

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION
OCTOBER 28, 2019
PERMITS IN NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICTS
NRD-2019-0062
1706 WINDSOR ROAD
OLD WEST AUSTIN NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT

PROPOSAL

Rehabilitate ca. 1932 house; alter window openings on rear wall; alter rear cabana.

ARCHITECTURE

2-story rectangular-plan house; hipped roof covered in red clay tile; stucco cladding; multi-lite double-hung wood-sash windows; arched entryway and door.

PROJECT SPECIFICATIONS

The proposed project includes ten parts:

1. Replace windows in-kind;
2. Replace balcony railings in-kind;
3. Remove shutters;
4. Replace garage doors with glazing;
5. Enclose stair to basement with glazing (not visible from street);
6. Add staircase and steel railing to rear walkway;
7. Add roof deck (not visible from street);
8. Alter window openings on rear (west) wall, including large windows to double-height space;
9. Alter window openings on side (north) wall (part of an addition constructed in 1996) and replace existing windows with windows of different sizes and sash patterns; and
10. Restore large front opening in rear cabana and add glazing.

RESEARCH

Clarence and Jennie Covert constructed the house around 1932. Clarence lived there until his death in 1940; Jennie moved out by 1944. After a few short-term renters, Ralph and Nila Oakley lived in the house from around 1952 until at least 1981.

Clarence Covert was born in 1888 in Texas. As co-founder of the Covert Motor Company with his father Frank Covert Sr., Clarence Covert was a prominent businessman often quoted in newspapers on auto sales, particularly Buicks. "The Covert company has for many years enjoyed a fine reputation for fair dealings and has figured prominently in all movements favoring the growth and progress of Austin," *The Austin American* stated in 1939. Frank Covert Sr. retired in 1932, and Clarence shared management of the company with his brother Frank Jr., starting in 1934. Clarence Covert died in 1940 in his home.

Jennie Matthews Covert was born in 1888 in Webberville. She married Clarence Covert before 1912 and the couple had three sons. She was involved in numerous social groups, including the Girls' Settlement Club and the Junior League. Jennie Covert died in 1977 in Austin.

Ralph Sidney Oakley was born in 1899 in Arkansas. In 1930, he was living in Jeffersonville, Texas, working in the real estate business. By 1938, he had moved to Austin, where he managed the Longhorn Cafe. The 1949 and 1952 city directories list him in the insurance

business with Everett Kingsbery, the previous owner of 1706 Windsor Road. By 1955, Oakley owned Oakley Real Estate, which he ran until at least 1973. He was involved in a 1962 case heard by the Texas Supreme Court regarding condemnation of land for a highway project. Ralph Oakley died in 1981 in Austin.

Nila Burch Oakley was born in 1916 in Houston to a farming family. She lived in San Antonio in 1935, but moved to Austin and married Ralph Oakley by 1940. She died in 1988 in Austin.

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW

The house is a contributing property in the Old West Austin National Register Historic District. It may 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 moderately 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 Mediterranean Revival style and appears to be architecturally significant.
 - b. **Historical association.** Clarence Covert lived in the house from the time it was constructed until his death in 1940. More research would be needed to determine if his residence during this period has significant historical associations with the Covert Auto Co. There do not appear to be significant historical associations with Ralph and Nila Oakley, who lived in the house for approximately thirty years.
 - 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:

- 2) *The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.*
The project retains the property's historic character by preserving features, spaces, and spatial relationships. The most dramatic change is to the rear wall, much of which was added in 1994.
- 3) *Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.*
The project does not create a false sense of historical development.
- 4) *Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.*

The project retains the house's stucco cladding (added at an unknown date after construction) and side and rear additions (built in 1994 and at an unknown date).

- 5) *Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.*

The house's distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques will be preserved.

- 6) *Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.*

Windows and balcony railings will be replaced in-kind.

- 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 proposed building is generally compatible with the surrounding neighborhood, which contains a mix of historic-age and new construction. The three houses immediately to the south are substantial two-story buildings; a large modern house is prominently located at the end of the block (see photos on p. 3-5). The building's materials and proportions mark it as new construction.

The proposed project meets the standards.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

Retain the stucco cladding; ensure that cabana changes are compatible with the principal house. The committee was supportive of replacing the windows and balcony railings in-kind and removing the shutters. The stucco cladding is proposed to be retained.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Comment on and release the plans.

LOCATION MAP



-  SUBJECT TRACT
-  PENDING CASE
-  ZONING BOUNDARY

NOTIFICATIONS

CASE#: NRD-2019-0062
LOCATION: 1706 Windsor Road



1" = 217'

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

Photos



Primary (east) façade of 1706 Windsor Road.



Detail of porte-cochere (enclosed ca. 1989).

Occupancy History

City directory research, Austin History Center

By Historic Preservation Office staff

October 2019

- 1929 Address not listed. Clarence and Jennie Covert reside at 1508 Colorado Street.
- 1932 Clarence and Jennie Covert, owners (address listed as 1318 Windsor Road)
Covert Auto Co.
- Dane Covert, renter
No occupation listed
- 1935 Clarence and Jennie Covert, owners (address listed as 1318 Windsor Road)
Covert Auto Co.
- Clarence Covert, Jr., renter
Student
- George H. Covert, renter
No occupation listed
- Dane M. Covert, renter
Salesman, Covert Auto Co.
- 1939 Clarence and Jennie Covert, owners
Covert Auto Co. (321-23 W. 6th Street)
- Clarence Covert, Jr., renter
Salesman, Covert Auto Co.
- George H. Covert, renter
Student, UT
- 1941 Mrs. Jennie Covert, owner (wid. Clarence)
No occupation listed
- Clarence Covert, Jr., renter
Student
- George H. Covert, renter
Student, UT
- 1944 Mrs. Mildred DeVere, owner (wid. A. C.)
No occupation listed
- Janet L. DeVere, renter
Clerk, no employer listed
- Nadion Harrington + 2 children, renter (wid. Herbert G.)
Housekeeper

- 1947 Everett G. and Ora N. Kingsbery, owners
Hotel operator (1205 Capitol National Bank Building)
- John R. Kingsbery, renter
Student, UT
- Marian C. Kingsbery, renter
Student
- 1949 Everett G. and Nell Kingsbery, owners
Oakley & Kingsbery
- Marian C. Kingsbery, renter
No occupation listed
- 1952 Ralph and Nila Oakley, owners
Oakley & Kingsbery Insurance (915½ Congress Avenue)
- 1955 Ralph and Nila Oakley, owners
Oakley Real Estate (1014 Brazos Street)
- 1959 Ralph A. and Nila Oakley, owners
Both Oakleys worked at Oakley Real Estate Investment (1014 Brazos Street)
- 1968 Ralph S. and Nila Oakley, owners
Ralph Oakley Real Estate
- 1973 Ralph S. and Nila Oakley, owners
Ralph Oakley Real Estate
- 1977 Ralph S. and Nila Oakley, owners
Retired
- 1981 Ralph S. and Nila Oakley, owners
Retired
- 1986 Max Michaelis, owner
Rancher
- 1992 Ben F. and Melanie H. Barnes, owners
Consultant (Ben); attorney, Griggs & Harnson (Melanie)

Austin Buick Dealer Returns From Survey of Huge Automobile Factories

Clarence Covert of the Covert Automobile company, Buick dealers, has just returned from Flint, Mich., where he spent two days as a guest of the Buick Motor company. Buick is entertaining the majority of its 8,000 dealers at the factory and the famous General Motors proving ground this fall, at the rate of about 250 a week.

Mr. Covert made the trip in a special Pullman train, along with the other dealers in the San Antonio Buick branch territory. The dealers reached Flint early Monday morning, their train pulling onto a siding near the Buick factory. The party, numbering about 125 men, was met by Buick executives, divided into groups of a dozen or so each, provided with guides.

Except for luncheon, which was served at the Hotel Durant, the tour occupied the entire day. The luncheon was attended by E. T. Strong, president of the Buick Motor company, C. W. Churchill, general sales manager, and other Buick executives, who addressed the visiting dealers on various sales and service problems, and congratulated the dealers for their part in making this by far the greatest of all Buick years.

The next day the dealers landed at the proving ground, which lies a few miles from the nearby town of Milford. Here they were shown the testing through which Buick goes constantly, to safeguard its position of quality leadership.

"Austin Buick Dealer Returns..."
The Austin American, 10/23/1927.

employs almost 30,000 workers. Its factory is nearly two miles long and several blocks wide; it has its own fire and police departments, its own water and telephone systems, in short, it is a good-sized city in itself.

"I think all the dealers in the territory felt that the visit was the experience of a lifetime. For myself, the visit to the plant and the proving ground, and our contact with Buick's builders, made me mighty proud of my connection with Buick. It put a real significance in the slogan: 'When Better Automobiles are Built, Buick Will Build Them.' We've got inside information, now, that Buick 'doesn't mean maybe.'"

After a day crammed with incident, they left for home.

Proves Motor Efficiency.

"It's hard to say which was more amazing, the factory or the proving ground," said Mr. Covert. "Each was a wonderful experience and a genuine treat. The day at the factory brought home the marvelous efficiency of Buick manufacture and explained how it is that Buick can offer such startling values. We saw the conscientious care that goes into the making of every Buick car, the relentless tests which insure that every one is right when it goes out—and we gained some conception of the enormous resources this policy has enabled Buick to develop.

"I was especially impressed at the way machinery has taken the place of man power, whose work it does more quickly and more accurately than men. Movement of parts in their transformation from raw material into finished cars, is taken care of by a system of conveyors of marvelous ingenuity, each designed perfectly for its own particular job. They run from operation to operation, and from plant to plant, in what seems like a hopeless maze; yet their movement is perfectly co-ordinated, and their combined effect is efficiency itself.

"For all its machinery, Buick

Heads of Covert Automobile Co.



FRANK M. COVERT



CLARENCE COVERT

Frank M. and Clarence Covert are active in the management of the pioneer Covert Automobile company which was founded over a quarter century ago by Clarence and his father Frank Covert, Sr. In 1932 Frank Covert, Sr. retired leaving actual guidance of the company in the hands of his two sons. He died in 1938. Though associated with the company for many years, Frank Covert did not formally enter the firm until 1934. The Covert company has for many years enjoyed a fine reputation for fair dealings and has figured prominently in all movements favoring the growth and progress of Austin.

"Heads of Covert Automobile Co.," The Austin American, 3/26/1939.

Covert's Funeral Is Arranged

Funeral services for Clarence Covert, Sr., 52, well-known Austin business man and a founder of the Covert Motor company, will be held Saturday at 10 a. m. from the family residence at 1706 Windsor road. Burial will be in Oakwood cemetery.

Mr. Covert died this morning at 12:30 o'clock at his residence after several weeks of illness.

He is survived by his widow; three sons, Dan, Clarence, Jr., and George Covert, all of Austin; one brother, Frank Covert of Austin; and three sisters, Mrs. Arthur Watson of Austin, Mrs. B. M. Temple of Oklahoma City; and Mrs. Walker Shipman of Illinois.

"Covert's Funeral Is Arranged," The Austin Statesman, 8/23/1940.

Building Permits

Unless the Plumbing is done in strict accordance with City Ordinances, do not turn on the water.

No. A 235 A+B

PERMIT FOR WATER SERVICE Austin, Texas

M. *J. D. Woodward* 1706 Address *Windsor Road*

Plumber *John L. Martin* Size of Tap *1 1/4* Date *6/22/25*

Foreman's Report. *90* *Ad Tap Service*
1/19/62

Date of Connection *6/25/25*

Size of Tap Made *1 1/4*

Size Service Made *1 inc.*

Size Main Tapped *8"*

From Front Prop. Line to Curb Cock *4'*

" " " " " " *1 foot in of water*

Location of Meter *at side of*

Type of Box *Small*

Depth of Main in St. *1.5 ft*

" " Service Line *1.6 ft*

From Curb Cock to Tap on Main *22'*

Checked by Engr. Dept. **INDEXED**

Foreman's Signature *Hervey*

Size: No. Fittings, Curb Cock, Elbow, St. Elbow, Bushing, Reducer, Pipe, Lead Comp., Nipples, Union, Plug, Tee, Stop, Box, Lid, Valves, Reg. No.

JUL 2-1925

Water tap permit issued to J.D. R. Woodward, 6/22/1925. This permit is likely for another house, as the subject property was addressed as 1318 Windsor at this time.

Unless the Plumbing is done in strict accordance with City Ordinances, do not turn on the water.

No. A 3449

PERMIT FOR WATER SERVICE Austin, Texas

M. *G. P. Horton* 1706 Address *Windsor Rd*

Plumber *H. J.* Size of Tap *1/2* Date *8-11-30*

Foreman's Report.

Date of Connection *8/13/30*

Size of Tap Made *3/4*

Size Service Made *1 1/2*

Size Main Tapped *8"*

From Front Prop. Line to Curb Cock *13' 11"*

" " " " " " *36' 7 1/4"*

Location of Meter *at work*

Type of Box *Lock*

Depth of Main in St. *8'*

" " Service Line *12"*

From Curb Cock to Tap on Main *11'*

Checked by Engr. Dept. *5-21-30 JCA* **INDEXED**

Foreman's Signature *BENSON*

Size: No. Fittings, Curb Cock, Elbow, St. Elbow, Bushing, Reducer, Pipe, Lead Comp., Nipples, Union, Plug, Tee, Stop, Box, Lid, Valves, Reg. No.

SEE TAP 2357 1/2 2358 1/2 2359 1/2 2360 1/2 2361 1/2 2362 1/2 2363 1/2 2364 1/2 2365 1/2 2366 1/2 2367 1/2 2368 1/2 2369 1/2 2370 1/2 2371 1/2 2372 1/2 2373 1/2 2374 1/2 2375 1/2 2376 1/2 2377 1/2 2378 1/2 2379 1/2 2380 1/2 2381 1/2 2382 1/2 2383 1/2 2384 1/2 2385 1/2 2386 1/2 2387 1/2 2388 1/2 2389 1/2 2390 1/2 2391 1/2 2392 1/2 2393 1/2 2394 1/2 2395 1/2 2396 1/2 2397 1/2 2398 1/2 2399 1/2 2400 1/2

Water tap permit issued to G. P. Horton, 8/11/1930. This permit is likely for another house, as the subject property was addressed as 1318 Windsor at this time.

Recent building permits have been approved for the following changes:

- Enclosure of detached garage to create a guest house (1994)
- Basement, first-floor, and second-floor additions (1996)
- Enclosure of carport (porte-cochere) (2013)