

## ZONING CHANGE REVIEW SHEET

CASE NUMBER: C14H-2022-0098

HLC DATE: August 3, 2022

PC DATE: TBD

CC Date: TBD

APPLICANT: Nneka Shoulds

HISTORIC NAME: Donley-Goode-Walton House / Walton's Beauty Shop and Salon

WATERSHED: Boggy Creek

ADDRESS OF PROPOSED ZONING CHANGE: 1605 Leona Street

ZONING CHANGE: SF-3-NP to SF-3-NP-H

COUNCIL DISTRICT: 1

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends the proposed zoning change from family residence-neighborhood plan (SF-3-NP) to family residence-neighborhood plan-historic landmark (SF-3-H-NP) combining district zoning.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR LANDMARK DESIGNATION: Historic associations and community value

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION ACTION:

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:

CITY COUNCIL ACTION:

CASE MANAGER: Kalan Contreras

PHONE: 512-974-2727

NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATIONS: Austin Independent School District, Austin Lost and Found Pets, Austin Neighborhoods Council, Davis-Thompson, Del Valle Community Coalition, East Austin Conservancy, Friends of Austin Neighborhoods, Homeless Neighborhood Association, Neighborhood Empowerment Foundation, Neighbors United for Progress, Organization of Central East Austin Neighborhoods, Preservation Austin, SELTexas, Sierra Club, Austin Regional Group

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: N/A

BASIS FOR RECOMMENDATION:

**§ 25-2-352(3)(c)(ii) Historical Associations.** *The property has long-standing significant associations with persons, groups, institutions, businesses, or events of historic importance which contributed significantly to the history of the city, state, or nation; or represents a significant portrayal of the cultural practices or the way of life of a definable group of people in a historic time.*

Nominator Nneka Shoulds, the home's current occupant, describes the building's historical associations:

Recommended as not eligible for a local historic landmark designation in the East Austin Historical Resources Survey of 2016, 1605 Leona St. was essential in assisting a multicultural Tejano-Irish immigrant family and a marginalized Black American family to establish strong foundations upon which future generations would launch long-lasting legacies.

Uniquely located directly across from historic Oakwood Cemetery (originally called City Cemetery and the oldest city-owned cemetery in Austin), the home tells the untold story of two families who achieved their American dreams against unimaginable odds. The people who lived here experienced and endured painful racial segregation and discriminatory practices, and they fought against those conditions with dignity and courage to break barriers in education, the military, music, and business.

1605 Leona St. is the childhood home of Raymond (Ramón) “Cowboy” Donley, known as the “godfather of Tejano music.” Donley was a classically trained violinist who once played with the Durango Symphony. Raymond made his living as a barber by day, but at night, he led his band, La Orquesta de Ramon Donley. His son, Manuel Donley, took an early interest in music, following the lead of his father. Manuel Donley began his apprenticeship as a musician hanging out in his father's barbershop, where musicians were as likely to come by for a haircut as they were to break out a fiddle or accordion to play a couple of tunes. By the time he was 11 years old, Manuel Donley had taught himself how to play the guitar and later, the requinto (a type of six-string guitar). Manuel formed the band ‘Los Heartbreakers’ as a teen and was performing mostly instrumentals at Church festivals and street fairs until their breakthrough performance at Parque Zaragoza in 1949.

The Donleys sold the home in 1944 to the Goode family, which included laborer John Wesley Goode; his wife, Hattie Goode, who worked as a washwoman; son and military serviceman, Ernest Goode; and daughter and son-in-law Helen Goode Walton and Willie “Boots” Walton. Helen worked as a cosmetologist, while Willie was a blues and ragtime musician. The Goode family benefitted from the multiple streams of income, which allowed them to maintain a comfortable middle-class lifestyle.

Similar to many other East Austin families, The Goode family had plans to operate a business out of their new home and quickly began making the necessary alterations. Around 1947, a crew including Willie “Boots” Walton demolished the rear wall to extend and refurbish the room into a full-service salon, complete with a separate entrance. The exterior wood siding was refinished, the carport constructed, and the interior renovated to section the larger spaces into smaller private rooms. White aluminum exterior siding was installed around 1950. Renovations completed during this period were undocumented and likely unlicensed, as the city often did not enforce zoning ordinances or construction permits in East Austin. Construction of Walton’s Beauty Salon was likely complete within 1947. Hattie Goode conveyed 1605 Leona St. to her daughter Helen for \$1 on December 13, 1954.

Helen Walton’s ambitions led her to the Johnson & Randolph Beauty School, where she became a Certified Cosmetology Instructor in 1951. At the time, Texas law required beauty shop operators to complete 1,000 hours of training. Walton would go on to receive a gold cup from Prairie View A & M College’s Cosmetology Institute for completing the five-year course in advanced cosmetology. She is noted as Austin’s first cosmetologist to do so.

Helen Walton was a member of David Chapel Missionary Baptist Church for more than 64 years. She served as a Sunday school teacher, treasurer, piano/organ player, and member of the Senior Choir. She was elected David Chapel Missionary Baptist Church Woman of the Year in 1993. When Helen Walton wasn’t occupied by family, work, her education, or her professional goals, her social calendar was filled with meetings and events that reflected her reputation as a well-known and respected businesswoman. Walton was selected as one of Austin’s “Best Dressed Women” in 1959 and was a member of the Hair Designer’s Guild, sponsor of the Miss Black Austin Pageant.

Later in life, after closing the beauty shop and retiring in 1984, Helen Walton provided companion care to former First Lady of Texas, Mildred Paxton Moody, wife of Governor Dan Moody. Walton was honored by Governor Ann W. Richards for years of outstanding service to David Chapel Missionary Baptist Church, her family, and the community in 1993. She received 95<sup>th</sup> Birthday greetings from Texas State Representative Dawnna Dukes in October 2012.<sup>1</sup>

**§ 25-2-352(3)(c)(iv) Community Value.** *The property has a unique location, physical characteristic, or significant feature that contributes to the character, image, or cultural identity of the city, a neighborhood, or a particular group.*

Home-based businesses were an important part of life in segregated East Austin. Though few residents had the capital to construct new commercial buildings, many entrepreneurs used their homes to provide professional services that customers of color could not access elsewhere. Beauty shops for Black customers were particularly important, as they both provided a gathering space for women of color and an invaluable service tailored to African American beauty. In an era where African American women—like Helen Goode Walton—were struggling against all odds to break professional barriers, salons owned and operated by Black cosmetologists gave others the chance to look and feel their best. In twentieth-century East Austin,

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<sup>1</sup> Shoulds, Nneka. Historic Zoning Application: 1605 Leona St. 2022.

salons were not just spaces to indulge in a bit of vanity, but places where Black professionals could uplift each other while pursuing their own entrepreneurial goals.

Occupant and nominator Nneka Shoulds describes Walton's Beauty Shop's impact on the family and neighborhood: "Walton's Beauty Shop and Salon thrived the 1950s and Helen Walton's career as a cosmetologist offered a level of economic independence that was rare for a Black woman during a time when employment opportunities were limited. Most white salon owners served white customers and did not serve Black customers or hire Black beauty professionals. This created an extremely viable market for Black beauty shop operators and instructors who ensured that East Austin and other African American communities had access to the services and specialized products their customers needed."<sup>2</sup>

PARCEL NO.: 0209091108

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: N 47.67' OF LOT 1&2 BLK 3 OLT 37 DIV B JOHNS C R SUBD

ESTIMATED ANNUAL TAX ABATEMENT: \$6,516.78 total (homestead); city portion: \$1,878.93

APPRAISED VALUE: \$621,633

PRESENT USE: Residence

DATE BUILT/PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE: ca. 1939; 1939-1972

INTEGRITY/ALTERATIONS: Moderate to high, with most changes taking place during the historic period and reflecting the home's historic use as a home-based business. The original residence was retrofitted around 1947 to convert the space to a beauty shop, then continually updated through the historic period as the business evolved. This era of renovation included the carport, aluminum siding, and addition. Non-historic-period exterior alterations include adding a pitched roof to the rear addition in 1993 and replacing windows in 2012, without altering openings constructed during the historic beauty-shop era or the remaining original openings. The previously-enclosed front door was reopened and the secondary door enclosed with siding.

PRESENT OWNERS: Helen Shoulds

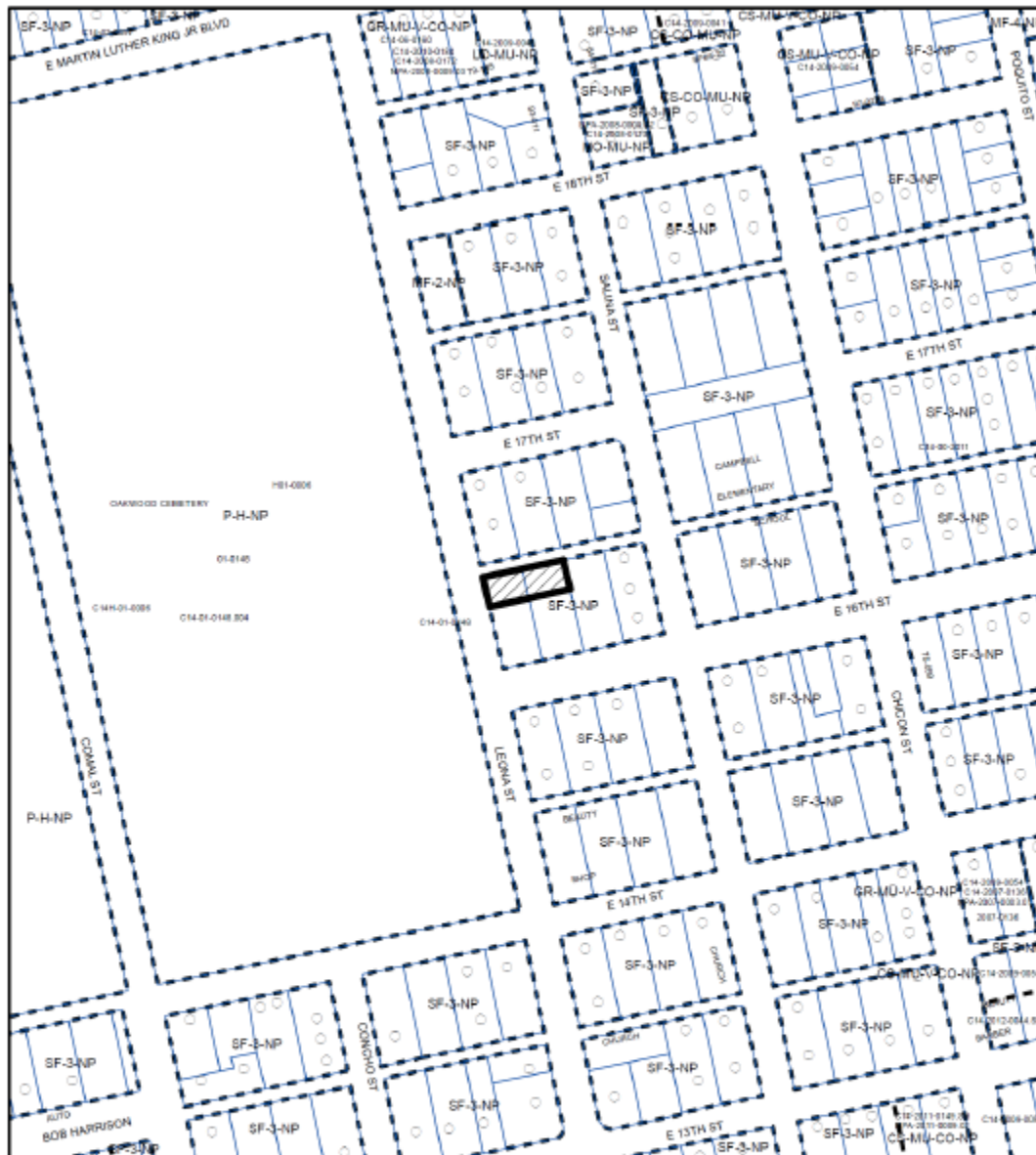
ORIGINAL OWNER(S): Arcadio Donley

OTHER HISTORICAL DESIGNATIONS: None




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<sup>2</sup> Shoulds, Nneka. Historic Zoning Application: 1605 Leona St. 2022.

## LOCATION MAP



1" = 200'

-  SUBJECT TRACT
-  PENDING CASE
-  ZONING BOUNDARY

**HISTORIC ZONING**  
ZONING CASE#: C14H-2022-0098

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