

FROST TOWN URBAN GARDEN NEWS

JAMES BUTE PARK / FROST TOWN HISTORIC SITE

Art & Environmental Architecture, Inc.

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Recrudescent Happenings from the Banks of the Murky Brown Bayou

- The Harris County Historical Commission unanimously passed a resolution granting Frost Town its first historic marker. As of November 1st, the paperwork is in the hands of the Texas Historic Commission for editing and review of the narrative and its subsequent final approval. To the right is an artistic rendering from the marker proposal.
- J.K. Wagner & Company performed a brief but incisive archaeological investigation of portions of the Frost Town historic site in September. Their findings were better than we hoped for. According to Doug Molineu, archaeologist, significant portions of the early Frost Town habitation soils remain for investigation, calling the site potentially "...invaluable in advancing our understanding of this increasingly important aspect of our history," referencing the Barrio De El Alacran. The intact state of early Euro-American habitation soil under and around Frost Town, suggests that with an exhaustive dig, Native American remnants may also be found. Talk about historically rich.



- Ernest Roth of Terra Surveyors generously contributed his time and energy to reconnoiter the original footprint and street plan of the Frost Town Addition. This was the first step in Harris County Precinct 2's and Art and Environmental's historical street identification program. This program's ultimate aim is to show the original street grid by using landscaping and signage. Ernest Roth and his team are pictured below.

Kudos All Around

- Special thanks to David Pomeroy, Louis F. Aulbach, Milton Howe and Janet K. Wagner for helping with our presentation to Commissioner Sylvia Garcia of our historic marker program for the Frost Town Historic Site / James Bute Park.
- Special thanks also to Sylvia Garcia, Judson Robinson, Jr. and Helen Berrott-Tims with Precinct 2, for their keen interest in Harris County history and respectful attention to our planned improvements for the Frost Town Historic Site.
- And finally, special thanks to the MacDonald-Peterson Foundation for their gracious financial support.



Bridge Preservation Expands and is Showing Results in 2007

Our history program is moving forward with applications for special protections on some of our local engineering marvels...an almost unnoticed inventory of worthy civic structures owned by the City in the form of bridge architecture.

As a cultural arts organization directly responsible for the rejuvenation of the McKee Street Bridge, we are uniquely positioned to carry through with the nomination process of other significant Houston bridges.

Sabine, San Jacinto and Hill are, as of November 2007, listed on the National Historic Register. The Almeda and Telephone bridges have all passed their nominations under the State Board of Review and have been submitted to the National Park Service for final approval, according to Adrienne V. Campbell of the Texas Historical Commission.

Placement on the register brings awareness and respect from the community to the City's unknown treasures and may protect them from damage, alteration or destruction. It also provides stability to our city during the current climate of urban revitalization.

For a summary of the City Beautiful movement visit http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/City_Beautiful.



Telephone Road (1931) – also part of the City Beautiful Program an intact elegant structure placed within a pleasant landscape. However this bridge is threatened by flood way issues. JG McKenzie was a contributing engineer on this bride as well.



Almeda Road Bridge (1921) – a J.G. McKenzie city engineer contribution and good example of the City Beautiful movement in Texas. Almeda is threatened by floodway issues and could be in danger of demolition. Listed by TxDOT and the THC as eligible for the National Register under Criterion C for Engineering.



Hill Street (1938) is a steel plate girder bridge embodying distinctive characteristics of this type and is significant for the length of span at the time of construction. The art deco sidewalk rails are true to form and could be called depression modern. J.G. McKenzie is the bridge designer.



Sabine Street (1924) is a significant example of City Beautiful bridge design in Texas. A non-truss concrete structure with arches between piers, and one of Houston's most photographed.



San Jacinto Street (1914) is an open spandrel concrete arch bridge which spans Buffalo Bayou. It is significant as a rare example of the type in Texas. There are a total of only 23 in the state and a good example of City Beautiful bridge design. The Main Street Viaduct is the sister bridge to the San Jacinto Street bridge: at bayou level they are both wonderful to view and pass under.