

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Lori Martin, President
Clayton Bullock, President-Elect
Allen Wise, 1st Vice President
Richard Kooris, 2nd Vice President
Alyson McGee, Secretary
Clay Cary, Treasurer
Vanessa McElwraith, Immediate Past President

DIRECTORS

Melissa Barry
Richard Craig
John Donisi
Steve Genovesi
Eileen Gill
Ann S. Graham
Harmony Grogan
Linda Y. Jackson

Ken Johnson
Patrick Johnson
Scott Marks
Kelley McClure
Dennis McDaniel
Christina Randle
Michael Strutt

REPRESENTATIVES

Benjamin Ibarra-Sevilla, UTSOA
Bob Ward, Travis County Historical Commission
Charles Peveto, Austin History Center Association

STAFF

Lindsey Derrington, Executive Director
Lesley Walker, Development and Communications Coordinator

July 17, 2020

Emily Reed, Chair
City of Austin
Historic Landmark Commission

Re: Rogers Washington Holy Cross District LHD Application

Dear Ms. Reed,

Preservation Austin is so pleased to offer this letter of support for the Rogers Washington Holy Cross Historic District application. Our organization has been Austin's leading nonprofit voice for historic preservation since 1953, with a mission to promote our city's diverse cultural heritage through the preservation of historic places. We strongly support the establishment of a local historic district in Rogers Washington Holy Cross (RWHC).

The Rogers Washington Holy Cross Historic District is one of the most intact concentrations of post-World War II housing for African Americans in Austin. As an early neighborhood developed by Black professionals for Black professionals, Rogers Washington Holy Cross represents the strength and tenacity of many African American families who dedicated their lives to the education and uplifting of their children and their community. The RWHC neighborhood is small in size but large in significance, including several architecturally distinct buildings designed by African American architect John Chase, FAIA, and many residences of individuals and families who made meaningful contributions to the city of Austin and beyond. Historic district status would help preserve this unique cultural and built legacy.

The RWHC neighborhood organization has been committed to investing in the needs and improvements of the neighborhood for decades, despite the pressures of systemic racism and economic inequities. The neighborhood association has worked collaboratively and creatively with homeowners, renters, and businesses over the last three years to develop design standards that incorporate the spirit of preservation and the dynamic realities of this central East Austin neighborhood.

Our nonprofit has supported this community-based, volunteer-driven effort for the past two years, including through two matching grants to help cover application fees. We've been honored to work with these advocates, and urge the Historic Landmark Commission to support making this district a reality.

Sincerely,

Lori Martin, President

Dear Commissioners,

Re: Rogers-Washington-Holy Cross District Preservation Application

On behalf of the City of Austin's Equity Office, please accept this letter of support for the Rogers-Washington-Holy Cross Neighborhood Association [RWHC] Historic District Preservation Application.

The City of Austin's Strategic Direction 2023 calls for the focus on culture and lifelong learning being enriched by Austin's unique civic, cultural, ethnic, and learning opportunities. Unfortunately, one of the major challenges we face is the loss of that culture and history of Austin's African American community. Austin is the only city among the ten fastest growing U.S. cities where general population growth and African American growth point in opposite directions.

Likewise, the RWHC organization has been committed to investing in the needs and improvements of their neighborhood for decades, despite the pressures of systemic racism and economic inequities. This neighborhood represents the strength and tenacity of many African American families who dedicated their lives to the education and uplifting of their children and their community. And I applaud their efforts preserve Austin's history of historic African American neighborhoods.

We also recognize the persistent, dedicated, hard work that the RWHC Neighborhood Association has put into this process for the last (3) years through constant communication with homeowners, businesses, renters and the City of Austin.

We have worked with members of RWHC on various projects and respect their methods of solicitation as well as their efforts to collaborate with all for the most beneficial solutions.

In that spirit, I hope that you will grant this application to a truly-deserving community!

Sincerely,



Bryon Oaks
Chief Equity Officer
Austin Equity Office



BLACKLAND

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

The Dream Starts Here



July 21, 2020

Dear Commissioners,

Re: Rogers-Washington-Holy Cross District Preservation Application

On behalf of the Blackland Community Development Corporation please accept this letter of support for the Rogers-Washington-Holy Cross Neighborhood Association [RWHC] Historic District Preservation Application.

Our organization was founded in 1983 with the express aim of protecting the integrity and character of our neighborhood. We have steadfastly stood by that promise in building and improving the lives of our neighbors of all ages.

Likewise, the RWHC organization has been committed to investing in the needs and improvements of their neighborhood for decades, despite the pressures of systemic racism and economic inequities. This neighborhood represents the strength and tenacity of many African American families who dedicated their lives to the education and uplifting of their children and their community.

We also recognize the persistent, dedicated, hard work that the RWHC Neighborhood Association has put into this process for the last (3) years through constant communication with homeowners, businesses, renters and the City of Austin.

We have worked with members of RWHC on numerous projects and respect their methods of solicitation as well as their efforts to collaborate with other neighborhoods for the most beneficial solutions.

In that spirit, I hope that you will approve this application to a truly deserving community!

Sincerely,

Austin Dennis
Board President



FANNIE MAE STEWART CONSERVATORY
1902 E. 22nd Street, Austin, Texas 78722

MAIN PHONE (512) 220-8751

www.blacklandcdc.org | facebook.com/BCDCAustin





Willis Hunt – ARA Board Chair | Gregory L. Smith – President & CEO

July 20, 2020

Ms. Emily Reed, Chair and Historic Landmark Commissioners
City of Austin Landmark Commission
Historic Preservation Office
Planning and Zoning Dept.
P.O. Box 1088, Austin, Texas 78767

Dear Ms. Reed and Commissioners,

Re: Rogers-Washington-Holy Cross District Preservation Application

Please accept this letter of support for the Roger-Washington-Holy Cross Neighborhood Association (RWHC) Historic District Designation Application. As you may know, the Austin Revitalization Authority has long been a supporter of preserving communities and history, particularly in the East Austin sector of the City of Austin.

The Rogers-Washington-Holy Cross neighborhood was identified in the East Austin Historic Resources Survey (2016) as a potential local historic district, eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The history of the neighborhood tells a rich story of the development of East Austin in the Post-War and early years of the civil rights movement. Initially developed for the African American community veterans returning from serving their country in World War II, the addition of land owned by local Black dentist, Joseph W. Washington, created space for custom designed homes for luminary figures within the community. It became home to Huston-Tillotson President John Q. Taylor King, Oscar L. Thompson, the first African American graduate of the University of Texas at Austin and HT professor, Austin Public Library branch namesake Willie Mae Kirk, Principal of Kealing Jr. High School and 75th President of the Colored Teachers State Association, T.C. Calhoun, businesswoman Della Phillips, and other noted professionals. The architecture of the homes speaks to the time period; houses vary in style from John Chase's two mid-century modern designs to handsome split-level and one-story ranch homes. Many of the current residents have lived in the neighborhood all their lives, bringing a pride of continuous ownership and history that is being lost in Austin.

Austin is quickly losing much of the fabric that encases the history of the city. East Austin has been especially hard hit, losing historically and culturally significant places. It is important to recognize and preserve spaces like the Rogers-Washington-Holy Cross neighborhood, in order to exhibit a physical manifestation of our full American history, not just read a plaque about it.

Again, I hope you will support the Rogers-Washington-Holy Cross neighborhood's request which clearly meets the designation criteria established by code. I agree that its history is worth saving, and I support their efforts.

Sincerely,

Gregory L. Smith

President and CEO