

**LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT**

**LANDMARK NAME:** Stanley C. Woods House  
**OWNERS:** Dr. Donald L. Kramer and Ilene T. Kramer  
**APPLICANT:** Same as Owner  
**LOCATION:** 3330 Chevy Chase – River Oaks

**AGENDA ITEM:** B.1  
**HPO FILE NO.:** 15L313  
**DATE ACCEPTED:** Nov-20-2015  
**HAHC HEARING DATE:** Dec-16-2015

**SITE INFORMATION**

Lot 14, Block 8, River Oaks Country Club Estate, City of Houston, Harris County, Texas. The site contains a two-story brick house in the Colonial Revival style.

**TYPE OF APPROVAL REQUESTED:** Landmark Designation

**HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY**

The Stanley C. Woods House at 3330 Chevy Chase was constructed in 1961 in the River Oaks Country Club Estates subdivision of Houston, Texas. The 2½-story 4,000 square foot Colonial Revival residence was designed by architect Robert Weldon Maurice (1925-2010). Maurice had apprenticed in the office of Birdsall P. Briscoe, renowned eclectic-style Houston architect, and was himself was a highly regarded architect with a broad scope of built work ranging from the Tropical Bird Building for the Houston Zoo and the French style house at 3734 Willowick Road in River Oaks.

Shortly after completion, the house was purchased in 1962 by Stanley Crawford Woods (1922-2013), a prominent Houston lawyer, social activist, and politician. Woods fought and won several notable state and federal Supreme Court anti-trust suits, advocating for independent producers and landowners against major oil and gas companies. Woods ran in the Democratic primaries for Governor of Texas in 1966.

The Stanley C. Woods House at 3330 Chevy Chase Drive meets Criteria 1, 3, 4, and 6 for Landmark designation.

**HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE***Stanley Crawford Woods*

Stanley Crawford Woods was born in Bartlesville, Oklahoma, on September 19, 1922, to Samuel B. and Hattie C. Woods. His father came from Missouri and his mother was born in the Indian Territory.

Woods volunteered in the Marine Corps during World War II but was medically discharged before the war's end. In 1945 he graduated from Kansas University. Several years later, in 1948, he graduated from the University of Texas with a Law Degree and received his license to practice law in Texas later that year. He worked for Pure Oil Company out of Tulsa, Oklahoma, for one year. In 1949, he moved to Houston where he continued to do legal work.

In the 1960s and 1970s, Woods was a tireless advocate not only on behalf of his own businesses but also for independent oil and gas producers and small landowners. In 1959, just prior to the purchase of 3330 Chevy Chase, Woods had formed Woods Exploration & Producing Co. and Southeastern Pipeline Co. Representing his companies, Woods filed an anti-trust suit against ALCOA and Crown Central

Petroleum Company under the Sherman Anti-Trust Act. Woods ultimately won four Texas Supreme Court decisions followed by two jury trials in Federal Court in Houston, the last of which is among the most oft cited and longest duration private anti-trust suits in the U.S., lasting from 1960-1975.

As a social activist, Woods helped organize approximately 6,500 landowners and small Texas producers to form the Texas Landowners and Independent Oil and Gas Producers Association. With this group, Woods successfully lobbied against forced unitization of private land by major oil and gas companies and the closure of approximately 25,000 wells. Extending his activism to public service, Woods ran in the primaries for Governor of Texas against incumbent Democratic candidate John Connally in 1966, advocating for the state's first minimum wage law, the creation of more medical and nursing schools and to support new industry in smaller communities in the state. During the primary, Woods' efforts in extending voter registration ultimately led to the repeal of the poll tax in Texas.

Woods was appointed by President Kennedy to educate the state on the benefits of Medicare, then newly formed. According to his obituary, "Stanley [Woods] believed that this was the most important public service victory of all his political endeavors."

## *Dr. Donald L. Kramer and Mrs. Ilene T. Kramer*

Since 1997, 3330 Chevy Chase has been occupied by the current owners, Dr. Donald L. Kramer and Mrs. Ilene T. Kramer. Until 2014, Dr. Kramer was founder and CEO of Nobilis Health Corp., formerly Northstar Healthcare Inc. He remains as medical consultant to Nobilis Health Corp. and Honorary Consul to the Republic of Botswana.

## *Robert Weldon Maurice*

Architect Robert Weldon Maurice received a BS Arch (1946) and M Arch (1947) from the Rice Institute and apprenticed in the office of Birdsall P. Briscoe, renowned eclectic-style Houston architect. He achieved professional recognition with his design of Sally's Sandwich Shop in 1955, a one-story sliver of a building in downtown Houston. His house and studio at 3222 Mercer Street, with "garden" rooms, was featured on the 1959 AIA Home Tour. In the 1960s, Maurice and his partner Richard S. Wilkins designed the Shell Employees Federal Credit Union Building in Deer Park, Texas (1962) and the Burnett-Bayland Children's Center (1969).

A founding member of the Zoological Society of Houston, Maurice was commissioned in 1966 to design the new Tropical Bird Building for the Houston Zoo. Aligning his design with the vision of the zoo's director, John Werler, in response to traditional exhibits that displayed "beautiful birds in square boxes of bedroom colors," Maurice created a naturalistic aviary with water and live plants in which birds flew freely among the visitors. Maurice also designed traditional architecture, notably the eighteenth-century French style house of Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Arnold, Jr., (1964) at 3734 Willowick Road in River Oaks and the Baird House on Shadywood Drive.

## *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 Hogg's 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**

In 1961, Walter E. Babel, Jr. funded, on speculation, the construction of the Stanley C Woods House at 3330 Chevy Chase Drive and his own house at 3320 Chevy Chase Drive. These contemporaneous houses were built on adjacent lots replatted from a one-acre lot previously occupied by the Duncan House in the River Oaks Country Club Estates subdivision of Houston, Texas. Developed in the 1920s by Hugh Potter and Will and Mike Hogg, River Oaks was conceived as a planned garden suburb

removed from the rapid and disorganized development of Houston, and remains the city's most distinguished neighborhood.

The Stanley C Woods House was conceived as a two-and-a-half-story, approximately 4,000 square foot Southern Colonial style house with a two-car detached garage. Characteristic of the style, the double-height five-bay colonnade extending across the symmetrical front façade references the Greek Revival style reflective of the southern plantation home. At the center of the façade, the front entry is composed of classical fluted pilasters, a pair of French doors with black painted shutters and front door with a fan light transom. At the interior, one is greeted with the grand gesture of a double-height oval stair hall with a sweeping elliptical stair and elliptical cove dome.

Colonial style architecture in the US arose from the borrowing of architectural elements from Georgian England, which in turn referenced Greek and Roman models. In response to the hot, humid climate of Houston, the Southern Colonial house type employs high ceilings for passive cooling. The use of brick veneer in the southern US originated from the wide availability of superior Virginia clay. The Southern Colonial style is a distinct architectural style of River Oaks, illustrated by the River Oaks Country Club and the manses that line River Oaks Boulevard.

### *Renovations*

Upon purchasing the house from Linda Peterson in 1997, the current owners sought the architectural direction of L. Barry Davidson Architects for a major restoration and addition to the structure for their family, including their four young daughters. While the program included doubling the area of the existing house, the architect approached the project with sensitivity, fully retaining the existing front façade and minimizing the visual scale of the additions to the rear. The expansive grounds were maintained by configuring the addition as an “L,” with the long leg of the addition perpendicular to the original central plan house. Original details such as the intricate wrought iron stair rail design of Maurice and the historical windows were judiciously repeated or carefully restored.

L. Barry Davidson Architects is a highly regarded architecture firm specializing in traditional architecture, having completed several new and restored houses in River Oaks. L. Barry Davidson received the 2016 Good Brick Award from Preservation Houston for the renovation and addition of 3663 Del Monte, also in River Oaks.

The 2001 renovations and addition included connecting the first floors of the existing two story house and the existing two-car garage structure with a covered walk. The addition of the bedrooms and baths which were added to the back of the house made it possible to have a connection between the house and the garage quarters at the second floor level. A breakfast room, mudroom, workspace and breezeway separating the garage and the house were added in the first floor space below the bedrooms. The existing veranda at the back of the house was extended by approximately 3’ and converted to a screened porch that the family could enjoy while using the pool. The existing second floor Master Bath suite which was located over the veranda was remodeled to suit the client’s needs. The existing Ionic columns at the rear of the house that did not match the front columns were replaced with brick columns when the porch was enclosed. The contemporary curved full height glass wall of the Family room was replaced with more traditional fenestration. A new composition shingle roof was installed over the existing structure and the new addition.

The brick selected for the addition replaced the brick that was on the existing house because the existing brick was painted and when the paint was removed there was no match available. The front columns and existing windows were protected, however the false wood arch header detail at the windows we felt was added later and so we straightened out the headers over the rectangular windows. All of the new windows in the addition match the existing window style and light pattern. The scope of the 2001 addition also included new interior finishes, kitchen remodeling, re-plastering of the existing pool and landscaping.

*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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<http://preserveriveroaks.com/homes.html>

<http://www.ropo.org/neighbor.html>

## 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
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### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission recommend to City Council the Landmark Designation of the Stanley C Woods House at 3330 Chevy Chase Drive.

### HAHC RECOMMENDATION

The Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission recommends to City Council the Landmark Designation of the Stanley C Woods House at 3330 Chevy Chase Drive.

**EXHIBIT A**  
**CURRENT PHOTO**  
**THE STANLEY C WOODS HOUSE**  
**3330 CHEVY CHASE DRIVE**





**EXHIBIT B**  
**2000 PHOTO**

THE STANLEY C WOODS HOUSE  
3330 CHEVY CHASE DRIVE





## EXHIBIT C SITE MAP

THE STANLEY C WOODS HOUSE  
3330 CHEVY CHASE DRIVE

