

## ZONING CHANGE REVIEW SHEET

CASE NUMBER: C14H-2021-0181

HLC DATE: October 25, 2021  
November 15, 2021

PC DATE: December 14, 2021  
January 11, 2022

APPLICANT: Historic Landmark Commission (owner-opposed)

HISTORIC NAME: Nalley-Shear-Bremond Warehouse

WATERSHED: Waller Creek

ADDRESS OF PROPOSED ZONING CHANGE: 301 San Jacinto Street

ZONING FROM: CBD to CBD-H

COUNCIL DISTRICT: 9

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends the proposed zoning change from central business district (CBD) to central business district – historic landmark (CBD-H) combining district zoning.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR LANDMARK DESIGNATION: Architecture, historical associations, community value.

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION ACTION: **October 25, 2021:** Initiated historic zoning. **November 15, 2021:** Recommended historic zoning on the basis of architecture, historical associations, and community value. Vote: 9-0 (Tollett and Wright absent).

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION: **December 14, 2021:** Commission-requested postponement to January 11, 2022. **January 11, 2022:** Deny central business district – historic landmark (CBD-H) combining district zoning. Vote: 7-3-1 (Commissioners Azhar, Connolly, Flores, Hempel, Mushtaler, Shieh, and Thompson in favor; Commissioners Cox, Schneider, and Shaw opposed; Commissioner Llanes Pulido abstaining).

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The building does not appear to be listed, at least with this address, in the Comprehensive Cultural Resources Survey (1984).

CITY COUNCIL DATE: February 3, 2022

ACTION:

ORDINANCE READINGS: 1<sup>ST</sup>

ORDINANCE NUMBER:

CASE MANAGER: Elizabeth Brummett

PHONE: 512-974-1264

NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATIONS: Austin Independent School District, Austin Lost and Found Pets, Austin Neighborhoods Council, City of Austin Downtown Commission, Downtown Austin Alliance, Downtown Austin Neighborhood Assn. (DANA), Friends of Austin Neighborhoods, Homeless Neighborhood Association, Neighborhood Empowerment Foundation, Preservation Austin, Red Line Parkway Initiative, SELTexas, and Sierra Club, Austin Regional Group

BASIS FOR RECOMMENDATION:

**Architecture:** The building at 301 San Jacinto St. is a good example of a rail-side warehouse building that typifies wholesale distribution of provisions and commodities during the time the vast majority of those operations were by rail. Per the historic designation criteria in Land Development Code [§25-2-352](#), it is not only high-style buildings that qualify for landmark status under the architecture criterion; “a particularly fine or unique example of a utilitarian or vernacular structure” may also be designated. This building qualifies for landmark designation as a good example of a utilitarian structure with few alterations.

The building is a one-story, rectangular-plan, flat-roofed brick warehouse. Its distinctive features include the decorative brickwork, namely the segmental-arched windows and transoms with brick lintels and a corbelled brick belt course at the parapet. The brickwork shows a sense of aesthetic detail at a time when such attention was still paid to utilitarian buildings, and the arched windows relate to the load-bearing masonry construction. The raised loading docks with independent metal and wood canopies speak to the historic warehouse use. In terms of architectural integrity, the building has some alterations, most notably replacement of the original windows and doors. However, the fenestration pattern remains, and the building is recognizable from the historic period.

**Historical Associations:** This warehouse building was constructed around 1912 for the Nalley Grocery Company, operated by A.M. Nalley, and later by J. Gordon Wilcox, a prominent wholesale grocer. Nalley Grocery Company remained here until around 1917, when the Shear Company, owned by Mrs. H.H. Shear of Waco, Texas, appears as the owners of the building in Austin city directories. These early wholesale grocery distribution warehouses were also coffee roasters and purveyors of produce. The Shear Company operated out of this building until around 1923, when it was sold to the John Bremond Company, a grocery wholesaler and roaster of high-grade coffee sold throughout Texas.

The John Bremond Company was one of the, if not the most, prominent wholesale grocery businesses in Austin for many years, supplying grocery stores and restaurants in the city. The company was established in 1847 with a grocery store opened by John Bremond, Sr. John Bremond II, who was born in Philadelphia in 1841 and died in Austin in 1918, ran the business established by his father. In turn, John Bremond III died in 1928, leaving the business to his sister and her husband, Hallie and Hale Houston. The company expanded its sales territory into the Hill Country, including the cities of Llano, San Saba, New Braunfels, Johnson City, and Fredericksburg to the west, and to Giddings in the east. This building was their Austin warehouse until the company closed in 1957.

Food and grocery distributing continued out of this building when White Swan, a wholesale institutional grocery company, took over the space. In the late 1970s, the building became a wholesale auto part warehouse, and in the early 2000s, this building was the residence for the cast of MTV's Real World program. More recently, it has been a restaurant. Will Houston, whose family has owned this building since the time of purchase by the John Bremond Company in the mid-1920s, sold it to Bremond Partnership in 2005; Will Houston remains as the managing partner and the primary name on the Travis Central Appraisal District ownership card for this property today.

The Bremond name is very much a part of the history of development of our city. John Bremond and his family were a major force in Austin commerce, banking, and civic life. Paul Bremond was instrumental in bringing the railroad to Austin. There is a state historical marker at the site of the Bremonds' first non-extant store on E. 6<sup>th</sup> St. While the grocery business predates the building, this is the oldest remaining structure associated with the business.

Wholesale grocery operations were essential to the livelihood of the city in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, importing foodstuffs into Austin that could not be obtained from local farmers and ranchers. The railroad's arrival in Austin in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century was a game-changer for the city, allowing for the importation of a huge number of manufactured and cultivated items, everything from building materials to fabrics to home furnishings, and food. The railroad transformed Austin from a settlement to a city, and it was firms like Nalley, Shear, and John Bremond that brought the urbanizing influences of foods to the burgeoning city. This building represents a significant chapter in the history of the development of Austin as a city.

**Community Value:** This warehouse building has a unique location and contributes to the character and image of the city, meeting the criterion for community value. While the warehouse district today is most closely identified with those buildings on the west side of downtown, warehouse buildings historically existed along the rail corridor through downtown. Currently, only the Nelson Davis Warehouse (C14H-1990-0007, 117 W. 4<sup>th</sup> St.) is historically designated. Of the remaining building stock, this ca. 1912 building is among the oldest, most intact, and most historically and architecturally significant examples of a downtown warehouse. Its location east of Congress Ave. serves as a balance to the Nelson Davis Warehouse and highlights the historic extent of warehouse buildings in downtown.

Further, preservation of this building would complement other landmarks and National Register of Historic Places listings near the Austin Convention Center. These include historic residences and civic buildings: Palm School and Austin Central Fire Station. Designation of an industrial building would round out this array of Austin's history at the city's doorstep.

PARCEL NO.: 0205021604

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: LOT 1-4 BLOCK 032 ORIGINAL CITY

ESTIMATED ANNUAL TAX ABATEMENT: \$67,340 (total, non-homestead); city portion: \$23,462

APPRAISED VALUE: \$16,328,021

PRESENT USE: Restaurant

CONDITION: Excellent

PRESENT OWNERS:

301 SAN JACINTO MANAGER LLC  
c/o Will Houston, Managing Member  
4202 Spicewood Springs Road, Suite 100  
Austin, Texas 78759

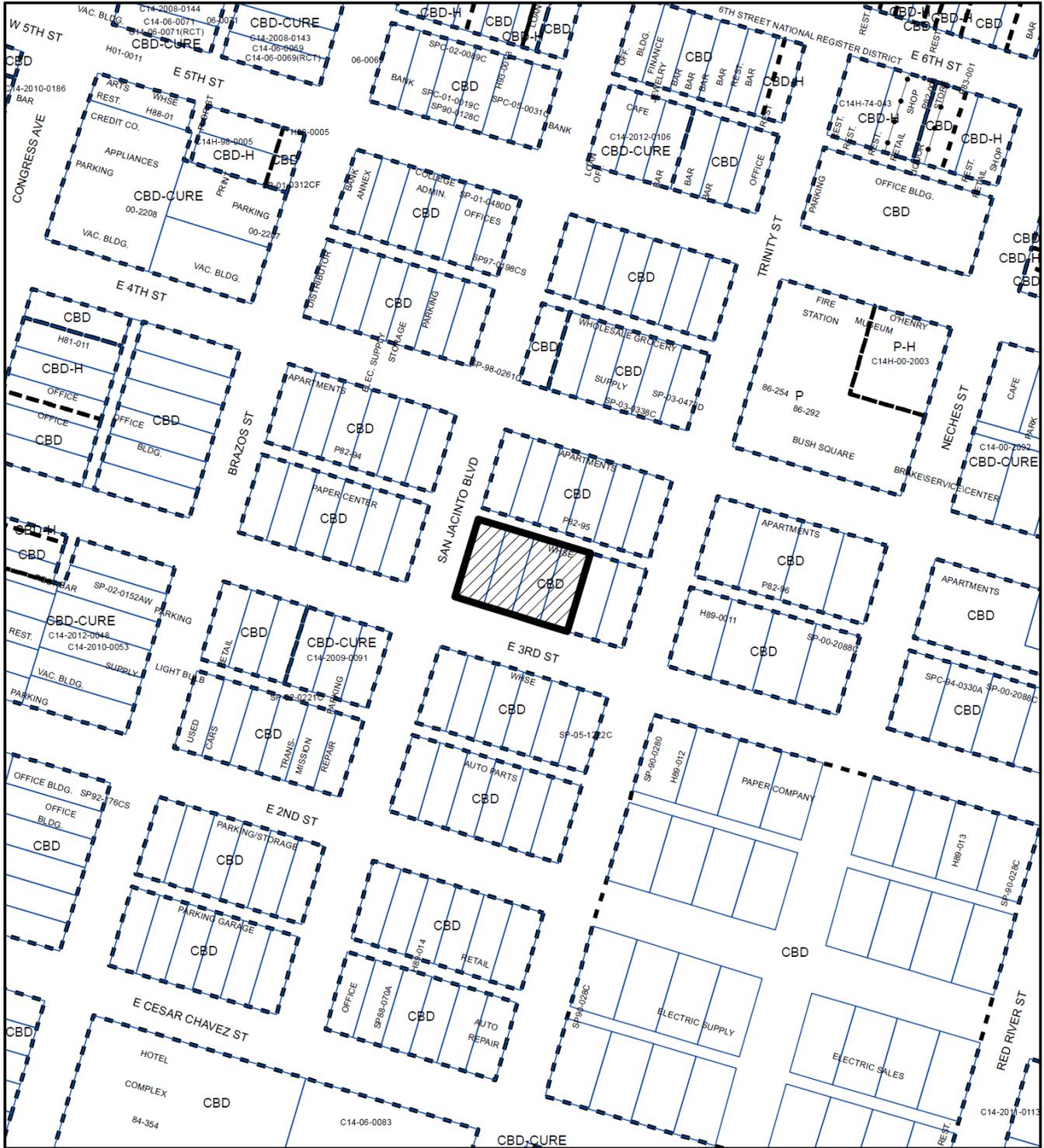
DATE BUILT: ca. 1912

ALTERATIONS/ADDITIONS: Modifications to windows, awnings.

ORIGINAL OWNER(S): Nalley Grocery Company

OTHER HISTORICAL DESIGNATIONS: None.

# LOCATION MAP



-  N
-  SUBJECT TRACT
-  PENDING CASE
-  ZONING BOUNDARY

## HISTORIC ZONING

ZONING CASE#: C14H-2021-0181

1" = 200'

This product is for informational purposes and may not have been prepared for or be suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes. It does not represent an on-the-ground survey and represents only the approximate relative location of property boundaries.

This product has been produced by the Housing and Planning Department for the sole purpose of geographic reference. No warranty is made by the City of Austin regarding specific accuracy or



## PROPERTY INFORMATION

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### *Photos*



*Historic Preservation Office staff, 2008*



*Photo from Visit Austin, austintexas.org*

*Occupancy History*

City Directory Research, Austin History Center

By City Historic Preservation Office, November 2008

- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| 1987    | Austin Automotive Warehouse<br>Wholesale auto parts<br>John Bobbitt, manager                  |
| 1977    | Austin Automotive Warehouse<br>Wholesale auto parts<br>Joe Anderson, manager                  |
| 1967    | White Swan (Institutional Foods Company)<br>Wholesale groceries<br>W.G. Cullom, manager       |
| 1957    | John Bremond Company<br>Wholesale groceries<br>Hale M. Houston, president                     |
| 1953    | John Bremond Company<br>Wholesale groceries and coffee roasters<br>Hale M. Houston, president |
| 1949    | John Bremond Company<br>Wholesale groceries and coffee roasters<br>Hale M. Houston, president |
| 1944-45 | John Bremond Company<br>Wholesale groceries and coffee roasters<br>Hale M. Houston, president |

- 1941 John Bremond Company  
Wholesale groceries and coffee roasters  
Hale M. Houston, president
- 1937 John Bremond Company  
Wholesale groceries and coffee roasters  
Hale M. Houston, president
- 1935 John Bremond Company  
Wholesale groceries and roasters of high-grade coffee  
Hale M. Houston, president
- 1932-33 John Bremond Company  
Wholesale groceries and roasters of high-grade coffee  
Hale M. Houston, president
- 1930-31 John Bremond Company  
Wholesale groceries and roasters of high-grade coffee  
Hale M. Houston, president
- 1929 John Bremond Company  
Wholesale groceries and roasters of high-grade coffee  
Hale M. Houston, president
- 1927 John Bremond Company  
Wholesale groceries and roasters of high-grade coffee  
Hale M. Houston, president
- 1924 John Bremond Company  
Wholesale groceries and roasters of high-grade coffee  
John Bremond, president  
Hale M. Houston, vice-president
- 1922 Shear Company  
Wholesale groceries, produce, and coffee roasters  
Mrs. H.H. Shear (Waco, Texas), president  
J.B. Godfrey, manager  
NOTE: The John Bremond Company was located at 109-13 E. 6<sup>th</sup> Street.
- 1920 Shear Company  
Wholesale groceries, produce, and coffee roasters  
Mrs. H.H. Shear (Waco, Texas), president  
J.B. Godfrey, manager
- 1918 Shear Company  
Wholesale groceries, produce, and coffee roasters  
Mrs. H.H. Shear (Waco, Texas), president  
J.B. Godfrey, manager
- 1916 Nalley Grocery Company  
Wholesale groceries and coffee roasters  
J. Gordon Wilcox, president and manager  
NOTE: The Shear Company is not listed in the directory.
- 1914 Nalley Grocery Company  
Wholesale groceries and coffee roasters  
A.M. Nalley, president and manager

1912-13 Nalley Grocery Company  
Wholesale groceries and coffee roasters  
A.M. Nalley, president and manager

1910-11 The address is not listed in the directory.

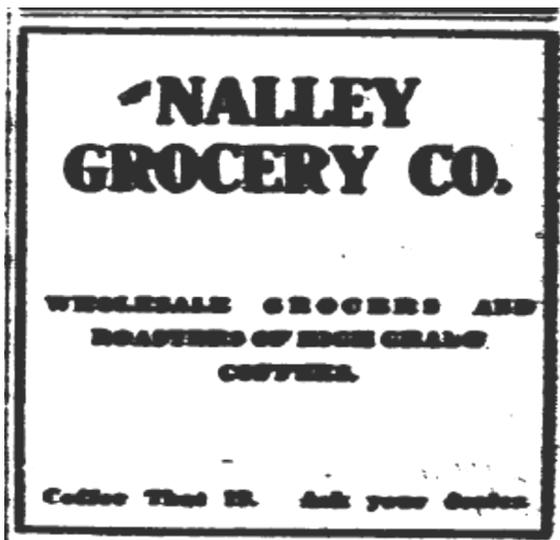
NOTE: The Nalley Grocery Company was located at 400-02 Congress Avenue.

NOTE: The building was extensively remodeled in 1975. The residents of the MTV series "Real World Austin" lived here during filming in 2004. The building was again remodeled as a restaurant for the tenant, Rio Grande Mexican Restaurant, in 2005.

*Historical Information*



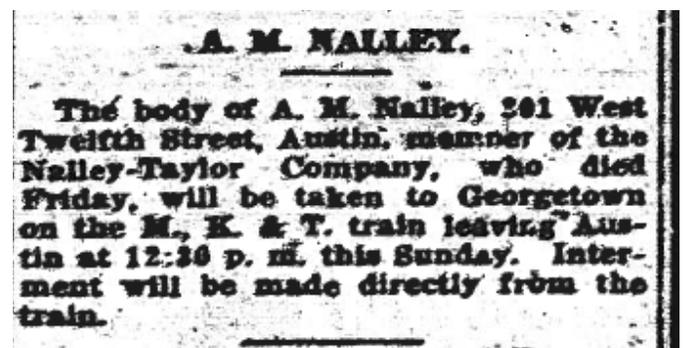
*Austin Statesman, January 1, 1912*



*Austin Statesman, January 2, 1912*



*Austin American, September 18, 1920*



*Austin American, September 19, 1920*

Excerpts from KTBC - TV "OUR TOWN" featuring John Bremond, wholesale grocer- established 1847

1847- moved his family to Austin from Philadelphia- business at 109 Pecan St. Merchandise sold- everything a pioneer family needed. Hardware, food, clothing- Gradual change from a general store to wholesale grocery business. In 1852 (?) he was appointed to a railroad committee. He wanted to bring the railroad from Houston to Austin. He died in 1866 before railroads got here.

1871 RR finally arrived - Christmas Day. Lowered cost of bringing freight to Austin. His son, John Bremond the Second, decided to enter the wholesale grocery business which supplied areas 60 miles south, 160 miles north. Stores in this area bought from him, driving into town in their wagons and would load up

In 1919 Mr. Hale Houston became president (

Present building constructed in 1924 (has nearly 37,000 sq. ft. storage.

Cold storage rooms for perishables- still have an area for coffee roasting and blending. Brands distributed- Golden Eagle, John Bremond, Early Breakfast

Since 1920 we've gone out to the stores instead of having them come to us.

## On the Threshold

OF A

## Great Decade

*Austin Is 90 Years Old This Year*



Onward and upward has been the story of Austin's progress during the four score and ten years of her wonderful history. The John Bremond Company has witnessed 77 years of the splendid city building enterprise so steadily carried forward here. Without boom days or stampede both the city and her leading institutions have grown with the lengthening of years.

Today we stand on the threshold of a decade that rounds out the first hundred years of Austin's history. May we not each and all meet and make the most of each of the ten years.

Wishing you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

WE PROGRESS EVERY YEAR

### JOHN BREMOND CO.

COFFEE ROASTERS AND WHOLESALERS

Established 1847

Wishing You All A Merry Christmas  
and Happy New Year

Christmas greetings from John Bremond Company



— SINCE 1847 —

The  
**JOHN BREMOND  
COMPANY**

80 YEARS  
—OF—  
Continuous Service  
—TO—  
Austin and Central Texas

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WHOLESALE GROCERS

—AND—

ROASTERS OF HIGH GRADE COFFEES

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Advertisement for the John Bremond Company  
Austin American-Statesman, August 14, 1927

At Your Grocers



ESTABLISHED 1847

Advertisement for John Bremond Coffee  
Austin American, November 4, 1928

## John Bremond & Company

by Phoebe Allen

The history of John Bremond & Company is an extraordinary puzzle – each piece leads to another, connecting the family to one of the city’s oldest commercial establishments, the city’s first firefighters, its first railroad, its oldest bank, and the six homes of its historic Bremond Block.

**John Bremond**, the progenitor of Austin’s Bremond family, was born in 1813 in New York City to Catherine Green Bremond (1795-1874) of Fishkill, New York, and Paul Barlie Bremond (1770-1851), a French émigré physician who came from Marseilles to the U.S. in 1805.<sup>i</sup> According to Mary Josephine Butler Cooper<sup>ii</sup>, great-granddaughter of John Bremond, “Family lore hands down the story that Dr. Bremond had been a physician to Napoleon.”

John’s oldest brother, **Paul Bremond** (1810-1885), left school at the age of 12 and apprenticed with a hatter in New York City. Paul later established a business in Philadelphia, but it failed in the panic of 1836. Choosing to begin anew in the Republic of Texas, he established a successful general merchandising business in 1839 in Galveston, the major port and principal city of the Republic with a population of more than 3,000. He moved to Houston in 1842, where he was a well-known railroad financier and entrepreneur. In 1848 Paul Bremond initiated the organization of the Galveston & Red River Railway, which was to become the Houston & Texas Central Railway that arrived in Austin in 1871. He later built the Houston East & West Texas Railway to serve the timber belt between Houston and Shreveport. Paul’s daughter Margaret was the first wife of William Marsh Rice, benefactor of Rice University.<sup>iii</sup>

It is likely that John Bremond followed in his brother’s footsteps to some degree, working first as a hatter in Philadelphia,<sup>iv</sup> marrying his wife Elizabeth Roberts there in 1833, and then heading to Texas in 1846. John established a dry goods and grocery store at 109 East Pecan (Sixth Street), across from the present Driskill Hotel, as early as 1847. The June 13, 1918 issue of the *Austin American* newspaper states, “This establishment has been in operation in the same building and under the same name since 1847. . . . It is one of the oldest business houses in Austin, and one of the oldest wholesale establishments in Texas.”

There were several options for reaching Austin in the 1840s. El Camino Real, the old San Antonio highway, offered overland travel by wagon through Louisiana and Arkansas. One could travel aboard a boat from the east coast all the way to the port of Galveston. The Colorado River was not yet navigable, but from Galveston steamboats traveled up the Brazos River as far as Richmond or Groce’s Landing near the old Austin Colony’s capital of San Felipe, or—if the rivers were up—as far as Washington-on-the-Brazos. One then proceeded overland in wagons. Alternatively, Mr. Bremond might have utilized the Erie Canal—which opened in 1825 and was the superhighway of pre-Civil War America—to travel from

Albany to Buffalo, then by steamboat down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers to New Orleans, boarding a vessel there for Galveston. (Perhaps this was the reason for Bremond's presence in Buffalo at his death.)

According to Frank Brown's *Annals of Travis County and the City of Austin from the earliest times to the close of 1875* (25.37), John Bremond came to Austin from Philadelphia in October of 1846.

"He at once opened a stock of goods in a small boardroom, about 16 feet square, on the east side of Congress Avenue, located about thirty yards below Pecan Street. He remained there awhile, afterwards moving to the stand on the south side of Pecan Street, now occupied by his son, John Bremond. At the time there was a small pine building on the ground, perhaps twenty feet square, with a shedroom attached. John Bremond did business at this stand until his death. About the year 1849 he established a small branch store on the east side of the Avenue, between Sixth and Seventh Streets, in charge of his son Eugene. ... Bremond's business gradually increased until he felt justified in erecting more commodious quarters, which he did. In 1847 he went North to purchase goods. Upon his return he brought to Austin his oldest son, Eugene, then about thirteen years old. In 1848 he again went North after goods, and returned with his entire family [his wife and six more children]. Mr. Bremond went North in 1866, and suddenly died in July of that year at Buffalo, N.Y., in his 52<sup>nd</sup> year."

Bremond's Austin business venture flourished. He enlarged the store building in 1852, the same year he was chosen as a member of the Provisional Railroad Association of Travis County, an organization of prominent men who encouraged the construction of a railroad from the Texas coast to Austin.<sup>v</sup> Since the 1871 arrival of the railway would affect and shape the future of the business, it would be interesting to know how John's support for the railway was connected to that of his brother Paul in Houston.

In an entry in Governor Elisha Pease's journal for July 4, 1856, the first occupant of the Governor's Mansion recorded that John Bremond joined him there to view the Capitol fireworks, an indication of his high standing in the youthful city. In August of 1858, Bremond met with other businessmen to end the era of fighting fires with the bucket brigade. Formerly a fireman in New York, who knew drill routines and equipment, he aided in organizing and chartering Austin Hook and Ladder Company No. 1.<sup>vi</sup> His son Eugene was also a member of this company, and John Jr. became a member of the Washington Fire Company.

A later newspaper clipping<sup>vii</sup> describes the elder Bremond: "The first John Bremond was once a fire chief...He was quite a dresser and had his uniforms tailored in New York. He used to twirl a small cane as he walked down the street. A real dandy, reports a remote cousin, Edward Robinson, who is still a volunteer fireman."

In the Oct. 7, 1854 edition of Austin's *Texas State Times*, Bremond advertised "cheese, chains, clams, clothing, crackers, cranberries, crowbars and cutlery." The dry goods store faced Pecan Street, and the grocery department opened to Brazos Street. In 1865, the year before his death, the elder Bremond brought his sons **Eugene** and **John, Jr.** into the business as partners, establishing **John Bremond & Company**.

The family of **John Henry Robinson** (1819-1897) holds many pieces of the Bremond puzzle. The two families were good friends, and three of his children married three of John Bremond's children. The Robinson homestead at Bois d'Arc (7<sup>th</sup>) and Rio Grande was a block from the Bremond homestead at Pecan (6<sup>th</sup>) and Nueces Streets.<sup>viii</sup>

Born in London, England, Robinson was a seaman in his younger days on a merchant vessel that traveled between Liverpool and New Orleans. His ship was wrecked off the Virginia coast on his last voyage. In 1836 he married Elizabeth Sheridan in New Orleans. His Irish wife preferred to stay in the United States, so Robinson started a bakery in New Orleans as the door-to-door salesman of cakes and baked goods made by a partner. Soon he moved to Little Rock, Arkansas, where he opened a store. His first son was born there in 1839.

In the mid-1850s Robinson loaded his family into a covered wagon and brought them to Austin. He opened a general merchandise store on the west side of Congress Avenue just north of Fifth Street in 1856. The 20-inch-thick-stone load-bearing walls built in 1856 are incorporated in the oldest documented structure in Austin, the **Robinson-Rosner Building**, which was enlarged in 1886.

Now the puzzle pieces become complicated. John H. Robinson was in partnership for a time with **Eugene Bremond**, who married his daughter, **Mary Amelia Robinson**, in 1861. When Eugene went back to work for his father at John Bremond & Company, Robinson partnered with his own son, John Robinson Jr., as **J.H. Robinson & Son**. In 1868, **John Robinson Jr.** married **Madeline Bremond**. He was one of the original founders of the old Washington Fire Engine Company organized in that year at 601 Brazos Street.; that original building is still standing. When John Robinson Jr. decided to join John Bremond & Company as a partner, his younger brother **Alfred Robinson**, who married **Pauline Bremond** in 1869, replaced him as the 'Son' in the Robinson firm.<sup>ix</sup> Alfred died in 1885, leaving the store to his younger brother Alonzo. (The Robinson family founded the Austin White Lime Company, which is still in operation today in northwest Austin.)

### **Bremond's Bank**

From the Bremond store's inception, Eugene made private loans to early settlers – charging the standard 18% interest – from a room at the rear of the store. Preferring banking to dry goods and

groceries, Eugene sold his share of the business in 1870 to his brother John, who subsequently added their sister's husband as his partner.

The **State National Bank**, known locally as "Bremond's Bank," was chartered in 1882. It was located at the west end of the store, at 109 East Sixth, across the alley from Joe Koen's Jewelry. Major George Littlefield accepted a position on the board of directors in company with Eugene's son, Pierre. Lewis Hancock (who would inherit from his father George the corner lot he would sell to Scarbrough's in 1905) served as vice president. Eugene's wife's brother, J.G. Palm, was the cashier, and Eugene's son Walter was the assistant cashier and would later succeed his father as president.<sup>x</sup> In 1887, Eugene became a member of the newly established Board of Trade, an organization comparable to today's Chamber of Commerce.

The **Houston and Texas Central Railroad**, originally incorporated by John's brother, Paul Bremond, reached Austin in December of 1871.<sup>xi</sup> The railroad station was conveniently located near the Bremond store on Market Square, bordered by Fifth, Trinity, Sixth, and Neches Streets. Prior to the railway, "Overland wagons pulled by teams of mules and oxen transported lumber, cotton, and other articles for hundreds of miles to the coast or rail outlets, increasing the cost of such items as much as 600 to 700 percent."<sup>xii</sup> Candles, for example, were selling for \$9.00 a pound! Although it initially took 17 1/2 hours or more for the trains to travel between Houston and Austin, rail travel profoundly changed transportation, the business economy, and John Bremond & Company. Shifting from retail to wholesale operations, John Bremond & Company was now able to supply dry goods and groceries to smaller stores throughout Central Texas.

In 1898, Robinson—who managed the dry goods phase of the business—retired and sold his half interest to his partner for \$50,000. Since Bremond primarily handled the grocery business, an agreement was signed with the company's chief dry goods competitor, McKean-Eilers on Congress Avenue, selling them the dry goods business, with John Bremond & Company retaining the grocery business.<sup>xiii</sup>

The company was one of the first in the nation, in 1905, to roast, grind and distribute their own blend of coffee. Prior to that time, each family had to roast and grind the green coffee beans they purchased. Since there was no other roasting plant in Texas, the red one-pound and three-pound cans of John Bremond Coffee soon became familiar in grocery stores from Texarkana to Brownsville. Eventually they distributed four blends for home consumption – John Bremond, Early Breakfast, and Golden Eagle, and a stronger blend for café use.<sup>xiv</sup>

In 1915 John Bremond & Company incorporated with a capitalization of \$100,000. John Jr. died in 1918, leaving the business to his children – John Bremond III, Howard Bremond, and Hallie Bremond Houston. Howard died in 1919, and his two siblings bought his third interest.<sup>xv</sup>

In 1924, with the rail depot now at Third Street and Congress Avenue, the company moved to Third & San Jacinto Streets. John III died in 1928, leaving the business to his sister and her husband, Hale Houston. John Bremond & Company closed its doors there around 1967, according to Hale's son, Bill Houston.

### **Bremond & Company Building Demolished**

In 1978, a City Zoning Hearing met to consider a demolition request for the Bremond and Pope Buildings (125-139 East Sixth Street). The two-story stuccoed, limestone masonry buildings, later faced with brick, had been remodeled and renovated – and, apparently, renumbered. The original façade had changed, but still present on the second story were six of the original windows, the number of glass panes in each sash indicating that the windows were installed prior to 1870. The owners were listed as William B. Houston, Edward Robinson Jr., trustee, and John Covert Watson. At the time of its demolition in 1979, it was the oldest commercial structure in Austin and housed OK Records, Catman's Shine Parlor, Moma's Money Restaurant, City Pharmacy and Don Politico's Tavern. The adjacent Pope Building was the home of the blues club, Antone's.

In 1981, the Bremond store was replaced by the Littlefield Mall's 24 apartment units and ground-level retail space. The 500 parking spaces provided in the mall made it possible for the historic Littlefield Building, built across the street in 1912, to survive intact.

### **The "Original" Bremond Block**

The history of the Bremond Block Historic District, which lies between Seventh and Eighth, Guadalupe and San Antonio Streets on one of Austin's seven hills, is well documented, but the "original" Bremond block was at another location. At first the Bremond family lived above the Bremond store. Pauline Bremond (Mrs. Alfred Robinson) was born there. According to a 1958 Cooper-Nagle interview, "The daughter of the first Mrs. John Bremond told the story that her mother was very unhappy when she first came to Austin to join her husband at this frontier community. She was so afraid that the Texas sun would bake the brains of her little daughters that she made them hats, cut holes in the top of the hats, then pulled their hair through and tied the hair in a knot, so that the little girls could not take their hats off."

The John Bremond homestead was in the block between Sixth and Seventh, Nueces and Rio Grande (Block 75). After his death, the block was divided into quarters. Eugene received the northwest quarter and built a house there for his daughter Lillie, who married Dr. Ralph Steiner. The southeast quarter of the block, with the original Bremond home facing Sixth Street, was given to John's daughter Louisa (Mrs. Hugh) Haynie. His daughter Virginia (Mrs. Joseph Nagle) received the northeast quarter, and the Nagle

family lived there until the home was torn down in the 1950s. John Jr. received the southwest quarter of the block, but never lived there.

Maerki's Bakery was the first building on the southwest corner. According to a 2002 interview with Mary Jo Cooper, the Maerki home just east of the bakery first faced south on Sixth Street, before Mrs. Maerki had it turned around and moved to face Seventh Street because of the traffic on Sixth.<sup>xvi</sup>

Mrs. Cooper recalled visiting the Steiner and Nagle homes, but could recall no home at the southeast corner of the block. After the death of her own mother when she was five, Mrs. Cooper was raised by her mother's sister, Mary Robinson Martin, in a home still standing at Seventh and Nueces Streets. She also recalled the nearby Robinson home.

### **Relationship of the Bremond Block Historic District**

In 1866, the year of his father's death, Eugene Bremond purchased the north half of the now historic Bremond Block. For a few years, he and his wife Mary Amelia Robinson lived at the northeast corner of the block in the former Greek Revival home of one of Austin's first doctors, William Phillips. After the death of Eugene's wife in 1872, he married Augusta Palm, a daughter of the noted intellectual Sir Svante Palm (who gave his extensive library collection to UT and for whom Palm School is named). Eugene and Augusta moved to the Victorian Italianate home on the southwest corner of the block in 1874.

Taking up residence in the Phillips-Bremond home was Eugene's son Eugene Jr., who was deaf and mute and required live-in companions. His caretakers over the years included his grandmother Elizabeth Bremond (1814-1898), her daughter Madeline with husband John Robinson, Jr., and Elizabeth's youngest daughter, Kate Eggleston. John Jr. bought the home in 1906 and rented it to one of his employees, Hale Houston, who would eventually become president of the company. Houston married John's daughter Hallie Houston in 1915, securing Bremond occupancy of the Phillips-Bremond-Houston house for the next 50 years.

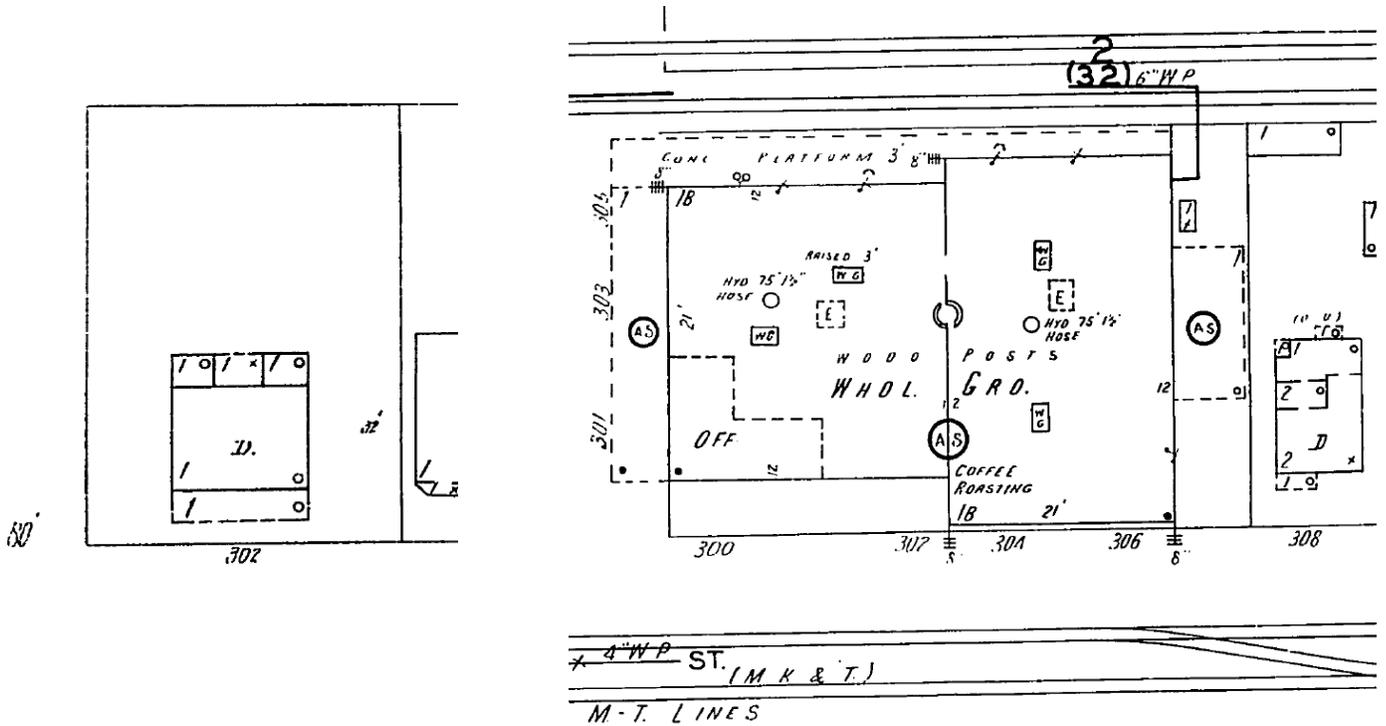
In 1891, Eugene brought his widowed, pregnant sister, Pauline Bremond Robinson, and her six children to live in the house next door. (Pauline and her unmarried daughter Kate later raised an infant here when the child's mother, Josephine Robinson Butler, died in the influenza epidemic of 1918, leaving four young children. The remaining three children were raised by Josephine's sister, Mary Robinson Martin, one block away. Mary Jo Butler Cooper was one of those three children. She recalls that all of the Bremond and Robinson cousins were close, and that her aunts would sew together in her Grandmother Pauline's home.)

Eugene's sister, Josephine Bremond Crosby, and her husband Josiah lived briefly in the house on the northwest corner of the block. It was remodeled and enlarged for Eugene's son Walter and his bride in 1887. A home was built in the lot adjacent to Eugene's home for his youngest son Pierre and his bride, St.

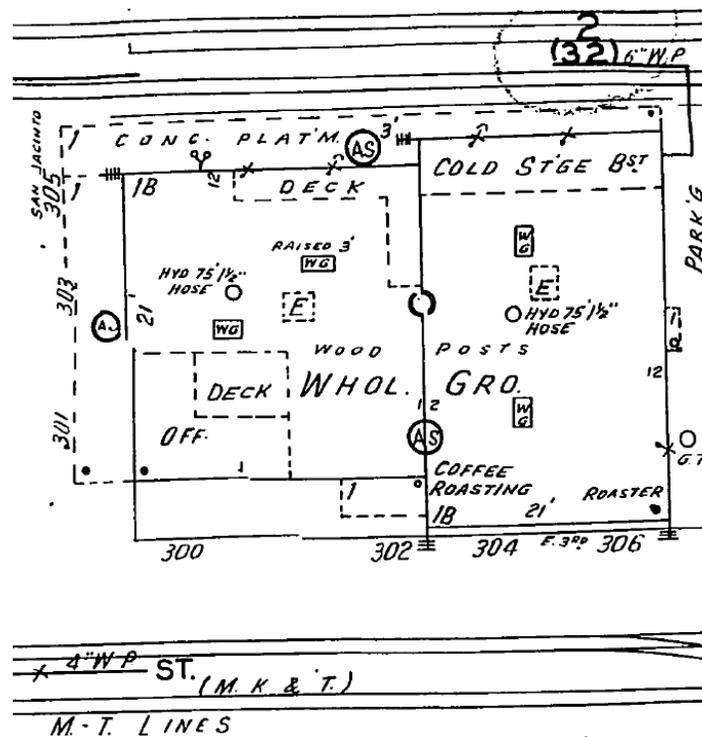
Louis socialite Nina Abadie, in 1898. Pierre and Nina used tin cans for golfing holes early in their marriage and constructed Austin's first golf course and country club with Lewis Hancock.

John Jr. was actually the first to purchase land and a Greek Revival style house, not unlike the Governor's Mansion, on the now historic Bremond Block in 1864. John Jr. lived in this house until he demolished it to build a formal Victorian home on the two lots on the southeast corner in 1886. His first wife died as the house was nearing completion. His second wife didn't like the unsanitary stables being so close to their home, so she had them moved to a site on or near the older Bremond block.

The first house in Austin to boast an indoor toilet, John Jr.'s magnificent home adds the final piece to the Bremond puzzle and is testimony to the success of John Bremond & Company.



Left, the 1900 Sanborn map shows a house at 302 E. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, the site of the current building. Right, the 1935 Sanborn map shows the current building as a wholesale grocery warehouse with coffee roasting in the eastern half of the building. The John Bremond Company had its wholesale grocery warehouse and coffee roasting business here from 1924 to 1967. Note that there was still a two-story residence next to the building at 308 E. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street at the right of the map.



The 1961 Sanborn map shows the current building at the northeast corner of 3<sup>rd</sup> and San Jacinto – it is labeled wholesale groceries with coffee roasting in the eastern portion of the building and cold storage in the basement, reflecting the continued occupancy by the John Bremond Company.

October 29, 2021

Austin City Council  
City Hall  
301 W. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street  
Austin, Texas 78701

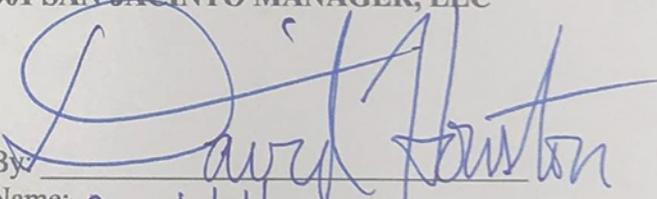
Re: Proposed Historic Zoning for the property located at 301 San Jacinto Boulevard, 304, 306, and 306 ½ E. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Austin, Texas, 78701, also known as TCAD Parcel No. #0205021604 (the "Property")

Dear Austin City Council:

We, the undersigned owner of the above referenced Property, oppose Historic (H) zoning on the property and any effort to initiate the zoning. We hereby oppose any change of the zoning classification to any zoning district other than Central Business District ("CBD").

Sincerely,

**301 SAN JACINTO MANAGER, LLC**

  
By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name: David Houston  
Title: David Houston

cc: Steve Sadowsky

# VINCE ♦ YOUNG

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## STEAKHOUSE

January 10, 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Phillip Brown and along with my wife Laura McIngvale Brown, we own and operate the Vince Young Steakhouse here in the heart of downtown Austin. We opened the Vince Young Steakhouse at the property in question (301 San Jacinto Blvd.) on November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2010 with Austin's hometown hero and Texas quarterback, Vince Young. To date, we are Austin's only locally owned and operated prime steakhouse and are lucky enough to say we are still thriving even despite what 2020 and Covid-19 threw at us.

I am a born and raised Austinite and have seen immense change in our city over my lifetime and the course of our eleven years in operation at the Vince Young Steakhouse, this growth has been great for our business and our community alike, but I hope that the evolution doesn't overpower and push out us "little guys" and locally owned businesses. As our landlord hopes to destroy a century plus old building to make way for more concrete and glass, it seems as if downtown is losing its soul one building at a time. We need preserve the few original places we have left and not push out small family-owned businesses that are the true fabric of this city and help "Keep Austin Weird".

I write today in favor of granting 301 San Jacinto Blvd. the historic status it deserves to save a little piece of Austin while we still can. I strongly support the Historical Commissions vote in granting historical status to 301 San Jacinto Blvd.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter and more importantly, thank you for all your hard work for our wonderful city!

All my best -



Phillip Brown