

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION
FEBRUARY 24, 2020
DEMOLITION AND RELOCATION PERMITS
HDP-2020-0003
1612 E. 7TH STREET

PROPOSAL

Demolish a ca. 1906 house.

ARCHITECTURE

One-story, rectangular-plan, hipped-roof, board-and-batten-sided frame transitional cottage with an almost-full-width shed-roofed independent porch on square wood posts with a non-historic rail; single, modern replacement windows.

RESEARCH

The house was built around 1906; the first occupant was Ernest W. Chambers, a machinist for the Houston and Texas Central Railroad, who lived here for only a short time. The next occupant also worked for the Houston and Texas Central Railroad, reflecting the demographic that typified this neighborhood at the time this house was built.

The house further reflects the changing demographics of East Austin over the first few decades of the 20th century, as after an initial series of blue-collar Anglo occupants, the neighborhood began becoming more diverse and African-American residents occupied this house from around 1915 onward. The first African-American residents were laborers, chauffeurs, butchers, and porters, typical occupations for African-American men of the period. Around 1921, the house was purchased by Green and Lula Penn, an African-American couple. Green Penn lived in this house until his death in 1979. He worked variously as a porter, elevator operator, chauffeur, and delivery man before beginning his work as a janitor in the public schools, particularly Blackshear School, where he worked from around 1936 until around 1951. He then became a warehouse man and delivery driver for Southern Distributing Company, the local distributors for Falstaff and Pabst Blue Ribbon beer; he worked at Southern Distributing until his retirement around 1970. Green Penn was living in this house at the time of his death in 1979. The house then became a rental property.

STAFF COMMENTS

The house was recommended not eligible for local or National Register designation by the East Austin Historic Resources Survey (2016).

Staff has evaluated this house for designation as a historic landmark and has determined that the house does not meet the criteria for landmark designation as set forth in City Code:

- a. **Architecture.** The house is a common style of vernacular house from the early 1900s, with its hipped roof and board-and-batten siding, if a bit larger than many of its contemporaries. The windows have been replaced in the house, but it maintains its historic footprint as shown on the Sanborn maps of 1921, 1935, and 1962. Despite the retention of form, the house reflects a common style that does not rise to the level of a historic landmark.
- b. **Historical association.** The house demonstrates the much larger demographic shifts in East Austin in the early 20th century, but no more so than any other dating from the same period. The person most significantly associated with the house was a porter, janitor, and delivery truck driver. There do not appear to be significant historical associations.
- 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. The house does not meet the criteria for individual designation as a historic landmark.

LOCATION MAP



-  N
-  SUBJECT TRACT
-  PENDING CASE
-  ZONING BOUNDARY

NOTIFICATIONS

CASE#: HDP-2020-0003
1612 E 7TH STREET



1" = 292'

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.

1612 E. 7th Street
ca. 1906



OCCUPANCY HISTORY 1612 E. 7th Street

City Directory Research, Austin History Center
By City Historic Preservation Office
December, 2019

- | | |
|---------|---|
| 1992 | Antonio Martinez, renter
No occupation listed
NOTE: The directory indicates that Antonio Martinez was a new resident at this address. |
| 1985-86 | Hung and Ha Pham, renters
No occupation listed
NOTE: The directory indicates that Hun and Ha Pham were new residents at this address. |
| 1981 | Vacant |
| 1977 | Greene Penn, owner
Retired |
| 1973 | Greene Penn, owner
Retired |
| 1968 | Greene and Myrtle Penn, owners
Porter, Southern Distributing Company, Falstaff beer, 411 E. 4 th Street. |

- 1965 Greene and Myrtle Penn, owners
Porter, Southern Distributing Company, Falstaff beer, 411 E. 4th Street.
- 1961 Greene Penn, owner
Porter, Southern Distributing Company, Falstaff beer, 411 E. 4th Street.
- 1957 Green Penn, owner
Helper, Southern Distributing Company, Falstaff beer, 411 E. 4th Street.
- 1954 Greene and Beatrice Penn, owners
Warehouse man, Southern Distributing Company, Falstaff beer, 411 E. 4th Street.
- 1952 Green and Beatrice Penn, owners
Warehouse man, Southern Distributing Company, Falstaff and Pabst Blue Ribbon beer, 411 E. 4th Street.
- 1949 Green and Beatrice Penn, owners
No occupation listed
- 1947 Green and Beatrice Penn, owners
Janitor, public schools
- 1944-45 Green and Willie Penn, owners
Janitor
- 1941 Green and Willie F. Penn, owners
Janitor, public schools
Also listed is John W. Penn, an apprentice with Fulcher Printing Company, 611 E. 7th Street.
- 1939 Green P. and Frances W. Penn, owners
Janitor
- 1937 Green P. and Willie F. Penn, owners
Janitor, Blackshear School
Also listed are Quinton and Marjorie Penn; neither had an occupation shown.
- 1935 Green P., Jr. and Willie F. Penn, owners
Green: Delivery man, Capital Printing Company (Alma Harrell, proprietor), 608-10 Colorado Street.
Willie: Domestic, James B. and Elizabeth Wharey, 3006 Washington Square. James B. Wharey was a professor at the University of Texas.
NOTE: Green Penn married Willie Frances Hutchinson in 1934.
- 1932-33 Green P. Penn, Jr., owner
Porter, Capital Printing Company (Alma Harrell, proprietor), 608-10 Colorado Street.
NOTE: Lula Penn died in 1931.

- 1930-31 Green P., Jr. and Lula Penn (colored), owners
Porter, Capital Printing Company (Alma Harrell, proprietor), 608-10 Colorado Street.
- 1929 Green and Lula Penn (colored), owners
Porter, Harrell's, clothing, men's outfitters, and hatters, 604 Congress Avenue.
- 1927 Green, Jr. and Lula Penn (colored), owners
Chauffeur W.H. Folts, president of the Austin National Bank and secretary of the Driskill Hotel Corporation, 1801 Congress Avenue.
- 1924 Green and Lula Penn (colored), owners
Elevator operator, Scarbrough Building, 6th Street and Congress Avenue.
- 1922 Green and Lula Penn (colored), owners
Porter, Swift and Company, meat packers, 311 Congress Avenue.
- 1920 James and Mary Owens (colored), renters
Butcher, J.B. Pierce and Brother, meat market, 1511 E. 6th Street.
NOTE: Green and Lula Penn are listed at 1900 W. 10th Street; neither had an occupation shown.
- 1918 Samuel and Rosa Cleveland (colored), renters
Chauffeur
- 1916 James Armstrong (colored)
Laborer
- 1914 Joseph P. Billingsley (not noted as colored)
No occupation listed
- 1912-13 Vacant
NOTE: Joseph P. Billingsley is listed at 1611 E. 7th Street; he was the proprietor of a saloon at 1620 E. 6th Street.
NOTE: Orlando H. Gibson is listed at 1802 E. 1st Street; he worked at the Houston and Texas Central Railroad roundhouse.
- 1910-11 Orlando Gibson
Collector, Isaac Bledsoe, wholesale and retail pianos and organs, breeder of horses and mules, 821-23 Congress Avenue.
- 1909-10 John R. Killen
Machinist's helper, Houston and Texas Central Railroad roundhouse.
- 1907-08 Ernest W. Chambers
Machinist, Houston and Texas Central Railroad roundhouse.
- 1905 The address is not listed in the directory.
NOTE: Ernest W. Chambers is not listed in the directory.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES**Green Penn, Jr. (ca. 1921 – ca. 1979)**

Green Penn, Jr. appears in the 1910 U.S. Census as the 14-year old son of Green and Mariah Penn, who owned their home at 1308 E. 3rd Street in Austin. Green Penn, Jr. was born in Texas and had no occupation listed. His father, Green Penn, 50, had an unknown place of birth, and was a porter in a saloon. His mother, Mariah Penn, 45, also had an unknown place of birth, and was a cook at a college. Green, Jr. had an older sister, Alfreda, 18, who had been born in Texas and had no occupation listed.

His 1917 World War I draft registration card shows that Green Penn, Jr. was living at 1308 E. 3rd Street in Austin at the time of his registration. He was born in 1893 in Austin, and was a porter at the Austin National Bank. He was short with a medium build and had brown eyes and black hair.

The 1930 U.S. Census shows Green Penn as the owner of this house, which was worth \$800. He was 34, had been born in Texas, and was a porter in a store. His wife, Lula, was 32, had been born in Texas, and was a laundress at home. They had 5 children: daughter Vernell, 12; Clarence, 10; John Wesley, 6; Earl Lee, 4; and Green, Jr., 3. All of the children had been born in Texas. With them lived a niece, Adele Kello, 14, who had been born in Texas.

Lula Penn was living at this address when she died in May, 1931. She was born in 1898 in Austin to Walter and Jennie Lott, and was a laundress.

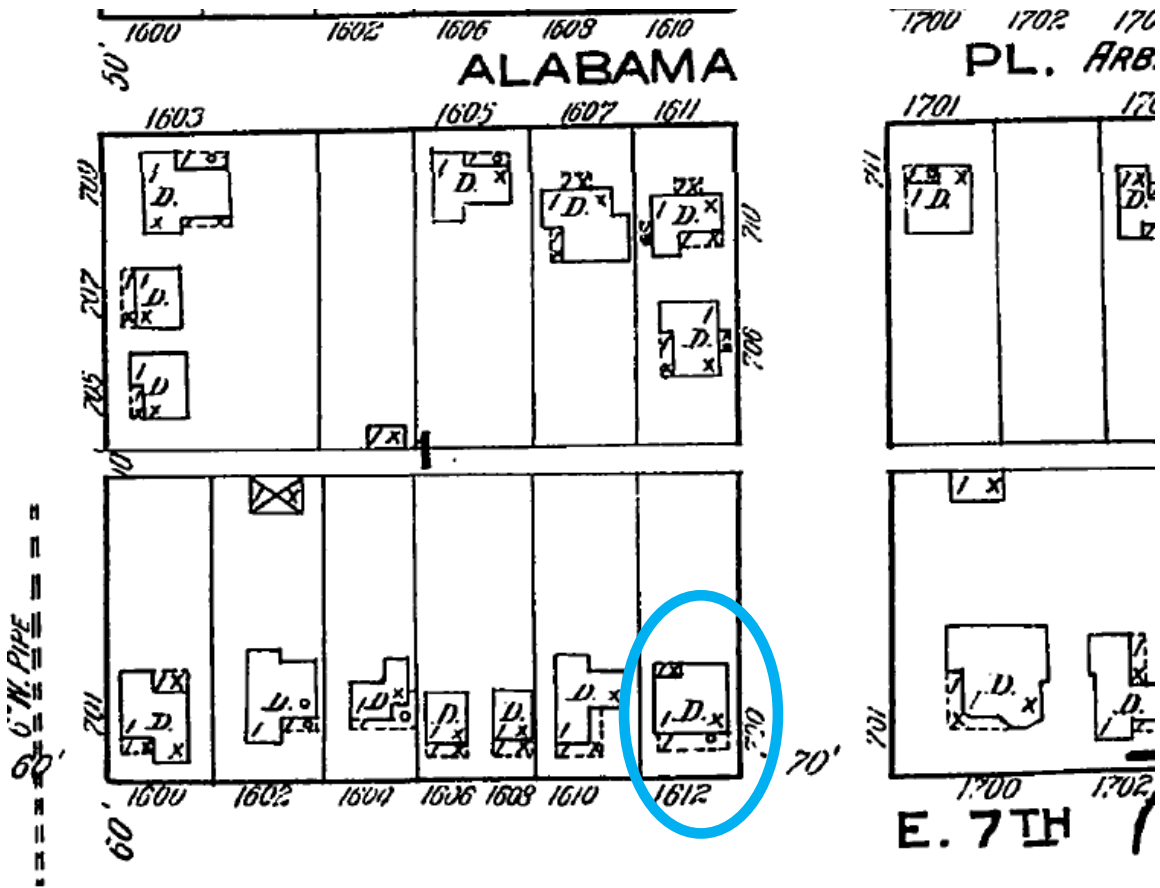
The 1940 U.S. Census shows Green Penn as the owner of this house, which was worth \$1,400. He was a 45-year old Texas-born widower who worked as a janitor in the public high school. With him lived 3 of his sons: John W., 16; Earl Lee, 14; and Green, Jr., 13. All the boys had been born in Texas and none had an occupation listed. Also in the household was Green Penn's daughter, Vernell McCallister, 22, and her daughter, Laverne, 4. Vernell McCallister was a Texas-born cook in a private home. This census report shows Willie F. Penn living in the home of her brother, Asa W. Hutchinson at 1809 E. 16th Street in Austin. Willie F. Penn was 34, had been born in Texas, and was a beautician in a beauty parlor. She is listed as married, while the entry for Green Penn shows him as a widower. Willie's brother, Asa Hutchinson, 44, had been born in Texas and was a teacher.

Green Penn married Willie Frances Hutchinson in Travis County in September, 1934. He married Mary Myrtle Thomas in Travis County in April, 1961. They divorced in Travis County in May, 1974.

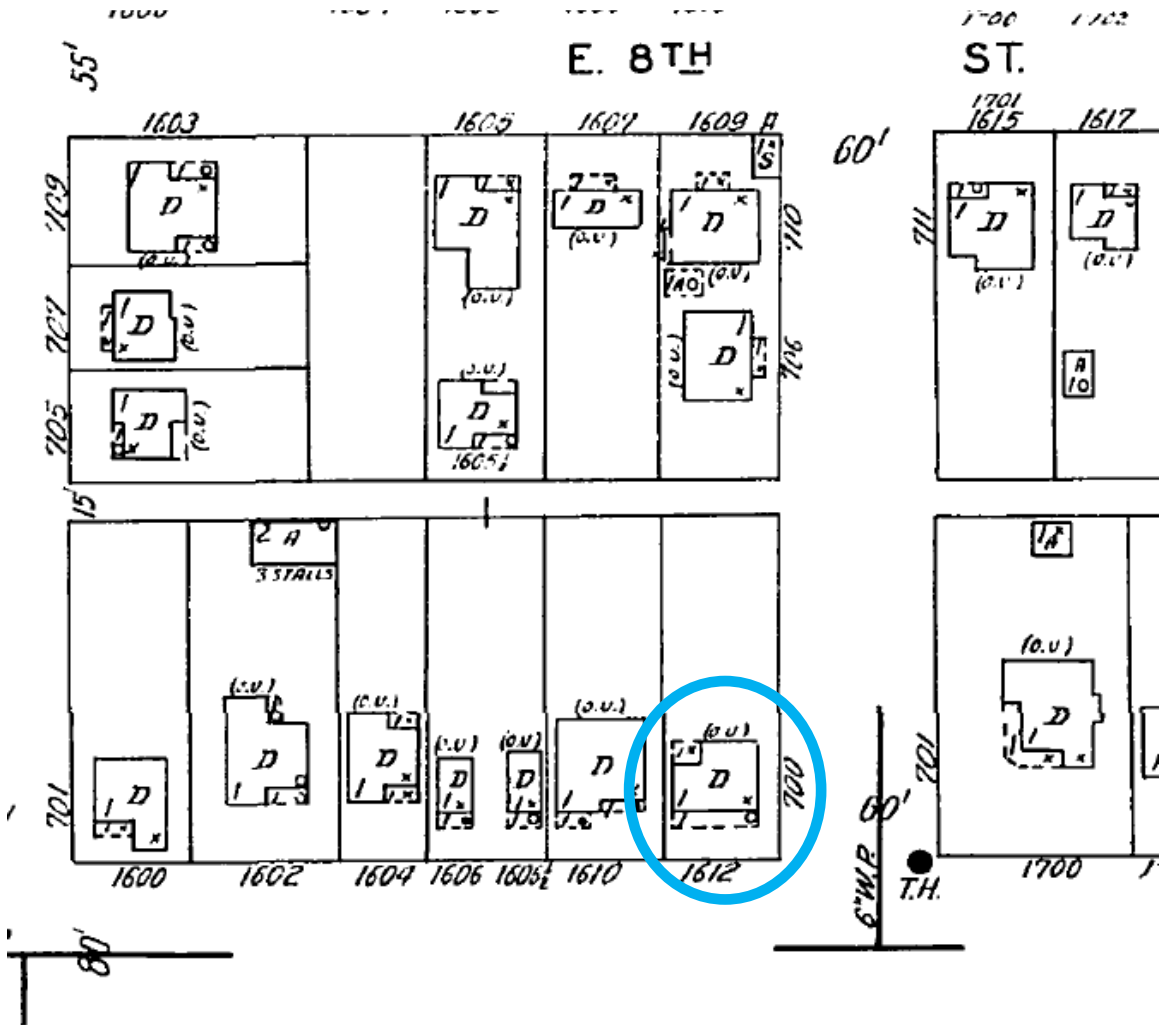
Green Penn was living at this address when he passed away in November, 1979. He was born in 1894 in Austin and was a retired custodian for AISD. He was divorced.

PENN, Green, 85, 1612 E. Seventh, died Saturday. Services 1 p.m. Wednesday at King-Tears Mortuary. Burial, Evergreen Cemetery. Survivors: daughter, Mrs. Vernell Jessie of Compton, Calif.; Clarence K. Penn of Los Angeles, Calif.; John W. Penn of San Antonio, Earl Penn and Green Penn Jr., both of Houston; 12 grandchildren.

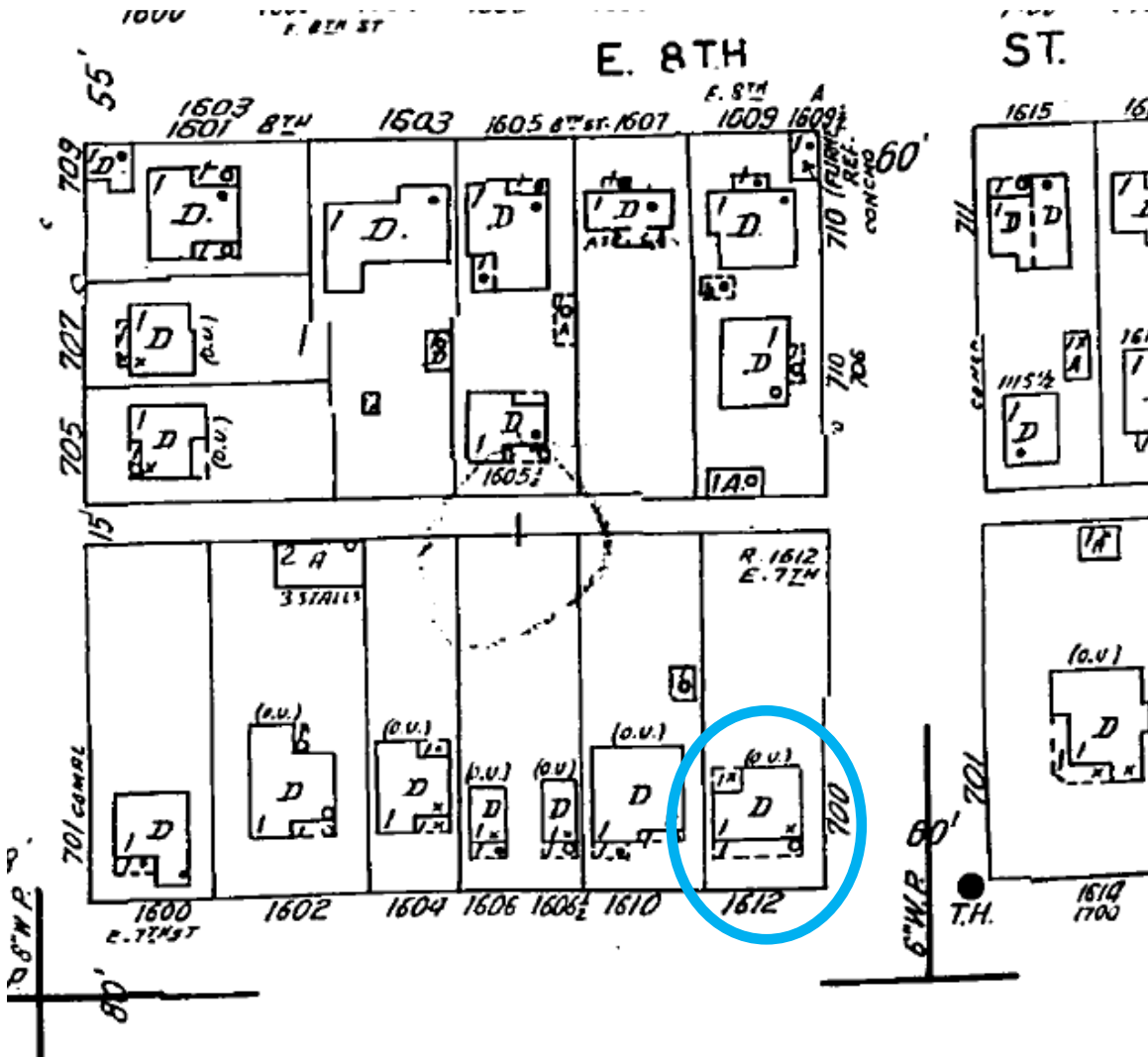
Obituary of Green Penn
Austin American-Statesman, November 12, 1979



The house appears on the 1921 Sanborn map with the same configuration as currently exists.



The 1935 Sanborn map shows the same configuration as the 1921 map above.



The 1962 Sanborn map shows the same configuration for the house as the 1921 and 1935 maps above.

10-11-80 Repair Min. Std

OWNER	Leieng Thi Duong	ADDRESS	1612 East 7th Street
PLAT	30	LOT	BLK.
SUBDIVISION			
OCCUPANCY			
BLDG. PERMIT #		DATE	OWNERS ESTIMATE
CONTRACTOR		NO. OF FIXTURES	
WATER TAP REC#		SEWER TAP REC#	

Building permit to repair the house to minimum standards (1980)
 City records indicate a permit to repair and remodel the house in November, 1980, and for the installation of new sheetrock and new windows in 2010.