

Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE February 26, 2020

TO City of Dallas Landmark Commissioners

SUBJECT **Landmark Commission Authorized Hearing**

Landmark Commission Chair, Emily Williams, and Commissioner Hinojosa request that the Landmark Commission authorize a public hearing to consider initiation of the historic designation process for 3111 N Winnetka Avenue, the Lillie McBride House. Attached is the statement of intent for your review.

This is a hearing to consider the request to authorize the hearing and not the designation of property at this time.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Liz Casso'.

Liz Casso, Senior Planner
Office of Historic Preservation



CITY OF DALLAS

CERTIFIED MAIL #7013 3020 0001 1420 8819

February 24, 2020

WESLEY RANKIN COMMUNITY CENTER INC
3100 CROSSMAN AVE
DALLAS, TEXAS 75212-3914

RE: 3111 N. WINNETKA AVE (LILLIE MCBRIDE HOUSE) STATEMENT OF INTENT

Dear Property Owner:

The Lillie McBride House is to be considered for possible initiation as a City of Dallas Landmark at the City of Dallas Landmark Commission's meeting on Monday, March 2nd, 2020. The meeting will be held at Dallas City Hall, 1500 Marilla St., in the City Council Chambers beginning at 1:00 p.m.

The purpose of an historic designation as a City of Dallas Landmark is to protect, enhance and perpetuate places and areas which represent distinctive and important elements of the city, state or country's historical, cultural, economic, archaeological, paleontological, ethnic, political and architectural history. Designation brings awareness to historic sites, and increases public knowledge and appreciation of our historic past. Designation also helps us to protect, restore and preserve these sites so that future generations may experience and learn from them.

Commissioner Hinojosa and I believe that the Lillie McBride home at 3111 N. Winnetka may be eligible for designation as a City of Dallas Landmark. We believe the site meets the following local City of Dallas criteria qualifying it for local Landmark designation: History, Heritage and Culture (represents the historical development, ethnic heritage or cultural characteristics of the city state, or country); Historic Event (location of or association with the site of a significant historic event); Significant Persons (identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the culture and development of the city, state, or country); and Historic Education (represents an era of architectural, social, or economic history that allows an understanding of how the place or area was used by past generations). In addition, we believe the site may also be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A (property associated with an historical trend) and Criterion B (association with significant person(s) in our past) of the national criteria for evaluation.

The structure was built about 1930 in the unincorporated area of West Dallas, at 509 County Avenue, owned and occupied by Lillie McBride, sister of former Barrow Gang members Raymond and Floyd Hamilton. Over the years, Dallas annexed many areas surrounding the city, and the city renamed and renumbered streets to prevent duplication of street names, including the one where the McBride home is situated. Formerly 509 County Avenue, the address is now 3111 N. Winnetka Avenue which is three blocks from the Barrow Family home and filling station at 1221 Singleton Boulevard. McBride, who worked as a seamstress, lived only a few blocks away from

her brother, Floyd Hamilton, and her mother, Alice Davis, each of whom had a home on Crossman Avenue. McBride was accused, along with other family members of the Barrow Gang, with “harboring” the fugitives, but the charges against her were eventually dismissed. McBride lived in the house until about 1939, when she married Ray Frost.

On January 6, 1933, Tarrant County Sheriff J.R. Wright, Deputy Malcolm Davis, and five other law enforcement agents entered the unincorporated area of West Dallas to investigate the robbery of the Home Bank in Grapevine, robbed a week earlier by the Barrow Gang. Knowing the home at 509 County Avenue was owned by the sister of Barrow Gang member Raymond Hamilton, and acting on a tip, they intended to question a woman at the residence. The officers staked out the residence for the night. Just after midnight, a car entered the drive and the men inside were alerted to the police presence. When Deputy Davis ran from the rear of the house, he was shot in the abdomen at very close range and later died. The shooter was later identified as Clyde Barrow of the infamous criminal duo Bonnie and Clyde. Dallas County Sheriff’s Department went so far as to re-enact the shooting in a photo now located in the Dallas History and Archives Division at the J. Erik Jonsson Central Library. The death of Deputy Davis, at the hands of Clyde Barrow at the McBride House, ultimately led law enforcement officials to track down and kill the infamous duo of Bonnie and Clyde, ending their streak of criminal activities and murders.

The association with Clyde Barrow and the Barrow Gang, who, for better or worse, contributed to the culture and development of the city, is of local and national significance. The first few years of the 1930s saw a rise in the number of Midwestern outlaws committing robbery and murder in the American heartland. Their notoriety was bolstered by an American public who had lost confidence in government institutions and the U.S. banking system during the Great Depression. Overexposure by the media of gangster activities offered a means of escape from harsh economic reality for many whom regarded them as “Robin Hood” type folk figures. By 1935, J. Edgar Hoover’s Special Forces had largely eradicated the Midwest of its outlaws.

In addition to its connection to the Barrow Gang, the McBride House, which is currently owned and associated with the Wesley-Rankin Community Center, is also linked to the past culture and development of this area of West Dallas, formerly called the Devil’s Back Porch. The Wesley-Rankin Community Center is a faith based non-profit organization founded in 1902. Formerly called the Wesley Center, it was renamed Wesley-Rankin in 1978 after Hattie Rankin Moore, and was intended to commemorate her dedication to helping this neighborhood as far back as 1935 when she understood the desperate plight of young people growing up in a marginal area in the shadow of downtown Dallas. Hattie Rankin, who was from affluent Highland Park, came to West Dallas with no other idea but to comfort a broken-hearted mother and family. Raymond Hamilton, member of the Barrow Gang, was executed for murder on May 10, 1935. It was Rankin’s compassion for Alice Davis, mother of Raymond and Floyd Hamilton, which prompted her to begin her work in this area at that time. She, as well as Pastor W. A. Criswell, are credited with aiding Floyd Hamilton in abandoning his criminal life and turning his life over to God. Today, the Wesley-Rankin Community Center continues her mission of building a stronger multi-generational West Dallas community characterized by more graduates, responsible parents, active and empowered citizens, and self-determination with advancing economic independence.

The Lillie McBride House, and its association with the Barrow Gang, the death of Deputy Davis which led to the end of Bonnie and Clyde, as well as the work of Hattie Rankin and the Wesley-Rankin Community Center in West Dallas, fits within not only the story of how this area of West Dallas developed, but also the larger national story of gangster activities in America during the Great Depression. This history qualifies the property for initiation under four of Dallas' criteria for designation (listed above), as well as Criterion A and B of the National Register criteria. The property also appears to retain sufficient architectural integrity. The house retains its original form, openings and exterior cladding, as shown in a photograph of the official re-Enactment of Deputy Davis' shooting at 509 County Avenue. Potential designation of the Lillie McBride House is an opportunity to protect a site that is associated with the history of Clyde Barrow and a testament to the effects of poverty and hopelessness that pervaded West Dallas during the Great Depression as well as to the uplifting work of people like Hattie Rankin Moore.

We look forward to the opportunity to discuss the potential historic designation of this important site with you at the March 2nd City of Dallas Landmark Commission meeting. Please contact the City of Dallas Office of Preservation Staff at (214) 671-5052 if you have any questions or need more information prior to the meeting.

Sincerely,



Emily Williams
Chair, Dallas Landmark Commission



Rosemary Hinojosa
Dallas Landmark Commissioner (District 6)