

Texas Historical Commission staff (BB), 2/14/2012  
Official Texas Historical Medallion and 16" x 12" plaque with post  
Harris County (Job #11HR06) Subject (Atlas ) UTM  
Location: Houston, 18 Courtlandt Place

**W. T. CARTER, JR. HOUSE**

IN 1912, ARCHITECTS BIRDSALL BRISCOE AND OLLE LOREHN DESIGNED THIS HOME FOR W. T. CARTER, JR., (1887-1957) AND LILLIE AUGUSTE (NEUHAUS) CARTER (1890-1966). THE TWO-STORY PRAIRIE STYLE HOUSE HAS A HIPPED TERRA COTTA TILED ROOF WITH DORMERS, STUCCO VENEER, AND A WIDE FULL-WIDTH PORCH WHICH EXTENDS TO COVER A PORTE-COCHERE. A TWO-STORY GARAGE AND TWO CARRIAGE HITTING POSTS AT THE FRONT CURB ARE ALSO HISTORIC. W. T., PROMINENT IN LUMBER AND REAL ESTATE, ALSO SERVED ON THE HOUSTON PORT COMMISSION AND CITY COUNCIL AND DEVELOPED HOUSTON'S FIRST PUBLIC AIRPORT (LATER WILLIAM P. HOBBY AIRPORT). THE CARTER FAMILY OWNED THE HOUSE UNTIL 1978.

RECORDED TEXAS HISTORIC LANDMARK – 2011

MARKER IS PROPERTY OF THE STATE OF TEXAS

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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**RECORDED TEXAS HISTORIC LANDMARK MARKERS:  
2011 Official Texas Historical Marker  
Sponsorship Application Form**

Valid September 1, 2010 to November 15, 2010 only

This form constitutes a public request for the Texas Historical Commission (THC) to consider approval of an Official Texas Historical Marker for the topic noted in this application. The THC will review the request and make its determination based on rules and procedures of the program. Filing of the application for sponsorship is for the purpose of providing basic information to be used in the evaluation process. The final determination of eligibility and therefore approval for a state marker will be made by the THC. This form is to be used for Recorded Texas Historic Landmark (building marker) requests only. Please see separate forms for either Historic Texas Cemeteries or subject markers.

**Proposed marker topic** (official title will be determined by the THC): W. T. Carter, Jr. House

**County:** Harris

**Town** (nearest county town on current state highway map): **Houston**

**Street address of marker site or directions from town noted above:** #18 Courtlandt Place, Houston, Texas

**Marker Coordinates:**

**If you know the location coordinates of the proposed marker site, enter them in one of the formats below:**

UTM Zone 15 Easting 883761.103 Northing 10803089.522

Lat: 29.743884 Long: -95.384782(deg, min, sec or decimal degrees)

**Otherwise, give a precise verbal description here** (e.g. northwest corner of 3rd and Elm, or FM 1411, 2.6 miles east of McWhorter Creek): n/a

**NOTE:** Recorded Texas Historic Landmark markers must be placed at the structure being marked.

**Recorded Texas Historic Landmark markers definition:** Recorded Texas Historic Landmark (RTHL) markers are awarded to structures deemed worthy of preservation for their historical associations and architectural significance. RTHL is a legal designation and comes with a measure of protection; it is the highest honor the state can bestow on a historic structure, and the designation is required for this type of marker. The RTHL designation becomes effective upon approval by the THC. Official Texas Historical Markers signify the RTHL designation, which comes only through application to and approval by the THC and must include public display of an Official Texas Historical Marker. Owners of RTHL-designated structures must give the THC 60 days written notice before any alterations are made to the exterior of the structure. RTHL status is a permanent designation and is not to be removed from the property in the event of a transfer of ownership. Only the THC can remove the designation or recall the marker. The marker must remain with the structure and may not be removed or displayed elsewhere until or unless the THC gives express approval in writing for such action. Once designated as RTHL, properties are subject to provisions of Texas Government Code, Section 442.006(f).

**Criteria:**

1. **Age:** Structures eligible for the RTHL designation and marker must be at least 50 years old.

2. **Historical significance:** Architectural significance alone is not enough to qualify a structure for the RTHL designation. It must have an equally significant historical association, and that association can come from an event that occurred at the site; through individuals who owned or lived on the property; or, in the case of bridges, industrial plants, schoolhouses and other non-residential properties, through documented significance to the larger community.
3. **Architectural significance:** Structures deemed architecturally significant are outstanding examples of architectural history through design, materials, structural type or construction methods. In all cases, eligible architectural properties must display integrity; that is, the structure should be in a good state of repair, maintain its appearance from its period of significance and be considered an exemplary model of preservation. Architectural significance is often best determined by the relevance of the property to broader contexts, including geography. Any changes over the years should be compatible with original design and reflect compliance with accepted preservation practices, e.g., the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*.
4. **Good state of repair:** Structures not considered by the THC to be in a good state of repair are ineligible for RTHL designation. The THC reserves the sole right to make that determination relative to eligibility for RTHL markers.

**Special National Register considerations for RTHL marker applications:** If a structure has been individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) under either Criterion A or B and Criterion C (Architecture), the historical text compiled as part of the National Register nomination process may be submitted as part of the marker process, provided it includes the required reference notes and other documentation. Acceptance of the National Register information for the purposes of the marker process will be up to the sole determination of the THC. Listing in the NRHP does not guarantee approval for an RTHL marker. See the THC web site at <http://www.thc.state.tx.us/markerdesigns/madnrcrit.html> for National Register criteria.

Check this box if the property is individually listed in the NRHP.

## APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Any individual, group or county historical commission (CHC) may apply to the THC to request an Official Texas Historical Marker for what it deems a worthy topic. Only complete marker applications that contain all the required elements and are submitted online as required can be accepted or processed by the THC (for RTHL markers, the required elements are: sponsorship application form; narrative history; documentation; legal description of the property; site plan; floorplan; historic photograph; and current photographs clearly showing each side of the structure—please resize photographs to 1-2 MB, or approximately 1024 x 768 pixels).

- Completed applications must be duly reviewed, verified and approved by the county historical commission (CHC) in the county in which the marker will be placed.
- The sponsorship application form, narrative history and documentation must be submitted as Microsoft Word or Word-compatible documents and sent via email attachments to the THC by no later than November 15, 2010.
- Required font style and type size are a Times variant and 12-point.
- Narrative histories must be typed in a double-spaced (or 1.5-spaced) format and include separate sections on context, overview, significance and documentation.
- The narrative history must include documentation in the form of reference notes, which can be either footnotes or endnotes. Documentation associated with applications should be broad-based and demonstrate a survey of all available resources, both primary and secondary.
- Upon notification of the successful preliminary review of required elements by the THC, a non-refundable application fee of \$100 is required. The fee shall be submitted to the THC within ten working days of application receipt notification.

**APPROVAL BY COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

The duly appointed marker representative (chair or marker chair) noted below for the county historical commission will be the sole contact with the THC for this marker application. To ensure accuracy, consistency and efficiency, all information from and to the THC relative to the application—and throughout the review and production processes—will be via direct communication with the CHC representative. All other inquiries (calls, emails, letters) to the THC will be referred to the CHC representative for response. By filling out the information below and filing the application with the THC, the CHC representative is providing the THC with notice that the application and documentation have been reviewed and verified by the CHC and that the material meets all current requirements of the Official Texas Historical Marker program.

**As chair or duly appointed marker chair, I certify the following:**

Representatives of the CHC have met or talked with the potential marker sponsor and discussed the marker program policies as outlined on the THC web site. CHC members have reviewed the history and documentation for accuracy and made corrections or notes as necessary. It is the determination of the CHC that the topic, history and documentation meet criteria for eligibility.

**CHC comments or concerns about this application, if any:**

**Name of CHC contact** (chair or marker chair): Louis F. Aulbach, Marker Chair

**Mailing address:** PO Box 925765 **City, Zip:** Houston, 77292-5765

**Daytime phone** (with area code): 713-683-8379 **Email address** (required): lfa@hal-pc.org

**PERMISSION OF PROPERTY OWNER FOR MARKER PLACEMENT**

**Property owner:** Ginger L Napier and Glen C Runnels

**Address:** #18 Courtlandt Place **City, state, zip:** Houston, Texas 77006

**Phone:** 713-238-6705 **Email address:** gnapier@cnintl.com

**Legal Description of the property** (metes and bounds, lot and block, etc.): Lot 10 & Tracts B4 & C7, Courtlandt Place

Upon receipt of the application, the THC will provide the owner with a letter that outlines the legal responsibility of ownership under the Recorded Texas Historic Landmark statute. The letter must be signed by the owner and returned to the THC before the evaluation can be completed.

**NOTE:** The property owner will not receive any additional copies of correspondence from the THC. All other correspondence—notice of receipt, request for additional information, payment notice, inscription, shipping notice, etc.—will be sent via email to the CHC representative, who is encouraged to share the information with all interested parties as necessary. Given the large volume of applications processed annually and the need for centralized communication, all inquiries about applications in process will be referred to the CHC for response. The CHC is the sole liaison to the THC on all marker application matters.

**SPONSORSHIP PAYMENT INFORMATION**

Prospective sponsors please note the following:

- Payment must be received in full within 45 days of the official approval notice and must be accompanied by the THC payment form. The THC is unable to process partial payments or to delay payment due to processing procedures of the sponsor. Applications not paid in the time frame required may, at the sole discretion of the THC, be cancelled or postponed.
- Payment does not constitute ownership of a marker; Recorded Texas Historic Landmark markers and other Official Texas Historical Markers are the property of the State of Texas.
- If, at any time during the marker process, sponsorship is withdrawn, a refund can be processed, but the THC will retain the application fee of \$100.
- The Official Texas Historical Marker Program provides no means of recognizing sponsors or property owners through marker text, incising or supplemental plaques.

**Marker sponsor** (may be individual or organization): Ginger L Napier and Glen C Runnels

**Contact person** (if applicable): same

**Mailing address:**#18 Courtlandt Place **City, zip:** Houston, 77006

**Email address** (required):gnapier@cnintl.com **Phone: 713-238-6705**

#### **SHIPPING INSTRUCTIONS**

In order to facilitate delivery of the marker, residence addresses, post office box numbers and rural route numbers are not permitted. To avoid additional shipping charges or delays, use a business street address (open 8 a.m.—5 p.m., Monday through Friday).

**Name:** Ginger L Napier and Glen C Runnels

**Street address:**#18 Courtlandt Place **City, zip:** Houston, 77006

**Daytime phone** (required): 713-238-6705 **Email** (required): gnapier@cnintl.com

#### **TYPE AND SIZE OF RECORDED TEXAS HISTORIC LANDMARK MARKERS**

As part of its review process, the THC will determine the appropriate size marker and provide options, if any, for the approved topic based on its own review criteria, including, but not exclusive of, historical significance, replication of information in other THC markers, relevance to the Statewide Preservation Plan and the amount of available documented information provided in the application narrative. In making its determination, however, the THC will also take into account the preference of the CHC, as noted below.

The sponsor/CHC prefers the following size marker:

- 27" x 42" RTHL marker with post (\$1500)
- 27" X 42" RTHL marker without post\* (\$1500)
- 18" x 28" RTHL marker with post (\$1000)
- 18" x 28" RTHL marker without post\* (\$1000)
- RTHL medallion and 16" x 12" plaque with post (\$750)
- RTHL medallion and 16" x 12" plaque without post\* (\$750)

\*For an RTHL marker without post, indicate to what surface material it will be mounted:

- wood
- masonry
- metal

other (specify)

**SUBMITTING THE APPLICATION (via email required)**

When the CHC has determined the application is complete, the history has been verified and the topic meets the requirements of the Official Texas Historical Marker Program, the materials should be forwarded to the THC via email at the following address: [markerapplication@thc.state.tx.us](mailto:markerapplication@thc.state.tx.us).

- The CHC or marker chair should send an email containing the following attachments (see attachment function under file menu or toolbox on your computer):
  - This application form
  - The narrative history (including documentation)
  - Legal description of the property
  - Detailed floor plan for each floor of the structure
  - Detailed site plan of the property
  - At least one historic photograph
  - Current photographs clearly showing each side of the structure

**RECORDS RETENTION BY CHC:** The CHC must retain hard copies of the application as well as an online version, at least for the duration of the marker process. The THC is not responsible for lost applications, for incomplete applications or for applications not properly filed according to the program requirements. For additional information about any aspect of the Official Texas Historical Marker Program, see the Markers page on the THC web site (<http://www.thc.state.tx.us/markerdesigns/madmark.html>)

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Texas Historical Commission  
History Programs Division  
P.O. Box 12276, Austin, TX 78711-2276  
Phone 512/463-5853  
[history@thc.state.tx.us](mailto:history@thc.state.tx.us)



**TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION**  
*real places telling real stories*

Application for a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark Marker for the

**W. T. CARTER, JR. HOUSE**  
**#18 COURTLANDT PLACE, HOUSTON, TEXAS**

Written by Anna Mod, SWCA Environmental Consultants  
for review by the Harris County Historical Commission

## I. CONTEXT

Houston grew steadily in the second half of the nineteenth century due to ongoing enhancements to the port and additional railroads. City leaders invested in the city's future and established infrastructure including electric service, streetcars, paved streets and public transportation. The Port of Houston was established in 1841 and steamships plied Buffalo Bayou and unloaded at the foot of Main Street. The railroad arrived in 1860 and by 1922 there were seventeen lines operating in Houston.<sup>1</sup> Buffalo Bayou, straightened and deepened, received her first ocean going vessel in 1876 and this enhancement - coupled with the railroad - propelled the city into a major transportation and shipping center.<sup>2</sup> The 1901 discovery of oil near Beaumont at Spindletop propelled Beaumont into an oil boomtown overnight, yet Houston was better positioned for explosive growth due to her established infrastructure and better social and cultural amenities; the city absorbed many newcomers over the following two decades as newly chartered oil companies moved their headquarters there.<sup>3</sup>

In the late nineteenth century, wealthy Houstonians built large mansions along the main avenues south of downtown in the Victorian-era styles that were popular at the time. Sited on large parcels, it was not uncommon for the house, outbuildings and gardens to occupy an entire city block.<sup>4</sup> Live Oak trees were planted along the lot perimeters and these oaks, now a century old, can still be seen sporadically in what is now Midtown. The city's population doubled in the first decade of the twentieth century<sup>5</sup> and the residential avenues south of downtown began to experience commercial encroachment. Homeowners realized the value of a planned community

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<sup>1</sup> Weiskopf, Douglas L. Rails Around Houston. Charleston, et al: Arcadia Publishing, 2009, p. 2

<sup>2</sup> *Handbook of Texas Online*, s.v. "HOUSTON SHIP CHANNEL"  
<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/HH/rhh11.html> (accessed May 30, 2010).

<sup>3</sup> Johnston, Marguerite, Houston: The Unknown City: 1836-1946. College Station: Texas A&M Press, 1991, pp. 129-131.

<sup>4</sup> Sanborn Maps, City of Houston, 1885-1951, Volumes 1 and 5.

<sup>5</sup> Morrison and Fourmy, *City Directory of the City of Houston*, 1910-11, p. 11.

within a city adamantly opposed to zoning, and true to the Houston entrepreneurial spirit, developers responded and provided new neighborhoods with deed restrictions following design principles of the City Beautiful movement: Westmoreland (1902), Hyde Park (1905), Courtlandt Place (1906), Avondale (1907) and Montrose (1911).<sup>6</sup>

## II. OVERVIEW

The 1912 W. T. Carter, Jr. house at #18 Courtlandt Place is the second Carter family house (following #16 completed the same year) that ultimately included four houses on the north side of Courtlandt Place (#s14, 16, 18 and 20). The house was designed by Olle Lorehn and Birdsall Briscoe for W. T. Carter, Jr. and his wife Lillie Auguste Neuhaus Carter.

Willie Theron Carter was born January 24, 1887 in Barnum, Texas to Ernest A. and Elizabeth Barclay Carter. Willie's mother died within a few months of his birth, and he was adopted by William Thomas and Maude Holley Carter, his aunt and uncle,<sup>7</sup> and his name changed to William T. Carter, Jr.<sup>8</sup> His adopted father, W. T. Carter, Sr., founded the W. T. Carter & Brother Lumber Company in 1870s. The company, headquartered in Camden, Polk County, Texas, oversaw around 180,000 acres of timber spread over four East Texas counties.<sup>9</sup> In 1908, Carter, Sr. moved his family to a large house on Main Street in Houston.<sup>10</sup> Towards the end of his life, Carter, Sr. divided his business interests between his two sons and left Willie in charge of the company's Houston interests. In 1910, William T. Carter, Jr. married Lillie Neuhaus (1890-1966). The couple had two sons, Victor N. and William T. "Billy."<sup>11</sup>

Carter prospered in the family lumber business and branched out into banking and real estate. One of Carter's real estate ventures was the purchase of land in southeast Houston and the

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<sup>6</sup> Houghton, Dorothy Knox Howe, et al. Houston's Forgotten Heritage: Landscape, Houses, Interiors 1824-1914. College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1991, preface and introduction.

<sup>7</sup> United States Federal Census: Year: 1880; Census Place: *Trinity, Texas*; Roll 1329; Family History Film: 1255329; Page: 311A; Enumeration District: 109.

<sup>8</sup> Jones, J. Lester (Pat). Centennial 1876-1976, W. T. Carter & Bro., self-published history of Carter family, 1976.

<sup>9</sup> Johnson, Marguerite. Houston: The Unknown City, 1836-1946. College Station: Texas A&M Press, 1991, p. 131.

<sup>10</sup> United States Federal Census: Year: 1910; Census Place: *Houston Ward 4, Harris, Texas*; Roll T624\_1559; Page: 8A; Enumeration District: 75; Image: 935.

<sup>11</sup> United States Federal Census Year: 1930; Census Place: *Houston, Harris, Texas*; Roll 2348; Page: 25A; Enumeration District: 92; Image: 656.0.



creation of Houston's first public airport, W. T. Carter Field. It was privately owned for ten years and offered commercial aviation (Braniff and Eastern) and airmail service before the City purchased it in 1937 and renamed it Houston Municipal Airport. Following the death of Governor William P. Hobby, the city renamed the airport in his honor in 1967, and it remains a busy Houston commercial airport.<sup>12</sup> Carter also developed the Garden Villas subdivision, a neighborhood adjacent to the airport in southeast Houston. The Carter family also developed Sherwood Forest, a Memorial area subdivision on the site of their prewar hunt lodge.<sup>13</sup> Carter, Jr. also served on the Houston City Council as an at-large member (1942-44) and district councilman (1944-46). He was a member of the Houston Port Commission from 1925-1935.<sup>14</sup>

In 1953 Carter, with Houston politician and entrepreneur Jesse Jones, founded the Phonoscope Company to provide two-way video conferencing for the business and education communities. Carter and Jones lured Lee Cook away from the Los Alamos Lab in New Mexico<sup>15</sup> to oversee the technical side of the company based on Carter's vision of electronic information exchange between people, and wiring the city to promote long-range communication.<sup>16</sup> Early investors included Bing Crosby and the company is still in existence today.

The Carter clan on Courtlandt Place was socially prominent and maintained a privileged lifestyle and active social schedule. Lillie Carter's sister-in-law, Jessie Carter Taylor (#20 Courtlandt Place), held regular Saturday night parties in her basement where 40-50 guests could gamble and watch boxing matches (the boxers possibly recruited employees of the family's Camden lumber mill).<sup>17</sup> Lillie Neuhaus Carter was more reserved than her sister-in-law and a "powerful social arbiter of Houston's Old Guard." She and her husband used their influence to limit club memberships and residency on Courtlandt Place. Ironically, her son Victor married oil heiress Betty Crotty in what the heirs believe was the first society wedding between old and new Houston.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> History of Hobby Airport, <http://www.fly2houston.com/houHistoryOfHobby>

<sup>13</sup> Interview with Victor Carter (grandson of W. T. Carter, Jr., son of Victor Carter) by Penny Jones, 16 July 2008.

<sup>14</sup> Jones, J. Lester (Pat). Centennial 1876-1976, W. T. Carter & Bro., self-published history of Carter family, 1976, p. 44.

<sup>15</sup> Houston Business Journal, "Low-profile Cook Recognized as true Telecom Trailblazer." Friday, January 14, 2005.

<sup>16</sup> Interview with Lee Cook, by Sallie Gordon and Penny Jones, 26 July 2008.

<sup>17</sup> Interview with Victor Carter (grandson of W. T. Carter, Jr., son of Victor Carter), by Sallie Gordon and Penny Jones, 7 November 2006.

<sup>18</sup> Gordon, Sallie and Penny Jones, Houston's Courtlandt Place. Arcadia Publishing, 2009, p. 42.

Lillie Carter remained in the house after the death of her husband and relatives stayed there until the late 1960s. The house changed hands four times in the 1980s until Gerald B. Smith purchased it in 1987. The house sold to the Charles and Frances Dunn in 1996 and the current owners bought it from them in 2007.

### **Courtlandt Place**

A. L. Hamilton, T. A. Cargill and Sterling Myer incorporated The Courtlandt Place Improvement Company on August 8, 1906 for the purpose of creating a neighborhood with “residences of good class” as far as possible from the “noise, dust, constant traffic and other annoyances” of a growing city.<sup>19</sup> Plans for the new Courtlandt Place neighborhood were announced in the *Houston Post* a month later with a report on the purchase of 15 acres of land by the Courtlandt Improvement Company from Terry Smith of New York and plans for a subdivision named “Courtlandt Place . . . one of the finest residence sections in the South.”<sup>20</sup> On the 1907 plat map, the land is described as “situated within the city limit of Houston, Texas north of and adjoining Westmoreland, being the south one third of Lot 23 of a subdivision of the Obedience Smith survey according to a map recorded in Vol. Y, page 15, Harris County Deed Records.”<sup>21</sup>

The neighborhood was surveyed by A. J. Wise, a civil engineer, who laid out a 110 foot long boulevard with four central medians and a total of 26 lots: 24 measuring 100' x 170' and two polygonal shaped lots (lots 1 and 26) adjacent to the east entrance.<sup>22</sup> The vision of the developers was to establish an exclusive neighborhood with houses of high quality. Six primary restrictive covenants were incorporated into each deed *in perpetuity* and included: no business or commercial houses; only one house, not less than two stories, per purchased lot; setback footage required to maintain uniformity; fences in the rear only; front hedges can be no higher than three feet high in the front 50 feet of the property line; and, no house may cost less than \$10,000.<sup>23</sup> In

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<sup>19</sup> Agreement Creating Courtlandt Association, dated June 29, 1912. James L. Autry papers, “Courtlandt Place,” box 20, file 15, Woodson Research Center, Rice University.

<sup>20</sup> “New Residential Addition Planned,” *Houston Post*, Sept. 6, 1906.

<sup>21</sup> Deed Records of Harris County, Map Book 2, page 26.

<sup>22</sup> Wise, A. J. 1907 plat of Courtlandt Place. James L. Autry papers, “Courtlandt Place” box 20, file 15, Woodson Research Center, Rice University.

<sup>23</sup> Autry papers, “Courtlandt Place.”

1912, the Courtlandt Place Improvement Company created the Courtlandt Place Association, still in existence today, and appointed ten trustees and deeded the street to them as joint tenants.<sup>24</sup>

The neighborhood ran the equivalent length of three standard city blocks from Taft on the west to the entrance, a semicircular bend at Brazos and Stuart Avenue. The eastern entry was one block south of Elgin and two blocks west of the South End streetcar stop.<sup>25</sup> The initial development was successful and the first two houses (#s 4 and 6) were completed in 1910. By the beginning of World War I four years later, nine houses were completed on the street. Four more houses were completed by 1920 and an additional four by the decade's end. In 1937, the eighteenth house was built on the street and construction ceased until 1979 when the house at #13 was built. In 1985, #1 Courtlandt Place was built, the last house on an undeveloped lot. Thirteen years later in 1998, another new house, #3, was built on the side yard of the Autry house (#5) replacing an iron frame greenhouse, designed by the Lord and Burnham Company of Philadelphia, and a tennis court, both demolished after the 1980 City of Houston survey.<sup>26</sup> These three non-contributing houses respect the setback and massing of the other houses on the block, a requirement of the restrictive covenants, and do not detract from the historic character of the street. Today, there are a total of 21 houses and no remaining vacant lots: eleven houses on the north side and ten on the south side of the street.

The neighborhood reads as an architectural and social history of early twentieth century Houston. Architects Sanguinet and Staats of Ft. Worth designed six houses (#s 5, 9, 23, 4, 6 and 8); Birdsall Briscoe also designed six (#s 11, 19, 13, 16, 18 and 20) including one (#18) with Olle Lorehn; New York architects Warren and Wetmore, architects of Houston's Union Station (NR, 1977), Villa de Matel and the Texas Company building (NR, 2003) designed #17. John Staub and Alfred Finn each designed one house, numbers 2 and 24 respectively.<sup>27</sup>

The eastern entry gates to the neighborhood, paired masonry pylons, were in place by 1908. As home sales increased in the adjacent Montrose subdivision to the west, there was an increase in traffic down Courtlandt Place towards Main Street. In 1912, William Ward Watkin (brought to Houston in 1909 by the architectural firm Cram & Goodhue for the design and

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<sup>24</sup> Autry papers, "Courtlandt Place."

<sup>25</sup> Baron, Steven M. Houston Electric: The Street Railways of Houston, Texas. Houston: Steven M. Baron, 1996, p. 41.

<sup>26</sup> Autry papers, "Courtlandt Place."

<sup>27</sup> Landon, Marie D. Courtlandt Place Historic District, National Register of Historic Places nomination, 1979.

construction of the earliest buildings for the Rice Institute [now Rice University]) designed and oversaw the construction of the western wall as well as curbs, sidewalks, iron entry fencing, rear wooden alley gates and the plantings in the medians.<sup>28</sup>

Later the same year, Montrose developer J. W. Link, claiming that the western wall and the private street were illegal, lobbied city hall to tear down the wall and reopen the street so as to provide car traffic from Lovett Blvd. with direct access to Main Street via Courtlandt Place.

The city agreed; the western wall was removed and the city took the street from the Association, paved it and installed streetlights. While this was a loss to the exclusivity of the Courtlandt Place development, it was still buffered to the north by the Westmoreland subdivision (1902) and on the west by Montrose (1911), both contemporary City Beautiful residential neighborhoods of similar quality and with similar restrictive covenants until after World War II.

In addition to its architectural significance, Courtlandt Place was home to many of the city's early businessmen and their families. A. S. Cleveland (#8) was a wholesale grocery owner and cotton factor whose civic activities included service as president of the Houston Chamber of Commerce and the Houston chapter of the American Red Cross. Cleveland was also a trustee of Rice University. James Lockhart Autry (#5) came to Texas from Mississippi and worked on a ranch in Navarro County. He apprenticed with a lawyer in Corsicana and was admitted to the bar. There he met J. S. Cullinan who left Corsicana to establish the Texas Company, later Texaco, in Beaumont following the discovery of oil at Spindletop. Autry was of counsel to the Texas Company, and a pioneer in petroleum law in Texas.<sup>29</sup> Another important household on the block was that of Charles Ludwig Neuhaus (#6), a director of the Texas Rice Mill Company, Union National Bank and an investor in the Courtlandt Improvement Company.<sup>30</sup>

The houses were large and were staffed by servants, many of whom lived in the second story apartments above the garages. It was not uncommon for a household to have three or more servants, including a housekeeper, cook, grounds keeper and chauffeur. Study of the city directories prior to 1950 clearly shows that African-American staff lived in the rear above the garage, while an Anglo nurse or housekeeper would sometimes live in the main house with the

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<sup>28</sup> William Ward Watkin papers, 1903-1956, Woodson Research Center, Fondren Library, Rice University, Houston, Texas.

<sup>29</sup> Air, Murray and Sallie Gordon, Recorded Texas Historic Landmark application for #5 Courtlandt Place, 2009.

<sup>30</sup> Gordon and Jones, p. 100.

family, following the segregated customs of the time. Other servants would commute from their own neighborhoods nearby.

The area to the east of Courtlandt Place was predominantly residential in use due to its location away from the commercial center. However, without deed restrictions it was not immune to commercial encroachment. The 1924 Sanborn map shows the beginnings of commercial development creeping into the two blocks directly to the east and southeast of the Courtlandt Place entry gates. By 1951, a dry cleaner was in business at the corner of Brazos and Elgin, directly north of the Courtlandt Place entry gates. This same map shows the two-block area to the east bordering on 50% commercial in use.<sup>31</sup>

Early plans for the city's freeway system show a dotted line on the 1959 Key Map for the proposed location of SH 59, known locally as the Southwest Freeway. It was completed by 1965. The initial freeway construction removed direct access to Main Street from the neighborhood and in 1968 the Bagby-Brazos ramp cut into the eastern edge of the neighborhood,<sup>32</sup> necessitating the removal of the twin entry pylons, electric iron and glass lamps and "several of the largest Cottonwood trees in Harris County."<sup>33</sup> The bricks were saved from the pillars and the existing pylon in the eastern median is constructed of the rescued bricks.<sup>34</sup>

The neighborhood suffered from the suburban flight in the 1950s and 60s as younger generations sought new houses with modern appliances away from the city as the older generation was dying off. By this time the deed restrictions in neighboring Montrose and Westmoreland began to expire and small apartment buildings began to sprout up in place of single family dwellings. Beginning in the 1970s there was a small renaissance of the inner city, and young families began to move back.<sup>35</sup> By the early 1980s the neighborhood had stabilized and the Courtlandt Place Association pooled resources and purchased the street back from the city for \$103,115.<sup>36</sup> The Association is required to hold liability insurance and to ensure access for emergency vehicles.

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<sup>31</sup> Sanborn map, 1924-51, Vol. 5, sheet 544.

<sup>32</sup> *Houston Post*, 17 May 1965, Section 2.

<sup>33</sup> *Houston Post*, 17 May 1965, Section 2

<sup>34</sup> "Courtlandt Place." *Houston Post*, 11 December 1974, page 3AA.

<sup>35</sup> "Courtlandt Place." *Houston Post*, 11 December 1974, page 3AA.

<sup>36</sup> "Residents buy Houston Street." *Houston Chronicle*, 28 Sept. 1982.

Neighborhood residents started the research and paperwork for listing Courtlandt Place on the National Register of Historic Places as a district in 1979 but this effort failed. Later that year, eleven houses were listed individually on the National Register, including the Myer-Hall house (NR 1979). The following year Courtlandt Place was successfully listed as a National Register Historic District. In 1996 Courtlandt Place became the City of Houston's first locally designated historic district following the establishment of the city's historic preservation ordinance in 1995.

There are also ten listed (nos. 5, 6, 8, 9, 15, 16, 17, 19, 22 and 24) Recorded Texas Historic Landmarks and four individual City of Houston Landmarks (nos. 5, 18, 19 and 24) in the neighborhood. Today Courtlandt Place is a well-preserved neighborhood and reads as an architectural and social history of early twentieth-century Houston. Arcadia Publishing released a neighborhood history, *Houston's Courtlandt Place*, in 2009.

### **Architectural description**

The W. T. Carter, Jr. residence is a two-story, wood framed, Prairie style house with a stucco veneer and a hipped terra-cotta tiled roof. The RTHL application includes the house, two-story garage and two carriage hitching posts at the front curb either side of the sidewalk. The house faces south onto Courtlandt Place. The primary facade has a wide, full width, L-shaped, hipped roof porch supported by square masonry piers and extends around the eastern corner of the house. The porch roof extends to cover the *porte cochere* on the west side. The wide overhanging eaves of the porch and main volume enhance the width and horizontality of the house. There is a central dormer on each elevation: hipped on the primary facade and west elevation and Alamo-parapet on the east. The windows are wooden sash with 6/1 lights. There are three stucco clad chimneys: one in the rear and one each on the east and west elevations. The central entry steps onto the porch are clad with square terra-cotta tile and the exterior threshold retains its original hexagonal tile. The wooden entry door, three quarter length sidelights and transom each have clear, beveled glass infill in a decorative pattern set in lead coming. The door, a replacement, has a central glass piece marked with an "S" for Smith, the owner in the late 1980s. The sidelights and transom are original.

The house retains a significant amount of its interior elements and integrity including the original layout, ceiling height and materials and finishes. The interior plan is a wide central hall

with parlors on each side. The house has five wooden fireplace mantels, one in each of the parlors and one in each bedroom. The original pocket doors between the hall and parlors are extant. The downstairs flooring is tiger oak and the stairs are rock maple. All of these exotic woods were easy to obtain, as the Carter family owned one of the largest lumber mills in the region. There is a formal staircase and a smaller one in the rear of the house. The walk-in Carter family safe, fabricated by Herring Hall and Marvin, is extant in the basement. Original features in the kitchen include the copper vent hood and the kitchen sink. The original hardware is extant throughout the house and door hardware is an egg-shaped glass knob.

The garage is a two-story, wood framed, L-plan building with stucco cladding. It has a similar terra-cotta tiled roof as the house. The wooden sash windows are 2/2 light. Within the building is a former hog pen and horse stall in addition to space for two cars. The upstairs includes a small apartment and bath.

There is a pool, a one-story pool cabaña (c. 1985) and narrow gabled walkway leading from the house to the two-story garage in the backyard. The pool house and walkway both date to c. 1985 and are not yet of historic and are good examples of the Post Modern style. The pool cabaña is a one-story, wood framed, front gabled building with a small side gabled entry portico. The gabled walkway is supported by delicate metal columns reinforced by cross cabling. Both the cabaña and walkway have red metal seamed roofs.

Changes to the house include the enclosure of the rear sleeping porch and the new front door, a compatible replacement. Minor changes to the interior were made to upgrade the kitchens and bathrooms.

### **Olle Lorehn and Birdsall Briscoe**

Olle Lorehn was a Swedish-born Houston architect responsible for Houston Fire Station #7, now the Houston Fire Museum (1899, NR, RTHL), the James Bute Warehouse, Houston's first warehouse to loft conversion (1910, NR), Nabisco's first Houston production plant (1902, demolished), and Sacred Heart Co-Cathedral (threatened).<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Fox, Stephen, Houston Architectural Guide. Houston: AIA, 1990, pp. 61, 62, 67, 84, 93, 169.

Birdsall Parmenas Briscoe was born in Harrisburg, Texas and was the great-grandson of John R. Harris, the founder of Harrisburg.<sup>38</sup> He apprenticed with Houston architects Lewis Wilson and Lewis Sterling Green and opened his own practice in 1912, the year the Carter house was built. While he had some commercial commissions, he is best known for his residential work in Houston's early twentieth century neighborhoods of Shadyside, Broadacres, River Oaks, and six houses in Courtlandt Place (nos. 11, 19, 20, 14, 16 and 18). His residential clients included prominent businessmen, such as the Carter family (for whom he designed four houses), and R. Lee Blaffer. A Briscoe-designed house for William Lockhart Clayton (1917, RTHL) is now the Clayton Library Center for Genealogical Research and part of the Houston Public Library system. Briscoe is perhaps best known for his early twentieth century remodeling of the Varner-Hogg Plantation in Brazoria County for Ima Hogg.<sup>39</sup>

### **III. SIGNIFICANCE**

The W. T. Carter, Jr. house at #18 Courtlandt Place is significant architecturally as an example of the early twentieth century residential work of Olle Lorehn and Birdsall Briscoe. The house is a good example of the Prairie style and is the only example of this style on the street of popular revival style houses. It is also significant for its association with the W. T. Carter, Jr. family, business and social leaders in Houston. Carter served on the Port Commission and the City Council. He was active in real estate, and developed Houston's first commercial airport. He developed the neighborhoods of Garden Villas and Sherwood Forest and foresaw video conferencing by decades in his founding of Phonoscope. The house is also significant as a contributing resource to the Courtlandt Place neighborhood, an early twentieth-century subdivision developed with the intent to provide its elite residents with an exclusive enclave amid the explosive growth of Houston.

### **IV. DOCUMENTATION**

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<sup>38</sup> *Handbook of Texas Online*, s.v. "Briscoe, Birdsall Parmenas" <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/BB/fbrbw.html> (accessed June 21, 2010).

<sup>39</sup> *Handbook of Texas Online*, s.v. "Briscoe, Birdsall Parmenas"



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Harris County Appraisal District, <http://www.hcad.org/>

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[www.houston55.com.postcards-from-Texas/stories/2009-03-courtlandt-place.jsp](http://www.houston55.com.postcards-from-Texas/stories/2009-03-courtlandt-place.jsp)

Landon, Marie. *National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form for #18 Courtlandt Place*, 1979.

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McAlester, Virginia and Lee, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf Inc., 1984.

-----, *A Field Guide to America's Historic Neighborhoods and Museum Houses: The Western States*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf Inc., 1998.

### **Special Collections and Clipping Files**

Courtlandt Place Clipping File, Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library.

### **Maps**

Bracey's Block Maps, City of Houston, Texas, 1942 and 1950.

Key Map of Houston, Texas, 1959-1969.

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Authorization for Recorded Texas Historic Landmark Designation

Date of RTHL designation: January 28, 2011

Property Name: W. T. CARTER, JR. HOUSE
Physical Address: 18 COURTLANDT PLACE
City: HOUSTON County: HARRIS Zip: 77006
Property reference number (Appraisal District/Tax Office property number, etc.): 0102490000010
Legal Description (Lot and block, metes and bounds, etc.): LOT 10 TRS B4 & C7 COURTLANDT PLACE

Additional description ("property encompassing the bridge and abutments," "the 1936 portion of the County Consolidated High School building," "the historic homestead, including the main house, barn, windmill, smokehouse and water well," etc.): THE HISTORIC HOMESTEAD, INCLUDING TWO STORY GARAGE AND APARTMENT AND TWO CARRIAGE HITCHING POSTS AT THE FRONT CURB EITHER SIDE OF THE SIDEWALK AT #18 COURTLANDT PLACE

The Recorded Texas Historic Landmark (RTHL) designation is awarded to historic structures deemed worthy of preservation for their architectural integrity and historical associations. Authorized by the Texas Legislature under Texas Government Code, Chapter 442, RTHL is the highest honor the state can bestow on historic structures in Texas. Designated properties are afforded a measure of legal protection and become part of the recorded history of the state's built environment.

Benefits of the RTHL designation:

- Recognition that a property is of local, regional or state significance.
Protection for up to 90 days from exterior alterations, including demolition or relocation.
Ad valorem tax exemptions, where granted by local taxing authorities.
Inclusion in the Texas Historic Sites Atlas.
Technical preservation assistance through the THC.

Responsibility of the property owner under the RTHL provision, as noted in Texas Government Code, Chapter 442.006 (f):

A person may not damage the historical or architectural integrity of a structure the commission has designated as a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark without notifying the commission at least 60 days before the date on which the action causing the damage is to begin. After receiving the notice, the commission may waive the waiting period or, if the commission determines that a longer period will enhance the chance for preservation, it may require an additional waiting period of not longer than 30 days. On the expiration of the time limits imposed by this section, the person may proceed, but must proceed not later than the 180th day after the date on which notice was given or the notice is considered to have expired.

Additionally:

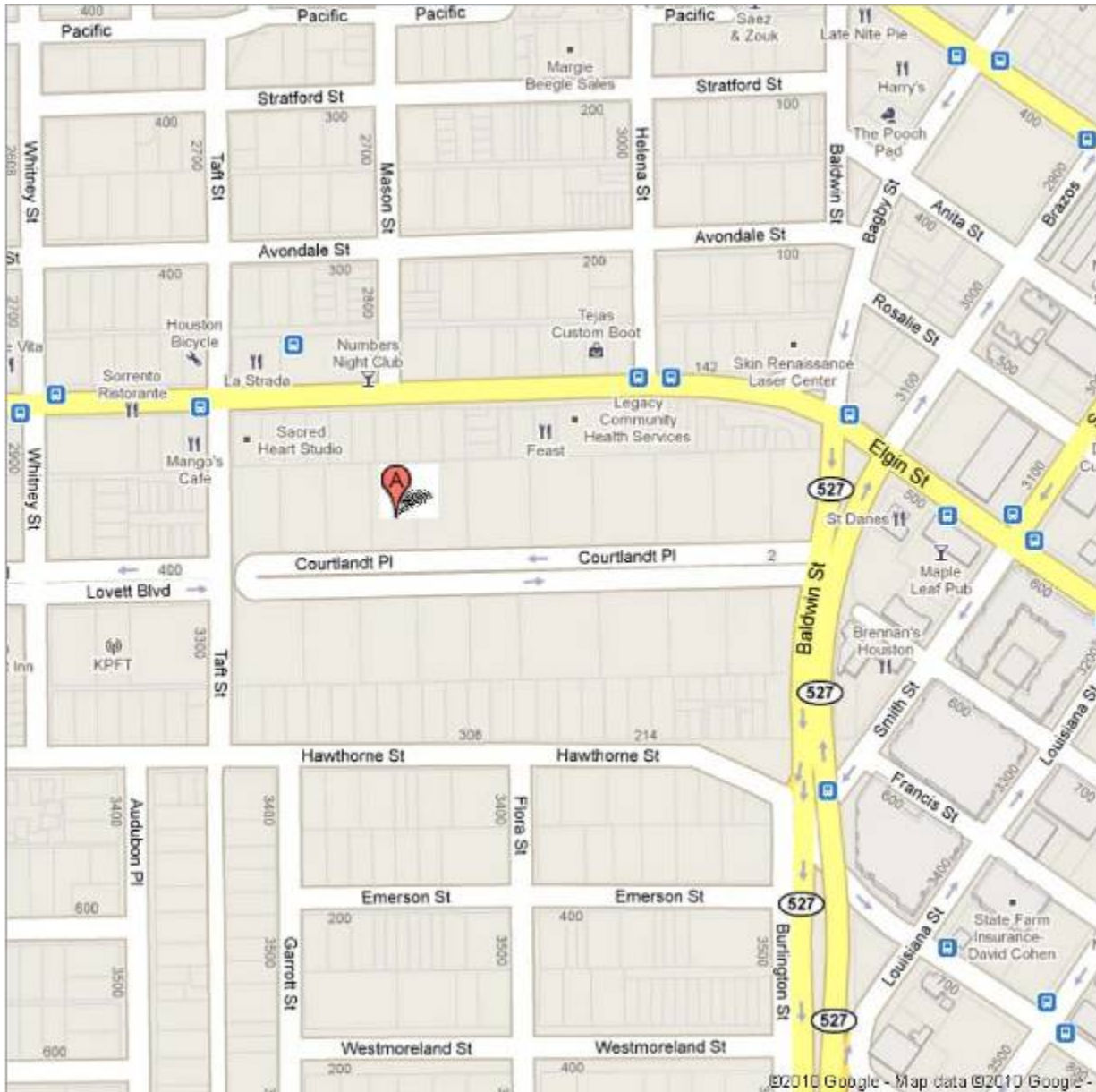
- The designation requires the public display of the RTHL marker. The marker is the property of the State of Texas and may not be removed or relocated without the prior permission of the Texas Historical Commission.
RTHL status is a permanent designation which is retained with the property even upon transfer of ownership. Only the Texas Historical Commission may remove the designation.
Structures designated as RTHLs do not have to be open to the public, but the marker must be accessible to the public.
RTHL designation does not imply eligibility for federal tax incentives for rehabilitation.

I, the property owner or legal administrator of the property noted herein, signify below that I have read the information regarding Recorded Texas Historic Landmarks and that I voluntarily seek the designation for the property. I further promise to comply with the provision noted in the Texas Government Code.

Name (print): GLEN C RUNNELS
Mailing address: 18 COURTLANDT PLACE
City, state, zip: HOUSTON, TEXAS 77006
Signature: [Handwritten Signature]
Phone: (713) 526-6826 Date: 2/03/11

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PHONE 512.463.6100 • FAX 512.475.4872
www.thc.state.tx.us

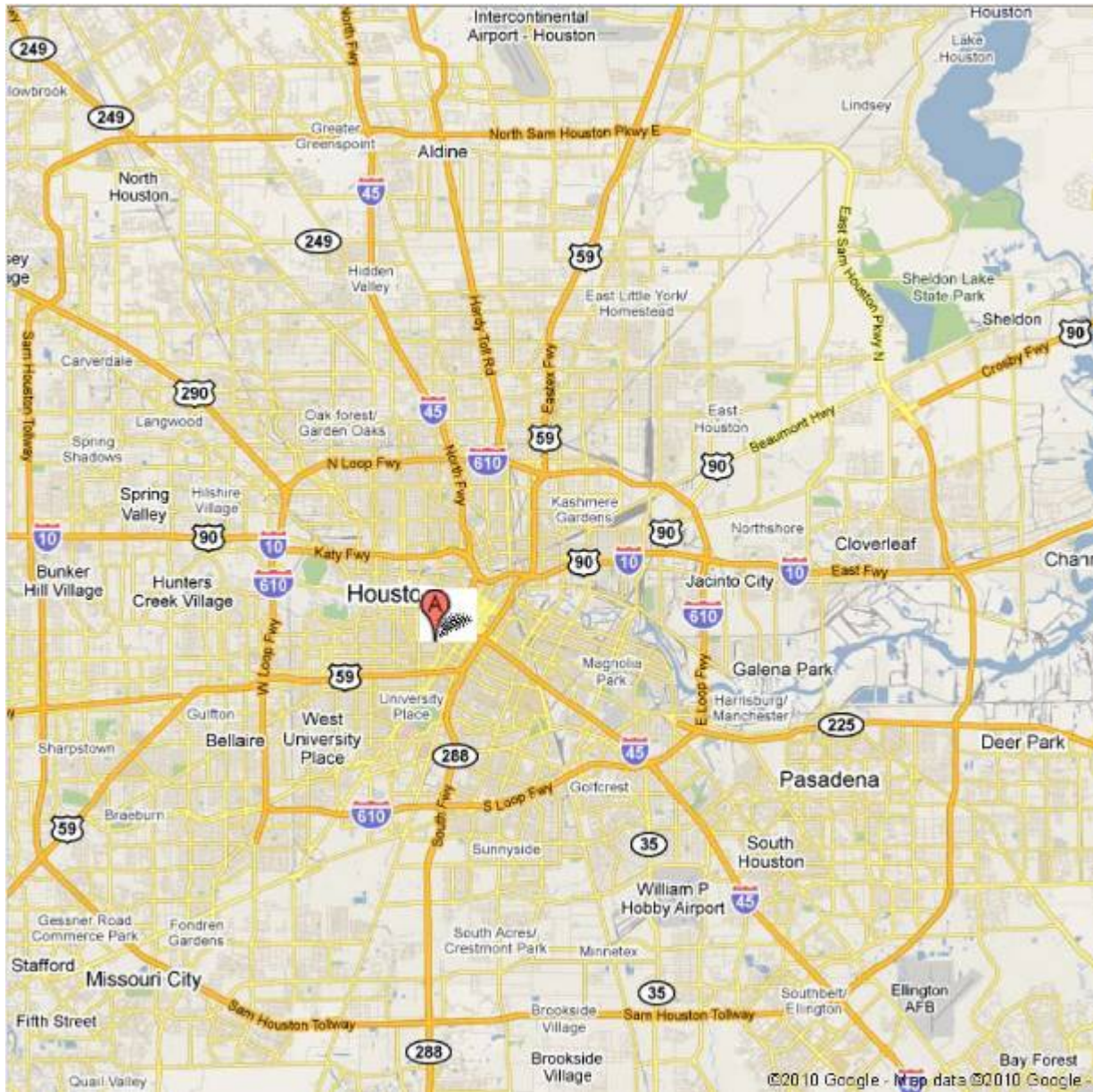
**Legal Description:** Lot 10 and Tracts B4 and C7 in the Courtlandt Place addition, Houston, Harris County, Texas (Harris County Appraisal District).



#18 Courtlandt Place, Houston, Texas

source: Google Maps, 2010



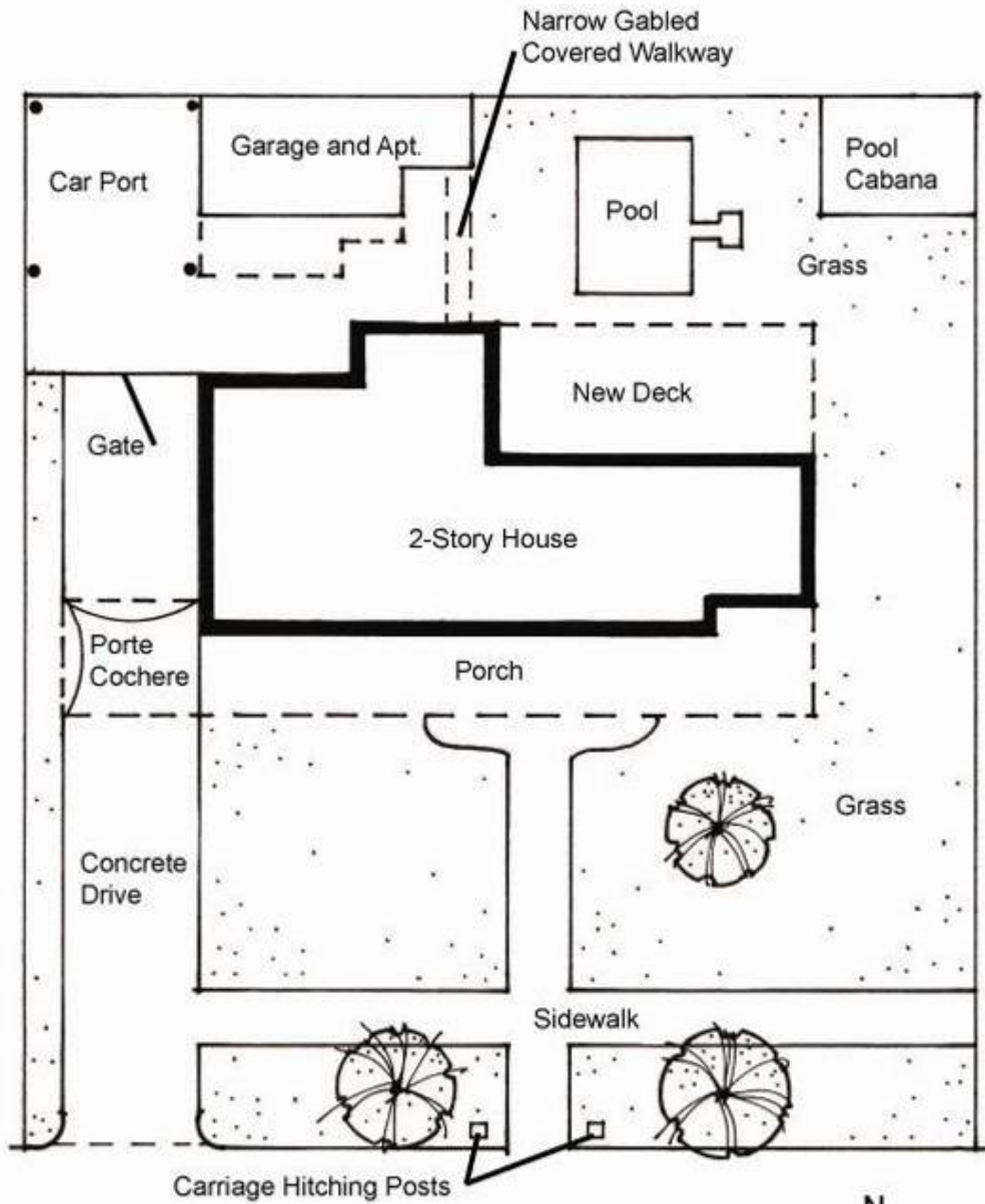


#18 Courtlandt Place, Houston, Texas

source: Google Maps, 2010

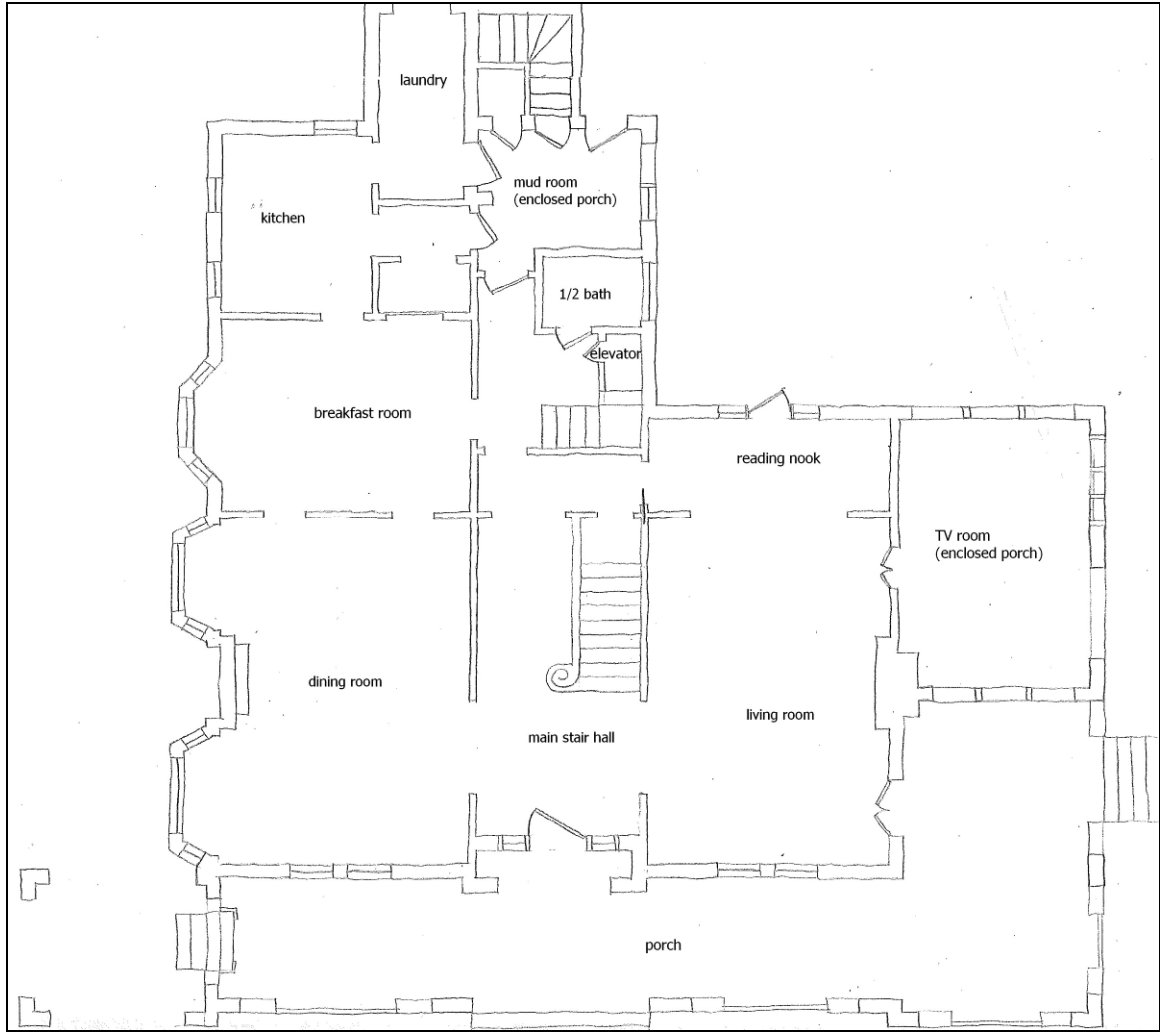






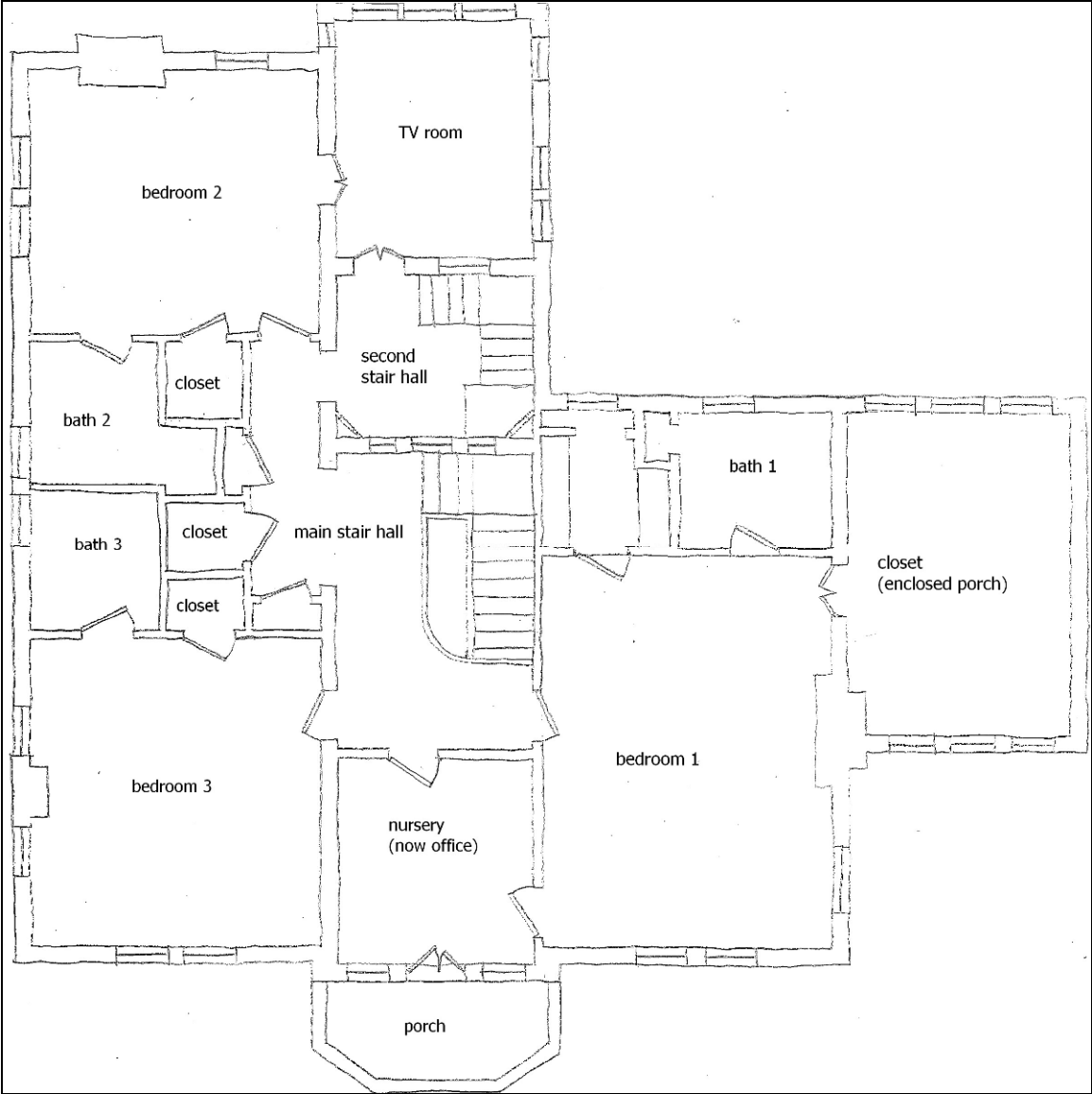
No. 18 Courtlandt Place





First floor





Second floor







#18 Courtlandt Place, c. 1915

Courtesy: Woodallen Photography



GATEWAY TO COURTLANDT PLACE

Courtlandt Place gates, c. 1912

Source: William Ward Watkin papers, Woodson Research Center, Rice University





#18 Courtlandt Place, south facade, view north

Anna Mod for SWCA, 2010



Detail of south façade, front door and hitching posts

Anna Mod for SWCA, 2010





Detail of front door, three quarter sidelights and transom

Anna Mod for SWCA, 2010



Detail of hitching posts

Anna Mod for SWCA, 2010



East and north elevations, view south

Anna Mod for SWCA, 2010



North and west elevations, view south

Anna Mod for SWCA, 2010





Garage, view north

Anna Mod for SWCA, 2010



Pool cabaña, view north

Anna Mod for SWCA, 2010





Gabled walkway, view N

Anna Mod for SWCA, 2010