

News Release



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Six properties receive historic designation

HOUSTON, September 2, 2009 – Houston City Council recently designated the Bettes House, the James L. Autry House, the Henderson/Scurlock House, the Jones-Hunt House and St. John Missionary Baptist Church as historic landmarks. They also designated the Tajan Home in the Old Sixth Ward Protected District as a protected historic landmark. The “protected” designation means the property cannot be demolished or inappropriately altered.

The Francois and Marie Tajan House, at 1801 Lubbock Street, is located within the Old Sixth Ward Protected Historic District. The Old Sixth Ward Historic District has the largest concentration of Victorian-era buildings in Houston, the majority of which were built in the 1870s through 1890s. Built in 1887, the Francois and Marie Tajan House was considered unusual for its time, because it featured a progressive floor plan which includes features more commonly found in homes built a decade later, such as wainscoting, integral closets, and beveled, wood siding.



The T. J. and Ruth Bettes House built in 1928 and located at 1059 Kirby Drive, was designed in the Southern Colonial style by noted Houston architect, Charles Oliver. Notable residents of the house were T. J. Bettes and later ‘Judge’ Roy Hofheinz. In 1928, T. J. Bettes moved to Houston and organized a mortgage company named the Trust Company of Texas, later called the T. J. Bettes Company. Roy Hofheinz was a prominent Houston politician, businessman, and developer. He served in the Texas House of Representatives, as Harris County judge and in 1952, was elected to the first of two terms as mayor of Houston. Along with his partners in the Houston Sports Association, Hofheinz was instrumental in bringing Major League Baseball to Houston in 1962, and was the driving force behind the Astrodome, the world’s first domed stadium.



At 2222 Gray, St. John Missionary Baptist Church was founded in Houston’s Third Ward in 1899 by Rev. H. R. Johnson. Today with a congregation at 110 years old, St. John has a long history as an influential African-American institution in the community. Over the years, several different church buildings have been built to house the growing congregation. The current three-story brick Gothic Revival church building was constructed in 1946 under the leadership of Rev. N. C. Crain. Rev. Crain was pastor of St. John for over 40 years and left a lasting mark on the church.



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The James L. Autry House at 5 Courtlandt Place was designed by Sanguinet and Staats in 1912. It is an excellent example of Neo-Classical Revival architecture in the Courtlandt Place Historic District. James Lockhart Autry was a significant figure in the early days of the Texas oil industry. As an attorney and judge, Autry was a pioneer in the field of oil and gas law. After the discovery of the Spindletop oil field in 1901, Autry helped Joseph Cullinan organize the Texas Fuel Company, now known as Texaco. The Autry family was also community philanthropists, funding the children's wing of the Houston Tuberculosis Hospital among other endeavors. The Autry House Episcopal student center at Palmer Memorial Church adjacent to the Rice University campus was named in memory of James Autry.



The Henderson/Scurlock Home, located at 3663 Del Monte Drive, was built for Mr. and Mrs. Hugh G. Henderson. The home was constructed in 1941 and designed by recognized Houston architect, Harry D. Payne. In 1946, the house was purchased by Eddy and Elizabeth Scurlock. Eddy Clark Scurlock amassed a considerable fortune in the oil business, much of which the Scurlocks donated to further health and education causes. Many of their financial gifts flowed through the Scurlock Foundation, which was founded in 1958. The 21-story Scurlock Tower in the Texas Medical Center was named in honor of the support given by the Scurlocks. The two-story brick Henderson-Scurlock house exhibits characteristics of the Colonial Revival style.



The Jones-Hunt House at 24 Courtlandt Place in the Courtlandt Place Historic District was designed by Alfred C. Finn. The house was built between 1919 and 1921 by Sarah Brashear Jones, whose parents were early Houston settlers. Sarah Brashear and her husband, Col. James Warren Jones, who served in the Texas State Senate, were prominent in political and social affairs in Houston in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The Jones-Hunt house is a two-story brick house, rectangular in form with a two-story off-center entrance portico and a wide central gable facing the street.



Houston's Historic Preservation Ordinance recognizes and protects the city's historic sites. By preserving the city's valuable historic resources, residents and visitors are visibly reminded of our culture and heritage, boosting civic pride and economic prosperity. More information is available online at the Planning Department web site at www.houstonplanning.com under Historic Preservation.