

**HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION**  
**APRIL 27, 2015**  
**DEMOLITION AND RELOCATION PERMITS**  
**HDP-2014-1147**  
**1708 VISTA LANE**

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**PROPOSAL**

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Demolish a ca. 1939 house.

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**ARCHITECTURE**

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One-story, rectangular-plan, side-gabled, rock-veneered house with a full-width inset porch on square wood posts and no railing; Colonial Revival-styled 8:8 and 6:6 frame windows.

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**RESEARCH**

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The house was built in 1939 by Frank Rundell, a prominent and prolific local builder and developer. The first occupants were renters, Everett G. and Helen Pratt, who lived here until 1940, when they purchased a house on McCallum Drive. Everett G. Pratt was a native of Colorado, and they had lived in Denver prior to moving to Austin in the late 1930s. He had a private practice. Dick and Eleanor Vaughan rented the house from 1940 until around 1944. The Vaughans had lived in Houston prior to moving to Austin, and Dick Vaughan was a staff correspondent for the Houston Press newspaper. Jerry and Virginia Knippa owned and occupied the house in the mid-1940s while Jerry Knippa was a supervisor for the State Department of Banking. The Knippa family lived here until around 1946, when they moved to San Antonio; Jerry Knippa became the president and manager of the Texas Savings and Loan Association. The house was then owned by a series of widows. Lucille Turner is listed as the owner in the late 1940s; Ruth Buell owned and occupied the house from the late 1940s until around 1958. She was the widow of Ralph Buell, who worked for the Texas Department of Public Safety. They had lived in Brownsville, Texas before moving to Austin.

From around 1958 until the early 1980s, the house was owned and occupied by Ruby McIntosh, the widow of Roy McIntosh, a field man for a real estate and loan company. The McIntosh family was from Abilene, and Ruby McIntosh had been an art teacher there at McMurry College as well as an artist, specializing, it seems, in floral paintings. A 1936 story in the Abilene (Texas) Morning Reporter-News informs that Mrs. McIntosh was honored by the Woman's Literary Club in Hamlin, Texas, where she exhibited her paintings, and presented one, "Calla lilies" to the Hut Memorial Library in Hamlin. She had taught art at McMurry College, and at the time of the newspaper article in 1936, she was a private art teacher. Some of her work was also displayed at the Elisabet Ney Museum in Austin in the 1930s as part of an exhibit of West Texas artists, as well as continuing to exhibit in Abilene – her "Spring blossoms" was noted in an Abilene newspaper article in 1947. She moved to Austin in 1957, and began teaching arts and crafts at the Texas School for the Deaf. Her son, Calvin, lived in Austin, and her daughter, Betty, lived in Colorado. She lived in this house until around 1981, when she moved to Colorado. She died in Colorado in 1988, and is buried next to her husband in Abilene.

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**STAFF COMMENTS**

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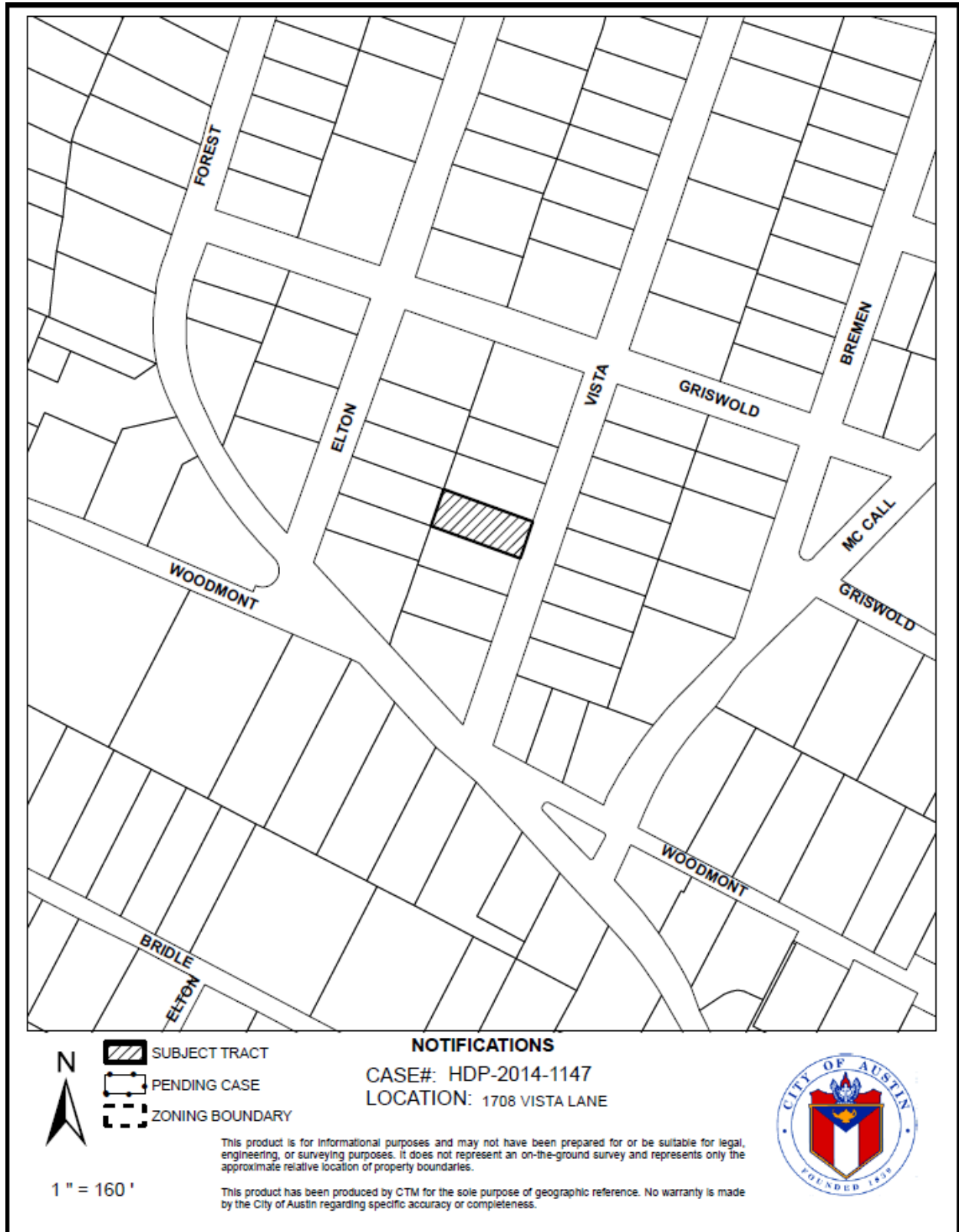
The house is beyond the bounds of any City survey.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

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Encourage the applicant to adaptively re-use this house if feasible. This is an exceptional example of Texas Colonial Revival from the late 1930s, built by a prominent local builder. The stone veneer and full-width front porch lend a unique Central Texas feel to this otherwise typical Colonial Revival house, and efforts to preserve the historic appearance of this house should be given full consideration. If adaptive re-use and additions are not feasible, then staff recommends 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.

## LOCATION MAP



April 22, 2015

Dear Historic Landmark Commissioners,

My husband, Brandon, and I are the homeowners of 1708 Vista Lane, and we are appearing at the April 27 public hearing to seek approval for a demolition permit that was submitted in December. In advance of this hearing, we wanted to take the opportunity to provide additional context to our case and explain why we are pursuing demolition vs. a remodel.

Brandon and I graduated from West Point in 2000 and served in the US Army. After a tour of duty in Korea, we were stationed in Ft Hood, TX where we both deployed to Iraq during the initial invasion in 2003. Our time at Ft Hood and the support we received from the Central Texas community really cemented our desire to relocate back to the Austin area after serving in the military. Upon leaving the military and completing MBA programs, we focused our efforts on returning to Austin.

In 2009, we bought our home on 1708 Vista Lane. It was a great home in a neighborhood that allowed us to live near all of the things that we loved about Austin – but it needed work. When we moved into the home, the home was a mix of different styles -- Red tin roof, red shutters and red painted siding, Spanish tiled porch surrounded by a picket fence. We remodeled the home to be more in line with Texas Hill Country Colonial Revival – which is the image you all see today.

We have invested in this home and we are invested in this neighborhood. During the course of the six years that we have lived in this home, we have lost loved ones and started a family. This home and neighborhood have been at the core of our life experiences post military. While our family needs have changed since we first moved in, we have not taken the decision to expand our home lightly.

In fact, we initiated a remodel process with Michael Stouse – our architect - in 2012 after we had our daughter, Caroline. After several months, we put the plans on pause because we were not able to find a way to remodel in a way that met our needs. In 2013, we picked up the plans again to see if we could look at the remodel differently. We came to the same conclusion and again put the plans on hold. Finally, in 2014, we picked up the plans with a new dedication to seeing this project through. We love the neighborhood and wanted to find a way to meet the needs of our growing family. This time, we decided to pursue plans to demolish the home which allowed us to have the home that we needed for our family

We are not seeking to build a McMansion with a design that does not fit the neighborhood. Rather, we are seeking to build an appropriate home that meets city code (unlike our current home) and also meets the needs of our family - such as:

- Three bedrooms plus a private bedroom & bathroom for my aging mother who has moved in
- off street parking / covered parking - due to the narrow street and limited right of way
- outdoor living space

Brandon and I have been overwhelmed by the support that we have received from our neighbors. We had nine letters written from neighbors supporting the project – and four neighbors who have offered to attend the hearing to lend their help. We are humbled by their support – which furthers our love of our neighborhood.

We understand the intent of the Historic Landmark Commission and respect the work that is done to preserve what we love about the city. As you may know, at the last hearing, the Commission discussed that our home likely falls short of being eligible for historic designation. In this spirit and with respect to our neighborhood, we humbly request the committee's approval of our application for demolition. We are committed to building a tasteful home that reflects the Hill Country Colonial Revival elements and fully documenting the history of our home as it currently exists. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,  
Jamie & Brandon Holden

1708 Vista Lane  
ca. 1939



OCCUPANCY HISTORY  
1708 Vista Lane

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

1992	Mary A. McNeel, owner Photographer
1985-86	Carla W. Du Bois, renter No occupation listed
1981	Mrs. R.C. McIntosh, owner Retired
1977	Mrs. R.C. McIntosh, owner Retired
1973	Ruby C. McIntosh, owner Widow, Roy H. McIntosh Artist
1968	Ruby C. McIntosh, owner Widow, Roy H. McIntosh Artist
1962	Ruby C. McIntosh, owner

- Widow, Roy H. McIntosh  
Proprietor of an art studio (not separately listed in the directory).
- 1959 Ruby C. McIntosh, owner  
There is no listing for Ruby C. McIntosh in the directory.
- 1955 Ruth Buell, owner  
Widow, Ralph L. Buell  
No occupation listed  
NOTE: There is a listing in the 1955 directory for Corpus Christi for a Mrs. Ruby McIntosh; she was the proprietor of the Aloha Motel in Corpus. She is listed in the 1957 Abilene city directory as an art teacher.
- 1952 Ruth Buell, owner  
Widow, Ralph L. Buell  
No occupation listed  
Also listed is A. Sidney Buell, U.S. Army.
- 1949 Ruth Buell, owner  
Widow, Ralph L. Buell  
No occupation listed
- 1947 Lucille Turner, owner  
Widow, Clint Turner  
No occupation listed  
NOTE: Ruth Buell is not listed in the directory.  
NOTE: A.H. Jerry and Virginia Knippa appear in the 1948 San Antonio city directory; he was the president and manager of the Texas Savings and Loan Association.
- 1944-45 Jerry A. and Virginia Knippa, owners  
Supervisor, State Department of Banking
- 1941 Dick and Eleanor Vaughan, renters  
Staff writer, Associated Press  
NOTE: Everett G. and Helen Pratt are listed at 2503 McCallum Drive; he was a lawyer with offices in the Nalle Annex Building, 125 E. 7<sup>th</sup> Street.
- 1940 Everett G. and Helen Pratt, renters  
Lawyer  
NOTE: J. Richard and Eleanor Vaughan are listed at 910 W. 19<sup>th</sup> Street; he was a correspondent for the Houston press newspaper.
- 1939 The address is not listed in the directory.  
NOTE: Everett G. and Helen Pratt are not listed in the directory.

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

### Everett and Helen Pratt (ca. 1939 – ca. 1940)

The 1940 U.S. Census shows Everett and Helen Pratt as the owners of the house at 2503 McCallum Drive in Austin. That house was worth \$8,000. Everett Pratt was 32, had been born in Colorado, and was an attorney in private practice. Helen Pratt was 32, had been born in

Indiana, and had no occupation listed. They had a 7-year old son, Robert, who had been born in Colorado. The family had lived in Denver, Colorado in 1935.

**J. Richard (“Dick”) and Eleanor Vaughan (ca. 1940 – ca. 1944)**

The 1940 U.S. Census shows J. Richard and Eleanor Vaughan as the renters of this house. J. Richard Vaughan was 34, had been born in Texas, and was the staff correspondent for a newspaper. Eleanor Vaughan, was 30, had been born in Texas, and had no occupation listed. They had 2 children: Eleanor, 9; and J. Richard, Jr., 6. Both children had been born in Texas. The family had lived in Houston, Texas in 1935. The 1930 U.S. Census shows John R. and Eleanor Vaughan renting a house in Houston, where John R. Vaughan was a newspaper reporter, and Eleanor Vaughan was a bank clerk.

**Ruth (Mrs. Ralph) Buell (ca. 1948 - ca. 1958)**

Ralph L. and Ruth Buell appear in the 1940 U.S. Census as the renters of the house at 1503 Northwood Road in Austin. Ralph L. Buell was 49, had been born in Texas and worked for the Texas Department of Public Safety. Ruth Buell was 39, had been born in Texas, and had no occupation listed. They had 2 sons: Ralph L. Jr., 17; and Sydney J., 10. Both boys had been born in Texas and neither had an occupation listed. With them lived Ralph Buell’s mother, Helen W. Buell, a 79-year old New Jersey-born widow with no occupation listed. The family had lived in Brownsville, Texas in 1935. The 1930 U.S. Census shows Ralph and Ruth Buell as the renters of a house in San Benito, Texas. Ralph Buell was 39, had been born in New York, and was the editor of a newspaper. Ruth Buell was 29, had been born in Texas to Mississippi-born parents, and had no occupation listed. Their son, Ralph, Jr. was 8, and had been born in Texas.

**Ruby (Mrs. Roy) McIntosh (ca 1958 – ca. 1981)**

Roy H. and Ruby C. McIntosh appear in the 1930 U.S. Census for Abilene, Texas, where they rented a house. Roy H. McIntosh was 43, had been born in Indiana, and was a field man for a real estate and loan company. Ruby McIntosh was 34, had been born in Texas, and had no occupation listed. They had 2 children: Betty J., 8; and Calvin S., 4. They also had an African-American servant, Mattie Langston, 28, who had been born in Texas. Roy H. McIntosh died in 1946; Ruby McIntosh died in 1988 in Colorado; both she and Roy are buried in Abilene, Texas.

The Hardin-Simmons University Range Rider of October, 1957 references that Ruby Conaway McIntosh told of her new work in the Texas School for the Deaf in Austin. She is in charge of the Arts and Crafts program here. Her son Calvin, also resides in Austin, and daughter Betty is in Aurora, Colorado.



RUBY CONWAY MCINTOSH

*Art*

Graduate Simmons University Art Department, 1916; Summer student in Chicago Art Institute, University of Chicago; Head of Art Department, Montezuma College, 1927-28; at McMurry since 1930.



MRS. L. T. WHITLOW

*Matron Boys' Hall*

At McMurry since 1932.



IRIS GRAHAM, B. A.

*Registrar*

B. A., McMurry College, 1923; Student Assistant College office, 1926-28; Present position since 1928.

Twenty

The Totem, yearbook of McMurry College (1933)



Frank Rundell 1708 Vista Lane

62

Tarrytown Place

Rock veneer res., box garage attached

253n - 1/3/39

7

Building permit to Frank Rundell for the construction of this house (1939)

Mrs. Ruby McIntosh 1708 Vista Lane

154

63

13

Tarrytown Place

Move Water Heater-Remodel House.

70642

10/13/58

500.00

East End Lbr. Co.

Move W.H. to new loc.-cut vent for heater-add plastic door to closet; reroof house & sheetrock 2 rooms

Building permit to Ruby McIntosh to remodel and re-roof the house (1958)

Mrs. Ruby McIntosh 1708 Vista Lane

154

63

Terry Town Place

Remodel and Repair Residence

81942

11-13-61

100.00

Owner

None

WORK ROOM Convert garage into work room

Building permit to Ruby McIntosh to convert the garage to a work room (1961)