

CITY OF HOUSTON

Archaeological & Historical Commission

Planning and Development Department

LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT

LANDMARK NAME: Roy P. Etchison House

OWNER: Vallette and Russell Windham

APPLICANT: Same as Owner

LOCATION: 2140 Pine Valley Drive - River Oaks

AGENDA ITEM: III.a

HPO FILE NO: 13L284

DATE ACCEPTED: 07/30/2013

HAHC HEARING: 08/14/2013

SITE INFORMATION: Lot 1, Block 49, River Oaks Sec. 3, City of Houston, Harris County, Texas. The site includes a historic two-story, brick single family residence.

TYPE OF APPROVAL REQUESTED: Landmark Designation

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

The Roy P. Etchison House was designed by architect Eugene Werlin and first occupied by the Etchison family in 1940. Mr. Etchison was an owner and operator of Brooks System Sandwich automated food shops, aka One's a Meal. The two-story Etchison house is designed in the Monterey style and is faced with multicolored brick in a "drunk brick" bond meant to look uneven and hand done.

Eugene Werlin received a degree in architecture from Rice Institute in 1927 and started his career as a draftsman for Houston architect Cameron Fairchild. Werlin designed numerous houses in Old Braeswood and River Oaks, and was also the architect for the Wilshire Village Apartments on West Alabama and Dunlavy, the Sakowitz Store at 5000 Westheimer Rd, the Craig's Department Store in Rice Village, and Miller Outdoor Theater at Hermann Park.

The Roy P. Etchison House at 2140 Pine Valley Drive meets criteria 1, 4, and 6 for Landmark Designation.

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE

Roy P. Etchison

Roy Pardo Etchison was born on August 4, 1900, in McLennan, Texas. His father was a successful truck farmer. He served in World War I and graduated from the Rice Institute in 1922, where he was a member of the business club and the Samurai Club. He remained active with Rice, serving on the Alumni Board in 1941. He started his career in Houston as a clerk at the Texas Company, and he married Kathryn Yeaton in the mid-1920s.

Kathryn was born in Texas on October 26, 1904. She started work at the age of 15 as a stenographer but also attended Kidd-Key College in Sherman, Texas, with her sister Ruth. Ruth and Kathryn worked as stenographers for the Peerless Laundry Company in the early 1920s.

In 1927, Etchison was the general manager of The Sandwich Shop Company in Houston, which had two locations. By 1928, Etchison was a purchasing agent for the new Brooks System Sandwich Company and by 1930, he is listed in the U.S. Census as a Vice President and General Manager. When he purchased the home on Pine Valley, he was listed in the paper as the owner of the company.

CITY OF HOUSTON

Archaeological & Historical Commission

Planning and Development Department

Etchison was active in the restaurant business and in 1953, he was elected President of the Texas Restaurant Association.

The lot at 2140 Pine Valley Drive was originally purchased by Dr. Louis C. Schuster in 1937. Dr. Schuster developed the home but did not live there, according to Houston City Directories. He also developed a home at 2219 Pine Valley, which was also designed by architect Eugene Werlin.

Etchison purchased the 2140 Pine Valley home in 1940, according to this article in the *Houston Post* from May 12, 1940:

Mr. and Mrs. Roy Etchison have purchased a two-story brick veneer residence at 2140 Pine Valley Drive, in River Oaks, from Dr. L.C. Schuster for \$24,000, it was reported Saturday.

The residence, designed by Eugene Werlin, architect, contains a living room, library, dining room, breakfast room, kitchen and powder room downstairs and three bedrooms and two baths upstairs.

Servants' quarters are above a two-car garage.

Mr. Etchison is vice president of the Brooks System Sandwich shops.

A similar article in the *Houston Post* from June 30, 1940 also describes the home. The *Houston Chronicle* also published a photograph of the home. The captions read:

Roy E. (sic) Etchison, vice president of the Brooks System Sandwich Shops, has purchased the above home at 2140 Pine Valley Drive in River Oaks from Dr. Louis Schuster for \$25,000. The site is 231 by 239 feet. The house includes three bedrooms, two baths, two dressing rooms, an entrance hall and wrought iron balcony, a paneled library and breakfast room, screened living porch and powder room. The sale was handled by E.M. Betty, sales manager from Frank P. Young, realtor.

The Etchisons' arrival in River Oaks was announced in the *River Oaks Magazine*:

Mr. and Mrs. Roy P. Etchison have built a most interesting and delightful Monterey type home at 2140 Pine Valley Drive. The residence sits on a corner site, nestling in huge oaks trees and is a departure from the conventional interpretation of Monterey in that it has a number of interesting elevations and various wings and ells. It is constructed of rough, beautiful brick, has white trim and shutters. Clapboards are used in the gallery overhanging a side entrance, and again in the construction of the servants' quarters and motor room which make a wing to the house proper. There is a white painted iron balcony, beautiful in design, and a curving walk of white stone slabs to add another touch of interest. Mr. and Mrs. Etchison have a five year old daughter, Barbara. At the present time Mr. Etchison's mother, Mrs. A.N. Etchison, and his niece, Francille Downs, from Waco, are visitors in the home. Mr. Etchison is owner of the Brooks System Sandwich Shops.

The Etchisons lived in the home on Pine Valley until the late 1960s. Kathryn Etchison died in Arlington, Virginia, on May 15, 1992. Roy Etchison died in Dallas on November 23, 1993.

CITY OF HOUSTON

Archaeological & Historical Commission

Planning and Development Department

Brooks System Sandwich Shops, AKA One's A Meal

The Brooks Sandwich System came to Houston in 1928. Roy Etchison was the purchasing agent at the time. He quickly became the general manager and a vice president by 1930. At that time, the company had two restaurants, both downtown. By 1947, when Etchison left the company, the company had six locations. Etchison went on to found Etchison's Quick Foods.

The Brooks System Sandwich Shop ultimately grew to eleven locations around Houston at its peak in the 1960s. Also known as One's A Meal, the name of the restaurant still is recognized today.

Subsequent Owners

The subsequent owners of the property at 2140 Pine Valley include William E. Gipson, Joseph W. Robertson, Jr., and Tina and Robert Yrshus. The current owners purchased the property in 2000.

Eugene Werlin

Eugene Werlin was born in Pennsylvania on March 20, 1905. He moved with his family to Houston, where his father worked as a bookkeeper. Werlin graduated from the Rice Institute in 1927 with a BA in Architecture. He started work as a draftsman for Cameron Fairchild.

Early in his career, Werlin designed several homes in the Braeswood neighborhood, including 2333 Underwood Blvd., 2330 Underwood Blvd, 2329 Underwood Blvd., and 3228 Underwood Blvd. Werlin designed several of Houston's most notable buildings, including the Wilshire Village Apartments at the corner of West Alabama and Dunlavy. That complex of garden apartments was recently demolished for a grocery store. He also designed the Sakowitz Store at 5000 Westheimer Road (now demolished) and Craig's Department Store at 2501 University in the Rice Village (altered). Werlin's firm also designed Miller Outdoor Theater in Hermann Park.

In River Oaks, Werlin designed:

- 3427 Del Monte
- 3827 Del Monte (demolished)
- 3102 Ella Lee (demolished)
- 3653 Inverness (demolished)
- 3663 Inverness (demolished)
- 3389 Inwood (demolished)
- 3702 Inwood (demolished)
- 3618 Locke
- 2219 Pine Valley (demolished)
- 3639 Piping Rock
- 3645 Piping Rock
- 3102 Reba (demolished)
- 3109 Reba (demolished)
- 3610 Willowick
- 3920 Willowick, Werlin's own home, (demolished)

Werlin's son, Eugene Jr., also became an architect. Werlin Sr. died January 22, 1989.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION AND RESTORATION HISTORY

2140 Pine Valley is sited facing southwest on a triangular lot on the corner of Pine Valley Drive and Looscan Lane. The home is designed in the Monterey style. The Monterey style developed in Monterey, California, and was popular from 1930-1950.

CITY OF HOUSTON

Archaeological & Historical Commission

Planning and Development Department

The residence features a cross gable roof and the front façade features a prominent front gable. The residence is faced with multicolored brick that features “drunk brick” bond which is meant to look uneven and hand done. The main entrance is off centered on the front façade. The entrance features a wood paneled three lite entry door with a decorative wood surround and a metal shed roof. On the first floor of the front façade to the left of the front entrance is an 8-over-8 sash window. The first floor also features a bay window centered on the front façade. The bay features a standing seam metal roof and two 4-over-4 sash windows and an 8-over-8 sash window. The second story features a decorative cantilevered iron balcony. The balcony features carved decorative wood beams. The beams are allayed in an AA-B-B-AA pattern. The second story features three 6-over-6 sash windows and two 8-over-8 sash windows. The south side of the front façade features a one-story brick projection with a shed roof.

The north façade facing Looscan Lane features a brick exterior end chimney. The first floor features a 6-over-6 sash window and an 8-over-8 sash window. The second story features four 6-over-6 sash windows and the side gable features a triangular attic vent.

A two story addition with an attached garage was constructed to the rear of the residence in 2011. The north elevation of the addition facing Looscan Lane features two 6-over-4-6 sash windows, a four lite fixed window, and two wood paneled and divided lite garage doors on the first floor and second story features six 6-over-6 sash windows. The west elevation of the addition features a 6-over-6 sash window and glass entry door with a standing seam metal roof on the first floor. The second floor features four 6-over-6 sash windows.

The addition is clad with brick on the first floor and horizontal wood lap siding on the second floor. The front gable two-story attached garage facing Looscan Lane is clad with brick.

The south façade facing Pine Valley Drive features a 6-over-6 sash window and two 8-over-8 sash windows on the first floor. The second floor features three 6-over-6 sash windows. The side gable features a triangular attic vent. The rear of the south elevation cannot be seen from the public right-of-way due to a high wall.

All of the windows in the residence feature inoperable wood slat shutters. The home is in excellent condition.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Houston City Directories, various publishers

Texas General Contractors’ Association Bulletin

River Oaks Scrapbooks, River Oaks Collection, Houston Public Library.

Various resources from Ancestry.com

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

CITY OF HOUSTON

Archaeological & Historical Commission

Planning and Development Department

EXHIBIT A

ROY P. ETCHISON HOUSE
2140 PINE VALLEY DRIVE



CITY OF HOUSTON

Archaeological & Historical Commission

Planning and Development Department

EXHIBIT B
SITE LOCATION MAP
ROY P. ETCHISON HOUSE
2140 PINE VALLEY DRIVE

