

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION
SEPTEMBER 23, 2019
DEMOLITION AND RELOCATION PERMITS
HDP-2019-0442
1705 CEDAR AVENUE

PROPOSAL

Demolish a ca. 1929 house with a ca. 1940 attached store.

ARCHITECTURE

One-story, rectangular-plan, front-gabled stuccoed frame house with a partial-width, shed-roofed independent porch on an ornamental metal post and a wood post; from the front of the house extends a one-story, rectangular-plan, front-gabled stuccoed frame store building with a front-gabled parapet roof with a non-historic window in the apex of the gable.

RESEARCH

The house appears to have been built around 1929 by Samuel P. and Leonora Cunningham, who lived here until around 1936. Samuel Cunningham was a plasterer and concrete worker. The house was vacant for a short period in the 1930s, then rented by Oran Wilford Roberts, and his wife, Mary from around 1940 until they purchased the property around 1951. The store addition to the front of the house was constructed during the Roberts' tenancy here – the 1935 Sanborn map shows the original house built by Samuel and Leonora Cunningham; the 1962 map shows that the store had been constructed in the front of the house, and that the house had been stuccoed. City records reveal a permit filed by O.W. Roberts in 1952 to stucco the exterior of the building. The Roberts continued to live here until around 1966. In what appears to be an exception to the norm in Austin, O. Wilford Roberts and his wife were both Anglos, who operated their grocery store and resided on the store premises in an otherwise African-American neighborhood. After the Roberts retired and moved into the Cherrywood neighborhood, the house was owned by a maid, then a widow, then rented by the manager of a liquor store in the late 1970s through the mid-1980s. The former store section of the building apparently became living quarters after the Roberts closed their business.

STAFF COMMENTS

The house and store were recommended as non-contributing to a potential historic district in the East Austin Historic Resources Survey (2016); however, this combination of house and store intact is becoming increasingly rare in East Austin, prompting staff to bring this application for demolition to the Commission for review.

Staff has evaluated this house and store for designation as a historic landmark and has determined that the buildings have been so significantly altered that they do not meet the criteria for landmark designation as set forth in City Code:

- a. **Architecture.** The combination of attached house and grocery store was once a common configuration in East Austin neighborhoods; few of these buildings remain. However, this house and store have been so drastically altered that outside of the basic configuration, there is little to recall the historic appearance of these structures. The modifications to the buildings prevent consideration of the property as a historic landmark under the architectural criterion.
- b. **Historical association.** The house was first owned by an African-American plasterer and concrete worker; the longer residency was by an Anglo couple who operated their grocery store in the front of the house. There do not appear to be significant historical associations.





- c. **Archaeology.** The house was not evaluated for its potential to yield significant data concerning the human history or prehistory of the region.
- d. **Community value.** The house 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.
- 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

Encourage restoration and adaptive re-use, then relocation over demolition, but release the permit. The buildings have been so modified that a City of Austin Documentation Package is not justified in this case.

LOCATION MAP



-  N
-  SUBJECT TRACT
-  PENDING CASE
-  ZONING BOUNDARY

NOTIFICATIONS

CASE#: HDP-2019-0442
LOCATION: 1705 CEDAR AVE



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.

1" = 333'

1705 Cedar Avenue
ca. 1929 with a ca. 1940 store addition



OCCUPANCY HISTORY 1705 Cedar Avenue

City Directory Research, Austin History Center
By City Historic Preservation Office
September, 2019

- | | |
|---------|---|
| 1929 | The address is not listed in the directory.
NOTE: Samuel P. and Lenora Cunningham (colored), are listed at 1309 Cedar Avenue; he was a plasterer. |
| 1930-31 | Samuel P. and Leonora Cunningham (colored), owners
Plasterer |
| 1932-33 | Samuel P. and Leonora Cunningham, owners
Plasterer |
| 1935 | Samuel P. and Leonora Cunningham, owners
Plasterer |
| 1937 | Vacant
NOTE: Samuel P. Cunningham is listed at 1600 Singleton Avenue. He was a concrete worker. Leonora Cunningham is not listed in the directory. |
| 1939 | Warren and Tennie Grant, renters |

Farmer

NOTE: Orin W. and Mary Roberts are listed at 2132 East Avenue; he was a paper hanger.

- 1941 O. Wilford and Mary Roberts, renters
Proprietor, Roberts Grocery and Market (at the house)
Also listed is O. Wilford Roberts, Jr., a student.
- 1944-45 O. Wilford and Mary Roberts, renters
Proprietor, Roberts Grocery and Market (at the house)
- 1947 O. Wilford and Mary E. Roberts, renters
Proprietor, Roberts Grocery and Market (at the house)
- 1949 Organ Wilford and Mary Roberts, renters
Proprietor, Roberts Grocery and Market (at the house)
- 1952 O. Wilford and Mary E. Roberts, owners
Proprietor of a grocery store
- 1955 O. Wilford and Mary E. Roberts, owners
Proprietor, Roberts Grocery and Market (at the house)
NOTE: The directory indicates that O. Wilford and Mary E. Roberts lived in the rear of the premises and the market was in the front.
- 1959 O.W. and Mary E. Roberts, owners
Proprietor, Roberts Grocery and Market
NOTE: The directory indicates that O.W. and Mary E. Roberts lived in the rear of the premises and the market was in the front.
- 1962 O.W. and Mary E. Roberts, owners
Proprietor, Roberts Grocery and Market
NOTE: The directory indicates that O.W. and Mary E. Roberts lived in the rear of the premises and the market was in the front.
- 1965 O.W. and Mary E. Roberts, owners
Proprietor, Roberts Grocery and Market
NOTE: The directory indicates that O.W. and Mary E. Roberts lived in the rear of the premises and the market was in the front.
- 1968 Larnell Jones, owner
Maid
NOTE: O.W. and Mary Roberts are listed at 3106 Lafayette Avenue; he was retired.
- 1973 Annie Brown, owner
Widow, Henry Brown
No occupation listed
NOTE: Nath and Essie Riep are listed at 1311 Cedar Avenue; he was the manager of Hudspeth Corner Beauty Salon, 1403 Cedar Avenue.
- 1977 Nath C. and Essie M. Riep, renters
Manager, Ward's Liquor, 1103 N. Interregional Highway (he is listed as the manager; there was another location at 2303 S. Congress Avenue).

- 1981 Nath C. and Essie M. Riep, renters
Manager, Ward's Liquor (not listed in the directory)
- 1985-86 Nath C. and Essie M. Riep, renters
Manager, Ward's Liquor, 1103 N. Interregional Highway, and 9704 N.
Lamar Boulevard.
- 1992 Willie Mathis, renter
No occupation listed

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Sam and Leonora Cunningham (ca. 1929 – ca. 1936)

Lenora Moore married S.P. Cunningham in Travis County in 1912.

Sam Proverbs Cunningham's 1918 World War I draft registration card shows that he was born in 1885 and was living at 1803 Chicon Street in Austin. He was a cement finisher. His wife was Lenora Cunningham. He was of medium height and had a medium build, black hair and black eyes.

The 1920 U.S. Census shows Sam and Leonora Cunningham as the renters of a farm near Manor, Texas. Sam Cunningham was 34, had been born in Texas to Tennessee-born parents, and was a farm laborer. Leonora Cunningham was 38, had been born in Texas, and had no occupation listed. Leonora Cunningham had 3 children from her first marriage: Julia Moore, 19; Louise Moore, 17; and son Fred Moore, 11. All of Leonora's children had been born in Texas and none had an occupation shown.

The 1930 U.S. Census shows S.P. and Lenora Cunningham as the owners of this house, which was worth \$700. S.P. Cunningham was 44, had been born in Texas to a Tennessee-born father and a Texas-born mother, and was a plasterer in building construction. Lenora Cunningham was 43, had been born in Texas, and was a laundress for a private family. With them lived Lenora Cunningham's son, Fred Moore, 20, who had been born in Texas and was a laborer in building construction; and a grand-daughter, Clarissa Washington, 4, who had been born in Texas.

Solomon Proverbs Cunningham died in 1944. His death certificate shows that he was living on Northwestern Avenue in Austin at the time of his death. He was born in 1888 in Travis County and was a cement plasterer and finisher. He is listed as a widower. There was no obituary in the Austin newspapers.

It is believed that Lenora Cunningham died in 1945 at Holy Cross Hospital. She was living at 2107 ½ E. 14th Street in Austin and was a widowed housewife. She was born in Fayette County, Texas to John Henderson, who had been born in the West Indies, and Cornelia Dobbins, who had been born in Texas. She is buried in Evergreen Cemetery. There was no obituary in the Austin newspapers.

O. Wilford and Mary Roberts (ca. 1940 – ca. 1967)

His 1917 World War I draft registration card shows that Oran Wilford Roberts was living at 1004 E. 4th Street in Austin. He was born in 1892 near Austin, and was a clerk for Bohn & Shelby. He was tall with a slender build and had brown hair and brown eyes.

The 1920 U.S. Census shows Oran Wilford Roberts as the 27-year old son of Oran and Erin A. Roberts, who rented their home at 304 E. 1st Street. Oran Wilford Roberts was born in Texas and was the manager of a dry cleaning shop. His father, Oran M. Roberts, 58, was a Texas-born farmer; his mother, Erin A. Roberts, 50, was born in Texas to a Wisconsin-born father and a

Virginia-born mother, and had no occupation listed. Oran Wilford had a younger brother, R.L. Roberts, 18, who had been born in Texas and was a clerk in the railway express office.

O.W. Roberts married Mary E. Howerton in Travis County in April, 1922.

O. Wilford and Mary Roberts are listed in the 1930 U.S. Census as the renters of the house at 805 Neches Street in Austin. O. Wilford Roberts was 37, had been born in Texas, and was a salesman for a department store. Mary Roberts was 33, had been born in Texas, and had no occupation listed. They had a son, Wilford, 7, who had been born in Texas. With them lived Mary Roberts' father, Willard Howerton, a 59-year old Missouri-born widower who was a secretary for the State Industrial Board.

The 1940 U.S. Census shows O. Wilford and Mary E. Roberts as the owners of this house, which was worth \$2,000. O. Wilford Roberts was 47, had been born in Texas, and was a grocery merchant. Mary E. Roberts was 43, had been born in Texas, and was a grocery merchant. Their son, W. Wilford Roberts, Jr., 18, had been born in Texas, and had no occupation listed.

His 1972 death certificate shows that Oran Wilford Roberts was living at 3106 Lafayette Avenue at the time of his death. He was born in Texas in 1892 and was a merchant in the grocery business. Mary Ethel Howerton Roberts was living at 4700 Dudmar Drive at the time of her death in 1982. She was born in 1896 in Texas, and was a widowed housewife.

ORAN W. ROBERTS
 Oran Wilford Roberts, 79, of 3106 Lafayette, died in a local hospital Thursday.
 He is survived by his wife, Mrs. Mary Roberts of Austin; two sisters, Mrs. Evelyn Walker of Austin and Mrs. Orine Shiflett of Robstown; one brother, R.L. Roberts of Austin, several nieces and nephews.
 Funeral will be at 3 p.m. Saturday at Cook-Walden Funeral Home, Rev. Albert Merubia officiating. Burial will be in Austin Memorial Park.

Obituary of Oran Wilford Roberts
 Austin American, February 4, 1972

ROBERTS, Mary E., 85, 4700 Dudmar Drive, died Sunday. Services 10 a.m. Tuesday at Hyltin-Manor Funeral Home. Burial, Austin Memorial Park. Survivors: brother-in-law, R.L. Roberts of Austin; sister-n-law, Orine Shiflett of Robstown.

Obituary of Mary E. Roberts
 Austin American-Statesman, June 28, 1982

2410

PERMIT FOR WATER SERVICE Austin, Texas

Samuel Cunningham Address *1705 Cedar Ave*³⁸

Plumber *Lawell Lee* Size of Tap *1 1/2"* Date *6/6/29*

CHANGED TO *8"* MAIN AND RENEWED SERVICE WITH *1/2"* COPPER ON *750.00* Foreman's Report.

NEW II Date of Connection *6/4/29*

Date of Connection	<i>6/4/29</i>
Size of Tap Made	<i>1 1/2"</i>
Size Service Made	<i>1 1/2"</i>
Size Main Tapped	<i>3"</i>
From Front Prop. Line to Curb Cock	<i>4'</i>
" " " " " "	<i>20'</i>
Location of Meter	<i>at curb</i>
Type of Box	<i>lock</i>
Depth of Main in St.	<i>12"</i>
" " Service Line	<i>12"</i>
From Curb Cock to Tap on Main	<i>25' 4"</i>

No. Fittings	Size
2 Curb Cock	<i>5/8"</i>
1 Elboce.	<i>3/4"</i>
1 St. Elboce.	<i>3/4"</i>
1 Bushing	<i>3/4"</i>
1 Reducer	<i>3/4"</i>
27 Pipe	<i>5/8"</i>
Lead Comp.	
2 Nipples	<i>3/8"</i>
1 Plug	<i>3/4"</i>
1 Tee	<i>3/4"</i>
1 Stop	<i>3/4"</i>
1 Box	<i>3/4"</i>
Lid	
Valves	
Req. No.	<i>45-83</i>

Checked by Engr. Dept. *7-3-29* Foreman's Signature *Bernard*

INDEXED

Water service permit to Samuel Cunningham for this house (1929)

O. W. Roberts **1705 Cedar Avenue**

38 **9** **8**

Glenwood

Re-roof and stucco outside of building.

52322 10-22-52 **\$800.00**

Owner

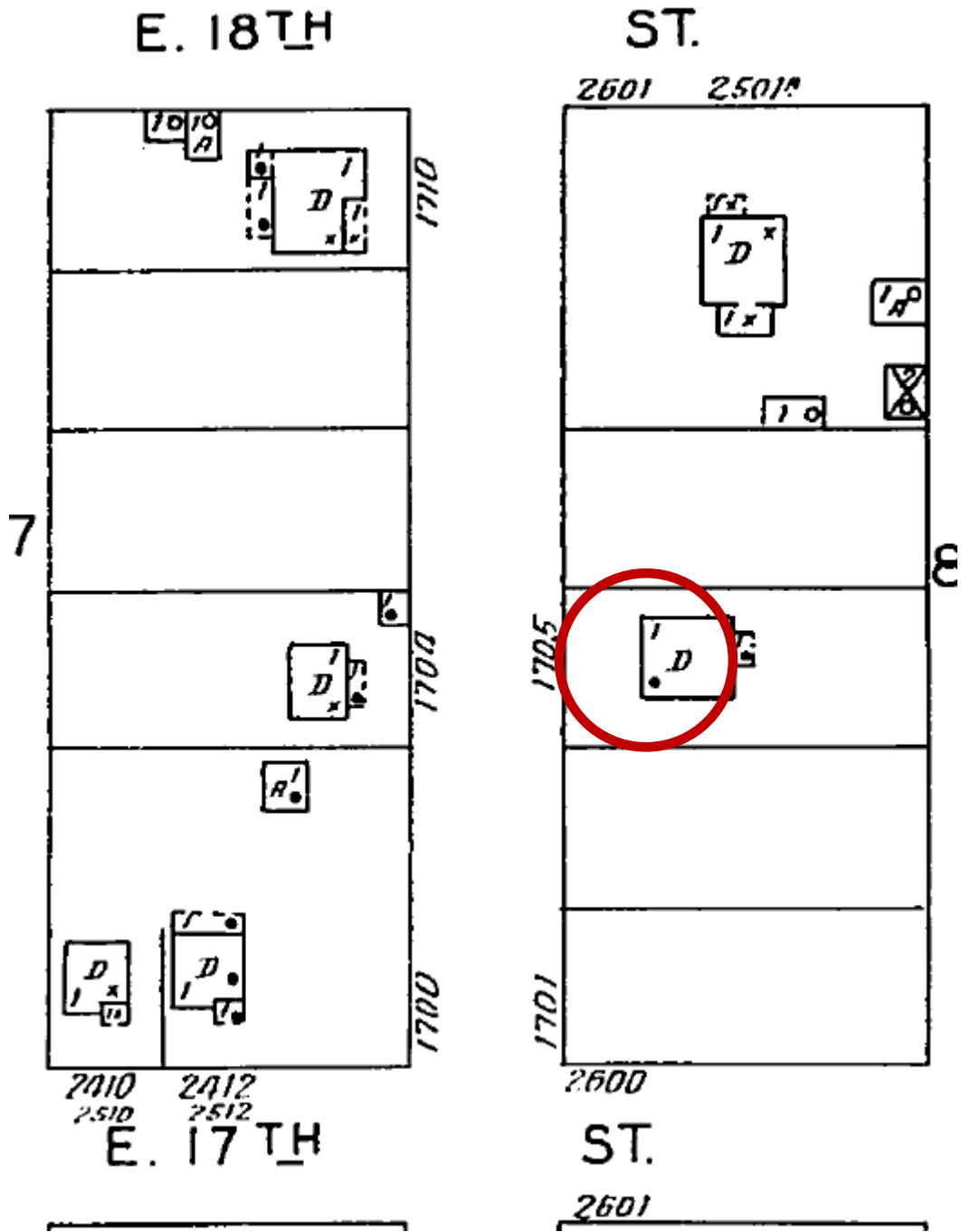
Building permit to O. Wilford Roberts to re-roof and stucco the exterior of the building (1952)

O. W. Roberts 1705 Cedar Avenue
38 9 8 - -

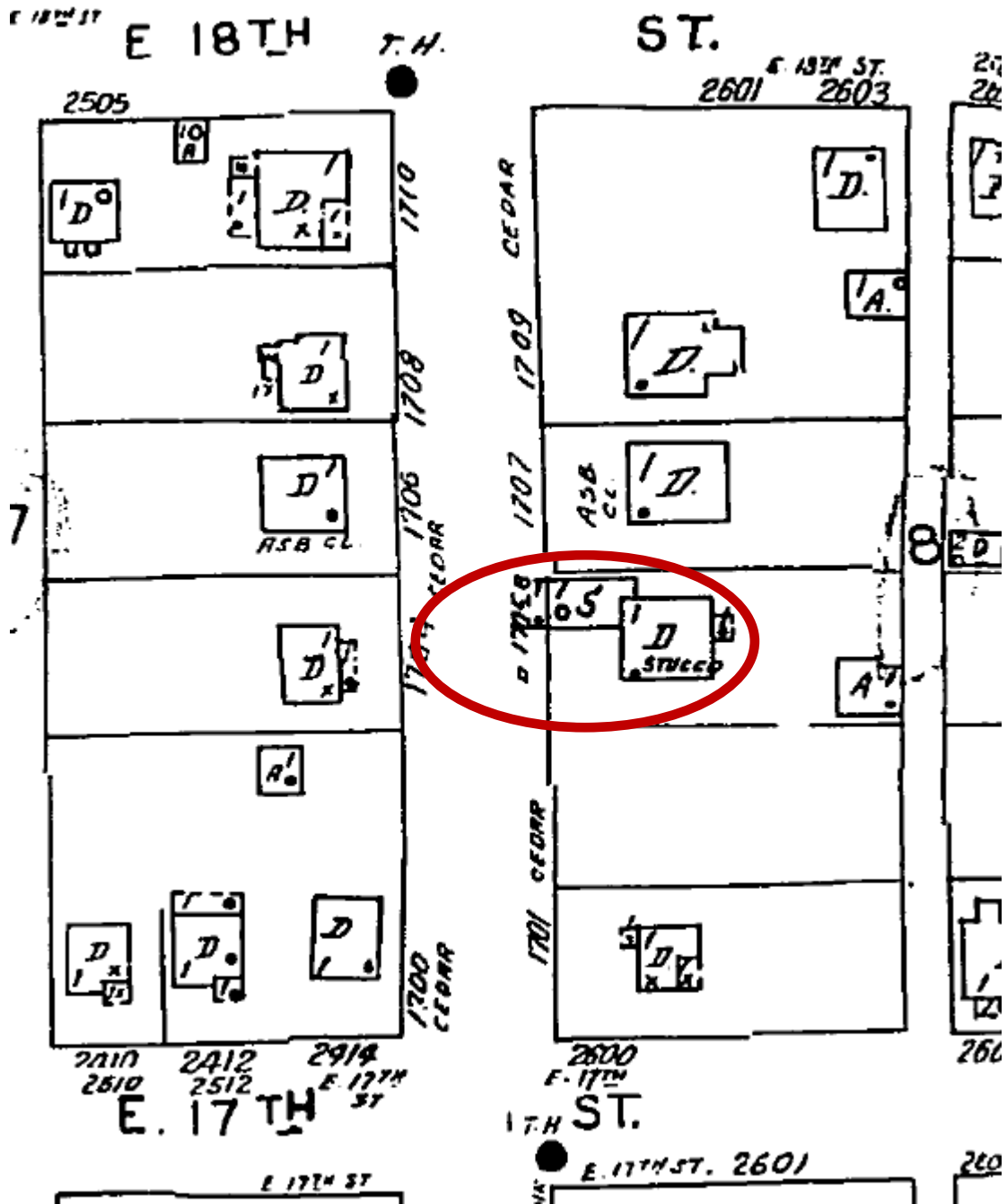
Glenwood Addn.
Addition to commercial building.
52507 11-12-52 \$1200.00
Owner

O.K. by Zoning Board 11-10-52.

Building permit to O. Wilford Roberts for an addition to the commercial building (1952)



The 1935 Sanborn map shows the frame house.



The 1962 Sanborn map shows the store in the front of the house, and the notation that the house had a stucco exterior.