

LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT

LANDMARK NAME: Sumners-Dale House

OWNER: Laura SoRelle

APPLICANT: Same as Owner

LOCATION: 2159 Pelham Drive – River Oaks

AGENDA ITEM: III.a

HPO FILE NO: 14L295

DATE ACCEPTED: May-13-2014

HAHC HEARING: May-22-2014

SITE INFORMATION: Tracts 10 & 11A, Block 43, River Oaks Section Three, City of Houston, Harris County, Texas. The site includes an historic, one-story Tudor Revival bungalow.

TYPE OF APPROVAL REQUESTED: Landmark Designation

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

The Sumners-Dale House at 2159 Pelham Drive, designed by River Oaks Corporation architect Charles Oliver, was built in 1929 for Leona and Clement Sumners. Leona Sumners was a teacher at the Franklin School, and Clement Sumners was an accountant for an oil company. The house was later owned by Robert and Harriette Dale, and remains in the Dale family.

The home was designed by noted Houston architect, Charles Oliver, who was the in-house architect for the River Oaks Corporation from 1926 to 1931. During the period when he worked for the River Oaks Corporation, Oliver designed over 75 homes in the River Oaks neighborhood in various styles, including Georgian, Tudor, Dutch Colonial, Mediterranean, and Norman.

The one-story residence is faced in brick and stone, and is designed in the Tudor Revival style with a cross gable standing seam metal roof. The dominant form of the house is a side-gabled structure with a steep cross-gabled entrance bay.

The house is significant for its architect and architecture, and as a rare remaining example of a modest home in River Oaks. The Sumners-Dale House at 2159 Pelham Drive meets Criteria 1, 4, 5, and 6 for Landmark designation.

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE

Clement and Leona Sumners

Clement Peter Sumners was born on November 5, 1895, in Cuero, Texas. He married Leona Ettie Weisinger, of Montgomery, in 1919. Clement was a veteran of World War I, and he worked as a bookkeeper in Houston while he studied for his law degree from the South Texas College of Law. Leona graduated from the College of Industrial Arts in Denton with a degree in Home Economics. In 1930, she taught at Franklin Elementary.

The *Galveston Daily News*, which often reported the building news and permits from Houston, listed the building permit for 2159 Pelham Road on July 11, 1929:

“C. P. Sumners, six room brick veneer house and garage, 2159 Pelham Drive, Lot 10, Block 43, River Oaks Addition, \$8,000.”

The loans for the home were reported as satisfied in October 1929. The Sumners family lived in the home only a short time; they moved to Montgomery, Texas after Clement finished law school. Two of Clement's brothers were Episcopal priests; from 1929 to 1932, Reverend Charles A. Sumners lived at 2159 Pelham while he was assigned to St. Stephen's Episcopal Church on West Alabama and later to Palmer Memorial Chapel on South Main. Reverend Sumners went on to be the long-time rector at St. David's Episcopal Church in Austin from 1939 to 1975. Reverend Thomas Sumners served at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in the 1930s and later became the founding Rector of St. John the Divine in River Oaks in 1940.

The house was briefly occupied by another family, and then vacant from 1935 to 1939. The home was briefly occupied from 1939 to 1941 by Everett and Cecile Stafford. Everett Stafford was a land-man for the Stanolind Oil and Gas Company.

Robert and Harriette Dale

Robert and Harriette Dale purchased the home around 1941. Robert was the Houston manager of the Cooper Bessemer Corporation. The company made engines and engine compressors. In the 1940s, Cooper Bessemer's offices were located in the M&M Building, now known as the University of Houston-Downtown. The company was renamed Cooper Industries in 1969, and its headquarters were relocated to Houston.

Robert Hamilton Dale was born April 7, 1894 in Dallas. He was a veteran of World War I, and a graduate of the University of Texas. He had moved to Houston by 1920, and worked as an electrical engineer for the Tennant-Lovegrove Company. Harriette Smith Dale was born October 4, 1894 in Texas. She married Robert Dale in the early 1920s.

The Dales reared two sons at 2159 Pelham Drive, Robert H. Dale Jr., and Alan S. Dale. Both sons graduated from Lamar High School and the University of Texas. Mr. and Mrs. Dale would live in the home until after Robert's death in 1978. Harriette Dale died on July 16, 1987. The home was purchased in the early 1980s by the Dales' granddaughter, Laura Dale SoRelle, who raised four sons in the home – Andrew, Robert, Daniel, and Michael. The home has been in the Dale family for over seventy years.

Charles Oliver

The home was designed by noted Houston architect, Charles Oliver, who was the in-house architect for the River Oaks Corporation from 1926 to 1931. Oliver was born in 1894 and was a native of Arkansas. By 1920, he was an architect in Dallas. He worked for the Russell Brown Company in Dallas and Houston, which constructed many homes in Texas during the first quarter of the 20th century.

Oliver worked for the Russell Brown Company from 1916 until 1926, when he was hired away by the River Oaks Corporation. During the period when he worked for the River Oaks Corporation, Oliver designed over 75 homes in the River Oaks neighborhood in various styles, including Georgian, Tudor, Dutch Colonial, Mediterranean, and Norman. By 1930, he had moved to River Oaks and lived in a Spanish Colonial home on Pelham Drive with his wife Eloise and their children. Charles Oliver had an enormous impact on the character of the neighborhood. Through the River Oaks Card File, the following Oliver homes have been identified:

- 981 Kirby Drive
- 1059 Kirby Drive
- 1407 Kirby Drive
- 1528 Kirby Drive
- 1708 River Oaks Blvd
- 1827 Kirby Drive

- 1903 Bellmeade Road
- 1904 Bellmeade Road
- 1915 Bellmeade Road
- 2007 River Oaks Blvd
- 2105 Brentwood Drive
- 2109 Inwood Drive
- 2116 Del Monte Drive
- 2121 Inwood Drive
- 2136 Inwood Drive
- 2141 Pine Valley Drive
- 2146 Stanmore Drive
- 2147 Inwood Drive
- 2149 Pine Valley Drive
- 2159 Pelham Drive
- 2164 Troon Road
- 2169 Troon Road
- 2192 Troon Road
- 2202 Stanmore Drive
- 2203 Brentwood Drive
- 2217 Troon Road
- 2224 Looscan Lane
- 2228 Chilton Road
- 2408 Stanmore Drive
- 2438 Pelham Drive
- 2454 Pine Valley Drive
- 2504 Pelham Drive
- 2517 Del Monte Drive
- 2530 Stanmore Drive
- 2915 Chevy Chase Drive
- 2938 Del Monte Drive
- 3108 Locke Lane
- 3108 Reba Drive
- 3205 Del Monte Drive
- 3214 Inwood Drive
- 3217 Del Monte Drive
- 3219 Reba Drive
- 3223 Chevy Chase Drive
- 3229 Del Monte Drive
- 3230 Del Monte Drive
- 3235 Locke Lane
- 3238 Locke Lane
- 3245 Reba Drive
- 3250 Locke Lane
- 3257 Huntingdon Place
- 3257 Reba Drive
- 3262 Reba Drive
- 3263 Huntingdon Place
- 3315 Del Monte Drive
- 3330 Del Monte Drive
- 3372 Del Monte Drive
- 3394 Chevy Chase Drive
- 3428 Chevy Chase Drive

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION AND RESTORATION HISTORY

The Sumners-Dale House at 2159 Pelham Drive faces north in the middle of an elongated block of homes. The house is faced in brick and stone, and is designed in a Tudor Revival style with a cross gable standing seam metal roof. The house is clad in mottled brick laid in Flemish bond.

The residence features an ‘F’ shaped footprint and the dominant form of the house is a side-gabled structure with a steep cross-gabled entrance bay. The ‘F’ shaped footprint is formed by a front cross gable mass connected to a rear cross gabled mass by a gable center mass.

The front facade, facing Pelham, features a single dominant front-gabled entrance bay, faced with stone. The bay is offset from the center, as is typical in Tudor Revival designs. The bay features a rectangular wood and iron door with a small window. The door is inset from the front with a stepped brick surround. An iron balconet is located above the door. The front gable features an exterior chimney faced with stone and is located to the east of the door. A vertical band of brick runs down the center of the chimney and the chimney is capped with a horizontal row of bricks. The front gable of the entrance extends almost to the base of the house.

The front façade features a 1-over-1 sash window located to the east of the entrance bay. To the west of the entrance bay is a ribbon of three 1-over-1 sash windows. The west façade of the home features a bay window, with three 1-over-1 sash windows, a wood paneled entry door, and five 1-over-1 sash windows at the rear of the elevation. The rear gable features a 1-over-1 sash window. The east façade features a ribbon of three 1-over-1 sash windows and a 1-over-1 sash window in the gable.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

City Directories, 1927 to present.

Fox, Stephen, personal notes on Charles Oliver, May 3, 2005.

Galveston Daily News, July 11, 1929.

Various resources 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 Erin Glennon, Planning and Development Department, City of Houston.

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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|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| <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 checked="" 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 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; | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | (7) Whether specific evidence exists that unique archaeological resources are present; | | | |
| <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. | | | |

AND

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|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| <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 Sumners-Dale House at 2159 Pelham Drive.

HAHC RECOMMENDATION

The Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission recommends to City Council the Landmark Designation of the Sumners-Dale House at 2159 Pelham Drive.

EXHIBIT A

CURRENT PHOTO

SUMNERS-DALE HOUSE
2159 PELHAM DRIVE



EXHIBIT B

SITE LOCATION MAP

SUMNERS-DALE HOUSE
2159 PELHAM DRIVE

