

PETITION FOR HISTORIC LANDMARK DESIGNATION TO THE HISTORICAL LANDMARK COMMISSION, PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION, AND CITY COUNCIL OF DENTON, TEXAS:

I/We, the undersigned, owner(s) of, or party(s) with financial interest in, all property herein described, do hereby file this, my/our petition, asking that the said property be designated as a historic landmark under the provisions of Ordinance #80-30 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Denton, Texas. The said property is located at 811 West Oak

and is more particularly described as follows:

PT LOT 9 MC KENNON ADDITION, WM NEILL SURVEY 971

I/We herewith tender the filing fee of ^{\$125.00} ~~One Hundred and Fifty Dollars (\$150)~~. I authorize the City of Denton to place a sign or sign(s) on the above property for public notification of the proposed historic designation.

NAME Jerry Don Vann
 ADDRESS 811 West Oak
 CITY Denton STATE Texas
 PHONE 387-3241

Submitted this 12th day of October, 1980.

Martin-Russell-Vann Home, 811 West Oak, Denton, Texas

The red brick Georgian residence with the Adamesque influence in its rounded windows and wrought iron at 811 West Oak was built for Dr. and Mrs. M. L. Martin and their two children, Milton and Ruth.

Dr. Martin, an eye, ear, nose, and throat specialist, was originally from Columbia, South Carolina. Mrs. Martin was Ailsey Forester, daughter of a prominent area rancher, L. S. Forester of Slidell-Belivar. The Martins were ~~active~~ active in Denton social and business circles and the house was a center for large parties and receptions.

Built over several years behind the Martin's Hickory Street home, 811 was completed in 1931. The dark red brick was from Neodesha, Kansas; the architect was David Williams from Dallas, whose work influenced that of O'Neil Ford; the foundation and cement work was done by Ray Lakey; the carpentry by "Splinty" Davidson and Edgar Davidson; and the brick work by Charles Davis and sons. The home is of double brick construction and has triple floorings, the top one, of course, hardwood.

It was one of the first homes in Denton to have an inner circuit telephone from upstairs to the kitchen. It was also the first centrally air-conditioned home in Denton. It had a central heating system from the beginning--in fact, the original Lennox furnace is still in use; a sliding door was cut in the furnace ductwork in the basement where an enormous block of ice could be placed for the furnace fan to blow cool air to all parts of the home.

The original sunroom, or morning room, had an outdoor entrance to be used for an office by Dr. Martin following his retirement but it was never used for this purpose. In later renovation, the door was converted into a window. That is the only outside change in the building since it was built.

Dr. Martin died in September of 1941 and Mrs. Martin sold the home to the Helford Russells in 1944. Mr. Russell, owner of the department store and lingerie manufacturing company, was a prominent Denton businessman and civic leader. During their 23 years in the home, the Russells did extensive interior renovation, modernizing the kitchen, adding central air conditioning, replacing the dining room chandelier with one of Waterford, and removing the living room chandelier. They also added ceiling fans to four of the upstairs bedrooms, but removed the attic fan to put in a stairway to the third floor attic.

The home is strictly rectangular in plan, with a minimum of projections, and a symmetrical facade. Chimneys are placed so as to contribute to the over-all symmetry. The central part projects slightly from the ends and is crowned with three dormer windows; the eaves are detailed as classical cornices; and Adam style semicircular balconies adorn the front. Set far back on a deep lot, the English-influenced architecture of this home is especially viewable because of the absence of trees on the front lawn. The back of the lot is heavily wooded, however. A garage which matches the house and a porte cochere on the back of the house are architectural interests in the back.

Since 1967, it has been the home of Dr. and Mrs. J. Don Vann, Christopher and Vanessa. Dr. Vann, professor of English at North Texas State University, is the author or editor of numerous books and articles and has lectured on his special interest, the novelist Charles Dickens, in America and Great Britain. Mrs. Vann has been active in Denton community affairs and clubwork and has served as president of the Ariel Club, Denton's oldest woman's club and of the Historical Preservation Society. The Vann's home was pictured and written about in the December 1979 issue of the magazine Texas Homes. It appeared on the Channel 5 news three times in December 1978 when the Vanns were visited and interviewed by Bobbie Wygant. It is listed as a state historic site by the Texas Historical Commission, 1977.

Criteria to be used in Historical Landmark Designation

The petitioner will be responsible for furnishing data to the Planning and Community Development Department for submittal to the Landmark Commission substantiating that the property meets at least one or more of the following 13 criteria for Historic Landmark designation:

1. Character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City of Denton, State of Texas, or the United States.
2. Recognition as a recorded Texas historic landmark, a national landmark, or entered into the National Register of Historic Places.
3. Embodiment of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type or specimen.
4. Identification as the work of an architect or master builder whose individual work has influenced the development of the city.
5. Embodiment of elements of architectural design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant architectural innovation.
6. Relationship to other distinctive buildings, sites or areas which are eligible for preservation according to a plan based on architectural, historic or cultural motif.
7. Portrayal of the environment of a group of people in an area of history characterized by a distinctive architectural style.
8. Archaeological value in that it has produced or can be expected to produce data affecting theories of historic or prehistoric interest.
9. Exemplification of the cultural, economic, social, ethnic or historical heritage of the City, State or United States.
10. Location as the site of a significant historic event.
11. Identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the culture and development of the City, State or United States.
12. A building or structure that because of its location has become of value to a neighborhood, community area, or the city.
13. Value as an aspect of community sentiment or public pride.