

## Legislation Text

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File #: 19-346, Version: 1

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Presenter

*Amy McWhorter, Historic Preservation Officer*  
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**SUBJECT:**

Approval of the second and final reading of an ordinance granting rehabilitation tax relief for a five-year period to the property addressed as 564 S. Hill Avenue, a contributing resource in the Sophienburg Hill Historic District and a local Historic Landmark known as the Kopplin-Leitch House.

**BACKGROUND / RATIONALE:**

**Case No.:** HLC-19-008

**Council District:** 5

**Owner/Applicant:** Bonnie Leitch  
564 S. Hill Avenue  
New Braunfels, TX 78130  
(830) 660-2335  
bkleitch@gmail.com

**Staff Contact:** Amy McWhorter, Historic Preservation Officer  
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**City Council held a public hearing and approved the first reading of this requested ordinance on May 13, 2019.**

The property at 564 Hill Avenue includes a circa 1890 single-family dwelling and associated accessory structure. In 1891, Albert Kopplin purchased Lots 13, 14, 15, and 16, of Block 2 of the Jahn Addition from Emma Jahn. The deed records specify Lots 13 and 15 fronted onto the "extension of Academy Street" and Lots 14 and 16 fronted onto Grand Avenue (now known as Hill Avenue.) The subject structure is located on Lots 14 and 16 and fronts onto Hill Avenue.

According to his obituary published in 1929, Albert Kopplin came to New Braunfels in 1892. Prior to that he resided in the Bulverde and Schoenthal areas where he was a successful rancher and stock farmer. According to the 1900 Census, Kopplin lived on "Union Hill" (also known as Hill Avenue) with his wife Marie, daughter Emma Pfeuffer and grand-daughter Etekla Pfeuffer. This document lists his occupation as capitalist, which referred to someone living off of income from stocks, land, or other similar investments. The year prior to his death, Kopplin sold the property to

his daughter Emma, who deeded it to her children 1929. It appears that the property was used as a rental property or part-time home following Kopplin's death as census records and anecdotal details provided by descendants show that it was not a homestead property during the period from 1930-1945. In 1945 Pfeuffer's children sold the property to Tom C. Adare, whose heirs sold it to Ernesto and Christina Solis in 1971.

The dwelling is a t-plan dwelling with a cross-gabled roof clad in corrugated metal with a shed-roof entry porch. The exterior is clad in wooden siding and the original 4/4 wooden windows are intact. The front gable projection has a mansard roof canopy with saw-tooth millwork. The front porch is supported by chamfered wooden porch posts and has an intricately carved wooden gingerbread frieze and balustrade. The primary entry is located at the junction of the front gable and wing and consists of a single, hinged door with a fixed stained-glass transom. Secondary entrances on the rear façade also have transom windows. There is one internal brick chimney. The accessory structure was constructed circa 1925.

The structure is an excellent local example of Folk Victorian architecture which was a popular residential building style in New Braunfels from circa 1885-1900. During this period, the advent of the railroad and advances in steam engine technology made the use of decorative wooden elements less expensive and more common. Character-defining features of the style include the gable front and wing form, exuberant wooden decorative elements borrowed from the Italianate and Queen Anne styles, and un-textured, simply clad exterior walls.

**Determination Factors:**

In making a determination on rehabilitation tax relief, the following factors are to be considered:

- Whether the subject property has been designated as a local historic landmark or is located in a local historic district (*City Council approved the designation of the subject property as part of the Sophienburg Hill Historic district on August 10, 2009). In addition, City Council approved the individual Historic Landmark designation for the property on July 10, 2017.*
- Whether the improvement(s), renovation(s) or restoration(s) to the structure total at least ten percent of the property value reflected on the appraisal district tax rolls. *The applicant has provided receipts for qualified expenditures totaling \$27,251, which is in excess of 10% of the current appraised value of the property.*

**ADDRESSES A NEED/ISSUE IN A CITY PLAN OR COUNCIL PRIORITY:**

<b>City Plan/Council Priority:</b> Envision New Braunfels Comprehensive Plan	<b>Action 2.25</b> Increase resources for historic preservation. <b>Action 8.8</b> Collaborate with property owners to preserve historic structures.
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**FISCAL IMPACT:**

Approval would “freeze” the taxable value of the property to the current value for the calculation of ad valorem taxes. Therefore, exact value of the fiscal impact is contingent upon future, undetermined appraised values.

**COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:**

The Historic Landmark Commission held a public hearing on April 9, 2019 and recommended

approval of the request (5-0-0, Commissioners Warnecke, Sonier and Totman were absent and Commissioner Leitch recused).

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval as the subject property meets all requirements for relief as specified in the City's Code of Ordinances, Article III, Section 66-57.1. This tax relief tool continues to provide an incentive for property owners to rehabilitate, designate and protect historic structures which maintains the heritage of our community.

**Attachments:**

1. Application
2. Location Map
3. Photographs
4. Ordinance 2009-52
5. Ordinance 2017-46
6. Section 66-57-1
7. Excerpt from the April 9, 2019 Historic Landmark Commission minutes
8. Ordinance