

AGENDA ITEM: IVb

HPO File no. 101001

SITE NAME:

SITE LOCATION: 1748 North Boulevard – Boulevard Oaks Historic District

Owner: Florence Jordan as to an undivided 1/2 interest, and Florence Henszey Jordan

Applicant: Lee Girard, Realtor

Time Frame	Date Accepted	90-day Waiver
	October-6-2010	N/A

SITE INFORMATION:

Lots 3 & 4, Block 5, Ormond Place, City of Houston, Harris County, Texas. The building on the site includes a two-story, brick house with attached garage.

TYPE OF APPROVAL REQUESTED:

The owner and applicant requests approval of a certificate of appropriateness for the following work:

- Demolition of the primary two-story residential building and attached garage

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE:

The home at 1748 South Boulevard was built in 1928 in the newly developed Ormond Place Subdivision, which is part of the Boulevard Oaks Historic District. Ormond Place, bounded by West Edgemont and extending almost to Hazard, was platted in 1923. The subdivision, which contains 33 lots, was developed by George F. Howard, a real estate developer and President of the San Jacinto Trust Company. He built his own house in Boulevard Oaks at 1707 South Boulevard. Howard and the San Jacinto Trust Company were responsible not only for a significant part of Boulevard Oaks, but also for the development of Braeswood, a southwest Houston subdivision planned by Hare & Hare in the late 1920s. E. H. Fleming, developer of Southampton Place across Bissonnet from Boulevard Oaks, planned and developed Ormond Place. West Ormond Place, platted and filed in 1935, continued from Ormond Place to Hazard.

The home is classified as “contributing” to the proposed historic district. When the Boulevard Oaks National Register Historic District was approved by the National Park Service on February 22, 2002, the house at 1748 South Boulevard was also classified as “contributing.” The house exhibits influences of the Colonial Revival style. Despite the multiplicity of subdivisions, the blocks along North and South Boulevards display a cohesiveness in terms of both architecture and landscape architecture which epitomizes upper middle income residential developments in the south end of Houston in the 1920s. The houses, most built between the middle 1920s and late 1930s, exemplify the refined suburban domestic architectural traditions prevalent in the United States during the interwar years. The neighborhood was developed as Houston’s residential and institutional core moved south and west of the downtown area. Rice University, the Texas Medical Center, Hermann Park and the Museum of Fine Arts are contemporary with the neighborhood and are located less than a mile away. The planning of North and South Boulevards as boulevards divided by central, landscaped lots guaranteed a uniformity and consistency that makes Boulevard Oaks a cohesive neighborhood in Houston

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

AGENDA ITEM: IVb

SITE NAME:

HPO File no. 101001

SITE LOCATION: 1748 North Boulevard – Boulevard Oaks Historic District

APPROVAL CRITERIA FOR DEMOLITION:

Sec. 33-247. Same--Demolition of landmark, protected landmark, contributing structure, potentially contributing structure or within archaeological site.

(a) The issuance of a certificate of appropriateness for the demolition of a landmark, a contributing structure or a potentially contributing structure, or for demolition of a building, structure or object on or in an archaeological site shall be subject to the establishment by the applicant of an unreasonable economic hardship or the establishment of an unusual and compelling circumstance.

(1) Determination of an unreasonable economic hardship shall be based upon the following criteria:

S D NA S - satisfies D - does not satisfy NA - not applicable

(a) That the property is incapable of earning a reasonable return, without regard to whether the return is the most profitable return, including without limitation, whether the costs of maintenance or improvement of the property exceed its fair market value;

The 2010 Harris County Appraisal District records for this property indicate a land value of \$1,638,000 and an improvement value of \$319,000. The property was purchased by the current owner in 1964 for approximately \$45,000.00 exclusive of interest.

(b) That the property cannot be adapted for any other use, whether by the current owner, by a purchaser or by a lessee, that would result in a reasonable return; and **The applicant has submitted three renovation estimates for the rehabilitation of the existing structure. The three different estimates are for \$900,000, \$1,125,000 , and \$753,964 respectively. The proposed rehabilitation costs and land value after rehabilitation would be \$2,538,000 , \$2,763,000 , and \$2,391,964, which all exceed neighborhood comparables per square foot.**

(c) That efforts to find a purchaser or lessee interested in acquiring the property and preserving it have failed. **The property has been actively listed on MLS since April 2010.**

(3) Determination of the existence of an unusual or compelling circumstance shall be based upon the following criteria:

S D N/A S – satisfies D – does not satisfy N/A – not applicable

(a) That current information does not support the historic or archaeological significance of this building, structure or object or its importance to the integrity of an historic district, if applicable; **Historic Sanborn Fire Insurance Company maps for this property indicate that the original configuration of the house consisted of the central two story portion of the house and a small two story wing located to the east (right) side of the building. The Sanborn map also indicates a small entry vestibule/mud room located on the west side of the building which was one story in height with dimensions of approximately 8'-0" x 8'-0". Subsequent phases of remodeling have added a series of side and rear additions which have altered the original integrity of the building. The west side of the building currently features a one and one half story addition with a series of graduated side facing gable roofs. The side addition has**

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

AGENDA ITEM: IVb

HPO File no. 101001

SITE NAME:

SITE LOCATION: 1748 North Boulevard – Boulevard Oaks Historic District

added and additional 35'-0" of street width to the original 42' wide house. Although the house was listed as "contributing" at the time of the historic district inventory, the new information which has come to light about alterations would have resulted in a "non-contributing" classification had the information been available at the time of the historic district application.

- (b) Whether there are definite plans for reuse of the property if the proposed demolition is carried out and what effect such plans have on the architectural, cultural, historical or archaeological character of the surrounding area; **The prospective purchaser's intention is to build a new single family home of comparable size, which will straddle both lots as is the current configuration.**
- (c) Whether reasonable measures can be taken to save the building, structure or object from further deterioration, collapse, arson, vandalism or neglect.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval of the certificate of appropriateness.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

AGENDA ITEM: IVb

HPO File no. 101001

SITE NAME:

SITE LOCATION: 1748 North Boulevard – Boulevard Oaks Historic District

Statement from Property Owner

October 5, 2010

To Whom It May Concern:

My parents, George and Florence Jordan, purchased the property at 1748 North Blvd in 1964.

My father is deceased and my mother is unable to live alone. She currently lives in a retirement community in Austin. Because none of my family now lives in Houston, we are relying on paid help to maintain the empty house. Needless to say, this is a financial drain on my mother’s assets as she must shoulder the expenses not only for this Houston property but also for the retirement community where she lives. Although we are currently managing, my father always counted on the money from the sale of this house for my mother’s future living expenses. She has minimal investments or savings.

We understand the condition of the house makes renovation an expensive proposition, so although we would be sorry to see the house torn down, we also understand this is the only reasonable option for a buyer. Everything from the wiring to the air conditioning units is long out-dated, not to mention the presence of mold in the air conditioning ducts. Since the question of permission for demolition has arisen, the interest in the property, in spite of its being in a prime location and being a double lot has been close to zero. The one offer we have for the house is contingent upon demolition.

In regard to the historic nature of the house, it has always been our understanding that the house was significantly remodeled by the previous owners, the Allens. Mr. Allen owned a construction company and we were told this company did the remodeling. Included in the renovations were the addition of what is now the front door to the house, the entrance hallway and a new staircase. The master bedroom, bath and closet as well as the eating area of the kitchen were new additions; the kitchen itself was completely remodeled. Upstairs, two rooms and a bath were added in addition to a complete re-configuring of the other rooms upstairs. The renovations were significant since the original house was probably a typical center-entry colonial of the type common in the neighborhood. The entire floor plan of the house, both upstairs and down is probably completely changed from the original structure.

Thank you for your time attention to our request for a demolition permit.

Elizabeth Bodman
Daughter of Florence Jordan

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

AGENDA ITEM: IVb

HPO File no. 101001

SITE NAME:

SITE LOCATION: 1748 North Boulevard – Boulevard Oaks Historic District

**Statement from Applicant
Representing Property Owner**

Planning and Development Dept., City of Houston
c/o Mr. Thomas McWhorter
November 3, 2010
Page 2

The foregoing items were all prepared at arms-length and independently of each other. None of the authors of such materials are employed by the Property owner or its agents.

With this letter, the applicant has provided the Office of Historic Preservation with a significant amount of material in support of its application. As such, I would like to take this opportunity to summarize some of the more notable components of the application:

- The Jordan family originally purchased the Property in 1964 in an arms-length transaction for approximately \$51,000. Since its original construction, the home has gone through two major additions, severely altering the original design and resulting in a structure that straddles two platted lots in Ormand Place subdivision. Of all the professionals that have toured the home during this process, none could definitively identify the original, historic structure.
- Mrs. Jordan requires significant medical attention and currently resides in a nursing home in the Austin, Texas area. The costs of Mrs. Jordan’s care are extraordinary – approximately \$6,000 per month. Mrs. Jordan’s children are relying on the funds from the sale of the Property to ensure that their mother continues to receive sufficient care and attention during the final chapter of her life. The sale of the Property would also relieve the family from significant property tax, insurance and other financial burdens relating to the ownership of the Property (e.g., utilities, landscaping, homeowners’ association dues, etc.). The Jordan family estimates these costs to be in excess of \$3,200 per month.
- The Property has been listed for sale since April 23, 2010. Prior to placing the Property on the Multiple Listing Service, the listing broker marketed the Property in December of 2009 by mailing 400+ letters to neighbors and area builders who might be interested in new construction or remodeling the existing home. Since that time, the Property has been under contract twice. Both contracts were withdrawn when the buyers became aware of the impending elimination of 90-day waiver certificate feature of the City’s historic preservation ordinance. Both buyers had intended to demolish the existing improvements and construct a new single family home.
- According to the 2009 HCAD appraisal, the value of the Property is \$1,831,777; land is valued at 1,638,000 and the home is valued at \$193,777. The square footage is listed at 4,564 square feet, which equates to \$42 per square foot. Per Mark Atkins, AIA, who is experienced in the restoration of historic structures, the cost of a historical renovation to a home like this is estimated to be 4 to 5 times the value on a cost per square foot basis, or around \$900,000. The renovation proposals enclosed with this letter are consistent with this figure. Assuming a total renovation, the new value of the land and the improvements would be around \$2,731,000, or \$598 per square foot, far surpassing the comparables of the

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

AGENDA ITEM: IVb

HPO File no. 101001

SITE NAME:

SITE LOCATION: 1748 North Boulevard – Boulevard Oaks Historic District

Planning and Development Dept., City of Houston
c/o Mr. Thomas McWhorter
November 3, 2010
Page 3

neighborhood on a cost per square foot basis. This disparity in “improved value” and comparables is very unattractive to lenders and would make for a poor investment decision.

- Mrs. Winston, who is currently under contract to purchase the Property, plans to build a modestly scaled single family home on the site, in keeping with the historic nature of the neighborhood.

Based on the foregoing and the various factors to be considered by the Historic Preservation Office in the review of an application for a Certification of Appropriateness-Demolition, the applicant respectfully requests that HPO staff recommend its application for approval by the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission.

Please call me if you have any questions or would like any additional information.

Sincerely,



Anthony L. Marré

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

AGENDA ITEM: IVb

HPO File no. 101001

SITE NAME:

SITE LOCATION: 1748 North Boulevard – Boulevard Oaks Historic District

**Site Location Map
Not to Scale**



CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

AGENDA ITEM: IVb

HPO File no. 101001

SITE NAME:

SITE LOCATION: 1748 North Boulevard – Boulevard Oaks Historic District

Photo of Existing Building



CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

AGENDA ITEM: IVb

HPO File no. 101001

SITE NAME:

SITE LOCATION: 1748 North Boulevard – Boulevard Oaks Historic District

Detail of Side Addition



CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

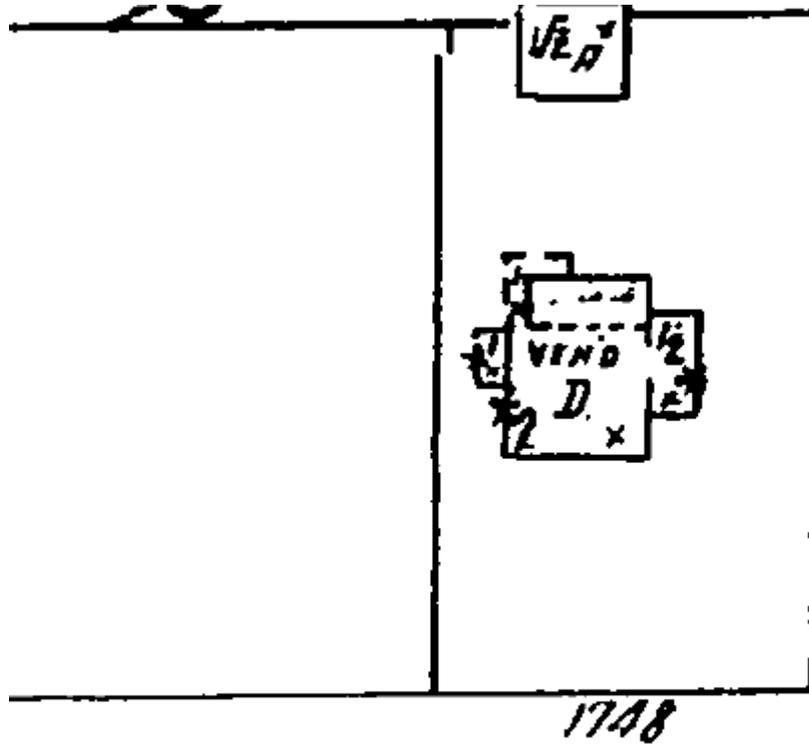
AGENDA ITEM: IVb

HPO File no. 101001

SITE NAME:

SITE LOCATION: 1748 North Boulevard – Boulevard Oaks Historic District

Historic Sanborn Map



NORTH

Copy of Current Survey

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

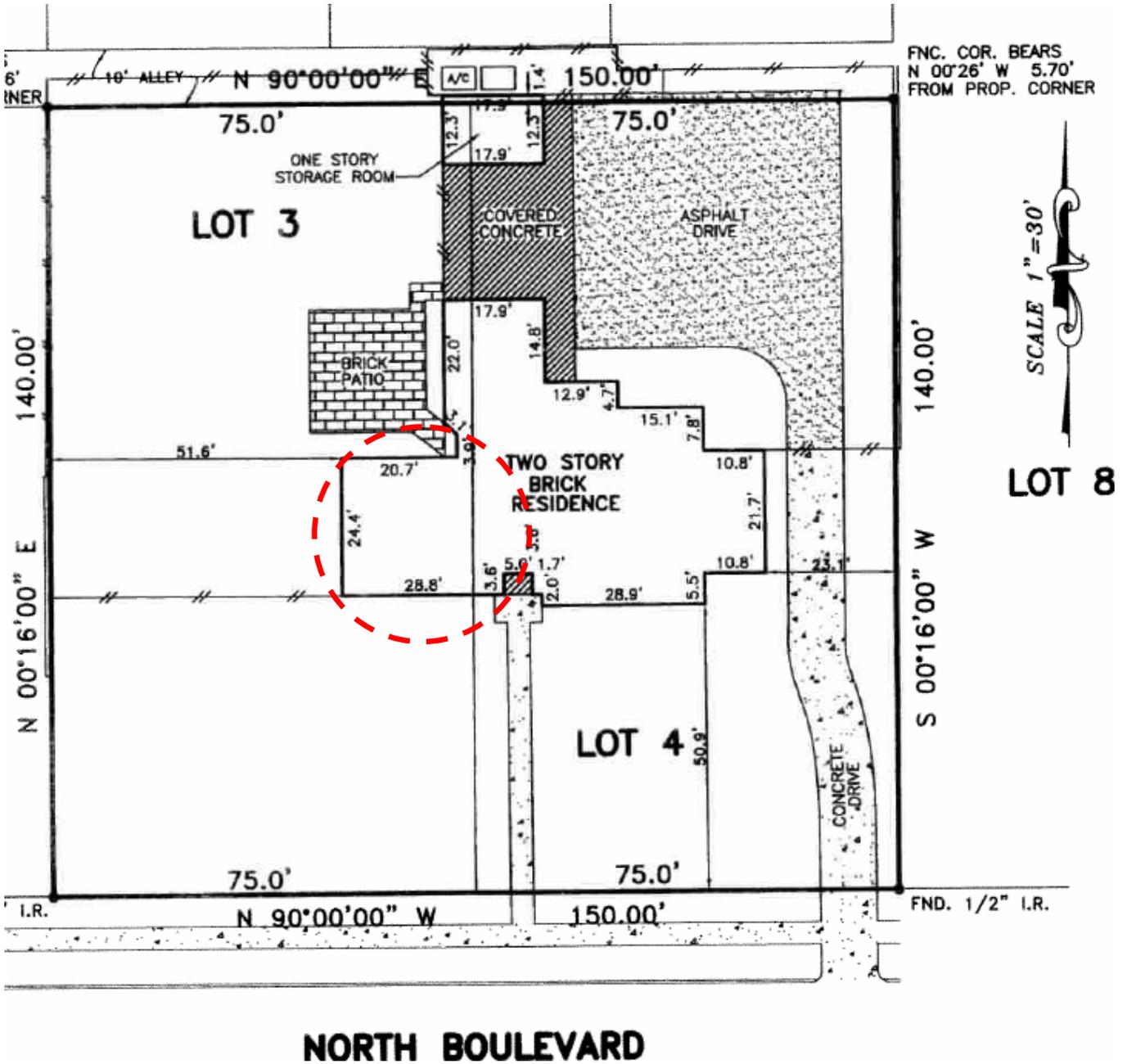
AGENDA ITEM: IVb

SITE NAME:

HPO File no. 101001

SITE LOCATION: 1748 North Boulevard – Boulevard Oaks Historic District

Side Addition Circled



CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS