

**HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION
OCTOBER 26, 2020
DEMOLITION AND RELOCATION PERMITS
HDP-2020-0352
2507 PARK VIEW DRIVE**

PROPOSAL

Demolish a ca. 1954 house in Austin's Air-Conditioned Village.

ARCHITECTURE

The house is one-story, designed in the Ranch style with a combination of board-and-batten, and a horizontally-laid random narrow stone course veneer wainscoting across the front of the house; a side-gabled roof with deep eaves shades the structure. Fenestration consists of metal-framed horizontally-sliding window to the right of the single-leaf glazed front door (a modern replacement) and then a series of awning-style wood-frame windows above the stone wainscoting. The house has an attached garage at the far right end of the facade, once an open double carport.

RESEARCH

This house is the Carrier house, designed by the Carrier Corporation in conjunction with local architect H.D. Powers, and built by local contractor Andrew S. Patton. H.D. Powers had worked for the Federal Housing Administration prior to this job, and designed five houses in the Air-Conditioned Village for various air conditioning manufacturers. All of his houses had masonry veneer exteriors and were built on a slab. Powers and Patton collaborated on a house featured in the 1953 Parade of Homes.

Austin's Air-Conditioned Village was the largest of one of several experiments throughout the country in the early 1950s to test the feasibility of designing and building homes with central air conditioning for the middle class. Up until that time, central air conditioning was something that was only offered in high-end homes, and the need for more homes for returning servicemen spurred an increase in developing technology for new middle-class homeowners. The Air-Conditioned Village in Austin was specifically envisioned as a neighborhood of relatively modest, if technologically-advanced houses, all with a price tag affordable to many middle-class buyers and as a test case for the cost effectiveness for modest homes in a warm and humid climate.

Typical of the early purchasers of the houses in the Air-Conditioned Village, the house at 2507 Park View Drive was initially occupied by Cyrus and Dorothy Brown, who only lived here for a short period of time. His occupation was not listed in the Austin city directory, but it appears that Cyrus Brown was a lumberman from Shallowater, near Lubbock. He does not appear in city directories either before or after the edition of 1954, and he died in Vernon, Texas in 1981. His death certificate noted that he was a retired lumberman.

After the short tenancy of Cyrus and Dorothy Brown, the house was owned and occupied by Rodney and Geneva Larson, who lived here until around 1959. Rodney Larson was a bridge contractor, who later developed a shopping center in Oak Hill.

STAFF COMMENTS

The house is beyond the scope of any City survey to date, but would be contributing to a potential historic district for Austin's Air-Conditioned Village.

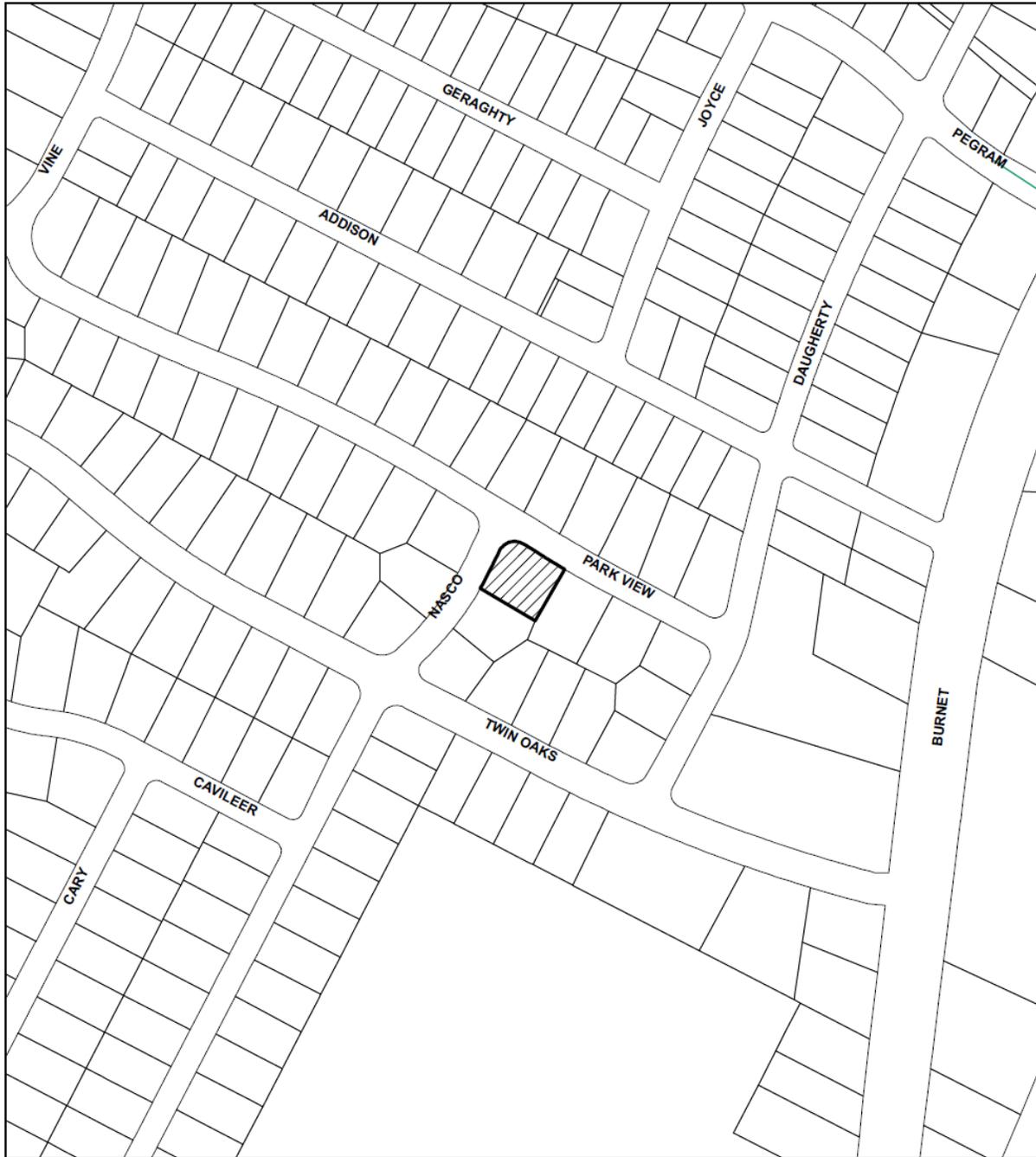
Staff has evaluated this house for designation as a historic landmark and has determined that the house may meet the criteria for landmark designation as set forth in City Code:

- a. **Architecture.** The house is an excellent example of a modest Ranch style house with few alterations over the years. The Ranch style is typified by a long, low presence, side-gabled, with deep eaves, all of which are present on this house. The design of this house reflects not only a very popular style at the time of its construction, but an adaptation for central air conditioning at a price point attractive to middle class homebuyers. The house may qualify for its architectural significance.
- b. **Historical association.** The house was designed by local architect H.D. Powers in conjunction with the Carrier Corporation, a pioneer in air conditioning systems for commercial and residential uses. There may also be significance in the associations with Rodney and Geneva Larson, as a bridge contractor and the developer of a shopping plaza in Oak Hill on the southwest side of the city.
- 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.** As one of the more intact houses in the Air-Conditioned Village, this house represents a unique chapter in Austin's history, as the focus of a nationwide study that paved the way for the further development of residential air conditioning for every class of building, not just the expensive houses. The house therefore may qualify for designation under the community value criterion as well.
- 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

Strongly encourage the applicant to consider retention of the house, as it is a very intact example of a test house in Austin's Air-Conditioned Village, a unique neighborhood in the city, and every consideration towards preservation should be considered before release of an application for demolition. The house may meet the criteria for architectural significance, historical associations, and community value.

LOCATION MAP



-  SUBJECT TRACT
-  PENDING CASE
-  ZONING BOUNDARY

1" = 236'

NOTIFICATIONS

CASE#: HDP-2020-0354
LOCATION: 2507 Park View Drive

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.



Communication from the applicant:

Greetings,

I Appreciate the opportunity to speak on behalf of my family ,neighbors and friends who live in the air-conditioned village houses. In my conversations with many of these homeowners the majority of them have expressed they are against historic designation or zoning though these houses have some meaning in context to their original intent.

The air-conditioned village houses were valuable steps along the way. They were experiments and stepping stones. They should not be made monuments by giving historic designation but we should take their meaning and intent and advance the cause of energy efficiency and solar orientation by going on where they left off . We go on and pay respect by creating and designing highly efficient structures that blend into their environments and fulfill the original intent by manifesting excellence in the new structures. We go on by incorporating innovative building technologies that have been developed over the last 50 years and undoubtedly far surpass the standards and quality that these relics represent.

We need to pay respects to the former pioneers by building better performing homes modeled after the mid-century vibe and embellish upon the original Air Conditioned Village idea. This act alone would honor their memory.

It is indeed the intent of our current exploits, one of which the city should be proud to support, being that the current architect, designer and builder of these next creations are actually living, and show care and sensitivity in what they create because we are in fact passionate about beauty, design , construction and community. We will proudly nod our head to the forefathers with our creations.

We should leave to the discretion of the homeowners who bear the financial burdens and quirks of these outdated, inefficient and often poorly constructed houses to judge whether or not to invest further resources. What inevitably comes with the cost of ownership is failing foundations , very costly cast iron plumbing replacements located underneath inadequately engineered concrete foundations in expansive clay soils. Many of these houses experience drainage issues because their Finished Floor Elevations were built too low to the ground to accommodate heavy downpours.

It was not standard practice in those days to perform Geotechnical soils testing to determine the best possible engineering designs for these foundations..We also have far better methods and equipment for air-conditioning and insulation than we formerly had in the past with the disciplines and advancements of building science. Many of these

advancements have been championed by the Austin Energy green building program..

I have extensive experience in building and construction from an early age. As a designer and builder I have personally built over 50 houses in the Central Austin area. I am very familiar with the issues that homeowners face when making the decision to remodel or start new. I have had houses on the NARI tour, The Cool House Tour, and have been awarded many 5 STAR Ratings for houses built under the Green Building program, one of which was filmed by the Discovery Channel. We stand firm in our convictions and ask that the Commission yield to brighter, healthier expressions of our homes, If indeed we as homeowners choose to do so, it is in fact our right and our future.

Dominique Levesque

**Owner of
2507 Park View Drive**

Developer of 2505 Park View Drive

Image Below represents the Mid Century Style we intend to build at 2505 Park View Drive. Our modern expression in Honor or AirConditioned Village 2.0

A single story single family home

<https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:41f176a0-6b40-497f-8dce-1f64d1ec08a9>

2507 Park View Drive
ca. 1954



1954 photograph of the house when brand new

OCCUPANCY HISTORY 2507 Park View Drive

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

- 1959 Travis and Blanche Howard, owners
Proprietor, Travis Howard Nursery, 1113 Springdale Road.
- 1957 Rodney D. and Geneva Larson, owners
Contractor
- 1955 Rodney D. and Geneva Larson, owners
Contractor, 2406 Exposition Boulevard.
- 1954 Cyrus H. and Dorothy J. Brown, owners
No occupation listed
NOTE: Rodney D. and Geneva Larson are listed at 2607 Enfield Road; he was a general contractor with his office at 2406 Exposition Boulevard.
- 1953 The address is not listed in the directory.
NOTE: Cyrus H. and Dorothy J. Brown are not listed in the directory.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES:

Cyrus H. and Dorothy J. Brown (ca. 1954)

His 1940 World War II draft card shows that Cyrus Hulin Brown was living in Shallowater in Lubbock County, Texas. He was born in Eastland County, Texas in 1916, and worked for a lumber company in Shallowater. He was married to Dorothy Juan Brown. He was 6'-1", weighed 172 pounds, and had a light complexion with brown hair and blue eyes. He enlisted in the U.S. Army as a private at Fort Sill, Oklahoma in 1944. He was a native of Texas living in Lubbock, and was a retail manager.

Cyrus Brown married Dorothy Juan Gillett in Lubbock county, Texas in February, 1937.

Cyrus Brown died in Vernon, Texas in 1981, and is buried there. His death certificate shows that he was a retired lumberman.

Rodney D. and Geneva Larson (ca. 1954 – ca. 1959)

Rodney Dale Larson was born in San Antonio, Texas in 1929. He married Geneva Rae Lanier in Dallas County, Texas in September, 1950. Geneva Larson died in 2000; Rodney D. Larson died in 2007. Both are buried in Austin.

Rodney D. Larson Rodney Dale Larson, age 77, of Austin and Marble Falls, died Thursday, June 7, 2007. He was born August 26, 1929 to Harold and Bertha Larson in San Antonio, Texas. He was the owner of Rodney D. Larson Equipment Co., and built bridges throughout Texas. After retiring from the construction business, he and his wife owned and managed Oak City Shopping Center, as well as other properties in Oak Hill. Rodney was a man of many talents. He was a great gardener, an excellent cook, a keen whittler, a creative quilter, a card, chess and domino player extraordinaire, and a great fisherman. He loved kids and animals, and taught a lot of kids how to raise chickens, pigeons, bulls and lambs. He loved the outdoors, especially the lake and the coast. He loved dancing to "Waltz Across Texas" and hanging out with his best buddy and grandson, Chris. Rodney was a member of AGC of Texas, the Bass Club, Oak Hill Business &

Professional Association and Oak Hill Optimist Club, helping build the Oak Hill Optimist Club Baseball Fields. He is preceded in death by his loving wife of 50 years, Geneva Rae Larson, and his parents, Harold and Bertha Larson. Rodney is survived by his son, Mike Larson of Chestertown, New York; daughter, Vikki Keller of Austin; grandson, Chris Keller of Austin; special friend, Hazel Eskew of Austin; as well as numerous relatives and friends. Pallbearers include: Chris Keller, Rodney Keller, Gary Pugh, Adam Pugh, Hunter Arend, Khier Remadna, Nabil Remadna, Clay Rivers, Buddy White and Herb Eskew. Visitation will be Sunday, June 10, 2007 from 3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. at Cook-Walden Funeral Home, 6100 North Lamar. Services are scheduled for Monday, June 11, 2007 at 2:00 p.m. in the Colonial Chapel at Cook-Walden Funeral Home, North Lamar. Interment will follow at Cook-Walden/Memorial Hill on North IH-35. Donations may be made to the American Cancer Society or charity of your choice. The family would like to thank all the doctors, nurses and caregivers for their special care of Mr. Larson during his illness. We will all miss him, but know that he ran out of catfish and is "down on the pier, tryin' to catch another'un!"

Obituary of Rodney Larson
 Austin American-Statesman, June 10, 2007

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WATER SERVICE PERMIT E No. 280

Austin, Texas **INDEXED**

Received of ANDREW S. PATTON Date 3-15-54

Address 2507 PARKVIEW

Amount TWENTY AND NO/100 \$ 20 00

Plumber NEW DEAL PLBC Co Size of Tap 3/4"

Date of Connection	<u>3-24-54</u>
Size of Tap Made	<u>3/4"</u>
Size Service Made	<u>3/4"</u>
Size Main Tapped	<u>8" L.I.</u>
From Front Prop. Line to Curb Cock	<u>2.5'</u>
From E-Prop. Line to Curb Cock	<u>3.3'</u>
Location of Meter	<u>CURB</u>
Type of Box	<u>LOCK</u>
Depth of Main in St.	<u>3'</u>
Depth of Service Line	<u>2'</u>
From Curb Cock to Tap on Main	<u>open</u>
Checked by Engr. Dept.	<u>4-9-54 man</u>

No. Fittings	Size
1	Curb Cock <u>3/8"</u>
1	Elbow <u>3/4" x 1/2"</u>
1	St-Elbow <u>3/4" x 1/2"</u>
	Bushing
	Reducer
	Pipe <u>3/4" x 1/2"</u>
	Lead Comp.
	Nipples
	Union
	Plug
1	Fee <u>TILE</u>
1	Stop <u>TILE</u>
1	Box <u>LOCK</u>
1	Lid
	Valves
	Job No. <u>20-373-502</u>
	Req. No. <u>107000-</u>

INDEXED

Water service permit for this address (1954)