

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION
DEMOLITION AND RELOCATION PERMITS
FEBRUARY 7, 2024
PR-2023-101976; GF-2023-104770
ETHEL McDONALD AND ELMER JACKSON HOUSE/FASHIONETTE BEAUTY SHOP
1206 EAST 13TH STREET

PROPOSAL

Rehab and remodel a ca. 1936 house and home-based business.

PROJECT SPECIFICATIONS

- 1) Remove non-original aluminum siding and repair wood siding beneath, replacing in-kind where needed.
- 2) Replace non-original windows and reopen infilled windows.
- 3) Replace roof in-kind with new shingles.
- 4) Repair or replace missing or deteriorated elements, including rafter ends, window screens, brackets, gable vent, and fascia. Non-original porch detailing will not be reconstructed.

ARCHITECTURE

One-story Craftsman bungalow with horizontal wood siding, a full-width porch beneath a wide gabled roof, and a historic-age gabled rear addition. Some of the building's character-defining features are missing, including brick porch piers likely removed during aluminum siding installation. The windows have been replaced, but the original openings have not been modified.

RESEARCH

Please review the information provided by the property owner below in *Historical information* on Ethel McDonald Jackson, Elmer Q. Jackson, and their family's significant community impact in Robertson Hill.

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 potential historic landmarks. The following standards apply to the proposed project:

Repair and alterations

1. General standards

The proposal mostly repairs or replaces historic material in-kind.

3. Roofs

The proposed replacement shingles and roof repair are appropriate.

4. Exterior walls and trim

Removal of aluminum siding and repair of underlying siding is appropriate.

5. Windows, doors, and screens

The existing vinyl replacement windows are not appropriate. Repair of existing historic-age windows for use at the front of the building, as specified on the demolition sheet provided, is appropriate as long as dimensions remain consistent. The reopening of historic-age openings that have been enclosed is appropriate, provided that the new fenestration is compatible in materials, size, and configuration. The replacement of missing historic-age screens as specified in the demolition sheet is appropriate and encouraged.

6. Porches

The proposed project does not recreate non-historic porch elements, which is appropriate; however, replacing the brick piers and tapered posts supporting the gabled porch from available photographs would restore a significant character-defining feature to this potential landmark.

Summary

The project meets most of the applicable standards, but vinyl window replacement may preclude the property from retaining the integrity required for designation as a historic landmark.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

An application for historic landmark zoning has been submitted to Land Use Review and will be forwarded to the Historic Landmark Commission pending payment of fees. The applicant has provided a summary of the building's history as part of the pending historic zoning request, available below.

PROPERTY EVALUATION

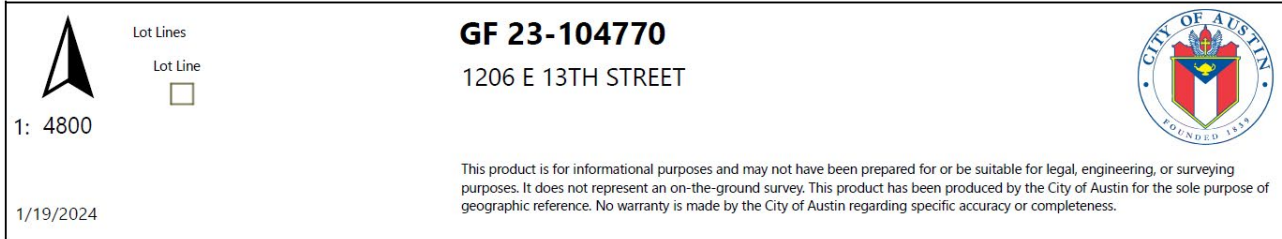
The 2016 East Austin Historic Resource Survey lists the property as contributing to potential local and National Register Historic Districts.

Designation Criteria—Historic Landmark

- 1) The building is more than 50 years old.
- 2) The building appears to retain moderate integrity. Window replacement, siding restoration, and remodeling of the back and front houses were approved in 2022 by Development Services without review by the Historic Preservation Office or Historic Landmark Commission after fire damaged both buildings.
- 3) Properties must meet two criteria for landmark designation (LDC §25-2-352). Staff has evaluated the property and determined that it does meet two criteria:
 - a. Architecture. The building is constructed in a vernacular style with Craftsman influences, including an addition built for the Fashionette Beauty Shop.
 - b. Historical association. The property is associated with cosmetologist and entrepreneur Ethel McDonald Jackson and her husband, Elmer Q. Jackson. The McDonald and Jackson families, pillars of the Robertson Hill community, provided both essential business services and neighborhood outreach to their neighborhood during their residence at the property.
 - 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. Home-based businesses were an important part of life in segregated East Austin. Though few residents had the capital to construct new commercial buildings, many entrepreneurs used their homes to provide professional services that customers of color could not access elsewhere. Beauty shops for Black customers were particularly important, as they provided both a gathering space for women of color and an invaluable service tailored to African American beauty, hair, and personal style.
 - e. Landscape feature. The property was not evaluated for its ability to possess a significant natural or designed landscape with artistic, aesthetic, cultural, or historical value to the city.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

If the Commission feels that the windows do not negatively impact the probability of landmark designation, approve the application. Alternately, invite the applicant to the next meeting of the Architectural Review Committee to discuss alternatives to proposed vinyl windows.



PROPERTY INFORMATION*Photos*



Partial demolition and remodel application, 2023



Pending historic zoning application, 2023



Pending historic zoning application, 2023 – back house

Occupancy History

City Directory Research, October 2023

1959	Fashionette Beauty Shop
1955	Fashionette Beauty Shop
1952	Virginia F. Corprew, renter – serviceman, Visual Education
1949	Elmer and Ethel M. Jackson, owners – driver, Deluxe Cab
1944	Ethel McDonald, owner – cosmetologist at beauty shop, 1103 Navasota St.
1941	Isaiah and Rosetta Bennett, renters – laborer
1939	Address listed as 1106 E. 13 th St. Rosetta Bennett, renter
1935	Address not listed.

See in-depth occupancy information below.

Historical Information

Information provided by property owner, Ms. Belinda M. Davis, as part of a pending historic zoning application.

Thank you for the privilege of submitting this application for historic preservation distinction for my childhood homes located at 1206 East 13th Street and 1209 Bob Harrison in Austin, 78702. The homes are owned by "NineB Properties LLC ", of which I am a part of. The torch has been passed to me as part owner and a party of the LLC to care for and preserve my childhood homes. These properties represent the architectural integrity of the original Robertson Hill Neighborhood homes, as well as, historical documentation of a long- standing business which was vital to the support of the community.

My parents, Elmer and Ethel McDonald Jackson (Daddy and Mama) were grandchildren of enslaved African Americans. They rose above that distinction to become entrepreneurs and home owners. Despite encountering many obstacles, they were able to achieve homeownership in the historic Robertson Hill Neighborhood, enrich the East Austin Community as self- sufficient independent business owners and to do so in and from their home at 1206 East 13th Street.

Homeownership in Robertson Hill

For many years it has been my desire to improve the properties and keep them in our family. My Mama's desire to bless her family and friends is paramount in my heart and on my mind. My Mama's love, care and kindness totally transformed my life and my sister's life for the better. I desire to obey her request to not sell the property. Furthermore, I want to bless future generations of our family by enhancing the legacy of Ethel and Elmer Jackson by renovating these properties as I remember them. These properties must be income producing in order to keep them in the family.

Out of respect and love for the legacy of Historic East Austin, I am determined to replicate the properties to what the neighborhood looked like in the 1950's and 1960's. The following addresses of homes in the 1200 block of East 13th Street have not altered their architectural appearance and integrity:

1200, 1201, 1203, 1205 and 1206.

The home at 1208 was moved from another location to the vacant 1208 lot and it resembles some of the original homes on the block. The other homes in the block do not represent the authentic East Austin neighborhood I grew up in. It is sad to witness the change to the community that means so much to me. It's as though the true identity of our community is in the process of being permanently erased. The history and preservation of "Old East Austin" is definitely needed.

Most of our former neighbors have passed on and their legacies and contributions to our community were not recorded or preserved. Many of those homes have been demolished and new houses built in their place. I desire the opposite outcome for my childhood homes. My goal is to preserve the legacies of Elmer and Ethel Jackson by obtaining historical preservation distinction of the 13th Street and Bob Harrison properties.

Historical Association

My Mama often spoke of why she did not attend a four- year college after high school. As a child of The Great Depression, she wanted to enter the workforce as soon as possible in order to assist her family in any way needed. She became a student at the Crescent Beauty School on East Eleventh Street after graduation from Emile High School in Bastrop, Texas. Once she graduated from beauty college, she became an instructor at the school. She also worked as a hairdresser at Triple Mirror Beauty Shop (then located at 605 San Jacinto and listed in the 1940 Austin City Directory) in Austin.

Once she purchased the 13th Street property in 1944, a small addition to the home was built for her beauty shop. The shop was named "Fashionette Beauty Shop". Mama's beauty shop was operational until July 1974. The advertisement for Fashionette Beauty Shop is recorded in the 1958 Austin City Directory.

Our neighborhood in the Robertson Hill Freedom Colony was once filled with many African American pioneers and businesses. Those businesses included *King Tears Mortuary, Owens Garage, Phillips and Upshaw Mortuary, Phillips Humble/Exxon Service Station, Angelina Motel, Katie's Kitchen, Caldwell Barber Shop, Madison Florist Shop, Gilbert Business School and Pease Signs. Those businesses were all within a three (3) block radius of our 13th Street home.

Fashionette Beauty Shop was a vital part of our community. Generations of families patronized Mama's business. She was a licensed cosmetologist for over thirty years. She regularly received new clients from references from the close- knit Robertson Hill neighborhood business community. Mama even had a few male clients who would come after normal business hours to have their hair pressed and curled to maintain their "processed" hair style that was popular in the 1960's.

Ethel and Elmer Jackson were influential members of the Historic East Austin Community. They consistently put the needs of others over their personal needs. Our Mama was always collecting clothing for the less fortunate and money to purchase flowers for bereaved neighbors. The Fashionette Beauty Shop was a hub of activity for neighbors and friends. A place of refuge, counseling, to receive a word of encouragement, even a place to receive prayer.

Daddy and Mama were concerned about the welfare of others. Mama eagerly shared words of wisdom and encouragement with her clients, family and friends. She was kind and approachable. She was sought out to confide in and trusted to give wise advice. She compassionately “walked the talk”. She put her faith into action.

Daddy was well known in our community as he drove throughout East Austin on a daily basis in his job as a taxi driver. He worked part time for Phillips and Upshaw Mortuary as a funeral director and an ambulance driver. He was also a notary and people would visit our home to have documents notarized.

They both fed the hungry, housed the homeless, cared for the sick. They strived to make sure the needs of others were met. I am convinced they made monetary loans to neighbors and friends that were never repaid. They sacrificed to provide for their parents, siblings, nieces, nephews, cousins and friends who needed education, housing, food and love. Our neighbors knew compassionate assistance was available at our home, 1206 East 13th Street.

Community Value

The property at 1206 East 13th Street has been in our family for at least eighty (80) years. My Mama, Ethel McDonald Jackson purchased the family homestead from Maud McDonald Collins and W.D. Collins, her sister and brother-in-law, on July 20, 1944. Ethel purchased the property as a single woman who worked as a licensed cosmetologist. It has been said that the property was built by Mr. Greene, husband of Sophia McDonald Greene, the aunt of Ethel and Maud. Elmer Jackson married Ethel McDonald on June 26, 1946 in Austin and 1206 East 13th Street became his primary residence as well.

Our residence was significant and unique because it was not only our home but was also Mama’s place of business. Daddy was a cab driver with Harlem Cab Company until his death. His cab was parked at our home when he was not driving passengers to and from their destinations. His cab was parked in the driveway at our home when he died at home on December 24, 1971. Ethel lived on the property until her death on November 30, 1974. They both lived, worked and died in their beloved home.

My sister, Brenda and I completed our primary education and college while residing at 1206 East 13th Street. Mama and Daddy’s sacrifices, hard work and perseverance enabled my sister and I the opportunity to attend and graduate from college. We both earned college degrees in May 1975.

My parents raised two daughters at the 13th Street and Bob Harrison properties. They also supported family members and friends at the same time. Many family members were helped by living at the 13th Street property (refer to the attached chronological list of occupants). Their compassionate gifts of opening their home to others in need resulted in many individual successes and a stronger East Austin community.

It is still paramount in my mind not to sell the properties they worked so hard to purchase and maintain. Ownership of this property was fundamental to their goal to become self-sufficient and to be able to bless others through home ownership. This property is near and dear to my heart. This is also the sentiment of my immediate family.

I moved to Maryland in 1976 and Brenda moved in 1988 to another home in Austin. The property was rental property from that time on. The properties, 1206 East 13th Street and 1209 Bob Harrison, have been vacant since 2008. The properties are currently in the process of being renovating to their original appearance.

Once again, my goal is to preserve the legacies of my parents, Elmer and Ethel Jackson by obtaining historical preservation distinction of the 13th Street and Bob Harrison properties.

Please call or email me if you have any questions regarding this application. Thanks for all you do to preserve the authenticity of Austin communities.

Sincerely,
Belinda McDonald Davis



*Ethel McDonald Jackson in front of her home at 1206 East 13th Street.
Early 1970's*



Original Fashionette Beauty Shop Sign



*Ethel McDonald Jackson, Curtis McDonald and
Belinda and Brenda McDonald in backyard of
1209 Bob Harrison.
Late 1950's*



*Brenda and Belinda McDonald in front yard of 1206 East 13th Street.
Early 1960's*



L to R:
Curtis McDonald, Oscar & Virgie McDonald,
Ethel McDonald Jackson & Thaddeus McDonald in
front of 1209 Bob Harrison
on Curtis' & Thaddeus' Graduation from
L.C. Anderson High School



W.D. Collins and Maud McDonald Collins,
Ethel McDonald Jackson,
&
McDonald Family
1947



Richard McDonald, brother of Ethel Jackson standing in front of
1206 East 13th Street.
Mid 1970's



*Family of the late Ethel and Elmer Jackson in front of
1206 East 13th Street. December 1974*



*Brenda McDonald and Lawrence McDonald
Leaving from 1206 East 13th Street for
Brenda's college graduation ceremony.
May 1975*

*Chronological List of Occupants/Residents/Tenants

Ethel McDonald Jackson		purchased home 7/1944
Elmer Q. Jackson	Taxi driver & Funeral Director	married Ethel on 6/26/1946
Ellliott Mae Williams		rented a room
Rosa Lee Jackson	Housekeeper	rented a room
Aaron & Bea Roberts	Cook	late 1950's renters
Mr. Mack	Atlanta Life Insurance Agent	rented room
Curtis McDonald	student	9/1946-6/1949
Thaddeus McDonald	student	9/1946-6/1949
Agricultural Visitors from Nigeria/Agri.Extension Service		early 1960s
VISTA volunteers (3)	Summer 1970	rented rooms
Robert Ray Jackson	March 1971-June 1972	rented room
Richard McDonald	retired farmer	1/1965-9/1976
Oscar C. McDonald	retired farmer	1962-November 1964
Belinda McDonald	April 1956-April 1976	primary residence
Brenda J. McDonald	April 1956-May 1988	primary residence
Samuel Williams, Sr.	June 1976-May 1988	primary residence
Shonda Williams	January 1978-May 1988	primary residence
Samuel Williams II	January 1979-May 1988	primary residence

Elmer Jackson married Ethel McDonald on June 26, 1946 in Austin and 1206 East 13th Street became his primary residence.

Elliot Williams was a close family member who rented a room after she graduated high school. She left Texas and relocated to California. She moved back to Texas in 1965 and rented a room at 1206 East 13th.

Rosa Lee Jackson is the mother- in- law of Ethel McDonald Jackson and lived at the property for a short period of time.

Mr. and Mrs. Roberts rented a room at 1206 in the late 1950's. Mr. Roberts was a cook in a historic Oak Hill Restaurant and Mrs. Roberts was a housekeeper for a private family in Austin.

Mr. Mack was an insurance agent with Atlanta Life Insurance Agency. He did not live in Austin but traveled to Austin for business from time to time. He rented a room at 1206 and 1209 because he was not allowed to rent a room in a hotel as an African American.

Curtis and Thaddeus McDonald are the younger siblings of Ethel McDonald Jackson. They lived with her and their brother-in-law beginning in September 1946, less than three months after they were married. The siblings relocated from Cedar Creek, Texas to Austin to attend the Original L.C. Anderson High School. The brothers had just completed primary school in Cedar Creek at the two room Hopewell Rosenwald School. It was a tremendous educational advantage for Curtis and Thaddeus to attend the Original L.C. Anderson High School. I believe this personal sacrifice contributed to the educational and personal success of both brothers.

Both brothers graduated from Anderson High School with honors and both attended college on scholarships. Curtis attended Huston Tillotson College, University of Pittsburgh, Texas Southern University and graduated from the University of Texas with a PhD in Chemistry. He worked in higher education as a college professor, head of chemistry department at his alma mater, Texas Southern University. He also worked for NASA and the Oakridge Laboratories.

Thaddeus McDonald attended Prairie View College and University of California at Berkeley. He served in the U. S. Marine Corps. He was employed as an agricultural extension agent in Lee and Travis County, Texas. In that employment position, Thaddeus would host agricultural agents from Africa. Those visitors were not allowed to stay in Austin hotels. Many of those agricultural agents would rent a room from Mama and Daddy during their visit to Texas.

In the summer of 1970, three (3) young people with Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) came to live in our home for a period of six to eight weeks. They were college students, one female and two males. My sister and I were enriched socially and educationally by our interactions with our summer tenants.

Robert Jackson was the nephew of Ethel and Elmer Jackson. He came to live at 1206 East 13th Street when he left Dallas area and relocated to Austin. He worked for J.R. Reed Music Company during his Austin residency.

Richard McDonald was the bother of Ethel Jackson and the brother -in -law of Elmer Jackson. He came to live at the 13th Street residence after the death of his father, Oscar McDonald. He sold cedar wood to local barbeque restaurants. He would chop the cedar wood from his property in Cedar Creek and bring it to the 13th Street home in Austin to sell. He also made lamps from the branches of the cedar trees to sell. He would chop down cedar trees and sell them from the front yard of our home during the Christmas holiday season.

My Granddaddy, Oscar C. McDonald, came to live at 1206 East 13th Street in 1962 after collapsing from dizziness. He was a retired farmer and lived on the land he inherited from his father. His sons brought him from his home in Cedar Creek to his daughter's home. After receiving medical attention, he was diagnosed with high blood pressure and hardening of the arteries. He lived at 1206 until his death in November 1964.

Belinda and Brenda McDonald, the daughters of Lawrence and Shirley McDonald, arrived in Texas on April 30, 1956. They are the nieces of Ethel and Elmer McDonald. They lived at 1209 Bob Harrison (the home directly behind 1206 East 13th which is categorized as property improvement) until May 1960. The family moved to the 13th Street home because they had outgrown the smaller Bob Harrison home. Belinda and Brenda completed their primary education and college while residing there. Their sacrifices, hard work and perseverance enabled my sister and I the opportunity to attend and graduate from college. Both earned college degrees in May 1975.

Year	Occupant Name & Reference	Source
1944-74	Ethel McDonald Jackson	Personal knowledge
1946-1971	Elmer Jackson	"
1956-1976	Belinda McDonald (Davis)	"
1956-1988	Brenda McDonald (Williams)	"
1976-1988	Samuel Williams, Sr.	"

Source: Ms. Belinda Davis, draft historic zoning application, 2023

Permits

Elmo Jackson 1206 East 13th St.
40 38 6 Pt. of 3&4 B
O'Reilly Subdiv.
Frame addition
29487 3-16-46 \$1100.00
W. A. Brooks

Elmer Jackson	1206 E. 13th St.
40 3	6

James O'Reilly

Remodle & Repaint Residence.

76619	6/14/60	250.00
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R.D. White -

Build in new closets in house & put in new window
in bedroom & paint outside.

5-19-77 #164496 remodel exist res 2000.00