

**HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION  
APRIL 27, 2015  
DEMOLITION AND RELOCATION PERMITS  
HDP-2015-0151  
1710 MAPLE AVENUE**

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**PROPOSAL**

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Demolish a ca. 1913 house.

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**ARCHITECTURE**

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One-story, rectangular-plan, hipped roof frame house with a partial-width inset porch and a central, hipped-roof dormer. The siding has been replaced or covered over with synthetic siding and permastone, and the original windows have been replaced with vinyl windows.

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**RESEARCH**

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The house was built around 1913. The first known occupant of the house was John Washington, an African-American laborer, who lived here until around 1915. A cook, Julia Merritty, is listed as the occupant in the 1916 city directory. From around 1917 to around 1930, the house was owned and occupied by John and Julia Whitley. John Whitley was a carpenter who then went to work as a porter and delivery driver for the C.A. Bradford Company, one the city's largest paint, wallpaper, and art supply stores. He was an agent for the Universal Relief Insurance Company of Texas in the late 1920s.

In the 1930s, the house was owned and occupied by Arthur and Gertrude Taylor. Arthur Taylor worked as a porter – for a refrigerator dealership, and then at a UT fraternity house. From around 1940 until the early 1960s, the house was first rented, then owned by Albert Sneed and his wife Savannah. Albert Sneed had no occupation listed in the city directories; he had farmed in Bastrop County before moving into Austin. His daughter, Velma, and her husband, Willie Simpson, lived with the Sneeds for some time, then later moved into the house themselves. Willie Simpson was a motor vehicle operator for the U.S. General Services Administration.

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**STAFF COMMENTS**

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The house is listed as a medium priority for preservation in the Chestnut Neighborhood Historic Resources Survey (2001) because of the alterations.

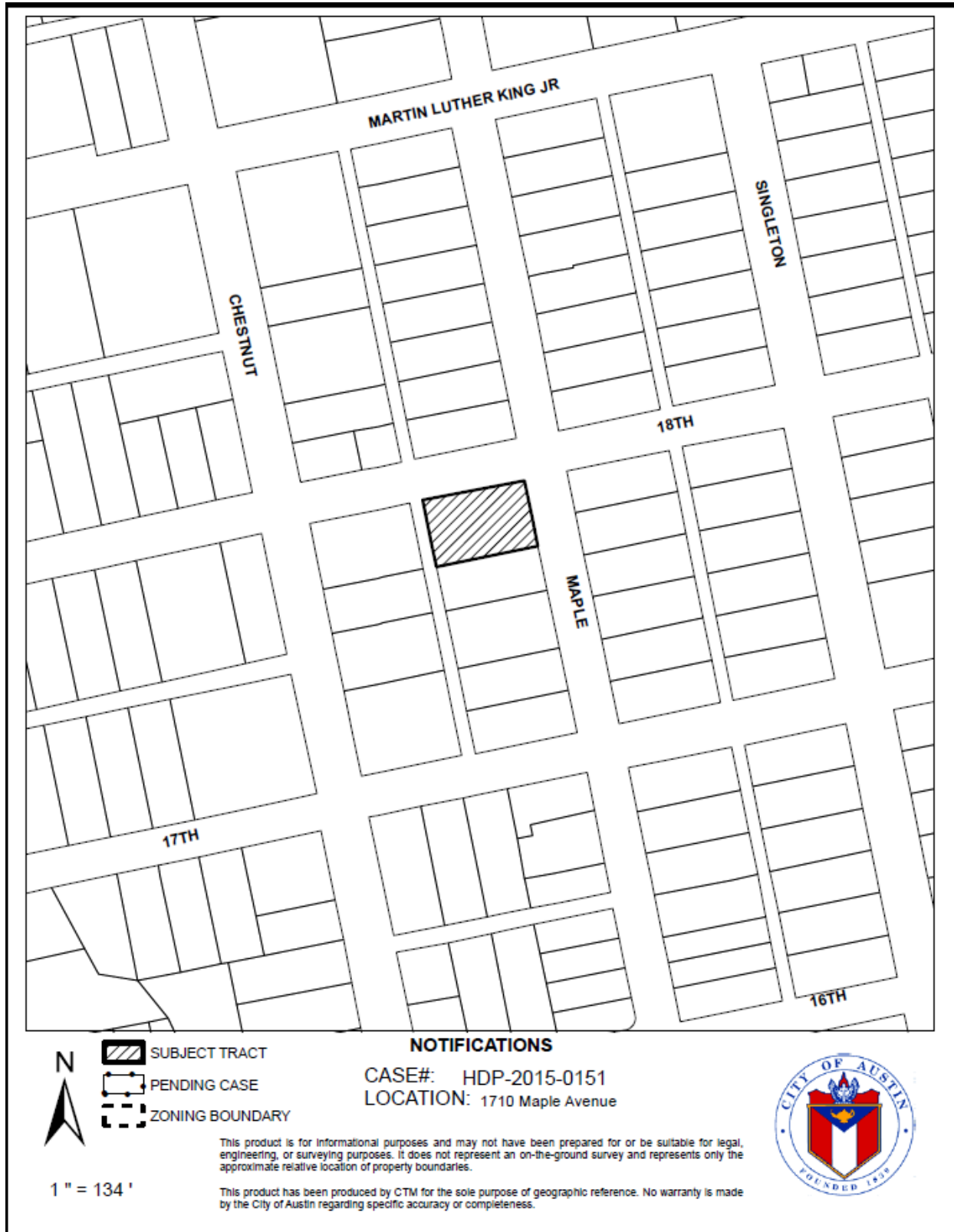
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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

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Staff encourages the applicant to consider restoration of this house rather than demolition. The house is over 100 years old, and while it may not qualify as an individual landmark in its current condition, it has a long history with African-American families in the neighborhood, and is a good example of its architectural style. Restoring this house would add greatly to the architectural and historical character of the neighborhood. If the Commission votes to release the permit, staff recommends the 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



1710 Maple Avenue  
ca. 1913



## OCCUPANCY HISTORY 1710 Maple Avenue

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

1992	Willie S. and Velma A. Simpson, owners Retired
1985-86	Willie S. and Velma A. Simpson, owners Motor vehicle operator, General Services Administration
1981	Willie S. and Velma A. Simpson, owners Motor vehicle operator, General Services Administration
1977	Willie S. and Velma A. Simpson, owners Motor vehicle operator, General Services Administration
1973	Willie S. and Velma A. Simpson, owners Motor vehicle operator, General Services Administration
1968	Willie S. and Velma A. Simpson, owners Laborer, U.S. General Services Administration
1962	Albert Sneed, owner

	No occupation listed
	Willie S. and Velma Simpson, renters Truck helper, City Sanitation Division
1959	Albert Sneed, owner No occupation listed
	Willie S. Simpson (no wife listed), renter Driver, Rhodes Truck Lines, 817 Airport Boulevard.
1955	Albert Sneed, owner No occupation listed
	Willie S. and Velma Simpson, renters Clerk, Post Office
1952	Albert and Savannah Sneed, owners No occupation listed NOTE: Willie S. Simpson is not listed in the directory.
1949	Albert Sneed, renter There is no listing for Albert Sneed in the alphabetical section of the directory. NOTE: Willie S. Simpson is listed at 1505 E. 7 <sup>th</sup> Street; he was a helper at the South Texas Cotton Oil Company.
1947	Albert and Savannah Sneed, renters No occupation listed
1944-45	Albert and Savannah Sneed, renters No occupation listed
1941	Albert and Savannah Sneed, renters Laborer NOTE: Arthur and Gertrude Taylor are listed at 2403 E. 12 <sup>th</sup> Street; he was a laborer. Arthur Taylor, Jr. lived with them; he was a porter at the Bradford Paint Company.
1939	Arthur and Gertrude Taylor, owners Laborer Also listed is Arthur Taylor, Jr., a laborer. NOTE: Albert and Savannah Sneed are not listed in the directory.
1937	Arthur and Gertrude Taylor, owners No occupation listed Also listed is Arthur Taylor, Jr., a porter at the Bradford Paint Company, 201-03 W. 9 <sup>th</sup> Street.
1935	Arthur and Gertrude Taylor, owners Porter, Beta Theta Pi Fraternity, 2613 University Avenue. Also listed is Arthur Taylor, Jr., no occupation shown.
1932-33	Arthur and Gertrude Taylor, owners No occupation listed

- 1930-31 Vacant  
NOTE: Arthur and Gertrude Taylor (colored) are listed at 1102 Olive Street; he was a porter for Frigidaire Sales and Service, 301 E. 5<sup>th</sup> Street.  
NOTE: John and Julia Whitley are listed at 1169 San Bernard Street. He was a glazier for the Bradford-Barrett Company, wholesale and retail paint, window glass, wallpaper, picture frames, and art material, 201-03 W. 9<sup>th</sup> Street.
- 1929 John W. and Julia Whitley (colored), owners  
Agent, Universal Relief Insurance Company of Texas, 605½ San Jacinto Boulevard.
- 1927 John and Julia Whitley (colored), owners  
Driver, C.A. Bradford Company, wholesale and retail paint and window glass, wallpaper, picture frames, and art materials, 201-03 W. 9<sup>th</sup> Street.
- 1924 John and Julia Whitley (colored), owners  
Delivery man, C.A. Bradford Company, wholesale and retail paint and window glass, wallpaper, picture frames, and art materials, 201-03 W. 9<sup>th</sup> Street.
- 1922 John and Julia Whitley (colored), owners  
Porter, C.A. Bradford, paints, 705 Congress Avenue.
- 1920 John and Julia Whitley (colored), owners  
Porter, C.A. Bradford, paints, 705 Congress Avenue.
- 1918 John and Julia Whitley (colored), owners  
Carpenter
- 1916 Julia Merritty (colored)  
Cook  
NOTE: John Whitley is not listed in the directory.
- 1914 John Washington (colored)  
Laborer  
NOTE: Julia Merritty is not listed in the directory.
- 1912-13 The address is not listed in the directory.  
NOTE: John Washington is listed as a yardman for George W. Littlefield, the president of American National Bank; he lived on Littlefield's property at 300 W. 24<sup>th</sup> Street.

#### **BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES:**

##### **John and Julia Whitley (ca. 1917 – ca. 1930)**

John and Julia Whitley appear in the 1930 U.S. Census as the owners of the house at 1169 San Bernard Street in Austin. Their house was worth \$4,500. John Whitley was 43, had been born in Texas, and was a glazer at a wholesale house. Julia Whitley was 41, had been born in Texas, and had no occupation listed. They had no children listed with them.

##### **Arthur and Gertrude Taylor (ca. 1931 – ca. 1940)**

Arthur and Gertrude Taylor appear in the 1940 U.S. Census as the renters of the house at 2403 E. 12<sup>th</sup> Street. Arthur Taylor was 49, had been born in Texas, and did contract yard work. Gertrude Taylor was 40, had been born in Texas, and was a maid in a private home. They had

4 sons: Arthur Taylor, Jr., 25, a porter in a cafe; Samuel Lee Taylor, 15; C. Ray Taylor, 13; and Oliver Taylor, 9. All of the boys had been born in Texas.

The 1930 U.S. Census shows Arthur and Gertrude Taylor as the renters of the house at 1102 Olive Street in Austin. Arthur Taylor was a mechanic in a battery station. In addition to the sons listed in the 1940 census report, they Taylors had another son, William, who was 12 in 1930. The 1920 U.S. Census shows Arthur and Gertrude Taylor renting the house at 2108 East Avenue with their sons, Arthur, Jr., and William. Arthur Taylor was a driver; Gertrude Taylor was a laundress at the house.

**MRS. GERTRUDE TAYLOR**  
 Mrs. Gertrude Taylor, 71, of 7300 Providence, died in a local nursing home Friday.  
 Funeral will be Monday at 2:30 p.m. at New Hope Baptist Church, Rev. O. T. Arnold officiating. Burial will be in Evergreen Cemetery under direction of King-Tears Mortuary Inc.  
 Survivors include her husband, Arthur Taylor; four sons, Arthur Taylor, Jr., Ray Taylor, and Oliver Taylor, all of Austin, and Samuel L. Taylor of Midland; four sisters, Hattie Butler of Eltonia, Mrs. Emma Harris of Austin, Mrs. Caloma Woods of Gonzales, and Mrs. Annie L. Johnson of Abson; 15 grandchildren.

Obituary of Gertrude Taylor  
 Austin American-Statesman, July 30, 1972

**TAYLOR, Arthur Sr., 92, of Austin died Saturday. Services 10 a.m. Thursday at Fuller-Sheffield Funeral Home. Burial Evergreen Cemetery.**

Death notice for Arthur Taylor  
 Austin American-Statesman, November 13, 1984

**Willie and Velma Sneed Simpson (ca. 1953 - )**

Albert and Savannah Sneed appear in the 1940 U.S. Census as the renters of this house. Albert Sneed was 67, had been born in Texas, and had no occupation listed. Savannah Sneed was 59, had been born in Texas, and had no occupation listed. They had 4 children: James, 25, a general construction helper; daughter Earl, 23, who did housework for a private family; Matthew, 20, a baker; and Velma, 19, who had no occupation listed. With them lived Albert's brother, Anderson Sneed, 74, who had no occupation listed. The family had lived in rural Bastrop County in 1935. The 1930 U.S. Census shows Albert and Savannah Sneed renting a farm in Bastrop County, where Albert was a farmer. Savannah Sneed is listed as a farm laborer, as are the couples' two oldest children. The family included 7 children at that time, with Novice, Kermit, and Tommie as the three oldest, who were not then listed with the family in 1940 census report.

Savannah Sneed died September 7, 1952. There was no obituary in the Austin newspapers.

Velma Sneed married Willie S. Simpson; they lived in the house through the 1990s.

**ALBERT SNEED**  
**Funeral for Albert Sneed will**  
**be Friday at 3 p.m. at Greater**  
**Mt. Zion Baptist Church with**  
**Rev. N. W. Bacon officiating.**  
**Burial will be in Evergreen**  
**Cemetery under direction of**  
**King-Tears Mortuary, Inc.**  
**Survivors include daughters,**  
**Mrs. Mary Earl Grant, Mrs.**  
**Velma Simpson, Austin, Miss**  
**Novella Sneed, Los Angeles,**  
**Miss Tommie Sneed, Chicago;**  
**sons, Arthur Sneed, Chicago,**  
**James Sneed, Richmond, Calif.,**  
**Kermit Sneed, Chicago. M. W.**  
**Sneed, Compton, Calif.; 21**  
**grandchildren, 36 great-**  
**grandchildren, 13 great-great-**  
**grandchildren.**

Funeral notice for Albert Sneed  
 Austin American-Statesman, November 28, 1968



### **Velma Sneed Simpson**

Velma Sneed Simpson, age 73, passed away on January 24, 1996.

She is survived by her husband, Willie S. Simpson of Austin; son, Willie Earl Simpson Sr. and wife of Austin; daughter, Barbara E. Walker and husband of Atlanta, Georgia; sister-in-law, Alice Hunter of Bryan, Texas; five grandchildren and a host of nieces and nephews.

Funeral services will be Tuesday, 1:30 p.m. at Greater Mt. Zion Baptist Church. Interment will follow at Evergreen Cemetery.

Obituary of Velma Sneed Simpson  
Austin American-Statesman, January 28, 1996

**Mary Sneed**

**1710 Maple Avenue**

**38**

**1**

**5**

**- -**

**Glenwood Addition**

**Frame addition to rear of residence.**

**40415 3-8-49**

**\$450.00**

**Albert Sneed**

Building permit to Mary Sneed for the construction of a frame addition (1949)