



Archival Documentation Package

Robert and Rose Roberts House
3509 North Interstate Highway 35
Austin, Travis County, Texas

Background

This report provides archival documentation of the Robert and Rose Roberts House, located at 3509 North Interstate Highway (I-) 35, in Austin, Travis County, Texas. The documentation has been completed as mitigation for the building's removal as part of the I-35 Capital Express Central project.

Contents

This documentation package contains:

- Building history, contextual background, statement of significance for the property, and survey forms, taken from the reconnaissance-level Historic Resources Survey Report for the I-35 Capital Express Central project, completed in September 2022 as part of the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. The building history has been updated with additional information gathered from the September 2024 site visit which allowed for detailed examination of the building's interior and exterior.
- A sketch-level floor plan of the Roberts House building, prepared using measurements taken in September 2024.
- A sketch-level site plan of the Roberts House and its immediate surroundings.
- Exterior and interior photographs of the Roberts House building, with accompanying photo log and key.

**Robert and Rose Roberts House:
Reconnaissance-Level Text and
Survey Forms (September 2022)**

3509 North Interstate Highway (I-) 35 (Robert and Rose Roberts House)

Description

The Robert and Rose Roberts House at 3509 North I-35 is a one-and-one-half-story, rectangular-plan, cross-gable residence with Tudor Revival influences resting on a pier and beam foundation. It has an asphalt-shingle roof with central chimney and textured stucco cladding. Vegetation obscures a recessed entrance within a Tudor-style gable on the front (northwest) facade. It has a vinyl replacement door on the southwest elevation and original, one-over-one sash windows with 12-light storms on the first story and metal one-over-one sash windows on the half story. It appears that the attic was finished to create additional living space and the metal windows were installed on the half story sometime after the 1950s. Documentation of the house's interior conducted in September 2024 revealed that the staircase used to access the half story was located in the southeast corner of the dining room, but has since been removed. A one-story, side-gable, two-car garage with metal overhead sliding doors is located east of the house at the southeast corner of the property. The garage has an asphalt-shingle roof, stucco cladding, and a tripartite wood window. A flagstone patio area with firepit is located north of the garage.

Background

Robert Lenoy "Robin" Roberts and wife Rose Veronica Lehman Roberts became one of the first families to live in the new University Park subdivision when they purchased the lot at present-day 3509 North I-35 (then Cameron Road, later renamed East Avenue) in 1929.¹ Shortly after acquiring the lot, their cousin built the house and included the Tudor Revival-influenced gable based on contemporary magazines. Like many Americans, Robin and Rose Roberts struggled to make ends meet during the Great Depression. Nevertheless, they were able to purchase three adjacent lots south of the property. Over the years the Roberts used part of the land to grow vegetables and leased other lots for various commercial enterprises. In 1951 the Texas Highway Department bought 20 feet of right-of-way from the front yard for the construction of the four-lane Interregional Highway, which later became I-35. In the late 1960s the highway department constructed the upper deck lanes, towering over the property. During this period and afterward, many neighboring families moved and residences along the highway were demolished or converted to commercial uses. The Roberts family held out and continued to live in the house at least until the mid-1980s.² At the time of the reconnaissance survey in 2022, Travis Central Appraisal District (TCAD) records showed the Roberts family still owned the 3509 North I-35 property and the two adjacent properties to the south: 3507 North I-35 and 3505 North I-35. Figures 1 through 3

¹ William Booth, "A Family History Perches at the Curb of Progress," *Austin American-Statesman*, August 4, 1985.

² Booth, "A Family History Perches at the Curb of Progress," E1, E19.

show the Roberts House, their adjacent properties, and highway development between the 1930s and the 1980s.



Figure 1. Roberts House (left) and garage (right) in the 1930s, prior to the construction of the Interregional Highway (later I-35). Image from Booth, "A Family History Perches at the Curb of Progress."

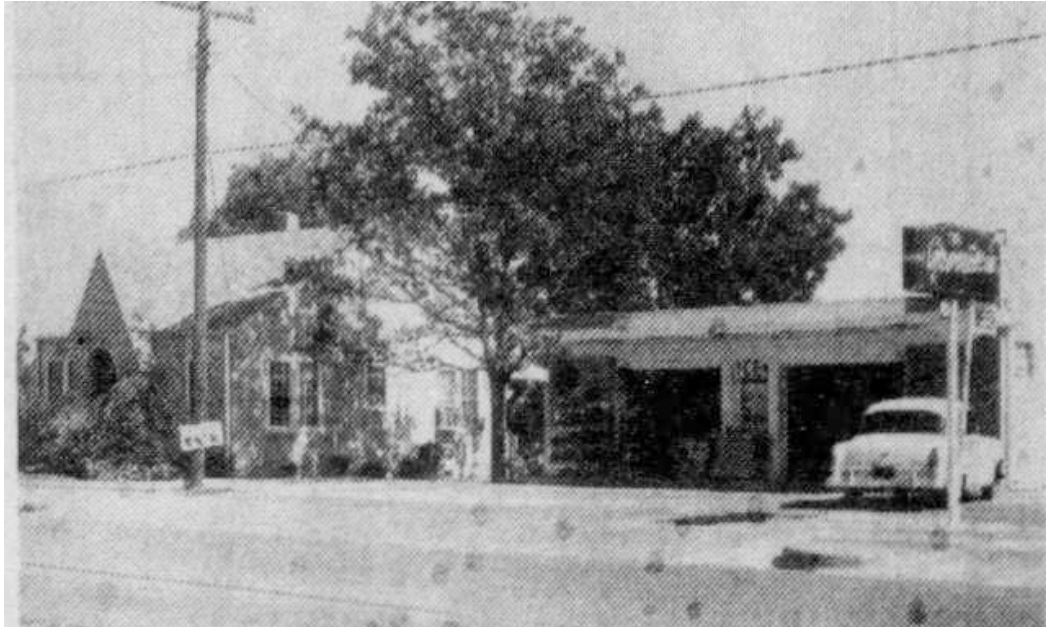


Figure 2. Roberts House (left) and the Roberts-owned grocery store (right) in the 1950s. Image from Booth, "A Family History Perches at the Curb of Progress."



Figure 3. 1985 photograph of the Roberts House and garage (left) and the Roberts-owned grocery store building converted to a photography studio. The northbound I-35 upper deck is shown above the property at the top of the image. Image from Booth, "A Family History Perches at the Curb of Progress."

Significance

Criterion A

Based on the reconnaissance survey, the Roberts House is one of approximately three extant pre-World War II houses constructed to face former East Avenue in this area. The other two houses include a 1923 bungalow with Classical Revival details at 3009 North I-35 (Haster House) and a c.1925 bungalow with Craftsman details and a replacement porch at 3007 North I-35. An intensive-level survey has been completed for the Haster House concurrently with the reconnaissance survey. All three extant houses represent the early development pattern of one-story, frame houses constructed along the former East Avenue thoroughfare in the 1920s and early 1930s, which heralded the beginning of residential development in the area of the East Austin Outlots. Many of the other residences constructed along the corridor during this period have been lost to highway development and increasing multi-family and commercial development. Of the three surviving houses, the bungalow at 3007 North I-35 has considerable alterations, resulting in a lack of historic integrity. The Roberts House possesses significance at the local level under National Register Criterion A in the area of Community Planning and Development for its role as one of the only remaining residential properties representing interwar-period development

patterns along the former East Avenue corridor. The period of significance dates to c.1930, when the house was constructed.

Criterion B

Reconnaissance-level research did not identify historically significant persons that would meet the standards for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP); therefore, the Roberts property does not possess significance under National Register Criterion B.

Criterion C

The Roberts House is a c.1930 frame residence with limited Tudor Revival influences. Based on reconnaissance-level research and survey, the house and garage were constructed using relatively common design, construction methods, and materials. The Roberts house and garage do not embody “distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction” nor do they represent the “work of a master,” or possess “high artistic value.”³ Therefore, the Roberts property does not meet the threshold of significance required for listing in the NRHP under National Register Criterion C in the area of Architecture.

Integrity

Alterations to the house include some replacement windows and side door. Alterations to the garage include replacement garage doors. Despite minor alterations, both the house and garage retain all aspects of integrity.

NRHP Eligibility and Boundaries

The Roberts House and associated garage at 3509 North I-35 are eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion A in the area of Community Planning and Development for their direct association with early residential development along East Avenue. The historic boundary is defined as TCAD parcel 209089, which contains both the house and garage.

³ National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, revised 1997 1990, 17, https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/upload/NRB-15_web508.pdf.

Survey Date:	December 16, 2021
Resource No.	235A
Project Location:	Austin, Travis County, Texas. IH 35 from US 290 E to US 290 W/SH 71
Project Name and CSJ:	IH 35 Capital Express Central Reconnaissance Survey, 0015-13-388
Address, Lat/Long:	3509 North Interstate Highway 35, 30.29335/-97.72003
Function/Sub-function:	DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling
Construction Date:	1930
Architectural Style/Form:	Tudor Revival
NRHP Eligibility:	Not eligible.
Description/Comments:	One-and-one-half-story, rectangular-plan, cross-gable, Tudor Revival residence. Pier and beam foundation. Asphalt-shingle roof with central chimney. Textured stucco or cement cladding material. Vegetation obscures recessed entrance within Tudor-style gable on front (northwest) facade. Vinyl replacement door on side (southwest) elevation. Original 1/1 sash windows with 12-light storms on first story. Replacement 1/1 sash windows on half story. Resource 235A does not possess historical or architectural significance within the historic contexts necessary for individual listing in the NRHP under Criteria A, B, or C.
Integrity Considerations:	Alterations include replacement roof material, windows, and side door. Despite minor alterations, Resource 235A retains all aspects of integrity.



View facing south.

Survey Date:	December 16, 2021
Resource No.	235A
Project Location:	Austin, Travis County, Texas. IH 35 from US 290 E to US 290 W/SH 71
Project Name and CSJ:	IH 35 Capital Express Central Reconnaissance Survey, 0015-13-388
Address, Lat/Long:	3509 North Interstate Highway 35, 30.29335/-97.72003
Function/Sub-function:	DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling
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Integrity Considerations:	Alterations include replacement roof material, windows, and side door. Despite minor alterations, Resource 235A retains all aspects of integrity.



View facing southeast.

Survey Date:	December 16, 2021
Resource No.	235A
Project Location:	Austin, Travis County, Texas. IH 35 from US 290 E to US 290 W/SH 71
Project Name and CSJ:	IH 35 Capital Express Central Reconnaissance Survey, 0015-13-388
Address, Lat/Long:	3509 North Interstate Highway 35, 30.29335/-97.72003
Function/Sub-function:	DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling
Construction Date:	1930
Architectural Style/Form:	Tudor Revival
NRHP Eligibility:	Not eligible.
Description/Comments:	One-and-one-half-story, rectangular-plan, cross-gable, Tudor Revival residence. Pier and beam foundation. Asphalt-shingle roof with central chimney. Textured stucco or cement cladding material. Vegetation obscures recessed entrance within Tudor-style gable on front (northwest) facade. Vinyl replacement door on side (southwest) elevation. Original 1/1 sash windows with 12-light storms on first story. Replacement 1/1 sash windows on half story. Resource 235A does not possess historical or architectural significance within the historic contexts necessary for individual listing in the NRHP under Criteria A, B, or C.
Integrity Considerations:	Alterations include replacement roof material, windows, and side door. Despite minor alterations, Resource 235A retains all aspects of integrity.



View facing east. Showing relationship of 235A (left) and 235B (right).

Survey Date:	December 16, 2021
Resource No.	235B
Project Location:	Austin, Travis County, Texas. IH 35 from US 290 E to US 290 W/SH 71
Project Name and CSJ:	IH 35 Capital Express Central Reconnaissance Survey, 0015-13-388
Address, Lat/Long:	3509 North Interstate Highway 35, 30.29324/-97.71991
Function/Sub-function:	DOMESTIC/Secondary Structure
Construction Date:	1930
Architectural Style/Form:	No Style
NRHP Eligibility:	Not eligible.
Description/Comments:	One-story, side gable, two-car garage. Asphalt-shingle roof and stucco siding. Two garage bays with metal overhead doors. Tripartite wood window. Resource 235B does not possess historical or architectural significance within the historic contexts necessary for individual listing in the NRHP under Criteria A, B, or C.
Integrity Considerations:	Alterations include replacement garage doors and roof material. Despite minor alterations, Resource 235B retains all aspects of integrity.



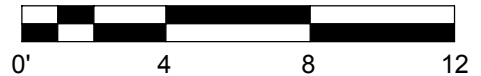
View facing east.

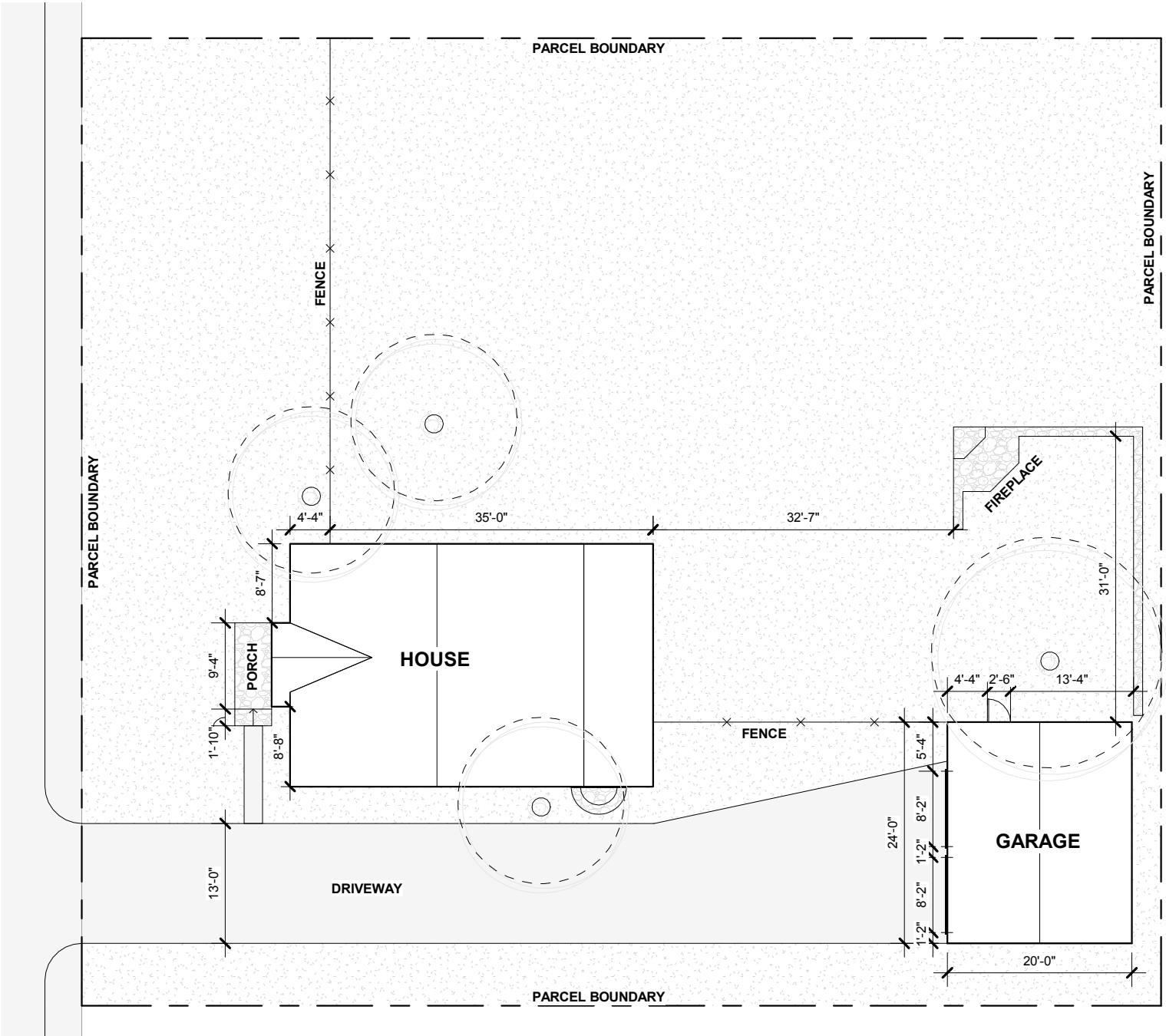
Survey Date:	December 16, 2021
Resource No.	235B
Project Location:	Austin, Travis County, Texas. IH 35 from US 290 E to US 290 W/SH 71
Project Name and CSJ:	IH 35 Capital Express Central Reconnaissance Survey, 0015-13-388
Address, Lat/Long:	3509 North Interstate Highway 35, 30.29324/-97.71991
Function/Sub-function:	DOMESTIC/Secondary Structure
Construction Date:	1930
Architectural Style/Form:	No Style
NRHP Eligibility:	Not eligible.
Description/Comments:	One-story, side gable, two-car garage. Asphalt-shingle roof and stucco siding. Two garage bays with metal overhead doors. Tripartite wood window. Resource 235B does not possess historical or architectural significance within the historic contexts necessary for individual listing in the NRHP under Criteria A, B, or C.
Integrity Considerations:	Alterations include replacement garage doors and roof material. Despite minor alterations, Resource 235B retains all aspects of integrity.



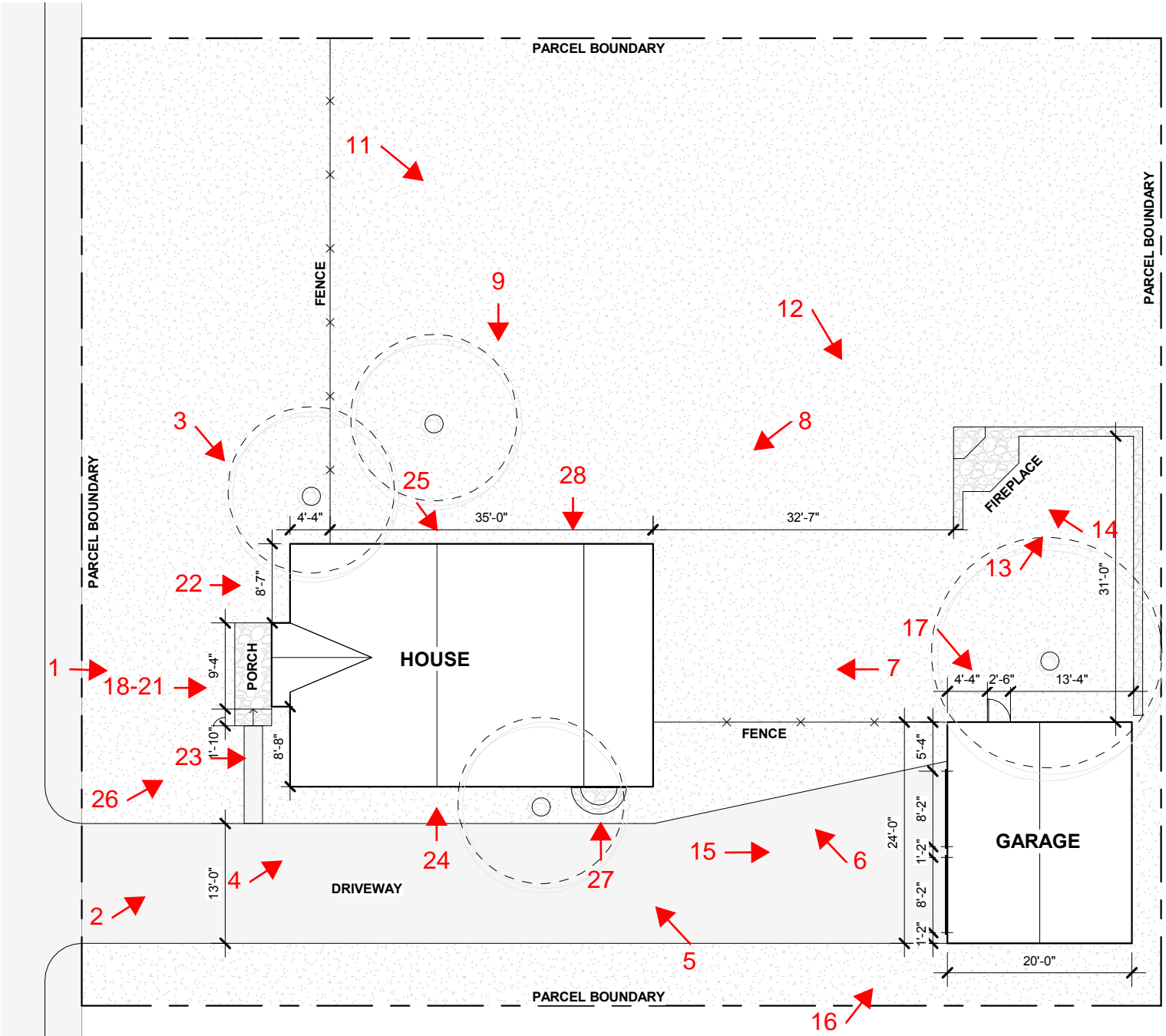
View facing east. Showing relationship of 235A (left) and 235B (right).

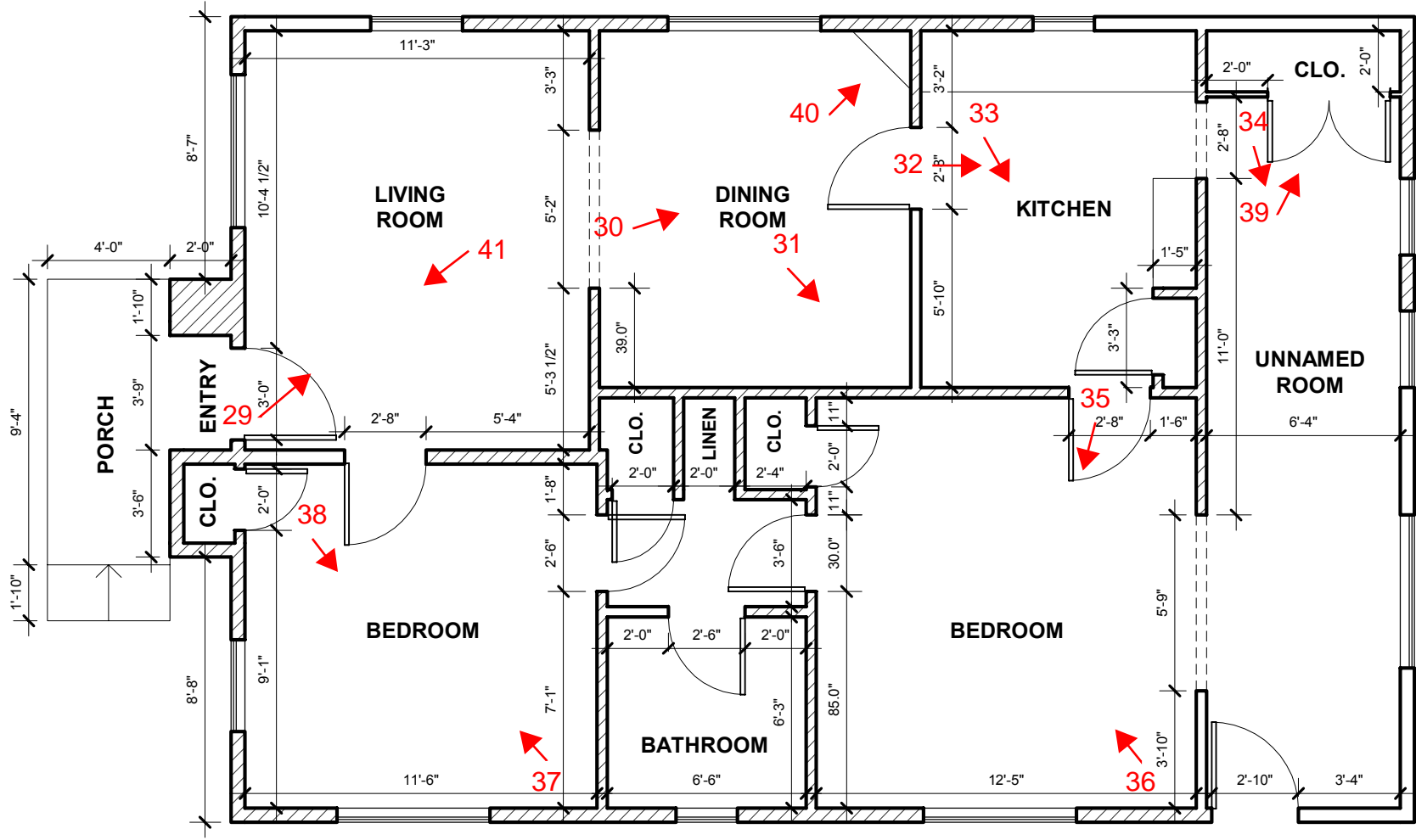
Robert and Rose Roberts House: Sketch Floor Plan and Site Plan





**Robert and Rose Roberts House:
Exterior and Interior Photographs
with Key Map and Photo Log
(September 2024)**





ROBERT AND ROSE ROBERTS HOUSE

3509 North Interstate Highway 35

Austin, Travis County, Texas

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ROBERT AND ROSE ROBERTS HOUSE

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