

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION
DEMOLITION AND RELOCATION PERMITS
AUGUST 23, 2021
PR-21-098969
3400 HILLVIEW ROAD

PROPOSAL

Demolish a ca. 1940 house.

ARCHITECTURE

Two-story, rectangular-plan, side-gabled brick veneered house with elements of Monterrey Revival style with its second-story, partial width screened porch across the front, and segmental-arched sunporch opening on the ground floor; single and paired 6:6 fenestration; single-leaf entry door with sidelights. The house features textured brick in subtle patterns.

RESEARCH

The house was built in 1940 by Whalen (or Wayland) C. Rivers and his wife, LaRuth, who lived here until around 1946. Wayland Rivers was an officer in the Elgin Standard Brick Company, manufacturers of high quality brick for residential and commercial construction in central Texas. Rivers was also in the grocery business before building this house in West Austin.

The next owners and occupants were John W. and Dorothy Shivers, who lived here from around 1946 until around 1950. John W. Shivers was a timelock inspector for the Yale Lock Company for many years.

Around 1953, the house was rented by W.J. Murray, Jr. and his wife, Josephine; they lived here until around 1958. Murray was a long-time employee of the Texas Railroad Commission, and had been in the oil business in Houston. He was serving as chair of the commission at the time that he and Jo rented this house. He came under scrutiny for the money he made while serving on the Commission, but was exonerated in 1963 of any wrongdoing. He was the first petroleum engineer to serve on the Commission, which oversees oil and gas regulations in Texas.

PROPERTY EVALUATION

The property is beyond the bounds of any City survey to date.

Designation Criteria—Historic Landmark

- 1) The building is more than 50 years old.
- 2) The building appears to retain high integrity.
- 3) Properties must meet two criteria for landmark designation (LDC §25-2-352). Staff has evaluated the property and determined that it may meet two criteria:
 - a. Architecture. The building is a good example of its architectural type, and is constructed in brick, which make it unusual – most houses of this type are frame. The house conveys architectural significance as a rare example of Monterrey style in Austin, and also, having been built by a principal in the Elgin Brick Company, contains some textured brick which adds to its possible architectural significance.
 - b. Historical association. The house is associated with at least two prominent people in Austin’s history: Wayland C. Rivers, who was a principal in the Elgin Standard Brick and Tile Manufacturing Company at the time that he and his wife built this house and lived here in the early 1940s; Rivers also had several other prominent businesses in Austin the mid-20th century. W.J. Murray, Jr. the first petroleum engineer to serve on the Texas Railroad Commission, rented this house during the time he chaired the Commission in the mid-1950s.
 - c. Archaeology. The property was not evaluated for its potential to yield significant data concerning the human history or prehistory of the region.
 - d. Community value. The property 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

Consider the applicant's structural reports in light of whether the house meets the criteria for designation as a historic landmark. Staff believes that the house has architectural merit, and believes there is a case for historical significance as well, even though the prominent owners/occupants of this house only lived here for a relatively short period of time. If, however, the Commission votes to release the permit, then staff encourages rehabilitation and adaptive reuse, then relocation over demolition, but release of the permit upon completion of a City of Austin Documentation Package, consisting of 8 x 10 photographs of all elevations, printed on photographic paper, a dimensioned sketch plan, and a narrative history for archiving at the Austin History Center.

LOCATION MAP



1" = 292'



SUBJECT TRACT



PENDING CASE



ZONING BOUNDARY

NOTIFICATIONS

CASE#: GF 21-103606

LOCATION: 3400 HILLVIEW ROAD

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.



PROPERTY INFORMATION

3400 Hillview Road
ca. 1940



OCCUPANCY HISTORY 3400 Hillview Road

City Directory Research, Austin History Center
By City Historic Preservation Office
June 2021

1959	Vacant
1957	William J., Jr. and Josephine E. Murray, renters Chairman, State Railroad Commission
1955	William J., Jr. and Josephine Murray, renters Chairman, State Railroad Commission
1952	Gray Thoran, owner NOTE: Neither Gray Thoran nor Thoran Gray is listed in the directory. NOTE: William J., Jr. and Jo N. Murray are listed at 3300 Windsor Road; he was a commissioner on the State Railroad Commission. NOTE: J.W. and Dorothy Shriver are listed at 3302 Jamesborough Drive; he was a time lock inspector.
1949	John W. and Dorothy L. Shriver, owners Timelock inspector Also listed are Ann Shriver and John W. Shriver, Jr., both students.
1947	John W. and Dorothy L. Shriver, owners Salesman, Yale & Towne (not listed in the directory)

NOTE: Whalen C. and Luruth Rivers are listed at 3500 Enfield Road; neither had an occupation shown.

- 1944-45 Whalen C. and La Ruth Rivers, owners
No occupation listed
- 1941 Whalen and LaRuth Rivers, owners
Vice-president, Elgin Standard Brick & Tile Manufacturing Company, sales office 614 Lavaca Street.
- 1940 Whalen C. and LaRuth Rivers, owners
Vice-president, Elgin Standard Brick and Tile Manufacturing Company, 614 Lavaca Street.
NOTE: The house is listed as being on the north side of the street, 1 house north of Warren.
- 1939 The address is not listed in the directory.
NOTE: Whalen C. and La Ruth Rivers are listed at 1414 Newfield Lane; he was the vice-president of Elgin Standard Brick and Tile Manufacturing Company, Elgin, Texas.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES:

Whalen C. and La Ruth Rivers (ca. 1940 – ca. 1946)

The 1940 U.S. Census shows Wayland and Luruth Rivers as the owners of this house, which shows an address of 3408 Hillview Road, and which was worth \$14,000. Wayland C. Rivers was 52, had been born in Texas, and was the owner and manager of a farm and ranch. Luruth Rivers was 43, had been born in Texas, and had no occupation listed. They had a son, Wayland, Jr., 12, who had been born in Texas.

Wayland Coates Rivers was born in Elgin Texas in 1888 and died in Austin in 1959. He was living at 3506 Enfield Road at the time of his death and was the chairman of the board and director of a brick manufacturing company and a bank.

Luruth Smith Rivers was born in Elgin, Texas in 1896 and died in Austin in 1978. She was a widowed homemaker, living at 1801 Lavaca Street in Austin.

John W. and Dorothy L. Shriver (ca. 1946 – ca. 1950)

The 1940 U.S. Census shows John W. and Dorothy Shriver as the owners of a house worth \$10,000 at 1414 Newfield Lane in Austin. John W. Shriver was 43 had been born in Tennessee, and was a time lock inspector for the Yale Lock Company. Dorothy Shriver was 30, had been born in Texas, and had no occupation listed. They had three children: Marie, 10, son Jonnie, 7, and Jack E., 5, all of whom had been born in Texas. Also within the household were Dorothy Shriver's family, mother Annie Edgar, a 55-year old Texas-born widow who was the supervisor of sewing in a WPA Sewing Room, sister-in-law Mattalie Edgar, 20, a Texas-born stenographer for the State Planning Board; and brother-in-law Wiley Edgar, 18, a Teas-born kitchen helper at the Milam Cafeteria. All the member of the Shriver family had lived in Eustace, Texas in 1935. The Shrivens also had a lodger, James Frazier, 37, who had been born in Texas and was a social worker on the WPA Administration staff. He lived in Dallas in 1935.

John Wesley Shriver was born in 1898 in Wartrace, Tennessee and died in Austin September 21, 1954.

Dorothy Lee Shriver married Robert Elliot Bradley in Travis County in March, 1956.

Dorothy Lee Shriver Wharton was born in 1909 in Eustace, Texas and died March 17, 1985 in Austin.

JOHN W. SHRIVER

John W. Shriver of 2110 Glendale Street died in a local hospital Tuesday.

He is survived by his widow, Mrs. Dorothy Lee Shriver of Austin; a daughter, Ann Shriver of Houston; two sons, Jack Shriver of Austin and Johnny Shriver of Houston; his mother, Mrs. Mary Adkins of Quitman, Miss; a sister, Mrs. Julia Patton, also of Quitman; a brother, Carroll Shriver of Seattle, Wash; two half-sisters, Mrs. Ruth Pickering of Nashville, Tenn. and Mrs. Helen Patton of New Orleans, La., and two half-brothers, Homer Adkins of St. Louis, Mo., and Manston Adkins of Nashville, Tenn.

He had been associated with the Yale Lock Company as a time lock inspector for thirty-four years.

Funeral services will be held Thursday at 2 p.m. at the Cook Funeral Home with Dr. Marvin Vance officiating.

Pallbearers will be Franklin D. McMullin, Clarence Wurtzlow, C. M. Rogers, Russell Richey, Gilbert Bradley, and Henry Gates Steen. Burial will be in Austin Memorial Park.

Obituary of John W. Shriver
Austin Statesman, September 22, 1954

William J., Jr. and Josephine Murray (ca. 1954 – ca. 1958)

Houston Oil Man Reported Picked For Rail Board

**W. J. Murray Jr.,
Ex-Chief Enforcement
Officer, Said Named**

HOUSTON, Nov. 16.—(AP)—William J. Murray Jr., 32, Houston oil man and former chief enforcement officer for the Texas Railroad Commission, was said by the Houston Chronicle Saturday to be the "likely choice" of Governor-elect Beauford Jester for appointment as railroad commissioner.

The newspaper said it learned on good but unquotable authority that Murray would receive the appointment, generally considered the most important one Jester will make. The appointment will be made in January, the Chronicle added.

The governor-elect, reached at Galveston Saturday, made only this comment:

"He (Murray) certainly is under consideration, but no decision has been reached."

Murray graduated from the University of Texas in 1936 and later taught at the school.

In 1939 Murray went to work for the Railroad Commission in charge of an engineer crew, and rose to chief law enforcement officer through the East Texas district offices of the commission. Later he was examiner for the commission in Austin.

In 1941 Murray left the commission to become conservation engineer for the petroleum administration for war and in 1944 took a job as petroleum engineer for Wheelock and Collins of Corsicana.

Early this year he entered the oil business here.

William J. Murray, Jr. considered for Texas Railroad Commission
Austin American-Statesman, November 17, 1946

Official Tells Surprise At Critical Report

Associated Press

The Travis County grand jury, in a report critical of publicity of its investigation of W. J. Murray Jr. has cleared Murray of any criminal violations while a railroad commissioner.

Attorney General Waggoner Carr, apparently the target of the publicity criticism, said he is "greatly surprised that the grand jurors criticized the right of the public to know."

Carr reported to Governor John Connally last week that Murray had a \$1.7 million income from oil and gas ventures during Murray's 16 years on the commission. The report was released to newsmen by Connally's office shortly before Carr appeared before the grand jury.

"We abhor the publicity and news releases in regards to the William J. Murray matter," the grand jury report said.

"It is our opinion the publicity and news releases have been inconsiderate of the traditional prestige and historic secrecy of the grand jury proceedings," the report said.

"After reviewing all testimony and material given to the Travis County grand jury by the attorney general's office, state investigating agencies, and the Travis County district attorney's office, we find that William J. Murray Jr. has not committed any criminal act in the conduct of his duties as a railroad commissioner."

"I have always been confident that any review of the evidence would result in my complete exoneration, although I have never been charged with anything," Murray said after the grand jury reported.

"I do appreciate the exoneration by the grand jury and feel that it will help reaffirm the confidence that I have felt the public had in me all along," he said. He said he had no plans for the future to announce.

Murray resigned April 10, two days after publicity began on his oil holdings while a commissioner.

He said the publicity would lessen his effectiveness as a commissioner, but contended he did nothing illegal and said he welcomed a grand jury investigation.

Carr's report said his investigation raised "a serious question of a conflict of interest between the official duties of Mr. Murray and his private interests."

Carr also urged a thorough study toward an improved and stronger code of ethics governing state officials and employees.

Murray, 48, was the first petroleum engineer to serve on the powerful oil and gas regulatory board.

Portions of the news story on the exoneration of W.J. Murray Jr. of wrongdoing while serving on the Texas Railroad Commission
Austin Statesman, June 19, 1963

The Murrys later built a home on Lake Austin that was written up in a society page in the Austin newspapers as a home for parties in 1960.