

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION
OCTOBER 23, 2017
APPLICATION FOR A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS
HDP-2017-0286
Old Negro Women's Home – King's Daughters Home
1210 Rosewood Avenue

PROPOSAL

Relocate the original frame section of the house to 1201 Cotton Street.

PROJECT SPECIFICATIONS

The applicant proposes to move the original frame section of the building 2 blocks north to a vacant lot at 1201 Cotton Street, at the corner of Navasota Street. The house is currently one building in from the corner of Navasota Street and Rosewood Avenue. The later, non-historic masonry additions to the rear will be demolished.

STAFF RESEARCH AND NOTES

The Commission recommended historic zoning for this house in July, 2017. The applicant is seeking to relocate the house, which is currently used as an office space, to a vacant lot owned by Wesley Methodist Church, which will use the building as an office. The proposed site is approximately 2 blocks north of the existing site, at the corner of Cotton and Navasota Streets, and a block from the potential San Bernard historic district. The proposed site is residential in character.

The Old Negro Women's Home was established by African-American benevolent societies and churches in 1913, in a "frame building" at 907 E. 10th Street, which accommodated 6 aged women and a matron. The 10th Street building does not appear on either the 1900 nor the 1935 Sanborn map, but it was located in the area that also had the 10th Street Baptist Church and the Robertson Hill School, both African-American institutions. Newspaper articles from 1913 describe the work that the King's Daughters, an African-American benevolent society, did to the building to make it livable, including painting, papering, and cleaning, and stated that the women were busy making bed linens, quilts, and other furnishings for the home. African-American and Anglo citizens and organizations donated equipment and provisions for the women at the home, including dishes, cooking utensils, groceries and farm products, and a sewing machine. However, it appears that the 10th Street building was a temporary location for the home and that the executive board was looking for a larger house to accommodate more residents. Later in 1913, the home moved to an 1890s house on the site of the current building on Rosewood Avenue. A former owner of the house placed an advertisement for its sale in the Austin newspaper in 1909, describing that house as having 7 rooms, good stables, a bath, servant's room, a cistern, city water, gas, and electric lights. The last owner of the house prior to its occupancy by the Old Negro Women's Home was James T. Johnson, a former deputy sheriff and deputy district clerk, who, according to his 1944 obituary, was renowned for his charity and benevolence.

Newspaper articles show that the current house was built in 1926, two years before the adoption of the City Plan that recommended the removal of all services and institutions for people of color to a separate, segregated district in East Austin. Settlement patterns in Austin from the Civil War until the late 1920s with the adoption of the City Plan, show a high level of racial integration throughout the central part of the city, but with marked areas where African-Americans made up the majority of the population, including Robertson Hill, the original site of the Old Negro Women's Home, and Samuel Huston College. East of Robertson Hill, the neighborhood around E. 11th Street and Rosewood Avenue was characterized by a mix of African-American and Anglo residences in the 1920s, as shown on the 1922 Sanborn map and from listings in the city directories for the period.

Scattered businesses in the area were generally food-related, including the Arnold Bakery, and small groceries, mostly operated by Anglo or immigrant Italian proprietors.

By the mid-1930s, E. 11th Street, west of the intersection with Rosewood Avenue, was developing into more of a commercial area, although the 1935 Sanborn map still shows the neighborhood as primarily residential. City directories of the period show that both 11th Street and Rosewood Avenue were becoming more closely identified with an African-American population, although there was still a number of Anglo residents in the neighborhood. City directories of the 1940s and 1950s show the transformation of 11th Street west of Navasota Street into an African-American business district, with insurance offices, night clubs, restaurants, beauty and barber shops, and other businesses catering to the segregated population. East of Navasota Street, on both Rosewood Avenue and 11th Street, the neighborhood retained its residential character, including the Old Negro Women's Home. Just west of the home was the Deluxe Hotel, which also had several other related businesses operating on the premises, and across 11th Street was the Hillside Pharmacy, established by Ulysses S. Young around 1950. Otherwise, Navasota Street marked the eastern boundary of the business district.

The Old Negro Women's Home was built in a residential neighborhood in 1926, and retained its context and identity as a residential structure until around 1970. The neighborhood surrounding the home has undergone great transformation in recent years with the construction of new multi-family residential, mixed-use, and office buildings along E. 11th Street, the encroachment of commercial uses east of Navasota Street, and the conversion of formerly residential buildings for commercial uses. Please see appendices for Sanborn maps and photographs.

The proposed site at 1201 Cotton Street is in a residential neighborhood 2 blocks north of the current site of the house. There has been some redevelopment along Cotton Street, but with the exception of a couple of two-story houses on the north side of the street, the new development is compatible in size, scale, and massing with the historic character of the neighborhood. Along Navasota Street are several houses dating from the 1910s and 1920s, so the contextual location of the Old Negro Women's Home in this traditionally African-American residential neighborhood will be historically compatible.

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW

The Commission's Standards for Review of applications for Certificates of Appropriateness include:

- Do not destroy the distinguishing original qualities or character of a building, structure, or site and its environment. Avoid the removal or alteration of any historic material or distinctive architectural features.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

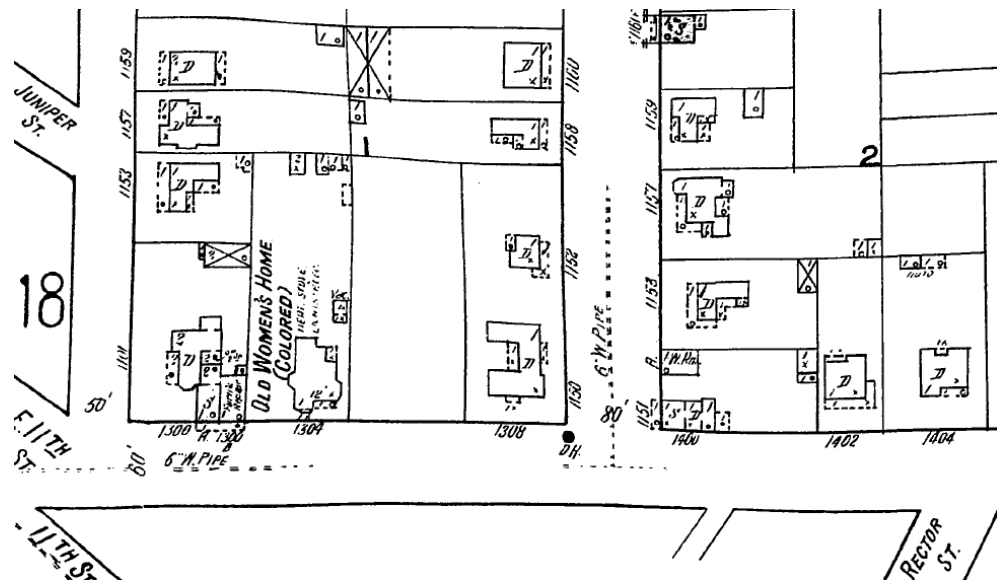
The Committee requested that staff research the context of the house for presentation to the Commission.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

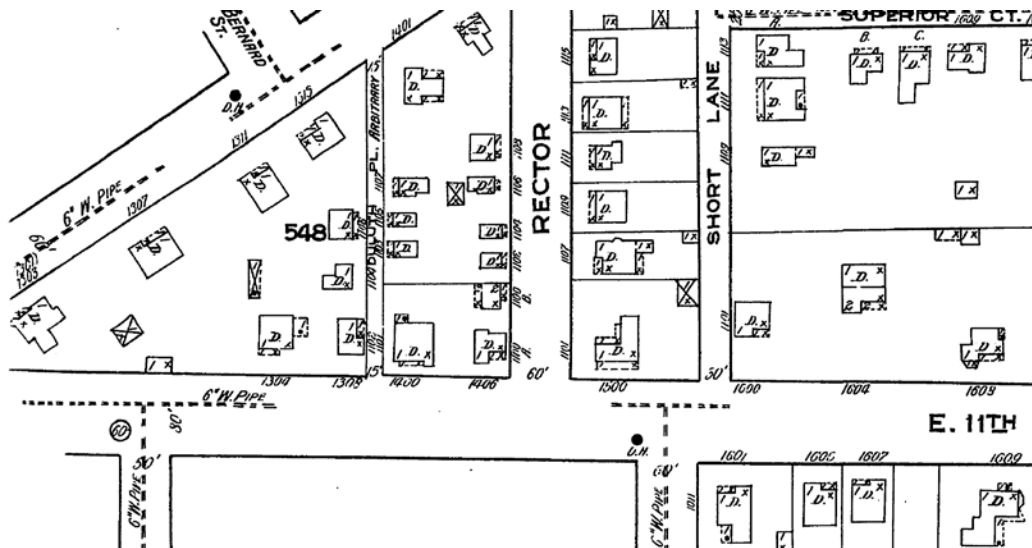
Approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the relocation of the house to 1201 Cotton Street. Relocation serves several goals, including the preservation of the house, and places the house back into a residential setting, 2 blocks from its original location in a traditionally African-American neighborhood.

Appendix 1 – Sanborn maps of the Rosewood Avenue / 11th Street neighborhood

The earliest Sanborn map to show this neighborhood is the 1922 map, which shows an almost exclusively residential neighborhood along both Rosewood Avenue and E. 11th Street with the exception of small stores at both the lot immediately to the west of the Old Women's Home (colored) and at the corner of San Bernard Street. Unfortunately, the 1922 map does not show the area west of the intersection of 11th and Rosewood to determine if it was similarly residential or had more commercial businesses. The "D" represents a dwelling – an "S", such as at the corner of Rosewood and San Bernard – indicates a store.



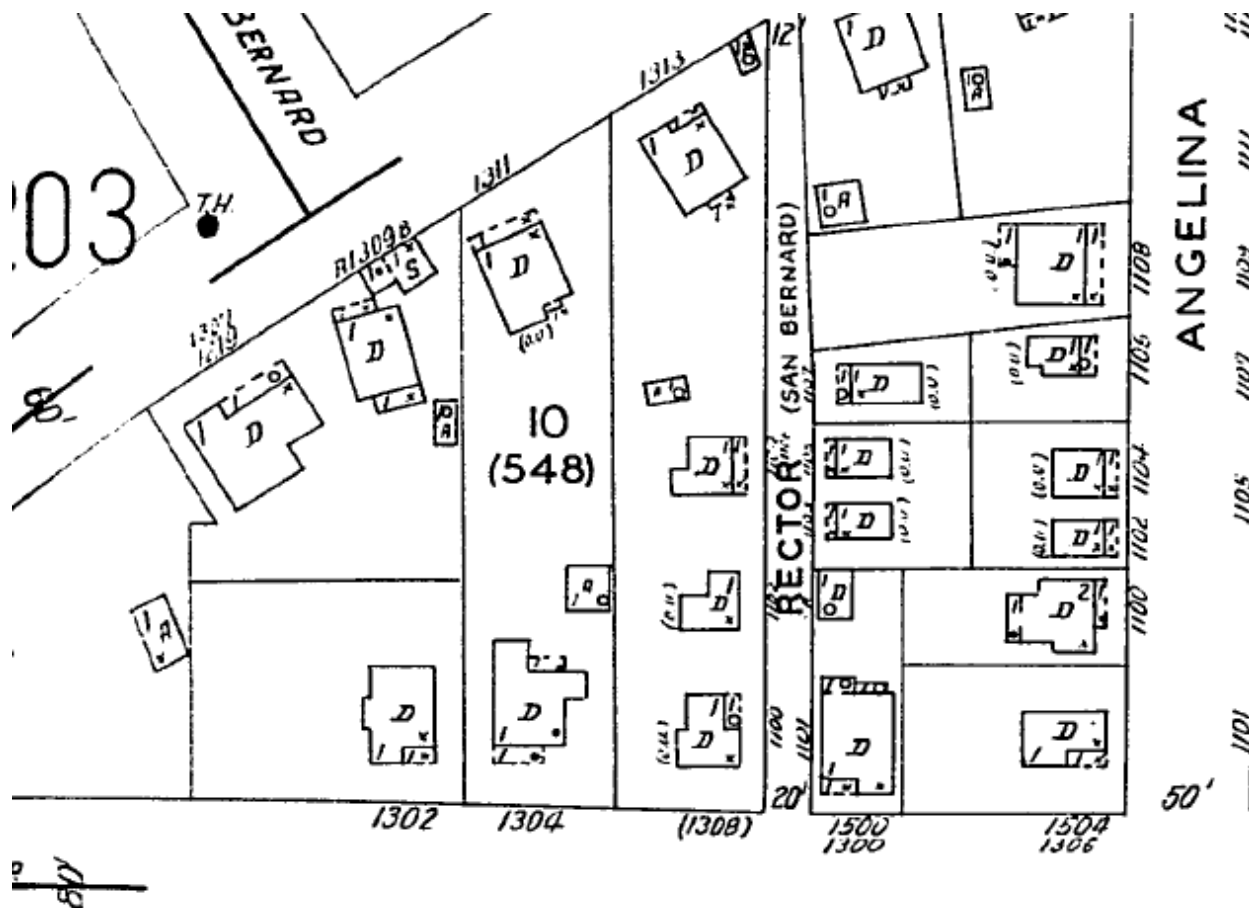
The street at the bottom of this map is Rosewood Avenue.



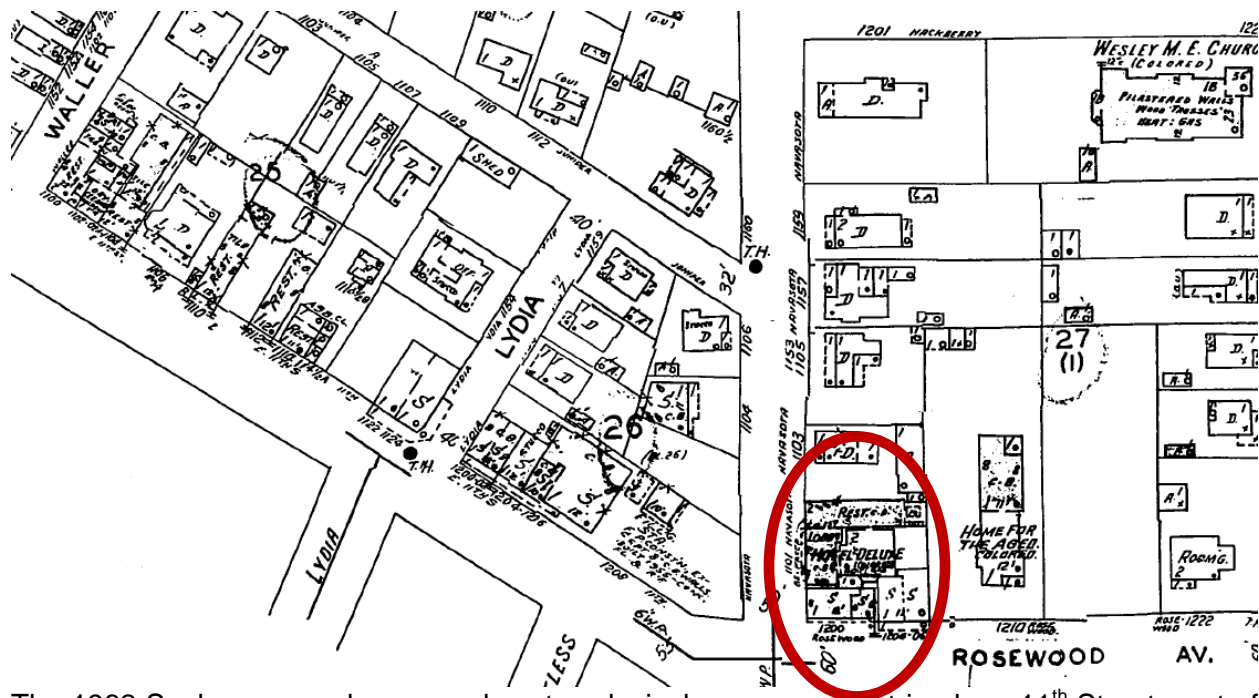
The 1922 map above shows E. 11th Street east from the intersection with Rosewood Avenue, which is the diagonal street at the top left of the map. Like Rosewood, 11th Street was almost exclusively residential.



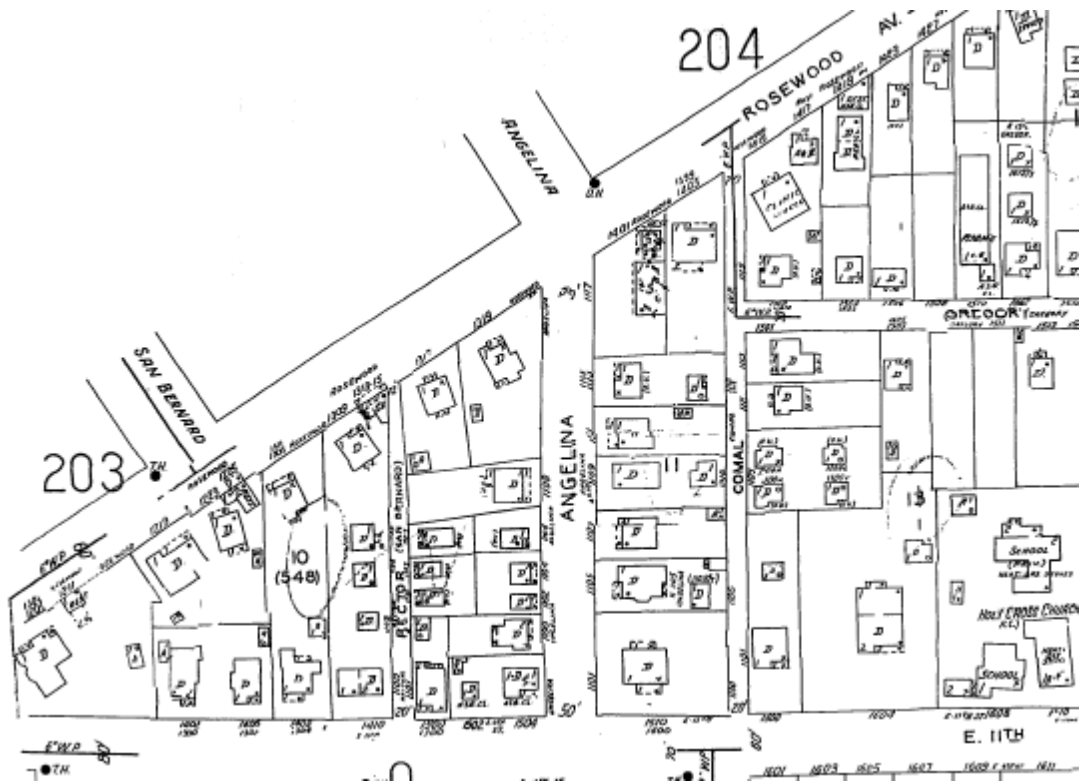
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The 1935 Sanborn map shows that the area to the east of the home along 11th Street (the bottom of the map) and Rosewood Avenue (the diagonal at the top of the map) was exclusively residential.



The 1962 Sanborn map shows an almost exclusively commercial strip along 11th Street west of the home, with dwellings behind the house along Navasota. The Deluxe Hotel (identified by the red circle) and associated businesses was on the corner of Rosewood Avenue and Navasota Street, just to the west of the "Home for the Aged (Colored)." East of the intersection of 11th Street and Rosewood Avenue, the neighborhood became exclusively residential along both streets.



This 1962 map shows the south side of Rosewood Avenue and the north side of E. 11th Street east of their intersection and the Old Negro Women's Home – both streets evidence a pattern of residential, rather than commercial development.

AF - HOTELS, TAVERNS, ETC. H3000(29)
 Delux Hotel
 PICA 20871



Austin History Center

Appendix 2 – Current photographs of the site and neighborhood



The Old Negro Women's Home, 1210 Rosewood Avenue



Front garden of the Old Negro Women's Home looking east along Rosewood Avenue



Haynes-DeLashwah House, 1209 Rosewood Avenue, across the street from the Old Negro Women's Home. The Haynes-DeLashwah House is a designated city historic landmark and is now being used as a commercial building.



View from the Old Negro Women's Home across Rosewood Avenue and 11th Street to the old Hillside Pharmacy building (ca. 1950)



Site of the Deluxe Hotel, northeast corner of Rosewood Avenue and Navasota Street, now an office building



Former service station building at the northwest corner of 11th and Navasota Streets, just west of the intersection with Rosewood Avenue



View west along 11th Street from Navasota Street showing the historic commercial buildings on the south side of the street (left side of photograph) and new multi-family residential developments



View looking east from just west of the intersection of Rosewood Avenue (to the left), and 11th Street (to the right)



The proposed site for the Old Negro Women's Home, at the southeast corner of Cotton and Navasota Streets (1201 Cotton Street)



House on Navasota Street at the west end of Cotton Street. The proposed site for the Old Negro Women's Home is catty-corner to this house.



House on Navasota Street just north of the intersection with Cotton Street



North side of Cotton Street looking east from Navasota Street



House immediately to the east of the proposed site (1203 Cotton Street)