

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION
DECEMBER 14, 2020
PERMITS IN A NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT
GF-20-180133
1510 PALMA PLAZA
OLD WEST AUSTIN NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT

PROPOSAL

Demolish a ca. 1923 house that is contributing to the Old West Austin National Register Historic District.

ARCHITECTURE

One-and-a-half story, L-plan stuccoed cottage with clipped gables; single, paired, and triple 1:1 fenestration; shed-roofed cover over entry.

RESEARCH

The house was built in 1923 by A. Howard and Augusta Osburn, who lived here until around 1943. A. Howard Osburn was a proprietor with Murray and Niles Graham in the Enfield Insurance Agency, a branch of the Enfield Realty Company, which developed the Enfield subdivisions carved out of the old Pease Estate, and including this house. In the early 1930s, he joined the insurance firm of Millican and Hamby as a solicitor in the real estate department. In the mid-1930s, Augusta Osburn became the manager of the Austin Country Club after managing the downtown Austin Club for a number of years. The Osburns moved to the country club and rented this house for a short period of time, then moved back in, staying here until around 1943.

Augusta Osburn, besides being the manager of two prestigious clubs in the city, also ran a lending library in the Renfro Drug Company store on W. 12th Street; the Renfro Drug Company was owned and operated by her family, and was one of the largest drug stores in the city with several locations downtown, on the west side, and near the university. Their main store was at 600 Congress Avenue, the site of the current CVS Drug Store at 6th Street and Congress Avenue.

Howard Osburn was also involved in real estate development, including the Upland addition centering on Concordia Avenue just east of what is now IH-35 between Manor Road and E. 38th Street north of French Place. Howard and Augusta Osburn moved from this house to Tarrytown, where they spent the rest of their lives on Hopi Trail.

From the early 1940s until the early 1960s, the house was rented as a single family residence to including an insurance agent, an employee of a women's and children's clothing store, and an owner of a car dealership. The house was converted to a duplex in 1962, and an additional housing unit was added in 1963 to make the property a tri-plex; city directories from the mid-1960s forward reflect three housing units at this address. The demographics of the tenants also shifted. While the house was a single family rental, the occupants were solidly middle class; after conversion to a duplex and triplex, the occupants reflected lower middle class status, with students, a food service worker, and a public school teacher.

STAFF COMMENTS

The house is contributing to the Old West Austin National Register Historic District.

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 clipped-gable stuccoed house, a rarity in Austin. Although the overall form of the house is common, the stuccoed exterior walls and prominent clipped gables are unusual features for a house of this vintage.o

This is also an unusually modest home for a prominent businessman, especially one who was probably involved in the later development of the Enfield subdivisions. The house reflects the ideals of the 1920s vision of Enfield as a middle class neighborhood, and for several reasons then may have architectural significance.

- b. **Historical association.** The house was the long-time home of Howard and Augusta Osburn, both prominent business and cultural leaders. Howard Osburn was in the insurance and real estate business, beginning with the Enfield Realty's Enfield Insurance Company, moving on to Millican and Hamby, a prominent insurance and real estate firm, and finally to his own agency. Augusta Osburn was a member of the prominent Renfro family which had several drug stores throughout the city and probably the largest drug store company in Austin before the arrival of national chains. She was the manager of the downtown Austin Club for several years in the 1930s and became the manager of the Austin Country Club from around 1936 until around 1939; the family moved to the country club to be resident managers there. Augusta Osburn also ran a circulating library in the Renfro Drug Store on W. 12th Street. There may be significant historical associations with both Howard and Augusta Osburn, who lived for about 20 years in this house, from the time of its construction in 1923, until the early 1940s, when they moved to Tarrytown.
- 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 NOTE

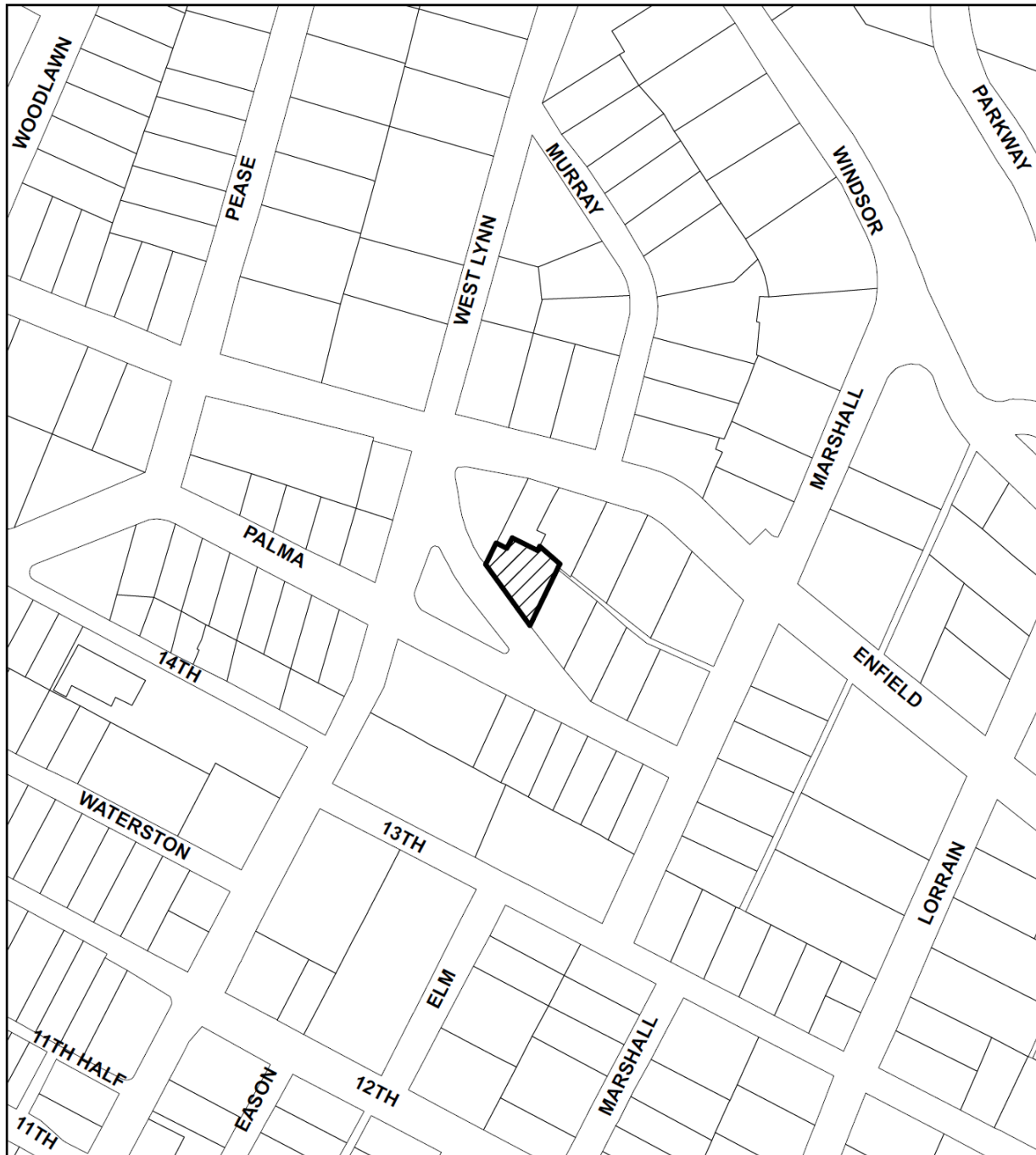
An application for the demolition of this structure was brought before the Commission in 2006, but there were only 5 out of the 9 members of the Commission present, and the minutes from the meeting indicate that there was a motion to allow the demolition of the house but that the vote was 3-1-1, which did not constitute a quorum vote. There is no record of any subsequent vote on the Commission-initiated case for historic zoning. The permit was released, but the previous applicant let that permit expire. Historic Preservation Office policy generally does not require a rehearing of an expired permit, as the Commission has had the opportunity to review and rule on it, in this case the permit was released because of lack of a quorum so there was no effective ruling by the Commission on whether to recommend historic zoning for this house.




STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Encourage rehabilitation and adaptive re-use, returning the house to single-family use with auxiliary dwelling units to achieve the desired density on this site. The applicants presented their proposal to the Architectural Review Committee on November 30, 2020, and presented testimony of structural, plumbing, and electrical issues in the existing house that will make it infeasible for rehabilitation, but staff still encourages the applicants to use the existing house to the greatest extent possible and construct one or more ADU's for density that will help in the rehabilitation cost of the existing house. This house has architectural interest and relates a story of a prominent businessman and more importantly, his wife, who managed the two most prestigious private clubs in Austin at that time. This house should not be demolished until all aspects of preservation and rehabilitation have been exhausted

as prohibitive or infeasible. Staff reminds the Commission that this house is contributing to the historic district, and cannot be demolished until the Commission has reviewed and commented on the proposals for new construction, so a postponement of the application for demolition may be appropriate to sync up the two proposals should the Commission feel that the house has historical and architectural significance.

LOCATION MAP



-  SUBJECT TRACT
-  PENDING CASE
-  ZONING BOUNDARY

1" = 208'

NOTIFICATIONS

CASE#: GF 20-180133
LOCATION: 1510 PALMA PLAZA

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.



1510 Palma Plaza
ca. 1923



ca. 2005 photo of the house by staff



Photo taken December, 2020 showing third rental unit to the left rear of the house.

OCCUPANCY HISTORY 1510 Palma Plaza

City Directory Research
Austin History Center
Prepared by City Historic Preservation Office
June, 2005

- | | |
|------|--|
| 1975 | <p>A. Mrs. Mary Brayton
Widow, William Brayton
Bellaire Halfway House, 1515 Enfield Road
NOTE: Mildred Brayton, director, Bellaire Halfway House, also resided here.</p> <p>B. Mrs. Edith Williams
Widow, C.L. Williams
No occupation listed</p> <p>C. Mrs. Emma Rucker
Food service worker, University of Texas</p> |
| 1970 | <p>A. Susan J. Schaffer
Typist, City Engineering Department</p> <p>B. John and Barbara Laplante
Student</p> <p>C. Rick and Mitsuk Peterson
Student</p> |
| 1965 | <p>A. Gene and Sharon Calvert
Teacher, public school</p> <p>B. Carroll Glaser
No occupation listed</p> <p>C. Roy and Susan Zoch
Bill poster, Rollins Outdoor Advertising</p> |
| 1960 | <p>Edgar and Laura Wilson, renters
Agent, Trans-American Life Insurance Company</p> |
| 1955 | <p>Edgar and Laura Wilson, renters
Manager, American Founders Life Insurance Company</p> |
| 1952 | <p>Edgar and Laura Wilson, renters
Employed by Buttrey's Women's and Children's Ready to Wear Clothing, 107 W. 6th Street</p> |
| 1949 | <p>Otto J. and Ada Huth, renters
One of three owners of Peck's Auto Sales
Also listed is Dolores Huth, reservation secretary, Stephen F. Austin Hotel</p> |

- 1947 Joseph Ballanfonte, renter
Proprietor, Odom and Ballanfonte, Petroleum Engineers
- 1944-45 Perry D. and Helen Swindler, owners
U.S. Army
NOTE: A. Howard and Augusta Osburn are listed at 2003 Hopi Trail; he was the proprietor of a real estate, insurance, and investment business at 801 Brown Building.
- 1941 A. Howard and Augusta Osburn, owners
Real estate, Insurance, and Investments, 725 Brown Building
- 1937 Schorr and Lila Apperson, renters
Sales manager, Texas Public Service Company
NOTE: In 1937, the Osburns are listed as living at the Country Club.
- 1935 A. Howard and Augusta Osburn, owners
Real Estate Department, Millican and Hamby, general insurance and loans, 205-7 W. 7th Street.
NOTE: The house is listed as 10 Palma Plaza
- 1932-33 A. Howard and Augusta Osburn, owners
Solicitor, Millican and Hamby, general insurance and loans, 205-07 W. 7th Street.
Augusta is listed as the manager of the Austin Club
- 1930-31 A. Howard and Augusta Osburn, owners
Proprietor with Murray Graham and Niles Graham of the Enfield Insurance Agency, 205 W. 7th Street
- 1929 A. Howard and Augusta Osburn, owners
Proprietor with Murray Graham and Niles Graham of the Enfield Insurance Agency, 205 W. 7th Street
- 1927 A. Howard and Augusta Osburn, owners
Proprietor with Murray Graham and Niles Graham of the Enfield Insurance Agency, 205 W. 7th Street
- 1924 A. Howard and Augusta Osburn, owners
Proprietor with Murray Graham and Niles Graham of the Enfield Insurance Agency, 205 W. 7th Street
- 1922 Palma Plaza is not listed in the city directory. Abner H. and Augusta Osburn are listed as living on the west side of Murray Lane, one house north of Enfield Road. Osburn lists his occupation as an employee of the Kuntz-Sternenberg Lumber Company.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES:

A. Howard and Augusta Osburn (ca. 1923 – ca. 1943)

His 1918 World War I draft registration card shows Abner Howard Osburn living at 510 Walsh Street in Austin. He was born in 1884 and was the city salesman for W.T. Caswell at 5th and Chicon Streets. His wife was Augusta Osburn. He was tall with a medium build and had brown hair and gray eyes.

In 1920, according to the census report of that year, A. Howard and Augusta R. Osburn were renting the house at 1205 W. 6th Street in Austin. A. Howard Osburn was 34, had been born in Virginia and was a salesman for a lumber company. Augusta R. Osburn was 25, had been born in Texas, and had no occupation listed. They had no children listed with them.

The 1930 U.S. Census shows R. [sic] Howard and Augusta R. Osborn [sic] as the owners of this house, addressed as 10 Palma Plaza; the house was worth \$7,000. A. Howard Osburn was 45, is listed as being born in Virginia to a North Carolina-born father and a Virginia-born mother, and was a real estate salesman. Augusta R. Osburn was 35, had been born in Texas to a Texas-born father and a Virginia-born mother, and had no occupation listed. They had no children listed with them.

The 1940 U.S. Census shows Arthur Howard Osburn and his wife Augusta as the owners of this house, which was worth \$5,500. A. Howard Osburn was 50, had been born in West Virginia, and was an insurance and bond man in the real estate business. Augusta Osburn was 41, had been born in Texas, and was the owner of a circulating library. Also in the household was a nephew, Tex Renfro, 12, who had been born in Texas.

Abner Howard Osburn was born October 8, 1884. He was born in West Virginia, and came to Texas around 1900 as a representative of the National Biscuit Company. He came to Austin and became associated with the real estate and insurance firm of Millican and Hamby. Later, he was a proprietor with Niles and Murray Graham, the developers of Enfield, of the Enfield Insurance Company. He was a founder of the Austin Real Estate Board. Osburn died in Austin in July, 1954.

A Howard Osburn's 1954 death certificate shows that he was living at 2003 Hopi Trail in Austin at the time of his death. He was born in 1884 in Jefferson County, Virginia [sic – he was born in West Virginia], and was in the real estate and insurance businesses.

Osburn Heads Insurance Exchange

The resignation of Alfred Bull as president of the Insurance Exchange and the election of Howard Osburn of the Enfield Realty company, as president to succeed him was the chief business of the insurance exchange which held its regular monthly meeting at the Driskill hotel at 12:15 o'clock Wednesday.

"I have withdrawn from the active part of the insurance business

with the firm of Bull & Deviney but I will maintain my interest in the business and on the strength of this I wish to remain a member of the Insurance exchange even though I resign my post as president because of conflicting business," President Bull said in presenting his resignation.

Mr. Bull was recently named vice-president of the Texas Bank & Trust company.

Upon the motion of Richard Corner, who expressed the regrets of the exchange at the loss of the services of Mr. Bull, the resignation was accepted.

The nominating committee consisting of Gillespie Stacy, Brown Robbins and Earl Simms, made its report through Stacy, the chairman, who stated that Howard Osburn had been selected to succeed Bull. The nomination was unanimously accepted.

Portion of the new article on the election of A. Howard Osburn to the chief business executive of the Insurance Exchange of Austin
Austin Statesman, January 27, 1926

Mrs. Osburn. Manager of Country Club

A new regime has begun at the Austin Country club with the installation as resident manager of Mrs. Howard Osburn, until recently manager of the Austin club in the Norwood building.

Under her predecessor, Mrs. James W. Bass, the club weathered many vicissitudes and came back strong, even after the loss of its buildings by fire.

But increasing demands for the sort of service peculiar to a country club made it mandatory that a manager be within call at all times, and Mrs. Bass, feeling she could not afford to give more time to the club, resigned and the board of directors acceded to her wishes.

The dissolution of the Austin club just at this time made available the services of Mrs. A. Howard Osburn, who as manager of the Austin club made it one of the most popular and delightful places of entertainment in Austin.

Mr. and Mrs. Osburn have taken up residence in the attractive quarters just completed for the manager, and Mrs. Osburn assumed her new duties on Jan. 15.

The club has been very successful in its endeavor to absorb as largely as possible the membership of the Austin club and plans are under way to give the same service as was provided by the recently disbanded club.

A daily luncheon will be served during the hours convenient for business men who will enjoy the relaxation of a drive to the club and a brief sojourn in its restful quiet.

Dinner will be served each night and a special Sunday night supper will be served from 7 to 9 p. m. A special Sunday luncheon served from 12 to 2 p. m. will be another new feature.

Wednesday will henceforth be observed as Ladies' Day at the club.

With increased space and improved facilities provided by recent improvements at the Country club, a return to traditional affairs which have lapsed and been missed during a few years is being arranged. Among these are the Easter Monday bridge tea, formerly an outstanding event on the social calendar in the early spring, the children's Easter party and egg hunt, and the annual barbecue for club members only.

A club dance is being planned, according to the new manager, within the next two weeks.

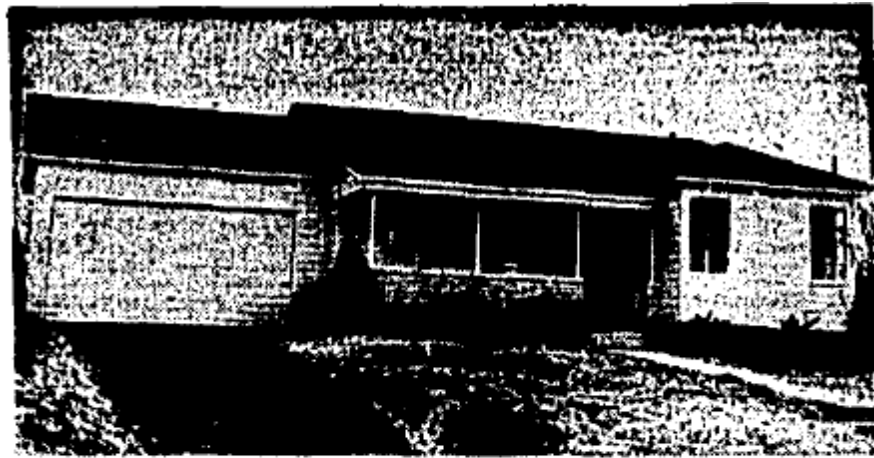
News story on the installation of Augusta Osburn as manager of the Austin Country Club
Austin American-Statesman, January 19, 1936

**JUST A FEW SAMPLES OF THE MANY
POPULAR NEW BOOKS ON OUR SHELVES**

RENFRO DRUG CO. NO. 5 CIRCULATING LIBRARY
914 West 12th St. Augusta Osburn

Disputed Passage	Lloyd C. Douglas
The Sword of Islam	Rafael Sabitini
Dr. Norton's Wife	Mildred Walker
Song of Years	Bess Streeter Aldrich
Danger Signal	Phyllis Bottome
NON-FICTION	
Alone	Richard Byrd
Best Poems of 1938	Thomas Moul
The Windsor Tapestry	Compton MacKenzie
Style Your Personality	Renee Long
Unforgotten Years	Logan P. Smith

Notice in the newspaper of new titles in the Renfro Drug Company Circulating Library, managed by Augusta Osburn
Austin American-Statesman, January 15, 1939



—Photo by Neal Douglas.

OPEN FOR INSPECTION is this five-room frame home with stone trim in Upland addition at 1404 Concordia. This home has textone walls, select oak floors, steel casement windows and tile bath. The two-car garage is attached.

Upland Addition Gaining Popularity, Osburn Reports

**Seven New Homes Already Built in Section,
And More To Be Begun Within Week**

Upland addition, a breezy rolling area studded with native trees, is gaining popularity, A. Howard Osburn, developer, reported Saturday.

The winding paved streets of the addition will stay that way, Mr. Osburn noted, since all utility lines have been laid and con-

connections run to each lot. Thus, future connections will not break the pavement.

"Upland addition invites you to visit its cool, rolling hills and inspect the attractive new homes that are now available," Mr. Osburn declared.

These homes are built under FHA specifications and under FHA inspection. Two are now available, and many home sites are still open.

Upland addition is 10 minutes' drive from the heart of the city and six minutes from the university. It is located just eight blocks from the new Robert E. Lee school.

Seven new homes have been built, five of them having been sold already. Among those who have purchased homes in Upland are Mr. and Mrs. John D. Reed, Mr. and Mrs. Jim Slavin, Mr. and Mrs. Martin Moses, Mr. and Mrs. F. W. Bradshaw and Mr. and Mrs. Carlyle W. Urban. Several other new homes have been planned and construction on them will start within the next week.

"The two unsold houses," Mr. Osburn pointed out, "are unusually attractive and are to be sold below present construction costs. Be sure to see them."

Mr. Osburn, a realtor, has offices in the Brown building and a field office at Concordia and Lafayette streets.

News story on the Upland Addition developed by A. Howard Osburn
Austin American-Statesman, January 18, 1942

AFTER ILLNESS

Death Takes A. H. Osburn In Hospital

A. Howard Osburn, 69, longtime resident of Austin and prominent in real estate and insurance circles, died Friday at 11 a.m. in Seton Hospital following an illness of four days.

Osburn suffered a stroke at noon Monday in his office at his home, 2003 Hopi Trail and was rushed to the hospital immediately. He had returned only a short time from attending a church service and a trip downtown to the Post Office.

Osburn suffered a heart attack in his downtown office 10 years ago but recovered and resumed his business and church activities.

Funeral services will be held Saturday at 5 p.m. at the Church of the Good Shepherd with the Rev. R. Scott Copeland, minister in charge of Calvary Episcopal Church in Bastrop, officiating.

Pallbearers will be nephews — Edward Henley, James Henley, David Henley and Fred Carpen-

(See OSBURN, Page 5)

OSBURN

(Continued from Page 1)

ter, all of Brownwood, and Joe Renfro of Austin; and North Millican and Pierce Lowrey both of Austin.

Osburn is survived by his widow, Mrs. Augusta Renfro Osburn; one brother, Dr. John Neale Osburn, physician of Corona Del Mar, Calif. and a cousin, Mrs. Scott Copeland of Austin.

Mrs. Osburn has asked that flowers be omitted for the funeral and that instead gifts be made in her husband's memory in the Book of Remembrance of the Episcopal Diocese of Texas.

Christened Abner Howard Os-

burn, he was born Oct. 8, 1884, at Ripon, Jefferson County, West Virginia, the son of Dr. and Mrs. Howard Osburn. His father was a practicing physician of that county.

Osburn was a graduate of Virginia Polytechnic Institute at Blacksburg, Va.

He came to Texas at the turn of the century from Virginia as a sales representative of the National Biscuit Company with headquarters in Waco. After leaving the employe of that company, he moved to Austin where he became associated with the real estate and insurance firm of Millican and Hamby.

Later he was employed by the old Sternenberg Lumber Company and afterward the Enfield Realty Company. He later opened his own real estate and insurance office.

He was one of the founders of

the Austin Real Estate Board and was a past president. He also was a member of the Austin Insurance Exchange.

Osburn was a lifelong communicant of the Episcopal Church. For a number of years he was a vestryman and junior warden of St. David's Episcopal Church, and was one of the early communicants of the Church of the Good Shepherd where he also served as a vestryman and junior warden. He was a member of the Brotherhood of St. Andrew, Episcopal Church organization.

Osburn and Augusta Renfro were married 41 years ago in Brownwood. Mrs. Osburn is a native of Marlin.

The body will be at the Cook

**Funeral Home until time for the
funeral service.**

Front page news story on the life, career, and death of A. Howard Osburn
Austin Statesman, July 16, 1954

MRS. AUGUSTA OSBURN

Mrs. Augusta Osburn, 68, of 2003 Hopi Trail, died Tuesday in Austin. She was a member of Good Shepherd Episcopal Church.

She is survived by her nephew, Joseph Renfro of Austin.

Funeral is pending at Cook-Walden Funeral Home.

Obituary of Augusta Osburn
Austin Statesman, October 17, 1972

MRS. A. HOWARD OSBURN

Funeral for Mrs. A. Howard (Augusta) Osburn, 2003 Hopi Trail, was Wednesday at Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd. Rev. Samuel Baxler officiated and burial was in Austin Memorial Park under direction of Cook-Walden Funeral Home.

Pallbearers were Arthur P. Renfro, David H. Henley, Edward Henley, Joseph F. Renfro III, David Renfro and Fred Carpenter.

Mrs. Osburn died Tuesday.

Story on the funeral of Augusta Osburn
Austin Statesman, October 18, 1972

Howard Osburn

1510 Palma Plaza

~~90b~~

52

141

Enfield B

General rep. to interior and close in
rear porch

124r - 5/18/38

Building permit to Howard Osburn to enclose the rear porch (1938)

Howard Osburn

1510 Palma Plaza

~~90b~~

-

-

52

-

Enfield B

repair fire damage

20005 - 7-15-40

3

Building permit to Howard Osburn to repair fire damage (1940)

Dr. Albert Kleiman

1510 Palma Plaza

141

52

-

Enfield "B"

Remodel Residence to Create Duplex

83888

5-11-62

1400.00

Owner

5

DUPLEX

Change partitions; install kitchen; general re-modeling.

Building permit to create a duplex (1962)

OWNER Dr. Albert Kleiman ADDRESS 1510 Palma Plaza
PLAT 141 LOT 52 BLK. - DIV
SUBDIVISION Enfield B
OCCUPANCY Remodel interior of Duplex to create Triplex
BLD PERMIT # 87010 DATE 3-1-63 OWNERS ESTIMATE 2,000.00
CONTRACTOR Thomas Brothers NO. OF FIXTURES 5
WATER TAP REC # SEWER TAP REC #
TRIPLEX
Paved off-street parking to be provided for 3 Cars
Apt. # 3

Building permit to create a triplex (1963)