

An Application for a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark
THE WIPPRECHT HOME
500 East 29th Street, Brazos County, Bryan, Texas
By Gordon Satoh

I. CONTEXT

River, Rail, and University - The Advent of Bryan, Texas

Bryan is a major city in Brazos County, Texas, located approximately 100 miles north-northwest of Houston, 170 miles south of Dallas, and 100 miles east of Austin. Major influences formative to Brazos County included “rivers, railroads, and Texas A&M University.”¹ Legend of a thirst-breaking river going back to the time of Spanish exploration provided the name for the county, “Brazos de Dios”—in the arms of God.² The advent of Bryan came with the extension of the railroad system through Brazos County by the Texas and Pacific Railroad. Theodore Kosse, a surveyor with Houston and Texas Central, designed the original plan for the town, including land for a courthouse square, a school, a Methodist Church, and lots rendered for taxation. William Joel Bryan, a nephew of the renowned Stephen Fuller Austin, gave a tract of land along the railroad’s right of way for a town to be named in his honor. Austin, commended as the “Father of Texas” when eulogized by Sam Houston, was the leader of the second successful colonization of the region that became known as the Republic of Texas. His nephew would leave a similar impression upon Brazos County, through the town of Bryan.³

II. OVERVIEW

The Railroad and Bryan

In 1860, William Joel Bryan sold his interest in the town lots to Abram Groesbeck and W. R. Baker, the directors of Houston and Texas Central, for the sum of \$3,200.00. North of the town of Millican, this single, square-mile tract would eventually become a town that served the railway employees and patrons. The Civil War brought a halt to the railroad expansion; however, Bryan continued to grow into a village of about 300 residents. In 1866, by a vote of 190 to 42, Bryan displaced Boonville as the county seat of

Brazos County. The post office was moved to this fledgling town, and the first train arrived on August 19, 1867. A yellow fever epidemic brought the majority of the population of Millican to the new county seat within weeks of this inaugural visit. Bryan became a major crop distribution center and enjoyed a 232% increase in population between 1860 and 1870, hosting the Democratic Convention in 1868, and the Episcopalian Convention in 1870. Main Street was “made wide enough to turn a five-yoke ox-wagon” and businesses rose up on the west side of the railroad track, abutting the line in order to facilitate loading.⁴ Residents of Bryan voted to incorporate in 1867, and it was formally incorporated by an Act of the Texas Legislature in 1872.⁵

The Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas

An act of the United States Congress approved on July 2, 1862, and then amended on July 23, 1865, then approved by the Legislature of Texas on April 17, 1871 provided the foundation and endowment for an Agricultural and Mechanical College. In 1866 Congress, through the Morrill Act, provided a gift of 180,000 acres of public land, which was sold for \$174,000.00 to provide “officers’ salaries.”⁶ Brazos County donated an additional 2,416 acres of land on either side of the Houston and Texas Central Railroad. The Constitution of 1876, Article VII, Section 13, gave this proclamation:

“The Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas, established by an act of the legislature, passed April 17, 1871, located in the county of Brazos is hereby made and constituted a branch of the University of Texas, for instruction in agriculture, the mechanic arts, and the natural sciences connected therewith.”⁷

On Monday, October 2, 1876, the Agricultural and Mechanical College, the first state-supported institutional of higher learning, officially opened for registration with instruction beginning two days later with an enrollment of forty students under the supervision of six faculty members.⁸ Participation in the military training, through the Corps of Cadets, was compulsory and the total cost for education at this time, excluding books and clothing, was \$140

Degrees offered included Bachelor of Scientific Agriculture, Bachelor of Mechanical Engineering, Bachelor of Civil Engineering, and Bachelor of Scientific Horticulture. In 1883, postgraduate courses were offered in scientific agriculture, and a man by the name of Walter Wipprecht became “the first to avail himself of this provision.”⁹ In 1887 Congress provided additional funds for the establishment of an agricultural experiment station, and in 1890, the board of directors selected Governor Lawrence Sullivan Ross, the acclaimed former Confederate general and state senator, to lead the college as president. By 1894, the Agricultural and Mechanical College boasted a matriculation of 313 students, a graduating class of 31 students, eleven department heads, and nine assistant, adjunct, or associate professors. In 1910 the Bryan-College Station Interurban railway began providing convenient public transportation between the two cities and ready access to the growing college.¹⁰

The Turn of the Century - Evidence of Growth

A survey of Bryan by Bella French in 1878 included “two private banks, fifty business houses, two lumber and grist mills, one gin and mill, one oil factory (cottonseed oil), two carriage and buggy factories, two brick cotton warehouses, two public halls, and four livery stables.”¹¹ She also noted the architecture and “the newly established Agricultural and Mechanical College, four miles away.”¹² The primary crop of the region was cotton, with production in excess of 15,000 bales by the beginning of the twentieth century. Cotton compression, used to lower the cost of transporting cotton by sea and, later, by rail, became a large and powerful industry. The Bryan Compress Company began operating in 1887 and ranked Bryan on par with many port cities and followed the growing trend to build compress facilities inland. An influx of German, Czechoslovakian, and Italian immigrants, who left cotton farms to start businesses in Bryan, helped to develop a strong merchant class. Church congregations, such as Saint Anthony Catholic Church, were founded to accommodate the growing needs of specific ethnic populations. The “Mutual Improvement Circle,” which would later become known as The Woman’s Club, was organized in 1895 and was an early bastion for women’s rights. This organization served the public through civic, literary, and

philanthropic works, working towards mosquito eradication and the beautification of the city and helped in securing a grant for a Carnegie Library. Public works came to Bryan in 1889 with the Bryan Water, Inc. and Electric Light Co., Inc. contracted to provide city services and turn of the century photographs of Main Street show street lighting provided by a suspended bulb. By December 1900 the city boasted both an ice factory and a cold storage plant, but more importantly, a second railroad, the International & Great Northern Railroad, reached the city and it eventually became the commercial center for Brazos, Robertson, and Burleson counties.¹³

III. HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Wipprecht home brings together the lives of two significant individuals from early Bryan history, its namesake, Walter Wipprecht, businessman and public official who arranged for the construction of the home for his mother, Julia, and who would later occupy the house upon her death, and George Washington Jenkins, Jr., a contractor known for his contributions to the city's architecture as well as his early death. Their life experiences provide insight into the commercial, social, and domestic lives of Victorian-age Bryan, Texas. At the time of this home's construction, the city was poised on the brink of the twentieth century. Wealth from cotton, railroads, and commerce brought prosperity to the city that created a level of opulence and grandeur. The era of Civil War Reconstruction was superseded by the construction of a modern city, replete with the amenities of larger cities. Architecture was only limited by the materials at hand and the imagination of the contractor. Soon, the Queen Anne style would reach the Brazos Valley.

Walter Wipprecht

From the late 1890s to the turn of the century the name Walter Wipprecht was well-known in Brazos County. As a graduate of the Texas Agricultural and Mechanical College Wipprecht had taught agriculture, served as a cotton expert, succeeded in business and had worked as public official. These were considerable achievement for the son of German immigrants.¹⁴

Wipprecht was born in Sisterdale, Kendall County, Texas on January 3, 1864 to Rudolph and Julia Kapp Wipprecht. His formative years were likely spent in New Braunfels where the family had settled after the war. Historian Frank W. Johnson described young Walter as “a scholarly man himself, he is a son and is descended from a line of scholarly ancestors.”¹⁵ This being said, while no formal record can be found of Walter’s early education, his home environment was most likely to have been rich in literature, arts, and the sciences. Wipprecht entered the Agricultural and Mechanical College in 1881 at the age of 17, just five years after the college had opened and later received one of only thirteen certificates of graduation with the Class of 1884. In 1885 Wipprecht became the first person to enter postgraduate studies and graduate with a Bachelor of Scientific Agriculture. A publication from that year indicates that he was active in both analytical work pertaining to the effect of fertilizers on corn and the bearing of salt on fat production in pigs. From 1886 to 1887, Wipprecht remained at the college as an assistant in chemistry. It was during this period that he filed for a passport as a “native citizen.” Departing for Germany in 1887, Wipprecht studied at the University of Jena—the institution his father had graduated from—until 1889 and soon published his work as a scientist working on ammonia based fertilizers¹⁶.

Wipprecht later served as a chemist for the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station from 1888 to 1890, and then founded a chemical laboratory at the Louisiana Sugar Experiment Station at Audubon Park, near New Orleans, Louisiana. From 1890 to 1891 he also served as the second president of the Texas Agricultural and Mechanical College Alumni Association, the predecessor of the Association of Former Students. About 1892 Wipprecht resigned from this position and became lead chemist for E. H. Cunningham in Sugarland, Texas, the owner of one of the largest cane sugar houses in the United States. A year later he returned to Bryan sometime around 1893 and entered into a business arrangement with Meredith Hadden James, forming the pharmacy, James and Wipprecht.¹⁷

On June 15, 1893 Wipprecht married Sallie Ethel Read, a daughter of the distinguished Texas surgeon Rhesa W. Read. In 1897 he helped to organize and manage the Bryan Press Company and became manager of its cotton compression operation, one of the most significant in town since both cotton farmers and the railroads relied on the compressed cotton bales for shipment. Fueled by his scientific education, Wipprecht improved not only the operation of the plant, but took interest in the farming of the agricultural district

supplying the raw material. And, his interest in agriculture extended beyond the workplace as demonstrated from an article published in 1911 about his observations of the growth of a pecan tree that sprouted in his yard next to one of his rose bushes. His exacting nature is demonstrated by his account of the height of the tree, the number of buds each year, and the number of pecans the tree bore. Finally sometime around 1898, Wipprecht constructed this home for his mother, Julia.¹⁸*

In 1901 Wipprecht was elected a city alderman. His entry into politics continued with his election as tax collector in 1904, and subsequent re-election for four terms. In 1913, his political influence extended to Austin when the State Legislature proposed Joint Resolution 18, which called for the Agricultural and Mechanical College to move to Austin. In Walter's own words, when recounting his story for the *Dallas Morning News* column "The Touring Texan" at the age of 83, the people raised a fuss and told him, "You go to Austin and bring the Legislature down here."¹⁹ Walter convinced the Legislature to visit—they arrived by Pullman train car, complete with forty-one secretaries and a carload of page boys—and the amendment was defeated. After chemicals and the confinement of the pharmaceutical business damaged his lungs, Wipprecht returned to the Agricultural and Mechanical College in 1914 to serve as its business manager, a position which he held until 1937. In 1919 following the death of his mother, Julia, Walter and his family lived in the house. When Wipprecht's wife, Sallie Ethel, died on September 17, 1934 there is no evidence that Wipprecht ever re-married.²⁰

Wipprecht told the "The Touring Texan" that he "was retired" from the job in 1946.²¹ This same newspaper article describes him as having the appearance of a scientist, "with strong features and a white mustache and trim goatee."²² Shortly before his death, he was also described by George Sessions Perry as, "Perhaps the deepest-dyed Aggie I have ever known, one who doubtless thinks of his blood corpuscles not in conventional terms but as being, like A. and M.'s school colors, maroon and white."²³ Walter died on September 28, 1951 and was buried the next day in the Bryan City Cemetery.²⁴

* Editor's note: Julia Wipprecht was a woman of independent means, having her own business interests. Although he may have overseen its construction, there is no evidence that Walter Wipprecht paid for the construction of this house.

George Washington Jenkins, Jr.

George Washington Jenkins, Jr. was born on October 5, 1863 in London, England, the third son of Captain George W. Jenkins, Sr. and Mary Ann Newby Jenkins. After the senior Jenkins immigrated to the United States in January 1873, the family followed six months later and joined him in Chicago, Illinois, where his family. The Jenkins family came to Texas in January 1878, first to Wheelock, then settling in Bryan where young Jenkins worked as an architect and contractor, sometimes engaging in projects with his brother Charles.²⁵

The Jenkins family became a major architectural force in Bryan. Jenkins, Sr. had been apprenticed to a contractor as a young man and his son, George, Jr., might have been influenced most by his father's style and methods, especially since his father was known as "a man of energy and a great worker, a skilled artisan."²⁶ George Sr. most likely learned a technique known as "balloon framing" while he lived in Chicago, Illinois. Developed around 1833 in that city by Augustine Taylor during the construction of St. Mary's Church in Fort Dearborn, Illinois, balloon framing became popular throughout America. Named for reliance on a thin framework of multiple lightweight studs, balloon framing provided a means for building inexpensive structures that required a minimum of skilled labor and enough flexibility to withstand inclement weather. Prior to this time, massive timbers had to be hewn and jointed in order to form a solid structure. Balloon framing became a predominant system of construction after the Civil War, when reconstruction necessitated the construction of both massive numbers of both homes and businesses.²⁷

The Queen Anne style, closely associated with the English architect Richard Norman Shaw (1831–1912) may have influenced George Sr.'s design and style, both from his training in England, and the tastes of American Victorian clients. The abundance of rail transportation from large cities to the interior of the country allowed for a wide range of materials and manufactured components, particularly elaborate moldings and decorative trim, giving architects and contractors a great deal of freedom with their designs and materials. This can be seen in many of the Victorian-era homes that dot the Texas landscape, whether urban or rural.²⁸

Without a doubt, George Jr.'s contributions to Bryan architecture have been overshadowed by those of his older brother, Charles "Charlie" Eric Jenkins, for whom a

Recorded Texas Historical Landmark marker has been awarded (Marker No. 8685). There is no doubt, however, most attributable, in part, to the fact that George Jr.’s working life was relatively short, being cut down by a tragedy as he approached his prime. Well-known Bryan landmarks, such as the E. J. Jenkins House, the Hudson-Harrison House, and Saint Andrew’s Episcopal Church are attributed to Charles. Still other homes throughout the East Side Historic District can be attributed to him as well, including the A.W. Wilkerson House, the Eugene Edge House, the Astin-Porter Mansion, and the McMichael-Wilson House. With such an abundance of significant and preserved structures attributed to his older brother George Jr.’s contributions to the architectural history of Bryan are often overlooked.²⁹

George Washington Jenkins, Jr. made quite an impact on the architecture of Bryan in his own right with his construction of the initial structure for the Villa Maria Ursuline Academy, though the structure would eventually need steel bar reinforcements. His brother, Charlie would later construct a 15,000 square foot addition. George Jr. also built several homes located now in the East Side Historic District including the W.A. Withers House and, based on the information on the elevation plans, the Wipprecht home. He has been credited with the construction of the Agricultural Building at Texas A&M University. Lastly, with his brother the pair built the old First Methodist Church and was in the process of building Saint Andrew’s Episcopal Church when his life came to an unexpected end.³⁰

On Saturday morning, April 19, 1902, the *Bryan Morning Eagle* reported that George Jenkins, Jr. as having developed symptoms of “hydrophobia” after being bit on the hand by his dog. This same news article described how Jenkins had applied himself to business matters for weeks previously and may have been suffering from overwork and exhaustion; however, Jenkins soon left his business in his elder brother’s care and accompanied by his younger brother, Edwin, he departed for Atlanta to seek treatment. His wife, Bertha Newby Jenkins, was visiting relatives in London and was taking a steamer home. Unfortunately, George W. Jenkins died on April 20, 1902 and is buried in the Bryan City Cemetery.³¹

IV. ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Wipprecht home is situated on a 0.653 acre tract of real property with the following description:

“Being all of that certain tract or parcel of land, lying and being situated in the STEPHEN F. AUSTIN NO. 9 LEAGUE, Bryan, Brazos County, Texas, and being part of the Preston Street right-of-way between Block 48 of the ORIGINAL TOWNSITE of the City of Bryan and the MITCHELL ADDITION.”³²

This property resides in three historically significant regions: the Stephen F. Austin No. 9 League, which is part of the territory awarded by the Mexican Government to Stephen F. Austin for introducing three hundred colonists to the Washington Municipality; within the original one square mile town site of the City of Bryan deeded by William Joel Bryan to Abram Groesbeck and W. R. Baker, the directors of Houston and Texas Central and the East Side Historic District—identified in the National Register of Historic Places No. 87001613 (1987) and described as a 210 acre region “roughly bounded by Houston, East Twenty-ninth, Haswell, and East Thirtieth” streets.³³ The historic significance of the district has been recognized through its architecture and engineering contained in multiple late-Victorian, single dwelling domestic homes from 1875–1899.³⁴

Traditionally the district has been home to the significant Bryan businessmen, plantation owners, and medical or legal professionals. Nearby notable properties include the Astin-Porter home at 600 East 29th Street, Recorded Texas Historic Landmark No. 8663, a two story Classical Revival residence with Corinthian columns, which belonged to cotton heiress Onah Astin, and the E. J. Jenkins House at 607 East 27th Street, Recorded Texas Historic Landmark No. 8686, built for Edwin James Jenkins, who owned one of Bryan’s drugstores and served as both Mayor and City Councilman.³⁵

The house is Queen Anne style described by the preservation consultants of Hardy-Heck-Moore as a “large L-plan dwelling” with “expertly crafted detailing” and “one of the few intact Victorian-era houses remaining in the city.” Extensive detailing and woodwork both outside and within the home is characteristic of the style of George Washington Jenkins, Jr. and his brother Charles. And while the construction of the house has been attributed to

Charles, the elevation plans from May–December 1898 indicate that at least the design work is of George Jr.’s hand.³⁶

The property contains several large live oak trees, at least one of which can be identified in photographs of the home circa 1900 and 1904, and the pecan trees towards the rear of the property may of the same tree described in an article from 1911 discussing what may be the first “grafted” pecan in Brazos County. Hackberry, Bradshaw pear, mimosa, Chinese tallow, catalpa, cedar, and elm trees appear to be modern additions. There is no sign of the raised bed gardens seen in early 20th century photographs. Bent and cast iron fencing of considerable age surrounds the yard, although photographs from 1900 and 1904 show wooden fencing. Fencing along the property boundary with the Astin-Porter Home is also more modern in origin. There are no signs of a stable or carriage house on the property. Concrete and stone walks lead from the street and surround the property, which is elevated about eighteen inches above street level.³⁷ The ownership record reveals that Julia Wipprecht took ownership of the property as early as 1894. Deed records indicate that the property was documented as belonging to Mrs. J. Wipprecht, and was signed by Walter Wipprecht, as her attorney in fact. The property remained in her ownership until 1919, when it became part of her estate, and then became the property of Walter and Sallie Ethel Wipprecht until 1934, when Sallie Ethel died. The property then remained in the name of Walter Wipprecht until his death in 1951, when it was willed to Ida Welch Kernodle, his daughter. Ida died on April 10, 1989 and the property was conveyed to Anne Reed Kernodle Matthews, Ida’s daughter. In 1990 the property was sold to R. Bruce and Kelly L. Buechler who purchased the property with the intention of restoring it. After extensive restoration and the awarding of the Bryan Mayor’s Preservation Prize, the home was sold to Philip C. and Martha Banks in 2001. *The property designation was changed from residential to commercial* and the home is presently used as the office of Philip C. Banks, Attorney at Law.³⁸

In effect, the ownership of the property remained in the Wipprecht family and their descendants for nearly one century. The relatively small number of owners of this property and the expert restoration work executed by the Buechlars has contributed to the home’s largely intact condition.

Design and Construction

The Wipprecht home contains the following features described by The National Trust for Historic Preservation as belonging to the Queen Anne style: hipped roof, second story projections, contrasting first-floor clapboard siding and intricate second-floor shingle patterns, steep gables, spindled ornamentation, paneled brickwork chimney, and rich, dark woods. Additional features attributed to Victorian houses from 1880 to 1910 that are found in the 1898 Wipprecht home include: classic columns as porch supports, recessed porches in the gables, free classic gable detailing, which in this case is polychrome, extensive decorative detailing, and bay windows. Given the abundance of characteristics shared with descriptions of Queen Anne style Victorian-era homes it is safe to deduce that the Wipprecht home falls into one of the many variants of the Queen Anne style.³⁹ Several significant exterior primary architectural features of the home have been identified:

The original drawings of the four elevations currently hang on the walls of the home. These plans denote dates from May 5 to December 5, 1898 and are each signed “Geo. Jenkins Bryan, Tex.” While George Sr. lived until 1904, the collaborative efforts between Charles and George Jr. make it more probable that George Washington Jenkins, Jr. was the creator of these designs. Although the construction had been originally credited to Charlie Jenkins, the sole name of George on the design plans makes it likely that he was also the general contractor for this home. For this reason, credit for the design and construction of this home will be given to George Washington Jenkins, Jr. Given his death in 1902, this would make the Wipprecht home one of his final domestic residences.⁴⁰

Description (*see Appendix A–C for detailed descriptions of the Interior—Downstairs, Interior—Upstairs, and Exterior*)

Some of the architectural features of this home may be unique for this historic district. Those significant features on the exterior of the home include: 2-1/2 story, frame dwelling with L plan, exterior walls with weatherboard siding, hip roof with gables, jig-sawn brackets, wood sash double-hung windows, single-door primary entrance, three-bay porch with shed roof on south elevation, Doric columns, turned wood balusters, two interior brick

chimneys with paneled brickwork and corbelled caps, pedimented entry bay to porch, small polygonal bay projects from southeast corner, hood moldings with jig-sawn brackets over façade windows, imbricated shingle treatment of second story, jig-sawn sunburst motifs in porch gables, enclosed porch over entry bay, and integral rear ell. The home is framed by balloon construction, upon concrete piers and a red brick foundation. Elaborate moldings are found throughout the interior, including egg and dart molding made of dark pine, the most frequent trim in the home, particularly over door lintels and windows. Bulls-eye medallions are incorporated into the moldings, giving doorways and windows a columned appearance. Generally there are several different layers of moldings, which form an elaborate framing of all doors, entry-ways, and windows. The upstairs moldings are more subtle and subdued. The downstairs moldings show the full extent of the craftsman's trade. The species of pine used throughout the home is most likely old-growth longleaf pine, which was abundant in Louisiana and East Texas during the time in which the house was constructed. This was the favored tree for construction due to the tree's tall, straight trunks, and ready availability through due to influx of railroad traffic. The dark appearance wood concurs with the description, being a reddish amber color with a large, distinct grain, and significant density and hardness. Typically this wood was finished with an oil based coating. Typical old-growth trees could reach a height of 80 to 100 feet and a diameter of 24 to 32 inches, explaining the long expanses of seamless flooring, best seen in the upstairs bedrooms. There is no way to be certain that the moldings and other woodwork were the creation of the Jenkins' family, however, the Jenkins' family may have possessed the technical expertise and equipment to be able to create these items locally. Floors throughout the home are pine, excepting the entry-way and dining room, where they are oak (of higher elevation than the other flooring – perhaps replacement or covering of original flooring, as the planks are much shorter in length as akin to more modern sources), and in the kitchen and restrooms, where tile has been installed for convenience and housekeeping. Some wall surfaces are covered with "canvas-backed" (cheesecloth) wallpaper. The cloth backing of the paper allows it to flex with changes in temperature. Large, double-hung windows are found throughout the home, giving it a light and spacious interior. One room even has rippled, polychrome, leaded stained glass windows. Upstairs rooms have transoms above the doors, with clear glass insets, some of which still have the original transom rods in place. Ceilings

are approximately sixteen feet tall downstairs and approximately fourteen feet upstairs. Ornate, polychrome, gold embellished picture railings are found throughout the downstairs. (Three of the four elevation plans hang from these picture railings by vintage brass claws, demonstrating the intended use of this decorative trim. Two massive pocket doors are found downstairs, separating the front parlor from the back parlor, and separating the dining room from the entry-way. An elaborate staircase with steam bent bead-board decoration, alternating diagonal bead-board wainscoting, bulls-eye appointed spindles, post carvings, and an ornate, geometric, newel post, is found in the entry-way, and forms an impressive centerpiece for the home. The craftsmanship, appointments, and attention to detail are impeccable. Even with age and wear, the brilliance of George Washington Jenkins, Jr.'s work shines throughout the home. Unlike many homes of this age, the architectural treasures have not been stripped from either the interior or the exterior of the Wipprecht home.⁴¹

V. STATE OF PRESERVATION

The Hardy-Heck-Moore Historic Sites inventory, completed in July 1986 identifies the Wipprecht home as being one of the few intact Victorian-era houses remaining in the city of Bryan, Texas. Hardy-Heck-Moore described the home as a "large L-plan dwelling" with "expertly crafted detailing" and commends the multitude of exterior features, exceeding the designated lines on the research form. Victorian homes, owing to their ornate construction and difficult maintenance, often fall into disrepair and are purchased for their property, dismantled for their architectural treasures, and lost forever to both historians and the public, except perhaps in photographs and the memories of the elderly. Comparing the Wipprecht home to the plans that George Washington Jenkins, Jr. prepared in 1898 indicates that approximately 90 to 95% of the original exterior features remain intact. This includes such embellishments as the polychrome, jig-sawn, eave and gable brackets, the Doric columns and spindled porch balustrade, the corbelled brick chimneys and the jig-sawn gable ornamentation. The interior has been preserved and restored to the extent that approximately 85 to 90% of the original interior remains with at least 95% of the original woodwork trim

and window treatments. With the exception of the flooring in the kitchen, restrooms, dining room, and front entryway, the original, nearly joint-free, pine flooring has been preserved.⁴²

Restoration by Dr. and Mrs. Buechler

Bruce and Kelly Buechler invested incredible effort towards preserving and restoring the Wipprecht home, upgrading components only where necessary. Over 85% of the original pine flooring remains. Gas valves were updated as a safety consideration, but the piping and ports where heaters once stood remain in the floor. The original footed bathtub was refinished and restored. The incredible woodwork includes wainscoted walls, baroque and rococo picture rails, ornate scroll sawn and turned canopies, egg and dart trim, oak mantles and overmantles, bead board, grand staircase, and pocket doors have all been preserved and restored. Where additions have been made, such as the sunroom on the side and the enclosure of the second story porch, every effort was taken to preserve the architectural theme and elements to the extent possible. Central air and heating were added to the home, but in a manner consistent with the preservation of architectural elements. The polychrome color scheme, lost on many Victorian-era homes because of the intensive and expensive labor needed to maintain it, presents an excellent example of the contrasting elements desired by clients of this time period.

Preservation by Mr. and Mrs. Banks

Philip and Martha Banks utilize the Wipprecht home as a law office. The professional use of the property; however, has not distracted the current owners from taking a keen interest in the continued preservation and restoration of the home. They have been intensely interested in the history and significance of the house and have sponsored the research which underlies this report. They intend to make a copy of this report and copies of the materials used in research available to the Carnegie Library, the same institution which Julia Wipprecht was instrumental in helping to bring to Bryan. It is hoped that this contribution will help spark renewed interest in the preservation of the East Side Historic District and future research on the significance of Bryan as a railroad and cotton town of the late nineteenth century.

VI. CONCLUSION

The Wipprecht home has multiple levels of historical and cultural significance which deem it worthy of historic marker consideration. The home is one of the finest intact examples of Queen Anne style, Victorian-era, domestic architecture remaining in Bryan. The designer and contractor was George Washington Jenkins, Jr., whose structures are not as well known as those of his brother Charles Eric Jenkins. Julia Wipprecht, for whom the home was originally built, was an early suffragette and charter member of the society that brought the Carnegie Library to the area and worked to improve conditions for women in the region. Her son, Walter Wipprecht, became the first person to graduate with an advanced degree from the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas, demonstrating how the son of German immigrants could achieve success through hard work, education, and ingenuity. Therefore, justification for declaring this site a Registered Texas Historic Landmark can be divided into four primary areas: the historical significance of Walter Wipprecht and his contractor, George Washington Jenkins, Jr., the significance of the home's design and construction, and the state of preservation.

Of all the Queen Anne style homes in the East Side Historic District that have not yet been awarded a historic landmark designation, the Wipprecht home best exemplifies an intact structure of the Victorian-era. The high state of preservation and ready accessibility by the public make it an ideal home for recognition on the boundary of this district. With the combined significance of the property as part of the Stephen F. Austin Number 9 League, the original town site of the City of Bryan, and the corner of the East Side Historic District makes this property ideal as a starting point for describing the history of Bryan. The home's history and the current state of preservation makes designation of this home a great example of preservation in both local and state history during the late nineteenth century.

NOTES

¹ Walker, Shirlreed, “The Brazos and Navasota River,” in *Brazos County History: Rich-Past–Bright Future*, ed. Glenna Fourman Brundidge (Bryan, TX: Family History Foundation, 1986), 49.

² Ibid.

³ Walker, Shirlreed, “Community Histories: Towns Past and Present,” in *Brazos County History: Rich-Past – Bright Future*, ed. Glenna Fourman Brundidge (Bryan, TX: Family History Foundation, 1986), 29; *Stephen F. Austin*, Texas State Library & Archives Commission Web Site: <http://www.tsl.state.tx.us/treasures/giants/Austin/Austin-01.html> (retrieved November 19, 2008).

⁴ Walker, “Community Histories,” 29.

⁵ Ibid.; *History of Bryan, Texas*, City of Bryan Web Site: <http://www.bryantx.gov/departments/?name=history> (retrieved November 12, 2008); Scott, Paul R., “Civil War and Reconstruction,” in *Brazos County History: Rich-Past – Bright Future*, ed. Glenna Fourman Brundidge (Bryan, TX: Family History Foundation, 1986), 100.

⁶ Smith, Robert F., “Agricultural and Mechanical College,” *United States Bureau of Education, Circular of Information*, vol. 1, series 84 (Washington, DC: GPO, 1903), 261.

⁷ Ibid., 260.

⁸ *The Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas*, Texas A&M University Corps of Cadets Web Site: <http://www.aggiecorps.org/about/history.htm> (retrieved November 20, 2008)

⁹ Smith, *Bureau of Education*, 269.

¹⁰ Smith, *Bureau of Education*, 260-2, 292, 299; *The Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas*; Walker, “Community Histories,” 32.

¹¹ Walker, “Community Histories,” 30.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Treat, Victor H., “Brazos County Agriculture,” in *Brazos County History: Rich-Past – Bright Future*, ed. Glenna Fourman Brundidge (Bryan, TX: Family History Foundation, 1986), 68-72; Walker, “Community Histories,” 30-1; Page, Bill and Regina Opersteny, *A Guide to Historic Brazos County* (Bryan, TX: Brazos Heritage Society, 2003), 25; Parsons, Walter H., Jr., “Churches – Religious Histories,” in *Brazos County History: Rich-Past – Bright Future*, ed. Glenna Fourman Brundidge (Bryan, TX: Family History Foundation, 1986), 142; Madeley, Edward, “Lodges and Civic Organizations,” in *Brazos County History: Rich-Past – Bright Future*, ed. Glenna Fourman Brundidge (Bryan, TX: Family History Foundation, 1986), 176; Mounce, Clara, “Libraries,” in *Brazos County History: Rich-Past – Bright Future*, ed. Glenna Fourman Brundidge (Bryan, TX: Family History Foundation, 1986), 164.

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¹⁸ Marriage Record, Marriage License Records: Book G-2, Page 218 (1893), Office of the County Clerk, Brazos County, Texas; Johnson, *History of Texas*, 1471. See also Sallie Ethel Read, Daughters of the American Revolution ID number 119274. According to Borden she preferred to be called S. E. or S. Ethel. She is also listed as an organizing member and registrar of the William Scott Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution according to Madeley; ¹⁹ Johnson, *History of Texas*, 2017; Nevels, *Lynching to Belong*, 122. According to Johnson Wipprecht’s superb managerial skills enabled the plant to return to business in only 90 days after a disastrous fire in 1906. Johnson’s biography of Wipprecht also documents his service as the President of the Bryan Telephone Company who contributed “much profit to the stockholders and increase of good service to the community” and as one of the directors of the Parker-Astin Hardware Company; Kyle, E. J., “The Pecan and Hickory in Texas,” *Texas Department of Agriculture Bulletin*, vol. 19 (May-June 1911), 11-2; Sulak, Phillip, “Couple restore home to its original condition, win Bryan Mayor’s Historical Preservation Prize,” *Bryan College Station Eagle* (May 12, 1992), C5.

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²¹ Fowler, *Lawmakers*, 15.

²² Ibid.

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²⁴ *Brazos County Texas Cemeteries*, 273.

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³⁰ Page and Opersteny, *A Guide*, 33; Obituary, “George Jenkins;” Mayo, Henry P., *Villa Maria Ursuline Academy of Bryan, Texas*, narrative history submitted with Registered Texas Historic Landmark application for Site of Villa Maria Ursuline Academy (2003) located at 2400 Osborn Lane, Bryan, Brazos County, Texas (Marker No. 13279); Jenkins, George, *Elevation West Side Residence, 1898* (original plans on site of Wipprecht home); Hawtrey, *St. Andrew's Episcopal Church*.

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