



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

August 2, 2023

HDRC CASE NO: 2023-274
ADDRESS: 3403 S FLORES ST
LEGAL DESCRIPTION: NCB 2659 BLK 6 LOT 8 N 8 FT OF 9
APPLICANT: Adrián Nájera/NAJERA ADRIAN - 3403 S Flores
OWNER: Adrian Najera/NAJERA ADRIAN - 401 Buena Vista Circle
REQUEST:
The applicant is requesting Historic Landmark Designation for the property at 3403 S Flores St.

FINDINGS:

- a. The request for landmark designation was initiated by the property owner.
- b. HISTORIC CONTEXT: The structure at 3403 South Flores Street is a two-story Art Deco style two-part commercial building built c. 1941 and operated as the Liberty Food Store by Pon T. Wong beginning in 1942. Adrián Nájera currently owns the property. It is located in the Lone Star neighborhood of City Council District 5. The property first appears in the 1942-43 city directory as both the Liberty Food Store and residence of Pon Tong Wong (1896-1967) and his wife Lee Shee Wong. Between 1907 and 1949 there were a total of 120 Chinese groceries listed in the City directories. The number of abandoned corner stores is unknown, however, an OHP survey identified at least 42 corner stores that were once owned and operated by a Chinese American. The property at 3403 South Flores was not included in the survey. Born in California, Pon T. Wong was the cousin of another prominent Chinese grocer in San Antonio, Don Wong (1502 South Flores). Pon T. Wong died in San Antonio in 1967, and his residence at the time of his death was listed as 1840 West Laurel. Lee Shee Wong died in 1995, and their son Franklin Wong inherited the property in 1998.
- c. SITE CONTEXT: The subject property is located in the Lone Star neighborhood just west of Mission Concepcion, the Mission Historic District, and the World Heritage Buffer Zone. Situated at the intersection with Glenn Street, the property is part of the South Flores commercial corridor near the confluence of San Pedro Creek and the San Antonio River. The 3400 block of South Flores is a mixture of residential and commercial uses, with businesses located on street corners and homes tucked in between. Most structures are single story, built between 1900 and 1940. Architectural styles of the homes include vernacular, Folk Victorian, and Craftsman. Styles of the commercial structures show influences including Spanish Eclectic and Art Deco.
- d. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION: The structure is an Art Deco concrete block building with a distinctive smooth-faced stone finish and mosaic tile patterns. As a movement, Art Deco symbolized modernism, new wealth, and sophistication, and the style gained traction from the early 1920s and remained popular until the beginning of the Second World War. The primary façade features low-relief decorative panels found at entrances, around windows, along roof edges or as string courses. The front entrance doorway is surrounded by two rectangular apron panels with a concave quarter-circle bevel on the top corners and an aquamarine glaze. The same bright color is applied to the decorative terracotta frieze moldings below the roof edge and the second story windows. The most distinguishing features of the building include tile work in a high-contrast checkered motif of bold black and vibrant aquamarine pieces. This pattern appears on the base of the front façade below the windows, and wraps around to the first quarter of the right façade. A cantilevered corrugated metal canopy covers the front entrance and walkway, projecting out from the building above the large display windows on the lower floor, and extends around the right façade to cover the lower windows and tile work. The shopfront windows appear as punctured openings, with recessed casements. To maintain a streamlined appearance for the building, the clerestory windows above the canopy are glass blocks arranged in groups of horizontal bands aligned with the doors and windows below. The second floor features three picture windows on the front façade and one above the canopy on the right façade. Between the lower clerestory windows and upper picture windows are string courses of the checkered tiles; the tile pattern above the entrance is a rectangular frame.
- 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):
 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 Art Deco style two-part block commercial building with character-defining features including the mosaic tile work and decorative panels, frieze moldings, large display windows, picture windows, and clerestory windows, and a sidewalk canopy;

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 Art Deco style two-part block commercial building with character-defining features including the mosaic tile work and decorative panels, frieze moldings, large display windows, picture windows, and clerestory windows, and a sidewalk canopy;

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; as one of a collection of neighborhood Chinese Grocery stores that operated in the early twentieth century in San Antonio.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of a Historic Landmark Designation of 3403 South Flores 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