

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION
JULY 27, 2020
DEMOLITION AND RELOCATION PERMITS
HDP-2020-0258
2501 SOL WILSON AVENUE

PROPOSAL

Demolish a ca. 1921 house.

ARCHITECTURE

One-story, rectangular-plan, front-gabled frame bungalow with a partial-width, front-gabled, independent porch on plain wood posts; side gablet halfway down the north elevation of the house; original fenestration appears to be 4:4 and in a single and double configuration, but many windows have been replaced with modern units.

RESEARCH

The house appears to have been built around 1921 for Sol I. and Mabel Wilson, who lived here until the late 1940s, when they moved to Los Angeles, California. Sol I. Wilson was born in Cedar Creek, Bastrop County, Texas in 1889 and worked at various automobile dealerships in downtown Austin during the course of his career. He married Mabel Love in Travis County in 1910, and lived on the eastern outskirts of Austin. This house, believed to have been built around 1921, and still featuring a 4:4 window in front that was more common at that time, was originally listed as being on an Austin rural route, then at 1167 Bedford Avenue (the house actually faces Bedford Avenue today), at 1167 Sol Wilson Avenue, and finally, with its current address of 2501 Sol Wilson Avenue. City directories show that Sol I. Wilson was employed as a chauffeur and as a porter at auto dealerships in Austin once he and Mabel gave up farming for paid occupations. Interestingly, the census reports show the couple's children as attending Anderson High School and Kealing Junior High School; it was unusual to have the name of the school noted in the census report, but one might speculate that the education of their children was important enough to Sol and Mabel Wilson to mention that to the census taker, who noted it in the report. However, very little other information is available about the life of Sol I. Wilson. There were no articles mentioning him in the Austin newspapers, no City Council minutes referencing why this street was named for him (which would have been a very unusual occurrence in segregated Austin), and he had no obituary in the Austin newspapers (although Mabel Wilson's 1964 passing was noted in the paper). It could be that he was the owner of the land across which this street traversed, but at this point, it is all speculation. Sol Wilson Avenue appears as a street name in the city directories of the early 1930s, although no houses are listed on the street. Sol and Mabel Wilson are listed on an Austin rural route at the same time, and the first time that they are listed with an urban address, it is 1167 Bedford Avenue (the adjacent street).

STAFF COMMENTS

The house is beyond the bounds of any City survey to date.

Staff has evaluated this house for designation as a historic landmark and has determined that the house may meet the criteria for landmark designation as set forth in City Code, but with further information required for a full evaluation:

- a. **Architecture.** The house is a typical vernacular bungalow with little architectural distinction and many modern replacement windows. However, it does maintain its integrity of form, materials and design to a great extent,

and even with the window replacements, could qualify under the architectural criterion.

- b. **Historical association.** The house was the home of Sol I. and Mabel Wilson from the early 1920s until the late 1940s. Sol I. Wilson was a porter for several automobile dealerships in downtown Austin. More research will be required to understand the significance of Sol and Mabel Wilson beyond what is currently available, and curious that a street is named for him. There may 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

Postpone the case to August 24, 2020 to further investigate and evaluate the significance of Sol I. and Mabel Wilson in the community. If the Commission does not postpone this item, then staff recommends the encouragement of rehabilitation and adaptive re-use, then relocation over demolition, but release of 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

NOTIFICATIONS

CASE#: HDP-2020-0258
LOCATION: 2501 SOL WILSON AVENUE



1" = 250'

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.

2501 Sol Wilson Avenue
ca. 1921



Detail of 4:4 window at the front of the house.

OCCUPANCY HISTORY 2501 Sol Wilson Avenue

City Directory Research, Austin History Center
By City Historic Preservation Office
July, 2020

- | | |
|---------|--|
| 1959 | Gussie M. Lewis, renter
No occupation listed |
| 1955 | Vacant |
| 1952 | J.H. and Malvin Murray, owners
U.S. Army
NOTE: Sol I. Wilson is not listed in the directory. |
| 1949 | Sol I. Wilson, owner
NOTE: Sol I Wilson is not listed in the alphabetical section of the directory. |
| 1947 | Sol I. and Mabel Wilson, owners
No occupation listed |
| 1944-45 | Sol I. and Mabel Wilson, owners
Salesman |
| 1942 | Sol I. and Mabel Wilson, owners
No occupation listed |
| 1941 | Ruben B. and Mary L. Lott, renters
No occupation listed
NOTE: Sol I. and Mabel Wilson are listed at 1167 Bedford Street, which appears to be the former address for this house. He had no occupation shown. Sol I. Wilson, Jr. is listed with them; he was a porter. |
| 1939 | The address is not listed in the directory.
NOTE: Sol I. and Mabel Wilson are listed at 1167 Bedford Street, which appears to be the former address for this house. He had no occupation shown. |
| 1937 | Sol Wilson, owner
No occupation listed
NOTE: The house is listed as being on the south side of Sol Wilson Avenue, 1 house east of Wayne Road. The house is the only one on the south side of Sol Wilson Avenue. |
| 1935 | Unknown
NOTE: Saul I. and Mabel Wilson are listed on a rural route in Austin. He was the solicitor for the Peoples' Burial Association.
NOTE: Sol Wilson Avenue is listed in the street listings in the directory, but no houses are listed on the street. |
| 1932-33 | Neither Sol nor Saul Wilson is listed in the directory. Sol Wilson Avenue is listed in the street listings in the directory, but no houses are listed on the street. |

- 1930-31 Saul and Mable Wilson are listed on an Austin rural route. He was a porter at Goad Motor Company.
NOTE: Sol Wilson Avenue is not listed as a street in the directory.
- 1929 Saul and Mable Wilson (colored) are listed without an address in the directory. He was a porter at Fromme Motor Company.
NOTE: Sol Wilson Avenue is not listed as a street in the directory.
- 1927 Sol and Mable Wilson are not listed in the directory.
- 1924 Saul I. and Mable Wilson (colored) are listed on an Austin rural route. He was a porter at Fromme Motor Company.
- 1922 Saul I. and Mabel Wilson (colored) are listed on an Austin rural route. He was a porter at Fromme Motor Company.
- 1920 Saul I and Mabel Wilson are not listed in the directory.
- 1918 Saul I. and Mabel Wilson are listed at 1203 Cedar Avenue. He was a chauffeur for Alfred Smith, who lived at 912 Trinity Street. Alfred Smith was a proprietor of Smith & Wilcox, men's and boys' clothing, hats, furnishings, and shoes, 616 Congress Avenue.
- 1916 Saul I. Wilson is listed at 1203 Cedar Avenue. He was a porter at Thomson Motor Car Company.
- 1914 Solomon Wilson (colored) is listed at 1203 Cedar Avenue. He was a porter.
- 1912-13 Saul Wilson (colored) is listed at 1806 E. 11th Street. He was a porter at Scarbrough & Hicks, department store.
- 1910-11 Saul Wilson is not listed in the directory.
- 1909-10 Saul Wilson is not listed in the directory.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES:

Sol I. and Mabel Wilson (ca. 1941 – ca. 1949)

The 1910 U.S. Census shows Sol Wilson as a 20-year old yard man living at 2008 Whitis Avenue, but working as a "servant" at 2007 Whitis Avenue. The family living at 2008 Whitis Avenue, where Wilson lived on the premises, was that of A.F. Bishop, a Presbyterian minister, and his wife, Cora, an Ohio-born music teacher. The family at 2007 Whitis Avenue, where Sol Wilson was employed, was home to physician Homer Hill, and his wife, Elba. Sol Wilson had been born in Texas, and was single.

Saul [sic] Wilson married Mabel Love in Travis County on November 23, 1910.

His 1917 World War I draft registration card shows that Sol Iola Wilson was living at 1203 Cedar Avenue in Austin. He was born in Bastrop County, Texas in 1889. He worked as a chauffeur for Alfred Smith at 10th and Trinity Streets. He had a wife and 4 children. He was listed as "Negro" and had a medium build and was of medium height, with black hair and dark brown eyes.

Sol I. and Mabel Wilson appear in the 1920 U.S. Census for Justice Precinct 3 of Travis County, Texas, where they owned their farm. Sol I. Wilson was 30, had been born in Texas, and was a

farmer. Mabel Wilson was 27, had been born in Texas, and had no occupation listed. They had 6 children: Nita, 9; Lola, 8; Sammie Lee, 7; son Lutcher, 4; Marguerite, 2; and Mabel L., 1. All of the children were born in Texas.

The 1930 U.S. Census shows Saul [sic] and Mabel Wilson as the owners of a home worth \$800 on the outskirts of Austin. Saul Wilson was 40, had been born in Texas, and was a porter at the Hupmobile Company, a car agency. Mabel Wilson was 38, had been born in Texas, and had no occupation listed. They had 7 children: Samuel L., 17, a student at Anderson High School; Lutcher S., 15, a student at Kealing Junior High School; Margaret, 13, a student at Kealing Junior High School; Mabel, 11, a student at a ward school; Saul [sic], Jr., 10, a student at a ward school; Bessie E., 5; and Ben, 1.

The 1940 U.S. Census shows Sol and Mabel Wilson as the owners of the house at 1167 Sol Wilson Avenue in Austin; the house was worth \$1,050. Sol Wilson was 50, had been born in Texas, and was a salesman for an automobile company. Mabel Wilson was 47, had been born in Texas, and had no occupation listed. They had 10 children listed with them, as well as 3 grandchildren. Their children were Sammy Lee Ercott, 26, a matron at the Texas School for the Deaf and Dumb (presumably the segregated institution for African-American students); Lutcher, 24, a janitor in the public schools, Margaret, 22, a maid for a private family; Katherine, 22; Sol, Jr., 20; Bessy Elizabeth, 14; Ben, 11; Yvonne, 10; Charles, 7; and Maude Luther, 5. All of the children were born in Texas. The grand-children were Dell Hunt, 5; Julia Dean, 5; and Rose Van Overton, 3. There is no clear indication of which of Sol and Mabel's children was the parent of the grandchildren listed in the census report.

His 1942 World War II draft registration card shows that Saul Lola Wilson was living at this address. He was born in Cedar Creek, Bastrop County, Texas on September 15, 1889 and worked for Southern Distributing Company of Lexington, Kentucky. He had a telephone. He was 5'-10" tall, weighed 185 pounds, and wore glasses. He signed his card as "Saul" Wilson.

Sol Lola Wilson was listed as a Democrat in the voter registration rolls of Los Angeles, California in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Mabel Wilson died in Los Angeles in 1964.

MRS. SAUL I. WILSON
 Mrs. Saul I. (Mable) Wilson
 formerly of Austin, died Monday
 in Los Angeles, Calif. Funeral
 will be at 10 a.m. Saturday at
 Second Baptist Church in Los
 Angeles under direction of An-
 geles Funeral Home.
 Survivors include a niece,
 Mrs. Clara Bell Biles, Austin.

Obituary of Mabel Wilson
 Austin American-Statesman, November 28, 1964



Sol I. Wilson



Mable Love Wilson

WATER SERVICE PERMIT

Austin, Texas

No. Sec. 257

Received of E. J. Hofheinz De

Address 2501 Sol Wilson

Amount Two and 50/100 - - - -

Plumber Griggs Size of

CHANGED TO 6" MAIN AND RENEWED SERVICE WITH 3/4" COPPER ON 700-5/3

Date of Connection 9-27-41

Size of Tap Made 3/4"

Size Service Made 3/4"

Size Main Tapped 6" 1/2"

From Front Prop. Line to Curb Cock 8'

From S. Prop. Line to Curb Cock 20'

Location of Meter C.U.A.B.

Type of Box LOCK

Depth of Main in St. C.U.A.B. 26"

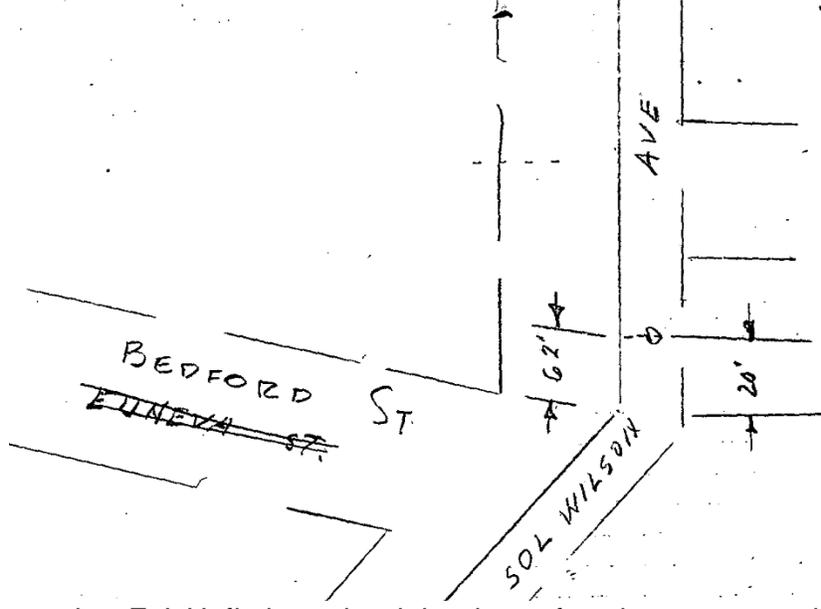
Depth of Service Line 12"

From Curb Cock to Tap on Main OVERHEAD

Checked by Engr. Dept. _____

No. Fittings	Size
1	Curb Cock 3/4"
	Elbow
	St. Elbow
1	Bushing 3/4" x 1/2"
1	Reducer 3/4" x 1/2"
3	Pipe 3/4" Dia.
1	Lead-Comp. 3/4" Dia.
1	Nipples 3/4" x 1/2"
	Plug

INDEXED



Water service permit to E.J. Hofheinz, a local developer, for what appears to be this address (1941)

OWNER	Charles Hill	ADDRESS	2501 So1 Wilson
PLAT	257	LOT	23
			BLK 2
SUBDIVISION	S. L. Wilson		
OCCUPANCY	Residence		
BLD PERMIT #	143311	DATE	6-18-74
		OWNERS ESTIMATE	2800.00
CONTRACTOR	Ace Constr.		NO. OF FIXTURES
WATER TAP REC #		SEWER TAP REC #	

Remodel Exist. Res.

Building permit to Charles Hill to remodel the house (1974)