

## HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION

July 06, 2018

**HDRC CASE NO:** 2018-288  
**ADDRESS:** 230 CACTUS ST  
**LEGAL DESCRIPTION:** NCB 632 BLK B LOT 9  
**ZONING:** RM-4  
**CITY COUNCIL DIST.:** 2  
**APPLICANT:** Eugenio & Alma Chavarria  
**OWNER:** Eugenio & Alma Chavarria  
**TYPE OF WORK:** Finding of Historic Significance  
**REQUEST:**

The applicant is a Finding of Historic Significance for the property located at 230 Cactus Street.

### APPLICABLE CITATIONS:

*Unified Development Code Sec. 35-606. - Designation Process for Historic Landmarks.*

(a) **Authority.** Requests for landmark designation may only be made by or with the concurrence of the property owner. In instances where a property owner does not consent to the landmark designation, the historic preservation officer shall request a resolution from city council to proceed with the designation process prior to any zoning commission hearing. Notwithstanding the foregoing, a request for landmark designation may be made and approved by the city council. To the extent that this subsection conflicts with any other provisions of this chapter, this paragraph shall control except for buildings, objects, sites, structures, or clusters heretofore designated as local landmarks or districts, National Register landmarks or districts, state historic landmarks or sites, or state archaeological landmarks or sites. Additionally, requests for designation shall be made on a form obtained from the city historic preservation officer through the office of historic preservation. Completed request forms shall be returned to the office of historic preservation for processing. All buildings, objects, sites, structures, or clusters heretofore designated by the city council as historic landmarks under any pre-existing ordinance of the City of San Antonio shall be accorded the protection of properties designated historic landmarks under this chapter and shall continue to bear the words "historic, exceptional" (HE) or "historic, significant" (HS) in their zoning designation.

### (b) **Designation of Historic Landmarks.**

(1) **Initiation.** Any person, the historic and design review commission, zoning commission, the historic preservation officer, or the city council may initiate a historic landmark designation by filing an application with the historic preservation officer. Requests for designation shall be made on a form obtained from the city historic preservation officer. Completed request forms shall be returned to the office of historic preservation for processing. Owner consent for historic landmark designation shall be required unless a city council resolution to proceed with the designation has been approved. Additionally, owners may submit with the application a written description and photographs or other visual material of any buildings or structures that they wish to be considered for designation as non-contributing to the historic landmark.

(3) **Decision.** The historic preservation officer shall refer a completed application for historic landmark designation to the historic and design review commission. Property owners of proposed historic landmarks shall be notified of the historic and design review commission hearing by the historic preservation officer by mail prior to a historic and design review commission hearing for historic landmark designation. Notice to property owners shall state the place, date, time and purpose of the historic and design review commission hearing. The historic preservation officer shall also send notice of the meeting to any registered neighborhood associations located within the proposed district boundary. The historic and design review commission shall make and forward its recommendation to the zoning commission within forty-five (45) days from the date of submittal of the designation request by the historic preservation officer. Upon submittal of the historic and design review commission's recommendation, the proposed historic district or landmark designation shall be submitted to the zoning commission for its review recommendations along with its finding of historic significance. The zoning commission and the city council shall process the application as prescribed in [section 35-421](#) of this chapter and this section. The zoning commission shall schedule a hearing on the historic and design review commission recommendation to be held within sixty (60) days of receipt of such recommendation and shall forward its recommendation to city council which shall schedule a hearing to be held within sixty (60) days of council's receipt of such recommendation. Upon passage of any ordinance designating a historic landmark, or removing or upgrading the designation of historic, the city clerk shall send notice of the fact by mail to the owner or owners of affected property.

*Unified Development Code Sec. 35-607. – Designation Criteria for Historic Districts and Landmarks.*

(a) **Process for Considering Designation of Historic Districts and Landmarks.** Historic districts and landmarks shall be evaluated for designation using the criteria listed in subsection (b) and the criteria applied to evaluate properties for inclusion in the National Register. In order to be eligible for historic landmark designation, properties shall meet at least three (3) of the criteria listed. Historic districts shall consist of at least two (2) or more structures within a legally defined boundary that meet at least three (3) of the criteria. Additionally, all designated landmarks and districts shall demonstrate clear delineation of the legal boundaries of such designated resources.

(b) Criteria For Evaluation.

- (5) Its embodiment of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style valuable for the study of a period, type, method of construction, or use of indigenous materials; as a fine example of Spanish Eclectic architecture
- (7) Its unique location or singular physical characteristics that make it an established or familiar visual feature;
- (11) It is distinctive in character, interest or value; strongly exemplifies the cultural, economic, social, ethnic or historical heritage of San Antonio, Texas or the United States;

**FINDINGS:**

- a. The request for landmark designation was initiated by the property owner.
- b. **HISTORIC CONTEXT** – The property at 230 Cactus is a Spanish Eclectic residence built c. 1917, an attached structure in the rear of the home, facing Martin Luther King Dr., was built c. 1910. 230 Cactus is located at the northwest corner of Cactus and Martin Luther King Dr. San Antonio's east side neighborhoods were the earliest to welcome African-American property owners and residents. The residential blocks east of South Hackberry (including the 200 block of Cactus Street, developed over the first decades of the 20th century. Many of the original structures have been lost in the surrounding area. Willie Silar Lee purchased the corner lot at Cactus and Nebraska (now Martin Luther King Dr) from P.H. & Catherine Wolf in 1913. According to the San Antonio Light & Gazette, Lee pulled a building permit for a three room house on this lot in August of 1910. The 1912 City Directory lists Willie and Erastus Lee as residents at 230 Cactus. Based on the 1912 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, it appears the Lees lived in the wood frame structure facing Nebraska at that time. The store seems to have been an important community gathering space according to the current property owner and newspaper articles which list it as a polling location in the 1930s and 1940s. It remained in business from 1922 through 1967.
- c. **SITE CONTEXT** – The single family house is located on the corner of Cactus Street and Martin Luther King Drive. The home faces Cactus Street, which is a residential street with single family homes, varying in styles, all with a similar 10-15 foot front setback. The home aligns with the historic development pattern of the block, though it is the only Spanish Eclectic style on this block. On the northwest corner of the intersection is a single family minimal traditional home, and on the other two corners are vacant lots. A block to the west runs South Hackberry, a commercial corridor; a block to the west continues the residential neighborhood.
- d. **ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION** – The house is a single story Spanish Eclectic structure with a flat roof and parapet wall, and a stucco exterior. A concrete carriage step with the initials “F.M.A.” is placed at the sidewalk curb; this is the only carriage step that remains along the block. Two narrow, red, blue, and yellow barrel tile covered shed roofs hang above the covered front porch. The front porch metal shed roof was likely added at a later time; the porch has non-original wood lattice that obstructs the front porch from view. The porch has a wrought iron balustrade and tiled steps that lead from the front walk to the original inset porch with a front and side archway. Small blue diamond tiles accent the top of each elevation. A prominent exterior stucco chimney is attached to the south elevation, tapering at the top. Double hung wood windows are installed throughout the house, some covered by multi-light screens. At the rear of the main structure is an attached yellow stucco garage with an overhead wood garage door. The Spanish Eclectic features include the stucco exterior, flat roof and parapet, clay barrel tiles, arched inset porch, tiled porch floor and wood, one-over-one windows. Located at the eastern side of the property is a small commercial structure with a wood storefront with a flat roof and parapet. It has a rectangular footprint, wood siding, two wood windows and two non-original wooden double doors that face Martin Luther King Drive. The front façade fenestration has been altered and the doors and windows are asymmetrical to the front façade. The store appears to have been originally a residence. After converting to a store, a porch was added but has since been removed based on the 1951 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map.
- e. **EVALUATION** – As referenced in the applicable citations, 230 Cactus meets UDC criterion [35-607 (b)5], [35-607 (b)7], [35-607 (b)11], for a finding of historic significance in the process of seeking designation as a local historic landmark. In order to be eligible for landmark designation, a property must meet at least three of the criteria; 230 Cactus meets three.

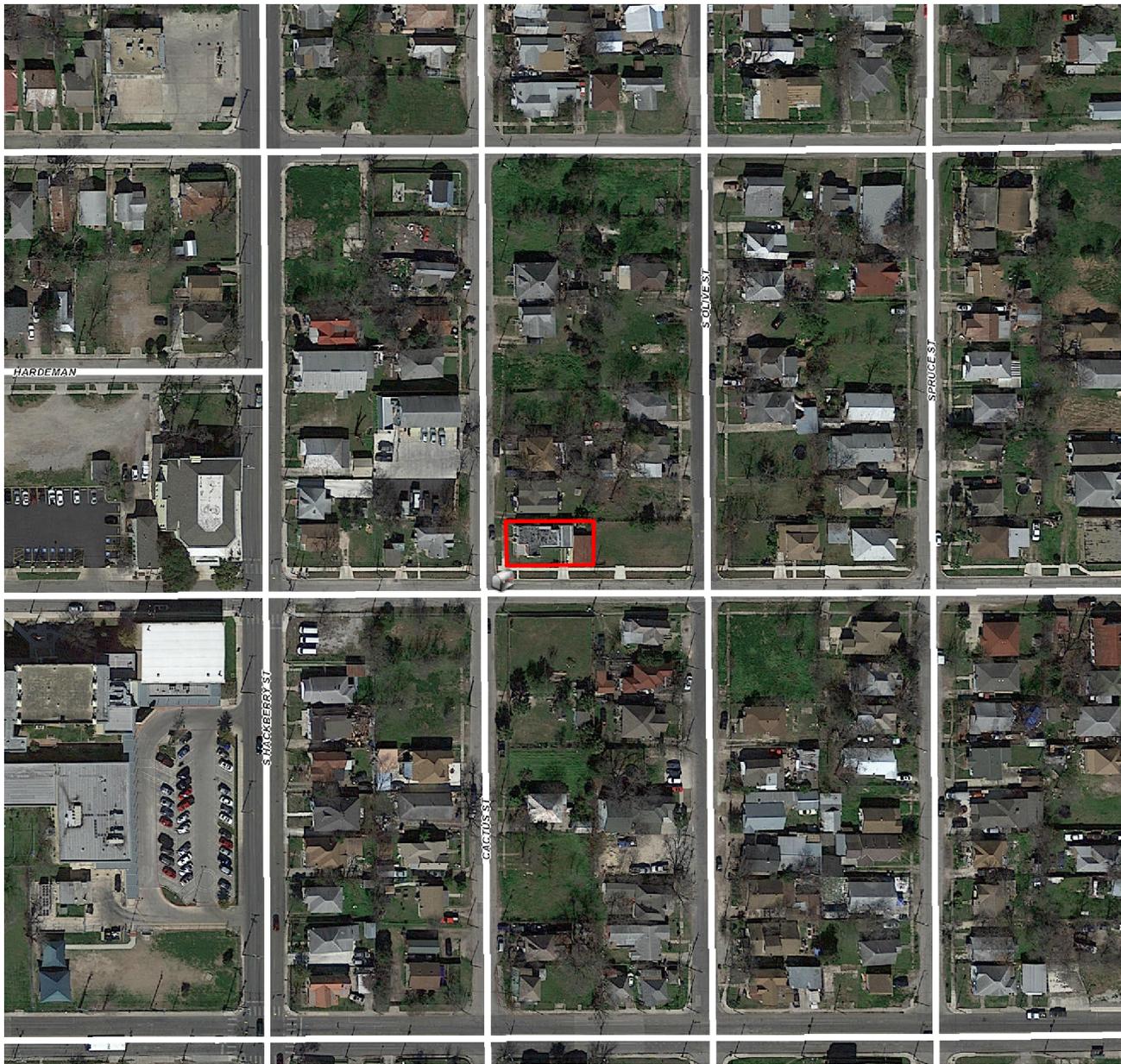
5. Its embodiment of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style valuable for the study of a period, type, method of construction, or use of indigenous materials; as a fine example of Spanish Eclectic architecture and an early twentieth century commercial storefront.
  7. Its unique location or singular physical characteristics that make it an established or familiar visual feature; for its prominent location at the corner of Cactus and Martin Luther King Blvd.
  11. It is distinctive in character, interest or value; strongly exemplifies the cultural, economic, social, ethnic or historical heritage of San Antonio, Texas or the United States; for the role of Abernathy Grocery role as a modified residence serving as an important community space operated by Frank Abernathy.
- f. The request for landmark designation was initiated by the property owner. If the HDRC approves the Finding of Historic Significance, then the recommendation for designation is submitted to the zoning commission. The zoning commission will schedule a hearing and then forward its recommendation to the City Council. City Council has the ultimate authority to approve the historic designation zoning overlay.
  - g. Per UDC Sec. 35-453, once the commission concurs with the eligibility of the property and makes a recommendation of approval for designation, interim design review requirements will be in place and the property owners must receive a written approval (a Certificate of Appropriateness) for any exterior work. These interim requirements will remain in place until the City Council makes their final decision on the proposed zoning change or not longer than six months.
  - h. The City offers a tax incentive for the substantial rehabilitation of historic properties because historic landmarks possess cultural and historical value and contribute to the overall quality and character of the City and its neighborhoods. If historic designation is approved, rehabilitation and restoration work may be eligible for this incentive. State and Federal tax incentives are also available for properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places and provide substantial relief for rehabilitation projects.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval of a Finding of Historic Significance and that the Historic & Design Review Commission recommend approval for the landmark designation of 230 Cactus to the Zoning Commission and to the City Council based on findings b through e.

**CASE MANAGER:**

Lauren Sage



## Flex Viewer

Powered by ArcGIS Server

Printed: Jun 18, 2018

The City of San Antonio does not guarantee the accuracy, adequacy, completeness or usefulness of any information. The City does not warrant the completeness, timeliness, or positional, thematic, and attribute accuracy of the GIS data. The GIS data, cartographic products, and associated applications are not legal representations of the depicted data. Information shown on these maps is derived from public records that are constantly undergoing revision. Under no circumstances should GIS-derived products be used for final design purposes. The City provides this information on an "as is" basis without warranty of any kind, express or implied, including but not limited to warranties of merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose, and assumes no responsibility for anyone's use of the information.



FRONT



RIGHT



RIGHT



RIGHT



RIGHT, REAR



RIGHT, REAR



REAR



RIGHT, REAR



RIGHT





RIGHT



FRONT



FRONT



FRONT



FRONT



LEFT



LEFT



LEFT





CITY OF SAN ANTONIO  
**OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

## Statement of Significance

**Property Address: 230 Cactus St.**

**Tier: 3**

**Known Name: n/a**

### *1. Application Details*

Applicant: Eugenio & Alma Chavarria

Type: Designation Request

Date: May 18, 2018

### *2. Findings*

The property at 230 Cactus St. is a Spanish Eclectic residence built c. 1917 and is currently owned by Eugenio & Alma Chavarria. An attached structure in the rear of the home, facing Martin Luther King Dr., was built c. 1910.

230 Cactus St. is located at the northwest corner of Cactus St. and Martin Luther King Dr. San Antonio's east side neighborhoods were the earliest to welcome African-American property owners and residents. Mt. Zion Baptist Church and Douglass Elementary are located one block to the west at the intersection of South Hackberry and Martin Luther King Dr. These institutions both were founded in the late 19th century to serve the African American community, and relocated to their present sites by 1940. The residential blocks east of South Hackberry developed over the first decades of the 20th century. Many of the original structures have been lost in the area surrounding 230 Cactus St.

Willie Silar Lee purchased the corner lot at Cactus St. and Nebraska (now Martin Luther King Dr) from P.H. & Catherine Wolf in 1913. Wolf was a successful baker and real estate investor. According to the San Antonio Light & Gazette, Willie pulled a building permit for a three room house on this lot in August of 1910. She married Erastus Lee in February 1911, and the 1912 City Directory lists them as residents at 230 Cactus St.. Based on the 1912 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, it appears the Lees lived in the wood frame structure facing Nebraska at that time. After Willie Lee's death, her siblings sold the property to Frank Abernathy in 1917. Frank and his wife Josephine operated Abernathy Grocery on Nebraska Street, apparently in the former Lee residence. The store seems to have been an important community gathering space according to the current property owner and newspaper articles which list it as a polling location in the 1930s and 1940s. It remained in business from 1922 through 1967. Abernathy appears to have been connected with political leader Charles Bellinger, and was at one point accused of participating in a gambling syndicate weld by Bellinger. Frank Abernathy was reportedly the cousin of Rev. Ralph Abernathy, close companion to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



## CITY OF SAN ANTONIO OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Abernathy, an active member of the Mt. Zion Baptist Church, was engaged with local politics and his connection to these civil rights legends remains an important touchstone for the community.

### *3. Architectural Description*

The house is a single story Spanish Eclectic structure with a flat roof and parapet wall, and a stucco exterior. A concrete carriage step with the initials “F.M.A.” is placed at the sidewalk curb; this is the only carriage step that remains along the block. Two narrow, red, blue, and yellow barrel tile covered shed roofs hang above the covered front porch. The front porch metal shed roof was likely added at a later time; the porch has non-original wood lattice that obstructs the front porch from view. The porch has a wrought iron balustrade and tiled steps that lead from the front walk to the original inset porch with a front and side archway. Small blue diamond tiles accent the top of each elevation. A prominent exterior stucco chimney is attached to the south elevation, tapering at the top. Double hung wood windows are installed throughout the house, some covered by multi-light screens. At the rear of the main structure is an attached yellow stucco garage with an overhead wood garage door. The Spanish Eclectic features include the stucco exterior, flat roof and parapet, clay barrel tiles, arched inset porch, tiled porch floor and wood, one-over-one windows. Located at the eastern side of the property is a small commercial structure with a wood storefront with a flat roof and parapet. It has a rectangular footprint, wood siding, two wood windows and two non-original wooden double doors that face Martin Luther King Drive. The front façade fenestration has been altered and the doors and windows are asymmetrical to the front façade. The store appears to have been originally a residence. After converting to a store, a porch was added but has since been removed based on the 1951 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map.

### *4. Landmark Criteria*

230 Cactus St. is not currently designated as a historic landmark. Staff concludes that the property meets the following criteria:

5. Its embodiment of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style valuable for the study of a period, type, method of construction, or use of indigenous materials; as a fine example of Spanish Eclectic architecture and an early twentieth century commercial storefront.
7. Its unique location or singular physical characteristics that make it an established or familiar visual feature; for its prominent location at the corner of Cactus and Martin Luther King Blvd.
11. It is distinctive in character, interest or value; strongly exemplifies the cultural, economic, social, ethnic or historical heritage of San Antonio, Texas or the United



CITY OF SAN ANTONIO  
**OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

States; for the role of Abernathy Grocery role as a modified residence serving as an important community space operated by Frank Abernathy.

*5. Outcome of Review*

Based on this assessment, 230 Cactus St. meets three of the sixteen criteria listed in UDC Section 35-607(b). In order to be eligible for landmark designation, a property must meet at least three of these criteria; thus 230 Cactus St. is eligible for designation as a local landmark.



## Lauren Sage (OHP)

---

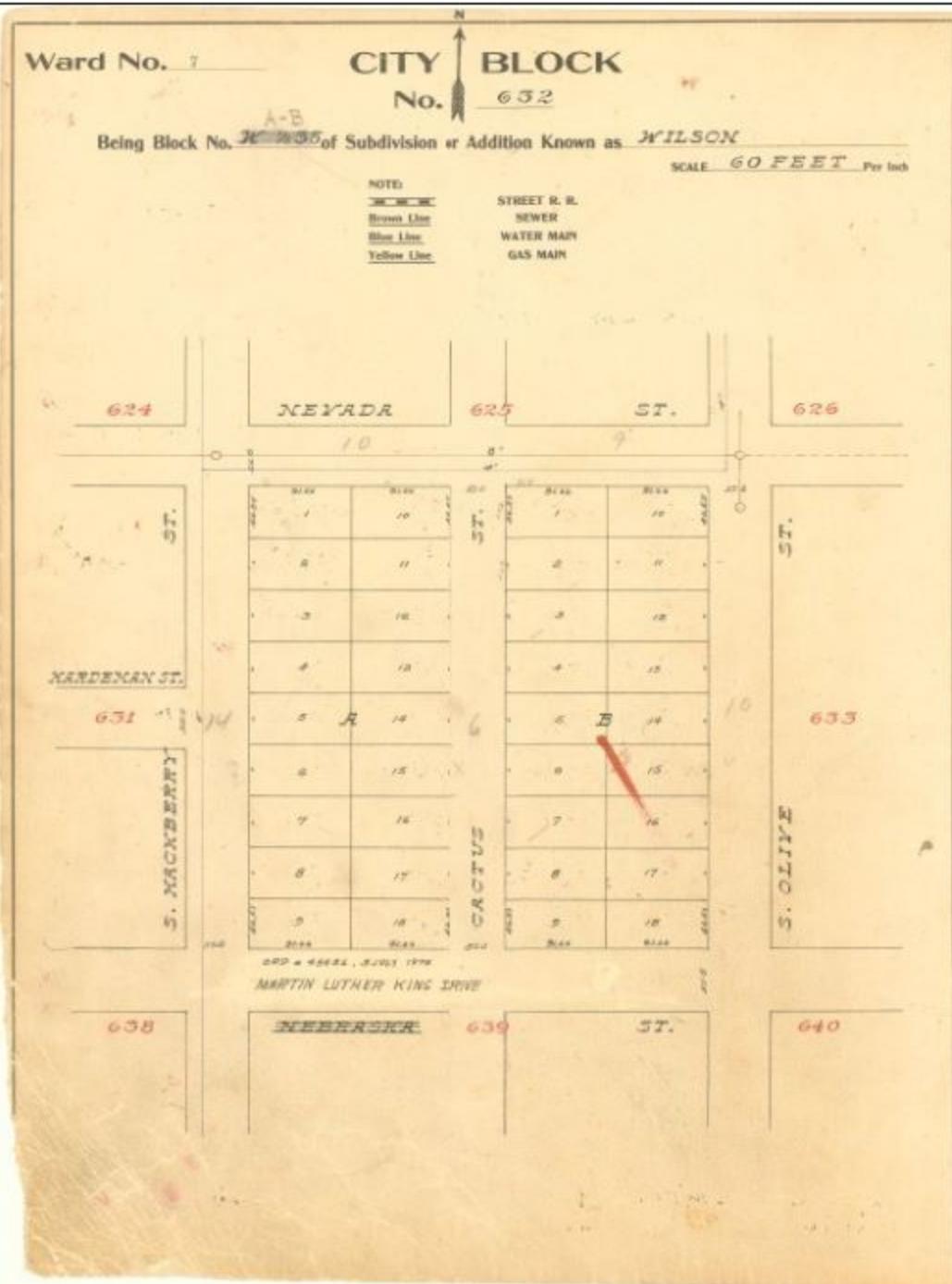
**From:** Eugenio Chavarria <echavarria003@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, May 18, 2018 3:19 PM  
**To:** Office Of Historic Preservation  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Statement of Significance

To whom it may concern,

The property on 230 Cactus St. was built by Rev. Ralph Abernathy who was a deacon at Mt. Zion First Baptist Church. His cousin was Ralph David Abernathy Sr.. According, to history " Ralph David Abernathy was an American civil rights activist and Christian minister.

He was a close friend and mentor of Martin Luther King." It is believed that Rev. Ralph David Abernathy and Martin Luther King came to this house on 230 Cactus St. and Martin Luther King St. This house must be preserve as an American History for future generations.

Thank you,  
Eugenio Chavarria



266

264

276

277

268



DAKOTA

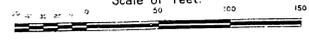
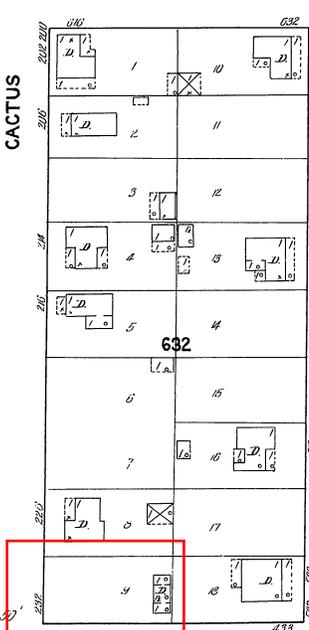
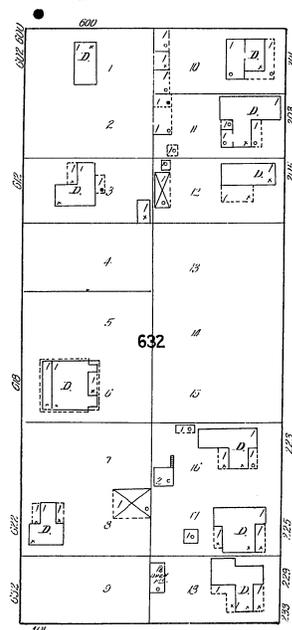
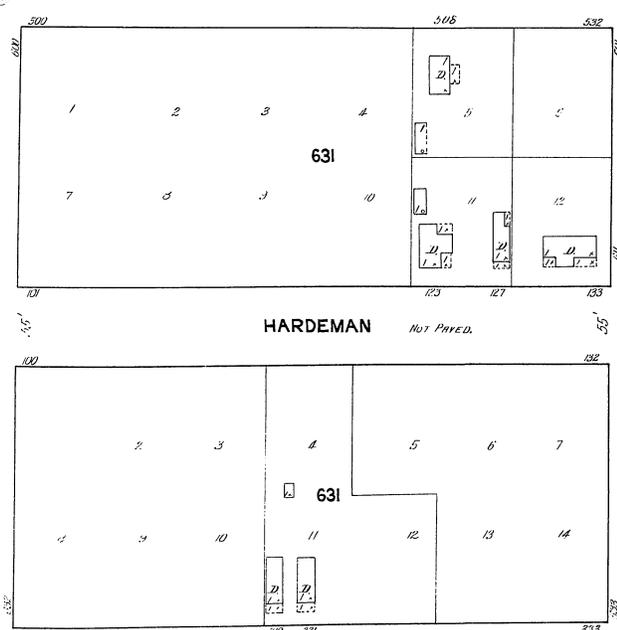
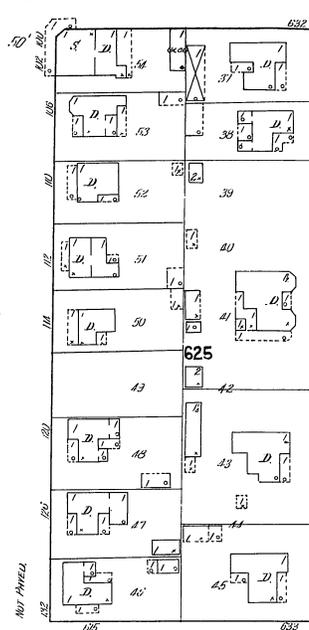
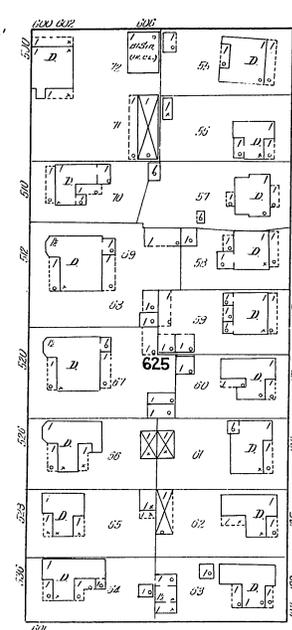
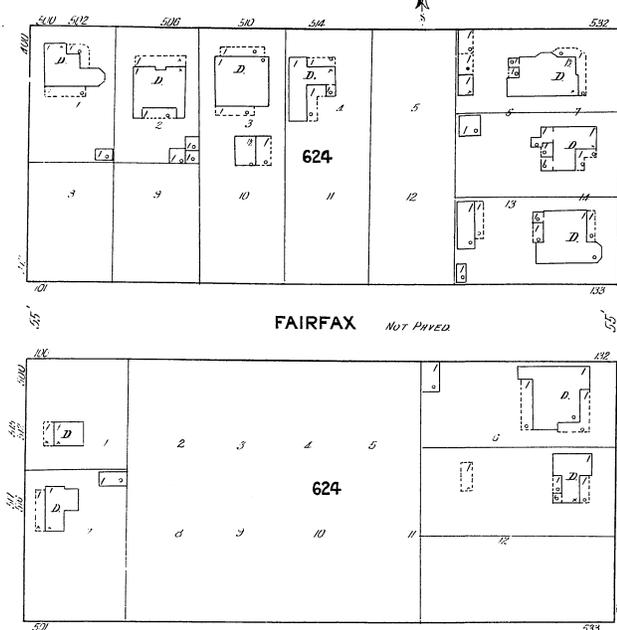
FAIRFAX Not Paved

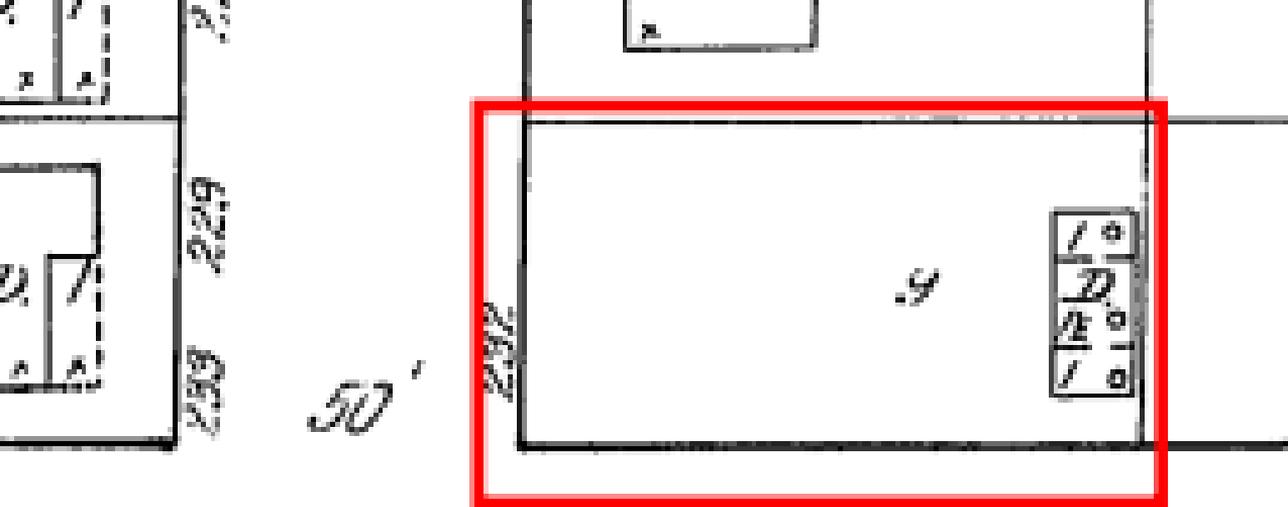
NEVADA

HARDEMAN Not Paved

NEBRASKA

Scale of Feet. 50 100 150





Sanborn 1912,

Sheet 266, Close-up

264

276

277

268



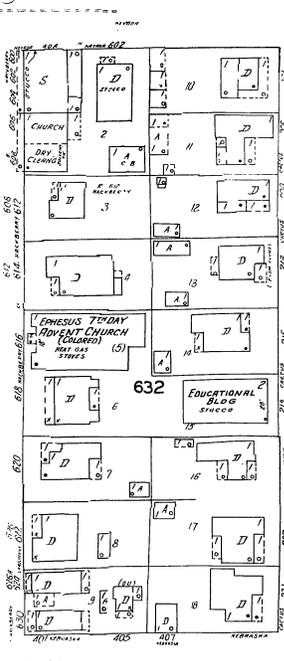
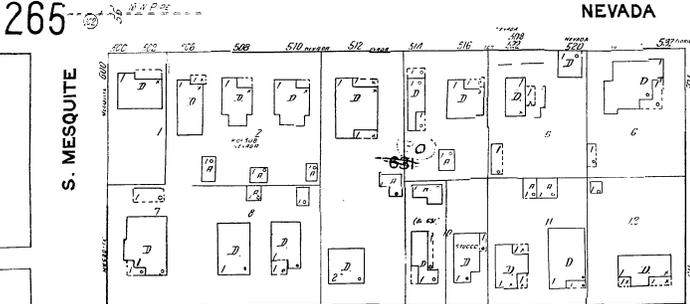
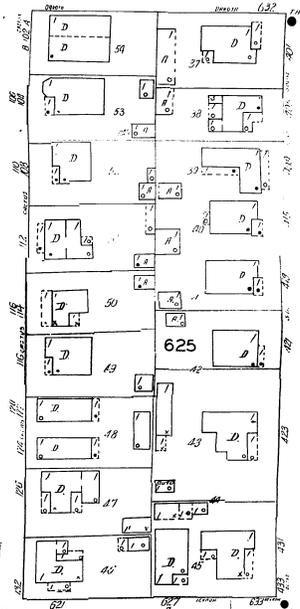
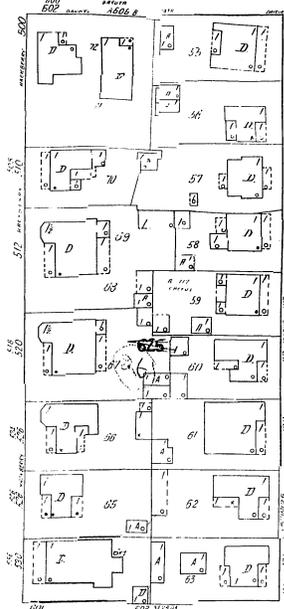
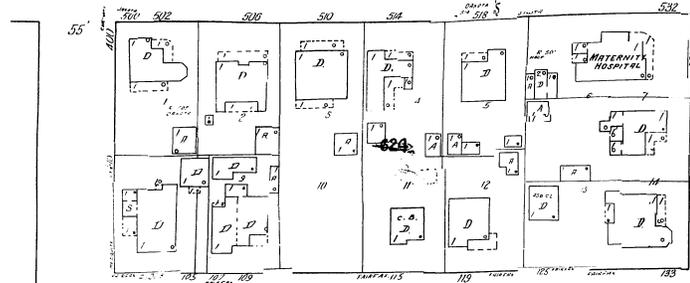
DAKOTA

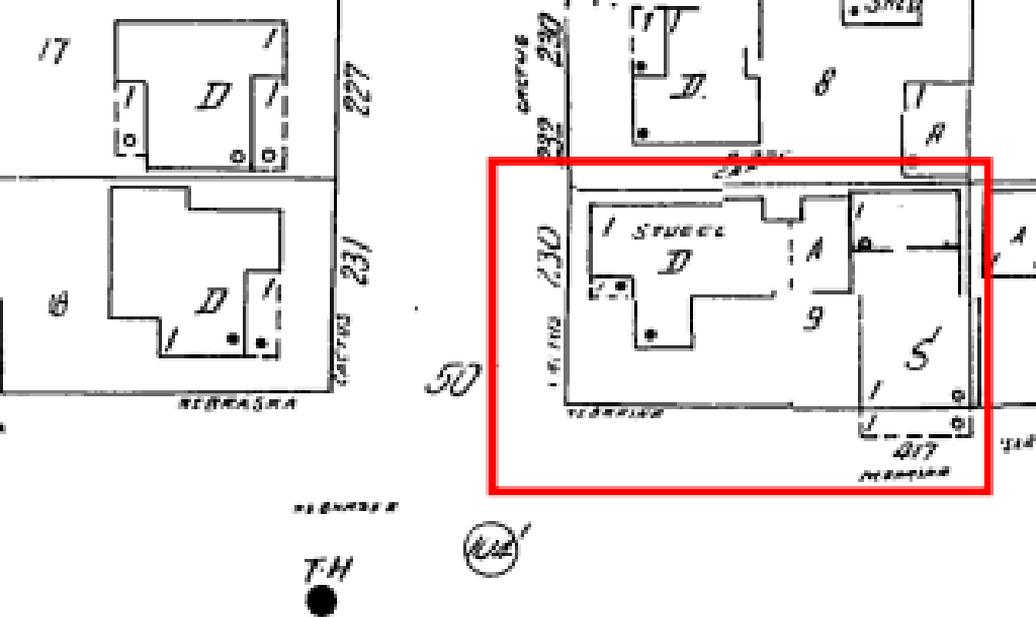
FAIRFAX

NEVADA

HARDEMAN

NEBRASKA





Sanborn 1951, Sheet 266  
 Close up