

LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT

LANDMARK/SITE NAME: John Hamman Jr. House
OWNER: Steven J. and Katherine H. Gibson
APPLICANT: Same as Owner
LOCATION: 3379 Inwood Drive, Houston, Texas
30-DAY HEARING NOTICE: N/A

AGENDA ITEM: IIIb
HPO FILE NO.: 06L166
DATE ACCEPTED: Oct-25-06
HAHC HEARING DATE: Nov-16-06
PC Hearing Date: Nov-30-06

SITE INFORMATION

Lot 2 and Tract 3B, Block 4, River Oaks Country Club Estates, City of Houston, Harris County, Texas. The site includes a historic two-story, brick veneer residence.

TYPE OF APPROVAL REQUESTED: Landmark Designation

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY:

The John Hamman, Jr. House, located at 3379 Inwood, is associated with this notable Houston oilman, who served as President of Hamman Oil and Refining Company. The home was constructed in 1937 and designed by the prolific Houston architects, Harvin C. Moore and Hermon Lloyd. The body of work created by these architects is substantial and includes many homes in River Oaks as well as public and commercial buildings, like the Memorial Center and Chapel at Rice University. Harvin C. Moore is also credited with being one of Houston's earliest preservationists as he helped to found the Harris County Heritage Society. Moore and Lloyd designed both a residence and an office building for John Hamman, Jr. The residence is owned by Kate and Steven Gibson; and Mrs. Gibson's family (Hobby) currently owns and maintains business offices at the old Hamman Oil and Refining Company building on San Felipe. The house qualifies for Landmark designation under criteria 3, 4, 5, and 6.

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE:

Notable Houston architects, Harvin C. Moore and Hermon Lloyd, designed the house at 3379 Inwood Drive in 1939 for John Hamman, Jr. The Hamman family has a long and illustrious history in Texas. Mr. Hamman's grandfather, General William Harrison Hamman (1830-1890), fought with Robert E. Lee and then in Hood's Texas Brigade during the Civil War. According to the Handbook of Texas, after the war, he became the first oil prospector in Texas; and he drilled his first oil well at Saratoga in Hardin County. Interestingly, he owned options and leases at the Sour Lake and Spindletop oilfields but did not drill on them. During his later years he helped to build railway links throughout Texas and ran twice for Governor of Texas as the Greenback candidate. The Greenback Party was a short lived political party which existed in America during the 1870's and 1880's. The party believed that the use of paper money, not backed by gold or silver, should be continued after the Civil War when it was first introduced in America. The political party members would later split to form the Populist and Union Labor parties which were responsible for eventual legislation which led to the creation of the eight hour work day and women's suffrage.

The interest in oil continued to the next generation through John Hamman, Senior (1879-1966). He founded the Hamman Exploration Company which later became the Hamman Oil and Refining Company, a pioneer in the development of mineral resources in Texas. He was also a lawyer specializing in land and corporation law. John Hamman donated the William Harrison Hamman papers to Rice University's Fondren Library where they reside today.

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John Hamman, Jr. (1908-1974) was born in Houston to Nettie and John Hamman, Senior. According to a 1943 Houston Post Article, "Texas Heartbeat", Hamman was described as a "stout, blond, quietly purposeful vice president of Hamman Oil" who "approached the petroleum industry scientifically." Mr. Hamman majored in geology and geophysics at Harvard and received his Masters degree in 1930. After earning his degree he spent two years in the field "seeking to do what his honored grandfather had done by instinct, divination or whatever. And he was successful – more so than his forbearer. The difference was that John could sink a test." Of note, he and his brother George were exploring in Matagorda County with seismic instruments constructed by George when they discovered a salt dome. They drilled the deepest well to date (1943) on the Texas coast (about 9300 feet) and discovered a prolific oil and gas field which was later named Hamman oilfield. John Hamman, Jr. spent his career with Hamman Oil and Refining Company. The company continues to be an independent, family-owned business involved in oil and gas exploration and production. John Hamman Junior's son, Henry Hamman, currently serves as President of the Hamman Oil Company and on the board of trustees of the philanthropic Hamman Foundation.

The 1943 Houston Post article also states the "Hamman oil headquarters are in what we believe to be the most attractive office building in Houston, on San Felipe Road." This headquarters building was designed in 1939 by Moore and Lloyd. Today, this building is, ironically, owned and used by the Hobby family, the family of Mrs. Gibson (the owner of 3379 Inwood).

John Hamman Jr.'s brother George, and wife Mary Hamman, created an endowment in 1954 which has donated approximately 25 million dollars for various causes. According to the Hamman foundation their philanthropic they give "assistance to students in the pursuit of higher education through scholarships; to promote the arts; to fund qualified institutions in the furtherance and development of scientific projects; to aid churches, associations and conventions of churches in the advancement of religion; to aid colleges and universities in both operating and capital needs; to provide aid for the needy; and to assist hospitals, medical colleges and research institutions for the study, treatment and cure of disease. According to Architectural Historian and Author Stephen Fox, Rice University's Hamman Hall was built in 1958 in memory of George Hamman with a gift donated by his wife Mary Josephine Hamman. The architects were George and Abel Pierce. The facility is used for arts performances and is the home to Rice University's drama group, The Rice Players.

The full papers of the architect of the John Hamman, Jr. House, Harvin C. Moore, are kept by the Houston Public Library. In 1987, Michael Wilson wrote a booklet outlining Moore's life entitled "Harvin C. Moore, Houston Architect." According to the introduction written by Moore's son Barry, Harvin Moore (1905-1994) was born in Carmona, Texas. As a child, the family relocated to Houston and lived in a two-story frame house at 1314 Fairview. He graduated from Central High School in 1923 and began college at Rice Institute. He graduated from Rice University "with distinction" and intended to go to medical school. After a brief stint in medical school, Moore reentered Rice to study architecture and received his BS in Architecture in 1930. Upon graduation, construction was slow due to the Depression and Moore teamed up with Hermon Lloyd (1909-1989), another undergraduate in the Rice architecture program, to design party decorations and sets. The two worked well together, and in 1934, they formed the firm of Moore & Lloyd. They were first located in the Citizen's State Bank Building downtown. Several years later, they designed a building at 2006 West Alabama which became the one of the early architectural offices in Houston with central air conditioning. According to Barry Moore, "Moore and Lloyd were soon very popular and very busy. The reputation of the firm rested largely on their works in River Oaks."

The firm's work continually increased during the 1930's. The commercial work was often for the same clients as their residential designs. The residences were usually traditional in style and the commercial buildings were more "Moderne." Barry Moore attributes this to the fact that clients wished to appear "progressive in business and traditional in family values."

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During their partnership, Moore and Lloyd designed many commercial, civic and military buildings, including over 84 homes in River Oaks. The catalogue of Moore and Lloyd works put together by Michael Wilson for the Houston Public Library is extensive.

A selection of his River Oaks homes includes: 3310 Del Monte Drive (1934) (demolished); 2228 Del Monte Drive (1934) (demolished); 2133 Pine Valley (1935) "*Home of the Month: McCall's*"; 1839 Kirby Drive (1935) (demolished); 1927 Bellmeade Road (1935) (demolished) "*Architectural Forum: 101 Finest Small Homes*"; 2125 Bellmeade Road (1935); 3257 Ella Lee (1935) (demolished); 2940 Chevy Chase (1935); 1558 Kirby Drive (1935); 2148 Looscan Lane (1935); 2117 Looscan Lane (1935) (demolished) "*Home of the Month: McCall's*"; 2129 Looscan Lane (1936) (demolished); 1112 Shepherd Drive (1935); 2404 Brentwood Drive (1935); 2216 Chilton Road (1936) (demolished) "*Home of the Month: McCall's*"; 2137 Chilton Road (1936) (demolished); 2132 Troon Road (1936); 1801 Sharp Place (1937); 3239 Locke Lane (1936); 1537 Kirby Drive (1936); 2022 Chilton Road (1936) (demolished); 2136 Pelham Drive (1936); 3215 Ella Lee (1937); 2036 Chilton Road (1936) (demolished); 3324 Ella Lee Lane (1937); 3068 Reba (1937); 5 Briarwood Court (1937); 2440 Inwood Drive (1937); 3417 Ella Lee Lane (1938); 3412 Piping Rock Lane (1938); 7 Briarwood Court (1938); 3208 Chevy Chase Drive (1938); 1910 Kirby Drive (1938) (demolished); 2327 Claremont Lane (1938) (demolished); 2057 Claremont Lane (1939); 3689 Del Monte Drive (1939) (demolished); 3413 Piping Rock Lane (1939); 2033 Claremont Lane (1940); 1909 Olympia Drive (1939); 3610 Meadow Lake Lane (1940) (demolished); 3225 Reba Drive (1940); 1665 Willowick (1940) (demolished); and 3666 Chevy Chase Drive (1940) (demolished).

By the end of the 1930's, Moore and Lloyd began to move in different directions and, by the entry of the U.S. into World War II, the firm had dissolved. After Pearl Harbor, Moore applied to Congressman Albert Thomas to gain entrance to the Naval Officers Candidate School. The Congressman convinced Moore that he would be much more helpful to the government in his capacity as an experienced architect. Thus started a twenty year relationship where Moore received military commissions for naval bases in Texas, and later, for federal projects in Houston and elsewhere in Texas. During this phase of his career, he also received commissions for churches, small buildings and industrial buildings.

In 1954, he began a foray into historic preservation by saving the Kellum-Noble House (City of Houston Protected Landmark), which stands on its original site in City Park and which had fallen into disrepair after many years of use as a City of Houston Parks Department facility. Moore was one of three who started the Harris County Heritage Society with the mission to save the Kellum-Noble House from demolition. According to Barry Moore, "Moore was one of the few practicing architects of the time who did not see a concern with historic preservation as incompatible with an interest in modern architecture. With the Heritage Society, he worked to locate worthy historic structures, raise funds for their restoration, and move them to Sam Houston Park. Moore restored the Nichols-Rice-Cherry House (c.1850) and the San Felipe Cottage, among others, during his years with the Society."

Per Barry Moore, Harvin Moore considered the preservation works among his favorite projects. The other buildings that he particularly liked were: 1537 Kirby (Hamaker House), 3239 Locke Lane (Childress House), Rice Memorial Chapel and Student Center, and the Houston Casket Company (1717 Live Oak).

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION AND RESTORATION HISTORY:

The home at 3379 Inwood Drive is a two-story, brick veneered home in a style known as "Period". The "Period" style, like its name suggests, derives its name from historic precedents. The style gained in popularity during the 1920's and 1930's and sought to recreate the look and feel of historic French and English manors. The Hamman house features a steeply pitched cross gabled roof. The exterior is clad in dark red brick and dark

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stained wood trim. Of particular note are the casement windows, the steeply pitched roof, the original bottled glass and wooden front door, and the bay window on the east side of the façade. The gardens were originally designed by the Dallas firm of Lambert Landscaping.

The Hamman home located at 3379 Inwood is in exceptional condition. It has had only three owners in its lifetime, the Hammans, the Brittons and now, the Gibsons. In 2005-2006, the Gibsons completed an extensive restoration including replacing many of the steel casement windows which had deteriorated over time. Additionally, the garage, which had been converted into a living area by the previous owners, was returned to its original purpose as a garage. In the rear of the house, a sunroom was extended out by several feet and a screen porch was added along the back of the home. None of these changes have impacted the façade of the home. Finally, the Gibsons added elements of the original Lambert landscaping plans back into the house including the restoration of an original fish pond.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

“Guide to the William Harrison Hamman Papers, 1828-1966”, Rice University fondren Library, Woodson Research Center

Handbook of Texas Online, s.v. ",," <http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/HH/fha40.html> (accessed October 24, 2006).

Houston Post, January 10, 1943, “Texas Heartbeat.”

Interview with Barry Moore by Kelley Trammell, September, 2006

Walker, Lester, American Homes; an Illustrated Encyclopedia of Domestic Architecture Black Dog and Leventhal Publishers 2002

Wilson, Michael, Harvin C. Moore: Houston Architect, Houston Public Library 1987.

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

APPROVAL CRITERIA FOR LANDMARK DESIGNATION:

Sec. 33-224. Criteria for designation of a Landmark.

(a) The HAHC and the commission, 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:

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|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| S | NA | S - satisfies | D - does not satisfy | NA - not applicable |
| <hr/> | | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" 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; | | |

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- (2) Whether the building, structure, object, site or area is the location of a significant local, state or national event;
- (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;
- (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;
- (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 a neighborhood;
- (6) Whether the building, structure, object or site or the buildings, structures, objects or sites within the area are identified as the work of a person or group whose work has influenced the heritage of the city, state, or nation;
- (7) Whether specific evidence exists that unique archaeological resources are present;
- (8) Whether the building, structure, object or site has value as a significant element of community sentiment or public pride.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission recommend to the Houston Planning Commission the Landmark Designation of the John Hamman Jr. House at 3379 Inwood Drive.

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SITE LOCATION MAP
JOHN HAMMAN, JR., HOUSE
3379 INWOOD DRIVE
NOT TO SCALE

