

408 East 33rd St – Case # C14H-2010-0016

Dear Commissioner Sullivan,

The little house at 408 East 33rd Street is the only known board and batten house in Grooms Addition. It has significant history qualifying it for Landmark status, supported by vote by the Historic Landmark Commission. It is possibly that, given more time, it will be proven that it is even more significant than it is being given credit for.

In the early mid 1980s Robert Kaler, Diane Van Helden (who now lives in North Carolina) and I interviewed Adelia Keltner Neu who grew up in the Historic Landmark Keltner house at 200 East 32nd Street. In the 1920's the creek that today runs in a storm sewer was a flowing creek that cut between the Keltner house and the house at 408 East 33rd Street. (My grandmother, who lived on East 34th Street, also spoke of this flowing creek, later contained underground). Adelia Neu told us the story of growing up in Grooms Addition and having a Black friend, another girl named Adelia, who lived on the other side of the creek. They would meet at the creek to play. Following this interview the home at 408 East 32nd Street became known as the "other Adelia house". The house is typical of the housing that Black families occupied at this period of time and is in the location pointed out by Adelia Neu. Research supports the location of the creek cutting between the girls' homes.

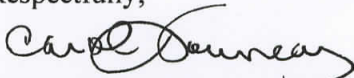
Research by Robert Kaler and myself clearly shows that the house at 408 East 33rd Street is original to that location. As often happened in our neighborhood in the early 1900s, houses were moved for one reason or another, most often from one lot to the lot next to it. The house at 408 was simply moved from one site on its lot to be closer to the street and away from the main house it sat behind. Specifically, it was moved 55 feet south and 5 feet west. Additions to a house when it was moved are not unusual. Removing a porch to move it and then adding a more up to date one is also not unusual. Other Landmark structures have similar building histories. **(Please see exhibits from Robert Kaler concerning information in this paragraph).**

The history that goes with the house at 408 East 33rd is important to our neighborhood. We are still searching census records and other documents, etc. for "the other Adelia". As you are aware, tracing Black history from the early 1900s is tedious and often leads to dead ends. Later history, from the 1950s to the 1990s, has John Reginald Boswell living at the house for some forty-five years. There is a possible connection between Boswell and the Krueger family at 3300 Duval, another Landmark house. Recent research shows a possible connection with Stanley Finch and Boswell through UT, though this is not conclusive at this time.

Please consider also that, as Austin prides itself in being one of the greenest cities in our nation, preservation efforts require much less energy than demolishing one structure and then building another. Preservation and being "Green" go hand in hand. Besides other reasons for historic importance, the house at 408 East 33rd also points out that past generations had some excellent ideas concerning energy efficiency.

Thank you for your time and interest concerning 408 East 33rd Street. This house is important to our history. It deserves Landmark status.

Respectfully,



Carol Journeay, co-chair, Grooms Addition Historic Committee