

## **HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION**

**April 15, 2015**

**Agenda Item No: 19**

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>HDRC CASE NO:</b>       | <b>2015-123</b>                              |
| <b>ADDRESS:</b>            | 220 BROADWAY                                 |
| <b>LEGAL DESCRIPTION:</b>  | NCB 421 BLK 24 LOT A9 & 3                    |
| <b>ZONING:</b>             | D HS   |
| <b>CITY COUNCIL DIST.:</b> | 1  |
| <b>LANDMARK:</b>           | Traveler's Hotel                             |
| <b>APPLICANT:</b>          | Office of Historic Preservation              |
| <b>TYPE OF WORK:</b>       | Recommendation for National Register listing |

### **REQUEST:**

The applicant is requesting review and concurrence of the nomination of the Travelers Hotel at 220 Broadway Street to the National Register of Historic Places.

### **FINDINGS:**

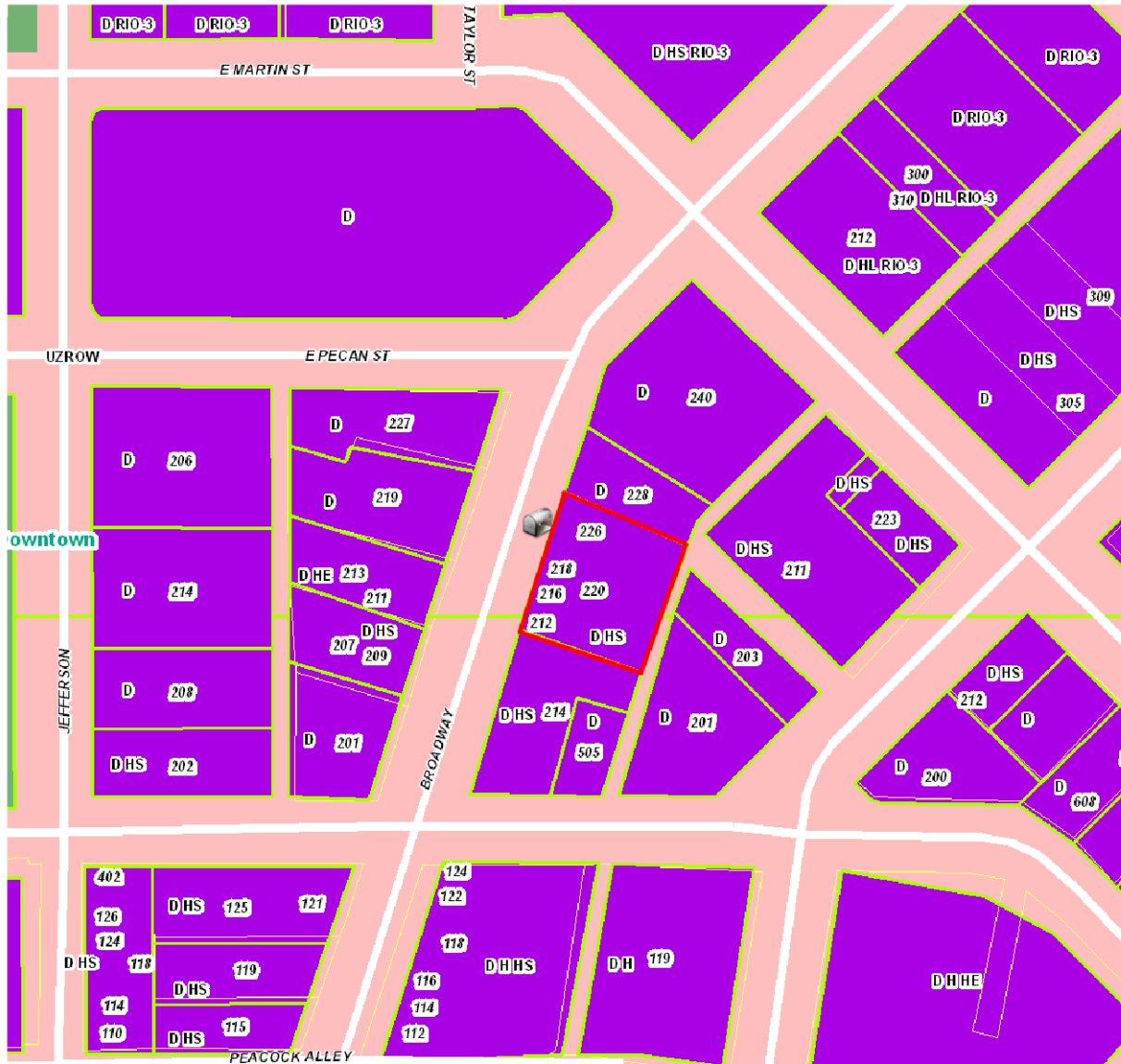
- a. As a participant in the CLG Program, the City of San Antonio's chief elected official, the mayor, and the local historic preservation review commission, board or committee must comment on properties nominated to the National Register of Historic Districts within their jurisdictions.
- b. This application will be considered by the State Board of Review on May 16, 2015.
- c. The nomination is provided in the exhibits for this request.
- d. The building is nominated to the National Register under Criterion C in the area of Architecture, as a distinctive mid-rise budget hotel within the central business district, with a period of significance extending from its construction in 1914 through the completion of the 7<sup>th</sup> floor, c.1928.


### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends concurrence with the nomination of the Travelers Hotel at 220 Broadway Street to the National Register of Historic Places.

### **CASE MANAGER:**

Alyson Smith





## 220 Broadway

### Travelers Hotel

Printed: Mar 30, 2015

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## National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

## 1. Name of Property

Historic Name: Travelers Hotel

Other name/site number: NA

Name of related multiple property listing: NA

## 2. Location

Street &amp; number: 220 Broadway

City or town: San Antonio

State: Texas

County: Bexar

Not for publication: ☐Vicinity: ☐

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this

☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria.

I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following levels of significance:

☐ national ☐ statewide ☐ localApplicable National Register Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official / Title

State Historic Preservation Officer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Texas Historical Commission

State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria.\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official\_\_\_\_\_  
Date\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

\_\_\_\_ entered in the National Register

\_\_\_\_ determined eligible for the National Register

\_\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the National Register.

\_\_\_\_ removed from the National Register

\_\_\_\_ other, explain: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

Travelers Hotel, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

## 5. Classification

### Ownership of Property

|                                     |                  |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Private          |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Public - Local   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Public - State   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Public - Federal |

### Category of Property

|                                     |             |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | building(s) |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | district    |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | site        |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | structure   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | object      |

### Number of Resources within Property

| Contributing | Noncontributing |            |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|
| 1            | -               | buildings  |
| -            | -               | sites      |
| -            | -               | structures |
| -            | -               | objects    |
| 1            | 0               | total      |

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register:

## 6. Function or Use

**Historic Functions:** DOMESTIC/hotel; Commercial: business, restaurant

**Current Functions:** DOMESTIC/hotel; WORK IN PROGRESS

## 7. Description

**Architectural Classification:** Late 19<sup>th</sup> and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century American Movements: Commercial Style

**Principal Exterior Materials:** Brick, Terra Cotta

**Narrative Description** (see continuation sheets x)



Travelers Hotel, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| X | A | Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.   |
|   | B | Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.  |
| X | C | Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction. |
|   | D | Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.  |

**Criteria Considerations:** NA

**Areas of Significance:** Commerce, Architecture

**Period of Significance:** 1914-19xx

**Significant Dates:** 1914

**Significant Person** (only if criterion b is marked): NA

**Cultural Affiliation** (only if criterion d is marked): NA

**Architect/Builder:** Unknown

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (see continuation sheets xx)

## 9. Major Bibliographic References

**Bibliography** (see continuation sheet xx)

### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

### Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State historic preservation office (*Texas Historical Commission, Austin*)
- ☐ Other state agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other -- Specify Repository:

**Historic Resources Survey Number** (if assigned): NA

Travelers Hotel, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property:** Less than 1 acre (0.2699 acres)

### Coordinates

#### Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: NA

1. Latitude: 29.428094° Longitude: -98.4871622°

**Verbal Boundary Description:** NCB 421 BLK 24 LOT A9 & 3

**Boundary Justification:** The boundary includes all property historically associated with the building.

## 11. Form Prepared By

Name/title: Elizabeth Feldman, and National Register Coordinator Gregory Smith

Organization: MARTINFeldman Architects

Street & number: 19115 Birdsong West

City or Town: San Antonio

State: Texas

Zip Code: 78258

Email: betty@martinfeldmanarchitect.com

Telephone: 210-573-3602

Date: February 12, 2015

## Additional Documentation

**Maps** (see continuation sheets xx)

**Additional items** (see continuation sheets xx)

**Photographs** (see continuation sheets xx)

# SBR Draft

Travelers Hotel, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

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Photograph Log

(Photos on pages 29-40)

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

## **Narrative Description**

The 1914 Travelers Hotel, at 220 Broadway in downtown San Antonio, Texas, is a seven story (with basement) three-part commercial block of reinforced concrete with a brick and stucco exterior. Situated on a roughly-square lot in the middle of a once fully-developed block, the hotel contains nearly 40,000 square feet of floor space. Built to the north and south property lines, only the hotel's east and west elevations feature windows. Facing west, the primary elevation is detailed in a fashion similar to that of contemporary buildings in other large American cities, with a three-part horizontal division of warm brown brick on the ground floor with large plate glass storefront for the retail space, dark ochre brick for the residential floors, and a light buff cornice band at the top. The hotel has a central inset entrance leading down a corridor to a central lobby with clearstory windows and a high arched ceiling. The small concrete staircase in the northwest corner of the lobby connects to the upper floors, while an elevator shaft with two elevators runs from the basement to each of the floors above. The guest rooms line both side of a central hallway, which runs the north-south length of the building. The hotel has been partially or fully occupied since construction, and retains a high degree of integrity.

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## ***Setting***

Originally known as Avenue C, San Antonio's Broadway radiates northeast from the heart of the city, and historically served as a primary artery for commerce and travel into San Antonio, connecting the city to Austin and points north towards Waco, Dallas and Fort Worth. In the 1920s, the road served as a section of the Meridian Highway (connecting Canada to Mexico through the central U.S.), and hosted a busy streetcar line. The Travelers Hotel building is oriented to the west, facing Broadway in a densely-developed section of downtown, with an elegant inset central entrance framed by thick stone pilasters bearing the name of the hotel, and a shallow archway. The two-story building that once stood to the north burned in the mid-1900s, its site now marked by a surface parking lot. To the east (rear) is a narrow alleyway used for deliveries and as a secondary exit. The south elevation of the Travelers Hotel abuts the historic Calcasieu Building, which is roughly the same height as the nominated building.

## ***Structure***

The Travelers Hotel, originally constructed as a six-story building, is a seven-story (plus basement) building of reinforced concrete plate and load-bearing columns, with wire-cut brick and terra cotta ornamentation on the front elevation. The building's design followed the composition of contemporary buildings in central San Antonio, and those designed in other major American cities, with the classic three-part vertical block composed of three distinct parts: a dark brick store front base; an ochre colored brick shaft; and a brick capital with simple classical terra cotta detailing. The original dark brick storefront has been lost, but based on historic photographs was similar to that still present on the neighboring Calcasieu Building. The Travelers Hotel features an almost-square ground floor plan with an oblong residential tower rising six stories above. The masonry block elevator tower is slightly offset from the residential tower to allow a corridor to run the length of the residential tower. The main corridor is also offset with a fifteen foot distance from the east elevation and eighteen feet from the west elevation. Two three foot wide exit corridors are placed at either end of each floor of the tower and lead to exterior fire escapes. The central elevators connect the basement to the seventh floor. Across from the elevator core is a narrow concrete stair, open to each floor and connecting the first floor to the seventh floor. The roof of the ground floor is flat to the center with a clearstory windowed central element rising 24 feet over the lobby. The roof of the tower is also flat and both are covered with a bituminous material.

## *Exterior*

The building has only one primary elevation, facing west to Broadway, with a large main entrance centered on the elevation base. The symmetrical brick and stone elevation features three bays. The outer bays are framed on the residential floors with cast stone quoins, with paired 1-over-1 sash windows flanked by single sash windows of the same type. The large central bay feature five vertical window columns with paired sash windows; the central window column, situated over the primary entrance, is framed by a 4-story vertical stone surround with decorative cast stone spandrels. The upper floor is not as finely detailed as the lower floors, with a high proportion of wall space given to a ribbon of 1-over-1 sash windows. On both sides of the doorway arch are storefronts, now covered with stucco and small windows and doors at each retail space. Above the base on the residential tower, the exterior is finished with wire-cut face brick laid in running bond. The brick at the base was most likely reddish brown matching that of the Calcasieu building abutting to the south.

The architectural expression of the Travelers Hotel and the neighboring Calcasieu Building follow a similar style of high-rise buildings built in other major cities. The first floor of the building is highlighted by a strong darker color with storefront windows to show off the retail within the space. Upper floors have clusters of large double hung windows that opened to allow good ventilation and light for the residence. The top floor finished with a classical heavy cornice would have housed the mechanical systems for the building. The ground floor was defined with the use of a stone arch and a stone header band connecting the base to the tower floors. Rising above the front entrance arch is a vertical band of stone and terra cotta calling attention to the location of the main entrance. When the seventh floor was added on the roof, larger apartments were added to allow greater flexibility to the living conditions in the building. While the canopy and the seventh floor did not appear in the 1914 photograph, in a photograph taken in 1928, a canopy had been added below the prism glass and above the plate glass storefront windows, and a seventh floor had been added finished in light buff stone and terra cotta to match the cornice below. The verticality of the building is further enhanced by keystone elements placed on both ends of the primary elevation and at the second bays coming into the center element. The sixth floor is further adorned with terra cotta decorative elements between the windows on the two outside bays, then a capping frieze and cornice finishes the elevation in a classical style decorative elements.

Some of the signage connoting the purpose of the building are still present: a vertical projecting internally-illuminated five-part box sign over the entrance (dating to the postwar period), and a large painted sign on the north side façade (early painted layers, now faded, identify the name of the hotel and the \$2.00 price for a room).

## *Interior*

The Travelers Hotel plan features a nearly-square ground floor base with a residential tower positioned over the front half of the base. The central entrance is framed by a curved header of stone and plaster. The marble base and floor tile remain intact and carry through the lobby and to the rear of the central space. On the ground floor the space has been subdivided over the years with retail, no kitchen or storage space remains and the lift from the basement has not be in operating order for many years. Over the central lobby the ceiling appears to have been vaulted with clearstory windows at the perimeter, no longer visible, the marble front desk remains with a backup wall that may be recovered. One bathroom remains of the original program across from the small concrete stair connecting the upper floors. The elevator shaft remains, however both elevators have been removed and one has been installed. Another elevator will need to be added for size code compliance.

Floors two thru six have single small guestrooms with no bathrooms; a large bathroom placed at the end of each floor was the only restroom facilities to these guests. Each small bedroom had a door adjoining the room next to it allowing a guest to rent one or more rooms at a time. The corridor running the length of the tower connects the central elevators and center stair to the rooms to each side. The exit corridors are at either end of the corridor and lead to fire escapes attached to the outside of the building on the east elevation. Except for the doors and gas lamps in the corridor no

fabric remains. Each room has large double hung wood windows that have been severely damaged by rain and birds. The plaster walls in the rooms have been damaged by water and on many of the floors no longer exist. On the seventh floor, added sometime before 1928, the rooms were built larger with individual bathrooms. Several refurbishments have created space that is unusable as bathrooms. In a more recent refurbishment an eight inch concrete floor was poured in the space which causes a tripping hazard at the entrance to the bathroom. Simple framed doors with louvers that have been filled in, line the double loaded corridor. The corridor is offset with one side having fifteen feet from the outside of the building to the corridor and the other having eighteen feet from the outside of the building to the corridor.

The basement program contains storage, boilers, elevator control room and other maintenance rooms. There are two lifts from the basement to the ground floor level that open to the exterior. The lift on the front of the building comes up under the sidewalk. The other is accessed from the alley.

### *Integrity*

Overall, the building retains sufficient architectural integrity to qualify for individual listing in the National Register. The exterior remains largely as it was constructed, with a seventh-floor addition completed by 1928. The primary elevation is intact with the exception of the storefronts. All of the architectural brick work and decorative elements remains intact. On the interior, the original configuration of spaces remains largely as it was when the building was completed, with some reversible room divisions in the lobby area. The plan of the double-loaded corridors on the upper residential floors is still evident, and the rooms retain their original configuration, with the exception of added restrooms. Taken as a whole, these alterations do not negatively affect the building's integrity.

Travelers Hotel, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

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## Statement of Significance

The 1914 Travelers Hotel in central San Antonio, Texas, is a seven-story reinforced concrete building with a brick veneer and classical terra-cotta detailing that incorporated essential elements of fireproof construction techniques within its framework. The building features retail spaces and a lobby on the ground floor and simple guestrooms along a single straight corridor on the upper floors, and stands as an important local example of a mid-rise commercial building that compliments the other early 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings of similar scale that line the Broadway corridor. Designed to fit the lodging needs of a growing segment of budget business travelers, the hotel offered basic amenities at affordable prices, with flexible room configurations that provided an opportunity for salesmen to conduct their business in adjoining rooms. The building is nominated to the National Register under Criterion C in the area of Architecture, as a distinctive mid-rise budget hotel within the central business district, with a period of significance extending from its construction in 1914 through the completion of the seventh floor, c.1928.

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At the time of the Travelers Hotel's construction, San Antonio was a well-established regional commercial center for private industry (including insurance, financial services, and manufacturing) and a city with rapidly-expanding military sector. With greatly improved rail and automobile connectivity, San Antonio's economy and population quickly grew in the decades following 1900. Economic prosperity fueled greater real estate speculation and competition among hotel developers that continued until the Great Depression.<sup>1</sup> By 1910, San Antonio had grown to a population of 96,614, becoming the 54<sup>th</sup> most populous city in the United States, and the number one most populous in Texas, almost doubling in size in just ten years from a 1900 census count of 53,321 persons. As a growing commercial center, city leaders recognized the need for a variety of short and long-term residential facilities. A 1915 article in the *San Antonio Light* newspaper argued that "San Antonio is under-built...real estate men have long complained that vacant lot owners should build for the rental market to have guaranteed tenants."<sup>2</sup>

The Travelers Hotel was one of several concrete or steel-framed high-rise hotels built in San Antonio in the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with elevators, and central heating and electrical systems. The year 1909 saw the opening of two major full-service downtown hotels: the St. Anthony Hotel and the Gunter Hotel, both of which expanded over the followed decades, and offered large meeting spaces and well-appointed rooms. The Travelers Hotel would stand in contrast to these high-end lodgings, as it catered to a growing segment of budget-minded business travelers representing regional and national companies that required an army of travelling sales representatives to market their manufactured products. Strategically placed on Avenue C (later named Broadway) on the northeast edge of the central business district, the hotel catered to traveling salesmen, many of whom represented suppliers of the army, which had a strong presence in the city, primarily at Fort Sam Houston.

While the Travelers Hotel is a large and imposing building, it was nevertheless overshadowed in prominence by the more elegant and high-profile hotels built in the city during the same period. While the identity of the architect has not been determined, the builder, H.N. Jones Construction Company of San Antonio, completed the hotel in 1914 at a cost of \$125,000 for owners J.M. Watson and S.K. Kranzthor. The hotel opened on October 15, 1914, and was extolled by an article in the *San Antonio Express* as "modern in every way." The writer further noted that:

[T]he proprietors are having installed several novel attractions for the comfort and entertainment of their guests. Convertible doors, screened in summer and which by the pressing of a button can be made into a solid door for winter, will be installed in each of the 100 rooms. The entire sixth floor, on which there will be shower baths and a club room, will be for men only. This feature is now in vogue in several of the large hotels in the North and East and has proved a drawing card for commercial

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<sup>1</sup> Maria Pfeiffer, "Gunter Hotel, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas." National Register of Historic Places nomination (2007), 18.

<sup>2</sup> *San Antonio Light*, January 1, 1915.



Travelers Hotel, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

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travelers. A roof garden, forecasted to rank second to none in the Southwest, will be in operation on top of the building before next summer.<sup>3</sup>

Compared to premier hotels in San Antonio such as the Gunter Hotel, the Travelers Hotel offered only basic amenities. The guest rooms were small and spare, with shared bathrooms at each end of the hall. Adjoining rooms, however, could be connected through shared doorways, offering the option of renting one or more additional rooms to display salesmen's product samples and merchandise. Unlike upscale hotels, the Travelers Hotel lacked a mezzanine level, offered no business meeting or conference rooms, and didn't feature a dedicated parking lot or garage. The majority of guests most likely arrived by bus or train, and the hotel served as a stop for intercity bus lines, with destinations such as Austin. The building's entrance was flanked by three narrow storefronts on each side, occupied through the late 1920s by businesses that catered to the hotel's clientele, including a café, cigar shop, and combination barber & tailor shop. While the Travelers Hotel catered primarily to travelling businessmen (billed as the "travelling men's home" in San Antonio newspaper ads in 1919), it also opened its doors to family travelers as well, indicated by incidental newspaper references published through the 1920s. In keeping with common hotels practices of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Travelers Hotel mostly likely turned away unaccompanied women, and almost certainly adhered to a "whites only" policy through the Jim Crow era.

An article published in the *San Antonio Express* in the weeks prior to the hotel's opening identified the owners as Charles Wuest and William Nagel ("two San Antonio boys...who were smiled upon by success in their present enterprise – the Crockett Hotel"), not making the distinction between the operators of the business and the owners of the property.<sup>4</sup> The building nevertheless remained under the ownership of parties other than Nagel and Wuest. Republic Realty purchased the building in 1920, and sold the property to D. Sullivan in 1921, who continued to lease the hotel to Nagel and Wuest. While the building changed hands once again (to a partnership comprised of Eleanor Collins, Annie Sullivan, Elizabeth Clem and husband John Clem), Nagel and Wuest continued to operate the hotel (along with the Travelers Hotel in New Braunfels) until they declared bankruptcy in June 1931, after which the hotel continued to operate much as before under different management. In 1938, the *San Antonio Light* reported that the hotel, managed by J.M. Thompson, had completed a light remodeling (including new curtains, mirrors, lights, furniture, and other fixtures), while reporting that the hotel coffee shop was managed by Charles N. Wuest.<sup>5</sup> In the early 1940s, Wuest remained active in the hotel trade, serving as president of the San Antonio Hotel Association and managing the Prudential Hotel.<sup>6</sup>

Specifically designed to meet the needs and expectations of travelling salesmen in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Travelers Hotel, like many hotels in large and small U.S. cities, soon became outmoded, and was hampered by the impracticality and high cost of renovations that would be necessary to sufficiently modernize it. Nationwide, the hotel business changed dramatically following World War II, threatening the viability of antiquated downtown budget lodgings such as the Travelers Hotel. Modern motels and "motor hotels" located along primary highways outside of crowded central business districts appealed to travelers with amenities such private bathrooms, air conditioning, telephones, televisions, and plenty of free parking. The owners and managers of the Travelers Hotel made incremental changes in light of this increasing completion, but aside from the addition of small private bathrooms (a common postwar modification for older hotels), the fabric of the building remained largely unchanged. In the early 1950s, the hotel advertised weekly rates and boasted "fans in every room" in a series of small ads in the *San Antonio Express*. By this point, however, the hotel's reputation was beginning to erode, and the 1952 exposé *U.S.A. Confidential* (described by the publisher as a

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<sup>3</sup> "Travelers Open Oct. 15." *San Antonio Express*. October 1, 1914.

<sup>4</sup> "Three Pictures of the Way San Antonio is Growing," *San Antonio Express*, October 4, 1914, p.35. Wuest and Nagel were brothers-in-law.

<sup>5</sup> "Travelers Finishes Remodeling Program," *San Antonio Light*, April 10, 1938.

<sup>6</sup> "S.A. Hotel Man Honored," *San Antonio Light*, June 3, 1941. Wuest died in January 1946.



“full-scale, full-bodied, uncensored, unafraid account of the under-life of America”) noted in its San Antonio chapter that “the prettiest pickups hang around the Travelers Hotel...”<sup>7</sup> By 1963, weekly and monthly rates were offered for “working or retired people,” indicating the hotel’s transition to extended-stay lodging. By this time, the hotel also offered window-unit air conditioners. The hotel has remained in business to the present day, still offering daily, weekly, and monthly rates, but is only partially occupied on the second and third floors, while the upper floors remain empty.

The Travelers Hotel is architecturally significant both for its aesthetic and programmatic qualities. It is similar in style, size, scale, materials, and massing to many downtown hotels built across Texas in the 1910s, with a symmetrical plan, concrete frame, and brick veneer with cast stone decorative elements. The building’s architect is unknown (despite exhaustive research), but the primary façade is typical of early 20<sup>th</sup> century urban high-rise buildings with separation of the building’s main program elements expressed on the exterior. Originally conceived as a 2-part commercial block with retail space and a lobby on the ground floor, with private rental rooms on the upper floors, the building was transformed into a 3-part vertical block with the addition of a full seventh floor by the late 1920s. This category of commercial building that was first described by architectural historian Richard Longstreth in *The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture*. Longstreth’s classification system separates typical central and neighborhood commercial buildings into different categories based not on stylistic detailing but on the composition of the primary façade. The three-part vertical block first developed during the late-nineteenth century “as a means of simplifying the external composition of tall commercial buildings.”<sup>8</sup> The composition of a three-part vertical block features three distinct zones, analogous to the divisions of a classical column. A one-to-two-story base visually grounds the building; a middle zone, or shaft, comprises the majority of the building’s facade and is generally the least decorated, and an ornamented upper zone, or capital, of one-to-three stories.

The Travelers Hotel exhibits all of these distinguishing features. The building’s façade is relatively flat, featuring a slightly-projecting cornice with an egg-and-dart stringcourse above the sixth floor, and a plain parapet above the seventh floor. The building’s verticality is expressed through stacked quoins that define the outermost bays, and the decorative enframed central bay finished with stone over the main entrance. Other details include stone keystones over the fifth floor windows in the outer bays and sculpted stone spandrels in the central bay. The resulting decorative scheme a greatly-simplified yet refined interpretation of Beaux Arts classicism applied to an otherwise plain brick facade. The hotel’s entrance hallway and lobby is similarly refined, and retains most of its original finishes and details, including a marble registration desk, marble baseboards, hexagonal tile floor with a Greek key border, and intact crown molding with egg-and-dart stringcourses.

The building also exemplifies the type of mid-rise commercial hotels that were constructed in cities across the country during the late 1800s and early 1900s, as railroads and highway systems connected far-flung areas of the United States. By the turn of the century, hotels served not only as lodging for travelers but as important public spaces for the local community. Ground floor commercial spaces provided additional income for the building owner, and served not only the hotel guests but also local residents. Private hotel rooms were located on the upper floors, opening off of an efficient floor plan of double-loaded corridors. The Travelers Hotel featured this same hierarchy of interior spaces, with commercial storefronts opened onto the street and directly into the finely-detailed lobby. The building stands as an excellent and relatively unaltered example of an urban hotel designed to accommodate businessmen traveling on limited budgets, expressed in the building’s plan, which allowed for only basic amenities. The first floor storefront spaces were rented out to independent vendors, which operated a café, barber and tailor shop, and cigar store. The residential floors have small adjoining rooms that could be connected through central doors to provide display rooms

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<sup>7</sup> Jack Lait and Lee Mortimer. *U.S.A. Confidential*. (New York: Crown Publishers), 1952, p.211.

<sup>8</sup> Longstreth, Richard, *The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture*, The Preservation Press: 1987, 93.

SBR Draft

Travelers Hotel, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

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next to sleeping rooms. The lack of private baths maximized the space and flexibility of each guest room, while the placement of bathrooms and shower facilities at the end of each floor would have reduced both construction and maintenance costs. Originally designed to accommodate only male guests, the restroom and shower rooms were later divided to provide small facilities for women. Eventually, private bathrooms were installed in each guest room.

The Travelers Hotel stands on a densely-developed urban block near the heart of San Antonio, and its current owners propose to rehabilitate the building for use as a hotel. It is nominated to the National Register under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as a remarkably intact example of an early 20<sup>th</sup> century budget hotel.

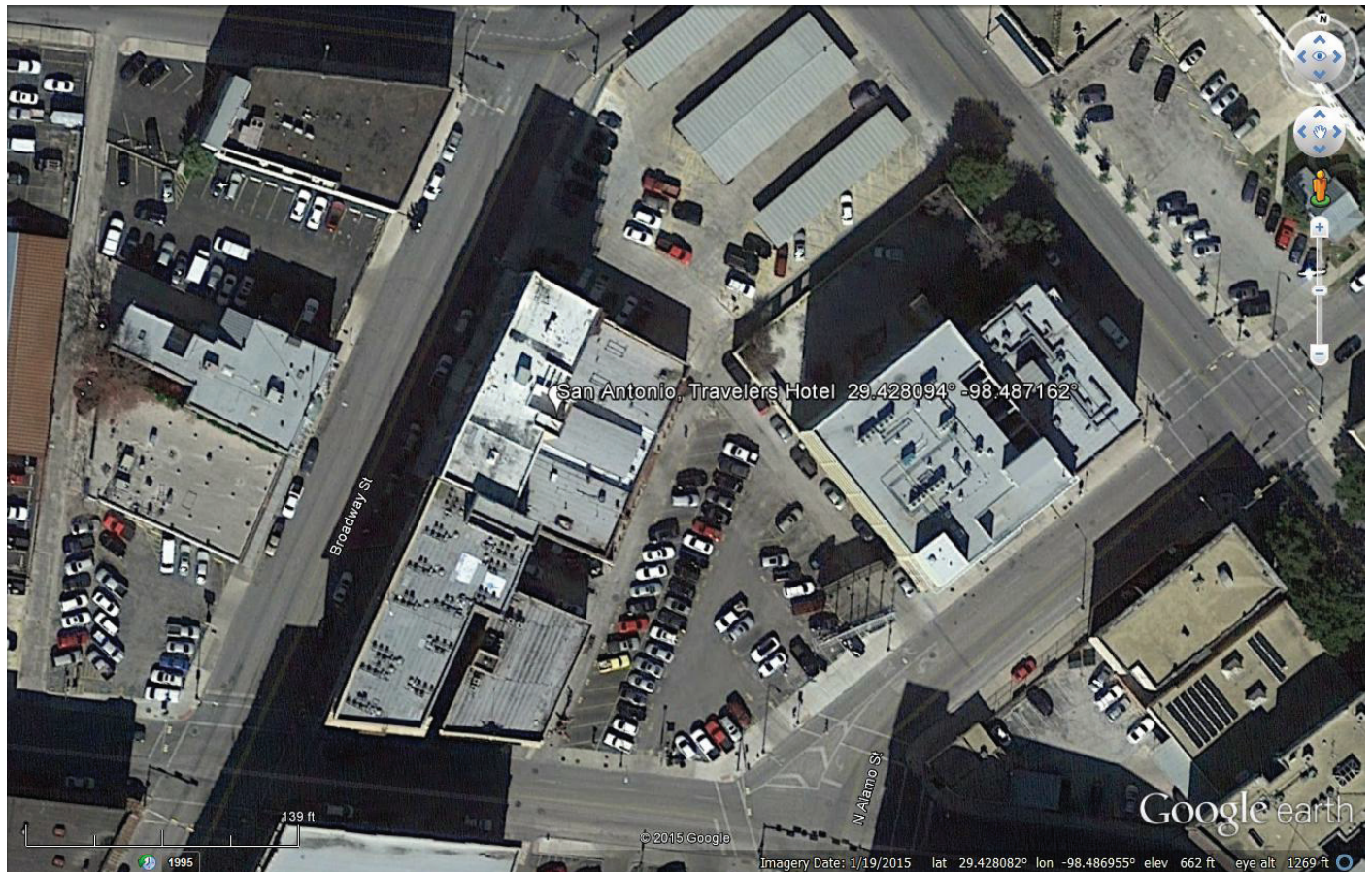
## Bibliography

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# SBR Draft

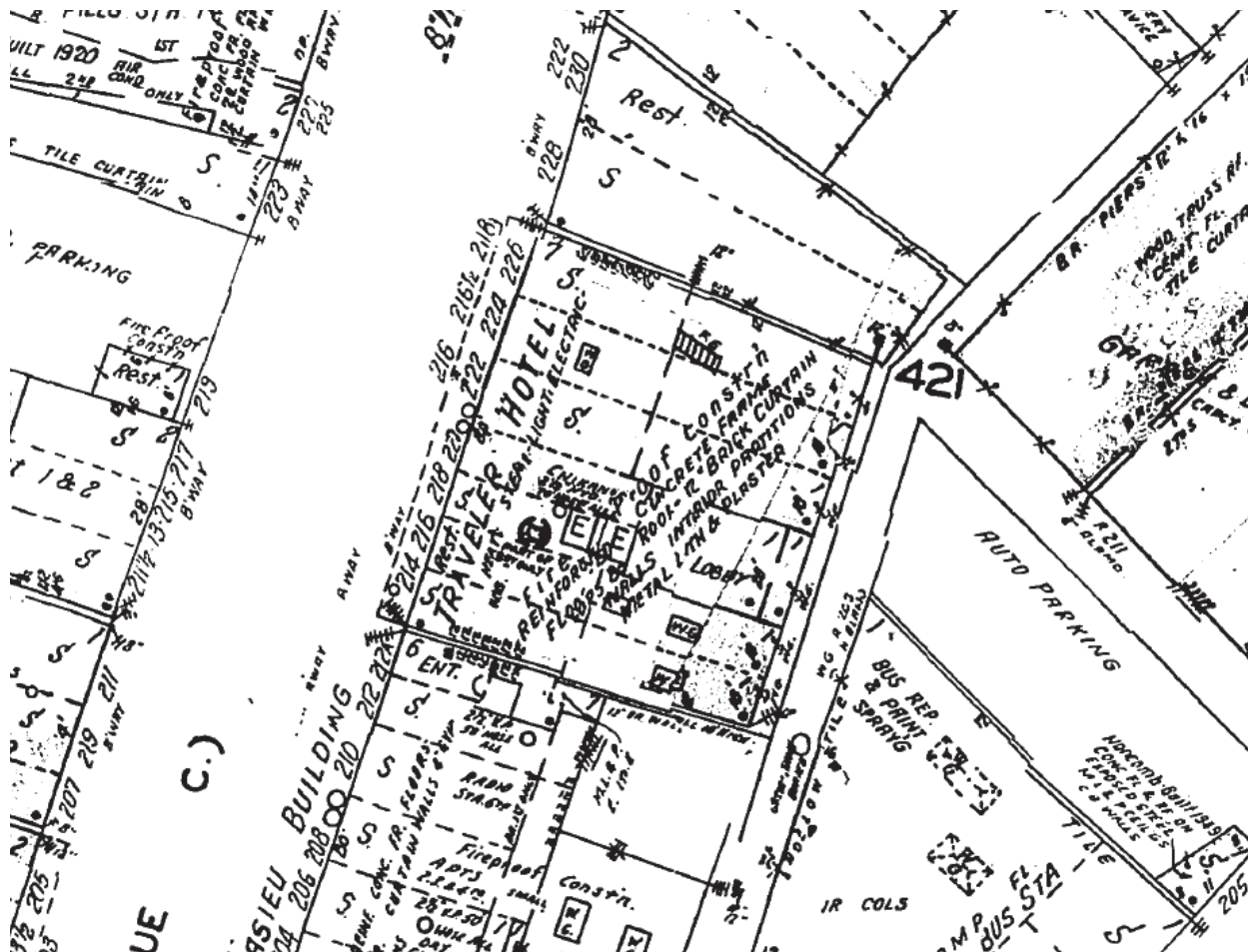
Travelers Hotel, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

Google Map, accessed March 4, 2015.





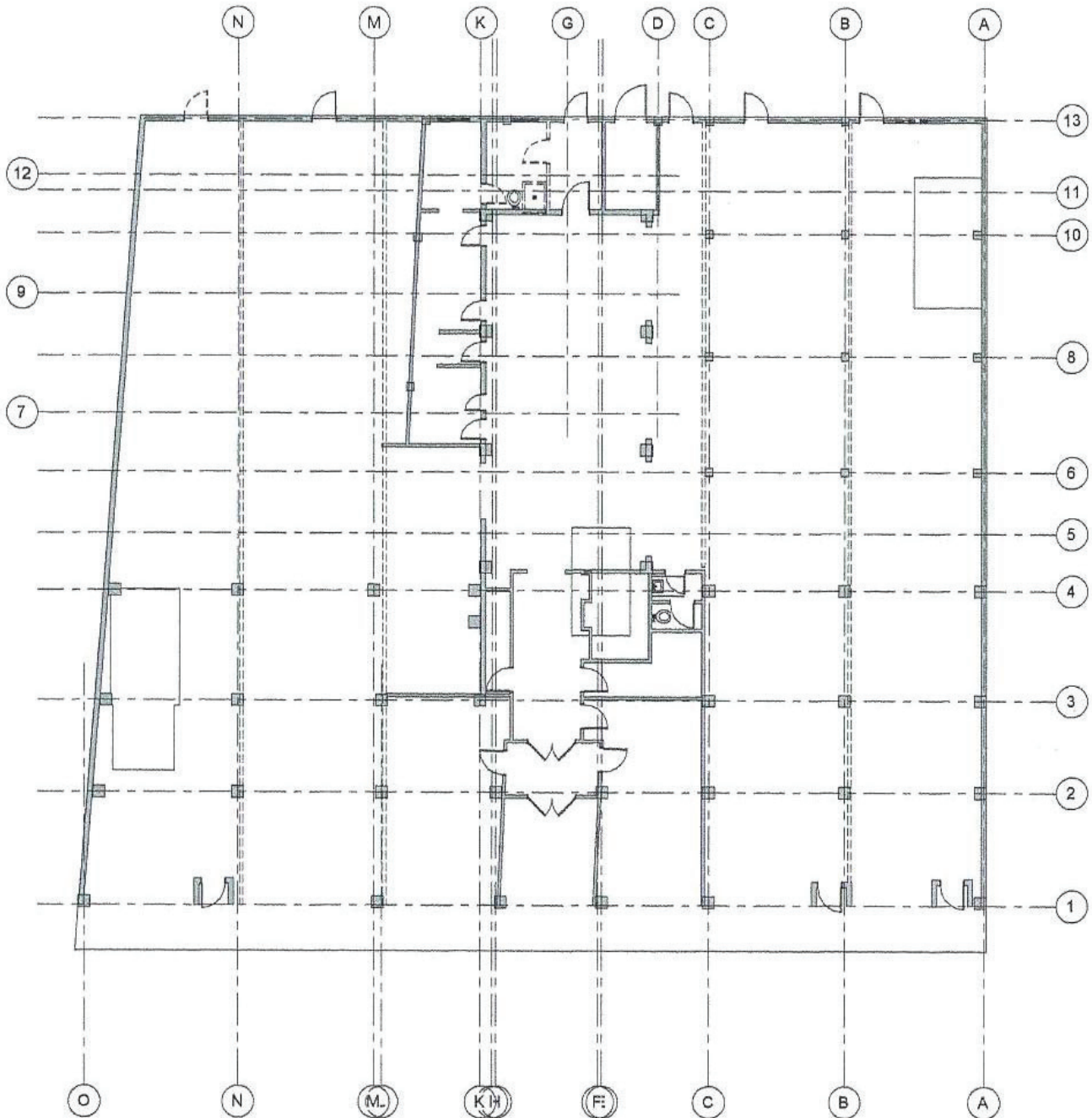
Sanborn Fire Insurance Map  
San Antonio 1911-Mar. 1951 vol. 2, 1912-Jan. 1951, Sheet 120.



# SBR Draft

Travelers Hotel, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

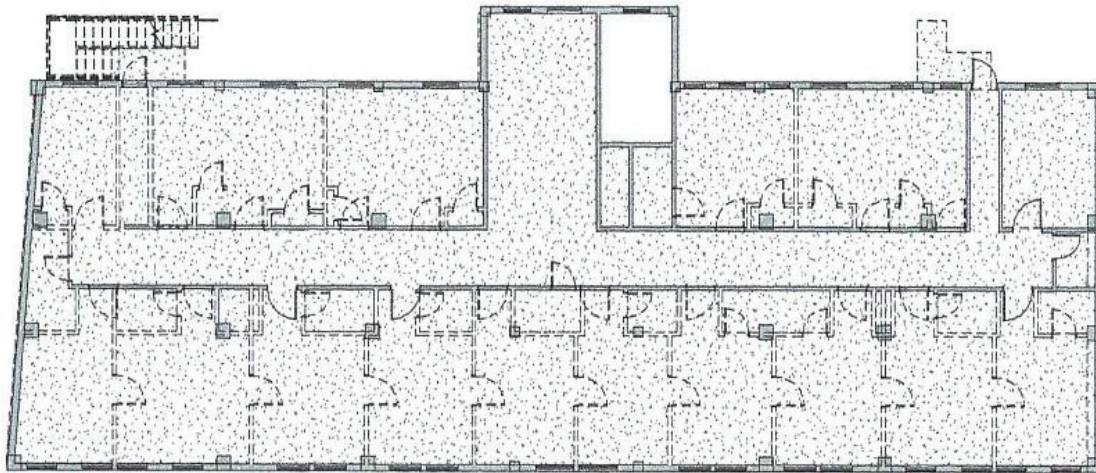
2014 Plan by Elizabeth Feldman.



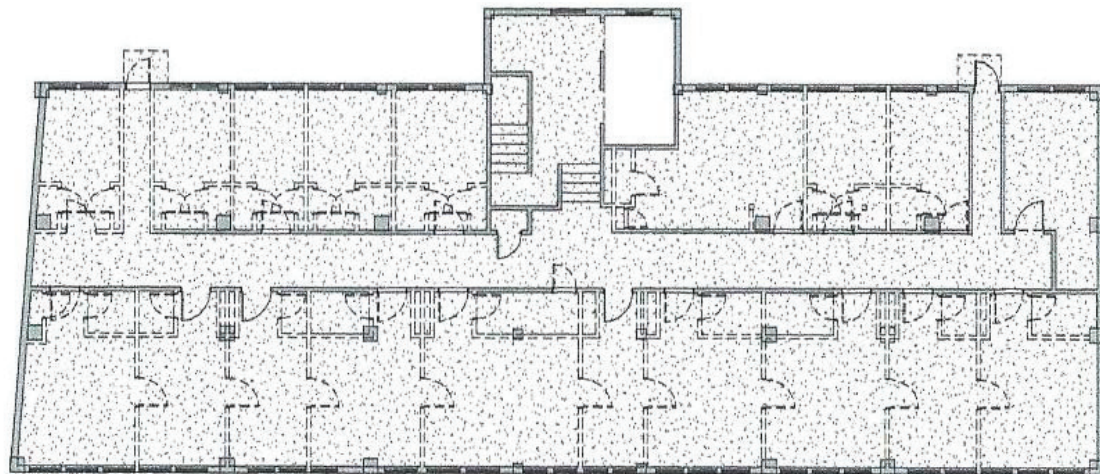
1 FIRST FLOOR - DEMOLITION PLAN  
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

Travelers Hotel, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

2014 Plan by Elizabeth Feldman.



1 2ND - 5TH FLOORS  
SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0"



2 7TH FLOOR  
SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0"



# SBR Draft

Travelers Hotel, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

Southwest of the Calcasieu building looking northeast, with the Travelers Hotel on the far left. Circa 1914.  
*UTSA Libraries, Special Collections.*



Light Building finished May 1st, 1914.  
finished Sept. 1st, 1914.

Calcasieu Building



Travelers Hotel, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

Southwest of the Calcasieu building looking northeast, with the Travelers Hotel on the far left, 1950s.  
*UTSA Libraries, Special Collections.*



# SBR Draft

Travelers Hotel, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

Broadway, looking south, Travelers Hotel on far left, c. 1950s.  
*UTSA Libraries, Special Collections.*



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# SBR Draft

Travelers Hotel, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

Photo taken from the west edge of Broadway looking back to the south east; date on the photograph is 1962. The painted sign on the north elevation of the hotel states rooms available for \$2.00 per night.

*UTSA Libraries, Special Collections.*



Z-1899-A-30709

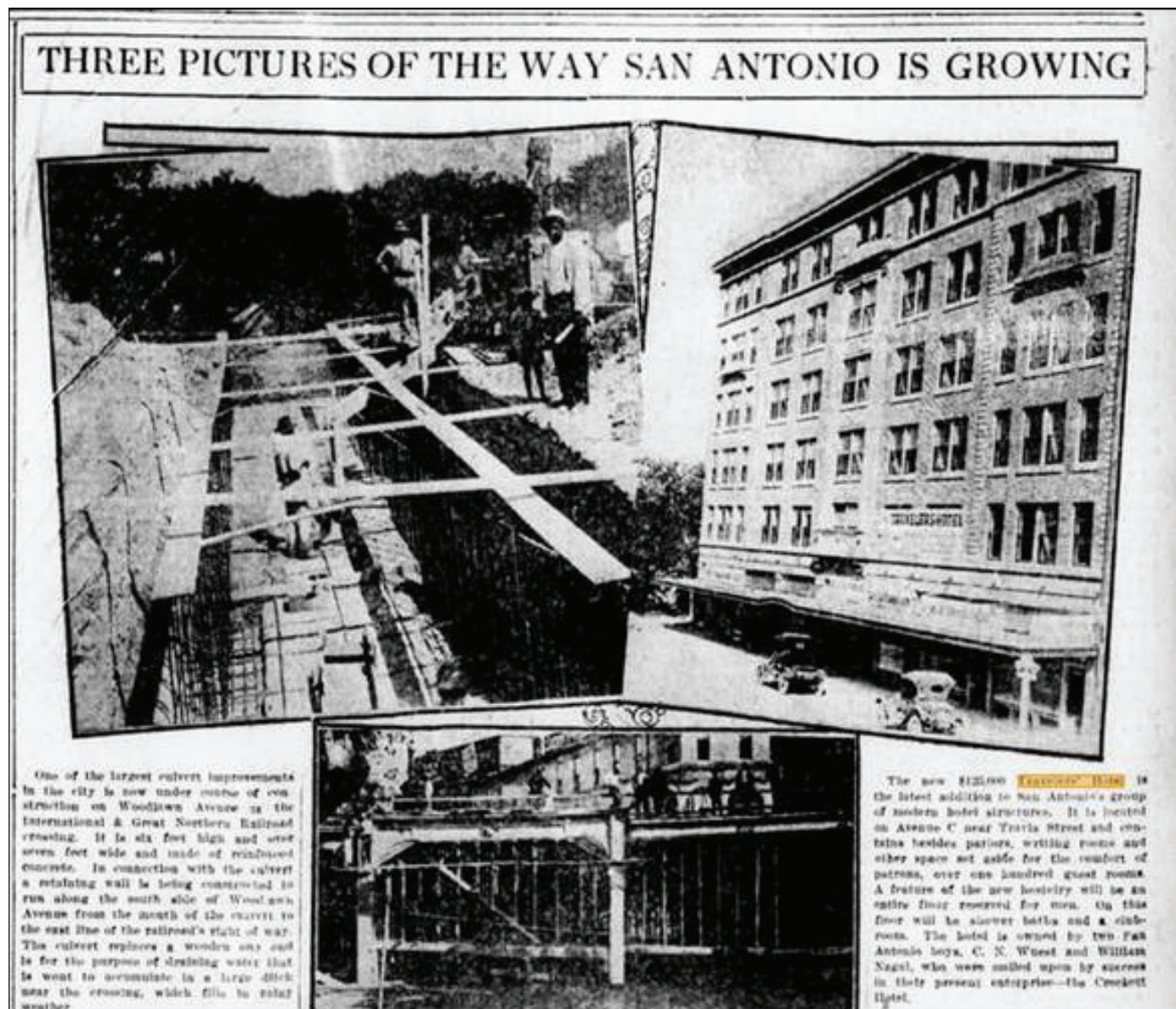
TRAVELER'S HOTEL  
220 BROADWAY 1962



Travelers Hotel, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

*San Antonio Express*, October 4, 1914, p. 35.

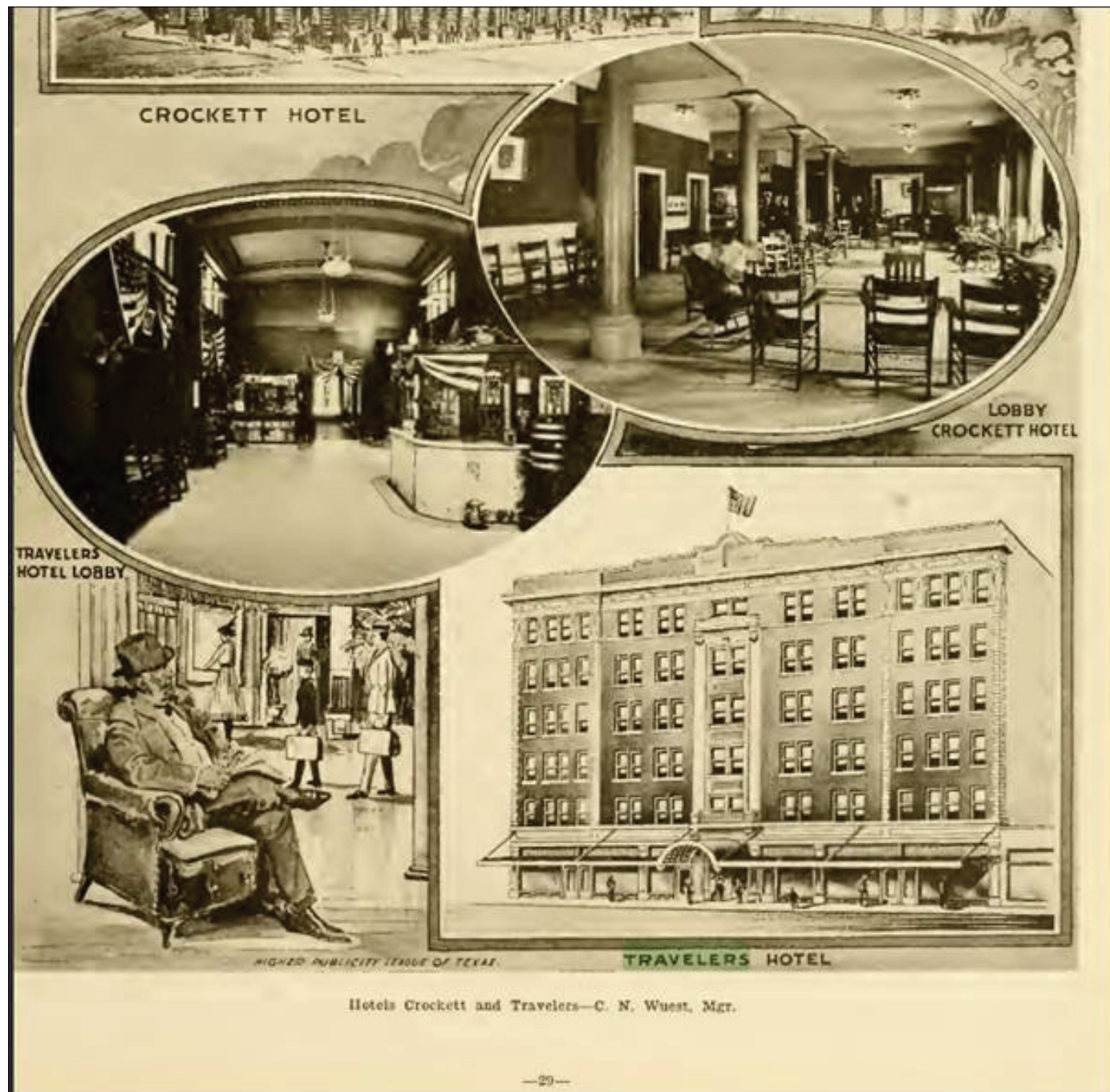
(<http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapht431965/m1/35/zoom/?q=%22travelers%20hotel%22%20date:1912-1914>), accessed March 4, 2015 .





Travelers Hotel, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

“Great San Antonio, the City of Destiny and of your Destination” (1918).  
<https://archive.org/details/greatsanantonioc00high>, accessed March 4, 2015.




Travelers Hotel, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

SBR Draft

*The Official Hotel Red Book and Directory.* Official Hotel Red Book and Directory Company, 1920. Google Books, accessed January 13, 2015

# TRAVELERS HOTEL

**The Traveling Men's Home in San Antonio**  
**SAN ANTONIO, U. S. A.**



**EUROPEAN PLAN** **FIREPROOF**  
**POPULAR PRICES**  
**EVERY ROOM OUTSIDE EXPOSURE**  
**MODERN IN EVERY RESPECT**

**NAGEL & WUEST, Proprietors and Managers**

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Travelers Hotel, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

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*The Fredericksburg Home Kitchen Cook Book.* Public School Auxiliary of Fredericksburg, Texas, 1921.  
Google Books, accessed January 13, 2015



For  
Service  
Comfort  
And  
Courtesy  
Yours



**TRAVELERS HOTEL**  
**NAGEL & WUEST**  
**SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS**  
**U. S. A.**



# SBR Draft

Travelers Hotel, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

Undated postcard, collection of Lewis Fisher, San Antonio.





Travelers Hotel, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

SBR Draft

Undated postcard, collection of Lewis Fisher, San Antonio.



Travelers Hotel, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

**SBR Draft**

Undated postcard, collection of Lewis Fisher, San Antonio.





Travelers Hotel, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

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## Photographs, 2014

Photo 1. East side of Broadway, Travelers Hotel on left. Facing southeast.





Travelers Hotel, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

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Photo 2. West elevation.



Photo 3. West elevation.





Travelers Hotel, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

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Photo 4. West elevation.



Photo 5. West elevation.



Travelers Hotel, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

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Photo 6. West elevation.



Photo 7. West elevation.





Travelers Hotel, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

Photo 8. Northeast oblique.



Photo 9. East side.



Travelers Hotel, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

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Photo 10. East elevation.



Photo 11. Hotel entrance on west side.





Travelers Hotel, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

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Photo 12. Hotel Entrance. Photo by Gregory Smith.



Photo 13. Entrance portal. Photo by Gregory Smith.



Travelers Hotel, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

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Photo 14. Entrance portal and modified storefront.



Photo 15. Former café, south of entrance portal. Photo by Gregory Smith.





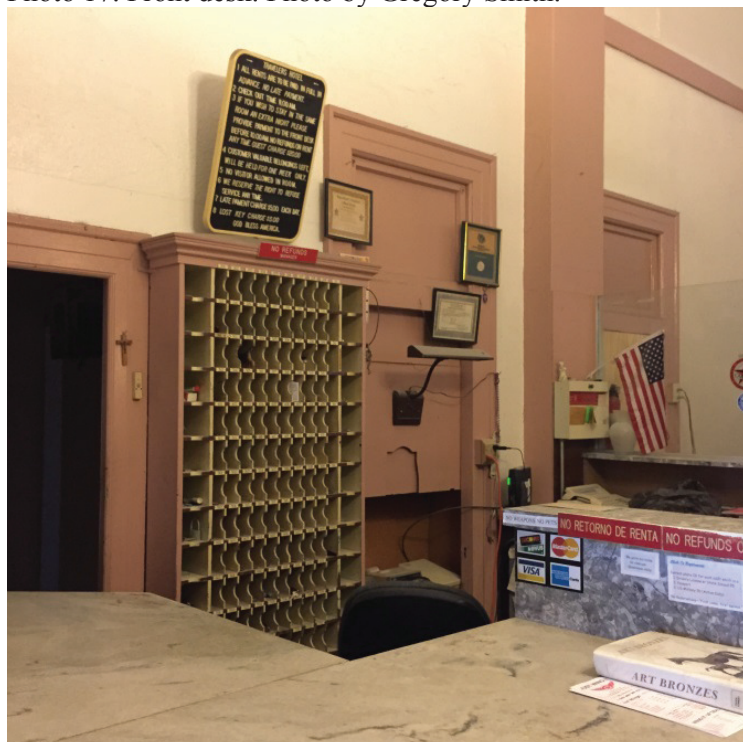
Travelers Hotel, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

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Photo 16. Lobby, facing east.



Photo 17. Front desk. Photo by Gregory Smith.



Travelers Hotel, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

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Photo 18. Primary staircase from lobby. Photo by Gregory Smith.



Photo 19. Typical upper floor hallway. Photo by Gregory Smith.

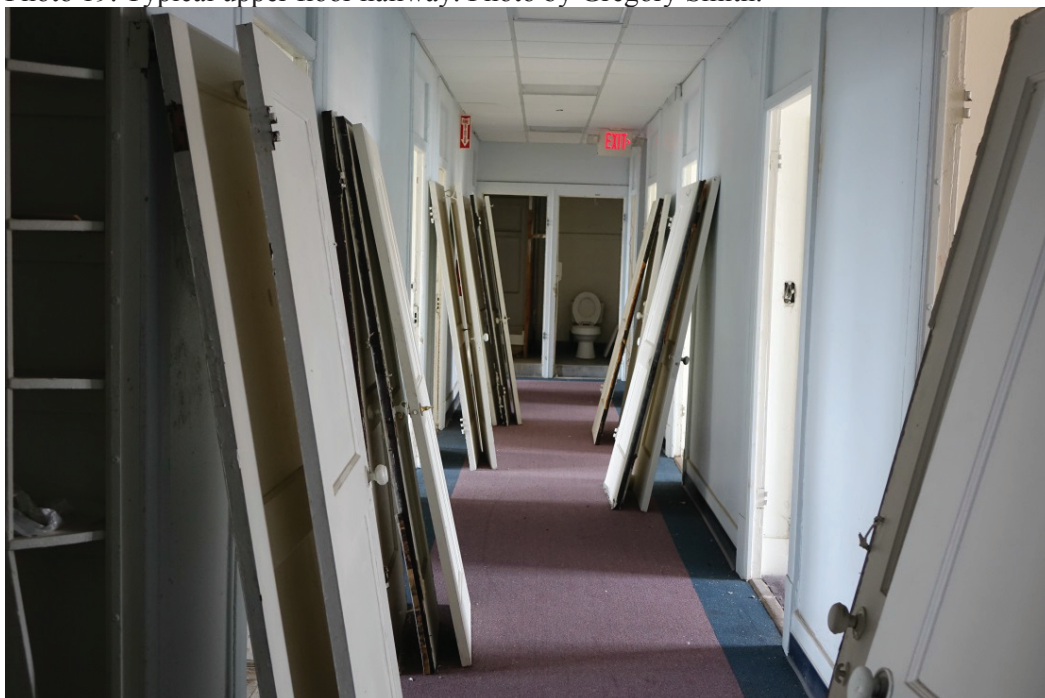


Photo 20. Typical doorways between adjoining rooms. Photo by Gregory Smith.



Photo 21. Typical upper floor room, looking towards hallway.





Photo 22. Typical guest room. Photo by Gregory Smith.



*-fin-*

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
*real places telling real stories*

March 17, 2015

The Honorable Ivy R. Taylor  
Mayor, City of San Antonio  
P.O. Box 839966  
San Antonio, Texas 78283-3966

Re: Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas  
  
Travelers Hotel, 220 Broadway Street

Dear Mayor Taylor:

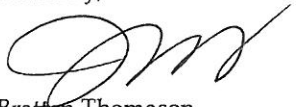
We are pleased to inform you that a nomination to the National Register of Historic Places was recently submitted for the above-referenced properties for review by our office. This letter serves as formal notice of the nomination from the State Historic Preservation Officer, the Executive Director of the Texas Historical Commission (THC), which is also the state agency responsible for administering the Texas Certified Local Government Program (CLG) program under state and federal legislation.

Our staff has reviewed the nomination and will forward it to the State Board of Review for their consideration and possible action at their meeting in Texas City, on May 16, 2015. The National Register is the federal government's official list of historic properties worthy of preservation pursuant to the National Preservation Act of 1966, in the support of public and private efforts to identify evaluate and protect America's historic resources.

As a participant in the CLG program, the local historic preservation review commission, board or committee and the chief elected official for the City of San Antonio is required to separately notify the THC's National Register programs office; the property owner; and the applicant as to their opinions in regard to the nomination no later than May 15, 2015. A copy of the draft nomination is posted on the THC website: <http://www.thc.state.tx.us/sbrmeeting>. The nomination must be reviewed by the city's CLG Representative Andriana Ziga and the local landmark board in advance of that date. Please be reminded that compliance with the provisions of the CLG program is a state and federal obligation that could jeopardize the city's CLG status if compliance is not met.

Thank you for your anticipated cooperation and we look forward to your participation in this federal process. Should you have any questions concerning this letter or if we can be of further assistance, please contact Gregory W. Smith, National Register Coordinator, at (512) 463-6013.

Sincerely,

  
for Bratten Thomason  
Director, History Programs Division

cc: Andriana Ziga, CLG representative, City of San Antonio ✓

