

January 4, 2024

To: Historic Landmark Commission
From: Eastwoods Neighborhood Association
Regarding: Demolition application for 701 Sparks Avenue

We write in support of Historic Landmark designation for 701 Sparks Avenue. This house is the keystone entrance to Sparks Avenue, a one-block long street at the north end of Eastwoods Park. It was one of the earliest houses on the street, built in the 1920s when a few innovative stucco Mediterranean style houses were being built in the neighborhood, such as the one at 3109 Harris Park Ave at the corner of 32nd Street, which marks the entrance into the neighborhood from East 32nd Street.

Others will describe the architectural significance of the house, and describe its association with people of note in the community, but we will say how it is valued by the neighborhood. We live here because we like the interesting mixture of housing styles and types and the parklike ambience. The Seminary of the Southwest with its historic Rather House and pleasant campus sits at one corner of the neighborhood and Eastwoods Park holds a place in the center. Waller Creek divides the neighborhood and provides a natural exhibit of trees and the creek. The overall feeling is of a comfortable community.

Our houses are mostly old, at least pre-World War II and of varying styles. Because of our proximity to UT, many of the houses were built by professors and some now provide rental housing for students. Many original houses have accessory dwellings built over the years to provide income for the homeowners. My own house on Bellevue Place, built in 1914, is a historic landmark and we have a large 1938-vintage apartment in the rear which we have rented for 25 years to five international graduate students. Two other historic houses on my block are similarly used.

Several area houses have been used as rentals in recent years. Perhaps due to its proximity to the law school, the neighborhood is mostly quiet and welcoming to students. The house at 701 Sparks also has been revised for renting. Until very recently the house was maintained well and the landscaping was attractive. When the owner died it was sold off-market early last year. The new owner has not maintained the landscaping and has removed all the trees off the east side of the property, leaving the east side of the house barren and exposed.

We hope the house can be protected as a key element of our neighborhood and a proper link from the residences to the park. It is valued by the neighbors, as evidenced by the list of people who signed in support of landmark designation when we sent a request for support. Nineteen people responded positively, and only one said no. They are listed below for your information.

Thank you for your work on behalf of Austin's historic resources.

Sincerely,
Linda Team

President Emeritus,
Eastwoods Neighborhood Association

Yes:

Linda Hallidy

Josiah Harlow

Randall Soileau

Martha Carey Sadler

Rick Luisi

Mike and Marcie Jarratt.

Robyn Turner

Oscar Rodriguez

Joe and Kathryn Asaro

Whit and Betty Bodman

Lin Team

Lewis Donelson

Russell Jones

Kwame Walker

Tara Turner

Kosta Selinidis

