

**HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION  
MARCH 28, 2016  
DEMOLITION AND RELOCATION PERMITS  
HDP-2015-1006  
1603 WILLOW STREET**

**PROPOSAL**

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Demolish a ca. 1902 house.

**ARCHITECTURE**

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One-story, wing-and-gable plan frame house with board-and-batten siding; partial-width shed-roofed independent porch with bracketed turned wood posts; single and paired 4:4 fenestration.

**RESEARCH**

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The house appears to have been built around 1902. The first owners and occupants were Adolph and Mary Gruber, who moved here from a multi-family dwelling on South Congress Avenue. Adolph Gruber was born in New Orleans; his father was a Bavarian-born brewer. Adolph worked for the telephone company at the time that he and Mary bought this house. His job titles included switchboard man, electrician, and loose wire chief. Around 1911, he went to work as a laboratory assistant in the School of Physics at the University of Texas, a job he retained until his death in 1936.

After Adolph Gruber died, the house became a rental property. Ruell L. and Ethel Turner rented the house through the 1940s; he was a warehouseman for Central Freight Lines. Subsequent tenants included a driver for the Firestone Test Fleet, and two Air Force families. In the mid-1960s, the house was rented by Santos and Eloisa Trevino, who lived here until the early 2000s. Santos Trevino was a clockmaker and watch repairman.

**STAFF COMMENTS**

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The house is listed in the East Austin Historic Resources Survey (1980), indicating its significance.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

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Release the permit upon 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. The applicant has worked diligently to investigate and evaluate alternatives to demolition, and has regretfully concluded that the condition of this house prevents him from rehabilitating and re-using it.

Dear Mr. Blatt:

Regarding 1603 Willow St:

I regret to inform you that your house is a poor candidate to move. Unfortunately, the house was of low quality when it was originally built as a shotgun kit house. Kit homes are not the types of homes that are worthy of relocation. It currently has termite damage, contaminated wood and other materials full of asbestos and lead, and floors that have been so compromised they are beyond repair. Add to that its low ceilings and poor layout, and this house is not at all feasible to move.

Additionally, in my opinion, even if the house could magically be relocated, it wouldn't make any sense to put money into saving it. In short, there is nothing worth saving.

Sorry to be the bearer of bad news. Please know I always try to save an old home when feasible.

Best,

Oliver Billingsley

Billingsley House Moving Inc

## LOCATION MAP



SUBJECT TRACT



PENDING CASE



ZONING BOUNDARY

1" = 250'

## NOTIFICATIONS

CASE#: HDP-2015-1006

1603 WILLOW STREET

This product is for informational purposes and may not have been prepared for or be suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes. It does not represent an on-the-ground survey and represents only the approximate relative location of property boundaries.

This product has been produced by CTM for the sole purpose of geographic reference. No warranty is made by the City of Austin regarding specific accuracy or completeness.





1603 Willow Street  
ca. 1902



## OCCUPANCY HISTORY 1603 Willow Street

City Directory Research, Austin History Center  
By City Historic Preservation Office  
August, 2014

1992	Santos and Elouisa Trevino, owners Retired
1985-86	Santos and Elouisa Trevino, owners Watch repairs (at the house)
1981	Santos and Elouisa Trevino, owners Watch repairs (at the house)
1977	Santos and Louisa Trevino, owners Watch repairs (at the house)
1973	Santos and Louisa Trevino, renters Watch repairs
1968	Santos and Louisa Trevino, renters Watch repairs
1962	Willard and Pearl Wortham, renters No occupation listed
1959	Harold and Leona Reaves, renters U.S. Air Force
1955	M.C. and Gennie V. Walker, renters Driver, Firestone Test Fleet, research, 211 E. Riverside Drive.
1952	Jess W. and Geneva Noble, renters U.S. Air Force
1949	Vel V. and Helen E. Ives, renters No occupation listed
1947	Ruell L. Turner, renter Checker, Central Freight Lines, 401 Colorado Street.
1944-45	Ruell L. and Ethel Turner, renters Foreman, Central Freight Lines, 401 Colorado Street.
1941	Ruel L. and Ethel Turner, renters Foreman, Central Freight Lines, 401 Colorado Street.
1939	Cecil Whitehead, renter Laborer
1937	Adolph A. Gruber, owner Chemist

1935	Adolph A. Gruber, owner Laboratory assistant, University of Texas
1932-33	Adolph A. Gruber, owner Laboratory assistant, University of Texas
1930-31	Adolph A. Gruber, owner Laboratory assistant, University of Texas
1929	Adolph A. Gruber, owner Laboratory assistant, University of Texas
1927	Adolph A. Gruber, owner Laboratory assistant in physics, University of Texas
1924	Adolph A. Gruber (not listed as owner) Laboratory assistant in physics, University of Texas
1922	Adolph A. Gruber, owner Laboratory assistant in physics, University of Texas
1920	Adolph A. Gruber, owner Laboratory assistant in physics, University of Texas
1918	Eva Gruber, owner Widow, Anton Gruber No occupation listed Also listed is Adolph A. Gruber, a laboratory assistant in physics at the University of Texas.
1916	Eva Gruber Widow, Anton Gruber No occupation listed Also listed is Adolph A. Gruber, a laboratory assistant in the School of Physics at the University of Texas.
1914	Eva Gruber Widow, Anton Gruber No occupation listed Also listed is Adolph A. Gruber, a laboratory assistant in the School of Physics at the University of Texas.
1912-13	Adolph A. Gruber Laboratory assistant, School of Physics, University of Texas. NOTE: Eva Gruber, the widow of Anton Gruber, is listed at 22307 Leon Street; she had no occupation shown.
1910-11	Adolph A. Gruber Switchboard repairman, Southwestern Bell Telephone Company
1909-10	Adolph A. Gruber Loose wire chief, Southwestern Telephone and Telegraph Company

- 1906-07      Adolph A. Gruber  
Electrician, Southwestern Telephone and Telegraph Company
- 1905          Adolph A. Gruber  
Electrician, Southwestern Telephone and Telegraph Company
- 1903-04      Adolph A. Gruber  
Switchboard man, Southwestern Telephone Exchange
- 1900-01      Unknown  
NOTE: Adolph A. Gruber is listed at 1811 S. Congress Avenue; he was a general inspector for the Southwestern Telephone and Telegraph Company.

### BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

#### **Adolph A. Gruber (ca. 1902 – ca. 1936)**

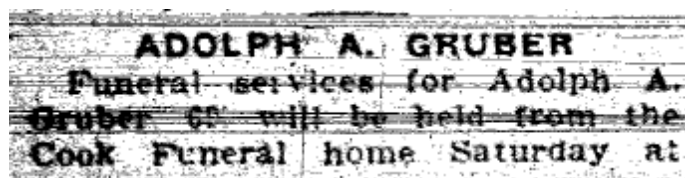
Adolph A. Gruber appears in the 1880 U.S. Census as the 12-year old son of Anton and Eva Gruber, who lived in Mesquite Street in Austin. He was born in Louisiana, and is listed as being at school. He was the oldest of the couple's three children. Anton Gruber was 37, had been born in Bavaria, was a brewer. Eva Brewer was also 37, had been born in Bavaria, and was listed as keeping house.

The 1900 U.S. Census shows A.A. and M.A. Gruber at 1811 South Congress Avenue, which also had two other families listed. A.A. Gruber was a 34-year old Louisiana-born electrician; M.A. Gruber was 38, had been born in Illinois, and had no occupation listed.

The 1910 U.S. Census shows Adolph A. and Mary A. Gruber at this address. Adolph A. Gruber was 45, had been born in Louisiana, and was an electrician for the telephone company. Mary A. Gruber was 48, had been born in Illinois, and had no occupation listed. They had a boarder, Bessie Galbraith, 25, who had been born in Texas, and was an operator for the telephone company.

The 1920 U.S. Census shows Adolph A. Gruber as the owner of this house. He was a 52-year old widower who had been born in Louisiana and was a laboratory assistant at the University of Texas.

The 1930 U.S. Census shows Adolph A. Gruber as the owner of this house. He was 62, and was listed as a teacher at the University. He had a roomer, Herbert H. Hamilton, 27, who had been born in Texas, and was a welder for the street railway company.





9:15 a. m. and at 9:30 a. m. from St. Mary's Catholic church with the Rev. Father Gallagan officiating. Burial will be in Mt. Calvary cemetery.

Active pallbearers will be Adolph Schnelder, Charlie Boes, Simon Gills, Bige Reno, W. L. Benson and J. W. Parks.

Honorary pallbearers, members of the Physics department of the University of Texas, will be Prof. W. T. Mather, S. L. Brown, J. M. Kuehne, Arnold Romberg, M. T. Colby, C. P. Boner, A. D. Lockenwitz, J. J. Miller, L. J. B. LaCoste and Earl Dickens.

Mr. Gruber is survived by one sister, Mrs. J. H. Williams, and one brother, L. H. Gruber, both of Austin.

Mr. Gruber, a resident of Austin for many years, was born in New Orleans, La., June 29, 1867. He had been connected with the Physics department of the University of Texas for a number of years.

Obituary of Adolph A. Gruber  
Austin American, March 21, 1936

#### **Ruell L. and Ethel Turner (ca. 1940 – ca. 1948)**

Ruell L. and Ethel D. Turner appear in the 1940 U.S. Census as the renters of this house. Ruell L. Turner was 40, had been born in Georgia, and was a warehouseman for Central Freight Lines. Ethel D. Turner was 34, had been born in Texas, and had no occupation listed. They had 2 sons: Weldon L., 16, ; and Floyd O., 13. Both boys had been born in Texas, and neither had an occupation listed. With them lived Ethel Turner's mother, Violet Bazemore, a 74-year old Illinois-born widow with no occupation listed.

The 1930 U.S. Census shows R.L. and Ethel Turner as the renters of the house at 1901 Riverview Street in Austin. R.L. Turner was a 30-year old Georgia-born milker in a dairy. Ethel Turner had no occupation listed. Their two boys were listed, as well as Ethel's mother, Mrs. I.B. Bazemore, who had no occupation listed.



**BUELL L. TURNER**

Ruell L. Turner, 58, of 3710 Munson, died in a local hospital Sunday. A life long resident of Austin, he was a retired state employee.

Survivors include two sons, Floyd Turner and Weldon Turner of Austin; seven brothers, O. D. (Jack) Turner of Round Rock, Buford Turner of Houston, Leonard Turner, L. D. Turner, E. A. Turner, Tom Turner and Jake Turner of Austin; three sisters, Mrs. Lola Carvell, Mrs. Adelle Atchison and Mrs. Avis McFarland of Austin; and six grandchildren.

Funeral services will be held at Hytlin-Manor Funeral Home at 2 p.m. Monday with H. L. Methaney of the Govalle Church of Christ officiating.

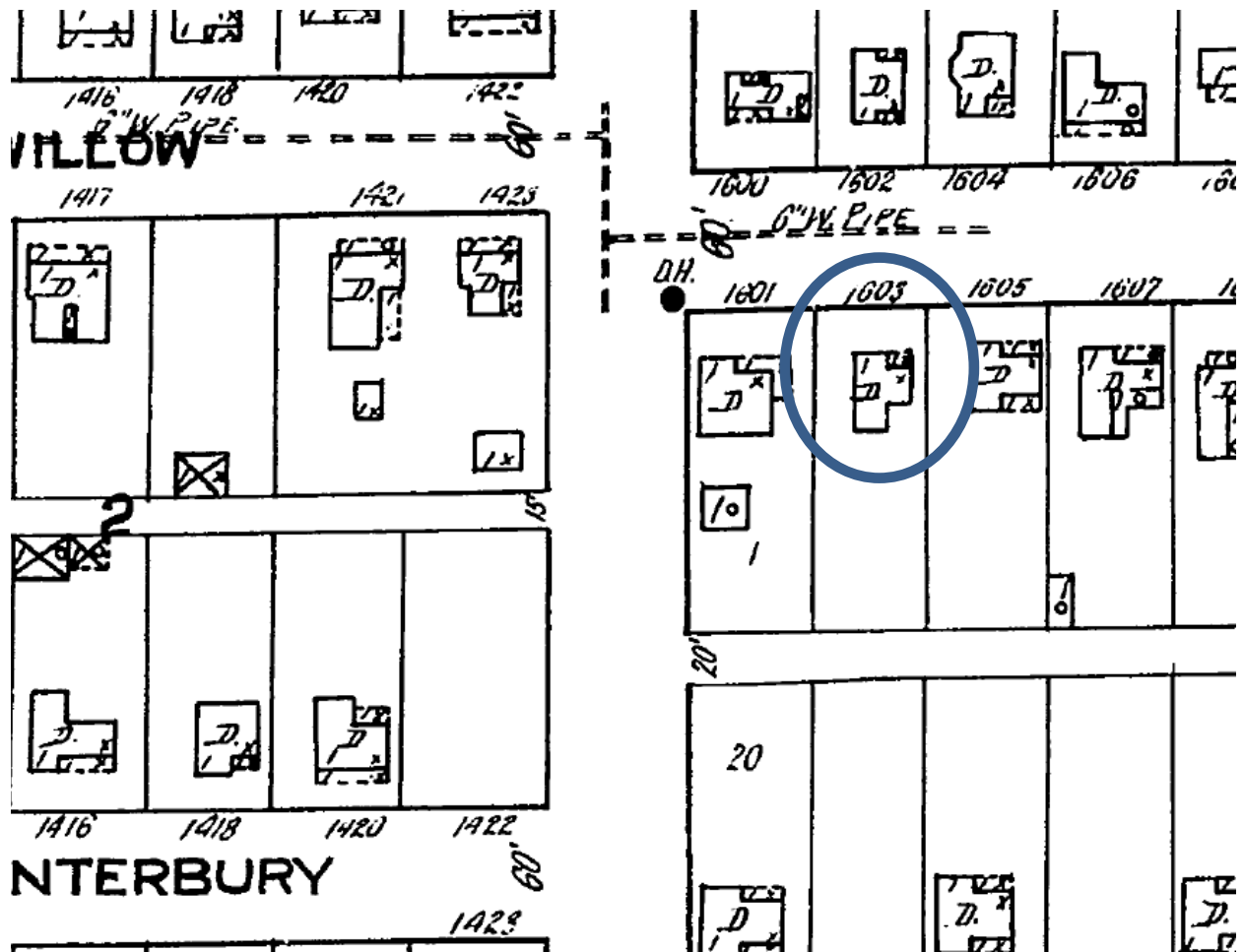
Obituary of Ruell L. Turner  
Austin American, October 28, 1957

**TREVINO, Eloisa**, 73, of Austin died Friday. Prayer service 7 p.m. today, Mission Funeral Home. Services 2 p.m. Monday, Mission. Burial Assumption Cemetery.

Death notice for Eloisa Trevino  
Austin American-Statesman, May 16, 2004

**TREVINO, Santos Flores**, 86, clocksmith, of Austin died Aug. 25. Rosary 7 p.m. Tuesday, Mission Funeral Home. Services 10 a.m. Wednesday, Mission. Burial Assumption Cemetery.

Death notice for Santos Trevino  
Austin American-Statesman, September 9, 2013



The 1922 Sanborn map shows the house.



Date: November 6, 2015

To: Jeffrey Blatt

Re: Residence located at:  
1603 Willow Street  
Austin, TX 78702

Jeff,

Below is the estimate for foundation repairs, modification and renovating the exterior to "original" appearance.

Pier and beam foundation repair. Replace existing cedar post with concrete pillars level foundation and replace subflooring material.

**\$55,200.00**

The residence will need all new under-pinning after the foundation is renovated

**\$6,960.00**

Concrete porch at front entrance will need to be replaced and brought to code for accessibility.

**\$5,880.00**

The renovation of the exterior will be extensive. The front elevation is wood and shows signs of dry rot throughout. Due to the current un-level foundation, the existing wood siding has warped and will not be reusable. The usable original wood siding on the east and west elevations will need to be sanded and repaired prior to paint. All wood windows will need to be completely re-furbished and updated with current glass and E-Values. All soffits will need to be replaced as will the existing roof. Covered Front porch will need to be shored up and post replaced. All Fascia Boards need to be replaced

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**\$54,600.00**

The property appears to have an illegal building addition. This will have to be completely demolished including slab work. There is also an addition to the existing structure that would need to be removed. This encases the hot water heater.

**\$21,000.00**

Renovation Cost Total:	\$143,640.00
G.C Fee of 20%:	\$28,728.00

**Total Estimated Cost: \$172,368.00**

Please note that this does not include any cost for the interior finish-out of the residence. This is just structural and exterior cost. All exterior walls will need all new insulation and possible repair to any damaged studs or any unforeseen issues.

The interior of the residence would need to be completely gutted to include removal of all existing plumbing, electrical wiring, sheetrock, insulation and millwork. All flooring would need to be removed as well. All electrical panels would need to be updated from the City's source. A conservative estimate for this work, including demo and labor and materials to remodel is between **\$115,000 & \$135,000.00**

This would make the total project cost approximately \$287,368.00 and \$307,368.00

Please let me know if you need any further information or explanation for the comments above.

Respectfully Submitted,

Travis Bertram