

Hello Planning Commission,

I am an owner at The Westgate tower and in support of zoning historic at the city level. As our building manager has mentioned, we as owners have shouldered increased costs and responsibility to take meticulous care of our building and maintain its historical integrity. There is simply no other building downtown that has taken the extreme care that the Westgate has to maintain our historic integrity. There is also no other residential building downtown that meets the requirements that the Westgate does. I would also argue that assuming that every unit in this building is a million dollar unit and that all unit owners are wealthy individuals who are strictly after the tax break that is offered is presumptuous and incorrect. The Westgate has some of the most modestly sized and affordable units in all of Downtown. We are one of the only buildings downtown to have units that sell for less than the average median home price in Austin.

I was hurt by the Planning Commissions previous comments that seemed to suggest that granting us historic designation should not be offered unless the building was under immediate threat of redevelopment. This is my home. Isn't the planning commission supposed to be sticking up for the old Austin, those of us who can't afford to lose our homes to redevelopment?

My ask is that the Planning Commission does not write off The Westgate as a haven for wealthy individuals and instead views the Westgate as a building that is comprised of owners from all economic backgrounds who have formed a community in the building with the common purpose of maintaining its' historic integrity and accuracy. If we do not get historic zoning, I fear that one day soon this admired building will have no choice but to sell to a developer who will turn it into another overpriced glass box that only the city's elite can afford. I ask that the planning commission think about the owners who chose to live at the Westgate because it's what they could afford. I ask that the Planning Commission thinks about the owners who have dedicated the time and money preserving the Westgate thus far to ensure we keep an old part of Austin still standing for the public to admire. I ask that the Planning Commission thinks of the owners who chose the Westgate as their home because they have admired the building and dreamed about living in this historic residence since they were kids growing up in Austin.

We, as a building, have been doing our part to maintain this building and meet the requirements outlined so I ask that the Planning Commission takes a factual based approach and approves historic zoning.

Carson Berry
