

This Month in Austin AGC History - January

Land Leased in January 1948 for \$1 Per Year on Fredericksburg Road (now South Lamar) for New Office & Planroom

Back in 1946 when the Austin AGC was founded, the Board of Directors met twice monthly at the [Driskill Hotel](#) downtown. During an October meeting that year, a “rent or build” question with regard to office space arose, and a search committee was formed to scout potential locations around town to house a permanent office space and plan room for the growing membership. Interestingly, and just like in today’s Austin real estate market, the search committee noted that it was “extremely difficult to find suitable quarters for a reasonable rent” at the time.

Several leads did emerge, however, as Austin AGC Board member Frank Rundell stated he was negotiating for the purchase of some property on Bowie Street and, if he made the purchase, would be willing to rent part of it to the AGC. Mr. Rundell was an Austin building contractor for over 60 years until he retired in the 1970s. He owned the Frank Rundell Company and many of his personal and business papers – including over 100 sets of architectural drawings for buildings he constructed - are stored in the [archives of the Austin Historical Society](#). Most notably among his many commercial and residential projects around town, Mr. Rundell served as the 1926 general contractor for upgrading [Pease Park](#) in Central Austin to include a rest room/Tudor cottage, memorial entrance gates, wading pool, and a low water dam. In 1941, his company built the Shelton Chapel at the [Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary](#) at 100 E. 27th Street, and [many fascinating construction photos from that build are available online here](#). He also built many homes throughout town, including the [historic 1929 Carapetyan House located at 3801 Duval Street in Hyde Park](#).



Shelton Chapel Under Construction in 1942



3801 Duval built by Frank Rundell in 1929



Seminary Students in Front on Newly Built Shelton Chapel (Rundel Construction sign visible to left)

A second option for the new Austin AGC office centered on leasing land from the Southern Pacific Railroad off Red River between East 3rd and 4th Streets, the same block where the Moontower Café is located today across from Convention Center. As a last resort if no other viable options emerged, AGC leaders considered renting room in the Alamo Hotel that was located at the northwest corner of 6th and Guadalupe. It had quite the [interesting history as detailed recently here](#).

Ultimately, concrete plans for the new AGC office were laid thanks to an oral agreement struck in January 1947 with Mr. C.A. Maufrais to lease his property on Fredericksburg Road (our current location at 609 South Lamar) for the purpose of building an Austin AGC office and plan room. The Maufrais family had a long connection to the Austin construction industry as William Maufrais came here in 1892 to establish a concrete company. Over the years, William's business grew and upon his death in 1919 his son, C.F., took over. At that time the small company owned only a few concrete mixers, but by the late 1940s the business – now known as the Maufrais Ready Mixed Concrete Company – boasted a modern fleet of over 70 trucks located at 106 Barton Springs Road (home today of the Yeti Flagship store.) Throughout Austin today you can still see the name Maufrais stamped into the concrete sidewalks they poured, a city requirement at the time of completion.

After that handshake agreement was reached then financing was arranged, a zoning change made, and the new Austin AGC office building was completed a few months later. While no photos or plans of that building are known to exist (though we continue to search!) we are told the building was a modest facility with enough room for a small staff office, meetings space, and plan room where blueprints for upcoming projects could be reviewed by industry trade members of the association. A loan of \$6,000 (roughly \$65,000 today) was procured for the building, but that does not take into account many in-kind donations of labor and materials. The first official meeting at this location took place on June 3, 1947.



An official lease agreement for the land was finally formalized seven months later in January 1948 when a two-year deal was inked between the AGC and the Maufrais family for a fixed rental rate of only \$1.00 per year for the roughly .40 acre property the AGC owns today. No mention is made in the archives as to why exactly the cost was so low, but the likeliest reason would be that the Maufrais family simply wanted to support the newly formed construction association.

Later that year in July 1948, the Maufrais family advised the AGC that they wanted to sell their Fredericksburg Road property, including the portion on which the AGC office is located today. After review, the AGC Board of Directors on August 3rd agreed to purchase our current property at a price of \$100 per front foot - the measurement of the front footage adjoining the street – for a total of \$10,000. Sadly, Mr. Maufrais passed away a few days later on August 8, 1948, and a [copy of his obituary along with additional details of the company is available here.](#)

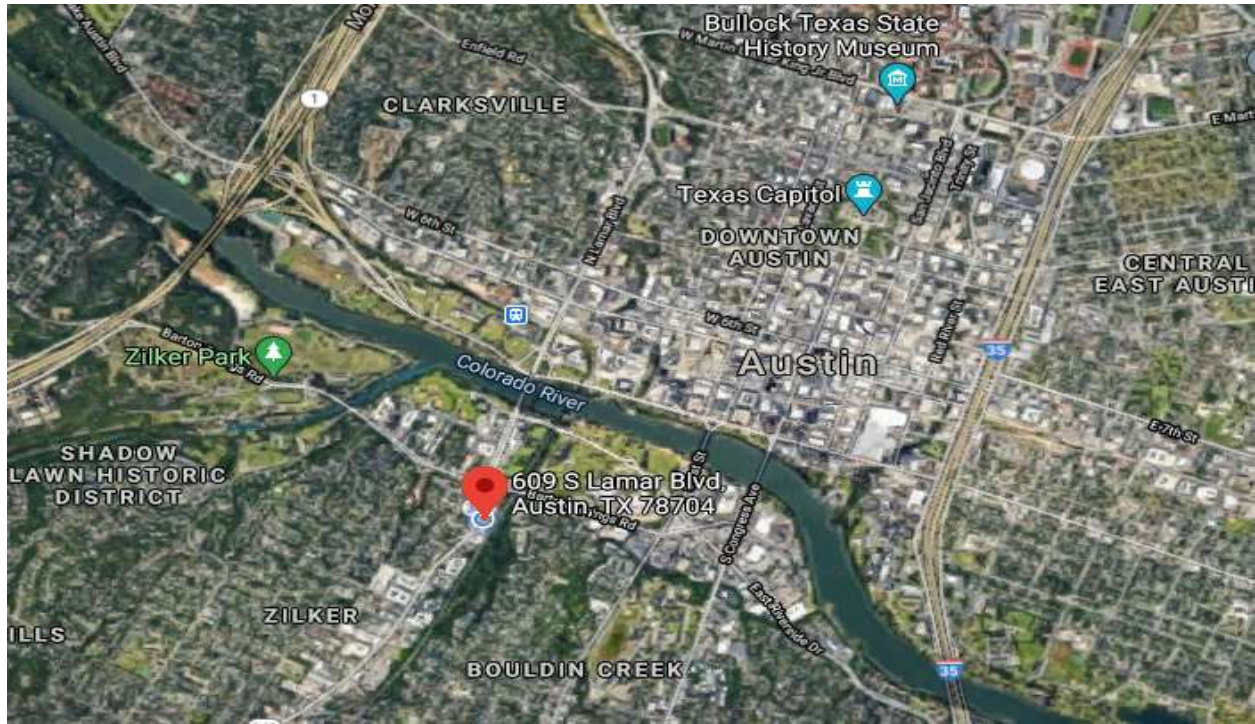


Looking south in the 1940s across Lamar Bridge. The original Austin AGC office would soon be built just beyond the white building on the left.

Perhaps due to issues of settling the Maufrais estate, the property sale transaction was not finalized until the following year in 1949 and a note at 5% interest was established with Capital National Bank. Given the current Travis County tax value of \$2,076,000 for the .40 acre parcel we own here, that initial investment of \$10,000 has produced an annualized return of 7.37% for the association.

With that real estate transaction complete, the Austin AGC was well on its way to becoming the

collective voice for the commercial construction industry here in town. Looking back over the past 75 years, we are truly grateful for the men and women who founded and built this organization that continues to benefit our 260 company members and their over 10,000 employees who carry on the great tradition of building Austin's quality of life!



609 South Lamar today in the heart of Central Austin