

LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT

LANDMARK NAME: The American Brakeshoe Company Building

OWNER: Johnson Kruger Holdings, LTD

APPLICANT: Grace Cynkar, SWCA

LOCATION: 3315 W. 12th Street - Reinerman

AGENDA ITEM: III.B

HPO FILE NO.: 14L294

DATE ACCEPTED: May-07-2014

HAHC HEARING DATE: May-22-2014

SITE INFORMATION

Tract 12E ABST 642 J Reinerman, City of Houston, Harris County, Texas. The site includes a two-story commercial structure.

TYPE OF APPROVAL REQUESTED: Landmark Designation

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

The American Brakeshoe Company Building was built in 1965 as part of a growing suburban industrial development trend in the City of Houston. It provided tenants with both light industrial manufacturing and office space. The building was part of the West Loop Industrial Park (now the Inner Loop Northwest Industrial Submarket), ideally placed for transportation near to the Eureka Junction and the confluence of two railroad lines and freeways. The first occupant was the American Brakeshoe Company, an automobile and railroad brake shoe manufacturer based in New York City.

The American Brakeshoe Company Building is significant as a visual reminder of the area's industrial development and as an example of the Modern Style. Renovated by the current owners in 2014, the building retains a high degree of architectural and historic integrity.

The American Brakeshoe Company Building meets Criteria 1, 4, 5, and 9 for Landmark designation of Section 33-224 of the Houston Historic Preservation Ordinance.

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE

Reinerman Survey

In 1834, John and Anna Reinermann immigrated to Texas from Oldenburg, Germany, with their sons, John Jr. and Henry. During the last leg of their journey from New Orleans to Texas, the schooner on which the family traveled, the Sabine, was shipwrecked off Galveston Island on December 22, 1834. The family continued their travels and settled on the north side of Buffalo Bayou near Memorial Park's current location. The family built a log cabin, planted orchards, and cultivated several fields before John Reinermann's death in 1835.

The Reinermann family remained in the area following John's death. Henry Reinermann married Louisa Schermann on December 19, 1840. The couple had two children before Henry died suddenly in 1844. Louisa married Joseph Sandman the following year and the couple had a son, Joseph Sandman Jr., in 1846.

In the late 1840s, Anna Reinermann applied to the State of Texas for a Headright Grant in the name of her deceased husband and on the grounds that he was present in Texas before the 1836 Revolution.

Headright Grants were land grants reserved for men who had immigrated to Texas prior to the state's revolution.

On April 28, 1847, the State of Texas granted John Reinermann's heirs a land grant consisting of a league (4,338 acres) and labor (177 acres). The boundaries of the John Reinermann league were Buffalo Bayou on the south, the west boundary of the John Austin League on the east (today Reinerman Street), Post Oak Boulevard on the west, and approximately 15th Street on the north. In addition to an interest in the John Reinermann League, Henry Reinermann received a land grant of one-third a league immediately north of his father's land. The boundaries of this property were 26th Street on the north, Mangum Road on the west, and the John Austin Survey on the east.

By the late 1940s, Louisa was no longer married to Joseph Sandman. The cause of their separation is unknown but in 1850 Louisa appears in the U.S. Census married to Christian Bethje. The couple is listed with one daughter and Louisa's previous three children. Their farm, on the original Reinermann property, prospered and by the 1860s included a sawmill, cultivated fields, 300 head of cattle, and additional farm animals.

In 1869, members of the Reinermann family began to move away from the farm near Memorial Park. Some purchased a house in the Brunner Addition along Washington Avenue near its intersection with Shepherd Drive. By 1883, the original property along Buffalo Bayou had been abandoned and heirs of the family had begun selling tracts to various timber operators, beginning with northwest sections of the property. Later, heirs sold the remaining property to land speculators. Descendants of the Reinermann family remain in Houston but have since changed the spelling of their name to 'Reinerman.'

Eureka Junction

Eureka Junction is a railroad yard located approximately 1.8 miles east of Interstate 610 (I-610) and 0.5 miles north of Interstate 10 (I-10). The junction served as a transition yard where trains bringing goods into or out of town could stop and the various cars be reorganized according to the destination and type of goods. The Houston and Texas Central Railway (H&TC), a company begun in 1848 by Ebenezer Allen as the Galveston and Red River Railway (G&RR; until 1856), first operated this junction.

In 1852, the company proposed a line from Houston to Brenham, Texas, with plans to expand further into the interior of the state. Paul Bremond and Thomas William House broke ground on the project in 1853 but progressed slowly, not reaching the 25 miles to Cypress City until 1856. By 1861, the railroad reached 81 miles to Millican, Texas. After a pause in construction during the Civil War, progress on the rail line resumed with H&TC's purchase of the Washington County Railroad Company with a line between Hempstead and Brenham. The H&TC railroad continued to expand throughout the state until the company was bought by Charles Morgan in 1877. It continued operation under the H&TC organization until 1883 when Southern Pacific purchased all of Morgan's railroad holdings.

The Eureka Junction gets its name from Eureka Mills, a small Texas community centered around the Eureka Mill, a cotton mill located five miles northwest of downtown Houston. The mill opened in 1870 under the ownership of a number of Houstonian businessmen and with an initial investment of \$125,000. At its peak, the mill used 17,000 pounds of cotton per day. In 1872, the mill had 75 employees, all of whom lived in the surrounding community of Eureka Mills. By 1888, Eureka Mills was a stop on the H&TC line although the community had already begun to disappear.

Eureka Junction is shown on the 1922 historic topographic map (see Exhibit B) with only a few dirt roads and buildings in the vicinity. The junction sits on the H&TC railroad at its intersection with the

Kansas and Texas Railroad. Eureka Junction continued serving as a rail yard after H&TC became part of Southern Pacific and was a major yard for the Missouri, Kansas, and Texas line by the 1980s. As of 2014, the rail yard remains in service for the Union Pacific Railroad (merged with Southern Pacific c. 1997).

Houston Highway Expansion (I-10 and I-610)

Following the railroad, the development of Houston's highway system played a major role in the City's population and commercial growth during the last half of the twentieth century. In 1949, following World War Two (WWII), Houston had a population of 806,701. Initial plans for Houston superhighways began in the 1930s but were halted due to the Great Depression and then WWII. Following the war, the City of Houston in conjunction with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) Houston Office, the Houston Chamber of Commerce, and Harris County began planning Houston's highways based on a loop and radial system.

In October of 1943, the Texas Transportation Commission (TxDOT after 1991) designated US 75 south of downtown (now the Gulf Freeway) as the City's first freeway. By 1946, a total of five freeways, including two segments of US 75, a segment of US 59, SH 225 (the La Porte Freeway), and a segment of US 90 (now I-10), leading into downtown Houston were approved. In 1954, the core Houston freeway system plan was finalized and published.

The Katy Freeway (I-10 West) was designated as a freeway in two stages, inside I-610 in 1946 and outside I-610 in 1953. The first portion of this highway was completed in 1956 and encompassed a short section between the then-future Memorial City Mall (opened in 1966) and Loop 610. From here the highway expanded both east and west, meeting Loop 610 in 1963 and continuing through downtown in 1968.

The first formal study for a Houston bypass loop occurred in 1941; however Loop 610 was not designated a freeway until 1954 (north, west, and south loops) and 1960 (east loop). The first section of Loop 610 opened for use in 1960; however the complete freeway was not finished until 1975.

The formation and expansion of Houston's freeway system provided new means of efficient transportation into and throughout the city. As a result, developers could build both residential and commercial projects further from downtown. People could commute further distances for work and goods could be transported over greater distances.

Houston Industrial Parks and Districts

During the 1960s and 1970s, Houston experienced a construction boom resulting in numerous new developments. The Astrodome (NRHP 2013) opened in 1964, followed by the first building of the mixed-use Greenway Plaza development in 1967, and major Houston developer, Gerald Hines, completed the Galleria in 1970. At the same time and in large part because of the freeway system, developers and entrepreneurs were also focusing on the Houston suburbs, particularly as locations for offices.

During this construction boom, the suburban industrial park emerged as a new type of development. By selecting a location close to both railroad and highway hubs, developers could offer tenants easy access to raw materials and means of transportation. Materials would come into town on the railroad, be delivered close to or even directly to the industrial complex via railroad spur, and then finished products could be trucked out via the highway system.

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By 1969, Houston had more than 18 suburban industrial parks circling the city offering spaces for light manufacturing, heavy manufacturing, distribution, research, and office space. Just two years later, Houston had a total of 33 industrial parks with five more planned or under construction. Examples of these developments include the following complexes:

- Bankers Mortgage Industrial Center (5700 Clinton Dr.)
- Gulf Port Industrial Park (E. Loop 610 and Wallisville Rd.)
- Brookhollow Industrial Park (W. Loop 610 at NW Freeway)
- White Oak Industrial Park (near I-45 and N. Loop 610)
- Wynnwood Industrial Park (W. Loop 610 at Hempstead Rd.)
- Deer Park Industrial District (Battleground Rd. at Hwy 225)

West Loop Industrial Park

The West Loop Industrial Park is located along W. 11th and W. 12th Streets directly east of I-610 and north of Hempstead Road. It is located along the Southern Pacific Railroad just north of the Eureka Junction (also called the Eureka Rail Yards). Development in this area began circa 1944 when the City extended W. 11th Street west from White Oak Bayou. By 1955, the City of Houston had also extended W. 12th Street, and approximately 20 buildings appear in the area on the topographic map of that year (see Exhibit B). Following the construction of the nearby segments of I-610 and I-10 in the early 1960s, the industrial development underwent a construction boom evident in the number of new buildings visible on the 1967 topographic map (see Exhibit B).

The identity of the original developer of this park is unknown; however, Gerald D. Hines Interests and the Trammell Crow Company are two likely possibilities. Gerald Hines owned land in this area in the 1950s and granted the Missouri, Kansas, and Texas Railroad Company a right-of-way easement running north of and parallel to W. 11th street and through the industrial park location in 1958. Hines Interests also built an industrial building at 3484 W. 12th Street in 1973. The Trammell Crow Company, a group of investor builders, was also advertising available industrial locations at the West Loop Industrial Park in the early 1970s.

Many of the tenants in this industrial park were and are still related to the energy industry. Two of the major companies with locations in this area are the General Electric Co. (GE) and Big Three Industries (now occupied by Air Liquide). GE is first listed on W. 12th Street in 1968 and the building is identified as housing the company's metallurgical department. Big Three Industries, a natural gas distributor, was located at 3535 W. 12th Street in a building designed by Houston architects, Mackie and Kamrath, and built in 1974. Today the building and property is occupied by Air Liquide, another natural gas distributor. Other early tenants of the West Loop Industrial Park include the Harley Sales Company of Texas, which produced gas engines; a plumbing contractor called Humphrey Company, Inc.; and Houston Hermetics, Inc., an air-conditioning parts manufacturer.

The American Brakeshoe Company Building

According to the Harris County Appraisal District (HCAD), the industrial building at 3315 W. 12th Street was built in 1965. Although no records of an architect, contractor, or developer have been found, the first owner of the building was the American Brakeshoe Company as listed in the 1966 Harris County Block Books.

The American Brakeshoe Company began as the Ramapo Foundry in 1901 and manufactured railroad brake shoes. In 1902, it became the American Brake Shoe and Foundry Company. The company's largest complex was located in Mahwah, New Jersey, where 500 workers produced railroad and automotive products, as well as hydraulics, castings, and friction material. Over time the American Brakeshoe Company was incorporated into various entities, such as the Kellogg-American Company, founded in 1910, which produced automotive and service station compressors. In Houston, it is now the Omnigear Group, a power transmission systems manufacturer, located at 1830 W. 15th Street.

Very little information is available about subsequent owners and tenants at 3315 W. 12th Street. According to HCAD, Smith Industries purchased the building in 1984 but no record has been found of this company's product or service. TelTex, Inc., a company marketing communication devices such as telephones, speech aids, and radios, is listed as the building's occupant in the 1991 Houston City Directory. By 2010, the building housed the headquarters of TD Rowe Amusements, Inc. a company providing coin-operated entertainment systems, such as billiards tables, video games, and jukeboxes, to restaurants, bars, and family entertainment centers; however, TD Rowe filed for bankruptcy that same year. In 2011, NuSmile Pediatric Crowns, a manufacturer of pediatric dental crowns, purchased the property. The company completed an addition to the building in 2013 and remains the owner and occupant as of May 2014.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE AND RESTORATION HISTORY

The American Brakeshoe Company Building is a 14,724 square-foot building, facing north, on a 64,861 square-foot lot at 3315 W. 12th Street. The building is a multi-story, high Modern-style, light industrial building located in the Inner Loop Northwest Industrial Submarket, west of the Lazybrook/Timbergrove residential subdivision. Renovated by the current owners in 2013, the building features the original, 1965 one-story, rectangular-plan, brick building and a 2013 two-story, metal addition to the rear (south) side of the building.

The building is unique in comparison to other industrial buildings in the area for its high architectural style. Other buildings may have one or two Modern-style features but they do not compare to the cohesive design of the American Brakeshoe Building. The primary, north façade has a horizontal rhythm emphasized by the flat roof and metal casement ribbon windows with concrete surrounds. A two-story brick tower pierces the building at a 90-degree angle and separates the atrium and front entrance from the rest of the elevation. Placed on the northwest corner of the building, the front entrance features full-height, single-light windows and a single-light glass door with transom.

The west elevation is arranged in three bays. The first includes the single-story, glass front entrance. The second is a brick one-and-a-half-story block, pierced by asymmetrically placed paired and single square single-light windows with concrete surrounds. The third bay is the two-story metal addition with a floor-to-ceiling glass, secondary entrance and metal awning mimicking the primary entrance. Three square, single-light, metal windows pierce the second story of this bay, referencing the second bay's original window openings.

The south elevation is comprised entirely of the 2013 metal addition. Minimal in design, the elevation is pierced by more square, single-light, metal windows on both the first and second stories. A single-truck bay with overhead, metal door and a single metal door with metal awning provide access to the first story.

The east elevation maintains the same three-bay layout as the west elevation. The first bay is the two-story metal addition with a metal stair leading to a single, metal door with metal awning on the second floor. The second bay is the single-story, extended height block from the 1965 building. Unlike the west elevation, this side does not have the same brick cladding. It is composed of concrete masonry units (CMU) and is completely painted white. This bay features four, evenly spaced pairs of single-light, square windows with concrete surrounds. The third bay is brick clad, with center, paired, three-light, metal casement windows.

The building is set back approximately 70 feet from the right-of-way with an open front lawn. An asphalt drive leads from W. 12th Street to visitor parking on the west side of the building and continues to an employee parking lot behind the building. A steel, flat awning provides six covered parking spaces along the southeast corner of the building in the employee lot. A 17-foot Missouri, Kansas, and Texas Railroad easement runs directly south of and along the southern property boundary.

The NuSmile Company purchased this building in 2011 and completed the rear metal addition in 2013, adding 6,140 square feet to the existing 8,584 square-foot building. Glass in all of the exterior windows was replaced with low-E-glass, but the original opening sizes and materials were retained. The American Brakeshoe Company Building retains a high degree of integrity. It retains its integrity of location and workmanship. Its integrity of materials and design has been slightly compromised by the two-story metal addition to the rear of the building. This addition does maintain the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and is easily distinguishable as new construction in comparison to the original 1965 portion of the building. The building's integrity of setting and feeling has also been slightly compromised by the demolition of surrounding industrial buildings of the same era. Along W. 12th Street this building type is giving way to residential townhomes; however industrial buildings remain the major building type as of 2014. Despite these small integrity losses, the American Brakeshoe Company Building retains a high degree of integrity. The 2013 addition has been favorably received, earning the owners a Good Brick Award from Preservation Houston and a nomination for the *Houston Business Journal's* 2014 Landmark Awards in the Historic Renovation category.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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

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EXHIBIT A

PHOTOS

THE AMERICAN BRAKESHOE COMPANY BUILDING
3315 W. 12TH STREET



North and west elevations, view SE, 2014.

(Photo Courtesy of SWCA)

EXHIBIT A

PHOTOS (CONTINUED)

THE AMERICAN BRAKESHOE COMPANY BUILDING
3315 W. 12TH STREET



West and partial north elevations, view SE, c. 2013.

(Photo Courtesy of Bao Loi)

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EXHIBIT A

PHOTOS (CONTINUED)

THE AMERICAN BRAKESHOE COMPANY BUILDING
3315 W. 12TH STREET



South and partial west elevations, view NE, 2014.

(Photo Courtesy of SWCA)



East and north elevations, view SW, 2014.

(Photo Courtesy of SWCA)

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EXHIBIT A

PHOTOS (CONTINUED)

THE AMERICAN BRAKESHOE COMPANY BUILDING
3315 W. 12TH STREET



North and partial west elevations, view SE, c. 2011.

(Photo Courtesy of Shane Barry)



West and south elevations, view SE, c. 2011.

(Photo Courtesy of Shane Barry)

EXHIBIT B

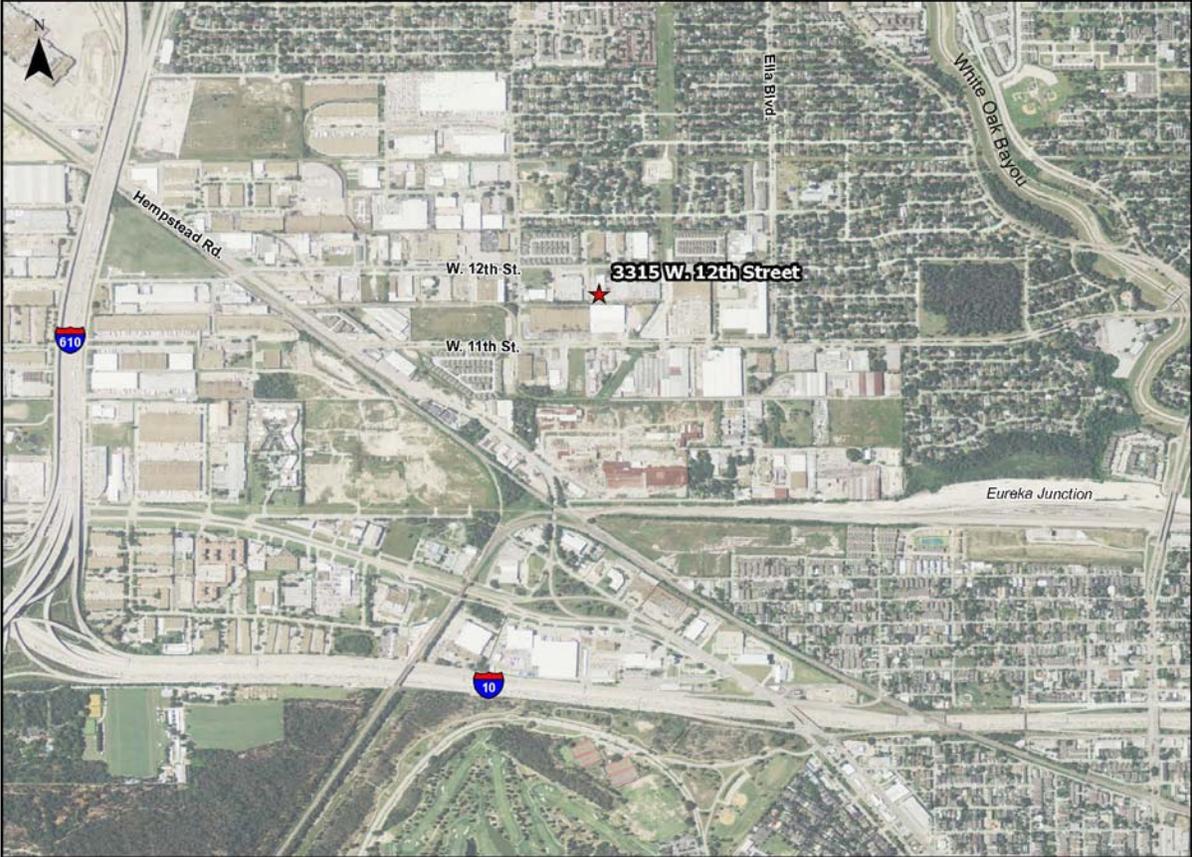
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EXHIBIT C
MAPS
THE AMERICAN BRAKESHOE COMPANY BUILDING
3315 W. 12TH STREET

Location Map



Source: 2012 NAIP Aerial Imagery

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EXHIBIT C
MAPS (CONTINUED)
THE AMERICAN BRAKESHOE COMPANY BUILDING
3315 W. 12TH STREET

1922 Topographic Map



Source: 1922 USGS Topographic Map Houston Heights

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EXHIBIT C
MAPS (CONTINUED)
THE AMERICAN BRAKESHOE COMPANY BUILDING
3315 W. 12TH STREET

1946 Topographic Map



Source: 1946 TVA Topographic Map Houston Heights

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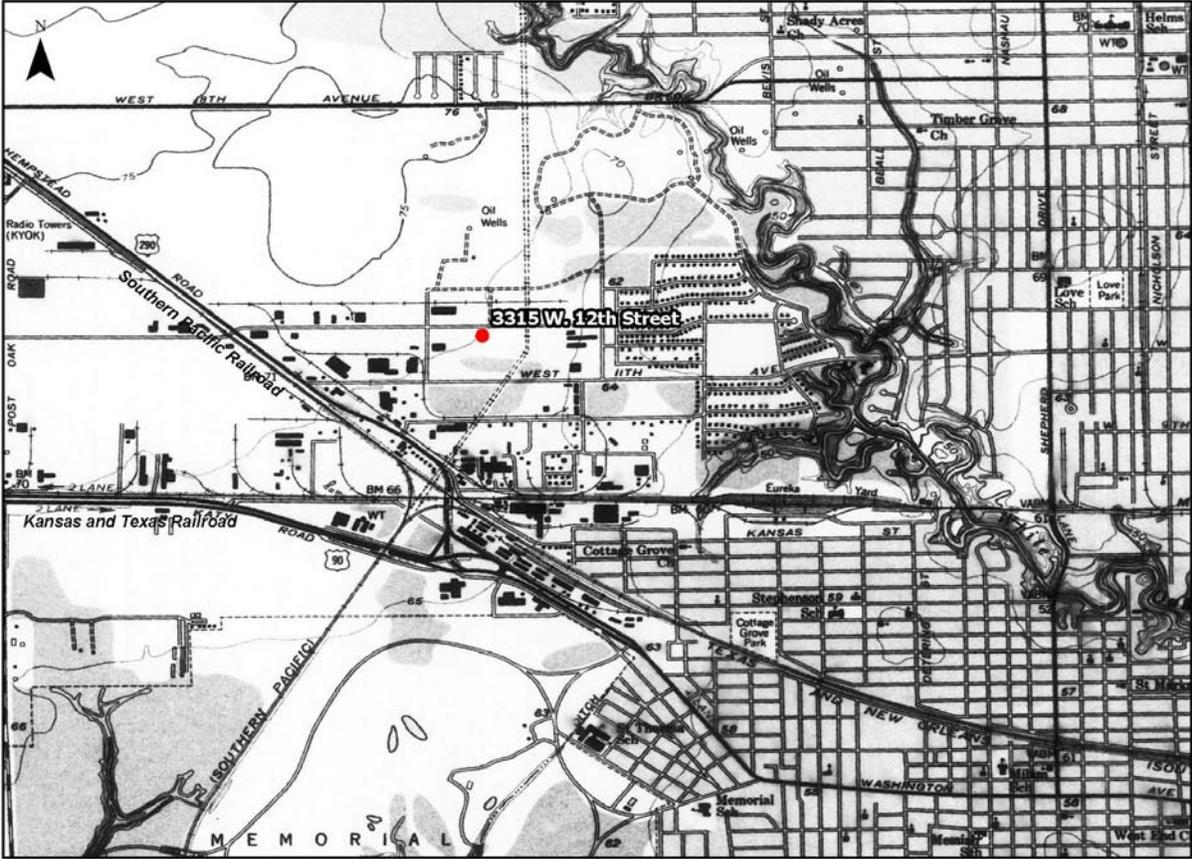
Planning and Development Department

EXHIBIT C

MAPS (CONTINUED)

THE AMERICAN BRAKESHOE COMPANY BUILDING
3315 W. 12TH STREET

1955 Topographic Map



Source: 1955 USGS Topographic Map Houston Heights

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EXHIBIT C
MAPS (CONTINUED)
THE AMERICAN BRAKESHOE COMPANY BUILDING
3315 W. 12TH STREET

1967 Topographic Map



Source: 1967 USGS Topographic Map Houston Heights