



# CITY OF SAN ANTONIO OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

## HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION

### COMMISSION ACTION

**This is not a Certificate of Appropriateness and cannot be used to acquire permits**

December 6, 2023

**HDRC CASE NO:** 2023-456  
**ADDRESS:** 914 W MULBERRY AVE  
**LEGAL DESCRIPTION:** NCB 1810 BLK 28 LOTS 17 & 18 & W 12.5 FT OF 19  
**APPLICANT:** Lilly A Salinas/SALINAS VINCENT P & LILLY ANN - 914 W MULBERRY AVE  
**OWNER:** Lilly Salinas /SALINAS VINCENT P & LILLY ANN - 914 W MULBERRY AVE

#### REQUEST:

The applicant is requesting Historic Landmark Designation for the property at 914 W Mulberry Ave.

#### FINDINGS:

a. The request for landmark designation was initiated by the property owner.

b. **HISTORIC CONTEXT:** The property at 914 West Mulberry Avenue is a two-story Prairie style Four-Square brick residence located in the Beacon Hill Area neighborhood conservation district (NCD-5) of City Council District 1. Vincent & Lilly Salinas currently own the property. Beacon Hill evolved during San Antonio's first and greatest expansion, which began in the 1850s and continued with few interruptions until the Great Depression. The neighborhood grew around the San Antonio Street Railway Trolley lines that originally provided access to historic San Pedro Springs Park. The subject property was built circa 1918 for W.A. & Willie W. Ellis, who purchased the deed for the parcel in 1913 from Charles and Madge Venable. The address first appeared in the 1918 City Directory, and at that time, William Alvin Ellis (1872–1948) was the principal for the Ellis Brokerage Company. His first wife died that year, and Ellis married his second wife, Clara Mae Ellis (formerly Boldt) in 1923. A native of Louisiana, Missouri, Ellis had lived in San Antonio for 36 years. He was a life member of San Antonio Lodge 1070, A.F.&A.M., a 33rd degree member of the Scottish Rite, and a member of Alzafar Temple, San Antonio Chapter 381. Clara Ellis was actively involved with the San Antonio Women's Club. In the 1929 City Directory, the address was listed as the home of William M. Marvin, an agent for the Brown Cracker & Candy Company, and his wife Florence. In the 1931 City Directory, Marvin is listed as the Vice President of the San Antonio Broom Factory, which was one of the top local manufacturers and employers. The Marvins resided at the property until 1937, at least. Charles Graebner (1861-1932) purchased the deed to the property in 1928, and his widow sold the property to their daughter-in-law in 1939. A native San Antonian, Graebner was a pioneer businessman and civic leader in San Antonio and was active in real estate development. He served as president of the Ducier Candy Manufacturing company, former president of the San Antonio Chamber of Commerce, former president and life member of the San Antonio Museum Association, and a former president of the San Antonio Manufacturers' Association. In 1919, Graebner donated the grounds of the Barclay elementary school (1112 S. Zarzamora St., now the Ramiro P. Estrada Achievement Center). In the early 1930s, he donated evergreens for the new elementary school at 530 Hoover Avenue, and in January 1932 the SAISD Board named it Charles Graebner Elementary School in his honor. He was also the brother of Mrs. Augusta Kronkosky, wife of Albert Kronkosky, who served as head of the Gebhardt Chili Powder Company and founded the San Antonio Drug Company. Graebner died in November 1932 at his country home near Boerne at the age of 71 and was buried in Knights Of Pythias Cemetery. His son, Edward Alexander Graebner (1887-1924) married Bertha Mae Sulfer on 9 July 1907, in St. Joseph Township, Michigan. He died on 13 September 1924, in San Antonio, at the age of 37, and was buried in Knights Of Pythias Cemetery. Bertha Mae Graebner (Sulfer) (1888-1986) resided at 914 West Mulberry Avenue from 1940 to 1952 (or later). By 1955, Graebner resided next door at 918 West Mulberry Avenue, and she was listed in the City Directory as the pastor of "The Christ Way Chapel" at that same address.

c. **SITE CONTEXT:** The subject property is a north-facing house, situated near the middle of a block bound to the north by W Mulberry Ave, the east by Blanco Rd, the south by W Huisache Ave, and the west by Grant Ave. The block includes Neoclassical, Craftsman, and Spanish Eclectic, with a few examples of more modern infill. A divorced sidewalk runs through large front yards; driveways appear as either full-width concrete or ribbon drives. The house is on a large lot and has an in-ground kidney-shaped pool on the east side of the parcel. The backyard is enclosed by a wooden privacy fence with a swinging gate at the end of the

straight concrete driveway.

d. **ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:** The subject property is a two-story Prairie style Four-Square residence constructed of red brick with a rectangular plan, hipped roof, widely overhanging boxed eaves, a brick chimney, and a one-story, full-façade porch supported by square brick columns. It has a composite shingle roof with a gabled dormer on the primary façade. The dormer features a central arched window with stained glass, flanked by two smaller square windows. The front porch entry is asymmetrical, with three concrete steps on the right side flanked by low, rectangular brick piers. The porch is covered by wooden planks. The front door is wooden with a single, three-quarter length glass pane, with a rectangular transom and sidelights. The chimney is located on the east side of the structure. Windows are one-over-one wood windows with 9-over-one wood screens. There is a decorative stained glass clerestory window in the center of the lower story of the east façade. The rear entry features French doors with single glass panes. The back porch is a raised wooden deck with four steps, covered by a shed roof supported by square wooden columns and railing. There is a casita or pool house near the southeast corner of the lot with a symmetrical façade and hipped roof with composite shingles.

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 Ellis, Marvin, and Graebner families.

8. Its historical, architectural, or cultural integrity of location, design, materials, and workmanship; as an example of the Prairie style Four-Square brick residence.

13. It bears an important and significant relationship to other distinctive structures, sites, or areas, either as an important collection of properties or architectural style or craftsmanship with few intrusions, or by contributing to the overall character of the area according to the plan based on architectural, historic, or cultural motif; as one of the earliest homes in the Beacon Hill neighborhood.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval of a Historic Landmark Designation of 914 West Mulberry Avenue based on findings a through e.

**COMMISSION ACTION:**

Approved as submitted.



**Shanon Shea Miller**  
**Historic Preservation Officer**