

Gaudette, Angela

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, October 25, 2020 6:18 PM
To: PAZ Preservation
Subject: D 1 815 Rutherford Place

*** External Email - Exercise Caution ***

Dear Commissioners,

As long time residents of Travis Heights, my husband and I are very concerned to see so many properties up for possible demolition in our beautiful and historic neighborhood. Actually we are just hearing about several of them. We walk in the neighborhood almost daily and really haven't seen notices in prominent locations. This is a time when it is even more important to maintain our sense of community, and these houses are such an important part of the fabric of our town.

We strongly urge you to deny requests for demolition of the beautiful Tudor house at 815 Rutherford Place. It is truly a gem and would be such a loss for our entire community.

How can Austin continue to allow our historic masterpieces to be erased? These are the places that make Travis Heights such a community and keep it truly unique.

Please help in any way you can.

Thank You,
Susie Mauldin and Michael McKane
Alameda Dr.
Austin, Texas 78704

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Gaudette, Angela

From: Angela Reed [REDACTED] >
Sent: Friday, October 23, 2020 3:17 PM
To: Valenzuela, Sarah - BC; Papavasiliou, Alexander - BC; Jacob, Mathew - BC; Myers, Terri - BC; McWhorter, Trey - BC; Reed, Emily - BC; Little, Kelly - BC; Tollett, Blake - BC; Heimsath, Ben - BC; Koch, Kevin - BC; Featherston, Witt; Wright, Caroline - BC
Cc: Sadowsky, Steve; PAZ Preservation
Subject: 815 Rutherford, Item D.1

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Re:
Case # HDP-2020-0274, Agenda item D.1
815 RUTHERFORD PLACE AND 1204 ALTA VISTA AVENUE

Dear Commissioners.

I am a resident of the Travis Heights neighborhood and a member of the SRCC's Preservation Committee. I am writing again in opposition to the above-referenced demolitions.

There are many reasons that we as a preservation committee, as individual neighbors, and neighborhood associations, oppose demolitions (in this case, the SRCC neighborhood association voted against these demolitions almost unanimously, save one abstention. That letter is in last month's HLC's backup). We can just as easily speak to the impact of demolitions on affordability and displacement, and on the environment. But limiting my comments to the importance of preservation specifically, I want to reiterate that granting this demolition removes **three** contributing structures to the National Register Historic District that our neighborhood has volunteered and fundraised for, for the past 15 years; and, which just over a month ago was enthusiastically approved by the State Board of Review.

I spoke with Mr. Kim early in this process and he conveyed that no one had told him this property had any historic value, and that if they had, he probably wouldn't have purchased it. And, he says, restoring houses is "not in his business model." I think that by now, he probably wishes he'd had better-informed advice on the value of these houses--the Rutherford house, in particular, given its more distinctive style--because he may have made a different choice. I've also heard that he spoke with other members of this committee in the past month and seemed to be entertaining the idea of retaining the house on Rutherford and incorporating it in the plans for the property. I very much hope that's what he decides to do, and hope that the HPO can work with him on possible scenarios.

Neighbors in Travis Heights, people who are truly invested in this community, have worked long and hard to achieve the National Register District; and, while I very much dislike having to confront developers or homeowners with bad news that a neighborhood is unhappy with their plans, I am also compelled to speak up when I see our neighborhood being exploited as a commodity--tearing down houses that can otherwise be

restored, and flipping that property for a profit. It's a bad business model for communities in general, and for historic communities especially. In Travis Heights, we worked for the NRHD in the hopes of deterring demolitions and attracting owners who want to restore homes, possibly taking advantage of the preservation tax credit which would allow owners to rehabilitate their properties as rentals, which we welcome. We have a good record of working with developers when they do choose to restore homes, supporting them in variance requests, if needed, to save a historic building, for example.

One reason neighbors have worked so hard for this National Register District is so we don't have to write letters, approach homeowners or developers and speak in opposition in the first place. The National Register designation is intended to educate and alert residents and developers of the historic value of these houses, especially these smaller houses that an untrained eye may pass off as a tear-down. As many commissioners know, this National Register District is our alternative to a Local Historic District, which given City of Austin logistics, we found to be impossible to obtain for a neighborhood of this size, much less for even a smaller District (a one-street LHD, which we finally accomplished on Mary Street, was the most our neighborhood could finally accomplish). We have very limited tools to fight demolitions to preserve our neighborhood's historic character, and we hope the HPO will work with us to educate developers about our NRHD so that they don't find themselves having to defend their projects, and neighbors don't have to rally to fight every demo. We hope to finally get the word out that demolishing central Austin homes, in Travis Heights in particular, is NOT a good business model.

We thank this commission for your volunteer support and dedication to preservation in Austin.

Regards,

Angela Reed

Travis Heights resident

SRCC Preservation Committee

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