

September 27, 2022

Planning and Zoning Commission

Thank you for the consideration of the Westgate Tower as a Historical Landmark District. As exemplified in the application and in other correspondence Westgate Tower clearly meets the requirements for this zoning change. I encourage you to follow the recommendations of city staff and the Historic Landmark Commission by voting to approve the requested zoning change.

I am an owner of a small residential unit in the Westgate Tower. I owned a small house in the Zilker neighborhood for 30 years until the tax burden became too great. I chose housing in the downtown area to facilitate easy access to public transit. I am blind and unable to drive. I evaluated other downtown residential properties, some located in Austin historic landmark buildings. None met my needs as affordably as my unit in Westgate Tower. I am very fortunate to live here.

I became aware of the Westgate Tower in the early 1970s when a friend from my home town worked for Lumberman's Investment while attending college. I was not aware of the residential aspect of this high rise until one of my bosses bought an efficiency unit to reduce his commuting cost. He loved to share the pictures of the Capitol he took from his condo.

I have been following the board meetings on the internet. I am concerned by comments regarding interior modifications and public access to the building. These have no bearing on historic landmark requirements. Certificates of Appropriateness are only applicable to modifications to the exterior of the landmark structure or site.

The tax incentive program is designed to encourage owners to maintain the historic structure and site by offsetting owner costs with tax exemptions. It is the chief appraiser who evaluates each owners' annual application. The application can be approved, denied or modified. We can estimate the cost of the zoning change based on the program as it exist today. We cannot predict the programatic changes to be made in the future and cannot, therefore, predict cost with certainty beyond the current period.

Thank you



Richard Lyons