

# Landmark Designation

## ZC-18-20

# Thompson/Cape Dam and Ditch Engineering Structure



### Summary

<b>Request:</b>	Designate Thompson's/Capes Dam and Ditch Engineering Structure as a local historic landmark.		
<b>Applicant:</b>	City of San Marcos 630 East Hopkins Street San Marcos, TX 78666	<b>Property Owner:</b>	Same

### Notification

<b>Application:</b>	November 8, 2018	<b>Neighborhood Meeting:</b>	N/A
<b>Published:</b>	November 11, 2018	<b># of Participants</b>	N/A
<b>Posted:</b>	November 9, 2018	<b>Personal:</b>	November 9, 2018
<b>Response:</b>	Prior to the October 4th Historic Preservation Commission meeting, Staff received one letter in opposition to the request and thirteen letters in favor of the request. Those have been included in the packet as background material.		

### Property Description

<b>Location:</b>	East of IH-35, south of River Road and on either side of Cape Road		
<b>Acreage:</b>	17 acres	<b>PDD/DA/Other:</b>	N/A
<b>Existing Zoning:</b>	FD	<b>Proposed Zoning:</b>	Same
<b>Existing Use:</b>	Parkland	<b>Proposed Use:</b>	Parkland
<b>Preferred Scenario:</b>	Existing Neighborhood	<b>Proposed Designation:</b>	Same
<b>CONA Neighborhood:</b>	Blanco Gardens	<b>Sector:</b>	6
<b>Utility Capacity:</b>	Adequate	<b>Floodplain:</b>	Yes

### Surrounding Area

	<b>Zoning</b>	<b>Existing Land Use</b>	<b>Preferred Scenario</b>
<b>North of Property:</b>	MF-12	Multifamily	Existing Neighborhood
<b>South of Property:</b>	CD-4	Vacant	Existing Neighborhood
<b>East of Property:</b>	FD	Parkland and vacant	Existing Neighborhood
<b>West of Property:</b>	GC	IH-35	Existing Neighborhood

### Staff Recommendation

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Approval as Submitted	<input type="checkbox"/>	Approval with Conditions / Alternate	<input type="checkbox"/>	Denial
<b>Staff:</b> Alison Brake, CNU-A			<b>Title :</b> Historic Preservation Officer & Planner		<b>Date:</b> November 14, 2018

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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Approval as Submitted	<input type="checkbox"/>	Approval with Conditions / Alternate	<input type="checkbox"/>	Denial
The Historic Preservation Commission recommended approval of the request to designate the property as a local historic landmark with a vote of 4-2 at the October 4 <sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting; Commissioners Holder and Arlinghaus dissented.					

**History**

In 1985, the property determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) under Criterion A for its significance to commerce and Criterion C for its engineering and design. The nomination form states that the Thompson/Cape Dam and Ditch Engineering Structure was constructed in 1867 to divert water from the San Marcos River to a manmade ditch in order to utilize water power from the river. According to the form the site consists of three components: the dam, the ditch, and the wheel pit and machinery platform. According to the nomination form, water power channeled by the dam and ditch was utilized between 1850 and 1942 to turn a waterwheel, later a turbine, to run a grist mill, a sawmill, a shingle machine and a cotton gin.

William Alexander Thompson was a planter in Mississippi and Louisiana before settling in Texas in 1850. He decided to build a mill along the San Marcos River and struck an agreement with John Francis McGehee to construct the dam at this location. He became the landowner in 1867 and reconstructed the original dam at this time. The dam, mill, and surrounding property remained in the Thompson family until 1909 when John Matthew Cape purchased it. With Cape's ownership, the entire machinery plat was rebuilt with extensive improvements to the ditch. The water wheel was removed and a new wheel pit was constructed to house two turbines. This new complex was known as the Cape Gin Company with the ditch known as the Cape Gin Company Canal. Cape's Gin was converted to electrical power in 1942 which is when the dam, ditch and turbines fell into disuse. Many structures and machines once associated with the waterwheel or turbine are no longer present. The nomination form states that the dam, ditch, and wheel pit/machinery platform are the only structures over 50 years old that remain from the Thompson and Cape eras.

**Additional Analysis**

None at this time.

**Comments from Other Departments**

<b>Police</b>	No Comment
<b>Fire</b>	No Comment
<b>Public Services</b>	No Comment
<b>Engineering</b>	No Comment

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Evaluation			Criteria for Approval (Sec. 2.5.4.5)
Consistent	Inconsistent	Neutral	
<u>X</u>			Historical, architectural, and cultural significance of the site(s) <i>The NRHP nomination form states that the Thompson/Cape Dam and Ditch engineering structure is an important element in the history of milling in the state as it reflects the development of engineering techniques and economic changes seen in the milling industry through time.</i>
<u>X</u>			Suitability for preservation or restoration <i>The local historic landmark designation places a structure or site under review authority of the Historic Preservation Commission which means any changes to the building's/structure's exterior (other than color), which includes restoration, must be approved by the Commission and issued a Certificate of Appropriateness. Designating the subject property as a local historic landmark demonstrates the City's dedication to preservation by applying the same guidelines to public property as we do to privately owned property in historic districts or other locally designated landmarks.</i>
<u>X</u>			Educational value; <i>The designation will also draw public attention to our diverse collection of buildings and sites, and help educate citizens in the history of San Marcos.</i>
<u>X</u>			Satisfaction of criteria established for inclusion of site(s) and/or district in the National Register of Historic Places. <i>In 2016, as part of a Section 106 Review, the Texas Historical Commission (THC) stated that the property retains sufficient historic significance and remains eligible for listing in the National Register. The dam, mill race, waste ways, and wheel pit each are considered contributing features. The remnants of other features associated with the dam or mill which include, but are not limited to, the foundations of head gates, are also considered contributing resources by the THC.</i>