Neill-Cochran House Museum
2310 San Gabriel Street
Austin, Texas 78705-5014

November 3, 2026

Attn: Austin Historic Landmarks Commission

Re: HLC Case No. PR-2026-127240, 909 West 22 ½ Street

Dear Historic Landmarks Commission:

I am writing today to formally request that the HLC deny the demolition permit for Case No. PR-2026-127240, the property at 909 West 22 ½ Street. This c. 1907 property plays an important role in telling the story of West Campus and of broader Austin history and should be preserved.

This property retains a remarkable degree of its historic fabric, both on the interior and exterior, and is one of few remaining examples of a Late Victorian/Transitional Queen Anne-style residence within the West Campus area. As such is speaks to a vibrant and diverse community that has largely been lost. Beyond its architectural significance, the property's connection with the Thiele family and the ever-evolving University of Texas neighborhood provide openings to stories that continue to resonate in our city and whose loss will deprive current residents of the rich understanding of the spaces they inhabit.

Too often, the city allows its historic fabric to be swept away in favor of new development when adaptive reuse remains a viable alternative. This structure is physically in a condition that would lend itself well towards adaptive reuse and its demolition would be an unnecessary tragedy. I therefore request that the HLC:

- postpone the demolition request and initiate historic zoning to allow city preservation staff to review the primary-source Thiele archives and to visit the site to evaluate the property for individual landmark status.

and

- encourage the applicant to alter their plans to pursue adaptive reuse, on-site relocation/integration, or structural preservation

Other cities have threaded the needle between preservation and progress in ways that allow them to retain their historic fabric while adapting to the needs of a modern population. I encourage Austin to take a stand to say that there are better ways of accomplishing the goal of high-density mixed use than through the scraping of the architectural and cultural heritage of our streetscapes.

Sincerely,

Rowena Dasch

Rowena Houghton Dasch, Executive Director, Neill-Cochran House Museum