

BELFORD HISTORIC DISTRICT

LOCATION 1200 to 1900 blocks of Austin Avenue and Main Street Georgetown, Williamson County, Texas.

REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS.

State: Historic Resource Survey of Georgetown, Texas October 1983 to July 1984. Texas Historical Commission, Austin, Texas.

National: Dilley-Tinnin House. 1977. National Register of Historic Places. U.S. Department of the Interior. Washington, D.C.

Local builder C. S. Belford constructed many of the late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century residences in the Morrow and Lost additions, an eight-block area designated as the Belford Historic District. This cohesive residential neighborhood, which lies four blocks south of the Williamson County Courthouse, contains the city's greatest concentration of historic and architecturally significant dwellings. Seventy-three of the 81 structures in the district are at least half a century old, with 70 dwellings contributing to the historic character of the district. The Belford Historic District encompasses an area roughly bounded by University Avenue, the rear property lines to the east of Main Street, 19th Street, and the rear property lines to the west of Austin Street. In addition to the concentration of significant examples of local architecture, the district is distinguished by consistent setbacks of the dwellings from the sidewalks on most streetscapes, regularly spaced trees along the streets on the higher-numbered blocks and a rhythm pattern created by the similar massing and spacing of the houses, especially along the 1600 to 1900 blocks.

The Belford Historic District chronicles the evolution of architectural forms and development patterns in Georgetown from the 1870s to the 1930s. In the nineteenth century, residential neighborhoods developed somewhat sporadically, as in the older portion of the district along the 1200 blocks of Austin Ave. and Main St. After the turn of the century, however, Belford and others built houses in groups that, in a physical sense, were forerunners of modern subdivisions. The more recent section of the district contains this type of development.

Numerous residential forms and architectural styles ranging from modest vernacular dwellings to fine examples of stylistic movements are represented in the district. Bungalows and variants of twentieth-century popular forms are the most prevalent, especially in the 1600-1900 blocks. The distinctive three-bay dwellings with inset porches under hipped roofs like the Heard House at 1602 Main (Site No. 435) are numerous in the 1600 block of Main Street. Victorian, frame, vernacular (primarily L-plan houses) and Prairie School influenced dwellings appear less frequently. Unique architectural expressions among this collection of dwellings are the 1879-80 Dilley-Tinnen House at 1200 Austin (Site No. 375), a handsomely massed Italianate design, and the 1850s Mather House (Site No. 380), a single pen log dwelling moved to Austin Avenue from rural Williamson County in 1976. Another recently moved structure is the Young House at 1243 Mail Street (Site No. 472), a Belford-designed house built north of the Southwestern University campus in 1903.

Belford's numerous dwellings constructed along Main Street and Austin Avenue create the unique character of this district. The enduring builder's versatility is apparent in houses of varying scale, style, and complexity. The oldest house attributed to Belford in the district is the old Hodges House (Site No. 382) at 1604 Austin, an L-plan residence of moderate proportions. Belford's own home, built in 1896 at 1230 Austin Avenue (Site No. 376), is an intricate Queen Anne composition of juxtaposed, multitextured masses and open porches punctuated with turned and jigsawed ornament. As "modern" and popular styles emerged, Belford demonstrated his sophistication as a builder with the execution of the most up-to-date designs. Three of the district's houses have a strong Prairie School influence with sweeping horizontal elements on otherwise block-like forms. The Smith House, built in 1910 at 1242 Austin Avenue (Site No.

377), and its contemporaries--the Tisdale House at 1252 Austin Avenue (Site No. 378) and the Sansom House (Site No. 433) at 1252 Main--exemplify the best of this particular expression in Georgetown. To complete the repertoire of then-current styles, the Belford Lumber Company also constructed bungalows with success in the district, such as the Banner House (Site No. 404) at 1265 Austin Avenue.

DEFINITION OF CATEGORIES

Contributing: Contributing properties are those which add to the historic character of the district. These structures are at least 50 years old and retain most of the original architectural integrity. The vast majority of the buildings in this category range in construction date from the early 1890s to the late 1920s. A few, such as the Hodges House (Site No. 381) at 1602 Austin, have been sheathed with vinyl or aluminum siding. In other cases, a concrete-floor porch has replaced the original wooden structure. Although these changes detract from the integrity of a structure, they are not significant alterations to a dwelling's overall massing, composition, and original design. Also, these modifications are generally easily reversible.

Noncontributing: Noncontributing structures are those which detract from the historic character of the district and are regarded as intrusive. Most of the properties in this category are not 50 years old and have no architectural or historic significance. Three of the noncontributing structures are pre-1934 structures that have been so severely altered that little, if any, of their original architectural integrity remains. The house (Site No. 405) at 1605 Austin is a frame bungalow built in the 1920s that was drastically altered in 1984. A stone veneer was applied to the exterior and its original appearance is barely discernible today. The house (Site No. 430) at 1236 Main was substantially remodeled in the 1940's or 1950s. The log cabin (Site No. 380) at 1262 Austin is an 1850s structure that was moved in 1976 from a rural setting some 12 miles northwest of Georgetown. Although the dwelling does much to aid local citizens understand what pioneer conditions in the area were like, it has no direct association with the historic or physical development of this late nineteenth and early twentieth-century residential development.

INVENTORY OF PROPERTIES WITHIN THE BELFORD HISTORIC DISTRICT

No. 374. 1208 Austin. Lindell House. 1906-07. Belford.

No. 375. 1220 Austin. Dilley-Tinnin House. 1879-80.

No. 376. 1230 Austin. Belford House. 1895-96. Belford.

No. 377. 1242 Austin. Smith House. 1908-09. Belford.

No. 378. 1252 Austin. Tisdale House. 1914. Belford.

No. 379. 1256 Austin. McDaniel House. 1906. Belford.

No. 380. 1262 Austin. Mather Cabin. c. 1850s.

No. 381. 1602 Austin. Hodges House. 1923. Belford.

No. 382. 1604 Austin. Old Hodges House. c. 1985. Belford.

No. 383. 1606 Austin. c. 1930.

No. 384. 1610 Austin. c. 1895. --1702-1710 Austin. c. 1975.

No. 385. 1802 Austin. c. 1925.

No. 386. 1804 Austin. Stearnes House. 1924. Belford.

No. 387. 1902 Austin. c. 1890.

No. 388. 1904 Austin. c. 1940.

No. 395. 1205 Austin. c. 1895.

No. 396. 1215 Austin. c. 1915. (Belford?) ---1221. Austin. c. 1950.

No. 397. 1223 Austin. c. 1925.

No. 398. 1225 Austin. c. 1925.

No. 399. 1227 Austin. c. 1935.

No. 400. 1239 Austin. Robertson House. c. 1895.

No. 401. 1243 Austin. c. 1923.

No. 402. 1251 Austin. c. 1925. ---1253 Austin. c. 1950.

No. 403. 1263 Austin. Barron House. c.1890/1909. Belford.

No. 404. 1265 Austin. Banner House. 1925. Belford. ---1603 Austin. c. 1950.

No. 405. 1605 Austin. c. 1925.

No. 406. 1607 Austin. c. 1935.

No. 407. 1611 Austin. Coleman House. c. 1915.

No. 408. 1705 Austin. c. 1925.

No. 409. 1709 Austin. Lyons House. 1925. Belford.

No. 410. 1711 Austin. Purl House. 1921. Belford.

No. 411. 1803 Austin. Thompson House. 1922. Belford.

No. 412. 1805 Austin. Shaw House. c. 1925.

No. 413. 1903 Austin. Halley House. 1916. M.L. Langford.

No. 414. 1905 Austin. c. 1925.---1907 Austin. c. 1980. ---1909 Austin. c. 1960.

No. 427. 1208 Main. Morrow-Forsvall House. c. 1880/1915. Belford.

No. 428. 1216 Main. Bainbridge-Chrietzberg House. c. 1885/1915. C.S. Griffith.

No. 429. 1222 Main. c. 1885/1930. ---1226 Main. c. 1970.

No. 430. 1236 Main. c. 1940.

No. 431. 1246 Main. c. 1910.

No. 432. 1250 Main. c. 1890. (Belford?)

No. 433. 1252 Main. Sansom House. 1910. Belford.

No. 434. 1256 Main. Wileman House. 1913. Belford.

No. 435. 1602 Main. Hearde House. 1912. Belford.

No. 436. 1604 Main. Thompson House. c. 1924. (Belford?)

No. 437. 1608 Main. B. Behrens House. 1914. Belford.

No. 438. 1612 Main. Sherman House. 1914. Belford.

No. 439. 1702 Main. W. Behrens House. 1922. Belford.

No. 440. 1706 Main. Munson House. 1924. Belford.

No. 441. 1708 Main. C.R. Swenson House. c. 1926. A.C. Brady.

No. 442. 1710 Main. C.H. Swenson House. 1924. Belford.

No. 443. 1804 Main. Sutton House. 1923. Belford.

No. 444. 1806 Main. 1916. Belford.

No. 445. 1810 Main. 1916. C. B. Lunsford.

No. 446. 1812 Main. Morelle House. 1922. Belford.

No. 447. 1814 Main. Miffleton House. 1921. Belford.

No. 448. 1902 Main. Stirling. 1914. C.S. Griffith.

No. 202. 102 E. University. c. 1930.

No. 468. 1205 Main. c. 1930.

No. 469. 1215 Main. c. 1920.

No. 470. 1221 Main. c. 1920. ---1225 Main. c. 1970.

No. 471. 1237 Main. Brenke House. 1908. Belford.

No. 472. 1243 Main. Young House. 1907. Belford.

No. 473. 1251 Main. c. 1884/1936.

No. 474. 1253 Main. Halley Rent House. 1924. Belford.

No. 475. 1255 Main. Old Sutton House. 1913. Belford.

No. 476. 1257 Main. Wood House. 1914. Belford.

No. 477. 1603 Main. Edens House. 1913. Belford.

No. 478. 1605 Main. 1912. Belford.

No. 479. 1611 Main. Lindell House. 1924. Belford.

No. 480. 1701 Main. c. 1927.

The Belford Historic District contains a high concentration of mostly early twentieth-century dwellings built by prominent local lumberman, Charles S. Belford. Of the 81 structures within the district's confines, 70 are classified as contributing and add to the historic character of the area. A total of 11 are presently categorized as noncontributing structures, of which three are historic buildings that have been severely altered (see "Definition of Categories" within this nomination). The district provides a cross-section of Belford's career in the construction business, and a wide variety of styles and types of residences can be found, such as L-and modified Lplan houses, small bungalows, Prairie-style homes, and Belford's own Queen Anne residence. The neighborhood has long been an area where many of Georgetown's leading citizens, such as former mayor Marsh F. Smith and Judge Cooper Sansom, have lived.

Born in Newark, Ohio, in 1857, Charles S. Belford came to Georgetown in 1884 and two years later, he married Mollie Carothers who was the daughter of F.W. Carothers, president of the 1st National Bank of Georgetown. The city had two lumberyards when Belford first arrived. George Irvine owned one, while J.W. Whittle and Moses Harrell operated the other. After parting with Whittle in 1891, Harrell joined Belford in the purchase of the Irvine Lumber Co., but this partnership was short-lived. In 1892 Belford, along with other investors, bought out Harrell's share of the firm, and it was renamed the Belford Lumber Co.

Very early in his career, Belford obtained contracts to build residences for some of Georgetown's most prominent citizens, including merchants J.A. McDougle and Henry W. Harrell (brother of Belford's former business partner), as well as W.Y. Penn, Pastor of the First Methodist Church. These three individuals had Queen Anne style residences (Site Nos. 599, 600, and 601) built in a row on Elm Street in 1895-96 (all are listed in the University Avenue-Elm Street Historic District). At about the same time, Belford erected a similarly styled dwelling for himself next to the Dilley-Tinnen House (Site No. 375 individually listed in the National Register) on Austin Avenue.

Belford's reputation as a meticulous and reliable contractor became well known in Georgetown and nearby cities, as his business expanded rapidly. He opened a branch lumberyard in Weir. By the early years of the twentieth century, the original Belford Lumber Yard encompassed one entire city block as well as portions of two others. A disastrous fire in March 1909 nearly destroyed the lumberyard, but the company rebounded and soon was back in operation.

Although the firm built many homes in Georgetown, its practice was by no means limited to residential architecture. The Masonic Lodge (Site No. 456 in the Williamson County Courthouse Historic District) is one of Belford's finest examples of commercial architecture. Others included St. John's Methodist Church (Site No. 174) and Mood Hall at Southwestern University (Site No. 186, listed in the National Register). Austin architect C.H. Page designed the church and the hall.

During the 1910s and 1920s, the southern parts of Brushy (now Austin Avenue) and Main streets, especially the 1200 blocks, developed into a neighborhood that included many of Georgetown's most influential citizens. Marsh F. Smith, president of the Georgetown Oil Mill and mayor from 1926 to 1946, built a large brick residence (Site No. 377) next to Belford's home on Austin Avenue in 1908-09. His son-in-law, Cooper Sansom, built a two-story dwelling (Site No. 433) at 1252 Main Street. Sansom was an attorney who was appointed federal district judge presiding over the Georgetown area.

Although the residences in the 1200 blocks of both Main Street and Austin Avenue range from the 1890s to the 1920s and reflect a wide variety of types and styles, those in the 1600 block (there are no 1300 to 1500 blocks) were generally built in the mid 1910s. The houses in the 1700 to 1900 blocks were erected in the early to mid 1920s. The majority of these homeowners were merchants who operated successful establishments in the downtown area.

Belford built most of the houses in the neighborhood, although C.S. Griffith, another lumberman and builder in Georgetown, was also responsible for constructing a number of them. In 1915 he remodeled the BainbridgeChreitzburg House (Site No. 428) at 1216 Main Street. He likely built the houses at 1215 and 1221 Main Street (Site Nos. 469 and 470, respectively) since they closely resemble his other houses, such as the Wilson House (Site No. 506) at 1104 Church.

JUSTIFICATION OF BOUNDARIES

The Belford Historic District contains an extremely high concentration of pre-1934 dwellings, most of which were built by the Belford Lumber Co. of Georgetown. The long city blocks with their uniformly setback residences and treelined sidewalks, especially in the 1700 to 1900 blocks of Austin Avenue and Main Street, greatly add to the cohesiveness of the homes within the district. Only eight post-1934 structures are within the district's boundaries. Modern commercial buildings border the district's northern limits, while residential neighborhoods prevail to the east, south and west. Church Street, to the east, has a large number of pre-1934 dwellings; however, these homes are, for the most part, relatively unimportant and lack the cohesiveness of the neighboring historic district. In addition, few of the residences along Church Street were built by the Belford Lumber Co., and, therefore, do not possess strong historical associations with the area along Main and Austin. Lands to the east and south of the southern end of the district mostly contain post-1934 dwellings. A neighborhood with small vernacular residences that have been severely altered borders the district to the west.