

**STAFF REPORT
HISTORIC AND CULTURAL LANDMARKS COMMISSION
CITY OF FORT WORTH, TEXAS**

DATES: February 10, 2025

COUNCIL DISTRICT: 11

GENERAL INFORMATION

REQUEST	Recommendation for Designation as a Historic and Cultural Landmark
APPLICANT/AGENT	R. Lucille Samuel (Grand High Court Heroines of Jericho)
LOCATION	3016 E 4 th Street
ZONING/ USE (S)	CF (Community Facilities)
NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION	Individual

REQUEST

The owners request a recommendation to City Council to consider designating the property at 3016 E 4th Street as a Historic and Cultural Landmark (HC).

APPLICABLE CITY OF FORT WORTH ZONING ORDINANCE PROVISIONS

4.401 Historic Preservation Overlay Districts

(c) Identification and Designation of Cultural Resources

3. Eligibility for Designation

a. Eligibility for HC and HC District Designations.

i. Individual Property. An individual property may be designation as HC if it meets the following qualifications:

1. Two or more of the criteria for significance; and
2. The necessary criteria for assessing integrity.

Criteria for Historic Significance

1. Is distinctive in character, interest or value, and exemplifies the cultural, economic, social, ethnic or historical heritage of the City of Fort Worth, State of Texas or the United States.
2. Is an important example of a particular architectural type or specimen in the City of Fort Worth.
4. Has been identified with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the culture and development of the City of Fort Worth, State of Texas or the United States.

BACKGROUND

The Grand High Court of the Heroines of Jericho, located at 3016 E. 4th St., northeast of Harmon Field Park, serves as the headquarters for one of the oldest African American women's fraternal organizations in the country. Throughout its 135-year history, the Heroines of Jericho have been led by 25 Grand Most Ancient Matrons and 18 Grand Worshipful Joshuas, who have dedicated their time and resources to make this esteemed organization a successful entity.

Adopted in 1897 in Texas, the Grand High Court of Heroines of Jericho was the first female Masonic organization within the Texas Prince Hall Masons. After a resolution adopted by the Grand Lodge, both the Grand Lodge and the Grand High Court of Heroines of Jericho relocated to Fort Worth in 1906. Today, the Grand High Court oversees 53 local courts throughout Texas. The current headquarters, located on East 4th Street, was established in 1952. This one-story yellow masonry structure, which exhibits mid-century modern design, houses membership documents, historical files, and hosts events requested by local courts.

However, due to lack of maintenance and loss of parking, the Grand High Court of Heroines of Jericho building was placed on the Most Endangered Places List by the Historic Fort Worth twice in 2017 and 2024. If designated as a Landmark, the historically under-represented organization can benefit from economic incentives to sustain the headquarters and continue its legacy.

EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE

The 1952 headquarter at 3016 E 4th Street meets criteria 1, 2, and 4 of significance for the Historic Cultural Landmark designation:

First, it represents a rare historical resource for African Americans in the state, particularly as it identifies with a black female organization (Criterion 1). Second, the building is a distinctive example of Mid-Century Modern architecture in the city (Criterion 2). Lastly, it is associated with William Madison McDonald (1866-1950), an influential American politician, businessman, and banker in Texas during the late nineteenth century (Criterion 4).

In regards to **Criterion 1**:

the current 1952 building in the City of Fort Worth is the headquarters for all Heroines of Jericho chapters within Texas. The headquarters serves as a concrete testament to the enduring masonic tradition and is a unique representative of African American women's fraternal organizations. Named from Rahab, known as the Heroine of Jericho in the Book of Joshua in the Bible, this nonprofit charitable organization has existed since the late 19th century.

The degree associated with this tradition is considered a side honorary degree of the Ancient Holy Royal Arch Masonry. Men who received this degree were called Master Masons; their wives, mothers, widows, sisters, and daughters who received the degree were called Heroines. "Courts" of the Heroines of Jericho have been established to promote the principles of the Masonic Order and to inspire female interest in its objectives.¹ Being an affiliation of the Prince Hall Freemasonry, the Heroines of Jericho is an equivalent part of the African American history. Named after Prince Hall, a formerly enslaved Black abolitionist, Prince Hall Freemasonry was established because then Masonic Lodges refused to admit African Americans. In 1775, Hall founded the first Black Masonic Lodge in Boston to advocate for racial uplift and social justice for the African American community.²

¹ "Overall History of the Heroines of Jericho." <https://thejericho.weebly.com/history-in-washington-state/overall-history-of-the-Heroines-of-jericho>

² Hall, along with 14 other men, formed their own lodge, African Lodge No. 1, the first Black Freemasonry, in 1775 in Boston. They received their charter in 1784 and became African Lodge No. 459. The organization

In regards to **Criterion 2**:

Constructed in 1952, this single-story masonry building is a notable example of Modern Style architecture. Its irregular L-shaped floor plan, flat roof, and cast-iron windows highlight its Modern period identity. The street façade appears symmetrical, with the entrance bay—featuring a centered fixed window—flanked by two wings that contain full-height cast-iron windows. Interestingly, the projecting taller entrance bay itself is asymmetrical as the left side has an entry door while the right side has a rectangular casement window. It is worth noting that the current pitched roof is an addition to the original flat roof, likely made between 1995 and 2000. This new roof covering obscures the previous zigzag roofline and taller central volume. However, the building still retains its original form, showcasing meticulous architectural details.

In regards to **Criterion 4**:

The Grand High Court Heroines of Jericho has served its community for 135 years and led by 25 Grand most ancient matrons and 18 Grand Worshipful Joshua's.³ Many outstanding leaders have been a part of the organization, include a political legend William Madison McDonald (1866-1950). William Gooseneck "Bill" McDonald is widely believed to be Texas' first Black millionaire. In 1892, he was elected Grand Joshua and served as Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of Texas, Prince Hall for 50 years. Same in 1892, he was elected to the Republican Party of Texas's state executive committee and as permanent state chairman in 1898. He also founded Fort Worth's first African American-owned bank in 1906 and banked with black chapters of Masons. Under his management, the bank survived the Great Depression (Wikipedia). William McDonald Park in Fort Worth (5400 Eastland St) is named after this legendary figure. Moreover, the city of Fort Worth proclaimed June 22 as William Madison "Gooseneck Bill" McDonald Day in 2022 by action of the City Council (John Henry, Fort Worth Magazine, 6/22/2022).

EVALUATION OF INTEGRITY

Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance. The designation of a property must not only be shown to have significance under Zoning Ordinance, but it also must have integrity. Within the concept of integrity for example, the National Park Service criteria recognizes seven aspects that define integrity.

Seven Aspects of Integrity

1. **Location.**
2. **Design.**
3. **Setting.**
4. **Materials.**
5. **Workmanship**
6. **Feeling.**
7. **Association.**

In relation to the Seven Aspects of Integrity:

1. The building at 3016 E 4th Street is still in its original **location** as it was constructed in 1952.

advocated for racial uplift and social justice for the African American community. Kamal Morgan (2024). "Who are the Heroines of Jericho? And why is their Fort Worth headquarters endangered?" <https://www.star-telegram.com/news/local/fort-worth/article288591296.html>

³ Men can also be members of the Heroines of Jericho. They are called Knights of Jericho, and the highest position is the most worshipful Grand Joshua.

2. The **design** of the headquarters is mostly intact and identifiable. Although the pitched roof was added on the top of the original structure, its original plan, form, fenestration, exterior materials and details can fully reflect its architectural quality.
3. The buildings' original **setting** is intact within the area of the original development and geographic location.
4. Except for the additional pitched roof and the two glass block openings on the west recessed wall, the original **materials** of the building generally remain intact. These materials include the original yellow face brick, cast-iron casement windows, and the two façade windows with awnings above their casings.
5. The building displays the physical evidence of **workmanship** from the 1950s. Its original brickwork exhibits excellent craftsmanship, especially the central curved wall and the decorating soldier course above the window. The thin cast-iron casement windows are also an iconic design that marks the industrial achievement of the modern age.
6. The building retains its Mid-Century **feeling** derived from the international style of the 1950s, such as the irregular floor plan, rectangular form, horizontal lines, cast-iron windows, and simple brick bonds.
7. The building retains its **association** with the community and the African American women's organization. As the headquarters of the Grand High Court, the building has served this community for over seven decades. It is home of the organization, which hosts various events, maintains official documents and historical records, and offers workshops, networking, and charity opportunities to support the vulnerable. This building is a hub connecting the current 900 members of the Heroines of Jericho in Texas and links them to their historical precedents.

FINDINGS / RECOMMENDATIONS

Eligibility for Designation

The structure meets the following City of Fort Worth criteria for historic designation:

Criterion 1: Is distinctive in character, interest or value, and exemplifies the cultural, economic, social, ethnic or historical heritage of the City of Fort Worth, State of Texas or the United States.

Criterion 2: Is an important example of a particular architectural type or specimen in the City of Fort Worth.

Criterion 4: Has been identified with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the culture and development of the City of Fort Worth, State of Texas or the United States.

Integrity

Based on the evidence still extant at the property, the buildings at 3016 E 4th Street sufficiently retain seven aspects of integrity (location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association).

Summary

Staff have found evidence that the property meets 3 of the 8 Criteria for Designation. The property also retains its original integrity and the identity for which it is significant. This is consistent with the requirements of the ordinance for Historic & Cultural Landmark properties.

Therefore, staff recommends the following motion:

That the HCLC recommend that City Council consider designating the buildings at 3016 E 4th Street as a Historic & Cultural Landmark (HC) and that the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* be used when evaluating any proposed future change to the property.



February 17, 2025

R. Lucille Samuel
3016 E 4th Street
Fort Worth TX 76111

RE: HCLC-25-016 – 3016 E 4th Street

Dear Ms. R. Lucille Samuel

On **February 10, 2025** the Historic and Cultural Landmarks Commission (HCLC) considered the request for a recommendation to City Council to consider designating the property located at 3016 E 4th Street as a Historic & Cultural Landmark (HC) and made the following determination:

That the HCLC recommend that City Council consider designating the buildings at 3016 E 4th Street as a Historic & Cultural Landmark (HC) and that the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties be used when evaluating any proposed future change to the property.

Please contact the Development Services Department if you would like further direction regarding your application and the decision of the HCLC at (817) 392-8000.

Sincerely,

Lorelei Willett
Historic Preservation Officer

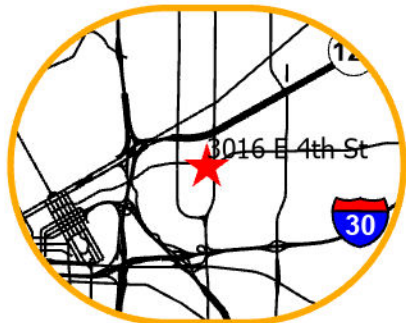
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

City of Fort Worth

• 100 Fort Worth Trail • Fort Worth, Texas 76102
Customer Service 817-392-8000

Historic Designation

3016 E 4th St



*Individually designated historic property



SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS



Figure 1: Location of subject Properties



Figure 1: Building façade and front yard, from E 4th Street looking south



Figure 2: Building frontage (north) and west elevation, looking from northwest corner



Figure 3: Rear (south) elevation



Figure 4: East elevation, looking from S Chandler Dr



Figure 5: West Elevation (north section)



Figure 6: Historic Photo of Headquarters Building (undated)



Figure 7: Existing Building (Google Street View, 2023)



Figure 9: Entrance Bay and west window (2024)

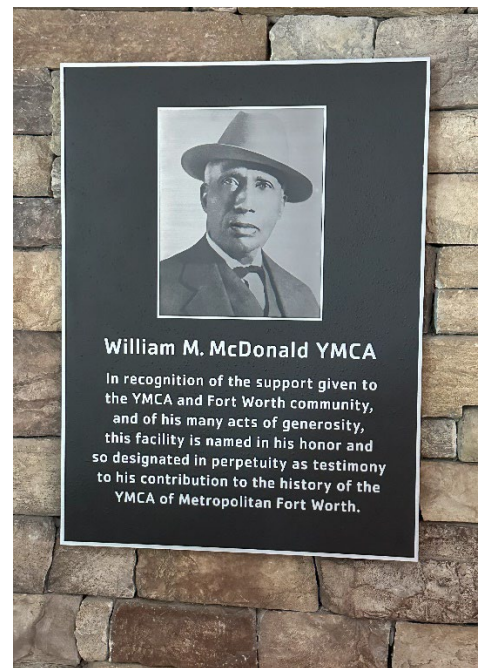


Figure 10: (Left) Corner Stone; (Right) William M. McDonald (Provided by Grand High Court Heroines of Jericho)



Figure 11: 1926 Warrant (Provided by Grand High Court Heroines of Jericho)



Figure 12: Event photo (Provided by Grand High Court Heroines of Jericho)