

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION
PERMITS IN NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICTS
MAY 4, 2022
HR-2022-016431; PR 2022-002618
TRAVIS HEIGHTS-FAIRVIEW PARK
1803 KENWOOD AVE

PROPOSAL

Demolish a circa 1937 single-story residence and replace it with a new construction single-family residence.

PROJECT SPECIFICATIONS

- 1) Total demolition of existing contributing single-family residence built-in 1937.
- 2) Construction of new single-family residence with in-ground pool in rear, garage, and carport.

The proposed primary building is a two-story minimalist style. It features a compound roofline, fixed-pane, and casement full-light fenestration in irregular pattern; dark grey brick on the first story and light-colored exterior stucco cladding on the slightly overhanging second story.

The rear second-story elevation has a small rear balcony with a horizontal metal railing overlooking the pool.

Designs indicate a side entry garage and direct neighboring carport located in front of the residence. A horizontal wood fence is situated directly in front of the carport, which shields the carport and garage from direct view from the street.

The roofline was changed to a front-gabled form after meeting with the Architecture Review Committee on March 18, 2022. The windows were changed to a regular fenestration pattern on the front façade, a small covered front porch and additional brick were also added to the primary facade, and the wood fence and garage were removed. The carport was turned to face the street directly.

ARCHITECTURE

Wood frame, single-story, residential construction on pier and beam foundation. The structure is of the Minimal Traditional style with a side gable with a front-facing cross gable design. It is typical of Minimal Traditional design with horizontal wood siding, two sets of symmetrical multi-pane, 6:6 wood windows flanked by slim, simple shutters. There is a small, round gable vent in the front-facing gable façade. The single door entry has a concrete landing and is covered with a wooden awning supported by decorative wooden brackets. The awning is a continuation of the asphalt roof. There is a thin, slightly turned metal balustrade and railing on the front concrete steps and landing.

RESEARCH

1803 Kenwood Avenue was likely built by the prominent dentist and civic activist Dr. R.L. Struhall in 1937. Dr. Struhall and his wife Lillian Parma had moved to 1805 Kenwood by 1942. According to City Directories, in 1941, 1803, Kenwood was owned by Raymond W., Jr. and his wife, Marjorie M. Ramsey. Raymond was employed at the R & R Service Station, and they lived in the home until at least 1944. According to City Directories records, the house continued to be occupied short-term until it was purchased by Donald B. and Elsie A. Ezell, who lived in the home till Mr. Ezell's death in 1961. The Ezell's owned and operated The Chicken House Café, a restaurant located at 4201 Alice Avenue. Elsie Ezell was also a local high school teacher.

DESIGN STANDARDS

The City of Austin's [Historic Design Standards](#) (March 2021) is based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and are used to evaluate projects in National Register districts. The following standards apply to the proposed project:

Residential new construction

1. Location

The current house facade is setback 25.3 ft from the property line's western border, which looks to begin approx.—1 foot after the Kenwood Avenue street sidewalk. The proposed design appears to be compatible with the historic district's setbacks and site location.

2. Orientation

The proposed building is oriented toward Kenwood Avenue. It features a single side-loading garage next to a single-side loading carport. The design was changed after the ARC meeting to feature a front-loading carport directly facing Kenwood Avenue. Due to the front carport location, the orientation is not compatible with the historic district's adjacent contributing buildings.

3. Scale, massing, and height

The proposed building is two stories in height. This section of Kenwood Avenue is comprised of small, single-story residences with simple massing. The proposed design is not compliant with the following Design standards:

3.1: Design the height of new buildings to respond to nearby contributing buildings and the dimensions of the lot;
or

3.2 Design the massing of new buildings to reflect the character of nearby contributing buildings.

The proposed two-story new construction uses step-down height transition according to design standards. After the ARC meeting, the front façade of the second floor was set back an additional 9 feet away from the front of the property.

3.3- Use step-downs in building height, wall-plane offsets, and other variations in building massing to provide a visual transition when the height of new construction exceeds that of adjacent contributing buildings by more than one-half story.

However, the height is not compatible with the historic surroundings because no two-story contributing buildings are adjacent to this location.

The design does not meet the following Design Recommendation:

Do not exceed the height of the tallest contributing building on the block.

The addition of out-of-scale houses significantly changes a street's rhythm. While its massing, scale, and height may be typical for new infill in other areas of Austin, it is not compatible with contributing historic buildings in this district. Overall, the design conflicts with scale, massing, and height standards.

4. Proportions

The width appears compatible, but the proposed height and mass are not compatible with the adjacent contributing buildings (see 3).

5. Design and style

The proposed building's minimalist design and style do not appear compatible or take cues from adjacent contributing buildings. After the ARC meeting, some designs from the original structure were incorporated, such as single hung windows, a covered front porch, and a front-gabled roofline making the updated design more compatible than the previous iteration.

6. Roofs

After the ARC meeting, the roofline was modified from a non-compatible compound roofline to a roofline emphasizing a front-facing gable. The gable was repositioned to a location on the front façade to more closely resemble the position of a front-facing gable on the original structure. The resulting roofline is more compatible than the original design.

7. Exterior walls

While brick may be a compatible material, stucco is not. Therefore, the proposed exterior wall design is not compatible with the adjacent contributing buildings. After the ARC meeting, additional brick material was added to the house's façade, but the second story remains stucco which is still not compatible.

8. Windows and doors

The irregular fenestration pattern and varied window proportions and sizes are not compatible with the more stylistic window elements of the adjacent contributing buildings. After the ARC meeting, the forward fenestration was revised to provide greater regularity in the spacing between windows. The proposed windows closest to the street were modified to single-hung windows, similar to those in the existing structure. The updated window design is more compatible than the first version.

9. Porches

Standard 9.2 indicates that new construction should include porches that reflect and continue the rhythm, size, proportions, and placement of those on contributing buildings. This design is not compatible with adjacent contributing buildings. The original design was not compatible with adjacent contributing buildings. After the ARC meeting, a covered front porch was added to the proposed home to improve its connectivity with the street and surrounding neighborhood.

11. Attached garages and carports

Standard 11.1 indicates that newly attached garages should only be built at the front of a property if they match the block's predominant garage location and orientation. Houses within this area were built with detached garages at the rear of the property. This design initially featured a single side-loading garage next to a single-side loading carport in front of the proposed home. The garage and carport design were incompatible with the historic district's adjacent contributing buildings. After the ARC meeting, the plan was changed to include an open carport facing the street in front of the proposed home. The updated design is less compatible than the original since the carport is now fully visible and facing the street.

2. Walls and fences

The horizontal wood fence in front of the property is not compatible with adjacent contributing buildings. It does not match the predominant location of fences and their orientation within the block. After the ARC meeting, the fence was removed. However, the carport is now fully visible from the street.

Summary

Although there have been modifications to improve the design, the project still does not meet the applicable standards, primarily due to the proposed construction's mass, scale, orientation, and material choice.

PROPERTY EVALUATION

The property contributes to the Travis Heights-Fairview Park National Register district.

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 does not meet two criteria:
 - a. Architecture. The building is a good example of Minimal Traditional architecture and does appear to convey architectural significance.
 - b. Historical association. The property does not appear to have 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.

COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

Feedback The Architectural Review Committee received a presentation on the project on April 18, 2022. Committee members did not find the design compatible with the Travis Heights-Fairview Park National Register District. Discussion included the lot would accommodate keeping the house and adding an addition onto the back, the proposed design was a barrier to its surroundings and stark, and the design should be more approachable and maintain current setbacks. Members recommended bringing a one-story presence out in front and moving parking to the side or rear, reducing the sizeable second-story window size, and overall making the design more compatible because it significantly diverges from the historic streetscape.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Comment on the plans, then encourage rehabilitation and adaptive reuse, then relocation over demolition, but release the permit upon completion of a City of Austin Documentation Package.

LOCATION MAP



SUBJECT TRACT
PENDING CASE
ZONING BOUNDARY

1" = 333'

NOTIFICATIONS
CASE#: HR 22-016431
LOCATION: 1803 KENWOOD AVENUE

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

Contributing to the Travis Heights National Register Historic District

Photos



Demolition permit application, 2022

Occupancy History

City Directory Research, January 2022

1959	Donald B. Ezell, owner
1957	Donald B. and Elsie Ezell, owners Chicken House Café
1955	Donald B. and Elsie A. Ezell, owners Chicken House Café
1952	Donald B. and Elsie A. Ezell, owners Restaurant 4201 Alice Ave
1949	Donald B. and Elsie A. Ezell, owners Electrician
1947	Alf P. and LaVerne H. Reinhardt, renters Clerk Austin Paper
1944	Raymond W. Jr. and Marjorie M. Ramsey, renters Tex-Con Oil Co.
1941	Raymond W. Jr. and Marjorie M. Ramsey, owners R & R Service Station
1939	Address not listed

Permits

Unless the Plumbing is done in strict accordance with City Ordinances, do not turn on the water.

PERMIT FOR WATER SERVICE AUSTIN, TEXAS No. 5111
 M. *Dr. R. L. Shruhalla* Address *1803 Kenwood Ave.*
 Plumber *Gissell* Size of Tap *1/2* Date *2-12-37*

Date of Connection *2/15/37* Foreman's Report *132*

Water service permit, 1937

D. B. Ezell 1803 Kenwood

132 3 40

Travis Hts.

Fr. Addn. to rear of Res.

64052 6-22-56 \$800.

G. Ward

Building permit, 1956

Dr. H. L. Shruhalla 1803 Kenwood

132 - 40 3 A

Travis Hts.

frame residence

182 - 2-10-37

4

Building permit, 1937

Dr. R. L. Struhall likely built 1803 Kenwood Avenue

DR. R. L. STRUHALL CLAIMED BY DEATH

The Austin Statesman (1921-1973); Oct 21, 1954;
ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Austin American Statesman
pg. A1

DR. R. L. STRUHALL CLAIMED BY DEATH

Dr. R. L. Struhall, 54, well known Austin dentist, died unexpectedly Thursday about 6:45 a. m. at his home, 1803 Kenwood Avenue.

Funeral services have been set tentatively for 10 a. m. Saturday at the Church of St. Ignatius, Martyr in South Austin. Burial will be in Mt. Calvary Cemetery.

He is survived by his widow, Mrs. Lillian Parma Struhall; five daughters, Mrs. E. C. Smith of Houston, Mrs. Bob Luck, Miss Frances Struhall, Miss Ann Struhall and Miss Janel Struhall, all of Austin; and three sons, R. L. Struhall Jr., and Al Struhall, both of Austin, and James Struhall of Mexico City.

Also surviving are one brother, L. J. Struhall of Austin; and six sisters, Miss Ann Struhall and Mrs. Christine Janicek, both of Granger, Mrs. Rose Marie Kuecka of Austin, Mrs. Bertha Micholka of Cameron, Mrs. Louise Marek of Temple and Mrs. Augustine Parma of Granger and by five grandchildren.

The body is at the Wilke-Thurman-Clay Funeral Home where rosary services will be held Thursday at 8 p. m. and Friday at 8 p. m.

The family has requested friends planning to send flowers instead to

make contributions to the St. Ignatius Parish Building Fund.

Dr. Struhall was born and reared in Granger and was the son of the late Mr. and Mrs. James Struhall. (See STRUHALL, Page A2)



DR. R. L. STRUHALL.

hall of Granger. He came to Austin from Granger in 1923 to attend the University of Texas for two years where he took his pre-dental course. While a student in the University, he was an active member of the Newman Club.

He later attended and obtained his dental degree from the Northwestern University School of Dentistry at Evanston, Ill., and had practiced his profession in Austin for 30 years.

He was one of the original members of the parish of St. Ignatius, Martyr, and active in the affairs of that church. For a number of years he served on the parish advisory committee and was a member of the building committee. He was master of ceremonies for the ground breaking of the new St. Ignatius Parish School on Oltorf Street on Oct. 10.

He was a member of Capital City Council No. 1017, Knights of Columbus, and of Bishop Hecher Assembly, fourth degree Knights of Columbus.

Dr. Struhall also was actively identified in civic affairs, being a member of the City Planning Board and a past president of the South Austin Civic Club. During his tenure as president of the latter group, one of the major accomplishments was the building of the Austin Theater, a facility that the South Austin area had petitioned for.

Death of Dr. Struhall resulted in the loss to the University of Texas of one of its strongest supporters. He never missed a football game and helped many of the players to get through school. He and Howard C. (Bully) Gilstrap, assistant University of Texas football coach, attended school together in Granger and were close friends.

Dr. Struhall's death is believed to have followed a coronary occlusion. Shortly before, his wife found him having difficulty in breathing and the family physician and the fire department's inhalator squad were summoned. Death intervened about the time the firemen arrived.

Dr. James V. Sparks, close friend of the deceased dentist, said he had lunch with Dr. Struhall Wednesday in a downtown eating place as was their usual custom. He expressed shock over Dr. Struhall's passing. Other associates said he had not shown any indications of feeling ill as he continued his professional duties during the day.