



Name of Property: Casa José Antonio Navarro
City, State: San Antonio, Texas
Period of Significance: ca. 1855–1871
NHL Criteria: 2
NHL Theme: III. Expressing Cultural Values
1. Educational and intellectual currents
IV. Shaping the Political Landscape
4. Political ideas, cultures, and theories
Previous Recognition: 1972 National Register of Historic Places
National Historic Context: *American Latinos and the Making of the United States*
V. Political and Military Affairs, 1783-1860
H. Manifest Destiny, 1844-1859

NHL Significance:

- Casa Navarro is nationally significant as the home of Tejano statesman and historian José Antonio Navarro (1795-1871). Navarro was a political leader whose prolific career as statesman and defender of Tejano rights shaped the destiny of Texas as an independent Republic and, ultimately, as part of the United States of America.
- Casa Navarro is significant as the primary urban residence of José Antonio Navarro from around the time of its purchase until the end of his life. Navarro lived here while writing and publishing his historical essays in the 1850s, the period considered “the height of his fame and influence.” Navarro became the first Tejano historian with the publication of two historical essays that describe the heroic efforts of Tejanos during the Mexican struggle for independence from Spain. These essays corrected the erasure of Tejanos



from the historical record and served as a direct counter to typical Anglo accounts of the period, which offered stories of a period of decline under Mexican rule and cast the Anglo newcomers as the only Texas patriots.

- Born under Spanish rule, Navarro eventually served in three legislative bodies under three different nations—Mexico, the Republic of Texas, and the United States. He was one of only two native Texans to sign the Texas Declaration of Independence in 1836, was the sole Tejano delegate elected to the July 1845 Constitutional Convention that approved annexation of Texas by the United States, and worked to protect the civil rights of Tejanos when he successfully argued to keep the word “white,” in reference to race, out of the Texas Constitution. His commitments to both American ideals and to the rights of Texan Mexican Americans make him one of the leading figures of Texas and the American Southwest under three sovereignties.

Integrity:

- Casa José Antonio Navarro retains a high degree of historic integrity, with all contributing buildings and structures recently rehabilitated or restored. Although the neighborhood has changed dramatically over more than one hundred years, such that these three small, historic buildings are now surrounded by tall buildings and concrete parking lots, they continue to preserve the historic location, scale, feeling, and association of the Laredito barrio during the first four decades of Texas’ statehood.
- The complex is the best-preserved, surviving historic property in its original location that is directly associated with José Antonio Navarro.

Owner of Property: State of Texas

Acreage of Property: Approx. 1 acre

Origins of Nomination: Casa José Antonio Navarro was identified as a potential NHL in 2011, during a focused effort by the NPS to identify nationally significant sites associated with American Latino history. In 2012, the Texas Historical Commission enthusiastically supported the effort.



Potential for Positive Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program:

- National Historic Landmark designation will bring more awareness to, and encourage the continued preservation of, Casa José Antonio Navarro.

Potential for Negative Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program: None is known.

Landmarks Committee Comments:

Landmarks Committee Recommendation: Designation. Mr. Hoyos moved, Dr. Mills seconded; unanimous approval.

Public Comments Favoring Designation (received as of 4/22/16):

Mark Wolfe, Executive Director, Texas Historical Commission, Austin, Texas

The Honorable Lloyd Doggett, Texas 35th District, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC

Sylvia Navarro Tillotson, Founder and President Emerita, Friends of Casa Navarro State Historic Site, San Antonio, Texas

Advisory Board Recommendation: