

AGENDA ITEM: Ia

HPO File no. 091001

SITE NAME:

SITE LOCATION: 1826 South Blvd. – Boulevard Oaks Historic District (Pending)

Owner: John and Deborah McBride

Applicant: Chester Labus – Chester Labus Homes

Time Frame

Date Accepted
October-2-2009

90-day Waiver
Dec-31-2009

SITE INFORMATION: Lot 1 & TR 2A, Block 3, Ormond Place, City of Houston, Harris County, Texas. The buildings on the site include a two-story, wood framed with brick veneer duplex. **The detached garage apartment was not classified and therefore does not require a Certificate of Appropriateness for its demolition.**

TYPE OF APPROVAL REQUESTED:

The owner and applicant requests approval of a certificate of appropriateness for the following work:

- Demolition of the primary two-story residential duplex building;

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE:

The home at 1826 South Boulevard was built about 1934 as a speculative home in the newly developed Ormond Place Subdivision, which is part of the proposed Boulevard Oaks Historic District. Ormond Place, bounded by West Edgemont and extending almost to Hazard, was also platted in 1923 and contains 33 lots located in Boulevard Oaks. It was developed by George F. Howard, a real estate developer and President of the San Jacinto Trust Company. He built his own house in Boulevard Oaks at 1707 South Boulevard. Howard and the San Jacinto Trust Company were responsible not only for a significant part of Boulevard Oaks, but also for the development of Braeswood, a southwest Houston subdivision planned by Hare & Hare in the late 1920s. E. H. Fleming, developer of Southampton Place across Bissonnet from Boulevard Oaks, planned and developed Ormond Place. West Ormond Place, platted and filed in 1935, continued from Ormond Place to Hazard.

The home is classified as “contributing” to the proposed historic district. When the Boulevard Oaks National Register Historic District was approved by the National Park Service on February 22, 2002, the house at 1826 South Boulevard was also classified as “contributing.” The house exhibits influences of the Colonial Revival style. Although the home was built as a duplex, of which there are several in the immediate area, all of the duplexes were constructed with only one main entry door to harmonize with the other single-family homes in the neighborhood. Despite the multiplicity of subdivisions, the blocks along North and South Boulevards display a cohesiveness in terms of both architecture and landscape architecture which epitomizes upper middle income residential developments in the south end of Houston in the 1920s. The houses, most built between the middle 1920s and late 1930s, exemplify the refined suburban domestic architectural traditions prevalent in the United States during the interwar years. The neighborhood was developed as Houston’s residential and institutional core moved south and west of the downtown area. Rice University, the Texas Medical Center, Hermann Park and the Museum of Fine Arts are contemporary with the neighborhood and are located less than a mile away. The planning of North and South Boulevards as boulevards divided by central, landscaped lots guaranteed a uniformity and consistency that makes Boulevard Oaks a cohesive neighborhood in Houston

The home at 1826 South Boulevard was purchased shortly after its construction by Mrs. Madie E. Hillyer and her daughter, Mrs. Bernice Hillyer Reindl and her husband, Edward Adolph Reindl. According to the City Directory of 1935 the address is shown as 1914 South Boulevard, but was changed to 1826 South Boulevard as other homes were built in the block. Prior to purchasing the home, Mrs. Hillyer and her daughter and son-in-law were living at

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4309 Garrott Street according to the 1934 Houston City Directory. Mrs. Hillyer was the widow of F. T. "Kinch" Hillyer. She and her son, "Kinch" Hillyer, Jr. as well as her two daughters, Madie L. and Bernice Hillyer, moved in the mid-1920s to Houston where they lived at 1402 Southmore Avenue. Mrs. Hillyer had chosen to move to Houston most likely because her other son, Ray H. Hillyer, had been attending Rice Institute since 1919. Furthermore, her daughters, Madie L. and Bernice Hillyer, also began to attend Rice Institute upon the family relocating to Houston. After graduation, Bernice Hillyer became a teacher at Charles Milby Senior High School at 1601-31 Broadway.

While Bernice Hillyer was attending Rice Institute, she likely met there her future husband, Edward A. Reindl, who also graduated from Rice in 1933. Edward A. Reindl first became employed as a clerk and then bookkeeper with the W. H. Curtin & Co. Inc. The firm was located at 2019 Franklin Avenue and manufactured steam traps, thermometers, gauges, oil testing instruments as well as laboratory apparatus and chemicals. The President and Manager of the company was Mr. W. H. Curtin, who lived at 2504 Del Monte Drive in the River Oaks Subdivision. The Reindl family, including Mrs. Madie Hillyer and her other daughter, Madie L. Hillyer, lived at 1826 South Boulevard for a number of years. And while living there, Edward A. Reindl, Jr. was born in the home in November 1946. Today, their son is an engineer with the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers in Galveston, Texas. The home at 1826 South Boulevard was subsequently owned by J. W. Ratley, and his wife Sara. Mr. Ratley was employed as Superintendent of Engineering and Construction with Gulf Oil Corporation at 712 Main Street. Another owner was Robert O. Bell and his wife, Margaret. Mr. Bell was employed by Hughes Tool Company at 5425 Polk Avenue.

Edward A. Reindl was born in February 1906 in Groveton, Trinity County, Texas. He was a son of Josef Thomas Reindl and his wife, Sofie Julia Rossler. Both of his parents had come to the United States just before the turn-of-the-century. Josef Reindl was born in 1877 in Amberg, Bavaria, Germany. He came first to Nacogdoches County, Texas where in 1901 he married Sofie Julia Rossler. She was born in 1882 and was a daughter of Rudolf Rossler and his wife, Julia Klampa Pavlovia, both natives of Hungary (Austria). Josef Reindl was a baker, and later moved his family to Angelina County, Texas. In the 1910 Census Josef Reindl and his family were living in Justice Precinct 1, Trinity County, Texas where he continued his occupation as baker. Living with him was his wife, Sofie and the following children, all of whom were born in Texas: Mary M. (b. 1902); Charlotte S. "Lottie" (b. 1903); Anna B. (b. 1904); and Edward Adolph (b. 1906). Also living with the family was Edy Palkovich, who was a baker's assistant. Another son, Karl Josef Reindl was born in Groveton, Texas on October 22, 1912. The Reindl family moved to Houston shortly thereafter where Joseph Reindl operated a grocery store and saloon at the southeast corner of Houston Avenue and Beauchamp in the First Ward. In 1915 Reindl relocated his grocery store to 3001 N. Main, where he also lived. He also formed a partnership with Lee R. Seib as Seib and Reindl, and they operated a saloon and restaurant at 208 Louisiana. Another son, Rudolph J. Reindl was born in Houston in 1916. In 1917 and 1918 Josef Reindl was operating his grocery store and saloon at 3800 N. Main (3801), where he lived as well. In 1919 the family moved to 342 Parkview Avenue in the McDow Subdivision, which was adjacent to the recreational Highland Park, just north of the First Ward, where Reindl returned to baking as his occupation. His daughter, Annie, attended Draughton's Business College and later worked as an assistant with the Houston Recreation Department and then as a stenographer with Southwestern Bell Telephone Company, where her sisters, Lottie and Mary, worked as well. Mary M. Reindl Clark and her sister, Annie Reindl Strybos married and moved away from the homeplace as did their brothers, Rudolph and Edward A. Reindl. After the death of their parents, the remaining unmarried children, including Charlotte and her brother Karl Reindl, continued to live in the house at 342 Parkview until 1991.

APPROVAL CRITERIA FOR DEMOLITION:

Sec. 33-247. Same--Demolition of landmark, protected landmark, contributing structure, potentially contributing structure or within archaeological site.

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(a) The issuance of a certificate of appropriateness for the demolition of a landmark, a contributing structure or a potentially contributing structure, or for demolition of a building, structure or object on or in an archaeological site shall be subject to the establishment by the applicant of an unreasonable economic hardship or the establishment of an unusual and compelling circumstance.

(1) Determination of an unreasonable economic hardship shall be based upon the following criteria:

S D NA S - satisfies D - does not satisfy NA - not applicable

(a) That the property is incapable of earning a reasonable return, without regard to whether the return is the most profitable return, including without limitation, whether the costs of maintenance or improvement of the property exceed its fair market value; **The 2009 appraisal records for this property indicate a land value of \$988,650 and an improvement value of \$85,072 which reflects the previous owners petition to the HCAD to declare the building an “economic mis-improvement” which does not accurately reflect the building’s true value. The purchase price for the property was less than the appraised value. The applicant has not provided any information regarding costs exceeding the buildings fair market value. A check of the City of Houston permits system revealed that the property was not under any orders from neighborhood protection regarding its condition.**

(b) That the property cannot be adapted for any other use, whether by the current owner, by a purchaser or by a lessee, that would result in a reasonable return; and **When the property was listed with the Multiple Listings Service, the 4,008 square foot house and 785 square foot detached garage apartment were listed as a residence. The listing for the property included numerous interior photographs of the house which indicated that the listing agent believed that the existing building was in presentable condition to market on its own merits.**

(c) That efforts to find a purchaser or lessee interested in acquiring the property and preserving it have failed. **There is no information to support that the property has been offered for sale to someone willing to rehabilitate the historic building. The property was purchased in April of 2009 as the site for a new single family house.**

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Denial of the certificate of appropriateness as requested by the applicant.

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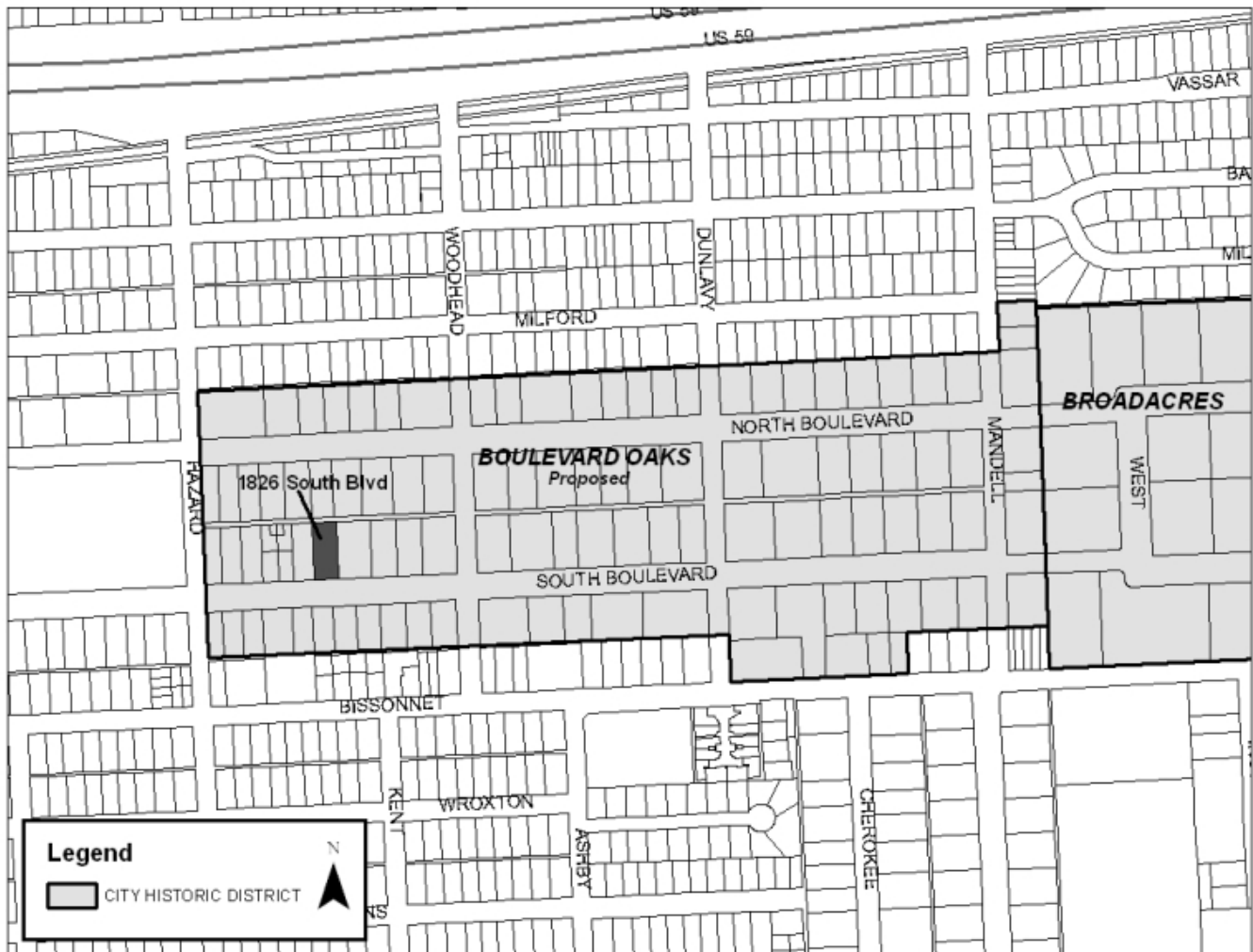
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**Site Location Map
Not to Scale**



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Photo of Existing Building



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