Houston Archaeological & Historical Commission Department

Planning and Development

PROTECTED LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT

LANDMARK NAME: Dr. & Mrs. Robert A. Johnston House

AGENDA ITEM: B

OWNERS: Dr. Nancy and Mr. David Webb HPO FILE No.: HP2024 0148

APPLICANTS: Listed above and Mr. Alexander Webb DATE ACCEPTED: 05-22-2024

LOCATION: 7 Shadow Lawn Street, 77005 HAHC HEARING: 07-18-2024

SITE INFORMATION: Two-story 6,043 square foot, red brick, single-family dwelling positioned on a 17,696 square foot lot designed and built in 1928 within the Shadow Lawn Historic District. Located on Lot 7, Shadow Lawn neighborhood subdivision.

TYPE OF APPROVAL REQUESTED: Protected Landmark Designation

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY:

The Dr. & Mrs. Robert A. Johnston House was built on Shadow Lawn Street in 1928. It is a red brick, two-story Georgian style house in excellent original condition. Dr. & Mrs. Johnston lived in the home for nearly fifty years, until the early 1970s. Dr. Johnston was a prominent physician in the Houston medical community specializing in Obstetrics and Gynecology.

The Johnston House is located within the Shadow Lawn Historic District which is near Rice University, the Museum District and the Texas Medical Center. In the 1920s, lawyer and real estate developer John H. Crooker purchased a trapezoid-shaped piece of land between Bissonnet Street and Shadyside. The subdivision he planned to build, called Shadow Lawn, was across from Broadacres and was platted with a single circular street. A total of thirteen houses were built in the subdivision. 7 Shadow Lawn was one of eight houses completed in the neighborhood between 1925 and 1929. In 2008, Shadow Lawn became a City of Houston Historic District, one of twenty-three such districts.

The current owner is seeking a Protected Landmark Designation for 7 Shadow Lawn, which is a contributing structure in the Shadow Lawn Historic District.

The Johnston House meets criteria 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6 for Landmark Designation and criteria 1 and 3 for Protected Landmark Designation.

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE:

SHADOW LAWN HISTORIC DISTRICT

The City of Houston's *Historic Preservation Manual* includes a detailed history of Houston's Historic Districts, including Shadow Lawn:

"Shadow Lawn was one of the private enclave neighborhoods developed in the 1920s. It is near similar South End subdivisions such as Waverly Court, Broadacres, and West Eleventh Place. The houses in Shadow Lawn were designed by the premier residential architects of the period. It also includes two outstanding examples of modernist homes, designed by their architect owners.

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Shadow Lawn is one of a series of "private enclave" neighborhoods in Houston. An "enclave" is a group or area that is distinct from the rest of the community. Courtlandt Place was the first of these neighborhoods to be built in Houston, starting in 1910. It was a gated community. Courtlandt Place was a single boulevard with grand houses on each side.

A different approach was taken in the Shadyside neighborhood in 1916. Instead of one long boulevard, Shadyside was built around a curving lane. Remington Lane provided entry to the neighborhood from either South Main Street or Sunset Boulevard. A second lane, Longfellow, also entered the neighborhood from South Main Street. Longfellow ended in a circle just past its intersection with Remington. Another nearby subdivision, West Eleventh Place, was developed around a single narrow lane and cul-de-sac. The Shadow Lawn subdivision combined all three of these concepts.

The first decades of the 20th century were boom years for Houston. Its economy was expanding quickly, and so were the city and its population. Wealthy residents moved south, and then southwest, away from the downtown area. James A. Baker, Jr., an attorney, had recently developed an upscale subdivision called Broadacres, on the north side of what is now Bissonnet Street.

Another lawyer, John H. Crooker, also became involved in real estate development in the 1920s. He bought a roughly trapezoid-shaped tract of land between Poor Farm Road (now Bissonnet) and Shadyside. The subdivision he planned to build, called Shadow Lawn, was across Bissonnet from Broadacres.

The subdivision was platted with a single circular street. That allowed Crooker to divide the irregularly shaped piece of land into 17 lots. The lots are also irregularly sized and shaped. (Only one lot is rectangular.) The circular street is connected to Bissonnet Street and Mount Vernon Street by two short "legs." Three of the lots are inside the circle, and the other 12 lots are outside.

A total of 13 houses were built in the subdivision. Eight houses were completed in Shadow Lawn between 1925 and 1929. Two were built in the early 1930s; an additional three houses were constructed in 1950, 1961, and 1980–82. Three lots in what is now Shadow Lawn were originally developed as part of the Shadyside subdivision. A fourth Shadyside lot makes up part of the property at 1 Shadow Lawn.

Houston's best architects designed the homes in this neighborhood. They are mostly large, two-story, brick or stucco houses in the Revival Styles popular during the 1920s and 1930s. The original residents were business owners, professionals, members of elite families, and (in two cases) wealthy widows. Later, two professors of architecture built and lived in homes in the neighborhood."

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Dr. Robert A. Johnston (b.1895-d.11/27/1972)

Robert Johnston was born in Alabama in 1895. He completed college and earned a medical degree, becoming an Obstetrician. In the 1920s, he moved to Houston and was instrumental in establishing the Obstetrics-Gynecology Department at the Houston Clinic.

He became Chief of Staff of the St. Joseph's OB/GYN program for many years and was a clinical professor of the same subjects at Baylor Medical School.

In 1957, he was named to the Board of the Medical Research Foundation of Texas. After a protracted illness he passed away at the age of 77 in November of 1972.

Mrs. Marie Hogg Johnston (b.1900, d.1970)

Marie Louise Hogg (1900-1970) was the daughter of Josephine Connolly (1872-1949) and Francis Baylor Hogg, M.D. (18781-1909). Josephine Connolly Hogg was from New Orleans; she and her husband are buried in the Connolly family's cemetery plot in New Orleans

Dr. Frank Baylor Hogg was the son of Thomas Elisha Hogg (1842-1880) and his wife, Anna E. A. McMath (1846-1892). Thomas Elisha Hogg was the elder brother and mentor of Governor James Stephen Hogg (1851-1906). At the time of his death, Thomas E. Hogg lived in Denton TX, where he had served as county judge of Denton County.

Marie Louise Hogg Johnston was the great-niece of Governor James S. Hogg. Her father, Dr. Francis Baylor Hogg, was the first cousin of Governor Hogg's children, Will, Ima, Mike, and Tom Hogg.

Dr. and Mrs. Johnston had two children: Marie Josephine Johnston (Mrs. Rodney Willoughby, 1925-2013) and Robert A. Johnston, Jr., M.D. (1930-2017).

Vance Phenix, Architect

The architect of 7 Shadow Lawn was Vance D. Phenix (1897-1983). Phenix was a Texan and a graduate of the University of Texas Architecture School. During the nineteen twenties and thirties, Phenix worked for the Dallas architects Thomson & Swaine, for John F. Staub in Houston, and for the New York architect, Frank J. Forster. At the time he designed 7 Shadow Lawn, Phenix was employed as a draftsman for John Staub. He designed the Johnston House at the same time Staub was completing Bayou Bend for Ima, Will, and Mike Hogg. Phenix began his own architectural practice in Houston around 1940.

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ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION AND RESTORATION HISTORY:

The *City of Houston Historic District* web page describes "the thirteen homes in Shadow Lawn as predominantly two-story, grand homes set on large lots. Ten were built before 1935. Four of the houses are built in the style of a French country manor house. Two others are similar, but with an English (Tudor Revival) influence. Four houses are built in the Georgian (Colonial Revival) style."

The Colonial Revival style was popularized in the early 1900s. Around the turn of the century, many books and magazines were published with drawings and photographs of early Georgian buildings. Consequently, Colonial Revival buildings constructed during this time were often faithful reproductions of colonial architecture. Colonial Revival houses are typically rectangular in shape, with symmetrical facades and front entrances that are emphasized with small porches or pediments.

7 Shadow Lawn is a two-story, red brick veneer, Colonial Revival style house in excellent original condition. As is typical of Georgian houses, the front façade of 7 Shadow Lawn is symmetrically arranged. It consists of three main bays: a large central rectangular bay is balanced on each side with bays of equal size and coordinating design.

The first bay, on the far left, is recessed several feet and comprised of four multi-paned French doors on the first level. On the second floor, a large eight-over-eight, double-hung wood window is centered above. The window has a pair of operational louvered shutters and a brick sill. This bay is partially shielded by a graceful fence constructed with wood lattice and brick pillars.

The large rectangular bay in the center of the house has a prominent, central front entrance. A wood six-panel door with a transom above has decorative Doric pilasters on each side and a curving aged copper roof above. A copper lantern is attached to each of the pilasters. Over-sized, double-hung, twelve-over-twelve windows are located on each side of the front door on level one. On level two, three eight-over-eight, double-hung windows are centered above the front door and windows on the first level.

The third bay of the house, which is also recessed, consists of four casement windows that mirror the four French doors in the first bay on the left side of the house. The second level on bay three is an exact match to the first bay, with a double-hung, eight-over-eight window accented with a pair of louvered shutters.

Bays four and five are single-story structures. Bay four has a flat roof and one small six-over-six double hung window with louvered shutters. It connects the main house to the single-story two-car garage. The garage has a hip roof and copper lanterns positioned above each of the two automatic doors.

The third floor has a pair of matching dormer windows.

The house is elevated above the sidewalk and has a brick retaining wall about five bricks in height. The front door is reached by a bluestone pathway that is edged in red brick.

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Ancestry.com, 1910, 1920, 1930, and 1940 United States Federal Census. Accessed April 2023, U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995, U.S. Draft Registration Cards, Texas Birth Certificates, 1880-1982, Texas Death Certificates, 1903-1982, Texas Marriage Records and Index, 1837-2015.
City of Houston City Directories and Cole Directories, Clayton Library Center for Genealogical Research. Accessed May 2024.
Findagrave.com, Index. Accessed May 2024.
Fox, Stephen, Biographical and historical information on Johnston family and architect. Provided May 2024.
Harris County Appraisal District, Real Property Account Information and Ownership Information for 7 Shadow Lawn, Houston, Texas, 77005. Accessed May 2024.
Harris County Archives, Tax Records, Accessed May 2024.
Houstontx.gov, City of Houston Historic Preservation Manual, <i>Shadow Lawn Historic District</i> , Accessed May 2024.
McAlester, Virginia Savage. A Field Guide to American Houses: Revised and Expanded. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013.
The Odessa American, "Doctor Dies After Illness, Robert Johnston Obituary." November 27, 1972.
The information and sources provided by the applicant for this application have been reviewed, verified, edited and supplemented with additional research and sources by Cara Quigley, Planning and Development Department, City of

Houston.

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APPROVAL CRITERIA FOR LANDMARK DESIGNATION

Sec. 33-224. Criteria for designation

(a) The HAHC, 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 appropriate for the type of designation:

S	NA	S - satisfies D - does not satisfy NA - not applicable			
		(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;			
		B) 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;			
		(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;			
□ AND		(8) Whether the building, structure, object or site has value as a significant element of community sentiment or public pride.			
		(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)).			
Sec. 33-229. Criteria for protected landmark designation					
S	NA	S - satisfies D - does not satisfy NA - not applicable			
\boxtimes		(1) Meets at least three of the criteria for designation in section 33-224 of this Code;			
		(2) Was constructed more than 100 years before application for designation was received by the director;			

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(3) Is listed individually or as a contributing structure in an historic district on the Nationa Historic Places; or	l Register of
(4) Is recognized by the State of Texas as a Recorded State Historical Landmark.	

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission recommend to City Council the Protected Landmark Designation of the Dr. and Mrs. Robert A. Johnston House at 7 Shadow Lawn Street, Houston, TX 77005.

HAHC RECOMMENDATION

The Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission recommends to City Council the Protected Landmark Designation of the Dr. and Mrs. Robert A. Johnston House at 7 Shadow Lawn Street, Houston, TX 77005.

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EXHIBIT A PHOTOS

Dr. and Mrs. Robert A. Johnston House 7 Shadow Lawn Street, Houston, TX 77005

Photo 1: North (front) elevation of the Dr. and Mrs. Robert A. Johnston House. Camera facing south. Photo by HOP staff Cara Quigley, July 2024.



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Photo 2: North (front) elevation of the Dr. and Mrs. Robert A. Johnston House and garage. Camera facing south. Photo by HOP staff Cara Quigley, July 2024.



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Photo 3: Zoomed out view of the north (front) elevation of the Dr. and Mrs. Robert A. Johnston House and garage. Camera facing south. Photo by HOP staff Cara Quigley, July 2024.



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Photo 4: Oblique view of the north (front) elevation of the Dr. and Mrs. Robert A. Johnston House. Camera facing southwest. Photo by HOP staff Cara Quigley, July 2024.



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Photo 5: Oblique view of the north (front) elevation of the Dr. and Mrs. Robert A. Johnston House and garage. Camera facing southeast. Photo by HOP staff Cara Quigley, July 2024.



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Photo 6: Oblique view of the north (front) elevation of the Dr. and Mrs. Robert A. Johnston House. Camera facing southeast. Photo by HOP staff Cara Quigley, July 2024.



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Photo 7: Oblique view of the southeast (left and rear) elevation of the Dr. and Mrs. Robert A. Johnston House. Camera facing northwest. Photo by HOP staff Cara Quigley, July 2024.



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Photo 8: Zoomed out oblique view of the southeast (left and rear) elevation of the Dr. and Mrs. Robert A. Johnston House. Camera facing northwest. Photo by HOP staff Cara Quigley, July 2024.



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Photo 9: Southeast (rear left corner) elevation of the Dr. and Mrs. Robert A. Johnston House. Camera facing north. Photo by HOP staff Cara Quigley, July 2024.



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Photo 10: Oblique view of the south (rear) elevation of the Dr. and Mrs. Robert A. Johnston House. Camera facing northwest. Photo by HOP staff Cara Quigley, July 2024.



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Photo 11: South (rear) elevation of the Dr. and Mrs. Robert A. Johnston House. Camera facing north. Photo by HOP staff Cara Quigley, July 2024.



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Photo 12: Oblique view of the south (rear) elevation of the Dr. and Mrs. Robert A. Johnston House. Camera facing northwest. Photo by HOP staff Cara Quigley, July 2024.



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Photo 13: Oblique view of the south (rear) elevation of the Dr. and Mrs. Robert A. Johnston House. Camera facing northeast. Photo by HOP staff Cara Quigley, July 2024.



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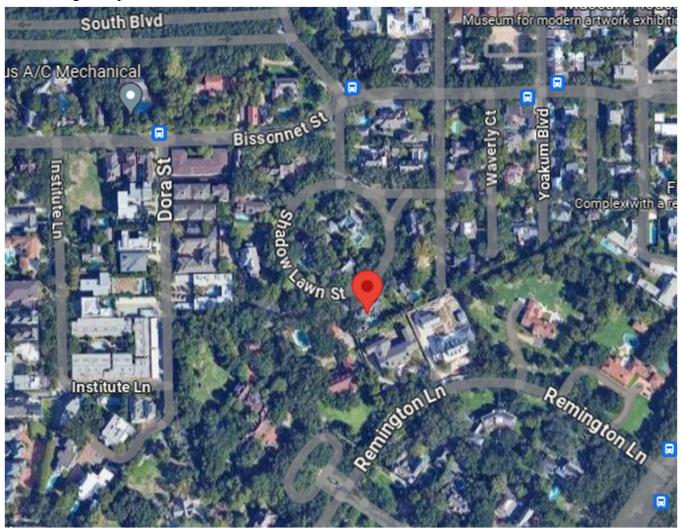
Photo 14: Oblique view of the south (rear) elevation of the Dr. and Mrs. Robert A. Johnston House. Camera facing northeast. Photo by HOP staff Cara Quigley, July 2024.



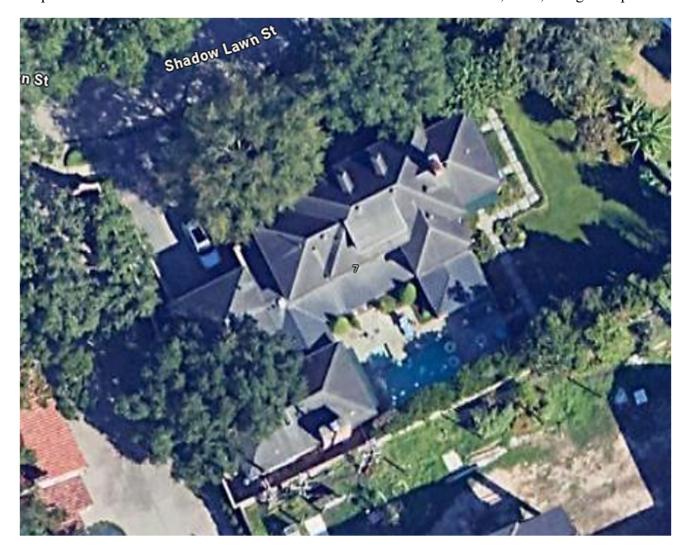
EXHIBIT B SITE MAPS

Dr. and Mrs. Robert A. Johnston House 7 Shadow Lawn Street, Houston, TX 77005

Map 1: Aerial view of the location of the Dr. and Mrs. Robert A. Johnston House. Accessed June 26, 2024, Google Maps.



Map 2: Aerial view of the site of 7 Shadow Lawn Street. Accessed June 26, 2024, Google Maps.



Map 3: Shadow Lawn Historic District map by the City of Houston Planning and Development Department. Accessed June 26, 2024.

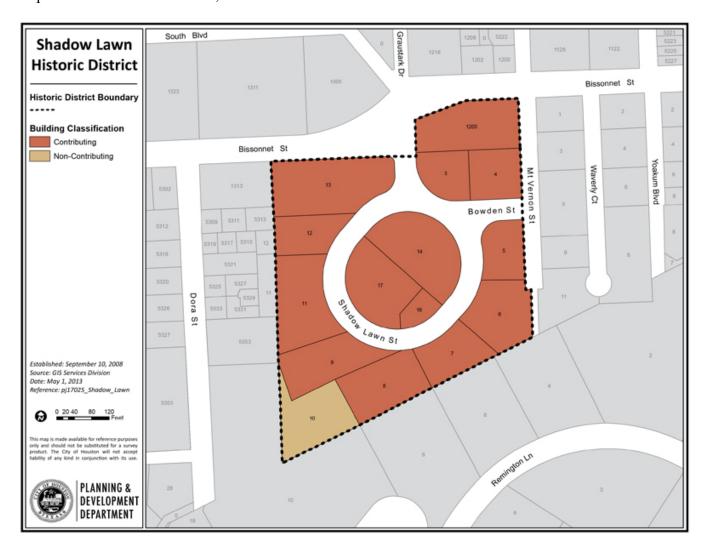
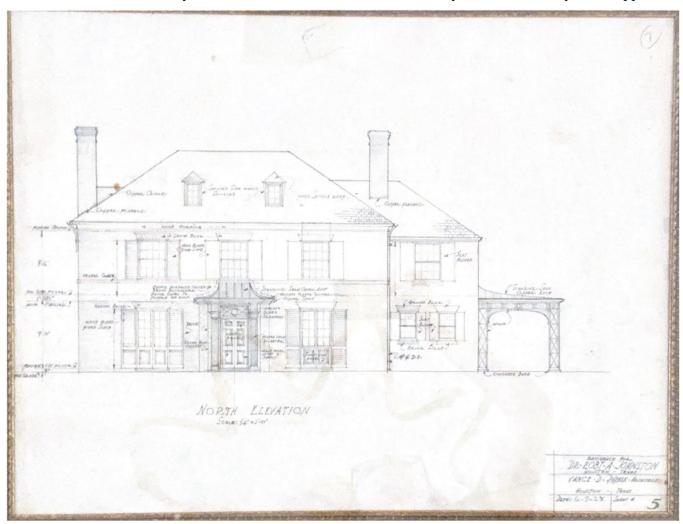


EXHIBIT C HISTORIC DOCUMENTATION

Dr. and Mrs. Robert A. Johnston House 7 Shadow Lawn Street, Houston, TX 77005

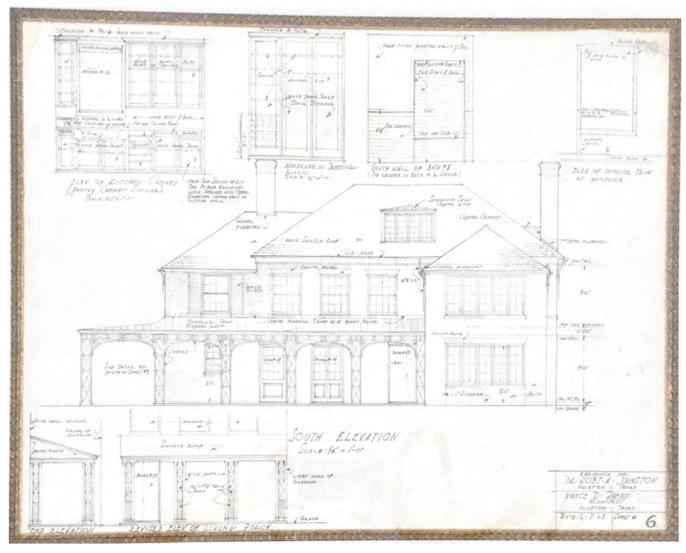
Figure 1: Original architectural drawing of the "North Elevation" of the Dr. and Mrs. Robert A. Johnston House from June 7, 1928, by architect Vance D. Phenix. Accessed July 2, 2024, courtesy of the applicant.



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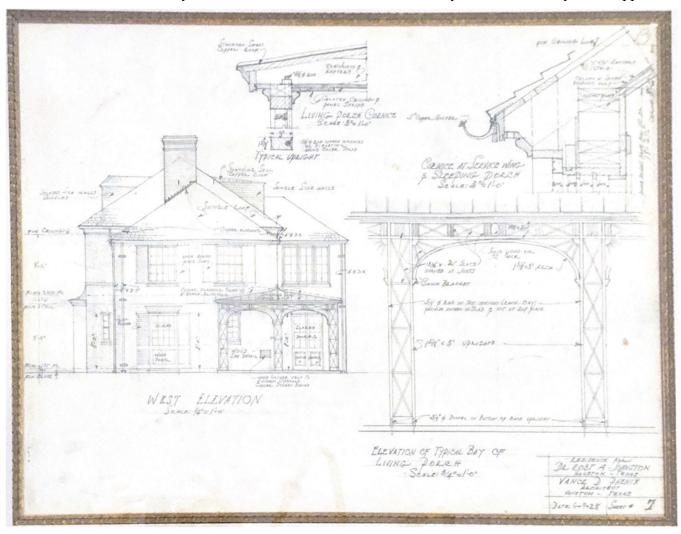
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Figure 2: Original architectural drawing of the "South Elevation" of the Dr. and Mrs. Robert A. Johnston House from June 7, 1928, by architect Vance D. Phenix. Accessed July 2, 2024, courtesy of the applicant.



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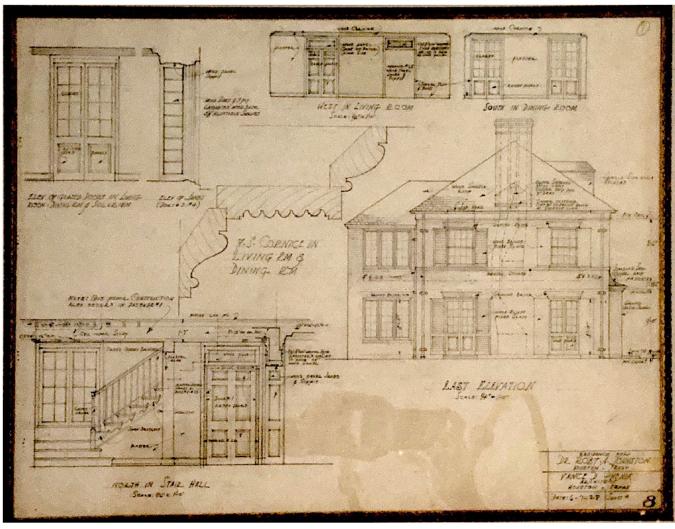
Figure 3: Original architectural drawing of the "West Elevation" of the Dr. and Mrs. Robert A. Johnston House from June 7, 1928, by architect Vance D. Phenix. Accessed July 2, 2024, courtesy of the applicant.



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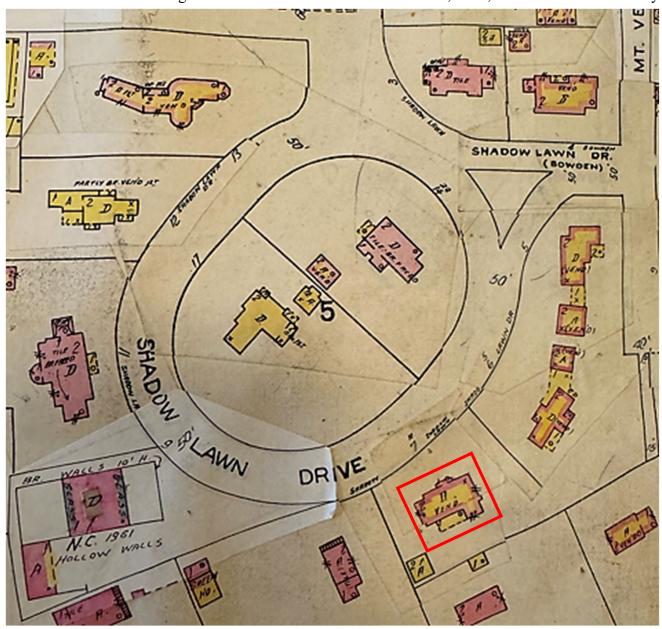
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Figure 4: Original architectural drawing of the "East Elevation" of the Dr. and Mrs. Robert A. Johnston House from June 7, 1928, by architect Vance D. Phenix. Accessed July 2, 2024, courtesy of the applicant.



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Figure 5: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from 1945 (vol 5, sheet 584) showing the location of 7 Shadow Lawn in Shadow Lawn neighborhood subdivision. Accessed June 27, 2024, from Julia Ideson Library.



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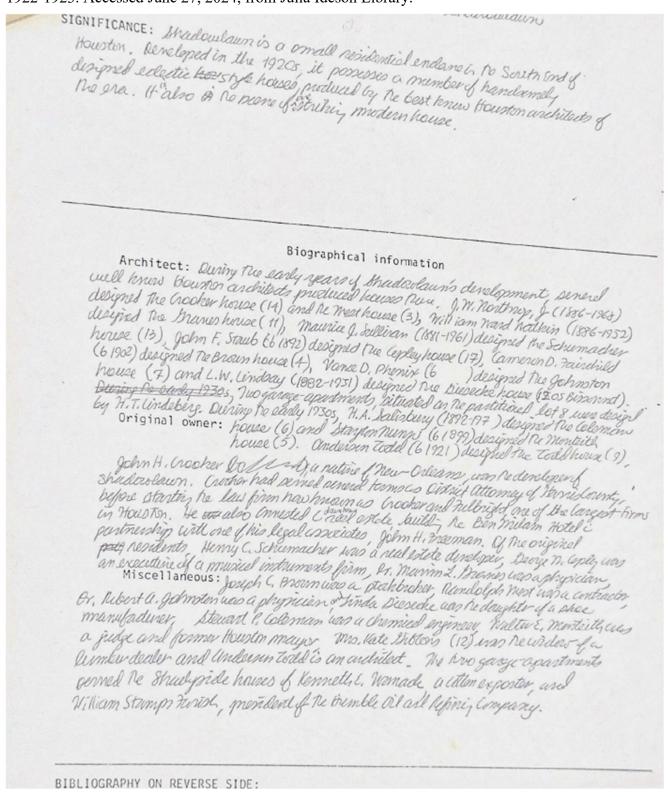
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Figure 6: Houston Architectural Inventory of the Shadow Lawn neighborhood subdivision (pg. 1/3) from 1922-1923. Accessed June 27, 2024, from Julia Ideson Library.

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Figure 7: Houston Architectural Inventory of the Shadow Lawn neighborhood subdivision (pg. 2/3) from 1922-1923. Accessed June 27, 2024, from Julia Ideson Library.



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Figure 8: Houston Architectural Inventory of the Shadow Lawn neighborhood subdivision (pg. 3/3) from 1922-1923. Accessed June 27, 2024, from Julia Ideson Library.

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Figure 9: No.7 Shadow Lawn featured in *The Rice Design Alliance*'s homes tour "Shadowlawn: An Architectural Tour" which took place Friday, October 21 through Sunday, October 23, 1983. Accessed June 27, 2024, from Julia Ideson Library.



7 Shadowlawn Circle, 1928-1929 Vance D. Phenix, architect

Just as John F. Staub finished Bayou Bend for Ima Hogg. one of his associates, Vance D. Phenix, designed this house for Miss Hogg's cousin, Marie Louise Hogg, and her husband, Robert A. Johnston, a physician. The Johnston House is a symmetrically composed house in the Regency style of early nineteenth-century England, a genre that was to become quite popular in the 1930s. Dr. Johnston lived in the house until his death in 1971. The second owners, Mary Ralph and John C. Yost, had the architects Emery Young and Associates of Fort Worth design an extensive series of alterations and additions, including new wings to the southeast and southwest, a swimming pool, and an attached garage, completed in 1975. The present and fourth owners have remodeled the interior to include a new entrance hall and stair, designed by the architect William VanAllen Furbush.

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Figure 10: Building Land Assessment photo of 7 Shadow Lawn from 1975. Accessed June 26, 2024.

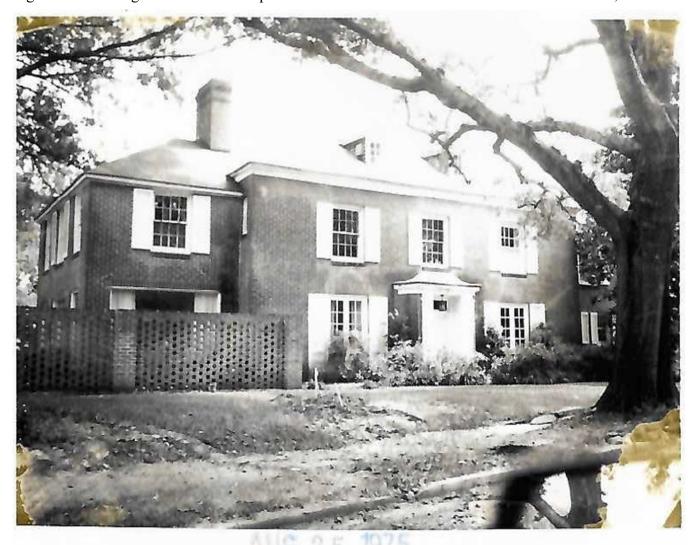


Figure 11: Building Land Assessment from 1968 (pg.1/2) for 7 Shadow Lawn. Accessed June 26, 2024.

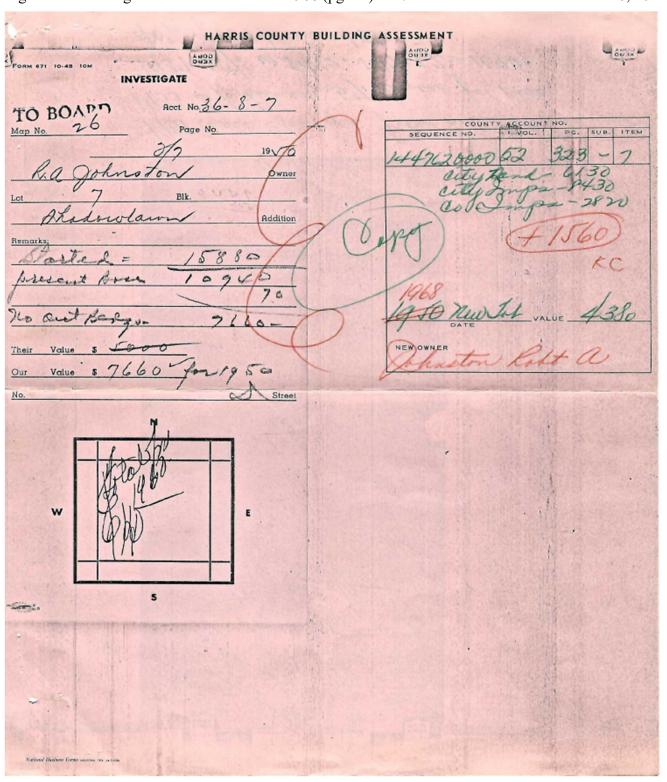
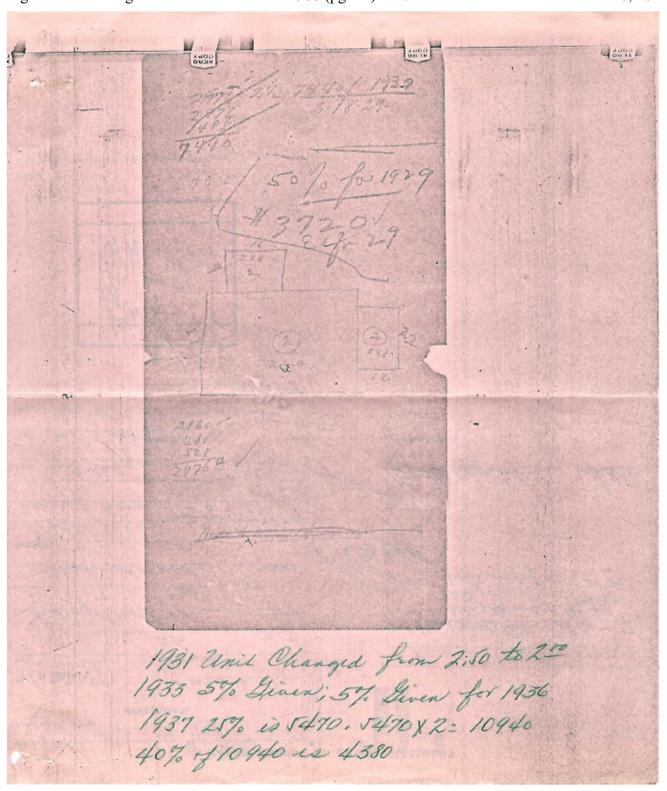


Figure 12: Building Land Assessment from 1968 (pg.2/2) for 7 Shadow Lawn. Accessed June 26, 2024.



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Figure 13: Building Land Assessment from 1975 for 7 Shadow Lawn. Accessed June 26, 2024.

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Houston Archaeological & Historical Commission Department

Planning and Development

Figure 14: Building Land Assessment from 1975-1977 (pg.1/2) for 7 Shadow Lawn. Accessed June 26, 2024.

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Figure 15: Building Land Assessment from 1975-1977 (pg.2/2) for 7 Shadow Lawn. Accessed June 26, 2024.

