



04/27/2017

Oakwood Chapel Rehabilitation Project and Archeological Investigation
Staff Report and Recommendation for Discovered Burials



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1. Summary of Recommendations

This report provides a summary of the history of Oakwood Cemetery and Chapel, the current rehabilitation project and the department's final recommendation for the disposition of recently discovered burials beneath Oakwood Chapel. The department's final recommendation is based on a number of criteria, including professional and regulatory feedback, precedent cases, and community feedback collected at public meetings conducted on March 25 and April 11, 2017, and subsequent input periods that followed.

The Austin Parks and Recreation Department (PAR) is recommending that the recently discovered burials within the footprint of the Oakwood Chapel, where safely recoverable, be exhumed and reinterred in close proximity to the chapel and within the section of the cemetery historically called the "Colored Grounds." As communicated to the public and as stated in this report, there are limitations to exhuming every burial that may be discovered due to constraints imposed by the building's structural grade beams. PAR pledges to work with the community to develop strong elements of interpretation and commemoration for all the burials that have been discovered, which will extend to a better understanding of the historically significant section of the cemetery for people of color.

The Oakwood Cemetery and its burial patterns are products of incremental development and growth, and no section of the cemetery contains a monolithic community of people or a singularly consistent form of documentation. The discovered burials within the section designated on archival maps as the "Colored Grounds" are no exception. Based on currently discovered documentation from the *Austin American Statesman*, it is also unknown to what extent grave markers or other physical indications of these burials existed at the time of the chapel's construction. What is known is that in 1859 the City of Austin established a section of the cemetery for burials of "people of color¹." This section, referred to in sexton records as "Colored Grounds," "Mexican Grounds" and "Stranger's Grounds," was likely full by approximately 1890, 24 years prior to the chapel's construction in 1914.

While community feedback received during the outreach process has supported differing solutions, it seems agreed upon that the burial discoveries underneath the chapel are a source of reflection about a community's responsibility for treatment of those who have come before us, and provide an opportunity for the City of Austin to acknowledge a past injustice.

PAR would like to give their sincere thanks to District 1 Council Member Ora Houston and Policy Aide Genoveva Rodriguez for their support and assistance in outreach to the local community, facilitating public discussion and seeking a resolution through this process.

PAR would also like to recognize the support of Ms. Nefertitti Jackmon, director of Six Square (Austin's African American Cultural Heritage District), Pastor Keith Brown of the Church of God in Christ and Pastor Billy McClendon of the St. James Missionary Baptist Church for their involvement in the public process and for reaching out to their communities and congregations. Finally, PAR extends thanks to our nonprofit partner, Save Austin's Cemeteries, for their thorough research into the history and development of Oakwood Cemetery, and for their continued support and stewardship of municipal cemetery causes.

¹ City of Austin Historic Cemeteries Master Plan, p. 87.

2. Project Overview

The historic Oakwood Cemetery Chapel was constructed in 1914 to function as a mortuary chapel. It sits within the Oakwood Cemetery, a City of Austin Historic Landmark, a registered Historic Texas Cemetery, and a National Register of Historic Places site. In the subsequent 103 years since its construction, the building has suffered from uneven foundation settlement and deferred maintenance. Due to its existing condition, rehabilitation of the Oakwood Chapel was identified as a top priority for cemetery improvements that were funded under the 2012 General Obligation Bond. PARD is in the process of rehabilitating this structure to function once again as a space for services as well as a visitor's center and community space. Once restored, the building will be programmed in partnership with PARD's Cemetery Operations and Museums & Cultural Centers Division as recommended by the COA Historic Cemeteries Master Plan, which was adopted by City Council in 2015.

Construction drawings for the chapel rehabilitation were completed by local architecture firm, Hatch + Ulland Owen, public bidding was completed in summer of 2016, and construction began in October 2016 by Gadberry Construction Inc.

The scope of the Chapel rehabilitation includes:

- Structural stabilization of foundation
- Surface drainage improvements
- ADA access improvements
- Rehabilitation of single-occupant restroom
- Mechanical, electrical, lighting overhaul
- Restoration of interior and exterior finishes, including doors, windows, masonry, roof, plaster, etc.

3. Archeological Investigations

The 1914 chapel was constructed in an area of the cemetery that was designated as a racially segregated section beginning in 1859. Within this section, designated for people of color, there is scarce burial documentation and comparatively few remaining gravestones.

Research provided by non-profit partner Save Austin's Cemeteries and supported by PARD staff cites evidence of "Negro," "Mexican," and "Stranger/White"² burials within this section of the cemetery – with at least one example of each community in close proximity to the Chapel. With few grave markers still existing today and no direct descendants who have come forth with knowledge of ancestral location, it is unknown at the time of this report's issuance what communities are represented by individual graves underneath the chapel footprint.

Given the sensitivity of the cemetery site, PARD contracted with an archeological firm, Hicks and Company, and secured an Antiquities Permit with the Texas Historical Commission (THC) prior to construction in July, 2016. The Antiquities Code of Texas requires state agencies and political subdivisions of the state to notify the THC of ground-disturbing activity on public land. No site disturbance has taken place without monitoring by the archeological team.

² Terms referenced are those used in cemetery logbooks

On Nov. 22, 2016, while excavating soil outside of the chapel, two buried headstones and one footstone were discovered approximately one foot under existing grade. On Nov. 29, while drilling a pier shaft within the chapel interior, small bone fragments were discovered about 4' under existing grade. At this time, all construction activity was immediately halted. The THC, Council Member Houston and City leadership were immediately informed.

Per direction from the THC, the contractor and archeological team proceeded with closely monitored soil removal in order to assemble a better understanding of the inventory on site. As of February 13, 2017, approximately 3.5' of soil had been removed from the chapel interior, which allowed the archeological team to assemble a more complete assessment of indicated burials within the building footprint (refer to **Figure 1**). At this depth, the archaeologist is able to approximate grave shaft locations without disturbing burial contents.

Except for objects discovered during scraping (including several small bone fragments), no exhumation of human remains has occurred at this time. The indication of burial shafts is based on visual evidence of soil discoloration and the actual totals could fluctuate. Currently, the estimated number of burial shafts on the interior of the structure totals 25.

Field reports prepared by the archeologist are available in the report appendix. As noted in these archeological field reports, it is likely that at least some portion of interior burials have been previously disturbed by initial construction (1914) and perhaps by subsequent renovations (most notably in 1944). The grade beams that support the building walls extend approximately five feet below the soil, which is deeper than the height of indicated burials observed to date. At this time, there is no way to predict the physical condition of the burials.

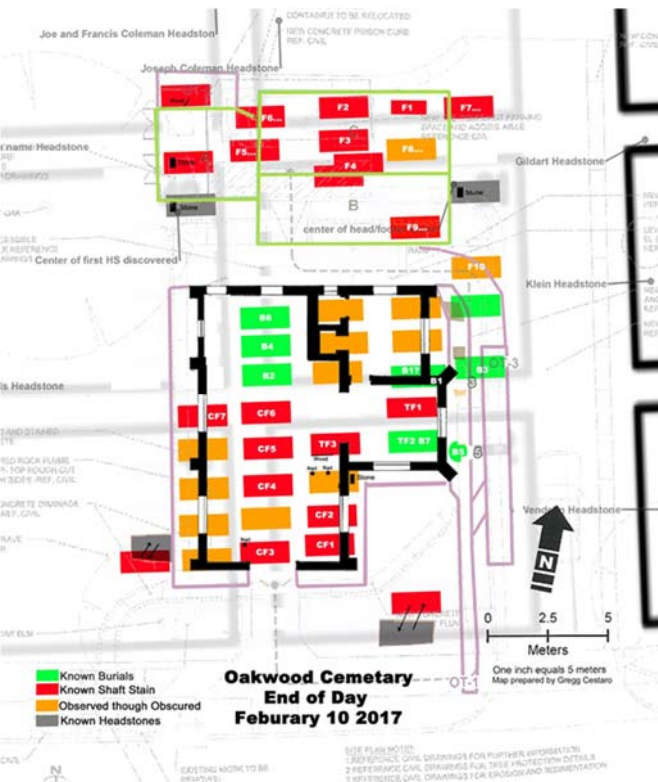


Figure 1: Archeological site inventory prepared by Hicks & Co. Archeology (refer to Appendix for full sized image)

So far, no identifying information has been uncovered on headstones or recovered artifacts. The archeological team will excavate soil using hand tools

and record any discovered burials through global positioning technology, sketch maps, detailed notes and digital photography. Where objects are exposed, this will include documentation of casket morphology, casket hardware and any funerary objects before stabilizing the interment.

In the case that exhumation and reinterment of human remains take place, archival research and bioarcheological analysis will be performed to help determine identity and relative age. No destructive DNA

testing would take place on discovered remains, and all exhumations would comply with Chapter 711 of the Texas Health and Safety Code. A more complete explanation of a bioarcheological analysis is discussed in section 10 of this report.

Because existing burial documentation does not map specific burial plots within this section of the cemetery, it is unlikely that any burials will be able to yield information about identity.

4. Public Process

PARD has made every effort to follow archeological best practices by first assessing and developing an inventory of conditions on site, followed by public notification and community engagement. Together with Council Member Houston's office, the City provided information to the community in several ways.

Notification to local clergy:

10am-12pm, Saturday, March 4, 2017
Britton, Durst Howard & Spence Building
1183 Pleasant Valley Rd., Austin, TX 78702

Media release and press conference:

10am, Tuesday, March 7, 2017
City Hall
301 W 2nd St, Austin, TX 78701



Figure 2: Public meeting at Delores Duffie Recreation Center on March 25, 2017

1st Public outreach meeting:

Community Conversation on Oakwood Cemetery Chapel
10am-12pm, Saturday, March 25, 2017
Delores Duffie Recreation Center
1182 Pleasant Valley Rd., Austin, TX 78702
**an open feedback period extended from March 25-April 7*

2nd Public outreach meeting:

Community Conversation on Oakwood Cemetery Chapel
6:30-8pm, Tuesday, April 11, 2017
Britton, Durst Howard & Spence Building
1183 Pleasant Valley Rd., Austin, TX 78702
**an open feedback period extended from April 11-April 21*

Through this public process, PARD informed the community of Oakwood Cemetery's historic context, the background of the construction project, and the constraints to the archeological scope of work. The primary goals conveyed to the community by the City of Austin were:

- to restore dignity to the discovered graves
- to return to the construction project as expeditiously as possible

The department invited feedback at both public meetings and for an extended period by email.

Overall, public feedback was wide-ranging. Some community members felt it would be most appropriate to move or remove the Chapel from its current location, though City of Austin staff explained this was not a feasible option. Some felt leaving burials in place was a more respectful option, while others felt exhuming and reburial was a more dignified solution. Many citizens offered general questions about how we could learn more from this situation and what options existed both for the archeological and building rehabilitation scopes. A complete documentation of submitted questions and comments is available in Section 4 of the report appendix.

5. Timeline of Oakwood Cemetery Site Development and Management History

Understanding the historical development of the Oakwood Cemetery can help to better contextualize the discovered burials and determine a path forward. A bulleted timeline of known significant events follows:

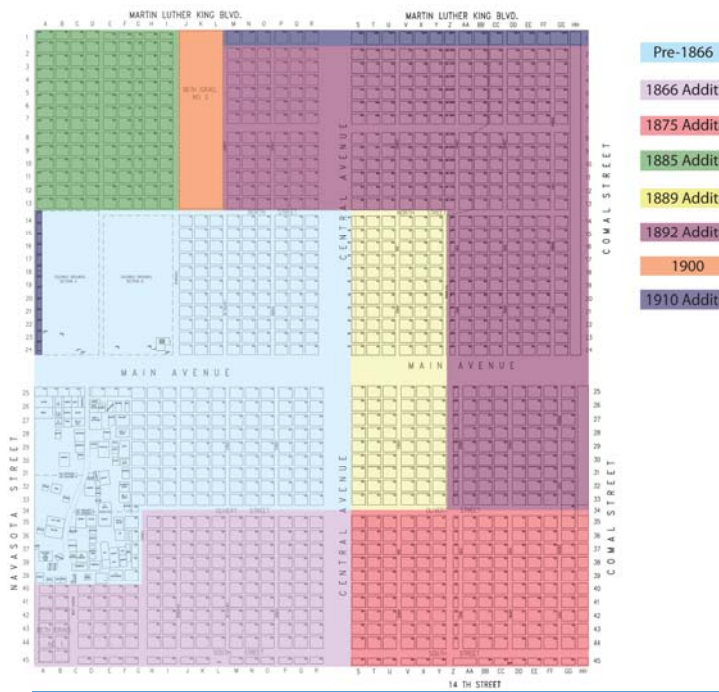


Figure 3: *Oakwood Cemetery Development diagram; source: City of Austin Historic Cemeteries Master Plan*

1839: City Cemetery (later called Oakwood Cemetery) established at the northeast corner of the original town plat. At that time, Austin was the capital of the Republic of Texas

1839: First burial, possibly that of an enslaved person killed between Austin and Bastrop

1841: Earliest recorded burial (George Logan)

1845: Republic of Texas enters the Union and becomes the 28th state of the United States of America

1856: Texas Legislature relinquishes State’s interest in the cemetery and grants ownership to the City of Austin

1859: Austin City Council passes ordinance designating the burial grounds as “Austin City Cemetery” and designates the cemetery into three sections:

- One section “for use of the inhabitants of the city of Austin”

- One section for the interment of “strangers”
- One section for the interment of “people of color”

1859-1880: Approximately 1,200 people of color were interred in the section historically known as the “Colored Grounds” according to research conducted by the Austin History Center

1890: The racially segregated section of the Oakwood Cemetery had reached capacity, leading to the development of Bethany Cemetery and Plummers Cemetery

1908: City Cemetery formally named Oakwood Cemetery

1914: Oakwood Mortuary Chapel constructed

1926: Establishment of Evergreen Cemetery as exclusively segregated cemetery for people of color

1890s-c. 1970: Much of the maintenance of Oakwood Cemetery performed by individuals and various cemetery associations

1970: Oakwood Cemetery became more formally managed by the City of Austin

1970-1989: Maintenance performed by Public Works and Parks and Recreation Departments

1989-2013: All municipal cemetery sales, operations and maintenance contracted to outside corporation

2004: Formation of Save Austin’s Cemeteries, nonprofit group, to advocate for and support the preservation of municipal cemeteries, including Oakwood Cemetery

2006-2011: Save Austin’s Cemeteries funds a number of reports and studies to support the rehabilitation of Oakwood Chapel

2013: PARD assumes full management and oversight of all municipal cemeteries, including Oakwood Cemetery. More information on services provided can be found here: <http://austintexas.gov/contact-information/cemeteries>

2013-2015: PARD develops the *Historic Cemeteries Master Plan*, which was adopted by City Council in September, 2015. The planning process galvanized the Austin community around recommendations to restore and activate Austin’s historic cemeteries. Following is a link to the plan: <https://austintexas.gov/cmp>.

6. Historical Significance of Oakwood Cemetery’s “Colored Grounds,” a segregated section for people of color

The racially segregated section of Oakwood Cemetery is historically significant and is the final resting place for

prominent Austin citizens. Many of the older graves in the “Colored Grounds” were likely marked at one time with less permanent markers such as wooden crosses or modest gravestones, which did not stand the test of time. In later years, prominent African American leaders and families chose to be interred in Oakwood Cemetery’s “Colored Grounds” as evidenced by the graves of many significant Austin residents, including:

- **Reverend Jacob Fontaine** (1808-1898) - The Reverend Fontaine, who was born into slavery, was a political and civic leader, newspaper publisher and established numerous churches throughout Travis County. He is especially known for the establishment of the St. John Regular Missionary Baptist Association and was its first moderator. The Reverend Fontaine was also a leading advocate for the establishment of the University of Texas in Austin.
- **Edward H. Carrington** (1847-1919) - E.H. Carrington, who was born into slavery, was a prominent business and community leader. His grocery store, the E. H. Carrington store was located on E. 6th Street. Carrington was best known for lending money to poor farming families and worked with the Friends in Need to cover funeral expenses for the needy.
- **Laurine Cecil (L.C.) Anderson** (1853-1938) - L.C. Anderson was well-known as the longtime principal of L.C. Anderson High School. He made his mark long before as the first president of the Colored Teachers Association and president of Prairie View University, the first state-supported Texas college for African Americans. Throughout his life, L.C. Anderson worked to unify African American leaders in business, politics, and religious and fraternal organizations, and to improve conditions for black Texans through education.
- **Dr. Everett Givens** (1888-1962) - Dr. Everett Givens, though recognized as an excellent dentist, is better known for efforts to gain equal privileges, rights, and opportunities for African American citizens of Austin. After being denied admission to University of Texas in 1946 for a course, he sought action in the Texas Supreme Court to compel the University of Texas Board of Regents to establish in Austin a branch university for African Americans. While the writ was denied by a district court, his lawsuit is seen as setting the stage for *Heman Sweatt v. Painter*, one of the nation’s most significant civil rights cases, which integrated the University of Texas’s Law School.

In addition to a large number of African American community members, the cemetery also holds the remains of Mexicans and Mexican Americans. Further, as recent research from Save Austin’s Cemeteries suggests, areas within the section of the cemetery referred to as the “Colored Grounds” also serves as the final resting place for “strangers” not from Austin, including individuals with European ancestry. This section of the cemetery is nuanced, and presents an opportunity for continuing research and discovery.

7. Project Constraints and Challenges

A path forward that satisfies the two project goals of restoring dignity to the discovered burials and proceeding with the construction project is largely shaped by constraints and feasibility. A list of limitations and challenges follows:

- Moving or raising the chapel is infeasible because the process would cause significant damage to the

condition of the graves underneath the building.

- The Oakwood Cemetery Chapel has been a part of the cemetery landscape for over 100 years, and is a City of Austin Historic Landmark.
- Some burials extend underneath the building grade beams and cannot be exhumed without compromising the structural integrity of the building and creating life safety concerns.
- Per direction from the THC, any casket or human remains with potential to be disturbed by construction activity would have to be exhumed.
- The structural beams extend deeper into the soil than the top levels of some discovered burials, which creates a likelihood that burials in close proximity to beams were disturbed during the building's initial construction.
- The Chapel has undergone at least one significant renovation in 1944, which added a new restroom and altered the flooring of the Chapel to a floating concrete slab, both of which disturbed interior soils to some degree.
- Limited documentation of burials from this time period exists, and documented burials within this section are not referenced to a specific location. Therefore, outreach to direct descendants underneath the chapel is not a viable option.
- Legal and regulatory considerations outlined in the Antiquities Code and the Texas State Health Code provide guidance for treatment of burials and construction impacts.
- Burials should be addressed quickly to ensure protection and safety at the project site.
- Construction and demolition are underway, and therefore the building is vulnerable to water infiltration.
- Construction delay results in increased costs, and there are additional project costs for exhumation, architectural redesign and adjustments to proposed construction.

8. Options for moving forward

The PARD team has worked closely with City staff, project archeologists, THC and sought the opinion of other professionals to make deliberate decisions on site and to understand best practices in these circumstances. PARD and City staff recognize the sensitivity of this situation and are committed to moving forward in the most dignified and respectful manner.

As previously discussed, PARD's primary goals are to restore dignity to the discovered gravesites and to resume the construction project.

While the immediate priority is to come to a solution regarding the discovered burials, PARD also plans to facilitate a public process resulting in recommendations for commemoration and interpretation of the burials in a parallel effort to the building rehabilitation. This process has been messaged in community meetings and will commence in late spring. More information about this process can be found in Section 10 of this report.

With an understanding of public input heard to date and practical constraints outlined above, the department has explored two feasible options for consideration:

1. Discovered burials could be exhumed from their current locations inside the chapel and reinterred within Oakwood Cemetery with appropriate grave markers in close proximity to the chapel. To maintain building stability and worker safety, it will not be feasible to remove all burials underneath the structure and this is understood by the THC and the archeological team. If it is decided to exhume and reinter burials, the archeologist under contract to the City will provide a full report documenting the archeological investigation and reinterment process.
2. Burials could remain intact underneath the chapel, and separated by a suspended wood floor with crawl space. These design changes to the project would remove the immediate impact to the soils above the interior burials.

It should be noted that significant design changes have been proposed to eliminate nearly all exterior hardscaping, which will remove impacts above the newly discovered burials outside the chapel, and perhaps others still unknown. Coordination for this effort is ongoing with architect and contractor. It is the intent of PARD Cemetery staff to memorialize all discovered interior and exterior burials as a part of the chapel rehabilitation project.

9. Criteria for Decision Making

At the Community Conversation on March 25, 2017, PARD laid out the criteria which would guide the department's decision making process. As stated in the executive summary, PARD staff is recommending exhumation of as many graves as feasible, given the structural limitations. Following are the criteria that were evaluated as part of the process:

Community input from public meetings and open feedback periods:

When confronted with issues related to the discovery of previously unknown graves, it is a best practice to first attempt to connect with the descendent community. In the case of the graves that were discovered beneath Oakwood Cemetery, there is no definitive information about exactly who may be interred in the graves. PARD sought the guidance of District 1 Council Member Ora Houston in order to connect with congregations and long-time residents in the local community. It should be noted that the Oakwood Cemetery community is diverse and includes community members of different backgrounds. Further, the cemetery has a strong and dedicated group of supporters who have long advocated for the restoration and promotion of the cemetery.

PARD has received feedback from a variety of voices about whether the graves should be exhumed or remain. The responses are varied, recommendations are nuanced and there is not a clear and universal consensus.

Several people have cited European traditions where human remains are intentionally buried underneath chapels or churches, as was done in Westminster Abbey. Recommendations to leave in place include suggestions about how to indicate the location of graves through design and interpretation. For some people, moving the graves is seen as an unnecessary or potentially disrespectful act.

Alternatively, there are others who feel that to leave the graves in place would perpetuate and condone the widespread practice throughout the United States of disrespecting the graves of African Americans and other communities of color. These voices express concern that if this chapel is to be used as a public space, people's graves would unavoidably be walked over and on top of. These community voices view this as a statement of disrespect.

PARC staff has concluded that given the decision of Austin's past City leaders to deliberately designate this section of the cemetery as an area for "people of color," the opinions represented by the communities of color and the traditional burial practices of these communities are of significant importance. Oakwood Cemetery was originally established as an "Upland South Folk Cemetery," which is distinctive for its characteristics of site, orientation, plantings, grave markers and decorations and grave-tending rituals and practices.³ Graves were oriented with feet to the east, a practice that has roots in Christian and Jewish traditions, but also seen in the funereal practices of Africa. It was also a practice that graves would be covered with mounds of dirt, to be renewed as the earth settled. Further, graves were often scraped bare of grass as allowing grass to grow on a grave was seen as a sign of disrespect. As stated in *Austin's Historic Cemeteries Master Plan*, "Scraping of individual graves or entire burial grounds was common throughout the east and central Texas, in both white Anglo and African American communities. These practices were part of a 'cult of piety,' in which the care of the burial grounds enabled the living to continue to memorialize the dead, and both mounding and scraping are seen today."⁴

While PARC staff has received thoughtful suggestions regarding some European funerary traditions, such as intentional burials within chapels, there is concern that the circumstances at Oakwood Chapel are representative of a different context. The Oakwood Cemetery Chapel, which was likely a segregated space given the time period of its construction and use, was constructed atop the graves of the marginalized with a diminished voice in their own community. One could ask: what statement would the City of Austin be sending by doing nothing to return dignity to these grave sites previously purchased by its own residents?

Where possible, PARC staff has reached out to members of the known descendant community, such as the great-grandsons of the Reverend Jacob Fontaine. When asked about exhumation of as many graves as possible and reinterment with new headstones in close proximity to the Chapel, Mr. Rudolph Abdul-Aleem stated, "that would be a step in the right direction." Mr. Lambuth Fontaine echoes these sentiments by stating, "the remains should be respectfully exhumed and reinterred with proper commemoration."

Professor Roland Hayes, professor of history and director of the African American Cultural Center at Austin Community College facilitated discussion amongst a group of multi-generational Austin residents, and submitted comment saying, "Those human remains found should be respectfully exhumed and reinterred. Properly marked as best can be done and identified, close proximity of their original interment."

³ City of Austin Historic Cemeteries Master Plan. p. 78.

⁴ City of Austin Historic Cemeteries Master Plan. p. 80.

Further, Austin resident Marilyn Poole submitted comment, noting, "...I will offer a suggestion that the best course, the most sensitive and empathetic course given the circumstances, might be to exhume and identify to the fullest extent possible the skeletal remains underneath the treasured building, but only if a significant percentage of the skeletal population (e.g. 90%) can be recovered. Then, memorialize those remains individually, by exhibit or monument. This would be respectful. This would be sensitive to both history and its impact. This would be ameliorative."

Representing an alternative view, Rick Stryker, a historian, preservationist and former director of the Corpus Christi Museum of Science and Natural History, submitted comment, stating, "The construction of a chapel over burials, however inadvertent and perhaps unintentional, is unfortunate in retrospect. However, the integrity of the burials and the structure, in this case, ought to be respected. As was pointed out, the mitigation of all the burials is not possible given the location of some of them under the walls of the structure. ... In my opinion, such a carefully designed floor treatment should be installed leaving the graves below undisturbed."

Resident Steven Brown offers a similar conclusion in a different context, "My feelings are that Blacks have been relocated out of East Austin due to gentrification. We've already lost the land that we were once segregated to. Our ancestors losing the land...they are resting in would only compound the loss. I believe that moving the bodies to make a way to repair the chapel is a parallel to blacks being relocated out of Austin to make way for the new development that has left blacks out of "East Austin 2.0."

In summary, while there was not a universal consensus about whether the burials should remain in place or be moved, several voices from the communities most closely connected to the historically-named "Colored Grounds" had a preference for exhumation. PARD recognizes that there is no perfect solution to this past injustice. However, exhumation will allow for the respectful reburial and marking of long-forgotten graves. Additionally, given the chapel's future function as a public space, reinterment of the burials mitigates direct impact above the exhumed gravesites.

It must be stated that the section known as the "Colored Grounds" also holds the graves for people of other races and ethnicities and PARD welcomes continued research and scholarship to expand the historical record.

Professional archeological and regulatory recommendations:

PARD has been in close communication with the project archaeologist, the THC archeological regulator, and the City of Austin Law Department. Further, PARD has consulted with professionals in the field of archeology, public history and African-American studies to seek opinions across the broader field of study.

Dr. Maria Franklin, a professor of archeology, anthropology and African Diaspora studies at the University of Texas submitted feedback, stating, "Given that the chapel is slated for renovations and will continue to be used for public functions, I'd recommend that the burials be exhumed and reburied elsewhere at the cemetery. Moreover, all of the personal effects and coffin hardware of the deceased should be reinterred along with the remains of those deceased, and Austin Parks should solicit the support of a local church or

churches to perform burial rites. Each individual deserves to have their burial marked with a permanent grave marker, as well. I'm basing my above recommendations on the practices carried out at other significant African American historic cemeteries, including the Dallas Freedmen's Cemetery, and the African Burial Ground in Manhattan. Of prime importance is the respect for those buried; continuing to use the chapel would undoubtedly have a negative impact on the burials, and disturb the remains."

The letter submitted from the THC reads, "It is our position that if any portion of casket and human remains will be impacted in any way by the project, those remains must be exhumed. This applies to the entire work site, including piers for wall stabilization, piers for the floor, etc." Citing precedent from across the country, the City of Austin Law Department is in agreement with recommendations of the THC.

Related to project constraints discussed in Section 7, the Hicks & Co. field report states, "because of engineering, structural, and safety concerns it is recommended that each of these interments be considered on an individual basis regarding practicality and degree of exhumation required." PARD, the City of Austin and the project team understand that some burials may not be recoverable due to the pre-existing building conditions, but do propose exhumation of all burials that can be safely accessed.

Time constraints & financial feasibility:

As with any construction project, schedule and cost are significant drivers of progress and feasibility. However, the discovery of burials introduced an unforeseen element into the rehabilitation, and warrants community dialogue before any decision to proceed is made. Time and cost alone do not dictate the recommendation from the project team, but do provide parameters for what can and cannot be done.

There was citizen feedback suggesting that the Chapel be moved to another site or temporarily lifted from the ground while remains are exhumed. This option is infeasible not only for the damage it would cause to burials, but also because the cost and schedule impact would be prohibitive. Alternatively, some citizen discussion suggested that due to the cost impact of exhumation and other practicalities, remains should be left in place.

PARD is cognizant that exhumation is not the easier choice with respect to time and cost. While exhumation and reinterment was not part of the original scope of work for the building rehabilitation project, PARD acknowledges the City's obligation to facilitate discussion and seek the best possible solution. Upon completion, the chapel will serve as a civic asset that will tell a more complete story of the history of the cemetery, including its segregated past. Further, through interpretation and commemoration, the chapel will serve as place to honor and tell the stories of all the people for whom the cemetery is the final resting place.

Projections for cost impact remain estimates at the time of this report's issuance, however, a total figure will be inclusive of fees for exhumation and associated documentation, architectural redesign to mitigate impacts to discovered burials outside of the Chapel and change order fees to the contractor for design adjustments and project delay. It is expected the total project impact will approach \$200,000 to \$300,000. Funding for the additional costs will come from the project contingency from the 2012 Cemetery Renovations Bond funding,

and will be offset by Hotel Occupancy Tax funding that PARD was recently allocated in Fiscal Year 2017.⁵

Precedent cases:

Precedent cases, specifically in regard to discovery of lost African American cemeteries, can be cited all over the United States. During the community meeting on March 25, PARD discussed several significant projects that were both discovered and resolved in differing contexts. While each situation has differed, there were clear lessons that could be learned.

The African Burial Ground in lower Manhattan is perhaps the most well-known site nationally where previously unknown burials were discovered. From the 1690s through 1794, free and enslaved Africans were buried in a 6.6 acre site in lower Manhattan. The construction of a federal building in 1991 led to the discovery of the burial site. Many years of exhumation and reburial, archeological study and public engagement led to a new understanding of people whose lives were poorly documented and understood. The African Burial Ground is now a U.S. National Monument and Memorial managed by the National Park Service. For more information about the African Burial Ground, visit <https://www.nps.gov/afbg/>.

The Dallas Freedman's Cemetery is the burial site for approximately 2,000 graves of African Americans in Dallas between 1869 and 1907. When the Texas Department of Transportation began expansion plans for the North Central Expressway, it was discovered that highway construction in the 1940s had paved over nearly an acre of the site. The Freedman's Cemetery Archeological Project allowed for the excavation, documentation and analysis of more than 1,000 burials. The project resulted in a greater understanding of the material culture of late 19th century African Americans and chronology of the burial site. A memorial now stands near the expressway. More information can be found at <http://texaslakestrail.com/plan-your-adventure/historic-sites-and-cities/sites/freedmans-cemetery-memorial>.

The expansion of the Texas Ranger Museum in Waco is a cautionary tale of the consequences of failing to consult with archeological professionals early in a construction process and the critical importance of early community engagement when burials are discovered. The Texas Ranger Museum's expansion led to the discovery that graves that were thought to have been relocated in the late 1960s were left in place with only headstones being relocated. Construction crews discovered the remains during excavation. More than 200 graves were exhumed and a costly and protracted process unfolded over the course of many years to identify and reinter the remains. While no formal website exists to document the project, there are many articles online that document the discovery and subsequent process.

It is important to recognize that while each community may address situations related to burial discoveries differently, the solution settled on by PARD and the City of Austin could become a model that others reference in the future.

⁵ Hotel Occupancy Tax funding allocated to the chapel will be used only for allowable expenditures related to the building rehabilitation, allowing 2012 G.O. Bond funding to be redirected to costs related to exhumation and re-interment.

Interpretive value of bioarcheological analysis:

A significant differentiating factor between the two options under consideration is that the option to exhume and reinter burials potentially allows for greater understanding of the lives of people of color in Austin in the mid to late 19th century. Under the requirements of the issued Antiquities Permit, a bioarcheological analysis would occur if exhumation is performed. Burial context can be provided by a non-invasive analysis of the physical remains, which often provides demographic data, including race/ethnicity, gender and approximate age. In some cases, physical remains can also inform about cause of death and aspects of lifestyle, such as physical health, levels of nutrition or stresses endured. Further, artifacts may reveal aspects of material culture and possibly the cultural significance for those buried in this section. It must be understood, however, that the physical condition of the remains is unknown until exhumation takes place.

As stated previously, the primary justification for the department's recommendation is informed by a variety of factors. PARD acknowledges and welcomes the opportunity for discovery through archeology and interpretation, with an understanding that this analysis is not a driver of the decision to exhume. However, bioarcheology does hold potential to provide additional information that could serve as a basis for future onsite interpretation. For those burials not able to be exhumed, it is PARD's hope that elements of commemoration and interpretation will restore dignity to all the burials underneath the chapel. For those burials not recoverable, citizen Grania Patterson offers this dedication, "*Beneath this floor, enfolded by the walls of this chapel, lie the remains of past citizens of Austin. Not forgotten, but cherished by the community.*"

10. Next Steps: Commemorative Public Process

In managing and maintaining cemeteries, PARD recognizes the sensitivity of burial sites and welcomes a community voice in this process. While the context of the chapel construction over burials may never be fully known, PARD recognizes this situation as an opportunity to acknowledge a past injustice by commemorating burials that were formerly ignored and later lost to time, and also to interpret this situation so that the history is not lost on future generations.

Staff from the PARD Museums and Cultural Centers Division will facilitate a public process beginning in late Spring, which will ultimately result in recommendations for "Interpretation, Commemoration, and Reclamation" of the burials in the larger context of the Chapel Rehabilitation and the segregated section for people of color. This public outreach plan is currently being developed, and information about the process will soon follow.

It should be noted that the *Historic Cemeteries Master Plan*, adopted in 2015, recommended that PARD actively interpret and program historic cemeteries with an emphasis on the historic "Colored Grounds" at Oakwood along with Plummers Cemetery and Evergreen Cemetery, which are predominantly African-American. Further, partners such as Save Austin's Cemeteries and Six Square (Austin's African American Culture Heritage District), have long promoted programming and interpretation of historic municipal cemeteries.

Additional information about the rehabilitation project and contact information for select PARD staff can be found below:

Project web site: <http://austintexas.gov/page/oakwood-cemetery-chapel-rehabilitation>

PARD Media Contact:

John Nixon, PARD Communications Manager
512 974-2464
john.nixon@austintexas.gov

PARD Cemeteries Contact:

Tonja Walls-Davis, PARD Cemeteries Manager
512 978-2320
tonja.walls-davis@austintexas.gov

PARD Project Contact:

Kevin Johnson, PARD Project Manager
512 974-9506
kevin.johnson@austintexas.gov

PARD Historical Resources Contact:

Kim McKnight, Environmental Conservation
Program Manager
512 974-9478
kim.mcknight@austintexas.gov

Oakwood Chapel Rehabilitation Project and Archeological Investigation

Appendix: Supporting Information

1. Antiquities Permit from Texas Historical Commission

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
real places telling real stories

July 15, 2016

Josh Haefner
Hicks & Company
1504 West 5th Street
Austin, TX 78703

Re: Project review under the Antiquities Code of Texas
COA Oakwood Chapel Restoration, Travis County, Texas
Texas Antiquities Permit Application #7709

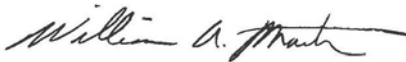
Dear Colleague:

Thank you for your Antiquities Permit Application for the above referenced project. This letter presents the final copy of the permit from the Executive Director of the Texas Historical Commission (THC), the state agency responsible for administering the Antiquities Code of Texas.

Please keep this copy for your records. The Antiquities Permit investigations requires the production and submittal of one printed copy of the final report, a completed abstract form submitted via our online system, two copies of the tagged PDF final report on CD (one with site location information & one without), and verification that any artifacts recovered and records produced during the investigations are curated at the repository listed in the permit. The abstract form maybe submitted via the THC website (www.thc.state.tx.us) or use url: <http://xapps.thc.state.tx.us/Abstract/login.aspx> Additionally, you must send the THC shapefiles showing the boundaries of the project area *and* the areas actually surveyed via email to archeological_projects@thc.state.tx.us.

If you have any questions concerning this permit or if we can be of further assistance, please contact Lillie Thompson at 512/463-1858. The reviewer for this project is Tiffany Osburn, 512/463-6096.

Sincerely,



for
Mark Wolfe
Executive Director

MW/lft

Enclosures

Cc: Kevin Johnson, City of Austin



State of Texas
TEXAS ANTIQUITIES COMMITTEE
ARCHEOLOGY PERMIT # 7709

This permit is issued by the Texas Historical Commission, hereafter referred to as the Commission, represented herein by and through its duly authorized and empowered representatives. The Commission, under authority of the Texas Natural Resources Code, Title 9, Chapter 191, and subject to the conditions hereinafter set forth, grants this permit for:

Monitoring

To be performed on a potential or designated landmark or other public land known as:

Title: COA Oakwood Chapel Restoration
County: Travis
Location: East-Central Austin (Oakwood Cemetery)

Owned or Controlled by: (hereafter known as the Permittee):

City of Austin
919 West 28th 1/2 Street
Austin, TX 78705

Sponsored by (hereafter known as the Sponsor)

City of Austin
919 West 28th 1/2 Street
Austin, TX 78705

The Principal Investigator/Investigation Firm representing the Owner or Sponsor is:

Josh Haefner
Hicks and Company
1504 West 5th Street
Austin, TX 78703

This permit is to be in effect for a period of:

5 Years and 0 Months

and Will Expire on:

07/06/2021

During the preservation, analysis, and preparation of a final report or until further notice by the Commission, artifacts, field notes, and other data gathered during the investigation will be kept temporarily at:

Hicks & Company

Upon completion of the final permit report, the same artifacts, field notes, and other data will be placed in a permanent curatorial repository at:

Texas State Univ.-CAS

Scope of Work under this permit shall consist of:

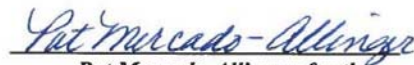
Archeological monitoring on the Oakwood Chapel Restoration Project, Travis County, Texas. For details see scope of work submitted with permit application.

ARCHEOLOGY PERMIT # 7709

This permit is granted on the following terms and conditions:

- 1) This project must be carried out in such a manner that the maximum amount of historic, scientific, archeological, and educational information will be recovered and preserved and must include the scientific, techniques for recovery, recording, preservation and analysis commonly used in archeological investigations. All survey level investigations must follow the state survey standards and the THC survey requirements established with the projects sponsor(s).
- 2) The Principal Investigator/Investigation Firm, serving for the Owner/Permittee and/or the Project Sponsor, is responsible for insuring that specimens, samples, artifacts, materials and records that are collected as a result of this permit are appropriately cleaned, and cataloged for curation. These tasks will be accomplished at no charge to the Commission, and all specimens, artifacts, materials, samples, and original field notes, maps, drawings, and photographs resulting from the investigations remain the property of the State of Texas, or its political subdivision, and must be curated at a certified repository. Verification of curation by the repository is also required, and duplicate copies of any requested records shall be furnished to the Commission before any permit will be considered complete.
- 3) The Principal Investigator/Investigation Firm serving for the Owner/Permittee, and/or the Project Sponsor is responsible for the publication of results of the investigations in a thorough technical report containing relevant descriptions, maps, documents, drawings, and photographs. A draft copy of the report must be submitted to the Commission for review and approval. Any changes to the draft report requested by the Commission must be made or addressed in the report, or under separate written response to the Commission. Once a draft has been approved by the Commission, one (1) printed, unbound copy of the final report containing at least one map with the plotted location of any and all sites recorded and two copies of the report in tagged PDF format on an archival quality CD or DVD shall be furnished to the commission. One copy must include the plotted location of any and all sites recorded and the other should not include the site location data. A paper copy and an electronic copy of the completed Abstracts in Texas Contract Archeology Summary Form must also be submitted with the final report to the Commission. (Printed copies of forms are available from the Commission or also online at www.thc.state.tx.us.)
- 4) If the Owner/Permittee, Project Sponsor or Principal Investigator/Investigation Firm fails to comply with any of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure or with any of the specific terms of this permit, or fails to properly conduct or complete this project within the allotted time, the permit will fall into default status. A notification of Default status shall be sent to the Principal Investigator/Investigation Firm, and the Principal Investigator will not be eligible to be issued any new permits until such time that the conditions of this permit are complete or, if applicable, extended.
- 5) The Owner/Permittee, Project Sponsor, and Principal Investigator/Investigation Firm, in the conduct of the activities hereby authorizes, must comply with all laws, ordinances and regulations of the State of Texas and of its political subdivisions including, but not limited to, the Antiquities Code of Texas; they must conduct the investigation in such a manner as to afford protection to the rights of any and all lessees or easement holders or other persons having an interest in the property and they must return the property to its original condition insofar as possible, to leave it in a state which will not create hazard to life nor contribute to the deterioration of the site or adjacent lands by natural forces.
- 6) Any duly authorized and empowered representative of the Commission may, at any time, visit the site to inspect the fieldwork as well as the field records, materials, and specimens being recovered.
- 7) For reasons of site security associated with historical resources, the Project Sponsor (if not the Owner/Permittee), Principal Investigator, Owner, and Investigation Firm shall not issue any press releases, or divulge to the news media, either directly or indirectly, information regarding the specific location of, or other information that might endanger those resources, or their associated artifacts without first consulting with the Commission, and the State agency or political subdivision of the State that owns or controls the land where the resource has been discovered.
- 8) This permit may not be assigned by the Principal Investigator/Investigation Firm, Owner/Permittee, or Project Sponsor in whole, or in part to any other individual, organization, or corporation not specifically mentioned in this permit without the written consent of the Commission.
- 9) Hold Harmless: The Owner/Permittee hereby expressly releases the State and agrees that Owner/Permittee will hold harmless, indemnify, and defend (including reasonable attorney's fees and cost of litigation) the State, its officers, agents, and employees in their official and/or individual capacities from every liability, loss, or claim for damages to persons or property, direct or indirect of whatsoever nature arising out of, or in any way connected with, any of the activities covered under this permit. The provisions of this paragraph are solely for the benefit of the State and the Texas Historical Commission and are not intended to create or grant any rights, contractual or otherwise, to any other person or entity.
- 10) Addendum: The Owner/Permittee, Project Sponsor and Principal Investigator/Investigation Firm must abide by any addenda hereto attached.

Upon a finding that it is in the best interest of the State, this permit is issued on 07/06/2016.


Pat Mercado-Allinger, for the
Texas Historical Commission

2. Archeological Field Reports and Site Photos

Summary of Archeological Excavations at Oakwood Cemetery 12/21/2016—1/18/2017

Archeological excavations at the Oakwood Cemetery Chapel resumed on December 21, 2016 following a meeting between Hicks & Company archeologists, Gadberry, and the City of Austin. As coordinated in the meeting, these excavation efforts continued inside and outside the chapel, with crew members working in both locations simultaneously whenever possible. The goal at this stage is to exhume the two known burials in the main room of the chapel and to determine approximately how many burials are located outside the chapel to the north and east, based on staining and patterning of burial shafts.

Fieldwork Summary

Inside the chapel, archeologists set up four one meter by one meter excavation units and a site datum along the east side of the initial exploratory trench (**Figure 1**) on December 21, 2016. Excavation proceeded by hand using shovels, trowels, and eventually, chisels and hammers. Progress is relatively slow due to the extremely dry and compact clay soils in this area. Excavation on these interior units has continued each working day. As of January 18th, 2017, artifacts recovered from excavation of these units include several pieces of wood and a few square cut nails. One phalanx was recovered from the northernmost unit, designated as XU1. Based on the depth of recovery and proximity to pier drilling back dirt it is likely out of primary context, having been redeposited during mechanical backhoe activity or pier drilling.



Figure 1: Plan view of interior excavation units.

Additionally, some highly fragmented pieces of bone were noted in the southernmost unit, XU4 on January 4–6. Excavation in the southeastern corner of the unit where the bone was found has temporarily been halted so that the surrounding floor surfaces can be leveled and to open additional excavation units around XU 4 to expose more of the burial. These remains represent a

third burial in the main room of the chapel interior. The two previously known burials are located in the XU's north of XU 4. The first burial was identified by wood and nail fragments during initial trench excavation. The second burial was identified by staining in the exploratory trench profile. On January 11th, fragmented bone was discovered in the northernmost excavation unit (XU 1) at a depth of 45 cm below datum (**Figure 2**). A burial shaft is also clearly visible in plan view at this depth, consisting of mottled clay surrounded by darker, softer soil. Excavation of this burial continued under the direction of Dr. Jodi Jacobson for the next several days. Work on this burial had to be halted beginning on January 16th, however, due to flooding in the unit.



Figure 2: Fragmented bone found in XU1

On Wednesday, January 11th, excavation began on a one meter by one meter unit (XU 6) directly east of XU 4. The unit was placed in this location to expose more of Burial #6. Archeologists have been working to quickly chisel this unit down to the same level as XU 4, but the dry and compact soils are making this difficult. By the end of the day on January 16th what appears to be the edge of a mottled clay burial shaft had become apparent along the southern edge of XU 6. No bone has been recovered from XU 6 yet, which means the bone recovered in XU 4, directly to the west is likely out of context. On January 12th, a 1 meter by 50 centimeter unit (XU 7) was opened directly east of XU 3. The purpose of this unit is to expose as much of Burial #2 as possible. Burial #2 likely extends east of XU 7, but this unit is only 50 centimeters wide east to west to ensure excavation does not happen within two feet of the foundation footer.

After a meeting between Hicks & Company and the City of Austin on January 12th, it was decided that archeologists would also scrape a small layer of soil from the other rooms in the chapel, using shovels, to check for burial stains similar to what was seen outside north of the chapel (which is discussed further below). That afternoon shovel scraping began in the tower

room. This consisted of removing already screened dirt and roughly leveling the floor. Scraping stayed one foot away from the foundation footers. After cleaning the area with trowels, three rectangular stains became apparent (**Figure 3**). As expected, one of the stains somewhat overlaps the pier hole where human remains were initially found (Burial #1). Unlike the burial stains outside, the two stains closest to the wall consist of a softer, darker soil surrounded by mottled clay. Another stain near the southwestern corner of the room is fainter, but consists of hard, dark gray, mottled clay.



Figure 3: Burial stains in tower room of chapel, facing east.

On Tuesday, December 27th, mechanical excavation began outside, at the northwest extent of the project area, in a minimally invasive fashion, peeling sediment off surface in 5-8 centimeter increments, pausing to screen the back dirt. As no patterned cultural staining or artifacts were noted in situ during scraping and only a single potential historic-period artifact was recovered during screening, at approximately 40–50 centimeters it was decided to continue scraping this area to a three-foot depth to expose an intact wall profile that could be used to inform further scrapings and exhumations (this corner of the project area was the only location where previous construction efforts had yet to remove top soil and previous fill material). Archeologists closely monitored and screened all sediment from this continued excavation. Following excavation of this control-trench to a depth of three feet below surface, the south wall was shovel and trowel scrapped and profiled. Scraping of this wall revealed a piece of wood that is potentially part of a casket from 40–80 centimeters below the surface (**Figure 4**).



Figure 4: Outside Trench 2 southern wall profile with wood in profile, parallel to tape measure.

Once trench excavation was completed and west profile was complete, scraping continued at the northwestern area utilizing both a backhoe and bulldozer, removing sediment in the same controlled low-invasive methodology, in wider swaths. For provenience control, these excavations were done in three separate “blocks”, designated as Blocks A, B, and C. Based on the soil profile in the trench, it was decided that for now, the bulldozer would at first only remove the first layer of top soil and associated sediment, which extends to approximately 30 centimeters below the current surface. A sample of this sediment (approximately 30 percent) was screened. A number of artifacts were recovered, but none that were temporally diagnostic to any time period prior to the mid twentieth century. Artifacts recovered included several keys, ranging from skeleton keys and older vehicle keys to modern-cut keys. Two coins with 1960s dates, dozens of glass shards, plastics, and various rusted metal artifacts were recorded from the scraping. These artifacts suggest that the area northwest of the chapel was once the location of some type of work area or shed, or a location where flooding has previously redeposited discarded items from up slope. The mid to late twentieth century deposits correlate with the topsoil layer noted in the above-described wall profile (Outside Trench 2) and it is likely that this a recently deposited stratum.

On Friday, December 30th, a hand-cut piece of limestone was identified during scraping north of the chapel. This stone appears to have been set vertically in the ground and is in line with the first headstone that was discovered near the northwest corner of the chapel. It is likely that this stone represents another grave marker (**Figure 5**).



Figure 5: Headstone uncovered in scraping Block A north of chapel.

On Tuesday, January 3rd, interior and exterior excavations continued simultaneously. A narrow and shallow backhoe trench (OT 3) was excavated east of the chapel parallel and immediately adjacent to the gravel road. This trenching was done to check for any stains indicative of burials shafts that could extend under the current gravel road. The trench was only excavated to 30–40 centimeters below the current ground surface because several pieces of wood and a rib fragment that could be human were encountered. Wood fragments were observed intermittently along the entire length of the trench. The rib fragment was found while screening soil from the southern 1/3 of the trench. Given the depth that the wood was discovered at, it is believed that it was part of a wood plank road or walkway rather than coffin wood, though coffins cannot be ruled out as the source of the wood at this time.

Limited scraping in Blocks B and C continued north of the chapel on Tuesday, January 4th. A sample of this sediment was screened (approximately 20%). Though some artifacts such as various types of glass and metal were recovered, none of them definitively predate chapel construction. Following scraping, garden hoes were used to scrape back part of the area that had been mechanically scraped to check for indications of burials. By the end of the day on January 4th no clear burial shaft stains were visible, so the following day outside work concentrated on extending Outside Trench 1 and XU 5.

On Thursday, January 5th, a one meter by one meter excavation unit was placed in between the two headstones uncovered north of the chapel's northwest corner. The goal of placing the unit in this location is to be able to view in profile the grave shafts of both burials presumably associated with the headstones. Viewing these profiles will help inform exhumation methodology and further burial identification. Excavation of the unit proceeded relatively

quickly because sediment in this area is soft. By the end of the day on Friday, January 6th, this unit had been excavated to 30 centimeters below the surface. No further excavation has happened in this unit since January 6th because continued mechanical scraping in Blocks A-C revealed distinct burial shafts, as explained below. Given these new discoveries there is little reason to continue with excavation in XU 5.

From January 5–6 the trench that was excavated immediately adjacent to the east wall of the chapel (OT 1) was extended south to the street using a backhoe. The trench extends to a depth of approximately 30 centimeters below the surface. This excavation was monitored by archeologists; however, none of the soil was screened due to the shallowness of the trench and lack of obvious historic features. Approximately 3.4 meters north of the street, the backhoe uncovered a block of limestone that measures 30 cm in width (**Figure 6**). This block appears to be in line with the modern sidewalk and possibly represents an older sidewalk. It was found near the end of the day on Friday and will be explored further.



Figure 6: Outside Trench 1 showing limestone block; taken from street.

On Monday, January 9th, excavation continued on units located inside the chapel while mechanical scraping continued north of the chapel in Blocks B and C. As before, layers of dirt were removed in 5–8 cm increments while archeologists monitored. Sediment was sample- (approximately 20 percent). After removing 10–15 additional centimeters in Block C, clear burial shafts became visible in the northern half of the block. Mechanical scraping continued north of the chapel to bring the rest of Block C and Block B down to the same level. Once this was finished and the area was scraped clean with a trowel, five burial shaft stains were clearly

visible (**Figure 7**). Two of these burials located at the southern edge of Block B are partially overlap one another, indicating that not all burials in this section of the cemetery were evenly spaced or clearly marked.

On Wednesday, January 11th, trowel scraping was completed in Blocks B and C. This revealed two to three more probable burials in Block B, some of which are slightly overlapping, as discussed above (see **Attachment A**). These overlapping burials will hopefully become clearer and easier to interpret once more soil is mechanically removed further to the south.



Figure 7: Burial stains in Blocks B and C; facing west from eastern edge of Blocks B and C.

Beginning in the afternoon of Thursday, January 12th, mechanical scraping continued north of the chapel in a new block, Block D. This block is located directly east of Block C and extends east to the gravel road. Through the course of the afternoon two new burial stains were partially revealed. These became visible at a higher depth (10—20 cm) than the burial stains in Blocks B and C, probably due to the natural slope. As a result, mechanical scraping did not go as deep in Block D. Near the end of the day the machine hit (and shattered) a piece of limestone in the southeast corner of Block D that was potentially part of a grave marker. The machine therefore moved north to continue scraping while avoiding the possible marker. Quickly after scraping continued in the northern half of Block D, however, the machine hit another piece of limestone. This one did not break as much as the one to the south, and it was clear that this one had been

purposefully shaped. It was also still totally in situ, having been placed deeper in the ground than the one to the south (**Figure 8**). Given this information, it is likely that both of these limestone pieces are parts of either headstones or footstones. It should also be noted that these possible grave markers are nearly at the edge of the gravel road that runs east of the chapel. Because they were uncovered late in the afternoon, and there was no easy way for the machine to avoid the possible markers while continuing work, scraping north of the chapel ceased for the day.



Figure 8: Probable grave markers in Block D, facing west.

Overnight between January 12th and into the morning of January 13th, the site saw heavy rain, which left much of the outside work area inundated with water, including all scraping blocks, despite attempts to keep them covered with plastic (**Figures 9**). The trench outside the east wall of the chapel (OT-1) was filled with water, nearly to the top (**Figure 10**). The pier hole in the northeast corner of the tower room was also filled to the top with water (**Figure 11**). Floor scraping was attempted in the small room in the northeast corner of the chapel, but this quickly became inundated with water too (**Figure 12**). Work was able to continue in the excavation units in the main room of the chapel, which had stayed dry. Before leaving for the weekend some measures were taken to prevent further flooding within the chapel. City of Austin employees used a shopvac to remove the water from OT 1 and the pier hole in the tower room. They also placed sandbags around OT 1 to attempt to divert the water around it. Over the weekend (January 14-15) rain continued off and on, and by Monday site flooding was worse. Both the northeast corner room and the tower room of the chapel were flooded, and water had started to come in to XU 1. Limited work was able to continue on other XUs inside on Monday. By Tuesday, January 17th, however, flooding was worse, which made excavation inside more

difficult and also raised concerns about structural stability and safety. As a result, work has been halted since approximately 10:00 Tuesday morning.



Figure 9: Blocks A-D filled with water after rain on 1/13/17.



Figure 10: Outside Trench 1 filled with water on 1/13/17.



Figure 11: Pier hole in northeast corner of tower filled with water 1/13/17.



Figure 12: Room in northeast corner of the chapel inundated with water 1/13/17.

Artifact Analysis

To date, artifacts collected have included: pieces of wood, nails, pull tabs, miscellaneous pieces of metal, plastics, shaped limestone, several types of glass and ceramics, coins, buttons, keys, and a horseshoe. Human remains have also been recovered from three distinct burials (Burials #

1, 2, and 4). Most of the artifacts have come from the first approximately 30 cm of the scraping blocks north of the chapel. These first 30 cm are part of a distinct stratum visible in profile in OT-2, in the far northwestern corner of the project area. This stratum consists of dark brown sandy clay loam. Unfortunately, few of the artifacts from this layer are diagnostic, or dateable to a specific time period. Furthermore, many of the artifacts from the first layer of the scraping blocks that are diagnostic date to the mid twentieth century or later, meaning they are probably not associated with any of the burials in this area of the cemetery. For example, several pull tabs from aluminum cans were recovered from Block A, but these date to the 1970s. Two coins with 1960s dates were also found in this block. Part of a plastic fork recovered from Block A also affirms a mid to late twentieth century date for the first 30 cm of soil north of the chapel. Based on the late dates of these artifacts it seems likely that this soil was fill brought in from elsewhere and/or is the result of runoff moving down slope to the southwest.

A few artifacts dating to before the mid-twentieth century have been recovered within and immediately below the top 30 cm in blocks A-D. These are: eight shards of solarized amethyst glass, one solarized amethyst glass bottle stopper (**Figure 13**), and two aqua glass shards. Solarized amethyst glass refers to glass that began as colorless and turned a light to deep purple hue when exposed to UV light, due to the manganese dioxide used in its manufacture. The majority of these bottles were produced from the 1880s through the end of World War I (Lindsey 2016). Aqua glass has a wider diagnostic date range. Aqua glass containers were common from at least the early nineteenth century and mostly fell out of use by the 1920s. One major exception was Ball Mason jars, which continued to be manufactured with aqua glass through the 1930s (Lindsey 2016).



Figure 13: Solarized amethyst glass stopper from Block C.

A few diagnostic artifacts have been found in other locations around the project area. The base of a ceramic vase or dish stamped with “1606” and “Wardle England” was recovered immediately outside the southeast corner of the chapel tower (**Figure 14**). This was found just below the surface when contractors began hand digging the trench that runs parallel to the tower wall (now designated OT-1). These markings indicate that this earthenware vessel was produced by Wardle & Co. in Staffordshire, England between 1891 and 1935 (Birks, n.d.). A complete horseshoe and a broken glass mug made from solarized amethyst glass (**Figure 15**) were recovered very close to where the ceramic base was found. It is likely that these artifacts are associated with Burial #5, which was identified by staining in the OT-1 wall profile outside the southeast corner of the chapel tower. They were probably placed around the top of the grave sometime between 1891 and the 1920s.



Figure 15: Stoneware base with maker’s mark.

The only other type of potentially diagnostic artifacts recovered at Oakwood thus far is nails. Several square or rectangular machine-cut nails have been found inside the chapel in various XUs and at different depths. Machine cut nails were produced as early as the 1790s but their popularity quickly waned beginning in the 1890s when the Bessemer process allowed production of inexpensive, soft steel (Visser 1997). After this time most nails produced were the steel wire type nails that are still used today. Some machine cut nails have continued to be produced to the present day with the same method used before the 1890s. Today, these nails are generally used for fastening hardwood floors and for other specialty uses. Given that the chapel originally had hardwood flooring, it is impossible to determine if the cut nails collected so far are from caskets that predate the twentieth century or with the later wood flooring of the chapel.

Preliminary Conclusions and Recommendations

As of January 18, 2017 three burials have been identified in the main room of the chapel (Burials 2, 4, and 6). Once flooding in the chapel has been fully mitigated, it is anticipated that excavation of XUs 1–7 associated with these burials will continue. However, data suggests that current recovered artifacts in XU4 to current depth lack locational integrity and intact burials are at least another five cm below current depth in XUs 4, 6, and 7. Because of this, and given the COA's temporal and financial constraints, it is recommended that more expedient excavation strategies be considered at this location in consultation with the THC. Shovel scraping in the chapel tower revealed rectangular stains that likely represent three additional burials in this room, one of which is associated with the human remains recovered during pier hole drilling (Burial #1; numbers have yet to be assigned to the other two). All of these stains appear to underlay building walls to various degrees. Because of engineering, structural, and safety concerns (see **Attachment B**) it is recommended that each of these interments be considered on an individual basis regarding practicality and degree of exhumation required. For burials where exhumation is not feasible the COA intends to mark locations with wall-affixed burial plaques or other appropriate interpretive monumentation.

Investigations at the Chapel's exterior north side have revealed seven distinct burial stains as well as two additional grave markers. Proposed changes to the design plans have removed the accessible parking space originally planned for this area and the COA is investigating similar reductions to sidewalk and flumes with the intent of maintaining design integrity and minimizing potential impacts to the exterior. Possible alternatives for diversion of water could include creation of a shallow swale on the Chapel's north side to direct surface water away before it reaches the building envelope.

Hick & Company intends to collect location data on the discovered interments utilizing a total station once conditions permit to aid in site interpretation and to inform any future infrastructure planning. Hence, with hardscaped impacts eliminated or minimized, it is recommended that preservation in place with appropriate grave markers would serve as satisfactory mitigation, aligning with the COA's primary goal of chapel restoration. Two trenches have been excavated between the east wall of the chapel and the gravel road (OT-1 and OT-3). The wall profiles of OT-1, which is immediately adjacent to the chapel's east wall, show that four probable burials are located along the length of this trench. Whether or not these will need to be exhumed is dependent on design changes to the perimeter sidewalk and flume, currently under consideration.

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Visser, Thomas

1997 Nails: Clues to a Building's History. Electronic Document,
<https://www.uvm.edu/~histpres/203/nails.html>, accessed January 20, 2017.

Significant progress has occurred since late January's interior flooding delays. Per agreed plan of action between Gadberry, the City of Austin and Hicks & Company, water diversion, and the bulk removal of interior fill to reveal additional burial staining was coordinated and performed from February 3–10. On February 3, small shallow excavations and pushpiles of spoils were strategically placed to help conduct rainwater and mitigate rainwater on the surface including ground water accumulation. During this work revealed two additional burial stains were revealed in Block C at the north side of the chapel's exterior, which followed the recognizable pattern of other stain features on the ground surface (**Figure 1**). Concurrent to this exterior work, interior preparation for sand infill for excavation units 1-7 was aided by City of Austin workers who brought in 20 cubic yards of sand, most of which was used to fill and protect the interior excavation from mechanical excavations (**Figure 2**). From February 6–8, mechanical excavation in the interior of the chapel, was preformed to an agreed upon 43 inch (approximately 110 centimeters) level from known front entrance datum. During monitoring of this work, human remains were noted in ground floor within the tower room (Feature Tower 2- now Burial 7). Work in this area was halted while awaiting bioarchaeological specialist Dr. Kate Spradly, who arrived February 8.



Figure 1: A new exterior stain in the southeast corner of block C. View from Chapel looking north.



Figure 2: Mechanical operations within the chapel, note protective sand in plastic lined XU1-7.



Figure 3: Human bone in FT2 (Burial 7), comprising of Cranial fragments including teeth.

According to Dr. Spradely, the interred individual in Burial 7 is an 18-25 year old person, based on root development observed on a molar found associated with other cranial bones in the east part of the grave (Figure 3). Manual fill removal in the interior of the office room revealed 3-4 tentative stains, one along the east wall and three along the wall associated with the safe and

closet. Wet clay and foot traffic temporarily obscured the stains, but at the current 38 inch level, there is room for additional excavation to better delineate. On February 10, continued delineation of interior staining and monitoring of the west wall trench and the southeast corner wall trench continued. During this activity additional grave staining was noted near front entrance of chapel (Figure 4).



Figure 4: New Staining in Southeast corner of the interior chapel. View from doorway.

Preliminary conclusions on End of Day February 10, 2017

Based primarily on known burials and known staining in the interior, a linear spatial pattern of relatively evenly distributed potential features/burials/plots can be considered if it assumed this area of the cemetery was fully utilized. There seems to be little random placement of graves, but a somewhat orderly grid that was envisioned by cemetery planners.

A least 10—15 burials may have been previously impacted by the construction of the Chapel. Given that the footings of the building continue beyond our current 43 inch level and below the average bone level, it is highly probable that past workers building the chapel penetrated through the graves to create the foundation, bringing artifacts and human remains to the surface and then redepositing as mixed surface scatter, grading, and interior fill (**Figure 6**).

Based on the findings of the interior hand and mechanical excavation it is suggested that there are several modifications and fill events in the past. Primarily, the footprint of the chapel may have been dug out to a level close to current excavation level in order to create the foundation. Perhaps prior to 1940, imported clay was later added beneath the wood floor to alleviate water permeation under the floor. This may have had good effect in the main chapel due to clay dryness and hardness, but a lesser effect in the tower and office as suggested by current moist conditions. The concrete floor modification in the 1940's saw another fill event at the entrance of the chapel where dark silty clay full of logs, limestone rock fragments, old building materials, a horseshoe, square cut nails, and other locally gathered debris including a foot stone were deposited up to 2.2 meters from the south chapel wall and near to floor level.

These cultural materials as presented to us currently are at least 4 times removed from context by 1) general degradation and redistribution over time since being originally deposited 2) initial Chapel construction 3) past Chapel maintenance, localized workshopping activities, 1940s redesign and 4) excavation and modification of the land surface in this current reconstruction phase.

The sum total of previously displaced personal funerary artifacts, human remains, and other historic construction/maintenance/personal items is a very mixed and out of context, a localized universe of cultural material currently redeposited on the current ground construction surface and pushpiles. Though direct observation during mechanical excavation yielded little in regards to artifacts or bone, it is probable that many other of these materials are now in the segregated/unsegregated pushpiles and require sample screening. Although, being out of context, even before excavation, it would provide only the most general and limited of temporal and associative data, even if hand dug at 10 cm levels and screened 100 percent. What artifacts and bone remains within the currently known and delineated burials and features would provide the more temporal and associative data useful to historic burial use and demography.

3. Engineering Letter regarding Structural Constraints



December 22, 2016

Mr. David Carroll, AIA
HUO Architects
1010 E. 11th Street
Austin, Texas 78702

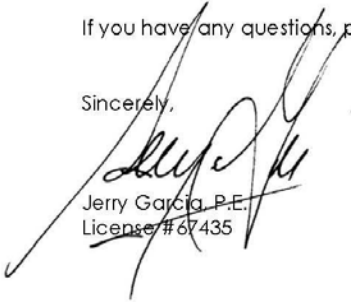
RE: Oakwood Chapel – Oakwood Cemetery

Dear Mr. Carroll:

This letter serves to confirm our on-site discussions regarding the excavations currently taking place at the Oakwood Chapel. Under no circumstance shall any excavations occur directly beneath any existing masonry walls. No excavations greater than a 4'-0" depth shall occur within a distance of 2' to the face of any existing walls.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact this office.

Sincerely,



Jerry Garcia, P.E.
License # 67435



4. Public Feedback

Questions and Comments submitted for discussion on March 25th Public Meeting:

- *Why are you just focusing on this one issue?*
- *The stones and roads need restoration too. What are you doing to address these funding issues?*
- *Why not move chapel to Austin Memorial Park? Leave graves alone*
- *Offer families financial assistance to relocate graves.*
- *Are you attempting to ID the graves to though DNA analysis?*
- *Community Conservation: Why has PARD already decided that the graves will be commemoration?*
- *Are there plans for some type of memorial listing the names and location of prominent African Americans?*
- *Confusion about what was said 1. City Rep “Building being moved is not an option?” 2. “Decision must be made quickly? Later said time is not of the essence”*
- *Comment: Archaeological content, regarding the disinterment of the bodies under the Chapel. (Grania Patterson)*
- *A suspended wood floor can be installed in a way that grave can be undisturbed. Leave the graves alone.*
- *Has there been any information recovered that would indicate human remains were disinterred purposely or otherwise during the 1914 building construction?*
- *Any indication that there extant headstones or other markers in 1914 in this area of the cemetery?*
- *Is there space in the cemetery to rebury the remains?*
- *I am concerned that the “history” and a historical designation does not allow a relocation of a building, but allows relocation (i.e. exhumation) of skeletons.... Smacks of acculturation & moral elitism.*
- *Is it morally wrong to build, pave, rebuild or restructure a building over graves?*
- *How will you memorialize the graves?*
- *Why are you not discussing North Bound Mopac built over graves too? Commemorate those too.*
- *Is the THC permit online?*
- *How are you funding this work?*
- *Are you saying that the Chapel floor will not be disturbed to consider excavation?*
- *Was the Chapel renovated earlier and when?*
- *Can you just move the Oakwood Chapel onsite to a different location and leave the bone fragments’ site as a sacred ground with a plaque?*
- *Is there any records from the original construction of the chapel address the issue?*
- *Does the existence of the graves pose a structural concern for the building in the future – settlement issues, etc?*
- *Leave remains in place with significant memorial.*
- *Will artifacts be preserved and displayed?*

- *Beneath this floor, enfolded by the walls of this chapel, lie the remains of past citizens of Austin. Not forgotten, but cherished by the community. Dedication date. (Grania Patterson)*

Questions and Comments transcribed from small table discussion from March 25th Public Meeting:

Table One: Share general feedback and thoughts for commemoration

- *Stop walking pets/dogs from use of cemetery as a park*
- *City needs to follow health and safety code 713.011 regarding care of municipal cemeteries*
- *Notifying relatives about any memorials/services*
- *Do African American churches and funeral homes have records of those buried at Oakwood?*
- *Try to identify people under the chapel via DNA, Austin History Center records, and church records*
- *Note not just African American churches but also other people of color and white paupers/"strangers"*
- *List as a historic site on tours (especially promoted by the City of Austin)*
- *Empty site- extend memorial into the burial garden (graves are often unmarked, THC is exploring this)*
- *Incorporate Oakwood into GWCM Juneteenth observances*
- *Limited view for restoration*
- *Glass floor for chapel so no one can ignore the significance*
- *Or raise wooden floor with plaques included after wall is stabilized*

Table Two: Provide input for additional outreach or notification ("who is not here?")

- *Camacho family (Danny's family) maybe his sister*
- *Local churches (continue)*
- *Elderly members (for research into who was there)*
- *Provide info table at Juneteenth*
- *Libraries/Carver Museum*
- *Cyclical process- needs to address it again and again*
- *Always seeking info*
- *Always seeking collections*
- *Funeral homes*
- *Reach out to the community to get more people of African descent to be in the know*
- *Encourage groups/people to share this information and to give feedback*
- *Michelle Mears- author of book about feedman colony in Austin*
- *Grace will lead home- book*

Table Three: Learn about archeological process and construction project

Questions:

- *Artifacts- who do they belong to?*
- *Memorial- would it have to be in the chapel space?*
- *Is there a dental expert archeologist?*
- *What is being done now to mitigate damage?*
- *What can we learn about the people?*
- *What condition are the remains in?*

- *Can the chapel be raised to remove remains?*
- *Does the chapel have to remain in place?*
- *Is there any reported history from when the chapel was built and opened?*
- *Can we do additional GPR?*

Comments:

- *Do as much as possible through non-invasive process*
- *Include Austin Parks Foundation for support*
- *Michelle Mears Book on Freedman's Colonies*



Oakwood Chapel Project – Community Conversation
 Saturday, March 25, 2017
 10:00am – 12:00pm
 Delores Duffy Recreation Center

Sign-In Sheet

Name	Email Address or Phone Number
AURENE / Son / TRAVIS CITY TX 78758	
PATRICIA CULHAM	
ZENOBIA C. JOSEPH	Saturday, 25 March 2017 10:05AM
William Ellis	
Alan Garcia	
Roland C. Hayes	
Kelsey Russell	
Bob Davel	
Jim Pitts & Cynthia McFarlin	
Eleanor Thompson	
Helen Clark	
Angeladerron	



Our Mission Statement: To provide, protect and preserve a park system that promotes quality recreational, cultural and outdoor experiences for the Austin community.



Oakwood Chapel Project – Community Conversation
 Saturday, March 25, 2017
 10:00am – 12:00pm
 Delores Duffy Recreation Center

Sign-in Sheet	
Name	Email Address or Phone Number
GRANITA PATTERSON	
Jan Root	
Terri Mirka	
JESIE WOLFENDEN	
DELORES DUFFY	
Adrian Brown	
Bahagiel Tillman	
HUGH MAYFIELD	
Ashleigh Knapp	
GRACE CESTANO	
David Campbell	
Mandy - Fink	
SCOTT RIDER	
Johnnie M. Overton	
Jalyn Victor	
Ray Boyd	
Dale Platt	
Josie Ragolia	
Megan Spencer	



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Oakwood Chapel Project – Community Conversation
 Saturday, March 25, 2017
 10:00am – 12:00pm
 Delores Duffy Recreation Center

****SIGN-UP FOR INTEREST IN COMMEMORATIVE AND INTERPRETIVE PROJECT COMPONENT****

Name	Email Address or Phone Number
Sharon Blythe	
Helen Clark	
Veslie Wouffenden	
Sally Victor	
Feri Mirka	
Megan Spencer	
Nefertiti Jackman	
Tom Hartz	



Our Mission Statement: To provide, protect and preserve a park system that promotes quality recreational, cultural and outdoor experiences for the Austin community.

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
real places telling real stories

April 5, 2017

Kevin Johnson
City of Austin
919 West 28th ½ Street
Austin, TX 78705

Re: Oakwood Cemetery Coordination under the Antiquities Code of Texas (TAC #7709)

Dear Mr. Johnson:

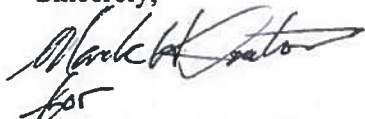
Thank you for your ongoing coordination with this office regarding above referenced Antiquities permitted project. This letter serves as additional comment on the project from the State Historic Preservation Officer, the Executive Director of the Texas Historical Commission.

It is our position that if any portion of casket or human remains will be impacted in any way by the project, those remains must be exhumed. This applies to the entire work site, including piers for wall stabilization, piers for the floor, etc.

Thank you for your efforts to preserve the irreplaceable heritage of Texas.

If you have any questions concerning our review or if we can be of further assistance, please contact Tiffany Osburn at tiffany.osburn@thc.texas.gov.

Sincerely,



for
Mark Wolfe, State Historic Preservation Officer

MW/to





THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

Department of Anthropology, 2201 Speedway Avenue, Stop C3200 • Austin, TX 78712-1723 • (512) 471-4206 • www.utexas.edu

April 3, 2017

Kevin Johnson
Project Coordinator
City of Austin Parks and Recreation Dept.
PO Box 1088
Austin, TX 78767-1088

Dear Mr. Johnson,

I'm writing at the request of Kim McKnight, who asked that I provide recommendations on what I believe would be the best way to proceed with the unmarked burials located within the Oakwood Cemetery's chapel. I want to first point out that I've only visited the site once, and as you're no doubt aware, have not been involved in any professional capacity with this project.

Given that the chapel is slated for renovations and will continue to be used for public functions, I'd recommend that the burials be exhumed and reburied elsewhere at the cemetery. Moreover, all of the personal effects and coffin hardware of the deceased should be reinterred along with the remains of those deceased, and Austin Parks should solicit the support of a local church or churches to perform burial rites. Each individual deserves to have their burial marked with a permanent grave marker, as well.

I'm basing my above recommendations on the practices carried out at other significant African American historic cemeteries, including the Dallas Freedmen's Cemetery, and the African Burial Ground in Manhattan. Of prime importance is the respect for those buried; continuing to use the chapel would undoubtedly have a negative impact on the burials, and disturb the remains.

I'd also strongly recommend that you continue to reach out to Austin's African American community, and to work with them in resolving this. It's important that the community be involved at every stage of the project, and that Austin Parks makes every effort to be transparent and open to communication.

I sincerely hope that you, your staff, the local African American community, and other stakeholders, are able to come to a mutually agreeable way forward regarding this significant site.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Maria Franklin", written over a horizontal line.

Maria Franklin
Associate Professor

Cc: Ora Houston, Kim McKnight, Tonja Walls-Davis

Johnson, Kevin

From: Marilyn Poole [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, April 10, 2017 2:00 AM
To: Johnson, Kevin; McKnight, Kim
Subject: Re: REMINDER: Community Conversation on Oakwood Cemetery Chapel

I am unable to attend Tuesday's meeting, but I do offer the following:

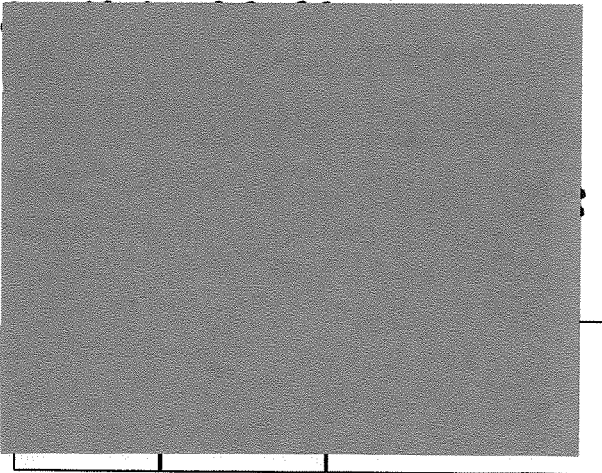
Our East Austin community was hurt badly by the way desegregation of the schools was conducted. The so-called integration was really an assimilation that has nearly destroyed us. The option is always the majority saying "What we have is more valuable and more important than you or anything that you bring to the table; so, ours gets preserved, and you have to choose between available options." The premise is flawed, presumptive, and hurtful. That was true of school desegregation in the '70s; it is equally applicable in this case. I am not advocating a move of the historic structure; I am just addressing the elephant that is in the room at these hearings.

That being said, I will offer a suggestion that the best course, the most sensitive and empathetic course given the circumstances, might be to exhume and identify to the fullest extent possible the skeletal remains underneath the treasured building, but only if a significant percentage of the skeletal population (e.g. 90%) can be recovered. Then, memorialize those remains individually, by exhibit or monument. This would be respectful. This would be sensitive to both history and its impact. This would be ameliorative.

Sincerely,

Marilyn

MARILYN POOLE
Attorney at Law
THE FOWLER LAW FIRM, P.C.



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April 6, 2017

City Of Austin
Austin Parks & Recreation Cemetery- Facility Services
2800 Hancock Dr.
Austin, Texas 78731

Tonja Walls-Davis

Thanks for accepting our comments concerning the human remains found in the Oakwood Cemetery. These comments are grounded in serious thought and discussion among original Austenite's and others.

- a) Those human remains found should be respectfully exhumed and reinterred. Properly marked as best can be done and identified, close proximity of their original interment.

Sincerely,

Roland C. Hayes
Director African American Cultural Center
Austin Community College

[REDACTED]

March 26, 2017

Ora Houston, District 1 Council Member
City of Austin
P.O. Box 1088
Austin, TX 78767

Dear Council Member Houston:

Cathy and I attended the Oakwood Cemetery Development Meeting yesterday at the Delores Duffie Recreation Center. I was not feeling well so we stayed only for the presentation. But I did provide my thoughts on one of the feedback cards.

I have some expertise and experience that might be useful. I retired after 37 years in museums, the last 27 as director of the Corpus Christi Museum of Science and History. In that capacity, I was a department head with the City of Corpus Christi. Among the programs, I oversaw was archeology field research including Native American burials. The Corpus Christi Museum is also the Texas Marine Archeology Repository. As a professional historian, I have had occasion to work with historic preservation issues in Texas, Michigan, and Delaware. In retirement, I remain on the Board of Directors of the Texas Tropical Trail Region, a program of the Texas Heritage Trails Program - Texas Historical Commission. I am also on the editorial board of Authentic Texas Magazine (authentic texas.com) which is a statewide heritage tourism magazine.

There is a long history of burials within, under, and around Church structures. I am used to the more intentional practice of doing that with columbarium's in my current church in Bastrop (Calvary Episcopal Church) and my former church in Corpus Christi (St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church). The history of such burials usually includes the burial of important individuals within the confines of the church. My favorite is the upright burial of Ben Jonson (17th century playwright and poet) in Westminster Cathedral. How cool is that?

One of the foundational premises of historic preservation is to avoid major changes to designated structures. The construction of a chapel over burials, however inadvertent and perhaps unintentional, is unfortunate in retrospect. However, the integrity of the burials and the structure, in this case, ought to be respected. As was pointed out, the mitigation of all the burials is not possible given the location of some of them under the walls of the structure.

I applaud the decision to replace the poured concrete floor with a suspended wood floor. It is historically appropriate in a restoration sense, but it also is an opportunity to replace the floor with minimal impact on the burials below. In my opinion, such a carefully designed floor treatment should be installed leaving the graves below undisturbed.

Sincerely,

Rick Stryker

[Redacted signature block]

Johnson, Kevin

From: daleflatt [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 28, 2017 9:44 AM
To: Johnson, Kevin
Subject: Do you have a copy of this Parks engineering report

Whereby they dug a couple of test holes on the outside of the chapel to check on the foundation a few years ago just want to be sure that some of your potential burials aren't those test holes

Sent via the Samsung GALAXY S® 5, an AT&T 4G LTE smartphone

Johnson, Kevin

From: kay boyd [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 28, 2017 1:46 PM
To: Johnson, Kevin
Subject: Re: Chapel/Oakwood research

This is what I have found on African-American burials at Oakwood. The statement was made Saturday about the colored not BEING ALLOWED to be buried in other places. I do not think this was completely true or least at all times.

In what was called the "colored grounds" I have identified

Facts on who is buried in the "colored grounds"?

Paupers--miscellaneous

Blacks--well known and not

Some "Mexicans"- 4 tombstones found

Some "whites"—3 families (7 stones)

This is not the only area where blacks are buried. At least 2 lots (48 and 50) east of the road have families – Mahala Murchison Strain and Brown/Baylor. Also miscellaneous blacks and whites in lot 49. Plus Col. Littlefield's manservant Nathan Stokes in his lot up near MLK.

SAC is working on a proposal to rename this burial ground. We believe that the time is right to consider a new name and we are gathering suggestions for that area. They can be presented when and to whom appropriate. We also want to grid this section so that burial locations can be identified. At this time it appears as though they are sown in a field of grass.

Kay

On Tue, Mar 28, 2017 at 1:20 PM, Johnson, Kevin <Kevin.Johnson@austintexas.gov> wrote:

Ms. Boyd, thank you for the email and notice about the articles. I was able to easily find those you have posted on the SAC website. Thank you for linking me to those.

If there is other information you're able to uncover, please don't hesitate to share it with me!

Thanks,

Kevin Johnson

Project Coordinator | CIP Project Management

City of Austin | Parks and Recreation Department

(512) 974-9506 | kevin.johnson@austintexas.gov

From: kay boyd [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 28, 2017 8:57 AM
To: Johnson, Kevin <Kevin.Johnson@austintexas.gov>
Subject: Chapel/Oakwood research

Kevin I am with Save Austin's Cemeteries and attended the discussions Saturday.

Much was mentioned about searching records at the history center. We have already done a lot of this and many are posted on the SAC webpage. I have also been doing newspaper research on the chapel. I am happy to help answer some of these questions and/or point the way to data that might already be posted, if needed.

Kay Boyd

--

Kay Boyd

--

Kay Boyd

Johnson, Kevin

From: Tom Hatch [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, April 03, 2017 11:51 AM
To: Houston, Ora; Rodriguez, Genoveva; Wilson, Beverly
Cc: McKnight, Kim; Johnson, Kevin
Subject: Fwd: Oakwood rendering
Attachments: Oakwood rendering.pdf

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Good morning Ora, would be glad to visit with you on the phone or in person. I know how busy you must be. I also know how incredibly important Oakwood Cemetery issues are.

Ever since the community meeting, I have been struggling to come up with ideas that reflect:

RESPECT
HONOR
DIGNITY
BEAUTY
LIGHT
and
TRUTH

These words speak to the needs of not only those whose remains are under or very near the chapel but all of those whose burial sites are unmarked . . . and why

Should the community and PARD decide to relocate the remains of those under the chapel, that can be done and our office will do all we can to support that effort. Should the community and PARD choose to allow the remains to stay in place we will work with the community and PARD to develop the most respectful solution.

Of all of the ideas discussed in our office, the one I came up with is the one that moves me the most and honors all whose remains are all but forgotten.

Thoughts:

leave the remains where they are and minimize and document any disturbance during the structural work

carefully mark the stains or shafts so that their locations are well documented on the ground for all unmarked grave sites in the area and inside the chapel

protect those sites in some way

prior to installing the replacement wood flooring, carefully place internally lit 12" x 12" x 12" black, brown, and white translucent polished granite cubes on each grave site . . . all cubes are all three colors . . the nature of granite.

while installing the wood flooring, 24" x 24" thick glass panels with lockable steel frames are installed centered over each glowing granite cube that also lights up the ground

the top of each cube will have an important short and relevant saying etched into it

the installation of the glowing cubes will also be securely placed on the grave site of all of the unmarked graves

this portion of Oakwood Cemetery will no longer be forgotten . . . and the history will forever be told inside of the cemetery

the attached image is my weak attempt to show the concept just after the sun goes down on Oakwood

I look forward to hearing from you in some way and thank you so much for your efforts in coming up with ideas that reflect doing the right thing

tom [REDACTED]

client-focused + responsible design



1010 East 11th Street
Austin, TX 78702

--

Tom Hatch, FAIA
E: [REDACTED]
M: [REDACTED]

hatch + ulland owen architects
1010 East 11th Street
Austin, TX 78702
T: [512.474.8548](tel:512.474.8548)
www.huoarchitects.com



Comments and Questions transcribed from group discussion on April 11, 2017:

Suggestions

- *Consider giving an apology for past wrong doing*
- *Research African American publications from that time period to see if any documentation exists*
- *It feels like moving the remains is offensive*
- *The chapel should be moved -- "a wage of its mistake"*
- *The chapel should be moved -- it is not sacred*
- *Reach out directly to The Villager, Austin Gold Dollar and the Nokoa Observer newspapers*
- *Reach out to Steve Sadowsky for sources*
- *Removing the chapel also removes the history of what happened*

Questions

- *Do we know why the Chapel was built, and by who?*
- *Where will the remains be relocated to?*
- *What will the remains be reburied in?*
- *Were there, or is it possible that there are multiple burials in one space?*



Oakwood Cemetery Chapel – Community Conversation
 Tuesday, April 11 2017
 6:30–8:00pm
 Britton, Durst, Howard and Spence Building

Sign-In Sheet	
Name	Email Address OR Phone Number
Bobby Cervantes	
Martinique Monroe	
STEVEN BROWN	
David Carroll	
JOSH HAERFNER	
LESUE WOFFENBENDER	
Sharon Blythe	
Lambuth Stoutaine	
Cathy Rick Spynke	
Horace Tolbert	
Ferri Mirka	
Will Ellis	
Megan Spencer	
JAM HARK	
(J) Howard	
Netertiti Jackson	
AKSWA HART	



Our Mission Statement: To provide, protect and preserve a park system that promotes quality recreational, cultural and outdoor experiences for the Austin community.

Johnson, Kevin

From: Richard Stryker
Sent: Thursday, April 13, 2017 8:15 AM
To: Johnson, Kevin
Subject: Draft Oakwood Chapel Rehabilitation Project
Attachments: Ora Houston April 12 2017.docx

Dear Mr. Johnson-

Attached is feedback regarding the Draft Oakwood Chapel Rehabilitation Project report.

I mailed a hard copy to Council Member Houston.

Best Regards,

Rick Stryker

April 12, 2017

Ora Houston, District 1 Council Member
City of Austin
P.O. Box 1088
Austin, TX 78767

Dear Council Member Houston:

Cathy and I attended the Oakwood Cemetery Development Meeting yesterday at the Chestnut Community Center where the "Staff Report and Draft Recommendation for Discovered Burials" was reviewed and comment sought. We have some thoughts to share with you.

Ultimately, a successful outcome to this project rests with how the Oakwood Chapel is used to interpret the story and commemorate those interred in the Cemetery. I am impressed by the research done by those associated with the project and input provided by community members and individuals with particular expertise and/or experience. This body of work provides a foundation for the interpretive plan. A conceptual interpretive plan should now be created to provide the framework for the components of the "Discovered Burials" story. Developing a conceptual interpretive plan need not be a prolonged endeavor. For example, every museum exhibit begins with just such a step prior to proceeding with exhibit design development.

The PARD recommended exhumation and reinternment plan is fraught with pitfalls. Exhumation of burials within the walls of the Chapel (apparently 10 burials) while leaving burials under the walls (apparently 15 burials) falls short of a respectful outcome. If, before any burials are moved, a conceptual interpretive storyline is developed that includes the circumstances that allowed construction of the Chapel in 1914 on top of graves that cannot be moved and the social environment that led to the creation of a segregated cemetery with impermanent grave markers. Then, it might be determined that disinterring and reburying any remains associated with this unfortunate situation is a less culturally sensitive option.

The necessity of conducting the proposed bioarcheological analysis of the burials is an interesting scientific investigation until it is considered in the context that someone's recently deceased grandmother/grandfather is being thus examined. Nearly anonymous burials somehow make this an acceptable approach. However, the bioarcheological analysis will not be worth the ultimately negative reaction of descendants within the community who might perceive that they are being targeted by yet another layer of disrespect. As an example, just step over the line to the first duly marked grave and contemplate a proposal for bioarcheological analysis of a burial.

Sincerely,

Rick Stryker

cc. Kevin Johnson, PARD Project Manager

Johnson, Kevin

From: McKnight, Kim
Sent: Wednesday, April 12, 2017 8:30 AM
To: Leslie Wolfenden
Cc: Johnson, Kevin; Welch, Cara; Walls-Davis, Tonja
Subject: RE: Oakwood Chapel project feedback

Leslie,

Thank you for your email. We appreciate you taking time to share your perspective. Your feedback will be included in our final report.

Thank you again for participating in this process.

Take care,
Kim

From: Leslie Wolfenden
Sent: Wednesday, April 12, 2017 7:56 AM
To: McKnight, Kim <Kim.McKnight@austintexas.gov>
Subject: Oakwood Chapel project feedback

Dear Kim,

I have been closely following the Oakwood Cemetery Chapel project as this building is the reason why I got involved in cemetery preservation. It is a Charles Page-designed architectural gem that has been the focal point of Oakwood for over a hundred years, in addition to being a City of Austin Historic Landmark, a Historic Texas Cemetery contributor, and a National Register District contributor. My background is in historic preservation and architecture, and I have been in the historic preservation (private and public) sector for over a decade. My Master's thesis was about the preservation of Austin's historic cemeteries.

Needless to say, I am dismayed to hear discussion of removing, or even razing, the building because of the remains found under the chapel. Yes, it was wrong that the chapel was built on top of graves, but two wrongs don't make a right, and moving or razing the chapel would definitely be a wrong in my book. The chapel is now part of the history of Oakwood Cemetery and the city of Austin.

Moving the building would be very problematic because of the stone rubble foundation perimeter walls that support the building, in addition to the building being masonry. The rubble foundation would likely crumble if dug under, in order to jack up the building for removal -- this puts undue stresses on the walls, particularly the tower area, negatively impacting the structural integrity of the building and running the very high risk of wall collapse and human safety issues. It would be a different matter if the foundation support was made of concrete beams, which is not the case here. The graves under the walls would also be negatively impacted by the attempt to dig under the rubble foundation walls.

Razing the building would also have issues of negatively impacting the graves, as some of the graves are above the bottom level of the stone foundation. Razing the building would also destroy a piece of history.

In regards to doing research on the graves and whether there was any negative feedback about the original construction of the chapel back in 1914, I suggest looking at the African-American newspaper archives for that

year to see if any citizens voiced complaints. The *Austin American Statesman* newspaper makes no mention of graves in the chapel articles throughout 1914. Steve Sadowsky of the City Preservation Office regularly does this type of research.

I appreciate the City allowing time for public involvement and feedback, and for making every attempt to come to a decision that is respectful as possible for the remains, while preserving one of Austin's crown jewels that is the Chapel.

Sincerely,

Leslie Wolfenden

Johnson, Kevin

From: Dale Flatt · >
Sent: Wednesday, April 12, 2017 7:39 PM
To: McKnight, Kim; Walls-Davis, Tonja; Johnson, Kevin; Houston, Ora
Cc: board@sachome.org; wolfthree@gmail.com
Subject: Fwd: Reburial boxes used as an industry standard
Attachments: Plan for Simple Plywood Reburial Boxes.pdf

COA staff,

I did some research on Zigler cases which is what Tonja said you planned to use they start at well over \$300.00 per unit and are full size

<http://www.ogr.org/assets/docs/ebloa%20ziegler%20case%20%20biovu%20bag.pdf>
<https://www.affordablefuneralsupply.com/cremation/shipping-containers/ziegler-transfer-case/>

Attached and below is what i have learned today. Doug Boyd is a well know and respected archaeologist, I have worked with in the past, please review the attached document, for what is commonly used in reinternments like what you face. The cost for a 3/4 inch x 4' x8' sheet of BC plywood is \$40.00. If one sheet yields 3 boxes that \$13.33 per unit + screws and glue, call it \$15.00 per unit.for materials. if you choose 1/2 inch (15/32) BC plywood it is \$21.25 per sheet or \$7.09 per box and screws and glue, its \$8.50 per unit for labor.

I assume that PARD has a cabinet shop that could cut and assemble these units, assume your labor is \$30.00 per hr you still come in under \$50 / unit. that is less than 1/6th of the cost and is in my opinion, the fiscally responsible path you should consider

with each burial, there should be a perminiate ID tag, inside the burial box, either a laminated sheet of paper or a stamped aluminum plate that identifies the burial and references back to the case study document. If we were to fill the void in the pine box with sand, when the outer container degrades in time, there will be no visible settling of the soil, thus eliminating the need for an outer burial vault. Texas health and Safety code dictates the required depth of the burial.

As part of the memorialisation, we should consider a flush granite marker for each reinternment. as we do not know the name of anyone, perhaps the wording could be "Chapel Relocation # _ "and the new date of reinternment.

Dale Flatt

-----Original Message-----

From: Doug Boyd >om>
To: Jennv McWilliams >m>; Aaron Norment (>n) >com>
Sent: Wed, Apr 12, 2017 4:23 pm
Subject: Re: Reburial boxes

Hi Dale,

The attached diagram is a simple construction plan for making simple reburial boxes from 1/2-inch or 3/4-inch plywood and deck screws. This is the type of box we have used on several historic burials reinternments. If you use the high-grade plywood, the boxes are sturdy and attractive if built properly.

for a reburial, they can be embellished by adding brass handles or covered with simple

table cloths.

Each box measures 2-ft long, 1-ft wide, and 1-ft deep. This size works well for historic remains that are limited skeletal materials and remnants of casket wood and hardware. In my experience, these small boxes have worked well 98% of the time. In a couple of cases with mid-twentieth century burials, we found large pieces of metal caskets that would not fit into the reburial boxes.

One 4x8-ft sheet of plywood will make 3 reburial boxes. The only trick is to cut all the sides and top and bottom pieces first, and then trim the end pieces to an exact fit that will vary for 1/2 inch or 3/4 inch plywood.

Let me know if you have any questions.

Doug

Douglas K. Boyd, RPA
Vice President
Prewitt and Associates, Inc.
2105 Donley Drive, Suite 400
Austin, Texas 78758

On 4/12/2017 3:36 PM, Jenny McWilliams wrote:

Hello,

I received a call from Dale Flatt (Oakwood Cemetery/Save Austin Cemeteries). I work with Dale from time to time on Travis Co. cemetery issues. He is asking about reburial boxes that archeologists use. I let him know what I knew about the boxes Aaron and friend built, but specifically, Dale is looking for construction materials and measurements. I told him I would put him in touch with y'all. Dale is cc:'ed on this email- or you can let me know and I can pass it along to him.

Jennifer McWilliams

Historic Cemetery Preservation Coordinator
History Programs Division
Texas Historical Commission
P.O. Box 12276
Austin, Texas 78711-2276
512.475.4506
www.thc.state.tx.us



TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
real places telling real stories

Johnson, Kevin

From: Andrew Malof <Andrew.Malof@LCRA.ORG>
Sent: Thursday, April 13, 2017 8:08 AM
To: Walls-Davis, Tonja; Johnson, Kevin; joh.nixon@austintexas.gov
Subject: Oakwood

Hello

Yesterday's newspaper article caused me to recall a visit to Dickson Mounds in Illinois. It's easy to find the controversy but a bit more difficult to find the resolution. The open Native American burials were left in place but permanently sealed. Above the was constructed a very moving multimedia experience that walked you through the history and beliefs of these people. I'm sure this has been discussed – I haven't read any of the reports – but I thought I'd call it out anyway as a possible resolution.

Best,

Andrew Malof

Supervisor, Cultural Resources
Lower Colorado River Authority
PO Box 220
Austin, Texas 78767

Johnson, Kevin

From: Walls-Davis, Tonja
Sent: Thursday, April 13, 2017 12:18 PM
To: Johnson, Kevin; McKnight, Kim
Subject: FW: Test

Hello,

I had a great conversation with Cristi Clement this morning. Please see her email below.

Tonja

From: Cristi Clement
Sent: Thursday, April 13, 2017 11:25 AM
To: Walls-Davis, Tonja <Tonja.Walls-Davis@austintexas.gov>
Subject: Re: Test

Tonya,

So nice to chat with you. Thanks for your time.....I know you must be busy with this project. HOpe I can be helpful,

Cheers

Cristi

Commentary:

I can empathize with sentiments concerning location of an ancestors remains. Although perhaps unconventional in our culture, the consecration and recognition of the graves in their current location, could serve the highest honor of their memory. Their story must not be lost.

At Verdun France WW I memorial, an ossuary with viewing windows in the foundation walls and in the chapel floor provides a moving, unforgettable memory of those who were lost in the Great War. Their voices are loud and clear and any visitor is moved to remember them.

Done on a smaller scale, a viewing window somehow incorporated into the chapel itself, could serve our long forgotten ancestors in an unique way. Could this be explored before disturbing any grave please?

I will be glad to do provide more information on the Verdun site. What is critical now, is for us to think in terms of a solution that can survive for next 100 years as Verdun has.

Cristi Clement
MARble Falls TX

Sent from my iPad

On Apr 13, 2017, at 11:07 AM, Walls-Davis, Tonja <Tonja.Walls-Davis@austintexas.gov> wrote:

Thank you.

Johnson, Kevin

From: Walls-Davis, Tonja
Sent: Thursday, April 13, 2017 4:20 PM
To: Johnson, Kevin; McKnight, Kim
Subject: FW: Message from Travel France Online

FYI

Tonja

From: Cristi Clement m]
Sent: Thursday, April 13, 2017 4:15 PM
To: Walls-Davis, Tonja <Tonja.Walls-Davis@austintexas.gov>
Subject: Fwd: Message from Travel France Online

Tonya

Surprise! A pleasant one as well. DO you want or take it from here?

I assume you can be more specific on what will be helpful. MAY I suggest they might be able to take some pics of the viewing structure in the building as I could find no pics of "in floor" example that I so vividly remember. I did note that they had done some serious renovation recently with the 100 year anniversary. They may have changed the structure during that time.. But may have older fotos to consider?

IF I can assist just let me know.

Cheers
Cristi

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

From: admin@travelfranceonline.com
Date: April 13, 2017 at 12:11:03 PM CDT
To:
Subject: Re: Message from Travel France Online

Good evening,

Thanks for your email.

I suggest you contact L'Ossuaire de Douaumont directly.
<http://www.verdun-douaumont.com/contact/?lang=en>

This is the only online contact they have (Reservations) but I am sure they'll be able to help or direct you to the correct department.

Hope this helps.

Kind regards,
Diane @TFOTeam

Diane de la Guillermie
Founder and editor
www.travelfranceonline.com
admin@travelfranceonline.com

----- Original Message -----

From: Travel France Online <admin@travelfranceonline.com>

To: webteam@tlc-online.co.uk, admin@travelfranceonline.com, doinseine@gmail.com

Sent: Thu, Apr 13, 2017, 6:02 PM

Subject: Message from Travel France Online

Message from Travel France Online

Your Name: Cristi clement

Email address

Your Subject: Douaumont ossuary and request for point of contact for more information

Your Message: City of AustinTexas, Oakwood Cemetery, is interested in your approach to incorporating ossuary views for visitors. A historic chapel renovation project is underway. Is there a point of contact perhaps at the Douaumont site that could provide more information?

Johnson, Kevin

From: Walls-Davis, Tonja
Sent: Friday, April 14, 2017 2:15 PM
To: Johnson, Kevin; McKnight, Kim
Subject: FW: Oakwood Cemetery Chapel Comment

Tonja

From: Sharon Blythe n]
Sent: Friday, April 14, 2017 6:05 AM
To: Walls-Davis, Tonja <Tonja.Walls-Davis@austintexas.gov>
Subject: Oakwood Cemetery Chapel Comment

Tonja,
As discussed, the Oakwood Chapel grave sites are sacred, and those graves were there before the Chapel was built. The only way the City can truly make this right for the families is to remove the chapel from its current site piece by piece leaving the foundation intact and the grave sites intact.

Please do not dis-inter those graves which would be further desecration of this precious place.

Staff recommendation is only that and it is the citizens who decide the fate of the chapel which is not sacred. This citizen decision was expressed in the two meetings that I attended on the Chapel.

Please consider this my official input into this process and please really think about what is right for our citizens.

Thank you,
Sharon Blythe

Johnson, Kevin

From: Dale Flatt
Sent: Monday, April 17, 2017 5:46 PM
To: McKnight, Kim; Walls-Davis, Tonja; Johnson, Kevin
Subject: my impt on the chapel project

I would like to address the statements and direction that the Chapel restoration and discovery of older burials around and under the chapel is going. I have been involved in the research of Austin's city Cemeteries for 15 years as well as learning about other municipal cemeteries in the united States.

Let's start with a public announcement from Council member Ora Houston's office, in which Mrs. Houston stated that when she was told about the discovery of human remains during the restoration process that her **"heart just stopped"** Mrs. Wells the cemetery manager is seen nodding in the background. Mrs. Houston went on to talk about the **"lack of humanity hit her at that point"** ref <http://kxan.com/2017/03/07/bone-fragment-discovery-halts-work-at-oakwood-cemetery-chapel/>

The Perception from the cemetery staff who have been on the job since April 1, 2013, is that these remains are of African-American decent, and the discussions at the meetings have been steered to be a "black lives matter" Issue. This is evident with lots of input coming in from the community and staff choosing to work with the **"population most affected"** under the assumption that this as an African-American burial ground. You are moving forward under a false and unsupported assumption.

The membership of Save Austin's Cemeteries has provided you with documentation that this area has white Germans as well as Hispanics in it, that this was the pauper grounds also known as the stranger grounds, therefor the city cannot say for sure that these discovered burials are of African-American decent. We believe that all lives matter and this should not be about race but, righting a perceived wrong.

During the public discussions, many people have used the term "disrespect" and feel that those persons who constructed the Chapel in 1913-1914 did so with the full knowledge of burials in the area. No one living today can say that this was done intentionally and with full knowledge of unmarked burials.

We all agree that it should not of happened, and that we will attempt to right the perceived wrong. We do know from the historic records that there were six holding vaults in the tower section that were used to hold remains until the burial ground could be prepared, and that prior to the construction of the Chapel and into the 1950 there was an additional building onsite known as the Dead house.

Cemeteries have operational needs in which management make decisions based on the needs of the living, cost and space constraints of the site in question, this is done out of necessity and not meant as a sign of disrespect – in most cases.

Now at this point I hope you will be thinking that this line of thinking is very wrong and that under no circumstances should a burial area be disturbed or built on top of, that all lives matters and we should not knowingly disrespect burials on a known cemetery ground to fit the needs of society; congratulations and welcome to the discussion we are now on the same page.

Based on the soil scraping on the north side of the Chapel along with newspapers from 1891 it is clear that the city's Pauper grounds were full in 1891, which would include the designated Pauper areas in sections Two, Three and section Four, but yet only a few years back we had a need to find a location at Oakwood cemetery to place the spoils – left over displaced soil from new internments, so the then cemetery Manager Gilbert Hernandez choose to create a staging area in the SE corner of the cemetery where soils could be placed until a sufficient amount were stockpiled to warrant a dump truck to remove them from the site. This was done as an operational need to save on the cost of getting a dump truck and large equipment to make several trips for small amounts. This was done with the full knowledge that this area was part of the pauper grounds, the decision was made and a screen fence was erected to hid the blight that can be a spoils pile, and for several years the city has been using this area for a staging of spoils. That is a sign of disrespect for those at rest in this area in my eyes but the reality is that any descendants who knew of those unmarked graves have also long passed on. The city officials justified the action out of need and stated that there were no records of burial in that area and no headstones.... Sound familiar?

Let's move over to Springdale Road and another city cemetery – Plummers. Established in 1891 when Oakwood could no longer meet the needs of the African American community, it and its sister cemetery Bethany were established, but unlike Bethany, the City has for many years been encroaching onto Plummers. Would it surprise you to know there are burials under Springdale Road? How about the fact that electrical poles were installed in the cemetery and let's not forget about the buried fiber optic cable which runs across graves of Austin's early African Americans. City engineers know about the burials, the master plan team knows, but yet just last year the city started pouring sidewalks on the cemetery ground so they could accommodate the Bus Stop they built on the cemetery grounds years ago.

The city officials know this is a cemetery and that the original burial ground extended into what is now Springdale Road but they justified the encroachment as needing to meet the needs of those who ride the bus. This happened in 2016 not 1914, with the full knowledge of the city leadership, are you starting to rethink how the chapel project could have happened?

Let's come west to Evergreen cemetery, an historic African American cemetery. A few years back during the drought I visited the site and found a green patch of grass in a sea of dormant brown grass when I looked I discovered a broken metal pipe a few inches in diameter with water leaking out. It was not under pressure, water was tricking out. I remembered that the bathrooms just up the hill had dripping faucets and commodes so I went to the store and purchased a large red bottle of food coloring and flushed ½ in each of the 2 toilets. By the time I waked down to the leaking pipe pink colored water was flowing out of the break. It was clear that this pipe was connected to the restrooms and that anyone using them would be discharging raw sewage onto the Cemetery grounds. I called 311 and reported the sewage leak and within 1 hr. several city trucks were on site. The bathrooms were secured and it was determined that this area was the location of the old Caretakers home that stood in the past and that it was part of the old septic system for the home from the 1930's. A permit was acquired from the city and city crews working with the then contractor InterCare and ran a new sewer line and tied it into the city's main on 12ths street, then the city purchased a porta potty and closed the bathrooms. At no point was the old line dug up or the septic field removed, a few years latter the city had the need to re plat the SW corner of the cemetery to meet the needs of the African American community for more burial space at Evergreen. Since then the cemetery management has changed, do you think that the current management know that they are selling grave spaces to the public in an old septic field? as far as they know that was just an unused section of the cemetery... sound familiar?

Before this site was Evergreen it was Highland Park Cemetery circa 1891. It is clear that when the city purchased 2 parts of that property 1928 & 1957 that there were no more than 500 bodies on that property we know for sure that 191 of those were paupers (of all races) buried by the city. Two reports show that these are on the slope and along the creek. Those reports shows that the city has for years used this slope as a dumping ground for spoils and have knowingly destroyed that part of the old Highland Park Cemetery to facilitate the disposal of spoils. It's not just happening to people of African American decent, the past city leadership knew yet that said they did not have the funds to address the issue. Again just a few year back an assistant Director in PARD by the name of Cora Wright tried to continue backfilling that slope in an effort to create more affordable burial space at evergreen. It took a threat of a law suit to dissuade the city from moving forward with that plan. Your dealing with 20 or so burials at the Chapel and yet no one is concerned with the 191 paupers at Evergreen/ Highland Park and the dignity of those graves. can you really pick when you want to be shocked and offended and when it is ok?

Let's visit two city Parks that have cemeteries in them, Longview & Garrison parks. In Longview park, the city knew about the cemetery when they acquired the land, yet they built a basketball court and a pavilion on the cemetery grounds and maintain that their actions are OK, and the Parks Department does not maintain the cemetery portion of the park. It is vastly overgrown, and is a common hangout for kids and homeless persons. In Garrison par you have the Stanley & Nolen family cemetery. At the history center you will find photos of the old cemetery along with the then director of the Parks department poking a stick into a grave sink. The exact location of those burials has been lost to time. It's now a park where people picnic and play games. City staff knows about this, but yet no action has been taken for those white families but were too quick to hoist the flag and held a press release to be offended at the thought that someone would knowingly build on a presumed black burial ground.

In closing, I think you have come to understand that sitting on the high horse and accusing those unknown persons in the past of disrespecting a burial area and making an assumption as to who the ethnicity of those persons who are in proximity to the chapel may not be the best course of Action. That I can easily demonstrate that the city of Austin continues to disrespect the grave sites of the long departed and when informed they shrug and give you a blank look. I am not advocating for spending the millions of dollars to realign Springdale Road and all of the associated utilities nor remove the thousands of cubic yards of soil the cover the graves at Highland Park.

Let's bring this project back to the center line and acknowledge that you have no idea of the race or origin of these peoples, let's move the ones we can in an efficient, cost appropriate manner, to include those inside the structures foot print and those in the front of the tower section as well as the few on the west side so we can ensure an effective foundation stabilization as well as a planned rain water run off to insure the building will not flood again in the future.

Overall, your cautious and methodical approach is serving you well, but do not let it get sidetracked by special interest groups who want to make it something it is not just so they can further their agenda. The THC and State have established guidelines on how this should happen. Let employees stick to what they know, and let the professionals do what they are hired to do.

Dale Flatt

Johnson, Kevin

From: Steven Brown >
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2017 7:54 AM
To: Johnson, Kevin
Subject: OakWood Colored Grounds

Good morning,

I hope you had a great Easter weekend. I am emailing you in regards to the Oakwood cemetery. My feeling are that Blacks have been relocated out of East Austin due to gentrification. We've already lost the land that we were once segregated to. Our ancestors losing the land (by being dug up and buried in close proximity)they are resting in would only compound the loss. I believe that moving the bodies to make a way to repair the chapel is a parallel to blacks being relocated out of Austin to make way for the new development that has left blacks out of "East Austin 2.0." I think the city should keep the remains underneath the chapel, separated by a suspended glass floor with crawl space. Treat the space with dignity, as ancient royal burial tombs. How many more (systemic) losses should the black East Austin take for the (team)...?

Best Regards,
Steven Brown

Johnson, Kevin

From: Terri Mirka <
Sent: Wednesday, April 19, 2017 11:49 PM
To: Johnson, Kevin; McKnight, Kim; Walls-Davis, Tonja
Cc:

Subject: Chapel Project - New Research on Diverse Burials
Attachments: Oakwood Chapel Burials SAC Research Apr 19 2017.pptx

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

I'd like to thank your group for the comprehensive approach you are taking in gathering feedback from the Austin Community on the burials discovered at the Oakwood Chapel area. To ensure that there is an accurate understanding of the diversity of the burials in this specific area, we in the Save Austin's Cemetery group have conducted extensive research which is summarized in the attached document.

The conclusion of our work is that the chapel area was likely first used as "Mexican Grounds" and "Strangers (Whites) Grounds" during the 1870s, but there were only a few headstones erected since the burials were likely of people with very little money. There are several headstones near the chapel and other evidence which demonstrate this usage. Given this, we strongly recommend that the "community of impact" be broadened to more accurately reflect the diversity of the groups likely buried under the chapel.

We'd be glad to walk your group through this detailed attached research as well as highlight the specific findings on-site at Oakwood Cemetery.

If you have research which contradicts our findings on the burials, we'd certainly like to review that. Please let us know if you need any additional information or further clarification.

Thanks,
Terri Mirka
Save Austin's Cemeteries

Johnson, Kevin

From: Terri Mirka
Sent: Friday, April 21, 2017 4:37 PM
To: m; Johnson, Kevin; McKnight, Kim; Walls-Davis, Tonja
Cc:
Subject: n
Re: Chapel Project - New Research on Diverse Burials
Attachments: Oakwood Chapel Burials SAC Research April 21 2017.pptx

Attached please find an update to our research submitted 4/19/17. The primary change is to add information for an important, additional Mexican headstone we located even further to the west which could indicate that the "Mexican Grounds" extended along Main St all the way to the dividing dirt road within the "Colored Grounds." Modified pages include slide 1 (date change and addition of Robert Tieman as we used his previous research for part of our work) and slides 3-8, 12-13.

Thanks again for seeking the community input!
Terri Mirka
Save Austin's Cemeteries

-----Original Message-----

From: Terri Mirka n>
To: kevin.johnson <kevin.johnson@austintexas.gov>; kim.mcknight <kim.mcknight@austintexas.gov>; tonja.walls-davis <tonja.walls-davis@austintexas.gov>
Cc:

Sent: Wed, Apr 19, 2017 11:49 pm
Subject: Chapel Project - New Research on Diverse Burials

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If you have research which contradicts our findings on the burials, we'd certainly like to review that. Please let us know if you need any additional information or further clarification.

Thanks,
Terri Mirka
Save Austin's Cemeteries

Review of Burials At/Near Oakwood Chapel – 4/21/2017 Final Report

Source of burial data reviewed:

- Austin PARD Cemeteries Division Records, Austin History Center, Oakwood Cemetery Interments, Books 8 (1866-1880) and Book 9 (1874-1900), Online, Transcribed Version & Oakwood Cemetery Burials, Microfiche Summary . Commonly referred to as the “Sexton Records”
- Headstones at Oakwood Cemetery

Researchers: Kay Boyd, Dale Flatt, Terri Mirka & previous work of Robert A. Tieman (Save Austin’s Cemeteries).

Please direct feedback on content improvements to Terri Mirka. This document is intended to share research data and photos, but not to be used as a presentation given the amount of information on the slideware.



Oakwood Sexton Records

Photo: April 2017, T. Mirka

Racial terms used in this review are those used in the historical records.

A Fundamental Question: How Could The 1914 Chapel Have Been Built Atop Graves?

- This April 2017 photo depicts the area west of the chapel. This seemingly vacant area is reportedly full, but there are only a few headstones, and specific locations of burials were not recorded for most of the burials in the “colored grounds.”
- Much of the area was likely used for people who didn’t have money to put in place a durable headstone or any at all.
- When the chapel was built 1914, the grounds **near/at the chapel** likely looked very similar except for headstones for:
 - Dario Nanes buried 1875 in the “**Mexican Grounds**” (Color: Mexican) on the SW corner of the chapel
 - Conrad and Heinrich Bormann buried 1872 in the “**Strangers Grounds**” (Color: White) directly behind the chapel
 - Joe Coleman (Color: Negro) buried 1910 in “**Col Gr**” behind the chapel.

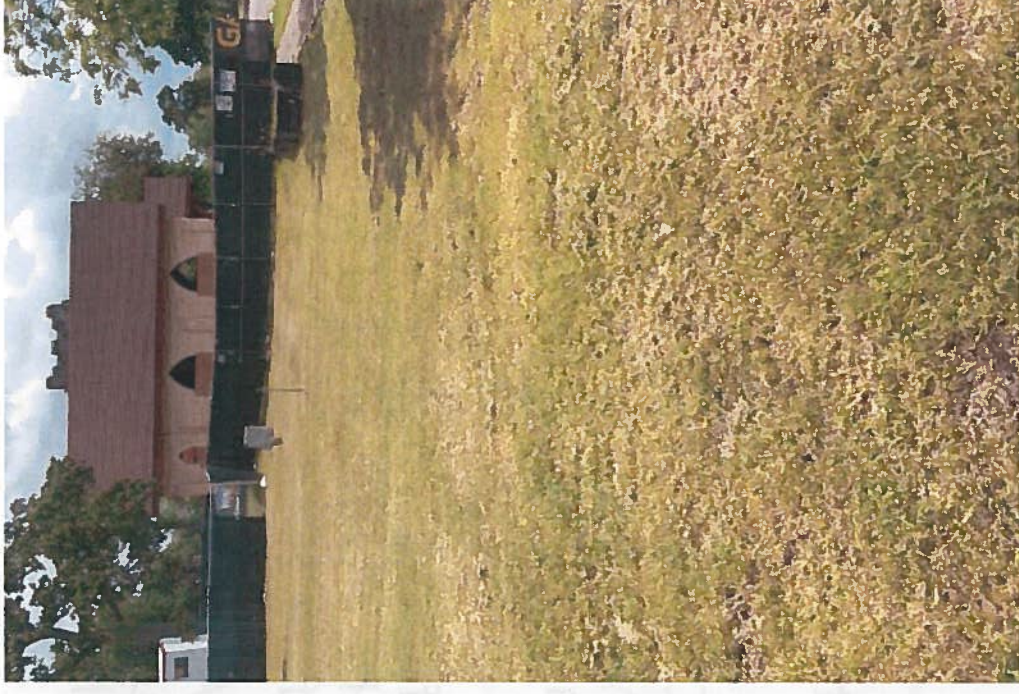


Photo: April 2017, T. Mirka

Research Methodology

- Walking site review of headstones throughout all non-family owned grounds at Oakwood
- Identification of areas throughout Oakwood by years used for burials for each group - Mexicans, Negroes, Strangers (a designation for Whites only after mid-1873) – to identify what years the area near the chapel was originally used
- Detailed review of burial locations for years indicate that burials originally may have taken place in the chapel area (1870-~1882) before its construction planning before 1914
- Review of PARD Sexton Records at Austin History Center for burials by groups and individuals buried during 1870-1882 to identify who could be there or not be there by process of elimination

Assumptions/Theories/Conclusions

- Evidence in the form of recorded data and remaining headstones is scarce and sometimes inaccurate, however it seems that due diligence may not have been done in researching the available information in the chapel area so we are providing additional proof that the “impacted community” for the chapel burial relocations is not broad enough given that the most evidence found in the area of the chapel is actually that of White and Mexican burials in the 1870s which seems to be when that ground was used for initial burials.
- The historical term “Colored Grounds” was used for a broad area, even though there are subsets within these grounds that were used as “Strangers Grounds” and “Mexican Grounds.” Different sextons used varying terms for burial grounds and appeared to label the same area with a different term depending on the person’s race.
- The area at or near the chapel was also used as “Strangers Grounds (term used primarily for “white” burials) in the public area and “Mexican Grounds” in the 1860s-early 1880s. “Strangers Ground” headstones still visible indicate that this would be the first 4-5 rows west of Rosedale. Three Mexican headstones are visible along Main St: one at the southwest corner of the chapel, one west of the chapel in the middle of “Colored Ground B” & one further west near the dividing dirt road. A fourth Mexican headstone for an 1880 burial is not currently visible.
- People of “Negro” color were primarily buried in the middle of the Colored Grounds during this timeframe, looking at a limited number of headstones there and sexton burial records
- After it was announced that Oakwood had no more space for Pauper burials in 1891, the City appeared to find space for “Negroes” in and amongst the grounds originally used for “Strangers” and “Mexicans” in the traditional “Colored grounds”. This is demonstrated with the burial of the Coleman family beginning 1910 and many other surrounding headstones northwest of chapel the 1920s as well as additions of family members to earlier burials (Dedrik family, starting 1884-)
- People of “Negro” color were also buried east of the Colored Grounds in Section 4 (lots 48-56, 90-97, and 134-138) in racially mixed plots from ~1880-1912.

Public Burial Grounds for Austin Community (Stranger Grounds, Mexican Grounds, Colored Grounds) - Plots not owned by Families

- People who did not own a burial plot of “White” color were usually listed as being buried in the “Strangers Grounds.”
 - Estimated # of burials 1870-1878: 250
 - Est # of burials 1879-1891: 580
- People of “Mexican” color were usually listed as being buried in “Mexican Grounds” or “Strangers Grounds” (until mid 1873) with the same location being called different names
 - Est # of burials 1870-1878: 125
 - Est # of burials 1879-1891: 90
- People of “Negro” color were usually listed as being buried in the “Colored Grounds” even when they were buried to the east of the “Colored Grounds” in Section 4 for burials in the lots with other races in the late 1880s-1918
 - Est # of burials 1870-1878: 620

Notes:

- “Strangers Grounds” was first used in sexton records in 1866 when the sexton first began recording burial locations. It referred to poor White and Mexican burials until mid 1873, and the only Whites after then. Burial numbers for 1866-1869 are not included above since no headstones have been found for that period in the area near the chapel.
- Other statistics for all races and time periods will be summarized once errors and omissions from transcribed data from the City Sexton records are resolved.

Google Earth View with Summary Burial Areas (Limited Data)



Photo: GoogleEarth, 2016 View (T. Mirka)

Records show burials as "Mexican Grounds" (1875, 1881, 1882) west of chapel

No records found yet for this area for burials before the chapel built (1861, 1872-1876), north of chapel

Records Show Burials as White, "Strangers Grounds", ~1879-1891

Mexican & Strangers Ground Burials Near Chapel 1870s-early 1880s

* Sexton Records Show Burials as White, Buried in "Strangers Ground":



Photo: Dale Flatt, Nov. 2005

- * Carl Schlickum/Schlikum, 1876 (& family 1908 & 1959)
- * Joseph Ericson, 1872 headstone (J.S. Peterson in Sexton record)
- * Wilhelm Heisser, 1875 (W.H. footstone only, theory/only match)
- * Jacob Thies, 1876 headstone
- * Conrad & Heinrich Bormann, 1872 original headstone

Other burials in "Mexican Grounds" of note not pictured to the west are J. Hernandez (1882) & M. Estrada (1881) & A. Luna (1880, whose stone is currently not visible).

Other close burial is Coleman Family (Negro, 1910-1958 burials, 5 headstones)

Dario Nanes, Mexican 1875, buried in "Mexican Grounds"

Mexican & Strangers Ground Burials Near Chapel 1870s-early 18802 - Aerial

1870s Burials: White, "Strangers Ground":



Ericson, 1872

W. Heisser, 1875 (theory)

J. Thies, 1876

Bormann (2), 1872

Notes:

- Not shown (north of Ericson): Schlikum, 1876 & Cezeaux, 1861
- See previous slide for additional detail

Photo: GoogleEarth, 10/2014 view (D. Flatt)

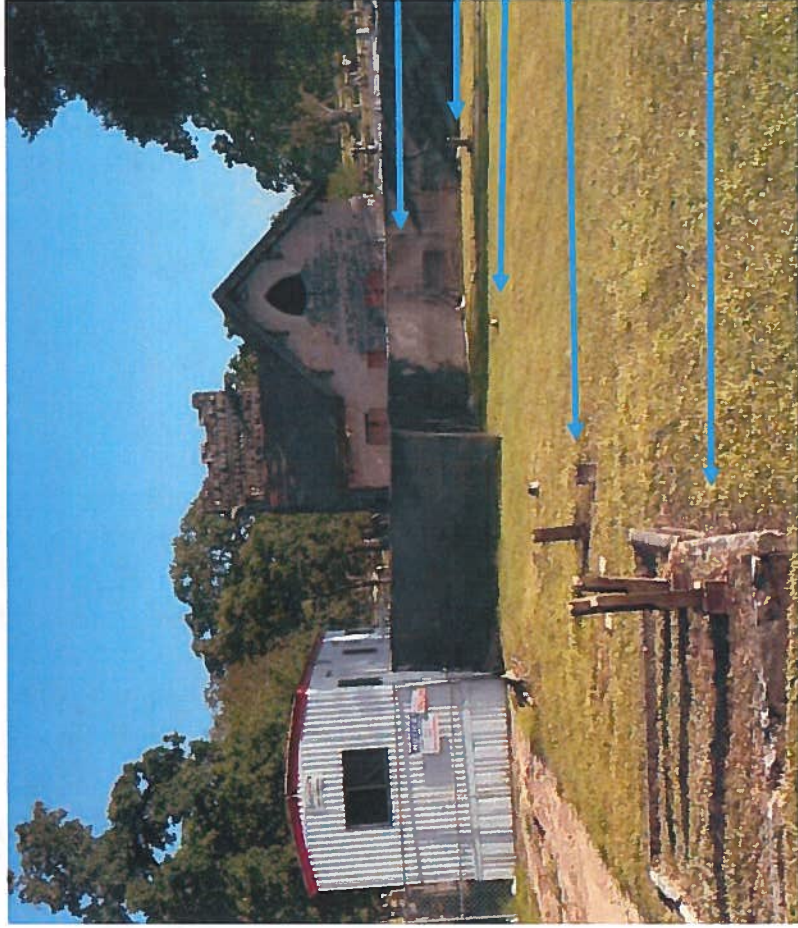
M. Estrada, Mexican, 1881, "Mexican Grounds"

Nanes, Mexican, 1875, in "Mexican Grounds"

J. Hernandes, Mexican, 1882, "Mexican Grounds"

T.J. Wells, Negro Color, 1927, in "Col Gr"

Stranger Ground Burials Near Chapel View from Behind Chapel



- 1870s Burials: White, “Strangers Ground”
- Buried in rows/columns 1-4 behind chapel
- Many other burials right of the pictured area

Bormann (2), 1872 (behind black fencing)

J. Thies, 1876

W. Heisser, 1875 (theory)

Ericson, 1872

C. Schlickum, 1876 (& family 1908 & 1959)

Notes:

- Not shown: Charles Cezeaux, 1861 headstone, from France, but not found in Sexton records (north of area)

Photo: April 2017, T. Mirka

1870s Sample Burials in Colored Grounds – Color “Negro”

Scarce, but existing records indicate that the area near/at the chapel was used some for “Strangers/White” and “Mexican” burials during the 1870s – early 1880s. In contrast, this view shows located burials for color “Negro” during this timeframe.

A. Ferrill, 1873 headstone



W. Norris, 1872 headstone

A. Scott, 1870 headstone

Butler Children, 1868-72
headstones

1874-1875 records for color “Negro”
did list lots for some burials, likely
near Carrington, 1875

R. Green, 1870 headstone

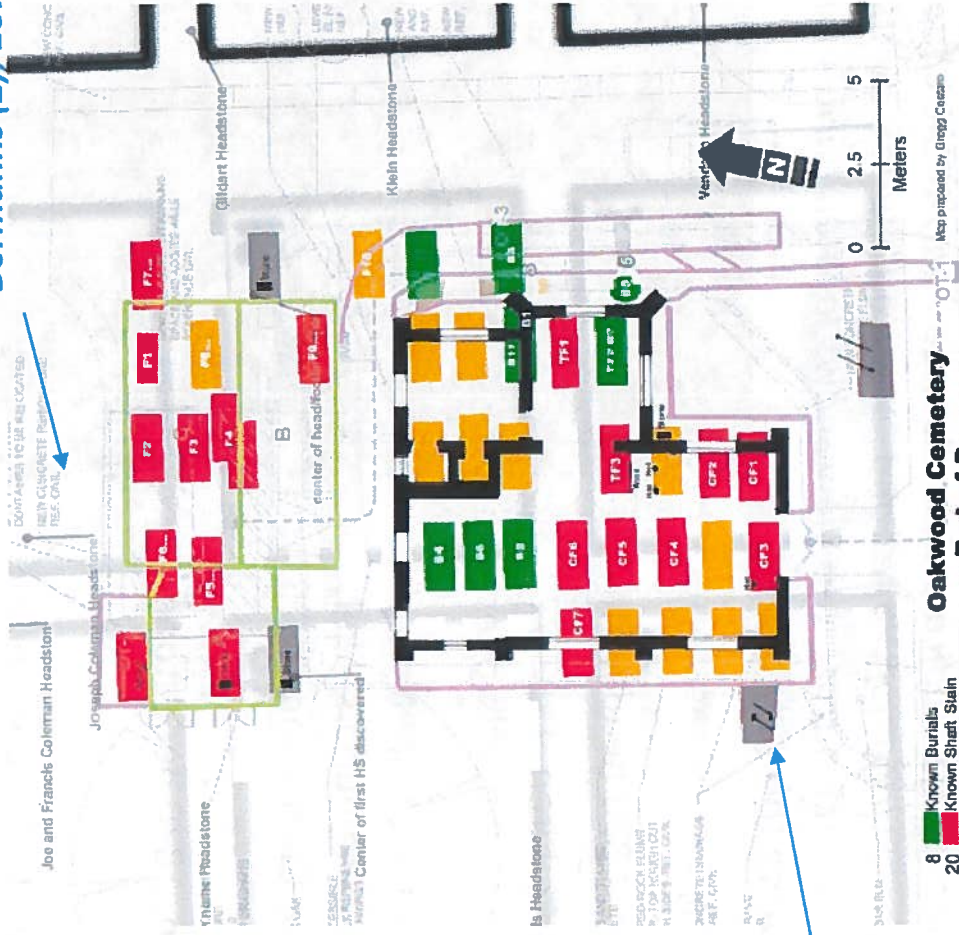
E. Woods, 1875 headstone



Site discoveries

Thies, 1876

Bormanns (2), 1872



Oakwood Cemetery
End of Day
February 10 2017

8	Known Burials
20	Known Shaft Slain
13	Observed through Obscured
3	Known Headstones
44	total

Dario Nanes,
 Mexican 1875

These 3 known 1870s burials/stones near the chapel for the "White" and "Mexican" burials are not named in this comprehensive drawing of burials, stains, headstones in the Austin PARD Draft Report & presentation dated 4/11/17, while only the later headstones of the Coleman family are named, even though these stones are later and some are further away from the chapel. We have added names in blue to show. Records show several people of "white" color were buried in "rows/columns" 1-4 going north from this depiction in the 1870s.



Public Burial Areas in Oakwood Section 4 Area East of Traditional "Colored Grounds"



Photo: April 2017, K. Boyd

Expanded
Burial Area
for Various
Races,
including
over 40 for
"Negroes"
~1880-1912
(Many
Headstones)

Strangers/Pauper Grounds Used ~1879-1891, Lots 136-140 (No Headstones)

Example Burial Record - Dario Nanes Buried in Mexican Grounds 1872 (SW Corner of Chapel)



Photo: Dale Flatt, 2002 (cropped)



Photo: Robert Sage, 2013

Oakwood Cemetery Database

OSTRAL PEAR 3302
AUSTIN HISTORY CENTER
RUSSELL PUBLIC LIBRARY

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Oakwood Cemetery Database

first name	Dario
last name	Nanez (Nunez)
burial date	4 Feb 1875
years/months/days	025 00 00
sex	M
color	M
nativity	
disease	consumption
attending physician	
where buried	Mexican ground
Sec Lot Space	
by whom buried	Friends
profession	
remarks	(added later Sec 4 s/w of stone bldg)

Photo of Sexton Record (Feb 1875 Burials, Note D. Nanez in Mexican Ground & J. Sabatsky in Strangers Ground)



Example Burial Record - Conrad & Heinrich Bormann Buried in "Stranger Grounds" 1872 (Behind Chapel)

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Oakwood Cemetery Database

Father and Son

first name	Conrad
last name	Bormann
burial date	10 Apr 1872
years/months/days	
sex	M
color	W
nativity	
disease	murdered
attending physician	
where buried	strangers grounds Sec 4
Sec Lot Space	
by whom buried	
profession	
remarks	added by someone-Conrad and Heinrich Bormann, back of chapel

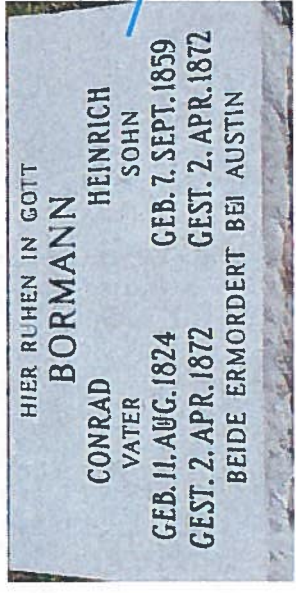


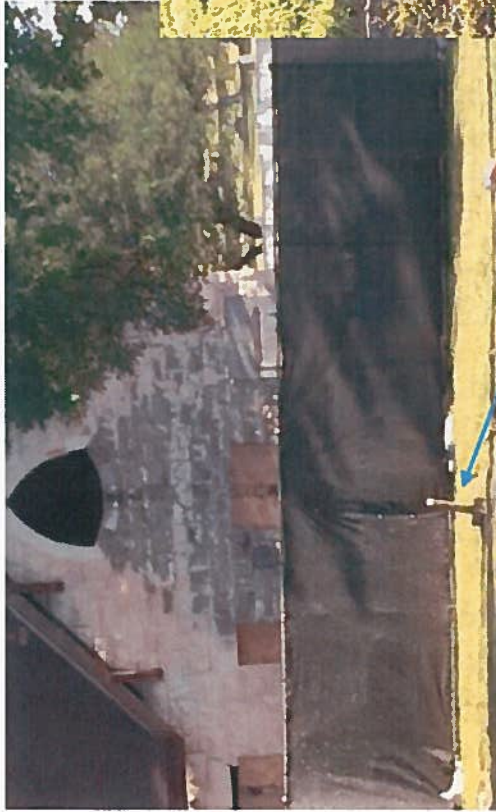
Photo of Sexton Record (Mar-Apr 1872 Burials, Note 10 April Bormann record and 2 Mexican children, all recorded as buried in Stranger's Grounds)

Mexican Child →

Bormann →

Mexican Child →

Example Burial Record - Jacob Thies Buried in "Strangers Grounds" 1876 (North of Coleman Family)



Photos: April 2017, T. Mirka



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Oakwood Cemetery Database

first name	Jacob
last name	Thies
burial date	7 Dec 1876
years/months/days	032 00 00
sex	M
color	W
nativity	Germany
disease	fall from wagon
attending physician	Fritz Tegener, Judge
where buried	Stranger ground
Sec Lot Space	
by whom buried	
profession	
remarks	14 years in America

Oakwood Cemetery Database

Photo of Sexton Record (Dec 1876 Burial), all recorded as buried in Stranger's Grounds



Thies →

Recommendations from Save Austin's Cemeteries

- Review these findings and if you agree, communicate them with groups who have come to the conclusion that the “chapel is built upon negro graves” (using the specific words from the Carver Museum representative at the 4/11/17 community meeting)
- If the City PARD group does have burial records that contradict the findings in this report, please share them so we can re-evaluate our conclusions.
- Expand the “impacted community” to include representatives from all the races believed to be buried in the area
- Consider renaming the current “Colored Grounds” to something more appropriate for the diverse Austin community buried there, such as Public Burial Grounds or Community Burial Grounds. Add lot numbers so that burials in this area can be mapped for family researchers.
- Work with SAC to improve the burial records managed by PARD at Austin History Center and online to correct assumption and transcription errors
- We at SAC would like to view any headstones located so that we can assist in identifying the burials near/under the chapel.
- Work with SAC to develop a comprehensive plan to improve the condition of the existing headstones in this area

Johnson, Kevin

From: Walls-Davis, Tonja
Sent: Saturday, April 22, 2017 12:36 AM
To: Johnson, Kevin; McKnight, Kim
Subject: Fwd: Adrienne Re: REMINDER: Cemetery Rules- Conversation Corps

Sent from my Sprint phone.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: "adrienne isom"
To: "Walls-Davis, Tonja" <Tonja.Walls-Davis@austintexas.gov>
Subject: Adrienne Re: REMINDER: Cemetery Rules- Conversation Corps
Date: Fri, Apr 21, 2017 11:31 PM

From: Adrienne Isom -Travis County Historic Commissioner Rep. Precinct #1 (Four consecutive times appointed)
Industrial Artist.

To: Tonja Walls-Davis <tonja.walls-davis=austintexas.gov@mail251.suw14.mcdlv.net> on behalf of Tonja Walls-Davis <tonja.walls-davis@austintexas.gov>
Sent: Friday, April 21, 2017 3:10 PM
To:

Hello Tonja,

Thank you for the information towards cemeteries. (Including the Oak wood Cemetery)

I am very concerned about the outcome and method of saving both the Chapel, and the slave grave sight. My Grandfather (The Late Sherman Fowler) use to tell us (His grandchildren) about that Cemetery.

Historic Projects

At the Travis County Historic Commission, we have a great deal of projects. There is a percentage that includes African American historic sites. For the most part it seems that the older people such as myself (59 going on 60 this year) are most concerned about preserving the history.

This is the State Capitol. People who visit Austin depend on seeing history preserved, especially in the Capitol City.

Other Projects

Over time there has been, and is still..... many projects. Some of these projects includes African American historical extinction of sites. (Most are due to development) This does not help the remaining African American population that is left develop of maintain any pride of culture.

Things I am working on in other places.

I am working on projects in other cities for people who know why they should be preserving African American History. (Alabama included)
But,,,,,, I live here in Austin, Texas.

My father, the late Dr. Alton D. Rison was a long time history teacher in New York. He taught us history at the table. He was also the first African American to graduate from U.T. with a Masters in Sociology.
My mother (Mrs. Martha Rison), is still alive. (Although she is suffering with Alzheimer. She is a native of Austin. The family names are: Gregg, Mackey,(Such as Dr. Audrey Mackey) Marshall,(Including General Marshall), Fowler, Fisher, Risher, Caldwell, Duke, Dukes, (As in Dawana Dukes, and Stacy), Tolliver, Spears. (As in Nelda Wells Spears), and others.
There were not that many Black families here back in the day, and mostly all African Americans that are from here are related.
Both of my parents earned Bachelor Degrees from "Historic" Tillotson College.

I must say,,,, that with the projects we are addressing, things have been quite overwhelming.

I usually decide to back 4 to 5 things a year and make sure I am representing them to the fullest.

If I cannot represent my Precinct,,,,, as well as the good of African Americans what good am I?

I have taught every level from K to College. 99 percent of the teaching was in East Austin. Families are busy,,,,and do not have time to learn about saving buildings, historic sites of dead people, deal with transportation, deal with City code issues, over-bearing Developers, and more.

This is why they elect officials. Then people are given jobs, and appointed, to learn and serve the interest of the people who need to have time to do their area of expertise and see after their families. They depend on **those of us in place** to think of these things for them,,,,and really represent their interest. Although some like to participate, and know what they want to see, they usually do not know what can be done to achieve their wishes.

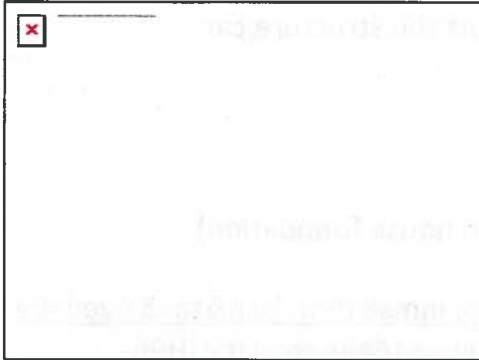
Example:

As for Oak Wood. I attended the first meeting at Rosewood Park and Rec. I noticed citizens really are concerned about the grave site, but they don't know construction, or budgets, and they don't know what could be done, but they want something done to dignify the dead.

I was very inspired by a PBS show I saw two nights ago about Nazi Death Camps. In particular "Sobibor".

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jeHO8avVWg4>

I just looked it up, and the video is on line. It is on youtube



Escape from a Nazi Death Camp

www.youtube.com

From PBS - The secret Nazi death camp at Sobibor was created solely for the mass extermination of Jews. But on the 14th of October 1943, the inmates fought b...

After watching how those Jewish people found out where those forgotten graves were, then found a way to preserve the site I really knew I had to get up off of my complacent behind and act on behalf of African American interests for this.....project. I knew,,,,I have to get a little more backbone. It should carry the same importance.

Why not?

Please view the PBS video with your spouse or children if you have such. You will be moved and see what I am talking about.

**Can this be a possible approach to preserving the entire project?
Something that can be done after an engineer gives an OK.**

This should also be cost effective.

I sent it to some other Officials who are working on a solution.

Subject: Re: Adrienne Re: Cemetery Preservation Workshop Update

**Can't we do both?
Can we save the building and the graves?**

(Especially after seeing a documentary shown on PBS about the Sobibor , Germany Extermination burial site find, and preservation, I gave the matter more thought.

What can be done? (Or similar)

A "Beam" can be placed under the building (Under the existing walls to fortify the stone walls) with steel cross posts through the center. (Welded)

A Beam is like a concrete rectangle ring, enforced with steel. Can the building be raised? (Seems too heavy)

Another solution - Whatever posts or beams which already support the structure can be strengthened. (General Contracting associate suggested)

Next digging down around the building, (Instead of lifting it)

Insert more posts. (Far down to the bedrock similar to fixing a bad house foundation)

<https://www.google.com/search?q=spot+footings&noj=1&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKewjo6Wf-7bTAhVP1mMKHfEUACsQAUICSgC&biw=1536&bih=816#imgrc=QfSUH96-pbev4M:>

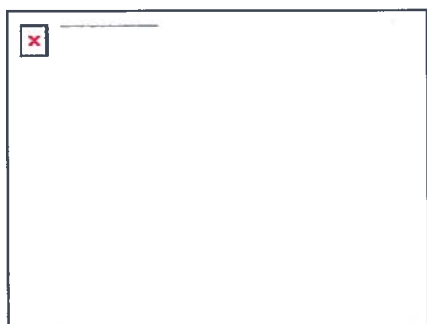
Piers

<https://www.google.com/search?q=repairing++a+foundation&noj=1&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiEoJHoLbTAhVMxYMKHeH2DWMQAUICigD&biw=1536&bih=816#imgrc=U9FdlyxsTjBtrM:>

Frame outside and inside the walls, however many feet an engineer states will be sufficient for load barring. Pour load bearing support Beams for a new support of the structure.

<https://www.google.com/search?q=spot+footings&noj=1&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKewjo6Wf-7bTAhVP1mMKHfEUACsQAUICSgC&biw=1536&bih=816#imgdii=mXmCKyyDL-UZNM:&imgrc=jCYPBDxoLKys5M:>

A Beam - [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beam_\(structure\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beam_(structure))



Beam (structure) - Wikipedia

en.wikipedia.org

A beam is a structural element that primarily resists loads applied laterally to the beam's axis. Its mode of deflection is primarily by bending.

Reroute the water (very easy to do) Change in the Earth and climate has caused water to run along side the building and into the building. Redirection has to be done regardless, of whatever solution.

Floating wooden floor over the inside after the building is stabilized.
Placing water impermeable barrier to stop moister from coming up to the wood.

Also more soil or limestone inside above the waterline to make the water not come inside. So this means artifacts have to be placed on dirt over the barrier to make them look like they were found on the dig.

Another solution (Instead of the moister barrier only) is to pour a minimum of 6 inches concrete as a slab, create artificial dig in the center placing real artifacts from the dig, and dirt. Place wooden floating floor over the slab, leaving the center square vacant for a glass visual of the artifacts. (It will appear that the entire floor was left as soil.

Examples:

Glass center floor for historical viewing of the dig: Samples below on URL: (More extravagant than we need most likely)

https://www.google.com/search?q=Tomb+of+Christ+with+glass+floor&tbm=isch&imgil=tobjUvQetLUUfM%253A%253BhfUPkg8lmzgfM%253Bhttp%25253A%25252F%25252Fwww.dailymail.co.uk%25252Fsciencetech%25252Farticle-3968764%25252FNew-images-reveal-3-million-restoration-Christ-s-burial-shrine-contains-slab-Jesus-resurrected-crucifixion.html&source=iu&pf=m&fir=tobjUvQetLUUfM%253A%252ChfUPkg8lmzgfM%252C&usg=__azetaYa0l-uxzJZ9xpm1YRanhXs%3D&biw=1536&bih=816&ved=0ahUKEwiM3_Pz8LbTAhWJ24MKHXniDhQQyjcIMA&ei=zK36WlZJO4m3jwT5xLugAQ#imgrc=AmWhUnl1E3PIMM:

https://www.google.com/search?q=Museum+with+glass+floor&tbm=isch&imgil=cIEEOHncLychkM%253A%253BpdYwWIZ0tUN3uM%253Bhttps%25253A%25252F%25252Fwww.robertharding.com%25252Findex.php%25253Flang%2525253Den%25252526page%2525253Dsearch%25252526s%2525253Dglass%252525252Bfloor%252525252B%25252526smode%2525253D0%25252526zoom%2525253D1%25252526display%2525253D5%25252526sortby%2525253D0%25252526bgcolour%2525253Dwhite&source=iu&pf=m&fir=cIEEOHncLychkM%253A%252CpdYwWIZ0tUN3uM%252C&usg=__8XCU26GPu8mzLRZvv4UkTvbsbyw%3D&biw=1536&bih=816&ved=0ahUKEwj5lLe48LbTAhUKy2MKHcleDXAQyjcILQ&ei=UK36WPmsD4qWjwPJvbWABw#imgrc=lsckUFVoKGfOmM:

Historical info of deceased people on plaques to be placed on the inside walls

Porcelain UV photos on the walls commemorating the dead and the history of the times.

https://www.google.com/search?q=Historical+tiles+UV&tbm=isch&imgil=bNZMC9-9xCM6QM%253A%253Bw3ahoeMS7r9ueM%253Bhttp%25253A%25252F%25252Ftileartisans.com%25252Fart-in-public-places%25252F&source=iu&pf=m&fir=bNZMC9-9xCM6QM%253A%252Cw3ahoeMS7r9ueM%252C&usg=__0vH_M0YF8-

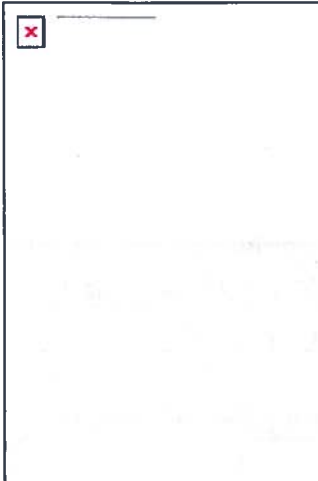
[yQfw_u5LBbXpXNEJ0%3D&ved=0ahUKEwixrLry8bbTAhVGxYMKHcxrCWIQyjcIPQ&ei=1q76WLHpFsaKjwTM16WQBg&biw=1536&bih=816&dpr=1.25#imgrc=R4jVIHtrvhJWOM:](http://www.king-tearsmortuary.com/)

Stewart King of King Tears Mortuary says he, and Evergreen has info of who is buried there.

Address: 1300 E 12th St, Austin, TX 78702

Phone: (512) 476-9128

<http://www.king-tearsmortuary.com/>



King-Tears Mortuary, Inc. - Serving Austin and Vicinity ...

www.king-tearsmortuary.com

King-Tears Mortuary, Inc.- Funeral and Cremation Services.
Serving Austin and Vicinity since 1901.

Everybody will be happy....

Anything else is a disaster!

If you would like to go further. The use of GPR (Ground Penetrating Radar) can determine the whereabouts of buried bodies. Inevitably some of the buried people will be effected. (But not as many if located)

If you watch the Sobibor movie they talk about a group of College students that flew to Germany from California to help the Jewish Researchers successfully find out where exterminated people were buried.

You never know. Maybe a group of students who could take the project on as part of their degree plan. **It only takes time.**

Very cost effective.

City of Austin
Cemetery Operations
2800 Hancock Dr.
Austin, TX 78731

April 26, 2017

Dear Ms. Tonja Walls-Davis,

I am a descendent of Rev. Jacob Fontaine buried in 1898 and Melvina Fontaine buried in 1893; both buried at Oakwood Cemetery. I would like to thank you for accepting my comments about the human remains found underneath the chapel located at Oakwood Cemetery. The remains should be respectfully exhumed and reinterred with proper commemoration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lambuth Jacob Fontaine". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Lambuth Fontaine