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November 19, 2009

Mrs. Dealey Herndon  
Project Manager  
Governor's Mansion Restoration  
State Preservation Board of the State of Texas  
Sent via e-mail

Dear Mrs. Herndon,

Thank you for your recent presentation to members of the Heritage Society of Austin's Board and Preservation Committee regarding the proposed addition to the Texas Governor's Mansion. We very much appreciate your willingness to provide our Board with direct information on the proposal, and the generous amount of your time given to our questions and comments.



HERITAGE  
SOCIETY OF  
AUSTIN

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As you are aware, the Texas Governor's Mansion is a National Historic Landmark, one of only two in Austin, with the State Capitol being the other. This is the highest level of designation for preservation available via local, state, or federal channels. As a former president of the Heritage Society of Austin, you know the mission of this organization and our dedication to preservation. We were the first to call publicly for full restoration of the Mansion – literally while the embers were still hot from the arsonist's work – and we were honored to be able to present First Lady Anita Perry with the first funds to kick-off the fundraising effort to restore the Mansion.

Because of the value of the integrity of the Mansion, we are in full support of its restoration, but we are not in support of the expansion as currently proposed. The Mansion is one of Texas' most important and visible historic landmarks. How we as Texans treat it sets a standard and sends a signal across our state as to the inherent value of landmarks and historic preservation. The proposed addition would be visible from three of the four adjacent streets, and would impact the iconic and symbolic frontal view of the Mansion. Beyond the impacts to the integrity of the structure itself, the proposed addition may set a destructive precedent for National Historic Landmarks across the country.

Living in the Mansion has been a tremendous privilege that has only belonged to only 40 families. We certainly understand that, compared to some homes today, the Mansion may not have all the facilities or expanse desired. In this spirit, we offer to work with you and your team to explore other options to meet the stated objectives without compromising the historic integrity of the structure.

Sincerely,

Mandy Dealey  
President

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