

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

HDRC CASE NO: 2022-557
ADDRESS: 616/618 Wilmington
LEGAL DESCRIPTION: NCB 1716 Blk A Lot 5 & N 5 ft of 7
ZONING: R-6
CITY COUNCIL DIST.: 1
APPLICANT: Office Of Historic Preservation
OWNER: Archon Borrowing Group, LLC
TYPE OF WORK: Finding of Historic Significance
CASE MANAGER: Amy Fulkerson

REQUEST: The applicant is requesting a Finding of Historic Significance for 616/618 Wilmington.

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;**
 - 8. Its historical, architectural, or cultural integrity of location, design, materials, and workmanship;**
 - 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. On September 6, 2022, a demolition application was submitted to the Office of Historic Preservation by Juan Chavarria of CH Construction & Remodeling on behalf of the property owner of 616/618 Wilmington, located in the Tobin Hill neighborhood of City Council District 1. OHP staff researched the property to determine eligibility during the 30-day review period provided by UDC 35-455.
- b. 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.
- c. **DEMOLITION AND DESIGNATIONS COMMITTEE:** The Demolition and Designation Committee (DDC) held a site visit on November 9, 2022.
- d. **HISTORIC CONTEXT:** The property at 616/618 Wilmington NCB 1716 Blk A Lot 5 & N 5 ft of 7, is a single-story, rear junction double shotgun. There are roughly 12 known examples remaining in the city and to staff's knowledge this is a form that is unique to San Antonio. The property is owned by the Archon Borrowing Group, LLC.

The block where 616/618 Wilmington is located was surveyed and re-subdivided in 1911 for Mrs. Kate C. Gosling. Due to finances, most developers could only afford to purchase small parcels of land. A developer would subdivide the land, sell the lots, and the new owner would hire a builder or contractor

to build a house.¹

Public transportation played a large role in the early neighborhood development of Tobin Hill with the inception of a mule-drawn streetcar route from Main Plaza north to San Pedro Park in 1878. In general, mule-drawn streetcars increased the distance one could commute within 30 minutes to two to three miles allowing for residential expansion outside the urban core.² The first electric trolleys appeared in 1890. By 1919 the eastern part of Tobin Hill, anchored by the Pearl Brewery, was served by a streetcar that ran from Dallas St. to King's Court in the vicinity of Brackenridge Park. Affordable housing options like 616/618 Wilmington and access to public transportation made the neighborhood a desirable location and the area saw rapid development in the 1920s-30s.

On June 26, 1925 Dewey E. Wright and Mary H. Wright signed a mechanic's lien and a deed of trust for construction of the structure located at 616/618 Wilmington. for Dewey E. The Wrights are listed as the residents of 618 Wilmington, while 616 was occupied by Tom C. Frost, Jr., and his wife Ilsé. Dewey Wright was an investment banker at Alamo National Bank, and his first tenet was the grandson of Tom C. Frost, the founder of Frost Bank. The Frost's moved before the birth of their son, Tom C. Frost in 1927. The Wrights owned the property until Mary Hayman Wright's sister purchased the property from them in 1934. Mary Wright and her sister Anna (also known as Sarah A.) Hayman lived at 618 Wilmington from 1934 until Anna's death in 1948. Various tenets resided at 616 Wilmington during these years, the tenants were typically employed nearby at businesses such has as Samuels Glass and Franz Ice Shop.

- e. **SITE CONTEXT:** The southeast-facing house is on an irregular block bound to the north by Kendall St., to the east by E. Evergreen St, and to the southeast by E Euclid Ave. The block includes Craftsman, Folk Victorian architecture, and new construction. Divorced sidewalks run through small front yards; driveways are not always present when they are, they appear as either full-width concrete or ribbon drives. The house is on a large lot and has an inground pool on the southeast side of the parcel. The backyard is enclosed with a chain-link fence. E. Evergreen is the boundary of the Tobin Hill Historic District.
- f. **ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:** The rear junction double shotgun house at 616/618 Wilmington has a Craftsman influence with wide eaves with exposed rafter tails, triangular brace supports for the shed porch, and a square porch pier on the interior side of each porch. The roof has two front gables with a cross gable in the rear where the two units connect. The residences remain relatively unaltered except for the rear porches, which have been enclosed (see Sanborn Map, 1938). Many of the original interior features remain in 616 Wilmington as well.
- g. **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 616/618 Wilmington was built for Dewey E. Wright and Mary H. Wright c. 1925 and Mary Wright lived at 618 Wilmington through 1948. Dewey Wright was an investment banker at Alamo National Bank. He and his wife occupied 618 Wilmington and had had tenants at 616 Wilmington. Their first tenant was Tom C. Frost, Jr., and his wife Ilse. The Frosts moved before the birth of their son, Tom C. Frost in 1927.

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 rear junction double shotgun is to staff's knowledge a unique shotgun form found only in San Antonio. There are roughly 12 known examples remaining.

8. Its historical, architectural, or cultural integrity of location, design, materials, and workmanship; The Craftsman-style rear junction double shotgun is largely unchanged. It

¹ National Park Service US Department of the Interior, National Register Bulletin: Historic Residential Suburbs, p. 26.

² SA on Track: The Suburban Street Railway Complex through 1933, Master Thesis by Maria Watson.

maintains its original footprint with the only exterior modification being enclosed rear porches. The original siding and windows remain intact.

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; Public transportation played a large role in the early neighborhood development of Tobin Hill with the inception of a mule-drawn streetcar route from Main Plaza north to San Pedro Park in 1878. In general, mule-drawn streetcars increased the distance one could commute within 30 minutes to two to three miles allowing for residential expansion outside the urban core. Affordable housing options like 616/618 Wilmington and access to public transportation made the neighborhood a desirable location and the area saw rapid development in the 1920s-30s.

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; The Office of Historic Preservation has undertaken a survey of shotgun houses in San Antonio. Based on this survey, there are roughly 12 known examples of rear junction double shotgun homes, a uniquely San Antonio form. This structure is in the Tobin Hill neighborhood, which is an eligible the National Register Historic District and was surveyed by the Office of Historic Preservation in 2021. This structure would be considered contributing to the neighborhood and holds a unique position in preserving the continuity of the intersection of Wilmington, Kendall, and E Laurel.

- h. 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.
- i. 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 616/618 Wilmington based on findings a through g.



CITY OF SAN ANTONIO OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Historic Design and Review Commission *Demolition and Designation Committee*

DATE: 9 Nov 2022, 4:30 OM

ADDRESS: 616/618 Wilmington

APPLICANT: Juan Chavarria/Archon Borrowing Group

DDC Members present: Jimmy Cervantes, Jeff Fetzer, Anne Marie Grube, Monica Savino
Property owner: Hank Cole (Archon Borrowing Group), Bill Bittles (contractor)
Staff present: Amy Fulkerson
Others present: Lisa Garza (San Antonio Conservation Society)

REQUEST: Demolition of primary structure

COMMENTS/CONSERNS:

The property was built c. 1925 and is a rear junction double shotgun form with Craftsman influence. There are only 12 remaining examples of this unique San Antonio form.

If demolition is approved, the owners plan to build back with two or four units of affordable workforce housing.

The commissioners commented that there appears to be a lot of original material that remains intact on the building including the windows and siding. Can the building be repaired?

The owners have had the property for 3½ years. They had tenants leasing the space until it became unsafe due to rotting floor beams and foundation piers. They consulted five different foundation repair companies. Some said it was impossible, for others the cost to repair the foundation was more than the budgeted renovation costs. Their concern is that the home would need to be lifted to repair and replace the foundation piers and floor supports. The foundation companies said this process could cause the building to break in half due to its form. They were advised that the building would need to be cut in two to make repairs.

The commissioners stated that they are aware of the costs, but the purpose of their meeting was to assess if the building met the criteria for historic designation. If the property were designated, they could consider economic hardship at that time. There are also grants that could help offset the cost of foundation repair. The city also offers tax incentives for repair of historic properties.

The property owners are also concerned about safety. Every time they secure the building with fences, or board up the property, they find their defenses cut through. Cameras get disconnected



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and thrown up on the roof or stolen. They are concerned that someone will set a fire to stay warm and burn the building or die on the premises. Neighbors on either side are concerned about the people living onsite and have heard disturbances at night. The property owners have called the police and the Vacant Buildings program is aware. Commissioners suggested that they work with their City Council person to and asked staff to assist.



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Statement of Significance for 616/618 Wilmington Ave

Architectural Description

The rear junction double shotgun house at 616/618 Wilmington has a Craftsman influence with wide eaves with exposed rafter tails, triangular brace supports for the shed porch, and a square porch pier on the interior side of each porch. The roof has two front gables with a cross gable in the rear where the two units connect. The residences remain relatively unaltered except for the rear porches, which have been enclosed (see Sanborn Map, 1938). Many of the original interior features remain in 616 Wilmington as well.

Site Context

The southeast-facing house is on an irregular block bound to the north by Kendall St., to the NW by Kendall St, to the NE by Evergreen St, and to the southeast by E Euclid Ave. The block includes Craftsman, Folk Victorian architecture, and new construction. Divorced sidewalks run through small front yards; driveways are not always present when they are, they appear as either full-width concrete or ribbon drives. The house is on a large lot and has an inground pool on the southeast side of the parcel. The backyard is enclosed with a chain-link fence. Evergreen is the boundary of the Tobin Hill Historic District.

Historic Context

The property at 616/618 Wilmington NCB 1716 Blk A Lot 5 & N 5 ft of 7, is a single-story, rear junction double shotgun. There are roughly 12 known examples remaining in the city and to staff's knowledge this is a form that is unique to San Antonio. The property is owned by the Archon Borrowing Group, LLC.



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Public transportation played a large role in the early neighborhood development of Tobin Hill with the inception of a mule-drawn streetcar route from Main Plaza north to San Pedro Park in 1878. In general, mule-drawn streetcars increased the distance one could commute within 30 minutes to two to three miles allowing for residential expansion outside the urban core.² The first electric trolleys appeared in 1890. By 1919 the eastern part of Tobin Hill, anchored by the Pearl Brewery, was served by a streetcar that ran from Dallas St. to King's Court in the vicinity of Brackenridge Park. Affordable housing options like 616/618 Wilmington and access to public transportation made the neighborhood a desirable location and the area saw rapid development in the 1920s-30s.

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during these years, the tenants were typically employed nearby at businesses such as Samuels Glass and Franz Ice Shop.

Criteria for Designation:

3. Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the development of the community, county, state, or nation; The home at 616/618 Wilmington was built for Dewey E. Wright and Mary H. Wright c. 1925 and Mary Wright lived at 618 Wilmington through 1948. Dewey Wright was an investment banker at Alamo National Bank. He and his wife occupied 618 Wilmington and had had tenants at 616 Wilmington. Their first tenant was Tom C. Frost, Jr., and his wife Ilse. The Frosts moved before the birth of their son, Tom C. Frost in 1927.

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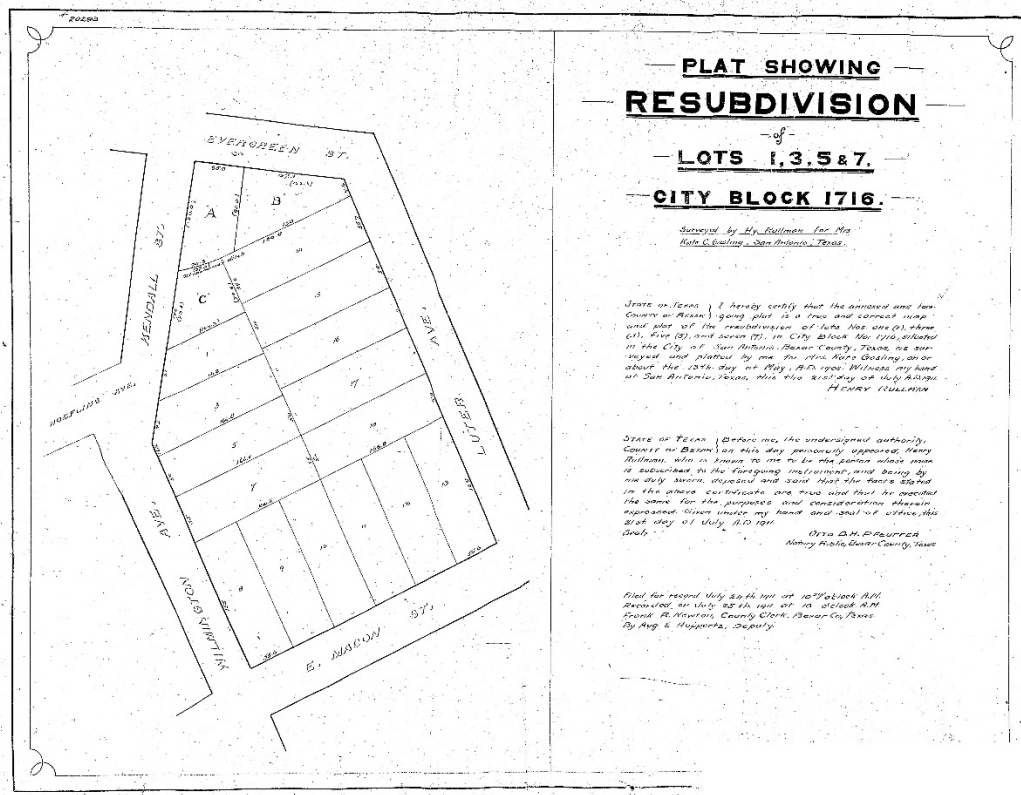
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expansion outside the urban core. Affordable housing options like 616/618 Wilmington and access to public transportation made the neighborhood a desirable location and the area saw rapid development in the 1920s-30s.

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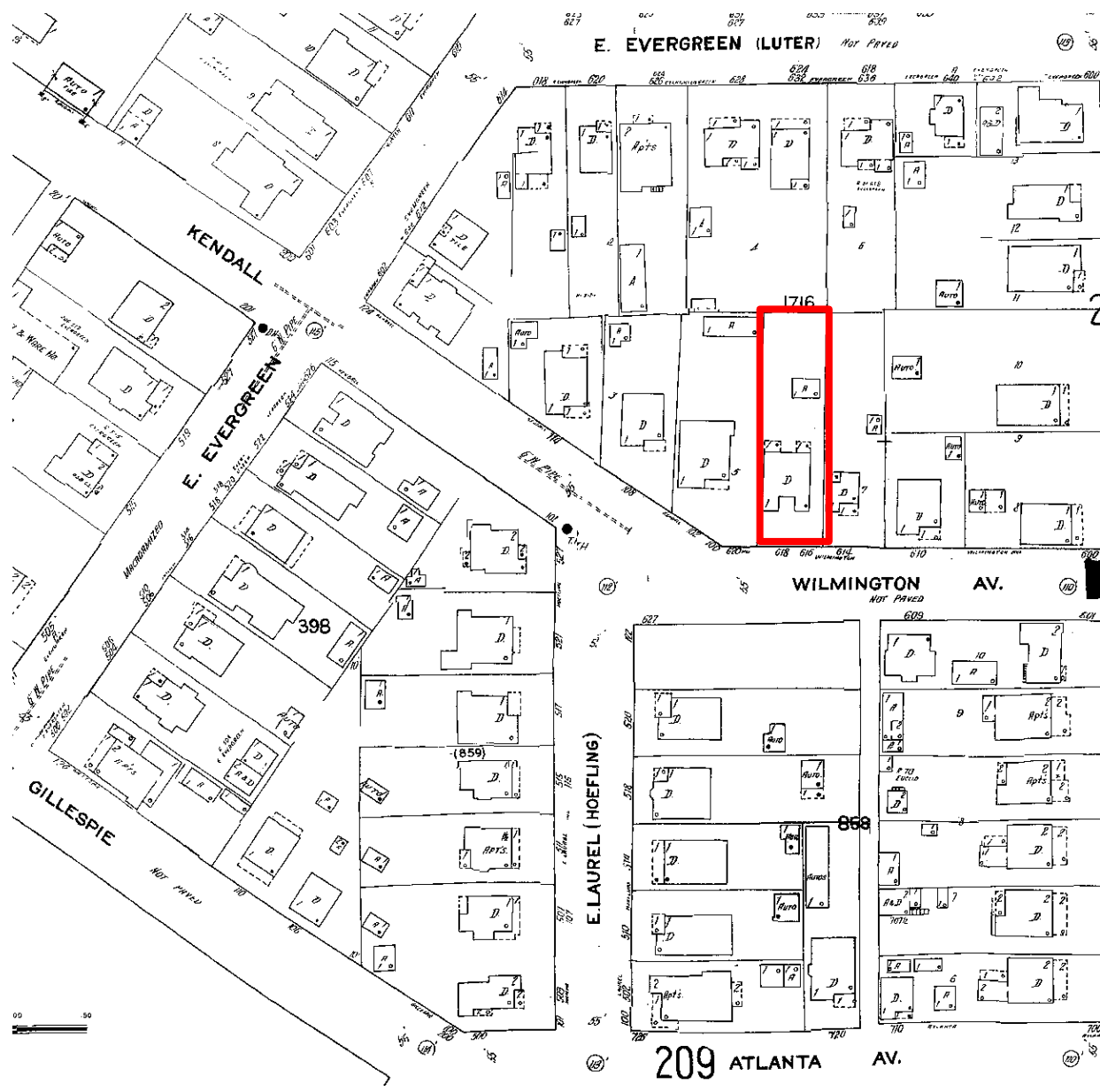
616 and 618 Wilmington



Plat, 1911



Sanborn Map, 1938, vol 2, sheet 212. San Antonio Public Library Special Collections.



Sanborn Map, 1911-1952, vol 2, sheet 212. Texas Digital Sanborn Maps.



Southeast elevation



Northwest elevation





616 Wilmington



618 Wilmington



Interior of 618 Wilmington



Chimney detail

From: [Frederica Kushner](#)
To: [Jenny Hay \(OHP\)](#); [Amy Fulkerson \(OHP\)](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] 616-618 Wilmington Ave.
Date: Saturday, October 1, 2022 5:04:19 PM
Attachments: [618 Wilmington - deed search.docx](#)
[618 Wilmington City Dir search.docx](#)

Jenny,

It's me again. I've done some research on the property under a demolition request at 616-618 Wilmington Ave., in Tobin Hill. It was built in 1926 by D.E. Wright and his wife Mary. One or another of the Wright family lived in either 616 or 618 until at least 1948. After that, the duplex was probably all rental. It looks to be largely unchanged. There are no other evident demolitions on the 600 block. It looks to be in fair shape. Why does someone want to demolish a building that could provide 2 housing units, probably at least semi-affordable? We believe it contributes to the neighborhood and should be preserved.

I'm attaching my research. It's jumbled but may give an idea of the timeline. This was a very difficult search.

Frederica Kushner



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