

<b>PROTECTED LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT</b>
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**LANDMARK NAME:** Lawrence and Maggie Scarborough House**OWNER:** Tim P. Womble**APPLICANT:** Same as Owner**LOCATION:** 412 Avondale Street – Montrose**30-DAY HEARING NOTICE:** N/A**AGENDA ITEM:** III.b**HPO FILE NO.:** 06PL34**DATE ACCEPTED:** Oct-31-06**HAHC HEARING DATE:** Dec-21-06**PC AGENDA DATE:** Jan-4-2007**SITE INFORMATION:**

Lot 6, Block 7, Montrose, City of Houston, Harris County, Texas. The site includes a historic two-story, wood frame residence and a noncontributing one-and-one-half-story garage and quarters.

**TYPE OF APPROVAL REQUESTED:** Landmark and Protected Landmark Designation

**HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY:**

The house located at 412 Avondale was the home of Lawrence P. Scarborough. Scarborough was the City of Houston Purchasing Agent as well as an attorney, real estate investor, and at other times the Secretary Treasurer of the Thomas Wilson Publishing Company as well as the Treasurer of the Texas Banking and Investment Company. The home was designed and constructed in 1912 by Houston architect and builder Frank J. Marett. Marett was responsible for the design of other houses in the nearby upscale subdivisions of the James Bute Addition and Westmoreland, as well as at least one of the grand homes of Lovett Boulevard. Today, few verifiable examples of this architect's work remain. The home is designed in the American Foursquare style which was an important architectural style to both Houston and the country in general in the first decades of the twentieth century. The house meets Criteria 3, 4, and 5 for designation.

**HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE:**

The Lawrence and Maggie Scarborough house is located at 412 Avondale. The address falls within the 1912 extension to the original Avondale Subdivision plat of 1907, which originally included the 100, 200, and 300 blocks of Avondale, Stratford and Hathaway (Westheimer). In 1912, Avondale Street was extended three blocks west to Crocker Street. The extension of Avondale Street is officially within the Montrose subdivision, but visually a cohesive extension of the earlier Avondale neighborhood. The style of architecture found in the Avondale extension, and the upper middle class families who purchased homes there, were similar in many respects to the homes and residents found in the earlier section of the neighborhood. Today, the eastern portion of Avondale, which includes the 100 block of Avondale and the 100 and 200 blocks of Stratford Street, is a designated City of Houston Historic District, one of seven thus far designated by City Council.

Avondale was one of several upscale "suburban" neighborhoods developed during the first quarter of the 20th century, which included Audubon Place, Courtlandt Place, James Bute Addition, Montrose, and Westmoreland. This area attracted Houston's business and social elite more than a decade before the creation of River Oaks, Houston's undisputed upscale neighborhood. Avondale was first platted in 1907 and derived its name from a variation on the name of William Shakespeare's hometown in England, Stratford-upon-Avon. According to an Art Nouveau-style ad in the May 25, 1907 Houston Daily Post newspaper, the name Avondale was chosen from a publicly advertised naming contest. Nine contestants tied for the \$25 prize, which was increased to \$27 so that the nine winners could split the money evenly. The two major thoroughfares in Avondale were named Avondale and Stratford. Avondale offered many attractive perks to upper echelon Houstonians. All unsightly utility lines and garbage bins were accessed from the alleyways behind every home. The concrete curbs and sidewalks were

tinted a pleasing shade of pink so as not to strain the eye in the afternoon sun, and streets were paved with oyster shell. Furthermore, no businesses, boarding houses, or structures costing less than \$5,000 were allowed within the neighborhood. The developers touted it as a “first class neighborhood.” The streets were landscaped with a variety of oaks, palms, and camphor trees planted by the fledgling Teas Nursery.

Houston experienced a period of substantial growth after major oil strikes in the early 1900s in nearby East Texas oilfields, including Spindletop, Pelly, and Goose Creek. Cotton also played a major economic role, and was so important to the local economy that a Houston Cotton Exchange was created that tracked the price of cotton like commodities on New York’s Wall Street Stock Exchange. Avondale played host to many of the men involved in the oil and cotton business. The neighborhood was close to the downtown business district, but far enough away from the hustle and bustle to accommodate spacious homes, large lawns, and broad streets.

The Scarborough House was built for the Houston Land and Development Company. Henry B. Jackson, Secretary Treasurer of the company, signed the deed for the sale of the newly constructed house and land to Maggie Scarborough. Maggie was the wife of Lawrence Scarborough and operated the Corona Flats, which was a boarding house located at 1011 Walker Avenue near the present site of the Beatty–West building. The purchase of the house occurred in August 1912 and included all of Lot Six in Block Seven in the Montrose Addition and the improvements thereon, known more commonly as 412 Avondale. The house was located in the 1912 extension to the Avondale subdivision. The sale price of \$9,000 stipulated that a \$5,000 cash payment was due at closing, with the remaining \$4,000 to be paid to Frank J. Marett. Marett was contracted by Henry B. Jackson, in June 1912, to design and build the house at 412 Avondale.

Frank J. Marett was an architect and builder who began his career in Houston in the 1890s. Some of his earliest projects were in the W.R. Baker subdivision in the 6<sup>th</sup> Ward and in the A.C. Allen Addition near the modern-day intersection of North Main and Quitman. By the early 1900s, however, Marett’s contracts were becoming grander and for clients in Houston’s new upscale South End neighborhoods. Marett appears to have been affected by the Great Depression, which began with the stock market crash of 1929. In 1930, Frank Marett was no longer listed in City Directories as an architect and builder and is instead listed simply as a carpenter. Of the projects that Marett designed and built before 1920, the home at 412 Avondale is only known extant example of his work.

The first occupants of the house at 412 Avondale were Lawrence P. Scarborough and his wife Maggie. Scarborough was born circa 1867 in Jasper County in East Texas. His father was a farmer born in Arkansas and his mother was a Louisiana native. It was in the now vanished Jasper County community of Tram, Texas, that Lawrence Scarborough landed his first jobs as town Postmaster in 1887. The post office in Tram was short lived and ceased to exist in 1891 when the operations were moved to Magnolia Springs, Texas.

Lawrence Scarborough moved to Houston in 1908. His first job in Houston was as Treasurer of the Texas Banking and Investment Company as well as Secretary Treasurer of the Thomas Wilson Publishing Company. By 1910, Scarborough had added the titles of attorney and real estate investor to his career. His office was in the First National Bank Building at 201 Main Street, where it would remain for the next twelve years. Although Scarborough was financially comfortable, he rented flats in downtown Houston from 1908 until 1912. Scarborough met his future wife, Maggie, when he rented a room in the Corona Flats, which she owned.

In 1912, when Lawrence and Maggie Scarborough purchased the home on Avondale, he was the Purchasing Agent for the City of Houston and had offices in the old City Hall, which was located in the 300 block of Travis in Market Square. Scarborough simultaneously maintained his office in the First National Bank Building for his personal investment business. After major oil fields were discovered in this region of Texas starting in the

1890s, many landowners gained considerable extra income from the lease of the mineral rights for oil exploration. Lawrence Scarborough dealt in oil leases, some as far away as Jefferson County, in addition to his City Purchasing Agent career. He also dealt in real estate and co-founded a real estate company near the Houston Ship Channel in the early 1920s.

In 1918, Lawrence P. Scarborough sold the house at 412 Avondale to J.K. Warren, who was president of the Warren-Cleveland Lumber Company. Lawrence and Maggie Scarborough moved down the street to the house at 304 Avondale where they were residing when he died in 1923. The house at 412 Avondale changed hands several times in the following decades. J.K. Warren sold the house to Henry Catheriner, who then sold it to George H. Lacy, and then Jean Westwick, from whom the current owner purchased the property in 1988. The home was restored to its original appearance and remains in exceptional condition.

### **ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION AND RESTORATION HISTORY:**

The Lawrence and Maggie Scarborough House was constructed in 1912 as a two-story, wood frame residence. The home is essentially an American foursquare design characterized by two floors, a hipped roof, and an almost equilateral exterior perimeter. The home varies from the more plain examples of the style as seen elsewhere in the city and across the country. Although its classification is "American Four Square" the house shares many characteristics of the Prairie style which was also very popular at that time in the Montrose and Avondale subdivision. The Prairie style influence can be seen in the house's broad front porch which creates the feeling of horizontality to the structure as opposed to the normally vertical appearance of pure American foursquare designs.

The wood-frame home is constructed on a raised brick pier foundation. The front façade has a one story covered porch that is supported by decorative brick columns. The front porch is capped by a three-sided wooden balustrade that surrounds an open-air veranda accessed via two pairs of equally spaced French doors. A wide decorative stucco freeze is located midway between the second story and the roofline. A repeating Moorish-inspired pattern is inset within the textured decorative plaster frieze and is trimmed in wood. The home features a hipped roof with one center dormer window that faces Avondale Street to the north. The wide roof eaves are boxed in and supported by pairs of decorative wooden scroll brackets. The majority of windows in the home are of wood sash six-over-one pane windows. The home is clad in wooden "double drop" siding. The home's interior has a formal first floor plan with parlor, dining room, butler's pantry, and kitchen arrangement. Floors in the public rooms are of quarter-sawn oak with mahogany inlays around the borders.

A covered carport was added to the eastern façade of the house in the 1930s, but was removed by the current owner. An original wood-frame garage has been demolished and replaced with a modern freestanding replacement in the same location to the rear of the property. The home is in excellent repair and remains very true to its historic appearance.

### **BIBLIOGRAPHY:**

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Johnston, Marguerite. Houston, The Unknown City 1836-1946 ; Texas A&M Press 1991.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Co. Maps Houston 1925 Vol. 5 p. 543.

Wheat, Jim. Postmasters and Post Offices of Texas, 1846-1930.

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

### APPROVAL CRITERIA FOR PROTECTED LANDMARK DESIGNATION:

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

(a) The HAHC and the commission, in making recommendations with respect to designation, and the city council, in making a designation, shall consider three or more of the following criteria, as appropriate for the Protected Landmark designation. If the HAHC reviews an application for designation of a Protected Landmark initiated after the designation of the Landmark, the HAHC shall review the basis for its initial recommendation for designation and may recommend designation of the landmark as a protected landmark unless the property owner elects to designate and if the landmark has met at least (3) three of the criteria of Section 33-224 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance (HPO) at the time of its designation or, based upon additional information considered by the HAHC, the landmark then meets at least (3) three of criteria of Section 33-224 of the HPO, as follows:

- | S                                   | NA                                  |  | S - satisfies | D - does not satisfy | NA - not applicable |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|---------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| <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;                    |               |                      |                     |
| <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;   |               |                      |                     |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | (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;                    |               |                      |                     |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | (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;  |               |                      |                     |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | (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;   |               |                      |                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | (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; |               |                      |                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | (7) Whether specific evidence exists that unique archaeological resources are present;   |               |                      |                     |

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- (8) Whether the building, structure, object or site has value as a significant element of community sentiment or public pride.

**OR**

- The property was constructed before 1905;

**OR**

- The property is listed individually in the National Register of Historic Places or designated as a “contributing structure” in an historic district listed in the National Register of Historic Places;

**OR**

- The property was designated as a State of Texas Recorded Texas Historical Landmark.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission recommends to the Houston Planning Commission the Landmark and Protected Landmark Designation of the Lawrence and Maggie Scarborough House at 412 Avondale Street.

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SITE LOCATION MAP  
LAWRENCE AND MAGGIE SCARBOROUGH HOUSE  
412 AVONDALE STREET  
NOT TO SCALE

