

**HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION
DEMOLITION AND RELOCATION PERMITS
MAY 4, 2022
DA-2022-040962; GF-2022-047912
211 WEST 4TH STREET**

PROPOSAL

Demolish a ca. 1936 commercial building and reconstruct the façade.

PROJECT SPECIFICATIONS

- 1) Demolish and reconstruct building façade. The character of the brickwork, opening patterns, and other design details will be accurately reconstructed. Existing brick will be salvaged and reused in the reconstruction, with paint removed or the bricks turned to reveal the unpainted side. An original steel window will be evaluated for repair and reinstallation based on its condition.
- 2) Reinstall Oilcan Harry's signage on the adjacent façade at 213 W. 4th Street.
- 3) Construct a high-rise tower with more than a 5' setback from the building façade. Behind the parapet, the garage levels will be clad in a simple screen in a dark bronze color.

ARCHITECTURE

The building at 211 W. 4th Street is a single-story brick warehouse with a curvilinear stepped parapet that exhibits modest Mission Revival stylistic influences. Decorative elements include diagonal tiles at the raised central portion and ends of the parapet and a rowlock course as coping. The building retains its original window and door openings with soldier course headers. At the left end of the façade is an original multi-light steel window with a central awning sash. The adjacent door opening has been infilled with a flat panel. At the right end of the façade, paired doors flanked by windows fill an overhead door opening. The brick has been painted and a black tile wainscot added.

RESEARCH

The Lightsey-Carroll-Firestone (Oilcan Harry's) Building was constructed around 1936 as the home of Leggett W. Carroll's Lightsey-Carroll Company, local distributors for Magnolia Beer. The Lower Colorado River Authority had an office in this building in the early 1940s and expanded into the adjacent building at 213 W. 4th Street by 1942. The Firestone Retread Shop opened here around 1946; the building served as a tire retread business shop until the early 1960s. Two businesses servicing automobile transmissions were located here in the mid-1970s; the building was converted to a nightclub use in the late 1980s. Oilcan Harry's expanded into the space formerly known as 209 W. 4th Street when it opened at this location in 1990.¹

Gay bars are broadly acknowledged as a place for grassroots organization and safe space for the LGBTQIA+ community. With over 30 years in operation, Oilcan Harry's is Austin's oldest gay bar.² For many years, the bar hosted annual Red Hot Fundraisers to benefit Project Transitions, a nonprofit that provides services to those living with HIV and AIDS.³ The bar was named by *Out* magazine as one of the world's 50 best gay bars in 2008.⁴

DESIGN STANDARDS

The City of Austin's [Historic Design Standards](#) (March 2021) are based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and are used to evaluate projects at historic landmarks and within historic districts. The Warehouse District was previously identified by Historic Preservation Office staff as a potential historic district. The following standards are applicable in considering the proposed project:

Repair and alterations

1. General standards

These standards do not explicitly address reconstruction. Rather, they emphasize retaining historic materials in place,

¹ From Steve Sadowsky, *Narrative History of Buildings in Austin's Warehouse and Wholesale Districts*, undated (ca. 2009).

² "Oilcan's Celebrates 30 Years Open This Weekend," *Austin Chronicle*, Jan. 23, 2020, <https://www.austinchronicle.com/daily/qmmunity/2020-01-23/oilcans-celebrates-30-years-open-this-weekend/>.

³ "Making a Difference at St. Edward's and at Oilcan Harry's," *Austin American-Statesman*, July 9, 2006, B2.

⁴ "Madonna to Visit Oilcan Harry's?" *Austin American-Statesman*, Apr. 24, 2008, A2.

planning for repair when needed due to deterioration, and replacing materials only when deteriorated beyond repair. For this project, reconstruction is not proposed based on the existing conditions of the buildings. Rather, it is a means of protecting original building materials from damage during construction of the proposed high-rise tower.

4. Exterior walls and trim

These standards emphasize retaining historic masonry walls and using replacement mortar that matches the historic mortar in composition, joint profile, and color. For this project, the existing brick will be reused, with paint removed or the bricks turned to reveal the unpainted side. Care will be taken to match the masonry patterns and detailing in reconstruction.

5. Windows, doors, and screens

11. Commercial storefronts

Standards in these sections emphasize retention of historic materials, or where elements have been previously altered or replaced, using new designs and materials that are compatible with the scale and style of the building.

The original steel window will be evaluated for reinstallation based on its condition. The window will be retrofitted with new glazing to meet energy code requirements while repairing the steel frame and sash.

Other openings are previously altered, including infill of the original entrance and replacement of an overhead door with paired doors and sidelights. The project will involve new glazing and doors within these openings, which is a compatible treatment that will maintain the overall configuration of the façade.

Commercial additions

2. Scale, massing, and height

These standards emphasize that additions should appear subordinate to a historic building. Within an urban setting surrounded by high-rise towers, the standards allow vertical additions that are set back at least 20' behind the building parapet, with a potential 5' cantilever forward at a greater height. The proposed tower is set back 5' behind the parapet. The material and color selection are intended to differentiate the addition and cause it to visually recede behind the parapet, such that it does not overwhelm the building despite the shallower setback.

Summary

The proposal to demolish and reconstruct the building façade, rather than retain it in place, does not meet the standards that would be applied in review of proposed work to a historic landmark. However, it represents a compromise solution intended to maintain the streetscape character of this block of the Warehouse District. The project entails careful reconstruction using the existing brick and accurately capturing building details. The design of the tower includes a vertical hyphen with a restrained architectural treatment, set back from and intended to visually recede behind the parapet.

PROPERTY EVALUATION

The *Historic Buildings in the Warehouse District Survey* (ca. 2009) lists the property as high priority for inclusion in a potential historic district.

Designation Criteria—Historic Landmark

- 1) The building is more than 50 years old.
- 2) The building retains moderate to high integrity. Modifications include infill of the door and overhead door within existing openings, painting of the façade, and addition of a tile wainscot.
- 3) Properties must meet two criteria for landmark designation (LDC §25-2-352). Staff has evaluated the property and determined that it may meet two criteria:
 - a. Architecture. The building is a particularly intact example of a utilitarian warehouse with modest Mission Revival stylistic influences.
 - b. Historical association. The historic uses of the building are typical of buildings within the downtown Warehouse District. The property does not appear to have individually significant associations.
 - 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 possesses a unique location and physical characteristics as part of the Warehouse District. Further, Oilcan Harry's formed the nucleus of Austin's LGBTQIA+ entertainment district, contributing to the image and cultural identity of a particular group. The significance of a property must have its basis at least 50 years ago, unless there is an argument for exceptional significance (as defined by [Criteria Consideration G](#) for the National Register of Historic Places). The 50-year benchmark for evaluation is intended to give sufficient perspective on what is historically important. In order to adequately evaluate more recent

significance, there must be scholarly research or other assessment of a property’s historical import, as well as a comparison with related properties to identify which best represents the historical associations. While Oilcan Harry’s is not 50 years of age, its status as Austin’s oldest operational gay bar may meet the threshold to demonstrate exceptional significance.

- 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

The Architectural Review Committee provided feedback on the proposed project on April 11, 2022. Committee members emphasized the importance of historical accuracy and retention of original materials and patterns in treatment of the building façades. The building façades should be preserved in place during construction, or if reconstructed, involvement of a preservationist on the project team and rigor in field measurements is critical. Different brick treatments on the various façades gives each building a distinct character. Restoration of missing or altered features should be based on documentary or physical evidence of an earlier configuration. Transoms and fenestration patterns should be maintained.

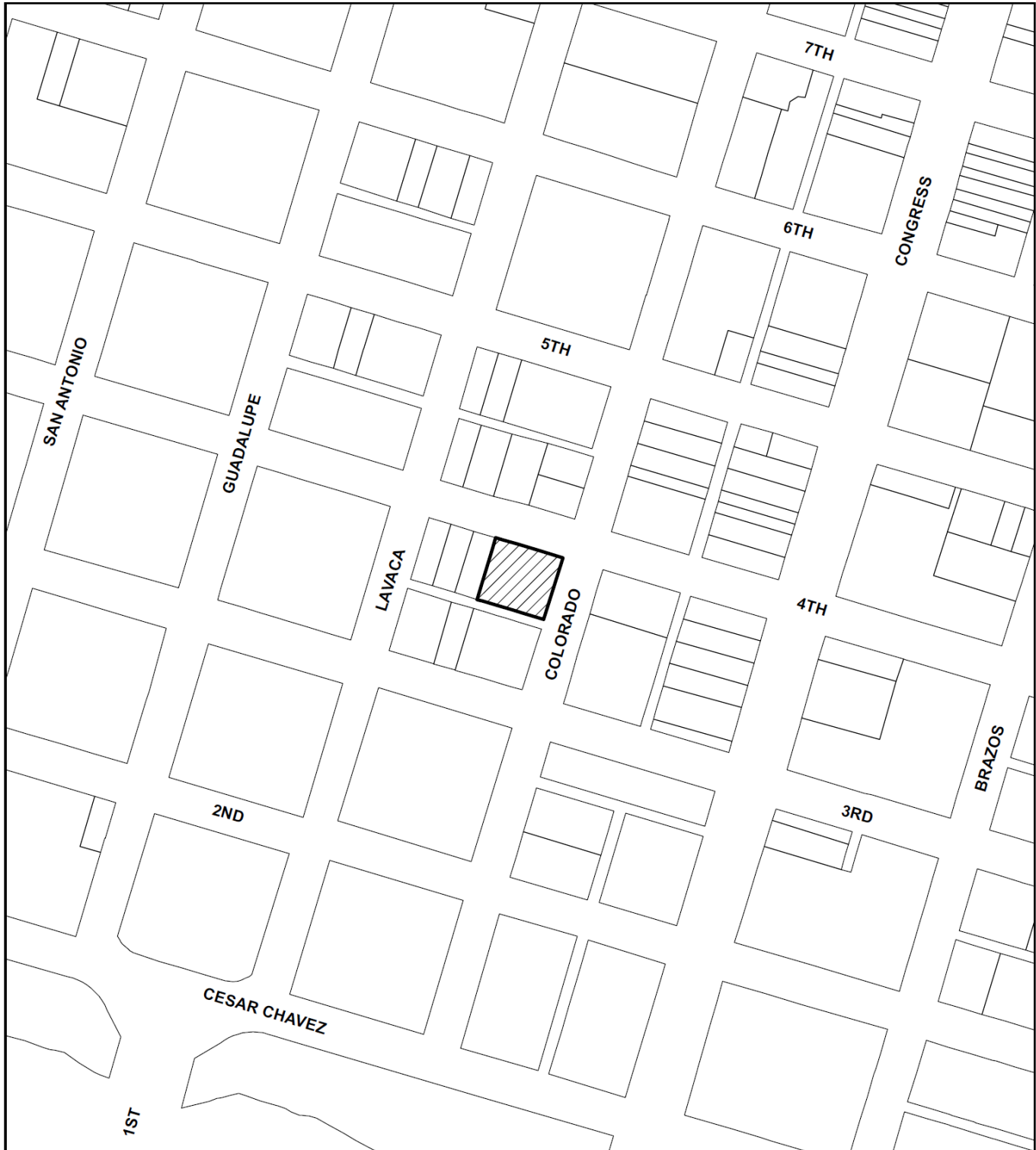
The relationship between this block of warehouses and the landmark Nelson Davis Warehouse across Colorado should be considered. At the corner of 4th and Colorado, committee members recommended retaining the masonry of the corner building, with fenestration removed to create an open-air plaza, rather than removing the corner entirely.

The setback of the new tower is critical to not overwhelming the warehouse façades. Committee members appreciated the neutral color and texture of the tower garage cladding at this level. Greenery at the parapet level would detract from the historic character of the warehouses.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

In consideration of the applicant’s commitment to reconstruct the building façade, release the associated permits upon completion of a City of Austin Documentation Package.

LOCATION MAP



SUBJECT TRACT



PENDING CASE



ZONING BOUNDARY

NOTIFICATIONS

CASE#: GF 22-047912

LOCATION: 201- 211 W 4TH STREET



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.

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Photos



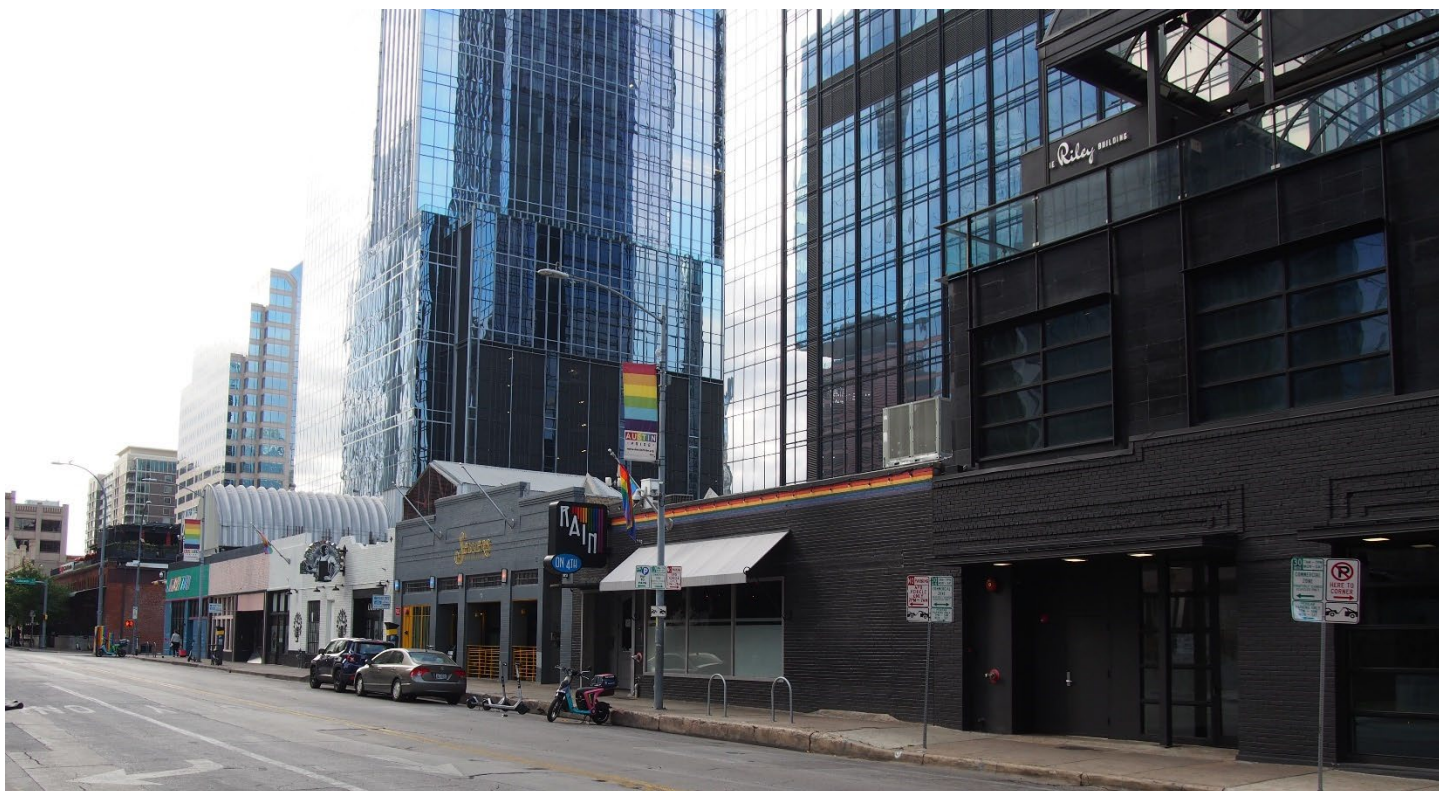
*Jerry's Automatic Transmissions Center, 1979 photograph.
House Building File: 4th W. 211, PICH 06015, Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.*



211 W. 4th Street, Historic Preservation Office staff, April 2022.



211 W. 4th Street, Historic Preservation Office staff, April 2022.



200 block of W. 4th between Colorado and Lavaca streets. Note that buildings at 217 and 219 W. 4th Street (in foreground) are outside of the project area. Historic Preservation Office staff, April 2022.

Occupancy History

City Directory Research, November 2008 and April 2022

1992	211 W. 4 th St.	Address not listed Note: Oilcan Harry's was established in 1990 at 211 W. 4 th St.
1988-89	211 W. 4 th St.	Vacant
1980-86	211 W. 4 th St.	Address not listed
1978	211 W. 4 th St.	Jerry's Automatic Transmission Center
1975	211 W. 4 th St.	Long Transmission Parts T. A. Long, proprietor Automatic Transmission Center Gabino Moreno, Jr., manager
1970-74	211 W. 4 th St.	Long Transmission Parts (automatic transmission center)
1968	211 W. 4 th St.	Capitol Auto Glass
1964	211 W. 4 th St.	Vacant
1959	211 W. 4 th St.	Firestone Retread Shop (tires)
1958	211 W. 4 th St.	Firestone Retreading Division W. B. Wilson, manager Note: W. B. Wilson was also the manager of the main Firestone store at 901 Lavaca St.
1953	211 W. 4 th St.	Firestone Retreading Division Luther New, shop foreman
1949	211 W. 4 th St.	Firestone Retreading Division Otho O. Green, proprietor
1947	211 W. 4 th St.	Firestone Retreading Division Otho O. Green, manager
1944	211 W. 4 th St.	Vacant
1941	211-213 W. 4 th St.	Lower Colorado Authority (Operating Division)
1939	211 W. 4 th St.	Southern Distributing Co. (beer) Cecil Moore and Leggett W. Carroll, proprietors
1937	211 W. 4 th St.	Lightsey Carroll Co. (wholesale beer) Leggett W. Carroll, proprietor
1935	211 W. 4 th St.	Address not listed

Permits

SIGN PERMIT

OWNER Fox Service Co. ADDRESS 211 W. 4th St.PLAT 7 LOT 9 BLK 28SUBDIVISION Original CityOCCUPANCY signBLD PERMIT # 152237 DATE 9-29-75 OWNERS ESTIMATE \$485.00CONTRACTOR T & S Signs NO. OF FIXTURES

WATER TAP REC # SEWER TAP REC #

Sign permit, 1975

exchange 018 for 314 Rd W. W. C. F. 975.73
166242 Water Service Receipt 281989 W.C.

G- 52128

Lot: 11 (7.5.4)
Bk: 28
Plat #: (7) 11Date: 10/29/90
Amt: \$ 340 + 440.00 = 880.00
Size of Meter: 3/4"
City Conn ☒ Drop In

Received of: Richard Donnell Phone: 263-5887
 Service Address: 211 West 4th Street SRR Code: WAI
 Subq. User Cont. #: Monthly Fee Ret. Date:
 Subdivision: Original City PRV: Yes ☒ No ☒
 M.A.: 115 30' Xukchell Rd. Austin 78733
 WW Attached/ Not Required Pd. Previously
 Stub Loc: 10 existing Size:
 Comments: put in 50'x
see FE1989
 S.I.F. By: Date:
 Loc:
 P.C.P. # Sz By Date
 Wa. Insp 11-15-90 By JY0426
 Date Conn: 11-20-90 Loc. EC By 181115:19pm
 One Call: Date 11/20/90 Permit # 901116042
 Plumber:
 Revised by: no permit

Growth Corridor: ☒
 Inside City: ☒ Outside: ☒
 Zone: East ☒ Central ☒ West ☒
 Material Used: 8" x 31" pipe drain
tile used

ENTERED

NOV 21 1990

MAINTENANCE

GOVALLE

By: Anna Chase 292601

W+WW 0053

REV. 11/83

Richard Donnell

Water service receipt, 1990

Historical information

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AGNOLIA

Those are the
"BUY WORDS"
of Texans
wherever
beer is sold

Lightsey-Carroll Co.
211 West 6th St. Phone 2-3188

MAGNOLIA.

Roast Beef—a he-man's dish . . . a favorite old stand by . . . and yet how different it tastes when it's served with a sparkling cold bottle of Magnolia Beer. Simple dishes and old favorites take on added flavor when served with Magnolia—the beer that "goes with" good food. Try it and see how it "peps up" YOUR meals.

Roast Beef



LIGHTSEY-CARROLL CO.
211 W. 6th Phone 2-3188

Advertisements for Magnolia Beer, distributed by the Lightsey-Carroll Company, Austin American, Nov. 7, 1936, and Austin Statesman, Apr. 9, 1937

<p>LEGGETH W. CARROLL</p> <p>Leggeth W. Carroll, 66, 1719 Enfield Rd., died in a local hospital Sunday morning. He was born in Tennessee Colony and later lived in Athens before moving to Austin where he has resided for the past 35 years. He was a member of the University Methodist church, a veteran of World War I, Masonic Lodge, Scottish Rite bodies and the Ben Hur Shrine.</p> <p>Funeral services will be held Tuesday at 10 a.m. at the Weed-Corley funeral home. Dr. Robert E. Ledbetter Jr. will officiate, assisted by Rev. Brady Tyson and</p>	<p>burial will be in Austin Memorial Park.</p> <p>Besides his wife, he is survived by two daughters, Mrs. Eiband Wilshusen, Galveston and Mrs. Jeff Wilson of Laredo; his mother, Mrs. John L. Carroll of Palestine; three brothers, A. B. Carroll Santa Anna, T. A. and George B. Carroll, of Tennessee Colony; three sisters, Mrs. R. K. Blackshear, Austin, Mrs. Addie Blackburn, Corsicana and Mrs. George Collins of Athens. Three grandchildren also survive.</p> <p>MRS. HAL R. ANDERSON</p> <p>Mrs. Hal R. Anderson died at</p>
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Obituary for Leggeth Carroll, owner of the wholesale beer distributorship that operated here in the mid- to late-1930s, Austin American, Apr. 30, 1956.

NAMES Project

The Austin NAMES Project, a local chapter of the International AIDS Memorial Quilt, will sew a memorial fabric heart onto AIDS Quilt panels for a donation of \$3 to \$10. The hearts may be purchased and panels viewed 5-9 p.m. today at 'Bout Time, 9601 N. Interstate 35, and 9 p.m. to midnight at Oilcan Harry's, 211 W. Fourth St.; 9 p.m. to midnight Saturday at Buckles Saloon, 115 San Jacinto, and Chain Drive, 504 Willow; and 9 p.m. to midnight Sunday at Vanities, 117 San Jacinto. Call 448-4508 for information.

"NAMES Project," Austin American-Statesman, Feb. 8, 1991, E6.

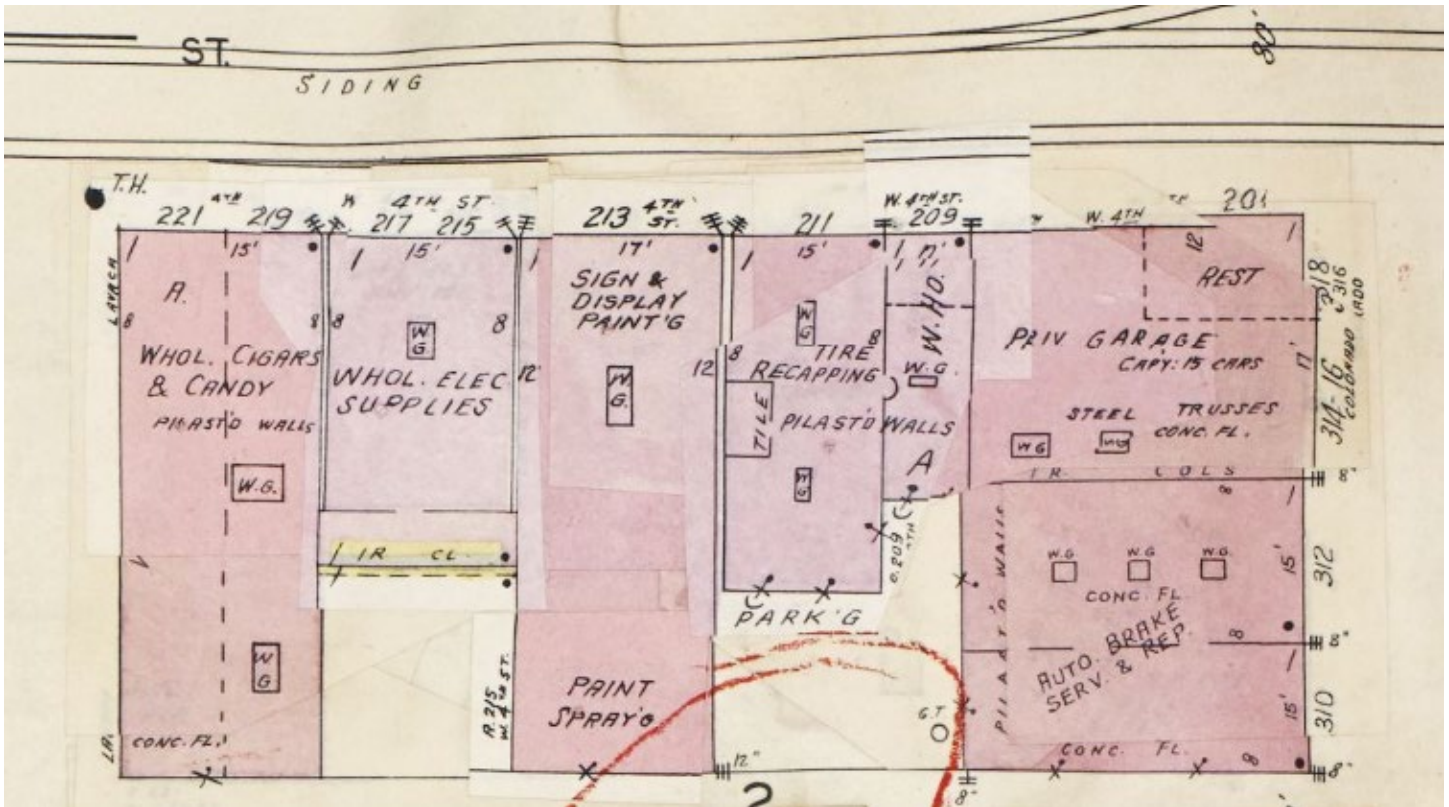
From 1880 to the early 1900s, the district was known as Guy Town, Austin's red-light district. At least 10 brothels occupied the area west of Congress Avenue and north of West First Street.

But anti-vice crusades launched by religious and political leaders cleaned up Guy Town. The brothels were replaced by warehouses, canning factories, auto repair shops and retail stores.

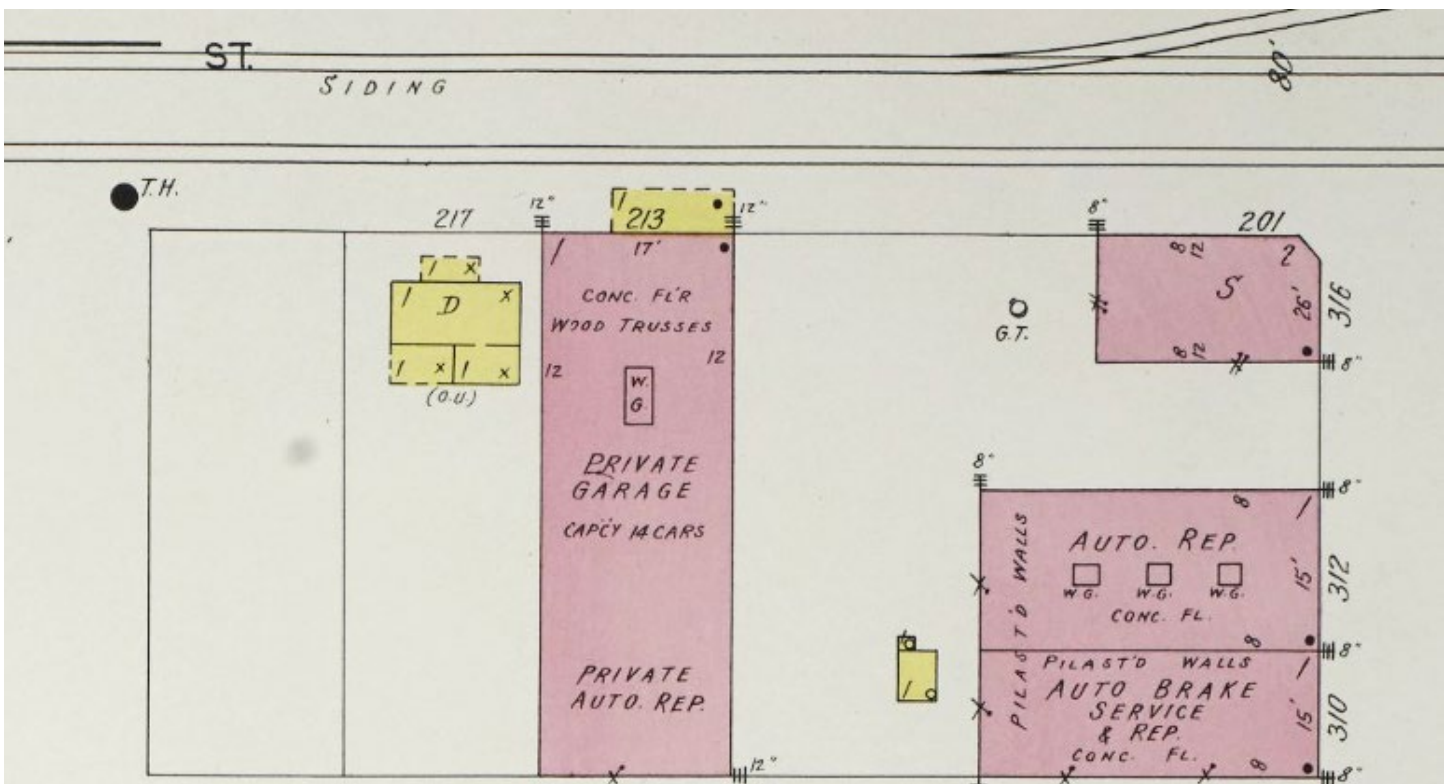
Today, establishments such as Antone's, The Bitter End, Sullivan's, Oilcan Harry's, Cedar Street and Fado Irish Pub brim with crowds most nights of the week. It has become one of the city's retail and restaurant hot spots over the past five years, gaining a reputation as the Sixth Street for the 30-something crowd.

Excerpt from "Apartments in Warehouse District?" Austin American-Statesman, Oct. 3, 1997, D1.

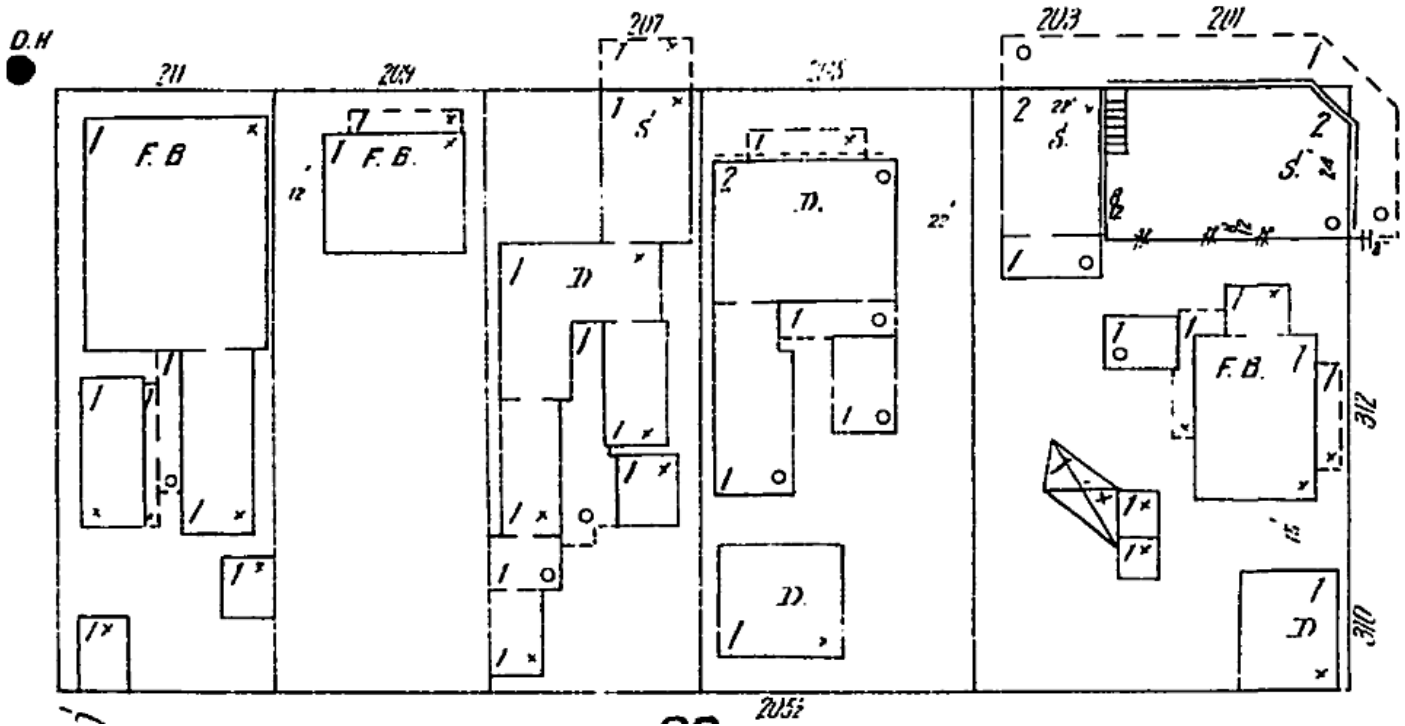
Sanborn Fire Insurance maps



The 1961 map shows the current configuration of the building and notes it was a tire recapping shop.
 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1961, Vol. 1, Sheet 13, accessed via Library of Congress,
https://www.loc.gov/resource/g4034am.g4034am_g08415196101?sp=18&st=image.

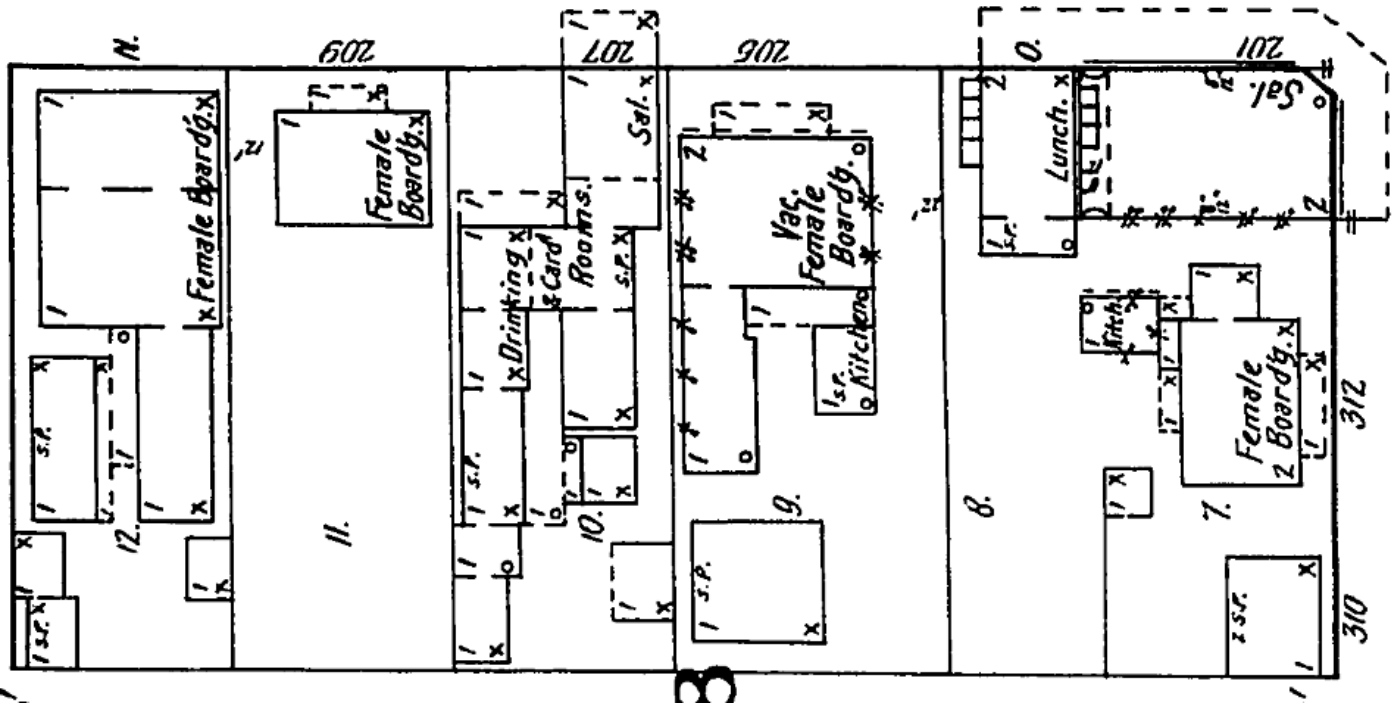


The 1935 map shows this lot as vacant; the current building was constructed in 1936.
 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1935, Sheet 13, accessed via Library of Congress,
https://www.loc.gov/resource/g4034am.g4034am_g084151935/?sp=18&st=image.



The 1900 map shows a two-story dwelling at the site of the current building. Peter Sandoval, a painter, is listed at this address as late as 1927. By 1929, this lot as well as the one to the west was home of the Southland Red Ball Motor Bus Company, who built their garage next door around 1928. This lot was vacant by the early 1930s.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1900, Sheet 3, accessed via ProQuest Digital Sanborn Maps, <https://digitalsanbornmaps.proquest.com>.



Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Jan. 1894, Sheet 17, accessed via ProQuest Digital Sanborn Maps, <https://digitalsanbornmaps.proquest.com>.