

# CITY OF HOUSTON

Archaeological & Historical Commission

Planning and Development Department

## HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGNATION REPORT

**DISTRICT NAME:** First Riverside Terrace  
**LOCATION:** See attached site location map

**AGENDA ITEM:** A  
**APPLICANT:** Asif Mahmood, a  
property owner

**30-DAY HEARING NOTICE:** March 18, 2022

**HAHC HEARING:** April 21, 2022

### SITE INFORMATION

Riverside Extension: Lot 1 Blk 1. Riverside Terrace Section 1: Lot 12 & Tract 13; Tracts 13A, 13B, & 14A; Tracts 14 & 15A; Tracts 15 & 16A; Tracts 16 & 17A; Tracts 16B & 17A-1; Tract 17B; Tracts 17 & 18A; Tracts 18 & 19A; Tract 19 & Lot 20, of Block 14. Lot 1 & Tract 2A; Tracts 2 & 3A; Tracts 3 & 4A; Tracts 4 & 5A; Tracts 5 & 6A; Tracts 6 & 7A; Tract 7, Lots 8 & 9; Tracts 12 & 13A; Tracts 16 & 18A, Lot 17, of Block 15. Riverside Terrace Section 3: Tracts 21 & 22A of Block 24; all being located in City of Houston, Harris County, Texas.

**TYPE OF APPROVAL REQUESTED:** Historic District Designation

### History and Significance Summary

Riverside Terrace was platted in 1924. It became one of the neighborhoods where wealthy Jewish families lived in the 1920s and 1930s. River Oaks would not allow Jews or African Americans to buy homes there. Riverside Terrace was not solely a Jewish neighborhood. Many residents were also Catholic and Protestant – at a time when divisions in America fell along religious lines. This set the tone for the neighborhood being an integrated community.

The homes in Riverside Terrace were priced around \$30,000. There have been many notable people and families who lived in Riverside Terrace. Some of the families are discussed later in this report.

In the mid-1950s, white families began moving to more distant suburbs. In the early 1960s, white residents who saw the potential for an integrated neighborhood tried to stabilize the area by posting signs that read, “*This Is Our Home – It Is Not For Sale*” which became the title of the acclaimed, 1985 documentary, by Jon Schwartz that gives a 60-year overview of the community and its struggle to integrate.

What began as an integrated neighborhood along religious lines, became integrated along racial lines. Many African American and white families cherished and valued Riverside Terrace as a place that mattered to them and their families and that is still the case today.

## History and Significance

### *Riverside Terrace*

Riverside Terrace received its name because it stretched alongside both sides of Brays Bayou. Today, the area includes land from Almeda to Cullen and between Elgin and Old Spanish Trail. The area also connects two city parks, MacGregor Park and Hermann Park, connected by scenic drives aptly named North MacGregor and South MacGregor Way after the man who is credited with planning the subdivision, Henry MacGregor.

Henry Frederick MacGregor who came to Houston in 1873, began his career working in commerce on the Buffalo Bayou. Later in 1879, he worked for the Galveston City Railway Company. By 1900, MacGregor began investing in real estate and subsequently extended Houston's residential area southward. Frederick's residential developments began with building several subdivisions in the South Main area. The first two decades of the twentieth century witnessed "street-car suburbs" that flourished in Houston and the South Main area was one of those suburbs.

Before Henry MacGregor died in 1923, he had divided up the land he owned into five-acre tracts and sold it. MacGregor's executors sold the land to Riverside Land Company after his death. It was Clarence M. Malone who developed Riverside Terrace into single-family residential homes. Not only was Malone its main developer but he also served as vice president at the Guardian Trust Company which were the sales agents. C.M. Malone was a native of San Angelo and arrived in Houston in 1905 working as an auditor for the Houston Belt & Terminal Company. In 1917, he organized the Guardian Trust Company.

Clarence's brother, Clayton E. Malone, served as the manager of the real estate department at Guardian Trust Company. Sensing the potential for residential development due to technological advancements in transportation, the Riverside Land Co. platted the first section of Riverside Terrace in 1924. "It has been observed that each (subsequent) year the development in Riverside Terrace has followed a tendency toward finer homes and larger homesites," said Mr. [Clayton] Malone. Malone further added, "there still remains 253 desirable homesites to be sold which are dotted among beautiful homes and well-established streets." The company correctly foresaw the popularity for the automobile.

During the Roaring Twenties, the growing popularity in the automobile coincided with Houston's economic growth. With the affordability of automobiles and increased salaries, more families could afford to live further away from Houston's city center in what were termed "automobile suburbs".

When Riverside Terrace opened, sales brochures stressed its premier location. The subdivision was promoted for its close proximity to South Main's cultural, medical, educational, and social facilities. Adding to its proximity factor, Mr. [Clayton] added the prestige it would have saying,

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“With the opening of MacGregor Way and the completion of the park system surrounding Riverside Terrace, no other addition in the city will have the same surroundings as to parks, schools, and churches that Riverside Terrace will have.”

The first section of the project – an area bounded by Almeda, Blodgett, Live Oak and Oakdale streets – was financed by the Guardian Trust Company. Using the same sales language as the River Oaks Corporation, noted that there would be “rigid building restrictions...so that each purchaser is assured beforehand of the exact character of the improvements with which he will be surrounded.”

Architects who designed the first homes in the neighborhood included John F. Staub, Birdsall P. Briscoe, William Ward Watkin, Lenard Gabert, and Joseph Finger. Several distinctive modern houses were designed by the offices of Bailey A. Swenson and Bolton & Barnstone. The architectural firm of MacKie and Kamrath also produced homes of modern design as did Max Flato. One house, featured in Architectural Record in 1942, was described as having excited neighborhood controversy for its modern design. Today, the neighborhood contains numerous outstanding examples of residential architecture ranging from traditional revival styles to late Art Deco and mid-century modern, interspersed with small motels and apartment buildings.

The success of Riverside Terrace attracted other developers and the subdivisions of Washington Terrace and Riverside were platted in the vicinity. Today, the entire area is known as Riverside Terrace. Home construction and commercial development have recently revived throughout parts of Riverside Terrace.

Riverside Terrace was once home to a large number of Jewish families, including such prominent names as Weingarten, Finger, Sakowitz, Schlumberger, and Battlestein, who had been excluded from River Oaks. From the 1930s until the post-war era, the area was unofficially known as the “Jewish River Oaks,” for its affluent residents and impressive homes, particularly those on MacGregor Drive facing Brays Bayou.

The neighborhood’s demographics began shifting in 1952. This occurred when wealthy African-American cattleman Jack Caesar moved his family into Riverside Terrace. Jack Caesar remained in his house even after a bomb was detonated on his front porch. This did not deter African-American professionals moving into the area. Riverside Terrace attracted African-American college professors, doctors, lawyers, and politicians who saw the benefits of living near Texas State University (an HBCU originally named Texas State University for Negroes, now known as Texas Southern University), University of Houston, Riverside Hospital, and the Medical Center. Such prominent names as Rev. William Lawson, Mrs. Mattie Hilliard, Dr. Rupert O. Roett, Dr. Catherine Roett-Reid, Dr. Andrew Allen and famed poet Vivian Ayers (parents of Debbie Allen and Phylicia Rashad), Dr. Edith Irby Jones, TX State Senator and U.S. Rep. Barbara Jordan, TX State Rep. Shawn Theyry, Forest Miles, TX State Rep. Garnet Coleman, architect John Chase Jr., U.S Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee, and Mathew Knowles (father of Beyoncé) lived (and some continue living) in the neighborhood. Today the descendants of these people, as well as new families, have stayed in or moved into Riverside Terrace. There existed two consulates in Riverside Terrace. According to a 1961 city directory, the Haitian consulate was located at 2817 Rosedale St and later at 2401 Riverside Drive. The Bolivian consulate – according to the same 1961 city directory – existed at 3330 Parkwood Drive.

## The Proposed Historic District

The proposed historic district is comprised mainly of eclectic revival architectural styles. Other styles include Traditional Ranch, American Vernacular, and Mediterranean. Most of the contributing homes are two-story and most have a brick veneer, one structure is clad in stone. Many of the eclectic revival styled homes feature Colonial, French, and Tudor characteristics. Several of the structures have quoins. Most have chimneys and porches. The district's structures are evidence to the form, style, and craftsmanship of homes constructed seventy years ago or more and are valuable historic resources.

A handful of the structures turn up in primary source materials. The home at 2412 Wichita St is classified as Eclectic Revival in a symmetrical design. This structure possesses some Colonial Revival and French Eclectic characteristics. A source described it as a "7-room brick veneer house [with] garage." Constructed in 1938, it is a two-story home with double-front doors with a semicircular window above the front entrance and an entry porch.

2402 Rosedale, is a two-story Eclectic Revival residence constructed in 1929 and has Tudor characteristics such as a large chimney with chimney pots, and front-facing gable with a steep roof pitch. Archival source described it as a "beautiful English-type home...Contains three bedrooms, sleeping porch, two very attractive tiled baths. Plastered throughout basement with hot air furnace. Double brick garage and servant room with complete bath equipment."

The two-story Eclectic Revival at 2415 Rosedale Street was constructed in 1936. The front porch and quoins are characteristic of Colonial Revival and has a dominant chimney like the French Eclectic style. A source described it as "two-story modified English type, with eight rooms, two baths and of brick and natural stone construction. All interior walls will be plastered and there will be a finished attic and a sun bath enclosed with awnings that will lead from the attic."

The two-story Eclectic Revival at 2420 Rosedale Street was also constructed in 1936. It has a rounded front porch, a prominent chimney, and a front-facing gable with a steep roof pitch exemplifying Tudor characteristics. It is described as having "...three bedrooms, two baths, a lavatory, a library and screen porch... The attic is finished and there is a servant's apartment and bath adjoining a two-car garage." It has a natural stone veneer.

The two-story, brick veneer Eclectic Revival at 2505 Rosedale Street features Tudor elements like a sweeping curve on the front gable and a barge board at the entrance. The front porch is rounded with quoins. Above the front entrance is a small oculus window. Constructed in 1931, it is described as "a two-story English-type brick residence...for \$17,000." Situated above three windows on the front façade are seen keystones.

The two-story, brick veneer Eclectic Revival house at 2515 Rosedale Street features a prominent front chimney and rounded front porch which are characteristic of the Tudor style. A building permit from 1935 described it as an "eight room, 2 story brick veneer house, 2 baths, garage, wood shingle roof [for] \$4000." The front door is a simplified Chateausque element.

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The two-story structure at 2520 Rosedale Street is also a registered City of Houston Protected Landmark (May 2018) listed as the Lewis-White House. Constructed in 1931 in the Mediterranean Revival style. The use of brick is atypical to this style. It has a low-pitched hipped roof covered in Spanish tile. More of its architectural elements can be found in its protected landmark designation report.

The proposed historic district is significant to the City of Houston because of its historical origins, growth, people, and architecture. For these reasons, the district minimally meets ordinance designation under Sec. 33-224:

*Criterion 1: Whether the building, structure, object, site, or area possesses character, interest, and value as a visible reminder the development heritage, and cultural and ethnic diversity of the city, state, and nation.* The proposed district is a visible reminder of the unique development and heritage of the city of Houston and nation. The contributing properties retain significant architectural integrity.

*Criterion 2: Whether the building, structure, object, site, or area is the location of a significant local, state or national event.* It is a neighborhood that represents significant cultural, sociological conditions and shifts. Deed restrictions that precluded African-Americans and Jews from living in Houston's premiere neighborhood, River Oaks, became an attractive residential area for wealthy businessmen and professionals.

*Criterion 3: Whether the building, structure, object, site, or area is identified with a person who, or group or event that, contributed significantly to the cultural or historical development of the city, state, or nation.* Specific individuals have lived in the proposed district such as Beyoncé Knowles-Carter and its current resident, Jew Don Boney, former Houston Councilman.

*Criterion 4: Whether the building or structure or the buildings or structures within the area exemplify a particular architectural style or building type important to the city.* The structures listed are all older than 50 years of age and are from the very early 20<sup>th</sup> century and older than 100 years of age. Construction dates range between 1927-1950. They all are intact period examples of styles and types of construction representative of the greater community.

*Criterion 5: Whether the building or structure or the buildings or structures within the area are the best remaining examples of an architectural style or building type in the neighborhood.* The buildings in the proposed district represent excellent examples of the original building styles and types in the neighborhood.

*Criterion 8: Whether the building, structure, object or site has value as a significant element of community sentiment or public pride.* This is a segment of the first section platted for development and is a place for the greater Riverside Terrace neighborhood.

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Sanborn Map, 1925-1949



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## Map of Proposed Boundary





### Proposed Map of First Riverside Terrace Historic District

Boundary



Parcel Classification

-  Contributing
-  Non-Contributing



This map is made available for reference purposes only and should not be substituted for a survey product. The City of Houston will not accept liability of any kind in conjunction with its use.

Source: COHGIS  
Date: March 2022  
Reference: pj25260



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## Building Inventory

Building Status Legend

C = Contributing Structure

NC = Noncontributing Structure

V = Vacant

<b>Property Address</b>	<b>Subdivision</b>	<b>Block</b>	<b>Lots</b>	<b>Circa Year Built</b>	<b>Bldg Status</b>	<b>Architectural Style</b>
2412 Wichita St	Riverside Terrace Section 3	24	Tracts 21 & 22A	1938	C	Eclectic Revival
2413 Wichita St	Riverside Terrace Section 1	15	Lot 17 and Tracts 16 & 18A	1927	C	Eclectic Revival
2507 Wichita St	Riverside Terrace Section 1	15	Tracts 12 & 13A	1946	C	Colonial Revival
2402 Rosedale St	Riverside Terrace Section 1	15	Lot 1 and Tract 2A	1929	C	Eclectic Revival
2403 Rosedale St	Riverside Terrace Section 1	14	Lot 20 and Tract 19	1950	C	Traditional Ranch
2408 Rosedale St	Riverside Terrace Section 1	15	Tracts 2 & 3A	1928	C	Restrained Colonial Revival
2409 Rosedale St	Riverside Terrace Section 1	14	Tracts 18 & 19A	1937	C	Eclectic Revival
2414 Rosedale St	Riverside Terrace Section 1	15	Tracts 3 & 4A	1927	C	Eclectic Revival
2415 Rosedale St	Riverside Terrace Section 1	14	Tracts 17, 17B, & 18A	1936	C	Eclectic Revival



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2418 Rosedale St	Riverside Terrace Section 1	15	Tracts 4 & 5A	Vacant	NC	Vacant
2417 Rosedale St	Riverside Terrace Section 1	14	Tracts 16 & 17A	1955	NC	Apartment
2419 Rosedale St	Riverside Terrace Section 1	14	Tracts 16B & 17A-1	1955	NC	Apartment
2420 Rosedale St	Riverside Terrace Section 1	15	Tracts 5 & 6A	1936	C	Eclectic Revival
2503 Rosedale St	Riverside Terrace Section 1	14	Tracts 15 & 16A	1936	C	American Vernacular
2505 Rosedale St	Riverside Terrace Section 1	14	Tracts 14 & 15A	1931	C	Eclectic Revival
2506 Rosedale St	Riverside Terrace Section 1	15	Tracts 6 & 7A	1928	C	Eclectic Revival
2509 Rosedale St	Riverside Terrace Section 1	14	Tracts 13A, 13B, & 14A	1936	C	Eclectic Revival
2515 Rosedale St	Riverside Terrace Section 1	14	Lot 12 and Tract 13	1935	C	Eclectic Revival
2520 Rosedale St	Riverside Terrace Section 1	15	Lots 8 & 9 and Tract 7	1931	C	Mediterranean Eclectic
2600 Rosedale St	Riverside Extension	1	Lot 1	1928	C	Eclectic Revival

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## **APPROVAL CRITERIA FOR HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGNATION**

According to Section 33-222.1 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance:

Application for designation of an historic district shall be initiated by either:

(a) Application for designation of an historic district shall be initiated by either:

(1) 10 percent of the owners of tracts in the proposed district; or

**The application for designation of the First Riverside Terrace Historic District was received by the Planning Department. The application was initiated in accordance with city code.**

(2) The HAHC upon instructing the director to prepare an application for designation.

(c) The department shall review each application for initial completeness. Upon determining that the application is initially complete, the director shall schedule and conduct one public meeting on the proposed historic district unless the director determines in her sole discretion that one or more additional meetings is necessary. The director shall give notice of the public meeting in accordance with subsection (d) of this section, including procedures for giving notice of any additional public meeting.

(d) The director will establish the process for notice and for determining the evidence of support of the application, which shall include the following:

(1) Within 15 days after determining the application is initially complete, the director shall mail a notice to the owners of all property within the proposed historic district as indicated on the most current appraisal district records. The director shall give notice to a civic association registered with the department whose area is included, in whole or in part, in the proposed district.

(2) The notice shall include the following:

a. The date, time, and location of the public meeting described in subsection (c) of this section;

**The director gave notice of the public meeting by depositing written notice in the United States mail on December 8, 2021.**

b. Any other information the director determines may be useful to the property owners.

(e) After the final public meeting, the director shall mail notice to the owners of all property within the proposed historic district. The notice shall include a card to be returned by the property owner which shall indicate whether the property owner does or does not support designation of the historic district. The card must be placed in the U.S. mail with proper postage affixed and postmarked or delivered to the director not later than the thirtieth day after the date on the notice.

**The director gave notice for property owners to indicate whether the owner does or does not support the designation of the historic district in the United States mail on January 25, 2021.**

(f) After the deadline for returning cards mailed in accordance with subsection (e) has passed, the director will determine if owners of 67 percent of all the tracts in the proposed district

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support the designation of the district. If so, the application will be considered final. If the director determines that the owners of less than 67 percent of tracts in the proposed historic district support the designation of the district, then the director shall either:

**Less than 67% of tracts in the proposed historic district were received in support of designation. The director shall modify the boundaries of the proposed district.**

- (1) Modify the boundaries of the proposed historic district if the modification will result in boundaries where the owners of 67 percent of the tracts support designation of the proposed historic district. If the director modifies the boundaries, the application will be considered final; or

**13 of 35 tracts in the proposed district returned the response form in support of the designation of the historic district. The director modified the boundaries of the proposed historic district which resulted in a boundary where 68.42% - 13 of 19 tracts – supported designation of the proposed historic district**

- (2) Determine that the application fails and that no further action will be taken by the HAHC. The director shall mail notice to the owners of all property within the proposed historic district that the public hearing before the HAHC has been cancelled.

(h) The HAHC will conduct a public hearing on each final application for designation of a historic district. Following the public hearing, the HAHC may recommend that the boundaries of the proposed historic district be amended in accordance with the intent and general purpose of this article.

**The director gave notice of the public hearing to be held before the HAHC on April 21, 2022 by depositing written notice in the United States mail on March 18, 2022.**

- (b) Notwithstanding the foregoing, no building, structure, object or site less than 50 years old shall be designated as a landmark or archaeological site, and no area in which the majority of buildings, structures or objects is less than 50 years old shall be designated as an historic district, unless it is found that the buildings, structure, object, site or area is of extraordinary importance to the city, state or nation for reasons not based on age.

**There are a total of 19 structures within the proposed First Riverside Terrace Historic District. Of the 19 structures, there are 16, or 84.21%, structures classified as contributing. There are 2 structures, or 10.52%, structures classified as non-contributing. One tract of land is classified as vacant.**

