

LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT

LANDMARK NAME: George M. Dow House
OWNER: George G. Hansen
APPLICANT: Same as Owner
LOCATION: 2211 Brentwood Drive - River Oaks
30-DAY HEARING NOTICE: N/A

AGENDA ITEM: II.a
HPO FILE NO: 08L206
DATE ACCEPTED: June-26-08
HAHC HEARING: July-10-08
PC HEARING: July-17-08

SITE INFORMATION

Lot 4, Block 46, River Oaks Section 1, City of Houston, Harris County, Texas. The site includes a two-story, brick veneer residence.

TYPE OF APPROVAL REQUESTED: Landmark Designation

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

The George M. Dow House at 2211 Brentwood Drive, built in 1931, was designed by the prolific Houston architects, Hiram A. Salisbury and T. George McHale. The two-story brick house features an asymmetrical design, with a prominent front chimney, a main entrance framed by pilasters topped with a broken pediment, and several small front gables, including two gabled wall dormers. The Dow family lived in the house for its first forty years. George M. Dow worked most of his career in the insurance industry, and was active in the local community.

Salisbury & McHale, architects, practiced from the 1920s through the 1950s and designed many of the homes in River Oaks, Southampton, and other affluent Houston neighborhoods, as well as such notable buildings as St. Stephen's Episcopal Church and St. John's School. Brentwood Drive is one of the most architecturally intact streets in River Oaks and also boasts eight other homes already designated, or pending designation, as City of Houston Landmarks, including three houses located in the 2200 block. The George M. Dow House qualifies for Landmark Designation under Criteria 1, 3, 4, and 6.

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE

The first mention of the home at 2211 Brentwood Drive comes in May 1931 with the following in "Home for All Times," the River Oaks Corporation publication:

"The new home of Mr. and Mrs. George Dow is now under construction by Benson-Hall Company, at 2211 Brentwood Drive. The home was designed by H.A. Salisbury."

The same publication ran the following in December 1931:

"Mr. and Mrs. George Dow purchased the site at 2211 Brentwood Drive and now have completed and moved into their new home... The place is just next door to the J.H. Reynolds family."

George and Eleanor Dow lived in the house for forty years. George M. Dow, who was apparently nicknamed "Tiny," was born in Houston on August 12, 1894. In 1931, when the Brentwood house was built, Dow is listed by the City Directory as working for Houston Natural Gas. He would later spend most of his career in the insurance industry. Through the 1930s, Dow worked for a variety of firms including Jarrell & Cage, George M. Dow Insurance Agency, and finally, Anderson & Montgomery. He would remain with Anderson & Montgomery from the early 1940s until his retirement in 1968. At

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his death in February 1974, his obituary lists him as a member of St. John's Church, Gray Lodge No. 329, AF&AM, Scottish Rite and York Rite Bodies and Arabia Temple Shrine. Eleanor Barber Dow was born in Brookline, Massachusetts, to Captain Henry Barber and Mary Gardner Barber in 1897. She lived for 96 years, and her obituary lists her as a member of St. John's Church.

The Dow family owned the home until around 1970, when they sold it to George M. Thompson, a geologist, who owned the home until 1984. Many River Oaks families know the house as the Thompson house. In 1991, the Thompsons sold the home, and a series of owners followed, including: Thomas Cook (1991), James Garrison (2002), and Alvin Thomas (2003). The current owners, George and Amanda Hansen, purchased the home in 2006.

Hiram A. Salisbury (1892-1973), one of the architects of the Dow 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 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 an office in the Post-Dispatch (subsequently Shell) Building until 1937. Salisbury served as president of the American Institute of Architects, Houston Chapter, in 1954.

Beginning in 1928, Salisbury collaborated on many projects with fellow architect, T. George McHale. Salisbury and McHale's projects included residential, commercial, and church buildings. Among their more notable projects are St. Stephen's Episcopal Church at 1805 W. Alabama (1941); St. John's School at 2401 Claremont (1945-49); and many of the homes located in River Oaks, Southampton, and other affluent Houston neighborhoods. Salisbury and McHale relocated their offices to the River Oaks Community Center at 2017 W. Gray in 1938-39, and moved to 3501 Allen Parkway in 1945.

Thomas George McHale (1903-1975) was also born in Omaha, Nebraska, and attended school at the University of Notre Dame. After receiving his architecture 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. Starting in 1925, he worked for George B. Prinz for several years before joining Salisbury.

Beginning 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. McHale was married to Inez P. McHale, a celebrated Houston interior decorator. The McHales lived at 1106 Palm Avenue before moving to 2 Courtlandt Place.

Brentwood Drive is one of the most architecturally intact streets in River Oaks and has eight other homes already designated, or pending designation, as City of Houston Landmarks:

- Dr. H.J. and Emerence Ehlers House, 2112 Brentwood (1934, Cameron Fairchild)
- Dr Culver M Griswold House, 2121 Brentwood (1929, Stayton Nunn)
- Colonel W.B. Bates House, 2128 Brentwood (1936-37, Stayton Nunn)
- Dr. Mavis P. Kelsey Sr. House, 2136 Brentwood (1940, C. C. Rouse, builder)
- John B. Hines House 2219 Brentwood (pending), (1927-28, Joseph Northrop Jr.)
- Lester L. Neuhaus House, 2227 Brentwood (pending), (1931, Salisbury & McHale)
- Joseph H. Russell House, 2232 Brentwood (1929, Russell Brown Co.)
- Maurice and Virginia Brown Angly House, 2514 Brentwood (1934, Russell Brown Co.)

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Brentwood Drive also has two other Salisbury & McHale houses, the Neuhaus House next door at 2227 Brentwood, and the Turner House at 2521 Brentwood.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION AND RESTORATION HISTORY

The home at 2211 Brentwood Drive is a two-story, brick veneered home built in 1931. The most striking features of the home’s asymmetrical front façade are the main entryway, a prominent front chimney, and a large twelve-over-twelve window that allows light into the main stairway of the home. The façade also features several front gables, including two gabled wall dormers. The entryway is surrounded by square pilasters and an elegant broken pediment. The home maintains its historic wood sash windows on both the upstairs and downstairs. The Hansen family purchased the house in 2006. Renovation plans are to expand and update the kitchen and garage areas and to update upstairs bedroom areas which will not affect the historic appearance of the house.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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

Fox, Stephen, personal notes and research about Hiram A. Salisbury and T. George McHale, August, 2006.

Home for All Times, May and September, 1931.

Houston City Directories.

Houston Chronicle, Obituary of George Dow, Senior.

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

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 |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
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- (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 accept the recommendation of the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission and recommend to City Council the Landmark Designation of the George M. Dow House at 2211 Brentwood Drive.

GEORGE M. DOW HOUSE
2211 BRENTWOOD DRIVE



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SITE LOCATION MAP
GEORGE M. DOW HOUSE
2211 BRENTWOOD DRIVE
NOT TO SCALE

