

3401 Sleepy Hollow Court and 3394 Chevy Chase

These two architecturally significant homes, both in River Oaks, were demolished earlier this year to make way for new homes. Although River Oaks is not a designated historic district, it has a number of vintage homes whose architecture, architects and original owners make a significant contribution to the history and culture of the neighborhood and the city.



The magnificent estate at 3401 Sleepy Hollow Court was designed by Birdsall Briscoe, one of Texas' finest architects of the early 20th century. Born in Harrisburg in 1876 and raised on a ranch in Goliad, Briscoe was the grandson of Andrew Briscoe, a hero of San Jacinto, and great-grandson of John R. Harris, founder of Harrisburg. The urbane Briscoe was the premier architect for Houston society in the years before and after World War I and placed his imprimatur on the city's finest neighborhoods: Courtlandt Place, Shadyside, Broadacres, Southampton, and River Oaks. He collaborated with the outstanding architect of the rising generation, John Staub, on one of Houston's architectural treasures, Bayou Bend, the home of Miss Ima Hogg. The Greek Revival Plantation-style home on Sleepy Hollow was celebrated as one of Briscoe's best. Offering more than 6,500 square feet and expansive, two-acre park-like grounds, the home had been beautifully restored and updated in the 1990s by premier home designer Ed Eubanks.



The 5,700-plus square-foot Georgian-style home at 3394 Chevy Chase was designed by architect Charles Oliver and completed in 1928. Oliver was one of the architects employed by the Hoggs' River Oaks Corporation, and his homes and commercial buildings are ranked among Houston's finest historic structures. A restoration of his house at 2508 Pelham received a Good Brick Award from the Greater Houston Preservation Alliance in 2004. Updates to the Chevy Chase house were installed in the early 1990s but, at the time of sale, it was in only fair condition. By virtue of architectural provenance and design, this house was an excellent candidate for more complete restoration.