

# CITY OF HOUSTON

Archaeological & Historical Commission

Planning and Development Department

## LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT

**LANDMARK NAME:** Helm-McDonough House

**OWNERS:** Audrey and Brandon Cochran

**APPLICANTS:** Same

**LOCATION:** 2107 Looscan Lane – River Oaks

**AGENDA ITEM:** II.b

**HPO FILE NO:** 12L265

**DATE ACCEPTED:** 2-9-2012

**HAHC HEARING:** 5-17-2012

**SITE INFORMATION:** Lot 10, Block 50, River Oaks Section 3, City of Houston, Harris County, Texas. The site includes a historic two-story, brick and shingle clad residence.

**TYPE OF APPROVAL REQUESTED:** Landmark Designation

### HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

The Helm-McDonough House was designed in the Colonial Revival style by Louis A. Glover in 1937. In 1907, Louis began working for his father, architect Frank Glover. By 1911 Frank Glover renamed the firm, *F.S. Glover and Son, Architects*. Louis Glover later designed several significant buildings in Houston including, the Julia Ideson Building of the Houston Public Library, Lamar Senior High School, John H. Reagan High School, James W. Deady Junior High School, and Charles H. Milby Senior High School.

The Helm-McDonough House was built for Annie Dickson of Galveston. Mrs. Dickson sold it to Shirley and Justa Helm in September 1938. Shirley Helm was a prominent Houston attorney and a founding member of the Texas Trial Lawyers Association. Justa Cartwright-Helm was a descendent of the Cartwright family, a Texas pioneer family that originally settled in San Augustine County. Mr. and Mrs. Helm lived in the house until 1947 when they sold it to Mr. and Mrs. Jack McDonough. The McDonoughs remained in the house until their deaths in 1979 and 1985.

The Helm-McDonough House meets Criteria 1, 4, and 6 for Landmark designation.

### HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE

#### *Shirley and Justa Helm*

Shirley Helm was born on August 8, 1905 in Houston. He graduated from Central High School, Rice Institute, and University of Virginia's School of Law. In 1928 he moved to Houston to practice law. In 1943 he partnered with Albert Jones to form their own firm, Helm and Jones. At the time of his death Helm was the Senior Partner of Helm, Pletcher, Hogan, Bowen and Saunders. He was a founding member of the Texas Trial Lawyers Association, and was active with the American Bar Association and the International Society of Barristers. He was a member of St. John the Divine.

Justa Cartwright-Helm was born in San Antonio on July 2, 1909 and raised in Beaumont, Texas. She descended from the Cartwright family, a Texas pioneer family that originally settled in San Augustine County, Texas. She studied two years at Principia Junior College in St. Louis and graduated from the University of Texas. She died in 1995.

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The Cartwright family arrived in Texas in the spring of 1820. They settled in what is now San Augustine County in East Texas. The Cartwrights began to acquire land holdings during the Republic era and continued to purchase land throughout the nineteenth century. In addition they conducted business operations in San Augustine, including cotton plantations, livestock, and agriculture.

The Helms purchased the house from Mrs. Annie Dickson in 1938. The sale of the house to the Helms was reported in both the *Houston Chronicle* and the *Houston Post* on September 18, 1938. From the *Houston Post* article:

“Mr. and Mrs. Shirley M. Helm have purchased an attractive two-story, brick veneer residence at 2107 Looscan Lane in River Oaks from Mrs. Annis A. Dickson of Galveston. Louise A. Glover was the architect for the residence. The home, situated on a lot 70X150 feet in size, contains three bedrooms, two baths and a downstairs lavatory. The consideration for the residence was \$12,750. Mr. Helm is an attorney.”

The December 1938 edition of *River Oaks Magazine* reported, “Mr. and Mrs. Shirley Helm are living in their new home at 2107 Looscan Lane. Mr. Helm is an attorney with the firm of Allen, Helm and Jacobs.” The Helms lived in the house until 1947, when they moved to 1547 Kirby Drive, a larger house designed by Salisbury & McHale and built by developer R.H. Pentz.

### *Jack and Maydee McDonough*

The Helms sold the house in 1947 to Jack and Maydee McDonough. Jack McDonough was born in Beaumont, Texas on March 31, 1904. By 1930 he and his wife were living in Houston on Castle Court and he worked in the oil business. Mr. McDonough was a department manager of Superior Oil where he remained until his retirement. Maydee Pedigo McDonough was also born in Beaumont, Texas in 1906. She attended Ward-Belmont College in Nashville (which later became Harpeth Hall) and graduated from the University of Texas in 1926. She died March 20, 1979. Jack McDonough remained in the house until his death on December 25, 1985.

### *Louis A. Glover*

Louis Antonio Glover was born in 1884 and raised in nearby Harrisburg, Texas, the son of architect Frank S. Glover. Frank Glover was born in Texas in the 1850s and his firm was well established in Houston by the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As early as 1907 Louis was working as a draftsman at his father’s firm. In 1909, Frank S. Glover was given the charge to reconstruct the Colorado County Courthouse in Columbus, Texas after a hurricane damaged it. This project gave Louis A. Glover more experience and by 1911 the firm name was changed to F.S. Glover and Son, Architects. From that point on Louis A. Glover’s occupation is listed as *architect* in the City Directories. Louis Glover died in 1959. At the time of his death, he was a member of Trinity Episcopal Church and the American Institute of Architects.

Louis Glover designed several significant buildings in Houston including:

- Julia Ideson Building of the Houston Public Library, 1926 (with Cram and Ferguson and William Ward Watkin)
- Lamar Senior High School, 1937 (with John F. Staub, Kenneth Franzheim, Lamar Q. Cato, and Harry D. Payne).

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- John H. Reagan High School, 1926 (with John Staub)
- James W. Deady Junior High School, 1928
- Charles H. Milby Senior High School, 1926

The River Oaks plan library shows that Glover designed the houses at 2140 Stanmore and 2260 Pine Valley, in addition to 2107 Looscan. Both houses still stand. The T.G.C.A. Monthly bulletin indicates that Louis Glover also designed an apartment building at 1930 W. Walker Street in 1930.

### ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION AND RESTORATION HISTORY

The Helm-McDonough House is a Colonial Revival style house and is representative of the late 1930s. It is facing northwest on curved Looscan Drive. The house is 2,899 square feet on a 9,312 square foot lot. The house is one bay wide under a side gabled roof.

The house is faced with brick on the first story and shingle siding on the second story. The shingle second story slightly overhangs the first story in a Garrison Colonial motif, which was popular during the time period. The entrance is located on the north part of the front façade. The door is a simple wood and glass door with wood trim. There is a small shed porch roof featuring decorative hood brackets. A 6-over-6 wood sash window is located above the door on the second story. Two 9-over-9 wood sash windows complete the first story front façade; with two 6-over-6 wood sash windows complete the second floor front façade. All windows have shutters. The side gabled roof slightly overhangs the second story and there is a tall brick chimney on the southern (side) façade of the house.

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

City of Houston City Directories, various dates

“Obituary for Louis A. Glover.” *Houston Chronicle*, July 29, 1957.

“Obituary for Shirley Nelm.” *Houston Chronicle*, November 8, 1986.

“Shirley Helm Buys Home on Looscan.” *Houston Post*, September 18, 1938.

T.G.C.A. Monthly Bulletin, 1930.

Various sources from ancestry.com

*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

(a) The HAHC, 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
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AND

<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 Archaeological and Historical Commission recommend to City Council the Landmark Designation of the Helm-McDonough House at 2107 Looscan Lane.

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## EXHIBIT A

Helm-McDonough House

2107 Looscan Lane



## Planning and Development Department

NOT TO SCALE

