



LANDMARK NAME: Doney-McElwain-Freeman House

OWNERS: Jeff Willard Paxton Jr. and Rachel Lauren Paxton

APPLICANTS: Jeff Willard Paxton Jr. and Rachel Lauren Paxton

LOCATION: 2522 Calumet Street

AGENDA ITEM: C

HPO FILE No.: HP2026_0221

DATE ACCEPTED: Jul-13-2026

HAHC HEARING: Aug-13-2026

SITE INFORMATION: Lot 13, Block 28, Riverside Terrace, Section 4, City of Houston, Harris County, Texas.

TYPE OF APPROVAL REQUESTED: Protected Landmark Designation

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

2522 Calumet Street is a Colonial Revival style home constructed in 1928 and completed in 1929 in Riverside Terrace. The 1920s subdivision was once known as the "Jewish River Oaks" and later became home to many of Houston's prominent African American professionals. The two-story brick veneer home has had six owners and operated as a rental residence from 1957 through the late 1970s. Notable tenants included Thomas F. Freeman, the renowned Texas Southern University debate coach. The property includes a contributing house and a non-contributing detached garage. The nomination was written by Deavion Wallace with Preservation Houston.

The Doney, McElwain, and Freeman House at 2522 Calumet meets Criteria 1, 3, 4, and 5 for Landmark Designation and Criterion 1 for Protected Landmark designation.

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE

Architectural Style

2522 Calumet Street is a restrained Colonial Revival style home. Colonial Revival homes are recognized for their enduring popularity in America. The style emerged in the 1880s as a direct response to renewed interest in American history following the centennial of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.¹ Architecture began to reflect this expression of patriotism when the firm McKim, Mead & White started designing buildings heavily inspired by late 18th- and early 19th-century Federal and Georgian architecture.²

Colonial Revival architecture was meant to imitate the original colonial era, not replicate it exactly. Architects drew on design elements from the Revolutionary War era, such as pedimented or gabled windows, pilasters, front doors with fanlights or sidelights, and Palladian windows, and adapted the style for residences, churches, and libraries. Because late 19th-

¹ "Colonial Revival Style 1880s - 1940s (U.S. National Park Service)." n.d. Accessed, July 2, 2026.
<https://www.nps.gov/articles/colonial-revival-architecture.htm>.

² "Colonial Revival Style 1880s - 1940s (U.S. National Park Service)." n.d. Accessed, July 2, 2026.
<https://www.nps.gov/articles/colonial-revival-architecture.htm>.



century architects worked during advancements in building construction technology and improved materials such as millwork, Colonial Revival buildings were larger and more robust in appearance than their colonial predecessors.

Riverside Terrace

During the first two decades of the 20th century, "streetcar suburbs" flourished in Houston as residential developments spurred the extension of streetcar lines. By the mid-1920s, the growing popularity of the automobile led to new "automobile suburbs," several of which were platted on either side of Brays Bayou in the vicinity of Hermann Park. One such suburb was Riverside Terrace.

Development of the area was started by Henry Frederick MacGregor, who came to Houston in 1883 and began investing in real estate. By 1900, MacGregor had helped extend Houston's residential area southward by building several subdivisions in the South End. The first section of Riverside Terrace was platted in 1924, in an area bounded by Almeda, Blodgett, Live Oak and Oakdale streets, and financed by the Guardian Trust Company. The success of Riverside Terrace attracted other developers, and the subdivisions of Washington Terrace and Riverside were platted in the vicinity.

Early Riverside Terrace sales brochures stressed the area's premier location, promoting the subdivision as being near South Main's cultural, medical, educational and social facilities. The developer, using similar sales language to that used by the River Oaks Corporation, noted that there would be "rigid building restrictions ... so that each purchaser is assured beforehand of the exact character of the improvements with which he will be surrounded."

Riverside Terrace, historically referred to as Houston's "other" River Oaks, emerged as a subdivision that reflected wealth and exclusivity. In the 1930s, members of Houston's wealthiest Jewish families—including such prominent names as Weingarten, Finger, Sakowitz and Battlestein, who were excluded from residing in River Oaks—migrated to Riverside and built homes extending discontinuously along Brays Bayou and MacGregor Way from Almeda Road on the west to Calhoun Road on the east. From the 1930s until the postwar era, the neighborhood was unofficially known as the "Jewish River Oaks" for its affluent residents and impressive homes, particularly those on MacGregor Way overlooking Brays Bayou.

The neighborhood's demographics began to change in 1952 when affluent African American cattleman Jack Caesar moved his family into Riverside Terrace. Eventually, all but a few white homeowners left the neighborhood, but Riverside Terrace once again became home to prominent professionals, this time African American college professors, doctors, lawyers and politicians.

The neighborhood's architecture reflects its history of prominent residents. Architects who designed homes in Riverside Terrace include John Staub, Birdsall Briscoe, Bolton & Barnstone and Joseph Finger. Several distinctive modern houses were designed by the office of Bailey A.



Swenson, and the architectural firm of MacKie & Kamrath also produced homes of modern design. One house, featured in *Architectural Record* in 1942, was described as having excited neighborhood controversy for being so modern. After decades of disinvestment following the construction of State Highway 288, which bisected the neighborhood in the 1980s, home construction and commercial development have revived since the early 2000s, especially on the southern edge of the neighborhood. This new activity has been contested, as townhouse developments and demolitions of older homes have raised concerns among residents about preserving the neighborhood's historic character.

Owner History

The lot at 2522 Calumet, one of fifty-one in the new Riverside Terrace addition, was purchased from the Guardian Trust Company in 1928 by D.F. Vickers, who bought and sold properties as an investor. The home's first owner, Loudon C. Doney Jr., purchased the lot from Vickers that same year and hired contractor W.H. (Fred) Wyse to build the home for \$10,000. After the Great Depression struck, Doney sold the home in 1931 to James and Hilda M. Isbell, under Mrs. Isbell's name, and the couple lived on the property for six years before selling it in 1937 to B.W. Woolley. Woolley sold the home in 1939 to Walter James Willke who then sold it in 1956 to Andrew A. McElwain. After McElwain's passing in 1957, his wife Martha sold the home to Thomas F. Freeman in 1958, followed by Charles Edward Freeman and Linda Faye Lacey in 1969 and Myrnia Rose Moore in 1972. The occupants of 2522 Calumet reflect the history of Riverside Terrace itself, from the boom and bust of the 1920s and 1930s to the neighborhood's transition into a home for Houston's African American professionals.

Daniel Flavell Vickers

Daniel Flavell Vickers was born on December 27, 1886 to William Vickers and Hannah Elizabeth Flavell in Alvarado, Texas. Vickers met and married Mary Kad Riley in 1913 in Freestone, Texas. His primary occupation was a manager at an oil refining company and for additional income, he engaged in real estate speculation. In 1917, his family moved to Houston, and in 1928, Vickers purchased one of the fifty one lots available in the new addition of Riverside Terrace from the Guardian Trust Company.³ In August of that same year, he sold the lot for \$4,345.05 to the home's first owner, Loudon Charles Doney Jr.⁴

Loudon Charles Doney Jr.

Loudon Charles Doney Jr. was born on September 17, 1896 to Loudon Charles Sr. and Margeret Kate Ferguson in Palestine, Texas. Doney Jr. served in the U.S. Army as a second lieutenant during World War I from 1917 to 1919. After his discharge he returned to the United States, arriving in Brooklyn, New York in 1919. The following year, Doney Jr. met and married his wife Mary Naomi Gainer in Dallas, Texas. The couple then moved to Corpus Christi, Texas where they resided with Doney's parents for a few years before relocating to Houston in 1926.

³ [Daily Court Review Newspaper Archives](#), Jul 23, 1928, P. 2. NewspaperArchive.com. July 23, 1928.

⁴ [Daily Court Review Newspaper Archives](#), Jun 18, 1937, P. 3. NewspaperArchive.com. June 18, 1937.



Doney Jr. was a consulting engineer, specializing in natural gas and appliance installation.⁵ He served as chief engineer of Houston's Gulf Gas Company, where he oversaw the installation of natural gas appliances, before resigning to start his own natural gas consulting firm in Houston. In 1928, Doney Jr. purchased the lot at 2522 Calumet from D.F. Vickers and hired W.H. (Fred) Wyse, a Houston contractor, to build the home for \$10,000. A permit to construct the eight room, two-story, and brick veneer home was issued in October of 1928,⁶ and construction was completed in March of 1929.⁷ That same year, however, the Great Depression struck and Doney fell behind on his payments to Wyse, who sued him. In 1931, Doney sold his home to James and Hilda Isbell for \$9,930.

Hilda Margaret Isbell

Hilda M. Pearce-Isbell was born on May 11, 1887 in Kent, England to John Pearce and Amelia Claxton. Her family moved to the United States in 1870 where she later met and married James H. Isbell, who was originally from Austin, Texas but later relocated to Houston's Third Ward.

Ms. Pearce came from a family of iron merchants in England before marrying her husband James Isbell, a manager for Gibraltar Savings and Buildings Association, in 1905. They purchased the home from Doney Jr. in 1931 under Mrs. Isbell's name. In the home, she held several tea events throughout her stay to celebrate major family milestones such as school graduations.⁸ The couple lived on the property for six years before they sold their home to B. W. Woolley for \$16,000 in 1937.⁹

Buck Wynn Woolley

Buck Wynn Woolley was born on September 1, 1896 in Denton, Texas. He worked in the oil industry as a distributor. Woolley moved to Houston in 1937 to work as an operator at the Merit Oil Corporation.¹⁰ In 1928, he married Lottie Plummer, the daughter of Spencer and Elizabeth Plummer. Woolley purchased the home from Ms. Pearce-Isbell in 1937 and lived there for two years. Woolley eventually sold the home to Walter James Willke in 1939.¹¹

Walter James Willke

Walter James Willke was born on August 3, 1898 to Robert Willke and Bertha Willke in Blanco, Texas. Willke briefly joined the U.S. navy at the age of 25 as a fireman on a tramp steamer shoveling coal. After he was discharged, he married Janice Easterling in 1926 and later moved

⁵ *Houston Chronicle* (Houston, Texas), July 22, 1928: 46. [NewsBank: America's News – Historical and Current](#).

⁶ *Houston Chronicle* (Houston, Texas), July 29, 1928: 39. [NewsBank: America's News – Historical and Current](#).

⁷ *Houston Post* (Houston, Texas), March 10, 1929: 27. [NewsBank: America's News – Historical and Current](#).

⁸ *Houston Chronicle* (Houston, Texas), May 18, 1932: 6. [NewsBank: America's News – Historical and Current](#).

⁹ *Houston Post* (Houston, Texas), June 19, 1937: 17. [NewsBank: America's News – Historical and Current](#).

¹⁰ [Buck Wynn Woolley 1930s Census Records](#). Accessed July 24, 2026.

¹¹ *Daily Court Review Newspaper Archives*, Jun 18, 1937, P. 3. [NewspaperArchive.com](#). June 18, 1937.



to Houston. Willke purchased the home from Woolley in 1939, and the couple lived in the house for only one year before selling to Andrew A. McElwain in 1940. Afterward, Willke had saved enough money to open a business, Dixie Pharmacy, in 1940.¹²

Andrew A. McElwain

Andrew A. McElwain was born in December 1896 to Andrew McElwain Sr. and Elizabeth Rourke in Xenia Green, Ohio. In 1942, McElwain met and married his wife, Martha Perry. Later that same year, the young couple moved from Ohio to Houston and lived in the city for fifteen years before his untimely passing in 1957 at 61 years old.¹³ While in Houston, McElwain was a superintendent of a rolling mill at America's Rolling Mill Company's Sheffield Division. After his passing, the title of the property was placed under the name of his wife, Martha McElwain. Ms. McElwain retained the property and then sold the home to Thomas F. Freeman in 1958.¹⁴

Thomas F. Freeman

Thomas Franklin Freeman was born June 27, 1919, in Richmond, Virginia to Louis Hyne Freeman Sr. and Louise Elizabeth Willis. He earned a bachelor's degree in English from Virginia Union University, a divinity degree from Andover Newton Seminary, and a doctorate in homiletics from the University of Chicago in 1948. In 1947, Freeman taught as a visiting lecturer at Morehouse College, where a young Martin Luther King Jr. was in attendance.¹⁵ In 1949, Freeman moved to Houston to teach philosophy at Texas Southern University and founded the TSU Debate Team the same year. He mentored many students during his 71-year career.¹⁶ Freeman also pastored Mount Horeb Baptist Church for decades where he held Family Day events and published a book of ten sermons in *The Choice of the Pew*. In 1956, he married Clarice Estelle, a musician, educator, and community leader in Houston.¹⁷ Together, the couple lived at 2522 Calumet from 1959 to 1966 until they moved to another home in the same neighborhood.

Rental Tenants for 2522 Calumet and 2522 1/2 Calumet

From 1959 to 1966, the Freemans resided in the main house at 2522 Calumet Street. During those years, various rooms on the property were advertised for rent, including the garage at the rear, addressed as 2522½ Calumet, which housed separate tenants over the years. In 1967, Ruth Johnson resided in the main house while Charles Mock lived in the garage apartment.¹⁸ In 1969, Charles Edward Freeman and Linda Faye Lacey occupied the main

¹² [Walter J Willke 1940 Census Records](#). Accessed July 20, 2026.

¹³ [Texas, U.S., Death Index, 1903-2000](#). Accessed July 20, 2026

¹⁴ [Daily Court Review Newspaper Archives](#), Aug 27, 1958, p. 3. [NewspaperArchive.com](#). August 27, 1958.

¹⁵ [Thomas F. Freeman Legacy](#). Texas Southern University. Accessed July 20, 2026

¹⁶ [Thomas F. Freeman Legacy](#). Texas Southern University. Accessed July 20, 2026

¹⁷ [Cook County, Illinois Marriage Index, 1930-1960](#). Accessed July 20, 2026.

¹⁸ Houston City Directory 1967 (66th ed.). (n.d.). (66th ed.). R. L. Polk & Co.



home.¹⁹ By 1972, Myrnia Rose Moore lived in the main house, with Leroy Hawkins residing at 2522 ½ Calumet.²⁰

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION AND RESTORATION HISTORY

Property Description

The house at 2522 Calumet is a two-story dwelling situated on lot 13, block 28 within section 4 of Riverside Terrace. Positioned on the north side of Calumet Street, which follows an east-west direction, the primary elevation of the residence faces south toward the street. The home is set back behind a flat front lawn, on a slight incline, with a detached garage located at the rear of the property, accessible through a paved alleyway. The house is a raised continuous concrete foundation with a ventilated crawl space and is clad in red brick veneer. The house has a side gable roof and a smaller projecting hip roof on a rear addition in the southeast corner. A boxed wood cornice defines the eaves, and a half-round gutter system surrounds the roofline. A one-story wing extends from the east side of the house.

The south-facing primary facade exhibits a symmetrical three-bay arrangement across two stories. The roofline is punctuated by three gabled dormers, each containing multi-pane wood windows, and two brick chimneys situated at the east and west ends of the home. The main entrance is covered by a one-story, flat-roofed porch supported by two Corinthian columns. Windows consist of wood double-hung sashes, primarily in eight-over-one and six-over-six configurations, featuring wood sills brick lintels. The two larger first-story windows, located toward the outer edges of the front elevation, include decorative keystones.

The east elevation features a central brick chimney and a one-story projecting wing on the rear half of the first story. Near the foundation there is a chimney cleanout door and a foundation vent. Two windows are symmetrically placed on either side of the chimney on the second story. The first story has one window aligned vertically with the southernmost second-story window. The projecting wing has two windows on its east side. The west elevation features a central brick chimney and a one-story projecting wing on the rear half of the first story. On the second story, there are four windows, two placed on each side of the chimney. On the first story, two windows placed on each side of the projecting wing, and the wing itself has two windows on its west side.

The site has a leveled topography where the property is slightly above the street grade, a common characteristic of properties near Brays Bayou. A detached garage is located at the rear of the property, accessed from the driveway, east of the house. The front entrance is reached via a curved concrete walkway from the Calumet Street sidewalk. Vehicular access is provided through the rear alley. The front lawn has several tall, mature pine trees and foundation shrubs, which aligns with historical descriptions of "wooded grounds" and remains a defining environmental characteristic of the property.

¹⁹ Houston City Directory 1969 (66th ed.). (n.d.). (66th ed.). R. L. Polk & Co.

²⁰ Houston City Directory 1972 (66th ed.). (n.d.). (66th ed.). R. L. Polk & Co.



Restoration History

The residence retains a high degree of historic integrity. The building occupies its original 1928 site, and while the broader area has seen significant changes, the immediate streetscape of early 20th-century homes remains intact. The design integrity is strong; comparing current conditions to 1951 photography reveals that the Colonial Revival massing, dormers, and masonry remain mostly unchanged. The original multi-light fixed windows have been replaced in their original openings with the current sash windows. Several window openings have since been altered: on the east side of the home, a second-floor window is boarded, and on the west side, a first-floor window is boarded and a second-floor window has been bricked in. Also on the west side, a former window was converted into a side door, with steps leading up to the entrance. A 1929 photograph indicates the porch originally had double columns at the outer corners and possibly pilasters flanking the front door; currently there are single columns at the outer corners. A former wood railing above the porch and original wood shutters have been removed; the two black metal balcony railings now present on the second floor were not original to the home's initial build. Original materials such as the brick veneer and wood trim survive, though composition shingles have replaced the original wood roofing. The workmanship of the porch detailing and brickwork remains clearly visible. The home continues to reflect the character of a late-1920s upper-middle-class residence and maintains a significant association with the early development of Riverside Terrace.

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The information and sources provided by the applicant for this application have been reviewed, verified, edited and supplemented with additional research and sources by Samantha de Leon, Planning and Development Department, City of Houston.

APPROVAL CRITERIA FOR LANDMARK DESIGNATION

Sec. 33-224. Criteria for designation

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



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

Sec. 33-229. Criteria for protected landmark designation

S	D	NA	S - satisfies	D - does not satisfy	NA - not applicable
☐	☐	(1) Meets at least three of the criteria for designation in section 33-224 of this Code;			
☐	☐	(2) Was constructed more than 100 years before application for designation was received by the director;			
☐	☐	(3) Is listed individually or as a contributing structure in an historic district on the National Register of Historic Places; or			
☐	☐	(4) Is recognized by the State of Texas as a Recorded State Historical Landmark.			



STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission recommend to City Council the Protected Landmark Designation of the Doney-McElwain-Freeman House at 2522 Calumet Street, Houston, TX 77004.

DRAFT



EXHIBIT A

CURRENT PHOTOS

DONEY-McELWAIN-FREEMAN HOUSE
2522 CALUMET ST



Photo 1

Northwest (front) elevation, camera facing southwest



Photo 2

Northwest corner and driveway, camera facing southwest



Photo 3

Southeast (side) elevation, camera facing southwest



EXHIBIT B

SITE MAP

DONEY-McELWAIN-FREEMAN HOUSE
2522 CALUMET ST

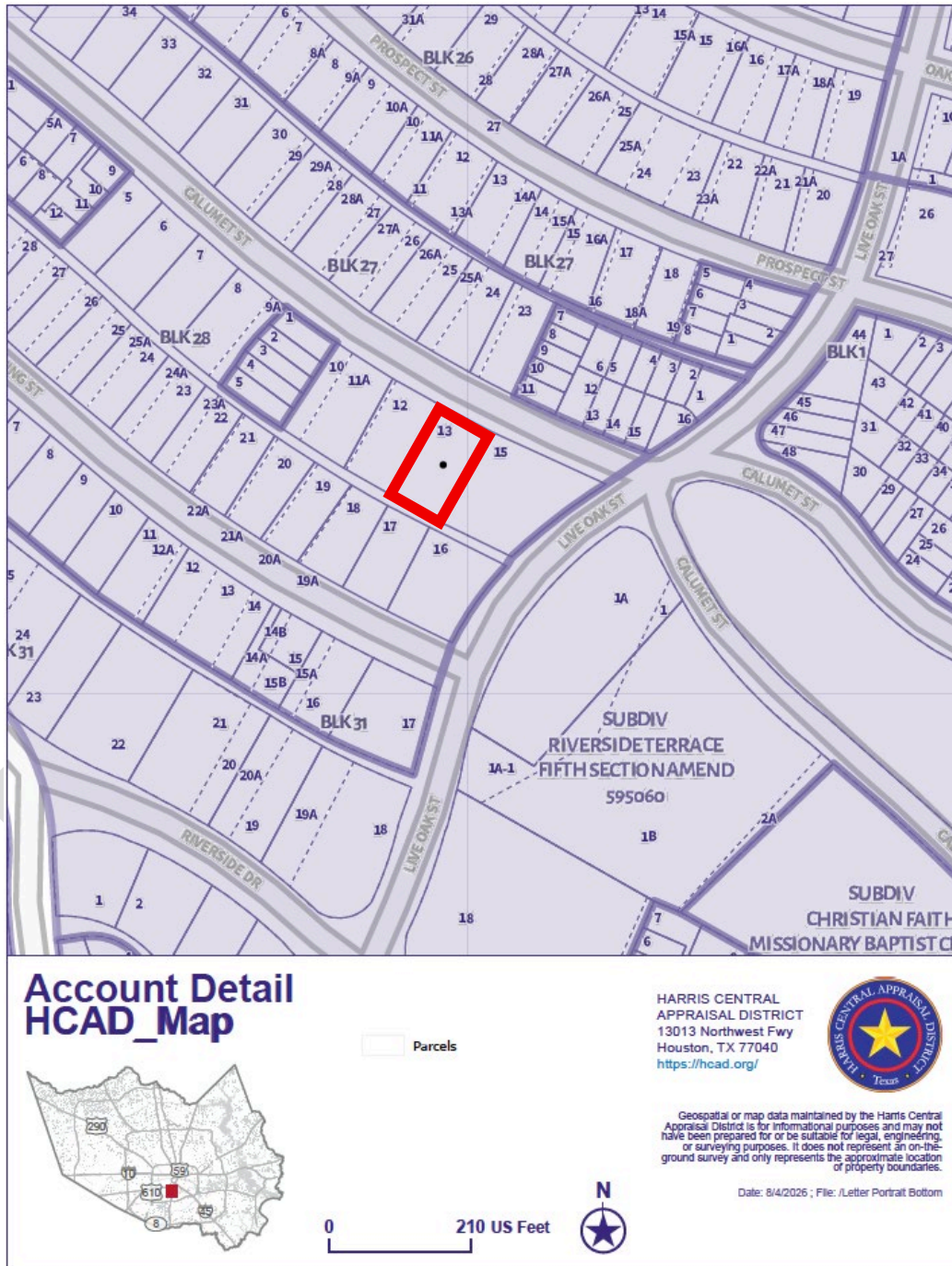




EXHIBIT C

1932 SANBORN FIRE INSURANCE MAP

DONEY-McELWAIN-FREEMAN HOUSE

2522 CALUMET ST





EXHIBIT D

NEWS ARTICLES

DONEY-McELWAIN-FREEMAN HOUSE

2522 CALUMET ST

TWO NEW RIVERSIDE TERRACE HOMES

Upper photo: Home of L. C. Doney Jr. at 2522 Calumet drive in Riverside Terrace. Mr. Doney is consulting engineer for the Natural Gas company. This home is just west of Riverside park. Lower picture: Home of Harris Underwood, located at 2201 Southmore boulevard in Riverside Terrace.



Figure 1

1929 Newspaper Article

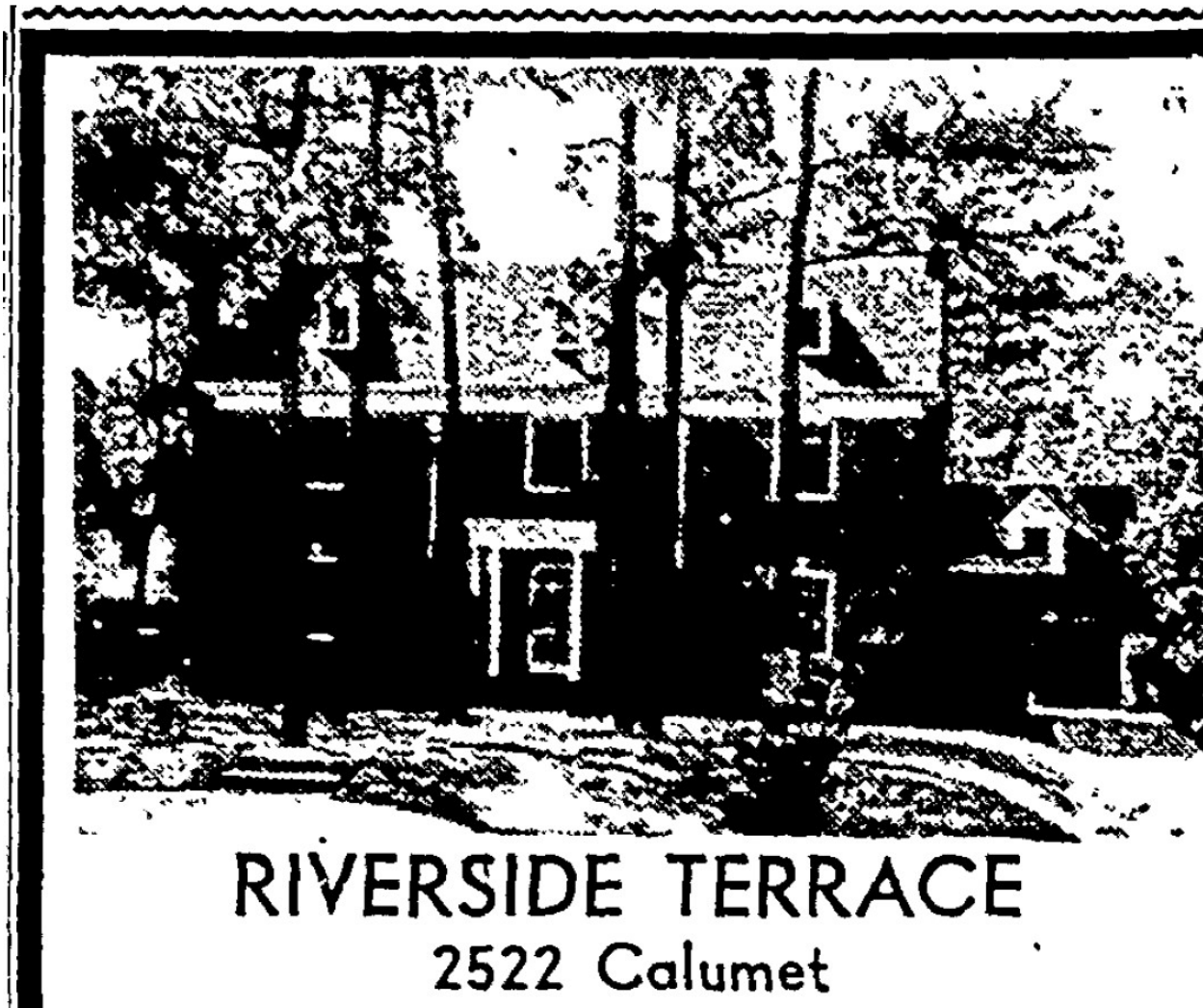


Figure 2

1951 Photograph of 2522 Calumet St.