

## HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION

September 15, 2021

**HDRC CASE NO:** 2021-334  
**ADDRESS:** 503 URBAN LOOP  
**LEGAL DESCRIPTION:** NCB 13420 BLK LOT 4  
**ZONING:** D  
**CITY COUNCIL DIST.:** 1  
**APPLICANT:** Conservation Society of San Antonio, Westside Preservation Alliance, Esperanza Peace and Justice Center  
**OWNER:** DPMILLER INVESTMENTS LLC  
**TYPE OF WORK:** Request for review of historic significance  
**CASE MANAGER:** Jessica Anderson

### REQUEST:

A request for review by the HDRC regarding eligibility of the property located at 503 Urban Loop for landmark designation.

### 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. 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 zoning commission hearing. Notwithstanding the foregoing, a request for landmark designation may be made and approved by the city council. To the extent that this subsection conflicts with any other provisions of this chapter, this paragraph shall control except for buildings, objects, sites, structures, or clusters heretofore designated as local landmarks or districts, National Register landmarks or districts, state historic landmarks or sites, or state archaeological landmarks or sites. Additionally, requests for designation 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. **Designation of Historic Landmarks.**
  1. **Initiation.** Any person, the historic and design review commission, zoning commission, the historic preservation officer, or the city council may initiate a historic landmark designation by filing an application with the historic preservation officer. Requests for designation shall be made on a form obtained from the city historic preservation officer. Completed request forms shall be returned to the office of historic preservation for processing. Owner consent for historic landmark designation shall be required unless a city council resolution to proceed with the designation has been approved. 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. **Decision.** The historic preservation officer shall refer a completed application for historic landmark designation to the historic and design review commission. Property owners of proposed historic landmarks shall be notified of the historic and design review commission hearing by the historic preservation officer by mail prior to a historic and design review commission hearing for historic landmark designation. Notice to property owners shall state the place, date, time, and purpose of the historic and design review commission hearing. The historic preservation officer shall also send notice of the meeting to any registered neighborhood associations located within the proposed district boundary. The historic and design review commission shall make and forward its recommendation to the zoning commission within forty-five (45) days from the date of submittal of the designation request by the historic preservation officer. Upon submittal of the historic and design review commission's recommendation, the proposed historic district or landmark designation shall be submitted to the zoning commission for its review recommendations along with its finding of historic significance. The zoning commission and the city council shall process the application as prescribed in [section 35-421](#) of this chapter and this section. The zoning commission shall schedule a hearing on

the historic and design review commission recommendation to be held within sixty (60) days of receipt of such recommendation and shall forward its recommendation to city council which shall schedule a hearing to be held within sixty (60) days of council's receipt of such recommendation. Upon passage of any ordinance designating a historic landmark, or removing or upgrading 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) and the criteria applied to evaluate properties for inclusion in the National Register. 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.**
  1. **Its value as a visible or archeological reminder of the cultural heritage of the community, or national event;**
  3. **Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the development of the community, county, state, or nation;**
  6. **Its historical, architectural or cultural character as a particularly fine or unique example of a utilitarian structure, including, but not limited to, bridges, acequias, gas stations, transportation shelters, or other commercial structures;**
  7. **Its unique location or singular physical characteristics that make it an established or familiar visual feature;**
  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;**

**FINDINGS:**

- a. On July 9, 2021, the Conservation Society of San Antonio, the Westside Preservation Alliance, and the Esperanza Peace and Justice Center jointly submitted a request for review of historic significance for the property at 503 Urban Loop. DPMiller Investments LLC currently owns the property, which is located in City Council District 1.
- b. **CASE HISTORY:** On January 24, 2020, Charles John, HSI Design Group, submitted a request for a review of contributing status for 503 Urban Loop, which at that time was believed to be a designated local landmark. The assessment evaluated the property's historic significance and found that the primary structure, including several additions, met three criteria and remained eligible for landmark designation. On March 5, 2021, an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) for demolition of a landmark with new construction was submitted to the Office of Historic Preservation by Jonathan Card, Card and Company Architects, on behalf of the property owner of 503 Urban Loop. In May 2021, staff researched available records and could not locate any designation ordinance. Staff determined that the designation for 503 Urban Loop was likely an error that occurred about 30 years ago.
- c. **DEMOLITION AND DESIGNATIONS COMMITTEE:** The Demolition & Designation Committee (DDC) attended site visits on April 28 and May 12, 2021. Staff conducted additional site visits with the property owners on February 21, 2020, and October 7, 2020.
- d. **HISTORIC CONTEXT:** The structure at 503 Urban Loop is a Spanish Eclectic-style structure built in 1883 for Aurelia W. Dashiell, with Spanish Eclectic additions built by 1931, 1951, and by 1963, for the Carmelite Sisters Day Nursery. The famous San Antonio bawd Fannie Porter lived and worked at the subject structure from c. 1897 until c. 1901; during that time, Porter hosted members of the Wild Bunch, including Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid. No other remaining site in San Antonio is associated with these persons. The form of the 1880s bawdy house remains discernable within the Carmelite Sisters' later Spanish Eclectic additions. The building retains original interior elements, including a staircase and numerous walls, from its original construction in 1883 by Aurelia Dashiell as a bawdy house or brothel. The basic wall and roof forms of this structure form the core of the building. Although not representative of the whole of Laredito, this building serves as a rare, visible reminder that vice and entertainment played a significant role in the area. The Carmelite Sisters opened an orphanage and day care in the former brothel in 1914, just two years after the tragic fire that destroyed the nearby St. Joseph's Orphanage on the grounds of Santa Rosa Hospital, which had been run by the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate

Word. The Carmelite Sisters' expansion of 503 Urban Loop between 1931 and 1963 testifies to the critical role the Catholic Church played in meeting an underserved community's needs, both material and spiritual.

- e. **SITE CONTEXT:** The structure at 503 Urban Loop is a Mission Revival-style structure built in 1883, with Spanish Eclectic additions built by 1931, 1951 and by 1963. Urban Loop runs south from W Cesar Chavez Blvd, turns east in front of the Sanitary Tortilla Company (623 Urban Loop) and ends at S Santa Rosa. It runs through a parcel bounded to the north by W. Cesar E. Chavez Blvd, the east by S Santa Rosa Ave, the south by El Paso St, and the west by Interstate Highway 10/35, just blocks south of historic Market Square and Milam Park. The structure is surrounded by individual landmarks, including the Immaculate Heart of Mary complex at Urban Loop and S Santa Rosa, Richter Bakery at 426 S Santa Rosa, Jose Antonio Navarro School at 141 Lavaca, La Trinidad Methodist Church at 300 San Fernando St, and a cluster of landmarks on El Paso St between Interstate Highway 10/35 and S Leona St. The property itself is largely paved in asphalt, but also has a concrete pad serving as a basketball court and some small grassy lawns. The property is surrounded on the south, west, and north elevations by a low CMU wall.
- f. **ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:** The structure has low-sloped shed, hipped, gabled, and flat roof forms; sloped roofs are clad in red standing-seam metal. Eaves on the southeasternmost portions of the building have exposed rafter tails, while the 1883 core and the northernmost one-story addition have no visible rafter tails. The building is largely clad in stucco, except for a CMU addition on the south side of the 1883 house. The structure's metal-frame windows are fixed, one-over-one, have false muntins so they appear as six- or nine-over-six, or are obscured by dark sun screens. There is a fixed five-pane quatrefoil wood window over the recessed main entrance on the east elevation. The northernmost addition has fixed clerestory windows in the peak of the gable. The northeast corner of the structure has a second-story porch. The two-story portion of the building along Urban Loop has two stucco-clad chimneys and a door at the north end of the east elevation with covered stoop. The southernmost single-story portion of the building has only windows on the east and south elevations, with a recessed entrance on the west. Both the main entrance and the entrance on the west side of the southernmost addition are marked by square stucco-clad columns. There is a single-story CMU garage at the northeast corner of the property with a metal carport attached to the south side. Character-defining features of 503 Urban Loop include a low-pitch shed, hipped, and gabled roofs and flat roofs with wide eaves and exposed rafter tails, where present; stucco cladding, wood-frame quatrefoil window above the main entrance on the east elevation; and stucco-clad chimneys on the c. 1931 addition.
- g. An assessment of the property provided in response to the January 2020 request for review of contributing status found the additions made by 1951 and 1963 could be considered appropriate for removal within the context of a more comprehensive proposal reviewed and approved by HDRC. A detached garage was determined to be non-contributing; OHP issued a COA for its demo on 2018.
- h. **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):
  - 1. **Its value as a visible or archeological reminder of the cultural heritage of the community, or national event;** Although not representative of the whole of Laredito, this building serves as a rare, visible reminder that vice and entertainment played a significant role in the area. As later enlarged, the building also serves as an important example of the Catholic Church's outreach to children, the poor, and immigrants on the Westside. The Carmelite Sisters' expansion of 503 Urban Loop between 1931 and 1963 testifies to the critical role the Catholic Church played in meeting an underserved community's needs, both material and spiritual.
  - 3. **Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the development of the community, county, state, or nation;** The famous San Antonio bawd Fannie Porter lived and worked at the subject structure from c. 1897 until c. 1901; during that time, Porter hosted members of the Wild Bunch, including Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid. No other remaining site in San Antonio is associated with these persons.
  - 6. **Its historical, architectural or cultural character as a particularly fine or unique example of a utilitarian structure, including, but not limited to, bridges, acequias, gas stations, transportation shelters, or other commercial structures;** it is a surviving example of an orphanage or non-institutional group quarters in Laredito, a neighborhood associated with the city's Hispanic community since its founding.
  - 7. **Its unique location or singular physical characteristics that make it an established or familiar visual feature;** Beyond Casa Navarro and a few other structures to the south, almost nothing remains of the

Laredito neighborhood in San Antonio. This negation resulted from a long and aggressive pattern of urban renewal, which displaced people, and destroyed homes and businesses, between 1949 the 1970s.

**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;** 503 Urban Loop relates to the sociocultural and economic activities of working-class labor, including that of Mexican American and African American prostitutes, and the predominantly Euro-American madams of the more luxurious brothels, like Fannie Porter's. 503 Urban Loop is the last physical tie to an area that also served as a major economic engine for the city. The growth of San Antonio, driven by the railroads and the presence of permanent military bases, created significant consumer demand for prostitution. Under the later management of the Carmelite Sisters, 503 Urban Loop played an important role in addressing the needs of poor Mexican American Families and children on the Westside.

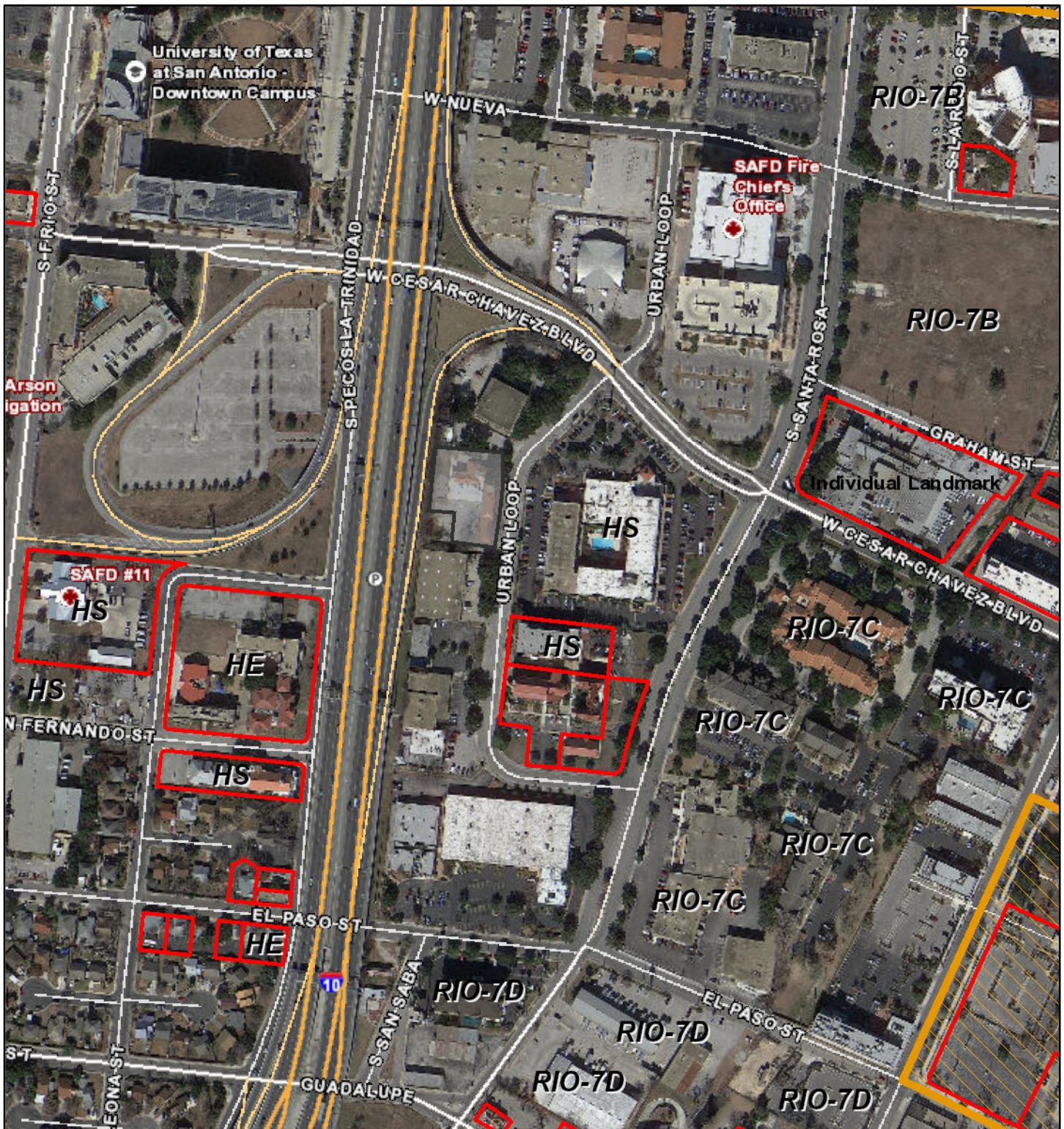
- i. The City offers a tax incentive for the substantial rehabilitation of historic properties because historic landmarks possess cultural and historical value and contribute to the overall quality and character of the City and its neighborhoods. If historic designation is approved, rehabilitation and 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.
- j. If the HDRC agrees with the request, OHP will seek concurrence from the owner. If the owner is in favor of designation, the request may proceed in the designation process and will be presented to the Zoning Commission. In the case where an owner is not in favor, OHP must first forward the recommendation of the HDRC to City Council for consideration of a resolution to initiate the landmark designation process as outlined in UDC 35-606. If the HDRC does not agree with the request, a resolution from City Council to initiate the landmark designation will not be sought. If the HDRC does not agree with the request, a resolution from City Council to initiate the landmark designation will not be sought and a demolition request could be approved administratively.
- k. Per UDC Sec. 35-453, 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:**

A property must meet three of 16 criteria under UDC Sec. 35-607(b) in order to be eligible for local historic landmark designation. Staff agrees with the applicant that the property meets five criteria. Therefore, staff finds that the property is eligible based on findings a through h and recommends a Finding of Historic Significance to the Historic and Design Review Commission.



# City of San Antonio One Stop



August 25, 2021

drawGraphics\_poly



User drawn polygons



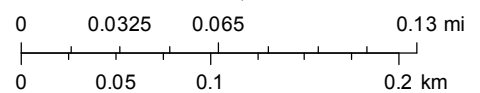
Historic Landmark Sites



Historic Districts

Zoning Overlay Label

1:4,000





## Bexar CAD

Property Search Results > 525057 DPMILLER  
INVESTMENTS LLC for Year 2021

Tax Year: 2021

## Property

## Account

Property ID:	525057	Legal Description:	NCB 13420 BLK LOT 4
Geographic ID:	13420-000-0040	Zoning:	D
Type:	Real	Agent Code:	60585
Property Use Code:	400		
Property Use Description:	OFFICE		

## Protest

Protest Status:

Informal Date:

Formal Date:

## Location

Address:	503 URBAN LOOP SAN ANTONIO, TX 78204	Mapsco:	616D5
Neighborhood:	NBHD code10040	Map ID:	
Neighborhood CD:	10040	E-File Eligible	

## Owner

Name:	DPMILLER INVESTMENTS LLC	Owner ID:	3243069
Mailing Address:	14500 SAN PEDRO AVE STE 101 SAN ANTONIO, TX 78232-4354	% Ownership:	100.0000000000%

Exemptions:

## Values

(+) Improvement Homesite Value:	+	\$0	
(+) Improvement Non-Homesite Value:	+	\$318,830	
(+) Land Homesite Value:	+	\$0	
(+) Land Non-Homesite Value:	+	\$681,170	Ag / Timber Use Value
(+) Agricultural Market Valuation:	+	\$0	\$0
(+) Timber Market Valuation:	+	\$0	\$0
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(=) Market Value:	=	\$1,000,000	
(-) Ag or Timber Use Value Reduction:	-	\$0	
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(=) Appraised Value:	=	\$1,000,000	
(-) HS Cap:	-	\$0	
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(=) Assessed Value:	=	\$1,000,000	

Taxing Jurisdiction

Owner: DPMILLER INVESTMENTS LLC  
% Ownership: 100.000000000000%  
Total Value: \$1,000,000

Entity	Description	Tax Rate	Appraised Value	Taxable Value	Estimated Tax		
06	BEXAR CO RD & FLOOD	0.023668	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$236.68		
08	SA RIVER AUTH	0.018580	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$185.80		
09	ALAMO COM COLLEGE	0.149150	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,491.50		
10	UNIV HEALTH SYSTEM	0.276235	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$2,762.35		
11	BEXAR COUNTY	0.277429	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$2,774.29		
21	CITY OF SAN ANTONIO	0.558270	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$5,582.70		
57	SAN ANTONIO ISD	1.502300	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$15,023.00		
CAD	BEXAR APPRAISAL DISTRICT	0.000000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$0.00		
SA030	San Antonio TIF #30 Westside	0.000000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$0.00		
Total Tax Rate:		2.805632					
					Taxes w/Current Exemptions:	\$28,056.32	
					Taxes w/o Exemptions:	\$28,056.32	

Improvement / Building

Improvement #1:	Commercial	State Code:	F1	Living Area:	12994.8 sqft	Value:	\$307,825
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Type	Description	Class CD	Exterior Wall	Year Built	SQFT
400	OFFICE	D - A	MA	1950	9282.0
400	OFFICE	D - A	MA	1950	3712.8

Improvement #2:	Commercial	State Code:	F1	Living Area:	sqft	Value:	\$6,876
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Type	Description	Class CD	Exterior Wall	Year Built	SQFT
GAR	Detached Garage	* - F		0	900.0

Improvement #3:	Commercial	State Code:	F1	Living Area:	sqft	Value:	\$1,727
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Type	Description	Class CD	Exterior Wall	Year Built	SQFT
FEN	Fence	S - F		0	298.0

Improvement #4:	Commercial	State Code:	F1	Living Area:	sqft	Value:	\$2,402
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Type	Description	Class CD	Exterior Wall	Year Built	SQFT
ASP	Asphalt	* - F		0	2012.0

Land

#	Type	Description	Acres	Sqft	Eff Front	Eff Depth	Market Value	Prod. Value
1	IND	Industrial	0.7950	34630.00	0.00	0.00	\$681,170	\$0

**Roll Value History**

Year	Improvements	Land Market	Ag Valuation	Appraised	HS Cap	Assessed
2021	\$318,830	\$681,170	0	1,000,000	\$0	\$1,000,000
2020	\$556,149	\$681,170	0	1,237,319	\$0	\$1,237,319
2019	\$564,440	\$667,670	0	1,232,110	\$0	\$1,232,110
2018	\$549,180	\$865,750	0	1,414,930	\$0	\$1,414,930
2017	\$529,030	\$865,750	0	1,394,780	\$0	\$1,394,780

**Deed History - (Last 3 Deed Transactions)**

#	Deed Date	Type	Description	Grantor	Grantee	Volume	Page	Deed Number
1	4/20/2020	SWD	Special Warranty Deed	GIRLS AND BOYS TOWN OF SAN ANTONIO	DPMILLER INVESTMENTS LLC			20200081509
2	7/5/2005	SWD	Special Warranty Deed	FATHER FLANAGANS BOYS HOME	GIRLS AND BOYS TOWN OF SAN ANTONIO	11705	2158	20050239225
3	10/12/1990	Deed	Deed		FATHER FLANAGANS BOYS HOME	4925	1911	0

**Economic Unit Links****Property ID:**

525057

110

**Protest status and date information current as of Aug 25 2021 1:18AM.**

**2021 and prior year appraisal data current as of Aug 6 2021 5:48PM**

**For property information, contact (210) 242-2432 or (210) 224-8511 or email.**

**For website information, contact (210) 242-2500.**



## CITY OF SAN ANTONIO OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

### Statement of Significance

**Property Address:** 503 Urban Loop

#### 1. Application Details

Applicant: Charles John, HSI Design Group  
Type: Determination of Non-contributing Status  
Date Received: 24 January 2020

#### 2. Findings

The structure at 503 Urban Loop is a Spanish Eclectic-style structure built in 1883 for Aurelia W. Dashiell,<sup>1</sup> with Spanish Eclectic additions built by 1931,<sup>2</sup> 1951<sup>3</sup> and by 1963<sup>4</sup> for the Carmelite Sisters Day Nursery.<sup>5</sup> It is located in City Council District 1. Father Flanagan's Boys Town currently owns the property.

When built, the property now addressed 503 Urban Loop but historically located on the 500 block of S San Saba was just two blocks south of San Antonio's Sporting District; it operated as brothel until c. 1912.<sup>6</sup> The Sporting District was established by a City Council ordinance on December 16, 1889, titled "The Ordinance to suppress and restrain bawdy houses within the limits of the City of San Antonio," bounded to the north by Monterey St, the east by S Santa Rosa, the south by Matamoras, and the west by S Concho.<sup>7</sup> The ordinance required brothels and the women who worked there to be licensed. House licenses were \$500, but the individual license came at no cost to the applicant. Houses or women violating the ordinance, described as a misdemeanor offense, were to be fined no less than \$25 and no more than \$100 and imprisoned for no more than 20 days. The ordinance also required weekly medical check-ups for all women working in the brothels, at the cost of \$1 per exam.<sup>8</sup> In 1911, licensing fees gathered under the ordinance netted the City of San Antonio more than \$50,000,<sup>9</sup> equivalent to about \$1.36 million in 2020.<sup>10</sup>

Fannie Porter, a prominent figure in stories of turn-of-the-century San Antonio, is listed as a resident of Dashiell's brothel in the 1897-98 and 1901-02 city directories.<sup>11</sup> Porter was born in England in 1873 and moved to the United States the next year.<sup>12</sup> Prior to 1897, Porter is listed as residing at the boarding house (another euphemism for a brothel) of Carrie Anderson at the corner of S San Saba and San Fernando, one

<sup>1</sup> Bexar County Clerk (web site). Builders Lien: Aurelia W. Dashiell to San Antonio Real Estate Building and Loan Association, 25 July 1883, M LN, vol. B, p. 95.

<sup>2</sup> Sanborn Fire Insurance Map: San Antonio, Texas, 1931, vol. 4, sheet 413.

<sup>3</sup> Sanborn Fire Insurance Map: San Antonio, Texas, 1911-Mar. 1951, vol. 4, 1912-Mar. 1951, sheet 413.

<sup>4</sup> Historic Aerials (web site). 503 Urban Loop, San Antonio, Texas, 1963. Accessed 27 January 2020. [Historicaerials.com](http://Historicaerials.com).

<sup>5</sup> San Antonio City Directory, 1963, p. 613.

<sup>6</sup> Sanborn Fire Insurance Map: San Antonio, Texas, 1912, vol. 4, sheet 413.

<sup>7</sup> "The Blue Book for Visitors, Tourists and Those Seeking a Good Time While in San Antonio, Texas." Publisher/author unknown. 1911-1912, p. 5.

<sup>8</sup> City of San Antonio City Council Minutes for 16 December 1889, book H, p. 557-60.

<sup>9</sup> Morgan, Lael. "The San Antonio Blue Book: Proof of a Secret Era." *The Compass Rose*, University of Texas at Arlington, Fall 2007, vol. XXI, No. 2, p. 1-3.

<sup>10</sup> CPI Inflation Calculator (web site). Accessed 2 March 2020. <https://www.in2013dollars.com/us/inflation/>.

<sup>11</sup> San Antonio City Directory, 1897-98, p. 468; 1901-02, p. 434.

<sup>12</sup> Selcer, Richard F. "Porter, Fannie (1873-?)." Texas State Historical Association, Handbook of Texas Online. Accessed 28 Feb 2020. <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fpo5>.

1901 S. ALAMO ST, SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS 78204

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## CITY OF SAN ANTONIO OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

block south of the subject structure.<sup>13</sup> She joined the brothel on the 500 block of S San Saba by 1897 and remained there until at least 1901.<sup>14</sup> It was during her time at Dashiell's house that the Wild Bunch, the infamous gang headed by Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, used the subject structure as a "rest stop, hideout, rendezvous, and headquarters."<sup>15</sup> The Wild Bunch's last known visit to Porter's brothel was in February 1901; Porter is said to have thrown a going-away party for the gang that year before the Wild Bunch disbanded. Porter is difficult to track after the 1901-02 listing in the city directory; according to her entry in the Handbook of Texas Online, "legend has it that Fannie died in a car accident in El Paso years later."<sup>16</sup>

In 1911, the Sporting District was one of the main tourist attractions in San Antonio—second only to the Alamo—and was the largest red light district in Texas and third largest in the United States. In addition to nearly four dozen brothels,<sup>17</sup> the Sporting District was home to gambling halls, dancehalls, and vaudeville theaters, as well as businesses like restaurants and hotels that didn't specifically cater to the vice district. Dwight D. Eisenhower closed the district in 1941, during his command of Fort Sam Houston.<sup>18</sup>

Rev. J. W. Shaw, Bishop of the Diocese of San Antonio, acquired the property in 1913,<sup>19</sup> and the Carmelite Sisters opened an orphanage and day care center there in 1914.<sup>20</sup> The Diocese sold the property to the Carmelite Sisters in 1918.<sup>21</sup>

The Carmel of the Divine Heart of Jesus was founded in Berlin, Germany, in 1891, and their mission from the beginning was to assist "poor and neglected children, above all those who had no home" as well as "immigrants and transient workers."<sup>22</sup> In 1918, the subject structure was home to a day nursery and an orphanage that cared for 24 children.<sup>23</sup> Newspaper ads and articles indicate the day nursery catered to the working poor, with a special focus on serving families of Mexican descent and recent immigrants.<sup>24</sup> By the 1940s, the center no longer housed orphans, but dedicated itself to caring for and educating the children of

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<sup>13</sup> San Antonio City Directory, 1887, p. 66 (Anderson, Carrie) and 302 (Porter, Fannie).

<sup>14</sup> San Antonio City Directory, 1897-98, p. 468; 1901-02, p. 434.

<sup>15</sup> Selcer, Richard F. "Porter, Fannie (1873-?)." Texas State Historical Association, Handbook of Texas Online. Accessed 28 Feb 2020. <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fpo5>.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Sanborn Fire Insurance Map: San Antonio, Texas, 1912, vol. 4, sheets 405-406.

<sup>18</sup> Morgan, Lael. "The San Antonio Blue Book: Proof of a Secret Era." *The Compass Rose*, University of Texas at Arlington, Fall 2007, vol. XXI, No. 2, p. 1-3.

<sup>19</sup> Bexar County Clerk (web site). Warranty Deed with V/L: Louis M. Michael et al to Right Reverend J. W. Shaw, as Bishop. 26 November 1913, Deed book, vol. 429, p. 551.

<sup>20</sup> "Happy Xmas for Orphans is Assured." San Antonio *Evening News*, Saturday, 21 December 1918, p. 12.

<sup>21</sup> Bexar County Clerk (web site). Rt. Rev. J. W. Shaw, Bishop of the Diocese of San Antonio, to The Carmelite Sisters D. C. J. 20 May 1918, Deed book, vol. 544, p. 138.

<sup>22</sup> Carmelite Sisters of the Divine Heart of Jesus (web site): Our Roots. Accessed 2 March 2020. [Carmelitedej.org](http://Carmelitedej.org).

<sup>23</sup> "Happy Xmas for Orphans is Assured." San Antonio *Evening News*, Saturday, 21 December 1918, p. 12.

<sup>24</sup> "Happy Xmas for Orphans is Assured." San Antonio *Evening News*, Saturday, 21 December 1918, p. 12; "120 Youngsters in Day Nursery." San Antonio *Express*, Sunday Morning, 9 October 1929, p. 14; "One Campaign Instead of Thirty-Four." San Antonio *Express*, Sunday Morning, 25 October 1925, p. 32; "Day Care Centers Help Working Mothers." San Antonio *Light*, Monday, 30 September 1968, p. 44.



## CITY OF SAN ANTONIO OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

working parents.<sup>25</sup> In 1967, the two Carmelite day center locations (the second at 2006 Nebraska St) provided “more than 44,000 days of care for 462 children.”<sup>26</sup>

During their ownership, the Carmelite Sisters contributed three additions to the 1883 home at 503 S San Saba. The two-story building along Urban Loop was added by 1931,<sup>27</sup> and by 1951, the sisters added the one-story addition to the south end of that building.<sup>28</sup> A one-story chapel was added to the north side of the building between 1955 and 1963, according to historic aerials.<sup>29</sup> They also demolished outbuildings from c. 1883 and purchased adjacent properties, demolishing the homes that once stood there.<sup>30</sup> Homes to the west of the subject structure were demoed to make way for Interstate Highway 10/35.<sup>31</sup> A modern detached garage located near the northwest corner of the property was also added in the 1960s,<sup>32</sup> but was found noncontributing; an administrative Certificate of Appropriateness was generated by staff for demolition of the detached garage on August 29, 2018. The garage remains intact on site at the time of this assessment.<sup>33</sup>

In 1990, the Carmelite Sisters sold the property at 503 Urban Loop to Father Flanagan’s Boys Home of San Antonio, also known as Boys Town.<sup>34</sup> Boys Town was founded in Omaha, Nebraska, in 1917 by Father Edward J. Flanagan. Between 1985 and 2005, under the leadership of Father Valentine J. Peter, the program grew to include more than 12 sites across the United States as well as a national hotline.<sup>35</sup> By 1991, Boys Town established five homes for “abused and neglected children in the San Antonio area,” and shared plans for a downtown emergency shelter at 503 Urban Loop. The shelter was planned to house children who might otherwise end up in the care of the city’s juvenile justice and probation systems while providing counselling and aftercare to the children and their families. Boys Town renovated the building’s interior,<sup>36</sup> but did not add to the building’s footprint. Despite the renovations, the main staircase and banister from the 1883 remain in the core of the building.<sup>37</sup> The program operated out of the subject structure until 2017, when Boys Town closed all of its properties in Texas, New York, and California.<sup>38</sup> The organization retains ownership of the property at 503 Urban Loop.

Photos on file at the Conservation Society of San Antonio show that in 1990, all phases of the building from the c. 1931 addition north but excluding two flat-roofed portions had standing-seam metal roofs; the c. 1951

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<sup>25</sup> “Day Nurseries Combine Play With Education.” *San Antonio Express*, Sunday Morning, 29 August 1942, p. 8A.

<sup>26</sup> “Day Care Centers Help Working Mothers.” *San Antonio Light*, Monday, 30 September 1968, p 44.

<sup>27</sup> Sanborn Fire Insurance Map: San Antonio, Texas, 1931, vol. 4, sheet 413.

<sup>28</sup> Sanborn Fire Insurance Map: San Antonio, Texas, 1911-March 1951, vol. 4, 1912-March 1951, sheet 413.

<sup>29</sup> Historic Aerials (web site). 503 Urban Loop, 1955 and 1963.

<sup>30</sup> Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps: San Antonio, Texas, 1931, vol. 4, sheet 413; 1934, vol. 4, sheet 413; 1938, vol. 4, sheet 413; 1911-March 1951, vol. 4, 1912-March 1951, sheet 413.

<sup>31</sup> Historic Aerials (web site). 503 Urban Loop, 1963 and 1966.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Site visit by Office of Historic Preservation staff, Friday, 21 February 2020.

<sup>34</sup> Bexar County Clerk (web site). Warranty Deed: Carmelite Sisters, A Corporation, Carmelite Sisters of the Divine Heart of Jesus of California and the Carmelite Sisters D.C.J. to Father Flanagan’s Boys’ Home, 12 October 1990, Deed book, vol. 4925, p. 1911.

<sup>35</sup> Boystown.org: History. Accessed 2 March 2020. <https://www.boystown.org/about/our-history/Pages/default.aspx>.

<sup>36</sup> McAuliffe, Suzanne. “Boys Town plans a shelter for kids downtown.” *San Antonio Light*, 18 April 1991.

<sup>37</sup> Site visit by Office of Historic Preservation staff, Friday, 21 February 2020.

<sup>38</sup> SBG San Antonio. “Boys Town closing facilities here in San Antonio.” WOAI Antonio, accessed 2 March 2020. <https://news4sanantonio.com/news/local/boys-town-closing-facilities-here-in-san-antonio>.





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addition had a composition shingle roof.<sup>39</sup> The photo included in *Diamond Jubilee: 1874-1949*, published by the Archdiocese of San Antonio, shows the 1883 core and the c. 1951 addition both with composition shingle roofs.<sup>40</sup> The red standing-seam metal roofs have been in place since at least October 2007.<sup>41</sup>

### 3. Architectural Description

The structure at 503 Urban Loop is a Mission Revival-style structure built in 1883, with Spanish Eclectic additions built by 1931, 1951 and by 1963. Urban Loop run south from W Cesar Chavez Blvd, turns east in front of the Sanitary Tortilla Company (623 Urban Loop) and ends at S Santa Rosa. It runs through a parcel bounded to the north by W. Cesar E. Chavez Blvd, the east by S Santa Rosa Ave, the south by El Paso St, and the west by Interstate Highway 10/35, just blocks south of historic Market Square and Milam Park. The structure is surrounded by individual landmarks, including the Immaculate Heart of Mary complex at Urban Loop and S Santa Rosa, Richter Bakery at 426 S Santa Rosa, Jose Antonio Navarro School at 141 Lavaca, La Trinidad Methodist Church at 300 San Fernando St, and a cluster of landmarks on El Paso St between Interstate Highway 10/35 and S Leona St. The property itself is largely paved in asphalt, but also has a concrete pad serving as a basketball court and some small grassy lawns. The property is surrounded on the south, west, and north elevations by a low CMU wall.

The structure has low-sloped shed, hipped, gabled, and flat roof forms; sloped roofs are clad in red standing-seam metal. Eaves on the southeastern most portions of the building have exposed rafter tails, while the 1883 core and the northernmost one-story addition have no visible rafter tails. The building is largely clad in stucco, except for a CMU addition on the south side of the 1883 house. The structure's metal-frame windows are fixed, one-over-one, have false muntins so they appear as six- or nine-over-six, or are obscured by dark sun screens. There is a fixed five-pane quatrefoil wood window over the recessed main entrance on the east elevation. The northernmost addition has fixed clerestory windows in the peak of the gable. The northeast corner of the structure has a second-story porch.

The two-story portion of the building along Urban Loop has two stucco-clad chimneys and a door at the north end of the east elevation with covered stoop. The southernmost single-story portion of the building has only windows on the east and south elevations, with a recessed entrance on the west. Both the main entrance and the entrance on the west side of the southernmost addition are marked by square stucco-clad columns.

There is a single-story CMU garage at the northeast corner of the property with a metal carport attached to the south side.

Character-defining features of 503 Urban Loop include:

- Low-pitch shed, hipped, and gabled roofs and flat roofs with wide eaves and exposed rafter tails, where present
- Stucco cladding
- Wood-frame quatrefoil window above the main entrance on the east elevation
- Stucco-clad chimneys on the c. 1931 addition

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<sup>39</sup> Conservation Society of San Antonio. Subject file: San Saba Street. Accessed Monday, 24 February 2020.

<sup>40</sup> The Archdiocese of San Antonio. "Diamond Jubilee: 1874-1949." Copyright 1949, Robert E. Lucey, Archbishop of San Antonio.

<sup>41</sup> Google street view, 503 Urban Loop, San Antonio, Texas: October 2007. Accessed 2 March 2020.





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### 4. Landmark Criteria

The property meets the following criterion 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;** famous San Antonio bawd Fannie Porter lived and worked at the subject structure from c. 1897 until c. 1901; during that time, Porter hosted members of the Wild Bunch.
- **6: Its historical, architectural or cultural character as a particularly fine or unique example of a utilitarian structure, including, but not limited to, bridges, acequias, gas stations, transportation shelters, or other commercial structures;** The property is an example of a c. 1880s brothel; along with its additions, it serves as a reminder of the mission of the Carmelite Sisters to serve families in San Antonio, particularly those who were immigrants, who were of Mexican-descent, and/or who were working-poor.
- **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;** 503 Urban Loop contributes to an understanding of San Antonio's red light district, which operated from the 1880s until 1941.

### 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 503 Urban Loop meets this threshold. Further research may reveal additional significance associated with this property.

Additions to the 1883 boarding house made by 1931, 1951, and 1963 are considered contributing to the landmark. Should a future owner wish to demolish the building in part or in total, staff recommends the request be heard by the Historic and Design Review Commission (HDRC). While the most recent additions are of historic age and relate to the site's history, staff suggests that their removal could be appropriate if considered within the context of a more comprehensive proposal reviewed and approved by the HDRC. The detached garage located near the northwest corner of the property was found noncontributing and an administrative Certificate of Appropriateness was generated for demolition of the detached garage on August 29, 2018. No HDRC review is required for the detached garage.

The City of San Antonio 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. Rehabilitation and restoration work on this property 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. Because the property contributes to an understanding of San Antonio's red light district, once the largest in Texas and the third-largest in the country, staff believes the property may be eligible. A request for a determination of eligibility can be made to the Texas Historical Commission.

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*Northeast oblique showing main entrance; c. 1963 addition at right.*



*East and south elevations of the c. 1931 c. 1951 addition.*

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*West elevations of the c. 1931 and c. 1951 additions at right; 1883 house form visible at left.*



*North and west elevations of the 1883 building; west elevation of c. 1963 addition at left.*

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*C. 1960s detached garage at northwest corner of property.*

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## CITY OF SAN ANTONIO OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

### CARMELITE SISTERS OF THE DIVINE HEART OF JESUS

The Carmelite Sisters of the Divine Heart of Jesus came to San Antonio in 1914, at the invitation of Bishop Shaw, to establish a home for poor homeless children and a day nursery for boys and girls between the ages of one and six years.

Rev. Mother Mary Teresa, foundress and superior general of the Carmelite Sisters of the Divine Heart of Jesus, accompanied by two Sisters of her congregation, arrived in San Antonio on January 5, 1914. Bishop Shaw bought them a house at 503 San Saba Street. The house was renovated and the three Sisters prepared it for occupation by January 14. On that date Mother Mary Felicitas and five Sisters took charge.

The first little girl arrived in March, 1914, and during the 35 years of its existence thousands of children have been in the care of the Sisters. On April 7th, 1914, Bishop Shaw blessed the chapel, dedicating it to the Sacred Heart, celebrated the first Mass therein, and inaugurated the reservation of the Blessed Sacrament.

The Sisters, carrying on the work begun by their zealous foundress, visited the poor in their homes, and were tireless in their efforts to alleviate the sufferings of the afflicted to whom they

brought spiritual consolation and comfort. Luke-warm Catholics returned to the practice of their religion; marriages were validated; children and adults were instructed and baptized, and the Last Sacraments were administered to the dying through the instrumentality of the Sisters.

When the building became too small the Sisters were enabled, through the generosity of friends, to enlarge the Day Nursery and secure adjoining property.

### NEBRASKA STREET

In July of 1918, upon the recommendation of the Rev. J. B. Muehlsiepen, C.Ss.R., and with ecclesiastical approval, the Sisters established a home for poor boys at 2006 Nebraska Street. They also engaged in missionary activities like the Sisters on San Saba Street. For six years the Sisters occupied a small frame building until the present two story brick structure was erected in 1924. This building has also served as the Provincial House of the Carmelite Sisters since 1925.

The home for boys was converted into a day nursery for boys and girls in the fall of 1942, in accordance with the wishes of Archbishop Lucey.



DAY NURSERY, SAN SABA ST.

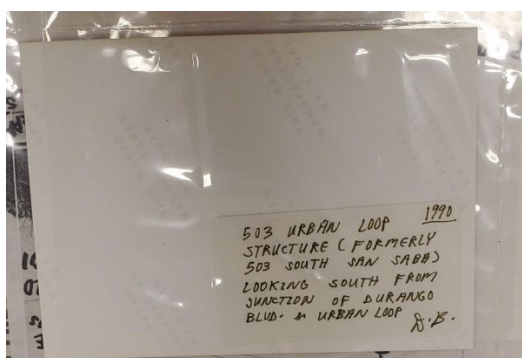
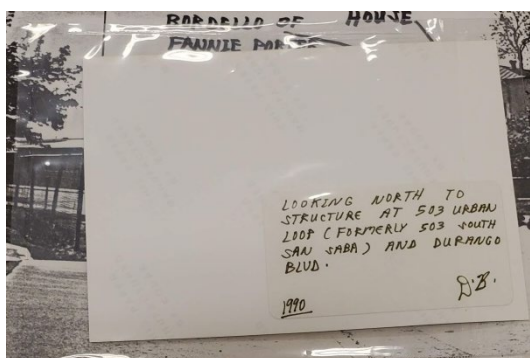


CONVENT AND NURSERY, NEBRASKA ST.

*Excerpt from "Diamond Jubilee: 1874-1949," published by the Archdiocese of San Antonio, copyright 1949 by Robert E. Lucey, Archbishop of San Antonio. Bottom left image is 503 Urban Loop, northeast oblique. Bottom right is the day nursery at 2006 Nebraska St.*



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*Photos taken by David C. Bowser in 1990, in the S San Saba subject file at the Conservation Society of San Antonio, showing previous conditions of the property.*

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*Interior staircase retained from the  
1883 boarding house.*

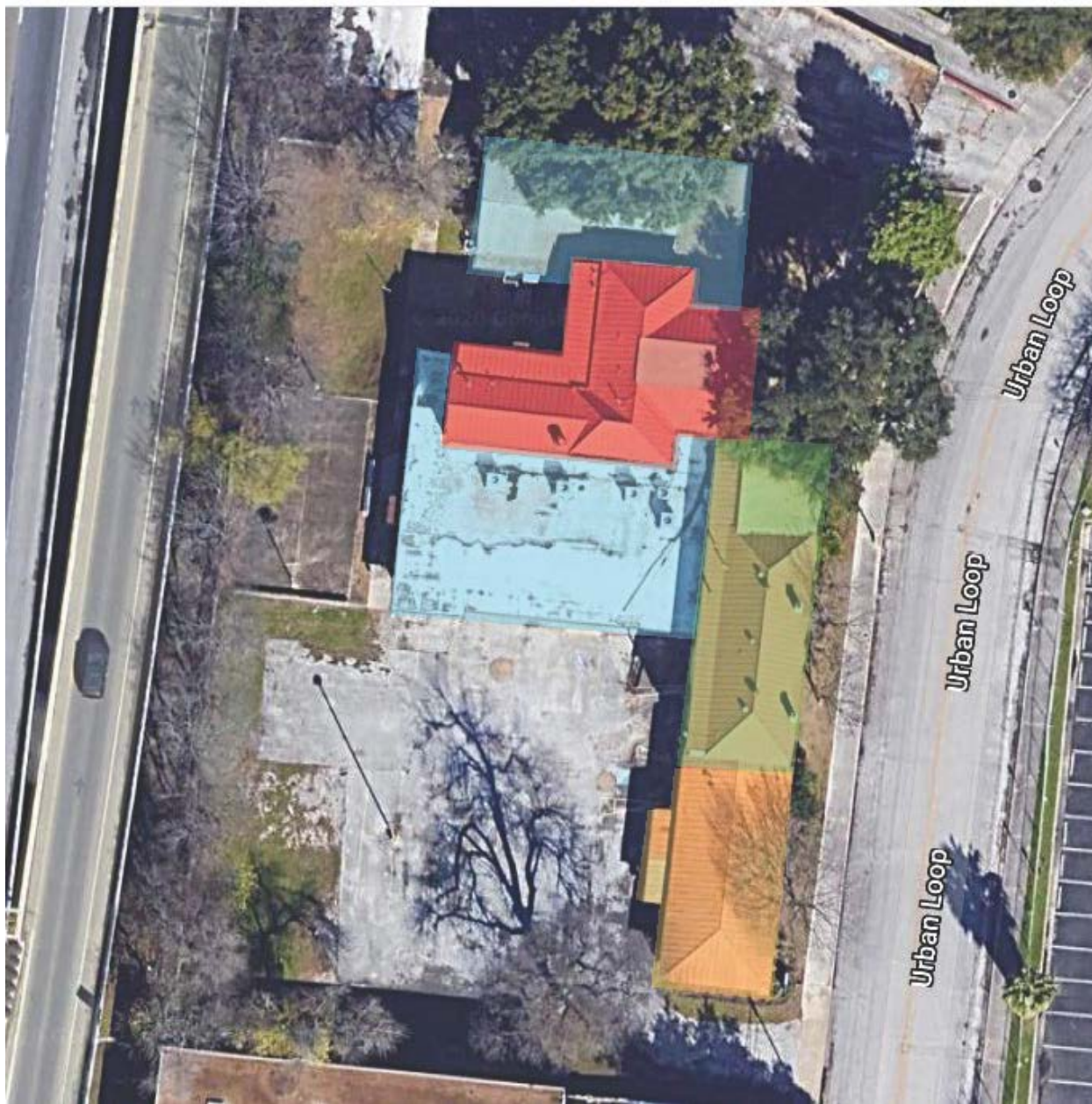
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*Phases of 503 Urban Loop:*

*RED: 1883-c. 1912*

*GREEN: addition c. 1931-38*

*ORANGE: addition by 1951*

*BLUE: additions c. 1955-c. 1963*

*Aerial of 503 Urban Loop from Google satellite.*

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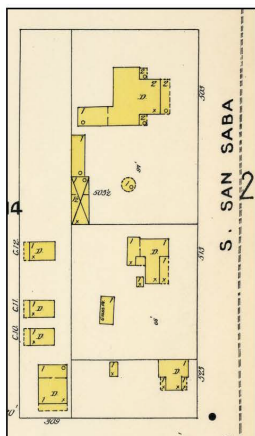




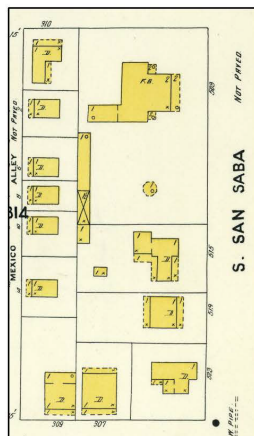
# CITY OF SAN ANTONIO OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

503 Urban Loop  
Sanborn Fire Insurance  
Maps by Year

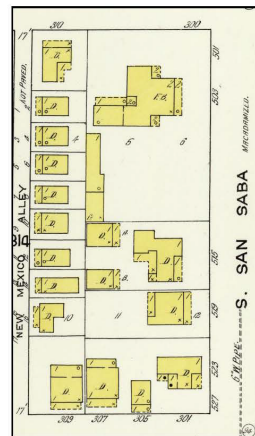
*Urban Loop was  
previously named  
S San Saba.*



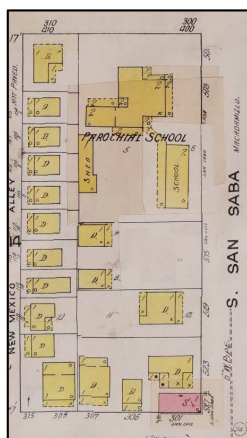
1896, sheet 24



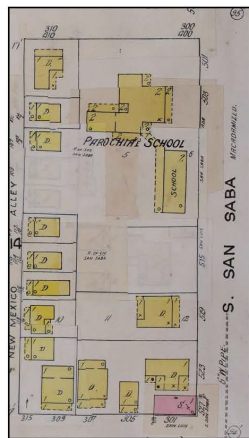
1904, vol. 1, sheet 32



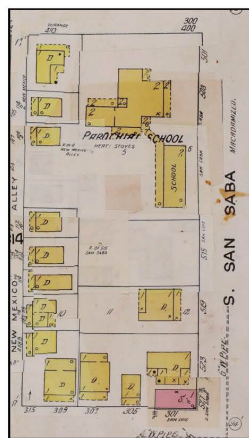
1912, vol. 4, sheet 413



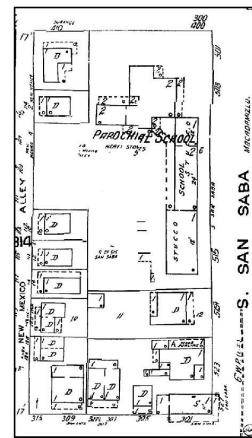
1931, vol. 4, sheet 413



1934, vol. 4, sheet 413



1938, vol. 4, sheet 413



1911-Marc. 1951, vol. 4, 1912-  
Mar. 1951, vol. 4, sheet 413

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San Antonio's Sporting District, 1912

*Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1912, vol. 4, p. 405, 406, and 413.*

*FB = female boarding = brothel*



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## Materials Submitted by Applicant

## 503 Urban Loop – Request for Finding of Historic Significance

### Statement of Significance

The building at 503 Urban Loop (formerly 503 San Saba), known as the Aurelia Dashiell House and the Carmelite Sisters Nursery, meets five of the criteria for landmark designation under the terms of the Uniform Development Code (UDC). This building is an exceedingly rare survivor of the nearly vanished “Laredito” neighborhood central to the history of San Antonio’s Westside. The existing exterior elevations, openings and details are sufficient to convey this important history.

The building meets **Criterion 1** for its value as a visible reminder of the cultural heritage of the community. In “*Laredito, The Forgotten Neighborhood West of San Pedro Creek*,” author Rueben Perez documents the little-told history of the working-class, predominantly Mexican American neighborhood that included “one of the most famous red-light districts in the country”<sup>1</sup> at its center. Within this district, Fannie Porter’s brothel at 503 South San Saba achieved a prominence that merited mention in several other published sources, including the Texas State Historical Association’s *Handbook of Texas* and David Bowser’s *West of the Creek: Murder, Mayhem, and Vice in Old San Antonio*, which features Miss Porter’s photo on the cover.<sup>2</sup>

The form of the 1880s bawdy house remains discernable within the Carmelite Sisters’ later Spanish Eclectic additions. Although not representative of the whole of Laredito, this building serves as a rare, visible reminder that vice and entertainment played a significant role in the area. Perez notes that many of the former residents he interviewed “stated it was a way of life and both sides co-existed with one another.”<sup>3</sup>

As later enlarged, the building also serves as an important example of the Catholic Church’s outreach to children, the poor, and immigrants on the Westside. The Carmelite Sisters opened an orphanage and day care in the former brothel in 1914, just two years after the tragic fire that destroyed the nearby St. Joseph’s Orphanage on the grounds of Santa Rosa Hospital, which had been run by the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word.<sup>4</sup> Nearby Catholic landmarks with similar charitable missions include the 1911 Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, whose residence hall sheltered Mexican clergy fleeing religious persecution in 1914<sup>5</sup>, and the 1921 Nuestra Señora Guadalupe Church, where Father Carmelo Tranchese became a powerful advocate for the poor in the 1930s.<sup>6</sup> The Carmelite Sisters’ expansion of

503 Urban Loop between 1931 and 1963 testifies to the critical role the Catholic Church played in meeting an underserved community’s needs, both material and spiritual.

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<sup>1</sup> Perez, Rueben M. and Dr. Citali M. Zentella. “*Laredito, The Forgotten Neighborhood West of San Pedro Creek*,” Published by Rueben Perez, 2013, p. 79.

<sup>2</sup> Bowser, David. *West of the Creek: Murder, Mayhem and Vice in Old San Antonio*, Maverick Publishing Company, 2003, p. 41-45.

<sup>3</sup> Perez, p. 82.

<sup>4</sup> Sowa, Carol Bass, “Tragic orphanage fire remembered by CCVIs,” *Today’s Catholic*, November 12, 2012, p. 1, 16.

<sup>5</sup> “A Short History of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish,” accessed June 9, 2021, <https://www.ihmsatx.org/history.html>.

<sup>6</sup> Zelman, Donald L. “Tranchese, Carmelo Antonio,” *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed June 09, 2021, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/tranchese-carmelo-antonio>.

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The property meets **Criterion 3** for its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the development of the community. The famous San Antonio bawd Fannie Porter lived and worked at the subject structure from c. 1897 until c. 1901; during that time, Porter hosted members of the Wild Bunch, including Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid.<sup>7</sup> No other remaining site in San Antonio is associated with these persons.

The building retains original interior elements, including a staircase and numerous walls, from its original construction in 1883 by Aurelia Dashiell as a bawdy house or brothel. The basic wall and roof forms of this structure form the core of the building.

San Antonio's fourth Bishop, the Reverend John W. Shaw, saw the need to help care for children in the Westside barrios. He purchased the house at 503 San Saba in 1913 and paid for its renovation. Appointed at a time when large numbers of Mexican Catholics were fleeing to South Texas to escape the Mexican Revolution, Bishop Shaw reopened San Antonio's Spanish missions and created the parish of Nuestra Señora Guadalupe for Spanish-speaking Catholics.<sup>8</sup> He also invited the Carmelite Sisters of the Divine Heart of Jesus to make the house in Laredito into a home for orphans and a day nursery for the children of the working poor.

Reverend Mother Mary Teresa, the founder and superior general of the Carmelite Sisters, arrived in San Antonio to help prepare the house for its new mission in 1914.<sup>9</sup> The Reverend Mother founded her order in Berlin, Germany in 1891 and came to North America in 1912, creating several homes for children in the U.S. and Canada.<sup>10</sup> This Carmelite order remains active worldwide.

Mother Mary Felicitas, who took charge of the San Saba home in 1914, and the Carmelite Sisters who served the community warrant additional research, as does midwife Romana Ramos, who ran the nearby *Casa de Maternidad*, a refuge for single mothers with newborn babies.<sup>11</sup> The beginning of her career as a midwife overlaps with the final years that the house on San Saba operated as a brothel.

The property meets **Criterion 6** due to its historic and cultural character as a surviving example of an orphanage or non-institutional group quarters in Laredito, a neighborhood associated with the city's Hispanic community since its founding. Authors Reuben Perez and Citalli Zentella lament that "most of the original structures in Laredito are no longer there . . . little has been left for future generations to learn

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<sup>7</sup> Selcer, Richard F. "Porter, Fannie," *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed June 13, 2021, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/porter-fannie>, and Van Ostrand, Maggie, "Fannie Porter of San Antonio, Texas Escapes," accessed June 13, 2021, <http://www.texasescapes.com/MaggieVanOstrand/Fannie-Porter-of-San-Antonio.htm>.

<sup>8</sup> "Our Lady of Guadalupe Shrine - Chapter 1 In the Beginning: 1911 to 1932," accessed June 14, 2021, <https://www.olgsanantonio.com/post/our-lady-of-guadalupe-church-history>.

<sup>9</sup> The Archdiocese of San Antonio. "Diamond Jubilee: 1874-1949." Copyright 1949, Robert E. Lucey, Archbishop of San Antonio, p. 221.

<sup>10</sup> "Carmelite Sisters of the Devine Heart of Jesus – Our Roots: Our Congregation," accessed June 15, 2021, <https://www.carmelitedcj.org/roots/our-congregation>.

<sup>11</sup> Museo del Westside, "Romana Ramos – Women & Activism in the Westside," accessed June 11, 2021, <https://www.museodelwestside.org/women-activism/romana-ramos>.

## 503 Urban Loop – Request for Finding of Historic Significance

important facts in the roots of their heritage and historical development of San Antonio.”<sup>12</sup> This remaining structure thus carries more significance.

The building exhibits several Spanish Eclectic details, including its low-pitched shed, hipped and gabled roofs with wide eaves and exposed rafter tails, its stucco cladding and chimney, and the wood-framed quatrefoil window at the entrance. Most of these elements relate to the 1931 additions made by the Carmelite Sisters. Subsequent additions in 1951 and 1963 followed the same theme. The building is easily recognizable in a photograph from 70 years ago published in the Archdiocese of San Antonio’s *Diamond Jubilee: 1874-1949* and retains its residential character.

The building meets **Criterion 7** due to its unique location that makes it an established and familiar visual feature. Beyond Casa Navarro and a few other structures to the south, almost nothing remains of the Laredito neighborhood in San Antonio. This negation resulted from a long and aggressive pattern of urban renewal, which displaced people, and destroyed homes and businesses, between 1949 the 1970s.

The Spanish Eclectic style sets 503 Urban Loop apart as the only historic building remaining on the west side of S. San Saba Street. Its distinctive red, standing seam metal roof catches the eye and creates a visual link to the red roof on the Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, visible down the street.

This building meets **Criterion 11** due to its distinctive interest and value for its ties to the vanished Laredito neighborhood. Both 503 Urban Loop and Laredito played a significant role in San Antonio’s social, ethnic, and economic history. The building, which operated as a brothel between 1883 and c. 1912, contributed to “a period of tension in San Antonio history in which prostitution and proper society clashed and people disputed whether the trade was a necessary evil aspect of urban life or whether it debased urban life and society.”<sup>13</sup>

Part of the historic significance of 503 Urban Loop relates to the sociocultural and economic activities of working-class labor, including that of Mexican American and African American prostitutes, and the predominantly Euro-American madams of the more luxurious brothels, like Fannie Porter’s.<sup>14</sup> The deliberate concentration of these vice-related businesses in Laredito further underscored the area’s overall marginalization from “respectable” society.<sup>15</sup>

503 Urban Loop is the last physical tie to an area that also served as a major economic engine for the city. The growth of San Antonio, driven by the railroads and the presence of permanent military bases, created significant consumer demand for prostitution. Brothel owners, as well as the city government, found it economically advantageous for vice businesses to locate in a single area on the outskirts of downtown.<sup>16</sup> In doing so, San Antonio’s red-light district followed a development pattern common to other large cities, including Ft. Worth and its infamous “Hell’s Half-Acre.”<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Perez, p. 9.

<sup>13</sup> Cain, Jennifer, “For Those Seeking a Good Time while in San Antonio, Texas – The Restrictions and Permissions of Bawdy Houses from 1889-1941,” accessed June 9, 2021, <https://www.uiw.edu/sanantonio/prostitution.html>, p. 1.

<sup>14</sup> Guerra, Donna, “Westside Preservation Alliance comments for Texas Public Radio Interview,” June 6, 2021.

<sup>15</sup> Cain, p. 4.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p. 6.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

## 503 Urban Loop – Request for Finding of Historic Significance

Other establishments offering gambling, dancing, and vaudeville theater thrived in proximity to Laredito's brothels. The Office of Historic Preservation's research states that, by 1911, San Antonio's sporting district was "second only to the Alamo" as a tourist attraction. Two years before the brothel at 503 South San Saba closed, the district delivered the equivalent of about \$1.36 million (adjusted to 2020 dollars) to the city government in licensing fees.

Under the later management of the Carmelite Sisters (1914-1990), 503 Urban Loop played an important role in addressing the needs of poor Mexican American families and children on the Westside. The Archdiocese of San Antonio noted that by 1949, "thousands of children [had] been in the care of the sisters."<sup>18</sup> Over three-quarters of a century, the former brothel repurposed by Bishop Shaw and the Carmelites became a neighborhood fixture, representative of the organized efforts to improve barrio life that are part of San Antonio's social and historical heritage.

503 Urban Loop is worthy of preservation as a testament to Laredito's colorful past, to the long tradition of Catholic ministry to the poor and marginalized on the Westside, and to the key figures who helped shape both legacies.

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<sup>18</sup> The Archdiocese of San Antonio, p. 221.

## 503 Urban Loop – Request for Finding of Historic Significance

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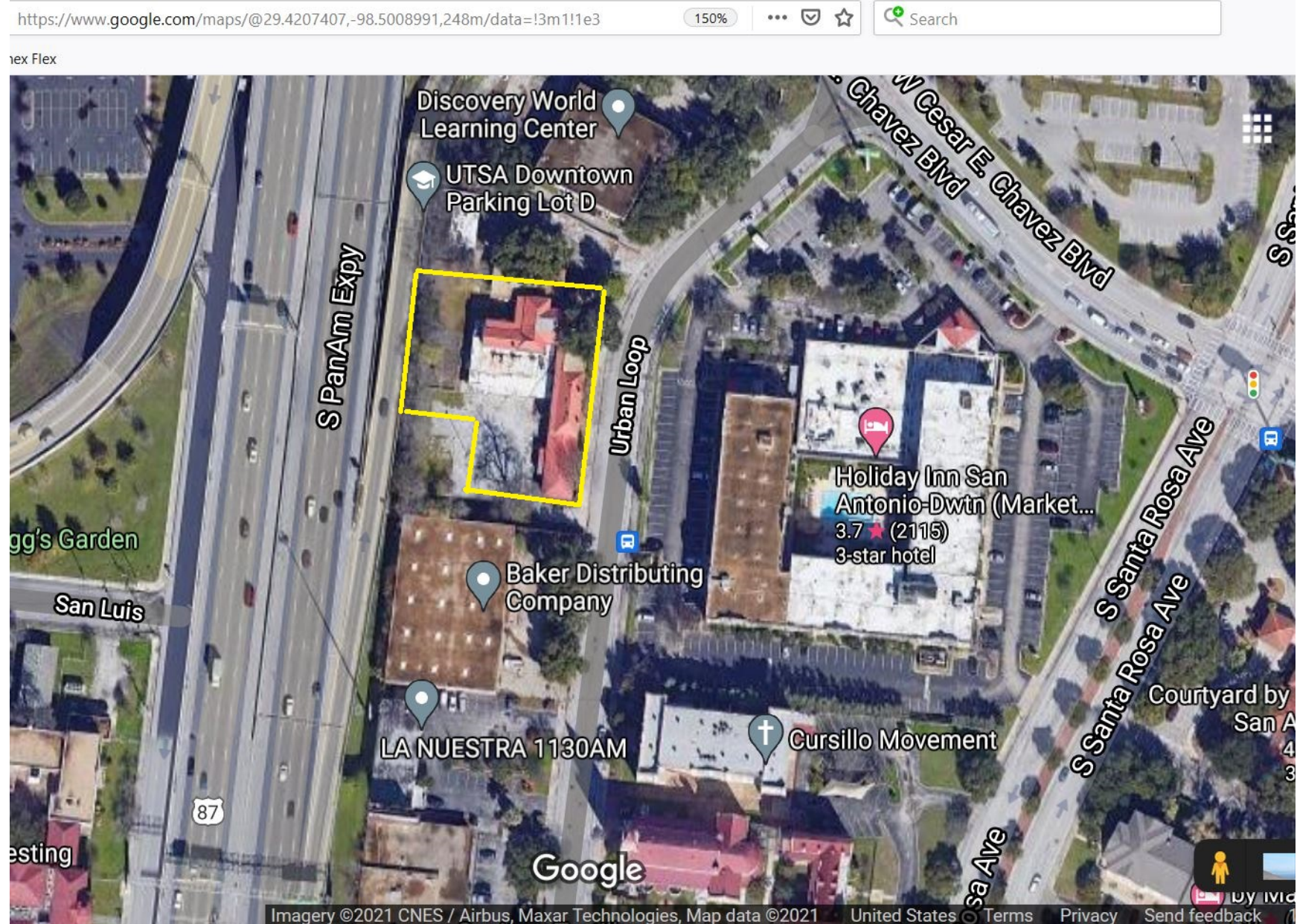
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**\*Only references new information not previously documented in the Office of Historic Preservation's statement of significance for HDRC Case No, 2021-109 presented on May 5, 2021.**



## 503 Urban Loop – Request for Finding of Historic Significance

Aerial Map from Google Maps, June 15, 2021





503 Urban Loop - Request for Review of Historic Significance

Photos taken by Vincent Michael, June 2021.



Northeast oblique showing main entrance and c. 1963 addition at right.



East elevations of the c. 1951 addition (left) and c. 1931 addition (right).



## 503 Urban Loop - Request for Review of Historic Significance

Photos taken by Vincent Michael, June 2021



East elevation of 1931 addition.





**CITY OF SAN ANTONIO**  
**OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION**



*Northeast oblique showing main entrance; c. 1963 addition at right.*



*East and south elevations of the c. 1931 c. 1951 addition.*

1901 S. ALAMO ST, SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS 78204

210.207.0035 • Fax: 210.207.0199 • [info@sapreservation.com](mailto:info@sapreservation.com) • [www.sapreservation.com](http://www.sapreservation.com)





CITY OF SAN ANTONIO  
**OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION**



*West elevations of the c. 1931 and c. 1951 additions at right; 1883 house form visible at left.*



*North and west elevations of the 1883 building; west elevation of c. 1963 addition at left.*

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CITY OF SAN ANTONIO  
**OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION**



*C. 1960s detached garage at northwest corner of property.*



*Interior staircase retained from the 1883 boarding house.*



## CITY OF SAN ANTONIO OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

### CARMELITE SISTERS OF THE DIVINE HEART OF JESUS

The Carmelite Sisters of the Divine Heart of Jesus came to San Antonio in 1914, at the invitation of Bishop Shaw, to establish a home for poor homeless children and a day nursery for boys and girls between the ages of one and six years.

Rev. Mother Mary Teresa, foundress and superior general of the Carmelite Sisters of the Divine Heart of Jesus, accompanied by two Sisters of her congregation, arrived in San Antonio on January 5, 1914. Bishop Shaw bought them a house at 503 San Saba Street. The house was renovated and the three Sisters prepared it for occupation by January 14. On that date Mother Mary Felicitas and five Sisters took charge.

The first little girl arrived in March, 1914, and during the 35 years of its existence thousands of children have been in the care of the Sisters. On April 7th, 1914, Bishop Shaw blessed the chapel, dedicating it to the Sacred Heart, celebrated the first Mass therein, and inaugurated the reservation of the Blessed Sacrament.

The Sisters, carrying on the work begun by their zealous foundress, visited the poor in their homes, and were tireless in their efforts to alleviate the sufferings of the afflicted to whom they

brought spiritual consolation and comfort. Luke-warm Catholics returned to the practice of their religion; marriages were validated; children and adults were instructed and baptized, and the Last Sacraments were administered to the dying through the instrumentality of the Sisters.

When the building became too small the Sisters were enabled, through the generosity of friends, to enlarge the Day Nursery and secure adjoining property.

### NEBRASKA STREET

In July of 1918, upon the recommendation of the Rev. J. B. Muehlsiepen, C.Ss.R., and with ecclesiastical approval, the Sisters established a home for poor boys at 2006 Nebraska Street. They also engaged in missionary activities like the Sisters on San Saba Street. For six years the Sisters occupied a small frame building until the present two story brick structure was erected in 1924. This building has also served as the Provincial House of the Carmelite Sisters since 1925.

The home for boys was converted into a day nursery for boys and girls in the fall of 1942, in accordance with the wishes of Archbishop Lucey.



DAY NURSERY, SAN SABA ST.



CONVENT AND NURSERY, NEBRASKA ST.

*Excerpt from "Diamond Jubilee: 1874-1949," published by the Archdiocese of San Antonio, copyright 1949 by Robert E. Lucey, Archbishop of San Antonio. Bottom left image is 503 Urban Loop, northeast oblique. Bottom right is the day nursery at 2006 Nebraska St.*



503 Urban Loop - Request for Review of Historic Significance

Photos taken by David C. Bowser in 1990, located in the San Saba file at the San Antonio Conservation Society Foundation Library.



*East façade of original house, c. 1931, and c. 1951 additions, looking southwest on Urban Loop from Cesar Chavez.*



*East façade of c. 1951 and c. 1931 additions, looking northwest on Urban Loop towards Cesar Chavez.*



503 Urban Loop - Request for Review of Historic Significance

Photos taken by David C. Bowser in 1990, located in the San Saba file at the San Antonio Conservation Society Foundation Library.



*Interior staircase retained from the boarding house.*

# Bexar CAD

## Property Search Results > 525057 DPMILLER INVESTMENTS LLC for Year 2021

Tax Year: 2021

### Property

#### Account

Property ID:	525057	Legal Description:	NCB 13420 BLK LOT 4
Geographic ID:	13420-000-0040	Zoning:	D
Type:	Real	Agent Code:	60585
Property Use Code:	400		
Property Use Description:	OFFICE		

#### Protest

Protest Status:	OP(OPEN PROTEST)
Informal Date:	
Formal Date:	

#### Location

Address:	503 URBAN LOOP SAN ANTONIO, TX 78204	Mapsc0:	616D5
Neighborhood:	NBHD code10040	Map ID:	
Neighborhood CD:	10040	E-File Eligible	

#### Owner

Name:	DPMILLER INVESTMENTS LLC	Owner ID:	3243069
Mailing Address:	14500 SAN PEDRO AVE STE 101 SAN ANTONIO, TX 78232-4354	% Ownership:	100.000000000000%
		Exemptions:	

### Values

(+) Improvement Homesite Value:	+	\$0	
(+) Improvement Non-Homesite Value:	+	\$559,741	
(+) Land Homesite Value:	+	\$0	
(+) Land Non-Homesite Value:	+	\$681,170	Ag / Timber Use Value
(+) Agricultural Market Valuation:	+	\$0	\$0
(+) Timber Market Valuation:	+	\$0	\$0
<hr/>			
(=) Market Value:	=	\$1,240,911	
(-) Ag or Timber Use Value Reduction:	-	\$0	
<hr/>			
(=) Appraised Value:	=	\$1,240,911	
(-) HS Cap:	-	\$0	
<hr/>			
(=) Assessed Value:	=	\$1,240,911	

### Taxing Jurisdiction

Owner: DPMILLER INVESTMENTS LLC

% Ownership: 100.0000000000%

Total Value: \$1,240,911

Entity	Description	Tax Rate	Appraised Value	Taxable Value	Estimated Tax
06	BEXAR CO RD & FLOOD	0.023668	\$1,240,911	\$1,240,911	\$293.70
08	SA RIVER AUTH	0.018580	\$1,240,911	\$1,240,911	\$230.56
09	ALAMO COM COLLEGE	0.149150	\$1,240,911	\$1,240,911	\$1,850.82
10	UNIV HEALTH SYSTEM	0.276235	\$1,240,911	\$1,240,911	\$3,427.83
11	BEXAR COUNTY	0.277429	\$1,240,911	\$1,240,911	\$3,442.65
21	CITY OF SAN ANTONIO	0.558270	\$1,240,911	\$1,240,911	\$6,927.64
57	SAN ANTONIO ISD	1.502300	\$1,240,911	\$1,240,911	\$18,642.20
CAD	BEXAR APPRAISAL DISTRICT	0.000000	\$1,240,911	\$1,240,911	\$0.00
SA030	San Antonio TIF #30 Westside	0.000000	\$1,240,911	\$1,240,911	\$0.00
Total Tax Rate:		2.805632			
Taxes w/Current Exemptions:					\$34,815.40
Taxes w/o Exemptions:					\$34,815.40

**Improvement / Building**

All improvements valued at income

Improvement #1: Commercial State Code: F1 Living Area: 12994.8 sqft Value: N/A

Type	Description	Class CD	Exterior Wall	Year Built	SQFT
400	OFFICE	D - A	MA	1950	9282.0
400	OFFICE	D - A	MA	1950	3712.8

Improvement #2: Commercial State Code: F1 Living Area: sqft Value: N/A

Type	Description	Class CD	Exterior Wall	Year Built	SQFT
GAR	Detached Garage	* - F		0	900.0

Improvement #3: Commercial State Code: F1 Living Area: sqft Value: N/A

Type	Description	Class CD	Exterior Wall	Year Built	SQFT
FEN	Fence	S - F		0	298.0

Improvement #4: Commercial State Code: F1 Living Area: sqft Value: N/A

Type	Description	Class CD	Exterior Wall	Year Built	SQFT
ASP	Asphalt	* - F		0	2012.0

**Land**

#	Type	Description	Acres	Sqft	Eff Front	Eff Depth	Market Value	Prod. Value
1	IND	Industrial	0.7950	34630.00	0.00	0.00	\$0	\$0

**Roll Value History**

Year	Improvements	Land Market	Ag Valuation	Appraised	HS Cap	Assessed
2021	\$559,741	\$681,170	0	1,240,911	\$0	\$1,240,911

2020	\$524,580	\$681,170	0	1,205,750	\$0	\$1,205,750
2019	\$564,440	\$667,670	0	1,232,110	\$0	\$1,232,110
2018	\$549,180	\$865,750	0	1,414,930	\$0	\$1,414,930
2017	\$529,030	\$865,750	0	1,394,780	\$0	\$1,394,780

**Deed History - (Last 3 Deed Transactions)**

#	Deed Date	Type	Description	Grantor	Grantee	Volume	Page	Deed Number
1	4/20/2020	SWD	Special Warranty Deed	GIRLS AND BOYS TOWN OF SAN ANTONIO	DPMILLER INVESTMENTS LLC			20200081509
2	7/5/2005	SWD	Special Warranty Deed	FATHER FLANAGANS BOYS HOME	GIRLS AND BOYS TOWN OF SAN ANTONIO	11705	2158	20050239225
3	10/12/1990	Deed	Deed		FATHER FLANAGANS BOYS HOME	4925	1911	0

**Economic Unit Links****Property ID:**

525057

110

**2021 data current as of Jun 15 2021 1:21AM.****2020 and prior year data current as of Jun 4 2021 5:03PM****For property information, contact (210) 242-2432 or (210) 224-8511 or email.****For website information, contact (210) 242-2500.**



CHICAGO TITLE GF# 4300112003594-AJ

**NOTICE OF CONFIDENTIALITY RIGHTS:** IF YOU ARE A NATURAL PERSON, YOU MAY REMOVE OR STRIKE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION FROM THIS INSTRUMENT BEFORE IT IS FILED FOR RECORD IN THE PUBLIC RECORDS: YOUR SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER OR YOUR DRIVER'S LICENSE NUMBER.

**SPECIAL WARRANTY DEED**

**Effective Date:** April 20, 2020

**Grantor:** FATHER FLANAGAN'S BOYS' HOME, A NEBRASKA NONPROFIT CORPORATION, being the Sole Member of and successor in title to Boys Town Texas, Inc., a Texas corporation that was voluntarily terminated December 20, 2017, and that was formerly known as Girls and Boys Town of San Antonio, a Texas nonprofit charitable corporation

**Grantor's Mailing Address:** 14100 Crawford St.  
Boys Town, NE 68010

**Grantee:** DPMILLER INVESTMENTS, LLC, a Texas limited liability company

**Grantee's Mailing Address:** 314 Limestone Creek Road  
San Antonio Bexar County, Texas 78232

**Consideration:** Cash and other good and valuable consideration, the receipt of which is acknowledged.

**Property (including any improvements):**

Lots 2, 4, 7 and 8, New City Block 13420, Tex R-39 Central West Area Project 1 Urban Renewal, San Antonio, Texas, an addition to the City of San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas, according to plat thereof recorded in Volume 5502, Pages 28-31, Deed and Plat Records, Bexar County, Texas.

**Reservations From and Exceptions to Conveyance and Warranty:**

1. Restrictive covenants of record recorded in Volume 5502, Pages 28-31, Deed and Plat Records of Bexar County, Texas.

2. City Water Board Easement, along the east lot line, as shown on plat recorded in Volume 5502, Pages 28-31, Deed and Plat Records, Bexar County, Texas. (Lot 2)

3. 15 foot Building Setback Line, along the west lot line, as shown on plat recorded in Volume 5502, Pages 28-31, Deed and Plat Records, Bexar County, Texas. (Lot 7)

4. 30 foot Building Setback Line, along the east lot line, as shown on plat recorded in Volume 5502, Pages 28-31, Deed and Plat Records, Bexar County, Texas. (Lot 7)

5. 30 foot Building Setback Line, along the east lot line, as shown on plat recorded in Volume 5502, Pages 28-31, Deed and Plat Records, Bexar County, Texas. (Lot 8)

6. City Water Board Easement, along the south lot line, as shown on plat recorded in Volume 5502, Pages 28-31, Deed and Plat Records, Bexar County, Texas. (Lot 8)

7. 10 foot CPSB Easement, along the south lot line, as shown on plat recorded in Volume 5502, Pages 28-31, Deed and Plat Records, Bexar County, Texas. (Lot 8)

8. 5 foot Non-Access Easement, along the west lot line, as shown on plat recorded in Volume 5502, Pages 28-31, Deed and Plat Records, Bexar County, Texas. (Lot 8)

9. 15 foot Building Setback Line, along the west lot line, as shown on plat recorded in Volume 5502, Pages 28-31, Deed and Plat Records, Bexar County, Texas. (Lot 8)

10. Historic Designation: Verified Certificate, recorded on August 13, 2014, at Volume 16817, Page 1967, Real Property Records, Bexar County, Texas.

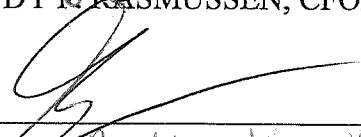
11. Unrecorded Lease Agreement between Boys Town Texas, Inc., as Landlord, and Clear Channel Outdoor, Inc., as Tenant) dated effective August 13, 2013.

Grantor, for the Consideration and subject to the Reservations from Conveyance and the Exceptions to Conveyance and Warranty, grants, sells, and conveys to Grantee the Property, together with all and singular the rights and appurtenances thereto in any way belonging, to have and to hold it to Grantee and Grantee's heirs, successors, and assigns forever. Grantor binds Grantor and Grantor's heirs and successors to warrant and forever defend all and singular the Property to Grantee and Grantee's heirs, successors, and assigns against every person whomsoever lawfully claiming or to claim the same or any part thereof, by, through or under Grantor, but not otherwise, except as to the Reservations from Conveyance and the Exceptions to Conveyance and Warranty.

When the context requires, singular nouns and pronouns include the plural.

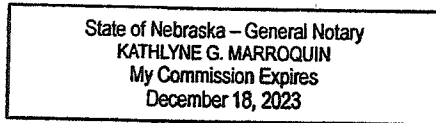
FATHER FLANAGAN'S BOYS' HOME, a  
Nebraska nonprofit corporation

By:   
JUDY E. RASMUSSEN, CFO/EVP Finance

By:   
Name: Rodney Kempf  
Title: CEO

THE STATE OF Nebraska §  
COUNTY OF Douglas §

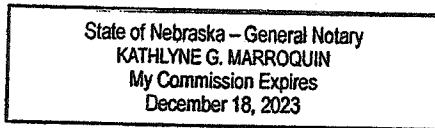
This instrument was acknowledged before me this 17<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2020, by JUDY F. RASMUSSEN as CFO/EVP Finance of FATHER FLANAGAN'S BOYS' HOME, a Nebraska nonprofit corporation, on its behalf.



Kathlyne Marroquin  
Notary Public, State of Nebraska

THE STATE OF Nebraska §  
COUNTY OF Douglas §

This instrument was acknowledged before me this 17<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2020, by Rod Kempkes as COO of FATHER FLANAGAN'S BOYS' HOME, a Nebraska nonprofit corporation, on its behalf.



Kathlyne Marroquin  
Notary Public, State of Nebraska

AFTER RECORDING RETURN TO:

DPMILLER INVESTMENTS, LLC  
314 Limestone Creek Rd.  
San Antonio, TX 78232



**File Information**

**eFILED IN THE OFFICIAL PUBLIC eRECORDS OF BEXAR COUNTY  
LUCY ADAME-CLARK, BEXAR COUNTY CLERK**

**Document Number:** 20200081509

**Recorded Date:** April 20, 2020

**Recorded Time:** 3:07 PM

**Total Pages:** 4

**Total Fees:** \$34.00

**\*\* THIS PAGE IS PART OF THE DOCUMENT \*\***

**\*\* Do Not Remove \*\***

Any provision herein which restricts the sale or use of the described real property because of race is invalid and unenforceable under Federal law

STATE OF TEXAS, COUNTY OF BEXAR

I hereby Certify that this instrument was eFILED in File Number Sequence on this date and at the time stamped hereon by me and was duly eRECORDED in the Official Public Record of Bexar County, Texas on:  
4/20/2020 3:07 PM



*Lucy Adame-Clark*  
Lucy Adame-Clark  
Bexar County Clerk



## TIER ONE NEIGHBORHOOD COALITION

Tier One Neighborhood Coalition (T1NC) is a group of San Antonio neighborhoods organized to advocate and work for compatible development, as well as other important issues that affect our communities. T1NC promotes communication, cooperation, education and support among participating neighborhoods. Please visit [t1nc.org](http://t1nc.org) for additional information.

June 14, 2021

To: HDRC Commissioners

cc: Shanon Shea Miller-OHP

This letter is to convey our support for the Finding of Historic Significance for the Dashiell House at 503 Urban Loop.

We recently were made aware of a request for demolition of the Dashiell House. Additional information revealed that the property may have been erroneously connected to the Immaculate Heart of Mary School and Church property for the purpose of Landmark designation. OHP has acknowledged the administrative error and affirms that the Dashiell House is in fact not part of that larger site designation. In its current status, the 1883 Dashiell House is not a locally designated landmark and risks demolition.

The structure's role in San Antonio's history is well-documented and meets several of the Designation Criteria for Historic Landmarks per UDC Sec. 35-607 to include its contribution to the historic Westside's history. Additionally, its accommodation for both residential and commercial uses for 138 years is testimony to the long-time importance of functional and vernacular architecture in a growing city.

As such, the Tier 1 Neighborhood Coalition Steering Committee fully supports the process of Finding of Historic Significance.

Respectfully Submitted

T1NC Steering Committee

Cosima Colvin  
Jordan Ghawi  
Bianca Maldonado  
Monica Savino  
Taylor Watson

Christine Drennon  
Mary Johnson  
Alan Neff  
Anisa Schell  
Theresa Ybanez

Liz Franklin  
Ricki Kushner  
Velma Pena  
Cynthia Spielman

Tony Garcia  
Margaret Leeds  
Queta Rodriguez  
Steve Versteeg











