

PROTECTED LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT

LANDMARK NAME: Fox-Kuhlman Building

OWNERS: Michael Shapiro (305 Travis); Carolyn Wenglar (307 Travis)

APPLICANTS: Same as Owners

LOCATION: 305-307 Travis - Main Street Market Square Historic District

30-DAY HEARING NOTICE: N/A

AGENDA ITEM: VIII.b

HPO FILE NO: 07PL49

DATE ACCEPTED: Oct-31-07

HAHC HEARING: Jan-30-08

PC HEARING: Feb-14-08

SITE INFORMATION:

Lot 9, Block 33, SSBB, City of Houston, Harris County, Texas. The north half of Lot 9 is owned by Michael Shapiro, and the south half of Lot 9 is owned by Carolyn Wenglar. The site includes a two-story, brick commercial structure spanning both halves of Lot 9, with each half being separately owned.

TYPE OF APPROVAL REQUESTED: Landmark and Protected Landmark Designation

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY:

The Fox-Kuhlman Building, located at 305 and 307 Travis Street on the east side of Market Square, is one of Houston's oldest surviving commercial buildings. Construction on the two-story brick building had begun by 1862 by Eliza Fox and her husband, John Kuhlman, and had been completed by 1866 when Eliza died.

A single brick facade fronts two separately owned and occupied halves, each with its own hipped roof. Over the years, this two-sided building has housed numerous enterprises, including grocers, tailors, jewelers, clothing stores, real estate offices, restaurants, and bars. The north half of the building, at 305 Travis, has been owned by the same family since the 1930s, and the family's tailoring business, Duke of Hollywood, is still in operation at the site. The south half of the building, at 307 Travis, has most recently been home to Warren's Inn, a popular bar that has been located in the Market Square area for several decades.

The Fox Kuhlman Building is listed as a contributing building to the Main Street Market Square National Register and City of Houston historic districts. In addition, it meets Criteria 1, 4, and 5, and was constructed before 1905, all considerations for Landmark and Protected Landmark Designation.

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE:

The Fox-Kuhlman Building, located at 305-307 Travis on Market Square, was built between 1862 and 1866, and is one of Houston's oldest surviving commercial buildings. It is designated as a contributing structure in the Main Street Market Square National Register Historic District, established in 1983, as well as the City of Houston Historic District, designated by City Council in 1998.

The Main Street Market Square Historic District is located on the south bank of Buffalo Bayou between Milam and San Jacinto streets. The historic district encompasses the area surrounding Market Square, the epicenter of early Houston commerce, as well as the Main Street Business District, which begins at Buffalo Bayou and continues southward to Texas Avenue. The buildings within the district range from modest, mid-nineteenth-century brick commercial buildings to a number of small but ornately detailed High Victorian commercial buildings, as well as a fine selection of multi-story public, bank, and office

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buildings. Allen's Landing and Market Square are two of the most historic sites in the City of Houston. Market Square, laid out in 1836 and located one block west of Main Street between Congress and Preston, is bounded on the west and east by Milam and Travis. Market Square was the site of the main public market and City Hall from 1839 until 1939.

Houston's earliest commercial buildings were little more than houses of wood-frame construction, usually with the end gables turned toward the street. Only their close configuration and lack of porches distinguished them from the houses in the residential section of Houston south of Prairie Avenue and east of Main Street. Repeated fires as well as a wave of economic prosperity in the late 1850s, attended by the construction of the Houston and Texas Central Railway and the Galveston, Houston and Henderson Railway, encouraged the replacement of wooden commercial buildings with more substantial masonry structures. During the early stages of the Civil War, Houston continued to experience a period of population growth and economic prosperity. This was due partially to the strategic location of Houston, many hundreds of miles from the battlefronts. As such, Houston received an influx of people from neighboring states that were more affected by the war.

During the 1860s and early 1870s, after fires repeatedly devastated the area, the wooden buildings on the block fronts surrounding Market Square were replaced by relatively modest, two-story masonry buildings housing the establishments of grocers, bakers, butchers, confectioners, liquor dealers, and other businesses that benefitted from the proximity to the public market. Most of the remaining historic structures around Market Square date from this period. They typically feature segmentally arched or flat-headed windows in regular patterns on the upper floors, with most ornament confined to brick cornices. Today, the east side of the 300 block of Travis, the west side of the 200 block of Travis, and the north side of the 800 block of Congress represent all that is left of once thriving Market Square.

Shortly after Houston was first platted in 1836, Lots 9 and 10 in Block 33, the block bounded by Travis, Congress, Preston and Main Streets, were purchased by Timothy Donnellan and his wife, Emilie De Ende Donnellan. Each lot was 50 feet wide and 100 feet deep. In 1846, the Donnellans sold off the rear 28 feet of the two lots, thus reducing the depth of Lots 9 and 10 to 72 feet from their frontage on Travis Street.

After Timothy's death, Emilie sold the north 1/3 of Lot 9 to John C. Fox in 1851 and the southern 2/3 of Lot 9 to Thomas Westrope in 1850. In 1853, Fox also purchased the middle 1/3 of Lot 9, so that he now owned the northern 2/3 of Lot 9, where he and his wife, Eliza, ran a bakery. Fox died in 1854, and in 1857, the last 1/3 of Lot 9 was purchased by Eliza Fox's second husband, Charles Stephanes, for \$600.

Eliza Fox was born in Hanover, Germany, in approximately 1825. John C. Fox and Eliza had two daughters, Eliza and Francisca (or Frances). On October 27, 1855, a year after John's death in 1854, Eliza married Charles Stephanes, a local grocer who had a store on Market Square. The French-born Stephanes was a veteran of the Texas Revolution who had fought in the Battle of San Jacinto. Eliza and Charles had a daughter Mary, born circa 1857. In the 1860 census, the household was recorded as living in Houston's Fourth Ward. Charles was 54 years old, and Eliza was age 35. In addition to Eliza's three daughters, the household included three Stephanes children, presumably Charles's children from a prior marriage.

In late 1859, after four years of marriage, Eliza petitioned for a divorce from Charles. In early 1860, a fire destroyed significant portions of the east side of the 300 block of Travis facing Market Square, including the Fox homestead and store. Eliza and Charles' divorce was granted on Dec 22, 1860, and in the property division, Eliza received her original separate property of the northern 2/3 of Lot 9 (the homestead of Eliza and her late husband John Fox), as well as the southern 1/3 of Lot 9 out of the

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community property, which Stephanes had purchased in 1857. Stephanes died in 1868, and was buried in the old St. Vincent's Catholic cemetery located near present-day Navigation and Jensen streets.

On March 20, 1861, three months after her divorce from Stephanes, Eliza married John Kuhlman, who owned the adjacent property (Lot 10) at the southeast corner of Travis and Congress, where he had built a three-story brick building the year before. Like Eliza, Kuhlman was a German immigrant born in Hanover, and a widower with several children. As part of their marriage agreement, Eliza transferred the north half of Lot 9 to John Kuhlman. By 1862, Kuhlman had begun construction of a brick building on the two halves of Lot 9. Before the building was completed, however, John and Eliza found themselves "mutually dissatisfied and finding that they cannot live agreeably and harmoniously together" decided to live separately. On September 23, 1862, a separation agreement was filed in which Kuhlman surrendered all rights to Lot 9 and conveyed the partially constructed brick building to Eliza in 'its actual condition.' In return, Eliza had to 'renounce all right of habitation with him or in his residence.'

John Kuhlman went on to marry a third time, and had six additional children with his last wife, Sarah, before he died on May 8, 1883. Kuhlman was buried in the two-acre Kuhlmann Cemetery at 4001 Roseneath in Riverside Terrace off South MacGregor. His three sons by Sarah - Henry, George, and John - went on to operate the Star Bottling Company, which was located at 1117-1119 Commerce Avenue in the 1890s.

By the time of her death in April 1866, Eliza Fox had managed to complete construction of the two-story, two-sided brick building on Lot 9. Her estate, including Lot 9, Block 33 as well as numerous other properties, was partitioned among her three daughters. Eliza Thompson and Francisca Schuelby, her daughters with John C. Fox, were awarded the north half of Lot 9 adjoining Lot 10. Mary Stephanes, Eliza's daughter with Charles Stephanes, received the south half of Lot 9. Each half of Lot 9 had 25 feet of frontage on Travis Street and was seventy-two feet deep, and each half had improvements worth \$4500 'gold dollars.' After Mary's father Charles died in November 1868, she became a ward of Father Joseph Querat, a local priest originally from France, who played an important role in the construction of Annunciation Catholic Church at Crawford and Texas. Mary eventually went to live with relatives in France.

In March 1880, the three sisters sold the entire property to Henry Stude, a German immigrant, for \$11,000. Stude's son and daughter-in-law, Alphonse and Louise Stude, owned and operated a bakery and coffee 'saloon' for many years on Preston between Milam and Travis, on the south side of Market Square. Henry Stude also purchased property on the north side of White Oak Bayou in 1873, where he was a 'gardener' according to the City Directory. After Henry Stude's death in May 1905, ownership of Lot 9 (305-307 Travis) went to his six grandchildren - Henry W., Alphonse, Louis, Stokes, Emilie, and Henrietta - who sold the property to Edward Armstrong for \$60,000 in March 1917. Henry W. Stude (1881-1951), the eldest of Stude's grandchildren, transformed the family bakery business into a prominent commercial baking company, and served as national president of the American Bakers' Association and American Institute of Baking in the late 1920s to mid 1930s. Henry W. Stude was also involved in local real estate ventures, including the development of the Norhill subdivision on the north side of White Oak Bayou on the Stude family's former pasture lands.

Since the Fox-Kuhlman Building was built in the 1860s, it has been occupied by numerous merchants - grocers, clothing stores, jewelers, pawnbrokers, a harness and saddle maker, real estate offices, and barbers. Since 1936, the north half of the building, at 305 Travis, has been owned and occupied by the same family-run tailoring shop. The shop was originally opened as Hollywood Tailors in 1936 by William B. Samuelson, who moved to Houston in 1936. At that time, there were many tailor shops

surrounding Market Square where City Hall was originally located. When Samuelson died in 1962, his son Lionel E. Samuelson took over the business. Around 1969 or 1970, Lionel sold the building to his sister and brother-in-law, Udis and David Shapiro, who had been operating Duke's Man's Shop two doors down at 309 Travis since 1949. In 1971 David and Udis merged the two businesses into Duke of Hollywood Tailors at 305 Travis. Their son, Michael Shapiro, continues to run the tailoring shop, and in recent years, has added a shoe shine stand and a full-service bar, known as the CharBar, to the space.

The south half of the Fox-Kuhlman Building has housed a succession of restaurants and bars for the last several decades. Since the 1980s, Warren's Inn has occupied the space. Warren's was originally owned by Warren Trousdale, the late brother of the current building owner, Carolyn Wenglar. Before moving to 307 Travis, Warren's was located across Market Square at 316 Milam in the now-demolished Bethje-Lang Building.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION AND RESTORATION HISTORY:

Built as one structure, the Fox-Kuhlman Building features two hipped roofs behind a continuous cornice line of decorative brickwork. The two-story brick structure now consists of two separately owned halves, each 25 feet wide with three bays. Under divided ownership, the building's front facade has evolved over the years into the appearance of two separate facades.

At 307 Travis, the south half of the building, the double front doors, as well as the narrow flanking doors with transom lights and brick window hoods, appear to be original. The ornamental iron balcony across the second floor was added sometime in the twentieth century.

The north half of the structure, 305 Travis, has seen more alterations over the years, with the most recent changes taking place in 2001. A Certificate of Appropriateness was granted by the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission on November 8, 2001, for renovations to the exterior of 305 Travis (Duke of Hollywood). The following work was approved: the demolition of the then-existing aluminum storefront, which had been a later alteration, and the rebuilding of a wood storefront of three bays. The two side bays were to consist of paired, wood doors with elongated vertical glass lights and wood panels below the glass, and the center bay was to consist of paired plate glass windows. The existing glass block transom windows were to remain. A decorative wood pilaster was added on the outside edge of the paired doors, and mahogany trim was added around the glass block transom windows.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

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Houston Architectural Survey, Vol 5, p 1202.

National Register narrative for Market Square.

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Downtown Historic District, Report on Buildings within the Historic District, 1996.

Beverly, Trevia Wooster, At Rest: A Historical Directory of Harris County, Texas, Cemeteries (1822-1992), p. 48.

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

APPROVAL CRITERIA FOR PROTECTED LANDMARK DESIGNATION:

The HAHC shall review each application for designation of a protected landmark that is included in an application for designation of a landmark at the same time and in the same manner as it reviews and considers the application for a landmark. The HAHC and the Planning Commission, in making recommendations with respect to a protected landmark designation, and the City Council, in making a designation, shall consider whether the building, structure, site, or area meets at least three of the criteria in Section 33-224, or one of the criteria in Section 33-229, as follows:

S **NA**

S - satisfies **NA - not applicable**

Meets at least three of the following (Sec. 33-229(a)(1):

- (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 (Sec. 33-224(a)(1);
- (2) Whether the building, structure, object, site or area is the location of a significant local, state or national event (Sec. 33-224(a)(2);
- (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 (Sec. 33-224(a)(3);
- (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 (Sec. 33-224(a)(4);
- (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 (Sec. 33-224(a)(5);
- (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 (Sec. 33-224(a)(6);
- (7) Whether specific evidence exists that unique archaeological resources are present (Sec. 33-224(a)(7);
- (8) Whether the building, structure, object or site has value as a significant element of community sentiment or public pride (Sec. 33-224(a)(8).

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,

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object, site, or area is of extraordinary importance to the city, state or nation for reasons not based on age (Sec. 33-224(b)).

OR

- The property was constructed before 1905 (Sec. 33-229(a)(2));

OR

- The property is listed individually in the National Register of Historic Places or designated as a “contributing structure” in an historic district listed in the National Register of Historic Places (Sec. 33-229(a)(3));

OR

- The property is recognized by the State of Texas as a Recorded State Historical Landmark (Sec. 33-229(a)(4)).

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Houston Planning Commission accept the recommendation of the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission and recommend to City Council the Landmark and Protected Landmark Designation of the Fox-Kuhlman Building at 305-307 Travis Street.

SITE LOCATION MAP
FOX-KUHLMAN BUILDING
305-307 TRAVIS STREET
NOT TO SCALE

