



CITY OF SAN ANTONIO  
**OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

August 21, 2018

**APPLICATION FOR CHANGE OF ZONING**

**Request:**

The Office of Historic Preservation is requesting a change in zoning to add “HL” Historic Landmark designation to 615 Eleanor Street and to waive all related fees. *OHP Staff recommends approval.*

**Case Comments:**

On June 20, 2018, the HDRC approved a Finding of Historic Significance requested by the owner and recommends approval to the Zoning Commission and City Council for the historic landmark designation of 615 Eleanor.

**Case History:**

August 21, 2018	Zoning Commission hearing
June 20, 2018	Historic & Design Review Commission (HDRC) hearing (Approved)
May 30, 2018	Property owner submitted application

**Applicable Citations:**

Note: In accordance with the process for designation of a historic landmark, as outlined in Section 35-607 of the UDC, properties must meet three of sixteen criteria. This property meets three of the Criteria for Evaluation.

*UDC Section 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.

(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;

(7) Its unique location or singular physical characteristics that make it an established or familiar visual feature;

(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 landmark designation was initiated by the property owner.

b. SITE CONTEXT –

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



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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.

c. **HISTORIC CONTEXT –**

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.

d. **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 windows 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.

e. **EVALUATION –** As referenced in the applicable citations, 615 Eleanor 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; 615 Eleanor 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 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 Mahneke Park by families with close ties to Fort Sam Houston.

f. 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



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designation zoning overlay.

- g. 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.
- h. 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.

**ATTACHMENTS**

HDRC Recommendation

HDRC published Exhibits

Letter of Support from the Mahncke Park Neighborhood Association