



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

August 21, 2024

HDRC CASE NO: 2024-272
ADDRESS: 711 E MISTLETOE
LEGAL DESCRIPTION: NCB 863 BLK LOT S 80 FT OF 31
APPLICANT: Betsy Hove/HOVE BETSY ANNE - 711 E MISTLETOE AVE
OWNER: Betsy Hove/HOVE BETSY ANNE - 711 E MISTLETOE AVE
REQUEST:

The applicant is requesting Historic Landmark Designation for the property at 711 East Mistletoe Avenue.

FINDINGS:

a. The request for landmark designation was initiated by the property owner.

b. **HISTORIC CONTEXT:** The structure at 711 East Mistletoe Avenue is a one-story dwelling, built circa 1918. The subject property is located in the Tobin Hill neighborhood, just west of the St. Mary's Street corridor and U.S. Highway 281, and two blocks south of the Trail Street boundary of the Monte Vista Historic District of City Council District 1. Betsy A. Hove currently owns the property.

The land in this neighborhood was first subdivided in 1913 as part of Sarah F Ostrom's Addition. The Ostrom Homestead and farm sat just east of the plat, between the not-yet-constructed Quarry Road (now N St. Mary's Street) and the Upper Labor Ditch or acequia. At that time, Mistletoe Ave was called Broad Ave, and neither Ewald Street nor Valentino Place had been platted.

Several homes predate the subdivision, some of which are still extant on the north side of Mistletoe Ave west of Carleton. Construction of new homes in the 1910s and 1920s was rapid, reflecting the city's growth during this period. By 1924, Mistletoe Ave had received its contemporary name. Ewald Street was subdivided in 1918 but did not appear in the City Directory until 1920, at which time its residents were all African-American; by 1930, however, the residents on Ewald were all Hispanic.

In 1929, the City Directory includes Broad Avenue Alley, which would later become Valentino Place. Residents of Broad Avenue Alley were Hispanic and African American during this time. Home sizes and styles vary greatly throughout the proposed district, but Ewald Street contains a consistent group of small shotguns and Valentino Place has a few small bungalows. The size of the homes reflects the modest means of the renters and property owners.

Although Mistletoe Ave, Ewald St, and Valentino Pl are chiefly residential, a few businesses have existed within the proposed district boundary. At 631 E Mistletoe (now 629 ½ E Mistletoe) a brick factory produced tortillas and tamales, and a few other lots had grocery stores that likely operated out of the owners' homes. Today, several structures at the more commercial corner of Kings Ct and E Mistletoe Ave have businesses including restaurants and a salon.

The subject property is first listed in the City Directory as 535 Broad Avenue, the location of the Bell Bedding Company and the home of Max and Belle Alpert. Max Alpert and Belle Berger married in San Antonio in 1916, and then purchased the property from J. Oswald Martyn in 1917. In 1919, Max Alpert and Irving Strauss founded the Bell Manufacturing Company and concentrated on the popular "Bell Middies" garment, which was widely distributed throughout Texas. The popularity of their products in the early 1920s led to rapid growth and expansion as one of the leading firms in San Antonio's burgeoning garment industry.

c. **SITE CONTEXT:** The subject property is a south-facing house, situated near the middle of a block bound to the north by Valentino Place, the east by Kings Court, the south by East Mistletoe Avenue, and the west by Ewald Street. There is not a cohesive architectural statement along this corridor, but the homes represent the styles popular at the time of their construction in

the early twentieth century. Good examples of Folk Victorian, Tudor Revival, Craftsman, and Spanish Eclectic are present along the street. Modern infill is minimal, although many homes have been modified with updated materials and additions.

d. **ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:** The subject property is a single-story Craftsman cottage built circa 1918, with a low-pitched, cross-gabled roof with overhanging eaves, exposed rafters, and a front-facing gable covering the centered third-width front entry porch. The front porch is supported by two tapered wood columns atop square piers, and the front door is flanked by small single-sash windows. The roof is covered with composite shingles, and the rain gutters with downspouts are attached to the front edge of the side-facing gable. The left and right sides of the front façade feature paired groups of single-sash windows, with wood window screens. The left and right façades feature two sets of paired single-sash wood windows, and a smaller one-over-one wood window. The walls of each façade include distinctive wooden clapboard siding.

e. **EVALUATION:** In order to be eligible for historic landmark designation, properties shall meet at least three (3) of the 16 criteria listed. The applicant submitted that the property meets the following criteria, consistent with UDC sec. 35-607(b):

8. Its historical, architectural, or cultural integrity of location, design, materials, and workmanship; as an example of a Craftsman home that retains significant original materials and design details;

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 association with the Bell Manufacturing Company, one of the most successful early companies in the San Antonio garment industry;

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; for its location in the Tobin Hill neighborhood, an eligible local and National Register historic district.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of a Historic Landmark Designation of 711 East Mistletoe Avenue based on findings a through e.

COMMISSION ACTION:

Approved as submitted.



Shanon Shea Miller
Historic Preservation Officer