

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION
APPLICATION FOR A DEMOLITION PERMIT IN A NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT
OCTOBER 25, 2021
PR-21-113815
WILLOW-SPENCE NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT
80 AND 82 SAN MARCOS STREET

PROPOSAL

Demolish two ca. 1941 houses.

ARCHITECTURE

Two one-story, rectangular-plan, side-gabled, frame cottages on the same lot. The houses have a central entry topped with a front-gabled entry hood; paired 1:1 fenestration, some with decorative 3:1 wood screens.

RESEARCH

There is a building permit in city records evidencing construction of these houses in 1941; the Sanborn map of 1935 shows different houses on this site, and the 1962 Sanborn map shows the current houses. The 1941 building permits reflect construction by Louis Bonugli, who operated a neighborhood grocery store just a block from this site, and who invested in neighborhood real estate. Bonugli and his family lived at 80 San Marcos intermittently in the late 1940s and early 1950s, but in other years, the family is listed at their grocery store 78 San Marcos, likely to earn additional income from renting the house at 80 San Marcos.

The house at 82 San Marcos was built as a rental unit. The house at 82 San Marcos was home to only two families during much of the historic period, one of whom lived in an earlier house on this site. The first residents of the house were Willie L. and Allie Smith, who lived here until around 1943, and had lived in the earlier house on this site since the early 1930s. Willie Smith was an auto mechanic. Raymond and Angie Miller moved into the house around 1943 and rented the house until around 1950. Raymond Miller was taxi driver who later opened his own filling station while living in this house. Angie Miller worked at Woolworth's a downtown discount department store.

PROPERTY EVALUATION

The houses are listed as non-contributing to the Willow Spence National Register Historic District, but staff questions that determination, as they are intact examples of vernacular residential design that would be contributing to the historic district if evaluated today. The Willow-Spence National Register Historic District was nominated in 1985, when the houses would not have qualified under the 50-year threshold; the district nomination does not shed any light on the justification for the determination. The East Austin Historic Resources Survey (2016) does not identify the house at 80 San Marcos, but does recommend that the house at 82 San Marcos is eligible as a local landmark or contributing to a potential local or National Register Historic District. Staff does not agree with the assessment of qualification for local landmark designation for either of the houses..

Designation Criteria—Historic Landmark

- 1) The buildings are more than 50 years old.
- 2) The buildings appear 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 while the houses would meet the criterion for architectural significance, there does not appear to be justification for determining that they reflect historical significance.
 - a. Architecture. The buildings are good examples of wood-frame vernacular residential construction and retain a very high degree of integrity. Staff has not been able to determine whether these houses were “kit” houses, but they re definitely builder grade and designed with identical features.
 - b. Historical association. The properties were associated with Louis Bonugli, who built them as rental properties for the working class, and who operated a neighborhood grocery store just a block from this site. Bonugli lived in the house at 80 San Marcos only intermittently, and rented out the house at 82 San Marcos to blue collar families. There do not appear to be significant historical associations.
 - 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

Encourage rehabilitation and adaptive reuse, then relocation over demolition, but release the permit upon review of the plans for new construction by the applicant and 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. While these houses were initially determined non-contributing to the Willow-Spence Historic District, that was likely due to their age at the time of the nomination in 1985, and therefore disqualified because they were not yet 50 years old; staff believes they would be contributing to the National Register district now, and probably to a potential local historic district, but do not rise to the level of historic landmarks.

LOCATION MAP



-  N
-  SUBJECT TRACT
-  PENDING CASE
-  ZONING BOUNDARY

NOTIFICATIONS
CASE#: PR 21-113815
LOCATION: 82 SAN MARCOS STREET



1" = 292'

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.

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PROPERTY INFORMATION

Photos



80 and 82 San Marcos, photo from applicant, 2021



80 San Marcos, photo from applicant, 2021



82 San Marcos, photo from applicant, 2021

Occupancy History

City Historic Preservation Office
City Directory Research, July 2021

82 San Marcos:

- | | |
|------|---|
| 1959 | Gaither B. Yarbrough, renter
Carpenter, Jackson Cullen |
| 1957 | Gaither B. and Myrtle Yarbrough, renters
Carpenter, Calcasieu Lumber Company |
| 1955 | Twain R. and Letrelle Schieffer, renters
Director, State Railroad Commission |
| 1952 | Victor and Doris Hidalgo, renters
Victor – Mill worker
Doris – Employee, Buttrey’s, women’s and children’s ready to wear clothing, 107 W. 6 th Street. |
| 1949 | Raymond A. and Angie Miller, renters
Raymond – Clerk, Moore Automotive Supply. 301-03 E. 5 th Street
Angie – Desk clerk, Woolworths, department store, 600 Congress Avenue |
| 1947 | Raymond A. and Angie Miller, renters
Filling station |

- 1944-45 Raymond Alex and Angie Miller, renters
No occupation listed
- 1941 William L. and Allie Smith, renters
Auto repair
- 1940 William L. and Allie Smith, renters
Auto repair

NOTE: William L. and Allie Smith appear to have lived in an earlier house on this site with the same address. He was engaged in auto repair.

80 San Marcos:

- 1959 W. E. Boone, renter
- 1953 Louis M. and Johanna Bonugli
Bonugli's Red and White Grocery, 78 San Marcos
- 1952 Louis M. and Johanna Bonugli
Bonugli's Red and White Grocery, 78 San Marcos
- 1949 Louis Jr. and Jewell Bonugli
Clerk, Bonugli Grocery
- 1947 Ned and Viola Lee, renters
Employed by Brown & Root
- 1941 Laverne and Bessie M. Van, renters
Carpenter
- John S. Jr., and Ola Edwards, renters
Carpenter

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES:

William L. and Allie Smith (ca. 1941 – ca. 1943)

The 1940 U.S. Census shows Willie L. and Allie Smith as the renters of this house. Willie L. Smith was 43, had been born in Texas, and was an automobile mechanic. Allie Smith was 40, had been born in Tennessee, and had no occupation listed. They had four children: Margaret, 18; son Willie, 15; Wanda, 11; and Otis, 23, along with Otis' wife, Gladys, 23, and their daughter, Noritta 2. Otis Smith was a truck driver for Armour & Company, a meat packing plant. All the family members had been born in Texas.

The 1930 U.S. Census shows W.L. and Allie Smith renting a house in Lockhart, Texas, where W.L. Smith was a mechanic in a garage. Allie Smith had no occupation listed, but is listed as having been born in Oklahoma. The couple had five children: Odis, 13; James R., 11; Margaret, 8; Billie, Jr., 5; and Wanda, 1. All the children had been born in Texas.

Willie L. Smith was born in 1896 and died in 1981. Allie Mae Smith was born in 1899 and died in Austin in 1983.

Raymond A. and Angie Miller (ca. 1943 – ca. 1950)

Alex R. and Angie Miller appear in the 1930 U.S. Census as the renters of the house at 4404 Avenue C in Austin. Alex R. Miller was 29, had been born in Texas, and was a solicitor for a correspondence school. Angie Miller was 24, had been born in Texas, and had no occupation listed. They had a 5-year-old daughter, Louise, who had been born in Texas.

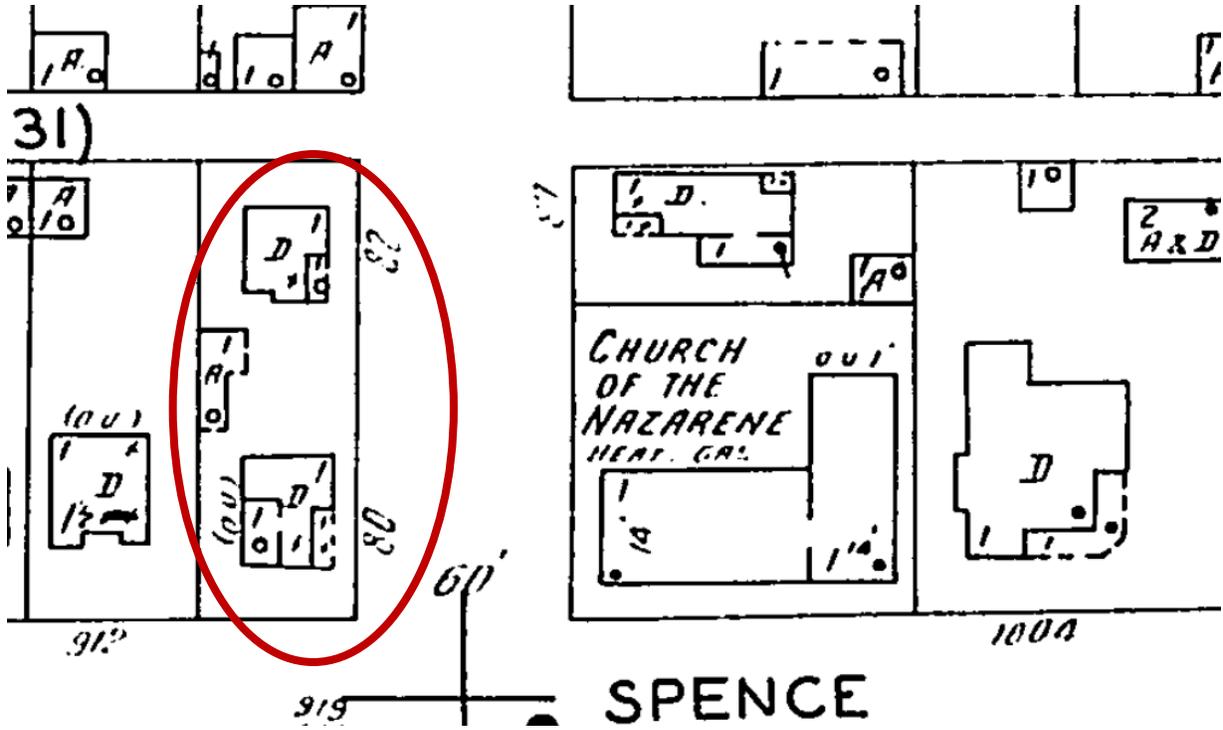
The 1940 U.S. Census shows Raymond A. and Angie Miller as the renters of the house at 79 San Marcos Street in Austin.

Raymond A. Miller was 39, had been born in Texas, and was a taxi driver Angie Miller was 34, had been born in Texas, and was a saleslady at Woolworth's, a downtown department store chain. They had a daughter, Louise, 15, who had been born in Texas and had no occupation listed.

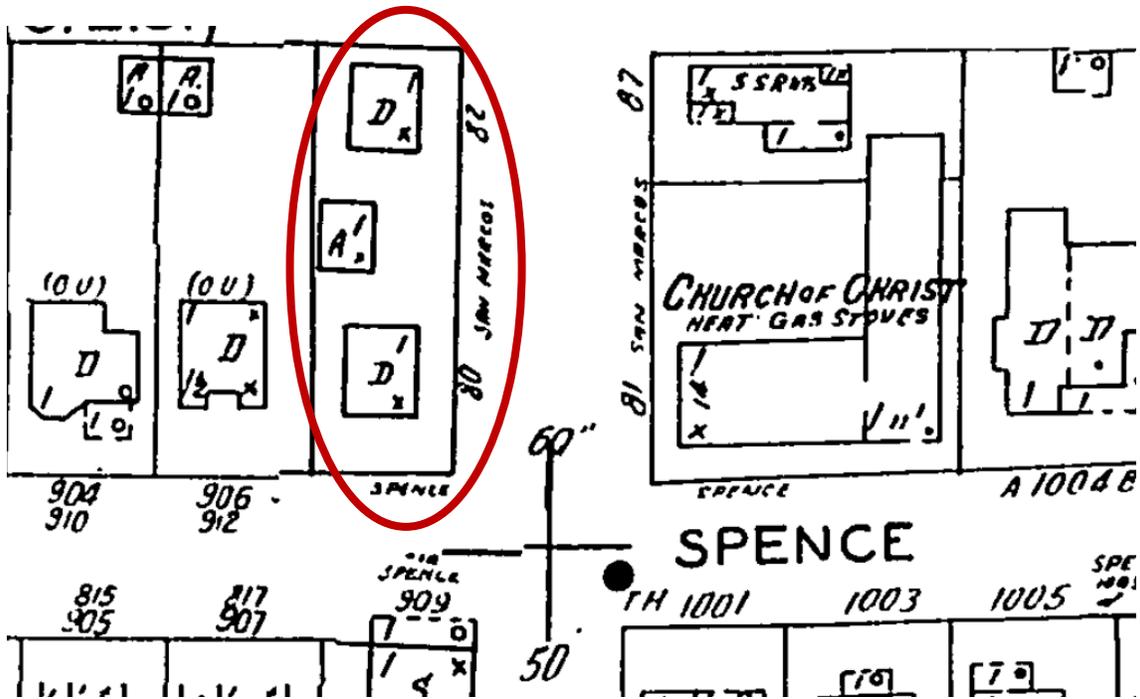
His 1942 World War II draft registration card shows that Raymond Alexander Miller was living at this address. He was born in Moody, Texas in 1900 and was working in Houston for shipbuilder at the time of his registration. His mother, Mrs. L.A. Miller, of Moody, Texas, was his listed next of kin. He was 5'-6" tall, weighed 130 pounds, and had a light complexion with black hair and brown eyes. He had a mustache.

Raymond Alex Miller was living at 1415 Alamo in Austin at the time of his death in 1978. He was born in Texas in 1900 and was the owner and operator of a service station. He was married. Angie Miller died in Austin in December 1989.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps



The 1935 Sanborn map shows different houses on this site.



The 1962 Sanborn map shows the current houses.