

ZONING CHANGE REVIEW SHEET

CASE NUMBER: PR-21-139164

HLC DATE:

October 25, 2021

November 15, 2021

PC DATE:

COUNCIL DISTRICT: 1

APPLICANT: Historic Landmark Commission

HISTORIC NAME: Mack and Gertrude Blocker House

WATERSHED: Boggy Creek

ADDRESS OF PROPOSED ZONING CHANGE: 1601 Cedar Avenue

ZONING FROM: SF-3-NP to SF-3-H-NP

SUMMARY STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends the proposed zoning change from single family residence – Neighborhood Plan (SF-3-NP) combining district to single family residence – Historic Landmark – Neighborhood Plan (SF-3-H-NP) combining district zoning.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR LANDMARK DESIGNATION:

Architecture and historical associations.

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION ACTION: October 25, 2021: Initiated historic zoning.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The East Austin Historic Resources Survey (2016) recommends this house as contributing to a potential local or National Register Historic District.

CITY COUNCIL DATE:

ACTION:

ORDINANCE READINGS: 1ST 2ND 3RD

ORDINANCE NUMBER:

CASE MANAGER: Steve Sadowsky

PHONE: 974-6454

NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION:

Austin Independent School District, Austin Lost and Found Pets, Austin Neighborhoods Council, Chestnut Addition Neighborhood Assn. (C.A.N.A.), Chestnut Neighborhood Plan Contact Team, Chestnut Neighborhood Revitalization Corporation (CNRC), Del Valle Community Coalition, East Austin Conservancy, Friends of Austin Neighborhoods, Homeless Neighborhood Association, Neighborhood Empowerment Foundation, Neighbors United for Progress, Preservation Austin, SELTexas, Sierra Club, Austin Regional Group

BASIS FOR RECOMMENDATION:

Architecture:

One-story, rectangular-plan, hipped roof, frame transitional-style house with a partial-width inset porch with a segmental-arched bargeboard, raised rail, paired battered timber posts,

and boxed panel spandrels; replacement single 6:6 fenestration; central, hipped roof frame attic vent dormer.

The building is a good example of a transitional house, a period representing a bridge between the Victorian styles known for their architectural ornamentation and the more reserved and smaller-scale bungalow styles of the 1920s. Transitional houses were generally taller than the later bungalows, but began to exhibit a lower form than the Victorians of the past; a slow move from verticality to horizontality. Although the windows have been replaced, the house reflects a high degree of integrity for its age, and is also unusual for its continuous ownership by a Black family in an era where a house like this would have likely started off with white owners. The house appears to have architectural significance.

Historical Associations:

According to Travis County real estate records, Mack Blocker purchased this property in the fall of 1914. The lot was across the street from his wife's father's property. He and his wife, the former Gertrude Parker, lived here until their deaths. Mack Blocker worked a variety of jobs, typical of African-American men in the first part of the 20th century: laborer, porter, truck driver, and janitor. He died in 1927, and his widow, Gertrude, continued to live in this house for decades to come. Gertrude Blocker apparently never remarried, and supported herself with work as a maid and cook for a private family.

The property was owned and occupied by Mack Blocker and his widow, Gertrude Blocker, during the entire historic period. Both Mack and Gertrude Blocker worked in professions typifying Black life in Austin in the early 20th century: janitor, porter, laborer, cook, and maid. After Mack Blocker's early death in the late 1920s, Gertrude Blocker continued to maintain ownership of this house until her own death many decades later.

Like many corner houses in East Austin, the Mack and Gertrude Blocker House occupies a prominent location and is more substantial than the houses on the street between the corner houses; these corner houses almost seem like gateposts for the interior houses, settle the stage for the development of the block.

PARCEL NO.: 0210112001

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: LOT 7 BLK 9 OLT 32&33 DIV B GLENWOOD ADDN

ESTIMATED ANNUAL TAX ABATEMENT: \$6,210 (owner-occupied); \$3,344 (income-producing).

APPRAISED VALUE: \$550,543

PRESENT USE: Single family residential

CONDITION: Good

PRESENT OWNERS:

Ramon and Maria Guerra
1601 Cedar Avenue
Austin,, Texas 78702

DATE BUILT: ca. 1915

ALTERATIONS/ADDITIONS: Windows replaced; some others, but none that compromise the historic integrity of the house.




ORIGINAL OWNER(S):

Mack and Gertrude Blocker (1914)

OTHER HISTORICAL DESIGNATIONS: None.

LOCATION MAP



-  SUBJECT TRACT
-  PENDING CASE
-  ZONING BOUNDARY

NOTIFICATIONS

CASE#: PR 21-139064

LOCATION: 1601 CEDAR AVENUE

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.

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.



Photos*Google Street View, 2020***Occupancy History**

City Directory Research, September 2021

1959	Gertrude Blocker, owner Occupation not listed
1957	Gertrude Blocker, owner (widow of Mack) Occupation not listed
1955	Gertrude Blocker, owner (widow of Mack) Maid
1952	Gertrude Blocker, owner Maid
1949	Gertrude Blocker, owner Dom
1947	Gertrude Blocker, owner (widow of Mack) Cook public school
1944	Gertrude Blocker, owner Maid
1941	Gertrude Blocker, owner Cook
1939	Gertrude Blocker, owner Cook

- 1937 Gertrude Blocker, owner
Cook 2801 Rio Grande
- 1935 Gertrude Blocker, owner
Cook 2801 Rio Grande
- 1932 Gertrude Blocker, owner
Occupation not listed
- 1929 Gertrude Blocker, owner
Not listed
- 1927 Mack and Gertrude Blocker, owners
Janitor University YMCA
- 1924 Mack and Gertrude Blocker, owners
Janitor
- 1920 Mack and Gertrude Blocker, owners
Laborer
- 1916 Mack Blocker
Porter State Comptroller's Department
- Shelly Blocker
Cleaner State Department of Public Buildings and Grounds
- 1914 The address is not listed in the directory.
NOTE: Mack Blocker, a laborer, is listed at 2108 E. 14th Street.
NOTE: Richard Parker, Gertrude Blocker's father, is listed at 1600 Cedar Avenue.

Biographical Information

Mack Blocker married Gertrude Parker in Travis County in 1913. He bought this property in September, 1914.

According to his 1917 World War I draft registration card, Mack Blocker was born in LaGrange, Texas in 1893, and was living at this address at the time of his registration. He was married and worked as a chauffeur for the Driskill Hotel. He was of medium height and build and had black hair and black eyes.

The 1940 U.S. Census shows Gertrude Blocker as the owner of this house, which was worth \$900. Gertrude Blocker was a 43-year old Texas-born widow, and was a maid in a private home. With her lived her nephew, Charles Conley, 30, who had been born in Texas, and was a waiter at the Austin Hotel.

Gertrude Blocker is listed as the owner of this house in the 1930 U.S. Census. The house was worth \$900. She was a 34-year-old Texas-born widow who worked as a cook for a private family. She lived alone.

The 1920 U.S. Census shows Gertrude Blocker as the wife of Mack Blocker; they rented their home in Fort Worth, Texas. Mack Blocker was a 27-year old Texas-born truck driver. Gertrude Blocker was 24, had been born in Texas, and had no occupation listed. They had no children listed with them.

Gertrude Blocker died in Travis County in March, 1990. Mack Blocker died of apoplexy in 1927 on the road about 4 miles from San Antonio.

BLOCKER, Gertrude, 92, of Austin died Monday. Services 1 p.m. Friday, Ebenezer Baptist Church. Burial Evergreen Cemetery.

Death notice for Gertrude Blocker
Austin American-Statesman, March 15, 1990