



PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

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Mecom Fountain and five distinctive homes receive historic designation

HOUSTON, June 29, 2016 – City Council designated the Stanley C. Woods House, the Governor William P. Hobby and Secretary Oveta Culp Hobby House, the Elwyn and Imola Carroll House, and the Frank H. Roberts House as historic landmarks. Council also designated the Mecom Fountain and the Hirzel-Von Haxhausen House as Protected Historic Landmarks. The protected designation preserves the structure in perpetuity.

Mecom Fountain has been one of Hermann Park's most beloved sites. In September 1963, John W. Mecom Sr. and his wife, Mary Elizabeth, gifted a \$100,000 fountain designed by Eugene Werlin, AIA, to the City of Houston. In 1964, the park installed Mecom Fountain at the site of George Kessler's old sunken garden across the street from the Warwick Hotel, maintaining the elliptical shape of the existing landscaped median.



Mecom Fountain is significant as the work of architect Eugene Werlin, as well as for its modern design, as a reminder of the city's development, and for its association with Hermann Park and the Mecom family.



The Hirzel-von Haxhausen House at 2120 Sabine Street in the First Ward was designed and built in 1883 for Carl and Anna Hirzel. The First Ward is one of the four original wards created by the city of Houston in 1840. The house is a classic example of the Queen Anne residential style. The Hirzel's resided at the home for 22 years until they sold the property to August and Minna von Haxthausen. August von Haxthausen (1874-1931) ran the Texas Deutsche Zeitung (TDZ), the city's German-language newspaper. He also served as a Texas state representative from 1909-1917.

First Ward still has a small number of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century homes, such as the Hirzel-von Haxhausen House, representing some of the oldest structures in Houston. The house was sensitively rehabilitated in 2015.



The Stanley C. Woods House at 3330 Chevy Chase was constructed in 1961 in the River Oaks Country Club Estates subdivision of Houston, Texas. The 2½-story 4,000 square foot Colonial Revival residence was designed by architect Robert Weldon Maurice. Maurice had apprenticed in the office of Birdsall P. Briscoe, renowned eclectic-style Houston architect, and was himself was a highly regarded architect with a broad scope of built work ranging from the Tropical Bird Building for the Houston Zoo and the French style house at 3734 Willowick Road in River Oaks.

Shortly after completion, the house was purchased in 1962 by Stanley Crawford Woods, a prominent Houston lawyer, social activist, and politician. Woods fought and won several notable state and federal Supreme Court anti-trust suits, advocating for independent producers and landowners against major oil and gas companies. Woods ran in the Democratic primaries for Governor of Texas in 1966.

The Governor William P. Hobby and Secretary Oveta Culp Hobby House at 2115 Glen Haven Blvd was designed by Harry D. Payne, FAIA. The house is the only example of a speculatively built Tudor Revival style in Old Braeswood. Planned to rival River Oaks, the late 1920s neighborhood is significant for its wide range of eclectic and architecturally significant structures sited on large tree covered lots. Governor and Secretary Hobby impacted the City of Houston through their civic leadership, dispersion of the news, and their charitable contributions.



The Elwyn & Imola Carroll House at 1827 Kirby Drive is a significant example of Tudor Revival style design. The house has a distinctive Y-shaped plan with the main entrance facing northwest at the corner of Kirby Drive and Pelham Drive. The house was built in 1927 as a speculative property for the River Oaks Corporation and designed by the firm's in-house architect, Charles W. Oliver, who would go on to create 75 homes in the River Oaks subdivision.

The first owners of 1827 Kirby Drive were Mr. and Mrs. Elwyn Carroll. Elwyn Carroll was a member of a prominent lumber and oil family from Beaumont, while Imola Link Carroll was the daughter of successful Houston businessman/developer, John Wiley Link.

The Carrolls lived in the Kirby Drive house briefly from 1928 to 1929. In 1932, George Sawtelle, president of the Kirby Oil Company, purchased the property.

The Frank H. Roberts House, designed and built for Frank H. Roberts at 3308 Parkwood in Riverside Terrace, was constructed in 1936. The house exemplifies the Tudor Revival style, a popular national architectural style of the time, found throughout the Boulevard Oaks Historic District and River Oaks. The Roberts House was built by contractor/developer Ivan H. Greer – two Greer’s homes in River Oaks have been designated City of Houston historic landmarks.



Frank H. Roberts served as the President of the Gulf Brewing Company, which was founded and owned by renowned Houstonian, Howard Hughes. Hughes’ brewery created the most popular beer in Texas, Grand Prize Beer, and was a Houston landmark from 1933-1963. In 1992, after the house had stood vacant and deteriorating for ten years, the South MacGregor Civic Club requested a dangerous building decree and subsequent demolition order from the City of Houston. The condemned house was scheduled to be demolished when the current owners purchased it in June 1993 and began rehabilitating the structure.

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