

**HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION  
MARCH 23, 2015  
DEMOLITION AND RELOCATION PERMITS  
HDP-2015-0058  
607 ELMWOOD PLACE**

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**PROPOSAL**

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Demolish a ca. 1925 house.

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**ARCHITECTURE**

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One-story, rectangular-plan, clipped front-gabled frame bungalow with a partial-width shed-roofed partially-inset porch on posts and piers; single and triple 1:1 fenestration.

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**RESEARCH**

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The house appears to have been built around 1925; the first owners and occupants were Alonzo B. and Maude Norwood, who lived here until around 1931. Alonzo Norwood was a barber by trade, and in the late 1920s, he was the manager and part-owner of the Norwood Motoramp. He was from Lone Oak in northeast Texas, and eventually moved back to northeast Texas after living in Austin for a few years.

The house was owned and occupied by Walter H. and Winifred McNeill from around 1931 to around 1939. Walter H. McNeill was an associate professor in civil engineering at the University of Texas while he and his family lived in this house. He later became the chair of the Department of Drawing in the School of Engineering, and was chair of the Engineering Placement Committee and supervisor of courses in the Engineering Defense Training Program.

From around 1939 to around 1953, the house was rented by prominent Austin businessman J. Gordon Wilcox, and his wife, Anna. Wilcox had been the president of a large coffee roasting business in Austin in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and went on to work as an auditor and accountant for the State Railroad Commission. From the mid-1950s onward, the house has been a rental property with a variety of tenants, but mostly students. In the mid-1970s, the house was divided up into several apartments, rented to students.

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**STAFF COMMENTS**

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The house appears in the Comprehensive Cultural Resources Survey (1984) but without a priority for research.

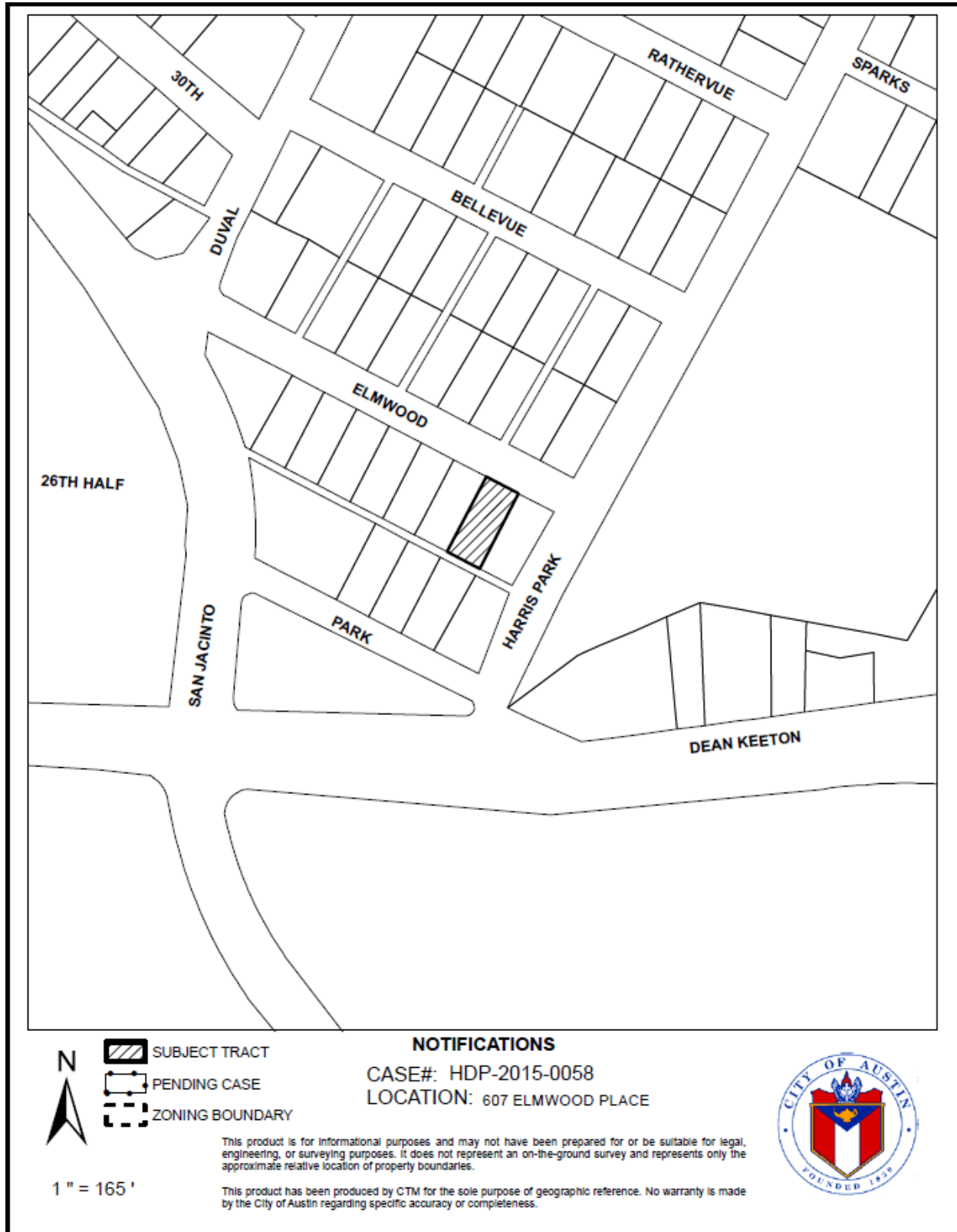
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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

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Encourage rehabilitation and adaptive re-use to the greatest extent possible. Elmwood Place is adjacent to the UT campus, but it, and the surrounding streets were historically an enclave of upper middle-class residents, including prominent professors, businessmen, and clergy, who called this neighborhood home. While this house probably does not qualify as an individual historic landmark, it is an integral part of this central neighborhood, and every consideration towards preservation of these bungalows and this neighborhood should be undertaken prior to entertaining demolition of yet another 90-year old structure.

## LOCATION MAP



607 Elmwood Place  
ca. 1925



OCCUPANCY HISTORY  
607 Elmwood Place

City Directory Research, Austin History Center  
By City Historic Preservation Office  
February, 2015

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|---------|--|
| 1992    | Tina Wood, renter<br>No occupation listed  |
| 1985-86 | <p>A: Matthew K. Wickham, renter<br/>Drafter<br/>NOTE: The directory indicates that Matthew K. Wickham was a new resident at this address.</p> <p>B: Joan A. Zapata, renter<br/>No occupation listed<br/>NOTE: The directory indicates that Joan A. Zapata was a new resident at this address.</p> |
| 1981    | Linda Latham, renter<br>Office secretary, State Highway Department   |
| 1977    | <p>A: Mary C. Gee, renter<br/>No occupation listed<br/>NOTE: The directory indicates that Mary C. Gee was a new resident at this address.</p> <p>B: Lynn Harrell, renter<br/>Student</p>   |

1973	Jackie Kleypas, renter Student
1968	Vacant
1962	Samuel L. and Betty Lindsey, renters Salesman
1959	Phocion S. and Julie Park, III, renters Design engineer, City Engineering Department
1955	Eugene E. Wiese, renter Student
1952	J. Gordon and Anna Wilcox, renters Accountant, State Railroad Commission
1949	J. Gordon and Anna Wilcox, renters Accountant, State Railroad Commission
1947	J. Gordon and Anna Wilcox, renters Accountant, State Railroad Commission
1944-45	J. Gordon and Anna Wilcox, renters Accountant, State Railroad Commission  Bruce and Jenelle Gibson, renters U.S. Army NOTE: The house is listed as 217 Elmwood Place.
1942	J. Gordon and Anna Wilcox, owners President-general manger, Wilcox-Nelson Company, coffee roasters, 214-16 W. 4 <sup>th</sup> Street.
1941	J. Gordon and Nan Wilcox, renters Clerk, City Tax Assessor and Collector NOTE: The house is listed as 217 Elmwood Place.
1939	Walter H. and Winifred McNeill, owners Associate professor, University of Texas NOTE: The house is listed as 217 Elmwood Place. NOTE: J. Gordon and Anna Wilcox are listed at 209 W. 33 <sup>rd</sup> Street; he was the president and general manager of Wilcox-Nelson Company, coffee roasters.
1937	Walter H. and Winifred McNeill, renters Associate professor, University of Texas NOTE: The house is listed as 217 Elmwood Place.
1935	Walter H. and Winifred McNeill, owners Associate professor, University of Texas NOTE: The house is listed as 217 Elmwood Place.
1932-33	Walter H. and Winifred McNeill, owners Associate professor, University of Texas

NOTE: The house is listed as 217 Elmwood Place.

- 1930-31      Alonzo B. and Maude Norwood, owners  
 No occupation listed  
 NOTE: Walter H. and Winifred McNeill are listed at 910 Poplar Street; he was an associate professor at the University of Texas.  
 NOTE: The house is listed as 217 Elmwood Place.
- 1929      Alonzo B. and Maude Norwood, owners  
 Proprietor (with Dudley Miller and Montreal W. Gove), Norwood Motoramp Company, 7<sup>th</sup> and Colorado Streets.  
 NOTE: The house is listed as 217 Elmwood Place.
- 1927      Alonzo B. and Maude Norwood, owners  
 No occupation listed  
 NOTE: The house is listed as 217 Elmwood Place.
- 1924      The address is not listed in the directory.  
 NOTE: Alonzo B. and Maude Norwood are listed at 1306 E. 1<sup>st</sup> Street; he was the proprietor (with Will J. Pike), of the Pike-Norwood Motor Car Company, Nash and Marmon sales and service, 209-11 W. 6<sup>th</sup> Street.

## **BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES**

### **Alonzo B. and Maude Norwood (ca. 1925 – ca. 1932)**

Alonzo B. and Maud Norwood appear as the renters of a house in Lone Oak, Hunt County, Texas, in the 1920 U.S. Census. Alonzo B. Norwood was 36, had been born in Texas to Georgia-born parents, and was a barber in his own shop. Maud Norwood was 35, had been born in Texas, and had no occupation listed. They had no children listed with them.

The 1930 U.S. Census shows Alonzo B. and Maude Norwood as the owners of this house, which was worth \$5,000. Alonzo Norwood was the assistant manager of a garage. Maude Norwood had no occupation listed. They had a daughter, Eula N. (Norma), who was 8.

By 1940, according to the U.S. Census of that year, Lonzo and Maude Norwood were living in Longview, Texas, where they rented a house with their daughter, Norma, 19. They had lived in Brownwood, Texas in 1935. Lonzo Norwood was barber. Alonzo B. Norwood died May 21, 1962 in Dallas. According to his death certificate, he had lived in Dallas for 7 years; he had been born in 1883 in San Augustine, Texas, and was a retired barber.

### **Walter H. and Winifred McNeill (ca. 1932 – ca. 1939)**

The 1940 U.S. Census shows Walter H. and Winifred McNeill as the owners of the house at 1407 Wathen Avenue in Austin. That house was worth \$10,000. Walter McNeill was 51, had been born in Texas, and was a teacher at the University of Texas; Winifred McNeill was 43, had been born in Texas, and had no occupation listed. They had 2 daughters: Mary Jane, 9. And Ann Millicent, 8.

The 1930 U.S. Census shows Walter H. and Winifred McNeill as the renters of a duplex at 2808 North Guadalupe Street (now Hemphill Park Avenue) in Austin. Walter McNeill was a teacher at the State University; Winifred McNeill had no occupation listed. On the other side of the duplex was another pair of UT professors.

WALTER HIRAM MCNEILL

Professor Walter Hiram McNeill was born in Evant, Coryell County, January 27, 1889, son of Dr. Hiram McNeill, pioneer Texas physician, and Pernina Jane McNeill.

He graduated from the University of Texas in June, 1910, with the degree of Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering. Following graduation he served the Houston and Texas Central Railroad at Houston for more than four years. Later he became associated with the James Stewart Construction Company as a field engineer in Texas and Virginia on various types of construction work, including the erection of Sutton Hall on the University of Texas campus, and construction of army camps and dry docks for the United States government at the time of World War I.

During the later months of World War I, he served as a machine gun instructor in the School of Military Aeronautics in Austin. At the request of T. U. Taylor, Dean of Engineering, he joined the staff of the Department of Drawing in 1918.

He was married to Winfred Hume, a graduate of the University and a resident of Austin, November 27, 1929.

He received the Master of Science in Civil Engineering degree in 1923 and was promoted to the rank of Professor of Drawing in 1939. For 18 years he served as chairman of the Department of Drawing, which he directed up to the time of his retirement on April 30, 1951 on account of ill health. He died on June 6, 1951.

Professor McNeill is survived by his widow and two daughters, Mary Jane and Ann, both students in the University of Texas, and by a brother, Dr. W. C. Jones of Houston, and by four nephews.

Professor McNeill was a member of University Lodge No. 1190, A. F. & A. M.; Tau Beta Pi, honorary engineering fraternity; the American Society for Engineering Education; and the University Club.

As a member of the University Club, he contributed generously to its success, and there he formed many friendships through his interest in pool and billiards.

Professor McNeill devoted many hours of extra service to the University as Chairman of the Engineering Placement Committee from 1936 to 1947. Under his leadership the highly successful placement program of the College of Engineering was developed, almost entirely due to his own efforts.

From 1941 to 1945 Professor McNeill was supervisor of courses in the Engineering Defense Training program and the Engineering, Science, Management War Training program throughout Texas.

Professor McNeill's chief hobby was fishing. He developed a deep interest in the sport, beginning with the trips he took as a child with his father, and continuing throughout a full life. He enjoyed relating these early experiences in which he and his father would travel in a buggy to the fishing spots and camp on the banks of a stream. One summer, after he had become a member of the faculty, he made a trip throughout the western part of the United States, with two friends, camping and fishing wherever they desired. For the last twenty years of his life very few summers passed in which he did not spend a portion of the time fishing either in fresh or salt water. He enjoyed the sport thoroughly, and was always a source of enjoyment to his companions.

Professor McNeill was an inspiration to all who worked with him. He was always cheerful and understanding, and ready at all times to cooperate and help his co-workers in any problems that were presented. He always found time to confer with his students in working out any difficulties they might have in their work or in their planning, and gave freely of his advice and experience.

It was his friendliness that attracted students, thus making it easier to help them and for them to present their problems to him. He had an unusually fine ability to devise different approaches to difficult problems--a teaching trait of tremendous value to students whose minds are able to comprehend in differing ways.

In his own duties he was a perfectionist; no detail was too small, no question too time consuming for his careful and thorough attention. Yet, he could delegate responsibility well, and a pleasant and stimulating atmosphere prevailed in his department.

One of the sterling attributes of Professor McNeill, which served as an example to many of his associates, was faithful adherence to a systematic program of thrift. He made a consistent practice of setting aside a certain portion of his income for future needs.

If words could properly express his character, they would reveal a sincerity and a greatness that was most extraordinary if not unique.

He evidently knew that his life was closing some six months before he died and he and his family resolutely set about to make his departure as natural as any other normal occurrence. He contributed a lesson to all who came in contact with him at this time. He did not die lonely. His wife and daughters were smilingly with him to the last moment of his consciousness.

W. W. Dornberger  
S. P. Finch  
C. R. Granberry  
B. E. Short  
C. E. Rowe, Chairman

Memorial Resolution for Walter H. McNeill, University of Texas School of Engineering (1951)

#### **J. Gordon and Anna Wilcox (ca. 1939 – ca. 1953)**

J. Gordon and Anna R. Wilcox appear in the 1940 U.S. Census as the renters of this house. J.G. Wilcox was 55, had been born in Texas, and was the manager of a wholesale coffee business. Anna R. Wilcox was 51, had been born in Texas, and a music teacher in a studio. They had a son, Harry W., 23, who had been born in Texas and was an office clerk for the Texas Unemployment Compensation Commission.

The 1930 U.S. Census shows John G. and Anna Wilcox renting the house at 209 W. 33<sup>rd</sup> Street in Austin. John G. Wilcox was the president of a coffee roasting company; Anna Wilcox was a piano accompanist in a studio. They had 4 children: Rosalie, 21, a book-keeper for the coffee roasting company; John G. Wilcox, Jr., 20, a shipping clerk for the coffee roasting company; Peyton Wilcox, 19, a checker at a gravel pit; and Harry Wilcox, 13, who had no occupation listed. The family had a servant, Rosa Orn, 21, who had been born in Texas.

Anna Wilcox died in 1959; J. Gordon Wilcox died in Mineral Wells, Texas in 1963; he was in a sanitarium there at the time of his death.

**JOHN G. WILCOX SR.**

John Gordon Wilcox Sr., of Mineral Wells, died in Mineral Wells Saturday. He was in business in Austin for many years with the Wilcox-Nelson Company and also the Austin Grocery Company.

Survivors are a daughter, Miss Rosalie Wilcox of Austin; three sons, Peyton Wilcox, Harry Wilcox, both of Austin, and John Gordon Wilcox Jr. of Mineral Wells; five grandchildren; and a brother, D. K. Wilcox of Georgetown.

Funeral services will be held Monday at 3:30 p.m. at Cook Funeral Home. Burial will be in Austin Memorial Park.

Obituary of J. Gordon Wilcox  
Austin American-Statesman, February 10, 1963