



# PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

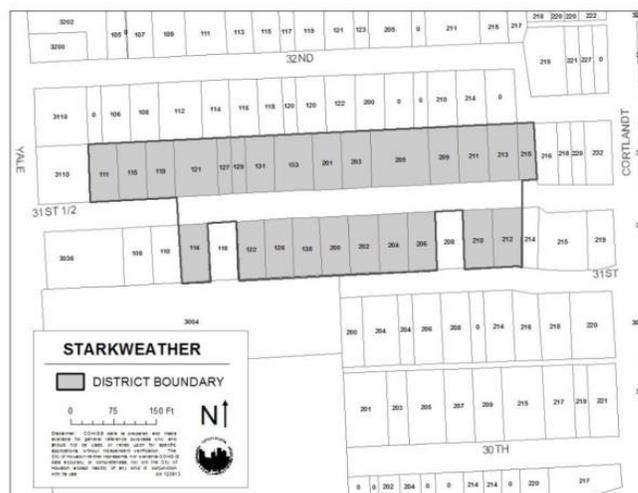
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## City Council designates Starkweather in Independence Heights as a City historic district

**HOUSTON, February 26, 2014** – Starkweather becomes the City’s 21st Historic District. The Starkweather Historic District is within the Independence Heights community, north of Loop 610. The district is two blocks long, located within the 100 and 200 blocks of East 31½ Street.

Starkweather derived its name from F. W. Starkweather, who originally subdivided the land that is now E 31 ½ Street. The district was developed between the late 1920s and 1940s by Edgar S. Phelps and his son Edgar H. Phelps. These developers sold lots to African Americans looking to reside within the City of Independence Heights. By August 1910, 215 lots had already been sold in Independence Heights at an average value of \$80 each.

On January 17, 1915, Independence Heights, with a population of nearly 400, voted to incorporate as an independent city, becoming the first city in Texas completely run by African Americans. By 1920, the city had grown to a population of 720. Independence Heights was annexed to Houston in 1929. Independence Heights offered working and middle class African Americans the opportunity to live in better conditions than in Houston’s wards, while maintaining access to the central city by way of streetcar, jitney, and bus.



The district features modest frame dwellings typical of early 20<sup>th</sup> Century working and middle class suburbs. It features architectural styles that reflect both the prosperity of the late 1920s as well as the economic difficulties associated with The Great Depression and World War II. While many of these homes have been altered from their original state, most of the district’s historic fabric remains intact.

For more information on Historic Preservation, go to [www.houstonplanning.com](http://www.houstonplanning.com).