

CITY OF HOUSTON

Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission

Planning & Development Department

HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGNATION REPORT

HISTORIC DISTRICT: Houston Heights Historic District South
(south of 11th Street)

LOCATION: See Site Location Map – (attached)

APPLICANT: Terry Mahaffey, owner 820 Arlington

30-DAY HEARING NOTICE: 6-15-2010

AGENDA ITEM: IV

HPO FILE NO: 10HD17

DATE ACCEPTED: 6-2-2010

HAHC HEARING DATE: 7-15-2010

PC HEARING DATE: 7-22-2010

SITE INFORMATION: Houston Heights Subdivision, including all of Blocks 230, 229, 228, 227, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 260, 259, 258, 257, 256, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 290, 289, 288, 287, 286, 301, 303; Block 216, Lots 1-11; Block 217, Lots 6-24; Block 219, Lots 3-23; Block 220, Lots 3-24; Block 221, Lots 1-22, S ½ of Lot 23; Block 231, Lots 4-12; Block 226, Lots 1, 2, 8-24; Block 246, Lots 10-12; Block 261, Lots 1-12; Block 276, Lots 2-10; Block 291, Lots 3-12; Block 300, Lots 1-12; Block 302, Lots 1-12 & 15-24, Block 304, Lots 1-9, 17-24; Block 305, Lots 1-9, 13-24; Block 313, Lots 1-5; 114 East Fifth Condo; Antebellum Homes; Arlington Heights Condo; Babin Santos; Blackstone Place Amendment; Bungalow Revival Sec 1; Columbia Heights Sec 1; Columbia Street; Cortlandt Oaks; Fallon Court; Heights Retail Center; Heights Street T/H; Hightower Estates; Houston Heights Partial Replat; Houston Heights 7th Amend; Kilheaton; Oxford Lots; Oxford Park; Patio Homesites White Oak at Courtlandt; City of Houston, Harris County, Texas.

TYPE OF APPROVAL REQUESTED: Historic District Designation

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY OF HOUSTON HEIGHTS HISTORIC DISTRICT SOUTH

Houston Heights was developed originally by the Omaha and South Texas Land Company in 1891, and at that time, they established the largest, earliest planned community in Texas. They purchased 1,756 acres of land just northwest of Houston. In 1891 they purchased, merged and electrified both streetcar systems in Houston as well as extended the lines to their new community, named Houston Heights, due to its elevation 23 feet above that of downtown Houston. Directors of the Omaha and South Texas Land Company in 1892 developed public utility systems, sidewalks, and streets, including Heights Boulevard with its grand, 60-foot wide esplanade and street car service; built and marketed 17 homes for sale as well as lots for home building by others; allocated sites for parks and schools; built the Houston Heights Hotel on West 19th Avenue to encourage the establishment of the business center there served by streetcar; encouraged the establishment of churches; and facilitated the development of a major industrial, manufacturing district in the northwest section of Houston Heights, also served by rail. The Omaha and South Texas Land Company also deed restricted lots on Heights Boulevard in 1892, which controlled setback, use, quality and size of the new construction. These deed restrictions were also used on some other lots throughout Houston Heights. This effort to enact deed restrictions was the first known instance of such in Houston, a practice that had been used successfully in other cities from which the investors of Houston Heights hailed, and the deed restrictions set the desired standard for their new suburb. However, the deed restrictions were not enforced and lapsed after the annexation of Houston Heights by the City of Houston.

Since Houston Heights was so well planned from its inception, and as the result, very attractive to investors, Houston Heights grew rapidly and eventually was incorporated as a city in 1896. It flourished as a distinct municipality until 1918 when the residents, by vote, agreed to be annexed to the City of Houston. The reason that the citizens of Houston Heights voted for the annexation to Houston was primarily to guarantee a broader tax base with which to support their public schools. Houston Heights voted "dry" in 1912, guaranteeing that alcohol may not be sold – an extremely unique ordinance adopted by Houston Heights and continuously enforced by the City of Houston. Houston Heights grew rapidly in the 20th century, but continued to maintain

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its unique identity, which was reflected in its original planning. Today the area still maintains the feeling of a distinctive, self contained “small town” with its predominantly small 19th century, one-story cottages and larger, two-story Victorian-era homes, and numerous early 20th century bungalow style buildings. It also boasts a thriving business district on W. 19th Street (now predominantly antique shops, retail and restaurants) and a large industrial district northwest of the business section. The neighborhood also contains the original city hall of Houston Heights (also the fire station and jail). Also located there are a number of historic churches, theatres, corner stores, private and public parks, fraternal halls and schools.

The proposed Houston Heights Historic District South is contained within the boundaries of Houston Heights, which was designated as a Multiple Resource Area (MRA) on June 22, 1983 by the National Park Service. Houston Heights was designated as a MRA because it was at one time an independent municipality of less than 50,000 inhabitants (1896-1918), a requirement of the designation, and the area also contains a large number of buildings that have been individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places, another requirement. On April 10, 1991 in conjunction with the Houston Heights Centennial Celebration that year, Houston City Council designated the entire Houston Heights Subdivision as Houston Heights Historic District of the City of Houston (Resolution No. 91-15). The resolution proclaimed Houston Heights as “one of the first planned communities in the State of Texas ... the largest intact historic district in the city tangible evidence of Houston’s architectural and historical legacy an area with great potential for enhancement and revitalization as a point of interest in the city.” While that designation granted no powers or conferred no rights or privileges associated with the designation, it was nevertheless a significant step taken by City Council to recognize certain historic neighborhoods in Houston for their historical and architectural significance to the city. Main Street Market Square Historic District had been designated previously by City Council, which was then followed by the same designations for Houston Heights and the Old Sixth Ward. The resolution designating Houston Heights had also been recommended to City Council by the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission (HAHC) at the request of the Houston Heights Association (HHA). The action taken by City Council was also warranted as Houston Heights had been honored previously in 1988 when the Houston Heights Urban Main Street Project on West 19th Street was established by the Texas Historical Commission and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The program successfully achieved economic development and at the same time preserved the historic buildings which enhanced the success and made it unique. The success of the project also resulted in the formation of the Greater Heights Area Chamber of Commerce, which continues its activities even to this day. The Texas Historical Commission approved a Recorded Texas Historical Landmark (Subject Marker) for Houston Heights which was dedicated during the Centennial Celebration in 1991. Many other sites and buildings in Houston Heights have been designated as Recorded Texas Historical Landmarks as well as being listed individually on the National Register of Historic Places. When the Historic Preservation Ordinance was adopted on March 1, 1995, 126 National Register sites, including the Houston Heights Esplanade, were designated as landmarks and made subject to the Historic Preservation Ordinance temporarily for two years. Most of these properties have subsequently been designated permanently as Landmarks, Protected Landmarks and/or designated as “contributing” to two previously designated historic districts. In addition to many national register designated sites and city landmarks/Protected Landmarks, Houston Heights West Historic District also includes the city-owned Milroy Park, and Houston Heights East Historic District includes nine esplanades of Houston Heights Boulevard. The proposed Houston Heights South Historic District includes within its proposed boundaries the remaining eight esplanades of Heights Boulevard, designed and platted in 1891.

When the MRA designation was bestowed on Houston Heights (called “The Heights”) in 1983, it was recommended by the National Park Service, as well as by the Texas Historical Commission, that multiple historic districts should be established within the boundaries of Houston Heights, since it was at one time a city and contained a significant collection of historic buildings. Generally the approach for an historic district designation is to designate the entire neighborhood, or suburb, as it was originally platted. Houston Heights was

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originally a town and planned as such from its beginning, and when it was annexed by Houston and became a subdivision of Houston, it still retained its diversity, but was not like other subdivisions of Houston. Thus the approach for the creation of several historic districts within Houston Heights tries to uniquely identify and denote that diversity of development found in Houston Heights and recognize it. Several subsequent surveys of the historic resources of Houston Heights have also recommended that same approach, including the extensive and costly survey in 1994 which was funded by the Houston Heights Association. With the designations by City Council of the Houston Heights Historic District West on December 19, 2007 and the Houston Heights Historic District East on February 21, 2008, those recommendations are being addressed. The action by City Council was also supported by the HHA in response to the desire of a majority of Houston Heights residents, who in conjunction with the City of Houston's Planning and Development Department, plan to determine the feasibility of submitting subsequent applications to the HAHC for other historic district designation applications, not just in Houston Heights, but in the several other unique and distinctive geographic neighborhoods, which are also under the civic umbrella of the HHA.

The area proposed for this application is the Houston Heights Historic District South, which includes a majority of historically and architecturally significant sites. The proposed historic district is also located south of and is contiguous to the Houston Heights Historic District East. The proposed historic district not only contains a majority of historic, residential architecture, but perhaps as significant are the churches and school buildings located within the proposed historic district. No where else in Houston is there a more concentrated grouping of historic church buildings than in Houston Heights. The churches of the community were and are still of great importance to Houston Heights, contributing to the town's image of respectability since the early days. The religious life of the neighborhood was also an important part of the social activities. One of the churches, such as All Saints Catholic Church, which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, even established a separate school as early as 1913 for the children of its parishioners. Moreover, within the boundaries of the proposed historic district are other very significant sites, such as the Southwestern Bell Telephone Company Building (1926), which has been listed in the National Register of Historic Places; the Heights Boulevard Esplanade (1891) and Harvard Elementary School (1923). Other important school buildings in the greater Houston Heights include John H. Reagan Senior High School, whose expansion by Houston Independent School District was very sympathetic as well as compatible to the historic school building. In regards to the proposed boundary of the proposed historic district, most changes in Houston Heights occurred along E. 11th where many of the historic buildings have been demolished as newer commercial activity increased -- thus this street delineates the proposed boundaries on the north. The west side only of Oxford Street delineates the eastern boundary of the proposed historic district, as only these lots, like others within the proposed historic district, run east and west. On the east side of Oxford Street on either side of the number streets, there were only eight very small lots that were originally platted in Houston Heights. These lots east of Oxford also were originally platted to run north and south. Since those few lots east of Oxford are configured differently than the majority of the other lots in Houston Heights, and since these lots are also similar in configuration and contain the same type of development as do the other platted neighborhoods to the east of Houston Heights, those lots in Houston Heights east of Oxford Street should be included within one or more other historic district applications that can be submitted later for neighborhoods, including Pinelawn, Bradshaw, Ridgewood and the Stude Subdivisions. The proposed Houston Heights Historic District South qualifies for historic district designation under Criteria 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 8.

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE OF HOUSTON HEIGHTS HISTORIC DISTRICT SOUTH

The large urban neighborhood of Houston Heights covers approximately 1,756 acres just two-and-one-half miles northwest of Downtown Houston. One of the first planned suburbs in the state, Houston Heights has retained its architectural and civic identity to an unusual degree despite the subsequent loss of historic buildings and adverse development. This has been accomplished in spite of its location in one of the fastest growing cities in the United States. Houston Heights presents a Whitman's Sampler of turn-of-the-century architectural styles. Several notable late-Victorian era mansions and substantial early 20th-century public, ecclesiastical, fraternal and commercial buildings serve as the anchors of the neighborhood. Nevertheless, the real strength of Houston Heights rests in its wide array of essentially vernacular, middle-class, and domestic architecture of the period 1893-1941.

The one and two-story houses and cottages are usually of frame construction, and were constructed in a variety of styles. Influences from the Colonial Revival, Queen Anne, Folk Victorian and Bungalow styles clearly dominate the architecture found in Houston Heights, but noteworthy examples of other styles are also found, including Gothic, Neo-Gothic, Mission Revival, Renaissance Revival, Prairie, Craftsman Bungalow, English Bungalow and Art Deco. Furthermore, in spite of tremendous pressure for development, the effects of several periods of decline, and a lack of zoning laws, the relationship of the buildings within Houston Heights has survived. A majority of the area still consists of tree lined streets of older residences, punctuated by occasional churches, schools and commercial buildings. Yet more and more of the historic cottages are being demolished or moved away to other areas of Houston, and the historic fabric of Houston Heights is being replaced with large "MacMansions," – not only a trend in Houston but a national trend where there is no historic preservation review. The Houston Heights Association has become very concerned with this trend, and once historic district designation is adopted, anticipate that the education provided through the city's Historic Preservation Ordinance will benefit the residents and developers alike. The ultimate objective is to accomplish appropriate restoration and preservation of the existing historic resources, which is vital not only to insure the retention of the status of architectural significance of Houston Heights, but also to encourage new development that only replaces "non-contributing, non-historic" sites (shown on the attached inventory) and to ensure that the new development is compatible with and reinforces the architectural significance of Houston Heights. The objective is to encourage:

- 1) Appropriate restoration of the remaining, historic buildings that have been classified as "potentially contributing" where architectural integrity has been diminished and should be returned as well as preserving the "contributing" buildings where their architectural integrity has been continuously maintained or it has been restored by appropriate restoration -- shown on the proposed historic district inventory (attached);
- 2) Appropriate additions to the historic buildings, which are subordinate and oriented to the rear and although they are attached, the additions do not alter the historic roof shape, and the additions appear as a secondary building behind the historic building, including the orientation of parking and parking structures to the side and rear of historic buildings; and
- 3) New construction that only replaces buildings that have been identified as "non-historic, non-contributing" on the inventory of the proposed historic district (attached), but moreover, the new construction is reflective of the context, placement and elements of the types and styles of buildings located within Houston Heights, and which are relevant to the particular architectural significance of Houston Heights. New construction must reflect the unique character of Houston Heights and should not look elsewhere to any other cities for inspiration.

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Oscar Martin Carter was President of the American Loan and Trust Company, which created the Omaha and South Texas Land Company for the purpose of developing their new site, Houston Heights, near Houston in the early 1890s. He did so in part because of the area's proximity to the Houston business center, and in part because the elevation there is higher "and healthier" (as promoted at the time due to frequent malaria outbreaks) than that of adjacent parts of Houston. The area is now densely populated, as a result of the original subdivision into 10,000 lots. Despite the size of the population and the growth of Houston in and around Houston Heights, the community retains a strong identity and something of the atmosphere of a small town. Carter planned the town with a basic grid pattern, focusing on a central boulevard divided by an esplanade. This grassy strip is still lined with palms, oaks, oleanders, magnolias, and other vegetation, and remains a visual and social focus for the neighborhood. Today, the HHA has made this wonderful, historic asset of Houston Heights one of its priorities, and has expended countless amounts of money and volunteer hours to maintain and improve the esplanade.

The vegetation in all parts of Houston Heights is exceptional, and it contributes greatly to the comfortable sense of community. Topographically, Houston Heights is relatively flat, rising in elevation slightly toward the northwest. The major natural feature of the neighborhood is White Oak Bayou, which flows through the southern part of the neighborhood. The slight elevation of Houston Heights above Downtown Houston, as mentioned above, was considered a selling point at the time the area was first developed, along with the sandy soil, good drainage, and superior artesian water.

The blocks and their constituent lots were originally platted so that most buildings face east or west (lots running east and west). An exception in Houston Heights is found west of Yale and north of W. 16th Street (the northernmost boundary of the Houston Heights Historic District West); in this area the orientation of houses is north-south (lots running north and south), and there are many more lots per block than in the rest of Houston Heights. Another exception is the platted lots east of Oxford Street. By varying the sizes of lots from block to block (and thus their original prices), the planners established areas to appeal to anyone seeking a site for a home, or for a business. In this way, social and economic segregation was easily accomplished with the wealthier residents on major streets such as Heights Boulevard, Harvard, Yale, Cortlandt, or Allston, and the less advanced families economically on less conspicuous streets such as Ashland, Waverly in the West, or Oxford in the East.

The first commercial development in Houston Heights, which was made to help attract new residents, was built by Carter along W. 19th on either side of Ashland. Several one- and two-story commercial buildings were constructed of frame or brick, and included a fine hotel which became a hospital in 1899. Although the original building at W. 19th and Ashland burned in 1915, several hospital buildings and doctor's offices have subsequently been built on or near that site. The general area remains as one of the most active commercial strips in the neighborhood. Transportation both by railroad and by street railway was extremely important to early development. The streetcars no longer run as this form of transportation was abandoned on April 27, 1940 to make way for the "more progressive system of buses." However, the modern buses today follow the same route up and down Heights Boulevard via W. 19th Street as did the streetcars. Nor are the industrial rail tracks used that formerly ran along Nicholson, which were used by local industry to shuttle goods between 2nd and Center Streets below White Oak Bayou, and to reach the main railroad lines on 7th Street at Heights Boulevard. Now the tracks have been removed and the strip has been abandoned. Today the City of Houston has developed the strip as green space for a biking and hiking trail which connects Houston Heights with the White Oak Bayou green space.

O. M. Carter boosted Houston Heights as a residential and industrial community, with provisions for a proper separation of these activities. Industries were early attracted, and several manufacturing plants, oil refineries, and mills were constructed in the 1890s. These were generally situated in the northwestern section and far western sections of Houston Heights along Railroad (now Nicholson) Street, or were connected to it by spurs. Of these often large industrial complexes, only the network of buildings at 2201 Lawrence, remain completely

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intact. Although this large plant was occupied by several owners in the first few years following construction in 1894, it is most widely known as the Oriental Textile Mill (N.R.; City Landmark). The most prominent feature is a four-story, square tower with a clock on each face. The southwestern and northwestern sections of Houston Heights contain the industrial and heavy commercial elements of what was once a complete and independent, small community. To supply the factories with workers, several small, frame cottages and shotgun houses were built along the tracks and in the northern and southwestern sections of Houston Heights. In those areas, blocks had been planned with smaller lots for just such a purpose. Because of their proximity to industry, much of these areas were made available to black families, who were otherwise excluded economically from owning property in the new, carefully planned suburb. Several of these early buildings on the fringes of Houston Heights remain, although most have deteriorated or have been demolished and replaced with other types of housing.

From the outset, the primary emphasis of Houston Heights was residential, not industrial. The Omaha and South Texas Land Company, headed by Carter, was not usually involved in the actual construction of homes, but it did commission the Houston Land and Trust Company to build seventeen elaborate residences along Heights Boulevard and Harvard Street as a means of promoting the neighborhood. Thus the construction of fine, highly detailed houses began on Heights Boulevard in 1893. Some of the homes included the D. D. Cooley House at Heights and E. 18th Street (demolished in 1968), now occupied by Marmion Park; the Colonel N. L. Mills House at 1502 Heights Boulevard (demolished); and the Eden L. Coombs House on Heights Boulevard (demolished). Others, which are still extant, include the Mansfield House at 1802 Harvard (N.R, RTHL, City LM) and the Milroy House and its original carriage house at 1102 Heights Boulevard (N.R.; RTHL, City LM). All of these elaborate, Queen Anne style homes, as well as others, were built from the original plans of George F. Barber, a notable architect in Knoxville, Tennessee. The Milroy House also boasts its original, two-story carriage house, also a design of Barber, and it is the only remaining Barber design for that type of building in Houston. The Omaha and South Texas Land Company also deed restricted lots on Heights Boulevard in 1892, which controlled setback, use, quality and size of the new construction. These deed restrictions were also used on some other lots throughout Houston Heights. This effort to enact deed restrictions was the first known instance of such in Houston, a practice that had been used successfully in other cities from which the investors of Houston Heights hailed, and the deed restrictions set the desired standard for their new suburb. However, once Houston Heights was annexed into Houston, the deed restrictions were not enforced.

At the same time that the primary investors and other professionals were building prominent homes on the boulevard and on large corner lots on parallel streets, many not-so-wealthy people were building smaller, but equally ornate, cottages. They were primarily white collar workers or skilled craftsmen who sought a comfortable suburb away from the city for their families. The Land House at 301 E. 5th, which was built between 1896 and 1899, is a fine example of an early cottage built by such craftsmen. This frame house, which is included in the proposed historic district, is simple in plan like so many others in Houston Heights. It has also been listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Most houses were constructed no more than one or one-and-one-half stories in height, and had a combination roof with a single lateral gable and a projecting gabled bay on the front. Some featured a decorative barge board on the front gable, and cut-out brackets and dropped pendants on the three sided bay. Most featured an attached porch supported by turned or round columns. Cottages were built throughout Houston Heights during the 1890s, and a need was soon apparent for schools to serve the area. The first was the Cooley Elementary School, a two-story, brick building at W. 17th and Rutland, which was originally built in 1893. It was destroyed by fire in 1961, but another, early twentieth century auxiliary building is still extant next to the alley between W. 16th and 17th Streets at Rutland. The Houston Independent School District building complex lies just north of the Houston Heights Historic District West. The second school was built in 1898 at 8th and Harvard as a one-room, frame building. This soon was expanded and eventually was replaced in 1911 by a two-story, brick schoolhouse. Today, Harvard School still remains a dominant building in the neighborhood when a new school was built in 1923. Although additions were made to

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it in 1979, the historic building remains and is still in use today. Harvard Elementary School is included within the boundary of the proposed Houston Heights Historic District South.

A second major period of residential development in Houston Heights ran from about 1900 to 1910. During that decade, architectural styles began to change. Several families built scattered, large homes, but Victorian era style detailing became less prominent and the desired form shifted from a narrow, two-story house to the lower and wider Colonial Revival cottage, which featured a large dormer in the center of its hipped roof, while simple Doric columns supported an attached porch extending across the front elevation. The ornamentation of the windows sometimes featured the use of wooden tracery, and the presence of a transom and sidelights around the door were all characteristics of this period.

Other styles of the early 20th century began to appear in Houston Heights in the years before the annexation of the neighborhood in 1918 into the City of Houston. Wealthy suburbanites continued to build elaborate homes on the tree lined boulevard, which was finally paved with brick in 1912. An adaptation of the several prominent styles became popular for a while. A simple example of Prairie influence still can be seen today at 1448 Heights Boulevard (N.R.; City Landmark), while the detailed house at 1536 Heights Boulevard (N.R.; City Landmark) is a well-preserved example influenced by the Craftsman Bungalow style, both of which are located in the Houston Heights Historic District East.. Some houses became to be constructed with brick, featured hipped roofs with small central dormers, and with attached porches, some of which wrapped both sides of the houses. More and more houses also began to feature porches supported by tapered half-columns mounted on brick piers.

The schools and churches that were organized in the neighborhood about this time contributed to the image of the area as a suitable place in which a family might live and grow. The buildings built to house these organizations served a similar purpose with respect to the visual continuity of the community. Many such buildings were built in the mid-20s: All Saints Catholic Church (Romanesque Revival style, N.R.); Alexander Hamilton Junior High (Jacobean Revival style), Reagan Senior High (also Jacobean Revival style; N. R. eligible); Emmanuel Lutheran Church (Gothic Revival style; N. R.), Heights Christian Church (Classical eclectic; N.R.), and the Heights Church of Christ (Neo-classical; RTHL; PL), the latter three being located within the boundary of Houston Heights Historic District East. Each of these buildings were constructed of brick and occupy a prominent corner site, or in the cases of Hamilton School, an obvious location at the terminus of a street, Heights Boulevard and Reagan School, an obvious location at the terminus of Columbia Street. As the population grew, so did the need for the municipal government to provide services to the people.

In 1914, the two-story, red-brick Houston Heights City Hall was constructed in Jacobean Revival style at the northeast corner of W. 12th Street and Yale (N.R.; RTHL; PL). The architect was Alonzo C. Pigg. This building also served as the fire station and jail (1914-1918) during the years in which Houston Heights was an independent town until being annexed by the City of Houston. The building was built on the East side of Yale Street across from the original Houston Heights High School, which burned in 1924 (site is now Milroy Park). The Houston Heights City Hall was then used as Fire Station No. 14 by the City of Houston after annexation. It was sold in December 2009 by the City of Houston to the HHA, which had restored it during a previous 20-year lease period from the City of Houston. The building serves and benefits the Houston Heights community. The original jail cell (now a vault) is still preserved in the historic building. A small commercial center had also developed in the 100 Block of W. 12th directly across from the Houston Heights City Hall. Two large, two-story brick commercial buildings were built there -- both of which display the construction date and the name of Brown, in the upper parapet walls. One was constructed in 1916 and the other one in 1922.

The commercial buildings of Houston Heights proudly bespoke their purpose during that historic period in which American business and industry were all important. They were often as simple as the small, frame or brick filling station, such as the one located at 1400 Oxford (N.R.), which served the community from 1929 until the 1950s. It served an important supporting function when Houston and Houston Heights evolved from their early dependence upon mass transportation toward the use of the automobile for individual mobility. Still

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extant are a small number of these very early gasoline stations, some of which are located on Yale at 6th Street, Heights Boulevard at 8th Street, and 3500 White Oak, all of which are located within the proposed historic district.

The large Renaissance Revival building, built in 1926-27 for the telephone company at 743 Harvard (N.R.), illustrates how large businesses could be sensitive to the communities in which they built. This particular placement, both the size and material of the building, complemented Harvard School on the opposite corner. Further, the contrasting stone trim with its Renaissance-inspired details of cherubs, lions, and grapes (used often on commercial buildings of that period), contributes to the building's visual appeal. Both of the buildings are located within the boundary of the proposed Houston Heights Historic District South.

The commercial strip at the southernmost section of Houston Heights and located on the north side of Washington Avenue at Heights Boulevard, was once part of Chaney Junction, also referred to as Chaneyville. These buildings are the only remaining examples of the near Houston Heights' development that occurred during that prosperous era. This strip connected the primarily residential community with downtown Houston. Outstanding among the row of commercial buildings is the impressive building at 3620 Washington Avenue (N.R.), designed by Joseph Finger, and which housed first the Citizens State Bank, and then the Heights State Bank, providing a grand entrance to the neighborhood. In fact the developer originally constructed two monumental entry gate piers (demolished) on either side of Heights Boulevard at Washington Avenue to introduce what lay ahead in their new development, Houston Heights. Chaneyville was also the site of Abbott Street School. Also, on the south side of Washington Avenue, at Chaneyville, were several other large, two-story brick commercial buildings that fronted Washington. The entire area was completely demolished in the mid-1980s except for Heights State Bank (now Rockefeller's Club).

It is unfortunate that Houston Heights development during the decades since the 1920s have not always been as attentive to the aesthetic values of the community as were their earlier counterparts. As the population became generally more mobile, much of the sense of the human scale was lost on the major arteries of transportation in and around Houston Heights on Shepherd, 11th Street, 20th Street, White Oak Boulevard (6th Street), Interstate Highway 10, and Interstate Highway 610. Intrusions to the usual scale and style of the area mostly occurred when buildings were constructed in strips along these major streets and highways, on the fringes of the neighborhood, or in a few very concentrated sections. Also, as the original restrictions in deeds expired or were not enforced after annexation, some smaller homes were built in vacant spaces among large houses, even on Heights Boulevard. And in the 1950s and 1960s, several of the finest original, single family homes have been demolished and replaced with multi-unit apartment complexes of unaesthetic design and poor construction. Some small businesses, usually of concrete block, including the one at 1401 Heights Boulevard, have likewise been built with little respect in regards to materials, proportions or placement in relationship to the residential buildings around them. Other sections of Houston Heights, particularly in the northwestern industrial area, experienced modern residential development during the housing boom after World War II. A few long, brick, ranch style houses of the 1950s and 1960s dot the neighborhood as well. Since the early 1990s more and more of the Victorian-era and bungalow cottages are being demolished and replaced. Although most of the new homes being built are single-family and are built on raised, pier and beam foundations, (characteristic of historic Houston Heights), they are usually larger, taller and wider and are also built closer both to the street as well as to the side property lines. Moreover, they are usually built in architectural styles and feature elements that were never found in Houston Heights, much less in Houston.

Despite these challenges, there has been some positive change in the appearance of Houston Heights and in the attitude of its residents during the past decade. Much of the development that occurred in the late 1940s through the 1970s was inappropriate, both in use as well as type. It is the intent of the historic district designation not only to recognize the historical significance of Houston Heights, but also to identify the types and locations of inappropriate development and to guide appropriate, new development to these sites in order to improve the

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character of the historic neighborhood, while not diminishing it. Such changes have led to the revitalization of many such inner-city neighborhoods. Individuals, both long-term residents and newcomers, began to improve many of the deteriorating residences. Houses that had been allowed to crumble slowly, as many of the original occupants died, have been returned to their earlier condition and significance, and again to display fine turn-of-the-century detailing. Sensitive development is being encouraged, especially in areas that are already endangered. The trend to construct the modern, new single-family homes is more desirable than past development of the more, dense townhouse type. However, new construction should never result in the loss of any “contributing” and “potentially contributing” sites that have been identified within the designated or other potentially eligible historic districts.

The historic homes, the large trees that overhang the narrow streets, the well-kept yards, and the sidewalks (which were often not included in such early suburbs)--all help preserve a scale that welcomes pedestrians. Except for the Heights Boulevard esplanade, which is actively used for jogging and walking, there are few open spaces which can serve as parks. The HHA, however, developed two pocket parks on Heights Boulevard – Marmion Park at Heights and 18th, and Donovan Park at Heights and 7th which is located within the boundary of the proposed Houston Heights Historic District South. Both park sites were purchased by the HHA to thwart very, inappropriate planned development, and today, they have been transformed into wonderful, useful park space, owned and maintained by the HHA. A city-owned park, Milroy Park, is located at 1205 Yale Street at W. 12th, and is included within the boundary of the Houston Heights Historic District West. The park is owned by the City of Houston, which partnered with the Houston Heights Association in the past when improvements were made to the park.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF HOUSTON HEIGHTS AND HOUSTON HEIGHTS HISTORIC DISTRICT SOUTH

The one and two-story houses and cottages found throughout Houston Heights are usually of frame construction, and are executed in a variety of styles. Influences from the Colonial Revival, Queen Anne, English Cottage, Hip Bungalow, Bungalow Duplex, Prairie, American Four-Square, Gable front cottage, Craftsman Bungalow, Bungalow and Folk Victorian styles clearly dominate, but a few noteworthy examples of other styles likewise occur. Within the proposed historic district is a most unique and rare style – Second Empire or Mansard roof style, which is located at 916 Columbia Street (adversely altered April 2010). Houston Heights as an inner-city neighborhood declined from the 1950s to the 1970s until the HHA was formed which embarked on heroic efforts not only to recognize the neighborhood for its historical and architectural significance but also to spark a revitalization effort. They commissioned an initial windshield survey of the entire area which was conducted in June and July of 1979, by Ellen Beasley, preservation consultant based in Galveston, Texas, and by Katy London, project assistant. During this survey, each building in the area was evaluated and marked on large field maps as "significant," "possibly significant," "contributing," or "compatible" to the character of the neighborhood, or as "detracting" from it. After a careful evaluation of these maps through several visits to the area for further inspection, and after a preliminary study of local history, a large number of buildings were determined to be of individual significance to the community. The buildings chosen served as examples of the kinds of buildings that were constructed in the neighborhood, or were buildings with strong historical associations with that development. Searches of both primary and secondary literary sources were conducted, and more detailed research (i. e., the tracing of deeds, and the consultation of city directories and newspaper files) was done for the significant buildings and the people associated with them. A survey form of the Texas Historical Commission was completed for each significant building and photographs were taken. No archaeological surveying or testing was done. On July 11 and 12, 1982, a second windshield survey, was made of Houston Heights by Peter Flagg Maxson of the Texas Historical Commission and by Clayton Lee, a lifelong resident of Houston Heights. Virtually all sites being nominated were revisited, and properties, which had been significantly rehabilitated or remodeled and which had become deteriorated or otherwise changed since the

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initial Beasley/London survey, were re-photographed to insure that nomination photographs accurately portrayed existing conditions.

Within Houston Heights today there are approximately 8,000 buildings, of which 102 were nominated in the first group to the National Register of Historic Places in 1983. Included in those nominations were Heights Boulevard Esplanade (N.R.). Several other buildings, or clusters of buildings and structures, were to be nominated as additional research and/or sympathetic rehabilitation was completed. Another survey was initiated by the Houston Heights Association Historical Committee in 1984, which also proposed the designation of at least two historic districts. An additional 31 buildings were added to the National Register of Historic Places subsequently in 1986 to 1993. At the time of the initial nominations, it was proposed also that the neighborhood contained thousands of important, historic buildings which were found significant collectively, and should be included within multiple "historic districts" within the boundaries of the entire platted neighborhood of Houston Heights. The historic districts that have been proposed in Houston Heights would include only a portion of those original 8,000 buildings. Again in 1994 the Houston Heights Association commissioned another survey for the entire neighborhood, which also validated the creation of multiple historic districts.

The southern portion of Houston Heights, which is proposed as the Houston Heights Historic District South, includes the following proposed boundaries: the west side of Oxford Street only (eastern boundary), East 11th Street (northern boundary), Heights Boulevard (western boundary); and 4th Street (southern boundary). This portion of Houston Heights, as originally planned, is more like Houston Heights Historic District West, which is primarily residential. The proposed historic district, while primarily residential too, also includes a school, several small, local corner stores, four church sites, an institutional building and of course, Heights Boulevard Esplanade.

Under the jurisdiction of the City of Houston, which had no zoning regulations, more non-residential uses as well as more inappropriate commercial development was established within Houston Heights, which has geographically changed the neighborhood somewhat by re-defining some areas where significance has been diminished. In regards to the proposed Houston Heights Historic District South, most of these changes occurred along 11th Street and the southern portion of the area, which is close to Interstate Highway 10, where several large warehouse type businesses have replaced numerous historic, residential buildings that once existed just north of its feeder road.

Residents of Houston Heights and the surrounding historic neighborhoods, as more and more of the historic cottage are being demolished or moved away to others areas of Houston, are becoming concerned that the historic fabric as well as significance of their neighborhoods are being replaced with large "MacMansions," not only a trend in Houston but a national trend where there is no historic preservation review. The Houston Heights Association is well aware of this trend. In 1994 they had hired the Austin, Texas firm of Hardy, Heck and Moore, which is nationally respected as preservation consultants, to complete an extensive historic resources survey of Houston Heights at a cost of \$10,000. The survey not only confirmed that Houston Heights was both historically and architecturally significant, and warranted historic district designations, but their recommendations also supported previous recommendations for the creation of multiple historic districts. The expenditure and survey planning efforts of the HHA was finally set into motion recently when the residents of Houston Heights initiated the first of several planned applications for historic district applications, including Houston Heights Historic District West, which was designated by City Council on December 19, 2007, and then Houston Heights Historic District East, which was designated on February 21, 2008. Residents of the Freeland Addition, which lies adjacent to the proposed historic district, were designated by City Council on September 10, 2008. That neighborhood is also under the civic umbrella of the HHA. The residents of all three historic districts, in partnership with the HHA, supported the designation applications and felt that once historic district designations were adopted, they anticipated that the education provided through the city's Historic Preservation Ordinance would benefit not only the residents and developers alike, but the community at-large. The ultimate

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objective is to achieve appropriate restoration and preservation of the existing historic resources, which is vital to protecting the architectural significance of Houston Heights, but also to encourage new development that only replaces “non-contributing, non-historic” sites (shown on the attached inventory) that is also compatible to and reinforces the architectural significance of Houston Heights. The objective is to encourage:

- 1) Appropriate restoration of the remaining, historic buildings that have been classified as “potentially contributing” where architectural integrity has been diminished and should be returned as well as preserving the “contributing” buildings where their architectural integrity has been continuously maintained or it has been restored by appropriate restoration -- shown on the proposed historic district inventory (attached). A few examples of “contributing” buildings where their architectural integrity has been continuously maintained or it has been restored by appropriate restoration include: Hipped Bungalow at: 704 Arlington; 915 Arlington; Cottage at: 825 Arlington, 617 Columbia, 730 Columbia, 844 Columbia, 941 Cortlandt, and 201 E. 5th ; Pyramid roof cottage at: 1031 Arlington, 1024 Columbia, 1026 Columbia; Bungalow at: 427 Cortlandt, 815 Arlington; 832 Columbia, 935 Columbia, 1002 Columbia, 1006 Columbia, 1015 Columbia, 1042 Cortlandt, 429 Oxford, 939 Oxford, 1013 Oxford, 1019 Oxford, 401 E. 5th, 507 E. 5th, 3411 White Oak, 201 E. 9th, 501 E. 9th, 505 E. 9th ; Bungalow Duplexes at 930-932 Harvard, 1027-1029 Arlington, 1038-1040 Cortlandt, 1023 Oxford, 1037 Oxford; Folk Victorian at 927 Harvard, 831 Arlington; English Cottage at 420 Cortlandt; 1001 Oxford; Queen Anne (L-plan) at 823 Harvard, 831 Harvard, 427 Cortlandt, 630 Cortlandt, 815 Cortlandt, 618 Arlington, 721 Arlington, 811 Arlington, 939 Arlington, 1025 Arlington, 441 Columbia, 522 Columbia, 711 Columbia, 912 Columbia, 1027 Columbia, 106 W. 4th, 122 E. 5th, 301 E. 5th, 208 E. 8th, 301 E. 8th, 402 E. 9th, 403 E. 9th ; Craftsman Bungalows at 839 Harvard, 746 Cortlandt, 723 Arlington, 816 Arlington, 536 Columbia, 1022 Cortlandt, 113 E 4th ; Colonial Revival at 1039 Harvard; Dutch Colonial at 1046 Harvard; Greek Revival at 943 ½ Cortlandt; Renaissance Revival at 743 Harvard; Gothic Revival at: 201 E. 10th (church); Second Empire (Mansard Roof) at 916 Columbia; and Tudor Revival at 609 Oxford.
- 2) Appropriate additions to the historic buildings, which are subordinate and oriented to the rear and although they are attached, the additions do not alter the historic roof shape, and the additions, if visible, appear as a secondary building behind the historic building, and moreover, the orientation of parking and parking structures are to the side and rear of historic buildings. A few examples of appropriate rear additions include: 906 Arlington, 916 Arlington, 939 Arlington, 711 Columbia, 1024 Columbia, 425 Cortlandt, 528 Cortlandt, 706 Cortlandt, 739 Cortlandt, 912 Cortlandt, 916 Cortlandt, 431 Harvard, 611 Harvard, 625 Harvard, 810 Harvard (school – right side addition only), 935 Harvard, 945 Harvard, 1009 Harvard, 402 Heights, and 941 Oxford.
- 3) New construction that only replaces buildings that have been identified as “non-historic, non-contributing” on the inventory of the proposed historic district (attached), but moreover, the new construction is reflective of the context, placement and elements of the types and styles of buildings located within Houston Heights, and which are relevant to the particular architectural significance of Houston Heights. New construction must reflect the unique character of Houston Heights and should not look elsewhere to any other cities for inspiration. A few examples of appropriate new construction include: 714 Arlington, 727 Arlington, 622 Columbia, 948 Columbia, 1010 Columbia, 1020 Columbia, 821 Cortlandt, 420 Harvard, 431 Harvard, 402 Heights, 440 Heights, 728 Harvard, 511 Heights, 415 Oxford, 809 Oxford and 825 Oxford.

The City of Houston is generally regarded as one of the great boom cities of the later 20th century. Indeed, most visitors to the Space City with its soaring office buildings little suspect the existence of a relatively intact, turn-

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of-the century residential neighborhood just northwest of the central business district. Houston Heights, however, is unique in the City of Houston for various reasons. To begin with, it has a strong individual identity with its own history, having been a separate, incorporated “city” from 1896 to 1918 with its own government, ordinances and taxing entity. It has had its own churches, philanthropies, commerce, industry and its own systems of transportation and education. Much more than Houston as a whole, Houston Heights has had a strong continuity of ownership, and a firm sense of identity and camaraderie. These are reflected today in the strong neighborhood association of old and new residents, dedicated to the preservation and rehabilitation of Houston Heights. Furthermore, the fabric of Houston Heights is different from that of other older areas of Houston. It was arguably the first planned suburb of Houston, as well as the earliest and largest planned streetcar development in Texas. Its landscape and architecture still strongly evoke its early 20th-century appearance. In spite of pressures for real estate development, a gradual half century decline in the neighborhood, and the fact that Houston is the only major city in the country without zoning laws, buildings have survived which are significant in many fields, including architecture, commerce, communications, community planning, education, industry, politics, religion, and the humanitarian field.

The decade of the 1890s was an exciting period of development for Americans. Towns were becoming cities; cities were expanding. In Texas, this was especially true as many speculators drew people from other states. The Houston area attracted thousands of these adventurers, and it was in this climate that Houston Heights began. The new town was planned and promoted by men from Nebraska, and it supplied the housing needed for the growing population of the crowded city. Similar "streetcar suburbs" across the country were often swallowed as the urban areas expanded and grew around them. Although Houston Heights was annexed by Houston in 1918, the flavor of the neighborhood was firmly established and is still very much in evidence today. In a major city that has no zoning laws, it is especially significant that this residential community retains relatively intact its collection of late 19th and early 20th century dwellings, as well as its strong neighborhood identity. During the last decade, Houston Heights has experienced a resurgence as Houstonians and newcomers reevaluate the advantages of inner city living.

The land upon which O. M. Carter and his Omaha and South Texas Land Company developed their new town had long been important to the area of the city of Houston. This section of southeastern Texas was first occupied by Indians of the Coastal Plains. Although a Spaniard had visited the area in the early 16th century, it was not until 1745 that the French from New Orleans and the Spanish began to vie for control of the region. At that time, the area that included much of Houston Heights was controlled by Chief Canos of the Orcoquisacs. This chief successfully played the two European powers against one another for many years. The area was once heavily forested, and wildlife was abundant which was supported by White Oak Bayou.

In the early 19th century, as Americans began to settle the region, grants of land were given to many of the pioneers by the Mexican government. The tracts of land that were awarded at that time to John Richardson Harris and John P. Austin would eventually become the City of Houston after Texas won independence as a Republic. Harris had established a thriving port on Buffalo Bayou by the time the war began, and a town, Harrisburg, had grown around it. This was burned immediately before the Battle of San Jacinto in 1836, but was rebuilt after the war. Shortly after the Revolution, the town of Houston was laid out on the bayou above Harrisburg, and began its period of steady growth. Speculation on this land began when the Allen Brothers, John and Augustus, acquired most of the Austin League and began promotion of this town in the wilderness, named after Sam Houston. The rapidly growing town served as the capital of the Republic until 1839. It was during this period, when provisions were scarce and expensive, and housing as an even greater challenge, that the series of yellow fever epidemics began in which the high area north of the White Oak Bayou first became important to the settlement. With each new outbreak of the disease, anxious residents sought to escape the source. Thus a community of tents appeared on the opposite side of the bayou from Houston in the region that would later become Houston Heights.

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The importance of Houston as a trading center grew rapidly as the movement of Americans westward increased. The population swelled dramatically after the Civil War with a great influx of black people from the South; and the lack of adequate housing again aggravated a major bout with yellow fever in 1867. The period from 1874 to 1890 brought tremendous commercial expansion to Houston as Buffalo Bayou was made more navigable and the construction of the Houston Ship Channel was begun. The city began to function more and more as a port. Another means of transportation that greatly affected the city during that era was the railroad. By 1890, Houston had grown to be a principal center for the railroads in Texas. As trade and the transportation business grew, and as technology provided new methods of transportation, the need for housing increased for those who participated in this booming commerce. Creative investors such as Oscar Martin Carter recognized the desire of the growing middle class to move away from the noise and dirt of the crowded city. Thus in the 1880s and 1890s, plans were made for several new suburban developments in Texas, of which Houston Heights remains by far the largest and the most intact. Carter came to Houston from Nebraska in 1887 to scout out the new, emerging city and discovered that Houston was destined to become a great city one day soon. He was so impressed with what he saw that he felt investing there heavily, as well as encouraging others to do so, would be very beneficial to them all. Carter had been involved in banking and real estate in that state and in Colorado, and his move to Texas followed the organization of the Omaha and South Texas Land Company. The company began purchasing about 1,756 acres of what was to become Houston Heights in May, 1891, and made over \$500,000 worth of improvements before offering lots for sale in 1893.

The blocks were carefully arranged, some principal streets were covered with shell (“macadamized”) and a waterworks was established. Scattered open spaces were planned to supplement the 60-foot wide esplanade on Heights Boulevard. The trees and other natural features that now line the streets and make the scenery so pleasant were planned and planted during that early period of preparation. Carter also built a commercial strip at 19th and Ashland and arranged for stores to be opened there to attract new residents. As was common in most promotional towns, he built a grand hotel (destroyed by fire, 1915) in which prospective buyers could stay as they inspected the area.

According to Sister Agatha’s history of Houston Heights, “in general the streets were named for colleges and universities” and/or show the background of the men who developed Houston Heights. The streets within the proposed Houston Heights Historic District South, including Oxford, Columbia, and Harvard Streets, were no doubt named after the alma maters of O. M. Carter’s business associates in Houston Heights. However, further research by Randy Pace since Sister Agatha’s book was published, reveals more about the names of the streets. The developers of Houston Heights certainly named the thoroughfares, running north and south, after important places associated with them. Moreover, the streets running east and west were not called streets, but avenues. It was only after the City of Houston annexed Houston Heights that the “numbered” avenues began to be called streets. According to the city directories, this happened between 1956 and 1959 when the number thoroughfares of Houston Heights which were called avenues, were changing to being called streets. Not only did the prominently named streets give Houston Heights a more cosmopolitan connotation, but the thoroughfares with “Avenue” following their specific numbered name, which was spelled out originally, were more prestigious as well. Many of the streets in Houston Heights, such as Allston, Rutland, and Portland Streets (now named Tulane), were certainly named after cities in Massachusetts or Vermont from whence many of the developers and investors hailed. O. M. Carter himself had been born in Massachusetts in 1842. Allston, Massachusetts was also a very fashionable streetcar suburb of Boston, which certainly gave inspiration to the Texas developers for their fashionable streetcar suburb, Houston Heights. Originally named, “North Houston,” it was changed in short order to Houston Heights, a name which implied not only fashion and prominence but desirability as well. Rutland Street in Houston Heights is likely named after Rutland, Vermont, a home to one or several of the investors in Houston Heights. Commonwealth Avenue, which begins in Allston, Massachusetts and spans through Boston, is the most prominent Boulevard there with its extremely wide esplanade. Former Governor Oliver Ames of Massachusetts, who lived on Commonwealth Avenue, was also an investor in Houston Heights,

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as was former Governor Alvin Saunders of Nebraska. O. M. Carter was a supporter of Saunders and had run his election campaign for Senator in Nebraska. Commonwealth Avenue in Boston was certainly the inspiration for the design of Heights Boulevard with its own grand 60-foot wide esplanade. Originally, the developer of Houston Heights called, either boastfully and/or appropriately, the thoroughfare located on either side of the esplanade "The Boulevard." In 1925 the name of the grand thoroughfare in Houston Heights was changed. The change was most likely prompted due to the recent development of the new subdivisions of Broadacres and Boulevard Oaks (both listed in the National Register of Historic Places as well as designated City of Houston Historic Districts) since those neighborhoods also featured two prominent thoroughfares both of which were located on either side of a green esplanade. Those thoroughfares were named North Boulevard and South Boulevard. Perhaps it was confusing to have other thoroughfares in the city named Boulevard as there was already one in Houston Heights also known as "The Boulevard." Therefore, in 1925 the name of the thoroughfare in Houston Heights was changed to Houston Heights Boulevard. In 1973 the name of the thoroughfare was simply changed to Heights Boulevard, as it is known as today.

Allston Heights, Massachusetts is where a substantial part of the campus of Harvard University is located. Harvard was also a name chosen by O. M. Carter as one of the other street names in Houston Heights. Harvard Street, also located within the boundaries of the proposed historic district, was likely named after Harvard University, not only the likely alma mater of one or more of the influential investors in Houston Heights, but even Carter's own sons were graduates of Harvard University. Carroll M. Carter, who graduated with a degree in engineering from Harvard, operated the Carter Mine Company in Gunnison County, Colorado, where the Carter family mined successfully for gold.

Yale Street, located to the west of Heights Boulevard, was another street name chosen by Carter, and it was named after the university in New Haven, Connecticut. Yale Street incidentally, in earlier days, was a very prestigious, residential thoroughfare. However many of the historic homes have been demolished today. In fact the boundaries of both Houston Heights Historic District East as well as West are contiguous to one another in the 1200 Block of Yale, where Milroy Park is located on the west side and the Houston Heights City Hall is located on the east side.

Carter had tried early on to entice an associate of his, F. E. Clark from Lawrence, Massachusetts, to come to Houston Heights to expand his eastern ventures there. Clark was affiliated with the Pemberton Mills, owned by the Essex Company, which was one of the largest cotton mills in the world. The building that was first constructed on Lawrence Street, which was named after Lawrence, Massachusetts, was a box spring and mattress factory, but it was later occupied by the Oriental Textile Mill (N.R., City LM). The Oriental Textile Mill even developed an area of about four blocks near the plant as "Factory Village," a clustering of small houses for the workers. These houses have now been replaced by more industries and new modern row housing.

Also in Lawrence, Massachusetts was another large cotton mill, the Arlington Mills, whose name most likely inspired the name for Arlington Street in Houston Heights as well, which is located within the boundaries of the proposed Houston Heights Historic District South. As for the name of Cortlandt Street, also located within the proposed boundaries, its origin must have been taken from the Dutch name, "Van Cortlandt" which is the origin also for the name of a town in New York as well as one in Nebraska. In Nebraska, where Carter and Cooley originally planned their venture of Houston Heights, there is also a town named Cortlandt, which was a name suggested by the railroad officials there, doubtlessly named after Cortlandt, New York. One or both of the towns in New York and Nebraska were likely in some way associated with one or more of the original investors in Houston Heights.

During the time that Carter and his associates developed Houston Heights, Carter also acquired both mule-drawn streetcar systems in Houston, namely the Houston City and Bayou City Street Railway Companies, and converted them into the Houston Heights Street Railway, with its track providing easy access to Houston from all sections of Houston Heights. This provided transportation for the majority of the area's residents who were

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not employed by factories in the neighborhood, but worked in Houston. The right-of-way ran northward on the east side of Heights Boulevard, turning west on W. 19th Street, then south on Railroad (now Nicholson) to W. 17th, and back to the west side of Heights Boulevard running south. This track thus encircled the original commercial area of Houston Heights and also placed the focus of the fashionable, streetcar suburb on Heights Boulevard. Heights Boulevard was also the first street in Houston Heights to be paved with brick in 1912, as all streets up until this time, were macadamized, or paved with shell.

The first lots to be sold in the new town were bought in 1893 by Silas D. Wilkins. Wilkins was one of the carpenters for the Omaha and South Texas Land Company, and he had helped to ready the area for residents. Wilkins later became the second postmaster of Houston Heights. The Panic of 1893 delayed the sale of lots somewhat. Also that year, the Omaha and Houston Land Improvement Company (Omaha and South Texas Land) failed, and Carter was forced to use funds from the Houston City Street Railway Company, legally or not, to carry on the development expenses of Houston Heights. By the time of the U S Census of 1900, Houston Heights had a total population of 800. It was not until 1896 that the community became incorporated as a "town," and assumed its own municipal government.

The first residence to be built on Heights Boulevard was appropriately the home of one in the original group of investors, D. D. Cooley. This landmark was built in 1893 as an example of the type of house to be built on the grand boulevard. D. D. Cooley had come to Houston with Carter in 1887 to be the first general manager of the real estate office of the Omaha and South Texas Land Company. From the beginning, he was extremely interested in making education easily available to the residents. He helped establish the first schools, including one for black children, and the first elementary school was named for him. In addition to land, Cooley had financial interests in oil, rice, and insurance. The entire Cooley family was active socially in the neighborhood. Cooley donated the land upon which the clubhouse for the Houston Heights Woman's Club was built at 1846 Harvard (N.R.; City Protected Landmark), which is located within the boundaries of Houston Heights Historic District East. The Cooley descendants remain influential in Houston today in medicine and business.

John A. Milroy was the member of the "first five citizens," as the original group of investors was called, who was perhaps the most influential in the actual sale of lots and the movement of residents into the area. After gaining experience in real estate in the Northwestern United States, Milroy moved to Houston in 1893 to join Carter and his company. He and his family first lived in the fine house, built in 1898 at 1602 Harvard (N.R.), also located within Houston Heights Historic District East. In 1897, Milroy moved into the large, intricately detailed home, built in 1893 at 1102 Heights Boulevard (N.R.; RTHL; City Landmark), also included within the Houston Heights Historic District East. For 20 years, Milroy was the general agent of the Houston Heights Office of Carter's company, assuming the power of attorney to all lands owned by O. M. Carter in Texas in 1906. Of equal importance were his eight terms as mayor of the municipality of Houston Heights beginning in 1899. His children were also very active in the community, and his older daughter, Helen, was widely associated with philanthropic and charitable groups. It is interesting to note that this man, who had been so instrumental in the initial success of the Houston Heights, lived for only a few months after its annexation by Houston in 1918. Milroy Park, located at 1205 Yale Street at W. 12th, was named for John A. Milroy, the Mayor of Houston Heights from 1899 to 1907. The park is included within the boundaries of Houston Heights Historic District West. The east side of the 1200 Block of Yale and also the location of the Houston Heights City Hall is included within the boundaries of Houston Heights Historic District East.

The first mayor of Houston Heights was William G. Love, who served from the incorporation as a village in 1896 until 1899. His greater service to Houston Heights, however, was as its legal advisor. He was also appointed District Attorney for Harris and Galveston counties in 1907, and was elected to that position in the next year, serving until 1910. The large, Queen Anne style house, built in 1905 at 1505 Heights Boulevard, with its classical detailing on the porch and delicately ornamented windows, was the home of Mayor Love until his death in 1926. The home is included within the boundaries of Houston Heights Historic District East

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Although David Barker was mayor of Houston Heights for six years, he was primarily an investor in real estate. He was president (1924-42) of the Park Place Company that developed a large subdivision east of Houston. During his administration in Houston Heights (1907-13), several major improvements were accomplished. Heights Boulevard and several other streets were paved with brick, schools were constructed, and the first city hall was built. Houston Heights was thriving as evidenced by the census figures of 1910 which show an increase since 1900 of more than 6,000 people in Houston Heights.

The improvements accomplished by Mayor Barker were funded through bonds made possible by a charter from the State of Texas in 1911, which granted the town of Houston Heights the emergency power to tax. After proving his ability to handle public funds, Barker was elected Harris County Commissioner in 1914. As such, he ordered construction of the first concrete roads to be built in Harris County. And from 1928 until 1936, he served as the Land and Tax Commissioner of Houston. His well preserved house, built in 1910 at 121 E. 16th (N.R.; City Landmark), is a lasting reminder of the man who contributed much to his immediate community and the entire city. The home is located within the boundaries of Houston Heights Historic District East.

The home of Houston Heights' fourth mayor, Robert F. Isbell, also survives at 639 Heights Boulevard (N.R.; City Landmark). It is noteworthy in that it features a large second-floor room designed specifically to accommodate public meetings. That home is included within the boundaries of the proposed historic district, Houston Heights Historic District South. The last mayor of Houston Heights was James B. Marmion, who served from 1914 until annexation in 1918. His primary concern was in creating parks for the little town, although probably the most prominent event during his administration was the dedication of the Houston Heights City Hall at Yale and W. 12th (N.R.; City Protected Landmark). The Houston Heights Association was able to purchase the site of the Cooley home as a park when inappropriate development was proposed there. With the generous gift of \$300,000 from Houston Endowment on June 14, 1979, HHA not only purchased the Cooley site but also purchased the Donovan Park site at Heights and 7th. The HHA named the park at Heights and E. 18th in honor of J. B. Marmion for his dedication and public service not only to Houston Heights, but Marmion had always had an interest in parks. Prior to serving as Houston Heights' last mayor, J. B. Marmion had been a member of the City of Houston City Council and Chairman of the Streets, Bridges and Public Grounds Committee, which oversaw the maintenance of Sam Houston Park, Houston's first public park (1899; City PL). "Because of the intensive use to which Sam Houston Park was subjected, maintenance seems to have been a problem." In the summer of 1906, J. B. Marmion commenced a major remodeling of "City Park" in order to improve its facilities. During Marmion's oversight of City Park, the zoological garden and conservatory, which was kept in and about the Noble House, was removed." The collection of animals, which had cost \$200 a month to feed, was sold to an amusement park in Little Rock, Arkansas according to the Standard History of Houston.

The HHA also constructed in Marmion Park its award winning Kaiser Pavilion in 1985. The Kaiser Pavilion was designed by John Martin and Associates, architect, and the landscaping for the park was designed by SWA Group. Both design firms have received national recognition for their work. The Kaiser Pavilion was designed to emulate the Cooley home's unique turret, and the Pavilion was named after Mr. and Mrs. Clarence H. Kaiser, supporters of the effort. The park was dedicated on May 31, 1986.

In 1996 Donovan Park was once again revitalized when HHA contacted Robert Leathers, a nationally recognized landscape architect, who had initiated the idea of creating parks, which were designed by kids and built by volunteers. HHA successfully revitalized Donovan Park at Heights and 7th Street which was next to the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railroad. The park was designed with both a Victorian as well as railroad theme, inspired by 8th grade students of Harvard Elementary School. School children also use the park as it is near their school campus. The Victorian theme was inspired by the neighborhood architecture while the railroad theme for the park was inspired by the railway line (since abandoned). The name of the park honored James G. Donovan, the last city attorney of Houston Heights, who drafted the "dry ordinance" in 1912, which remains in effect

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“until time runeth not.” Much of Houston Heights remains dry today – an extremely unique ordinance adopted by Houston Heights and continuously enforced by the City of Houston. Donovan Park is included within the boundaries of the proposed historic district, Houston Heights Historic District South

The survival of the homes of four Houston Heights mayors, a mayor pro tempore, and the Houston Heights City Hall as well as the surviving Houston Heights Waterworks structure (N.R.), is quite unexpected in an area of the state beset with much change. It was during Marmion's administration that the citizens of Houston Heights acknowledged that they could no longer supply proper tax revenue to provide for the education for their children. It seems that the principal issue leading to annexation was doubt to fund adequate the local school system. The importance of this issue is a good indication of the orientation of the community as a neighborhood for families. From the outset of this project, Carter planned Houston Heights as a modest suburb. There were a few land dealers, such as William A. Wilson, who acted as investors and developers in the area but, in general, Carter sought to prevent speculation. His advertisements and his methods of promotion do not appear to have been aimed at the very wealthy, but at the growing class of white-collar workers, young professionals, and the skilled craftsmen of the working class. His philosophy has been maintained in practice by the residents over the years, whether consciously or not. The social and economic make-up of the present Houston Heights probably is quite similar to that of Houston Heights of 1915. The early occupants of the large, fanciful homes along Heights Boulevard were often doctors, lawyers, or dealers in real estate.

The greater portion of Houston Heights was residential, however, and as Houston Heights grew, it was not uncommon for a new resident to use the skills of his trade to build a home for his own family in addition to those he built professionally. An example of such a craftsmen was Samuel Webber, a brick mason. In 1903, he built a house at 407 Heights Boulevard (N.R.; City Landmark). A few years later, as his craft improved and he became more prosperous, he built a second house at 1011 Heights Boulevard (N.R.; City Landmark). The home features a round tower and a porte-cochere in addition to more intricate detailing in the brickwork. Both Webber homes are located within the boundaries of the proposed historic district, Houston Heights Historic District South. Smaller, more modest cottages were also built by resident-carpenters and other members of the building trade. The popular, L-shaped cottage was the most common form in the early years. After about 1910, the trend shifted to 20th century styles, with several varieties of bungalows. The architecture of Houston Heights clearly indicates the kinds of people who settled the area.

Expansions in Houston Heights paralleled advances of business and industry in Houston. The new commercial opportunities provided more people the prosperity to own homes. The majority of the early residents of Houston Heights belonged to this new middle class, and most of the homes in the neighborhood are built of styles found in the popular publications of that era: bungalows, two-story, American Four Squares, etc. The first occupants of such houses were often bookkeepers, drillers of oil wells, teachers, or small businessmen. It was extremely important for such people to be part of a community such as Houston Heights. The green, open spaces in which children could play, the schools, the churches, the social and civic clubs were all necessary elements.

One of the most important social and cultural organizations in Houston Heights was the Houston Heights Woman's Club. Women from all parts of Houston Heights, including the area south of 11th Street, which is the area that is proposed for the historic district, were members. According to Sister Agatha, “Since its first settlement a very decided civic activity had marked the Heights, the Houston Heights Literary Club being the outstanding organization for women. On January 15, 1900, sixteen women of the Heights met at the home of Mrs. C. R. Cummings and formed the Literary Club. Almost immediately after organization of the club, the president, Mrs. Cummings, moved from the Heights and Mrs. C. A McKinney succeeded in office. In the famous *Blue Book* for 1907-1908 is the following entry: HOUSTON HEIGHTS LITERARY CLUB - Organized January, 1899 - Membership - 35. Meets every Wednesday from October to June at home of president. Officers and executive board: Mrs. W. G. Love, president; Mrs. W. W. Kellogg, first vice-president;

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Mrs. D. M. Duller, second vice-president; Mrs. Geo. C. Van Demark, recording secretary; Mrs. M. Sheehan, corresponding secretary; Mrs. P. B. Thornton, treasurer. Executive board; Mesdames W. G. Love, W. W. Kellogg, D. M. Duller, Geo. C. Van Demark, F. F. Dexter, W. E. Bennett, and H. N. Jones, Course of study for 1907-8, 'American Studies.'"

O. M. Carter also provided meeting space for the women in his power house at the waterworks on W. 19th Avenue. Meanwhile the Literary Club was outgrowing its single interest and expanding into enough departments to incorporate itself into the more general title of Woman's Club. In February, 1911, the Arts and Crafts Club, the Musical and Social Club, and the original Literary Club merged into the Houston Heights Woman's Club. All these different groups had come from the membership of the Literary Club or its associates. The charter members of the Woman's Club were: Mesdames W. E. Bennett, O. F. Carroll, Thomas S. Lowry, A. W. Cooley, G. W. Hawkins, S. H. Webber, W. A. Renn, C. A. McKinney, W. A. McNeill, M. D. Ritter, H. S. Robinson, A. B. Sheldon, P. B. Thornton, Susan Rogers Tempest and W. B. Welling." The first president of the Houston Heights Woman's Club was Mrs. W. A. Renn, who presided at a reception for the opening of the building on Friday, October 18, 1912.

According to Pace's history of Houston Heights, the "women held a carnival in 1911 to raise money for the building. The carnival was held on the Heights playground, now the site of Hamilton Junior High School, at Heights Boulevard and E. 20th Avenue. The club also held benefit plays to raise money. Most were organized, produced and directed by Mrs. Myrtle Cook Lowery, one of the Heights' most beloved citizens, who graduated from her early home theatricals to become a nationally famous actress." Sister Agatha relates, "*The Gilded Fool*, starring E. V. Whitty, was the first benefit sponsored by the ladies for the building fund." Edmond V. Whitty's own home, located at 124 W. 17th Avenue (City LM), as well as the Community Garden next door, face the south side of the Heights Christian Church at 1703 Heights – all of which are located within Houston Heights Historic District East.

According to Pace's history of Houston Heights, "the Houston Heights Woman's Club building was built in 1912 on a lot donated for that purpose by Mrs. D. D. Cooley (Helen Winfield Cooley). Her husband, D. D. Cooley, who was superintendent of construction of the Omaha and South Texas Land Company, which developed Houston Heights in 1891, owned many lots in the new development. It was the practice of Mr. Cooley to give his wife lots for her birthdays and anniversaries, one of which she donated to the Woman's Club for their new clubhouse. Mrs. D. D. Cooley was a charter member of the Houston Heights Literary Club, which developed into the Houston Heights Woman's Club." The *Suburbanite* has notice of the formal opening of the Club House on Friday, October 18, 1912." Pace further notes, "the cost of the building was \$1,500 and by way of comparison the price of the piano (financed by the Music Study Department) was the same amount. Under the able direction of Mrs. W. A. Renn, President of the Woman's Club, the members had their building clear of debt within a year of its erection. Their only trouble was the stage. It was built high, when ladies wore skirts that touched the floor, and twice had to be lowered as skirts got higher and higher."

Sister Agatha continues, "aside from its cultural character, the old Literary Club was an agency for great good among the poor in the Heights. The ladies held a ball once a year at the old skating rink and the proceeds were used as a charity fund. In various other ways the treasury of the club was replenished to serve as a community chest. Committees were appointed to investigate calls for aid and an amount of money was disbursed. The ladies would file the request together with a report on actual conditions found to warrant help, and then would give food and medical aid as far as they were able. There was no other social service available. Later, the Woman's Club also fostered the first school library at Heights High School. Actually in the beginning the books were kept in the principal's office, but the teachers could send there and secure material for classroom use. At least the club had provided books. Very few schools in those days had a library room provided to house the books. When the Literary Club in February, 1911, merged with its sub-divisions to form the Woman's Club, it must have made other arrangements for its charity work because the *Suburbanite* on March 11, 1911, shows

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members of the Literary Club forming a new organization for that specific purpose: At a meeting held at the home of Mrs. M. Sheehan Monday afternoon for the purpose of forming a United Charity Organization in the Heights, the following officers were elected: President, Rev. C. A. Earl; Vice-President, Mrs. J. M. Limbocker; Treasurer, Mrs. M. Sheehan; Recording Secretary, Mrs. E. F. Patterson; Corresponding Secretary, Mrs. W. A. Renn.”

“A few weeks later the *Suburbanite* gives an encouraging report on its tag day receipts for charity sponsored by this new organization. The following year the newspaper again mentioned Tag Day and named the ladies responsible during Christmas week "to tag all going and coming on the street cars." Each lady had a number of young helpers appointed for different hours. These young ladies would board the car as it went round the belt and persuade each passenger to buy a tag. Perhaps the dread disease that gripped all Houston was the immediate cause for the organization of the United Charities. On April 6, 1912, the *Suburbanite* gives notice about closed theaters and public places of meeting all over Houston and the Heights: Cerebo-Spinal Meningitis. What do you know about it? Let us urge you to learn more about it by coming to the Baptist Temple, Thursday . . . The club women of the Heights founded their different groups for mutual pleasure and cultural improvement, but they also considered social work and educational help as part of their reason for organization.”

The members of the Houston Heights Woman’s Club were dedicated to their projects and activities as exemplified by the accomplishment of the construction of their own clubhouse. Many social and cultural events have been held at the clubhouse. Since 1912 the building is still used by the Houston Heights Woman’s Club as originally planned, and where plans have been made and implemented to help others in need, and where they continue their work even today. The Houston Heights Woman’s Club at 1846 Harvard (N.R.; City Protected Landmark) is located within Houston Heights Historic District East.

The churches of the community were also of great importance during that period, contributing to the town's image of respectability. The religious life of the neighborhood was also an important part of the social activities. No where else in Houston is a more concentrated grouping of historic church buildings than in Houston Heights. Today, still extant in Houston Heights are religious, historic buildings for many denominations, including Lutheran, Church of Christ, Heights Christian Church, First Baptist, Baptist Temple, Methodist, Episcopal, Catholic (church and school buildings), Assembly of God, Presbyterian and Healing Waters Fellowship. There are many sanctuary buildings that still exist within each of the two designated historic districts as well as the proposed Houston Heights Historic District South. Some have even been adapted to other uses, such as Assembly of God (1927) at 1404 Allston (office), the Second Church of Christ, Scientist (1922) at 1402 Harvard Street (residence) and the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (1930; demolished; Educational Hall) at 945 Oxford (residence) which is located within the boundary of the proposed historic district. The Second Church of Christ, Scientist was restored in 1997 as a residence. At that time, one of the educational wings, the one on the north side of the main church, was detached and relocated to 1416 Harvard, where it was also restored as a single-family dwelling. The other wing on the south side of the church was also restored in place and also partially adapted into a garage with access from the adjacent alley at the rear. The builder, Steve Watters, who owned Sterling Victorian Homes and who died March 22, 1997 shortly after saving the historic church, was posthumously honored with a Good Brick Award from the Greater Houston Preservation Alliance in 1998 for his very creative restoration and successful, adaptive use project.

There are several church buildings located within the boundaries of the proposed historic district, Houston Heights Historic District South. One of the former church buildings for the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (1930) is located at 945 Oxford. Unfortunately, the historic church was demolished, but its Educational Hall has been adapted to residential use. Fortunately, the original, brick monument sign (1930) still remains and is classified as a contributing element to the proposed historic district. Another church is the First Baptist Church – Heights, which is located at 912 Harvard. It was organized in 1904 and worships today in their

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sanctuary built in 1959. The historic church building, which originally stood on the corner of Harvard and 8th, was demolished, and the site is now a parking lot for the church. Facing 8th Street is the Children and Youth Building, which was built about 1940 in the Neo-classical style of architecture at 110 E. 8th Street. The church building of Collins Memorial Methodist Church, established in 1903, still exists at 1039 Harvard, which is located adjacent to the boundary of the proposed historic district. The church was constructed in 1950 in the Colonial Revival style and is now owned by Healing Waters Fellowship. Directly across Harvard Street and to the east is the All Saints Catholic Church complex which includes a newer school building, a playground, a historic school building, the historic Administration Building, Grotto and the historic Gothic Revival church (1927), located at 201 E. 10th Street, which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Other significant religious buildings are located within Houston Heights Historic District East and include: Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church at 1448 Cortland (aka 306 E. 15th Street) (1932; Gothic Revival; N.R.), the unusual Immanuel Lutheran Church Gymnasium and Parish Hall at 1448 Cortlandt (1949, Barrel Roof style) and the new Immanuel Lutheran Church at 1447 Arlington (1961, Neo-Gothic style); Heights Church of Christ at 1548 Heights Boulevard (aka 120 E. 16th Street) (1924; Alfred C. Finn, architect; Neo-Classical style, RTHL; pending City of Houston Protected Landmark); Second Church of Christ, Scientist at 1402 Harvard (1922, Craftsman style); Heights Christian Church at 1703 Heights Boulevard (1927; C. N. Nelson, architect; Classical Revival style, N.R., and utilized today by Opera in the Heights) as well as the newer Heights Christian Church at 1745 Heights Boulevard (1965; Neo-Gothic style); Heights Methodist Episcopal Church, South – in 1950 renamed Grace United Methodist Church - at 1245 Heights (1971; Neo-Gothic style) and the Grace Methodist Church Chapel/Educational Building/Office at 1226 Yale (1951, Gothic Revival style) as well as Grace Methodist Church Hall, built in 1926 in the Craftsman style at 1240 Yale (aka 116 W. 13th) which is located directly behind the present sanctuary; and also of importance are the iron horse hitching rings that are still installed in the concrete street curb adjacent to Grace Methodist Church Hall at 116 W. 13th -- the rings most likely date from 1912 when the original red brick church was built which faced Yale at 13th (demolished 1970); and lastly, St. Andrew's Episcopal Church at 1819 Heights Boulevard (1947; Gothic Revival style). Another historic church building, Baptist Temple, is located one block north of the commercial district of Houston Heights. The building, constructed with a Mission Revival influence in 1912, is located on the northeast corner of W. 20th Avenue and Rutland.

Education was a high priority among the leaders of Houston Heights from the beginning. Two elementary schools were constructed by 1898, to serve the northern and eastern sections of Houston Heights, including Harvard Elementary School, which is located within the boundaries of the proposed historic district. The original Houston Heights High School, which was built in 1904 and burned 20 years later, was located on the site of present-day Milroy Park in Houston Heights Historic District West. A few additions were made to these schools while Houston Heights existed as a separate municipality; but major new construction did not occur until after annexation of the town by the City of Houston. New schools were built in the 1920s, including Heights High School (now Alexander Hamilton Middle School, which was built in 1920 at 139 W. 20th (Maurice J. Sullivan, architect). Another school, John H. Reagan Senior High School, was built in 1927 at 401 E. 13th Street (N.R. eligible; John F. Staub and Louis A. Glover, William Ward Watkin, consulting architects). The latter two school campuses are located directly adjacent to the boundaries of Houston Heights Historic District East.

The first branch of the Houston Public Library was constructed in Houston Heights at 1302 Heights Boulevard (N.R.; City PL; J. M. Glover, architect). It was built the following year after the Julia Ideson Library was constructed in 1924 at 500 McKinney (William W. Watkin, J. M. Glover, architects; N.R., RTHL, City PL). The Heights Branch Library is located within Houston Heights Historic District East. Its cornerstone, which is located at the southeast corner of the building, gives the construction date as 1925 and by whom constructed – Universal Construction Company. The Heights Branch Library, a magnificent Renaissance Revival style

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building, is truly a significant and historic building not only to Houston Heights but to the City of Houston as well. It was also the fitting location for the Recorded Texas Historical Landmark (Subject Marker) for Houston Heights that was dedicated and installed during the Houston Heights Centennial in 1991, co-chaired by Bart Truxillo and Jenny Bennett. The dedication event for historic markers as well as the birthday party was chaired by Joann Boote, Chair of the Houston Heights Historical Committee. The Houston Heights subject marker dedicated that day was researched and authored by Randy Pace, who was a past Chair of the Houston Heights Historical Committee, and past Board member of the Houston Heights Association. The marker was dedicated during the Centennial of Houston Heights on May 5, 1991 with much pomp and circumstance. The event even included a salute to Houston Heights by the Reagan High School marching band, which played “Happy Birthday” at the marker dedication. The marker dedication at the library was followed by a grand parade led by the Reagan Band which proceeded up Heights Boulevard to Marmion Park at 18th and Heights Boulevard, where another Recorded Texas Historical Landmark (Subject marker) was dedicated for D. D. Cooley. The marker was researched and authored by Gayle Cooley, wife of Dan Cooley, to honor her husband’s great-grandfather, D. D. Cooley, a founder of Houston Heights. The marker was placed on the site where Cooley’s grand Queen Anne style home once stood.

Following the dedication of the two RTHL markers, there was also a birthday celebration party at the historic Heights Christian Church at 1703 Heights Boulevard, which is located in the Houston Heights Historic District East. The church also hosted the Houston Heights Museum collection as well as the contemporary photograph exhibition of Heights photographers, both of which were housed there during the centennial celebration. During the birthday party, Larry Hamm played the “Houston Heights Polka” on the piano. The polka most likely had not been heard for almost 100 years since its first debut, and was performed with great fervor and accomplishment by Mr. Hamm during the celebration. The polka had been originally composed by Clifford Grunewald in 1893 and had been dedicated to his friend, Colonel N. L. Mills, Superintendent of Real Estate, Omaha and South Texas Land Company. The lively tune was reminiscent of the very active real estate boom in the community at that time. In addition to the placement of the Recorded Texas Historical Landmarks at the Heights Library and Marion Park, several other sites and buildings in Houston Heights have been designated as Recorded Texas Historical Landmarks too. Moreover, many other sites are eligible for the designation by the Texas Historical Commission in Austin whose program is administered locally by the Harris County Historical Commission in Houston.

The City of Houston grew tremendously following World War I, partly because of the deepening of the ship channel and expansion of the petroleum and chemical industries. A major result of this was the extension of several major streets and highways and, in later years, the construction of new interstate highway systems. These routes have been both detrimental and helpful to Houston Heights. Although providing easier access into the area, encouraging more development, and causing major commercial strips to form along primary arteries, the highways have generally respected and followed the original boundaries of Houston Heights, and have helped provide a buffer zone for the area. Heights Boulevard runs through the center of the neighborhood and continues to be the focus of movement and activity within the community.

Eventually, as happened in many inner-city neighborhoods, more commercial and industrial interests began to creep into the area after World War II. In a city without zoning, it has been doubly difficult and challenging for communities such as Houston Heights to remain intact. As long-term residents move away or died, the land was often developed by interests that are insensitive to the community into which they are moving. Even areas that remain residential declined as many of the houses became rental property. This phenomenon has been a problem in Houston Heights, but the strong identification of the residents and of the local businessmen with the community has helped limit intrusions to the fringes and to certain concentrated areas.

A major factor in the protection of the atmosphere of the neighborhood, and in the revitalization of the area in recent years, has been a strong, Heights-based financial power. The first of the local banks, Citizens State Bank,

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built an elaborate building at 3620 Washington Street in 1925 as a cluster of other commercial buildings was being constructed in that block. This fine building, which later became the Heights State Bank, still provides a touch of grandeur as one enters Houston Heights from the south. However, virtually all housing stock between Washington Avenue and Interstate Highway 10 has been demolished after the construction of the interstate highway at White Oak Bayou. Furthermore, many of the historic homes south of 4th Street have been demolished as commercial businesses have been established just north of the feeder road of IH 10, which is the reason why this area cannot be included in the proposed historic district. However, the HHA was instrumental in working with Texas Department of Transportation, the City of Houston, and Harris County Commissioner L. Franco Lee to save the twin bridges across White Oak Bayou, and HHA raised additional funds to restore the iron, lamp posts on the bridges over White Oak Bayou at Heights Boulevard and at Yale when the neighborhood celebrated its centennial in May 1991. The historic bridges had been constructed by the City of Houston in 1925. Those bridges replaced the original twin, wooden bridges built on Heights Boulevard by the Omaha and South Texas Land Company in 1892.

The pattern of promotion, booming growth, uncertainty, and decline that was experienced by Houston Heights is similar to that of many inner-city neighborhoods. Also similar was the rejuvenation of the area which began in the 1970s. A major reason for the success of the work done to save this endangered area is the strong sense of community. The efforts began with people who were returning to childhood homes, and with long-term residents who had always identified themselves as citizens of Houston Heights and suddenly realized that their community needed help. Many Houston Heights residents are elderly and have lived here all their lives. Their dedication to the community has had a strong influence in the area's stability.

The City of Houston is generally considered one of the most transient in the United States, while Houston Heights boasted unusual longevity of ownership in many structures. Homes of the Mulcahy, Doyle (demolished in 2007), Countryman, Zagst, Kleinhaus, Allbach, Borgstrom, Burnett, and Knittel families, as well as the Schauer filling station, have had the same owners since their time of construction, or until quite recently. Family occupancies of 25 or 50 years was not unusual in other buildings of Houston Heights. It should also be noted that while Houston Heights lost a quarter of its population after 1950, the trend was reversed in 1975, and the neighborhood has been growing.

The Houston Heights Association (HHA) was organized in 1973, and has been an energetic force in restoring pride in the neighborhood, as well as in renovating buildings. Demolition of a few key structures, especially landmarks on Heights Boulevard, saddened and stirred up those who are concerned about loss of historic buildings. The Cooley home had been demolished in 1968 to the chagrin of all residents. And the trend continues even today. In 2007 the historic Doyle House, a significant Queen Anne style home, located at 945 Heights Boulevard (N.R. eligible), was demolished for new development. That site is now located within the proposed historic district. The HHA has sought to draw attention to the early heritage of the area with various activities and improvements along Heights Boulevard, including two private parks, Marmion and Donovan Park. In the early 1970s they have also placed small, wooden gazebos at various locations on the Heights Boulevard esplanade. At the entrance to Houston Heights on Heights Boulevard at 4th Street (now I-10), which is included within the boundaries of the proposed historic district, is an historic marker plaque for Houston Heights, which has been installed on the brick, monument entry wall also bearing the name of the neighborhood, "Houston Heights." The HHA constructed the brick monument entry wall which denotes entry into historic Houston Heights. Also installed there to honor supporters of Houston Heights, especially the Heights Boulevard Esplanade, is a memorial plaza with an obelisk, benches and drinking fountains for both humans as well as pets.

In March 1979 when the City of Houston was presented with the 15 foot high, Lombard Lamp from her sister city, Hamburg, Germany, it was placed on the Heights Boulevard esplanade at E. 11th, which is located within Houston Heights Historic District East. The Lombard Lamp is an ornate cast-iron and aluminum street lamp

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which is a replica of the historic streetlights that adorn the Lombard Bridge over the River Elle in Hamburg. Originally built in 1865, the bridge was adorned with the lamps in 1869 and the work stipulated that the “execution of the candelabra must be conducted in the finest manner, in gray iron, completely pure without any form of chiseling...the casting process must be the absolute best yet developed for works of this nature.” Designed by Hamburg sculpture Carl Borner, the lavish base is composed of cherubs, garlands and other decorative features. When the lamps were given and dedicated to American cities, including New York, Chicago, Boston and Houston, Mayor Helga Elster of Hamburg commented at the time, “We hope to shed light on a bridge of friendship ...” The Lombard Lamp in Boston was placed in the esplanade of Commonwealth Avenue. Since Heights Boulevard was modeled after Commonwealth Avenue when Houston Heights was developed, the Houston Lombard Lamp was placed in the ideal location as it illuminates and graces the historic thoroughfare in historic Houston Heights as well. A celebration was held at Lombard Lamp in May 1985 at which time Houston Heights was recognized for its Multiple Resource Area designation by the National Park Service. A plaque was dedicated and installed at the base of Lombard Lamp to honor the occasion. The dedication event was chaired by Joann Boote, Chair of the Houston Heights Historical Committee. The plaza which now includes the Lombard Lamp was built in 1999. The plaza was named the Melvalene and Carl Cohen Plaza in honor of the Cohens, who were long-term supporters of the Houston Heights Association. Carl Cohen had even served as the first president of the HHA. Just south of the Cohen Plaza across E. 11th Street on the Heights Boulevard Esplanade is the World War II Memorial, erected in 1999. It is located within the boundary of the proposed historic district, Houston Heights Historic District South. Adjacent and located just to the south of the World War II Memorial is the Clayton Lee Plaza. Clayton Lee, Jr. was a native of Houston Heights as well as a prominent Heights Rotarian. He was instrumental in the facilitation of the creation and construction of the World War II Memorial, thus its close proximity to the Lee Plaza. Clayton Lee and his wife, Libby Lee, have been life long residents and promoters of Houston Heights as well as Houston Heights Association volunteers and supporters. The Clayton Lee Plaza was dedicated in April, 2010.

The HHA has also completed other improvements in the esplanade of Heights Boulevard including the Rose Garden at Heights and E. 20th Street in 1985, where the garden is paved with bricks bearing the names of long-term supporters of the Houston Heights Association (HHA). In the last few years, HHA has embarked upon their greatest initiative by reforesting the parkway on either side of Heights Boulevard where were planted numerous live oak trees in addition to the installation of decorative street lamp standards, including the area south of 11th Street, which is within the proposed historic district. The HHA has also reforested the esplanade and installed a jogging trail enhanced by benches and trellises. The jogging trail, which is one of the most utilized areas in Houston Heights, was installed and is maintained by Paul Carr and his dedicated committee. It was named after Mr. Carr, one of Houston Heights’ most dedicated and long-term volunteers.

Also, work throughout the neighborhood is being done privately by individuals who want to preserve their homes and the community as they were originally intended to be. Interestingly, a strong mission to preserve and promote the history of Houston Heights led the HHA to reprint Sister M. Agatha's “History of the Houston Heights” (1956) in 1971. Tremendous public response led to a second printing in 1975, followed by a third in 1976 and a fourth printing in 1981. Although the book is out-of-print today, it can be viewed on-line at <http://community.rice.edu/focusresources/books/agatha/> Another extensive history of the neighborhood was produced by the HHA during the Houston Heights Centennial in 1991. It was researched and written by G. Randle “Randy” Pace and Deborah Markey and was entitled, “Houston Heights, a Historical Portrait and a Contemporary Perspective 1891 – 1991.” This book, which includes a number of historic as well as modern-day photographs, is a history of the neighborhood which is accompanied by history texts for each historic photograph. However it is now out-of-print. In 2009 Anne Sloan authored and the Houston Heights Association produced a photographic history of Houston Heights, entitled “Houston Heights – Images of America” which was published by Arcadia Press. This book includes a large number of vintage photographs which “chronicle this charming suburb’s development and the residents who have left their imprint.”

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The original plan for Houston Heights has never really changed. Although each historic building there includes details that are unique to it, these are but variations on common themes. The similarity in scale, materials, and setback provide a visual unity to the streetscapes. The rich landscaping enhances the comfortable atmosphere of this relatively quiet community within the busy city. The diverse, yet compatible, architecture of Houston Heights illustrates the social mixture of the neighborhood. The combination of industrial, commercial, and residential buildings remain today in a balance not far from that originally planned by Carter. Although that rich architectural mix is at risk, it is hopeful that inappropriate changes or further loss of the historic buildings can be minimized by the designation of historic districts and the education which accompanies it.

The commercial center of the original Houston Heights was successfully revitalized in 1988 when W. 19th Street was designated as an Urban Texas Main Street project at the instigation of the Houston Heights Association, property owners and potential merchants along W. 19th. The first business to open was Carter & Cooley Deli in 1989, which still operates its business in the restored 1921 Simon Lewis Building. The Simon Lewis Building, built on the original site of the Houston Heights Hotel (destroyed by fire), was first occupied by Ward Drug, which operated there for over 30 years. The Ward family even lived above their drugstore, and that space is now occupied by several offices. Deli owners, Neil Sackheim and Randy Pace, who were also members of the Steering Committee of the HHA which was organized to facilitate the creation of the Main Street, specifically named their deli thusly not only to honor Heights founders, Oscar Martin Carter and Daniel Denton Cooley for what they had accomplished, but also because no where within the neighborhood was to be found any mention or any tribute which bore their names. The Main Street program was created by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and is managed by the Texas Historical Commission. In many ways, the area can still be identified as the town of Houston Heights, an area whose historic resources qualify for designation within the proposed historic district, Houston Heights Historic District East. It is a neighborhood with "...vernacular, popular, (and) traditional building design, landscape architecture, (and) urban design or planning..." that "had an important influence on the historic ... appearance and development of the State, region, (and) community...." The proposed Houston Heights Historic District South qualifies for historic district designation under Criteria 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 8.

There are many sites located within the two designated Houston Heights historic districts as well as the proposed Houston Heights Historic District South which would qualify for individual designation as well, including National Register of Historic Places (N.R.), Recorded Texas Historical Landmark (RTHL), City of Houston Landmark (City LM) or City of Houston Protected Landmark (City PL) or all of the above. To date, the following sites within the proposed Houston Heights Historic District South have been designated by the City of Houston as Landmarks/Protected Landmarks and/or listed individually in the National Register of Historic Places as follows:

Hawkins House at 1015 Heights Boulevard - a unique example of the Spanish Colonial Revival style, which was once the home of George Hawkins, one of the first men in Texas to own an automobile (1905). He had the first auto dealership in Texas and his attached garage to the historic house faces 10 ½ Street, which was cut specifically so he could access his garage; Samuel H. Webber House at 1011 Heights Boulevard – a unique . two-story brick house with corner turret and porte-cochere which also has access to 10 ½ Street – the home being an uncommon Queen Anne residence in Houston and this example remains one of the most substantial turn-of-the-century houses of its date and style in the Heights, if not the city; Aristide L Etie House at 402 East 11th ; House at 917 Heights Boulevard, which is an unusual Victorian era home for Houston Heights;

828 Heights Boulevard, a relatively simple, large home built along Heights Boulevard; 844 Cortlandt, which is typical of average, but ornate cottages often built in Houston Heights during the early years of development; Countryman House at 402 East 9th which is a fine example of well kept raised cottage of Heights Heights; 844 Columbia which is an unusual type for the Heights since more common in rural southeast Texas; Southwestern Bell Telephone Company at 743 Harvard, W. L. Goyen, architect, being an ornate and unusual Renaissance

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Revival example in Houston Heights; Meitzen House at 725 Harvard, a typical middle-class home for early Houston Heights; Wimberly House at 703 Harvard which was built near his business at 702 Heights Boulevard, the Wimberly Brothers Grocery (now site of Donovan Park), which was a popular gathering place for this end of the Heights because residents paid their taxes there; Isbell House at 639 Heights Boulevard, which is a two-story eclectic frame house once the home of Robert Isbell, the fourth mayor of the Heights (1913-14); Eaton House at 510 Harvard once owned by Dr. W. H. Eaton, a local dentist best known in the Heights for operation of the Heights Natatorium, a popular gathering place; Joseph Ogle House at 530 Harvard;

House at 532 Harvard was built by Hart Oil and Well Company for one of its employees, and is typical of the larger homes built in the Heights as Houston grew with the oil industry and white collar workers and professionals moved into the suburbs; Samuel H. Webber House at 407 Heights Boulevard which was the first of two on the Boulevard built by Samuel H. Webber, a brick mason, for his family; House at 122 E. 5th Street

Which was the home of Paul Roffal, proprietor of the Model Carriage Company, and later in 1923, it became the residence of Miss Elizabeth Stile, a geologist; Houston Heights Telephone Company at 430 Harvard. (DEMOLISHED), Frank E. Ebersole, builder, and originally was the only commercial building in this part of the Heights except for grocery stores; House at 217 E. 5th Street, a handsomely detailed, well-kept example of small, early cottages common to the Heights; Gustavo Lund House at 301 East 5th being one of the earliest houses remaining in the Heights, and built by a carpenter of the Southern Pacific Railroad shops and also elected an alderman in 1897 and 1899; Heights Boulevard Esplanade, O. M. Carter, developer, which is the 60-wide grassy, park space lined with palms, oleanders, and other attractive vegetation which was built as the visual and social center of the historic neighborhood which continues even today with its popular jogging and walking trail;

John W. Anderson House at 711 Columbia which is an L-plan vernacular dwelling with some Shingle style influence, built by Anderson who was a construction superintendent with the Street Building Company in Houston Heights; Charles Roessler House at 736 Cortlandt; Austin Copeland House I at 921 Arlington which is significant as a small vernacular dwelling – owned and occupied by Copeland who built other homes adjacent to his; Austin Copeland House II at 923 Arlington (DEMOLISHED); J. H. Clare House at 939 Arlington;

Jay L. Durham House at 921 Heights Boulevard, built for Durham, who was the first paid fire chief of Houston Heights, by William A. Wilson who developed Woodland Heights and Eastwood neighborhoods; James L. Jensen House at 721 Arlington which was built by Jensen, a carpenter by trade, who like others in the profession who contributed to the growth of Houston Heights; Moses A. Clayton House at 1025 Arlington and built for Clayton who was an air brake operator for the Houston & Central Railroad; and the Charles E. Coombs House at 1037 Columbia, built by Charles H. Tefft for Coombs who was a tank wagon driver for Waters Pierce Oil Company.

There are a few other buildings that have been listed in the National Register of Historic Places and/or designated as City of Houston Landmarks/Protected Landmarks which are located directly adjacent to the proposed historic district and they include:

House at 112 W. 4th which features double gallery porches, a design that was once typical of the early detailed houses built in the neighborhood at the turn of the century and which has been lost due to widespread demolition; All Saints Roman Catholic Church at 201 East 10th being the best example of Romanesque Revival in Houston Heights as well as All Saints Roman Catholic School on Harvard; and Mulcahy House at 1046 Harvard, being an unusual example of the Dutch Colonial Revival style built for a teller at the South Texas Commercial National Bank.

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"Houston Heights," National Register of Historic Places Nomination, Texas Historical Commission, Peter Flagg Maxson.

"Houston Heights," Recorded Texas Historical Landmark (Subject Marker) Nomination, G. Randle Pace, 1991.

Pace, G. Randle and Deborah Markey, "Houston Heights, A Historical Portrait and A Contemporary Perspective 1891 – 1991," Tribune Publishing, Houston, Texas, 1991.

The information and sources for this application have been reviewed, verified, edited and supplemented with additional research and sources by Randy Pace, Historic Preservation Officer, Planning and Development Department, City of Houston.

APPROVAL CRITERIA

According to Section 33-222 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance:

Application for designation of an historic district shall be initiated by either:

(b)(1) The owners of at least 51 percent of the tracts in the proposed district, which tracts shall constitute 51 percent of the land area within the proposed district exclusive of street, alley and fee simple pipeline or utility rights-of-way and publicly owned land, shall make application for designation of an historic district. In case of a dispute over whether the percentage requirements have been satisfied, it shall be the burden of the challenger to establish by a preponderance of the evidence through the real property records of the county in which the proposed historic district is located or other public records that the applicants have not satisfied the percentage requirements.

Of the 761 total tract owners, 405 tract owners signed petitions in support or 53.22%. The total land area of tracts whose owners signed in support of the designation constitutes 51.27% percent of the total land area within the proposed district.

(b) Notwithstanding the foregoing, no building, structure, object or site less than 50 years old shall be designated as a landmark or archaeological site, and no area in which the majority of buildings, structures or objects is less than 50 years old shall be designated as an historic district, unless it is found that the buildings, structure, object, site or area is of extraordinary importance to the city, state or nation for reasons not based on age.

There are a total of 808 structures in the proposed historic district. Of those 808 structures, 133 are classified as "contributing" and 371 are classified as "potentially contributing" or 62.38% are classified as historic. There are 304 structures that are classified as "non-contributing" (50 years of age or less, or 50 years of age or more and severely altered).

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According to the approval criteria in Section 33-224 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance :

(a) The Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission and the Houston Planning Commission, in making recommendations with respect to designation, and the City Council, in making a designation, shall consider one or more of the following criteria, as applicable:

S **NA**

S - satisfies **NA - not applicable**

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | (1) Whether the building, structure, object, site or area possesses character, interest or value as a visible reminder of the development, heritage, and cultural and ethnic diversity of the city, state, or nation; |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | (2) Whether the building, structure, object, site or area is the location of a significant local, state or national event (Sec. 33-224(a)(2)); |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | (3) Whether the building, structure, object, site or area is identified with a person who, or group or event that, contributed significantly to the cultural or historical development of the city, state, or nation; |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | (4) Whether the building or structure or the buildings or structures within the area exemplify a particular architectural style or building type important to the city; |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | (5) Whether the building or structure or the buildings or structures within the area are the best remaining examples of an architectural style or building type in a neighborhood; |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | (6) Whether the building, structure, object or site or the buildings, structures, objects or sites within the area are identified as the work of a person or group whose work has influenced the heritage of the city, state, or nation; |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | (7) Whether specific evidence exists that unique archaeological resources are present (Sec. 33-224(a)(7)); |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | (8) Whether the building, structure, object or site has value as a significant element of community sentiment or public pride (Sec. 33-224(a)(8)). |

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Houston Planning Commission accept the recommendation of the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission and recommend to City Council the Historic District Designation of Houston Heights Historic District South.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION

Recommended to City Council the Historic District Designation of Houston Heights Historic District South.