

ZONING CHANGE REVIEW SHEET

CASE NUMBER: C14H-2009-0048

HLC DATE:

November 9, 2009

PC DATE:

November 10, 2009

APPLICANTS: Richard and Amy Griffin

HISTORIC NAME: Fred and Margaret Sharp House

WATERSHED: Shoal Creek

ADDRESS OF PROPOSED ZONING CHANGE: 12 Niles Road

ZONING FROM: SF-3 to SF-3-H

SUMMARY STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends the proposed zoning change from family residence (SF-3) district to family residence – Historic Landmark (SF-3-H) combining district zoning.

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION ACTION: Recommended the proposed zoning change from family residence (SF-3) district to family residence – Historic Landmark (SF-3-H) combining district zoning. Vote: 6-0 (Myers absent).

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION: recommends the proposed zoning change from family residence (SF-3) district to family residence – Historic Landmark (SF-3-H) combining district zoning. Vote: 8-0.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The house is beyond the bounds of the Comprehensive Cultural Resources Survey (1984).

CITY COUNCIL DATE: December 10, 2009

ACTION:

ORDINANCE READINGS: 1ST 2ND 3RD

ORDINANCE NUMBER:

CASE MANAGER: Steve Sadowsky

PHONE: 974-6454

NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION: Pemberton Heights Neighborhood Association

BASIS FOR RECOMMENDATION:

The ca. 1947 house was designed by noted Austin architects Giesecke, Kuehne and Brooks, and has ornate Colonial Revival details at the front entry; the house is associated with Fred Sharp, a prominent oilman, and his

wife, Margaret, prominent in Austin social circles and a charter member of the Austin Junior League.

Architecture:

Two-story L-plan hipped roof painted brick house with Colonial Revival details including the principal entry framed with a segmental-arched surround and containing sidelights, a fanlight, and a keystone at the top of the arch; 9:9 windows with an ornamental stone lintel and keystones; the house has a two-story partial-width front porch with ornamental metal railings. The house was designed by the prominent Austin architectural firm of Giesecke, Kuehne, and Brooks.

Historical Associations:

The house was built for Fred L. and Margaret H. Sharp in 1947. Fred L. Sharp was a native of Brooklyn, New York, who had worked in New Jersey in the laundry business for several years before moving to Austin to work for Karpark Meters, which installed parking meters in many cities, including Austin, after World War II. Sharp later went into the oil business with his brother-in-law Carlton Weaver, and maintained an office in Corpus Christi. Margaret ("Skeet") Sharp grew up in Mississippi, and graduated from the University of Texas. She married Kenneth Caswell, but they divorced in 1940. Margaret became involved in the National Youth Administration and worked for LBJ when he was a congressman. She married Fred Sharp in 1945, and lived in this house until the mid-1980s; she was noted for her gardens. Margaret Sharp was a charter member of the Austin Junior League.

PARCEL NO.: 01130109040000

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: The East 5 feet of Lot 18, Pease Estates Section 2, Abstract 697, Survey 7, .70 acre out of the George W. Spear League.

ANNUAL TAX ABATEMENT: \$28,381 (owner-occupied); city portion: \$4,699 (capped).

APPRAISED VALUE: \$2,121,538

PRESENT USE: Single-family residence.

CONDITION: Excellent

PRESENT OWNERS:

Richard and Amy Griffin
112 W. Blanco Bend Drive
Wimberley, Texas 78676

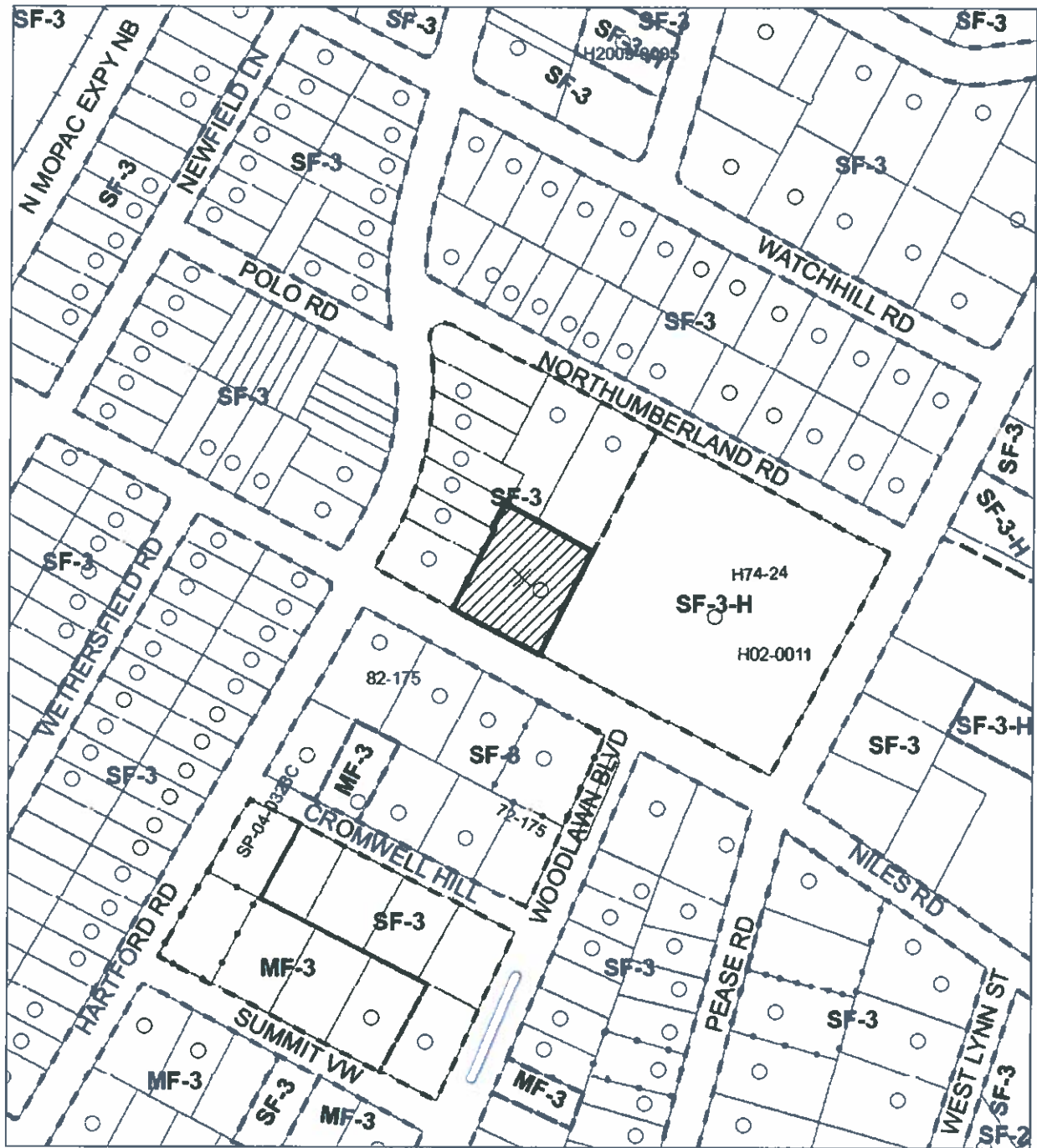
DATE BUILT: ca. 1947

ALTERATIONS/ADDITIONS: The house was remodeled in 1989, a garage and breezeway were added to the house in 1997; a second story was added to the garage in 2000.

ORIGINAL OWNER(S): Fred L. and Margaret H. Sharp (1946)

OTHER HISTORICAL DESIGNATIONS: None.

LOCATION MAP



1" = 200'

 SUBJECT TRACT

 ZONING BOUNDARY

 PENDING CASE

OPERATOR: S. MEEKS

HISTORIC ZONING

ZONING CASE#: C14H-2009-0048

ADDRESS: 1706 NILES RD

SUBJECT AREA: 0.000 ACRES

GRID: H24

MANAGER: S. SADOWSKY



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12 Niles Road
ca. 1947





Detail of front entry and ornamental metal balcony railing

OCCUPANCY HISTORY 12 Niles Road

City Directory Research, Austin History Center
By City Historic Preservation Office
October, 2009

1992	Velda B. Evans, owner No occupation listed NOTE: THE house is listed as 1706 Niles Road
1987	Vacant NOTE: The house is listed as 12 Niles Road
1981	Fred L. Sharp, owner Retired NOTE: The house is listed as 12 Niles Road
1976	Fred L. and Margaret H. Sharp, owners Retired
1972	Fred L. and Margaret H. Sharp, owners Retired
1969	Fred L. and Margaret H. Sharp, owners Retired

1965 Fred L. and Margaret H. Sharp, owners
Retired

1961 Fred L. and Margaret H. Sharp, owners
Proprietor, Weaver-Sharp Oil Company

1957 Fred L. and Margaret H. Sharp, owners
Oilman

1953 Fred L. and Margaret H. Sharp, owners
No occupation listed

1952 Fred L. and Margaret H. Sharp, owners
No occupation listed

1949 The address is not listed in the directory.
NOTE: Fred and Margaret Sharp are not listed in the directory.

NOTES:

Fred L. Sharp was born in Brooklyn, New York in 1895, and was living in Highland Park, New Jersey in 1917, when he registered (twice) for the military. He states on his registration card that he is married, and that he works as a laundry foreman for Alex Stewart in Highland Park. Fred Sharp does not verifiably appear in any census reports – there is a Fred Sharp, a stockbroker, living with his wife Loretta in Houston, Texas in 1930, and although this Fred Sharp (as well as his wife) was born in New York, he is listed as being about 2 years younger than the Fred Sharp who purchased this house.

Form 1 2366 REGISTRATION CARD Jan 139

1 Name Fred L. Sharp 22

2 7 Olive Rd H. Park N.J.

3 Date of Birth Apr 27 1895

4 Are you (1) a natural born citizen, (2) a naturalized citizen, (3) an alien? Natural Born

5 Where born Brooklyn N.Y. U.S.A.

6 If not a citizen, of what country, state or colony are you a subject?

7 What is your present trade, occupation or office? Laundry Foreman

8 By whom employed? Alex Stewart

9 Where employed? Highland Park N.J.

10 How long have you been married? 7 yrs

11 What military service have you had? None

12 I certify that I have verified above contents and that they are true.

C. H. Gudmund

29-3-23-A REGISTRAR'S REPORT 118

1 Name Fred L. Sharp 22

2 Date of Birth Apr 27 1895 22

3 How long have you been married? 7 yrs

I certify that the contents are true, that the person registered has read his own statement, that I have explained his statement, and that all of his answers of which I have knowledge are true, except as follows:

Leo Muller

2nd H. Park

Highland Park

June 5-1

Fred Sharp's World War I draft registration card – shows him as married and living in New Jersey working as a laundry foreman.

SHARP, Fred L., 81, No. 13 Niles Rd., died Tuesday. Services 10:30 a.m. Thursday at Wood Corley Funeral Home. Survivors: wife, Margaret Sharp of Austin; sons, Kenneth Caswell of Memphis, Tenn., CAVITT Sharp of Los Angeles, Calif.; daughter, Mrs. Arthur Cunningham of Tyler; sisters, Mrs. H.G. Fonville of Houston, Mrs. G.E. Turner of Maitland, La.; 4 grandchildren; 2 nephews and one niece.

Fred Sharp's obituary
 Austin American-Statesman, March 30, 1977

Fred Sharp
 147 - -

1706 Niles Road.
 142-2501 of
 Peace Est. -

Unplatted

Two-story brick veneer res.-garage inter-
 29048 2-11-46 \$20,000.00 gral
 Frank Sefolk

16

Building permit for the construction of the house (1946)

WATER SERVICE PERMIT

Austin, Texas

No. B-2780
 DUPLICATE
 Date 2-25-47

Received of Fred Sharp
 Address 1706 NILES Road

Amount

Plumber

Size of Tap $\frac{1}{2}$ "

Date of Connection 2-25-47
 Size of Tap Made 1 1/2"
 Size Service Made 1 1/2"
 Size Main Tapped 4"
 From Front Prop. Line to Curb Cock 10'
 From West Prop. Line to Curb Cock 50'
 Location of Meter FRONT CURB
 Type of Box 10" x 10"
 Depth of Main in St. 3'
 Depth of Service Line 2'
 From Curb Cock to Tap on Main 28'
 Checked by Engr. Dept.

No.	Fittings	Size
1	Curb Cock	1 1/2" cap. Te cap
1	Elbow	1 1/2" cap.
1	Std Elbow	1 1/2" cap.
1	Bushing	1 1/2" x 1 1/2"
1	Reducer	1 1/2" cap. to 1"
30'	Pipe	1 1/2" cap. 40' x 7
20'	Lead Comp.	20' x 1 1/2" cap. Lead
1	Valve	6" x 1 1/2" O.T. S.W.C.
1	Plug	6" x 1 1/2" Ball N.P.
1	Stop	4" Tee HAMP
1	Box	1 1/2"
1	Lid	1 1/2"
1	Valves	1 1/2"
Job No.	11323-102	
Reg. No.	1211	

INDEXED

Water service permit to Fred Sharp (1947)

Receipt No. 5922 Application for Sewer Connection N° 20450

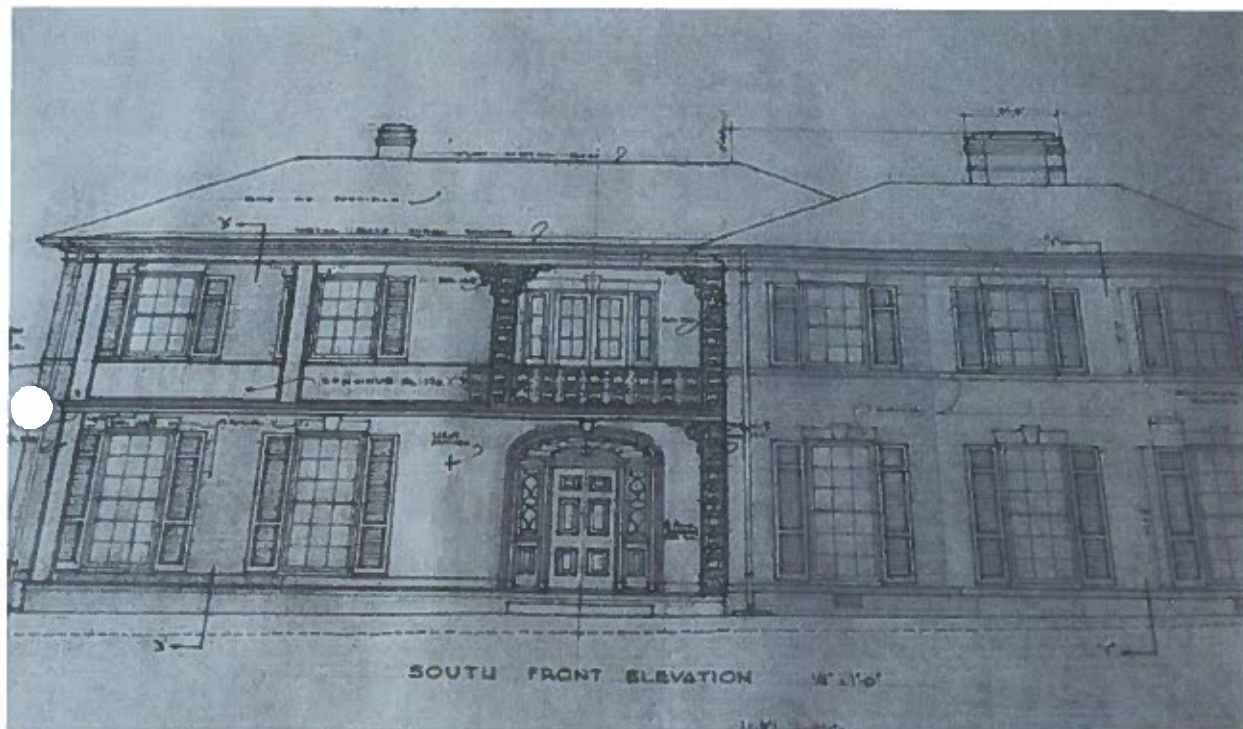
Austin, Texas, 5-10- 1946

To the Superintendent of Sanitary Sewer Division, City of Austin, Texas.

Sir:—
 I hereby make application for sewer connection and instructions on premises owned by Fred L. Sharp at 1706 Nile St. Rd. Street,
 further described as Lot 147 of Block 147 Outlot Division
 subdivision unplatted Plat 147, which is to be used as a Res.
 In this place there are to be installed 4 fixtures. Plumbing Permit No. 22109
 I agree to pay the City of Austin, the regular ordinance charge. 5-10-46

Depth at Prop. Line 4' 5 at Main Respectfully,
 Sub. Out } 27 1/2' E of W.L.W. H. L. Wiley
 Connected (Location)
 Date 5-15-48 Wm
 By Sharp
 NOTE: Connection Instructions 6 in Nile Rd - at west
lot line - new line

Sewer connection application by Fred L. Sharp (1946)



Original blueprint drawing for the house done by Giesecke, Kuehne, and Brooks.

A. APPLICATION FOR HISTORIC ZONING

OK to
SS
9-16-09

PROJECT INFORMATION:

#10345298

DEPARTMENTAL USE ONLY	
APPLICATION DATE: <u>9-23-09</u>	FILE NUMBER(S): <u>CHH 2009-0046</u>
TENTATIVE HLC DATE: _____	
TENTATIVE PC or ZAP DATE: _____	
TENTATIVE CC DATE: _____	
CASE MANAGER: <u>S. SODOLSKY</u>	CITY INITIATED: YES/NO <u>(NO)</u>
APPLICATION ACCEPTED BY: <u>R. R. RAY</u>	ROLLBACK: YES/NO _____

BASIC PROJECT DATA:

1. OWNER'S NAME:	<u>Amy & Richard Griffin</u>
2. PROJECT NAME:	<u>The Fred & Margaret Sharp House</u>
3. PROJECT STREET ADDRESS (or Range):	<u>#12 Niles Road</u>
ZIP	<u>78703</u>
COUNTY:	<u>Travis</u>
IF PROJECT ADDRESS CANNOT BE DEFINED ABOVE:	
LOCATED _____ FRONTAGE FEET ALONG THE N. S. E. W. (CIRCLE ONE) SIDE OF	
APPROXIMATELY _____ (ROAD NAME PROPERTY FRONTS ONTO), WHICH IS	
INTERSECTION WITH _____ DISTANCE FROM ITS	
CROSS STREET.	

AREA TO BE REZONED:

4. ACRES _____	(OR)	SQ. FT. _____			
5. ZONING AND LAND USE INFORMATION:					
EXISTING ZONING	EXISTING USE	TRACT# (IF MORE THAN 1)	ACRES / SQ. FT.	PROPOSED USE	PROPOSED ZONING
<u>SF-3</u>	<u>Residence</u>	_____	_____	<u>Residence</u>	<u>SF-3-H</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

RELATED CURRENT CASES:

6. ACTIVE ZONING CASE?	(YES/NO) <u>(NO)</u>	FILE NUMBER: _____
7. RESTRICTIVE COVENANT?	(YES/NO) <u>(NO)</u>	FILE NUMBER: _____
8. SUBDIVISION?	(YES/NO) <u>(NO)</u>	FILE NUMBER: _____
9. SITE PLAN?	(YES/NO) <u>(NO)</u>	FILE NUMBER: _____

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION (SUBDIVISION REFERENCE OR METES AND BOUNDS):

10a. SUBDIVISION REFERENCE: Name: Pease Estates Sec. 2 E 5 ft. of 1 of
Block(s) _____ Lot(s) _____ Outlot(s) A-185 197 Shr 7
Plat Book: _____ Page ACK. 70 Spear 6 W
Number: _____
10b. METES AND BOUNDS (Attach two copies of certified field notes if subdivision reference is not available or zoning includes partial lots)

DEED REFERENCE CONVEYING PROPERTY TO PRESENT OWNER AND TAX PARCEL I.D.:

11. VOLUME: _____ PAGE: _____ TAX PARCEL I.D. NO. 01130109040000

OTHER PROVISIONS:

12. IS PROPERTY IN A ZONING COMBINING DISTRICT / OVERLAY ZONE? YES ☒ NO ☐
TYPE OF COMBINING DIST/OVERLAY ZONE (NCCD, NP, etc) _____
13. LOCATED IN A LOCAL OR NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT? YES ☐ NO ☒
14. IS A TIA REQUIRED? YES ☒ NO ☐ (NOT REQUIRED IF BASE ZONING IS NOT CHANGING)
TRIPS PER DAY: _____
TRAFFIC SERIAL ZONE(S): _____

OWNERSHIP TYPE:

15. ☒ SOLE ☐ COMMUNITY PROPERTY ☐ PARTNERSHIP ☐ CORPORATION ☐ TRUST

If ownership is other than sole or community property, list individuals/partners/principals below or attach separate sheet.

OWNER INFORMATION:

16. OWNER CONTACT INFORMATION
SIGNATURE: Amy Griffin NAME: Amy & Richard Griffin
FIRM NAME: _____ TELEPHONE NUMBER: 567-8389
STREET ADDRESS: #15 Niles Rd.
CITY: Austin STATE: Tx ZIP CODE: 78703
EMAIL ADDRESS: agriffin13@austin-rr.com

AGENT INFORMATION (IF APPLICABLE):

17. AGENT CONTACT INFORMATION
SIGNATURE: S Deaderick NAME: Suzanne Deaderick
FIRM NAME: Historic Research & Representation TELEPHONE NUMBER: 512-477-2929
STREET ADDRESS: 2502 Harris Blvd.
CITY: Austin STATE: Texas ZIP CODE: 78703
CONTACT PERSON: Suzanne Deaderick TELEPHONE NUMBER: 477-2929
EMAIL ADDRESS: Suzanne@Grande.com.net

DEPARTMENTAL USE ONLY:

D. SUBMITTAL VERIFICATION AND INSPECTION AUTHORIZATION

SUBMITTAL VERIFICATION

My signature attests to the fact that the attached application package is complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I understand that proper City staff review of this application is dependent upon the accuracy of the information provided and that any inaccurate or inadequate information provided by me/my firm/etc., may delay the proper review of this application.

PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT NAME BELOW SIGNATURE AND
INDICATE FIRM REPRESENTED, IF APPLICABLE.

S. Deaderick 9/17/09
Signature Date

Suzanne Deaderick
Name (Typed or Printed)

Historic Research & Represent.
Firm (If applicable)

INSPECTION AUTHORIZATION

As owner or authorized agent, my signature authorizes staff to visit and inspect the property for which this application is being submitted.

PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT NAME BELOW SIGNATURE AND
INDICATE FIRM REPRESENTED, IF APPLICABLE.

→ Amy Griffin 09/17/09
Signature Date

Amy or Richard Griffin
Name (Typed or Printed)

Firm (If applicable)

E. ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM

concerning
Subdivision Plat Notes, Deed Restrictions,
Restrictive Covenants
and / or
Zoning Conditional Overlays

I, Suzanne Deaderick have checked for subdivision plat notes, deed restrictions,

(Print name of applicant)

restrictive covenants and/or zoning conditional overlays prohibiting certain uses and/or requiring certain development restrictions i.e. height, access, screening etc. on this property, located at

#12 Niles Road
(Address or Legal Description)
Austin, Tx. 78703

If a conflict should result with the request I am submitting to the City of Austin due to subdivision plat notes, deed restrictions, restrictive covenants and/or zoning conditional overlays it will be my responsibility to resolve it. I also acknowledge that I understand the implications of use and/or development restrictions that are a result of a subdivision plat notes, deed restrictions, restrictive covenants and/or zoning conditional overlays.

I understand that if requested, I must provide copies of any and all subdivision plat notes, deed restrictions, restrictive covenants and/or zoning conditional overlay information which may apply to this property.

S Deaderick
(Applicant's signature)

9/17/09
(Date)

TAX CERTIFICATE
Nelda Wells Spears
Travis County Tax Assessor-Collector
P.O. Box 1748
Austin, Texas 78767
(512) 854-9473

NO 1041988

ACCOUNT NUMBER: 01-1301-0904-0000

PROPERTY OWNER:

GRIFFIN RICHARD D & AMY A
112 W BLANCO BEND DR
WIMBERLY, TX 78676-5600

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION:

E 5 FT OF LOT 18 PEASE ESTATES SEC
2 ABS 697 SUR 7 *ACR .70 SPEAR G
W

ACRES 0.000 MIN* .00000 TYPE

SITUS INFORMATION: 12 NILES RD

This is to certify that after a careful check of tax records of this office, the following taxes, delinquent taxes, penalties and interests are due on the described property of the following tax unit(s):

YEAR ENTITY
2008 AUSTIN ISD
CITY OF AUSTIN (TRAV)
TRAVIS COUNTY
TRAVIS COUNTY HEALTHCARE DISTRICT
ACC (TRAVIS)

TOTAL
ALL PAID
ALL PAID
ALL PAID
ALL PAID
ALL PAID

TOTAL SEQUENCE 0

ALL PAID

TOTAL TAX:
UNPAID FEES:
INTEREST ON FEES:
COMMISSION:
TOTAL DUE ==>

ALL PAID
* NONE *
* NONE *
* NONE *
ALL PAID

XES PAID FOR YEAR 2008 \$47,565.94

ALL TAXES PAID IN FULL PRIOR TO AND INCLUDING THE YEAR 2008 EXCEPT FOR UNPAID YEARS LISTED ABOVE.
The above described property may be subject to special valuation based on its use, and additional rollback taxes may become due. (Section 23.55, State Property Tax Code).
Pursuant to Section 31.08 of the State Property Tax Code, there is a fee of \$10.00 for all Tax Certificates.

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND AND SEAL OF OFFICE ON THIS DATE OF 09/17/2009

Fee Paid: \$10.00

Nelda Wells Spears
Tax Assessor-Collector

By: 

Deed Chronology

#12 Niles Road

Transaction	Volume/Page	Date
Anne Dowling Robertson and the estate of William F. Robertson to Fred L. & Margaret Sharp	771/20	8-21-45
Niles Graham to Fred L. & Margaret Sharp	1324/259	3-9-53
Margaret Howie Sharp to Velda Barnhart Wyche	09327/0278	8-6-85
Velda B. Evans (formerly Wyche) to Greer Lee Evans	10912/0790	3-31-89
Greer & Velda Evans to Richard C. & Susan Hile	11926/2142	4-28-93
Richard & Susan Hile to Ian George Butcher & Dundee Jones		6-13-2000
Ian George & Dundee Butcher to Richard & Amy Griffin		3-5-2004

**Chronological Listing of Owners/Occupants
#12 Niles Road**

Year	Occupant Name	Source
1946-78	Fred L. Sharp	City Directory
1979-85	Mrs. Margaret Sharp	City Directory
1986-93	Velda B. Evans (was Wyche)	City Directory
1994-2000	Richard C. Hile	City Directory
2000-03	Ian George & Dundee Butcher	City Directory
2004-present	Amy & Richard Griffin	City Directory

Biography of Margaret "Skeet" Caswell Sharp

A real Southern lady from Jackson, Mississippi, Margaret Sharp was also very bright. She was the salutatorian of her graduating class before coming to the University of Texas to get her degree in Spanish and French.

When Margaret came home from the hospital as a premie, she was too small to sleep in a crib. Her parents made a bed for her in a drawer, and upon seeing how tiny she was, her siblings declared that she looked like a "little red mosquito". From then on, Margaret was called 'Skeet' by her family and friends.

After U.T., Margaret married Kenneth Caswell, the son of Daniel Haskell Caswell. They had two children, Kenneth Caswell, Jr. and a daughter, Claire. The family lived in what was called the 'middle Caswell house', which years later was demolished when the city extended Fifteenth Street. The marriage didn't last, and the Caswells were divorced in 1940.

Being a very independent and self-sufficient woman, Margaret went to work for Congressman Lyndon B. Johnson to support her children. She became involved in the National Youth Association, which was one of Roosevelt's programs. Margaret was also an avid gardener, and became a co-owner in "Hillyer's Family Florist".

In 1945, Margaret married Fred Sharp. Together they bought the lot next to the Pease Mansion and built their beautiful home. Margaret now had the perfect place to garden, and was twice voted "Gardener of the Year" in Austin. She was also a 1933 charter member of the Junior League of Austin.

Biography of Fred L. Sharp

Fred Sharp came to Austin from upper New York. He had always been quite the entrepreneur, investing in various businesses including a laundry in his home state. Upon moving to Austin in the 1940s, Fred went to work for Karpark Meters. He became very successful selling parking meters to small towns in Texas, Mississippi, and Louisiana. This was right after the war and small towns were installing parking meters for the first time. He also sold them to the city of Austin.

Because of this success, Fred and Margaret were able to afford a large lot that they bought from Niles Graham. They contracted with Giesecke, Kuehne and Brooks to design their beautiful new home, and selected Frank Sefcik to build it. The house took two years to build because materials were difficult to get.

It was during this time that Fred went into the oil business with his brother-in-law, Carlton "Tubby" Weaver. They formed "Weaver Sharp Oil Company", and successfully drilled in south Texas and the Corpus Christi area. Fred was also an artist and signed his work with an F sharp (the musical note).

During World War I, Fred had survived a plane crash and lost his nose. This was, of course, devastating to him. Plastic surgery was very new at this time, so Fred sought out a surgeon in Vienna, Austria who rebuilt his nose with a platinum plate and shaped it to look just like his mother's nose. Hardly anyone could tell, according to his daughter.

Biography of Richard C. Hiles

Richard C. Hiles is an attorney with Dies and Hile law firm in Austin, Texas.

Biography of Amy & Richard Griffin

Married in 1990, Richard and Amy both served on the board of the Neil and Elaine Griffin Foundation for 15 years. F. O'Neil Griffin ("Neil") is Richard's father. The family charitable foundation gave millions of dollars in full-ride scholarships to graduates from Kerr county high schools to attend Texas state colleges. Each recipients was hand chosen based on scholastic achievement, SAT scores, school and community involvement, and character. The foundation also gave sizable contributions to Schreiner University, MD Anderson, Habitat for Humanity, and Austin's Paramount Theatre.

Both Richard and Amy are traditional darkroom photographers and owned F8 Fine Art Gallery from 2001-2006. There were two locations: Kerrville and Austin. They divided their time between the two cities until finally settling in Austin full-time after closing the Kerrville location in 2004.

The Way We Were: THE EARLY YEARS

By Peggy Pickle

In 1933, Austin had just 53,120 people — and only 44 miles of paved streets. Tom Miller was mayor, Ma Ferguson moved into the Governor's Mansion for the third time and Austin's pride and joy was the elegant new Public Library at 9th and Guadalupe.

Also in 1933, a group of young women involved in charitable work benefiting Austin's Settlement Club was granted permission by the Association of Junior Leagues of America to form the Junior League of Austin, Inc. (JLA).

The thin brown volume which is the First Annual Report and Membership Directory of the 1933-34 Junior League of Austin lists 48 Active members and four "Professionals" — women who contributed dues but "because of their professional work are not able to do Active work."

Among the charter members of the JLA was Mrs. Ken Caswell, now Mrs. Fred Sharp — known to her friends as Skeet. Recently, Skeet Sharp reminisced about her early days in the Junior League of Austin.

In 1933, Skeet was a young wife with a



Skeet Sharp as a 1933 charter member of the Junior League of Austin.

toddler, living in the "middle" Caswell house at 1500 West Avenue (demolished during the 1970's extension of 15th Street). One morning she received a surprise visit from a group of Settlement Club volunteers who invited her to join them in petitioning the Association of Junior Leagues of America for membership. In those days of secret ballot — even pre-secret ballot — did Skeet suspect ahead of time she would be asked?

"Oh, it was a total surprise!" said Skeet. "If you got wind ahead of time that you were even under consideration, they might not ask you. Membership was a great honor, but very hush-hush."

Standing in her living room, Skeet had just a few minutes to deliberate before saying yes. In February 1934, the national association ratified the petition and Skeet became a charter member of the Junior League of Austin.



Eight Austin "chorines" whose picture appeared in the Austin American Statesman advertising the 1935 Follies were: (L to r.) Mrs. Ed Robinson, Mrs. A.N. McCallum, Jr., Mrs. Selden Reed, Mrs. Stuart Watt, Mrs. Wright Stubbs, Mrs. Greenwood Wooten, unidentified, Mrs. Banner Gregg.

Little did she know that her membership would span almost two decades, until she went Sustaining in 1950. "In all those years I never took a leave," said Skeet. "I was so young then and I stayed the whole time. I think I served longer than anybody (of the charter members)."

Today, at age 81, Skeet Sharp is as lovely and unflappable as ever. Her gardening talents are legendary, as is her reputation for getting things done. In a voice still heavy with her native Mississippi, she smiles as she remembers Austin's first self-conscious foray into League-dom.

Early in 1934, the Austin League, thrilled by its new national status, held a reception at the Enfield home of Mrs. J.T. (Gladys) Bowman, newly-elected first president of the JLA. The reception honored a visiting advisor from the national Association, sent to help the Austin League get started. League members arrived at the Bowman

The Early Years (continued)
home (now the 1508 Marshall Lane residence of Sustainer Jeanne Vier) dressed "way, way up," only to discover that their guest of honor was all business — "charming and intelligent, but dressed just as plain as could be."

"Despite hard times, people dressed formally then. You wore evening clothes to weddings. We wore hats and gloves *everywhere*. When you put on a dress, you put on a hat."

League members shopped at Scarbrough & Sons, T.H. Williams, Goodfriends, Leon's Slipper Shop, Marie Antoinette's, The French Boot Shop and bought hats at Miss Fanny Andrew's on Lavaca. Most ladies had fashionable Marcel waves, "except Gladys Bowman, who wore her hair in a bun."

Early monthly League meetings were held at the Calcasieu building on 5th Street, through the largess of the Drake family, whose daughter, Margaret Drake Thomson, was League Corresponding Secretary 1933-34. Skeet remembers "a big barny room" with no frills, but it was free, centrally located, and the League felt blessed to have the space.

Dues for Actives throughout the 1930's were \$16 a year, which during the Depression was "a lot more money than it sounds like now. Ken and I paid \$50 for our first house!"

Opened September 6, 1934 at 503 East 5th Street, the Thrift Shop is the Austin League's oldest income-producing project. To drum up interest, the League hired little

boys to pass out orange fliers advertising the grand opening. To everybody's surprise, the Thrift Shop was mobbed opening day, making a profit of \$70 — the first month's rent. So successful that members were forced to issue numbers to limit shoppers, the Thrift Shop raised \$1,257 its first two years.

The League's earliest event fund-raiser was the Follies, begun in 1935. Produced by Jerome Cargill Productions and directed by Gerald Hanchette, the Follies was a traveling talent show benefitting Leagues around the country. Cargill provided scripts and costumes, while League members provided local talent for the skits. After ex-

You see, we were trying very hard to get away from the 'social' image of the Junior League. We had fun, but we tried very hard to prove that we were doing good volunteer work. I remember we were all so proud to be members of the Junior League.

penses and Cargill's cut, the Follies earned \$1,650 for the Austin Junior League its first year.

Everybody loved the Follies. For many, it was a rare chance in the limelight. "Here we were, most of us old married ladies, up on stage, kicking and dancing in short skirts," giggles Skeet. "And oh, the husbands loved it. They'd sit in the audience and hoot and carry on. There was much discussion about who had the best legs."

The first year, with guidance from the

national League, the board of the Austin League began the daunting process of deciding which organizations would receive League volunteers. Hospitals were popular placements, as was the Well Baby Clinic, under the direction of T.J. McElheny, M.D. One of Skeet's first placements was the Lighthouse for the Blind, where she read work assignments to the students, learning a little Braille in the process. "Back then they (the Lighthouse students) didn't get as much training. They learned to make brooms, things like that. It's a different world now."

Despite the League's glamorous image, much League work was anything but glamorous. "A lot of our placements were menial jobs — not even desk jobs," says Skeet. "We cleaned up, scrubbed the floor. We did what was needed and thought nothing of it. You see, we were trying very hard to get away from the 'social' image of the Junior League. We had fun, but we tried very hard to prove that we were doing good volunteer work. I remember we were all so *proud* to be members of the Junior League."

Skeet thinks the best part about being a charter member of the JLA was the feeling of closeness. "The League was very small. You knew everybody. You knew their families. You knew what was expected of you."

And what was the hardest part about the League back then? Fifty-eight years later, her complaint sounds familiar.

"Too many meetings!" she says with a laugh.

