

HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION

July 17, 2024

HDRC CASE NO: 2024-227
ADDRESS: 1613 N ALAMO ST
LEGAL DESCRIPTION: NCB 965 BLK LOT 13
ZONING: IDZ-3, H
CITY COUNCIL DIST.: 2
APPLICANT: Ashley Farrimond/Killen, Griffin & Farrimond, PLLC
OWNER: BESA LAND PARTNERS LP
TYPE OF WORK: Demolition of a landmark
APPLICATION RECEIVED: May 02, 2024
60-DAY REVIEW: July 01, 2024 (60 Day Demolition Hold)
CASE MANAGER: Edward Hall
REQUEST:

The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for approval to demolish the historic structure at 1613 N Alamo, an individual landmark.

The historic structure was heavily damaged by fire on April 23, 2024.

APPLICABLE CITATIONS:

UDC Section 35-614. – Demolition

Demolition of a historic landmark constitutes an irreplaceable loss to the quality and character of the City of San Antonio. Accordingly, these procedures provide criteria to prevent unnecessary damage to the quality and character of the city's historic districts and character while, at the same time, balancing these interests against the property rights of landowners.

(a)Applicability. The provisions of this section apply to any application for demolition of a historic landmark (including those previously designated as historic exceptional or historic significant) or a historic district.

(3)Property Located in Historic District and Contributing to District Although Not Designated a Landmark.

No certificate shall be issued for property located in a historic district and contributing to the district although not designated a landmark unless the applicant demonstrates clear and convincing evidence supporting an unreasonable economic hardship on the applicant if the application for a certificate is disapproved. When an applicant fails to prove unreasonable economic hardship in such cases, the applicant may provide additional information regarding loss of significance as provided in subsection (c)(3) in order to receive a certificate for demolition of the property.

(b) Unreasonable Economic Hardship.

(1)Generally. The historic and design review commission shall be guided in its decision by balancing the historic, architectural, cultural and/or archaeological value of the particular landmark or eligible landmark against the special merit of the proposed replacement project. The historic and design review commission shall not consider or be persuaded to find unreasonable economic hardship based on the presentation of circumstances or items that are not unique to the property in question (i.e. the current economic climate).

(2)Burden of Proof. The historic and design review commission shall not consider or be persuaded to find unreasonable economic hardship based on the presentation of circumstances or items that are not unique to the property in question (i.e. the current economic climate). When a claim of unreasonable economic hardship is made, the owner must prove by a preponderance of the evidence that:

- A. The owner cannot make reasonable beneficial use of or realize a reasonable rate of return on a structure or site, regardless of whether that return represents the most profitable return possible, unless the highly significant endangered, historic and cultural landmark, historic and cultural landmarks district or demolition delay designation, as applicable, is removed or the proposed demolition or relocation is allowed;
- B. The structure and property cannot be reasonably adapted for any other feasible use, whether by the current owner or by a purchaser, which would result in a reasonable rate of return; and
- C. The owner has failed to find a purchaser or tenant for the property during the previous two (2) years, despite

having made substantial ongoing efforts during that period to do so. The evidence of unreasonable economic hardship introduced by the owner may, where applicable, include proof that the owner's affirmative obligations to maintain the structure or property make it impossible for the owner to realize a reasonable rate of return on the structure or property. (3)Criteria. The public benefits obtained from retaining the cultural resource must be analyzed and duly considered by the historic and design review commission.

As evidence that an unreasonable economic hardship exists, the owner may submit the following information to the historic and design review commission by affidavit:

A. For all structures and property:

- i. The past and current use of the structures and property;
- ii. The name and legal status (e.g., partnership, corporation) of the owners;
- iii. The original purchase price of the structures and property;

i. The assessed value of the structures and property according to the two (2) most recent tax assessments;

- v. The amount of real estate taxes on the structures and property for the previous two (2) years;
- vi. The date of purchase or other acquisition of the structures and property;
- vii. Principal balance and interest rate on current mortgage and the annual debt service on the structures and property, if any, for the previous two (2) years;
- viii. All appraisals obtained by the owner or applicant within the previous two (2) years in connection with the owner's purchase, financing or ownership of the structures and property;
- ix. Any listing of the structures and property for sale or rent, price asked and offers received;
- x. Any consideration given by the owner to profitable adaptive uses for the structures and property;
- xi. Any replacement construction plans for proposed improvements on the site;
- xii. Financial proof of the owner's ability to complete any replacement project on the site, which may include but not be limited to a performance bond, a letter of credit, a trust for completion of improvements, or a letter of commitment from a financial institution; and
- xiii. The current fair market value of the structure and property as determined by a qualified appraiser.

xiv. Any property tax exemptions claimed in the past five (5) years.

B. For income producing structures and property:

- i. Annual gross income from the structure and property for the previous two (2) years;
- ii. Itemized operating and maintenance expenses for the previous two (2) years; and
- iii. Annual cash flow, if any, for the previous two (2) years.

C. In the event that the historic and design review commission determines that any additional information described above is necessary in order to evaluate whether an unreasonable economic hardship exists, the historic and design review commission shall notify the owner. Failure by the owner to submit such information to the historic and design review commission within fifteen (15) days after receipt of such notice, which time may be extended by the historic and design review commission, may be grounds for denial of the owner's claim of unreasonable economic hardship.

When a low-income resident homeowner is unable to meet the requirements set forth in this section, Then the historic and design review commission, at its own discretion, may waive some or all of the requested information and/or request substitute information that an indigent resident homeowner may obtain without incurring any costs. If the historic and design review commission cannot make a determination based on information submitted and an appraisal has not been provided, then the historic and design review commission may request that an appraisal be made by the city.

(d)Documentation and Strategy.

(1)Applicants that have received a recommendation for a certificate shall document buildings, objects, sites or structures which are intended to be demolished with 35mm slides or prints, preferably in black and white, and supply a set of slides or prints to the historic preservation officer.

(2)Applicants shall also prepare for the historic preservation officer a salvage strategy for reuse of building materials deemed valuable by the historic preservation officer for other preservation and restoration activities.

(3)Applicants that have received an approval of a certificate regarding demolition shall be permitted to Receive a demolition permit without additional commission action on demolition, following the commission's recommendation of a certificate for new construction. Permits for demolition and construction

shall be issued simultaneously if requirements of section 35-609, new construction, are met, and the property owner provides financial proof of his ability to complete the project.

(4) When the commission recommends approval of a certificate for buildings, objects, sites, structures designated as

landmarks, or structures in historic districts, permits shall not be issued until all plans for the site have received

approval from all appropriate city boards, commissions, departments and agencies. Permits for parking lots shall not

be issued, nor shall an applicant be allowed to operate a parking lot on such property, unless such parking lot plan

was approved as a replacement element for the demolished object or structure.

(e) Issuance of Permit. When the commission recommends approval of a certificate regarding demolition of buildings, objects, sites, or structures in historic districts or historic landmarks, permits shall not be issued until all plans for the site have received approval from all appropriate city boards, commissions, departments and agencies. Once the replacement plans are approved a fee shall be assessed for the demolition based on the approved replacement plan square footage. The fee must be paid in full prior to issuance of any permits and shall be deposited into an account as directed by the historic preservation officer for the benefit, rehabilitation or acquisition of local historic resources. Fees shall be as follows and are in addition to any fees charged by planning and development services:

0—2,500 square feet = \$2,000.00

2,501—10,000 square feet = \$5,000.00

10,001—25,000 square feet = \$10,000.00

25,001—50,000 square feet = \$20,000.00

Over 50,000 square feet = \$30,000.00

FINDINGS:

- a. The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for approval to demolish the historic structure at 1613 N Alamo, an individual landmark.
- b. The historic structure at 1613 N Alamo was constructed circa 1920 and is found on the 1912 Sanborn Map. The structure was constructed in the Craftsman style and features a full width front porch and a front facing gabled roof. The historic structure was heavily damaged by fire on April 23, 2024. Many of the structure's ornamental elements remain, including porch columns and brackets.
- c. SUB-COMMITTEE REVIEW – The Demolition and Designation Committee met on site on May 29, 2024, and June 12, 2024, to view the condition of the structure. At those site visits, Commissioners commented on the condition of the structure and asked questions regarding salvage, possible reconstruction, and the structure's structural integrity.
- d. DEMOLITION NOTICE – Demolition notice postcards were mailed to properties within a 200-foot radius of the property, as required by the Unified Development Code.
- e. The loss of a landmark structure is an irreplaceable loss to the quality and character of San Antonio. Demolition of any contributing buildings should only occur after every attempt has been made, within reason, to successfully reuse the structure. Clear and convincing evidence supporting an unreasonable economic hardship on the applicant if the application for a certificate is disapproved must be presented by the applicant in order for demolition to be considered. The criteria for establishing unreasonable economic hardship are listed in UDC Section 35-614 (b)(3). The applicant must prove by a preponderance of the evidence that:

1. *The owner cannot make reasonable beneficial use of or realize a reasonable rate of return on a structure or site, regardless of whether that return represents the most profitable return possible, unless the highly significant endangered, historic and cultural landmark, historic and cultural landmarks district or demolition delay designation, as applicable, is removed or the proposed demolition or relocation is allowed;*

[The applicant has provided an estimate to reconstruct the structure, which totals \$470,400. Per Bexar County Appraisal District records, the assessed value of this lot is \$943,210.]

2. *The structure and property cannot be reasonably adapted for any other feasible use, whether by the current owner or by a purchaser, which would result in a reasonable rate of return;*

[The applicant has submitted a structural engineer's assessment which notes that due to the major spread of damage cause by the fire, the structure of the building has been compromised and is not considered a structurally sound building.]

3. *The owner has failed to find a purchaser or tenant for the property during the previous two (2) years, despite having made substantial ongoing efforts during that period to do so. The evidence of unreasonable economic hardship introduced by the owner may, where applicable, include proof that the owner's affirmative obligations to maintain the structure or property make it impossible for the owner to realize a reasonable rate of return on the structure or property.*

[This property is not currently listed for sale and has not been actively marketed by this owner. Per Bexar County Deed History, this property was purchased by the current owner in May 2022.]

- f. Staff finds that the applicant has not fully satisfied the burden of proof requirements to demonstrate an unreasonable economic hardship, as the UDC requires all three criteria, noted above, to be met.
- g. LOSS OF SIGNIFICANCE – When an applicant fails to prove unreasonable economic hardship, the applicant may provide to the Historic and Design Review Commission additional information which may show a loss of significance in regards to the subject of the application in order to receive Historic and Design Review Commission recommendation of approval of the demolition. If, based on the evidence presented, the Historic and Design Review Commission finds that the structure or property is no longer historically, culturally, architecturally or archeologically significant, it may make a recommendation for approval of the demolition. In making this determination, the historic and design review commission must find that the owner has provided sufficient evidence to support a finding by the commission that the structure or property has undergone significant and irreversible changes which have caused it to lose the historic, cultural, architectural or archeological significance, qualities or features which qualified the structure or property for such designation. Additionally, the Historic and Design Review Commission must find that such changes were not caused either directly or indirectly by the owner, and were not due to intentional or negligent destruction or a lack of maintenance rising to the level of a demolition by neglect.
- h. REPLACEMENT PLANS – The applicant has not provided specific or detailed replacement plans at this time.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff does not find that the applicant has met the UDC's requirement for an unreasonable economic hardship, as noted in finding f; however, staff finds that the structure may have experienced a loss of significance.

Should the Historic and Design Review Commission find an unreasonable economic hardship or a loss of significance not caused directly or indirectly by the owner, as noted in finding f, and recommend approval of the demolition of this structure, staff recommends the following:

- i. That the applicant provide documentation of the structure's architectural elements in accordance with the UDC Section 35-614(d).
- ii. That the applicant provide a detailed salvage plan documenting which elements will be salvaged through deconstruction, as required by Code.

All requirements of the UDC Section 35-614(d) and (e) must be satisfied prior to the issuance of a demolition permit.



CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
**OFFICE OF HISTORIC
PRESERVATION**

Historic and Design Review Commission
Design Review Committee Report

DATE: May 29, 2024

HDRC Case #: -----

Address: 1613 N Alamo

Meeting Location: 1613 N Alamo

APPLICANT: Ashley Farrimond

DRC Members present: Monica Savino, Jimmy Cervantes

Staff Present: Edward Hall

Others present: Benjamin Dressner

REQUEST: Demolition of a historic landmark

COMMENTS/CONCERNS:

MS: Questions about planned use for property.

MS: Questions about what started the fire.

BD: Vagrants

BD: Fire investigation showed vagrant fire

BD: 24/7 security now; previously 4 site visits a day.

MS: Questions regarding relocation of structure. BD: House was going to be relocated within development or within adjacent neighborhood. BD: Hadn't progressed with idea.

MS: Almost complete interior destruction for the last 20 feet or so. Front portion appears to still maintain architectural details in tact.

MS: Consider relocating the front portion of the structure.

AF: Will need to discuss partial relocation with a structural engineer.

MS: Look at partial demolition and apply economic hardship to that.

MS: Provide all of the documents that would normally be provided.

JC: Questions regarding cause of fire.

JC: When viewed from front, the house has a lot of character. Damage is obvious. How much is salvageable? Could elements of the house be saved and used elsewhere?

JC: Would like to know extent of damage on the interior.

JC: Understands challenges

JC: Provide a viable plan for salvage for the structure's materials.

OVERALL COMMENTS:

June 11, 2024



Mr. Benjamin Dreszer
Fulcrum Development, LLC
100003 NW Military HWY. Ste. 2205
San Antonio, Texas 78231

RE: **1613 N. Alamo – Fire Investigation**
1613 N Alamo St.,
San Antonio, Texas 78215

AXIS Project #: **24310-0**

Dear Mr. Benjamin Dreszer:

As requested, AXIS Structural, LLC visited the above referenced residential structure on June 6, 2024, to assess the structure for possible damage sustained from a past fire event and provide our opinion on the structural soundness of the entire structure. Our assessment was limited to our visual observations of the structural members as we could visually see during our visit to the site. Destructive testing or exploration of the sub-surface soils was not part of our assessment.

Existing Construction:

The roof is constructed with conventional 2x4 rafters at 24" on center topped with 1x6 decking with standing seam metal roof covering. Ceiling joists consist of 2x4 with 1x6 ceiling. Roof and ceiling framing bearing over interior and perimeter conventionally framed 2x4 at 24" on center walls, insulated with blown-in insulation. The superstructure framing is supported over a pier and beam foundation consisting of 2x8 floor joists at 24" on center. The residence was constructed in 1940 (according to tax records).

Observations:

During our visit to the site, we walked the perimeter and interior of the building. Walking through the interior of the building and observing, many wall finishes were either burned away or removed to expose wall framing. Fire seems to have spread to the entire interior of the structure. Damages seen during our visit are as follows:

- Metal roof deck burned, broken, and bent.
- Burned and destroyed roof rafters with much roof decking gone.
- Burned and destroyed wall rafters and studs.
- Burned away floor decking and flooring.

Engineers Opinion:

Based on our observations, due to the major spread of damage caused by the fire, we believe that the structural integrity of this building has been compromised and it is not considered a structurally sound building. In our opinion, the current structural state of the structure poses a potential life-safety risk of those that enter, particularly first responders. Therefore, given the extent of the structural damage and high risk to life safety, we recommend that the structure be demolished.

Respectfully,

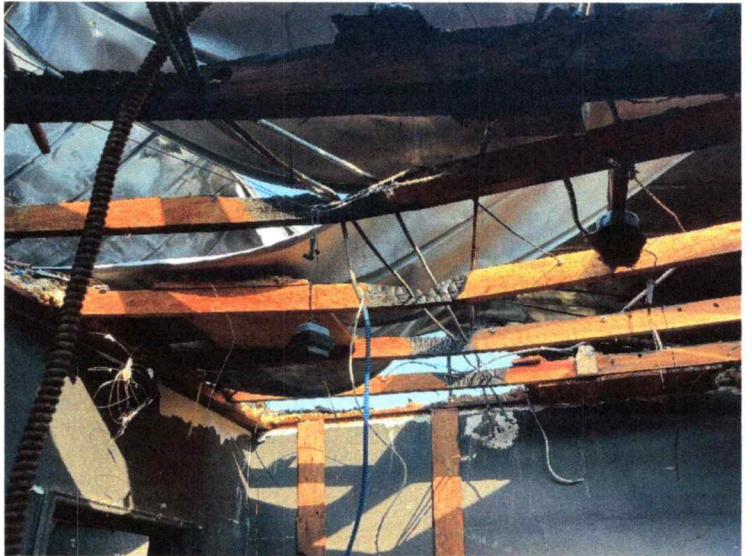
AXIS Structural, LLC


Roger Martinez, P.E.
Texas Professional Engineer License Number 90220

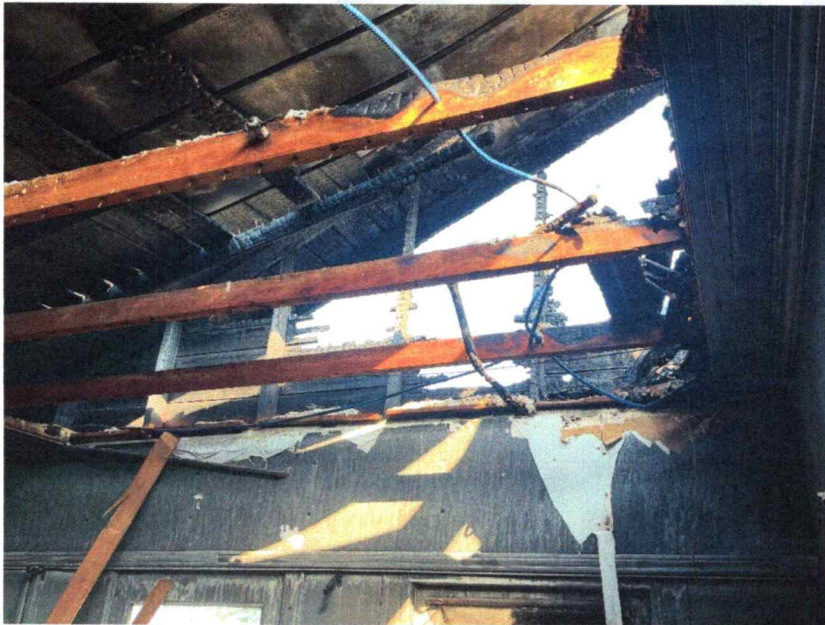
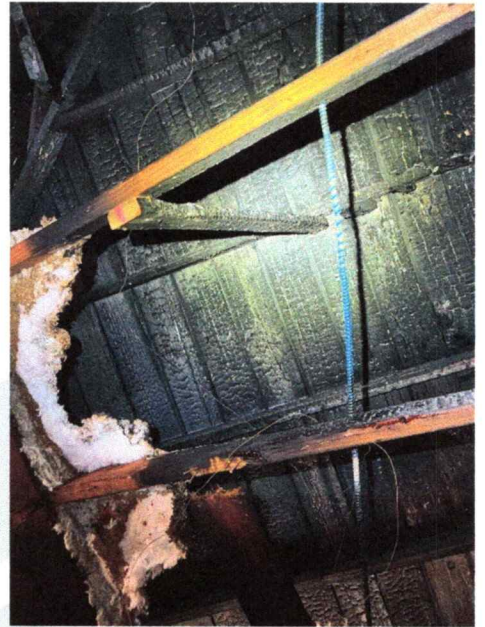
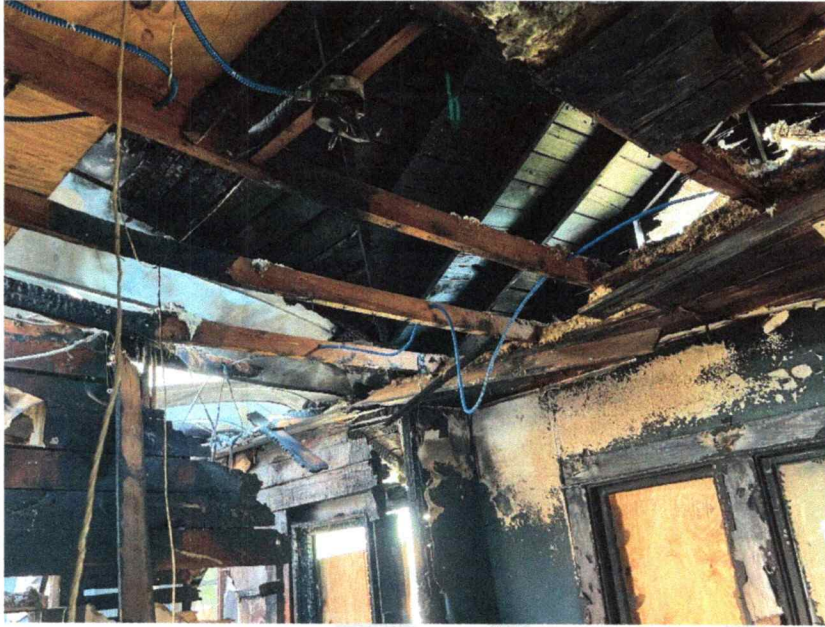


AXIS Structural, LLC investigated only the portion of the building described. Other buildings that are part of this complex were never considered as part of our investigation. Our investigation did not include discovery, testing, monitoring, cleanup or neutralization of pollutants, hazardous substances or asbestos. Our investigation also did not include reviewing mechanical, electrical or plumbing conditions. Our opinions and recommendations expressed are based on the condition of the structure, as we were able to visually see it during our investigation at the site. Means, methods, procedures, techniques, sequencing, completing construction and safety on the job site should remain the responsibility of the Contractor hired to carry out the repair work. No warranty of this structure for future use, operability or suitability is expressed or implied.

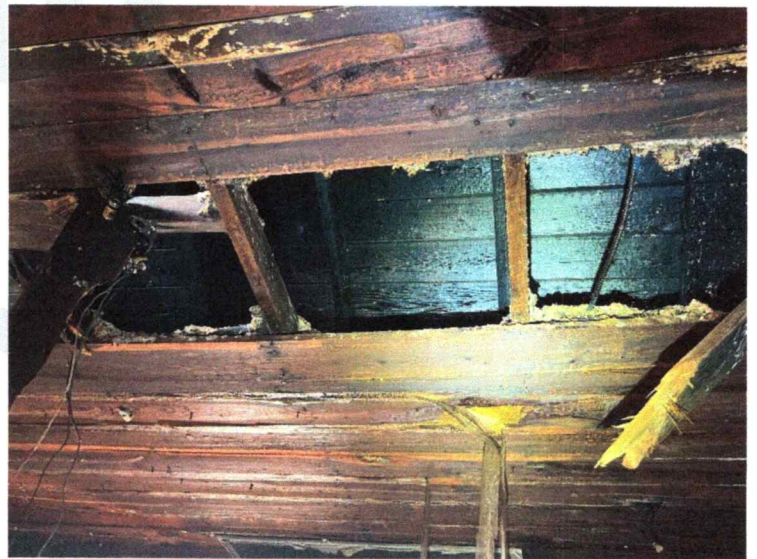
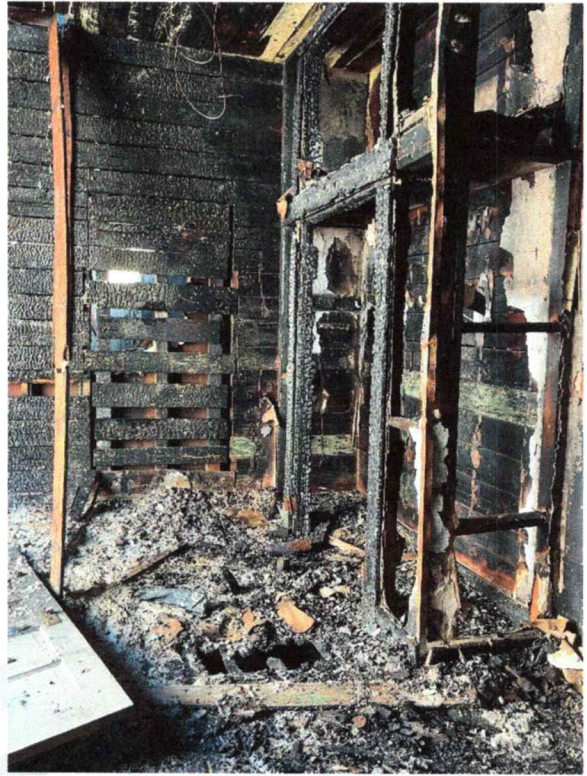
Metal Roof Deck Burned, Broken, and Bent



Burned and Destroyed Roof Rafters with Much Roof Decking Gone



Burned and Destroyed Wall Rafters and Studs



Burned Away Floor Decking and Flooring





Dean Howell inc

616 Delaware St
San Antonio, TX 78210 US
+1 2107896209
jeff@deanhowellinc.com
www.deanhowellinc.com

Estimate

ADDRESS	SHIP TO	ESTIMATE	1102AA
Fulcrum	1613 N Alamo	DATE	07/09/2024
10003 NW Military Highway St. 2205	San Antonio TX, 78215		
San Antonio, Texas 78231			

DATE	ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	QTY	RATE	AMOUNT
		Dear Benji Dreszer, based on previous similar projects our estimate is the replacement cost with demolition, new utilities, foundation, and rebuilding of structure with electrical, HVAC, plumbing in a similar wood frame, metal roof, wood floor, average interior finish and cabinets will run \$350/sq ft, and the building is 1344 sq ft. Which comes out to \$470,400. Please let us know if you need anything else. Thanks, Jeff Breazeale.			

TOTAL

Accepted By

Accepted Date

1613 N. Alamo

Potentially Salvageable Materials

wood and plastic	1400 Sq ft Dutch Lap Siding
Metal Work	1200 metal roofing standing seam
Doors	Double wooden french doors
Cabinetry	5 wooden kitchen cabinets
wood and plastic	2800 sq ft wood on wall
wood and plastic	Bead board approximately 500 sq ft
Doors	Interior doors. 4 Solid wooden single panel
Masonry	Chimney stack roughly 1.5' x 2'. Red brick, D'Hanis stamp
Windows	Window sashes. Wood six over six.
Windows	Window sash weighs
Flooring	3/4 thick x 3 1/4" wide
Metal Work	2' x 6'. Metal roofing, corrugated. 144 sq ft
wood and plastic	Studs, Rafters - 8500 LF
wood and plastic	Joist - 1000 LF
Windows	Sills - 250 LF
Roofing	Roof decking - 2500 LF
Carpentry	Beadboard - 1200 SF
trim and base	Trim and baseboards - 3500 LF
Carpentry	Shiplap

May 29, 2024 at 8:38:01 AM
1611 N Alamo St
San Antonio TX 78215
United States



May 29, 2024 at 8:39:12 AM
1613 N Alamo St
San Antonio TX 78215
United States



May 29, 2024 at 8:38:50 AM
1613 N Alamo St
San Antonio TX 78215
United States



May 29, 2024 at 8:38:33 AM
1611 N Alamo St
San Antonio TX 78215
United States



May 29, 2024 at 8:37:47 AM
1611 N Alamo St
San Antonio TX 78215
United States



May 29, 2024 at 8:38:18 AM
1611 N Alamo St
San Antonio TX 78215
United States



May 29, 2024 at 9:10:02 AM
1616 Broadway St
San Antonio TX 78215
United States



May 29, 2024 at 8:37:36 AM
1611 N Alamo St
San Antonio TX 78215
United States





