

CITY OF HOUSTON

Archaeological & Historical Commission

Planning and Development Department

LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT

LANDMARK NAME: James and Marguerite Shepherd House

AGENDA ITEM: II

OWNERS: Janet H. and Harvin C. Moore, IV

HPO FILE NO: 11L256

APPLICANTS: Same as owners

DATE ACCEPTED: Sept-2-2011

LOCATION: 2105 Brentwood Drive – River Oaks

HAHC HEARING: Sept-22-2011

SITE INFORMATION: Tracts 8C-1, 8D and 9E, Block 46, River Oaks Section 3, City of Houston, Harris County, Texas. The site includes a two-story, stucco clad single family residence, and an historic garage. The garage is not part of the landmark designation.

TYPE OF APPROVAL REQUESTED: Landmark Designation

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

The James and Marguerite Shepherd House at 2105 Brentwood Drive at the corner of Shepherd Drive was designed in the English Picturesque style by well-known architect Charles Oliver. The house was constructed in 1927-28 for James L. Shepherd, Jr., a prominent attorney with Baker, Botts, Andrews and Shepherd, and his wife Marguerite Street Shepherd. Shepherd was the nephew of B. A. Shepherd, for whom Shepherd Drive was named.

Charles Oliver was the in-house architect for the River Oaks Corporation from 1926 to 1931. Oliver would design 75 houses in River Oaks in many styles including Georgian, Tudor, Dutch Colonial, Mediterranean and Norman. The Johnston House is an exceptional example of Oliver's work in the English Picturesque style, with its half-timbering, high-pitched cross-gabled façade, and massive chimney. In 1935, the Shepherds commissioned John F. Staub to design a breezeway addition and garage alteration. The property is unique in that it was designed by two of Houston's most prominent architects.

The James and Marguerite Shepherd House meets Criteria 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6 for Landmark designation.

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE

On May 8, 1927 the *Houston Chronicle* announced a list of new River Oaks property owners:

Eighty-five new names were added to the list of River Oaks Property Owners this week.

This was brought about by the opening of a new section through the pre-development sale of Tuesday and Wednesday. Among the new owners: ...J. L. Shepherd...

The new section the Chronicle is referring to is Section 3, otherwise known as the "Buffalo Drive Section." The original map, containing Hugh Potter's handwritten notations of each lot price, indicates that Tract 8D (on which a portion of the subject house is located) was the most expensive lot on the block at \$5,000. The remaining lots ranged from \$4350 to \$4900; the lots situated in the middle of the block were the least expensive. Over time the land of the Shepherd House grew to include Tract 8C-1 and 9E.

At the time the house was built, very few other residences had been completed on Brentwood Drive (the two blocks bounded by Kirby Drive and Shepherd Drive). The 1928 City Directory

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indicates that only three houses were completed – the houses at 2203, 2219 and 2513 Brentwood Drive. The 1929-30 City Directory reveals that the Shepherds resided at 4111 Austin Street (in Houston’s Midtown neighborhood) prior to moving into their new house on Brentwood Drive.

Shortly after settling into their new house, the Shepherds performed a renovation. The May 1932 edition of *Homes for All Times* (the River Oaks Corporation magazine) states:

Mr. and Mrs. James L. Shepherd are adding onto their home at 2105 Brentwood Drive with a modernistic powder room with interesting contrasts of silver and patent leather trim. This work is under the supervision of Charles W. Oliver.

James Shepherd’s daughter, Marguerite Cecilia “CC” Shepherd-Cambias, visited many times with the current owners about the history of the house. The property originally contained a detached garage to the rear of the house, with a driveway that entered off Shepherd Drive. Shepherd Drive became increasingly busy and the Shepherds did not like having to access the driveway from Shepherd.

In 1935, the Shepherds purchased two-thirds of the lot located to the west with the intent of reorienting the driveway. According to Mrs. Cambias, who was thirteen at the time, the Shepherds engaged John Staub to design a plan that would reorient the driveway to enter off Brentwood Drive, on the western end of the property. Staub’s plans called to expand the existing garage to the west and relocate the garage doors from the east side of the building to the now-wider south side, where they would face a rear parking area. Mrs. Cambias recalls Staub visiting her house many times to oversee the construction.

James Leftwich Shepherd, Jr.

James Leftwich Shepherd, Jr., (1893-1964) was a native of Huntsville, Texas. His family had deep Texas roots; his grandfather, Newton Shepherd, and great-uncle, Benjamin Armistead “B. A.” Shepherd, settled in Texas in 1839. B. A. Shepherd was known for laying out the route of the Houston, East and West Texas Railroad in 1875, and for founding First City Bank. Shepherd Drive is named after him.

James L. Shepherd, Jr., entered law, as had his father James L. Shepherd, Sr., a district judge of the 32nd judicial district of Texas. James Jr. moved to Houston in 1917 to join the law firm of Baker, Botts, Parker and Garwood. According to the *Texas Handbook Online*, he became a partner in 1929 and “was known nationally as a leader in oil and gas law, mineral law, and water rights law.” In 1954, the firm became Baker, Botts, Andrews, and Shepherd. His clients included Sinclair Oil Company and Rice University.

Shepherd first became active with the American Bar Association (A.B.A.) in 1928, around the time that he was moving into 2105 Brentwood Drive. He held a number of positions including chairman of the Mineral Law Section, Member of the A.B.A. House of Delegates, and was elected chairman of the House in 1957. As chairman of the House, he held the second highest position in the A.B.A. During his career he was known for continually fighting for the efficiency of the administration of justice.

He was also active locally, and served as President of the Houston Bar in 1945 and of the Texas Bar in 1946-47. He belonged to several organizations including River Oaks Country Club, Ramada Club, Houston Club, Petroleum Club, Austin Club (Austin, Texas) and Bankers Club

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(New York). At the time of his death in 1964, he was living in the house at 2105 Brentwood Drive with his second wife, Helga, whom he married in 1959 after the 1958 death of Marguerite. James Jr. and Marguerite had two children, Marguerite Cecilia “CC” Shepherd Cambias, who died in 2007, and James Leftwich Shepherd III, who died in 1980.

Upon James Shepherd’s death on October 8, 1964, the house passed to his wife Helga. Helga Shepherd died in 1996 and the house was sold to the current owners, Janet and Harvin Moore, in 1997.

There is an interesting connection between James Shepherd and the current owner, Harvin Moore, IV. B. A. Shepherd purchased the Kellum House in 1850, and sold it to Zerviah Noble in 1851. The Kellum-Noble House was slated for demolition in 1954. This led to the formation of the Houston Heritage Society, which rescued the building and opened it to the public as a house museum in 1958. The Kellum-Noble House was restored by Harvin C. Moore, the grandfather of the current owner of the James and Marguerite Shepherd House.

Charles Oliver

The James and Marguerite Shepherd House was designed by noted Houston architect, Charles Oliver, who was the in-house architect for the River Oaks Corporation from 1926 to 1931. According to notes from Stephen Fox, Oliver was a native of Dallas and had previously worked in the architectural/construction firm of the Russell Brown Company, which constructed many stylish houses in Dallas and Houston during the first quarter of the 20th century. Oliver worked for the Russell Brown Company from 1916 until 1926, when he was hired away by the River Oaks Corporation. Eventually, Oliver would design 75 houses in the upscale River Oaks neighborhood in many styles including Georgian, Tudor, Dutch Colonial, Mediterranean and Norman. (Some of his most distinctive houses are the Mediterranean style houses, of which approximately six are still standing in River Oaks.)

Some of Oliver’s houses include:

- 2203 Brentwood Dr, 1925
- 1903 Bellmeade St, 1926
- 2508 Pelham Drive, 1927 (Charles Oliver’s family home)
- Ben Johnston House, 3325 Chevy Chase Dr, 1927 (City of Houston Landmark)
- 1528 Kirby Drive, 1927-28
- 1827 Kirby Drive, 1927-28
- William Davis Royston House, 2224 Looscan Ln, 1927-28 (City of Houston Landmark)
- T. J. and Ruth Bettes House, 1059 Kirby Dr, 1928 (City of Houston Landmark)
- 3394 Chevy Chase, c. 1928
- Hal and Iley Nunn Davis House, 1915 Bellmeade St, 1929 (City of Houston Protected Landmark)
- 2007 River Oaks Boulevard, 1929 (home of Mike Hogg, developer of River Oaks)
- 3015 Del Monte Drive, c. 1929
- 2504 Pelham Drive, c. 1929
- 2141 Pine Valley, c. 1930
- Casa a La Punta, 3223 Chevy Chase, c. 1930 (City of Houston Landmark)
- Christie House, 3358 Inwood Drive, 1930

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- Stokes-Farnsworth House, 1407 Kirby Dr, 1930 (City of Houston Landmark)
- River Oaks Corporation House, 2164 Troon Rd, 1930 (City of Houston Landmark)
- 2970 Lazy Lane, 1934 (as consulting architect to James C. Mackenzie with Birdsall Briscoe)

John F. Staub

According to the *Handbook of Texas Online*, John F. Staub (1892-1981) began his architectural practice in New York in 1916. In 1921, he came to Houston to supervise a project in the Shadyside neighborhood, and went on to establish his own practice here in 1923. Staub is best known as an architect of single-family houses and is closely identified with the River Oaks neighborhood. His first independent commission in Houston was the River Oaks Country Club. As mentioned, above, he was then retained by the Hogg brothers to design two model homes for the developing River Oaks subdivision. As his career progressed, he was tapped as primary architect (with Birdsall Briscoe named associate architect) to design Bayou Bend, the home of Ima Hogg. Between 1924 and 1958, he designed thirty-one houses in River Oaks, in addition to making designs for homes that were never built, as well as designing renovations and extensions for existing homes. Outside of River Oaks, Staub homes from this period were built in Broadacres, Courtlandt Place, and the Fort Worth neighborhood of River Crest. Additional Staub homes may be found in Beaumont, Dallas, and Memphis, Tennessee, some of which are open to the public as museums.

According to Howard Barnstone's book, some of the River Oaks homes designed by John Staub include:

- House for Country Club Estates, 3374 Chevy Chase, 1924
- Joseph H. Chew House, 3335 Inwood, 1925
- House for Country Club Estates, 3260 Chevy Chase, 1925
- Kemerton Dean House, 1912 Bellmeade, 1925 City of Houston Landmark
- John F. Staub House, 3511 Del Monte, 1925
- Hubert B. Finch House, 3407 Inwood, 1926
- Bayou Bend for Ima Hogg, 2940 Lazy Lane, 1926
- Judge Frederick C. Proctor Home, 2950 Lazy Lane, 1926 (as associate to Birdsall Briscoe), Demolished.
- Harry C. Hanszen House, 2955 Lazy Lane, 1930
- Wallace E. Pratt House, 2990 Lazy Lane, 1931, Demolished.
- J. Robert Neal House, 2960 Lazy Lane, 1931 City of Houston Landmark
- George A. Hill, Jr. House, 1604 Kirby Drive, 1931
- Hugh Roy Cullen House, 1620 River Oaks Boulevard, 1933
- David D. Bruton House, 2923 Inwood Drive, 1933 City of Houston Landmark
- Clarence M. Frost House, 2110 River Oaks Boulevard, 1933
- Ravenna for Stephen P. Farish, 2995 Lazy Lane, 1934
- William J. Crabb House, 2416 Pine Valley Drive, 1935, Demolished.
- Robert Bowles House, 3015 Inwood Drive, 1935
- George S. Heyer Home, 2909 Inwood Drive, 1935
- Oak Shadows for Ray L. Dudley, 3371 Chevy Chase, 1936

- Tom Scurry House, 1912 Larchmont, 1936
- James L. Britton House, 1824 Larchmont, 1936
- Robert D. Strauss House, 1814 Larchmont, 1937
- John M. Jennings House, 2212 Troon Road, 1937
- Dan J. Harrison House, 2975 Lazy Lane, 1938
- Claud B. Hamill House, 2124 River Oaks Boulevard, 1938
- Edward H. Andrews House, 3637 Inwood Drive, 1939, demolished
- Rienzi for Mr. and Mrs. Harris Masterson, III, 1406 Kirby Drive, 1952 (S,R&H)
- Ben Anderson House, 3740 Willowick, 1956 (S,R&H) City of Houston Landmark
- House for Mr. and Mrs. George A. Peterkin, Sr, 2005 Claremont, 1957 (S,R&H)

In addition to residential work, Staub designed the parish house of Palmer Memorial Church, the Junior League Building, and the Bayou Club in Houston. His firm designed buildings for the campuses of the University of Texas, Rice University, University of Houston, and the Texas Medical Center. He was the primary architect on the John Reagan High School project as well. Staub, Rather, and Howze also consulted with Jim Goodwin of Pierce and Pierce in the new building and planetarium for the Houston Museum of Natural Science.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION AND RESTORATION HISTORY

The James and Marguerite Shepherd House was designed in an English Picturesque style by Charles Oliver in 1927-28, with circa 1935 alterations by John Staub. The house has elements of both Tudor and Norman influence. The house faces north on Brentwood Drive and is sited in the center of its lot. To the east is Shepherd Drive, but the house is completely obscured from this busy street by heavy landscaping and a high, ivy covered wall constructed by the Moores.

Circa 1935, John Staub designed alterations to the house. Staub's design included the one-story portico structure, with its distinctive arched beam design for the windows and gates. He also capped the loggia's west end with an elegant overhang that would protect a driver from rain as he or she exited the car at the new swinging gate. The Staub alterations compliment the Oliver-designed house. The gardens from this period were designed by Ellen Biddle Shipman.

The main mass of the house is situated under a side-gabled roof. A multi-gabled front façade belies Tudor detailing, as does a massive chimney. The house is faced with rough stucco, with wood and brick accents. The entire house is painted white, except for the wood trim.

On the eastern side of the front façade is a small two-story section of the house situated under the main roof. On the first floor is a two-part transom window of eight-lights each with a four-light transom above. On the second-floor façade is an eight-light metal casement window.

The main entrance block of the house features two front-gabled roofs, one atop the other forming a third-story. A massive chimney projects in front of the taller three-story front-gable. The chimney is topped with a diagonal brick pattern and above that are horizontal bands of brick. A diagonally-paned fixed-metal window is in the third-story gable. Above the window, a decorative dovecoat has been created in wood placed in a chevron pattern.

A lower two-story front gable projects in front of this higher gable, and intersects with the chimney. This section contains the entrance of the house. The front entrance is recessed behind arched walls of horizontally-laid bricks and under a massive wooden lintel. Above the lintel are

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decorative thin bands of wood arranged vertically in a sunburst pattern. Above the diagonally detailed wooden door hangs a lantern. There is a diamond shaped light in the door. A six-light metal casement window is to the left of the entrance on the first floor façade.

Above the entrance is a two-part casement window with diagonal lights. The window is surrounded by thick wood and framed by shutters. The shutters are made of irregularly cut vertical wood boards. Again, a large lintel is above the window and decorative thin bands of wood are arranged in a sunburst pattern above this window. Between the first and second floor facades and to the right of the entrance is a large casement window, which gives light to the stair hall. The casement window is a two-part window of eight-lights each with a four-light transom above.

To the west of the entrance bay is a bay window of metal casements with a thick wooden surround on the first floor facade. Above this window is a projecting bay on the second-floor. This bay features half-timbering detailing and a small casement window on the second-floor. This window is also surrounded with thick wood.

To the west of this bay is the Staub alteration of the house, which features a long one-story portico or “mews,” which is open to the rear of the house. In the front, this portico is covered with stucco, features a side-gabled roof and has some half-timbering detailing around two open windows with turned wood vertical spindles. To the east of this section is a board-and-batten door. The portico turns at a right angle and continues south so as to make an enclosed yard.

The house has had only two owners and has been exceptionally maintained.

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Fox, Stephen, personal notes on Charles Oliver, May 3, 2005.

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Information provided by the owners, Harvin and Janet Moore.

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Johnston, Marguerite, *Houston: The Unknown City 1836-1946*, Texas A&M University Press, College Station, 1991.

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

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APPROVAL CRITERIA FOR LANDMARK DESIGNATION

Sec. 33-224. Criteria for designation

(a) The HAHC, 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 | D - does not satisfy | NA - not applicable |
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- (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;
- (2) Whether the building, structure, object, site or area is the location of a significant local, state or national event;
- (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;
- (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;
- (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;
- (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;
- (7) Whether specific evidence exists that unique archaeological resources are present;
- (8) Whether the building, structure, object or site has value as a significant element of community sentiment or public pride.

AND

- (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 Archaeological and Historical Commission recommend to City Council the Landmark Designation of the James and Marguerite Shepherd House at 2105 Brentwood Drive.

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EXHIBIT A
JAMES AND MARGUERITE SHEPHERD HOUSE
2105 BRENTWOOD DRIVE



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EXHIBIT B SITE LOCATION MAP JAMES AND MARGUERITE SHEPHERD HOUSE 2105 BRENTWOOD DRIVE NOT TO SCALE

