



18-0016HTM

**TITLE:** Conduct a Public Hearing to Consider/Discuss/Act on the Request by John Bearg for Approval of a Historic Marker for the House Located at 510 Tucker Street.

**COUNCIL GOAL:** Enhance the Quality of Life in McKinney

**MEETING DATE:** May 3, 2018

**DEPARTMENT:** Planning

**CONTACT:** Guy R. Giersch, Historic Preservation Officer  
Matt Robinson, AICP, Planning Manager

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Staff is recommending approval of a historic marker for 510 Tucker Street.

**PRIORITY RATING:** The property is listed as a high priority building according to the 2015 Update of the Historic Resource Survey. A high priority building contributes significantly to local history or broader historical patterns; is an outstanding or unique example of architecture, engineering or crafted design; retains a significant portion of its original character and contextual integrity; meets in some cases, criteria for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places and/or is eligible for a Texas Historical Marker.

**ITEM SUMMARY:** On March 26, 2018 the applicant submitted the necessary documentation to apply for a historic marker for the house located at 510 Tucker Street known as the Merritt/Dowdy House.

The purpose of the Historic Marker Program is to encourage owners of historic properties to become actively involved in the preservation of McKinney's historic past through the recognition of historic events, people, and architecture. The applicant has submitted a written narrative relating the history of the various families that have owned the property or resided at 510 Tucker Street and the role they played in McKinney's history.

The Merritt/Dowdy House is a circa 1898, Folk Victorian/Prairie style home. It is an example of the Folk Victorian Style architecture with Prairie style detailing. This construction technique was popular from 1870 - 1910. Originally, the house was built

on a predominately rectangular plan as a one and a half story, pier and beam, wood-frame house covered with wood, lap siding. The porch extends across approximately one-half of the front of the house and turning to wrap the east side of the house. The house was originally a one and a half story house and today it is a two-story house. The house uses gable roof elements. The house is fenestrated with a one-over-one mulled windows. Some of the mulled windows are a modified Chicago-style window design. The large, multi-light front door has sidelights. The house has had two major alterations since it was built in 1897.

In 1915, the house had rooms added thus creating a second story. The Victorian columns were replaced with square columns and the rafter tails along with knee bracing helped convert the house from a Queen Anne Style home to an Arts and Crafts Style home.

In 1923, the house was transformed into a Prairie Style home. The house was veneered with brick. The left side of the porch was enclosed and a laundry room was added around 1950.

## **HISTORICAL FIGURES ASSOCIATED WITH THE HOUSE:**

### **Henry Hawkins White (1868-1920)**

- Henry White was the son of Coleman and Clarissa White, early pioneers in Collin County. Henry started working at the Collin County National Bank around 1890 as a cashier. Cashiers were officers of the bank which is a vastly different bank position compared to today's cashiers in the bank. The Collin County National Bank was established in 1881 with G.A. Foote as president, Henry's Brother, James L. White, James W. Throckmorton, I.D. Newsome, Thomas B. Wilson, William a Rhea, and R.M. Board were all founders of the bank.
- Henry White married Bessie K Howard and purchased the lot at 510 Tucker in 1895. He constructed a Queen Anne Style house.
- Around 1911 Henry followed his brother James to Dallas. Henry rented out the home on Tucker and eventually sold the house to James Merritt in 1914 and moved to Seeley, California.
- Henry contracted liver cancer, moved back to McKinney, divorced Bessie and died at the age of 52 in 1920.

### **James H. Merritt (1881-1949)**

- James Merritt was born in McKinney, the son of Captain William W. Merritt and Jennie (Compton) Merritt.
- James graduated from McKinney College Institute which was located at the corner of Board and Foote Street. Today, Arbors Off the Square Apartments is located there. He continued his education at the McKinney Business College. Upon graduating he took a clerical position with the W.S. Knight Dry Goods located on the south side of the Square. By 1910, James was the store manager.
- Merritt lived on Tucker with his sister Minnie and brother-in-law Harry Q. Smith

who was part owner in the drug store started by his father Benjamin M. E. Smith in 1881. West of the Smith's residence was the home of cotton dealer William Hynds and his wife Eudura and their daughter Rosabel.

- James married Rosabel in 1911 and they purchased the White's house in 1914.
- James became the sole owner W.S. Knight Dry Goods Store. He changed the name of the store to J.H. Merritt Dry Goods. It was located on the south side of the McKinney Courthouse Square. Merritt was active in the Chamber of Commerce, the Lion's Club, and the Rotary Club.
- Merritt purchased property at 210 N Tennessee which served as the home to Standard Garage and today houses the City of McKinney I.T. Department, Water Billing, and Building Inspections.
- In 1928, James sold the dry goods store and became president of the First National Bank. During the Depression the First National Bank and Collin County National Bank merged.
- In 1937, Merritt was appointed to the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas.
- In 1949, James Merritt, Sr. died at the age of 68 with his wife following him in 1951.
- The City of McKinney honored Merritt's public service by naming the City's first Public Housing Project after him. It is still known as Merritt Homes and is located at 1200 N. Tennessee Street.

#### **William Clarence Dowdy (1891-1985)**

- Clarence Dowdy is the son of Tennessee pioneer John and Lucy Dowdy who settled near Wylie in 1880. They moved to McKinney in 1909.
- Clarence graduated from McKinney High in 1912 and received his law degree in 1916 from Texas University Law School. He was admitted to the bar but went to WW1 in 1918 and returned home in 1919. He practiced law and was appointed to the position of assistant prosecuting attorney of Collin County in 1930. In 1944, he was appointed as Judge of the 59<sup>th</sup> District Court. He would eventually retire from the bench in 1964 at the age of 73.
- Clarence was president of the Collin County Bar Association, Lions Club, Commander of the American Legion was a 33<sup>rd</sup> degree Mason, taught Sunday school class at Trinity Presbyterian Church and was county Chairman of the Democratic Party from 1940 -1942. His wife Emily was associated with numerous social clubs in McKinney including the Anniversary and Sesame Clubs.
- The Dowdy's purchased the house in 1953
- Emily died in 1981 and Clarence in 1985. Their son Bill Dowdy and wife Martha Ann (Atkinson) inherited the house and they lived in the house until they died 2012 and 2015 respectively.

**ASSESSMENT:** Staff believes that the applicant has met all of the requirements to obtain a Historic Marker under the Historic Neighborhood Improvement Zone Program (Ordinance 2015-12-105). Therefore, Staff is recommending approval of a Historic Marker for 510 Tucker Street.

Under Ordinance 2015-12-105, if the HPAB approves the Marker, the applicant will be responsible for purchasing and displaying the Historic Marker.

Also, under Ordinance 2015-12-105, if the Historic Preservation Advisory Board approves the Marker, the applicant may make application for a Level 1 tax exemption (100% exemption of the City's ad valorem taxes for a period of 7 years) providing the building has architectural integrity and has been properly rehabilitated/restored and maintained. The building must have a residential use in order to qualify for the tax exemption.

**SUPPORTING MATERIALS:**

[Marker Application](#)

[Supporting Documentation](#)

[Narrative History](#)

[Site Plan](#)

[Family Photo History](#)

[Interior Photos](#)

[Photo Research](#)