



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION 20241210-005

Date: 12/10/2024

Subject: Letter of Support from the Community Development Commission

Motioned By: Commissioner Bertha Delgado Seconded By: Commissioner Tisha-Vonique Hood

Recommendation

Letter of Support from the Community Development Commission regarding historic zoning at 1500 E.12th Street

Description of Recommendation to Council

Dear Mayor and Council,

The Austin Community Development Commission supports the Historic Landmark Commission's ordinance to designate 1500 E. 12th St. as a City of Austin Historic Landmark.

From Preservation Austin:

"Built between 1889 and 1911, the store at 1500 E. 12th St. traces the diverse heritage of East Austin. The building's early history reflects the German heritage of Austin and Central Texas—initially constructed by grocer and politician Christian J. Willhem, it was later acquired by Dessau merchants Ernest and Louisa Eisenbeiser, who operated a produce and dry goods store, a saloon, and a restaurant there.

In 1950, Black businessman Buford Johnson purchased the building, transforming it into a community hub for East Austin's African American population during the Jim Crow era. By the mid-1950s, the building housed the Fifteen Hundred Beauty and Barber Shops, as well as Club Fifteen Hundred, a bar and music venue. It later became the home of the Gamma Eta Alpha chapter of the Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity, the oldest fraternity in America to admit Black members. The building is prominently situated at the corner of E. 12th and Comal Streets, directly across from the I.Q. Hurdle and Southgate-Lewis Houses—both landmarks of Austin's Black heritage —reflecting the greater importance of this intersection to the story of Black East Austin. "

This property has been part of the many changes in East Austin and deserves to be preserved

and designated a historic landmark for the City of Austin. We urge the Austin City Council to support the ordinance.

- Community Development Commission, Austin, TX

Vote: Unanimous on an 8-0-0

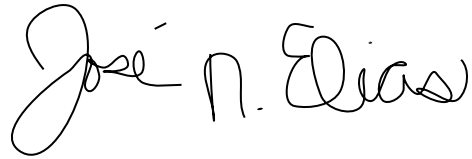
For: Chair Cheryl Thompson, Vice Chair Jose Noe Elias, and Commissioners Jenny Achilles, Nyeka Arnold, Bertha Delgado, Tisha Vonique Hood, Raul Longoria and Julia Woods.

Against:

Abstain:

Absent: Commissioners Cynthia Jaso, Jo Anne Ortiz, Gavin Porter and Michael Tolliver

Attest:



Jose N. Elias
