

LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT

LANDMARK NAME: Dr. Conway and Bessie Blume House

OWNERS: Florence and Thomas Langford

APPLICANTS: Same as Owners

LOCATION: 3640 Inwood Drive - River Oaks

30-DAY HEARING NOTICE: N/A

AGENDA ITEM: Va

HPO FILE NO.: 07L191

DATE ACCEPTED: Nov-1-2007

HAHC HEARING DATE: Dec-12-2007

PC MEETING DATE: Jan-3-2008

SITE INFORMATION

Tract 8, Block 78, River Oaks Section 9, 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 Dr. Conway and Bessie Blume House, located at 3640 Inwood Drive, is associated with a nationally recognized arborist and entrepreneur, Dr. Conway M. Blume. The residence was designed for Dr. Blume in 1948 by Houston architects, Hiram A. Salisbury and T. George McHale. The body of work created by these architects is substantial and includes many examples in River Oaks and Southampton, as well as St. Johns School and the St. John's Chapel, designed in association with Mackie and Kamrath Architects. The Blume House qualifies for Landmark Designation under Criteria 1, 4, and 6.

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE:

Notable Houston architects, Hiram A. Salisbury and T. G. McHale, designed the house at 3640 Inwood Drive in 1948 for Dr. Conway Moncure and Bessie Rarick Blume. Dr. Blume was born on November 13, 1890, in Bienville Parish, Louisiana, and moved to Houston around 1923. In Houston, he founded Blume System Tree Experts. According from information gleaned from Houston City Directories and other internet resources, Dr. Blume's company lasted well after his death in 1950 and into the 1990s. In the City Directory of 1948, Dr. Blume is listed as "President and Inventor" of the company, whose offices were located at 2736 Virginia. He was an active advertiser in the River Oaks Times, and an October 1947 advertisement in that publication states:

"Tree Beauty by Blume – This beautiful and steadily growing Spanish live oak tree is off to a good start as a permanent treasure of charm, shade and practical value. The Blume System Tree Experts planted it in February 1945 for Dr. and Mrs. R.H. Hooper at 3735 Chevy Chase... Recognized as one of America's great reputable institutions for handling all tree problems, the Blume System is located at 2736 Virginia Street, just off Westheimer."

Dr. Blume lived at 3640 Inwood Drive for only two years before his death. The Houston Post obituary, appearing on August 3, 1950, describes Dr. Blume as a nationally known arborist. It mentions his involvement as President of the Southern Shade Tree Conference, member of the National Arborist Association, and member of the National Shade Tree Conference. He was also active in the Houston community, with memberships at River Oaks Country Club, Houston Club, Houston Chamber of

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Commerce, Rotary Club, Holland Lodge No.1, Scottish Rite, and Arabia Temple Shrine. He was a charter member of St. Luke's Methodist Church and a member of its board of stewards.

Bessie Blume continued to live in the home after Dr. Blume's death until the mid-1950s when the house was sold to Joseph B. Saunders. Saunders was the President and Treasurer of Triangle Refineries Inc. Later owners included Ray A. Pittman, Jr., who listed his occupation as "investments"; John H. Pace who worked with Pace and Company Builders; and most recently, Hal Kuntz.

According to architectural historian Stephen Fox, Hiram A. Salisbury (1892-1973), the architect for the Blume House, was born in Omaha, Nebraska. Salisbury studied architecture under a fellowship from the American Institute of Architects and later graduated from the School of Architecture at New York's Columbia University (1913-1914). He worked as a draftsman for Thomas R. Kimball from 1910-1923 and for George B. Prinz from 1923-1926. Salisbury established his own architectural firm in Houston in 1926, and he is first listed in the 1927 Houston City Directory with his office in the Post-Dispatch (subsequently Shell) Building, where he had his office until 1937.

Beginning in 1928, Salisbury collaborated on many projects with fellow architect, T. George McHale. Their projects included residential, commercial, and churches. Among their more notable projects are the St. John's School located at 2401 Claremont St, St. Stephens Episcopal Church located at 1805 W. Alabama, and many of the homes located in River Oaks, Southampton and other affluent Houston neighborhoods. Salisbury and McHale also designed a new automobile dealership for Houston auto dealer and philanthropist Jack Roach in the 6000 Block of Harrisburg Road in 1941. In 1938-39, Salisbury and McHale relocated their office to the River Oaks Community Center at 2017 W. Gray, and in 1945, they relocated again to 3501 Allen Parkway.

Thomas George McHale (1903-1975) was also born in Omaha, Nebraska, and attended school at the University of Notre Dame. Following the receipt of his architectural degree, McHale became a draftsman for John Latenzer & Sons, where he worked from 1919 until 1923. In 1924 he worked for James A. Allen and Leo A. Daly. In 1925, he began working for George B. Prinz where he joined Salisbury. They both left that firm to form their own firm in 1927. Inez P. McHale, McHale's wife, was a celebrated Houston interior decorator. The McHales lived first at 1106 Palm Avenue and then moved to No. 2 Courtlandt Place.

In 1930, Hiram A. Salisbury and his wife lived at 3412 Yupon between Hawthorne and Harold. By 1953, the Salisburys were living at 610 Saddlewood Lane. Salisbury continued his practice in Houston until approximately 1962, when he retired to Medford, Oregon. He served as the President of The American Institute of Architects, Houston Chapter, in 1954.

A list of identified works of Salisbury (HAS) in association with McHale (TGMcH) and others, which was researched and provided by Stephen Fox, includes: Masonic Temple, 118 N. 11th St., Mc Allen TX, 1926; Southampton Home Sensible, 2218 Dunstan Rd, 1927; W. L. Pearson House, Corpus Christi TX, 1927; Ironcraft Studio Building (altered), 3901-07 Main St., 1927; H. Q. Rickman House, 2223 Stanmore, 1927 (American Architect 5 Jan 1928); Nelms Building (H. S. Tucker & Co. Oakland-Pontiac dealership) (demolished), 2310 Main St., 1927; E. E. Johnson House, 949 S. Ohio Ave., Mercedes TX, 1927; Emergency Clinic and Hospital Unit 2 (demolished), 1316 75th St., 1928; Mrs. H. F. Lawson Building (demolished), 1010 Holman Ave., 1929; Robert H. Pentz House, 2159 Inwood Dr., 1930; Speculative House (Paul Weaver House), 3443 Inwood Dr., 1930; Benson-Hall Construction Co. House (A. E. Kerr, Jr., House), 2005 Bellmeade Rd., 1931; Frank L. Webb House, 2935 Chevy Chase Dr., 1931; W. E. Sampson House (demolished), 984 Kirby Drive, 1932, with Cameron Fairchild; Charles A. Perlitz House (demolished 2005), 1005 Sul Ross Ave., c. 1932; Stewart P. Coleman House, 6

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Shadowlawn Circle, 1933; W. E. Montieth House, 5 Shadowlawn Circle, 1934; James Anderson House, 5216 Dunlavy St., 1934; C. Milby Dow Bay House “Raven Moor”, near Baytown, 1935; Henry A. Sauer House, 2229 Inwood Dr., 1935, HAS & TGMcH; Damon Wells House, 1659 North Blvd., 1935, HAS; Larry J. Langdon House, 2131 Troon Rd., c. 1936; Elwood Fouts House (altered), 3470 Inwood Dr., 1936, HAS & TGMcH; Francis G. Coates House, 3417 Del Monte Dr., 1936, HAS & TGMcH; J. E. Cooper House, 2247 Dryden Rd., 1936, HAS with H. Edward Maddox, and Claude E. Hooton; Pfeiffer House, River Oaks Boulevard (demolished May 2004); George B. Corless House, 1936 Larchmont Rd., 1936, HAS & TGMcH; H. F. Junker House, 2226 Shakespeare Rd., 1936, HAS & TGMcH; St. James Episcopal Church, 1500 N. Thompson St., Conroe TX, 1936-37, HAS & TGMcH; J. Sayles Leach House (demolished), 2207 River Oaks Blvd., 1937, HAS & TGMcH (*House & Garden*); Royston H. Patterson House, 7370 Sims Dr., 1937, HAS & TGMcH; John S. Bonner House, 1705 North Blvd., 1938, HAS & TGMcH; Lucien L. Powell House, 2111 Pine Valley Dr., 1938, HAS & TGMcH; Wheeler Nazro House, 3400 Piping Rock Lane, 1938, HAS & TGMcH; P. L. Williams House, 3612 Rio Vista Dr., 1938, HAS & TGMcH; Katrina Byram House, 2135 University Blvd., 1939, HAS & TGMcH; Ned Gill House, 949 Kirby Dr., c. 1940; Harry J. Kuhn House (demolished), 22 N. West Oaks, 1940, HAS & TGMcH; William S. Bonner House, 1412 North Blvd., 1940, HAS & TGMcH; E. H. Lorehn House (altered), 2198 Troon Rd., 1940, HAS & TGMcH; W. Leland Anderson House, 1519 South Blvd., 1940, HAS & TGMcH; George C. Schmidt House (demolished), 21 Westlane Place, 1940, HAS & TGMcH; Dr. Paul Ledbetter House, 3508 Inwood Dr., 1941, HAS & TGMcH; Thomas D. Anderson House (attribution but not proven), 3929 Del Monte Dr., 1941; Chapel, St. John The Divine Episcopal Church, 2450 River Oaks Blvd., 1941, HAS & TGMcH and MacKie & Kamrath, Birdsall P. Briscoe, consulting architects; St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church, 1805 W. Alabama Ave., 1941, HAS & TGMcH; Jack Roach Building, 6000 Block of Harrisburg Blvd., 1941, HAS & TGMcH; Adolph Pfeffer House, 2109 River Oaks Blvd., 1930s, HAS & TGMcH; W. E. Parry House, 2407 Pelham Dr., 1930s, HAS & TGMcH; Russell L. Jolley House, 2527 Pelham Dr., 1930s, HAS & TGMcH; Jack Roach House, 3001 Del Monte Dr., 1939, HAS & TGMcH; Donald Kolp House, 3434 Wickersham Lane, 1940s, HAS & TGMcH; Parish House, Christ the King Lutheran Church, 2353 Rice Blvd., 1946-49, HAS & TGMcH; St. John’s School, 2401 Claremont Lane, 1945-49, HAS & TGMcH and MacKie & Kamrath; St. Luke’s Episcopal Hospital, 6720 Bertner Ave., Texas Medical Center, 1946-54, Staub & Rather and HAS; St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, 7843 Park Place Blvd., 1946-48, HAS & TGMcH; North Side State Bank Building, 2010 N. Main St., 1947-48, HAS & TGMcH; Wyatt Metal & Boiler Works Building addition, 6100 Kansas, 1948, HAS & TGMcH; Dr. Blume House, Houston, 1948, HAS & TGMcH; Condit Elementary School addition, 7000 S. Third St., Bellaire TX, 1949, HAS & TGMcH; Trinity Presbyterian Church, 7000 Lawndale Ave., 1949, HAS & TGMcH; St. John’s Episcopal Church, 514 Carter St., Marlin TX, 1949, HAS & TGMcH; Blue Triangle YWCA Building, 3005 Mc Gowen Ave., 1951, HAS and Birdsall P. Briscoe; St. George’s Episcopal Church (demolished), 510 13th Ave. N., Texas City TX, 1950, HAS & TGMcH; St. Paul’s Lutheran Church, 1208 5th St., Rosenberg TX, 1950, HAS & TGMcH; St. Thomas Episcopal Church, 207 Bob-O-Link Lane, Wharton TX, 1951, HAS & TGMcH; Wheeler Nazro House “Doe Run Farm,” Washington-on-the-Brazos TX vicinity, 1951, HAS & TGMcH; St. John The Divine Episcopal Church, 2450 River Oaks Blvd., 1952-54, MacKie & Kamrath and HAS; Retreat House, 1952-53, TGMcH; St. John’s Lutheran Church, 3920 Ave. L, Galveston TX, 1953-54, HAS & TGMcH; St. Michael’s Episcopal Church, 1601 Lake Rd., La Marque TX, 1953, HAS & TGMcH; Parish buildings, St. Michael the Archangel Catholic Church, 1801 Sage Rd., 1955, TGMcH; and the Walter Shult House, 500 Hillcrest Dr., Richmond TX, 1957, HAS & TGMcH.

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ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION AND RESTORATION HISTORY:

The Dr. Conway and Bessie Blume House at 3640 Inwood Drive was designed in the Colonial Revival style. The house, which faces southeast, is sited on a large lot with a stand of mature trees evoking a rural feel. The exterior of the home is clad in painted brick veneer. The façade features a full-width two-story porch supported by six fluted Doric columns resting on a red brick porch.

The home is five bays in width and features a centered entryway with sidelights and fanlight transom. First floor windows are pass-through double-hung nine/nine pane wood sash windows. A small ornate iron balcony is located directly above the ground floor entry. The balcony surrounds the central six/six light double-hung wood sash window which matches the others of the second story. The formal interior floor plan features a large elegant entry hall and a curved stairway that stops at a landing before winding upstairs.

Previous alterations to the house include a garage, which was attached to the home and subsequently enclosed and converted to a pool room. Subsequent to the garage conversion, a second story addition was added to it.

The house at 3640 Inwood Drive has experienced a prolonged period of deferred maintenance and is now in need of a complete restoration. Numerous roof leaks have caused significant damage to the home. The home was recently purchased by the Langford family who plan to undertake an extensive restoration.

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 about Hiram A. Salisbury and T. George McHale, August, 2006.

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

Houston Post, Obituary of Dr. Conway Blume, August 3, 1950.

River Oaks Times, October 29, 1947.

City Directories; Various Years.

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
<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 (Sec. 33-224(a)(1);		
<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 (Sec. 33-224(a)(2);		

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- (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 Dr. Conway and Bessie Blume House at 3640 Inwood Drive.

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SITE LOCATION MAP
DR. CONWAY AND BESSIE BLUME HOUSE
3640 INWOOD DRIVE
NOT TO SCALE

