

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places Registration Form****1. Name of Property**

Historic Name: Suburban Alcoholic Foundation Clubhouse

Other name/site number: NA

Name of related multiple property listing: NA

**2. Location**

Street &amp; number: 2809 Northland Dr.

City or town: Austin

State: Texas

County: Travis

Not for publication: ☐Vicinity: ☐**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  
(☒ 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 (☒ meets ☐ does not meet) the National Register criteria.

I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following levels of significance:

☐ national ☐ statewide ☒ localApplicable National Register Criteria: ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D  
Signature of certifying official / Title

State Historic Preservation Officer

Date

12/29/22

Texas Historical Commission

State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that the property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register  
☐ determined eligible for the National Register  
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register.  
☐ removed from the National Register  
☐ other, explain: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Suburban Alcoholic Foundation Clubhouse, Austin, Travis County, Texas

## 5. Classification

### Ownership of Property

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Private
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - Federal

### Category of Property

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

### Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	3	structures
0	1	objects
1	4	total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: NA

## 6. Function or Use

**Historic Functions:** Social: clubhouse

**Current Functions:** Social: clubhouse

## 7. Description

**Architectural Classification:** Mid-Century Modern Residential: Contemporary

**Principal Exterior Materials:** Stone: Leander Fieldstone, Concrete, Wood, Asphalt

**Narrative Description** (see continuation sheets 7-7 through 7-10)

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>A</b>	Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>B</b>	Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>C</b>	Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>D</b>	Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations:** NA

**Areas of Significance:** Health/Medicine, Architecture (*local level of significance*)

**Period of Significance:** 1966-1973

**Significant Dates:** 1966

**Significant Person** (only if criterion b is marked): NA

**Cultural Affiliation** (only if criterion d is marked): NA

**Architect/Builder:** Day, Fred Winfield (architect)

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (see continuation sheets 8-11 through 8-18)

## 9. Major Bibliographic References

**Bibliography** (see continuation sheet 9-19)

### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested. Part 1 approved on (date)
- ☐ 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, Austin*)
- ☐ Other state agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☒ Other -- Specify Repository: Suburban Alcoholic Foundation, Hill Country Intergroup

**Historic Resources Survey Number** (if assigned): NA

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## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property:** 5 acres

### Coordinates

#### Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: NA

1. Latitude: 30.333009° Longitude: -97.749847°

**Verbal Boundary Description:** The nominated boundary is the current and historic legal parcel recorded by Travis CAD: (Property ID# 0230010702) ABS 216 SUR 14 DAVIS J P ACR 5.00 and shown on MAP 2 (accessed November 1, 2021)

**Boundary Justification:** The boundary includes all property historically associated with the Suburban Alcoholic Foundation Clubhouse.

## 11. Form Prepared By

Name/title: Michael Schneider, Chairman, with assistance from Bonnie Tipton (THC Historian)  
Organization: Suburban Alcoholic Foundation  
Street & number: 2809 Northland Dr.  
City or Town: Austin State: TX Zip Code: 78757  
Email: bonnie.wilson@thc.texas.gov  
Telephone: (512) 452-6784  
Date: January 1, 2022

## Additional Documentation

**Maps** (see continuation sheets MAP-20 through MAP-21)

**Additional items** (see continuation sheets FIGURE-22 through FIGURE-34)

**Photographs** (see continuation sheets PHOTO-35 through PHOTO-55)

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



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**Photograph Log**

Property: Suburban Alcoholic Foundation Clubhouse  
Address: 2809 Northland Dr. Austin, Travis County  
Photographer: Bonnie Tipton  
Date(s): November 1, 2021 and December 27, 2022.

Photo 1: SAF Clubhouse is set back far on the property, which is surrounded by trees and features a large parking lot (original) and commodious grassy lawn. 12/27/22.

Photo 2: West (primary) elevation. 11/1/21

Photo 3: Entrance (West elevation). The aluminum frame entry is a non-historic alteration from 2012. 11/1/21

Photo 4: North section of primary (West) elevation. Looking southeast. 12/27/22

Photo 5: South side of primary (West) elevation showing 2012 alteration. Looking southeast. 12/27/22.

Photo 6: North Elevation, looking south. 11/1/21

Photo 7: The building's inverted corners retain historic glazing. View southwest. 12/27/22

Photo 8: Rear (East) Elevation, looking west. 12/27/22

Photo 9: The concrete slab veranda is original, and the corrugated metal canopy is a historic-age addition. Non-historic doors date to the 2012 renovation. 12/27/22

Photo 10: South Elevation, view north. 12/27/22

Photo 11: Two (of three) non-contributing sheds on the southeast portion of the property. 11/1/21

Photo 12: The large backyard and patio provide areas for fellowship, an integral aspect of maintaining sobriety. Looking northeast. 12/27/22

Photo 13: The property is secluded from the busy roadway (Northland Dr./F.M. 2222). Looking north. 12/27/22

Photo 14: Exposed fieldstone and mahogany characterize the interior. Entrance, looking west. 11/1/21

Photo 15: Kitchen and lobby, looking northeast. 11/1/21

Photo 16: Room configurations, including the hallway, and materials changed because of the work. 11/1/21

Photo 17: "Big Room," looking north to the podium (original feature). 12/27/2022

Photo 18: Big Room, looking southeast. 12/27/2022

Photo 19: Big Room, showing interior design details: reentrant corners, historic glazing, mahogany and grasscloth walls. 12/27/2022

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Photo 20: Al-Anon ("Small") Room, looking north. 11/1/21

Photo 21: Al-Anon/Small Room, looking southwest. 11/1/21

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## Narrative Description

Designed as a “permanent home” for Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) members, the 1966 Suburban Alcoholic Foundation (SAF) Clubhouse is a broad, one-story mid-century modern building in Austin, Travis County. It is of frame construction on a concrete foundation with fieldstone exterior walls. The clubhouse’s low-slung profile, wide-eaved hipped roof, and rambling rectangular plan shares the residential aesthetic of midcentury homes in surrounding neighborhoods. There are two meeting rooms, a lobby, kitchen, and outdoor patio for members to congregate. Historic interior finishes include exposed fieldstone walls, vaulted wood beam ceilings, original windows, and solid mahogany doors and paneling. An inconspicuous tree-shaded driveway off Northland Drive/F.M. 2222, a busy Central Austin east-west thoroughfare, is the only entrance to the 5-acre property. There are three non-contributing sheds and flag pole on the property. In 2012, a 20-foot portion of the west exterior wall was extended out by 2 feet to accommodate renovated interior restrooms. Clad in fieldstone, the extension is discreet and does not significantly detract from the building’s original design. SAF Clubhouse retains excellent integrity to communicate its architectural and historical significance.

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## Setting and Nominated Boundary

The Suburban Alcoholic Foundation (SAF) Clubhouse is in Austin, Travis County 5.5 miles northwest of the State Capitol. Northland Drive/F.M. 2222, a busy east-west thoroughfare, runs north of the property. Itself on former public land, SAF Clubhouse’s neighbors are the City of Austin-owned Northwest Austin Recreation Center (west) and the 86-acre Memorial Park public cemetery (south). Postwar suburban neighborhoods with characteristic meandering streets and Ranch style homes are north and east of property. Mopac Expressway/Loop 1 is a half-mile west, and although built in 1970s, planning for its construction played a key role in the clubhouse’s existence.

Designed “as a permanent home” for Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), the property’s siting respects the spiritual foundation of all AA’s traditions: anonymity. The nominated boundary is a 5-acre right trapezoid (**Map 3**) bordered by canopies of elm, oak, and hackberry trees. Shoal Creek, an 11-mile-long flood-prone waterway that drains into the Colorado River downtown, determined the diagonal eastern property line. Here, dense woods obscure the 20-foot elevation drop between the clubhouse and the creek’s greenbelt. The west-facing clubhouse is at the rear southeastern section of the property, set back approximately 150 yards from Northland Drive. This siting required approximately one-to-four feet of grading during the clubhouse’s construction.

AA members enter the property through an inconspicuous entrance off Northland Drive just west of the intersection at Shoal Creek Boulevard (**Photo 13**). A narrow steel signpost, which reads “Northland Group 2809 S.A.F.,” is the only marker noting the building’s existence along the public right-of-way. The entrance is a long, tree-shaded asphalt driveway that opens to a large parking lot. A generous St. Augustine grass yard that surrounds the clubhouse is considered historic landscaping. Red barberry hedging, crepe myrtle, and young elm trees were planted around the building within the last 10 years. There are three non-contributing metal sheds on the property and a non-contributing flag pole.

## Suburban Alcoholic Foundation Clubhouse

### *Exterior*

SAF Clubhouse, built in 1966, is a one-story building of frame construction on a concrete foundation with a modified rectangular plan. It resembles midcentury modern Contemporary residential architecture in its overall design, plan, scale, and materials. Elevations are asymmetrically composed and characterized by broad expanses of rough-cut fieldstone exterior walls laid in irregular courses. Sections of the exterior walls discreetly project from the primary wall

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plane (**Photo 6**). Reentrant plate glass windows and doors (**Photo 7**) at the building's corners, clerestory windows, and a window wall along the rear elevation lights the interior. The asphalt shingle roof has a broad low-slung profile showing a combination cross-hipped and flat-hipped line with widely overhanging eaves.

The **west (primary) elevation** is 119' wide and organized into three sections: a 30-foot-wide central entrance and asymmetrical north (38-foot-wide) and south (53-foot-wide) masses flanking it. A wide concrete sidewalk with an exposed aggregate finish leads to the building's double-door entrance (**Photo 3**). It is recessed 2.8 feet from the primary wall plane under a flat-hipped roof. A non-historic glass and aluminum frame double-door system that replaced the clubhouse's original solid mahogany stile and rail doors with bronze handles.<sup>1</sup> Left (north of the entrance) houses the interior "Big Room" under a hipped roof (**Photo 4**). Here, a wide subsection of the wall projects 3.4-feet from the primary plane by way of reentrant wood frame corner glazing. Right (south) of the entrance is a 53-foot-wide section that projects approximately 10 feet from the primary wall plane. Again, reentrant corner glazing frames a large subsection of this wall.

In 2012, SAF hired an architectural firm to update portions of the clubhouse's facilities. A 20-foot section of the south portion of the west exterior wall was extended out by 2 feet to accommodate renovated restrooms (**Photo 5**). Clad in fieldstone (collected from the partial demolition), the extension is discreet and does not significantly detract from the building's original design.

The **north elevation** is 47-feet-wide with reentrant glazed corners (**Photo 6**). Centered is a 13-foot wall section that projects 2.5 feet from the north façade and denotes the interior rostrum. Clerestory windows are hidden under the north, west, and east elevation eaves and light the Big Room.

The **east elevation** faces the clubhouse's "backyard," a patio and expansive lawn where members fellowship. The north (34-foot) portion of the rear façade (like on the west elevation) has reentrant corner glazing that frame the Big Room's exterior west wall. Clerestory windows are tucked beneath the eaves. Wall-height vertical glazing characterizes more than 70 feet of the rear façade, which is under the flat-hipped roof (**Photo 8-9**). The historic wood framed fixed glass paired panels flank a broad fieldstone chimney that extends above the roofline. Modern, aluminum framed double-doors at the northernmost part of the window wall replaced original solid wood doors in the 2012 renovation. Fieldstone cladding is repeated on the southern end of this elevation with an inverted glazed corner. A narrow, wood clad storage closet was added after the period of significance.

The **south façade** is 40-feet wide (**Photo 10**). It has a stepped composition with an east 15-foot-wide wall section that is set back approximately seven feet. The remaining portion repeats the clubhouse's inverted corners, but the western corner has a solid door and half glazing that obscures an interior restroom.

### *Interior*

SAF Clubhouse was purpose-built for the congregation and recovery of Alcoholics Anonymous and Al-Anon members and has been in continuous use since 1966. It is a 4,700 square-foot building featuring a central lobby, kitchen, office, two main meeting rooms (Big Room and Al-Anon Room), and a childcare room. Built "as a permanent home" for AAs, the interior's warm and welcome feeling is expressed through its physical openness, material variety in wall-cladding, window walls, large stone fireplace, warm mahogany paneling, and doors—all intact examples of the clubhouse's original design.

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<sup>1</sup> The handles are in a display case inside the main meeting room along with the ceremonial shovel used to break ground in 1965.

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Fieldstone walls continue uninterrupted from the exterior entrance through the interior entry portal (**Photo 14**), which opens to the lobby. This area—with tables, sofas, kitchen, and a fieldstone fireplace—is where AAs congregate for “the meeting before the meeting.” The lobby (**Photo 15**) is an open room with vaulted wood plank ceilings. Interior clerestories on the south wall extend the ceiling sightline into the Al-Anon meeting room (**Photo 20**). The room’s mahogany-framed walls are exposed fieldstone, gypsum board, wood-paneling, and glass (window walls along the west elevation.) Laminate flooring (replaced asbestos vinyl) and multi-light ceiling light fixtures are not original.

Entrance to the Big Room, AA office, and a storage closet are recessed in the lobby’s north wall. A wood board engraved with “BUT FOR THE GRACE OF GOD” hangs above the recession. The SAF building committee designed and installed this feature upon the clubhouse’s completion. Three sets of solid mahogany doors form the lobby’s south wall and enclose the Al-Anon meeting room at the lobby’s south end.

The lobby’s west wall is clad in fieldstone with an open, non-historic kitchen separated from the seating area by an elongated counter for self-serve coffee and sweets. Exposed fieldstone (repurposed from a 2012 renovation) clads the wall area under the new kitchen’s coffee bar. This southwest portion of the building’s floorplan reflects renovations SAF made to the clubhouse in 2012. Historically, this area had several small rooms that opened to the lobby: a library (actually used as a “drying out” room for inebriated individuals), vending room with phone booth, kitchen, small meeting rooms, and a hallway leading to restrooms and custodian’s quarters. The current kitchen’s footprint occupies the former library, vending room, and original kitchen.

The 2012 renovation that enlarged the kitchen also shifted restrooms to the west side of the building. (see plans **Figure 4-5**) Originally, these facilities shared a wall with the Al-Anon room. The new, larger restrooms overtook what was previously one of two small meeting rooms and includes a 20-foot portion of the west exterior wall that was extended out by 2 feet. That change reconfigured the original hallway, too. (**Photo 16**) Non-historic materials (plaster walls, acoustical ceiling tiles, hollow-core wood doors, and vinyl flooring) replaced historic finishes in the renovated area—kitchen, bathrooms, hallway, and small meeting room. The former custodian’s quarters at the end of the hallway is intact. Now used for childcare, the brightly painted room has vaulted ceilings, a restroom, and closet.

Alcoholics Anonymous meeting are held in the “Big Room,” a roughly 1780-square-foot space on the clubhouse’s north side. (**Photos 17-19**) Its vaulted ceiling is the hipped roof’s exposed decking with non-historic ceiling fans and multi-light hanging fixtures. Narrow clerestory windows and inverted corner windows glazed with historic privacy glass light the room. Most wall sections are wood-paneled while several are covered in historic grasscloth wallpaper. Fieldstone walls mark frame the central rostrum, a raised platform with a wood and grasscloth podium, that is setback on the north wall. Enframed copies of AA’s Twelve Traditions, Twelve Steps, common sayings (“Easy Does It”), and encased memorabilia decorate the room. Vinyl flooring replaced the original wood parquet. Air-conditioning, a critical feature in Texas buildings, is hidden in the dropped ceiling above the entrance doors with column of air intake vents on the south wall.

Al-Anon, a support group for families of alcoholics, meets in a 540-square-foot room (Al-Anon/Small Room) at the clubhouse’s southeast corner. (**Photos 20-21**) Visual and physical continuity between this meeting room and lobby are original to the design. Three sets of wood-framed, solid doors with transoms form the room’s north wall. These transoms, which frame the vaulted ceiling, give uninterrupted sightlines between the spaces. Importantly, this design feature gives SAF flexibility to open the Al-Anon room to the lobby during social events. A variety of historic wall materials are present: wood-paneling, fieldstone (south wall), and window walls. The vinyl floors are non-historic.

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## Integrity

The SAF Clubhouse's doors have been open to alcoholics and their families seven days a week for more than 56 years. Its excellent condition and integrity reflect AA's 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition to "be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions." The clubhouse's initial construction, 2012 renovation, and continued maintenance was funded entirely through the donations of thousands of Austinites. SAF Clubhouse retains excellent integrity of **location** and **setting** on a secluded site along Shoal Creek Boulevard surrounded by postwar suburbs in North Central Austin. It retains excellent integrity of **design** and **workmanship** as a one-story domestically scaled clubhouse that shares the residential aesthetic of nearby postwar homes. The building's rambling plan, low-slung roofline, exposed rafters, broad chimney, mix of natural cladding, and window walls are hallmarks of that design era. During the 2012 renovation, a 20-foot portion of the west exterior wall was extended out by 2 feet. Clad in fieldstone, the extension is discreet and does not significantly detract from the building's original design. Historic interior **materials**—particularly warm wood paneling, exposed fieldstone, and ceiling decking—are intact throughout the building's principal areas: Big Room, Al-Anon Room, and lobby. However, interior alterations to update its kitchen and bathrooms resulted in the loss of historic materials in the southwest portion of the clubhouse. Because SAF Clubhouse continues to operate for its original purpose and shows a preponderance of good integrity of the first five aspects, it retains excellent integrity of **feeling** and **association**.

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## Statement of Significance

The 1966 Suburban Alcoholic Foundation (SAF) Clubhouse in Austin, Travis County was built as a dedicated meeting place for area members of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). Bill Wilson and Dr. Bob Smith co-founded AA in 1935 in Akron, Ohio to help themselves and others recover from alcoholism. The first Austin group began in 1945 with five individuals and, by 1955, grew to three AA groups with 200 members. A self-supported organization that barred itself from owning property, groups' meeting places were low-or-no cost venues (like individual's homes or churches) that moved when cost, membership, and other circumstances warranted. Members of Austin's Suburban Group organized a distinct entity, the Suburban Alcoholic Foundation, in 1955 "to provide a permanent home for AA in Austin." Ten years later, twenty-two foundation members secured a loan for the construction of a mid-century modern clubhouse which it rented to the Suburban, and later Northland, Groups. Designed by local architect Fred W. Day and completed in 1966, the nominated building featured two meeting rooms, a "drying out room," and caretaker's quarters. It has been in continuous use since that time.

Alcoholics Anonymous' national significance was previously recognized by the National Park Service when it listed the homes of its founders in the NRHP: the Dr. Robert and Anne Smith House (NHL#85003411) in Akron, Ohio and Stepping Stones, the Bill and Lois Wilson House (NHL#4000705) in Westchester, New York. The SAF Clubhouse is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the area of Health/Medicine at the local level of significance for its role in assisting alcoholics to find and maintain permanent sobriety. It is also nominated under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as an excellent local example of Austin's mid-century modern residential style uniquely designed for alcoholic recovery. Architect Fred W. Day designed a domestically scaled one story clubhouse with a broad, low-slung roofline, fieldstone exterior, warm interior finishes, and a large backyard that resembled the suburban middle-class homes built across Austin in the mid-1960s. The period of significance is 1966-1973, recognizing the building's construction through the 50-year threshold for listing.

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## Brief History of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Al-Anon<sup>2</sup>

Alcoholics Anonymous was co-founded by William "Bill" G. Wilson (1895-1971) and Dr. Robert H. "Dr. Bob" Smith (1879-1950) in Akron, Ohio in 1935. After years of severe drinking and numerous failed attempts to stop, a physician informed Bill that he was a hopeless alcoholic. He tried spiritual groups and detoxing in hospitals, but inevitably returned to drinking. Facing an alcoholic death or the asylum, Bill returned to the hospital once more. While there he had a spiritual experience that removed his compulsion to drink. His experience is reflected in the second of AA's twelve steps, acknowledgement of a higher power.

During his first months of sobriety, Bill W. also learned that working with other alcoholics was imperative to maintaining his own recovery. On an unsuccessful business trip to Akron, Ohio, Bill was tempted to drink at the hotel bar. Instead of succumbing, he found a directory of churches and began calling and asking if someone could put him in touch with other alcoholics. Eventually he was introduced to Dr. Robert Smith, known as "Dr. Bob." During their ongoing friendship, Bill encouraged Dr. Bob as he struggled to stay sober, and this helped Bill maintain his own commitment to sobriety. AA's official founding date is June 10, 1935, when Dr. Bob's took last drink. One alcoholic working with another alcoholic is a core tenant of AA. Today, AA members can trace his or her sponsorship back to Bill Wilson. Bill realized that only other alcoholics could truly understand the tangled emotions evoked by his debilitating ordeal. As Dr. Bob wrote, "He was the first living human with whom I had ever talked, who knew what he was talking about in regard to alcoholism from actual experience. In other words, he talked my language."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> This section was adapted from the NHL applications for Dr. Robert and Anne Smith House (NHL#85003411), Bill and Lois Wilson House (NHL#4000705).

<sup>3</sup> "Doctor Bob's Nightmare," *Alcoholics Anonymous*, 181.

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Dr. Bob and Bill W. began formal development of the AA program. Group meetings were held in Dr. Bob and Anne Smith's Akron house but were moved to a school building when the membership grew too large. Dr. Bob also treated alcoholics in his home and at City Hospital. Group meetings at which members shared their personal experiences demonstrated to newcomers that they were not alone, and that recovery was possible. AA meetings offered understanding and inspiration rather than judgment and guilt that typically drove an alcoholic to seek comfort in alcohol. If a member did have a lapse and drink, it was seen as a "setback" rather than "failure."

Bill W. anonymously authored or co-authored four books on alcoholism: *Alcoholics Anonymous* (1939), *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* (1953), *Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age* (1957) and *The AA Way of Life*. *Alcoholics Anonymous*, colloquially known as the Big Book, included the 12 Steps and numerous autobiographical stories contributed anonymously by recovered alcoholics. Wilson wrote the first eleven chapters and edited the autobiographical chapters. The *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, published in 1953, established the guidelines for AA that ensured its long-term success; these principles are still used by AA groups and the General Service Organization today.

Alcoholics Anonymous successfully challenged widely held perceptions of alcoholism when it called it a disease of the body, mind and spirit rather than a moral affliction. The idea was originated in the medical profession as early as the eighteenth century and supported later by psychiatrist Carl Jung, who played an important role in AA's founding.<sup>4</sup> Before the publication of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, alcoholism was regarded as the result of a character defect or moral weakness. Groups such as the Oxford Group, a Christian reformist movement that Bill once joined seeking a way to control his drinking, regarded alcohol as a sin; the remedy for alcoholism was to pray for forgiveness. Medicine offered little help as facilities were rare and "treatment" meant drying out at a sanitarium for those who could afford it. State mental hospital or jail housed many alcoholics of lesser means. These rarely resulted in permanent sobriety. As late as 1941, the popular press noted that alcoholism remained one of the great unsolved public-health enigmas. Public stigma and the lack of viable treatment options combined to prevent alcoholics from seeking help and embarking upon the path to recovery.

*Alcoholics Anonymous*, written by alcoholics to alcoholics, explained the disease and provided a practical treatment program and a community of support that has helped millions attain lasting sobriety. In 1951, the American Public Health Association presented the Lasker award to AA, "in recognition of its unique and highly successful approach to that age-old public health and social problem, alcoholism...In emphasizing alcoholism as an illness, the social stigma associated with this condition is being blotted out."

Bill's wife Lois Wilson (1891-1988) founded Al-Anon Family Groups for the family members of alcoholics. In the early days of AA family members—typically, wives, as most AA's early members were men—attended AA meetings with the alcoholic. While this approach helped the wives support their husbands, the AA meetings did not provide a forum for spouses to discuss and share their own experiences and feelings. By 1940, Lois began organizing separate meetings that became known as "Family Group Meetings." She understood first-hand that friends and family members of alcoholics have to deal with their own issues related to the alcoholism and sobriety of their loved ones. She advocated the use of an adapted version of AA's 12 Steps to solve them.

In 1951, Lois and her friend Anne B. began an effort to formally coordinate the numerous Family Groups across the country. The Central Clearing House, as it was called, disseminated information and materials for the groups.

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<sup>4</sup> See Ernest Kuntz, *Not God: A History of Alcoholics Anonymous* (Hazeldon, Center City, MN: 1979) for a Jung's association with AA and a more detailed history of AA.



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Eventually, the Clearing House became known as Al-Anon Family Groups. In 1957, Lois organized Alateen for the children of alcoholic parents. As of today, Al-Anon and Alateen have 24,000 group meetings in 115 countries.<sup>5</sup>

AA's 12 Steps remain the most successful means of treating alcoholism and are the central treatment program in most hospitals and clinics. AA does not keep official membership lists; however, in 2021 the General Service Office estimated the organization's international membership at more than 3 million; the report calculated that 64,541 groups with 1.3-million members existed in the United States alone.<sup>6</sup> Other groups that address issues as varied as drug addiction, gambling, overeating, and surviving incest have subsequently adopted the 12 Steps.

*Alcoholics Anonymous in Austin, Texas*

Austin AA's recognize December 13, 1945, as the founding anniversary of Alcoholics Anonymous in the Capitol City. The program of recovery first came to Texas from Ohio via Larry Jewell, "a down-on-his-luck" newspaperman sent to Houston on the advice of his physician. The night before Jewell boarded his train, Clarence Snyder (one of AA's "Original 100" and founder of Cleveland's first AA group) gave him a copy of *Alcoholics Anonymous*. Despite never having attended a meeting, Jewell had a spiritual awakening after reading "the Big Book," and started an AA group when he arrived in Houston in 1940. Roy Yeargin and Ed Hudson, members of the Houston Group, became self-proclaimed AA "evangelists," and traveled Central and East Texas (including Ed's hometown Austin) in 1940-1941 trying to educate doctors, ministers, and law enforcement about the program.<sup>7</sup> Alcoholism's moral stigma proved a barrier to Yeargin and Hudson's evangelizing venture. Importantly, however, they made an impression on Dr. David Wade, a psychiatrist at the University of Texas Medical School at Galveston. Nevertheless, the two men's efforts fizzled, and both enlisted in the U.S. Armed Forces to serve in World War II.

Hudson returned from active duty to Houston in 1945 suffering a severe alcoholic relapse. With help from the Houston AA group, he moved to his parents' home in Austin. Hudson visited Dr. Wade at his new office in Austin and asked the psychiatrist to introduce him to other alcoholics. Wade facilitated the first AA meeting in Austin by connecting Hudson with Clarence Long (SAF member), Ernest Page, Ryan Pearson, and Jimmy Meeks who gathered on December 13, 1945 at the Hudson Family Home on W. 7<sup>th</sup> Street.<sup>8</sup> One year later, local membership of the "Austin Group" grew to 12, and in 1947 there were approximately 70 alcoholics (20% of which were women) in Austin's AA recovery who were "drawn from all walks of life—a millionaire, the flat broke, college students, a preacher, housewives, professional men."<sup>9</sup>

African American and Hispanic Austinites were welcomed *guests*, but not members, at the Austin Group. Although nationally AA proclaimed itself as "the great leveler," racism prevented many Black and Brown alcoholics from accessing recovery, a deadly contradiction observed by the *Chicago Defender*, "Apparently racial association is fine when you are drunk but part of sobering up is getting back your race prejudices."<sup>10</sup> The earliest recorded Black AA

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<sup>5</sup> Al-anon.org.

<sup>6</sup> General Service Office, "Estimates of A.A. Groups and Members as of December 31, 2021," <https://www.aa.org/sites/default/files/literature/SMF-53%20EstimatesofAAGroupsandMembers%20EN%200122.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup> "Ed H. [Hudson] at 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary AA, Austin, TX, 12-13-1965," Recovery Speakers, <https://www.recoveryspeakers.com/ed-h-at-20th-anniversary-aa-austin-tx-12-13-1965-2/>, accessed July 1, 2022.

<sup>8</sup> "Ed H. [Hudson] at 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary AA, Austin, TX, 12-13-1965," Recovery Speakers, <https://www.recoveryspeakers.com/ed-h-at-20th-anniversary-aa-austin-tx-12-13-1965-2/>, accessed July 1, 2022. The above history is based on Ed Hudson and Clarence Long's oral testimonials at a 1965 anniversary event.

Other accounts state the first meeting occurred at Dr. Wade's office.

<sup>9</sup> "Alcoholics Anonymous Uses Group Therapy," *Austin American*, September 25, 1947. "At Least 800 Expected Here for AA Parley," *Austin American*, June 16, 1945.

<sup>10</sup> "Adventures in Race Relations," *The Chicago Defender (National Edition)*, February 26, 1949.

Suburban Alcoholic Foundation Clubhouse, Austin, Travis County, Texas

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groups in the U.S. were formed in the late 1940s.<sup>11</sup> Following this pattern, in 1947 the *Austin American* reported interest in establishing a local African American AA group but no resources show whether any segregated groups formed or how Austin's AA groups integrated in the 1960s.<sup>12</sup> Austin State Hospital, Shoal Creek Hospital, and other private recovery facilities that employed the 12-step programs were the only known treatment services available to Black and Hispanic alcoholics.

As alcoholism became a concern for mental health advocates in the postwar period, the subject's publicity helped grow Austin's Alcoholics Anonymous community. Between 1955 and 1970, the number of local groups quadrupled from two to eight with a membership that swelled from 100 to 500. The Austin Group first convened at the Driskell Hotel until it secured a residential rental property on 18<sup>th</sup> Street. By 1955, however, finding a reliable and large enough place for 100 individuals to meet regularly proved difficult. Furthermore, AA's Sixth Tradition prevented groups from purchasing property (see Figure 15). When the Austin Group split into two clubs—the Downtown Group and Suburban Group—members of the Suburban Group formed a distinct non-profit corporation called the Suburban Alcoholic Foundation (SAF) to purchase a "permanent home" for Austin alcoholics. SAF bought a 1920 Tudor Revival home at 2100 West 35<sup>th</sup> Street in, what was then, Austin's suburbs. Called "the Oaks" for the beautiful stand of Live Oak trees that shaded it, the home was equipped with a game room, library, informal living room for meetings, and a kitchen "where a coffee pot is always bubbling."<sup>13</sup> In 1966, SAF constructed the nominated building when freeway expansion for, what is now, MOPAC (Loop 1) Expressway forced The Oaks closure.

The AA community continued to expand in the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. By 1980, there were fourteen groups across the city and, today, there are dozens with meetings offered seven days a week from 7am to midnight. As is the trend nationwide, most groups rent rooms from local churches, office and commercial buildings. There are three clubhouses. Since the 1970s, the SAF Clubhouse, the "Pink House" in South Austin, and the 24-Hour Club in North Austin have been considered the city's principal clubhouses due to the permanence of their facilities and accessibility to the public. The Bouldin Group's "Pink House" is a c. 1940 pier-and-beam wood frame residence that the South Austin Alcoholic Foundation purchased in 1975. The North Austin 24-Hour (NA24) Clubhouse (1000 Prairie Trail) was first rented by the North Austin Foundation in 1986 and purchased in 1991. NA24 is the only location to provide recovery services for alcoholics 24 hours a day.

#### *Suburban Alcoholic Foundation Clubhouse*

By 1964, the City of Austin's expansion and improvement of Mopac Boulevard led to the closing of SAF's "the Oaks" clubhouse on West 35<sup>th</sup> Street. It was in the proposed right-of-way for the present West 35<sup>th</sup> Street Mopac overpass. With their home under threat, the Foundation directed attorney and Suburban Group member Trueman O'Quinn to negotiate and arrange compensation for the taking of the property. O'Quinn carried political clout as a former member of the Texas Legislature and City Attorney for Austin. On February 3, 1965, one week after the condemnation hearing, SAF and city officials settled on a deal: \$27,500 for the West 35<sup>th</sup> Street property and five acres of land at the southwest corner of Northland Drive and Shoal Creek. Before it was settled, however, the Austin City Council had to give its stamp of approval. Two council members, one being Emma Long, were against the trade as they envisioned a park along the Shoal Creek greenbelt. Luckily, it passed 3-to-2. For the duration of the new clubhouse's construction, SAF rented its West 35<sup>th</sup> Street property from the city for \$100/month.

The Foundation appointed an eight-member building committee, chaired by Bill Carter, to secure an architect and construction firm to build a new clubhouse. They financed construction using funds from the sale of The Oaks and

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<sup>11</sup> See Glenn F. Chesnut, *Heroes of Early Black AA: Their Stories and Their Messages*, BookPatch, LLC: 2017.

<sup>12</sup> "Alcoholics Anonymous Uses Group Therapy," *Austin American*, September 25, 1947.

<sup>13</sup> Anita Brewer, "A Higher Power, He Finds, Provides the Help He Needs," *Austin American Statesman*, July 21, 1957.

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through a secured banking loan. Twenty-two SAF members guaranteed a \$75,000, 25-year loan at 6.25% interest with the Mutual Savings Institution of Austin:

Longstreet Ames	Ralph Hawkins	Bob Pinkston
Urban Andrews	Gordon Hill	Billie Rowland
Curtis Bishop	Herman Jones	George Sutherland
Cecil Cabaniss	Clarence Long	Porter Travis
Doris Carter	Nedra Marsh	George Wall
Fred Carter	Dick Nichols	Martin Wukasch
Bob Coonroud	Margie Ogle	
Joe Dewitt	Harold Patman	

While most members of SAF belonged to the Suburban Group, which rented the clubhouse, the nominated building is open to any AA group in Austin. Furthermore, two of the eight-member building committee—Eloise Cabiness and Ann Cook—were members of the Suburban Al-Anon group. On April 7, 1965, SAF signed a contract with Austin architect Fred Winfield Day Jr. to design the SAF clubhouse. A graduate of the University of Texas School of Architecture, Day worked for some of the city's most prestigious firms before organizing a private practice. SAF hired builders Matthews, Newman, Oge, and Bell Lumber Company to construct the building and paid Day \$5,534 for the architectural plans and to oversee project management. On November 11, 1965, Mayor Lester Palmer and SAF Board of Trustees Chairman Cecil Cabiness raised the ceremonial first shovelfuls of dirt that commenced the construction process.<sup>14</sup>

SAF Clubhouse was completed in late July 1966. With change orders and cost adjustments, the building cost \$76,763 to construct. The lumber alone cost more than \$19,000. Cabiness and Brown Furniture Company furnished the building for \$5,000. The grand total—including architect fees, site improvements, utilities—was \$93,861, roughly \$844,000 in today's dollars. A letter to the SAF dated Aug. 1, of that year, Bill Carter, recommended specific rules for the clubhouse's facilities. The Committee also suggested that the words "*But for the Grace of God*" be carved at the entrance of "the Big Room."<sup>15</sup>

The Suburban Alcoholic Foundation celebrated the new clubhouse in the shadow of tragedy. On Monday, August 1, 1966, Charles Whitman shot and killed 14 people from the observation deck atop the University of Texas Tower. At the time, it was the deadliest mass shooting in U.S. history. Although a growing city in the mid-1960s, Austin remained a small town at heart. Doubtless there were AA members with personal connections to tragic event.

The Suburban Group's inaugural meeting began at The Oaks on 35<sup>th</sup> Street. At the usual 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition intermission, attendees left that location and drove up Shoal Creek Boulevard to the nominated building where they finished the meeting. On August 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup>, SAF hosted dedicatory events, an open-house, public meetings, and closed meetings (for AA members only).

The new facilities featured two large meeting rooms for AA and Al-Anon members, a game and TV room, and building manager's quarters.<sup>16</sup> In addition to meetings of AA, Al-Anon and Alateen, there were regular events such as dances with a live band, holiday gatherings, and bingo. The "card room" was active from the very beginning. "Suburban Rummy" was (and remains) the game of choice. More importantly, the building's lobby and back patio were always open to alcoholics looking for support, a hot cup of coffee, and a safe respite. There was also a "drying

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<sup>14</sup> SAF Minutes; "New Clubhouse," *Austin American Statesman*, November 16, 1965.

<sup>15</sup> SAF Minutes.

<sup>16</sup> "A New Door for Alcoholics," *Austin American Statesman*, August 9, 1965.

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out room” to help the “wet” alcoholic who stumbled through our doors. In the early days, a register was passed in the AA meeting to record names and phone numbers. If time elapsed and one wasn’t seen at a meeting, other AA’s would reach out in support.

For many years Austin had three AA groups: Downtown, Suburban, and South Austin. The SAF Clubhouse, which hosted meetings for the Suburban Group, was North Austin’s only AA meeting place. As the old saying goes, “All it takes to start a new AA group is a resentment and a coffeepot.”<sup>17</sup> By the early 1980s, a dispute within the Suburban Group and SAF led to the brief closure of clubhouse and the eventual creation of the Northland AA Group, which now rents the nominated building for its meetings.

With continuous daily use since its construction in 1966, SAF made improvements to clubhouse to maintain the building’s viability. In 2005, it became a non-smoking facility. Old timers recount that hanging air vents strained to filter the haze caused by “smoking section” (really just the west side of the Big Room). In 2012, the Foundation undertook a major renovation of the clubhouse that included reconfiguring spaces and construction of new, larger bathrooms. When the Covid Pandemic closed the clubhouse to in-person meetings, the Northland Group (and other AA groups internationally) hosted virtual meetings. Gradually, outdoor meetings commenced in the large lawn of the SAF Clubhouse and were vitally important to the recovery of Austin alcoholics. Today, the SAF Clubhouse continues to function as the home to Northland AA Group’s meetings—of which there are more than 30 per week—and the Northland Al-Anon Family Group, which hosts daily meetings.

## Architectural Significance

### *Austin’s Mid-1960s Residential Architectural Aesthetic*

The SAF Clubhouse, designed as a “permanent home” for recovering alcoholics, resembles the residential architectural aesthetic popular in mid-1960s Austin suburbia. Austin’s postwar suburban development occurred alongside the emergence of a new knowledge economy. In the 1940s and 1950s, political and business leaders leveraged Austin’s traditional strengths—higher education and government—to evolve the small city into a center for scientific research and development. This “industry without smokestacks” produced human capital—a labor market of skilled workers from the University of Texas and recruited from out-of-state. Growth-minded politicians, the business community, and real estate developers promoted Austin—particularly North and Northwest Austin—as an attractive place to live and work. Nationally circulated articles extolled “the scenic countryside surrounding Austin; the cultural amenities such as plays, libraries, sports, and conferences; the recreational opportunities due to climate and geography and the advantages of raising a family in the area.”<sup>18</sup>

Indeed, the city attracted thousands of skilled white-collar workers to the fast-growing knowledge industry. In 1950, the census recorded a population of 132,459. Fifteen years later 214,117 people were enumerated, a 62% increase. Furthermore, cultural geographer Andrew Busch noted more than half of Travis County residents in 1973 were recent transplants, having lived in the area for less than 10 years.<sup>19</sup> Income rates also soared. Between 1959 and 1969, Austin’s per capita income rose 41% and family income rose 46%. Although more people were moving to Austin, the population density (persons per square mile) decreased from 3,386 in 1960 to 3,144 in 1970 as most moved to suburban areas in previously undeveloped parts of northwest Austin. Suburban development in the 1950s-1960s

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<sup>17</sup> SAF Archives.

<sup>18</sup> Robbins, Paul, “The Town That Won the Pennant: A Short History of Austin’s Economic Development,” *Austin Environmental Directory*, 2003, <https://environmentaldirectory.info/a-short-history-of-austins-economic-development/>.

<sup>19</sup> Andrew M. Busch, *City in a Garden: Environmental Transformations and Racial Justice in Twentieth-Century Austin, Texas* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017): 981.

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expanded city limits by roughly 70%, from 51 to 86 square miles. Middle-class neighborhoods—like Allandale, Shoalmont, and Rosedale—had a wooded character and were defined by significant traffic arteries (like Northland Dr./2222) and unique natural features like Shoal Creek.<sup>20</sup>

Austin's professional architecture community made a significant, modernist mark in postwar residential design, which local builders replicated throughout the new suburbs. SAF Clubhouse architect Fred W. Day Jr. graduated from UT's School of Architecture in 1950 just as it underwent an era of significant programmatic change. Between 1951 and 1957, Director Harwell Hamilton Harris and a diverse faculty of architects (later nicknamed "Texas Rangers") restructured the UTSOA's pedagogic program to embrace historical precedent, urban context and regionalism, and emphasized space over form.<sup>21</sup> One author described Harris as "the only architect notably successful at designing distinctly modern residences" in 1950s Austin. Harris' Dr. Thomas M. Cranfill House (NR#40001416) consisted of two one-story pavilions sheathed in cypress board-and-batten siding with a shallow pitched roof with deep eave overhangs to shelter it from the harsh Texas sun. Interior and exterior spaces merge through window walls and glass doors that open onto courtyards. Its wooded site and orientation overlooking Shoal Creek (rather than street-facing) creates a sense of privacy. Day's design for the Lila B. Etter Alumni Center at UT, which was completed in 1965, shows its influence from Harris' 1955 work for Dr. Cranfill.<sup>22</sup> **(Figure 13)**

Other architects and firms who elevated the city's midcentury residential landscape included Fehr and Granger (under whom Day once worked), A.D. Stenger, and Roland Roessner. Their work, found in suburbs near the nominated clubhouse, introduced Austinites to the California Modern architectural language of Richard Neutra, Charles and Ray Eames, Walter Gropius, and mainstreaming efforts of builder Joseph Eichler.<sup>23</sup> Material expression, open interior plans, blurred interior/exterior distinctions, horizontal emphasis, and site integration are general hallmarks of this approach.

Like most cities in the mid-1960s, Austin's suburban landscape was filled with economical, middle-of-the-road modernist homes that reflected nationwide trends. Around the SAF Clubhouse, most midcentury houses are generally one-story with rectilinear plans and broad, low-slung roof lines. Contemporary examples have window walls that provided uninterrupted exterior/interior sightlines as it allowed natural sheathing materials—wood, stone, brick—to extend into a space uninterrupted. The soft modernism of the era's Eichler-style homes also prioritized privacy in design. Facades were oriented away from the street with glass walls at the home's rear. Clerestories gave needed interior lighting with the benefit of privacy. Ranch houses, however, proliferate Allandale, Shoalmont, and Rosedale neighborhoods. While these shared some of the characteristics list above, Ranch houses often included stylistic features of earlier Tudor Revival, Colonial Revival, and Spanish Revival eclecticism.

Non-residential buildings constructed in suburban settings—like medical offices, churches, and offices—frequently resembled the surrounding residential architecture in material, design, and (or) plan. A nearby domestically scaled example is the 1959 medical office at 2301 North Loop Blvd. Covenant Presbyterian Church (3003 Northland Dr.) is an A-frame religious building of similar stone and warm wood framing as the nominated building that was built in 1960. Fred Day, the SAF clubhouse's architect, looked to Frank Lloyd Wright's residential aesthetic as an inspiration for the Alumni Center at UT. Although the design changed significantly from his original proposal, it shared a welcoming and residential quality in its layout, materials, and plan.

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<sup>20</sup> Austin Chapter AIA, *Austin and Its Architecture* (Austin: Austin AIA, 1976): 65.

<sup>21</sup> Smilja Milovanovic-Bertram, "In the Spirit of Texas Rangers," March 2008, <https://smartech.gatech.edu/handle/1853/29118>.

<sup>22</sup> For more on the history of the Etter Alumni Center, see <https://jimnicar.com/2015/04/10/the-alumni-center-turns-50/>. Austin Chapter AIA, *Austin: Its Architects and Architecture (1836-1986)*, (Austin: Heritage Society of Austin, 1986): 44. National Register, Dr. Thomas M. Cranfill House, Austin, Travis County, Texas, National Register #40001416.

<sup>23</sup> Riley Triggs, "The Shaping of the Mid-Century Modern Home in Austin," Heritage Society of Austin.

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SAF Clubhouse is an excellent local example of mid-1960s suburban residential architectural aesthetic on a non-residential building. The one-story clubhouse is domestically scaled with a rectilinear plan and broad, low-slung roofline. Set back far onto the 5-acre wooded site, the clubhouse's primary façade is still oriented away from the public entrance with window walls on the rear elevation that face a large yard overlooking Shoal Creek. Unbroken expanses of rough-cut fieldstone characterize the exterior walls. These run seamlessly past exterior glass walls and sidelights to the interior where clerestory and reentrant corner windows of privacy glass bring in natural light. Vaulted ceilings of exposed wood planks enhance the feeling of openness while the use of natural materials—wood and fieldstone—in interior sheathing and fireplace give the clubhouse a homey quality that is inviting, warm, and comfortable.

*Fred W. Day, AIA (1926-2014)*

Fred Winfield Day, Jr. was born. on July 9, 1926, in Savannah, Georgia, but he grew up in Temple, Texas, a small city 75 miles north of Austin. After earning his BA from the University of Texas in 1946, Day enrolled in UT's School of Architecture and graduated four years later. Day earned considerable experience working for prestigious local firms—Fehr and Granger (1949, 1953-1954), Jessen Jessen Millhouse & Greeven (1954-1958; various dates as consulting architect); Brooks, Barr, Graeber, White—and established a private practice in the 1960s. In 1968, Day returned to Jessen, Inc. as a principal and soon became its president, a role he held until his retirement in 1993. His principle works included the 1965 Lila B. Etter Alumni Center, Texas Collections Deposit Library (1968), and Medical Office at 3100 Red River Street (1966). Active in the professional community, Day was an officer and president of the Central Texas AIA Chapter and an associate professor at UTSOA.

**Conclusion**

The SAF Clubhouse is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the area of Health/Medicine at the local level of significance for its continuous role in the treatment and recovery of alcoholism. Since completion, the Foundation has rented its facilities to local groups of Alcoholics Anonymous, whose mission is to assist alcoholics in finding and maintaining permanent sobriety. It is also nominated under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as an excellent local example of Austin's mid-century modern residential style uniquely designed for the recovery and congregation of AA and Al-Anon members. Although spiritual principles are the foundation of its program, Alcoholics Anonymous is not considered nor allied with any religious creed, sect, denomination, organization, institution, or movement. Therefore, the applicants do not claim Criteria Consideration A (Religious Properties). The period of significance is 1966-1973, recognizing the building's construction through the 50-year threshold for listing.

Suburban Alcoholic Foundation Clubhouse, Austin, Travis County, Texas

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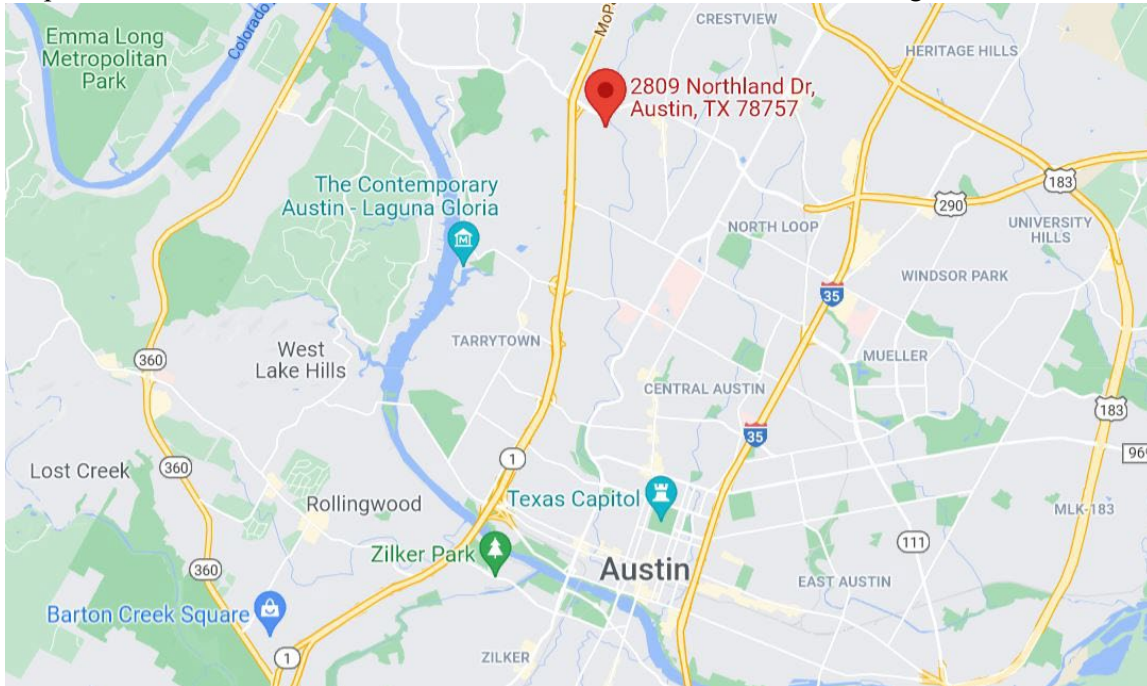


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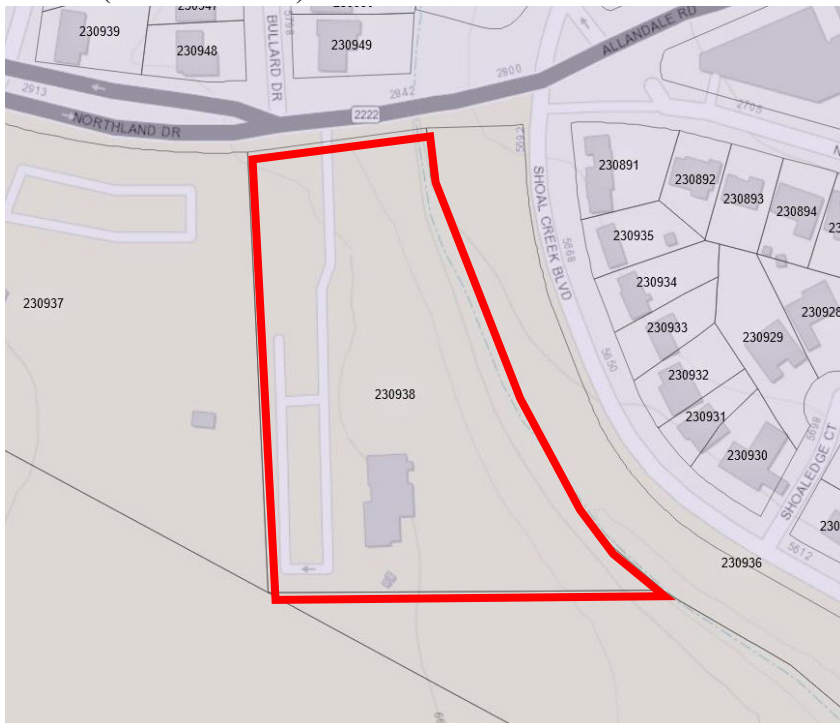
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## Maps

Map 1: Suburban Alcoholic Foundation, 2809 Northland Drive. Source: Google



Map 2: The nominated boundary is the current and historic property boundary recorded by Travis CAD (ID #230010702) as ABS 216 SUR 14 DAVIS J P ACR 5.00.





Suburban Alcoholic Foundation Clubhouse, Austin, Travis County, Texas

Map 3: Setting of nominated property. Source: Google Earth, accessed July 7, 2022.



Map 4: Austin, SAF Clubhouse 30.333009° -97.749847°. Source: Google Earth, accessed November 1, 2021.

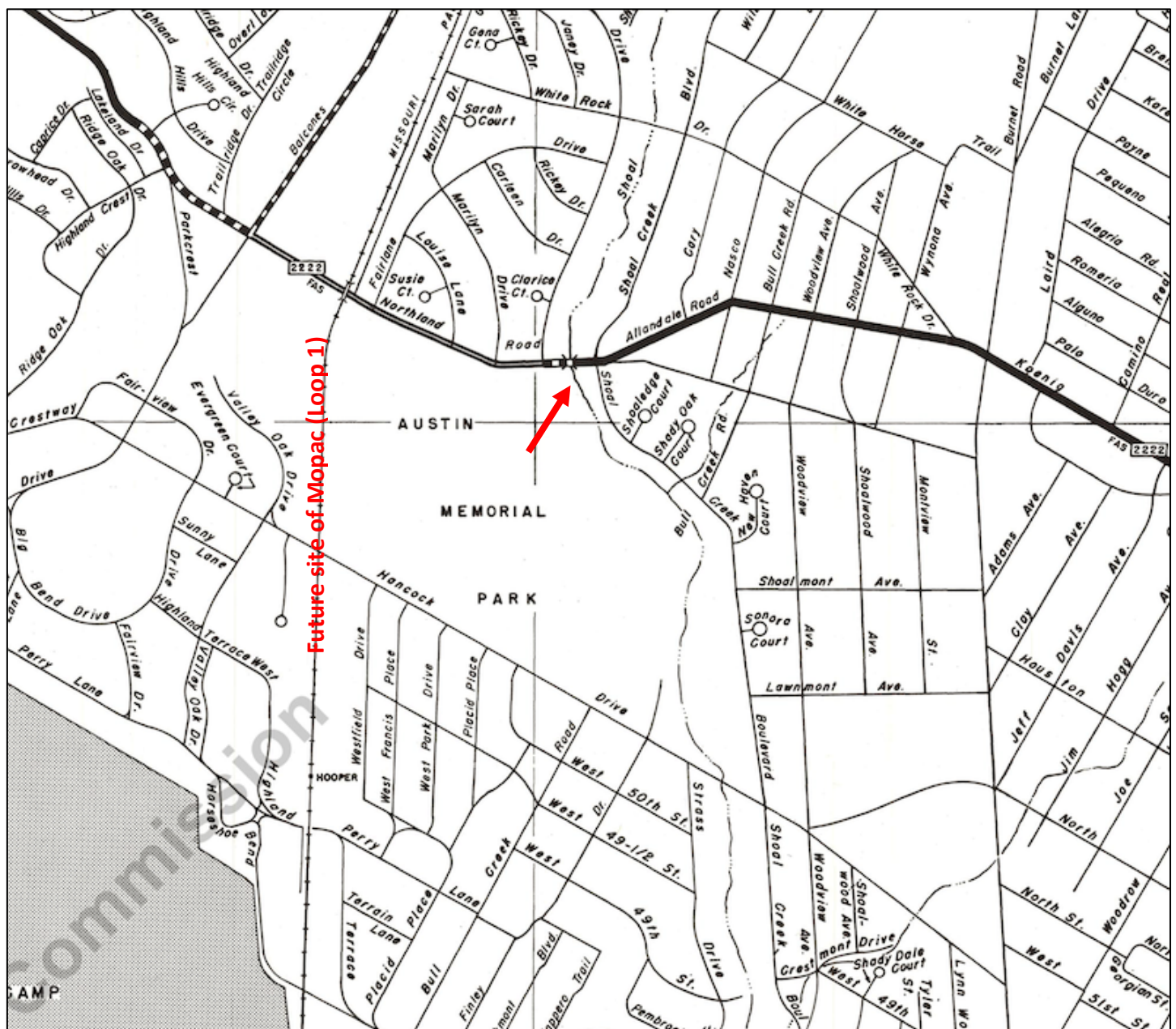




Suburban Alcoholic Foundation Clubhouse, Austin, Travis County, Texas

## Figures

Figure 1: Inset of 1963 (corrected to 1972) Austin city street map showing location of nominated property. Source: General Highway Map (#5674). Texas State Archives Map Collection.





Suburban Alcoholic Foundation Clubhouse, Austin, Travis County, Texas

Figure 2: 1965 Aerial (shortly before construction) showing suburban neighborhoods that surround the property.  
Source: City of Austin Property Profile.

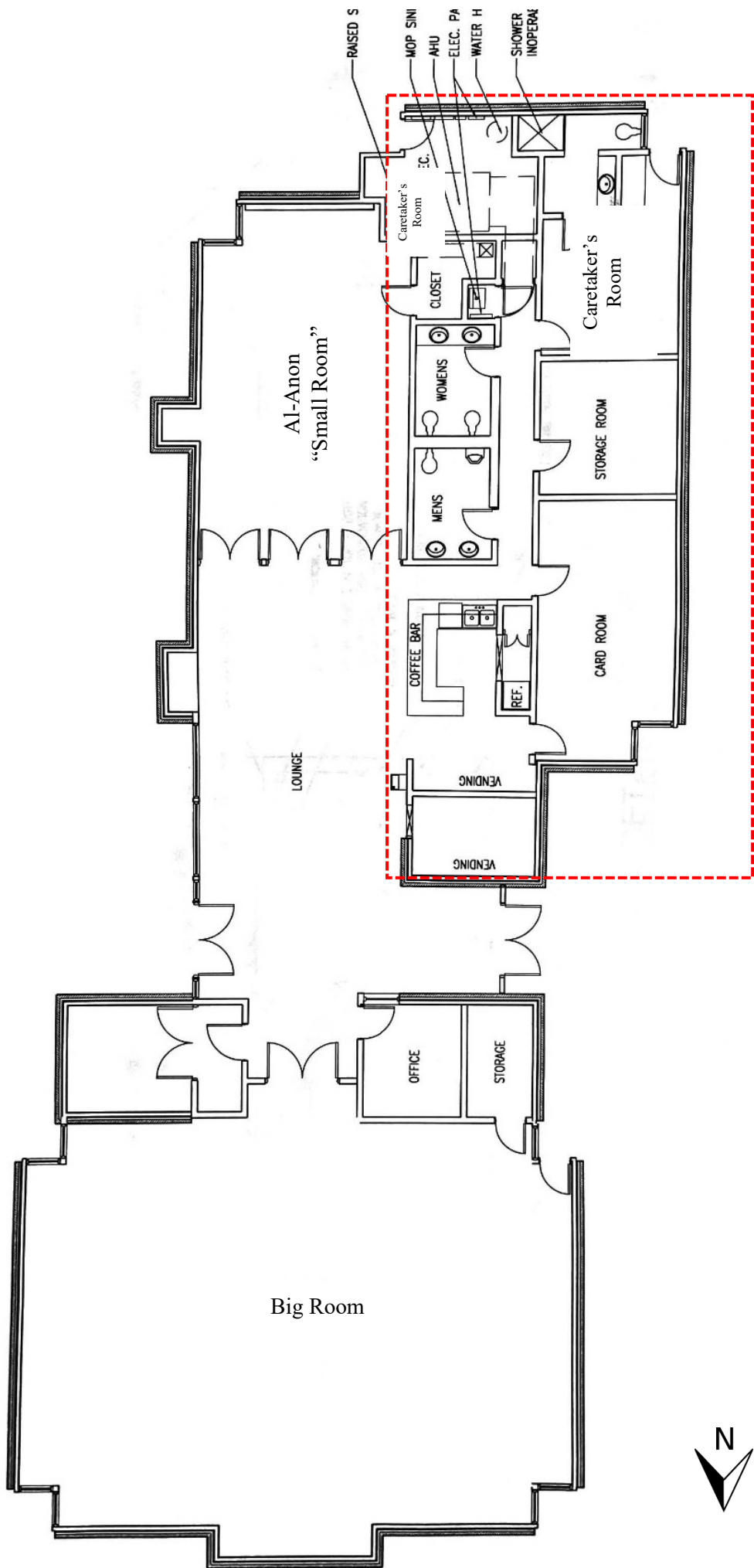


Figure 3: 1976 Aerial of SAF Clubhouse. Source: City of Austin Property Profile.



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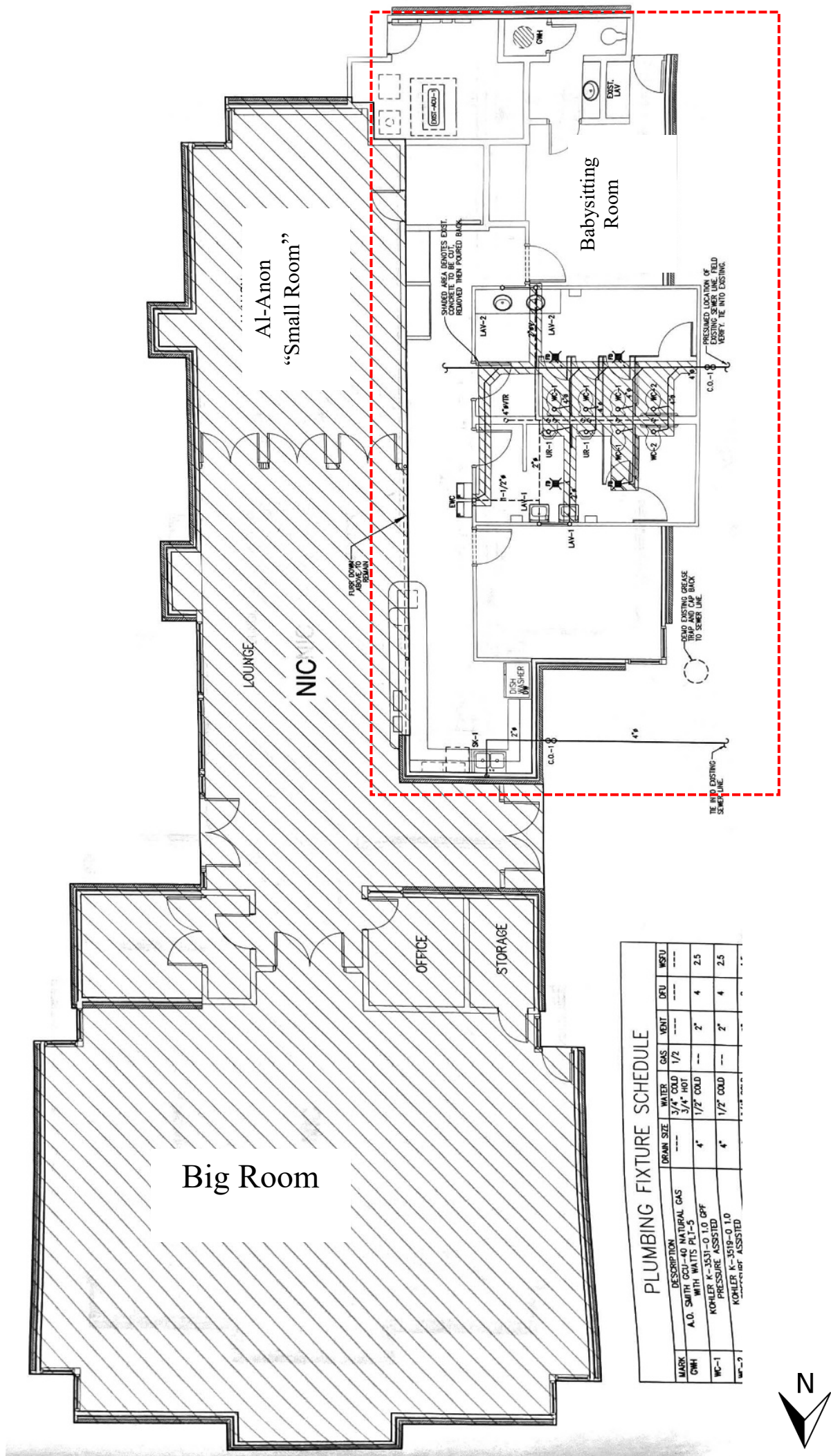
Figure 4: Historic floorplan. The dotted line indicates the area affected by renovations in 2012. Source: Spencer Godfrey Architects, Inc., 2012 based on original blueprints (Fig. 5).





Suburban Alcoholic Foundation Clubhouse, Austin, Travis County, Texas

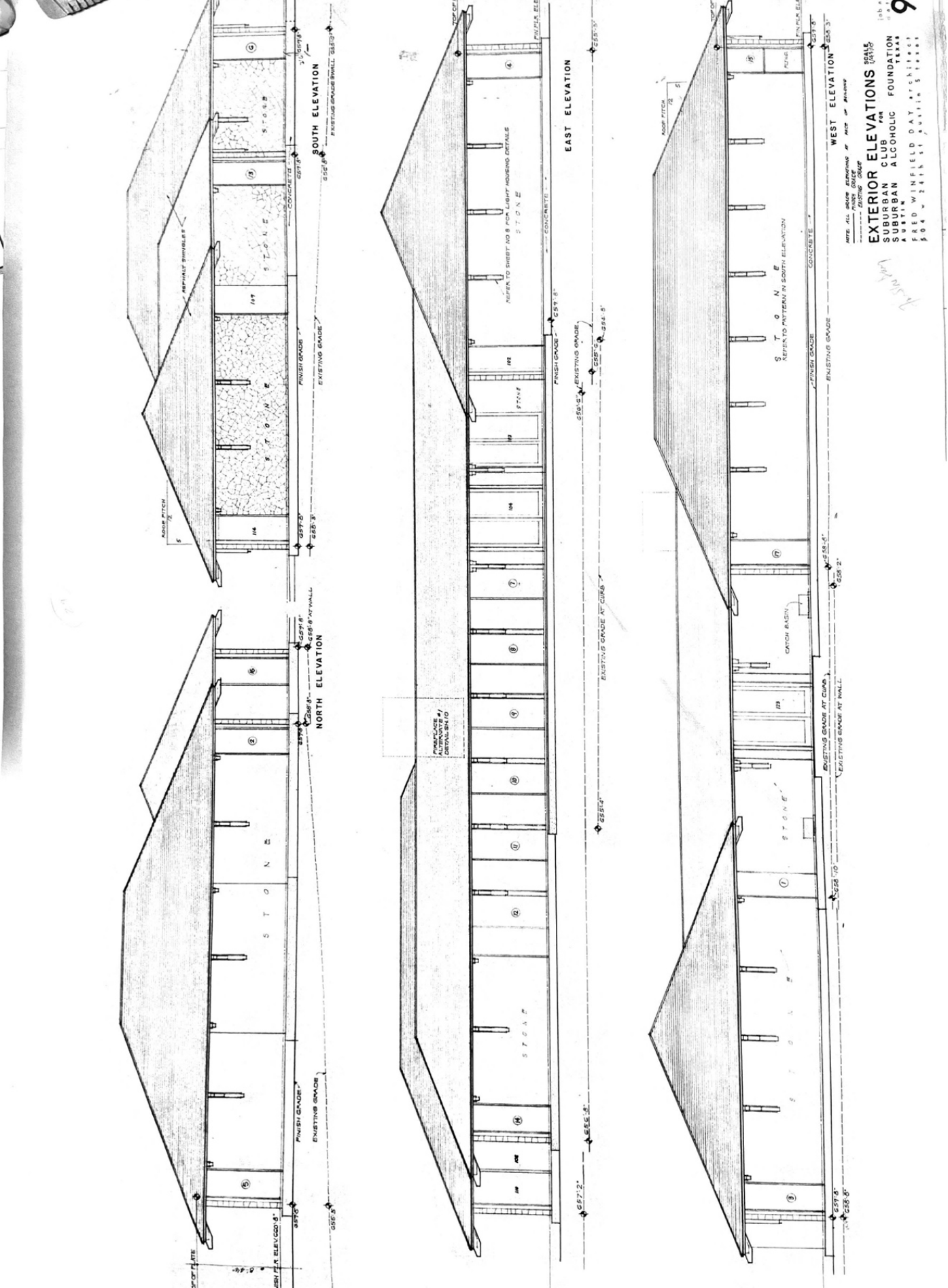
Figure 5: Current Floor Plan with 2012 alterations (red outline) to southwest portion of building. Source: Ibid.





Suburban Alcoholic Foundation Clubhouse, Austin, Travis County, Texas

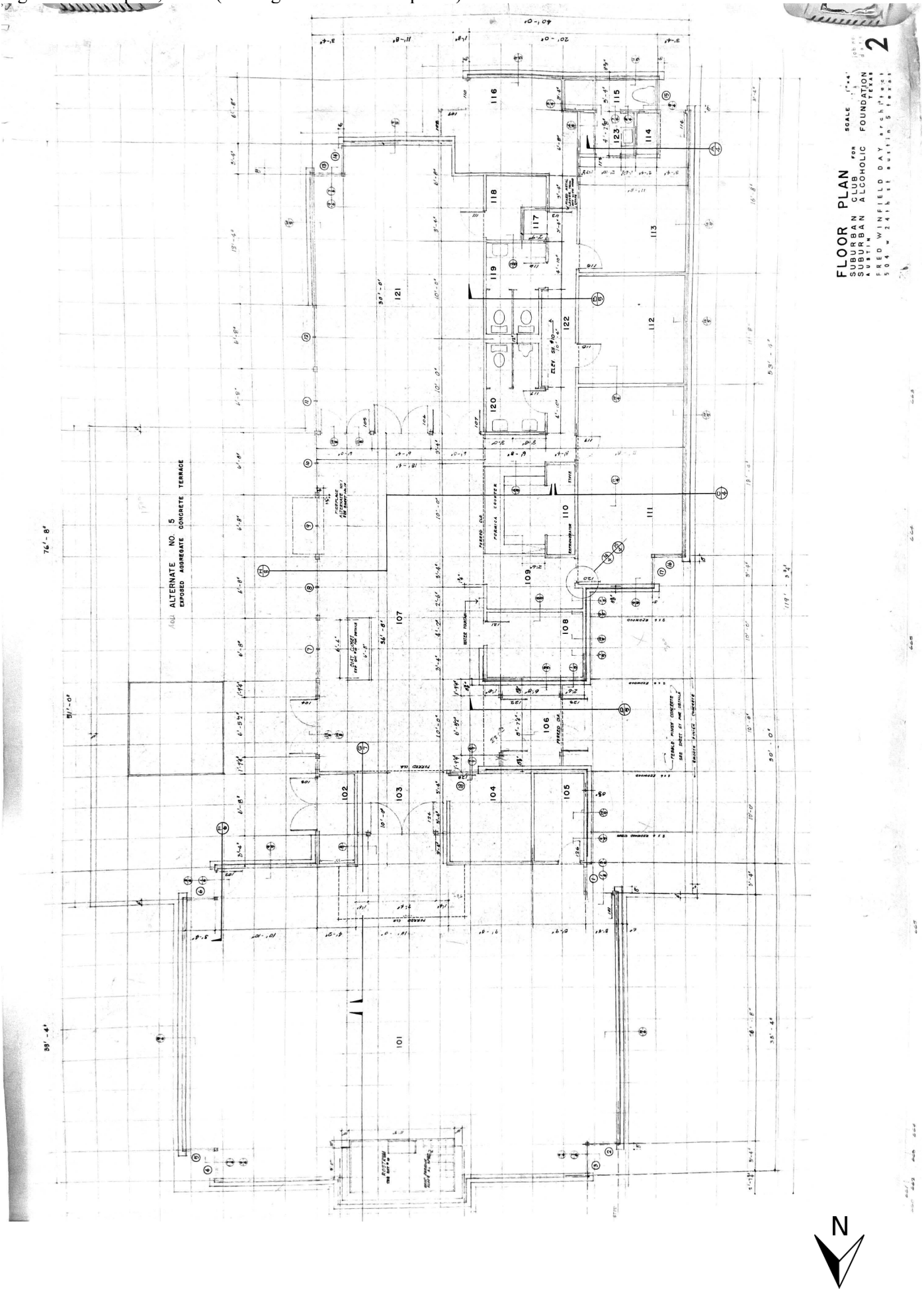
Figure 7: Historic plans of building elevations, 1965. Source: Ibid.





Suburban Alcoholic Foundation Clubhouse, Austin, Travis County, Texas

Figure 8: Floor plan, 1965. (See Figure 1 for clearer plans.) Source: Ibid.





Suburban Alcoholic Foundation Clubhouse, Austin, Travis County, Texas

Figure 9: On Nov. 16, 1965, Mayor Lester Palmer had the honor of breaking ground for the SAF Clubhouse. Source: *Austin American-Statesman*, November 16, 1965.



**NEW CLUB HOUSE**—Breaking ground for the new \$150,000 Alcoholic Anonymous club house are, left to right, Mayor Lester Palmer, Cecil Cabaniss, president of the Suburban Alcoholic Foundation, and architect Fred W. Day. The clubhouse, to be at Northland Drive and Shoal Creek Boulevard, will provide companionship

*American-Statesman/UPI*

and a meeting place for the AA groups. The AA was forced out of its last location by freeway expansion. There are approximately 400 members in the Austin area group, which is completely self-supporting. Membership is by individual decision.

Suburban Alcoholic Foundation Clubhouse, Austin, Travis County, Texas

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Figure 10: Suburban Alcoholic Foundation Clubhouse in 1973 with the original stone BBQ pit and without the current canopy. Source: SAF Archives.



Figure 11: Members pose from the Big Room's rostrum to celebrate the 28<sup>th</sup> anniversary of AA in Austin. Source: SAF.

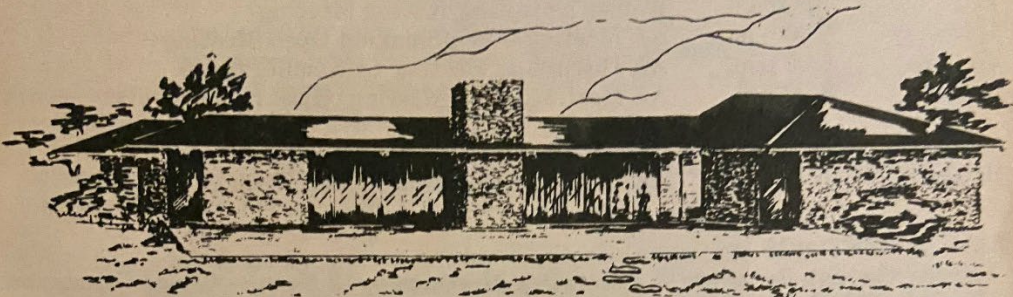




Suburban Alcoholic Foundation Clubhouse, Austin, Travis County, Texas

Figure 12: Meeting schedule of the Suburban Group, n.d. Source: SAF Archive.

# **SUBURBAN GROUP— ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS**



***Built in 1966 by The Suburban Alcoholic Foundation, Inc., a non-profit organization.***

2809 Northland Drive, Austin, Texas 78731 Telephone: AC 512, 453-9300

Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who have a common problem — alcohol. We think of alcoholism as an illness, and of the active alcoholic as a sick person. We are different from the majority of people in that we, as alcoholics, are so constituted, emotionally and physically, that to us alcohol in any form or in any quantity is a poison. We know we can never be cured of the compulsion to continue drinking once a drink has been taken, but we know also that we can be released from the obsession to take the first drink.

We are not crusaders, reformers, or evangelists. AA is not allied with any creed, sect, denomination, organization, institution or movement. Our membership is a crosscut of society. It takes no stand on any controversial issue. AA helps the sick alcoholic recover if he desires, and helps him live a better and more useful life after arresting his illness.

AA is not a religious organization. Most of us believe that our principal source of help is a Power greater than ourselves, but the conception of that Power, if any, is entirely a matter of the individual's viewpoint.

The premises are open seven days a week, from 7:00 a.m. until midnight.

### **Schedule of Regular Meetings**

Sunday	9:30 a.m.	Beginners Group (Less than 1 year only) (Alcoholics Only)
Sunday	9:30 a.m.	AA Meeting (Over 1 year) (Alcoholics Only)
Sunday	11:00 a.m.	AA Meeting (Fundamentals) (Open Meeting)
Sunday	6:30 p.m.	Study of Steps 1-4 Rotating (Alcoholics Only)
Sunday	8:00 p.m.	Study of the 12 Steps (Alcoholics Only)
Monday	8:00 p.m.	AA Speaker Meeting—Chip Night (Alcoholics Only)
Tuesday	8:00 p.m.	Study of Big Book (Open Meeting)
Tuesday	8:00 p.m.	Young Minds (Open Meeting)
Wednesday	8:45 p.m.	Beginners Group (Less than 1 year only) (Alcoholics Only)

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Figure 13: Architect Fred Day designed the UT Alumni Center, which was built in 1965. Source: <https://jimnicar.com/tag/fred-day/>.<sup>24</sup>



# DEDICATION OF THE *Lila B. Etter* ALUMNI CENTER

<sup>24</sup> Now called the Etter-Harbin Alumni Center, it is on the UT campus at 2110 San Jacinto Blvd.

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Figure 14: Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol — that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.



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Figure 15: Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous (Short Form)

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority — a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose — to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.
6. An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

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**Photographs**

Property: Suburban Alcoholic Foundation Clubhouse  
Address: 2809 Northland Dr. Austin, Travis County  
Photographer: Bonnie Tipton  
Date(s): November 1, 2021 and December 27, 2022.

Photo 1: SAF Clubhouse is set back far on the property, which is surrounded by trees and features a large parking lot (original) and commodious grassy lawn. 12/27/22.





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Photo 2: West (primary) elevation. 11/1/21





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Photo 3: Entrance (West elevation). The aluminum frame entry is a non-historic alteration from 2012. 11/1/21





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Photo 4: North section of primary (West) elevation. Looking southeast. 12/27/22





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Photo 5: South side of primary (West) elevation showing 2012 alteration. Looking southeast. 12/27/22.  
To accommodate larger interior restrooms, a discreet section (shown here) of the exterior wall was pushed out two feet. Clad in original stone, the change resembles original exterior design elements seen on other elevations.





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Photo 6: North Elevation, looking south. 11/1/21



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Photo 7: The building's inverted corners retain historic glazing. View southwest. 12/27/22





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Photo 8: Rear (East) Elevation, looking west. 12/27/22 The non-contributing shed is against, but not attached to, the façade.





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Photo 9: The concrete slab veranda is original, and the corrugated metal canopy is a historic-age addition. Non-historic doors date to the 2012 renovation. 12/27/22





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Photo 10: South Elevation, view north. 12/27/22





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Photo 11: Two (of three) non-contributing sheds on the southeast portion of the property. 11/1/21 The stone object is the former BBQ pit previously attached to the back patio seen in Figure 10.





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Photo 12: The large backyard and patio provide areas for fellowship, an integral aspect of maintaining sobriety.  
Looking northeast. 12/27/22





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Photo 13: The property is secluded from the busy roadway (Northland Dr./F.M. 2222). Looking north. 12/27/22





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Photo 14: Exposed fieldstone and mahogany characterize the interior. Entrance, looking west. 11/1/21



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Photo 15: Kitchen and lobby, looking northeast. 11/1/21 The kitchen was enlarged during the 2012 renovation.





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Photo 16: Room configurations, including the hallway, and materials changed as a result of the work. 11/1/21





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Photo 17: "Big Room," looking north to the podium (original feature). 12/27/2022





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Photo 18: Big Room, looking southeast. 12/27/2022





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Photo 19: Big Room, showing interior design details: reentrant corners, historic glazing, mahogany and grasscloth walls. 12/27/2022





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Photo 20: Al-Anon ("Small") Room, looking north. 11/1/21



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Photo 21: Al-Anon/Small Room, looking southwest. 11/1/21



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