

Dear Members of the Zoning and Platting Commission,

Fred Day graduated from University of Texas at Austin in 1950 with a degree in Architecture. In 1954, a home he designed was included as part of a national study with international consequences, the Austin Air-Conditioned Village experiment. The home is now a prized architectural example of Mid-century Modern style. It stands at 2502 Park View Drive. Showcased is not only Fred Day's masterful architectural vision, described as unique and spirited, but also the elements of the organic architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright.

The unique home in which my parents lived for 60 years, was their pride and joy. It caught the attention of many passersby who would summon their courage to ask for a tour of the house's interior. They were never disappointed because the interior also was exciting.

What makes this house so noticeable? Why does it evoke such powerful positive feelings? It is because Fred Day created harmony from disparate elements: planes lines, angles, positive and negative space, asymmetry, and mixed materials. From complexity, there emerged a tantalizing form of “**Art**-chitecture.”

Consider the brick work. No two walls or lines are the same height, but because they begin past the left side of the house and extend past the right side, they create a uniting theme. Consider also the color scheme of yellow and grey. This color combination is introduced in the square panels on the front of the home. It continues into the bathrooms where the counters are made of inlaid one-inch-square yellow tiles. The walls are made of inlaid one-inch-square grey tiles. This color scheme ends outside on the tall, alternating yellow and grey privacy panels enclosing the oversized back patio and the large surrounding grass area. They were clearly visible through the back glass walls of the living room.

Elements of form-following-function can be seen through the interior and exterior of the home. An example is the atrium, which graces the front patio roof. It provides sunlight for the plants and kitchen, and allows additional breeze to the front patio. However, even Fred Day could not imagine its comedic touch. An errant peacock flew to the atrium to observe people below.

Recently, after my parents passed away, we had a garage sale. We were thrilled to see a troop of neighbors walking from the west end of Park View, to our sale at the east end. But they did not come to buy. They came to talk serious business, and to have their voices heard. They came armed with blueprints of homes in the Air-Conditioned Village, original books giving the specifications of the air conditioning and they brought formidable knowledge of Fred Day. These peoples' homes were not included in the Air-Conditioned Village but they still had 65-year-old artifacts, passed down from one homeowner to the next. They had witnessed something important. They wanted to be heard. They wanted to see the home preserved. They said this repeatedly, and this was their main message.

With each decision we make, we create our legacy. Will we demolish 2502 Park View Drive, leaving future generations to wonder, what were they thinking? Or will we be thanked by them for preserving this wonderful architectural and historical home? What will be our legacy?

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Sheryl Kelly Ginsburgh, Ph.D.

Hello Mr. Rivera,

I will be speaking tomorrow at the hearing for ZAP but wanted to submit my written comments just in case. Thanks so much!

Kelly

Hello, my name is Kelly Savedra and I support the preservation of the property at 2502 Park View Drive.

My family and I live down the street from 2502 Park View Drive in a house that is very similar, located at 2710 Park View. These two houses share the same floor plan, square footage, and mid-century modern design, and they are the same age. They differ in some design details and materials, but the biggest difference is that the house at 2502 was built as part of the historic Austin Air Conditioned Village, and ours was not. While ours has some of the same architectural value, 2502 was created by Fred Day as part of the Air Conditioned Village, so it has the historical and community value that ours does not.

We have been here since 2005 and after moving into this house have raised two children now 14 and 10 years old. We fell in love with this house the moment we saw it because the architecture has such a unique and beautiful design. The house needed a lot of work but we were willing to put in the money and time to keep the bones of this house in tact. Even before we were able to remodel almost every person who visited our house said how marvelous it was. From the magnificent natural light gained by all the windows to the open layout that was so treasured in mid century modern houses.

Eventually, through a mutual acquaintance, a couple came over who are architects specializing in mid century preservation and design. They told us that they believed our house to be one of the best examples of a true mid century modern house that they had seen in Austin. They told us to call them first, when we decided to do any remodeling to the house. Years later we did just that, and they were able to help us update the house while keeping it true to its mid century design. Now we love this house even more. It is still the same house, but with new windows, siding and an HVAC system to make it

energy efficient. The clean lines that already existed in the original design are accentuated beautifully with our updated kitchen and the openness though out the home. We didn't add on to this house or knock down any walls, we just let the beauty of the house shine through.

I tell you all this because if these things are true of our house they can be true of 2502 Park View as well. We happily raised a family with two children here, we love having people over to see our beautiful and unique house. 2502 Park View has even more reason to be preserved, because it was part of the air-conditioned village.

I think it would be a disgrace to tear down this wonderful piece of history. We bought in this neighborhood because we loved its character and charm. This house is a prime example of how this neighborhood started. I have seen it argued that a house this size isn't suitable for families anymore. Well, I can tell you we are living proof that this is simply not true. Believe it or not some people do still like to have a yard for their children to run in, and we have never found our house to be too small for our needs as a family of four, even with our children in their teenage years.

The Historical Landmark Commission states that properties must meet two criteria for landmark designation, three makes an even stronger case, like a sturdy three-legged stool. While my home has the architectural merit it lacks the other criteria needed to be deemed historical, only one leg to stand on. 2502 has outstanding architectural, historical and community value, a sturdy three-legged stool that you can rest your reputation on.

Please preserve this marvelous piece of Allendale history, there aren't very many of these gems left to save.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Madam Chair & Commissioners,

I respectfully urge you to support the recommendation of staff and the Historic Landmark Commission for historic zoning for the 'Chrysler Air Temp' house at 2502 Park View Drive.

There is no question of the historic merit of the Air Conditioned Village -- these 22 Allendale homes served as the proving ground for the modern era of central air conditioning, and in so doing they shaped the future residential development of much of the United States -- and the Chrysler Air Temp house at 2502 Park View Drive is considered the best example remaining.

While we often think of historic properties as grand or majestic in nature, or associated with wealthy or powerful individuals, this is an opportunity to recognize the value of a unique mid-century property built for middle class homeowners. As a city that prides itself as being special and unique, and as cultivating innovation and technology, it is fitting to preserve the history of this property.

On a personal note, thank you for your service on the Commission. I served six years on ZAP and, while I very much enjoyed the opportunity to serve the community, I recognize that it is a significant commitment, not only for yourself but your family as well. Thanks for giving your time and talent to better our city.

Please let me know if I may answer any questions or provide additional materials.

Sincerely,

John Donisi  
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Austin, TX 78703