



# CITY OF SAN ANTONIO

## OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

March 20, 2018

### **APPLICATION FOR CHANGE OF ZONING, WESTFORT HISTORIC DISTRICT**

#### **Summary:**

The Office of Historic Preservation is requesting a change in zoning for the 200 and 300 block of Army between Broadway and Pine, and the 200 block Brahan on the north between Broadway and Pine, and the 300 block of Brahan between Haywood and Pine to include a new Westfort Historic District (H). The district will include 60 properties.

OHP Staff recommends approval.

#### **Case Comments:**

The San Antonio Conservation Society has submitted a letter of support.

#### **Case History:**

January 17, 2018 – Approved Historic & Design Review Commission (HDRC) hearing

October 19, 2017 – 51% threshold met

April 11, 2017 – OHP Informational Meeting

March 23, 2017 – OHP received an application, submitted by a property owner within the boundary

#### **Applicable Citations**

**Note:** UDC Section 35-607 (a) states that historic districts shall consist of at least two or more structures that meet at least three of the designation criteria. The proposed Westfort Historic District meets criteria 3, 8, 10 and 11. All properties within the proposed boundary are found to be contributing.

*UDC Section 35-607 – 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;
  8. Its historical, architectural, or cultural integrity of location, design, materials, and workmanship;
  10. Its character as an established and geographically definable neighborhood, united by culture, architectural style or physical plan and development;
  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;

#### **Findings of Fact:**

- a. The request for historic district designation was submitted by a property owner within the proposed boundary on March 23, 2017, on behalf of the Westfort Alliance Neighborhood Association.
- b. The proposed district was platted in 1909 by E.H. Cunningham and J.Kirkpatrick. The area includes an eclectic mix of styles, including Tudor, craftsman, prairie, Spanish eclectic, folk Victorian, post-war mid-century apartments and neoclassical homes. The development pattern and neighborhood location reflect the proliferation of housing stock after WWII abutting Fort Sam Houston to the east. UDC Section 35-607 (a)

states that historic districts must meet at least three of the designation criteria. The proposed Westfort Historic District meets criteria 3, 8, 10 and 11. All structures included in the proposed boundary are contributing.

- c. **BACKGROUND** -- The applicant is requesting approval for historic district designation for the Westfort Historic District and a recommendation for approval to the Zoning Commission and to the City Council for Historic zoning designation.
  - The proposed district will include the 200 and 300 block of Army between Broadway and Pine, and the 200 block Brahan on the north between Broadway and Pine, and the 300 block of Brahan between Haywood and Pine. It contains 60 non-municipal parcels total. All 60 properties are contributing to the proposed district.
  - Prior to receiving the request for district designation, OHP staff was invited by residents to attend five neighborhood meetings held on 7/18/2016, 8/7/2016, 8/14/2016, 8/23/2016, and 9/14/2016, to provide information regarding historic designation and the design review processes.
  - A public informational meeting for proposed historic district as held on April 11, 2017, for property owners within the boundary. 17 property owners were present at this meeting.
  - On October 17, 2017, OHP gave an additional presentation describing the designation and design review process at the Westfort Neighborhood Alliance Association (WANA) quarterly meeting. Over 20 residents of WANA were in attendance.
  - On October 19, 2017, the staff of the Office of Historic Preservation received and verified 31 return notices of 51% of the property owners within the proposed boundary that are in support of the designation. In accordance with the UDC, staff has forwarded the application to the HDRC for review.
  - The decision to seek historic district designation was in response to concerns from the residents regarding recent demolitions and increased development activities.
  - The proposed boundary is located within the Westfort Neighborhood Conservation District-9 (NCD). The NCD was designated by the City Council October 2011. Per UDC 35-335, the City Council aims to preserve, protect, enhance, and perpetuate the value of these residential neighborhoods or commercial districts through the establishment of Neighborhood Conservation Districts. NCDs are established in areas that possess distinctive character-defining features.
- d. **SITE CONTEXT** – The proposed historic district lies north of the west end of Fort Sam Houston and north of downtown San Antonio. There are curbed sidewalks, large lots with deep setbacks and a large landscaped median along Brahan Boulevard.
- e. **HISTORIC CONTEXT** - The proposed historic district consists of portions of two subdivision plats, Army Terrace and Narcissa Place, both platted in 1909. John H Kirkpatrick Company was the owner and developer of Army Terrace Plat. Narcissa Place was platted by E.H. Cunningham. Both subdivisions attracted prominent residents in the 1910s including Sunken Gardens architect, C.T. Boelhauwe; Frack Scobey, director of the U.S. Mint and Gutzon Borglum, American artist and the sculptor of the Mount Rushmore National Monument.
- f. **ARCHITECTURAL ASSESSMENT** – The housing stock is largely reflective of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century trend which promoted varied styles within neighborhoods. The architectural styles in Westfort range from Folk Victorian, Craftsman, Prairie, Colonial revival, Tudor revival, to Spanish eclectic with a couple of mid-century apartment buildings.
- g. **EVALUATION** - As referenced in the applicable citations, Westfort Historic District meets UDC criterion [35-607 (b)3], [35-607 (b)8], [35-607 (b)10], [35-607 (b)11], for designation as a local historic district. In order to be eligible for a historic district, a proposed district must meet at least three of the criteria; Westfort Historic District meets four.
  - **(3) Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the development of the community, county, state, or nation;** for its association with key figures associated with local and national landmarks and key institutions.
  - **(8) Its historical, architectural, or cultural integrity of location, design, materials, and workmanship;** Westfort is an eclectic neighborhood architecturally speaking with a mix of styles and types. The eclectic styles reflect the chronology of the neighborhood's development. Houses and apartment buildings are located in this area with styles including Folk Victorian, New Formalism, Midcentury modern, Craftsman, Prairie, Colonial revival, Tudor revival, and Spanish eclectic. Primary materials found include stucco, wood, wood shingle, and brick. All structures within the proposed district are within the period of significance and contribute to the neighborhood. There are only two vacant lots, otherwise the neighborhood is intact.
  - **(10) Its character as an established and geographically definable neighborhood, united by culture, architectural style or physical plan and development;** The Westfort Neighborhood was established adjacent and partially encircled by Fort Sam Houston. The proposed district boundary is

part of 2 subdivisions both platted in 1909. The neighborhood includes similar setbacks, large lots, a wide landscaped median, and a grand streetscape on this rise overlooking the city.

- **(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;** The Westfort Neighborhood has been home to many prominent citizens, including C.T. Boelhauwe, architect of the State Bank and Trade building and the Sunken Gardens Theatre, Gutzon Borglum, sculptor of Mount Rushmore, and more. The Westfort Neighborhood was established with a need for multi-family homes and apartment buildings being adjacent to Fort Sam Houston.
- h. If the HDRC concurs that the proposed district meets criteria and is eligible for designation and recommends the historic district designation for the Westfort Historic District, then their recommendation shall be submitted to the zoning commission. Once the zoning commission makes their recommendation, it will be submitted to the city council. The city council shall review and shall approve or deny the proposed historic district.
- i. Per UDC Sec. 35-453, once the commission makes a recommendation for designation, property owners shall follow the historic and design review process before permits can be issued, until a final resolution from City Council. Written approval (a Certificate of Appropriateness) must be obtained for any exterior work.
- j. Historic districts possess cultural and historical value and contribute to the overall quality and character of the City. The City offers a tax incentive for all residential properties occupied by the property owner at the time of the designation. The incentive is a 20% tax exemption on City taxes for 10 years provided the owner remains in the property.
- k. The City also offers a Substantial Rehabilitation tax incentive. After substantial rehabilitation of a historic property, the property owners may choose one of two tax incentives, including having the city property taxes frozen for 10 years at the pre-rehabilitation value, or paying no city property taxes for the first five years, and for the next five years, city property taxes are assessed at the value that is 50% of the post-rehabilitation assessed value.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Proposed boundary response map

HDRC Recommendation

OHP Staff recommendation to HDRC and published Exhibits

Letter of Support from the San Antonio Conservation Society