

CITY OF HOUSTON

Archaeological & Historical Commission

Planning and Development Department

LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT

LANDMARK NAME: Lunn House

OWNERS: Elva Stewart

APPLICANTS: Same

LOCATION: 504 Fairview - Fourth Ward

30-DAY HEARING NOTICE: N/A

AGENDA ITEM: Iib

HPO FILE NO: 10L230

DATE ACCEPTED: May-24-2010

HAHC HEARING: June-17-2010

PC HEARING: June-24-2010

SITE INFORMATION

Tracts 1 and 2, Block 6, Fairview Addition, City of Houston, Harris County, Texas. The site includes a one and a half-story, wood frame, single family residence .

TYPE OF APPROVAL REQUESTED: Landmark Designation

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

Year of construction	C1907
Architect	
Architectural style	
Significant residents/owners	
Historic District of neighborhood	
Surveys	
Other designations	

The Lunn House meets Criteria X for Landmark designation.

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE

The house at 504 Fairview Street on the corner of Whitney and Fairview was built by Thomas B. Lunn for his bride, Eva Brown. The house is still sometimes referred to locally as the Wedding House. Eva's father ran a dry goods store in La Grange. Thomas Lunn was employed as a bookkeeper at his father's private sanitarium. The Lunn's had a fine garden and Mr. Lunn, so the story goes, would hand a rose to each lady on the street car when the flowers were in bloom. There are still old rose bushes in the garden. Eva Lunn was a painter but Tuberculosis and poor eyesight forced her to discontinue. She was also a musician and there is an alcove in the living room built for her spinet.

The Lunn's had no children of their own but adopted the son of their housemaid of 45 years, Lydia Fehrle, a German immigrant. Upon the deaths of Mr. and Mrs. Lunn, the house at 504 Fairview was left to Milton. Her son built a house for his family around the corner on Fargo Street so his children spent a lot of their childhood in the Fairview house. The Fargo Street house later burned.

Thomas Lunn is the son of Dr. William W. Lunn, founder of Lunn Sanitarium in the Kiam Building. Dr. Lunn received his medical education from Jefferson Medical College at

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Philadelphia and Tulane University at New Orleans, where he graduated in 1880. In 1875 Dr. Lunn began practicing medicine in La Grange. In 1896 he moved to Houston and founded the private sanitarium the Kiam Building. An advertisement in the Houston Post states, "Treat all chronic diseases by electricity, electric massage, and dry heat sweat baths. When necessary we use internal medicine as may be indicated. Dr. W.W. Lunn: Diseases of women and surgery, a specialty. Dr. E.D. Lunn: Diseases of nose, throat, eye, and ear, a specialty."¹ He helped to establish the Texas Children Sanitarium at Houston. Thomas Lunn's mother was Miss Annie Williams, daughter of Thomas Williams, who came to Matagorda County, Texas before Stephen F. Austin.

Eva Brown was the niece of Bettie Brown of Ashton Villa in Galveston. Ashton Villa was built by Bettie's father, Mr. James Moreau Brown. It was the first of Galveston's great Broadway mansions, the first brick house to be built in Texas, and has long been at the center of the Island's social life. Mr. James Moreau Brown was born in New York State on September 22, 1821. He was the youngest of 16 children. After running away from home, he was apprenticed to a brick mason. He left New York around 1838, arriving in Galveston sometime in the mid 1840s. In Galveston, he opened a prosperous hardware business. In 1855 he purchased a slave named Alek, who was a brick mason. In 1859, Brown purchased the lots on Broadway for \$4,000 and began construction on the house. The design was that of an Italianate villa, with wide overhanging eaves, ornate cornice brackets and dramatic wrought iron veranda.

James Brown and his wife Rebecca Ashton Stoddart Brown raised five children. They were John Stoddart (1848), Moreau Roberts (1853), Rebecca Ashton, known as Bettie (1855), Charles Rhodes (1862) and Mathilda Ella (1865).

In Ashton Villa, the most dominant figure was the artistic and eccentric daughter, Bettie, Eva Brown's aunt. Bettie was an independent woman for her generation. She never married and was an accomplished amateur artist at a time when women were allowed to dabble in painting china, but were not to cross over that line to actually paint seriously. Much of her artwork is on display in the house.

Mr. Brown lived in the house until his death on Christmas Day 1895 at age 74. Mrs. Brown died in 1907. The house went to Bettie, who lived there until her death in 1920. Bettie's sister, Mathilda inherited the house leaving it to her daughter Alice in 1926. The house was sold to the Shriners, who used it as offices until 1970, when the house was taken over by the Galveston Historical Foundation, who opened it to the public in 1974.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION AND RESTORATION HISTORY

The Lunn House was constructed circa 1907 by the original owner, Thomas B. Lunn. The house was designed in the Queen Anne style and is a one-and-one-half-story, asymmetrical, wood frame building. The house retains a high level of architectural integrity.

¹ Houston Post. January 23, 1901.

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The wood frame house rests on a pier and beam foundation and is clad with original horizontal lapped, cypress siding. A wraparound front porch accentuates the asymmetry of the façade. The porch supports are classical columns, raised on a pedestal to the level of the porch railing. The original porch supports were replaced but in the original style. The porch railing is composed of spindlework wood columns.

The house retains the original double hung wood sash windows with 1/1 glass lites and one sliding sash window and many retain the original glass. Two cutaway bay windows are featured on the house, one on the front facade and one on the east elevation.

The house features a steeply pitched, combination hipped roof with two lower cross gables, one front-facing and one side-facing. Over half of all Queen Anne houses feature this roof shape, which is among the most distinctive Queen Anne characteristics. The intersecting front-facing gable features a sliding sash window and is enclosed by a pent roof. A polygonal tower rises out of the corner of the front façade. A polygonal tower at this location is another distinguishing feature of the Queen Anne style. Behind the tower is a chimney that was used for the original, and still existing, clothes boiler under the house.

The original roof was cedar shake but has been replaced with plain shingles. The decorative cedar shakes on the dormers and the tower were replaced a few years ago in the original pattern. The front entrance features a paneled, solid wood door, inset with cut glass, and topped with a glass transom.

In the interior the transom windows remain and the lay-out is unchanged except for the central hall where the previous owner, Thomas Schooler, replaced the divided stairway with a single staircase to the upstairs. Mr. Schooler restored the house from a shambles to its present state, installing period chandeliers and ceiling medallions purchased in New Orleans. There were once two steps leading to the porch whereas now there are 9. He remodeled the downstairs bathroom but maintained the historic character. A claw foot tub with flowers painted on the side is in the largely dysfunctional bathroom upstairs. The current kitchen was last functionally remodeled circa 1930s. The second floor originally had several small bedrooms but is now opened up to serve as an artist's studio.

The Queen Anne style was the dominant style of housing in the United States from 1880 through 1900. The style was spread throughout the country by pattern books and the first architectural magazine, *The American Architect and Building News*. The style was most popular in the southern and western parts of the country, with California and the South having the most elaborate examples. The Queen Anne had an asymmetrical floor plan; steeply pitched roof of irregular shape, usually with a dominant front-facing gable; textured shingles, siding, or other device to avoid a smooth-walled appearance; and a partial or full-width porch, usually one story high.

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

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

APPROVAL CRITERIA FOR LANDMARK DESIGNATION

Sec. 33-224. Criteria for designation of a Landmark.

(a) The HAHC and the 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 | D - does not satisfy | 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; | | | |
| <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; | | | |
| <input 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; | | | |
| <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; | | | |
| <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; | | | |
| <input 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; | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | (7) Whether specific evidence exists that unique archaeological resources are present; | | | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | (8) Whether the building, structure, object or site has value as a significant element of community sentiment or public pride. | | | |

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STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission recommend to the Houston Planning Commission the Landmark Designation of the Lunn House at 504 Fairview.

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EXHIBIT A

Lunn House
504 Fairview

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EXHIBIT B SITE LOCATION MAP

Lunn House
504 Fairview

NOT TO SCALE