# HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION OCTOBER 28, 2019 PERMITS IN NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICTS NRD-2019-0061 1716 W. $34^{\text{TH}}$ STREET

# OLD WEST AUSTIN NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT

#### PROPOSAL

Demolish a one-story house built ca. 1941; construct a new house.

### ARCHITECTURE

1-story, side-gabled, rectangular-plan house; shiplap wood siding with multi-lite double-hung wood-sash windows; small entry porch.

## PROJECT SPECIFICATIONS

The proposed irregular-plan building is capped by a hipped roof and clad in limestone at the ground floor, wood siding at the second floor, and vertical hardiplank on a rear portion. It features fixed and casement aluminum-sash windows, a fully glazed door, and an integral garage with a wood door stepped back 20' from the front wall.

#### RESEARCH

Caxton Cavitt and Jessie Comer constructed the house around 1941 and lived there until around 1968 (Caxton died the previous year). Caxton C. Comer was born in 1877 to a farming family in either Kentucky or Texas. He began teaching at age 17 and attended the State Teachers' College, Trinity University, and the University of Texas. By the time he retired at age 79, Caxton Comer had worked for 62 years in education, both in public schools and the state and federal government; he rose to the position of Superintendent of Schools for the State Health Department. He was involved in the Chamber of Commerce, the Lions Club, and First Presbyterian Church. Caxton Comer died in 1967 in Austin.

Jessie Blanche Comer (nee Smith) was born in 1891 in Avalon, Texas. She married C. C. Cavitt around 1909, and the couple had two children. In 1930, she was working as the manager of a cafeteria in Gatesville, Texas. After the family moved to Austin, Jessie Comer was involved with the ladies' auxiliary of the First Presbyterian Church. She died in 1986 in Georgetown.

## STANDARDS FOR REVIEW

The house is a contributing property in the Old West Austin National Register Historic District. It does not appear to meet the standards for designation as a historic landmark.

Designation Criteria—Historic Landmark

- 1) The building is more than 50 years old.
- 2) The building retains a high degree of integrity.
- 3) Properties must meet two historic designation criteria for landmark designation (City of Austin Land Development Code (Section 25-2-352). The property does not appear to demonstrate significance according to any criteria.
  - a. Architecture. The building is an intact example of the Minimal Traditional style, but does not appear to be architecturally significant.

- b. **Historical association**. Caxton and Jessie Comer lived in the house for more than 25 years, from the time the house was constructed until at least 1968. There do not appear to be significant historical associations.
- c. **Archaeology**. The property was not evaluated for its potential to yield significant data concerning the human history or prehistory of the region.
- d. **Community value**. The property does not appear to possess a unique location, physical characteristic, or significant feature that contributes to the character, image, or cultural identity of the community, Austin, or Texas as a whole.
- e. Landscape feature. The property is not a significant natural or designed landscape with artistic, aesthetic, cultural, or historical value to the city.

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation are used to evaluate projects in National Register historic districts. The following standards apply to the proposed project:

- 9) New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

  The surrounding area contains mostly one-story buildings with side-gabled or hipped roofs and wood siding; a few two-story modern buildings and limestone-clad buildings are scattered nearby. The proposed building is somewhat compatible with the area in its cladding materials and hipped roof; however, it is not compatible in terms of size and scale, irregular massing, and its integrated garage. Its design and materials mark
- 10) New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.
  If the proposed building were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic district would be unimpaired.

The proposed project somewhat meets the standards.

## COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

it as new construction.

The committee recommended redesigning the house to have a one-story street presence and reduced vertical emphasis.

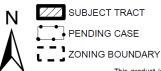
The flat roof has been changed to a hipped roof, the material of the front façade has been altered, with second-story wood cladding above limestone on the ground floor; windows have been added to the primary façade; and the material of the garage door has been changed. A projecting porch roof has also been added.

#### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Encourage rehabilitation and adaptive re-use of the existing building, including consideration of a demolition delay, as the building is contributing to the historic district; then encourage relocation over demolition. If the Commission votes to release the demolition permit, then staff recommends 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.

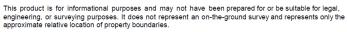
Due to the building's location in a National Register historic district, the Commission must review and comment on the proposed plans for new construction prior to the release of the demolition permit. If the Commission votes to release the demolition permit, staff recommends commenting on and releasing the plans for new construction.





# NOTIFICATIONS

CASE#: NRD-2019-0061 LOCATION: 1716 W 34TH STREET



1 " = 333 '

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.



# Photos



Primary (south) façade and west elevation of 1716 W. 34th Street.



Buildings immediately to the east.

# Occupancy History

City directory research, Austin History Center By Historic Preservation Office staff October 2019

1941	Address not listed
1944	C. C. and Jessie Comer, owners (listed as 1916 W. 34th Street)
1947	Address not listed 1916 W. 34 <sup>th</sup> Street vacant
1949	Martin C. and Catherine C. Young, owners Estimator, J. M. Odom
1952	Marlin C. and Cath Young, owners Estimator, Jamie M. Odom
1955	Cavitt C. and Jessie Comer, owners No occupation listed
1959	Covitt C. and Jessie Comer, owners No occupation listed
1962	Covitt C. and Jessie Comer, owners No occupation listed
1965	Guy and Emma D. Burks, owners Chief engineer, Bluebonnet Electric Co-op (Giddings)
1968	Mrs. Jessie Comer, owner (widow of Cavett C.) Retired
1973	Tom C. and Beth Granger, owners Salesman, Ray Butler Inc.
1977	S. F. and Beth Smith, owners Student
1981	John and Sarah Larkin, renters No occupation listed
1986	S. F. Smith, owner Sales employee, Import Business
1992	Andrew and Lisa Galewsky, renters Nurse, Wilson Grosenheider (Lisa)

# CAXTON C. COMER

Caxton C. Comer, 90, 1716 West 34th, died in a local hospital Monday after a lingering illness. He had been a resident of Austin 34 years, began teaching at 17 and served the public schools, federal government and state health department in a teaching capacity for 62 years.

Comer retired at 79. He attended the State Teachers' College, Trinity University, and the University of Texas. He was a life member of the Texas! State Teachers Association of School Administrators, member of the Chamber ofi Commerce, the Lions Club, and First Presbyterian Church where he was an elder 57 years.

He is survived by his widow,
Jessie B. Comer; two
daughters, Miss Mary Beth
Comer, Oakland, Calif., and
Mrs. W. R. Stump, Georgetown,
one son, J. S. Comer, Dallas;
four grandsons, Jim and Chris
Comer, and Billy and Randy

Stump, two sisters, Mrs. J. W. Lauck, Waco, and Mrs. T. W. F. Smith, Dallas; and one brother, Dr. J. P. Comer, Charlottesville, Va.

Funeral services were held Tuesday at First Presbyterian Church. Rev. William P. Caldwell and Dr. Frederick Brooks officiated and burial was in Capital Memorial Gardens under direction of Weed-Corley Funeral Home.

Pallbearers were W. H. Whittle, Noel P. Amstead, E. D. Wiginton, Dr. D. R. Peevey, J. H. Sheffield and Harris Bell.

Honorary pallbearers were L.
C. Procter, Everett Williams,
Fred Haynie, Roy West, Fred
Schmidt, Tom Teer and officers
of First Presbyterian Church.

Those who care to do so may make a memorial contribution to the Memorial Fund of the Presbyterian Church or the American Cancer Society.

Obituary, The Austin Statesman, 4/18/1967.

STATE OF TEXAS	27-01-21 2	27-0/CERTIFICAT	E OF DEATH	STATE FILE NC.	27429				
PLACE OF DEATH     COUNTY	Travis		2. USUAL RESIDENCE (Where dec	n: residence before admission)					
b. CITY OR TOW	N (If outside city limits, give precinct no.) Austin	since 1934	c. CITY OR TOWN (If outside city limits, give precinct no.)  Austin  d. STREET ADDRESS (if rurel, give location)  1716 West 34th						
d. NAME OF (If not HOSPITAL OR INSTITUTION	in hospital, give street address) St. David's	s Hospital							
IS PLACE OF DEATH INSIDE CITY LIMITS?  YES 50 NOT			IS RESIDENCE INSIDE C  YES TX	F. IS RESIDENCE ON A FARM?  YES A SO P					
NAME OF DECEASED (Type or print)	(a) First	(b) Middle Cavitt	(c) Lest Comer	April 17.					
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15. WAS DECEASED EV	ER IN U.S. ARMED FORCES?  Of yes, give war or dates of service)	16. SOCIAL SECURITY NO. 450-38-4673	Belle Gaskin  17. INFORMANT  Mrs. Jessie Comer (wife)						
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23d. LOCATION	rial (City, town, or county)	April 18, 1967	The second secon	Memorial G	Ltd.Jack Corley185				
Au 250. REGISTRAR'S FILE N		Texas  Y LOCAL REGISTRAR  24-1967	25c REGISTRARY SIGNATURE	-	AUSTIN, TEXAS				

Death certificate, 1967.

WA	TER SERVICE PEI  Austin, Texas  J. V. Williams				•	Sec	167 2, 20	8	6-41	
Address	1716 Wast 3/th		 							-
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Plumber	Smoot		 							**
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18145B No. SANITARY SEWER SERVICE PERMIT Austin, Texas Received of Date 11/26/1941 Smoot Address \_\_ 1716 W. 34th. Amount \_ Murray Graham Builder or Owner Plumber\_ 209 Brykerwood Plat No. Block Subdivision \_ Date of Connection 12/31/1941 By City \_\_\_\_ By Plumber \_ Checked By Boatright 8 Size Size Main \_\_\_ Depth in St. 12½' from PL Main Assign.\_\_ Stub Depth \_\_\_\_ Fittings Gravel\_\_\_\_\_\_Remix\_\_\_\_\_\_Stoppers \_Prop. Line Stub Location Bends Wyes Pipe Pipe Book No. \_\_A-1370 Paving Cut \_\_\_\_\_ No. 5

Sewer connection permit issued to Smoot, 11/26/1941.