



LANDMARK NAME: Myrle and Vernon Williams House

OWNERS: Ellen and William Sparker

APPLICANTS: Ellen and William Sparker

LOCATION: 2107 Tangley Street, Houston, TX 77005

AGENDA ITEM: C

HPO FILE No.: HP2026_0148

DATE ACCEPTED: May-13-2026

HAHC HEARING: June-18-2026

SITE INFORMATION: 2107 Tangley Street, Lot 10, Block 16, Southampton Place. The Myrle and Vernon Williams House, constructed in 1938, is a 2,917 square foot, two-story, red brick single-family residence located on a 5,841 square foot lot.

TYPE OF APPROVAL REQUESTED: Protected Landmark Designation

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

The Myrle and Vernon Williams House was built in 1938 and is a traditional red-brick residence constructed by prolific Houston builder William Farrington. Vernon Williams and his wife, Myrle, were the home's first owners and lived there until the 1970s. Mr. Williams worked as a wholesale clothing salesman, representing regional garment distributors including Fowler & Wells of Houston and Meyer, Mueller & Boardman Company of St. Louis.

During the early and mid-twentieth century, Houston developed into a major commercial distribution center for the Southwest, supported by its extensive rail network, port facilities, and expanding highway system. Wholesale businesses clustered in the downtown warehouse district, while traveling salesmen such as Williams served as a vital link between these firms and retailers throughout the region. Myrle Williams, a 1920 graduate of Baylor University, worked as a schoolteacher and was an active member of the American Association of University Women (AAUW).

The Williams household reflects the type of professional family drawn to the Southampton subdivision during Houston's rapid expansion in the 1920s and 1930s. Many residents of the neighborhood were employed in business, education, and other professional occupations tied to the city's growing commercial economy.

The developer E.H. Fleming purchased the land for Southampton in 1922, and development began in 1923. The early deed restrictions that enforced the building of only single-family residences with required minimum setbacks helped ensure that the neighborhood still has a "1920s feel." The housing stock includes a variety of architectural styles including classical Georgian and Tudor Revival homes, as well as brick cottages and bungalows. However, historic houses in the neighborhood are increasingly being torn down. Many of the new, modern residences do not complement the neighborhood's historic character. The current owners are seeking a Protected Landmark Designation for 2107 Tangley Street to preserve the house, which contributes to the historic character of Southampton Place and is representative of the neighborhood's history.

The Myrle and Vernon Williams House at 2107 Tangley Street meets criteria 1, 3, 4 and 5 for Landmark Designation and criteria 1 for Protected Landmark Designation.



HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE

Southampton Place

In 1922, the developer E.H. Fleming purchased 160.75 acres from Mrs. Nellie B. League of Galveston for \$297, 387.50. He originally planned a “residential and business” community on the acreage. During this early period, the deed restrictions that would become part of every deed for each piece of property were established and helped preserve the residential quality that the neighborhood continues to enjoy today. These restrictions included the prohibition of saloons, the sales of “spirituous liquors,” any “foundry, cemetery, reform school, asylum, slaughterhouse, or institutions for the treatment of tuberculosis or the mentally impaired.” Furthermore, no “prospecting, mining or drilling” would be permitted. Apartment buildings and multi-family housing were also prohibited. In addition, to ensure building quality, minimum construction costs were set: lots facing Rice Boulevard ranged from \$12,000, \$15,000, lots facing Sunset Boulevard were between \$8,000 to \$10,000 and all other lots between \$5,000 - \$7,000.

A sales prospectus advertised Southampton as “A place to love to live in” in 1922. The booklet predicted “A community of beautiful homes, harmonious in every detail” and a “desirable environment.” At its inception, Southampton was bolstered by the advantage of being adjacent to the Rice Institute, which was the largest privately endowed college in the nation. The brochure promised Southampton residents a park and playground, a school site, transportation fund, paved alleys and sidewalks, trees and ornamental plantings, and utilities and adequate storm sewers, rather than open culverts or ditches. The idea of enforcing stringent restrictions to protect the future of a large residential community made up of single- family homes may have been the brainchild of E.C. Barkley, a co-worker of E.H. Fleming and a Vice President at the San Jacinto Trust Company, who became one of Southampton’s earliest residents.

Early residents built their homes in an irregular pattern extending southward from Bissonnet, leaving construction on Rice Boulevard last. The 1926 city directory lists four homes on Bissonnet, six on Wroxton, nine on Albans and seven on Sunset. By 1928, the directory lists homes on all Southampton east-west thoroughfares. There were 144 homes combined on Bissonnet, Wroxton, Albans, Sunset, Quenby, Tangleby, Robinhood, Dunstan, Bolsover and Rice Boulevard. A.E. Kerr, the first resident on Rice Boulevard, became the first president of the Southampton Civic and Improvement Club a year after purchasing his home.

The development in Southampton was mirrored in downtown Houston. In the late 1920s, Houston witnessed the biggest building boom in its history. This boom would not be duplicated for the next three decades. Progress was in the air, and Mr. Fleming built two sample homes on Sunset Boulevard in Southampton to demonstrate what could be done with modern devices and design. The homes were fully electrified, and a contemporary newspaper article announced that, “Everything...is electrical, bringing before the people of this city an opportunity to learn the many advantages this wonderful invention of science has brought to the present-day household.” Architect William Ward Watkin wrote in *Houston* magazine about this era, “The opportunity is here to make a city, growing as recently and rapidly as Houston is growing,



one of the most beautiful cities in the country...I wonder if we are not at the beginning of an epoch in the history of our country when we are about to experience a very positive migration from the northern and north-central states to the south and toward the southwest." By 2000, there were 601 homes in Southampton.

Vernon Henderson Williams (b.12/29/1897, d. 2/22/1975)

The first homeowners at 2107 Tangley Street were Vernon H. Williams and his wife, Myrle Katherine Fleming Williams.

Vernon Henderson Williams was born in 1897 to Thomas Green Williams and Ar'mintie D. Conyers in Moody, Texas. Both parents were members of large farming families from Hart County, Kentucky. His father was the oldest of eight children and his mother the oldest of ten children. The Williams family later settled in Texas, near Waco, where Vernon was raised. In 1922, he married Myrle Katherine Fleming. The couple later relocated to Houston, Texas.

Vernon and Myrle, who had no children, resided at 2107 Tangley for several decades. Also living in the household was Myrle's mother, Flora Ella Barnes Fleming. Census records indicate that the garage apartment at 2107 Tangley served as living quarters for domestic employees. The 1940 census lists Eugene Martin and his wife, Pearl, as occupants of the garage apartment, employed by the household as a yardman and maid respectively.

Detached garage apartments containing living quarters for household staff were not typical for many homes in the neighborhood. On this block, most properties—approximately seventy-five percent—featured one-story garages designed primarily for a single automobile and without residential space above. In some cases, garage apartments in the area were rented for income, including to students attending nearby Rice Institute, rather than for household staff.

Vernon Williams worked as a wholesale clothing salesman representing regional garment distributors, including Fowler & Wells of Houston and Meyer, Mueller & Boardman Company of St. Louis. Firms of this type supplied ready-to-wear clothing to retail merchants throughout Texas and the Gulf Coast through traveling sales representatives who presented seasonal merchandise lines and secured orders from independent stores.

During the early and mid-twentieth century, Houston emerged as a major commercial distribution center for the Southwest, supported by its rail network, port facilities, and expanding highways. Wholesale businesses clustered in the downtown warehouse district, while salesmen such as Williams served as the link between these firms and retailers across the region.

The Williams household reflects the type of professional family drawn to the Southampton subdivision during Houston's rapid expansion in the 1920s and 1930s, when many residents were employed in business, education, and commercial occupations associated with the city's growing economy.



Myrle Katherine Fleming Williams (b.3/28/1895, d. 3/1/1983)

Myrle Katherine Fleming was born in 1895 to Samuel Simpson Fleming and Flora Ella Barnes in Nortonville, Kansas. She attended Baylor University and graduated in 1920 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Modern Languages. Census records indicate that she was employed as a schoolteacher early in her career. As a college graduate, Myrle Williams belonged to the generation of educated women who participated actively in professional and civic organizations such as the American Association of University Women (AAUW).

The American Association of University Women (AAUW), founded in 1881, is a national organization dedicated to advancing educational and professional opportunities for women. Established by female college graduates during a period when higher education for women was expanding in the United States, the organization created a national network through which members engaged in scholarship, research, and civic activities. By the early twentieth century AAUW had established local branches in cities across the country, including Houston, where members organized lectures, community initiatives, and study groups devoted to subjects such as literature, art, international affairs, and interior decoration.

During the early 1940s, Myrle Williams hosted meetings of the AAUW Interior Decoration Study Group at her home at 2107 Tangle. These gatherings brought together college-educated women from across Houston for discussions and presentations related to architecture, design, and decorative arts.

The use of private residences such as the Williams home for AAUW activities illustrates the role of neighborhood homes as informal centers of intellectual and civic life among Houston's university-educated residents during this period. The neighborhood's proximity to Rice Institute further contributed to this culture of civic engagement, attracting educated residents and fostering the growth of organizations dedicated to scholarship and public life.

William Giddings Farrington – Builder

The William G. Farrington Company was a well-known Houston-based architectural design and construction company.

William G. Farrington was born on September 10, 1901 in Kingfisher, Oklahoma. He was a graduate of Muskogee and Ardmore public schools and was educated as an engineer at the University of Cincinnati before coming to Houston in 1926.

Architectural Historian Stephen Fox considers William Farrington's company one of the best design/build firms in Houston in the period spanning 1935-1942. Farrington was also an active civic leader, as well as the developer of several prominent Houston subdivisions, including Tanglewood, Braeswood and Monticello.



According to the Houston Chronicle, Farrington was a "major developer of commercial and residential properties and a leader in Houston civic, educational and religious affairs." After arriving in Houston, Farrington worked for the San Jacinto Trust Company but eventually started his own business in 1929. He began by building individual homes and later moved into the development of subdivisions.

Farrington is probably best known as the developer of the Tanglewood subdivision. He started Tanglewood in 1948 as the post-war successor to River Oaks. According to architectural historian, Stephen Fox, the highlights of Farrington's post-war years included the Lamar-River Oaks Shopping Center (Westheimer and River Oaks Boulevard), the extensions of the River Oaks Shopping Center on West Gray and the Parkwood Apartments (demolished by Baylor College of Medicine). He also developed the Braeswood and Monticello additions, Post Oak Shopping Center, Fairmont addition, and others.

In 1937, the William G. Farrington Company, advertised as "Architect-Builders" of homes, was located at 2139 Sunset Boulevard, in Southampton Place. Farrington lived and worked at 2139 Sunset Boulevard which was a charming red brick colonial home recently lost to new construction. Farrington was also the builder of several other homes in Southampton: 2115 Tangley Street and 1928 and 2011 Sunset Boulevard. The houses were built in either the Colonial or Tudor Revival styles or a combination of the two. An advertisement from the William Farrington Company stated:

"The freedom-loving spirit of the American people, especially in the South, demands the freedom of a home. The Colonial home appeals most to the American spirit. Adapting the fundamental structure of walls and roof to our own background and our own needs, we have made the colonial home a characteristic expression of national life which will endure as long as its sturdiness stands for the strength of American people, its livableness for their practicality and ingenuity, its beauty for their ideals."

Farrington was equally active in Houston's civic and community life. In 1945, he was elected to the Houston Independent School District Board of Trustees, serving as board president from 1949 to 1951. His broader civic contributions included service as a board member of St. Luke's Hospital, the University of Houston Board of Regents, Ben Franklin Savings and Loan Association, and Houston Lighting and Power Company, as well as senior warden of St. John's Episcopal Church. He was also a charter member of the National Association of Home Builders and founding president of the Houston chapter.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION AND RESTORATION HISTORY

Architectural Description

The Myrle and Vernon Williams House is a two-story brick house exhibiting both Colonial Revival and restrained Tudor Revival influences expressed through its massing, materials, and façade composition. The primary elevation is characterized by a subtly asymmetrical arrangement—a hallmark of Tudor design—in which the central entrance bay, varied window



groupings, and chimney mass create a balanced yet informal composition. The asymmetrical arrangement is characteristic of the medieval English architecture that served as the primary inspiration for the Tudor Revival movement, reflecting the style's deliberate departure from classical symmetry in favor of its vernacular English roots.

The house has a side-gabled roof with composition shingles. A brick chimney on the left side emphasizes verticality and traditional masonry. Exterior walls are clad in pale red brick laid in running bond pattern.

Fenestration consists of vertically proportioned, multi-light windows arranged in varied groupings. The first-floor windows feature subtly arched brick lintels, introducing a subtle medieval reference typical of Tudor-inspired design. The primary entrance is recessed beneath a curved metal canopy supported by decorative scrolled brackets. The wood-paneled front door is framed by simple trim.

Through its asymmetrical façade, arched multi-light windows, and masonry construction, the residence reflects a subtle Tudor Revival influence adapted for early 20th-century American domestic architecture.

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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 [Samantha de Leon](#) and [Emily Ryan](#), 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

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

AND

- (9) If less than 50 years old, or proposed historic district containing a majority of buildings, structures, or objects that are less than 50 years old, whether the building, structure, 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

- (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 Myrle and Vernon Williams House at 2107 Tanglely Road, Houston, TX, 77005.



**EXHIBIT A
CURRENT PHOTOS
THE IRENE AND GEORGE ROBINSON HOUSE
2322 DUNSTAN ROAD**





EXHIBIT B
SITE MAP
FIRST CITY NATIONAL BANK
1021 MAIN STREET

