

**HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION
NOVEMBER 16, 2020
DEMOLITION AND RELOCATION PERMITS
HDP-2020-0353
2505 PARK VIEW DRIVE**

PROPOSAL

Demolish a ca. 1954 house in the Air-Conditioned Village.

ARCHITECTURE

One-story, side-gabled, Ranch-style house with deep eaves and an extension of the front roofline to constitute a covered walkway from what was the attached carport to the front door. The house has a combination of red brick and wood siding; fenestration consists of aluminum-framed sliding windows with a clerestory pane above; grouped in a triple configuration on the front of the house. The carport has been enclosed with horizontal siding, and contains a paired set of the same windows. The porch has been modified to give the house somewhat of an Arts and Crafts appearance with tapered porch posts and stone piers at the front door.

To the left of the front door is a brick-veneered wall that extends almost to the roofline; a narrow band of horizontal wood siding containing a pair of sliding windows tops the brick veneer and wraps around the left side of the house. The house has two rear additions, constructed in 1963 and 1964, the latter providing a mother-in-law apartment on-site.

RESEARCH

The house at 2505 Park View Drive was the Frigidaire House, designed by Ned A. Cole. S.R. Sheppard was the builder. Frigidaire was one of the air conditioning companies pairing with local homebuilders and the National Association of Home Builders to construct houses to test the cost effectiveness and appeal of central air conditioning in houses priced for middle-class consumers.

This house is one of several in the Air-Conditioned Village designed by Ned Cole, a local architect and designer, who was instrumental in attracting the National Association of Home Builders to Austin to build a small neighborhood of modest homes with central air conditioning. The builder was S.R. Sheppard, a local contractor who was interested in energy efficiency and had already constructed a house with wall and attic insulation and air conditioning in a nearby West Austin neighborhood before embarking on this more modest house in the Air-Conditioned Village.

Austin's Air-Conditioned Village was the largest of several experiments throughout the country in the early 1950s to test the feasibility of designing and building homes with central air conditioning for middle class buyers. Up until that time, central air conditioning was generally only offered in more expensive homes, and the need for more homes for returning servicemen spurred an increase in developing technology for new middle-class homeowners. The Air-Conditioned Village in Austin was specifically envisioned as a neighborhood of relatively modest, if technologically-advanced houses, all with a price tag affordable to many middle-class buyers. The builders worked with the University of Texas to monitor usage over the period of two years; the buyers of these houses agreed to the terms of the experiment.

Architect Ned Cole, returning to Austin after World War II, established Fabricon, which designed and constructed prefabricated wall storage units. In city directories of the 1950s, the business of Fabricon is listed rather modestly as "cabinet makers" when the company did so much more in house design and the efficiency of interior storage. Cole began designing houses that employed many prefabricated features, such as roof trusses, windows, and

storage walls. He designed seven houses in the Air-Conditioned Village in Austin, and went on to design homes that were built throughout Texas.

The first owners and occupants of this house were Charles and Shirliereed Ashworth, who lived here at least through the early 1960s, when they built the additions on the back for Shirliereed Ashworth's mother. Charles Ashworth was the controller at Fabricon, Ned Cole's company, until around 1959, when he opened the Village Launderettes, one on Burnet Road and one on North Lamar, with Oliver Strom.

STAFF COMMENTS

The house is beyond the bounds of any City survey to date, but would be contributing to a potential historic district for the Air-Conditioned Village.

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




- a. **Architecture.** The house embodies several of the hallmarks of the Ranch style, including the long, low configuration, deep eaves, and prominent low front porch. The house was specifically designed as a modest house to test the ability to provide central air conditioning in homes for the middle class. Although the house has been somewhat modified, its original form and contextual appearance remains intact, and may qualify for designation under this criterion..
- b. **Historical association.** The house was designed by Ned Cole, a local architect who was instrumental in bringing the experiment of central air conditioning to Austin, and who was noted for his innovative architectural designs using prefabricated elements. This house may qualify for designation for its associations with Ned Cole.
- 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 is located within the Air-Conditioned Village, a nationally-recognized experiment in home design and climate control for the middle class in the early 1950s. This house in the Air-Conditioned Village possesses a unique location and story of development that contributes to the character of Austin.
- 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

Strongly encourage the applicant to retain the existing house to the greatest extent possible. This house, while modified, still retains an important identity as a test house in the Air-Conditioned Village for potentially meeting the criterion for community value, as well as associations with architect Ned Cole. If the Commission votes to release the application for demolition, then staff recommends the 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, prior to release of the permit.

LOCATION MAP



-  SUBJECT TRACT
-  PENDING CASE
-  ZONING BOUNDARY

1" = 333'

NOTIFICATIONS

CASE#: HDP-2020-0353

LOCATION: 2505 PARK VIEW DRIVE



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.

Communication from the applicant:

Greetings,

I Appreciate the opportunity to speak on behalf of my family ,neighbors and friends who live in the air-conditioned village houses. In my conversations with many of these homeowners the majority of them have expressed they are against historic designation or zoning though these houses have some meaning in context to their original intent.

The air-conditioned village houses were valuable steps along the way. They were experiments and stepping stones. They should not be made monuments by giving historic designation but we should take their meaning and intent and advance the cause of energy efficiency and solar orientation by going on where they left off . We go on and pay respect by creating and designing highly efficient structures that blend into their environments and fulfill the original intent by manifesting excellence in the new structures. We go on by incorporating innovative building technologies that have been developed over the last 50 years and undoubtedly far surpass the standards and quality that these relics represent.

We need to pay respects to the former pioneers by building better performing homes modeled after the mid-century vibe and embellish upon the original Air Conditioned Village idea. This act alone would honor their memory.

It is indeed the intent of our current exploits, one of which the city should be proud to support, being that the current architect, designer and builder of these next creations are actually living, and show care and sensitivity in what they create because we are in fact passionate about beauty, design , construction and community. We will proudly nod our head to the forefathers with our creations.

We should leave to the discretion of the homeowners who bear the financial burdens and quirks of these outdated, inefficient and often poorly constructed houses to judge whether or not to invest further resources. What inevitably comes with the cost of ownership is failing foundations , very costly cast iron plumbing replacements located underneath inadequately engineered concrete foundations in expansive clay soils. Many of these houses experience drainage issues because their Finished Floor Elevations were built too low to the ground to accommodate heavy downpours.

It was not standard practice in those days to perform Geotechnical soils testing to determine the best possible engineering designs for these foundations..We also have far better methods and equipment for air-conditioning and insulation than we formerly had in the past with the disciplines and advancements of building science. Many of these

advancements have been championed by the Austin Energy green building program..

I have extensive experience in building and construction from an early age. As a designer and builder I have personally built over 50 houses in the Central Austin area. I am very familiar with the issues that homeowners face when making the decision to remodel or start new. I have had houses on the NARI tour, The Cool House Tour, and have been awarded many 5 STAR Ratings for houses built under the Green Building program, one of which was filmed by the Discovery Channel. We stand firm in our convictions and ask that the Commission yield to brighter, healthier expressions of our homes, If indeed we as homeowners choose to do so, it is in fact our right and our future.

Dominique Levesque

**Owner of
2507 Park View Drive**

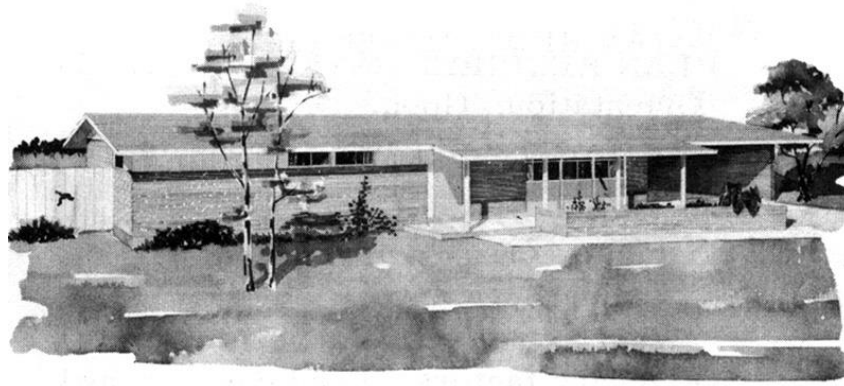
Developer of 2505 Park View Drive

**Image Below represents the Mid Century Style we intend to build at 2505 Park View Drive. Our modern expression in Honor or AirConditioned Village 2.0
A single story single family home**

<https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:41f176a0-6b40-497f-8dce-1f64d1ec08a9>

2505 Park View Drive
ca. 1954





Original rendering of the house (1954)

OCCUPANCY HISTORY

2505 Park View Drive

City Directory Research, Austin History Center
 By City Historic Preservation Office
 September, 2020

- | | |
|------|---|
| 1959 | Charles N. and Shirliereed Ashworth, owners
Charles: Proprietor (with Oliver Strom), Village Launderette, 5502 Burnet Road (now the A-Town homegoods store) and 909 Lamar Boulevard.
Shirliereed: Clerk, Harris School (AISD), 1711 Wheless Lane. |
| 1957 | Charles N. and Shirley R. Ashworth, owners
Comptroller, Fabricon, cabinet makers, 4601 E. 5 th Street. |
| 1955 | Charles N. and Shirley R. Ashworth, owners
Employed by Fabricon, Inc., cabinet makers, 4601 E. 5 th Street. |
| 1954 | Charles N. and Shirly R. Ashworth, owners
Controller, Fabricon, cabinet makers, 4601 E. 5 th Street. |
| 1953 | The address is not listed in the directory.
NOTE: Charles N. and Shirliereed Ashworth are listed at 1005 E. 43 rd Street; he was an accountant for Fabricon, cabinet makers, 4601 E. 5 th Street. |

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES:

Charles N. and Shirley R. Ashworth (ca. 1954 –

His World War II draft card shows that Charles Nugent Ashworth was living at 309 E. 15th Street in Austin at the time of his registration in October, 1940. He was born in 1916 in Kaufman, Texas; his mother, who lived in Arlington, Texas, was his closest relative. He worked for the Texas Unemployment Compensation Commission in the Brown Building in Austin. He was 5'-11" tall, weighed 170 pounds and had a ruddy complexion with brown hair and gray eyes. He had a slight scar on his left cheek.

Charles N. and Shirliereed Darwin Ashworth had a son, Charles Darwin Ashworth, in April, 1952.

Charles Nugent Ashworth was born in 1916 and died in January 2001; Shirliereed Darwin Ashworth was born in 1920 and died in 1974. Both are buried in the Ashworth Cemetery in Cedarvale, Kaufman County Texas.

WATER SERVICE PERMIT
Austin, Texas

E No. 610
INDEXED

Received of S. R. SHEPPARD Date 3-31-54

Address 2505 PARKVIEW

Amount TWENTY & NO/100

Plumber P. J. DREWINGTON Size of Tap 3/4"

Date of Connection 4-27-54

Size of Tap Made 3/4"

Size Service Made 3/4"

Size Main Tapped 8" C.I.

From Front Prop. Line to Curb Cock 7.5'

From W Prop. Line to Curb Cock 91'

Location of Meter CURB

Type of Box IRON

Depth of Main in St. 3'

Depth of Service Line 2'

From Curb Cock to Tap on Main PIPE

Checked by Engr. Dept. main

INDEXED 5-16-54 EKR N

No. Fittings	Size	
1	Curb Cock	5/8"
1	Elbow	3/4" C.I.
1	St. Elbow	3/4" C.I.
	Bushing	
	Reducer	
4	Pipe	4" 3/4" C.I.
	Lead Comp.	
	Nipples	
	Union	
	Plug	
1	Stop	1/2" L.I.D.
1	Box	IRON
1	Lid	
	Valves	
	Job No.	11-323-502
	Req. No.	11-323-502

Water service permit to S.R. Sheppard, the builder of this house (1954)

Charles N. Ashworth got a building permit for the construction of a rear addition in 1963. Georgia Darwin is listed as the owner of the property on a building permit to add another rear addition to create a duplex in 1964.

SANITARY SEWER SERVICE PERMIT
Austin, Texas

No. 41534

Received of CHARLES A. ASHWORTH Date 3-16-64

Address 2505 PARKVIEW DR.

Amount 50.00

Builder or Owner GA Plumber GA

Lot 11 Block C Subdivision Edgewood-See Plat No. 292

Date of Connection 3-25-64

By City 34' N. 5 PL. IN EASEMENT

By Plumber SWISHER

Checked By SWISHER

Size Main 8" Depth ± 5 1/2' (rock)

Main Assign. 2 1/2' E of E P

Stub-Depth 5 1/2' Prop. Line 3'

Stub Location TO BE IN EASEMENT

Book No. A-3080

Paving Cut OK 3-13-64 No. 20

No. Fittings	Size	Price
9	Pipe	22.5
1	Wyes	100
1	Bends	100
	Reducers	
	Plugs	
	Sand	
	Gravel	
	Remix	
	Stoppers	
	Castings	
1	Other	100
	Labor	146.0
	TAP	15.0
	FOREMAN	23.3
	Total	422.58

Sewer service permit to Charles Ashworth for a second tap for the property (1964) corresponds to the building permit for the mother-in-law addition above.