CITY OF HOUSTON

Archaeological & Historical Commission **Planning and Development Department**

PROTECTED LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT

LANDMARK NAME: William L. Clayton Summer House
OWNER: Susan Clayton Garwood
APPLICANT: Susan Clayton Garwood
LOCATION: 3376 Inwood Drive – River Oaks
30-DAY HEARING NOTICE: N/A

AGENDA ITEM: III.c
HPO FILE NO.: 08PL72
DATE ACCEPTED: Oct-21-08
HAHC HEARING: Nov-13-08
PC HEARING: Nov-20-08

SITE INFORMATION

Lot 8, Block 1, River Oaks Country Club Estates Subdivision, City of Houston, Harris County, Texas. The building on the site includes a two-story, wood frame residence.

TYPE OF APPROVAL REQUESTED: Protected Landmark Designation of a Designated Landmark

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

The William Clayton Summer House at 3376 Inwood Drive was the first home to be built in River Oaks. It was built as the summer house for Houston businessman, public servant, author, and philanthropist William Lockhart Clayton and his family. Clayton was co-founder of the Anderson-Clayton Cotton Company, which grew to become one of the world's largest cotton brokerage firms with offices in several countries. The William Clayton Summer House was built in 1924 and designed by Houston architect Birdsall P. Briscoe, who had designed the Claytons' primary residence at 5300 Caroline (now the Clayton Library Center for Genealogical Research) in 1916, as well as many of the grand homes located in Courtlandt Place, Broadacres, and Riverside Terrace. The two-story house is designed in the Colonial Revival style, and faces onto the River Oaks Country Club Golf Course. Susan Clayton Garwood, a granddaughter of William L. Clayton, is the current owner of the house.

The William Clayton Summer House was designated as a City of Houston Landmark in January 2007. The William Clayton Summer House is also listed on the National Register, and meets Criteria 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6 for Protected Landmark designation.

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE

William Lockhart Clayton was born in Tupelo, Mississippi, in 1880 and was raised in Jackson, Tennessee. His career path began at the age of fourteen when he held the position of the Clerk of Chancery Court in Madison County, Tennessee. His first exposure to the cotton business came when he landed a job at the American Cotton Company in New York City at age sixteen. Clayton quickly rose through the ranks at American Cotton. At age twenty-two, he was company treasurer, and by age twenty-four, he had achieved the title of assistant general manager. In 1904, Will Clayton and his brother, Ben Clayton, brother-in-law, Frank Anderson, and Monroe D. Anderson joined together to form the Anderson Clayton Cotton Company in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Anderson Clayton would eventually become one of the world's largest cotton import/export companies and secure Houston as the regional capitol of the cotton industry. The company had locations in England, France, and Germany. Clayton moved his family to Lucerne, Switzerland, to oversee the operations of their European facilities. The company moved the business to Houston in 1907 to be closer to the port, which played a vital role to their business. William L. Clayton and family relocated to Houston in 1916.

William L. Clayton married Sue Vaughan, a Kentucky native, in 1902. Together they had five children. Of the five children, they had a son who did not live past infancy and four surviving daughters. The first daughter Ellen (1903-1993) wrote a 1958 biography about William L. Clayton, and was married to Houston attorney Wilmer St. John, who served as a Justice of the Texas Supreme court.

William L. Clayton served in several high profile government appointments during his lifetime. During World War I, he served on the committee of the War Industries Board for cotton distribution. During World War II, Clayton was appointed deputy to the coordinator of inter-American affairs under Nelson Rockefeller. The intent of the Inter-American Affairs Department was to increase the level of economic and commercial cooperation between trading partners friendly to America. A secondary goal of the organization was to help consolidate power among the Western countries during time of war and to keep valuable natural resources from being purchased by the Axis powers. William Clayton later helped craft America's Marshall Plan for the economic recovery of Europe after World War II. In 1936, Clayton was on the cover of Time Magazine. Clayton officially retired from the Anderson Clayton Cotton firm in the 1950s but retained a controlling interest in the company. He died in Houston in 1966. In the spirit of the Clayton family's philanthropy, a family foundation was created for charitable giving, which exists to this day.

In 1916, William Clayton hired Texas architect, Birdsall Briscoe, to build a new home for his family in the fashionable south end neighborhood of Southmore. Birdsall P. Briscoe, born in Harrisburg, Texas, in 1876, was educated at Texas A&M University and began his architectural career in Houston with architects Lewis Wilson and Lewis Sterling Green in 1904. During this time, his firm designed the original Blessed Sacrament church (circa 1910), a former East End landmark demolished in 2005. Briscoe started his own firm in 1912. He designed the Clayton home on Caroline in 1916 in the Georgian Revival style and construction was completed in 1917. The home is now open to the public as the Clayton Genealogical Library and is a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark.

Clayton hired architect Birdsall Briscoe again in 1924 to design a country house for him in the fledgling River Oaks subdivision, and it would become the very first home built in the neighborhood. The new summer home was constructed on a large two acre site which abuts and blends seamlessly with the River Oaks Country Club Golf Course located to the north side of the lot. The home faces north towards the golf course, but the site is accessed via a driveway from Inwood Drive on the south. A 1929 publication of the Forum of Civics, titled A Garden Book for Houston , featured the still new Clayton Summer House for its choice of 'Reeves Spirea,' also known as Bridal Wreath, in the home's landscape plan.

According to the Handbook of Texas Online, River Oaks was developed "by Buffalo Bayou and Memorial Park in west central Houston. The residential garden suburb, which comprises 1,100 acres, was developed in the 1920s by Michael Hogg and attorney, Hugh Potter, who in 1923 obtained an option to purchase 200 acres surrounding the River Oaks Country Club. In 1924 Hogg organized Country Club Estates to promote the development. The two developers retained Kansas City landscape architects, Hare and Hare, to provide a master plan that would protect the environmental integrity and natural beauty of the area. They also hired J. C. Nichols, who built one of the first major shopping centers in the United States, to serve as a design consultant. The master plan included homesites, a fifteen-acre campus for River Oaks Elementary School, two shopping centers, and esplanades planted with flowers. It called for underground utility lines, eliminated alleys, allowed only three intersecting streets, provided rigid building codes, and eventually banned all commercial traffic. Deed restrictions and centralized community control assured exclusivity; approval of house designs by a panel of architects and citizens and a purchase price of at least $7,000 were required. The first home in the area, built by Will and Sue Clayton, is now listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Among the other notable houses is Ima

Hogg's family home, Bayou Bend (N. R.; City of Houston Landmark), designed by John F. Staub and Birdsall P. Briscoe. In the late 1920s the development lost money, but by the late 1930s developers had invested $3 million in the project, and the community had begun to influence development patterns downtown. In the 1930s River Oaks was at the geographic center of Houston. The community operated independently for three years, after which it was annexed by the city."

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION AND RESTORATION HISTORY

Birdsall P. Briscoe's design for the William Clayton summer house was executed in the Colonial Revival style and has been described as one of the most important houses of its style in the southwest United States. The two-story wood framed home is characterized by a hipped roof with dormers and two "fronts." According to southern architectural traditions, the home presents a colonnaded facade toward the golf course green and a more subdued façade to the rear facing Inwood Drive, which is the more commonly seen elevation. The home's primary façade is five bays in width with central entry framed by transom and sidelights. Windows are of alternating six-over-six, eight-over-eight and four-over-four pane wood sash windows. The principle facade is sheltered beneath a two-story porch capped by a cross patterned balustrade. The entablature is supported by six rectangular columns with simple capitals.

The main body of the house is arranged with a center hall floor plan that is one room in width on either side of the center hall. The first floor entry leads to a prominent center hall that terminates at the southern side of the house in a semi-enclosed foyer with staircase. A living room flanks the right or western side of the main hall, which extends the full depth of the house. The home's library is situated to the left or eastern side of the home's center hall and is adjacent to a dining room located to the rear.

Located to the rear of the house are two symmetrically placed one-story, gable-ended outbuildings located between the main body of the house and Inwood Drive to the south. Each of the outbuildings is attached to the main house by means of an enclosed arcaded passageway. Each passageway extends in a semi-circular path from the eastern and western façade of the main house to each of the outbuildings. The passageway to the eastern side of the home connects the home's dining room to the kitchen outbuilding and another passageway on the western side of the home connects the living room to a summer house on the western or left side of the site.

The Claytons hired Birdsall Briscoe again in 1930 to convert the home to a primary residence. During the 1930 remodeling the second story sleeping porch was enclosed to create an additional bedroom and two windows were removed. In 2002-2003 the home was again remodeled, but work was largely focused on the outbuildings and their connecting passageways to the main body of the house. Glassman Shoemake Maldonado Architects replaced an existing covered passageway leading to the original kitchen building with a new one, constructed on the original footprint. The reconstructed passageway features five prominent plate-glass windows which replaced the symmetrically arranged, round headed, multi-light windows and smaller octagonal windows located to either side of a multi-light beveled head wood door. During the same remodeling phase, the driveway-facing façade of the kitchen building was reconfigured with the omission of three evenly spaced six-over-six paned wood sash windows and the addition of three larger window and entry bays. The three bays, comprised of a doorway between two windows, are uniform in spacing height and width, all of which feature a round head and multiple lights. A carport was built to the east of the kitchen building and conforms to the elliptical arrangement of driveway and out-buildings. On October 24, 2007, the HAHC retroactively approved a Certificate of Appropriateness for the alterations.

The home is owned by Susan Clayton Garwood, granddaughter of William L. Clayton.

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

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Johnston, Marguerite, Houston the Unknown City 1836-1946 , 4th edition, Texas A&M University Press, 1994.

Ligon, Charles W., A.I.A., Architect "William L. Clayton Summer House" National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, 1983.

APPROVAL CRITERIA FOR PROTECTED LANDMARK DESIGNATION

The HAHC shall review each application for designation of a protected landmark that is included in an application for designation of a landmark at the same time and in the same manner as it reviews and considers the application for a landmark. The HAHC and the Planning Commission, in making recommendations with respect to a protected landmark designation, and the City Council, in making a designation, shall consider whether the building, structure, site, or area meets at least three of the criteria in Section 33-224, or one of the criteria in Section 33-229, as follows:

S NA **S - satisfies NA - not applicable**

Meets at least three of the following (Sec. 33-229(a)(1):

☑ ☐ (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 (Sec. 33-224(a)(1);

☐ ☑ (2) Whether the building, structure, object, site or area is the location of a significant local, state or national event (Sec. 33-224(a)(2);

☑ ☐ (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 (Sec. 33-224(a)(3);

☑ ☐ (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 (Sec. 33-224(a)(4);

☑ ☐ (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 (Sec. 33-224(a)(5);

☑ ☐ (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 (Sec. 33-224(a)(6);

☐ ☑ (7) Whether specific evidence exists that unique archaeological resources are present (Sec. 33-224(a)(7);

☐ ☑ (8) Whether the building, structure, object or site has value as a significant element of community sentiment or public pride (Sec. 33-224(a)(8).

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);

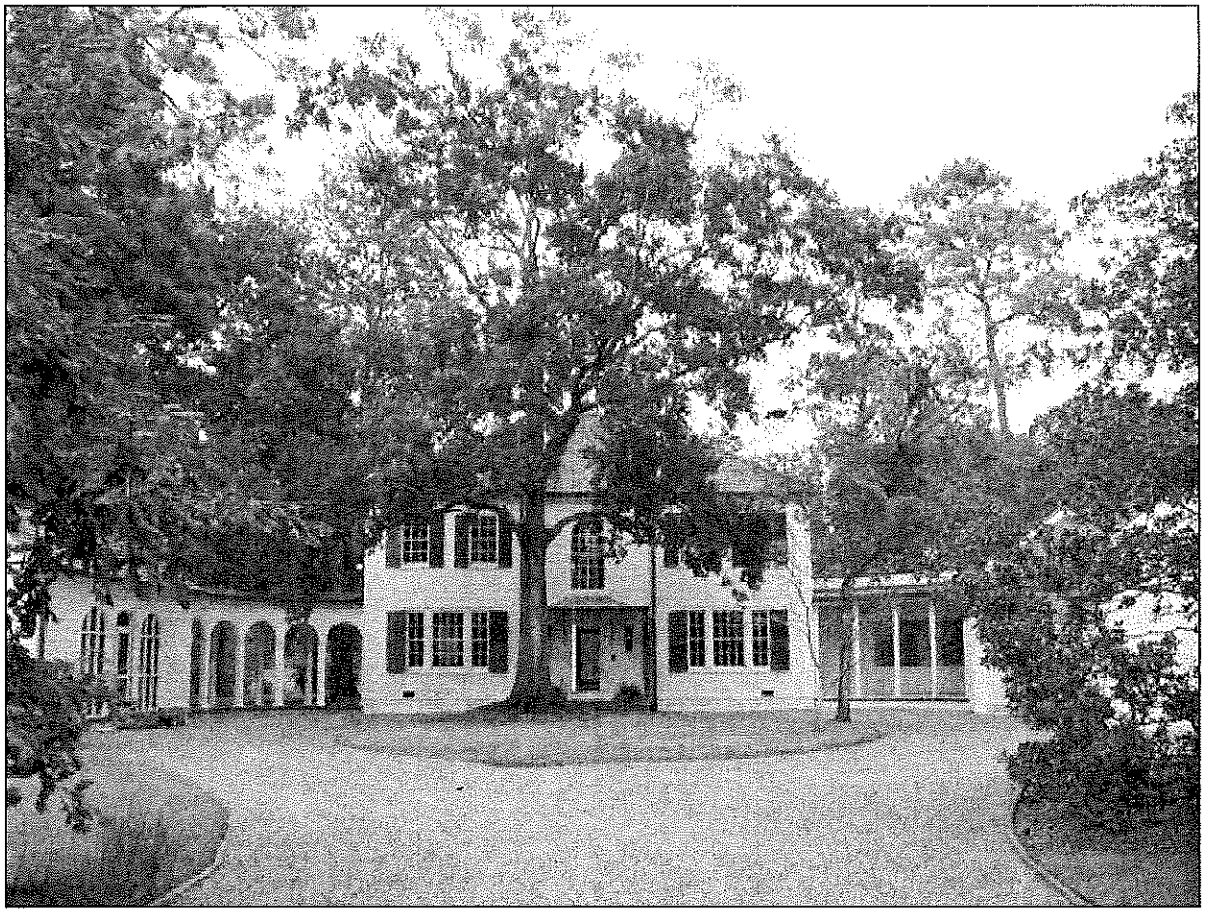
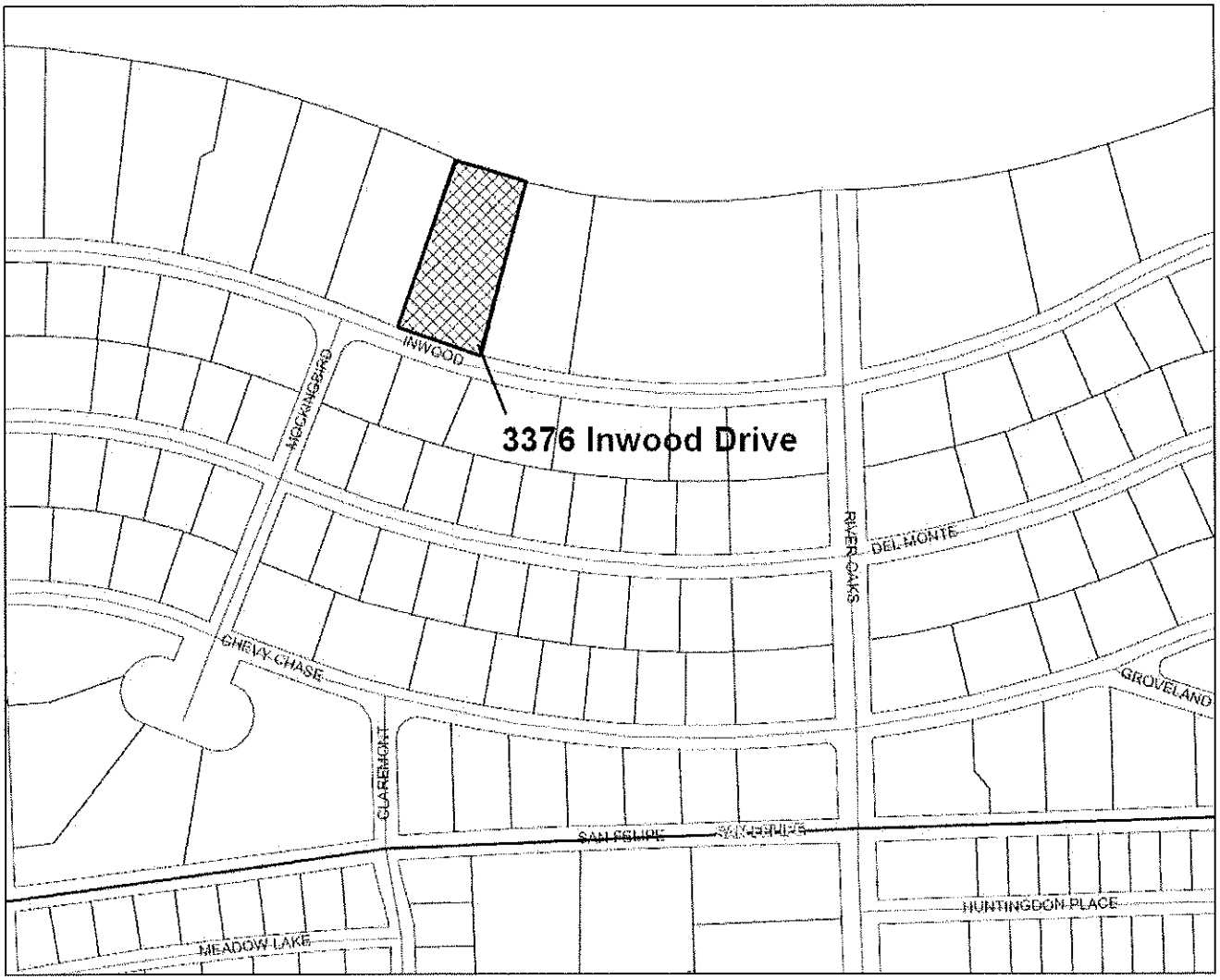
OR

☐ ☑ 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 Archaeological and Historical Commission recommend to the Houston Planning Commission the Protected Landmark Designation of the William L. Clayton Summer House, a City of Houston Landmark, at 3376 Inwood Drive.

WILLIAM L. CLAYTON SUMMER HOUSE
3376 INWOOD DRIVE



SITE LOCATION MAP
WILLIAM L. CLAYTON SUMMER HOUSE
3376 INWOOD DRIVE
NOT TO SCALE