

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION
MAY 20, 2019
DEMOLITION AND RELOCATION PERMITS
HDP-2019-0196
1706 E. 14TH STREET

PROPOSAL

Demolish a ca. 1928 house.

ARCHITECTURE

One-story, rectangular-plan, front-gabled frame bungalow with a partial-width partially-inset porch and an articulated front gable on ornamental metal posts; paired and triple replacement windows; synthetic siding.

RESEARCH

The house was built in 1928 by Benjamin Leo (B.L.) Joyce, the beloved and highly-respected organizer and leader of the old Anderson High School Yellow Jackets band from 1934 to 1955. B.L. Joyce was born in Plaquemine, Louisiana, and educated at the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, where he received his training as a master tailor. Tuskegee, like most African-American institutes of higher learning, had, as part of its educational program, vocational courses such as tailoring for students to advance themselves in their careers upon graduation. Joyce then moved to Austin to teach tailoring at Samuel Huston College, while he also worked in a tailor shop on Trinity Street. He participated in the music department at Samuel Huston College and played the tuba in the U.S. Army band while serving during World War I. In the early 1930s, Joyce was recruited by the principal of Anderson High School to organize the musical band program at Anderson High School and Kealing Junior High Schools. Joyce was outstanding in fostering musical talent at Anderson High School, and was known to go in neighborhoods to find youngsters interested in musical training. Joyce, with his skill in tailoring, designed and made, with the help of band mothers, the first uniforms for the Anderson High School band. He was, by all accounts, a strict disciplinarian, who inspired greatness in his students, even if he prohibited them from playing jazz and other popular music of the time. Many of his students looked up to him as a father figure, and he took that honor seriously. He organized the Friday evening concerts in Rosewood Park, and led the Anderson High School band to 7 state championships during his tenure. The Anderson High School band also played for the National Baptist Sunday School Convention, and even traveled as far away as Indiana for a concert. Stories abound of the incredible presence of the Yellow Jackets band in concert, parading down Congress Avenue and taking up the entire width of the avenue. Joyce led the Anderson High School band until 1955, when he was forced to retire when he could not meet the standard of a new state law that required public school teachers to have a degree in their field. He continued to be active in the African-American community and music in Austin, and remained in this house until around 1970. His wife, the former Zenobia (Nobia) Duncan, passed in 1939; in his later years, B.L. Joyce moved to San Jose, California, where several of his children lived. He died in California in 1980 and was buried in Austin's Evergreen Cemetery.

STAFF COMMENTS

The house was not recommended for individual designation nor for inclusion in a historic district by the East Austin Historic Resources Survey (2016).

Staff has evaluated this house for designation as a historic landmark and has determined that the house meets the criteria for landmark designation as set forth in City Code:

- a. **Architecture.** The house is a vernacular bungalow that maintains its integrity of form, if not materials. While the house reflects a common style in Austin, it represents a simplified version of the bungalow that was more prevalent in East Austin than in other neighborhoods. This variant of the bungalow is important to consider in determining architectural merit for houses in East Austin. Staff believes that the changes to the house can be reversed and its historical appearance easily restored, and that the simple bungalow form reflected here meets the criterion for architectural distinction.
- b. **Historical association.** The house was the home of B.L. Joyce and his family from 1928 until around 1970. B.L. Joyce was a very prominent member of Austin's African-American community as the leader of the Anderson High School Yellow Jackets band, and organizer of the Rosewood Park summer concerts, fostering musical talent in Austin. The house meets the criterion for designation under 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 community value of this house is determined by its owner and occupant for over 40 years, B.L. Joyce, who had a monumental impact in Austin's African-American community.
- 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

Initiate historic zoning and encourage the applicant to explore the possibilities for restoration of the house as a landmark commemorating the life and contributions of B.L. Joyce to the African-American community in particular, and the city's musical heritage in general.

LOCATION MAP



-  N
-  SUBJECT TRACT
-  PENDING CASE
-  ZONING BOUNDARY

NOTIFICATIONS
CASE#: HDP-2019-0196
1706 E 14TH STREET



1" = 200'

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.

1706 E. 14th Street
ca. 1928



OCCUPANCY HISTORY 1706 E. 14th Street

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

- 1929 B.L. and Nobia Joyce (colored), owners
Tailor, 506 ½ Trinity Street.
NOTE: The house is listed as 1606 E. 14th Street.
NOTE: The 1927 directory shows B.L. and Censuia [?] Joyce at 1606 E. 14th Street. Benjamin and Nobia J. Joyce divorced in August, 1927. B.L. Joyce was a tailor at 506 ½ Trinity Street.
NOTE: The 1922 Sanborn map shows the former house on this site. This house was built in 1928.

**BUILDING PERMITS APPLIED
FOR
B. L. Joyce, \$1500, construct frame
residence at 1606 East 14th street.**

Newspaper notice that B.L. Joyce had applied for a building permit to construct this house
Austin Statesman, June 2, 1928

- 1930-31 Benjamin L. and Nobia Joyce (colored), owners
No occupation listed

1932-33	Benjamin L. and Nobie Joyce (colored), owners No occupation listed
1935	Benjamin L. and Nobia Joyce, owners Band master Also listed is Leola Joyce, no occupation shown.
1937	Benjamin L. and Novia J. Joyce, owners Music teacher, Anderson High School
1939	Benjamin L. and Nobia J. Joyce, owners Teacher, public schools Also listed is Leola T. Joyce, a student.
1941	Benjamin L. Joyce, owner Teacher Also listed are Gladys Joyce, no occupation shown; and Thomas Joyce, U.S. Army.
1944-45	Benjamin L. Joyce, owner Teacher, public schools
1947	Benjamin L. Joyce, owner Teacher, Anderson High School
1949	Benjamin L. Joyce, owner Teacher, Anderson High School
1952	Benjamin L. Joyce, owner Teacher
1955	Benjamin L. Joyce, owner Band director, City Recreation Department
1959	Benjamin L. Joyce, owner Musician
1962	Benjamin L. Joyce, owner Musician
1965	Benjamin L. Joyce, owner Retired
1968	Benjamin L. Joyce, owner Retired
1973	Elroy and Lucy Eilers, renters Jailer, City Police Department
1977	Elroy and Lucy Eilers, renters No occupation listed
1981	Elroy and Lucy Eilers, owners

Elroy: Employed by Motorola, 7715 Chevy Chase Drive.
 Lucy: Employed by Travis State School
 Also listed is Evelyn Eilers, employed by Foley's, department store,
 Highland Mall and Barton Creek Square Mall.

- 1985-86 Elroy and Lucy Eilers, owners
 Employed by Motorola, 7715 Chevy Chase Drive.
 Also listed is Evelyn Eilers, employed by Foley's department store,
 Highland Mall and Barton Creek Square Mall.
- 1992 Lucy Eilers, owner
 Cashier, Owens' Garage, 1411 Bob Harrison Street.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES:

Benjamin L. and Nobia Joyce (ca. 1928 – ca. 1970)

The 1920 U.S. Census shows Benjamin L. and Nobia Joyce as the renters of a house at 1402 Rosewood Avenue in Austin,. Benjamin L. Joyce was 31, had been born in Kansas, and was a tailor in a tailor shop. Nobia Joyce was 23, had been born in Texas, and had no occupation listed. They had a daughter, Leola, 1, who had been born in New Mexico.

The 1930 U.S. Census shows Benjamin and Birdie Joyce as the owners of the house at 1606 E. 14th Street; the house was worth \$1,400. Benjamin Joyce was 41, had been born in Louisiana, and was a pressman for a tailor shop. Birdie Joyce was 31, had been born in Texas, and was a saleslady for a dry goods store. They had 5 children: Leola, 11; Gladys, 9; Tom, 7; Richard, 6; and Albert, 5. All the children had been born in Texas.

The 1940 U.S. Census shows Benjamin Joyce as a 51-year old widower and the owner of this house, addressed as 1706 E. 14th Street; the house was worth \$2,000. Benjamin Joyce was born in Louisiana and was a public school teacher. His daughter, Lela, 21, born in Texas, is listed as absent; she had no occupation shown. With him lived his 4 other children: Gladys, 19; Thomas, 17; Richard, 16; and Albert, 14. All the children had been born in Texas and none had an occupation listed. Also in the household was a niece, Geraldine Stafford, 20, who had been born in Alabama and had no occupation listed. She had lived in Mobile, Ala. in 1935.

Nobia Joyce was born in 1898 and died in 1939. Benjamin L. Joyce died in Santa Clara County, California in January, 1980. Both are buried in Austin's Evergreen Cemetery.

Her death certificate shows that Nobia Joyce was born in Belton, Texas in 1898 and was living in this house at the time of her death from cervical cancer. She was a married housewife.

Honor Slated Tonight For B. L. Joyce

Friday is "B. L. Joyce Day" in Austin.

So Mayor C. A. McAden proclaimed it Thursday in honor of the founder and long time director of the Anderson High School Band, who will receive tribute in a special ceremony in Doris Miller Auditorium Friday at 8 p.m.

Joyce will receive a certified check from Mayor McAden, contributions from citizens all over town.

Appearing with him on the platform will be M. H. Crockett Jr., assistant director of the University of Texas Longhorn Band; Noble Prentice, vice president of the Austin School Board; Dr. George I. Sanchez of the UT's Latin-American Institute; W. B. Campbell, principal of Anderson High School; and W. H. Smith, an East Austin fraternal leader.

Other members of the City Council are expected to be present at the ceremony, at which Arthur DeWitty will be master of ceremonies.

—◆◆◆—
B.L. Joyce honored
Austin Statesman, September 4, 1953

Below is Michael Corcoran's article on the L.C. Anderson High School Yellow Jackets band, led by B.L. Joyce:

THE PRIDE OF EAST AUSTIN: L.C. ANDERSON YELLOW JACKETS

Posted by [mcorcoran](#) on January 18, 2015



Anderson H.S. band 1955. Photo by Neal Douglass

Trumpet players blew so hard to produce the slightest spit of sound that they almost passed out. Drummers snapped their sticks with all the rhythmic sense of a pair of tennis shoes in the dryer. The honks of confusion rang out in the music room on the first day of band practice.

It was 1950 and Austin native Alvin Patterson, a 27-year-old recent graduate of the New England Conservatory of Music, sat in his office at Douglass High School in El Paso and wondered what he'd gotten himself into. The school had never had a band before. His thoughts turned to his mentor, B.L. Joyce, the larger-than-life band director at L.C. Anderson High School in East Austin.

Patterson wondered how the man he called "Prof" would handle the situation. He took a deep breath, thrust the door of his office open and stood firmly before his musical beginners, but the dissonance barely dispersed.

THWACK! Patterson brought his baton down hard on a table top. The room froze. "Rule number one," Patterson intoned, sternly. "When I step up to the podium I want to be able to hear a pin drop."

Patterson sits in his home office/Anderson High museum in East Austin and smiles at the memory. "I always thought Mr. Joyce was maybe a little too strict until I had to control a room full of kids with noisemakers in their hands," says the 81-year-old recent retiree. "You've gotta demand discipline and respect or there's gonna be chaos."

The Anderson High School Yellow Jacket Band, whose lofty alumni include bop trumpet great Kenny Dorham and former Motown arranger Gil Askey, had only two directors in its 38-year history. Joyce founded the band in 1933 and ruled it with an iron baton until Patterson took over in 1955, when the old man was forced to resign because of a new statewide regulation that required high school band directors to have music degrees. That Joyce, who got his college degree in tailoring from Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, didn't step down voluntarily made for a rough return for Patterson.



L-R Teddy Wilson, Alvin Patterson, Kenny Dorham at the 1966 Longhorn Jazz Fest.

"We gave (Patterson) some grief that first year," says Joseph Reid, who played clarinet in Joyce's last and Patterson's first bands. "If there was anybody you could call a legend in East Austin during that time, it was B.L. Joyce." Imagine replacing Coach Paul "Bear" Bryant at Alabama or taking over "The Tonight Show" after Johnny Carson's retirement. Several band members quit after Patterson's first practices. But the 1940 Anderson grad didn't shy from the challenge and was eventually able to carve his own imposing legacy until federal orders to desegregate closed Anderson, Austin's historically black high school, in 1971.

Long before Janis Joplin sang at Threadgill's and Willie Nelson got the heads and 'necks together at the Armadillo, Austin's reputation as a music town was forged by the Anderson High School band. Resplendent in uniforms as bright as a September sunrise, the Yellow Jacket Band would trek to the annual Prairie View Interscholastic League competitions and invariably come back with a trophy. Under Joyce's directorship, the Jacket band won the state championship seven times from 1940-1953.

"If we got second place it was a big disappointment," says Ernie Mae Miller, a tenor sax player with the band from 1940-43, who went on to a lengthy career as a singer/pianist. "We just sounded better than the other bands. When they called our name as the winner, we were like, 'Of course!' "



B.L. Joyce

For most of the '40s, '50s and '60s, the East Side was invisible to most of Austin's West Siders. The predominantly black neighborhood on the other side of the freeway might as well have been a town far away. But when the Yellow Jacket Band marched down Congress Avenue, its presence was full and pronounced.

They would span the full width of the street, causing rubberneckers to jump back on the curb or else be swallowed up in their swagger of brass. "We felt like we were representing not only our school, but our entire community," says Reid, who heads the Original L.C. Anderson Alumni Association. "When we sang our school song ('When the days are dark and dreary/We are never blue or weary/ It's ever onward, upward, forward, marching AHS'), we really meant it."

The Yellow Jackets were the first black band to march at a Texas inauguration, for Gov. John Connally in 1959. They were the first all-black band to play in the Austin Aqua Festival parade a few years later.

Besides Dorham, Miller and Askey, more than two dozen future band directors, including Ray Murphy (Hobbs, N.M.), T.W. Kincheon (Caldwell High), Richard Elder (Taylor High) and John Whitehurst (Boulder, Colo.), passed through the ranks, but then so did such notables as Travis County tax collector Nelda Wells Spears, Dr. James Hill (chief of the University of Texas community relations department), John Q. Taylor King (former Huston-Tillotson College

president and head of King Tears Mortuary), longtime H-T music department head Beulah Curry Jones and educator Charles Akins, who became the first black principal of a predominantly white high school in Austin in 1973.

"Teach the whole person. That's what I learned from Mr. Joyce," says Patterson, who spent 32 more years in education after the original L.C. Anderson High closed. (The current Anderson High, at 8403 Mesa Drive on the West Side, was built in 1973.) "Being in the band was more than just playing the right notes. It was about building character and leadership skills. If you didn't toe the line, we'd put you out of the band in a second."

Jazz turns the tide

A tailor who made custom suits out of his house at 1706 E. 14th St. and taught the trade at Samuel Huston College, Benjamin Leo Joyce was also a musician who played tuba in the Army band during World War I. With a desire to give black students the same kind of musical training given in the white schools, Joyce started canvassing East Austin in late 1932 looking for kids who wanted to play. He also solicited neglected instruments. An Austin trumpeter, William Timmons, had been teaching a community band over at the youth center on Angelina Street but he was soon off to join the Ringling Bros. circus band. Joyce recruited four Timmons students — Alvin Patterson's older brother Roy, Hermie Edwards, Ulysses Fowler and Raymond Edmondson — as the core of his first AHS band.

Joyce made the uniforms that first year; no beginning band ever looked so snappy.

The players were expected to carry themselves in a manner consistent with their sartorial splendor. "Mr. Joyce didn't put up with an ounce of foolishness," says Ernie Mae Miller, whose grandfather Laurine Cecil Anderson was the school's namesake. "You couldn't play no jazz either."

Joyce bent his strict "no jazz" rule only one time that Patterson could remember. "We were playing football against Wheatley (the archrival from San Antonio) and they were beatin' us," he recalls. "But



even worse, their band was showing us up, playing all these hot big band swing numbers. So Mr. Joyce called me over and said, 'What was that swing thing you were playing the other day when you thought I was out of listening range?' I said that was 'Tuxedo Junction' and he said, 'OK, let's hear it.' " The band also did Cab Calloway's "Fat Foot Flewzy."

Miller, who was also in the band at the time, recalls that the crowd went nuts when the precise, militaristic Yellow Jackets of marches and grand overtures turned to swing and jazz. "It lit a fire under the football team, too. We ended up winning the game," she says, with a hearty laugh.

When Patterson was in the band with Dorham and Askey, the trio and such friends as trombonist Buford Banks (father of noted local jazzman Martin Banks) and trumpeters Paris Jones and Warner "Rip" Ross would meet in the back yard of Patterson's house at 1709 Washington Ave. to play improvisational jazz. Though Dorham went on to iconic status, replacing Miles Davis in the Charlie Parker Quintet in 1948 and co-founding the influential Jazz Messengers in 1954, he often deferred to the older players in the back yard jam sessions, especially Hermie Edwards, recognized as the baddest horn player in East Austin at the time. "Kenny was quiet, deep," Patterson recalls. "Very thoughtful and perceptive."

After being drafted into the Navy in 1942 and stationed in Boston, where his job was playing "Taps" as the body bags from World War II were unloaded, Patterson met up with Dorham when the trumpet player was in Billy Eckstine's band. "He used to copy Erskine Hawkins when we'd jam in Austin," Patterson says, "but he started getting into his own thing."

Dorham, known for his dark trumpet tone and graceful melodic flights, died in 1972. But Patterson was able to hang with him one more time, when Dorham returned home, with fellow native Austinite Teddy Wilson and an all-star cast, including John Coltrane, Elvin Jones, Lightnin' Hopkins and Dave Brubeck, to play the 1966 Longhorn Jazz Fest at the old Disch Field (next to City Coliseum).



Gilbert Askey, Motown great.

When Askey made his triumphant return to Austin in the mid-'60s, he brought a trio of singers from Detroit to a party at the Hamilton Avenue home of his mother, Ada Simonds. "Everybody was pretty much focused on the Supremes," Patterson recalls of the special guests. Askey's credits include arranging and producing the likes of Curtis Mayfield, the Four Tops and the soundtrack to "Lady Sings the Blues."

Whatever success Askey achieved, he was quick to credit Joyce. When the old man passed away in 1980, Askey, who currently lives in Australia, wrote a poem called "I Am an Extension of Him" for the funeral program. "Mr. Joyce lives on in the things I do, for without him there'd be no me," it ends.

The impeccably-dressed, well-spoken Joyce came from an era, Reid says, when educators were bigger heroes in East Austin than footballers or singers. "The legends you heard about growing up were Miss (Lucille) Frazier, the English teacher and Mr. (Lawrence) Britton, the track coach," says Reid. "Even going back to when I was in elementary school, the older kids would say, 'Just wait until you've gotta take Mr. Pickard's science class.' Anderson High was the thread that kept the community together."

The school was all black until the late '50s when a handful of Hispanics attended. The first white student to graduate from Anderson was in 1970. The next year, following a U.S. Supreme Court decision that favored busing as a preferred method of integration, the federal government sued the Austin school district and ordered district schools to desegregate. As the first federal suit following the Supreme Court decision, the Austin case was a national news story for several months.

AISD's decision in July 1971 to comply by closing Anderson High, which had fewer than 20 nonblack students (out of a student body of about 800), "just devastated us all," says Patterson.

The one-way busing — with black students sent to white schools, but white students not sent to black schools — especially rankled East Austinites. On the first day of the new school year, 121 former Anderson High students did not report to their new schools.

"It's like they ripped the heart out of East Austin," says Reid. "You wanna know when the neighborhood started going downhill? It's when they closed Anderson."

Patterson moved to McCallum High School, where many of the black students were bused, and remained a counselor in the community relations department until 1984, when he took a position as assistant to the dean at St. Edward's University. He retired last June at age 80. Fittingly, a Juneteenth parade of marching bands ended at Patterson's doorstep in East Austin, a show of appreciation for the 16 years he led the best high school marching band in Texas.

The building at 1607 Pennsylvania Ave. that housed Anderson High School from 1913-1953 burned down 20 years ago. Kealing Junior High now sits on the site. The original Olive Street location of Anderson (1907-1913) — which was originally named E.H. Anderson High for L.C.'s older brother — burned down in 1947.

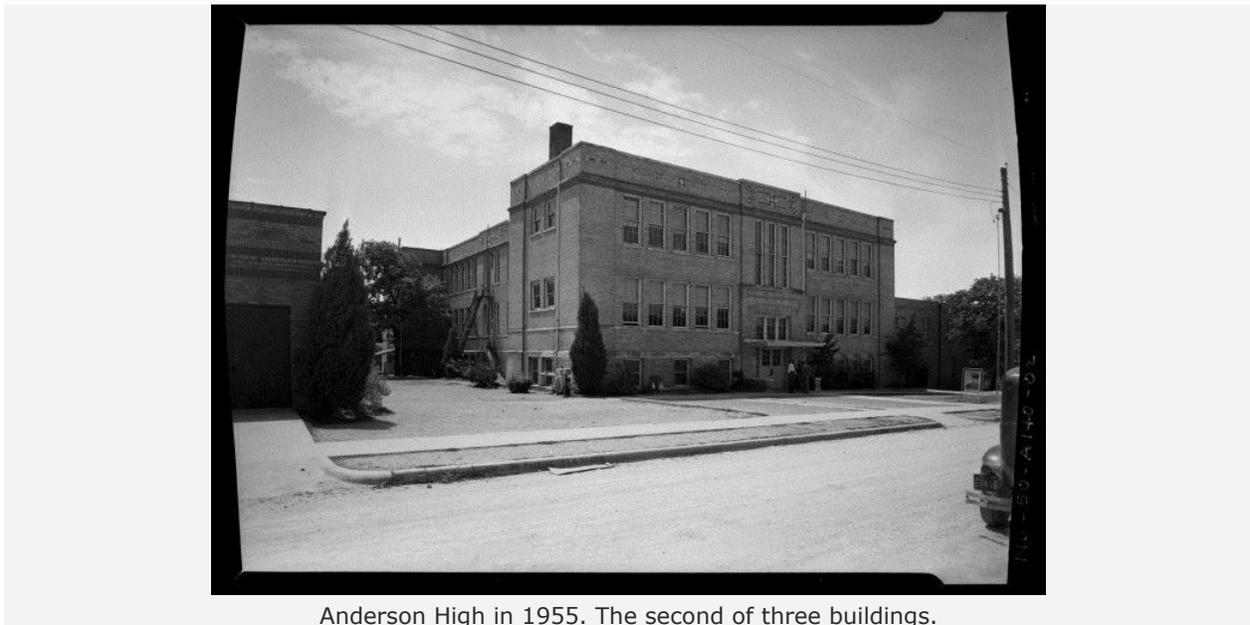
But the brick building on Thompson Street, which housed L.C. Anderson High (renamed after the 1938 passing of its first principal) from 1953-1971, still stands. Anderson alum Thomas "Hollywood" Henderson has restored the running track and the football field on the west side of the school, but the building, which now holds the Boys & Girls Club and an alternative learning center, does not resemble a place that once anchored an entire community.

Sometimes when Patterson drives on that street, his mind brakes for memories. Other times he drives by and looks away, not wanting to revisit what used to be.

But it's a special place, this building where Joyce passed him the baton, where he became a father figure to a family of students, just like the old man had been.

"Mr. Joyce was as strict as they come — you sure didn't want to feel his wrath," Patterson says. "But I think you'll find that, deep down, kids want someone riding them, demanding the best out of them."

The fumbling disorder of a band practice can, with the right guidance, evolve into the sweetest sound.



Anderson High in 1955. The second of three buildings.

The B.L. Joyce Parade - Celebrate the Fine Arts AUSTIN, TX - On June 1, 2016 Blackshear Elementary Fine Arts Academy and the surrounding community will celebrate the lifetime work of Benjamin Lee Joyce, aka B.L. Joyce. He was an East Austin Educator who brought the Fine Arts into a community that had no Fine Arts at that time in History. He taught tailoring at Tillotson College, which is now Huston-Tillotson University. He was a master musician who played in the US Army Band. He was asked to form marching bands at Old Anderson High School and Keeling Middle School. The bands he created, won the Texas band champions He a created community wide music program that exposed the students and the community who lived in East Austin to the importance and value a good Fine Arts education. He also brought music to Blackshear. The Parade Starts on the corner of Chalmers and 11th Street, in front of Blackshear Elementary School Fine Arts Academy. It proceeds east on 11th Street to Chicon Street, left on Chicon Street to Rosewood, left on Rosewood to Angelina Street. Then, right on Angelina to the Carver Museum. Because of his work in building the Fine Arts and the Black Community, Blackshear Elementary Fine Arts Academy is proud to honor him by starting the Blackshear Elementary Fine Arts Academy, All Homemade Instruments Marching Band. Which will march in his honor in the B.L. Joyce Celebrate the Fine Arts Parade, aka the B. L. Joyce Parade. The B. L. Joyce Parade will take place on June 1, 2016. From 11am1pm. It will start in front of Blackshear Elementary Fine Arts Academy 1712 East 11th Street. It will end at the George Washington Museum, 1165 Angelina St. We will honor current community builders and educators from the Blackshear Community. Pizza and water will be served to all students, teachers, and parents who attend. Join us to honor Mr. Benjamin Lee Joyce

Austin Villager, May 27, 2016

B. L. Joyce
39 3

1706 E. 14th St.
11

C. R. Johns

Repair fire damage.

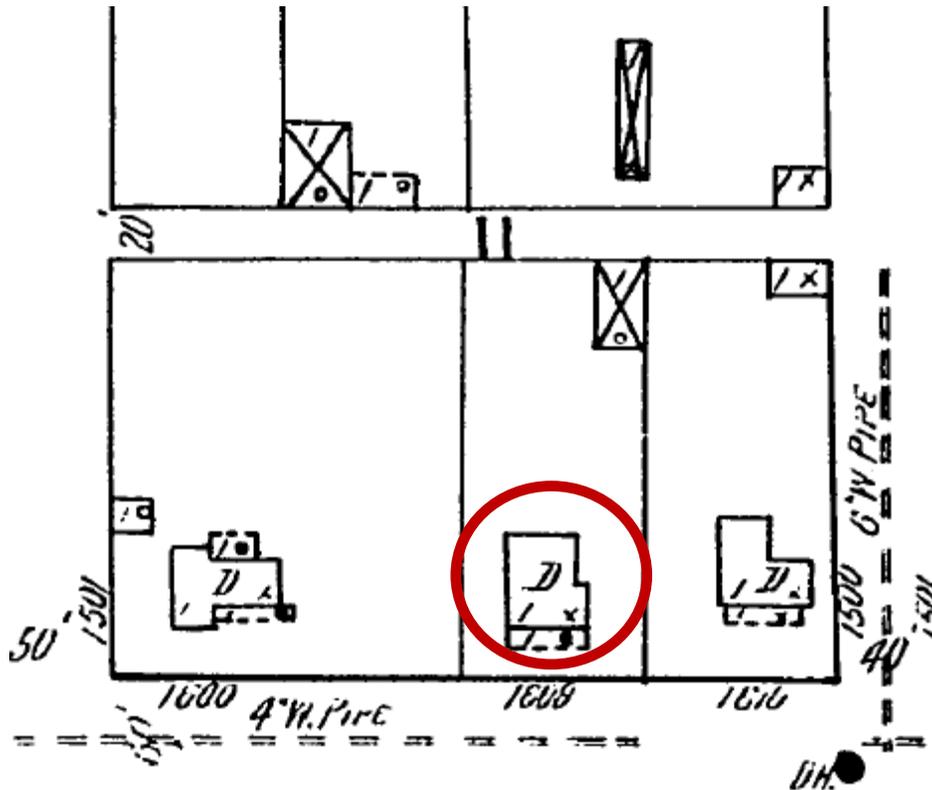
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Oliver B. Street =

Replace sheetrock, new floor and replace plumbing—
repair roof.

Building permit to repair fire damage (1960)

City records indicate a permit to install siding to the house in 1984, and a permit to construct a utility room in the rear of the house in 1984.



The 1922 Sanborn map shows a different house on this site with its former address of 1606 E. 14th Street. This older house had a full-width front porch.

