

ZONING CHANGE REVIEW SHEET

CASE NUMBER: C14H-2015-0013

HLC DATE:

September 28, 2015

PC DATE:

January 12, 2016

APPLICANTS: Terry and Suzanne Burgess, owners

HISTORIC NAME: Sparks House

DISTRICT: 9

WATERSHED: Shoal Creek

ADDRESS OF PROPOSED ZONING CHANGE: 1510 West Avenue

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

SUMMARY STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends the proposed zoning change from single family residence (SF-3) district to single family residence – Historic Landmark (SF-3-H) combining district zoning.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR LANDMARK DESIGNATION:

Architecture and historical associations.

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION ACTION: Recommended the proposed zoning change from SF-3 to SF-3-H. Vote: 9-0 (Panju off-dais).

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION: Recommended the proposed zoning change from SF-3 to SF-3-H on the consent agenda. Vote: 11-0 (Oliver and Stevens absent).

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The house is listed as a Priority 2 for research in the Comprehensive Cultural Resources Survey (1984).

CITY COUNCIL DATE: February 11, 2016

ACTION:

ORDINANCE READINGS: 1ST 2ND 3RD

ORDINANCE NUMBER:

CASE MANAGER: Steve Sadowsky

PHONE: 974-6454

NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION: Judge's Hill Neighborhood Association

BASIS FOR RECOMMENDATION:

Architecture:

Two-story rectangular-plan hipped tile roof Renaissance Revival-styled brick-veneered house with ornamental limestone and cast concrete accents, including window and door surrounds; combination of single, paired, and triple flat-arched and round-arched 1:1 windows with stone sills. The house was designed by prominent Austin architects Page Brothers, whose work spanned residential, commercial, and institutional architecture in Austin and throughout the State of Texas. The house is especially notable for its attention to detail, its combination of round-arched and flat-arched windows, and its ornate ornamentation, including the "dolphin" windows on the ground floor. Renaissance Revival design took as its inspiration the architecture of Tuscany, Spain, and other Mediterranean regions, and reflects a certain eclecticism in design with a combination of window types, exterior ornamentation or sculptured features, a low-pitched roof, and use of tile for the

roofing materials. Renaissance Revival buildings are generally light in color, and feature either stucco or light-colored brick or stone as the primary surface material. This house features more Spanish elements than most Renaissance Revival houses, and reflects its location in the Southwest.

Historical Associations:

The house was built in 1927 for Sam and Bertha “Polly” Sparks. Sam Sparks was a prominent city and state leader before his untimely death in 1933. Born in Bell County, Texas in 1873, Sparks made his mark at a young age. When he succeeded his father as the Bell County Sheriff in 1897, he was the youngest county sheriff in the state. He went on to become the president of the Texas Sheriff’s Association in 1903, then served as state treasurer from 1906 to 1912.

In 1912, he began his distinguished career in banking and finance, organizing the Texas Trust Company with local businessmen George W. Walling and H.A. Turner. When the company’s charter was amended in 1922, Texas Trust Company became the Texas Bank and Trust Company. That bank merged with Republic Bank and Trust Company in 1932, and Sparks served as the chairman of the board of the combined institution. His interests went far beyond banking, however. He served as president of the Woodward Manufacturing Company at Penn Field in Austin from 1922 to 1927. Originally organized to manufacture truck bodies for Chevrolet and Ford, the Woodward plant was destroyed by a tornado in 1922. Sparks re-organized the company into a furniture manufacturing plant, specializing in wood furniture using native Texas hardwoods such as gum and magnolia. At one time, Woodward was the largest manufacturing facility in Austin. He was also very active in civic affairs, leading the funding drives for the construction of Memorial Stadium and the Gregory Gymnasium on the campus of the University of Texas.

After his death in 1933, Bertha “Polly” Sparks continued to reside in this house, raising her children. She sold family property on 16th Street in 1934 to architect Charles Granger, who later built his home and the Perch, the first example of a mid-century Modern garage apartment in the city.

The property was purchased by Andrew and Josephine Viscardi in 1949; they lived here until 1953, when they sold it to dentist Roman Berezovytch and his family.

PARCEL NO.: 0211010713

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: N 92FT OF E 182.95FT AV OF OLT 9 DIVISION E

ESTIMATED ANNUAL TAX ABATEMENT: \$8,500 (owner-occupied); city portion: \$2,500 (capped).

APPRAISED VALUE: \$2,143,905

PRESENT USE: Residence

CONDITION: Excellent

PRESENT OWNERS:

Terry and Suzanne Burgess
3405 Woodview Avenue
Austin, Texas 78756

DATE BUILT: ca. 1927

ALTERATIONS/ADDITIONS: Virtually unchanged exterior; interior modifications.

ORIGINAL OWNER(S): Sam and Bertha Sparks (1927)

OTHER HISTORICAL DESIGNATIONS: None.







Ornate exterior stonework with the S initial ironwork by Fortunat Weigl

Sparks House

1510 West Avenue, Austin, Texas 78701

Compiled by Phoebe Allen, July 2015

SUMMARY

Page Brothers architects designed a Spanish eclectic home at 1510 West Avenue in Austin, Texas for politician and businessman Sam Sparks Sr. and his wife “Polly” in 1927. Sparks served as Texas’ state treasurer, had an active career in banking and finance, and was a civic leader in the community. The property itself has a history that leads one back in time to Austin’s early development, including a prior Hutchings-Sparks house at the site that is associated with Frank Brown, a Travis County Clerk and compiler of *Annals of Travis County and the City of Austin*¹, who purchased the entire block in 1870. Both Brown’s parents and Sam Sparks’ grandparents were 1830s Texas pioneers in Robertson Colony.

This house merits designation as a City of Austin Historic Landmark and as a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark for its exemplary architecture, its integrity, and the historic role of its original owners, as well as the property’s history and significance in the evolution of the Judges Hill neighborhood.

NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT

Shoal Creek was the natural western boundary of Austin when Edwin Waller laid out the city’s original one-square-mile grid in 1839. The lots inside the 1839 city plan, as well as *outlots* beyond the lots inside the “Original City” grid, were sold to the highest bidders.

Those who purchased outlots in the future **Judges Hill** neighborhood included Outlot Nine’s first owner, **Charles L. Mann**. Outlot 9 is bounded by Shoal Creek on the west, Cherry/West 16th Street on the north, West Avenue on the east, and North Avenue/West 15th on the south. The land plummets sharply on its far west side toward Shoal Creek— a creek that was the early capital’s boundary between white settlement and Native Americans to the west.

In 1870, **Frank Brown** purchased all of Outlot 9. Brown lived in a house on the southeast corner of this outlot until 1904; his house could have been originally built as early as the 1850s by previous property owner A.G. Compton², an editor of the *Austin Texas Sentinel*. A two-story home with north and south wings is pictured at 15th/North just west of West Avenue on the 1887 and 1873 Birds Eye Maps³.

The wealthy **Caswell** family purchased Outlot 8 and a south parcel of Outlot 9 in 1896. The Caswells built three houses in a row along West Avenue. The 1904 William Caswell house at 1502 West Avenue lies just north of 15th Street; the grand 1899 Daniel H. Caswell House at 1404 West Avenue lies just south of 15th Street and is operated by the Austin Junior Forum as an event center; both are historic landmarks. The 1909 Haskell Caswell House at 1500 West Avenue was razed in 1966 in order for 15th Street to be extended to Lamar.

The Sparks House is situated on the northeast corner of Outlot 9, at the intersection of West Avenue and Sixteenth Street, a few blocks northwest of the Texas State Capitol and southwest of The University of Texas campus. The neighborhood takes its name from the numerous judges who built homes in the area beginning in 1851.

Adjacent to the downtown business district, the homes near this street are some of the oldest in Austin. Spanning a period from the 1850s through the turn of the century, the structures provide insight into the transitioning architectural styles and building materials of the time.

Elijah Sterling Clack Robertson (1820-1879), son of Robertson Colony’s empresario, built the first home in the neighborhood on a bluff overlooking Shoal Creek. He was soon followed by several others along West Avenue, the western boundary of 1839 Austin. The **Glasscock Mansion** (razed 1923) was built in the 1400 block in 1853. The circa 1855 Chandler-Shelley House, also known as **Westhill**, at 1703 West Avenue, was likely built by **Abner Hugh Cook** about the same time Cook was building the nearby Governor’s Mansion. Many elegant, historic homes still line both sides of West Avenue.

There are at least three periods of construction activity in the Judges’ Hill area. First is that beginning during the Republic and running through World War I, roughly 1840 to 1914. The style is reflected in Abner Cook homes and other early structures. A second phase of development includes the period between the two world wars, 1914 to 1945. The third phase, following WWII, saw the addition of a few homes in the Ranch and Mid Century Modern styles.

¹ Frank Brown, *Annals of Travis County and the City of Austin From the Earliest Times to the Close of 1875*. MS, Frank Brown Papers, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin.

² See deed chain for 1855, 1863.

³ Koch, Augustus (1840-?). Austin, State Capital of Texas, 1887. Lithography, 28x41 in. Austin History Center, Austin Public Library. Koch’s 1873 map also indicates the Glasscock House and the Brown House on the west side of West Avenue.

Because of its proximity to the Capitol, UT and downtown Austin, the Judges' Hill neighborhood continues to experience controversial revitalization, demolition for replacement by condos, and conversion of single-family residences to professional offices. On the 1800 block of West Avenue, for example, is a series of three modern apartment and condominium buildings that replaced two famed historic homes: the **Edward Mandell House** home at 1704 West Avenue, built in 1891 and demolished in 1967, and the **Angeline Townsend-Thad Thomson** home at 1802 West Avenue, built in 1868 and demolished in 1962.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

By 1927 Victorian style was no longer in vogue, yet wealth was still measured in residential architecture. The Sparks House is rich with complementary construction materials – brick, limestone, cast concrete and tile – as well as elegant, unique masonry detail and on both of its street front façades. The rectangular, almost square shape of the house imparts a solidity that speaks to its owners' foundation in the community.⁴

Austin's Page Brothers architects designed this Spanish eclectic home for the Samuel Sparks Sr. family in 1927. Eleven sheets of original plans, dated June 1, 1927, are on file in the Austin History Center⁵. The two-story frame structure with brick veneer and stone detailing has a full basement, attic and separate single story garage on 0.389 acres of land. The floor plan is an irregular L-plan; the original footprint of the residence is unchanged. Weigl Ironworks created the "S" details and other original ironwork for the home.

The hipped, tile roof has a flat peak and exposed rafter tails. A detached single-story, three-car garage has a hipped roof with composition shingles. The circa 2006 garage faces 16th Street and replaced an original two-story garage that was in very poor condition.

The main floor plan originally contained a living room and dining room, kitchen, breakfast room, sewing room, screen porch, and half bath. The second floor was designed with four bedrooms, a dressing room and two baths. The basement level originally featured a servant's room and bath, central boiler room, a potting or garden room, and another large room.

Windows are double hung, one over one, and all have original stone sills with the exception of some on the rear of the house. Three ground-level front "Dolphin" windows (called by this name due to the dolphin figures in the bas relief) are arched and featured in an elaborate cast concrete, bas-relief window surround with two integral columns that match multiple columns on the inset front and wrap-around side porch. The window triplex is accompanied on either side by a stone urn or basin at the base of a Rowlock arch of brick with a herringbone brick fill. There are three one/one windows above the window triplex, each with matching shutters that have iron "S" designs on each set, no railings.

An upper three-window group above the porch area is highlighted by a decorative metal rail with alternate straight and twisted rails. The flooring of the inset front porch is cement scored into square tiles. There are three entries on the front porch. The main door faces south, is arched with wood panels, two upper glass panes, and a brick surround. The second and third entries on the porch face the street and are sets of arched, double French doors with multi-lights. Porch posts are brick and molded concrete, with half columns and posts.

A side entry door faces 16th Street and features multi-lights with a solid fan transom above and a design in its cement surround, with multi-paned sidelights. The second story window over the side entry is arched.

The black metal rail fence six feet in height runs along West Avenue and turns the corner along 16th. It has periodic capped, stucco square posts. Two semi-circular basins are embedded in the front façade. A sidewalk and gardens surround the home. There is a concrete driveway on 16th Street.

Original architectural features of the interior include the hardwood floors, handrails, newel posts, and carved end cap details. Great care and expense have been used in 2015 to protect very detailed woodwork on the staircase.

According to Russ Butler⁶, the bricks are scratch textured brick made from the lightest layer of fireclay in the Wilcox Formation. "The clay is a very white clay and I suspect it came from the Wilcox formation in East Texas as that is the lightest/whitest clay I know of. They contain fine particles of manganese dioxide that were added to the clay to provide a speck in the brick. They were probably fired to about 2100F in bee hive kilns. The brick were laid with a lime putty mortar (before Portland Cement mortars became popular) and as a result the mortar joints are, characteristically, very soft. This soft mortar allows the brick to be cleaned and reused. The brick are typical of "wood molded" brick fired with wood in scove kilns; extruded, solid, scratch textured brick with manganese specks in the body."

Architectural Modifications

The interior configuration of the house has been modified over the years, but the exterior is largely historic and has strong integrity. In an attempt to bring the house into the 21st century, attorney Patrick Thompson and partner, Paul Parson, an interior decorator, renovated the home in 2006, adding new wiring, plumbing, heating, air-conditioning and rebuilding some windows while maintaining the houses' original architecture and character.

⁴ Bowman, Gordy. "Austin Architect," Third Coast: The Magazine of Austin, February 1987, page 10.

⁵ Stark Residence Architecture files PB-2701, FF-005, 86101. Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.

⁶ Russell Butler of Elgin-Butler Brick, May 8, 2015 via email. He personally visited the site in June of 2014 and determined that the bricks were not made by Elgin-Butler.

Interior walls were reconfigured to create more of a foyer, to enlarge the kitchen, to provide two master suites and a guest suite, and to remove nonfunctional spaces. Parson enclosed the rear porch with windows and added a small room above the rear porch, leaving the footprint and exterior otherwise historic. When Parson purchased the house, the tile roof was in disrepair; he replaced it with composition shingles. Parson rebuilt some of the badly deteriorated windows, all with single panes, to closely match the originals.

Owners Terry and Suzanne Burgess are currently remodeling the interior of the house and have gone to great lengths and expense to maintain the exterior architectural features. Costs are very expensive because the house interior has deteriorated and because the interior walls have required reconfiguration. Most of the electrical, plumbing, sheetrock and cabinetry have thus required replacement. Exterior expense has included the cost of returning the composition shingle roof to the original style of tile at \$60,000. Replacement of the damaged concrete basins on the front façade was \$5,000. (One was good, one damaged; the remaining original basin required removal in order to cast two basins to match the originals; they were stained to match the rest of the extensive ornamental concrete on the exterior of the house.) The Burgesses have rebuilt a number of the windows with custom made, energy efficient, double-pane glass and wood at a cost of around \$65,000. These costs are included as examples of some of the expenses incurred to maintain historic integrity of the exterior while creating a livable home for a modern family.

ARCHITECT

Page Brothers Architects also designed the nearby 1907 Reed-Byrne House at 1410 Rio Grande and the 1906 McClendon House at 1606 Pearl. **Brydson Lumber Company** was engaged by Sparks in a Mechanics Lien at a cost of \$25,000. The contract for a deposit is dated 6/24/27 with the final payment on completion dated 2/14/28.⁷

In 1886 Charles Henry Page moved his young family from St. Louis, Missouri to Austin to work as a stonemason on the construction of the new Texas State Capitol building. In 1898, Page's oldest son, **Charles Henry Page Jr.** (1876-1957), opened the architectural firm of C. H. Page and was joined in 1907 by his younger brother **Louis Page** (1883-1934) as C.H. Page and Brother, which became Page Brothers.

Page Brothers quickly emerged as one of the preeminent architectural practices in Texas with the commission for the Texas Pavilion at the St. Louis World's Fair in 1904. The firm was prominent in the transition from late 19th century eclecticism, through an expressive classicism in the 1910s, to the period of modernism. The firm became one of the state's leading firms specializing in public projects such as schools and courthouses. Its works extended across Texas and included such significant projects as the Smith County Courthouse (1910), the Littlefield Building in downtown Austin (1912/15), the Hunt County Courthouse (1928), the Travis County Courthouse (1929), and the Austin National Bank (1930, razed 1956) at 513 Congress Avenue.⁸ Page Brothers designed numerous public buildings in Texas, including the Williamson, Hays, Fort Bend and Anderson County Courthouses as well as city hall buildings in Mexia and Eagle Lake.

After Louis' death in 1934, the firm's name changed to C.H. Page Architect. Charles Henry Page III (1910-), who received his bachelor's degree in architecture from UT in 1932, became a partner in 1936 (C.H. Page & Son) and took over the firm after his father's death in 1957.⁹

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

History of Outlot 9

Charles L. Mann was the first buyer of Outlot 9. Born about 1825 in Mississippi, Mann became a Texas government official and Texas Ranger. He was appointed ad interim Adjutant General of Texas on December 24, 1847 and served until March 7 of that year. In January 1850 he was living in Austin, where he was an officer in the Metropolitan Division of the Sons of Temperance. The 1850 census reports that Mann owned real estate valued at \$3,000. At one time he was a city magistrate in Austin and in 1857 was captain of a group of Texas Rangers in a filibustering expedition to Nicaragua.¹⁰

⁷ Plans for the house are on file at Austin History Center.

⁸ Texas Historical Commission. <http://www.thc.state.tx.us/page-southerland-page-llp-austin>

⁹ Roxanne Williamson, "Charles Henry Page," *Handbook of Texas Online* (<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fpa76>), accessed June 25, 2012. Texas State Historical Association. Hank Todd Smith, ed., *Austin, Its Architects and Architecture* (Austin Chapter, American Institute of Architects, 1986). Roxanne Williamson, *Austin, Texas: An American Architectural History* (San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 1973). Charles Page, Vertical Files, Austin History Center.

¹⁰ "Mann, Charles L.," *Handbook of Texas Online*. Accessed June 10, 2015. Uploaded June 15, 2010. Texas State Historical Association. (<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fma34>)

After passing through several hands, Outlot 9 was purchased in 1870 by **Frank Brown**.¹¹ He likely moved into a house already on the property, built between 1855 and 1863¹². Brown lived in a house on the southeast corner of Outlot 9. He and his wife deeded lots north of his home to two of his daughters, who built homes there: the 1889 **Dignan-Mickey House**¹³ (a City of Austin Historic Landmark) and the 1891 **Hutchings-Sparks House**. The first husband of **Effie Wade Brown Dignan** (1857-1947) had died in 1888; she sold her property to the Caswell family in 1900. As Mrs. Stark Washington, Effie Brown contributed data for a chapter about her grandmother, Sarah Harrington Wade Brown, for the book *Pioneer Women in Texas*¹⁴. The chapter is the story of Frank Brown and his parents' journey to Robertson Colony.

In 1890 thirty feet of Outlot 9 along its north line was donated to extend Sixteenth Street. Mrs. Caswell purchased part of Outlot 9 from Frank Brown in 1896 and built the William Caswell House on the site of Brown's former home in 1904, and the adjacent Haskell Caswell House in 1909 (demolished 1966 for the extension of 15th Street).

Building History:

Frank Brown and wife Georgiana gave the northeast corner of Outlot 9 at 1510 West Avenue to their daughter **Sarah Wittie Brown Hutchings** (1865-1931) in February of 1888¹⁵. She and her husband **Henry Hutchings** (1865-1939) took out a mechanics lien¹⁶ for constructing improvements in February of 1889.¹⁷ Hutchings is listed at the address from 1889-90 through the 1903-04 Austin City Directories.

The property was sold by Austin Real Estate & Abstract Company to **Hattie & W.B. Johnsey** in 1905. The retired Reverend Johnsey and his wife lived there until they sold the property to Sam & Bertha Sparks on **December 19, 1910**. In 1910 a plasterer and a bricklayer are indicated as residents of the home. The family of Sam Sparks moved into the house by 1912 and lived there through 1920, when the **1889 Hutchings-Sparks House** was razed, probably by fire, about 1921.

Paul Parson, previous owner: "I have a copy of the original plans which mention an existing retaining wall. When we were excavating in the back yard for drainage we discovered some evidence of a previous house." Sanborn maps do not cover this block until 1935.

Sam Sparks Sr. built an elegant new home at the site in 1927. The Sparks family lived in a new house directly west of the Hutchings-Sparks home, at 805 W. 16th Street, while their new house was under construction. Bertha Sparks sold that property in 1934 to Charles Granger, who built the present Granger House & Perch, historic landmarks, on that lot.

Judge Sam Sparks (1939-) spent quite a lot of time at his grandmother's home when he was a small boy while his father was at war in the Navy and his mother was helping with the war effort. Times were hard, and his grandmother leased the basement rooms to college students during the war.

"It was the perfect home for a little boy," says Sparks. "There was this little hidden bedroom off the master bedroom" where he played and where his grandfather spent the last years before his death.¹⁸ Judge Sparks has given a copy of a painting of the house, made by one of his relatives, to Parson, who has passed that on to the current owners.

About a year after his mother's death, **George Sparks**,¹⁹ who had been continually residing in the home, sold it in November of 1949 to **Josephine & Andrew H. Viscardi** for \$25,000.²⁰ The Viscardis in turn sold the home to **Frances L. & Roman Berezovytch** in September of 1953.

¹¹ See Deed Chain for 1870.

¹² The increase in value from \$800 in 1855 to \$5,000 in 1863 indicates that the Brown's house could have been built by previous owners Rebecca & A.G. Compton.

¹³ Helen and Walter Murray Graham, first cousin of the Pease grandchildren and well-known developers of Enfield, purchased the Dignan home in 1911 and lived there until 1916. The 1865-66 Texas Governor Andrew Jackson Hamilton's¹³ widowed daughters Lillie Hamilton Maloney and Mary Hamilton Mills owned the home and lived there from 1916 to 1932. Mary's husband, W.W. Mills, wrote the book *Forty Years in El Paso*, chronicling the Mills' sojourn as the first white family in El Paso. After the deaths of the Hamilton sisters, their family sold the home to Samuel W. Mickey in 1937.

¹⁴ *Pioneer Women in Texas*, Annie Doom Pickrell, E.L. Steck Co, Austin, Texas. 1929.

¹⁵ Travis County Deed Book 80, page 289.

¹⁶ Mechanics lien. Travis County Deed Book 83, page 165.

¹⁷ See the Deed Chain for some confusion regarding the property, which was reconveyed back and forth between Hutchings and Brown, and perhaps involved unpaid taxes.

¹⁸ Villalpando, Nicole. "A House with History: Design and law run deep at Judges' Hill estate." *American Statesman*, March 21, 2010. G1, 8.

¹⁹ *Austin American Statesman*, June 6, 1947; *The American* July 23, 1963. "Austin Builder Succumbs to Illness at Home," *Austin Statesman*, July 6, 1933.

²⁰ Travis County Deed Book 1020, page 105.

Berezovytych was a dentist; his family lived in the house for almost 50 years. Their son sold the home to interior decorator **Paul Parson** and **Patrick Thompson** in June of 2005²¹. Parson made significant renovations in the house, which was sold to **JWAM West Management LLC (Jack Wheeler)**²² in March of 2012 and to the current owners, **Suzanne & Terry Burgess**, in February of 2013²³.

Significant Persons Associated with the Property

FRANKLIN TATE BROWN (1833-1913), meticulous record-keeper and chronicler of the history of Travis County and Austin through the end of the Nineteenth Century, purchased Outlot 9 in 1870; it is indicated on the 1873 and 1887 Bird's Eye Maps of Austin.²⁴

Son of Sarah Harrington Wade Brown (1808-1876) and John Duff Brown (1806-1840), Frank was born in Nashville, Tennessee. When he was two years old, in the fall of 1835, he came to Texas with his parents and a group of settlers to the headquarters of the Robertson Colony. After the "Runaway Scrape" the Brown family lived in the Colony near Old Nashville on the Brazos River through the winter of 1839-40, along with families that included Jacob M. Harrell, James Shaw, James Swisher and A.J. Graves. His father served in the Texas Army in 1837. In the winter of 1839-40 the family moved to Washington-on-the-Brazos, where his father died and where Frank was a carrier boy for the *National Register*.

Mrs. Brown and her four children and one "colored woman" left for Austin in January of 1846 in an ox wagon pulled by six oxen. The distance was about 110 miles; there were no bridges for crossing streams or rivers. From October 1848 to February 1849, Frank worked in the office of the *Western Texian* in San Antonio. In Austin, Frank learned the printer's trade. He married **Georgiana A. McLemore** (1834-1897) in Austin on January 1, 1856. Their family came to include twelve children, Brown's mother, an invalid sister, and an orphaned niece and nephew.

According to Frank Brown, he served as the Clerk of the District Court of Travis County beginning in 1854 and was continuously re-elected until 1894, when he retired. He enlisted in the Confederate Army as a private, was honorably discharged as a captain of home guards at the end of the war, and was paroled in July 1865. That same year he was appointed Clerk of the District Court and City Alderman of Austin. From July 1865 until January 1867 he was associated with James A. Foster as publishers of the *Austin Southern Intelligencer*. He also developed a property called Lakeside on old Lake McDonald, twelve miles west of Austin.

After Brown's retirement in 1869, he compiled his *Annals of Travis County and the City of Austin* at the request of the Texas Historical Society and the Daughters of the Republic of Texas. His manuscript is a storehouse of information about the history of the Austin area in the second half of the nineteenth century. Brown's daughters built homes in the same block of West Avenue. Frank's daughter **Effie Dignan** sold her next-door property to Mrs. L.B. Caswell in October of 1900. Brown died in 1913 in Austin at the Nueces Street home of his daughter **Wittie** and her husband, **Henry Hutchings**, who had lived at 1510 West Avenue until 1904.²⁵

HENRY HUTCHINGS (1865-1939), soldier, publisher, and politician, was born in Somersetshire, England, on August 17, 1865 and brought to America by his parents in 1866. He became a private in the Iowa National Guard in 1882 and, after moving to Texas, joined the Texas National Guard in 1885. In 1890 he founded and published the *Austin Evening News* and, for a time, published the *Austin Statesman*, later renamed the *Austin American Statesman*. He was adjutant general of Texas from 1911 to 1917, when he resigned to organize the Seventy-first Infantry Brigade. He commanded this brigade in the United States Army overseas during World War I. Hutchings was secretary of state under Governor Pat M. Neff in 1925, and from January 18, 1933, to January 15, 1935, served again as adjutant general. Hutchings married **Wittie Brown** (1865-1931) in 1886, and they had seven children. On March 9, 1935, he married Mrs. Hallie White of Dallas. He died at his home in Austin in 1939. At the time of his death he was executive officer in charge of the narcotics division of the Texas Department of Public Safety.²⁶

SAM SPARKS SR. (1873–1933) "became one of the most distinguished public officials of Texas, while as a banker

²¹ Travis County Deed Record 2005104304-05TR.

²² Travis County Deed Record 2010043531TR. Jack Wheeler, owner. His sons occupied the house for a brief period.

²³ Travis County Deed Record 2013028777TR.

²⁴ Travis County Deed Book T, page 592, for \$3,750.

²⁵ *Austin American*, January 20, 1924. *Austin Statesman*, October 29, 1899, January 28, 1913. Frank Brown, *Annals of Travis County and the City of Austin* (MS, Frank Brown Papers, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin). *Galveston News*, October 8, 1895. Frances K. Hendricks, "BROWN, FRANK," *Handbook of Texas Online*(<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fbr81>), accessed February 05, 2014. Published by the Texas State Historical Association

²⁶ *Austin American*, July 29, 1939, Obituary. Lura N. Rouse, "HUTCHINGS, HENRY." *The Handbook of Texas Online*. (<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fhu49>), accessed June 15, 2015. Uploaded on June 15, 2010. Published by the Texas State Historical Association.

and civic leader he took prominent part in shaping the destinies and development of Austin.”²⁷

A native of Bell County, Texas, Sam was the fourth of nine children born to **Mary Fisher** (1846-1918) and Texas native **Samuel Alexander Sparks** (1846-1897). Sam’s father was the 12th child of **William Crain Sparks** (1798 GA-1857 TX) – a farmer and stock raiser that settled in Robertson Colony in 1834, became a colonel in the Republic of Texas Militia (Texas Rangers) and was a member of the Republic’s House of Representatives from Nacogdoches County. William’s son, Samuel Alexander Sparks, served four successive terms as Sheriff of Bell County, retired for one term and was elected to a fifth, being sheriff when he died.

Sam Sparks Sr. attended the public schools of Bell County, the old free school known as Belton Male Academy, the Wedemeyer Academy at Salado, and Belton Business College, where he received a diploma. At the age of 21, he was elected city secretary at Belton (1894 to 1897) and succeeded his father as sheriff of Bell County at the age of 24 (1897-1903), the youngest sheriff at that time to be elected in Texas. In 1903, at age 30, he was unanimously elected president of the **Texas Sheriffs' Association**.

At the age of 36, on November 15, 1906, he married **Bertha May “Polly” Jones Mulkey**²⁸ (1880 KY - 1947) in Corsicana, Texas, her hometown. The couple became the parents of three children: Sam Mulkey Sparks (1907-1910), Mary Louise Sparks (1909-1985), Jack Sparks (1911-1992), and George Walling Sparks (1915-1963). The Sparks couple adopted a child, William (1905-1981), on March 25, 1911, following the death of their first child.

During the three terms Sparks was **Texas State Treasurer** (1906 to 1912), again the youngest man at that time to be elected, he established residence in Austin and by 1912 was the vice president of the Business Men’s Accident Association. Sparks entered into an association with George W. Walling and H.A. Turner in April of 1912, embarking on a career in finance by organizing the **Texas Trust Company** as its president. The charter was amended in 1922 to permit banking, with a name change to **Texas Bank and Trust Company**, which merged with **Republic Bank and Trust** in 1932; Sparks was elected as chairman of its board of directors, and served in that role until his death.

Sparks was prominent in Lions Club affairs and served as president of the Lions Club and of the Chamber of Commerce. While president of the Austin Chamber of Commerce in 1916 Sparks helped bring grand opera to the city for the first time, promoted the erection of the Stephen F. Austin Hotel, and assisted in the merger of the United Telephone Company with Southwestern Bell, a move that provided residents with one of the most favorable telephone rates in the country at the time. He also led drives for funds for building Memorial Stadium and Gregory Gymnasium at the University of Texas and the University Methodist Church.

From 1922-27, Sparks was president of **Woodward Manufacturing Company**, which evolved out of **Woodward Body Works**. When World War I was over, Penn Field was on the market. Sparks and D.J. Woodward of San Antonio purchased 75 acres of land in Penn Field with 1¾ mile of railroad track and one of Penn Field’s original buildings to manufacture Ford and Chevrolet commercial truck bodies. The first truck was manufactured in 1921, with D.J. Woodward serving as the president of the company at the time. The plant, which was Austin’s largest factory at the time, was demolished by a tornado in May of 1922, with at least one employee dying from injuries and about 25 injured. There was no insurance for tornadoes. About 150 people were living at the plant; they lost everything. Sparks was quoted as “heartbroken over his injured men” and unable to discuss his financial losses.²⁹

Rebuilt and established as a corporation in 1923, the **Woodward Manufacturing Corporation** transitioned from manufacturing truck bodies to bedroom furniture of gum, magnolia and solid woods from East Texas for distribution in Texas. The founders were Judges Hill neighbors Sam Sparks, “Commodore” Edgar H. Perry, David Cleveland Reed, and William Caswell – who served as president of the company from the late 1920s to its sale circa 1960.

Sparks also held interests in real estate and developed three additions to Austin, including Shoal Crest and Speedway Heights.

Sparks was also a lover of fine stock and stock raising and keenly interested in ranching; his holdings included farming land in Texas as well as his farm in Bell County, notable for its horses and cattle. Consequently he was chosen as president of the Travis County Fair held in Austin in 1921 and served as president when the County Fair

²⁷ Adams, Frank Carter, ed., *Texas Democracy: A Centennial History of Politics and Personalities of the Democratic Party, 1836–1936*. Democratic Historical Association, Austin 1937, vol. IV, pp. 58.

²⁸ Bertha Sparks was the daughter of T.G. and Julia (Greenwade) Jones of Hopkinsville, Kentucky.

²⁹ Central Texas Business & Professional Directory, Wm. Skaggs, editor, Centex Publications, Austin, 1952. File AF F5000 (21), Austin History Center: *Austin American*, May 5, 1922, “Austin Manufacturing Unit Increases Output to Keep Up with Orders,” 1930; “Heartbroken Over His Injured Men, Sparks Cannot Talk Losses,” and “Cyclones Kill 10”. *Austin American*, Feb. 13, 1922, “Woodward Plant Shows Way to Austin Industry,” page 1:2. *Woodward Body Works: Commercial Bodies for Chevrolets*, (catalog), Tobins, Austin, undated.

was enlarged in 1922 to become the Central Texas Fair. Sparks was a member of the University Methodist Episcopal Church and paid off the church's indebtedness upon its dedication and served as a steward of the church. He was a 32nd degree of the Scottish Rite and was a member of the Mystic Shrine, belonged to the Knights of Pythias and was active in the Violet Crown festival, of which he was elected king. Sam Sparks died in Austin of consumption at the age of 60 on July 6, 1933, and was buried in Oakwood Cemetery.³⁰

Sam and Bertha's daughter **Mary Louise Sparks** married Yerger Hill Jr.; they have a daughter, Dianne Hill James, and a son, Yerger Hill III, both of whom contributed information for this nomination.

Son **George Sparks** attended law school at the University of Texas, worked for the Texas attorney general, and practiced law in Houston after his mother's death.

Son **Jack Sparks** (1911-1992) received a BBA at UT in 1932, worked at the General Land Office (1932-35), and in oil fields (1935-36) before graduating from UT's law school in 1938 with highest honors. Jack practiced law for over 50 years in Austin. He was associated with Judges Hill neighbor George E. Shelly for four months, then Hart & Brown for nine months. He served as assistant D.A. to Travis County beginning in 1939. Jack Sparks married Beulah Campbell in 1934 and had three children: Joe Campbell Sparks, Sandra Sparks Martin, and Judge Sam Sparks.

Jack's son, **Judge Sam Sparks** (1939-), was born in Austin and received from UT his bachelor's degree in 1961 and a law degree in 1963. He began his legal career as a law clerk for Federal District Court Judge Homer Thornberry for the Western District of Texas. After Thornberry received an appointment to a higher court in 1965, Sparks moved to El Paso, where he joined the firm of Hardie, Grambling, Sims & Galatzan. President George H.W. Bush nominated Sparks to a newly created seat on the federal bench on October 1, 1991. He was married to Arden Reed Sparks until her death in 1990. Sparks returned to Austin with his second wife, the former Melinda Echols (1947-), and continues to serve as a United States District Judge for the Western District of Texas, Austin Division.³¹

Current Owners: Suzanne & Terry Burgess

Terry Burgess moved to Austin from Stephenville, Texas in 1972. He graduated from UT in 1976, worked for Elgin-Butler Brick over 10 years, and left as CFO. He has owned Consolidated Metal Technologies, located in Round Rock, for over 20 years. He played in many bands in many venues over all of these years and is the author of Double Dave's radio commercial that played for several years in Austin.

Suzanne Burgess moved to San Marcos from Maryland in 1982 and to Austin in 1983. She worked for the State of Texas for 27 years and retired in 1997.

The Burgesses have put a lot of money and effort into restoring this home to its as-built condition. They want to make sure that the house is protected for future generations.

SIGNIFICANCE

The Sparks House merits historic landmark status for its unique design by noted Austin architects, the Page Brothers, as well as its importance as the home of Austin civic leader Sam Sparks. It has a very high degree of integrity in its original materials and style and is currently undergoing restoration by its new owners; restoration work is scheduled to be completed in September.

While West Avenue has become a mix of offices and residences, this property is still zoned residential. It is commendable that the home continues to serve as a residence in a neighborhood where homes are increasingly utilized as businesses.

³⁰ Adams, Frank Carter, ed., *Texas Democracy: A Centennial History of Politics and Personalities of the Democratic Party, 1836-1936*. Democratic Historical Association, Austin 1937, vol. IV, pp. 58-65. Austin: Democratic Historical Association, 1937). Austin *American-Statesman*, July 7, 1933. John L. Sims, "SPARKS, SAM," *Handbook of Texas Online* (<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fsp02>), accessed June 11, 2015. Uploaded on June 15, 2010. Published by the Texas State Historical Association.

³¹ Federal Judicial Center website, <http://air.fjc.gov/>; United States District Court, Western District of Texas website, http://www.txwd.uscourts.gov/gen_info/judges.asp; and the State Bar of Texas website, <http://www.texasbar.com>. Also from Sam Sparks' wife Melinda Sparks, via email.

OCCUPANCY CHAIN from Austin City Directories
 1510 West Avenue (and related property in Outlot 9)
 Legal Description: N 92 Feet of E 182.95 Feet AV of Outlot 9 Division E

1872-73	Frank Brown, Deputy Clerk District Court, r. west side West Ave. bet. Cherry (16 th) & North Ave (15 th). (1872-73 is the first Austin City Directory)
1883-84	Frank Brown, County Clerk, 1500 West Ave.
1885-86	Frank Brown, r. 1500 West Ave, cor North (15 th)
1886-87	Henry Hutchings, r. 206 W. 14 th , book and job printer 1002 Congress. (First reference to HH in directory)
1889-90	Henry Hutchings , 1506 West Avenue, corner of West Avenue & 16 th Street, proprietor Hutchings Printing House at 1000-1002 Congress. Dignan, Effie W. (wid J.F.) h. Henry Hutchings
1891-92	Hutchings, 1510 West Ave.
1893-94	Henry Hutchins, 1510 West Ave, president Hutchings Printing Co, on 1 st floor of Temporary Capitol, SW corner of 11 th & Congress
1895-96	Henry Hutchings, 1510 West Ave. president Hutchins Printing Co, vice-president Lakeside Improvement Co, editor and business manager of Austin Evening News. [Dignan, Effie (wid J.F.) r. 1502 West Ave.]
1900-01	Henry Hutchings, 1510 West Ave., pres. News Publishing Co., business manager Austin Evening News
1903-04	Henry Hutchings, superintendent of Gammel-Statesman Publishing Co. r. 1510 West Av Frank Brown, r. 1500 West Ave.
1905	No listing for 1510 West Henry Hutchings, r. 1911 Nueces, chief clerk Secretary of State Dept. 1500 West - Wm. N. Pratt 1502 West –John R. Reed, mgr. Bush & Gerts Piano Co of Tx.
1906-07	Rev. William B. Johnsey . 1510 West
1907-08	Rev. William B. Johnsey, retired.
1909-10	Rev. William B. Johnsey, retired.
1910-11	1510 West - James Knight, bricklayer, and Henry Rowe, plasterer 1500 West – D. Haskell Caswell Jr. 1502 – Wm. T. Caswell 1504 – Elston H. Ford, dealer in Texas lands [Henry Hutchings, mgr. Firm Foundation Printing Co, 118 E. 9 th , r. 1913 Nueces]
1912-13	Sam Sparks , 1510 West Ave, pres. Tx Trust Co & vp Business Men's Accident Assn [Henry Hutchings, r. 1913 Nueces, adjutant general State of Tx off. State Capitol]
1916	Sam Sparks, 1510 West Ave, pres Tx Trust Co, vp Woodward Mfg. Co., Business Mens Accident Assoc of Tx Henry Hutchings, r. 1913 Nueces, Brigadier Gen, Adj Gen State of Tx
1920	Sam Sparks (Bertha), 1510 West, pres. Tx Trust Co, vp Business Men's Accident Assn
1922-1927	1510 West Avenue is not listed in City Directories during these years
1922	Sam Sparks (Bertha), 805 W. 16th (pres. Tx Trust Co & vp Woodrow Mfg. Co & Business Men's Accident Assn of Tx
1924	Sam Sparks (Bertha), 805 W. 16 th , pres. Tx Bank & Trust Co, pres Woodrow Body Works -Wm. Sparks, h. 805 W. 16 th -Benjamin P Sparks, rooms 805 W. 16 th , Sparks & Sanders (horse dealers)
1927	Sam Sparks (Bertha), 805 W. 16 th , pres. Tx Bank & Trust Co, pres Woodrow Body Works
1929	Sam (Bertha) Sparks, 1510 West Ave. (also Wm, Jack, & Mary L.)
1934	Bertha Sparks (widow), 1510 West
1935	Bertha Sparks (widow Samuel), 1510 West Geo. W. Sparks, student UT, 1510 West Jack (Beulah bkpr GLO, 1510 West
1940	Bertha J. Sparks (widow Samuel), 1510 West Geo. W. Sparks, rep. State Attorney General, 1510 West Jack (Beulah; c:1) Sparks, 1702 Wethersfield Rd.
1945	Bertha J. Sparks (widow Samuel), h. 1510 West Geo. W. Sparks, USN, r. 1510 West

	Jack (Beulah; 2) lawyer, 1702 Wethersfield
1949	George W. Sparks , 1510 West
1952	Andrew Viscardi (Josephine) insurance. 1510 West Ave.
1953	Andrew Viscardi
1954	Vacant

1955, 60, 65, 70, 75, 80, 85-86, 1990, 95, 2000, 2005 **Roman Berezovytch (Francis)** dentist
Berezovytch sold the home to Paul Parson June 10, 2005.

2006, 2007, 2008 **Paul Parson, Patrick Thompson**
 2009-10-11 No listing
 2012-14 Terry & Suzanne Burgess, owners

City of Austin Lot Registers:

1899: Mrs. S. W. Hutchings \$1500 92 X 128
 1900: Wittie Hutchings \$1000 92 X 128
 1902: Mrs. S. W. Hutchings \$1130 92 X 128 NE corner
 1904: Mrs. S. W. Hutchings \$1130 92 X 128 NE corner
 1905: Austin Real Estate and Abstract, NE cor 92 X 128, \$1130
 1910: W.B. Johnsey, NE cor 92 X 195, \$3,600
 1915: Sam Sparks, 92 X 195, \$5,000
 1920: Sparks, 92 X 195, \$5,000; + 124 X 175, \$800
 1925: Sparks, \$5,000 + \$400 (less 60 X 160)
 1928: Sparks, \$5,400
 1930: Sparks, \$14,200 + \$1530

DEED CHAIN

1510 West Avenue and related properties in Outlot 9³²

2/15/2013	JWAM West Mgt. to Suzanne & Terry Burgess LLC 2013028777TR \$2,000,000
3/30/2012	Paul E. Parson & Patrick F. Thompson to JWAM West Mgt LLC 2010043531TR
6/13/2005	Wm. Berezovytch et al to Paul E. Parson & Patrick Thompson 2005104304-05TR \$850,000
10/23/2004	Roman Berezovytch to William Berezovytch, trustee, et al
9/4/1953	Josephine & Andrew H. Viscardi to Frances L. & Roman Berezovytch Vol. 1404, p. 409. \$25,000
11/29/1949	Jack Sparks, estate executor et al to Josephine & Andrew H. Viscardi. Book 1020/105. \$25,000.
6/9/1947	Probate of Bertha Sparks, deceased June 6, 1947.
8/31/1934	Bertha M. Sparks to Charles T. Granger. Book 510/139. (rear lot on 16 th) Bearings for survey from Vol. 13331, p. 1083.
6/24/1927	<i>Mechanic's Lien. Sam Sparks to Brydson Lumber Co. for construction of residence</i> \$25,000.
10/20/1922	<i>Homestead Designation of Bertha & Sam Sparks. V340/498. 92x259 feet out of NE corner of Outlot 9, Division E.</i>
5/31/1917	<i>Sparks to Texas Bitulithic Co. 298/2. For paving, guttering, curbing of West Avenue, \$355.32</i>
11/26/1915	Harry P. Bickler to Sam Sparks (partial lot) Book 277, page 485, of which portion was conveyed to N.A. Stedman 11/26/1915
12/19/1910	Hattie B. & W.B. Johnsey to Sam Sparks & Bertha May Sparks V243/382.
10/1/1910	[Frank Brown to Louise B. Caswell Book Book 163/506]
3/27/1908	[J.W. McClendon to W.B. Johnsey Book 227/487]

³² Historic deeds which served as sources for the deed chain will be archived at the Austin History Center with Sam Sparks papers.

11/28/1905 **Austin Real Estate & Abstract Co. to W.B. Johnsey** Book 209/p11

3/12/1898 **Frank Brown to Henry Hutchings & wife Wittie.** Filed 7/19/1904. Book 198/157. Beginning at a point 230 feet north from the SE corner of Outlot 9 on West Ave., north on West Ave. 45 feet, a lot 46x128 feet, adjoining the lot 46x128 feet conveyed to Effie W. Dignan on the south.

2/21/1898 Henry Hutchings & wife Wittie to Frank Brown. \$500. Reconveys same property. Book 152/54.

11/30/1897 Estate of Georgiana A. Brown, deceased Nov. 25, 1897.

7/23/1894 Frank & Georgiana Brown to Wittie Hutchings. 23 feet fronting on West Ave. Book 126/329.

5/1/1890 *Sixteenth Street extended to Shoal Creek; donated 30 feet along north line of Outlot 9. Book 93/559.*

2/6/1889 *H. & Wittie Hutchings to J.F. Pate. Mechanics lien. Book 83/165. \$1,000. For constructing improvements on the Hutchings homestead.*

1/26/1889 Frank Brown & wife Georgiana to Mrs. Wittie Hutchings. Love and affection for their daughter. Book 84/322.

1/26/1889 Wittie & Henry Hutchings to Frank Brown Sr. Book 84/320.

2/15/1888 **Frank Brown & wife Georgiana to Mrs. Wittie Hutchings.** Love and affection for their daughter. Book 80/289.

11/1/1870 **Geo. W.G. Browne & wife Julia A. & Jno. Hancock, trustee, to Frank Brown.** \$3,750. T/592. Outlot 9.

3/17/1863 A.G. Compton & wife Rebecca M. to Geo. W.G. Browne. \$5,000. Q/56 [*the increase in value indicates that a house may have been built on Outlot 9 by the Comptons between 1855 and 1863*]

3/20/1855 Robt. Creuzbaus to A.G. Compton. \$800. H/314.

11/20/1854 Robt. Creuzbaus to J.T. Graves Trustee. Outlot 9 \$287.49 note in favor of Nathaniel Townsend. H/135.

2/10/1853 Charles W. Pressler to Robt. Creuzbaus. \$420. Outlot 9, with other property. F/204

5/12/1852 State of Texas to Charles W. Pressler, assignee of Charles L. Mann V564/563 (Lot 9)
Patent #208 Vol. 2, page 93

4/14/1851 Charles L. Mann to Charles W. Pressler. \$100. E/225. Assignment or Transfer.

4/14/1851 Harvey Smith to Chs. W. Pressler. E/274 Outlot 9. Quit claim deed.

2/4/1851 Chas. Mann by Constable deed to Harvey Smith. \$27. D/430

12/18/1850 **State of Texas to Charles L. Mann.** Outlot #9, Division E, Austin City Outlots. \$50. E/224

State of Texas Tax Suits as listed in Property Abstracts

12/10/1902 State of Texas vs. Mrs. W. Hutchings et al. Tax Suit for 1896, 1898, 1899, & 1900 on 92x128 feet of Outlot 9. V14/85. Prays foreclosure.

10/18/1901 Mrs. Willie Hutchings et al. NE corner 92x128 ft. of Outlot 9.

1/9/1901 City of Austin to Frank Brown. Release. Book 165/502. At a sale on April 5, 1898 the City purchased Outlot 9 (less 92 feetx128 feet of NE portion) to satisfy taxes due for year 1895 amounting to \$89.52, and paid by Frank Brown.

11/9/1899 Frank Brown. Tax Suit for year 1897 on all of Outlot 9 except 128 fronting N line by 138 fronting E line out of NE corner. Settled and dismissed 1/16/1901

8/21/1902 Mrs. W.W. Hutchings for 1900 on 92x128 ft NE corner of Outlot 9

8/26/1902 Mrs. W.W. Hutchings for 1899 on 46x128 ft NE corner of Outlot 9

30/9/1896 Mrs. W.W. Hutchings for ____ on 46x128 ft NE corner of Outlot 9

3/15/1897 Frank Brown for 1895 on all of Outlot 9 except 92x128 ft on West Avenue.

4/26/1897 Mrs. W. Hutchings for 1890, 1895, 1896, & 1898 on 46x128 ft. of NE corner of Outlot

APPENDIX

Burgess Floor Plans, scans
Survey Plat - Site Plan, scan
Metes & Bounds, scan

Maps:

Sanborn Map, 1935, Sheet 40, Austin History Center (full page pdf and photo detail of original)
Map (scan) from Historical Abstract #280206. 1928. Indicates lots owned by Sparks, Dignan, Caswell and McClendon in Outlot 9.
Koch, Birds Eye Map, 1887, detail of Outlot 9 showing Frank Brown house at 15th & West Avenue

Historic Photos

Neither the Austin History Center nor any surviving member of the Sparks family (Judge Sam Sparks, Diane Hill James, or Yerger Hill) has an earlier photo of the house.
PICH 05236 1510 West Avenue, front façade from south angle, Austin History Center, undated
PICH 05237 1510 West Avenue, front façade from north angle, Austin History Center, undated
Watercolor Painting (photo), original in possession of Judge Sam Sparks, painted by a member of the Sparks family

Photos by Phoebe Allen, July 2015

Front, east façade

Rear, west façade

North (16th Street) façade

South façade

Details of front window surround

Page Brothers Design Plans, Austin History Center

BasementFloorPlan.JPG

2ndFloorPlan.JPG

RoofPlan.JPG

FrontEastElevation.JPG

FrontEastElevationDetail.JPG

NorthElevation.JPG

SouthElevation.JPG

RearElevation.JPG

Detail 2nd Floor.JPG

FirstFloorPlan.JPG

Letters of Support from Neighbors:

Jay Tassin & Brent Danninger, 1001 W. 17th (Kozmetsky House)

Megan & Albert Meisenbach, 1800 San Gabriel St. (Matsen House)

Margaret & Paul Gosselink, 903 W. 16th Street

Milton Felger, 1705 West Avenue

Mark Seeger & Jeff Harper, 805 West 16th (Granger House)

Jo Sue Howard, 1801 West Avenue (Scarborough House)

Steve Sadowsky, Preservation Officer

Kathy Tovo, City Council

City of Austin

Steve and Kathy,

I am the owner of 1705 West Avenue; and I support the application for the individual Landmark Designation for the 1510 West Ave (Sparks house).

With regards, I am

/S/

Milton R. Felger, DDS MS

Commander, United States Navy (Ret.)

10008 Cormorant Cove

Austin, TX 78730-3583

Historic Landmark Commission

Planning Commission

Mayor Adler and City Council members

re: Sparks House, 1510 West Avenue

I am writing in support of the application for historic zoning of the Sparks House at 1510 West Avenue. I believe the facts submitted by the applicants, Terry and Suzanne Burgess, speak for themselves. This house meets the criteria, is worthy of preservation, and deserves to be designated historic by the City of Austin. This structure is important not only to the fabric of the city of Austin but to Judges Hill neighborhood. As president of that neighborhood association, I am a proponent of retaining the history that we share.

The owners are in the midst of extensive restoration and renovation, including returning to the original red tile roof. I think that speaks to their respect for the history of the Sparks House and desire to preserve it for many future generations of Austinites.

Please join me in support of historical designation by the City of Austin for the Sparks House.

Jo Sue Howard
1801 West Avenue
Austin, TX 78701

Please show Paul and Margaret Gosselink as strongly in favor of Historic Designation for the Judge Sam Sparks Home at 1510 West Avenue. Judge Sparks was an early 20th Century Judicial Giant in Austin and his home is an architectural beauty which has been lovingly restored. The home is an important piece of Austin History and an important structure in the Judges' Hill Neighborhood where we live (4 houses to the west).

Sincerely,
Margaret & Paul Gosselink
903 W 16th St
Austin, Tx 78701

We support of the historic zoning application for the

1927 Sparks House at 1510 West Avenue, in Judges Hill. This house

meets the Historic Landmark criteria and is critical to preserve since is

important to the fabric of the City of Austin and its history.

.

We support of the historic zoning application for the

1927 Sparks House at 1510 West Avenue, in Judges Hill. This house

meets the Historic Landmark criteria and is critical to preserve since is

important to the fabric of the City of Austin and its history.

.

The Sparks house has links to the pioneers of Texas of 1830 and is important to the history of Judges Hill as well as the 2 remaining Caswell houses on West Avenue in Downtown Austin. The owners are in the midst of extensive

project that will finally restore its previous modern shingle roof to the original red Spanish tile at a cost of \$60,000, and replace the 2 damaged concrete basins on front façade, at \$25,000. to match the rest of the extensive ornamental concrete on the exterior of the house. The Burgesses have rebuilt some of the windows with custom made, energy efficient double pane glass and wood at a cost of around \$65,000

They are doing the expensive restorations for many future generations of Austinites, providing the city with a visible downtown asset that it should in turn help preserve.

This is especially important in Judges Hill, the small, historic garden district that the prior City Council, its staff and consultants considered worthy of preservation in its Downtown Austin Plan.

Our neighborhood spent many hundreds of hours, seven years and depleted its funds in an attempt to create a historic district here which failed. Without government support, the incentive to destroy this place of history is at risk of being razed over time. So it's now very important that you make this home's preservation sustainable going forward. Your vote for historic designation will remove the Sparks house as a target for developers' bulldozers.

Your efforts will help preserve a small corner the history of Austin's downtown for future generations that will enjoy walking and cycling through the area of quiet and large trees and yards as a respite from so much concrete surrounding it.

Please join us in support of historical designation by the City of Austin for the Sparks House.

Sincerely, Megan and Albert Meisenbach

1800 San Gabriel Street
Austin, TX 78701

Historic Landmark Commission
Planning Commission
Mayor Adler and City Council members

re: Sparks House, [1510 West Avenue](#)

I am writing in support of the application for historic zoning of the Sparks House at [1510 West Avenue](#). I believe the facts submitted by the applicants, Terry and Suzanne Burgess, speak for themselves. This house meets the criteria, is worthy of preservation, and deserves to be designated historic by the City of Austin. This structure is important not only to the fabric of the city of Austin but to Judges Hill neighborhood.

As the next door neighbors of this applicant and the owners of the National, State and City Landmark - the Granger House and Perch - we are proponents of retaining the history that we share.

The owners are in the midst of extensive restoration and renovation, including returning to the original red tile roof. I think that speaks to their respect for the history of the Sparks House and desire to preserve it for many future generations of Austinites.

Please join us in support of historical designation by the City of Austin for the Sparks House.

Mark Seeger and Jeff Harper
The Granger House and Perch
805 West 16th Street
Austin, TX 78701

Historic Landmark Commission
Planning Commission
Mayor Adler and City Council members

Re: Sparks House, 1510 West Avenue

We are writing in support of the historic zoning application for the 1927 Sparks House at 1510 West Avenue, in Judges Hill. This house meets the criteria and is worthy of preservation. This structure is important to the fabric of the city of Austin and to the Judges Hill neighborhood.

The Sparks house is set on a prominent corner of West Avenue at W. 16th Street in Downtown Austin and so invites passersby into its history and Austin's. The owners are in the midst of extensive project that will finally restore its roof to the original red Spanish tile. They are doing the heavy lifting that will restore it for many future generations of Austinites, providing the city with a visible downtown asset that it should in turn help preserve.

This is especially important in Judges Hill, the small, historic garden district that the prior City Council, its staff and consultants considered worthy of preservation in its Downtown Austin Plan. Our neighborhood spent many hundreds of hours and depleted its funds in an attempt to create a historic district here. After neighbors had initially approved it, though, pro-development opponents and their attorneys finally torpedoed that effort. Without government support, the incentive to destroy this place of history is at risk of being razed over time.

So it's now doubly important that you make this home's preservation sustainable going forward. As a student in an architectural master's program at UT Austin when I moved to Judges Hill, I know that its owners have spent more restoring Sparks House than they can ever recover. But the historic designation will remove the bullseye from its location as a target for developers.

Your efforts will help preserve a small corner the history of Austin's downtown for future generations that will enjoy walking and cycling through the area as a respite from the concrete canyons nearby. We have opened our homes to public and educational events repeatedly and Sparks House will add to that heritage.

Please join us in support of historical designation by the City of Austin for the Sparks House.

Jay Tassin and Brent Danninger
1001 W. 17th Street
Austin, TX 78701