

## Allen, Amber

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**From:** Carolyn Croom [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, August 21, 2021 11:09 PM  
**To:** PAZ Preservation; Little, Kelly - BC; Koch, Kevin - BC; Tollett, Blake - BC; Featherston, Witt; Heimsath, Ben - BC; Wright, Caroline - BC; Valenzuela, Sarah - BC; McWhorter, Trey - BC; Castillo, Anissa - BC; Larosche, Carl - BC; Myers, Terri - BC  
**Subject:** Concerning 2502 PARK VIEW DRIVE (GF-21-10366)

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Dear Members of the Historic Landmark Commission,

I support preservation of the Mid-Century Modern home at 2502 Park View Drive. As an excellent Modern residence, designed by a well-known Austin architect, this house has significant historic and architectural value. In addition, it's the best-preserved home in the proposed Austin Air Conditioned Village Historic District and is also representative of the entire proposed District. The Austin Air Conditioned Village experiment was the first large-scale and also largest project of test houses built in the 1950s to test the feasibility and affordability of air-conditioning in homes affordable to middle-class buyers. According to Preservation Austin, in comments to the Historical Landmark Commission, the Air Conditioned Village was not only a nationally-significant study but also "an internationally-renowned experiment in building innovation and social science."

The residence is definitely the most modern in its design of the Air Conditioned Village houses, closest to the International Style of architecture and *Arts & Architecture* magazine's Case Study houses, with a nearly flat roof and a very simple, clean execution. Other elements of mid-century design in the house include site-specific passive cooling strategies, clerestory windows, exposed roof beams, an asymmetrical, paneled facade, and distinctive patterned-brick screening walls.

The house is an early, outstanding example of architect Fred Day, who made a substantial contribution to Austin's development. According to Preservation Austin, his "involvement in this high-profile, and much celebrated project was an early victory in his 40-year career." A graduate of the UT School of Architecture, his contributions include the award-winning Faulk Central Library, the Teachers Retirement System of Texas building, the Austin Doctors Building, the pro-bono master plan and drawings for Laguna Gloria, and renovations to the UT Law School and Student Union. Notable buildings he designed outside Austin include the Visitors Center at the McDonald Observatory and the Hooper-Schaeffer Fine Arts Center at Baylor University. He was president of AIA Austin and awarded an honorary Life Membership on the UT School of Architecture Advisory Council. He won multiple design awards from the Austin chapter of the American Institute of Architects and the Texas Society of Architects.

This house, known as "The Air Temp" House, for its Chrysler AirTemp air-conditioning system, is representative of the entire Air Conditioned Village experiment in several ways. All of the houses, including this residence, exemplify technological innovation in design and construction, with cutting-edge climate-control techniques. Each had experimental air-conditioning systems with a variety of air-distribution systems. They shared several heat-reducing strategies as well, such as light paint, light roofing, and wall and roof insulation. 2502 Park View may have had the deepest overhangs at four feet, but the other houses had generous overhangs too. All of the homes were studied for one year for their impact on the residents. UT's Psychology Department surveyed the inhabitants of the Village houses and area houses without air-conditioning, comparing the daily habits of both groups, finding that the Village families slept more, spent more time inside their homes and had to clean less than the other group. The Air Temp house includes all of the important features of homes in the project.

Mid Tex Mod, in its letter to the Historic Landmark Commission, states that the home "retains a remarkably high degree of integrity of design, materials, workmanship, and feeling as the most distinctive and intact original residence within the Austin Air-Conditioned Village development." Fred Day produced a striking Modern residence, as opposed to other more conventional ranch

homes in the project. This early work of Fred Day, exhibiting excellent period architecture, should be preserved for our Central Texas community.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Croom  
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Austin, Texas 78757

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