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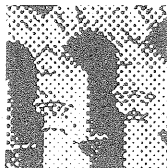
October 16, 2008

The Honorable Will Wynn  
Mayor Pro Tem McCracken and Council Members  
City of Austin  
P. O. Box 1088  
Austin, Texas 78767

RE: **Historic Zoning Case No. C14H-2008-0019; *Blondie Pharr House***

Dear Mayor Wynn, Mayor Pro Tem McCracken and Council Members:

The Preservation Committee of the Heritage Society of Austin respectfully requests your support for the historic zoning of 801 Highland Avenue (the Blondie Pharr House).



HERITAGE  
SOCIETY OF  
AUSTIN

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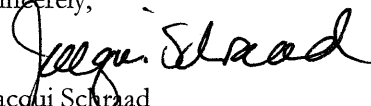
Specifically, the Preservation Committee believes the property meets the criteria of subsection 25-2-352(A)(3)(b)(i) ("embodies the distinguishing characteristics of a recognized architectural style") and subsection (ii) ("substantially associated with persons . . . of historical significance which contributed to the social . . . history of the City . . .") of the City of Austin Code of Ordinances. Staff concurs and has recommended initiation based upon these criteria as well.

Beyond meeting the enumerated criteria, the Committee has serious concerns about the precedent to be set by potential release of this demolition permit. The testimony offered by the prospective purchaser of this property to the Historic Landmark Commission on Monday, June 23, in support of the permit displayed a palpable lack of understanding of the intent and operation of our historic preservation ordinances. For example, the purchaser testified to the need for replacement of materials in-kind, although this is certainly not a requirement of Code. The decision to seek a demolition permit is a serious one, and should be requested only when a proper level of due diligence regarding preservation as an alternative has been demonstrated.

The purchaser also offered extensive testimony regarding the estimated costs of restoration, including claiming serious engineering, design and structural deficiencies, but provided HLC with no professional assessments from registered architects or engineers to support these claims. Other testimony supported the position that the house is well worth saving and not so threatened as the purchaser claimed.

In sum, the structure meets the criteria for historic zoning, and the prospective purchasers' testimony in support of demolition appears to be inadequately informed and supported. As such, we urge your support for the historic zoning request, and thank you for your many hours of hard work to preserve what is best about Austin for future generations.

Sincerely,

  
Jacqui Schraad  
Executive Director

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