

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION
PERMITS IN NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICTS
APRIL 3, 2024
HR-2024-016555
OLD WEST AUSTIN NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT
2321 HARTFORD ROAD

PROPOSAL

Construct additions and accessory buildings at a ca. 1936 house.

PROJECT SPECIFICATIONS

- 1) Construct a new detached garage at the front of the building. The proposed garage is constructed with finishes and detailing to match the existing house.
- 2) Construct a second-floor addition to the main house. The proposed addition mirrors the finishes and decorative details of the main house, including 6:6 windows and corner quoins. A secondary entrance and covered walk, supported by simple columns, is located on the first floor of the addition.
- 3) Construct a new carport. It features a mostly flat roof and simple column capitals.
- 4) Construct an addition to the guest house.
- 5) Construct a new pool, patio, and outdoor kitchen.

ARCHITECTURE

Two-story Georgian Revival house designed by Page and Southerland with rear guesthouse originally used as servants' quarters.

RESEARCH

The house at 2321 Hartford Road was constructed in 1936 for attorney Jesse "Jack" M. Harris and his wife, Rose Thomason Harris. It was designed by architects Page and Southerland and featured servants' quarters and its own deepwater well to irrigate the expansive grounds. Jack Harris, a native of Snyder, graduated from the University of Texas and practiced law until just before his death in 1967.

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 in National Register districts. The following standards apply to the proposed project:

Residential additions

1. Location

The proposed additions are located at the side of the building, stepped back slightly from the front wall of the original house, aligned with existing modifications but less than 15'.

2. Scale, massing, and height

The proposed carport appears subordinate to the main house, though the second-floor addition carries more visual weight.

3. Design and style

The proposed design and style of the modifications meet the standards.

4. Roofs

The proposed roof form and materials are appropriate.

5. Exterior walls

The proposed wall materials are compatible.

6. Windows, screens, and doors

The proposed windows and doors are compatible.

7. Porches and decks

The proposed porches appear compatible.

9. Attached garages and carports

The applicant has amended the design to reduce the roof slope and column size of the carport to enhance compatibility.

Residential new construction

1. Location

The proposed new detached garage is located in front of the existing house, while the other accessory buildings remain at the rear of the house.

2. Orientation

The proposed new garage is oriented with its bay doors facing a secondary elevation, which matches the orientation of other detached garages in the district.

3. Scale, massing, and height

The proposed scale, massing, and height of the new garage are compatible and appear to reduce its prominence at the street-facing elevation.

4. Proportions

See 4.

5. Design and style

The proposed design and style of all new accessory buildings appear appropriate.

6. Roofs, 7. Exterior Walls, and 8. Windows and doors

The proposed roof forms, exterior walls, and fenestration appear appropriate.

Summary

The project mostly meets the applicable standards. The applicant has amended the designs to include Committee feedback.

PROPERTY EVALUATION

The property contributes to the Old West Austin National Register district.

Designation Criteria—Historic Landmark

- 1) The building is more than 50 years old.
- 2) The building appears to retain high to moderate integrity. The building was remodeled in 1970 and additions were constructed in 2015.
- 3) Properties must meet two criteria for landmark designation (LDC §25-2-352). Staff has evaluated the property and determined that it does not meet two criteria for landmark designation:
 - a. Architecture. The building is a good example of a Georgian Revival house designed by Page and Southerland.
 - b. Historical association. The property does not appear to have 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 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.
 - e. Landscape feature. The property does not appear to retain a significant natural or designed landscape with artistic, aesthetic, cultural, or historical value to the city.

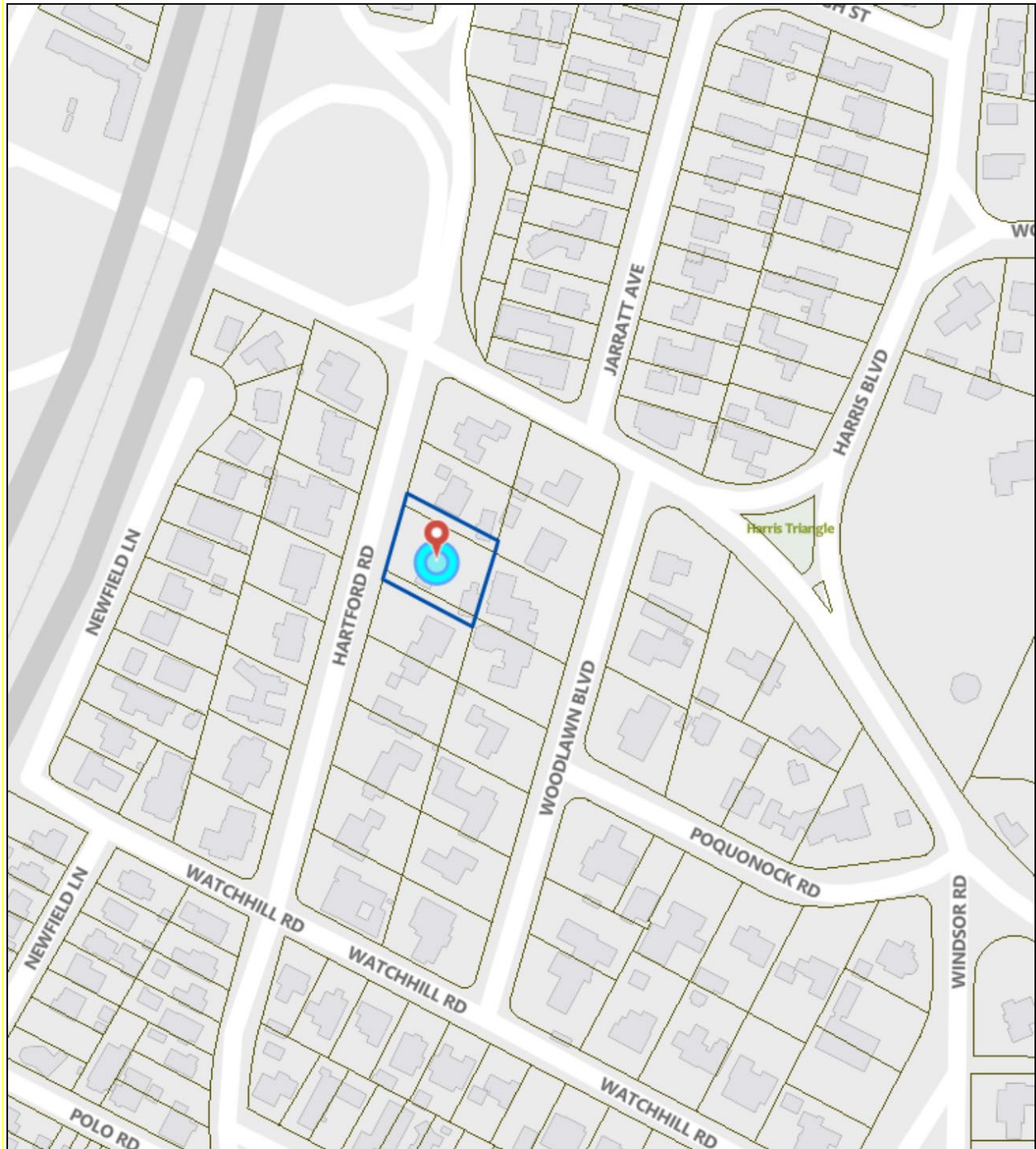
COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

Reduce the slope on the carport roof. Reduce the size and detailing of new columns. Omit or lighten decorative cornice trim at new portions of building.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Comment on plans. The applicant has amended the proposal to include Committee feedback.

LOCATION MAP



Lot Lines
Lot Line

1: 2400

3/18/2024

HR 24-016555

2321 HARTFORD ROAD



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PROPERTY INFORMATION

Photos



FRONT OF HOUSE

BACK OF HOUSE

REAR STRUCTURE



SIDE OF HOUSE



SIDE OF HOUSE



Historic review application, 2024

Occupancy History

City Directory Research, March 2024

1959	Jesse M. Harris, owner
1955	Jesse M. and Rose T. Harris, owners – lawyer, 709 Capitol National Bank building
1953	Jesse M. and Rose T. Harris, owners – lawyer, 709 Capitol National Bank building
1947	Jesse M. and Rose T. Harris, owners – attorney-at-law, 709 Capitol National Bank building Jesse M. Harris, Jr. – student Martin and Faye J. Harris, renters – student
1944	Jesse M. and Rose T. Harris, owners – attorney-at-law, 709 Capitol National Bank building
1941	Jesse M. and Rose T. Harris, owners – attorney-at-law, 709 Norwood Building J. Martin Harris, Jr. – student
1939	Annie Lee, renter – cook Rose T. Kirksey, renter – widow of S.F. Kirksey Jesse M. and Rose T. Harris, owners – attorney-at-law, 709 Norwood Building

1937 Annie L. Jones, renter – cook
 Rose T. Kirksey, renter – widow of S.F. Kirksey
 Jesse M. and Rose T. Harris, owners – lawyer, 709 Norwood Building

Historical Information

~~SUNDAY 1937~~
 The home of Mr. and Mrs. J. M. Harris at 2321 Hartford Road is one that home-lovers often admire. The house sets on a hill, which affords the Harris family plenty of cool breezes. The home, a Georgian colonial, is of white painted brick. The Harris family moved into their home last November, and since that time they have built several rock walls and terraces. Their favorite cool resting place is on the rock terrace at the rear of the home.

(Continued on Page 2, Col. 1)

Staying With New House Is One Vacation

(Continued from Page 1.)

Especially in the evening, this is an inviting place. The barbecue pit in the back yard gives them much pleasure, Mrs. Harris remarked.

FRANCES MUELLER American-Statesman Staff. The Austin American (1914-1973); Austin, Tex.. 18 July 1937: A1.

Georgian Colonial Home



This attractive residence of Georgian colonial style of architecture is that of J. M. Harris at 2321 Hartford Road. Designed by Page and South-erland, Austin architects, this residence is of brick veneer construction with wood frame and

plastered interior, and comprises nine rooms, two baths and basement. The roof is of asbestos shingle type. A hot air central heating system has been provided for this modern home.

The Austin American (1914-1973); Austin, Tex.. 05 June 1938: B5.



Bandits once gave Jack Harris a tough time, but he recovered his quail.

Tranquil Now, But Things Had A Way Of Happening To Harris

AT the age of 59, Jesse Martin Harris has about attained the peace and tranquillity that have always been his aim. He is a lawyer by profession. A few good clients plus keen business judgment has put him in solid with those who make up the financial statements and pass on credit ratings.

If after this blunt appraisal you still want him to handle the matter, Harris will take up your cudgels. Otherwise, he will point out there are any number of lawyers in town eager for the business.

It has not always been that simple for Jesse Martin Harris, who, for purposes of identification, will hereafter be called Jack. The nickname was pinned on him while he was still a student in the University of Texas. It has stuck ever since.

As a youngster he traded a cow for room and board in order to learn typing and shorthand. That was in Weatherford, Texas, when he lived on a farm near Thorp Springs. He swept out the business college for his tuition.

Having qualified as a stenographer Harris caught a freight train for Austin and applied to the Page Brothers, Charles and Louis, for a job. Then he set to work writing specifications and biding his time until he knew "Mr. Louie well enough to talk him into letting him work and go to school, too. He did. But he missed out on a lot of night life at the same time.

It was then things began to happen to Jack Harris. For a rugged youngster in search of peace and tranquillity, he was on more hot-plates than warmed-over hash. It was as natural for him to be in whistling distance when trouble brewed as for a good bird dog to set a point when scenting quail.

Several years ago Jesse Martin Harris made up his mind that he was not going to have to depend upon the corridor trade to stay in business. "I knew I'd starve to death," he says. So he followed routine practices just long enough to obtain some semblance of financial security.

This took place in two 12 year cycles—El Paso and Snyder. In 1936 he had his financial fences in good enough repair to move back to Austin. At the conclusion of another 12 year cycle he does not even bother to wear a wristwatch. Time is not that important.

His secretary, Mrs. Amelia Buchanan, who has been with him since 1933, will keep him briefed on what few appointments he has to fill. His son Martin, now in the attorney general's department, generally rides home with him, and will notify his father of the time to depart.

His law offices in the Capital National Bank Building are as plain as common sense can make them. Mrs. Buchanan soon found out that her boss' tastes didn't run to plush and that air of suave dignity that lulls a prospect.

You come in and state your business. Harris may throw a foot on the desk and work with a cigarette lighter that is always giving him trouble. Then without more ado he will state his opinion on the merits of the case.

An impulse to always do what he thought was right headed him into trouble as manager of the University Cactus. He thought the school wasn't getting value received and took the business away from a local firm. A red-hot editorial in The Austin Statesman attacked him for sending business out of town.

Harris was just as tough with the Fort Worth concern. "It was a big outfit. We argued a lot about the cost. I finally matched him to see if it would cost \$2,300 or \$2,500. I won." He still points with pride to that annual as the best one published up to that time.

Harris once had to pack a pistol for self protection while still a student in the University. Again his personal sense of right and wrong got him to this jam.

There was a man in town who started looking for trouble each time he took on a load of whiskey. The individual visited the house where Harris boarded and caused quite a ruckus. Young Harris was incensed and when a son of the woman who had been abused by the tough one started hunting a gun, Harris made it easy for him.

It grew into a nasty mess and a court fight. A few months later the toughie returned with a gun looking for Harris, who at the time was busy downtown drawing up specifications. County Judge George Matthews was then sheriff.

Matthews ran the man out of town but handed Harris a pistol with this admonition: "Keep your window shades down. Don't sit by an open window. Every time this fellow gets tanked he'll come looking for you."

There must be a fierce instinct in Harris to protect that which is his. Nothing else would explain an incident which happened to him while he was practicing law in El Paso in 1915. He and a friend had been quail hunting near the border when they found themselves surrounded by bandits.

Harris' first knowledge of this was when a twig hit by a bullet broke and fell in his face. With bullets falling all around them the two found temporary haven on top of a small rise and counted up their ammunition. It was then Harris remembered he had left about a dozen quail between him and the bandits.

He retrieved those quail. "At the time I thought it was funny," he says. "Now I know it was foolhardy. I was sick at my stomach several times afterwards when I thought what a chance I'd taken."

The whole incident had a movie finish with the US Cavalry riding hell-bent for leather and dispersing the bandits with one fusillade.

A second story that illustrates this instinct concerns a Mexican con man who picked Jack's pocket in Juarez. Harris hit El Paso with \$270.25 and office space with Victor Moore, a prominent criminal lawyer in those days. All Harris had was a promise from Moore that he would throw a few clients his way.

The pickpocket got all but 25 cents which left Harris on a diet of doughnuts and coffee until he could win a case. A few months later Moore called Harris in and asked why the theft had never been reported. "I would have lent you some money," said Moore.

Harris found out who'd picked his pockets and tucked it away in his mind. When Pancho Villa took over Juarez he ran all the underworld out. Along with this crowd was one Enrique, the pickpocket.

A few days later Harris found Enrique in El Paso and stuck a six-shooter in his ribs and marched him to the police station. "They put Enrique on the chain gang and that didn't suit his soft hands much," says Harris. The El Paso police were cooperative and each time Enrique worked off one fine he was in on another case.

To make a long story short Jack got back his \$270 plus interest.

Harris is probably the only struggling young lawyer without influence who ever rode a special train out of Mexico. He had met Rose Thomason in Cloud Croft, New Mexico, on July 4, 1915. In 1916 they were married. So when a friend of Jack's told him about having a silver mine in Mexico and would give him a fifth interest to go down and straighten things out, Harris took him up.

Harris knew there was danger. But if he made a go, it was a big start in his married life. So without Mrs. Harris knowing anything about the perils he slipped off and took out a \$5,000 insurance policy and caught a train for Nacazari, Mexico. He also took \$3,000 in 20-dollar gold pieces for bargaining purposes.

"When I hit town 15 Mexicans showed up with claims. They kept wanting me to go over the mountains but I smelled a rat and wouldn't budge from the hotel," Harris says.

This went on for several days when Harris decided to head back for the states. The day of his departure he got word to see the manager of a mining concern at Nacazari.

"He was a clean-cut Mexican and told me he had intercepted a message which said they were going to grab me. I had never seen this man

before but I told him about the \$3,000 in gold and asked him to keep it for me."

Without checking from the hotel Harris boarded the train at a water stop. At Douglass he was put in jail and told he would be returned to Nacazari to face charges. Harris knew it concerned the silver mine, a deed for which he had in his pocket. He chewed up the deed and spit it out the window. This attracted a newsboy which gave Harris another idea.

Would the boy deliver a note across the border for \$10? The boy would and did.

Back in Nacazari Harris was hauled before a judge and charged with fraud. The recipient of the note had hustled up legal talent, one of the ruling classes from Mexico City. About the second day of the trial Harris saw his attorney marched out of town in front of drawn bayonets.

That did not cheer Jack up any. In the meantime he was writing letters back home telling his wife what a grand time he was having. Then one day a Frenchman showed up with an idea. The Mexican law said that if a man brought false charges against another, and it was so proven, the first party could be tried and given twice as harsh a sentence. What, asked the Frenchman, would be wrong with him planting the story about town that the Gringo was playing possum with an idea of doing just this thing?

"I told him nothing could make matters worse," says Harris.

Next day the Mexican judge told Harris to be out of Mexico in 24 hours. Harris went to his friend at the mining company who supplied an engine and a flat car for Jack's concluding journey to Nogales.

The Jack Harrises live at 2321 Hartford Road. There is a two-year-old Nancy Harris, a grandchild, who Grandfather Jack says is already developing into a rugged individualist.

Jack once invested \$1 in piano lessons and learned to play the piano. "Terrible music, but it's a good way to kill time," says Jack. He says he shuts the door when he sits down to play "so I won't run Rose out of the house."

Although life has settled down into the groove he has always wished it, Harris has a memento of those troublous days when he was always just two jumps ahead of the hounds. It is the insurance policy that he took out for his wife when he went to Mexico.

Across its face is marked in red, "not good in Mexico."

"I didn't know it until I got back," he says.

CHARLES E. GREEN.

Harris Has New Edition On Utilities

Austin attorney J. M. Harris Saturday followed through on an old hobby, when he published a study of the private utility business in Texas, and outlined his personal views on power questions and policy.

He got out the first of these published reports in 1936, and since has followed with a new one every two years.

In the survey and statistical summary of the progress of the private electric industry, J. M. Harris was joined by attorney Martin Harris. But in the commentary, J. M. Harris pointed out he was expressing his individual ideas. As to the long series of booklets, he said, "I have always assumed full responsibility for it, and I pay for publishing it. It has never been submitted to anyone for approval. In the following pages, I want to put down some facts which I think every Texan ought to know."

In his discussion of private power vs. public power, Harris swung into a broad discussion of government policy in England, France and elsewhere.

"No one can claim that our system is perfect," he said. "In my 65 years I have lived through some pretty hard times, but I am convinced that the worst living conditions ever endured by the common man in this country were better than the best ever enjoyed by the common man in any other nation under any sort of ism."

The Austin American (1914-1973); Austin, Tex.. 07 Nov 1954: A27.

Jack Harris Dies In Hospital

J. M. (Jack) Harris, 79, 2321 Hariford Road, died in a local hospital Thursday.

An Austin resident 31 years and a former resident of Synder and El Paso, he was a member of the Tarrytown Baptist Church.

He was a graduate of the University of Texas Law School in 1912, a charter member of the Chancellors and an attorney until his retirement in January of 1967.

Survivors are his wife, Mrs. Rose Thomason Harris, Austin; son, Martin Harris, Austin; three granddaughters, two great-grandchildren and one nephew, Sam Wood, Denver, Colo.

Funeral services will be held at 10 a.m. Saturday at Tarrytown Baptist Church under direction of Weed-Corley Funeral Home. Rev. C. Reginal King will officiate and graveside services will be held at 2 p.m. Saturday at Oakwood Cemetery in Waco.

Those who care to do so may make a memorial contribution to Settlement Home or Tarrytown Baptist Church.

J. M. (JACK) HARRIS

Funeral for J. M. (Jack) Harris will be Saturday at 10 a.m. at the Tarrytown Baptist Church with Rev. C. Reginal King officiating. Graveside services will be at 2 p.m. at Oakwood Cemetery in Waco under direction of Weed-Corley funeral home.

Those who care to do so may make a memorial contribution to the Settlement Home or the Tarrytown Baptist Church.

The Austin Statesman (1921-1973); Austin, Tex.. 18 Mar 1967: 4.

The Austin Statesman (1921-1973); Austin, Tex.. 16 Mar 1967: B4.

MRS. ROSE HARRIS

Funeral for Mrs. Rose Charles de LaFontaine Harris widow of the late J. M. Harris 76, of 1801 Lavaca was Friday at Weed-Corley Funeral Home. Rev. Reginald King officiating. Graveside services were in Oakwood Cemetery in Waco.

Mrs. Harris died at her home Thursday.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Tarrytown Baptist Church or the Harris Fund.

MRS. ROSE HARRIS

Mrs. Rose Charles de LaFontaine Harris, 76, of Cambridge Towers died at her home early Thursday. She had been a resident of Austin since 1936 and was formerly of Snyder. She was a member of Tarrytown Baptist Church and was active in the Junior Helping Hand and Settlement Club.

Survivors include a son, Martin Harris of Austin; three grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Funeral arrangements are pending at Weed-Corley Funeral Home.

The Austin Statesman (1921-1973); Austin, Tex.. 30 Aug 1973: A32.

The Austin Statesman (1921-1973); Austin, Tex.. 31 Aug 1973: 32.

Permits

OWNER	John C. White	ADDRESS	2321 Hartford Road
PLAT	148	LOT	35
		BLK	
SUBDIVISION	Sunset Hill		
OCCUPANCY	Residence		
BLD PERMIT #	119815	DATE	11-13-70
OWNERS	ESTIMATE \$4,000.00		
CONTRACTOR	Mathews Const.	NO. OF FIXTURES	
WATER TAP REC #	Exist	SEWER TAP REC #	Exist
Remodel a residence			

Connection Charge \$ 12.00
Application for Sewer Connection.

Nº 12865A

Austin, Texas, Sept. 30, 1936

To the Superintendent of Sewer and Public Improvements,
City of Austin, Texas

Sir:—

I hereby make application for sewer connection and instructions on premises owned by J. M. Harris

at 2321 Hartford Road street,

further described as lot 35, block 35, outlot 35

subdivision Sunset Hill East, division 901, plat 901

which is to be used as a res. + sub. gtri.

In this place there are to be installed 10 1/4 fixtures.