



# 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**

February 5, 2020

**HDRC CASE NO:** 2020-011  
**ADDRESS:** 241 E FRENCH PLACE  
**LEGAL DESCRIPTION:** NCB 1715 BLK LOT 12  
**APPLICANT:** Darcy Focke - 241 E French Pl  
**OWNER:** John Focke - 344 Upper Cibolo Creek Rd

**REQUEST:**

The applicant is requesting a finding of historic significance for the property located at 241 E French Pl.

**FINDINGS:**

- a. The request for landmark designation was initiated by the property owner.
- b. **HISTORIC CONTEXT:** The structure at 241 E French Pl is a one-story, single-family brick Folk Victorian home built c. 1883 for Jacinto Gonzales. It is located in the Tobin Hill neighborhood of City Council District 1. John B. Focke is the current owner. The property is north of the Tobin Hill historic district, but is within the boundaries of the Tobin Hill Community Association. The homes in this neighborhood represent the styles popular at the time of their construction in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. A 2005 survey effort in Tobin Hill identified this block as eligible for designation as a local historic district. Many residents of the Rock Quarry neighborhood, named after the street that ran along the east edge of the city blocks (now St. Mary's St), worked at the quarry or with affiliated businesses; Jacinto was listed in the 1881 city directory as a mason for the Texas Building Association. In 1893, Jacinto was appointed to the police force and served until his death in 1897. His wife Josefa remained at 308 Yndo St until 1907. Sanborn Fire Insurance maps indicate that the wood-framed addition to the rear of the house was built between 1912 and 1951, while the roof over the porch on the primary elevation was added after 1951.
- c. **SITE CONTEXT:** The structure at 241 E French Pl is a one-story, single-family brick Folk Victorian home built c. 1883. The property is located on a block bounded to the south by E French Pl, the west by McCullough Ave, the north by E Russell Pl, about three blocks north of the Tobin Hill local historic district, and and the east by Gillespie St. It is one block east of the Monte Vista local historic district, and one block northwest of the E French Place local historic district. The property has a gravel driveway with a concrete apron; a married sidewalk runs along the south edge of the property, and there is a brick path leading from the right-of-way to the front porch.
- d. **ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:** The home has a cross-gabled roof form clad in composition shingles, and its historic core is of brick construction on a stone foundation with wood-framed rear additions. The home has four-over-four wood windows on the historic core. There is a round decorative element centered below the south and east gables with a floral or leaf pattern. The north elevation is dominated by two rear additions, one at the northeast corner and the other extending from the rear gable. The original rear gable is visible above the addition; the gable of the addition is lower and wider than the original, and the addition is clad in wood and corrugated steel. There is a large wood platform patio at the northeast corner of the home. Character-defining features of 241 E French Pl include brick construction on stone foundation, a cross-gabled roof form, and round decorative elements centered below the south and east gables.
- e. **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):

3. Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the development of the community, county, state, or nation; the property was owned by Jacinto Gonzales, an early resident of the Rock Quarry neighborhood who, like other early residents of the neighborhood, worked in the quarry. Gonzales also worked in public service as a member of the San Antonio police force, 1893-97.
  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 an example of early Folk Victorian architecture in San Antonio.
  8. Its historical, architectural, or cultural integrity of location, design, materials, and workmanship; the home was built c. 1883 and represents one of the earliest homes in present-day Tobin Hill.
  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 located in an area of the Tobin Hill Community Association identified by staff as an eligible local historic district.
- f. 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.
  - g. 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.
  - 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 241 E French Pl to the Zoning Commission and to the City Council based on findings a through e.

**COMMISSION ACTION:**

Approved as submitted.



Shanon Shea Miller  
Historic Preservation Officer