

# News Release



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## City of Houston designates three properties as historic

**HOUSTON, February 3, 2010** – Houston City Council designated the Lackner House, the Stokes-Farnsworth House and the Wilson G. Saville House as historic landmarks.

The Stokes-Farnsworth House at 1407 Kirby Drive, completed in 1928, was designed by Charles Oliver who designed over 75 River Oaks houses and was a master at early twentieth-century eclectic styles. The Stokes-Farnsworth House is one of the best examples of the Tudor Revival style of architecture in River Oaks, as well as one of the remaining original River Oaks Corporation spec houses in the neighborhood, and retains its integrity of materials, design, setting, and workmanship. The first owner was Dr. Merle Benefield Stokes, surgeon and secretary of the Harris County Medical Society (1934-35)



and president in 1936. It was later owned by Richard Farnsworth, partner in the successful Houston-based construction company, Farnsworth and Chambers. Farnsworth and Chambers built many buildings in Houston and the Southwest, including the Farnsworth and Chambers headquarters at 2999 South Wayside, a City of Houston Protected Landmark, which housed NASA in the early 1960s and has been home to the City of Houston Parks and Recreation Department for many years.

The Wilson G. Saville Home was constructed in 1933 and designed by prolific Houston architects Hiram A. Salisbury and T. George McHale. The Wilson G. Saville House at 3217 Groveland Lane is a two-story, wood-frame brick veneer residence with an asymmetrical floor plan. Wilson G. Saville was a West Point graduate and served in the army in World War I before starting a career as a geologist and mining engineer. In 1925, he established the Torsion Balance Exploration Company which, according to the Houston Chronicle, was “one of the earliest geophysical consulting companies in America.” Saville served two terms as Chairman of the Port of Houston Board from 1946 to 1950. Under Chairman Saville’s stewardship, the Port of Houston became the second largest port in the United States in tonnage in 1948, a year when the value of cargo exceeded \$1 billion for the first time. Wilson Saville enjoyed a productive career as a business and civic leader in Houston.



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The Lackner House at 2002 Bolsover was built in 1932 in a raised brick bungalow style for Laura and Fred Lackner, and designed by noted Houston architect, Joseph W. Northrop, Jr. Northrop got his start in Houston overseeing the construction of the Rice University campus, and went on to a successful independent career and is perhaps best known for designing many residences in Houston's more affluent early 20th century neighborhoods. The Lackner House is unusual in that the main floor of the house is elevated approximately seven feet above ground. This floorplan was made at the request of Laura Lackner, who wanted the house's living space to be all on one floor but also wanted her new home to fit in with the two-story houses in its Southampton neighborhood. Laura Lackner was a descendant of the Reinermann family, early German pioneers to Harris County who immigrated to Texas in 1834. The Reinermann family land grant encompassed much of the territory north and east of Memorial Park.



More information including photos of the properties is online at the Planning Department web site at [www.houstonplanning.com](http://www.houstonplanning.com) under Historic Preservation.