

HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION

December 04, 2024

HDRC CASE NO: 2024-395
ADDRESS: 727 S ALAMO ST
LEGAL DESCRIPTION: NCB 903 BLK LOT 15 EXC S TRI OR A-50
ZONING: C-2 IDZ, H
CITY COUNCIL DIST.: 1
DISTRICT: Lavaca Historic District
APPLICANT: Michael Ramirez/First Choice Signs & Services, LLC.
OWNER: FRANCISCO VELASQUEZ/VELASQUEZ FRANCISCO
TYPE OF WORK: Signage
APPLICATION RECEIVED: November 13, 2024
60-DAY REVIEW: January 12, 2025
CASE MANAGER: Bryan Morales
REQUEST:

The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for approval to install an approximately 27 sqft acrylic and aluminum blade sign with an internally illuminated cabinet.

APPLICABLE CITATIONS:

Historic Design Guidelines, Chapter 6, Guidelines for Signage

1. General

A. GENERAL

- i. *Number and size*—Each building will be allowed one major and two minor signs. Total requested signage should not exceed 50 square feet.
- ii. *New signs*—Select the type of sign to be used based on evidence of historic signs or sign attachment parts along the building storefront where possible. Design signs to respect and respond to the character and/or period of the area in which they are being placed. Signs should identify the tenant without creating visual clutter or distracting from building features and historic districts.
- iii. *Scale*—Design signage to be in proportion to the facade, respecting the building's size, scale and mass, height, and rhythms and sizes of window and door openings. Scale signage (in terms of its height and width) to be subordinate to the overall building composition.

B. HISTORIC SIGNS

- i. *Preservation*—Preserve historic signs, such as ghost signs or other signs characteristic of the building's or district's period of significance, whenever possible.
- ii. *Maintenance*—Repair historic signs and replace historic parts in-kind when deteriorated beyond repair.

C. PLACEMENT AND INSTALLATION

- i. *Location*—Place signs where historically located and reuse sign attachment parts where they exist. Do not erect signs above the cornice line or uppermost portion of a facade wall, or where they will disfigure or conceal architectural details, window openings, doors, or other significant details.
- ii. *Obstruction of historic features*—Avoid obscuring historic building features such as cornices, gables, porches, balconies, or other decorative elements with new signs.
- iii. *Damage*—Avoid irreversible damage caused by installing a sign. For example, mount a sign to the mortar rather than the historic masonry.
- iv. *Pedestrian orientation*—Orient signs toward the sidewalk to maintain the pedestrian oriented nature of the historic districts.

D. DESIGN

- i. *Inappropriate materials*—Do not use plastic, fiberglass, highly reflective materials that will be difficult to read, or other synthetic materials not historically used in the district.
- ii. *Appropriate materials*—Construct signs of durable materials used for signs during the period of the building's construction, such as wood, wrought iron, steel, aluminum, and metal grill work.
- iii. *Color*—Limit the number of colors used on a sign to three. Select a dark background with light lettering to make signs more legible.

iv. *Typefaces*—Select letter styles and sizes that complement the overall character of the building façade. Avoid hard-to-read or overly intricate styles.

E. LIGHTING

i. *Lighting sources*—Use only indirect or bare-bulb sources that do not produce glare to illuminate signs. All illumination shall be steady and stationary. Internal illumination should not be used.

ii. *Neon lighting*—Incorporate neon lighting as an integral architectural element or artwork appropriate to the site, if used.

F. PROHIBITED SIGNS

i. An abbreviated list of the types of signs prohibited within San Antonio’s historic districts and on historic landmarks is provided below. Refer to UDC Section 35-612(j) and Chapter 28 of the Municipal Code for more detailed information on prohibited signs.

- Billboards, junior billboards, portable signs, and advertising benches.
- Pole signs.
- Revolving signs or signs with a kinetic component.
- Roof mounted signs, except in the case of a contributing sign.
- Digital and/or LED lighted signs, not to include LED light sources that do not meet the definition of a sign.
- Moored balloons or other floating signs that are tethered to the ground or to a structure.
- Any sign which does not identify a business or service within the historic district or historic landmark.
- Any non-contributing sign which is abandoned or damaged beyond 50 percent of its replacement value, including parts of old or unused signs.

Notwithstanding the above, signs designated as a contributing sign or structure by the historic preservation officer shall not be prohibited unless or until such designation is revoked.

G. MULTI-TENANT PROPERTIES

i. *Signage Plan*—Develop a master signage plan or signage guidelines for the total building or property.

ii. *Directory signs*—Group required signage in a single directory sign to minimize visual color and promote a unified appearance.

3. Projecting and Wall-Mounted Signs

A. GENERAL

i. *Mounting devices*—Construct sign frames and panels that will be used to be attach signs to the wall of a building of wood, metal, or other durable materials appropriate to the building’s period of construction.

ii. *Structural supports*—Utilize sign hooks, expansion bolts, or through bolts with washers on the inside of the wall depending upon the weight and area of the sign, and the condition of the wall to which it is to be attached.

iii. *Appropriate usage*—Limit the use of projecting and wall-mounted signs to building forms that historically used these types of signs, most typically commercial storefronts. To a lesser degree, these signage types may also be appropriate in areas where residential building forms have been adapted for office or retail uses, if sized accordingly.

B. PROJECTING SIGNS

i. *Placement*—Mount projecting signs perpendicularly to a building or column while allowing eight feet of overhead clearance above public walkways.

ii. *Public right-of-way*—Limit the extension of projecting signs from the building facade into the public right-of-way for a maximum distance of eight feet or a distance equal to two-thirds the width of the abutting sidewalk, whichever distance is greater.

iii. *Area*—Projecting signs should be scaled appropriately in response to the building façade and number of tenants.

C. WALL-MOUNTED SIGNS

i. *Area*—Limit the aggregate area of all wall-mounted signs to twenty-five percent of a building facade.

ii. *Projection*—Limit the projection of wall-mounted signs to less than twelve inches from the building wall.

iii. *Placement*—Locate wall signs on existing signboards—the area above the storefront windows and below the second story windows—when available. Mount wall signs to align with others on the block if an existing signboard is not available.

iv. *Channel letters*—Avoid using internally-illuminated, wall-mounted channel letters for new signs unless historic precedent exists. Reverse channel letters may be permitted.

FINDINGS:

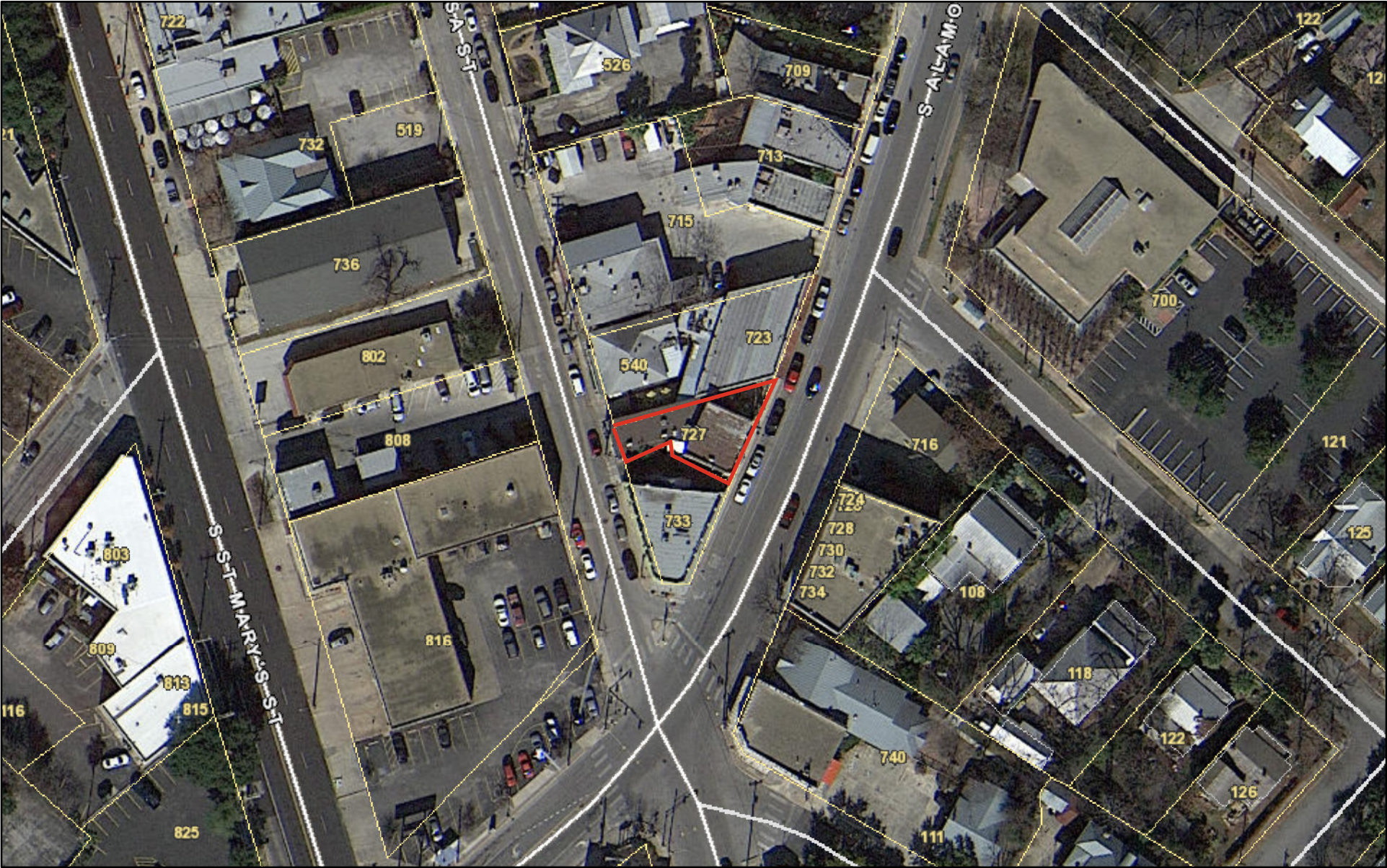
- a. The property located at 727 S Alamo St is a two-story commercial structure that first appears on the 1892 Sanborn Map. It features four non-historic windows on the second floor facing S Alamo St, two entry doors, and two large windows on the first floor. The S Alamo St facing wall plane features bilateral symmetry and first appears in the 1892 map as a bakery. This property contributes to the Lavaca Historic District.
- b. SIGNAGE (SIZE) – The applicant is requesting approval for a blade sign approximately 27 sqft in size. The Historic Design Guidelines for Signage 1.A.i. states total requested signage should not exceed 50 square feet. Staff finds the total size of the proposed sign conforms to Guidelines.
- c. SIGNAGE (MATERIALS) – The applicant is requesting approval for a blade sign featuring an acrylic face and aluminum surround. Signage 1.D.i. states to not use synthetic materials not historically used in the historic district. Signage 1.D.ii. states to construct signs of durable materials used for signs during the period of the building's construction, such as wood, wrought iron, steel, aluminum, and metal grill work. While the use of aluminum is appropriate, staff finds the use of acrylic does not conform to Guidelines.
- d. SIGNAGE (COLORS) – The applicant is requesting approval for a blade sign featuring a white background and black lettering. Signage 1.D.iii. states to select a dark background with light lettering to make signs more legible. Staff finds the color placement does not conform to Guidelines.
- e. SIGNAGE (LIGHTING) – The applicant is requesting approval for a blade sign featuring internal illumination. Signage 1.E.i. states to use only indirect or bare-bulb sources that do not produce glare to illuminate signs and internal illumination should not be used. Staff finds the use of internal illumination does not conform to Guidelines.
- f. SIGNAGE (INSTALLATION) – The applicant is requesting approval to install a blade sign on historic masonry. Signage 1.C.iii. states to avoid irreversible damage caused by installing a sign and to mount a sign to the mortar rather than the historic masonry. Staff finds the installation of the blade sign generally appropriate; however, the applicant should install the signage without damage to historic masonry onsite.

RECOMMENDATION:

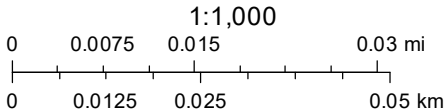
Staff recommends approval of the request, based on findings a through f, with the following stipulations:

- i. That the applicant incorporate a durable material for the requested sign as noted in finding c.
- ii. That the applicant incorporate a dark background with light lettering as noted in finding d.
- iii. That the applicant incorporate external lighting as noted in finding e.

City of San Antonio One Stop

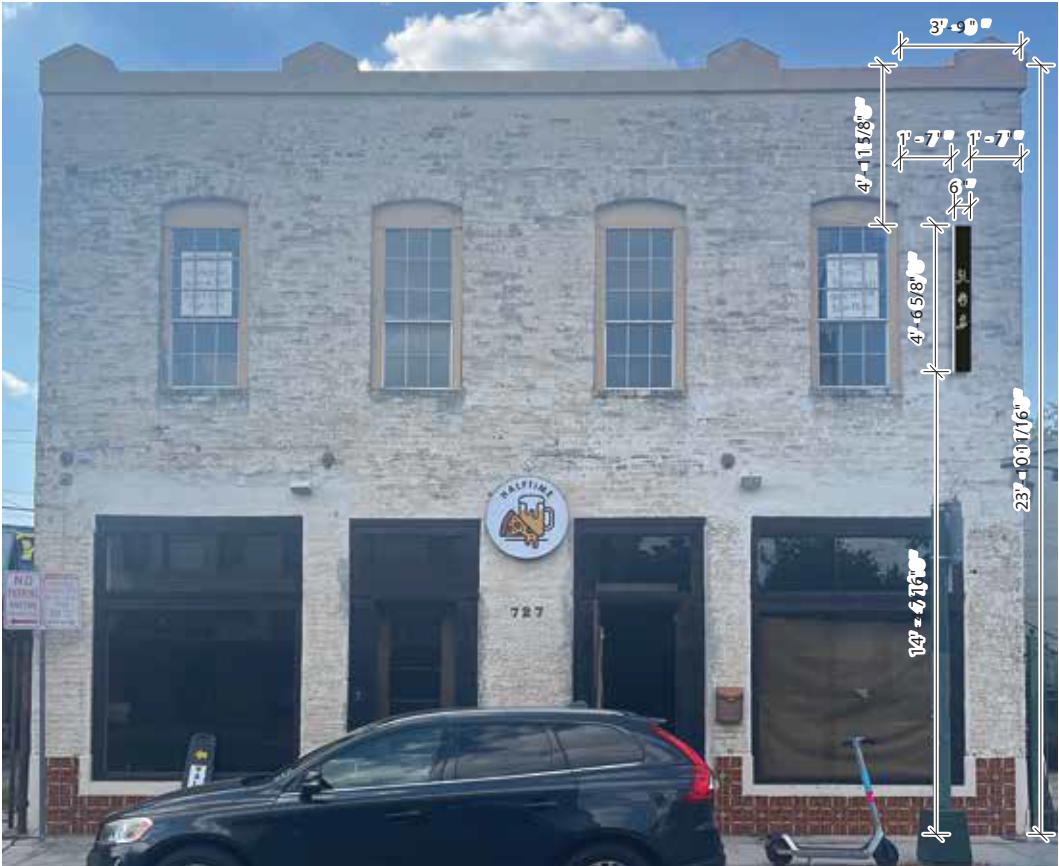


November 26, 2024

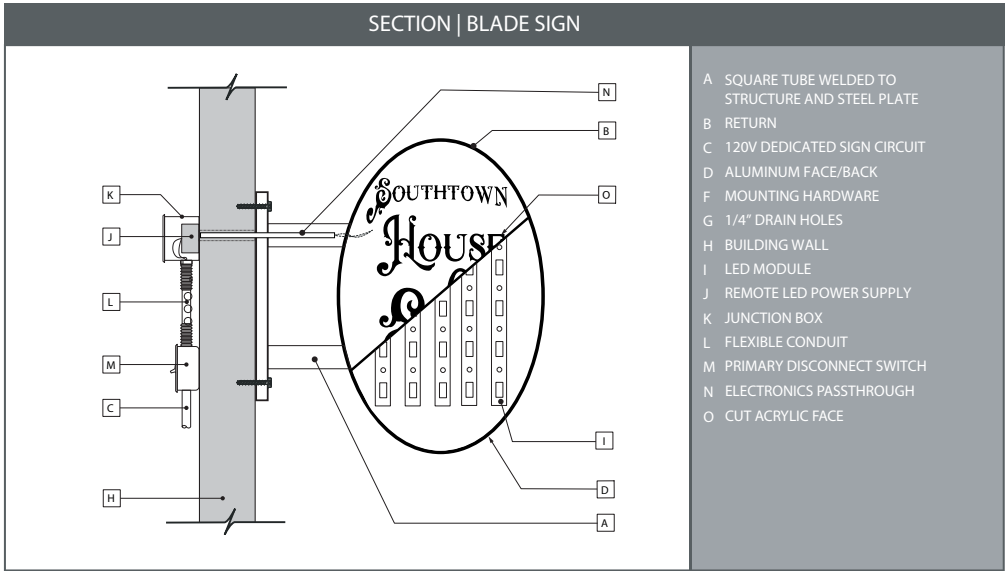


SOUTHTOWN SPIRITS/
SIGN PLACEMENT

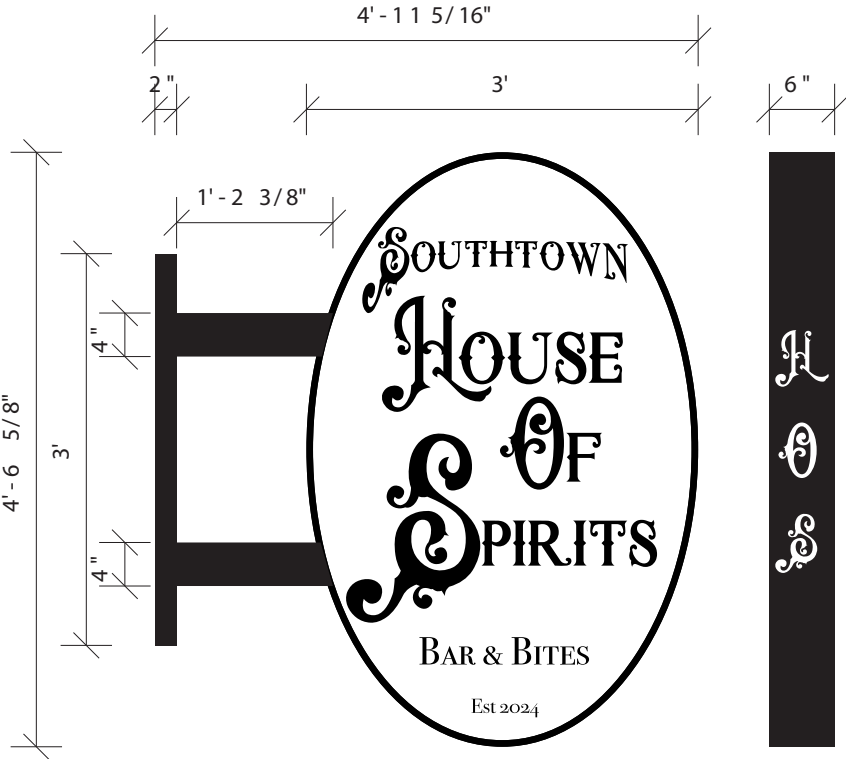
BLADE SIGN



SECTION



MEASUREMENTS



LOCATION

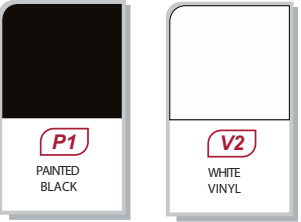


TYPE 1

QUANTIT Y: 1
49 15/16" W X 54 3/4" H 6" D

DISTANCE FROM GROUND:
14' 4 7/16"

1 DESCRIPTION
DOUBLE-SIDED BLADE SIGN
MOUNTED TO THE WALL.



BLADE SIGN

APPROX. 18.9 SQ FT

NOTES:



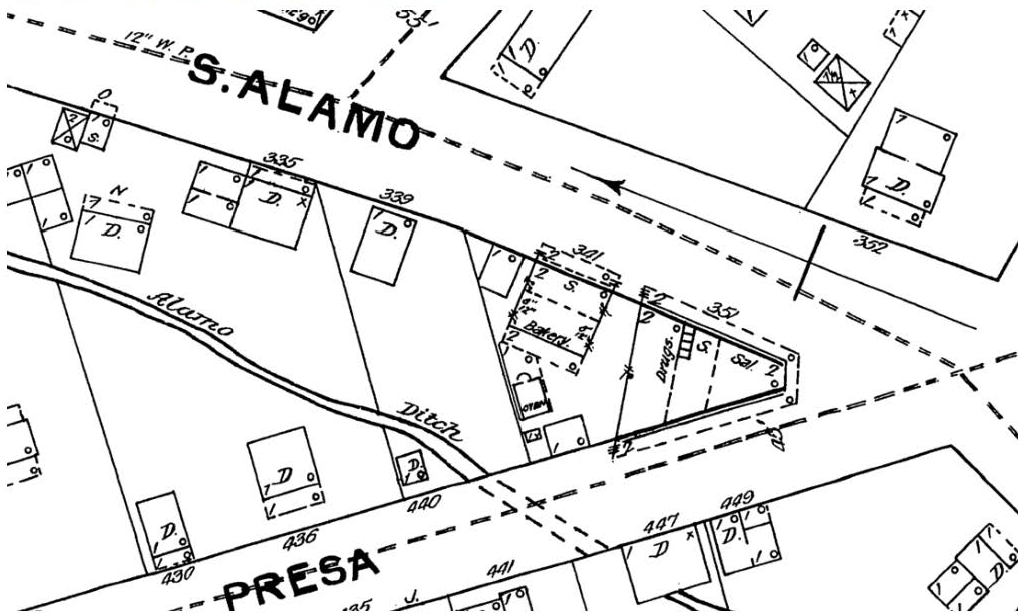
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FOR ELECTRIC SIGNS IN STALLED
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State: Texas ▼

City: San Antonio ▼

Date: Feb. 1892 

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San Antonio 1896, Sheet 31

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State: Texas

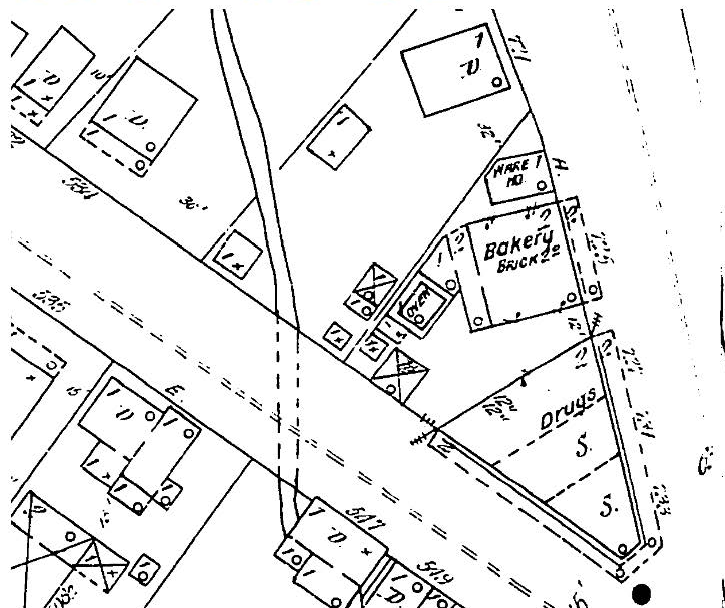
City: San Antonio

Date: 1896



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