

**HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION  
NOVEMBER 16, 2020  
DEMOLITION AND RELOCATION PERMITS  
HR-2020-146817  
1703 WOODLAWN BOULEVARD**

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**PROPOSAL**

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Demolish a ca. 1929 house and construct a new house.

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**ARCHITECTURE**

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The existing house is an L-plan Spanish Colonial Revival-styled stuccoed frame house with hints of Art Deco detailing, especially in the front door; metal-framed windows; raised parapet at the entry.

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**RESEARCH**

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The house was built in 1929 for Nick Ferris and his wife, Bolling, both of whom were involved in the operation of downtown's Marie Antoinette Shop for ladies' fashions. Nick Ferris was the son of S. Ferris, a Lebanese immigrant who first settled in Manor and moved to Austin, where he established several businesses, including S. Ferris Sons, a dry goods store on E. 6<sup>th</sup> Street, and several clothing stores, including the Marie Antoinette, known for years as one of Austin's most upscale ladies' clothing stores. Nick Ferris would travel the world to bring the latest fashions to the women of Austin. Bolling Ferris, an interior decorator, was responsible for the design of the new Marie Antoinette Shop on Congress Avenue in 1935. Nick and Bolling Ferris lived in this house until around 1943. Their home on Woodlawn Boulevard was distinctive for its style in a neighborhood otherwise full of Colonial and Tudor Revival houses.

Edna Hammerman, the proprietor of a prominent insurance adjusting firm in Austin, rented the house in the mid-1940s. Thomas J. and Glenda Prather then purchased the house around 1946, and lived here until around 1964. Thomas Prather was an accountant for the State Highway Department who later became the director of the Texas Congress of Parents and Teachers. Glenda Prather was an artist.

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**STAFF COMMENTS**

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The house was listed with no priority for research in the Comprehensive Cultural Resources Survey (1984), and was listed as non-contributing to the Old West Austin National Register Historic District. The applicant has furnished photographs depicting the poor condition of the existing house.

The applicant appeared before the Architectural Review Committee on November 2, 2020 and related further details of the deteriorated condition of the house that appear to justify its demolition rather than its rehabilitation. The ARC members agreed that the house was non-contributing to the historic district and although they noted the unique architecture of the house, they did not voice objections to its demolition. The applicant further presented his plans for the new house, which the Committee members reviewed favorably, suggesting only that the applicant better highlight the front entrance to the house.

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 is a very good example of Spanish Colonial Revival residential architecture, somewhat of an anomaly in this section of West Austin. The house maintains a high degree of integrity and may rise to the level of architectural significance.

- b. **Historical association.** The house was built by Nick Ferris, a prominent businessman in Austin and a member of a Lebanese family known for its dry goods and ladies' clothing stores. Nick Ferris was the manager of the family's Marie Antoinette Shop, perhaps the most upscale ladies' clothing store in downtown Austin. Ferris made frequent buying trips to New York and other world cities to bring the latest fashions back to Austin, and in doing so, contributed to the style of the city. The house has historical significance for its associations with Nick and Bolling Ferris, who lived here from the time of construction in 1929 until around 1943, when they moved to a house on Greenlee Drive.
- 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.

### **NEW CONSTRUCTION**

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After demolition of the existing house, the applicant proposes the construction of a new house on the site. The proposed new house will be a one-and-a-half story frame house with cementitious fiber artisan lap siding, wood windows and a wood door; the house will have a one-story rear wing, all following a neo-Colonial Revival style. The proposed new house will have a screened porch across the half of the front elevation; the house will have a standing-seam metal roof. The house will very much be in character with the historic district in terms of its architecture.

### **STANDARDS FOR REVIEW FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION**

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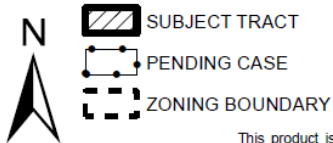
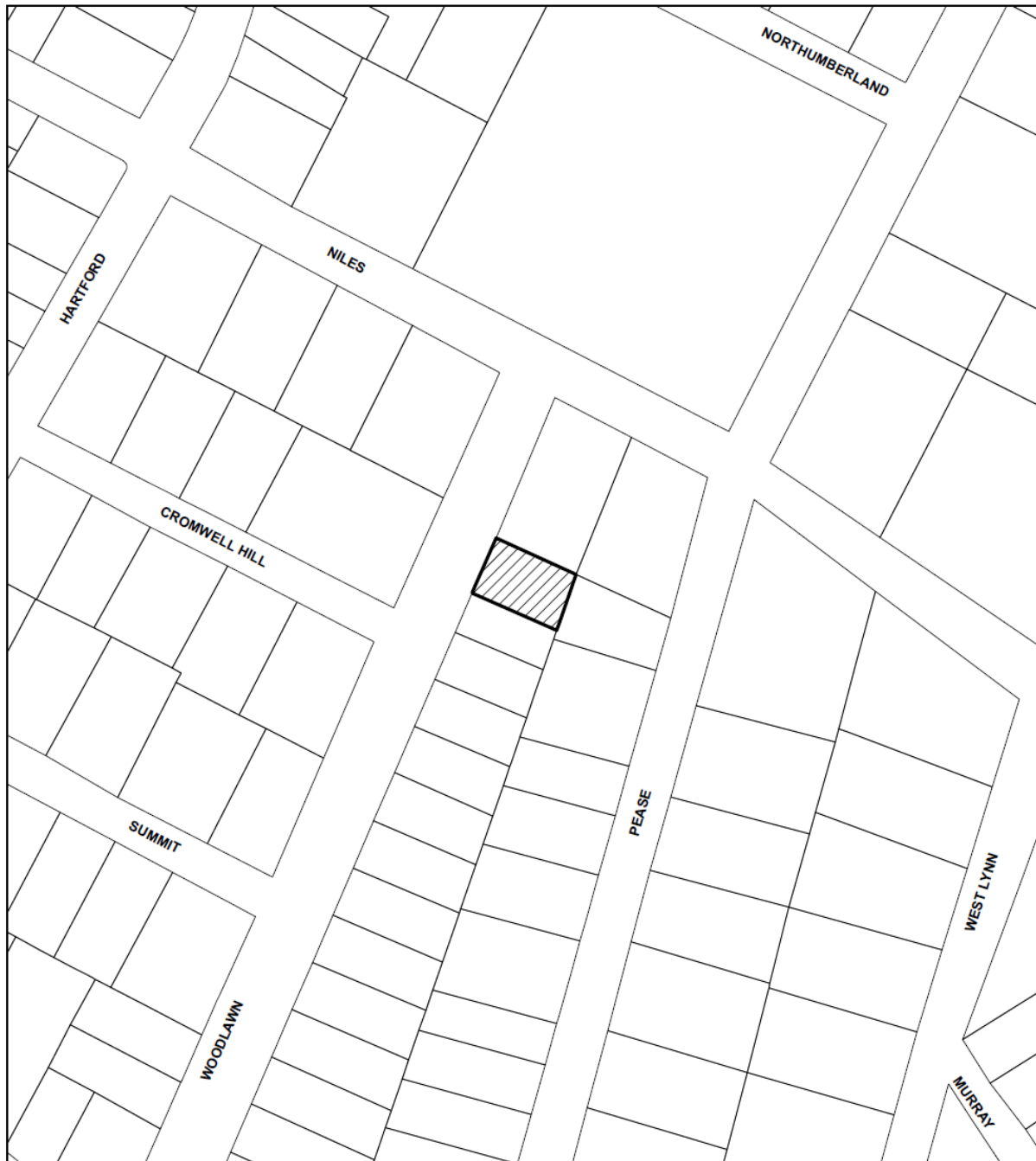
Design standards for new construction in historic districts dictate compatibility with the contributing properties in the historic district in terms of massing, scale, architectural elements, height, exterior wall materials, and fenestration patterns. The proposed house, a one-and-a-half story, traditionally-styled wood-framed house is compatible with the historic character of the street and the district. Good design such as this does not stand out from the contributing houses within the district. The proposed design is sensitive to the historic character of the district and appears to be very compatible.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

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Release the demolition and building permits for this case, 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



1" = 148'

## NOTIFICATIONS

CASE#: HR-20-146817  
LOCATION: 1703 WOODLAWN BOULEVARD

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.



1703 Woodlawn Boulevard  
ca. 1929







Front door detail

## OCCUPANCY HISTORY

### 1703 Woodlawn Boulevard

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

1992	Stewart Shaw, owner No occupation listed NOTE: The directory indicates that Stewart Shaw was a new resident at this address.
1985-86	Mahala V. Sibley, owner No occupation listed
1981	Mahala V. Sibley, owner No occupation listed
1977	Vacant NOTE: Mahala V. Sibley is not listed in the directory.
1973	Allan Bird, owner Student Also listed is Margaret P. Bird, a teacher at the TEA Special School.

- 1968 Thomas Maceo, owner  
Student
- 1965 James B. and Harriet Rutland, owners  
Salesman, Texaco, wholesale oils, 1121 Springdale Road.
- 1962 Thomas J. and Glenda Prather, owners  
Director, Texas Congress of Parents and Teachers, 408 W. 11<sup>th</sup> Street.
- 1957 Thomas J. and Glenda H. Prather, owners  
Accountant, State Highway Department
- 1954 Thomas J. and Glenda Prather, owners  
Accountant, State Highway Department
- 1952 Thomas J. and Glenda Prather, owners  
Analyst, State Highway Department
- 1949 Thomas J. and Glenda Prather, owners  
Thomas: Analyst, State Highway Department  
Glenda: Student, University of Texas
- 1947 Thomas J. and Glenda Prather, owners  
U.S. Army
- 1944-45 Edna M. Hammerman, owner  
Proprietor (with J.W. Gainer), Hammerman & Gainer, workmen's  
compensation, liability, automobile, fire, windstorm, inland marine, aircraft  
insurance adjusters, 725-28 Brown Building.  
NOTE: Thomas and Glenda Prather are listed at 1501 Mohle Drive; he was in  
the U.S. Army.  
NOTE: Nick J. and Bolling H. Ferris are listed at 2500 Greenlee Drive; he was  
the proprietor of the Marie Antoinette, women's clothing, 504 Congress Avenue.
- 1941 Nick J. and Harriet B. Ferris, owners  
Manager, The Marie Antoinette, women's clothing, 504 Congress Avenue.
- 1939 Nickolas J. and Bolling Ferris, owners  
Manager, The Marie Antoinette, ladies' wear, 814 Congress Avenue.
- 1937 Nickolas J. and Bolling Ferris, owners  
Manager, Marie Antoinette (Saadi J. Ferris, proprietor), women's clothing, 107 E.  
6<sup>th</sup> Street and 812-14 Congress Avenue.
- 1935 Nickolas J. and Bolling Ferris, owners  
Manager, Marie Antoinette (Saadi J. Ferris, proprietor), women's clothing,  
107 E. 6<sup>th</sup> Street and 812-14 Congress Avenue.
- 1932-33 Nickolas J. and Bolling Ferris, owners  
Proprietor (with A. George, John A. and Saadi A. Ferris), Marie  
Antoinette, women's clothing, 107 E. 6<sup>th</sup> Street.  
NOTE: All of the Ferris family members except Nickolas were also the  
proprietors of S. Ferris Sons, department store, 501-07 E. 6<sup>th</sup> Street.

NOTE: The address is listed as 1327 Woodlawn Boulevard.

1930-31      Nickolas J. and Bolling Ferris, renters  
                  Proprietor (with A. George, John A. and Saadi A. Ferris), Marie  
                  Antoinette, women's clothing, 107 E. 6<sup>th</sup> Street.

NOTE: The address is listed as 1327 Woodlawn Boulevard.

1929            The house is listed as "under construction."  
                  NOTE: N.J. and Bolling Ferris are listed at 206 E. 15<sup>th</sup> Street, the home  
                  of Saidi and Sophie Ferris. N.J. Ferris was the proprietor of Marie  
                  Antoinette, ladies' ready-to-wear clothing, 107 E. 6<sup>th</sup> Street.  
                  NOTE: The address is listed as 1327 Woodlawn Boulevard.

## **BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES:**

### **Nickolas and Bolling Ferris (ca. 1929 – ca. 1943)**

Nicep Joseph Ferris' 1917 World War I draft registration card shows that he was living at 300 E. 8<sup>th</sup> Street in Austin. He was born in July, 1893 in Sheridan, Nebraska, and was a self-employed merchant. He was single. He was of medium height and had a slender build, brown eyes, and dark hair.

Nick J. and Bolling H. Ferris appear in the 1930 U.S. Census as the owners of this house, which is listed with its former address of 1327 Woodlawn Boulevard, and which was worth \$10,500. Nick J. Ferris was 36, had been born in Nebraska to Syrian-born parents, and was a ladies' ready-to-wear clothing merchant. Bolling H. Ferris was 21, had been born in Texas, and had no occupation listed. They had no children listed with them.

The 1940 U.S. Census shows Nick J. and Bolling Ferris as the owners of this house, which was worth \$7,500. Nick J. Ferris was 46, had been born in Nebraska, and was the owner of the Marie Antoinette. Bolling Ferris was 31, had been born in Texas, and was an interior decorator. They had no children listed with them.

His 1968 death certificate shows that Nickep (Nick) Joseph Ferris was born in Nebraska in 1893, and was living at 3405 Westledge Circle at the time of his death. He was the retired owner of a ready to wear clothing store, and was married. He is buried in Mount Calvary Cemetery in Austin. Bolling Harrison Ferris was born in 1908 and died in 1998. She is buried in Wharton, Texas.

### **FERRIS-HARRISON.**

Nick Ferris of Austin and his bride, formerly Miss Bolling Harrison of Wharton, who were married Saturday, June 25, arrived in Austin Tuesday and expect to leave July 13 for a honeymoon trip to New York. Mrs. Ferris is the daughter of Mrs. G. A. Harrison of Wharton, Texas, and attended the university last year, being a pledge of Chi Omega sorority.

Mr. Ferris is the son of G. Ferris, a member of the mercantile firm composed of sons of S. Ferris and a graduate of St. Edward's university.

News of the marriage of Nick Ferris and Boling Harrison

Austin Statesman, June 29, 1927

# FERRIS BUILDS BIG BUSINESS

## From Manor Store to National Trade in 30 Years.

Beginning with a small general store in a little Travis county town 30 years ago, S. Ferris of Austin has had a successful business career that reads almost like a novel.

From this small beginning there has developed a large retail department store, one of the best known in Austin, a ladies ready-to-wear and millinery shop catering especially to college girls and the younger set, a modern shoe store operated on novel lines, a wholesale dry goods business, and an importing and brokerage business with headquarters in New York serving customers throughout the United States.

### In Austin 27 Years

After several years in Manor, Mr. Ferris moved to Austin in 1900 and opened his store at 500 East Sixth street, just opposite his present location. At that time he conducted a general store including groceries as well as dry goods.

Five years later, in 1905, the business had grown rapidly and the grocery and dry goods departments were located in separate buildings across the street from the original location.



### Builds New Store

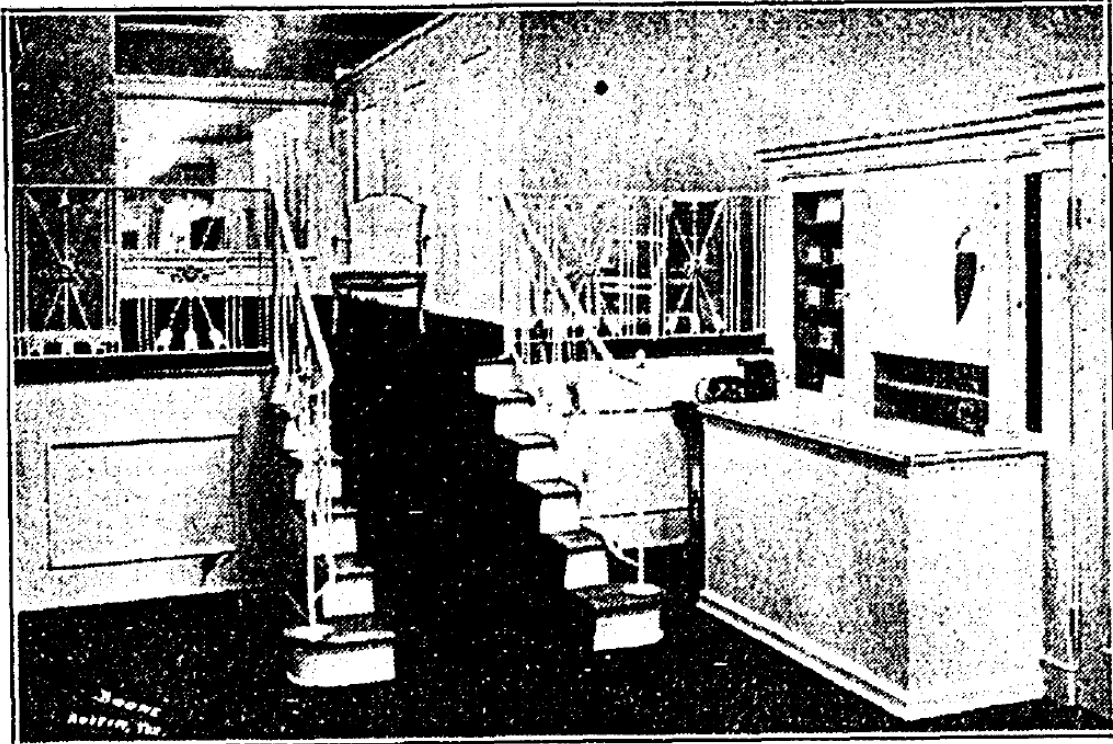
In 1910 the grocery business was sold, and in 1912 a new building was erected for the dry goods business which was then beginning to grow into department store proportions. This building is the one now occupied by S. Ferris Sons department store. Adjoining it is the Ferris shoe store which was opened last year and has made notably rapid growth. Also under the Ferris banner is the Marie Antoinette shop; one of the most popular exclusive ladies' shops in Austin.

In the fall of 1926 Mr. Ferris decided to concentrate his attention on importing, wholesaling and merchandise brokerage with an office in New York. The retail store in Austin was placed under the joint ownership and management of S. Ferris' three sons—George Ferris, Nick Ferris and John Ferris, and the name changed to S. Ferris Sons. The Marie Antoinette is under the immediate direction of Nick Ferris, who makes frequent trips to the New York markets in its interest.

In addition to his mercantile interests, Mr. Ferris is active in real estate operations and is probably the largest single owner of business property on Sixth street.

History of the S. Ferris Sons Company in Austin  
Austin Statesman, August 14, 1927

## Interior of New Marie Antoinette Shop



This is an interior view of the new Marie Antoinette shop, at 814 Congress avenue, which will open Monday. The stairway leads to fitting rooms.

The entire shop is finished in a fashion suggestive of its famous namesake. Nick Ferris, of course, continues as manager.

New Marie Antoinette Shop interior debut  
Austin American-Statesman, April 7, 1935

# VISITORS THROG NEW SHOP OF FERRIS

The Easter parade—or at least a more than fair percentage of it—tripped in and out of the new Marie Antoinette shop at 814 Congress Monday as the store observed open house in its new location.

Store hours were from 9 to 9 on the opening day, but were back on the usual schedule of 8 to 6 today. One of the special opening attractions—the modeling of frocks and gowns by Miss Marlan Avery, popular Austin girl—will continue, however, through the week.

Several thousand visitors thronged the store up to the closing hour to view the delicately lovely French Empire interior and to congratulate Mr. and Mrs. Nick Ferris on the beauty of both furnishings and new fashions. Mr. Ferris is just back from New York, where he selected late spring and early summer stock, including a number of exclusive models, for his Austin clientele.

From its smart entrance, with windows for display of daily new fashions, to its mirror-covered back wall, the new Marie Antoinette is a modern complement to the famous beauty for whom it is named. The interior, designed by Mrs. Ferris, formerly Miss Bolling Harrison, who has studied both design and architecture, is French Empire with a touch of the classic modern. It is done in Empire blue and gold and bone ivory, with handcarved woodwork by Peter Mansbendel and doors hand-stenciled. The six fitting rooms have been completed each in a different pastel color—blue, peach, yellow and other delicate hues.

Indirect lighting is featured.

Steps at the rear lead to a small raised lounge off which the fitting rooms open; the rear wall is a huge mirror, well lighted for full-length views, and the lounge itself is handsomely furnished for convenience of waiting customers.

The modern front, with two principal display windows, is dominated by models designed after two women whose style sense is unrivaled. The charming red-head is Mary Taylor, model for Vogue; the other is Mrs. Plamondon, New York society woman noted for her leadership in fashion.

To the regular staff of four, the Marie Antoinette has added three new permanent saleswomen and increased its personnel to 10 for the opening.

The shop was banked with flowers, presented by friends of the management, on the opening day.

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Article on the new Marie Antoinette store, decorated by Bolling Ferris  
Austin Statesman, April 9, 1935



Nick Ferris always dreamed of a place of his own. He and "Papa" opened a tiny, gray-painted shop on Congress known as The Marie Antoinette. The store was moved to the 800 block of Congress Avenue and finally to its present location with Nick as manager and buyer. The business flourished until 1946 when Nick retired and the store was sold.

Excerpt from a profile article on S. Ferris  
Austin American-Statesman, May 2, 1948

## **Nick Ferris Will Manage French Room**

S. Ferris Corporation operating as The French Room, previously Alex Ferris, has announced the appointment of Nick Ferris as full-time active manager of the store.

Mr. Ferris' appointment and the fashion shop's change of name became effective Tuesday.

Well-known in Austin and Central Texas, Mr. Ferris has been associated with finer ready-to-wear shops here for a number of years.

Serving as assistant manager will be Alex Ferris.

Officers of S. Ferris Corporation and owners of the entire stock are Mrs. S. Ferris, president; A. G. Ferris and Coleman Gay.

Announcement that Nick Ferris will manage the French Room, ladies' clothing store  
Austin Statesman, November 1, 1948

**NICK J. FERRIS**

Nick J. Ferris, 3405 Westledge Circle, died in a local hospital early Monday. A lifetime resident of Austin, Ferris was a member of St. Mary's Catholic Church.

He attended St. Edward's College. Before his retirement, Ferris originated Marie Antoinette ready to wear store and operated this store until selling to its present owners.

Survivors are his wife, Mrs. Bolling Harrison Ferris; one daughter, Miss Mary Bolling; one sister, Mrs. Bertha Davis of Austin; and three brothers, George Ferris, Austin, John Ferris, Houston, and Alex Ferris, Wichita, Kans.

Funeral arrangements are pending at Weed-Corley Funeral Home.

Obituary of Nick Ferris  
Austin Statesman, April 8, 1968

**NICK J. FERRIS**

Rosary for Nick J. Ferris will be said at 8 p.m. Tuesday at Weed-Corley Funeral Home.

Requiem mass will be celebrated at 9 a.m. Wednesday at St. Mary's Catholic Church. Rev. Harold Zink will officiate and burial will be in Mt. Calvary Cemetery.

Pallbearers will be Colbert Glenn, Jim Lindeman, Calvin Huffman, Alex Rugeley, Walter Orr and Malcolm Levy.

Funeral notice for Nick Ferris  
Austin Statesman, April 9, 1968

**Thomas J. and Glenda Prather (ca. 1946 – ca. 1964)**

His 1940 World War II draft card shows that Thomas James Prather was living at Taft, San Patricio County, Texas, where he worked for the Central Power and Light Company. He was born in 1914 in Richland Springs, Texas, and was married to Glenda Hendricks Prather. He was 5'-8" tall, weighed 150 pounds and had a light brown complexion with brown eyes and brown hair.

Tom and Glenda Prather appear in the 1940 U.S. Census for Taft, San Patricio County, Texas, where they rented their home. Tom Prather was 26, had been born in Texas, and was the cashier at the electric light company. He lived in Corpus Christi, Texas in 1935. Glenda Prather was 25, had been born in Texas, and had no occupation listed. She lived in Richland Springs, San Saba County, Texas in 1935. They had a female lodger, Mildred (last name illegible) 20, who had been born in Texas and was a public school teacher. She lived in Denton, Texas in 1935.

# Five Women's Paintings Displayed at Art Gallery

By CHARLES FLINT  
Written for  
The American-Statesman

Paintings by five women artists are being presented at the Art Gallery of the Texas Federation of Women's Clubs. The artists exhibiting are Mary Jane Fraley, Glenda Prather, Mrs. Charles Ravey, Loma Wilson Reidy, and Martine Threlkeld.

Of the paintings by Mary Jane Fraley, I felt that those items which best represent her are "Bright Evening" and "Grasshoppers," both small oils.

Glenda Prather's small oil, "The Mum," is one of the fine little canvases in the show. This work has a calm poise and a quiet charm which makes it a pleasure to behold.

Mrs. Charles Ravey is a talented painter who is not only well-represented in this exhibit, but who is also represented in the Texan Painting and Sculpture but who is also represented in the Texas painting and sculpture show at the Laguna Gloria Gallery. For me, the three oils, "Limblue," "Chinese Panel," "Stickleaf," the two enamels, "Synthesis" and "Sky-lites," and the two remarkable collages, "Sea Sick Fisherman" and "French Quarters" best represent Mrs. Ravey in this exhibit.

Loma Wilson Reidy's small oil, "Stillife," is the one painting in the show which I would most like to have for myself. A very nice interpretation of the subject-matter is infused with a degree of artistic quality which results in a little gem of a painting. Mrs. Reidy is also well-represented by the oils "Mother Mary," and "Bird Sanctuary."

Martine Threlkeld is the only



artist in the group represented by watercolors. Her "Roses," "White Camilias," "M a g n o l i a," and "Bunch of Flowers" are, as you may guess, flower-paintings which have a bold, clear, print-like quality in their interpretation.

The exhibit extends through March 3.

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Article announcing the display of one of Glenda Prather's paintings at the Art gallery of the Texas Federation of Women's Clubs  
Austin Statesman, February 26, 1956

## PTA Parley Addressed By Prather

Thomas J. Prather, executive director of the Texas state PTA office in Austin, was one of four Texans attending a recent conference of PTA leaders from six southern states in Hot Springs, Ark.

In an address to the more than 60 PTA leaders from Texas, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Missouri, Prather emphasized the need to make PTA more relevant to its members, and communicated to them "the laudable goals of PTA."

Theme of the conference was making PTA more effective and relevant to today's social turmoil.

Dr. Edwin Stumpf, chairman

of high school services of the Louisiana PTA and professor of LSU, spoke on the consequence of not involving youth in the decision-making process.

He stressed that many young people are socially conscious but find themselves neither a part of the elect or of the electorate. Stumpf particularly emphasized the need for PTA to involve students in the decision-making process.

Thomas J. Prather addressing PTA leaders  
Austin Statesman, December 8, 1969

N. J. Ferris 1703 Woodlawn Blvd  
90C - - 56&57 -  
Enfield C  
General repairs & add storeroom to  
garage  
144r - 3/20/39

Building permit to Nick J. Ferris for general repairs and to construct a storeroom to the garage  
(1939)

*PH6*  
*90C*  
N. J. Ferris 1703 Woodlawn Blvd.  
- - 56 -  
Enfield C  
box addn. to garage for servants qts.  
20318 - 8-30-40

Building permit to Nick J. Ferris for an addition to the garage (1940)

OWNER Mahala ~~Sibley~~ <sup>Sibley</sup> ADDRESS 1703 Woodlawn Blvd.  
 PLAT 146 LOT 56 BLK.  
 SUBDIVISION C. Enfield  
 OCCUPANCY Addn to res.  
 BLDG. PERMIT # 190531 DATE 1-24-80 OWNERS 1,500.00  
 ESTIMATE  
 CONTRACTOR James King NO. OF FIXTURES  
 WATER TAP REC# SEWER TAP REC#  
 Addn to res Fireplace remodel gar.  
 Building permit to Mahala Sibley to construct an addition (1980)

OWNER Mahola Sibley ADDRESS 1703 Woodlawn Blvd  
 PLAT 146 LOT 5 & 6 BLK.  
 SUBDIVISION C. Enfield  
 OCCUPANCY Re-roofing res & remodel Sun room  
 BLDG. PERMIT # 194494 DATE 4-15-80 OWNERS 900.  
 ESTIMATE  
 CONTRACTOR Owner NO. OF FIXTURES  
 WATER TAP REC# SEWER TAP REC#

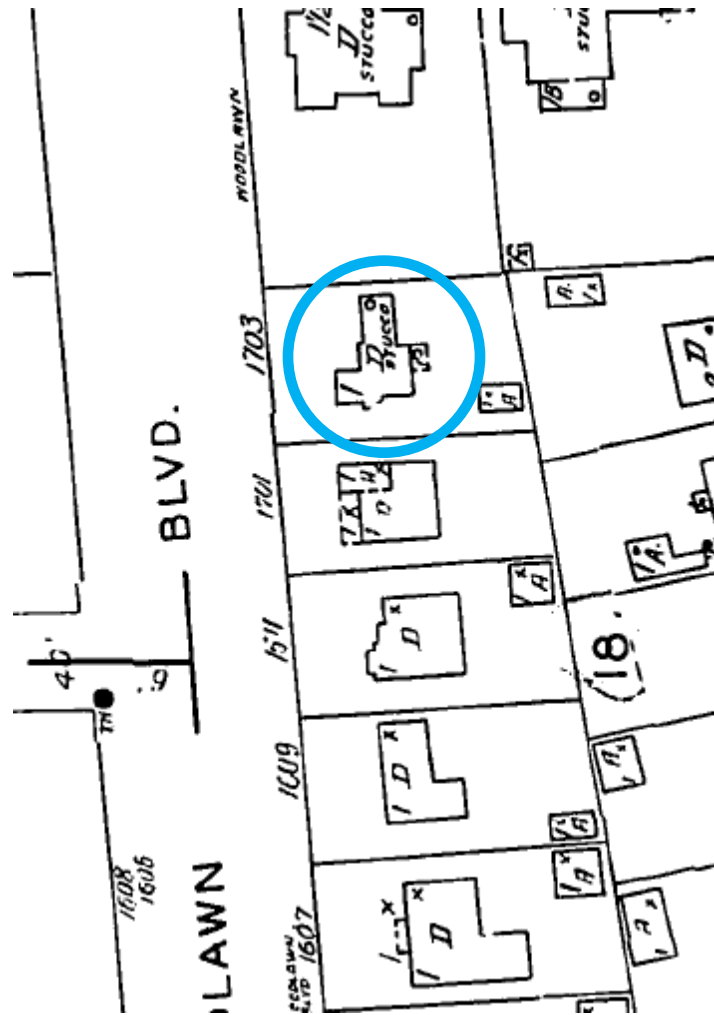
Building permit to Mahala Sibley to reroof the house and remodel the sunroom (1980)

City records indicate a permit to replace the sewer line in 2011, and a complaint of a mouse infestation and the water heater not being up to Code in 2018.



The 1935 Sanborn map shows the house with an address of 1615 Woodlawn Boulevard; that address does not align with city directory listings of the period.





The 1961 Sanborn map indicates that the house has a stucco exterior and has its current address of 1703 Woodlawn Boulevard.