



# CITY OF SAN ANTONIO OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

## HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION COMMISSION ACTION LETTER

December 6, 2017

**HDRC CASE NO:** 2017-533

**ADDRESS:** 901 NOGALITOS ST  
905 NOGALITOS ST  
118 RALPH AVE  
120 RALPH AVE  
122 RALPH AVE  
911 NOGALITOS ST

**LEGAL DESCRIPTION:** NCB 18 BLK LOT PT OF A6 EXC E IRR 13 FT TRI

**PUBLIC PROPERTY:** No

**APPLICANT:** Vincent Michael/San Antonio Conservation Society - 107 King William

**OWNER:** Maria Hetos/co Cathy Skefos - 3981 Walnut Grove

**REQUEST:**

A request for review by the HDRC regarding eligibility of 905 Nogalitos for landmark designation.

**FINDINGS:**

- a. A demolition application was submitted on October 3, 2017, to the Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) by the property owner for the gas station structure located at 905 Nogalitos (currently addressed 901 and 903 Nogalitos) which is located in the Collins Garden Neighborhood. OHP Staff conducted research, met with the owner and contacted the Collins Gardens Neighborhood Association during the 30 day review period provided by UDC 35-455.
- b. A Request for Review of Historic Significance for the gas station structure located at 905 Nogalitos was submitted to OHP by the San Antonio Conservation Society on October 13, 2017.
- c. This property was identified through a comprehensive survey of historic gas stations undertaken in 1983 by the San Antonio Conservation Society that was updated and expanded beginning in 2012. HDRC approved a finding of historic significance on August 17, 2016, as the property was included in the 2016 Office of Historic Preservation Gas Station initiative. Although the UDC does allow for designation without owner support, the property was removed from the list due to the property owner's objection to designation prior to the City Council resolution on January 19, 2017, to move the Gas Station initiative forward.
- d. In accordance with UDC Section 35-453, an official notice of eligibility was sent to the property owner on October 20, 2017. The property is subject to interim design controls as defined in the UDC for the lesser of 180 days of notification or action by City Council on the recommendation for designation. During this period, written approval from the Office of Historic Preservation, known as a Certificate of Appropriateness, is required for work on the exterior of this property.
- e. If the HDRC agrees with the request and recommends approval, OHP will seek concurrence from the owner. If the owner is in favor of designation, the request may proceed in the designation process. In the case where an owner is not in favor, OHP shall forward the recommendation to City Council for consideration of a resolution to initiate the landmark designation process as outlined in UDC 35-606. If the HDRC does not agree with the request, a resolution from City Council to initiate the landmark designation will not be sought.
- f. 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.

g. SITE CONTEXT – The parcel is located at the southwest corner of Nogalitos and Ralph Streets, a prominent corner on the Nogalitos corridor along San Pedro Creek. Prior to the construction of the gas station, the property was owned by the companies operating the slaughterhouses near the stockyards on the opposite side of San Pedro Creek. Nogalitos Street is part of the historic Meridian Highway which connected San Antonio to Laredo and Saltillo. The site would have been a prime location for roadside establishments capitalizing on auto travel. The corner of Nogalitos and Ralph is located at a bend in the road which makes the gas station structure a highly visible resource in the community, contributing to the overall character of the streetscape of Nogalitos Street. Outside of the site context, the gas station is a unique example of roadside architecture and is contributing to the historic use and period. There are 4 principal non-residential structures on the parcel including the gas station with the dates of construction ranging from 1935 through 2000. These are noted in the exhibits as buildings 1 through 4.

- The first structures built on the parcel were several small residences facing Ralph, which were built in the early 1930s. The westernmost house was demolished in 2012 and the remaining two residences were approved for demolition in 2017.
- After the filling station (building 1) was built in 1935, a restaurant, barber shop and package store were constructed c. 1940 to the south on Nogalitos Street. The package store appears to have been demolished between 1955 and 1960.
- The restaurant and barber shop have been connected and are in use as a sports bar (building 2). Modifications to these two structures include a change in building footprint and façade arrangement.
- A tourist court was built c. 1946 in the center of the parcel. It remained in operation through the 1960s and was demolished between 1986 and 1995.
- An auto repair and welding shop (building 3) was also built c. 1946 addressed as 114 Ralph and has been modified by several additions made over the years. This structure is simple in form and material and does not reflect the character or architectural style of the gas station.
- Existing today and in use is a Quonset hut (building 4) housing an auto repair garage that was built c. 1948. It is addressed as 110 Ralph and appears to be of original building form, material and footprint. There are no additional character elements on the structure that demonstrate a relationship with the gas station, and it is not a unique or rare example of this building type.
- Two small utility buildings were constructed between 1995 and 2002 on the western side of the property near San Pedro Creek and are determined to be non-contributing structures.
- Accessory to the gas station (building 1) and these two small utility buildings, three other structures (buildings 2-4) remain on the parcel. While these structures are representative of the development of the property over time, they are determined to be non-contributing to the historic significance of the property.

h. ARCHITECTURAL ASSESSMENT – Based on the historic significance of the site, the gas station structure is the most significant of the existing buildings and staff finds it to be the only contributing structure on the parcel. The gas station structure was built circa 1936 for the Pure Oil Company. It is designed in the Tudor architectural style with a steeply pitched cross-gabled composition shingle roof on the office structure, faux half-timbering on the front gable of the canopy, and two brick chimneys flanking the north and south elevations with simple chimney pots. The main office features one large storefront window topped with a projecting hipped metal roof and one pedestrian door. A two-car service bay is attached to the south elevation of the main office and features a side-gabled composition shingle roof that is lower than the roofline of the office structure. Both the office and the service bay feature a painted brick exterior finish. The canopy roof is supported by two sets of square posts atop concrete pillars. The original office and canopy form is prominent and intact.

i. EVALUATION –The applicant proposed a list of five (5) criteria for eligibility. These include (b)(6) Its historical, architectural or cultural character as a particularly fine or unique example of a utilitarian structure, including, but not limited to, bridges, acequias, gas stations, transportation shelters, or other commercial structures; (b)(8) Its historical, architectural, or cultural integrity of location, design, materials, and workmanship; (b)(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; (b)(12) It is an important example of a particular architectural type or specimen; (b)(15) It represents a resource, whether natural or man-made, which greatly contributes to the character or image of a defined neighborhood or community area. Staff evaluated the structure against all 16 criteria and determined it was consistent with UDC sec. 35-607:

35-607(b)(1) Its value as a visible or archeological reminder of the cultural heritage of the community, or national event; this property is a reminder of the cultural heritage of San Antonio as a crossroads for many historic routes such as the Meridian Highway. Its site along the historic San Pedro Creek also connects the property to the city's cultural heritage.

35-607 (b)(6) Its historical, architectural or cultural character as a particularly fine or unique example of a utilitarian structure, including, but not limited to, bridges, acequias, gas stations, transportation shelters, or other commercial

structures; this utilitarian structure maintains its historic, architectural, and cultural character as the only example of a Tudor Style Gas Station and the only extant Pure Oil Station remaining in San Antonio.

35-607 (b)(8) Its historical, architectural, or cultural integrity of location, design, materials, and workmanship; the property maintains a high level of historical, architectural and cultural integrity in location, design, materials and workmanship. The structure is largely intact with few intrusions or modifications, reflecting the original design of Pure Oil Company brand.

35-607 (b)(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; this gas station exemplifies the economic heritage of the oil industry that played an important role in the economic growth of the state and the city in the early twentieth century. It also represents a societal shift from older transportation methods to a reliance on personal automobiles.

35-607 (b)(12) It is an important example of a particular architectural type or specimen; as an important example of a Tudor Style Gas Station featuring a residential appearance with typical Tudor stylistic characteristics including steeply pitched, side gable roof and half timbering on the gabled ends of the building and canopy with few intrusions or modifications.


35-607 (b)(15) It represents a resource, whether natural or man-made, which greatly contributes to the character or image of a defined neighborhood or community area; located at a prominent corner, where the street bends at the approach to the historic San Pedro Creek, the structure commands a highly visible location in the Collins Gardens Neighborhood near the edge of the Lone Star Neighborhood, and plays a part in defining the Nogalitos Corridor's historic evolution as a connection to local and transnational automotive travel.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval of the request and has identified the gas station structure to be the only contributing building on site. Staff finds that 905 Nogalitos meets six (6) of the 16 criteria for evaluation and is eligible for landmark designation based on findings f and g. If the Historic and Design Review Commission (HDRC) approves the request, the HDRC will become the applicant and will request a resolution from the City Council to initiate the designation process.

**COMMISSION ACTION:**

The Historic and Design Review Commission agrees with the request, recommends approval and requests a resolution from the City Council to initiate the designation process.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shanon Shea Miller". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Shanon" being more prominent.

Shanon Shea Miller  
Historic Preservation Officer