

From: [Scott Menzies](#)
To: [Contreras, Kalan](#)
Subject: Robertson Hill Neighborhood Association Letter of Support for 907 E.13th
Date: Wednesday, February 4, 2026 2:50:56 PM

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On behalf of the Robertson Hill Neighborhood Association (RHNA), I am writing to formally express our opposition to the proposed demolition of the historic structure located at 907 E. 13th Street, Austin, Texas 78702.

At a duly noticed meeting of the Robertson Hill Neighborhood Association, the membership held a vote regarding the proposed demolition. The vote was unanimous in opposition. This decision reflects the strong and shared belief of our neighborhood that the structure at 907 E. 13th Street holds significant historical and cultural value and should be preserved.

The building is a contributing element to the historic fabric of East Austin and Robertson Hill. Its age, architectural character, and connection to the area's early development make it an important physical reminder of the neighborhood's history. Demolishing this structure would result in an irreversible loss to the community and further erode the historic character of our neighborhood.

At this time, there is no clear or concrete plan for redevelopment that would justify the permanent loss of this historic resource. Preservation, rehabilitation, or adaptive reuse should be fully explored as viable alternatives that respect both the site's history and the surrounding community.

The Robertson Hill Neighborhood Association respectfully urges the **Planning Commission** and all relevant decision-making bodies to deny the demolition request for 907 E. 13th Street and to support efforts that prioritize preservation of historic resources in East Austin.

Thank you for your time and consideration of the neighborhood's position on this matter.

Sincerely,

Scott Menzies
President
Robertson Hill Neighborhood Association

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Julius Nitschke House – Historic Landmark Packet

Statement of Significance

Under the City of Austin Historic Landmark criteria, the Julius Nitschke House is significant for its association with historically important persons, its representation of early residential development patterns, and its strong associative integrity.

The property is associated with the Nitschke family, a German-American family active during Austin's late-19th- and early-20th-century growth. Members of the family contributed to Austin through skilled labor and civic leadership during a formative period in the city's development. Notably, Julius Nitschke's uncle, J. Bassett Nitschke, served for twenty years on the Austin City Council and played a key role in early municipal infrastructure, including street paving and storm sewer installation.

Julius Nitschke personally built and occupied the house as his residence, reflecting a historic pattern of owner-built homes intended for long-term occupancy rather than speculative development. Approximately four decades later, Julius Nitschke sold the property to **Andrew W. Versea**, an African American reverend, marking an important transition in the property's history that reflects patterns of African American homeownership, community leadership, and neighborhood continuity in East Austin.

This continuity of ownership across racial and cultural lines enhances the property's historical significance by illustrating broader social and demographic patterns in Austin during the early-to-mid 20th century. The property retains integrity of location, association, and feeling, and remains legible as an early Austin residential structure tied directly to its original builder and subsequent community leaders.

Historic Landmark Eligibility Finding

The Julius Nitschke House meets City of Austin Historic Landmark designation criteria for association with historically significant persons, its illustration of historic patterns of development and homeownership, and for its ability to convey these associations through retained integrity of location, association, and feeling.

Demolition Rebuttal Statement

Demolition of the Julius Nitschke House would result in the irreversible loss of a documented historic resource directly associated with early Austin civic leadership, skilled labor history, and African American community leadership in East Austin. The property is not a vacant or speculative structure, but a surviving example of an owner-built home later stewarded by a prominent African American reverend.

The replacement of this structure would permanently sever the physical connection between multiple historically significant communities and the neighborhood they helped build. Preservation of this resource aligns with the City's adopted preservation goals and supports neighborhood continuity, cultural heritage, and responsible growth.

Appendix A: Historical Documentation

City Directory and Property History Evidence

Historic Austin city directories document Julius H. Nitschke as a carpenter residing at 907 East 13th Street, confirming direct association between the subject property and its original builder. Property records further indicate that approximately forty years later, ownership transferred to Andrew W. Versea, an African American reverend, demonstrating continuity of residential use and community leadership.

Newspaper Documentation

A contemporaneous newspaper article documents J. Bassett Nitschke as a long-serving Austin City Council member and early municipal infrastructure leader, including oversight of Congress Avenue paving and Austin's original storm sewer system. This documentation establishes the Nitschke family's direct involvement in shaping Austin's civic and physical infrastructure.

Sturgill, Hunter

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, February 3, 2026 5:41 PM
To: Historic Preservation Office
Subject: PR-2025-138065; GF-2025-144692 ; 907 E 13th Street

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Preservation Board,

I am writing to oppose the demolition permit for 907 E 13th Street.

This house is one of the oldest remaining homes in the neighborhood and meets the City's criteria for historic consideration, including architectural significance, association with early settlers in this area of Austin, and established community value. It is also one of the few remaining structures tied to the Swedish history of Swede Hill, much of which has already been lost to prior development.

Neighborhood representatives have attempted to contact the applicant to discuss alternatives to demolition, but those requests have gone unanswered. This raises concerns about demolition-by-neglect and a lack of good-faith engagement in the preservation review process. The applicant's consistent demolitions among their considerable 12th and 13th Street holdings and plethora of empty lots have become a blight on the East Side. It is about time that the Board and the City of Austin to do something about it as it is long overdue. They are not honest brokers and never will be until they held to account..

I respectfully urge the Commission to deny the demolition permit and to require consideration of preservation alternatives consistent with the City's adopted criteria and long-term neighborhood interests.

Bruce Sheehan
903 East 14th St
Austin, TX 78702

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February 3, 2026

RE: PR-2025-138065; GF-2025-144692 ; 907 E 13th Street

To whom it may concern,

As a resident of Swede Hill, I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed demolition permit for 907 E 13th Street.

The property is one of the oldest remaining residences in the neighborhood and retains clear historical significance. Based on the City's adopted criteria, the building meets multiple standards for consideration, including architectural integrity, association with historically significant individuals, specifically early settlers in this area of Austin, and community value. As one of the few remaining structures connected to the Swedish heritage of Swede Hill, the property represents an increasingly rare link to the neighborhood's cultural and historical identity, much of which has already been lost through prior development, including the construction of I-35.

The applicant has been unresponsive to meet and discuss alternatives to demolition. This lack of engagement raises concerns about their known demolition-by-neglect practices and the potential reliance on procedural timelines rather than good-faith preservation review. These concerns are heightened by the applicant's recent demolition of another property on East 13th Street, which has resulted in another vacant lot rather than meaningful reinvestment. This pattern has had a visible and negative impact on the larger neighborhood.

I respectfully urge the Commission to deny the demolition permit for 907 E 13th Street and to consider preservation-minded alternatives consistent with the City's historic review criteria and neighborhood conservation goals.

Sincerely,

Molly Hubbs

Resident of Swede Hill Neighborhood

Sturgill, Hunter

From: Sturgill, Hunter
Sent: Friday, January 23, 2026 10:49 AM
To: Historic Preservation Office
Subject: FW: Next meeting of Historic Landmark Commission
Attachments: IMG_2499.jpg



Hunter Sturgill (she/her)
Planner II
Historic Preservation Office
Austin Planning
512-974-3393
hunter.sturgill@austintexas.gov

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From: Contreras, Kalan <Kalan.Contreras@austintexas.gov>
Sent: Friday, January 23, 2026 9:12 AM
To: Sturgill, Hunter <hunter.sturgill@austintexas.gov>
Subject: FW: Next meeting of Historic Landmark Commission

Please add to backup. Thank you!

From: River Roaring [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, January 13, 2026 12:46 PM
To: Contreras, Kalan <Kalan.Contreras@austintexas.gov>
Cc: Historic Preservation Office <Preservation@austintexas.gov>; [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Next meeting of Historic Landmark Commission

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Kalan,

I appreciate your willingness to receive information by email!

Attached please find:

- **the first page of my contract of sale of 907 East 13th Street to Eureka.** This shows that the other company name is simply a holding company, as this contract is the one we closed on and the property has not been sold to anyone else since.
- **a rendering by Jamie Chioco's architecture firm for 907 East 13th.** This rendering shows that we had planned to build a LOT of new construction behind the current front two rooms, the historically significant

part, without the public even being able to see the construction behind the historic front. The whole back portion would be hidden from sight from the front! These plans were approved by the city, and we had our construction permits, and were about to break ground when I changed my mind. So **this plan to add new construction behind the historic part was approved already. It can be done easily!**

I'm copying my neighbor Polina on this email to keep her in the loop.

I have many stories to share about the block, and it's history that I learned from Deloria Grant who lived across the street from me for 70 years.

Would you like me to share my stories here by email, or share them in person at the meeting February?

Would they be helpful to you before the hearing?

I very much appreciate your help on this, and look forward to hearing from you.

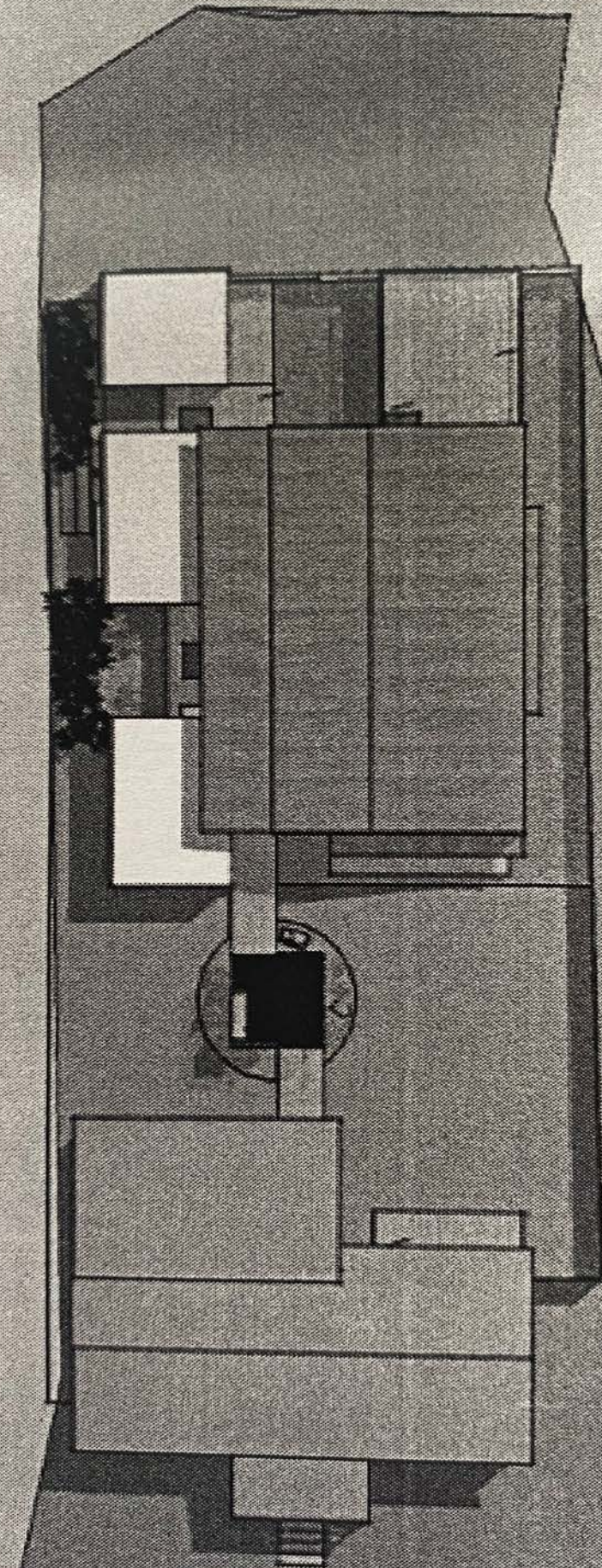
With love and light,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "River". The letter "R" is large and stylized, with a small asterisk above it. The rest of the name is written in a cursive, flowing script.

909 East 13th Street

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Sturgill, Hunter

From: Polina Koronkevich [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, January 7, 2026 5:27 AM
To: Historic Preservation Office
Subject: PR-2025-138065; GF-2025-144692 ; 907 E 13th

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Hello,

I'm writing in opposition to the demolition permit for 907 e 13th street. This is one of the oldest homes in the neighborhood, and Eureka is a rampant demolition-by-neglect bad actor. I spoke at last month's meeting about this property, and my feelings have not changed. I will not be able to attend tonight's meeting.

We reached out to the applicant to come meet with the neighborhood, but have not heard back from them. We suspect that they will not be interested in meeting with us in order to run out the 90-day automatic approval clock. I know that the city is being sued by Eureka because of the Eisenbeiser building, but we need to put a stop to these tactics because they are ruining neighborhoods. There is another property on east 13th that they recently tore down, which had been a rental but now is just an empty lot. I pass it walking every day and it's a blatant reminder that these people do not have any interest in improving the East Side.

This building certainly meets the criteria for architecture, association with important people (the first settlers to this part of Austin), and community value -- it is one of the oldest homes in this neighborhood and connects us the Swede portion of our Swede Hill neighborhood name, much of which we have lost to I-35 development.

Thank you,
Polina

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