

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION
PERMITS IN NATIONAL REGISTER DISTRICTS
MAY 24, 2021
PR-2021-072218; HR-2021-066900
OLD WEST AUSTIN NATIONAL REGISTER DISTRICT
2308 WOODLAWN BLVD.

PROPOSAL

Demolish 1940 contributing house due to fire damage.

PROJECT SPECIFICATIONS

The house was significantly damaged by a fire on March 12, 2021 that occurred during a renovation project. The fire burned from at least 3:15 to 7:31 A.M., when Austin Fire Department declared it under control. At the peak, nearly 70 firefighters responded. The fire destroyed the metal roof of the central, two-story volume of the house, burned through the floor structure on multiple levels, and resulted in extensive fire, smoke, and water damage. In addition to photos in this report and supporting documentation from the applicant, please see the following news coverage:

- [Statesman.com/story/news/2021/03/12/firefighters-tackle-blaze-former-long-estate-mansion-central-austin/4662038001/](https://statesman.com/story/news/2021/03/12/firefighters-tackle-blaze-former-long-estate-mansion-central-austin/4662038001/)
- [Cbsaustin.com/news/local/two-alarm-fire-at-central-austin-house-causes-street-closures](https://cbsaustin.com/news/local/two-alarm-fire-at-central-austin-house-causes-street-closures)
- [Twitter.com/AustinFireInfo](https://twitter.com/AustinFireInfo), 3/12/2021, from 3:49 A.M. to 7:31 A.M. when the fire was declared under control

The current application is solely for demolition due to life safety concerns. Per Land Development Code § 25-11-213 (J), review of new construction in a National Register district is not required prior to issuance of a demolition permit in cases where “the building official determines that demolition or relocation is necessary for reasons related to public safety.”

Plans for new construction will be submitted to the Commission at a future date. The applicant intends to rebuild the front of the house as it existed prior to the fire, including reuse of the columns.

ARCHITECTURE

This brick Neoclassical mansion consists of a central, two-story portion flanked by symmetrical one-story wings. The central portion has a full-façade porch with Doric columns supporting an entablature and a full-width balcony with decorative railing. The wings each have a slightly recessed hyphen terminating in a front-gabled volume, with quoins at the corners and cornice returns and cupolas at the roofs. The central front door has an elliptical transom and sidelights, and multi-light windows on the front of the house have operable shutters. The house has a rear addition to the northern wing, including a garage, and an octagonal addition at the center rear.

RESEARCH

The house was built in 1940 for Frank W. and Olivia M. Woolsey. Frank Woolsey, born in 1893, occupied the house until his death in 1963. An insurance executive, he was one of the founders of the Austin Mutual Life Insurance Company in 1921. He served as president of two successor organizations, the Austin Life Insurance Company and Security National Life Insurance Company. He was also on the charter board of the Austin Savings and Loan Association in 1945. Woolsey served as president of the Austin Lion’s Club and member of the Masonic Lodge, Scottish Rite Bodies, and Ben Hur Shrine.

Olivia Woolsey, born in 1900, continued to live in the home until her death in 1990. She was active in the Junior League of Austin, Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority alumnae, Women’s Symphony League, and the First Methodist Women’s Society of Christian Service. Throughout her time living in the house, she entertained and hosted charitable events and meetings. Olivia remarried Louis E. Potucek in 1966. Potucek was a petroleum engineer, who actively fundraised for the Symphony League of Austin and was named a Knight of the Symphony. He died in 1974.

Philanthropists Joe R. and Teresa Lozano Long, namesakes of the Long Center for the Performing Arts, became the home’s second owners in 1992. The Longs donated millions to arts and education throughout Texas. They showcased their extensive artwork collection in the home and constructed additions that more than doubled it in size.

The house was designed by architect Louis C. Page, Jr. of the architecture firm Page & Southerland, a precursor of Page Southerland Page. The practice designed multiple prominent buildings within Austin, including Rosewood Courts (1938), Austin Municipal Building (1936), Brackenridge Hospital (1940), and Palmer Auditorium (1959), in addition to buildings

across Texas. The firm continues in operation as Page/ and has designed projects worldwide. While the aforementioned civic and institutional projects were modern in design, Page Southerland Page's residential work was more typically executed in period revival styles. The Neoclassical architecture of this house, in particular, appears to have drawn inspiration from the Greek Revival designs of Abner Cook, including the nearby Woodlawn (Pease) Mansion. This house was specifically acknowledged in the Old West Austin National Register district nomination as a good example of the firm's work within the district.

Landscaping for the house was designed by prominent landscape architect C. Coatsworth Pinkney. Before moving to Austin in 1939, Pinkney received a master's in landscape architecture from Harvard University and apprenticed with the Olmsted Brothers. His work in Austin includes landscapes at Rosewood Courts and the French Legation.

STAFF COMMENTS

The house is contributing to the Old West Austin National Register District. A historic landmark nomination for the property was in development prior to the fire, and this report is based on part on research by HHM & Associates.

While the house previously qualified for landmark status, its present condition must be considered in evaluating whether to initiate historic zoning.

Designation Criteria—Historic Landmark

- 1) The building is more than 50 years old.
- 2) The building was enlarged by the Longs but appeared to retain high integrity prior to the fire damage. However, the house's compromised condition should be considered in determining whether it still meets landmark criteria.
- 3) Properties must meet two criteria for landmark designation (LDC §25-2-352). Considering its historic significance only, staff has evaluated the property and determined that it meets two criteria:
 - a. *Architecture*. The building is a notable example of a mid-twentieth century Neoclassical house, designed by Page Southerland Page with landscape design by C. Coatsworth Pinkney.
 - b. *Historical association*. The property is associated with multiple prominent businesspeople and philanthropists: Frank W. and Olivia M. Woolsey, Louis E. Potucek, and Joe R. and Teresa Lozano Long.
 - c. *Archaeology*. The property was not evaluated for its potential to yield significant data concerning the human history or prehistory of the region.
 - d. *Community value*. The property 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.

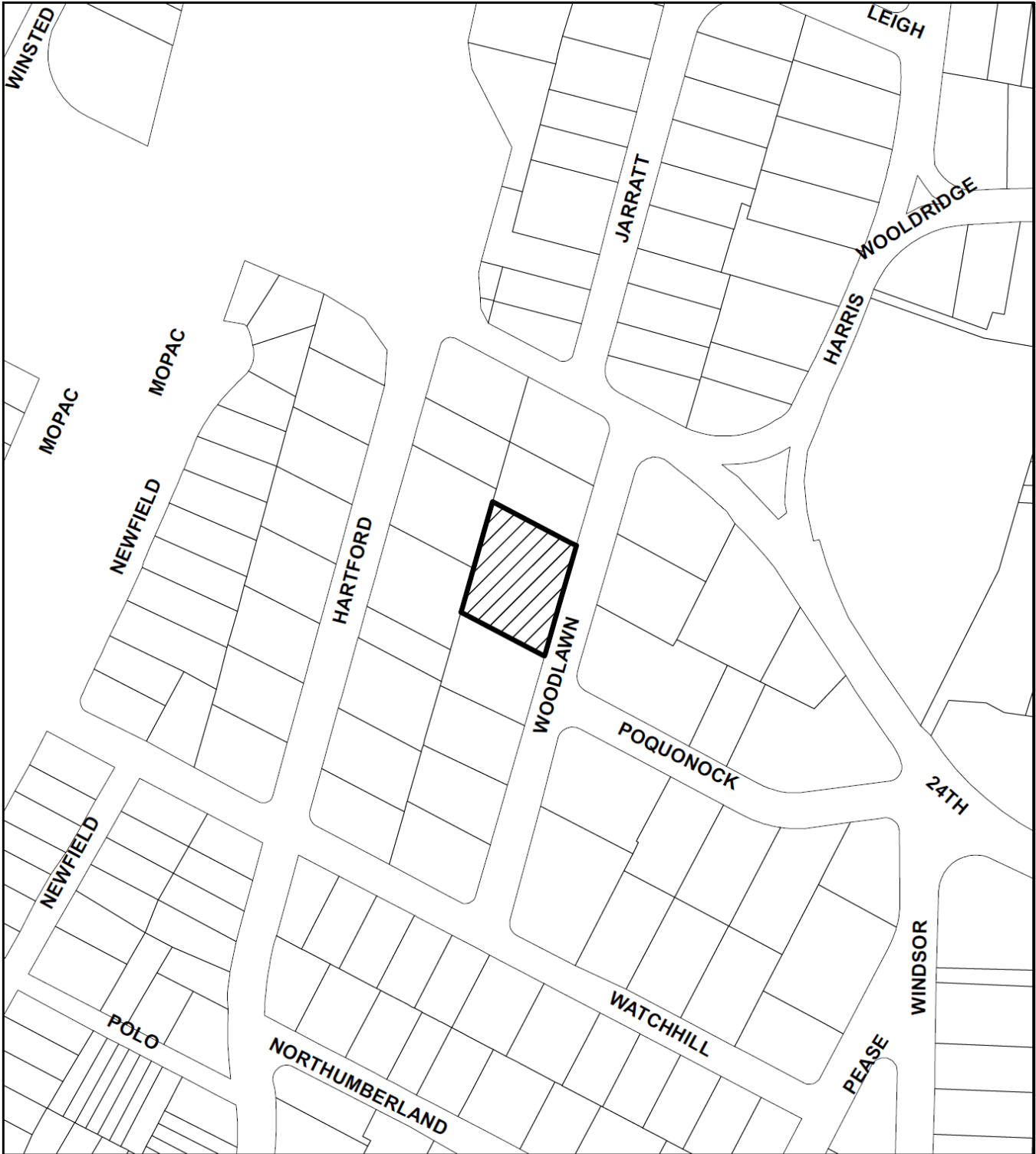
COMMITTEE FEEDBACK


Not reviewed.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION


Although the house previously met the criteria for landmark designation, it has been compromised by fire damage. Staff recommends the commission release the demolition permit in consideration of life safety concerns. A City of Austin Documentation Package is not recommended due to the house's current condition.

LOCATION MAP







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SUBJECT TRACT



PENDING CASE



ZONING BOUNDARY

NOTIFICATIONS
CASE#: HR 21-066900
LOCATION: 2308 WOODLAWN BLVD.



1" = 208'

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*

Source: [Eliteauctions.com/2308-woodlawn-austin-tx](https://eliteauctions.com/2308-woodlawn-austin-tx), 2020, prior to fire



Source: [Twitter.com/AustinFireInfo](https://twitter.com/AustinFireInfo), 3/12/2021, 4:26 A.M.





Source: Statesman.com video stills, 3/12/2021



Source: Applicant, 2021

Occupancy History

City Directory Research, May 2021

1941	Address not listed
1944	Frank W. and Olivia Woolsey, owners President Austin Mutual Life Insurance Co. (Littlefield Building)
1947	Frank W. and Olivia M. Woolsey, owners President Austin Mutual Life Insurance Co. & Austin Life Insurance Co. (Littlefield Building)
1949	Frank W. and Olivia M. Woolsey, owners President Austin Mutual Life Insurance Co. & Austin Life Insurance Co. (800 Lavaca Street)
1952	Frank W. and Olivia Woolsey, owners President Austin Mutual Life Insurance Co. & Austin Life Insurance Co. (800 Lavaca Street)
1955	Frank W. and Olivia M. Woolsey, owners President Austin Life Insurance Co. (800 Lavaca Street)
1957	Frank W. and Olivia M. Woolsey, owners President Austin Life Insurance co. (800 Lavaca Street)
1959	Frank W. and Olivia M. Woolsey, owners President Austin Life Insurance Co.

Biographical Information

Austin American-United Press

Frank W. Woolsey, president of Austin Life Insurance Company, points to the firm's 35 years of service. Its policies now protect more than 50,000 people.

Austin Life Work Has Wide Reach

More than 50,000 people are being provided life insurance protection by the Austin Life Insurance Co. During the past 35 years, \$5 million in claims has been paid out by that company and the companies it has assumed.

Its offices at 800 Lavaca are directed by **Frank W. Woolsey**, president.

Originally entitled the Austin Mutual Life Insurance Co., its present corporate structure was set up in 1946, and its present name assumed. Since that time it has handled only legal reserve insurance.

John Sulak Takes Post As Editor

LA GRANGE, Aug. 11—The Fayette County Record is published in La Grange and is one of the few papers to issue two editions weekly. The paper was established in

Article on Frank Woolsey, The Austin American, 8/12/1956

F. Woolsey Succumbs In Hospital

Frank W. Woolsey, prominent insurance executive and business man of Austin for almost a half century, died Tuesday morning at St. David's Hospital.

Woolsey was one of the founders of the old Austin Mutual Life Insurance Company in 1921 and later helped organize the Austin Life Insurance which eventually took over the assets of the Austin Mutual Life. About a year ago Security National Life Insurance Company merged with the Austin Life Insurance Company and is now operating under the Security National name at Eighth and Lavaca Streets.

Woolsey served as president of the three institutions and was a guiding force in their growth and expansion.

For many years Woolsey was a member of the Austin Lions Club and at one time was president.

The body is at the Weed-Corley Funeral Home where funeral arrangements are pending.

Woolsey, 69, lived at 2308 Woodlawn and had been a resident of Austin for more than 40 years. He formerly lived in Bay City where he was engaged in the banking business. He was associated with the state banking department when he moved to Austin before aiding in the organization of the Austin Mutual Life Insurance Company.

He was a member of the First Methodist Church and was a lifetime steward of that church. He held membership in the Masonic Lodge, Scottish Rite Bodies and the Ben Hur Shrine. He also attended the University of Texas.

He is survived by his widow, Mrs. Olivia Woolsey; one daughter, Mrs. David S. Buell of Dallas; one son, William Jonathan Woolsey of Austin and by five grandchildren, Olivia Lynn Buell, Susan Woolsey Buell and David Buell Jr., all of Dallas and Laura Lynn Woolsey and Ellen Poage Woolsey, both of Austin.

He is also survived by two brothers, V. G. Woolsey and Dr. C. R. Woolsey, both of Corpus Christi and by three sisters, Mrs. H. W. Bishop of Houston, Mrs. Charles Schaedel of Grapevine and Mrs. Lewis McVea of Corpus Christi.



LOUIS POTUCEK

Civic leader dies

Oil Man Potucek Succumbs

Louis E. Potucek, 77, retired oil man and Austin civic leader, died Wednesday in a local hospital.

An Austin resident for 10 years, Potucek received his degree in petroleum engineering at the University of Kansas. After his retirement from the oil business, he was active in fund-raising activities for the Symphony League of Austin and was named a Knight of the Symphony.

He is survived by his wife, Olivia M. Potucek (formerly Mrs. **Frank Woolsey**) of Austin; one daughter, Maggie Nell Buell of Dallas; three brothers, two sisters and five grandchildren.

Rosary will be at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday at Weed-Corley Funeral Home. Memorials may be made to St. Austin's Catholic Church or the Austin Symphony Fund.

Coffee at Woolsey Home Ends Art Group Season

A coffee at the new home of Mr. and Mrs. F. W. Woolsey, 2308 Woodlawn, Thursday morning ended the season for Art Group Six. Mrs. E. W. Jackson and Mrs. A. D. Gaston assisted Mrs. Woolsey as hostesses.

Pink rosebuds, yellow snapdragons and blue delphinium decorated the living room for the party, which marked the first opening of the new home. In the library yellow roses were arranged.

Mrs. A. D. Gaston, incoming president, poured, and Mrs. Fred Adams, retiring president, served the salad. The coffee table was laid with an imported cutwork cloth and centered with red roses in a silver bowl.

Mrs. Gordon Griffin met the guests at the door, and Mrs. Fred Nagle and Mrs. F. L. Kuykendall also assisted in the house party.

New officers installed during the morning were as follows: Mesdames Gaston, president; Howard Marshall, vice president; Fred Nagle, Jr., secretary, and F. L. Kuykendall, treasurer.

A talk on glass and pottery of today by Miss Edith Kirkland was the last in the series of studies on arts and crafts in the home.

Members present were Mesdames Fred Adams, Walter Bohn, Leslie Colwell, Marlon Fowler, Weldon Hart, M. H. Goldsmith, Gordon Griffin, R. E. Whitlock, F. L. Kuykendall, Howard Marshall, Morris Midkiff, W. P. Morgan, Fred Nagle, Jr.,

Mesdames E. P. Onstot, Harvey Penick, J. F. Ritter, Jr., J. T. Robinson, Frank Scofield, Baker Williams, Ralph Yarborough, H. G. Bossy, Naomi Moore, Patrick Moreland, Ralph A. Porter, J. W. Wheeler, E. W. Jackson, A. D. Gaston and F. W. Woolsey.



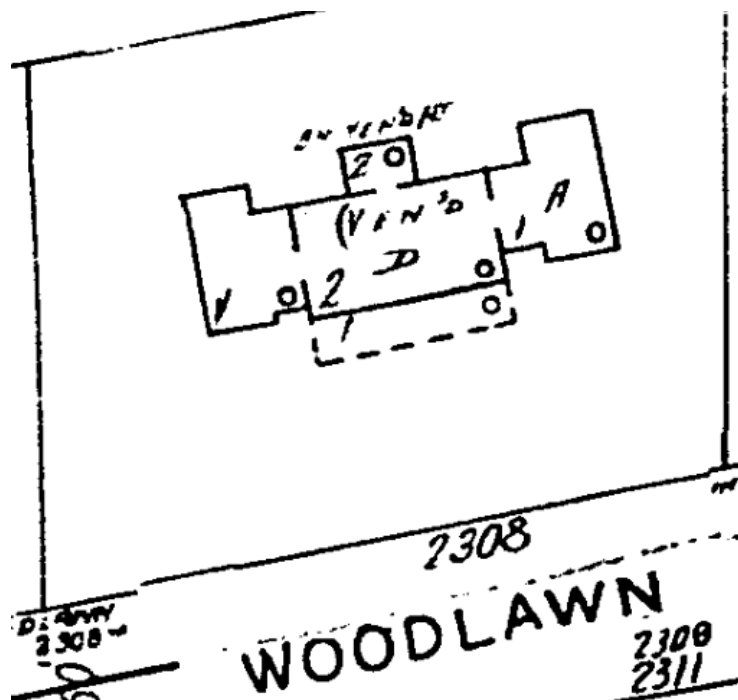
American-Statesman/UPPI

KAPPA EVENT IS TUESDAY — Mrs. Frank Woolsey, left, Mrs. Ruel Walker, Mrs. Hal McCuiston and Mrs. Greenwood Wooten Jr. have everything ready for the annual Kappa Kitchen, set for Tuesday from 11 a.m. until 1 p.m. The bake sale will be in Mrs. Woolsey's garden, 2308 Woodlawn. Homemade breads, pies and cakes will be available, and there'll be pickles, jams, jellies, casseroles, mayonnaise and fried chicken

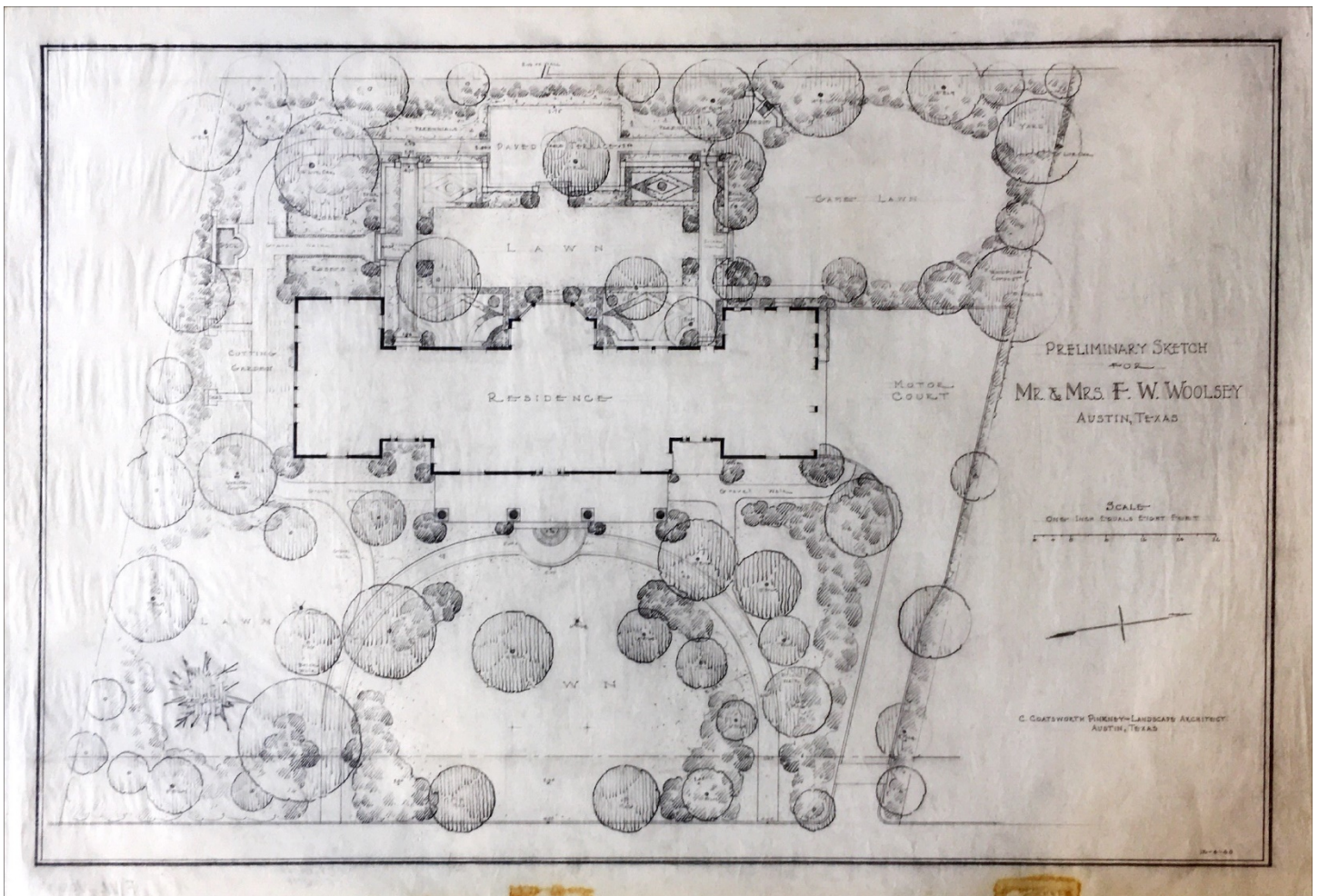
offered too. Admission is 50 cents, with proceeds going to the Natural Science Center and the UT chapter's scholarship fund. Refreshments will be served. Mrs. McCuiston is general chairman of the "kitchen," and Mrs. Wooten is president of the Kappa Kappa Gamma alumnae. Mrs. Walker is president of the Kappa Mothers Club, which is co-sponsoring the event with the alumnae.

Events hosted at 2308 Woodlawn Blvd., The Austin Statesman, 5/1/1941 and The Austin American, 5/3/1964

Historic Maps and Drawings



Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1961, sheet 55



Landscape drawing by C. Coatsworth Pinkney, Austin History Center

Permits

Frank Woolsey 2308 Woodlawn Blvd.
 146 1 24-25 -
 Sunset Hills
 1&2 story brick veneer res. with gar.
 integral
 19911 - 7-2-40
 19

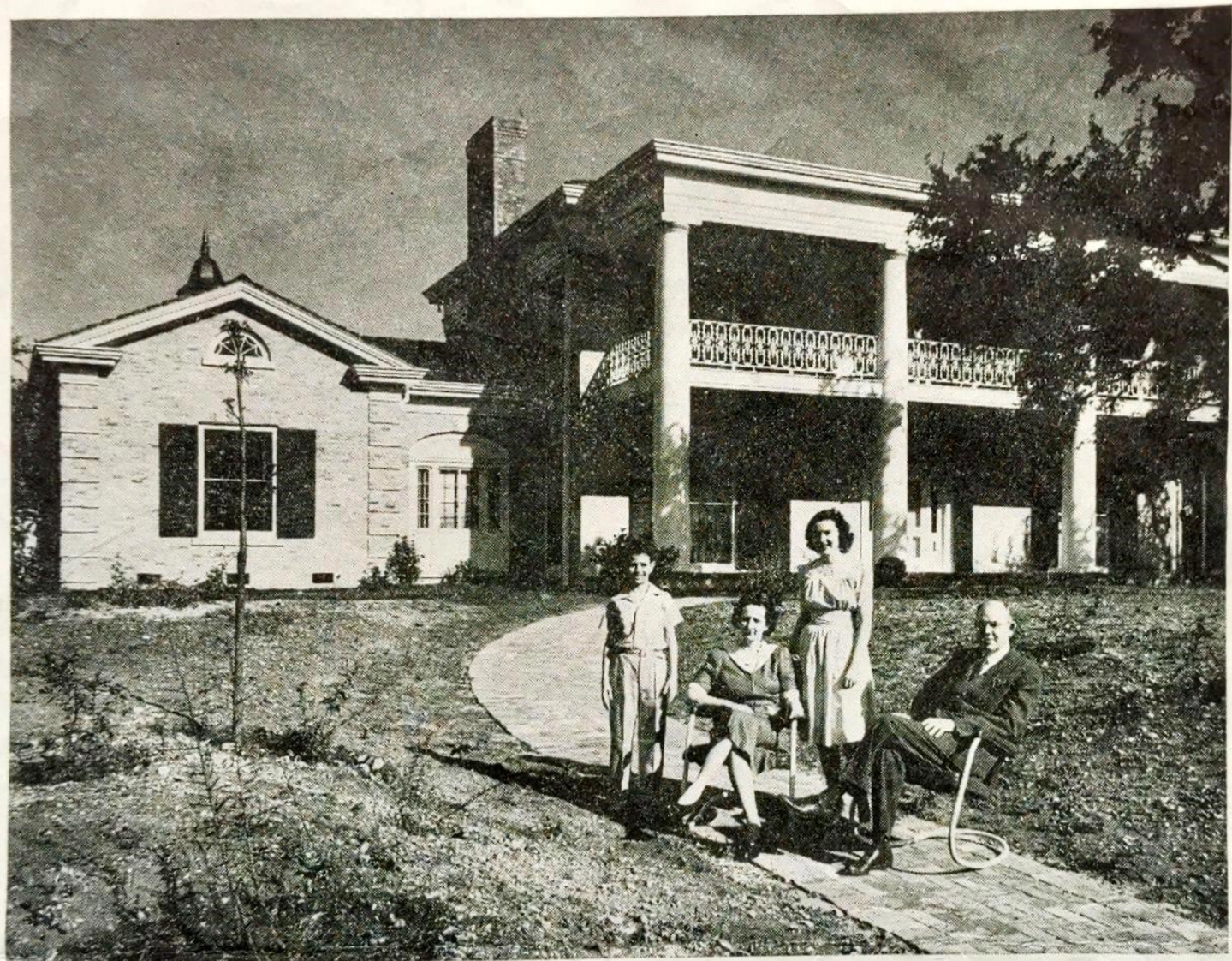
Permit for \$19,900 Residence Issued

Permit for construction of a new \$19,900 residence at 2308 Woodlawn by Frank Woolsey was issued today by City Bldg. Inspector J. C. Eckert.

The proposed new one and one-half story brick veneer home was designed by Page and Southerland, Austin architects. Robert Morris is contractor.

*Building permit, 1940;
 Article mentioning the building permit, The Austin Statesman, 7/2/1940*

The F. W. Woolseys and Their New Home



THIS is the first picture made of the F. W. Woolseys at their new home. . . a handsome Natchez colonial residence, 2308 Woodlawn, Enfield.

The house built of old hand made brick faces east, with a wonderful view, especially at night, of the city. The illuminated capitol dome and tower of the University adding beauty to the scene.

Rare taste has been shown in the furnishings of the house. . . which has numerous special features. . . including an elevator and an unusual game room. . . located in the one story wing shown in the picture. A

corresponding wing is on the opposite side. Landscaping of the grounds will soon begin to show results. In the rear has been planted a formal garden with boxwood hedges and terraced lawn. . . typical of old Virginia gardens.

Mr. and Mrs. Woolsey moved to Austin nineteen years ago, and have made an enviable place for themselves in the life of the city.

Mrs. Woolsey is musical. Is a member of Austin Art Group No. 6, and of the Texas Fine Arts Association.

Mr. Woolsey is one of Austin's bus-

iest men. . . but occasionally finds time to fish, hunt or go horseback riding with his wife. He is a Shriner, member of the Chamber of Commerce, and past president of the Lions Club. As for the younger Woolseys—Margie Nell is a student at Senior High, and has been having a gay time recently at the numerous parties given by and for the High School students. She is talented musically and is also studying speech.

Billy Jon is a pupil at Pease School. He is especially fond of riding horseback. Has his own horse "Lizzie," and lately won second place in the Biltmore horse show.

—F. Wilbur Seiders



Page Southerland Page Records and Drawings

An Inventory of the Collection

Collection Summary

Creator:	Page Southerland Page
Title:	Page Southerland Page Records and Drawings
Dates:	1935-1982
Dates (Bulk):	1935-1969
Abstract:	Page Southerland Page is an Austin, Texas architectural firm that was originally formed as Page Southerland in 1932 by Louis Page, Jr. and Louis F. Southerland. Louis Page's brother, George Matthew Page, joined the firm in 1939 and the name was changed to Page Southerland Page. The majority of the collection consists of architectural drawings dating from 1935 to 1982.
Accession number:	AR.2009.030
Quantity:	.2 linear feet (1 text box; 8 flat file drawers; 3077 drawings)
Location:	Architectural archives stacks and flat file drawers, Archt qAR, Artifacts
Language:	English
Repository:	Austin History Center, Austin Public Library , 810 Guadalupe, PO Box 2287, Austin, TX 78768

Administrative History

Louis Charles Page Jr. (1909-1981) was born in Austin, Texas. The son of the architect Louis Page, Page Jr. followed in his father's footsteps and graduated from The University of Texas School of Architecture (1929) and MIT (1931). After graduation he spent a summer in the architectural program in Fontainebleau and then returned to Austin and interned briefly at this father's firm Page Brothers before opening up an office with Louis Southerland.

Louis F. Southerland (1906-1994) grew up in Trenton, Texas and also studied architecture at The University of Texas before transferring to MIT, where he received his bachelor's degree in architecture (1932).

Page and Southerland opened their firm in Tyler, Texas because the town was in the midst of an oil boom. Unfortunately, according to a 1947 interview with Southerland in the *Austin Statesman*, the people in Tyler were not spending the oil money on buildings. Page returned to Austin to teach at the University of Texas School of Architecture and Southerland moved to San Antonio to work on the United States Post Office and Courthouse in Ralph Cameron's office. Page and Southerland reopened their office in Austin in 1935. Their early projects were residences and several school buildings around the state. In 1938 they received their first big commission from the Public Works Administration to construct Rosewood Courts (called the Negro Housing Project at the time) in Austin.

Louis Page's younger brother George Matthews Page joined the firm after his graduation from The University of Texas School of Architecture in 1937 and an extended tour of Europe. The name of the firm was changed to Page Southerland Page in 1939/1940. While the firm continued to design residential projects it moved toward larger commercial, medical, educational, public and ecclesiastical buildings. Page Southerland Page was responsible for the Austin Municipal Building (1936), Dr. Pepper Bottling Plant (1939), Brackenridge Hospital (1940), Smithville Locker Plant (1944), Elgin-Butler Brick Company Office Building (1946), Mason Memorial Hospital (1948), McCallum High School (1952), Dart Bowl Bowling Center (1958), Palmer Auditorium (1959), IBM campus (1961), St. David's additions (1960s-1970s), as well as many other buildings in Texas. The firm opened offices in Dallas and Houston in 1974 and went on to design projects throughout the world.

Louis Page died in 1981, Louis Southerland followed in 1994 and George Page a year later. The firm, now just called Page, has continued to grow and currently (2016) has offices in five cities in addition to Austin.

Scope and Contents

The majority of the collection consists of architectural drawings designed by Page Southerland and Page Southerland Page dating from 1935 through the early 1980s. There are over 3000 drawings that represent approximately 275 projects of residential, commercial, medical, educational, public, ecclesiastical, and military nature; 80 of them attributed to Page Southerland and 194 attributed to Page Southerland Page. All of the projects are located in Texas, with over two-thirds of them located in Austin. Represented are 36 commercial designs including the Dr. Pepper Bottling Plant (1939, 1946-1947), Elgin-Butler Brick Company Office Building (1946), Powell and Woolsey Building (1950), Dart Bowl Bowling Center (1958), City National Bank Building (1969), and IBM Corporate Facilities (1975); 11 ecclesiastical designs including Church of the Good Shepherd (1945), Mexican Baptist Church (1946) and additions to the University Presbyterian Church (1950s); 25 educational projects including Pleasant Hill School (1935), Rosedale School (1946), Metz Elementary additions and renovations (1947) and McCallum High School (1952); 20 medical projects including various renovations and additions to St. David's Community Hospital (1950s, 1960s, 1970s), Brackenridge Hospital additions (1970s) and Seton Medical Center (1970s); 22 public projects including the Austin Municipal Building (1937), Rosewood Court Housing Project (1938), improvements to the Austin Water Filtration plant (1953), and the Post Office and Federal Building (1962); and 155 residential designs including single family homes, apartment buildings and fraternity/sorority houses.

In addition to the architectural drawings there are five black and white photographs of a 1946 unidentified institutional building project, a photo rendering of the proposed United State Naval Hospital in Austin and transparency of rendering of the City National Bank on Congress Avenue, Austin. Also included are a set of drafting tools.



1906 - 1994

Charles Coatsworth "C.C." Pinkney

Pioneer Information

Related Landscapes

Born in Denver, Colorado, Pinkney graduated from Colorado A&M in 1927, majoring in horticulture and entomology. He then pursued graduate work in landscape architecture at Harvard, where he served as a field assistant to Morley Jeffers Williams, supervising excavations at Stratford Hall in summer 1932, and again from August to October 1934. Pinkney's discoveries were essential to the reconstruction of the east garden, as well as the stable, springhouse, and entrance west of the house. In 1934 Pinkney received his master's in landscape architecture and married Evelyn Robinson. The Charles Eliot Traveling Fellowship sent him for a year's study in Europe (1934-1935), and he apprenticed with Olmsted Brothers and worked for a time with Arthur Shurcliff.

Pinkney arrived with his family in Austin, Texas, in 1939. One of his earliest commissions was the landscape for the second phase of construction (1940-1941) at the Rosewood Courts housing project. He designed the gardens of several local estates and residences, including the Joseph Renfro, Jr., House, the Leach House, and the Stanley and Emily Finch House, all in the 1940s. He planned much of Austin's Allandale neighborhood between 45th street and Northland Drive, as well as bicycle trails running along Shoal Creek. He also designed the landscapes of several local schools, including Summit Elementary School, Perry Park Elementary, Murchison Junior High School, McCallum High School, Reagan High School, and Rosedale School. In his design of the grounds of the French Legation Museum in 1953, Pinkney showed sensitivity to the history of the site, leaving the gently rolling grounds largely open and unobstructed. His career in Austin spanned five decades.

Related Content

LANDSCAPE