construction of new, flexible office space flanking the south and west side of the property. The historic house will be used for conference and meeting rooms and other support services for the collaborative office environment.



*Figure 4 - The Gilfillan House, North Elevation*

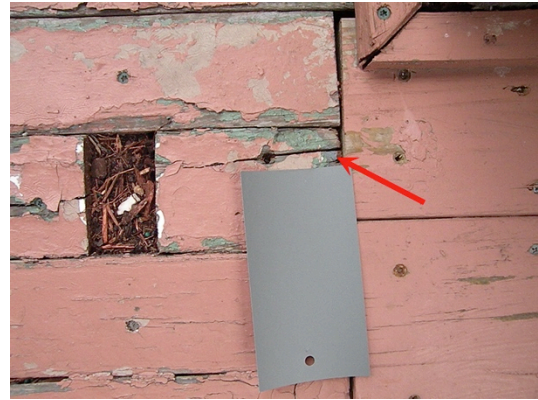
## Restoration

The intent of the proposed project includes the restoration the exterior of the historic Gilfillan House, taking care to protect and preserve historic character-defining features while bringing back historic details that have been lost over the years. Work will include masonry restoration, window restoration and conservation and repair of the wood railings and deep overhanging eaves and brackets. The existing wood porch floor is extremely deteriorated and requires replacement in kind. Exterior lighting will be restored where historic fixtures remain, and historically appropriate fixtures will be installed at the porches to replace modern fixtures.





*Figure 5 - Wood windows and cast stone sills will be restored.*



*Figure 6 - Deteriorated wood floors will be replaced; paint color will match historic.*



*Figure 7 - Exposed conduit will be concealed, floors will be replaced, and additional masonry cleaning and conservation will be performed at the second floor porch*

Some modern alterations will be addressed in the restoration, including removal and subsequent concealment of exposed electrical conduit and continued work on areas of second floor masonry that had been painted years ago when the porch was converted to office space. A modern exterior door at the second floor gallery will be replaced with a historically appropriate door. Modern enclosure of the second floor porch of the kitchen addition will be re-opened, restoring this original feature and creating a visual connection between the historic building and the new

office space to the south. The code-required existing modern guard rails at the second floor gallery will be refinished or replaced to be as unobtrusive as possible.



*Figure 8 - Existing roof systems over the porte cochère and main house.*

The existing roof is a mix of asphalt shingles and concrete tiles believed to date to the 1980 restoration. At some point in the past the asphalt shingles were coated with a spray urethane foam and white spray topcoat that was oversprayed on to the adjacent brick walls. While the roof does not appear to have any active leaks, the owner wishes to replace the roof as part of this larger construction project if funding permits. Options for roof replacement include new concrete tiles to match those currently found on the porte cochère and front porch, or clay tile to match the historic roof system that was still in place in a photograph dating to 1975.



*Figure 9 - a cropped view of the Gilfillan House from 1906, showing the original terrace rail, removed prior to 1975.*



If possible, the railing at the perimeter of the original terrace will be reconstructed as well. This rail was constructed of brick piers with Mission-styled caps, with wood railings and sawn balusters spanning between.

The stairs leading to the porches and several of the door thresholds are in a serious state of deterioration. This work will include replacement of stone steps where needed to provide safe access.

A historic paint analysis will be performed to determine the original paint scheme. New exterior paint colors will either match existing, historic, or a historically appropriate color scheme, with approval from the Historic Landmark Commission. The following historic photograph indicates that the wood trim was not always painted in a contrasting light cream color. We will be investigating the paint history with this knowledge.



*Figure 10 - This early image was acquired from the great grandson of William Gilfillan, Michael Gavin.*

The current site and building are not accessible to people with disabilities, so another key part of the project will involve the reconfiguration of the southwest corner of the building to include a new egress stair, elevator, and accessible restrooms. This area is the least visible from any public right of way, and is the most sensitive and integrated location to provide these improvements. The design team wishes to avoid a building addition that would obstruct the exterior walls of the house. To that end, the elevator, restroom and stair core have been carefully massaged by Thomas Phifer + Partners to fit within the historic envelope in a manner that preserves all of the historic windows. The only known concession to this approach is the need to raise the roof to enclose the elevator penthouse. This change will not be visible at all from the primary 8<sup>th</sup> Street elevation, and perhaps only minimally apparent from certain angles along Nueces. The new construction at the southwest quadrant of the historic house will have the added benefit of addressing long-term water infiltration problems in to the basement in this area.

*- O'Connell Architecture*





*Figure 11 – Rendering of the proposed new building as seen from above the corner of 8<sup>th</sup> and Nueces.*

## New Construction

Thomas Phifer + Partners

The West 8<sup>th</sup> Street campus is located in the northwest quadrant of Austin, Texas. The campus incorporates 10,000 square feet of new office space on the site of the Prairie-style Gilfillan House. Under its new ownership, the West 8<sup>th</sup> Street campus will provide flexible event and conference space in downtown Austin.

The design of the new buildings make reference to the Gilfillan House's warm brick, arched façade and are sited to preserve primary views to and from the historic structure. The office building's light wood palette matches the tone of the Gilfillan House. Its two-story colonnade aligns with the strong cornice line of the landmark house. The addition's balcony is oriented northward allowing soft daylight to flood the interior spaces while eliminating the need for shades and replicates the sheltered outdoor setting experienced on the Gilfillan House's three-sided covered porch.

- Thomas Phifer + Partners

## Landscape

Design Philosophy: The overall concept for the landscape design at the Gilfillan House utilizes beautiful and efficient plant and hardscape materials to respond to the historic character of the site and reflect Austin's native ecology. The site is defined by the duality of its relationship to an evolving Downtown Austin and its historic relevance. The goal is to respect the site's history and place in the city while embracing updates as a way to build upon the future significance of the site. We do not seek to misrepresent history, but rather reveal and reinforce the integrity of the site's character. We see the Gilfillan House renovation as a celebration of the property's beauty, resulting in a site that will be performative, functional and enjoyable for the next 100 years.

Planting: All vegetation will be indigenous to the Austin area. New native landscaping will maintain the historic character and be a more sustainable choice given the inherent adaptation to local climate conditions. Except in times of drought the vegetation will not require irrigation after the establishment period; these plants will require little or no fertilizer due to their adaptation to the nutrients found in local soil.



*Figure 12 - The historic heritage oak at the northeast corner of the site has been mauled to accommodate power lines. Our plan is to request that the City bury these lines to the maximum extent feasible.*

Heritage and Protected Trees: All efforts will be made to maintain the health of the grand heritage oak tree on the northeast corner of the site. The protected cedar elm at the immediate southwest corner of the historic building is causing significant damage to the foundation and roof, and must be removed as part of this project. We will replace this tree with new trees as determined appropriate.





*Figure 13 - The cedar elm at the southwest corner of the building is causing structural damage, and must be removed.*

Accessibility: Due to degradation and inconsistency in paving material, the existing stairs will be reconfigured with native limestone (to match existing) in order to increase safety and longevity of the material. The stair to tread ratio will be modified in order to meet current accessibility codes. The adjacent retaining walls will remain intact.

Sidewalks: Due to the high degree of foot-traffic and intended use for the structure, the design team proposes adjusting the existing historic walls in order to provide new sidewalks along the South and East of the property. The existing walls are tiered (2) in order to retain grade; the intention is to remove the first of the two walls and utilize the space between the curb and the second retaining wall for the installation of a sidewalk. This will result in the creation of variable sidewalk widths ranging from 5-10 feet.

Retaining Walls: The design team intends to maintain and restore the second tier walls in their existing location. The design team will propose a modern intervention at the base of the existing walls in order to ensure their structural integrity and provide a clarity between what is “new” and what is “old,” hence revealing and celebrating the historic walls.

- Coen + Partners

Collaboratively prepared by:

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Tere O’Connell, O’Connell Architecture

June 30, 2016