

CITY OF HOUSTON

Archaeological & Historical Commission

Planning and Development Department

PROTECTED LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT

LANDMARK NAME: Sidney Sherman Brady House
OWNER: Susan Avila delgado
APPLICANT: Same
LOCATION: 3805 Wilmer Street (formerly 405 Milby Street)
30-DAY HEARING NOTICE: N/A

AGENDA ITEM: IV.b
HPO FILE NO: 09PL79
DATE ACCEPTED: Sep-7-09
HAHC HEARING: Sep-24-09
PC HEARING: Oct-1-09

SITE INFORMATION

Lot 3 and Tract 2, Block 2, Brady Home, Harris County, Texas. The site includes a one story, masonry with stucco house.

TYPE OF APPROVAL REQUESTED: Landmark and Protected Landmark Designation

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

Sidney Sherman Brady was a member of one of the oldest families of the South. His grandfather was General Sidney Sherman, hero of the battle of San Jacinto, and his father was John Thomas Brady, one of Houston's most prominent pioneers. Sidney Sherman was made lieutenant colonel of the Texas army in March 1836 and led troops in the Battle of San Jacinto on April 21, 1836. He served as a Harris County representative; Major General of Militia; commandant of Galveston during the Civil War; and organized the Buffalo Bayou, Brazos and Colorado Railway Company, which constructed the first rail line in Texas.

After moving to Houston in 1856, John Thomas Brady established a law practice, became a Confederate soldier, served two terms in the Texas legislature and was among the first Texas lawyers to appear before the Supreme Court of the United States after Texas was readmitted to the Union. John Brady was a principal organizer of the Texas Transportation Company, which became part of the Southern Pacific Railroad. Brady was instrumental in deepening the ship channel to bring large ships and commerce to the port of Houston. Magnolia Park, one of Houston's oldest neighborhoods, which was laid out in 1890 on a 1,374-acre site owned by John Thomas Brady.

Following in the footsteps of his well-known family, Sidney Sherman Brady left a lasting impression on Houston through his achievements in Houston's business ventures and prominence in social circles. He served as president of the Sherman Brady Brick Company, Brady Hamilton Land Company, and Sherman Brady Brick Works. He was the organizer of the Buffalo Bayou Transportation Company and was one of the largest personal holders of real estate in the city. He also served as Secretary and Treasurer of the Courtlandt Improvement Company, which developed Courtlandt Place, both a National Register of Historic Places and City of Houston Historic District.

The Sidney Sherman Brady House was custom built for Sidney Sherman Brady in 1905. The home was designed in the Queen Anne style and features a wrap around front porch. The building is of true masonry construction unlike many historic and modern counterparts which utilize only a brick veneer cladding system over a wood frame.

The Sidney Sherman Brady House meets Criteria 1, 3, 4, 5, and 8 for Landmark and Protected Landmark designation.

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HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE

Sidney Sherman Brady

Sidney Sherman Brady was a member of one of the oldest families of the South, whose members have left an indelible mark on local, state, and national history. Brady was the grandson of General Sidney Sherman, the hero of the battle of San Jacinto. His father was John Thomas Brady, lawyer, legislator, newspaperman, and Houston Ship Channel organizer. Although his life was cut tragically short, Sidney Sherman Brady left a lasting impression on Houston through his achievements in the city's business world and involvement in social circles.

Brady was active in many business ventures. According to a Houston Chronicle article which reported his death, he maintained a well respected reputation in the business community, "and the connection of his name with a business venture was an insurance of success for that venture." He was president of several companies including the Sherman Brady Brick Company, the Brady Hamilton Land Company, and the Sherman Brady Brick Works. He was the organizer of the Buffalo Bayou Transportation company and was one of the largest personal holders of Houston real estate in the city.

Brady was the Secretary and Treasurer of the Courtlandt Improvement Company, which purchased the land and laid out the Courtlandt Place subdivision on the southern edge of the city. Courtlandt Place is one of Houston's earliest elite residential subdivisions. Modeled on suburban planning developed in St. Louis, known as the "private place," gated Courtlandt Place is an example of neighborhoods built as small, private enclaves in response to the urban chaos of Houston in the early 1900s. The first houses in Courtlandt Place were built in 1909. Many of the houses were designed by renowned Houston architects, including Sanguinet and Staats, Birdsall P. Briscoe, John F. Staub, and Warren and Wetmore. Early residents were the old elite of Houston, known for their "congeniality in philosophy and politics," and were frequently related. Sidney Sherman Brady's two sisters, Henrietta Brady and Lucy Brady owned homes in Courtlandt Place with their husbands, Wilmer Sperry Hunt and John Van Wanroy Garrow, respectively. Courtlandt Place was designated a National Register of Historic Places Historic District in 1979, received a Texas historical marker in 1989, and was designated a City of Houston Historic District in 1996.

In addition to his many business pursuits, Brady was active in social clubs throughout the city. He was a member of the Country Club, the Thalian Club, and the Houston Club. He was a charter member of Houston Council 803 Knights of Columbus, the sixth Knights of Columbus Council to be instituted in Texas. He owned the first high-speed car in Harris County, was an authority on automotive matters, and was one of the first officers of the local automotive club.

Sidney Sherman Brady died November 3, 1910 in a high-speed car accident. He was 26 years old. Brady and his friend, Charles Dieke, were driving along Harrisburg Road, heading home from La Porte, when Brady lost control of the car. The car veered into a ditch, rolled over onto him and pinned him beneath it. It was estimated that he was traveling between 70 and 75 mph. A passerby who saw a man pinned beneath the car drove Brady to the Country club, where he was examined by Dr. R. W. Link. He was pronounced dead on arrival from a broken neck. The funeral took place at the Church of the Blessed Sacrament on Sherman Avenue and Brady Place at 10:30am on November 5, 1910. Brady was buried at Glenwood Cemetery. Brady was survived by his wife, Chaille M. Jones, and their two daughters, Florence M. (born 1907) and Harriett A. (born 1908).

The house at 3805 Wilmer Street was custom built for Brady in 1905. He resided there with his wife, Cecille, and two daughters from 1907 until his death in 1910. Chaille, Florence, and Harriet continued to live in the house until 1912, after which time it was occupied by a series of owners.

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Col. John Thomas Brady

Sidney Sherman Brady was the only son of Col. John Thomas Brady. John Brady was born in Maryland on October 10, 1830. Before his arrival in Houston in 1856, Brady was admitted to the bar at Port Tobacco, Maryland in 1855 where he practiced law briefly; was editor of the *Frontier News* of Westport, Missouri for two years; assisted in organizing the new territorial government of Kansas where he was elected public printer, a position in which he published the journals and laws of the state's first legislature; and became district attorney for the Third Judicial District of the Territory of Kansas.

Brady came to Houston in 1856 as a young lawyer. He established a law practice, and settled along the bayou near Harrisburg. Shortly after moving to Houston, John Brady became a Confederate soldier. In the Civil War, Brady served the Confederacy on Gen. John B. Magruder's staff and was a volunteer aide to Commodore Leon Smith on the steamer *Bayou City* in the capture of the *Harriet Lane* and the defeat of the federal fleet at Galveston Harbor on January 1, 1863. He received special mention for his courage at the battle of Galveston.

After the war, Brady served two terms in the Texas state legislature. He was elected to the Tenth Legislature in 1863 and served as chairman of the committee on finance. In 1866 he was chairman of the committee on internal improvements in the Eleventh Legislature, and he was an advocate of the State Plan for building railroads. As a senator in the Sixteenth Legislature in 1878, he was chairman of the committee on public debt. In 1880 he was nominated for Congress by the National Greenback Labor party. He was among the first Texas lawyers to appear before the Supreme Court of the United States after the state was readmitted to the Union.

Brady was a principal organizer of the Texas Transportation Company, which became part of the Southern Pacific Railroad. The Texas Transportation Company was chartered on September 6, 1866, to construct a railroad along the south side of Buffalo Bayou from Houston to a point near Bray's Bayou. By early 1876, Texas Transportation Company constructed an eight-mile line from Clinton to Houston along the north side of Buffalo Bayou. The railroad line was completed and opened in September 1876. The Texas Transportation Company was merged into the Texas and New Orleans in June 1896, and the line is still operated as an industrial branch of the Southern Pacific.

From the time he arrived in Houston, Brady was interested in deepening the ship channel to bring large ships to the port. In 1876, with his own funds, he had the channel dredged along the section where the turning basin now stands. The new channel cut Brady's Island from his property. Partly in response to his efforts, the Houston Ship Channel Company was organized to dredge the bayou to a minimum of nine feet. The city eventually invested in the Buffalo Bayou Ship Channel Company and in July 1870, Congress designated Houston a 'port of delivery' and posted a customs official in the city.

Magnolia Park, one of Houston's oldest Hispanic neighborhoods, was laid out in 1890 on a 1,374-acre site owned by Thomas Brady. It was named for the 3,750 magnolias that developers planted there. Magnolia Park became an independent municipality in 1909 and was annexed to the city of Houston in October 1926. Though whites first inhabited the town, Mexican Americans began arriving by 1911, brought here by political and economic unrest in their native country. The new settlers first settled in an area they called Las Arenas (the Sands), residential property laid out from the sands dredged from the nearby Houston Ship Channel. Composed mostly of working class families, the Mexican-American community would become Magnolia Park's predominant ethnic group. Most of the new settlers worked as laborers, laying railroad tracks or dredging and widening Buffalo Bayou. Others loaded cotton on ships and railroad cars or helped construct the ship channel. Mexican-American women worked in jute

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mills, making gunnysack material for binding cotton bales. Residents of Mexican origin purchased lots at the townsite, built single-family homes, and fostered an active Mexican cultural life through clubs, fraternal organizations, theatrical groups, and events. By 1929 Magnolia Park, surrounded by refineries, factories, textile mills, industrial plants, and wharves, was the largest Mexican settlement in Houston. The local population increased in the early 1940s, as war-related jobs drew Mexican Americans to Houston from across the Southwest. By the 1960s, the middle class had expanded under the programs of President Lyndon Baines Johnson's Great Society, but the bulk of the local Mexican-American residents remained poor. In 1978 up to 20 percent of local residents were below the poverty level. In 1990 the community was a working-class neighborhood with a population of 14,000. Today, Magnolia Park continues to be a Hispanic community deeply rooted in Mexican-American history.

After John Brady's first wife, Caledonia Tinsley of Brazoria County, died, he married Lennie Sherman, General Sidney Sherman's daughter, on November 24, 1880. Lennie and John had two children, daughter, Lucy Sherman (born August 1881; married attorney Wilmer Sperry Hunt) and son Sidney Sherman Brady. After Lennie died, he remarried to Estelle Jenkins and had one daughter, Henrietta B. Brady (born February 1887; married John Van Wanroy Garrow). Col. John Thomas Brady died after suffering a stroke on an inspection of the port of Houston on June 26, 1890, and was buried at Glenwood Cemetery.

Sidney Sherman

Sidney Sherman was born at Marlboro, Massachusetts, on July 23, 1805. He was orphaned at twelve; at sixteen served as clerk in a Boston mercantile house; and at seventeen was in business for himself but failed for lack of capital. He spent five years in New York City; in 1831 he went to Cincinnati. In Newport, Kentucky Sherman formed a company, the first to make cotton bagging by machinery. Sherman became a captain of a volunteer company of state militia in Kentucky and in 1835 sold his cotton bagging plant and used the money to organize fifty-two volunteers for the Texas Revolution. The fifty-two volunteers in his company were later regarded as official soldiers in the Texas army. Sherman's soldiers left for Texas on the last day of 1835 and arrived the day before the election for delegates to the Convention of 1836. Sherman's company demanded and received the right to vote. When Sam Houston organized his first regiment at Gonzales in March 1836, Sherman was made lieutenant colonel. The army was reorganized at Groce's Ferry and Sherman, recently promoted to colonel, was given command of the Second Regiment of the Texas Volunteers. On April 21, 1836 Sherman commanded the left wing of the Texas army, opened the attack, and has been credited with the battle cry, "Remember the Alamo." After the battle he acted as president of the board of officers that distributed captured property among the soldiers.

President David G. Burnet refused to accept Sherman's resignation when the fighting was over and instead commissioned him as colonel in the regular army and sent him to the United States to raise more troops. After weeks of illness Sherman made his way back to Kentucky and sent troops and clothing back to Texas. His wife, the former Catherine Isabel Cox, returned to Texas with him. They established their home, Mount Vernon, a one-room log house, on a bluff below the San Jacinto battleground. In 1839 the family moved to Crescent Place on San Jacinto Bay. Sherman was Harris County's representative in the Seventh Congress of the republic, serving as chairman of the committee on military affairs. During his term in office he introduced a bill to establish the position of Major General of the Militia and increase protection along the western and southwestern frontiers. In 1843 he was elected major general of militia, a position he held until annexation. It was in his capacity as head of the militia that he presided over the trial of Capt. Edwin W. Moore.

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After annexation, Sherman moved to Harrisburg and with the financial support of investors bought the town and the local railroad company. He organized the Buffalo Bayou, Brazos and Colorado Railway Company, which constructed the first rail line in the state. In the Civil War, Sherman was appointed commandant of Galveston by the Secession Convention. He performed his duties until he became ill at which time he retired to his home on San Jacinto Bay. Sherman spent his last years in Galveston. He died there at the home of his daughter, Mrs. J. M. O. Menard, on August 1, 1873. Sherman County and the city of Sherman in Grayson County are named in his honor.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION AND RESTORATION HISTORY

The Sidney Sherman Brady House is a one-story, masonry brick home. The brick is clad with stucco, and the home rests on a high-raised brick foundation which features an above-ground full basement. The home was designed in the Queen Anne style and features a wrap around front porch. The windows are arched at the top and are capped with masonry brick arches on both the basement and main living floor levels. Windows are comprised of double hung wood sash windows with 1/1 glass lites. The building features a combination hipped and gable roof with prominent intersecting gable ends which face south and west. Each gable end features decorative shingle work. The use of a Palladian window arrangement on the south facing gable is a hallmark of the Queen Anne period. The roof structure is punctuated by three masonry chimneys with decorative integral chimney pots which are clad with smooth finish cement.

The building is of true masonry construction unlike many historic and modern counterparts which utilize only a brick veneer cladding system over a wood frame. The building is divided into three levels although the building features only one main living floor. The building rests atop a full size solid brick foundation which encloses a full basement which is constructed half above and half below the ground surface. The basement is punctuated by regularly spaced arched headed windows which allow light into the basement area. The primary living floor is accessed by a tall flight of steps leading to the wraparound porch which begins at the southwest corner of the building and wraps around the west end.

The main living floor features a formal floor plan with double parlors and separate library each serviced by a fireplace with decorative wooden mantels and glazed ceramic tile surrounds. Circulation between the formal rooms occurs via a long hallway located at the north side of the building and which forms a long central east-west axis that runs along the building's primary rooms. The internal hallway leads to a staircase at the east end of the home which allows access to the partially finished attic area.

The house has experienced several alterations in the past which have not seriously diminished the architectural and historic importance of the building. At some point in the past, three shed roof dormers were added at the attic level which face south, west, and north. The applied roof of the wrap around porch is now missing, but the porch deck, masonry railing and stoop are intact. A 1970's era photograph shows the now missing porch roof and slender pairs of wooden colonettes supporting the roof structure. An enclosed wood framed sleeping porch has been constructed to the east side of the building closest to the side property line which is also constructed on a continuation of the same raised basement and which may have functioned as an early porte-cochere. The wood framed sleeping porch features a series of double hung wood sash windows and is clad in horizontal lap wood 117 siding.

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, Thomas McWhorter, and Courtney Spillane, Planning and Development Department, City of Houston.

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- (2) Whether the building, structure, object, site or area is the location of a significant local, state or national event;
- (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;
- (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;
- (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;
- (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;
- (7) Whether specific evidence exists that unique archaeological resources are present;
- (8) Whether the building, structure, object or site has value as a significant element of community sentiment or public pride.

AND

- (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)).

OR

- The property was constructed before 1905 (Sec. 33-229(a)(2));

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 (Sec. 33-229(a)(3));

OR

- The property is recognized by the State of Texas as a Recorded State Historical Landmark (Sec. 33-229(a)(4)).

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 Protected Landmark Designation of the Sidney Sherman Brady House at 3805 Wilmer Street.

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EXHIBIT A
SIDNEY SHERMAN BRADY HOUSE
3805 WILMER STREET



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EXHIBIT A
SIDNEY SHERMAN BRADY HOUSE
3805 WILMER STREET



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EXHIBIT B
SITE LOCATION MAP
SIDNEY SHERMAN BRADY HOUSE
3805 WILMER STREET
NOT TO SCALE

