

LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT

LANDMARK NAME: Walter F. Daly House
OWNERS: Charlie and Sharon Bryan
APPLICANTS: Same
LOCATION: 2938 Del Monte Drive – River Oaks

AGENDA ITEM: II.C
HPO FILE NO: 12L264
DATE ACCEPTED: Feb-6-2012
HAHC HEARING: May-17-2012

SITE INFORMATION

Lot 13, Block 32, River Oaks Sec. 1, City of Houston, Harris County, Texas. The site includes a two-story, brick residence.

TYPE OF APPROVAL REQUESTED: Landmark Designation

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

The Walter F. Daly House, built circa 1929 on Del Monte Drive in River Oaks, was designed by architect Charles Oliver for the Russell Brown Company. The Russell Brown Company was a prolific builder and designer of new houses in Houston's affluent neighborhoods from 1902 until the early 1940s. After 10 years with the Russell Brown Company, Charles Oliver worked as the in-house architect of the River Oaks Corporation from 1926 to 1932, when he left to start his own practice. Oliver designed over 75 homes in River Oaks in a variety of styles, and had an enormous impact on the character of the neighborhood. The Daly House is an example of the Tudor Revival style and is faced with brick, stone, stucco and wood.

Early occupants of the house were Walter F. Daly, a cotton broker, and Charles Simpson, vice president of the Rogers Galvanizing Company. Lodwich and Madaline Bolin purchased the house in 1948 and lived in the house for 44 years. Mr. Bolin was a vice president at Brown and Root, Inc, and endowed two chairs at Baylor College of Medicine.

The Walter F. Daly House meets Criteria 1, 3, 4, and 6 for Landmark designation.

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE

Charles Oliver

The home at 2938 Del Monte Drive was designed by noted Houston architect, Charles Oliver for the Russell Brown Company. Mr. Oliver was born in 1894 and was a native of Arkansas. By 1920, he was an architect in Dallas. He worked for the Russell Brown Company in Dallas, which constructed many stylish homes in Dallas and Houston during the first quarter of the 20th century. For the Russell Brown Company, he designed 3205 Del Monte and 3217 Del Monte, and 3223 Chevy Chase in River Oaks.

Oliver worked for the Russell Brown Company from 1916 until 1926, when he was hired away by the River Oaks Corporation. Oliver was the in-house architect for the River Oaks Corporation from 1926 to 1932, when he left to start his own practice. Over that period, Oliver would design 75 homes in the River Oaks neighborhood in many styles including Georgian, Tudor, Dutch Colonial, Mediterranean and Norman. By 1930, he was living in a Mediterranean-style home on Pelham Drive in River Oaks with his wife Eloise and their children. Some of his most distinctive homes

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were Mediterranean style homes, of which approximately six are still standing in River Oaks. Oliver had an enormous impact on the character of the neighborhood. Through the River Oaks Card File and other sources, the following have been identified as Oliver homes in River Oaks:

- 981 Kirby Dr.
- 1059 Kirby Dr.
- 1407 Kirby Dr, 1930
- 1528 Kirby Dr, 1927-28
- 1708 River Oaks Blvd.
- 1827 Kirby Drive, 1927-28
- 1903 Bellmeade Rd, 1926 (Mediterranean)
- 1904 Bellmeade Rd
- 1915 Bellmeade Rd
- 1925 Bellmeade, 1928
- 2007 River Oaks Blvd, 1929 (home of Mike Hogg, developer of River Oaks)
- 2105 Brentwood Dr
- 2109 Inwood Dr
- 2116 Del Monte Dr
- 2121 Inwood Dr
- 2136 Inwood Dr
- 2141 Pine Valley, c. 1930 (Tudor)
- 2146 Stanmore Dr
- 2147 Inwood Dr
- 2149 Pine Valley Dr
- 2159 Pelham Dr
- 2164 Troon Road
- 2169 Troon Road
- 2192 Troon Road
- 2202 Stanmore Dr.
- 2203 Brentwood Dr, 1925 (Mediterranean)
- 2217 Troon Road
- 2224 Looscan Lane
- 2228 Chilton Road
- 2408 Stanmore Dr
- 2438 Pelham Dr
- 2454 Pine Valley Dr
- 2504 Pelham Dr, c. 1929 (Norman)
- 2508 Pelham Dr, 1927 (Charles Oliver's family home)
- 2517 Del Monte Dr
- 2530 Stanmore Dr
- 2915 Chevy Chase Dr
- 2938 Del Monte Dr
- 2970 Lazy Lane, 1934 (as consulting architect to James C. Mackenzie with Birdsall Briscoe)
- 3015 Del Monte, c. 1929 (Tudor)
- 3108 Locke Lane
- 3108 Reba Dr
- 3205 Del Monte Dr
- 3214 Inwood Dr
- 3217 Del Monte Dr
- 3219 Reba Dr
- 3223 Chevy Chase Dr, c. 1934 (Mediterranean)
- 3229 Del Monte Dr
- 3230 Del Monte Dr
- 3235 Locke Lane
- 3238 Locke Lane
- 3245 Reba Dr
- 3250 Locke Lane
- 3257 Huntingdon Place
- 3257 Reba Dr
- 3262 Reba Dr
- 3263 Huntingdon Place
- 3315 Del Monte Dr
- 3330 Del Monte Dr
- 3358 Inwood Dr, 1930
- 3372 Del Monte Dr
- 3394 Chevy Chase, c. 1928
- 3428 Chevy Chase Dr.

Although the Daly House is recorded as being the design of Charles Oliver for the Russell Brown Company in the River Oaks files, it appears to have been built after Oliver had changed employment to the River Oaks Corporation. A date of 1929 is set as the construction date, based on

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the move of the Daly family to the home in 1930 and a scrap of the Houston Chronicle dated December 15, 1929 and found by the current owners behind the original vanity mirror.

Russell Brown Company

Another major architectural contributor to the character of River Oaks and other affluent Houston neighborhoods was the firm of Russell Brown Company, a Houston-based architectural design and construction company. It was chartered in 1906 by Russell Brown, who was born on December 12, 1875, in Taylor, Texas, and came to Houston in 1902. The company was a prolific builder and designer of new houses in Houston from 1902 until the early 1940s. Brown expanded his operations by opening branch offices in Dallas in 1916, San Antonio in 1922, and Los Angeles in 1923.

The Russell Brown Company provided architectural services (although Brown himself was not an architect) in addition to construction services. The firm specialized in house design and construction, and also designed several commercial buildings in Houston in the 1920s and 1930s, such as the first Jefferson Davis Hospital and the Schlumberger Building, as well as the six-story Guaranty State Bank and Simpson Office Building in Ardmore, Oklahoma in 1917.

The firm was very active in Houston from the 1910s until World War II. His houses were known to be of the first quality in design and materials. The Russell Brown Company constructed numerous houses in the Avondale, Westmoreland, Montrose, Boulevard Oaks, and River Oaks neighborhoods in Houston and in the Dallas subdivision of Munger Place. The company was the general contractor of such notable Houston houses as the William S. Farish House in Shadyside (1925) and the Cleveland Sewall House in River Oaks (1926, N.R. and COH Protected Landmark). Brown's own house was in Westmoreland. Among the architects who worked at various times for the Russell Brown Company in Houston were A. N. Dawson, Charles W. Oliver, Mike Mebane, and Gonzalo Ancira. In an indication of the quality of the Russell Brown architects, the River Oaks Corporation hired one of Russell Brown's architects, Charles Oliver, as in-house architect in 1926.

Additional information on the Russell Brown Company comes from a company brochure published circa 1936 which notes the following:

“The restful harmony and careful designing, the elegance imparted by graceful simplicity marks the difference between Russell Brown Company homes and the regular run of places so often built.”

Russell Brown retired from the building business in the mid 1940s. He lived out his retirement at his ranch near Juliff, Texas, south of Houston, where he died in 1963.

Walter F. and Nellie Daly

Walter F. Daly was born in Memphis c. 1873. At the time of his death in 1941, he had lived in Houston for 18 years and worked as a cotton broker, owning the firm W.F. Daly and Son. He and his family spent much of his life in Waco, Texas. He was a member of the Presbyterian Church. His death was marked on the front page of the Houston Chronicle on June 19, 1941.

The Dalys moved to River Oaks in 1930 from 3516 Garrott Street in Montrose. (That home still stands and is part of the Westmoreland Historic District). Their unmarried adult children, Amanda and Morgan, lived with them in the house. The home was sold by his daughter in February 1943 to

Mr. and Mrs. Charles L. Simpson. It does not appear that the Daly family stayed long in Houston after that.

Charles L. Simpson

Mr. Simpson worked as the Vice President and general manager of the Rogers Galvanizing Company. In this Houston Chronicle article the house, with an accompanying pictures was thus described:

“Mr. and Mrs. Charles L. Simpson purchased this well-appointed English home at 2938 Del Monte in River Oaks during the week for \$26,000. It has a site 120 x 180 feet. The floor plan includes three bedrooms, two screened porches, two baths, and a powder room. The place has attic ventilation and a central heating plant. Mr. Simpson is vice president of the Rogers Galvanizing Company. The seller was Amanda C. Daly.”

Lodwick T. and Madaline G. Bolin

The Simpson family did not stay long in the house, selling it to the Bolin family by 1948. Mr. Bolin was a Vice-President at Brown and Root, Inc. He was born in 1899 in Brazoria County, graduated from Houston’s Central High School, and attended Texas A&M University. He died on August 2, 1980. He endowed two chairs at Baylor College of Medicine. Madaline Elba Goforth Bolin was born in 1904. Mrs. Bolin lived in the house until her death on November 14, 1992. The house sold to the current owners in 1993.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION AND RESTORATION HISTORY

The Daly House is 4,691 square feet and sited facing North on a 21,240 square foot lot. The home is executed in a Tudor Revival style, is two-stories tall and is faced with brick and stone with stucco and wood elements. Multiple intersecting front gables are placed under a tall side gabled main roof.

The house’s front façade is four bays wide. The west bay of the house is a two story bay that projects forward from the main façade and terminates in a front facing gable roof. This bay is faced with brick. The first floor façade features a tri-part casement metal window, divided by wood, and capped with a brick lintel of vertically placed bricks. The second floor façade features a four-part casement metal window, divided by wood and capped with a brick lintel of vertically placed bricks. Each window features eight rectangular panes of glass. Diagonally placed bricks that parallel the roof line and terminate in a straight line decorate the façade.

The next bay is also two-story and feature the entrance to the home. It also projects from the main part of the house but is slightly set back from the west bay. The first floor facade is faced in stone and the second floor façade is faced with half-timbering decoration. The front door is an arched batten wood door with a glazed rectangular window. The door is deeply inset from the stone façade. On the second story, there is decorative half timbering detail with a tri-part casement window of diagonal panes of leaded glass. The peak of the front gable roof is slightly shorter than the west bay.

Moving east, the next bay of the house is set back from the entrance bay. It is faced with brick and is under a side gabled roof with a slight overhang. The first floor façade of this bay features a four-part casement windows of rectangular panes of glass, capped with a brick lintel of vertically placed

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bricks. Above this window on the second floor is a four-part casement metal window, divided by wood and capped with a brick lintel of vertically placed bricks. A tall brick chimney is placed at the end of this bay.

The east bay of the house is set back again, and features a larger tri-part fixed pane windows on the first floor façade. This was probably an enclosed porch of some kind. Above are two paired casement windows set directly under the overhanging eaves. A tall chimney terminates the house.

The current owners have lived in the house since 1993, and have preserved the house in exceptional condition.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ancestry.com

Houston Chronicle, February 7, 1943.

Houston City Directories

“Walter F. Daly, retired cotton broker, Expires,” *Houston Chronicle*, June 19, 1941.

The information and sources provided by the applicant for this application have been reviewed, verified, edited and supplemented with additional research and sources by Diana DuCroz, Planning and Development Department, City of Houston.

APPROVAL CRITERIA FOR PROTECTED LANDMARK DESIGNATION

The HAHC shall review each application for designation of a protected landmark that is included in an application for designation of a landmark at the same time and in the same manner as it reviews and considers the application for a landmark. The HAHC and the Planning Commission, in making recommendations with respect to a protected landmark designation, and the City Council, in making a designation, shall consider whether the building, structure, site, or area meets at least three of the criteria in Section 33-224, or one of the criteria in Section 33-229, as follows:

S NA

S - satisfies NA - not applicable

Meets at least three of the following (Sec. 33-229(a)(1)):

- (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;
- (2) Whether the building, structure, object, site or area is the location of a significant local, state or national event;
- (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;
- (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;

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- (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;
- (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;
- (7) Whether specific evidence exists that unique archaeological resources are present;
- (8) Whether the building, structure, object or site has value as a significant element of community sentiment or public pride.

AND

- (9) If less than 50 years old, or proposed historic district containing a majority of buildings, structures, or objects that are less than 50 years old, whether the building, structure, object, site, or area is of extraordinary importance to the city, state or nation for reasons not based on age (Sec. 33-224(b)).

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission recommend to City Council the Landmark Designation of the Walter F. Daly House at 2938 Del Monte Drive.

EXHIBIT A - PHOTOS



EXHIBIT B - SITE LOCATION MAP

