

**Zoning Public Hearing
CITY OF AUSTIN
RECOMMENDATION FOR COUNCIL ACTION**



**AGENDA ITEM NO.: Z-2
AGENDA DATE: Thu 12/02/2004
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SUBJECT: C14H-00-2003 – Conduct a public hearing and approve an ordinance amending Chapter 25-2 of the Austin City Code by zoning property locally known as the Susanna Dickinson House on Brush Square, 409 E. 5th Street (Town Lake Watershed), from Public-Historic (P-H) to Public-Historic (P-H) to provide for the individual designation of the Susanna Dickinson House on Brush Square. Historic Landmark Commission Recommendation: To grant Public-Historic (P-H) to provide for the individual designation of the Susanna Dickinson House on Brush Square. Zoning and Platting Commission Recommendation: To grant Public-Historic (P-H) to provide for the individual designation of the Susanna Dickinson House on Brush Square. Applicant: Historic Landmark Commission. City Staff: Steve Sadowsky, Historic Preservation Office, Neighborhood Planning and Zoning Department, 974-6454.

REQUESTING Neighborhood Planning
DEPARTMENT: and Zoning

DIRECTOR'S
AUTHORIZATION: Alice Glasco

ZONING CHANGE REVIEW SHEET

CASE NUMBER: C14H-00-2003 **HLC. DATE:** September 27, 2004
ZAP DATE: November 2, 2004

AREA: N/A

APPLICANT: Historic Landmark Commission **AGENT:** N/A

HISTORIC NAME: Susanna Dickinson House

WATERSHED: Town Lake

ADDRESS OF PROPOSED ZONING CHANGE: Brush Square

ZONING FROM: No zoning change required.

SUMMARY STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends individual designation of the Susanna Dickinson House in its location on the historically-zoned portion of Brush Square, based upon Historic Landmark Designation Criteria 1, 3, 6, 7, 11, and 13.

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION ACTION: The Historic Landmark Commission withdrew this historic zoning case in 2000, when the Dickinson House was slated for placement within the Convention Center Hotel, and created the Dickinson House Special Committee, which has been successful in devising a plan to relocate and restore the house. The Dickinson House was moved from its original location to the historically-zoned portion of Brush Square, next to the O. Henry House, and currently awaits restoration. **September 27, 2004:** Recommended the individual designation of the Dickinson House, from P-H to F-H based upon Historic Landmark Designation Criteria 1, 3, 6, 7, 11, and 13. Vote: 6-0 (Bunton and Fowler absent).

ZONING AND PLATTING COMMISSION ACTION: Recommended the individual designation of the Dickinson House, from P-H to F-H based upon Historic Landmark Designation Criteria 1, 3, 6, 7, 11, and 13. Vote: 8-0-1 (Baker abstaining).

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The groups seeking funding for restoration of the Dickinson House are requesting an individual designation for the house to better qualify for restoration grants.

CITY COUNCIL DATE: December 2, 2004 **ACTION:**

ORDINANCE READINGS: 1ST 2ND 3RD **ORDINANCE NUMBER:**

CASE MANAGER: Steve Sadowsky **PHONE:** 974-6454

NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION: Downtown Austin Neighborhood Association

BASIS FOR RECOMMENDATION:

The Susanna Dickinson house is the only structure surviving in Texas associated with Susanna Dickinson, the sole Anglo survivor of the massacre at the Alamo in 1836. The house meets Historic Landmark Designation Criteria 1, 3, 6, 7, 11, and 13:

1. Character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City of Austin, State of Texas, or the United States. The Dickinson House is the only known structure surviving in Texas associated with Susanna Dickinson, who survived the battle for Texas independence at the Alamo. It is also one of few mid-nineteenth century residential structures surviving in downtown Austin.

3. Embodiment of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type or specimen.

The ca. 1869 Dickinson House is a vernacular center-hall building with rubble masonry walls and a plaster finish, and has an associated detached kitchen. The house is a notable example of a modest vernacular house from the mid-nineteenth century, with a façade symmetry suggesting a similarity to the Trask House on Red River Street, built during the same period. The Dickinson House is a rare surviving example of vernacular center-hall residential masonry construction in Austin.

6. Relationship to other distinctive buildings, sites or areas which are eligible for preservation according to a plan based on architectural, historic, or cultural motif.

The Dickinson House is contemporary and similar in architecture and construction to the Trask House, a designated City historic landmark now located on Red River Street.

7. Portrayal of the environment of a group of people in an area of historic characterized by a distinctive architectural style.

The Dickinson House portrays the standard of living and lifestyle of Susanna Dickinson and her husband Joseph W. Hannig, a prominent Austin merchant of the time. The house has the trappings of the merchant class in its construction, center hall design, and probable Greek Revival ornamentation. The house has a detached kitchen, reflecting the necessity to keep cooking activities out of the house in the nineteenth century to help keep the house cooler and to prevent fires. The kitchen was located approximately 10 feet behind the house and in line with its side wall.

11. Identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the culture and development of the city, state or United States.

See attached information on Susanna Dickinson.

13. Value as an aspect of community sentiment or public pride. There is a great deal of public interest in restoring the Susanna Dickinson House, rescued from demolition and the only structure associated with the War for Texas Independence in Austin.

PARCEL NO.: N/A

DEED RECORD: N/A

ANNUAL TAX ABATEMENT: N/A

APPRAISED VALUE: N/A

PRESENT USE: Awaiting restoration

CONSTRUCTION/DESCRIPTION: One-story c. 1869 or 1870 rubble masonry house and outbuilding with side-gabled roof. The house's substantial limestone exterior walls, roof structure and stone footings remain.

CONDITION: Fair

PRESENT OWNER

City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department
P.O. Box 1088
Austin, Texas 78767

DATE BUILT: ca. 1869

ALTERATIONS/ADDITIONS: The house was incorporated into the former Pit Barbecue restaurant at Fifth and Neches Street, demolished to make way for the Convention Center Hotel. It has been moved to the northeast corner of Brush Square. Removal of original features, including front and rear porches, exterior doors and windows, chimney and other features.

ORIGINAL OWNER(S): Joseph W. and Susanna (Dickinson) Hannig (1869)

OTHER HISTORICAL DESIGNATIONS:

NATIONAL REGISTER: No

RECORDED TEXAS LANDMARK: No

NATIONAL LANDMARK: No

LOCAL SURVEYS: No - its existence was unknown until the demolition of the Pit Barbecue in 2000.



MRS. DICKENSON
MOTHER OF
THE BABE OF THE
ALAMO

Dies At Age 68

IN AUSTIN.

Austin Statesman, Austin, Tex., Oct. 9, 1883:

On Sunday (Oct. 7) there died, in this city, the lady whose name heads this article. Mrs. Hannig was at one time Mrs. Dickenson, a name indelibly attached to the bloodiest page of Texas history. At Thermopylae no one escaped; at the Alamo, not a combatant in the citadel was left to tell the tale. But there did escape three non-combatants — Mrs. Dickenson, Mrs. Alsbury and Col. Travis' negro body servant. Mrs. Dickenson was the wife of Lieut. Dickenson, of the garrison. She was in the fort at the time of its investment by the Mexicans, and remained there with her babe until the terrible slaughter was ended.

When she left the Alamo, every soldier had fallen in defense of the fort. Lieutenant Dickenson, with a child on his back, attempted to follow his wife, but when he leaped from a window of the church the bodies of both man and child fell lifeless to the earth, riddled with Mexican bullets.

The woman had watched the advance of the bloodthirsty enemy from early dawn, when he advanced upon the fort, until its last defender fell; she saw it all; heard the bugles give the signal for advance; listened to the terrific rattle of musketry as the Texans, from the ramparts of the fort, poured volley after vol-



Mrs. Dickenson

ley into advancing Mexican lines; heard the moans of the dead and dying, the repeated calls of Castrillon for advance; she watched the scalars and heard the awful crash that opened the breach in the walls through which the Mexicans poured on to their deadly work; she saw Travis fall at the head of the fight; looked on the immortal Crockett while he weeded down Mexicans with his ponderous blade until he fell upon a hillock of victims.

She heard the brave defense of Bowie, as almost helpless he rose from his sick bed, and, with the expiring spirit of a patriot and a demigod, met his foes and gave more than one of them death.

Mrs. Hannig has often repeated the

terrible scenes which she was an eye witness on that awful day, when Texas gave up to immortality the last one of these brave defenders, and as often as they were so repeated, tears of woe coursed down her cheeks.

But few women have passed through such scenes, and in the centuries to come, none, probably will ever witness such another; certainly none will perform any part in any act where greater heroism may be displayed.

This woman was the last living memorial of the Alamo.

The "Babe of the Alamo," her child, died many years ago. Mrs. Alsbury, in bygone years, paid the debt of all humanity, and the servant of Travis, after being lost sight of, has long since gone where there are no wars, no brave defenders, no carnage, no Alamo.

Mrs. Hannig had lived to a good old age, (68) and yet the scenes of that awful day, in San Antonio, dwelt as fresh in her mind to the day of her death, over forty-eight years afterward, as though they were but things of yesterday.

Her name belongs to the history of Texas, and it is but a fitting tribute to the glorious memorial of her existence that she be honored by Texas.

Some of the brave defenders of Texas sleep on the hill south of the city, overlooking the placid Colorado, but not one who died at the Alamo slumbers peacefully there.

How proper it would be then that the mortal remains of this woman be deposited in the state burial ground, where in the future, Texas might honor the last resting place of the woman who cast her lot with mortal heroes, who have been promoted to immortality.