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June 3, 2009

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

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

We are writing to express our dismay over the recent outcome on the case pertaining to the Bradford-Nohra House at 4213 Avenue G. It is disgraceful that a case on which so many people have spent so much time over the course of a year was found at the end to have a procedural error made at the outset. Neighborhood volunteers, council members, commission members and city staff spent countless hours on what was apparently a moot point from early on.

People often have respectable reasons to differ on the historical value of a property, but the facts in each case should have a fair hearing and cases should be decided in their merits, not have the outcome distorted by procedural technicalities.

Over the past few years, there have been several prominent Landmark Commission cases in which a valuable historic asset was lost on a procedural technicality that should have been avoided by adequate and unbiased attention from staff. Although we are pleased with the city manager's commitment to have a City attorney present in future Landmark Commission meetings, it does not bring back the precious resources that have been lost.

The effective functioning of the preservation program is critical to our City. We hope that the Council will carefully monitor the performance of the city preservation program to assure that it is performing its proper functions more effectively in the future.

Regards,

Julian Read
President