

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION
DEMOLITION AND RELOCATION PERMITS
DECEMBER 13, 2023
PR-2023-132210; GF-2023-147770
1707 SINGLETON AVENUE

PROPOSAL

Demolish a ca. 1941 house.

ARCHITECTURE

One-story hollow clay tile building with stucco cladding, a gabled roof, exposed rafter tails, and a gablet with triangular brackets above the front stoop. Windows are 1:1 with wooden screens and slatted awnings.

RESEARCH

The house at 1707 Singleton Avenue was constructed in 1941 by Chester and Daisy Crozier Walker. Chester Walker was a plasterer and carpenter, and the Walkers had two sons. Daisy Walker's mother, Mrs. Ollie Crozier, and Chester Walker's father, Joe D. Walker, also lived with the family. The Walkers had two sons, Robert and Chester, Jr.; the latter joined the family once the Walkers' sons grew up and left home, they became foster parents to four siblings.

PROPERTY EVALUATION

The 2016 East Austin Historic Resource Survey lists the property as contributing to potential local and National Register historic districts.

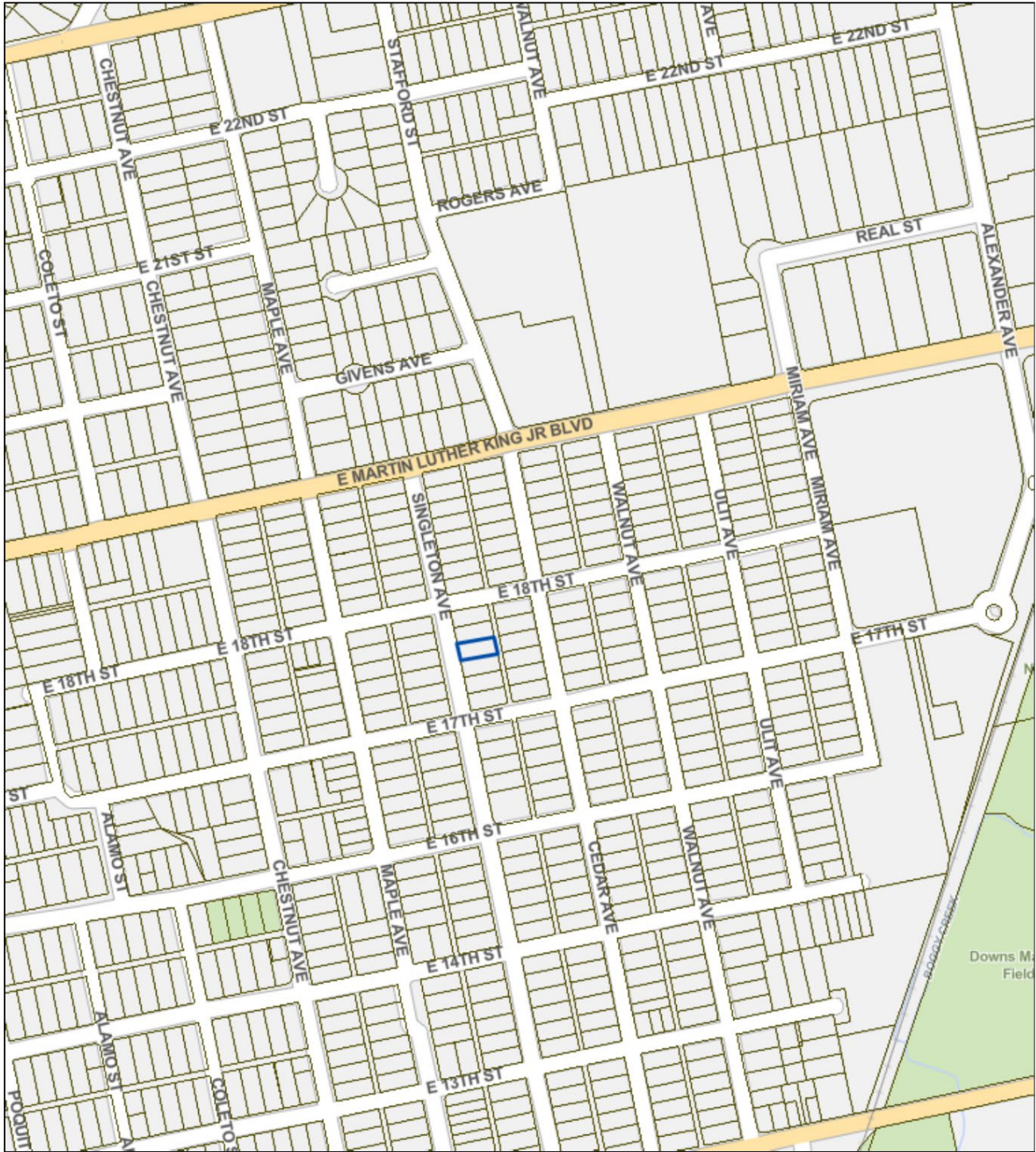
Designation Criteria—Historic Landmark

- 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 likely does not meet two criteria:
 - a. Architecture. The building is constructed in a vernacular style that incorporates elements of the Minimal Traditional and Craftsman styles. Chester Walker, a carpenter and plasterer, may have worked on his home.
 - b. Historical association. The property is associated with the Walker family, though archival research did not produce evidence of 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 was not assessed for its contribution as 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 does not appear to be a significant natural or designed landscape with artistic, aesthetic, cultural, or historical value to the city.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Encourage rehabilitation and adaptive reuse but release the demolition permit upon completion of a City of Austin Documentation Package.

LOCATION MAP



GF 23-147770

1707 SINGLETON AVENUE



11/30/2023

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. This product has been produced by the City of Austin for the sole purpose of geographic reference. No warranty is made by the City of Austin regarding specific accuracy or completeness.

PROPERTY INFORMATION*Photos*



Demolition permit application, 2023

Occupancy History

City Directory Research, November 2023

1959	Chester S. Walker, owner
1955	Chester S. and Daisy Walker, owner – employee, Ace Plastering Company
1952	Chester S. and Daisy Walker, owner – laborer Chester S. Walker, Jr. – student
1949	Chester S. and Daisy Walker, owner – carpenter
1944	Chester S. and Daisy Walker, owner – carpenter
1941	Address not listed.



AT BLISS—Private Chester A. Walker Jr. is undergoing basic training at the anti-aircraft center at Fort Bliss. His parents live at 1707 Singleton.

The Austin American (1914-1973); 03 Oct 1954: C6.

"Just the second day they were here, Johnny announced to us, 'I think I'm gonna call you Big Mama and call him Big Daddy!'" Mrs. Walker said, "and now that's what all the children call us."

"Big Daddy and Big Mama" are more widely known as Mr. and Mrs. Chester Walker, and the person responsible for their new names is Johnny, one of the four children for whom they are now providing a foster home.

Mr. and Mrs. Walker, at ages 67 and 57, respectively, have reared two sons of their own already. Now, through the foster parent program of the Travis County Child Welfare Unit, they are starting on another. In addition to Johnny, they have his 10-year-old brother Charles and his four-year-old twin brother and sister, Michael and Michelle.

"We really only expected two children — and with only two bedrooms, that's all we had room for — but these four children had to stay together, and they needed a home — so we squeezed them in!"

This is the first foster parent experience for the Walkers, and they are entering into it with all the zest and enthusiasm which characterizes all their activities.

In the words of Mrs. Walker, "We've had a beautiful life together, and I thank God for it, so if there's any kind of a way we can help these children to have a better life, well, we want to do it."

This is the basic motivation of all the couples, who become foster parents wanting to help a child.

The children they help need foster homes for a variety of reasons. They may be infants awaiting adoption, but for whom no adoptive couple is immediately available; they may be children whose parents are ill or out-of-work and, therefore, temporarily cannot care for them. They may be the children of a couple whose lives have been shattered by marital discord, alcoholism, narcotics, or mental illness.

They may be children who have been abused or battered by their parents — or abandoned completely by them. It may be a frightened girl — pregnant but unmarried — needing a place to stay until her baby is born. And, in some cases, it may be a child with emotional or physical handicaps with which his parents are unable to cope.

These children are all ages, and all races. For some, foster care is a very brief experience — and they can plan to be reunited with their own families, or placed with an adoptive family within a month or a few months. For others, foster care may last for years.

But for every child, it is a very significant experience. For the foster parents, too, each child is special and a challenge, in a different way.

Unlike the Walkers, who are novices in the foster care program, Mr. and Mrs. Peter Mansbendel have served two years as foster parents and have had a wide variety of experiences in that period.

While they took older children, at first, they decided to try caring for infants, since there was such a need for this type of foster home. And this now seems to be their very special

talent.

They have had a great deal of success in taking infants who were developing slowly, and readying them for adoption by bringing them to a developmental level more in keeping with their age level. This was accomplished not through any special program, nor because the Mansbendels have any special training in child development, but through the attention and love which every child needs, but which these particular children had been denied.

One of their most memorable experiences was with a little girl named Dorothy. In the overcrowded setting which was her world for the first five months of her life, she was not developing normally. She was thought to be retarded and/or deaf. Within days of her placement in the Mansbendel home, however, the listless, unresponsive child was beginning to show progress.

Slowly she began to reach for things, to jabber, to crawl and creep. Under the patient and loving direction of Mr. and Mrs. Mansbendel, her development continued for the next three months, at the end of which Dorothy was performing at a level normal for her age, and was placed for adoption.

Dorothy is only a chapter in the success story of these outstanding foster parents. They now have a little girl who is ready for adoption, and are expecting a little boy to be placed with them soon. Like Dorothy, he is not developing at the level expected for a child his age, and the hope is that the Mansbendels will be able to help him so he, too, can be placed in an adoptive home which will be his for keeps.

Foster families come in all ages and sizes. While the Walkers are an older couple who were living alone, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Lopez are a young couple, with five children of

The Lopez family has absorbed their new addition without much difficulty. As Mrs. Lopez says, "I don't think it's hard for me because I have five, and, you know, one more doesn't make much difference — since you have to cook for a big family already!" And the Lopez children were delighted to have a new playmate — right in the family.

"If something were to happen to us, we'd want someone to take care of our children, so we feel like this is something we should do — and we like the idea of helping someone to a better life" Mrs. Lopez told me.

The Travis County Child Welfare Unit needs more like the Walker, the Mansbendel, and Lopez couples. They need more people who will do something positive to help a child. More information about the foster parent program can be obtained by telephoning the Travis County Child Welfare Unit, at 444-6711, or by attending one of the weekly meetings at the State Department of Public Welfare Office, at 2201 Post Road. These meetings are to furnish information to prospective foster parents and are being held every Monday evening in April and May at 7 p.m.

**Four Now Have
'New' Mom, Dad**

The Austin Statesman (1921-1973); 20 Apr 1969: A7.

MRS. OLLIE CROZIER

Funeral services for Mrs. Ollie Crozier, 81, of 1707 Singleton Avenue will be held Sunday at 1 p.m. at New Hope Baptist Church with Rev. O. T. Arnold officiating. Burial will be in Evergreen Cemetery under direction of King - Tears Mortuary.

She is survived by four daughters, Mrs. Daisy Walker, Mrs. Scenia Mae Humphries, Miss Minnie Crozier and Mrs. Willie Staten; son, Frank Crozier; sister, Mrs. Scenie Coleman; four grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

JOE D. WALKER

Joe D. Walker, 89, of 1707 Singleton died in a local nursing home Tuesday. Funeral services will be held on Saturday at 2 p.m. at New Hope Primitive Baptist Church with Rev. O. G. Galloway officiating.

Burial will be in the Burditts Prairie Cemetery under direction of King-Tears Mortuary, Inc.

Survivors include one sister, Mrs. Ella H. Loft of Austin and several neices and nephews.

The Austin American (1914-1973); 11 Jan 1964: 7.

The Austin Statesman (1921-1973); 20 Nov 1970: 23.

Permits

Chester Walker

1707 Singleton Ave

18

-

7

10

-

Glenwood Addn

Hollow Tile Res

22410 - 8-23-41

Building permit, 1941