

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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from



July 18, 2023

The Honorable Sylvester Turner
Mayor, City of Houston
P.O. Box 1562
Houston, Texas 77251

Re: Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, Houston, Harris County, Texas

Ewart H. and Lillian Lightfoot House, 3702 Audubon Place

Houston Light Guard Armory, 3820 Caroline Street

Dear Mayor Turner:

We are pleased to inform you that a National Register of Historic Places nomination for the above-referenced property was recently submitted for review by our office. This letter serves as formal notice of the nomination from the State Historic Preservation Officer, the Executive Director of the Texas Historical Commission (THC), which is also the state agency responsible for administering the Texas Certified Local Government Program (CLG) program under state and federal legislation.

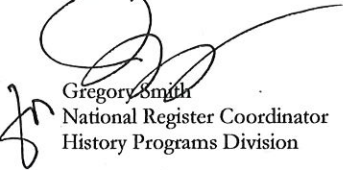
Our staff has reviewed the nomination and will forward it to the State Board of Review for their consideration and possible action at their meeting on September 23, 2023. The National Register is the federal government's official list of historic properties worthy of preservation pursuant to the National Preservation Act of 1966, in the support of public and private efforts to identify evaluate and protect America's historic resources.

As a participant in the CLG program, the local historic preservation review commission, board, or committee, and the chief elected official for the City of Houston are required to separately notify both the THC's National Register program and CLG program their opinions in regard to the nomination no later than September 22, 2023.

A copy of the draft nomination and meeting information is posted on the THC website: <http://www.thc.texas.gov/sbrmeeting> We request the CLG representative to coordinate review by the landmark board in advance of the State Board of Review meeting. Compliance with the provisions of the CLG program is a state and federal obligation that could jeopardize the city's CLG status if compliance is not met.

Should you have any questions concerning this letter or if we can be of further assistance, please contact Gregory W. Smith, National Register Coordinator, at (512) 463-6013. For questions regarding the CLG program, please contact Kelly Little at (512) 463-7812. Thank you for your cooperation and participation in this federal process.

Sincerely,


Gregory Smith
National Register Coordinator
History Programs Division

cc: Roman McAllen, CLG Representative, City of Houston ✓



SBR Draft

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. Name of Property

Historic Name: Lightfoot, Ewart H. and Lillian, House
Other name/site number: NA
Name of related multiple property listing: NA

2. Location

Street & number: 3702 Audubon Place
City or town: Houston State: Texas County: Harris
Not for publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this (nomination request for determination of eligibility) meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property (meets does not meet) the National Register criteria.

I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following levels of significance:
 national statewide local

Applicable National Register Criteria: A B C D

<p style="text-align: right; margin: 0;">State Historic Preservation Officer</p> <p>Signature of certifying official / Title _____</p> <p>Texas Historical Commission _____ State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>Date</p>
--	---------------------------------

<p>In my opinion, the property <input type="checkbox"/> meets <input type="checkbox"/> does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
<p>_____</p> <p>Signature of commenting or other official</p> <p>_____</p> <p>State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>Date</p>

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- ___ entered in the National Register
- ___ determined eligible for the National Register
- ___ determined not eligible for the National Register.
- ___ removed from the National Register
- ___ other, explain: _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Ewart H. and Lillian Lightfoot House, Houston, Harris, Texas

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Private
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - Federal

Category of Property

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: NA

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions: Domestic: Single Dwelling

Current Functions: Domestic: Single Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification: Late 19th & 20th Century American Movements: Craftsman

Principal Exterior Materials: Stucco, Wood: Shingle, Glass, Stone: Cobblestone, Asphalt

Narrative Description (see continuation sheets 6-10)

Ewart H. and Lillian Lightfoot House, Houston, Harris, Texas

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

<input type="checkbox"/>	A	Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
<input type="checkbox"/>	B	Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	C	Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
<input type="checkbox"/>	D	Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations: NA

Areas of Significance: Architecture (*local level of significance*)

Period of Significance: 1923-1925

Significant Dates: 1923

Significant Person (only if criterion b is marked): NA

Cultural Affiliation (only if criterion d is marked): NA

Architect/Builder: Ewart H. Lightfoot

Narrative Statement of Significance (see continuation sheets 11-16)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography (see continuation sheet 17)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested. Part 1 approved on (date)
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office (*Texas Historical Commission, Austin*)
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository:

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): NA

Ewart H. and Lillian Lightfoot House, Houston, Harris, Texas

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: Less than one acre

Coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: NA

1. Latitude: 29.73956 Longitude: -95.38682

Verbal Boundary Description: The boundary is the legal parcel recorded by Houston CAD as Property ID: 0261410000017 and described: TR 1A BLK 15 MONTROSE. (CAD accessed March 15, 2023.) See MAP 3.

Boundary Justification: The nominated boundary includes all property historically associated with the nominated resource.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title: Joseph L. Bostick, III, consultant, with assistance from Bonnie L. Tipton (THC Historian)

Organization: NA

Street & number: 3702 Audubon Place

City or Town: Houston State: TX Zip Code: 77006

Email: joseph.l.bostick@gmail.com

Telephone: 713-360-9550

Date: January 15, 2023

Additional Documentation

Map (see continuation sheets 18-20)

Figures (see continuation sheets 21-29)

Photographs (see continuation sheets 30-38)

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington

Ewart H. and Lillian Lightfoot House, Houston, Harris, Texas

Photo Log

Name of Property: Ewart H. and Lillian Lightfoot House

City or Vicinity: Houston

County, State: Harris, TX

Photographer: Joseph L. Bostick, III

Date Photographed: January 14-16, 2023

Photo 1: Exterior, NE corner of Marshall St & Audubon St

Photo 2: Photo 2: Exterior, facing east on Audubon Pl.

Photo 3: Exterior, Porch and front entrance

Photo 4: Mailbox, east elevation.

Photo 5: North elevation. (Google Streetview, 2023)

Photo 6: Rear west elevation, camera looking northeast.

Photo 7: Rear south elevation, camera looking east.

Photo 8: Living room, camera looking east to primary bedroom.

Photo 9: Interior, Living room, cobbleston fireplace

Photo 10: Interior, Dining room, camera looking west.

Photo 11: Interior, Kitchen, camera looking north.

Photo 12: Interior, Breakfast nook, camera looking west.

Photo 13: Interior, 1925 2nd floor addition. Camera looking west.

Photo 14: Interior, Ballroom step-down bath

Photo 15: Garage

Ewart H. and Lillian Lightfoot House, Houston, Harris, Texas

Narrative Description

The 1923 Ewart H. & Lillian Lightfoot House in Houston, Harris County is a 1½ story, frame California Arts and Crafts-influenced bungalow with a modified rectangular plan and front gable roof. It is on a corner lot in Audubon Place, an early 20th century streetcar suburb in Houston’s Montrose Addition. The first floor is clad in stucco with a wood shingled partial second floor, one-room addition (built in 1925). Designed and built by the original homeowner, the nominated bungalow is a good local example of Southern California architects Greene & Greene’s influence on North American residential architecture. Notable exterior features include the use of cobblestone on stair risers and broad chimney; low-pitched roof with exposed rafter tails; battered piers supporting a partial width trellised front porch; and attached garage. The interior retains its historic bungalow configuration, original cobblestone chimney, built-ins, oak floors, and mahogany arched openings. Remnants of Ewart H. Lightfoot’s patented innovations—electric mailbox signal, bedside door locks, and automated window pulley system—are also present. The Lightfoot House has been a single-family residence since its construction and has excellent integrity to communicate its architectural significance.

Setting

The Ewart H. and Lillian Lightfoot House (hereafter Lightfoot House) is an early 20th century bungalow in Audubon Place, an early 20th century streetcar suburb and local historic district 2.5 miles southwest of downtown in Houston’s Montrose Addition. Named for the boulevard that bisects it, Audubon Place is considered “the last remaining mostly-residential section within the original boundaries of Montrose.”¹ The neighborhood is characterized by one and two-story single and multi-family Craftsman, Colonial Revival, and Prairie style residences built c.1905-1925 with regular, 20-foot setbacks on a rectilinear street grid. The area is generally flat with mature oak trees lining the streets.

Site

The nominated boundary is a 100x60-foot residential lot at the northeast corner of Audubon Pl. and Marshall St. The 2,700 square-foot house is at the far southwest corner with rear elevations set close to the west and south property lines. There are two walkways leading to the house: one serpentine path begins at the Audubon-Marshall intersection and the other leads to the north elevation from Marshall St. The lot rises approximately four feet above street grade with a non-historic scalloped iron fence separating the front yard from public sidewalks. A broad driveway for the historic attached two-door garage is at the rear (west) side of the north façade. A Bermuda grass front yard extends across both street-facing elevations (east and north). Hedges and flowering plants are landscaped around the home, some within historic cobblestone-lined beds.

Lightfoot House

General Appearance

Built in 1923, the Lightfoot House is a 1½ story Craftsman bungalow with a modified rectangular plan (58x46 feet) and low-pitched front gable roof. It is of wood frame construction on pier and beam with rough stucco on metal lath exterior siding. The white stucco (originally rose-colored) appears thickly applied in an English Cottage-inspired finish of short, raised irregular strokes that were likely made using a rounded trowel. The home’s asphalt shingle roof (originally wood shingles) has wide overhanging eaves supported by triangular brackets. A 1923 article (**Fig. 7**) shows all windows were originally multi-light casement, but today most first floor windows are 1/1 wood sash (likely installed before the 1950s) in single, paired, and grouped configurations. Planters are hung beneath most windows on

¹ City of Houston Planning and Development Department, “Audubon Place Historic District,” accessed June 16, 2023, https://www.houstontx.gov/planning/HistoricPres/HistoricPreservationManual/historic_districts/audubon_place.html.

Ewart H. and Lillian Lightfoot House, Houston, Harris, Texas

street-facing elevations. In 1925, the homeowner constructed a single-room second floor addition. Set back from the front elevation gable, the addition has wood shingle walls with large multi-light awning windows (original) on the north, east, and south elevations.

East Elevation

The east (front) elevation faces Audubon Place and features an offset front porch on the north side. Red tiled steps with cobblestone risers lead to a porch framed by large, battered piers. The front porch is covered by a flat wood roof with exposed rafters and beams that puncture the piers. The handmade iron work that surrounds the porch was added in the 1960's. The home's mahogany front door has six lights clustered at eye level. Right (north) of the door is a narrow metal opening for mail and a 1/1 wood sash window. The wide cobblestone chimney is left of the porch and rises above the roofline. Paired 1/1 windows light the interior living room. Then, a three-sided bay window with a pent roof is at the south end of this façade, making a chamfered corner juncture with the south (rear) elevation.

North Elevation

The north elevation faces Marshall St. A three-sided bay window is at the far east (left) end under a front gable roof. Two battered piers frame grouped casement windows that are on a small wood frame addition. This non-historic addition (1955-1956) enclosed the home's original trellised patio, and the piers supported the wooden trellis. The original exterior wall (which became an interior room with French doors) featured two 8/8 double-hung sash windows flanking a horizontal, 21-paned window near the ceiling. The addition's west elevation has a non-historic door. Right (west) of the addition are paired 6-light casement windows set high on the wall plane, followed by a larger pair of casement windows.

The elevation's far west end has the garage at ground level and the former servant's room (now office) is above under a front-facing gable with a 1/1 window. Cobblestone retaining walls frame the driveway leading to the attached garage, which was built lower than the house at street grade. One garage opening is integrated into the building while the westernmost opening is actually a wood frame extension. The garage doors are unified under a flat wooden roof supported by cobblestone piers and triangular brackets. Non-historic metal railing lines the garage roof, which extends to the west elevation. The garage doors are non-historic replacements made to resemble the historic wood paneled doors.

Above the first floor is the one-room "pop-up" addition built in 1925. It has shingled walls with five multiplane wood frame awning windows (original). This configuration is repeated on the second floor's south elevation.

West Elevation

Two single 1/1 wood sash windows are on the south side of the west elevation. The wooden structure built between the house and rear fence is original. It serves as the roof structure for one of the home's garages, an outdoor patio, and provides access to the former servant's quarters. Access to this single room was originally through the now-latticed covered opening on the west façade. A non-historic door next to paired windows is now the room's only entry.

South Elevation

The south (rear) elevation is several feet from the property line and faces a fence. Paired 1/1 windows are at equal intervals along the wall plane. In the 1930s, the homeowners installed a door in place of one window at the south elevation's far west side. This accommodated an interior apartment. The change, however, was made outside the nominated building's period of significance (1922-1925). **(Photo 7)**

Ewart H. and Lillian Lightfoot House, Houston, Harris, Texas

Interior

The Lightfoot residence retains excellent integrity on the interior. In contrast to its dark wood accent, the abundance of windows fills the interior with light. Many of the original materials and room configurations are intact and were not touched during the recent renovations. Some of the more remarkable features of the interior include the 8–10-foot oak hardwood planks that run throughout the floor of the home, mahogany archways, door and window trim, built-in cabinetry, hand-tissued décor on ceiling beams, and the cobblestone fireplace. Elements of the original intercom system remain from floor to floor along with the home's original iron box in the laundry. A hallway runs down the center of the home that provides access to all rooms and also the upstairs via a narrow staircase.

The home's front door is on the east elevation under the front porch. It opens to the 21x14-foot living room, which now serves as a formal reception room. The floor is original to the home and is made up of 8-10' ft. oak planks that run throughout the entire first floor. Windows and doors are surrounded by a wide wood trim that is stained, not painted. On the east wall is a 7' gas fireplace covered completely in cobblestone. Its original fireplace tools, andirons, and screen sit upon a 2' hand-tiled base. Its wood mantle is original to the house as well. On the north wall is first of several 7' wide mahogany archways. This one leads to the 9' x 14' sun parlor. On the south wall of the living room is the second archway that leads into the formal 12' x 14' dining room. Both the living room and dining room have textured plaster walls that are an original design choice for the Lightfoot residence. French doors (installed in 1955-1956) lead from the dining room to the former north elevation patio. Now enclosed, the space retains exposed ceiling rafters and its original clay tile floor.

From the library or the dining room, the kitchen can be accessed via an inswing/outswing door that is original to the home. The 9' x 14' kitchen has its original cabinetry and layout with very few renovations since the original construction of the home. The Mission style kitchen cabinets have detailed woodwork along the top. The wide trim surrounding doors and window continues into the kitchen although painted white. A smaller archway leads into the breakfast nook, one of the more unique rooms in this historic home. The breakfast nook has a built-in, mahogany bar with two 6.5' glass door cabinets that flank the center portion. Additionally, the wood trim extends around the entire room with a faux brick backing. There are exposed beams on the ceiling, each decorated with hand-cut tissue paper placed by the original owner, Lillian Lightfoot.

The south side of the home is where all three (originally four) bedrooms are located. The first sits at the southeast corner of the home measuring 14' x 16' with two double and two single windows which create a bay window on the east front of the home. The second bedroom follows the Jack and Jill shared bath between the guest bedrooms. The primary bedroom sits on the southwest corner of the home with a primary closet and primary bath ensuite. The original tub has been kept in the primary bath. A single door sits on the south wall which gives access to a side & small outdoor area. This opening was built in the 1930s when the Lightfoot's rented out the back room.

The former servant's quarters is a 10' x 16' room disconnected from the house and accessible from the roof over the garage. Today, it is an office. A 1920s trade journal article featuring Lightfoot noted the absence of an interior room for servants, speaking to the role race played in Southern home design. In areas of the country, like Houston, where those hired were often African American, "quarters for them are provided over the garage," with a separate entrance and "seldom provided with bathrooms or other modern conveniences."² At the nominated home, there was originally a small enclosed bathroom provided *outside* and to the right of this room's entrance.

² "System in House Building," *National Builder* 65, No. 5 (May 1922): 20.

Ewart H. and Lillian Lightfoot House, Houston, Harris, Texas

1925 "Pop-Up" Addition

Built in 1925, the second floor was designed for social gatherings with retractable wall-to-wall drapes controlled via wire and pulley. Remnants of the pulley system are present. The 27' x 15' single room has 5 windows that line the north and south walls with smaller windows on the east and west sides of the room. A clay tile fireplace is original. There is a full bathroom tucked into the southwest corner and is accessed by a stair. Barn doors sit in the middle of the east wall which give access to the home's only attic/storage space. Now covered by carpet, the original flooring was soundproof yellow & black cork checkerboard.

Interesting Features in the Lightfoot Residence

The **mailbox**: In 1925, Ewart Lightfoot submitted a patent for a mailbox design that rang a bell when the mail arrives in order to avoid having to regularly check for mail. In response, the Bonham Daily Favorite newspaper named him an "inventor and little angel of cheer to tired housewives." The original mail slot still exits on the front porch and enters through the former sun parlor. [7]

The **windows**: A pulley system in the crawl space under the floor for all of the windows was designed by Ewart. The pulley system opened the windows at night while the family was sleeping in order to keep the house cool. At 6 a.m. the windows would close so the house was warm when the family awoke. While remnants of the pulley system still remain on the large 5' x 5' windows in the upstairs room, the system itself no longer exists.

The **automatic door locks**: Invented for convenience, Ewart had an automatic door lock located next to his bed. When one of the children arrived home at night, they would ring the bell 5 times to notify Ewart they were home. Ewart would flip the switch to lock the door.

The **upstairs shower**: During renovations, a window was removed in the upstairs bathroom revealing what was originally intended to be the shower. The shower was finished during the remodel.

The **staircase**: The staircase that leads to the second floor used to be a coat closet which is why it is narrow. The velvet rope that functions as a rail that leads up the south side of the staircase is also original to the design. The staircase and rope were untouched in renovations as they do not comply with current code standards.

The **primary bed & bath**: The house was originally designed with only one family bath and four bedrooms. During the Great Depression, a second bath was added, formerly the bedrooms, in order to cut the house into two apartments. The family rented the rooms. This is also why the door exists in the primary bedroom on the south side. A laundry room was added where the original bath stood, and the primary bed and bath were combined.

Alterations

Alterations to the exterior include the addition of ironwork around the front porch (c.1960), asphalt roof (replaced original shingles), and replacement garage doors (c. 2020). Additionally, the original screened-in north elevation porch was enclosed in 1955-1956. On the interior, a second bath was added, and one bedroom removed to enclose the primary bed and bathroom. The original family bath was divided into a primary closet and the laundry room. In 1925, the original hall coat closet was removed, and stairs were added to access the second story addition. The upstairs powder room was finished and converted into a full bath. The kitchen features modern appliances but retained original cabinetry.

Ewart H. and Lillian Lightfoot House, Houston, Harris, Texas

Integrity

The Ewart H. and Lillian Lightfoot House retains good integrity of **location** and **setting** in Houston's Audubon Place, a local historic district recognized as an important intact example of a 1920s residential suburb. Built in 1923, the nominated house is identifiably an early 20th century Craftsman bungalow. Nearly all elements of its original **design**—floorplan, massing, fenestration, ornament, rough textured stucco siding, cobblestone chimney—and **materials** are intact. The exterior stucco pattern and stonework and interior millwork are excellent intact examples of early 20th century building techniques and **workmanship** that went into the house's construction. Unfortunately, only remnants of Lightfoot's innovations (mailbox, automatic door locks, and window openers) are preserved. Overall, however, there is a preponderance of good integrity of the above five aspects, and the Lightfoot House has excellent integrity of **association** and **feeling**.

Ewart H. and Lillian Lightfoot House, Houston, Harris, Texas

Statement of Significance

The 1923 Ewart H. and Lillian Lightfoot House, named for the original homeowner who designed it, is an excellent local example of a Craftsman bungalow reflecting Southern California architects Greene & Greene's influence on North American residential architecture. Ewart H. Lightfoot (1886-1950), an entrepreneur and inventor, moved his family to Houston in 1920 when he began employment with homebuilder George T. Broun. He built a one-story bungalow on Audubon Place in the Montrose Addition, then Houston's largest residential development. Completed in 1923 with a 1925 "pop-up" airplane addition, the Lightfoot House exhibited architectural detail and craftsmanship inspired by Greene & Greene's Pasadena, California homes. The rough stucco and shingled residence featured exaggerated battered columns, wide eaves, prominent cobblestone chimney, and trellised porches with a classic 8-room bungalow plan. Lightfoot also incorporated his patented innovations—automatic windows, door locks, and mail-box alarm—in the design (only remnants of which remain today). It is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C in the area of Architecture at the local level of significance. The period of significance is 1923-1925, the date of original construction through the completion of the second-floor addition.

Audubon Place, Houston

In the early 20th century, Houston experienced an era of unprecedented urban expansion. Between 1890 and 1930, Houston grew from the state's fourth largest city to the biggest:

Extensive railroad and shipping connections; commodity trading and processing businesses; and urban real estate development contributed to its successive cycles of urban growth during these decades. Especially important was the development of an entire new industry based on oil exploration, processing, and marketing. These were also the decades when several of Houston's most important institutions of high culture were founded, often by public spirited women drawn from the city's elite.³

Speculators developed exclusive neighborhoods—like Courtlandt Place, Westmoreland, and Avondale—southwest of downtown that attracted Houston's rising middle- and upper-class citizens. Platted by the Houston Land Corporation, the Montrose Addition was the city's first large-scale, restricted subdivision. The 3,300-acre area had more than 1,000 lots organized around grand boulevards (such as Audubon Place) with a streetcar that ran to and from downtown.⁴ The Audubon Place Local Historic District (**Map 4**) is part of the original Montrose Addition that developed between 1910 and 1930.

Audubon Place, which ran parallel to Montrose Boulevard, was one subset of Montrose that developed quickly. Sanborn maps (**Figure 2-3**) show most homes on blocks along Audubon were built by 1924 and these reflected the popular architectural styles of the day. Architects and builders (like the George T. Broun Co.) designed and constructed Craftsman, American Foursquare, Prairie, and Colonial Revival styles throughout the neighborhood.⁵ Stucco, as well as brick and wood siding, was a popular exterior cladding. While employed with the Broun Co., Ewart Lightfoot purchased a corner property at Audubon Place and Marshall Street in 1920 that he subdivided into three lots. On those he designed his home (3702 Audubon Pl.) and two, 2-story stucco Foursquare homes at 3708 Audubon Pl. and 601 Marshall St. All the homes still stand today as single-family residences.

³ National Register, Westmoreland Historic District, Houston, Harris County, Texas, National Register #94000859: 8-36. <https://atlas.thc.texas.gov/NR/pdfs/94000859/94000859.pdf>.

⁴ City of Houston Planning and Development, "Audubon Place: About," https://www.houstontx.gov/planning/HistoricPres/HistoricPreservationManual/historic_districts/audubon_place.html.

⁵ Ibid.

Ewart H. and Lillian Lightfoot House, Houston, Harris, Texas

As quickly as it was developed, the larger Montrose area declined by the mid-1940s. Postwar interstate construction and subdivisions attracted families away from these early 20th century suburbs. Commercial and institutional encroachment and demolition of residences changed the character of the neighborhood.⁶ Audubon Place, however, remained remarkably intact, which led to its local designation and subsequent preservation. The Lightfoot Family and their direct descendants lived in the nominated home until 2000, and it remained under their ownership until 2021. It is among the standout homes recognized for its historical and architectural distinction in the district.

Ewart H. and Lillian Lightfoot House⁷

Ewart Hoyt Lightfoot (1886-1950) designed the nominated house for his family, and the house building firm he worked for constructed it in 1922. Ewart was born on August 28, 1886⁸ in Henderson, Kentucky to Dr. Nathaniel and Sarah D. Pate Lightfoot. His father died when he was two years old leaving Sarah to raise their five children on her own. Ewart graduated from Henderson High School in 1907 where he studied mechanical drawing. A Chicago firm, impressed by young Ewart's work, paid him to produce interior decorating drawings.⁹ He then sought employment as a traveling salesperson for a typewriting company, which may have been what brought him to Texas.¹⁰ In 1914, city directories for Longview (Gregg County) and Beaumont (Jefferson County), both list Lightfoot as a resident. A budding entrepreneur, he operated Lightfoot Tourist Tavern in Longview¹¹ and Lightfoot Apartments in Beaumont, where he was also listed as a manager for the Underwood Typewriter Company. The same directories show Lillian, Ewart's future wife, was already living with him and helping to manage the tourist camp.

Lillian Coates Diffenbacher (1878-1971) was born to Dr. William and Lucy Coates Diffenbacher on June 4, 1878 in Platteville, Wisconsin. By 1910, Lillian moved to Beaumont with her first husband, Stith Hurst, whom she married in 1898, and their three children. Lillian and Stith separated in 1913-1914, and she wed Ewart in Beaumont on August 12, 1916.

By 1920, Ewart changed careers when he became an associate of George T. Broun, owner of a lumber company based in Beaumont and a house-building enterprise in Houston. As Broun's right hand, Ewart introduced methods to streamline the company's factory production of household materials—windows, doors, fireplaces, plumbing. The standardization of these elements cut costs and sped up construction. In 1922, *National Builder*, reported the Broun Company built and sold thousands of homes in Houston valued at more than a million dollars.¹²

Under Broun's employment, Ewart moved Lillian and his stepchildren to Houston where they purchased a corner lot on Audubon Place in Montrose, an up-and-coming residential development south of downtown. He drew the architectural plans for an eight-room frame and stucco bungalow at the cost of \$8500, and the Broun Company built it starting in March 1923. Most likely due to Houston's soil conditions, the house was built up on a soil mound four feet above street level, which is unusual for the neighborhood. Completed by June, Ewart promoted his home as an "India bungalow in its highest development" with the architectural details, craftsmanship, and efficiency of California

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Adapted in part from a family history by Erin James Granberry called, "The Lightfoot Legacy." (n.p./n.d)

⁸ Family histories record 1878 as his birth year but the federal census, death certificate, WWI, and WWII draft registrations list 1886. Ewart's brother Ewing, however, was born in 1878.

⁹ "A Bright Henderson Boy," *Inquirer* (Owensboro, Kentucky), May 17, 1904.

¹⁰ "Not a Kick from Lightfoot," *Allentown Democrat*, October 9, 1909.

¹¹ *Worley's Directory of Longview, Gregg County* (Dallas, John F. Worley Company: 1914) p. 192, Ancestry.com. U.S., City Directories, 1822-1995 [database on-line]. Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2011.

¹² "System in House Building," *National Builder* 65, No. 5 (May 1922): 19.

Ewart H. and Lillian Lightfoot House, Houston, Harris, Texas

bungalows.¹³ The picturesque house was finished in rough, rose-colored stucco with “great overhanging eaves,” a large “semi-rustic” cobblestone fireplace and chimney, mahogany finishes, and integrated servants quarters and garage.¹⁴

Servants quarters were not a unique feature for an upper-middle class home of this era. A 1920s trade journal article on the George T. Broun Company informed readers on the role race played in Southern home design. Unlike Northern homes where (presumably white) servants quartered in interior rooms, stricter segregation was custom in Southern houses where the majority of domestic workers were African American. The “quarters for them are provided over the garage,” with a separate entrance and “seldom provided with bathrooms or other modern conveniences.”¹⁵ Indeed, historical records identified two individuals the Lightfoot Family employed. In 1940, Evans Ogilvie (1919-1970) and wife Edith Mae Ogilvie, nee Williams (1921-1990) were recorded as living in the rear room over the garage. Both born in Louisiana, the Ogilvie’s married in Houston in 1939 where Evans found employment as a truck driver for a local rice mill, and Edith cooked, presumably for the Lightfoots.¹⁶

By 1924, Ewart had patented several inventions that he installed in the nominated house. An electric signal bell registered incoming deliveries to the mailbox (**Figure 11**). A programmable clock could close bedroom windows and turn on steam heat to regulate the home’s temperature at desired intervals. Electric door locks and kitchen ventilation were also unique features. In 1925, Ewart designed and built a second-floor one-room addition. Fenestrated by windows on the north and south sides, it gave the home the appearance of an airplane bungalow. With soundproof cork floors and restroom, the room provided the Lightfoot children a place for social gathering and play.

The home remained in the family even after Ewart and Lillian moved to Longview in 1930. The following year, they opened (or re-opened) Lightfoot Tourist Tavern (later the Lightfoot Lodge) that came to be a remarkable success. In 1936, Ewart was elected president of the Texas Auto Courts Association and also, along with others, founded the *Tourist Court Journal*. Ewart continued his legacy of innovation until his death in the spring of 1950. His stepdaughter Maxine inherited the home, but Lillian returned to live there with Maxine until her death in 1971. Maxine passed away in 2000. Although vacant, the Lightfoot House remained under family care until 2021 when the descendants sold it to the present owners who are committed stewards of this historic house.¹⁷

The Craftsman Bungalow¹⁸

The bungalow house proliferated nationwide in the first decades of the 20th century, reaching its peak popularity in the 1920s and 1930s. Architectural historian Jay C. Henry described the bungalow as a style and a type of residential architecture with distant roots in India.¹⁹ Its development in the U.S. coincided with a burgeoning urban (and suburban) population and economic expansion that resulted in the need for relatively inexpensive and appropriately designed, single-family housing. Often described as “practical” and “economic,” bungalows were usually one-story houses with flexible plans that could accommodate 20th century middle-class standards for functional arrangement, comfort, and privacy.²⁰ It became a ubiquitous house type across the country, but homes varied greatly in size, materials, and style. Plans were sold to consumers and contractors in popular magazines and builder’s catalogs. Many builders, like Houston’s Broun Company, standardized construction materials offering customers “ready cut” homes

¹³ “India Bungalow in Its Highest Development,” *Houston Chronicle*, June, 17, 1923.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ “System in House Building,” *National Builder* 65, No. 5 (May 1922): 20.

¹⁶ Year: 1940; Census Place: Houston, Harris, Texas; Roll: m-t0627-04197; Page: 8B; Enumeration District: 258-235.

¹⁷ Erin James Granberry. *The Lightfoot Legacy*: N/D. Houston, Texas.

¹⁸ Reproduced, in part, with author’s permission from National Register of Historic Places, Houses at 1217 and 1219 Tulane Street, Houston, Harris County, Texas, National Register # 100005898, 16-17.

¹⁹ Henry, 248.

²⁰ For more information about the social function of bungalow house plans versus Victoria-era predecessors, see Alan Gowans, *The Comfortable House: North American Suburban Architecture, 1890-1930* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1986): 25-29.

Ewart H. and Lillian Lightfoot House, Houston, Harris, Texas

assembled onsite. Thus, well-planned, and well-made bungalows were affordable and accessible to Americans of differing means.

Bungalow interiors were casual and well-ordered with straight-forward layouts whereby rooms opened directly to one another. Advertisements, classifieds, and permit lists described bungalows by the number of interior rooms. Four-rooms indicated a living room, dining room, single bedroom, and kitchen; bathrooms were not enumerated but there was typically one no matter how many bedrooms were present. Porches on the front and rear of the home integrated indoor/outdoor living and reflected an architectural response to environmental conditions (particularly for hot Southern summers) before air conditioning.

Interiors were organized into three distinct functional units: living rooms, sleeping quarters, and the service area. Living rooms typically opened directly onto a spacious veranda or porch and connected to a dining room. Bedrooms, separated by hallways in larger bungalows, ranged from two to five in number; single bedroom bungalows were less common. The service area included the kitchen and bathroom:

the former of which was situated so that cooking odors would not flood the other rooms in the house. The kitchen, which averaged eight feet by 12 feet, was simply furnished with a sink, range, table, and cupboards, and was convenient to the dining room. The bathroom, of which there was usually only one no matter how many bedrooms were present, had an average measurement of fifteen feet by 7 feet and held three fixtures: a lavatory, tub, and water closet. The bathroom often was located between the sleeping and living room zones of the house, and its one door opened onto a neutral zone such as a hallway.²¹

From modest-to-high style, bungalows reflected a variety of popular historicist architectural modes, but Craftsman became the most identifiable style associated with the residence type. Craftsman style was strongly associated with the Arts and Crafts-era homes of Pasadena, California built by firms like Greene and Greene. Outside of California, contractor-builders, like Ewart Lightfoot, “armed with pattern books” could reproduce the forms and details of Craftsman vocabulary:²²

The distinctive exterior features of the Craftsman bungalow and two-story Craftsman house include a front porch, usually with a shallow pitched gable roof. The main body of the house, also with a pitched roof, rises slightly above this porch. Typically, the proportions of the houses are wide and low, effectively conveying a gravity-bound character to the dwellings. This feature assumes mannered proportions when stone or stuccoed piers are thickened under the weight of large wooden beams and rafters that support thin, albeit broad roof planes. Where there is a half-story, it is usually surrounded by windows or fronted by an open sleeping porch. When the partial second story reads as a dominant design feature, the dwelling is referred to as an “airplane bungalow” in contemporary literature. The surface of a Craftsman bungalow is usually shingles or clapboard stained or weathered brown. Occasionally stucco is used on the chimney or foundation.²³

The influence of Southern California architects **Greene and Greene** is discernable in the nominated home. Brothers Charles Sumner Greene and Henry Mather Greene, educated in manual arts at MIT and apprenticed in Boston, moved to Pasadena, California in the early 1900s. Following a vacation to England by Charles in 1901, he brought back Arts

²¹ National Register of Historic Places, Bungalow Colony Historic District, San Antonio, Bexar County, 38.

²² Henry, 241.

²³ National Register, *The Residential Architecture of Pasadena, CA: 1895-1918: the Influence of the Arts and Crafts Movement* MPS, National Register of Historic Places (1998): E-11.

Ewart H. and Lillian Lightfoot House, Houston, Harris, Texas

& Crafts ideals a decade before the movement might have reached the West Coast. The brothers took an artistic leap, attempting to synthesize the best of many worlds into a new California vernacular: the adobe and Mission forms of the region, the Shingle Style of Richardson in the Northeast, and the Italian and Japanese architecture they had studied.

The Greene's picked the chalet, a folk carpenter's dream, as their base. Charles Greene rejected revival styles in favor of a type inspired by Japanese timber-frame construction. Their goal, writes Arts & Crafts historian Bruce Smith, was "to develop a singular style of architecture appropriate to California's climate and lifestyle...massive pilings of arroyo stone and clinker brick, Japonesque lanterns, verandahs and pergolas, open courtyards and shaded porches, and low-pitched rooflines with rafter tails."²⁴ Charles Greene also noted how environmental conditions, inspired by Spanish-era missions, also shaped the brothers' approach to project design:

Those old [Spanish] monks came from a climate not unlike this. They built after their own fashion, and their knowledge of climate and habits of life were bred in the bone. Therefore, giving heed to these necessary and effective qualities there is good and just reason why we should study their works.²⁵

Greene and Greene's most celebrated works include the Gamble House (a museum), the Blacker House, the Thorsen residence; and the Arturo Bandini House (1903, demolished c. 1960s), which is credited for popularizing rustic cobblestone chimneys, as seen on the nominated house.

According to William F. Stern, "the rise of the bungalow in Houston was part of a nationwide movement...and [the California Bungalow] was one of the earliest examples in American architecture of an indigenous building type moving from west to east rather than in the other direction."²⁶ Affordable, efficient, modern, and customizable, the bungalow proliferated in the newly-developed suburbs that overtook the city's farm pastures. It was Houston's most popular housing type from 1905 to 1925. Importantly, bungalow plans were well-suited to Houston's hot humid climate. Air flowed freely through the interconnected rooms, which in Houston were planned in such a way as to benefit from summer's prevailing southerly winds. The bungalow's characteristic wide over-hanging eaves also provided needed shading from the sun. A porte cochere, a feature frequently seen on more ornate bungalows also evidenced, Stern posited, that the housing type was the country's first "designed with the family car in mind."²⁷ Some Craftsman bungalows near the nominated house had porte cocheres, but the Lightfoot House appears to be the only one to have an integrated garage. Attention to architectural detail and craftsmanship set apart particular bungalows from the thousands of others:

The carpenter's hand can be seen at every turn, from the skirted base which gracefully carries the house to the terra firma, to the elegantly carved, exposed beams and fascia. The craftsmanship is integral with the structure, expressing a sense of the materials and the craft of construction.²⁸

Houston's bungalow era declined by the 1930s, replaced by similarly sized cottages with historicist forms and decoration. The Lightfoot House is an excellent and well-preserved example of the Craftsman bungalow that, at one time, characterized the city's suburbs.

²⁴ David Kramer, "The Craftsman Bungalow," 2011, <https://www.thecraftsmanbungalow.com/category/greene-greene/>.

²⁵ Qu *California Design, 1910*, California Design Publications (1974) 96-97 in Carolyn Pitts, National Register of Historic Places nomination for David Berry Gamble House #71000155, Pasadena, California.

²⁶ Stern, "Lure of the Bungalow," 8.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 8.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 9.

Ewart H. and Lillian Lightfoot House, Houston, Harris, Texas

Architectural Significance

The 1923 Lightfoot House is an excellent local example of a builder-designed Craftsman bungalow influenced by the Southern California residential architecture of Greene & Greene. The architectural detail and craftsmanship make it a stand-out property worthy of recognition in AIA architectural guides, *Cite* magazine, and as a landmark within the local historic district. “Although not a grand house,” one author wrote, “great attention was paid by the builder to detail in his own house.”²⁹ It has a distinguishable bungalow interior plan characterized by a sequence of rooms organized by function. Bedrooms are on the south side of the home with the living, dining, kitchen, and breakfast nook on the north side. A cobblestone fireplace, as seen in Greene & Greene’s Bandini House, is the living room’s centerpiece. Mahogany floors, wall paneling, bookshelves, and door surrounds decorate the public rooms. Because the home does not access the block’s alley, Lightfoot integrated the garage with the house, a unique feature in an era when garages were typically standalone structures. The servant quarters, located above the garage but disconnected from the interior, is demonstrative of the way race and racism impacted domestic space in the early 20th century.

Exterior details, materials, and features that Lightfoot incorporated also reflect the eclectic stylistic combinations of English, Chalet, and Mission that characterized many Southern California bungalows. The first floor’s stucco is thickly applied in an English Cottage-inspired finish of short, raised irregular strokes that were likely made using a rounded trowel while wood shingles cover the second floor “pop-up” addition. Tiled stairs with cobblestone risers lead to the trellised front porch with exposed beams and supported by battered stucco piers, an eclectic threshold through which to enter the house. According to family tradition, cobblestones that cover the rustic chimney and along garden beds were procured from the Houston Ship Channel. The home’s front gabled roof with wide hanging eaves and triangular supports are characteristic of the bungalow type and Craftsman style. Window groupings, particularly those on the second floor, are also indicative of the airplane bungalow sub-type.

Conclusion

The Ewart H. & Lillian Lightfoot House is nominated for listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion C in the area of Architecture. The well-preserved and greatly loved home has survived 100 years of an ever-changing Houston landscape. Named for the original homeowner who designed it, is an excellent local example of a Craftsman bungalow reflecting Southern California architects Greene & Greene’s influence on North American residential architecture. Ewart H. Lightfoot (1886-1950), an entrepreneur and inventor, moved his family to Houston in 1920 when he began employment with homebuilder George T. Broun. He built a one-story bungalow on Audubon Place in the Montrose Addition, Houston’s largest residential development. Completed in 1923 with a 1925 “pop-up” airplane addition, the Lightfoot House exhibited architectural detail and craftsmanship inspired by Greene & Greene’s Pasadena, California homes. The period of significance is 1923-1925, the date of original construction through the completion of the second-floor addition.

²⁹ Houston Architectural Survey, Volume 4 (Montrose Area and South End), 778-780.

Ewart H. and Lillian Lightfoot House, Houston, Harris, Texas

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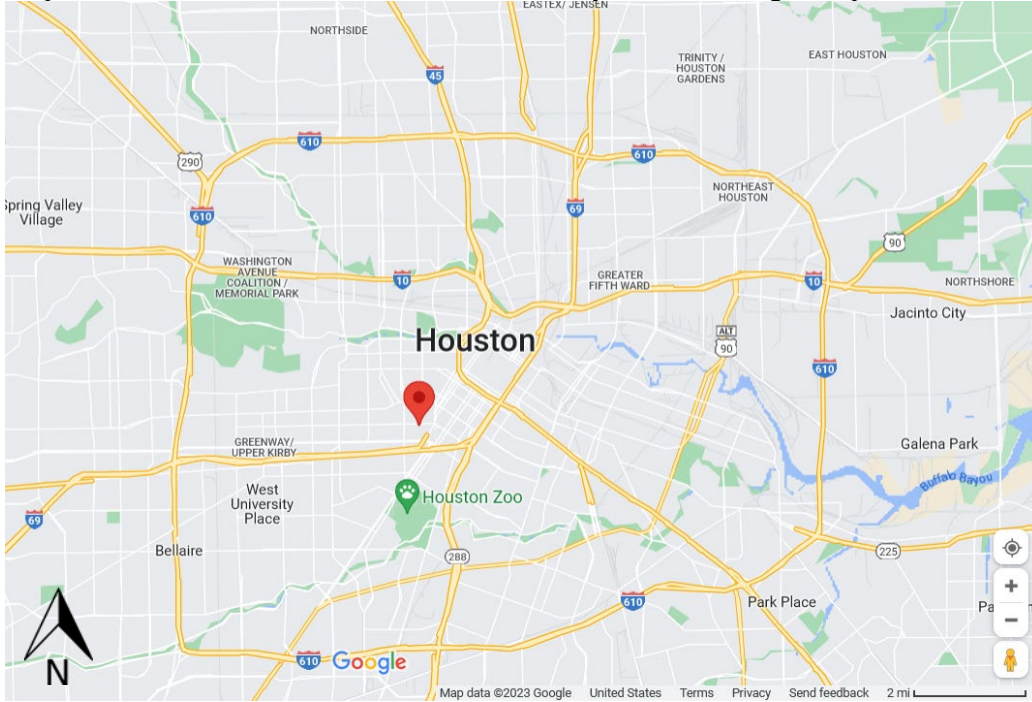
"System in House Building—Geo. T. Broun, Houston, Texas." *National Builder* 65, no. 2 (May 1922): 19-28.

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Ewart H. and Lillian Lightfoot House, Houston, Harris County, Texas

Maps

Map 1: 3702 Audubon Pl., Houston, Harris County. Source: Google Maps.



Map 2: Houston, Lightfoot House 29.739522° -95.386830° Source: Google Earth, accessed March 16, 2023.



SBR Draft

Ewart H. and Lillian Lightfoot House, Houston, Harris, Texas

Map 3: Harris CAD map showing nominated boundary (Property ID 0261410000017): TR 1A BLK 15 MONTROSE



SBR Draft

Ewart H. and Lillian Lightfoot House, Houston, Harris, Texas

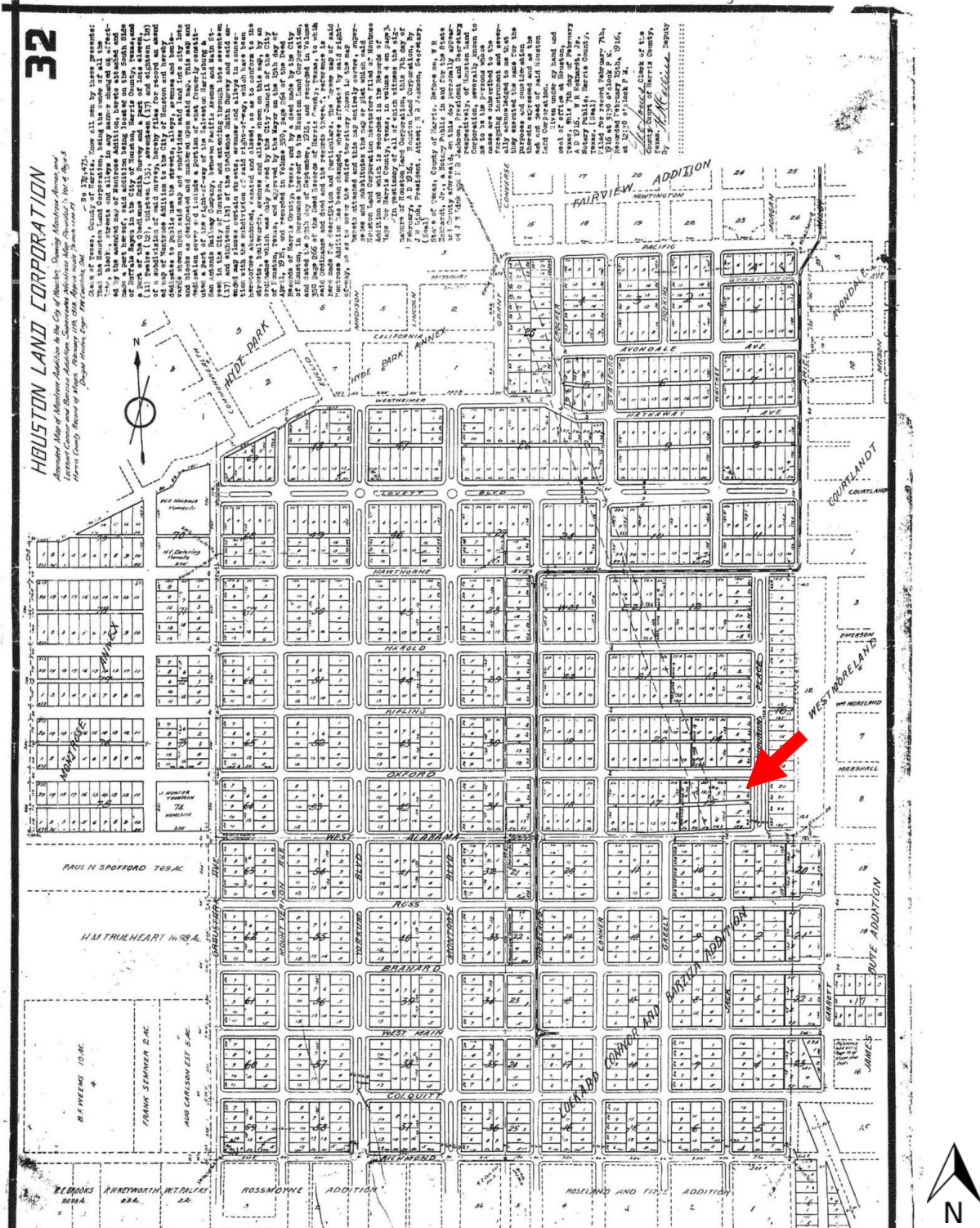
Map 4: The nominated residence is a contributing resource in the local Audubon Historic District.



Ewart H. and Lillian Lightfoot House, Houston, Harris, Texas

Figures

Figure 1: 1915 map of Montrose Addition



Ewart H. and Lillian Lightfoot House, Houston, Harris, Texas

Figure 2: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Houston 1924-1950 vol. 5, 1925, Sheet 548. Source: ProQuest.

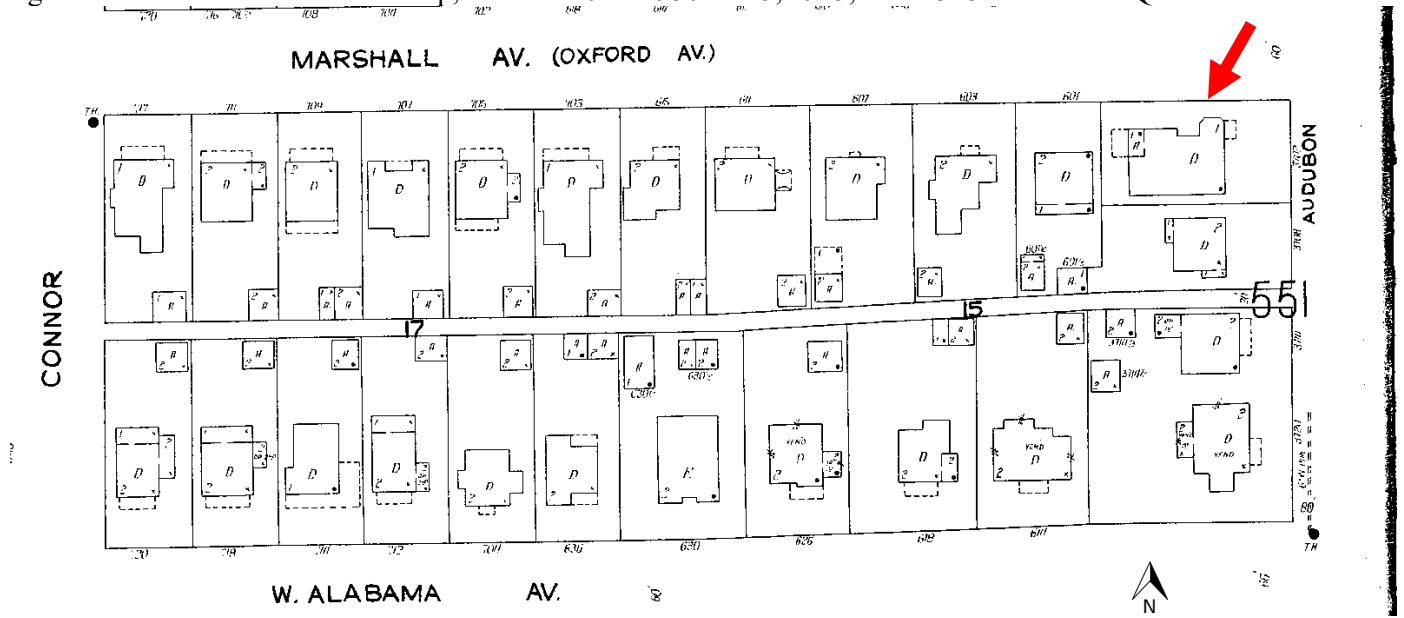
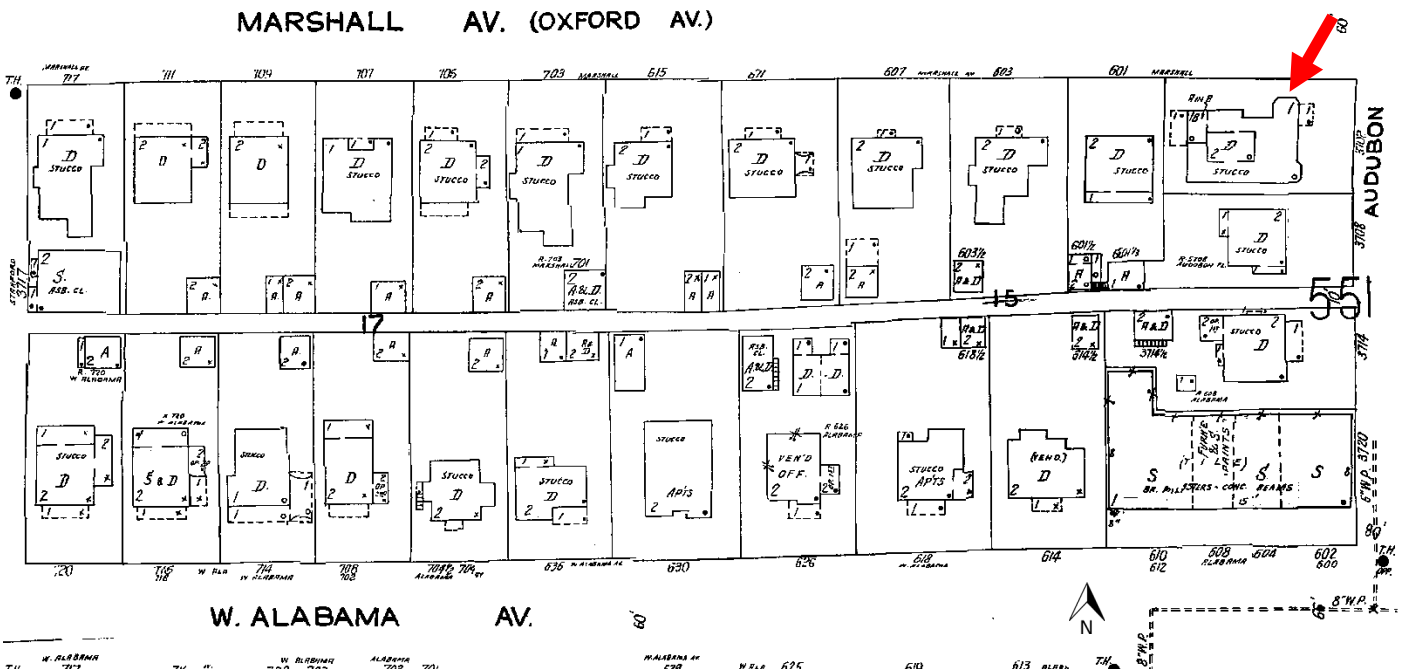


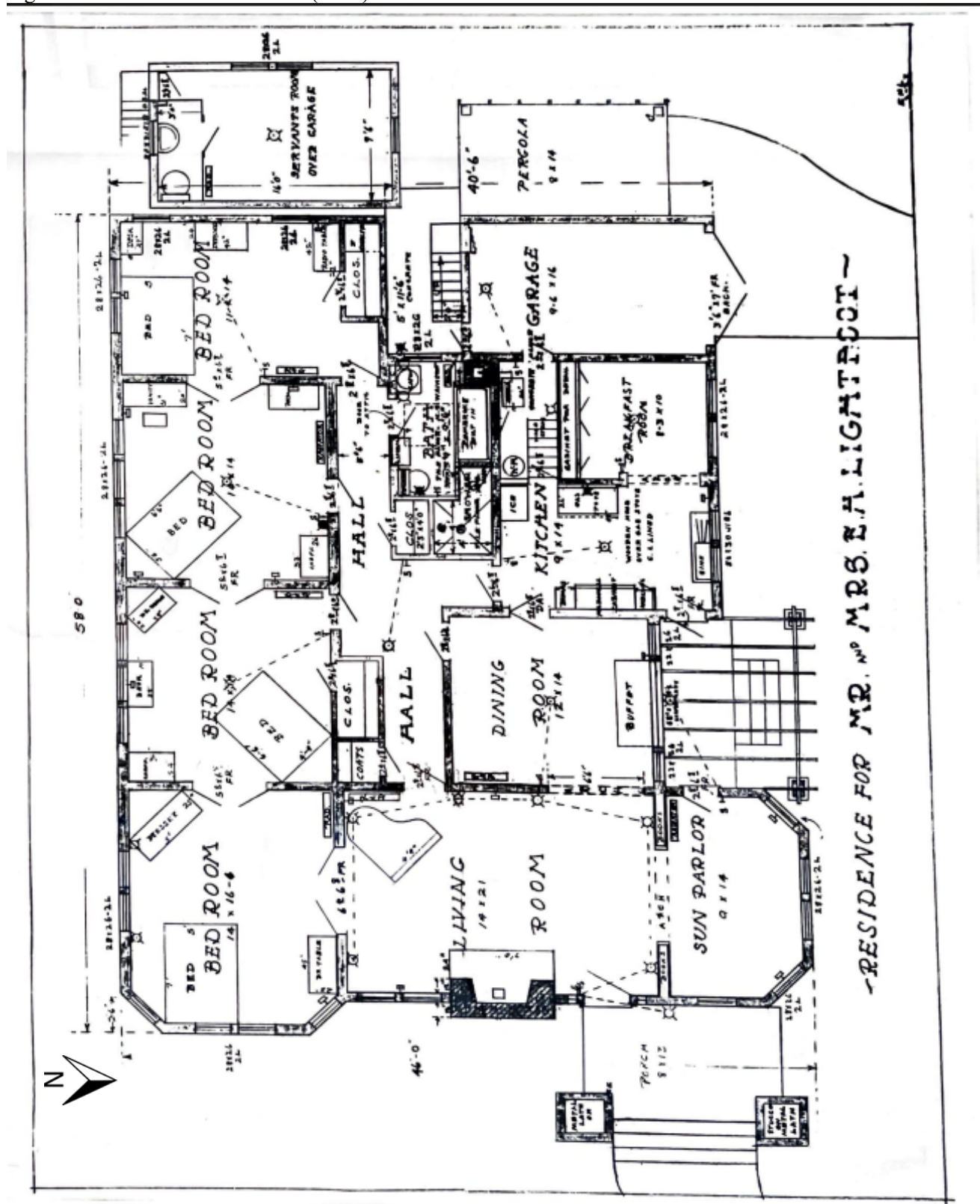
Figure 3: The second story addition is shown on the updated Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Houston 1924-Feb. 1951 vol. 5, 1924-Feb. 1951, Sheet 548. Source: ProQuest.



SBR Draft

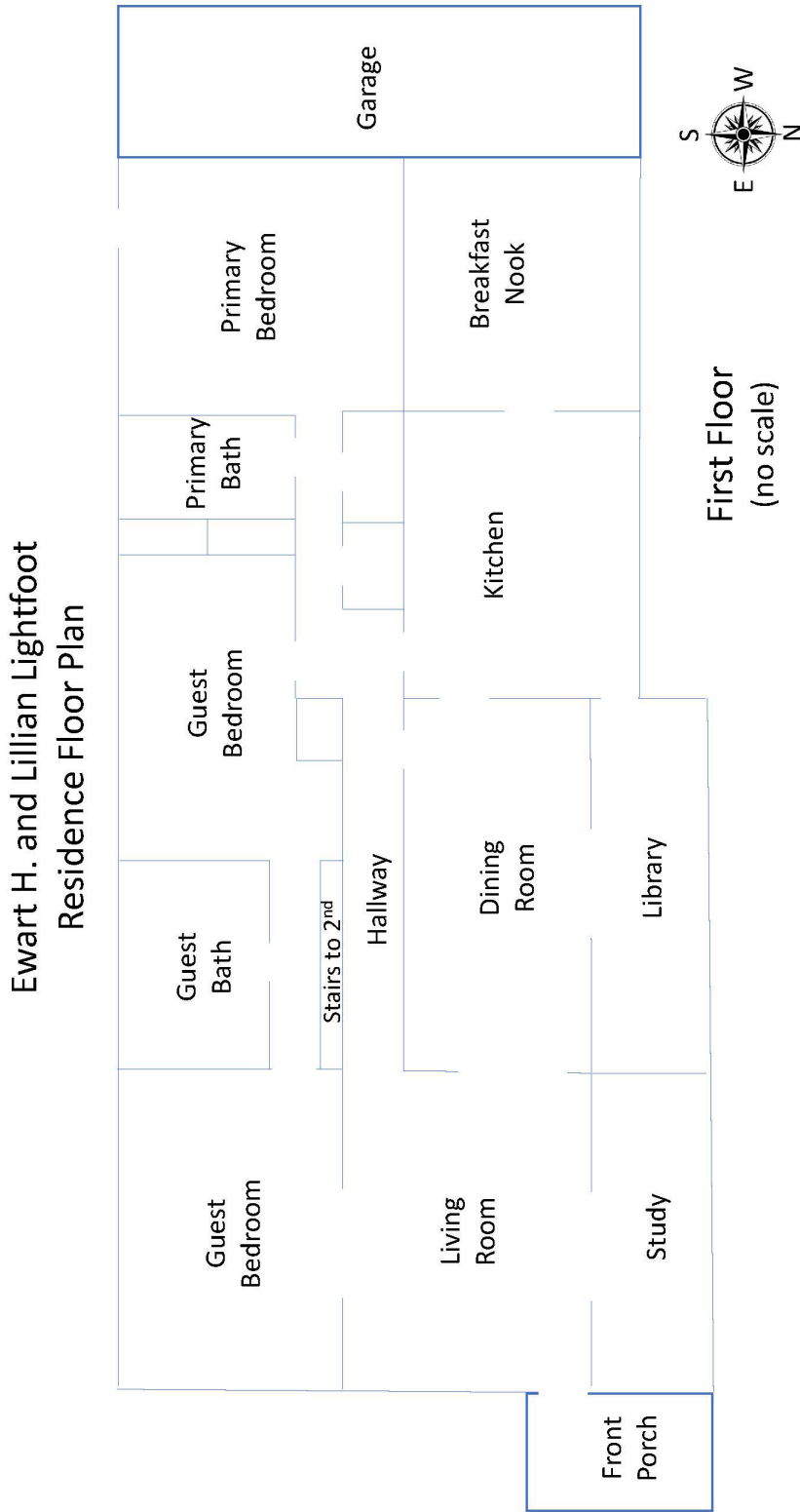
Ewart H. and Lillian Lightfoot House, Houston, Harris, Texas

Figure 4: Historic First Floor Plan (1921).



Ewart H. and Lillian Lightfoot House, Houston, Harris, Texas

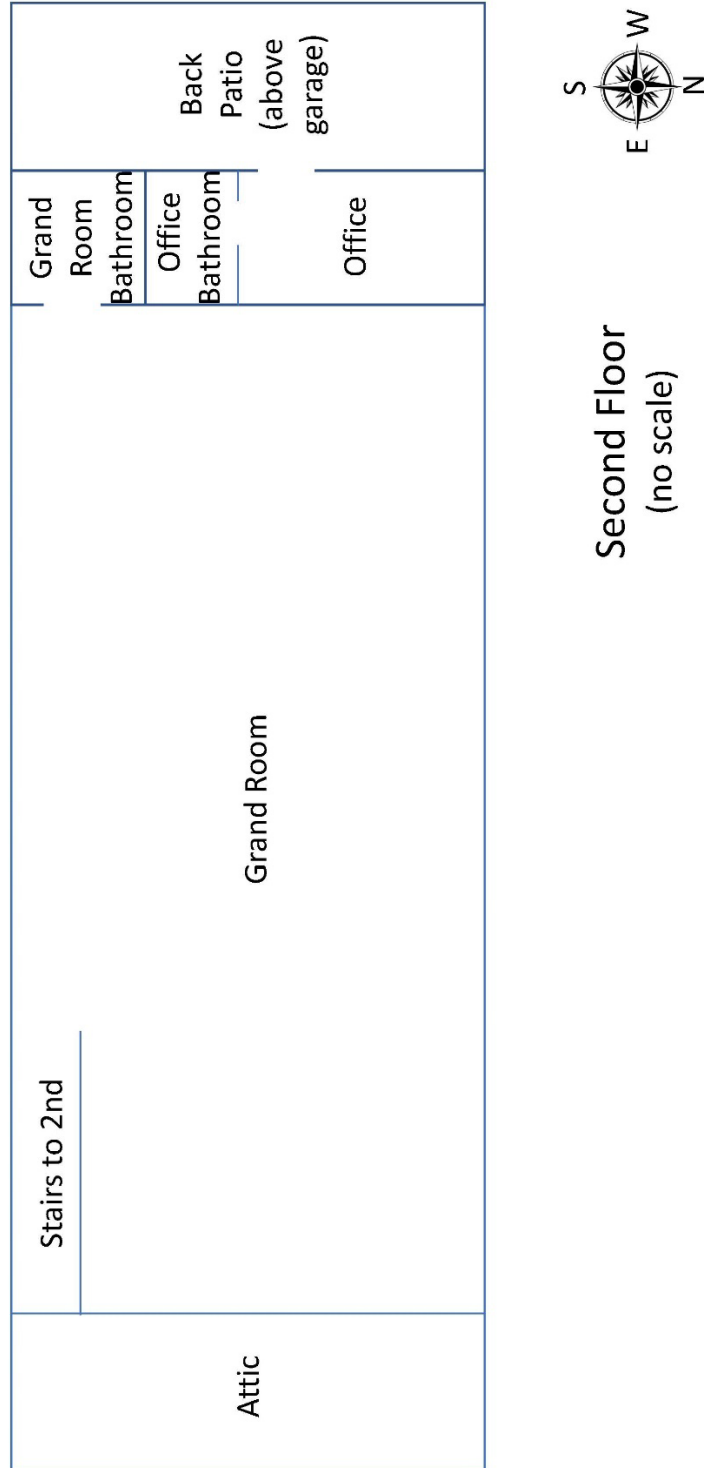
Figure 5: Current First Floor Plan



Ewart H. and Lillian Lightfoot House, Houston, Harris, Texas

Figure 6: Half-story addition current plan:

Ewart H. and Lillian Lightfoot Residence Floor Plan



Ewart H. and Lillian Lightfoot House, Houston, Harris, Texas

Figure 7: *Houston Chronicle* article highlighting the nominated house. Source: "India Bungalow in Its Highest Development." *Houston Chronicle* (June 17, 1923): 54.

Sunday, June 17, 1923

THE HOUSTON

India Bungalow in Its Highest Development




Electric Buttons Do Everything But Talk in This Home

A new record for attractiveness and novelty in home building has been set in Houston by the George T. Broun Company in the construction of a home for Ewart H. Lightfoot, manager of the Keystone Lumber Company, corner Audubon Place and Oxford Street. Mr. Lightfoot himself is responsible for the plans of the house. It is a bungalow of the type typical of India and which has found its highest American development in Florida and California.

The exterior is of a very uneven and rough texture in old rose and colored stucco. Great overhanging eaves protect the windows from the sun and rain. Dark creosoted woodwork blends effectively with shadows created by the eaves. A large cobblestone fireplace gives the exterior a semi-rustic appearance.

Woodwork in the principal rooms

Ewart H. and Lillian Lightfoot House, Houston, Harris, Texas

Figure 8: Lightfoot House in 1925 after the second floor “airplane” addition.



Figure 9: Architectural history periodicals and books reference the house as an excellent example of its type and style. Source: 1986 photo by Paul Hester for “The Lure of the Bungalow” in *Cite* (Winter 1986): 9.



© 1986 Paul Hester, Houston

An airplane bungalow, so called because it resembles the profile of a biplane of the early part of the century, was designed in 1923 by E. A. Lightfoot and is located at the corner of Audubon and Marshall in Montrose

Ewart H. and Lillian Lightfoot House, Houston, Harris, Texas

Figure 10: Ewart Lightfoot, c. 1920, when he worked for George T. Broun Construction. Source: "System in House Building—Geo. T. Broun, Houston, Texas." *National Builder* 65, no. 2 (May 1922): 19.



Ewart H. Lightfoot, assistant

Ewart H. and Lillian Lightfoot House, Houston, Harris, Texas

Figure 11: "Ewart H. Lightfoot's recent invention which saves the housewife many steps. Above: Postman depositing mail in slot, pressing back cover which rings bell. Center: Housewife removing mail from box through door inside house. Below: Housewife looks at enunciator when bell rings and drop indicates that mail has been placed in box."
Source: "Letting the Mail Announce Its Presence," *Houston Chronicle*, Feb. 10, 1924, pg. 6.



Ewart H. and Lillian Lightfoot House, Houston, Harris, Texas

Photographs

Photo 1: Exterior, NE corner of Marshall St & Audubon St.



Ewart H. and Lillian Lightfoot House, Houston, Harris, Texas

Photo 2: Exterior, facing east on Audubon Pl.



Ewart H. and Lillian Lightfoot House, Houston, Harris, Texas

Photo 3: Exterior, Porch and front entrance, January 16, 2023



Photo 4: Mailbox, east elevation.



Ewart H. and Lillian Lightfoot House, Houston, Harris, Texas

Photo 5: North elevation. (Google Streetview, 2023)



Ewart H. and Lillian Lightfoot House, Houston, Harris, Texas

Photo 6: Rear west elevation, camera looking northeast.



Photo 7: Rear south elevation, camera looking east.



Ewart H. and Lillian Lightfoot House, Houston, Harris, Texas

Photo 8: Living room, camera looking east to primary bedroom.



Photo 9: Interior, Living room, cobbleston fireplace.



Ewart H. and Lillian Lightfoot House, Houston, Harris, Texas

Photo 10: Interior, Dining room, camera looking west.



Photo 11: Interior, Kitchen, camera looking north.



Ewart H. and Lillian Lightfoot House, Houston, Harris, Texas

Photo 12: Interior, Breakfast nook, camera looking west.



Photo 13: Interior, 1925 2nd floor addition. Camera looking west.



Ewart H. and Lillian Lightfoot House, Houston, Harris, Texas

Photo 14: Interior, Ballroom step-down bath



Photo 15: Garage



~End~