

**HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION**  
**DEMOLITION AND RELOCATION PERMITS**  
**MAY 4, 2022**  
**DA-2022-040962; GF-2022-047912**  
**211 WEST 4<sup>TH</sup> STREET**

## **PROPOSAL**

---

Demolish a ca. 1936 commercial building and reconstruct the façade.

## **PROJECT SPECIFICATIONS**

---

- 1) Demolish and reconstruct building façade. The character of the brickwork, opening patterns, and other design details will be accurately reconstructed. Existing brick will be salvaged and reused in the reconstruction, with paint removed or the bricks turned to reveal the unpainted side. An original steel window will be evaluated for repair and reinstallation based on its condition.
- 2) Reinstall Oilcan Harry's signage on the adjacent façade at 213 W. 4<sup>th</sup> Street.
- 3) Construct a high-rise tower with more than a 5' setback from the building façade. Behind the parapet, the garage levels will be clad in a simple screen in a dark bronze color.

## **ARCHITECTURE**

---

The building at 211 W. 4<sup>th</sup> Street is a single-story brick warehouse with a curvilinear stepped parapet that exhibits modest Mission Revival stylistic influences. Decorative elements include diagonal tiles at the raised central portion and ends of the parapet and a rowlock course as coping. The building retains its original window and door openings with soldier course headers. At the left end of the façade is an original multi-light steel window with a central awning sash. The adjacent door opening has been infilled with a flat panel. At the right end of the façade, paired doors flanked by windows fill an overhead door opening. The brick has been painted and a black tile wainscot added.

## **RESEARCH**

---

The Lightsey-Carroll-Firestone (Oilcan Harry's) Building was constructed around 1936 as the home of Leggett W. Carroll's Lightsey-Carroll Company, local distributors for Magnolia Beer. The Lower Colorado River Authority had an office in this building in the early 1940s and expanded into the adjacent building at 213 W. 4<sup>th</sup> Street by 1942. The Firestone Retread Shop opened here around 1946; the building served as a tire retread business shop until the early 1960s. Two businesses servicing automobile transmissions were located here in the mid-1970s; the building was converted to a nightclub use in the late 1980s. Oilcan Harry's expanded into the space formerly known as 209 W. 4<sup>th</sup> Street when it opened at this location in 1990.<sup>1</sup>

Gay bars are broadly acknowledged as a place for grassroots organization and safe space for the LGBTQIA+ community. With over 30 years in operation, Oilcan Harry's is Austin's oldest gay bar.<sup>2</sup> For many years, the bar hosted annual Red Hot Fundraisers to benefit Project Transitions, a nonprofit that provides services to those living with HIV and AIDS.<sup>3</sup> The bar was named by *Out* magazine as one of the world's 50 best gay bars in 2008.<sup>4</sup>

## **DESIGN STANDARDS**

---

The City of Austin's [Historic Design Standards](#) (March 2021) are based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and are used to evaluate projects at historic landmarks and within historic districts. The Warehouse District was previously identified by Historic Preservation Office staff as a potential historic district. The following standards are applicable in considering the proposed project:

### Repair and alterations

#### 1. General standards

These standards do not explicitly address reconstruction. Rather, they emphasize retaining historic materials in place,

---

<sup>1</sup> From Steve Sadowsky, *Narrative History of Buildings in Austin's Warehouse and Wholesale Districts*, undated (ca. 2009).

<sup>2</sup> "Oilcan's Celebrates 30 Years Open This Weekend," *Austin Chronicle*, Jan. 23, 2020, <https://www.austinchronicle.com/daily/qmmunity/2020-01-23/oilcans-celebrates-30-years-open-this-weekend/>.

<sup>3</sup> "Making a Difference at St. Edward's and at Oilcan Harry's," *Austin American-Statesman*, July 9, 2006, B2.

<sup>4</sup> "Madonna to Visit Oilcan Harry's?" *Austin American-Statesman*, Apr. 24, 2008, A2.

planning for repair when needed due to deterioration, and replacing materials only when deteriorated beyond repair. For this project, reconstruction is not proposed based on the existing conditions of the buildings. Rather, it is a means of protecting original building materials from damage during construction of the proposed high-rise tower.

#### 4. Exterior walls and trim

These standards emphasize retaining historic masonry walls and using replacement mortar that matches the historic mortar in composition, joint profile, and color. For this project, the existing brick will be reused, with paint removed or the bricks turned to reveal the unpainted side. Care will be taken to match the masonry patterns and detailing in reconstruction.

#### 5. Windows, doors, and screens

##### 11. Commercial storefronts

Standards in these sections emphasize retention of historic materials, or where elements have been previously altered or replaced, using new designs and materials that are compatible with the scale and style of the building.

The original steel window will be evaluated for reinstallation based on its condition. The window will be retrofitted with new glazing to meet energy code requirements while repairing the steel frame and sash.

Other openings are previously altered, including infill of the original entrance and replacement of an overhead door with paired doors and sidelights. The project will involve new glazing and doors within these openings, which is a compatible treatment that will maintain the overall configuration of the façade.

#### Commercial additions

##### 2. Scale, massing, and height

These standards emphasize that additions should appear subordinate to a historic building. Within an urban setting surrounded by high-rise towers, the standards allow vertical additions that are set back at least 20' behind the building parapet, with a potential 5' cantilever forward at a greater height. The proposed tower is set back 5' behind the parapet. The material and color selection are intended to differentiate the addition and cause it to visually recede behind the parapet, such that it does not overwhelm the building despite the shallower setback.

#### Summary

The proposal to demolish and reconstruct the building façade, rather than retain it in place, does not meet the standards that would be applied in review of proposed work to a historic landmark. However, it represents a compromise solution intended to maintain the streetscape character of this block of the Warehouse District. The project entails careful reconstruction using the existing brick and accurately capturing building details. The design of the tower includes a vertical hyphen with a restrained architectural treatment, set back from and intended to visually recede behind the parapet.

## **PROPERTY EVALUATION**

---

The *Historic Buildings in the Warehouse District Survey* (ca. 2009) lists the property as high priority for inclusion in a potential historic district.

#### *Designation Criteria—Historic Landmark*

- 1) The building is more than 50 years old.
- 2) The building retains moderate to high integrity. Modifications include infill of the door and overhead door within existing openings, painting of the façade, and addition of a tile wainscot.
- 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 particularly intact example of a utilitarian warehouse with modest Mission Revival stylistic influences.
  - b. Historical association. The historic uses of the building are typical of buildings within the downtown Warehouse District. The property does not appear to have individually significant 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 possesses a unique location and physical characteristics as part of the Warehouse District. Further, Oilcan Harry's formed the nucleus of Austin's LGBTQIA+ entertainment district, contributing to the image and cultural identity of a particular group. The significance of a property must have its basis at least 50 years ago, unless there is an argument for exceptional significance (as defined by [Criteria Consideration G](#) for the National Register of Historic Places). The 50-year benchmark for evaluation is intended to give sufficient perspective on what is historically important. In order to adequately evaluate more recent

significance, there must be scholarly research or other assessment of a property's historical import, as well as a comparison with related properties to identify which best represents the historical associations. While Oilcan Harry's is not 50 years of age, its status as Austin's oldest operational gay bar may meet the threshold to demonstrate exceptional significance.

- 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**

---

The Architectural Review Committee provided feedback on the proposed project on April 11, 2022. Committee members emphasized the importance of historical accuracy and retention of original materials and patterns in treatment of the building façades. The building façades should be preserved in place during construction, or if reconstructed, involvement of a preservationist on the project team and rigor in field measurements is critical. Different brick treatments on the various façades gives each building a distinct character. Restoration of missing or altered features should be based on documentary or physical evidence of an earlier configuration. Transoms and fenestration patterns should be maintained.

The relationship between this block of warehouses and the landmark Nelson Davis Warehouse across Colorado should be considered. At the corner of 4<sup>th</sup> and Colorado, committee members recommended retaining the masonry of the corner building, with fenestration removed to create an open-air plaza, rather than removing the corner entirely.

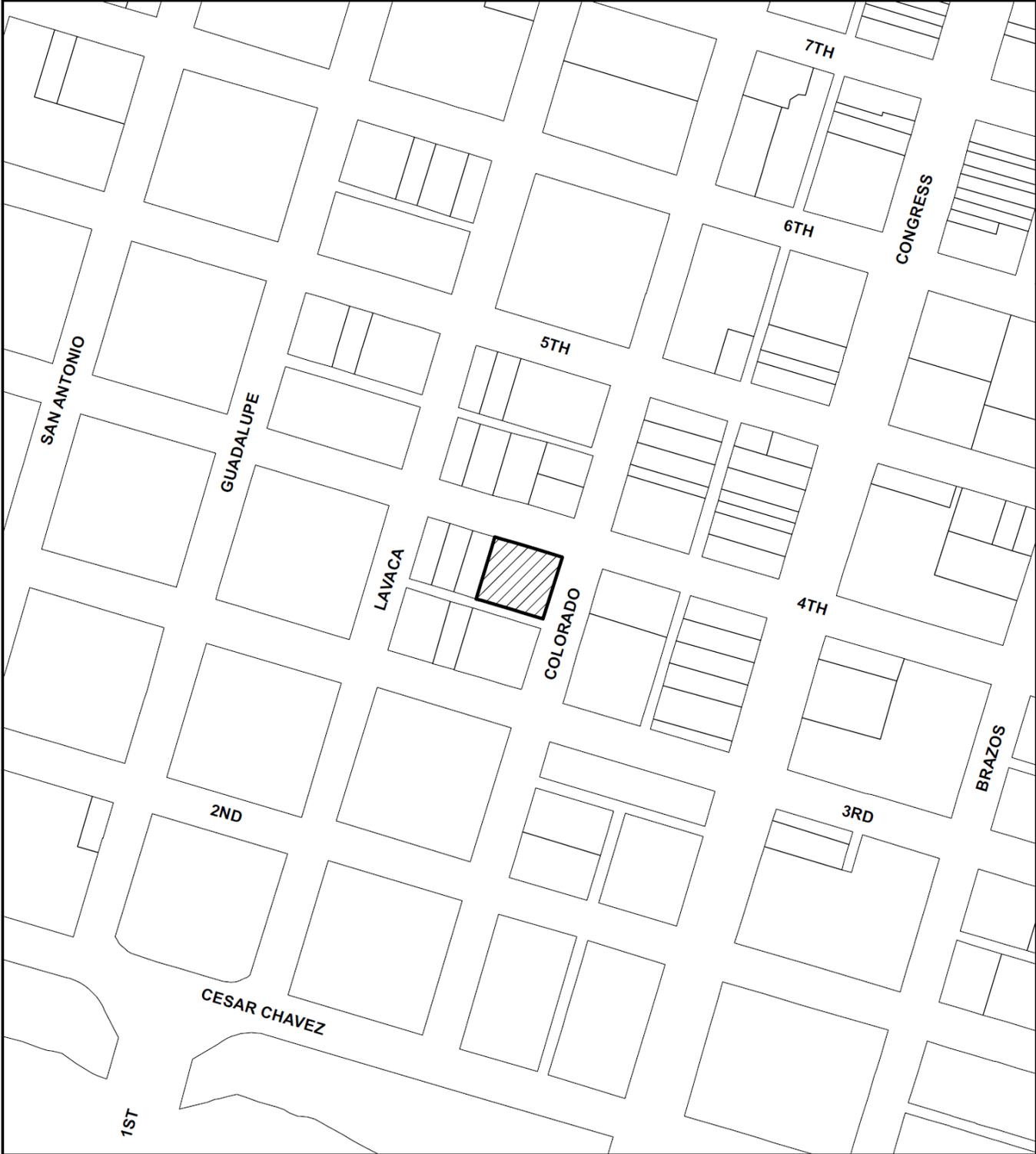
The setback of the new tower is critical to not overwhelming the warehouse façades. Committee members appreciated the neutral color and texture of the tower garage cladding at this level. Greenery at the parapet level would detract from the historic character of the warehouses.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

---

In consideration of the applicant's commitment to reconstruct the building façade, release the associated permits upon completion of a City of Austin Documentation Package.

LOCATION MAP



-  SUBJECT TRACT
-  PENDING CASE
-  ZONING BOUNDARY

**NOTIFICATIONS**

CASE#: GF 22-047912  
 LOCATION: 201- 211 W 4TH STREET



1" = 250'

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

Photos



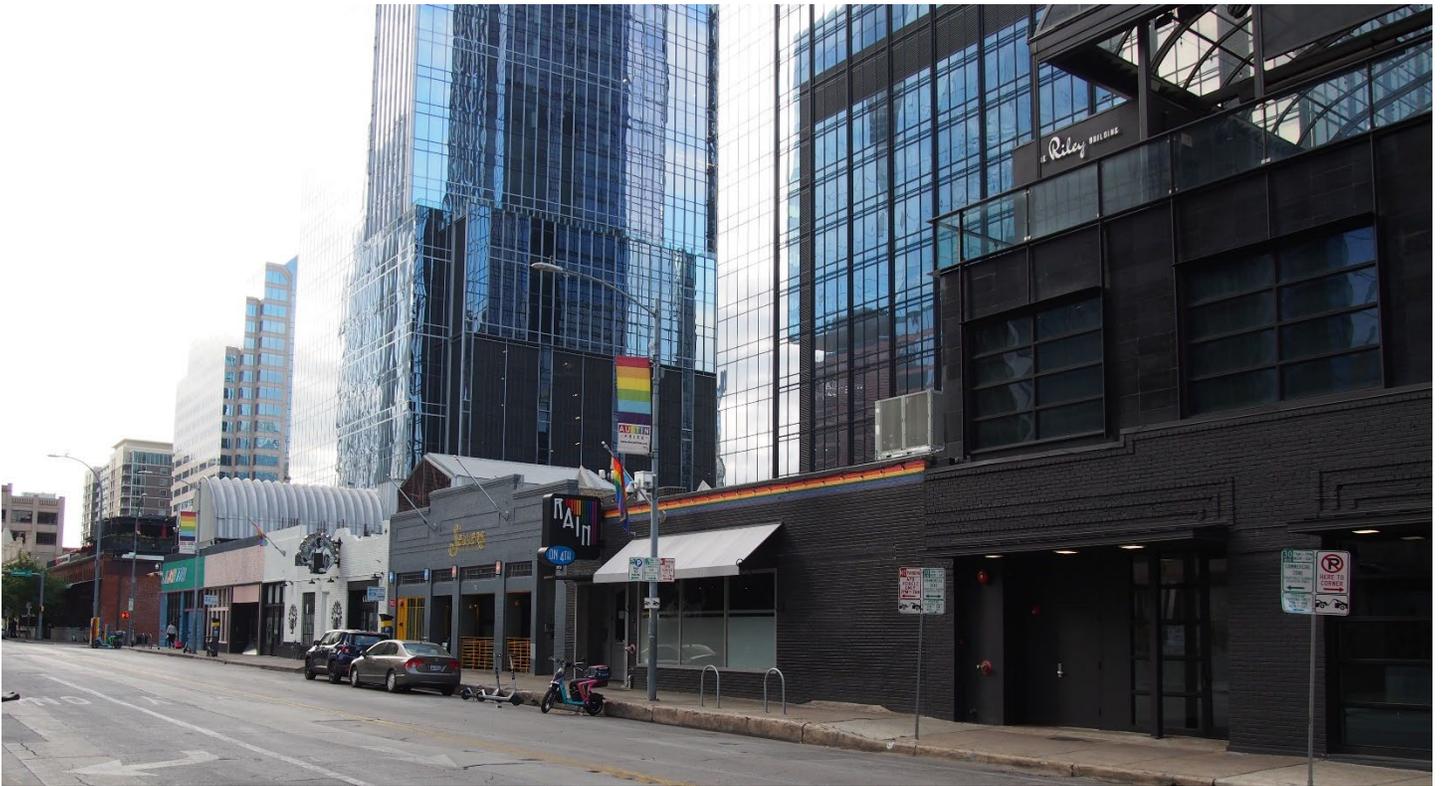
*Jerry's Automatic Transmissions Center, 1979 photograph.  
House Building File: 4<sup>th</sup> W. 211, PICH 06015, Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.*



*211 W. 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Historic Preservation Office staff, April 2022.*



*211 W. 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Historic Preservation Office staff, April 2022.*



*200 block of W. 4<sup>th</sup> between Colorado and Lavaca streets. Note that buildings at 217 and 219 W. 4<sup>th</sup> Street (in foreground) are outside of the project area. Historic Preservation Office staff, April 2022.*

*Occupancy History*

City Directory Research, November 2008 and April 2022

1992	211 W. 4 <sup>th</sup> St.	Address not listed Note: Oilcan Harry's was established in 1990 at 211 W. 4 <sup>th</sup> St.
1988-89	211 W. 4 <sup>th</sup> St.	Vacant
1980-86	211 W. 4 <sup>th</sup> St.	Address not listed
1978	211 W. 4 <sup>th</sup> St.	Jerry's Automatic Transmission Center
1975	211 W. 4 <sup>th</sup> St.	Long Transmission Parts T. A. Long, proprietor  Automatic Transmission Center Gabino Moreno, Jr., manager
1970-74	211 W. 4 <sup>th</sup> St.	Long Transmission Parts (automatic transmission center)
1968	211 W. 4 <sup>th</sup> St.	Capitol Auto Glass
1964	211 W. 4 <sup>th</sup> St.	Vacant
1959	211 W. 4 <sup>th</sup> St.	Firestone Retread Shop (tires)
1958	211 W. 4 <sup>th</sup> St.	Firestone Retreading Division W. B. Wilson, manager Note: W. B. Wilson was also the manager of the main Firestone store at 901 Lavaca St.
1953	211 W. 4 <sup>th</sup> St.	Firestone Retreading Division Luther New, shop foreman
1949	211 W. 4 <sup>th</sup> St.	Firestone Retreading Division Otho O. Green, proprietor
1947	211 W. 4 <sup>th</sup> St.	Firestone Retreading Division Otho O. Green, manager
1944	211 W. 4 <sup>th</sup> St.	Vacant
1941	211-213 W. 4 <sup>th</sup> St.	Lower Colorado Authority (Operating Division)
1939	211 W. 4 <sup>th</sup> St.	Southern Distributing Co. (beer) Cecil Moore and Leggett W. Carroll, proprietors
1937	211 W. 4 <sup>th</sup> St.	Lightsey Carroll Co. (wholesale beer) Leggett W. Carroll, proprietor
1935	211 W. 4 <sup>th</sup> St.	Address not listed

Permits

SIGN PERMIT

OWNER Fox Service Co. ADDRESS 211 W. 4th St.

PLAT 7 LOT 9 BLK 28

SUBDIVISION Original City

OCCUPANCY sign

BLD PERMIT # 152237 DATE 9-29-75 OWNERS ESTIMATE \$485.00

CONTRACTOR T & S Signs NO. OF FIXTURES

WATER TAP REC # SEWER TAP REC #

Sign permit, 1975

exchange 018 for 3/4" Rd W. W. R. F. 293.73  
166242 Water Service Receipt 28 1989 CC

G- 52128

Lot: 11 (7, 8, 9)  
Bk: 28  
Plat #: (7) 11



Date: 10/29/90  
Amt: \$ 340.74 + 440.00 = 780.74  
Size of Meter: 3/4"  
City Conn:  Drop In

Received of: Richard Howell Phone: 263-5887  
Service Address: 211 West 4th Street SRR Code: WAT  
Subg. User Cont. #: Monthly Fee Ret. Date:  
Subdivision: Original City PRV: Yes No   
M.A.: 115 30' Kuehler Dr. Austin 78733  
WW Attached/ Not Required Pd. Previously  
Stub Loc: 10 1/2" 5146 Size: Growth Corridor:   
Comments: (written) 50X Inside City:  Outside:  
S.I.F. By: Date: Zone: East Central West  
Material Used: 4" x 31" tile set drain  
Loc: ENTERED  
P.C.P. # Sz By Date  
Wa. Insp 11-15-90 By JY0426  
Date Conn: 11-20-90 Loc. FC By 188115:19pm NOV 21 1990  
One Call: Date 11/20/90 Permit # 901116042  
Plumber:  
Revised by: No Permit

By: Anna Chavez 292601

W+ WW 0053

REV. 11/83

Richard Howell

9 MAINTENANCE  
GOVALLE

HW

Water service receipt, 1990

Historical information

**M**ake  
**M**ine  
**M**AGNOLIA

Those are the  
"BUY WORDS"  
of Texans  
wherever  
beer is sold



Lightsey-Carroll Co.  
211 West 6th St. Phone 2-3188

**MAGNOLIA.**

Roast Beef—a he-man's dish . . . a favorite old stand by . . . and yet how different it tastes when it's served with a sparkling cold bottle of Magnolia Beer. Simple dishes and old favorites take on added flavor when served with Magnolia—the beer that "goes with" good food. Try it and see how it "peps up" YOUR meals.

Roast Beef



LIGHTSEY-CARROLL CO.  
211 W. 6th Phone 2-3188

Advertisements for Magnolia Beer, distributed by the Lightsey-Carroll Company, Austin American, Nov. 7, 1936, and Austin Statesman, Apr. 9, 1937

<b>LEGGETH W. CARROLL</b>	burial will be in Austin Memorial Park.
Leggeth W. Carroll, 56, 1719 Enfield Rd., died in a local hospital Sunday morning. He was born in Tennessee Colony and later lived in Athens before moving to Austin where he has resided for the past 35 years. He was a member of the University Methodist church, a veteran of World War I, Masonic Lodge, Scottish Rite bodies and the Ben Hur Shrine.	Besides his wife, he is survived by two daughters, Mrs. Eiband Wilshusen, Galveston and Mrs. Jeff Wilson of Laredo; his mother, Mrs. John L. Carroll of Palestine; three brothers, A. B. Carroll Santa Anna, T. A. and George B. Carroll of Tennessee Colony; three sisters, Mrs. R. K. Blackshear, Austin, Mrs. Addie Blackburn, Corsicana and Mrs. George Collins of Athens. Three grandchildren also survive.
Funeral services will be held Tuesday at 10 a.m. at the Weed-Corley funeral home. Dr. Robert E. Ledbetter Jr. will officiate, assisted by Rev. Brady Tyson and	<b>MRS. HAL R. ANDERSON</b> Mrs. Hal R. Anderson died at

Obituary for Leggeth Carroll, owner of the wholesale beer distributorship that operated here in the mid- to late-1930s, Austin American, Apr. 30, 1956.

## NAMES Project

The Austin NAMES Project, a local chapter of the International AIDS Memorial Quilt, will sew a memorial fabric heart onto AIDS Quilt panels for a donation of \$3 to \$10. The hearts may be purchased and panels viewed 5-9 p.m. today at 'Bout Time, 9601 N. Interstate 35, and 9 p.m. to midnight at Oilcan Harry's, 211 W. Fourth St.; 9 p.m. to midnight Saturday at Buckles Saloon, 115 San Jacinto, and Chain Drive, 504 Willow; and 9 p.m. to midnight Sunday at Vanities, 117 San Jacinto. Call 448-4508 for information.

*"NAMES Project," Austin American-Statesman, Feb. 8, 1991, E6.*

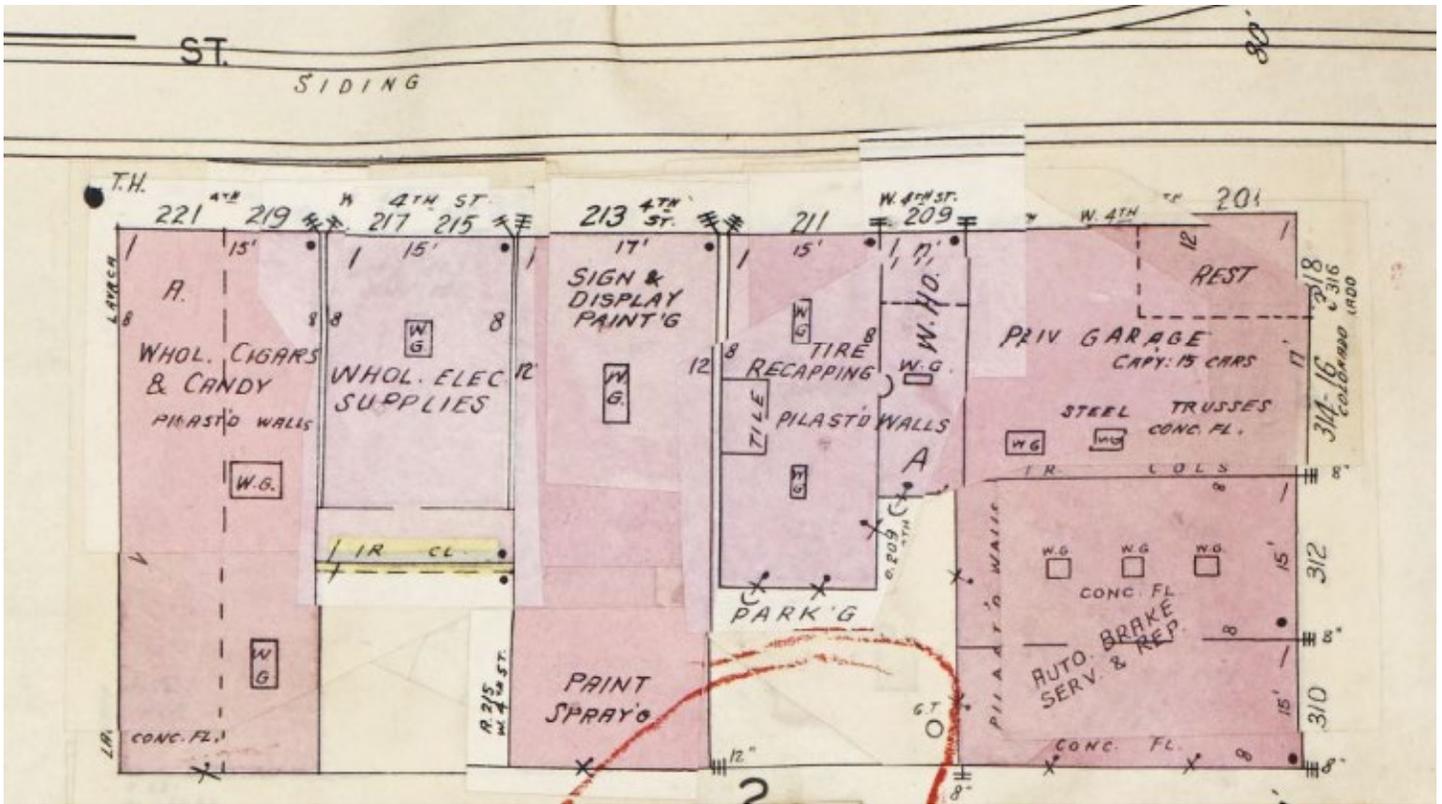
From 1880 to the early 1900s, the district was known as Guy Town, Austin's red-light district. At least 10 brothels occupied the area west of Congress Avenue and north of West First Street.

But anti-vice crusades launched by religious and political leaders cleaned up Guy Town. The brothels were replaced by warehouses, canning factories, auto repair shops and retail stores.

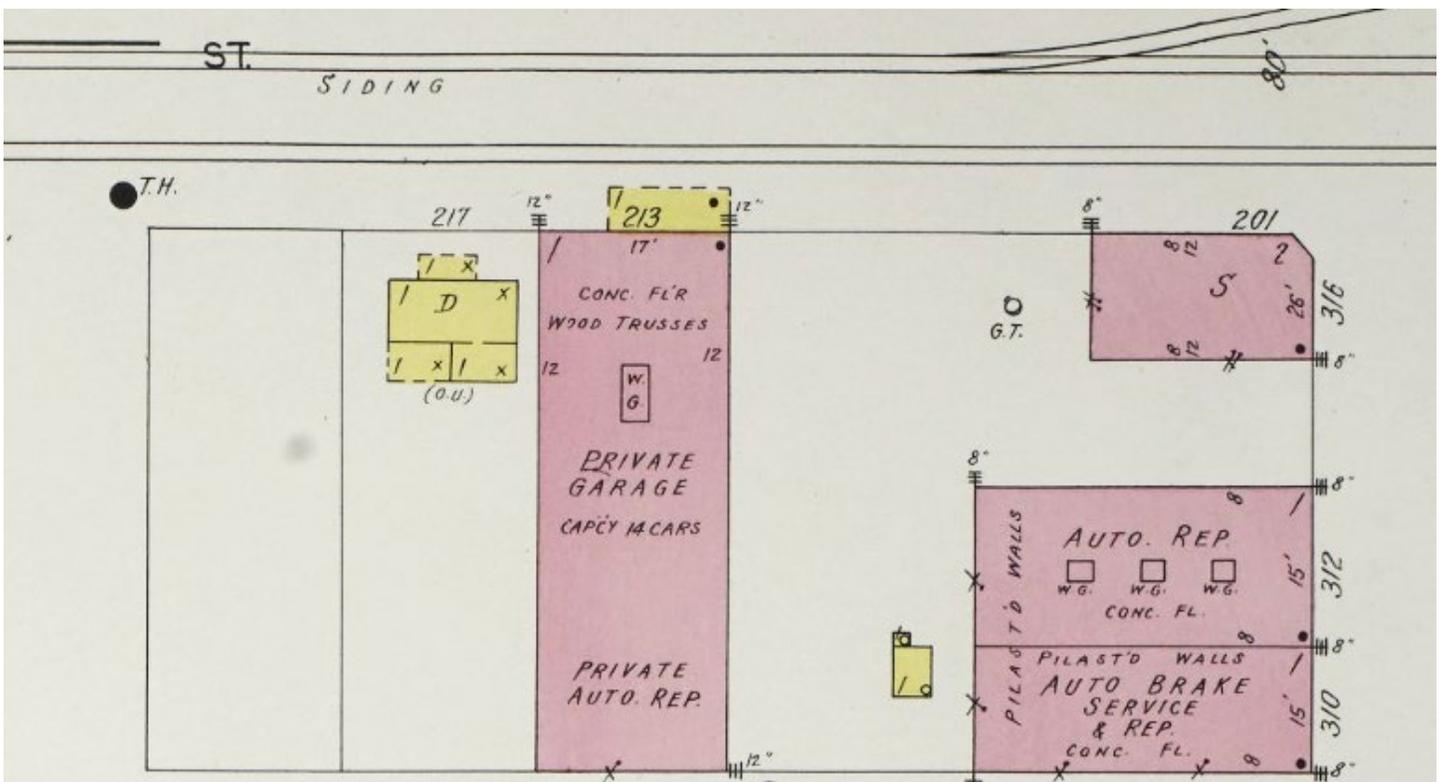
Today, establishments such as Antone's, The Bitter End, Sullivan's, Oilcan Harry's, Cedar Street and Fado Irish Pub brim with crowds most nights of the week. It has become one of the city's retail and restaurant hot spots over the past five years, gaining a reputation as the Sixth Street for the 30-something crowd.

*Excerpt from "Apartments in Warehouse District?" Austin American-Statesman, Oct. 3, 1997, D1.*

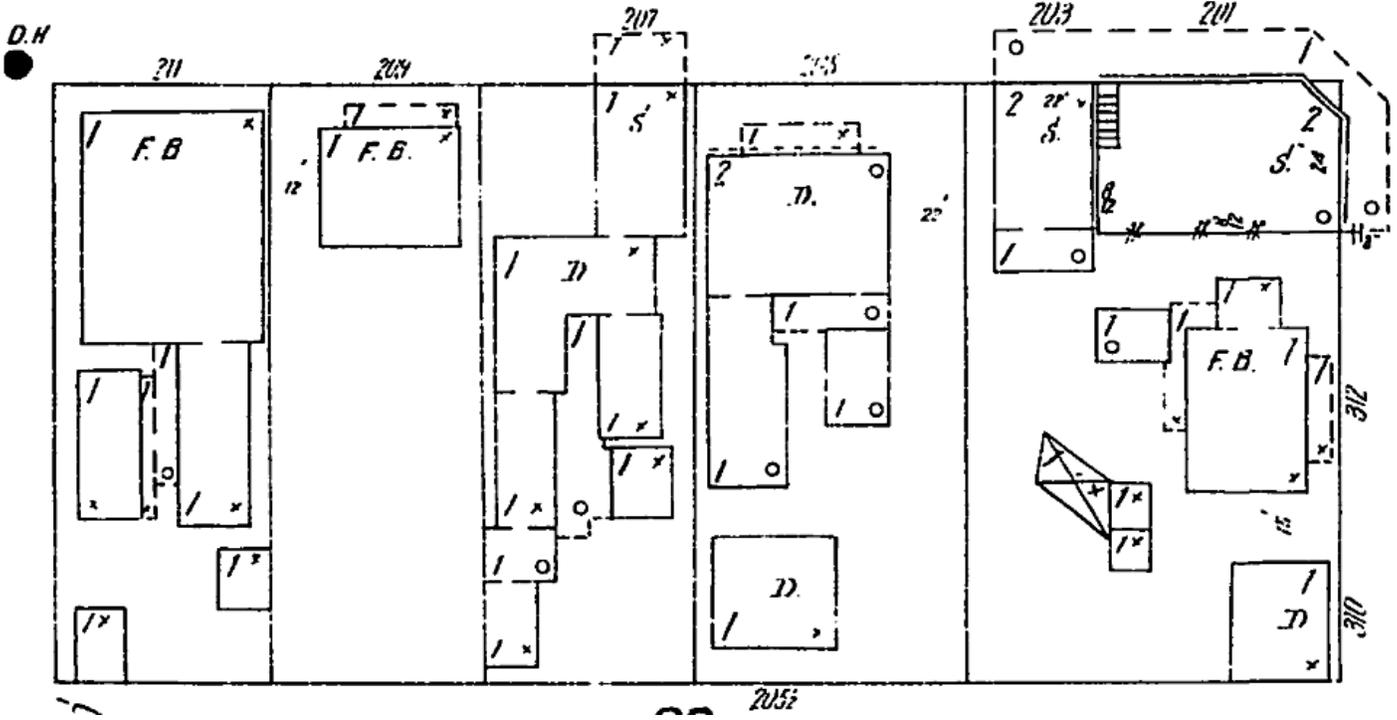
Sanborn Fire Insurance maps



The 1961 map shows the current configuration of the building and notes it was a tire recapping shop. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1961, Vol. 1, Sheet 13, accessed via Library of Congress, [https://www.loc.gov/resource/g4034am.g4034am\\_g08415196101?sp=18&st=image](https://www.loc.gov/resource/g4034am.g4034am_g08415196101?sp=18&st=image).

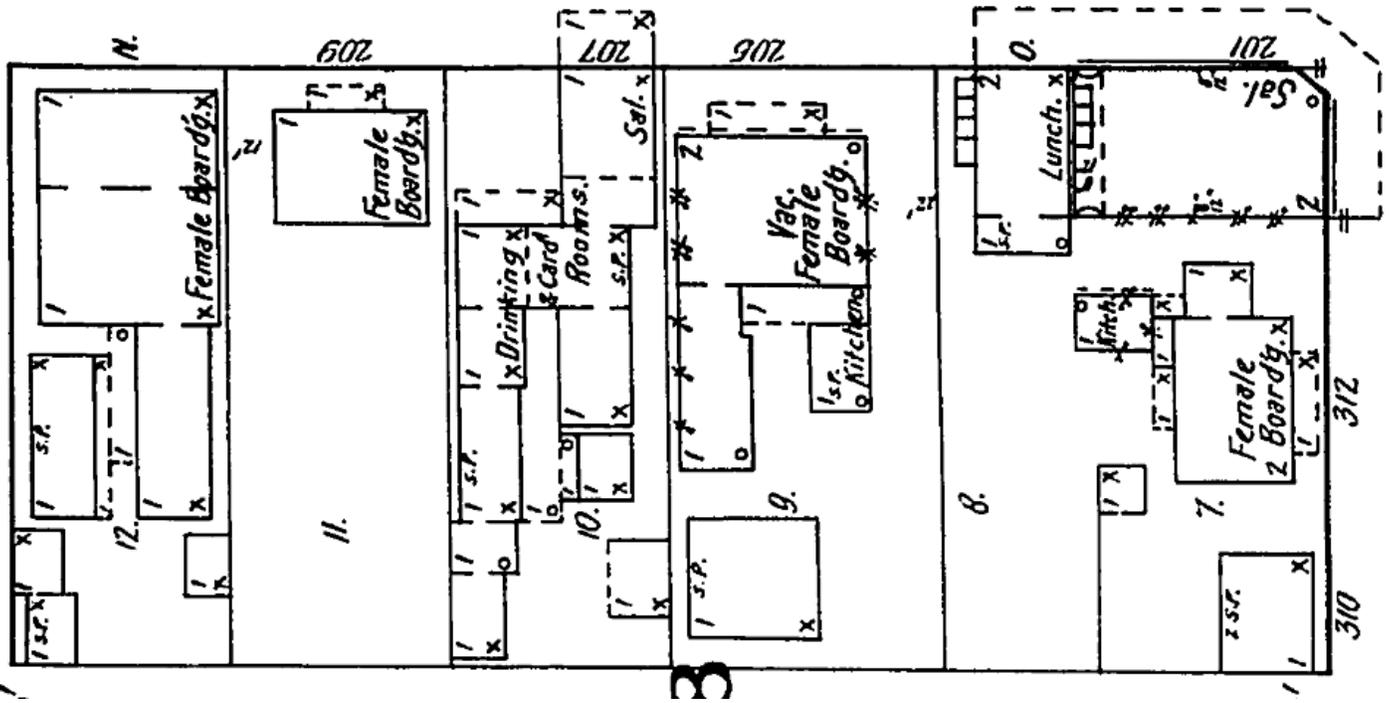


The 1935 map shows this lot as vacant; the current building was constructed in 1936. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1935, Sheet 13, accessed via Library of Congress, [https://www.loc.gov/resource/g4034am.g4034am\\_g084151935/?sp=18&st=image](https://www.loc.gov/resource/g4034am.g4034am_g084151935/?sp=18&st=image).



The 1900 map shows a two-story dwelling at the site of the current building. Peter Sandoval, a painter, is listed at this address as late as 1927. By 1929, this lot as well as the one to the west was home of the Southland Red Ball Motor Bus Company, who built their garage next door around 1928. This lot was vacant by the early 1930s.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1900, Sheet 3, accessed via ProQuest Digital Sanborn Maps, <https://digitalsanbornmaps.proquest.com>.



Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Jan. 1894, Sheet 17, accessed via ProQuest Digital Sanborn Maps, <https://digitalsanbornmaps.proquest.com>.