

**HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION**  
**February 20, 2019**

**HDRC CASE NO:** 2019-045  
**ADDRESS:** 843 RIGSBY AVE  
**LEGAL DESCRIPTION:** NCB 3306 BLK 38 LOT 24 W 30 FT OF 25  
**ZONING:** R-4  
**CITY COUNCIL DIST.:** 3  
**APPLICANT:** Jesse Martinez, on behalf of owner Marie A. Miller  
**OWNER:** Marie A. Miller  
**TYPE OF WORK:** Historic Landmark Designation

**REQUEST:**

The applicant is requesting a finding of historic significance for the property located at 843 Rigsby Ave.

**APPLICABLE CITATIONS:**

*Unified Development Code Sec. 35-606. - Designation Process for Historic Landmarks.*

- a. **Authority.** Requests for landmark designation may only be made by or with the concurrence of the property owner. In instances where a property owner does not consent to the landmark designation, the historic preservation officer shall request a resolution from city council to proceed with the designation process prior to any zoning commission hearing. Notwithstanding the foregoing, a request for landmark designation may be made and approved by the city council. To the extent that this subsection conflicts with any other provisions of this chapter, this paragraph shall control except for buildings, objects, sites, structures, or clusters heretofore designated as local landmarks or districts, National Register landmarks or districts, state historic landmarks or sites, or state archaeological landmarks or sites. Additionally, requests for designation shall be made on a form obtained from the city historic preservation officer through the office of historic preservation. Completed request forms shall be returned to the office of historic preservation for processing. All buildings, objects, sites, structures, or clusters heretofore designated by the city council as historic landmarks under any pre-existing ordinance of the City of San Antonio shall be accorded the protection of properties designated historic landmarks under this chapter and shall continue to bear the words "historic, exceptional" (HE) or "historic, significant" (HS) in their zoning designation.
- b. **Designation of Historic Landmarks.**
  1. **Initiation.** Any person, the historic and design review commission, zoning commission, the historic preservation officer, or the city council may initiate a historic landmark designation by filing an application with the historic preservation officer. Requests for designation shall be made on a form obtained from the city historic preservation officer. Completed request forms shall be returned to the office of historic preservation for processing. Owner consent for historic landmark designation shall be required unless a city council resolution to proceed with the designation has been approved. Additionally, owners may submit with the application a written description and photographs or other visual material of any buildings or structures that they wish to be considered for designation as non-contributing to the historic landmark.
  2. **Decision.** The historic preservation officer shall refer a completed application for historic landmark designation to the historic and design review commission. Property owners of proposed historic landmarks shall be notified of the historic and design review commission hearing by the historic preservation officer by mail prior to a historic and design review commission hearing for historic landmark designation. Notice to property owners shall state the place, date, time and purpose of the historic and design review commission hearing. The historic preservation officer shall also send notice of the meeting to any registered neighborhood associations located within the proposed district boundary. The historic and design review commission shall make and forward its recommendation to the zoning commission within forty-five (45) days from the date of submittal of the designation request by the historic preservation officer. Upon submittal of the historic and design review commission's recommendation, the proposed historic district or landmark designation shall be submitted to the zoning commission for its review recommendations along with its finding of historic significance. The zoning commission and the city council shall process the application as prescribed in [section 35-421](#) of this chapter and this section. The zoning commission shall schedule a hearing on the historic and design review commission recommendation to be held within sixty (60) days of receipt of such recommendation and shall forward its recommendation to city council which shall schedule a hearing to be held within sixty (60) days of council's receipt of such recommendation. Upon passage of any ordinance

designating a historic landmark, or removing or upgrading the designation of historic, the city clerk shall send notice of the fact by mail to the owner or owners of affected property.

*Unified Development Code 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.**
  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;
  8. Its historical, architectural, or cultural integrity of location, design, materials, and workmanship;
  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;
  12. It is an important example of a particular architectural type or specimen;
  13. It bears an important and significant relationship to other distinctive structures, sites, or areas, either as an important collection of properties or architectural style or craftsmanship with few intrusions, or by contributing to the overall character of the area according to the plan based on architectural, historic or cultural motif.

**FINDINGS:**

- a. The request for landmark designation was initiated by the property owner.
- b. **HISTORIC CONTEXT:** The structure at 843 Rigsby Ave is single-story Asian-inspired Craftsman bungalow with detached garage located in the Highland Park neighborhood and built c. 1922. Marie A. Miller currently owns the property. Prolific San Antonio developer B.G. Irish subdivided The Highlands neighborhood in 1923. The current population density of this neighborhood was reached between World War I and World War II. Craftsman bungalows are the dominant style and house form found in the neighborhood, but many other influences and styles are visible, such as Tudor Revival cottages and minimal traditional homes. Many of the houses were constructed in part by use of pattern books, which resulted in houses with similar features such as hipped roofs with exposed rafters, triangular braces below the roof, and a variety of porch columns. The neighborhood has been identified by staff as eligible for local historic district designation; were it designated in future, 843 Rigsby Ave would be listed as contributing. 843 Rigsby Ave first appears in a June 4, 1922, advertisement for Highland Park, “the addition with character.” The ad touts the individuality of the neighborhood and chose this high-style and unique home to drive that point home. The current owner’s aunt, Annabelle L. Fisher (alternately Fischer), purchased the home c. 1963, and it has remained in the family since. The structure is an example of Asian-influenced—also known as Orientalist—architecture, an early 20<sup>th</sup> Century adaptation of Craftsman style attributed to widespread interest in Asian design following the construction of the Japanese Pavilion at the 1904 St. Louis World’s Fair. Pagoda houses, as they are sometimes known, are differentiated from other Craftsman structures primarily by their flared roof line. 843 Rigsby Ave has a few other features that, to Westerners, read as “Asian:” a cross-hatch pattern in the wood window screens; hourglass-shaped stone pedestals and chimneys; traditional columns replaced by four square posts topped with beveled, and stacked beams in place of a more recognizable capital. A photo included in the June 4, 1922, San Antonio *Light* advertisement for Highland Park also shows the pergola-style carport, since removed, that stretched from the pedestals on the east side of the porch across the driveway. The hourglass-shaped stone pedestals for the carport remain. The structure at 843 Rigsby Ave is one of the most elaborate and intact examples of the Asian-influenced Craftsman style found in the city.
- c. **SITE CONTEXT:** The subject structure is located on the north side of Rigsby Ave on the second lot west of the corner of Rigsby Ave and S Gevers St, but is the de facto corner property. Yards along the north side of Rigsby Ave have retaining walls and sloping driveways that illustrate the neighborhood topography. Lots are long and rectangular, with medium setbacks between 10 and 20 feet from the right-of-way. The street is dotted with old-growth trees along sidewalks with grass easements and concrete curbs. Driveways are typically full concrete with flared aprons, but ribbon drive, asphalt, and tile are also present. The structure abuts the west edge of the parcel, with a concrete driveway along the east side of the parcel leading to a detached garage (which doesn’t appear on

Sanborn maps). The south edge of the lot along the right-of-way is bordered by a short stone retaining wall capped in concrete with four concrete steps and a walkway leading to the front porch; this wall continues west across the front of the neighbor's yard. The west side of the parcel has a stone wall approximately five feet tall, built in a different style than the wall along the right-of-way. There is a wood picket fence along the east and north edges of the parcel with a gate centrally located at the rear of the yard (north side of the parcel) allowing access to the recently paved alley. The house sits roughly 11 to 20 feet from the right-of-way, in line with other homes in the neighborhood.

d. **ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:** The house has an L-shaped plan with a front-gabled porch, hipped asphalt shingle roof and a small side-gable wing on the east elevation. The roof features metal barrel ridge caps across all forms, evidence perhaps of an historic tile roof; staff did not find evidence to corroborate this. The wide eaves are supported by decorative wood braces, and the roof has exposed rafters except on the flared gables. It is clad in ribbon-course wood shingle that runs from eaves to ground, including the skirt, with white trim and details. When present, peaks of gables (which also feature ribbon-course shingle) have white-painted vents flanked by decorative braces. Rough stone pedestals for the porch and carport and the stone chimneys are hourglass-shaped and topped with concrete capitals. Porch pedestals are topped with four square columns and beveled, stacked beams. The house retains all of its original one-over-one wood windows and patterned wood screens, and all but one of its original wood doors and wood door screens, as well as its original footprint; there are no additions to the primary structure. The south and primary façade's dominant feature is the front-gabled porch with stone pedestals and decorative wood columns and capitals. There are five steps with white painted risers and weathered wood runners leading to the painted wood porch deck, which has a low stone wall topped in concrete along the east edge with a break in the low wall for a short staircase to the driveway. The porch ceiling is lacquered beadboard with a small metal (possibly copper) Arts and Crafts-style pendant light at center. There are three ganged wood windows with decorative screens to the left of the porch with a wood planter box running the length of the windows. The north wall of the patio has French doors with wood screen doors. The west wall of the patio has the original wood front door with a wood screen door flanked by one-over-one wood windows with decorative wood window screens. Protruding from roughly the southwest corner of the roof is one of two hourglass-shaped stone chimneys, visible from the right-of-way. East of the porch are pedestals that remain from the historic wood carport. There is an iron fence between the house and the left rear carport pedestal and an iron gate between the rear carport pedestals. On the east façade, from south end to north, are a pair of ganged one-over-one wood windows with decorative wood screens followed by a single one-over-one wood window with decorative wood screen. This side of the house has a small gabled wing; the south elevation of the wing has a wood door and wood screen door on the left and a one-over-one wood window with decorative wood screen on the right. The gable end has three ganged one-over-one wood windows and decorative wood screens with braces at each side of the elevation. The north (rear) elevation, from east to west, has two pairs of ganged one-over-one wood windows on the first plane. A room breaks from this elevation, with a small one-over-one wood window and undecorated wood screen centered on the projection. The elevation steps back again and has what appears to be a more modern door with a decorative metal screen door flanked by one-over-one wood windows with undecorated wood screens. From the projection to the west edge of the façade, the roofline remains the same despite changes in the elevation, creating a covered stoop at this rear entrance. There is a brick patio separated from the house by a concrete sidewalk and three steps up to the back door; the sidewalk connects to the driveway. The second chimney is visible when facing this elevation, exiting roughly the northwest third of the roof. Just north of the northeast corner of the house is a cistern roughly 10 feet from the north elevation. The lid is gone, and the cistern itself appears to be filled. North of the house in the northeast corner of the parcel is a detached garage with a flared roof and the same metal barrel ridge caps and asphalt shingles as the primary structure. The hipped roof has exposed rafters, shallow braces under wide eaves, and clapboard siding. The south façade of the garage has a pair of ganged swinging garage doors followed by a single wood door and two-over-two wood door screen. The door is followed by a single one-over-one wood window with a four-over-one wood window screen. From left to right, the elevation has a single one-over-one wood window with undecorated wood window screen, then a smaller one-over-one wood window with wood window screen. The trim of a third window is just visible beyond the third brace; no other details are visible due to landscaping. Roughly five feet from this elevation is a stone wall four- to five-feet tall with jagged rocks at the top instead of a smooth cap. The stone differs from that used on the primary structure's pedestals and wall along the right-of-way: stones are set with the largest face visible. This stone wall runs the length of the west façade.

Character-defining features of 843 Rigsby include:

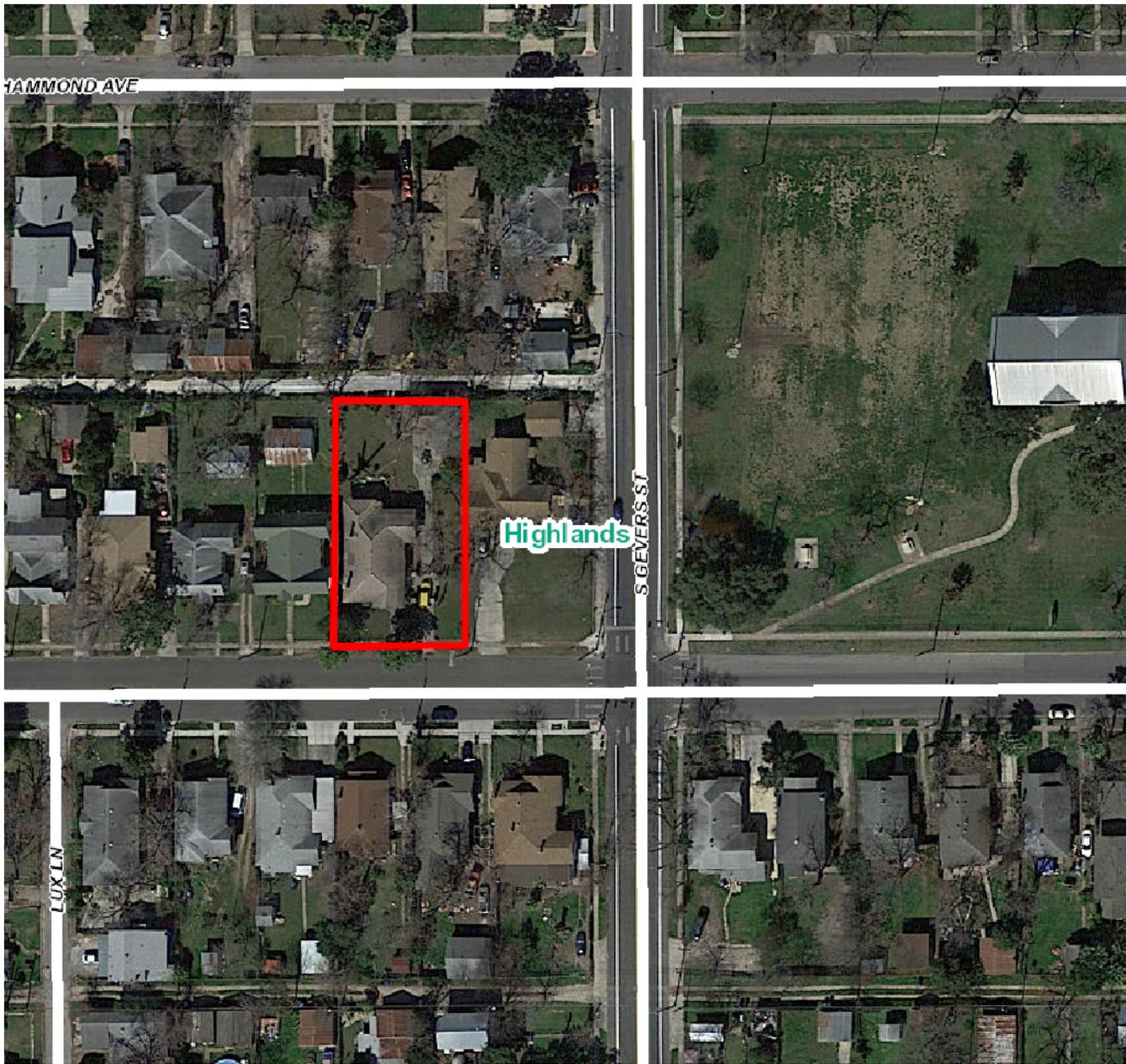
- Flared roof line
- Wide eaves with decorative braces

- Exposed rafter tails
  - One-over-one wood windows
  - One-over-one wood window screens with cross-hatch design
  - Hourglass-shaped stone pedestals
  - Hourglass-shaped stone chimneys
  - Columns comprised of four square posts topped with beveled, stacked beams
  - Barrel ridge caps
- e. EVALUATION: In order to be eligible for historic landmark designation, properties shall meet at least three (3) of the 16 criteria listed. Staff evaluated the structure against all 16 criteria and determined that it was consistent with UDC sec. 35-607(b):
5. **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;** This house embodies numerous distinguishing characteristics of Craftsman-style structures including multiple roof levels, a prominent gabled front porch with stone pedestals, and wide eave overhangs featuring exposed rafters and triangular knee braces, and uses indigenous materials such as stone in its construction.
  7. **7: Its unique location or singular physical characteristics that make it an established or familiar visual feature;** this house is one of a small collection Craftsman bungalows in San Antonio that display Asian design influences. These features make it a unique and established visual feature of the block and surrounding neighborhood. It is located near a corner on a prominent thoroughfare in the Highland Park neighborhood and was displayed in newspaper advertisements for the development in 1922.
  8. **8: Its historical, architectural, or cultural integrity of location, design, materials, and workmanship;** as a high-integrity example of Asian-influenced Craftsman architecture, the historic fabric of the structure remains almost entirely intact.
  11. **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 structure is an example of a pagoda home, a style attributed to widespread interest in Asian design following the construction of the Japanese Pavilion at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair.
  12. **12: It is an important example of a particular architectural type or specimen;** 843 Rigsby is one of the most elaborate examples of the pagoda house form found in San Antonio, with its flared roof form; cross-hatch pattern on the wood window screens; hourglass-shaped stone pedestals and chimneys; and beveled, stacked beams in place of column capitals.
  13. **13: It bears an important and significant relationship to other distinctive structures, sites, or areas, either as an important collection of properties or architectural style or craftsmanship with few intrusions, or by contributing to the overall character of the area according to the plan based on architectural, historic or cultural motif;** the Highland Park neighborhood has been identified by staff as eligible for local historic district designation; were it designated in future, 843 Rigsby Ave would be listed as contributing.
- 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. 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 makes a recommendation for designation, property owners must receive a written approval (a Certificate of Appropriateness) for any exterior work until the City Council makes their final decision.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval of a finding of historic significance and that the Historic and Design Review Commission should recommend approval for the landmark designation of 843 Rigsby Ave to the Zoning Commission and to the City Council based on findings a through e.

**CASE MANAGER:** Jessica Anderson



## Flex Viewer

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Printed: Feb 13, 2019

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

## Statement of Significance

**Property Address:** 843 Rigsby Ave

### 1. Application Details

Applicant: Jesus Martinez, on behalf of owner Marie A. Miller

Type: Owner-initiated Designation

Date Received: 25 January 2019

### 2. Findings

The structure at 843 Rigsby Ave is single-story Asian-inspired Craftsman bungalow with detached garage located in the Highland Park neighborhood and built c. 1922. Marie A. Miller currently owns the property.

Prolific San Antonio developer B.G. Irish subdivided The Highlands neighborhood in 1923. He purchased the land from L.P. Peck and Ben Hammond, two members of the Highland Park Improvement Company, which was developing the subdivision immediately north of The Highlands. Prior to its purchase for development, Albert Steves Jr. ran cattle on this property, leading to its early nickname of “the old Steves pasture.” Key to the development of what was then the largest suburb in San Antonio was the new trolley line. The No. 10 Line passed through Highland Park via Rigsby Ave, ending at Adele Street (now S Walters), until 1933, when the trolley was replaced by bus service. The current population density of this neighborhood was reached between World War I and World War II.

Craftsman bungalows are the dominant style and house form found in the neighborhood, but many other influences and styles are visible, such as Tudor Revival cottages and minimal traditional homes. Many of the houses were constructed in part by use of pattern books, which resulted in houses with similar features such as hipped roofs with exposed rafters, triangular braces below the roof, and a variety of porch columns. The neighborhood has been identified by staff as eligible for local historic district designation; were it designated in future, 843 Rigsby Ave would be listed as contributing.

843 Rigsby Ave first appears in a June 4, 1922, advertisement for Highland Park, “the addition with character.” The ad touts the individuality of the neighborhood and chose this high-style and unique home to drive that point home.<sup>1</sup> In the 1924 city directory, the address is listed as home of Dennis “Denny” and Rose McNerney. The couple first rented the home, and then purchased it from Jules and Amie (alternately reported as Annie) Hill in February 1926. The McNerneys owned 843 Rigsby Ave until c. 1946. They rented it for about a year before selling it to John F. and Helen A. Milhan. Mr. Milhan died in 1961, followed by Mrs. Milhan in 1963. The current owner’s aunt, Annabelle L. Fisher (alternately Fischer), purchased the home from L. J. Milhan c. 1963, after Fisher, her sister Lilly Miller, and Lilly’s daughter Marie (the current owner) were displaced from their previous home at 1107 Hoefgen Ave by the expansion of Highway 37. The structure at 843 Rigsby Ave has remained in their family since.<sup>2</sup>

The structure is an example of Asian-influenced—also known as Orientalist—architecture, described by New Orleans researcher Winston Ho as “a romantic version of a Far East structure designed and built by

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<sup>1</sup> “New Bungalow—Highland Park.” San Antonio *Light*, 4 June 1922, p. 3-D.

<sup>2</sup> This information was shared with staff by Marie A. Miller, 843 Rigsby Ave, on 13 February 2019.



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Westerners.”<sup>3</sup> This early 20<sup>th</sup> Century adaptation of Craftsman style is attributed to widespread interest in Asian design following the construction of the Japanese Pavilion at the 1904 St. Louis World’s Fair.<sup>4</sup> Pagoda houses, as they are sometimes known, are differentiated from other Craftsman structures primarily by their flared roof line. 843 Rigsby Ave has a few other features that, to Westerners, read as “Asian:” a cross-hatch pattern in the wood window screens; hourglass-shaped stone pedestals and chimneys; traditional columns replaced by four square posts topped with beveled, and stacked beams in place of a more recognizable capital. A photo included in the June 4, 1922, *San Antonio Light* advertisement for Highland Park also shows the pergola-style carport, since removed, that stretched from the pedestals on the east side of the porch across the driveway. The hourglass-shaped stone pedestals for the carport remain. During a site visit with staff, the current owner reported that the pergola had been removed by the time she and her family moved in c. 1963. Staff was unable to confirm presence of the pergola in the 1955 historic aerial, but it is missing in aerials by 1966.

The structure at 843 Rigsby Ave is one of a number of Asian-influenced or pagoda homes in San Antonio, located in the Lone Star, Beacon Hill, Dignowity Hill, Denver Heights, and Westside neighborhoods, in addition to Highland Park. Additional research may uncover more Asian-influenced structures in San Antonio. Though there are other examples of Asian-influenced architecture in San Antonio, the pagoda house at 843 Rigsby Ave is one of the most elaborate and intact examples found in the city.

### 3. Architectural Description

The subject structure is located on the north side of Rigsby Ave on the second lot west of the corner of Rigsby Ave and S Gevers St. Because half of the corner lot was purchased by the original owner of 843 Rigsby Ave, the structure is the de facto corner property. The block is bordered to the north by Hammond Ave, the west by Nopal St, the south by Rigsby Ave, and the east by S Gevers St. The road is flat, but yards along the north side of Rigsby Ave have retaining walls and sloping driveways that illustrate the neighborhood topography. Lots are long and rectangular, with medium setbacks between 10 and 20 feet from the right-of-way. The street is dotted with old-growth trees along sidewalks with grass easements and concrete curbs. Driveways are typically full concrete with flared aprons, but ribbon drive, asphalt, and tile are also present. Rigsby Ave is wide enough to allow for street parking on both sides.

The structure abuts the west edge of the parcel, with a concrete driveway along the east side of the parcel leading to a detached garage (which doesn’t appear on Sanborn maps). The south edge of the lot along the right-of-way is bordered by a short stone retaining wall capped in concrete with four concrete steps and a walkway leading to the front porch; this wall continues west across the front of the neighbor’s yard. The top step is painted white and has the house number painted at the center in black. The west side of the parcel has a stone wall approximately five feet tall, built in a different style than the wall along the right-of-way. (See photos at the end of this statement.) There is a wood picket fence along the east and north edges of the parcel with a gate centrally located at the rear of the yard (north side of the parcel) allowing access to the recently paved alley. The house sits roughly 11 to 20 feet from the right-of-way, in line with other homes in the neighborhood; the house to its east has a S Gevers address and is set back more than 20 feet from Rigsby.

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<sup>3</sup> Bruno, Stephanie. “Fantasies of Asia showed up as pagoda houses, commercial buildings, researcher says.” *The Advocate*. New Orleans, LA. 23 January 2019.

<sup>4</sup> Bruno, Stephanie. “A Century-Old Creole Pagoda.” *The Times-Picayune*. New Orleans, LA. 18 September 2004.



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The house has an L-shaped plan with a front-gabled porch, hipped asphalt shingle roof and a small side-gable wing on the east elevation. The roof features metal barrel ridge caps across all forms, evidence perhaps of an historic tile roof; staff did not find evidence to corroborate this. The wide eaves are supported by decorative wood braces, and the roof has exposed rafters except on the flared gables. It is clad in ribbon-course wood shingle that runs from eaves to ground, including the skirt, with white trim and details. Where it is still present, light brown paint on the shingles is crazed across all surfaces. Where paint is no longer present, weathered gray wood is visible, giving the primary façade a blue-gray appearance overall. The paint on the north façade is more intact and gives one a better idea of the previous paint scheme: this elevation predominately appears light brown. The white painted trim has been regularly maintained; layered paint is visible on the wood screen pattern and much of the trim.

Rough stone pedestals for the porch and carport and the stone chimneys are hourglass-shaped and topped with concrete capitals. Porch pedestals are topped with four square columns and beveled, stacked beams. The seams are visible in the beveled beams, allowing staff to see how they were constructed to create the tails at beam ends. The house retains all of its original one-over-one wood windows and patterned wood screens, and all but one of its original wood doors and wood door screens, as well as its original footprint; there are no additions to the primary structure. The current owner has added interior burglar bars to most of the windows; they appear to be set between the window and screen when present.

The south and primary façade's dominant feature is the front-gabled porch with stone pedestals and decorative wood columns and capitals. There are five steps with white painted risers and weathered wood runners leading to the painted wood porch deck, which has a low stone wall topped in concrete along the east edge with a break in the low wall for a short staircase to the driveway. The porch ceiling is lacquered beadboard with a small metal (possibly copper) Arts and Crafts-style pendant light at center. There is a vent in the peak of the flared gable, with a brace on either side of the vent. The gable has the same ribbon-course pattern as the rest of the house. There are three ganged wood windows with decorative screens to the left of the porch with a wood planter box running the length of the windows. The north wall of the patio has French doors with wood screen doors. The west wall of the patio has the original wood front door with a wood screen door flanked by one-over-one wood windows with decorative wood screens. Protruding from roughly the southwest corner of the roof is one of two hourglass-shaped stone chimneys, visible from the right-of-way. This front chimney has concrete capital and a square metal vent.

East of the porch are pedestals that remain from the historic wood carport. There is an iron fence between the house and the left rear carport pedestal and an iron gate between the rear carport pedestals.

On the east façade, from south end to north, are a pair of ganged one-over-one wood windows with decorative wood screens followed by a single one-over-one wood window with decorative wood screen. This side of the house has a small gabled wing; the south elevation of the wing has a wood door and wood screen door on the left and a one-over-one wood window with decorative wood screen on the right. The gable end has three ganged one-over-one wood windows with decorative wood screens with braces at each side of the elevation and braces on either side of a vent at the peak of the gable.

The north (rear) elevation, from east to west, has two pairs of ganged one-over-one wood windows on the first plane. A room breaks from this elevation, with a small one-over-one wood window and undecorated wood screen centered on the projection. The elevation steps back again and has what appears to be a more modern door with a decorative metal screen door flanked by one-over-one wood windows with undecorated

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wood screens. From the projection to the west edge of the façade, the roofline remains the same despite changes in the elevation, creating a covered stoop at this rear entrance. There is a brick patio separated from the house by a concrete sidewalk and three steps up to the back door; the sidewalk connects to the driveway.

The second chimney is visible when facing this elevation, exiting roughly the northwest third of the roof. The rear chimney has a smaller, round metal vent, perhaps indicating this chimney was used to house exhaust from some mechanical system inside the structure. Just north of the northeast corner of the house is a cistern roughly 10 feet from the north elevation. The lid is gone, and the cistern itself appears to be filled.

North of the house in the northeast corner of the parcel is a detached garage with a flared roof and the same metal barrel ridge caps and asphalt shingles as the primary structure. The hipped roof has exposed rafters, shallow braces under wide eaves, and clapboard siding instead of the shingles found on the primary structure. The south façade of the garage has a pair of ganged swinging garage doors followed by a single wood door and two-over-two wood door screen. The door is followed by a single one-over-one wood window with a four-over-one wood window screen.

The west elevation was difficult to access and document due to some overgrown landscaping near the southwest corner of the house. From left to right, the elevation has a single one-over-one wood window with undecorated wood window screen, then a smaller one-over-one wood window with wood window screen. The trim of a third window is just visible beyond the third brace; no other details are visible. Roughly five feet from this elevation is a stone wall four- to five-feet tall with jagged rocks at the top instead of a smooth cap. The stone differs from that used on the primary structure's pedestals and wall along the right-of-way: stones are set with the largest face visible. This stone wall runs the length of the west façade.

The house has a number of old growth trees, including two large magnolia trees and three pink crepe myrtle trees along the right-of-way.

Character-defining features of 843 Rigsby include:

- Flared roof line
- Wide eaves with decorative braces
- Exposed rafter tails
- One-over-one wood windows
- One-over-one wood window screens with cross-hatch design
- Hourglass-shaped stone pedestals
- Hourglass-shaped stone chimneys
- Columns comprised of four square posts topped with beveled, stacked beams
- Barrel ridge caps

#### 4. Landmark Criteria

The property meets the following criteria under UDC 35-607(b):

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;** This house embodies numerous distinguishing characteristics of Craftsman-style structures including multiple roof levels, a prominent gabled front porch with stone pedestals, and wide eave overhangs featuring exposed rafters and triangular knee braces, and uses indigenous materials such as stone in its construction.

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7. **Its unique location or singular physical characteristics that make it an established or familiar visual feature;** this house is one of a small collection Craftsman bungalows in San Antonio that display Asian design influences. These features make it a unique and established visual feature of the block and surrounding neighborhood. It is located near a corner on a prominent thoroughfare in the Highland Park neighborhood and was displayed in newspaper advertisements for the development in 1922.
8. **Its historical, architectural, or cultural integrity of location, design, materials, and workmanship;** as a high-integrity example of Asian-influenced Craftsman architecture, the historic fabric of the structure remains almost entirely intact.
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 structure is an example of a pagoda home, a style attributed to widespread interest in Asian design following the construction of the Japanese Pavilion at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair.
12. **It is an important example of a particular architectural type or specimen;** 843 Rigsby is one of the most elaborate examples of the pagoda house form found in San Antonio, with its flared roof form; cross-hatch pattern on the wood window screens; hourglass-shaped stone pedestals and chimneys; and beveled, stacked beams in place of column capitals.
13. **It bears an important and significant relationship to other distinctive structures, sites, or areas, either as an important collection of properties or architectural style or craftsmanship with few intrusions, or by contributing to the overall character of the area according to the plan based on architectural, historic or cultural motif;** the Highland Park neighborhood has been identified by staff as eligible for local historic district designation; were it designated in future, 843 Rigsby Ave would be listed as contributing.

#### **5. Staff Recommendation**

A property must meet at least three of the 16 criteria used to evaluate eligibility for landmark designation, and this assessment determines that 843 Rigsby meets this threshold. Therefore, staff recommends approval of a finding of historic designation for the property at 843 Rigsby. Further research may reveal additional significance associated with this property.



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South (primary)  
facade



South half of east  
facade

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North half of east  
facade



North facade

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West facade



Stone wall along west  
edge of parcel

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Rear garage



Cistern near northeast  
corner of structure

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A closer view of the porch columns and beams. Construction method is readable in the joinery.



Porch ceiling and metal pendant light

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*New Bungalow—Highland Park*



Highland Park, "the addition with character," is fast becoming one of the chief residential districts of the city because of its attractiveness, individuality, location, altitude, improvements, water supply, public school, and building restrictions, which are the qualities looked for by the home builder. Highland Park is exceedingly attractive as a home site and is the most talked of spot in the city by home lovers, according to E. P. Peck, the owner.

The homes in Highland Park are of the very highest type and in strict conformity to building restrictions. This tends to make the addition a high class residence district. Only houses costing not less than two to five thousand dollars are allowed to be erected, with such out-buildings as may be necessary, excluding everything of an unsightly or objectionable nature.

E. P. Peck, who created Highland Park, told of some of the attractions and improvements of the addition. He said: "Highland Park has approximately twelve miles of paved streets; twenty-two miles of cement walks; twelve miles of water mains. Highland Park offers more actual advantage for the

home builder and holds more promise for the future than any other addition in San Antonio.

"The addition is entirely protected by building restrictions which adds to its advantages. The home builder may erect a new home in Highland Park and be assured of the fact that no inferior houses, shacks, hospitals, etc., will be built near it.

"Highland Park is in an unrivaled location, commanding an unobstructed panoramic view of the entire city and surrounding country. The location is in the southeast section of the city and within the two-mile circle. Being less than two miles from the business and shopping district, it is easily accessible from the business district by paved streets or by the Highland Park line, fifteen minute trolley service."

"The pure fresh air and wholesome surroundings, paved streets, cement walks and curbs, gas and sewer mains, city water, house to house mail delivery, a \$100,000 public school, electric light and telephone service, 60-foot streets and 20-foot alleys, excellent street car service, improved streets that are reached by three paved boulevards, are some of the realities and not promises that Highland Park offers to prospective home builders."

San Antonio *Light*, June 4, 1922, featuring a photo of the structure at 843 Rigsby Ave. Note the pergola-style carport, since removed.

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Marie A. Miller  
843 Riggsby  
S. A. TX. 78210

History of House on 843 Riggsby  
Journey to our home started on  
Summer of 1962. We liked the  
rock wall and also because it  
was unusual structure. What  
prompted our move because of the  
expansion of the Highway 37<sup>th</sup>.

The couple passed the heir,  
a young man from Austin, TX. was  
heir, his name Millhouse, house  
also was filled with furniture.

I, Marie Miller liked a  
small antique metal round  
with marble top. Unfortunately the  
young man said the only piece  
of furniture he wanted to keep  
was that piece, it broke my  
heart when my mother said, I  
had to give it up, minor repairs  
were done. The house has a  
butler's pantry, which we  
still enjoy.

Submitted 25 Jan 2019  
JLA

I

309  
1645

310 ESSEX  
1644

311  
1643

WEST FALL AV.

329A  
3272

3273

3274

312

PECK AV.

3262

3283

3284

DREXEL AV.

3292

3293

3294

S. NEW BRAUNFELS AV.

NOPAL

S GEVERS

HAMMOND AV.

329E  
3304  
MILL AND PINE PUBLIC SCHOOL

3305

3306

331

RIGSBY AV.

3316

3317

3318

KAYTON AV.

MATLOCK

IVY

319

320

320

1951

