

## PUBLIC HEARING INFORMATION

This zoning/rezoning request will be reviewed and acted upon at two public hearings: before the Land Use Commission and the City Council. Although applicants and/or their agent(s) are expected to attend a public hearing, you are not required to attend. However, if you do attend, you have the opportunity to speak FOR or AGAINST the proposed development or change. You may also contact a neighborhood or environmental organization that has expressed an interest in an application affecting your neighborhood.

During its public hearing, the board or commission may postpone or continue an application's hearing to a later date, or may evaluate the City staff's recommendation and public input forwarding its own recommendation to the City Council. If the board or commission announces a specific date and time for a postponement or continuation that is not later than 60 days from the announcement, no further notice is required.

During its public hearing, the City Council may grant or deny a zoning request, or rezone the land to a less intensive zoning than requested but in no case will it grant a more intensive zoning.

However, in order to allow for mixed use development, the Council may add the MIXED USE (MU) COMBINING DISTRICT to certain commercial districts. The MU Combining District simply allows residential uses in addition to those uses already allowed in the seven commercial zoning districts. As a result, the MU Combining District allows the combination of office, retail, commercial, and residential uses within a single development.

For additional information on the City of Austin's land development process, visit our website:  
[www.ci.austin.tx.us/development](http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/development).

Written comments must be submitted to the board or commission (or the contact person listed on the notice) before or at a public hearing. Your comments should include the board or commission's name, the scheduled date of the public hearing, and the Case Number and the contact person listed on the notice.

**Case Number: C14H-2018-0013**

**Contact: Cara Bertron, 512-974-1446**

**Public Hearing: February 26, 2018, Historic Landmark Commission**

Ranjini Chardirakanthan

Your Name (please print)

☐ I am in favor  
☒ I object

809 Pressler Street

Your address(es) affected by this application

Ranjini Chardirakanthan

Signature

2/20/2018  
Date

Daytime Telephone: 415-713-0499

Comments: 1. 809 Pressler should not be a contributing resource for the Smoot/Terrace park historic district. 809 Pressler does not meet the criteria for a contributing home.

2. Pressler Street should not be part of any local historic district.

3. Any move to create an LTD should be reconsidered and resubmitted for fairness and due process. See details attached, ~~attached as a separate document~~

~~on 2/20/2018~~  
If you use this form to comment, it may be returned to:

City of Austin

Planning & Zoning Department

**Cara Bertron**

P. O. Box 1088

Austin, TX 78767-8810



## **Objection to the Smoot/Terrace Park Historic District**

Case Number C14H-2018-0013, scheduled for Public Hearing on February 26, 2018 to the Historic Land Commission.

### **Summary**

#### **Recommending:**

1. That 809 Pressler is not a contributing resource for the Smoot/Terrace Park Historic District ("LHD"). 809 Pressler does not meet the criteria of a contributing home.
2. That Pressler Street be excluded included in any LHD. With an LHD only 6 of 22 homes will be contributing. There is no historic character or uniformity of homes on Pressler Street.
3. That any move to create an LHD be reconsidered and resubmitted for fairness and due process, including proper notice and a more transparent vote process.

Examples of fairness considerations:

- 12% of the vote came from the wishes of a trust who's deceased owner did not prevent the homes being built across the street from her in the 2000s when she was alive and who's current 6<sup>th</sup> Street property is not maintained and is an eyesore to Pressler Street. This 6<sup>th</sup> Street property is a Historic Landmark that provides no historic value due to the poor conditions and has no uniformity with any other home on the street.
- The Applicant and Neighborhood Associate Representative ("Applicant") for the LHD had a contributing home to the West Line National Register Historic District, but changed her home to be non-contributing for this LHD.

These two LHD promoters are imposing harsh restrictions on my home with nearly no consequence to themselves.

Examples of due process violations:

- I did not received notice in the past. I continue to receive improper notice addressed to the sellers, despite my providing my recorded warranty deed to the Historic Preservation Office.
- Applicant used her role – which was supported with public funds – to disseminate information in a discriminatory and biased fashion. Specific examples information being shared with some individuals and not others based on the individuals point of view, can be provided.
- The voting process was not open and transparent.
- The standards themselves are rife with inconsistencies and lack of evidence, and should be considered void for vagueness on their face



I speak from experience, having owned a 1900s home in San Francisco and a 1920s home in a local historic district in Coral Gables, FL. In both communities, one has a sense of history and uniformity of homes by walking down the street. That is not the case for Pressler Street in Austin.

I purchased 809 Pressler on December 28, 2017. If I had known of this proposed LHD, I would not have purchased the house.

### **Recommendation Analysis**

All pages below refer Permit/Case: 2018-011195 ZC, Case Number: C14H-2018-0013, "Formal Submittal 1/31/2018."

#### **1. Recommending 809 Pressler is not a contributing resource for the Smoot/Terrace Park Historic District ("LHD")**

809 Pressler does not have the characteristics of a contributing home, as you can see on the survey, page 155.

- a. Per page 6, "all contributing buildings in the district were constructed of wood with wood siding." The survey of 809 Pressler lists the exterior wall materials as "Fiber cement siding"
- b. Per page 6, "Windows and doors from all time periods were constructed of wood..." The survey of 809 Pressler shows the door covered with a screen door and the windows covered with solar screens.
- c. Standing on the porch I can see were there were changes to the pillars of the porch.
- d. The skirt of the house was replaced by me with a permit because the skirt cracked when the foundation was repaired.

I have not been provided with a picture or any evidence to validate that 809 Pressler is in fact what it looked like in the period of significance. I owned a 1920s home in a local historic district (Coral Gables, FL) and the historic preservation office had a picture of my home in the 1940s.

To provide a survey of 809 Pressler 70 years after the period of significance, claiming that the home had no visible alterations is evidentiary weak and likely incorrect. Without actual evidence of the design, construction, and appearance in the period of significance, the LHD fails on its face to accomplish the purported objectives, and it will be impossible for the Historic Preservation Office to apply the standards consistent with due process to any requested changes, as the lack of clear evidence of the actual historic character has not been shown to exist in the current standard.



## **2. Recommending that Pressler Street not be included in a LHD.**

Per page 159, from the application, "**PURPOSE** Local historic district designations provides.... compatible with the neighborhoods' historical character."

There is no historical character to Pressler Street. Only 6 of the 22 homes on Pressler Street are recommended to be contributing.

Furthermore, the Smoot Mansion on 6<sup>th</sup> Street is an eyesore to Pressler Street with chain link fences, broken walls and unkept structures.

Given the substantial existing changes to the nature and character of Pressler Street it is unlikely that the small percentage of remaining domiciles can claw back the look and feel of the period of significance.

In Coral Gables, FL, where I had a contributing house in an LHD – one got a sense of the 1920s Old Spanish style created by George Merrick. Even modern homes were in the Old Spanish style. Trash was picked up from the back of the house, chain link fences were prohibited, home colors were from an established list, windows and doors were replaced to match the character of the existing home as evidenced by photographs provided by the historic preservation office.

On Pressler, there is no historic character or uniformity of homes.

## **3. Recommend that any move to create a LHD be reconsidered and resubmitted for fairness, and due process including proper notice, transparency of vote, and reasonableness of restrictions.**

**Proper notice.** Please know that I bought the home on December 28, 2017. If I had known of this proposed LHD, I would not have purchased the house.

I specifically checked the Historic Preservation website here:  
<http://www.austintexas.gov/departments/historic-preservation>, prior to the purchase. There was no mention and continues to be no mention the proposed change in zoning on the website. The city notice that was sent around January 18, 2018, and was addressed to the sellers and not to me, the owner of the home. As a result, I did not open the mail.

I learned about the LHD from my neighbors on January 21, 2018.

The Applicant, at 700 Pressler had actual knowledge that I purchased the home and did not notify me (she lives across the street). In fact, evidence will show that I was specifically excluded from communications on the LHD, based on my viewpoint. Such viewpoint bias is inappropriate for a government funded initiative and calls into question whether due process was maintained throughout the initiative.



The Historic Preservation Office required me to provide my recorded warranty deed to confirm my vote of "no" to the LHD. The Historic Preservation Office continues to mail the sellers regarding notice of the LHD, not me, the rightful owner. Such erroneous notice calls into question whether proper notification was and will be provided to the correct people.

You can verify the continued incorrect notice for 809 Pressler in the "labels" included in the Permit/Case: 2018-011195 ZC, Case Number: C14H-2018-0013.

**Fairness of vote.** The restrictions on changes to contributing homes are most harsh on homes that are contributing and that are not Historical Landmarks. The vote for this LHD was submitted by 9.9 acres, 1.3851 acres of which is the Smoot mansion / Flower Hill, a historical landmark. My understanding is that the vote for Flower Hill is required to be "in favor" per the wishes of deceased Ms. Jane Smoot. It seems quite unfair that from her trust deceased Ms. Smoot restricts changes to my home while not preventing the building of the 7 homes across the street from the Smoot mansion in the 2000s when she was alive. Furthermore, her trust does not keep the historical character of the home.

Furthermore, the home of the Applicant at 700 Pressler Street was designated as contributing for the West Line National Register Historic District. According to Emily Payne, Architectural Historian who prepared the surveys, the only reason the Applicant's home is not contributing to the LHD is because of the alterations she made to the home, which changed the character from contributing to non-contributing. Such viewpoint bias is inappropriate in a government program, and along with other viewpoint bias communications, calls into question whether the process followed to complete that application was proper.

These two LHD promoters are imposing harsh restrictions on my home with nearly no consequence to themselves.

**Fairness of restrictions.** The requirements of the LHD are to repair windows and doors, with little option to replace to the same character. That is both expensive and impacts other Austin goals such as the net zero sustainability initiative. Repair of old homes are lost trades and expensive. For example, at my home at 809 Pressler, I prevented a fire hazard by repairing the electrical wiring. The overwhelming recommendation from electricians I interviewed was to rewire, which would have required cutting through shiplap walls resulting in a very expensive and historically and structurally damaging repair. I finally found an electrician who properly pigtailed the electric outlets with a permit.

The repair restriction requirements are unreasonable and do not further the objective of the LHD. From the street – you will not be able to tell the difference between replacing with similar character (like they required in Coral Gables, FL) or repair. The only one who will be able to tell the difference is I – from my expense and the energy inefficiency.

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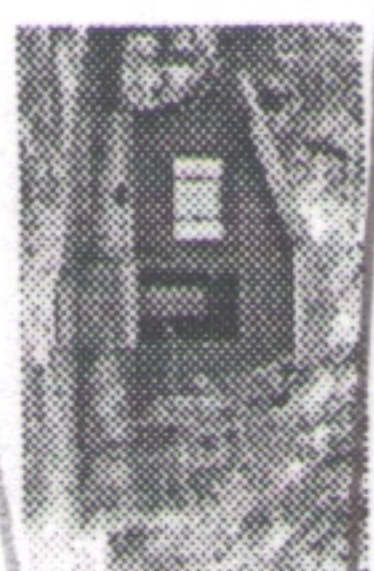







If the purpose of the LHD is to preserve the character and integrity of a historic neighborhood, then including Pressler in the LHD does nothing to further that objective, as it is already a substantially mixed neighborhood. Furthermore, the lack of historic evidence and ineffectiveness of the standards will not enable the Historic Preservation Office to make fair and unbiased decisions.

Please consider these facts when considering your recommendation for the LHD.

Attached: excerpt from the application, inventory of homes on Pressler Street












# Excerpt from LHD application, inventory of homes on Pressler Street

Address	CAD Parcel ID	Acreage	Type	Current use	Original use	Stylistic influences	Year built	History notes	Alterations	Additions	Integrity notes	Recommended local designations
 803 OAKLAND AVE	106747	0.1587	Single-family house	Residential	Residential	Craftsman	1925	None	Windows replaced, Converted to duplex, Exterior wall materials replaced, Porch enclosed	None visible	None	Recommended non-contributing to a local historic district
 604 PRESSLER ST	106791	0.143	Single-family house	Residential	Residential	No stylistic influences visible	1947	West Line National Register Historic District nomination lists year built as 1950	Porch altered	Side addition, Rear addition	None	Recommended non-contributing to a local historic district
 606 PRESSLER ST	106790	0.1241	Single-family house	Residential	Residential	No stylistic influences visible	1946	West Line National Register Historic District nomination lists year built as 1950	None visible	Additional story added, Rear addition	Second story added in 2006	Recommended non-contributing to a local historic district
 608 PRESSLER ST	106789	0.1046	Single-family house	Residential	Residential	Minimal Traditional	1946	West Line National Register Historic District nomination lists year built as 1950	Doors replaced	None visible	None	Recommended non-contributing to a local historic district
 610 PRESSLER ST	106788	0.1033	Single-family house	Residential	Residential	No stylistic influences visible	2001	None	None visible	None visible	None	Recommended non-contributing to a local historic district
 612 PRESSLER ST	106787	0.0761	Single-family house	Residential	Residential	No stylistic influences visible	2001	None	None visible	None visible	None	Recommended non-contributing to a local historic district
 614 PRESSLER ST	106786	0.1143	Garage	Residential	Residential	No stylistic influences visible	2001	None	None visible	None visible	None	Recommended non-contributing to a local historic district
 615 PRESSLER ST	494918	0.1604	Single-family house	Residential	Residential	No stylistic influences visible	2000	None	None visible	None visible	None	Recommended non-contributing to a local historic district

Pressler








1 home  
614



Address	CAD Parcel ID	Acreage	Type	Current use	Original use	Stylistic influences	Year built	History notes	Alterations	Additions	Integrity notes	Recommended local designations
 616 PRESSLER ST	106785	0.125	Single-family house	Residential	Residential	No stylistic influences visible	2008	None	None visible	None visible	None	Recommended non-contributing to a local historic district
 700 PRESSLER ST	106784	0.1386	Single-family house	Residential	Residential	Minimal Traditional, Craftsman	1946	West Line National Register Historic District nomination lists year built as 1945	Porch added	Additional story added, Rear addition	None	Recommended non-contributing to a local historic district
 701 PRESSLER ST	494917	0.1505	Single-family house	Residential	Residential	No stylistic influences visible	2000	None	None visible	None visible	None	Recommended non-contributing to a local historic district
 702 PRESSLER ST	106783	0.106	Single-family house	Residential	Residential	No stylistic influences visible	1946	West Line National Register Historic District nomination lists year built as 1950	Exterior wall materials replaced, Porch screening likely during period of significance	Side addition	None	Recommended non-contributing to a local historic district
 703 PRESSLER ST	106796	0.1537	Single-family house	Residential	Residential	No stylistic influences visible	2000	None	None visible	None visible	None	Recommended non-contributing to a local historic district
 704 PRESSLER ST	106782	0.1468	Single-family house	Residential	Residential	Prairie, Craftsman	1925	None	None visible	Rear addition	None	Recommended contributing to a local historic district
 710 PRESSLER ST	106781	0.107	Single-family house	Residential	Residential	Craftsman	1925	None	Windows replaced	Additional story added, Rear addition	Second story addition appears to be built within historic period	Recommended contributing to a local historic district
 800 PRESSLER ST	106780	0.118	Single-family house	Residential	Residential	Craftsman	1925	None	Exterior wall materials replaced, Doors replaced, Windows replaced, Fenestration pattern altered	Rear addition	None	Recommended non-contributing to a local historic district
 802 PRESSLER ST	106779	0.1178	Single-family house	Residential	Residential	Craftsman	1925	None	None visible	Side addition	None	Recommended contributing to a local historic district

Non contributing per Steve Sadowski  
demolition grandfathered



Address	CAD Parcel ID	Acreage	Type	Current use	Original use	Stylistic influences	Year built	History notes	Alterations	Additions	Integrity notes	Recommended local designations
 803 PRESSLER ST	106773	0.1533	Single-family house	Residential	Residential	Folk Victorian	1996	None	None visible	None visible	None	Recommended non-contributing to a local historic district
 804 PRESSLER ST	106778	0.1182	Single-family house	Residential	Residential	No stylistic influences visible	1955	None	Exterior wall materials replaced, Doors replaced, Windows replaced	High fence and pool in front yard	None	Recommended non-contributing to a local historic district
 805 PRESSLER ST	106774	0.1202	Single-family house	Residential	Residential	Craftsman	1941	West Line National Register Historic District nomination lists year built as 1940	None visible	None visible	None	Recommended contributing to a local historic district
 807 PRESSLER ST	106775	0.1318	Single-family house	Residential	Residential	Craftsman	1935	None	None visible	None visible	None	Recommended contributing to a local historic district
 807 PRESSLER ST	106775	0.1318	Garage	Residential	Residential	No stylistic influences visible	1935	None	None visible	None visible	None	Recommended contributing to a local historic district
 809 PRESSLER ST	106776	0.1134	Single-family house	Residential	Residential	Classical Revival	1935	None	None visible	None visible	None	Recommended contributing to a local historic district
 811 PRESSLER ST	106777	0.1106	Single-family house	Residential	Residential	Minimal Traditional	1930	None	None visible	None visible	None	Recommended contributing to a local historic district

1 home  
807