

HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION

June 18, 2025

HDRC CASE NO: 2025-150
ADDRESS: 1118 West French Place
LEGAL DESCRIPTION: NCB 3031 BLK 2 LOT 18 THRU 20
ZONING: R-6 CD NCD-5
CITY COUNCIL DIST.: 1
APPLICANT: Bo Guan
OWNER: Bo Guan & Liwei Zhang
TYPE OF WORK: Historic Landmark Designation
CASE MANAGER: Charles Gentry

REQUEST: The applicant is requesting a Historic Landmark Designation for 1118 West French Place.

APPLICABLE CITATIONS:

Unified Development Code Sec. 35-606. - Designation Process for Historic Landmarks.

- a. **Authority.** Requests for landmark designation may only be made by or with the concurrence of the property owner or by City Council. Such landmarks shall bear the words "historic, landmark" (HL) in their zoning designation. In instances where a property owner does not consent to the landmark designation, the historic preservation officer shall request a resolution from city council to proceed with the designation process prior to any hearing regarding the designation by the historic and design review commission or zoning commission. Notwithstanding the foregoing, a request for landmark designation may be made and approved by the city council. Additionally, requests for designation by a property owner shall be made on a form obtained from the city historic preservation officer through the office of historic preservation. Completed request forms shall be returned to the office of historic preservation for processing. All buildings, objects, sites, structures, or clusters heretofore designated by the city council as historic landmarks under any pre-existing ordinance of the City of San Antonio shall be accorded the protection of properties designated historic landmarks under this chapter and shall continue to bear the words "historic, exceptional" (HE) or "historic, significant" (HS) in their zoning designation.
- b. **Initiation.**
 1. Any person, the historic and design review commission, zoning commission, the historic preservation officer, or the city council may initiate a request for review of historic significance or evaluation for eligibility for historic landmark designation. Owner consent to initiate historic landmark designation shall be required unless a city council resolution to proceed with the designation has been approved. Requests for historic landmark designation may be requested by or with verified written consent of a property owner and shall be made on a form obtained from the city historic preservation officer. Required application materials are listed in section 35-B129 of this chapter. Completed request forms shall be returned to the office of historic preservation for processing. Additionally, owners may submit with the application a written description and photographs or other visual material of any buildings or structures that they wish to be considered for designation as non-contributing to the historic landmark.
 2. Requests made by a person who does not represent the property owner may be made by submitting a Request for Review of Historic Significance. Required application materials are listed in section 35-B129 of this chapter. Completed request forms shall be returned to the office of historic preservation for processing. Such request does not initiate the historic designation process or automatically result in interim controls. All applications shall be evaluated by the historic preservation officer and may be referred to the Historic and Design Review Commission for a Finding of Historic Significance in accordance with this section.
- g. **Decision.** A Finding of Historic Significance may be approved by the Historic Preservation Officer or by the historic and design review commission by a majority vote of members present. If approved, the Historic Preservation Officer will seek concurrence from the property owner. Property owners may verify or withdraw consent at any time during the designation process.
 1. All requests for a change in zoning to include a historic zoning overlay having either written,

verified owner consent or resolution by City Council to proceed with the historic landmark designation will be processed in accordance with 35-421.

2. If the subject property owner does not consent to the proposed designation, the Historic Preservation Officer shall request City Council resolution to initiate historic landmark designation.
3. To designate a historic landmark, the city shall obtain consent to the designation by the owner of the property or approval of designation by three-fourths (¾) vote of the Historic and Design Review Commission recommending the designation and a three-fourths (¾) vote by the City Council. If the property is owned by an organization that is a religious organization under Section 11.20, Tax Code, the property may be designated as a historic landmark only if the organization consents to the designation.
4. Upon passage of any ordinance designating a historic landmark, or removing the designation of historic, the city clerk shall send notice of the fact by mail to the owner or owners of affected property.

Unified Development Code Sec. 35-607. – Designation Criteria for Historic Districts and Landmarks.

a. **Process for Considering Designation of Historic Districts and Landmarks.** Historic districts and landmarks shall be evaluated for designation using the criteria listed in subsection (b). In order to be eligible for historic landmark designation, properties shall meet at least three (3) of the criteria listed. Historic districts shall consist of at least two (2) or more structures within a legally defined boundary that meet at least three (3) of the criteria. Additionally, all designated landmarks and districts shall demonstrate clear delineation of the legal boundaries of such designated resources.

b. **Criteria for Evaluation.**

3. Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the development of the community, county, state, or nation;
5. Its embodiment of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style valuable for the study of a period, type, method of construction, or use of indigenous materials;
8. Its historical, architectural, or cultural integrity of location, design, materials, and workmanship;
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.

FINDINGS:

- a. The request for landmark designation was initiated by the property owner.
- b. **HISTORIC CONTEXT:** The structure at 1118 West French Place is a two-story dwelling, built circa 1906. Bo Guan and Liwei Zhang currently own the property. The subject property first appears in the 1908 City Directory as the home of HD & Laura Thompson [*sic*]. Henry Davies Thomson and Laura Driscoll Thomson were very influential in early 20th century social circles in San Antonio.
- c. **SITE CONTEXT:** The subject property is located in the Beacon Hill Area Neighborhood Conservation District (NCD), two blocks east of the Fredericksburg Road commercial corridor, and is on the northeast corner of the block near the intersection of West French Place and Blanco Road. The structure is situated between Blanco Road and Fredericksburg Road in the Treasure Hill Plat, which would have allowed convenient access from either street in what is currently called the Beacon Hill Neighborhood. The site is on a prominent hill which would have overlooked San Pedro Springs to the southeast and central San Antonio beyond.
- d. **ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:** The subject property is a two-story Craftsman style dwelling built circa 1906, featuring: gabled roof with deep overhanging eaves and exposed rafters; original wood lap siding, consistent with the materials and craftsmanship of the time; double-hung multi-pane windows, offering both visual rhythm and ventilation; prominent dormers and bay windows, contributing to a balanced but informal massing; stone foundation and perimeter walls, anchoring the

home to its natural landscape. The structure retains a high degree of architectural integrity. Original materials, window arrangements, and structural forms are still in place. Where modifications have occurred, they have been done with sensitivity to the historic fabric of the home. Its preservation makes it a rare example of early Craftsman residential architecture in the Beacon Hill Area.

- 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; as the home of the Thompson family for over four decades.

5. Its embodiment of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style valuable for the study of a period, type, method of construction, or use of indigenous materials; as an example of an early Craftsman style home from the early twentieth century.

8. Its historical, architectural, or cultural integrity of location, design, materials, and workmanship; as an example of a Craftsman residence in the Beacon Hill neighborhood and the oldest extant structure on the south side of the block.

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; based on its location on a corner property in the Beacon Hill Neighborhood.

- f. The City offers a tax incentive for the substantial rehabilitation of historic properties because historic landmarks possess cultural and historical value and contribute to the overall quality and character of the City and its neighborhoods. If historic designation is approved, rehabilitation and restoration work may be eligible for this incentive. State and Federal tax incentives are also available for properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places and provide substantial relief for rehabilitation projects.
- g. If the HDRC approves the Historic Landmark Designation, then the recommendation for designation is submitted to the Zoning Commission. The Zoning Commission will schedule a hearing and then forward its recommendation to the City Council. City Council has the ultimate authority to approve the historic designation zoning overlay.
- h. Per UDC Sec. 35-608, once the Commission makes a recommendation for designation, property owners must receive a written approval (a Certificate of Appropriateness) for any exterior work until the City Council makes their final decision.

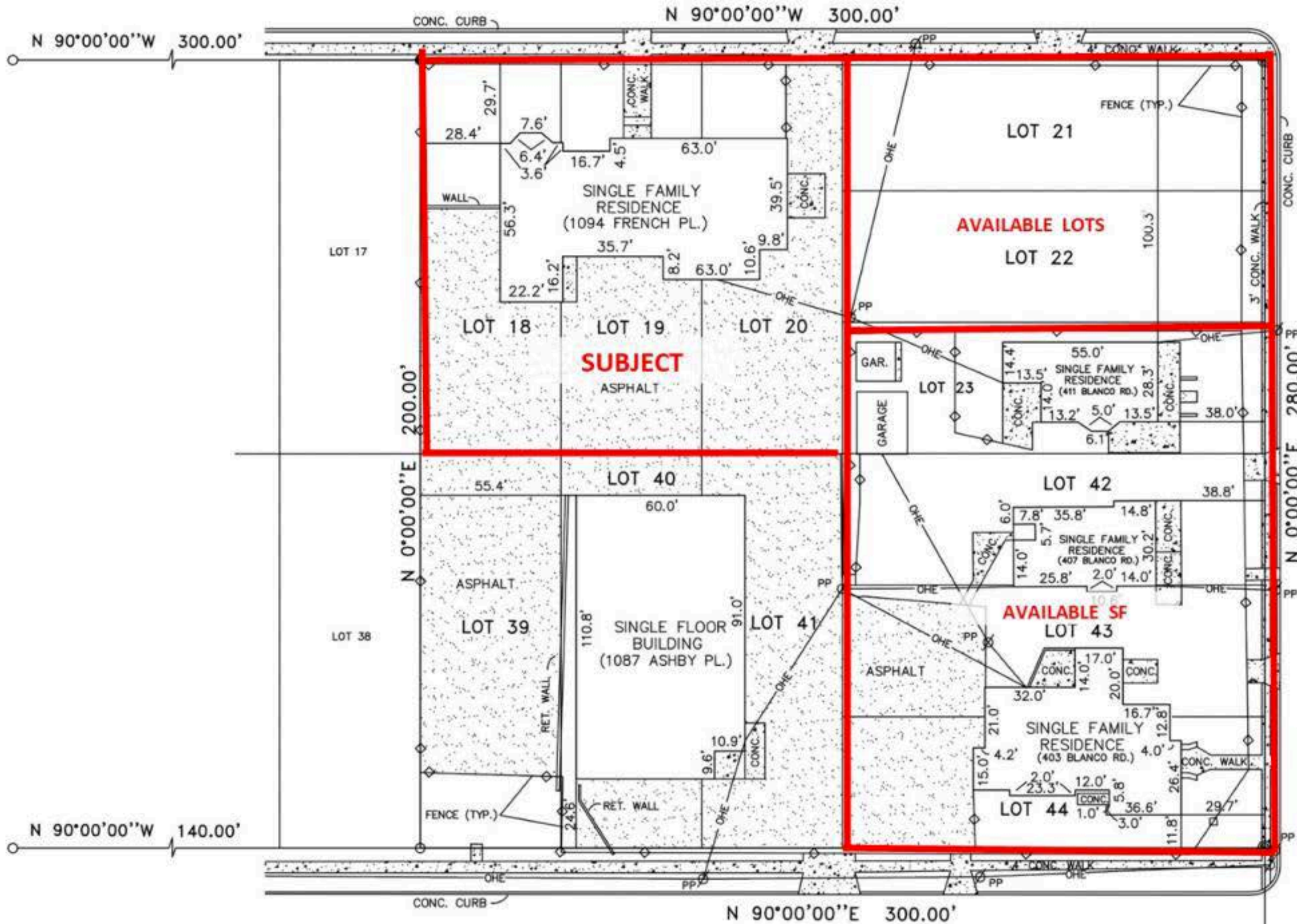
RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of a Historic Landmark Designation of 1118 West French Place based on findings a through e.

User drawn polygons

0 0.0175 0.035 0.07 km

FRENCH PLACE

55.6' R.O.W.
ASPHALT PAVEMENT



BLANCO ROAD

60' R.O.W.
ASPHALT PAVEMENT

ASHBY PLACE

55.6' R.O.W.
ASPHALT PAVEMENT



HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Historic Assessment

Property Address: 1118 West French Place

1. Application Details

Applicant: Bo Guan
Type: Historic Landmark Designation
Date Received: 16 May 2025

2. Findings

The structure at 1118 West French Place is a two-story dwelling, built circa 1906. Bo Guan and Liwei Zhang currently own the property. The subject property is located in the Beacon Hill Area Neighborhood Conservation District (NCD), two blocks east of the Fredericksburg Road commercial corridor, and is on the northeast corner of the block near the intersection of West French Place and Blanco Road. The structure is situated between Blanco Road and Fredericksburg Road in the Treasure Hill Plat, which would have allowed convenient access from either street in what is currently called the Beacon Hill Neighborhood. The site is on a prominent hill which would have overlooked San Pedro Springs to the southeast and central San Antonio beyond.

The earliest identified references to the "Treasure Hill Addition" to the Beacon Hill neighborhood appear to have been made in San Antonio newspaper articles in early 1906. The subject property first appears in the 1908 City Directory as the home of HD & Laura Thompson [*sic*]. Henry Davies Thomson (5 October 1871 – 10 February 1955) was born in Victoria, TX, and was the son of Nelson Anderson Thomson (1839-1899), a former Mayor of Victoria. Thomson was a World War I veteran and served as a Captain in the U.S. Army Medical Corps. After the war he was a farmer and investor in the oil and gas industry. On October 7, 1895, he married Anna Laura Driscoll (13 August 1873 – 3 October 1956) in Victoria. She was the daughter of Jeremiah O. Driscoll, who was the older brother of Robert Driscoll Sr., the father of Clara Driscoll (1881-1945). After their marriage, the couple moved to Los Angeles, California, and then built the subject property in San Antonio in 1906.

Mrs. Thomson was very active in San Antonio social circles. She was a member of the Alamo Mission Chapter of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas and the San Antonio de Bexar Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, and hosted meetings at their home in the late 1930s. She also served in leadership roles on the Witte Museum Advisory Board, the Army-Civilian Club, the Conservation Society of San Antonio, the Battle of Flowers Association, and the San Antonio Art League. At the onset of World War II, the Thomsons were among the earliest and largest contributors to the Bexar County Red Cross fundraising campaign.

Bo Guan purchased the property in April 2025.

3. Architectural Description

The subject property is a two-story Craftsman style dwelling built circa 1906, featuring: gabled roof with deep overhanging eaves and exposed rafters; original wood lap siding, consistent with the materials and craftsmanship of the time; double-hung multi-pane windows, offering both visual rhythm and

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ventilation; prominent dormers and bay windows, contributing to a balanced but informal massing; stone foundation and perimeter walls, anchoring the home to its natural landscape. The structure retains a high degree of architectural integrity. Original materials, window arrangements, and structural forms are still in place. Where modifications have occurred, they have been done with sensitivity to the historic fabric of the home. Its preservation makes it a rare example of early Craftsman residential architecture in the Beacon Hill Area.

4. Landmark Criteria

The property meets six criteria under UDC 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 Thomson family.
- **5: Its embodiment of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style valuable for the study of a period, type, method of construction, or use of indigenous materials;** as an example of a Craftsman residence from the early twentieth century.
- **8: Its historical, architectural, or cultural integrity of location, design, materials, and workmanship;** as an example of a Craftsman residence in the Beacon Hill neighborhood and the oldest extant structure on the south side of the block.
- **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;** based on its location on a corner property in the Beacon Hill Neighborhood.

5. Staff Recommendation

A property must meet at least three of the 16 criteria used to evaluate eligibility for landmark designation, and this assessment determines that 1118 West French Place meets this threshold. Further research may reveal additional significance associated with this property.



HISTORIC PRESERVATION



1. 1118 West French Place – Northwestern oblique



HISTORIC PRESERVATION



2. 1118 West French Place – East façade

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3. 1118 West French Place – Southwest oblique

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4. 1118 West French Place – Rear façade

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5. 1118 West French Place – Southeast oblique



HISTORIC PRESERVATION



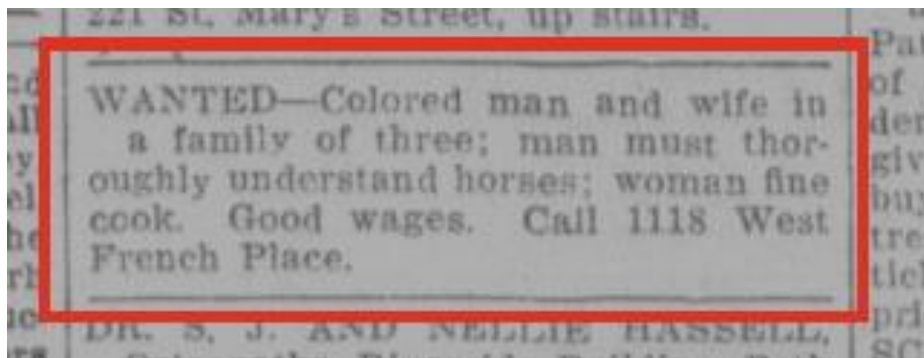
6. Sanborn Map (1911), Vol. 1, Sheet 98

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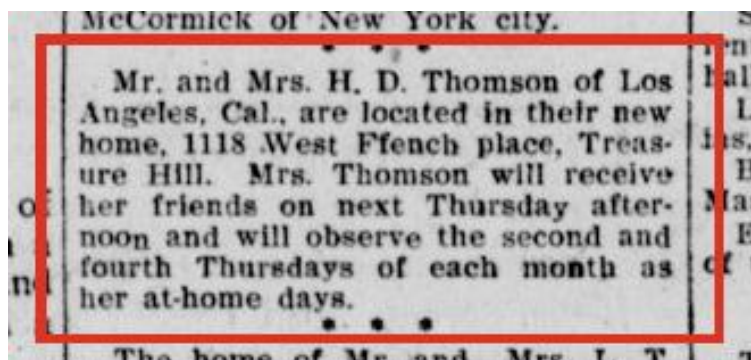
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HISTORIC PRESERVATION



7. *San Antonio Daily Light* (December 02, 1906), Pg. 10



8. *San Antonio Daily Light* (January 28, 1907), Pg. 5



HISTORIC PRESERVATION

do Smith that crosswalks be placed at for
ty Nolan and Olive streets were adopted ing
to A petition from H. D. Thompson, de
n introduced by Alderman Smith, asked up
ri for permission to grade and gravel wh
he West French Place at the Blanco road h
ne and to build cement sidewalks and wh
es curbing, was referred to the street no
n committee. al

Petitions introduced and referred to

9. San Antonio Light (March 14, 1911), Pg. 12

Chairman Menger, recommended that
Dural street be opened and graded
The petition of H. D. Thompson to
grade and gravel West French place,
upon the recommendation of Chair-
man Menger of the street committee,
was referred to the city engineer.
Alderman Richter, chairman of the
assessment committee, announced that

10. San Antonio Light And Gazette (March 21, 1911), Pg. 2



HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Wives of Delegates Honored at Party

Honoring the wives of Humble delegates attending the 16th annual convention of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists, and a few additional friends, Mrs. L. T. Barrow of Houston entertained Friday with a tea in the home of her parents, Mr. and Mrs. H. D. Thomson, 1118 West French Place.

Welcoming the guests in the flower decked hall was Mrs. M. M. Reagan. Receiving with the hostess and her mother in the drawing room was Mrs. A. M. Heptler.

Yellow spring flowers arranged in a blue bowl formed the centerpiece for the tea table. Assisting in the dining room were Mrs. J. V. Adams, Mrs. C. J. Cunningham, Mrs. L. F. McCollum and Mrs. Sidney Powers of Oklahoma.

There were 69 guests.

11. San Antonio Express (March 21, 1931), Pg. 6



HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The San Antonio de Bexar Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution will meet at 3 p. m. today in the home of Mrs. H. D. Thomson, with Mrs. J. T. Shuler as co-hostess.

12. San Antonio Express (December 03, 1936), Pg. 6

give a program on "Pay Dirt."

The Conservation Society will meet at 3 p. m. Monday, Nov. 28, with Mrs. H. D. Thomson, 1118 West French Place, with Mrs. Frank Badger and Mrs. E. J. Larkin as co-hostesses.

13. San Antonio Express (November 23, 1938), Pg. 4



HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The December meeting of the Alamo Mission Chapter of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas will take place at the home of Mrs. H. D. Thomson, 118 West French Place, at 2:30 p. m. Tuesday, Dec. 13. Mrs. Alice Neighbors, the program chairman, announces that the speaker for the afternoon will be Dr. A. B. Wacker, who is head of the Social Science Department of the University of San Antonio. Dr. Wacker will have as his subject "The Capitals of Texas."

14. San Antonio Express (December 12, 1938), Pg. 4



HISTORIC PRESERVATION

15—FANNIN 1231

THE SAN ANTONIO

AT SESSION



MRS. HALLY BRYAN
Guest of honor.



MRS. H. D. THOMSON
Courtesy committee chairman.

HUGE BOMBER PLANT STARTS

DETROIT, May 15. — The Ford Motor company yesterday began construction of an \$18,000,000 bombing plane factory, termed largest of its kind in the world.

From the plant will come complete sub-assemblies and parts—with the exception of the four engines—for Consolidated B-24 bombers. Daily production is to furnish sub-assemblies and parts for five ships.

Plans call for shipping parts to assembly plants at Tulsa and Fort Worth, but the government may decide on final assembly here.

The B-24, regarded as the world's most formidable bomber, weighs 29 tons, loaded, can travel 300 miles an hour, carrying four tons of bombs and has a cruising range upward of 3000 miles.

Elmendorf Park's Swim Pool Opens

The swimming pool at Elmendorf park was opened Thursday, sixth city pool opened for the season.

Still closed are Braekentide and San Pedro pools.

D. R. T. PARLEY BEGINS WITH CEREMONY

Daughters of the Republic of Texas, as a part of pre-convention ceremonies Thursday, were to take part in a flag presentation program at the Municipal auditorium at 4:30 p. m.

Flags of Texas and the United States will be presented to the city by the Alamo Mission chapter and the United Spanish War Veterans auxiliaries of the department of Texas.

The San Antonio firemen's band will play and an invocation will be given by the Rev. J. M. Todd, pastor, local chaplain of the U. S. W. V. Mrs. Kate Seideman, department president, will present the national flag. Mrs. Carolyn Fallon, state secretary, will lead the pledge of allegiance.

MAVERICK TO SPEAK.
Presentation of the flag of the Republic of Texas will be by Mrs. Frederick Schenkenberg, state D. R. T. president. Mrs. E. A. Holmgren, flag chairman, will lead the salute to the Texas flag.

Mayor Maury Maverick will accept the flags.

L. O. Miller, chaplain of Fort Sam Houston, will give the benediction.

The D. R. T. will hold an informal dinner at the Menger hotel at 6:30 p. m., during which they will be greeted by representatives of the city and county and of the D. A. R., Colonial Dames and Daughters of 1812.

FIFTIETH CONVENTION.

The fiftieth convention of the D. R. T. will open at 8:30 p. m. in the ballroom of the Menger hotel and the delegation will return to Alamo gardens to attend a pageant presented by the Alamo Mission chapter of the D. R. T. with Mrs. Henry R. Wofford as chairman.

The evening's activities will be climaxed by the unveiling of a portrait of Mrs. Clara Driscoll, who was instrumental in having the Alamo turned over to the state.

Guests of honor at the opening dinner will be Mrs. Hally Bryan Perry of Houston, co-founder with her cousin, Miss Betty Ballinger of Galveston, of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas; Mrs. Carrie Franklin Kemp, past president of the organization; Mrs. Madge W. Hearne, past president, and granddaughter of Sam Houston; Mrs. Clara Driscoll, Mary K. Cloud of Austin and Mrs. Lella Small, curatorial of the Alamo museum.

GARDEN PARTY SET.

Mrs. Henry Wofford will direct the pageant following the dinner. The pageant will depict "six living pictures" of Texas under six flags. Walter Dunham, assistant state director of WPA music projects, will be in charge of music. Forty-five persons will participate.

Following the pageant, a garden party will be held.

Mrs. H. D. Thomson is chairman of the San Antonio courtesy committee in charge of the convention.

German Crews to

15. San Antonio Light (May 15, 1941), Pg. 3

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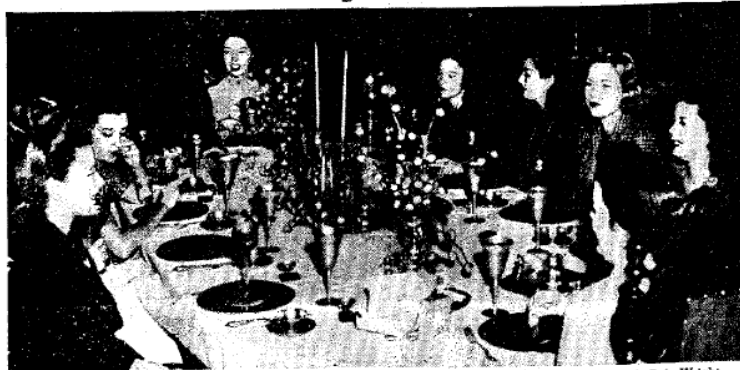
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HISTORIC PRESERVATION

10 D

Formal English Breakfast



Around the beautifully set breakfast table you see from left to right Misses Hazel Dean Maverick, Delia Wright, Josephine Houston, Jean Champion, Ruth McLean, Almeda Towns, Mary McGarrough, and Anne Boyle. The party was given by Mrs. H. D. Thomson for Misses Anne Boyle and Josephine Houston, debutantes of the season.



Mrs. Thomson is standing with two guests, Miss Anne Boyle and Mrs. Frederick J. Oppenheimer.



Two prominent guests were Mrs. Sarah Riddle Eagar and Mrs. A. M. Hall seated together for breakfast.



At the quiet social affair, Mesdames P. J. McNoel, Herbert J. Hayes, Douglas W. King and Miss Elizabeth Houston.



Mothers of three popular debutantes, Mesdames M. K. Towns, Mary McLean and Jim Maverick.

16. San Antonio Express (November 9, 1941), Pg. 56

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HISTORIC PRESERVATION

50th Anniversary

Mr. and Mrs. Henry D. Thomson celebrated their golden wedding anniversary with a party at their home Oct. 7. Receiving with them were their son and daughter, Mr. and Mrs. L. T. Barrow of Houston, and their nephew and niece, Mr. and Mrs. A. D. Rooke of Woodsboro. Assisting were Mesdames Blanche Badger, Cora Davenport, Florence Roberts, Ann Rose Heusinger, Ed Leighton, E. O. Sar-ratt, Deshler Whiting, H. H. Walton, Julian Onderdonk, Nellie McCaleb, Bertha Watlington, Ella K. Dunn and Misses Josephine Kincaid and Helen Bonney. Among guests were Misses Mamie Dove and Anne Barrow of Austin

17. San Antonio Light (October 14, 1945), Pg. 33
