



CITY OF SAN ANTONIO OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION
COMMISSION ACTION

This is not a Certificate of Appropriateness and cannot be used to acquire permits

May 5, 2021

HDRC CASE NO: 2021-165
ADDRESS: 222 BROOKS ST
LEGAL DESCRIPTION: NCB 495 BLK 19 LOT 26 AT 222 BROOKS
APPLICANT: OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION - 839966 PO BOX
OWNER: LOZANO YULL & VOORHEES CYNTHIA - 222 Brooks

REQUEST:

The Office of Historic Preservation is requesting a Finding of Historic Significance for the property located at 222 Brooks St.

FINDINGS:

- a. On February 3, 2021, a demolition application was submitted to the Office of Historic Preservation by Jenny Hernandez on behalf of the property owner of the structure at 222 Brooks, located in the Government Hill neighborhood of City Council District 2. OHP staff researched the property to determine eligibility during the 30-day review period provided by UDC 35-455. OHP contacted the owner on March 1, 2021, to inform him that preliminary evidence suggested the home may be significant and to arrange a site visit. The property owner is in support of designation.
- b. **DEMOLITION AND DESIGNATIONS COMMITTEE:** A virtual site visit was conducted on March 24, 2021, with owner Lozano, the Demolition and Designation Committee (DDC), and representatives from the Office of Historic Preservation (OHP). Notes are included in the case file. Staff provided photos and videos of the exterior of the structure and a summary of preliminary research findings; the DDC met via video conference to discuss the case. The DDC observed that the historic footprint and much of the block is still intact, and asked the owner to share his plans for the site. Lozano shared that he purchased the property last year and originally planned to renovate, but after assessing the interior, his current plan was to demolish the existing house and build new. The DDC and staff discussed the designation process with Lozano, the tax benefits available after designation, and grants available to owners of historic properties. On April 21, 2021, the HDRC referred the case back to the DDC with instructions to get access to the interior, since the house was boarded and inaccessible for the first site visit. An in-person site visit was conducted on April 27, 2021, with both owners, the DDC, and representatives from OHP. Notes are included in the case file. Staff provided a summary of preliminary research findings; the DDC discussed the case on site with the owners. The DDC walked the perimeter of the property and through all interior rooms. The DDC asked the owners about their plans for the property; Voorhees stated they wanted to demolish and build a new house. The DDC and staff discussed tax incentives and grants available to the owner as well as the process of requesting Certificates of Appropriateness (COA) while the case moves through the designation process. The DDC suggested that the owners remove noncontributing rear additions and build new rear additions to increase square footage. Staff shared that removal of the noncontributing rear additions is eligible for administrative approval and that the owners would need a permit for partial demolition from Development Services in addition to the COA from OHP. The owners said they planned to get feedback from an engineer about retaining the historic footprint.
- c. **HISTORIC CONTEXT:** The property at 222 Brooks is a single-story, four-bay National Folk residence with Folk Victorian influence built c. 1892. It is located in the Government Hill neighborhood of City Council District 2. Yul. Lozano and Cynthia Voorhees currently own the property. The property first appears in the 1892 City Directory as home to the Petit Family—Leon, Adlaide, daughter Mary, and son Charles. Leon worked first as a machinist, then as

an engineer for the Southern Pacific Railroad. After Leon moved in about 1901, three other Southern Pacific employees rented the home, conveniently located just north of the Southern Pacific tracks (now owned by Union Pacific), in quick succession. The house is built in the National Folk style, popular in the U.S. from c. 1850-1930, with Folk Victorian influence. The gable-front family of National Folk, exemplified by 222 Brooks, was a popular choice for "narrow urban lots," first in the Northeast and later in "expanding southern cities in the late 19th century." The subject structure has decorative shingles in the front gable, a characteristic of the Folk Victorian form.

d. SITE CONTEXT: The property at 222 Brooks is a single-story, four-bay National Folk residence with Folk Victorian influence built c. 1892. It is located in the Government Hill neighborhood of City Council District 2. The structure is on the south side of Brooks St, on a block bounded to the north by Brooks St, the east by N Pine St, the south by Duval St, and the west by N Olive St. This part of the Government Hill neighborhood is bordered by Interstate 35, Interstate 281, Union Pacific Railroad's East Yard, and N New Braunfels Ave. The Government Hill Historic District is on the opposite side of I-35 from the subject structure, and the Dignowity Hill Historic District is to the south on the other side of the rail yard. There is a cluster of individual local historic landmarks along Austin St, three blocks west of the subject structure. Brooks St itself is two blocks long, running east to west between N Hackberry and N Pine. The property has a low concrete-covered wall with limestone and bricks visible below the concrete that runs along the front of the parcel and wraps around the northeast and northwest corners. A chain-link fence runs the remaining perimeter of the parcel. A concrete path and stairs lead from the street to the concrete front porch.

e. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION: The subject structure is front gabled with a composition shingle roof and a separate corrugated metal shed roof over the front porch supported by metal columns. A metal balustrade runs along the edge of the patio and down each side of the front steps. Four-over-four wood windows flank a pair of front doors with transoms. The front doors are boarded with plywood. The house is clad in wood lap siding and has decorative shingles in the front gable. Windows are four-over-four with wood sashes where visible; some windows retain their one-over-one wood screens. Character-defining features of 222 Brooks include the end-gabled roof form, decorative shingles in the gable of the primary (north) elevation, four-over-four wood windows, one-over-one wood screens (where present), and the low stone and brick wall clad in concrete along the north end of the parcel and wrapping around the northeast and northwest corners.

f. EVALUATION: In order to be eligible for historic landmark designation, properties shall meet at least three (3) of the 16 criteria listed. Staff evaluated the structure against all 16 criteria and determined that it was consistent with UDC sec. 35-607(b):

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; the house is built in the National Folk style, popular in the U.S. from c. 1850-1930, with Folk Victorian influence.

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; 222 Brooks is situated just north of the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks and served as housing for SPRR employees for at least its first two decades.

13. It bears an important and significant relationship to other distinctive structures, sites, or areas, either as an important collection of properties or architectural style or craftsmanship with few intrusions, or by contributing to the overall character of the area according to the plan based on architectural, historic or cultural motif; the property is situated directly between two local historic districts, Dignowity Hill and Government Hill, and contributes to an understanding of the development of the neighborhood.

g. 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.

h. Per UDC Sec. 35-453, once the Commission makes a recommendation for designation, property owners must receive a written approval (a Certificate of Appropriateness) for any exterior work until the City Council makes their final decision.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of a finding of historic significance and that the Historic and Design Review Commission should recommend approval for the landmark designation of 222 Brooks to the Zoning Commission and to the City Council based on findings a through f.

COMMISSION ACTION:

Approved as submitted.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shanon Shea Miller". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Shanon Shea Miller
Historic Preservation Officer