



CITY OF SAN ANTONIO OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION
COMMISSION ACTION

This is not a Certificate of Appropriateness and cannot be used to acquire permits

May 5, 2021

HDRC CASE NO: 2021-211
ADDRESS: 135 LEOPOLD
LEGAL DESCRIPTION: NCB 2959 BLK 1 LOT 10 NCB 3553 BLK 1 LOT W TRI 35 FT OF A
APPLICANT: James Mark Shannon - 135 Leopold St
OWNER: James Mark Shannon - 135 Leopold St

REQUEST:

The applicant is requesting a Finding of Historic Significance for the property located at 135 Leopold St.

FINDINGS:

- a. The request for landmark designation was initiated by the property owner.
- b. **HISTORIC CONTEXT:** The property at 135 Leopold includes a single-story free classic Queen Anne residence built in 1908 by Louis Loessberg for Albert and Emma Merklen with three rear accessory buildings. It is located in the Lavaca neighborhood of City Council District 1. James Mark Shannon currently owns the property. Albert and Emma Merklen purchased Lot 10 in 1908 from Emil Scherrer, whose late father Leopold Scherrer is the namesake of this street. In September 1908, the Merklens contracted Louis Loessberg to build their home. The house was built in the free classic Queen Anne style, popular in the U.S. from 1880 to 1910. Typical features of this style found on the subject structure include a pyramidal roof with lower intersecting gables, classic (round) columns, decorative leaded glass windows found on the gable and in the front door. The Merklens added to the house by 1931. The Merklen Family retained ownership of the property through three generations, until 1996, when it was sold the home to the current owner. The rear accessory structure dates to between 1952 and 1963; the garage was added by 1931. The shed-roofed screened-in porch at the north edge of the parcel was built by the current owner.
- c. **SITE CONTEXT:** The structure is located on the north side of Leopold St, on a block bounded to the south by Leopold St, the west by S Presa St, the north by Lotus Ave, and the west by Panama Ave and N. U.S. Hwy 281. The property is located in an area bordered by three local historic districts (Lavaca to the north, King William to the northwest, and Mission to the southwest) and in a neighborhood that contains multiple individual landmarks. Nearby individual landmarks include 115 Leopold, 122 Leopold, 131 Leopold, 214 Lotus, and 224 Lotus. The parcel has a divorced concrete sidewalk with xeriscaped easement, and a concrete sidewalk leading from the street to the front porch. A wood picket fence about three feet tall encloses the front yard, which has tall wood gates under a pergola at the center. The concrete path and steps to the front porch are clad in stone. The rear garage is accessed via an alley that runs along the north side of the parcel. The backyard is enclosed using a combination of live bamboo, wood and bamboo fencing, corrugated steel, and mesquite. Much of the backyard is covered in grass, with the north end paved in decomposed stone.
- d. **ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:** The house has a standing-seam metal pyramidal roof with intersecting wings and a separate shed roof over the wood front porch. There are dormers on the north and south sides of the pyramidal roof. The porch is supported by classic columns with a short balustrade. The house is clad in wood siding, with decorative shingles in the north and east gables and on the dormers; the skirt is clad in stucco. The primary entrance is a 15-lite wood door with a transom. The gable on the primary elevation has a wood sash window with leaded glass upper lite over a single-lite sash. Other windows are two-over-two with wood sashes. There north elevation has a door at center flanked by two-over-two wood windows under a cantilevered roof. There is a wood casement window west of the cantilevered roof. The rear concrete porch and path leading to rear accessory

structures are clad in stone. The southernmost accessory structure has a saltbox form, standing seam metal roof, sliding barn doors, and is clad in cedar shingles. The end-gabled garage, also clad in shingles, and has a standing-seam metal roof and opens to the north. Both structures have exposed rafter tails. The shed-roof screened-in porch at the north end of the lot is wood framed. Character defining features of 135 Leopold include the pyramidal roof with dormers, wood front porch with classic columns and short balustrade under a separate shed roof, decorative shingles in the north and east gables, decorative shingles on dormers, leaded-glass windows and doors (where present), two-over-two wood windows (where present), wood casement window on north elevation, and the end-gabled garage with exposed rafter tails.

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. 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; the house is an example of a free classic Queen Anne residence, a style popular in the U.S. from 1880 to 1910.

8. Its historical, architectural, or cultural integrity of location, design, materials, and workmanship; the house is an example of a multigenerational home, built for Albert and Emma Merklen passed down two subsequent generations of the Merklen Family.

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 is located in an area bordered by three local historic districts (Lavaca to the north, King William to the northwest, and Mission to the southwest) and in a neighborhood that contains multiple individual landmarks. Staff has identified this area as an eligible local historic district; should this part of the Lavaca neighborhood choose to designate, the house would be considered 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 135 Leopold St to the Zoning Commission and to the City Council based on findings a through e.

COMMISSION ACTION:

Approved as submitted.



Shanon Shea Miller
Historic Preservation Officer