

NEWS RELEASE

COMMITTEE OF “RESTORE SACRED HEART CHURCH” APPLIES FOR TEXAS HISTORIC TAX CREDIT



El Paso, Texas, December 15, 2022: We are pleased to announce that the “Restore Sacred Heart Church” committee has submitted Part A of the application for the Texas Historic Tax Credit. This is the first time in the history of our barrios that there has been an application to restore a building using this credit. When Parts B and C are complete, we are expecting to receive about \$650,000 for the project, which is expected to cost a total of \$3,000,000.

The tax credit became available when the Segundo Barrio National Register Historic District was created on November 3, 2021. Sacred Heart Church is one of 685 buildings within the new district that is now eligible for the Texas Historic Tax Credit.

We hired Houston-based MacRostie Historic Advisors (MHA), a subsidiary of Ryan, LLC, to prepare and submit the three parts of the tax credit application. Part C, the final part of the application, will be submitted once the project is completed.

Sacred Heart Church, the most iconic building in the Segundo Barrio, was established in 1893 by Father Carlos M. Pinto, a Jesuit missionary from Italy, in order to attend to the spiritual and educational needs of the primarily Mexican immigrant community. Sacred Heart Church and Immaculate Conception Church are the oldest Catholic parishes within our city.

Thousands of El Pasoans were baptized or married in Sacred Heart Church and tens of thousands from both sides of the border have participated in mass here or joined community events. Thousands also attended Sacred Heart School. The Jesuit parish has deep roots and connections in the Mexican/Mexican-American community and with the El Paso community at large, and close ties to

the many families who reside in the Segundo Barrio, so much so that it has long been known as *el corazón del barrio*, “the heart of the neighborhood.”

Sacred Heart Parish has a long history of service to the El Paso community beginning with the parish school that was established in 1892. Sacred Heart Parish strives to fulfill its mission to turn fear into hope by helping individuals and families rise out of poverty through assistance to meet basic needs, and to overcome economic insecurity through its ministry of adult education courses. Through a variety of community services and ministries, the Church touches the lives of more than 3,500 families each year. Most recently, it has initiated a shelter on site to assist the many asylum seekers who have no place else to go.

The buildings of the Sacred Heart Church complex are between 99 and 130 years old and in dire need of restoration and infrastructural upgrades, but the limited financial resources of the barrio parish has made major improvements very challenging.

Our all-volunteer committee is applying for the necessary grants and tax credits, raising funds from the community, and overseeing the restoration, from the solicitation of architectural bids through the completion of all work.

So far, we have raised about \$150,000 from 330 individual donations, \$335,000 from grants, \$40,000 from the Sacred Heart Parish Building Fund, and \$20,000 from the UCS Jesuit Province. Including the expected \$650,000 from the tax credit, we are at about \$1,195,000. We have applied for \$160,000 in additional grants with a plan to apply for \$1,070,000 more between now and April, and our hope is to reach the \$2,000,000 mark by June 2023. At that point we begin the process of securing an experienced architectural firm.

The [Executive Committee](#) of Restore Sacred Heart Church is co-chaired by Father Rafael Garcia, S. J., the parish’s pastor, and Dr. Max Grossman and includes Bishop Mark Seitz, Church leaders, elected representatives, and professionals specializing in architectural history, historic preservation, and related fields.

The [Advisory Council](#) consists of professionals and local leaders who are strong supporters of Sacred Heart Church and proponents of historic preservation.

The restoration of Sacred Heart Church will be the first project of its type in the Segundo Barrio National Historic District, which was established thanks to the El Paso County Commissioners Court, Texas Historical Commission, and National Park Service.

Next year will mark the 130th anniversary of Sacred Heart Church and the 100th anniversary of the present sanctuary, which was erected in 1923. We are planning a series of celebrations and fundraisers in 2023 to commemorate the building and raise money for its restoration.

To donate to our cause, please visit the [donation portal of our webpage](#).

Fr. Rafael Garcia, S. J., Co-Chair, Restore Sacred Heart Church
Dr. Max Grossman, Co-Chair, Restore Sacred Heart Church

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