

**HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION  
JANUARY 27, 2020  
DEMOLITION AND RELOCATION PERMITS  
HDP-2019-0711  
4703 RAMSEY AVENUE**

**PROPOSAL**

Demolish a ca. 1939 house.

**ARCHITECTURE**

One-story, rectangular-plan house clad in painted brick, capped with a side-gabled roof with composition shingles and shallow eaves. It has single and paired 1:1 wood windows and a full-width shed-roof porch with decorative metal supports. A small addition was constructed to the rear in 1950. A detached garage is located behind the house. The home's small footprint and minimal detailing is typical for homes of the era and location.

**RESEARCH**

The house was built in 1939 and rented by NYA assistant director Raymond Leberban, then purchased by Forrest W. and Cecile Trafton around 1945. Forrest Trafton was a tile contractor. He began working for his uncle's family business, Trafton Marble and Tile, before he and his father branched off to start their own business, Trafton and Son, in 1940. Cecile Trafton worked as bookkeeper and office manager for the business, and her brother John F. Rodriguez was an assistant manager. Son Capt. William Trafton later joined the business.

The Traftons lived in the home until Mrs. Trafton's death in 1968; per deed records, it stayed in the family until 2006. Renters include grandson Mike Trafton and tilesetter Joe Castro, who may also have been associated with the Traftons' business.

**STAFF COMMENTS***Designation Criteria—Historic Landmark*


- 1) The building is more than 50 years old.
- 2) The building appears to retain high integrity.
- 3) Properties must meet two historic designation criteria for landmark designation (Land Development Code, Section 25-2-352). The property may demonstrate significance according to one criterion:
  - a) *Architecture*. The house is constructed in the Minimal Traditional style.
  - b) *Historical association*. While the house is associated with the Trafton family, who contributed their expertise as contractors to some of Austin's most iconic buildings at midcentury, the Trafton & Son building at 3700 Guadalupe may hold stronger associational and architectural significance due to its exceptional exterior tilework that showcases the Traftons' skills at both trade and salesmanship. However, the Commission may wish to consider Forrest and Cecile Trafton's importance with regards to their house, given the uncertain integrity of the Trafton & Son building since 2011.
  - 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 rehabilitation and adaptive re-use, then relocation over demolition, but release the 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.

# LOCATION MAP



-  SUBJECT TRACT
-  PENDING CASE
-  ZONING BOUNDARY

1" = 292'

## NOTIFICATIONS

CASE#: HDP-2019-0711  
4703 RAMSEY AVENUE

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*



*Sources: Google Street View, 2019; Historic Preservation Office, 2020.*

*Occupancy History* City Directory Research, Austin History Center, December 2019

1992	Joe S. and Ophelia Castro, owners Retired
1985- 86	Joe S. and Ophelia Castro, renters Tile setter
1981	No return
1977	Mike Trafton, renter
1973	Johnny and Susan Rose, owners Child care attendant, School for the Blind
1968	Forrest and Cecile Trafton, owners Trafton and Sons tile contractors
1965	Forrest and Cecile Trafton, owners Trafton and Sons tile contractors
1962	Forrest and Cecile Trafton, owners Trafton and Sons tile contractors
1959	Forrest W. and Cecile Trafton, owners Trafton and Sons tile contractors
1955	Forrest W. and Cecile Trafton, owners Trafton and Sons tile contractors
1952	Forrest W. and Cecile Trafton, owners Trafton and Sons tile contractors
1949	Forrest W. and Cecile Trafton, owners Trafton and Sons tile contractors
1947	Forrest W. and Cecile Trafton, renters
1944- 45	Forrest W. and Cecile Trafton, owners Trafton and Sons tile contractors
1941	Raymond D. and Mary Leberban, renters Assistant division director, NYA
1939	Address not listed



# Biographical Information

## MRS. CECILE L. TRAFTON

Requiem mass will be offered for Mrs. Cecile Lillian Trafton, 56, of 4703 Ramsey, Saturday at 10 a.m. at St. Louis Catholic Church with Monsignor Edward Matocha officiating. Burial will be in Assumption Cemetery. Rosary will be recited Friday at 8 p.m. from the Cook Funeral Home.

Mrs. Trafton lived in Austin 33 years and was a member of St. Louis Catholic Church, of the Ladies Guild at St. Louis Catholic Church and was office manager for Trafton and Son Tile Co.

She is survived by her husband, Forrest William Trafton of Austin; a son, Capt. William F. Trafton of Austin;

one sister, Mrs. Mary Neill of San Antonio; a brother, John F. Rodriguez of Austin; three grandchildren and a niece and a nephew.

Pallbearers will be Clarence Campbell, Leon Campbell, Otis Smith, Sandy Smith, Grady Smith, and Leroy Smith.

*The Austin Statesman; Jul 26, 1968*

## Directors of Austin Home Exposition Meet



The Austin Educational Better Homes exposition directors have completed plans on the exposition to be held in Pemberton Heights about June 1. Left to right standing—Otis Vaughan, A. J.

Stuart, Earl Tummell; sitting at table, left to right—Louis Groos, Forrest Trafton, Edwin C. Kreisle, Scott Yaemans, W. L. Bradfield and D. C. Bradford, the directors.

*The Austin American; Apr 19, 1936*

## TRAFTON & SON

TILE CONTRACTORS

Formerly Associated with Trafton Tile & Marble Co., Austin Branch

Announce Removal to New Address

**403 W. 26th St.**

One Door Off Guadalupe on West 26th St.

Plenty Parking Space

More Convenient

PHONE 2-7231

## ATTENTION!

Home Owners

## TRAFTON & SON

TILE CONTRACTORS

3700 Guadalupe

ANNOUNCE THEIR ABILITY TO HELP YOU PLAN THAT NEW TILE BATH, KITCHEN OR SUN ROOM YOU HAVE BEEN NEEDING. WE OFFER A COMPLETE ORGANIZATION OF HIGHLY SKILLED WORKMEN AND SUPERVISION THAT CAN BUILD A NEW OR MODERNIZE YOUR OLD ROOM AT A REASONABLE PRICE WITHIN AN ABSOLUTE MINIMUM OF TIME. TERMS MAY BE ARRANGED. FOR INFORMATION AND ESTIMATES WITHOUT OBLIGATION CALL—

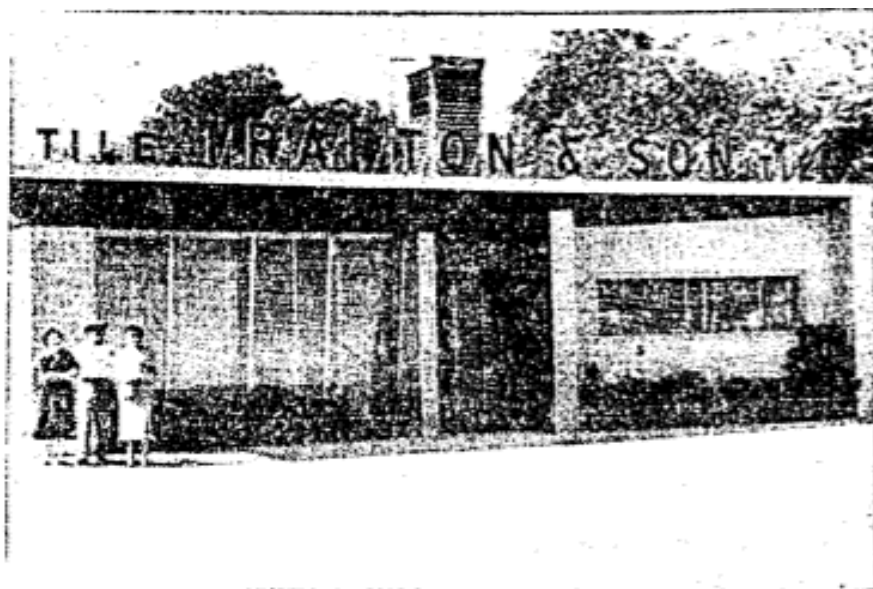
## TRAFTON & SON

TILE CONTRACTORS

Phone 2-7231 or 2-5581 after hours.

3700 GUADALUPE

*The Austin Statesman; Aug 2, 1940 and May 13, 1949*



**GOOD ADVERTISEMENT**—Trafton and Son Tile Company, 3700 Guadalupe is its own best advertiser of its wares through the attractive tile front of its building. The company, designed, selected and completed the dusty, gray-green tile finish of the building's exterior. The firm moved to the Guadalupe location in 1945, made additions and did some remodeling on the building in 1950.—(Neal Douglass Photo)

## WHOLE TRAFTON FAMILY HAS HAND IN TILE FIRM

The tile trade is a family matter with Trafton and Son Tile Company, 3700 Guadalupe.

Forrest Trafton, the owner, has been in the business 28 years. He opened his firm in Austin in 1940 in partnership with his father, W. E. Trafton, who was an active tile setter for 40 years.

Before coming to Austin, Forrest Trafton was associated with his uncle in the Trafton Tile and Marble Company of San Antonio. A son, Bill, is in the University of Texas and expects to be associated in business with his father when he completes his studies. Mrs. Trafton serves as bookkeeper for the firm.

Just get any member of the Trafton family on the telephone and they can tell you what you want to know about tile. Show room, office and warehouse for the firm are all located at 3700 Guadalupe. There are 20 persons employed, and five vehicles operate within a 150-mile radius of Austin.

Officers of the firm include: Forrest Trafton, owner; W. E.

Trafton, retired owner-partner; John F. Rodriguez, estimator and assistant manager; and Mrs. Forrest Trafton, bookkeeper.

Some of the jobs handled by the firm include: Commodore Perry Hotel, recent remodeling of Driskill (more than 120 bathrooms); International Life Insurance Building, the First Federal Building now under construction, and a number of Austin's finest residences.

## Carrie Nation Went Whole Hog on Mate

Carrie Nation, one of the most talked-of and talked-about individuals in the past 150 years, again made the press in 1903.

An eastern newspaper said bar-busting Carrie "is now both a 'grass' and a 'sod' widow. Her late husband, from whom she was divorced, is no more."

Commented The Austin Statesman, Oct. 14, 1903: "Mrs. Nation always did go whole hog or nothing."

*The Austin American; Oct 18, 1953.*

# triumphs

## in genuine CLAY TILE

### YOUR BUDGET

*can include real clay tile!*

Whether you are starting out or doing over, there is a place for clay tile in your home—and in your budget. Some people may think clay tile is expensive simply because it is found in the best homes. Actually, clay tile can be included in the budget for vast majority of homes.

### THE INITIAL COST

*is more than offset by unfailing permanence!*

Because you never have to repaint or replace clay tile. Wherever you use tile, it takes care of itself. It won't fade, it won't stain. So you see, its largely a matter of how much tile you can afford. Concentrate first on clay tile for the bath room and then on your kitchen, where its advantages over other materials are beyond dispute.

- No more waxing—ever!
- Tile is lovely—for the life of your home!
- Washes down easily!
- Steam and water can't harm!
- Tile is lovely to look at and easy to care for
- Colors keep their beauty!



"Just an occasional sponging keeps my Clay Tile Baths sparkling", says Mrs. Andrew S. Patton, 6002 Shoal Creek Blvd., Austin, Texas. Andrew S. Patton, Builder of Patton-Bilt Finer Homes, says, "We like Clay Tile, too, as a sales feature". That's why we use it in all our houses and of course, installed by Trafton & Son for the finest workmanship and supervision.

# TRAFTON and SON

SERVING AUSTIN for 21 YEARS — "The FINEST of MATERIALS combined with EXPERT WORKMANSHIP"

**3700  
Guadalupe**

*The Austin American; Oct 18, 1953*

## Mrs. Trafton Returns Home

Mrs. Forrest Trafton of 4703 Ramsey returned Friday morning from visiting her son and daughter-in-law, Lieutenant and Mrs. William Trafton, and her new grandson at Travis Air Force Base, Calif.

The baby, who has been named Michael Forrest, was born Sept. 10.

Grandparents are Mr. and Mrs. Forest Trafton and Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Lee Quicksall of 5603 Burnet Road. The baby's mother is the former Miss Leona Quicksall.

Lt. Trafton, a jet pilot in the US Air Force, received his wings in August at Webb AFB in Big Spring, and was recently transferred to the California base.

*The Austin American; Sep 25, 1955*



# CONGRATULATIONS CAPITAL PLAZA!

WE ARE PROUD TO HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO FURNISHING  
AND INSTALLING CERAMIC TILE AND QUARRY TILE FOR  
AUSTIN'S NEWEST AND FINEST SHOPPING CENTER.

## TRAFTON & SON

TILE CONTRACTORS

"FORREST & BILL TRAFTON"

3700 GUADALUPE

HO 5-8711

The Austin American (1914-1973); Nov 13, 1960



AWARD WINNERS — Three Austin architectural firms and a local ceramic tile contractor have been awarded the Tile Council of America's "CQ" Award for high quality use of ceramic tile. Receiving the awards from E. G. Spencer, right, head of the TCA's architectural program, are from left, Austin architects Arthur Fehr, Charles Carleton, George Page and Herbert Crume. Also receiving an award, but not shown, was tile contractor Forest Trafton.

*The Austin American; Mar 19, 1967*





## Best Building to Consider for Preservation

**AB** [austinchronicle.com/best-of-austin/year:2004/noll:critics/category:architecture-and-lodging/trafton-and-son-inc-best-building-to](https://www.austinchronicle.com/best-of-austin/year:2004/noll:critics/category:architecture-and-lodging/trafton-and-son-inc-best-building-to)

### Trafton & Son, Inc.

There are no commercial buildings in Austin more than 200 years old and not too many that are more than 100 years. America's history is short, and Austin's even shorter, so a structure with character that is even a half-century old and in a condition aching for pre-emptive preservation is worthy of note. The Trafton & Son Tile building, with its mosaic south wall, slanted roof, and subtly elegant font use, oozes with midcentury industrial potential. And that For Sale sign's been there forever! Personally, we are entertaining serious offers for partnership in our thrift-store/interior-design-by-day/coffee-klatch-by-night concept. Duh. Why didn't you think of that?

*The Trafton & Son building at 3700 Guadalupe (now Planet K Gifts) won the Chronicle's 2004 pick for "Best Building to Consider for Preservation." While the building is still standing, its façade, roofline, and some character-defining features have been modified, obscured, and/or removed.*

*Source: <https://www.austinchronicle.com/locations/trafton-and-son-inc-227591/>, Photos: Google Maps, 2011 and 2019.*

### Building Permits

D. D. Godwin                      4703 Ramsey Ave.  
 -                      33                      27                      -  
 Rosedale "H"  
 brick veneer residence and frame garage.  
 276N    6/22/39

*Building permit, 6-22-39*

