

**HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW
COMMISSION
September 7, 2022**

HDRC CASE NO: 2022-445
ADDRESS: 905 W. Agarita Ave
LEGAL DESCRIPTION: NCB 1792 BLK 20 LOT 45, 46, 47 & 48
ZONING: R-6, NCD-5
CITY COUNCIL DIST.: 1
APPLICANT: Alyssa Cedillo and Pablo Gonzalez
OWNER: Alyssa Cedillo and Pablo Gonzalez
TYPE OF WORK: Historic Landmark Designation
CASE MANAGER: Amy Fulkerson

REQUEST: The applicant is requesting a Finding of Historic Significance for 905 W. Agarita Ave.

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.

Criteria for Evaluation.

- 3. Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the development of the community, county, state, or nation;**
- 5. Its embodiment of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style valuable for the study of a period, type, method of construction, or use of indigenous materials;**
- 7. Its unique location or singular physical characteristics that make it an established or familiar visual feature;**
- 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 owners.
- b. **HISTORIC CONTEXT:** The property at 905 W Agarita Ave is a two-story Prairie style residence with carport, two-story front porch and balcony and a side porch, built c.1920. It is located in the Beacon Hill Area Neighborhood Conservation District (NCD-5) of City Council District 1. Shortly after the areas was platted in 1908, property in Beacon Hill was advertised as sound financial investment. Lots 46, 47, and 48, Block 20, NCB 1792 changed hands three times before it was purchased by Tuleta Chittim Wright in 1920. The property was owned by Mrs. Wright separate from her husband Gilbert Greer Wright who sold real estate. They were the first residents at 905 W Agarita Ave along with their four children and two servants. Gilbert Wright was active with the Order of the Alamo and was a Freemason. His daughters participated in the Order of the Alamo coronation. After her husband's passing, Tuleta Wright went to live with her daughter Dela White where she remained active in community philanthropy.

In 1942, the Wrights sold 905 W. Agarita Ave to Benny J. Cantu and his wife Audrey. Cantu was the owner operator of Audrey's Café a popular Mexican Food Restaurant. He also operated Benny's Ice House and the Burkeshire Taco Village for a brief time. Mr. Cantu was active with the San Antonio Mexican Chamber of Commerce of which her served as president three times in the 1960. He also served as president of the Fiesta Commission in 1965. Cantu promoted better relations between the U.S., Mexico and El Salvador through his work with *Sembradores de Amistad* (Sowers of Friendship) for which he served as president. He was also appointed to the Small Business Administration San Antonio District Advisory Council in 1971. In 1976, he and his wife were part of the U.S. delegation attending the opening of President Echeverria's Institute for the Research of Third World Problems.

- c. **SITE CONTEXT:** The south-facing house is on a block bound to the north by W. Summit Ave, the east by Blanco Rd., the south by W. Mulberry Ave., and to the west by Grant Ave. Located at the corner of

Blanco and W Agarita Ave, this two-story home anchors the block. The block includes Folk Victorian, Craftsman, and Spanish Eclectic architecture. Divorced sidewalks run through large front yards; driveways appear as either full-width concrete or ribbon drives. The house is on a large lot and has an inground pool on the northeast side of the parcel. The backyard is enclosed with a wooden privacy fence with a gate across the carport.

- d. **ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:** The two-story residence incorporates elements of Prairie style with front and side gables, wide boxed eaves, an emphasis on horizontal lines, and large square porch supports. The home is wood clad, and the roof has composition shingles. The two-story front porch features square masonry columns. The front door is flanked by sidelites on each side. There is a port cochere on the west side of the building with an enclosed second story. On the east side there is an enclosed porch. The house features one-over-one wood windows, many are paired. There are also windows in the east, south, and west facing gables.
- 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; The home at 905 W Agarita is associated with two families that have made significant contributions to San Antonio, the Wrights and the Cantus. Tuleta Wright and her daughter Dela were known for the charitable giving and support of social causes. Benny J. Cantu was a prominent small business owner who represented the Hispanic business community through his work with local, national and international organizations.

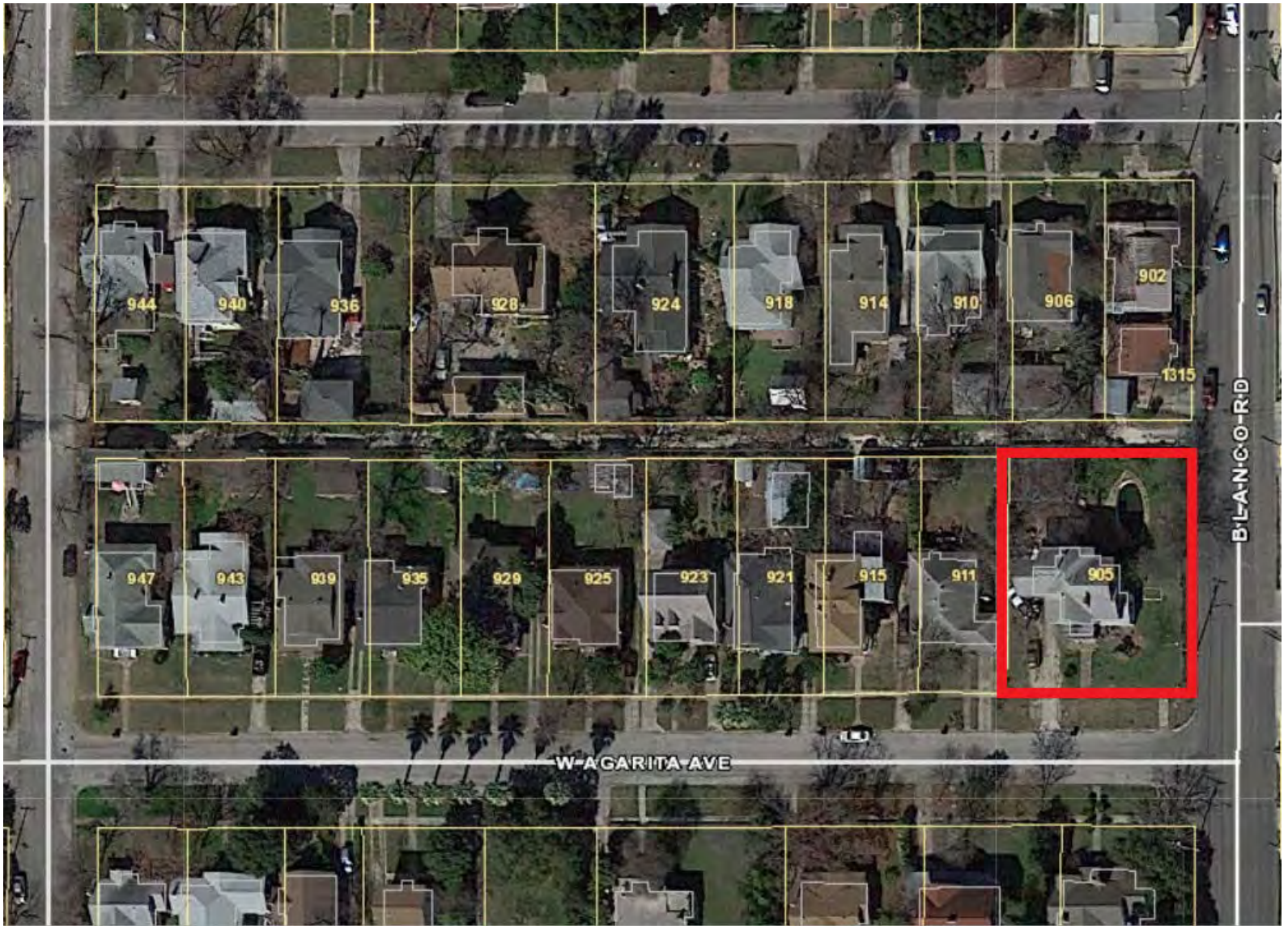
5. Its embodiment of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style valuable for the study of a period, type, method of construction, or use of indigenous materials; This Prairie style home retains the footprint shown on the 1924 Sanborn Map. Character defining features include massive square porch columns, a two-story front gabled mass in contrast to the flanking lower porte cochere and infilled porch, wide eave overhang, and horizontal emphasis in both siding and ribbon windows.

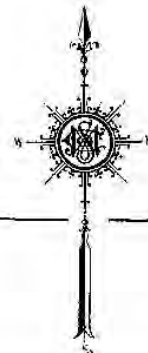
7. Its unique location or singular physical characteristics that make it an established or familiar visual feature; The structure is prominently located on the corner of Blanco and Agarita and has been a visual fixture of the neighborhood since c. 1920.

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; 905 W Agarita is located in the Beacon Hill Area neighborhood conservation district (NCD-5), which staff has identified as an eligible local historic district. Should the neighborhood choose to designate, the property would be listed as contributing.

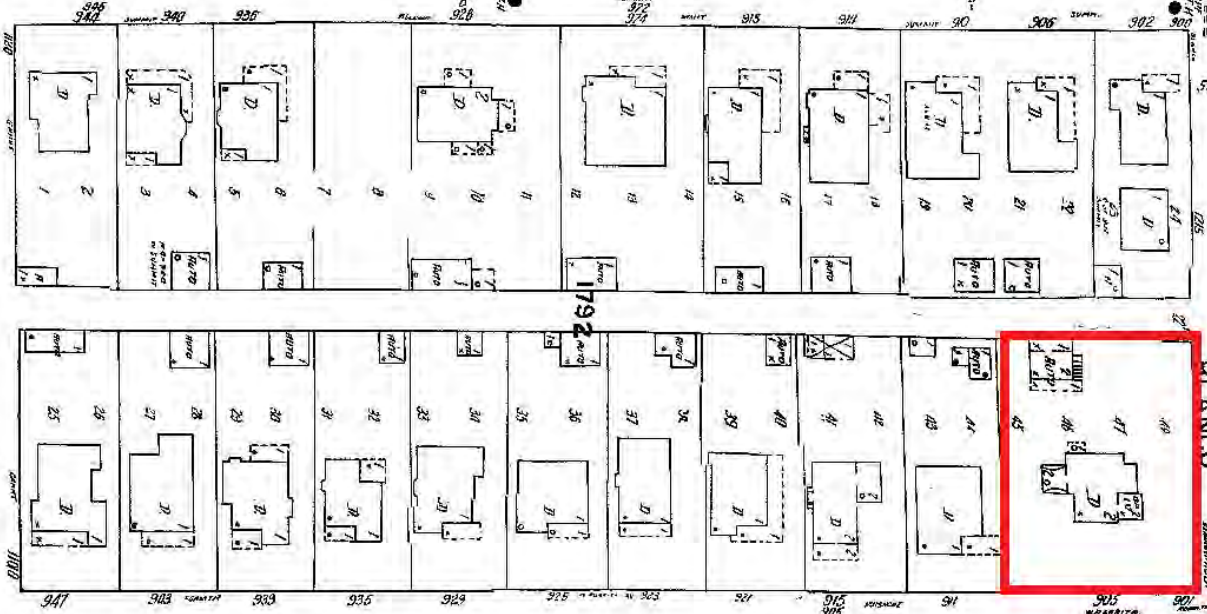
- f. The City offers a tax incentive for the substantial rehabilitation of historic properties because historic landmarks possess cultural and historical value and contribute to the overall quality and character of the City and its neighborhoods. If historic designation is approved, rehabilitation and 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 Finding of Historic Significance, 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. 35-453, 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: Staff recommends approval of a Finding of Historic Significance and that the Historic and Design Review Commission should recommend approval for the landmark designation of 905 W Agarita Ave to the Zoning Commission and to the City Council based on findings a through e.





AV.

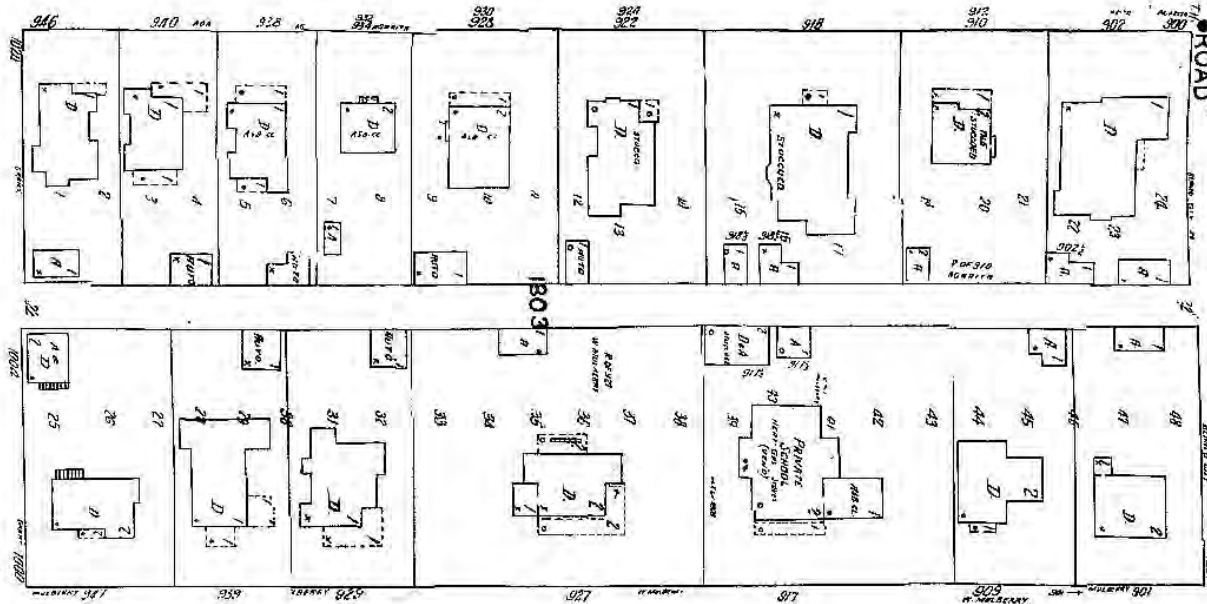


PLANCO

87

ROAD

AV.



AV. MACDONALD













Exhibits
Provided by
the
Applicants

Statement of Significance – 905 W. Agarita Ave

Architectural Description:

Victorian style architecture, built 1915

Three or More criteria the property meets under UDC 35-607

Criterion 5: Victorian Era residential architecture

This property is a “stunning reimagined historic property that boasts plenty of modern design, as well as those beautiful historic touches that make it unique” – Megan Stacy at My SA

Criterion 9: This property is on the corner of Blanco and represents the unique older homes that began to develop in the 1850's with few interruptions until the great depression. This property is a link to the first modern platted subdivisions developed in San Antonio. It was also featured as an example in a news article related to the affordability and culture of San Antonio

<https://www.mysanantonio.com/real-estate/article/Beacon-Hill-makes-list-of-10-Hottest-affordable-13552154.php>

News article “But the historic details don’t stop with the interior. This all-over beautiful property (on a corner lot, no less) features a beautiful pool, screen-enclosed veranda, and plenty of parking. Set in the up-and-coming Beacon Hill neighborhood, 905 W Agarita Ave is surrounded by a historic feel, trendy local businesses, and a strong sense of community.”

Criterion 10: Part of the Beacon Hill NCD-

Criterion 13- Part of the Beacon Hill NCD

References / Sources of your research:

Beacon Hill Neighborhood Conservation Society

<http://www.beaconhillsanantonio.org/ncd>

News Articles related to this property

<https://www.kwsanantonio.com/news/the-historic-renovation-of-our-dreams-flipping-houses-in-beacon-hill/>

<https://www.expressnews.com/lifestyle/home-garden/article/100-year-old-historic-San-Antonio-home-renovation-16150631.php>

<https://www.mysanantonio.com/business/article/Neighborhood-is-dotted-with-homes-of-historic-844935.php>

<https://www.mysanantonio.com/real-estate/article/Beacon-Hill-makes-list-of-10-Hottest-affordable-13552154.php>

Primary Structure:



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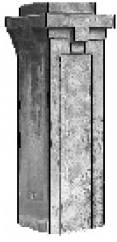












Beacon Hill Area Neighborhood Association

A NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Beacon Hill Area Neighborhood Association is a non-profit (501c) (4)
Organization dedicated to neighborhood unity and revitalization*

905 W. Agarita Landmark Designation

Case manager: Amy Fulkerson amy.fulkerson@sanantonio.gov

August 24, 2022

Dear HDRC Members:

Beacon Hill not only approves for the Landmark Designation for 905 W Agarita, we encourage such designations. We are proud and grateful to Alyssa and Pablo Cedillo for protecting Beacon Hill's unique history and architecture that is disappearing quickly.

Respectfully,

Daniel Hubbeling
President
Chair of the Zoning and Urban Design (ZUD) Committee
Beacon Hill Area Neighborhood Association