

## ZONING CHANGE REVIEW SHEET

CASE NUMBER: C14H-2025-0122

HLC DATE: February 4, 2026    PC DATE: March 24, 2026    CC Date: May 7, 2026

APPLICANT: Terri Myers, Preservation Central, Inc.

HISTORIC NAME: Dr. O.H. and Mrs. Thelma Elliott House

WATERSHED: Boggy Creek

ADDRESS OF PROPOSED ZONING CHANGE: 2207 East 22<sup>nd</sup> Street

ZONING CHANGE: SF-3-NP to SF-3-H-NP (Upper Boggy Creek: Blackland NPA)

COUNCIL DISTRICT: 1

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Grant the proposed zoning change from family residence-neighborhood plan (SF-3-NP) to family residence-historic landmark-neighborhood plan (SF-3-H-NP) combining district zoning.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR LANDMARK DESIGNATION: Community value, architecture, and historical associations

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION ACTION: Recommend historic zoning (11-0).

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION: Recommend historic zoning (13-0).

CITY COUNCIL ACTION:

CASE MANAGER: Kalan Contreras, 512-974-2727

NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATIONS: Austin Independent School District, Austin Neighborhoods Council, Blackland Neighborhood Assn., Del Valle Community Coalition, East Austin Conservancy, Friends of Austin Neighborhoods, Homeless Neighborhood Association, Overton Family Committee, Preservation Austin, Upper Boggy Creek Neighborhood Planning Team

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The 2016 East Austin Historic Resource Survey recommends the building as eligible for inclusion as a contributing building in potential local and National Register historic districts.

BASIS FOR RECOMMENDATION:

**§ 25-2-352(3)(c)(i) Architecture.** *The property embodies the distinguishing characteristics of a recognized architectural style, type, or method of construction; exemplifies technological innovation in design or construction; displays high artistic value in representing ethnic or folk art, architecture, or construction; represents a rare example of an architectural style in the city; serves as an outstanding example of the work of an architect, builder, or artisan who significantly contributed to the development of the city, state, or nation; possesses cultural, historical, or architectural value as a particularly fine or unique example of a utilitarian or vernacular structure; or represents an architectural curiosity or one-of-a-kind building.*

The O.H. and Thelma Mitchell Elliott House, built in 1954, clearly embodies the distinguishing characteristics of a recognized architectural style. Built by carpenter and contractor Arthur Parks, it is an intact example of the Ranch style, one of the most popular and enduring architectural styles for residential buildings in American history. It also provides a window into the development of East Austin during the 1950s: as an exemplar of up-and-coming stylistic trends in a historically segregated

part of East Austin, the home's contemporary design demonstrates that, in spite of the systemic inequalities in land use and services rampant in segregation-era Austin, new neighborhoods marketed to Black professionals still found forward-looking buyers at midcentury. Historian and applicant Terri Myers describes the home's setting and physical characteristics in detail:

The Ranch style house epitomizes the postwar "baby boom" era in its modern form, functional plan and interior layout, and absence of nonessential details and embellishments that characterized earlier architectural styles for domestic construction. The Elliott House reflects modern Ranch style traits in its single-story construction, low-pitched gable roof, shallow front porch and larger, more secluded rear terrace, detached carport, lack of extraneous ornament and simplified fenestration pattern. Even the application of aluminum siding, which occurred during the historic period, is emblematic of the modern era in which it was sold to consumers for energy efficiency and low maintenance. The Elliott House is largely intact to the historic period in its Ranch style plan, roof form and pitch, fenestration pattern, and appurtenant features. Thus, it embodies the principal characteristics of an iconic architectural style in postwar America.

The 2200 block of E. 22nd Street was not developed until after World War II. In 1952, Brown and Root Construction, Inc. opened and paved the previously closed street between Coletto and Chestnut Streets; development in the block commenced soon afterward. In December 1954, realtor Andy Anderson placed an advertisement in the Austin American newspaper for an "Open House." The ad was specifically geared to attract "Colored" people as noted in the announcement...this newly opened section of East Austin was a modern departure from the early twentieth century bungalows, shotgun houses, and "classical box" houses in the so-called "Colored District" south of Manor Road.<sup>1</sup>

**§ 25-2-352(3)(c)(ii) Historical Associations.** *The property has long-standing significant associations with people, groups, institutions, businesses, or events of historical importance that contributed significantly to the history of the city, state, or nation or represents a significant portrayal of the cultural practices or the way of life of a definable group of people in a historic time.*

The house at 2207 East 22<sup>nd</sup> Street is associated with Dr. O. H. and Thelma Mitchell Elliott, East Austin educators and civic leaders at the forefront of Civil Rights-era political and educational movements and Great Society programs for nearly forty years. Their contributions to both the communities of segregated East Austin and to the state- and nationwide Civil Rights movement helped to uplift not only East Austin residents but to bolster African American advancement and the creation of accessible education for all races and economic backgrounds around the country.

"Both O.H. and Thelma Mitchell Elliott were tireless advocates for civil rights, education, and human dignity—each forging their own path but united by a shared commitment to justice and community empowerment," remarks historian Terri Myers. "O.H. Elliott worked within institutions, breaking barriers in higher education and wielding political influence to open doors for others. Thelma Elliott, rooted in the social work tradition, championed community-driven solutions, empowering East Austin families through programs like ENABLE that listened to and uplifted their voices. Together, they worked in a system that had long excluded their community, doing the difficult, often invisible work that brought real change and restored agency to those long denied it."<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Ora Herman Elliott, born in Hope, Arkansas, in 1909, moved to Austin in 1935 and quickly became one of the city and state's most influential educators, college administrators, and leader in political

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<sup>1</sup>Myers, Terri. 2026. "O.H. and Thelma Elliott House – 2207 E. 22nd Street, Austin, TX 78722-2115." Historic zoning application.

<sup>2</sup>Myers 2026.

engagement and equity. Through the inner workings of state and local government, Elliott worked “behind these scenes” to promote civil rights. Elliott also worked to ensure more equitable housing and healthcare in Austin. Myers describes his achievements:

[As business manager and Interim President of Samuel Huston College,] Elliott became a “moving force” in the merger of Samuel Huston College and Tillotson College.... [In 1952] Huston-Tillotson College became the exclusive provider of higher education for African Americans in Central Texas. ...Dr. Elliott’s official duties included business manager, Associate Professor of Business Administration, and college accountant. He [also] supported the United Negro College Fund, [and] served as a member of the Board of Trustees for fifteen years, after which he was made a lifetime honorary trustee. Elliott’s service to the college was officially recognized in 1979, when he was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Humanities degree...

Elliott was not content to remain on the sidelines of advancement for African Americans during the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s. In fact, as early as 1941, he headed a committee to ask for Black representation in elections within the Democratic Party, a request that was denied based on the party’s [allowing] only white members to vote in its elections... Although [1944’s *Smith vs. Allwright* Supreme Court ruling] formally abolished the white primary in Texas, attempts to limit Black political participation did not cease. In 1948, Elliott spoke at a political rally sponsored by the Negro Citizens Council aimed at bolstering political engagement among Black Austinites...[and] went on to embody this vision through active political engagement [and leadership positions] at local and state levels...

Lyndon B. Johnson...initiated a series of domestic programs known as “The Great Society” aimed at eliminating poverty and racial injustice in the United States...Elliott seized upon this political climate and the resources it offered to “enhance the quality of life not only for [people] in Texas but for the disadvantaged throughout the United States of America.” ...He was one of the directors of the [City’s] Rights Agency that encouraged...appointment of a human rights commission to ensure the effective implementation of the Civil Rights Law of 1964...Elliott was also a member of the United Political Organization (UPO), a “Negro political group” that encouraged Governor Connally to [form] a state civil rights committee...Elliott also led several local initiatives to honor civil rights leaders in Austin...In 1966, Elliott was listed in *The Austin American* among “three of the eastside’s most respected men”...

...Elliott also worked with the Office of Economic Opportunity, a Great Society initiative established to oversee a variety of community-based anti-poverty programs....He was a driving force behind the first major low rent private housing development created in Austin....[and] was part of a committee organized to investigate health administration in Travis County with a special focus on the care of indigent persons...Over the years, Elliott cultivated close relationships with President Lyndon B. Johnson, Governors John Connally, Preston Smith, and Dolph Briscoe, and U.S. Representative Jake Pickle. Because of his outstanding service to education and the state, Governor Connally named him to the Coordinating Board of the Texas College and University System in 1969. He was the first African American to serve on the Coordinating Board, a position he held until 1977....Elliott was instrumental in bringing ACC to fruition through his adamant support and promotion of the college while serving on the Coordinating Board of Texas Colleges and Universities...Elliott’s role in founding ACC was so vital that the college dedicated its first commencement in 1977 to him.<sup>3</sup>

San Antonio native Thelma Mitchell Elliott, born in 1912, was one of the first Black students to desegregate the University of Texas at Austin during the 1950s. Not only was she one of the earliest

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<sup>3</sup> Myers 2026.

students to graduate from UT's School of Social Work, but she was also the first Black woman to earn her degree there. Mrs. Elliott later became the first Black woman to work as a juvenile probation officer in Travis County and to lead Lyndon Johnson's Project ENABLE (Education and Neighborhood Action for Better Living Environment). Myers describes her successes:

Thelma Mitchell...received her undergraduate degree from Samuel Huston College and later served as Assistant Dean of Women at Clark College. In the early 1950s, Mrs. Elliott returned to school to pursue a career in social work. She was among the "precursors," the first generation of Black students who desegregated the University of Texas at Austin in the 1950s. The struggle for desegregation at UT had begun much earlier, when an African American man applied and was denied because of his race in 1885... Sixty-five years later, in the fall 1950, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of Heman Marion Sweatt's application to UT's law school. That same fall, the University of Texas opened its graduate program in social work. Within two years, the first African American students graduated from the school: Gus Swain was the first male graduate in 1953, and Thelma Elliott was the first female graduate in 1954. "Precursors" such as Swain and Mrs. Elliott attended classes amidst threats of violence, intense scrutiny, and widespread hostility. Swain, in a 1982 speech, recalled that the School of Social Work felt like an "oasis" in the tense atmosphere of early desegregation.

After receiving her Master of Science in Social Work, Mrs. Elliott began a ten-year stint as the first Black female probation officer for the Travis County Juvenile Court. She also served as a social worker at Brackenridge Hospital, an instructor at Samuel Huston, president of the PTA, and was involved in her church...Perhaps some of the most important changes that Mrs. Elliott made were through her work with ENABLE. In 1966, in recognition of her work in Juvenile Court, Elliott was tapped to lead the project as part of President Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty. ENABLE (Education and Neighborhood Action for Better Living Environment) was sponsored by Child and Family Services and funded through the new Office of Economic Opportunity...Mrs. Elliott explained the mission of ENABLE as giving mothers "a sense of self, purpose, confidence and power, something that will grow, a motivation, and the tools to get something done for a better life." ...ENABLE [provided] a space in which parents could...learn about opportunities to improve their and their children's lives, and as a result, "win a permanent increase in self-confidence and capacities as parents and community members in meeting responsibilities more effectively." Under Mrs. Elliott's leadership, ENABLE evolved into group problem-solving initiatives to tackle specific problems such as unsanitary living conditions in rental units to neighborhood safety and infrastructure...ENABLE's work was never abstract; it was concrete, collaborative, and rooted in the lives of real people [to] restore a sense of dignity and power which had long been denied. Within a year of its launch, ENABLE Austin was recognized as one of the most successful of 60 such projects around the country...<sup>4</sup>

PARCEL NO.: 0212100505

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: LOT 6 & E 1FT LOT 7 BLK 12 OLT 46 DIV B JOHNS C R SUBD & PLUS ADJ VAC ALLEY

ESTIMATED ANNUAL TAX EXEMPTION (homestead, capped):

AISD	COA	TC	TC Health	Total
\$1,721.27	\$1,708.67	\$1,118.77	\$351.32	\$4900.04

APPRAISED VALUE: Land: \$403,993; Improvement: \$170,090; Total: \$574,083

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<sup>4</sup> Myers 2026.

PRESENT USE: Residence

DATE BUILT/PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE: 1954-1976

INTEGRITY/ALTERATIONS: High. A rear addition, carport, and storage building were constructed in 1961, and a mobile home was moved onto the rear of the lot and added to the main house in 1970. Both modifications were constructed by the original owners during the period of significance.

PRESENT OWNERS: Ms. Ora Ann Houston

ORIGINAL OWNER(S): Dr. O. H. and Thelma Mitchell Elliott

OTHER HISTORICAL DESIGNATIONS: None



*Elliott House, 2025 and Dr. and Mrs. Elliott. Source: Preservation Central via Ms. Ora Houston.*



**City of Austin - Historic Preservation Office Historic  
 Zoning Application Packet**

F. Historical Documentation (including Attachment A, B, photographs, historical narrative, and copies of historical information)

**A. APPLICATION FOR HISTORIC ZONING**

**PROJECT INFORMATION:**

DEPARTMENTAL USE ONLY	
APPLICATION DATE: _____	FILE NUMBER(S) _____
<b>TENTATIVE HLC DATE:</b> _____	
TENTATIVE PC or ZAP DATE: _____	
TENTATIVE CC DATE: _____	CITY INITIATED: YES / NO
CASE MANAGER _____	ROLLBACK: YES/NO APPLICATION
ACCEPTED BY: _____	

**BASIC PROJECT DATA:**

1. OWNER'S NAME: ORA Ann Elliott Houston

2. PROJECT NAME: O.H. and Thelma Elliott House

3. PROJECT STREET ADDRESS (or Range): 2207 E. 22nd St. Austin

ZIP 78722 COUNTY: TRAVIS IF PROJECT ADDRESS CANNOT BE DEFINED ABOVE:

LOCATED \_\_\_\_\_ FRONTAGE FEET ALONG THE N. S. E. W. (CIRCLE ONE) SIDE OF \_\_\_\_\_ (ROAD NAME PROPERTY FRONTS ONTO), WHICH IS APPROXIMATELY \_\_\_\_\_ DISTANCE FROM ITS INTERSECTION WITH \_\_\_\_\_ CROSS STREET.

**AREA TO BE REZONED:**

4. ACRES 0.2584 acs (OR) SQ.FT. 11,255.90 sq ft

EXISTING ZONING	EXISTING USE	TRACT# (IF MORE THAN 1)	ACRES / SQ. FT.	PROPOSED USE	PROPOSED ZONING
<u>SF-3</u>	<u>Residence</u>	_____	<u>11,255.90</u>	<u>Residence</u>	<u>SF-3-H</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

**RELATED CURRENT CASES:**

### City of Austin - Historic Preservation Office Historic Zoning Application Packet

6. ACTIVE ZONING CASE? (YES /  NO) FILE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_  
 7. RESTRICTIVE COVENANT? (YES /  NO) FILE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_  
 8. SUBDIVISION? (YES /  NO) FILE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_  
 9. SITE PLAN? (YES /  NO) FILE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

**PROPERTY DESCRIPTION (SUBDIVISION REFERENCE OR METES AND BOUNDS):**

10a. SUBDIVISION REFERENCE: Name: C.R. Johns OLT 46, Div B  
 Block(s) 12 Lot(s) 6 + 1 FT 7 Outlot(s) plus Adj Alley  
 Plat Book: 3 Page \_\_\_\_\_  
 Number: 14

10b. METES AND BOUNDS (Attach two copies of certified field notes if subdivision reference is not available or zoning includes **partial lots**)

**DEED REFERENCE CONVEYING PROPERTY TO PRESENT OWNER AND TAX PARCEL I.D.:**

11. VOLUME: 7587 PAGE: 696-699 TAX PARCEL I.D. NO. 203984

**OTHER PROVISIONS:**

12. IS PROPERTY IN A ZONING COMBINING DISTRICT / OVERLAY ZONE? YES  NO  
 TYPE OF COMBINING DIST/OVERLAY ZONE (NCCD, NP, etc) \_\_\_\_\_  
 13. LOCATED IN A LOCAL OR NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT? YES  NO  
 14. IS A TIA REQUIRED? YES  NO (NOT REQUIRED IF BASE ZONING IS NOT CHANGING) ✓  
 TRIPS PER DAY: \_\_\_\_\_  
 TRAFFIC SERIAL ZONE(S): \_\_\_\_\_

**OWNERSHIP TYPE:**

15.  SOLE \_\_\_ COMMUNITY PROPERTY \_\_\_ PARTNERSHIP \_\_\_ CORPORATION \_\_\_ TRUST  
 If ownership is other than sole or community property, list individuals/partners/principals below or attach separate sheet.

**OWNER INFORMATION:**

16. OWNER CONTACT INFORMATION  
 SIGNATURE: Ora Elliott Houston by tm NAME: Ora Elliott Houston  
 FIRM NAME: NA TELEPHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_  
 STREET ADDRESS: 2207 E. 22nd Street  
 CITY: Austin STATE: TX ZIP CODE: 78722  
 EMAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

**AGENT INFORMATION (IF APPLICABLE):**

City of Austin - Historic Preservation Office **Historic**  
**Zoning Application Packet**

**17. AGENT CONTACT INFORMATION**

SIGNATURE: Terri Myers NAME: TERRI MYERS  
 FIRM NAME: Preservation Central TELEPHONE NUMBER: (512) 695-7375  
 STREET ADDRESS: 823 Harris Avenue  
 CITY: Austin STATE: TX ZIP CODE: 78705  
 CONTACT PERSON: Terri Myers TELEPHONE NUMBER: (512) 695-7375  
 EMAIL ADDRESS: [REDACTED]

**D. SUBMITTAL VERIFICATION  
AND INSPECTION AUTHORIZATION**

**SUBMITTAL VERIFICATION**

My signature attests to the fact that the attached application package is complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I understand that proper City staff review of this application is dependent upon the accuracy of the information provided and that any inaccurate or inadequate information provided by me/my firm/etc., may delay the proper review of this application.

**PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT NAME BELOW SIGNATURE AND INDICATE FIRM REPRESENTED, IF APPLICABLE.**

see attached  
 Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (Typed or Printed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Firm (If applicable)

**INSPECTION AUTHORIZATION**

As owner or authorized agent, my signature authorizes staff to visit and inspect the property for which this application is being submitted.

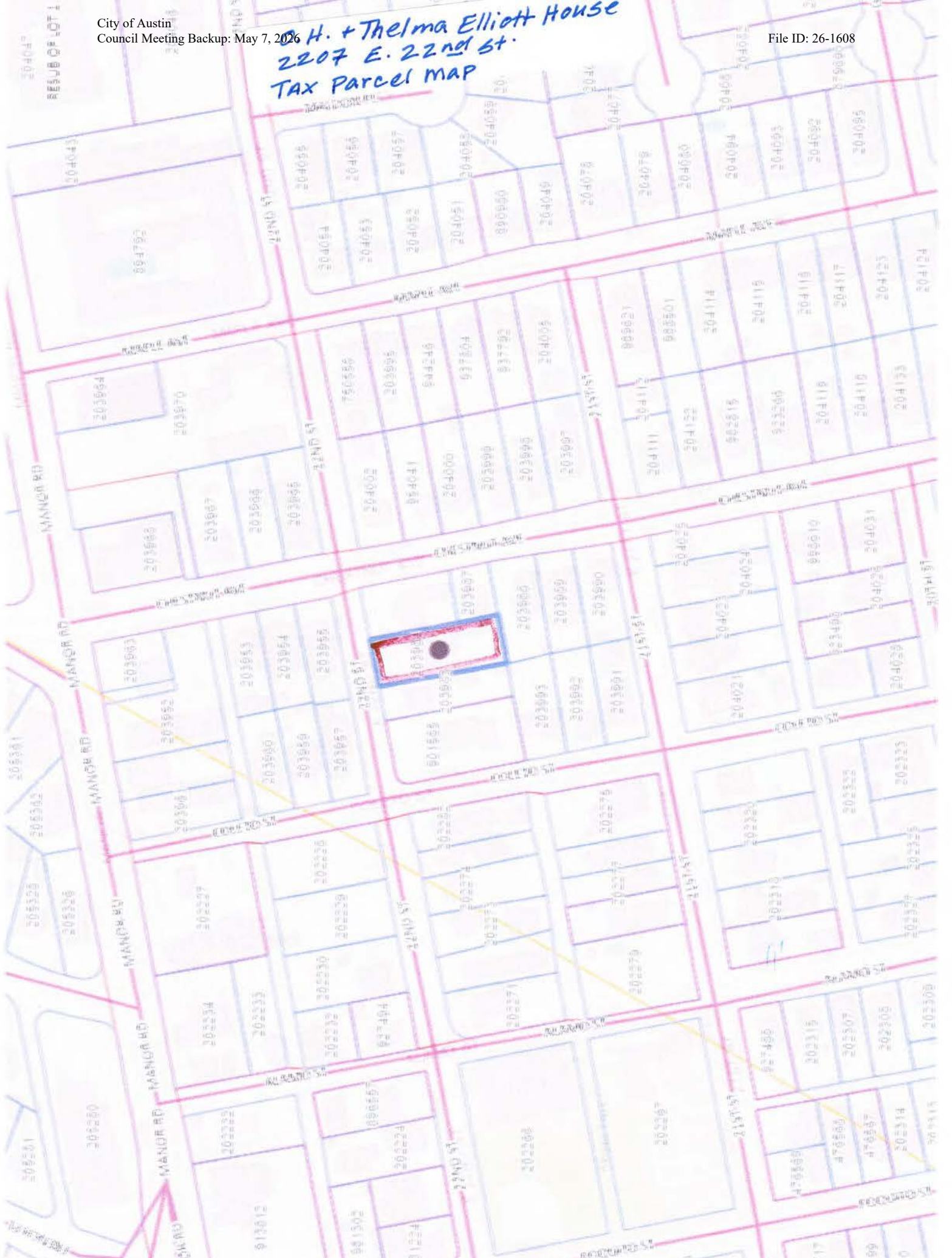
**PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT NAME BELOW SIGNATURE AND INDICATE FIRM REPRESENTED, IF APPLICABLE.**

See Attached  
 Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (Typed or Printed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Firm (If applicable)

**O.H. + Thelma Elliott House**  
**2207 E. 22nd St.**  
**TAX PARCEL MAP**





21210  
Revision Date:  
4/7/2025



NAD 1983\_StatePlane  
Texas\_Central FIPS 4203 Feet  
Projection: Lambert\_Conformal\_Conic

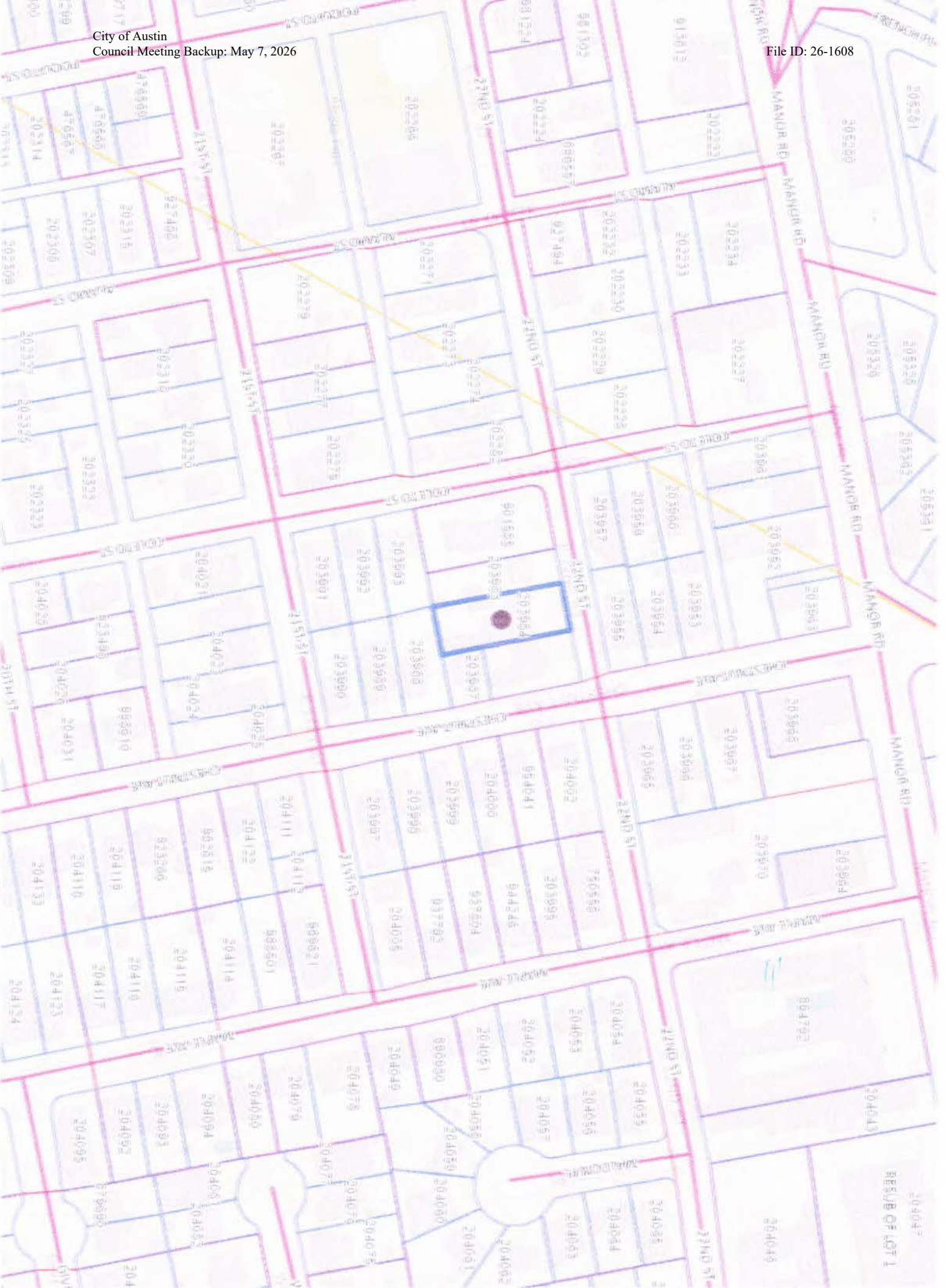


This tax map was compiled solely for the use of TCAD. Areas depicted by these digital products are not guaranteed, and are not necessarily accurate to mapping, surveying or engineering standards. Conclusions drawn from this information are the responsibility of the user. The TCAD makes no claims, promises or guarantees about the accuracy, completeness or adequacy of this information and expressly disclaims liability for any errors and omissions. The mapped data does not constitute a legal document.

**Travis Central Appraisal District**  
850 E Anderson Lane Austin, TX 78752  
P.O. Box 149012 Austin, Texas 78714  
www.traviscad.org  
Main Telephone Number (512) 834-9317



*O.H. and Thelma m. Elliott House  
2207 E. 22nd St*



TAX CERTIFICATE

NO 2332619

Celia Israel  
Travis County Tax Assessor-Collector  
P.O. Box 1748  
Austin, Texas 78767  
(512) 854-9473

File ID: 26-1608

ACCOUNT NUMBER: 02-1210-0505-0000

PROPERTY OWNER:

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION:

HOUSTON ORA ANN  
2207 E 22ND ST  
AUSTIN, TX 78722-2115

LOT 6 & E 1FT LOT 7 BLK 12 OLT 46  
DIV B JOHNS C R SUBD & PLUS ADJ VA  
C ALLEY

ACRES .2584 MIN% .000000000000 TYPE

SITUS INFORMATION: 2207 E 22 ST

This is to certify that after a careful check of tax records of this office, the following taxes, delinquent taxes, penalties and interests are due on the described property of the following tax unit(s):

YEAR	ENTITY	TOTAL
2024	AUSTIN ISD	*ALL PAID*
	CITY OF AUSTIN (TRAV)	*ALL PAID*
	TRAVIS COUNTY	*ALL PAID*
	TRAVIS CENTRAL HEALTH	*ALL PAID*
	ACC (TRAVIS)	*ALL PAID*
TOTAL SEQUENCE 0		*ALL PAID*
TOTAL TAX:		*ALL PAID*
UNPAID FEES:		* NONE *
INTEREST ON FEES:		* NONE *
COMMISSION:		* NONE *
TOTAL DUE ==>		*ALL PAID*

TAXES PAID FOR YEAR 2024 \$5,110.73

ALL TAXES PAID IN FULL PRIOR TO AND INCLUDING THE YEAR 2024 EXCEPT FOR UNPAID YEARS LISTED ABOVE.

The above described property may be subject to special valuation based on its use, and additional rollback taxes may become due. (Section 23.55, State Property Tax Code).

Pursuant to Section 31.08 of the State Property Tax Code, there is a fee of \$10.00 for all Tax Certificates.

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND AND SEAL OF OFFICE ON THIS DATE OF 10/28/2025

Fee Paid: \$10.00

Celia Israel  
Tax Assessor-Collector

By: 

MOBILE HOME TAX CERTIFICATE  
Celia Israel  
Travis County Tax Assessor-Collector  
P.O. Box 1748  
Austin, Texas 78767  
(512) 854-9473

NO 2332617

File ID: 26-1608

ACCOUNT NUMBER: 02-1210-0505-0201

PROPERTY OWNER:

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION:

HOUSTON ORA ELLIOTT  
2207 E 22ND ST  
AUSTIN, TX 78722-2115

PERSONAL PROPERTY MOBILE HOME 1970  
12 X 60 S#3D0R2S8915 FLEETWOOD

MH LBL: FLEETWOOD                      ACRES                      .0000 MIN%                      .000000000000 TYPE  
MOD: 1970 12 X 60                      SN1: 3D0R2S8915

SITUS INFORMATION: 2207 E 22                      ST

This is to certify that after a careful check of tax records of this office, the following taxes, delinquent taxes, penalties and interests are due on the described property of the following tax unit(s):

2024 AUSTIN ISD	*ALL PAID*
CITY OF AUSTIN (TRAV)	*ALL PAID*
TRAVIS COUNTY	*ALL PAID*
TRAVIS CENTRAL HEALTH	*ALL PAID*
ACC (TRAVIS)	*ALL PAID*
TOTAL SEQUENCE 0	*ALL PAID*
TOTAL TAX:	*ALL PAID*
UNPAID FEES:	* NONE *
INTEREST ON FEES:	* NONE *
COMMISSION:	* NONE *
TOTAL DUE ==>	*ALL PAID*

TAXES PAID FOR YEAR 2024                      \$111.29

ALL TAXES PAID IN FULL PRIOR TO AND INCLUDING THE YEAR 2024 EXCEPT FOR UNPAID YEARS LISTED ABOVE.

The above described property may be subject to special valuation based on its use, and additional rollback taxes may become due. (Section 23.55, State Property Tax Code).

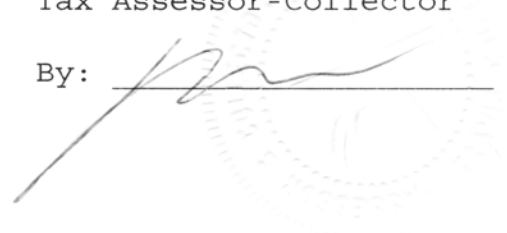
Pursuant to Section 31.08 of the State Property Tax Code, there is a fee of \$10.00 for all Tax Certificates.

With respect to each January 1 occurring in the 18-month period preceding the date of the sale, there are no perfected and enforceable tax liens on the manufactured home that have not been extinguished and canceled in accordance with Section 32.015, Tax Code or personal property taxes due on the manufactured home.

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND AND SEAL OF OFFICE ON THIS DATE OF 10/28/2025  
Fee Paid: \$10.00

Celia Israel  
Tax Assessor-Collector

By: \_\_\_\_\_



City of Austin - Historic Preservation Office  
Historic Zoning Application Packet

**D. SUBMITTAL VERIFICATION  
AND INSPECTION AUTHORIZATION**

SUBMITTAL VERIFICATION

My signature attests to the fact that the attached application package is complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I understand that proper City staff review of this application is dependent upon the accuracy of the information provided and that any inaccurate or inadequate information provided by me/my firm/etc., may delay the proper review of this application.

PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT NAME BELOW SIGNATURE AND INDICATE FIRM REPRESENTED, IF APPLICABLE.

Ms. Ora Elliott Houston 8/28/25  
Signature Date

Ms. Ora Elliott Houston  
Name (Typed or Printed)

Firm (if applicable)

INSPECTION AUTHORIZATION

As owner or authorized agent, my signature authorizes staff to visit and inspect the property for which this application is being submitted.

PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT NAME BELOW SIGNATURE AND INDICATE FIRM REPRESENTED, IF APPLICABLE.

Ms. Ora Elliott Houston 8-28-25  
Signature Date

Ms. ORA Elliott Houston  
Name (Typed or Printed)

Firm (if applicable)

City of Austin - Historic Preservation Office  
Historic Zoning Application Packet

**E. ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM**

concerning  
Subdivision Plat Notes, Deed Restrictions,  
Restrictive Covenants  
and / or  
Zoning Conditional Overlays

I, Ms. Ora Elliott Houston have checked for subdivision plat notes, deed restrictions,  
(Print name of applicant)

restrictive covenants and/or zoning conditional overlays prohibiting certain uses and/or requiring certain development restrictions i.e. height, access, screening etc. on this property, located at

2207 East 22nd St.  
(Address or Legal Description)

If a conflict should result with the request I am submitting to the City of Austin due to subdivision plat notes, deed restrictions, restrictive covenants and/or zoning conditional overlays it will be my responsibility to resolve it. I also acknowledge that I understand the implications of use and/or development restrictions that are a result of a subdivision plat notes, deed restrictions, restrictive covenants and/or zoning conditional overlays.

I understand that if requested, I must provide copies of any and all subdivision plat notes, deed restrictions, restrictive covenants and/or zoning conditional overlay information which may apply to this property.

Ms. Ora Elliott Houston  
(Applicant's signature)

28 August 2025  
(Date)

## **F.1: Historical Documentation – Deed Chronology**

**Deed Research for 2207 E. 22<sup>nd</sup> Street, Austin, TX 78722**

**Transaction**

**Vol./Page**

**C. R. Johns Re-subdivision**

**Plat Book 1, pp 3-5**

**Lee Edwards et ux (Effie) to O.H. Elliott et ux (Thelma)**

**Vol. 954, p 133**

**Part of N ½ Block 12, C.R. Johns, Outlot 46,**

**Division B, Austin, Travis Co. “real property**

**Known as 2207 E. 22<sup>nd</sup> Street”**

**November 24, 1948**

**O.H. & Thelma M. Elliott to East End Lumber Co.,**

**Mechanic’s Lien**

**E.L. Greenwood, vice-president, Arthur Parks contractor**

**“erection of certain improvements in N ½ Block 12, C.**

**R. Johns, City of Austin, according to Plat Book 3, pg. 13”**  
**p 14**

**Plat Book 3,**

**September 23, 1954**

**\$11,100 @ 6% interest**

**O.H. Elliott to Ora Ann (Elliott) Houston, “house and**

**Will March 11, 1980**

**Lot located at 2207 E. 22<sup>nd</sup> St. Austin, TX”**

**O.H. Elliott and wife Thelma M. Elliott to Ora Ann**  
**696-699**

**Vol. 7587, pp**

**Houston “Part of N ½ Blk 12, C.R. Johns, Outlot 46,**

**Div. B, Austin, Travis County, TX**

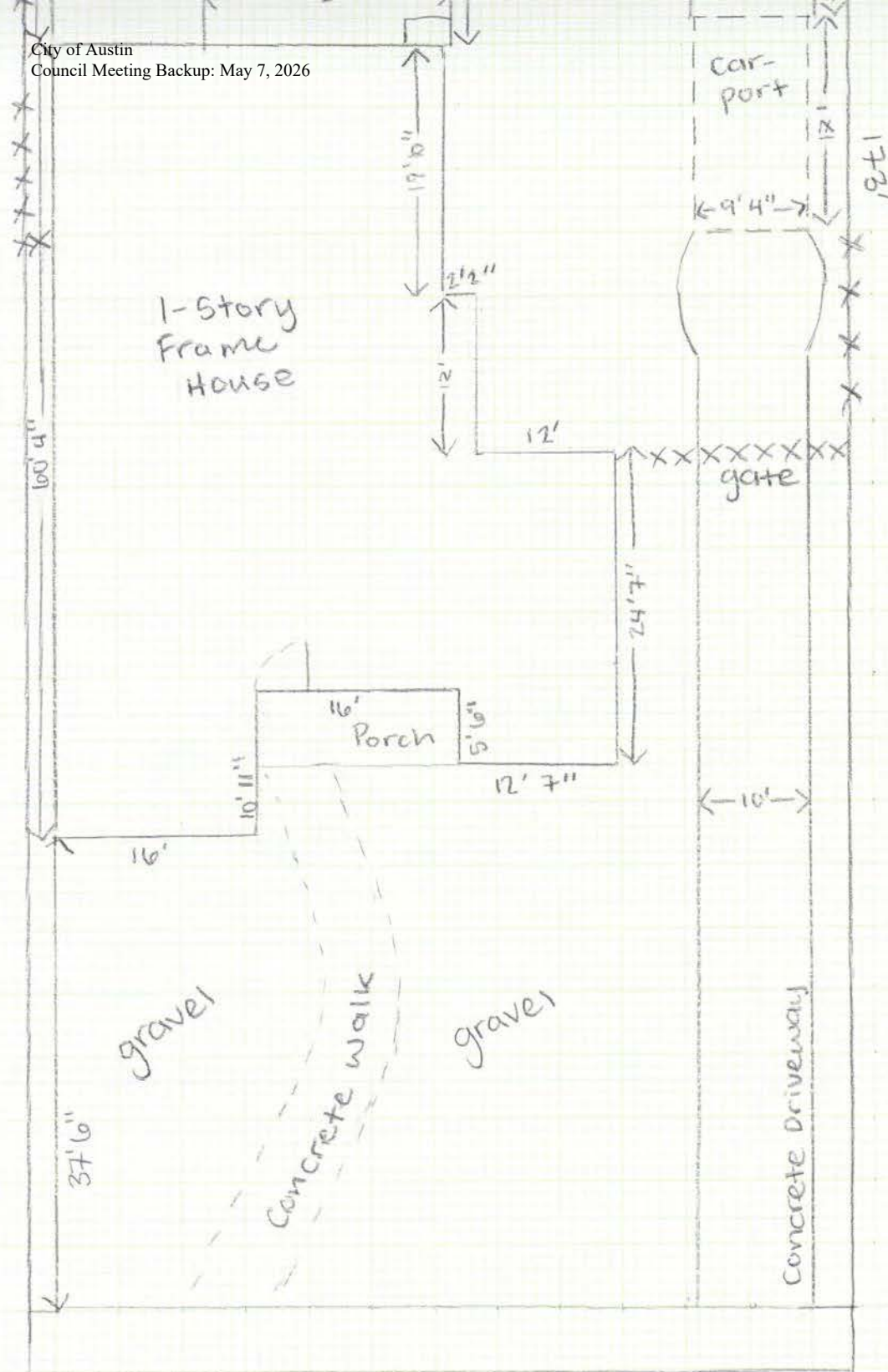
**Sept. 28, 1981 (executed), Sept. 30, 1981(filed)**

**\$10.00**

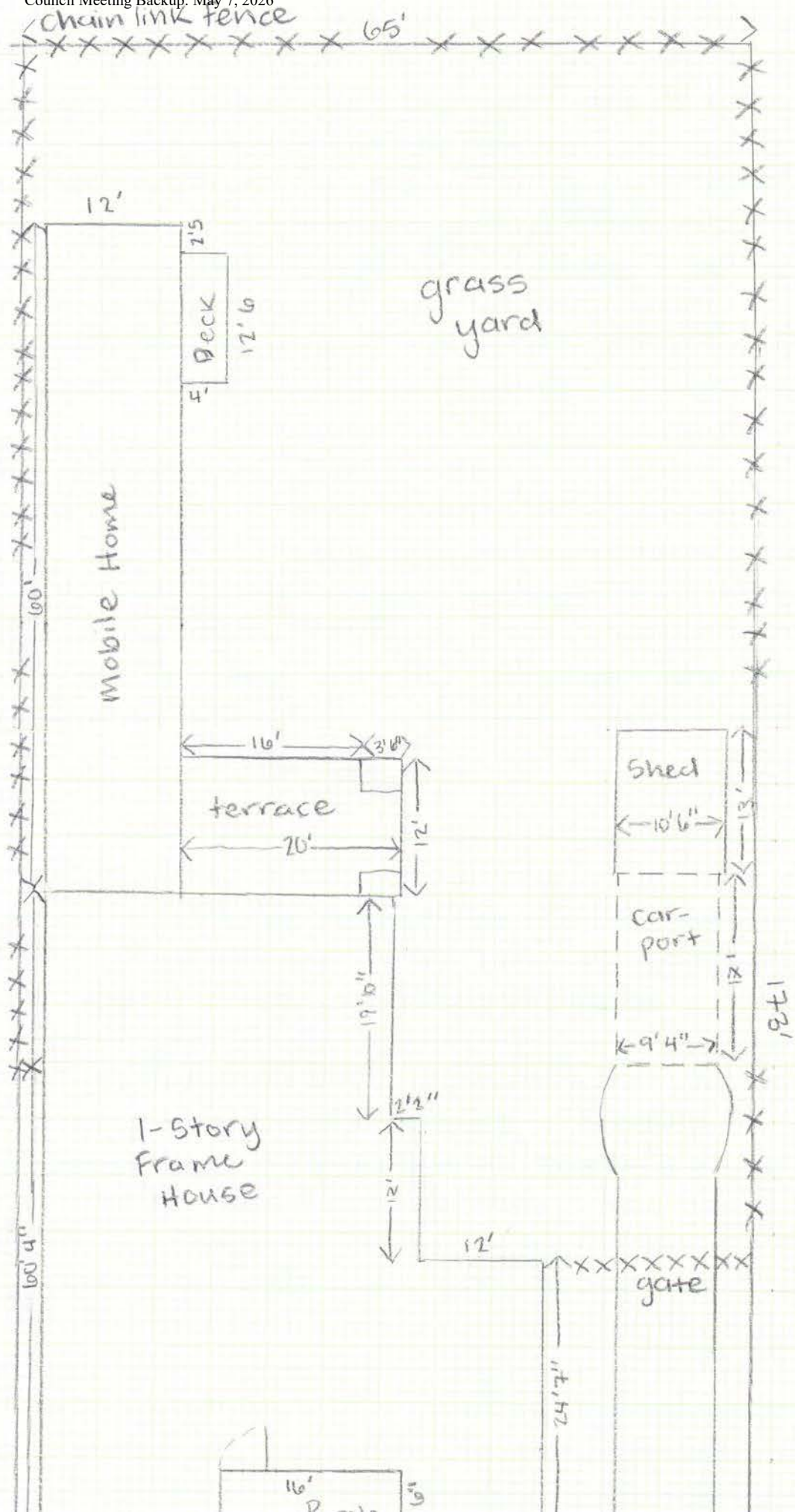
## **F.2: Historical Documentation – Occupancy History**

### **Occupancy Research for 2207 E. 22<sup>nd</sup> Street, Austin, TX 78722**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Occupant Name and Reference</b>	<b>Source</b>
1957-1958	O. H. Elliott (Thelma M.), Chief Auditor at Most Worshipful St. Joseph Grand Lodge (AF & AM), Owner- 2207 E. 22nd St.	City Directories
1959-1978	O. H. Elliott (Thelma M.), Grand Secretary at Most Worshipful St. Joseph Grand Lodge (AF & AM), Owner	City Directories
1980-1983	Ora E. [A.] Houston, Welfare Worker for State Depart. (M. H & MR), Owner- 2207 E. 22nd St.	City Directories
1984	Ora E. [A.] Houston, Owner & Thelma Elliott, Retiree,	City Directories
1988-1995	Ora E. [A.] Houston, State Department, owner	City Directories
1996	Ora E. [A.] Houston & Abigail Anthony	City Directories
2000-2004	Ora E. [A.] Houston, Owner	City Directories
2005	Ora E. [A.] Houston, Owner & Gina M. Houston,	City Directories
2008-2012	Ora E. [A.] Houston, Owner- 2207 E. 22nd St.	City Directories
2013-2014	Ora E. [A.] Houston, Owner & Gina M. Houston,	City Directories
2015-2018	Ora E. [A.] Houston, Owner- 2207 E. 22nd St.	City Directories
2019-2021	Ora E. [A.] Houston, Owner & Gina M. Houston,	City Directories
	No directories after 2021	



F.8 Site Plan 2207 E. 22nd St. Austin, TX 78722



### **F.3, F.4, F.6, F.9 – Historical Documentation**

#### **O. H. and Thelma Elliott House – 2207 E. 22<sup>nd</sup> Street, Austin, TX 78722-2115**

The O.H. and Thelma Elliott House at 2207 E. 22<sup>nd</sup> Street meets the standards as an Austin Historic Landmark in two of the five criteria for significance: Architecture and Historical Associations. Built in 1954, the early Ranch Style house is more than 50 years old and reflects the historic period and architectural trends in which it was built and achieved significance. The house clearly embodies the distinguishing characteristics of a recognized architectural style (Ranch). It retains a high degree of the seven aspects of historic and architectural integrity set out by the National Register of Historic Places in Bulletin 16 (integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association). More importantly, the house is associated with husband and wife, O. H. and Thelma Elliott, a “power couple” of segregated East Austin who were at the forefront of Civil Rights-era political and educational movements and Great Society programs in the city from the 1940s through the 1970s. The designation criteria for significance is fully addressed and supported in the following narratives.

#### **Criterion: Architecture**

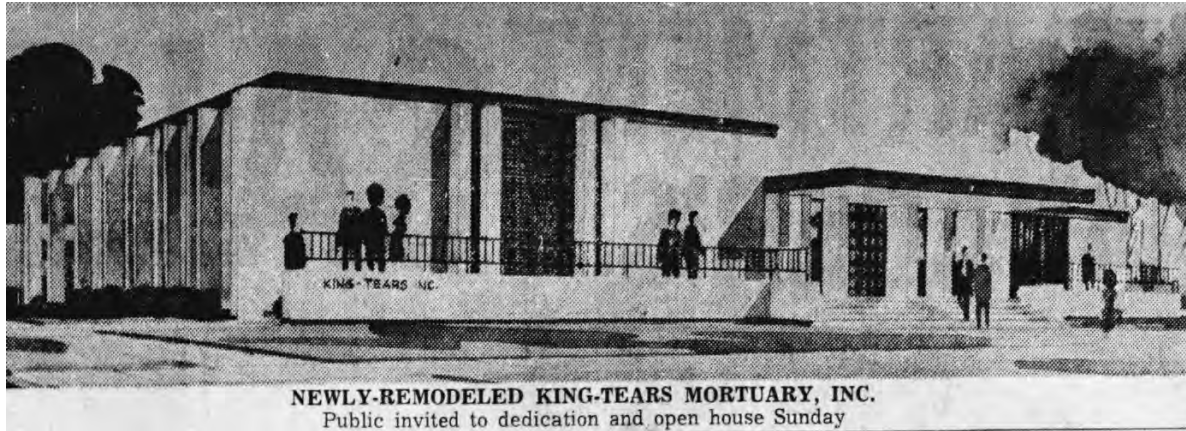
##### ***Architectural Description***

Construction: The 2200 block of E. 22<sup>nd</sup> Street was not developed until after World War II. In 1952, Brown and Root Construction, Inc. opened and paved the previously closed street between Coletto and Chestnut Streets; development in the block commenced soon afterward. In December 1954, realtor Andy Anderson placed an advertisement in the *Austin American* newspaper for an “Open House.” The ad was specifically geared to attract “Colored” people as noted in the announcement. The ad described the house as a “lovely frame and cutstone home at 2207 E. 22<sup>nd</sup> Street, 3 bedrooms, 2 all tile bathrooms, hardwood floors, car port, den.” The 1,700 square foot Ranch style house in this newly-opened section of East Austin was a modern departure from the early twentieth century bungalows, shotgun houses, and “classical box” houses in the so-called “Colored District” south of Manor Road. Anderson added Arthur Park’s name as the contractor in the notice, an indication that his work was known and respected.

Arthur Parks was a carpenter and contractor who worked in Austin from c. 1949 through the 1970s. He appears to have been well-known in East Austin; his work on the Mid-century Modern house for Mr. and Mrs. John King at 2400 Givens Avenue in 1960 was lauded as “Another Arthur Parks Production,” in a newspaper notice for their open house.<sup>1</sup> Parks also served as general contractor for a major remodel of King-Tears Mortuary designed by architect John Chase in 1971.<sup>2</sup> Both buildings are still extant.

<sup>1</sup> “Mr. and Mrs. John T. King Announce “Open House” (Another Arthur Parks Production), *The Austin American*, February 6, 1960: 11).

<sup>2</sup> “Mortuary Sets Open House,” *The Austin American*, May 13, 1971: 27).



**General Description:** The O.H. and Thelma Elliott House is a one-story Ranch Style house with a low-pitched cross-gabled roof, a shallow, irregular U-shaped footprint, and asymmetrical massing. The house rests on a pier and beam foundation; it has a cement stucco skirt punctuated with open-work concrete vents at regular intervals for air flow. The primary (street-facing) façade is composed of three unequal-sized bays: two forward-projecting wings on either side of the house with a slightly recessed porch set between them under the main roof. Each bay features large windows configured to appear as “picture” windows with good views of the front yard and streetscape. At the rear of the house is a medium-pitched front-gable wing with full-height sliding glass doors that open onto a concrete patio.

**Site and Foundation:** The Elliott House lies on a slightly sloping site with the west side of the building at grade level and the east side rising to about 1½ feet above grade. A concrete sidewalk runs the width of the lot; a curved concrete walkway leads to the front steps. The xeriscape yard is covered in small, gravel-like white stones and dotted with drought-resistant flowering plants, including a large prickly pear cactus. A concrete driveway leads from the curb cut to an original free-standing carport supported by metal poles with an attached utility shed at the rear. A chain link fence encloses the rear-side and back yards.

**House Form/Body:** The body of the house is a broad, side-gabled volume that spans most of the lot width. A front-gabled forward-projecting wing extends from the east side of the main side-gabled roof; a second, smaller shed-roofed wing projects forward beneath the slope of the side-gabled roof on the west. A front-gabled rear wing extends from the side-gabled volume to the patio and back yard on the south side of the house. At the rear east side of the front-gabled wing lies a single-wide 12' x 70' Fleetwood Mobile Home built and installed on the site in 1970; the mobile home is considered and taxed as personal property by the Travis County Appraisal District.

**Porch and Entrance:** A shallow, partial-width front porch supported by full-height floral-patterned wrought iron posts is set between the two front-gabled wings and sheltered under the main shed roof. Three concrete steps lead to the porch and front door; the door features an arched window with faux leaded glass in the upper panel.

**Fenestration:** Fenestration on the primary façade consists of three sets of aluminum windows: large, paired 1/1 double hung windows in each of the front-gabled wings and a tripartite “picture” window composed of a central single-lite window flanked by two narrower 1/1 windows. On the east façade are

two large 1/1 aluminum windows and two small 1/1 bathroom windows. There are no windows on the west façade except for a small window box into the kitchen. The rear (south) façade is dominated by a set of aluminum frame sliding glass doors that open from the den onto a concrete patio.

**Siding:** The frame house is clad in aluminum lap siding. On the front façade, a band of rusticated cast stone in regular courses stretches from beneath the windowsills to the top of the foundation skirting; the secondary east and west facades are entirely aluminum lap siding without cast stone accoutrements. The roof is composition shingle and has aluminum gutters and downspouts.

**Setting:** The O.H. and Thelma Elliott House occupies a large residential lot at 2207 E. 22<sup>nd</sup> Street, between Coletto and Chestnut Streets, in East Austin. Except for a modern multi-unit two-story condominium at the corner of Coletto, the block is composed of one-story single-family houses dating to the early post-World War II period. At that time, this part of the city was considered the segregated “Negro” or “Colored” District, i.e., east of the East Avenue, now IH-35, south of Manor Road. All of the original families on the block were African American; it has since become fully integrated. Despite the recent influx of ultra-modern houses in the general area, the 2200 block of E. 22<sup>nd</sup> Street retains its historic neighborhood character and building fabric to the extent that it conveys a good sense of the postwar suburban development era in which it was built.

### ***Architectural Analysis and Assessment***

#### **Ranch Style: [Virginia McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 2018]**

The O. H. and Thelma Elliott House is analyzed and evaluated in accordance with the work of Virginia Savage McAlester, one of the most-widely respected experts in the classification and analysis of historic residential architecture. According to Ms. McAlester, the date range for the Ranch Style extended from c. 1935 to 1975. She described the identifying features of the Ranch Style as “Broad one-story shape; usually built low to ground; low-pitched [gabled] roof without dormers; commonly with moderate-to-wide roof overhang; front entry usually located off-center and sheltered under main roof of house; garage typically attached to main façade; a large picture window generally present; asymmetrical façade.” The description applies to the O.H. and Thelma Elliott House in all respects except the garage; however, many Ranch Style houses – especially in hot climates – had free-standing carport/sheds as in the Elliott House.

Ms. McAlester went on to identify four principal subtypes of Ranch style houses: hipped roof, cross-hipped roof, side-gabled roof, and cross-gabled roof. She stated that about 40 percent of Ranch Style houses are cross-gabled, with a “broad side-gabled form, with a long roof ridge parallel to the street, and a single prominent front-facing gable extension. Occasionally a second such gable is present.” The O.H. and Thelma Elliott House exemplifies the cross-gabled subtype of Ranch Style houses, with its long, low side-gabled form punctuated by a front-gabled projection on the east and secondary front-gabled wing on the west side of the primary façade.

Ms. McAlester further stated that “more than 50 percent of Ranch houses have at least one picture window on the front façade, and some examples have more.” This was especially true of early postwar Ranch houses, including the Elliott House which has a main tripartite window (wide center light flanked by two narrower lights), as well as picture windows in each of the gables on the primary façade. Many

early postwar Ranch houses like the Elliott House featured pre-manufactured metal (aluminum, steel, or bronze) windows of varying sizes and shapes but with the same material and design family. The Elliott House meets this description: most of its windows are 1/1 double-hung aluminum sash on both the primary and secondary facades. An exception is the near full-height aluminum frame sliding glass doors on the rear (south) façade, that open into the den.

Front entries on Ranch Style houses are almost always off-center and sheltered by the main roof and overhanging eaves. They are typically positioned at the juncture of the long wall and front-projecting gable which offers greater shelter from the rain. The Elliott House is a good example of this type. Like about 50 percent of Ranch Style houses, the Elliott House has a partial width front porch contained under the main roof where is relatively inconspicuous. Originally, the porch on the Elliott House spanned the width of the long wall but when a second front-gabled wing was added on the west side of the house, the porch became nestled between the two gable ends. While some Ranch Style porch supports are simple wood posts, others are wrought iron rendered in vine or floral patterns such as those on the Elliott House, which has two full-height floral-design posts and alternating floral and twisted railings with twisted handrails. Builders of Ranch Style houses frequently added bits of traditional detailing, the most common of which were decorative – inoperable – window shutters like those on the Elliott House’s main façade.

### ***Architectural Integrity***

The house retains exceptional architectural integrity to the historic period, i.e. a dining room addition on the front west side of the house and aluminum siding were added in the period of significance, before 1961; thus, they possess significance in their own right. The plan and footprint of the house, including the den at the rear, roof form and pitch, fenestration pattern, siding profile, front porch and rear terrace all date to the period of significance.

### ***Architectural Significance***

The O.H. and Thelma Mitchell Elliott House is an excellent example of the Ranch style, one of the most popular and enduring architectural styles for residential buildings in American history. The Ranch style house epitomizes the postwar “baby boom” era in its modern form, functional plan and interior layout, and absence of nonessential details and embellishments that characterized earlier architectural styles for domestic construction.

The Elliott House reflects modern Ranch style traits in its single-story construction, low-pitched gable roof, shallow front porch and larger, more secluded rear terrace, detached carport, lack of extraneous ornament and simplified fenestration pattern. Even the application of aluminum siding which occurred during the historic period is emblematic of the modern era in which it was sold to consumers for energy efficiency and low maintenance. The Elliott House is largely intact to the historic period in its Ranch style plan, roof form and pitch, fenestration pattern, and appurtenant features. Thus, it embodies the principal characteristics of an iconic architectural style in postwar America.

## **Criterion: Historical Associations**

The mid-century Ranch style house at 2207 E. 22<sup>nd</sup> Street is closely associated with husband and wife, O. H. and Thelma Mitchell Elliott, the original “power couple” of segregated East Austin who were at the forefront of Civil Rights-era political and educational movements and Great Society programs in the city from the late 1930s through the 1970s.

### ***O. H. Elliott***

Dr. Ora Herman – O. H. – Elliott was born in Hope, Arkansas in 1909. He grew up in Muskogee, Oklahoma where he graduated from high school then received both his Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees from the University of Kansas.<sup>3</sup> Though not a segregated college, per se, Black male students were made to sleep on the outside sleeping porch, a reminder that racism existed not just in the South but throughout the country at that time.<sup>4</sup> After earning his graduate degree, Elliott served as the business manager of Clark College, a Methodist university in Atlanta, Georgia and the first historically Black college and university (HBCU) established in the southern United States. In 1935, Elliott moved to Austin to serve as business manager of Samuel Huston College; upon the death of the school’s president, Karl Everett Downs, he also served as Interim President of the college.<sup>5</sup>

When Elliott started working at Samuel Huston, another Black college operated just one mile away. Tillotson College, a private institution renowned for its departments of education and music, had served the East Austin community since it was chartered in 1877. The two schools enjoyed a healthy rivalry and both contributed significantly to the social and civic life of East Austin. However, neither institution possessed sufficient resources to provide the best education possible for their students. Confronted with this fact, Elliott pondered the question: why have two struggling Black colleges in the same city? Both schools had similar constituencies, curriculum shaped by moral and religious instruction, and a deep commitment to community service.<sup>6</sup> Cognizant of these similarities, Elliott became a “moving force” in the merger of Samuel Huston College and Tillotson College.<sup>7</sup> During a meeting of trustees on January 26, 1952, an agreement was reached to consolidate the two schools. A new charter was signed on October 24th of the same year and the newly minted Huston-Tillotson College became the exclusive provider of higher education for African Americans in Central Texas.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>3</sup> “Death and Funerals: O.H. Elliott,” *Austin American-Statesman*, Feb. 2, 1984, p. 14.

<sup>4</sup> Ora Houston, interview by Terri Myers, September 28, 2024.

<sup>5</sup> “Death and Funerals: O.H. Elliott,” *Austin American-Statesman*, Feb. 2, 1984, p. 14.

<sup>6</sup> “HT History,” Huston-Tillotson University, accessed June 23, 2025, <https://htu.edu/about/history/#:~:text=The%20roots%20of%20Tillotson%20College,classes%20on%20January%2017%2C%201881>.

<sup>7</sup> “Death and Funerals: O.H. Elliott,” *Austin American-Statesman*, Feb. 2, 1984, p. 14.

<sup>8</sup> “HT History,” Huston-Tillotson University, accessed June 23, 2025, <https://htu.edu/about/history/#:~:text=The%20roots%20of%20Tillotson%20College,classes%20on%20January%2017%2C%201881>.

It was said that Elliott “bore the burden in the heat of the day,” serving Huston-Tillotson College “during its years of struggle and hardships.”<sup>9</sup> During his time at the newly merged institution, Elliott’s official duties included business manager, Associate Professor of Business Administration, and college accountant.<sup>10</sup> He was also the treasurer of a citizen’s committee that supported the United Negro College Fund, a fund that enabled 32 private colleges and universities to give more scholarship aid, buy books and equipment, and pay teaching salaries.<sup>11</sup> Finally, Elliott served as a member of the school’s Board of Trustees for fifteen years, after which he was made a lifetime honorary trustee. Elliott’s service to the college was officially recognized in 1979, when he was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Humanities degree from Huston-Tillotson.<sup>12</sup>



*O.H. Elliott (on the far left) pictured among Sam Huston footballers and coach as they wave goodbye in preparation to take off for Mexico City to play the Mexican National Polytechnical Institute in 1951.<sup>13</sup>*

*Photo of O.H. Elliott provided by his daughter Ora Houston*

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> “More Than 250 Students Listed in H-T Classes,” *Austin-American Statesman*, June 16, 1955, p. 19.

<sup>11</sup> “Austin Church Support Asked in Negro Drive,” *The Austin American*, May 28, 1951, p. 25.

<sup>12</sup> “Death and Funerals: O.H. Elliott,” *Austin American-Statesman*, Feb. 2, 1984, p. 14.

<sup>13</sup> “Waving Farewell,” *The Austin American*, Sept. 21, 1951, p. 24.

Though he was said to have a quiet, almost gentle demeanor,<sup>14</sup> Elliott was not content to remain on the sidelines of advancement for African Americans during the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s. In fact, as early as 1941, he headed a committee to ask for Black representation in elections within the Democratic Party, a request that was denied on the basis of the party's mission statement to allow only white members to vote in its elections.<sup>15</sup> However, this rebuff did not dissuade him from pursuing racial equality in the ensuing decades.

It was not until three years later, in the landmark case *Smith vs. Allwright* (1944), that the Supreme Court reached the decision that Blacks could not be prohibited from voting in the Democratic primary even by party officials.<sup>16</sup> Although this court decision formally abolished the white primary in Texas, attempts to limit Black political participation did not cease.<sup>17</sup> In 1948, Elliott spoke at a political rally sponsored by the Negro Citizens Council aimed at bolstering political engagement among Black Austinites. The keynote speaker, Dr. Everett Givens, lauded the crowd: "your presence here shows your increased awareness of your rights and privileges in the government" and reminded them of their duty to inform themselves of the "issues of the day and the fitness of the candidates seeking office."<sup>18,19</sup> Elliott went on to embody this vision through active political engagement at both the local and state levels, holding leadership roles in the United Political Organization and the East Austin Council of Community Affairs,<sup>20,21</sup> representing his community as a delegate to several State Democratic Conventions,<sup>22,23</sup> and pursuing elected office as a candidate for Precinct Chairman in 1966.<sup>24</sup>

After Lyndon B. Johnson was inaugurated in 1964, he initiated a series of domestic programs known as "The Great Society" aimed at eliminating poverty and racial injustice in the United States. Great Society policy areas stretched far and wide: Civil rights, social and economic welfare, education, healthcare, and housing, among other spheres. Elliott seized upon this political climate and the resources it offered to "enhance the quality of life not only for [people] in Texas but for the disadvantaged throughout the United States of America."<sup>25</sup>

<sup>14</sup> "Death and Funerals: O.H. Elliott," *Austin American-Statesman*, Feb. 2, 1984, p. 14.

<sup>15</sup> "Negro Vote Is Ruled Out Here," *The Austin American*, Jul. 22, 1942, p. 5.

<sup>16</sup> Sanford G. Greenberg. "The Fight Against the White Primary in Texas: A Historical Overview," Texas State Historical Association, Last updated September 29, 2020. <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/white-primary>

<sup>17</sup> Sanford G. Greenberg. "The Fight Against the White Primary in Texas: A Historical Overview," Texas State Historical Association, Last updated September 29, 2020. <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/white-primary>

<sup>18</sup> "Negro Council to Sponsor Political Rally Tonight," *The Austin American*, Jul. 21, 1948, p. 8.

<sup>19</sup> "'Howdy-Do Stage Takes Over Race,'" *Austin American-Statesman*, Jul. 22, 1948, p. 8.

<sup>20</sup> "State Negro Group for Rights Panel," *Austin American-Statesman*, Dec. 22, 1964, p. 6.

<sup>21</sup> "OEO Grant Sought By Eastside Group," *Austin American-Statesman*, Feb. 25, 1966, p. 10.

<sup>22</sup> "Travis County Delegate to Attend State Democratic Convention," *The Austin-American*, Sept. 16, 1962, p. 6.

<sup>23</sup> "Delegate Named to Demo Session," *Austin American-Statesman*, Sep. 30, 1970, p. 17.

<sup>24</sup> "Democratic Party Primary Election," *The Austin American*, June 2, 1966.

<sup>25</sup> "Death and Funerals: O.H. Elliott," *Austin American-Statesman*, Feb. 2, 1984, p. 14.

Through the inner workings of state and local government, Elliott worked “behind these scenes” to promote civil rights.<sup>26</sup> He was one of the directors of the “Rights Agency” that encouraged the City Council to ask for the appointment of a human rights commission to ensure the effective implementation of the Civil Rights Law of 1964.<sup>27</sup> This law is seen by many historians as one of the crowning achievements of the Great Society in that it translated the demands of the civil rights movement into policy.<sup>28</sup> Elliott was also a member of the United Political Organization (UPO), a “Negro political group” that encouraged Governor Connally to include a provision for a state civil rights committee in his recommendations to the Legislature that same year.<sup>29</sup> The UPO adopted an action program the following year that included poll tax payment drives, efforts to familiarize local areas of opportunities under the federal anti-poverty program, and good representation at the inauguration of Connally and President Lyndon B. Johnson.<sup>30</sup> Elliott also led several local initiatives to honor civil rights leaders in Austin. In 1962, he presented a resolution to the City Council to rename Oak Springs Park after Dr. Givens, an East Austin dentist and civic leader.<sup>31</sup> In 1966, Elliott was listed in *The Austin American* among “three of the eastsides’ most respected men” who handed the City Council a petition that a library moving to Oak Springs be renamed “George Washington Carver Library.”<sup>32</sup> Both proposals were successful.

Elliott also worked with the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), a Great Society initiative established to oversee a variety of community-based anti-poverty programs. As part of the East Austin Council of Community Affairs, Elliott helped push for an OEO grant for a Small Business Development Corporation (SBDC) in 1965. When the council was told that it might be years before Austin received a grant, they continued to organize. The chairman of the SBDC reported: “This would put a lot of people in business who would never get in any other way. We plan to apply and keep the pressure on everywhere we can in hope we’ll get the money earlier than scheduled.” The previous year, Elliott had arranged an Austin visit for James A. Madison, Deputy Chief of Community Relations for the Job Corps in the OEO. Elliott organized for Madison to talk at Anderson High School and Huston-Tillotson as well as attend a Neighborhood Anti-Poverty Mass Meeting in Pan-American Center.<sup>33</sup>

Elliott can also be found at the center of various efforts to ensure more equitable housing and healthcare in Austin. For instance, he was a driving force behind the first major low rent private housing development created in the City of Austin. In 1965, construction started on a \$1.6 million apartment complex on a seven acre tract at Gunter-Springdale Road and Airport in East

<sup>26</sup> Ora Houston, interview by Terri Myers, September 28, 2024.

<sup>27</sup> “Rights Agency Bid By City Studied,” *The Austin American*, Jan. 8, 1965, p. 6.

<sup>28</sup> Alan Brinkley, “Great Society” in *The Reader’s Companion to American History*, Eric Foner and John Arthur Garraty eds., ISBN 0-395-51372-3, Houghton Mifflin Books, p. 472.

<sup>29</sup> “State Negro Group for Rights Panel,” *Austin-American Statesman*, Dec. 22, 1964, p. 6.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> “City Council Names Park After Dr. Givens,” *Austin American-Statesman*, Nov. 15, 1962, p. 6.

<sup>32</sup> “Carver Library Pressed,” *The Austin American*, Mar. 11, 1966, p. 12.

<sup>33</sup> “Camp Gary Tour Seen By Official,” *Austin American-Statesman*, Feb. 13, 1965, p. 9.

Austin.<sup>34</sup> The project, organized by the St. Joseph Grand Lodge, was completely underwritten by a Federal Housing Authority (FHA) loan.<sup>35</sup> Elliott, spokesman for the Lodge and part of the complex's 3-member board of trustees, reported that the apartment would be geared towards low to moderate income families and include a daycare center and playground.<sup>36</sup> In 1970, Elliott was part of a committee organized to investigate health administration in Travis County with a special focus on the care of indigent persons. Findings were presented to Travis County Commissioners Court and the City Council.<sup>37</sup>

Over the years, Elliott cultivated close relationships with President Lyndon B. Johnson, Governors John Connally, Preston Smith, and Dolph Briscoe, and U.S. Representative Jake Pickle.<sup>38</sup> Because of his outstanding service to education and the state, Governor Connally named him to the Coordinating Board of the Texas College and University System in 1969.<sup>39</sup> He was the first African American to serve on the Coordinating Board, a position he held until 1977. During his time on the board, Elliott cast the deciding vote to maintain the Law School at Texas Southern University.

While Elliott's work at Huston-Tillotson College and on the Coordinating Board might be his most celebrated achievements, he contributed to Austin civic life in countless additional ways. He was a man of faith who was deeply committed to his church, Wesley United Methodist Church, where he served as Chairman of the Trustee Board and as a delegate to the Methodist General Conference, among other positions within the congregation. Elliott's community service was boundless. He was a 33<sup>rd</sup> degree Mason, a Shriner, and a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity; a member of Connecting Links, the National Business League, and the Capital City Lion's Club. He also served as a member of the Austin Housing Authority's Finance Committee and the Austin Parks and Recreation Board,<sup>40</sup> and helped lead the Harry Lott division of the Boy Scouts of America.<sup>41, 42</sup> Over the years, Elliott participated in a number of philanthropic efforts. For instance, he helped plan a 1947 March of Dimes fundraising ball,<sup>43</sup> raised money for the Red Cross as a member of the East Austin Chest Big Gifts Committee between 1947-1951,<sup>44, 45, 46</sup>

<sup>34</sup> "Lodge To Develop 19-Unit Complex," *Austin American-Statesman*, Oct. 28, 1965, p. 21.

<sup>35</sup> The Federal Housing Authority (FHA) was created in 1934 as part of the New Deal and thus, was not a Great Society program. However, the Great Society expanded and built upon existing programs like the FHA to address broader social and economic issues. The FHA became part of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), a Great Society initiative established in 1965.

<sup>36</sup> "Lodge To Develop 19-Unit Complex," *Austin American-Statesman*, Oct. 28, 1965, p. 21.

<sup>37</sup> Travis Committee View Area Health," *The Austin American*, Jan. 30, 1970, p. 6.

<sup>38</sup> "Death and Funerals: O.H. Elliott," *Austin American-Statesman*, Feb. 2, 1984, p. 14.

<sup>39</sup> "3 Austinites Among College Board Appointees," *Austin American-Statesman*, Jan. 12, 1969, p. 14.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> "Scout Support," *The Austin American*, June 1959, p. 20.

<sup>42</sup> "DA to Speak Before Scouters," *Austin American-Statesman*, Jan 21, 1960, p. 20.

<sup>43</sup> "Negroes to Sponsor F.D.R. Birthday Ball to Help Polio Fund," *The Austin American*, Jan. 20, 1946, p. 4.

<sup>44</sup> "Red Cross Edges Past Drive Half-Way Mark," *Austin American-Statesman*, Mar. 13, 1947, p. 15.

<sup>45</sup> "More Pledges Roll In," *Austin American-Statesman*, Nov. 6, 1950, p. 11.

<sup>46</sup> "Veteran Who Knows Praises the Red Cross," *The Austin American*, Mar. 8, 1951.

headed a Special Donations Voluntary Donations Committee to collect funds for a new animal shelter in 1956,<sup>47</sup> and led a 1962 push to promote recreation in the Rosewood community.<sup>48</sup>

The impact that Elliott made on civic life in Austin cannot be overstated. Perhaps his most significant and enduring achievement was his role in the establishment of Austin Community College.<sup>49</sup> Elliott was instrumental in bringing ACC to fruition through his adamant support and promotion of the college while serving on the Coordinating Board of Texas Colleges and Universities. It was an accomplishment hailed by the board president as “an absolute necessity to public and higher education in Central Texas.”<sup>50</sup> Elliott’s role in founding ACC was so vital that the college dedicated its first commencement in 1977 to him in appreciation.<sup>51</sup>



*In 1959, O.H. Elliott was vice chairman of the Harry Lott District of the Boy Scouts of America. He is pictured here receiving a check from the Austin Branch of the National Alliance of Postal Employees that will be used to send five boy scouts to Camp Wooten.<sup>52</sup>*



*O.H. Elliott, grand secretary of the St. Joseph Grand Lodge, presents a \$69 check for the lodge to the Dental Clinic at 1183 Chestnut to buy toothbrushes for children.<sup>53</sup>*

<sup>47</sup> “Humane Society Opens Campaign for \$16,000,” *Austin American-Statesman*, June 11, 1956, p. 8.

<sup>48</sup> “Recreation Talks Called For Center,” *The Austin American*, Dec. 2, 1962, p. 43.

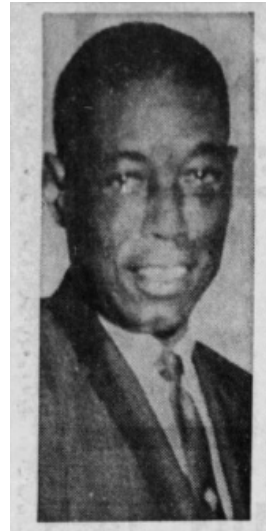
<sup>49</sup> “Death and Funerals: O.H. Elliott,” *Austin American-Statesman*, Feb. 2, 1984, p. 14.

<sup>50</sup> “October Hearing Announced For New Community College,” *The Austin American*, Sep. 28, 1972, p. 24.

<sup>51</sup> “Death and Funerals: O.H. Elliott,” *Austin American-Statesman*, Feb. 2, 1984, p. 14.

<sup>52</sup> “Scout Support,” *The Austin American*, June 1959, p. 20.

<sup>53</sup> “Money for Clinic,” *Austin American-Statesman*, Feb. 21, 1966, p. 7.



**HONORED** — O. H. Elliott, grand secretary of St. Joseph Grand Lodge, has been presented the outstanding achievement award from the Masonic body. Elliott is a past member of the Austin Parks and Recreation Board, a Boy Scout official, chairman of stewardship and finance at Wesley Methodist Church and a member of the Huston-Tillotson College board of trustees.

*O.H. Elliott (fourth left to right) pictured among members of the East Austin Community Big Gifts Committee.<sup>54</sup>*

*In 1963, O.H. Elliott was presented with an outstanding achievement award from the Masonic body.<sup>55</sup>*

### ***Family***

Not long after Elliot initially arrived in Austin to work at Samuel Huston College, he met Thelma Mitchell of San Antonio and the two were married in her hometown on January 6, 1938. The couple had two daughters, Ora Ann and Thelma Karen.<sup>56</sup> In 1954, the Elliotts bought a home at 2207 East 22nd Street in what was then referred to as the “Negro District,” located south of Manor in East Austin. Described by their daughter Ora Ann as a “complete community,” their neighborhood was economically diverse and composed of Black-owned homes and businesses.<sup>57</sup> Over the ensuing decades, the Elliott home became a gathering space for the community, hosting a variety of church, political, and civic meetings conducted by both Elliott and his wife, another East Austin mover and shaker.

### ***Thelma Mitchell Elliott***

Thelma Mitchell was born on November 25, 1912 in San Antonio, Texas. She attended Douglass High School and then moved to Austin, where she received her undergraduate degree from Samuel Huston College and later served as Assistant Dean of Women at Clark College.<sup>58</sup> In the early 1950s, Mrs. Elliott returned to school in order to pursue a career in social work. She was among the “precursors,” the first generation of Black students who desegregated the University of Texas at Austin in the 1950s. The struggle for desegregation at UT had begun much earlier, when an African American man applied and was denied on the basis of his race in 1885, only

<sup>54</sup> “More Pledges Roll In,” *Austin American-Statesman*, Nov. 6, 1950, p. 11.

<sup>55</sup> “Honored,” *Austin American-Statesman*, Aug. 14, 1963, p. 16.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> Ora Houston, interview by Terri Myers, September 28, 2024.

<sup>58</sup> “ENABLE: More Than An Anti-Poverty Committee,” *The Austin American*, June 12, 1966, pg. 10

two years after the university's founding. Sixty-five years later, in the fall 1950, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of Heman Marion Sweatt's application to UT's law school. That same fall, the University of Texas opened its graduate program in social work. Within two years, the first African American students graduated from the school: Gus Swain was the first male graduate in 1953, and Thelma Elliott was the first female graduate in 1954. "Precursors" such as Swain and Mrs. Elliott attended classes amidst threats of violence, intense scrutiny, and widespread hostility. Swain, in a 1982 speech, recalled that the School of Social Work felt like an "oasis" in the tense atmosphere of early desegregation.<sup>59</sup>

After receiving her Master of Science in Social Work, Mrs. Elliott began a ten-year stint as the first Black female probation officer for the Travis County Juvenile Court. She also served as a social worker at Brackenridge Hospital, an instructor at Samuel Huston, president of the PTA, and was involved in her church.<sup>60</sup> In addition, Mrs. Elliott juggled family responsibilities as the wife of O.H. Elliott, then business manager at Samuel Huston College, and mother of two daughters, Ora Ann and Thelma Karen. Ora Houston recalled that her mother "had a very deep sense of social justice."<sup>61</sup> Mrs. Elliott's commitment to social justice impacted not only her career choice but how she raised her family. Ora Houston recalled that their house "was always about service."<sup>62</sup> Ora's involvement in her community from an early age reflects this: In 1951, at the age of eight, Ora sang at a Christmas program among children and grandchildren of the Douglass Club, a women's organization affiliated with National Federation of Colored Women's Clubs.<sup>63</sup> In high school, she was a member of the Future Nurses Club,<sup>64</sup> was recognized in *The Austin American* for volunteering at a flood refugee shelter,<sup>65</sup> and was among the seniors at Anderson High who received the most "good citizenship certificates."<sup>66</sup> "I tell people all the time that I have my mother's sense of social justice," Ora said. "She was not a rebel, she was not out there marching on the streets. But in her own quiet way, she made important changes."<sup>67</sup>

Perhaps some of the most important changes that Mrs. Elliott made were through her work with ENABLE. In 1966, in recognition of her work in Juvenile Court, Elliott was tapped to lead project ENABLE, as part of President Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty. ENABLE (Education and Neighborhood Action for Better Living Environment) was sponsored by Child and Family Services and funded through the new Office of Economic Opportunity, the federal agency in

<sup>59</sup> Andrea Campetella, "A Social Work Precursor: Thelma Mitchell Elliott, Desegregation at UT Austin, and the War on Poverty," *The Utopian*, Sep. 24, 2018.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ora Houston, interview by Terri Myers, September 28, 2024.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> "Douglass Club Relatives Give Christmas Program," *Austin American-Statesman*, Dec. 20, 1951, p. 36.

<sup>64</sup> "Capping Service Set Today for Girls of High School Future Nurses Club," *The Austin American*, Feb. 1, 1959, pg. 32.

<sup>65</sup> "23 Students Pitch In for Flood Work," *The Austin American*, Nov. 6, 1960, pg. 8.

<sup>66</sup> "Good Citizen Program Set At Anderson," *The Austin American*, Apr. 30, 1961, pg. 9.

<sup>67</sup> Andrea Campetella, "A Social Work Precursor: Thelma Mitchell Elliott, Desegregation at UT Austin, and the War on Poverty," *The Utopian*, Sep. 24, 2018.

charge of administering many War on Poverty programs.<sup>68</sup> In a *Statesman* article printed on May 19, 1966, Mrs. Elliott explained the mission of ENABLE as giving mothers “a sense of self, purpose, confidence and power, something that will grow, a motivation, and the tools to get something done for a better life.”<sup>69</sup> Austin Child and Family Service executive director, Richard Standifer, reported that “many poverty families in Austin are not aware of either the long established resources in our city that are available to them,” “do not feel the services are for them,” or “lack the courage and know-how to seek such services and maintain the effort necessary to get them.”<sup>70</sup> ENABLE sought to tackle this problem by providing a space in which parents could collaborate, learn about opportunities to improve their and their children's lives, and as a result, “win a permanent increase in self-confidence and capacities as parents and community members in meeting responsibilities more effectively.”<sup>71</sup>



*Ms. Elliott (second from right, in green dress) with ENABLE team members<sup>72</sup>*

Low income families were often connected to ENABLE through other War on Poverty programs such as Head Start, however, a special effort was reportedly made to reach “the unreachable.” “We will knock on every door,” said Standifer.<sup>73</sup> ENABLE also provided free transportation and childcare to residents who attended neighborhood group problem-solving meetings. After the

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> “ENABLE: More Than Anti Poverty Committee,” *The Austin American*, June 12, 1966, pg. 10.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Photo AR-2007-017-033, Austin History Center, Austin Public Library

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

first such meeting, Mrs. Elliott reported: “This is so new it will take a while to catch on. But we did focus on many problems of the family and community. They told me they had wanted to talk about these things before but did not know where to go or how to go about it.”<sup>74</sup>

Under Mrs. Elliott’s leadership, ENABLE evolved into group problem-solving initiatives to tackle specific problems such as unsanitary living conditions in rental units to neighborhood safety and infrastructure. Though some of the work may seem modest today, ENABLE had a demonstrated positive impact on the health and well-being of primarily Black and Mexican communities throughout Austin. Before ENABLE, residents of Hergotz Lane in the southeastern part of the city had to travel 10 miles to the nearest supply of drinking water. Under Mrs. Elliott’s leadership, in May of 1966, they celebrated the installation of a water spigot in the neighborhood.<sup>75</sup> It was just a single, public spigot, but it solved a long-needed problem. A month later, in June, three men under the auspices of ENABLE waged war against mosquitoes in Montopolis with the aid of a fogging machine. Perhaps inspired by their success, Montopolis residents fought and won a battle for public transportation to connect them to city bus lines later that month. In September, ENABLE encouraged the formation of the Parents Club of Booker T. Washington Terrace public housing complex. The club organized a cleanup day in which parents and children cut down the high grass in the playground and removed bottles and rocks.<sup>76</sup>



*Water spigot on Hergotz Lane*<sup>77</sup>



*Mrs. Elliott at the Booker T. Washington Terrace public housing*<sup>78</sup>

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Andrea Campetella, “A Social Work Precursor: Thelma Mitchell Elliott, Desegregation at UT Austin, and the War on Poverty,” *The Utopian*, Sep. 24, 2018.

<sup>76</sup> Andrea Campetella, “A Social Work Precursor: Thelma Mitchell Elliott, Desegregation at UT Austin, and the War on Poverty,” *The Utopian*, Sep. 24, 2018.

<sup>77</sup> Photo AR-2007-017-069, Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.

<sup>78</sup> Photo AR-2007-017-045, Austin History Center, Austin Public Library

Also in September, ENABLE appeared in the *Statesman* urging Travis County residents experiencing job discrimination to contact the Austin Equal Citizenship Corporation. According to one committee member, Montopolis residents complained that they didn't get fair chances at jobs and promotions, and some kids still quit school because they believe all they can ever get is a "pick and shovel job." Having identified this issue at neighborhood meetings, ENABLE sought actionable ways to rectify it.<sup>79</sup> As a whole, ENABLE's work was never abstract; it was concrete, collaborative, and rooted in the lives of real people. By helping communities organize and act, ENABLE helped restore a sense of dignity and power where it had long been denied.

Within a year of its launch, ENABLE Austin was recognized as one of the most successful of 60 such projects around the country.<sup>80</sup> Felton Alexander, area coordinator of ENABLE, said that the dialogue between staff and committee members was more effective and open than any other he had witnessed.<sup>81</sup> Mrs. Alline Del Valle, six-state Houston-based area supervisor, credited the Austin program as having the best referral system of any city in the 20-city area. "It was thrilling to see the people ready to move. One of the men said they had tried before to get things done but he can see now they didn't know how," said Del Valle after attending a meeting in Montopolis.<sup>82</sup> Without a doubt, much of ENABLE Austin's early success can be traced to the steadfast leadership of Mrs. Elliott. When she resigned as director after nine months in order to accept a role at the Texas Office of Economic Opportunity (TOEO), the Brooksdale Improvement Club wrote to her: "We have heard that you have resigned. We hope this is not true, but if it is, we hope you will remain in a leadership role in helping others as you have helped us."<sup>83</sup> Her departure marked a bittersweet moment for East Austin, however, her new role at the state level meant her influence would stretch even further.

In December of 1966, Mrs. Elliott started her new position as the Research and Program Specialist in the Community Action Division of the TOEO. "We feel that Mrs. Elliott's long experience working with low-income families qualifies her highly for this state-level assignment in the war on poverty," said director Walter Richter.<sup>84</sup> Mrs. Elliott was tasked with planning and developing resource materials, ideas, and techniques for use by TOEO consultants and Community Action Program directors throughout the state.<sup>85</sup>

While this work proved invaluable, it also unfolded during a time of growing national tension, as the escalation of the Vietnam War led to shrinking federal budgets for domestic programs. The War on Poverty, once a centerpiece of national policy, began to lose momentum.<sup>86</sup> As funding dried up and federal support waned, Mrs. Elliott's ability to contribute through this role was

<sup>79</sup> "Job Discrimination Claims Due Equal Citizenship Corp.," *Austin American-Statesman*, Sep. 14, 1966, pg. 14.

<sup>80</sup> "Mrs. Elliott Added to the OEO Staff," *The Austin American*, Dec. 16, 1966, pg. 2.

<sup>81</sup> "ENABLE: More Than Anti Poverty Committee," *The Austin American*, June 12, 1966, pg. 10.

<sup>82</sup> "Poverty Program Rates High," *The Austin American*, June 9, 1966, p. 5.

<sup>83</sup> "Mrs. Elliott Added to the OEO Staff," *The Austin American*, Dec. 16, 1966, p. 2.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> Ryan Larochelle. "A Mission Without Precedent: The Rise and Fall of the Office of Economic Opportunity, 1964-1981," *Journal of Policy History* 36, no. 1 (2024). [https://muse.jhu.edu/pub/122/article/916370#info\\_wrap](https://muse.jhu.edu/pub/122/article/916370#info_wrap)

curtailed. Still, her commitment to social justice never wavered. She continued to serve the community as the Director of Social Services with the Mental Health and Mental Retardation Center and later with the Texas Department of Human Services, where she ultimately retired.<sup>87,88</sup>

### *Lives of Service*

Both O.H. and Thelma Mitchell Elliott were tireless advocates for civil rights, education, and human dignity—each forging their own path but united by a shared commitment to justice and community empowerment. O.H. Elliott worked within institutions, breaking barriers in higher education and wielding political influence to open doors for others. Thelma Elliott, rooted in the social work tradition, championed community-driven solutions, empowering East Austin families through programs like ENABLE that listened to and uplifted their voices. Together, they worked in a system that had long excluded their community, doing the difficult, often invisible work that brought real change and restored agency to those long denied it. After a lifetime of steadfast commitment to their community, O.H. Elliott passed on February 21, 1984, and Thelma Mitchell Elliott passed on July 21, 1998.<sup>89, 90</sup> Their legacy lives on in Austin through their daughter, Ora Ann Houston, who inherited their conviction, compassion, and dedication to the community.

Just like her parents, Ora Houston has led a life oriented around public service and civic engagement. Raised by two leaders who worked to amplify the voices of East Austin residents, Houston learned early the power of listening—to ask questions before offering answers, to lead by walking alongside.<sup>91</sup> These skills served her well in her 27 years working with the Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation and Child Protective Services. Even in retirement, she remained committed to public service, working in the office of Texas Senator Gonzalo Barrientos from 1999-2003 and serving as the first representative of District 1 on the Austin City Council between 2015 to 2019. While on City Council, she helped found Austinites for Geographic Representation, ensuring that communities like hers could elect leaders who reflected their lived experience.<sup>92</sup>

Houston's commitment to her community extends far beyond her official titles. She is an active member of St. James Episcopal Church, an inclusive, multi-cultural community of faith. In addition, Houston has served on a number of commissions and councils,<sup>93</sup> lent her voice to

<sup>87</sup> "Crisis Care Needs Listed," *The Austin American*, May 2, 1968, pg. 46.

<sup>88</sup> Andrea Campetella, "A Social Work Precursor: Thelma Mitchell Elliott, Desegregation at UT Austin, and the War on Poverty," *The Utopian*, Sep. 24, 2018.

<sup>89</sup> "Death and Funerals: O.H. Elliott," *Austin American-Statesman*, Feb. 2, 1984, p. 14.

<sup>90</sup> "Funerals and Memorials: Thelma Mitchell Elliott," *Austin American Statesman*, July 24, 1998, p. 22.

<sup>91</sup> "Women We Love: Ora Houston," *Austin Monthly*, accessed July 22, 2025,

<https://www.austinmonthly.com/women-we-love-ora-houston/>

<sup>92</sup> "About Ora Houston," Ora Houston, accessed July 22, 2025, <https://www.oraatx.com/about-ora>

<sup>93</sup> Ora Houston was a member of the Citizens Advisory Task Force of the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan, the collaborative council of the Travis County Model Court for Children and Families, and the Disproportionality Committee of Family and Protective Services. She was also vice-chair of the Upper Boggy Creek Neighborhood Planning Team.

planning teams, and stayed present on the streets of the neighborhood she called home. “If I’m afraid of the people I represent,” she once said, “then I don’t need to be on the council.” It is this unshakable belief in proximity, compassion, and accountability that has earned Houston a number of awards— the Pioneer Spirit Award, Outstanding Women in Texas Government (1998), Public Citizen of the Year, Texas Chapter, National Association of Social Workers (2009), Outstanding Civic Engagement, Austin Branch, NAACP (2011), and outstanding alumni, Huston-Tillotson International Alumni Association (2012).<sup>94</sup>

That legacy remains rooted not only in her values but in place. Houston continues to live in the home her parents, O.H. and Thelma Mitchell Elliott, built in 1954 on East 22nd Street. The house stands as a symbol of resilience, progress, and Black civic leadership in East Austin, a physical anchor for the multigenerational story of advocacy and empowerment the Elliotts began and their daughter carries forward.



*Photos of O.H. and Thelma Mitchell Elliott provided by their daughter Ora Ann Houston*

<sup>94</sup> “About Ora Houston,” Ora Houston, accessed July 22, 2025, <https://www.oraatx.com/about-ora>

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O.H. and Thelma Mitchell Elliott House – 2207 E. 22<sup>nd</sup> Street, Austin, TX 78722

Color Digital Photos – original labeled prints submitted separately



Photo 1: North (primary) façade, camera facing south



Photo 2: North façade and Inset Porch, camera facing southeast



Photo 3: East and North facades, camera facing southwest



Photo 4: West façade, camera facing southeast



Photo 5: South (rear) façade, camera facing north



Photo 6: Carport and Shed, East and North facades, camera facing south/southwest



Photo 7: Front porch, North and East Walls, camera facing west



Photo 8: Front Entrance, North façade, camera facing south



Photo 9: Carport, North & West house facades, camera facing south



Photo 10: Front-gabled East Wing, North façade, camera facing south/southeast



Photo 11: Interior – Kitchen with Original Stove



Photo 12: Mobile Home West façade, camera facing northeast



























Open for inspection. Owner-builder, 8-0588.

# OPEN HOUSE

2—5 PM

Sunday, 12th, 1954

2207 East 22nd Street  
Colored

See this lovely frame and cutstone home at 2207 East 22nd Street, 3 bedrooms, 2 all tile bathrooms, hardwood floors, car port, den.

ARTHUR PARKS, CONTRACTOR  
3012 East 12th Street—Phone 2-5648  
Austin, Texas

ANDY ANDERSON REALTY CO.  
1202 East 11th Street  
Phone 8-1932  
Austin, Texas



## O.H. Elliott

Mr. O.H. Elliott was born December 16, 1909, in Hope, Arkansas. His early childhood days were spent in Muskogee, Oklahoma, where he graduated from high school. He received his Bachelor's and Master's degrees from the University of Kansas.

He moved to Austin, Texas, in 1935 to serve as business manager of Samuel Huston College for a number of years. He also served the college as Interim President upon the death of the late President Karl Everett Downs.

A quiet, retiring man of great strength, Mr. Elliott served Huston-Tillotson College during its years of struggle and hardships. It was once said of him that he bore the burden in the heat of the day and kept the college together in its most difficult time. He was a moving force in the merger of Samuel Huston College and Tillotson College in 1952. He served as business manager and associate professor of Business Administration. For two years, Mr. Elliott served as business manager of Clark College, Atlanta, Georgia.

He was united in marriage with Thelma Mitchell of San Antonio, Texas, on January 6, 1938. They are the parents of two lovely daughters, Ora Ann and Karen. Mr. Elliott was a devoted husband and father.

His life and work were inextricably woven into the life of Huston-Tillotson College. He was a member of the Board of Trustees of the college for fifteen years and was a lifetime honorary trustee. He was awarded the Honorary Doctor of Humanities degree from Huston-Tillotson in 1979.

A deep commitment to the United Methodist Church had been an impelling force in Mr. Elliott's life. He served Wesley United Methodist Church as Chairman of the Trustee Board for a number of years; lay delegate to the Methodist General Conference; district lay leader of the Austin-Victoria district of the West Texas Conference; and vice chairman of the Commission on World Service and Finance, Southwest Texas Conference.

## Deaths

**BEYER, Frank August Jr., 84,** of Marble Falls died Tuesday. Services 11 a.m. today at Clements-Wilcox Funeral Home in Marble Falls and 3 p.m. today at Austin Memorial Park.

**CLINE, Melba Louise, 54,** of Austin died Wednesday. (Cook-Walden)

**LONGORIA, Pablo C., 29,** of San Marcos died Wednesday. Rosary 7:30 p.m. today at Los Angeles Funeral Home in San Marcos.

ACC dedicated its first commencement to Mr. Elliott in appreciation of his work.

Mr. Elliott served as grand secretary of M.W. St. Joseph Grand Lodge and as executive secretary of the Federation of Masons of the World, Inc. He was a 33 degree Mason, a Shriner, and a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.; a member of Connecting Links; the National Business League; and the Capital City Lion's Club. He was a member of the Finance Committee of the Austin Housing Authority, a member of the Parks and Recreation Board of Austin; promoter of the Harry Lott division of Boy Scouts of America, earning the Order of the Silver Beaver, the highest honor in Scouting.

His close association with the late Dr. Everett H. Givins and his relationship with former President Lyndon B. Johnson, former Governors John Connally, Preston Smith, Dolph Brisco, and U.S. Representative Jake Pickle enabled Mr. Elliott, in his quiet and gentle manner to enhance the quality of life not only for those of us in Texas, but for the disadvantaged throughout the United States of America.

His survivors include his devoted wife, Thelma Mitchell Elliott; his daughters, Ora Ann Houston, Austin, and Karen Elliott Charleston, Fort Riley, Kansas; one grandson, Stephen; three granddaughters, Gina, Lauren, and Leslie; one niece, Katie L. Jones, San Antonio, Texas; a nephew, Roscoe Eubanks, Wichita, Kansas; and a host of other relatives and friends.

Funeral services will be Thursday at 10:00 AM, at the Wesley United Methodist Church. King-Tears Mortuary officiating.

## Irene Austin

Irene Austin, age 92, of Daingerfield, Texas, passed away Sunday, January 29, 1984, in a Lone Star, Texas hospital.

Mrs. Austin was born March 11, 1891, in Marion County, Texas. She married Mr. Sam Austin, Sr. on March 3, 1912. She was a member of the New Hope Baptist Church; and the Morris Delight Chapter #304, Order of the Eastern Star.

Survivors include her husband, Sam Austin, Sr. of Daingerfield; one son, Sam Austin, Jr. of Austin; one sister,

Mass, 10 a.m. Friday at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Martindale. Burial, San Pablo Cemetery in Lockhart.

**TAYLOR, Ronald Leon, 68,** of Austin died Tuesday. Services 3:30 p.m. today at Hyltin-Manor Funeral Home. Burial, Capital Memorial Park.

**WILLIAMS, Doris Jackson, 42,** of Austin died Sunday. Services 2 p.m. today at King-Tears Mortuary. Burial, Evergreen Cemetery.

Arrangements by Reeder-Davis Funeral Home in Hugh Springs.

## Frederick Gierspeck

Frederick Gierspeck, of Austin died Wednesday.

He was a member of Ivy Lodge #397, AF & AM of Elmira, New York, the Scottish Rite Bodies of the Valley of Corning, New York, the Ben Hur Temple of Austin, and St. Luke's on the Lake Episcopal Church.

Funeral services will be held at 10:00 AM Friday at St. Luke's on the Lake Episcopal Church with the Reverend Roland Timberlake officiating. Interment will be in Capital Memorial Park Cemetery.

Mr. Gierspeck was the husband of Virginia Gierspeck of Austin; the father of Marcia Keeling and Eric Gierspeck, both of Conroe; the grandfather of Christie Tracy, Katherine Gierspeck, both of Conroe; and the great-grandfather of Aaron Tracy of Conroe.

In lieu of flowers, expressions of sympathy may be made in memorials to your favorite charity.

Arrangements by Cook-Walden Funeral Home.

## Edith Dial

Edith Dial, age 86, of Austin died Tuesday.

She had been a resident of Austin since 1950 and was a member of First Southern Presbyterian Church. She was a member of P.E.D. Readers Guild Art Group #6 and had done volunteer work for the Austin State School for several years.

She is survived by several nieces and nephews.

Services, 1:00 PM Friday, Weed-Corley Funeral Home with Reverend Gary Dennis officiating. Burial, Austin Memorial Park.

## Joe J. Joseph, Sr.

Joe J. Joseph, Sr., 66, of Austin, died Sunday.

He was a member of St. Theresa Catholic Church and the Austin Lebanese Association. Mr. Joseph had operated the Triple J Tavern at 6th and Red River for over 33 years. After retiring in 1980, he helped his sons at Austin Amusement and Vending Co.

Survivors include his wife, Nora Joseph, Austin; three sons, Joe J. Joseph, Jr., Salem T. Joseph, Anthony F. Joseph, all of Austin; two daughters, Mary M. Joseph, JoAnn M. Joseph, both of Austin; grandchildren, Joe J. Joseph, III, Eddie Joseph, Salem T. Joseph, Jr., Janet Joseph, Amy Joseph and Nora Joseph, all of Austin; sisters, Marjorie (Margie) Joseph, Jeanette Burkett, both of Austin; brothers, John E. Joseph, George C. Joseph, both of Austin; many nephews and nieces.

Rosary will be said at 7:30 PM Monday in the Colonial Chapel of the Cook-Walden Funeral Home. Mass will be celebrated at 10:00 AM Tuesday in the St. Mary's Cathedral. Reverend Harold Zink, CSC, Reverend William

Those who care to make a memorial contribution to the Capital Memorial Center.

File ID: 26-1608

## Erin McKay Lindberg

Erin McKay Lindberg Austin died Sunday.

She was known as a caring person and is survived by her beloved friend, Gary De... the people who cared. M... peace, Amen.

Graveside services... day, Austin Memorial

Arrangements by We... neral Home.

## Beatrice Niederauer

Beatrice Niederauer, a Georgetown nursing ho... 1, 1984.

She was a resident of... for all of her married... band, C.J. Niederauer, ... in death in June, 1958.

Survivors include thr... Mildred Land of Beaumo... of Irving, Madge O'Donn... town; she was preceded... son, C.J. Niederauer, Jr.

Funeral services will... 10:00 AM at Broussard F... in Beaumont, Texas. Bu... Cemetery in Beaumont,

Memorial contributi... made to the Wesleyan N... in Georgetown.

## Julius W. Paschall

Julius W. Paschall, ag... Miami Drive passed awa...

He is survived by his... Paschall of Austin; thr... Gloria Blackstone and T... both of Austin, and To... Lewisville; three sons, J... Jr. of Rockdale, Terrell... Tim Paschall, both of... brother, W.D. Paschal... Falls; and six grandchild...

Funeral services will... PM Friday at Wilke-Ar... neral Home, Chapel of t... Reverend Charles Stewa...

## Linnie Bell Riddell

Linnie Bell Riddell, a... Antonio died Tuesday.

Born in Jones County, lene, she later returned Mountain area of Centr... married James H. Rida... her husband farmed and his death in 1949, when San Antonio.

Funeral services will... PM Friday at Croft's Fur... Johnson City with the R... Doty officiating. Burial... ble Falls Cemetery, Mar...

Mrs. Riddell is surv... daughters, Jane Klenk... Wagner, both of San A... sons, Elmo Riddell of V... Riddell of Johnson City... Riddell of Austin; nine g... and seven great-grandch...

trict attorney filed Wednesday as candidates for the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals.

Judge Oliver Kitzman and former Bexar County District Attorney Bill White said they would run in the Democratic primary.

Kitzman, 49, said he would oppose incumbent Sam Houston Clinton, with whom he has "definite philosophical differences."

in reversing several hundred narcotics convictions," Kitzman said.

Kitzman received national publicity last year when he fined himself \$50 for being 12 minutes late to his court in Hempstead.

The judge lives in Brookshire and presides over a judicial district that includes Waller, Austin and Fayette counties. He is a graduate of

white, 51, said he would seek the  
Judge Wendell Odem, who announced  
tember that he would not seek re-  
File ID: 26-1608

Dallas lawyer Kerry Fitzgerald announced as a candidate for Odem

White is a graduate of the University and St. Mary's University School of

## Deaths and funerals



O.H. Elliott

Mr. O.H. Elliott was born December 16, 1909, in Hope, Arkansas. His early childhood days were spent in Muskogee, Oklahoma, where he graduated from high school. He received his Bachelor's and Master's degrees from the University of Kansas.

He moved to Austin, Texas, in 1935 to serve as business manager of Samuel Huston College for a number of years. He also served the college as Interim President upon the death of the late President Karl Everett Downs.

A quiet, retiring man of great strength, Mr. Elliott served Huston-Tillotson College during its years of struggle and hardships. It was once said of him that he bore the burden in the heat of the day and kept the college together in its most difficult time. He was a moving force in the merger of Samuel Huston College and Tillotson College in 1952. He served as business manager and associate professor of Business Administration. For two years, Mr. Elliott served as business manager of Clark College, Atlanta, Georgia.

He was united in marriage with Thelma Mitchell of San Antonio, Texas, on January 6, 1938. They are the parents of two lovely daughters, Ora Ann and Karen. Mr. Elliott was a devoted husband and father.

His life and work were inextricably woven into the life of Huston-Tillotson College. He was a member of the Board of Trustees of the college for fifteen years and was a lifetime honorary trustee. He was awarded the Honorary Doctor of Humanities degree from Huston-Tillotson in 1979.

A deep commitment to the United Methodist Church had been an impelling force in Mr. Elliott's life. He served Wesley United Methodist Church as Chairman of the Trustee Board for a number of years; lay delegate to the Methodist General Conference; district lay leader of the Austin-Victoria district of the West

Because of his outstanding service to education and the state, Governor John B. Connally named him to the Coordinating Board of Texas College and University System in 1969, where he served until 1977. While serving on this board, Mr. Elliott cast the deciding vote to maintain the Texas Southern University Law School. He was also instrumental in the establishment of Austin Community College. In 1977, ACC dedicated its first commencement to Mr. Elliott in appreciation of his work.

Mr. Elliott served as grand secretary of M.W. St. Joseph Grand Lodge and as executive secretary of the Federation of Masons of the World, Inc. He was a 33 degree Mason, a Shriner, and a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.; a member of Connecting Links; the National Business League; and the Capital City Lion's Club. He was a member of the Finance Committee of the Austin Housing Authority, a member of the Parks and Recreation Board of Austin; promoter of the Harry Lott division of Boy Scouts of America, earning the Order of the Silver Beaver, the highest honor in Scouting.

His close association with the late Dr. Everett H. Givins and his relationship with former President Lyndon B. Johnson, former Governors John Connally, Preston Smith, Dolph Brisco, and U.S. Representative Jake Pickle enabled Mr. Elliott, in his quiet and gentle manner to enhance the quality of life not only for those of us in Texas, but for the disadvantaged throughout the United States of America.

His survivors include his devoted wife, Thelma Mitchell Elliott; his daughters, Ora Ann Houston, Austin, and Karen Elliott Charleston, Fort Riley, Kansas; one grandson, Stephen; three granddaughters, Gina, Lauren, and Leslie; one niece, Katie L. Jones, San Antonio, Texas; a nephew, Roscoe Eubanks, Wichita, Kansas; and a host of other relatives and friends.

Funeral services will be Thursday at 10:00 AM, at the Wesley United Methodist Church. King-Tears Mortuary officiating.

### Irene Austin

Irene Austin, age 92, of Daingerfield, Texas, passed away Sunday, January 29, 1984, in a Lone Star, Texas hospital.

Mrs. Austin was born March 11, 1891, in Marion County, Texas. She married Mr. Sam Austin, Sr. on March 3, 1912. She was a member of the New Hope Baptist Church; and the Morris Delight Chapter #304, Order of the Eastern Star.

Ellemma Pete of Oakland, California; one brother, Perry Pete of Houston; one grandson, Sam Austin, III of Boston, Massachusetts.

Funeral services will be Thursday, February 2nd, at 1:00 PM in the New Hope Missionary Baptist Church in Daingerfield with Reverend J.D. Green and Reverend L.B. George officiating. Interment will be in the Daingerfield Cemetery.

Arrangements by Reeder-Davis Funeral Home in Hugh Springs.

### Frederick Gierspeck

Frederick Gierspeck, of Austin died Wednesday.

He was a member of Ivy Lodge #397, AF & AM of Elmira, New York, the Scottish Rite Bodies of the Valley of Corning, New York, the Ben Hur Temple of Austin, and St. Luke's on the Lake Episcopal Church.

Funeral services will be held at 10:00 AM Friday at St. Luke's on the Lake Episcopal Church with the Reverend Roland Timberlake officiating. Interment will be in Capital Memorial Park Cemetery.

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She is survived by several nieces and nephews.

Services, 1:00 PM Friday, Weed-Corley Funeral Home with Reverend Gary Dennis officiating. Burial, Austin Memorial Park.

### Joe J. Joseph, Sr.

Joe J. Joseph, Sr., 66, of Austin, died Sunday.

He was a member of St. Theresa

Donahue, CSC, Monsignor tocha, Reverend Richard Reverend James Olmhouse ate and burial will be in Cemetery.

Pallbearers will be J. Larry Nohra, Issac Nohra, George C. Joseph, Jr., Hor Lee Burkett, Paul Math: Sconci, Jr., and Gus Attal.

Those who care to do so a memorial contribution to ical Center.

### Erin McKay Lindberg

Erin McKay Lindberg, Austin died Sunday.

She was known as a caring person and is survived by a beloved friend, Gary De V the people who cared. May peace, Amen.

Graveside services, 1:00 day, Austin Memorial Park

Arrangements by Weed-Corley Funeral Home.

### Beatrice Niederauer

Beatrice Niederauer, age 84, a Georgetown nursing home, died in 1984.

She was a resident of Austin for all of her married life with her husband, C.J. Niederauer, prior to her death in June, 1958.

Survivors include three children: Mildred Land of Beaumont, Texas; Madge O'Donnell of Irving, Texas; and C.J. Niederauer, Jr. of Beaumont, Texas.

Funeral services will be held at 10:00 AM at Broussard Funeral Home in Beaumont, Texas. Burial in Beaumont, Texas.

Memorial contribution may be made to the Wesleyan University in Georgetown.

### Julius W. Paschall

Julius W. Paschall, age 84, of Miami Drive passed away Sunday.

He is survived by his wife, Gloria Blackstone and three children: Gloria Blackstone and Tom Lewisville; three sons, J. Jr. of Rockdale, Terrell and Tim Paschall, both of Falls; and six grandchildren.

Funeral services will be held at 1:00 PM Friday at Wilke-Anderson Funeral Home, Chapel of the Reverend Charles Stewart



DEC 66





# the utopian

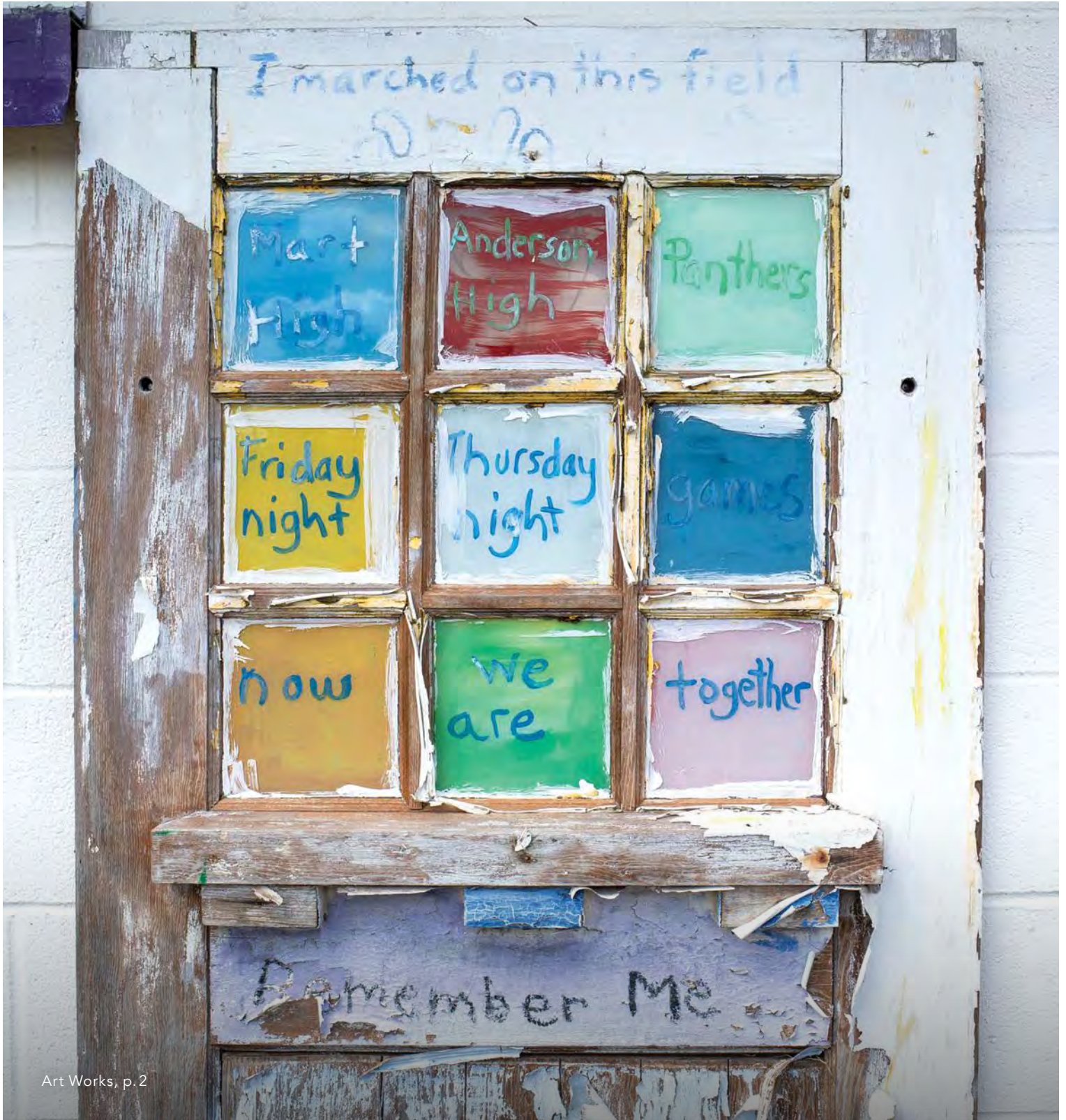
File ID: 26-1608  
**ART WORKS**  
Art and community in Mart, Texas

**A SOCIAL WORK PRECURSOR**  
Thelma Mitchell Elliott, MSSW '54

**RENACER IN OAXACA**  
Partnerships for maternal health

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN | STEVE HICKS SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

FALL 2018



# FROM THE DEAN

"IN A SENSE, MY PARENTS WERE LUCKY THAT THEIR INTERRACIAL MARRIAGE WAS DISMISSED AS SOMETHING 'PUERTO RICANS DO.' DURING OUR COUNTRY'S PAINFUL PERIOD OF LEGALLY ENFORCED RACIAL SEGREGATION, OTHERS WERE NOT SO LUCKY."

It was my father's aspiration to forge a future for his children that led to his enlistment in the U.S. Army. In 1956, after the Korean War, his assignment took us from a small town in Puerto Rico to a new home in Richmond, Virginia. My father was a dark-skinned biracial Puerto Rican (white father, black mother), and my mother was white. Their interracial marriage was rather typical in the island, and I didn't think much of it.

Years later I understood that their marriage was rather remarkable in the mainland. I asked my mother one day about their arrival in Virginia, a state where "miscegenation" was actually a felony. She replied matter-of-factly, "Oh, as soon as people heard your father and me speaking Spanish, they brushed it off. To them we were foreigners, and they thought that's what 'they' do."

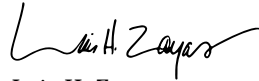
In a sense, my parents were lucky that their interracial marriage was dismissed as something "Puerto Ricans do." During our country's painful period of legally enforced racial segregation, others were not so lucky.

Many fought, in many ways, for the end of legalized segregation. I have shared in other communications that our building used to house a junior high school that led desegregation in Austin. This issue brings you the story of Thelma Mitchell Elliott, a graduate from our program and one of the Precursors, the first generation of black students that desegregated the university in the early 1950s.

Despite the Civil Rights Act of 1964, segregation and discrimination against people of color and vulnerable populations persist — we see it in police shootings of African American men; detention and separation of asylum-seeking families; the consequences of eating, barbecuing or doing ordinary things "while black."

Social workers fight against these acts daily with our profession's variegated skills and tools. Sometimes, as you will read in this issue, this fight involves using art and creativity to recover forgotten histories and build community. Other times, it involves crossing disciplinary and geographic borders to create positive change.

I am proud that our faculty, students and alumni bring every skill to bear on making our world a more just one.



Luis H. Zayas

*Dean and Robert Lee Sutherland Chair in Mental Health and Social Policy*



## FROM YOU (ON "ALWAYS ON DUTY")

@nursingjobshers

"Love stories like this!"

@phallv

"Good informative article."

@Aggie\_GR

"That's awesome and a great reminder that Texas' two largest research universities, TAMU and UT Austin, are jointly committed to supporting our veterans and their families!"

@Galagator89

"One of the many reasons I am proud to be part of the @UTSocialWork. The professors continue to teach the importance of research, how it can lead to creating interventions that can help individuals and the world. Thanks for sharing."



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 sites.utexas.edu/theutopian

 The University of Texas at Austin  
Steve Hicks School of Social Work

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the **utopian**

The Utopian is published for alumni and friends of The University of Texas at Austin Steve Hicks School of Social Work.

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This Issue's Contributors  
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Katherine Corley



■ In September 1966, the Parents Club of the Booker T. Washington Terrace public housing organized a cleanup day.

# a social work PRECURSOR

## Thelma Mitchell Elliott, desegregation at UT Austin, and the War on Poverty in Texas

In May of 1966, residents of Hergotz Lane in South East Austin celebrated the installation of a water spigot in their neighborhood. It was just a single, public spigot, but it meant that they no longer had to travel 10 miles to the nearest drinking water supply.

In early June, “a task force of three men and a fogging machine,” as the Austin Statesman put it, descended on Montopolis to wage war on mosquitoes. Later that month, after a hard battle for access to public transportation, Montopolis families were able to board a bus that connected them to Austin bus lines.

And in September, the newly minted Parents Club of the Booker T. Washington Terrace public housing organized a cleanup day. Parents and children cut down the high grass in the complex’s playground and removed trash, bottles and rocks.

By Andrea Campetella / Photos Courtesy Austin History Center

**[THELMA ELLIOTT] WAS AMONG THE PRECURSORS, THE FIRST GENERATION OF BLACK STUDENTS WHO DESEGREGATED THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN IN THE 1950s.**

This flurry of activity in mostly Mexican and African-American areas of Austin owed much to the late Thelma Mitchell Elliott (MSSW '54). Elliott was the leader of ENABLE, one of the many programs through which the Lyndon B. Johnson administration waged the War on Poverty across the nation. Under Elliott's leadership, ENABLE empowered diverse communities in Austin to tackle everything from living conditions to neighborhood safety and infrastructure.

But even before Elliott was publicly recognized for this important work, she did something else that, at the time, went unrecorded. She was among the Precursors, the first generation of black students who desegregated The University of Texas at Austin in the 1950s.

### Integration at UT Austin

As told in *As We Saw It. The History of Integration at The University of Texas at Austin*, the struggle to desegregate the university started only two years after it was founded, when in 1885 an African-American man (unnamed in the records) applied for admission. He was rejected on the basis that "admittance of negroes" was "not of standard practice."

The turning point was after World War II. In 1946, with the support of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Heman Marion Sweatt applied to the law school and was

denied access on the basis of his race. The case (*Sweatt v. Painter*) went all the way to the Supreme Court, which in 1950 ruled in Sweatt's favor. Amidst much media attention and demonstrations in favor and against desegregation, Sweatt started law school in the fall semester of that year.

That same fall, the university's newly minted graduate program in social work opened its doors to students. In its two first years, the program admitted the late Gus Swain — who in 1953 became the first African-American male graduate — and then Elliott, who in 1954 became the first African-American female graduate.

In a speech Swain gave in 1982 he described going to campus with the threat of violence, at a time when buildings off the main drag were plastered with sayings like "Nigger go home." But he also recalled that the school of social work felt like an "oasis" and a safe place during this time.

Anita Swain, who was married to Gus Swain when he was in school, said in a phone conversation that "the school of social work was pretty liberal as far as race relations." She also remembered her late husband as a fighter for equality.

"He would not tolerate racial discrimination. He was a crusader. He was in the right field, always trying to make things better and help people move on. When we lived in Washington [after Swain graduated], we were marching every Saturday!" she recalled. I just kept my



Photo: AR-2007-017-045, Austin History Center, Austin Public Library



boots ready because whether it was cold, or snowy or wet, we were going to march!”

The Swains knew Elliott as a neighbor and family friend. Anita Swain remembered her husband giving Elliot information about the newly opened social work program and encouraging her to apply.

At the time, Elliott was married to O. H. Houston, then a business manager at Sam Huston College. They had a young daughter, Ora Houston, who is now Austin’s Council Member for District 1. She still lives in the house in East Austin where she grew up.

At least as remembered by Ora Houston, Elliott was not the marching type. But she was a multifaceted community leader for whom the graduate social work program was a great match.

“She was president of the PTA; she was very involved in the community; she was very involved in the church... and she had a very deep sense of social justice,” Houston said.

## Project ENABLE and Beyond

After receiving her Master of Science in Social Work in 1954, Elliott worked as a probation officer for the Travis County Juvenile Court until 1966, when she was tapped to lead project ENABLE.

ENABLE stood for Education and Neighborhood Action for Better Living Environment. It was sponsored by Child and Family Services and received funding through the new Office of Economic Opportunity, the federal agency responsible for administrating most of the War on Poverty programs.

In Austin, ENABLE started by reaching out to mothers of children enrolled in Head Start — another War on Poverty program.

“ENABLE is meant to give them [the mothers] a sense of self, purpose, confidence and power, something that will grow, a

motivation, and the tools to get something done for a better life,” Elliott explained in a *Statesman* article of May 19, 1966.

ENABLE soon expanded into “neighborhood group problem-solving” initiatives that engaged community members to tackle everything from unsanitary living conditions in rental units to neighborhood safety and infrastructure.

Barely a year after it was launched, ENABLE Austin was considered one of the most successful of 60 such projects that existed across the nation. Because of the program’s positive impact in communities such as Montopolis, in October 1966 Elliott was asked to address a national conference of Head Start teachers.

In true social work fashion, Elliott chose to emphasize self-awareness and strength-based perspectives during her address. As reported in the *Statesman*, she told Head Start teachers to be aware of their own insensitivities and blind spots when working with families, and make efforts to involve and empower parents.

“We in ENABLE are also committed to involving the parents in the education of their children. We encourage parents to use their native talents and constitutional rights to make decisions affecting them, their children, and the neighborhood where they live,” Elliott told the teachers.

## ENABLE IS MEANT TO GIVE [MOTHERS] A MOTIVATION, AND THE TOOLS TO GET SOMETHING DONE FOR A BETTER LIFE.

In late 1966, Elliott left ENABLE to join the Texas Office of Economic Opportunity, where she was tasked with developing resource materials, ideas and techniques to be used in community projects across the state.

As the War on Poverty and its accompanying federal funding dwindled down in the context of escalation of the Vietnam War, Elliott continued her career in social services. She first joined the Austin/Travis County public health system and then the Texas Department of Human Services, from which she eventually retired. She died on July 21, 1998.

“I tell people all the time that I have my mother’s sense of social justice,” daughter Ora Houston said. “She was not a rebel, she was not out there marching on the streets. But on her own quiet way, she made important changes.” ■

**OPPOSITE PAGE**  
Elliott at the Booker T. Washington Terrace public housing.

**LEFT** Elliott (second from right, in green dress) with ENABLE team members.

**BOTTOM** Hergotz Lane residents using the public water spigot.

# DESEGREGATION

*at The University of  
Texas at Austin*



**1883**

University opens its doors.

**1885**

First record of African American applicant (unnamed) denied admission.

**1938**

George L. Allen is able to register for a class but then his registration is canceled.

**1946**

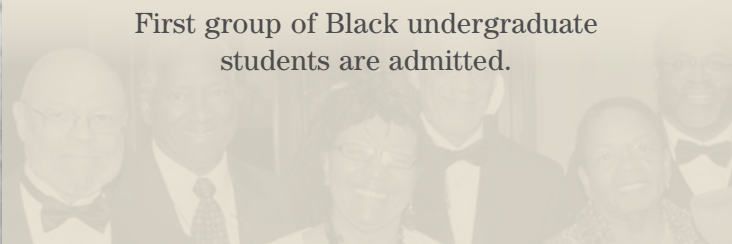
Heman Sweatt is denied admission to the law school. Case (Sweatt v. Painter) goes to the Supreme Court.

**1950**

Supreme Court rules in Sweatt's favor. UT becomes the first institution of higher education in the South required by law to admit African Americans to its graduate programs.

**1956**

First group of Black undergraduate students are admitted.



Permitting and Development Center | 6310 Wilhelmina Delco Drive, Austin, TX 78752 | (512) 978-4000

## General Information

Location: **2207 E 22ND ST**  
 Parcel ID: **0212100505**  
 Grid: **MK23**

## Planning & Zoning

\*Right click [hyperlinks](#) to open in a new window.

Future Land Use (FLUM): **Single Family, Transportation**

Regulating Plan: **No Regulating Plan**

Zoning: **SF-3-NP**

Zoning Cases: [C14-02-0057](#)  
[C14H-2025-0122](#)

Zoning Ordinances: **020801-92**  
[19990225-070b](#)  
[20060406-051](#)

Zoning Overlays: **Selected Sign Ordinances**  
**Residential Design Standards: LDC/25-2-Subchapter F**  
**ADU Approx Area Reduced Parking**  
**UPPER BOGGY CREEK: BLACKLAND**

Neighborhood Plan: [UPPER BOGGY CREEK: BLACKLAND](#)

Infill Options: **Garage Placement Design Option, Parking Placement Imp Cover Design Option, Small Lot Amnesty Infill Option**

Neighborhood Restricted Parking Areas: --

Mobile Food Vendors: --

Historic Landmark: --

Urban Roadways: **Yes**

## Zoning Guide

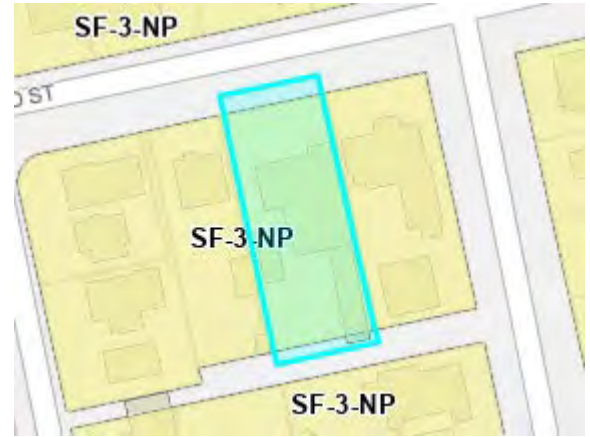
The [Guide to Zoning](#) provides a quick explanation of the above Zoning codes, however, the [Land Use Assistance](#) provides general zoning assistance and can advise you on the type of development allowed on a property. Visit [Zoning](#) for the description of each Base Zoning District. For official verification of the zoning of a property, please request a [Zoning Verification Letter](#). General information on the [Neighborhood Planning Areas](#) is available from Neighborhood Planning.

## Environmental

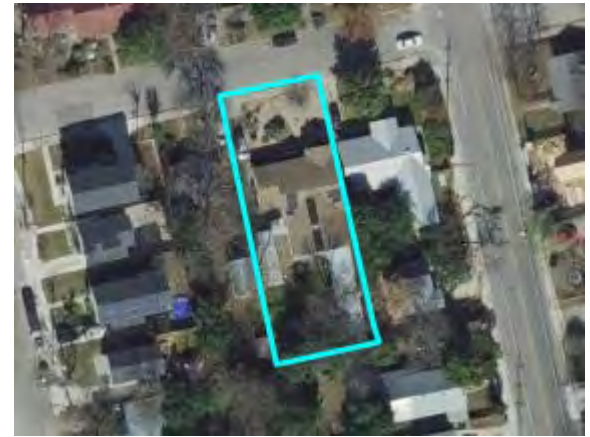
Fully Developed Floodplain: **No**  
 FEMA Floodplain: **No**  
 Austin Watershed Regulation Areas: **URBAN**  
 Watershed Boundaries: **Boggy Creek**  
 Creek Buffers: **No**  
 Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone: **No**  
 Edwards Aquifer Recharge Verification Zone: **No**  
 Erosion Hazard Zone Review Buffer: **No**

## Political Boundaries

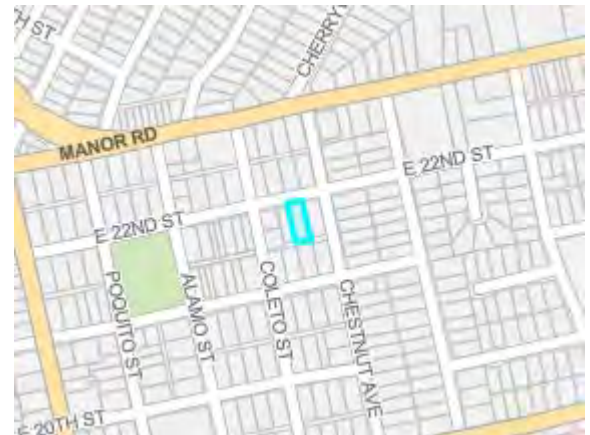
Jurisdiction: **AUSTIN FULL PURPOSE**  
 Council District: **1**  
 County: **TRAVIS**  
 School District: **Austin ISD**  
 Community Registry: **Austin Independent School District, Austin Neighborhoods Council, Blackland Neighborhood Assn., Del Valle Community Coalition, East Austin Conservancy, Friends of Austin Neighborhoods, Homeless Neighborhood Association, Overton Family Committee, Preservation Austin, Upper Boggy Creek Neighborhood Planning Team**



Zoning Map



Imagery Map



Vicinity Map



City of Austin  
Council Meeting **EX-111-1608-0026**

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Travis Smith, President-Elect  
Elisha Perez, Vice President  
Kelly Little, Secretary  
Perry Lorenz, Vice President  
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Lindsey Derrington

File ID: 26-1608

February 4, 2026

RE: Dr. O.H. and Thelma Elliott House Historic Landmark Designation

Dear Chair Heimsath, Vice Chair Evans, and Members of the Historic Landmark Commission

[Preservation Austin](#) exists to empower Austinites to shape a more inclusive, resilient, and meaningful community culture through preservation. We write in support of the proposed historic landmark designation of the Dr. O.H. and Thelma Elliott House for architecture and historic associations. Built in 1954, the Elliot House is a testament to the lives of two remarkable educators and civic leaders, Dr. Ora Herman Elliott and Thelma Mitchell Elliott.

The Elliots were leaders in the communities of segregated East Austin and in the state and nationwide Civil Rights movement. Dr. O.H. Elliot served as business manager and Interim President of Samuel Houston College, and was instrumental in the merger of the college with Tillotson College in 1952, forming Houston-Tillotson University. Among his many accomplishments, Dr. Elliot led efforts to seek Black representation in elections within the Democratic Party in the 1940s, was a director of the City's Rights Agency tasked with implementation of the Civil Rights Law of 1964, and played a significant role in the founding of Austin Community College in 1973 through his work with the Coordinating Board of Texas Colleges and Universities. Through his decades of political involvement, Dr. Elliot cultivated close relationships with President Lyndon B. Johnson, Governors John Connally, Preston Smith, and Dolph Briscoe, and U.S. Representative Jake Pickle.

Thelma Mitchell Elliot was one of the first students to desegregate the University of Texas in the 1950s and was the first Black woman to graduate and obtain her degree from UT's School of Social Work. She was the first Black female probation officer for the Travis County Juvenile Court, serving in this role for 10 years. In 1966, Mrs. Elliot was recruited to lead the ENABLE (Education and Neighborhood Action for Better Living Environment) program, part of President Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty, which tackled initiatives from unsanitary living conditions in rental units to neighborhood safety and infrastructure. Her efforts under ENABLE Austin were recognized as one of the most successful initiatives of its kind nationwide.

Homeowner and daughter, Ms. Ora Houston, carries on her parents' legacy of civic leadership, notably during her time as representative of District 1 on Austin City Council from 2015 to 2019. A committed preservationist, we congratulate Ms. Houston on her efforts to preserve her family's history and the history of East Austin.

Sincerely,

Miriam Conner, President

Written comments must be submitted to the board or commission (or the contact person listed on the notice) before or at a public hearing. Your comments should include the board or commission's name, the scheduled date of the public hearing, and the Case Number and the contact person listed on the notice.

**Case Number: C14H-2025-0122**  
**Contact: Kalan Contreras, 512-974-2727**  
**Public Hearing: Feb. 4, 2026, Historic Landmark Commission**

Catherine Tucek  
*Your Name (please print)*

I am in favor  
 I object

2200 E 22nd St 78722  
*Your address(es) affected by this application*

Catherine Tucek  
*Signature*

28 JAN 2026  
*Date*

Daytime Telephone: 512 633 0471

Comments: I support my neighbor in  
her request for her zoning  
change

If you use this form to comment, it may be returned to:  
Austin Planning  
**Historic Preservation Office**  
P. O. Box 1088, Austin, TX 78767  
Or email to:  
[preservation@austintexas.gov](mailto:preservation@austintexas.gov)

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**Case Number: C14H-2025-0122**  
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**Public Hearing: Feb. 4, 2026, Historic Landmark Commission**

Athena Leyton  
*Your Name (please print)*

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I am in favor
<input type="checkbox"/> I object

2101 Maple Ave. #A 78722  
*Your address(es) affected by this application*

Athena Leyton 1/26/26  
*Signature* *Date*

Daytime Telephone: 512 484 4883

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Austin Planning  
**Historic Preservation Office**  
P. O. Box 1088, Austin, TX 78767  
Or email to:  
[preservation@austintexas.gov](mailto:preservation@austintexas.gov)

**From:** [brenda malik](#)  
**To:** [Sturgill, Hunter](#); [Lukes, Austin](#); [Wagner, Sofia](#); [Contreras, Kalan](#); [McKnight, Kim](#); [Taniguchi, Bat - BC](#); [Grogan, Harmony - BC](#); [Koch, Kevin - BC](#); [Acton, Jeffrey - BC](#); [Larosche, Carl - BC](#); [Heimsath, Ben - BC](#); [McWhorter, Trey - BC](#); [Alvarez, Jaime - BC](#); [Evans, Roxanne - BC](#); [Rice, Judah - BC](#)  
**Subject:** Opposition to Rezoning of  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 4, 2026 6:08:47 PM

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To Whom It May Concern:

As a resident in the Rogers-Washington-Holy Cross Historic District, I am very concerned that the rezoning application in our neighborhood will increase the already crowded residential streets and leave us vulnerable in the event of an emergency event.

Please deny the application for rezoning on 22nd Street!

Brenda Malik

**CAUTION:** This is an EXTERNAL email. Please use caution when clicking links or opening attachments. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please report it using the "Report Message" button in Outlook.  
For any additional questions or concerns, contact CSIRT at "cybersecurity@austintexas.gov".