

News Release



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Two downtown buildings, one beloved restaurant/entertainment venue and two homes designated as protected landmarks

HOUSTON, July 6, 2011 – Houston City Council designated the following properties as protected landmarks meaning they cannot be demolished or inappropriately altered: Sterne Building at 300 Main, Stuart Building at 304 Main, the Last Concert Café complex at 1403 Nance, the Edward Weil House at 308 Avondale and the Henry W. Stude House at 14 Remington Lane.

The Sterne Building at 300 Main Street was designed by architects Joseph Finger and James Ruskin Bailey and built in 1916. Joseph Finger is one of Houston's most historically significant architects, designing scores of buildings in Houston, including Houston's 1939 City Hall. The Sterne Building was built by Pauline Sterne Wolff to replace an earlier building constructed on the site in 1884 by her father Sam Sterne that had been destroyed by fire. The first retail occupant of the new Sterne Building was Krupp & Tuffly, a clothing and shoe store, which soon relocated down Main Street. In 1917, Cockrell's Drug Store moved in and occupied the building for many years.



The Stuart Building was built in 1880 following a disastrous fire in July 1879 that destroyed half of the 300 block of Main Street. Designed in the Italianate style, the Stuart Building is one of downtown Houston's last remaining Victorian buildings. The building was built at the same time as the two adjoining buildings to the south – 306 & 308 Main Street – and retains its original Italianate features, such as its heavy ornate sheet metal cornice, a sheet metal frieze containing the name 'Stuart,' ornate iron window hoods and iron sills, corner quoins, and a broken pediment. The wall surface of the upper floors is heavily plastered to appear as rusticated stone facing. Both the Sterne and Stuart buildings are contained within the boundary of the Main Street Market Square National Register and City of Houston Historic Districts, which encompass the area of Houston's earliest commercial development.

The Last Concert Café Complex is in Houston's 'Warehouse District' on the northeast side of downtown Houston. Established in 1949, the Last Concert Café, the first woman-owned café in post-World War II

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Houston, and is a legendary Houston restaurant and music venue. From 1949 through 1985, Elena ‘Mama’ Aldrete Lopez ran the Last Concert Café from her round table in the dining room of the café. Entrance was achieved by knocking at the red door and receiving access only after ‘Mama’ visually approved the guests from the small red curtained window set in the red door. Since opening, the café has hosted live music, providing both well-known and fledgling entertainers space for discovery and a viable showcase for talent. The expansion to an outdoor stage for larger performances in 1986 is in keeping with this café tradition established by ‘Mama’ in 1949.



In addition to the tile-roofed stucco café building on site are two 19th century residences that have been incorporated into the café complex – a six-room house built between 1848-1852 and facing west to William Street, and a two-room residence built as servants’ quarters in the 1870s. Local tradition holds that both were used as a brothel from the early 20th century through the 1970s. Architecturally, the Last Concert Café building is a good example of the Spanish style as applied to a commercial utilitarian building.

The Edward Weil House was built in 1917 by the Russell Brown Company, who sold it to Edward Weil, a retired wholesale liquor dealer. Subsequent owner, Joseph Tennant, developed many oilfield tools and designed and built one of the first gas recycling facilities in the world. The Edward Weil House was designed in the Prairie Style. It is unusual in that it was styled with a blend of Craftsman, Prairie and Mediterranean influences, a style departure from many of the homes on Avondale. In 1919, the Russell Brown Company published a catalog of some of its completed projects entitled Modern Homes. The Edward Weil House at 308 Avondale is featured in this catalog.



The Henry W. Stude Home was constructed in 1924 and designed by the prolific Houston architects, Birdsall P. Briscoe and Sam Dixon, Jr., in a French provincial style. Henry W. Stude was a prominent baker and owner of the Texas Baking Company. Stude’s grandfather, Henry Stude, purchased much land in Houston in the late 19th century. In 1915, the Stude family donated 22.4 acres of land along White Oak Bayou to Houston that were added to twenty acres already owned by the City to form Stude Park. Stude worked in partnership with Will and Mike Hogg in the early 1920s to develop Norhill, now a City of Houston Historic District.



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