

**HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION
APRIL 27, 2015
DEMOLITION AND RELOCATION PERMITS
HDP-2015-0173
1315 KENWOOD AVENUE**

PROPOSAL

Partial demolition of a ca. 1928 house and the construction of a two-story addition on the rear.

ARCHITECTURE

One-story, rectangular-plan, pyramidal-roofed frame house with a central, front-gabled pedimented entry porch with a segmental-arched entry; single and paired 1:1 fenestration with Craftsman-style wooden screens; Craftsman-style door with sidelights.

RESEARCH

The house was built in 1928; Peter and Esther Allidi were the first owners and occupants of the house. Peter Allidi was a Swiss-born painter who specialized in interior decoration, and was of the same school as craftsmen like Peter Mansbendel and Fortunat Weigl in the decorative house arts. He designed and executed the painted loggia ceiling of the old Austin Public Library (now the Austin History Center), and had several commission on the University of Texas campus, including the Stark Library in the Main Building, and the architecture library in Goldsmith Hall. He also did the interiors of Central Christian Church on Guadalupe Street. Esther Allidi was born in France, and had a French perfume business downtown in the 1920s. She was also an excellent cook, and was featured in several newspaper stories in the Austin newspapers dealing with French cooking. She worked as a chef in several restaurants in town, had a catering business, and developed a signature salad dressing.

STAFF COMMENTS

The owners are considering historic zoning for this property; the Commission should decide the appropriateness of this addition in light of the prospect of landmark designation for this house.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff continues to have reservations about the propriety of this addition, especially given that the owners desire landmark designation for this house, which staff believes is justified in its current configuration. Although the addition will be minimally visible from the street, it is still a large change to the physical properties of the house, and while staff sympathizes with the owners that want to increase the size of their house but have other factors on the lot that seem to proscribe a one-story, less obtrusive addition to the rear, there is still the question of whether a project such as this is appropriate for a potential historic landmark. Just because additions are allowed to landmarks (and potential landmarks) does not necessarily mean that they are appropriate, especially with the attendant property tax benefits that accrue with landmark designation. The house is a pristine example of its style right now; the proposed addition will compromise the architectural integrity of the house. It is up to the Commission to decide if the proposed addition will change the character of the house to an extent that is incompatible with landmark designation.

1315 Kenwood Avenue
ca. 1928



OCCUPANCY HISTORY
1315 Kenwood Avenue

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

1992	Beverly E. Williams, owner Clerk, University of Texas
1985-86	Beverly E. Williams, owner Administrative secretary, University of Texas
1981	Beverly E. and Amy V. Williams, owners Typist, University of Texas
1977	Amy V. French, renter Department manager, Austin public schools NOTE: The directory indicates that Amy V. French was a new resident at this address.
1973	No return
1968	William A. and Olivia A. Dobbins, owners

	No occupation listed
1962	Esther M. Allidi, owner Widow, Peter Allidi No occupation listed
1959	Esther M. Allidi, owner Widow, Peter Allidi No occupation listed
1953	Esther M. Allidi, owner Widow, Peter Allidi No occupation listed
1949	Esther M. Allidi, owner Widow, Peter Allidi No occupation listed
1947	Peter and Esther Allidi, owners Building contractor (office at the house)
1944-45	Peter and Esther Allidi, owners Building contractor (office at the house)
1941	Peter and Esther Allidi, owners Painter (office at the house)
1939	Peter and Esther Allidi, owners Painter
1937	Peter and Esther Allidi, owners Painter (office at the house) NOTE: The address is listed as 1403 Kenwood Avenue.
1935	Peter and Esther Allidi, owners Painter NOTE: The address is listed as 1403 Kenwood Avenue.
1932-33	Peter and Esther Allidi, owners No occupation listed NOTE: The address is listed as 1403 Kenwood Avenue.
1930-31	Peter and Esther Allidi, owners Contractor NOTE: The address is listed as 1403 Kenwood Avenue.
1929	Peter and Esther Allidi, owners Painter NOTE: The address is listed as 1403 Kenwood Avenue.
1927	The address is not listed in the directory. NOTE: Peter and Esther Allidi are listed at 810 W. 10 th Street; he was a painter.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Peter and Esther Allidi (ca. 1928 – ca. 1965)

The 1940 U.S. Census shows Peter and Esther Allidi as the owners of this house (which is listed as 1315 Kenwood Avenue), and which was worth \$6,000. Peter Allidi was 55, had been born in Switzerland, and was an interior decorator. Esther Allidi was 45, had been born in France, and had no occupation listed. They had a 9-year old daughter, Louise, who had been born in Texas.

The 1930 U.S. Census shows Peter and Esther F. Allidi as the owners of this house, which was worth \$4,000. Peter Allidi was 45, had been born in Switzerland, and was a house decorator. Esther F. Allidi was 36, had been born in France, and had no occupation listed. They had no children listed with them. The address is shown as 1403 Kenwood Avenue.

The 1920 U.S. Census shows Peter and Esther Allidi as the renters of a house at 1906 (name unintelligible). This census report shows that Peter Allidi had immigrated in 1900, and Esther Allidi had immigrated in 1913. He was a decorator with his own shop; she was a nurse. They had no children listed with them.

His 1948 death certificate shows that Peter Allidi was living at 1315 Kenwood Avenue; he was born July 23, 1885 in Switzerland, and was an artist and interior decorator. He had been living in the house on Kenwood for 32 years.

His 1918 World War I draft registration card shows that Peter John Allidi was living at 1906 Willow Street; he was born in Switzerland and was a house painter for Tom D. Hill in Donna, Texas. He was of medium height, medium build, had brown eyes, and dark brown hair.

Esther Allidi's 1975 death certificate shows that she was living in Waco. She was the owner of a café. She had lived in Waco for 8 years.

The concrete beams decorations were likely designed by Peter Allidi (1885-1948) and Harold Everett "Bubi" Jessen (1908-1979) in 1933. Allidi, born in Switzerland, also collaborated with Jessen to decorate the exterior loggia ceiling of the old Austin Public Library (1933) and was later employed to paint the Stark Library and Rare Book Study on the fourth floor of the Main Building (1937). The stenciled designs follow the theme of "The Progress of Architecture Through the Centuries" and feature famous buildings in architectural history and icons of the machine age. These decorations were the inspiration for the similar designs painted on the beams of the south lobby, added in the 1980s addition to the building.

From Interiors, A Catalog of Historic and Significant Campus Interiors, Project Management and Construction Services, University of Texas at Austin, 2010.

In 1928 the Austin voters approved \$150,000 in bonds for a permanent 36,000 square foot building at the site, and the temporary building was moved to Angelina Street to become Austin's first public library branch, the Carver Branch. Hugo Franz Kuehne, an Austin architect and a founder of the school of architecture at the University of Texas, designed the first permanent home of the Austin Public Library and construction began in 1932. Henry E. Wattinger was named the general contractor with a bid of \$106,638; John L. Martin was the plumbing and heating contractor (\$58,747); and Fox-Schmidt completed the electrical work (\$4,048). The building took advantage of local materials and craftsmen. Cordova cream limestone was used to achieve the Italian Renaissance Revival style of the building. Fortunat Weigl, a German ironsmith who immigrated to Texas in 1913, created ornamental wrought iron work to enhance the balconies, doors and windows. Peter Mansbendel, a Swiss master woodcarver who came to Texas in 1911, carved much of the interior woodwork. Harold Everett "Bubi" Jessen (1908-1979), a local architect, and Peter Allidi (1885-1948), also a Swiss immigrant who was a local artist and interior decorator, painted the frescoes on the ceiling of the arched loggia on the north side of the building. Allidi had previously completed the decoration in the architecture library of Goldsmith Hall on the University of Texas Campus and Jessen was a student

assistant on the project. (It is interesting to note that Peter Allidi's wife, Esther Mirel Allidi, was the creator of Mrs. Allidi's La Martinique salad dressing).

From Austin Remembers . . . , Austin History Center Association, Winter, 2014.:



Ad for Mrs. Allidi's perfume business
Austin American, February 28, 1926



Ad for Mrs. Esther Allidi's French perfumes
Austin Statesman, March 15, 1926



News story of Pete Allidi's award of a paint contract for the new newspaper offices
Austin American-Statesman, May 24, 1936

Piano Recital

Mrs. Jack Shelby presented members of her piano class in recital Friday evening at the home of Mrs. Peter Allidi, 1315 Kenwood. H. M. Bohn assisted with violin numbers.

The following class members took part in the program: Janet Boyd, Elizabeth Bohn, Ruby Ward, Alice Wallace, Luissette Allidi, Ethel Lacy, Laura Mae Cullen, Lila Ann Parker and Flora Jean Ware.

Piano recital at the home of Esther Allidi, 1315 Kenwood Avenue
Austin Statesman, December 31, 1939

Silver Tea To Aid French Refugees

A silver tea for the benefit of French war refugees will be given Thursday from 5 to 7 p. m. at the home of Mrs. Eugene Tips, 1708 Cromwell Hill. Mesdames Peter Allidi, J. E. McDonald, Harris Gardner and Eugene Tips will be joint hostesses for the occasion and these sponsors bespeak a generous response to this call from the women of Austin.

The funds will be sent to the central office of the Alliance Franchise in New York, and from there with the least possible delay to France to be made available for use.

News story on the silver tea for the benefit of French war refugees hosted by Mrs. Esther Allidi
Austin American-Statesman, June 16, 1940

**WE ARE PLEASED TO
ANNOUNCE**

That our kitchen is now under the management of

MRS. PETER ALLIDI

Famous for her good cooking. We join MRS. Allidi in
inviting her friends and former patrons to visit us.

LA CONGA

2317 SO. CONGRESS

PHONE 2-5170

Dinner Hour: 5 to 8

Ad for Mrs. Esther Allidi's position as the kitchen manager of La Conga
Austin Statesman, January 29, 1946



PETER ALLIDI

Last Services Conducted For Peter Allidi

Funeral Services for Peter Allidi, who died at a local hospital Monday, were held Tuesday at St. Ignatius Catholic Church, with the Rev. Francis Sullivan, CSC, officiating.

Allidi, who was 63 years old at the time of his death, had lived in Austin for 32 years. He came to the US 45 years ago from his native Switzerland. An artist and interior decorator of note, he executed the interiors of the Central Christian Church here and the interiors of several buildings on the University of Texas campus.

He is survived by his wife and an adopted daughter, Louisette.

Rosary services were held Monday evening at the Weed-Corley Funeral Home. Burial will be in Mount Calvary Cemetery.

News story on the funeral of Peter Allidi
Austin Statesman, September 28, 1948

¹
The Austin Statesman
the woman's WORLD

Austin, Texas, Friday, October 14, 1955—Page 8



Austin Statesman-Bill Kaley

MRS. ALLIDI WHIPS UP AUTHENTIC FRENCH RUM OMELET

Before you can say "bon appetit!" omelet is done.

CHOW LINES

Special Free Mrs. Allidi's

By PAT FOLMAR ROBINSON

Long famous as one of Austin's very best cooks is Mrs. Peter Allidi of 1315 Kenwood.

The native French woman operated a popular restaurant here during the '40's, and her "La Martinique" salad dressings are carried by food stores all over Texas.

Mrs. Allidi was born and raised in Grasse, France. But now — outside of her accent and flair for French cuisine — she is 100 per cent American, and very proud of it.

Before she opened her restaurant she wrote to a famous chef for advice. Louis P. DeGouy had been a friend of her uncle's on the French Riviera and until recently was consulting chef of Hotel Management of America.

Chef DeGouy sent Mrs. Allidi an autographed copy of his cook book and some additional recipes which he has never allowed to be printed.

He and Mrs. Allidi have corresponded ever since. Now some say Mrs. Allidi prepares DeGouy's recipes better than he can himself.

Mrs. Allidi has used two other guides to good cooking through the years.

Both are old French cookbooks — one was printed in 1873, and the other is over a 100 years old. But its curled brown pages still contain information which would be valuable to the most modern cook.

Mrs. Allidi's salad dressings were so popular at her restaurant she began selling them by the bottle. Even after she closed the restaurant, popular demand decreed she continue making salad dressings. At times she would actually double the price to discourage sales, but business kept getting better and better.

Now she operates a full scale business in the basement of her home. Her products include Roquefort cheese dressing, poppy seed dressing, chiffonade and French dressing.

When Mrs. Allidi has to name her favorite dishes the list always includes Oysters Poquette, Roast Duckling Menagere and rum omelet.

With October containing an "R," duck season coming up soon and omelets good anytime, all three of her favorites are timely now.

News story of Mrs. Esther Allidi's cooking and catering business
Austin Statesman, October 14, 1955

Who Made That Dressing For Salad? Mrs. Allidi Did!

It was Mrs. Allidi's Salad Dressing. That's the information reaching the Austin Chamber of Commerce this week after an article in last Sunday's Austin American-Statesman told of chamber difficulties in finding a salad dressing which a Del Rio man had asked the chamber to help locate.

The chamber now has an answer, "45 phone calls and five letters later," says Hal Susskind, director of information at the chamber.

The Del Rio man wrote of a salad dressing manufactured in Austin which he had discovered in the early 1930s and asked the chamber for the name.

Susskind didn't know the answer but the more than 10 people who responded with information this week helped him piece the puzzle together.

"Each contributed something," Susskind said.

Typical of the citizen response to the query is the letter from a

Smithville woman who tore out a portion of the article and wrote in the margin, "Possibly Mrs. Allidi's salad dressing -- it was excellent."

The consensus of calls was that the Del Rio man was probably looking for the salad dressing made by Mrs. Esther Allidi who started making the salad dressing at a restaurant on South Congress in the late 1940s.

Susskind's research indicates that Mrs. Allidi, who now lives in Waco, made a "poppy seed dressing" for a number of years before leaving the business in 1960 when a partner took over. Her salad dressing is manufactured today as "La Martinique Poppy Seed Dressing" by Smith Foods, Inc. which has a plant on South First Street.

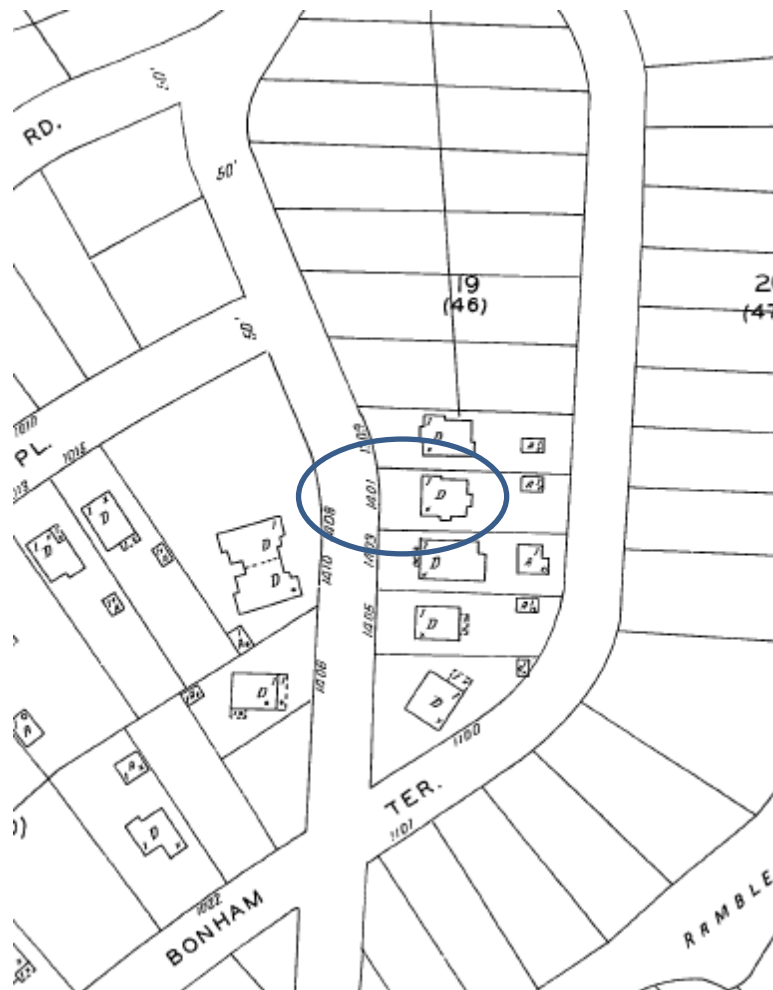
A newcomer to Austin, Susskind was pleased with the citizen response to his call for assistance and pleased that chamber could help the Del Rio man.

No sooner had he found the answer to this rather unusual request for help when another letter arrived.

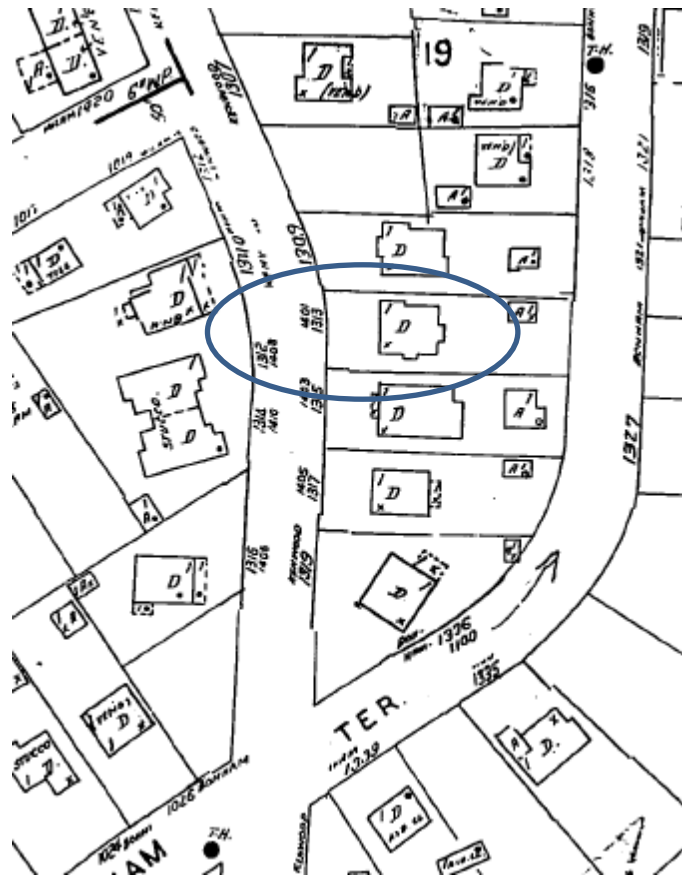
It was from a man in New Caledonia who asked for the name of "some rain-making organizations in Texas."

There's no end to the bizarre letters the chamber receives, Susskind says.

News story on Mrs. Esther Allidi's salad dressing
Austin American-Statesman, June 10, 1973



The 1935 Sanborn map shows the house with its address of 1401 Kenwood Avenue; this map is the first to show this section of the city.



The 1962 Sanborn map shows the house with the same configuration as shown on the 1935 map above; the address shows both the old address of 1401 and the new address of 1313 Kenwood Avenue.