

3621 Windsor

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However, the structure has been meaningfully expanded and changed over time – and staff's basis for historic association raises equity-related policy questions.



This Tarrytown residence was owned by oilwoman philanthropist Alma Thomas. It was built in the late 1940s for \$52,500 – **roughly 12 times the median home value** at that time.



This is the structure as it existed the year Alma Thomas passed – it included a main house and servants' quarters.



This is the structure as it today –
meaningful work has been done to expand and change it.

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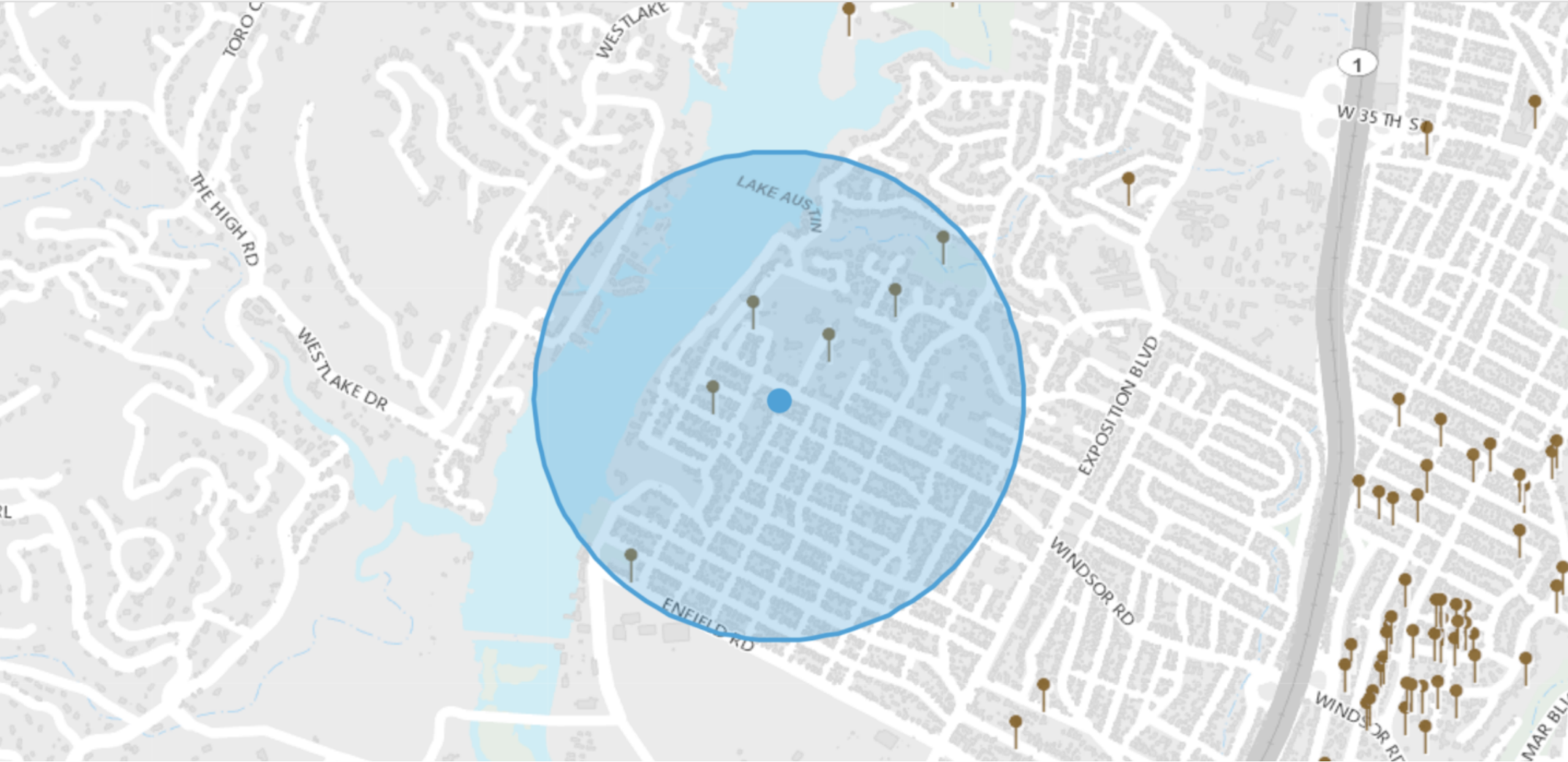
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However, adopting this rationale would disproportionately favor historic designation in affluent West Austin, where residents had a much greater capacity to participate in large-scale philanthropy.

This would also provide these affluent areas with tax exemptions and abatements. In other words, past wealth would be used as a basis for shifting today's tax burden onto less affluent Austinites.



Already, there are six historic landmarks with a half-mile of this property.

Supporting Conditions

Alma Thomas Has Been Appropriately Honored by Southwestern University.

Southwestern University has honored Thomas with the Alma Thomas Fine Arts Center, connecting her to the work she did and the causes she supported.

Alma Thomas' Granddaughter Opposes Historic Designation.

Thomas' granddaughter has written that this case “would connect my grandmother to a house rather than to the world she explored and the trailblazing work that she did” and has asked the Commission “Please do not use my grandmother as a justification for [initiating or approving historic zoning].”

Southwestern Buildings Will Cost \$750,000

GEORGETOWN, Dec. 23—Construction on two new Southwestern University buildings totaling \$750,000 is expected to begin about Jan. 15, President William C. Finch has announced.

Contracts were signed Wednesday for the Alma Thomas Fine Arts Center and the Martin Ruter Boys Dormitory, first unit of a proposed three-unit men's dormitory.

The contract calls for the completion of both in 1955. Contractor for both buildings is Rex D. Kitch-

ens of Austin. Cameron Fairchild of Houston, a Southwestern ex-student, is the architect.

The boys dormitory will be completed by Sept. 15 in time for the fall enrollment, Dr. Finch said. It will be located to the rear and west of the chapel and will house 100 men students. It is to be the first of three men's dormitories of that capacity, forming an open end quadrangle.

The Alma Thomas Fine Arts Center, named in honor of Mrs. Alma Thomas of Austin, is the result of a year of careful study.

The faculty committee, composed of Dean Henry E. Meyer, Professor John D. Richards and Professor Angus Springer, has worked closely with other members of the School of Fine Arts in completing details. The university building committee for the project is composed of Dr. Claude C. Cody Jr. of Houston; Mrs. Alma Thomas of Austin; Dr. I. J. McCook, vice president in charge of finance of the university; and Dr. Finch, president.

Alma Thomas has been appropriately honored by Southwestern University, connecting her to the work that she did and the causes she supported.

Recap

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Additionally, staff's rationale for historic association – if applied consistently – raises a number of policy questions related to equity and preferential treatment for historically affluent communities.

