



CITY OF SAN ANTONIO OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

APPLICATION FOR CHANGE OF ZONING

Request:

The Office of Historic Preservation requests a change of zoning to add “HL” Historic Landmark designation to 2602 N Flores and to waive all related fees. *OHP staff recommends approval.*

Case Comments:

January 20, 2021, the Historic and Design Review Commission (HDRC) agreed with the applicant’s request for a Finding of Historic Significance and supported the designation of the property as a local landmark.

Case History:

March 16, 2021	Zoning Commission hearing
January 20, 2021	Historic & Design Review Commission (HDRC) hearing
December 7, 2020	Application for Historic Landmark Designation submitted to OHP

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 Criteria for Evaluation.

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.
 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;**
 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;**
 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 of Fact:

- a. The request for landmark designation was initiated by the property owner.
- b. **HISTORIC CONTEXT:** The structure at 2602 N Flores is a single-story Craftsman-style box-with-canopy filling station built c. 1926 for Samuel Erlich. It is located in the Alta Vista neighborhood conservation district (NCD-2) of City Council District 1. MP2 Urban Development, LLC, currently owns the property. The structure first appears in city directories as a filling station owned and operated by Samuel Erlich. In 1927, the address appears as Witherspoon Refinery Co. Station No. 2, the second location of Witherspoon Oil Co. The first Witherspoon location, at 601 N Alamo, is a

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local historic landmark. By 1929, 2602 N Flores was Liberty Service Station, with pump installed and gas supplied by the Magnolia Petroleum Company. The property continued to change hands in subsequent years, appearing as a service station under three different names between 1934 and 1940. It was a grocery store by 1946 and until at least 1948, and then an ice house from 1954 until at least 1977. By the early 2000s, the property was renamed Patsy's and used as a bar and music venue. There is a chain-link fence along the south and west sides as well.

- c. **SITE CONTEXT:** The structure at 2602 N Flores is a single-story Craftsman-style box-with-canopy filling station built c. 1926. It is located in the Alta Vista neighborhood of City Council District 1, on the northeast corner of N Flores and W Russell Pl. It is located on the southwest corner of a block bordered to the west by N Flores St, the south by W Russell Pl, the east by Breeden St, and the north by W Craig Pl. The neighborhood is largely residential, with some commercial, such as the subject structure and a convenience store across the street on the northwest corner of N Flores and W Russell. The parcel is largely covered in concrete with some grass; it has a divorced sidewalk and thin grass easement along the south and west sides of the corner property.
- d. **ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:** The flat-roofed structure is rectangular and oriented toward the southwest corner of the property. The primary southwest elevation has brick columns at the corners and along the roofline with a stucco-clad façade. There are metal sconces on each exterior side of each column. A centered door is flanked by fixed plate-glass windows. The northwest elevation is boarded. The south end of the elevation has a boarded door flanked by windows with brick knee walls below. The north end of the elevation is clad in stucco; there is a boarded window where the brick meets this stucco near the center of the elevation. The northeast (rear) elevation is clad in stucco and lacks the parapet visible from this side of the building on other elevations. There is a door right of center. The fenestration on the southeast elevation is also boarded or covered in metal, except for a row of clerestory windows above the south section of the elevation. A ganged and boarded window and door are right of center, with another boarded door near the north end of the elevation. There is a tiled concrete slab in front of this north door; tiles are gray with MENS [sic] in yellow tile. Character-defining features include the southwest orientation of the building and main entrance facing the intersection; flat roof; brick cladding, where present; brick columns on southwest elevation; metal sconces on columns, where present; gray-tiled concrete pad with MENS [sic] in yellow tile; and a lighted pole sign with arm at the southwest corner.
- 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):

- 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;** the structure was built as a neighborhood filling station c. 1926 that included canopy and a corner-oriented entrance, all still discernable despite modifications to the exterior.
- 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;** for its long-term function as a neighborhood filling station, offering employment opportunities for local mechanics and attendants, and later as a convenience store, ice house, and music venue.
- 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 property was

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included in a 2013 survey of historic gas stations in San Antonio. It is located in the Alta Vista neighborhood conservation district (NCD-2), recognized by staff as an eligible local historic district. Were the neighborhood to choose designation, 2602 N Flores would contribute to the district. Additionally, the property served as the second location of the Witherspoon Refinery Co; the first Witherspoon location at 601 N Alamo is a local historic landmark.

- 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.

ATTACHMENTS:

HDRC recommendation

HDRC published exhibits

Alta Vista Neighborhood Association Letter of Support for Designation (included in published exhibits)

Conservation Society of San Antonio Letter of Support for Designation