

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION
MAY 20, 2019
PERMITS IN NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICTS
NRD-2019-0028
1815 POLO ROAD
OLD WEST AUSTIN NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT

PROPOSAL

Demolish a ca. 1939 non-contributing single-family home and contributing detached garage.

ARCHITECTURE

The house is a one-story, rectangular-plan, cross-gabled frame building with paired 6:6 wood windows, asbestos siding, composition shingle roof, and a decorative wooden bargeboard typical of Minimal Traditional homes. The rear elevation has sliding aluminum windows and metal-covered patio. The detached garage is a one-story square-plan frame structure with a pyramidal composition-shingle roof and metal garage door. It is set back approximately 45' from the main house and faces Polo Road, while the main house faces Newfield Lane.

RESEARCH

The house appears to have been built in 1939 and has been home to middle-class residents and University of Texas students, typical for the neighborhood's general demographic history and location. Short-term owners and renters occupied the house for the majority of its period of significance. The house's first known residents were Newton and Ella Whitney and their son Robert, a student at UT, in 1941. A series of renters followed in the 1940s until Steve Latham, a law student, and his wife Virginia, a stenographer, purchased the home in 1949. They lived there until at least 1952. The house was then sold to Gertrude B. Trotti, widow of Laurence Trotti, former Texas State Health Administrator, by 1955. According to City directories, she rented part of the house to students. After Mrs. Trotti passed away in 1969, the house was occupied by several short-term residents, including more UT students and a caterer.

STAFF COMMENTS

The house is listed as non-contributing to the Old West Austin National Register Historic District, though it displays similar features and integrity as nearby contributing structures. The garage is listed as contributing to the Old West Austin National Register Historic District.

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW

Designation Criteria—Historic Landmark

- 1) The building is more than 50 years old.
- 2) The building appears to retain high integrity.
 - a. **Architecture.** The house is a Minimal Traditional structure, typical for the area. It appears to be relatively intact. While Minimal Traditional buildings, with their conservative footprints and simple design, are quickly disappearing from Austin in favor of larger dwellings, this structure is not an exceptional example of its type.
 - b. **Historical association.** There appear to be no significant historical associations.
 - c. **Archaeology.** The house was not evaluated for its potential to yield significant data concerning the human history or prehistory of the region.

- d. **Community value.** The house does not possess a unique location, physical characteristic, or significant feature that contributes to the character, image, or cultural identity of the city, the neighborhood, or a particular demographic group.
- e. **Landscape feature.** The property is not a significant natural or designed landscape with artistic, aesthetic, cultural, or historical value to the city.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Postpone the public hearing to June 24, 2019 to encourage consideration of alternatives to demolition. The demolition permit cannot be released until the Commission has reviewed plans for new construction. If the Commission chooses not to postpone, staff recommends encouraging rehabilitation and adaptive re-use, then relocation over demolition, but release of the permit upon completion of a City of Austin Documentation Package.

LOCATION MAP



-  SUBJECT TRACT
-  PENDING CASE
-  ZONING BOUNDARY

NOTIFICATIONS

CASE#: NRD-2019-0028
 LOCATION: 1815 POLO RD



1" = 333'

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

Occupancy History

City Directory Research, Austin History Center
By City Historic Preservation Office, May 2019

1939	2111 Newfield Lane/1815 Polo Road not listed.
1941	Newton R. and Ella Whitney, renters No occupations listed Robert R. Whitney, renter Student, University of Texas
1944-45	Paul R. and Stephania Sward, renters Assistant branch manager, American Optical Company Harold P. and Margaret Smoke, renters U.S. Army
1947	Clarence E. Mored, renter No occupation listed
1949	Steve and Virginia Latham, owners Student, University of Texas
1952	Steve and Virginia Latham, owners Lawyer Stenographer, Internal Revenue Service
1955	Mrs. Gertrude B. Trotti (wid. Laurence), owner No occupation listed Jimmie D. Crow, renter Student Joseph Darmento, renter Student
1959	Mrs. Gertrude B. Trotti (wid. L.J.), owner No occupation listed
1962	Mrs. Gertrude B. Trotti, (wid. L.J.) owner No occupation listed
1965	Mrs. Gertrude B. Trotti, (wid. L.J.) owner No occupation listed
1968	Mrs. Gertrude B. Trotti, (wid. L.J.) owner No occupation listed
1973	2111 Newfield Ln. not listed. 1815 Polo Rd. not listed.

- 1977 James C. Siddall, renter
No occupation listed
NOTE: The directory indicates that James C. Siddall was a new resident at this address.
- 1981 No return
- 1985-86 Vickie L. Roberts, owner
Caterer
- 1992 Collins R. Howell, renter
Student

Biographical Notes

MRS. GERTRUDE B. TROTTI
EL PASO — Funeral for Mrs. Gertrude B. Trotti, formerly of Austin, was held in Fort Blvd. United Methodist Church in El Paso. Burial was held in Rest Lawn Cemetery in El Paso. Mrs. Trotti died Wednesday, July 23rd, in the Rest Haven Nursing Home in El Paso where she had resided for the past 15 months.

A member of Tarrytown Methodist Church, she was the widow of L. J. Trotti who for many years was Texas State Health Administrator.

Survivors include a sister, Mrs. W. A. Rotau and a brother, Curtis A. Blaylock, both of El Paso.

Death notice for Mrs. Gertrude B. Trotti. The Austin Statesman; Aug 3, 1969.

Building Permits

No building permits for 1815 Polo Road or 2111 Newfield Lane are available through the City's permit database.

Photos



Application photo of 1815 Polo Rd.



1940 aerial photo



Street View: Newfield Lane.



Street View: Polo Road and Newfield Lane.



Street View: Polo Road garage entrance