

**HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW  
COMMISSION  
March 15, 2023**

**HDRC CASE NO:** 2023-085  
**ADDRESS:** 916 W. Mistletoe Ave  
**LEGAL DESCRIPTION:** NCB 1845 BLK 40 LOT 13 THRU 16  
**ZONING:** R-6, NCD-5  
**CITY COUNCIL DIST.:** 1  
**APPLICANT:** Patrycja D. Babb and Ira Babb  
**OWNER:** Patrycja D. Babb and Ira Babb  
**TYPE OF WORK:** Historic Landmark Designation  
**CASE MANAGER:** Amy Fulkerson

**REQUEST:** The applicant is requesting a Finding of Historic Significance for 916 W. Mistletoe 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;**
- **4. Its identification as the work of a master builder, designer, architect, or landscape architect whose individual work has influenced 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;**
- **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. A historic assessment of the property was commissioned by the property owners in 2019 and completed by staff.
- c. **HISTORIC CONTEXT:** The property at 916 W Mistletoe Avenue is a two-story Prairie-style attributed to George Willis and built c. 1919 for Hugh C. and Hortense Paramore residence built ca. 1920. It is in the Beacon Hill Neighborhood Conservation District (NCD 5) of City Council District 1. Ira and Patrycja Babb are the property owners.

Beacon Hill is one of several unique neighborhoods that evolved during San Antonio's first great expansion, starting in the 1850s until the Great Depression. By 1890, electric trolleys that carried passengers to San Pedro Springs Park had influenced the development of the city's first new subdivisions to the north, including Beacon Hill. The lots occupied by 916 W Mistletoe are included on block 40 of a 1908 plat surveyed by Louis Polk of Polk & Attfield called the Beacon Hill Addition submitted by Nicholson & Furnish.<sup>1</sup>

The address first appears in the 1919 city directory as the residence of Hugh C. and Hortense Parramore and their children, William and Mary Louis.<sup>2</sup> Hugh Parramore was the son of prominent cattle raiser James Harrison Parramore went into the family business; he owned cattle ranches in Runnels County,

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<sup>1</sup> Bexar County Clerk (web site). Plat: Beacon Hill Addition. 28 September 1908. PLAT vol. 105, p. 173.

<sup>2</sup> "Social Notes." San Antonio *Express*, Friday, 3 September 1920, p. 8.

Texas,<sup>3</sup> Arizona, and New Mexico.<sup>4</sup> He moved from Runnels County to in San Antonio in 1914,<sup>5</sup> though the family maintained a ranch near Winters, Runnels County, Texas.<sup>6</sup> Prior to building in Beacon Hill, the Parramores lived at 507 W Euclid in the Five Points neighborhood.<sup>7</sup> Hugh purchased lots 13 through 15 on the south side of block 40 of new city block 1845, Beacon Hill, in 1917,<sup>8</sup> and added block 16 in 1918.<sup>9</sup> There, he chose to build a two-story red brick Prairie-style home with wings: a porch to the east of the central mass and a porte cochere to the west. An article in a 1919 issue of the San Antonio *Evening News* includes an image of the completed home at 916 W. Mistletoe under the headline, “Attractive Type of Homes Being Erected on Beacon Hill.”<sup>10</sup>

The home 916 W Mistletoe was likely designed by George Rodney Willis.<sup>11</sup> Willis was born in Chicago in 1879, and began his career at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as a draftsman in Frank Lloyd Wright’s studio. While there, he “worked with a number of architects who would later become important practitioners of the Prairie School style of architecture.”<sup>12</sup> Willis moved to San Antonio in 1911 and worked as a draftsman for Atlee B. Ayres. In 1916, left to work for C. T. Boelhauwe. He opened his own office in 1917.<sup>13</sup>

The structure at 916 W Mistletoe appears exactly as it did in the previously-cited 1919 article on Beacon Hill.<sup>14</sup> It is, however, missing its brick garage, originally located at the rear (south) edge of the lot. The garage was deconstructed and its brick salvaged; the current owners shared they plan to reuse the brick to reconstruct the garage.

Additional information about subsequent property owners is included in the Historic Assessment completed in 2019.

- d. SITE CONTEXT: The north-facing house is on a block bound to the north by W. Mistletoe Ave, the east by Blanco Rd., the south by W. Woodlawn Ave., and to the west by Grant Ave. The property is situated near the center of the block and across the street from the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah’s Witnesses. The block includes Craftsman, Colonial Revival, and Modern 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 the backyard is enclosed with a wooden privacy fence with a gate at the rear of the porte-cochere.
- e. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION: The home is designed in the Prairie style with a symmetrical primary façade with wings: to the east is a covered porch, and to the west a porte-cochere, both supported by brick piers capped in concrete. The primary cladding is red brick with contrasting sill lines and caps of concrete. The low-pitched hipped roof has wide eaves and green composition shingles; gutters and fascia are painted to match the concrete bands, while the ceilings of the porch and porte-cochere, exterior concrete stairs, and the eaves are painted a shade of green similar to the roof.

The home has a basement that once housed a cast-iron boiler (since removed). There is a brick and

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<sup>3</sup> “Social Notes.” San Antonio *Express*, Friday, 3 September 1920, p. 8.

<sup>4</sup> “Hugh Parramore, Cattleman, Dies.” San Antonio *Express*, Thursday, 31 July 1924.

<sup>5</sup> “Hugh Parramore, Cattleman, Dies.” San Antonio *Express*, Thursday, 31 July 1924.

<sup>6</sup> “Social Notes.” San Antonio *Express*, Friday, 3 September 1920, p. 8.

<sup>7</sup> San Antonio City Directory: 1918, p. 568.

<sup>8</sup> Bexar County Clerk (web site). Warranty Deed: B.F. Nicholson to H.C. Parramore, 20 November 1917. DEED vol. 524, p. 100, document no. 99990263203. Accessed 21 June 2019.

<sup>9</sup> Bexar County Clerk (web site). Warranty Deed: B.F. Dittmar to H.C. Parramore, 10 June 1918. DEED vol. 539, p. 76, document no. 99990167500. Accessed 21 June 2019.

<sup>10</sup> “Attractive Type of Homes Being Erected on Beacon Hill.” San Antonio *Evening News*, 9 August 1919, p. 7.

<sup>11</sup> Kothmann, Laytha Sue Haggard. “George Willis, Prairie School architect in Texas,” University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas, 1988.

<sup>12</sup> Texas State Historical Association: Handbook of Texas Online (web site). “Willis, George Rodney.” Accessed 21 June 2019. <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fwi93>

<sup>13</sup> “Willis, George Rodney.”

<sup>14</sup> “Attractive Type of Homes Being Erected on Beacon Hill.” San Antonio *Evening News*, 9 August 1919, p. 7.

concrete skirt with a coal door on the west side of the house, south of the porte-cochere, and windows on the east and west elevations above the concrete skirt. One can also discern the transition from first floor to basement on the exterior of the house because the courses of brick step out slightly from the upper floors. The current owner reports the basement is fully usable and accessed via an interior door with full staircase.<sup>15</sup>

- f. **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 connection to the Parramore family through Hugh Parramore. Hugh's father James Harrison Parramore was one of the founders of Abilene, Texas, and the family has been ranching in Texas since the 1875.

**4. Its identification as the work of a master builder, designer, architect, or landscape architect whose individual work has influenced the development of the community, county, state, or nation;** the design of the residence is attributed to George Willis, who was responsible for designing prominent homes and municipal and commercial buildings in Texas.

**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;** 916 W Mistletoe is an example of the Prairie style, popularized by Frank Lloyd Wright and the Prairie School of Chicago.

**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 structure is part of the eligible historic district of Beacon Hill and would be considered contributing were the neighborhood to pursue designation.

- g. 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.
- h. 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.
- 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 916 W Mistletoe Ave to the Zoning Commission and to the City Council based on findings a through f.

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<sup>15</sup> Ira Babb, by email to staff, 26 June 2019.





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



*North/primary façade.*



*Main entrance, from east porch.*

1901 S. ALAMO ST, SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS 78204

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*West façade.*



*West entrance off porte cochere.*



*Wrightian light fixture in porte cochere.*

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CITY OF SAN ANTONIO  
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*Rear/south façade.*

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*East façade.*

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*Screen grab from Remax.com showing garage before demolition. Accessed by staff 21 June 2019.*



*Bricks from the garage were salvaged and are stored under the home's rear deck.*

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*Names and initials carved into the concrete where the garage once stood.*

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# CITY OF SAN ANTONIO OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

SAN ANTONIO EVENING NEWS

SATURDAY, AUGUST 9, 1919.

SAN ANTONIO EVENING NEWS

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## Attractive Type of Homes Being Erected on Beacon Hill



### POSTPONEMENT MEANS HIGHER COSTS IN END

THOSE CONTEMPLATING BUILD-  
ING SHOULD COMMENCE AT  
ONCE, SAYS STRAUS

This week are shown three new homes recently erected on Beacon Hill which were snapped by the Staff Photographer in his quest for beautiful and attractive residences. The two-story brick house shown above is the home of H. C. Farnsworth, 916 West Mistletoe Avenue. Hard-faced brick was used, and the porch on one side and the covered driveway on the other give a well-balanced appearance. At the upper right is shown the new residence of John Stacy at 1101 West Mistletoe Avenue. This is a new type of bungalow that is becoming very popular in San Antonio. Below is the new bungalow home of B. W. Buckner at 1015 West Mistletoe Avenue. The glassed-in sleeping porch on the side is now a necessity in all modern homes.

### UPWARD TREND INDICATED BY BAROMETERS

ORDERS ON BOOKS OF ABSTRACT  
COMPANIES FORESHADOWS  
GREATER ACTIVITY

During the past week the real estate market has shown a strong under-tone, and every indication points at an increased activity. One of the barometers that forecasts clearly the trend of affairs in the world of real estate is the amount of business on the books of the abstract offices of the city.

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916 W Mistletoe included in story on Beacon Hill, San Antonio Evening News, Saturday, 9 August 1919.

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