

# ZONING CHANGE REVIEW SHEET

**CASE NUMBER:** C14H-2014-0001

**HLC DATE:**

January 27, 2014

February 24, 2014

**PC DATE:**

**APPLICANT:** Historic Landmark Commission

**HISTORIC NAME:** Baylor House

**WATERSHED:** Johnson Creek

**ADDRESS OF PROPOSED ZONING CHANGE:** 1607 W. 10<sup>th</sup> Street

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

**SUMMARY STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Recommend historic zoning ONLY if the Commission feels that this house has a significant association with the life and career of Mary Freeman Baylor. Staff would have no reservations about recommending historic zoning for this house if the house at 1609 W. 10<sup>th</sup>, which the Baylor family occupied in the 1970s, during the period of Mary Freeman Baylor's civic activism, were no longer standing, and this house was the only remaining house associated with Mrs. Baylor, but there are issues relating to the time period that the Baylors actually occupied this house that cause concern to staff.

**QUALIFICATIONS FOR LANDMARK DESIGNATION:** The ca. 1950 house is associated with Charles and Mary Freeman Baylor, who can be documented as living here from the time of construction of the house through the early 1960s. However, from around 1964 onward, it appears that Mary Freeman Baylor lived next door at 1609 W. 10<sup>th</sup> Street, and the family rented this house out. Mary Freeman Baylor was a very prominent civic rights activist for the people of her Clarksville neighborhood, leading the charge for the preservation of the Clarksville School and for the provision of sewers, paved streets, and other city services other neighborhoods took for granted in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In addition, Mary Freeman Baylor, along with several of her neighbors, worked diligently to prevent the razing of many of the houses in Clarksville for the construction of the Mo-Pac Expressway and a proposed cross-town expressway in the 1970s.

**HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION ACTION:** **January 27, 2014:** Initiated the historic zoning case. Vote: 5-0 (Limbacher and Myers ill).

**PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:**

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The house is listed as a Priority 1 in the Clarksville Survey (2000).

**CITY COUNCIL DATE:**

**ACTION:**

**ORDINANCE READINGS:** 1<sup>ST</sup> 2<sup>ND</sup> 3<sup>RD</sup>

**ORDINANCE NUMBER:**

**CASE MANAGER:** Steve Sadowsky

**PHONE:** 974-6454

**NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION:** Clarksville Community Development Corporation; Old West Austin Neighborhood Association.

## **BASIS FOR RECOMMENDATION:**

### **Architecture:**

One-story, rectangular-plan, side-gabled frame house with a central, partial-width, front-gabled independent porch on plain, square wood posts; 1:1 fenestration.

### **Historical Associations:**

The existing house was constructed ca. 1950 by Cary Baylor. According to city directories the first occupants were Charlie Williams, a laborer and his wife Essie, who only lived in the house for one year. Cary Baylor's son Charles Edward Baylor and his wife Mary Frances Freeman Baylor are listed as the residents from 1953 to 1964, after which they are listed in the directory as residing at 1609 W. 10<sup>th</sup> Street (next door) from 1964 into the late 1990s.

Mary Freeman Baylor was a community organizer, the first director of the Clarksville Neighborhood Center, and was founder of the Clarksville Community Development Corporation in 1978. She was instrumental in advocating for the City of Austin to make improvements to the Clarksville neighborhood and for the political and economic interests of the Clarksville community. One of her early advocacy efforts was leading protests against the construction of Loop 1 (MoPac Expressway) because of the impact it would have on the neighborhood and the displacement of its residents. Subsequent efforts were successful in halting the construction of a cross-town expressway that would have destroyed what was left of the Clarksville community. Mary Freeman Baylor continued to be closely involved with the community advocacy efforts until her death from a heart attack on March 16, 1997. (For a detailed biography of Mary Baylor see the excerpt obtained from the Texas State Historical Association web site is provided below.)

Charles Baylor worked as a porter for the Missouri Pacific Railroad and for TCC Continuum Computer Company, from which he retired. He survived his wife, and died March 12, 2010 at the age of 80.

Mary and Charles Baylor purchased 1609 W. 10<sup>th</sup> Street from Mary's father, J.H. Freeman, while they were living at 1607 W. 10<sup>th</sup> Street. According to Mary Baylor's children the Bayers maintained 1609 W. 10<sup>th</sup> Street as rental property while they saved enough money to make repairs to that house, and they continued to live at 1607 W. 10<sup>th</sup> Street until 1971. After this time an elderly widow, Nancy Chambers, resided at the 1607 house.

Mary's children remember their mother's community advocacy activities beginning while she resided at 1607 W. 10<sup>th</sup> Street and continuing there after she moved next door to 1609. They recall neighborhood meetings being held in the house as well as in the front and back yards starting in the 1960s. These meetings were about the need for the City to provide street lights and paved streets, and address serious drainage issues in the neighborhood. Most of these problems were not addressed until the late 1970s.

### **From Texas State Historical Association: The Handbook of Texas, by R. Matt Abigail**

"Mary Frances Freeman Baylor, African-American community organizer, director of the Clarksville Neighborhood Center in Austin, and founder of the Clarksville Community Development Corporation, only child of Gladys Y. Freeman and Will Freeman, was born in Austin, Texas, on August 9, 1929. She was raised by her mother in a section of West Austin known as Clarksville. She attended grade school there but later finished at Olive Street Elementary School, then attended Kealing Junior High School and L. C. Anderson High School. She also attended Tillotson College for a short time before marrying Charles Baylor in 1948. Together they had five children—Cynthia, Linda, Vicky, Ronnie, and Skip.

Baylor was a lifelong resident of the Clarksville neighborhood, and her ancestors were among the original settlers of Clarksville, which was one of the earliest freedmen's communities established west of the Mississippi River. Over time, the all-black community was incorporated into the city of Austin. However, in an era of rigid segregation, Clarksville was something of a geographical oddity. Essentially a closed, quasi-independent hamlet, it was surrounded on all sides by affluent, predominantly white neighborhoods and was isolated from the much larger, thriving African-American district in East Austin. Unfortunately, Clarksville's unique location meant that it was persistently neglected by city officials, who concentrated social services for blacks in East Austin. As a result, the area lacked many basic services. However, Baylor devoted her entire career to improving the impoverished community, which did not have developed schools, recreational facilities, sewers, or even paved roads until the 1970s.

After 1964 Baylor became an active supporter and volunteer in President Lyndon B. Johnson's War on Poverty program, and she began to petition the city of Austin to fund much needed improvements in Clarksville. Then, in 1968 she secured employment with the city of Austin's Health and Human Services Department, which appointed her director of the Clarksville Neighborhood Center (then known as the Human Opportunities Corporation)—a position she held for twenty-four years. Under her leadership, the center became a valuable resource for many of Clarksville's disadvantaged residents. It organized community volunteer and youth programs, hosted community meetings, provided food and clothing for the needy, and gave referrals to legal and medical resources. It also offered twenty-four-hour counseling services to assist residents with food stamp and welfare applications and to help them find employment and affordable housing.

In addition to her duties at the Clarksville Neighborhood Center, Baylor worked closely with the Clarksville Neighborhood Council, the Clarksville Advisory Board, and a host of other passionate volunteers to represent the political and economic interests of the disadvantaged community. From 1968 to 1970, she was a lead organizer in the protest against the construction of Texas Loop 1, colloquially known as the MoPac Expressway. The proposed route of the expressway threatened to demolish nearly one-third of Clarksville and displace dozens of needy minority families who had lived in the area for generations. Accordingly, Baylor and others recruited legal assistance and brought suit against the Texas Highway Department and the city of Austin. However, the lawsuit was unsuccessful and construction went ahead as planned. Despite this setback, the group managed to halt the construction of a cross-town expressway to connect MoPac and Interstate 35 in 1975—a project that would have further decimated what remained of Clarksville.

Following that success, Baylor and others convinced city officials to redirect federal funds toward basic infrastructure improvements for Clarksville. From 1975 to 1979, more than a million dollars were invested in order to repair dilapidated homes, pave roads and sidewalks, install street lights, traffic signals, storm drains, and sewers, and to construct a playground. Additionally, funds were provided to open a new community center, which was designed by architecture students at the University of Texas at Austin and built with volunteer labor recruited by Baylor.

These improvements could not have come any sooner. In fact, prior to the construction of an adequate drainage system, the community's sewage flowed into narrow, open ditches that periodically overflowed and flooded nearby homes. However, the enhanced infrastructure soon attracted real estate investors and commercial enterprises looking to redevelop the area. Afraid that gentrification would mar the neighborhood's historic character, raise taxes, and drive out low-income residents, Baylor responded. In 1978 she founded the Clarksville Community Development Corporation (CCDC) with the expressed goals of preserving and repairing historic structures and ensuring the availability of affordable

housing for the indigent. The CCDC, which was among the first non-profit community development corporations in the country, recruited legal assistance to halt unwanted developers, raised funds to repair rather than demolish older homes, and even convinced the city of Austin to construct the Clarksville Health Clinic in 1982. The CCDC's crowning achievement, though, was the construction of eighteen new homes for Clarksville's neediest families.

Baylor retired as director of the Clarksville Neighborhood Center in 1992 but continued to be closely involved with the community. She was a lifelong member of the Sweet Home Missionary Baptist Church, which formed the nucleus of Clarksville society for more than 100 years, and she acted as church clerk from 1989 to 1997. Additionally, from 1991 to 1997, she served on the board of the McAuley Institute. Founded in 1983 by the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, this organization provided financial support and organizational assistance to community development organizations nationwide, with a specific focus on helping underprivileged women and children.

Baylor died from a heart attack in Austin, on March 16, 1997, and was buried in Austin's historic Oakwood Cemetery. She was survived by her husband, five children, and five grandchildren. In her memory, the Seventy-fifth Texas Legislature passed a resolution to commemorate her achievements on behalf of the city of Austin and the community of Clarksville. Likewise, the city of Austin named a Clarksville-area park in her honor. Forever remembered as Clarksville's "problem solver," she was eulogized by Rev. W. B. Southerland of Sweet Home Missionary Baptist Church, who credited Baylor as "the primary instrument in bringing Clarksville from rocks and mud to paved streets and sod around the houses."

**E-mails supporting preservation of the house as a historic landmark:**

Dear Ms. Galindo and Ms. Roberts:

My name is Don Baylor. I grew up in Clarksville and am a life-long member of Sweet Home Baptist Church.

I am writing to add my voice to those who don't want the structure at 1607 W. 10th Street moved out of Clarksville.

I grew up visiting that house as it was the home of my uncle and aunt, Charles and Mary Baylor. Mary (Freeman) Baylor dedicated her life to the preservation of this community and my wife and I, along with the members of Sweet Home, fought to obtain the City's historical designation of the church. If we do nothing, this bit of history will go the way of so many of our treasured landmarks - it will disappear.

I urge the Landmark Commission to NOT allow the move of this house and to help us preserve not only Clarksville, but the precious (and diminishing) piece of Austin's history it represents.

Thank you for time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Don Baylor

Hello Steve -

I hope you are doing well. I am in Phoenix for yet another spring training, now as hitting coach for the CA Angels.

Before I left Austin, I copied Alyson McGee on an email I wrote to Mary Galindo & Andrea Roberts, urging the Landmark Commission to not allow the referenced structure to be moved out of Clarksville. In the

email I spoke of having grown up in Clarksville and visiting the house as it was the home of my uncle Charles and aunt Mary Baylor. In reply to my email Ms. McGee wrote asking to speak to me about my memories of the Baylor family occupying that residence, but I wasn't able to work that out before I left town. Now in Phoenix, my free time is very restricted to the workout schedule and I regret that I was not able to have that conversation with her.

Now, I understand there is a question about who occupied the house in 1966/1967. I'm writing to say that it is my recollection that in 1967, the year I graduated from (SFA) high school, my aunt & uncle's family was still living in that house. It is also the recollection of my sister, Connie, born in 1956, and my brother, Douglas, born in 1951. At that time, my sister was attending Mathews Elementary and specifically remembers going to the house at 1607 after school.

I hope this information is helpful and I would welcome you contacting me if I can be of further help in this matter.

Sincerely,

Don Baylor

Hi Steve,

It is always good to hear from you. I am afraid that I cannot be of much help with any concrete evidence in this situation. I have tried to find pictures to document but to no avail. Remember back in the day when the date a picture was developed would be on the outer border?

In my opinion, who owned the house should have more weight than who occupied the dwelling. That house at 1607 W. 10th was owned by my grandfather "Daddy Carey Baylor" from before I was born, until just recently when our cousin sold it. All of us Baylor children spent countless hours as well as many lived under that roof at one time or another. It is a shame that so many people who have no knowledge of the history of the Clarksville Community can simply buy the property and tear it down instead of restoring the homes to reflect and respect the integrity of the original style.

Steve, is there nothing in the zoning permits that keep this from continuing to happen? I know that if there is anything that can be done to help that you are the man to find a way. If I can be of any more assistance please do not hesitate to call upon me.

Warm regards,  
Doug Baylor

Hi Steve,

I just left a voice mail for you, but am sending this so you also have my email and contact information.

Linda Baylor suggested I contact you and see if I can add anything to the story about Mary Baylor's history with the house at 1607 W 10th St. I worked with Mary Baylor at the Clarksville Neighborhood Center in the 1970-1980's (and beyond as I have stayed involved with the Clarksville community). I continued a friendship with Mary until she died, and she served on the McAuley Institute board when I worked there.

I'd be happy to help if I can in any way. Below is contact information:

Kathy Tyler

**PARCEL NO.:** 0111030309

**LEGAL DESCRIPTION:** LOT 21 BLK 1 \*LESS N 5.8FT AV WESTRIDGE

**ESTIMATED ANNUAL TAX ABATEMENT:** \$1,999 (owner-occupied); city portion: \$560.

**APPRAISED VALUE:** \$205,000 (2013) – 2014 values are listed as N/A by TCAD.

**PRESENT USE:** Vacant

**CONDITION:** Good

**PRESENT OWNER:**

Sean Kubicek  
P.O. Box 161452  
Austin, Texas 78716

**DATE BUILT:** ca. 1950

**ALTERATIONS/ADDITIONS:** None apparent

**ORIGINAL OWNER(S):** Cary Baylor

**OTHER HISTORICAL DESIGNATIONS:** Contributing to the Clarksville National Register Historic District.



1607 W. 10<sup>th</sup> Street

## OCCUPANCY HISTORY

1607 W. 10<sup>th</sup> Street

From City Directories, Austin History Center

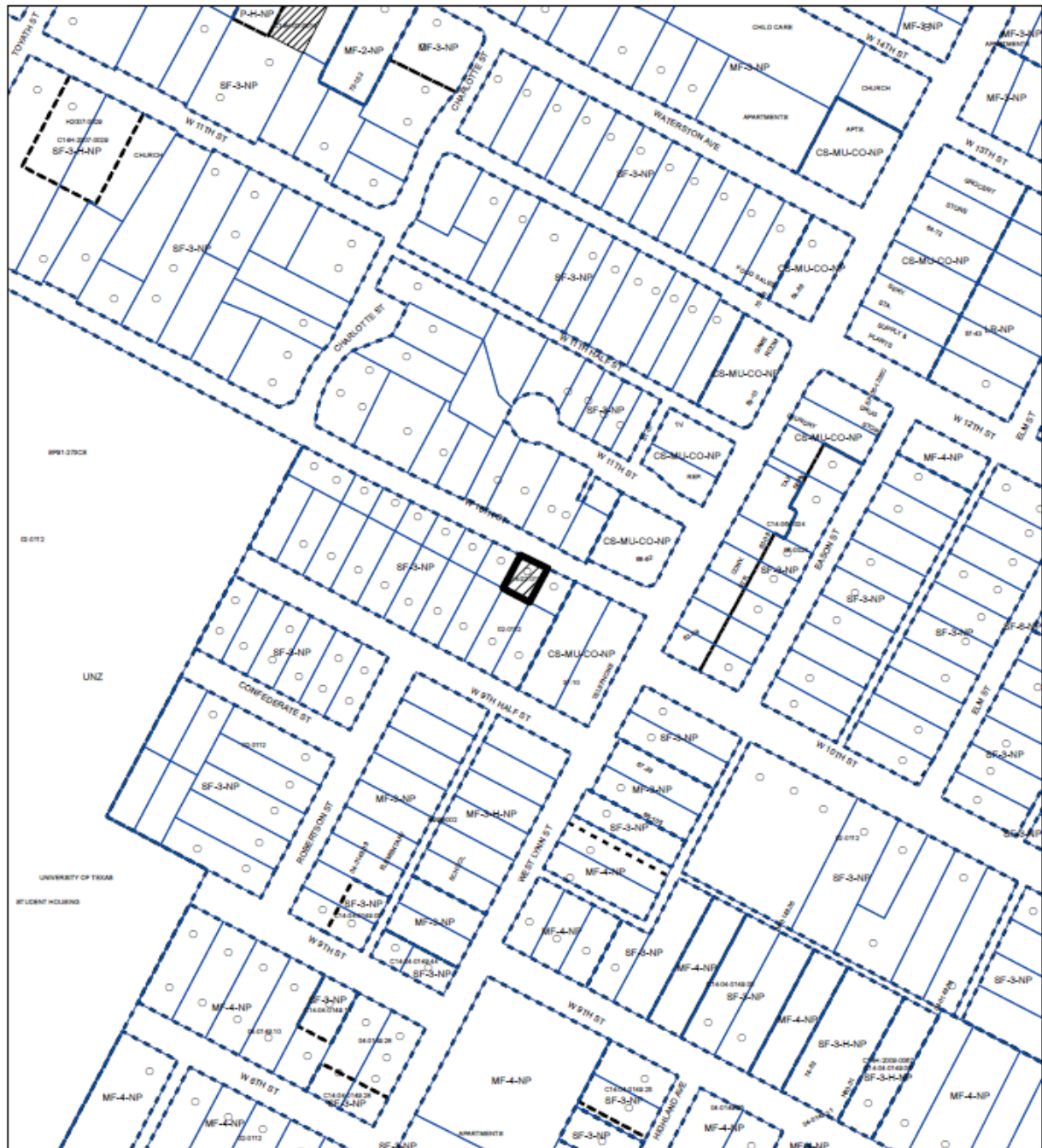
City of Austin Historic Preservation Office

August 2013




- |      |  |
|------|--|
| 1973 | Nancy Chambers, widow of Mart Chambers, retired  |
| 1969 | Nancy Chambers, widow of Mart Chambers, retired  |
| 1966 | Nancy Chambers listed in address directory but not in name directory.                          |
| 1964 | Note: Charles E. Baylor and Mary F. Baylor listed at 1609 W. 10 <sup>th</sup> Street           |
| 1963 | Charles E. Baylor, Porter, Missouri & Pacific<br>& Mary F. Baylor, no occupation listed        |
| 1961 | Charles E. Baylor, Porter, Missouri & Pacific<br>& Mary F. Baylor, no occupation listed        |
| 1959 | Charles E. Baylor, Porter, Missouri & Pacific<br>& Mary F. Baylor, no occupation listed        |
| 1957 | Charles E. Baylor, Trucker, Missouri & Pacific Lines<br>& Mary F. Baylor, no occupation listed |
| 1955 | Charles E. Baylor, Trucker, Missouri & Pacific Lines<br>& Mary F. Baylor, no occupation listed |
| 1953 | Charles E. Baylor, porter<br>& Mary F. Baylor, no occupation listed                            |
| 1952 | Charlie Williams, laborer<br>& Essie, no occupation listed                                     |
|      | Note: Charles and Mary Baylor are listed at 1606 W. 10 <sup>th</sup> Street                    |
| 1949 | No listing for 1607 W. 10 <sup>th</sup> Street   |



# LOCATION MAP



1" = 200'

-  SUBJECT TRACT
-  PENDING CASE
-  ZONING BOUNDARY

## HISTORIC ZONING

ZONING CASE#: C14H-2014-0001

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.

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