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## **Kelwood Company - History and buildings designed**

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*Rice University*

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## Kelwood Company

The following information acquired from Stephen Fox of Houston, Texas and Rice University.

1. *San Antonio Architecture: Traditions and Visions* ed. Julius M. Gribou, Robert G. Hanley, and Thomas E. Robey. San Antonio: AIA San Antonio, 2007.

p. 46 San Antonio Casino Club  
p. 78 Aztec Theater Building  
p. 196 McNeel House  
p. 198 Bushnell Apartments  
p. 204 Seligmann House

2. *Monte Vista National Register Historic District, San Antonio, BÈxar County, Texas (prepared by Maria Watson Pfeiffer)*

Kelwood Company (c. 1923-1930) was a firm that both designed and built residential and commercial buildings. Partners in the firm were attorney and financier Arthur A. Seeligson, architect Robert B. Kelly, and builder H. C. Wood. Robert Bertram Kelly (1893-1932) began his architectural career in 1912 as a draftsman for [San Antonio architect] H. A. Reuter. He moved to the A. A. Herff Company [architect] in 1914, returning briefly to Reuter's firm in 1917. After serving as Henry T. Phelps's draftsman in 1918, Kelly entered in partnership with Harvey P. Smith in 1919, an association that lasted until c. 1922. The Kelwood Company was first listed in the 1926 San Antonio City Directory (there are no directories for 1923-25), advertising their work in architecture, construction, and financing. Seeligson served as president, Kelly as vice president, and Wood as secretary/treasurer. The firm appears to have functioned until 1930, perhaps impacted by the Depression. Kelly practiced alone in 1931, and in 1932, he committed suicide.

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The Kelwood Company's commercial work included the San Antonio Casino Club Building (1926, listed in the National Register, 1980) and the Aztec Theater (1926, National register, 1992). The firm's Monte Vista work, designed by Robert Kelly, includes:

San Gabriel Apartments	124 E. Woodlawn	1925	
Bushnell apartments	240 Bushnell	1926	National Register 1982
P. J. McNeel House	126 E. King's Highway	1925	
Dr. Beecher F. Stout House	110 E. Lynwood	1925	
Julius Seligman House	106 Oakmont Court	1926	
Guy Borden House	262 E. Rosewood	1928	
Harry Landa House	233 E. Bushnell	1928	
Maurice Cohen House	233 W. Rosewood	1925	
Fred W. Frost House	241 W. Elsmere	1925	

as well as numerous other houses in the 200 block of West Rosewood and the 200 and 300 blocks of West Elsmere.

3. Henry F. Withey and Elsie Rathbone Withey. *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased)*. Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, 1970 (reprint of 1952 first edition).

p. 338—entry for Robert B. Kelly 96.11.1892-10.17.1932)—minimal information

4. (SF: Kelwood Co. seems to have begun in business in spring 1924. By 1928 Robert B. Kelly no longer

associated with firm; who the in-house architect was is not presently known. Kelwood Co. last listed in the 1929-30 issue of San Antonio City Directory; not listed in 1931 issue.)

## 5. San Antonio City Directory

### 1924-25

Robert B. Kelly, architect, off: Travis Building, res: 507 E. Laurel  
Kelwood Co., A. A. Seeligson, pres.; Robert B. Kelly, vice president; H. C. Wood, secretary-treasurer.  
Architecture, finance, off: Travis Building  
Arthur A. Seeligson, attorney, off: National Bank of Commerce Building, res: 115 E. Ashby Place  
Harry C. Wood, real estate off: Travis Building, res: 315 W. Elsmere Place

### 1926

Robert B. and Bertha Kelly (Kelwood Co) res: 1021 Breeden Ave.  
Kelwood Co. (architecture, construction, financing) off: 901-905 Travis Building  
Arthur A. and Ramona Seeligson, Seeligson & Seeligson, attorney, res: 115 E. Ashby  
Harry C. and Elizabeth R. Wood (Kelwood Co.) res: 1601 Belknap Place

### 1927-28

Robert B. and Gladys Kelly (Kelwood Co) res: 4 French Court  
Kelwood Co. (same as in 1926)  
Arthur A. Seeligson (The Kelwood Co., and Naylor Printing Co.)  
Harry C. and Elizabeth R. Wood (Kelwood Co.) res: 104 Bushnell Apartments

### 1929-30

Robert B. and Gladys Kelly, architect, off: Milam Building, res: 915 Ripley Ave.  
Kelwood Co., architects, 9th floor Travis Building  
A. A. Seeligson, attny, president, Naylor Co.  
Harry C. Wood, president, Wood Properties (H. C. Wood and Edward O. Herff) res: 302 Bushnell Apts.

### 1931

Kelwood Company not listed

## 6. Known Buildings and Unbuilt Projects by Robert B. Kelly and the Kelwood Company

### San Antonio

Ed Steves & Sons commercial building  
716-726 E. Commerce St.  
1928, Robert B. Kelly

San Antonio Casino Club Building  
102 W. Crockett St.  
1927, The Kelwood Co.

Aztec Theater Building  
104 N. St. Mary's St.  
1926, The Kelwood Co.

Michael's Jewelers Building rmdlg.  
113 Soledad St.  
1928, Robert B. Kelly

Milam Chevrolet Co. Building  
435-441 N. Flores St.  
1929, The Kelwood Co.

Jorrie Furniture Co. Building  
131 San Pedro Ave.  
1930, The Kelwood Co.

Globe Printing Co. Building  
634 Main Ave.  
1929, The Kelwood Co.

Davis-Webb Commercial Building  
203 E. Elmira Ave.  
1930, Robert B. Kelly

Naylor Printing Co. Building  
918 N. St. Mary's St.  
1928, The Kelwood Co.

San Antonio Clinic Building  
624 N. Alamo St.  
1925, The Kelwood Co.

San Antonio *Light* Building  
420 Broadway  
1931, Robert B. Kelly

Goggan Building  
123-127 Broadway  
1924, The Kelwood Co.

Dr. H. T. Wilson garage building  
901 E. Houston Ave.  
1927, The Kelwood Co.

Sunset System of San Antonio Building  
2323 Broadway  
1927, The Kelwood Co.

J. H. Compton House  
202 Army Blvd.  
1924, The Kelwood Co.

Kelwood Co. speculative house  
315 Parland Place  
1925, The Kelwood Co.

Willard E. Simpson House  
1211 W. Woodlawn Ave.  
1928, Robert B. Kelly

J. M. Trosper commercial building

2500-2512 Main Ave.  
1929, Robert B. Kelly

San Gabriel Apartments  
124-128 E. Woodlawn Ave.  
1925, The Kelwood Co.

Pleas J. McNeel House  
126 E. King's Highway  
1925, The Kelwood Co.

Mrs. William W. Woodworth House  
131 W. Gramercy Place  
1924, The Kelwood Co.

Clarence M. Hocker House  
109 W. Gramercy Place  
1929, Robert B. Kelly

Augusts G. Dugger House  
115 E. Elsmere Place  
1924, The Kelwood Co.

John Anthony House  
103 E. Elsmere Place  
1925, The Kelwood Co.

Kelwood Co. speculative house  
230 W. Elsmere Place  
1925, The Kelwood Co.

Kelwood Co. speculative house  
240 W. Elsmere Place  
1926, The Kelwood Co.

Kelwood Co. speculative house  
235 W. Rosewood Ave.  
1925, The Kelwood Co.

Kelwood Co. speculative house  
230 W. Rosewood Ave.  
1925, The Kelwood Co.

Kelwood Co. speculative house  
226 W. Rosewood Ave.  
1925, The Kelwood Co.

Dr. John L. Felder House  
130 E. Lynwood Ave.  
1927, The Kelwood Co.

Guy Borden House  
262 E. Rosewood Ave.

1928, The Kelwood Co.

Robert S. Michael House  
438 E. Rosewood Ave.  
1928, Robert B. Kelly

Julius S. Seligmann House  
106 Oakmont Court  
1925, The Kelwood Co..

Bushnell Apartments  
238-240 Bushnell Ave.  
1926, The Kelwood Co.

Harry Landa House  
233 Bushnell Ave.  
1928, Robert B. Kelly

Ransom commercial building  
5000 Broadway  
1928, Robert B. Kelly

William K. Ewing House  
405 Elizabeth Road  
1924, The Kelwood Co.

Fire Station 24  
301 Garrity Road  
1930, The Kelwood Co.

Dr. W. R. Sugg House  
308 Morningside Dr.  
1927, The Kelwood Co.

Post Exchange  
Randolph Air Force Base  
1930, Robert B. Kelly

Collins Garden Elementary School #27  
133 Harriman Place  
1930, Robert B. Kelly

### Brownsville

First Presbyterian Church  
1. W. Elizabeth St.  
1927, The Kelwood Co.

Mrs. Mary V. Gay House  
108 E. Levee St.  
1927, The Kelwood Co.

Hotel El Jardìn

1100 E. Levee St.  
1927, The Kelwood Co.

Missouri-Pacific Passenger Station  
11\_\_ E. Levee St.  
1927, The Kelwood Co.

Brownsville Chamber of Commerce Building  
12\_\_ E. Levee St.  
1927, The Kelwood Co.

### Corpus Christi

6-story Beach hotel (unbuilt project)  
1926, The Kelwood Co.

7-story office building (unbuilt project)  
1926, The Kelwood Co.

William Marks 2-story brick theater (status unknown)  
1928, The Kelwood Co.

### Kerrville

Dr. J. D. Jackson House (status unknown)  
1928, Robert B. Kelly

### Laredo

10-story A. C. Richter Aztec Hotel Co. hotel (unbuilt project)  
1926, The Kelwood Co.

E. García 2-story apartment (status unknown)  
1926-27. The Kelwood Co.

Auto Supply Co. garage (status unknown)  
1927, The Kelwood Co.

### Stamford

Bryant-Link Vo. Building  
120 S. Swenson St.  
1928, The Kelwood Co.

### 7. Newspaper citations

#### *Houston Post-Dispatch*

24 January 1926 "Brownsville's Historic Boardwalk Will Soon be Only a Memory to People; Chamber of Commerce Building to Occupy its Site" Boardwalk demolished. Work began in Dec 1925 on 150-room El Jardín, \$450,000; Train station to cost \$150,000

15 June 1926 Kelwood Co. (San Antonio) to design Chamber of Commerce Building

31 July 1926 “Triple Grand Opening Celebration for New Hotel, Chamber of Commerce Building and Railway Station is Being Planned”

1 August 1926 “Hotel El Jardín at Brownsville” rendering of final design for enlarged project. Must be completed by 1 Nov. 1926 to qualify for citizens’ hotel committee \$60,000 bonus. James-Dickinson Co. owner of property.

10 October 1926 ‘New Brownsville Chamber of Commerce’

18 Nov. 1926 “Big Plans Made for Radio Station” Radio KWWG to erect two 60 foot antennas on top of 100 foot high Hotel El Jardín; to be aimed at Midwest and Mexico.

26 November 1926 “Row of Buildings Nearing Completion”

24 April 1927 “Border Cities Join Hands in Festival”

*Brownsville Herald*

13 January 1927 “Plans Ready for Garage and Garden” Spanish garden and garage being added to Hotel El Jardín; Henry T. Phelps, arch., J. M. Nix, president.

8. *Texas General Contractors Association Monthly Bulletin*

Feb 1924--Robert B. Kelly listed as independent architect

April 1924—first mention of Kelwood Co.

May 1924—notes new address of Kelwood Co. as 907 Travis Building

Oct 1927—reference to Robert B. Kelly as in independent practice