



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 311 3rd St and to waive all related fees. *OHP staff recommends approval.*

Case Comments:

May 19, 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:

July 20, 2021	Zoning Commission hearing
May 19, 2021	Historic & Design Review Commission (HDRC) hearing
April 30, 2021	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.
 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;
 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.
 16. It is designated as a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark or State Archeological Landmark, or is included on the National Register of Historic Places.

Findings of Fact:

- a. The request for landmark designation was initiated by the property owner.
- b. The map included in the exhibits of this case shows the portion of the parcel to be designated, outlined in green. The blue outline denotes the boundaries of the parcel addressed 311 3rd St, which includes two other structures and surface parking.
- c. HISTORIC CONTEXT: The owner requests local landmark designation for the three-story Spanish Revival-style two-part commercial block at 311 3rd St, built in 1917 for the Standard Motor Sales Company. It is located in the Downtown Residents Association neighborhood of City Council District 1. DCL LLC currently owns the property. The subject structure was historically addressed

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309-311 3rd St. By 1922, it was home to Sunset Drug & Sundries. Sunset Drug Co. was established in 1920 and first located on Commerce St. According to an article from a 1927 issue of the San Antonio Express, the company handled “a full line of drugs, pharmaceuticals, chemicals, biological, toilet articles, proprietary patent medicines, perfumes and so forth.” By 1927, the company had grown so much that “larger quarters were found necessary and it moved to...309-311 Third St.” Sunset Drug remained at 309-11 3rd St until c. 1929. The property is currently the San Antonio office of Lake Flato Architects. The subject structure contributes to the San Antonio Downtown and River Walk National Register Historic District, designated in 2018. It contributes to an understanding of the early 20th century commercial development of San Antonio and is an example of a Spanish Revival two-part commercial block.

- d. **SITE CONTEXT:** The building stretches northeast to southwest across a block bound by 3rd St, Avenue E, E Travis St, and N Alamo St. The westernmost portion of the block is dominated by a contemporary parking garage, but the subject structure also shares the block with a single-story Spanish Revival storefront adjacent to the northwest, a stand-alone single-story commercial building at the corner of E Travis and N Alamo streets, and the Henry Terrell Building, a local historic landmark at 212 N Alamo. Other nearby landmarks include 211 N Alamo, 219 N Alamo, 301 Avenue E (San Antonio *Express News* Building), 308 Avenue E (Scottish Rite Cathedral), and numerous individual landmarks within the Alamo Plaza local historic district, located just south of the subject structure.
- e. **ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:** The building is constructed of concrete, masonry units, and brick cladding, and features ganged metal-sash windows that are either fixed or casement. The 3rd St elevation is more highly ornamented than the E Travis St elevation; the 3rd St elevation has two colors of brick used to render belts and patterns at each floor of the façade. The E Travis St elevation has only one color of brick but features alternating courses of dark and light stone along the ground floor. Both elevations have barrel tile-capped parapets, but the 3rd St elevation has decorative brick elements that extend past the parapet. The E Travis elevation has metal awnings over all ganged fenestration, including the main entrance, which is recessed near the north corner of the elevation. The northwest and southeast elevations appear largely without fenestration, except for recessed windows centered on each elevation. Character-defining features of the three-story building at 311 3rd St include brick cladding on street-facing elevations, barrel tiled parapet with low-relief ornament rendered in brick, decorative brick elements that extend past the parapet on the 3rd St elevation, alternating courses of light and dark stone on the ground floor of the E Travis St elevation, metal fixed or casement windows (where present), and fixed divided lites over display windows at the ground level.
- f. **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;** it is an example of a Spanish Revival-style two-part commercial block.
 - 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 dense with local historic landmarks and historic districts, and



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contributes to an understanding of the commercial development of the city in the early 20th Century.

16. It is designated as a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark or State Archeological Landmark, or is included on the National Register of Historic Places; the property contributes to the San Antonio Downtown and River Walk National Register Historic District, listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2018.

- g. 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.
- h. 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.
- i. 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

Conservation Society of San Antonio Letter of Support for Designation

Metes and bounds survey provided by applicant