

## ZONING CHANGE REVIEW SHEET

CASE NUMBER: C14H-2022-0139

HLC DATE: November 2, 2022    PC DATE: TBD    CC Date: TBD

APPLICANT: J. Pieratt, owner's agent

HISTORIC NAME: Felts-Moss House

WATERSHED: Shoal Creek

ADDRESS OF PROPOSED ZONING CHANGE: 2311 Woodlawn Blvd.

ZONING CHANGE: SF-3 to SF-3-H

COUNCIL DISTRICT: 10

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends the proposed zoning change from family residence (SF-3) to family residence-historic landmark (TOD-H-NP) combining district zoning.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR LANDMARK DESIGNATION: Architecture, historical associations, and historical associations under Criteria Consideration G of the National Register of Historic Places as defined in Land Development Code § 25-2-352(A)(1).

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION ACTION:

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:

CITY COUNCIL ACTION:

CASE MANAGER: Kalan Contreras

PHONE: 512-974-2727

NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATIONS: Austin Independent School District, Austin Lost and Found Pets, Austin Neighborhoods Council, Friends of Austin Neighborhoods, Homeless Neighborhood Association, Neighborhood Empowerment Foundation, Old Enfield Homeowners Assn., Pease Neighborhood Association, Preservation Austin, SELTexas, Save Historic Mundy District, Shoal Creek Conservancy, Sierra Club, Austin Regional Group

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: N/a

BASIS FOR RECOMMENDATION:

**§ 25-2-352(3)(c)(i) *Architecture.*** *The property embodies the distinguishing characteristics of a recognized architectural style, type, or method of construction; exemplifies technological innovation in design or construction; displays high artistic value in representing ethnic or folk art, architecture, or construction; represents a rare example of an architectural style in the city; serves as an outstanding example of the work of an architect, builder, or artisan who significantly contributed to the development of the city, state, or nation; possesses cultural, historical, or architectural value as a particularly fine or unique example of a utilitarian or vernacular structure; or represents an architectural curiosity or one-of-a-kind building.*

The 1938 house is a good example of Georgian Revival architecture constructed by central Texas architect Lee M. Smith. It was the first building constructed on Woodlawn Boulevard. According to the application:

In 1938, Lee M. Smith's architectural office was at 311 W. 7th St. Smith first appears in the Austin City Directory of 1935 as an architect working for Van C. Kelly Lumber Company, then in the Austin City Directory of 1937 as an architect with Calcasieu Lumber Company, which had its own stable of building designers, most of whom were not certified architects (registration of architects did not begin until the 1930s). He appears to have had his own practice from 1939 to 1943. He is not listed in a city directory after 1942, so given the short time that he appears to have worked in the Austin area, the Moss-Felts House appears to be one of the few surviving structures that serves as an example of his work. An article in the Bastrop Advertiser dated December 2, 1937 stated that 'Lee M. Smith ... is an

architect who offers a most advanced service in placing and supervising the erection of Hotels, Banks, Schools, Homes, etc. Many of our finest structures stand as a testament to the skill of this well known professional man. He is one of the most esteemed men both socially and in the professional life.'

**§ 25-2-352(3)(c)(ii) Historical Associations.** *The property has long-standing significant associations with persons, groups, institutions, businesses, or events of historic importance which contributed significantly to the history of the city, state, or nation; or represents a significant portrayal of the cultural practices or the way of life of a definable group of people in a historic time.*

The house is associated with the Felts family. The house was built in 1938 by former Elgin mayor and City Attorney A. M. Felts, whose children James and Dan became, respectively, founder of one of the Southwest's most influential transportation law firms and an internationally recognized scientist in the field of lipid metabolism. The application describes their contributions in detail:

The home was constructed by by A. M. Felts, who was the former City Attorney and Mayor of Elgin and the grandfather of Jan Bullock (widow of the late Lieutenant Governor, Bob Bullock). A. M. Felts was born in Arkansas, then moved to Belton, Texas when he was 16 to live with his uncle, Bell County Judge George Martin Felts. Amos became interested in the law and received his law degree from the University of Texas. He married Mildred Ilene Lytton September 17, 1917. Amos began practicing law in Elgin, where he also served as city attorney and mayor, before moving to Austin in 1927 to partner with C. W. Webb and Emma S. Webb. In February of 1938, while residing at 305 E. 38th St., Amos and Ilene paid \$2600 for portions of lots 19 and 20 in the young Sunset Hill Enfield and hired architect Lee M. Smith to design their two-story Georgian Revival house. In 1939, the law firm of Felts, Wheeler & Wheeler was established, with offices in the Norwood Building. Felts practiced transportation and general law until his death in 1952. Ilene and Amos Felts had two sons, James Felts and Amos Daniel Felts.

2311 Woodlawn was the childhood home of James and Amos Daniel Felts. Dan Felts was born on May 28, 1927. He lived in the house on Woodlawn from around age 11 until he graduated in 1944 and joined the Navy. He received his law degree from the University of Texas in 1952, and later practiced solo for 8 years in transportation and general law as his father had done. Around 1960, he joined James, Robinson, Felts and Starnes, which became the premier transportation law firm in the Southwest. For 20 years, Dan was the president and general counsel of the Southwest Household Goods Carriers and president and general counsel of the Texas Sand and Gravel Carriers. Dan and his wife Gloria had three children, Jan Bullock, Carol Keller and Dan Felts, Jr. Dan Felts died on May 8, 2013.

James Felts moved into the house at 2311 Woodlawn with his family when he was 15 years old. After serving in the Air Force Medical Corps during the war, James received a Ph.D. in Physiology and Biochemistry in 1955 and became an instructor in Physiology at Tufts Medical School from 1955 to 1959. He then joined the Cardiovascular Research Institute at UCSF. In 1969 he moved to the Banting and Best Department of Medical Research of Toronto. In 1972, he was recruited back to UCSF as Professor of Physiology, Consultant in the Cardiovascular Research Institute, and Chief of the Lipid Research Laboratory at the VA Medical Center. Felts was an internationally recognized expert in the field of lipid metabolism. James Felts gained recognition not only for his scientific accomplishments, but for his ethics. According to his 1988 obituary: "He continued to maintain the guiding principles of his youth--helping others to obtain their full capacities, as scientists and human beings. His work was always of impeccable quality. His contributions to biomedical science were significant."

**§ 25-2-352(A)(1):** *the property is at least 50 years old and represents a period of significance of at least 50 years ago, unless the property is of exceptional importance as defined by National Register Bulletin 22, National Park Service (1996).*

John A. Moss, a pioneer in both housing development and software development, purchased the home in 1956. His achievements span the end of the fifty-year significance cutoff and extend into the early 1980s. The application describes Moss's significance as follows:

John A. Moss was a respected local entrepreneur who purchased the home with his family in 1956. Among many other endeavors, Moss founded BPI during the 1970s, the first computer software manufacturer to go public in the United States in 1982. BPI manufactured accounting software that was licensed to Apple, Commodore, and IBM and played a key role in establishing Austin as a technology hub. Later in life, Moss and his wife Margaret purchased the historic home Sweetbrush, held numerous philanthropic and civic events there, and eventually listed the house on the National Register of Historic Places.

Moss was born in 1920 in Hearne, TX. He volunteered during World War II and was accepted for service on PT boats. However, the Navy needed his accounting talents. The Naval Department sent him to Chicago to do cost

auditing for projects like the A-bomb research at the University of Chicago; at Motorola Corporation for the instruments that brought B-29s back to base when they had dropped their payload; and the Elgin Watch Company, which created the timers for the torpedoes carried on U.S. submarines.

After the war, his young family moved to San Angelo, where Moss opened an accounting practice. With an investment group, he designed blueprints for homes that could be constructed and built for \$3,000, called the "San Angelo Plan." These homes were built nationally and internationally during the post-war building boom. In the mid-'60s, Moss purchased the new development of Lago Vista on Lake Travis. He developed the project for several years until he sold it to National Homes Corporation of Indiana.

In 1977, John was overseeing a franchise of retail food stores in Texas when he realized that an accounting system using microcomputers could improve the operation. At the time, the accounting for Moss's operation was sent to an outside firm that used mainframes. The time required to get the information to and from the accounting firm caused some of the smaller stores in Moss's chain to fall behind. Moss, who had seen Radio Shack's TRS-80 Model I, realized that microcomputers could allow an individual accountant to manipulate financial data quickly and easily. John was disenchanted with the over-technical accounting software available at that time. He decided that he could create an accounting program for personal computers better than anything on the market.

Around 1979, John founded BPI Inc. to create accounting software for the personal computing market. IBM soon became interested in BPI's software. The IBM PC was not on the market yet and was a closely held secret. IBM sent BPI five of the first PCs off the assembly line in disguised boxes accompanied by armed guards, and an agreement was made for BPI to create IBM's business software. Soon, BPI's accounting software was licensed to Apple, Commodore, and others. In 1982, BPI was barely three years old and was already one of the nation's largest suppliers of accounting software for microcomputers. It went public that year, becoming the first computer software manufacturer to go public in the United States and one of the youngest publicly held companies in Austin business history. John's search for better accounting software had led to an unprecedented national success.

PARCEL NO.: 0113010109

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: S 110 FT OF LOT 20 \*& SW TRI OF LOT 19 SUNSET HILL ENFIELD

ESTIMATED ANNUAL TAX ABATEMENT: \$10,568 total (homestead, capped); city portion: \$2,500 (homestead, capped)

APPRAISED VALUE: \$2,312,136

PRESENT USE: Residence

DATE BUILT/PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE: ca. 1938; 1938-1973 and 1973-1982

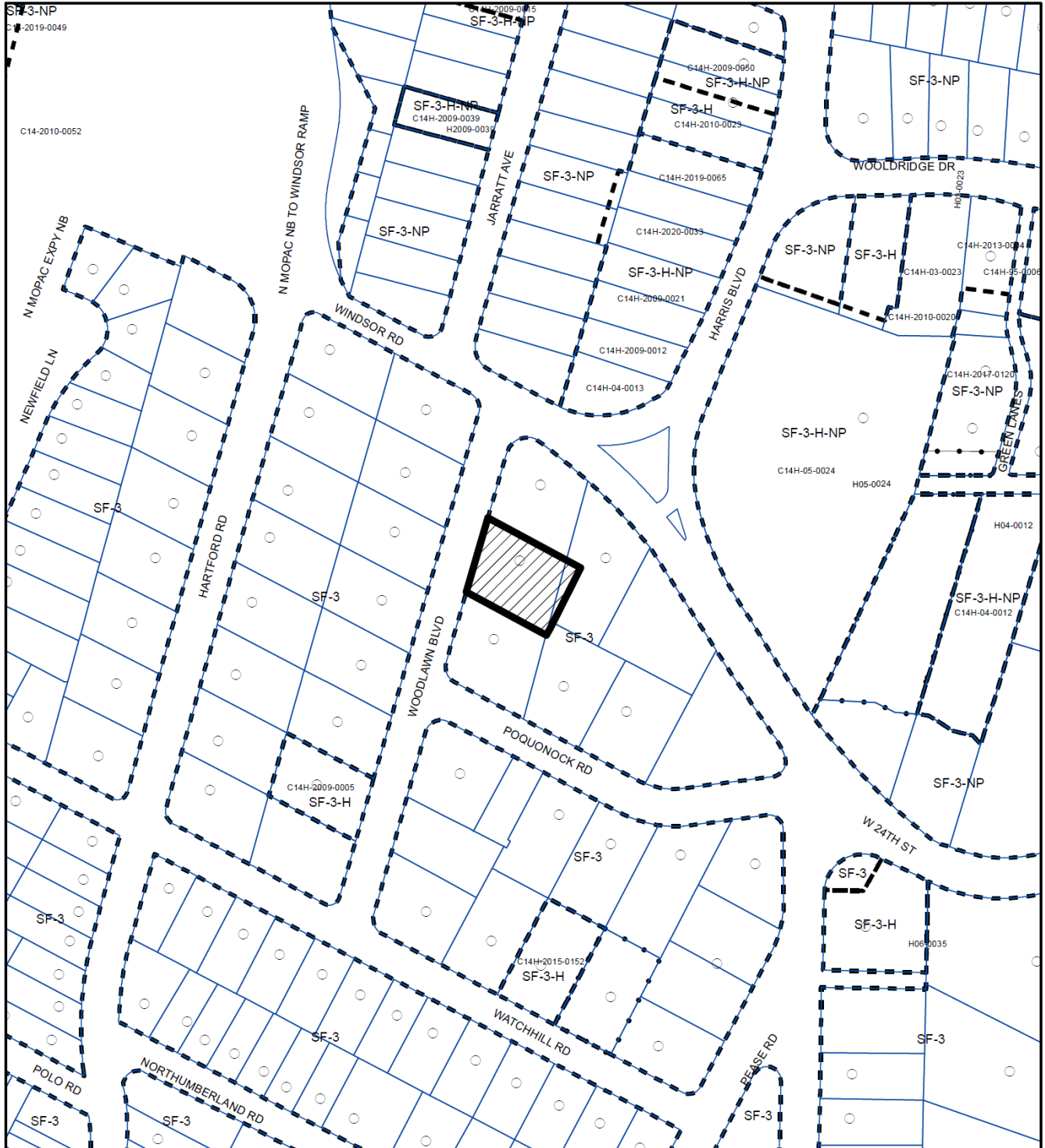
INTEGRITY/ALTERATIONS: High. Screens added to second-floor windows.

PRESENT OWNERS: Ann M. Pieratt, 2311 Woodlawn Blvd., Austin 78703

ORIGINAL OWNER(S): A. M. Felts

OTHER HISTORICAL DESIGNATIONS: The property contributes to the Old West Austin National Register Historic District.

## LOCATION MAP



- SUBJECT TRACT
- PENDING CASE
- ZONING BOUNDARY

1" = 200'

### HISTORIC ZONING

ZONING CASE#: C14H-2022-0139

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