

TESTIMONIALS

A Flagship House by Ellen Simpson

I've lived around the Crestview/Brentwood neighborhood for 20 years. My exercise walk is up and down Woodrow Avenue, and for the past 20 years the McKown House has been a special landmark of my walk. 1501 Richcreek is the highlight of this central Austin neighborhood, a flagship of mid-century development. Who in their right mind would allow the most beautifully designed home in a neighborhood to be torn down by outsider developers? My next-door neighbor has lived in his house since 1959. He told me 1501 Richcreek has always been a landmark home.

Deep in the Heart of Austin by Joanne Clem Garrett

Although I don't live in Crestview (I live in Wooten which is just north of Crestview on the other side of Anderson Lane), I have always had a fondness for what I now know is "The McKown House".

When it went on the market several years ago I was excited to be able to finally go inside because it had been my dream house for years - a sprawling ranch style house with so much character not to mention the majestic elm trees lining its perimeter, and all right in the heart of Austin!

I was unaware of who the original occupants were and the hand they had in the development of Austin at the time. Knowing that Mr. McKown was instrumental in building so much of our infrastructure including I-35 and the airport runways only adds to its value as an Austin landmark.

Although it has seen better days – the drought and neglect have taken their toll on the beautiful elm trees that I once admired - to me it, along with Crestview MiniMax, is still the crown jewel of that neighborhood and should be preserved as such. Please don't let us lose another piece of Austin's history to big developers!

Save the Landmarks! by Verna Warwick

I'm proud of you, Crestview residents! You have a neighborhood with character of its own, and you wish to preserve it! Like myself, you are alarmed at the invasion of our quaint little neighborhood by corporate investors. I have lived in Crestview since 1951. I know there are times when structures are in disrepair and need to be demolished. The McKown house does not meet that criteria. It needs the careful restoration of a historic house of outstanding architecture. We need to preserve the charm and individuality, along with the historic background, which makes Crestview a unique subdivision of our beautiful city of Austin.

A Forever House by Betty Sue Andrews

When R. J. McKown built his house on Richcreek Road, he meant it to last "forever" - using every material of the finest quality. In addition to building highways, his company constructed many homes and commercial properties. He used all that experience to build a home like no other at that time! (Betty Sue Andrews is R. J. McKown's granddaughter)

The McKowns and the Yates WERE Crestview by Leah Peschel

The McKowns lived there, and the house was a showplace of the neighborhood. The McKowns and the Yates WERE Crestview. We all knew them, and we had so much fun. My son and her son were the same age. The house is a landmark just like the IGA grocery store. It would be so sad if they tore it down. You can tell them what I said. I'm so glad y'all are trying to do something. (57-year Crestview resident)

An Impressive House by Diane Williams

I have lived in Brentwood for 25 years. This home was always beautifully maintained and is so very impressive. I always wished I lived there. I know drought has killed the lovely trees that stood along Woodrow, but the home and all its structures are still magnificent.

This "rip and replace" attitude that outsiders have needs to stop. They are destroying our quaint neighborhood and its charm. Leave McKown House alone!!

A Dignified Reminder of the Past by Justine Nygren

My home is on Palo Duro Road, and I also own the property next door. My parents bought that property in 1950, and I moved with them there at 12 years of age. I am now 76 years of age and have seen many changes in the Violet Crown and Crestview areas.

In my mind driving south from Anderson Lane on Woodrow Avenue the landmarks I look forward to seeing are the churches (at one time there were more churches on Woodrow than any other street in Austin, and we were proud of it), the Crestview Shopping Center and the homes at the intersection of Woodrow and Richcreek.

In this period of transition from single homes to multi-use facilities on what appears to be zero lot lines, I would greatly miss the McKown House as a stately, dignified reminder of the past and an inspiration to the new members of our community.

A Beautiful Landmark by Geneva Doyle

I have lived in the neighborhood since 1956 in the same house. I expect to live out my life at this address in Crestview. The McKown House has always been the most beautiful, the most admired and the most wanted house by everyone in this Crestview neighborhood. I do not want to see this beautiful landmark torn down. **SAVE THE MCKOWN HOUSE.**

A Generation of Values by Clare Barry

I feel like the McKown House has historic significance because it has long been a part of the cultural identity of the Crestview neighborhood, and because it was the residence of Mr. R. J. McKown and his family, and so is associated with a person of importance to the neighborhood and to the city as a whole.

I would like to share a couple of memories that I think are relevant to the second criteria of the Historic Landmark Commission for historic designation: Historical Associations. These are memories of two men of Mr. McKown's generation, who, like him, exemplify the values of our community, past and present.

Shortly after I moved into the Brentwood neighborhood in 1975, I found myself sometimes unable to stretch the grocery money from paycheck to paycheck. Mr. Prellop, owner of the Minimax, would put an I.O.U. in the cash drawer for the amount that I came up short. He would just write it on a little slip of paper and put it in the cash drawer. And then the next time I came in, I would pay it back. (You never forget little things like that.)

And then there was the time my next door neighbor's little boy ate a whole bottle of baby aspirin. After we called Poison Control, we called the Crestview Pharmacy. Mr. Harper had the remedy waiting for me on the counter as I dashed over there in my car. No need to pay now - my neighbor could come in and pay later . . .

Please save the McKown House. It is an important part of our neighborhoods' past.

Just as Historic by Sandra Mahlmann

I have lived in the neighborhood for 55 years, and the McKown house was always one of the best houses – Its tall, well kept trees, the always manicured lawn. It was always nice driving by and seeing the 3 upscaled houses on the corners. The McKown house is as historic as the Crestview Shopping Center, Minimax and Crestview Pharmacy. I would hate to see this wonderful house torn down to build some strange looking house like they build now days.

I was really sad to see the last occupants let the yard run down so. Lost 2 of the large trees and a lot of bushes. It was really sad that they took on much more house and yard than they could handle. It would be nice to get it back to its glory.

Anticipation by Sandy Giro

We moved to 1813 Richcreek in 1964. I was nine. We did not know anyone who lived in the McKown House. I remember walking home daily from Wooten Elementary looking forward to seeing the big beautiful house on the corner, wondering what it looked like inside and who lived there, hearing laughter. Growing older, riding my bike around the neighborhood or driving my car, I always looked forward to seeing the big house (McKown House).

We no longer live on Richcreek; my parents moved in 1997. There are many times when we visit Austin that we drive through our old stomping grounds. We look forward to seeing what has stayed the same and what has changed. 1813 now has central air instead of the window units we had. I imagine it has central heating too, instead of space heaters and many other changes that one cannot see from outside. All upgrades!!! I would feel devastated if someone tore down (my) house from my childhood; there would be NO reason to drive through the neighborhood anymore. There are tears running down my cheeks. I feel the same about the proposed changes to the McKown House as it, too, is a big part of my childhood. When we are driving down Woodrow towards Richcreek, I feel anticipation rising as I look for the big house (McKown House). If the McKown House was no longer there, I would not drive down Woodrow to Richcreek, I would drive to Yates or Burnet Road to see my childhood home.

Just Down the Street by Russell Barr

I grew up living just a few houses down from the McKown House. My parents still reside in that same house after over 60 years. When I retired, I returned to Richcreek to live next to my parents.

As a boy growing up on Richcreek, I was always intrigued by the big brick house on the corner. Even though to some it may have seemed out of place next to the more modest homes on the block, it always felt right for it to be there to me. The house is a part of the Crestview area; it belongs to it. It helps to define who we are as families, families past and families present. Visit the home, stand across the street and look. You will see and feel just as I did as a boy and do today 60 years later that it deserves to stay.

Crestview History by Susan Burneson

Looking at a map of Crestview, you can see that where the McKown Home is – the corner of Richcreek and Woodrow – is the geographic heart of Crestview. Woodrow Avenue, Brentwood and Crestview’s “main street”, passes by the mosaic Wall of Welcome, completed in 2008, and by Crestview Shopping Center and many neighborhood churches, all built in the early 50s and still thriving today. (Woodrow is known by many residents as “Church Row.”) Richcreek Road was named for Frank Richcreek, whose dairy farm became Crestview in the late 40s. Original Crestview developer Ray Yates and his wife, Maude, lived across Woodrow from the McKowns. Maude was an avid gardener and longtime member of the Violet Crown Garden Club. In the early 60s, she had a sturdy oak tree, slated for removal at Crestview Shopping Center, transplanted to a new location. Today, the tree provides shade for outdoor seating at Little Deli. Neighbors young and old remember longtime educator and gardener Al Boemer, who lived across Richcreek from the McKown Home for more than 50 years. A few blocks north, on the west side of Woodrow between Dartmouth and Princeton, is another large brick home, that of early area home builder Howard Pringle.

This Gracious Old Home by Martha Bell

My husband and I, with our young daughter, moved into Crestview in October, 1974, 39 years ago. When coming home from downtown, our route is usually Woodrow to Richcreek, where we make our turn at this gracious old home, a landmark of the neighborhood. It is very distinct in its style — different from any of the other houses in the neighborhood. We never knew any of the people who lived in the house, but we always admired it, and have been disappointed in the last few years to see the beautiful tall trees dying and being cut down. I think it would be a real shame to demolish the house, especially since I now know its history. I would hope someone who would appreciate it could buy it and live in it.

Preserve It For Future Generations by Walterene Peters

I have lived in Crestview since 1962 on Richcreek Road. I never knew the history of the McKown House but have always admired the house since I moved into the neighborhood because it had been so well kept and wished I could someday own the property but could never afford it. Since the house has been on the corner of my street since before I moved here, and the house has existed so long here, and Mr. McKown did so much for the neighborhood and was born before the turn of the 1900s, I think everything possible should be done to preserve it for future generations.

Mr. McKown and IH-35 by Richard Giro

In 1956 I was a 9th grader at Concordia High School. The campus included Concordia Jr. College, and was located at 3400 East Avenue, which over the years became what we know today as IH-35. My classmates and I would lay on the grass hillside near the Chapel and watch cars drive by on what was becoming a freeway. We could still walk across to the other side, as there was no need for barriers at that time.

Learning recently the identity of the contractor responsible for the transformation into what is the massive highway it is today is only a small fact. But discovering that Mr. McKown had a "roots" connection with Crestview neighborhood is meaningful, as my vision of the neighborhood is readily constructed by the house on Richcreek being the focal point of that vision. My wife lived on Richcreek, and I traveled the street many days while we were dating. For more visible data on the historical importance of Mr. McKown, go to texasfreeway.com. The 1951-1954 pictures illustrate the changes beginning to take place under the guidance of Mr. McKown. While changes to IH-35 were inevitable as Austin grew, it is comforting to know that Crestview has remained a symbol of stability. The McKown house anchors that stability, and must remain intact. Granting Historical status to the structure would support the fabric of a community that deserves to retain its dignity and strength.

What a Shame by Jane Farmer

I've lived on Pasadena Drive, very near the McKown House, for about 25 years. My home is really nice, but the McKown house has always been my "dream house". Until recently, the house stood among the stately elms and beautiful landscaping as a unique presence in the Crestview neighborhood. If it is demolished, in 5, 10, or 15 years down the road, people will say, "What a shame". Let's don't lose any more of Austin's historic buildings!

Icon of an Era by Mr. and Mrs. Jimmy D. Welborn

In our quaint neighborhood, filled with young families, students, and retirees - the McKown House has stood stately like the jewel of our era. We have often strolled past imagining ourselves sitting out by the pool, sunning by the cabana. Gazing up at the beautiful arbor of trees and admiring the perfectly manicured lawn, feeling inspired.

It has always been the estate of our neighborhood. It's our icon of an era -- the birth of our neighborhood when times were simple. We have been grateful for the parts of our neighborhood history and homes that have been spared from the wrecking ball.

For our future generations, please reconsider the heart of our community and save this wonderful home. Investors, be kind to our legacy; it is so very significant to our community and the people that reside here.

My Favorite House by Jill and Jake Green

My husband and I moved to Crestview in November of 2010. We are newer to the community, but absolutely love Crestview and the little things that make it a unique part of Austin. One of the joys of exploring the streets of Crestview is admiring all the houses and appreciating the trees in our neighborhood.

The McKown House became a favorite landmark for us during our daily walks. This house stood out to me for the large shade trees, as well as its architecture and scale, which is unlike most of the homes in the neighborhood. It is neatly organized on a prominent corner lot in Crestview, so it is very visible to both drivers and pedestrians. Early on I referred to The McKown House as "my favorite house", and my husband knew I meant the one on the corner of Woodrow and Richcreek. It was only after we had lived here for a while that we found out that this house is well known in Crestview. The McKown House is indeed an important landmark in our community. Please save the McKown House.