

2 May 2022

To: Amber Allen, Historic Preservation Office, City of Austin
Re: Demolition of 2002 Scenic Drive (GF22-047398)

Dear Ms. Allen

As a former resident across the street from 2002 Scenic Drive, I would like to write a letter protesting its proposed demolition. While the building complex has fallen into disrepair in recent years, it is a unique surviving element of a small 1930s neighborhood anchored around what is today the corner of Scenic and Stevenson. While some of the early buildings are now gone or heavily remodeled, portions still remain of this once vibrant little block of dwellings. Built mostly in a rustic, limestone-based style, those remains are quite distinctive from the more recent contemporary styles being erected around it. The houses of that early era in West Austin had a warm, charming and almost magical feel to them, in direct contrast to the harder lines of the newer surrounding structures, and they bring a feeling to the little neighborhood that will be lost when 2002 Scenic and its still surviving early twentieth century neighbors are removed.

I understand that 2002 Scenic was remodeled by Fehr and Granger in the late 1940s, a fact that supports its importance, and the need for preservation. Undertaken by two well-known veterans of Depression-era National Park Service construction, the 2002 Scenic remodel incorporates elements of Fehr's earlier work at Bastrop State Park and seems to represent a stage in the transition of his own career from a more historical beaux arts/eclectic style to his later mid-century modern designs. Born in Austin, Fehr was important in introducing the mid-century modern design into Texas, and aspects of his historical oeuvre of structures should be considered important for protection in our rapidly changing world.

I am an archaeologist with considerable experience in the historical era and some knowledge of historic structures. Though retired, I am still a research fellow at UT Austin. I have worked with the documentation and preservation of early buildings in Austin for decades and have sadly seen so many fine examples of past architectural styles demolished. We are too rapidly losing the anchor of our historic, architectural past, and it would be sad to see these once elegant structures removed. I am strongly in favor of refusing the demolition permit and seeking preservation partners to protect these impressive buildings. Thank you for your consideration in the matter.

Sincerely,



David O. Brown, Ph.D.
Associate, Archeoproductions, Inc.