

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION  
 OCTOBER 28, 2019  
 PERMITS IN NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICTS  
 NRD-2019-0061  
 1716 W. 34<sup>TH</sup> 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 it as new construction.

- 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**

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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**

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

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.

## LOCATION MAP



-  SUBJECT TRACT
-  PENDING CASE
-  ZONING BOUNDARY

1" = 333'

## NOTIFICATIONS

CASE#: NRD-2019-0061

LOCATION: 1716 W 34TH 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.





PROPERTY INFORMATION

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*Photos*



*Primary (south) façade and west elevation of 1716 W. 34<sup>th</sup> 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. 34 <sup>th</sup> 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)

*Background Research***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, a member of the Chamber of 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 *227-01-21* *227-01* CERTIFICATE OF DEATH *1551* *17* STATE FILE NO. *27429*

1. PLACE OF DEATH a. COUNTY <b>Travis</b>		2. USUAL RESIDENCE (Where deceased lived, if institution; residence before admission) a. STATE <b>Texas</b> b. COUNTY <b>Travis</b>	
b. CITY OR TOWN (If outside city limits, give precinct no.) <b>Austin</b>		c. LENGTH OF STAY <b>since 1934</b>	
d. NAME OF (If not in hospital, give street address) HOSPITAL OR INSTITUTION <b>St. David's Hospital</b>		d. STREET ADDRESS (If rural, give location) <b>1716 West 34th</b>	
e. IS PLACE OF DEATH INSIDE CITY LIMITS? YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>		e. IS RESIDENCE INSIDE CITY LIMITS? YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	
f. IS RESIDENCE ON A FARM? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
3. NAME OF DECEASED (Type or print) a. First <b>Caxton</b> b. Middle <b>Cavitt</b> c. Last <b>Comer</b>		4. DATE OF DEATH <b>April 17, 1967</b>	
5. SEX <b>Male</b>	6. COLOR OR RACE <b>White</b>	7. Married <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Never Married <input type="checkbox"/> Widowed <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced <input type="checkbox"/>	8. DATE OF BIRTH <b>March 7, 1877</b>
9. AGE (In years last birthday) <b>90</b>		10. USUAL OCCUPATION (Give kind of work done during most of working life, even if retired) <b>Retired</b>	
10b. KIND OF BUSINESS OR INDUSTRY <b>State Health Department Superintendent of Schools</b>		11. BIRTHPLACE (State or foreign country) <b>Kentucky</b>	
12. CITIZEN OF WHAT COUNTRY? <b>U S A</b>			
13. FATHER'S NAME <b>Samuel Allen Comer</b>		14. MOTHER'S MAIDEN NAME <b>Belle Gaskin</b>	
15. WAS DECEASED EVER IN U.S. ARMED FORCES? (Yes, no, or unknown) <b>no</b>		16. SOCIAL SECURITY NO. <b>450-38-4673</b>	
17. INFORMANT <b>Mrs. Jessie Comer (wife)</b>			
18. CAUSE OF DEATH (Enter only one cause per line for (a), (b), and (c).) PART I. DEATH WAS CAUSED BY: IMMEDIATE CAUSE (a) <b>Cancer of gall bladder</b> DUE TO (b) <b>adenocarcinoma</b> DUE TO (c) _____ PART II. OTHER SIGNIFICANT CONDITIONS CONTRIBUTING TO DEATH BUT NOT RELATED TO THE TERMINAL DISEASE CONDITION GIVEN IN PART I (a) _____			INTERVAL BETWEEN ONSET AND DEATH <b>3 yrs</b>
20a. ACCIDENT <input type="checkbox"/> SUICIDE <input type="checkbox"/> HOMICIDE <input type="checkbox"/>		20b. DESCRIBE HOW INJURY OCCURRED. (Enter nature of injury in Part I or Part II of Item 18.)	
20c. TIME OF INJURY Hour _____ a.m. _____ p.m. Month _____ Day _____ Year _____		20d. INJURY OCCURRED WHILE AT WORK <input type="checkbox"/> NOT WHILE AT WORK <input type="checkbox"/>	
20e. PLACE OF INJURY (e.g., in or about home, farm, factory, street, office building, etc.)		20f. CITY, TOWN, OR LOCATION	
21. I hereby certify that I attended the deceased from _____ <b>June 62</b> to <b>4-17-67</b> , and last saw the deceased alive on <b>4-17-67</b> . Death occurred at _____ <b>10 A</b> m. on the date stated above, and to the best of my knowledge, from the causes stated.		22a. SIGNATURE <b>[Signature]</b> (Degree or title) <b>MD</b>	
22b. ADDRESS <b>7 Medical Arts Square Austin, Texas</b>		22c. DATE SIGNED <b>4-19-67</b>	
23a. BURIAL, CREMATION, REMOVAL (Specify) <b>Burial</b>		23b. DATE <b>April 18, 1967</b>	
23c. NAME OF CEMETERY OR CREMATORY <b>Capital Memorial Gardens</b>		23d. LOCATION (City, town, or county) <b>Austin (Travis) Texas</b> (State) _____	
24. FUNERAL DIRECTOR'S SIGNATURE <b>Geed-Corley Funeral Home Ltd. Jack Corley 185</b>		25a. REGISTRAR'S FILE NO. <b>571</b>	
25b. DATE REC'D BY LOCAL REGISTRAR <b>4-24-1967</b>		25c. REGISTRAR'S SIGNATURE <b>B. M. Primer, M.D.</b>	
25d. REGISTRAR'S SIGNATURE <b>[Signature]</b>		25e. REGISTRAR'S SIGNATURE <b>[Signature]</b>	

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
REC'D MAY 19 1967  
BUREAU OF VITAL STATISTICS

VS-112, REV. 1/56

Death certificate, 1967.



## Building Permits

WATER SERVICE PERMIT		No. 16748	
Austin, Texas		Sec. 208	
Received of	J. V. Williams	Date	11-26-41
Address	1716 West 34th		
Amount	Two and 50/100 \$ 2.50		
Plumber	Smoot	Size of Tap	1/2"
Date of Connection	11-26-41	Size	
Size of Tap Made	3/4	Curb Cook	
Size Service Made	3/4	Elbow	
Size Main Tapped	6"	St. Elbow	3/4 x 1/2 - 13" V
From Front Prop. Line to Curb Cook	4'	Bushing	3/4 x 1/2 - 13" V
From E. Prop. Line to Curb Cook	22' 6"	Reducer	3/4 x 1/2
Location of Meter	CURB	Pipe	
Type of Box	IRON	Lead Comp.	
Depth of Main in St.		Nipples	
Depth of Service Line		Union	
From Curb Cook to Tap on Main		Plug	
Checked by Engr. Dept.	12-9-41 LE	1 Tee	7 1/2" V
		1 Stop	4" V
		Box	
		Lid	
		Valves	
		Job No.	1015
		Req. No.	61397

Water tap permit issued to J. V. Williams, 11/26/1941.

SANITARY SEWER SERVICE PERMIT		No. 18145B	
Austin, Texas			
Received of	Smoot	Date	11/26/1941
Address	1716 W. 34th.		
Amount	\$		
Builder or Owner	Murray Graham	Plumber	
Lot	6	Block	3
Subdivision	Brykerwood	Plat No.	209
Date of Connection	12/31/1941	No. Fittings	
By City	9' W/ELL	15' Pipe	4" 1.50
By Plumber		Pipe	
Checked By	Boatright	Wyes	
Size Main	6" Depth 4'	Bends	4" .40
Main Assign.	in St. 12 1/2' from PL	Reducers	
Stub Depth	Prop. Line 2'	Plugs	
Stub Location		Sand	
Book No.	A-1370	Gravel	
Paving Cut	No.	Remix	
		Stoppers	
		Castings	
		1 Other	4" tap .15
		Labor:	1 day 3.28

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