

PROTECTED LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT

LANDMARK NAME: House at 1918 Crockett Street

OWNERS: Bruce and Carole Boatner

APPLICANTS: Bruce and Carole Boatner

LOCATION: 1918 Crockett Street, Houston, Texas, 77007 – First Ward

AGENDA ITEM: B

HPO FILE NO.:

DATE ACCEPTED: 10/13/2020

HAHC HEARING: 11/18/2020

SITE INFORMATION: Lot 1, Block 315, Shearn, City of Houston, Harris County, Texas. Designation is requested for the single-story house. The building is 1,314 square feet on a 5,000 square foot lot.

TYPE OF APPROVAL REQUESTED: Protected Landmark Designation

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY:

The House at 1918 Crockett Street is a c. 1907 one-story, frame Craftsman bungalow with Folk Victorian elements located in the historic First Ward neighborhood. The First Ward is one of the four original wards created by the City of Houston in 1840. It included part of Houston's early business district, and was strategically located at the intersection of Buffalo Bayou and White Oak Bayou near Allen's Landing at the foot of Main Street. The term "First Ward" is still used today and generally refers to the area immediately west of I-45, east of Sawyer Street, south of I-10 and north of Washington Avenue.

In recent years, rapid development in the First Ward has drastically reduced the historic housing stock in the neighborhood. The neighborhood still has a number of Folk Victorian, Queen Anne and Craftsman style homes built between 1890-1930. While the High First Ward Historic District was created in 2014 to preserve some of these historic structures, 1918 Crockett Street is not within its boundaries.

The House at 1918 Crockett Street has been used as a rental for most of its history. The property was first listed in the Houston city directories in 1908; a cableman named Malcom Hearne was residing there. However, an advertisement placed in the *Houston Chronicle* by a resident at 1918 Crockett indicates a construction date as early as 1907. There were several subsequent renters after Hearne, and most resided at the property for one to two years. A long-term resident named Theodore Moritz Pech began living at the property in 1920. Theodore and his wife Frieda resided there for around 15 to 17 years, likely moving elsewhere between 1935 and 1937.

In 1940, Charles J. Puccio was listed in the city directories as the owner. Puccio likely owned and rented out the property for many years. The Harris County Appraisal Records lists Mariano Maggio as the owner of the property in 1954 and 1964. Maggio also rented out the property. According to the Harris County Appraisal District's ownership history, Mariano Maggio owned the property until 2000. Jennie Maggio Interests LLC owned it from 2000 to 2017.

The current owners are Bruce and Carole Boatner. They purchased the property in 2017 and carried out a historic restoration project. They are seeking a protected landmark designation for the property in the

First Ward in order to preserve this significant historic house and ensure that it remains a part of the neighborhood. The House at 1918 Crockett Street meets criteria 1, 4 and 8 for landmark designation and criteria 1 and 2 for protected landmark designation.

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE

FIRST WARD

The First Ward is one of the four original wards created by the City of Houston in 1840. It included part of Houston's early business district, and was strategically located at the intersection of Buffalo Bayou and White Oak Bayou near Allen's Landing at the foot of Main Street. First Ward was defined as all areas within the city limits northwest of Congress Street and Main Street. In 1866, First Ward's boundaries changed; land to the north and east of White Oak Bayou and Little White Oak Bayou became part of Fifth Ward. Although the ward system is no longer in place, the name First Ward is still used to describe the general area immediately west of I-45, east of Sawyer Street, south of I-10 and north of Washington Avenue.

The neighborhood was historically working-class. Many residents were railroad workers or worked in the grocery business due to the area's proximity to the Houston & Texas Central Railroad shops, Market Square and Buffalo Bayou. The success of the Houston and Texas Central Railroad greatly influenced the growth of the First Ward. Economic opportunity attracted many immigrants, who sought employment on the railroad or started their own businesses.

In recent years, development has drastically reduced the historic housing stock in the First Ward. Rampant and rapid construction of townhouses predominates. Most of the remaining historic houses were built from 1890 to 1930, including vernacular Victorian cottages and Craftsman bungalows. Concerted efforts by residents and advocacy groups to preserve historic homes resulted in the City of Houston designating the High First Ward Historic District on May 28, 2014.

HISTORY OF 1918 CROCKETT

The House at 1918 Crockett Street has been used as a rental for most of its history. The property was first listed in the Houston city directories in 1908 with a cableman named Malcom Hearne residing there. However, an advertisement placed in the *Houston Chronicle* by a resident at 1918 Crockett indicates a built date as early as 1907.

There were several subsequent renters after Hearne, and most resided at the property for 1 to 2 years. These residents include Felix Kohanowski (janitor) in 1910, Anton Karofski (city laborer) from 1911 to 1912, Jesse Hargrove (stenographer) from 1915 to 1917, and Henry R. Schwerdtfeger (clerk) from 1918 to 1919.

After Schwerdtfeger, there was a more long-term resident who began living at 1918 Crockett in 1920 – Theodore Moritz Pech. He lived there with his wife for around 15 to 17 years, likely moving elsewhere between 1935 and 1937. Theodore Moritz Pech was born on June 18, 1897 in Houston, Texas to Moritz

Pech and Fredericka Guese Pech. He was a clerk, bookkeeper and claims adjuster in oil companies. Theodore married Frieda S. Rentzel in 1918 in Nacogdoches. Frieda's birth date could not be located but she was born to Mr. and Mrs. W. F. Rentzel.

Theodore and Frieda moved to 1904 Crockett Street initially. By 1920, they were listed as residing at 1918 Crockett. While they lived at 1918 Crockett for several years, they did not own the property. Theodore and Frieda had two children, Mildred and Warren. Theodore died on December 31, 1956. Frieda died on December 16, 1988 in Mt. Enterprise, Texas. Both are buried in Woodlawn Cemetery.

In the 1940 Houston city directory, the owner of the property was Charles J. Puccio. Puccio and his wife Jane Sedita Puccio (married on July 29, 1922 in Harris county) were residing at 1918 Crockett with their two daughters (Sadie and Anna) according to the 1940 census records. Charles was the owner of a night club and Jane was a waitress there. While Charles was designated as the owner of the property in 1940, a resident named Thomas Sullivan was listed in the 1942 directory. Puccio likely owned and rented out the house for many years.

The Harris County Appraisal Records lists Mariano Maggio as the owner of the property in 1954 and 1964. Maggio also rented out the property. The resident listed at this address in the 1954 city directories was John G. Peacock, followed by Henry F. Mathews in 1956.

According to the Harris County Appraisal District's ownership history, Mariano Maggio owned the property until 2000. Jennie Maggio Interests LLC owned it from 2000 to 2017.

The current owners, Bruce and Carole Boatner, purchased the property in 2017.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION AND RESTORATION HISTORY

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE

American Craftsman

1918 Crockett Street is a one-story frame, Craftsman bungalow with Folk Victorian elements. The Craftsman style evolved out of the popular Arts and Crafts Movement of the early 1900s, when architecture shifted away from the more elaborate Victorian style. It was the prevailing architectural style in the United States between 1900 and 1930. Craftsman style is often associated with bungalow house forms, and both were inspired by architect brothers Charles Sumner Greene and Henry Mather Greene. The Greene's were from California and practiced together in Pasadena from 1893 to 1914. They began designing simple Craftsman bungalows around 1903, according to Virginia McAlester, author of *A Field Guide to American Houses: Identifying and Understanding America's Domestic Architecture*.

The defining features of bungalows include low-pitched gabled roofs, wide eaves (usually with exposed brackets under the eaves), partial or full-width porches supported by tapered square columns or piers and prominent but simple decorations.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

1918 Crockett Street is a one-story frame, Craftsman bungalow with Folk Victorian elements. The body of the house has a medium pitched, hipped roof with two interior brick chimneys at the peak of the roof. There is a wooden stringcourse with simple molding that runs the full-width of the house, separating the gable from the main body of the house. The roof is covered in asphalt shingles. The exterior of the house is clad in narrow siding. The house sits on a pier and beam foundation.

The front façade facing Crockett Street is two bays wide. The first (left bay) contains one original sash window. The upper sash contains a Victorian picket fence window pattern. The lower sash has a single pane of plate glass. The window has a thin wood frame and simple wood surround with a simple ledge molding above the window.

The second (right bay) contains an inset, partial-width porch with a slightly projecting gable front. Lattice trim covers the pier and beam foundation. Concrete steps lead onto the porch. The front door contains an exterior screen door that has a thin wood frame and simple wood surround.

The ornate wooden front door contains a large panel of beveled glass which was restored by the owners. Above the door, there is a transom with a Victorian picket fence window pattern. There is a simple ledge molding above the transom. To the right of the front door, there is a sash window. The upper sash contains a Victorian picket fence window pattern. The lower sash has a single pane of plate glass. The window has a thin wood frame and simple wood surround with a simple ledge molding above the window.

Two tapered wooden, square columns on rusticated cast stone bases are on the right side of the porch. Between the two front-facing columns, there is wooden, bread loaf porch railing with a decorative pattern in the balustrade.

The porch gable contains a window with a Victorian picket fence window pattern. The window has a thin wood frame and simple wood surround with a simple ledge molding above the window. There are three Craftsman-style brackets under the eaves in the gable. The gable is covered in fish-scale shingles.

The façade facing White Street (the right side of the house) is three bays wide with a continuation of the wooden stringcourse with simple wood molding that runs the full-width of the façade. There is a slightly projecting gable front in the second (central bay).

The first (leftmost bay) contains one 1-over-1 sash window within a thin frame and simple wood surround. There is a simple ledge molding above the window.

The second (central bay) contains two 1-over-1 sash windows, each within a wood frame. There is a simple wood surround that contains both windows, with a simple ledge molding above. The wooden stringcourse separates the windows from the slightly projecting gable. Above the stringcourse, there is one window with a Victorian picket fence window pattern. The window has a simple wood surround with a simple ledge molding above the window. One Craftsman-style bracket is under the eaves at either end of the gable.

The third (rightmost bay) contains two 1-over-1 sash windows, each within a wood frame. There is a simple wood surround that contains both windows, with a simple ledge molding above.

RESTORATION HISTORY

The current property owners, Bruce and Carole Boatner, have made significant efforts to restore the historic characteristics of 1918 Crockett, particularly the front porch.

The owners removed the modern brick columns supporting the porch rail (not original to house), except for one tapered column in place that appeared to be original to the house based on the age of the wood. The column was located in the corner of the porch, and the owners moved it to the position closest to the front door. They reproduced two tapered columns using the same dimensions as the remaining original column. The masonry block column supports were taken down (one column was intact and two partially intact at the time of restoration). Some masonry blocks remained in their original positions, while others were stacked nearby after original columns collapsed. The column supports were reconstructed using original blocks.

New concrete footings were poured on top of the original footings after taking note of the placement of original concrete footings located below soil level. The owners leveled the porch floor and replaced rotten joists. They removed the modern plywood on the porch floor to reveal the tongue and groove floorboards, as well as replaced the rotten tongue and groove boards.

The owners determined that the porch railing stored nearby on the property was original due to the age of the wood and bread loaf pattern of stiles consistent with other houses in the First Ward. They reproduced and installed two sections of railing using the original as a template. Lattice panels were installed around the perimeter of the front porch.

The roof shingles were replaced with asphalt shingles. The owners took care to keep the two historic chimneys intact.

All the windows are believed to be original to house. The front door is also believed to be original to house based on style and similarity of the hardware to rest of house (copper flash). The owners restored the front door to its original shellacked finish.

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

APPROVAL CRITERIA FOR LANDMARK DESIGNATION

Sec. 33-224. Criteria for designation

(a) The HAHC, in making recommendations with respect to designation, and the city council, in making a designation, shall consider one or more of the following criteria, as appropriate for the type of designation:

- | S | NA | S - satisfies | D - does not satisfy | NA - not applicable |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | (1) Whether the building, structure, object, site or area possesses character, interest or value as a visible reminder of the development, heritage, and cultural and ethnic diversity of the city, state, or nation; | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | (2) Whether the building, structure, object, site or area is the location of a significant local, state or national event; | | |

EXHIBIT A
BEFORE RESTORATION PHOTOS
HOUSE AT 1918 CROCKETT STREET
1918 CROCKETT STREET, HOUSTON, TEXAS 77007





FRONT FAÇADE FACING CROCKETT STREET



SIDE FAÇADE FACING WHITE STREET
PHOTOS BY BRUCE BOATNER

**EXHIBIT B
CURRENT PHOTO**

HOUSE AT 1918 CROCKETT STREET
1918 CROCKETT STREET, HOUSTON, TEXAS 77007



FRONT FAÇADE FACING CROCKETT STREET



SIDE FAÇADE FACING WHITE STREET
PHOTOS BY PRESERVATION HOUSTON

CITY OF HOUSTON

Archaeological & Historical Commission

Planning and Development Department

EXHIBIT C SITE MAP

HOUSE AT 1918 CROCKETT STREET
1918 CROCKETT STREET, HOUSTON, TEXAS 77007



Harris County Appraisal District



0 50 100 200 Feet

PUBLICATION DATE: 5/26/2020

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MAP LOCATION



FACET
5358D7

1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15

EXHIBIT D
SANBORN FIRE INSURANCE MAP
HOUSTON 1924-FEB. 1951, VOL. 9, SHEET 935
HOUSE AT 1918 CROCKETT STREET
1918 CROCKETT STREET, HOUSTON, TEXAS 77007

