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August 17, 2021

Terri Myers, Chair
City of Austin
Historic Landmark Commission

Re: 812 W. 12th Street Demolition Permit

Dear Ms. Myers,

Preservation Austin exists to empower Austinites to shape a more inclusive, resilient, and meaningful community culture through preservation. We write today in opposition to the proposed demolition of 812 W. 12th Street, the current home of No-Comply Skateshop. We ask instead that the Historic Landmark Commission support historic zoning for the property in the areas of Architecture and Community Value, as identified and recommended by Historic Preservation Office staff in their July 26, 2021 report (PR-21-087495).

Built ca. 1946, the property is an intact example of a neighborhood scale three-bay commercial building. While common throughout Texas, this building type is increasingly rare in Austin and its preservation should be prioritized. Throughout its lifetime, the building at 812 W. 12th St. has been home to a number of businesses that have served the surrounding neighborhood the nearby Austin High School, now the Austin Community College Rio Grande Campus. As described in the abovementioned staff report, the locations of commercial buildings of this type were essential in defining the character of the surrounding neighborhood.

The property was also identified as a contributor to the potential West Downtown Historic District in a historic resource survey conducted by HHM & Associates in 2020. Sponsored by the Old Austin Neighborhood Association, the survey was supported by a Certified Local Government grant received by the City of Austin and a matching grant from our nonprofit. Preservation Austin further supported the community's hard-fought efforts with a 2020 Preservation Merit Award last fall for their public service.

The survey's purpose is to recommend significant landmarks and potential districts for designation and to provide the information needed to make educated decisions about demolitions such as this. Significant resources go into these efforts with the understanding that they will make a difference to preservation outcomes moving forward. The city must stand by its historic resource surveys, in good faith, to protect our significant buildings and landmarks. We urge the Historic Landmark Commission to do so here.

As development pressures in Austin's central neighborhoods continue to increase, we believe that preserving what remains of our historic fabric is of the utmost importance. Furthermore, we believe that

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the proposed plan to create parking at the site does not constitute a worthy alternative use, especially as Austin moves towards becoming a more transit-oriented city. We applaud Austin Community College for their thoughtful preservation of Austin High School and understand that the demand for parking is considerable. In addition to historic zoning, we strongly recommend that ACC consider incorporating the structure into future plans for parking that will allow the building to remain in place while meeting the facility's needs.

Preservation Austin would also like to acknowledge No-Comply Skateshop, which has operated out of the building for the past fourteen years. This business is a central hub for a community and culture of skating and BMX that is well established in the neighborhood, which includes Heath Eiland and Morgan Moss BMX Skate Park and the 9th Street BMX Park. The outpouring of support for No-Comply at the July 26 meeting of the HLC is a testament to the ongoing community value of the building to the neighborhood.

For the abovementioned reasons, Preservation Austin encourages the Historic Landmark Commission to support historic zoning for the site. Thank you for your service, and for all you do to protect Austin's heritage.

Clayton Bullock, President