Brief History—Landwer/Manicapelli House
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Just west of the historic Austin Brothers Bridge, near Canyon Lake Number Two, stands the Landwer/Manicapelli home. M.F. Landwer, a Texas Tech biology professor, built the house in 1936 when the surrounding canyon was still a predominantly rural area. Professor Landwer, originally from Illinois, had a long standing interest in the flora and fauna of the region around the canyon, and spent ten years collecting information for his dissertation on the mammals of the Staked Plains. His wife, Virginia, grew up on the South Plains and, after finishing her degree at Texas Tech, taught biology for many years at Lubbock High School. Pictures of homes in California inspired the Landwers to build the home in a Spanish Mission style. Texas Tech architecture students contributed to the house plans that included a stucco exterior, clay tile roof, and a distinctive, ornate chimney.

The Landwers raised a variety of animals at their home in the canyon, including ducks, chickens, goats, sheep, and registered Holstein cows. A peacock also wandered about their property and often sought refuge from the wind in their garage, where it could more easily spread its feathers. The water near their home was also full of life, and new members of Texas Tech’s college clubs would often come get crayfish and Muscovy ducks as part of their initiation.
The Landwers lived in the house until after World War II, when they sold the house to Joe and Elizabeth Manicapelli. The Landwers remained in the Yellowhouse Canyon area even after they sold the house. Professor Landwer's interest in the land and life of the canyon never waned. In the 1970s he became an avid supporter of the Canyon Lakes Project. In an interview given a little over a year after his death in 1980, Virginia Landwer expressed her great pleasure that her husband lived to see the area cleaned up, as he was “crazy about the canyon.”

In 1972, the City of Lubbock acquired the house from Mrs. Manicapelli, whose husband died almost a decade earlier. In 1980 the city committed $100,000 to rehabilitate the home so that it could be used as a community center. The project aimed to transform the interior of the home while retaining the original look of the home’s exterior. The space inside was converted into three large activity rooms, accompanied by a kitchen area and security guard quarters. In the years during which the house sat empty, after Mrs. Manicapelli left and before the city began to work on the home, vandals damaged the outer walls, windows, and roof. The clay tiles had not only been ripped from the top of the house and broken, but also dropped down the chimney. Thus, much of the work done to the outside of the home was repair work, and replacing the roof proved a big challenge, as the particular type of tiles used in the original construction were no longer manufactured. Contractors traveled to Midland and Odessa and eventually turned up enough matching tiles to cover the entire roof.
The house is located in a historic location just south and east of the Lubbock Lake Site and in close proximity to the 1913 Austin Brothers Bridge. For centuries, Yellowhouse Canyon was an important watering stop across the plains, visited by indigenous peoples, comancheros, cowboys and settlers as they made their way across the Llano Estacado. The canyon was even the site of battles, and other events of great historical significance.
The Santa Fe railroad entered Lubbock via bridges in the canyon east of the house, connecting Lubbock to a nation-wide transportation system. However, the canyon was also a dumping ground for the community, filled with wrecking yards and other industrial uses that detracted from the scenic beauty of the area.

In the 1970s, the land around the Landwer/Manicapelli home became part of the City of Lubbock Canyon Lakes Project, a development significant not only for its beautification of the eyesore that the Canyon had become, but also for its role in rebuilding and renewing Lubbock after the 1970 tornado.
In 1982, the Landwer-Manicapelli home was designated a Local Historic Landmark. The City of Lubbock operated the building as a community center and party house until structural problems forced its closing in 2008.