

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION
PERMITS IN NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICTS
JANUARY 27, 2014
NRD-2013-0103
1717 Palma Plaza
Old West Austin National Register Historic District

PROPOSAL

Demolish a ca. 1935 duplex.

ARCHITECTURE

One-story, rectangular-plan, side-gabled frame duplex with a full-width inset porch on plain, square wood posts; single and paired 1:1 fenestration. Entry doors to the duplex units are each to the edge of the front elevation.

RESEARCH

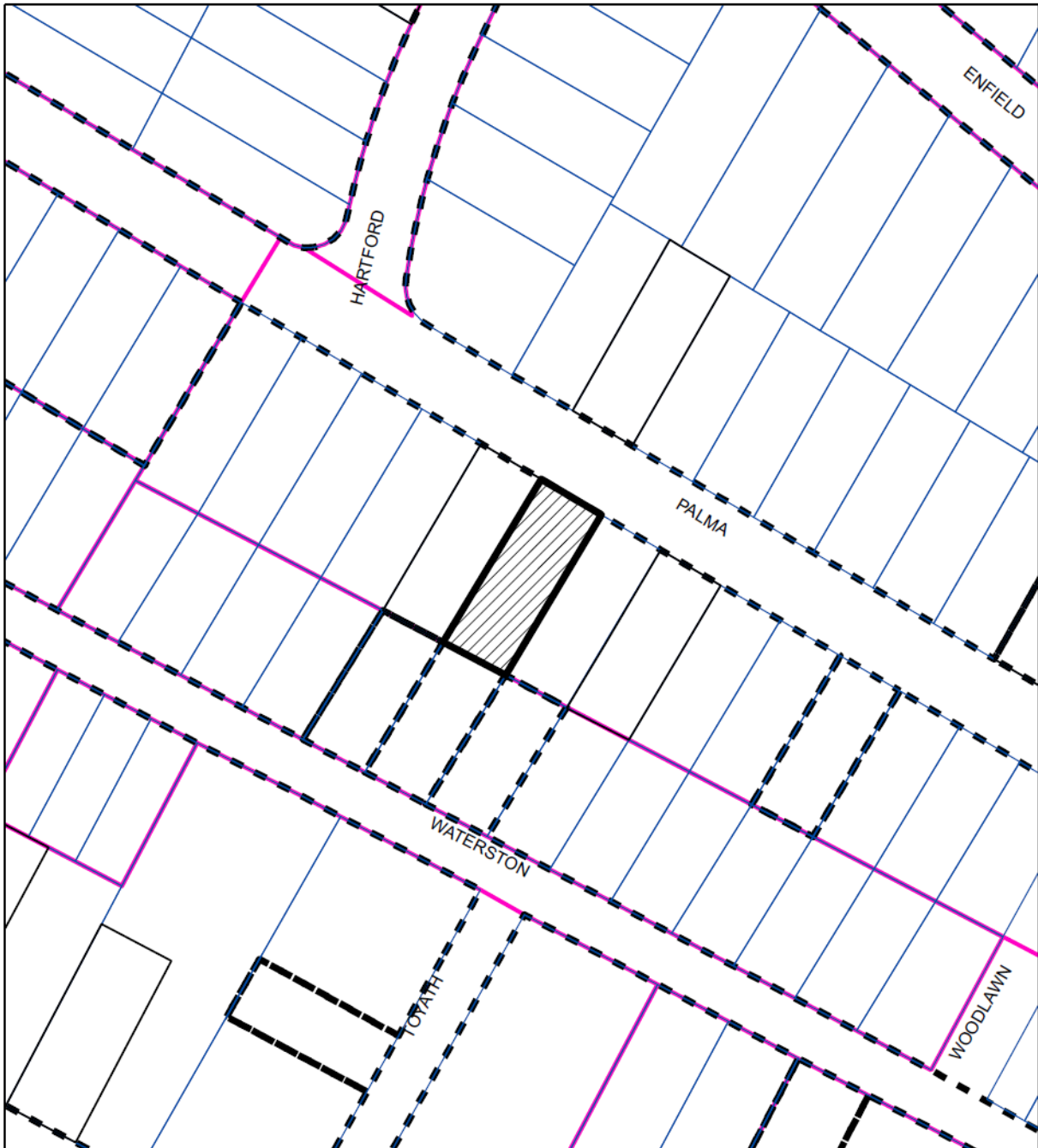
The duplex was built at the end of 1935 by Forrest Morgan, the owner of a local printing company, as an investment property. The earliest tenants of the duplex were very prominent people, including Pansy Nichols, the executive secretary of the Texas Tuberculosis Association, and a champion for medical care for African-American and Hispanic Austinites. Ms. Nichols lived here from around 1936 to around 1938. Other tenants in the late 1930s and early 1940s included the manager of Dun and Bradstreet, and Stanley E. Gunn, the Capitol reporter for the Austin Daily Tribune, who, after moving from this duplex, went to work as a war correspondent for the Fort Worth Star-Telegram and was killed in the war in the Pacific in 1944. After World War II, the tenants were mostly single women, many widowed, who worked as clerks, cashiers, and stenographers. There was a relatively high turnover in tenants after World War II; Alice Keesee, an analyst for the State Highway Department, lived here for around 10 years, and Helen MacBeth, a teacher originally from Indiana, lived here for almost 30 years.

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW

The building is contributing to the Old West Austin National Register Historic District.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Release the permit after completion of a City of Austin Documentation Package consisting of photographs of all elevations, a dimensioned sketch plan, and a narrative history, for archiving at the Austin History Center, and after Commission review of the plans for the site. While the duplex is contributing to the National Register District, it does not qualify for individual designation as a historic landmark.



SUBJECT TRACT

ZONING BOUNDARY

CASE#: NRD-2013-0103
LOCATION: 1717 Palma Plaza



This product is for informational purposes and may not have been prepared for or be suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes. It does not represent an on-the-ground survey and represents only the approximate relative location of property boundaries.

This product has been produced by the Planning and Development Review Department for the sole purpose of geographic reference. No warranty is made by the City of Austin regarding specific accuracy or completeness.

1717 Palma Plaza
ca. 1935



OCCUPANCY HISTORY
1717 Palma Plaza

City Directory Research, Austin History Center
By City Historic Preservation Office
November, 2013

1992	Tracey Overbeck, renter Student ½: Vacant
1985-86	Helen F. MacBeth, renter Librarian, St. Francis School (not listed in the directory) ½: Daniel Watson, renter No occupation listed NOTE: The directory indicates that Daniel Watson was a new resident at this address.
1981	Mrs. H. Fell MacBeth, renter Teacher, Resurrection School (not listed in the directory) ½: Stephen B. Derrickson, renter Assistant professor, University of Texas
1977	Helen L. MacBeth, renter Widow, Harold D. Macbeth Teacher, public schools ½: Kenneth E. and Nancy C. Richards, renters

Kenneth: No occupation listed
 Nancy: Employed by the public schools.

- 1973 Helen L. MacBeth, renter
 Widow, Harold D. Macbeth
 Tutor
 ½: Kenneth E. and Nancy Richards, renters
 Repairman, Strait Music, 908 N. Lamar Boulevard.
 NOTE: The directory indicates that Kenneth and Nancy Richards were new residents at this address.
- 1968 Helen F. MacBeth, renter
 Widow, Harold D. Macbeth
 Teacher, public schools
 ½: Mary G. Knight, renter
 Clerk, Lone Star Shoe Service, 622 Colorado Street.
- 1962 Allen R. and Billie Hoermann, renters
 Foreman, Doug Scales Body Shop (not listed in the directory).
 ½: Mary G. Knight, renter
 No occupation listed
 NOTE: Helen Macbeth is listed at 2904-A Robinson Avenue; she was a teacher at Govalle School.
- 1959 Henry W. and Gail Lichte, renters
 Student
 Also listed is Patricia Lichte, a stenographer at the State Attorney General's Office.
 ½: Mary G. Knight, renter
 Cashier, Buttrey's, women's and children's ready-to-wear clothing, 107 W. 6th Street.
- 1955 Ethel Adair, renter
 Widow, W.D. Adair
 No occupation listed
 ½: Mary Knight, renter
 Cashier, Buttrey's, women's and children's ready-to-wear clothing, 107 W. 6th Street.
- 1952 Alice Keesee, renter
 Widow, Allen Keesee
 Analyst, State Highway Department
 ½: Vacant
- 1949 Alice Keesee, renter
 Widow, Alden Keesee
 Analyst, State Highway Department
 ½: Wallace W. and Doris Shropshire, Jr., renters
 Student, University of Texas
- 1947 Alice Keesee, renter
 Widow, Alden Keesee
 Clerk, State Highway Department
 ½: Ray and Cornelia Strauss, renters

Clerk, Gugenheim-Goldsmith, wholesale fruit and produce, wholesale beer, 410 E. 3rd Street.

- 1944-45 Alden and Alice Keesee, renters
 Alden: U.S. Army
 Alice: Stenographer, State Highway Department
 ½: James T. and Julie Malloy, renters
 U.S. Army
- 1941 Stanley E. and Catherine Gunn, renters
 Reporter, Austin Daily Tribune, 10th and Colorado Streets.
 ½: Harry D. and India McIntosh, renters
 Salesman
- 1939 Benjamin T. and Helen Bennett, renters
 Manager, Dun & Bradstreet, 618 Littlefield Building.
 ½: Arnold B. and Loney Hughes, renters
 Foreman
- 1937 Pansy Nichols, renter
 Executive secretary, Texas Tuberculosis Association (Dr. Zachary T. Scott, chair), 700 Brazos Street.
 ½: M. Paul and Dora K. Gordon, renters
 No occupation listed
- 1935 The address is not listed in the directory.
 NOTE: Pansy Nichols is listed at 716 Patterson Avenue; she was the executive secretary of the Texas Tuberculosis Association.
 NOTE: M. Paul and Dora K. Gordon are not listed in the directory.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES:

Pansy Nichols (ca. 1936 – ca. 1938)

Pansy Nichols appears in the 1930 U.S. Census as the 33-year old daughter of Marmion Nichols, who rented a house at 1514 W. 9th Street in Austin. Pansy was the director of the public health service. Her 64-year old widowed father had no occupation listed. The family included Pansy's four other siblings, the youngest of whom was 20, and included the three young children of Pansy's divorced sister, Marguerite Gregory.

Pansy Nichols

Pansy Nichols died March 23, 1991,

in a local nursing home. Ms. Nichols was born in Georgetown, Texas, in 1896. She was educated in Georgetown and Austin and attended Southwestern University.

Her long career of public service began as an elementary teacher in Williamson county. During World War I she worked for the U.S. War Department and was awarded a Citation for her work as an Educator.

In 1918 she became the first employee of the Texas Tuberculosis Association as an Educator in child health care. In 1921 she became the Executive Director of that Association and began a drive to provide facilities to care for Tuberculosis patients. While Tuberculosis hospitals were difficult to find for many they were non-existent for Black Texans. Ms. Nichols provided the leadership that achieved hospital care for Black T.B. patients.

In her position with the T.B. Association she also worked to establish a program which became the Postgraduate Assembly for Black Physicians of Prairie View A&M as well as other continuing educational opportunities in allied health care fields. She also helped establish health education in seven Black colleges and sought to provide routine health education in all Texas elementary schools.

In 1942 she assisted the formation of the Inter-American Medical Conference, the first cooperative effort to battle Tuberculosis on both sides of the Rio Grande.

In 1946, under her leadership, free chest X-ray services were provided throughout Texas. because of Ms. Nichols' tireless leadership, all citizens of Texas had access to Tubercular health care regardless of the color of one's skin or the ability to pay for that service.

From her start in 1921 to her retirement from the Association in 1963, Ms. Nichols' achievements and awards were many and her work affected the lives of all Texans.

She is lovingly remembered and survived by: a brother and sister-in-law, T.J. and Maisie Nichols; four nephews, Tom Nichols, David Nichols, Jack Gregory, W.F. (Bill) Gregory; many other family and friends.

Arrangements by Weed-Corley Funeral Home, 3125 N. Lamar. 452-8811.

Obituary of Pansy Nichols
Austin American-Statesman, March 24, 1991

Stanley E. and Catherine Gunn (ca. 1940 – ca. 1943)

Stanley E. and Catherine Gunn appear in the 1940 U.S. Census as the renters of an apartment in this house, for which they paid \$28 per month. Both Stanley and Catherine Gunn were then 26; he had been born in Texas, she in Missouri. Stanley Gunn was the Capitol reporter for the Austin Daily Tribune; she was a stenographer. Although the city directories show that they only rented half this house, there is nobody else listed at this address in the census report. The 1930 U.S. Census shows Stanley E. Gunn as the 16-year old son of Elmer and Hazel Gunn of Lubbock, Texas. Stanley had no occupation listed; his Arkansas-born father was an attorney. According to the 1920 U.S. Census, the family had lived in Waco at that time, where Elmer Gunn was a lawyer. Stanley Gunn was a war correspondent for the Fort Worth Star-Telegram during World War II and was killed from shrapnel wounds on Leyte Island in the Pacific Ocean on October 29, 1944. He and Catherine had been living in Fort Worth at the time of his death.

Alden and Alice Keesee (ca. 1943 – ca. 1953)

Alden L. Keesee is listed as the 17-year old son of C.B. and Lenore Keesee of Victoria, Texas in the 1930 U.S. Census. Alden had been born in Texas and had no occupation listed. His father, C.B., was a house carpenter in Victoria. Although Alice Keesee is listed as a widow in the city directories, it appears that she and Alden divorced – he died in Temple, Texas in 1959.

Helen MacBeth (ca. 1965 – ca. 1990)

Helen and Harold MacBeth appear in the 1940 Census for Fort Wayne, Indiana, where they owned their home. Harold MacBeth was then 37, had been born in Minnesota, and was a brewer at a brewery. Helen MacBeth was then 33, had been born in Indiana, and had no occupation listed. They had a daughter, Joanna, 13. The 1930 U.S. Census shows the MacBeth family living in rented house in Royal Oak, Michigan, where Harold MacBeth was a mason. Helen had no occupation listed.

MacBETH, Helen L. Fell, 85, of Austin died Sunday. Services and burial, Fort

Wayne, Ind. (McComb, Dilgard & Cline, Auburn, Ind.; Cook-Walden, Lamar location)

APR 27 ~~Obituary of Helen MacBeth~~
Obituary of Helen MacBeth
Austin American-Statesman, March 24, 1992

Unless the Plumbing is done in strict accordance with City Ordinances, do not turn on the water.

PERMIT FOR WATER SERVICE

AUSTIN, TEXAS

No. 3210

M. Forrest T. Morgan Address 1717 Palma PlazaPlumber Lanier Size of Tap 1/2 Date 10-7-35

Date of Connection 10/8/35
 Size of Tap Made 1/2
 Size Service Made 2 1/2
 Size Main Tapped 6"
 From Front Prop. Line to Curb Cock 6' 8"
 From W. Prop. Line to Curb Cock 3'
 Location of Meter at curb
 Type of Box bed
 Depth of Main in St. 3'
 Depth of Service Line 2'
 From Curb Cock to Tap on Main 9' 6"
 Checked by Engr. Dept. 10-8-10-24-35

Foreman's Report

No. Fittings Size.
 2 Curb Cock 5/8" T
 Elbow
 St. Elbow
 2 Bushing 3/4" x 1/2"
 1 Reducer 3/4" x 1/2"
 19 Pipe 3/4"
 2 Tee Comp. 3/4" x 1/2"
 Nipples
 2 Union 3/4" x 1/2"
 1 Plug 3/4" x 1/2"
 Tee
 2 Sig. 3/4" x 1/2"
 2 Box 3/4" x 1/2"
 2 Lid 3/4" x 1/2"
 Valves
 Req. No. 5150

Foreman's Signature

Bennett

INDEXED

Water service permit to Forrest T. Morgan for this address (1935)

Connection Charge \$ 12.00 N^o 12209 ✓

Application for Sewer Connection.

Austin, Texas, Oct. 29, 1935

To the Superintendent of Sewer and Public Improvements,
City of Austin, Texas

Sir:—

I hereby make application for sewer connection and instructions on premises owned by Forrest T. Morgan, Jr.
at 1717 Palma Plaza Street,
further described as lot 25, block _____, outlot _____
subdivision Enfield "E", division _____, plat 900
which place is to be used as a duplex

In this place there are to be installed 8 fixtures.

I agree to pay the City Sewer Department the regular ordinance charge.

Respectfully, D.W. Lamer

Stub Out _____

Connected 11-2 193 5

Size of Main 6 inches

Size of Service 4 inches

8 Feet Deep in at

Feet from Property Line _____

Feet from Curb Line _____

Inspected by _____

Connection made by Lerman Torres
A-998 ✓

Sewer connection application by Forrest T. Morgan, Jr. (1935)