

LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT

LANDMARK NAME: Maurice and Virginia Brown Angly House
OWNERS: Kristine K. and William A. Hirtz
APPLICANTS: Kristine K. and William A. Hirtz
LOCATION: 2514 Brentwood Drive – River Oaks
30-DAY HEARING NOTICE: N/A

AGENDA ITEM: VII.b
HPO FILE NO: 08L194
DATE ACCEPTED: Dec-28-07
HAHC HEARING: Jan-30-08
PC HEARING: Feb-14-08

SITE INFORMATION:

Lot 7, Block 36, River Oaks Section 1, City of Houston, Harris County, Texas. The building on the site is an historic two-story brick veneered residence.

TYPE OF APPROVAL REQUESTED: Landmark Designation

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY:

The residence at 2514 Brentwood Drive was built in 1934 for Maurice and Virginia Brown Angly by the Russell Brown Company, a prominent Houston building firm. Virginia Brown Angly was the daughter of Russell Brown, and the home was likely built as a wedding present upon her marriage to Maurice Angly, who owned and operated the Angly Lumber Company. The Russell Brown Company was founded in Houston in 1906 and built a number of important houses in Houston, San Antonio, Dallas, and other Texas cities.

The two-story brick Angly House is designed in the Southern Colonial style and features a two-story front portico that spans most of the front facade. In 2007, a developer purchased the house with the intent to demolish it to make way for new construction. The current owners, Kristine and William Hirtz, contacted the developer, were able to purchase the home, and are now in the process of a major restoration. The Angly House qualifies for Landmark Designation under Criteria 1, 4, 5, and 6.

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE:

The house at 2514 Brentwood Drive was built by the Russell Brown Company for Maurice and Virginia Brown Angly. On September 5, 1934, the Houston Chronicle ran the following:

“Mr. and Mrs. Maurice Angly are now occupying their new home at 2514 Brentwood Drive in River Oaks. A wide front veranda, tall columns, Colonial architecture perpetuate the traditions of the Old South. The Russell Brown Co. built it.”

Russell Brown was an extremely active builder on Brentwood Drive, and his legacy on the two blocks includes the houses at 2120, 2131, 2144, 2224, 2232, and 2235 Brentwood Drive.

Maurice Angly (1902-1969) was married to Virginia Brown (1903-1979), Russell Brown's daughter. He founded a company, Angly Lumber, which he operated for over thirty years in Houston. In 1934, the City Directory lists him as President of Angly Lumber Company with an office located at 1317 Second National Bank Building. He and Virginia had one child, Maurice Angly, Jr., who went on to serve as a State Representative in Austin. The marriage between the Anglys was apparently short lived. It appears that the marriage had dissolved by the late 1940s when Virginia Angly is listed alone in the City Directory.

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In 1946, the Anglys sold the home to Harry and Lucy Holmes. The Holmes would later sell to Dr. and Mrs. J. Barnett Finkelstein, who lived in the home for many years. After Dr. Finkelstein's death, his children sold the house to a developer in 2007. The current owners, Kristine and William Hirtz, contacted the developer, were able to purchase the home, and are now in the process of a major restoration.

According to Stephen Fox, the Russell Brown Company was a Houston-based architectural design and construction company. It was chartered in 1906 by Russell Brown, who was born on December 12, 1875, in Taylor, Texas, and came to Houston in 1902. The company was a prolific builder and designer of new houses in Houston from 1902 until the early 1940s. Brown expanded his operations by opening branch offices in Dallas in 1916, San Antonio in 1922, and Los Angeles in 1923. The firm specialized in house design and construction, but also designed several commercial buildings in Houston in the 1920s and 1930s, such as the first Jefferson Davis Hospital and the Schlumberger Building, as well as the six-story Guaranty State Bank and Simpson Office Building in Ardmore, Oklahoma in 1917.

The Russell Brown Company constructed numerous houses in the Avondale, Westmoreland, Montrose, Boulevard Oaks, and River Oaks neighborhoods in Houston and in the Dallas subdivision of Munger Place. The company was the general contractor of such notable Houston houses as the William S. Farish House in Shadyside (1925) and the Cleveland Sewall House in River Oaks (1926, N.R.). Notable houses the company built outside of Houston include the Herbert L. Kokernot House in Monte Vista in San Antonio (1928); the O. L. Seagraves House at the Mo Ranch near Hunt, Texas (1929); the Talbott F. Rothwell House in Beaumont (1929); and the W. B. Morgan House in Olmos Park Estates in Olmos Park (1931). Among the architects who worked at various times for the Russell Brown Company in Houston were A. N. Dawson, Charles W. Oliver, Mike Mebane, and Gonzalo Ancira. In an indication of the quality of the Russell Brown architects, the River Oaks Corporation hired one of Russell Brown's architects, Charles Oliver, as in-house architect in 1926.

Additional information on the Russell Brown Company comes from a company brochure published circa 1936 which notes the following:

“The restful harmony and careful designing, the elegance imparted by graceful simplicity marks the difference between Russell Brown Company homes and the regular run of places so often built.”

Russell Brown retired from the building business in the mid 1940s. He lived out his retirement at his ranch near Juliff, Texas, south of Houston, where he died in 1963.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION AND RESTORATION HISTORY:

The Angly House was designed and built in 1934 by the Russell Brown Company. The home, designed in the Southern Colonial style, was featured in the River Oaks Magazine Anniversary Edition in May 1941. The house retains a high degree of architectural integrity when compared to the 1941 photos of the building from the magazine article.

The house is two stories in height with a side-gable roof and prominent two-story front portico. The exterior is clad in painted brick veneer. The front portico is 49 feet in width and spans much of the front of the house, save for a small one-story wing located to the west side of the house. The portico is supported by six square paneled columns and matching pilasters. The front entry retains its original elliptical fanlight transom and sidelights, and is flanked by two evenly spaced, triple hung, floor-to-ceiling jib windows. The second floor features double-hung 6/6 lite wood sash windows. The three multi-lite jib windows, centered as a group above the first floor main entry, are partially enclosed by a

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decorative, wrought iron balconette. The one-story wing at the west side of the building consists of a one-story, screened front porch supported by square paneled wood columns connected at the tops by a series of arched openings.

The entry hall of the home has a gracious circular stairway as its focal point. On either side of the hall, there are wide paneled arched openings leading into the dining room and living room. Throughout the home, there are numerous original features including deep crown molding, random-width pegged and beveled hardwood floors, decorative register covers, elaborate wainscoting, carved mantles, and knotty pine paneling.

Changes to the house have been minimal over the years. The current owners, Kristine and William Hirtz, purchased the home from a developer who had intended to demolish the house to make way for new construction. One of the few alterations to the house was an incompatible family room addition that had been added to the back of the home at some point. The Hirtz family has removed this inappropriate addition and has plans to rehabilitate and update the remainder of the house.

The information and sources provided by the applicant for this application have been reviewed, verified, edited and supplemented with additional research and sources by Thomas McWhorter, Planning and Development Department, City of Houston.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Handbook of Texas Online, s.v. "," <http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/GG/dog2.html> (accessed March 21, 2007).

Houston Chronicle, September 5, 1934.

Houston Chronicle, Obituary of Russell Brown, April 9, 1963.

Houston Post, Funeral Announcement for Maurice Angly, April 3, 1969.

River Oaks Property Owners Card File for Russell Brown Brentwood Homes.

APPROVAL CRITERIA FOR LANDMARK DESIGNATION:

The HAHC and the 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 appropriate for the type of designation:

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 (Sec. 33-224(a)(1);		
<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 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 (Sec. 33-224(a)(3);		
<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 (Sec. 33-224(a)(4);		

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- (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 (Sec. 33-224(a)(5);
- (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 (Sec. 33-224(a)(6);
- (7) Whether specific evidence exists that unique archaeological resources are present (Sec. 33-224(a)(7);
- (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).
- (9) If less than 50 years old, or proposed historic district containing a majority of buildings, structures, or objects that are less than 50 years old, whether the building, structure, object, site, or area is of extraordinary importance to the city, state or nation for reasons not based on age (Sec. 33-224(b).

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 Landmark Designation of the Maurice and Virginia Brown Angly House at 2514 Brentwood Drive.

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SITE LOCATION MAP
MAURICE AND VIRGINIA BROWN ANGLY HOUSE
2514 BRENTWOOD DRIVE
NOT TO SCALE

