



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number:15-1987

Agenda Item Number: 28.

Agenda Date: 4/30/2015

In Control: City Council A Session

Department: Office of Historic Preservation

Department Head: Shanon Shea Miller

Council district impacted: District 5

Subject: Resolution to proceed with landmark designation for 523 N. Colorado

Summary: This resolution requests direction from City Council to move forward with historic landmark designation for the property at 523 N. Colorado. The Historic and Design Review Commission (HDRC) recommended a Finding of Historic Significance for this property on March 19, 2014.

Background Information: The commercial structure at 523 N. Colorado occupies the Southwest corner of N. Colorado and Morales Streets. Corner stores, called *tiendas* or *tienditas*, were common throughout San Antonio until after World War II before the interstate system and large chain grocery stores changed the way people obtained their groceries.

The structure was constructed by 1935 at the latest. A one-story store building first appears on the 1935 Sanborn map with an address of 525 Morales. At that time, a residence was attached to the store with an address of 523 Morales. The property appears in the City Directory by 1915, but any indication of a commercial use at this address doesn't appear in the directories until 1940 at the latest when Mrs. Concepcion Martinez was listed as living at that address as a grocer. The 1951 City Directory indicates that The Little Grocery Store operated out of this address. The attached house originally listed at 523 Morales is now gone. The store, which faces N. Colorado, now bears the N. Colorado address.

This property exemplifies the typical early 20th century, small-scale commercial structures seen on the Westside of San Antonio. The store has a false front parapet, a common feature on shop buildings, and the Sanborn maps indicated a porch on the front, most likely an awning that extended out from the front of the shop. This is a rapidly disappearing resource type throughout San Antonio's inner city neighborhoods.

The property at 523 N. Colorado meets the following criteria for local landmark designation:

- 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];
- It is an important example of a particular architectural type or specimen [35-607(b)12];
- 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];

The property is located on San Antonio's near Westside. The property was submitted by Code Compliance to the Office of Historic Preservation for review on January 27, 2014. The recommendation by Code Compliance is for demolition. Office

of Historic Preservation (OHP) staff visited the property on January 31, 2014, for a site visit and recommended that the property was eligible for historic landmark designation.

Issue: Staff recommends that the property at 523 N Colorado meets the criteria and is eligible for landmark designation. If Council approves a resolution to proceed with landmark designation, then OHP would apply for a change in zoning to include a historic landmark overlay 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: Landmark designation would help protect and preserve this significant structure that played an important role in the architecture and history of San Antonio's near Westside. If Council does not approve a resolution to proceed with landmark designation, the designation process would come to an end and the HDRC's recommendation would not be required for any demolition requests. New construction on the property would not require review by the HDRC.

Fiscal Impact: There is no anticipated fiscal impact. All costs associated with historic landmark designation will be absorbed by the Office of Historic Preservation.

Recommendation: Staff recommends City Council approve the resolution to initiate historic landmark designation for this property.