

Orsay Tenant House
310 East 14th Street
Austin
Travis County
Texas

HABS No. TX-3265

HABS,
TEX,
227-AUST
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PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

ORSAY TENANT HOUSE

HABS NO. TX-3265

Location: 310 East 14th Street, northwest corner of East 14th and Trinity Streets, Austin, Travis County, Texas.
USGS Austin East Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 14.621560.3349750.

Present Owner: Urban Renewal Agency of the City of Austin.

Present Use: Vacant

Significance: The Orsay Tenant House is typical of the simple small stone houses built in Austin in the mid to late nineteenth century. Only a few of these simple buildings remain in the Capitol area.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: Circa mid-1870s. This house does not appear on Koch's 1873 Bird's Eye View of the City of Austin, but it is on the 1887 Koch map.
2. Architect: Unknown.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The following is an incomplete chain of title to the land on which the structure stands. Reference is to the Clerk's Office of the County of Travis, Texas.

1874 Deed December 9, 1874, recorded December 22, 1874.
Volume 28, page 112.
George W. Glasscock and Elizabeth J. Logan of Travis County, and Albert H. Glasscock and Andrew J. Glasscock of Williamson County (all heirs of George W. Glasscock) to
Hulda Orsey [Orsey] and husband Henry.

Will of Hulda Orsay not located in probate records of Travis County.

1911 Deed October 10, 1911, recorded November 7, 1911,
Volume 210, pages 47-49.
Henry Orsay, widower
to

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Emma Orsay Houston.
Orsay gave his share in the property to his daughter.

- 1935 Deed March 4, 1935, recorded March 13, 1935,
Volume 517, pages 151-152.
Emma Orsay Houston
to
Mrs. Kate S. Pritchett, widow.
- 1939 Will written November 11, 1912, filed February 24, 1939.
Kate S. Pritchett
to
Children.
- 1945 Deed February 26, 1945, recorded March 1, 1945,
Volume 755 pages 165-166.
John W. Pritchett et al
to
Douglas B. Thrasher, Robert B. Thrasher, and Lois D.
Thrasher.
Parts of lots 5 and 6.
- 1945 Deed May 8, 1945, recorded May 28, 1945,
Volume 757, pages 601-603.
Lois D. Thrasher et al
to
Noel K. Brown and Dan Stathos.
Part of lot 5.
- 1945 Deed May 8, 1945, recorded May 28, 1945,
Volume 761, pages 360-362.
Lois D. Thrasher et al
to
Noel K. Brown and Dan Stathos.
Part of lot 6.
- 1945 Deed August 8, 1945, recorded November 5, 1945,
Volume 765, pages 514-516.
Noel K. Brown and wife, Sybil P., and Dan Stathos
to
Robert C. Eckhardt and wife Orissa.
Part of lots 5 and 6.
- 1957 Deed December 31, 1957, recorded January 6, 1958,
Volume 1882, pages 197-199.
Robert C. Eckhardt and wife Orissa, Harris County, Texas
to
A. P. C. of Texas Realty, Inc.

- 1965 Deed April 26, 1965, recorded April 28, 1965,
Volume 2945, pages 40-42.
Ada Belle Riley and husband, J. V. Riley
to
Frank M. Holloway.
Part of lot 5, and parts of lots 5 and 6.
- 1969 Deed October 22, 1969, recorded April 3, 1970,
Volume 3830, pages 1565-1567.
Frank M. Holloway and wife, Floy
to
Baylor University.
- 1970 Deed July 27, 1970, recorded August 5, 1970, Volume 3911,
pages 1903-6.
Baylor University
to
Urban Renewal Agency of the City of Austin.
- 1973 Deed March 14, 1973, recorded March 27, 1973,
Volume 4607, pages 39-41.
Associated Plumbing - Heating - Cooling Contractors of
Texas, Inc.
to
Urban Renewal Agency of the City of Austin.

5. Original plans and construction:

No original plans or early photographs of the residence have been located. It does appear on the 1887 Koch map of Austin. Although the map is too small to distinguish many details, a balustrade on the upper deck of the roof is indicated.

6. Alterations and additions:

The canopies projecting over the front and back entrances are recent additions. At some time the large central back room was partitioned into a kitchen and a bathroom.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

The property was used primarily as residential rental property during the late nineteenth and much of the twentieth centuries. It served as an architect's office from 1939-1942, and since 1954 has been used solely for office purposes.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Old Views:

Bird's Eye View of the City of Austin, Travis County, Texas, 1873. Drawn by Augustus Koch.

Austin, State Capital of Texas. Drawn by Augustus Koch, 1887.

Partial View of Austin, Texas, circa 1891.

2. Primary and unpublished sources:

Austin City Directories, 1872-73 to present, Austin-Travis County Collection, Austin Public Library.

Travis County Deed Books, Travis County Courthouse, Austin, Texas.

3. Secondary and published sources:

House File, 310 East 14th Street, Austin-Travis County Collection, Austin Public Library.

Prepared by: Ellen Beasley
Project Historian
National Park Service
July 1973

PART II ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character:

A good example of a simple vernacular, one-story stone cottage that was built in the city of Austin during the mid-to-late nineteenth century.

2. Condition of fabric:

Exterior good; interior needs repair.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: Rectangular, one story, 42' - 9" across its five-bay front by 31' - 5" deep.

2. Foundations: Mortared rubble limestone probably down to bedrock; watertable projects about three inches.
3. Wall construction, finish: Rubble wall (13" wide) of ledge limestone, light cream in color, with heavy joints, of sand-lime mortar.
4. Structural system, framing: All framing yellow pine, full dimensioned. Floor and ceiling joists and rafters of wood; partitions 2 x 4 stud framing.
5. Stoop, terrace: Uncovered spaces of mortared flagstone. Front stoop 6' x 9'; rear terrace 9' x 32'. Small metal canopies over front and rear doors were apparently added in recent decades.
6. Chimneys: Two brick chimneys rise 3' above the roof deck.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: All doorway openings are topped with segmental arches of stone. Front entrance doorway is 3' - 4" x 9' - 0". Transom glazing is oval in shape; door, 3' - 0" x 7' - 0", is heavily molded, with a pair of vertical glazed openings and a horizontal panel below. The three rear doors are 3' - 0" x 7' - 0", upper half glazed.
 - b. Windows: All openings have segmental arched heads, double-hung wood sash. Typical windows have a 3' - 0" x 6' - 4" opening, with six-over-six-light sash. A pair of windows on the rear are each 2' - 4" x 3' - 4".
8. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Hipped roof, 9 in 12 pitch, with composition shingles. The flat deck is covered with built-up roofing.
 - b. Cornice: Wood cornice with a projection of 18"; ornamental wood brackets are widely spaced.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plan: A square-shaped entry space. There was originally a large kitchen to the rear; this is now divided into a small hallway, a bathroom, and a narrow kitchen. There are two square-shaped rooms on either side of the central axis.
2. Flooring: There is now a yellow pine 3" tongue and groove floor, apparently laid over an earlier plank floor.

3. Wall and ceiling finish: Wood lath and plaster, painted.
4. Doorways and doors: Typical doors have four vertical panels; the plain trim is 5 1/2" wide.
5. Fireplaces: Brick firebox has segmental arched opening. The wood mantel was carpenter-built with molded capitals on the side pilasters.
6. Present heating: There are gas-fired floor furnaces in the northeast and northwest rooms.

D. Site:

1. General setting: The house faces south on a lot on the northwest corner of the intersection of 14th and Trinity Streets, with a 62' frontage on 14th Street and a 74' frontage on Trinity. There are fine shade trees on the lot.
2. Walls, fences, walk, etc.: On the property lines on the south and east sides there are low 12" rubble stone walls. Other property lines have wire netting fences, poorly maintained. The entrance walk is of concrete. On the rear terrace near the kitchen door there is a 4' x 4' stone masonry wellhead (well is now filled).

Prepared by:
Melvin M. Rotsch, Architect
Project supervisor
National Park Service
July, 1973

PART III PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was jointly sponsored by the National Park Service and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Recorded under the direction of John Poppeliers, Chief of HABS, the project was completed during the summer of 1973 at the HABS field office at the University of Texas, Austin. Project supervisor was Melvin M. Rotsch (architect, Texas A & M University); project historian was Ellen Beasley; student architects were J. Tucker Bishop (University of Texas), Stephen J. Farneth (Carnegie-Mellon University), Robert D. Ferland (Cornell University), Carl J. Frenning (University of Pennsylvania), Richard W. Schreiber (Boston Architectural Center), and David J. Yturralde (University of Texas). Photographs were taken in 1974 by Roy Pledger.