



CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

APPLICATION FOR CHANGE OF ZONING

Request:

The Office of Historic Preservation requests a change of zoning to add “HL” Historic Landmark designation to 241 E French Pl and to waive all related fees. *OHP staff recommends approval.*

Case Comments:

On February 5, 2020, the Historic and Design Review Commission (HDRC) agreed with the applicant’s request for a finding of historic significance and supported the designation of the property as a local landmark.

Case History:

April 21, 2020	Zoning Commission hearing
February 5, 2020	Historic & Design Review Commission (HDRC) hearing
January 2, 2020	Application for Historic Landmark Designation submitted to OHP

Applicable Citations:

Note: In accordance with the process for designation of a historic landmark, as outlined in Section 35-607 of the UDC, properties must meet three of sixteen criteria. This property meets three Criteria for Evaluation.

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.
 3. **Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the development of the community, county, state, or nation;**
 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;**
 8. **Its historical, architectural, or cultural integrity of location, design, materials, and workmanship;**
 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.**

Findings of Fact:

- 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

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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 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.

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- 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.

ATTACHMENTS:

HDRC recommendation

HDRC published exhibits