

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION
JUNE 24, 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 house and contributing detached garage; replace with new construction.

ARCHITECTURE

The existing 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. 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.

PROJECT SPECIFICATIONS

- 1) Construct a new one-story stucco garage with gable roof at the approximate location of the existing garage.
- 2) Construct a new two-story house. The proposed house is clad in stucco and stone with a gable roof. It has single-light fixed-pane and casement windows of varying dimensions, a second-floor balcony at the east elevation, and a recessed entryway at the north elevation covered by a flat-roofed awning.

RESEARCH

The house appears to have been built in 1939 and has been home to middle-class residents and UT students, typical for the neighborhood's general demographic history. Short-term owners and renters occupied the house for most of its period of significance. Its first known residents were Newton and Ella Whitney and their son Robert, a student, 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 former Texas State Health Administrator Laurence Trotti, 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 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. The applicant has indicated that relocation was explored as an initial option over demolition, but was ultimately infeasible.

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW

Designation Criteria—Historic Landmark

- 1) The buildings are over 50 years old.
- 2) The house appears to retain a high degree of integrity. The garage appears to retain a moderate to low degree of integrity.
 - a. **Architecture.** The building does not appear to be architecturally significant.

- 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.

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation are used to evaluate new construction projects in National Register historic districts. Applicable standards include:

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

The proposed new construction will require demolition of a contributing auxiliary structure. The new construction is differentiated from historic properties in the district by its cladding materials, fenestration patterns, and two-story form. The proposed new house is larger than historic-age homes on the block, though similar in scale to its immediate neighbor. Revisions have been made to lower the roof height. The awning and sliding doors at the north elevation will be obscured by a fence.

10) New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall 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 rest of the historic district would be unimpaired.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Consider stepping back the second-floor massing and lowering the roof height and pitch. Add roof and cladding materials to plans. Consider relocating the main entrance to Newfield Lane.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Comment on and release plans for new construction, and release the demolition permit upon 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.

LOCATION MAP



-  SUBJECT TRACT
-  PENDING CASE
-  ZONING BOUNDARY

NOTIFICATIONS

CASE#: NRD-2019-0028

LOCATION: 1815 POLO RD

1" = 333'

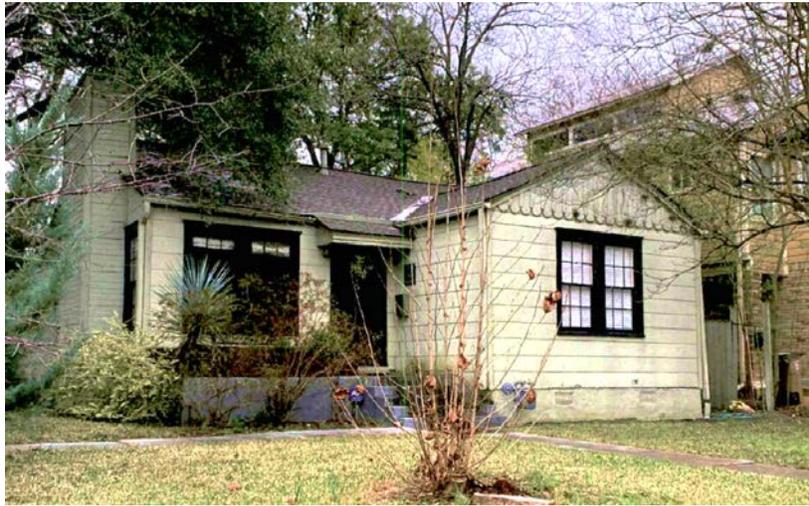
This product is for informational purposes and may not have been prepared for or be suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes. It does not represent an on-the-ground survey and represents only the approximate relative location of property boundaries.

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

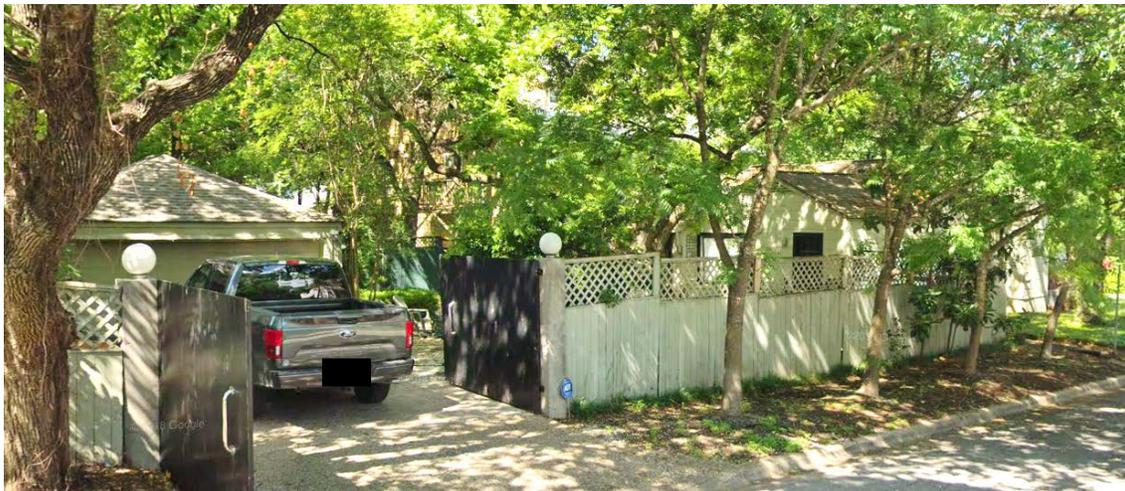
Photos



Newfield Ln. elevation



This aerial photo dating to 1940 shows that the house and garage had been built by that time.



Polo Rd. garage entrance



Streetscape view down Newfield Lane.



1815 Polo Road is located at the corner of Polo Road and Newfield Lane.

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 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
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 Jimmie D. Crow, renter Student

- Joseph Darmento, renter
Student
- 1959 Mrs. Gertrude B. Trotti (wid. L.J), owner
- 1962 Mrs. Gertrude B. Trotti, (wid. L.J.) owner
- 1965 Mrs. Gertrude B. Trotti, (wid. L.J.) owner
- 1968 Mrs. Gertrude B. Trotti, (wid. L.J.) owner
- 1973 2111 Newfield Ln. not listed. 1815 Polo Rd. not listed.
- 1977 James C. Siddall, renter
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.