

## HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION

November 01, 2017

**HDRC CASE NO:** 2017-536  
**ADDRESS:** 540 S ST MARYS  
**LEGAL DESCRIPTION:** NCB 134 BLK LOT A16  
**ZONING:** D, HS  
**CITY COUNCIL DIST.:** 1  
**DISTRICT:** La Villita Historic District  
**LANDMARK:** Limestone Building  
**APPLICANT:** David Quinn/Sombrilla  
**OWNER:** Shawn Brown, PC  
**TYPE OF WORK:** Installation of signage and awnings  
**APPLICATION RECEIVED:** October 3, 2017  
**60-DAY REVIEW:** December 2, 2017  
**REQUEST:**

The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for approval to:

1. Install wall signage to consist of 18" tall cut metal letters to read "Brown Legal Building".
2. Install three fabric awnings above second floor window openings.
3. Install one fabric awning above the first floor storefront system to feature thermal applied white graphics to read "SCB Law Offices".
4. Install one set of 28" tall cut metal address numbers.

### APPLICABLE CITATIONS:

Historic Design Guidelines, Chapter 6, Guidelines for Signage

#### 1. General

##### A. GENERAL

- i. Number and size—Each building will be allowed one major and two minor signs. Total requested signage should not exceed 50 square feet.
- ii. New signs—Select the type of sign to be used based on evidence of historic signs or sign attachment parts along the building storefront where possible. Design signs to respect and respond to the character and/or period of the area in which they are being placed. Signs should identify the tenant without creating visual clutter or distracting from building features and historic districts.
- iii. Scale—Design signage to be in proportion to the facade, respecting the building's size, scale and mass, height, and rhythms and sizes of window and door openings. Scale signage (in terms of its height and width) to be subordinate to the overall building composition.

##### B. HISTORIC SIGNS

- i. Preservation—Preserve historic signs, such as ghost signs or other signs characteristic of the building's or district's period of significance, whenever possible.
- ii. Maintenance—Repair historic signs and replace historic parts in-kind when deteriorated beyond repair.

##### C. PLACEMENT AND INSTALLATION

- i. Location—Place signs where historically located and reuse sign attachment parts where they exist. Do not erect signs above the cornice line or uppermost portion of a facade wall, or where they will disfigure or conceal architectural details, window openings, doors, or other significant details.
- ii. Obstruction of historic features—Avoid obscuring historic building features such as cornices, gables, porches, balconies, or other decorative elements with new signs.
- iii. Damage—Avoid irreversible damage caused by installing a sign. For example, mount a sign to the mortar rather than the historic masonry.
- iv. Pedestrian orientation—Orient signs toward the sidewalk to maintain the pedestrian oriented nature of the historic districts.

#### D. DESIGN

- i. Inappropriate materials—Do not use plastic, fiberglass, highly reflective materials that will be difficult to read, or other synthetic materials not historically used in the district.
- ii. Appropriate materials—Construct signs of durable materials used for signs during the period of the building's construction, such as wood, wrought iron, steel, aluminum, and metal grill work.
- iii. Color—Limit the number of colors used on a sign to three. Select a dark background with light lettering to make signs more legible.
- iv. Typefaces—Select letter styles and sizes that complement the overall character of the building façade. Avoid hard-to-read or overly intricate styles.

#### E. LIGHTING

- i. Lighting sources—Use only indirect or bare-bulb sources that do not produce glare to illuminate signs. All illumination shall be steady and stationary. Internal illumination should not be used.
- ii. Neon lighting—Incorporate neon lighting as an integral architectural element or artwork appropriate to the site, if used.

#### F. PROHIBITED SIGNS

- i. An abbreviated list of the types of signs prohibited within San Antonio's historic districts and on historic landmarks is provided below. Refer to UDC Section 35-612(j) and Chapter 28 of the Municipal Code for more detailed information on prohibited signs. Billboards, junior billboards, portable signs, and advertising benches. Pole signs. Revolving signs or signs with a kinetic component. Roof mounted signs, except in the case of a contributing sign. Digital and/or LED lighted signs, not to include LED light sources that do not meet the definition of a sign. Moored balloons or other floating signs that are tethered to the ground or to a structure. Any sign which does not identify a business or service within the historic district or historic landmark. Any non-contributing sign which is abandoned or damaged beyond 50 percent of its replacement value, including parts of old or unused signs. Notwithstanding the above, signs designated as a contributing sign or structure by the historic preservation officer shall not be prohibited unless or until such designation is revoked.

#### G. MULTI-TENANT PROPERTIES

- i. Signage Plan—Develop a master signage plan or signage guidelines for the total building or property.
- ii. Directory signs—Group required signage in a single directory sign to minimize visual color and promote a unified appearance

### 2. Awning and Canopy Signs

#### A. GENERAL

- i. Appropriate usage—Limit the use of awning and canopy signs to building forms that historically used awnings, most typically commercial storefronts and apartment buildings.
- ii. Placement—Place signs on the awning or canopy valance, the portion that is parallel with the window.
- iii. Mounting—Install awning hardware in a manner that does not damage historic building elements or materials.

#### B. DESIGN

- i. Materials—Fabricate awnings using fire-resistant canvas in a color that is appropriate to the period of the building.
- ii. Shape—Select awning shapes that reflect the door or window openings they cover. Limit valances to approximately eight to twelve inches in length.
- iii. Lettering and symbols—Lettering should generally be placed on the valance portion of the awning.

#### C. LIGHTING

- i. Internal illumination—Do not use internal illumination or other techniques that cause awnings to glow; however, illumination may be concealed in the awning to provide directional light to illuminate sidewalks or storefronts.

#### D. METAL CANOPIES

- i. Placement—Do not mount new signs or letters on historic metal canopies in a manner that destroys or conceals historic materials.

### 3. Projecting and Wall-Mounted Signs

- A. GENERAL i. Mounting devices—Construct sign frames and panels that will be used to be attach signs to the wall of a

building of wood, metal, or other durable materials appropriate to the building's period of construction. ii. Structural supports—Utilize sign hooks, expansion bolts, or through bolts with washers on the inside of the wall depending upon the weight and area of the sign, and the condition of the wall to which it is to be attached. iii. Appropriate usage—Limit the use of projecting and wall-mounted signs to building forms that historically used these types of signs, most typically commercial storefronts. To a lesser degree, these signage types may also be appropriate in areas where residential building forms have been adapted for office or retail uses, if sized accordingly.

## **B. PROJECTING SIGNS**

i. Placement—Mount projecting signs perpendicularly to a building or column while allowing eight feet of overhead clearance above public walkways. ii. Public right-of-way—Limit the extension of projecting signs from the building facade into the public right-of-way for a maximum distance of eight feet or a distance equal to two-thirds the width of the abutting sidewalk, whichever distance is greater. iii. Area-Projecting signs should be scaled appropriately in response to the building façade and number of tenants.

**C. WALL-MOUNTED SIGNS** i. Area—Limit the aggregate area of all wall-mounted signs to twenty-five percent of a building facade.

ii. Projection—Limit the projection of wall-mounted signs to less than twelve inches from the building wall.

iii. Placement—Locate wall signs on existing signboards—the area above the storefront windows and below the second story windows—when available. Mount wall signs to align with others on the block if an existing signboard is not available.

iv. Channel letters—Avoid using internally-illuminated, wall-mounted channel letters for new signs unless historic precedent exists. Reverse channel letters may be permitted.

## **FINDINGS:**

- a. The structure at 540 S St Mary's was constructed circa 1890 and first appears on the 1892 Sanborn maps. The structure features a raised first floor with first floor storefront windows, second floor paired windows, a front facing balcony, a castellated parapet wall and parapet wall roof tiles. In recent years, the structure has been covered with vegetation.
- b. Per the Guidelines for Signage 1.A.i., each building will be allowed one major and two minor signs. Total requested square footage for signage should not exceed fifty (50) square feet. Additionally, per the Guidelines for Signage 1.A.ii., new signage should be designed to be based on evidence of historic signs. Signs should identify the tenant without creating visual clutter or distracting from building features and historic districts.
- c. WALL SIGN – Below the parapet wall, the applicant has proposed to install 18" tall aluminum cut letters. The proposed total square footage for this signage is approximately 38 square feet. Signage was previously installed at this location on the façade. Staff finds the proposed signage to be appropriately sized and located and consistent with the Guidelines. The proposed signage should not feature a high gloss finish.
- d. FABRIC AWNINGS – The applicant has proposed to install fabric awnings above each façade opening on the east elevation of the second floor. The proposed fabric awnings will replace the existing, non-original awnings. Per the Guidelines for Exterior Maintenance and Alterations 11.B.ii., new canopies and awnings should be installed based on evidence of the original. If not evidence exists, new canopies and awnings should be based on the architectural style of the building and be proportionate in shape and size to the scale of the building façade to which they will be attached. Generally, staff finds the proposed awnings to be appropriate and consistent with the Guidelines.
- e. FABRIC AWNINGS – The applicant has proposed to install fabric awnings above the storefront system on the first floor. The proposed fabric awning will replace the existing fabric awning and will include valance signage to read "SCB Law Offices". The signage will feature thermal applied white graphics. Staff finds the proposed awnings and signage to be appropriate and consistent with the Guidelines.
- f. ADDRESS NUMBERS – At the southwest corner of the building, the applicant has proposed to install one set of aluminum cut numbers to be 28" tall. The numbers will read the structure's address, "540" and are to wrap the corner of the structure. Staff finds this proposal to be inappropriate and recommends the applicant propose address numbers that are consistent with those found historically on neighboring structures. Staff has provided examples of appropriate address numbers in the exhibits.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval of items #1 through #3 based on findings b through e with the stipulation that all cut

aluminum signage feature a non-glossy finish.

Staff does not recommend approval of item #4, the proposed address numbers based on finding f.

**CASE MANAGER:**

Edward Hall



## Flex Viewer

Powered by ArcGIS Server

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Navajo St

E Nueva St

S St Mary's St

S Presa St

540 South Saint Mary's Street

S Presa St

Arciniega St

Arciniega St

S St Mary's St

S St Mary's St

Hyatt Place San Antonio/Riverwalk

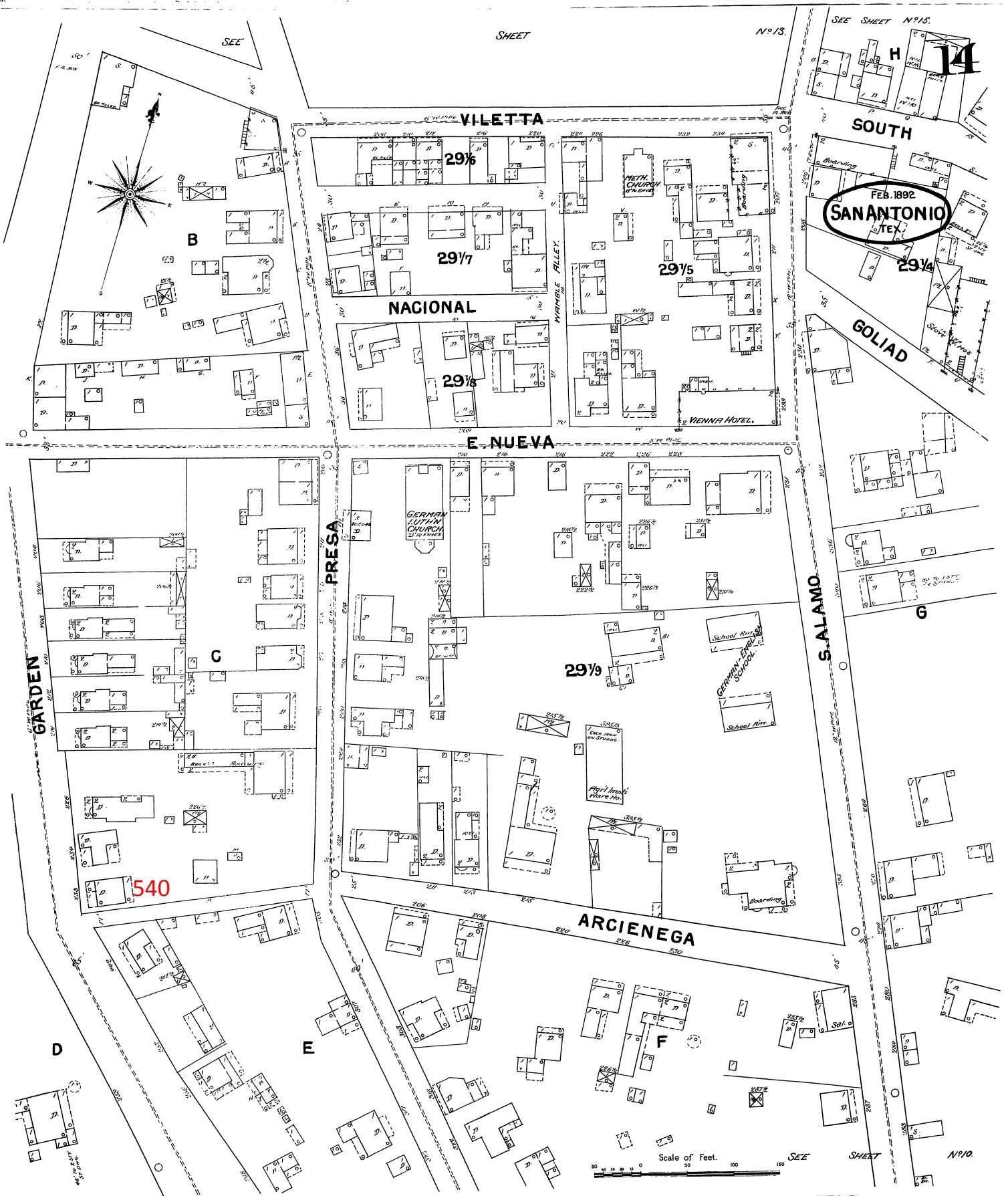




540  
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niega  
Marys







ARBOR HOUSE INN & SUITES





**QTY-(1) 25' TOTAL WIDTH  
18" TALL ALUMINUM CUT LETTERS**

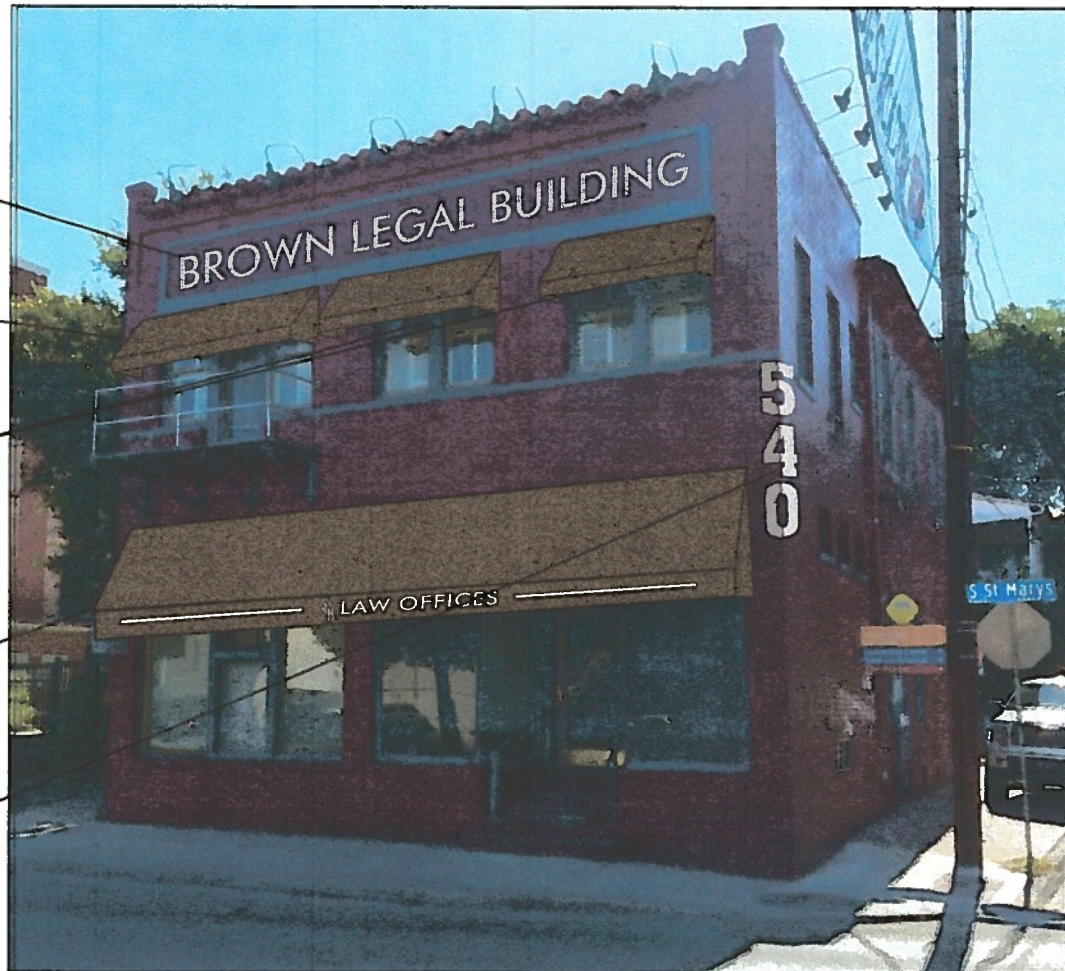
**QTY (3)  
UNIT (1) 9' WIDE X 15" DROP X 30" PROJECTION  
UNIT (2) AND (3)  
5' WIDE X 30" DROP X 30" PROJECTION**

**QTY (1) 30' WIDE X 4' DROP X 28" PROJECTION  
14" DB WITH THERMAL APPLIED WHITE GRAPHICS**

**QTY (1) SET OF 1/4" ALUMINUM CUT NUMBERS  
28" TALL SINGLE NUMBERS**

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DATE: AUGUST 30, 2017

PROJECT: LAW OFFICE OF SHAWN BROWN

ADDRESS: SAN ANTONIO

ACCOUNT MANAGER: PHIL MERCER

☐ Approved

☐ Approved with  
changes  
as noted.

☐ Changes needed

APPROVED FOR PRESENTATION BY DAVID QUINN, PRESIDENT

X

PLEASE SIGN AND DATE HERE



512 S St Mary's St  
San Antonio, Texas



Street View - Jan 2017

Address numbers example located in vicinity.



700 S Alamo St

San Antonio, Texas



Street View - Jan 2017





725 S Alamo St  
San Antonio, Texas



Street View - Jan 2017

