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July 23, 2008

Ms. Laurie Limbacher, Chair
 City of Austin Historic Landmark Commission
 City of Austin
 P.O. Box 1088
 Austin, Texas 78768

Re: HDP-2008-0297; The Southerland House, 2801 Robbs Run

Dear Madam Chair and Commission Members:

The Heritage Society of Austin urges your support for historic zoning of the Southerland House located at 2801 Robbs Run. We believe this property meets the criteria as both embodying the distinguishing characteristics of a recognized architectural style (§25-2-352(A)(3)(b)(i)) and as substantially associated with a person who contributed to the social, cultural, economic, and development history of the city, state or nation (§25-2-352(A)(3)(b)(ii)).

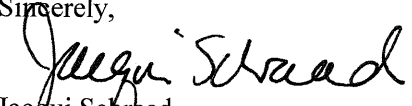
On May 20, 2008, a demolition permit was submitted to the City of Austin seeking total demolition of the Southerland House. As your backup materials clearly display, significant demolition of this mid-century modern structure had taken place prior to the submittal of this demolition permit application.

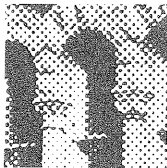
The City Code provides that a person must obtain a demolition permit to demolish all or part of a structure, with a limited exception to demolish interior walls, floors, or ceilings (§25-11-37). It appears from documentation that, beyond the limited demolition allowed by Code, exterior walls, doors, windows, original brickwork and other defining features of this structure were demolished and/or removed without the submittal of a demolition permit.

The City of Austin has a long established procedure for the submittal of a demolition permit application, and the significant processes and procedures that follow. The cumulative effect of this body of law is to ensure that the recognized community interest in the preservation of its historic built environment is considered and, if necessary, protected. When a person begins demolition without submitting a demolition permit application, it simply thwarts the purpose and intent embodied in the Code, and it should be dealt with in a serious and deliberate manner.

HSA strongly supports the staff recommendation for denial of the demolition permit and initiation of historic zoning for the structure, with the referral of the case to an appropriate entity for prosecution.

Sincerely,


 Jacqui Schraad
 Executive Director



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