

# News Release



**CONTACT:** Suzy Hartgrove: 713-837-7719  
Email: Suzy.Hartgrove@cityofhouston.net

## St. John Missionary Baptist Church designated a protected historic landmark

**HOUSTON, June 16, 2010** – Houston City Council designated the St. John Missionary Baptist Church at 2702 Dowling as a protected historic landmark.

St. John Missionary Baptist Church was founded in Houston's Third Ward in 1899 by Rev. Hilliard Reuben Johnson. Today, with a congregation dating back 110 years, the church has a long history as an influential African-American institution in the community. Over the years, at least three different church buildings have been built to house the growing congregation. The current three-story brick neoclassical temple-type church building was constructed in 1950 under the leadership of Dr. Rev. S.A. Pleasants, Jr., who was the distinguished pastor of St. John for 27 years.



St. John Missionary Baptist Church's current church building was constructed in 1950 by African-American contractor and builder, W.C. White, from San Antonio. In the 1960s, White became the first African-American to serve on San Antonio's City Planning Board and Housing Authority.

The church's Ionic temple facade is considered the grandest of the Dowling Street churches. Its prominent architectural design of colossal concrete columns was symbolic of the church's spiritual strength in the community. Today, St. John Missionary Baptist Church remains a highly visible landmark in its location on Dowling near McGowen Street.

For information regarding historic preservation, go to [www.houstonplanning.com](http://www.houstonplanning.com).