

November 19, 2013

Austin City Council
300 West Cesar Chavez Street
Austin, Texas 78701

Re: The Cranfill Beacham Apartments

Dear Council Members:

Our city has a dearth of significant early modern architecture. I am imploring you to approve the application for Landmark status for the Cranfill Beacham Apartments designed by the renowned architect Harwell Hamilton Harris, FAIA. The building has recently obtained well-deserved status as both a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark and National Register property but neither status will protect it from demolition or unsympathetic alteration. ONLY Austin Landmark status can do that. Sadly, just this past summer the house that Harris designed for Ft. Worth benefactor Ruth Carter Stevenson was demolished because it did not have the protections offered by local landmark status.

Harris was only in Austin for a brief time, during which he inspired many as an architectural professor at UT. He also managed to also produce a very few amazing gems of small residential projects, one of which I have had the opportunity to consult on with its current owner- a great privilege! The Cranfill Beacham Apartments are considered by architectural critics to be among his finest works. As a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects, I believe this small complex is truly important and contributes greatly to the rich and diverse urban fabric of our city. It is a rare example of the early modern era and is very much deserving of landmark status.

Sincerely,



Heather H. McKinney, FAIA, LEED BC+D

Founding Principal, McKinney York Architects
2013 Texas Society of Architects Firm of the Year

December 7, 2013

Austin City Council
300 West Cesar Chavez St.
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Council Members:

I am writing this letter to strongly support the application for Landmark status for the Cranfill Beacham Apartments designed by Harwell Hamilton Harris, FAIA. The building has recently obtained status as both a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark and National Register property, but only Austin Landmark status can protect it from demolition or unsympathetic alteration. This past summer the house that Harris designed for Fort Worth benefactor Ruth Carter Stevenson was demolished because it did not have the protections offered by local landmark status.

Harris was a distinguished architect of his time, and the apartments are considered by many, including Harris' biographer Lisa Germany, to be among his best work. As a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects I believe that this building embodies the essence of great architecture. It is an extraordinary project from the early modern era, and is very much deserving of landmark status.

In this era the cost of demolition and rebuilding, for short term profit, is much less expensive than the preservation of existing buildings and, as a result, many exemplary buildings are at risk of demolition. It can often take decades for 20th century works of architecture to be recognized for their historic value by the general public. It is for this reason that we look to the design professionals, experts within the field and city officials to recognize the truly outstanding examples of the built environment so that they can be protected and thus appreciate for decades to come.

Austin prides itself on being a supportive incubator of creative activity in both the arts and technology. How can it justify this claim if its own city officials do not take the basic steps to protect its most important, nationally recognized, creative works.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Legge', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Murray Legge, FAIA



THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

November 4, 2013

Austin City Council
300 West Cesar Chavez St.
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Council Members:

This is to very strongly support the application for Landmark status for the Harwell Hamilton Harris triplex on Cliff Street. I first had the privilege of touring this project in the early 1980s and was delighted to see that it was in near original condition at that point. I have kept track of this little jewel since then and have been extremely impressed with the efforts of both the current and former owners to maintain the integrity of this important work of architecture.

This is one of two distinguished works by Harris left from his years in Austin in the 1950s. (The other, the Thomas Cranfill House, already has Landmark status.) The Cliff Street Triplex is an important example of Harris' commitment to creating beautifully designed houses on an affordable budget. The units are small, but feel spacious. They take full advantage of their tight site and contribute greater density in a single-family neighborhood without compromising the amenity of any of their neighbors. This little project offers a lot of lessons we need to be paying attention to in Austin today.

We are behind our sister cities in Texas in acknowledging the very high quality mid-century modern architecture we have in Austin. This project offers exactly the kind of opportunity needed to begin to address that neglect. It is a significant building by a renowned architect that offers lessons for us to learn from more than half a century after its creation.

Kind regards,

Lawrence W. Speck FAIA
W. L. Moody Centennial Professor of Architecture



Furman + Keil Architects PLLC
708 Rio Grande St.
Austin, Texas 78701

phone 512-479-4100

www.FKarchitects.net

December 6, 2013

Austin City Council
300 West Cesar Chavez St.
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Council Members:

Please add my voice to those in support of the application for Landmark status for the Cranfill Beacham Apartments designed by Harwell Hamilton Harris, FAIA. Harwell Harris was the first Dean of the University of Texas at Austin School of Architecture. His career and architectural works inspired a generation of architects across the country, but particularly in our own community of Austin. The Cranfill Beacham house is one of Harris' best works.

The building recently obtained status as both a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark and National Register property, but only Austin Landmark status can protect it from demolition or unsympathetic alteration.

Harris' biographer Lisa Germany, confirms in her book, Harwell Hamilton Harris, that the apartment in Austin is "among his best work." As a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects I believe that this building embodies the essence of great architecture and is highly representative of the Texas regional modern movement of its time. It is an extraordinary project and is very much deserving of landmark status.

Sincerely,

Gary Furman, FAIA • principal



Ernesto Cragolino <ernesto@alterstudio.net>

Cranfill Apartments landmark nomination

1 message

Holleran, Michael <holleran@utexas.edu>

Mon, Nov 11, 2013 at 5:32 PM

To: "lee.leffingwell@austintexas.gov" <lee.leffingwell@austintexas.gov>, "sheryl.cole@austintexas.gov" <sheryl.cole@austintexas.gov>, "mike.martinez@austintexas.gov" <mike.martinez@austintexas.gov>, "laura.morrison@austintexas.gov" <laura.morrison@austintexas.gov>, "Chris.Riley@austintexas.gov" <Chris.Riley@austintexas.gov>, "william.spelman@austintexas.gov" <william.spelman@austintexas.gov>, "kathie.tovo@austintexas.gov" <kathie.tovo@austintexas.gov>, "bc-Dave.Anderson@austintexas.gov" <bc-Dave.Anderson@austintexas.gov>, "bc-Danette.Chimenti@austintexas.gov" <bc-Danette.Chimenti@austintexas.gov>, "bc-Alfonso.Hernandez@austintexas.gov" <bc-Alfonso.Hernandez@austintexas.gov>, "bc-Jeff.Jack@austintexas.gov" <bc-Jeff.Jack@austintexas.gov>, "bc-James.Nortey@austintexas.gov" <bc-James.Nortey@austintexas.gov>, "bc-Stephen.Oliver@austintexas.gov" <bc-Stephen.Oliver@austintexas.gov>, "bc-Brian.Roark@austintexas.gov" <bc-Brian.Roark@austintexas.gov>, "bc-Myron.Smith@austintexas.gov" <bc-Myron.Smith@austintexas.gov>, "bc-Jean.Stevens@austintexas.gov" <bc-Jean.Stevens@austintexas.gov>

Cc: Alyson McGee <Alyson.McGee@austintexas.gov>, Ernesto Cragolino <ernesto@alterstudio.net>, Phoebe Allen <phoebezink@gmail.com>, "emilyardoin@utexas.edu" <emilyardoin@utexas.edu>

Dear Mayor Lee Leffingwell, City Councilmembers, and Planning Commission members,

I am writing in support of the nomination of the Cranfill Apartments (1909 Cliff Street) as a City of Austin Individual Landmark. I am quite familiar with the building and its history, as it was a subject of student work in three classes here last year: our Graphic Documentation Studio (which prepared measured drawings to Historic American Buildings Survey standards), our Preservation Studio, and our National Register Documentation class.

The property is individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and therefore it meets the City's criteria for landmark designation. More importantly, it deserves to be listed and protected by the City: Harwell Hamilton Harris, who designed it, was a pivotal figure in Architectural education in Texas. Its design is a significant contribution to mid-century regional modernism, all the more notable because it is a modest multi-unit building not a mansion.

This is a particularly valuable example for us to preserve today. It is a model for sustainable neighborhood design, achieving significant density with grace, comfort and a light touch on the land. There is no more important legacy for us to preserve and celebrate.

Yours,

Michael Holleran

Michael Holleran
 Director, Graduate Program in Historic Preservation
 School of Architecture, University of Texas
 1 University Station, B7500
 Austin, Texas 78712
holleran@utexas.edu
 512.471.3792



November 7, 2013

The Honorable Lee Leffingwell & Members of the Austin City Council
PO Box 1088
Austin, TX 78767

Re: Austin Landmark Designation, Cranfill Apartments (Apartments No.1-3), 1909 Cliff Street,
Austin, Texas

Dear Mayor Leffingwell and City Council Members:

MidTexMod is writing to support landmark designation of the Cranfill Apartments building. As the local chapter of DOCOMOMO, MidTexMod is committed to the documentation and conservation of buildings, sites and neighborhoods of the Modern movement. Our chapter strongly supports the nomination of this important set of Modern apartments

The Cranfill Apartments, commissioned in 1958 by Thomas Cranfill and designed by architect Harwell Hamilton Harris, are an important example of mid century architecture and regional modernism. Mr. Harris was a Californian architect who relocated to Texas after he became the first Director of the School of Architecture at the University of Texas. Mr. Harris had numerous commissions in Texas, however he had only four commissions in Austin. Looking back at Harris' career, Texas architects Lawrence Speck and Paul Lamb observed that, "it is unusual to find an architect of Harris' generation who can be so explicit about the roots of his work. From Wright he learned organic principles of form making; from Sullivan he gained philosophical justification. From the Greene brothers he understood an attitude towards landscape; from Neutra he learned integration..."

The Cranfill Apartments exemplified Harris's architectural philosophy. These apartments were Harris's response to bringing nature indoors in the hot Texas climate. The Cranfill Apartments echo two of the most important mid century residences in the world: Luis Barragan's 1947 residence in Mexico and the Eames House in Los Angeles.

The Cranfill Apartments are of recognized historical significance. The Cranfill Apartments and Thomas Cranfill's adjoining Harwell Hamilton Harris home are on the list of the National Register of Historic Places. The Cranfill Apartments have also been designated a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark (RTHL) by the Texas Historical Commission.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Chas M. Peveto".

Charles M. Peveto, President
MidTexMod/Docomomo

Help protect the Cranfill Beacham Triplex by Harwell Hamilton Harris

About this petition

The Cranfill Beacham Triplex by Harwell Hamilton Harris is up for historic zoning, which would protect the property in perpetuity. Please join the petition and show your support NOW!

More information:

The triplex was designed by renowned architect Harwell Hamilton Harris, and former dean of the UT School of Architecture, who is known for the development of a 'Liberative Regionalism' which changed domestic design in the United States through its fusion of international style functionalism and the naturalism of Frank Lloyd Wright. His life and work have been chronicled in several books, including a catalog produced by the Center for the Study of American Architecture, and a book authored by Lisa Germany.

The Cliff Street apartments are a beautiful synthesis of Harris' highly developed California idiom of light wood construction combined with a sensibility for masonry walls that shelter occupants from the Texas sun. As Lisa Germany states, "the concrete block apartments held out Harris's favorite surprise: a rich and private exposure to nature. Quiet and elegantly functional, they are among his best work."

Signatures

1. Name: Nichole Wiedemann on 2013-12-02 14:54:30
Comments:

2. Name: Michael Boduch on 2013-12-02 15:24:36
Comments:

3. Name: Hugh Randolph on 2013-12-02 15:38:57
Comments:

4. Name: Charles di Piazza on 2013-12-02 17:45:35
Comments:

5. Name: Tim Cuppett on 2013-12-02 18:14:58
Comments:

6. Name: francoise de backer on 2013-12-02 18:17:28
Comments:

7. Name: Trent Davies on 2013-12-02 18:26:51
Comments:

8. Name: Eva Schone on 2013-12-02 18:27:13
Comments:

9. Name: Allison Gaskins on 2013-12-02 18:30:48
Comments:

10. Name: SANDRA GREGOR on 2013-12-02 18:35:16
Comments:

11. Name: Jay Farrell on 2013-12-02 18:38:06
Comments:

12. Name: Ann Clark on 2013-12-02 18:43:06
Comments:

13. Name: Larry Speck on 2013-12-02 19:02:09
Comments:

14. Name: Mark Warren on 2013-12-02 20:23:33

Comments:

-
15. Name: Kim McKnight on 2013-12-02 20:36:06
Comments: Absolute gem by an important modernist architect. Landmark it!
-
16. Name: Judith Birdsong on 2013-12-02 20:55:33
Comments:
-
17. Name: Chris Cobb on 2013-12-02 21:10:37
Comments:
-
18. Name: Nirav V. Patel on 2013-12-02 21:41:58
Comments: I have lived in apt 2 since the lucky year of 2005. It has been a pure joy to live in this space and now I share it with my fiancée, Carla. We are committed to preserving this building.
-
19. Name: John Tullis on 2013-12-02 21:50:55
Comments:
-
20. Name: Deanna Weekley on 2013-12-02 21:58:26
Comments: Save the apartments!!
-
21. Name: Kathleen Pittman on 2013-12-02 22:00:18
Comments:
-
22. Name: Carla Lanas on 2013-12-02 22:07:04
Comments:
-
23. Name: DeeDee Camozzi on 2013-12-02 22:11:22
Comments:
-
24. Name: Matt Brown on 2013-12-02 22:14:12
Comments: Iconic! Preserve it!
-
25. Name: Sarah on 2013-12-02 22:19:41
Comments:
-
26. Name: Suzette Thompson on 2013-12-02 22:44:51
Comments:
-
27. Name: Rupesh Patel on 2013-12-02 22:45:57
Comments:

-
28. Name: kevin on 2013-12-02 22:55:26
Comments: protect the past
-
29. Name: Swati Athavale on 2013-12-02 22:56:10
Comments:
-
30. Name: Angela Salas on 2013-12-02 22:58:58
Comments:
-
31. Name: Carlton Cullins on 2013-12-02 23:19:22
Comments:
-
32. Name: morgan delk on 2013-12-02 23:28:16
Comments:
-
33. Name: George Smart on 2013-12-02 23:34:28
Comments: An important Modernist site for Texas
-
34. Name: Victor Pena on 2013-12-03 00:03:35
Comments:
-
35. Name: Jason Duggan on 2013-12-03 00:04:45
Comments:
-
36. Name: Catherine Venart on 2013-12-03 00:06:55
Comments:
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37. Name: matt slusarek on 2013-12-03 00:13:03
Comments:
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38. Name: maggi lanas on 2013-12-03 00:44:56
Comments: Protect the Cranfill Beachman
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39. Name: Michelle Ward on 2013-12-03 01:27:37
Comments:
-
40. Name: Ben on 2013-12-03 01:36:19
Comments:
-
41. Name: Bonnie Wilson on 2013-12-03 01:46:24
Comments:

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42. Name: Jonathan Kirk on 2013-12-03 02:16:32
Comments:
-
43. Name: Bryan Robison on 2013-12-03 02:39:37
Comments: I've been in one of the units several times. They are a great example of mid-20th century architecture and are deserving of historical status.
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44. Name: Steven Dobberfuhr on 2013-12-03 03:11:26
Comments:
-
45. Name: rebecca baughman on 2013-12-03 03:26:14
Comments:
-
46. Name: Milan patel on 2013-12-03 03:27:11
Comments:
-
47. Name: Jill Ragsdale on 2013-12-03 03:30:55
Comments:
-
48. Name: Sara Vander Bie on 2013-12-03 03:40:41
Comments:
-
49. Name: wendy beck on 2013-12-03 04:11:27
Comments: architecturally significant compound
-
50. Name: David Bench on 2013-12-03 04:15:23
Comments: This triplex is clearly of historic significance
-
51. Name: Nuria zaragoza on 2013-12-03 04:23:53
Comments:
-
52. Name: Melissa on 2013-12-03 04:27:06
Comments:
-
53. Name: Muriel Wright on 2013-12-03 04:41:12
Comments:
-
54. Name: Matt MacFarland on 2013-12-03 05:02:12
Comments:
-
55. Name: Ashley Tullis on 2013-12-03 05:22:02

Comments:

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56. Name: Manish Patel on 2013-12-03 05:38:45
Comments: historic building that deserves this status
-
57. Name: Jorge Lanas on 2013-12-03 05:52:56
Comments:
-
58. Name: Benjamin Mikiten on 2013-12-03 06:33:58
Comments:
-
59. Name: Sarah Mount on 2013-12-03 14:01:57
Comments:
-
60. Name: Tom van den Bout on 2013-12-03 15:14:45
Comments:
-
61. Name: Derrington Building Studio on 2013-12-03 15:26:23
Comments:
-
62. Name: Heather Snow on 2013-12-03 15:50:23
Comments:
-
63. Name: Jennifer Huth on 2013-12-03 18:07:34
Comments:
-
64. Name: scott kirklin on 2013-12-03 20:28:37
Comments:
-
65. Name: Karrie League on 2013-12-03 20:36:08
Comments: These are beautiful homes!
-
66. Name: Matthew Elliott on 2013-12-03 20:56:16
Comments: Save this wonderful place! Make it historic!
-
67. Name: Atherña MacFarland on 2013-12-04 01:11:04
Comments:
-
68. Name: Julia Webb on 2013-12-04 03:21:39
Comments:
-
69. Name: Michelle DeMond-Axelrod on 2013-12-04 03:32:12

Comments: This is a unique international style home that deserves to be preserved

70. Name: Matthew McCord Lindley on 2013-12-04 16:02:50
Comments:

71. Name: Lucie Bardone on 2013-12-04 18:04:43
Comments:

72. Name: Christine on 2013-12-04 18:53:51
Comments:

73. Name: Courtney on 2013-12-04 20:13:38
Comments:

74. Name: Adam Garcia on 2013-12-05 00:01:18
Comments: protect the Cranfill Beacham Triplex by Harwell Hamilton Harris

75. Name: Andree Chalaron on 2013-12-05 05:13:17
Comments:

76. Name: rachel on 2013-12-05 06:53:45
Comments:

77. Name: camille jobe on 2013-12-05 15:16:18
Comments:

78. Name: Katherine Rinne on 2013-12-05 15:58:49
Comments:

79. Name: Kenneth Caldwell on 2013-12-05 16:05:52
Comments: An important work by one of the country's greats.

80. Name: Sean Kennaugh on 2013-12-05 16:12:13
Comments:

81. Name: John Hart Asher on 2013-12-05 17:46:35
Comments:

82. Name: Andrew Wigginton on 2013-12-05 18:08:21
Comments: Took me down an hour and a half rabbit hole learning more about this cool space. The city, state and country need to protect architecture like this. Question: are there people who are against protecting this property?

83. Name: Murray LEgge on 2013-12-05 18:08:24
 Comments:
