

ZONING CHANGE REVIEW SHEET

CASE NUMBER: C14H-2025-0122

HLC DATE: February 4, 2026 PC DATE: TBD CC Date: TBD

APPLICANT: Terri Myers, Preservation Central, Inc

HISTORIC NAME: Dr. O.H. and Thelma Elliott House

WATERSHED: Boggy Creek

ADDRESS OF PROPOSED ZONING CHANGE: 2207 East 22nd Street

ZONING CHANGE: SF-3-NP to SF-3-H-NP (Upper Boggy Creek: Blackland NPA)

COUNCIL DISTRICT: 1

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Grant the proposed zoning change from family residence-neighborhood plan (SF-3-NP) to family residence-historic landmark-neighborhood plan (SF-3-H-NP) combining district zoning.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR LANDMARK DESIGNATION: Community value, architecture, and historical associations

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION ACTION:

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:

CITY COUNCIL ACTION:

CASE MANAGER: Kalan Contreras, 512-974-2727

NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATIONS: Austin Independent School District, Austin Neighborhoods Council, Blackland Neighborhood Assn., Del Valle Community Coalition, East Austin Conservancy, Friends of Austin Neighborhoods, Homeless Neighborhood Association, Overton Family Committee, Preservation Austin, Upper Boggy Creek Neighborhood Planning Team

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The 2016 East Austin Historic Resource Survey recommends the building as eligible for inclusion as a contributing building in both local and National Register historic districts.

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 O.H. and Thelma Mitchell Elliott House, built in 1954, clearly embodies the distinguishing characteristics of a recognized architectural style. Built by carpenter and contractor Arthur Parks, it is an intact example of the Ranch style, one of the most popular and enduring architectural styles for residential buildings in American history. It also provides a window into the development of East Austin during the 1950s: as an exemplar of up-and-coming stylistic trends in a historically segregated

part of East Austin, the home's contemporary design demonstrates that, in spite of the systemic inequalities in land use and services rampant in segregation-era Austin, new neighborhoods marketed to Black professionals still found forward-looking buyers at midcentury. Historian and applicant Terri Myers describes the home's setting and physical characteristics in detail:

The Ranch style house epitomizes the postwar "baby boom" era in its modern form, functional plan and interior layout, and absence of nonessential details and embellishments that characterized earlier architectural styles for domestic construction. The Elliott House reflects modern Ranch style traits in its single-story construction, low-pitched gable roof, shallow front porch and larger, more secluded rear terrace, detached carport, lack of extraneous ornament and simplified fenestration pattern. Even the application of aluminum siding, which occurred during the historic period, is emblematic of the modern era in which it was sold to consumers for energy efficiency and low maintenance. The Elliott House is largely intact to the historic period in its Ranch style plan, roof form and pitch, fenestration pattern, and appurtenant features. Thus, it embodies the principal characteristics of an iconic architectural style in postwar America.

The 2200 block of E. 22nd Street was not developed until after World War II. In 1952, Brown and Root Construction, Inc. opened and paved the previously closed street between Coletto and Chestnut Streets; development in the block commenced soon afterward. In December 1954, realtor Andy Anderson placed an advertisement in the Austin American newspaper for an "Open House." The ad was specifically geared to attract "Colored" people as noted in the announcement...this newly opened section of East Austin was a modern departure from the early twentieth century bungalows, shotgun houses, and "classical box" houses in the so-called "Colored District" south of Manor Road.¹

§ 25-2-352(3)(c)(ii) Historical Associations. *The property has long-standing significant associations with people, groups, institutions, businesses, or events of historical importance that 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.*

The house at 2207 East 22nd Street is associated with Dr. O. H. and Thelma Mitchell Elliott, East Austin educators and civic leaders at the forefront of Civil Rights-era political and educational movements and Great Society programs for nearly forty years. Their contributions to both the communities of segregated East Austin and to the state- and nationwide Civil Rights movement helped to uplift not only East Austin residents but to bolster African American advancement and the creation of accessible education for all races and economic backgrounds around the country.

"Both O.H. and Thelma Mitchell Elliott were tireless advocates for civil rights, education, and human dignity—each forging their own path but united by a shared commitment to justice and community empowerment," remarks historian Terri Myers. "O.H. Elliott worked within institutions, breaking barriers in higher education and wielding political influence to open doors for others. Thelma Elliott, rooted in the social work tradition, championed community-driven solutions, empowering East Austin families through programs like ENABLE that listened to and uplifted their voices. Together, they worked in a system that had long excluded their community, doing the difficult, often invisible work that brought real change and restored agency to those long denied it."²

Dr. Ora Herman Elliott, born in Hope, Arkansas, in 1909, moved to Austin in 1935 and quickly became one of the city and state's most influential educators, college administrators, and leader in political

¹Myers, Terri. 2026. "O.H. and Thelma Elliott House – 2207 E. 22nd Street, Austin, TX 78722-2115." Historic zoning application.

² Myers 2026.

engagement and equity. Through the inner workings of state and local government, Elliott worked “behind these scenes” to promote civil rights. Elliott also worked to ensure more equitable housing and healthcare in Austin. Myers describes his achievements:

[As business manager and Interim President of Samuel Huston College,] Elliott became a “moving force” in the merger of Samuel Huston College and Tillotson College.... [In 1952] Huston-Tillotson College became the exclusive provider of higher education for African Americans in Central Texas. ...Dr. Elliott’s official duties included business manager, Associate Professor of Business Administration, and college accountant. He [also] supported the United Negro College Fund, [and] served as a member of the Board of Trustees for fifteen years, after which he was made a lifetime honorary trustee. Elliott’s service to the college was officially recognized in 1979, when he was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Humanities degree...

Elliott was not content to remain on the sidelines of advancement for African Americans during the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s. In fact, as early as 1941, he headed a committee to ask for Black representation in elections within the Democratic Party, a request that was denied based on the party’s [allowing] only white members to vote in its elections... Although [1944’s *Smith vs. Allwright* Supreme Court ruling] formally abolished the white primary in Texas, attempts to limit Black political participation did not cease. In 1948, Elliott spoke at a political rally sponsored by the Negro Citizens Council aimed at bolstering political engagement among Black Austinites...[and] went on to embody this vision through active political engagement [and leadership positions] at local and state levels...

Lyndon B. Johnson...initiated a series of domestic programs known as “The Great Society” aimed at eliminating poverty and racial injustice in the United States...Elliott seized upon this political climate and the resources it offered to “enhance the quality of life not only for [people] in Texas but for the disadvantaged throughout the United States of America.” ...He was one of the directors of the [City’s] Rights Agency that encouraged...appointment of a human rights commission to ensure the effective implementation of the Civil Rights Law of 1964...Elliott was also a member of the United Political Organization (UPO), a “Negro political group” that encouraged Governor Connally to [form] a state civil rights committee...Elliott also led several local initiatives to honor civil rights leaders in Austin...In 1966, Elliott was listed in *The Austin American* among “three of the eastside’s most respected men”...

...Elliott also worked with the Office of Economic Opportunity, a Great Society initiative established to oversee a variety of community-based anti-poverty programs....He was a driving force behind the first major low rent private housing development created in Austin....[and] was part of a committee organized to investigate health administration in Travis County with a special focus on the care of indigent persons...Over the years, Elliott cultivated close relationships with President Lyndon B. Johnson, Governors John Connally, Preston Smith, and Dolph Briscoe, and U.S. Representative Jake Pickle. Because of his outstanding service to education and the state, Governor Connally named him to the Coordinating Board of the Texas College and University System in 1969. He was the first African American to serve on the Coordinating Board, a position he held until 1977....Elliott was instrumental in bringing ACC to fruition through his adamant support and promotion of the college while serving on the Coordinating Board of Texas Colleges and Universities...Elliott’s role in founding ACC was so vital that the college dedicated its first commencement in 1977 to him.³

San Antonio native Thelma Mitchell Elliott, born in 1912, was one of the first Black students to desegregate the University of Texas at Austin during the 1950s. Not only was she one of the earliest

³ Myers 2026.

students to graduate from UT’s School of Social Work, but she was also the first Black woman to earn her degree there. Mrs. Elliott later became the first Black woman to work as a juvenile probation officer in Travis County and to lead Lyndon Johnson’s Project ENABLE (Education and Neighborhood Action for Better Living Environment). Myers describes her successes:

Thelma Mitchell...received her undergraduate degree from Samuel Huston College and later served as Assistant Dean of Women at Clark College. In the early 1950s, Mrs. Elliott returned to school to pursue a career in social work. She was among the “precursors,” the first generation of Black students who desegregated the University of Texas at Austin in the 1950s. The struggle for desegregation at UT had begun much earlier, when an African American man applied and was denied because of his race in 1885... Sixty-five years later, in the fall 1950, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of Heman Marion Sweatt’s application to UT’s law school. That same fall, the University of Texas opened its graduate program in social work. Within two years, the first African American students graduated from the school: Gus Swain was the first male graduate in 1953, and Thelma Elliott was the first female graduate in 1954. “Precursors” such as Swain and Mrs. Elliott attended classes amidst threats of violence, intense scrutiny, and widespread hostility. Swain, in a 1982 speech, recalled that the School of Social Work felt like an “oasis” in the tense atmosphere of early desegregation.

After receiving her Master of Science in Social Work, Mrs. Elliott began a ten-year stint as the first Black female probation officer for the Travis County Juvenile Court. She also served as a social worker at Brackenridge Hospital, an instructor at Samuel Huston, president of the PTA, and was involved in her church...Perhaps some of the most important changes that Mrs. Elliott made were through her work with ENABLE. In 1966, in recognition of her work in Juvenile Court, Elliott was tapped to lead the project as part of President Lyndon Johnson’s War on Poverty. ENABLE (Education and Neighborhood Action for Better Living Environment) was sponsored by Child and Family Services and funded through the new Office of Economic Opportunity...Mrs. Elliott explained the mission of ENABLE as giving mothers “a sense of self, purpose, confidence and power, something that will grow, a motivation, and the tools to get something done for a better life.” ...ENABLE [provided] a space in which parents could...learn about opportunities to improve their and their children’s lives, and as a result, “win a permanent increase in self-confidence and capacities as parents and community members in meeting responsibilities more effectively.” Under Mrs. Elliott’s leadership, ENABLE evolved into group problem-solving initiatives to tackle specific problems such as unsanitary living conditions in rental units to neighborhood safety and infrastructure...ENABLE’s work was never abstract; it was concrete, collaborative, and rooted in the lives of real people [to] restore a sense of dignity and power which had long been denied. Within a year of its launch, ENABLE Austin was recognized as one of the most successful of 60 such projects around the country...⁴

PARCEL NO.: 0212100505

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: LOT 6 & E 1FT LOT 7 BLK 12 OLT 46 DIV B JOHNS C R SUBD & PLUS ADJ VAC ALLEY

ESTIMATED ANNUAL TAX EXEMPTION (homestead, capped):

AISD	COA	TC	TC Health	Total
\$1,721.27	\$1,708.67	\$1,118.77	\$351.32	\$4900.04

APPRAISED VALUE: Land: \$403,993; Improvement: \$170,090; Total: \$574,083

⁴ Myers 2026.

PRESENT USE: Residence

DATE BUILT/PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE: 1954-1976

INTEGRITY/ALTERATIONS: High. A rear addition, carport, and storage building were constructed in 1961, and a mobile home was moved onto the rear of the lot and added to the main house in 1970. Both modifications were constructed by the original owners during the period of significance.

PRESENT OWNERS: Ms. Ora Ann Houston

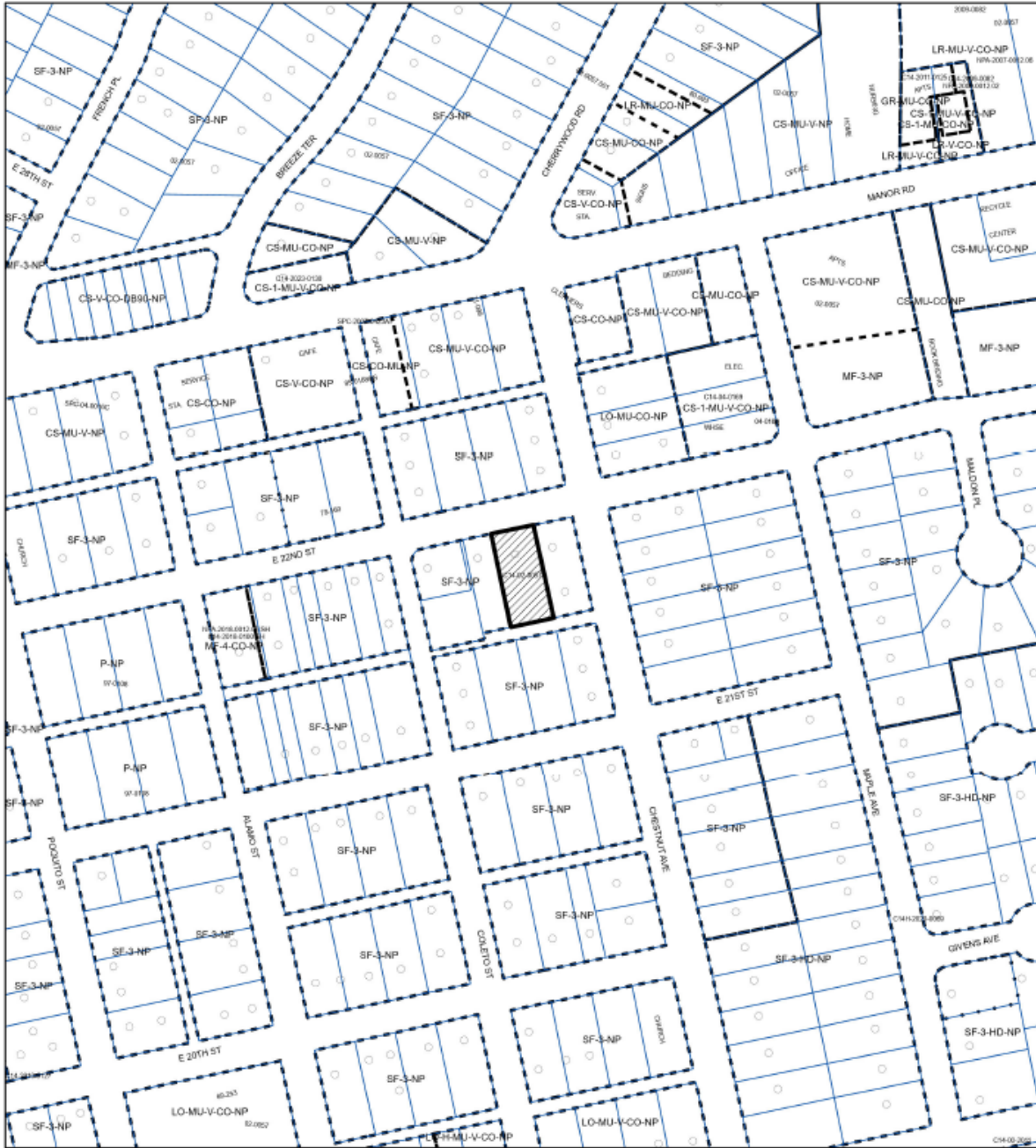
ORIGINAL OWNER(S): Dr. O. H. and Thelma Mitchell Elliott




OTHER HISTORICAL DESIGNATIONS: None



Elliott House, 2025 and Dr. and Mrs. Elliott. Source: Preservation Central via Mrs. Ora Houston.

Location Map



-  SUBJECT TRACT
-  PENDING CASE
-  ZONING BOUNDARY

HISTORIC ZONING

ZONING CASE#: C14H-2025-0122

1:2,400

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