

CHURCH OF CHRIST

Austin Parks and Recreation Department
**Historic Montopolis
Negro School**

Community Meeting

Hosted by District 3 Council Member Council Member José Velásquez
Wednesday, September 4, 2024



Site and Building History

- Original 1890s school at nearby location destroyed by flood.
- New building established on site in mid-1930s on land donated to Travis County by St. Edward's Baptist Church.
- Travis County transferred ownership to Austin Public Schools in 1952.
- Until 1954, *Brown v. Board of Education*, public education was racially segregated by law.
- School closed in 1962 when Austin Public Schools formally began integration of schools.
- Building served as Montopolis Church of Christ from mid 1960s until 1980s.
- Portion of Montopolis Church of Christ tract purchased and adjacent tract with St. Edwards Baptist Church condemned through eminent domain for Grove Blvd Extension in 1986-87, which was never constructed.

Community Advocacy & Acquisition by the City of Austin (2015-2017)

- **2015:** 500 Montopolis Dr. purchased by real estate development firm
- **2016:** Property owner files demolition permit and community advocated strongly for the building and site's preservation. Historic Landmark Commission recommends initiation of historic zoning, but item failed to pass due to lack of super majority
- **2017:** Owner agreed to historic designation for the building on the condition that the development would be granted a zoning change for denser development
- **2017:** Ultimately, council determined that 500 Montopolis Dr deserved to not just be preserved, but placed into the public realm and transformed into a museum

Community Advocacy & Acquisition by the City of Austin (2018-2019)

- **2018:** City unable to agree with owner on purchase price for property and therefore, directs that the building and site be acquired through eminent domain
- **2019:** City successful in completing eminent domain proceedings and takes possession of 500 Montopolis Dr; developer appeals monetary award and litigation continues until 2022



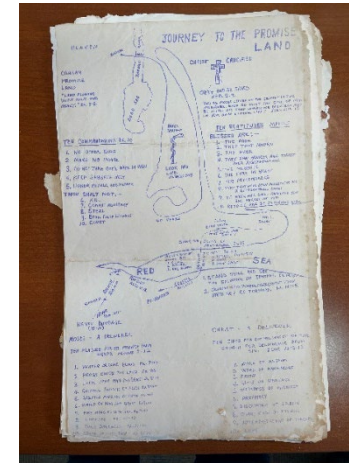
Building Condition (2020)



Building Clean-up & Funds for Planning (2020)

- **2020:** PARD completes protective measures for building; sensitive materials stored in climate-controlled space, provides on site storage for non-fixed furniture, completes pest and vermin exclusion, and completes hazardous material abatement
- **2020:** PARD requests and receives \$150K from Austin Parks Foundation to develop a concept plan for the school property

Location	Item	Number	Description
Archives Box 1	Phillips and Upshaw Funeral Home Church Fan	3	1 with Last Supper, 1 with family "Family Faith," and 1 with child and dog (no handle)
Archives Box 1	King-Tears Mortuary Church Fan	16	Green border, photo of building, wooden handle
Archives Box 1	American Standard Water Heater Church Fan	8	Peach background with photo of water heater and slogan on one side, and coupon and sales pitch on reverse side
Archives Box 1	Informational Sheets (ephemera)	164	"The Great Physician" (10), "The Place of Refuge" (45), "Journey to the Promise Land" (28), "Salvation of the Chief of Sinners and His Life" (47), "To Eternity By Faith or Feeling?" (32), "Should We Be Like Foxes (2 partial)
Archives Box 1	Religious Booklets "Gospel Minutes"	10	"Questions and Bible Answers" (3), "What Do You Have in Mind" (3), "Thanks From Your Editors" (1), "Sir, We Would See Jesus" (3)
Archives Box 1	"The Word of Truth" Magazine	2	Feb-Mar, 1968
Archives Box 1	Church of Christ Calendar	6	1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1986, 1987
Archives Box 1	Small Brochure "10 Reasons Why You Should Investigate The Church of Christ"	138	Blue front with image of Bible
Archives Box 1	"Women's Liberation, To Sin or Not to Sin. This Is the Question" Booklet	10	23 page brown booklet
Archives Box 1	"Gospel of Christ Gospel Lessons in Our Annual Tent Meeting" Brochure	228	Aug 10-17, 1986 (37), Aug 11-18, 1985 (159 folded, 32 unfolded)
Archives Box 1	COA Building Permit	1	8-25-67
Archives Box 1	Handwritten Scrolls	3	
Archives Box 1	Matches "Blue Streak Service"	1	Partially Used
Archives Box 1	"The Majestic Hymnal" Book	1	Brown cover with silver duct tape on spine
Archives Box 1	Empty Cans	3	"Dr. Pepper," "Hunt's Peach Halves," "Cock o' the Walk Halved Bartlett Pears"
Archives Box 2	Electrolux Multi-Filter	2	Tan filters to fit an Electrolux vacuum
Archives Box 2	"The Majestic Hymnal" Book	15	Brown cover with silver duct tape on spine
Archives Box 3	Telephone book	1	Greater Austin Dec 1975



Community Meetings and Open House (2021)

- **Sept. 21, 2021:** PARD Director McNeeley meets with members of Montopolis community to discuss approach to planning process
- **Nov. 6, 2021:** Community Open House; Austin Transportation invited to attend and gather feedback on Grove Blvd extension

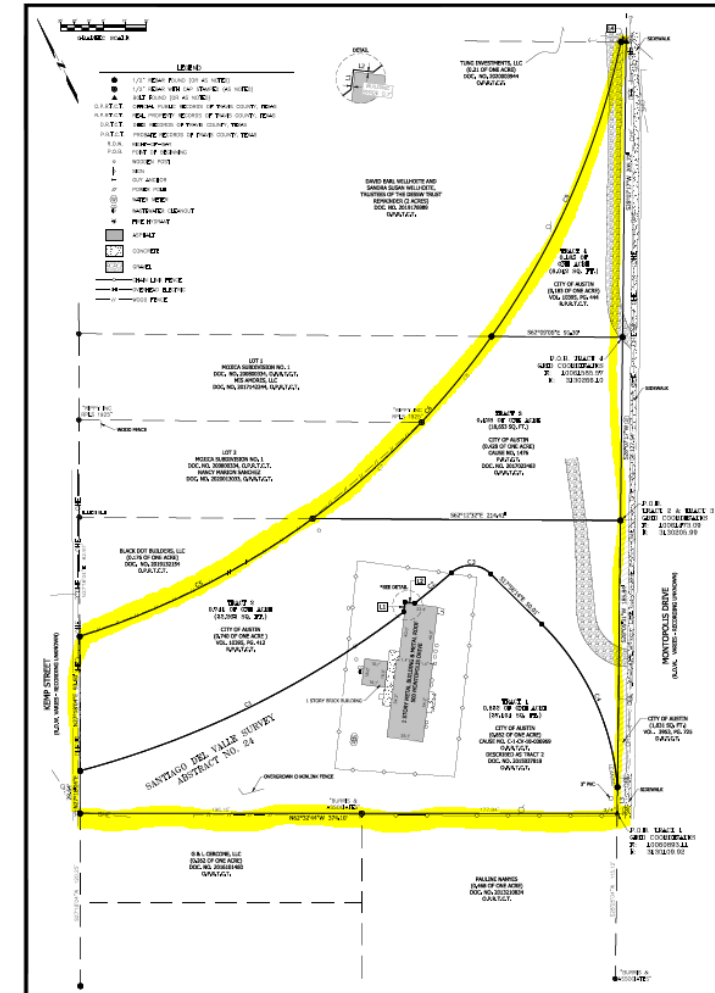


Planning discussion (2022-present)

- **February-July 2022:** PARD staff meets with Montopolis CDC to develop a Certificate of Exemption enabling PARD to directly contract with CDC to lead planning process.
- **July 2022:** Montopolis CDC requests a partnership agreement instead of contract for planning. Discussions continued into 2024. No contract to date.
- **September 4, 2024:** Community meeting to discuss next steps.

Expand & Dedicate Parkland Around Site (2022-2023)

- **June 2022:** The Grove Blvd extension formally removed from Austin Strategic Mobility Plan, allowing PARD to pursue parkland dedication for adjacent tract
- **December 2022:** PARD funds and coordinates boundary survey to support parkland dedication of Montopolis School and St. Edwards Church Tract
- **September 2023:** Councilmember Velasquez sponsors parkland dedication item



2023 Juneteenth Event



2024 Juneteenth Event



Next Steps

- Oral history
- Historic Designation
- Identify and decide on planning process
- Continue to build relationships with community
- Once plan is completed, seek funding for implementation





Questions