

PROTECTED LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT

LANDMARK NAME: Openshaw-Hutton House
OWNER: Daniel and Jeannine Cox
APPLICANT: Same as Owner
LOCATION: 1920 Kane Street – Old Sixth Ward Historic District
30-DAY HEARING NOTICE: N/A

AGENDA ITEM: Ia
HPO FILE NO.: 07PL39
DATE ACCEPTED: Dec-03-06
HAHC HEARING: Feb-14-07
PC HEARING: Mar-29-07

SITE INFORMATION:

Lot 1, Block 427, W. R. Baker Addition, NSBB, City of Houston, Harris County, Texas. The site includes a historic two-story, wood frame residence and historic one-story wood framed barn.

TYPE OF APPROVAL REQUESTED: Landmark and Protected Landmark Designation for both the historic house and historic barn

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY:

The Openshaw-Hutton House and historic barn, located at 1920 Kane, are contributing buildings in the City of Houston Old Sixth Ward Historic District as well as the National Register Historic District. The home was constructed circa 1879 and is one of the ten oldest houses extant in the neighborhood. In addition, the home is a rare surviving example of the two-story “T” cottage, which is also a rare house type for Houston. Its outbuilding, a historic barn, is an exceedingly rare building in the Houston metropolitan area. Although many hundreds of examples of this type of building once existed in Houston’s older neighborhoods, they were the more likely to be lost due to their secondary importance. The buildings meets Criteria 1, 4, and 5; the buildings also meet criteria for being constructed before 1905; and the buildings also meet criteria as “contributing” buildings to the Old Sixth Ward National Register Historic District; thus meeting multiple criteria for designation as a Landmark and Protected Landmark.

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE:

The Openshaw-Hutton House, located at 1920 Kane Street, was constructed circa 1879 for James Openshaw. It is a “contributing” building located within the boundaries of the Old Sixth Ward Historic District designated by Houston City Council in 1998. The home is also located within the boundaries of the Old Sixth Ward National Register Historic District listed in 1978. James Openshaw was a machinist for the Houston and Texas Central Railway Company. During the late nineteenth century, the Sixth Ward neighborhood was home to many people employed by the various railroads that crossed the area.

James A. Openshaw was born in England in 1851. He immigrated to Texas prior to July 1874, but the exact date of immigration is uncertain. The first known record for James A. Openshaw in America occurs in 1874 when he purchased a lot on the north side of what would become the 1900 block of Kane Street. He purchased Lot 3 in Block 427, W. R. Baker Addition, North Side Buffalo Bayou (NSBB), from Henry Maura, another Sixth Ward resident, on July 21, 1874. This lot is located two lots east of the subject property at 1920 Kane Street. This portion of the Baker Addition NSBB was officially a part of the Fourth Ward at the time, but would be redistricted and renamed the Sixth Ward in 1876. The 1874 price of the unimproved lot was \$200. In March 1877, James Openshaw contracted with James Nichols, a carpenter, to construct a one-story wood cottage on the site, which would later be known as 1912 Kane Street. It is believed that the 1877 house is still extant at that site, but with later alterations.

James Openshaw was married to Elizabeth Fortney the following month on April 12, 1877. Elizabeth, who sometimes used the name "Eliza," was born in Texas in 1859 to a father from Pennsylvania and a German-born mother. The Openshaws were listed in the 1878 Houston City Directory as boarding in the home of W. J. Coulter, a druggist, who lived at the northeast corner of Lubbock and Henderson Streets in the Sixth Ward. The first house that Openshaw had built was presumably an investment property.

On February 25, 1878, James and Elizabeth Openshaw purchased Lots 1 and 2 in Block 427 of the W. R. Baker Addition, NSBB. Lots 1 and 2 were located at the northeast corner of Kane and White Street adjacent to their house on Kane Street. The purchase price for the two unimproved lots was \$275.

The couple briefly moved to the Fifth Ward in 1881 to a residence located at the northwest corner of Hardy and Eagle Streets. Presumably, they moved because the new location was closer to Mr. Openshaw's work with the H. E. & W. T. Railroad shops. In 1883, James Openshaw's occupation was listed as a "Master Mechanic" for the railroad. The Openshaws maintained ownership of their property in Sixth Ward, however.

James Openshaw sold Lot 3 in Block 427 of the Baker Addition NSBB to Paul Schneidenberg, a clerk, in February 1889. This was the lot where James Openshaw had constructed a small frame cottage in 1877. James and Elizabeth Openshaw moved back to their Sixth Ward property in 1884, where they resided at the northeast corner of Kane and White Street, later known as 1920 Kane Street, until they sold it to Henry Stoermer in 1891. The sale to Stoermer included Lots 1 and 2 and the improvements thereon, being the house at 1920 Kane and possibly a house next door at 1916 Kane. The sale price was a staggering \$8,000. The house at 1920 Kane would eventually be sold to the Hutton family in 1906. During the Hutton ownership, the double gallery was added to the front of the house. The Hutton family owned the house until 1999.

The home is located within the W. R. Baker NSBB Addition to the City of Houston, which is more commonly known as the Sixth Ward. The W. R. Baker Addition was first platted in 1856 by William R. Baker. Baker owned a large tract of land from the original two leagues of land granted to John Austin from the Mexican government. Baker's tract of land extended from the north bank of Buffalo Bayou to the southern boundary of the Beauchamp Springs tract on the southern edge of White Oak Bayou. The area between Center Street and Buffalo Bayou had originally been considered to be a part of the Fourth Ward until 1876 when this area was redrawn as Houston's Sixth Ward.

The Old Sixth Ward Historic District has one of the largest concentration of Victorian-era buildings in Houston. The majority of the houses standing today were built in the 1870s, 80s, and 90s as modest, one-story frame cottages occupied by a single family. The distinctive Victorian character of these dwellings was enhanced by decorative millwork usually applied to the front porches. As the 20th Century progressed, new housing reflected changes in architectural style. Bungalows were built among the Victorian cottages, but the essential character of the neighborhood did not change. During World War II, many of the houses were converted from single to multi-family dwellings, often owned by absentee landlords. Since achieving recognition as both a nationally and locally designated historic district, the Old Sixth Ward has witnessed the restoration of many homes to single-family occupancy.

RESTORATION HISTORY:

The two-story wood frame house is constructed in a vernacular style commonly referred to as an "T" house, and is based on one of the earliest house types in America. The "T" house type, named for its slender rectangular perimeter, is characterized by its simple rectangular shape and is typically one room deep and two stories high. The roof structures are usually hipped or gabled. This compact house type was characterized by a central entry located in one of the long sides of the house. There are very few surviving examples of this type of house in

Houston. Another example of the "T" house type may be seen at 605 White Street (Nickerson-Ellis House, built circa 1883), which is also located within the Sixth Ward.

The site also includes a historic one-story wood frame outbuilding, which is located at the northwest corner of the site. The outbuilding or barn is approximately 10'x 20' with a gable roof, and is clad in vertical, board-and-batten siding. Historic barns are exceedingly rare structures in the Houston metropolitan area. Although many hundreds of examples of this type of structure once existed in Houston's older neighborhoods, they were the more likely to be demolished due to their secondary importance. Furthermore, the construction methods used in the construction of out-buildings was less substantial than that used for primary residences and commercial structures, so they tended to deteriorate at a more rapid rate than the primary structure.

The Openshaw-Hutton House was originally constructed with a modest one-story porch skirted with a stick balustrade, which covered only the central entry. In the late 19th or early 20th century, a substantial double gallery was added to the home and is documented in early photographs. The double gallery was constructed to span the house's three bays on both floors. The porch features four cylindrical wood columns on both the first and second story. A decorative band of fishscale shingles separates the two levels. The roof of the second story gallery has a simple entablature below a flat sloping roof that is applied to the front of the building.

The Openshaw-Hutton House recently underwent a full renovation, which restored the main body of the house and added additional living space to the rear, which is subordinate to the historic house. In October 1999, a Certificate of Appropriateness was granted for this restoration. The work included the following: restore the two-story porch by removing the aluminum columns (a later alteration) on the first floor and replacing them with four round, classical wood columns; repair the existing columns on the second-floor porch and balustrade; restore the porch balustrade on the first-floor porch to match upper porch; remove the plank decking on the first floor porch and replace with tongue and groove flooring to match that of upper porch; rebuild wood steps without railing to access porch; repair/restore fishscale shingles on pent roof of porch between first and second floors; remove asbestos siding and repair existing clapboard siding underneath to match existing; restore corner boards, watertable, fascia, and soffit to match original; restore/repair existing 6/6 wood sash windows; restore/repair shutters, corbels and trim around windows and doors to match original; replace existing roof shingles with composition shingle roof to resemble cedar shakes; repair damaged or missing foundation piers with cement block clad with brick to match existing; replace windows (later alteration) on west elevation with windows to match existing 6/6 windows; install lattice panels between brick piers; construct a shed roof dormer (for bathroom) on the east slope of the roof of the one-story addition (not visible from the street), approximately 10' wide and 7' deep and featuring a shed roof clad with composition shingles to match main roof, and clapboard siding to match main house, with paired 6/6 wood windows to match existing; and construction of a wood picket fence including wood newel posts and gates to match original shown in historic photograph.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Fox, Stephen. Houston Architectural Guide. Houston: American Institute of Architects, Houston Chapter and Herring Press, 1990.

Harris County Contract Records, Volume 1, p.151.

Harris County Deed Records, Volume 17, p.777, Volume 13, p.355, and Volume 52, p.2.

Houston City Directories, 1870-1949.

United States Census 1880, Harris County, Texas.

APPROVAL CRITERIA FOR PROTECTED LANDMARK DESIGNATION:

Sec. 33-224. Criteria for designation of a Protected Landmark.

(a) The HAHC and the commission, in making recommendations with respect to designation, and the city council, in making a designation, shall consider three or more of the following criteria, as appropriate for the Protected Landmark designation. If the HAHC reviews an application for designation of a Protected Landmark initiated after the designation of the Landmark, the HAHC shall review the basis for its initial recommendation for designation and may recommend designation of the landmark as a protected landmark unless the property owner elects to designate and if the landmark has met at least (3) three of the criteria of Section 33-224 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance (HPO) at the time of its designation or, based upon additional information considered by the HAHC, the landmark then meets at least (3) three of criteria of Section 33-224 of the HPO, as follows:

- | S | NA | S - satisfies | D - does not satisfy | 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; | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" 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; | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | (8) Whether the building, structure, object or site has value as a significant element of community sentiment or public pride. | | |
| OR | | | | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The property was constructed before 1905; | | |
| OR | | | | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The property was listed individually in the National Register of Historic Places or designated as a "contributing structure" in an historic district listed in the National Register of Historic Places; | | |
| OR | | | | |

- The property was designated as a State of Texas Recorded Texas Historical Landmark.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission accepts the recommendation of the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission and recommends to City Council the Landmark and Protected Landmark Designation of the Openshaw-Hutton House at 1920 Kane Street.

CITY OF HOUSTON

Archaeological & Historical Commission

Planning and Development Department

SITE LOCATION MAP
OPENSHAW-HUTTON HOUSE
1920 KANE STREET
NOT TO SCALE

