

HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION

March 06, 2015

Agenda Item No: 2

HDRC CASE NO:	2015-075
ADDRESS:	1544 W MISTLETOE
LEGAL DESCRIPTION:	NCB 6481 BLK 2 LOT 5&6
ZONING:	R6
CITY COUNCIL DIST.:	1
APPLICANT:	Brett Harris
OWNER:	Brett Harris
TYPE OF WORK:	Landmark Designation
REQUEST:	

The applicant is requesting a Finding of Historic Significance for the property at 1544 W Mistletoe.

APPLICABLE CITATIONS:

UDC Section 35-607(b) – Designation Criteria for Historic Districts and Landmarks

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[35-607(b)5]; The house embodies high integrity as an example of a Moorish-Spanish style house from the 1920s.

8. Its historical, architectural, or cultural integrity of location, design, materials, and workmanship[35-607(b)8]; The home is a significant example of one of the many different eclectic style homes that contribute to the Woodlawn Place Addition community.

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[35-607(b)11]; The Moorish-Spanish style home reflects the character of the early 1920s Woodlawn Place Addition neighborhood.

12. It is an important example of a particular architectural type or specimen [35-607(b)12]; The house is an intact, high integrity example of a Minimal Traditional house.

FINDINGS:

- The proposed landmark designation is owner initiated.
- The residence at 1544 W. Mistletoe was constructed in 1925. The house is designed in a minimal Moorish-Spanish style with a distinctive horse-shoe arched entrance at the front stoop. The house features stucco cladding , a tightly capped roof with no eave over hang, and a decorative wing wall along the façade.
- The property was part of the 20th century development of Woodlawn Place Addition that was established by three prominent San Antonio business, Norris Dickinson, Kenneth Wimer, and Leland Busby.
- The early San Antonio “automobile suburb” was first platted in 1922 and was chosen for the abundance of mature trees and features wide streets.
- The house has retained integrity of design, materials, workmanship and feeling, as well as location and setting within the historic-age Woodlawn Place Addition neighborhood.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of a Finding of Historic Significance for 1544 W Mistletoe based on findings a through e.

CASE MANAGER:

Alyson Smith





1544 Mistletoe

Printed: Feb 24, 2015

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1544 W. Mistletoe
Statement of Significance

The residence at 1544 W. Mistletoe was constructed in 1925 according to a Mechanics Lien with Melliff McAllister Lumber Company. The property was part of the early 20th century development of Woodlawn Place Addition that was established by three prominent San Antonio business, Norris Dickinson, Kenneth Wimer, and Leland Busby. The area was first platted in 1922 and was chosen for the abundance of mature trees. The development is nestled along the edge of Martinez Creek between Woodlawn Ave., Fredericksburg Road, and N. Zarzamora. Woodlawn Place addition was also known as the "Million Dollar Addition" or "Picture Book Addition" for the number of impressive homes in styles reflecting the Tudor Revival, Spanish Colonial Revival, Moorish-Spanish, and Craftsman. This early San Antonio "automobile suburb" featured tiled street names at every corner, wide streets, and utility poles located along rear alleys to not obstruct the beauty of the homes.

The house at 1544 W. Mistletoe is designed in a minimal Moorish-Spanish style with a distinctive horse-shoe arched entrance at the front stoop, stucco cladding, a tightly capped roof with no eave overhang, and a decorative wing wall along the façade. A small modern rear addition is clad with metal siding. The house has retained integrity of design, materials, workmanship and feeling, as well as location and setting within the historic-age Woodlawn Place Addition neighborhood.

The property meets the following criteria for local landmark designation:

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 [35-607(b)5]; as a high integrity example of a Moorish-Spanish style house from the 1920s.

Its historical, architectural, or cultural integrity of location, design, materials, and workmanship [35-607(b)8];

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 [35-607(b)11]; as a high integrity Moorish-Spanish style home that reflects the character of the early 1920s Woodlawn Place Addition neighborhood.

It is an important example of a particular architectural type or specimen [35-607(b)12]; as an intact, high integrity example of a Minimal Traditional house.

NOTICE OF CONFIDENTIALITY RIGHTS: IF YOU ARE A NATURAL PERSON, YOU MAY REMOVE OR STRIKE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION FROM THIS INSTRUMENT BEFORE IT IS FILED FOR RECORD IN THE PUBLIC RECORDS: YOUR SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER OR YOUR DRIVER'S LICENSE NUMBER.

GENERAL WARRANTY DEED

STATE OF TEXAS §
 § KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS:
COUNTY OF BEXAR §

THAT I KASSANDRA VELA-LAOSA, of the County of Bexar and State of Texas, for and in consideration of the sum of TEN AND NO/100 DOLLARS (\$10.00), and other good and valuable consideration to the undersigned paid by the Grantee herein named, the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, have GRANTED, SOLD and CONVEYED, and by these presents do GRANT, SELL and CONVEY unto BRETT HARRIS, of the County of Bexar and State of Texas, all of the following described real property in Bexar County, Texas, to-wit:

Lot 5, Block 2, New City Block 6481, WOODLAWN PLACE ADDITION, an Addition to the City of San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas, according to the map or plat thereof recorded in Volume 642, Page 87, Deed and Plat Records of Bexar County, Texas;

This conveyance is made subject to all and singular the restrictions, easements, conditions, covenants, assessments and mineral interests, if any, applicable to and enforceable against the above described property as shown by the records of said County;

TO HAVE AND TO HOLD the above describe premises, together with all and singular the rights and appurtenances thereto in anywise belonging, unto the said Grantee, his heirs, executors and administrators forever; and I do hereby bind myself, my heirs, executors and administrators to WARRANTY AND FOREVER DEFEND all and singular the said premises unto the said Grantee, his heirs, executors and administrators, against every person whomsoever lawfully claiming or to claim the same or any part thereof.

EXECUTED this 21 day of April, 2004.


KASSANDRA VELA-LAOSA











1544 W. Mistletoe

City Directory Research:

1924-25:

1500 block of W. Mistletoe listed but no address of 1544

1929-30:

Mrs. I. V. Cummings (owner)

1940-41:

Mrs. Ida V. Cummings (owner)

1951:

Robert A. Doak

1955-56:

David G. Dougherty

1960:

Vacant

Deed Research:

6/4/1925 – Dickinson (one of the developers of the area) sells the property to Henry C. King Jr.; deed stipulates restrictions for occupants and for future construction of a dwelling, so it doesn't appear that there was a house yet built on the lot.

6/5/1925 – Henry C. King Jr. sells the property to Ida Vail Cummings

6/11/1925 – Henry C. King Jr. signs Mechanics Lien with Melliff McAllister Lumber Co. to construct improvements on the property. This is most likely for the construction of the house, so the **house appears to have been constructed in 1925**. This is dated only a few days after he has sold the property to Mrs. Ida Cummings (not sure why he entered into the Mechanics Lien and not Mrs. Cummings).

11/20/1936 – Proof of Heirship

Ida V. Cummings of 1544 W. Mistletoe was married to Lewis F. Cummings on January 26, 1906 and lived with him in Chicago, IL until 1912. Lewis F. Cummings died in Chicago on April 9, 1933. No children. Note – in the deed below dated 10/15/1945 she identified herself as a widow at the time of purchase of the property, but according to this document her husband didn't die until 1933 (?). Maybe a type-o or error?

10/15/1945 – Mrs. Ida Cummings sells property to R.F. and Sybil Williams but retains right to live in the property until her death. (Her obituary is dated 1/1/1947)

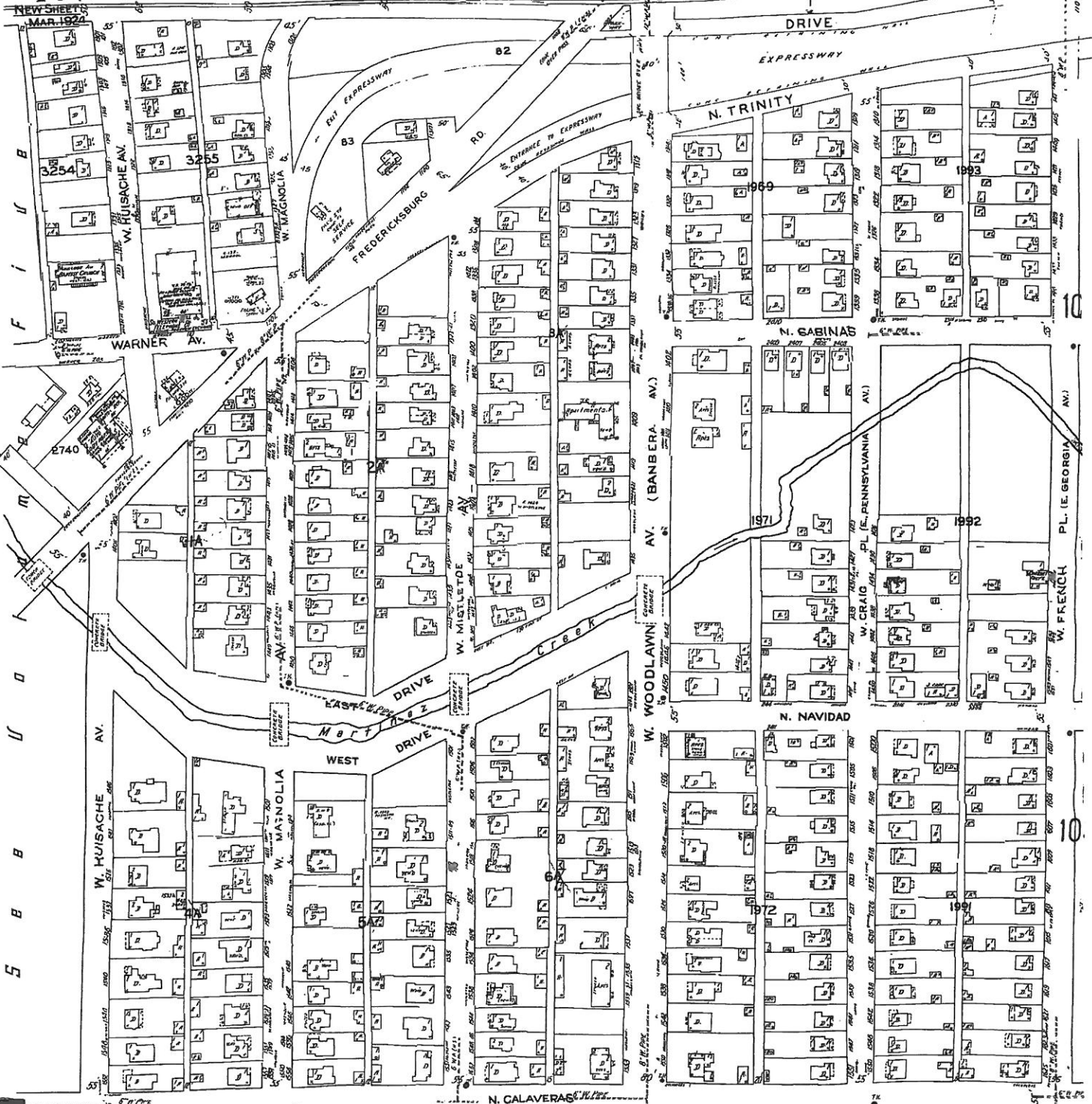
Other Research:

House is located in area known as Woodlawn Place Addition. This subdivision was once known as the "Million Dollar Addition." Initially platted in 1922, the majority of homes were constructed between 1924 and 1940. The neighborhood was established by three developers: N.S. Dickinson, Kenneth Wimer, and Leland Busby.

47

100

105



Scale 100 Ft. to One Inch.

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Woodlawn Place Addition

Location and History

The quiet neighborhood of Woodlawn Place Addition, once advertised as the “Million Dollar Addition,” is located just northwest of downtown San Antonio, along Martinez Creek between Woodlawn Ave., Fredericksburg Rd. (a section of the Old Spanish Trail) and N. Zarzamora.

The 100 acres, first platted in 1922, were chosen for the abundance of large mature trees that would surround the new bungalows and impressive homes with styles to include, Tudor Revival, Spanish Colonial Revival, Moorish-Spanish, and Craftsman architecture, with thoughtful designs in stonework and stucco. These homes included the latest in modern appliances, electrical lighting, gas and plumbing, all on paved streets with walks and curbs. The neighborhood was an “automobile suburb,” and the streets were designed to be eighty feet wide to accommodate the automobile, with rear garages and all power poles located in alleyways to not obstruct the beauty of the homes. A character-defining feature for this area is the tiled street names on every corner with street names continuing from the adjacent Woodlawn Lake District. The period of significance for Woodlawn Place Addition is 1924 to 1940 when the majority of these homes were built.



Developers

Three prominent San Antonio businessmen, Norris Dickinson, owner of N.S. Dickinson & Co., Kenneth Wimer, President and Manager of Wimer-Richardson & Company, Investment Bankers, and Leland Busby, President of the Busby Building Corp., all collaborated in the development of Woodlawn Place Addition, also known as the “Picture Book Addition,” and they each owned homes in this neighborhood.

Norris Dickinson, a leading real estate dealer and home builder, chose the land to plat and develop. He was also the Vice President of Busby Building Corp. and placed many ads in the San Antonio newspapers announcing the new model homes, some of which were sold fully

furnished. In 1926, an ad included 1546 West Magnolia Ave., a fully furnished Moorish-Spanish style home for \$11,500. In 1940, 1612 West Huisache was advertised as a “lovely, six-room home for rent at a reduced price of \$50.00/month.”



1612 W. Huisache



1546 W. Magnolia

Leland Busby traveled to Denver, Salt Lake City and several cities in California to study stucco and brick veneer construction and concluded that stucco homes would best adapt to San Antonio and its needs. He built several stucco homes, especially on W. Summit St., which became known as “Busby’s Stucco Row.” There are seven of the 20 stucco homes remaining today. Busby’s homes featured three-wall construction, reinforced concrete foundations, plaster finishes, hard wood and tile floors, and fire resistant mineral sheathing which also acted as an insulator.

Kenneth Wimer, who contributed greatly to the development of San Antonio, resided at 1506 Huisache, a magnificent two-story brick Tudor Revival. Urban legend has it that this house was later a brothel, complete with secret passages so that when the police arrived, all occupants could hide without being found.





A Complete Community

Commercial buildings added to the convenience of living in this area. They included: Woodlawn Place Grocery and Market located at 1651 Woodlawn as listed in the 1927 San Antonio City Directory; Diamond Service Gas Station #1 located at 1650 West Woodlawn, listed in the 1929-1930 Directory; and Beacon Drug Store located at 1655 Woodlawn listed in the 1929 Directory. In 1935, 1639 West Mistletoe was listed as Mrs. Ware Blanche Convalescent Home, which became Morgan Nursing Home from 1946 – 1970, and later became the Kerper House, a halfway house for released criminals. Today only the rear apartment stands on the large quadruple lot.

Woodlawn Elementary School opened in 1924, while Woodlawn Place Tabernacle served the community at 1701 West Woodlawn Ave., the closest religious sanctuary in the area. By 1934, it had changed its name to Woodlawn Methodist Church and is now El Divino United Methodist Church.

There are 30 apartment buildings out of the 221 resources in Woodlawn Place Addition. Most of these multi-family dwellings border the edges of the major streets in the area: Woodlawn Ave., N. Calaveras, and N. Zarzamora.

Today the Woodlawn Place Addition is well maintained and continues to add to the beauty and history of San Antonio.

By Lisa M. LeJune

*San Antonio Conservation Society volunteer - Historic Survey Committee
February 2009*

Original Draft By:

Rachel Baumann, Historic Preservation Intern 2004

Sources

New Encyclopedia of Texas, "Men of Texas" p. 493-494

San Antonio Light, May 1926, and July 1940

City of San Antonio, Office of Historic Preservation Archives

Woodlawn Place Addition

The Million Dollar Addition



Flat Story

Woodlawn Place Addition was originally owned by **Kenneth Wimer** (below). Wimer was a President of one of the largest firms of investment bankers in San Antonio. He lived in the neighborhood at 1506 Huisache (above).



Norris S. Dickinson platted Woodlawn Place Addition in 1922 and is described as a prominent realtor, leading real estate dealer and home builder. He chose a 100-acre piece of land to develop which was, "two and one-half miles from the heart of the city."

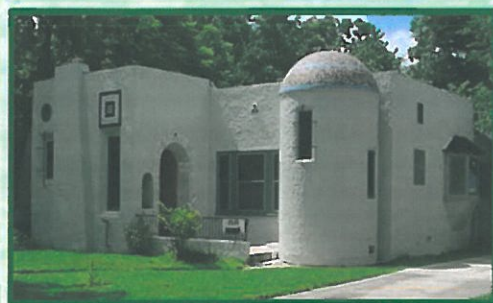
Busby's Stucco Row

Leland Busby was the president of Busby Building Co. and made many model homes in this area. West Summit Street is described as "Busby's Stucco Row" according to an article in the *San Antonio Light* in May 1926. Many of these stucco homes follow the Spanish Colonial Revival style with arched entryways to the front porch, arched tripled windows, and red tile roofs.



Location and Namesake

Woodlawn Place Addition is a neighborhood located on the eastern boundary of the Woodlawn Lake District. Woodlawn Lake was originally named the West End, due to its orientation in the city. The names of the streets are continued from the Woodlawn Lake District.



Woodlawn Place Addition became known as the "Picture Book Addition." A character-defining feature for this area is the tiled street names on every corner.

