

1603 Garden Street ✧ Austin, Texas 78702 ✧ USA ✧ 512.522.5124 ✧ ' " ' ^ "

Attached are photographs of this work at 1602 and 1603. Today on my walk I noticed thirteen other locations with similar work (Figures 4 through 16) on only four blocks of Garden Street between Comal and Robert Martinez Streets.

Neighborhood Vernacular

Other than the ironwork, 1602 if strictly preserved would be modest and unassuming. It poses no exception to the bungalows along the block or within the East Cesar Chavez neighborhood as a whole. However, it is valuable in its modesty as a contribution on a larger scale to the East Cesar Chavez community as it struggles to maintain the simple charm that attracts contemporary residents who love its sense of place. To focus only on 1602 is to miss the larger picture of what makes our neighborhood a distinct patch in the quilt of Austin's unique neighborhoods. The contribution today of my home, of 1602, and of most other houses on the block is a character created in the 1920s through 50s by forced segregation, blue collar work, minority culture, generations of residency, caring among neighbors, community activism, survival of adversity, humor, stories, and for the most part homes treated well because they were hard-won castles.

Please see Figures 17 and 18 for an understanding of the vibrant context of 1602 Garden Street among its neighboring homes. Please see figures 19 through 21 for an understanding of the breakdown that has happened across the street subsequent to a teardown.

Garden Street is similar to other nearby streets in its structures' slow succumbing to the pressures of age, disrepair, and gentrification. Since the 1970s, scores of homes *on Garden Street alone* were approved by the City for complete demolition. If today the City wishes to embrace this community, we cannot afford to continue to allow new construction over existing structures that are suitable to adaptive reuse.

On Rehabbing

I have visited inside 1602 Garden Street on multiple occasions, the last in 2014. I grant that in its current condition the structure is no gem. It would require consideration, attention, effort, monetary investment, and a shift in the mainstream development paradigm in order to bring it to its potential. All developers should expect to contribute in this manner when investing in any established neighborhood and especially in one of deep cultural and activist history such as ECC. There are plenty of experienced designers, architects, and builders in Austin who can facilitate this approach in a way that maintains the pattern language of the 1600 block while providing ecological, aesthetic, functional, and capacity upgrades that attract buyers who pay top dollar. And over-the-top dollar. This is Austin, after all.

I do not condone preserving structures that are beyond repair. 1605, for example was unsalvageable, and the block was happy to see it torn down in 2014. However, my neighbors and I object to what the City allowed to replace it: A structure of uninformed design and poor execution. There was no effort to integrate its appearance with the surrounding homes, including an incongruent scale that fills the lot to every legal inch to an extreme that leaves even garbage cans relegated to the front yard. Furthermore, the quality of construction is so blatantly poor (see roof detail, Figure 22) that I wonder how long it will be before we have another tear-down. The City failed us with this construction.

Back in the early 2000's, 1607, also seemed beyond repair; however, a young family with a lot of spunk bought the 4-plex tenement and turned it into a 2-flat home that continues to fit the neighborhood. (See Figure 19, lavender colored structure on far left.)

Garden Street holds many excellent examples of newer construction that integrate materials and form in a way that work with homes that are already here. The designers thought of these homes as more than a square lot to be filled – and I do mean filled – with only whatever was most convenient.

In conclusion, to rip out a bungalow with decent bones and potentially plant another thoughtless box is disrespectful to the neighborhood and those who have put in the sweat equity to make and keep it outstanding. Again, I say that if the City wishes to embrace this community, we cannot afford to continue to allow new construction over existing structures that are suitable to adaptive reuse. For any replacement structure at 1602 to come close to acceptability, it would have to incorporate exterior elements that demonstrate the architectural history on Garden Street – elements such as scaled footprint and lot placement, wooden exterior siding, eaves, exposed rafter tails, and a friendly front porch. There is vast room for individual choice with these guidelines. Otherwise, we take yet another step away from a beautifully connected community.

Thank you for the opportunity to voice my concerns. Should you have any questions or require further information, please do contact me.

Sincere regards,

Paige Erin Schlender



Figures 1 & 2 –
1602 Garden St.



Figure 3 – 1603 Garden St.



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6

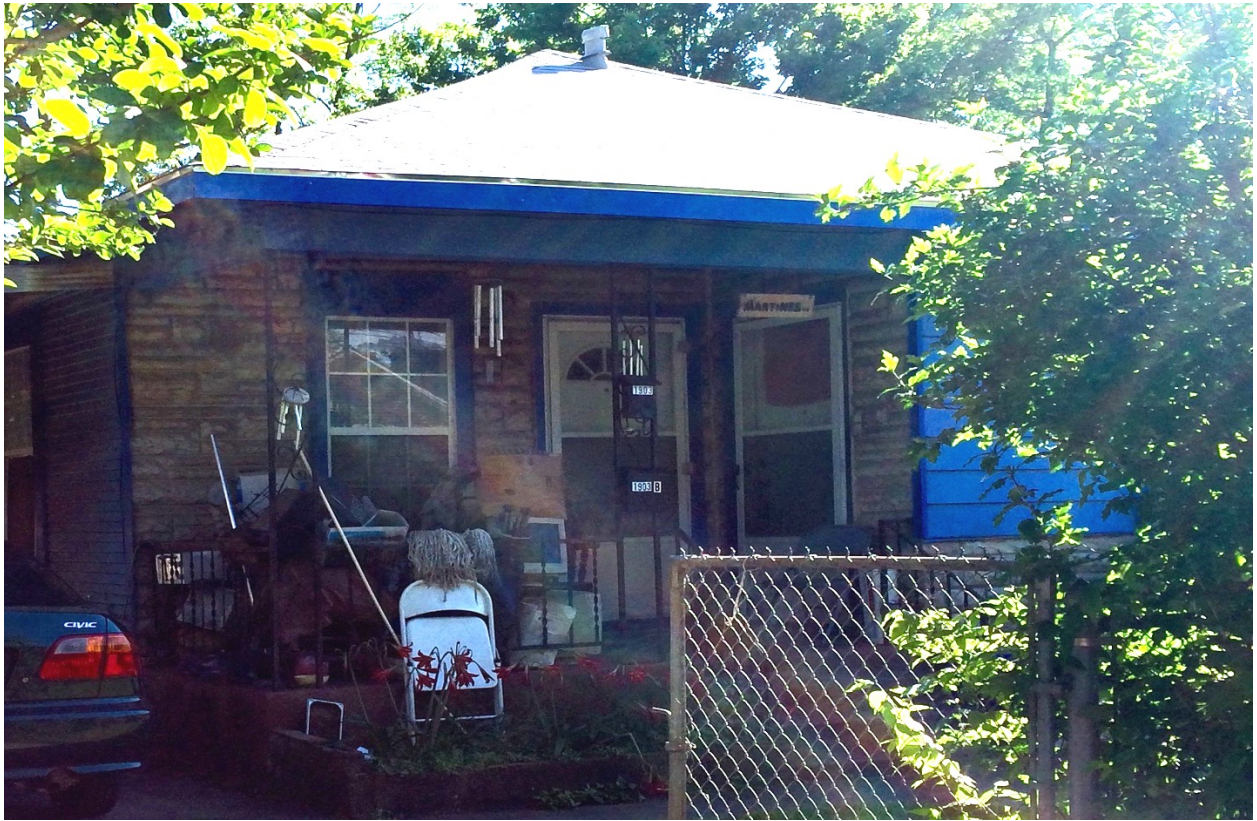


Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9



Figure 10

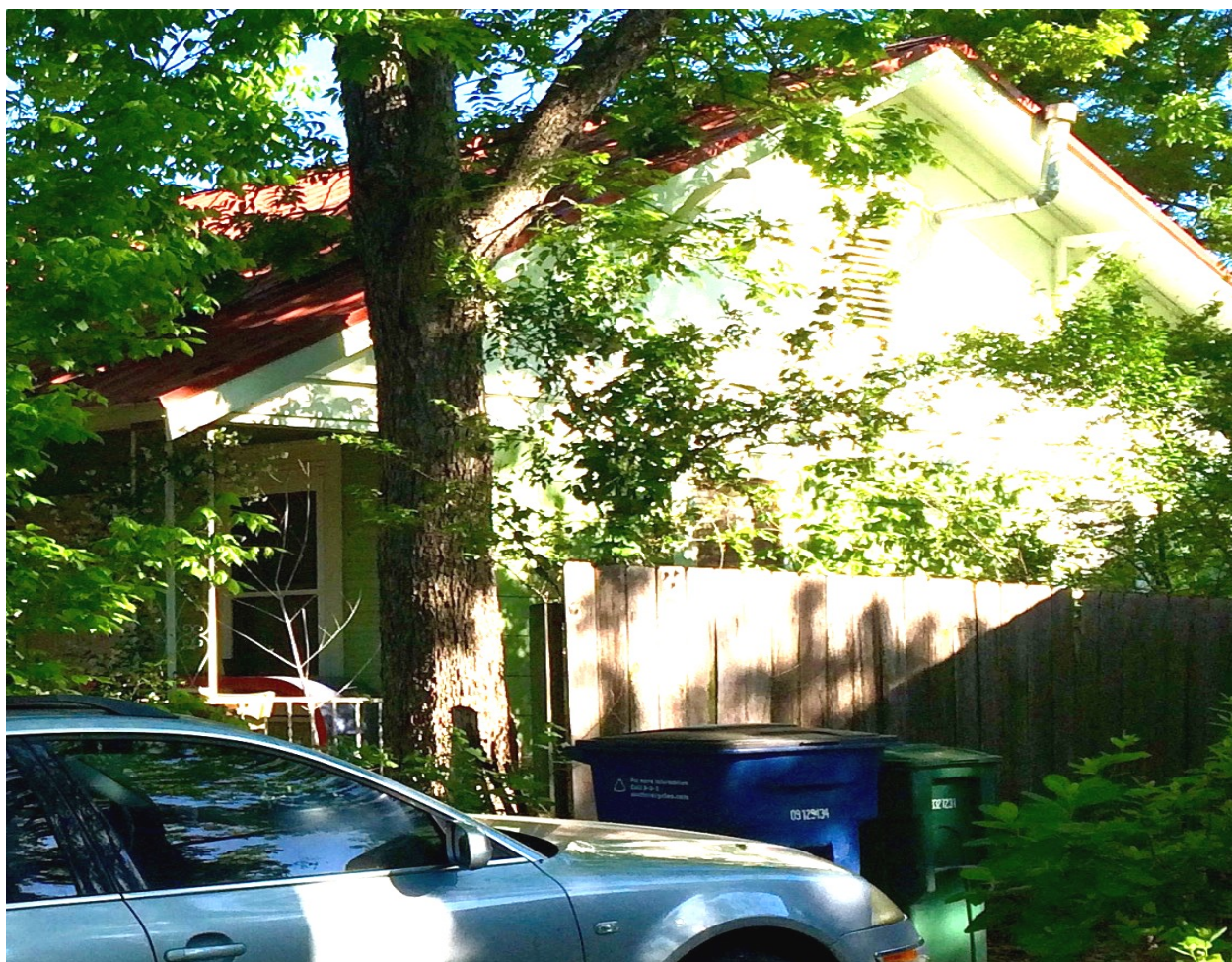


Figure 11



Figure 12



Figure 13



Figure 14



Figure 15

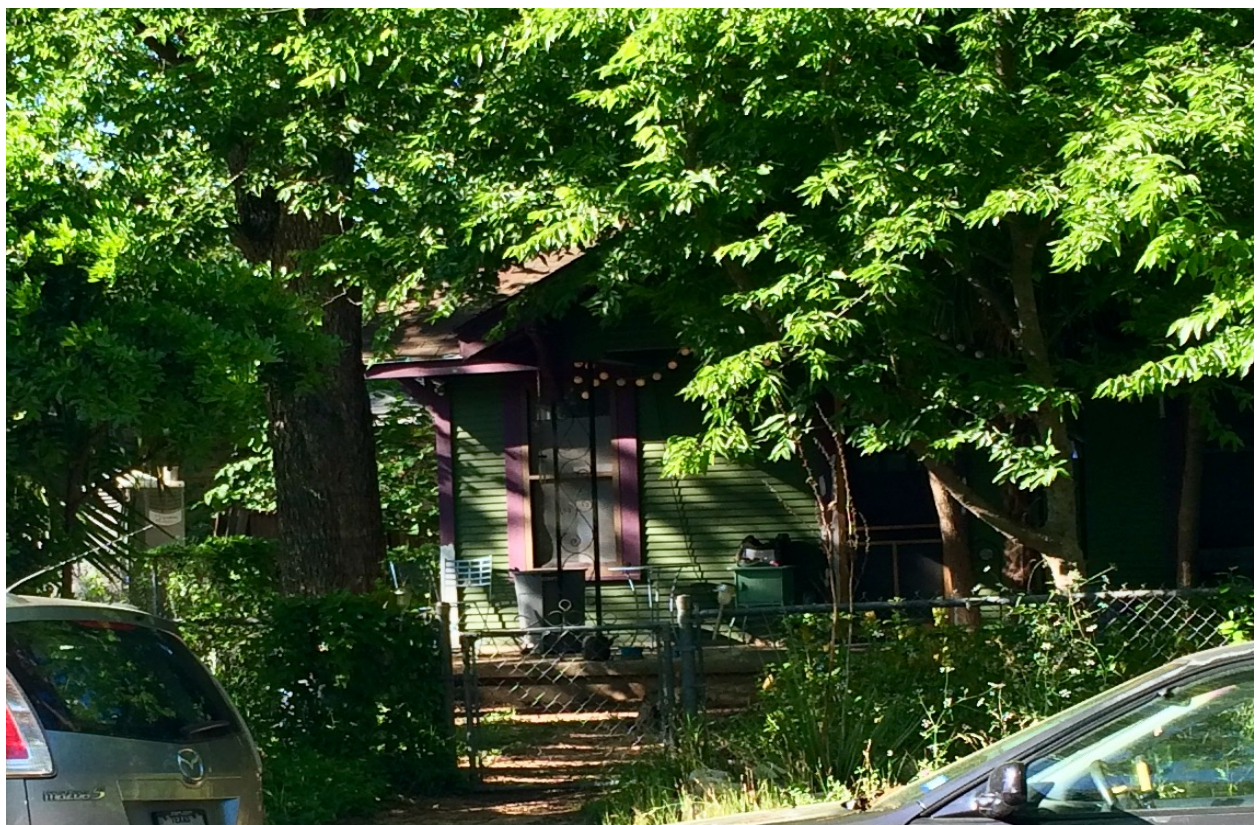


Figure 16



Figure 17 – 1602 Garden Street is third from the right.



Figure 18 – 1602 Garden Street is second from the left.



Figure 19



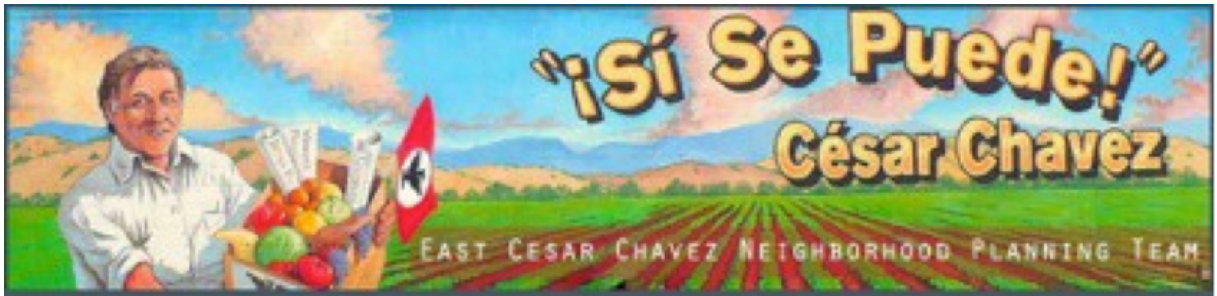
Figure 20



Figure 21



Figure 22



April 25, 2016
Historic Landmark Commission
City of Austin
RE: ECCNPT Opposition to Demolition of Structure at 1603 Willow Street (Item D1)

Dear Commissioners,

On April 20th, 2016 members of the East Cesar Chavez Planning Team voted unanimously to oppose the proposed demolition of the structure located at 1603 Willow Street. The demolition of this existing structure is counter to the neighborhood plan goals of preserving physical features to reinforce the cultural identity and history of the neighborhood.

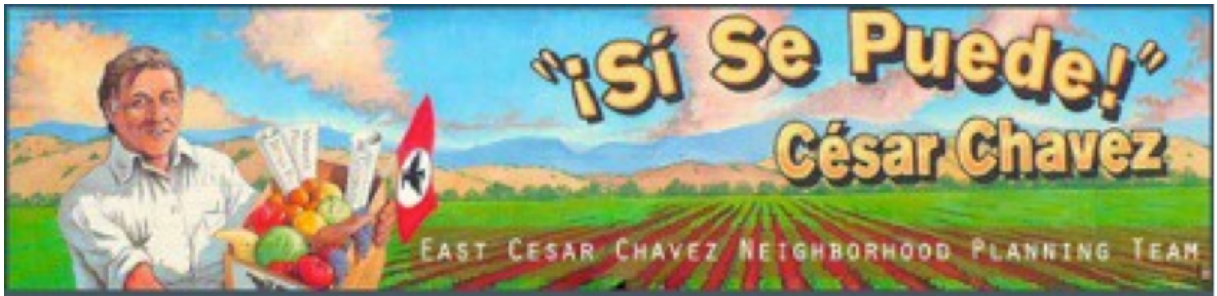
Though we would certainly prefer relocation of the buildings rather than outright demolishing, such relocation does nothing to preserve the character or culture of the existing East Cesar Chavez neighborhood.

We respectfully request that you deny applicant's request for a demolition permit.

Sincerely yours,

Jose Valera

Jose Valera
Chair, ECCNPT



April 25, 2016
Historic Landmark Commission
City of Austin
RE: ECCNPT Opposition to Demolition of Structure at 1112 E. 3rd Street (Item D7)

Dear Commissioners,

On April 20th, 2016 members of the East Cesar Chavez Planning Team voted unanimously to oppose the proposed demolition of the structure located at 1112 E. 3rd Street. The demolition of this existing structure is counter to the neighborhood plan goals of preserving physical features to reinforce the cultural identity and history of the neighborhood.

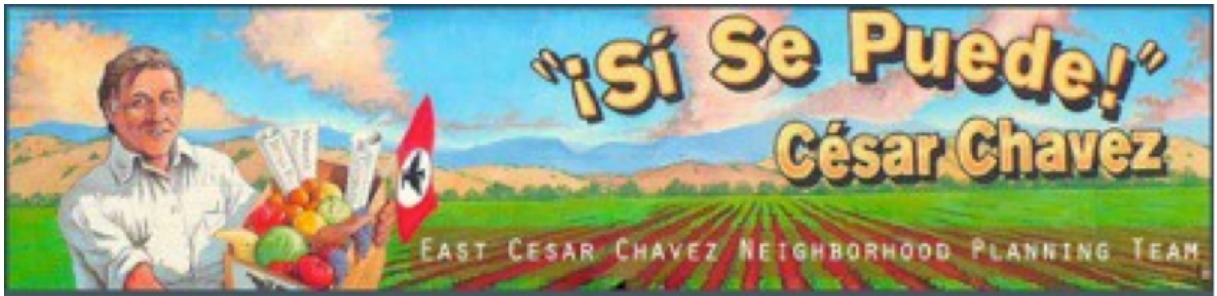
Though we would certainly prefer relocation of the buildings rather than outright demolishing, such relocation does nothing to preserve the character or culture of the existing East Cesar Chavez neighborhood.

We respectfully request that you deny applicant's request for a demolition permit.

Sincerely yours,

Jose Valera

Jose Valera
Chair, ECCNPT



April 25, 2016
Historic Landmark Commission
City of Austin
RE: ECCNPT Opposition to Demolition of Structure at 1602 Garden Street (Item D17)

Dear Commissioners,

On April 20th, 2016 members of the East Cesar Chavez Planning Team voted unanimously to oppose the proposed demolition of the structure located at 1602 Garden Street. The demolition of this existing structure is counter to the neighborhood plan goals of preserving physical features to reinforce the cultural identity and history of the neighborhood.

Though we would certainly prefer relocation of the buildings rather than outright demolishing, such relocation does nothing to preserve the character or culture of the existing East Cesar Chavez neighborhood.

We respectfully request that you deny applicant's request for a demolition permit.

Sincerely yours,

Jose Valera

Jose Valera
Chair, ECCNPT

From:
To:

Cc:
Subject: Re: 1112 East 3rd St, 1602 Garden, and 1603 Willow
Date: Monday, April 25, 2016 11:41:08 AM

| Dear Commissioners and Staff,

I write to inform you that, last week (April 20th), the East Cesar Chavez Neighborhood Planning Contact Team voted unanimously on four separate measures related to your consideration of demolition permit requests in our neighborhood.

In individual measures, the team voted to oppose the demolition of the structures at 1112 East 3rd St, 1602 Garden, and 1603 Willow. The neighborhood and team values these structures as architectural archetypes and reflective of the histories of the average Austinites who helped to build our neighborhood and the city. Moreover, neighbors identify the house at 1112 East 2nd St. with the Hergotz family. The Hergotz family played a prominent role in the development of the neighborhood. Neighbors note that the family owned their own railroad carriage cars to transport gravel into Austin from their property south east of town.

As the Historic Preservation Chair for the team I endorse staff's recommendation to pursue Landmark status for this structure. Landmark status will only enhance the value of the property which the current group of owners clearly purchased as an investment. If you approve pursuit of Landmark status, the ECC Historic Preservation Committee will gladly assist with further research of the property and any necessary fund raising.

The fourth and final ECC measure of relevance to your discussion tonight is the team's (again unanimous) endorsement of Councilman Renteria's proposal of a temporary moratorium on all demolitions in East Austin. We are experiencing an apparent uptick in the targeting of historic era in our neighborhood. A temporary stay will ensure that any structures that the City's consultants conducting the current survey identify as historically significant will still exist by the time the consultant team reports back to Council with recommendations.

I will be in attendance at tonight's meeting and available to answer your questions regarding the neighborhood's positions.

Best,
Amy Thompson
ECCNPCT Historic Preservation Committee Chair