

HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION
July 19, 2023

HDRC CASE NO: 2023-557
ADDRESS: 616/618 Wilmington
LEGAL DESCRIPTION: Wilmington NCB 1716 Blk A Lot 5 & N 5 ft of 7
ZONING: RM-4
CITY COUNCIL DIST.: 1
APPLICANT: Office of Historic Preservation
OWNER: Archon Borrowing Group, LLC
TYPE OF WORK: Recommendation for Historic Landmark Designation
CASE MANAGER: Charles Gentry

REQUEST: The Office of Historic Preservation is requesting a recommendation from the Historic and Design Review Commission regarding designation of the property at 616/618 Wilmington.

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.
- c. **Completeness Review.** See section 35-402 of this chapter. For purposes of this section and subsection 35-402(c), the historic preservation officer is the administrative official with original jurisdiction to review an application for completeness.
- d. **Evaluation.** Following receipt of a complete application, properties shall be evaluated for eligibility

under the Designation Criteria for Historic Districts and Landmarks outlined in 35-607. At his or her discretion, the Historic Preservation Officer may request a review and recommendation by the Historic and Design Review Commission for a Finding of Historic Significance.

- e. **Interim Controls.** When an application is made on a building, object, site or structure that has been determined by the historic preservation officer or the historic and design review commission to be an eligible resource for historic designation in accordance with this article, and when written notice informing the property owner of such a determination has been provided, then the provisions of this chapter shall apply to the property until the lesser of one hundred eighty (180) days of the notification or action by city council on the recommendation for designation. This period may be extended at the written request of the property owner at any time. All enforcement provisions outlined in 35-491 shall apply during this period. Should the city council fail to designate the recommended building, object, site, structure or cluster as a historic landmark or the recommended area as a historic district, the director of development services shall issue permits requested providing all City Code requirements are met.
- f. **Public Hearing Schedule.** Consideration of the item by relevant boards and commissions shall be scheduled for the next available public hearing which meets all legal notice and quorum requirements. If the property owner requests that the public hearing schedule be extended, then the interim controls period shall be extended for the same amount of time as granted.
- 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 ($\frac{3}{4}$) vote of the Historic and Design Review Commission recommending the designation and a three-fourths ($\frac{3}{4}$) 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.

FINDINGS:

- a. On December 7, 2022, the Historic and Design Review Commission approved a Finding of Historic Significance for the property at 616/618 Wilmington. On June 8, 2023, City Council approved Resolution 2023-06-08-0023R initiating a change in zoning for the property to include a historic landmark overlay. As a step in the zoning process, a recommendation regarding the proposed designation is required from the HDRC.
- b. 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.
- c. If the HDRC approves the 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.

- d. 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 that the Historic and Design Review Commission should recommend approval for the landmark designation of 616/618 Wilmington based on finding a.



616-618 Wilmington



*Recommendation for
Historic Landmark Designation
July 19, 2023*

*Presented by
Dr. Charles Gentry, Historic Preservation Specialist*

MAP

616-618 Wilmington

Council District 1

- *Tobin Hill*
- *RM-4*



CASE HISTORY

September 6, 2022

OHP receives a request for demolition review

November 9, 2022

Site visit by Demolition & Designation Committee

December 7, 2022

HDRC recommends Finding of Historic Significance

June 8, 2023

City Council instructs staff to initiate change in zoning to include historic landmark designation

July 19, 2023

HDRC recommendation on designation

To be scheduled

Zoning Commission

City Council

ELIGIBILITY: LOCAL LANDMARK DESIGNATION



Criteria: 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;
- 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;
- 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;
- 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;



CITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION

The City Council directs City staff to initiate rezoning to result in the designation of 616-618 Wilmington as a local landmark.



616-618 Wilmington



*Recommendation for
Historic Landmark Designation
July 19, 2023*

*Presented by
Dr. Charles Gentry, Historic Preservation Specialist*

RESOLUTION **2023-06-08-0023R**

**INITIATING HISTORIC LANDMARK DESIGNATION FOR
616-618 WILMINGTON STREET, LOCATED IN CITY
COUNCIL DISTRICT 1 AND WAIVING APPLICATION FEES.**

* * * * *

WHEREAS, the City of San Antonio's historic preservation program is designed to preserve, protect, and enhance historically, culturally, architecturally, and archaeologically significant sites and structures which impart a distinct aspect to the City of San Antonio ("City") and serve as visible reminders of the City's culture and heritage; and

WHEREAS, on December 7, 2022, the City's Historic and Design Review Commission approved a finding of Historic Significance by majority vote and recommended approval to initiate the Historic Landmark designation for the property at 616-618 Wilmington San Antonio, Texas, a single-story, rear junction double shotgun home, located in City Council District 1; and

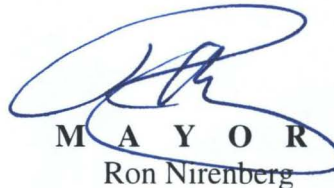
WHEREAS, City Council seeks to initiate historic landmark designation of 616-618 Wilmington, San Antonio Texas 78212 in accordance with Texas Government Code Chapter 211 and City Code of San Antonio, Texas, Chapter 35, Unified Development Code; **NOW THEREFORE:**

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SAN ANTONIO:

SECTION 1. City Council directs City staff to initiate historic landmark designation of the property located at 616-618 Wilmington, San Antonio Texas 78212, and to waive all related application fees, totaling \$842.70.

SECTION 2. This Resolution shall be effective immediately upon passage by eight affirmative votes; otherwise it shall be effective on the tenth day after passage.


PASSED AND APPROVED this 8th day of June, 2023.


M A Y O R
Ron Nirenberg

ATTEST:


Debbie Racca-Sittre, City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:


Andrew Segovia, City Attorney



City of San Antonio

City Council Meeting June 8, 2023

15.

2023-06-08-0023R

Resolution initiating historic landmark designation for 616-618 Wilmington Street and waiving application fees. [Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager; Shanon Shea Miller, Director, Office of Historic Preservation]

Councilmember Castillo moved to Approve on the Consent Agenda. Councilmember Cabello Havrda seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Nirenberg, Bravo, McKee-Rodriguez, Viagran, Castillo, Cabello Havrda,
Castro, Courage, Whyte

Absent: Rocha Garcia, Pelaez



CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Historic Design and Review Commission
Demolition and Designation Committee

DATE: 9 Nov 2022, 4:30 OM

ADDRESS: 616/618 Wilmington

APPLICANT: Juan Chavarria/Archon Borrowing Group

DDC Members present: Jimmy Cervantes, Jeff Fetzer, Anne Marie Grube, Monica Savino
Property owner: Hank Cole (Archon Borrowing Group), Bill Bittles (contractor)
Staff present: Amy Fulkerson
Others present: Lisa Garza (San Antonio Conservation Society)

REQUEST: Demolition of primary structure

COMMENTS/CONSERNS:

The property was built c. 1925 and is a rear junction double shotgun form with Craftsman influence. There are only 12 remaining examples of this unique San Antonio form.

If demolition is approved, the owners plan to build back with two or four units of affordable workforce housing.

The commissioners commented that there appears to be a lot of original material that remains intact on the building including the windows and siding. Can the building be repaired?

The owners have had the property for 3½ years. They had tenants leasing the space until it became unsafe due to rotting floor beams and foundation piers. They consulted five different foundation repair companies. Some said it was impossible, for others the cost to repair the foundation was more than the budgeted renovation costs. Their concern is that the home would need to be lifted to repair and replace the foundation piers and floor supports. The foundation companies said this process could cause the building to break in half due to its form. They were advised that the building would need to be cut in two to make repairs.

The commissioners stated that they are aware of the costs, but the purpose of their meeting was to assess if the building met the criteria for historic designation. If the property were designated, they could consider economic hardship at that time. There are also grants that could help offset the cost of foundation repair. The city also offers tax incentives for repair of historic properties.

The property owners are also concerned about safety. Every time they secure the building with fences, or board up the property, they find their defenses cut through. Cameras get disconnected



CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

and thrown up on the roof or stolen. They are concerned that someone will set a fire to stay warm and burn the building or die on the premises. Neighbors on either side are concerned about the people living onsite and have heard disturbances at night. The property owners have called the police and the Vacant Buildings program is aware. Commissioners suggested that they work with their City Council person to and asked staff to assist.



CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Statement of Significance for 616/618 Wilmington Ave

Architectural Description

The rear junction double shotgun house at 616/618 Wilmington has a Craftsman influence with wide eaves with exposed rafter tails, triangular brace supports for the shed porch, and a square porch pier on the interior side of each porch. The roof has two front gables with a cross gable in the rear where the two units connect. The residences remain relatively unaltered except for the rear porches, which have been enclosed (see Sanborn Map, 1938). Many of the original interior features remain in 616 Wilmington as well.

Site Context

The southeast-facing house is on an irregular block bound to the north by Kendall St., to the NW by Kendall St, to the NE by Evergreen St, and to the southeast by E Euclid Ave. The block includes Craftsman, Folk Victorian architecture, and new construction. Divorced sidewalks run through small front yards; driveways are not always present when they are, they appear as either full-width concrete or ribbon drives. The house is on a large lot and has an inground pool on the southeast side of the parcel. The backyard is enclosed with a chain-link fence. Evergreen is the boundary of the Tobin Hill Historic District.

Historic Context

The property at 616/618 Wilmington NCB 1716 Blk A Lot 5 & N 5 ft of 7, is a single-story, rear junction double shotgun. There are roughly 12 known examples remaining in the city and to staff's knowledge this is a form that is unique to San Antonio. The property is owned by the Archon Borrowing Group, LLC.



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The block where 616/618 Wilmington is located was surveyed and re-subdivided in 1911 for Mrs. Kate C. Gosling. Due to finances, most developers could only afford to purchase small parcels of land. A developer would subdivide the land, sell the lots, and the new owner would hire a builder or contractor to build a house.¹

Public transportation played a large role in the early neighborhood development of Tobin Hill with the inception of a mule-drawn streetcar route from Main Plaza north to San Pedro Park in 1878. In general, mule-drawn streetcars increased the distance one could commute within 30 minutes to two to three miles allowing for residential expansion outside the urban core.² The first electric trolleys appeared in 1890. By 1919 the eastern part of Tobin Hill, anchored by the Pearl Brewery, was served by a streetcar that ran from Dallas St. to King's Court in the vicinity of Brackenridge Park. Affordable housing options like 616/618 Wilmington and access to public transportation made the neighborhood a desirable location and the area saw rapid development in the 1920s-30s.

On June 26, 1925 Dewey E. Wright and Mary H. Wright signed a mechanic's lien and a deed of trust for construction of the structure located at 616/618 Wilmington. for Dewey E. The Wrights are listed as the residents of 618 Wilmington, while 616 was occupied by Tom C. Frost, Jr., and his wife Ilsé. Dewey Wright was an investment banker at Alamo National Bank, and his first tenet was the grandson of Tom C. Frost, the founder of Frost Bank. The Frost's moved before the birth of their son, Tom C. Frost in 1927.

The Wrights owned the property until Mary Hayman Wright's sister purchased the property from them in 1934. Mary Wright and her sister Anna (also known as Sarah A.) Hayman lived at 618 Wilmington from 1934 until Anna's death in 1948. Various tenets resided at 616 Wilmington

¹ National Park Service US Department of the Interior, National Register Bulletin: Historic Residential Suburbs, p. 26.

² SA on Track: The Suburban Street Railway Complex through 1933, Master Thesis by Maria Watson.



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during these years, the tenants were typically employed nearby at businesses such as Samuels Glass and Franz Ice Shop.

Criteria for Designation:

3. Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the development of the community, county, state, or nation; The home at 616/618 Wilmington was built for Dewey E. Wright and Mary H. Wright c. 1925 and Mary Wright lived at 618 Wilmington through 1948. Dewey Wright was an investment banker at Alamo National Bank. He and his wife occupied 618 Wilmington and had had tenants at 616 Wilmington. Their first tenant was Tom C. Frost, Jr., and his wife Ilse. The Frosts moved before the birth of their son, Tom C. Frost in 1927.

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; This rear junction double shotgun is to staff's knowledge a unique shotgun form found only in San Antonio. There are roughly 12 known examples remaining.

8. Its historical, architectural, or cultural integrity of location, design, materials, and workmanship; The Craftsman-style rear junction double shotgun is largely unchanged. It maintains its original footprint with the only exterior modification being enclosed rear porches. The original siding and windows remain intact.

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; Public transportation played a large role in the early neighborhood development of Tobin Hill with the inception of a mule-drawn streetcar route from Main Plaza north to San Pedro Park in 1878. In general, mule-drawn streetcars increased the distance one could commute within 30 minutes to two to three miles allowing for residential



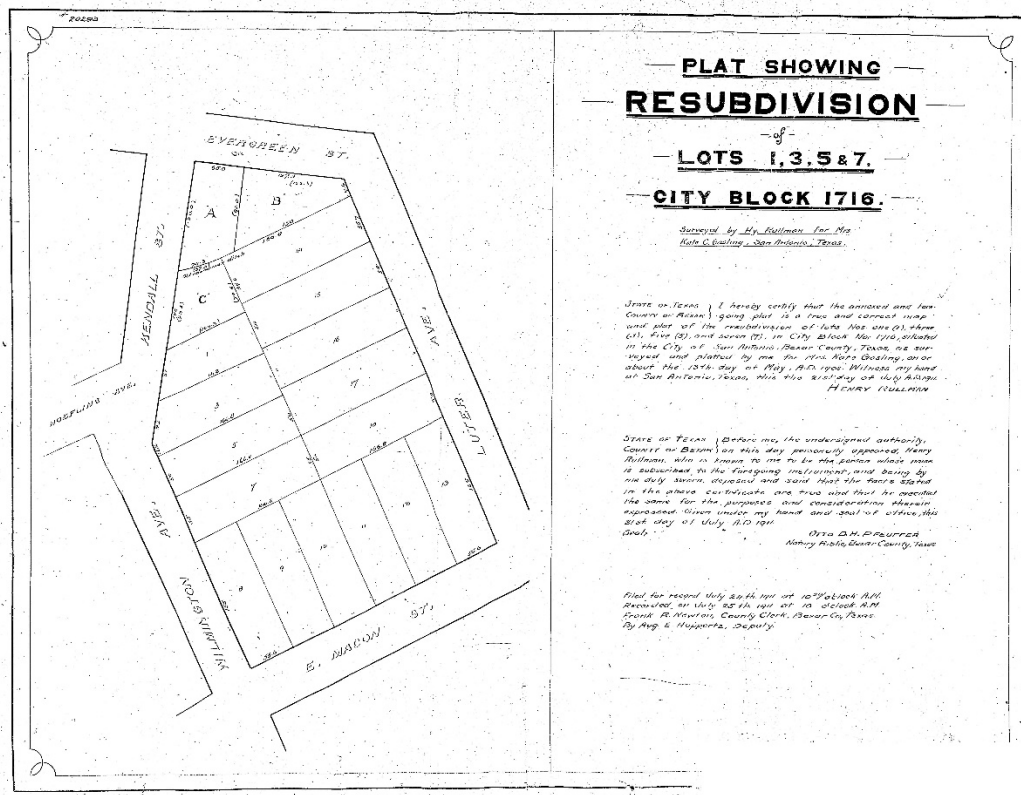
CITY OF SAN ANTONIO OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

expansion outside the urban core. Affordable housing options like 616/618 Wilmington and access to public transportation made the neighborhood a desirable location and the area saw rapid development in the 1920s-30s.

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; The Office of Historic Preservation has undertaken a survey of shotgun houses in San Antonio. Based on this survey, there are roughly 12 known examples of rear junction double shotgun homes, a uniquely San Antonio form. This structure is in the Tobin Hill neighborhood, which is an eligible the National Register Historic District and was surveyed by the Office of Historic Preservation in 2021. This structure would be considered contributing to the neighborhood and holds a unique position in preserving the continuity of the intersection of Wilmington, Kendall, and E. Laurel.



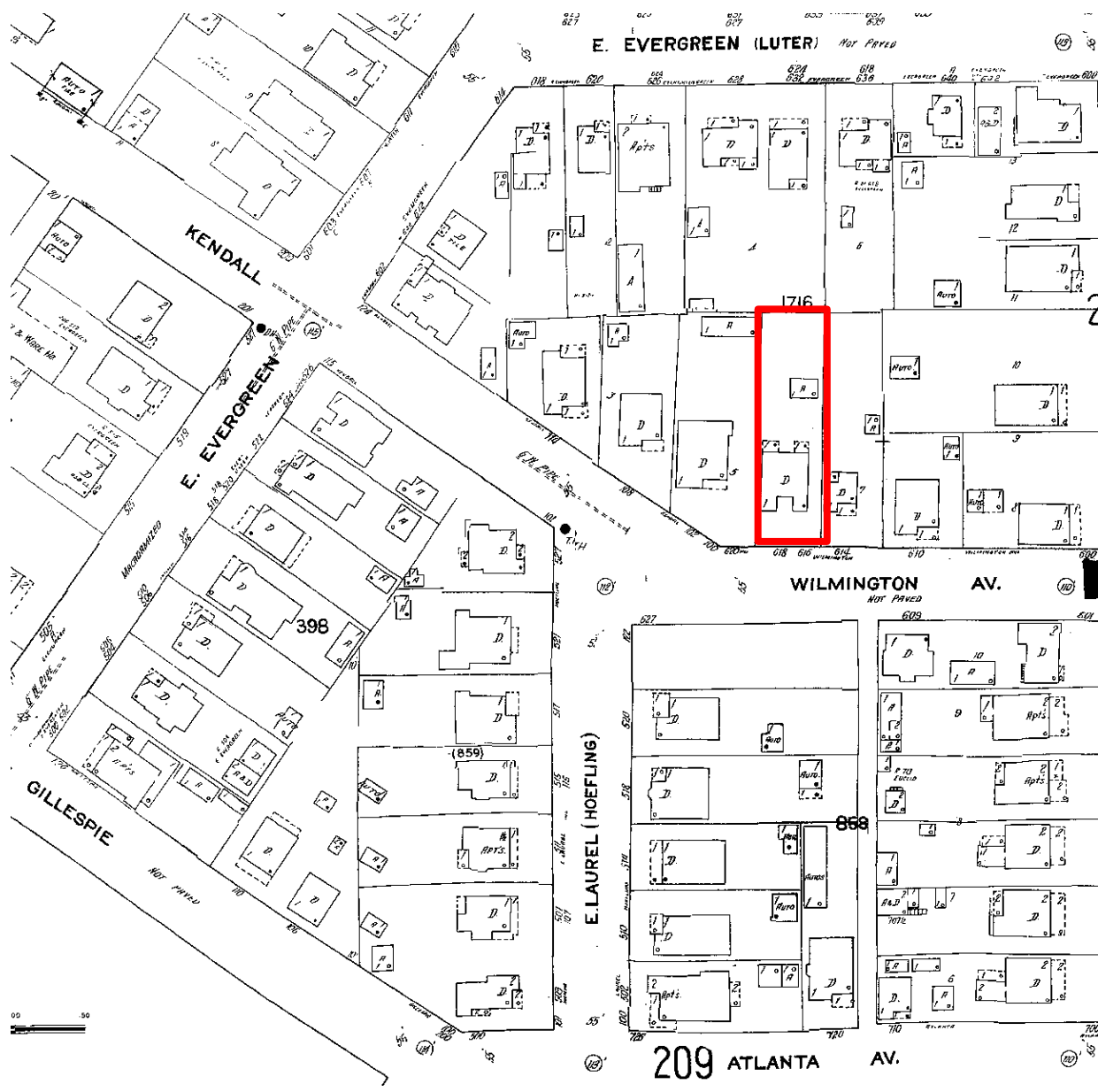
616 and 618 Wilmington



Plat, 1911



Sanborn Map, 1938, vol 2, sheet 212. San Antonio Public Library Special Collections.



Sanborn Map, 1911-1952, vol 2, sheet 212. Texas Digital Sanborn Maps.



Southeast elevation



Northwest elevation





616 Wilmington



618 Wilmington



Interior of 618 Wilmington



Chimney detail

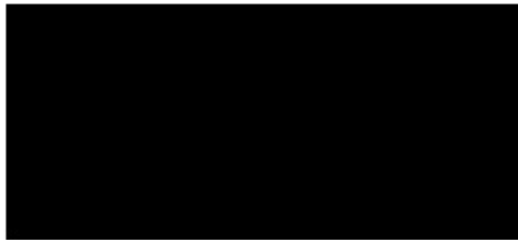
From: [Frederica Kushner](#)
To: [Jenny Hay \(OHP\)](#); [Amy Fulkerson \(OHP\)](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] 616-618 Wilmington Ave.
Date: Saturday, October 1, 2022 5:04:19 PM
Attachments: [618 Wilmington - deed search.docx](#)
[618 Wilmington City Dir search.docx](#)

Jenny,

It's me again. I've done some research on the property under a demolition request at 616-618 Wilmington Ave., in Tobin Hill. It was built in 1926 by D.E. Wright and his wife Mary. One or another of the Wright family lived in either 616 or 618 until at least 1948. After that, the duplex was probably all rental. It looks to be largely unchanged. There are no other evident demolitions on the 600 block. It looks to be in fair shape. Why does someone want to demolish a building that could provide 2 housing units, probably at least semi-affordable? We believe it contributes to the neighborhood and should be preserved.

I'm attaching my research. It's jumbled but may give an idea of the timeline. This was a very difficult search.

Frederica Kushner



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