



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number: 15-4909

Agenda Item Number: 21.

Agenda Date: 10/15/2015

In Control: City Council A Session

DEPARTMENT: Office of Historic Preservation

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Shanon Shea Miller

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: District 1

SUBJECT:

Resolution to proceed with landmark designation for 1201 S Flores.

SUMMARY:

This resolution requests direction from City Council to move forward with historic landmark designation for the property at 1201 S Flores. The Historic and Design Review Commission (HDRC) recommended a Finding of Historic Significance for this property on September 2, 2015. Because the owner of the property does not give consent for landmark designation, OHP is seeking Council resolution to initiate the designation process.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The one-story, stream-lined Art Moderne building with elements of Art Deco at 1201 S Flores was renovated to house the Golden West Service Station in 1940. City Directories indicate a structure existed here as a residence and commercial building beginning in 1929. The City Directories first list the building as an automobile oriented service business from 1936 through 1939, when a used car business operated at the address. In 1941, the San Antonio Light included an article celebrating the renovation of the building and featuring a photograph which shows the property as it appeared until recent modifications to the structure. The article touts the many services, a recently-introduced innovation for gas stations, provided by the Golden West Service Station for the increasingly auto-oriented S Flores thoroughfare.

The building features a curvilinear façade with a stucco and tile finish. Oblong, ship-style windows and recently demolished tower reflect the industrial aero-dynamic styles of the 1940s which were intended to capture concepts of speed and motion, perfectly matched to the auto-centric service provided by both the

structure and the S Flores corridor.

The property was identified by the San Antonio Conservation Society through their Gas Station Survey.

The property at 1201 S Flores is eligible for local historic landmark designation having met the following criteria:

Its value as a visible or archeological reminder of the cultural heritage of the community, or national event [35-607 (b)1]: As a significant streamlined art moderne structure along a significant automobile oriented thoroughfare;

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 [35-607(b)5]: As a streamlined art modern structure representative of its era;

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[35-607(b)6]: As a quickly vanishing example of historic San Antonio gas stations in the historic core;

Its unique location or singular physical characteristics that make it an established or familiar visual feature [35-607(b)7] For its prominent presence along S. Flores, a historically and culturally significant commercial corridor;

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 [35-607(b)11]; As an establishment, well built and designed, that served the community for over 80 years, including 30 as a full service gas station and most recently repurposed as a restaurant;

It represents a resource, whether natural or man-made, which greatly contributes to the character or image of a defined neighborhood or community area [35-607(b)15]; For its location and presence that contributes to the commercial corridor of S. Flores.

The review for historic significance was initiated by OHP following selective demolition work which was done by the owner. On September 2, 2015, the HDRC voted to pursue landmark designation of the property. Because the potential purchaser of the property does not give consent to designate the property, UDC Section 35-606 is followed to seek City Council resolution to proceed with the designation process.

The building at 1201 S Flores also falls within the Vacant Buildings Registration Pilot program under which the property owner is responsible for maintaining architectural features and window openings consistent with the program requirements. Recently, work has been done which does not conform to the program requirements.

Historic landmarks possess cultural and historical value and contribute to the overall quality and character of the City and its corridors. The City offers a tax incentive for the substantial rehabilitation of historic properties. 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.

ISSUE:

The property at 1201 S Flores meets the criteria for landmark designation and staff recommends that the

property be designated a Historic Landmark (HL). If Council approves a resolution to proceed with landmark designation, then OHP would apply for a change in zoning to include a historic landmark overly for the property. The change in zoning requires approval from both the Zoning Commission and City Council. If approved by Council, the property would become a local historic landmark. Rehabilitation work would qualify for local tax incentives. All future proposals would require HDRC review.

ALTERNATIVES:

If Council does not approve a resolution to proceed with landmark designation, the designation process would come to an end. The building would still need to comply with the Vacant Building Program requirements, but would also be eligible for demolition should it be pursued.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Costs associated with a designation include zoning application fees of \$770.00 which are funded in the Office of Historic Preservation FY 2016 Budget.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends City Council approve a resolution to initiate historic landmark designation for this 1201 S Flores.