

PLEASE INCLUDE IN BACK-UP DOCUMENTATION FOR 1-11-23 MEETING OF HISTORIC
LANDMARK COMMISSION REGARDING HR 2022-172625

Historical Landmark Commission
City of Austin

Dear Commissioners,

I write to express my objection to the proposed demotion of the historic home located at 409 Monroe. Since 1995, I have been the owner and occupant of 1602 Newning, which adjoins 409 Monroe to the south.

The house at 409 Monroe is deeply significant to Fairview Park and Travis Heights. 409 Monroe sits on a slight hill on a key Travis Heights intersection (whose corners all have historic homes) and is highly visible to the heavy vehicle and foot traffic at the intersection. Due to the striking character of the architecture and its position on the hill at this intersection, 409 Monroe is one of the houses in the neighborhood that is 'high-profile': people see it, notice it, value it, and consider it an important part of the fabric of the neighborhood.

409 Monroe has impressive and distinctive architecture, and is much valued and admired by neighbors and visitors. It is the last in a string of historic homes of architectural and historical significance that stretches along Academy and Newning (the other side of the 'string' is capped by the St. Cecilia Hotel on Academy.) 409 Monroe is important to the neighborhood's historic character and of great value to the community.

The house is intact and includes many fine historic features; there is no reason why it should not be preserved.

409 Monroe has, at least as long as I have owned my house, provided six units of housing. The main house includes four units, and each garage apartment (one has been demolished already) included a unit. At a time when Austin is grappling with a shortage of housing stock to meet our growing population, it does not make sense to eliminate five units of existing housing with one single-family, four-story mega-house.

I just became aware of the proposed plans for the new build and it is quite clear that a four-floor mega-home would not be in keeping with the neighborhood.

My own house, built in 1917, is a single story cottage that is less than 800 square feet. A four-story house of the profile proposed would not be compatible with the architecture of neighborhood generally, and certainly would be jarring next to mine.

I am troubled that the developer has not been up front with neighbors or with the seller about his intentions and feel he has not dealt in good faith with the property or the neighborhood. Several neighbors were assured that the home would not be demolished. Last fall, I was alarmed to observe a crew working on cutting limbs off of an historic live oak tree at the property and intervened to express my concern. I was assured that only a few smaller limbs would be removed. I returned from a business trip overseas weeks later to find that well over half of the tree had been

removed. In November, the demolition crew was at the property, and told me they had been instructed to demo the main house first (before the two garage apartments). They were only waiting for the bulldozer to arrive to begin demolition of 409 Monroe. Fortunately, neighbors who were aware that a demolition permit had not yet been granted were able to successfully intervene and stop the owner's attempt to illegally demolish the house.

I am writing to respectfully urge the Commission to deny the demolition permit. There are many possible solutions that could preserve the historic features of this home and maintain a presence that is consistent with the historic character of the neighborhood, yet allow the developer to create a desirable residence with modern interior features. 409 Monroe is extremely significant in its historic and community value to our neighborhood and historic district; once gone, it can never be replaced. Please deny the demolition permit and preserve this important home.

Yours sincerely,

Samantha Smoot
1602 Newning Ave.
512-826-2823

PUBLIC HEARING INFORMATION

Although applicants and/or their agent(s) are expected to attend a public hearing, you are not required to attend. However, if you do attend, you have the opportunity to speak FOR or AGAINST the proposed development or change. You may also contact a neighborhood or environmental organization that has expressed an interest in an application affecting your neighborhood.

During a public hearing, the board or commission may postpone or continue an application's hearing to a later date or recommend approval or denial of the application. If the board or commission announces a specific date and time for a postponement or continuation that is not later than 60 days from the announcement, no further notice is required.

A board or commission's decision may be appealed by a person withstanding to appeal, or an interested party that is identified as a person who can appeal the decision. The body holding a public hearing on an appeal will determine whether a person has standing to appeal the decision.

An interested party is defined as a person who is the applicant or record owner of the subject property, or who communicates an interest to a board or commission by:

- delivering a written statement to the board or commission before the public hearing that generally identifies the issues of concern (*it may be delivered to the contact person listed on a notice*); or
- appearing and speaking for the record at the public hearing; and:
- occupies a primary residence that is within 500 feet of the subject property or proposed development.
- is the record owner of property within 500 feet of the subject property or proposed development; or
- is an officer of an environmental or neighborhood organization that has an interest in or whose declared boundaries are within 500 feet of the subject property or proposed development?

A notice of appeal must be filed with the director of the responsible department no later than 14 days after the decision. An appeal form may be available from the responsible department.

For additional information on the City of Austin's land development process, please visit our website: www.austintexas.gov/abc

Written comments must be submitted to the board or commission (or the contact person listed on the notice) before a public hearing. Your comments should include the board or commission's name, the scheduled date of the public hearing, the Case Number and the contact person listed on the notice. Correspondence and information submitted to the City of Austin are subject to the Texas Public Information Act (Chapter 552) and will be published online

Case Number: HR 22-172625 - 409 E MONROE ST

Contact: Amber Allen, (512) 974-3393

Public Hearing: Historic Landmark Commission, January 11, 2023

☐ I am in favor

☒ I object

Your Name (please print)

Your address(es) affected by this application (optional)

Signature

Date

Comments:

409 Monroe is a significant, historic building of very high value for the neighborhood. The plans submitted for a four floor massive house are not in keeping with the neighborhood. Thank you

If you use this form to comment, it may be returned to:

City of Austin Housing & Planning Department

Historic Preservation Office, ATTN: Amber Allen

P.O. Box 1088

Austin, TX 78767-8810

E-mail: preservation@austintexas.gov