

PEMBERTON HEIGHTS MAY 10, 2003



# HERITAGE HOMES TOUR

## CENTRAL CITY SECLUSION

### Revealing the charm and splendor of Austin's venerable Pemberton Heights

*Town & Country* magazine called it one of the country's premier "platinum" neighborhoods. The people who live there – young families and original owners alike – consider it a homey haven at the heart of a bustling city.

Nestled on the wooded bluffs above Shoal Creek and the Pease Park greenbelt, Pemberton Heights is a residential oasis in the central city often overlooked by motorists whizzing by on Windsor, Mopac and Lamar. Known as a traditionally toney, old-Austin enclave of stately homes and majestic trees, Pemberton is more than just another upscale neighborhood. While property values – and taxes – have skyrocketed since the tech boom of the '90s, Pemberton residents cherish the historic texture and neighborly ambience of the area and are loath to leave it.

Towering oaks and elms arch over the narrow, winding streets (many with inlaid tiles on the curb to mark their names), and sidewalks are full of kids on bikes and adults walking and jogging. Block parties, carpools and family friendships maintain a neighborhood cohesion not unique to Pemberton but one that preserves a 1950s quality of life in the middle of high-tech Austin.

"Neighbors here look out for one another," said *Town & Country* in June 1998, "a major draw for those seeking an old-fashioned sense of community."

Architecture in the neighborhood – bounded by Mopac Expressway to the west, 29th Street to the north, Shoal Creek to the east and Windsor Road to the south – represents three phases of primary development from the late 1920s to the early 1950s. Designs include a variety of revival styles – mainly Mediterranean, Tudor and Spanish Colonial – as well as Prairie School, Craftsman, Art Moderne, International and Ranch. While many of the homes are sizable, a good portion are not, reflecting an eclectic (and original) mix of middle- and upper-income properties.



a: 2418 HARRIS BOULEVARD



b: 1505 WOOLDRIDGE DRIVE



c: 1415 WOOLDRIDGE DRIVE



envisioned Pemberton in the mid 1920s as an exclusive, deed-restricted subdivision north of Windsor Road, similar to the Old Enfield neighborhood to the south. Both originally were part of the George W. Spear League, portions of which were granted to Austin businessman James B. Shaw who built the Woodlawn Plantation on the southern part of the tract in 1853. Six years later, Woodlawn was sold to former Texas Governor Elisha Marshall Pease and the northern part of the tract went to Pease's law partner, Attorney General John Woods Harris. Little was built in the area before the turn of the century, when Austin's growth began slowly to expand west of Shoal Creek. Land donated by the Pease family along the creek became Pease Park in the early 1900s, a greenbelt amenity that added much to the allure of residential development along the bluffs.

The residential boom started in the early 1920s, when Woodlawn was subdivided. Ads promoting the Pemberton development first appeared in late 1926, during the Christmas season, touting the breezes and views afforded by the bluffs overlooking downtown and the University of Texas. Platted in August 1927, Pemberton was laid out using the new 20th-century principles of "suburban design," with curvilinear streets complementing the hilly terrain, small island parks, varied lot sizes and shapes and no network of alleys for city services (garages are accessed from the street). The 24th Street bridge over Shoal Creek, built in 1928, provided easy access to the development, which was one of the first suburbs in Austin oriented toward the automobile.

Combined with Old Enfield to the south and Brykerwoods to the north, Pemberton also forms the core of the proposed Old West Austin Historic District (OWAHD), which has been nominated for the National Register of Historic Places. Indeed, many contributing homes in Pemberton are subject to demolition or radical alteration, which would do irreparable harm to the neighborhood's historic fabric.



e: 2500 WOOLDRIDGE DRIVE



f: 1402 HARDOUIN AVENUE



g: 1406 HARDOUIN AVENUE

## TICKETS TO THE HOME TOUR

Discount tickets are available by mail in advance from the Heritage Society or online at [www.heritagesocietyaustin.org](http://www.heritagesocietyaustin.org). Advance tickets for members are \$10 and for non-members \$12. Tickets on tour day will be available for \$12 for members and \$15 for non-members at the on-site Tour Headquarters located under the tent on Wooldridge Drive. Advance tickets are also available at the following consignment locations:

Breed and Co. .... 718 West 29th Street and 3663 Bee Caves Road

Architects and Heroes ..... 1809 West 35th Street

Pioneer Farms General Store ..... 11418 Sprinkle Cut-Off Road



## THE DIVERSITY OF PEMBERTON HEIGHTS IS MIRRORED IN HER PEOPLE



Historic homes and big trees are only part of it. People make the place. And the residents of Pemberton reflect a demographic diversity not unusual in Central Austin. Democrats and Republicans, artists and entertainers, professionals and politicians, young and old, the eccentric and the hip, all have one thing in common – a desire to be settled. Pemberton is a neighborhood of continuity, where roots grow fast and deep. It attracts those willing to trade square footage for sidewalks, vintage architecture, good neighbors and a shady lot. As far as they're concerned, it doesn't get any better than this.

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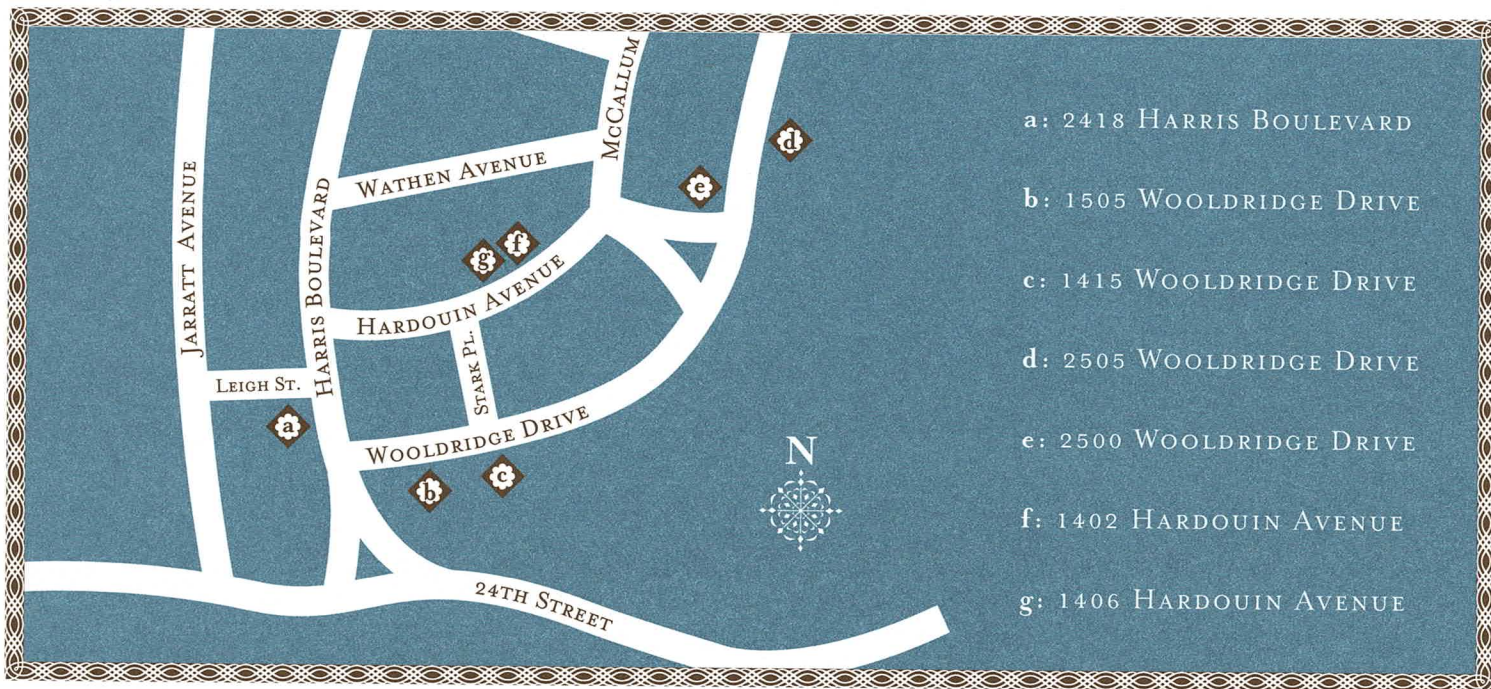
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