

CASE NO: Z2005162

Staff and Zoning Commission Recommendation - City Council

Date: August 25, 2005

Zoning Commission Meeting Date: July 19, 2005

Council District: 1

Ferguson Map: 616 D4

Applicant:

City of San Antonio, Historic
Preservation Officer

Owner:

Estate of Lester J. Reetz

Zoning Request: To designate property "HS" Historic, Significant

Lot 9 and Lot 10, NCB 112

Property Location: 211 Belvin Street

Proposal: To designate property "HS" Historic, Significant

Neighborhood Association: Five Points Neighborhood Association

Neighborhood Plan: Five Points Neighborhood Plan

TIA Statement: A Traffic Impact Analysis is not required

Staff Recommendation:

Consistent. The zoning request conforms with the Five Points Community Plan. The plan calls for homes that front Belvin at this point to be neighborhood commercial, but it also places a premium on housing preservation and improvement, including pursuing a historic or conservation district designation for the area. This rezoning request fits with the spirit and intent of the overall plan for the area.

Approval. The proposed zoning does not request a change in the base zoning. Historic Significance is appropriate for this single-family residential land use and is supported by the plans goal to preserve, rehabilitate and improve the housing stock.

One June 15, 2005, the Historic and Design Review Commission (HDRC) recommended a finding of Historic Significance for this property. The building qualifies as a City of San Antonio landmark based on the following criteria:

1. its value as a visible reminder of the cultural heritage of the community (35-607(b)(1));
2. its identification with a person who significantly contributed to the development of the community and state (35-607(b)(3));
3. its embodiment of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style valuable for the study of a period, type and method of construction (35-607(b)(5));
4. its historical, architectural, and cultural integrity of location, design, material, and workmanship (35-607(b)(8)); and
5. buildings that have come to represent a part of San Antonio's cultural heritage for at least twenty-five years (35-607(3)(2)(A)).

This application was initiated by the property owner through the City of San Antonio's Historic Preservation Office and is in favor.

Zoning Commission Recommendation:

Approval

CASE MANAGER : Judy Eguez 207-7442

VOTE

FOR	10
AGAINST	0
ABSTAIN	0
RECUSAL	0

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ZONING CASE NO. Z2005162 – July 19, 2005

Applicant: City of San Antonio, Historic Preservation Office

Zoning Request: To designate Historic Significance.

Ann McGlone, Historic Preservation Officer, stated Joseph R. Morris owned this house in 1894 thru 1940 and was a noted educator. She stated the owner is in favor of this designation and their intent is to restore this house.

FAVOR

Sonia Viesca, 619 Cypress, stated she is in favor of this historic designation. She stated this structure holds history.

Mary T. Gomez, 802 W. Poplar, Vice President of Five Points Neighborhood Association, stated they are in support of this request. She stated she feels Five Points Neighborhood hold plenty of history.

Staff stated there were 15 notices mailed out to the surrounding property owners, 0 returned in opposition and 3 returned in favor and 1 notice of support was received from Five Points Neighborhood Association.

Everyone present, for and against having been heard and the results of the written notices having been received, the Chairman declared the public hearing closed.

FINDING OF CONSISTENCY OF THE MASTER PLAN

COMMISSION ACTION

The motion was made by Commissioner Kissling and seconded by Commissioner Dixon to find consistency with the neighborhood plan.

(A verbal vote was taken)

AYES: Robbins, Rodriguez, Kissling, Farias, Dixon, Avila, Stribling, Gray

NAYS: None

THE MOTION CARRIED

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COMMISSION ACTION

The motion was made by Commissioner Kissling and seconded by Commissioner Dixon to recommend approval.

1. Property is located on Lot 9 and 10, NCB 112 at 211 Belvin Street.
2. There were 15 notices mailed, 3 returned in opposition and 1 in favor.
3. Staff recommends approval.

AYES: Robbins, Rodriguez, Kissling, Farias, Dixon, Avila, Stribling, Gray

NAYS: None

THE MOTION CARRIED

RESULTS OF NOTICE FOR COUNCIL HEARING

To be provided at Council hearing.



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**HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION
CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS**

June 15, 2005

CITY OF SAN ANTONIO

HDRC CASE NO: 2005-212
ADDRESS: 211 Belvin
LEGAL DESCRIPTION: NCB 112, N. Irr. 88.51' of Lot 9 & N. Irr. 76.99' of Lot 10
LANDMARK DISTRICT: Proposed
APPLICANT: Estate of Lester J. Reetz, 30 West Elmira
OWNER: Same
TYPE OF WORK: Finding of Historic Significance

REQUEST:

The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for approval of a finding of historic significance.

RECOMMENDATION:

The staff recommends approval of this request as submitted. The house at 211 Belvin, in the Five Points Neighborhood, was owned by Mr. Joseph R. Morris, noted educator and reported to be the first African-American principal in San Antonio. Mr. Morris was born in Philadelphia, Pa. He attended New Jersey College and colleges in Ohio and Illinois, receiving his BA degree in 1886 and his master's degree in 1897. He came to San Antonio in 1888 and taught at Riverside High School. By 1896, Morris taught at San Pedro School (became Grant Elementary) and was the only principal of Brackenridge Elementary School (aka Brackenridge Colored School) located at 522 (aka528) N. Centre Street from 1901 to 1936 when it closed. By 1940, Mr. Morris was principal at Grant School No. 50 Booker T. Washington No. 56. Mr. Morris served as a mentor and role model to thousands of children, some of whom entered the teaching profession after having been influenced by Mr. Morris.

The house at 211 Belvin in the Five Points Neighborhood was owned by Mr. Joseph R. Morris, noted educator and reported to be the first African-American principal in San Antonio. Mr. Morris was born in Philadelphia, Pa. He attended New Jersey College and colleges in Ohio and Illinois, receiving his BA degree in 1886 and his master's degree in 1897. He came to San Antonio in 1888 and taught at Riverside High School. By 1896, Morris taught at San Pedro School (became Grant Elementary) and was the only principal of Brackenridge Elementary School (aka Brackenridge Colored School) located at 522 (aka528) N. Centre Street from 1901 to 1936 when it closed. By 1940, Mr. Morris was principal at Grant School No. 50 Booker T. Washington No. 56.

Mr. Morris served as a mentor and role model to thousands of children, some of whom entered the teaching profession after having been influenced by Mr. Morris. He was described as a "short, small in statue man, [who] watched out his northern window to the boys and girls [in the] front yard below. His discipline was perfect...Mr. Morris, ...made frequent visits to the rooms testing for cleanliness and academic progress. He often could be seen carrying his violin to accompany the pupils" (L.W. Sutton-Taylor, 1975, on file, Jeannine Reetz).

Mr. Morris was a charter member of the NAACP and member of the Knights of Pithius. He was a member of a Masonic Lodge for 26 years and a patron of Eastern Star. Additionally, he was Vice-President of the newspaper Tonguelege (Jeannine Reetz, personal notes). Joseph and Lula had one child, Joseph Morris Jr.

In 1896-1897, Morris lived at 130 Dawson. By 1908, Morris and his wife, Lula were living at 211 Belvin. The tract of land "in Belvin Place and known as Lot 19" had been purchased by Morris in 1894. However, by 1940, the Morris's lived at 1817 E. Houston. In 1941, Lester J. Reetz purchased lot 19 NCB 112 from the Morris's.

Belvin Street named after the original developer, R. H. Belvin, is believed to be a part of an African American community referred to as "Newcombville (also referred to as Historic Newcombville). A 1912 map reflects that Newcombville extended from San Pedro Park to the Santa Rosa Hospital (map in possession of Mrs. Jerelyn Williams).

The wood frame house located at 211 Belvin is a one-story L-plan Victorian house with front and side facing gables and steeply pitched roof. Deed records substantiate that "improvements" were already present on the property by 1884 indicating that the original portion of the house was present by this date. Sanborn's Maps from 1896-1951 illustrate that the house has seen a number of renovations and adaptations through the years and this is supported by oral history (Jeannine Reetz, personal communication) and a site inspection. The present configuration was present by at least 1924. The original portion of the house appears to have been a double cell plan with lapboard siding. An addition of beveled siding was placed on the front façade between 1896-1924, making it a L-plan typical of the Victoria style of the era it was added. Elaborate spindle-work and pendants are still present on the front facing gable. The rear facing gable of the house was also an addition or enclosure of an outbuilding into the main house. Windows in what is believed to be the original double cell house are/were double hung 6/6 panes with decorative arch. The remainder of the house has/had double hung 2/2 windows with bay windows on the front facing gable. The original roof was of standing seam metal and/or wood shingles supported by 2x4 rafters spaced at 24" on centers. The ceilings and walls have solid board sheathing on them. The exterior walls are horizontal shiplap. The floor was supported by 2x6 floor joists spaced at 24 inches on centers spanning between 4x4 and laid flat 4x6 sill beams bearing on cedar posts. An original porch has been removed. Additionally, the house was relocated within the lot in both the 1950's and the 1980's to twice accommodate IH35. On the west side of the property, the carriage/horse barn, with original wood plank floorings remains in its original location.

It is a good example of the early Folk Victorians built in San Antonio in the first quarter of the 20th century. Additionally, the house is associated with Mr. Joseph Morris, an influential member of the community and early educator in the African-American community.

Therefore, HPO staff recommends that the house at 211 Belvin qualifies for historic landmark status based on the following criteria: its value as a visible reminder of the cultural heritage of the community; its identification with a person who significantly contributed to the development of the community and state; 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; and its unique location or singular physical characteristics that make it an established or familiar visual feature. Additionally, the house is associated with family persons important to the history of San Antonio.

The building qualifies as a City of San Antonio landmark based on the following criteria:

- (1) its value as a visible reminder of the cultural heritage of the community (35-607(b)(1));
- (2) its identification with a person who significantly contributed to the development of the community and state (35-607(b)(3));
- (3) its embodiment of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style valuable for the study of a period, type, and method of construction (35-607(b)(5));
- (4) its historical, architectural, and cultural integrity of location, design, material, and workmanship (35-607(b)(8)); and
- (5) buildings that have come to represent a part of San Antonio's cultural heritage for at least twenty-five years (35-607(c)(2)(A)).

COMMISSION ACTION:

Approval of a finding of historic significance.



Ann Benson McGlone
for Historic Preservation Officer