

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION

February 25, 2019

Demolition and Relocation Permits

HDP-2019-0020

1117 Bluebonnet Lane

PROPOSAL

Demolish a ca. 1963 house designed by A.D. Stenger.

ARCHITECTURE

1117 Bluebonnet Lane is a single-story mid-century Modern house designed and built by A.D. Stenger. It is a frame structure with a sweeping, angular roof reminiscent of the asymmetrical “wounded dove” design popular during the 1950s and ‘60s. A recessed entry, along with central clerestory windows and vertical wood siding, contrast with the home’s dramatically horizontal form. 1117 Bluebonnet Lane is larger than many Stenger homes, with a total area of 1,706 square feet.

The structure next door at 1115 Bluebonnet Lane, also an A.D. Stenger home, appears to be more in keeping with Stenger’s typical stone-clad designs (see also: 1111 Bluebonnet Lane), though it somewhat resembles its neighbor in roof form and height, setback, and massing. However, the attached carport’s front-facing orientation at 1117 places more emphasis on the elongated façade. This house, with its low-slung gabled roof, is a good example of Stenger’s often aircraft-inspired design sensibility.



1115 Bluebonnet Lane

1111 Bluebonnet Lane

Unlike Stenger’s houses further down the west side of the block (1102, demolition approved 2017; 1106 Bluebonnet Lane), whose variable rooflines add interest to flatter lots, his designs for this section of the street mirror its gentle slope. This house is in the midst of a grouping of relatively intact mid-century resources, including other Stenger homes; the streetscape provides a glimpse of how the architect planned based on topography.



1102 and 1106 Bluebonnet Lane, March 2018

RESEARCH

1117 Bluebonnet Lane was built in 1963 by Arthur Dallas Stenger, a prominent mid-century modern designer and homebuilder in Austin. Stenger, the son of an architect, was born in Dallas, served in the Navy during WWII, and attended the University of Texas School of Architecture. After passing his professional licensing exam in 1950, Stenger left the program without graduating to take advantage of the post-war housing boom, as he struggled to make ends meet as a student with his meager G.I. Bill stipend.

Stenger was often compared to prominent California developer Joseph Eichler in the exterior design sensibilities and open living areas that characterize his residential designs. A typical Stenger home has a low-pitched roof, pronounced rafter tails, exposed beams and decking, and post-and-beam foundation with a conservative footprint. Stenger also often included walls of collected stone, clerestory windows, gable ends that terminate in a projecting point, and cantilevered structural systems.

Stenger was a builder as well as an architect. He typically purchased infill lots in South Austin, particularly the Zilker neighborhood where this home is located, before constructing and selling his designs. 1117 Bluebonnet Lane's permit history reveals that Stenger was the lot owner and applicant for the home's construction, like most of the Stenger homes on the block.

1117 Bluebonnet Lane was completed in 1963. Its first listing in City directories was in 1965 as a vacant house. Its first listed occupant was Mrs. Billie Passmore, a programmer at City National Bank. During the 1970s, the home was owned by Paul H. Gray, an associate professor of speech communication at the University of Texas, and his wife Caroline. Dr. Gray, a prolific author and leading scholar in his field, directed many of UT's chamber theater and oral performance productions during the 1970s, and currently serves as Professor Emeritus with the Communications Department. From 1985-1992, the home was owned by radio station salesman Fred Smith and his wife Beverly.

STAFF COMMENTS

The property is not listed in any City survey to date. The applicant has provided information about the condition of the house, indicating serious deterioration that is compromising the structural integrity of the house. Repairs to the house will likely require the removal and replacement of significant amounts of historic fabric.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Initiate historic zoning. This house has significance as an A.D. Stenger home that exhibits the architect's trademark mid-century design components, particularly the single-story horizontally-oriented form and dramatic roofline. These elements relate the house to both the topography of the landscape and to the other historic-era structures that define the streetscape. This house's association with the architect, as well as his purposeful design choices that link the property to its surroundings, render it eligible for designation under the criteria for architecture and historical associations.

If the Commission determines that the house is in too deteriorated a condition to warrant initiation of historic zoning, then staff recommends release of the permit upon receipt 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 Commission may take into consideration the condition of the building when making a decision about the feasibility of repairs without compromising exterior integrity of design, given the evidence of structural failure and resulting water infiltration.

LOCATION MAP



1117 Bluebonnet Lane
ca. 1963



OCCUPANCY HISTORY
1117 Bluebonnet Lane

City Directory Research
Austin History Center
By: City Historic Preservation Office

- 1992** Fred and Beverly Smith, owners. Salesman, KHFI Radio
- 1985-86** Fred and Beverly Smith, owners. Salesman, K-98.
NOTE: Fred and Beverly Smith are listed in the directory as new owners.
- 1977** Paul H. and Carolyn Gray, owner. Associate professor, University of Texas.
- 1973** Paul H. and Carolyn Gray, owner. Associate professor, University of Texas.
Carolyn Gray
- 1968** Mrs. Billie Passmore, owner. Programmer, City National Bank.
Wid. Jessie D. Passmore
- 1965** Vacant

FOR THE DISCRIMINATING

Exciting new Spanish contemporary. 3 bedrooms. 2 baths. Work room. Double carport. Washer connections. Air - conditioned. **1117 Bluebonnet Lane. \$165 a month. GR 8-5080.**

Classified Ad. *The Austin Statesman*, 16 July 1963: 30.



1117 BLUEBONNET LANE

4 Bedrooms, 2 Baths, den, living room, dining room and kitchen. Air conditioning, built-in kitchen, tile floor, exposed beams, paneling and fenced back yard. 1 and 1/4 mile to Downtown. \$23,950. Loan established. \$150 per month.

A. D. STENGER—Architect - Builder Developer

HI 2-2287

Classified Ad. *The Austin-American*, 07 June 1964: C11.

SANITARY SEWER SERVICE PERMIT
Austin, Texas

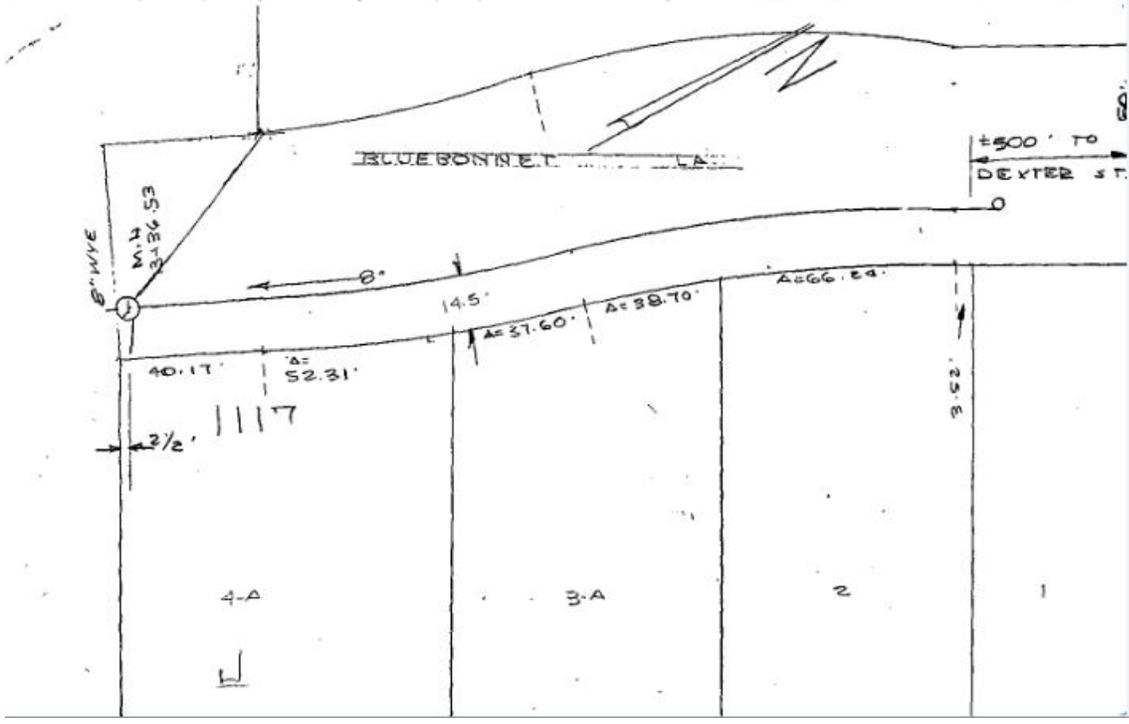
№ 39049

GM/TT

Received of A. D. Stanger Date 1-18-63
 Address 1117 Blue Bonnet Ln
 Amount 2.00
 Builder or Owner Self Plumber Bob Murray
 Lot 4A Block J Subdivision Southland Heights Plat No. 71

Date of Connection 3-14-63
 By City 9' N of SLL
 By Plumber _____
 Checked By Powell
 Size Main 8" Depth +6' (R&K)
 Main Assign. 14 1/2' W of E R
 Stub Depth 6' Prop. Line 2'
 Stub Location 2 1/2' N of SLL
 Book No. A3096
 Paying Cut No. 3-5-63 4977A

No. Fittings	Size	Price
6	6" Con	6.50
1	6" Bend	2.00
	Plugs	
	Sand	
	Gravel	
	Remix	
	Stoppers	
	Castings	
	Other	
Labor: 1.0 - 1.25		
Material: 1 - 1.50		
Total		20.75

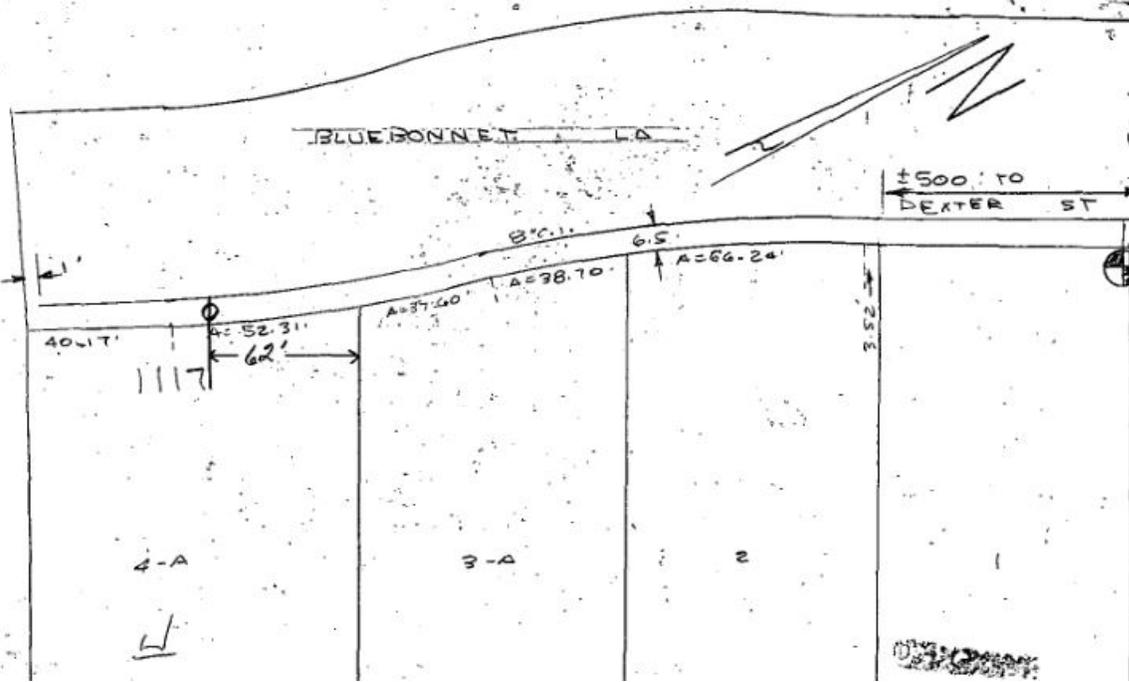


Let 4A SW II
WATER SERVICE PERMIT No. 32450
 Austin, Texas
INDEXED

Received of A. D. Steuger Date 1-18-63
 Address 1117 Blue Bonnet Lane
 Amount Fifty & no pad \$ 58.00
 Plumber _____ Size of Tap 3/4"

Date of Connection 2-14-63
 Size of Tap Made 3/4"
 Size Service Made 3/4"
 Size Main Tapped 8" C.I.
 From Front Prop. Line to Curb Cock 8'
 From N. Prop. Line to Curb Cock 62'
 Location of Meter CURB
 Type of Box Round
 Depth of Main in St. 3'
 Depth of Service Line 2'
 From Curb Cock to Tap on Main 2'
 Checked by Engr. Dept. 3-12-63 JBT

No. Fittings	Size
4	Pipe 3/4"
1	Corp. Cock 3/4"
	Cop. to Iron ell
	Cop. to Cop. ell
	Cop. to Iron Coupling
	Cop. to Cop. Coupling
1	Angle Stop 3/4"
	Stop
	Bushing
1	Nipples 8" 1 3/4" BRASS
	Service Clamp
	Valve
1	Meter Box Round
1	Lock Lid
1	Drain Tile
1	Drain Tile Lid
	Stop & Drain
	Job No. <u>4327-502</u>
	Foreman <u>A. Powell</u>



A. D. Stenger

1115 Bluebonnet Lane

74

3 & 4 3A

J

Southlund Park # 4

Frame Res. & Att CP & Stg.

83423

4-3-62

12,000.00

Owner

10

w E30513

s 37396

RESIDENCE

SHORT FORM - 4/14/62.

OWNER A. D. Stenger ADDRESS 1117 Bluebonnet Lane

PLAT 74 LOT 4 A BLK. J DIV

SUBDIVISION Southlund Park # 4

OCCUPANCY Frame Res. & Attached CP

BLD PERMIT # 86561 DATE 1-17-63 OWNERS ESTIMATE 15,000.00

CONTRACTOR Owner NO. OF FIXTURES 10

WATER TAP REC # w E 32450 SEWER TAP REC # s 39049

RESIDENCE