

Rogers Washington Holy Cross Historic District  
Preservation Plan &  
Narrative History

## **Rogers Washington Holy Cross Preservation Plan Overview**

### ***About the historic district***

The Rogers Washington Holy Cross Historic District is one of the most intact concentrations of post-World War II housing for African Americans in Austin. As an early neighborhood developed by black professionals for black professionals, its development pattern is strongly tied to its cultural significance as a professional, middle-class, suburban neighborhood. Neighborhood residents positively impacted science, architecture, local and national government, education, the U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force, and more. Architecturally, the houses represent post-war stylistic trends, including ranch, minimal traditional, contemporary and split-level styles. John Chase, the first African American to graduate from the University of Texas School of Architecture, designed houses in the district. Nash Phillips, a well-known builder, is also associated with the district.

Historic district (HD) designation is intended to protect and enhance existing historic resources. By establishing Rogers Washington Holy Cross Historic District zoning, the City of Austin provides a mechanism to ensure that architectural changes within the district are compatible with its historic character. Some of the homes within the district may not have sufficient historical or architectural significance to be designated as individual historic landmarks, but they have significance as part of the neighborhood fabric and context.

Rogers Washington Holy Cross has retained its original appearance and landscape patterns and conveys a distinct and accurate sense of its own history. As noted in the East Austin Historic Resource Survey, the district is significant for its relevance to important historic development and architectural trends in Austin, including post-World War II development patterns and its associations with Nash Phillips and John Chase, both known for their impact on Austin's growth and development.

In sum, Rogers Washington Holy Cross meets several of the criteria for local designation, including architecture, historical associations, and community value. The neighborhood is overwhelmingly comprised of historic-age resources that retain architectural integrity (47 of 57 resources), and it has an exceptional ratio of contributing to noncontributing properties with 82% contributing and 18% non-contributing.

The Rogers Washington Holy Cross Historic District represents the history and significance of an underrepresented population and under-told story of the history of Austin.

### ***Purpose of the preservation plan***

The City of Austin benefits from having neighborhoods and buildings that represent its diverse history and with unique architectural styles. The Rogers Washington Holy Cross Historic District was identified by the East Austin Historic Resource Survey for its innate historical and architectural value. Historic district designation will ensure that the historical and architectural significance of this neighborhood will be understood and valued by future generations. The designation will protect and preserve the existing form, integrity, and materials of historic properties and will preserve this significant neighborhood.

The Design Standards recognize that change is inevitable. They are written to acknowledge and maintain the integrity of the structures and comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. Consequently, the Rogers Washington Holy Cross Preservation Plan and Design Standards address rehabilitation, additions, and new construction.

Designation of the Rogers Washington Holy Cross Place Historic District does not require property owners to make changes to their properties, such as returning buildings to their historic appearance. Additionally, the review of construction projects within the district that results from district designation is limited to those

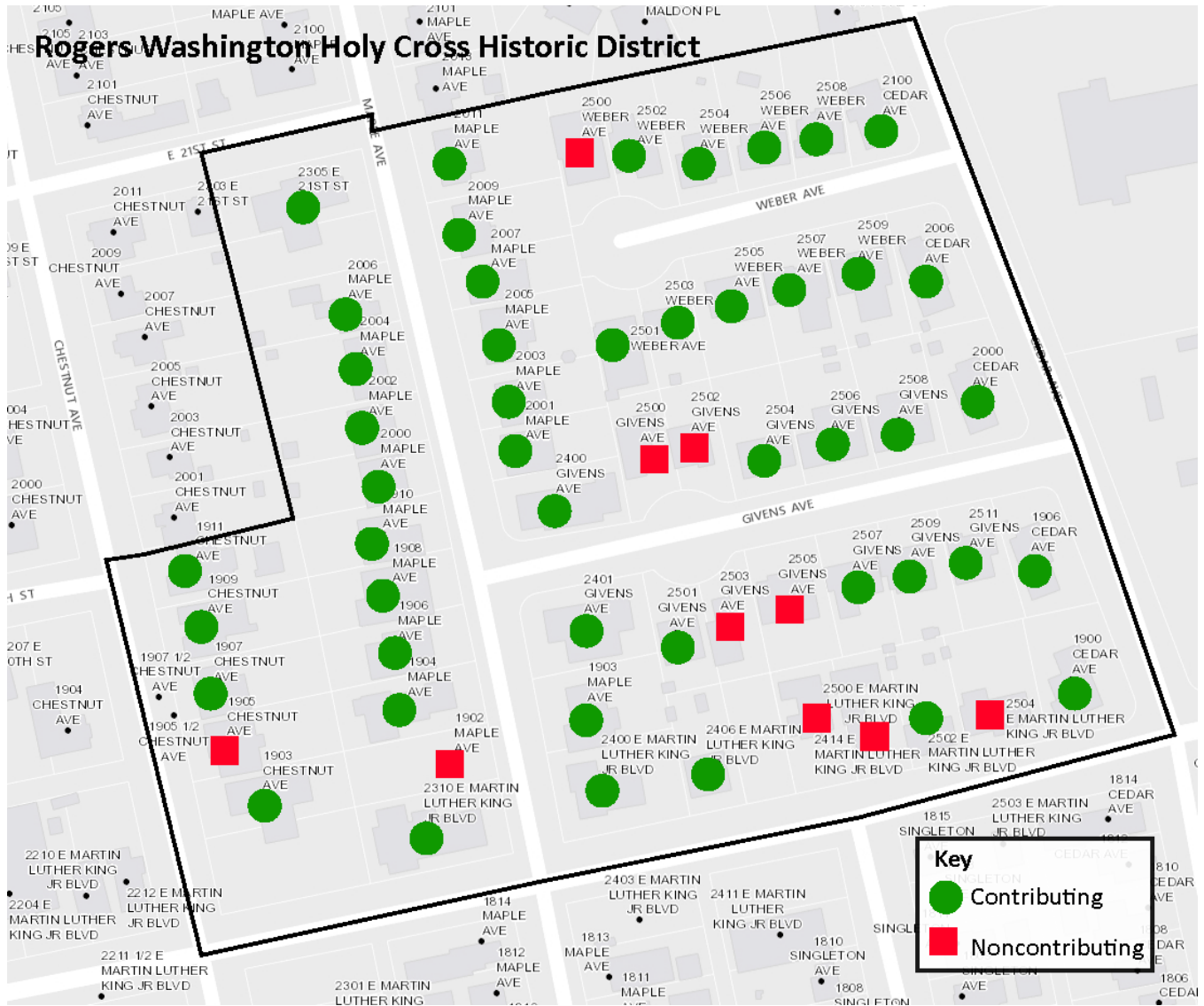
projects that affect the exterior of the building and its site; interior remodeling projects do not require review and approval.

***Goals of the preservation plan***

- Preserve the historic fabric of the Rogers Washington Holy Cross Historic District.
- Prevent the demolition of contributing buildings in the neighborhood.
- Encourage the rehabilitation, maintenance, and retention of historic structures.
- Ensure that alterations to existing buildings are compatible with the historic character of the structure and the district.
- Assist property owners and designers in developing plans for historic properties and encourage the compatibility of new structures with the existing historic fabric of the district.
- Encourage sustainable design and building practices in the neighborhood.
- Ensure that new construction in the district meets the design standards.

This document is a tool for the following parties:

- Property owners, tenants, contractors, design professionals, realtors or anyone else planning a change to the exterior or site of a building or new construction within the district.
- Historic Preservation Office staff and the Historic Landmark Commission, in their evaluation of whether to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for any project covered by these Standards.



Map showing the Rogers Washington Holy Cross Historic District, with contributing resources shown in green and non-contributing resources shown in red.\* Map identifies IDs, subdivision names, and boundaries of proposed NR/local district.  
Source: HHM survey data with Google base map, 2016.

## Rogers Washington Holy Cross Historic District

### GEOGRAPHIC DESCRIPTION

**Geographical Description/Boundaries:** East side of Chestnut Ave from E 20<sup>th</sup> Street to E Martin Luther King Jr Boulevard, both sides of Maple Avenue from E 21<sup>st</sup> Street to E Martin Luther King Jr Boulevard, both sides of Givens Avenue, both sides of Weber Avenue, north side of E Martin Luther King Jr Boulevard between Chestnut and Cedar

**Acreage:** 12.665 acres

**Topography:** Sloping gradually toward Boggy Creek to the southeast

**Natural Features:** N/A

**Subdivisions Included:** Sunrise Addition, Holy Cross Heights, Holy Cross Heights Re-subdivision, Washington Subdivision, various re-subdivisions (see map)

### PROPERTIES WITHIN THE DISTRICT

**Total Properties:** 57

**Contributing/Noncontributing:** 82% contributing (47 resources), 18% noncontributing (10 resources)

### OVERALL DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

**Dates of subdivisions:** 1932 (Sunrise Addition), 1956 (Holy Cross Heights), 1958 (Holy Cross Heights Re-subdivision), 1959 (Washington Subdivision)

**Circulation Patterns:** Combination of grid and cul de sac patterns

**Open Spaces:** No public open spaces within district boundaries, but open front yards and typically fenced back yards

### PRINCIPAL ARCHITECTURAL STYLES AND PERIODS OF CONSTRUCTIONS

**Period(s) of Construction:** Earliest constructed 1952. Construction period ended 1972.

**Property Types (Use):** 3% vacant, 95% residential

**Property Subtypes (Form):** Ranch

**Common Styles:** Ranch, Minimal Traditional, Split Level and Contemporary

### OVERALL DISTRICT INTEGRITY

**Common Alterations:** Doors replaced, windows replaced, exterior wall materials replaced

**Non-historic-age Infill:** A few new houses were constructed in 2015-2016 on Givens Avenue and E Martin Luther King Jr Boulevard

### HISTORIC ASSOCIATIONS

**Themes within the Context of East Austin:**

Post-World War II Development Patterns (Section 7.1.2), Desegregation, Private Sector (Section 7.4.3). The Holy Cross Heights Subdivision has a significant association with the introduction of the postwar curvilinear suburb neighborhood typology into East Austin, and because of the typically modest Ranch stylistic influences displayed by the collection of houses.

**Significant Historic Events:** Unknown

**Social, Racial, or Ethnic:** African American

**Known Architects and/or Builders:** Nash Phillips, John S. Chase

### PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE

**Period of Significance:** 1953-1970

[illegible]

6

THE STATE OF TEXAS )  
COUNTY OF TRAVIS )  
Know all Men By These Presents,  
that we, J. M. Crockett, Travis C. Green, & T. L. Mannings of  
the County of Travis, State of Texas, for and in full satisfaction  
of their certain debts of record in Book 149 of the Public  
Records of the County of Travis, State of Texas, conveyed  
to us by deeds of record in Volume 713 pages 341-353 and Volume 1205  
page 324 of the Deed Records of Travis County, Texas, do hereby adopt  
this map or plat as our substitution to be known as HOLY CROSS  
SUBDIVISION, and do hereby dedicate to the public all rights thereon  
except that of any future date land, Givens Avenue and Weber Avenue  
as extended westerly over adjacent property then Givens Ave. and  
Weber Ave. shall be considered to have a width of fifty  
feet each, and the said Weber Avenue as shown on this map, not required for a  
public thoroughfare, shall remain as shown on this map, not required for a  
public thoroughfare, and shall remain the property of the  
adjacent lot owners.

WITNESSED BY, have hereunto set our hand  
this 22<sup>nd</sup> day of October A.D. 1936.

THE STATE OF TEXAS )  
COUNTY OF TRAVIS )  
Know all Men By These Presents,  
that we, J. M. Crockett, Travis C. Green, & T. L. Mannings of  
the County of Travis, State of Texas, for and in full satisfaction  
of their certain debts of record in the Public Land Office,  
Government Outlets in the City of Austin, Travis County, Texas,  
to us by deeds of record in Volume 713 pages 341-353 and Volume 1205  
page 324 of the Deed Records of Travis County, Texas, do hereby adopt  
this map or plat as our substitution to be known as HOLY CROSS  
SUBDIVISION, and do hereby dedicate to the public all rights thereon  
except that of any future date land. Given under our hands and  
seals of office, and in presence of our witnesses, at Austin, Texas, this  
22<sup>nd</sup> day of October, 1956, and estimated westerly over adjacent property then Given Ave. and  
Weber Ave. shall be considered to have a width of fifty  
feet. The said Weber Avenue as shown on this map, not required for a  
public use, shall remain in the hands of the owners of the  
adjacent lots over.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, we, have hereunto set our hand  
this 22<sup>nd</sup> day of October, A.D. 1956.

Before me, the undersigned authority, on this day personally appeared J. M. Gregg, known to me to be the person whose name is subscribed to the foregoing instrument and acknowledged to me that he was executing the same for the purposes and consideration therein expressed.

THE STATE OF TEXAS  
COUNTY OF TRAVIS) Before me, the undersigned authority, on this day  
personally appeared Travis C. Cowan, a T.L. Homestead, known to me to be the  
holder of those rights now submitted to the foregoing instrument and acknowledged to me that he executed the same for the purposes and  
consideration therein expressed.

42 Day of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ A.D. 1956.

(SEAL)  
\_\_\_\_\_ My HAND AND SEAL OF OFFICE this the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ A.D. 1956.

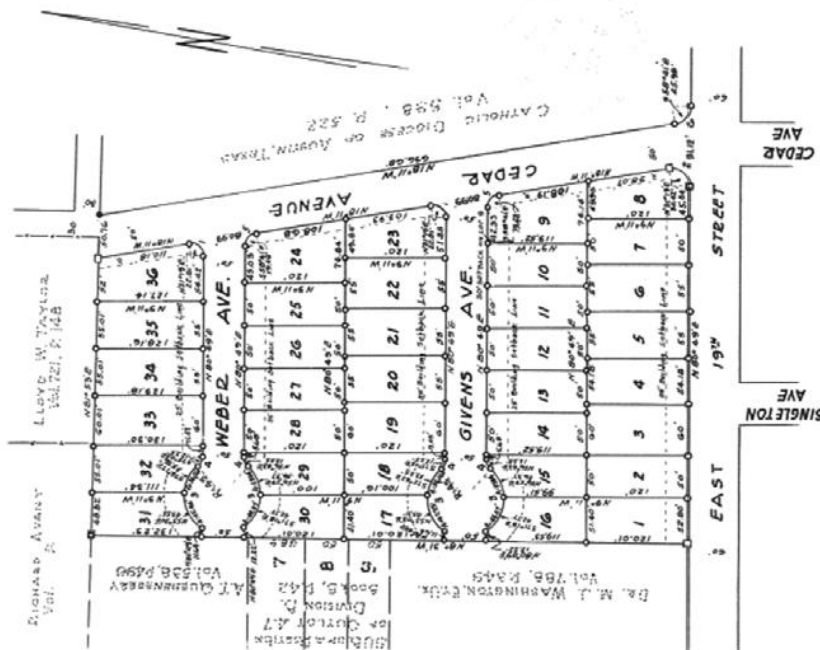
APPROVED FOR ACCEPTANCE:

Date: Nov. 13, 1956

ACCEPTED AND AUTHORIZED FOR RECORD BY THE  
CITY PLAN COMMISSION OF AUSTIN, TEXAS. THIS  
THE 13th DAY OF November, A.D. 1956.

W. H. Fuchs

FILED FOR RECORD



THE STATE OF TEXAS } I, Miss Emilee Lumbus, Clerk of the County  
COUNTY OF TRAVIS } Court, within and for the County and State aforesaid, do hereby  
certify that the within and foregoing Instrument was filed  
for record with this Certificate of Authentication on the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of December  
1956 at 1:30 p.m. and that I have received on the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of  
December 1956 at 1:30 p.m. the sum of \$10.00 in full of the  
fees due said County Court. Book 37, Page 377.

Witness My Hand and Seal of the County  
Court of said County, the date last written above.

(SEAL)

Miss Emilee Lumbus, Clerk  
County Court, Travis County, Texas.

**EASEMENTS:** The west five (5) feet of Lots 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 and the east two (2) feet of Lots 1, 16, 17, 19, 20; and the north thirty (30) feet of the west five (5) feet of Lots 13, 18, 19, 20; the north thirty (30) feet of the east two (2) feet of Lots 1, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20; the south thirty (30) feet of the west five (5) feet of Lots 1, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20; the south thirty (30) feet of the east two (2) feet of Lots 1, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20; the east two-foot (2') feet of Lots 18, 19, 20; the east two-foot (2') feet of Lots 1, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 are reserved for Public Utilities and are all reserved for Public Utilities also; the west ten (10) feet of Lots 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20; the west ten (10) feet of Lots 1, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20; the west seven (7) feet of Lots 15, 19, 20, 21; and the east seven-foot (7') feet of Lots 15, 19, 20 are reserved for drainage and Public Utilities and all along the rear of all lots.

In addition to the easements specifically granted by this subdivision plat, as a natural warranted easement is granted by the laws of the State of Michigan, all fully electric and telephone wires on the rear portion of all lots of this subdivision are to remain in place and no new service is now necessary to cross, in order to service the improvements on any one lot or lots of this subdivision. It is to be understood that the easements hereby granted are in addition to the easements already appearing on the lots of this subdivision.

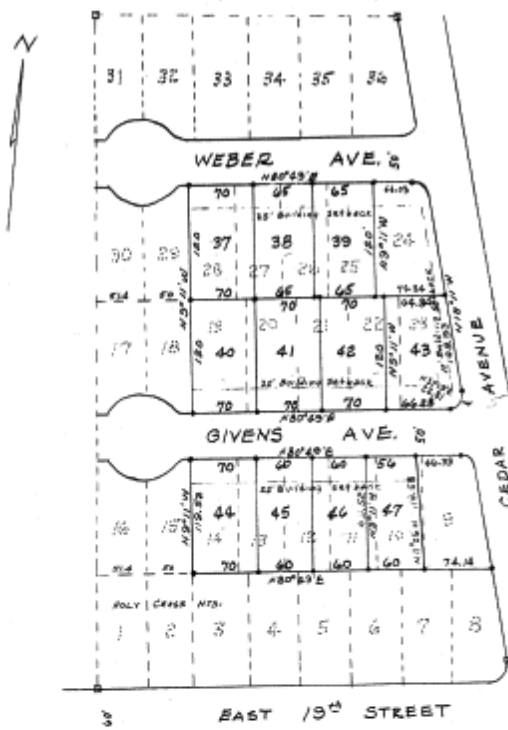
**LEGEND** (See page 13 of said plat.)

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**LEGEND**  
 o = I.R. Set  
 \* = I.O. Set

SCALE: 1"=100'

# HOLY CROSS HEIGHTS RESUBDIVISION



APPROVED FOR ACCEPTANCE:

Date: Jan. 21, 1958

V. L. Mike Mahoney,  
Director of Planning

ACCEPTED AND AUTHORIZED FOR RECORD BY THE  
PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN  
TEXAS, this 21st day of Jan. A.D. 1958

David B. Banow  
Chairman

Mr. Helen Mitchell  
Secretary

4'-28"  
7'-17.56'  
R = 5  
LC = 22.51'  
A = 28.92°

EASEMENTS: 5 ft along the rear of all  
lots for public utilities; ~~EXCEPT~~  
the west 7.5 ft of Lots 41 & 42 and  
the west 10 ft of Lot 44 for drainage  
and public utilities, and an aerial over-  
hang easement for electric and telephone  
wires only on the rear portion of all  
lots in this subdivision.

SCALE: 1" = 100'  
• = L.S.  
□ = C.M.



STATE OF TEXAS:  
COUNTY OF TRAVIS: Know All Men By These Presents:

That we, J. W. Gregg, Travis C. Cooke, & T. L. Hammons of Austin, Texas, sole owners of the tract of land shown hereon out of those certain tracts of land in Outlots 47 & 48, Division B of the Government Outlots in the City of Austin, Travis County, Texas, conveyed to us by deeds of record in Vol. 1703, pages 351-353 and Vol. 1703, page 354, Travis County Deed Records, do hereby adopt this plat as our resubdivision to be known as HOLY CROSS HEIGHTS RESUBDIVISION and we do hereby dedicate to the public all streets and easements shown hereon as far as our interests may appear.

WITNESS our hands this 15th day of JAN. A.D. 1958

J. W. Gregg  
J. W. Gregg

Travis C. Cooke  
Travis C. Cooke

T. L. Hammons  
T. L. Hammons

STATE OF TEXAS:  
COUNTY OF TRAVIS:

Before me, the undersigned authority, on this day personally appeared J. W. Gregg, Travis C. Cooke, & T. L. Hammons, known to me to be the persons whose names are subscribed to the foregoing instrument and acknowledged to me that they executed the same for the purposes and consideration therein expressed.

GIVEN under my hand and seal of office this 15th day of JAN. A.D. 1958.

(SEAL)

Eugene Plant  
Notary Public, Travis County, Texas



STATE OF TEXAS:  
COUNTY OF TRAVIS:

I, Miss Emilie Lisberg, Clerk of the County Court within and for the County and State aforesaid do hereby certify that the within and foregoing instrument of writing with its Certificate of Authentication was filed for record in my office on the 23 day of Jan. A.D. 1958 at 9:45 o'clock A.M. and duly recorded on the 23 day of Jan. A.D. 1958 at 9:45 o'clock A.M. in the Plat Records of said County in Book 4 Page 83.

WITNESS My Hand and Seal of the County Court of said County, the date last written above.

(SEAL)

Miss Emilie Lisberg  
Clerk County Court, Travis County, Texas  
By: Deputy.



RESUBDIVIDED in accordance with the  
subdivision ordinance of the City  
of Austin, Texas

By: James J. Watson  
Registered Surveyor  
Austin - Texas  
(SEAL)



C8s-58-11



**LEGEND**

1. 20' 198' T. 30' 00'  
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 14. 20' 00' T. 30' 00'  
 15. 20' 00' T. 30' 00'  
 16. 20' 00' T. 30' 00'

**APPROVED FOR ACCEPTANCE:**  
 Date: 12 May 1959, *May 12, 1959*  
 Hays M. Osborne, Director of Planning

**ACCEPTED AND AUTHORIZED FOR RECORD**  
 By the Planning Commission of the City of Austin, Texas  
 on the 12th day of May AD 1959.  
*Frank A. Brown*  
 Chairman

**STATE OF TEXAS:**  
**COUNTY OF TRAVIS:**  
 Know all Men By These Presents:  
 That I, Mrs. M. J. Washington, a widow, owner of that certain tract of land out of Sublot A, Division B of the Govt. Outlets adjoining the Original City of Austin, Travis County, Texas, according to a map or plat of said Govt. Outlets on file in the General Land Office of the State of Texas, conveyed to M. J. Washington by deed of record in Vol. 115 of pg. 349 Deed Records of Travis County, Texas, do hereby subdivide said tract of land into 16 lots in accordance with the attached plat, said subdivision to be known as WASHINGTON SUBDIVISION, and I do hereby dedicate to the public use the streets and easements shown hereon.

WITNESS MY HAND, this 12th day of May AD 1959

*Mrs. M. J. Washington*  
 Mrs. M. J. Washington

**STATE OF TEXAS:**  
**COUNTY OF TRAVIS:**  
 Before me, the undersigned authority on this day personally appeared Mrs. M. J. Washington, a widow, known to me to be the person whose name is subscribed to the foregoing instrument, and acknowledged to me that she executed the same for the purposes and considerations therein expressed.

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND AND SEAL of office, this 12th day of May AD 1959

*Richard F. Bush, Jr.*  
 Notary Public in and for Travis Co. Texas

**STATE OF TEXAS:**  
**COUNTY OF TRAVIS:**  
 I, Miss Emily Limberg, Clerk of the County Court within and for the State and County aforesaid do hereby certify that the foregoing instrument of writing with its certificate of authentication was filed for record in my office on the 11th day of May AD 1959 at 3:14 o'clock P. M. and duly recorded on the 11th day of May AD 1959 at 3:14 o'clock P. M. in the Plat Records of said County in Book 9 of pg. 121.

WITNESS MY HAND AND SEAL of this Court of said County, the date last written above.

*Miss Emily Limberg, Clerk of Ct. Travis Co. Texas*

By: *E. Limberg*

In addition to the easements shown on this plat, the near five (5) feet of all lots is dedicated as an easement for public utilities.

This is to certify that I have complied with Sec. 11 of the Subdivision Ordinance of the City of Austin.

**SURVEYED BY:** *Richard F. Bush, Jr.*  
*Charles F. Bush, Jr., Reg. Pub. Sur.*  
 Date: 9-27-59  
 FE 108.3.13

CE-59-10

CE-59-10

**WASHINGTON SUBDIVISION**

Plat, Washington Subdivision, 1959. Source: Travis County Clerk, Austin, Texas, vol. 9, pg. 121.

## Rogers Washington Holy Cross Property Inventory

The following inventory lists all individual resources within the Rogers Washington Holy Cross Historic District.

Note that the owner name is subject to change.

TCAD ID	Address		Construction Date	Style	Contributing/ Noncontributing	Legal Description
0212101503	2305	E 21 ST	1956	Ranch	C	LOT 4-5 BLK 1 OLT 47 DIV B SUNRISE ADDN
0212101408	1900	CEDAR AVE	1957	Ranch	C	LOT 8 * & E 25FT LOT 7 HOLY CROSS HEIGHTS
0212101407	1906	CEDAR AVE	1957	Ranch	C	LOT 9 *NE TRI OF LOT 10 HOLY CROSS HEIGHTS
0212101307	2000	CEDAR AVE	1958	Ranch	C	LOT 43 HOLY CROSS HEIGHTS RESUB
0212101306	2006	CEDAR AVE	1957	Ranch	C	LOT 24 HOLY CROSS HEIGHTS
0212101225	2100	CEDAR AVE	1960	Ranch	C	LOT 3 HOLY CROSS HEIGHTS RESUB 2
0212101521	1903	CHESTNUT AVE	1968	Ranch	C	LOT 5&6 WASHINGTON SUBD
0212101522	1905	CHESTNUT AVE	1972	Ranch	NC	LOT 4 WASHINGTON SUBD
0212101523	1907	CHESTNUT AVE	1964	Ranch	C	LOT 3 WASHINGTO SUBD
0212101524	1909	CHESTNUT AVE	1961	Ranch	C	LOT 2 WASHINGTON SUBD
0212101525	1911	CHESTNUT AVE	1962	Ranch	C	LOT 1 WASHINGTON SUBD
0212101316	2400	GIVENS AVE	1959	Ranch	C	LOT 13 WASHINGTO SUBD
0212101417	2401	GIVENS AVE	1959	Ranch	C	LOT 14 WASHINGTON SUBD
0212101317	2500	GIVENS AVE	2016	No style	NC	LOT 17&18 HOLY CROSS HEIGHTS
0212101401	2501	GIVENS AVE	1958	Ranch	C	LOT 17&18 HOLY CROSS HEIGHTS
0212101311	2502	GIVENS AVE	2015	No style	NC	LOT 16 HOLY CROSS HEIGHTS
0212101402	2503	GIVENS AVE	1964	Ranch	NC	LOT 15 HOLY CROSS HEIGHTS
0212101310	2504	GIVENS AVE	1960	Ranch	C	LOT 40 HOLY CROS HEIGHTS RESUB
0212101801	2505	GIVENS AVE	2016	No style	NC	LOT 44 HOLY CROSS HEIGHTS RESUB
0212101309	2506	GIVENS AVE	1958	Ranch	C	LOT 41 HOLY CROSS HEIGHTS RESUB
0212101404	2507	GIVENS AVE	1958	Ranch	C	LOT 45 HOLY CROSS HEIGHTS RESUB
0212101308	2508	GIVENS AVE	1959	Ranch	C	LOT 42 HOLY CROS HEIGHTS RESUB
0212101405	2509	GIVENS AVE	1958	Ranch	C	LOT 46 HOLY CROSS HEIGHTS RESUB
0212101406	2511	GIVENS AVE	1959	Ranch	C	LOT 47 HOLY CROSS HEIGHTS RESUB
0212101518	1902	MAPLE AVE	n/a	n/a	NC	

TCAD ID	Address		Construction Date	Style	Contributing/ Noncontributing	Legal Description
0212101416	1903	MAPLE AVE	1963	Ranch	C	LOT 15 WASHINGTON SUBD
0212101517	1904	MAPLE AVE	1969	Ranch	C	LOT 9 WASHINGTON SUBD
0212101516	1906	MAPLE AVE	1963	Ranch	C	LOT 10 WASHINGTON SUBD
0212101515	1908	MAPLE AVE	1962	Ranch	C	LOT 11 WASHINGTON SUBD
0212101514	1910	MAPLE AVE	1964	Ranch	C	LOT 12 WASHINGTO SUBD
0212101507	2000	MAPLE AVE	1961	Ranch	C	LOT 6 OLT 47 *RESUB PT OLT 47 DIVISION B
0212101312	2001	MAPLE AVE	1960	Ranch	C	LOT 9 OLT 47 *RESUB PT OLT 47 DIVISION B
0212101506	2002	MAPLE AVE	1961	Minimal Traditional	C	LOT 5 OLT 47 *RESUB PT OLT 47 DIVISION B
0212101313	2003	MAPLE AVE	1960	Ranch	C	LOT 8 OLT 47 *RESUB PT OLT 47 DIVISION B
0212101505	2004	MAPLE AVE	1960	Ranch	C	LOT 4 OLT 47 *RESUB PT OLT 47 DIVISION B
0212101314	2005	MAPLE AVE	1960	Ranch	C	LOT 7 OLT 47 *RESUB PT OLT 47 DIVISION B
0212101504	2006	MAPLE AVE	1953	Minimal Traditional	C	LOT 6 BLK 1 OLT 47 DIV B SUNRISE ADDN
0212101233	2007	MAPLE AVE	1959	No style	C	LOT 3 OLT 47 DIV B WELTON CITY SUBD
0212101232	2009	MAPLE AVE	1961	Ranch	C	LOT 2A *RESUB LOT 1-2 OLT 47 DIV B WELTON CITY SUBD
0212101231	2011	MAPLE AVE	1959	Ranch	C	LOT 1A *RESUB LOT 1-2 OLT 47 DIV B WELTON CITY SUBD
0212101519	2310	E M L KING JR BLVD	1964	1960s Contemporary	C	LOT 7 WASHINGTON SUBD
0212101415	2400	E M L KING JR BLVD	1964	Ranch	C	LOT 16 WASHINGTON SUBD
0212101414	2406	E M L KING JR BLVD	1957	Ranch	C	LOT 1-2 HOLY CROSS HEIGHTS
0212102001	2414	E M L KING JR BLVD	2016	No style	NC	UNT A 2414 E MLK CONDOMINIUMS PLUS 50.0 % INT IN COM AREA
0212102101	2500	E M L KING JR BLVD	1960	Ranch	NC	LOT 3&4 HOLY CROSS HEIGHTS
0212101410	2502	E M L KING JR BLVD	1957	Ranch	C	LOT 5 HOLY CROSS HEIGHTS
0212101409	2504	E M L KING JR BLVD	1958	Ranch	NC	LOT 6 & W 25FT LOT 7 HOLY CROSS HEIGHTS
0212101230	2500	WEBER AVE	1956	Ranch	NC	LOT 31 HOLY CROSS HEIGHTS
0212101301	2501	WEBER AVE	1958	Minimal	C	LOT 30 HOLY CROSS HEIGHTS

TCAD ID	Address		Construction Date	Style	Contributing/ Noncontributing	Legal Description
				Traditional		
0212101229	2502	WEBER AVE	1961	Ranch	C	LOT 32 HOLY CROSS HEIGHTS
0212101302	2503	WEBER AVE	1959	Minimal Traditional	C	LOT 29 HOLY CROSS HEIGHTS
0212101228	2504	WEBER AVE	1959	Ranch	C	LOT 33 HOLY CROSS HEIGHTS
0212101303	2505	WEBER AVE	1959	Ranch	C	LOT 37 HOLY CROSS HEIGHTS RESUB
0212101227	2506	WEBER AVE	1957	Ranch	C	LOT 1 HOLY CROSS HEIGHTS RESUB 2
0212101304	2507	WEBER AVE	1958	Ranch	C	LOT 38 HOLY CROSS HEIGHTS RESUB
0212101226	2508	WEBER AVE	1958	Ranch	C	LOT 2 HOLY CROSS HEIGHTS RESUB 2
0212101305	2509	WEBER AVE	1959	Ranch	C	LOT 39 HOLY CROSS HEIGHTS RESUB

## Context and Narrative History

The initial sections of this context statement were excerpted from the East Austin Historic Resource Survey conducted in 2016 by Hardy-Heck-Moore, Inc. Additional information and research about the neighborhood and families who lived here follows.

### Postwar Suburbanization, 1946–1969

Infill development continued gradually in East Austin in the post-World War II era, as opposed to the rapid and large-scale suburbanization generally thought to characterize development in the United States during the period. For the most part, land within the East Austin survey area was platted, and development had begun prior to World War II. In predominantly white areas, the process of residential development in the United States typically required that developers file a plat with the local government that specified “their plans for improving the land with streets and utilities.” However, in East Austin, completion of a plat did not equate provision of city services, and many platted subdivisions were devoid of paved streets, water and sewer services, and electricity lines. The resulting inequities in municipal services resulted in slower, more sporadic development patterns that counter the narrative of planned suburban development typical in the United States in the post-World War II era.

To assert their rights to equitable public services in exchange for their tax contributions, East Austin communities built strong non-governmental institutions, ranging from churches to political organizations to business enterprises. In East Austin and in similar communities across the United States, the grassroots activism of the post-World War II era resulted in policy changes at the federal, state, and local level that laid the groundwork for correcting inequalities in municipal services, encouraging private-sector redevelopment efforts in the decades to come.

### Development Patterns

Within East Austin, residential construction boomed immediately after World War II with the shortage of housing as veterans returned and rural populations moved toward cities. During the 1950s and 60s, the pace of residential construction declined. Commercial construction remained somewhat steady, though, and institutional construction spiked in the early 1960s, in connection with the expansion of Huston-Tillotson College and the construction of Martin Junior High School. The survey area was platted prior to World War II, but not fully built out until after the war’s conclusion. The trend of “Merchant Builders,” who both subdivided land and constructed houses for sale, and often provided financing as well, did not reach East Austin until the 1960s. Instead, each property owner took responsibility for building a house on their own land. For example, the College Heights Subdivision east of Chicon Street and north of East 11th Street was built out gradually from about 1910 through 1957. House plans and styles varied according to the day’s popular tastes.

From 1946 through ca. 1960, new houses were generally small, and additions and outbuildings often were constructed over time to enlarge living space and work space. In the 1950s, a number of large, older homes were subdivided into apartments, consistent of the trend toward small, modest living spaces in East Austin... Beginning ca. 1960, some new subdivision plats incorporated cul-de-sacs, a layout feature reminiscent of many postwar curvilinear suburbs of the era, but used on a much smaller scale. Notable examples in East Austin are the Washington and Holy Cross Heights Subdivisions—roughly bound by Cedar Avenue, East 19th Street (MLK, Jr. Boulevard), Chestnut Avenue, and East 20th Street.

### Effects of Desegregation on the Private Sector

With the legal imperative to desegregate public facilities after 1954, infrastructure gradually improved in East Austin. This stimulated private developers to plat residential suburbs that followed the postwar curvilinear pattern begun elsewhere in Austin (and across the United States) immediately after World War II. Within the East Austin survey boundaries, Holy Cross Heights forms the most prominent example. The subdivision was platted in 1952, featuring a street layout with the cul-de-sac pattern so characteristic of postwar American suburbs. Houses within the subdivision were constructed between 1956 and 1964. Overall, houses in the historic district were constructed between 1953 and 1972, with a few houses constructed recently (2015-2016).

Other similar suburbs were constructed beyond the East Austin survey boundaries to the east and northeast at an increasing rate after 1963. As a result, many families migrated into the newer and larger houses in these subdivisions rather than continuing the trend of constructing additions and enlarging houses in East Austin. With the resulting depopulation, a number of large-scale apartment complexes were constructed in East Austin beginning about 1963 as well—primarily along Manor Road and East 19th Street (MLK Jr. Boulevard), which were well-paved to accommodate automobile traffic. With the improvements to city infrastructure, white residents began to move into these new apartment complexes, slowly reintegrating the residential mix of the neighborhood, although single-family housing would remain occupied primarily by African American and Mexican American families for decades to come.

*[Conclusion of East Austin Historic Resource Survey excerpts]*

### Additional Information and Research about Rogers Washington Holy Cross

Rogers Washington Holy Cross was one of the first neighborhoods developed by black professionals for black professionals. Therefore, the neighborhood's development pattern is strongly tied to its cultural significance as a professional, middle-class, suburban African American neighborhood. Neighborhood residents positively impacted the areas of science, architecture, local and national government, education, the U.S. Armed Forces, and more.

- Oscar Thompson (1907-1962), who lived in **1906 Maple Avenue**, was one of the first African Americans to graduate from the University of Texas in 1951 with a master's degree in zoology. Thompson served in the Pacific Theatre in WWII prior to enrolling at UT. He went on to lead research in sickle cell anemia after graduation. His wife, Irene, was the only African American certified school secretary in Austin at the time. She served as secretary and registrar for Anderson High School for over 25 years, and spent over 34 years with Austin Independent School District. (Anderson High was the first African American high school in Austin.) Mrs. Thompson was a long-time member of Ebenezer Baptist Church. She also worked on the election committees of many Democratic candidates and hosted campaign functions in her house, which was designed by John Chase.
- Robert and Ruth McAlister lived in **1903 Maple Avenue**. Ruth was the first African American female teacher to receive a Master's Degree in Special Education at the University of Texas. She went on to be supervisor of special education—the first African American to hold a supervisory position in the Austin Independent School District. Her husband, Robert, was promoted to business manager at D.D.&B. After retirement, the couple owned and operated a grocery store at the corner of Chicon and Tillotson Streets.
- Della Phillips, who lived at **2310 E. MLK Jr. Boulevard**, also lived in a John Chase-designed house. Mrs. Phillips was a prominent businesswoman and an owner of the Phillips Upshaw Funeral Home. Phillips allowed Chase to design the house however he wanted to, with one stipulation: it must include spaces for

entertaining. This house stands out from the bungalow and Ranch-style homes in the rest of the district. Mrs. Phillips often hosted parties and events that brought the community together.

The following residents were part of the public service sector and helped improve education for the community through their work.

- **Kirk family (1908 Maple Avenue)**

Lee Kirk, Sr. was the first African American postal worker and certified pilot in Austin.

Willie Mae “Ankie” Kirk (1921-2013) donated 50 years of her life to improving local public services. Her leadership and service made her a beloved elder in the community. Mrs. Kirk attended high school at Anderson High School and earned her B.S. degree in Social Science at Sam Huston College (now part of Huston-Tillotson University, a historically black university affiliated with the United Methodist Church, the United Church of Christ, and the United Negro College Fund). She began her career in 1947 as a certified public school teacher and taught elementary education until retirement in 1982. Mrs. Kirk continued her education at Prairie View College and the University of Texas. She was appointed to the first Human Rights Coalition by the Austin City Council in 1968. Austin Mayor Jeffery Friedman appointed Kirk to the Library Commission in 1971. She succeeded in saving the Carver Library from demolition during her 12-years tenure as Commissioner. The Oak Springs Branch Library was renamed in honor of Willie Mae Kirk. The Kirks had four children together, Sandra, Connie, Lee, and Ron.

Ambassador Ron Kirk, son of Willie Mae Kirk, served two terms as the first African American mayor of Dallas. He was also the first African American Secretary of State in Texas under Governor Ann Richards. As a United States Trade Representative, Kirk was a member of President Obama’s cabinet and served as a principal trade advisor, negotiator, and spokesperson on trade issues. He was named one of “The 50 Most Influential Minority Leaders in America” by the *National Law Journal* in 2008.

- **Calhoun family (2401 Givens Avenue)**

T. C. Calhoun, who lived at **2401 Givens Avenue**, was the principal of Kealing Junior High School for over 40 years. He continued to be a leader by serving as one of the presidents of the African American State Teachers’ Association in the 1950s. Calhoun also opened the Teachers’ Credit Union for African American teachers. His wife, Thelma, worked with him to maintain the Union.

Thelma Calhoun was a supervisor for African American Travis County schools and a reading specialist at Sims and Maplewood elementary schools. She also assisted Ada Simon in the publishing of the *Let’s Pretend* series of children’s books and wrote elementary-school curriculum based on the books. Both T.C. and Thelma Calhoun were long-time active members of Ebenezer Baptist Church and helped many successfully find jobs.

- Norman Scales, who lived at **2509 Weber Avenue**, was born in Austin on November 11, 1918. He grew up in East Austin, and graduated from Anderson High School and Tillotson College (now Huston-Tillotson University). In 1940, he enlisted in the U.S. Army and served in WWII as a member of the Tuskegee Airmen, a renowned group of African American pilots. He was promoted to second lieutenant and then to captain. He was the first black pilot from Austin who was commissioned as second lieutenant. His squadron disabled or destroyed 400 German planes and at least 1,000 ground and sea targets. Scales flew over 70 missions over enemy territory and survived a plane crash. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross at Bergstrom Air Force Base in Austin on February 21, 1945. Scales was also awarded a Certificate of Valor. In 1989, he was posthumously recognized with an Honors Award by the Texas Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History at the Capitol’s Senate Chamber.

- Ira Poole, who lived at **2400 E. MLK Jr. Boulevard.**, moved to Austin as a student in order to earn his teaching credentials at Huston-Tillotson College. Throughout the course of his teaching career, he educated generations of Austin's students over a period of decades in several different elementary schools. A patriot and history buff, Poole generated enthusiasm among his students as he helped them learn, decorating his classroom bulletin boards and inventing hands-on projects that promoted a more in-depth understanding of their curriculum.

In the early 1960s, Poole built a single-story brick ranch-style home in Rogers Washington Holy Cross. Located on a corner, the house is situated toward the rear of the lot, providing an expansive front yard that, over time, Poole decorated with three-dimensional and bas-relief sculptures that reinforced the lessons he was teaching in school. Indeed, some of them actually began as school projects.

- John Quill Taylor and Marcet King lived at **2400 Givens Avenue** from 1962 into the 1990s, according to City directories. During this time, John Quill Taylor King served as Dean, President, and finally Chancellor of Huston-Tillotson College (now University). He also served as Vice President of King-Tears Mortuary.

- Jackson and Marshall families (**2508 Givens Avenue**)

Mrs. Sophia Lavon Jackson was an older married student who graduated from Tillotson College in 1944 with a B.A. degree in Home Economics. She was the highest-ranking student in the class. She worked at Tillotson's Home Economics Department from September 1944 to May 1960, Manor ISD from 1960 to 1962, and Prairie View University's Home Economics Department from 1962 to 1967.

Mr. Marion Sandy Jackson was one of the first African American mail handlers at the U.S. Postal Service in Austin from 1945 to 1962. The Jacksons purchased their house at 2508 Givens Avenue in 1959 from the builder, Travis Cook.

Mrs. Lavon Marshall, professor at Huston-Tillotson University, was active in The Links, Inc., an international nonprofit women's organization committed to enriching, sustaining, and ensuring the culture and economic survival of African Americans and other persons of African ancestry.

- Lester and Joyce Mays lived at **2502 Weber Avenue**. Joyce was an educator in the Flatonia, Coleman, Georgetown and Austin school systems. Lester Mays was a teacher and coach at Flatonia and DeValle. He was the first AISD Supervisor Coordinator over the Vocational Adjustment Coordinators in the Special Education Department and the Assistant Supervisor of the Clifton Center in Austin. He was also Assistant Director of the Upward Bound Program at Huston-Tillotson University.

- Mims family (**2502 Weber Avenue**)

Carnegie Harvard Mims, Sr. moved his wife and four children from San Angelo to Austin. The move was quite significant because he left a position in San Angelo, Texas as the state's first Black principal of an integrated high school. Even though he and his wife were highly educated and even founded some schools in West Texas, he took a lower-ranking position at the Negro Middle School to get his foot in the door of employment. His ambition did bear fruit after all.

Carnegie H. Mims, Jr. became the first Ombudsman of the University of Texas at Austin, mentoring young minds and proffering solutions to their problems. Before he went into private practice, he was chosen as an attorney for the first Texas Constitutional Revision Commission.



Brenda Mims Malik, daughter of Carnegie H. Mims, Sr., became one of the first Black broadcast news anchors in Austin. She continued to serve her community as a frequent host for the annual United Negro College Fund Extravaganza.

- Jimmy Snell, who lived at **2506 Givens Avenue**, served as Austin's first black Mayor Pro Tem in 1975. His candidacy was heavily supported by East Austin and University neighborhood residents. During his tenure as a City Councilman, he pursued the implementation of equal employment opportunity (EEO) programs. He also served as Honorary Public Service Chairman for the Austin Association of Life Underwriters.
- Maxine C. Johnson and Garvin Johnson, who lived at **1900 Cedar Avenue**, were among the first of the original homeowners to purchase a newly built home in the new Holy Cross Heights subdivision. Their home sits at the corner and intersection of Cedar Avenue and East Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard. Maxine graduated from Tillotson College with a degree in English in 1952, the same year that Tillotson merged with Samuel Huston College. After purchasing their new home in 1957, Maxine initially taught high school English in Roswell, New Mexico. She and her husband, Gavin, commuted weekly from Austin to Roswell. Garvin immediately returned to Austin after each trip in order to run his successful businesses—a Ritter Service Station on East 11th Street (behind Ebenezer Baptist Church) and the lucrative Harlem Cab business. Garvin returned each weekend to Roswell to pick up Maxine, and together they drove home to Austin.

### *John Chase*

John Saunders Chase was the first licensed African American architect in Texas. Chase was born in Annapolis, Maryland, to a principal and teacher. After serving in the Army during World War II, he studied architecture at Hampton University, a historically black university in Virginia. He moved to Austin in 1949 to work at the Lott Lumber Company, a black-owned business. In 1950, two days after the Supreme Court ruled that the University of Texas must admit Heman Sweatt and other African Americans in graduate and professional programs, Chase enrolled at UT's School of Architecture. He was the first African American to do so, and only one of two black students at UT. Federal marshals shadowed Chase for safety after he received hate mail.

After Chase graduated, no firms in Austin were willing to hire him. He moved to Houston in 1952, yet faced the same issue. So he established his own firm, John S. Chase, Architect, and taught architectural drafting at Texas Southern University, a historically black public university. Soon after moving to Houston, Chase and his wife Drucie visited black churches and shared his master's thesis on churches and progressive architecture with their ministers. That strategy generated ample work, and Chase went on to design schools, houses, churches, and public buildings. Influenced by Frank Lloyd Wright, his work features bright, spacious rooms and a minimalist approach.

Chase led the way for other African Americans as the first black member of the Texas Society of Architects, the Houston Chapter of the A.I.A., the United States Commission on Fine Arts (appointed by President Jimmy Carter), and the first black president of the University of Texas Exes; he also co-founded the National Organization of Minority Architects. Chase also became a mover and shaker for African Americans and their allies in Houston's political scene. John Chase died in 2012 and is now recognized as one of the most important African American architects of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and a leading Mid-Century Modern designer.

In Rogers Washington Holy Cross, Chase designed the houses at 1906 Maple Avenue and 2310 E. MLK Jr. Boulevard. He is also the architect of David Chapel, a striking Mid-Century Modern church complex kitty-corner from the historic district.

### *Nash Phillips*

Nash Phillips was a well-known Austin builder who constructed more than 80,000 homes over his career—50,000 in the Austin area alone. Phillips was born in Ft. Bliss, Texas in 1920. He grew up in San Antonio, graduated from the University of Texas, and attended law school. During World War II he served in the Navy, maintaining aircraft.

In 1945, Phillips and Clyde Copus founded Nash Phillips Copus Company (Nash Phillips/Copus Builders Inc.), which worked across Central Texas and in Phoenix. In Austin, the company constructed one-quarter of all houses built between 1945 and 1986 and served as a realtor for other properties. “The key to growth... has been quality design and quality building,” enthused *The Austin American* in 1958. The company prioritized houses with “livability-plus features” like pantries and fireplaces, in planned developments that balanced access to central Austin with proximity to new schools and shopping centers. That year, the company built and sold more than \$7 million in real estate.

Nash Phillips Copus also nurtured a new generation of homebuilders who went on to found their own companies. The company received the Builder of the Year award from *Professional Builder Magazine* in 1984. In 1991, Phillips co-founded Wilshire Homes. He died in 2011.

Phillips helped pioneer a number of innovations in homebuilding. Some were physical, such as preassembling house frames inside warehouses and erecting them on-site. Others were less tangible but equally critical, such as working with “sister” mortgage and insurance companies to help drive ownership opportunities.

In Rogers Washington Holy Cross, Phillips constructed houses along Maple, Givens, and Werner avenues.

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## Examples of Homes in the Historic District



John Quill Taylor and Marcet King's house at 2400 Givens Avenue (built 1959). Photo by HHM, 2016.



2504 East 19th Street (now E. MLK, Jr. Boulevard), constructed in 1958 with Ranch-style influences. Photo by HHM, 2016.