

**HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION**  
**DECEMBER 17, 2018**  
**DEMOLITION AND RELOCATION PERMITS**  
**HDP-2018-0640**  
**605 BARTON SPRINGS ROAD**

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**PROPOSAL**

Demolish a ca. 1938 garage apartment.

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**ARCHITECTURE**

Two-story, rectangular-plan, front-gabled frame garage apartment with a shed-roofed hood over the front door; single 6:6 fenestration.

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**RESEARCH**

The garage apartment is associated with McPhail's Florist, an old Austin flower shop established in the late 1920s. McPhail's Florist was established by Virgil McPhail around 1927 on Barton Springs Road; he also had a grocery business in the 700 block of E. 6<sup>th</sup> Street, which he later sold in favor of the flower business. Virgil McPhail was a native of Louisiana, and had operated a truck farm in Jefferson County, Texas prior to moving to Austin. He and Rosa lived on Wichita Street in an area that is now part of the University of Texas campus, before moving to this site on Barton Springs Road, where they opened their flower shop. The stuccoed flower shop had a two-story section to the rear where Virgil and Rosa McPhail lived and raised their daughters. They had their own greenhouse on site, and advertised their expertise with corsages, as well as being available at any time of the day or night. Virgil and Rosa McPhail separated in the late 1930s, and Virgil went on to his brother Frank's floral business, the Barton Springs Floral Company, as well as becoming the chief floral inspector for the State Department of Agriculture. He is listed in later city directories as living in the 4500 block of Avenue D. Rosa took over McPhail's Florist on Barton Springs Road, and it appears that she built the two-story garage apartment behind her shop and greenhouse around 1938 for additional income. She may also have lived in the garage apartment, but later city directories show unrelated persons on the site leading to the assumption that the garage apartment was for rental tenants and her family occupied the residential section of the flower business building.

Virgil McPhail died in Austin in 1965; his obituary lists Rosa as his wife, although it is clear they had not lived together since the late 1930s. Rosa McPhail died at the home of her daughter in Port Arthur, Texas in 1978. McPhail's Florist continued in business until very recently.

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**STAFF COMMENTS**

The garage apartment is not listed in any City survey to date.

Staff has evaluated this garage apartment for designation as a historic landmark and has determined that the building does not meet the criteria for landmark designation as set forth in City Code:

- a. **Architecture.** The garage apartment reflects its late 1930s construction date with 6:6 fenestration reminiscent of Colonial Revival detailing and a triangular attic vent in the apex of the front gable. The building does not have any architectural distinction.
- b. **Historical association.** The garage apartment appears to have been built by Rosa McPhail as a rental property, although she may have lived in it for a

period of time as well. In either case, there do not appear to be significant historical associations with this building; the flower shop itself has much more potential for designation as a historic landmark due to historical associations.

- c. **Archaeology.** The building was not evaluated for its potential to yield significant data concerning the human history or prehistory of the region.
- d. **Community value.** The building does not possess a unique location, physical characteristic, or significant feature that contributes to the character, image, or cultural identity of the city, the neighborhood, or a particular demographic group. The flower shop, however, would qualify under this criterion as representative of the “flower row” that used to exist along Barton Springs Road in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.
- e. **Landscape feature.** The property is not a significant natural or designed landscape with artistic, aesthetic, cultural, or historical value to the city.

#### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

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Encourage rehabilitation and adaptive re-use, then relocation over demolition, but 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. The building does not meet the criteria for individual designation as a historic landmark, and removal of the building will not significantly affect the historic context of the remainder of the site.

## LOCATION MAP



1" = 185'



SUBJECT TRACT



PENDING CASE



ZONING BOUNDARY

## NOTIFICATIONS

CASE#: HDP-2018-0640

LOCATION: 605 Barton Springs Road

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.



605-B Barton Springs Road  
ca. 1938



OCCUPANCY HISTORY  
605 Barton Springs Road

City Directory Research, Austin History Center  
By City Historic Preservation Office  
December, 2018

1992	McPhail's Florist and Greenhouse Rex Minyard, proprietor
1985-86	McPhail's Florist and Greenhouse Rex Minyard, manager B: Vacant
1981	B: Harry Murphy, renter No occupation listed
1977	McPhail's Florist and Greenhouse Jeannette4 McPhail Smith, proprietor B: Steven R. Calloway, renter

Teacher, public schools

- 1973      McPhail's Wayside Florists  
 Rosa McPhail, proprietor  
 A:      Preston Wheeler, Jr., owner  
           No occupation listed
- 1968      McPhail's Florists  
 Rosa McPhail, proprietor  
 A:      Rosa McPhail, owner  
           Proprietor, McPhail's Florist, 605 Barton Springs Road.  
 ½:      Dee Massey, renter  
           Student
- 1965      McPhail's Florists  
 Rosa McPhail, proprietor  
 A:      Vacant  
 ½:      Apartments
- 1961      A:      Rosa McPhail, owner  
           Proprietor, McPhail Florist, 605 Barton Springs Road.
- Warren N., Jr. and Loyce F. Bloss, renters  
             Warren:      Finisher, Austin Industries, furniture manufacturers, 4311  
                             S. Congress Avenue.  
             Loyce:      Telephone operator, Brackenridge Hospital
- ½:      H. Earl, Jr., and Beverly Vaughan, renters  
                     Laborer, State Highway Department
- John L. and Gail Surber, renters  
             No occupation listed
- 1959      McPhail's Wayside Florist  
 Rosa McPhail, proprietor  
 A:      Rosa McPhail, owner  
           Proprietor, McPhail's Wayside Florist
- Edward R. and Frances Chaloupka, renters  
             Student
- ½:      Ralph B. and Laverne Hudson, renters  
                     Proprietor, Avenue Café, 211 Congress Avenue.
- Monty W. and Ernestine Smith, renters  
             Examiner, Texas Insurance Checking Office
- 1955      McPhail's Wayside Florist  
 Rosa McPhail, proprietor
- Rosa McPhail, owner  
             Proprietor, McPhail's Wayside Florist, 605 Barton Springs Road.

- 1952 McPhail's Wayside Florist  
Rosa McPhail, proprietor
- Rosa McPhail, owner  
Proprietor, McPhail's Wayside Florist, 605 Barton Springs Road.
- 1949 McPhail's Wayside Florist  
Rosa McPhail, proprietor
- Rosa A. McPhail, owner  
Proprietor, McPhail's Wayside Florist, 605 Barton Springs Road.
- 1947 McPhail's Wayside Florists – "Your Patronage Appreciated."  
Rosa A. McPhail, proprietor
- Rosa A. McPhail, owner  
Widow, Virgil McPhail  
Proprietor, McPhail's Wayside Florists, 605 Barton Springs Road.
- 1944-45 McPhail's Wayside Florist  
Rosa McPhail, proprietor
- Rosa McPhail, owner  
Proprietor, McPhail's Wayside Florist
- ½: Henry J. and Willie C. Hudson, owners  
No occupation listed
- 1941 McPhail's Wayside Florist  
Rosa McPhail, proprietor
- Rosa McPhail, owner  
Proprietor, McPhail's Wayside Florist  
Also listed is Ruth McPhail, a student at the University of Texas.
- Henry J. and Willie C. Hudson, owners  
No occupation listed
- 1939 McPhail's Wayside Florist  
Mrs. R.A. McPhail, proprietor
- Rosa A. McPhail, owner  
Proprietor, McPhail's Wayside Florist, 605 Barton Springs Road  
Also listed is Ruth G. McPhail, a student at the University of Texas.  
NOTE: Virgil McPhail was a florist and inspector for the State Agricultural Department.
- 1935 McPhail's Wayside Florist – "The Original McPhail Flowers for any Occasion,  
Corsages our Specialty, 1<sup>st</sup> Greenhouse on Barton Springs Road, corner S. 1<sup>st</sup>.  
We never close."  
Virgil McPhail, proprietor

Virgil and Rosa McPhail, owners  
 Proprietor, McPhail's Wayside Florist  
 Also listed is Rosa N. McPhail, s a student at the University of Texas.

1932-33      McPhail's Wayside Florist  
 Virgil McPhail, proprietor

Virgil and Rosa McPhail, owners  
 Proprietor, Hokey-Pokey Grocery, 709 E. 6<sup>th</sup> Street; McPhail's Wayside Florist;  
 and vice-president Barton Springs Floral Company, 1610 Barton Springs Road.  
 NOTE: The address is listed as being on the south side of Barton Springs Road,  
 3 houses west of South Congress Avenue.

1929      Virgil and Rosa McPhail, owners  
 Florist, south side of Barton Springs Road, and proprietor of a grocery at 709 E.  
 6<sup>th</sup> Street.  
 NOTE: The address is listed as being the south side of Barton Springs Road, 3<sup>rd</sup>  
 from Barton Creek.

1927      The address is not listed in the directory.  
 NOTE: Virgil and Rosa McPhail are listed at 1909 Wichita Street. He was a  
 grocer at 709 E. 6<sup>th</sup> Street.

#### **BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES:**

##### **Virgil and Rosa McPhail (ca. 19 – ca. 1978)**

The 1940 U.S. Census shows Rosa McPhail as the owner of a residence with the address of 607 Barton Springs Road, but which is likely this garage apartment, as the florist shop had the address of 605 Barton Springs and there is no listing for a residential address of 605 Barton Springs Road in the census report. Rosa McPhail was 43, divorced, and had been born in Arkansas. She was a florist. With her lived 2 daughters: Ruth Grace, 19; and Laura Janet, 16. Both girls had been born in Texas, and neither had an occupation listed. Rosa McPhail had a lodger, Annie Burton Atkinson, 20, who had been born in Texas, and was a saleslady in a floral shop. Ms. Atkinson lived in Florence, Texas in 1935.

The 1930 U.S. Census shows Virgil and Rosa McPhail as the owners of a residence with the address of 510 Barton Springs Road in Austin; that house was worth \$2,500. Virgil McPhail was 34, had been born in Louisiana, and was a florist. Rosa McPhail was 35, had been born in Oklahoma, and had no occupation listed. They had 3 daughters listed: Rosa Nell, 13, who had been born in Oklahoma; Ruth, 9; and Janet, 6. The family had a boarder, Miss Vesta Hicks, 25, who had been born in Texas, and was a public school teacher.

Rosa McPhail died at the home of her daughter in Port Arthur, Texas in 1978; she had been there for just over 2 weeks before her death. Her last address was 605 Barton Springs Road in Austin. She was a florist who had been born in Arkansas in 1893, and is listed as a widow.

**VIRGIL McPHAIL**

Virgil McPhail, 71, 1904 Oldham, died in a local hospital Monday. He had been a florist for over 40 years and at the time of his death owned the Avenue Florist at 19th and Interregional.

He is survived by his wife, Mrs. Rosa McPhail of Austin; three daughters, Mrs. Douglas (Janet) Smith of Austin, Mrs. Howard Patterson of Port Arthur, and Mrs. Ruth Mers of Austin; one sister, Mrs. Grace Mobley of Cherokee, Okla.; and two brothers, Gates McPhail of Cherokee, Okla., and Homer McPhail of California; and eight grandchildren.

Funeral arrangements are pending at the Cook Funeral Home.

Obituary of Virgil McPhail  
Austin American, November 2, 1965



**VIRGIL McPHAIL**

Funeral for Virgil McPhail, 1904 Oldham, will be Wednesday at 3:30 p.m. at Cook Funeral Home with Rev. Paul Joyner officiating. Burial will be in Austin Memorial Park. Pallbearers will be Alan Mers, Truman McPhail, Joe Grissom, Trueman O'Quinn, Douglas Smith and Howard Patterson.

Funeral notice for Virgil McPhail  
Austin American, November 3, 1965

**McPHAIL, Mrs. Rosa, 85, 605 Barton Springs Road, died Saturday. Services 1:30 p.m. Monday at Wilke-Clay Funeral Home. Burial, Austin Memorial Park. Survivors: daughters, Rosa Nell Patterson of Port Arthur, Ruth Grisson of Farmers Branch, Jeanette Hardin of Austin; eight grandchildren; three great-grandchildren.**

Obituary of Rosa McPhail  
Austin American-Statesman, July 30, 1978

*Extension required to east  
side of greenhouse*

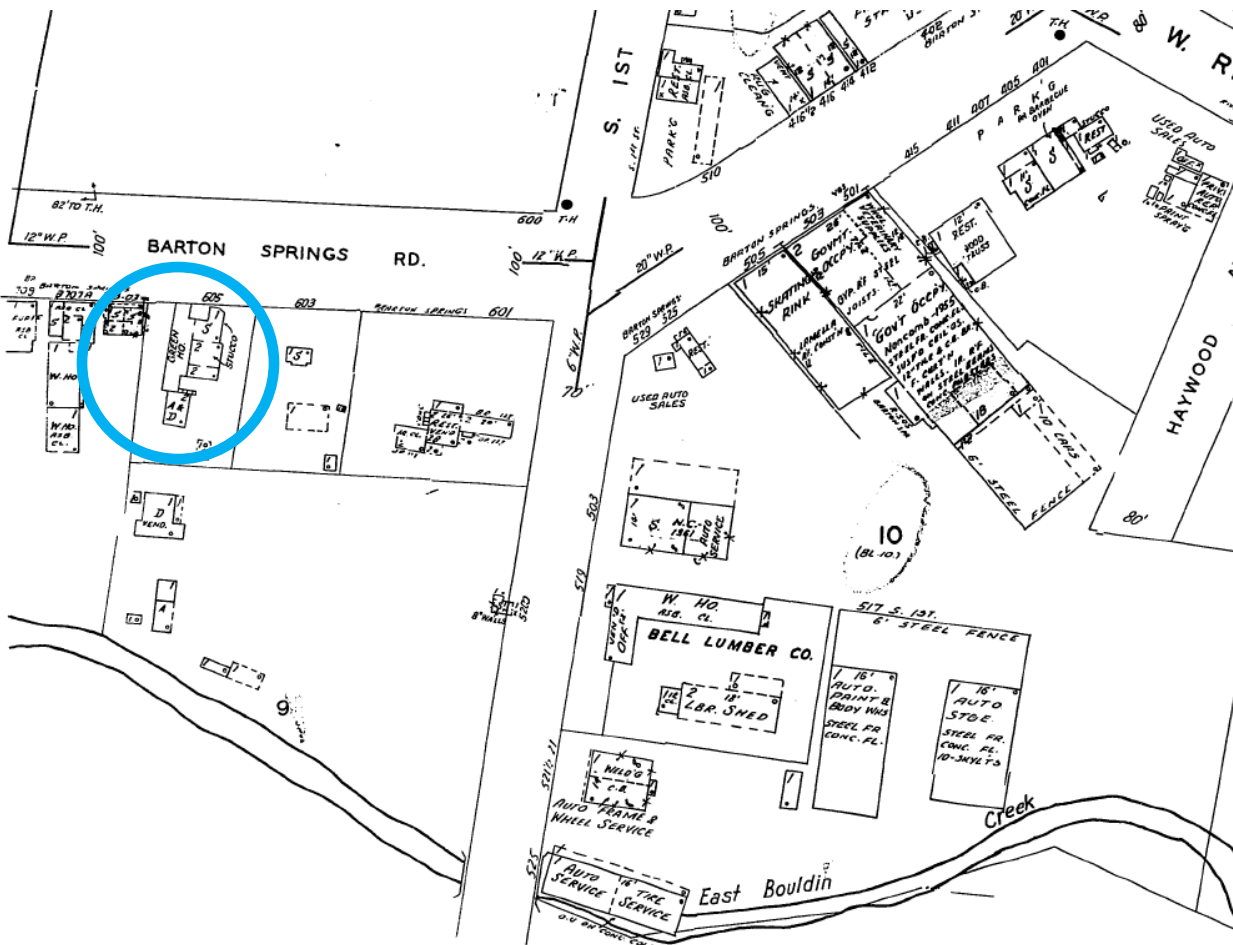
## SANITARY SEWER SERVICE PERMIT

Austin, Texas

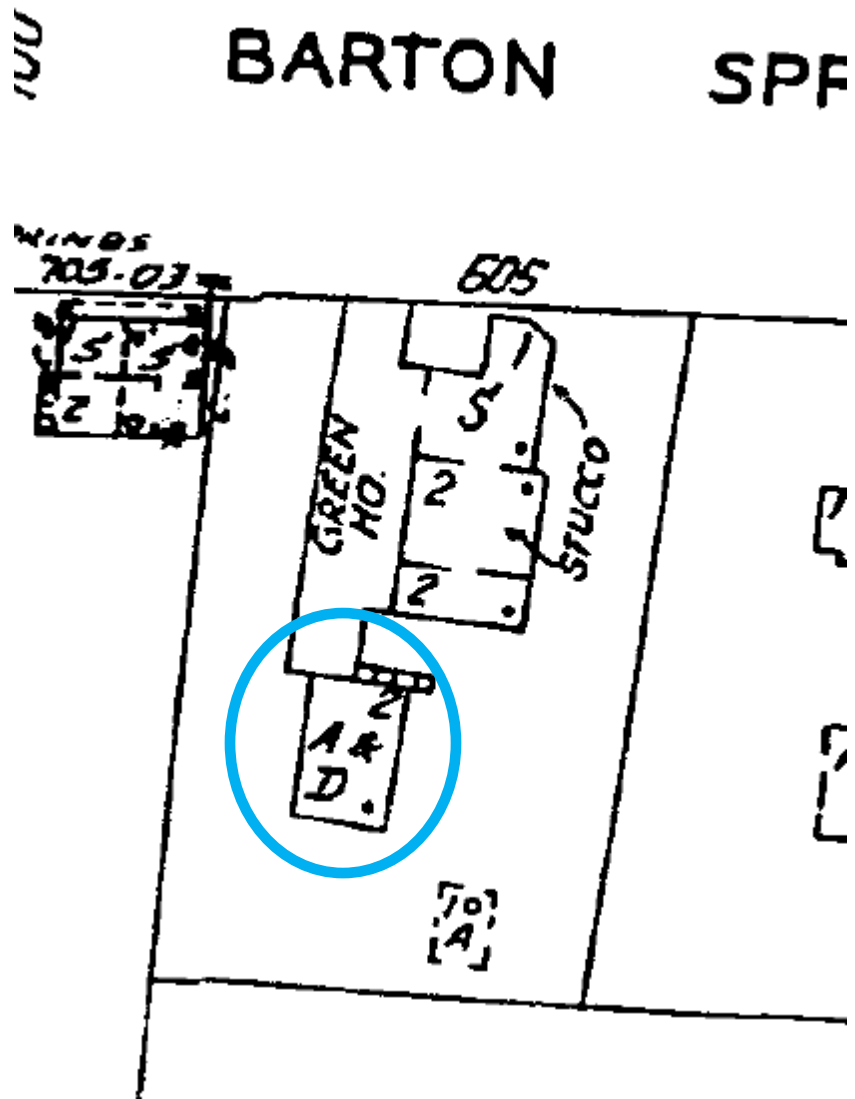
No. 18457 *A**Sub II*Received of Mrs. H. G. Patterson Date 6-23-42Address 605 Barton Springs Rd.Amount \$Builder or Owner Mrs. Rosa McPhail Plumber Lot *McPhail's* Block  Subdivision Mrs. Rosa McPhail Plat No. 118  
Tr. Isaac Decker League

Date of Connection	<u>7-7-42</u>	No. Fittings		Price	
By City	<del>_____</del>	12" pipe	4"	1.25	
By Plumber	_____	pipe			
Checked By	_____	Wyes			
Size Main	<u>6"</u> Depth <u>6½'</u>	1 Bends	4" 45	.40	
Main Assgn.	<u>12½' from PL</u>	Reducers			
Stub Depth	<u>Prop. Line</u>	Plugs			
Stub Location	<u>0+76</u>	Sand			
Book No.	<u>A-1589</u>	Gravel			
Paving Cut	<u>No.</u>	Remix			
		Stoppers			
		Castings			
		Other			
		4" Tap		.20	
		Labor: 11 hrs		5.50	
					7.35

Sanitary sewer permit for this address (1942)



The Barton Springs Road neighborhood in the 1962 Sanborn map.



Close up of the property in 1962 showing the two-story garage apartment at the rear of the compound.