

Response to Historic Landmark Commission
for discussion November 16, 2020

To: Chair and Commissioners, Historic Landmark Commission

From: Robin and Taylor Bruce – owners of 1406 Ethridge Ave, and Sam Burch, architect for 1406 Ethridge Ave

Date: November 13, 2020

Subject: Proposed Renovation of 1406 Ethridge Ave, Austin TX 78703

Response

We are submitting this statement in support of granting permit to move forward with updates and renovations at 1406 Ethridge Ave (“1406”), Austin, TX 78703.

First, we are incredibly grateful to the HLC for highlighting the pioneering legacy of the original occupants of 1406, Reverend Edmund Heinsohn and his family. While we had heard some of the home’s history from the last occupant in the process of our purchase transactions, we are thankful to have this more detailed history of Reverend Heinsohn’s perspective, leadership, and impact. Thank you for putting this together!

We feel honored to be the stewards of this home’s legacy of inclusion and warmth and to be raising our children amidst such shared values. We would be delighted to speak further with the HLC or relevant parties about ways in which we might further make known Reverend Heinsohn’s work and impact on our city.

Our aim in this renovation is to preserve the defining qualities of 1406 while updating the space to accommodate our family of five. We plan to maintain the general look and feel of the home, extending its life and roots in the community. For example, our hope with the extension of the front porch is to create a further sense of welcome and neighborly engagement.

We have also sought the opinion of architect Sam Burch in response to the specific elements detailed in the HLC’s review. His expert and opinion and response are recorded here:

- The garage is in fact not a new addition as is stated on C.3-2. The garage was added in our estimation sometime in the 1990s and currently has a composition shingle roof and fiber lap siding. We are simply recladding the exterior, replacing the composition shingle and adding living space in the existing attic which will not change the overall roofline. We are adding a dormer that is visible from the driveway.

- The new addition detailed in submitted plans at the rear of the house is replacing an existing addition that was constructed at the same time as the garage. It is poorly built and contributes nothing to the existing home. When this addition was built all of the existing stone on the rear of the original house was removed.
- While the proposed front porch will somewhat change the front of the house, the intent is for the owner to be able to enjoy the neighborhood and engage with their neighbors. That is currently not possible with the entry porch that exists today.
- It is my opinion that the original home is not an outstanding example of Colonial Revival architecture. The red standing seam roof is not consistent with the style nor is the existing stonework. Our proposed addition and remodel of the existing garage will only improve what currently exists and extend the life of the home for many years to come.
- Additionally, I agree with the HLC's opinion stated in C.3-2 that nothing about the property design, architecture, community value, or landscape features merits historic designation.

Thank you for your consideration.

We look forward to speaking with you on Monday, November 16, 2020.

Sincerely,

Robin and Taylor Bruce
Owners, 1406 Ethridge Ave.