

September 22, 2022

Planning and Zoning Commission:

Thank you for your consideration of making the Westgate Towers a Historical Landmark Combining District. I grew up in nearby Taylor, Texas and have always loved this building. When my mom and I traveled to downtown Austin to shop or visit the capitol we always drove by the Westgate. At that time (early 1970's), there were few buildings that competed with the height and majesty of the Westgate. I was enthralled that people actually live in that building. What a dream! Fifty years later, I'm fortunate enough to have purchased a modest 1,100 square foot home in the amazing building.

It was one of the buildings that inspired me to become an architect. I'm now a practicing architect in downtown Austin and have worked on architectural preservation projects around the country. My work has included the restoration of Radio City Music Hall, the Downtown Los Angeles Main Public Library, the main Cleveland Public Library, and the New Amsterdam Theatre in Manhattan. I'm currently working on historic projects at Texas Tech University, Stephen F. Austin University, and the City of Richardson, Texas.

During my time living in New York City (31 years and moved back to central Texas in 2020), I've worked with the NY Landmarks Preservation Commission on multiple projects. I understand the importance and opportunities of historic buildings in maintaining rich, inviting, amazing neighborhoods and communities. In my 33 years of architectural practice, I believe the Westgate represents an extraordinary candidate as a Historical Landmark Combining District for the City of Austin. It has every component that's important in designating a historic landmark:

1. It's over 50 years old and represents a period of architectural significance.
2. It retains a high degree of architectural integrity.
3. It's listed on the National Register of Historic Places (2010)
4. It's a recorded Texas Landmark (2012)
5. It's a place of historical significance (capital view corridor, LBJ, Headliner Club, etc).
6. And very importantly, it represents an era of Austin-past.

I say this because it's astonishing to me that Planning & Zoning has not already unanimously approved this City of Austin designation. I've been involved in so many projects where building owners were fighting against historic designations and didn't want to maintain the architectural significance of their building. The amount of time, money, and effort focused on maintaining the Westgate is substantial (I'm on the buildings' architectural committee). It's a rarity to have a buildings' ownership and management interested and involved in its historic importance.

I strongly encourage you to support a vote for designating the Westgate a Historical Landmark Combining District.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Moss', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Douglas Moss, AIA, LEED AP, NCARB
Partner - Steinberg Hart