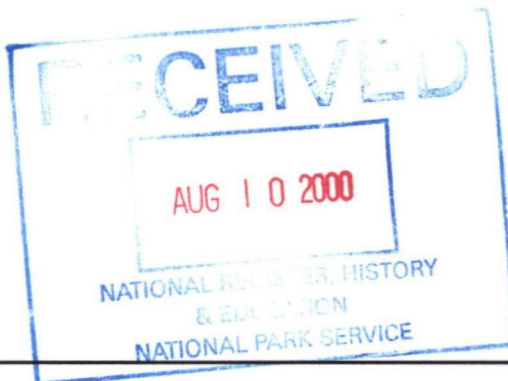


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM



OMB No. 10024-0018

Presub
757

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

HISTORIC NAME: Link-Lee House

OTHER NAME/SITE NUMBER: John Wiley Link and Thomas P. Lee House

2. LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: 3800 Montrose

CITY OR TOWN: Houston

STATE: Texas

CODE: TX

COUNTY: Harris

CODE: 201

NOT FOR PUBLICATION: N/A

VICINITY: N/A

ZIP CODE: 77006

3. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this x nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property x meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide x locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official

7-26-00

Date

State Historic Preservation Officer, Texas Historical Commission

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

- ☒ entered in the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
☐ determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register
☐ removed from the National Register
☐ other (explain):

9/11/00

5. CLASSIFICATION

OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY: Private

CATEGORY OF PROPERTY: Building

NUMBER OF RESOURCES WITHIN PROPERTY:	CONTRIBUTING	NONCONTRIBUTING
	2	1 BUILDINGS
	0	0 SITES
	1	0 STRUCTURES
	0	1 OBJECTS
	3	2 TOTAL

NUMBER OF CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES PREVIOUSLY LISTED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER: 0

NAME OF RELATED MULTIPLE PROPERTY LISTING: N/A

6. FUNCTION OR USE

HISTORIC FUNCTIONS: DOMESTIC: Single-Family Dwelling

CURRENT FUNCTIONS: EDUCATION: College=Administration Building

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: Neo-Classical Revival

MATERIALS: FOUNDATION CONCRETE
WALLS BRICK; STONE/ Limestone; CERAMIC TILE; TERRA COTTA
ROOF CLAY TILE
OTHER METAL/ Iron

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION (see continuation sheets 7-5 through 7-18)

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 5

Link-Lee House
Houston, Harris County, Texas

DESCRIPTION

The 1912 Link-Lee House is a large, three-story, brick faced house exhibiting a bold Neo-Classical Revival plan with its extreme setback massing and monumental two-story entry portico. Built on a modified rectangular plan, the exterior walls are constructed of reinforced concrete clad with vitrified buff brick and highlighted with enameled terra cotta glazed tile and stone trim. The formal axial plan of the interior reflects Neo-Classical Revival tenets, while the Arts and Crafts movement is evidenced in the fine woodwork, built-in cabinets, and art glass doors and windows. Facing east on Montrose Boulevard, the house occupies an entire city block of the Montrose Place Addition, an early 20th century residential subdivision developed by John W. Link, the house's first occupant. The two-story brick carriage house and pergola walkway constitute the other two contributing resources of the property. Two noncontributing resources that postdate the period of significance consist of a one-story brick building and a metal fence. Although the house has experienced some alteration and change over the years, the Link-Lee House retains a high degree of architectural and historic integrity.

Situated at a busy intersection of what was once a prominent block of the Montrose Addition of Houston, the stately Link-Lee House stands as one of the last residences of its grandeur, as the three reaming corners have since fallen to commercial development (see photograph 1). The Link-Lee House commands an entire city block at the intersection of West Alabama Avenue and Montrose Boulevard. The house is set back far from the street on a landscaped berm. Expansive areas of grass surround the house on the east and south elevations, with numerous mature oak and magnolia trees shading the grounds.

The house is constructed of load-bearing walls set on a reinforced concrete foundation with a raised basement. The lower portion of the house is defined by a limestone water table. The exterior walls are made of concrete faced with a light, cream-colored vitrified brick. The central three-story core of the house is covered with a hipped roof finished with glazed green ceramic tile. Lower flat roofs over the porches, bay windows, and the portico, project out from the central massing, creating upper floor terraces. Conforming to the Neo-Classical Revival tenets, the rectangular shaped house is symmetrical, but diverts from strict classicism with its exaggerated porches and prominent east portico.

The east or main façade faces Montrose Boulevard, a major north-south thoroughfare that was once a grand esplanade through the Montrose Addition. The house is approached from Montrose Boulevard by a wide sidewalk that separates into two smaller walkways that follow the landscaped perimeter of the house (see figure 7-1). The main sidewalk has a series of steps about mid-way to the house, with a second set of steps leading to the front porch. The second set of steps is flanked by brick stoops outlined with limestone coping. Large pedestals urns are placed at each end of the porch. Towering over the porch is the monumental east portico composed of square columns and a decorative entablature (see photograph 2). The house is entered

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Link-Lee House
Houston, Harris County, Texas

through a small flat arch, featuring stylized fluted columns supporting an entablature both fashioned out of glazed terra cotta tiles. Beyond the arch is a pair of wooden doors containing a geometric pattern of colored-glass. The same colored-glass pattern is found in the sidelights and transoms surrounding the doors (see figure 7-5).

The second story porch gallery is open and outlined with metal balustrade divided into sections by square corner posts clad in terra cotta and featuring inset panels and decorative scrolls. Two identical recessed side porches, to the north and south, are constructed and detailed in a similar manner. All of the windows on the first and second floors of this façade are wood sash and transom with limestone surrounds, except for those of the 1922 first floor porch addition, which are metal.

The eight colossal square columns of the portico are clad in terra cotta and support a full entablature that continues around the house. The columns are accented with a terra cotta and blue ceramic tile cartouche on each face. The architrave is decorated with a geometric pattern of ceramic polychrome tiles. Above the terra cotta frieze is a line of hanging pendants alternating with modillion and acanthus leaf blocks. Along the top of the cornice is a band of polychrome diamond and square tiles inset into the terra-cotta crown molding (see figure 7-6). The green clay tile roof is visible above the terra cotta band. A corbeled brick parapet wall extends a foot further above the roof, enclosing the third floor roof terrace. The two chimneys on the house are sheathed in the same brick as the exterior and decorated with inset panels and corbeled caps.

The north façade continues the line of the elaborately decorative entablature. The front porch, which extends its detailing to include the projecting porte cochere, is supported by square, battered brick columns with decorative terra cotta capitals (see photograph 2). A short flight of steps from the porte cochere leads up onto the first floor side porch. The porch balustrade is composed of brick with arched openings and square brick posts with limestone caps. The projecting porte cochere creates a second floor terrace enclosed with metal balustrade and square brick corner posts. To the west of the porte cochere, the projecting north wing ends with a curved two-story bay containing 1/1 wood windows on the upper floor and casement windows at the basement level (see figure 7-7). Immediately west of this feature, on the first floor, is a projecting box window covered with a green clay tile roof. This window is highlighted with a transom and sidelights and a lower inset wooden panel. The remaining windows of this façade are identical 1/1 wooden sash with limestone surrounds.

Approached by a short flight of stairs, the west elevation is dominated by the center rear entrance doors. To the left of these glass doors, the building projects forward, while to the right is a single story, rounded projecting bay with three sets of 1/1 wooden sash windows. Above the entry, the second floor reveals a large stained glass window over the landing of the central staircase. On the upper floors, the windows are paired 1/1 wooden sash, while the lower floor contains single 1/1 wooden sash. A covered walkway, composed of a brick column and timber beam pergola covered with green clay tile, interconnects the main house with the carriage house to the west (see figure 7-8). A photograph from 1948 indicates that originally the pergola was not

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Link-Lee House
Houston, Harris County, Texas

covered. Clad with the same cream-colored brick, the simple, two-story carriage house resembles in design and materials the quality of the main house. At some unknown date, a small single story shed addition was added to the west elevation of the carriage house.

On the south elevation of the house, a two-story rectangular bay projects forward. The bay has dissimilar windows on the upper and lower floors. The second floor terrace, located on the east side of this elevation, is encircled by a metal balustrade with square brick corner posts matching those on the east and north elevations. The first floor porch was enclosed in 1922, and its windows are of a metal design.

The original interior plan for the house did not include a foyer, but instead allowed access directly into the large twenty by forty-foot living room from the central entry. The main rooms of the house were arranged to either side of a 15-foot wide staircase. Photographs from 1947 indicate that the interior of the living room featured birch wainscoting and a paneled wood beam ceiling (see figure 7-9). To the right and rear of the living room was a 20 by 27-foot dining room created by the curved projecting north bay. Behind the dining room was a 12 by 14-foot breakfast room, with a kitchen beyond. The side carriage entrance accessed the building through a small glazed passageway that separated the living and dining rooms on the north side of the house, and continued on the south side of the house separating the music room from the living room. Historically the library was located behind the music room and contained glass front bookcases, tapestry wall coverings, and a paneled wood beam ceiling. The second floor originally contained five bedrooms and three bathrooms. Casement windows opened from all of the bedrooms onto the large porches and terraces. The third floor contained a ballroom measuring twenty feet by forty feet. This room opened onto the third floor terrace and displayed intricate stenciled wall decorations. The raised basement originally housed modern service equipment, including a steam heat system, a fire extinguishing system consisting of two standpipes, a laundry facility and a vacuuming system for the entire house.

Purchased in 1947, by the Diocese of Galveston, on behalf of the Basilian Fathers of Toronto, the Link-Lee House became the first building for the University of St. Thomas. The Link-Lee House housed the classrooms, library, and administrative offices for this newly created liberal arts university. Photographs from 1948 indicate that changes made to the property at this time included the construction of a one-story classroom building, fronting Yoakum, on the west portion of the property (see photograph 1). Built of brick, the classroom building (noncontributing) match in color and material the exterior of the Link-Lee House, and are not obtrusive to the site. Later changes to the site include the reconfiguration of the original circular drive, which accessed the property from West Alabama Avenue and Montrose Boulevard, to allow parking for the university's growing student population. Carved from lawn that encompassed the northwest corner of the property, the parking lot is surrounded by a low brick and metal fence (noncontributing) that continues around the perimeter of the property along West Alabama Avenue and Montrose Boulevard. Additional photographs from 1948 of the south and southwest elevations of the house (see figure 7-10) show that the house has remained relatively unaltered except for the addition (date unknown) of air conditioning units added to several windows.

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Link-Lee House
Houston, Harris County, Texas

Over time the University of St. Thomas acquired surrounding property and the Link-Lee House was converted into the university's administrative offices. The interior spaces have been altered over the years to accommodate the growing needs of the University. The interior configuration of rooms remains relatively unaltered, although many of the finishes have been substantially changed or removed. Several years ago extensive damage from a third floor roof leak resulted in the replacement of much of the plaster walls on the second and third floors. Due to severe damage, the dining room wood floor was also replaced with compatible wood flooring. The wood paneling and beam ceilings remain on the first floor. A small section of the tapestry wall covering in the library was deliberately retained as a visible reminder of the original wall covering of the room. Despite these alterations the Link-Lee House retains a high degree of its historic fabric as well as sufficient integrity of design, materials, workmanship, location, setting, feeling, and association to remain recognizable to its period of significance.

INVENTORY OF RESOURCES

Link-Lee House, contributing building
Two-story carriage house, contributing building
One-story classroom, noncontributing building
Modern metal fence, noncontributing object

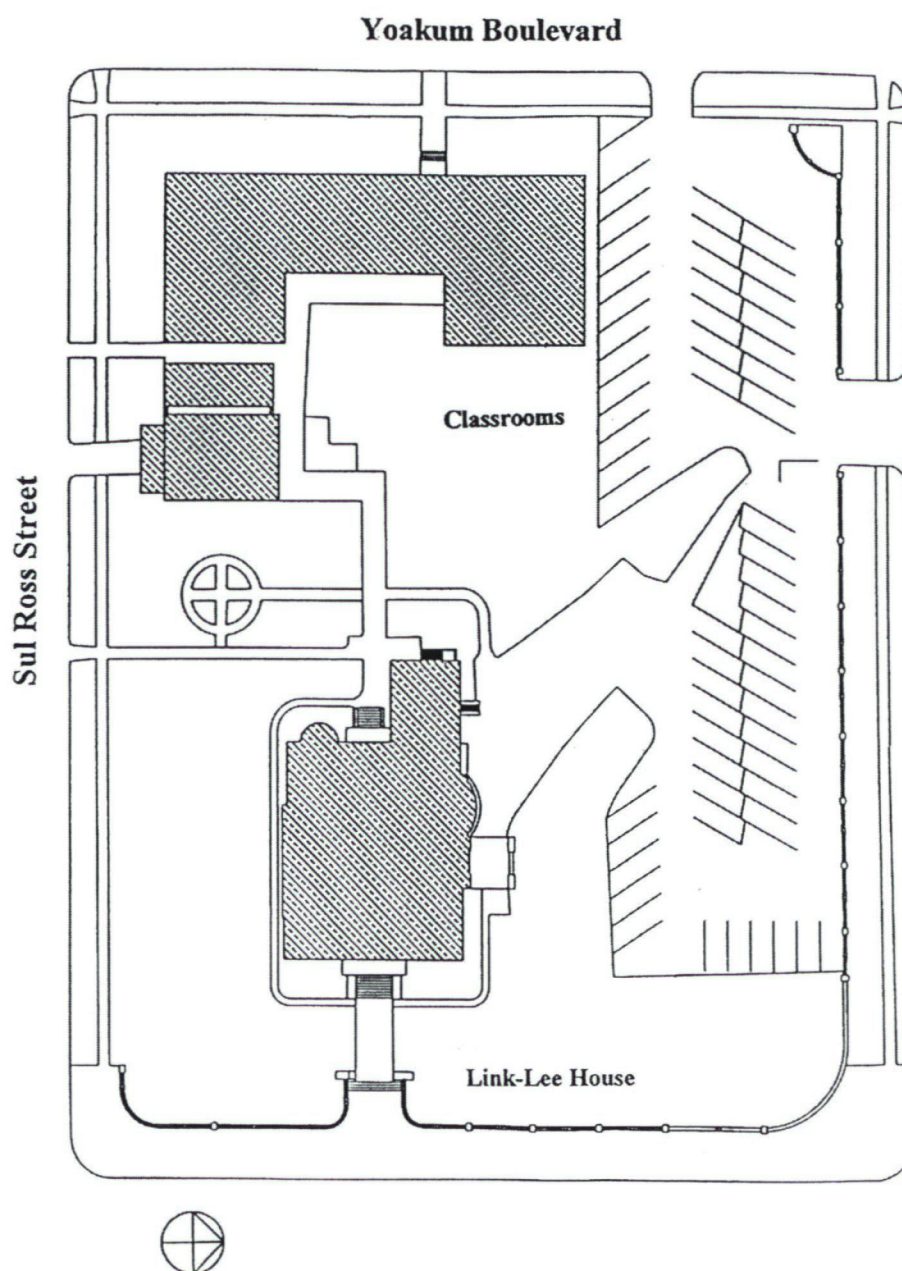
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Link-Lee House
Houston, Harris County, Texas

Figure 7-1 Site Plan (not drawn to scale)



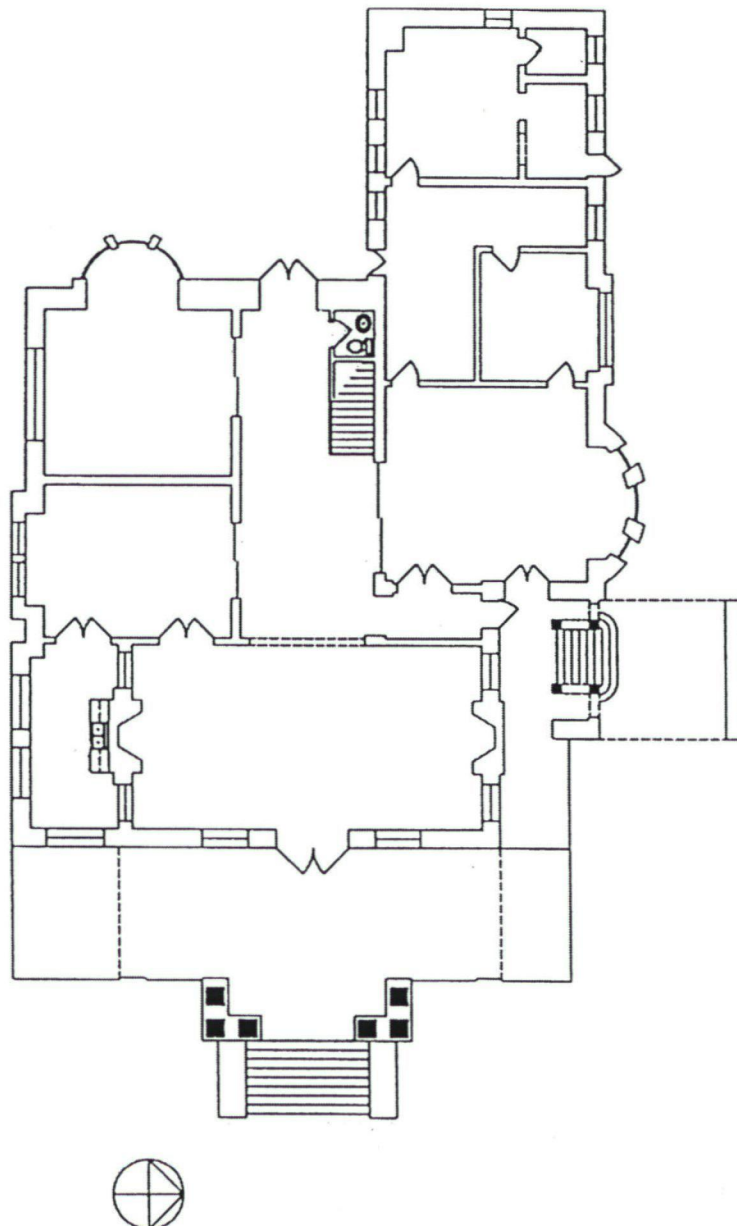
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Link-Lee House
Houston, Harris County, Texas

Figure 7-2 First Floor Plan (not drawn to scale)



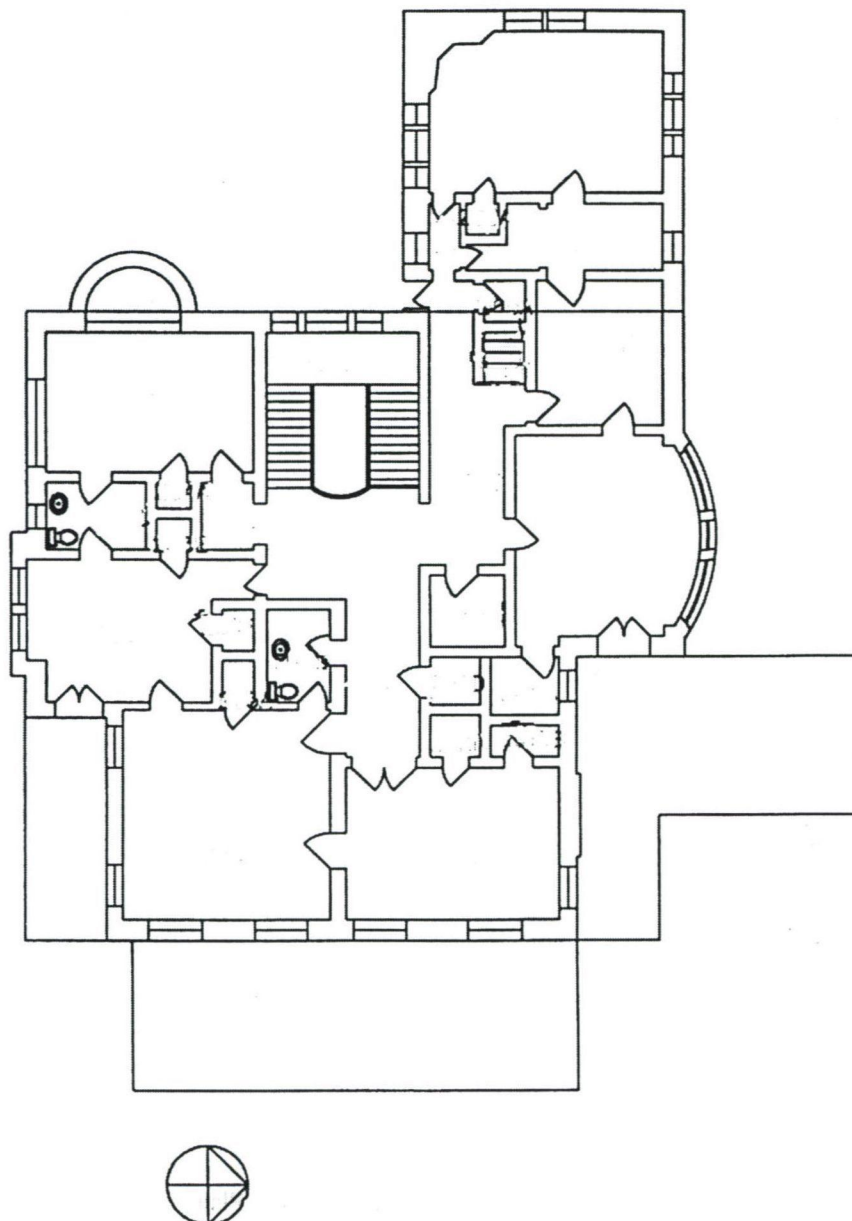
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Link-Lee House
Houston, Harris County, Texas

Figure 7-3 Second Floor Plan (not drawn to scale)



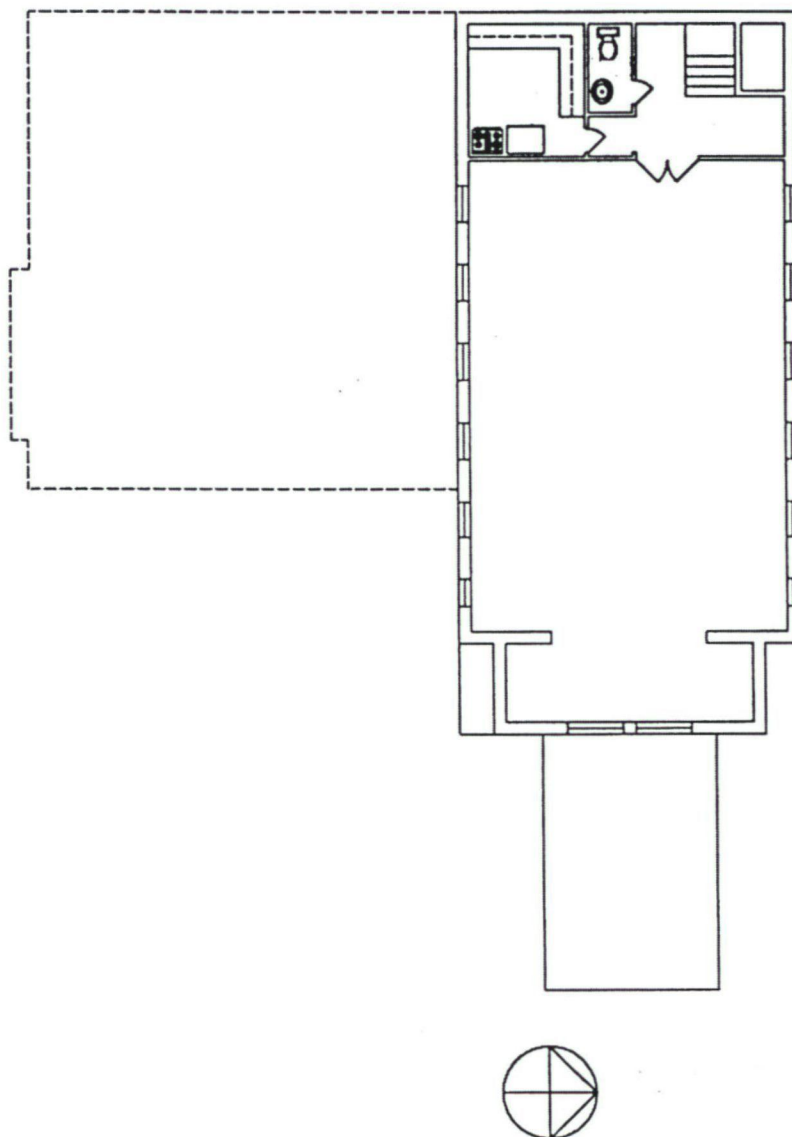
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Link-Lee House
Houston, Harris County, Texas

Figure 7-4 Third Floor Plan (not drawn to scale)



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Link-Lee House
Houston, Harris County, Texas

Figure 7-5 Photograph of Central Entry; East Elevation



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Link-Lee House
Houston, Harris County, Texas

Figure 7-6 Photograph of Cornice Detail; East Elevation



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Link-Lee House
Houston, Harris County, Texas

Figure 7-7 Photograph of Detail of North Elevation



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Link-Lee House
Houston, Harris County, Texas

Figure 7-8 Photograph of Covered Walkway; East Elevation



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Link-Lee House
Houston, Harris County, Texas

Figure 7-8 Photograph of Interior; 1948



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Link-Lee House
Houston, Harris County, Texas

Figure 7-10 Photograph of South Elevation; 1948



8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

APPLICABLE NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA

- ☒ **A** PROPERTY IS ASSOCIATED WITH EVENTS THAT HAVE MADE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE BROAD PATTERNS OF OUR HISTORY.
- ☐ **B** PROPERTY IS ASSOCIATED WITH THE LIVES OF PERSONS SIGNIFICANT IN OUR PAST.
- ☒ **C** PROPERTY EMBODIES THE DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF A TYPE, PERIOD, OR METHOD OF CONSTRUCTION OR REPRESENTS THE WORK OF A MASTER, OR POSSESSES HIGH ARTISTIC VALUE, OR REPRESENTS A SIGNIFICANT AND DISTINGUISHABLE ENTITY WHOSE COMPONENTS LACK INDIVIDUAL DISTINCTION.
- ☐ **D** PROPERTY HAS YIELDED, OR IS LIKELY TO YIELD, INFORMATION IMPORTANT IN PREHISTORY OR HISTORY.

CRITERIA CONSIDERATIONS: N/A

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: ARCHITECTURE; COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE: 1912-1950

SIGNIFICANT DATES: 1912; 1922

SIGNIFICANT PERSON:

CULTURAL AFFILIATION: N/A

ARCHITECT/BUILDER: Sanguinet and Staats (1912); Alfred Finn (1922 addition)

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (see continuation sheets 8-19 through 8-26)

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

BIBLIOGRAPHY (see continuation sheets 9-27 through 9-28)

PREVIOUS DOCUMENTATION ON FILE (NPS): N/A

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

PRIMARY LOCATION OF ADDITIONAL DATA:

- ☒ State historic preservation office (*Texas Historical Commission*)
- ☐ Other state agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other -- Specify Repository:

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Link-Lee House
Houston, Harris County, Texas

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Link-Lee House (1912), designed by the noted Fort Worth architectural firm of Sanguinet and Staats, is an exceptional example of a Neo-Classical Revival style house, distinguished by its monumental portico, terra cotta and stone detailing, and decorative art glass. Prominently sited along the tree-lined esplanade of Montrose Boulevard, the elegantly designed house, together with its two-story carriage house and pergola, were the showplace of the Montrose Addition, Houston's largest restricted planned subdivision. Altered in 1922, to its present appearance, the Link-Lee House retains a high degree of its integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The Link-Lee House meets Criterion A in the area of Community Planning and Development, for the role it played in promoting the Montrose Addition, and Criterion C in the area of Architecture, for its exceptional design and association with the architectural firm of Sanguinet and Staats.

Development of the Montrose Addition

During the first decades of the twentieth century, Houston emerged as a major metropolitan center, becoming the third largest city in Texas in 1930. The opening of the Houston Ship Channel in 1914, coupled with its five radiating railroad lines, pushed the city into prominence as an important trade and transportation center. The discovery of oil at Spindletop in the 1920s, further increased the city's wealth and stature, as oil companies built refineries along the ship channel and erected striking corporate towers downtown. Along with its increased commercial stature, Houston's population doubled between 1900 and 1910, putting a strain on the its already overcrowded residential neighborhoods. In response to this shortage of housing, land developers began building exclusive residential neighborhoods beyond the original townsite boundaries. Although connected to the downtown by streetcar lines, these subdivisions offered a retreat from the noise and congestion of the central city through deed restrictions that banned businesses and commercial intrusions.

The Montrose Addition began in 1909 when John Wiley Link purchased 165 acres of farmland just west of the exclusive neighborhoods of Westmoreland (1902), Courtlandt Place (1906), and Avondale (1907). This land had originally been part of the 1836 Obedience Smith land grant of 3,370 acres registered under headright certificate number 203. Following Mrs. Smith's death, the land went through a number of transactions and subsequently sold for residential development after the city annexed the area in 1903. In September 1910, John Wiley Link moved to Houston from Orange, Texas, where he had been mayor and a prominent leader in the lumber and building industries. The following month, Link organized the Houston Land Corporation with a capitalization of \$500,000. The land development company included John Henry Kirby, a longtime friend and business associate of Link and a number of prominent Houston business and political leaders of the day.

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Link-Lee House
Houston, Harris County, Texas

The platting of the Montrose Addition occurred on October 4, 1911, with more than 1,000 individual lots, most measuring 50 x 100 feet recorded on paper (see figure 8-1). After platting, the Houston Land Corporation announced it would spend over one million dollars on improvements. Deviating from the street pattern established downtown, the four main thoroughfares, Montrose, Audubon, Lovett and Yoakum, were drawn on a true north-south line. Edward Teas Sr., founder of Teas Nursery, transformed these four boulevards into beautifully landscaped esplanades planted with palm trees. Early advertisements for the subdivision boasted that the Montrose Addition offered eleven of Houston's twenty-six miles of paved roads and over twenty-two miles of concrete curbs and sidewalks. The advertisements went on to claim that the new subdivision contained eight miles of sanitary sewers, seven miles of water mains, and several miles of gas mains. To access the new subdivision, the Montrose Line provided streetcar service between the neighborhood and downtown.

Property became available for purchase on October 11, 1911, and within the first year sixty-five homes were completed. Advertisements for the area contended that "Montrose was a well-developed area, with all modern conveniences, for all good people." The price of individual lots ranged from \$1,250 on some streets to \$7,500 on the leading boulevards, with construction for the typical, more modest, homes ranging between \$3,000 and \$8,000 (Houston Land Corporation Sales Brochure, 1912). Over the next ten years the subdivision flourished, developing steadily and profitably as a premier residential neighborhood.

In 1911, Link purchased the entirety of Block 41 in the center of the Montrose Addition on which to build his own home. Link commissioned the noted architectural firm of Sanguinet and Staats, one of the busiest and best known in Texas at the beginning of the twentieth century, to design his new house using his previous home in Orange as a model. The Link-Lee House was the first house completed for the subdivision. Built in 1911 after a design by Sanguinet and Staats, the \$60,000 house quickly became a showplace establishing and promoting the image of gracious living of the Montrose Addition. The Neo-Classical Revival style of this house, by no means typical of the entire neighborhood, became the embodiment of grandeur and opulence that Link hoped might characterize the homes would be built along the main esplanade boulevards.

Sanguinet and Staats

Founded in 1902 by Carl G. Staats and Marshall R. Sanguinet, Sanguinet and Staats became one of the states largest architectural firms, with offices located in Dallas, Waco, San Antonio, Houston, and Wichita Falls. Marshall R. Sanguinet (1859-1936), a native of St. Louis, attended St. Louis University without receiving his degree. Before beginning a two-year course in architecture at Washington University, Sanguinet spent two years in training in the office of the St. Louis architect Thomas Walsh. Sanguinet moved to Fort Worth in 1883 and practiced architecture with a number firms through the turn of the century, including Sanguinet and Dawson, Haggart and Sanguinet, Sanguinet and Messer, and Messer, Sanguinet and Messer. Carl G. Staats (1871-1928), born and educated in New York City, moved to San Antonio in 1891 to work for James Riely

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Link-Lee House
Houston, Harris County, Texas

Gordon. Seven years later he joined Sanguinet in Fort Worth as a draftsman. After founding the architectural firm, the two were responsible for designing numerous commercial and residential buildings throughout Texas, and are best known for their skyscraper designs in Fort Worth, Dallas, and Houston. Prominent examples of their work in Houston include the First National Bank Building (1905), the Paul Building (1907), the Old Houston Country Club (1908), the First Methodist Church (1910), the Post-Dispatch Building (1926), and the Old Houston National Bank (1926), and a number of private residences in Courtlandt Place, one of Houston's earliest exclusive residential neighborhoods.

John Wiley Link (1866-1933)

John Wiley Link was born to parents David Lowman and Nancy Emaline (Henry) Link on December 1, 1866. The place of his birth has been confusingly reported as both Epperson Springs, Tennessee and Gallatin, Texas. As a result of hard times, the family moved to Texas in 1878, stopping first in Corsicana, then settling on a large farm farther west, near Anson. John Wiley Link attended Baylor University in Waco, after which he migrated back to Tennessee to attend Vanderbilt University and Law School. After graduating, Link became a lawyer for the Fort Worth and Denver Railway. In 1889, Link met Ihna Imola Holland, daughter of Judge J. A. Holland of Fort Worth. In 1890, Link moved to Amarillo, where Holland had relocated with her parents. The two married on October 21, 1891, with Link soon after joining the law firm of Holland and Holland. Link moved with the law firm in 1895 to Orange. Elected mayor of Orange in 1900, Link became active in the city's development and instrumental in securing deep water ports in Beaumont and Orange and establishing the Beaumont-Orange deepwater channel.

Recognizing the important role that native forests would play in the lumber industry in East Texas, Link began acquiring large parcels of timbered land in the early 1900s. In 1902, Link purchased a lumber mill from John Henry Kirby and together with friend L. Miller formed the Miller-Link Lumber Company, one of the larger lumber companies operating in East Texas during this period. Link's career in the lumber trade culminated when he became president of the Texas-Louisiana Lumberman's Association a few years later.

Convinced of Houston's future prosperity, Link relocated there in 1910 and formed the Houston Land Corporation. An active promoter of the city, Link served as a member of the Board of Directors for the Houston Chamber of Commerce in 1911, 1912, and again in 1915, and 1916. During this period, Link also formed and became president of the Link Oil Corporation. The Link family moved into the Montrose Addition house in October of 1912. As a successful businessman, with five children, Link and his wife entertained lavishly. The third floor was designed as a ballroom with a clear dancing space of forty feet and doors opening on to the third floor terraces to accommodate their numerous guests. In 1916, after the wedding of their youngest daughter, the home was sold to oil merchant and businessman Thomas P. Lee, who purchased the home for \$90,000, the highest price paid for a house in Houston to that date.

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Link-Lee House
Houston, Harris County, Texas

The success of the Houston Land Corporation, as well as the Montrose Addition can be directly correlated to the business acumen of John Wiley Link. After selling his interest in the Houston Land Corporation, Link moved back to Beaumont briefly to organize the Beaumont Ship Building and Dry Dock Company. Returning to Houston in 1920, Link in 1921 became vice president and general manager of the Kirby Lumber Company and president of the Lamella Trussless Roof Company. During this time, Link also served as president of the Link-Ford Investment Company, the Polar Wave Ice Company, and as a director of the Union National Bank, the San Jacinto Trust Company, and the Bankers Trust Company. In 1926, Link, along with Gus S. Wortham, B. F. Carruth, and R. W. Ford, formed the American General Life Insurance Company, with Wortham as president and Link chairman. Known today as the American General Corporation, the company evolved into one of the largest insurance and holding companies in the country. In 1929, Link left the Kirby Lumber Company to become president of the parent company of the Dr. Pepper Company, and was instrumental in the re-organization and expansion of that company. Link continued as a business leader in Houston until his death on March 18, 1933.

Subsequent Owners of the House

Born in 1871, Thomas P. Lee began working in the oil fields of West Virginia at the early age of sixteen. Lee married his first wife Elizabeth Mann in 1892, who died shortly after the birth of their daughter in 1895. Lee remarried in 1900 to Essie Mabel Horton of Savannah, Georgia. In 1903, the couple moved to Sour Lake, Texas and Lee began working for the newly formed Texas Company as a general superintendent of production. Associated with the Texas Company for ten years, Lee was actively involved in the company's growth and development in the oil industry. Together with J. S. Cullinan, Will C. Hogg, James L. Autry, and E. F. Woodward, Lee formed and became president of the Farmers Petroleum Company in 1913. In 1915, Lee provided the initial capital for the formation of the Yount-Lee Company in Beaumont. This small company grew rapidly into a million-dollar business after the discovery of oil at Spindletop, and remained in operation until sold to the Standard Oil Company in 1933 for \$41.6 million. A year later, Lee and his associates formed the American Republics Corporation, an oil exploration and production company, where he served as vice president and director. That same year, Lee moved to Houston and acquired the Montrose Addition house from J. W. Link.

Lee, his wife, and six daughters, soon found their home in Montrose too small. In 1922, Lee commissioned noted Houston architect Alfred Finn to design an addition to the northwest corner of the house. Finn's design included enclosing an existing a first floor sleeping porch located on the southeast corner of the house, and constructing a second story bedroom above the existing kitchen. These additions altered the floor plan of the original house, including the number of rooms and location of stairways, to its current appearance. The house remained in the Lee family until 1946 when Mrs. Lee sold the house and property to the Catholic Diocese of Galveston on behalf of the Basilian Fathers of Toronto to establish a university.

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Link-Lee House
Houston, Harris County, Texas

Chartered on April 28, 1947, the University of the St. Thomas became the first co-educational Basilian university in the United States, as well as the first co-educational undergraduate catholic university in Texas (University of St. Thomas, 9). The university opened its doors on September 22, 1947 with fifty-seven students enrolled. The university grew from the original building, to a fifteen-acre campus with thirty-six buildings, including a multiple-building complex designed by architect Philip Johnson. Since 1947 the Link-Lee House has been continuously used as the Administration Building for the university.

Soon after completion, the Link-Lee House gained recognition as a landmark in southwest Houston, and remains today an important architectural and cultural resource for the city, conveying a strong sense of time and place. The building stands boldly among its neighbors as a reflection of early twentieth century architectural tastes and styles and as a showpiece of the Montrose Addition, an important segment of Houston's early twentieth century development. As one of the few remaining original residences of this magnitude along Montrose Boulevard, the Link-Lee House retains a high degree of its integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and associations to remain architecturally and culturally significant. For these reasons, the Link-Lee House is nominated at the local level of significance under Criterion C in the area of Architecture, for its design and association with the architectural firm of Sanguinet and Staats, and under Criterion A, in the area of Community Planning and Development, for the role it played in the development of the Montrose Addition.

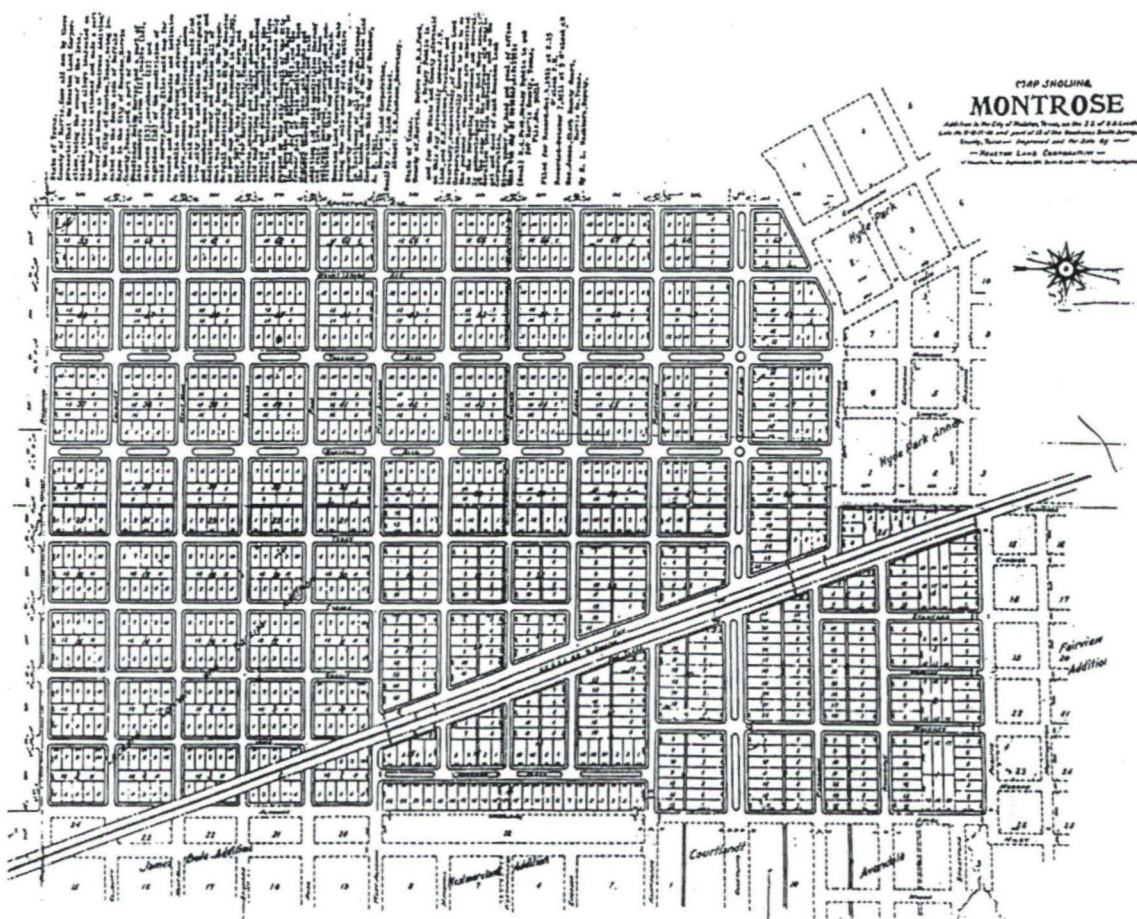
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 24

Link-Lee House
Houston, Harris County, Texas

Figure 8-1 1911 Plat of the Montrose Addition



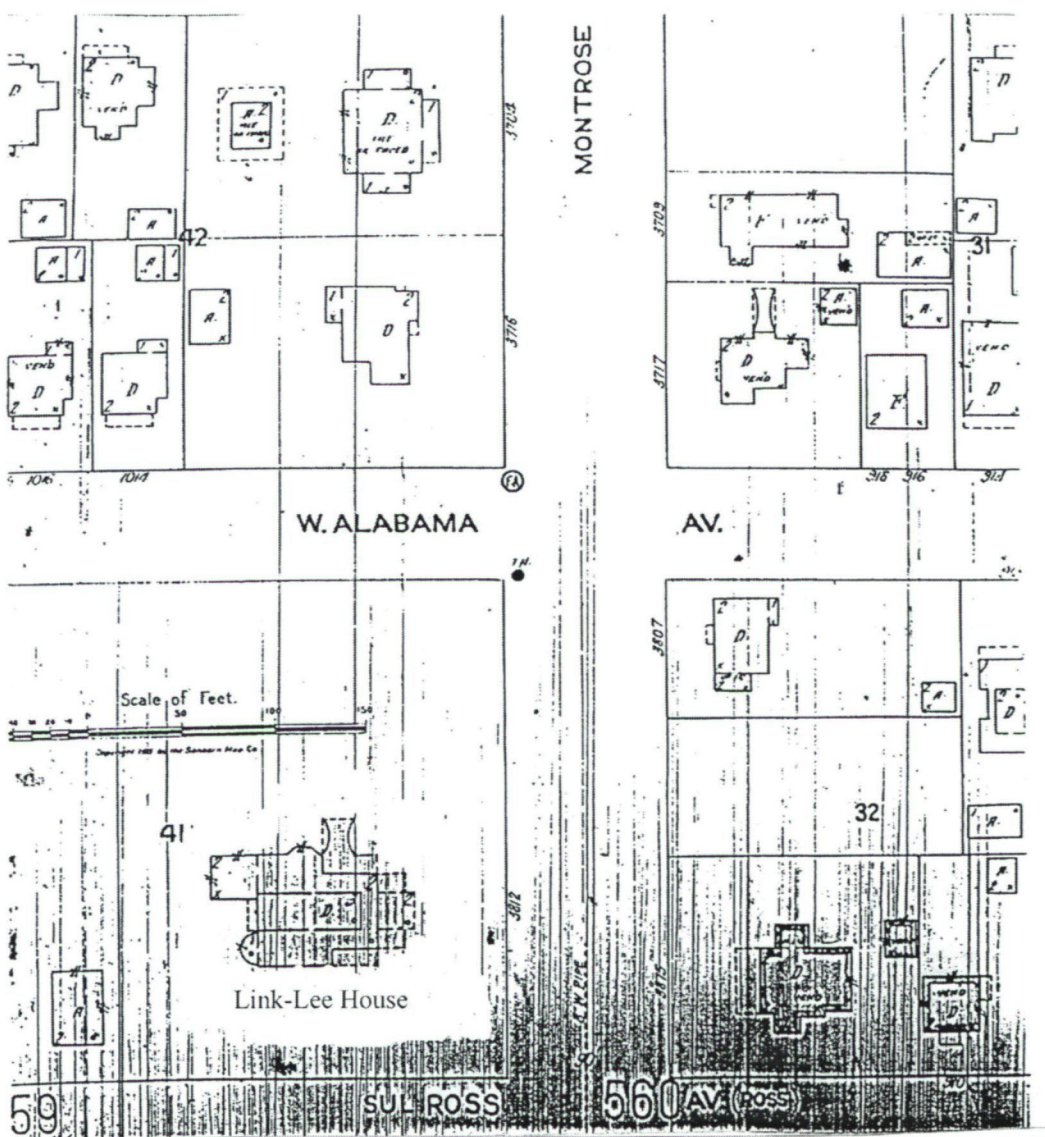
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 25

Link-Lee House
Houston, Harris County, Texas

Figure 8-2 1925 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 26

Link-Lee House
Houston, Harris County, Texas

Figure 8-3 1916 Photograph of Link-Lee House



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 9 Page 27

Link-Lee House
Houston, Harris County, Texas

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
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Link-Lee House
Houston, Harris County, Texas

Fox, Stephen, *Prospective*, Vol. XII, 1983.

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Houston Daily Post. "Montrose Place" - June 18, 1911.

_____. "Costly House for Montrose Place" - (no date).

_____. "The Link Residence, Work on Handsome Home in Montrose to Begin Soon" - January 8, 1911.

_____. "Permit for Link Home, Will Cost Approximately \$50,000 When Complete" - (no date).

_____. "Handsome Home of J. W. Link in Montrose Addition" - October 27, 1912.

_____. "Two New Streets Improve Montrose" - December 22, 1912.

_____. "Link Residence Sold for \$90,000.00" - December 3, 1916.

_____. "J. W. Link. Sr. Expires Suddenly in Office Here" - March 18, 1933.

_____. "J. W. Link Sr., Prominent Texas Lumberman, Dies Suddenly" - March 19, 1933.

Progressive Houston. "A Journal for the Advancement of the City" - July 1911.

Progressive Houston. "A Journal for the Advancement of the City" - February 1912.

Southern Architect and Building News. May 1913.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF PROPERTY: approximately two acres

UTM REFERENCES	Zone	Easting	Northing
	1 15	268720	3291960

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION (see continuation sheet 10-29)

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION (see continuation sheet 10-29)

11. FORM PREPARED BY (with assistance from John W. Murphey, THC Historian)

NAME/TITLE: Lynn Edmundson

ORGANIZATION:

DATE: May 15, 1999

STREET & NUMBER: 2216 Brentwood Drive

TELEPHONE: 713-522-0542

CITY OR TOWN: Houston

STATE: TX

ZIP CODE: 77019

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

CONTINUATION SHEETS

MAPS

PHOTOGRAPHS (see continuation sheet Photo-30)

ADDITIONAL ITEMS

PROPERTY OWNER

NAME: University of St. Thomas

STREET & NUMBER: 3800 Montrose

TELEPHONE: 713-525-2160

CITY OR TOWN: Houston

STATE: TX

ZIP CODE: 77006

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

Section 10 Page 29

Link-Lee House
Houston, Harris County, Texas

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lots 1-16 in Block 41, Montrose Addition to the City of Houston, on the south side of Buffalo Bayou located on Lots 11, 12, 17, 18, and part of 13 of the Obedience Smith Survey, Harris County, September, 1911.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries include all the property historically associated with this building, which consists of the entire block of 41, of the Montrose Addition.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section PHOTO Page 30

Link-Lee House
Houston, Harris County, Texas

PHOTO LOG

The following information pertains to all photographs unless otherwise noted:

Link-Lee House
3800 Montrose
Houston, Harris County, Texas

Photo No. 1 of 2
Aerial
c. 1947-48
Photographer: unknown

Photo No. 2 of 2
Camera Facing Southwest
May 1999
Photographer: Lynn Edmundson

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Link--Lee House
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: TEXAS, Harris

DATE RECEIVED: 6/01/00 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 6/13/00
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 6/29/00 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 7/16/00
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 00000751

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: Y NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

___ ACCEPT ___ RETURN ___ REJECT ___ DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS: *An outstanding example of Neo-classical design and importantly associated with Houston's suburbanization, house meets Crit. A + C. in Architecture and community development and planning. Since house is not being nominated for association w Link's name should be dropped from significant person. Nomination is being returned because photographs appear to be printed on color not B+W paper and do not meet National Register standards. Please submit at least one representative exterior view of house and additions (for example #1&7) on fiber based or resin-coated B+W process paper. Also, please drop Link's name from the item for significant person (section 8)*

RECOM./CRITERIA Return

REVIEWER LMcClelland DISCIPLINE History

TELEPHONE 202-343-9544 DATE 7/16/00

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: RESUBMISSION

PROPERTY Link--Lee House
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: TEXAS, Harris

DATE RECEIVED: 8/10/00
DATE OF 16TH DAY:
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

DATE OF PENDING LIST:
DATE OF 45TH DAY: 9/24/00

REFERENCE NUMBER: 00000751

DETAILED EVALUATION:

___ACCEPT ___RETURN ___REJECT _____DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

New photographs submitted on black & white
paper. Name has been dropped from "Sign.
Person" blank.

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept ATC

REVIEWER LMcCulland

DISCIPLINE History

TELEPHONE 202-343-9599

DATE 9/11/00

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N



LINK-LEE HOUSE

3800 MONTROSE

HOUSTON, HARRIS CO., TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPH 1 of 2

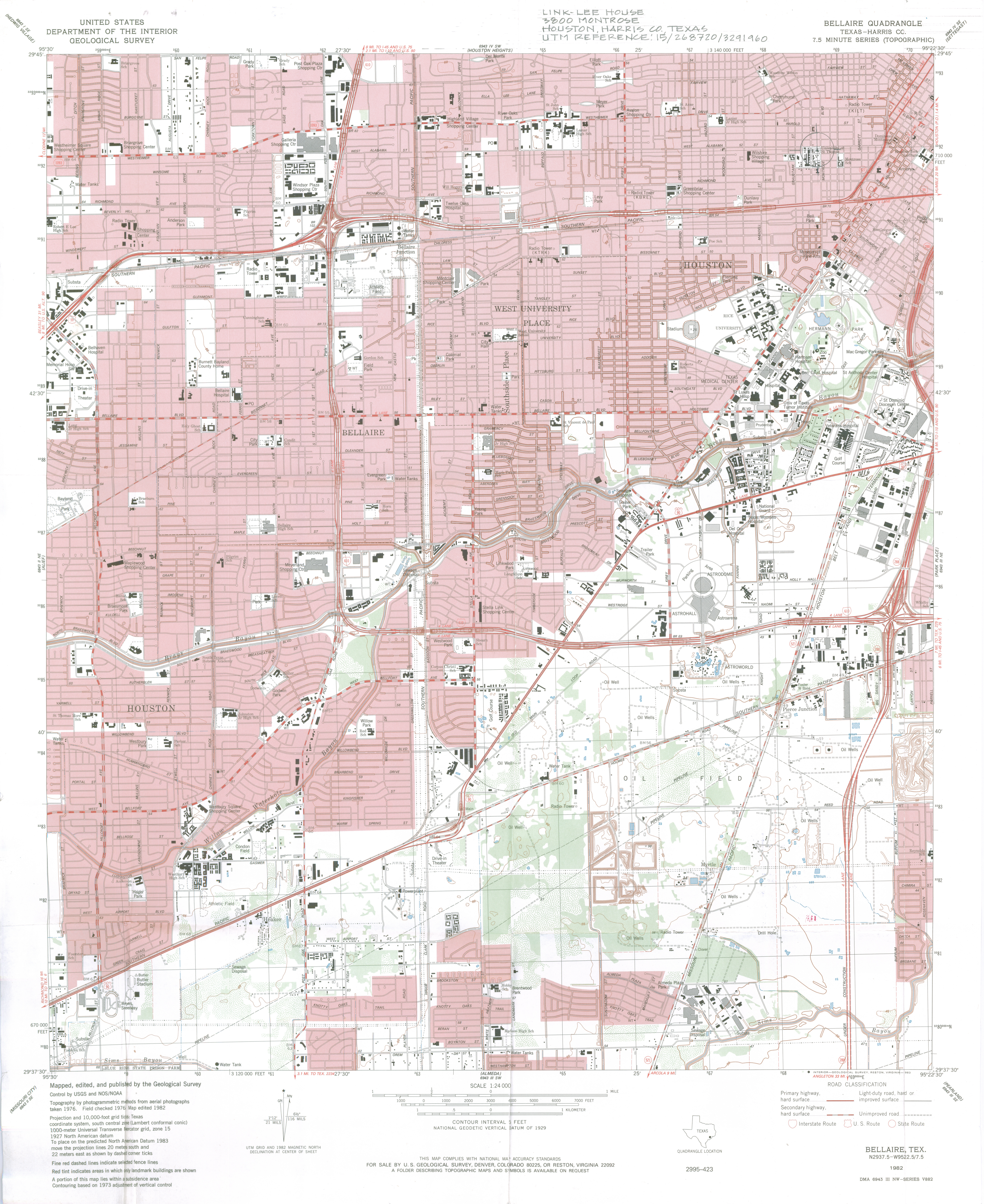


LINK-LEE HOUSE

3800 MONTROSE

HOUSTON, HARRIS CO, TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPH 2 of 2

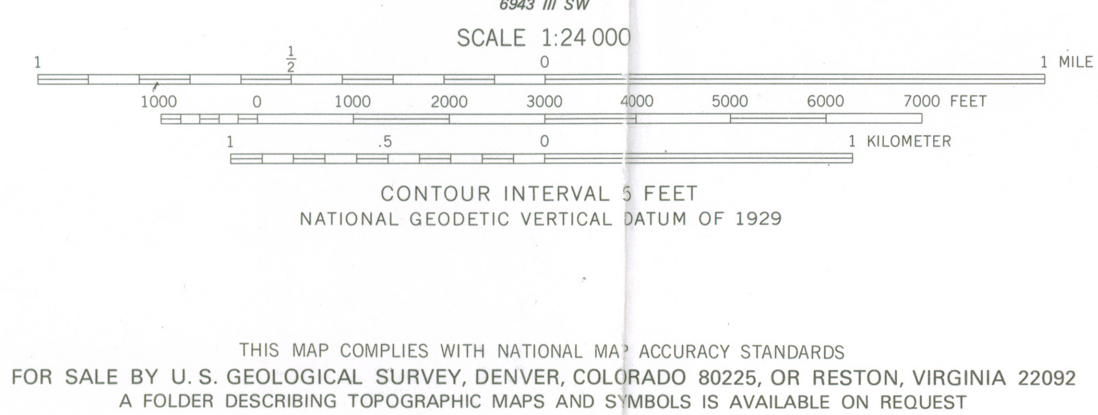


UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

LINK-LEE HOUSE
3800 MONTROSE
HOUSTON, HARRIS CO, TEXAS
UTM REFERENCE: 15/268720/3291960

Bellaire Quadrangle
Texas-Harris Co.
7.5 Minute Series (Topographic)

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs
taken 1976. Field checked 1976. Map edited 1982
Projection and 10,000-foot grid ties: Texas
coordinate system, south central zone (Lambert conformal conic)
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 15
1927 North American datum
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983
move the projection lines 20 meters south and
22 meters east as shown by dashed corner ticks
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence lines
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown
A portion of this map lies within a subsidence area
Contouring based on 1973 adjustment of vertical control



ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Primary highway, hard surface
Secondary highway, hard surface
Unimproved road
Interstate Route
U. S. Route
State Route



Bellaire, Tex.
N2937.5-W9522.5/7.5

2995-423

1982

DMA 6943 III NW-SERIES V882