

CITY OF HOUSTON

Archaeological & Historical Commission

Planning and Development Department

HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGNATION REPORT

DISTRICT NAME: AUDUBON PLACE HISTORIC DISTRICT

LOCATION: SEE ATTACHED SITE LOCATION MAP

APPLICANTS: PETER P. VAN BEMMEL, AUDUBON PLACE PROPERTY OWNER

30-DAY HEARING NOTICE: NOV-10-08

AGENDA ITEM: II

HPO FILE NO: 08HD14

DATE ACCEPTED: OCT-29-08

HAHC HEARING: DEC-11-08

PC HEARING: Dec-18-08

SITE INFORMATION: All of Blocks 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, E23, W23, Montrose Addition; Block 31, Montrose Addition except Montrose Square; Lots 9-16, Block 10; Lots 8-14, Block 11; Lots 5-9, Block 24; Lots 1, 2, 12, and 13, Block 29; Lots 1, 2, 10 thru 13, Block 30, Montrose Addition; Carva Townhouse Condo; Hawthorne Lofts; Hawthorne Street Townhouses; Holley subdivision; Kipling Arms Condo; Kipling Village Townhouse Condo; Manors at Audubon Place; Montrose Place Townhouse Condo; Piazza Savannah; Royal Brook Condo; Stanford Court; Stanford Street Townhomes; Thorne Tree Amend No. 1 -- all of which are replats within the original Montrose Addition, City of Houston, Harris County, Texas.

TYPE OF APPROVAL REQUESTED: Historic District Designation

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY:

The original Montrose Addition, which includes the area known as Audubon Place, was the city's first large-scale, restricted planned suburban subdivision. It was platted in September, 1911 by the Houston Land Corporation, owned by one of Houston's most prominent businessman, John Wiley Link. Link named the area "Montrose" after the historic town in Scotland which was mentioned in the writings of Sir Walter Scott. To design his new subdivision, John Link hired the engineering and construction firm of Stone & Webster (which had just finished building the Interurban line between Houston and Galveston). They are one of the oldest and largest U. S. engineering firms today, having been established in 1889.

One of the most important features of the Montrose Addition are the grand boulevards designed with esplanades, including Lovett, Montrose, Yoakum and Audubon Place Boulevards. The intent was for larger mansions of the most prominent citizens of Houston to be built along the beautiful esplanades in Montrose, including Link's own home on Montrose Boulevard. Edward Teas, Sr., who later founded Teas Nursery, helped plan and landscape Montrose Place, as the area became known. While Montrose was originally platted as one neighborhood, over time sections of the large neighborhood, especially those centered around each of the four boulevard esplanades, have each established an individual civic identity, including Audubon Place.

With the City Beautiful movement sweeping the country, the area was commonly referred to as "Beautiful Montrose" which also became the title of the company's sales brochure. The neighborhood

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developed rapidly over the next ten years as Houston experienced increased growth. Some of Houston's most prominent citizens built homes in and around the Audubon Place Boulevard in the architectural styles that were in vogue in Houston and across the country during its period of development. The styles of architecture found in Audubon Place include: Bungalow, Prairie, Mission Revival, Colonial Revival, Queen Anne, Cape Cod, and Art Deco as well as the Craftsman style, which is the most prevalent style. Several homes in Audubon Place are featured in the "Houston Architectural Guide," while another one has been individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places as well as being designated as City of Houston Protected Landmark. Audubon Place Historic District meets Criteria 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6 for historic district designation.

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE:

The Montrose Addition, which also includes the area now known as Audubon Place, was the city's first large-scale, restricted planned suburban subdivision, which was platted in September, 1911 by Houston Land Corporation. One of the most important features of the entire Montrose Addition are the grand boulevards designed with esplanades, including Lovett, Montrose, Audubon Place and Yoakum Boulevards. While Montrose was originally platted as one neighborhood, over time several sections of the large neighborhood, especially those centered around each of the four boulevard esplanades, have established an individual identity and have even established Civic Associations – one of which being Audubon Place. The boundaries of the Audubon Place Civic Association as well as the proposed historic district, includes Audubon Place Boulevard on the east (which abuts up against Westmoreland Addition and runs north and south only between Hawthorne and West Alabama), Hawthorne Avenue on the north, Roseland on the west and West Alabama on the south (north side only). Another City of Houston historic district, Avondale West, is also part of the Montrose Addition, being located at the northeast corner of the original plat. The Avondale Civic Association, which also had been formed and had created its own community identify, succeeded in 2007 in establishing a second historic district, known as Avondale West Historic District, which is adjacent to the City of Houston Avondale East Historic District. It had been created in 1999, and it comprises the original Avondale Addition platted in 1907.

Before Montrose Addition was platted, it was an open prairie and pasture that stretched endlessly west from Westmoreland Addition (platted in 1902; City Historic District) and Courtland Place Subdivision (platted in 1907; City Historic District). The land upon which John Wiley Link and his Houston Land Corporation developed the Montrose Addition had long been important to the Houston area. This section of southeastern Texas was first occupied by Indians of the Coastal Plains. Although a Spaniard had visited the area in the early 16th century, it was not until 1745 that the French from New Orleans and the Spanish began to vie for control of the region. At that time, the area that included Audubon Place was controlled by Chief Canos of the Orcoquisacs. This chief successfully played the two European powers against one another for many years. The area was once heavily forested, and wildlife was abundant which was supported by Buffalo Bayou.

In the early 19th century, as Americans began to settle the region, grants of land were given to many of the pioneers by the Mexican government. The tracts of land that were awarded at that time to John Richardson Harris and John P. Austin would eventually become the City of Houston after Texas won independence as a Republic. Harris had established a thriving port on Buffalo Bayou by the time the war

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began, and a town, Harrisburg, had grown around it. This was burned immediately before the Battle of San Jacinto in 1836, but was rebuilt after the war. Shortly after the Revolution, the town of Houston was laid out on the bayou above Harrisburg, and began its period of steady growth. Speculation on this land began when the Allen Brothers, John and Augustus, acquired most of the Austin League and began promotion of this town in the wilderness, named after Sam Houston. The rapidly growing town served as the capital of the Republic until 1839. It was during this period, when provisions were scarce and expensive, and housing as an even greater challenge, that the series of yellow fever epidemics began in which the high area north of the White Oak Bayou first became important to the settlement. With each new outbreak of the disease, anxious residents sought to escape the source.

The importance of Houston as a trading center grew rapidly as the movement of Americans westward increased. The population swelled dramatically after the Civil War with a great influx of African-Americans from the South; and the lack of adequate housing again aggravated a major bout with yellow fever in 1867. The period from 1874 to 1890 brought tremendous commercial expansion to Houston as Buffalo Bayou was made more navigable and the construction of the Houston Ship Channel was begun. The city began to function more and more as a port. Another means of transportation that greatly affected the city during that era was the railroad. By 1890, Houston had grown to be a principal center for the railroads in Texas. As trade and the transportation business grew, and as technology provided new methods of transportation, the need for housing increased for those who participated in this booming commerce.

By the end of World War I, Houston had developed an economic maturity that had no rival in the South. It had developed a superior transportation system that became a pipeline to the world and thus to its vast resources. Houston's leaders had learned early on that its success would depend on transportation, and they focused on the development of a vast network of railroads and the Port of Houston. Although the city had always prospered and grown, it was on the verge of experiencing phenomenal growth in population and a "real estate" boom the likes of which it had never seen before. The real estate boom applied not only to Houston's business houses but to its neighborhoods and residential housing as well. From 1920 to 1924, Houston's population increased 46.5 percent, reaching 202,590 people. The demand for new housing is reflected in the building permit activity, which increased 42.7% over the previous year when it reached \$20,000,000 in 1923. The phenomenal growth of Houston also attracted many investors to Houston, including John Wiley Link.

John Wiley Link, lawyer, land developer, and businessman, and the son of David Lowman and Nancy Emmaline (Henry) Link, was born near Gallatin, Texas, on December 1, 1866. He studied law at Baylor University and was admitted to the bar in 1888. In 1891 he joined the law firm of Holland and Holland in Amarillo, and in that same year, he married Ihna Imola Holland in 1891. He moved with the firm in 1895 to Orange, where he became mayor in 1900. During this time he was instrumental in securing the Beaumont-Orange deepwater channel, and he organized the Beaumont Ship Building and Dry Dock Company. In 1910 Link and his family moved to Houston, where in 1912 he formed and became president of Link Oil Corporation. In 1921, Link became vice president and general manager of the Kirby Lumber Company. In 1926 he became first chairman of the board of the American General Insurance Company. He also became president of the Dr Pepper parent company in 1929. Later, he joined Kirby Lumber Company and served as vice-president and general manager. He was president of the Link-Ford Investment Company, the Polar Wave Ice Company and the Polar Wave Ice Rink. He

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served as a director of Union National Bank, the San Jacinto Trust Company and the Bankers Trust Company. He formed the Miller-Link Lumber Company, which became one of the largest lumber companies in the state. He is also credited with forming the first paper pulp mill in the South.

Soon after moving to Houston in 1910, Link formed the Houston Land Corporation, which purchased 167 acres, described as being located on the South Side of Buffalo Bayou, Lots 11, 12, 17 and 18 and part of Lot 13 of the Obedience Fort Smith Survey. The land purchased for the Montrose Addition was part of a land grant in the South End of Houston, a 3,370 acre tract, granted in 1845 to Mrs. Obedience Smith. Smith's survey also included earlier subdivisions of Houston, which were adjacent to Montrose Addition, including: Avondale, Courtlandt Place and Westmoreland. Link named the area "Montrose" after the historic town in Scotland which was mentioned in the writings of Sir Walter Scott. In September 1911, Link platted Montrose Addition and began development. Montrose Addition was Houston's first large-scale, restricted, planned suburban subdivision. To design his new subdivision, John Link hired the engineering and construction firm of Stone & Webster (which had just finished building the Interurban line between Houston and Galveston). Over 1,000 lots were platted and an expenditure of over one million dollars was made for improvements. The intent was for larger mansions of the most prominent citizens of Houston to be built along the beautiful esplanades in Montrose. All of the esplanades in Montrose remain in tact today, except Montrose Boulevard esplanade, which has been paved to widen it and to add more lanes for traffic.

According to Wikipedia Encyclopedia, Stone & Webster, which remains in business today, was founded as an American engineering services company in Stoughton, Massachusetts. Stone & Webster was founded as an electrical testing lab and consulting firm by electrical engineers, Charles Stone and Edwin Webster in 1889. Charles Stone and Edwin Webster first met in 1884 and became close friends while studying electrical engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. In 1890, only two years after graduating, they formed the Massachusetts Electrical Engineering Company. The name was changed to Stone & Webster in 1893. Their company was one of the earliest electrical engineering consulting firms in the United States. Stone & Webster's first major project was the construction of a hydroelectric plant for the New England paper company in 1890. Stone & Webster not only had valuable insight into developing and managing utilities but they also had keen intuition for businesses to invest in. Through the panic of 1893, Stone & Webster were able to acquire the Nashville Electric Light and Power Company for a few thousand dollars and later sold it for \$500,000. Throughout the next ten years, Stone & Webster acquired interest in a large number of utilities while offering managerial, engineering and financial consulting to a number of independent utility firms. Even though Stone & Webster were not a holding company, their financial and managerial presence meant that they had considerable influence in policy decisions. They would often be paid in utility stock.

According to Steven Baron in "History of the Houston Electric Company," the Houston City Street Railway company went into another receivership in 1901, and at that time, the street railway was sold to investors associated with the Stone & Webster firm of Massachusetts. It was reorganized as the Houston Electric Company.

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By 1908, Stone & Webster listed thirty-one railway and lighting concerns under its management including five located in Washington State. They were: Puget Sound Electric Railway; Puget Sound International Railway and Power Company; Puget Sound Power Company; The Seattle Electric Company; and Whatcom County Railway and Light Company.

When Stone & Webster had come to Texas to build the Galveston-Houston Electric Railway in 1910-1911, Link must have been impressed by the company, as he hired them to design his new Montrose Addition. Between 1911 and 1936 the Galveston-Houston Electric Railway, called the Interurban, ran parallel to the GH&H RR and provided thirty-minute service from Webster to Houston. The total trip was fifty miles between Galveston and Houston. During 1925 and 1926 it won first place in the nation in an interurban speed contest.

According to the Texas Almanac for 1910, the Stone & Webster Management Association of Boston, Massachusetts, managed and operated the following companies in Texas: Northern Texas Traction Company, Galveston Electric Company, Houston Electric Company, El Paso Electric Company, Dallas Consolidated Electric Street Railway Company, Rapid Transit Railway Company (Dallas), Metropolitan Street Railway Company (Dallas), and Galveston-Houston Electric Railway Company (currently under construction). Two interurban lines are projected by this management, one to connect Dallas and Ennis through Waxahachie, the other to connect Fort Worth and Cleburne. The Northern Texas Traction Company operates lines in Fort Worth, between Fort Worth and Dallas, and in Oak Cliff, a section of Dallas. Capital stock \$2,900,000, trackage 82.5 miles. The Galveston Electric Company: Capital stock \$1,350,000, of which \$350,000 is preferred; miles of track 35.1 miles. The Houston Electric Company: Capital stock, common \$2,000,000, preferred \$1,000,000, miles of track 49.8 miles.

By 1912, Stone & Webster divided itself into three specialized subsidiaries: Stone & Webster Engineering, Stone & Webster Management Association and Stone & Webster and Blodgett Inc.

Stone & Webster was sensitive to the concerns of large utility holding companies and were careful to emphasize the complete independence of these utilities. In 1916, J. D. Ross, superintendent of Seattle City Light, issued a critical report pertaining to Stone & Webster's presence in Seattle and effectively showed that there were 49 companies under Stone & Webster's management. Stone & Webster was also involved in Puget Sound area street railways. In 1900, they had controlled and merged eight small rail lines in Seattle. Soon after, they also took over the street railway systems of Tacoma and Everett.

Due to the promise of Washington States natural resources for hydroelectric power and seemingly limitless development opportunities brought companies like Stone & Webster to the state. Edwin Webster believed that outside capital was crucial to develop the resources of Washington, and chided those who thought otherwise. In 1905, Stone & Webster bought out the power and lighting properties that were once owned by the Bellingham Bay Improvement Company. These included the York Street Steam plant and the partially built Nooksack Falls Hydroelectric Power Plant. Stone & Webster took over construction operations and on September 21, 1906, Bellingham received power from the plant via a 47 mile long transmission line. Stone & Webster was involved in creating the facilities and laboratories for the Manhattan Project. Prior to its acquisition it was also part of the Maine Yankee decommissioning project. In 2000, Stone & Webster filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection due to cash flow problems. It was bought at auction by the Shaw Group for \$150 million.

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In order to attract people to the new development, John Link in 1912 built the first mansion at 3800 Montrose Boulevard, at the southwest corner of Alabama and Montrose. The house is reminiscent of the Neo-Classical mansion in Orange, Texas that Link had built for his wife, Inna Imola Holland, and their six children. Link chose his new Houston home to be designed by the architectural firm of Sanguinet, Staats and Barnes of Fort Worth, who were active in Houston during that period designing buildings in various styles. When Link sold his house in 1916 for \$90,000, it was the highest price ever paid for a house in Houston up to that time. The home was sold to Thomas P. Lee, an independent oilman. He became involved with the Texas Company, and he was actively involved in this company's growth and development. Together with J. S. Cullinan and others, Lee formed and became president of Farmers Petroleum Company. Later he formed the American Republics Corporation and became one of the oil industry's leaders and experts. Lee married and had five daughters. Known as the Link-Lee Mansion, the house is now the administration building of the University of St. Thomas. The historic home is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and also is a designated Landmark of the City of Houston.

Other prominent residents of Houston followed Link's lead and also built mansions on the boulevards, including the: Henry H. Dickson House at 3614 Montrose in 1917, designed by Alfred C. Finn, and the Walter W. Fondren House at 3410 Montrose in 1920. However, Link never meant his Montrose Addition to be an exclusive domain for only the rich. Streets running between the boulevards offered lots as small as fifty by one hundred feet for seventeen hundred dollars in 1911. This was still expensive land for the time, but suitable for the middle-class, who built two-story houses and bungalows.

The Houston Land Corporation prided themselves on the variety of architectural styles built in Montrose, including Craftsman, Prairie and Classical Revival houses. According to "Houston the Unknown City" by Marguerite Johnston, "Downtown Houston's grid runs at an angle to the compass lines." All four main thoroughfares in the Montrose Addition – Montrose, Audubon Place, Lovett and Yoakum Boulevards, were drawn on a true north-south grid. Montrose Boulevard ran from Buffalo Bayou to Main Street. All of the boulevards were paved and the esplanades were landscaped. The grandest houses were to be built along the four boulevard esplanades. Edward Teas, Sr., who later founded Teas Nursery, helped plan and landscape Montrose Place, as the area became known. Historical documents note that seven trainloads of palm trees for the boulevards as well as thousands of evergreens, camphor and shade trees were installed. When Link purchased the land for the Montrose Addition, it was transversed by the Galveston, Houston and San Antonio Railroad. In fact the railroad dissected the area known as Audubon Place. The railroad was eventually abandoned, and the right-of-way was replatted into residential lots.

The names of the streets selected for the Audubon Place area of the Montrose Addition plat dated September, 1911 included: Audubon Place, Hawthorne, Terry (now Roseland), Harold, Kipling, Oxford (now Marshall), Conner (now Stanford) and West Alabama on the south. West Alabama also replaced names of other streets along the same route, including Mound Street, West Milam Road and Ross Street. At the time of initial development, the subdivision contained 11 of Houston's 26 miles of paved roads to accommodate the proliferation of automobiles. Additionally, there were over 22 miles of concrete curbs and sidewalks, eight miles of sanitary sewers, seven miles of water mains and many miles of gas lines. With the City Beautiful movement sweeping the country, the area was commonly referred to as "Beautiful Montrose" which also became the title of the company's sales brochure. Within the first year,

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over 65 homes had been constructed. The neighborhood developed rapidly over the next ten years as Houston experienced increased growth.

The Montrose line of the Houston Electric Company provided streetcar service between the new neighborhood and downtown. On opening day, August 18, 1912, hundreds of Houstonians gathered in bleachers to wait their turn for the inaugural run. A brass band provided the entertainment while Snyder's Ice Cream Company provided free refreshments. Before the expansion of the Houston Electric Street Railway Company's streetcar service to outlying areas, much of Houston's development occurred close to downtown's business district. With the extension of the South End line, "suburban" neighborhoods, such as Audubon Place, were made viable. The intersection at Roseland and West Main was the terminus and turnaround for the Montrose Streetcar Line. The Montrose Car Line went down Roseland, turned east on Hawthorne Street and then north on Taft Street. Although streetcar service lasted for nearly 25 years on the Montrose Line, the last car ran on March 13, 1937. By 1940, there were no more streetcars in Houston, which succumbed to newer forms of transportation provided by bus and by automobiles. It was even discovered through Federal court hearings that the bus and automobile manufacturing companies had actually conspired against the streetcar companies all across America, but by then it was too late.

The Audubon Place neighborhood developed quickly as did the entire Montrose Addition. Prominent Audubon Place residents included: construction magnate, Thomas Tellepsen; Oscar P. Jackson, owner of one of the largest garden seed companies in the Southwest; C. Louis Kerr, District Sales Manager for Gulf Refining Company; James Dore, sales manager for the Houston Car Wheel & Machine Company, suppliers to the railroad industry; and Edna W. Saunders, a famous impresario who in 1919, brought the French Army Veterans Band and the New York Philharmonic Orchestra to Houston for the first time. Other prominent residents also included: John Reeves, a dealer for Pierce Arrow & Stutz automobiles; Elbert Catlin, the Chief Engineer for The Texas Company; Abraham Schulman, president of the Lone Star Jewelry Manufacturing Company; George Cohen, president of Foley Brothers department store; Houston City Attorney, Winston McMahan; John Tucker, the General Superintendent for Gulf Production Company; Leonard Attwell, comptroller for Humble Oil & Refining Company; Leo Hamblet, President of First National Oil Company; Houston Chronicle columnist, Leon Hale; Houston Symphony conductor, Paul Berge; noted music teacher and choirmaster, Hu T. Huffmaster; cotton broker, Edward Forbes; and Joseph and Mary Stevenson. Joseph Stevenson was a carriage maker by trade and in 1903, he began a long and successful partnership with a blacksmith named C. Jim Stewart. In addition to building and repairing wagons and buggies, they operated the largest horseshoeing parlor in Texas. Changing with the times to provide auto body and engine services, the firm today provides engineering services and power systems worldwide. In 1991, Stewart & Stevenson was named to the Fortune 500 List of Industrial Companies.

When the original Montrose Addition was platted in 1911, it was a purely residential neighborhood. Over the years, however, commercial and institutional encroachment has been so pervasive that these few blocks, now known as Audubon Place, represent one of the last remaining residential enclaves within the traditional boundaries of Montrose. After World War II, many families moved from this area to the suburbs and the neighborhood entered a prolonged period of substantial change. During this time, the United States experienced a housing crunch as millions of soldiers returned home and started new families. Houston, like many other major metropolitan areas, struggled to meet the housing demands.

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While several of the original residents remained in Audubon Place, and continued to maintain their homes, many of the old homes were either demolished or divided into multiple units, or they were simply allowed to deteriorate, and the fabric of the neighborhood fell into jeopardy. (“Historic Homes in Audubon Place Report”)

However, there were many individuals who recognized the charm and historical significance of these, once neglected buildings, and over the past decade, have purchased and restored them – thus the neighborhood has experienced a revitalization. In the early 1990's, concerned residents formed the Audubon Place Association, a 501c3 civic association, whose mission is to provide neighbors with a common forum through which they may present a united front in facing the myriad and ever-changing problems associated with inner-city living. In May 1995 Audubon Place successfully reinstated deed restrictions under the name of the Historic Montrose Association. Residents of the community have also worked together to improve and beautify the area. In 1997 the Civic Association raised \$3,000, which was matched by the City of Houston, when the association was the recipient of a matching grant for esplanade beautification.

Many of the nearby, early 20th century neighborhoods, including Avondale, Courtlandt Place and Westmoreland, have been revitalized too, and residents have succeeded in having their historic neighborhoods being listed in the National Register of Historic Places and/or designated as City of Houston Historic Districts.

HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HOUSES:

The homes and buildings in the Audubon Place neighborhood reflect the architectural styles that were in vogue in Houston and across the country during its period of development. The styles of architecture found in the neighborhood include: Bungalow, Prairie, Mission Revival, Colonial Revival, Queen Anne, Cape Cod, and Art Deco (commercial building fronting on West Alabama), as well as the Craftsman style, which is the most prevalent style. Siding materials utilized for the exterior of the buildings include: stucco, brick, and wood cladding.

Between 1905 and 1925, the Bungalow and Craftsman styles became one of the predominant house forms in Houston's suburban neighborhoods, especially in Montrose. The rise in popularity of this style in Houston actually reflected a nationwide movement, which started in the Western United States and moved to the East. The bungalow became the perfect speculative house for the nation's new suburban cities. Stylistically the house had an eclectic beginning with influences coming from India, Spain and Japan and flourished by its incorporation of these stylistic elements from other cultures. The house type could be rustic or clean and open in the manner of prairie houses. Or the bungalow could be built-up to approximate a cottage form. The style was best known as a low, small house that prototyped informal living, used natural materials and relied on simplified design. Bungalow designers were especially adept at generating floor plan variation and roof forms as well as ornamental variations including changes in gables, window placement and materials. This flexible vocabulary made it possible to build rows of bungalows without having to repeat the same forms on the same block. The plan became one of the most popular in American building history. It was promoted by such popular publications as *Ladies' Home Journal* and the *Sears Roebuck and Co. Catalog*. House plans could be purchased for \$8 to \$12. Furthermore, the bungalow fit neatly on the standard 50-foot by 100-foot lots and the plans utilized

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space very efficiently in an open yet compact manner. More importantly, the bungalow floor plan accommodated Houston's hot humid climate by providing natural ventilation with air freely circulating from one room to another. In addition the wide overhanging eaves shaded rooms from the sun while the covered front porch served as additional outdoor living space. By the mid 1920s, the bungalow style had declined in popularity and was built with less frequency. The suburban cottage replaced the bungalow as the prevalent style. The cottage continued the tradition of a small, single family, detached house, but gave it a more picturesque image than that of the natural straightforward bungalow.

According to a "Field Guide to American Houses" by Virginia and Lee McAlester, the "Craftsman houses were inspired by the work of two California brothers – Charles Sumner and Henry Mather Greene – who practiced together in Pasadena (California) from 1893 to 1914. About 1903 they began to design simple Craftsman-type bungalows. Several influences – the English Arts and Crafts movement, an interest in oriental wooden architecture, and their early training in the manual arts – appear to have led the Greens to design and build these intricately detailed buildings. These and similar residences were given extensive publicity in such magazines as the Western Architect, The Architect, House Beautiful, Good Housekeeping, Architectural Record, Country Life in America, and Ladies' Home Journal, thus familiarizing the rest of the nation with the style. As a result, a flood of pattern books appeared, offering plans for Craftsman bungalows; some even offered completely pre-cut packages of lumber and detailing to be assembled by local labor. Through these vehicles, the one-story Craftsman house quickly became the most popular and fashionable house in the country." This style or its influence was adapted to two-story homes as well, where many examples can be found today in Audubon Place.

Several homes in Audubon Place are featured in the "Houston Architectural Guide" (AIA), including the Ewart and Lillian Lightfoot Home at 3702 Audubon Place (1923) and the George Cohen Home at 607 Kipling (1919). Others have been individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places, including the Joseph and Mary Stevenson Home at 804 Harold (1915) – which is also a designated City of Houston Protected Landmark. The oldest home in the neighborhood, located at 3419 Audubon Place, was built in 1907, while two other homes were built before 1910 – thus predating the platting of Montrose Addition. Furthermore, there were 39 homes were built before 1920; 97 homes were built before 1930 and 147 homes were built before 1957.

Many of the historic homes, representing several important architectural styles, were built by prominent Houston builders or designed by Houston architects, including:

Henry Yates

814 Marshall

Herman Vogt

607 Harold

Ewart Lightfoot

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3702 Audubon Place - Lightfoot was superintendent of construction for the George T. Broun Construction Company. Originally from Kentucky, Lightfoot was a prominent building contractor in Houston for 25 years. He was founder and president of the United Motor Courts of America. He lived here until his death in 1950; the house at 3702 Audubon Place is still owned by his family, and is featured in the Houston AIA Guide.

Houston Land Corporation

Created by John Wiley Link, a lawyer, land developer, and businessman, and son of David Lowman and Nancy Emmaline (Henry) Link. John Wiley Link was born near Gallatin, Texas, on December 1, 1866. He studied law at Baylor University and was admitted to the bar in 1888. In 1891 he joined the law firm of Holland and Holland in Amarillo. He married Ihna Imola Holland in 1891. He moved with the firm in 1895 to Orange, where he became mayor in 1900. During this time he was instrumental in securing the Beaumont-Orange deepwater channel. Link moved with his family to Houston in 1910 and developed the Montrose area with his company, Houston Land Corporation. Instrumental in developing the Montrose Subdivision. Houston Land Corporation constructed the homes at 809 Harold, 902 Kipling and 902 Marshall.

Fred J. Marett

Frank J. Marett was a French-Canadian who became an architect and builder. He began his career in Houston in 1897. Some of his earliest projects were in the W. R. Baker subdivision in the 6th Ward and in the A. C. Allen Addition near the modern-day intersection of North Main and Quitman. By the early 1900s, Marett began to be contracted to construct much grander houses and for clients in Houston's new upscale South End neighborhoods. Marett appears to have been affected by the Great Depression, which began with the stock market crash of 1929. In 1930, Frank Marett was no longer listed in City Directories as an architect and builder and is instead listed simply as a carpenter. Of the projects that Marett designed and built before 1920, only the home at 412 Avondale is an extant example of his work.

E. L. Crain & Company

E. L. Crain, a banker by trade, was involved heavily in home construction and housing development. He played a very active role in house construction in Audubon Place. He also built new homes scattered throughout new subdivisions all over Houston, including Houston Heights and Norhill. He not only built homes but he was also the developer of several Houston neighborhoods, namely: Cherryhurst, Pinehurst, Southside Place and Garden Oaks. He and his family, including sons Lillo and Carter, lived at 117 Lovett Boulevard. Crain's catalogue, showing the product of the Crain's Ready Cut House Company, provided a variety of home styles for his clients. The Ready Cut house kits were predominantly for smaller bungalows and compact two-story frame houses for the working class on a limited budget. All the materials needed for a Crain house, including windows, door frames, and cabinets, were made at the factory. Everything needed to complete the house, even up to the necessary number of wallpaper rolls, could be delivered to the site in the order. A building crew was provided also as an option at an additional cost. The Colonial Bungalow, an impressive two-story house with six white Greek Revival pillars across the front, sold for \$9,000. The one-story Spanish bungalow sold for \$7,750. E. L. Crain & Company built the houses located at 804 Harold, 610 Harold, 709 Harold and 802 Kipling.

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The information and sources for this application provided by residents: Gary Coover, Dan Piette, Doreen Stoller, Maaike and Peter Van Bommel; and Courtney Tardy- Greater Houston Preservation Alliance - have been reviewed, verified, edited and supplemented with additional research and sources by Courtney Spillane, Planning and Development Department and Randy Pace, Historic Preservation Officer, Planning and Development Department, City of Houston.

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APPROVAL CRITERIA:

According to Section 33-222 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance:

Application for designation of an historic district shall be initiated by either:

(b)(1) The owners of at least 51 percent of the tracts in the proposed district, which tracts shall constitute 51 percent of the land area within the proposed district exclusive of street, alley and fee simple pipeline or utility rights-of-way and publicly owned land, shall make application for designation of an historic district. In case of a dispute over whether the percentage requirements have been satisfied, it shall be the burden of the challenger to establish by a preponderance of the evidence through the real property records of the county in which the proposed historic district is located or other public records that the applicants have not satisfied the percentage requirements.

There are 230 unique tract owners within the proposed Audubon Place Historic District of whom 123 support the designation - thus 54.78% of the tract owners support the designation. The total land area owned by the tract owners in support constitutes 52.71% percent of the total land area within the proposed historic district.

<i>Audubon Place Historic District Support Statistics</i>	<i>Total Tracts</i>	<i>Signed in Support</i>	<i>Percentage of Total</i>	<i>Total Land Area of Tract Owner Support</i>
	230	123	54.78%	52.71%

(b) Notwithstanding the foregoing, no building, structure, object or site less than 50 years old shall be designated as a landmark or archaeological site, and no area in which the majority of buildings, structures or objects is less than 50 years old shall be designated as an historic district, unless it is found that the buildings, structure, object, site or area is of extraordinary importance to the city, state or nation for reasons not based on age.

There are a total of 223 sites within the proposed Audubon Place Historic District. Of the 223 sites, there are 133 or 59.64% of which are classified as “historic” (62 being classified as “contributing” and 71 being classified as “potentially contributing”). Of the 223 sites, there are 90 or 40.36% of which are classified as “non-contributing.”

<i>Audubon Place Historic District Sites Inventory</i>	<i>Contributing Historic Sites</i>	<i>Potentially Contributing Historic Sites</i>	<i>Non Contributing / Non Historic Sites & One Vacant Lot</i>
<i>Total = 223</i>	62	71	90
<i>Percent of Total</i>	27.80%	31.84 %	40.36%

According to the approval criteria in Section 33-224 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance:

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(a) The Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission and the Houston Planning Commission, in making recommendations with respect to designation, and the City Council, in making a designation, shall consider one or more of the following criteria, as applicable:

S	NA		S - satisfies	NA - not applicable
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(1) Whether the building, structure, object, site or area possesses character, interest or value as a visible reminder of the development, heritage, and cultural and ethnic diversity of the city, state, or nation;		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(3) Whether the building, structure, object, site or area is identified with a person who, or group or event that, contributed significantly to the cultural or historical development of the city, state, or nation;		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(4) Whether the building or structure or the buildings or structures within the area exemplify a particular architectural style or building type important to the city;		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(5) Whether the building or structure or the buildings or structures within the area are the best remaining examples of an architectural style or building type in a neighborhood;		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(6) Whether the building, structure, object or site or the buildings, structures, objects or sites within the area are identified as the work of a person or group whose work has influenced the heritage of the city, state, or nation;		

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission recommend to the Houston Planning Commission the Historic District designation of the Audubon Place Historic District.

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EXHIBIT A
SITE LOCATION MAP
AUDUBON PLACE HISTORIC DISTRICT
HOUSTON, TEXAS



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EXHIBIT B

INVENTORY OF AUDUBON PLACE HISTORIC DISTRICT
HOUSTON, TEXAS