

ZONING CHANGE REVIEW SHEET

CASE NUMBER: C14H-2019-0128

HLC DATE:

September 23, 2019

October 28, 2019

PC DATE:

COUNCIL DISTRICT: 1

APPLICANT: Historic Landmark Commission

HISTORIC NAME: Richard Overton House

WATERSHED: Boggy Creek

ADDRESS OF PROPOSED ZONING CHANGE: 2011 Hamilton Avenue (Richard Overton Avenue)

ZONING FROM: SF-3-NP to SF-3-H-NP

SUMMARY STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends the proposed zoning change from single family residence, neighborhood plan (SF-3-NP) combining district to single family residence – Historic Landmark – neighborhood plan (SF-3-H-NP) combining district zoning.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR LANDMARK DESIGNATION:

Architecture, Historical Associations, Community Value

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION ACTION: **September 23, 2019:** Initiated historic zoning upon the request of Volma Overton, Jr., nephew of Richard Overton. Vote: 7-0 (Myers, Reed, Jacob, and Hibbs absent).

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The house is recommended as contributing to a potential College Heights Historic District in the East Austin Historic resources Survey (2016).

CITY COUNCIL DATE:

ACTION:

ORDINANCE READINGS: 1ST 2ND 3RD

ORDINANCE NUMBER:

CASE MANAGER: Steve Sadowsky

PHONE: 974-6454

NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION: Blackshear/Prospect Hill Neighborhood Association; Organization of Central East Austin Neighborhoods (OCEAN).

BASIS FOR RECOMMENDATION:

Architecture:

One-story, L-plan, minimal traditional post-World War II frame cottage with a partial-width, independent porch on ornamental metal supports.

Historical Associations:

The house at 2011 Hamilton Avenue was built by Richard Overton in the College Heights subdivision of Austin in 1948. He lived here for the rest of his long life. Overton, who gained national recognition much later in life, was born in Bastrop County, Texas in 1906, the grandson

of slaves who had served at Travellers Rest, a plantation owned by Judge John Overton, just south of Nashville, Tennessee. Judge John Overton was an advisor to Andrew Jackson, and one of the founders of Memphis, Tennessee. Upon emancipation, many of the Overton slaves moved to Texas. According to his cousin, Volma Overton, Jr., Richard Overton knew those people and related many stories about their life in slavery and their journey to Texas, connecting his family members with their past through oral history. That connection made a big impression on Volma Overton, who found a deep appreciation in the relating of his family's history from Tennessee to Texas.

Richard Overton worked in occupations typical of many African-American men in Austin at the time. Born in rural Bastrop County, he came into Austin for paid work away from the cotton fields of his youth. He and his first wife, Novella, lived at 1511 E. 13th Street in the late 1930s, when Richard worked as a truck driver for the Bargain Furniture Company at 4th and Congress. He enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1940, and served in the South Pacific during World War II. When he returned to Austin after the war, he worked as a truck driver for Gage Furniture Company. He married his second wife, Wilma, and built this house in 1948, at a time when African-Americans in Austin were still subject to residential segregation, redlining, and an inability to secure mortgages and building loans. He built his modest house in the College Heights subdivision of East Austin, at the time an all-black enclave just northeast of the Tillotson Institute campus (it was not until 1952 that the Tillotson Institute merged with Samuel Huston College to become Huston-Tillotson College, later University). College Heights was a relatively affluent African-American residential section that had a majority of home owners rather than renters since the time of its initial development in the 1920s. Overton's choice of building in College Heights represented a conscious move to live in this neighborhood, and also his ability to purchase property and obtain the money to build this house, a rarity before the inclusion of African-American servicemen in the benefits of the GI bill.

Richard Overton continued working for Gage Furniture Company until the late 1950s, and then found a job working as a porter for the Western Pipeline Company at 1011 San Jacinto Street, a company where former Texas governor Allan Shivers served as the chairman of the board. In the mid 1960s, Richard Overton began working at the State Treasury Department, where he stayed until he retired in the 1970s. His cousin, Volma Overton, Jr. recalls that Richard Overton was very friendly with Ann Richards, who was the head of the State Treasury Department at that time, and used to deliver millions of dollars to various banks around Austin, riding up to the drive-through in a golf cart.

Richard Overton enjoyed nothing more than sitting on the front porch of this house, greeting passersby and relating stories of his life to his family and friends. Volma Overton, Jr. vividly remembers the stories of Richard Overton's service in World War II, when he was in the all-black engineer aviation battalion. His job was to clear airstrips, which almost immediately opened him and his crew up to enemy attack and gunfire. Although he rarely spoke of it, Richard Overton was an expert marksman, and was forced to kill many enemy soldiers to save his own life and those of his battalion members. Volma Overton, Jr. related that Richard Overton was ever-amazed that he was still around after all of the death he had witnessed during World War II.

Community Value:

After he built this house on Hamilton Avenue, Richard Overton became a neighborhood institution. Very few days passed where he was not on his front porch with his friends and family, smoking his favorite cigars, telling stories, and listening to those who came to visit and spend time with him. Volma Overton, Jr. relates that Richard Overton's 112th birthday party "was like a UN party" in that people from every walk of life, every race, every culture, every age, came to celebrate with him at this house that day. He was recognized by the City of Austin, which named Hamilton Avenue after him. As the oldest surviving veteran of World War II, he

was recognized by Texas governors Rick Perry and Greg Abbott, and most prominently, by President Barack Obama during a visit to the White House for a Veterans' Day commemoration in 2013. He was feted by the San Antonio Spurs, where he received a standing ovation. He consistently said that the secret to his longevity was his daily cigars, a little whiskey, and being right with God. When he passed away at the age of 112 in December, 2018, he was not only the oldest surviving U.S. World War II veteran, but also the oldest man in the United States.

PARCEL NO.: 0206100606

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: LOT 9 BLK E OLT 8&62 DIV B COLLEGE HEIGHTS ADDN

ESTIMATED ANNUAL TAX ABATEMENT: \$3,981 (owner-occupied); city portion: \$1,188.

APPRAISED VALUE: \$371,321

PRESENT USE: Single-family residential

CONDITION: Excellent

PRESENT OWNERS: Estate of Richard Overton

DATE BUILT: ca. 1948

ALTERATIONS/ADDITIONS: Carport constructed in 1950.

ORIGINAL OWNER(S): Richard Overton (1948)

OTHER HISTORICAL DESIGNATIONS: None.

LOCATION MAP



NOTIFICATIONS

CASE#: C14H-2019-0128
 LOCATION: 2011 HAMILTON AVE

-  SUBJECT TRACT
-  PENDING CASE
-  ZONING BOUNDARY

1" = 333'

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Austin resident Richard Overton, who was America's oldest man and oldest war veteran, died Thursday. Overton, who was honored for his military service and beloved for his propensity to enjoy his supercentenarian status with a cigar in one hand and a glass of whiskey in another, was 112 years old.

He died Thursday evening at a rehabilitation facility in Austin, said his cousin Volma Overton Jr. He had been hospitalized with pneumonia at St. David's Medical Center for more than a week before he was admitted into the rehab facility on Christmas Eve.

People paid their respects at his East Austin home Thursday night with few bouquets of flowers and candles. A sign on his door from his 112th birthday celebration read, "Making friends since 1906."

Overton was well-known to his neighbors, who often chatted with him on his porch in East Austin during the 72 years he lived there. Over the past few years, people from all over the country got a chance to know him as well, as he received increasing national attention for his age and his service in World War II.

For several of his recent birthdays, he welcomed the community into his front yard to celebrate. People from all over Central Texas arrived to say hello and gift him a birthday card — or, if they knew Overton's favorite pastimes, a bottle of whiskey or a box of cigars.

During Richard Overton's 111th birthday celebration, Volma Overton Jr. said it felt like Christmas, watching everyone line up to take a photo and share a gift with his cousin.

"It looks like everybody's getting ready to take a picture with Santa Claus — and he never turns anyone down," Volma Overton said. "He's an open person to everybody, and he wanted everyone who was in town who wanted to come by to come by."

Born in St. Mary's in Bastrop County on May 11, 1906, Richard Overton enlisted in the Army in 1942, nine months after the Pearl Harbor attack. He served in the Pacific theater — including Guam, Okinawa and Iwo Jima — until 1945, when he left the service.

Overton told the American-Statesman's Ken Herman in 2013 that he had landed on more beaches under fire than he could remember. He also remembered ducking bullets in foxholes and clearing bodies from fields of battle.

After the war, he worked in furniture stores and later the state treasurer's office when future Texas Gov. Ann Richards ran the agency.

Well into his triple digits, Overton enjoyed cigars, a habit he picked up as a teenager, and occasionally a little whiskey would accidentally spill into his coffee. He reportedly drove until he was 107.

In 2013, he met President Barack Obama and Vice President Joe Biden at the White House. That year, the Austin City Council proclaimed the veteran's birthday "Richard A. Overton Day." Council members passed a resolution to give Hamilton Avenue — the street on which Overton lived — the honorary name Richard Overton Avenue.

Overton spent many days on his porch, greeting people as they walked by.

"He considers himself our neighborhood watchdog, and he knows everything that's going on," neighbor Helen Elliott told the American-Statesman in 2016. "I don't think the neighborhood would be what it is without him. He's our legend, our icon."

In one of his last public appearances, Overton was honored in March 2017 with a standing ovation at a San Antonio Spurs game. Overton was presented with a custom camouflage Spurs jersey with his name and the number "110," his age at the time.

Overton was featured in local, regional and national publications and was the subject of the short documentary "Mr. Overton."

In 2016, his family launched a GoFundMe page to ensure that Overton received around-the-clock home health care and could remain at home for the rest of his days. Donations poured in from all across the country to help make that happen.

According to media reports Friday, Overton would be celebrated at a funeral at Shoreline Church in Austin on Jan. 12.

Obituary of Richard Overton
Austin American-Statesman, December 28, 2018

OBITUARY

Richard A. Overton

MAY 11, 1906 – DECEMBER 27, 2018

Obituary of Richard A. Overton

Richard A. Overton, age 112, the oldest living WWII Veteran died peacefully on Thursday, December 27, 2018 surrounded by his family. He was born in Bastrop County, Texas on May 11, 1906 to Gentry Overton Sr. and Elizabeth "Lizzie" Franklin. He lived most of his young life in Creedmoor, community of Pleasant Valley (school and church named after this community). He participated in the annual July 4th Pleasant Valley Community Reunion which began in the 1970s. Mr. Overton was a longtime resident of Austin, Texas, living on 2011 Hamilton Ave, he was honored to have the street re-named after him on his birthday May 11, 2017.

A Celebration of life for Richard will be held Saturday, January 12, 2019 at 11:00 AM at Shoreline Church, 15201 Burnet Road, Austin, Texas. Committal services, with Full Military Honors will take place on Saturday, January 12, 2019 at 2:00 PM at Texas State Cemetery, 909 Navasota Street, Austin, Texas.

Mr. Overton volunteered for the Army starting in 1942 and served with the 188th Aviation Engineer Battalion, an all-black unit that served on various islands in the Pacific. "He was there at Pearl Harbor when the battleships were still smoldering. He was there at Okinawa. He was there at Iwo Jima, where he said, 'I only got out of there by the grace of God,'" former President Barack Obama said while honoring Overton at a Veterans Day ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery in 2013.

He credited God for living so long but said he didn't take any medicine and enjoyed his vices.

"I drink whiskey in my coffee. Sometimes I drink it straight," he said when he was 107. "I smoke my cigars, blow the smoke out; I don't swallow it."

In a statement Thursday, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott called Mr. Overton "an American icon and a Texas legend."

"With his quick wit and kind spirit he touched the lives of so many, and I am deeply honored to have known him," Abbott said. "Richard Overton made us proud to be Texans and proud to be Americans. We can never repay Richard Overton for his service to our nation and for his lasting impact on the Lone Star State."

"I still walk, I still talk, and I still drive," Overton said, before hopping into his Ford F100 Custom pickup truck. Overton also said he liked to go to church and enjoyed the singing. He also loved caring for his cats.

Family, friends and strangers all helped celebrate his 112th birthday in May by visiting him at his home.

Richard is preceded in death by his parents Gentry and Lizzie Overton, six sisters: Annie Bell of Austin, TX, Lola Sneed of Seattle, WA, Dora Bradford of Stockton, CA, Lillie Mae of Seattle, WA, Tenola Overton of Austin, TX, Geneva Overton of Austin, TX; and three brother: Hilliard Overton of Austin, TX, Irwin Overton of Los Angeles, CA, Gentry Overton Jr. of Austin, TX.

Richard is survived by many cousins and extended family members.

"On behalf of the Overton Family, we would like to express sincere gratitude to the staff for the amazing job you have done. The care that you provided is not definable through mere words. We are truly grateful for all that you do!"

Funeral service will be held at 11:00am, Saturday, January 12, 2019 at Shoreline Church, 15201 Burnet Road, Austin, Texas 78728. Interment will be held at 2:00pm in Texas State Cemetery in Austin, Texas.

In lieu of flowers, contributions in Richard's memory may be made to Honor Flight Austin, 815-A Brazos Street, UPS Box 498, Austin, Texas 78701, www.honorflightaustin.org.

Fond memories and expressions of sympathy may be shared at www.cookwaldenfuneralhome.com for the Overton family.

Obituary by Cook-Walden Funeral Home, Austin, Texas

AUSTIN (KXAN) — Richard Overton, 112, was the oldest World War II veteran in America at the time of his death on Dec. 27, 2018.

"We're truly gonna miss him," said his cousin Volma Overton Jr. "He was the joy of our days."

Overton was born on May 11, 1906, in Bastrop County. He enlisted in the U.S. Army in September 1942 at Fort Sam Houston near San Antonio. Overton served in the South Pacific from 1942 through 1945, serving in Hawaii, Okinawa, Guam and Iwo Jima.

Military records show Overton buried fellow soldiers, served as base security and drove a Jeep for a lieutenant while stationed overseas.

Skills he learned as a young man helped when he joined the Army, as he already knew how to shoot.

"I always liked to hunt," Overton said in a 2013 interview with the Veterans History Project, a part of the Library of Congress, when he was 107 years old. He then told a story of how when trainers learned a recruit could shoot, they would set up targets on a bluff to test their accuracy.

While in the Pacific Theater, he was involved in gun battles against the Japanese, having to take cover in foxholes to keep from getting hit.

"One day I was in the foxhole, and I put a rock in front of me, and a bullet hit that rock," Overton said. "It... hit in the hole. And I grabbed it, see, that thing was so hot."

Overton says he learned an important lesson that day: always use dirt to hide yourself in a fox hole. Otherwise, the bullet can ricochet.

After time overseas, Overton found out he was returning home while writing a letter. He retired from the Army in October 1945, with the rank of Corporal.

He returned to Texas, working as a furniture salesman and for the Texas Treasury Department (now the Texas Comptroller's office) in Austin. He retired in 1985 as a courier.

He lived in the same east Austin house he built after World War II.

Overton celebrated his 100th birthday in 2006, with friends, family and KXAN there. He told us then he loved whiskey, women and smoking 12 cigars a day.

But he didn't let his age stop him.

Overton continued driving, smoking cigars, drinking whiskey and attending church several times a week into his old age.

In 2013, Overton traveled to Washington, D.C. twice. The first trip, in May, was an Honor Flight with nearly three dozen other World War II veterans to visit the National World War II Memorial.

Six months later, President Obama invited Overton to spend Veterans Day at Arlington National Cemetery, where he was greeted with two standing ovations.

"Today, Richard still lives in the house he built all those years ago, rakes his own lawn and every Sunday, he hops in his 1971 Ford truck and drives one of nice ladies in his neighborhood to church," President Obama said during the 2013 ceremony. "So, this is the life of one American veteran living proud and strong in the land he helped keep free."

In November 2015, Overton spent about a week, including Veterans Day, at St. David's Medical Center in central Austin battling pneumonia.

"He wants to let everyone know he will be just fine," family friend Martin Wilford said at the time.

Overton recovered, but after reaching 110 years old, he needed around the clock in-home care. Overton's family wanted him to stay in his home and receive the care; however in-home care is not covered by VA benefits.

After asking for help, people across the country donated nearly \$200,000 to help pay for Overton's care. Before his death, Overton was asked several times how to live a long, healthy life.

"I'd ask them to stay busy and talk to the Lord and live with the Lord," Overton said. "Don't live with the people. Live with the Lord. Let Him take care of you."

KXAN Obituary, December 28, 2018

Remembering Richard Overton, Austin man and America's oldest World War II vet

Richard Overton, a beloved Austinite and the country's oldest World War II veteran, passed away at 112 years old Thursday.

AUSTIN — On Dec. 27, 2018, the city of Austin lost one of its most beloved residents and the country lost the oldest veteran who fought in World War II. After a battle with pneumonia, Richard Overton passed away at 112 years old.

As his family and friends alongside not only Austin but the entire country, mourn the loss of a great man, we look back at a life well-lived.

A soldier is born

May 11, 1906

On May 11, 1906, Richard Arvin Overton was born in Bastrop County, Texas. Back then the average life expectancy was only 47 years. That was one of many barriers Overton shattered.

In 1940, Overton joined the Army as a member of the 188th Engineer Aviation Battalion.



Private First Class Overton arrived in Pearl Harbor weeks after the bombing that killed 2,403 Americans. "Every window that was in those houses was shot out. So when we got there, that's the way it was. And the ships, some of them were still floating, some of them still smoking," Overton told KVUE in 2013. "Some of them were still burning."





Overton was part of a segregated unit that "island hopped" throughout the South Pacific. Between 1940 and 1945, he traveled to Guam, Palau and Iwo Jima. "You heard in Iwo Jima the water turned to blood? Well, it did," he recalled. "When you talking about some of the stuff we had to go through, I never want to go through that again."

He left the Army in October 1945 as a technician fifth grade and returned to Austin.

Return to Texas

October 1945

Overton worked at local furniture stores and then as a courier for the Texas Department of the Treasury at the Texas State Capitol where he served four Texas governors before he retired.

“He knew many dignitaries,” Overton’s cousin, Volma Overton Jr. told [ABC News](#). “He worked for the treasurer of the state at one time and would drive a golf cart to the bank to deposit millions of dollars in checks.”

In 1945, Overton built the house on Hamilton Avenue in East Austin that he would call home for the rest of his life.

His time was filled with friends and family, afternoons spent sitting on his front porch, but he also liked to stay busy.

“That’s the only thing that will keep you living. You got to keep moving. You don’t sit down and watch TV all the time. You have to keep moving,” Overton said.

The world takes notice

2013

In 2013, the nation took notice of Overton. A whirlwind of publicity over the oldest living World War II veteran brought lawmakers to his front porch and sent him out into the world to meet celebrities and his brothers and sisters in arms.

President Barack Obama invited Overton to Washington, D.C., to visit the White House and participate in a Veterans Day ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery.



for Ben *Barack*

At the ceremony, Obama led a standing ovation for the proud veteran. Overton later said it was one of the proudest moments of his life.

In November of 2015, Overton battled pneumonia and recovered. But by 2016, the soldier had grown frail and was in danger of losing his beloved home of more than 70 years to stay in a nursing home.

A [GoFundMe campaign](#) raised close to \$200,000 to help pay for in-home care for the proud veteran.

Celebrating 112 years

May 11, 2018

In May 2018, Overton turned 112-years-old and the city and the nation celebrated alongside his family and friends.

“... that’s pretty old, ain’t it?” Overton said. “I can still get around, I can still talk, I can still see, I can still walk.”

He had no plans of slowing down.



Austin Mayor Steve Adler has declared the day Richard Overton Day and the city also changed the name of his street, Hamilton Avenue, to Richard Overton Avenue. "I'm proud to get that," Overton said.

Overton said his secrets to good health and longevity were smoking a cigar every day, having an occasional whiskey and surrounding himself with good friends.

In December 2018, Overton was taken to the hospital and diagnosed with another bout of pneumonia. He has battled pneumonia twice in recent years.

He was released from the hospital into rehabilitation on Dec. 24, but passed away three days later.

A warrior who has earned his rest

Saluting Richard Overton

Richard Arvin Overton watched the world change during his 112 years on this Earth. He survived a war in which more than 80 million people lost their lives. He lived through segregation and saw 21 presidents in the White House during his lifetime.

Overton led a life well-lived, filled with love, laughter, bravery and courage. He loved his family, his country and hoped that we could all learn to love each other.

He was a beloved member of not only the Austin community, but the nation.

Richard Overton, nation's oldest man, laid to rest in Austin

His age lent him celebrity, but it was Overton's humor, faith and indelible kindness that made him extraordinary.



Austin Mayor Steve Adler places a flower on the casket of Richard Overton during a graveside service on Saturday, January 12, 2019 in Austin. Overton was the oldest living WWII veteran, and oldest living man in the U.S. at 112-years-old until he died on December 27, 2018. He was known for drinking whiskey and smoking cigars on his front porch in east Austin. (Ashley Landis/The Dallas Morning News)(Ashley Landis



Flowers are placed near the burial site of Richard Overton during a graveside service on Saturday, Jan. 12, 2019, in Austin. Overton was the oldest living veteran and oldest living male at 112 years old until he died on Dec. 27, 2018. He was known for drinking whiskey and smoking cigars in East Austin.



General John M. Murray of the U.S. Army presents an American flag to Volma Overton, Jr. during a graveside service for Richard Overton on Saturday, Jan. 12, 2019, in Austin. Overton was the oldest living veteran and oldest living male at 112 years old until he died on Dec. 27, 2018. He was known for drinking whiskey and smoking cigars on his front porch in East Austin. Volma Overton Jr. was a cousin and the main caretaker for Richard Overton.

'A remarkable American'

A few years ago, Richard Overton was invited to spend his 109th birthday at the Governor's Mansion.

He showed up in a wheelchair, Gov. Greg Abbott remembered, and promptly challenged him to a race. Abbott, who [has used a wheelchair since suffering an accident in 1984](#), quickly declined. How would it look if he lost to a man nearly twice his age?

"What is your secret to living so long?" Abbott asked Overton that day. "His answer was immediate and unequivocal: cigars and whiskey."

It was this "quick wit" and "joyous spirit" that endeared Overton to millions, Abbott told those who came to a service honoring the supercentenarian at Shoreline Church on Saturday morning.

"We celebrate Richard Overton not because of how long he lived. Instead we celebrate him because of how he lived his life," Abbott told the congregation, which numbered in the hundreds. "Today, we salute a remarkable American. A soldier. A survivor. A jokester. A joy.

"A man from Texas. A man of God."



Governor Greg Abbott makes a presentation to Volma Overton, Jr. during a memorial service for Richard Overton on Saturday, Jan. 12, 2019, at Shoreline Church in Austin. Overton was the oldest living veteran and oldest living male at 112 years old until he died on Dec. 27, 2018. He was known for drinking whiskey and smoking cigars on his front porch in East Austin. Volma Overton was a cousin and the main caretaker for Richard Overton.

Despite having no children of his own, Overton was remembered as the capital city's great-great-great-grandfather. He was born in 1906, when there were just 45 stars on the U.S. flag. The grandson of slaves, Overton grew up picking cotton in Bastrop County and served in a segregated unit during World War II. General John M. Murray, commander of the Austin-based U.S. Army Futures Command, said Overton's 1887th Engineer Aviation Battalion faced "searing" combat in the Pacific theater. But Overton also had to stare down "the toxic mix of racial discrimination and low expectations from the units they were a part of," added Murray.

"And although those units across the United States Army, and really across all the services, were set up to fail, Richard and his comrades overcame those challenges with valor, with expertise and with professionalism and with dedication."

When Overton returned to Texas, he built a house on Austin's east side that would be his home for the next 70 years. It was here, on that porch on Hamilton Avenue, that people from across the country and around the world could find Overton on a sunny day. They'd ask him for advice, sip some Maker's Mark, and, Austin Mayor Steve Adler said, try to soak up some of his infectious positivity.

Obituary from the Dallas Morning News, January 12, 2019