

LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT**LANDMARK NAME:** The Elwyn & Imola Carroll House**OWNERS:** Phillip J. & Page M. Vogelsang**APPLICANT:** David Bush, Preservation Houston**LOCATION:** 1827 Kirby Drive – River Oaks**AGENDA ITEM:** B.1**HPO FILE NO.:** 15L312**DATE ACCEPTED:** Oct-30-2015**HAHC HEARING DATE:** Nov-16-2015**SITE INFORMATION**

Lot 1, Block 40, River Oaks Section 1, City of Houston, Harris County, Texas. The site contains a historic two-story brick house in the Tudor Revival style.

TYPE OF APPROVAL REQUESTED: Landmark Designation**HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY**

The house at 1827 Kirby Drive is a significant example of Tudor Revival style design. The house has a distinctive Y-shaped plan with the main entrance facing northwest at the corner of Kirby Drive and Pelham Drive. The house was built in 1927 as a speculative property for the River Oaks Corporation and designed by the firm's in-house architect, Charles W. Oliver, who would go on to create 75 homes in the River Oaks subdivision.

The first owners of 1827 Kirby Drive were Mr. & Mrs. Elwyn Carroll. Elwyn Carroll was a member of a prominent lumber and oil family from Beaumont, while Imola Link Carroll was the daughter of successful Houston businessman/developer, John Wiley Link. The Carrolls lived in the Kirby Drive house briefly from 1928 to 1929. In 1932, George Sawtelle, president of the Kirby Oil Company, purchased the property.

The Elwyn & Imola Carroll House at 1827 Kirby Drive meets Criteria 1, 3, 4, and 6 for Landmark designation of Section 33-224 of the City of Houston Code of Ordinances.

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE*Elwyn Carroll*

Elwyn Carroll (1897-1933) was born in Beaumont, Texas, to Joseph "Joe" E. Carroll and Alma Price Carroll, members of a prominent southeast Texas family that had made its fortune in lumber and oil. Elwyn Carroll attended the University of Virginia where he was on the staff of "Corks and Curly," the university yearbook, and served in the U.S. Army at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio during World War I. On October 21, 1920, he married Imola Link, daughter of John Wiley Link, at the Link family home at 819 Lovett Boulevard in Houston.

In addition to serving as president of the Link Oil Corporation, John Wiley Link was vice president and general manager of the Kirby Lumber Company, one of the largest lumber manufacturers in the United States and one of Texas' largest industrial concerns. Elwyn Carroll's career in Houston was tied to his father-in-law; Carroll was vice president of the Polar Wave Ice & Fuel Company, which had been incorporated by John Wiley Link, and was a partner in Link-Ford Company, investors.

On September 30, 1929, John Wiley Link made headlines by resigning from Kirby Lumber, investing substantial holdings in the Dr. Pepper Bottling Company and taking the full-time post of president of the soft drink manufacturer. Soon after, Elwyn Carroll and his family moved to San Antonio where Carroll assumed the position of president of the local Dr. Pepper bottler.

Elwyn Carroll died in the Link family home on Lovett Boulevard in Houston on August 31, 1933, after a lingering illness.

Imola Link Carroll

Imola Link (1896-1987) was born in Orange, Texas, to John Wiley Link and the former Inna Imola Holland; their daughter was always known by her middle name, Imola. John Wiley Link was a lawyer, land developer, businessman and mayor of Orange, who was instrumental in securing the Beaumont-Orange deep-water shipping channel. In 1910, the Link family moved to Houston, where John Wiley Link established the Houston Land Corporation to develop a major tract of property on the outskirts of the city. Eventually known as the Montrose Addition, the area became an upscale planned residential community. The Link family originally lived in a massive neoclassical mansion on the corner of the Montrose Boulevard and West Alabama Street; Link sold the house to T.P. Lee in 1916. Now known as the Link-Lee Mansion, the house at 3800 Montrose Boulevard is a recorded Texas Historic Landmark and listed on the National Register of Historic Places. After the mansion was sold, the Link family relocated to the house at 819 Lovett Boulevard (extant).

Imola Link was widely known as a fixture on the social scenes of Houston and Texas. As a single woman, her travels were covered by newspapers across the state and her elaborate wedding to Elwyn Carroll on October 21, 1920, at the Link family home on Lovett Boulevard was a major social event reported by Texas newspapers well beyond Houston. The couple originally lived in the fairly modest home at 1416 West Alabama (extant, now Neon Gallery) and Imola regularly appeared in the society pages of the Houston Post and Houston Chronicle, San Antonio Light, and Galveston Daily News. Identified as Mrs. Elwyn Carroll, she hosted bridge parties, bridal showers and musicales, as was typical of a woman of her position in the 1920s. Notably, when Imola gave birth to the couple's two daughters, the children were reported as being born to Mrs. Elwyn Carroll.

Imola Carroll moved with her husband and children to San Antonio after her father took control of the Dr. Pepper Bottling Company and her husband became president of the Alamo City's Dr. Pepper franchise. She remained in Houston and raised her daughters in the city after her husband's unexpected death. Imola and the children continued to live in the Link family home on Lovett Boulevard while she was employed by the Johnson Sales Company, Wholesale China and Glassware.

George Sawtelle

Born in Wheeling, West Virginia, George Sawtelle (1892-1967) graduated from Lehigh University with a Bachelor of Science degree in chemistry before joining the U.S. Army, serving in France during World War I and attaining the rank of captain in the Seventh Artillery Brigade. On his return to the United States, Sawtelle was an assistant football coach at Northwestern University before joining the Kirby Petroleum Company in 1922. The firm had been established a year earlier by pioneer lumberman and business developer John Henry Kirby. By 1924, Sawtelle was the company's general manager and chief geologist; he eventually rose to the presidency of the firm, a position he held for more than 20 years. On September 19, 1932, Houston's Daily Court Review reported that Sawtelle had taken out a chattel

mortgage to purchase the former Carroll home at 1827 Kirby Drive. He and his wife remained in the house for only three years. After the Sawtelles left the residence in 1935, the property was marketed by the River Oaks Corporation and was vacant until 1937, when the house was occupied by D.K. Collier, former president of the Guaranty State Bank of Mont Belvieu, Texas, and an associate of John Henry Kirby.

Charles W. Oliver, AIA

Charles W. Oliver (1892-1960) was a native of Wynne, Arkansas, who graduated from the University of Texas School of Architecture in 1916 before serving as a field artillery captain during World War I. After the Armistice, Oliver joined the Dallas office of the Russell Brown Company, an architectural/construction firm that had built many stylish homes during the first quarter of the 20th century. The company sent him to Houston in 1925 to design houses in River Oaks. On May 10, 1926, the River Oaks Corporation announced that Oliver had been hired as the development's consulting architect and was at the disposal of any River Oaks property owner without charge. Over the next six years, Oliver would be in charge of the corporation's Department of Architecture and Building and would design 75 homes in River Oaks in a variety of architectural revival styles. He created the distinctive Tudor Revival style house at 1827 Kirby Drive as a speculative property for the River Oaks Corporation in 1927. Oliver's landmarked houses in River Oaks include:

- 3325 Chevy Chase Drive (1927)
- 2224 Looscan Drive (1928)
- 3015 Del Monte Drive (1929)

Oliver left the River Oaks Corporation in 1932 to serve as architect/administrator for a federal housing project. He went on to build several houses in Houston in the late 1940s. Oliver died and is buried in Columbia, South Carolina.

River Oaks

River Oaks is adjacent to Buffalo Bayou and Memorial Park in west central Houston. The residential garden suburb, which comprises 1,100 acres, was developed starting in the 1920s through the foresight and persistence of brothers Will Hogg (1875-1930) and Mike Hogg (1885-1941) and attorney Hugh Potter (1888-1968).

The nucleus of the expansive subdivision predates the Hoggs' and Potter's involvement. By 1924, Country Club Estates, the section south of the newly established River Oaks Country Club, had been platted, but not developed. The Hogg brothers bought out the original investors and established Country Club Estates, Inc., later renamed the River Oaks Corporation.

Mike Hogg's friend, Hugh Potter, was installed as president of the corporation. Under his expert direction, the development of River Oaks began in earnest. Not only was the existing section developed, the corporation also busily acquired land on all sides of the original Country Club Estates. Between 1926 and 1947, an additional 19 platted subdivisions were joined to River Oaks.

A study of noteworthy American suburban communities, particularly Roland Park in Baltimore and the Country Club District in Kansas City, was responsible for such innovative ideas as the institution of architectural controls in River Oaks, the levying of a private tax to support a maintenance and services

fund, and the creation of a property owners' association to enforce deed restrictions. Will Hogg was especially determined that River Oaks serve as a model of enlightened community planning standards for Houston. He retained Kansas City landscape architects Hare & Hare to provide a master plan that would protect the environmental integrity and natural beauty of the area.

The developers also hired J.C. Nichols, who built Kansas City's Country Club Plaza, one of the first major shopping centers in the United States, to serve as a design consultant. The River Oaks master plan included home sites, a fifteen-acre campus for River Oaks Elementary School (1926, Harry D. Payne), two shopping centers, and esplanades planted with flowers. The plan called for underground utility lines, eliminated alleys, allowed only three intersecting streets and provided rigid building codes. Deed restrictions and centralized community control assured exclusivity; approval of house designs by a panel of architects and citizens and a minimum purchase price of \$7,000 were required. One restriction stated that no property could be conveyed to any person who was not of the Caucasian race, although that provision was deleted when the restrictions were renewed in 1985.

On March 15, 1926, the subdivision's developers announced a "Room for All Predevelopment Sale" for River Oaks: Section 1. An additional 134 lots were put on the market, nearly doubling the number of house sites offered in the original development. The lots in Block 40 on Skokie Drive (renamed Pelham Drive), which include 1827 Kirby Drive, served as the southern boundary of River Oaks. The general restrictions for the new tract required that single-family homes be at least two-stories tall with the exception of 13 lots in Block 40. The least expensive homes in Block 40 were to cost no less than \$7,500, while the price requirements on the remaining homes on Pelham Drive ranged from \$12,000 to \$18,000.

River Oaks operated independently for three years before it was annexed by the City of Houston. In the late 1920s, the development lost money, but by the late 1930s developers had invested \$3 million in the project and River Oaks had begun to influence development patterns in the rest of the city.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION AND RESTORATION HISTORY

The two-story brick Tudor Revival house has a distinctive Y-plan that takes full advantage of its prominent site on the corner of Kirby Drive and Pelham Drive. The plan comprises two wings, one parallel to Kirby and one parallel to Pelham with an entry set at a 45-degree angle to the wings, addressing the street intersection.

Pelham / North Façade

The façade of the east wing faces north parallel to Pelham Drive. The first/east bay contains a two-story brick addition that is slightly shorter than the historic house. The first floor of the addition is not visible behind a one-story garage addition. A six-over-six sash window with brick sill and brick lintel is centered in the second floor of the addition beneath a cross gable dormer. A second cross gable dormer faces east on the hipped roof, which is covered with composite shingles.

A one-story garage addition is perpendicular to the east addition in the first bay. A nine-light casement window with brick sill is centered in the east/Pelham façade of the garage beneath a cross gable dormer. A second cross gable dormer faces west in the hipped roof, which is covered with composite shingles.

The second bay marks the start of the historic house. The brick bay has an asymmetrical fenestration pattern. The first floor contains a centered pair of six-over-six sash windows with a brick sill and brick

lintel. The second floor contains two asymmetrically spaced, matching six-over-six sash windows with brick sills and brick lintels. The gable-end roof is covered in composite shingles and contains a hipped dormer with six-over-six sash windows.

The third bay contains a prominent brick chimney that steps inward in three stages. The first story base features asymmetrical corbelling at the top. The narrower second story section includes stepped triple fluting. The top section contains paired shafts with corbelled caps.

The fourth bay has an asymmetrical fenestration pattern. The first floor contains an off-center pair of six-over-six sash windows with diamond-pane transoms, brick sill and brick lintel. The second floor contains asymmetrically spaced six-over-six sash windows with brick sills and brick lintels. The larger of the two second-floor windows is next to the chimney. A half-size window is on the west side of the second-floor façade. The roof is cross-hipped in the fourth bay and contains a hipped dormer with six-over-six sash window.

The fifth bay is at a 45-degree angle to the east wing of the house. The first floor contains a small, central one-over-one sash window. There is a brick stringcourse between the first and second floors. The second floor contains a six-by-six lancet window with brick sill and brick tracery under a cross gable dormer in the gable-end roof.

Kirby at Pelham Northwest Façade

The gable-front entry façade is one bay wide and faces northwest at the corner of Kirby Drive and Pelham Drive set at a 45-degree angle to the two wings. The first floor contains a central, recessed entry porch under a segmented arch with brick cornerstone. A replacement door contains two large panes of glass. There is one lantern on either side of the porch below a brick stringcourse. The second floor features narrow, vertical triple diamond pane windows with diamond pane transoms, brick sill and brick lintel. Corbelled brick brackets on the second floor support the gable-end roof. The brick in the peak of the gable projects slightly from the second floor. The peak of the gable contains half-timbering with wooden brackets.

Kirby / West Façade

The façade of the Kirby Drive wing of the house faces west. The first/north bay is at a 45-degree angle to the Kirby wing of the historic house. The first floor contains a small, central one-over-one sash window. There is a brick stringcourse between the first and second floors. The second floor contains a six-by-six lancet window with brick sill and brick tracery under a cross gable dormer in the gable-end roof.

The second bay has an asymmetrical fenestration pattern. The first floor contains a small one-over-one sash window with brick sill and lintel widely spaced from an eight-over-eight sash window with brick sill and lintel. The second floor contains an off-center six-over-six sash window. The roof in this bay is hipped on the north end and contains a hipped dormer with six-over-six sash windows.

The third bay contains a prominent chimney that steps inward in three sections. The section on the first floor features corbelled shoulders at the top. The second floor section is distinguished by paired fluting. The top section is composed of triple shafts with corbelled caps.

The first floor of the fourth bay includes a six-over-six sash window with brick sill and lintel next to the chimney. The south end of this bay contains an enclosed sleeping porch with segmental arch containing a multi-paned window. The second floor contains two symmetrically spaced six-over-six sash windows

with brick sills and lintels. There is a central hipped dormer with six-over-six sash window in the gable end roof.

Renovations

The most noticeable changes to house over the years were the whitewashing/painting of the exterior brick. Photos of the house when it was completed in 1927 show unpainted masonry; when the River Oaks Corporation was marketing the house in 1936, the exterior was white. The house was still white in the tax photos from the 1960s, but pictures from the 1970s reveal the whitewash/paint was mostly removed. The house is currently unpainted brick.

According to the Harris County Building Assessment Records, the house was considered to be in fair condition by 1953 and all of the utilities were obsolete. The 1957 assessment noted that the masonry was cracked “in about 30 places.” The cracks were still a problem in 1970; in 1973, the county investigator noted, “This house is actually about to fall down - it is pulling apart & shifting in 4 directions. The roof has pulled apart because of the shifting foundation and the house leaks in every room,” before adding, “The picture is deceiving & does not show the condition of this house.” The referenced 1973 photo can be seen in Exhibit D.

The rear garage addition was constructed by previous owners between 2004 and 2009.

The current owners purchased the property in 2010. The house is in good condition, although the owner notes exterior brickwork needs repairs where the foundation shifts between wet and dry weather.

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

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- Naturalization Records and Death Records on ancestry.com, accessed September 2, 2015.

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

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission recommend to City Council the Landmark Designation of the Elwyn & Imola Carroll House at 1827 Kirby Drive.

HAHC RECOMMENDATION

The Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission recommends to City Council the Landmark Designation of the Elwyn & Imola Carroll House at 1827 Kirby Drive.

EXHIBIT A
CURRENT PHOTOS
THE ELWYN & IMOLA CARROLL HOUSE
1827 KIRBY DRIVE



Photos by David Bush, Preservation Houston.

EXHIBIT A
CURRENT PHOTOS
THE ELWYN & IMOLA CARROLL HOUSE
1827 KIRBY DRIVE



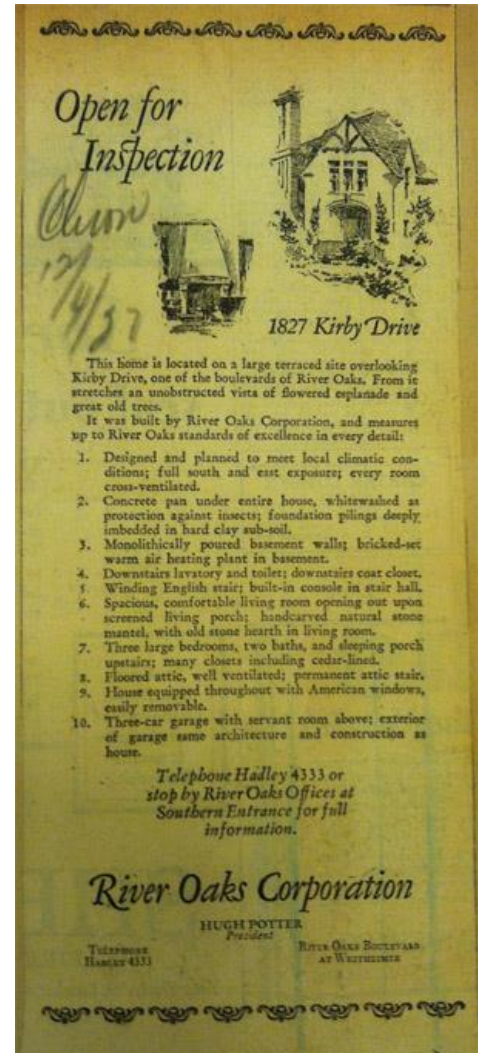
EXHIBIT B
SITE MAP
THE ELWYN & IMOLA CARROLL HOUSE
1827 KIRBY DRIVE



EXHIBIT C
 SCRAPBOOK ARTICLES
 THE ELWYN & IMOLA CARROLL HOUSE
 1827 KIRBY DRIVE

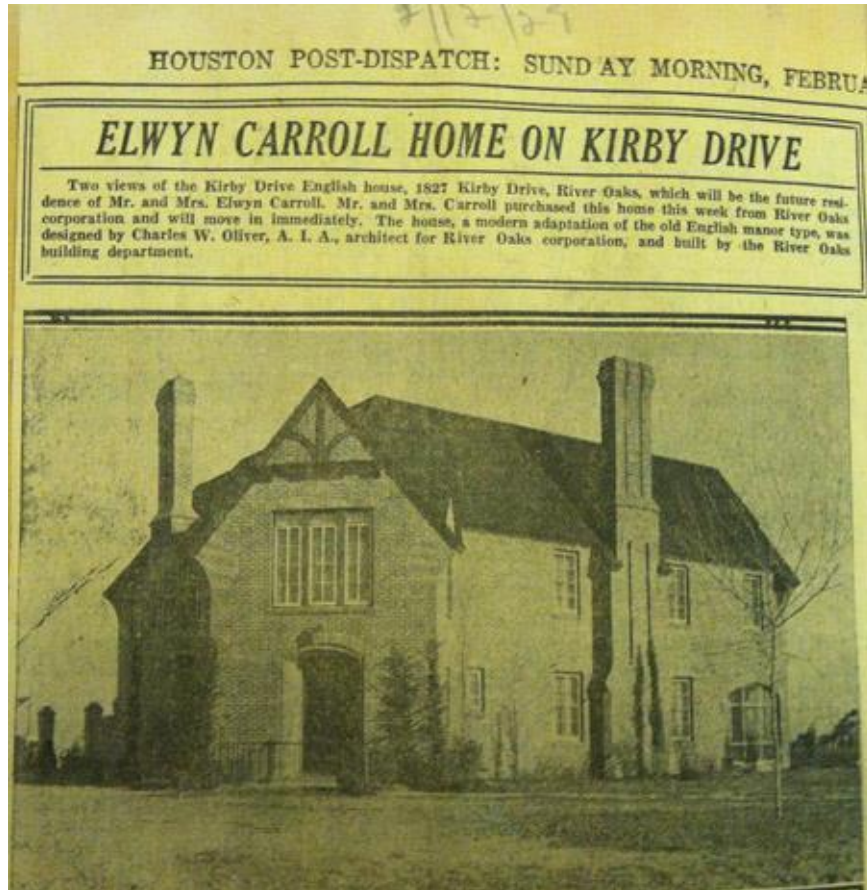


Houston Chronicle, November 20, 1927. River Oaks Scrapbooks. Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library.



River Oaks Corporation ad for 1827 Kirby Drive. *Houston Chronicle*, December 4, 1927. River Oaks Scrapbooks. Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library.

EXHIBIT C
SCRAPBOOK ARTICLES
THE ELWYN & IMOLA CARROLL HOUSE
1827 KIRBY DRIVE



Houston Post-Dispatch, February 12, 1928. River Oaks Scrapbooks. Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library.

THE HOUSTON CHRONICLE

REAL ESTATE REAL ESTATE REAL ESTATE REAL ESTATE REAL ESTATE

98. Houses for Sale 98. Houses for Sale 98. Houses for Sale 98. Houses for Sale 98. Houses for Sale

An Unusual Home
 unusually well planned for Houston climate.
1827 Kirby Drive
In River Oaks

Open Today, 11 A.M., 1 P.M. and 3 P.M.—6 P.M.

First floor plan Second floor plan

Here's why you'll like this home: Its attractively odd shape gives a free sweep to River Oaks' prevailing southeastern breeze—all the principal rooms in the house have southeast exposures. It is located on a corner site of generous proportions. It has a central, natural gas fuel heating plant, thermostatically controlled. Downstairs, a screened porch, a breakfast room (which can be used for a variety of purposes), the hall, dining room and kitchen are grouped about a living room 18 feet by 23½ feet. Upstairs are three bedrooms, a sleeping porch, two baths. The garage is for three cars and has a servant's room and bath. See this home today—you'll like it.

River Oaks Corporation
 Also Open in River Oaks, 3-6 P.M.: 2136 Looscan Lane and 2116 Chilton Road.

River Oaks Corporation ad for 1827 Kirby Drive. *Houston Chronicle*, November 3, 1935. River Oaks Scrapbooks. Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library.

EXHIBIT C
SCRAPBOOK ARTICLES
THE ELWYN & IMOLA CARROLL HOUSE
1827 KIRBY DRIVE

From River Oaks Corporation sales brochure for 1827 Kirby Drive, 1936. River Oaks Scrapbooks. Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library.

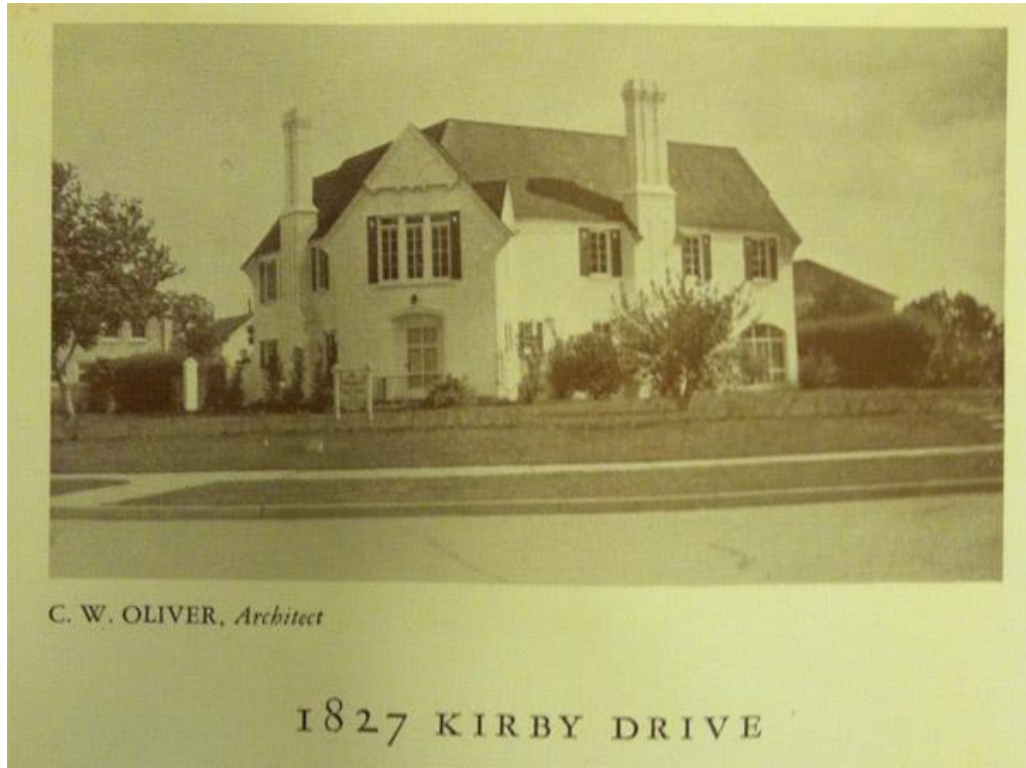
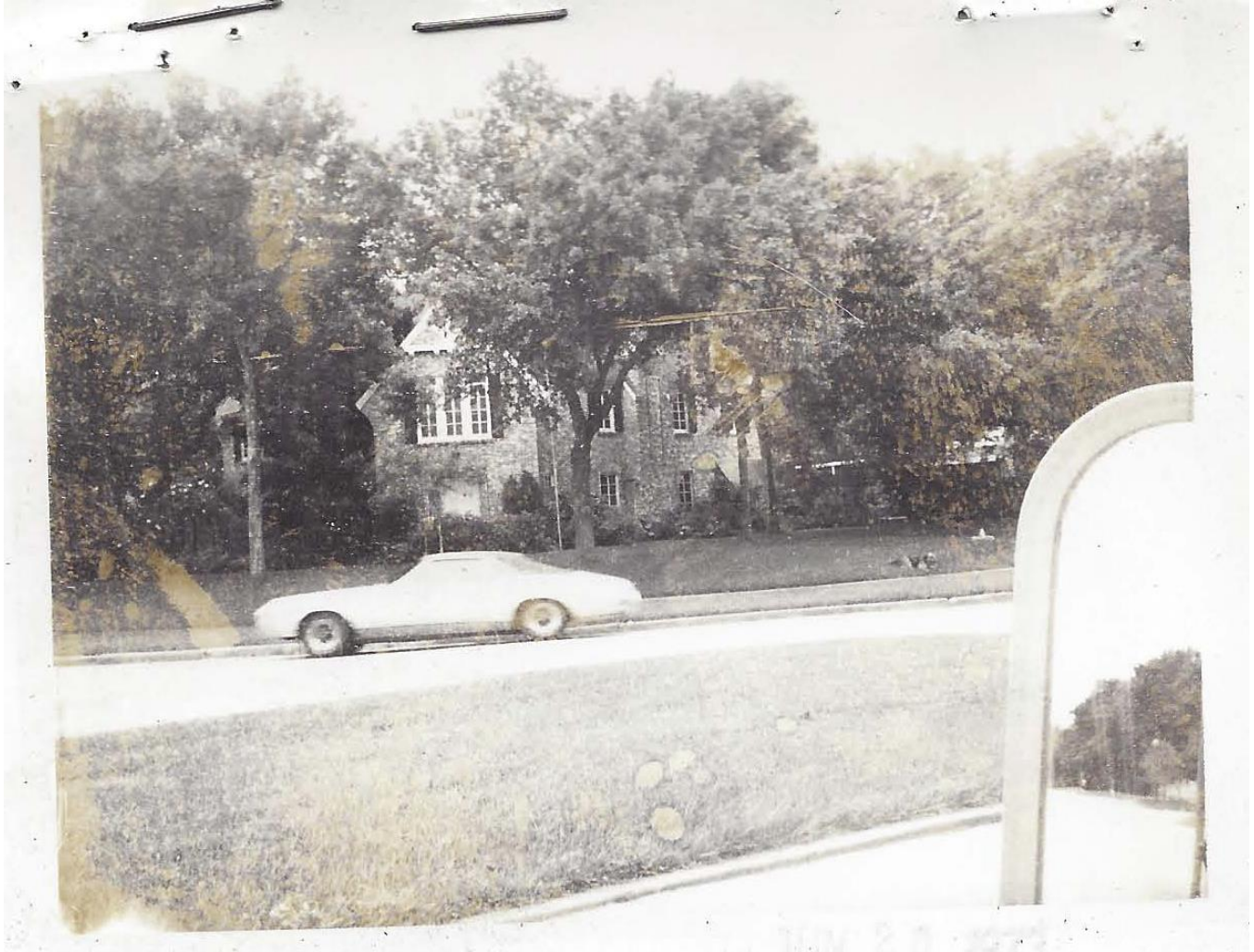


EXHIBIT D
HCAD PHOTO
THE ELWYN & IMOLA CARROLL HOUSE
1827 KIRBY DRIVE



Harris County Building Assessment Records, 1973.
Harris County Archives.