



Z2018296

# CITY OF SAN ANTONIO OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

## HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION COMMISSION ACTION

July 6, 2018

**HDRC CASE NO:** 2018-304

**ADDRESS:** 1603 S HACKBERRY ST

**LEGAL DESCRIPTION:** NCB 6815 BLK LOT 13, 14 & 15 Erika

**APPLICANT:** HizeL - PO BOX 160562

**OWNER:** We No Tell Lounge, LLC - PO BOX 160562

### REQUEST:

The applicant is requesting a Finding of Historic Significance for the property located at 1603 S Hackberry Street.

### FINDINGS:

a. The request for landmark designation was initiated by the property owner. b. HISTORIC CONTEXT – Joe X. Newcomb purchased this property in 1928 from Thomas Edison Barnes, and contracted with Barnes (who also operated a lumber company) to construct the ice house. Newcomb was an experienced ice manufacturer from Ennis, Texas. Several members of the Newcomb family were involved with the business – Bessie and Gerald were in sales, and Waldo was the secretary-treasurer for the company, and they all lived on West Drexel, in the block just west of the factory. The Crystal Ice Company remained in operation at this location through 1943, after which it changed hands several times while still producing ice. After a brief vacancy in the late 1950s, the structure became a bar/lounge through the 1960s and 1970s. The Barnes Terrace Addition No. 2 was subdivided between 1927 and 1928 by Thomas Edison Barnes. Today this area is included in the Denver Heights Neighborhood Association, but prior to the construction of Interstate 10 it was more closely connected with Highland Park. The blocks subdivided by Barnes were bound between Aberdeen Street and South Hackberry. Just east of Aberdeen Street, the Thomas Nelson Page School was built in 1925 to serve this rapidly growing neighborhood. Commercial development along South Hackberry by 1929 included two grocery stores, two filling stations, a department store, cleaners, and plumbing store between just the 1600 and 1800 blocks, underscoring the importance of this retail cluster for Highland Park residents. c. CULTURAL CONTEXT – After the Civil War, Texas, San Antonio in particular, became a manufacturing leader in the production of ice. By 1867, five ice factories existed in the United States; three of them were in San Antonio. Local German brewers had begun producing lager beers which needed colder fermentation temperatures. San Antonio's hot temperatures and the city's German population's thirst for lager created the perfect environment for ice as a commodity. By 1928 when the Crystal Ice Factory opened, home refrigeration was more common, but the need for large scale refrigeration, including for transportation and restaurant use, was strong enough to keep ice manufacturers in business until the 1950s when up to 90 percent of Texas families had home refrigeration. d. SITE CONTEXT – The two-part commercial block factory and ice house sits on a corner triple lot facing South Hackberry. The structure stands two stories tall on a L-shaped footprint along the South Hackberry commercial corridor. It is adjacent to a two story filling station. Across High Street is a two story fourplex. On the opposite side of South Hackberry are one story mid-century commercial structures. The structure's setback, 10 to 15 feet, is consistent with the setback of the canopy of the filling station while the fourplex sits on the front property line. e. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION – The factory and ice house is a two-part commercial; the structure's historic materials are largely intact. The factory and ice house structure has a flat roof with parapet and decorative cornice. The structure has plaster siding and it is unclear what structural framing materials are beneath the plaster. There are 3 bays on the two story portion, one of which has been opened up with no fenestration. All original first floor windows and doors have either been removed or plastered over. The second story has two steel

windows in each bay, each with 3- by-3 dividing lights. The one-story wing also has a flat roof with parapet and matching cornice. On this wing there are awning anchors although the awning has been removed. The factory has a rear wing, creating a L-plan shape. There are steel second story windows on the north elevation matching those on the front façade. The design, form and materials are all original. The alterations include boarding up windows on the first floor and opening up one of the three bays. f. EVALUATION – As referenced in the applicable citations, 1603 S Hackberry meets UDC criterion [35-607(b)5], [35-607 (b)7], [35-607 (b)11], for a finding of historic significance in the process of seeking designation as a local historic landmark. In order to be eligible for landmark designation, a property must meet at least three of the criteria; 1603 S Hackberry meets three. 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 an intact example of a 1920s ice house, a well-insulated structure with few windows to minimize heat gain with a small retail outlet attached. 7. Its unique location or singular physical characteristics that make it an established or familiar visual feature; as a highly visible two-story commercial structure located on a prominent corner on South Hackberry with shallow setback of approximately 10 feet. 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 an excellent example of the ice manufacturing industry which flourished in San Antonio. This was likely one of the last ice houses constructed, as electric refrigerators became more ubiquitous in local households. g. This request was initiated by the owner. If the HDRC approves the Finding of Historic Significance, then the recommendation for designation is submitted to the zoning commission. The zoning commission will schedule a hearing and then forward its recommendation to the City Council. City Council has the ultimate authority to approve the historic designation zoning overlay. h. Per UDC Sec. 35-453, once the commission concurs eligibility of the property and makes a recommendation of approval for designation, interim design review requirements will be in place and the property owners must receive a written approval (a Certificate of Appropriateness) for any exterior work. These interim requirements will remain in place until the City Council makes their final decision on the proposed zoning change or not longer than six months. i. The City offers a tax incentive for the substantial rehabilitation of historic properties because historic landmarks possess cultural and historical value and contribute to the overall quality and character of the City and its neighborhoods. If historic designation is approved, rehabilitation and restoration work may be eligible for this incentive. State and Federal tax incentives are also available for properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places and provide substantial relief for rehabilitation projects.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval of a Finding of Historic Significance and that the Historic & Design Review Commission recommend approval for the landmark designation of 1603 S Hackberry Street to the Zoning Commission and to the City Council based on findings a through e.

#### **COMMISSION ACTION:**

The Historic & Design Review Commission approves a Finding of Historic Significance and recommends approval to the Zoning Commission and City Council for the historic landmark designation of 1603 S Hackberry Street.



Shanon Shea Miller  
Historic Preservation Officer

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