

LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT

LANDMARK NAME: Dillon and Lena Carroll Anderson House

OWNER: Linda K. Finger

APPLICANT: Same as Owner

LOCATION: 3414 Del Monte Drive - River Oaks

30-DAY HEARING NOTICE: N/A

AGENDA ITEM: V.c

HPO FILE NO: 08L206

DATE ACCEPTED: Jun-24-08

HAHC HEARING: Jul-10-08

PC HEARING: Jul-17-08

SITE INFORMATION:

Lot 8, Block 5, River Oaks Country Club Estates, City of Houston, Harris County, Texas. The building on the site includes a two-story, stucco home.

TYPE OF APPROVAL REQUESTED: Landmark Designation

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY:

The house at 3414 Del Monte Drive was designed by Birdsall P. Briscoe in the Regency style of architecture. Briscoe was a noted Houston architect, who designed the home for Dillon and Lena Carroll Anderson in 1938. Lena Carroll Anderson was the granddaughter of lumberman W. T. Carter, and one of three sisters to live in Briscoe-designed houses. Her husband, Dillon Anderson, was a writer, lawyer, and U. S. statesman. In the 1950s, Anderson served as special assistant for national security to President Dwight D. Eisenhower. Anderson's first published short story won the O. Henry Prize for short fiction in 1949, and Anderson went on to write numerous short stories and three books with a Texas theme.

Birdsall Briscoe is best known as an architect of single-family houses and is closely identified with the River Oaks neighborhood. The house at 3414 Del Monte Drive has been featured in numerous publications, including the 1980 Houston Architectural Survey, the Houston Architectural Guide, River Oaks Magazine (1941), and Houston Home/Garden (May 1981). The Dillon and Lena Carroll Anderson House qualifies for Landmark Designation under Criteria 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6.

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE:

The home at 3414 Del Monte Drive was designed by Birdsall P. Briscoe for Dillon and Lena Anderson. The home received attention at the outset of its building as on February 20, 1938, the Houston Post carried a photograph with the caption:

“\$30,000 Regency Type Home – The attractive and dignified new regency type home at 3414 Del Monte Drive in River Oaks built at a cost of approximately \$30,000 has been occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Dillon Anderson. The residence has eight rooms and three baths, and is on a 120 x 180 foot lot. It was designed by Birdsall Briscoe, architect.”

Another notice with exactly the same information above ran in the Houston Chronicle.

In February 1941, the home was featured by River Oaks Magazine which carried a four-page article:

“Regency in the South... Planted among tall trees, dappled by their shadows, mellowed by the Texas sunshine, we present to you a fine example of the Regency of the South as conceived by its architect. As is typical of Regency in England, this home is built of stucco. Its conventional and elaborate iron grille work is designed after the manner of old New Orleans... Ionic columns

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grace the semicircular entrance porch and make a base for the balcony above them. The interior trim was adapted from an ante-bellum home in Jefferson, Texas, which Mr. Briscoe once saw when he was on a tour to survey historical American building...”

Lena Carroll Anderson was the granddaughter of W. T. Carter, a wealthy lumberman in Houston. Lena Carter Carroll, Mrs. Anderson’s mother, purchased two sites in River Oaks for two of her three daughters in 1936. The site at 3414 Del Monte Drive was purchased for \$6500. Birdsall Briscoe had a long and productive relationship with the Carter family. Eventually, all three of the daughters (Mrs. Anderson, Mrs. Bullington and Mrs. I. H. Kempner) lived in Birdsall Briscoe homes.

Lena Carroll Anderson’s husband, Dillon Anderson, was a prominent Houstonian whose full biography is provided by the Handbook of Texas Online:

“Dillon Anderson (1906-1974), statesman and writer, son of Joseph Addison and Besnie (Dillon) Anderson, was born in McKinney, Texas, on July 14, 1906. He enrolled at Texas Christian University before transferring to the University of Oklahoma, where he received a B.S. degree in 1927. He graduated from the Yale law school in 1929; that same year he was admitted to the Texas bar and began practicing with the Houston firm of Baker, Botts, Andrews, and Shepherd. He was made a partner of the firm in 1940.

Anderson served as a colonel in the United States Army from 1942 to 1945. He won the Army Commendation Ribbon and the Legion of Merit. He was appointed consultant to the National Security Council in 1953, and President Dwight D. Eisenhower chose Anderson to be his special assistant for national security in 1955. In that capacity, Anderson presided over the National Security Council and accompanied Eisenhower to the summit conference in Geneva in 1955. He resigned in 1956.

In 1948 Anderson met Edward Weeks, editor of Atlantic, who complained that J. Frank Dobie, Tom Lea, and John Lomax were the only Texans who ever sent contributions to his magazine. When Weeks asked Anderson if he knew of other Texas writers, Anderson volunteered to contribute, even though none of his fiction had been published. Anderson's first submission was ‘The Revival,’ a story that Weeks returned several times for revision. It was finally published in 1949 and won the Doubleday Company's O. Henry prize for short fiction. Anderson then began publishing other stories in Atlantic, Saturday Evening Post, and Collier's.

In 1951 Little, Brown, and Company brought out I and Claudie, which won the Texas Institute of Letters award that year. Little, Brown also published Anderson's second book, Claudie's Kinfolks, in 1954. Both books are accounts of the picaresque adventures of two fun-loving rogues who philosophize in homespun, practical fashion about life and the world. Though published as novels, both I and Claudie and Claudie's Kinfolks had been written as series of short stories. The same was true of The Billingsley Papers (1961), published by Simon and Schuster, although Anderson did develop a logical sequence for the stories. The ‘papers’ make up a report in which attorney Gaylord Boswell Peterkin reveals the true character of fellow attorney Richard K. Billingsley to the university faculty committee conferring an honorary doctorate of laws degree on Billingsley. Despite their loose structure, all three books won praise for their picture of life among the folk and the exuberant, if not always tasteful, pursuits of the Texan.

Anderson was a director of Westinghouse Electric Corporation, a trustee of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and a member of the Texas Institute of Letters. He married

Lena Carter Carroll on May 30, 1931. The Andersons and their three daughters made their permanent home in Houston. Dillon Anderson died in Houston in 1974 and is buried there.”

Birdsall Parmenas Briscoe (1876-1971) designed the classic Regency-style home for the Andersons. The Handbook of Texas Online provides excellent background on Birdsall Briscoe:

“Birdsall P. Briscoe, architect, was born on June 10, 1876, in Harrisburg, Texas, the son of Andrew Birdsall and Annie Frances (Paine) Briscoe. He was the grandson of Andrew Briscoe and the great-grandson of John R. Harris, founder of Harrisburg. He grew up on his parents' ranch near Goliad and attended San Antonio Academy, Texas Agricultural and Mechanical College (now Texas A&M University), and the University of Texas. During the Spanish-American War Briscoe served in the United States Army Infantry as a sergeant; he subsequently served as a major in the army during World War I.

He learned architecture through apprenticeships with the Houston architects C. Lewis Wilson and Lewis Sterling Green. After a brief partnership with Green (1909-11), Briscoe began independent practice in 1912. From 1922 until 1926 he was in partnership with Sam H. Dixon, Jr. From 1919 until his retirement in 1955, Briscoe shared an office with Maurice J. Sullivan. Although from time to time he collaborated with both Dixon and Sullivan on nonresidential commissions, Briscoe was best known for his elegantly composed and detailed houses.

He established his reputation as an exceptional designer at the outset of his career. His aptitude for disciplined formal composition and correct, scholarly rendition of historic detail placed him at the forefront of the eclectic trend in Houston architecture during the second decade of the twentieth century. Briscoe's finest houses, designed between 1926 and 1940, exhibit the array of historical architectural styles characteristic of American eclectic architecture and are distinguished by the architect's gift for harmonious proportion and full-bodied ornamental detail.

He worked extensively in the Houston neighborhoods of Courtlandt Place, Shadyside, Broadacres, and River Oaks. Among his clients for houses were William Lockhart Clayton (1917), W. T. Carter (1920), R. Lee Blaffer (1920), Walter H. Walne (1925), Burdine Clayton Anderson (1928), Robert W. Wier (1928), Milton R. Underwood (1934), Wirt A. Paddock (1936), I. H. Kempner, Jr. (1936), and Dillon Anderson (1938). Outside Houston, Briscoe's best-known project was the remodeling of the Patton-Varner House near West Columbia (see Varner-Hogg Plantation State Historic Park) for Ima and William Clifford Hogg in 1920.

Briscoe married Ruth Dillman in 1927. He joined the American Institute of Architects in 1921 and was elected a fellow of the institute in 1949. From 1934 until 1941 he served as district officer for South Texas of the Historic American Buildings Survey. He was the author of two western adventure novels, *In the Face of the Sun* (1934) and *Spurs from San Isidro* (1951). He was a parishioner of Christ Church. He died in Houston on September 18, 1971, and is buried at Oak Hill Cemetery in Goliad.”

According to Stephen Fox, the Birdsall Briscoe homes in River Oaks include:

- 1829 Sharp Place, Briscoe House #1 (1936)
- 2227 Chilton Road, Kempner House (1937)
- 2950 Lazy Lane, Dogwoods (1928-demolished)
- 3237 Inwood Dr., House for Country Club Estates (Red Bird House, 1925)
- 3196 Del Monte Dr., Harry L. Mott speculative house (1931)
- 3023 Del Monte Dr., Bullington House (1937)

- 2923 Del Monte Dr., Underwood House (1934)
- 2920 San Felipe Rd., speculative house for River Oaks Corp. (1931)
- 2938 San Felipe Rd., speculative house for River Oaks Corp. (1931)
- 2308 River Oaks Blvd., Fountain House (1938)
- 3127 Avalon Place, speculative house for River Oaks Corp. (1931)
- 2113 Bellmeade Rd., speculative house for River Oaks Corp. (1931)
- 3015 Chevy Chase Dr., speculative house for River Oaks Corp. (1930)
- 2929 Chevy Chase Dr., speculative house for River Oaks Corp. (1931)
- 3229 Chevy Chase Dr. *now 3229 Groveland, Paddock House (1936, COH Landmark)
- 3249 Chevy Chase Dr., Frost House (1937)
- 3376 Inwood Dr., Clayton Summer House (1924, COH Landmark)
- 3439 Del Monte Dr., Pinckney House (1937)
- 3434 Del Monte Dr., Schneider House (1941)
- 3414 Del Monte Dr., Anderson House (1938)
- 3334 Chevy Chase Dr., Wilson House (1938)
- 3425 Sleepy hollow Court, McKallip House (1938)
- 3401 Sleepy hollow Court, Johnson House (1936)
- 3606 Chevy Chase Dr., Austin House (1951)
- 3707 Inwood Dr., Vaughan House (1949)
- 3601 Inverness Dr., Hutcheson House (1948)
- 3606 Knollwood Dr., Britton House (1942, demolished)
- 3707 Knollwood Dr., White House (1940, in association with George W. Rustay)
- 3820 Willowick Rd., Davis House (1940, moved to one side of its original site)
- 3880 Willowick Rd., Schuhmacher House (1941, moved here from its original site and extensively altered)
- 4019 Inverness Dr., Dupree House "Legend" (1959)
- 2317 Claremont Ln., Briscoe House #2 (1939, extensively altered)

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION AND RESTORATION HISTORY:

The house at 3414 Del Monte Drive may be described as Regency in style. The two-story house is clad with stucco and features a rectangular plan. The entry is particularly elegant with a semi-circular portico featuring Ionic columns on the first floor and ornamental wrought iron on the second floor. The principal façade has six-over-nine sash windows with narrow sidelights and wrought iron balconies under second floor windows. The sills are at floor level on the first and second floor. Stephen Fox describes the main section of the façade as being “framed by recessed polygonal wings.” The home has a hipped roof and two prominent chimneys on the east and west sides. The interior has trim adapted from an ante-bellum mansion in Jefferson, Texas.

The home underwent a major rehabilitation and expansion in 1992 by Rudolf Colby. The changes to the home had minimal impact to the façade visible to the street.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Handbook of Texas Online, s.v. "," <http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/PP/fpa3.html> (accessed June 7, 2007) for Dillon Anderson.

Handbook of Texas Online, s.v. "," <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/AA/fan31.html> (accessed June 12, 2008) for Birdsall Briscoe.

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Fox, Stephen, ed., "Houston Architectural Guide", 2nd edition, American Institute of Architects/Houston Chapter, 1999.

River Oaks Magazine, "Regency in the South", pages 18-21, February 1941.

Houston Press, February 20, 1938.

Houston Architectural Survey 1980, Southwest Center for Urban Research and the School of Architecture, Rice University.

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
<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);		
<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 (Sec. 33-224(a)(3);		
<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 (Sec. 33-224(a)(4);		
<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 (Sec. 33-224(a)(5);		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 (Sec. 33-224(a)(6);		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	(7) Whether specific evidence exists that unique archaeological resources are present (Sec. 33-224(a)(7);		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	(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).		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	(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).		

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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 Dillon and Lena Carroll Anderson House at 3414 Del Monte Drive.

SITE LOCATION MAP
DILLON AND LENA CARROLL ANDERSON HOUSE
3414 DEL MONTE DRIVE
NOT TO SCALE

