

**HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION
COMPLIANCE AND TECHNICAL ADVISORY BOARD**

June 20, 2025

HDRC CASE NO: 2025-140
ADDRESS: 219 W ELSMERE PLACE
LEGAL DESCRIPTION: NCB 3969 BLK 4 LOT 11, 12 & W 15 FT OF 13
ZONING: R-5, H
CITY COUNCIL DIST.: 1
DISTRICT: Monte Vista Historic District
APPLICANT: Dennis Oliver
OWNER: Dennis Oliver/OLIVER DENNIS C &
TYPE OF WORK: Landscape modifications and retaining wall installation
APPLICATION RECEIVED: April 17, 2025
60-DAY REVIEW: June 16, 2025 (Continued to June 20, 2025, CTAB hearing)
CASE MANAGER: Bryan Morales

REQUEST:

The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for approval to:

1. Install a limestone retaining wall.
2. Install a landscape bed with steel edging.
3. Install Rocky Mountain flat stones at the front yard.

APPLICABLE CITATIONS:

Historic Design Guidelines, Chapter 5, Guidelines for Site Elements

1. Topography

A. TOPOGRAPHIC FEATURES

- i. *Historic topography*—Avoid significantly altering the topography of a property (i.e., extensive grading). Do not alter character-defining features such as berms or sloped front lawns that help define the character of the public right-of-way. Maintain the established lawn to help prevent erosion. If turf is replaced over time, new plant materials in these areas should be low-growing and suitable for the prevention of erosion.
- ii. *New construction*—Match the historic topography of adjacent lots prevalent along the block face for new construction. Do not excavate raised lots to accommodate additional building height or an additional story for new construction.
- iii. *New elements*—Minimize changes in topography resulting from new elements, like driveways and walkways, through appropriate siting and design. New site elements should work with, rather than change, character-defining topography when possible.

2. Fences and Walls

A. HISTORIC FENCES AND WALLS

- i. *Preserve*—Retain historic fences and walls.
- ii. *Repair and replacement*—Replace only deteriorated sections that are beyond repair. Match replacement materials (including mortar) to the color, texture, size, profile, and finish of the original.
- iii. *Application of paint and cementitious coatings*—Do not paint historic masonry walls or cover them with stone facing or stucco or other cementitious coatings.

B. NEW FENCES AND WALLS

- i. *Design*—New fences and walls should appear similar to those used historically within the district in terms of their scale, transparency, and character. Design of fence should respond to the design and materials of the house or main structure.
- ii. *Location*—Avoid installing a fence or wall in a location where one did not historically exist, particularly within the front yard. The appropriateness of a front yard fence or wall is dependent on conditions within a specific historic district. New front yard fences or wall should not be introduced within historic districts that have not historically had them.

iii. *Height*—Limit the height of new fences and walls within the front yard to a maximum of four feet. The appropriateness of a front yard fence is dependent on conditions within a specific historic district. New front yard fences should not be introduced within historic districts that have not historically had them. If a taller fence or wall existed historically, additional height may be considered. The height of a new retaining wall should not exceed the height of the slope it retains.

iv. *Prohibited materials*—Do not use exposed concrete masonry units (CMU), Keystone or similar interlocking retaining wall systems, concrete block, vinyl fencing, or chain link fencing.

v. *Appropriate materials*—Construct new fences or walls of materials similar to fence materials historically used in the district. Select materials that are similar in scale, texture, color, and form as those historically used in the district, and that are compatible with the main structure. Screening incompatible uses—Review alternative fence heights and materials for appropriateness where residential properties are adjacent to commercial or other potentially incompatible uses.

C. PRIVACY FENCES AND WALLS

i. *Relationship to front facade*—Set privacy fences back from the front façade of the building, rather than aligning them with the front façade of the structure to reduce their visual prominence.

ii. *Location* – Do not use privacy fences in front yards.

3. Landscape Design

A. PLANTINGS

i. *Historic Gardens*—Maintain front yard gardens when appropriate within a specific historic district.

ii. *Historic Lawns*—Do not fully remove and replace traditional lawn areas with impervious hardscape. Limit the removal of lawn areas to mulched planting beds or pervious hardscapes in locations where they would historically be found, such as along fences, walkways, or drives. Low-growing plantings should be used in historic lawn areas; invasive or large-scale species should be avoided. Historic lawn areas should never be reduced by more than 50%.

iii. *Native xeric plant materials*—Select native and/or xeric plants that thrive in local conditions and reduce watering usage. See UDC Appendix E: San Antonio Recommended Plant List—All Suited to Xeriscape Planting Methods, for a list of appropriate materials and planting methods. Select plant materials with a similar character, growth habit, and light requirements as those being replaced.

iv. *Plant palettes*—If a varied plant palette is used, incorporate species of taller heights, such informal elements should be restrained to small areas of the front yard or to the rear or side yard so as not to obstruct views of or otherwise distract from the historic structure.

v. *Maintenance*—Maintain existing landscape features. Do not introduce landscape elements that will obscure the historic structure or are located as to retain moisture on walls or foundations (e.g., dense foundation plantings or vines) or as to cause damage.

B. ROCKS OR HARDSCAPE

i. *Impervious surfaces* —Do not introduce large pavers, asphalt, or other impervious surfaces where they were not historically located.

ii. *Pervious and semi-pervious surfaces*—New pervious hardscapes should be limited to areas that are not highly visible, and should not be used as wholesale replacement for plantings. If used, small plantings should be incorporated into the design.

iii. *Rock mulch and gravel* - Do not use rock mulch or gravel as a wholesale replacement for lawn area. If used, plantings should be incorporated into the design.

C. MULCH

Organic mulch – Organic mulch should not be used as a wholesale replacement for plant material. Organic mulch with appropriate plantings should be incorporated in areas where appropriate such as beneath a tree canopy.

i. *Inorganic mulch* – Inorganic mulch should not be used in highly-visible areas and should never be used as a wholesale replacement for plant material. Inorganic mulch with appropriate plantings should be incorporated in areas where appropriate such as along a foundation wall where moisture retention is discouraged.

D. TREES

i. *Preservation*—Preserve and protect from damage existing mature trees and heritage trees. See UDC Section 35-523 (Tree Preservation) for specific requirements.

ii. *New Trees* – Select new trees based on site conditions. Avoid planting new trees in locations that could potentially cause damage to a historic structure or other historic elements. Species selection and planting procedure should be done in accordance with guidance from the City Arborist.

iii. *Maintenance* – Proper pruning encourages healthy growth and can extend the lifespan of trees. Avoid unnecessary or harmful pruning. A certified, licensed arborist is recommended for the pruning of mature trees and heritage trees.

FINDINGS:

- a. The property located at 219 W Elsmere is a 2-story Italian Renaissance Revival structure constructed c. 1926 and first appears on the 1931 Sanborn map. The primary structure features hipped roof forms, a tile roof, a stucco exterior, and a decorative front door surround. This property contributes to the Monte Vista Historic District.
- b. VIOLATION – On April 16, 2025, Office of Historic Preservation staff received a report for landscape modifications without a Certificate of Appropriateness. OHP staff reached out to the property owner on that date to let them know of the COA requirements and to submit an application for review. On April 17, 2025, the applicant submitted a COA application for review by OHP staff and the Compliance and Technical Advisory Board (CTAB).
- c. CASE HISTORY – On May 23, 2025, the applicant requested approval of their landscape project to the CTAB. The CTAB continued the request to the following CTAB agenda set for June 20, 2025.
- d. RETAINING WALL INSTALLATION – The applicant is requesting approval to install an approximately 12” limestone retaining wall at the front of the property. The Historic Design Guidelines for Site Elements 2.B.iii. states the height of a new retaining wall should not exceed the height of the slope it retains. While the requested retaining wall will be the first for the block, staff finds the low wall generally appropriate and does not exceed the height of the existing slope. Staff finds the installation of the retaining wall proposed by the applicant generally appropriate.
- e. LANDSCAPE BED INSTALLATION – The applicant is requesting approval to install a landscape bed to feature Asian Jasmine and steel edging not exceeding 8” in height along the border of the sidewalk, walkway, and the adjacent property’s driveway. Site Elements 3.A.ii. states to limit the removal of lawn areas to mulched planting beds or pervious hardscapes in locations where they would historically be found, such as along fences, walkways, or drives. Staff finds the landscape bed installation conforms to Guidelines.
- f. FRONT YARD STONE INSTALLATION – The applicant is requesting approval to install Rocky Mountain flat stones under the two front yard trees. Site Elements 3.B.ii. states pervious hardscapes should not be used as wholesale replacement for plantings. Site Elements 3.B.iii. states to not use rock mulch or gravel as a wholesale replacement for lawn area. The applicant is retaining two trees within the rock area and has proposed to install the landscape beds as noted in finding c. Staff finds the installation of stone generally appropriate.

RECOMMENDATION:

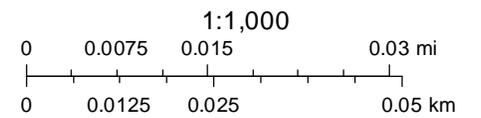
Staff recommends approval of items 1 through 3, based on findings a through f, with the following stipulations:

- i. That the applicant reduce the total height of the retaining wall to not exceed the height of slope it retains.
- ii. That the applicant increase the coverage of the Asiatic jasmine, reduce the footprint of the Rocky Mountain flat stones, and provide an updated landscape site plan for review by OHP staff prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness.

City of San Antonio One Stop



May 14, 2025



N00°00'00"W

24.2'

TWO
STUCCO

31.8'

38.5'

S00°00'00"E

existing beds

TILE

existing bed

large river stones

red oak

large river stones

pear

asian jasmine

asian jasmine

large river stones

asian jasmine

asian jasmine

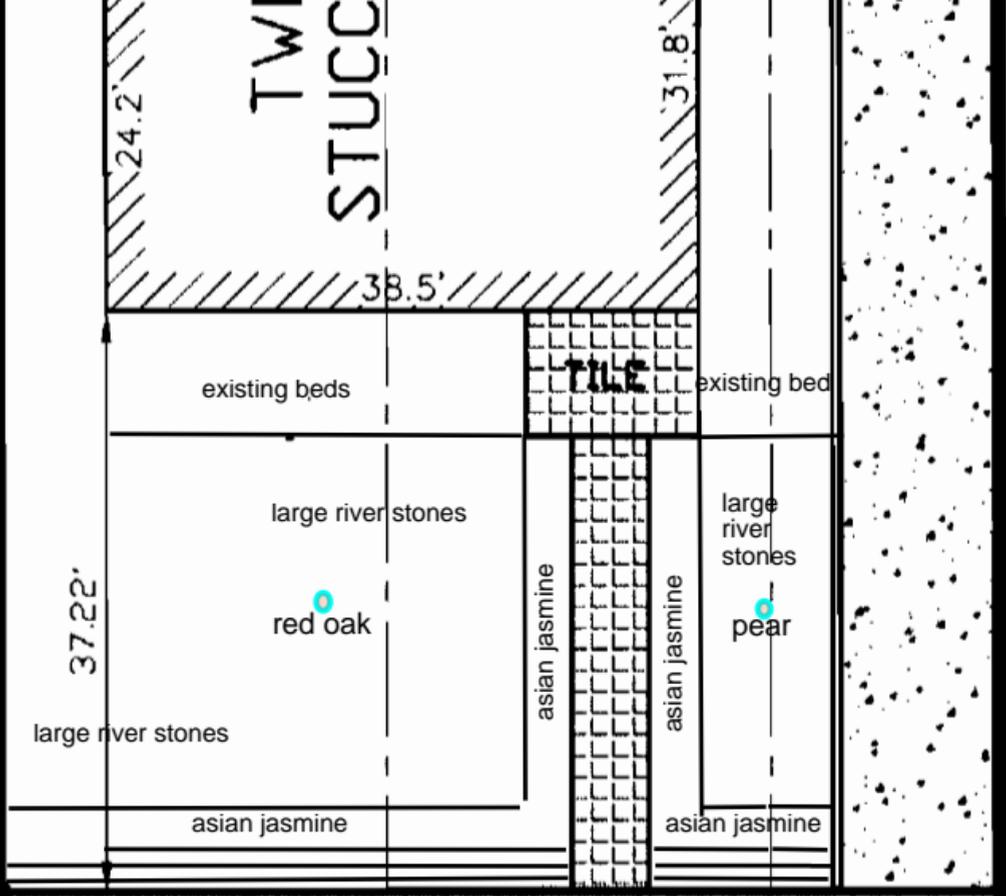
CONC.
CURB

37.22'

99.98'

Retaining wall

Rough-edged limestone rectangular blocks, about 3" high, in 3 layers, 2nd stepped back from first, 3rd stepped back from 2nd, mortared













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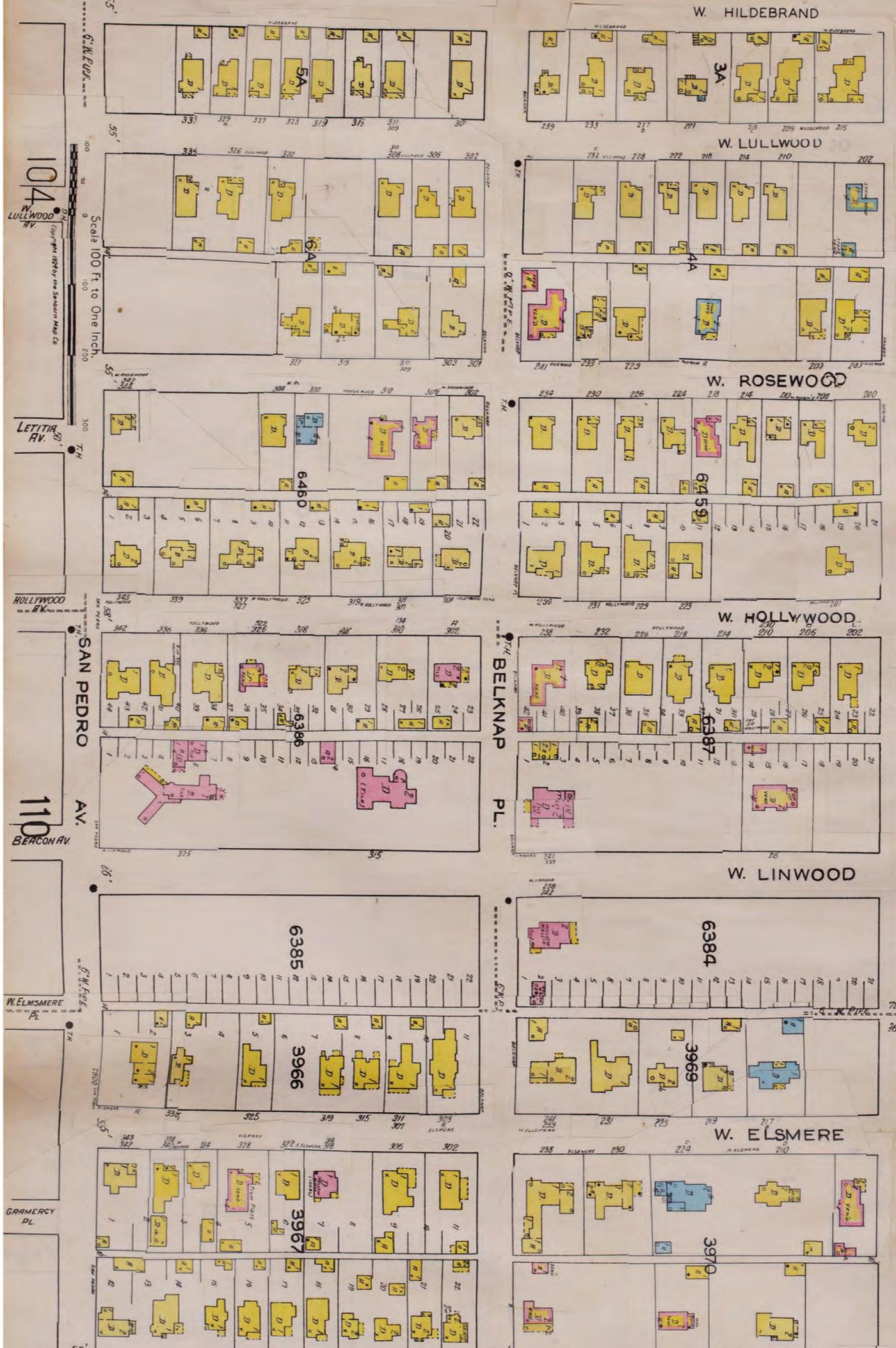
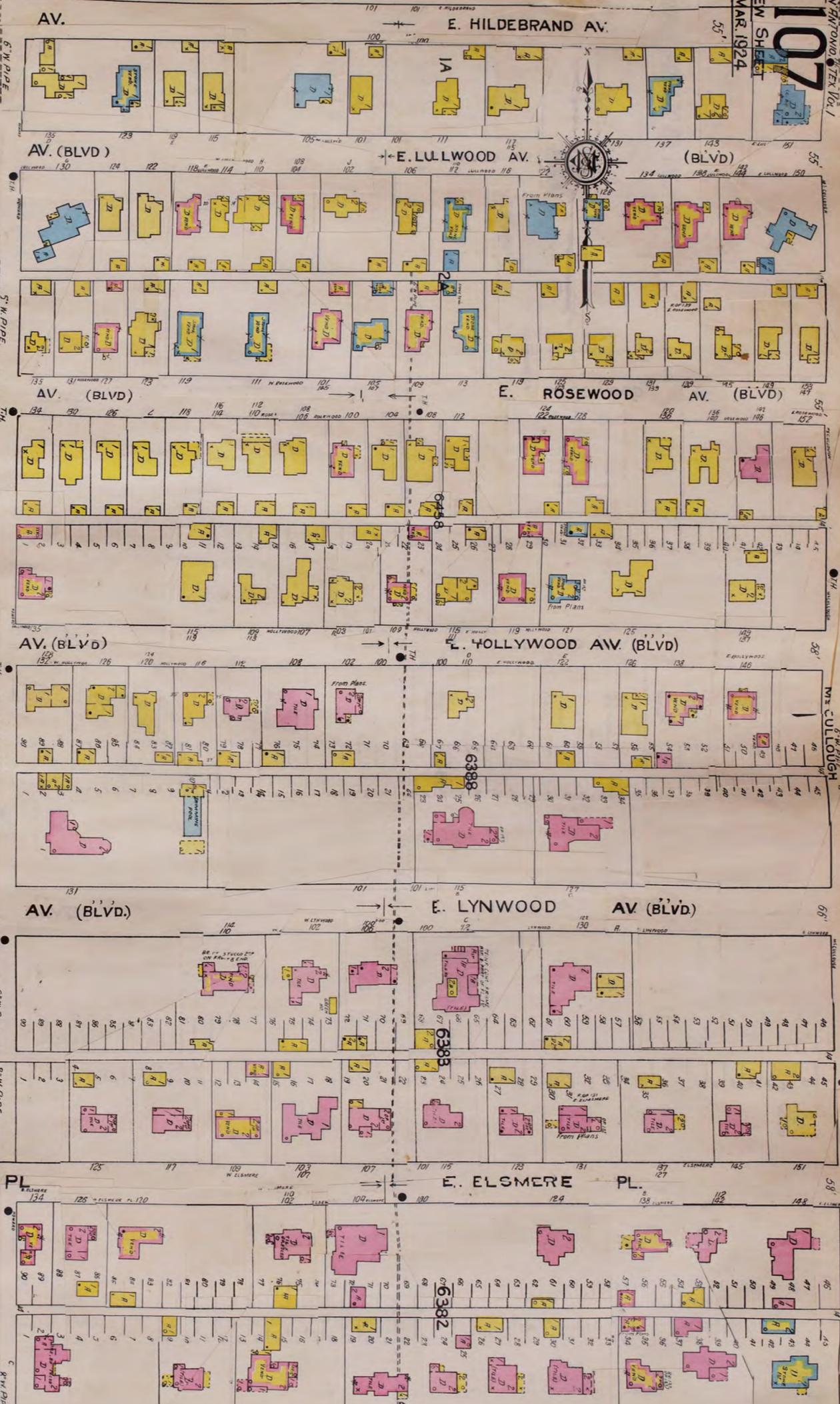
Cr. 3448

Travis Building

El Paso STREET AND AVENUE GUIDE (1926) Elsmere Place W

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1507 Cardenas Jose (h) | 1918 Ayala Luis (h) | 127 Starr J W (h) |
| 1508 Medina Carlos (r) | 1919 Martinez Julio (h) | Golondrina intacts |
| 1510 Martinez Timoteo (h) | Rodriguez Jose (r) | 201 Hewertt J W (h) |
| 1511 Hernandez Manuel (h) | 1922 Galan Manuel (h) | Drake Roy (r) |
| 1514 Hernandez Sabino (r) | 1923 Assamblea De Dios | rear Wilson W G (r) |
| rear Lewis John (r) | S Cibolo intacts | ELSMERE PLACE E |
| Rodriguez Ricardo (r) | S Navidad intacts | Bg 1 blk w 2200 McCul- |
| 1515 Losoya Basilio (r) | 2001 Sanchez Vidal (h) | lough av ext e 1 blk |
| Perez Felipe (r) | 2002 Garza Santiago (h) | 103 Anthony John (h) |
| 1516 Rodriguez Nazario (h) | 2003 Romo Benito (r) | 104 Wright Martin (h) |
| Hernandez Rodrigo (h) | 2004 Esquivel Josefina Mrs | 107 Flannery T H (h) |
| 1517 Ochoa Panfilo (h) | Mrs (r) | 115 Dugger A G (h) |
| 1518 Cantu Gonzalo (h) | 2006 Latigo Josefina Mrs (r) | 124 Felder J L (h) |
| 1521 Osuna Silberio (h) | 2007 Santoyo Anisetto (h) | 131 Vacant |
| 1522 Hernandez P M (h) | 2010 Sarmiento Jesus (h) | 137 Kearney W E (h) |
| Raggi Humberto (r) | 2011 Amayo Apolonio (h) | 142 Volck Morris (h) |
| 1523 Castillo Dario (r) | 2013 Giron Luis (h) | 145 Cook A F Dr (h) |
| 1529 Vasquez Amando (r) | 2015 Casas Maria Mrs (h) | 138 Cherry R B (h) |
| 1535 Alvarez Lena (h) | Esquivel Jose Maria | 151 McKenzie A J (h) |
| S Trinity intacts | (h) | ELSMERE PLACE W |
| 1602 Hemanes Juan | Cardenas Martinez (r) | Bg 1 blk e 2501 Howard |
| 1604 Baldobinos Arnulfo (h) | 2019 Cardenas Estefana (h) | ext w to Fredericksburg |
| 1606 Cardenas Fidel (r) | 2020 Bernal Porfirio (h) | rd |
| 1607 Torres Joaquina Mrs | S Chupaderas intacts | 117 Vacant |
| (h) | 2101 Sanchez Refugio Mrs | 125 Leslie R F (h) |
| 1612 Cardenas Hilario (h) | (r) | 126 Robertson H R (r) |
| 1614 Arredondo Jesus (h) | 2106 Castaneda Roberto | Howard intacts |
| 1619 Hernandez Pedro (h) | 2107 Martinez Lucas (h) | 219 219 McDaniel F W |
| 1621 Hernandez Aguilier (r) | Martinez Primitivo | (h) |
| 1622 Vargas Francisco (h) | 2110 Escobedo Concepcion | 230 Vacant |
| 1622 1/2 Vacant | (h) | 231 Ehlstrom Leo (h) |
| 1623 Hernandez D A Mrs (h) | 2111 Alvarez Fermin (h) | 236 Vacant |
| 1631 Ytuarte Candelario (h) | 2112 Torres Ramon (h) | 241 Frost F W (h) |
| Rosa Rafael de la (r) | 2114 Lopez M Mrs (h) | Belknap pl intacts |
| 1702 Esquivel Evaristo (h) | 2116 Castillo Miguel (r) | 302 Locke J R (h) |
| 1704 Ortiz Enrique (r) | rear Barbosa Pilar (r) | 306 Gieseck Walter (h) |
| 1706 Vargas Eduardo (h) | 2119 Berrosa Celestino (h) | 311 McCaldin J R (h) |
| 1707 Wolff Enrique (h) | 2120 Vacant | 314 Scott R C (h) |
| 1708 Reyna Abran (h) | 2122 Salinas Maria Mrs | 315 Kaufman Leon (h) |
| 1709 Ochoa Alfredo (h) | 2123 Aguillar Estefana Mrs | 319 Graves Kathryn Mrs |
| 1710 Gomez Pedro (r) | (h) | (h) |
| 1711 Ochoa Jesus | S Calaveras intacts | 322 Francis D G (h) |
| 1712 Reyna Narciso (h) | 2202 Barron Fernando | 325 Hennessey C T (h) |
| 1713 Fuente Bonifacio de la | 2206 (2106) Zamano Jose | 334 Greenwell J W (h) |
| (h) | (r) | 335 Caldwell Phillip Maj (h) |
| rear Fuente Margarito de la | 2209 Gonzales Bonifacio (h) | 338 Duckwall M W (r) |
| 1714 Garza Rogelio (r) | 2210 Estala Precilliano (h) | 342 Alvey G H (h) |
| 1715 Perez Aurelio (r) | 2214 Lozano Manuel (h) | San Pedro av intacts |
| 1718 Galindo Ramona Mrs | 2215 Alvarez Gil (h) | 402 Hearne W H (h) |
| (h) | 2217 Nalda Encarnacion (h) | 414 Vacant |
| 1719 Flores Santiago (h) | 2220 Siler Geronimo (h) | 424 Froebel R A (h) |
| 1720 Galindo Manuel (r) | 2223 Enriquez Pedro (h) | 433 Gilbert C W (h) |
| S Nueces intacts | 2310 Patino J O (h) | 437 Scott W T (h) |
| 1801 Cantu Manuel (h) | 2311 Alvarez Ramona Mrs | Breedon av intacts |
| 1806 Barbosa Refugia (h) | (r) | 502 Nicholson A L Mrs (h) |
| 1810 Cardenas Jose (h) | 2314 Perales Irineo (h) | 506 Stewart G E (r) |
| 1814 Gallindo Valentine (r) | 2315 Valdez Florentina Mrs | 507 Irish B G (h) |
| 1815 Rodriguez Pedro (r) | (r) | 523 Heil W W (h) |
| 1815 1/2 Mendoza Donaciano (r) | 2317 Lopez Rafaela Mrs (h) | 524 Brown P D Dr (h) |
| La Cruz Petra (r) | 2318 Lopez Dolores Mrs (h) | 528 Vacant |
| 1816 Salazar Tranquillino (r) | 2319 Lopez Tereso (h) | 529 Cook J A (h) |
| 1817 Perez Dolores Mrs (h) | Cardena Jose (r) | Klein Janet F Mrs (r) |
| 1818 Quiroz Jose (h) | 2321 Medina Cesario (h) | 534 Dewers O S (h) |
| 1819 Aguillar Severiano (r) | Galerio (h) | 535 Garrett Emma Mrs (h) |
| 1825 Salinas Concepcion (h) | S Sabinas intacts | 538 Forrest F B (h) |
| 1900 Vacant | 2410 Pena Dionicio (h) | N Flores intacts |
| 1901 Velasco Tomas (r) | 2414 Flores Anastacio (r) | 606 Borden B G (h) |

NEW SHEET 107
MAR. 1924



Scale 100 Ft. to One Inch.

LETITIA AV.

HOLLYWOOD AV.

SAN PEDRO AV.

110 BEACON AV.

W. ELSMERE PL.

GRAMERY PL.

Original Located at San Antonio Public Library Special Collections