

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION  
JULY 23, 2018  
PERMITS IN NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICTS  
NRD-2018-0051  
811 PRESSLER STREET  
WEST LINE HISTORIC DISTRICT

### PROPOSAL

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Demolish a one-story house built ca. 1939 and construct a new two-story garage apartment. The house is a contributing property in the West Line Historic District.

### ARCHITECTURE

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One-story, side-gabled, rectangular-plan house; clad in asbestos siding with 1:1 wood-sash windows.

### PROJECT SPECIFICATIONS

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Two-story, side-gabled, rectangular-plan garage apartment; clad in wood siding with clad-wood fixed and casement windows; capped with standing-seam metal roof. Doors include partially glazed clad-wood doors and an awning garage door. Ornamentation includes simple wood trim around the windows, simple brackets at the eaves, small door hoods, and brick walls at the entry staircase and north (side) elevation. The building has a footprint of 770 square feet.

### RESEARCH

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The house was constructed around 1939. After a few short-term renters, Guy and Lucile Bell purchased the house and moved in around 1944. Guy worked as a bookkeeper. In the late 1920s and early 1930s, he worked as the secretary for the Central Texas Automobile Club (the local chapter of AAA). Lucile worked as a seamstress and also was involved with traffic safety efforts. Guy died in 1956; Lucile lived in the house until her death in 1981.

### STANDARDS FOR REVIEW

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The property is contributing to the West Line Historic District. It does not appear to meet the standards for designation as a historic landmark.

#### *Designation Criteria—Historic Landmark*

- 1) The building is more than 50 years old, having been constructed ca. 1939.
- 2) The building appears to retain a moderately high degree of integrity.
- 3) Properties must meet two historic designation criteria for landmark designation (City of Austin Land Development Code (Section 25-2-352). The property does not appear to demonstrate significance according to any of the criteria.
  - a. **Architecture.** The building is built in the Craftsman style. It does not appear to be architecturally significant.
  - b. **Historical association.** Guy and Lucile Bell lived in the house for approximately thirty years; however, there do not appear to be significant historical associations. Guy Bell served as secretary of the early local chapter of the American Automobile Association in the 1930s; however, as this involvement predates his residence in the house by a decade, further research was not completed as to potentially significant historical associations.

- c. **Archaeology.** The property was not evaluated for its potential to yield significant data concerning the human history or prehistory of the region.
- d. **Community value.** The property does not appear to possess a unique location, physical characteristic, or significant feature that contributes to the character, image, or cultural identity of the community, Austin, or Texas as a whole.
- e. **Landscape feature.** The property is not a significant natural or designed landscape with artistic, aesthetic, cultural, or historical value to the city.

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation are used to evaluate projects in National Register historic districts. The following standards apply to the proposed new building:

*9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.*

When evaluated in the context of the West Line Historic District, the proposed building is differentiated from the surrounding historic buildings by its simple form and minimal modern ornamentation. It has a compatible size, scale, and massing. The proposed building is adjacent to the Ben Pillow House, a historic landmark. The new building is compatible with the historic landmark through its use of narrow wood cladding, similar window proportions, and simple window trim. It is also subordinate to the historic landmark through its placement behind the landmark and a greater setback from the street than the side elevation of the landmark.

*10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.*

If the proposed building were to be removed, the form and integrity of the historic area and the Ben Pillow House would be unimpaired.

The proposed project complies with the standards.

#### **COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION**

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The Certificate of Appropriateness Review Committee felt that the proposed design was not in keeping with the architectural character of the district. The committee recommended modifying the design to better acknowledge and connect to the adjacent Pillow House, while being subordinate to the property. Suggested changes included adding stone along the base.

The applicant has modified the cladding materials, window type and style, ornamentation, and entry staircase to comply with the committee's suggestions.

#### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

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Encourage rehabilitation and adaptive re-use of the existing building, including consideration of a demolition delay, as the building is contributing to the historic district. If the Commission votes to release the permit, then staff recommends 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.

Due to the building's location in a National Register historic district, the Commission must review and comment on the proposed plans for new construction prior to the release of the demolition permit. If the Commission votes to release the demolition permit, staff recommends commenting on and releasing the proposed plans.

LOCATION MAP



-  SUBJECT TRACT
-  PENDING CASE
-  ZONING BOUNDARY

**NOTIFICATIONS**

CASE#: NRD-2018-0051  
811 PRESSLER STREET



1" = 167'

This product is for informational purposes and may not have been prepared for or be suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes. It does not represent an on-the-ground survey and represents only the approximate relative location of property boundaries.

This product has been produced by CTM for the sole purpose of geographic reference. No warranty is made by the City of Austin regarding specific accuracy or completeness.

## PROPERTY INFORMATION

### *Photos*



*West (primary) façade and south elevation of 811 Pressler Street.*

### *Occupancy History*

City directory research, Austin History Center  
 By Historic Preservation Office staff  
 July 2018

- 1939      Raymond O. and Hazel E. Smith and child, renters  
             Real estate  
             Edgar G. and Nadie A. Brown, renters  
             No occupation listed
- 1941      Thomas G. (or J.) and Norma M. Capehart and 2 children, renters  
             Bus operator, Austin Transit Co.
- 1944-55   Guy W. and Lucile M. Bell, owners  
             Guy Bell worked as a repairman for the Brown Furniture Co. (1944-45), a  
             stockkeeper for Sherwin-Williams (1947), and a cabinetmaker (1949); no  
             occupation was listed in 1952 or 1955.



cannot locate *Ben*  
Connecting Charge \$ *1.00*

Application for Sewer Connection.

No. 9479A

Austin, Texas, *6-12* 192*0*

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 *Ben S. Pillow*

at *811* ~~811~~ *Prosper* Street

which place is to be used as a *Residence*

In this place there are to be installed *4* fixtures.

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

Respectfully, *Ben S. Pillow*

Location of Public Sewer *Plat 95*

*Access on Prosper St. to*

Connected *6-13* 192*0* *HC 34-102514*

Size of Main *4* inches

Size of Service *4* inches

Feet Deep *26*

Feet from Property Line *26*

Feet from Curb Line *26*

Connection made by *W. H. Bates*

*W. H. Bates*



Sewer connection permit issued to Ben S. Pillow, 6/12/1930.