



# 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**

July 17, 2024

**HDRC CASE NO:** 2024-225  
**ADDRESS:** 1106 BURLESON ST  
**LEGAL DESCRIPTION:** NCB 1007 BLK B3 LOT B  
**APPLICANT:** Clarence Callies/CALLIES CLARENCE LEE & - 1106 BURLESON  
**OWNER:** Clarence Callies/CALLIES CLARENCE LEE & - 1106 BURLESON

#### REQUEST:

The applicant is requesting Historic Tax Certification for the property at 1106 Burleson Street.

#### FINDINGS:

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

b. **HISTORIC CONTEXT:** The property at 1106 Burleson Street is a one-story vernacular residence with Craftsman style influence located in the Dignowity Hill neighborhood of City Council District 2. Stella and Clarence Lee Callies, Sr., currently own the property. Dignowity Hill was San Antonio's first exclusive residential suburb. The area was settled by Dr. Anthony Michael Dignowity, a physician and Czech immigrant, who built his family home on a hill to the east of town and called it Harmony House. During the latter part of the nineteenth century, Dignowity Hill, as it became known, was home to prominent San Antonio merchants and business owners who constructed large estates. Dignowity Hill was an exclusive and affluent residential area in San Antonio due to its high elevation, proximity to downtown, the size of the lots, and lack of city water, which required residents to construct expensive water collecting systems. The arrival of the railroad in 1877 significantly changed the neighborhood's built environment and demographic diversity. Industrial development greatly increased with the construction of an iron works factory, the development of a streetcar trolley line along Burnet Street (1891), and the extension of sewer and water lines to the area around the turn-of-the-century. By 1914, the neighborhood was surrounded by industry on the north and west, commerce on the south, and modest homes on the east. Dr. Dignowity died in 1875, and his Harmony House was later demolished. The property became Dignowity Park in 1926. The neighborhood consisted primarily of small Folk Victorian style houses and Craftsman Bungalows by the 1930s. Today, the neighborhood is a local historic district bounded by Sherman Street on the north, Commerce Street and Paso Hondo on the south, Palmetto Street on the east, and Cherry Street on the west. The subject property is located just two blocks outside the eastern boundary of the Dignowity Hill Historic District, along Palmetto Street. The subject property was built in 1949. The address first appeared in the 1951 City Directory as the home of Jason E. McCann, an Army clerk at Fort Sam Houston, and his wife Clara. In 1954, Roy and Alice Riojas purchased the property from the McCanns, and then in 1977 the Riojas sold the property to Stella and Clarence L. Callies, Sr.

Clarence L. Callies, Sr., is a nephew of the late Rev. Dr. Raymond A. Callies, Sr. Rev. Dr. Raymond A. Callies, Sr. began what is today one of the largest MLK Jr. marches in the nation. Improving the quality of life for all people was the dream of Dr. King and Reverend Callies. After the assassination of Dr. King in April 1968, Rev. Dr. Callies had a vision to do many things that would keep Dr. King's dream alive. Rev. Dr. Callies was also instrumental in the growth and development of San Antonio's Eastside. He was the founder and organizer of the Youth Leadership Conference for Community Progress. He and his organization were instrumental in getting traffic lights at busy intersections and improving drainage for the Eastside. He worked tirelessly to have Nebraska Street renamed Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive. He also founded J Street Park, Martin Luther King, Jr. Park and the Freedom Bridge on San Antonio's Eastside. One of Rev. Dr. Callies' greatest accomplishments was the dedication of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Plaza where he and his organization raised money to have a statue of Dr. King and the Monument of Brotherhood erected on the plaza site. His vision took him and his organization to the state capital in Austin, Texas, where he led a march to have Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday recognized as an official state holiday. He was also instrumental in having James Whitcomb Riley Junior High School renamed to Martin Luther King, Jr., Middle School (now M.L. King Academy, 3501 Martin Luther King Drive).

Clarence Callies, Sr., taught wood shop at James Fenimore Cooper Middle School in the San Antonio Independent School District, and also worked as a salesman for hog farmers. When the hog market declined in the late-1980s, Mr. Callies began growing vegetables in his yard and taking his harvest to local farmers markets. He also welcomed help from local residents in exchange for food crops. In 2015, Clarence L. Callies, Jr., had served 13 years of a 20-year prison sentence on charges related to the distribution of crack cocaine, and was one of four Texans among 46 nonviolent drug offenders whose prison sentences were commuted by President Barack Obama. Having been granted clemency at age 36 and given a second chance on freedom, Mr. Callies has since focused his time and energy on growing container plants in his yard and providing a variety of fresh, locally grown vegetables to help nourish the local community. The home was featured in a documentary about community gardens. Clarence L. Callies, Jr. currently resides at 1106 Burleson Street, and is the applicant for this request.

c. **SITE CONTEXT:** The subject property is a north-facing house, situated near the middle of a block bound to the north by Burleson Street, the east by Can't Stop Street, the south by Lamar Street, and the west by St. Charles Street. The block includes other one-story vernacular homes, Craftsman cottages, as well as minimal traditional residences.

d. **ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:** The subject property is a one-story vernacular residence with a side-gabled roof with wide, overhanging boxed eaves. Each façade is covered by tongue-and-grooved wooden drop siding. The roof is covered with composite shingles.

The front façade is asymmetrical with the front door on the left side, covered by a shed roof canopy supported by wood columns and brackets. There is a concrete front porch with two steps. The front door is flanked by one-over-one wood windows covered by sloped aluminum blade awnings. The central window features faux board and batten shutters. There is a smaller, one-over-one wood window on the right side of the front façade, also covered by a sloped aluminum blade awning, which matches a similar window on the left side of the right façade (west-facing). These windows also feature faux board and batten shutters.

The right façade features multi-level eaves, with the lower gable projecting a wing on the right side of the façade. The left eave of the projecting wing covers a side door on the primary façade, as well as a small concrete porch with two steps and a wood handrail affixed next to the door. There is a one-over-one wood window on the projecting wing, covered by a sloped aluminum blade awning. The left façade features multi-level eaves, with the lower gable projecting a wing on the right side of the façade. There are two one-over-one wood windows on the façade of the projecting wing, covered by sloped aluminum blade awnings, and there is another one-over-one wood window on the south wall of the wing. There is a paired set of two one-over-one wood windows on the primary façade.

There is a full-width rear addition with a sloping shed roof, giving the structure the appearance of a saltbox style. On the right façade, there is an aluminum sliding glass door entrance for the addition. There are three one-over-one aluminum windows on the rear façade of the addition.

There is a wooden storage shed at the end of the concrete driveway in the southwest corner of the parcel. The shed has a front-facing gabled roof with exposed rafters, and a pair of large, hinged wooden doors. There is a large chicken coop in the center of the back yard. A wooden ramp from the sidewalk to the front door, with wooden handrails, was built around 2013 or 2014, based on Google Street View images. A tall palm tree was removed from the front yard around 2020.

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):

3. Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the development of the community, county, state, or nation; for its association with the family of Rev. R.A. Callies.

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; as an example of a vernacular home in a working class African American neighborhood that developed in the mid-twentieth century, a period of large growth in San Antonio's population.

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 Dignowity Hill neighborhood.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval of a Historic Landmark Designation of 1106 Burleson Street based on findings a through e.

#### **COMMISSION ACTION:**

Approved as submitted.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Shanon Shea Miller". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Shanon Shea Miller**  
**Historic Preservation Officer**