

PROTECTED LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT

LANDMARK NAME: Carson-Lucia House

OWNERS: Hinojosa Family Investments

Applicants: Mr. & Mrs. Richard and Santos Hinojosa

LOCATION: 3904 Brandt Street, Houston, Texas 77006

AGENDA ITEM: [A](#)

HPO FILE NO.: [HP2021_0331](#)

DATE ACCEPTED: [10/21/2021](#)

HAHC HEARING: [11/16/2021](#)

SITE INFORMATION: The Carson-Lucia House is in the First Montrose Commons Historic District on lots 4 and 5, Tracks 3 and 7, Block 11, in the Bute addition. The site includes a two-story Classical Revival style clapboard 6,002 square foot house on a 15,625 square foot lot. The house has both a small basement and finished attic space. Construction of the house was completed in 1912.

TYPE OF APPROVAL REQUESTED: Protected Landmark Designation

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

The Carson-Lucia House is a significant example of Classical Revival residential design. The house was built in 1912 by the Russell Brown Company for Mrs. Julia Carson, the widow of a prominent businessman. It was later owned by Mrs. Pauline Lucia, the widow of a successful businessman and a prominent business owner in her own right. The Carson-Lucia House reflects the upwardly mobile development of the city's South End in the first two decades of the 20th century and has ties to the city's growth as a manufacturing center.

The Carson-Lucia house at 3904 Brandt Street meets Criteria 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6 for Landmark Designation and Criteria 1 and 2 for Protected Landmark Designation.

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE

First Montrose Commons

First Montrose Commons Historic District was designated by Houston City Council on June 9, 2010. The district consists of two distinct subdivisions – Lockhart, Connor & Barziza Addition, platted in 1873, and Bute Addition, platted in 1907. The Lockhart, Connor & Barziza Addition was named after real estate partners Robert Lockhart, John C. Connor, and Philippa Barziza. The adjacent Bute Addition was established by James Bute, founder of the Bute Paint Company, one of the longest continually operating local businesses in Houston's history.

When the Lockhart, Connor & Barziza Addition and Bute Addition were platted, the area was planned as an entirely residential neighborhood. Over the years, however, commercial and institutional encroachment became so pervasive that the blocks now known as First Montrose Commons, represent one of the last remaining residential enclaves in the area. After World War II, many families moved to the suburbs and the neighborhood entered a prolonged period of substantial change. During this time, the United States experienced a housing crunch as soldiers returned home and started new families. Houston, like other major metropolitan areas, struggled to meet the housing demands. While some original residents remained in First Montrose Commons and continued to maintain their houses, many old houses were either demolished or divided into multiple units, others were allowed to deteriorate, and

the fabric of the neighborhood began to fray. Like many inner-city neighborhoods, greater Montrose struggled in the 1950s and 1960s. The construction of Spur 527, which opened in 1962, required the destruction of more than half of the Bute Addition's housing stock. Nonetheless, a large number of historically significant houses remain that illustrate Houston's rich heritage. Incremental improvements initiated by residents, organizations, and alliances began in the 1970s.

Change accelerated in the late 1990s when the neighborhood was discovered by new residents moving to Houston as a result of \$2.6 billion in downtown revitalization and reinvestment. Homeowners developed an appreciation for the charm and historical significance of once neglected houses and purchased and restored them, which helped revitalize the neighborhood. In 1994, residents formed the First Montrose Commons Civic Association, whose mission was to "protect and enrich First Montrose Commons by encouraging neighborhood pride, communication, advocacy, and vigilance."

Many nearby early 20th century neighborhoods, including Avondale, Audubon Place, Courtlandt Place and Westmoreland, have also been revitalized and residents have succeeded in having their historic neighborhoods listed on the National Register of Historic Places and/or designated as City of Houston Historic Districts. Greater Montrose is home to five City of Houston Historic Districts: Courtlandt Place (1996), Westmoreland (1997), Avondale East (1999), Avondale West (2007), and Audubon Place (2009); Courtlandt Place and Westmoreland are also listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

James Bute Addition

The James Bute Addition comprises the eastern portion of the First Montrose Commons Historic District. The land was on the wilderness fringe of Houston when James House was deeded Lots 21 and 22 of the Obedience Smith Survey in 1848. James House, a prominent banker, was one of the financiers of the Houston & Texas Central Railroad possible, the second railroad built in Texas. Prior to 1890, House filed a plat for the James House Addition encompassing Lots 21 and 22 to provide housing for the booming city, but the Depression of 1893, the greatest economic downturn in U.S. history to that point, ended his plans. Following the recovery, Lots 21 and 22 were replatted, this time into two highly desirable residential districts – Lot 22 as the Westmoreland Addition (1902) and Lot 21 as the James Bute Addition (1907).

From the outset, James Bute planned for the subdivision to be a fashionable residential area and sold land there in quarter-blocks for \$750 to \$1,800 per lot. A 1909 advertisement in the *Houston Daily Post* described the James Bute Addition:

"The most fashionable district of Houston...between Westmoreland and Main Street [with] the South End [streetcar] line passing through it. It is fifteen minutes ride from the center of the city. Cars run every seven minutes. It is convenient to two of the best schools in the city...As an exclusive residential community...there is no property that can compare with it. The addition has been equipped with all modern conveniences – including sidewalks, sewerage, gas, water, electric lights, etc. Contracts have been let for curbing and paving the entire addition. The work is now in progress and will be completed as soon as practicable."

Original deed restrictions required significant set-backs, included restrictions on the construction of fences, and prohibited the construction or operation of businesses within the neighborhood. Today, only

three of the Bute Addition's original quarter-block mansions remain: the Cochran-Hofheinz House at 3900 Milam (City of Houston Landmark), the Carson-Lucia House at 3904 Brandt, and the Milam House at 4100 Milam. All three have been rehabilitated and are currently occupied by businesses sensitive to their histories. The houses now face a 30-foot high wall of concrete from Spur 527.

James Bute (b.1857, Edinburgh, Scotland, d.1915, Houston)

James Bute was born in Edinburgh, Scotland. He immigrated to Montreal, Quebec, in 1857, and then to New Orleans, finally arriving in Houston in 1861. Bute first gained entree to Houston's established business and social elite through his marriage to the daughter of prominent banker James House. In 1869, James Bute founded the Bute Paint Company, a retail and wholesale paint business. By 1887, Bute was supplying paints and other materials from a retail store on Main Street and supplying wholesale materials within a 150-mile radius.

Although Bute is primarily identified with his paint business, he made investments and applied his skills in other businesses as well. As an officer in a lumber company specializing in millwork production in the 1890s; by investing with T.W. House, Jr., in an oil company; and as an officer and director of the city's oldest wholesale pharmaceutical business, Houston Drug Company, Bute furthered influenced the commercial development of Houston.

In 1907, Butes' sons, John Bute, Jr. and James House Bute, and son-in-law John F. Garrott incorporated the paint business as the James Bute Company. James Bute died in 1915 at the age of 76. The Bute Paint Company continued to be family owned and operated until 1990. At the time of its dissolution, it was believed to be the longest continually operating business in Houston. The Bute Company warehouse (1909) still stands at 711 William Street, northeast of downtown Houston, and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Russell Brown Company

The Carson-Lucia House was built by the Russell Brown Company. According to architectural historian Stephen Fox, the Russell Brown Company was a Houston-based architectural design and construction company. Russell Brown was born on December 12, 1875, in Taylor, Texas, and came to Houston in 1902. The company was chartered in 1906 and specialized in residential design for upper- and middle-class homebuyers. After becoming successfully established in Houston, the company opened branch offices in Dallas by 1916, San Antonio by 1922 and Los Angeles in 1923. Architects who worked for the company included Alonzo N. Dawson, Charles W. Oliver, Mike Mebane and Gonzalo Ancira.

The firm designed and built several homes in Avondale between 1908 and 1925. The company built numerous houses in the Westmoreland, Montrose, Boulevard Oaks and River Oaks neighborhoods and in the Dallas subdivision of Munger Place and was the general contractor of such notable Houston houses as the William S. Farish House (1925) in Shadyside and the Cleveland Sewall House (1926) in River Oaks. In the early 1940s, Russell Brown retired to his ranch in Juliff, Texas, and the company ceased operations. Brown died in 1963.

OWNERSHIP HISTORY

Julia Moseley Baker Carson (b.1875 Austin, Texas, d.1950 Houston, Texas)

The house at 3904 Brandt Street was designed and built for Julia (Moseley) Baker Carson by the Russell Brown Company in 1912. Mrs. Carson was born on August 2, 1875, in Austin, Texas. She was a homemaker and mother to four sons. She was also a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution (D.A.R.) in the John McKnitt Alexander Chapter. An article in the *Houston Post* on May 5, 1912 headlined “Pretty Home in Bute Addition” calls the home “one of the finest in the city” and highlights its distinctive architectural and interior features.

Julia Carson was the widow of Philip R. Carson, one of the principals in Carson, Sewall and Company, a successful wholesale grocery and cotton business. Philip Carson was born in 1857 in Adalusia, Alabama. Philip Carson’s parents moved to Houston by 1880 and he worked in the family grocery store before rising to prominence in the city’s business community.

Philip and Julia Carson had four sons: Philip Rodgers Carson, Robert Baker Carson, Boulds Burnett Carson and John Raymond Carson. The family was listed in the Houston Blue Book, a social directory. Mr. Carson was a member of several civic organizations including the Houston Club, the Houston Light Guard and the Number 2 Club. The Number 2 Club was described as “the oldest and strongest social organization in the state and its membership is composed of the elite of the city,” in the Houston Blue Book.

After Philip Carson’s death in 1907, Julia Carson resided in a rental property at 909 Webster Street with her four sons. By 1912, Mrs. Carson had moved to her newly built home in the James Bute Addition. City directories indicate the staff at the house included a chauffeur, gardener, maid and a cook. In 1918, Mrs. Carson moved out of the house and began renting an apartment at the Rice Hotel. She later lived in apartments at the Lamar Hotel and the Warwick Hotel. Mrs. Carson owned 3904 Brandt Street until the early 1940s and rented it in various configurations – the whole house, separate rooms, etc. The Carson sons were tenants at the house while they were students at Rice Institute (now Rice University). Julia Carson died in 1950 and is buried in Glenwood Cemetery alongside her husband. Her tombstone reads: “A Beautiful Lady” and “wife of Philip Carson.” Her four sons spent the remainder of their lives in Houston and are also buried in Glenwood Cemetery.

Edgar Odell Lovett (b.1871 Shreve, Ohio, d.1957 Houston, Texas)

During the years that Mrs. Carson leased 3904 Brandt Street many of the renters were associated with Rice Institute. One of the most notable tenants was Edgar Odell Lovett, an educator and administrator who was the first president of Rice Institute from 1908 to 1946.

Lovett obtained his first doctorate degree from the University of Virginia in 1895 and completed his second doctorate in Mathematics from the University of Leipzig in Germany. In 1897, Lovett began working as an instructor at Princeton University; he became an assistant professor, then a full professor in mathematics and, eventually, head of the Mathematics and Astronomy Department at Princeton. In 1907, Princeton President (later U.S. President) Woodrow Wilson recommended Lovett for the job of president of the new Rice Institute.

From 1918 to 1920, Lovett rented 3904 Brandt Street and lived there with his family - wife Mary Ellen, daughter Adelaide and sons Henry and Laurence. Lovett Hall, Rice University's administration building, and Lovett Boulevard in Montrose are named in honor of Edgar Odell Lovett.

Pauline Vetrano Lucia (b. 1875, Castel Vetrano, Sicily, d. 1966, Houston)

Pauline Vetrano was born in Castel Vetrano, Sicily, on March 28, 1875 to parents Emmanuel Vetrano and Innocence Congemini. She married fellow Sicilian immigrant Vincenzo Salvatore "Charlie" Lucia on February 26, 1897. Vincenzo was the son of Salvatore Lucia and Anna La Russo of Palermo. He immigrated to the United States through the port of New Orleans in 1881. By 1884, he had moved to Houston and was the owner and operator of a fruit stand on the east side of Fifth Street at the Northeast Bridge. By 1886, the store expanded to sell groceries and beer. A "beer saloon" was added to the shop by 1889. The business thrived and, in 1891, Mr. Lucia opened the Magnolia Macaroni Manufacturing Company, a wholesale grocery distributor and importer and pasta manufacturer. With the success of his business, Mr. Lucia became a prominent member of the Houston business community.

In 1895, Mr. Lucia purchased a home at 520 San Felipe (later W. Dallas) and moved the macaroni company next door. Two years later, Vincenzo married Pauline Vetrano. They had ten children together, nine of whom survived past infancy: Samuel, Annie, Lena, Emanuel, Pauline, Vincent, Josephine, Joseph and Anthony.

After Mr. Lucia's death in 1927, Pauline became the company's manager and president. She remained in the family's W. Dallas home until her move to 3904 Brandt Street around 1943. Mrs. Lucia successfully ran the Magnolia Macaroni Manufacturing Company until the early 1950s. She lived in the Brandt Street house until her death in 1966. Her youngest son, Anthony, owned the property after his mother's passing. Anthony had lived in the home's garage apartment where he operated a ham radio station. He owned an insurance agency and was well-known for his advertising slogan, "Call Anthony 'Let's talk Insurance' Lucia." He remained in the home until the early 2000s. Anthony died on November 15, 2007 and is buried in the family plot in Glenwood Cemetery. After Anthony moved out of the home it remained vacant until 2011 and it entered into a period of significant physical decline.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION AND RESTORATION HISTORY

Classical Revival Architecture

Classical Revival architecture has its roots in ancient Greek and Roman architecture; in the temple architecture of ancient Greece and in the religious, civic and military architecture of the Romans. The style makes use of a range of traditional forms; most notably columns. It is also characterized by a formal symmetrical design, usually with a center door. Residential architecture is typically two stories in height with a full height attic. Common features include columned porches on the front façade, a front facing gable on the porch, a broken pediment or fan light over the entry, decorative door surrounds or sidelights, symmetrical side porches, boxed eaves, rectangular double-hung windows, and a balustrade at the roof line.

Classical Revival architecture has enjoyed popularity during various times in American history, including the period following the World's Columbian Exposition held in Chicago in 1893. An entire city was created in the Classical Revival style for the exposition. "The White City" was highly publicized and showcased cutting-edge technology with classically inspired design. Architectural styles

displayed at the exposition were quickly emulated and the Classical Revival style gained popularity. Many civic building and homes were built in the style from the end of the exposition well into the 1930s.

Architectural Description

The Carson-Lucia House is a near textbook example of Classical Revival design. The home was built on a monumental scale. The main house is a balloon framed wooden structure and rests on cast concrete piers with bridging steel I-beams. The house is clad in overlapping, beveled cypress siding with a 4-inch reveal. The wood frame, double-hung windows have a distinctive picket-patterned muntin design on the upper sash.

The home is two stories in height with a full finished attic and a small basement. The front elevation of the main house consists of three symmetrical bays with a hipped roof. On the first floor, the centrally located entry door is flanked with a bay on either side containing matching double-hung windows. The recently restored leaded-glass front door has leaded-glass sidelights with a fanlight above under a semi-circular decorative balcony with balustrade. Plate glass windows with decorative transoms are centered in the bays on either side of the entry door.

The full-width front porch has a slightly projecting pediment with a front-facing gable. The porch is supported by four monumental fluted columns with attic bases and Ionic capitals. The pediment is decorated in relief with a design that includes a central cartouche balanced by acanthus leaves and roses on either side. The house displays a formal entablature with a dentiled cornice and a defined frieze and architrave band.

A double-hung window with a decorative muntin pattern on the upper sash is centered in each of the three bays on the second floor. The house has a hipped roof with two pedimented dormers. An exterior, corbelled brick chimney is on the left (east) side of the house.

Recessed side bays on either side of the house contain symmetrical, double-height porches with single-story fluted columns with Ionic capitals. The first floor of the porch on the right (west) side of the house contains a porte-cochere.

Restoration History

Around 1920, a two-story, 800-square-foot carriage house was built on the property. In addition, the side porch on the south side of the house was enclosed with casement windows on the first floor and double-hung windows on the second floor. The new windows were designed to match the existing windows and doors. On the north side of the house, a second-floor porch was added to the single-story porte-cochere. Around the same time, the west elevation of the house was altered by the completion of a two-story addition, which included an expanded kitchen, butler's pantry, back staircase, additional upstairs bedroom and bathrooms.

After Anthony Lucia moved out of the house in the early 2000s it remained vacant until 2011. During this time it fell into a state of severe disrepair. After it was sold in 2011 the new owner began a period of extensive revitalization. Many of the rotted or missing architectural elements were replaced on the exterior of the house. All new plumbing and electrical was installed. Deteriorated plaster was removed and the house was insulated and dry-walled. The entire house was repainted. The intricate leaded-glass

front door and side lights were taken off-site, restored and then reinstalled. Period appropriate chandeliers were sourced and installed to replace the originals which had been stolen when the house was vacant.

The current owners completed additional interior renovations, including finishing the attic. Insulation, HVAC, and a bathroom were added on the third floor. The attic floors and walls were refinished. In the carriage house the second floor was renovated, and garage doors were made operational.

On the exterior of the house the four monumental columns were repaired due to serious wood damage. The porch railing was restored, and the entire exterior was painted. Gutters were also installed.

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

APPROVAL CRITERIA FOR LANDMARK DESIGNATION

Sec. 33-224. Criteria for designation

(a) The HAHC, in making recommendations with respect to designation, and the city council, in making a designation, shall consider one or more of the following criteria, as appropriate for the type of designation:

- | S | NA | | S - satisfies | D - does not satisfy | NA - not applicable |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | (1) Whether the building, structure, object, site or area possesses character, interest or value as a visible reminder of the development, heritage, and cultural and ethnic diversity of the city, state, or nation; | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | (2) Whether the building, structure, object, site or area is the location of a significant local, state or national event; | | | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | (3) Whether the building, structure, object, site or area is identified with a person who, or group or event that, contributed significantly to the cultural or historical development of the city, state, or nation; | | | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | (4) Whether the building or structure or the buildings or structures within the area exemplify a particular architectural style or building type important to the city; | | | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | (5) Whether the building or structure or the buildings or structures within the area are the best remaining examples of an architectural style or building type in a neighborhood; | | | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | (6) Whether the building, structure, object or site or the buildings, structures, objects or sites within the area are identified as the work of a person or group whose work has influenced the heritage of the city, state, or nation; | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | (7) Whether specific evidence exists that unique archaeological resources are present; | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | (8) Whether the building, structure, object or site has value as a significant element of community sentiment or public pride. | | | |
| AND | | | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | (9) If less than 50 years old, or proposed historic district containing a majority of buildings, structures, or objects that are less than 50 years old, whether the building, structure, object, site, or area is of extraordinary importance to the city, state or nation for reasons not based on age (Sec. 33-224(b)). | | | |

Sec. 33-229. Criteria for protected landmark designation

- | S | NA | | S - satisfies | D - does not satisfy | NA - not applicable |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | (1) Meets at least three of the criteria for designation in section 33-224 of this Code; | | | |

- (2) Was constructed more than 100 years before application for designation was received by the director;
- (3) Is listed individually or as a contributing structure in an historic district on the National Register of Historic Places; or
- (4) Is recognized by the State of Texas as a Recorded State Historical Landmark.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission recommend to City Council the Protected Landmark Designation of the Carson-Lucia House at 3904 Brandt Street.

HAHC RECOMMENDATION

The Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission recommends to City Council the Protected Landmark Designation of the Carson-Lucia House at 3904 Brandt Street.

EXHIBIT A
PHOTO
CARSON-LUCIA HOUSE
3904 BRANDT STREET



EXHIBIT B
PHOTO – SIDE VIEW
CARSON-LUCIA HOUSE
3904 BRANDT STREET



CITY OF HOUSTON

Houston Archaeological & Historical Commission

Planning and Development Department

EXHIBIT C SITE MAP CARSON-LUCIA HOUSE 3904 BRANDT STREET

