

Joint Restoration Project Puts New Face on A Historic Landmark

Standing like a sentinel watching over its protected territory, is a building at the entrance to the only officially designated Schertz Heritage Neighborhood. That building bears the address of 207 First Street and currently is the place of worship for the members of the Vineyard Fellowship Church. The church is the first building visible to residents and guest as they enter the historic neighborhood after turning south on First Street from Farm to Market 78. The building has been used as a church building only in more recent times. Its earlier uses have varied in purpose but most memorable business ventures contained in the space have included its original use as a general merchandise store (circa 1890), town post office, and later as a grocery store (Red and White Grocery).



First and Lee Street Heritage Neighborhood Marker



Front of Gerlich & Schulz General Merchandise Store (circa 1900) at what is today 207 First Street

The Schertz Historical Preservation Committee (SHPC) has maintained a keen interest in the homes and buildings of the neighborhood as several comprise what were some of the first such structures built in the community. The Schneider family farm occupied the land until the family descendants began selling off small plots for use as residential dwellings. The Schneider's (William) donated a small portion of the land (circa 1904) for placement of the community's first church (Emanuel Methodist Church) which still stands in the neighborhood at the corner of First and Church Streets.

The committee's outreach program includes a commitment to maintaining the grounds surrounding the Heritage Neighborhood marker and encouraging neighborhood revitalization projects whenever and wherever possible. The building occupant of 207 First Street is church pastor Juan Rodriquez with whom the committee has had a long standing relationship.

Sometime in early 2014, discussions with Pastor Rodriguez disclosed that he was interested in repairing and painting his church building. In furtherance of the committee's outreach mission the committee offered to assist Pastor Rodriguez in his restoration effort. Thus began the joint church/committee restoration project. The project began in the summer of 2014 with repair and paint scrapping work. By early winter the building had received a coat of paint primer (metal building). Weather during the winter months prevented further progress (too cold) and the spring rains compounded the delays. June 2015 saw renewed effort placed on the project. By Independence Day (July 4th) final touches were being applied to the exterior restoration.



Building as seen before restoration



Building during restoration work



Building as primed and upper trim work complete



Building after completed exterior restoration

The committee's involvement with projects such as the church building restoration has its origin in seeking to support those Heritage Neighborhood residents who have themselves undertaken exterior restoration initiatives and by doing so have contributed to preserving the neighborhood as a special heritage location. Several residential facelift projects have been undertaken since the neighborhood was designated as a city heritage neighborhood in 2010.

Next time you're in the vicinity of the neighborhood take a few moments to drive by the newly renovated Yineyard church and take-in the beauty of some of the historic homes.