

PROTECTED LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT

LANDMARK NAME: Knapp Chevrolet Building

OWNERS: Houston Dart, LLC

APPLICANTS: LAURA CARRERA, URBANO ARCHITECTS

LOCATION: 1230 HOUSTON AVENUE, HOUSTON, TEXAS 77007

AGENDA ITEM: A

HPO FILE NO.: HP2023_0178

DATE ACCEPTED: 08/01/2023

HAHC HEARING: 09/14/2023

SITE INFORMATION: Track 7, Block P, Evans, City of Houston, Harris County, Texas

The site includes a 1-story brick veneer commercial building, and a small parking lot.

TYPE OF APPROVAL REQUESTED: Protected Landmark Designation

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

The Knapp Chevrolet Building has been a prominent presence on Houston Avenue since it opened in April 1940, actively serving its community for over 80 years. The building was originally constructed as an automobile showroom for Knapp Chevrolet, a locally recognized company since 1940 still in business today. The building's front façade continues to reflect Chevrolet's industrial identity of the time, a typical characteristic of Art Moderne. Joe Montalbano, once owner of the locally recognized Montalbano Lumber Company, led the construction of the building in 1940. Today, this business continues to serve the Houston construction community as a Montalbano family-operated business. For most of its lifetime, the building has served as an active and viable commercial building for the neighborhood, serving as Knapp Chevrolet's showroom, repair shop, industrial print shop, and Station Theater, an improvisation theater that has been vital to the expansion of the improv scene in Houston with abundant workshops and classes. ¹ In late 2022, the building was rehabilitated into an Art Gallery and listed as a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark.

Based on a study conducted in 2022 by Urbano Architects, the building's 80-year history stands out among the few remaining commercial buildings constructed prior to 1951 facing Houston Avenue, the once thriving main commercial corridor of the First Ward; one of the original four wards in Houston. Its Art Moderne-style represents a typical small-scale Texas automobile shop that provided commercial services for its surrounding community, an important role in local economies since the invention of the automobile. According to three Moderne surveys conducted in 1978, 2005 and 2022, Knapp Chevrolet building represents among the few small-scale commercial Art Moderne buildings still present in Houston today. The period of significance is 1940-1973, reflecting the date of its current Art Moderne appearance through the current 50-year point.

¹ Houston Chronicle (2019, January 7). Houston's improv scene making itself seen. p. 1.

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE**History of the Knapp Chevrolet Building***1220 Houston Avenue, Prior to 1940*

Prior to construction of the Knapp Chevrolet building, there was a two-story Victorian house and a detached two-story apartment. The home may have belonged to the Fisk Family and the address was 1220 Houston Avenue.² According to the Harris County Tax Assessor Archives, the property address later changed to 1228 Houston Avenue³ and in 1940, it was changed to 1230 Houston Avenue.

As early as March 1935 through at least 1940, Joseph Frank Montalbano Sr. was the owner of the property. Joe was owner of the Montalbano Lumber Company, one of the oldest family-operated lumber companies in Houston today. The company supplied an assortment of construction materials including lumber, paint, plumbing, electrical supplies, roofing and hardware. Joe, was the son of Francesco (Frank) Montalbano, who founded the company in 1900 at 1309 Houston Avenue shortly after arriving from Palermo, Italy. Starting around 1929, Joe became owner and together with his wife, operated the company for over 61 years. By the 1930s, there were a series of advertisements by the Montalbano Lumber Company offering construction and financing services. Joe Montalbano was referenced on the Houston Post as being the builder of various small-scale brick-veneer buildings around Houston and in 1938, he built a two-story four-unit tan brick-veneer building still present today⁴. Joe lived at 1606 Goliad Street, a few blocks from Knapp Chevrolet Building.⁵ His three sons, Frank, Michael and John, eventually took over the business when Joe retired. Several newspaper articles by the Houston Post and Houston Chronicle have highlighted Joe and the Montalbano Lumber Company throughout the years. In 1990, Joe was referenced as the “distinguished lumber company czar” by the Houston Chronicle and in 1978, the Houston Post referred to the Montalbano Lumber Company as “the oldest lumber yard in Houston.”⁶ Today, the business continues to operate at 1309 Houston Avenue, the same location as back in 1940, and has expanded to another location in Houston.

² Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1924 vol. 2, Sheet 215. Houston Public Library online, Texas Digital Sanborn Maps

³ [Building and Land Assessment Cards], Harris County Tax Assessor – Collector: Harris County Archives, Houston, Texas.

⁴ Houston Post. (1938, April 24) Brick Being Built. P. 25

⁵ Houston Post (1935, October 6). Brothers. P.59.

⁶ Houston Post (1978, September 14). Oldest Lumber Firm. P. 59.

Knapp Chevrolet Building, 1940

Knapp Chevrolet opened their first Houston branch at 1230 Houston Avenue in April 1940, upon building completion. Knapp Chevrolet is one of the oldest family-operated car dealerships in Houston still present today. Prior to conducting business in Houston, Knapp had successfully operated dealerships in Harlingen, Brownsville and Mercedes in the Rio Grande Valley.⁷ F.E. Knapp of Weslaco served as president of the dealership at the time and J.M. Richardson, served as vice president and first manager of the Houston office.⁸ Knapp Chevrolet Houston's first customer is photographed at the front façade of Knapp Chevrolet Building (Figure 1), courtesy of Knapp Chevrolet.

According to newspaper articles, the building was considered a temporary location for Knapp Chevrolet and shortly after December 1941, they relocated to a 40,000 SF new building at 815 Houston Avenue.⁹ Today, Knapp Chevrolet Houston continues to operate at 815 Houston Avenue. The company has been recognized with a "Texas Treasure Business Award", a program of the Texas Historical Commission awarded by the Harris County Historical Commission.

Knapp Chevrolet Building, 1943 -1964

From 1943 through 1964, the building served as a repair shop under the business of Joe Goss Refinishing Service, later known as Goss Appliance Refinishing Shop. During this time, the business was owned and operated by Joe Goss, a Heights resident, offering refinishing services for appliances and furniture.

Knapp Chevrolet Building, Late 1960 - 2002

Starting the late 1960s through 2002, the building housed Industrial Printers, Inc, owned and operated by Fred Barry. Fred Barry was born in Nebraska on August 7, 1926. After serving as a World War II Navy veteran, he relocated to Houston and started Industrial Printers in 1947. The print shop served top Houston businesses, associations and politicians and May 31, 1991 was proclaimed Industrial Printers Day by Mayor Kathryn Whitmire.¹⁰ In 1990, Fred Barry filed a permit to construct a two-story metal warehouse approximately 5 feet south east of the Knapp Chevrolet building. A connecting corridor was constructed circa 2002, according to google earth.

⁷ Houston Chronicle (1940, April 14). New Dealer in Chevrolet Autos Opens. P.60

⁸ Houston Post. (1940, April 14). New Building for Houston Avenue. p. 14

⁹ Houston Post. (1941, December 1). Knapp Inc.; Authorized Chevrolet Dealer, to Open its New Building Today. p. 19

¹⁰ Houston Chronicle. (2008, December 6). Fred L. Barry Obituary. P.8

Knapp Chevrolet Building, 2002 – Late 2021

The Estate Land Company (Wiese Properties) purchased the building in November 2002 through December 2021. During this time, the building was leased to the Texas Art Asylum (2010-2013) and Station Theater (2013 – 2022). According to their website, the Texas Art Asylum is a “part craft store, part thrift store, part salvage yard for reuse, repurposing or upcycling” and in 2010, they were featured as “the Ultimate Business of the Week” by the Houston Chronicle for having collected 20,000 pounds of reusable materials¹¹. Station Theater is a popular venue in the neighborhood offering comedy performances as well as classes and workshops in improvisation, sketch and stand-up. By late 2021, the building had fallen into disrepair with extensive graffiti, paint, soiling, and vegetation throughout its brick facades. The four original display windows were missing, with its openings covered with plywood. The once shiny and curved metal entry awnings and metal coping were corroded with missing or broken parts. The entry doors were missing and blocked with plywood. Some upper windows were infilled with masonry and the site had unmanaged vegetation throughout.

Knapp Chevrolet Building, Late 2021 - 2023

In December 2021, the property, which included 1230 and 1224 Houston Avenue, was purchased by Houston Dart, LLC, with plans of rehabilitation into retail use. The development was led by Andres Utting and Jon Deal who hired Urbano Architects as Architect and Historic Preservation Consultant for the rehabilitation of the Knapp Chevrolet building and 1224 Houston Avenue. TDC Realty, LLC managed the construction with assistance by Long-Term Buildings, LLC. Following construction completion, Mont Art House, a local art gallery, moved into the Knapp Chevrolet Building and the now-disconnected 1224 Houston Avenue building serves as offices.

About Houston’s First Ward, Baker North Side Buffalo Bayou Subdivision and Houston Avenue**(By Preservation Houston¹²)**

The First Ward was established in 1840 as one of the original four wards in Houston. At the time, the ward system provided neighborhood representation in city government with Main Street and Congress Avenue as the dividing lines between the wards. The First Ward covered all the area northwest of the intersection at Main and

¹¹ Houston Chronicle. (2011, May 19). Texas Art Asylum. P.189.

¹² Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission Report. (2021, August 26) Protected Landmark Designation Application for the J.F. Kessler Building. P. 2 Courtesy of Preservation Houston

Congress to the city limits; it included Market Square and part of the original Port of Houston at the foot of Main Street. Although the ward system was abolished in 1905, the name First Ward is still used to describe the general area immediately west of I-45, east of Sawyer Street, south of I-10 and north of Washington Avenue.

Most land within the First Ward was outside the city's central business district and was surveyed and sold to private landholders for residential development beginning in the late 1830s. It quickly developed into a working-class community because of its proximity to the downtown port and what would become the Houston & Texas Central Railroad shops. Robust economic activity attracted German, Italian and Irish immigrants to the area who sought employment with the railroad or who would start their own businesses to serve the neighborhood. Population increase led the City of Houston to designate the part of First Ward east of White Oak Bayou as the Fifth Ward in 1866.

Many of the structures built in First Ward reflected styles that were popular in working class communities of the time, including small vernacular Victorian cottages and Craftsman bungalows. About 30 percent of the properties in the area were originally rentals, reflecting the transient nature of the occupants. Houston Avenue was First Ward's main business thoroughfare, but small commercial buildings that housed corner grocery stores, saloons, barber shops, bakeries, meat markets and drug stores were scattered throughout the neighborhood.

Like many neighborhoods its age, the First Ward began a long period of decline in the 1950s. Many of the historic houses and buildings were demolished and replaced by industrial buildings. Construction of interstates 10 and 45 also decreased the desirability of the area for anything beyond commercial buildings. The integrity of the neighborhood was further endangered as residents fled to more stable areas, and much of the remaining housing stock and commercial buildings that weren't demolished fell into disrepair.

Today, the First Ward is a neighborhood in transition. There is a thriving arts community in the area, and new retail is opening on its western edge. Demands for high-density housing near downtown, though, are putting increased pressures on the area. While small businesses are opening in rehabbed buildings and a new hike and bike trail runs along the neighborhood's northern edge, historic houses are being replaced at a rapid pace by modern townhomes. Nevertheless, the First Ward still has several late 19th-and early 20th-century buildings, including some of the oldest surviving structures in Houston. Concerted efforts by residents and advocacy groups to preserve the remaining historic housing stock resulted in the City of Houston designating part of the neighborhood as the High First Ward Historic District on May 28, 2014.

William Robinson Baker was born on May 21, 1820 in Baldwinsville, New York, to Asa and Hannah (née Robinson) Baker. William Baker moved to Texas in 1837 and worked as a bookkeeper for the Houston Town Company. He was elected Harris County clerk in 1841, a position he held for 16 years. Baker married Hester Eleanor Runnels on December 15, 1845. They had one child, Lucy. All three are interred in Glenwood Cemetery.

Baker was the mayor of Houston from 1880 to 1886, a Texas state legislator, president of the City Bank of Houston, and president of the Houston and Texas Central Railroad. He was also instrumental in developing early neighborhoods such as the First Ward and the Sixth Ward.

Shortly after John K. and Augustus C. Allen founded the town of Houston, the area immediately west of the townsite, now known as First Ward and Old Sixth Ward, was surveyed and sold to private landholders including William Baker. According to local historian Neal Parker, Baker bought lots in the part of Houston that is now the Baker NSBB subdivision from Angus McNeil, Augustus C. Allen and James S. Holman in 1838. By 1858, William R. Baker owned or held several mortgages on most of the land in this area.

Houston Avenue was platted as the primary north-south thoroughfare through William Baker's subdivision and developed into First Ward's main commercial corridor. Houston Avenue's planned significance was evident in its 100-foot easement compared to an average 60-foot easement on other streets in the First Ward. That width allowed the Houston City Street Railway to build a streetcar line along Houston Avenue in 1892, connecting the neighborhood with the city's central business district. In 1906, the streetcar line was extended to neighborhoods north and northwest of the First Ward to bring suburban residents to downtown workplaces. By the turn of the 20th century, Houston Avenue was a mix of commercial buildings, housing drug stores, grocery stores and saloons alongside single-family Victorian homes.

Many important First Ward institutions were located along Houston Avenue, including Hawthorne Public School, the neighborhood's elementary school at the intersection of Bingham and Houston, and the first fire station at the intersection of Spring and Houston. One of the first two-story brick buildings in the First Ward was constructed at the intersection of Summer and Houston, and the intersection of Crockett and Houston Avenue emerged as the center of commercial activity by the 1890s with three of its four corners occupied by businesses¹³.

¹³ Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1896, Sheet 53. Houston Public Library online, Texas Digital Sanborn Maps.

By the 1930s, several of the original structures along Houston Avenue had been replaced with more modern brick buildings. Like the rest of the First Ward, Houston Avenue began a period of decline in the 1950s and changed from its original mix of commercial and residential properties to predominantly commercial. Many buildings along the street were demolished; the businesses that remained, including bars, barbershops, beauty salons, convenience stores, auto mechanics, primarily served the immediate area.

Today, Houston Avenue remains a primary artery connecting downtown to near northwest neighborhoods. Though much of the housing stock along Houston Avenue has been demolished, a few residential and commercial structures from the late 1800s and early 1900s remain. New businesses are opening in rehabilitated historical buildings, and dedicated local preservationists are acting to retain some of the street's remaining historic structures. The historic buildings on Houston Avenue are outside the High First Ward Historic District and have no city protection.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION AND RESTORATION HISTORY

Architectural Description

Description

Knapp Chevrolet Building is a single-story, brick veneer commercial building located on the east side of Houston Avenue and corner of Dart Street, approximately a half-mile northeast of Downtown Houston, Texas. Designed in the Art Moderne architectural style, the building served as the first home of Knapp Chevrolet in Houston, one of the oldest family-operated car dealership businesses still present today. The building was constructed in April 1940 by Joseph (Joe) Frank Montalbano Sr. Joe, owned and operated the Montalbano Lumber Company for over 61 years, a family-operated lumber company that was founded in 1900 and is still in business today. Knapp Chevrolet's occupancy in the building was short-lived due to rapid success, yet the front façade still reflects the corporation's industrial identity of the time, a typical characteristic of Art Moderne. The building has been in active use for most of its lifetime, operating most notably as a neighborhood repair shop, print shop and improvisation theater. In late 2022, the building was rehabilitated as an Art Gallery, and the building exterior was restored to its original fabric. The work entailed bringing back various original features that were missing or in poor condition, such as the display windows that once faced Houston Avenue and Dart Street, wood windows that once faced the rear and the side façade and curved metal awnings at the entry. In addition, the rehabilitation entailed brick cleaning to remove extensive graffiti, paint, soiling and vegetation, as well as the

removal of a non-contributing metal enclosed corridor that once connected the Knapp Chevrolet building to an adjacent two-story metal addition constructed in the 1990's.

Exterior

General

The Knapp Chevrolet Building is a single-story, brick veneer commercial building composed of tan brick veneer with long horizontal stripes of black brick veneer at the parapet level. The building has a symmetrical front façade with a streamlined parapet that curves and steps into a higher center bay. The stepped center bay has vertical stripes of black brick veneer which closely resemble Chevrolet industrial designs of the time. The building has large display windows facing Houston Avenue and Dart Street and two front entrances, each with curved and narrow metal awnings. There is one glass overhead door at the north façade on Dart Street and a door located at the rear of the building facing east. The 2,646 square-foot building measures 49 feet wide by 54 feet deep by 15.5 feet high.

Front facing Houston Avenue (West Façade)

The building's primary west façade faces Houston Avenue and predominantly consists of tan brick veneer with four large display windows symmetrically distributed throughout the façade. There are two single-door main entries, each with a wood and glass doors, wood-framed transom and sheltered by a curved and narrow stainless steel awning that extends about three feet from the façade. Three horizontal stripes composed of black brick veneer run along the upper part of the façade, above the display windows. There is a streamlined parapet at the center, capped with a stainless steel coping that curves and steps into a higher center bay, which consists of a projecting tan brick veneer with contrasting black brick veneer arranged to create various bold vertical stripes and toward the bottom step down in plane. The center bay resembles closely to the front of a 1940's Chevrolet truck model. There is a bus stop located directly at the front of the building.

Side facing Dart Street (North Façade)

The North façade faces Dart Street and consists of tan brick veneer and three horizontal stripes composed of black brick veneer running above the windows. This façade has a display window closer to the corner of Houston Avenue that has butt-glazing in the middle to meet its wider span. There is one large two-over-four wood window closer to the parking lot that drops to the sidewalk level, giving the appearance of what is believed to

have been a large overhead door to car access. There are two low-height upper wood windows painted white directly at the center of the façade. These windows sit evenly between three matching concrete vents that consist of three evenly spaced openings and are located at the lower portion of the façade.

Side (South Façade)

The South façade faces the side of the property closest to the adjacent building, also known as 1224 Houston Avenue and its parking lot. The façade consists of tan brick veneer and three horizontal stripes composed of black brick veneer running above four low-height upper wood windows painted white. These windows have an extended brick sill arranged in rowlock. There are three matching concrete vents at the lower portion of the façade that match the ones on the North façade.

Rear (East Façade)

The East façade faces the rear of the property and the parking lot. The façade consists of tan brick veneer and there are three different types of wood-framed windows, with extended brick sills arranged in rowlock. There are three low-height upper windows, one of which sits directly over the rear wood and glass door. There are two medium-sized single-hung wood windows that sit directly at the center of the façade and one larger single-hung wood window that is near the rear door. The door frame and all wood windows are painted white. There are four matching concrete vents located at the lower portion of the façade that match the ones on the North and South façades. There is electrical equipment mounted on the wall near the street side. The gutters and downspouts are white. The rear of the site consists of a permeable true grid paver system with limited parking and a curb-cut on Dart Street.

Roof

The building's roof structure dates back to 1940 and consists of a wood frame and shiplap construction. In 2022, all previous modified bitumen roofing layers were removed and a new 60 mil TPO roofing system with rigid insulation was installed over the existing wood deck and shiplap. A new stainless steel coping extends throughout the building perimeter.

Interior

The interior of the Knapp Chevrolet building consists of a large open space with two distinctive main areas, the front or lobby area with a gypsum flat ceiling and wood trim throughout and the rear area with exposed wood

ceilings and small amenities, including an open kitchenette, two restrooms, a storage, and an MEP closet. The exposed ceilings occupy nearly two thirds of the building and consist of unpainted original vertical wood joists exposing to the wood deck above. The existing concrete floors are polished and appear original. There is one predominant exposed wood beam at the center that runs from the front to the rear of the building and is supported by two T-shaped wood columns. The walls and ductwork are painted white with minimalist lighting.

Integrity

The Knapp Chevrolet building has retained a high degree of integrity from its 1940 Art Moderne appearance. The Houston Chronicle published a photograph of the front of the building on 14 April 1940 (Figure 2.) During the same year, Knapp Chevrolet photographed their first ever customer at the front of Knapp Chevrolet Building, according to Robby Knapp of Knapp Chevrolet (Figure 1). These early photographs serve as evidence of the survival of the original physical characteristics that existed at the time of construction in 1940 and are still present today. Today, the building's historic integrity has retained a high degree of original location, materials, design, workmanship and feeling as defined by the National Register of Historic Places. The building remains in its original location, in the same urban setting facing Houston Avenue within the First Ward of Houston. The feeling of the property has not changed with its one one-story scale and a streamlined parapet that curves and steps into a higher center bay closely resembling Chevrolet industrial designs of the time. The original materials have not changed and still consist of tan brick veneer with pronouncing black horizontal stripes, shiny metal curved awnings, large wood display windows, and smaller wood windows. The building's Art Moderne style, and its wood-frame structural integrity and detailing remains untouched reflecting the workmanship of the 1940's.

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- ____, "Brothers" 6 October, 1935: 59.
- ____, "Duplex by J.F. Montalbano" 8 November, 1936: 28.
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- ____, "Duplex Planned" 4 June, 1939: 24.
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- ____, "New Chevrolet Dealer, Knapp Inch., Opened Here" 14 April 1940: 14.
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- ____, "Joe Goss [Obituary]" 18 January 1958: 49.
- ____, "Joseph J. Montalbano Sr. [Obituary]" 8 April 1966: 39.
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APPROVAL CRITERIA FOR LANDMARK DESIGNATION

Sec. 33-224. Criteria for designation

(a) The HAHC, in making recommendations with respect to designation, and the city council, in making a designation, shall consider one or more of the following criteria, as appropriate for the type of designation:

S	NA	S - satisfies	D - does not satisfy	NA - not applicable
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(1) Whether the building, structure, object, site or area possesses character, interest or value as a visible reminder of the development, heritage, and cultural and ethnic diversity of the city, state, or nation;		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(2) Whether the building, structure, object, site or area is the location of a significant local, state or national event;		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(3) Whether the building, structure, object, site or area is identified with a person who, or group or event that, contributed significantly to the cultural or historical development of the city, state, or nation;		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(4) Whether the building or structure or the buildings or structures within the area exemplify a particular architectural style or building type important to the city;		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(5) Whether the building or structure or the buildings or structures within the area are the best remaining examples of an architectural style or building type in a neighborhood;		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(6) Whether the building, structure, object or site or the buildings, structures, objects or sites within the area are identified as the work of a person or group whose work has influenced the heritage of the city, state, or nation;		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(7) Whether specific evidence exists that unique archaeological resources are present;		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(8) Whether the building, structure, object or site has value as a significant element of community sentiment or public pride.		
AND				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(9) If less than 50 years old, or proposed historic district containing a majority of buildings, structures, or objects that are less than 50 years old, whether the building, structure, object, site, or area is of extraordinary importance to the city, state or nation for reasons not based on age (Sec. 33-224(b)).		

CITY OF HOUSTON

Houston Archaeological & Historical Commission

Planning and Development Department

EXHIBIT A

PHOTO

KNAPP CHEVROLET BUILDING

1230 HOUSTON AVENUE, HOUSTON, TEXAS 77007



EXHIBIT B

MAPS

KNAPP CHEVROLET BUILDING

1230 HOUSTON AVENUE, HOUSTON, TEXAS 77007

Map 1: Harris County, Texas



Map 2: Google Earth, Location of Knapp Chevrolet Building and Downtown Houston, accessed June 22, 2023



Map 3: Google Earth, accessed June 6, 2023



DR

CITY OF HOUSTON

Houston Archaeological & Historical Commission

Planning and Development Department

Map 4: Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1924-Feb. 1951 vol. 2, 1924-Dec. 1950, Sheet 215. Houston Public Library online, Texas Digital Sanborn Maps

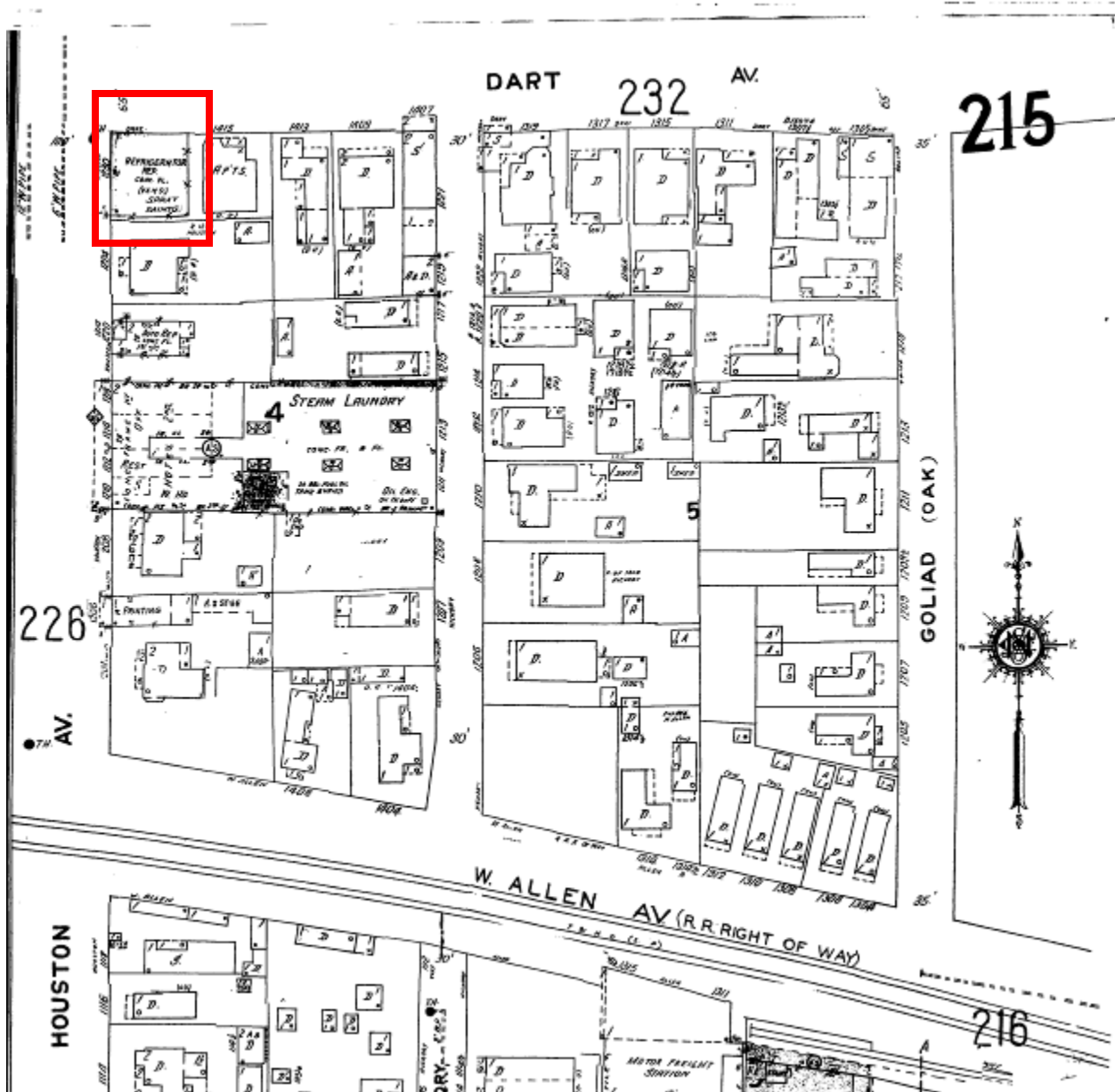


EXHIBIT C

DOCUMENT TITLE

KNAPP CHEVROLET BUILDING

1230 HOUSTON AVENUE, HOUSTON, TEXAS 77007

Figures

Figure 1: Photograph of Knapp Chevrolet Building circa early 1940's. According to Knapp Chevrolet, this is the first Knapp Chevrolet Houston customer. Courtesy of Knapp Chevrolet



Figure 2: Houston Post Historical Archives. Newspapers.com. Rice University Fondren Library. Accessed January 2022. "New Building for Houston Avenue" 14 April 1940: 47.

THE HOUSTON POST: SUNDAY, APRIL 14, 1940

Upkeep Cost of Material Is Vital

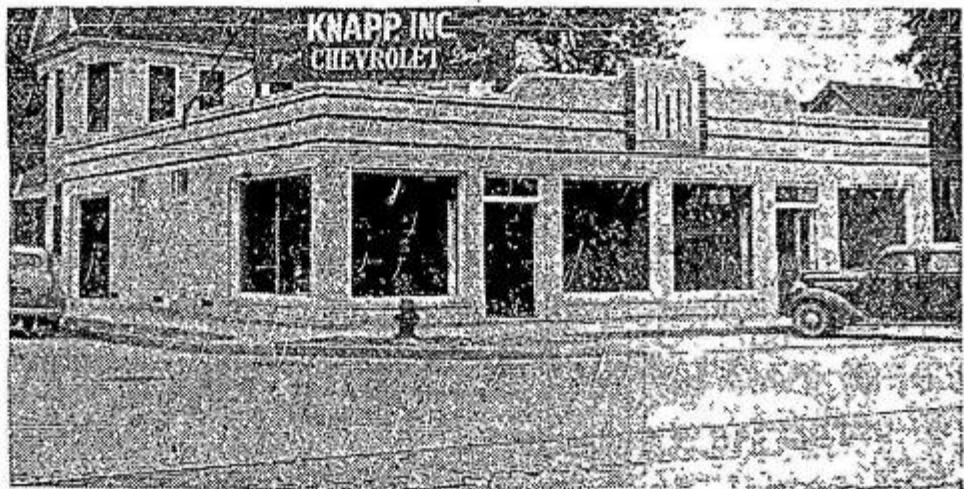
In selecting material for building a home there are two types of costs to be considered: The original cost and the relative cost of upkeep.

In the medium- and low-priced fields, particularly, great care must be used in selecting material which has both the lowest original cost and the lowest upkeep cost.

Differences in local conditions make it impossible to issue recommendations which are applicable in every section of the country.

In some parts of the country the cost of wood construction is so low that, regardless of the cost of upkeep of wooden houses, it is more sensible to use frame construction. In certain other parts of the country the architect and builder may recommend the use of some type of material for which upkeep costs are lower than those for wood construction.

NEW BUILDING FOR HOUSTON AVENUE



This new brick store building at 1223 Houston avenue will be the home of Knapp, Inc., new Houston Chevrolet agency. The store, 48 by 50 feet, was completed during the past week by J. Montalbano Sr., the owner. Material for the new store was furnished by the Montalbano Lumber company, 1309 Houston avenue. The Montalbano Lumber company carries a complete line of lumber, building materials of all kinds, including sash, doors, hardware, lime, brick and cement, and will furnish estimates on both residential and commercial structures. An advisory department for home builders includes a plan room, in which pictures, plans, drawings and specifications for homes of all types are available for the prospective home builder.

CITY OF HOUSTON

Houston Archaeological & Historical Commission

Planning and Development Department

Figure 3: Harris County Tax Appraisal and Building Assessment Records for 1228 Houston Avenue, Houston, Texas 77007. Harris County Archives. (later tax records changed the address to Knapp Chevrolet Building.)

Form 556 INVESTIGATE
 Map _____
 Vol. _____
 Page _____
 APR 30 1938
 Montalbano, Joe Owner
 Lot 50x100' Block P
 Evans Tot 7 Addition
 REMARKS: *Chub*
 County Value \$ 980
 Owners Value \$ 880
 No. _____ Street _____

Form 556 INVESTIGATE
 Map _____
 Vol. 13
 Page 159
 MAR 5 1935
 Montalbano, Joe Owner
 Lot Tct=7 50x100' Block P
 Evans Addition
 REMARKS:
 County Value \$ 980
 Owners Value \$ 880
 No. _____ Street _____

Form 556 INVESTIGATE
 Map No. Addition Evans
 Block P Lot 50x100'
 OWNER Montalbano, Joe
 ADDRESS 1228 Houston
 TYPE OF PROPERTY OCCUPIED VACANT
 FLOORING Tile, Hardwood, Concrete, Tile, Marble, Dirt
 INTERIOR TRIM Plaster, Hardwood, Marble, Metal, Built-in Features
 HEATING Furnace, Stove, Fireplace, Chimney, Oil
 LIGHTING Electricity
 PLUMBING Sewer, Water, Bath
 ELEVATORS
 CONDITION Good, Fair, Bad, Obsolete
 PERMIT DATE NO. AMT
 IMPROVEMENTS
 No. 2552 207 \$ 5100
 Front 40 2040
 Other 380
 Total 2420
 LAND VALUE
 Front Ft. 40
 Front Ft. Value Factor Value - \$
 TOTAL 850-980

Form 556 INVESTIGATE
 Map No. Addition
 Block Lot
 OWNER
 ADDRESS 1228 Houston
 TYPE OF PROPERTY OCCUPIED VACANT
 FLOORING Tile, Hardwood, Concrete, Tile, Marble, Dirt
 INTERIOR TRIM Plaster, Hardwood, Marble, Metal, Built-in Features
 HEATING Furnace, Stove, Fireplace, Chimney, Oil
 LIGHTING Electricity
 PLUMBING Sewer, Water, Bath
 ELEVATORS
 CONDITION Good, Fair, Bad, Obsolete
 PERMIT DATE NO. AMT
 IMPROVEMENTS
 No. 576 190 \$ 1090
 Front 35 380
 Other 380
 Total 380
 LAND VALUE
 Front Ft. 35
 Front Ft. Value Factor Value - \$
 TOTAL

DRAFT

Figure 4: Houston Post Historical Archives. Newspapers.com. Rice University Fondren Library.

Accessed January 2022. "Only Chevrolet has THE RIDE ROYAL" 31 March, 1940: 17

Only Chevrolet has "THE RIDE ROYAL"



—because only Chevrolet has all these modern features which make it possible!

"CHEVROLET'S First Again!"

LEADER IN SALES
8 OUT OF THE LAST 9 YEARS

The 1940 Chevrolet gives higher quality at low cost! . . . Low Prices . . . Low Operating Costs . . . Low Upkeep.

No other motor car can match its all-round dollar value



Chevrolet's PERFECTED KNEE-ACTION
(On Special De Luxe and Master De Luxe Models)

is assembled as an integral unit complete in itself, to assure perfect balance and, therefore, perfect springing, steering and braking in each individual car.



Chevrolet's STABILIZED FRONT END

with radiator, hood, headlights and fenders firmly and securely bound together in a rigid framework of structural steel, gives true front-end stability.



Chevrolet's AUTOMATIC RIDE STABILIZER

attached to the front end of the chassis frame, and linked to the lower Knee-Action member, imparts genuine steadiness on curves and sharp turns!



Chevrolet's SCIENTIFICALLY BALANCED SPRINGS

with double-acting shock absorbers, and with spring action varying automatically according to load and deflection, assure uniform riding smoothness at all times.



Chevrolet's BALANCED WEIGHT DISTRIBUTION in this LONGEST OF ALL LOWEST-PRICED CARS

gives that scientific distribution of weight over front and rear springs so essential to a smooth, level ride.



Chevrolet's RIGID ALL-STEEL BODY and BOX-GIRDER FRAME

the strongest and most rigid body and frame construction known to modern automotive engineering—adds that final degree of comfort and safety which spells today's finest ride . . . "Chevrolet's Ride Royal!"

POLLARD CHEVROLET CO.
Corolla or Bell
Preston 2326

DOWNTOWN CHEVROLET CO.
McKinney at Austin
Preston 1205

BOB ROBERTSON
382 Broadway (Harrisburg)
Wayde 7124

DOW MOTOR CO.
Milam, Walker and Louisiana
Felix 3293

SOUTH MAIN CHEVROLET, INC.
2200 South Main Street
Felix 3343

KNAPP, INC.
1220 Houston Ave.

Figure 5: Houston Post Historical Archives. Newspapers.com. Rice University Fondren Library.

Accessed January 2022. "New Chevrolet Trucks" 16 March, 1941: 13

NEW CHEVROLET TRUCKS

**1st IN DESIGN
IN POWER
IN FEATURES
IN STEERING EASE
and in SALES
among all low-priced trucks**

Truck buyers everywhere agree that Chevrolet trucks are first in value among all low-priced trucks... That's why they buy more Chevrolet trucks, year after year, than any other make.

WORLD'S LEADING TRUCK BUILDER

DOW MOTOR CO.
Milam, Walker and Louisiana. Fairfax 3393

KNAPP, INC.
1250 Houston Avenue Capitol 9891

DOWNTOWN CHEVROLET CO.
McKinney at Austin Preston 1205


SOUTH MAIN CHEVROLET, INC.
2300 South Main Street Fairfax 3361

POLLARD CHEVROLET CO.
Caroline at Bell Preston 3326

BOB ROBERTSON
302 Broadway (Harrisburg) Wayside 7134


Figure 6: Houston Post Historical Archives. Newspapers.com. Rice University Fondren Library.

Accessed January 2022. "Now Serving Houston! Knapp, Inc" 21 April 1940: 2.



Now Serving Houston!

KNAPP, Inc.



1230 Houston Ave.

TEMPORARY LOCATION

Houston's Newest Chevrolet Dealer

To properly sell and service Chevrolets in Houston we have tried to build the kind of an organization you like to do business with. Every department head has had years of experience in the business. They want to give you the best in courtesy, attention and service. Our service men are factory trained.

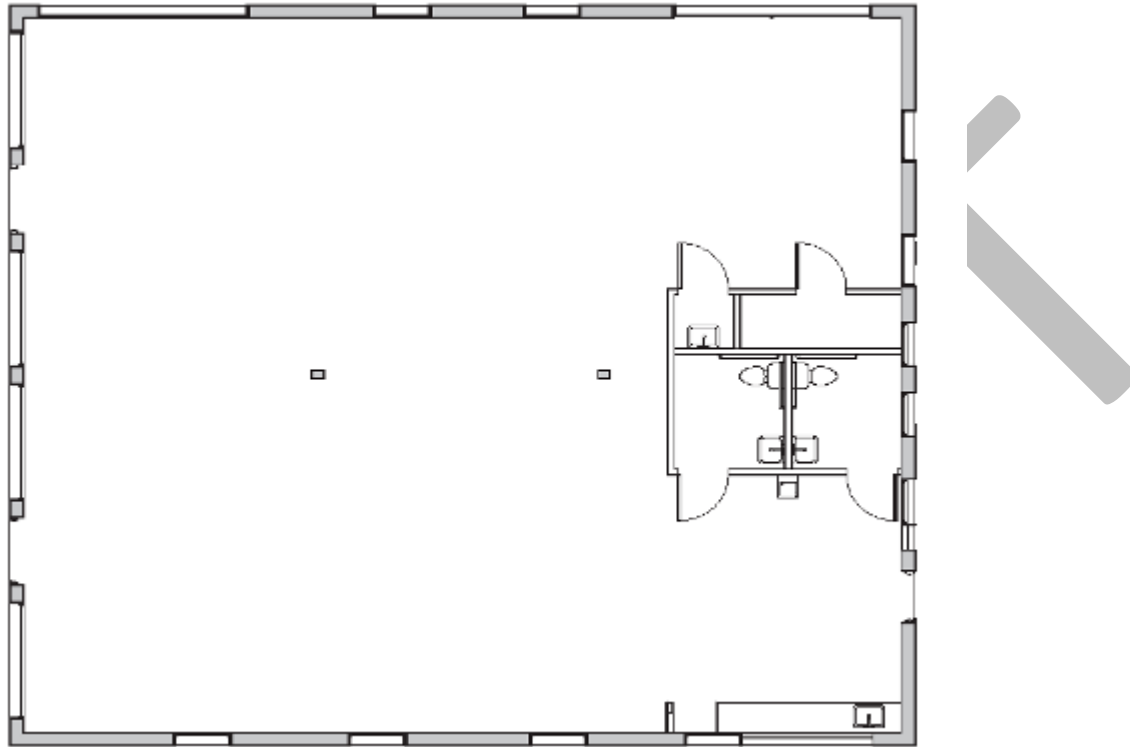
We are in need of used cars, and because of this fact, we are in position to make you a surprising offer for your present car in trade on the new 1940 Chevrolet. We can make deliveries right from the sales floor . . . no waiting . . . no delay.

These Salesmen are Ready to Serve You

H. V. GUDGER · JIMMIE ROGERS · IKE BEGGS
CHARLIE PHILLIPS · A. P. SULLIVAN
VIRGIL L. MEALER · ELMER MEYER

CHEVROLET'S, First Again IN 1940!

Figure 7: Existing floor plan. 2022 by Urbano Architects



DR

Figure 8: Existing Site Plan 2022 by Urbano Architects.



Figure 9: Small-Scale Moderne Building Survey in Houston, Texas. March 2022 by Urbano Architects.

SMALL-SCALE MODERNE BUILDING SURVEY IN HOUSTON, TEXAS



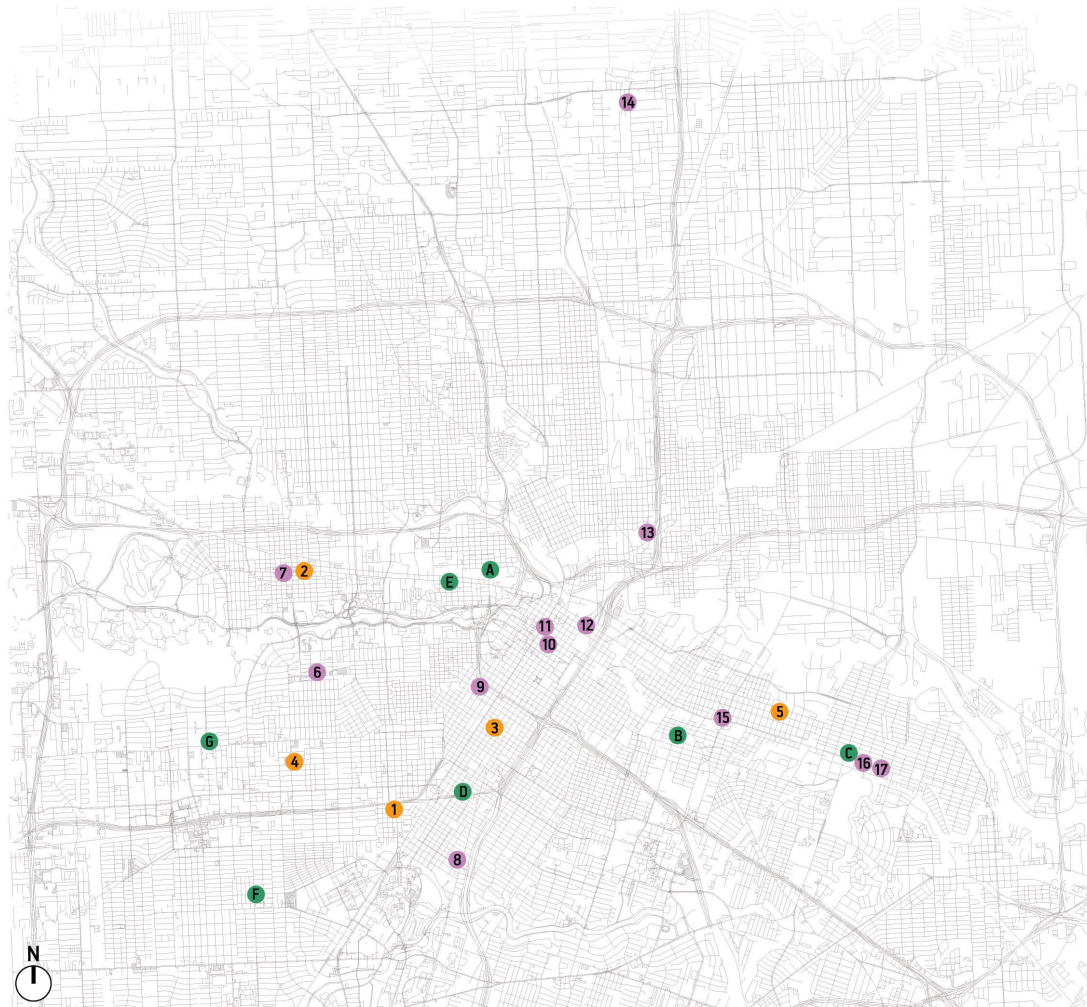
The following diagram depicts a survey of buildings in Houston, Texas per the Criteria noted below. Refer to the Legend for Building Status (Present, Altered or Demolished.)

CRITERIA

Style: Art Moderne
 Typology: Commercial
 Construction: 1930-1949
 Scale: < 7,000 SF (Approx)

LEGEND

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| ● Present Today (2022) | ● Altered (With Moderate to Significant Alterations) | ● Demolished |
| A 1230 Houston Avenue | G 2501 River Oaks Boulevard | 6 1927 W. Gray Street |
| B 4120 McKinney Street | 1 4704 Montrose Boulevard | 7 4901 Washington Avenue |
| C 210 Wayside Avenue | 2 4520 Washington Avenue | 8 5210-5216 Almeda Road |
| D 4201 Austin Street | 3 2715 Fannin Street | 9 2120 Milam Street |
| E 2101 Washington Avenue | 4 2815 S. Shepherd Drive | 10 1114 Capitol Avenue |
| F 6117 Kirby Drive | 5 5602 Canal Street | 11 517 Main Street |
| | | 12 1619 Franklin Street |
| | | 13 2917 Lyons Avenue |
| | | 14 9111 Jensen Drive |
| | | 15 4819 Harrisburg Boulevard |
| | | 16 6929 Harrisburg Boulevard |
| | | 17 7205 Harrisburg Boulevard |



Most buildings in this document were previously identified on the following earlier surveys: The Moderne Style of Architecture: A Houston Guide by Yolita Schmidt (1978) and Houston Deco: Modernistic Architecture of the Texas Coast by David Bush and Jim Parsons (2008)

www.urbanoarchitects.com | 119 E 20th st. Suite #200, Houston, TX 77008 | Tel: 832 444 0012

Figure 10: Survey of Pre-1896 – 1951 Buildings Present Today Facing Houston Avenue. March 2022 by Urbano

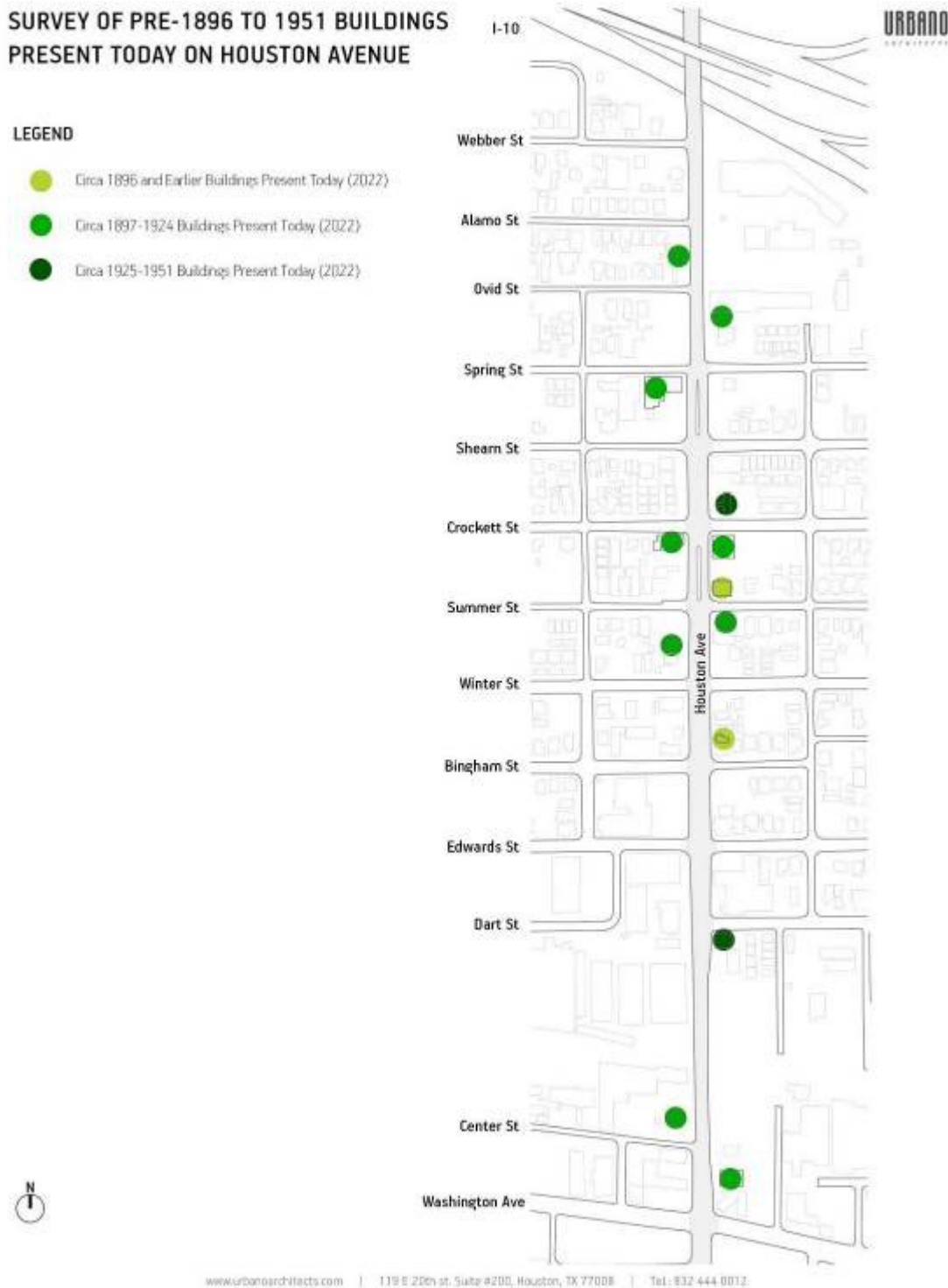


Figure 11: 1990 Plot Plan Showing Addition to Knapp Chevrolet Building by Previous Owner, Fred Barry

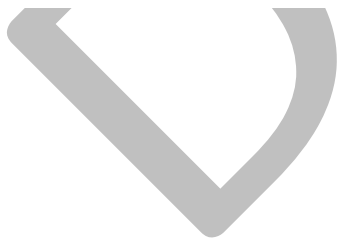
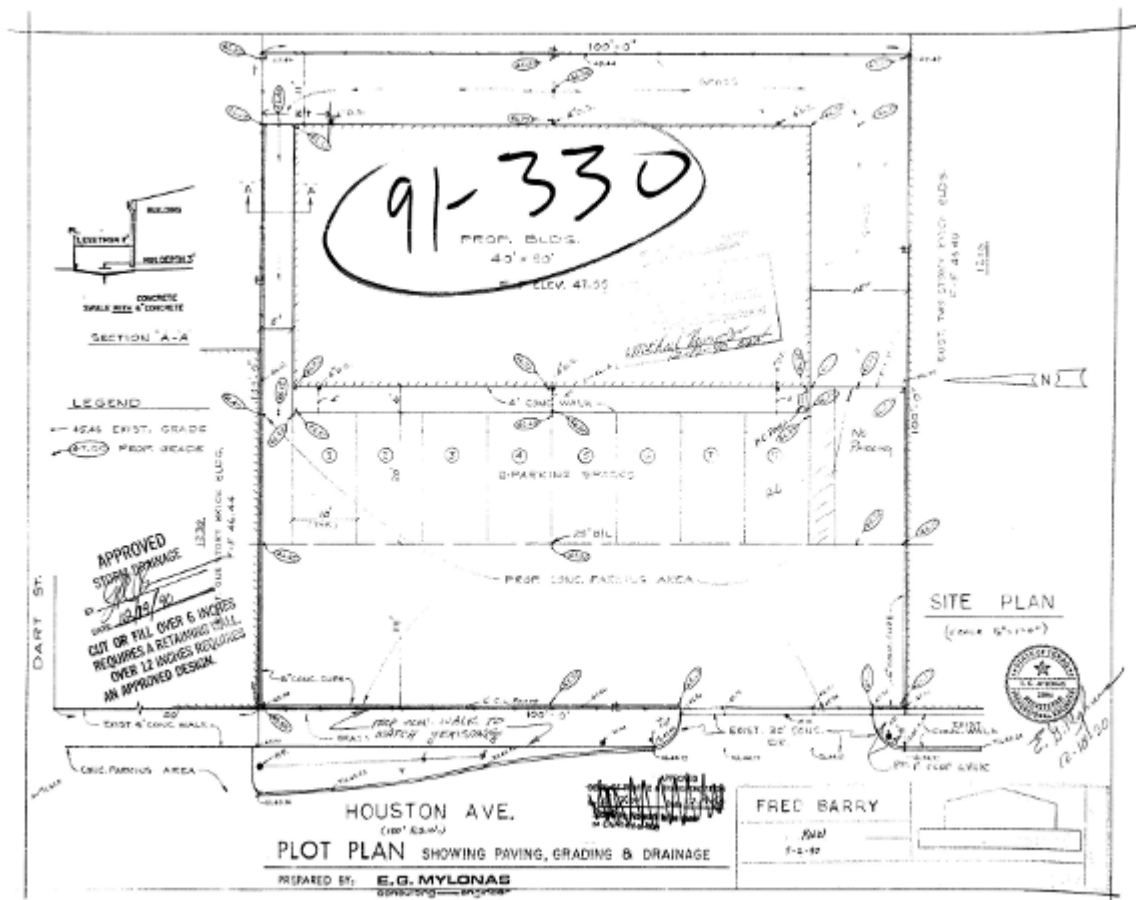


Figure 12: Photograph of Knapp Chevrolet Building Circa 2021 with Previously Connected 1990's Addition (1224 Houston Avenue) Prior to Rehabilitation.



Photographs

Photo 1: West (Front) Facade from Houston Avenue. 8 June 2023.



Photo 2: Stepped center bay at West Façade (Front). 17 February, 2023



Photo 3: Curved Metal Canopies and Entries at West Façade (Front). 17 February, 2023



CITY OF HOUSTON

Houston Archaeological & Historical Commission

Planning and Development Department

Photo 4: North (Side) Façade facing Dart Street. 8 June 2023



Photo 5: East (Rear) Façade with adjacent building 1224 Houston Avenue. 11 June 2023



Photo 6: East (Rear) Façade. 11 June 2023



CITY OF HOUSTON

Houston Archaeological & Historical Commission

Planning and Development Department

Photo 7: South Façade of Knapp Chevrolet Building and adjacent building, 1224 Houston Avenue. 8 June 2023.



Photo 8: South Façade View Looking East at location of previous connection to adjacent metal building. 8 June 2023.



Photo 9: Interior View at Lobby Looking South. 8 June 2023.



Photo 10: Interior View Looking Toward the Northern area of the East (Rear). 8 June 2023.



Photo 11: Interior View at Lobby Looking Northeast. 8 June 2023.



Photo 12: Interior View at Lobby Looking Toward the Southern area of the East (Rear). 8 June 2023.



Photo 13: Interior View at Rear Looking South East. 8 June 2023.

