

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION
PERMITS IN NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICTS
JANUARY 10, 2024
HR-2023-160745
SIXTH STREET NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT
505-07 EAST 6TH STREET

PROPOSAL

Renovate the building and convert from bar to restaurant. Repair exterior masonry, repaint elements where coating has deteriorated, and repair or replace clerestory window. Replace the single door with a double door.

PROJECT SPECIFICATIONS

- 1) Repaint existing painted masonry where needed, repairing brick prior to coating if deteriorated.
- 2) Repair existing awning, replacing with like materials where needed. Repaint.
- 3) Replace easternmost single door with double door to match existing fenestration rhythm.
- 4) Remove faux brick over clerestory window. Repair or replace clerestory, depending on level of deterioration. If replacement is chosen, use a window with divided lights similar to those shown in twentieth-century photos.

RESEARCH

The building at 505 and 507 East 6th Street were constructed in 1912 by Saidi Ferris on the site of an earlier store, owned by Ferris since 1905. Ferris, a native of Beirut and transplant from Nebraska, began his Austin business endeavors in 1898 with a grocery store at 500 East 6th. He later became one of Austin's most influential businessmen over the course of his long and productive career. Ferris also showed support for the other Syrian and Lebanese merchants who helped to establish 6th Street as a mercantile hub in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

At one time the owner of the most properties on 6th Street, Ferris operated a dry goods store which grew into several extremely profitable department stores through the twentieth century. In the 1920s, Ferris handed the department stores over to his three sons and took up wholesale trading in New York; he weathered the Great Depression in Austin as director of the Chamber of Commerce. The 6th Street department store was sold to a regional mercantile conglomerate in 1942; Ferris passed away seven years later. During the 1940s, the building was an A&P; it then became a hardware store.

DESIGN STANDARDS

The design standards established by Ordinance No. 20230720-160 ([July 2023](#)) and based on the Citywide Historic Design Standards for properties in the 500 and 600 blocks of East Sixth Street apply. The proposed project was evaluated based on the following applicable standards:

Rehabilitate and adaptively reuse contributing buildings, including at least the first 15 feet of historic facades.

The proposed alterations include retention of most of the historic building's façade and do not appear to preclude later designation as a historic landmark. The proposal includes repair and rehabilitation of existing material and restoration of infilled transom windows. The applicant has amended the proposal to better incorporate some Committee feedback.

Summary

The project meets the applicable standards.

PROPERTY EVALUATION

The property contributes to the Sixth Street National Register district. The 2022 Sixth Street Snapshot Resurvey lists the property as contributing to the historic 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 meets two criteria:
 - a. Architecture. The building is a good example of a one-part commercial block with two bays.
 - b. Historical association. The property is associated with influential businessman Saidi Ferris.

- 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 evaluated for its ability to 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; however, its association with Ferris may suggest a deeper connection to the Syrian community in early Austin with further research.
- e.* Landscape feature. The property is not a significant natural or designed landscape with artistic, aesthetic, cultural, or historical value to the city.

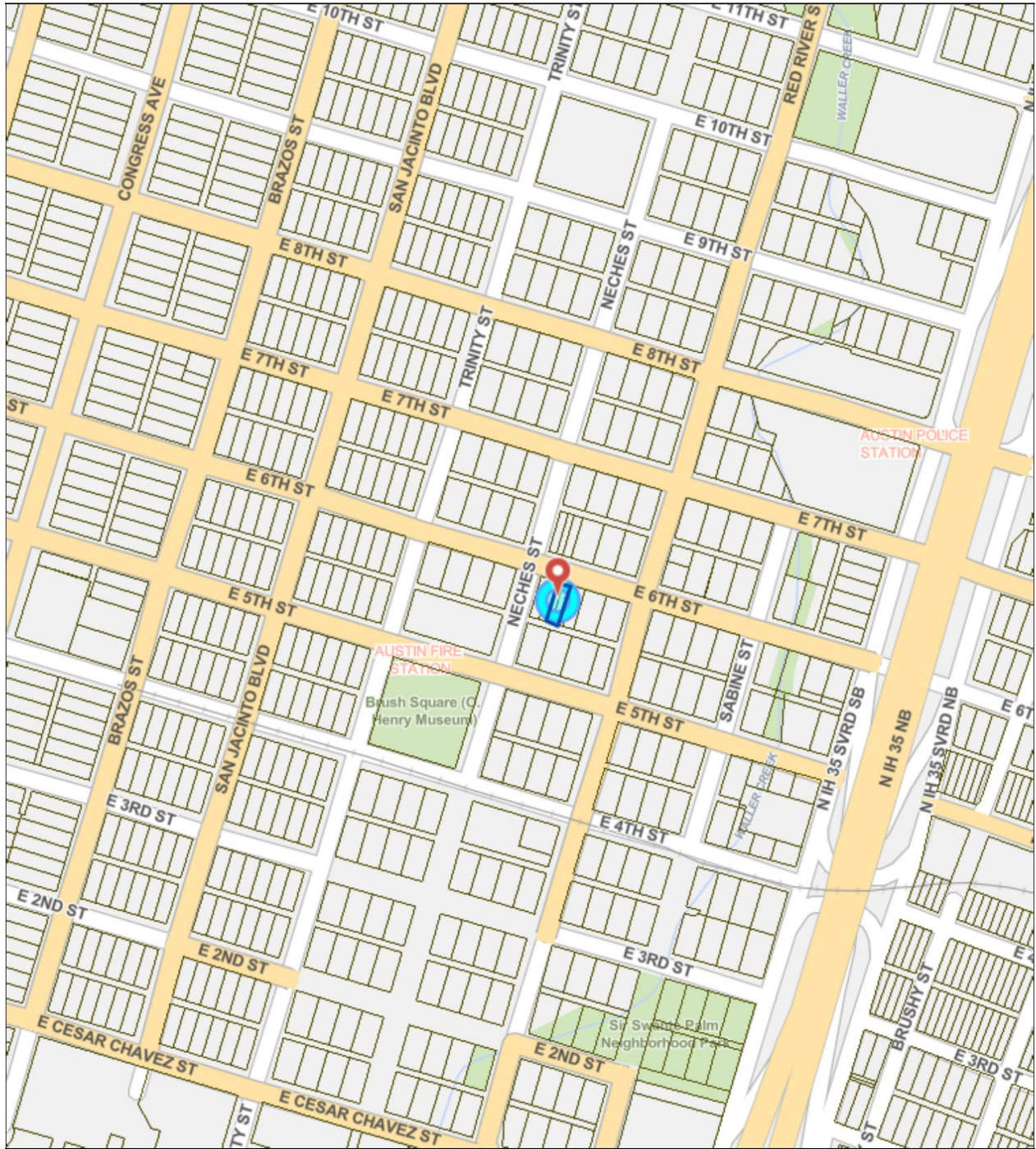
COMMITTEE FEEDBACK


Do not bring brick accent down to ground level. Do not divide transom so that it reads as one continuous line.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Comment on plans. The proposed alterations do not preclude future landmark designation.

LOCATION MAP





Lot Lines


Lot Line

1: 4800

12/27/2023

HR 23-160745

505 E 6TH STREET



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PROPERTY INFORMATION

Photos



2022 Sixth Street Snapshot Re-Survey

Occupancy History

City Directory Research, January 2024

1959	Miles Hardware
1955	Miles Hardware
1952	Sterzing Hardware Co.
1949	Sterzing and Miles Hardware
1944	A&P Food Stores
1941	A&P Food Stores No. 123
1939	A&P Food Stores No. 123
1932	501-507 E. 6 th St: Ferris and Sons Dept Store
1929	501-507 E. 6 th St: Ferris and Sons Dept Store
1927	503-507: S. Ferris Dry Goods
1924	505-07: S. Ferris dry goods
1918	S. Ferris Dry Goods
1916	S. Ferris Dry Goods

- 1914 503-507: Saidi Ferris, dry goods
 1910 505: Saidi Ferris, grocer
 507: Hammond and Cuneo meat market
 1906 One-story buildings not listed for 505-07.

Historical Information

<p>CITY MARKET.</p> <p>W. Hammond and Thomas Cuneo, formerly proprietors of Fulton market, will open at 507 East Sixth street, September 29, and will carry a full line of fresh meat and sausage. We solicit the patronage of our old and new customers. Free delivery. Phone 1068 old; 12 now.</p>	<p>inspector's office yesterday.</p> <p>E. C. Bartholomew obtained permits to erect a gallery at 902 West Avenue, to cost \$300, and to erect a store-room at 507 East Sixth Street, to cost \$1000.</p> <p>Do not forget us when ordering this</p>
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The Austin Statesman (1902-1915); Austin, Tex.. 25 Sep 1910: 12.

The Austin Statesman (1902-1915); Austin, Tex.. 08 June 1913: 11.

A5

	<p>—AND NOW FOR—</p> <p>The New Spring</p> <p>Clothing for Men</p> <p>Every suit is priced at considerably less than the usual prices---Come and make your own comparison and just read the reasonable price tickets.</p> <p>Big Line New Spring Straw Hats</p> <p>Just received. Priced from \$1.00 to \$2.50. Our \$1.00 Straw Hats are the best values.</p> <p>S. FERRIS</p> <p>505-507 EAST SIXTH STREET</p>	
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The Austin Statesman (1902-1915); Austin, Tex.. 12 Apr 1914: A5.

M. FERRIS RETURNS FROM WAR ZONE

**HE WAS IN TURKEY WHEN ORDER
TO MOBILIZE WAS ISSUED.
HAZARDOUS TRIP.**

There was merry-making at the home of S. Ferris, 111 East Seventh, yesterday, and the friends of the family joined in giving a glad welcome to Ferris, a son who had just returned from a four months' stay in the war zone. There had been fears that he would never be seen again, for he was in the Turkish dominions when the war broke out and was unable to get home. Turkey began to mobilize the last part of September, while Mr. Ferris was in Beyrout, and there appeared to be good reason for anxiety.

Finally money was obtained on a traveler's check, and passage was taken from Beyrout Sept. 29 to Alexandria, Egypt, thence after four days to Naples.

What amounted to steerage accommodations at first-class rates was obtained at Naples on an Italian ship bound for New York. Until the Straits of Gibraltar were passed, the greatest anxiety was felt on board for fear of floating mines, and this solicitude was reflected in the fact that religious services were held on board every day until the danger zone was passed.

Mr. Ferris had expected to spend seven months in Europe and Asia. It had not been for the war. As it was, he landed first at Cherbourg, France, visited Paris and other points, sailed from Marseilles to Alexandria, thence to Syria. The tour of the war-ravaged country included visits to Damascus and Jerusalem.



WATCHING
THE
FASHIONS
FOR SPRING
1917

THE STYLE SHOW AT FERRIS' TODAY!



We have made special effort in securing all that is new and beautiful for spring. Worthy of special mention are the new modes in

MILLINERY — BLOUSES — DRESSES — SKIRTS
Footwear, Dress Accessories, Haberdashery,
Men's Hats

We ask you to accept this as a personal invitation to view these displays of Fashion's finest at our store.

S. FERRIS

YOU NEVER PAY MORE AT FERRIS'
505-507 East Sixth St.

The Statesman (1916-1921); Austin, Tex.. 14 Mar 1917: 7.

The Austin Statesman (1921-1973); Austin, Tex.. 29 Feb 1924: 1.

CLOSING OUT

S. Ferris Is Retiring From Retail Field.

S. Ferris, who has been in the wholesale and retail business in Austin for 30 years, is retiring from the retail trade and will operate an exclusive wholesale business, according to an announcement from him Monday morning.

Mr. Ferris came to Austin in 1898 and opened his first store at 500 East Sixth street, the site directly across the street from his present retail location, at 503-505-507 East Sixth. Soon after the retail store was opened back there in the late 90's a wholesale department also was added. This wholesale business has been growing steadily and now, Mr. Ferris has decided to devote his entire time to the wholesale line of business.

In announcing his retirement from the retail business, Mr. Ferris has decided to "unload" his huge stock, which he estimates at a value of \$175,000 at public sale just before closing out his retail store. This stock consists of dry goods, clothing, furnishings, ready-to-wear, millinery, shoes, &c. Much of it was bought these past 60 days by Mr. Ferris himself on his recent extensive buying trip in the east.

The Austin Statesman (1921-1973); Austin, Tex.. 27 Sep 1926: 1.
The Austin Statesman (1921-1973); Austin, Tex.. 06 May 1927: 10.

FERRIS BUYS STORE BUILDING ON SIXTH STREET FOR \$13,500

Austin Merchant Plans Eventual
Construction of Modern Two-
Story Business Building.

Purchase of a one-story brick building located at 507 East Sixth Street by S. Ferris for a consideration of \$13,500 was announced Friday by the Paul O. Simms Company, who handled the deal. The building was purchased from C. M. Bartholomew and fronts 23 feet on East Sixth Street and is 128 feet deep.

Addition of this building to his other property gives Mr. Ferris property fronting 138 feet on East Sixth Street beginning at the corner of Neches and Sixth Streets.

Mr. Ferris is contemplating the eventual construction of a two-story brick building to serve as a home for his department store. It is announced. He plans the immediate enlargement of his present store with the purchase of the Bartholomew property.

The Paul O. Simms Company also

S. FERRIS SALE

Expert Starts Selling Campaign.

One of the most spectacular selling campaigns ever held in Austin is the promise of Frank Stefan, nationally known sales expert, who has come here from Minneapolis, Minn., to stage a sale for S. Ferris Sons department store at 503-507 East Sixth street.

Mr. Stefan, who is the leading, field man of the T. K. Kelly sales organization, is one of the best known sales managers in the country. He attributes his success to a policy of square dealing with the public and liberal newspaper advertising.

S. Ferris Sons is the business successor of S. Ferris, who is now in the wholesale and importing business. He is at present in New York where the headquarters of the importing business and the buying office of the wholesale store are located. The Austin retail store is owned and operated by his three sons who have grown up with the business and are now extending it rapidly. Special arrangements are being made, they state, to take care of the unusual crowds that are expected during this selling campaign.

Austin Wholesaler Opens New York Branch for Southwestern Buying

S. Ferris Starts New York Office.

S. Ferris, founder of the Ferris Dry Goods store, 505 East Sixth, returned from a two months trip to New York this past week with the announcement that he plans to maintain a jobbing office in New York under his own name in the future. Mr. Ferris spent much of his time in New York arranging for this office, and hopes to complete the project when he returns for another two months' trip in June.

Mr. Ferris for the past 15 years has bought stock for some of the largest stores in the middle west in Arizona and California, and in the Rio Grande valley, and from this time on will carry on this business direct from his New York offices. He is one of the first Austin merchants to establish a New York headquarters, and will be prepared to stock all dry goods lines with the best goods available at better prices, made possible through this direct buying and selling office.

♦ ♦ ♦ In Wholesale Trade

Prior to this time the Ferris store, carrying a complete line of all dry goods merchandise, has bought stock through a syndicated buying corporation as the majority of Austin stores do. Mr. Ferris, having retired from the active retail business, which is now being managed by his sons, will devote most of his time to the wholesale trade, and will spend a great part of his time at the New York division.

The store at 505 East Sixth street



S. FERRIS

In Austin, are in charge of the dry goods store since the re-organization which took place about three months ago, and are meeting with very good success. N. J. Ferris has charge of the Marie Antoinette shop in the first block on East Sixth.

The Ferris company has extended an invitation to Austin patrons to call and see the lines now offered, and state that with the establishment of the stocking offices in New York that even better service will be available in the future.

♦ ♦ ♦ Business Sound

"My opinion is that market conditions are rather normal, and that there is no cause to anticipate any appreciable fluctuation," Mr. Ferris said in regard to his investigations on the recent trip.

A. G. Ferris and J. A. Ferris, sons of the founder of the Ferris stores

The Austin Statesman (1921-1973); Austin, Tex.. 19 Mar 1927: 8.

pg. 1777

FERRIS BUILDS BIG BUSINESS

From Manor Store to National Trade in 30 Years.

Beginning with a small general store in a little Travis county town 30 years ago, S. Ferris of Austin has had a successful business career that reads almost like a novel.

From this small beginning there has developed a large retail department store, one of the best known in Austin, a ladies ready-to-wear and millinery shop catering especially to college girls and the younger set, a modern shoe store operated on novel lines, a wholesale dry goods business, and an importing and brokerage business with headquarters in New York serving customers throughout the United States.

In Austin 27 Years

In Austin 27 Years

After several years in Manor, Mr. Ferris moved to Austin in 1900 and opened his store at 500 East Sixth street, just opposite his present location. At that time he conducted a general store including groceries as well as dry goods.

Five years later, in 1905, the business had grown rapidly and the grocery and dry goods departments were located in separate buildings across the street from the original location.

Builds New Store

In 1910 the grocery business was sold, and in 1912 a new building was erected for the dry goods business which was then beginning to grow into department store proportions. This building is the one now occupied by S. Ferris Sons department store. Adjoining it is the Ferris shoe store which was opened last year and has made notably rapid growth. Also under the Ferris banner is the Marie Antoinette shop, one of the most popular exclusive ladies' shops in Austin.

In the fall of 1926 Mr. Ferris decided to concentrate his attention on importing, wholesaling and merchandise brokerage with an office in New York. The retail store in Austin was placed under the joint ownership and management of S. Ferris' three sons—George Ferris, Nick Ferris and John Ferris, and the name changed to S. Ferris Sons. The Marie Antoinette is under the immediate direction of Nick Ferris, who makes frequent trips to the New York markets in its interest.

In addition to his mercantile interests, Mr. Ferris is active in real estate operations and is probably the largest single owner of business property on Sixth street.

pg. 2

S. FERRIS SHOWS 'EM HOW TO GET C.C. MEMBERS

S. Ferris, Chamber of Commerce director, doesn't believe there is any such thing as business depression.

So when he was handed eight names of Chamber of Commerce "prospects," or men who might be added to the chamber's membership roster, he saw no reason why they shouldn't join. All eight of the prospects were business men on East Sixth street or on the east side of town.

And when he returned from his campaign he had signed all of the eight prospects—each membership card accompanied by the required fee of \$25. Mr. Ferris was assisted by his son, John Ferris, in securing the new members. The list includes:

George Daywood, W. M. Daywood & Sons, 519 East Sixth street; Austin Sausage Kitchen, J. W. Fletcher, 606 East Sixth street; Joe J. Daywood, 706 East Sixth street; Jake Frank, Frank Brothers, 301 East Sixth street; Charles Wolf, Charles Wolf & Co., 324 East Fifth street; S. G. Warren, 609 Red River street; J. B. Branton, 701 Red River street, and George Altal, 611 East Fifth street.

The Austin American (1914-1973); Austin, Tex.. 14 Aug 1927: B44.

The Austin Statesman (1921-1973); Austin, Tex.. 08 Oct 1930: 2.

S. Ferris Firm Grows With City

Four Buildings Now Home This Establishment

Trolley cars drawn by mules rolled down Congress' avenue in 1895 and turned eastward at Sixth street, then a dusty, bumpy street bordered with scattered frame buildings. On the north side of the street about five blocks from Congress avenue stood a small grocery store, and on the opposite corner a stone blacksmith shop.

In 1936, electric cars run down the center of a wide smooth paved street, the Sixth street today. At the corner of the old frame hundred block where the blacksmith shop stood is the very modern department store of S. Ferris and Sons. No longer is it the grocery store housed in one building on the north corner. To this firm which was founded by S. Ferris in 1895, includes four buildings in this same block covering from 501 through 507. It is one of the largest department stores in the City of Austin.

The founder of this expanding business, S. Ferris, was born in Beirut, Syria, in 1872. At 16, he came to the United States and settled in Nebraska. Here for years, he traded and bartered with other pioneers. In 1895, he arrived in Austin, and was so impressed with the beautiful country here, decided to settle permanently in a small town of about 15,000.

The grocery store was opened in 1895 and looked toward the present site of the firm. A few years later, Ferris moved the business into a new building just across the street. Since then he has added other parts to the building until in 1925 it attained its present size. It was then that the old grocery store forever disappeared and the name S. Ferris and Sons Department Store originated. The grocery store was a part of the past and the department store, the future.

In 1925, Ferris realized the need for an exclusive shop for women in Austin. The Marie Antoinette Shop was established at 107 Sixth street to meet this need. This shop was moved in 1935, to its present location at 814 Congress. Hand-selected merchandise of exceptional value is featured in this exclusive shop. Nick Ferris, son of S. Ferris, and manager of the Marie Antoinette was given special training in the buying and management of such a shop. He is assisting in the management by his brother Alex.

Although 63 years old, Mr. Ferris is still active as superintendent of both businesses. John and George Ferris are directly associated with him in the management of the business on East Sixth street, and have been trained for their particular department work.

Mr. Ferris has never been associated with any company, but he remained an independent merchant. He believes that by doing so, he can better anticipate and serve the needs of the people of Austin.

This year completes the firm's 41st year as a business institution in Austin. Forty-one years of personal management and service which have kept pace with the growing city. By continuing this service and close relationship to the needs of their customers, the firm will continue to expand as it has expanded from the Grocery store to its present day status, Mr. Ferris said.

The Austin American (1914-1973); Austin, Tex.. 19 July 1936: C4

S. Ferris Sons, One of City's Oldest Business Houses, Sold To Texas-New Mexico Firm

Sale of one of Austin's oldest mercantile establishments was made known Saturday, when it was announced that S. Ferris Sons, 501-3 East Sixth street, had been bought by Morris and William Levine.

The sale takes effect Feb. 19 or 20.

The Levine brothers, new owners, operate 11 other stores in Texas and New Mexico.

The East Sixth street firm was founded 43 years ago by S. Ferris. His sons, George and Nick Ferris, are partners in the business. Another son, Alex Ferris, was also in business with his father until last December, when he sold his interest and joined the army air corps.

George Ferris, spokesman for the partners, said the sale effected only the establishment at 501-3 East Sixth, and that they retained ownership of the Marie Antoinette shop on Congress.

"The Levine brothers are highly rated and well thought of in the mercantile field," Mr. Ferris said of the new owners. "They have the facilities and are equipped to do a bigger and better business here."

Mass Is Sung For S. Ferris

Requiem high mass was sung for S. Ferris, Austin merchant, at St. Mary's Cathedral at 10 a. m. Monday, with the Rev. Joseph McAllister officiating. The Most Rev. L. J. Reicher, bishop of Austin, participated in the last rites, giving absolution.

The Rev. James Gibbons served as deacon and the Rev. Frank Weber as sub-deacon.

The church was filled to capacity with persons of many races and creeds. Among them was a sprinkling of nuns.

The family and relatives marched in a body down the long aisle following the casket as it was wheeled to a position before the altar.

After the mass, Father McAllister delivered a farewell address over the remains.

Pallbearers were John A. Peninger, Herman P. Becker, James P. Nash, Ralph Schneider, Fred Joseph, Dennis Macken, S. Jack Balagia and Charles Balagia. Burial was in Mount Calvary Cemetery. Rosary services were held at the Cook Funeral Home Sunday night.

The Austin American (1914-1973); Austin, Tex.. 08 Feb 1942: 1.

The Austin Statesman (1921-1973); Austin, Tex.. 13 June 1949: 12.



The Austin Statesman (1921-1973); Austin, Tex.. 26 Sep 1967: 28.

Permits

OWNER	Bernard Mason	ADDRESS	505 East 6th
PLAT	9	LOT	2 & 3
		BLK.	
SUBDIVISION	Resub. of block go Lots 7 & 8 original city		
OCCUPANCY	Book Store		
BLDG. PERMIT #	189920	DATE	1-10-80
		OWNERS ESTIMATE	2,500.00
CONTRACTOR	Owner	NO. OF FIXTURES	
WATER TAP REC#		SEWER TAP REC#	