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January 26, 2010

Mr. Mark Wolfe
Executive Director
Texas Historical Commission
1511 Colorado
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Mr. Wolfe,

On behalf of the Heritage Society of Austin, I write to thank you for your recent statements affirming the commitment of the Texas Historical Commission to a public process for any review of proposed modifications to the historic or architectural integrity of the Texas Governor's Mansion. We also appreciate the work of Commission staff in explaining the roles of the various agencies engaged.



HERITAGE
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As you know, this organization shared with you and others the concerns that we had with the proposal to expand the Mansion to the north. Our concerns were based both on substance and on process. We strongly believed that the premise offered for the proposal was never established and the addition that was proposed degraded the integrity of the structure and the grounds. Similarly, we believed the proposal suffered from the lack of any discernable public process, an obvious transgression when dealing with one of the state's most beloved public structures.

The public process should begin prior to any additional proposal related to the restoration of the Mansion being generated for consideration. Specifically, we believe those seeking to expand the Mansion should bear the burden of establishing, in a public hearing allowing for full participation and review, that expansion is indeed necessary. This would include a determination that no other option (reconfiguration of existing space, modification of existing outbuildings, removal of functions off-site) but for expansion exists. Only then, if and when a public body concludes that, in fact, expansion is necessary and appropriate, should specific proposals be generated for consideration. Again, only in a public hearing and acting as a deliberative body should the Preservation Board or the Historical Commission make such a determination.

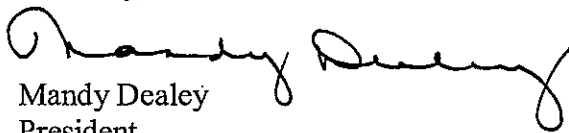
Further, if and when such a determination is made and a specific proposal is generated, the proposal itself deserves a thorough and generous opportunity for public review and comment. Any proposal for expansion needs to be considered in the context of its impact to the architectural and historic integrity of the structure. We would suggest, at a minimum, a series of public hearings or design charettes, as well as a defined period for public comment to be offered or submitted (both written

and oral), prior to any action, preliminary or final, being taken by either the State Preservation Board or the Historical Commission.

As all have learned from this experience, the Governor's Mansion is revered by Texans, and Texans won't shy away for sharing their feelings about its importance. The groundswell that met the proposal and ultimately made its withdraw necessary came from Texans of all walks of life who rightfully recognized a threat to one of Texas' most important and visible historic landmarks.

Again, we thank you for your recognition of the vital role of public participation in decisions impacting the Mansion, and look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mandy Dealey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and a long, sweeping tail.

Mandy Dealey
President

cc: John Sneed, State Preservation Board