PROPOSAL

Demolish a ca. 1917 house.

ARCHITECTURE

One-story, rectangular-plan building; front-gabled jerkinhead roof; wood siding; double-hung wood-sash windows; half-width porch; door with transom and sidelights.

RESEARCH

1603 E. 7th Street was built around 1917 by Dennis and Annie Hunter at a cost of $250. The family then occupied the house for five decades. The Hunters had lived in a previous dwelling on the property for at least five years before constructing the existing house.

Dennis H. Hunter was born in 1882 in Martindale, Texas, and completed school through the 8th grade. Hunter operated a restaurant on E. 6th Street, which is not named in city directories. He also worked various other jobs: as a saloon bookkeeper (1910), drugstore porter (1914), assistant steward at the Home Social & Benevolence Association (1918), and dry goods store porter (1930). Census records and city directories from the early 1940s show that the Hunters rented rooms in their home, including to James H. Means and another professor at nearby Tillotson Institute. Dennis Hunter died in 1943 in Austin.

Annie Storey Hunter was born in 1879 in Texas. She attended three years of college, later working as a dressmaker out of her home. She married Dennis Hunter prior to 1897, and the couple had three sons. Annie Hunter lived in the house until her death in 1970.

STAFF COMMENTS

The East Austin Historic Resources Survey (2016) identified the property as a potential historic landmark.

Designation Criteria—Historic Landmark

1) The building is more than 50 years old.

2) The building appears to retain 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 appears to demonstrate significance according to one criterion, and may demonstrate significance according to two criteria.

   a. Architecture. The house embodies the distinguishing characteristics of the Craftsman style and appears to be significant under this criterion.

   b. Historical association. Dennis and Annie Hunter built the house and lived in the house for roughly fifty years. The Hunters owned a restaurant on E. 6th Street, and were prosperous enough to buy land and construct a house when African Americans faced substantial financial and legal barriers. Further
research is recommended to determine if the property has 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 house does not appear to 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. Further research would confirm this.

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**

Postpone the case until January 27, 2020 to allow further research on Dennis and Annie Hunter.

If the Commission elects to approve the demolition application at this meeting, staff recommends encouraging rehabilitation and adaptive re-use of the existing building, then relocation over demolition; but release the demolition permit upon 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.
**Property Information**

*Photos*

*Primary (north) façade of 1603 E. 7th Street.*

*East elevation and north façade.*
Occupy History

Completed by Historic Preservation Office staff, November 2019

Staff note: City directories have occupancy records stretching back to 1887. This history covers occupancy from just before the current house was constructed around 1920.

1910 Vacant

1912 Dennis Hunter (colored)
Restaurant (1605 E. 6th Street)

1914 Dennie Hunter (colored)
Porter, Graham Drug Co., restaurant (1605 E. 6th Street)

1916 Dennis Hunter (colored)
Waiter, no employer listed

William Haswell (colored)
Waiter, Scholz Garten

1918 Dennis and Annie Hunter (colored)
Assistant steward, Home Social & Benevolence Association

1920 Samuel and Rosa Cleveland (colored), renters
Laborer, Patton Auto Co.

1603½: Bessie Lawrence (colored), renter
Laundress, no employer listed

1922 Dennis and Anna Hunter (colored), owners
No occupation listed

1924 Lee A. and Beulah J. Murphy, renters
No occupation listed

1927 D. H. and Anna Hunter (colored), owners
Restaurant (1103 E. 6th Street)

1929 D. H. and Annie Hunter, owners
No occupation listed

1932 D. H. and Annie Hunter, owners
No occupation listed

1935 D. H. and Annie Hunter, owners
No occupation listed

1937 D. H. and Annie Hunter, owners
No occupation listed

Theodore C. Calhoun, renter
Teacher, Anderson High School
John B. Jackson, renter
Teacher, Anderson High School

1939  D. H. and Annie Hunter, owners
      No occupation listed

1941  Dennis H. and Annie Hunter, owners
      No occupation listed
      J. H. Means, renter
      Associate professor, Tillotson College

1944  Mrs. Celia Brown, owner
      Maid, no employer listed
      Mrs. Annie S. Hunter, renter
      No occupation listed

1947  Mrs. Annie S. Hunter, owner (widow of D. H.)
      No occupation listed

1949  Mrs. Annie S. Hunter, owner (widow of D. H.)
      No occupation listed

1952  Annie S. Hunter, owner
      Supervisor, King’s Daughters Home for the Aged

1955  Mrs. Annie S. Hunter, owner (widow of D. H.)
      No occupation listed

1959  Mrs. Annie S. Hunter, owner
      No occupation listed

1963  Annie S. Hunter, renter (widow of Dennis)
      No occupation listed

1963  Annie S. Hunter, renter (widow of Dennis)
      No occupation listed

1968  Annie S. Hunter, renter (widow of Dennis)
      No occupation listed

1973  James H. Pittman, renter
      Laborer, no employer listed

1977  Roger W. and Georgia N. Thomas, Jr., owners
      Teacher, no employer listed

1981  G. R. Thomas, renter
      No occupation listed
1985  G. R. Thomas, renter  
Teacher, Jobs Corps Center (San Marcos)  

1992  G. R. Thomas, renter  
Teacher, Jobs Corps Center (San Marcos)  

Background Research

BUILDING PERMIT.  

Dennis Hunter, 1603 East Seventh  
Street, dwelling, $250.  

Building permit notice, Austin Statesman, 9/6/1917. 

Building Permits

PERMIT FOR WATER SERVICE  

M. ........................................ Address. 1603 E. 7th St.  
Plumber ...................................... Size of Tap 3/4" Date 7-2-31.  

Date of Connection 7-2-31  
Size of Tap Made 3/4"  
Size Service Made 3/4"  
Size Main Tapped 1"  
From Front Prop. Line to Curb Cock 2 3/4'  
From East Prop. Line to Curb Cock 2'  
Location of Meter Outside sidewalk  
Type of Box Leak  
Depth of Main in St.  
Depth of Service Line  
From Curb Cock to Tap on Main 2'  
Checked by Engr. Dept. 7-2-31  

Foreman's Report  

Foreman's Signature Frank Tisdale  

Water tap permit, 7/2/1931.