



# CITY OF MCKINNEY, TEXAS

## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 16-012HTM, **Version:** 1

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Conduct a Public Hearing to Consider/Discuss/Act on the Request by Don & Jennifer Spak for Approval of a Historic Marker for the House Located at 316 North Waddill Street.

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

**MEETING DATE:** September 1, 2016

**DEPARTMENT:** Planning

**CONTACT:** Guy R. Giersch, Historic Preservation Officer  
Samantha Pickett, Planning Manager

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Staff is recommending approval of a historic marker for 316 North Waddill 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 August 12, 2016 the applicant submitted the necessary documentation to apply for a Historic Marker for the house located at 316 North Waddill Street (also known as the Walker 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 316 North Waddill Street and the role they played in McKinney's history.

The Earl Walker House was built in 1950 by the Lee Elliott Building Materials Company. This particular house is an excellent example of Colonial Revival Style house. The Colonial style was revived and this particular home is a side gabled variant with a symmetrical façade that is typical of the style. The home is a two-story, wood frame dwelling, with asbestos fiber siding. The siding was introduced in 1937 and was a popular siding material throughout the 1930's - 1960's. The house uses six-over-six wood, double-hung windows that clearly establishes a hierarchy that is typical of the style as well. The primary entrance is a single door with sidelights. The primary entrance is accentuated with a temple-front motif supported by two pairs of Doric Columns that was recently

enlarged to better balance the porte cochere that was added.

**HISTORICAL FIGURES ASSOCIATED WITH THE HOUSE:**

- Silas Earl Walker, Jr. was born in McKinney in 1905. His father was the City tax assessor and the family lived on Davis Street. He attended Boyd High School and graduated in 1922. That same year Earl was inducted into the DeMolay Chapter of McKinney which is sponsored by one of the oldest Masonic Orders in Texas having been founded in 1848.
- In 1926 Earl Walker graduated from Baylor, married Helen Gay, and inherited the family business after his father's death. The business sold home furnishings and hardware.
- Earl sold the family business in 1936. He became very involved in civic activities. He joined the Chamber of Commerce, the Junior Chamber of Commerce, became the vice-president of the Retail Merchants Association, and directed the Collin County Confederate Veteran's Association. His activities resulted in Earl being named the "Most Valuable Citizen."
- In 1938 Earl and Helen had their first and only child named Gay. Helen Gay is the aunt of John Edward Gay (McKinney Mayor from 1991 to 1997).
- Helen Gay was a member of the Halcyon Club, a club dedicated to foster literature and culture. Helen was an accomplished milliner as well.
- Mr. Walker would continue adding to his community oriented career. He gave talks as a service on tax law and changes in the tax system. He became the Collin County Chairman of the Red Cross, assistant chief of the Volunteer Fire Department, involved with the Board of the City Hospital, chairman of the Sixth War Bond Drive, president of the McKinney Kiwanis Club, Board Member of Pecan Grove Cemetery, and his favorite civic duties Executive Director of the McKinney Housing Authority.
- The Housing Authority formed in 1949 began operation in 1952 when they constructed two projects designed by Fort Worth architects Boese & Hardrider and constructed by Lee Elliott Building Materials Company of McKinney. Over the years other projects were completed and these projects provided 200 low-income housing units.
- Earl Walker would see the passing of the City Charter in 1959 which established the Mayor-City Manager form of government that we use today.
- Silas Earl Walker died on August 4, 1977 and is buried in Pecan Grove Cemetery. He and his wife lived at 316 North Waddill until 1958.

**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 316 North Waddill 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 HPAB 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.