

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Lyons Avenue Historic District

Other names/site number: NA

Name of related multiple property listing: NA

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)**2. Location**

Street & number: Roughly bounded by Lyons Avenue between Benson and Yates streets

City or town: Houston State: Texas County: Harris

Not For Publication:

NA

Vicinity:

NA

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

 X A B C D

Signature of certifying official/Title:

Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

State or Federal agency/bureau
or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ___ entered in the National Register
___ determined eligible for the National Register
___ determined not eligible for the National Register
___ removed from the National Register
___ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:

☒

Public – Local

☒

Public – State

☐

Public – Federal

☐

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)

☐

District

☒

☐

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Site

Structure

☐

Object

☐

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>21</u>	<u>9</u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>11</u>	sites
<u>4</u>	<u>6</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>26</u>	<u>26</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 1 (2 are listed but 1 is no longer extant)

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

DOMESTIC/Hotel, Secondary structure, Single dwelling

COMMERCE/ Business, Restaurant, Specialty store

RECREATION AND CULTURE/ Theater

RELIGION/ Religious facility

HEALTH CARE/ Clinic, hospital, medial business/office

Current Functions

DOMESTIC/ Multiple Dwelling, Hotel, Single dwelling

COMMERCE/ Business, Specialty store

RELIGION/ Religious facility

SOCIAL/ Civic

VACANT/NOT IN USE

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7. Description

Architectural Classification:

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE NINETEENTH AND EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS:

Bungalow/Craftsman, Victorian Gothic

MODERN MOVEMENT: Contemporary, Minimal Traditional, Moderne, Post-war Modern

OTHER: Commercial

NO STYLE

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

FOUNDATION: concrete, wood

WALLS: wood, concrete block, brick, stone, stucco, synthetics

ROOF: asphalt, metal

Narrative Description

Summary Paragraph

The Lyons Avenue Historic District is a surviving segment of one of Houston's historic main streets in the city's historically Black Fifth Ward, encompassing a one-third-mile stretch of Lyons Avenue extending from the intersection of Lyons Avenue and Yates Street west to Benson Street, and including one parcel on the south side of Lyons Avenue west of Benson Street. The district occupies a flat setting on an orthogonal street grid with varied lot and block sizes. Its present mix of historic commercial, residential, religious, and professional buildings is interspersed with vacant lots and modern infill reflecting the cumulative impacts of mid-twentieth-century highway construction, Urban Renewal, and subsequent disinvestment to the area. Anchored on the east by St. Elizabeth's Hospital (listed in the National Register of Historic Places [NRHP] 2019) and on the west by the Lyons Theater and Louis White's Grocery, the district represents one of the few remaining concentrations of buildings from the Fifth Ward's once-vibrant African American commercial corridor. Of the 52 resources within the boundary (not including NRHP-listed St. Elizabeth's Hospital), 26 retain sufficient integrity to convey the district's historic character. Compared with Houston's other historically segregated African American commercial corridors—such as Dowling Street (now Emancipation Avenue) in the Third Ward and San Felipe Street (now West Dallas Street) in the Fourth Ward—the Lyons Avenue Historic District contains a moderately intact group of buildings associated with one of the city's major twentieth century African American business districts. Despite losses in historic fabric, the district continues to reflect the institutions,

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businesses, and residences that once defined this community center.

Previously listed in the National Register = 1

One previously listed NRHP property is within the district—St. Elizabeth’s Hospital at 4514 Lyons Avenue. The NRHP nomination (#100003489) for this property lists two contributing resources, the original 1947 hospital building and a ca. 1960 pump house. The pump house, no longer extant at the time of this nomination, is not included in the resource count for this district.¹

Setting, Layout, and Circulation Pattern

Fifth Ward and Lyons Avenue

The Lyons Avenue Historic District is in Houston, Harris County, Texas, north of Buffalo Bayou in the Fifth Ward (**Maps 1 and 2**), an urban community encompassing approximately 3,200 acres and roughly bounded by Buffalo Bayou on the south, the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) line east of Lockwood Drive on the east, Collingsworth Street on the north, and the Houston Belt and Terminal Railroad (HBT) line and Elysian Street Viaduct on the west (**Map 1**). The ward is largely residential, mostly composed of single-family residences with a mix of other property types, including multi-family residences, churches, schools, community buildings, and small commercial buildings, many of which were constructed during the early to mid-twentieth century. Larger, industrial businesses are along the railroad and bayou. Vacant lots, vacant and deteriorated buildings, and nonhistoric infill development are interspersed throughout. Vegetation in the ward includes grass, shrubs and trees in residential yards; parks; and street trees along main roads.

The Fifth Ward has an irregular, orthogonal gridded street pattern with rectangular blocks, intersected by several linear transportation corridors. The ward’s main east–west surface roadways are Collingsworth Street, Liberty Road, and Lyons Avenue, and the main north–south surface roadways are Jensen Drive, Waco Street, and Lockwood Drive. Lyons Avenue is an urban street northwest of downtown Houston that extends 4.4 miles (7.1 kilometers) mostly east–west from Aleen Street to McKee Street through the Fifth Ward and Denver Harbor neighborhoods. UPRR and HBT lines extend from northeast to southwest and north to south through the ward. Interstate Highway 10 and US Highway 59/Interstate Highway 69 also intersect the Fifth Ward (**Map 1**).

The construction of US Highway 59/Interstate Highway 69 and Interstate Highway 10 from the mid-1950s to late-1970s divided Fifth Ward communities and resulted in the loss or displacement of housing and important community buildings.² This continued in subsequent decades with the

¹ Hannah Curry-Shearouse and Anna Mod, "St. Elizabeth Hospital, Houston, Harris County," Texas Historical Commission (2018), National Register of Historic Places Designation Form.

² Nationwide Environmental Title Research, Excerpt of Harris County, Texas, 1956, Aerial Image; Nationwide Environmental Title Research, Excerpt of Harris County, Texas, 1962, Aerial Image; Nationwide Environmental Title Research, Excerpt of Harris County, Texas, 1966, Aerial Image; Nationwide

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expansion of these highways.³ The resulting setting along Lyons Avenue within the Fifth Ward can be described as follows:

- From the Elysian Viaduct to Interstate Highway 69, a few extant early to mid-twentieth-century industrial buildings and nonhistoric vacant lots, parking lots, and transportation infrastructure flank Lyons Avenue. The busy commercial center with shops, theaters, clubs, hotels, and restaurants, present from the 1920s through the 1950s, was largely abandoned by the late 1960s, with its entertainment venues the last to close.⁴ Demolitions in the mid-1970s through the 1990s resulted in the loss of almost all of the early to mid-twentieth century built environment along this segment of Lyons Avenue. Once a thriving intersection, Lyons Avenue at Jensen Drive is now flanked by two surface parking lots, a stormwater retention pond, and a vacant lot. Its major landmarks are gone, including the Club Matinee (a major music venue) and the associated Crystal Hotel.
- From Interstate Highway 69 east to the UPRR line east of Lockwood Drive, Lyons is flanked by a mix of early to mid-twentieth-century buildings, late twentieth to early twenty-first-century infill, and vacant lots. Extant older buildings include single-family residences, churches, mortuaries, a hospital, a pharmacy, grocery stores, movie theaters, a hotel, and other businesses that historically served the community. Some of the late twentieth and early twenty-first-century infill is larger in scale than the buildings that were present historically.

Lyons Avenue Historic District

Within the historic district, Lyons Avenue is an east–west urban street. It is intersected by seven north–south city streets on an orthogonal street grid: Yates, Dan, Tralle, Waco, Copeland, Featherstone, and Benson streets (**Map 2**). Four-way stoplights are at the Lyons Avenue intersections with Waco and Benson streets. An at-grade rail line with crossing gates intersects Lyons Avenue between Benson and St. Elmo streets. The right-of-way also serves as a utility corridor, with buried utilities beneath the road and sidewalk and an overhead electrical distribution line supported by a series of wooden and steel utility poles along the roadway. Lyons Avenue is paved in concrete, with a concrete curb and an intermittent sidewalk on its north and south sides. The sidewalk width varies but generally has a grass verge between the sidewalk and curb. Vegetation along the roadway corridor consists of grass lawns and ornamental plants and trees on maintained commercial, church and residential properties and on some vacant lots; weeds and brush on vacant and abandoned properties; and street trees irregularly spaced along Lyons Avenue. Much of the streetscape infrastructure dates from the period of significance, ca. 1925 to ca. 1975. The City of Houston also made improvements to roads within the historic district between 1966 and 1973, as the adjacent highway system developed. During this time period, the

Environmental Title Research, Excerpt of Harris County, Texas, 1973, Aerial Image.

³ Patricia Pando, "In the Nickel: Houston's Fifth Ward," *Houston History Magazine* 2011; Edward M. Emmett, *Houston's Freeways: Who Was Displaced and Why?*, Baker Institute, 2024.

⁴ Pando, "In the Nickel".

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City upgraded Waco Street to an arterial street and widened it with a median and additional traffic lanes.⁵ Lyons Avenue retains its historical width, even though road improvements during the mid to late twentieth century included repaving, replacing, or adding sidewalks, curbs, or ramps.⁶

Most buildings along Lyons Avenue are set back from the sidewalk, with either a lawn or parking lot between the sidewalk and building; a few abut the sidewalk. Parcels on the north side of Lyons Avenue are rectangular, and most are approximately 500 square feet; three parcels at the west end of the district have been subdivided for new development, and two have newly constructed residences. Parcels on the south side of the street are less consistent in size and shape with larger, post-World War II buildings. Residential, commercial, and health care buildings are one to two stories tall, with two taller buildings—the First Shiloh Baptist Church and St. Elizabeth’s Hospital—at the west end of the district. There are 23 vacant parcels in the district, representing historical resources that are no longer extant.

Property Types, Forms, and Construction Dates

Early to mid-twentieth century commercial, health care, residential, and religious buildings, interspersed with late twentieth to early twenty-first century office buildings, residences, parking lots, and vacant lots make up the district. The historic district has 22 buildings (including the NRHP-listed St. Elizabeth’s Hospital) constructed during the period of significance, between ca. 1925 and ca. 1970. Their historic functions include residential, commercial, recreational, health care-related, and religious. (see **Table 1**). Common forms, architectural styles and construction dates, grouped by historic function, are as follows:

- Nine buildings were historically single-family residences. They are wood-frame, one- or two-story buildings with rectangular or bungalow forms. Most were modest examples of the Craftsman or Minimal Traditional styles when constructed between ca. 1925 and 1940. Later modifications on some of the residences result in the loss of features associated with those styles. One building was converted to commercial use during the period of significance (4209 Lyons Avenue).
- There is one hotel consisting of two buildings, constructed in 1962 and 1970 (4204 Lyons Avenue). Both are two-story frame and masonry buildings with simple forms and no longer reflect an architectural style due to later modifications.
- Two secondary domestic buildings, a small ca. 1930 outbuilding (4517 Lyons Avenue) and a ca. 1963 detached two-story garage apartment (4408 Lyons Avenue), are both wood framed with rectangular forms and no architectural style.
- Seven commercial buildings, constructed between 1938 and ca. 1970, are one- to two-story wood-frame, concrete block, or masonry buildings. Forms include one-part

⁵ Nationwide Environmental Title Research, Harris County, Texas, 1966; Nationwide Environmental Title Research, Harris County, Texas, 1973.

⁶ Nationwide Environmental Title Research, Excerpt of Harris County, Texas, 1947, Aerial Image.

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commercial block and simple rectangular footprints. Most of the commercial buildings do not retain design characteristics of an architectural style other than Commercial, with a one-part commercial block form, with the exception of one Post-war Modern grocery store, constructed in 1955 (4410 Lyons Avenue).

- One property with a historic recreational function, a theater, is a two-story masonry building with one-part commercial block form, constructed ca. 1940. It is now a church (4030 Lyons Avenue).
- Four health care buildings include St. Elizabeth's Hospital and three clinics or doctor's offices. The hospital, constructed in 1947, is a masonry building with a U-plan, designed in the Moderne style (4514 Lyons Avenue). A contemporary clinic, constructed ca. 1946, is also a Moderne-style building with a rectangular form and rounded corners (4519 Lyons Avenue). The other two buildings date to the mid-1960s, both two-story with rectangular forms (4120 and 4223 Lyons Avenue). One is designed in the Contemporary style (4120 Lyons Avenue).
- Two churches, both constructed in the 1950s, are two to three-story masonry buildings designed in a Post-war Modern style (4315 and 4420 Lyons Avenue).

There are five buildings that postdate the period of significance. Four are residences: two small-scale bungalow-form single family residences constructed in 1991 (4507 and 4515 Lyons Avenue) and two shotgun-form elevated single family residences constructed in 2018 (4105 and 4107 Lyons Avenue). All are wood frame buildings and compatible in form and scale to the older residential buildings. The fifth building is the Fifth Ward Community Redevelopment Council (FWCRC) building, constructed in 1998 (4300 Lyons Avenue). The brick-clad building has a rectangular form and has features of the Colonial Revival style. It is similar in scale to the nonresidential buildings from the district's period of significance.

In addition to the buildings, there are 10 parking lots (four constructed during the period of significance) 11 vacant lots (one that dates to the period of significance), and one community garden within the district. Most of the vacant lots are the result of buildings demolished in the early twenty-first century and the community garden is a twenty-first century improvement to another vacant lot. Some of the parking lots are nonhistoric and are in the place of buildings that dated to the period of significance but are no longer extant. Both are interspersed through the district. There are a few small structures and objects (not included in the resource count) in the district including small sheds, commercial free-standing signs, and two Official Texas Historical Markers (OTHM).

Evolution of the Historic District During the Historic Period

The oldest extant buildings in the historic district are single-family residences constructed between approximately 1925 and 1940. In 1930, the district comprised mostly single-family residences on the north side of Lyons Avenue between Benson and Yates streets (**Figure 1**). Nearly all these buildings were wood-frame, one-story houses with front porches oriented toward the street. The

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south side of Lyons Avenue had a smaller number of scattered single-family residences and vacant parcels, along with a lumber yard (later demolished) next to the tracks of the UPRR. Both the north and south sides of Lyons Avenue had sidewalks with paved walkways leading from the street to the primary entrance of each dwelling.⁷ There are nine extant buildings that were historically single-family residences constructed during this period within the district. All are one- or two-story and wood-frame construction; a few have associated secondary domestic resources such as garages, some with second-story residential units. A few were later modified for commercial or other nonresidential use (**Figure 2**). The Craftsman bungalows at 4211 Lyons Avenue, 4408 Lyons Avenue, and 4517 Lyons Avenue are representative single-family residences from this time period. Constructed between ca. 1925 and 1930, their typical features include gable-front roofs and integrated porches. Most of these properties have undergone typical residential modifications such as porch alterations and replacement cladding, windows and doors.

Between 1938 and 1950, commercial buildings, a recreation and cultural-related building, commercial, and health care facilities replaced existing residences and formerly vacant lots, particularly on the south side of Lyons Avenue. As a result, the district was densely developed by 1950, with only a few lots undeveloped (**Figure 3**). Representative extant properties built during this period include two freestanding commercial buildings constructed in 1938 and 1940 (4409 and 4414 Lyons Avenue), a ca. 1940 movie theater (4030 Lyons Avenue), a 1946 surgical clinic (4519 Lyons Avenue), and the 1947 St. Elizabeth Hospital (4514 Lyons Avenue).

Development within the district continued into the 1950s with the construction of more commercial buildings and two churches. The construction of the Eastex Highway/U.S. Highway 59 during this time period displaced other residences and businesses. The Prince Hall Masons built the True Level Lodge #226 at 4212 Lyons Avenue (now demolished) when the organization's 1921 building was to be displaced by construction of Interstate Highway 69. Extant representative property types from this period of development within the Lyons Avenue Historic District include two churches and two grocery stores. The churches were the 1952 Miles Chapel CME Church (4315 Lyons Avenue) and the 1954 Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church (4420 Lyons Avenue), which filled the last undeveloped lot along Lyons Avenue. The grocery stores, constructed in 1955 and 1956 (4101 and 4410 Lyons Avenue), replaced former buildings on their lots.

During the 1950s, Lyons Avenue and Jensen Drive anchored much of the Fifth Ward businesses and community life, a role that shifted eastward along Lyons Avenue, after the mid-1950s construction of the Eastex Freeway/U.S. Highway 59.⁸ This may have spurred some of the later development that took place within the district from 1960 to the early 1970s. Representative property types from this period include a ca. 1965 doctor's office (4120 Lyons Avenue) and a motel with two buildings

⁷ Nationwide Environmental Title Research, Excerpt of Harris County, Texas, 1930, Aerial Image; Sanborn Map Company, *Houston, Harris County, Texas*, ProQuest Digital Sanborn Maps, 1867–1970, 1924–1951, Fire Insurance Map.

⁸ Pando, "In the Nickel".

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constructed in 1962 and 1970 (4204 Lyons Avenue). These buildings replaced existing buildings on their parcels.

The mid-1970s to 1990s were a period of socioeconomic and physical decline for the Fifth Ward; the increased mobility of the African American population after desegregation had an unanticipated negative effect on Black-owned businesses and communities in Houston. Migration out of the Fifth Ward by middle class residents, continued expansion of the interstate system, and urban renewal initiated a trend of displacement and vacancy of residences and businesses, leading to deterioration of the buildings and attraction of criminal activity.⁹ The City began to target buildings deemed unsafe for demolition. Unlike in previous decades, new construction did not replace buildings lost to demolition. Extant commercial buildings that are vacant and deteriorated and the 11 vacant lots within the Lyons Avenue Historic District attest to this legacy. Demolitions from 1981 to 2002 account for many of the existing vacant lots within the historic district; most of the parcels have not been redeveloped (**Figure 4**).¹⁰ Though not from the period of significance, these vacant and deteriorated commercial buildings and vacant lots have become characteristic of this historic district, as they are of the Fifth Ward in general. Despite this loss, however, some residents and businesses—and, in particular, church congregations and organizations—continued to invest in their buildings and the community. This continued investment is evident in the large ca. 1980 addition to the Miles Chapel, (4315 Lyons Avenue) as well as in the replacement of exterior building materials on the historic single-family residences and the Sunrise Motel (4204 Lyons Avenue).

The last decade of the twentieth century and the first quarter of the twenty-first have been characterized by some renewed investment in the Fifth Ward. Within the Lyons Avenue Historic District, these efforts are seen in new construction and the National Register designation and subsequent rehabilitation of St. Elizabeth's Hospital for residential use. The City of Houston's Housing and Community Development Department rehabilitated the former St. Elizabeth's Hospital at 4514 Lyons Avenue, restoring the building and reopening it in 2025 as St. Elizabeth's Place Apartments, an 85-unit affordable residential development.¹¹ The FWCRC, founded in 1989, acquired land for redevelopment beginning in the 1990s. In 1991, they constructed affordable single-family homes along Lyons Avenue; two are in the boundary of the historic district.¹² In 1998,

⁹ Pando, "In the Nickel"; Emily Grotta, "Council Panel Tours Decaying Buildings for Firsthand Look," *The Houston Post*, July 12, 1985, 18.

¹⁰ Nationwide Environmental Title Research, Excerpt of Harris County, Texas, 1981, Aerial Image; Nationwide Environmental Title Research, Excerpt of Harris County, Texas, 1982, Aerial Image; Nationwide Environmental Title Research, Excerpt of Harris County, Texas, 1995, Aerial Image; Nationwide Environmental Title Research, Excerpt of Harris County, Texas, 2002, Aerial Image; Nationwide Environmental Title Research, Excerpt of Harris County, Texas, 2020, Aerial Image.

¹¹ Housing and Community Development Department City of Houston, St. Elizabeth Place Restored and Reimagined: Expanding Housing in the Heart of Fifth Ward, houstontx.gov, 2025.

¹² Ben DeSoto, Fifth Ward, 1982–2000, MSS 0118, ADD BOX 2, Ben DeSoto Photograph Collection, Box 2, Houston Public Library, African American Research Center at the Gregory School, 1989; Pando, "In the

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the FWCRC constructed and moved to the building at 4300 Lyons Avenue; this building also officed U.S Representative Sheila Jackson Lee, who served the 18th Congressional District of Texas from 1995 to 2024. Preservation efforts in the historic district also included the successful applications for two OTHMs and a City of Houston Protected Landmark. In 2010, an OTHM for Peacock Records (Texas Historical Commission Atlas Number 5507016494) was installed in front of the Louis Robey Professional Building at 4120 Lyons Avenue followed by an OTHM in 2014 for the First Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church at 4420 Lyons Avenue (Texas Historical Commission Atlas Number 5507017909). The Louis White Grocery Store at 4101 Lyons Avenue was designated a City of Houston Protected Landmark in 2022.

Inspired by the advocacy of community members, the Cane River Community Garden, on a repurposed vacant lot in the historic district at 4205 Lyons Avenue, features a small-scale, ephemeral art installation created by the Houston Climate Justice Museum and Cultural Center that illustrates a timeline of industrial contamination in the Fifth Ward.¹³ Prompted by the emergence of cancer clusters and years of protest by Fifth Ward residents, the Environmental Protection Agency conducted an investigation from 2023 through 2025 into the historical industrial contamination of soil and groundwater in the Fifth Ward from operations at the UPRR.¹⁴ Despite the continued advocacy by Fifth Ward residents and supporters, however, loss of the early to mid-twentieth-century buildings is ongoing as hazardous buildings that are deteriorated or damaged by vandalism and vacant buildings that may attract criminal activity are removed. The 2025 demolition of the 1952 True Level Lodge #226 buildings and the dwelling at 4225 Lyons Avenue are examples of ongoing demolition.

Survey Methodology

The intent of this nomination was to select a portion of Lyons Avenue that retains a concentration of resources with sufficient physical and historical integrity to convey their significance as a district and to develop a statement of significance that justifies its importance within the context of Fifth Ward community's history and development. To identify the district, professional historians and architectural historians conducted a desktop review of Lyons Avenue between Interstate Highway 69 and Lockwood Drive to identify extant historic-age (50 years old or older) resources with sufficient physical and historical integrity to convey their significance as contributing resources to a historic main street associated with the Fifth Ward. Field investigations were conducted in August 2025 to document and assess resources in and adjacent to the proposed district boundary (**Map 1**).

Nickel".

¹³ The Houston Climate Justice Museum and Cultural Center, The Earth Clinic x HCJM at Cane River Gardens, The Houston Climate Justice Museum and Cultural Center, 2026.

¹⁴ Kyle McClenagan, Union Pacific, EPA to Assess Long-term Health Threats after Completing Soil Testing in Houston's Fifth Ward, Houston Public Media, 2025.; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Fifth Ward/Kashmere Gardens UPRR Site Background, 2026.

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As a result, the Lyons Avenue Historic District boundary contains extant buildings that retain sufficient integrity to convey their historical significance, bounded by parcels fronting Lyons Avenue beginning east of the intersection with Benson Street, extending east along Lyons Avenue to end at its intersection with Yates Street. The boundary extends to the southwest corner of Benson Street and Lyons Avenue to include one historic-age resource, 4030 Lyons Avenue. The boundary excludes two historic-age domestic resources that share a parcel with a historic-age commercial resource at 4414 Lyons Avenue and one historic-age domestic resource that shares a parcel with a historic-age commercial resource at 1904 Benson Street, since their setback from Lyons Avenue did not align with the intent to focus on resources fronting the street. Outside of the district boundary west of Benson and east of Yates streets, the number of resources built during the period of significance declines, and vacant lots and buildings constructed or significantly modified after 1970 increase; those blocks can no longer convey significance as segments of a historical Black main street in the Fifth Ward.

Integrity

The Lyons Avenue Historic District retains integrity to convey its significance as a Black main street in Houston's Fifth Ward:

Location and Setting

The contributing resources remain in their original locations. Although the setting has changed with the demolition of residences and other buildings, the character-defining features of setting are retained, including: an urban-type street in the city grid system with paved streets and sidewalks, small lot sizes on the north side of the street for single-family residences, and larger lot sizes on the south side of the street for nonresidential development. It also retains the historical pattern of building setbacks, with buildings dating to early in the twentieth century designed for pedestrian access and in the mid-twentieth century for vehicular access, and a mix of residential, religious, and commercial buildings. Few buildings within the district date from outside the period of significance; those that do are compatible with the scale and setback of the existing built environment.

Design, Materials, and Workmanship

The contributing resources in the Lyons Avenue Historic District retain integrity and are able to convey their significance, despite alterations to individual buildings. Their original functions remain evident, and most buildings continue to exhibit historic footprints, forms, fenestration patterns, porch configurations, and roof types. While some materials have been replaced and various modifications have occurred, these changes are typical of the ongoing use of historic buildings. Common residential alterations within the district include replacement of windows, doors, and wall cladding, as well as rear additions, and do not prevent resources from conveying their architectural style and form. Commercial properties show typical updates associated with continued business use, such as roof modifications; changes to signage; and replacement of windows, doors, or exterior cladding. Even with these alterations, they remain readily identifiable

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as commercial buildings, including those that are currently vacant. The cumulative effect of their modifications do not prevent an understanding of their essential characteristics - including form, style, and construction method - and a person alive during the period of significance would recognize the buildings.

Feeling and Association

The district retains the feeling of a commercial, residential, and health care center that grew along a main street within Houston's Fifth Ward community. Physical alterations to most individual buildings would not prevent recognition of the district's aesthetic and its integrity of feeling. The district maintains integrity of association supported by archival evidence that ties its history to the Fifth Ward community and to Lyons Avenue, historically the core of the Fifth Ward's Black community. Some of the newer buildings and sites, the 1998 FWCRC building at 4300 Lyons Avenue that previously housed offices for U.S. Representative Shelia Jackson Lee and the Cane River Community Garden at 4205 Lyons Avenue also connect to this association.

Black historic sites throughout the United States commonly exhibit moderate to severe loss of historic integrity as Black communities were often marginalized and disenfranchised from participation in civic discourse related to decision-making related to issues of public concern. As a result, loss of integrity as defined by National Register standards can in itself be a defining characteristic of historic properties associated with Black communities.¹⁵ The 12 vacant lots in this district, some of which were historically subdivided and developed with more than one residence or commercial building, are a notable characteristic of this district and are included as contributing or noncontributing resources due to their frequency and scale.

Contributing and Noncontributing Resources

Contributing buildings, structures, and sites date to the period of significance, ca. 1925 to ca. 1970, and retain integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association. There are 21 contributing buildings (**Map 3** and **Table 1**; map identification numbers [Map ID] 1A, 2, 7A, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15A, 17A, 17B, 18, 23A, 24, 26A, 28A, 29A, 30, 32A, 36A, 27, and 38A). Despite alterations, they have sufficient material and historical traits common to the neighborhood and therefore retain integrity of their setting or physical environment. They also retain enough of their salient features to be recognizable to the period of significance, despite physical alterations, and therefore have integrity of feeling. The neighborhood street system retains attributes of the location, setting, and feeling of the historical Lyons Avenue corridor. Contributing resources are affiliated with the neighborhood's historical development and convey associative qualities with social history and Black ethnic heritage.

There are also four contributing structures and one contributing site within the district. The contributing structures are parking lots associated with contributing buildings constructed during

¹⁵ Robert Z. Melnick et al., "Integrity as Process and Feature: Cultural Landscapes of Underrepresented Communities," *Change Over Time* 10, no. 2 (Fall 2021).

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the period of significance (**Map 3** and **Table 1**; Map IDs 7B, 17C, 29B, and 32B). The contributing site is a vacant lot from a building demolished ca. 1965, during the period of significance (**Map 3** and **Table 1**; Map ID 23B). That no new building was constructed to replace it is an indicator of disinvestment in the previously densely developed and active corridor.

The contributing buildings in the Lyons Avenue Historic District exhibit physical changes such as additions and removal and/or replacement of exterior materials that postdate the period of significance. However, the original design intent is evident with the presence of character-defining attributes, such as roof forms, fenestration patterns, and form or stylistic details. Associated structures, such as parking lots are contributing if associated with a contributing building and were constructed during the period of significance. Alterations and additions to contributing buildings and structures do not obscure historic-period stylistic influences or workmanship.

Acceptable alterations include:

- Replacement of historic siding, windows and doors
- Replacement of roof with a different form, as long as the original form of the roof is still clear
- Additions or alterations during the period of significance, particularly to change or add commercial use
- Rear additions after the period of significance
- Repaving and minor expansion of parking lots

Noncontributing buildings, structures, and sites detract from the district's character either because they were built after the period of significance, because of extensive modifications, or because the vacant lots detract from the integrity of setting and design of the district.

Unacceptable alterations to building constructed during the period of significance include:

- Demolition
- Change in orientation of main entrance from facing Lyons Avenue
- Full enclosure of front porch and/or entrance of single-family residence after the period of significance
- Complete modification of fenestration pattern
- Removal of signage and other features that identify commercial building function
- Relocation of or large expansion of parking lot

There are 9 noncontributing buildings, 6 noncontributing structures, and 11 noncontributing sites in the district. Of the buildings, four were constructed during the period of significance but have unacceptable alterations, such as enclosed primary porches, complete modification from original appearance, removal of signage, and do not retain integrity to be contributing properties (**Map 3**; Map IDs 6A, 21A, 22, and 25). Five buildings postdate the period of significance (**Map 3**; Map IDs 3, 4, 20, 34, and 35). The six noncontributing structures are parking lots constructed after the period of significance (**Map 3**; Map IDs 1B, 6B, 15B, 20B, and 38B) or associated with a noncontributing building (**Map 3**; Map ID 21B). Although there was a historic parking lot associated with the St.

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Elizabeth's Hospital, its parking lot is noncontributing, having replaced the historic parking area with a larger configuration reflecting later alterations, including the 2025 demolition of the rear additions and the former pump house (**Map 3**; Map ID 38B). The NRHP nomination does not list the parking lot as contributing or noncontributing.¹⁶ Ten vacant lots in the district, the result of demolitions after the period of significance—from ca. 1975 to 2026—are noncontributing sites (**Map 3**; Map IDs 5, 8, 9, 14, 16, 19, 23C, 26B, 27, 31, and 33). Aggregates of continuous vacant lots are counted as one. Although disinvestment and demolition is often a characteristic of Black communities, most of the demolitions postdate the period of significance. The Cane River Community Garden, a 2024 installation, is the eleventh noncontributing site.

The tabular inventory enumerates each resource in the Lyons Avenue Historic District by map identification number (Map ID), street address, historical/current name, historic function, year built, architectural style/form, type, and contributing/noncontributing status (**Table 1**). In all, 26 contributing resources (27 including the NRHP-listed St. Elizabeth's Hospital) and 26 noncontributing resources are in the Lyons Avenue Historic District (**Map 3**). One impermanent shed/ancillary structure and a nonhistoric-age dumpster enclosure were excluded (marked NA in the table), in keeping with National Park Service guidelines for counting resources.¹⁷ Year built ranges for parking lots represent parking lots that expanded. Year built ranges for vacant lots represent demolition dates for buildings on continuous, adjacent parcels that once had separate uses.

Table 1. Contributing and Noncontributing Resources in the Lyons Avenue Historic District

Map ID	Property Address	Historical/ Current Name	Historic Function	Year Built	Architectural Style/ Form	Type	Contributing
1A	4030 Lyons	Lyons Theater/Latter Day Deliverance Revival Church	Recreation and Culture/ Theater	ca. 1940	No Style/ Rectangular	Building	Yes
1B	0 Lyons	Latter Day Deliverance Revival Church (Parking Lot)	Commerce/ Specialty store; Domestic/Single dwelling	ca. 1980	No style/ Rectangular	Structure	No
2	4101 Lyons	Louis White Grocery Store/ NA (Vacant)	Commerce/ Specialty store	1955	Commercial/ One-part commercial block	Building	Yes
3	4105 Lyons	NA	Domestic/Single dwelling (one	2018	No Style/ Rectangular	Building	No

¹⁶ Curry-Shearouse and Mod, "St. Elizabeth Hospital".

¹⁷ National Park Service, Evaluating Garages and Outbuildings in Historic Districts, 2022.

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Map ID	Property Address	Historical/ Current Name	Historic Function	Year Built	Architectural Style/ Form	Type	Contributing
			building on now subdivided lot)				
4	4107 Lyons	NA	Domestic/Single dwelling (one building on now subdivided lot)	2018	No Style/ Rectangular	Building	No
5	4109-4119 Lyons	NA (Vacant Lot)	Domestic/Single dwelling; Domestic/ Multiple dwelling; Domestic/Single dwelling	ca. 2000–2014	No style/ Rectangular	Site	No
6A	4110 Lyons	NA/Latter Day Deliverance Revival Church	Domestic/Single dwelling	1930	No style/ Bungalow	Building	No
6B	4100-4102 Lyons	Unknown/NA (Parking Lot)	Commerce/ Specialty store; Commerce/ Restaurant	ca. 1990	No style/ Rectangular	Structure	No
7A	4120 Lyons	Louis Robey Professional Building	Health Care/ Medical business/office	ca. 1965	Contemporary/ Saltbox	Building	Yes
7B	4120 Lyons	Louis Robey Professional Building (Parking Lot)	Landscape/ parking lot	ca. 1970	No style/ Rectangular	Structure	Yes
8	0 St. Elmo	Unknown/NA (Vacant Lot)	Commerce/ Restaurant; Domestic/Single dwelling	ca. 1980–ca. 2000	No style/ Rectangular	Site	No
9	4205 Lyons	NA/ Cane River Community Garden	Domestic/Single dwelling	2024	No style/ Rectangular	Site	No
10	4207 Lyons	Lyons Prescription Pharmacy/ NA	Commerce/ Specialty store	ca. 1960	Commercial/ Rectangular	Building	Yes

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Map ID	Property Address	Historical/ Current Name	Historic Function	Year Built	Architectural Style/ Form	Type	Contributing
11	4209 Lyons	Reagan's Shoe and Boot Repair/NA (Vacant)	Domestic/Single dwelling, Commerce/ Specialty store	ca. 1925	No style/ Bungalow	Building	Yes
12	4211 Lyons	NA	Domestic/Single dwelling	ca. 1925	Craftsman/ Bungalow	Building	Yes
13	4223 Lyons	Dr. J. S. Stone/NA (Vacant)	Health Care/ Clinic; Domestic/Single dwelling	ca. 1963	No style/ Rectangular	Building	Yes
14	4225-4227 Lyons	Unknown/NA (Vacant Lot)	Domestic/Single dwelling, Commerce/ Specialty store	ca. 2000–2026	No style/ Rectangular	Site	No
15A	4315 Lyons	Porter Institutional/ Miles Chapel CME Church	Religion/ Religious facility	1952	Post-war Modern/ L-plan	Building	Yes
15B	4229 Lyons	Unknown/Porter Institutional/Miles Chapel CME Church (Parking Lot)	Commerce/ Specialty store	ca. 1990	No style/ Rectangular	Structure	No
16	0 Lyons	Unknown/NA (Vacant Lot)	Commerce/ Specialty stores	ca. 2000	No style/ Rectangular	Site	No
17A	4204 Lyons	Della Apartment Hotel/ Sunrise Motel	Domestic/ Hotel	1962	No style/ L-plan	Building	Yes
17B	4204 Lyons	Della Apartment Hotel/ Sunrise Motel	Domestic/ Hotel	ca. 1970	No style/ Rectangular	Building	Yes
17C	4204 Lyons	Della Apartment Hotel/ Sunrise Motel (Parking Lot)	Landscape/ parking lot	ca. 1965–1970	No style/ Rectangular	Structure	Yes
18	4206 Lyons	NA	Domestic/ Single dwelling	ca. 1940	No style/ Rectangular	Building	Yes
19	4212 Lyons	True Level Lodge No. 226/NA (Vacant Lot)	Social/ meeting hall	2025	No style/ Irregular	Site	No

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Map ID	Property Address	Historical/ Current Name	Historic Function	Year Built	Architectural Style/ Form	Type	Contributing
20A	4300 Lyons	Unknown/FWCRC	Commerce/ Specialty stores; Commerce/ Restaurant	1998	Contemporary/ Rectangular	Building	No
20B	4300 Lyons	Unknown/FWCRC (Parking Lot)	Commerce/ Specialty stores; Commerce/ Restaurant	1998	No style/ Irregular	Structure	No
21A	4401 Lyons	Church's Chicken/NA (Vacant)	Commerce/ Restaurant	ca. 1965	Commercial/ Irregular	Building	No
21B	4401 Lyons	Church's Chicken/NA (Parking Lot)	Landscape/ parking lot	ca. 1965	No style/ Irregular	Structure	No
22	4405 Lyons	NA	Domestic/ Single dwelling	ca. 1925	Craftsman/ Bungalow	Building	No
23A	4409 Lyons	Unknown/Golightlys Barber Shop	Commerce/ Specialty store	1940	Commercial/ L-plan	Building	Yes
23B	0 Lyons	NA (Vacant Lot)	Commerce/ Specialty store	ca. 1965	No style/ Irregular	Site	Yes
23C	0 Lyons	NA (Vacant Lot)	Domestic/Single dwelling	ca. 1975	No style/ Irregular	Site	No
24	4413 Lyons	Unknown/ NA	Domestic/Single dwelling; Commerce/ Specialty store	1940	Minimal Traditional/ Bungalow	Building	Yes
25	4415 Lyons	NA	Domestic/Single dwelling	1940	No style/ Bungalow	Building	No
26A	1607 Dan	Unknown/NA (Vacant)	Commerce/ Specialty store	ca. 1970	No style/ Rectangular	Building	Yes
26B	1607 Dan	NA (Vacant Lot)	Domestic/Single dwelling; Commerce/ Specialty store	ca. 2003	No style/ Irregular	Site	No
27	4404 Lyons	NA (Vacant Lot)	Domestic/Single dwelling	ca. 2020	No style/ Rectangular	Site	No

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Map ID	Property Address	Historical/ Current Name	Historic Function	Year Built	Architectural Style/ Form	Type	Contributing
28A	4408 Lyons	NA	Domestic/Single dwelling	ca. 1925	Craftsman/ Bungalow	Building	Yes
28B	4408 Lyons	NA	Domestic/ Secondary structure	ca. 1930	No style/ Rectangular	Building	Yes
29A	4410 Lyons	Coghlan Grocery Store/ Lyons Grocery Store	Commerce/ Specialty store	1955	Post-war Modern/ Rectangular	Building	Yes
29B	4410 Lyons	Coghlan Grocery Store/ Lyons Grocery Store (Parking Lot)	Landscape/ parking lot	1955	No Style/ Rectangular	Structure	Yes
30	4414 Lyons	Perfecto Cleaners/Fly Kutz Barber Lounge	Commerce/ Specialty store	1938	Commercial/ One-part commercial block	Building	Yes
31	4416 Lyons	NA (Vacant Lot)	Commerce/ Restaurant	ca. 2014	No style/ Rectangular	Site	No
32A	4420 Lyons	First Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church	Religion/ Religious facility	1954	Post-war Modern/ Irregular	Building	Yes
32B	4420 Lyons	First Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church (Parking Lot)	Landscape/ parking lot	ca. 1970	No style/ Rectangular	Structure	Yes
33	4501 Lyons	NA (Vacant Lot)	Domestic/Single dwelling	ca. 1990	No style/ Rectangular	Site	No
34	4507 Lyons	NA	Domestic/Single dwelling	1991	No style/ Bungalow	Building	No
35	4515 Lyons	NA	Domestic/Single dwelling	1991	No style/ Bungalow	Building	No
36A	4517 Lyons	NA	Domestic/ Single dwelling	1930	Craftsman/ Bungalow	Building	Yes
36B	4517 Lyons	NA	Domestic/ Secondary structure	ca. 1963	No style/ Rectangular	Building	NA
37	4519 Lyons	Beal Brothers Medical and	Health Care/ Clinic	ca. 1946	Moderne/ Rectangular	Building	Yes

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Map ID	Property Address	Historical/ Current Name	Historic Function	Year Built	Architectural Style/ Form	Type	Contributing
		Surgical Clinic/NA (Vacant)					
38A	4514 Lyons	St. Elizabeth's Hospital/ St. Elizabeth Place	Health Care/ Hospital	1947	Moderne/ U-plan	Building	Yes
38B	4514 Lyons	St. Elizabeth's Hospital/ St. Elizabeth Place (Parking Lot)	Landscape/ Parking lot	2025	No style/ Irregular	Structure	No
38D	4514 Lyons	St. Elizabeth's Hospital/ St. Elizabeth Place (dumpster enclosure)	NA	2025	No style/ Rectangular	Structure	NA

* NA = Not applicable

Architectural Descriptions for Select Contributing Resources

4030 Lyons Avenue (**Photograph 1; Map 3, Map ID 1A**)

This ca. 1940 stucco- and stone-clad building has a hipped roof and is now used as the Latter Day Deliverance Revival Church. The building was constructed as the Lyons Theater, which advertised in the *Houston Chronicle* from 1943 to 1951 and was listed in city directories through at least 1956.¹⁸ It was converted for use as a church sometime before 1977.¹⁹ The exterior has been heavily modified by removal of the parapet, replacement of the flat roof with a hipped metal roof with dormer, addition of stone veneer on the façade, a modified main entrance with replacement doors, and a porte-cochère addition at the rear of a side elevation. Windows on side elevations have been enclosed, added, or altered. The original marquee is extant, with signage added to it for the church. A noncontributing parking lot to its west was constructed between 1975 and 1980, replacing a store and single-family dwelling.

4101 Lyons Avenue (**Photograph 3; Map 3, Map ID 2**)

The 1955 Louis White Grocery has a side-gable roof with brick and wood vertical board cladding. It has lost its zigzag canopy. Windows and doors, including its triangular transom windows, are

¹⁸ *Houston Chronicle*, "Lyons and DeLuxe Theater," March 25, 1943, 13A, Advertisement; "Blue Plate Margarine Movie Treat," January 12, 1951, Section 2:6; Morrison & Fourmy Directory Company, *Houston, Texas, City Directory* (U.S. City Directories, 1822–1995. Ancestry.com, 1956).

¹⁹ *Houston Chronicle*, "The Church Directory," February 19, 1977, 5.

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boarded, and the brick is painted. The Louis White Grocery Store was designated a City of Houston Protected Landmark in 2022.²⁰

4120 Lyons Avenue (Photograph 5; Map 3, Map ID 7A–7B)

The ca. 1965 Contemporary-style Louis Robey Professional Building has saltbox and shed roofs, full-height vertical windows, stone and engineered wood siding cladding, and a single-door entry on its façade that opens to a central integrated partial-width porch. It is apparent on maps in 1966.²¹ Modifications include some replacement cladding. The property has an associated standalone sign contemporary to the building and an OTHM for Peacock Records (Texas Historical Commission Atlas Number 5507016494), erected in 2010, in the adjacent public right of way for Lyons Avenue.²² Off-street parking in front of the building wraps around to a large parking lot to its east; a contributing structure.

4204 Lyons Avenue (Photograph 8; Map 3, Map ID 17A–17C)

The former Della Apartments, now the Sunrise Motel, is composed of two buildings on an L-shaped parcel. The oldest building, fronting Lyons Avenue, is a two-story L-plan building clad in stone, brick, and wood siding panels, with a flat roof with parapet. It has a modified front entrance with an attached wraparound porch with a metal roof and a modified roofline. The rear ca. 1970 two-story building with a hipped roof is clad in brick and wood horizontal board.²³ The buildings have metal stairs leading to second-story balconies and doors to individual units. Original signage has been replaced, and both buildings have replacement windows and doors and painted masonry. Its historical function as a residential hotel appears unchanged. A paved parking lot is between the buildings along Featherstone Street, with a narrow driveway north of the rear building extending to another section of paved lot to its east; a contributing structure.

4414 Lyons Avenue (Photograph 17; Map 3, Map ID 30)

This 1938 one-part commercial-block rectangular building is clad in stucco, and its modestly stylized stepped parapet hides a shed roof. The street-facing storefront has three single-door entrances, each flanked with display windows. An awning extends the length of the façade. It has been modified with replacement doors and windows. The building has had several tenants, with Perfecto Cleaners, its longest occupant, using the building from approximately 1958 to at least 1990.²⁴

²⁰ City of Houston, Planning and Development Department, "Louis White Grocery Store, Houston, Harris County, Texas," (2020), Landmark Designation Report.

²¹ Nationwide Environmental Title Research, Harris County, Texas, 1966.

²² The Texas Historical Commission Texas Historic Site Atlas maps the historical markers and National Register of Historic Places properties in Texas and assigns each an unique identifier or Atlas Number; Texas Historical Commission, "Texas Historic Sites Atlas," 2025.

²³ Nationwide Environmental Title Research, Harris County, Texas, 1966; Harris County, Texas, 1973.

²⁴ *Houston Chronicle*, "Perfecto Cleaners," July 29, 1958, B5, Advertisement.; DeSoto, Fifth Ward, 1982–2000, 1989.

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4420 Lyons Avenue (Photograph 18; Map 3, Map ID 32A–32B)

The Post-war Modern-style First Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church was constructed in 1954. It has an irregular footprint and is clad in brick. Flat-roof one-story wings flank the focal point, a dramatic three-story volume with steeply pitched and slanted winged gable roof. Asymmetrically positioned, the towering façade has a full-height inset panel with three horizontal bands of four vertical metal-frame windows; three full-height buff brick pilasters separate the windows and accentuate verticality. The one-story wings have horizontal bands of clerestory windows under the flat roof's eaves. Another vertical characteristic, an open-frame, five-and-one-half-story bell tower rises from the building's northeast corner. The church is set back from the street with a large lawn with a paved walkway to exterior doors. John Saunders Chase Jr., the first African American architect licensed in Texas, designed the building. The church, founded in 1891 in the Fifth Ward, moved to its current location when the building opened.²⁵ The property has an associated historic-age standalone sign and an OTHM for the First Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church (Texas Historical Commission Atlas Number 5507017909), erected in 2014.²⁶ A parking lot was constructed between 1965 and 1970 south of the church, a contributing structure.

4514 Lyons Avenue (Photograph 19; Map 3, Map ID 38A)

The NRHP-listed St. Elizabeth's Hospital is a three-story E-plan Art Moderne-style building constructed in several phases between 1945 and 1988 (NRHP Reference Number 100003489).²⁷ The original rectangular two-story building opened in 1947, designed by Wyatt C. Hedrick of Texas and Charles H. Lindsley of Mississippi, clad in limestone with a flat roof with parapet and raised basement. It has a flat semicircular canopy and curved sidewalls with glass-block infill. The third floor and the west wing were added in 1958. In 1960, the east wing was added. The rear east and west wings are clad in brick.²⁸ All windows on the building are non-original fixed single-light aluminum-frame windows. The property has an associated nonhistoric-age standalone sign. Individually listed in the NRHP, the property was rehabilitated as part of a tax credit project and opened as a residential property in 2025. A parking lot was south of the building during the historic period, but the existing parking lot was constructed in 2025 after the demolition of the rear additions and pump house. It is much larger than the historic structure and is constructed of all new material; it is a noncontributing structure.

4519 Lyons Avenue (Photograph 20; Map 3, Map ID 37)

This 1946 Art Moderne commercial building has a rectangular plan with rounded corners on its Lyons Avenue façade, is clad in stucco, and has a flat roof with parapet. A two-story wing on the rear has a hipped roof. Historically, the building had glass-block windows at its rounded wall

²⁵ Texas Historical Commission, "First Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church, Houston, Harris County, Texas," (2014), Official Texas Historical Marker.

²⁶ Texas Historical Commission, "First Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church, Houston, Harris County, Texas".

²⁷ Curry-Shearouse and Mod, "St. Elizabeth Hospital".

²⁸ Curry-Shearouse and Mod, "St. Elizabeth Hospital".

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corners and flanking a central entry. Other windows were casement units. A sign was attached to the building below its roofline, and a rounded metal canopy extended over the door entrance, accessed on a set of rounded concrete steps. The two-story rear portion of the building may have had a garage door entrance. The façade has been modified with a replacement storefront, now boarded. It no longer has the character-defining glass-block windows, sign, or canopy, and all windows and doors are boarded. The building was constructed as the Beal Brothers Medical and Surgical Clinic, designed by Robbins & Chase and constructed by William J. Kettle. The *Houston Chronicle* described the building as fully air-conditioned and one of the most modern of its kind in Houston. Doctors and brothers Perry W. Beal and Anthony W. Beal were Black surgeons affiliated with St. Elizabeth's Hospital.²⁹ The clinic had an X-ray lab, fever therapy, electrical treatment devices, conference rooms, a library, and a dispensary.³⁰

²⁹ *Houston Chronicle*, "Negro Clinic Being Built," June 16, 1946, 8B; "Modern Clinic Complete," June 29, 1947, 23A.

³⁰ *Houston Chronicle*, "Negro Clinic"; "Modern Clinic Complete".

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☐ C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- ☐ B. Removed from its original location
- ☐ C. A birthplace or grave
- ☐ D. A cemetery
- ☐ E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- ☐ F. A commemorative property
- ☐ G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

Ethnic Heritage/Black (local level of significance)

Social History (local level of significance)

Period of Significance

ca. 1925 to ca. 1970

Significant Dates

1946–1947 (construction of the Beal Brothers Medical Clinic and St. Elizabeth’s Hospital), ca.

1950–ca. 1955 (construction of churches, Louis White Grocery and Coghlan Grocery Store, Eastex Freeway, and Interstate Highway 10)

Significant Person:

NA

Cultural Affiliation:

NA

Architect/Builder:

NA

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

The Lyons Avenue Historic District in Houston's Fifth Ward is significant as a Black main street for the local population for decades. During the early twentieth century, Lyons Avenue had emerged as a main street with commerce and numerous institutions that supported the Black community. By the mid-twentieth century, Lyons Avenue was the principal Black main street in Houston. The proposed district is an intact concentration of buildings that reflect the Fifth Ward's residential and commercial development and the significance of Lyons Avenue as a main street. Lyons Avenue Historic District is nominated to the National Register under Criterion A at the local level of significance in the areas of Social History and Ethnic Heritage/Black. The period of significance extends from ca. 1925, the construction date of the earliest built extant resources, to ca. 1970, the construction date of the latest built extant resources; this end date also encompasses transformative changes that freeway construction and urban renewal initiatives caused.

Narrative Statement of Significance

Houston Wards, 1839 to 1906

Houston, Texas, was founded on August 30, 1836, by brothers Augustus Chapman Allen and John Kirby Allen. They named the city after Samuel Houston, the Texan army general who led the defeat of the Mexican Army at the Battle of San Jacinto, winning the War for Texas Independence, and the first president of the Republic of Texas. The original townsite was developed using enslaved Black labor and Mexican prisoners of war, spanning 62 blocks across a 3-mile plat with main street centered along the bluff overlooking Buffalo Bayou's landing. Houston was incorporated in 1837 and briefly served as the temporary capital of the Republic of Texas.³¹

In 1839, Houston established a ward system to designate districts for local aldermen, following municipal governance trends contemporaneously common in America. Throughout the nineteenth century, the wards attracted diverse waves of immigrants, including those of Jewish, Irish, Russian, and Eastern European descent.³² Unlike typical city council districts defined by population, Houston's wards were divided by geographical features and Congress and Main streets. With approximately 2,500 miles of waterways, Houston earned the appropriate nickname "the Bayou City," and the bayous formed natural boundaries between most wards.³³ The four original wards were arranged around the intersection of Congress and Main streets: the First Ward north of Congress and west of Main, the Second Ward north of Congress and east of Main, the Third Ward south of Congress and east of Main, and the Fourth Ward south of Congress and west of Main.³⁴

³¹ Barrie Bradley Scardino, *Improbable Metropolis: Houston's Architectural and Urban History* (University of Texas Press, 2020).

³² Denise Frazier, "The Nickel: A History of African-Descended People in Houston's Fifth Ward," *Genealogy* 4, no. 1 (2020); Scardino, *Improbable Metropolis*.

³³ Scardino, *Improbable Metropolis*.

³⁴ David G. McComb, *Houston, The Bayou City* (University of Texas Press via Internet Archive, 1969); Scardino, *Improbable Metropolis*; Tyina L. Steptoe, *Houston Bound: Culture and Color in a Jim Crow City* (University of California Press, 2015).

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Following the Civil War, emancipation spurred the creation of new Black communities that became central to the city's early political and cultural development.³⁵ After Texas seceded from the Union in 1861, Houston served as the military headquarters for the Confederate district of Texas. The city never saw battle, and the practice of enslavement continued locally throughout the war. Although President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, it was not enforced in Texas until June 19, 1865.³⁶ Freed people from Brazoria and Fort Bend counties, and from elsewhere in East Texas, began settling north and south of Buffalo Bayou in settlements that became known as "the Bottoms" for their low-lying, flood-prone locations.³⁷ Freedmen's Town, in the Fourth Ward, emerged as the initial center of Black political and cultural life in Houston, with Black families purchasing land and building homes there soon after emancipation.³⁸

Houston's population growth after the Civil War drove both the expansion of existing neighborhoods and the creation of new ones.³⁹ The first railroad reached Houston in 1856, and the city rapidly expanded as a railroad hub following the war. To accommodate attendant population growth, the city added two new wards from the existing wards (**Figure 5**). In 1866, the Fifth Ward was formed from portions of the First Ward and the Second Ward, bounded by Buffalo Bayou on the south, Lockwood Drive on the east, Liberty Road on the north, and Jensen Drive on the west.⁴⁰ The Sixth Ward was formed in 1874 from the northern portion of the Fourth Ward, east of the city's downtown.⁴¹

Houston's wards were originally created as political districts for city governance but over time evolved into distinct social and cultural identities. During segregation, certain wards became designated areas where immigrants, Hispanic individuals, and Black residents were allowed to live, shaping long-lasting patterns in the city's communities.⁴² Unlike some cities, Houston did not develop a single Black neighborhood or district. Instead, Black residents settled across the city, establishing enclaves in each ward. By the end of the nineteenth century, the Black communities in the Third, Fourth, and Fifth wards had become hubs of Black American life.⁴³ Jim Crow-era⁴⁴ segregation confined nonwhite individuals to inferior spaces, and this spatial inequality defined racial boundaries in cities across the country. Terms such as "ghetto," "bottoms," and "barrio" became definitions for racialized spaces, linking physical locations to sociopolitical meanings of race and power.

³⁵ Bernadette Pruitt, *The Other Great Migration: The Movement of Rural African Americans to Houston, 1900–1941*, Sam Rayburn Series on Rural Life, (Texas A&M University Press, 2013).; Scardino, *Improbable Metropolis*.

³⁶ Scardino, *Improbable Metropolis*.

³⁷ Dorothy Knox Howe Houghton et al., *Houston's Forgotten Heritage: Landscape, Houses, Interiors, 1824–1914* (Rice University Press via Internet Archive, 1991).

³⁸ Houghton et al., *Houston's Forgotten Heritage*; Steptoe, *Houston Bound*.

³⁹ Houghton et al., *Houston's Forgotten Heritage*.

⁴⁰ McComb, *Houston, The Bayou City*; Scardino, *Improbable Metropolis*.; Janet K. Wagner, "Sixth Ward: Carving Out its Own Place," *Houston History Magazine* 2011.

⁴¹ Wagner, "Sixth Ward: Carving Out its Own Place".

⁴² Betty Trapp Chapman, "When There Were Wards: A Series," *Houston History Magazine* 2011.

⁴³ Pruitt, *The Other Great Migration*; Steptoe, *Houston Bound*.

⁴⁴ The Jim Crow era was a period of legal, race-based segregation, generally understood as extending from the end of post–Civil War Reconstruction in 1877 to the passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964. For more information, see C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (Oxford University Press, 1968).

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The term “Bottom” or “Black Bottom” informally describes Black neighborhoods in or adjacent to clearly segregated urban areas.⁴⁵ The term originally described the land itself. In Detroit, early French settlers used the term for its rich, dark soil. In Nashville, it referred to low-lying areas prone to flooding. Although Bottoms often lacked formal boundaries, discriminatory practices such as redlining⁴⁶ and race-based zoning separated these communities from the rest of the city. Over time, especially during the Great Migration,⁴⁷ the meaning shifted. As Black families left the rural South to settle in urban areas, Bottoms were neighborhoods shaped by exclusion, resilience, and racialized urban policy, not simply their topography. In many cities, the Bottom’s main street emerged as a crucial commercial hub where Black entrepreneurs could operate and build economic stability; this pattern reflected broader dynamics in segregated urban economies, where exclusion from white-owned establishments made Black-owned business districts indispensable to local economic and social life.⁴⁸ The term “Bottom” gained deeper cultural weight when Nobel laureate author Toni Morrison tied it to the Black American experience in her novel *Sula*.⁴⁹

Though Houston’s ward system was abolished in 1906, the enclaves and communities that had formed in them were ingrained with deep bonds to these places. These attachments maintained their importance to local communities, functioning as markers of identity, history, and belonging.⁵⁰ Over time, the Fifth Ward acquired a nickname that persists today: The Nickel.⁵¹

The Fifth Ward and Lyons Avenue

The Fifth Ward was created to accommodate the emerging working class, whose early development was tied to the railroads. The area initially attracted Anglo-American and Northern European immigrant residents and workers, while Black residents settled in the sparsely populated area near the Buffalo Bayou and east of the Fifth Ward outside the city limits.⁵² In 1870, the Fifth Ward had 1,139 residents; more than half, 578, were Black.⁵³ White residents were primarily Irish, Jewish, and German immigrants. By 1880, Mexican immigrants began settling in the area.⁵⁴ In 1880, the Southern Pacific Railroad was constructed through Houston, and it established its yard and

⁴⁵ Ken Coleman, “The People and Places of Black Bottom, Detroit,” *Humanities* 42, no. 4 (Fall 2021); Ujijji Davis, “‘The Bottom’: The Emergence and Erasure of Black American Urban Landscapes,” *Avery Review* 34 (October 2018).

⁴⁶ Redlining was a systematic, discriminatory practice in which banks, insurers, and other institutions denied services to people based on the racial makeup of their neighborhoods rather than on individual qualifications. Understanding Houston, Exploring the Legacy of Redlining in Houston, 2021.

⁴⁷ The Great Migration—one of the largest internal movements in U.S. history—reshaped the nation as more than six million Black Americans left the rural South for cities between 1916 and 1970. Pruitt, *The Other Great Migration*.

⁴⁸ Coleman, “The People and Places of Black Bottom, Detroit”; Davis, “‘The Bottom’”.

⁴⁹ Toni Morrison, *Sula* (Vintage Books, 1973); Stancivique Ndambi and Hubert Frank Lylian Massala, “History and Fiction: Black Americans’ Experience in Toni Morrison’s *Sula*,” *Journal of English Language and Literature* 8, no. 4 (2021).

⁵⁰ Pando, “In the Nickel”; Pruitt, *The Other Great Migration*; Tyina L. Steptoe, *Fifth Ward Houston, Texas, Black Past*, 2015.

⁵¹ Frazier, “The Nickel”; Pando, “In the Nickel”.

⁵² Houghton et al., *Houston’s Forgotten Heritage*; Scardino, *Improbable Metropolis*.

⁵³ Howard Beeth and Cary D. Wintz, *Black Dixie: Afro-Texan History and Culture in Houston* (Texas A&M University Press, 1992), 23; Pruitt, *The Other Great Migration*.

⁵⁴ Pruitt, *The Other Great Migration*; Steptoe, *Houston Bound*.

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maintenance shops in the Fifth Ward, providing an economic foundation for local workers through the end of the nineteenth century.⁵⁵ Buffalo Bayou remained a natural barrier between the Fifth Ward and the city until 1883, when a drawbridge at San Jacinto Street was built for easier access into the city.⁵⁶

The development of Lyons Avenue in the 1890s was a catalyst for eastward expansion in the Fifth Ward. Construction of Lyons Avenue began in September 1894. The 60-foot-wide street extended 1,600 feet inside the city limits, then continued more than 1 mile eastward, facilitating Fifth Ward development east of Benson Street through the early twentieth century.⁵⁷ Lyons Avenue was named after John Lyons, an Irish immigrant and Fifth Ward resident who was a real estate investor and proprietor of both the Lyons House and the Star and Crescent Hotel in the Fifth Ward. The Lyons House was a boarding house and dining establishment that catered primarily to railroad workers from the nearby Southern Pacific Railroad.⁵⁸

In 1913, John Lyons had acquired much of the land between present-day Benson and Yates streets **(Map 5)**.⁵⁹ Although Benson Street appeared on maps as early as 1913, no streets were yet platted to intersect Lyons Avenue east of Benson Street. The city limits were expanded through the early twentieth century, gradually moving east. By 1928, Lyons Avenue stretched east to Pearl Street, and Copeland, Waco, Tralle, Dan, and Elman (now Yates) streets were mapped. By 1930, the city had expanded its boundaries farther eastward; this extension incorporated all the land in the district.⁶⁰

By this time, Black migrants from rural Texas and Louisiana seeking urban economic opportunities had transformed the Fifth Ward into a predominantly Black neighborhood. Single-family residences, churches, and businesses associated with Black Houstonians would eventually occupy the community's major thoroughfares, including Lyons Avenue.⁶¹

The Fifth Ward, 1900 to 1940

The Fifth Ward's proximity to the railroads and the city's east-end industrial district made it an appealing place for Black migrants to settle as Houston's post-World War I growth accelerated through industrial expansion and the arrival of job-seeking ruralites.⁶² A new wave of Black migration brought thousands of African Americans to Houston from surrounding rural communities as they traded agricultural labor for industrial and domestic work.⁶³ Between 1910 and 1930, Houston's population experienced substantial growth, rising from 78,800 to 292,352. During the

⁵⁵ Diana J. Kleiner, "Exploring the Rich History and Culture of Houston's Fifth Ward," in *Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association, 2020; Pruitt, *The Other Great Migration*; Scardino, *Improbable Metropolis*.

⁵⁶ *Houston Post*, "The Face of Houston," February 9, 1964, Section 2:6.

⁵⁷ Pollard Porter, and Ruby, *Official Map of the City of Houston*, Harris County Archives, 1890.

⁵⁸ Find A Grave, John Lyons, Memorial 107164786, 2013; *Galveston Daily News*, "Lyons Avenue Opened," September 26, 1894, 3.

⁵⁹ Houston Title Guaranty Company, *City of Houston, Texas*, Harris County Archives, 1913.

⁶⁰ American Automotive Association, *Houston Adjacent Subdivision Map*, Identifier TXR-MC-A05-H-HoustonAdjacentSubdivisionsMap-1930, Houston History Research Center, Houston Public Library, 1930.

⁶¹ Kleiner, "Exploring the Rich History and Culture of Houston's Fifth Ward"; Pruitt, *The Other Great Migration*.

⁶² Pruitt, *The Other Great Migration*.

⁶³ Pruitt, *The Other Great Migration*, 3.

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same period, the city's Black population grew from just under 24,000 in 1910 to more than 63,000 in 1930.⁶⁴ Although Houston's Black population more than doubled between 1910 and 1930, the city's overall population expanded at an even faster pace. As a result, the proportion of Black residents declined from about 30 percent to around 21 percent of the total population. The expansion of rail lines and the development of the Houston Ship Channel were central to population growth, creating an abundance of industrial and manufacturing jobs.⁶⁵ By 1930, Black Houstonians working as switchmen, firemen, and brakemen made up one-third of skilled railroad workers.⁶⁶

A combination of migration, displacement, and industrial development reshaped the Fifth Ward into a predominantly Black area by the 1930s.⁶⁷ This transition began with the 1912 Great Fifth Ward Fire that burned much of the neighborhood.⁶⁸ The area was rebuilt with increased industrial density, a pattern enabled by Houston's lack of regulated planning and zoning. Most cities used these tools to manage growth and balance private and public real estate interests by regulating land use. The absence of zoning disproportionately affected neighborhoods near Buffalo Bayou, where residential tracts became interspersed with imposing manufacturing and industrial sites, railroad stations and sidelines, and warehouses.⁶⁹ In the aftermath of the fire, many white residents moved to Houston suburbs. Meanwhile, Black migrants from Louisiana and East Texas settled in the Fifth Ward, transforming it into a largely Black community.⁷⁰ The Fifth Ward Black population had grown from 9,397 in 1920 to 25,923 by 1940.⁷¹ Many migrants were Black Louisianans displaced by the 1927 Great Mississippi Flood who came to Houston for industrial job opportunities and settled on the northern edge of the Fifth Ward. These French-speaking Black Creole families claimed the area around Erastus and Collingsworth streets, establishing Frenchtown by the 1930s.⁷² Residential sections of the Fifth Ward housed Black railroad and industrial workers, dock workers, and domestic workers.⁷³

As a thoroughfare through the ward, Lyons Avenue became its commercial corridor, and by 1925, 40 Black-owned businesses anchored the neighborhood between Jensen and Lockwood drives.⁷⁴ The 1930 city directory listed 7 businesses along Lyons Avenue between Benson and Yates (then Elman) streets, growing to 24 by 1940 (**Table 2**).⁷⁵

⁶⁴ William Henry Keller, *Make Haste Slowly: Moderates, Conservatives, and School Desegregation in Houston* (Texas A&M University Press, 1999), 19.; Census Office U.S. Department of the Interior, 1910 Census: Population of the United States (1910); Census Office U.S. Department of the Interior, 1930 Census: Population of the United States (1930).

⁶⁵ Kleiner, "Exploring the Rich History and Culture of Houston's Fifth Ward"; Steptoe, *Houston Bound*.

⁶⁶ Pruitt, *The Other Great Migration*.

⁶⁷ Pruitt, *The Other Great Migration*; Kleiner, "Exploring the Rich History and Culture of Houston's Fifth Ward".

⁶⁸ Frazier, "The Nickel"; Pruitt, *The Other Great Migration*.

⁶⁹ Scardino, *Improbable Metropolis*.

⁷⁰ Frazier, "The Nickel".

⁷¹ Pruitt, *The Other Great Migration*, 76.

⁷² Beeth and Wintz, *Black Dixie*; Pruitt, *The Other Great Migration*; Steptoe, *Houston Bound*.

⁷³ Scardino, *Improbable Metropolis*.

⁷⁴ Pruitt, *The Other Great Migration*; Steptoe, *Houston Bound*.

⁷⁵ American Automotive Association, *Houston Adjacent Subdivision Map*, 1930; Morrison & Fourmy Directory Company, *Houston, Texas, City Directory* (U.S. City Directories, 1822–1995. Ancestry.com, 1930); *Houston, Texas, City Directory* (U.S. City Directories, 1822–1995. Ancestry.com, 1940).

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Table 2. Lyons Avenue Businesses in 1930 and 1940 City Directories⁷⁶

Name/Business	Intersection	Address	Year
Burke Lumber Company	Lyons Ave. and Benson St.	4118–4120 Lyons Ave.	1930
P. W. Watts/Drug Store	Lyons Ave. and Benson St.	4119–4121 Lyons Ave.	1930
G. H. Moore/Restaurant	Lyons Ave. and San Antonio & Aransas Pass Railroad	4201 Lyons Ave.	1930
Edward Loonam/Grocery	Lyons Ave. and Copeland St.	4300 Lyons Ave.	1930
Michale Bus/Grocery	Lyons Ave. and Tralle St.	4412 Lyons Ave.	1930
Thomas Blake/Grocery	Lyons Ave. and Dan St.	4520 Lyons Ave.	1930
R. Shelton/Barber	Lyons Ave. and Dan St.	4521 Lyons Ave.	1930
Louis White Grocery	Lyons Ave. and Benson St.	4101 Lyons Ave.	1940
Louis White Service Station	Lyons Ave. and Benson St.	4102 Lyons Ave.	1940
Hailey Lumber Company	Lyons Ave. and Benson St.	4116–4118 Lyons Ave.	1940
Fred Marshall/Printers	Lyons Ave. and Benson St.	4121 Lyons Ave.	1940
Lyons Avenue Eat Shop	Lyons Ave. and Featherstone St.	4201 Lyons Ave.	1940
Ellen's Place Restaurant	Lyons Ave. and Featherstone St.	4201 Lyons Ave.	1940
Thompson Drug Store	Lyons Ave. and Featherstone St.	4202 Lyons Ave.	1940
Thompson Service Station	Lyons Ave. and Featherstone St.	4202 Lyons Ave.	1940
Leon Powell/Barber	Lyons Ave. and Featherstone St.	4202 1/2 Lyons Ave.	1940
Jacquet's Tasty Shop/Confectioners	Lyons Ave. and Copeland St.	4303 Lyons Ave.	1940
Lyons Avenue Beauty Salon	Lyons Ave. and Copeland St.	4311 Lyons Ave.	1940
Lang's Place Dry Cleaners	Lyons Ave. and Copeland St.	4312 Lyons Ave.	1940
Lang's Café	Lyons Ave. and Copeland St.	4312 Lyons Ave.	1940
Lang's Service Station	Lyons Ave. and Copeland St.	4312 Lyons Ave.	1940
Lang's Ice Cream Shop	Lyons Ave. and Copeland St.	4312 Lyons Ave.	1940

⁷⁶ The available records for the Houston City Directories from 1950–1959 is incomplete, so information from those years was not incorporated into the table.

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Name/Business	Intersection	Address	Year
Your City Soda Company	Lyons Ave. and Waco St.	4407 Lyons Ave.	1940
Le Blanc Drug Store	Lyons Ave. and Waco St.	4407 Lyons Ave.	1940
Joyce Cleaners	Lyons Ave. and Waco St.	4407 Lyons Ave.	1940
Bua's Grocery and Market	Lyons Ave. and Tralle St.	4412 Lyons Ave.	1940
Dorn and Dorn Furniture	Lyons Ave. and Tralle St.	4416 Lyons Ave.	1940
Paul's Shoe Shop	Lyons Ave. and Tralle St.	4417 1/2 Lyons Ave.	1940
Avalon Barbecue Inn	Lyons Ave. and Dan St.	4520 Lyons Ave.	1940
Wynne's Service Shop	Lyons Ave. and Yates St.	4601 Lyons Ave.	1940
Centennial Grill	Lyons Ave. and Yates St.	4603 Lyons Ave.	1940

Although predominantly Black by this time, Jewish and Italian immigrants also lived and worked in the area. The presence of European immigrants in or near Black neighborhoods was common during this period, as anti-immigrant sentiment following World War I similarly limited their housing options.⁷⁷ Immigrant business owners often welcomed Black consumers and frequently advertised in Black newspapers, creating a degree of commercial integration amid a segregated landscape.⁷⁸ Italian immigrants, the Bua and Coghlan⁷⁹ families each operated grocery stores on Lyons Avenue.⁸⁰ No longer extant, the Bua Grocery and Market operated at 4112 Lyons Avenue at least through the mid-1940s.⁸¹ By 1960, the Coghlan Grocery Store was at 4410 Lyons Avenue (**Map 3**, Map ID 29A); in operation today, it is the Lyons Grocery Store.⁸²

Black commercial corridors were shaped by segregation, limited investment, and the need for institutions that could support community life when access to white business districts was restricted. During the Jim Crow era, Black Houstonians were unwelcome consumers on main streets in downtown Houston and other commercial services outside of their neighborhoods. When permitted access to other shops, they had to use separate entrances and service was inferior to that of which other patrons received. Out of necessity, Black entrepreneurs developed main streets with businesses and services in their enclaves and neighborhoods. These corridors grew around churches, fraternal lodges, cultural venues, and civic organizations as safe spaces to sell and purchase goods, develop economic independence, and build community autonomy.⁸³ Discriminatory policies that limited financing and public investment resulted in buildings that were frequently altered or repurposed gradually, with repairs made as resources allowed. Over time, this produced commercial landscapes that were more dispersed, varied, and institution centered than the linear, retail dense main streets typical of white or formally planned districts.⁸⁴ By the 1930s,

⁷⁷ Pruitt, *The Other Great Migration*.

⁷⁸ Steptoe, *Houston Bound*.

⁷⁹ The store and surname appear with multiple spellings, including Coughland, Coughlin, and Coughlan, with Coghlan the most common usage.

⁸⁰ *Houston Chronicle*, "Armour's Star Franks Now on Sale at These Fine Food Stores," January 21, 1960, 6; *Houston Post*, "The Face of Houston," June 14, 1938, 5.

⁸¹ *Houston Post*, "Save Used Household Fats for Ammunition," October 29, 1948, Section 2:2.

⁸² *Houston Chronicle*, "Armour's Star Franks Now on Sale at These Fine Food Stores".

⁸³ Pruitt, *The Other Great Migration*; Steptoe, *Houston Bound*.; Tom Hanchett, *Sorting Out the New South City: Race, Class, and Urban Development in Charlotte, 1875-1975* (The University of North Carolina Press, 2020).

⁸⁴ Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*

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the Fourth Ward was the city's largest Black economic hub, home to 95 percent of Black-owned businesses, with similar, if smaller, commercial corridors developing in the Third Ward along Dowling Street and in the Fifth Ward on Lyons Avenue.⁸⁵

Churches were a common part of Black main street as anchors of the community. Since they offered opportunities for shared worship experiences and social gatherings, church congregations created networks for political and charitable activities.⁸⁶ In 1865, Black residents in the Fifth Ward established the Mount Vernon United Methodist Church, which remains active today. Five other Fifth Ward congregations have histories spanning more than a century: the Pleasant Grove Baptist, Mount Pleasant Baptist, Sloan Memorial United Methodist, Payne Chapel Methodist, and First Shiloh Missionary Baptist churches.⁸⁷ The First Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church at 4420 Lyons Avenue is in the district (**Map 3**, Map ID 32A).

Entertainment venues were similarly common on Black main streets. A growing city with a swelling Black population, Houston attracted traveling Black musicians seeking audiences and income. Professional musicians were supported by urban wages that helped build a viable music scene after World War I. A form of blues music flourished in Texas during the Jazz Age—a mix of Texas blues, piano blues, ragtime, and zydeco.⁸⁸ Following World War I, Black dance halls and music clubs in Houston featured both local artists and touring bands. By 1930, Houston had developed an infrastructure for Black entertainment that bolstered Black consumerism.⁸⁹

Lyons Avenue in the Fifth Ward, 1940s to 1960s

At mid-century, Houston's burgeoning Black population relied on segregated commercial and cultural corridors for the activities of daily life. From 1940 to 1950, Houston's population increased from 384,514 to 596,163. The Black population expanded about 45 percent, increasing from 86,302 to 125,400; the proportion in the total population remained around 21 percent.⁹⁰ Entrepreneurs opened businesses and services to accommodate this population growth and benefit financially. The Lyons Avenue commercial corridor expanded with Black-owned movie theaters, motels, eateries, groceries, and shops. The corridor solidified the Fifth Ward as a place where families could live comfortably, be served and entertained, and participate in communal institutions and organizations.⁹¹ During the period, Lyons Avenue had replaced the Fourth Ward's San Felipe Road (now West Dallas Street) as Houston's prominent Black main street.⁹²

(Liveright, 2017).

⁸⁵ Beeth and Wintz, *Black Dixie*; Pruitt, *The Other Great Migration*; Steptoe, *Houston Bound*.

⁸⁶ Pruitt, *The Other Great Migration*.

⁸⁷ Kleiner, "Exploring the Rich History and Culture of Houston's Fifth Ward".

⁸⁸ Kleiner, "Exploring the Rich History and Culture of Houston's Fifth Ward"; Pruitt, *The Other Great Migration*; Steptoe, *Houston Bound*.

⁸⁹ Steptoe, *Houston Bound*.

⁹⁰ Keller, *Make Haste Slowly: Moderates, Conservatives, and School Desegregation in Houston*, 9.; Census Office U.S. Department of the Interior, 1940 Census: Population of the United States (1940); Census Office U.S. Department of the Interior, 1950 Census: Population of the United States (1950).

⁹¹ Frazier, "The Nickel"; Pando, "In the Nickel"; Steptoe, *Houston Bound*.

⁹² Beeth and Wintz, *Black Dixie*, 164; Pando, "In the Nickel".

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Commerce

By the 1950s, several businesses lined Lyons Avenue between Benson and Yates streets: four restaurants, two filling stations, two grocery stores, an icehouse, a furniture store, a confectioner's shop, a dry cleaners, and 19 other stores or businesses.⁹³ Several of these commercial buildings remain extant, reflecting the corridor's role as a neighborhood commercial hub. The Lyons Theater, at 4030 Lyons Avenue, was constructed around 1940 and operated until the mid-1950s; the building now serves as the Latter Day Deliverance Revival Church (**Map 3**, Map ID 1A).⁹⁴ By 1940, Louis White owned and operated his eponymous grocery store at 4101 Lyons Avenue (**Map 3**, Map ID 2); the original building was replaced in 1955 and is extant.⁹⁵ Two commercial blocks at the Lyons Avenue/Tralle Street intersection housed more commerce: the 1940 building at 4409 Lyons Avenue, now Golightly's Barber Shop (**Map 3**, Map ID 23A), and the 1938 building at 4414 Lyons Avenue that housed Perfecto Cleaners from the 1950s–1990s, now Fly Kutz Barber Lounge (**Map 3**, Map ID 30).⁹⁶ The Coghlan Grocery Store at 4410 Lyons Avenue, now Lyons Grocery Store (**Map 3**, Map ID 29A), was constructed in about 1955. By 1962, the Della Apartment Hotel, now the Sunrise Motel, was constructed at 4204 Lyons Avenue (**Map 3**, Map ID 17A). Reagan's Shoe and Boot Repair at 4209 Lyons Avenue operated from a converted dwelling by the early 1970s (**Map 3**, Map ID 11).⁹⁷

Health Care

During the Jim Crow era, segregation severely restricted health care access for Black Houstonians, as most hospitals only permitted white physicians and limited care for Black patients to segregated wards. To address this, Black physicians and communities established their own hospitals and health care facilities. People's Sanitarium, established in 1911 on Andrews Street in the Fourth Ward, was an early local facility. In 1919, Black physicians founded Union Hospital at Howard and Nash streets in the Fourth Ward with six beds and an operating room.⁹⁸ By 1923, it had relocated to Andrews Street and was renamed the Union-Jeremiah Hospital. As overcrowding persisted, hospital founders and Black physicians lobbied for a larger facility. Their advocacy led to the 1927 opening of the Houston Negro Hospital, later renamed Riverside General Hospital.⁹⁹ By the early 1940s, the city provided fewer than 200 hospital beds to serve all Black Houstonians. This severe shortage prompted local Black doctors, civic leaders, and the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception to raise funds for a facility. On May 18, 1947, the 60-bed St. Elizabeth's Hospital opened at 4514 Lyons Avenue (**Map 3**, Map ID 38A) in the Fifth Ward with an integrated staff of Black and white nurses, nuns, and physicians.¹⁰⁰ St. Elizabeth's Hospital underwent decades of transformation from expansion and desegregation.¹⁰¹

⁹³ Sanborn Map Company, *Houston, Harris County, Texas*, 1924–1951.

⁹⁴ *Houston Chronicle*, "Lyons and DeLuxe Theater"; "Blue Plate Margarine Movie Treat".

⁹⁵ Morrison & Fourmy Directory Company, *Houston, Texas, City Directory*.

⁹⁶ *Houston Chronicle*, "Perfecto Cleaners"; *Houston Post*, "Personals," January 6, 1949, C4.

⁹⁷ Nationwide Environmental Title Research, Harris County, Texas, 1966; Harris County, Texas, 1973.

⁹⁸ Houston Public Library, Union Hospitals, Manuscript 0178, Box 1, Folder 2, Vertical Files, Houston, Medical Hospitals, Houston Public Library, African American Research Center at the Gregory School, n.d.

⁹⁹ Mariah Jade Zimpfer, "Riverside General Hospital: A Legacy of Care for Houston's Underserved," in *Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association, 2022.

¹⁰⁰ Curry-Shearouse and Mod, "St. Elizabeth Hospital".

¹⁰¹ Overcrowding led to expansion between 1958 and 1965. In 1966, St. Elizabeth's received Medicare certification as part of federal desegregation efforts, securing vital funding. The Missionary Sisters operated

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The nation gradually advanced toward civil rights with legislation that promoted health care equality. In 1946, Congress passed the Hill-Burton Act, which provided federal funding for building and upgrading hospitals. The act had a separate-but-equal provision that allowed hospitals access to federal funds as long as they treated Black and white patients with equality. Following the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision that struck down segregated education, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) filed suit to eliminate the same doctrine in hospitals, but the court declined to review its case. A breakthrough came in 1964 when a second NAACP lawsuit resulted in an appeals court decision in *Simkins v. Moses H. Cone Memorial Hospital*, which formally struck down segregation in hospitals. Under President Lyndon B. Johnson, the Office of Equal Health Opportunity in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare was tasked with determining whether hospitals were eligible for federal funding under newly established Medicare and Medicaid programs, furthering the desegregation of health care facilities.¹⁰²

Houston's Black residents and practitioners opened medical facilities along Lyons Avenue, between Benson and Yates streets, adding depth of services to the main street corridor. Medical offices and facilities included the 1946 Beal Brothers Surgical Center at 4120 Lyons Avenue (**Figure 6; Map 3**, Map ID 37), the 1963 office of Dr. J. S. Stone at 4223 Lyons Avenue (**Map 3**, Map ID 13), the ca. 1965 office of Dr. Louis Robey at 4120 Lyons Avenue (**Map 3**, Map ID 7A), and the ca. 1960 Lyons Prescription Pharmacy at 4207 Lyons Avenue (**Map 3**, Map ID 10). The practitioners—the Beal brothers, Louis R. Robey, and J. S. Stone, among others—who operated these clinics became leaders in medicine, imparting distinction to this Black main street.

The Beal Brothers Surgical Center at 4120 Lyons Avenue, directly across from St. Elizabeth's Hospital and constructed in 1946, was established by Black physicians and brothers, Texas-born Anthony Wayne Beal and Perry Weldon Beal. Both graduated from the private historically Black Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee. Perry completed his medical degree in 1935, moved to Houston the following year, and established a practice. Anthony followed in 1943, completing his residency at Homer G. Phillips Hospital in St. Louis, Missouri, the only public hospital for Black patients in that city, before joining his brother in 1945. In 1950, both pursued advanced medical training at the University of Texas postgraduate school of medicine at Houston's Texas Medical Center. The Beal brothers practiced at several Houston institutions, including Riverside General Hospital in the Third Ward and St. Elizabeth's Hospital in the Fifth Ward.¹⁰³ Both became leaders in medical organizations: Perry served as president of the Houston Medical Association, vice president of the National Medical Association, and director of the Houston Negro Chamber of Commerce; Anthony eventually became a regional director for the National Medical

the hospital until 1981, when the Houston-based Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word took over and ran it until closing in 1988. A group of local doctors briefly reopened it as Drew Medical Center in 1989, but it closed again in 1990. The building served as a drug rehabilitation facility starting in 1992, then became the Barbara Jordan Healthcare Facility under the Riverside General Hospital system in 1996. After years of changing ownership, the facility permanently closed in 2014.

¹⁰² Curry-Shearouse and Mod, "St. Elizabeth Hospital"; Jonathan Martin, *Simkins v. Cone* (1963), North Carolina History Project, 2025.

¹⁰³ Shawna D. Williams, "Perry Weldon Beal: Pioneer African American Physician," in *Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association, 2017; "Anthony Wayne Beal: Pioneer Physician and Civil Rights Activist," in *Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association, 2020.

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Association and president of the Houston Medical Forum.¹⁰⁴ After Perry relocated to Los Angeles in mid-1952, he continued practicing medicine and served as president of the Medical, Dental, and Pharmaceutical Association.¹⁰⁵ At the time of its construction, the Beals' clinic served Black patients in ". . . one of the most modernly equipped clinics of its kind in Houston." Designed by architects Robbins & Chase and built by contractor William J. Kettle, the fully air-conditioned one-and-a-half-story brick and masonry building had 22 rooms, including an X-ray laboratory, patient conference rooms, a library, and a dispensary.¹⁰⁶

The obstetrics and gynecology office that Dr. J. S. Stone operated was at 4223 Lyons Avenue beginning around 1960. After graduating from Meharry Medical College in 1956, Stone settled in Houston's Fifth Ward; by 1963, he had built an obstetrics and gynecology facility in front of his home.¹⁰⁷ Over the course of his career, he was president of the Houston Medical Forum, founded the St. Elizabeth's Hospital of Houston Foundation, contributed to numerous city boards, and later became a licensed funeral director.¹⁰⁸

Dr. Louis R. Robey established a clinic at 4120 Lyons Avenue around 1965. Son of local music entrepreneur Don D. Robey, he graduated from Meharry Medical College. He had established his medical practice in Houston in 1955, affiliated with St. Elizabeth's Hospital, Houston Negro Hospital, and Lockwood Hospital.¹⁰⁹ By 1957, he was chief of surgery, and by 1959, he had been elected president of staff at both the Houston Negro and St. Elizabeth's hospitals.¹¹⁰ That year, Robey became the first Black physician in Texas elected to the American College of Surgeons at its 45th annual congress.¹¹¹

At least one other health care-related business in the district was the Lyons Prescription Pharmacy at 4207 Lyons Avenue, constructed around 1960. It housed several Fifth Ward businesses over the years including the Pollards Fish Market during the late 1960s.¹¹² By 1971, the location had transformed into the Lyons Prescription Pharmacy, announced in the *Houston Chronicle* that year.¹¹³

Entertainment

The Fifth Ward was a pivotal location for entertainment venues as rhythm and blues music took the stage. Louisiana-born Louis Wilton Dickerson owned the first venue in the Fifth Ward, Club Matinee on Lyons Avenue, next door to the Crystal Hotel. Don D. Robey opened the Bronze Peacock Dinner Club on Erastus Street in the Fifth Ward, an integrated space in a legally segregated city that

¹⁰⁴ *Houston Chronicle*, "Dr. A. W. Beal Heads Local Medical Forum," December 8, 1950, C3.

¹⁰⁵ Williams, "Perry Weldon Beal: Pioneer African American Physician".

¹⁰⁶ *Houston Chronicle*, "Negro Clinic"; *Houston Chronicle*, "Modern Clinic Complete".

¹⁰⁷ *Houston Chronicle*, "Negro Doctors Back Sit-Ins Youth Group," February 26, 1961, Section 1:20; Nationwide Environmental Title Research, Excerpt of Harris County, Texas, 1976, Aerial Image.

¹⁰⁸ *Houston Chronicle*, "Dr. J. S. Stone," January 10, 2015, Obituary.

¹⁰⁹ *Houston Chronicle*, "Negro Doctor Is Honored by Surgeons," October 7, 1959, Section 2:1.

¹¹⁰ *Houston Post*, "Wonder Drugs Called Wrong for Some Patients," June 11, 1957, page 6 section 1; "Dr. Robey Is First Houston Negro in Surgeons Society," October 7, 1959, page 13 section 11.

¹¹¹ *Houston Post*, "Dr. Robey Is First Houston Negro in Surgeons Society".

¹¹² *Houston Post*, "H. Mewhinney: Kountze's Claim to an Exclusive Commodity Is Challenged," February 6, 1967, Section 3:3.

¹¹³ *Houston Chronicle*, "Pharmacy," April 11, 1971, 38.

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promoted rhythm and blues performers and attracted white patrons. The club became part of the national touring circuit for Black performers and bands.¹¹⁴ In 1949, Robey founded Peacock Records to record Texas blues guitarist Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown. Peacock Records was influential locally and on the national scene. In 1953, Robey purchased the Memphis-based Duke Records label and other smaller labels, forming Duke-Peacock Records.¹¹⁵ The building was at 4104 Lyons Avenue before its demolition.¹¹⁶ Other music clubs in the Fifth Ward were the De Luxe or Roxy and Club Paradise. Louisiana Creole musicians in Frenchtown popularized zydeco music in Houston. The Continental Ballroom, founded by Doris McClendon, opened in 1951. More juke joints and zydeco clubs followed, including Alfred's Place, owned by Curley Cormier and opened in 1962, which promoted local zydeco bands.¹¹⁷

Religious

Three churches were established on Lyons Avenue at mid-century. The Porter Institutional Christian Methodist Episcopal (CME) Church was built in 1952 at 4315 Lyons Avenue (**Map 3**, Map ID 15A). Miles Chapel CME Church had become the occupant by 1951.¹¹⁸ The First Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church was constructed at 4420 Lyons Avenue in 1954 (**Map 3**, Map ID 32A); founded in 1891, the congregation is among the oldest in Fifth Ward.¹¹⁹ Founded in 1953, the Latter Day Deliverance Revival Church converted the Lyons Theater at 4030 Lyons Avenue into its facility in about 1977 (**Map 3**, Map ID 1A).¹²⁰

Social

Buildings along Lyons Avenue, as a Black main street, housed social establishments. Social organizations that sought to improve the quality of life for Black Americans included fraternal lodges. The first organized in Texas was the 1871 Prince Hall Grand Lodge founded in Galveston. Soon after, local fraternal and sororal chapters formed across the state. Civic and political agendas forwarded their ideals with practical benefits to members that included life insurance and death benefits.¹²¹ In the Fifth Ward, the True Level Lodge #226, organized in 1906, occupied the ca. 1952 True Level Building at 4212 Lyons Avenue until its 2025 demolition.¹²²

Desegregation and Lyons Avenue

Several Black physicians with offices located in the district played a key role during the civil rights movement, helping elevate Lyons Avenue as a Black main street. During the 1950s, Black physicians challenged segregation in the courts, fighting discrimination that extended far beyond

¹¹⁴ Steptoe, *Houston Bound*.

¹¹⁵ Pando, "In the Nickel".; An Official Texas Historical Marker (Texas Historical Commission Atlas Number 5507016494) commemorates Robey and Peacock Records at the neighboring 4120 Lyons Avenue

¹¹⁶ *Houston Chronicle*, "Robey's Place in R & B History Goes on Record," April 16, 2011, 1A; Texas Historical Commission, "Peacock Records, Houston, Harris County, Texas," (2010), Official Texas Historical Marker.

¹¹⁷ Steptoe, *Houston Bound*.

¹¹⁸ Sanborn Map Company, *Houston, Harris County, Texas*, Volume 8, Sheet 829, ProQuest Digital Sanborn Maps, 1867–1970, 1924–1951, Fire Insurance Map.

¹¹⁹ Texas Historical Commission, "First Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church, Houston, Harris County, Texas".

¹²⁰ Latter Day Deliverance Revival Church, About Us, 2025.

¹²¹ Alwyn Barr, *Black Texans: A History of African Americans in Texas, 1525–1995* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1995); Pruitt, *The Other Great Migration*.

¹²² True Level Lodge #226, History, 2025.

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health care. In 1950, Dr. Anthony Beal joined four other Black golfers in filing a federal district court lawsuit against the city after being denied access to Houston's Hermann Park Golf Course.¹²³ The district court initially ruled against them, but their determination proved fruitful when the circuit court reversed the decision in 1951. The city subsequently appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, which ruled on the case during its 1953–1954 term and upheld the right to bar Black citizens from municipal golf courses.¹²⁴ However, in May of 1954, the Houston City Council unanimously voted to end segregation of three municipal golf courses. Beal was among the first Black golfers permitted to play at Hermann Park following the ruling, a milestone in the desegregation of Houston's public facilities.¹²⁵

Black physicians were community leaders, using their resources and influence to confront segregation and advance social change throughout the 1960s.¹²⁶ The Houston Medical Forum, a local organization for Black physicians, was a financial supporter of the Progressive Youth Association.¹²⁷ In 1960, students from Texas Southern University (TSU) in Houston had established the Progressive Youth Association, led by TSU student Eldrewey Stearnes. On March 4, 1960, Stearnes and 13 fellow TSU students organized Houston's first sit-in at the lunch counter at Weingarten's Grocery Store to protest segregation.¹²⁸ Later that year, a group of students were arrested after a sit-in protest at the Union Lunchroom in Houston. Members of the Houston Medical Forum, including Lyons Avenue physician J. S. Stone, posted the students' bonds.¹²⁹ By 1961, numerous downtown lunch counters had integrated as a result of the association's demonstrations.¹³⁰

Desegregation unfolded gradually in Houston, with progress in health care, education, and public accommodations occurring throughout the 1960s. Educational opportunities for Black students in Houston remained severely limited during the segregation era, reflecting the broader inequalities of the Jim Crow system.¹³¹ In 1951, Houston had three senior high schools for Black students. The Phillis Wheatley High School, which opened at Lyons Avenue and Gregg Street, west of the district, in 1927, became one of the largest in the United States.¹³² The Fifth Ward and Wheatley High School produced many notable figures, including Congresswoman Barbara Jordan and Congressman Mickey Leland; musicians Arnett Cobb, Milton Larkin, and Illinois Jacquet; boxer George Foreman; and civil rights activist Dr. Lonnie Smith.¹³³ Despite the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, Houston, like most Southern cities, largely ignored the ruling. The construction

¹²³ *Houston Chronicle*, "Golf, Continued," June 3, 1954, A7; *Houston Post*, "Negro Golfers Play at 2 Public Courses," June 3, 1954, Section 3:2.

¹²⁴ *Houston Chronicle*, "City Golf Segregation Decision Due Shortly," October 12, 1953, A9; "Golf, Continued"; *Houston Post*, "Negro Golfers Play at 2 Public Courses".

¹²⁵ *Houston Chronicle*, "Golf, Continued".

¹²⁶ Beatrix Hoffman, *The Medical Civil Rights Movement and Access to Health Care*, National Library of Medicine, 2016.

¹²⁷ *Houston Chronicle*, "Negro Doctors Back Sit-Ins Youth Group".

¹²⁸ Keller, *Make Haste Slowly: Moderates, Conservatives, and School Desegregation in Houston*.

¹²⁹ *Houston Chronicle*, "Negro Doctors Back Sit-Ins Youth Group".

¹³⁰ Michael Anderson, "Eldrewey Stearns and Houston's Student Civil Rights Movement," *Houston History* 14, no. 2 (2017).

¹³¹ Keller, *Make Haste Slowly: Moderates, Conservatives, and School Desegregation in Houston*.

¹³² Kleiner, "Exploring the Rich History and Culture of Houston's Fifth Ward".

¹³³ Pando, "In the Nickel"; Richard West, "Only the Strong Survive," *Texas Monthly*, February 1979.

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of the Astrodome in 1965 as an integrated public space helped accelerate local desegregation, which extended to hotels and theaters by the early 1960s. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 strengthened public school desegregation by linking federal funding to integration and prohibiting discrimination in public accommodations while expanding protections for voting rights.¹³⁴

Desegregation disrupted the economic and social foundations of Black main streets throughout the United States. As residents and businesses moved into newly accessible areas, long-standing Black commercial corridors experienced sharp declines in economic activity and community cohesion.¹³⁵ While Black consumers began shopping at formerly segregated businesses throughout the city, white customers rarely visited Black-owned establishments, causing these businesses to lose their customer base.¹³⁶ Following the Fair Housing Act of 1968 and subsequent legal changes aimed to eliminate race-based housing restrictions, new suburban developments attracted middle-class Black families, leading to the economic decline of neighborhoods like the Fifth Ward.¹³⁷ As Fifth Ward residents dispersed across Houston, the neighborhood experienced rising abandonment, poverty, and crime.¹³⁸ Escalating violence twisted a mild nickname for the neighborhood into the epithetic “Bloody Nickel,” “Bloody Fifth,” or “Pearl Harbor.”¹³⁹ These negative monikers first appeared in white-owned newspapers in the 1940s in reports on neighborhood crime and were later adopted by some Fifth Ward residents.¹⁴⁰ In 1969, Fifth Ward Black musician Juke Boy Bonner wrote songs that issued warning to “Stay off Lyons Avenue” or it could be “the last place you’ll be seen.”¹⁴¹ By this time, the Fifth Ward and Lyons Avenue became associated with poverty and crime as disinvestment and neglect transformed the area.¹⁴²

Lyons Avenue, 1960 to 1980s

In the Fifth Ward, a major private urban renewal initiative took shape in 1969. The Moncrief-Lenoir Manufacturing Company invested \$10 million to acquire roughly 30 acres along the western end of Lyons Avenue, aiming to clear deteriorated structures and redevelop the area for commercial use. At the time, it was projected to be one of the largest privately funded urban renewal projects in the country. After demolition, efforts to attract businesses to the area failed and the promised revitalization eluded the neighborhood.¹⁴³

Systematic underinvestment in communities led to their stigmatization as “slums” or “blighted” areas, designations that carried lasting consequences. In 1949, Congress passed the Federal Housing Act, granting local governments funding and authority to seize and demolish private and

¹³⁴ Keller, *Make Haste Slowly: Moderates, Conservatives, and School Desegregation in Houston*; Scardino, *Improbable Metropolis*.

¹³⁵ Pruitt, *The Other Great Migration*.

¹³⁶ Frazier, “The Nickel”; Pando, “In the Nickel”.

¹³⁷ Emmett, Houston’s Freeways.

¹³⁸ Frazier, “The Nickel”.

¹³⁹ *Houston Post*, “The Face of Houston”; Pando, “In the Nickel”; West, “Only the Strong Survive”.

¹⁴⁰ *Houston Post*, “W. H. Keagans, Peaceful Peace Officer for 45 Years, Dies Here,” October 20, 1943, 12; Gregg Reese, “Heavyweight Champion George Foreman Dies at 76,” *Our Weekly*, 2025.

¹⁴¹ Frazier, “The Nickel”.

¹⁴² Frazier, “The Nickel”; Pando, “In the Nickel”.

¹⁴³ Mark Heckmann, “Fifth Ward Project Never Got off the Ground,” *Houston Chronicle*, October 4, 1976, 5; *Houston Chronicle*, “Ten Million Spent in Fifth Ward Project,” December 11, 1969, 4.

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public property for the purpose of improving aging infrastructure.¹⁴⁴ The first wave of funding began in 1950 as post–World War II federal aid to cities. Across the country, land labeled slums or blighted was acquired and cleared to make way for commercial improvements, multiple-family housing complexes, or highway development projects.¹⁴⁵ By 1965, the federal government had committed \$7.6 billion to urban renewal efforts in 827 communities in 40 states. The consequences of urban renewal included the destruction of historic buildings, the displacement of vulnerable families, and the removal and closure of small businesses.¹⁴⁶

Although Houston ranked as the seventh largest city in the United States by 1960, it did not participate in the federally funded urban renewal program because eligibility for federal aid required cities to adopt formal zoning laws.¹⁴⁷ Without official zoning ordinances, Houston's land use has long been shaped by a mix of local ordinances, private covenants, and redevelopment plans. This approach enabled transformations of the urban landscape, clearing the way for highways, commercial corridors, and large-scale developments. In place of city-led zoning, Houston relied on deed restrictions, landscape rules, and private regulations, effectively shifting land use authority from public institutions to private entities.¹⁴⁸

The district was most impacted by Houston's mid-century freeway expansion which targeted redlined communities. Transit development became a defining feature of urban planning, often intersecting with patterns of racial segregation and displacement, diminishing the role of Black main streets across the country. But long before Houston's freeways were built, city planners already understood the city's racial and economic layout. The 1929 City Planning Commission for Houston called for racial segregation enforced by zoning laws in the Second, Third, Fourth, and Fifth wards. This zoning proposal never passed, but housing restrictions, such as 1930s redlining policies, enforced segregation.¹⁴⁹ Redlining maps emerged in the 1930s as a federally sanctioned method of exclusion to prevent Black Americans from accessing homeownership. In 1933, during the Great Depression, the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) was established to stabilize homeownership. To assess lending risk, HOLC created color-coded residential maps for 239 major cities, including those in Texas. Neighborhoods were graded from A to D, with D areas marked in red to signify "hazardous" investments. In practice, predominantly Black neighborhoods were routinely assigned the lowest rating, regardless of economic status or location.¹⁵⁰

Redlining maps and segregation policies shaped Houston's freeway planning and later construction, disproportionately harming predominantly Black neighborhoods.¹⁵¹ 1949, Houston's freeway plan included Interstate Highway 45, Eastex Freeway/U.S. Highway 59, Interstate Highway 10, and sections of Interstate Highway Loop 610. The plan map aligned closely with Houston's redlined neighborhoods that HOLC had defined.¹⁵² At the time, this included the predominantly

¹⁴⁴ Ann Pfau et al., "Urban Renewal," in *The Inclusive Historian's Handbook*, Press Books, 2023.

¹⁴⁵ Davis, "The Bottom".

¹⁴⁶ Pfau et al., "Urban Renewal".

¹⁴⁷ Charles Culhane, "How Urban Renewal is Helping Many Cities," *Houston Post*, November 21, 1965, 10.

¹⁴⁸ Zhu Qian, "Without Zoning: Urban Development and Land Use Controls in Houston," *Cities, Science Direct* 27, no. 1 (2010).

¹⁴⁹ Emmett, Houston's Freeways.

¹⁵⁰ Qian, "Without Zoning: Urban Development and Land Use Controls in Houston".

¹⁵¹ Emmett, Houston's Freeways; Segregation by Design Houston: Freeways and Urban Renewal, 2025.

¹⁵² Emmett, Houston's Freeways; Texas Freeway, Historic Houston Freeway Planning Maps, 2025.

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Black neighborhoods of the Third, Fourth, and Fifth wards, whose proximities to downtown made them especially vulnerable to disruption.¹⁵³ These projects were part of a broader national push to build interstate highways, reshaping urban landscapes and mobility.¹⁵⁴

Houston's mid-century freeway expansion brought profound disruption to the Fifth Ward, where new highways fractured the neighborhood and isolated its commercial corridor.¹⁵⁵ The development of Houston's freeway system began with the acquisition of the Gulf Freeway right of way in the 1940s and its subsequent opening between 1948 and 1952. In the early 1950s, planning and construction for the Eastex Freeway/U.S. Highway 59, Interstate Highway Loop 610, and Interstate Highway 10 East commenced. Construction of the North Freeway/Interstate Highway 45 began in 1959, and freeway expansion accelerated through the 1960s.¹⁵⁶ Houston's Fifth Ward endured some of the most destructive displacement during freeway construction as the Eastex Freeway/U.S. Highway 59 split its western edge and Interstate Highway 10 divided its southern boundary. The construction of Interstate Highway 10 severed Lyons Avenue, turning it into a dead end at Harbor Street. This disrupted the flow of people and commerce, cut access to nearby residential areas, and diminished its main street role. By the early 1970s, the cumulative impact had transformed Lyons Avenue, contributing to long-term economic and social change.¹⁵⁷ Beginning in the early 1980s, commercial and residential buildings within the district were steadily demolished, and most of the parcels remain undeveloped without reinvestment (NETR 1981, 1982, 1995, 2002, 2026).

Community-led initiatives responded to decades of disinvestment and displacement in Houston's Fifth Ward. In 1967, the City of Houston established the Human Organizational Political and Economic Development (HOPE), an antipoverty agency, headquartered in three buildings along Lyons Avenue. HOPE published the *Voice of Hope* newspaper and offered job training, legal aid, employment assistance, and family education programs.¹⁵⁸ In 1989, with more than 20 percent of parcels vacant or abandoned in the community, the FWCRC was founded to lead neighborhood revitalization. Its efforts focused on new home construction, job training, access to technology, and the arts. During the 1990s, the FWCRC acquired land for redevelopment and partnered with the Fifth Ward Housing Corporation and Habitat for Humanity to build and renovate affordable housing. In 1991, the Fifth Ward Housing Corporation, in collaboration with The Metropolitan Organization, built four single-family homes along Lyons Avenue across from St. Elizabeth's Hospital.¹⁵⁹ Since its founding, the FWCRC and its partners have constructed more than 300 single-family homes, developed two multiple-family complexes, rehabilitated commercial properties, installed public art, and restored historic landmarks.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵³ Emmett, Houston's Freeways; *Houston Chronicle*, "Fourth Ward: An Area Waiting for Some Action," April 25, 1971, 8; Segregation by Design Houston: Freeways and Urban Renewal.

¹⁵⁴ Emmett, Houston's Freeways.

¹⁵⁵ Pando, "In the Nickel"; Emmett, Houston's Freeways.

¹⁵⁶ Emmett, Houston's Freeways; Texas Freeway, IH-10 East, the Baytown-East Freeway, 2025; Understanding Houston, Exploring the Legacy of Redlining in Houston.

¹⁵⁷ Emmett, Houston's Freeways; Pando, "In the Nickel".

¹⁵⁸ Pando, "In the Nickel".

¹⁵⁹ DeSoto, Fifth Ward, 1982–2000, 1989; Pando, "In the Nickel".

¹⁶⁰ Fifth Ward Community Redevelopment Corporation, About Us, 2025.

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Houston's Black Main Streets: Comparable Commercial Corridors

The main street in many American towns and cities historically represented a community's vitality, expressed through its businesses, civic activity, and everyday social life. Its central function was commercial—providing a place where goods were bought and sold or services were provided—but it also served as a cultural and social hub where residents gathered for events, celebrations, and informal connection. Many nineteenth and early twentieth-century Texas main street commercial areas were centered around squares, where a courthouse or other public building or facility sat at the center and main street extended from it; at the intersection of major US or state highways; or along railroads at rail stops. Commercial buildings typically flanked the corridor with one- or two-part commercial block forms, often with shared walls, with shops at street level and residences or offices above. These forms created the classic continuous main street façade. Many buildings used locally available materials and reflected the regional styles of their area. Other buildings evolved from earlier residential or vernacular structures.¹⁶¹

Black main streets often emerged under different conditions in the same communities, shaped by social and economic forces that sharply differed from those influencing other commercial corridors. Segregation, discrimination, and the need for self-sustaining institutions shaped how Black communities built and maintained their commercial life.¹⁶² Black main streets in Houston developed in a dispersed, ad-hoc fashion, shaped less by continuous rows of retail storefronts and more by the institutions that historically anchored Black community life—churches, cultural venues, fraternal halls, and political or civic centers. Segregationist policies restricted access to capital, shaping patterns of development, maintenance, and alteration in Black neighborhoods in ways that differed fundamentally from those in white commercial districts. Buildings were often adapted, expanded, or repurposed over time as resources allowed, and upkeep reflected the incremental, community-driven nature of development. The built environment developed gradually and informally, resulting in a landscape different from the linear, retail-dense main streets common in many white or later-planned districts.¹⁶³

During the early twentieth century, a network of corridors in the Third, Fourth, and Fifth wards supported Houston's Black commerce.¹⁶⁴ Although Black-owned businesses emerged in later Black communities such as Independence Heights, Sunnyside, and Acres Homes, these areas never developed commercial districts on the same scale as those found in the wards.¹⁶⁵ The nearest comparable examples to Lyons Avenue are the Third Ward's Dowling Street and the Fourth Ward's San Felipe Road.

Highway development fractured Dowling Street (now Emancipation Avenue), a cultural and commercial center that emerged as a Black commercial corridor from the 1910s through the early 1950s, with a mix of Black-owned businesses and music venues centered around Emancipation

¹⁶¹ Richard V. Francaviglia, *Main Street Revisited: Time, Space, and Image Building in Small-Town America* (University of Iowa Press, 1996).

¹⁶² Robert E. Weems, *Desegregating the Dollar: African American Consumerism in the Twentieth Century* (NYU Press, 1998).

¹⁶³ Rothstein, *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*.

¹⁶⁴ Pruitt, *The Other Great Migration; Steptoe, Houston Bound*.

¹⁶⁵ Pruitt, *The Other Great Migration*.

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Park,¹⁶⁶ at Dowling and Elgin streets.¹⁶⁷ Between 1910 and 1930, the Black population in the Third Ward grew and Black-owned businesses emerged along Dowling Street, which became the area's main commercial corridor.¹⁶⁸ The El Dorado Ballroom anchored the corridor when it opened in 1939 at Dowling and Elgin streets across from Emancipation Park. By the 1940s, Dowling Street boasted more than 120 stores between Interstate Highway 45 and Alabama Street.¹⁶⁹ However, mid-century interstate construction and the 1981 expansion of State Highway 288 through the Third Ward physically divided its once-connected business and residential districts.¹⁷⁰ Today, Emancipation Avenue near Elgin Street contains only a few historic-age commercial buildings surrounded by scattered nonhistoric-age infill and vacant lots. The Eldorado Ballroom and Emancipation Park are among the few remaining elements that reflect Third Ward's historic Black main street.¹⁷¹

In the Fourth Ward, San Felipe Road (now West Dallas Street), the city's earliest and most prominent main street for the Black population, declined under the pressures of urban renewal, public housing projects, and freeway construction. Also called Freedmen's Town, the Fourth Ward developed as Houston's earliest Black neighborhood after the Civil War. Anchored by the original Colored High School and the Houston Colored Carnegie Library, the restaurants, jazz clubs, and small businesses along San Felipe Road became the commercial and cultural center for Black Houstonians.¹⁷² During the 1930s, it was home to more than 95 percent of the city's Black-owned businesses.¹⁷³ The Fourth Ward, hemmed to the south and west by surrounding developments, lost prominence during the 1940s.¹⁷⁴ The 1944 opening of San Felipe Courts Apartments, an all-white public housing development that replaced one-quarter of Freedmen Town's land, deterred the Black commercial and civic presence. The construction of Interstate Highway 45 and the Pierce Elevated during the 1950s separated the eastern portion of the Fourth Ward from the rest of the community, displacing thousands of residents.¹⁷⁵ In the 1960s, a large area of the community was cleared for office building construction.¹⁷⁶ Between the 1940s and the 1970s, the Fourth Ward lost more than half its population as homes were demolished and businesses closed.¹⁷⁷ In the contemporary landscape, little on West Dallas Street between Interstate Highway 45 and Taft

¹⁶⁶ Following Emancipation, a group of Black Houstonians, led by Rev. Jack Yates, purchased the 10 acres for Emancipation Park in 1872. From 1922 to 1940 it was Houston's only park for African-Americans.

¹⁶⁷ Ezell Wilson, "Third Ward, Steeped in Tradition of Self-reliance and Achievement," *Houston History Magazine* 2011.

¹⁶⁸ Brandon Allen, Third Ward, Houston, Texas, 2019.

¹⁶⁹ Nancy Sarnoff, "Designs Reawaken Dowling Street's Forgotten Past," *Houston Chronicle*, May 14, 2016.

¹⁷⁰ Emmett, Houston's Freeways; Segregation by Design Houston: Freeways and Urban Renewal.

¹⁷¹ Nationwide Environmental Title Research, Harris County, Texas, 1930; Nationwide Environmental Title Research, Harris County, Texas, 1956; Nationwide Environmental Title Research, Harris County, Texas, 1995; Nationwide Environmental Title Research, Harris County, Texas, 2002.

¹⁷² Pruitt, *The Other Great Migration*; Tomiko Meeks, "Freedmen's Town, Texas: A Lesson in the Failure of Historic Preservation," *Houston History Magazine* 2011.

¹⁷³ Beeth and Wintz, *Black Dixie*.

¹⁷⁴ Cary D. Wintz, "The Fourth Ward: A Historic African-American Community in Houston," in *Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association, 2020.

¹⁷⁵ Segregation by Design Houston: Freeways and Urban Renewal; Meeks, "Freedmen's Town, Texas: A Lesson in the Failure of Historic Preservation".

¹⁷⁶ Wintz, "The Fourth Ward: A Historic African-American Community in Houston".

¹⁷⁷ Meeks, "Freedmen's Town, Texas: A Lesson in the Failure of Historic Preservation".

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Street reflects its historic Black main street. The corridor is now dominated by early twenty-first century commercial and residential development or reduced to vacant lots.¹⁷⁸

Amid these mid-twentieth-century disturbances, the Fifth Ward's Lyons Avenue became Houston's leading Black main street with its concentration of businesses, churches, and social institutions.¹⁷⁹ Lyons Avenue experienced the effects of urban renewal and freeway construction later than the Third and Fourth wards, yet it remained a central commercial and cultural corridor for Black Houstonians until highway building and the disinvestment that followed began to erode its role in the late 1960s.¹⁸⁰

Conclusion

The Lyons Avenue Historic District is eligible under Criterion A at the local level of significance, in the areas of Social History and Ethnic Heritage/Black, for its representation of a commercial and cultural corridor in the Fifth Ward. During the early twentieth century, Lyons Avenue emerged as one of Houston's few Black main streets, becoming a center for commerce, cultural life, and collective resilience. Anchored with locally owned businesses, churches, civic institutions, and health care facilities, Lyons Avenue offered essential services that fostered the Black community during an era of segregation and systemic inequality. By the mid-twentieth century, Lyons Avenue was Houston's most prominent Black main street. The period of significance extends from about 1925, the construction date of the earliest-built extant resources in the district, to ca. 1970. This period of significance incorporates post-war changes that disrupted long-standing development patterns on Lyons Avenue—in particular, freeway construction in the 1960s and later urban renewal projects.

¹⁷⁸ Nationwide Environmental Title Research, Harris County, Texas, 1930; Nationwide Environmental Title Research, Harris County, Texas, 1995; Nationwide Environmental Title Research, Harris County, Texas, 2002.

¹⁷⁹ Beeth and Wintz, *Black Dixie*; Pruitt, *The Other Great Migration*; Segregation by Design Houston: Freeways and Urban Renewal.

¹⁸⁰ Beeth and Wintz, *Black Dixie*; Frazier, "The Nickel"; Pando, "In the Nickel".

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Previous documentation on file (NPS): NA

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data: NA

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office: Texas Historical Commission
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository: NA

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): NA

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: 15.6 acres

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates: See continuation sheet 10-1

Datum if other than WGS84: NA

1.	Latitude:	29.776584	Longitude:	-95.323958
2.	Latitude:	29.774882	Longitude:	-95.323933
3.	Latitude:	29.774876	Longitude:	-95.324722
4.	Latitude:	29.775548	Longitude:	-95.324727
5.	Latitude:	29.775549	Longitude:	-95.324871
6.	Latitude:	29.774490	Longitude:	-95.324861
7.	Latitude:	29.774491	Longitude:	-95.325049
8.	Latitude:	29.774620	Longitude:	-95.325050
9.	Latitude:	29.774602	Longitude:	-95.325305
10.	Latitude:	29.775831	Longitude:	-95.325319
11.	Latitude:	29.775827	Longitude:	-95.325481
12.	Latitude:	29.776016	Longitude:	-95.325483
13.	Latitude:	29.776015	Longitude:	-95.325647
14.	Latitude:	29.775823	Longitude:	-95.325645
15.	Latitude:	29.775800	Longitude:	-95.326116
16.	Latitude:	29.775731	Longitude:	-95.326115
17.	Latitude:	29.775719	Longitude:	-95.326586
18.	Latitude:	29.775581	Longitude:	-95.326585
19.	Latitude:	29.775523	Longitude:	-95.328053
20.	Latitude:	29.775661	Longitude:	-95.328055
21.	Latitude:	29.775670	Longitude:	-95.328653
22.	Latitude:	29.775420	Longitude:	-95.328650
23.	Latitude:	29.775412	Longitude:	-95.328977
24.	Latitude:	29.775686	Longitude:	-95.328980
25.	Latitude:	29.775648	Longitude:	-95.329956
26.	Latitude:	29.775939	Longitude:	-95.329959
27.	Latitude:	29.775950	Longitude:	-95.329456
28.	Latitude:	29.776334	Longitude:	-95.329475
29.	Latitude:	29.776353	Longitude:	-95.329318
30.	Latitude:	29.776391	Longitude:	-95.329318

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Verbal Boundary Description: The Lyons Avenue Historic District (**Figure 3**) is roughly bounded by parcels fronting Lyons Avenue beginning east of the intersection with Benson Street, extending east along Lyons Avenue to end at its intersection with Yates Street. One building at the southwest corner of Benson Street and Lyons Avenue is included in the boundary. The district encompasses parts of 5 blocks and the entirety of 57 parcels.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary encompasses a portion of Lyons Avenue with a concentration of extant resources associated with its development as a main street in the predominantly Black Fifth Ward community during the Jim Crow and Civil Rights eras. Although the Fifth Ward community and historical Lyons Avenue corridor extend beyond this boundary, substantial loss of historic fabric and nonhistoric-age infill along Lyons Avenue to the east and west of the district boundary to preclude NRHP listing. Buildings in the boundary represent the most intact collection of properties that retain sufficient historical and physical integrity to convey their significant associations with social history and ethnic heritage.

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Adrienne Vaughan Campbell, Architectural Historian; Brandy Black, Architectural Historian
organization: Stantec Consulting Services Inc.
street & number: 1905 Aldrich Street, Suite 300
city or town: Austin state: Texas zip code: 78723
e-mail: brandy.black@stantec.com; adrienne.campbell@stantec.com
telephone: 512-328-0011
date: July 6, 2026

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** see Maps-1 to Maps-5
 - **Sketch map:** see Maps-5
 - **Additional items:** see Additional Documentation-1 to Additional Documentation-6
-

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
Tier 2 – 120 hours
Tier 3 – 230 hours
Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

Lyons Avenue Historic District

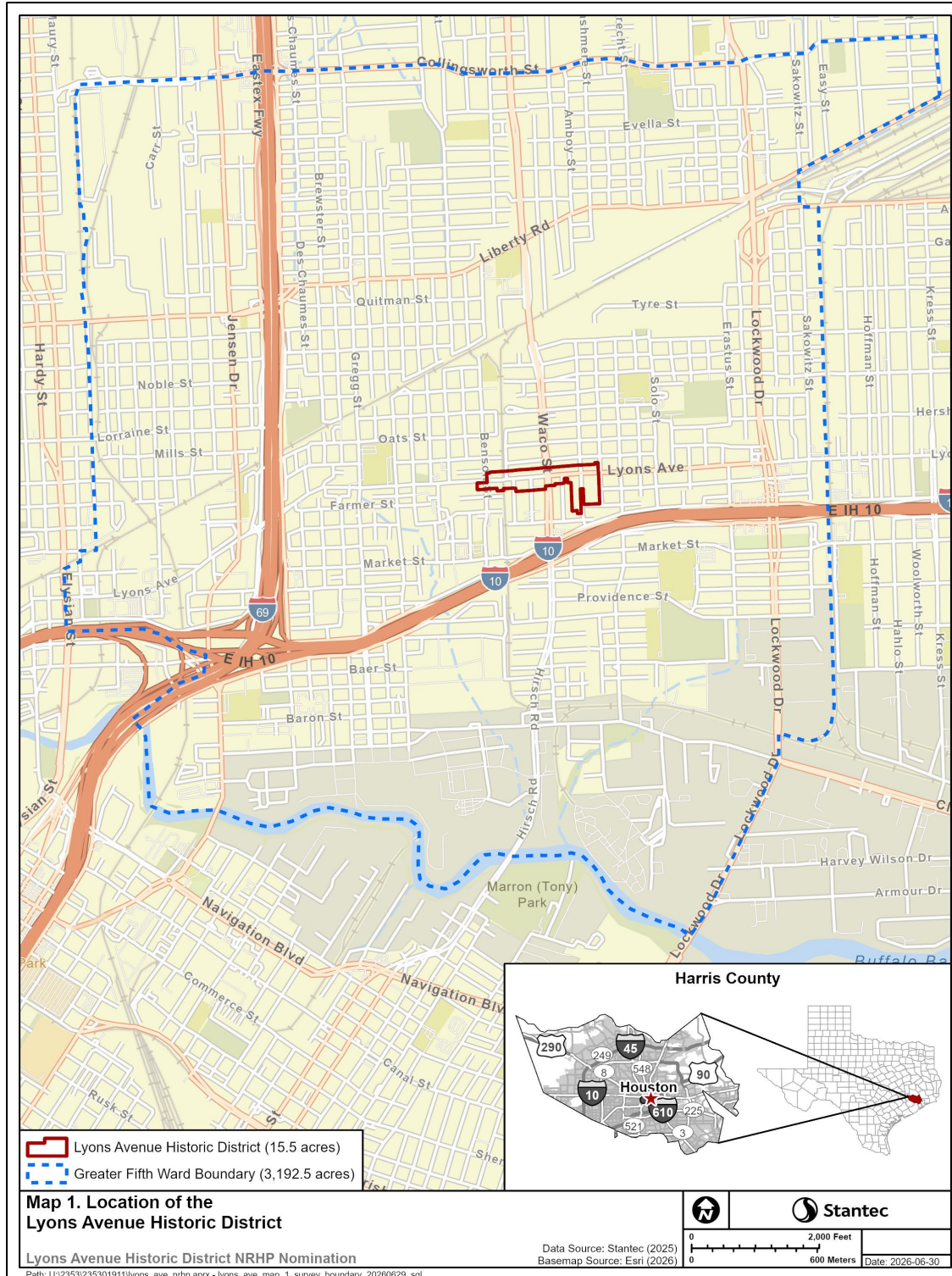
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Maps

Map 1. Location of the Lyons Avenue Historic District, Stantec 2026



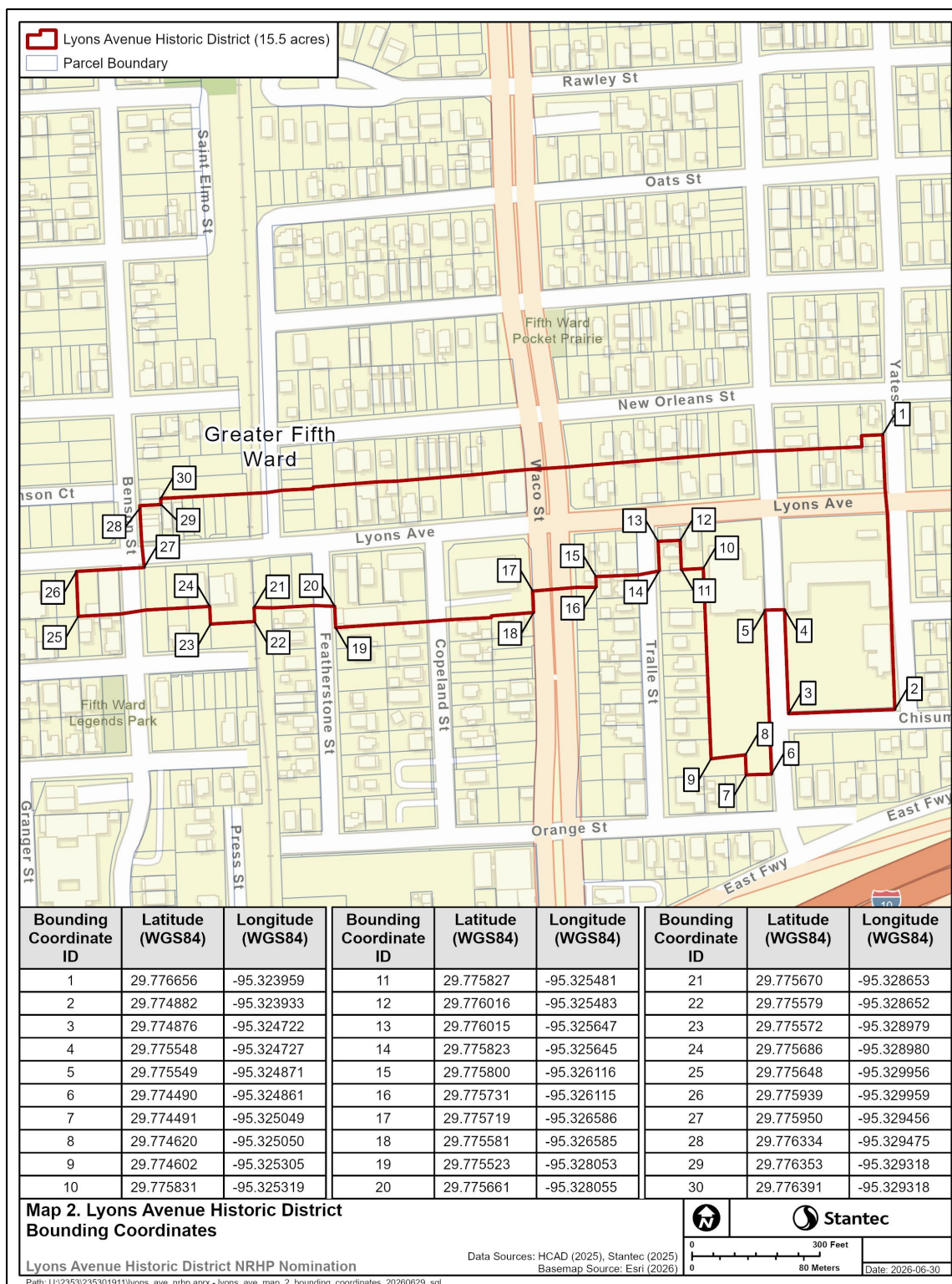
Lyons Avenue Historic District

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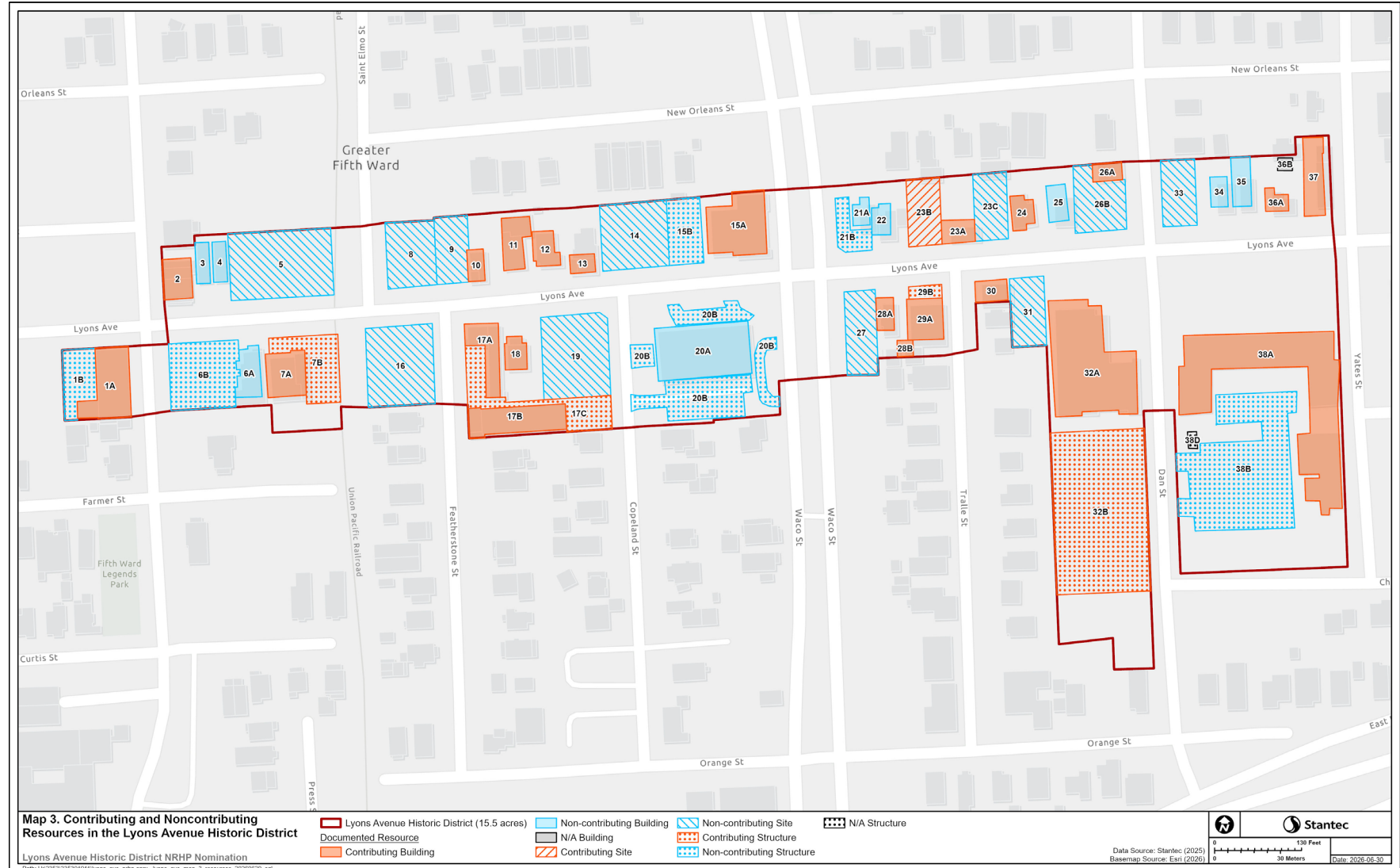
Map 2. Lyons Avenue Historic District Bounding Coordinates, Stantec 2026



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Map 3: Contributing and Noncontributing Resources in the Lyons Avenue Historic District, Stantec 2026



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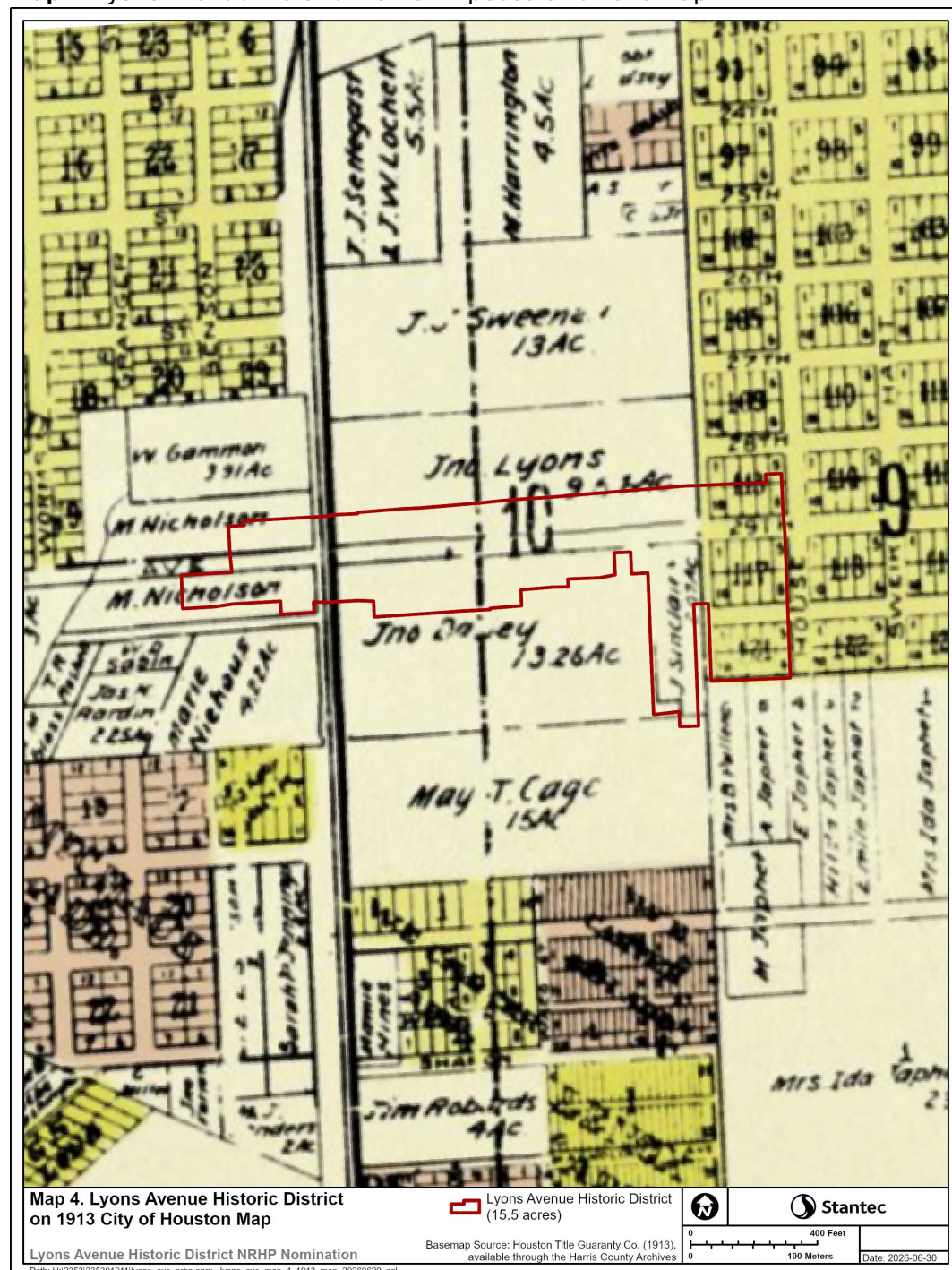
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Map 4: Lyons Avenue Historic District Imposed on a 1913 Map¹⁸¹



¹⁸¹ Houston Title Guaranty Company, *City of Houston, Texas*, Harris County Archives, 1913.

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Figures

Figure 1: The yellow box superimposed on the 1930 historic aerial image shows early development along Lyons Avenue within the historic district. Excerpted and annotated by Stantec.



Lyons Avenue Historic District

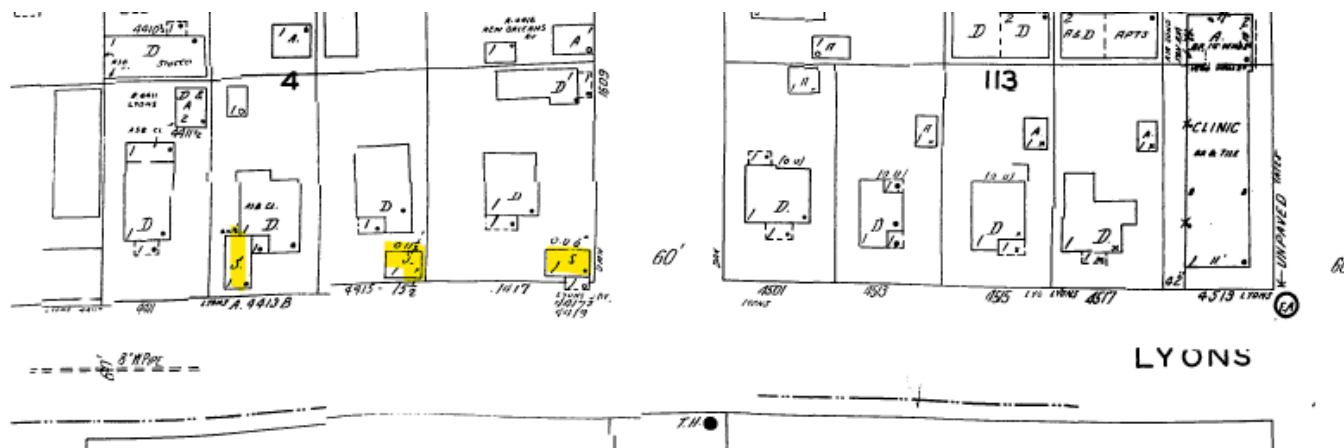
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Figure 1. The yellow highlights superimposed on this 1921–1951 Sanborn map (Vol. 8, Sheet 828) illustrate commercial development on Lyons Avenue parcels that were primarily residential.¹⁸²

Excerpted and annotated by Stantec.



¹⁸² Sanborn Map Company, *Houston, Harris County, Texas*, Volume 8, Sheet 828, ProQuest Digital Sanborn Maps, 1867–1970, 1924–1951, Fire Insurance Map.

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Figure 3. Historic aerial images from 1982 and 2002.¹⁸⁴ The blue boxes overlaid on the 2002 historic aerial highlight comparable vacant lots created by building demolition after 1980 along Lyons Avenue within the district, depicted with a red border. Excerpted and annotated by Stantec.

1980 Historic Aerial



2002 Historic Aerial

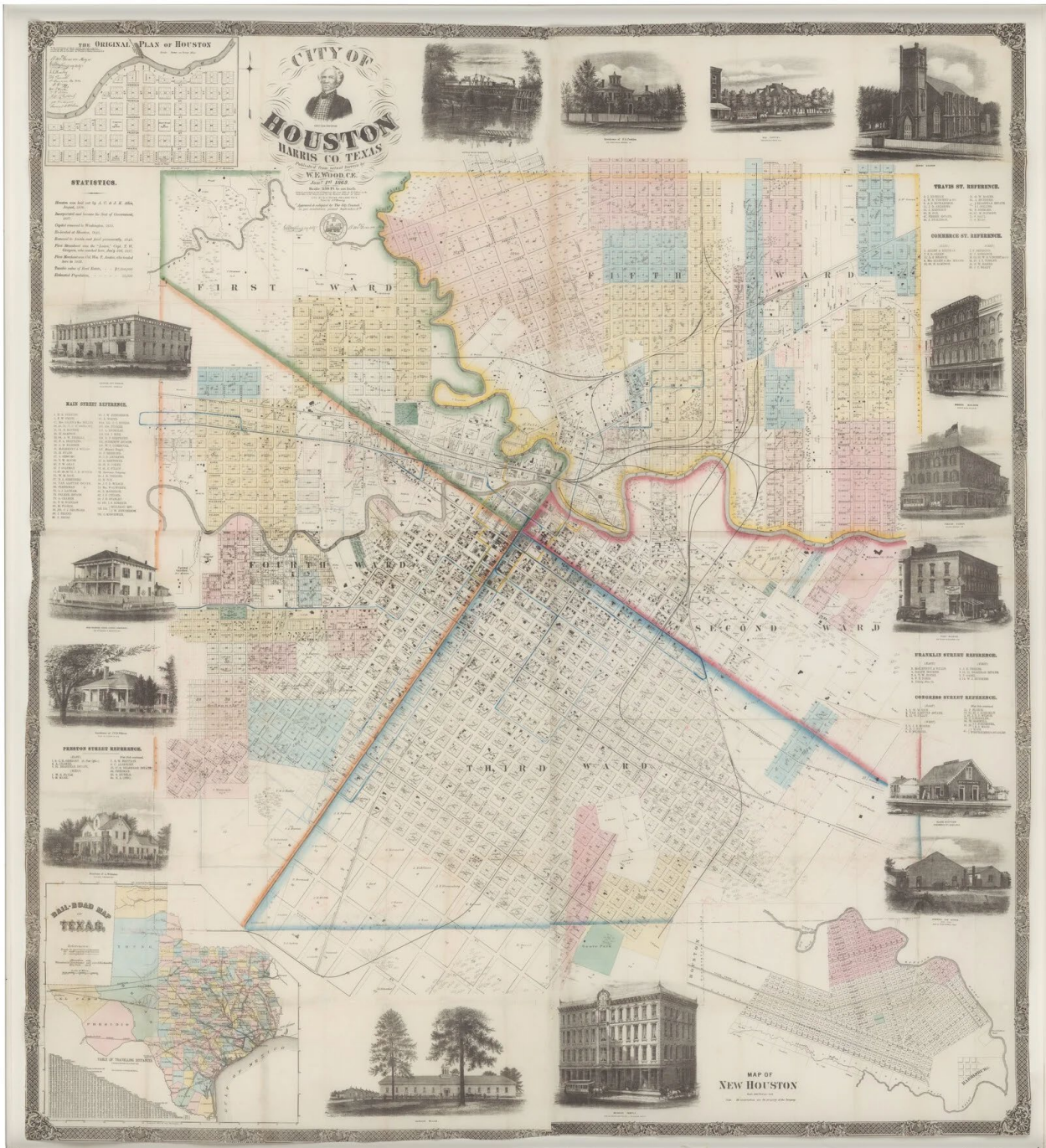


¹⁸⁴ Nationwide Environmental Title Research, Excerpt of Harris County, Texas, 1995, Aerial Image; Nationwide Environmental Title Research, Excerpt of Harris County, Texas, 2002, Aerial Image.

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Figure 4: 1869 Map of Houston depicting Houston's five wards.¹⁸⁵ Sixth Ward was not yet established.



¹⁸⁵ W. E. Wood, City of Houston, Harris Co., Texas 1869, 1869.

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Figure 6: Beal Brothers Medical and Surgical Clinic Post Card, date unknown.¹⁸⁶



¹⁸⁶ City of Houston Planning and Development Department, "Beal Brothers Medical and Surgical Clinic (Post Card)," in *City of Houston Planning and Development Department, Historic Preservation* (n.d.; reprint, repr.).

Lyons Avenue Historic District

Name of Property

Harris County, Texas

County and State

Photographs

Photo Log

Name of Property: Lyons Avenue Historic District

City or Vicinity: Houston

County: Harris State: Texas

Photographer: Adrienne Campbell and Brandy Black, Stantec

Date Photographed: August 5, 2025

Description of Photographs and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 22. TX_HarrisCounty_LyonsAve_0001

The Latter Day Deliverance Revival Church, constructed ca. 1940 as the Lyons Theater, at 4030 Lyons Avenue. View facing south, including the building, its nonhistoric port cochere addition and a portion of the building's nonhistoric parking lot on the right side of the image. The roofline and some exterior materials on the building have been altered.

2 of 22. TX_HarrisCounty_LyonsAve_0002

Streetview at Lyons Avenue and Benson Street. View facing west towards Latter Day Deliverance Revival Church (Former Lyons Theater) at left, empty lot that was historically occupied by housing and other buildings to right.

3 of 22. TX_HarrisCounty_LyonsAve_0003

Louis White Grocery at 4101 Lyons Avenue. View facing north.

4 of 22. TX_HarrisCounty_LyonsAve_0004

Streetview of nonhistoric-age resources along Lyons Avenue near Benson Street. View facing north.

5 of 22. TX_HarrisCounty_LyonsAve_0005

The ca. 1965 Louis Robey Professional Building at 4120 Lyons Avenue. View facing south, showing historic parking area in front and a portion of side parking on left side of image.

6 of 22. TX_HarrisCounty_LyonsAve_0006

Official Texas Historical Marker for Peacock Records at 4120 Lyons Avenue. View facing north.

7 of 22. TX_HarrisCounty_LyonsAve_0007

Streetview of the Lyons Avenue/Saint Elmo Street intersection with the UPRR. View facing west with vacant lots visible at left and right sides of image.

8 of 22. TX_HarrisCounty_LyonsAve_0008

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The 1962 Della Apartments, now the Sunrise Motel, at 4204 Lyons Avenue. View facing southeast. Painted and altered façade and altered roof line visible, as well as replacement signage on historic signpost.

9 of 22. TX_HarrisCounty_LyonsAve_0009

The ca. 1925 dwelling at 4211 Lyons Avenue. View facing northwest, showing partial enclosure of porch and painted brick piers.

10 of 22. TX_HarrisCounty_LyonsAve_0010

The ca. 1963 healthcare facility of Dr. J. S. Stone at 4223 Lyons Avenue. View facing north, showing boarded windows, painted brick, and second story addition and later alterations. The attached residence is no longer extant. The residence on the adjacent lot visible on the right side of the photograph was demolished in 2026.

11 of 22. TX_HarrisCounty_LyonsAve_0011

Streetview of Lyons Avenue at the intersection of Copeland Street. View facing west, showing 4223 Lyons on right side of image and the empty lot that was the location of the True Level Lode until its 2025 demolition on the left side of the image. The lodge's sign is still extant and is visible in the photograph.

12 of 22. TX_HarrisCounty_LyonsAve_0012

The 1952 Miles Chapel CME Church at 4215 Lyons Avenue. View facing north. The ca. 1980 addition is on the left side of the image.

13 of 22. TX_HarrisCounty_LyonsAve_0013

The nonhistoric-age Fifth Ward Redevelopment Council building at the corner of Lyons Avenue and Copeland Street. View facing southeast, showing the building, its surrounding parking lots, and street trees.

14 of 22. TX_HarrisCounty_LyonsAve_0014

Streetview at Lyons Avenue/Waco Street intersection. View facing east, showing Miles Chapel and its nonhistoric parking lot.

15 of 22. TX_HarrisCounty_LyonsAve_0015

The ca. 1925 dwelling at 4408 Lyons Avenue. View facing south. Visible alterations include replacement siding (vinyl), replaced windows, enclosure of a main door, and replacement of some porch supports.

16 of 22. TX_HarrisCounty_LyonsAve_0016

The 1955 Coghlan Grocery Store, now the Lyons Grocery Store, at 4410 Lyons Avenue. View facing southeast, showing historic parking area in front.

17 of 22. TX_HarrisCounty_LyonsAve_0017

The 1938 commercial building at 4414 Lyons Avenue. View facing southwest.

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18 of 22. TX_HarrisCounty_LyonsAve_0018

The 1954 First Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church at 4420 Lyons Avenue. View facing south, showing large lawn and setback from street.

19 of 22. TX_HarrisCounty_LyonsAve_0019

The 1947 NRHP-listed St. Elizabeth's Hospital at 4514 Lyons Avenue. View facing southwest, showing large lawn and setback from street.

20 of 22. TX_HarrisCounty_LyonsAve_0020

The 1946 Beal Brothers Medical and Surgical Center, now vacant, at 4519 Lyons Avenue. View facing northwest. Visible alterations include boarded windows and doors, missing awning fabric, infilled rounded-corner glass block windows.

21 of 22. TX_HarrisCounty_LyonsAve_0021

Streetview at Lyons Avenue/Yates Street intersection. View facing southwest, showing street trees, larger buildings in district (St. Elizabeth's and First Shiloh) on left side of image, residential resources on north side of Lyons on right side of image.

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22 of 22. TX_HarrisCounty_LyonsAve_0022

Cane River Community Garden at 4205 Lyons Avenue. This art installation depicts a timeline of industrial contamination in the Fifth Ward. View facing northeast.

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Current Photographs

Photograph 1. The Latter Day Deliverance Revival Church, constructed ca. 1940 as the Lyons Theater, at 4030 Lyons Avenue (**Map 5**, Map ID 1A). View facing south, including the building, its nonhistoric port cochere addition and a portion of the building's nonhistoric parking lot on the right side of the image. The roofline and some exterior materials on the building have been altered.



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Photograph 2. Streetview at Lyons Avenue and Benson Street. View facing west towards Latter Day Deliverance Revival Church (Former Lyons Theater) at left, empty lot that was historically occupied by housing and other buildings to right.



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Photograph 3: Louis White Grocery at 4101 Lyons Avenue (**Map 5**, Map ID 2). View facing north.



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Photograph 4. Streetview of nonhistoric-age resources along Lyons Avenue near Benson Street
(Map 5, Map IDs 3–4). View facing north.



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Photograph 5. The ca. 1965 Louis Robey Professional Building at 4120 Lyons Avenue (**Map 5**, Map ID 7A). View facing south, showing historic parking area in front and a portion of side parking on left side of image.



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Photograph 6. Official Texas Historical Marker for Peacock Records at 4120 Lyons Avenue. View facing north.



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Photograph 7. Streetview of the Lyons Avenue/Saint Elmo Street intersection with the UPRR. View facing west with vacant lots visible at left and right sides of image.



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Photograph 8. The 1962 Della Apartments, now the Sunrise Motel, at 4204 Lyons Avenue (**Map 5**, Map ID 17A). View facing southeast. Painted and altered façade and altered roof line visible, as well as replacement signage on historic signpost.



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Photograph 9. The ca. 1925 dwelling at 4211 Lyons Avenue (**Map 5**, Map ID 12). View facing northwest, showing partial enclosure of porch and painted brick piers.



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Photograph 10. The ca. 1963 healthcare facility of Dr. J. S. Stone at 4223 Lyons Avenue (**Map 5**, Map ID 13). View facing north, showing boarded windows, painted brick, and second story addition and later alterations. The attached residence is no longer extant. The residence on the adjacent lot visible on the right side of the photograph was demolished in 2026.



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Photograph 11. Streetview of Lyons Avenue at the intersection of Copeland Street. View facing west, showing 4223 Lyons on right side of image and the empty lot that was the location of the True Level Lodge until its 2025 demolition on the left side of the image. The lodge's sign is still extant and is visible in the photograph.



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Photograph 12. The 1952 Miles Chapel CME Church at 4215 Lyons Avenue (**Map 5**, Map ID 15A).
View facing north. The ca. 1980 addition is on the left side of the image.



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Photograph 13. The nonhistoric-age Fifth Ward Redevelopment Council building at the corner of Lyons Avenue and Copeland Street (**Map 5**, Map ID 20A). View facing southeast, showing the building, its surrounding parking lots, and street trees.



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Photograph 14. Streetview at Lyons Avenue/Waco Street intersection. View facing east, showing Miles Chapel and its nonhistoric parking lot.



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Photograph 15. The ca. 1925 dwelling at 4408 Lyons Avenue. (**Map 5**, Map ID 28A) View facing south. Visible alterations include replacement siding (vinyl), replaced windows, enclosure of a main door, and replacement of some porch supports.



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Photograph 16. The 1955 Coghlan Grocery Store, now the Lyons Grocery Store, at 4410 Lyons Avenue (**Map 5**, Map ID 29A). View facing southeast.



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Photograph 17. The 1938 commercial building at 4414 Lyons Avenue (**Map 5**, Map ID 30). View facing southwest.



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Photograph 18. The 1954 First Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church at 4420 Lyons Avenue (**Map 5**, Map ID 32A). View facing south, showing large lawn and setback from street.



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Photograph 19. The 1947 NRHP-listed St. Elizabeth's Hospital at 4514 Lyons Avenue (**Map 5**, Map ID 38A). View facing southwest, showing large lawn and setback from street.



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Photograph 20. The 1946 Beal Brothers Medical and Surgical Center, now vacant, at 4519 Lyons Avenue (**Map 5**, Map ID 37). View facing northwest. Visible alterations include boarded windows and doors, missing awning fabric, infilled rounded-corner glass block windows.



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Photograph 21. Streetview at Lyons Avenue/Yates Street intersection. View facing southwest, showing street trees, larger buildings in district (St. Elizabeth's and First Shiloh) on left side of image, residential resources on north side of Lyons on right side of image.



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Photograph 22. Cane River Community Garden at 4205 Lyons Avenue (**Map 5**, Map ID 9). This art installation depicts a timeline of industrial contamination in the Fifth Ward. View facing northeast.

