

1. Address/Description: 1314 E COMMERCE ST
HDRC Case No.: 2024-261
Applicant: Amina Thomas
Request: Historic Landmark Designation
City Council Dist.: 2

HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION

August 21, 2024

HDRC CASE NO: 2024-261
ADDRESS: 1314 East Commerce Street
LEGAL DESCRIPTION: NCB 597 BLK A LOT 4 & E 21.34 FT OF 3
ZONING: AE-1
CITY COUNCIL DIST.: 2
APPLICANT: Lawrence J. Magott
OWNER: Lawrence J. Magott
TYPE OF WORK: Historic Landmark Designation
CASE MANAGER: Charles Gentry

REQUEST: The applicant is requesting a Historic Landmark Designation for 1314 East Commerce Street.

APPLICABLE CITATIONS:

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

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

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

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

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

- a. **Process for Considering Designation of Historic Districts and Landmarks.** Historic districts and landmarks shall be evaluated for designation using the criteria listed in subsection (b). In order to be eligible for historic landmark designation, properties shall meet at least three (3) of the criteria listed. Historic districts shall consist of at least two (2) or more structures within a legally defined boundary that meet at least three (3) of the criteria. Additionally, all designated landmarks and districts shall demonstrate clear delineation of the legal boundaries of such designated resources.
- b. **Criteria for Evaluation.**
 3. **Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the development of the community, county, state, or nation;**
 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.**

FINDINGS:

- a. The request for landmark designation was initiated by the property owner.
- b. **HISTORIC CONTEXT:** The property at 1314 East Commerce Street is a one-story grocery store located on the East Commerce Street commercial corridor in City Council District 2. Lawrence J. Magott currently own the property.

East Commerce Street was originally an old Spanish route later known as the "Alameda" for the groves of cottonwood trees in the area. Although sparsely developed in the mid-nineteenth century by German, Polish, and African Americans, commercial activity flourished in the late 19th century with the arrival of the railroad in San Antonio in 1877. The streetcar emerged on Commerce Street in 1890, further increasing commercial and residential activity. The corridor had grown into a thriving, mostly African American commercial district by the mid-twentieth century with restaurants, hotels, retail stores, boarding houses, and professional offices. However, the rise in automobile traffic and the construction of IH-37 brought about a decline in the 1960s and 1970s. Today, the area has experienced a rebirth as an entertainment district with the restoration of many of the historic buildings and the bustling dining and entertainment venues of Sunset Station.

The subject property is located on the south side of the East Commerce Street corridor, just south of the boundary of the Dignowity Hill Historic District, two blocks east of Sunset Station in the St. Paul Square Historic District, and on the northern edge of the Denver Heights neighborhood. The current structure was built circa 1948. The address first appeared in the 1891 City Directory as 816 East Commerce Street, and then was listed as 814 East Commerce Street in the 1892 City Directory.

Theodore ("Theo") Magott was born on November 8, 1855, in Wieruszow, Lodz, Poland, to Franciszka and Elzbieta Polak Magott. At the age of 28, Theo arrived at the Port of New York in March 1884 with his uncle Reverend Romuald Andrew Magott, on their way to San Antonio, Texas. In 1885, Theo Magott worked for William Esser, the proprietor of Alamo Brewery and Lone Star Bottling Works, with whom he also boarded. Magott was granted citizenship in Bexar County in October 1890. In 1889, Theo Magott and Paul Wesp opened a bottling company at the intersection of Soledad and Romano Street, Magott and Wesp Mineral Waters, which manufactured soda water, mineral water and ginger ale. The business is listed in the City Directory through 1891.

In February 1887, Theo Magott married Mary Margaret Kindla at St. Stanislaus Church in Bandera, TX. Two of their three daughters, Sophia and Helen, died during childhood, and upon returning from a funeral at St. Joseph Society Cemetery in June 1889, Theo noticed property for sale at 814 East Commerce Street (now 1314 East Commerce Street). He purchased the lots and built Theo Magott Grocery and Beer Saloon, (listed in the 1895 City Directory as "The Farmers' Friend"). The store sold staple and fancy groceries, nails, barbed wire, fencing, harnessing, feed and seed. Adjoining the store was a camp yard where many Polish customers loaded their wagons and spent the night before their return trip to Panna Maria and St. Hedwig. Theo Magott's wife Mary Margaret died in June 1897, and then he married Pauline Helene Isner in November 1898. Theo Magott died on August 17, 1936 at his home at 113 Greeley Street, behind the store. He is buried at St. Joseph's Society Cemetery in San Antonio. After his death, Pauline Magott continued to manage the store with her sons Ted and then Al, until Al bought the business in the 1960s. Alfred Louis ("Al") Magott (also nicknamed "Iggy" after a popular comic strip character), was born January 26, 1911, in the family home on Greeley Street, the youngest child of Theo and Pauline Magott. He married Frances Elizabeth Moss of Refugio, Texas, in May 1946 at St. Joseph's Church. Al Magott died on April 25, 1993, and Frances followed him in death October 29, 2001. They are buried at Holy Cross Cemetery in San Antonio. Their youngest son Lawrence ("Larry") Magott currently owns the property and continues to operate the grocery store at 1314 East Commerce Street.

- c. **SITE CONTEXT:** The subject property is a north-facing commercial structure, situated near the middle of a block bound to the north by East Commerce Street, the east by South Mesquite Street, the south by Shadrach Street, and the west by South Cherry Street. The block includes a three-story hotel (City View Inn & Suites, 1306 East Commerce Street); a one-story Mission Revival style office building, adjacent to the subject property (1310 East Commerce Street); warehouses; and a one-story vernacular home (141 Shadrach).
- d. **ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:** The primary structure on the subject property is a one-story concrete commercial store with a flat roof and a brick-clad façade fronting East Commerce Street. The north façade and sidewalk are covered by a full-width aluminum canopy that is supported by four square brick columns. The front entrance on the left side of the façade features a pair of in-swinging wooden doors with glass upper panels, behind a pair of out-swinging metal screen doors. On the right side of the façade is a single door entrance to a story area, with a pair of fixed square windows to the left of the door. Between the two central columns is a public art bench created by James Wyatt Hendricks, the first of a series that lines the East Commerce Street corridor. This bench was inspired by Magott's Grocery & Market and features a granite seat on an iron framework. The iron backrest is inlaid with a mosaic of art tiles featuring images of meats, eggs, dairy, bread, fruits, and vegetables.

The eastern part of the parcel is an asphalt parking lot, enclosed by six-foot iron rail fencing with a sliding gateway on the Commerce Street side and a pair of swinging gates on the Shadrach Street side. Behind the grocery store there is a two-story storage warehouse, which has concrete lower walls topped by a metal framework with a shed roof. There is a one-story vernacular residence behind the store and warehouse at 141 Shadrach Street. The original residence features a cross-gabled roof with centered gable on the right wing. The roof is covered by asbestos shingles. A front addition was constructed prior to 1931, according to Sanborn maps.

- e. **EVALUATION:** In order to be eligible for historic landmark designation, properties shall meet at least three (3) of the 16 criteria listed. The applicant submitted that the property meets the following criteria, consistent with UDC sec. 35-607(b):

3. Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the development of the community, county, state, or nation; for its association with the family of San Antonio businessman Theodore Magott.

11. It is distinctive in character, interest or value; strongly exemplifies the cultural, economic, social, ethnic or historical heritage of San Antonio, Texas or the United States; as an example of one of the earliest and continuously operating family-owned grocery stores in San Antonio.

13. It bears an important and significant relationship to other distinctive structures, sites, or areas, either as an important collection of properties or architectural style or craftsmanship with few intrusions, or by contributing to the overall character of the area according to the plan based on architectural, historic, or cultural motif; for its location in the East Commerce Street corridor.

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

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of a Historic Landmark Designation of 1314 East Commerce Street based on findings a through e.

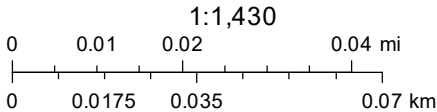
City of San Antonio One Stop



August 16, 2024

drawGraphics_poly

User drawn polygons





HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Historic Assessment

Property Address: 1314 East Commerce Street

1. Application Details

Applicant: Lawrence J. Magott
Type: Historic Landmark Designation
Date Received: 13 July 2024

2. Findings

The property at 1314 East Commerce Street is a one-story grocery store located on the East Commerce Street commercial corridor in City Council District 2. Lawrence J. Magott currently own the property.

East Commerce Street was originally an old Spanish route later known as the "Alameda" for the groves of cottonwood trees in the area. Although sparsely developed in the mid-nineteenth century by German, Polish, and African Americans, commercial activity flourished in the late 19th century with the arrival of the railroad in San Antonio in 1877. The streetcar emerged on Commerce Street in 1890, further increasing commercial and residential activity. The corridor had grown into a thriving, mostly African American commercial district by the mid-twentieth century with restaurants, hotels, retail stores, boarding houses, and professional offices. However, the rise in automobile traffic and the construction of IH-37 brought about a decline in the 1960s and 1970s. Today, the area has experienced a rebirth as an entertainment district with the restoration of many of the historic buildings and the bustling dining and entertainment venues of Sunset Station.

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HISTORIC PRESERVATION

was a camp yard where many Polish customers loaded their wagons and spent the night before their return trip to Panna Maria and St. Hedwig.

In 1913, Theo Magott founded the Texas Polish News Publishing Company and published *Nowiny Texaskie*, a Polish language newspaper. The newspaper's circulation increased throughout Texas during World War I, as Polish residents desired news about their homeland. Theo Magott served as President of the newspaper until it ceased publication in 1920. Theo Magott was an active parishioner at St. Joseph's and St. Michael's churches. He served as Finance Chairman on the Board of Directors for St. Michael's Church and solicited funds on behalf of his friend Reverend Tom Moczygemba for the construction of a new building at 418 Indiana Street in 1922. 1914 and 1915 issues of the newspaper were placed in the cornerstone of the church, which was demolished for Hemisfair construction in 1968.

Theo Magott's wife Mary Margaret died in June 1897, and then he married Pauline Helene Isner in November 1898. Theo Magott died on August 17, 1936 at his home at 113 Greeley Street, behind the store. He is buried at St. Joseph's Society Cemetery in San Antonio. After his death, Pauline Magott continued to manage the store with her sons Ted and then Al, until Al bought the business in the 1960s.

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3. Architectural Description

The primary structure on the subject property is a one-story concrete commercial store with a flat roof and a brick-clad façade fronting East Commerce Street. The north façade and sidewalk are covered by a full-width aluminum canopy that is supported by four square brick columns. The front entrance on the left side of the façade features a pair of in-swinging wooden doors with glass upper panels, behind a pair of out-swinging metal screen doors. On the right side of the façade is a single door entrance to a story area, with a pair of fixed square windows to the left of the door.

Between the two central columns is a public art bench created by James Wyatt Hendricks, the first of a series that lines the East Commerce Street corridor. This bench was inspired by Magott's Grocery & Market and features a granite seat on an iron framework. The iron backrest is inlaid with a mosaic of art tiles featuring images of meats, eggs, dairy, bread, fruits, and vegetables.

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Behind the grocery store there is a two-story storage warehouse, which has concrete lower walls topped by a metal framework with a shed roof. There is a one-story vernacular residence behind the store and warehouse at 141 Shadrach Street. The original residence features a cross-gabled roof with centered gable on the right wing. The roof is covered by asbestos shingles. A front addition was constructed prior to 1931, according to Sanborn maps.

Character-defining features of 1314 East Commerce Street include:

- One-story grocery store with canopy
- Two-story storage warehouse
- Public art bench

4. Landmark Criteria

The property meets six criteria under UDC 35-607(b):

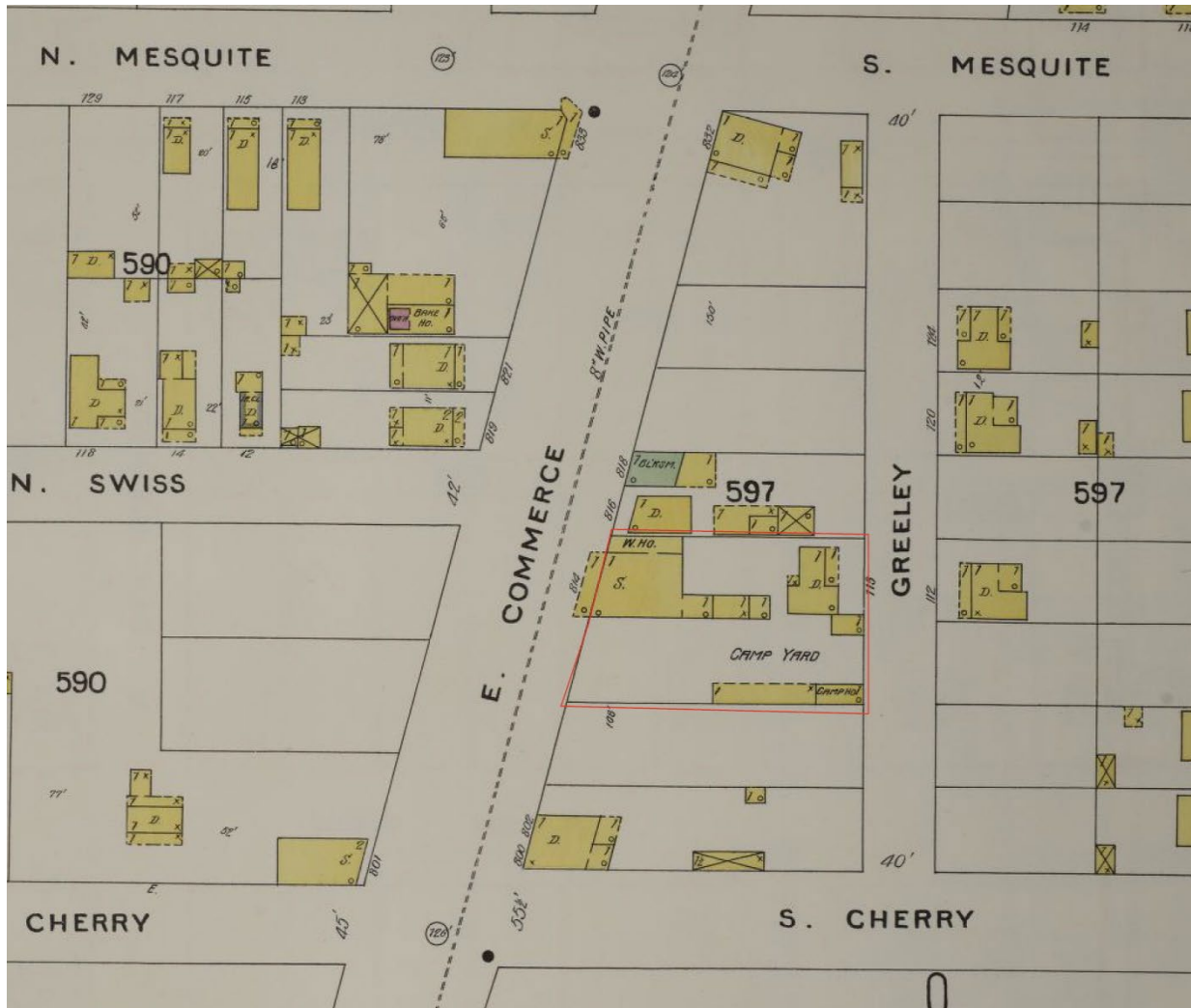
- **3. Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the development of the community, county, state, or nation;**
- **11. It is distinctive in character, interest or value; strongly exemplifies the cultural, economic, social, ethnic or historical heritage of San Antonio, 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;**

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 1314 East Commerce Street meets this threshold. Further research may reveal additional significance associated with this property.



HISTORIC PRESERVATION



1. Sanborn Map (1896), Sheet 73

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HISTORIC PRESERVATION

THEO. MAGOTT. FRED. WESP.

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MAGOTT & WESP, Proprietors.

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SELTZER AND APOLLINARIS WATER, Etc.,

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Factory, W. Commerce St., Bet. N. Brazos and San Jacinto.

Orders for Shipments to the Country Receive Special Attention.

2. 1887 City Directory ad

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