LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT

LANDMARK NAME: Colonel W. B. Bates House
OWNERS: Stephen and Elizabeth Newton
APPLICANTS: Same as Owners
LOCATION: 2128 Brentwood Drive - River Oaks
30-DAY HEARING NOTICE: N/A

AGENDA ITEM: Ib
HPO FILE NO.: 07L189
DATE ACCEPTED: Sept-7-2007
HAHC HEARING DATE: Sept-26-2007
PC MEETING DATE: Oct-11-2007

SITE INFORMATION

Lot 17, Block 47, River Oaks Section 3, City of Houston, Harris County, Texas. The site includes a two-story brick residence.

TYPE OF APPROVAL REQUESTED: Landmark Designation

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY:

The Bates House located at 2128 Brentwood Drive was built for Colonel and Mrs. W. B. Bates. Colonel Bates had a tremendous impact on Houston community through his activities in law, business, banking and in the medical community, especially as Chairman, Board of Trustees of M. D. Anderson Foundation. The home was designed by recognized Houston architect, Stayton Nunn, and constructed in 1936-37. Nunn's body of work is substantial and includes the original River Oaks Community Center (River Oaks Shopping Center), parts of Methodist Hospital, and many public school buildings. The house qualifies for Landmark Designation under Criteria 1, 3, 4 and 6.

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE:

Houston architect Stayton Nunn designed the house at 2128 Brentwood Drive in 1936 for Colonel and Mrs. William Bartholomew (W. B.) Bates. At the time of its completion, an article with a large photograph ran in the March 28, 1937, Houston Chronicle:

> "New Home of Mr. and Mrs. W. B. Bates – A striking view of the recently completed home for Colonel and Mrs. W. B. Bates at 2128 Brentwood Drive in River Oaks. This well designed brick home contains four bedrooms and two baths. Colonel Bates is an attorney here. Stayton Nunn was the architect for the home."

Colonel Bates (1889-1974) was a prominent attorney who joined Fulbright and Crooker when he arrived in Houston in 1923. Bates would spend his entire career with the firm, which would later become known as Fulbright, Bates and Jaworski. He was involved in many aspects of Houston: the Houston Independent School District, the University of Houston, the Houston Chamber of Commerce, and others. Bates' greatest impact on the city was probably through his role as chairman of the Board of Trustees of M. D. Anderson Foundation and the related growth of the Texas Medical Center. His papers reside at the Houston Academy of Medicine – Texas Medical Center Library, which describe Colonel Bates as having an "enormous impact on the growth and development of Houston, almost from the moment he arrived" in 1923. According to Bates' granddaughter, discussions about the formation of M. D. Anderson were discussed in the 2128 Brentwood home.

The best portrayal of Colonel Bates is captured by his biography in the Texas Handbook as presented below:

> "William B. (Colonel) Bates (c. 1889-1974), lawyer, foundation trustee, and banker, was born on August 16, 1889 or 1890, in Nat, Texas, the sixth of thirteen children of James Madison and Mary Frances (Cook) Bates. He attended and later taught in rural schools in Nacogdoches County. He earned an elementary teaching certificate at Sam Houston Normal Institute (now Sam Houston State University) in 1911, graduated from the University of Texas law school in 1915 at the top of his class, practiced law briefly in Bay City, and enlisted in the Leon Springs First Officers Training Camp[qv] when the nation entered World War I. He was commissioned a second lieutenant in August 1917 and was twice wounded in France; he held the rank of captain when he was discharged in July 1919. Bates returned to Nacogdoches and was elected district attorney in 1920 for the Second Judicial District. Partly because the Ku Klux Klan strongly opposed him in 1922, Bates did not win reelection."
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> "On January 1, 1923, he moved to Houston and joined the law firm of Fulbright and Crooker (later Fulbright and Jaworski) as an associate. He soon became a partner and continued as such until he retired in 1971. As a lawyer, Bates was most successful in his firm's business and corporate practice, in which he represented cotton firms, banks, and clients in the oil and gas business. He became chairman of the board of San Jacinto National Bank in 1942 and of the Second National Bank in 1944. He merged the two banks with Guardian Trust in 1945 under the name Second National Bank (later Bank of the Southwest and subsequently MBank). He remained chairman until 1967 and was a member of the board and advisory chairman at the time of his death.
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> Bates was an original trustee of the M. D. Anderson Foundation and became its chairman when the founder, Monroe D. Anderson, died in 1939. The foundation played a key role in building the Texas Medical Center in Houston. Bates was also vice president of the Benjamin Clayton Foundation for Research and was a trustee of the San Jacinto Museum of History Association. He served as a member of the Houston Board of Education (1927-35), president of that board (1932-35), a regent (1943-71) and president (1934-35) of the University of Houston, and a trustee of Trinity University."
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> "Though he never ran for political office after 1922, Bates retained an active interest in civic matters. In appreciation of his support, Governor Daniel J. Moody commissioned him an honorary colonel, a title that Bates used for the remainder of his life. On February 21, 1921, Bates married Mary Estill Dorsey of Nacogdoches. They had two daughters. Bates was a Presbyterian. He died in Houston on April 17, 1974."

Stayton Nunn, the architect of the Bates home, was born in Arkansas in 1899. He attended Trinity University in Waxahachie from 1916 to 1919. He earned degrees from Rice Institute in 1921 and 1922, and taught in the Rice architecture department from 1928 until 1941. Nunn practiced architecture in Houston for over 40 years.

From 1922 to 1928, Nunn worked as a draftsman for one of Houston's most prominent architects, William Ward Watkin (1886-1952). According to Stephen Fox, "Watkin's best buildings were designed during the late 1920's when Stayton Nunn was a member of his firm." In 1928, Nunn started his own practice. From 1936 to 1950, he was in partnership with Milton McGinty. It was during his partnership

with McGinty that he designed the iconic crescent-shaped River Oaks Community Center (a portion of which has been demolished). Later, he worked as coordinating architect for Houston Independent School District (1946-58). He finished his career at Nunn, Nunn & Ulbricht, a partnership with his son.

According to Stephen Fox, the homes and buildings completed by Stayton Nunn include the following:

- Cleveland Sewell House (National Register), 3456 Inwood Drive – Cram & Ferguson with Stayton Nunn, 1926.
- House for Mrs. Stayton Nunn, 2235 Albans Road, 1928 (altered).
- House for Southgate, Inc., 2011 University Boulevard, 1930.
- House for Southgate, Inc., 2012 Dryden, 1930.
- Robert H. Williams House, 1927 Wroxton Road, 1930-31.
- Garden Villas Elementary School, 7185 Santa Fe Drive, 1931-32 (with Edward Wilkinson).
- Dr. C. M. Griswold House, 2121 Brentwood Drive, 1929.
- Houston Gardens, 100 houses for Houston Gardens, Inc., 1933-34.
- H. Malcolm Lovett House, 1214 Berthea Avenue, 1933-34; addition, 1951 (demolished 1998).
- Houston Gardens Elementary School, 1935 (demolished).
- Ben C. Duffie, Jr., House, 2426 Inwood Drive, 1935.

Nunn & McGinty

- De Pelchin Faith Home, 100 Sandman Street, 1935-37, Architectural Record, August 1941.
- Glennlee, Glenn H. McCarthy House, 7500 Kelving Drive, 1935-37 (demolished).
- Five houses for John Embry, Idylwood, 1936.
- Susie Louise Weathersby House, 2406 Wichita Avenue, 1936.
- River Oaks Community Center, W. Gray Avenue and South Shepherd Drive, 1936-37, with Oliver C. Winston (Architectural Record June 1940) (partly demolished, 2007).
- Dudley C. Sharp House, 109 N. Post Oak Lane, 1937-38 (demolished), (House & Garden May 1940).
- Edward W. Kelley, Jr., House, Remington Lane, 1938.
- E. A. Cox House, 1508 Kirby Drive, 1938.
- 3260 Truxillo Avenue, Cuney Homes, 1938-40, with John F. Staub, Architectural Forum, November 1940 (462-63).
- Kelley Courts, 1119 Grove Street, 1939-41.
- M. B. Richardson House, 4 South West Oaks, 1939-40 (demolished).
- The Golden Girl, 1927 West Gray Avenue, 1940 (demolished).
- Leland McCullough House, 1221 S. Cage Boulevard, Pharr TX, 1940 (William C. Baxter, associate architect).
- Jamail's Grocery, 75th and Lawndale, 1941-42.

Stayton Nunn

- Methodist Hospital, Bertner Avenue, 1951 (with William Ward Watkin, Milton McGinty, and Vance D. Phenix).
- Forrest Lee Andrews House, 5 Tiel Way, 1952.
- Pearland High School, 1953, 1960.
- Spring Branch Junior High School, 1000 Piney Point Road, 1956 (with C. A. Johnson).
- John L. McReynolds Junior High School, 5910 Market Street, 1956.

Nunn, Nunn & Ulbricht

- Col. William B. Bates House, 210 Pine Hollow Lane, 1959.
- Fondren Junior High School, 6333 South Braeswood Boulevard, 1959.
- R. H. Fonville Junior High School, 725 East Little York Road, 1958-60.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION AND RESTORATION HISTORY:

The house was designed in the Manorial or Period style, which was popular in Houston during the 1920s and 1930s and drew inspiration from early English building traditions and the building styles of the Normandy region of Northern France. Of special interest is the house's original inset doorway, which is surrounded by intricate brickwork. Above the door are two ten-pane windows separated by intricate carved woodwork. On the east side of the home is a covered porch supported by painted timbered beams. The east side of the home also boasts brickwork of a diamond pattern on the second floor. The downstairs windows are steel casement with ten panes per window. The home sits upon a special block in River Oaks with a unique concentration of historic homes, including four homes that have been designated as City of Houston Landmarks. Other nearby Landmarks include the Dr. H. J. and Emerance Ehlers House at 2112 Brentwood Drive; the Joseph H. Russell House at 2232 Brentwood; the Dr. Culver M. Griswold House at 2121 Brentwood; and the Dr. Mavis P. Kelsey House at 2136 Brentwood.

The home is in exceptional condition and the façade retains a high degree of architectural integrity to its 1937 appearance. Alterations to the house since the Newton family ownership include the addition of a garage with living quarters above, a pool, and master bath.

After the ownership of Colonel and Mrs. Bates, the home passed through several owners, including Reagan Cartwright, Joseph T. Painter, and James R. Pierce. In 1995, Colonel Bates' granddaughter, Elizabeth Bentsen Newton, purchased the home with her husband. They were inspired by the home's family connection, its original design, as well as the home's adaptability to contemporary living.

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.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Fox, Stephen, personal notes and research Stayton Nunn, October, 2006.

Fox, Stephen, Houston Architectural Guide, American Institute of Architects, 1999.

Handbook of Texas Online, s.v. "," http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/BB/fbabq.html (accessed August 30, 2007).

"New Home of Mr. and Mrs. W.B. Bates", Houston Post, March 28, 1937.

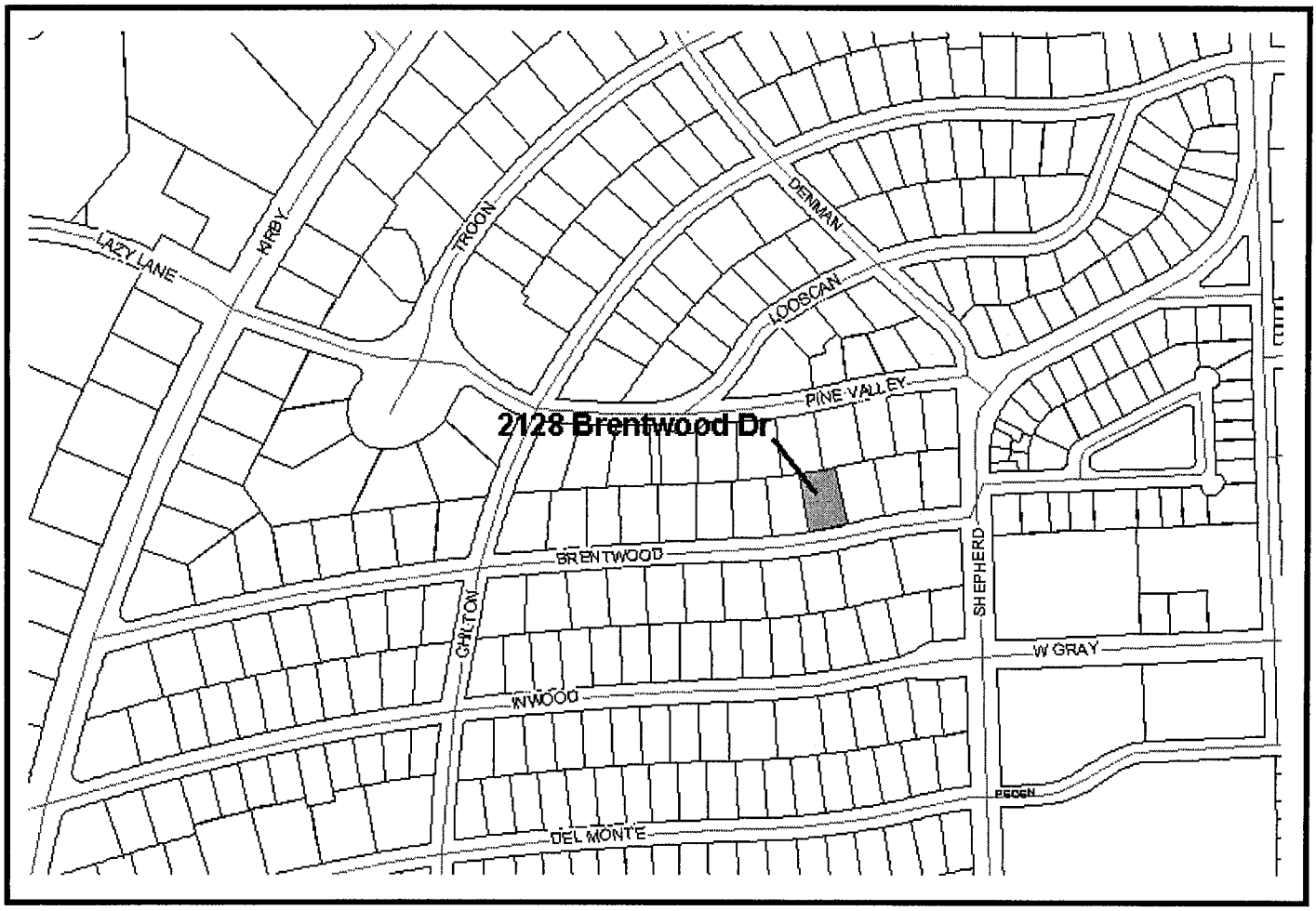
Houston Academy of Medicine, Papers of William B. Bates, www.mcgovern.library.com.

APPROVAL CRITERIA FOR LANDMARK DESIGNATION:

The HAHC and the Planning 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:

S	NA	S - satisfies NA - not applicable
☑	☐	(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 (Sec. 33-224(a)(1);
☐	☑	(2) Whether the building, structure, object, site or area is the location of a significant local, state or national event (Sec. 33-224(a)(2);
☑	☐	(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 (Sec. 33-224(a)(3);
☑	☐	(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 (Sec. 33-224(a)(4);
☐	☑	(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 (Sec. 33-224(a)(5);
☑	☐	(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 (Sec. 33-224(a)(6);
☐	☑	(7) Whether specific evidence exists that unique archaeological resources are present (Sec. 33-224(a)(7);
☐	☑	(8) Whether the building, structure, object or site has value as a significant element of community sentiment or public pride (Sec. 33-224(a)(8).
☐	☑	(9) If less than 50 years old, or proposed historic district containing a majority of buildings, structures, or objects that are less than 50 years old, whether the building, structure, object, site, or area is of extraordinary importance to the city, state or nation for reasons not based on age (Sec. 33-224(b).

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Houston Planning Commission accepts the recommendation of the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission and recommends to City Council the Landmark Designation of the Colonel W. B. Bates House at 2128 Brentwood Drive.

SITE LOCATION MAP
COLONEL W. B. BATES HOUSE
2128 BRENTWOOD DRIVE
NOT TO SCALE