

## ZONING CHANGE REVIEW SHEET

CASE NUMBER: C14H-2023-0105

HLC DATE: September 6, 2023; December 13, 2023    PC DATE: January 23, 2024    CC Date: March 7, 2024

APPLICANT: Historic Landmark Commission (owner-supported)

HISTORIC NAME: State Theatre

WATERSHED: Town Lake

ADDRESS OF PROPOSED ZONING CHANGE: 719 Congress Avenue

ZONING CHANGE: CBD to CBD-H

COUNCIL DISTRICT: 9

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends the proposed zoning change from central business district (CBD) to central business district-historic landmark (CBD-H) combining district zoning.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR LANDMARK DESIGNATION: Architecture, historical associations, community value

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION ACTION: September 6, 2023 – initiate historic zoning (9-0). December 13, 2023—recommend historic zoning (9-0).

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION: Recommend historic zoning per passage of the consent agenda.

CITY COUNCIL ACTION:

CASE MANAGER: Kalan Contreras, 512-974-2727

NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATIONS: Austin Independent School District, Austin Lost and Found Pets, Austin Neighborhoods Council, City of Austin Downtown Commission, Downtown Austin Alliance, Downtown Austin Neighborhood Assn. (DANA), Friends of Austin Neighborhoods, Homeless Neighborhood Association, Neighborhood Empowerment Foundation, Preservation Austin, SELTexas, Sierra Club, Austin Regional Group

### 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 State Theatre was the first theater in Austin specifically designed to screen movies. While other theaters had been constructed primarily for live performances, the State's cinema was purpose-built in 1935 as part of a conversion of an existing building, the old Avenue Hotel, to the plans of architect W. Scott Dunne and the fourth of the Interstate Circuit's Austin theaters (along with the Paramount Theatre, Queen Theatre, and Capitol Theatre). The State Theater is the only Scott Dunne-designed theater still open in Austin; Of his original 44 theaters, only 9 are still in operation. Its facade clearly embodies the characteristics of the Art Deco style.

The historical significance of the theater was promoted best in a letter to Live Oak Director Don Toner from Sinclair Black's architecture firm in 1998: "The State Theater is one of the remaining examples of the American Art Deco Period in the Congress Avenue National Register Historical District. That period of American design is not well represented in Austin as a whole with that absence being most pronounced along Congress Avenue. Sinclair Black & Andrew Vernooy, AIA is extremely pleased to assist Live Oak Theatre in its efforts to preserve the salient features of the State Theater's facade.

Without our combined efforts, the Congress Avenue Historical District will suffer an irrevocable breach in the continuity of its collection of period facades. Should that breach occur, it would deliver quite a blow to Austin's premier historical district." These words are only more significant 25 years later, with the original facade still intact.<sup>1</sup>

**§ 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.*

In the early 20th Century, Congress Avenue was home to 12 theatres, earning the nickname "Show Row." The Paramount and State Theatres are the only two still operating in their original function, and almost all the others have been demolished. With its roots as an entertainment corridor, this section of Congress Avenue is one of the oldest historic districts in Austin. Beyond that, the State is truly significant to the history of Austin's renowned cultural arts identity and a fundamental starting point of the film scene in Austin as the first theater in town explicitly built as a movie house.

It opened on Christmas Day with "The Bride Comes Home," a comedy with Claudette Colbert and Fred MacMurray. At the time of opening, Louis Novy was the manager. When the theatre opened, there was a retail space separating the Paramount Theatre and the State Theater; sometime in the 1940s, the State lobby was expanded, taking over the retail space and making the State and Paramount direct neighbors.

At the time of the State Theater opening, the president of the Interstate Circuit was Karl Hoblitzelle, and the general manager was R.J. O'Donnell. Interstate Circuit's parent company was Paramount Theatres. In 1953, Paramount Theatres merged with American Broadcasting Company, creating American Broadcasting-Paramount Theatres and the Interstate Circuit was a subsidiary. In 1965, they changed the name to American Broadcasting Companies, Inc. (ABC).

By the 1970s, the theatre had fallen on hard times, which lasted through the 1980s. An article suggests Paramount Theatre for the Performing Arts owners John Bernardoni and Charles Eckerman purchased the State Theatre in 1980 with plans to revitalize the space and continue operating it as a discount ticket movie house. Unfortunately, plans fell through with the general national economic decline of the '80s. It was then under the ownership of the City of Austin, and in 1986, the City leased it to Live Oak Productions, a local producing theatre company.<sup>2</sup>

**§ 25-2-352(3)(c)(iv) Community Value.** *The property has a unique location, physical characteristic, or significant feature that contributes to the character, image, or cultural identity of the city, a neighborhood, or a particular group.*

During the decades following a period of urban decay, the revitalization efforts of the city's downtown corridor were heavily reliant on performing arts spaces—notably the State--to bring back the once-thriving district. The theater was founded with community in mind, and this focus has stayed true throughout the theatre's history. Its latest owners have promoted local productions and later worked with the city to make the venue an accessible stage and rehearsal space for other local theatre groups to rent at affordable rates, encouraging and supporting the artist community, so integral to the identity of Austin.<sup>3</sup>

**PARCEL NO.:** 0206030814

**LEGAL DESCRIPTION:** N 40FT OF LOT 5 & S 3FT OF LOT 6 BLOCK 084 ORIGINAL CITY

**ESTIMATED ANNUAL TAX EXEMPTION:** N/A (nonprofit exemption applied)

**APPRAISED VALUE:** \$5,573,039

**PRESENT USE:** Theater

**DATE BUILT/PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE:** ca. 1935; 1935-1973

**INTEGRITY/ALTERATIONS:** High. Alterations have primarily occurred at the interior of the building, with rehabilitation projects occurring in the 1990s. The Historic Landmark Commission approved exterior alterations and rehab in 2023 that do not negatively impact the building's integrity, including adding a balcony at the existing addition, adding a ticket window, and connecting the building internally to the neighboring Paramount Theater.

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<sup>1</sup> Humphrey, Johnathan. Historic zoning application, 2023.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., <https://paramounthistory.org/interstate-theatres-1915-1975/>

PRESENT OWNERS: Live Oak Productions, 719 Congress Ave, Austin Tx 78701-3216

ORIGINAL OWNER(S): Interstate Circuit, Inc.; Karl Hoblitzelle

OTHER HISTORICAL DESIGNATIONS: Contributes to Congress Avenue National Register Historic District



AustinTheatre.org: <https://www.austintheatre.org/about/history/>



*State and Paramount theatres, circa 1936 ( [PICA-32942], Austin History Center, Austin Public Library)*



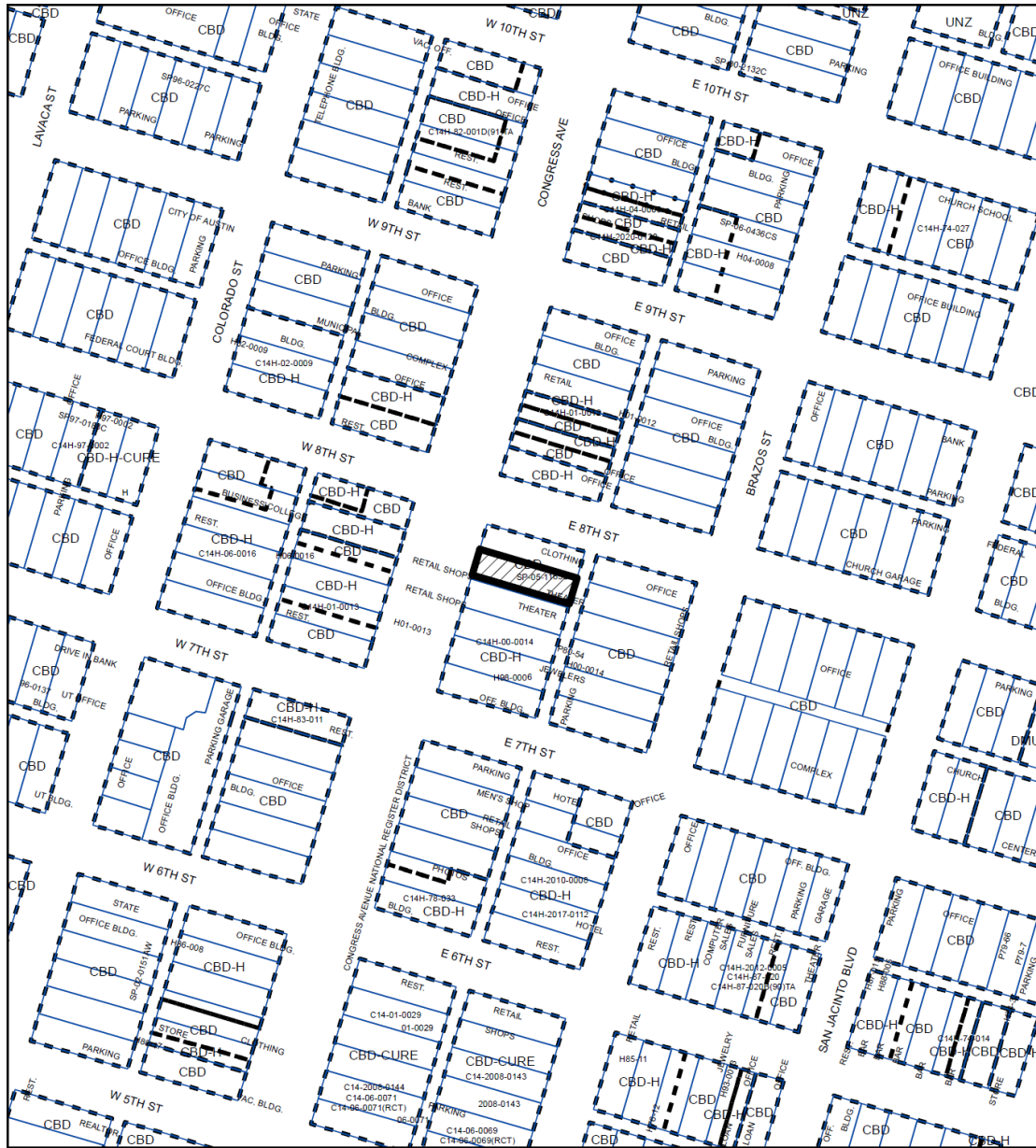
*State Theatre, 1946: <https://services.austintexas.gov/edims/document.cfm?id=209202>*






*Highsmith, Carol M, photographer. The State Theater in Austin, Texas. United States Austin Texas, 2014. -04-19. Photograph. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2014632644/>.*



# LOCATION MAP



-  SUBJECT TRACT
-  PENDING CASE
-  ZONING BOUNDARY

## HISTORIC ZONING

ZONING CASE#: C14H-2023-0105

1" = 200'

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 the Housing and Planning Department for the sole purpose of geographic reference. No warranty is made by the City of Austin regarding specific accuracy or



City of Austin - Historic Preservation Office  
Historic Zoning Application Packet

**A. APPLICATION FOR HISTORIC ZONING**

**PROJECT INFORMATION:**

DEPARTMENTAL USE ONLY	
APPLICATION DATE: _____	FILE NUMBER(S) _____
<b>TENTATIVE HLC DATE: 10-4-23</b>	
TENTATIVE PC or ZAP DATE: _____	
TENTATIVE CC DATE: _____	CITY INITIATED: <b>YES</b>
CASE MANAGER <u>Kalan Contreras</u>	ROLLBACK: YES/NO
APPLICATION ACCEPTED BY: _____	

**BASIC PROJECT DATA:**

1. OWNER'S NAME: Live Oak Productions

2. PROJECT NAME: State Theatre

3. PROJECT STREET ADDRESS (or Range): 719 Congress Avenue

ZIP 78701 COUNTY: Travis

IF PROJECT ADDRESS CANNOT BE DEFINED ABOVE:

LOCATED \_\_\_\_\_ FRONTAGE FEET ALONG THE N. S. E. W. (CIRCLE ONE) SIDE OF \_\_\_\_\_ (ROAD NAME PROPERTY FRONTS ONTO), WHICH IS APPROXIMATELY \_\_\_\_\_ DISTANCE FROM ITS INTERSECTION WITH \_\_\_\_\_ CROSS STREET.

**AREA TO BE REZONED:**

4. ACRES \_\_\_\_\_ (OR) SQ.FT. \_\_\_\_\_

5. ZONING AND LAND USE INFORMATION:

EXISTING ZONING	EXISTING USE	TRACT# (IF MORE THAN 1)	ACRES / SQ. FT.	PROPOSED USE	PROPOSED ZONING
<u>CBD</u>	<u>Theater</u>	_____	<u>0.1579 acres</u>	<u>Theater</u>	<u>CBD-H</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

**RELATED CURRENT CASES:**

6. ACTIVE ZONING CASE? (NO)	FILE NUMBER: _____
7. RESTRICTIVE COVENANT? (NO)	FILE NUMBER: _____
8. SUBDIVISION? (NO)	FILE NUMBER: _____
9. SITE PLAN? (NO)	FILE NUMBER: _____

City of Austin - Historic Preservation Office  
**Historic Zoning Application Packet**

**PROPERTY DESCRIPTION (SUBDIVISION REFERENCE OR METES AND BOUNDS):**

**10a. SUBDIVISION REFERENCE:** Name: N 40FT OF LOT 5 & S 3FT OF LOT 6 BLOCK 084 ORIGINAL CITY

Block(s) 084 Lot(s) 5 Outlot(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Plat Book: 1 Page \_\_\_\_\_

Number: Instrument #: 433187

**10b. METES AND BOUNDS** (Attach two copies of certified field notes if subdivision reference is not available or zoning includes partial lots)

**DEED REFERENCE CONVEYING PROPERTY TO PRESENT OWNER AND TAX PARCEL I.D.:**

**11. VOLUME:** 12813 **PAGE:** 01358 **TAX PARCEL I.D. NO.** 0206030814

**OTHER PROVISIONS:**

**12. IS PROPERTY IN A ZONING COMBINING DISTRICT / OVERLAY ZONE?** YES

TYPE OF COMBINING DIST/OVERLAY ZONE (NCCD, NP, etc) CVC/Congress Avenue

**13. LOCATED IN A LOCAL OR NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT?** YES

**14. IS A TIA REQUIRED?** NO (NOT REQUIRED IF BASE ZONING IS NOT CHANGING)

TRIPS PER DAY: \_\_\_\_\_

TRAFFIC SERIAL ZONE(S): \_\_\_\_\_

**OWNERSHIP TYPE:**

**15.** ☒ x **SOLE** ☐ **COMMUNITY PROPERTY** ☐ **PARTNERSHIP** ☐ **CORPORATION** ☐ **TRUST**

If ownership is other than sole or community property, list individuals/partners/principals below or attach separate sheet.

**OWNER INFORMATION:**

**16. OWNER CONTACT INFORMATION**

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ NAME: Johnathan Humphry

FIRM NAME: Paramount & Stateside Theatres TELEPHONE NUMBER: 512-692-0515

STREET ADDRESS: 719 Congress Avenue

CITY: Austin STATE: Texas ZIP CODE: 78701

EMAIL ADDRESS: [REDACTED]

**AGENT INFORMATION (IF APPLICABLE):**

**17. AGENT CONTACT INFORMATION**

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ NAME: Kalan Contreras

FIRM NAME: City of Austin Historic Preservation Office TELEPHONE NUMBER: 512-974-2727

STREET ADDRESS: 1000 E. 11th Street

CITY: Austin STATE: TX ZIP CODE: 78702

CONTACT PERSON: same TELEPHONE NUMBER: same

EMAIL ADDRESS: kalan.contreras@austintexas.gov

GENERAL WARRANTY DEED

15.2  
FILM CODE

00005510894

THE STATE OF TEXAS

§

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS:

COUNTY OF TRAVIS

§

§

THAT MICHAEL J. KUHN, TRUSTEE ("Grantor") for the consideration hereinafter stated, paid and secured to be paid by LIVE OAK PRODUCTIONS, a Texas non-profit corporation ("Grantee"), whose mailing address is 719 Congress Avenue, Austin, Texas, 78701, the receipt and sufficiency of which consideration is hereby acknowledged and confessed, has GRANTED, SOLD AND CONVEYED, and by these presents, does GRANT, SELL AND CONVEY, unto Grantee, subject to all of the reservations, exceptions and other matters set forth or referred to herein, the following described property:

- (i) That certain real property in Travis County, Texas, which is described on Exhibit "A" attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference, together with all oil, gas, and other minerals in or under the surface thereof, and all executory leasing rights with respect thereto (the "Land");
- (ii) All buildings, structures, parking areas, utility lines, utility facilities, utility improvements, street and drainage improvements, and other improvements of any kind or nature located in, on, or under the Land (all of the foregoing being referred to herein collectively as the "Improvements");
- (iii) All equipment, fixtures, and other items of any kind or nature which are attached or affixed to the Land or the Improvements, including, without limitation, all electrical, gas, plumbing, air conditioning, and heating installations and equipment, and all built-in appliances and other items of equipment (all of the foregoing being referred to herein collectively as the "Fixtures"); and
- (iv) All appurtenances benefiting or pertaining to the Land or the Improvements, including, without limitation, all of Grantor's right, title, and interest in and to all streets, alleys, rights-of-way, or easements adjacent to or benefiting the Land, and all strips or pieces of land abutting, bounding, or adjacent to the Land (all of the foregoing being referred to herein collectively as the "Appurtenances").

The Land, Improvements, Fixtures, and Appurtenances are collectively referred to herein as the "Property".

TO HAVE AND TO HOLD the Property, together with all and singular the rights and appurtenances thereto in anywise belonging unto Grantee, and Grantee's successors or assigns, forever; and, subject to all of the matters set forth or referred to herein, Grantor does hereby bind itself and its successors to WARRANT AND FOREVER DEFEND all and singular the Property unto Grantee, Grantee's successors and assigns, against every person whomsoever lawfully claiming or to claim the same, or any part thereof, provided, however that this conveyance is made by Grantor and accepted by Grantee subject to: (a) all protrusions and encroachments shown on the survey of the Property dated August 14, 1996, prepared by Roy D. Smith, Registered Professional Land Surveyor No. 4094; and (b) all standby fees, taxes and assessments by any taxing authority for the current and all subsequent years, and all liens securing the payment of any of the foregoing.

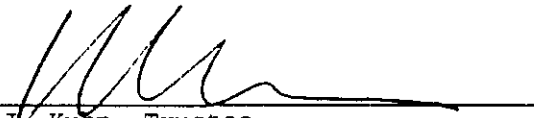
The consideration for this conveyance is as follows: A full valuable cash consideration to Grantor in hand paid by Grantee, the receipt of which is hereby

REAL PROPERTY RECORDS  
TRAVIS COUNTY, TEXAS



acknowledged, and for the payment of which no lien, express or implied, is retained against the Property, and one certain promissory note ("Note") of even date herewith in the original principal sum of \$290,000.00, made, executed and delivered by Grantee, payable to the order of NationsBank of Texas, N.A., a national banking association. The Note is by reference incorporated herein as fully and completely as if the same were here set forth verbatim. The vendor's lien, together with superior title remaining in Grantor, as vendor, is retained against the Property in favor of the holder of the Note ("Beneficiary") for the security of and until the full and final payment of the Note, when and whereupon this deed shall become absolute, and superior title remaining in Grantor, is hereby granted and conveyed to Beneficiary, without recourse or warranty of any kind or nature. Payment of the Note is additionally secured by a deed of trust lien on the Property created in the deed of trust ("Deed of Trust") of even date herewith, from Grantee to Michael F. Hord, Trustee, and in the event of default in the payment of the Note, or in the event of default in the performance of any of the covenants or conditions contained in the Deed of Trust which on the part of the grantor therein are to be kept and performed, then Beneficiary shall have the option to mature the Note and to foreclose the vendor's lien herein retained or the Deed of Trust lien which secures the payment of the Note, or both of said liens, either under the power of sale contained in the Deed of Trust or by court proceedings, as Beneficiary may elect.

EXECUTED AND DELIVERED the 12 day of November, 1996.


  
Michael J. Kuhn, Trustee

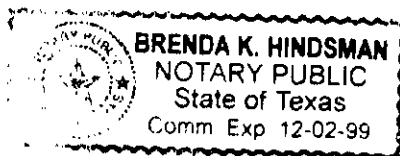
THE STATE OF TEXAS

COUNTY OF TRAVIS

This instrument was acknowledged before me this 12 day of November, 1996, by Michael J. Kuhn, Trustee.

(SEAL)

  
Notary Public Signature



RETURN TO: BRENDA HINDSMAN  
HERITAGE TITLE  
98 SAN JUANITO BLVD. STE. 400  
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78701

GF#

FIELD NOTES  
FOR

6,939 Square Feet - Portion of Lots 5 & 6 - Block 84  
Original City of Austin

ALL OF THAT CERTAIN PARCEL OR TRACT OF LAND BEING A PORTION OF LOTS 5 AND 6 IN BLOCK 84 OF THE ORIGINAL CITY OF AUSTIN, TRAVIS COUNTY, TEXAS ACCORDING TO THE MAP OR PLAT ON FILE AT THE GENERAL LAND OFFICE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS, SAID TRACT OF LAND BEING GENERALLY DESCRIBED AS THE NORTH 40 FEET OF LOT 5 AND THE SOUTH 3 FEET OF LOT 6 IN THE SAID BLOCK 84 AND BEING MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED BY METES AND BOUNDS AS FOLLOWS:

BEGINNING FOR REFERENCE at the centerline intersection of Congress Avenue and East 8th Street;

THENCE with the centerline of East 8th Street, S 71°06' E for a distance of 60.00 feet;

THENCE S 19°00' W for a distance of 40.00 feet to a point inside a building at the Southeast corner of the intersection of Congress Avenue and East 8th Street, same being the Northwest corner of the said Lot 6;

THENCE with the East r.o.w. line of Congress Avenue, S 19°00' W for a distance of 43.37 feet to a point inside a building wall at the Northwest corner and PLACE OF BEGINNING hereof;

THENCE with the North line of the herein described tract, which passes through the exterior walls and the interior air space of an existing building on the herein described tract, S 71°06' E for a distance of 160.00 feet to a hilti nail set in concrete in the West line of an alley at the Northeast corner hereof;

THENCE with the said alley line, same being the East line of the said Lots 5 & 6, S 19°00' W for a distance of 43.37 feet to an iron pipe found at the Southeast corner hereof;

THENCE with the South line of the herein described tract, approximately following the ground level seam line between two existing buildings, N 71°06' W for a distance 160.00 to a point in the East r.o.w. line of Congress Avenue inside a building wall at the Southwest corner hereof;

THENCE with the said r.o.w. line N 19°00' E for a distance of 43.37 feet to the PLACE OF BEGINNING and containing 6,939 square feet of land, more or less.

Surveyed By:

ROY D. SMITH SURVEYORS, P.C.

*Roy D. Smith*  
ROY D. SMITH  
REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL SURVEYOR  
August 14, 1996

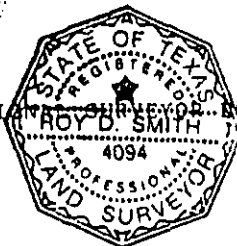


EXHIBIT A

REAL PROPERTY RECORDS  
TRAVIS COUNTY, TEXAS

12813 1360

FILED

96 NOV 13 PM 4:42

DANA L. JOHNSON  
COUNTY CLERK  
TRAVIS COUNTY, TEXAS

STATE OF TEXAS COUNTY OF TRAVIS

I hereby certify that this instrument was FILED on  
the date and at the time stamped hereon by me; and  
was duly RECORDED, in the Volume and Page of the  
named RECORDS of Travis County, Texas, on

NOV 13 1996



*Dana L. Johnson*  
COUNTY CLERK  
TRAVIS COUNTY, TEXAS

REAL PROPERTY RECORDS  
TRAVIS COUNTY, TEXAS

12813 1361

## State Theater History

In 1935, the first theater in Austin specifically designed to screen movies was built the State Theater. It was a conversion of an existing building, the old Avenue Hotel, to the plans of architect W. Scott Dunne and the fourth of the Interstate Circuit's Austin Theatres (along with the Paramount Theatre, Queen Theatre, and Capitol Theatre). It opened on Christmas Day with "The Bride Comes Home," a comedy with Claudette Colbert and Fred MacMurray. At the time of opening, Louis Novy was the manager. When the theatre opened, there was a retail space separating the Paramount Theatre and the State Theater; sometime in the 1940s, the State lobby was expanded, taking over the retail space and making the State and Paramount direct neighbors.

At the time of the State Theater opening, the president of the Interstate Circuit was Karl Hoblitzelle, and the general manager was R.J. O'Donnell. Interstate Circuit's parent company was Paramount Theatres. In 1953, Paramount Theatres merged with American Broadcasting Company, creating American Broadcasting Paramount Theatres and the Interstate Circuit was a subsidiary. In 1965, they changed the name to American Broadcasting Companies, Inc. (ABC).

By the 1970s, the theatre had fallen on hard times, which lasted through the 1980s. An old article suggests Paramount Theatre for the Performing Arts owners John Bernardoni and Charles Eckerman purchased the State Theatre in 1980 with plans to revitalize the space and continue operating it as a discount ticket movie house. Unfortunately, they fell on hard times with the general national economic decline of the 80s. It was then under the ownership of the City of Austin, and in 1986, the City leased it to Live Oak Productions, a local producing theatre company.

In June 1994, the Austin City Council named Live Oak the recipient of \$1.9 million in public bond money earmarked for the renovation of the State Theater. On February 1, 1995, Live Oak signed a lease on the State Theater and the adjoining Reynolds Penland Building, with an option to purchase both buildings. Private donations and earned income funded the beginning of renovations, including asbestos remediation. In the Spring of 1995, Live Oak moved into the State Theater and began to operate it as a performing arts facility. On November 12, 1996, Live Oak Theater exercised its option to purchase the State Theater building, concluding a two-and-a-half-year effort raising significant capital and expending thousands of staff and volunteer hours to acquire the building. Urban Property Analysts, Inc. appraised the building at \$420,000, and the purchase price was \$375,000.

In September 1997, the Austin City Council passed a second resolution authorizing city managers to negotiate a lease/sub-lease agreement with Live Oak. In consideration of the \$1.9 million in renovation funds, a lease/sublease agreement has been executed between Live Oak and the City of Austin to lease the facility to the City for twenty years. The City subleases the theater back to Live Oak to renovate and operate the facility. In July 1998, Live Oak paid off the mortgage on the State Theater, clearing the way to use the \$1.9 million for renovation. Austin

architect Sinclair Black and Live Oak's director Don Toner embarked on a \$3.5 million rehabilitation to be carried out in three phases, which began in June of 1998, with Phase I completed in April 1999. Designed by Austin architect Sinclair Black, the old movie house interior was turned into a pleasant 320-seat space offering patrons optimum visibility and comfort. While the full scope originally proposed was not completed, the renovations included the remodeling of the lobby, backstage work areas, dressing rooms, and the former balcony was transformed into rehearsal space.

The renovated theatre opened in 1999, with Live Oak changing its name to the State Theatre Company in 2000. Also in 2000, The State Theatre Company merged with its next-door neighbor, the Paramount Theatre for the Performing Arts, to form the Austin Theatre Alliance. The theater continued as an important venue for live theatre productions until June 2006, when a city water-main break flooded the State, causing several hundred thousand dollars in damage and forcing the theatre to abruptly close indefinitely. Adding further complexity to the situation was the theatre's relationship to the Reynolds-Penland building, the basement of which held all backstage facilities for the State. When remediation planning began, they found that major upgrades were required to bring backstage spaces up to code. After approximately \$300,000 worth of repairs were completed, the Austin Theatre Alliance was proud to celebrate the grand reopening of the State Theatre on March 1, 2011, with a private performance by Austin favorite Bob Schneider.

The Austin Theatre Alliance has been the owner and operator since 2000. Through all of these years, the State's Art Deco facade has remained largely original. Over the last few years, with the development of 721 Congress, the basement has been rehabilitated to once again offer proper storage space, dressing rooms, and offices. No significant structural changes have been made to the theater's auditorium or lobby since reopening, but critical preservation of the facade and maintenance have been ongoing.

### **Functions:**

The State Theater has operated as a movie house and live performance space.

### **Important Figures:**

#### **W. Scott Dunne**

Born in St. Louis July 15, 1886 and died on October 19, 1937

Spouse: Kathryn Pittman Dunne

#### **Louis Novy**

Born March 12, 1891 and died August 5, 1958 Austin, TX

Spouse: Minnie Lown Novy



**Karl Hoblitzelle**

Born in St. Louis, Missouri October 22, 1879 died in Dallas March 8, 1967

Spouse: Esther Thomas

**R.J. O'Donnell**

Born in Chicago, Illinois October 6, 1891 and died November 10, 1959 in Dallas

Spouse: Vinnie Lorraine Pearson

**Live Oak Productions (State Theatre Company)**

1982-2006

Directed by Don Toner, followed by Scott Kanoff Director, starting in 2000

**Don Toner****Sinclair Black**

Born in Tyler, Texas 1940 to present

**Historic Landmark Justification**

In the early 20th Century, Congress Avenue was home to 12 theatres, earning the nickname "Show Row." The Paramount and State Theatres are the only two still operating in their original function, and almost all of the others have been demolished. With its roots as an entertainment corridor, this section of Congress Avenue is one of the oldest historic districts in Austin. Beyond that, the State Theater is the only Scott Dunne-designed theater still open in Austin; Of his original 44 theaters, only 9 are still in operation. The State Theater is well over 50 years old, and the facade clearly embodies the characteristics of the Art Deco style. It is truly significant to the history of Austin's renowned cultural arts identity and a fundamental starting point of the film scene in Austin as the first theater in town explicitly built as a movie house. During the decades following a period of urban decay, the revitalization efforts of the city's downtown corridor were heavily reliant on these performing arts spaces to bring back the once-thriving district.

The historical significance of the theater was promoted best in a letter to Live Oak Director Don Toner from Sinclair Black's architecture firm in 1998, "The State Theater is one of the remaining examples of the American Art Deco Period in the Congress Avenue National Register Historical District. That period of American Design is not well represented in Austin as a whole with that absence being most pronounced along Congress Avenue. Sinclair Black & Andrew Vernoooy, AIA is extremely pleased to assist Live Oak Theatre in its efforts to preserve the salient features of the State Theater's facade. Without our combined efforts, the Congress Avenue Historical District will suffer an irrevocable breach in the continuity of its collection of period facades. Should that breach occur, it would deliver quite a blow to Austin's premier historical district." These words are only more significant 25 years later, with the original facade still intact.

The theater was founded with community in mind, and this focus has stayed true throughout the theatre's history. After taking over the theater, Live Oak Productions promoted local productions and later worked with the city to make the venue an accessible stage and rehearsal space for other local theatre groups to rent at affordable rates, encouraging and supporting the artist community, so integral to the identity of Austin. Today, the space is used for a variety of performances and film screenings. The Austin Theatre Alliance continues to offer discounted rates to local artists booking the theater, and these community-focused efforts will only expand in the upcoming capital project.

# Property Profile Report

## General Information

Location: **719 CONGRESS AVE**  
Parcel ID: **0206030814**  
Grid: **MJ22**

## Planning & Zoning

\*Right click [hyperlinks](#) to open in a new window.

Future Land Use (FLUM): **No Future Land Use Map**

Regulating Plan: **No Regulating Plan**

Zoning: **CBD**

Zoning Cases: **None:**

Zoning Ordinances: [19990225-070b](#)  
[781109-L](#)

Zoning Overlays: **ADU Approximate Area Reduced Parking**  
**Capitol View Corridors: SOUTH CONGRESS AT EAST LIVE OAK**  
**Congress Avenue**  
**Downtown Austin Plan Districts: Core / Waterfront**  
**Downtown Density Bonus: FAR - 25 | No Max Height**  
**Green Building Mandatory: Central Business District/Downtown**  
**Mixed Use**  
**Residential Design Standards: LDC/25-2-Subchapter F**  
**Selected Sign Ordinances**  
**Selected Sound Ordinances**

Infill Options: **--**

Neighborhood Restricted Parking Areas: **--**

Mobile Food Vendors: **--**

Historic Landmark: **--**

Urban Roadways: **Yes**

## Zoning Guide

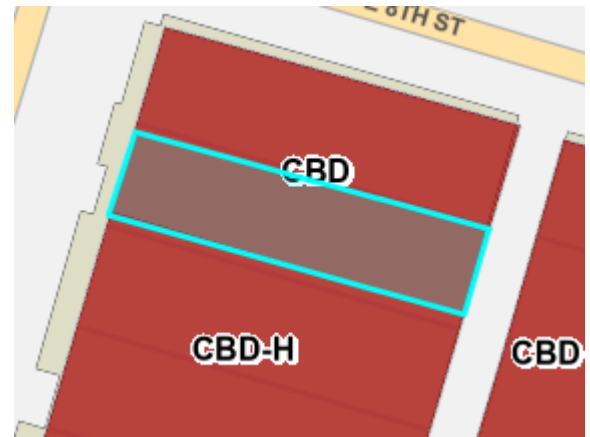
The [Guide to Zoning](#) provides a quick explanation of the above Zoning codes, however, the [Land Development Information Services](#) provides general zoning assistance and can advise you on the type of development allowed on a property. Visit [Zoning](#) for the description of each Base Zoning District. For official verification of the zoning of a property, please order a [Zoning Verification Letter](#). General information on the [Neighborhood Planning Areas](#) is available from Neighborhood Planning.

## Environmental

Fully Developed Floodplain: **No**  
FEMA Floodplain: **No**  
Austin Watershed Regulation Areas: **URBAN**  
Watershed Boundaries: **Lady Bird Lake**  
Creek Buffers: **No**  
Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone: **No**  
Edwards Aquifer Recharge Verification Zone: **No**  
Erosion Hazard Zone Review Buffer: **No**

## Political Boundaries

Jurisdiction: **AUSTIN FULL PURPOSE**  
Council District: **9**  
County: **TRAVIS**  
School District: **Austin ISD**  
Community Registry: **Austin Independent School District, Austin Lost and Found Pets, Austin Neighborhoods Council, City of Austin Downtown Commission, Downtown Austin Alliance, Downtown Austin Neighborhood Assn. (DANA), Friends of Austin Neighborhoods, Homeless Neighborhood Association, Neighborhood Empowerment Foundation, Preservation Austin, SELTexas, Sierra Club, Austin Regional Group**



Zoning Map



Imagery Map



Vicinity Map