

LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT

LANDMARK NAME: Montgomery-Reynolds House
OWNERS: John & Melina Bishop
APPLICANTS: Same
LOCATION: 2111 Del Monte Drive - River Oaks

AGENDA ITEM: II
HPO FILE NO: 12L273
DATE ACCEPTED: Oct-31-2012
HAHC HEARING: Dec-06-2012

SITE INFORMATION

Lot 17, Block 44, River Oaks Section 3, City of Houston, Harris County, Texas. The site includes a historic two-story, traditional residence.

TYPE OF APPROVAL REQUESTED: Landmark Designation

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

The Montgomery-Reynolds House was built for Mr. and Mrs. Thaddeus Montgomery in 1938 at 2111 Del Monte. The house was designed by architect Ellwood E. Stowe of Stowe & Stowe in the Georgian Revival style. Mr. T.C. Montgomery was a life-time railroad man, who held the position of Chairman of the Southern Pacific Railroad union in the mid-1920s. The house was later occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Henry D. Reynolds.

The Montgomery-Reynolds House meets criteria 1, 4, and 6 for Landmark Designation.

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE

Mr. and Mrs. T.C. Montgomery

The construction at 2111 Del Monte Drive was announced in the *Houston Post* on February 26, 1938:

“Mr. and Mrs. T.C. Montgomery have bought a site in the 2100 block of Del Monte drive and have started construction of their new home. Mr. Montgomery is with the Southern Pacific Railroad.”

The arrival of the Montgomery family to River Oaks was announced in the June 1938 edition of *River Oaks Magazine*:

“Mr. and Mrs. T.C. Montgomery and their two daughters have moved into their new residence are 2111 Del Monte. Their home, which is a modified Georgian, is built of a warm cream colored brick and is trimmed effectively with jade green blinds. The doorway is arched and recessed and has iron grided railings leading up to it on either side of the steps. The daughters of the house are Miss Madelyn Montgomery, who has recently been graduated from college and Joyce, who is a ninth grade student at St. Agnes Academy. Mr. Montgomery is assistant General Manager of the Southern Pacific lines.”

Thaddeus C. Montgomery was born June 13, 1884, in Texas. He built a railroad career from the bottom up, and was very successful. He began his business career around 1909, when he first appears in the Beaumont City Directory as the chief clerk at the yardmaster’s office for the T. &

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N.O. railroad. By 1912, he was the Night Yardmaster. In 1917-1918 the Jacksonville, Texas, City Directory lists him as a conductor of the Southern Pacific Railroad. In 1923, Montgomery is listed in the Houston City Directory as the Chairman of the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen at Southern Pacific lines. The Brotherhood was a railroad union. He held this position from 1923 to 1926.

The 1930 U.S. Census found Montgomery in Yoakum, Texas, where he was the trainmaster and conductor. By 1932, he and his family were living in Houston where he was the Superintendent of Wages for Southern Pacific Railroad. The Montgomery's stayed in Houston for the remainder of his career. By 1937, he was promoted to Assistant General Manager at Southern Pacific. He remained with the company until his retirement; his obituary states that he had worked for Southern Pacific for 52 years – his last position was as Personnel Manager. When he died in 1958, he was living in the Braes Heights area. He was a member of the Jacksonville Masonic Lodge, Scottish Rite, and the Arabia Temple Shrine. He was a member of St. Paul's Methodist Church. He married his wife Aurora prior to 1910. She died on February 11, 1971.

The Montgomery family lived in the home from 1938 until 1948, when they moved to Bellaire.

Fred and Katherine Dellone

Fred and Katherine Dellone lived in the house from 1948-1951. Fred Dellone worked in construction, often on underground construction projects. Mrs. Dellone was the first woman to sit on the Texas Real Estate Board. She owned her own real estate business, South End Properties.

Henry Davenport Reynolds

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Davenport Reynolds purchased the home in 1951. At the time, Mr. Reynolds worked for the Internal Revenue Service. He was born on October 15, 1921 in Falls, Texas, and grew up in Hempstead. He graduated from the University of Texas with a degree in Business Administration. He was active in business fraternities and clubs, and was the President of Beta Alpha Psi accounting fraternity in 1942. He served as a Lt. Commander in the U.S. Navy during World War II. He also received a Masters in Electronics Engineering. Henry Reynolds died on September 25, 1981.

He married Mary Dean Grimes on April 27, 1944. She was born in Selma, Alabama, and moved to Cleveland, Texas in her teens. She attended Stephens College and graduated from the University of Texas in 1944. She was a member of Zeta Tau Alpha. While in River Oaks, she was a Girl Scout leader, a library volunteer at River Oaks Elementary, and an active volunteer in the community. When she died in 2001, she had been a member of the Blue Bird Circle, and a member of First Presbyterian Church.

Mrs. Reynolds stayed in the house after Mr. Reynolds' death, and the house was sold in 1984.

Subsequent Owners

The home has belonged to several owners since the Reynolds, including Rusty Tamblyn, John and Cynthia Scofield, Erik Littlejohn, and Julie McClure and Troy Williams. The current owners purchased the home in 2011.

Ellwood E. Stowe

Ellwood Emmett Stowe was born in Galveston on November 15, 1881. By 1900, at the young age of 19, he had joined his older brother George B. Stowe in the design and building trade. Their architectural practice was called Stowe & Stowe, and at the height of their careers, they operated offices in Beaumont, Houston, and Galveston, simultaneously. Ellwood handled the office in Houston, keeping his home in Galveston and renting homes here in Houston.

Stowe and Stowe designed all types of buildings, including residential, multi-family, commercial, and industrial. In Galveston their projects included First Methodist Church, John's Oyster Resort, the Galveston Orphan's Home, the Leticia Rosenberg Women's Home, the Trust Building, and the Ikelheimer Building. They were also responsible for the raising of Trinity Episcopal Church, Galveston, following the 1900 Storm. In a 1967 article Stowe spoke about the variety of commissions:

“During our practice we designed and had constructed everything from the U.S. Government immigrant station on Pelican Island to log cabins, children's playhouses, an ice plant and even a milking parlor for cows...”

George Stowe died in 1932. Ellwood continued the business under the old name. The Great Depression caught up with him, as he stated in a 1963 Galveston Daily News article:

“The depression put the skids under my business about 1938,” Stowe said. “so I went with the US Department of Interior's National Park Service in Santa Fe, N.M., and during World War II I was with the U.S Army Corps of Engineers in Galveston.”

1937 marked the year in which Stowe became a registered architect. The 1938 date of the Montgomery-Reynolds House makes this project likely one of Stowe's last residential commissions in Houston.

Ellwood Stowe died in Galveston in December 1972. He was 91 years old. As late as 1969, he signed his letters to the Galveston Daily News as “Elwood E. Stowe, architect.”

River Oaks

When Will C. Hogg, Mike Hogg, and Hugh Potter began the development of River Oaks in 1923, it was with the intention of making it into a demonstration of the highest standards of modern community planning, a role model for the rest of Houston to follow. Will Hogg's ambitiousness and Hugh Potter's skillful management of River Oaks during its first thirty years made the community known nation-wide as a symbol of Houston. Since its creation, River Oaks has been published in national news, real estate, and design media, and has been the focus of scholarly analysis, in recognition of its significant contributions to the history of Houston and twentieth-century American elite suburban community development.

The creation of this type of subdivision was unique for Houston in many respects. The subdivision was laid out at what was then the far western edge of Houston. Prior to 1923, the majority of Houston's residential developments had occurred in a tight girdle around the downtown business district, such as Westmoreland (1902), Avondale (1907), Montrose (1911), Audubon Place (1906), Cherryhurst (1908), Binz, Southmore (1914), and Courtland Place (1906). River Oaks, however, was situated at the western city limits far away from other developments.

In addition, the developers broke with convention by laying out an organic pattern of roadways which lent a sense of spaciousness to the neighborhood, which was very different from the traditional Houston neighborhoods that followed a more rigid approach to development. These traditional neighborhoods used street grids which carved the land up into predictable square or rectangular blocks.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION AND RESTORATION HISTORY

The Montgomery-Reynolds House is a two story brick veneered 3,526 square foot residence sited on a 10,501 square foot lot facing north. The house is a Georgian Revival style house, very typical for the period in which it was built.

The house features a central entrance that is deeply recessed under a brick arch that features a decorative band of horizontally laid brick. The entrance features a wood paneled door with a single arched lite. The decorative brick arched entrance is flanked on either side by four lite fixed wood windows. The first floor also features two pairs of 6-over-6 wood sash windows on either side of the central entry.

The second story features two pairs of 6-over-6 wood sash windows and one 6-over-6 wood sash window. The second floor windows are located symmetrically above the first story bays; a common element in the Georgian Revival style.

The east façade of the house features an end gable exterior brick chimney. A band of flat wood trim runs around the house above the second story windows and under the eave of the roof.

The house is in very good condition and will be restored by the current owners, who purchased the house in 2012.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

“Ellwood Stowe is Oldest Working Isle Architect,” *Galveston Daily News*, July 7, 1963.

“Lots Sold in River Oaks,” *Houston Post*, February 27, 1938.

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“Island Architect Recalls 1900 Storm,” *Galveston Daily News*, September 8, 1968.

“Obituary for T.C. Montgomery,” *Houston Post*, February 28, 1958.

“Obituary for Mary Dean Grimes Reynolds,” *Houston Chronicle*, February 27, 2001.

“Obituary for Henry Davenport Reynolds,” *Houston Chronicle*, September 27, 1981.

River Oaks Magazine, June, 1938.

Various resources from Ancestry.com

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

EXHIBIT A

PHOTO

Montgomery-Reynolds House
2111 Del Monte Drive



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EXHIBIT B
SITE LOCATION MAP
Montgomery-Reynolds House
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