

Appendix A. The Changes in the Vicinity of Western Oaks – 1984 to 2008

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The purpose of these notes is to remark upon the transformation that occurred in the vicinity of the Western Oaks development in the period that I was a homeowner living at 7003 Fence Line Drive – September 1981 to August 2005. I used the date span 1984 to 2008 in the title assigned to these notes because of the availability to me of an aerial view of Western Oaks captured on February 16, 1984 and a Google Earth image captured on January 31, 2008. I will start with those images:



This 1984 aerial photograph has such good resolution that on the 4 ft by 6 foot enlargement that I had

[which was given to the WOPOA property manager in July 2005 and from the reception that I received it is likely that it was discarded]

was so great that one could see the holes [with surrounding mound of soil] in my front yard that had been dug to plant trees. Such detail could be retained in the huge enlargement because it was made from the extremely high resolution negative. It is impossible to achieve anywhere near that level of



from the print retained when I reduced when I moved to California in 2005.

Nevertheless, I can still enlarge the image sufficiently to disclose one of the truly remarkable facts about this February 16, 1984 aerial image – the fact that in this noon-time [from the lack of shadows on the ground] image there are only several cars parked on ALL the streets in the then existing J.W. Smith Western Oaks subdivision. I seem to recall that there were several cars parked on Hanging Oak Circle suggesting that someone had guests for lunch. Note how devoid of homes is the land between Fence Line Drive and Western Oaks Boulevard north of the Dalgren home – also the fact there were only six houses on the east side of Fence Line Drive north of Woodcreek Road. The other houses (north to William Cannon) on the east side of Fence Line Drive were not built by J.W. Smith.

The enlargement serves to illustrate that in those days that Woodcreek Road did not connect to Convict Hill Road.

An interesting story about the land facing McCarty Road [William Cannon Drive] between Fence Line Drive and Western Oaks Boulevard was the attempt of a church congregation to build their house of worship on that land. The residents of the non-Smith-built home along the east side of Fence Line Drive rallied together to fight the granting of the zoning to permit this church to be built. I always felt that the architect hired by the congregation must have never visited the neighborhood. I believe the architect essentially killed the project because he proposed building the church building in the center of the property and having the area bordering on Fence Line Drive be the off-street parking lot for the church. Had he proposed to have a well-landscaped side of the church building face Fence Line Drive [with the parking lot hidden to the west of the building], the uproar from the residents of Western Oaks Subdivision would likely have been less strong. The proposal was withdrawn before ever being heard before the Austin City Council.



The aerial photo is not aligned north-south vertical and therefore I have had to take the 2008 Google Earth image and rotate it to enable a more direct comparison with the 1984 aerial image.



The most obvious changes are the sweep of West William Cannon Drive which followed the old McCarty Lane until just past the intersection of Western Oaks Boulevard and then formed a “Y” with McCarty to the right and William Cannon to the left. The next big change is the sweep of the South Mopac Extension which necessitated the rerouting of the intersection of Latta Lane with Convict Hill Road. The next obvious change is the extension of Beckett Road to the south of Convict Hill Road and all the resulting development to the south of Convict Hill Road. Off the image to the left is the fact that since 1984 the Escarpment Boulevard was developed by widening the narrow country road previously known as Convict Hill Road after the 90 degree turn that took Convict Hill Road north to intersect 290 where William Cannon now intersects 290 – so that the final portion of the old Convict Hill Road before highway 290 got renamed William Cannon Boulevard. To the south of that former 90 degree northward turn of Convict Hill Road, Escarpment Boulevard was extended through what was formerly slightly

