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RIGHT



FRONT



LEFT



LEFT REAR



REAR RIGHT



LEFT



SURVEY PHOTO



MAR 31 2004

BEFORE RENOVATION
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CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Statement of Significance

Property Address: 615 Eleanor

Tier: 3

Known Name: n/a

1. Application Details

Applicant: Scott Day

Type: Designation Request

Date: May 30, 2018

2. Findings

The property at 615 Eleanor is a Queen Anne residence built c.1917 and is currently owned by Scott Day.

The Mahncke Park neighborhood was established in the early 20th century. George Brackenridge donated property for the park itself, which is located just a few blocks north of 615 Eleanor, in memory of Ludwig Mahncke. Mahncke, in his role as City Commissioner, was instrumental in establishing and developing San Antonio's park system. The neighborhood benefited from convenient street car access to downtown along the River Avenue line, and its proximity to the US Army Depot (Fort Sam Houston) made it a popular home for military families. A few homes were built in the 1900s and 1910s, but developer HC Thorman is credited with catalyzing construction in the area when he began building Craftsman bungalows in the Country Club Estates subdivision in the 1920s. The incremental development of the neighborhood is reflected in its eclectic collection of architectural styles, which include Folk Victorian, Queen Anne, Craftsman, Tudor Revival, Spanish Eclectic and Mission Revival structures. The structure at 615 Eleanor appears to be the oldest building on the block, and is the only example of Queen Anne architecture. A few small 1920s bungalows with details influenced by the Folk Victorian style remain on the north and south sides of the block. The other structures feature minimal traditional or modern styles. While 615 Eleanor has a setback of almost 30 feet, the other residences on this portion of the block have setbacks of approximately 15 feet. Originally, the lot was roughly T-shaped and the center portion had frontage on both Eleanor (M Street at that time) and Lucas Streets. The house directly faces the residences at Fort Sam Houston across a large esplanade.

While an exact construction date could not be determined for this property, it is likely that it was built in 1917 for Mary E. Moriarty. Recently widowed, Mrs. Moriarty moved to this location after her brother purchased it in 1916. Prior to 1916, the property was owned for 20 years by M.H. Shanley, who maintained a residence with his wife in Granbury, Texas. The late Edward Moriarty was a Commissary Sergeant at the US Army Depot. Mrs. Moriarty remained in the home until her death in 1959.



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3. Architectural Description

The house is a single-story Queen Anne with a hip on cross gabled roof, a front bay with three windows, and an inset front porch. It is situated on the west side of a rectangular lot that is surrounded by a 5-foot tall wrought iron fence. A non-original cinder block front walkway leads front the sidewalk to the wooden front porch. The porch is supported by four turned wooden posts. The front door is wood with a single light and a transom above it. The bay window sits beneath a front gable. The gable features a gable vent topped with a wooden pediment. There are two floor to ceiling double hung, two over two wood windows to the right of the front door. Several window styles are evident including two over two, one over one, and four over four. The window are wood with the exception of three two over two vinyl windows in the rear addition of the structure. The roof has standing seam metal roofing with crimped seems and the house is clad in wood lap siding. There are two rear additions with wood lap siding. The earlier addition features four over four wood windows and a side wood pedestrian door with 9 lights that accesses a side square wooden deck.

4. Landmark Criteria

615 Eleanor is not currently designated as a historic landmark. It is located in the Mahncke Park Neighborhood Conservation District (NCD-6). Staff concludes that the property meets the following criteria:

- 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 a Queen Anne structure with character defining features including cutaway bay window, hipped roof with lower cross gables, and inset porch with turned posts.
- 7. Its unique location or singular physical characteristics that make it an established or familiar visual feature; for its prominent location near the corner of Eleanor and New Braunfels overlooking Fort Sam Houston.
- 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; as it represents early development of Mahncke Park by families with close ties to Fort Sam Houston.

5. Outcome of Review

Based on this assessment, 615 Eleanor meets three of the sixteen criteria listed in UDC Section 35-607(b). In order to be eligible for landmark designation, a property must meet at least three of these criteria; thus 615 Eleanor is eligible for designation as a local landmark.



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History and Statement of Significance for 615 Eleanor

615 Eleanor is a classic example of folk Victorian houses that dot this area. The front gable shows simple bead board detailing installed at an angle and turned columns support the front porch. As development in Mahncke Park increased in post WWI, more bungalow homes were constructed in the immediate surroundings. Interestingly, this home was more elaborate than many of neighboring homes which tended to be small, basic homes. Inside, 615 Eleanor boasts much of its original longleaf pine millwork package with 12" high base boards and doorways with transoms.

The original builder of 615 Eleanor is unknown. It was last owned by Master Sgt. Jiles C. Wilder and his wife Kathleen. Master Sgt. Wilder served in the army and after leaving the military resided at 615 Eleanor till the 1980's. Both he and Kathleen were active in real estate and real estate development.

After returning from the Philippines in 1946, Sergeant Wilder joined the ROTC staff at Central Catholic where he served as coach of the Central Catholic High School Rifle Team. Wilder was active in the Military Cadet program from 1946-1949. Sergeant Wilder was coach of the championship University of Arkansas rifle team in 1942. (Express News, March 16, 1947.) He was one of 20 military officers on staff at the University of Arkansas commanding the ASTU, ROTC and the 305 CTD. (Northwest Arkansas Times, July 30, 1943.)

Remodeling and Restoration:

The Wilders remodeled the home after 1959. Arthur Mathis Jr AIA. did the drawings which specified enclosing the front porch with glass louvers and turning what was the back porch into a series of closets. A second bath was installed in the pantry. The kitchen was remodeled and closets were added to the bedrooms. Brick flus hung on brackets were removed and new gas wall heaters were installed.

The Wilders last lived there in the 1980's. The home had a flash fire in the early 90's when it was boarded up for over a decade. The property was slated to be demolished by the city when it was placed on the market. Realtors marketed the property as a development site and the house as a teardown.

The present owner purchased the property in 2003 and restorations were done to return the home to more of its original appearance. Original porch columns were missing but replacements were found to match the original "paint shadow" profiles. The art glass in the front window is not original but is typical of the era. Some of the original back porch ceiling has been restored and incorporated as a part of the bathroom ceiling.

Early History

The earliest identifiable land record for this tract is on April 1, 1897 when M.E. Culberson sold the lots to M.H. Stanley. Given the age and style of the house it's realistic to believe these either of the above people were the builder of the house.



