



April 30, 2024

City of Austin Historic Landmark Commission  
P.O. Box 1088  
Austin, TX 78767

Re: 2307 Windsor Road #2 (PR-2024-018182; GF-2024-030562)

Commissioners,

Mid Tex Mod, the leading voice for the preservation of Modern architecture in our region, submits this letter of opposition to the proposed demolition of the house at 2307 Windsor #2. As the Central Texas chapter of DOCOMOMO US, Mid Tex Mod's mission is to raise awareness of buildings, sites, neighborhoods, and landscapes of the Modern movement and to advocate for their preservation, documentation, and sustained use. Mid Tex Mod strongly opposes the release of a demolition permit for 2307 Windsor #2 and respectfully requests that the Commission initiate historic zoning given that the property meets the following criteria for landmark designation:

- **Architecture.** The O'Quinn House, built in 1950, was designed by Arthur Fehr of Fehr and Granger. The property predates and was likely influenced the design of the celebrated Charles Granger House in Judges Hill Historic District. The O'Quinn House is a contributing resource to the Old West Austin National Register Historic District, and is a unique example of Mid Century Modernist architecture. No other Modernist structures were listed in the entire Old West Austin National Register Historic District.
- **Landscape feature.** The O'Quinn House contains original significant landscape elements, incorporating the natural landscape into the Modernist design, including decorative stonework procured from 1853 Texas Capitol, wrought iron fencing that graced the 1888 Texas Capitol, bricks and other elements from UT's Old Main, and an iconic dry stack limestone fence constructed of hand hewn stones salvaged from Anderson Mill, a local grist mill operating from 1861 to 1894.

Our organization fully supports efforts to preserve the architecturally and historically significant residence. I have included photos below, and a 1953 article from the *American Statesman* ("History of Rock Walls of Hilltop Home") describing the house and the O'Quinn family.

Regards

Charles Peveto, Interim President  
Mid Tex Mod, Central Texas Chapter  
DOCOMOMO US



**IRISH TAKE TO THE HILLS**—High in the hills in Austin residential section live the Trueman O'Quinns in what could be aptly termed one of Austin's "show places." Walks which lead up several terraces to the modernistic Ranch style home at 2300 Windsor Road East (top left) are made of bricks from the University of Texas's Old Main Building. Although the home follows the modern functional trend, Mr. O'Quinn, a local attorney and quite a historian, has included in it many reminders of the young days in Texas. Before the fireplace of rock (being fired up by Mr. O'Quinn at top right) from one of Austin's old homes is a hearth of marble which once adorned

the old bank that employed O'Henry here. Outstandingly functional is the four-sided "island" of closets which Mrs. O'Quinn (lower left) planned with special units for guest coat closet, crystal, cardables, and other items. It is located on the second of three levels in the home. The two O'Quinn sons, Trueman Jr. (left in lower right) and Kerry—plus the dog, Colleen, have apartments on the lower level, where Trueman Jr. can store all his athletic equipment in a fireman red closet with sliding doors and Kerry can store his magic shoes apparatus and post his art work on the bulletin board. Colleen prefers her couch.—(Neal Douglas Photos by Julian Hovey)

# O'QUINN ABODE

## History Rocks Walls of Hilltop Home

By MARY McDONALD

Although the name has a slight touch of the Irish, according to the Emerald Isle, the Trueman O'Quinns are a real, downright Texan and they've got a home to prove it.

From the Central Texas red cedar in the yard to the East Texas pine walls and red Segura tile floor, the home at 2300 Windsor Road East is all Texan.

The O'Quinns have successfully combined the new and the old in design and interior decorations, and have erected one of the most unusual and beautiful homes of functional modern Texas Ranch style in the state.

The exterior is formed by East Texas "undressed" heart pine and rock that Mr. O'Quinn, a local attorney, has collected from old homes about Austin.

On the interior may be found furnishings that range from an old O'Henry dining table to the newest "spot" lighting fixtures.

With modernistic trends such as glass, sliding doors, cement windows and flat roof, the O'Quinns have charmingly mixed many antiques which capture the old days of pioneer history.

Rock for the walls came from the old Townsend home in Austin, originally built in 1856, and the show home, a landmark which stood on Bergstrom Field territory and was torn down to make way for jet runways. Beams for the open-beam ceilings in several of the rooms also came from the Shaw mansion. The rock was quarried near Austin.

Mr. O'Quinn, one of the best authorities on Austin history has spent years collecting items to be used in the home. Brick for the outside walks once formed parts of Old Main Building on the University of Texas campus. At one time the stone fence was part of the Anderson's Mill which old-timers will remember. Columns which flank the steep, winding drive leading down to the back of the house came from one of the state capitals that burned.

Imported Italian marble which dramatically fashions the hearth of the open fireplace in a solid living room wall of rock and the mahogany rails for a small flight of stairs are from the old Austin bank in which O'Henry was accused of embezzlement.

Several pieces of furniture from O'Henry's Austin home adorn the rooms, most interesting of which might be the round polished dining table. Under it is a little table which, says Mr. O'Quinn, "held sandwiches and mugs of beer for the players."

Stored in the garage are collections of ornamental fencing, two mementos from other old Austin homes, barons bars which imprisoned men in the Travis County jail and also held O'Henry—and a variety of other interesting articles for which Mr. O'Quinn hasn't found a spot yet.

The family, including two sons and a dog, figured they were doubly lucky—using Texans and living in Austin. So they selected a lot which commands a vivid view of the Capital City. From the large windows on the east can be seen the business section, the capitol and the University tower.

The home was completed in October of 1936, but the O'Quinns purchased the odd-shaped, 200 by 175 foot lot in 1934 and immediately began planting mesquites (acacia) and bignoniads and clearing out some of the cedar underbrush.

The home is located on a full acre and is closed in by trees, making it very secluded and private.

"Not even the door-to-door salesman can find us," laughs Mrs. O'Quinn, who is busy employed at the present time as assistant to the senate secretary.

As a matter of fact, they keep their friends on the right trail to their home only through detailed directions—and perhaps a map. The home is about mid-way on a 40-foot drop, which slopes in a series of some five terraces. It advances from the back of the property on Windsor Road to front on Windsor Road East—still high in the hills.

To carry out the functional idea

in the yard, Mr. O'Quinn has constructed walls at various places in the yard to allow free drainage down the slopes and to prevent erosion. The terracing was planned also so that a "man with a wheelbarrow could go from the back of the lot to the front without having to plod down steps." Just follow the slopes. Some of the terracing is natural, some artificial.

"It was rugged, but we had imagination," said Mr. O'Quinn.

The house was planned to receive the maximum morning sun in the winter and the minimum in the summer. "And every room but one—the kitchen—gets its southeast breeze," Mrs. O'Quinn explains. For summer, they just slide back the large glass doors on the east porch and the breeze sweeps through.

Built on three levels, not three stories, the home itself is modernistic and functional. The boys, 14-year-old Kerry and 12-year-old Trueman Jr., have their large room and bath on the lower level. The guest room also is on this level.

The boys' room has rock walls and fireman red closets with sliding doors. The furniture is arranged so that each has his own "apartment." Asphalt tile is used for the flooring.

There's plenty of space for Kerry's magic equipment and his bulletin board, featuring his art work and pictures of pin-up girls with signs: "Who wants Marilyn Monroe?" Kerry already has been awarded an art scholarship to the University of Texas.

Trueman Jr. is the athlete and reader of funny books. The big colie, Colleen, also has her "apartment" in the boys' room. She really is a favorite all over the house.

On the second level are the kitchen, the family living room, the main living room and the porch. Most outstanding and most functional here is the "island" which divides these rooms, since there are no doors except onto the porch. The island is a four-walled closet which contains a variety of storage units. There is a guest coat closet, a space built just the size to hold several cardables, crystal shelves, linen storage, and open shelves in the dining room side.

Very little wallpaper is used in the interior. What is used, the decorator called a "mural," said Mrs. O'Quinn. The gay-colored mural is on one wall of the dining room, and papers the hall and in her dressing room.

Mr. O'Quinn, who, among other

attributes, is a prominent civic worker, an O'Henry authority, a composer and a well-known member of the Austin Civic Theater, may have a right to claim to be part-architect, too, but his wife reserved the right to select the colors for the home.

Mrs. O'Quinn wanted abundance in the living room and purple in her kitchen. She got what she wanted—in soft and pretty tones. Blue is the color scheme in the O'Quinn's bedroom on the third level. Also on this last level is the man of the house's library and a large bath.

When it came to selecting a color for the ceiling of the kitchen, Mrs. O'Quinn said she'd leave it up to her "lucky" painter to select a color. So he actually dreamed up one.

As the story goes, he dreamed one night he was walking in rows and rows of trees just before dawn. Suddenly an angel flew over and he looked up at the underside of the wings. Light from the new day reflected the dew of the mist onto the angel's wings—and that was the color he selected for her kitchen ceiling. Mrs. O'Quinn's touches of purple about the kitchen combine with this to make a delightful and different cooking room.

lilli ann . . . as seen







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East Elevation  
Trueman Edgar O'Quinn Home



Granger House

