

# CITY OF HOUSTON

Archaeological & Historical Commission

Planning and Development Department

## LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT

**LANDMARK NAME:** C.B. and Roberta Delhomme House

**OWNERS:** Jim L. and Nancy F. Troxel

**APPLICANTS:** Same

**LOCATION:** 2232 Looscan Lane - River Oaks

**AGENDA ITEM:** Ila

**HPO FILE NO:** 11LM235

**DATE ACCEPTED:** Jan-21-2011

**HAHC HEARING:** May-19-2011

**SITE INFORMATION:** Lot 14, Block 48, River Oaks Sec 3, 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 C.B. and Roberta Delhomme House was designed in an eclectic Tudor Revival style and constructed in 1938 by builder W. L. Gordon. Born in Scott, Louisiana, in 1921, C. B. Delhomme operated a large boat distributor that sold the brands Dixie, Richardson, Matthews, Garwood, Robinson and Chris Craft across Texas, Oklahoma and Louisiana. At the height of the business, C. B. Delhomme had the South's largest boat distributor. Delhomme was one of the founders of the Houston Boat Show.

The architecture of 2232 Looscan signifies a transition from a rigid adherence to a revival style, in this case Tudor Revival, to the incorporation of modernistic elements. The Delhomme house departs from the strict copying of a Tudor style in its lack of stone, half-timbering or differentiated brick decorative detailing, as well as having casement windows without multipane Tudor detailing.

The C.B. and Roberta Delhomme House meets Criteria 1, 3, and 6 for Landmark designation.

### HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE

#### *C. B. and Roberta Delhomme*

Born in Scott, Louisiana, in 1921, C. B. Delhomme operated a large boat distributor that sold the brands Dixie, Richardson, Matthews, Garwood, Robinson and Chris Craft across Texas, Oklahoma and Louisiana. At the height of the business, C. B. Delhomme had the South's largest boat distributor. Delhomme was one of the founders of the Houston Boat Show. He was also Chairman of the Board of Methodist Hospital; founder and 26 year member of the Good Samaritan Foundation; first Fleet Captain of the Lakewood Yacht Club; and Board member of Houston National Bank and Baylor College of Medicine.

Delhomme was active in Methodist causes, in particular Methodist Hospital and the Good Samaritan Foundation. He served as Chairman of the Board of Methodist Hospital and on the Board of Baylor College of Medicine. He was a founder of, and active for 26 years with, the Good Samaritan Foundation, which was active in finding nurses to staff the newly founded Texas Medical Center and the Methodist Hospital. The Good Samaritan Foundation was founded in 1951 by Rev. Clyde Verheyden and six prominent Houstonians, including Delhomme. He was also the first Fleet

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Captain of the Lakewood Yacht Club, founded in 1955, and was also on the Board of the Houston National Bank. Roberta Delhomme was also active in Methodist causes, including the Blue Bird Circle.

C. B. Delhomme involved his family in his business pursuits. His son-in-law, Robert Hervey, became President of C. B. Delhomme in the 1950s. Delhomme sold his business in 1969 to his nephew, Louis Delhomme, who called the business Louis Delhomme Marine and was later a founding member of MarineMax, Inc. After selling the boat distributor, C. B. started C. B. Delhomme Sporting Goods. He died suddenly in Houston at the age of 77 on January 25, 1977.

The Delhomme family occupied the Looscan home until 1951, when they moved to 3690 Del Monte Drive. (The Del Monte house was also built by C. B. Delhomme and designed by Marshall S. McDougall). After that time, the house at 2232 Looscan Lane had several owners. Among these were lawyer Richard Criss and his wife Dorothy (1951-1955); Willard and Marietta Walbridge (mid-1950s); Maurice Mosson (1959-mid 1960s). From 1967 until 1988, Bert Clardy, President of Trans World Advertising, and his wife Winona, owned the home. After the Clardys, the home passed through two more owners – John and Lynnda Paukune and William and Andrea Reed, before being purchased by its present owners, Jim and Nancy Troxel, in 2003.

## *2232 Looscan Lane*

The C. B. and Roberta Delhomme House was built in 1938 by W.L. Gordon for the Delhomme family. On January 30, 1938 the first mention of the home appears in the Houston Post in an article announcing the construction contract:

*“\$14,000 Home Job Let – W.L. Gordon has been awarded the contract for construction of a two story residence for CB Delhomme according to the Builders Exchange. The contract price is \$14,000. The two story home will be erected at 2232 Looscan Lane in River Oaks, and will consist of ten rooms with a brick veneer exterior and wood shingle roof.”*

In July 1938, the River Oaks Corporation magazine, “Homes for All Times,” announced that the Delhomme family had settled into the house at 2232 Looscan Lane:

*“Mr. and Mrs. C. B. Delhomme, and their daughter, Doris, are now in their attractive new residence at 2232 Looscan Lane. Their home is a modified English in type. It is built of tan brick and has pale green trim at the openings, a black grilled railing around an upper deck, and a grilled entrance feature. The color scheme is exceptionally good. Mr. Delhomme is owner of the C. B. Delhomme Company, marine distributors.”*

On July 24, 1938, the Houston Post published an article, complete with a photograph of the newly constructed home. The article stated:

*“Mr. and Mrs. C.B. Delhomme have just moved into their new residence at 2232 Looscan Lane in River Oaks. The home, situated on a site 75x100 feet in size, has three bedrooms, two baths, and was erected at a cost of approximately \$15,000 for the house and lot. Mr. Delhomme is a distributor for Elco and Evinrude motors.”*

## *River Oaks*

When Will C. Hogg, Mike Hogg, and Hugh Potter began the development of River Oaks in 1923, it was with the intention of making it into a demonstration of the highest standards of modern community planning, a role model for the rest of Houston to follow. Will Hogg's ambitiousness and Hugh Potter's skillful management of River Oaks during its first thirty years made the community known nation-wide as a symbol of Houston. Since its creation, River Oaks has been published in national news, real estate, and design media, and has been the focus of scholarly analysis, in recognition of its significant contributions to the history of Houston and twentieth-century American elite suburban community development.

The creation of this type of subdivision was unique for Houston in many respects. The subdivision was laid out at what was then the far western edge of Houston. Prior to 1923, the majority of Houston's residential developments had occurred in a tight girdle around the downtown business district, such as Westmoreland (1902), Avondale (1907), Montrose (1911), Audubon Place (1906), Cherryhurst (1908), Binz, Southmore (1914), and Courtland Place (1906). River Oaks, however, was situated at the western city limits far away from other developments.

In addition, the developers broke with convention by laying out an organic pattern of roadways which lent a sense of spaciousness to the neighborhood, which was very different from the traditional Houston neighborhoods that followed a more rigid approach to development. These traditional neighborhoods used street grids which carved the land up into predictable square or rectangular blocks.

## **ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION AND RESTORATION HISTORY**

The C. B. and Roberta Delhomme House is Tudor revival influenced, a style that became fashionable in the 1920s and early 1930s. The style is loosely based on a variety of late Medieval English prototypes, ranging from thatch-roofed folk cottages to grand manor houses. These homes are usually characterized by steeply-pitched, side-gabled roof; dominate cross gables on façade; and tall, narrow windows.

The architecture of 2232 Looscan signifies a transition from a strict adherence to a revival style, in this case Tudor Revival, to the incorporation of modernistic elements. This departure from the strict copying of a Tudor style in the Delhomme house is seen in the lack of any stone, half-timbering or differentiated brick decorative detailing. It is also seen in the use of casement windows, a typical Tudor feature, but on 2232 Looscan the lights in the casement windows are more modern, lacking multi-pane Tudor detailing. Its construction in the late 1930s allowed for a less rigid adherence to a Tudor Revival style; the Delhomme house is a diluted version of Tudor Revival with some eclectic elements thrown in. The home's mottled brick exterior, undulating facade and multiple front gables recollect the Tudor Revival styling but the iron work entry portico as well as the lack of stone, half-timbering or differentiated brick decorative detailing give the house a more modern feel.

Two front gabled portions of the house extend from the front façade to include the living room and the entryway. The remainder of the front façade is incorporated under a hipped roof. A small side room, just one story, is to the north of the main bay. The entry porch is constructed with decorative

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iron posts. The current owners are restoring the home's exterior to its original appearance.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Houston Post, "\$14,000 Home Job Let", January 30, 1938.

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McAlester, Virginia and Lee, Field Guide to American Houses, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1984.

Sanborn Fire Insurance map for Houston.

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

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## 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:

- | <b>S</b>                            | <b>NA</b>                           | <b>S - satisfies</b> | <b>D - does not satisfy</b> | <b>NA - not applicable</b> |
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- (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;
- (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.

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission recommend to City Council the Landmark Designation of the C. B. and Roberta Delhomme House at 2232 Looscan Lane.

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**EXHIBIT A**  
C. B. AND ROBERTA DELHOMME HOUSE  
2232 LOOSCAN LANE



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**EXHIBIT B**  
**SITE LOCATION MAP**  
**C. B. AND ROBERTA DELHOMME HOUSE**  
**2232 LOOSCAN LANE**  
**NOT TO SCALE**

