

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION
DECEMBER 16, 2019
DEMOLITION AND RELOCATION PERMITS
HDP-2019-0640
1801 VANCE CIRCLE

PROPOSAL

Demolish a ca. 1960 house.

ARCHITECTURE

Two-story, split-level, irregular plan, brick and stucco house with a mid-century Modern aesthetic for a blocky, rectangular appearance; flat or shallow roof; combination of plate glass and metal-framed slider windows. The house is built into the slope of the bluff of Shoal Creek, and has its second level lower than the primary level accessible from the street and drive. The house has suffered a great deal of deterioration, including a collapsed roof structure.

RESEARCH

The house was designed and built as his “dream home” by consulting engineer Robert L. King and his wife, Hazel, upon their move to Austin from overseas in 1959-60. Robert L. King was from the Wichita Falls area, and studied at Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene, Texas before transferring to the University of Oklahoma to study architectural engineering. Upon graduation, he moved to Washington to serve as an architect for the U.S. Navy, and designed the East Wing Addition to the White House as well as a bunker for Franklin Delano Roosevelt. In the early 1950s, he joined the Nelson D. Rockefeller’s Institute of Inter-American Affairs, and traveled to Quito, Ecuador, Bogota, Colombia, and Lima, Peru to work alongside native personnel in the design and construction of hospitals, health centers, clinics, and medical schools. Upon his retirement in 1959, he and his wife Hazel moved to Austin, where he designed this house; he and Hazel lived in this house for the rest of their lives. King continued his work as a consultant in hospital planning, and also designed nursing homes and a couple of private residences. In Austin, the Kings hosted many international students and get-togethers in this house.

STAFF COMMENTS

The house is not listed in any City survey to date, and was outside the bounds of the proposed Judges’ Hill Historic District several years ago.

Staff has evaluated this house for designation as a historic landmark and has determined that the house does not meet the criteria for landmark designation as set forth in City Code:

- a. **Architecture.** The house is an example of mid-century Modern architecture with its blocky, rectangular modules, flat roof, and expanses of glass. It is located on Vance Circle, the only street in the Vance Park subdivision of the 1950s. Vance Park was designed to be a single-family residential district, with large lots set on a semi-private cul-de-sac and many architect-designed ranch and split-level style houses. The subdivision is on a bluff overlooking Shoal Creek to the west. Its homogeneity of architecture and context of construction makes Vance Park an anomaly in the central part of the city.
- b. **Historical association.** The house was designed and built by Robert L. King, who lived here from the time of its construction in 1960 almost until the time of his death in 2019. Robert L. King was renowned for his work in central and South America, helping build hospitals and other medical facilities for the native populations. While his work in Latin America is worthy of recognition

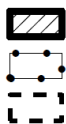
and commemoration, it does not fit squarely with the local criterion for significant historical associations.

- 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

Encourage rehabilitation and adaptive re-use, but release the 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. The house does not meet the criteria for individual designation as a historic landmark.

LOCATION MAP



SUBJECT TRACT

PENDING CASE

ZONING BOUNDARY

1" = 333'

NOTIFICATIONS

CASE#: HDP-2019-0640

LOCATION: 1801 VANCE CIRCLE

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.



1801 Vance Circle
ca. 1960





OCCUPANCY HISTORY 1801 Vance Circle

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

1992 Robert L. and Hazel King, owners
 Consulting engineer

| | |
|---------|---|
| 1985-86 | Robert L. and Hazel King, owners Consulting engineer (office at the house) |
| 1981 | Robert L. and Hazel King, owners Consulting engineer (office at the house) |
| 1977 | Robert L. and Hazel King, owners Consulting engineer (office at the house) |
| 1973 | Robert L. and Hazel M. King, owners Hospital consultant (office at the house) |
| 1968 | Robert L. and Hazel M. King, owners Hospital consultant (office at the house) |
| 1965 | Robert L. and Hazel M. King, owners Hospital consultant, 504 W. 24 th Street. Also listed is Robert L. King, Jr., a student. |
| 1962 | Robert L. and Hazel King, owners Hospital consultant, 504 W. 24 th Street. |
| 1961 | Robert L. and Hazel King, owners Planning consultant, 504 W. 24 th Street. Also listed is Robert L. King, Jr., a student. |
| 1960 | The street is not listed in the directory. NOTE: Robert L. and Hazel King are listed at 1600 Forest Trail; he was an architect. |

Robert Lloyd King
JULY 5, 1918 – MAY 10, 2019

Robert Lloyd King, longtime Austin resident, passed away May 10, 2019, two months shy of his 101st birthday. Bob was born July 5, 1918 in Burkburnett, Texas and grew up in Wichita Falls, Texas. He was the son of James Arvil King and Willie Ivy Williamson and brother to Millie Maurice Snyder, James Arvil King, Jr. and Ada Ruth Mullins.

He is preceded in death by wife Louise Roberson King, wife Hazel Mitchell King, son Robert L. King II, his parents and siblings. He is survived by son James F. King, daughters Angela King Smith (Kenneth), Cynthia King Johnson and Janet King Keeble (Floyd). He was affectionately known as “Buelo” to his 11 grandchildren and “Great Buelo” to his 18 great-grandchildren.

Bob was born into a pioneering family with deep roots in the Wichita Falls area. Growing up, he was very involved in Boy Scouts, earning his Eagle Scout. He slept in a tent in the backyard for a whole year when only a week was required for a badge, just to see if he could. As a teenager, he was the preferred chauffeur for his grandmother Lillis and spent many happy hours touring the countryside with her, stopping for ice cream on the way home.

Bob began college at Hardin Simmons University in Abilene, Texas where he played the cornet and was a trick roper with the famed Cowboy Band. He learned whipping from well known English trick roper Johnny Reagan. Determined to become an architectural engineer, he transferred to

the University of Oklahoma in Norman because of their strong architecture program. He received his Bachelor of Science in 1941.

While at Hardin Simmons, Bob met Louise Roberson whom he married in 1941. They had three children, Bob, Jim and Angela.

Upon graduation, Bob and Louise moved to Washington D.C. where he worked as a junior architect with the US Navy, Design Division, Bureau of Yards and Docks. He was involved in the design of the White House East Wing addition and an underground bunker for President Franklin Roosevelt in 1942.

In 1943, Bob joined the Institute of Inter-American Affairs (IIAA), headed by Nelson D. Rockefeller, as a hospital planning consultant, moving his family to Quito, Ecuador. This began his long association with international government aid programs which included Point Four, International Cooperation Administration (ICA) and the Agency for International Development (AID), all of which emphasized American technical assistance in collaboration with area resources and personnel.

Tragically, he lost his wife Louise in 1946 while in Ecuador. He later moved to Bogota, Colombia, where he met Hazel Mitchell. Ironically, she was born in Oklahoma, just 30 miles from where he grew up in North Texas. They were married in 1947 and had two children, Cynthia and Janet.

Bob's career took him to many countries in Central and South America where he was involved in the design and construction of numerous facilities such as hospitals, clinics, health centers and medical schools. He often worked closely with the indigenous people in the rural and mountainous Andes.

In 1952, Bob joined the ICA in Lima, Peru which became his base of operations for work throughout Latin America. The family immersed itself in the local culture and formed many lifelong friendships. Bob and Hazel enjoyed entertaining, often serving classic Peruvian dishes and drinks such as anticuchos and pisco sours. Some of his favorite memories were family trips to Cusco and Machu Picchu and weekend outings to the beach and the foothills. After one work trip to the Amazon, Bob surprised his family with a wild macaw. "Henry" became the family pet. After retiring from the government in 1959, Bob moved his family to Austin where he designed and built his dream house.

He continued his career as a hospital planning consultant, designing nursing homes, hospitals and the occasional private residence. He was part of an ICA consulting team to Ghana in 1960, advising the government on development of potential medical facilities and returned to Peru to assist and advise after the horrific earthquake and landslides in 1970.

Bob and Hazel were actively involved with the International Office at the University of Texas and often hosted international students in their home. He was a Deacon at University Presbyterian Church and was active on their building and planning committee, designing the distinctive serpentine wall on San Antonio Street. They loved traveling and sightseeing and made many trips to Colorado, New Mexico and the Four Corners area.

Bob was an avid reader and enjoyed collecting books on any subject. He had the gift of talking to anyone, anywhere, about anything and was always able to find a common connection. He never met a stranger. He was a gifted storyteller and enjoyed sharing his many interesting adventures and experiences. As his nephew Sam says, "Uncle Robert is the most interesting man in the world."

An accomplished do-it-yourselfer, he often helped his children with various home improvement projects and was always coming up with creative uses for all kinds of salvaged objects.

Water service permit to Robert L. King for this house (1960)

SANITARY SEWER SERVICE PERMIT
Austin, Texas

No 34110 ✓

Received of ROBERT L. KING Date 6-1-60
 Address 1801 VANCE CIRCLE
 Amount FIFTY \$ 50.00
 Builder or Owner STATE Plumber PHOENIX (Purdy)
 Lot 11 Block - Subdivision VANCE PK. Plat No. 9A

| | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|--------------|--------------|----------|--------------|-------|--------------|
| Date of Connection | <u>10-13-60</u> | No. Fittings | <u>9</u> | Pipe | <u>6"</u> | Price | <u>225</u> |
| By City | <u>12-N JSCC</u> | Wyes | <u>1</u> | Bends | <u>6"</u> | | <u>98</u> |
| By Plumber | <u>P. Swisher</u> | Reducers | | Plugs | | | |
| Checked By | <u>P. Swisher</u> | Sand | | Gravel | | | |
| Size Main | <u>6"</u> | Remix | | Stoppers | | | |
| Depth | <u>±3 (ROCK)</u> | Castings | | Other | <u>1 Reg</u> | | <u>98</u> |
| Main Assign. | <u>5' W J EPL</u> | Labor | <u>12 Hr</u> | | | | <u>15.00</u> |
| Stub Depth | | | <u>1 Hr</u> | | | | <u>2.40</u> |
| Stub Location | <u>12' N JSCC</u> | | <u>1 Hr</u> | | | | <u>1.50</u> |
| Book No. | <u>B-1693</u> | | | | | | <u>23.11</u> |
| Paving Cut | <u>24.10-600</u> | | | | | | <u>23.11</u> |
| No. | <u>80</u> | | | | | | |

Sewer service permit to Robert L. King for this house (1960)

Re: Your support requested concerning 1801 Vance Circle

Vicky Devenyns

Thu, Dec 5, 6:27 PM

Re: 1801 Vance Circle

I am a resident of Judge's Hill and I definitely support the demolition of a structure in such poor condition. I value the historical character of our neighborhood such that reasonable efforts are taken for preservation. Due to the condition of the house, not reasonable effort can restore it. I support demolition and hope that the rebuild is a structure that reflects the architecture of the similar properties in the neighborhood.

Thank you,

Vicky Devenyns
 Pearl Street
 Judges Hill

Maureen Burrows

Mon, Dec 2, 8:07 PM (2 days ago)

John and I are absolutely in support of the demolition and re-build! Let us know if there is anything further we can do to assist!

Best,
Maureen Burrows
1812 Vance Circle

Re: 1801 Vance Circle

Christy Krames

Wed, Dec 4, 3:23 PM o)

Dear Members of the Historic Landmark Commission and Historic Preservation Officer Steve Sadowsky,

I live across the street from 1801 Vance Cir and I support Don and Gretchen Ellis' proposed demolition of the house at that location. The house is beyond repair as the roof has collapsed into the house, and the considerable water damage has led to extensive mold and rotting of the structure.

*Christy and Ray Langenberg
1802 Vance Cir*

Mon, Dec 2, 5:28 PM (2 days ago)

Pace Lossen

to me, Keith

December 2019

To the Members of the Historic Landmark Commission and the Historic Preservation Officer Steve Sadowsky,

I am a resident of the Judges Hill neighborhood and I support Bob and Gretchen Ellis' proposed demolition of the house at 1801 Vance Circle due to the poor condition of the building. The roof has collapsed into the house, and the considerable water damage has led to extensive mold.

Pace and Keith Lossen
901 W 18th Street

Neighbor support of Demolition Permit Request at 1801 Vance Circle (Judges Hill)

Inbox



Mark Seeger

Mon, Dec 2, 6:42 PM (2 days ago)

to steve.sadowsky

December 2, 2019

To the Members of the Historic Landmark Commission and the Historic Preservation Officer Steve Sadowsky,

I am a resident the Judges Hill neighborhood and I support Bob and Gretchen Ellis' proposed demolition of the house (previously owned by the estate of Bob King) at 1801 Vance Circle due to the poor condition of the building.

The many years of obvious neglect has caused the roof to collapse into the house, and the resulting considerable water damage over many years has led to extensive mold, separation of interior walls, etc. Unfortunately, the window to save this house closed many years ago.

Because of these years of neglect, we believe the current structure is beyond reasonable and safe restoration or rehabilitation, and believe it is in the best interest of the City of Austin, our neighbors, and the new owners (Bob and Gretchen Ellis) to move forward with a demolition of the existing structure and begin new residential construction plans for the site.

Thank you for your continued service to the citizens of Austin.
Best regards,

Mark Seeger & Jeff Harper
The Historic Granger House and Perch
805 W 16th Street
Austin, Texas 78701-1519 (512) 784-0013

December 4, 2019

To the Members of the Historic Landmark Commission and the Historic Preservation Officer Steve Sadowsky,

Thank you for helping to preserve the history of Austin.

We are residents of the Judges Hill neighborhood. 1801 Vance Circle is adjacent to our back yard.

We support Bob and Gretchen Ellis' proposed demolition of the house at 1801 Vance Circle due to the poor condition of the building. The roof has collapsed into the house, and the considerable water damage has led to extensive mold. The roof has leaked for 45 years according to the family of the previous owner. Some exterior walls have separated from each other.

*Megan and Albert Meisenbach
The Historic Matsen House
1800 San Gabriel Street
Austin, TX 78701
512-940-2615*

Re: Your support requested concerning 1801 Vance Circle

Inbox



**Suzanne
Burgess** <suzanne@terryburgess.com>

Mon, Dec 2, 6:48 PM (2 days ago)

to me

It looks as if the house has already been demolished by mother nature. I have no problem with it's removal.

Suzanne Burgess
Landmark Sparks House
1510 West Ave
Austin TX 78701

Re: Your support requested concerning 1801 Vance Circle

Inbox



Rebecca Bingham

Mon, Dec 2, 12:22 PM (2 days ago)

to me

Please send the email from me:

Rebecca Bingham

1805A San Gabriel Street

Rebeccabingham@att.net

Sent from my iPhone

December 2019

To the Members of the Historic Landmark Commission and the Historic Preservation Officer Steve Sadowsky,

I am a resident the Judges Hill neighborhood and I support Bob and Gretchen Ellis' proposed demolition of the house at 1801 Vance Circle due to the poor condition of the building. The roof has collapsed into the house, and the considerable water damage has led to extensive mold.

John Spong

Thx Megan. We are on board with this.

John Spong

jspong40@gmail.com

December 2019

To the Members of the Historic Landmark Commission and the Historic Preservation Officer Steve Sadowsky,

I am a resident the Judges Hill neighborhood and I support Bob and Gretchen Ellis' proposed demolition of the house at 1801 Vance Circle due to the poor condition of the building. The roof has collapsed into the house, and the considerable water damage has led to extensive mold.