

# ZONING CHANGE REVIEW SHEET

**CASE NUMBER:** C14H-2017-0011

**HLC DATE:**

February 27, 2017

**PC DATE:**

February 28, 2017

**APPLICANT:** City of Austin, Parks and Recreation Department

**HISTORIC NAME:** Zilker Park Caretaker's Cottage

**WATERSHED:** Barton Creek

**ADDRESS OF PROPOSED ZONING CHANGE:** 2105 Andrew Zilker Road

**ZONING FROM:** P to P-H

**SUMMARY STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends the proposed zoning change from public (P) district to public – Historic Landmark (P-H) combining district zoning.

**QUALIFICATIONS FOR LANDMARK DESIGNATION:**

Architecture, historical associations, and community value.

**HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION ACTION:**

**PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:**

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The cottage is not listed in the Comprehensive Cultural Resources Survey (1984), but is listed as a contributing structure in the Zilker Park National Register Historic District.

**CITY COUNCIL DATE:** March 23, 2017

**ACTION:**

**ORDINANCE READINGS:** 1<sup>ST</sup> 2<sup>ND</sup> 3<sup>RD</sup>

**ORDINANCE NUMBER:**

**CASE MANAGER:** Steve Sadowsky  
Kim McKnight

**PHONE:** 974-6454  
974-9478

**NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION:** Zilker Neighborhood Association

**BASIS FOR RECOMMENDATION:**

**Architecture:**

The Zilker Caretaker's Cottage was designed by prominent local architect Hugo F. Kuehne in 1928, and constructed in the year or so thereafter. The cottage is designed in the Park Rustic style, and represents the influence of the City Beautiful and Arts and Crafts movements as well as the Tudor Revival residential style in developing a design for public park structures that blended in and complemented the ambience of the natural surroundings. The Caretaker's Cottage represents a very important example of Kuehne's masterful blending of a residential aesthetic with public architecture that resonates in 1930s park structures throughout the country, with examples in local, state, and national parks. The WPA, PWA, and CCC programs of the President Roosevelt's New Deal continued the tradition of "rustic" park architecture.

Kuehne used a Tudor Revival design for the Caretaker's Cottage, evident in the stone veneer, the multi-light fenestration, prominent chimney, and steeply-gabled roofs. The house was built

by the Brydson Lumber Company of Austin, a large business known for its ability to provide all materials for any construction project.

**Historical Associations:**

Andrew Zilker, a prominent Austin businessman, began purchasing property around Barton Springs at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Barton Springs had been the site of a sawmill operated by William Barton for many years in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and was becoming known as a place of beauty and recreation at the time that Zilker began purchasing the property. Zilker sold the property to the City of Austin in 1917 for use as a public park, and the City soon began constructing improvements within the park, which centered on what would become the Barton Springs Pool. In the early 1920s, local architect Hugo Kuehne designed a bath house and pavilion near the springs which increased its popularity so that the grounds surrounding the springs were further developed with picnic and other facilities.

With the construction of the park improvements in the 1920s, it became clear that the park required the services of a full-time, on-site caretaker to maintain the facilities. Hugo Kuehne designed the Caretaker's Cottage in 1928, but it was not until 1935 that Buster Robinson, the first full-time caretaker of the park, moved into the cottage and Buster began his life's work of maintaining the park for the citizens of Austin.

Robinson had been an employee of the City Parks Board for several years before assuming his role as full-time park caretaker, including his work to stack stones at the base of Barton Springs to create the swimming pool. In 1935, with his appointment as the park caretaker, Robinson took on a myriad of maintenance duties, including the painting of rocks in the pool with copper sulphate to deter the growth of algae, clearing the duckweed and other vegetation from the pool, and repairing and maintaining the other park facilities, including the picnic tables, playing fields, and model airplane field. Robinson retired in 1960, and his son, Jack, who had grown up in the caretaker's cottage, took over, moving with his family into the caretaker's cottage in 1965.

**PARCEL NO.:** 104027000

**LEGAL DESCRIPTION:** Field notes to follow.

**ESTIMATED ANNUAL TAX ABATEMENT:** N/A – publicly owned.

**APPRAISED VALUE:** N/A – publicly owned.

**PRESENT USE:** Park facility.

**CONDITION:** Excellent

**PRESENT OWNERS:** City of Austin

**DATE BUILT:** ca. 1929

**ALTERATIONS/ADDITIONS:** None.

**ORIGINAL OWNER(S):** City of Austin

**OTHER HISTORICAL DESIGNATIONS:** Contributing to the Zilker Park National Register Historic District.