

# CITY OF HOUSTON

Archaeological & Historical Commission

Planning and Development Department

## PROTECTED LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT

**LANDMARK NAME:** Elbert C. Crawford House

**OWNERS:** Ann K. Hubbard and Annise D. Parker

**APPLICANTS:** Same as Owner

**LOCATION:** 428 Westmoreland Avenue – Westmoreland Historic District

**30-DAY HEARING NOTICE:** N/A

**AGENDA ITEM:** V.a

**HPO FILE NO.:** 08PL67

**DATE ACCEPTED:** Jul-10-08

**HAHC HEARING:** Oct-16-08

**PC HEARING:** Oct-23-08

### SITE INFORMATION

Tract 21, Lot 3 and the east half of Lot 4, Block 6, Westmoreland Addition, a subdivision of Lot 22 of the Obedience Smith Survey, City of Houston, Harris County, Texas. The site includes a two and a half story house and a garage.

**TYPE OF APPROVAL REQUESTED:** Landmark and Protected Landmark Designation for house.

### HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

The Crawford House at 428 Westmoreland Avenue was built in 1904 in the Westmoreland neighborhood by August LeBrun Metcalf. Metcalf constructed numerous homes in Houston's historic districts, including Westmoreland, Houston Heights, and Old Sixth Ward. The house at 428 Westmoreland Avenue exhibits characteristics of the Colonial Revival style, and features giant Corinthian columns, Palladian windows, and a small cantilevered second floor balcony.

In 1906, Metcalf sold the newly constructed house to Clara Edwards Crawford. Her husband, Elbert C Crawford, founded many city businesses, including The Texas Coffee, Tea, and Spice Company. In 1918, the house was sold to Carl F. Gydeson, president of Gydeson-Manford Cadillac Company. When Gydeson died in 1946 the home was willed to his youngest son, Morris, who lived there until 1968.

The Crawford House was one of the first houses to be built in the Westmoreland Addition, Houston's first planned, elite residential area, and retains a very high level of architectural integrity. The Crawford House is classified as a contributing structure to both the Westmoreland National Register District (1994) and the City of Houston Historic District (1997).

The Elbert C. Crawford House meets Criteria 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6, is a contributing structure to a National Register Historic District, and was built before 1905 - all considerations for Protected Landmark designation.

### HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE

In the year 1900, the 44 acres of land that was to become the Westmoreland Addition was an expanse of open prairie. In August 1902, South End Land Company purchased and platted the land as a 12-block subdivision of Lot 22 of the original Obedience Smith Survey. South End Land Company was founded in 1902 by W. W. Baldwin of Burlington, Iowa and was based in Des Moines County, Iowa. In 1904, South End Land Company sold Lot 3 and half of Lot 4 to Mina Metcalf for \$2,100. At this time, the Secretary of South End Land Company was Martin T. Baldwin and the Treasurer was J. E. Breed, both of Cook County, Illinois. In addition to being the president of South End Land Company, W. W. Baldwin was a lawyer and a railroad executive. He was president of the St. Louis, Keokuk & Northwestern Railway and the Chicago, Burlington & Kansas City Railway. Under South End Land

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Company Mr. Baldwin later developed Westmoreland Farms on the southwest side of Houston in what is now Bellaire, Texas.

The Crawford House at 428 Westmoreland Avenue was built in 1904 in the Westmoreland Addition to the City of Houston by August LeBrun Metcalf. A. L. Metcalf was born in 1843 in Conewango, Cattaraugus, New York. In the 1880 Federal Census he and wife Mina were living in Bradford, McKean County, Pennsylvania. The Metcalfs had three children: son, Lee and daughters, Clair and Mable. The family arrived in Houston as early as November 9, 1895 at which time he was listed on a contract to construct a home in the area. According to the City Directories, in 1905 and 1906 (the same year he sold 428 Westmoreland) A. L. Metcalf was living at 210 Westmoreland and in 1907 he resided at 415 Westmoreland. The City Directories also indicate that 428 Westmoreland was vacant until Clara and Elbert Crawford resided there in 1907.

A. L. Metcalf constructed many houses throughout Houston, including those in the fashionable Westmoreland neighborhood, at least one in Old Sixth Ward and another in Houston Heights, using plans from George Franklin Barber, a Knoxville, Tennessee, architect. Barber published several catalogues of house plans, including "Cottage Souvenir No. 2", "Modern Homes", and "New Modern Homes." Metcalf also used plans from the Barber and Klutz catalogue, "Art and Architecture" in 1902-03 for several homes in Westmoreland. In the Westmoreland Neighborhood Metcalf built the houses at 415 Emerson Street, 304 Hawthorne Street, 3604 Garrott Street, 210 Marshall Street, and 217 Marshall Street. Metcalf also constructed the Staiti House at 425 Westmoreland, which was relocated to Sam Houston Park in 1986. Metcalf constructed the house at 443 Heights Boulevard in Houston Heights, which originally was a twin of 304 Hawthorne in Westmoreland, but the house on Heights Boulevard was drastically altered in 1994. One of Metcalf's earliest works is the house at 2003 Decatur, located within the Old Sixth Ward Historic District. The final listing of A. L. Metcalf in the area is in 1917 in a contract to build a home in Houston.

On March 20, 1906, Metcalf deeded 428 Westmoreland Avenue to Clara Edwards Crawford, wife of businessman, Elbert C. Crawford for \$5,850. In the city directories the home is shown as vacant until 1907 when it became the residence of the Crawfords. E. C. Crawford was born February 2, 1850 in Fayetteville, Arkansas and moved to Dallas, Texas in 1868 when he was eighteen years old. While in Dallas he founded The Dallas Coffee and Spice Mills with fellow proprietor, William Hammond. Mr. Crawford is first listed in the Houston City Directories in 1879. In the 1880 Federal Census he was living in the city of Houston at the home of Mrs. Theodosia Hall, a teacher, and her daughter Clara Hall, also a teacher. Clara and Elbert were married on July 5, 1880. Elbert briefly pursued a career as a school teacher which he abandoned to pursue a life in business with his brother, John Wesley Crawford, three years his junior. In 1878, the Crawford Brothers founded the Texas Coffee, Tea, and Spice Company at 130 to 134 Texas Avenue in Houston. Together, they were manufacturers and wholesalers of Crawford's Baking Powder, "liquid and dry blues, and yeast cakes...grocers' specialties, teas, etc." They also sold freshly ground spices and roasted coffees. The Texas Coffee, Tea, and Spice Company became a large, well known business in Houston grossing \$85,000 a year. In 1880, E. C. Crawford bought out his brother and became sole proprietor. In addition to the Texas Coffee, Tea, and Spice Company, Elbert Crawford owned Texas Star Creamery (1601 Washington), Crawford's Baking Powder, Texas Chemical Works (807 San Jacinto), and The Wonder Store (101 Main Street). He was also the manager of Houston Land and Investment Company (1016½ Congress Avenue) and Crawford Furniture Company (2421 McKinney). Elbert Crawford was also one of the largest owners of the Belle Plain Addition to Houston that was platted in 1875 by Nelson M. Smith. E. C. Crawford died in Houston on April 6, 1918 at the age of 67. Among the property willed to his widow, Clara, included personal property valued at \$800, 30 shares at one dollar each of Texas Petroleum Company, and land in the E.

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C. Crawford Addition to the City of Houston, the Harry Austin League in Brazoria County, the South Mexia Addition in Limestone County, and the Crawford Addition to the High School Addition in Quinton, Pittsburg, Texas.

On May 6, 1918, Clara Crawford, Elbert's widow, sold 428 Westmoreland to Carl Frederick and Marietta Gydeson for \$7,000. Carl Gydeson was born April 25, 1876 in Denmark. immigrated to Houston with his Danish parents in 1881 and was naturalized in 1884. He was vice-president of Houston Motor Car Company, President of Gydeson-Manford Cadillac Company, and proprietor of Gydeson & Sons, manufacturer of lubricating oils, located at 435 Bankers Mortgage Building, Houston. Carl and Marietta had three children, Carletta, Carl Frederick Jr., and Morris, born 1902, 1905, and 1907 respectively. According to Houston City Directories it appears that, upon Carl's death on October 1, 1946, 428 Westmoreland was inherited by youngest son, Morris and his wife, Loretta. Morris and Loretta Gydeson are listed in the Houston City Directories as residents of 428 Westmoreland until 1968. Between 1969 and 1973 the home was rented by several different students including Douglas Lewis (1969-1970), Sonny Stuart (1971), Wally Washington (1972), and Tim Leong (1973, 1975). It also appears that Morris owned the property until it was purchased by Carroll Shaddok in 1978. Morris died on December 14, 1989 in Hempstead-Waller, Texas.

During its period of primary significance, the residents of the Westmoreland Historic District included individuals who contributed to the history of Houston in the fields of commerce, community planning and development, engineering and architecture; education and the performing arts; and politics and government. The planning of the addition and the design and scale of its houses reflect trends in the development of residential real estate and domestic architecture in early 20th-century Houston. By virtue of its community planning features, its contributions to the evolution of suburban real estate development practices in Houston, its breadth of house types reflecting the transition from late 19th to 20th-century images of domestic style, and its association with persons active in the city's business and cultural life, the Westmoreland Historic District remains a spatially evocative preserve of early twentieth-century Houston.

### **ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION AND RESTORATION HISTORY**

The two and a half story frame house located at 428 Westmoreland Avenue exhibits characteristics of the Colonial Revival style which, at the time of construction, was one of the earliest such houses in this style located in the neighborhood. Its most prominent features include giant Corinthian columns, Palladian windows and a small cantilevered second floor balcony. When it was built in 1904 by August LeBrun Metcalf, most of the houses in Westmoreland were of the Victorian Era. The Elbert C. Crawford House was architecturally much more forward-looking. The house is one of the larger and more elaborate houses in Westmoreland. It is of frame construction with clapboard siding, rectangular in plan with monumental Corinthian columns across the front. The wide eaves of the roof are bracketed and a cross gable to the front emphasizes the entry. The central entrance is contained within a round arched frame enclosing a wide semi-circular transom, side lights and a glassed front door. Above the doorway is a balustraded balcony, which is cantilevered over the entry and is supported with large scroll brackets. French doors lead onto this balcony. To the west of the entrance is a two-story bay window containing 1/1 double sash windows identical to the others of the house. On the east side of the house is an open side porch on the ground floor, and a bay window on the second story. The foundation is brick and the roof is of wood shingles. Currently placed on the front wall, to the right of the entry, is a bronze plaque denoting the home as the "Crawford House".

### **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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Harris County Deed Records: Volume 164, Page 450; Volume 186, Page 384; Volume 400, Page 379.

Harris County Probate Records: Volume 46, Page 171-173, 193, 223-224.

Houston City Directories.

US Census: 1880, 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930.

Westmoreland National Register Nomination, August 17, 1993.

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

### APPROVAL CRITERIA FOR PROTECTED LANDMARK DESIGNATION:

The HAHC and the Planning Commission, in making recommendations with respect to a protected landmark designation, and the City Council, in making a designation, shall consider whether the building, structure, site, or area meets at least three of the criteria in Section 33-224, or one of the criteria in Section 33-229, as follows:

**S**    **NA**    **S - satisfies**    **NA - not applicable**

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Meets at least three of the following (Sec. 33-229(a)(1):

- (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 (Sec. 33-224(a)(1);
- (2) Whether the building, structure, object, site or area is the location of a significant local, state or national event (Sec. 33-224(a)(2);
- (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 (Sec. 33-224(a)(3);
- (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 (Sec. 33-224(a)(4);
- (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 (Sec. 33-224(a)(5);
- (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 (Sec. 33-224(a)(6);
- (7) Whether specific evidence exists that unique archaeological resources are present (Sec. 33-224(a)(7);
- (8) Whether the building, structure, object or site has value as a significant element of community sentiment or public pride (Sec. 33-224(a)(8).

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**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)).

**OR**

- The property was constructed before 1905 (Sec. 33-229(a)(2));

**OR**

- The property is listed individually in the National Register of Historic Places or designated as a “contributing structure” in an historic district listed in the National Register of Historic Places (Sec. 33-229(a)(3));

**OR**

- The property is recognized by the State of Texas as a Recorded State Historical Landmark (Sec. 33-229(a)(4)).

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission accept the recommendation of the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission and recommend to City Council the Landmark and Protected Landmark Designation of the Elbert C. Crawford House at 428 Westmoreland Avenue.

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SITE LOCATION MAP  
ELBERT C. CRAWFORD HOUSE  
428 WESTMORELAND AVENUE  
NOT TO SCALE

