



March 29, 2019

**Re: Preservation of the I. Q. Hurdle House**

Dear Mayor and Council, Urban Renewal Board, and Historic Landmark Commission:

On March 25, 2019, the Organization of Central East Austin Neighborhoods voted unanimously to add our voices to those of Kealing Neighborhood and Preservation Austin to call for timely action to ensure preservation of the I.Q. Hurdle House in its location at 1416 East 12th Street. As many of you know, this important City landmark has continued to deteriorate under current ownership, and we respectfully request that the Historic Landmark Commission initiate a demolition-by-neglect case and that you all lend your authority, expertise and leadership to the creation and implementation of a plan for preservation.

Mr. Hurdle was an indefatigable and consequential science educator, school administrator and activist who focused on issues of access and equity for black graduate students and black public school facilities as well as assisting the community with the process of desegregation following Brown v. Board of Education. His home sits where it has since it was built, at a prominent intersection along the East 12th Street urban renewal corridor in the center of the African American Cultural Heritage District next to a longtime black-owned funeral home, the former Eisenbeiser grocery store and the Southgate-Lewis House. This home and the legacy of its former occupant deserve a thoughtful restoration that enjoys high visibility and contributes to the revitalization of a newly thriving East 12th Street firmly rooted in its past.

The current owners of the I.Q. Hurdle House [Eureka/Gilfillan Group] were aware of the site's historic zoning when they purchased it more than three years ago, and have acquired more than three dozen properties within the urban renewal area since 2013. They also own an important structure in the Old Austin Neighborhood—the Gilfillan House at 603 West 8th Street. Eureka/Gilfillan Group engaged a renowned Austin architect to develop plans for restoring the Gilfillan House where it was built, in West Austin; and, we believe they can and should do the same for the I.Q. Hurdle House, where it was built, in East Austin. Current zoning of the site is CS-H-MU-NCCD, allowing for a wide range of

adaptive reuse options that could underwrite its restoration. And just this past December, Austin City Council took action to approve a ten-year extension of the Urban Renewal Plan for East 11th and 12th Streets to allow its steward, the Urban Renewal Board, more time to oversee implementation of the community's East 12th Street revitalization goals. Working with East 12th Street property owners to ensure preservation of the street's historic character is high among them, and the board has publicly expressed a preference that the street's historic fabric be preserved in place.

Thank you all for considering the urgency of this situation and the willingness of so many individuals and community groups ready to work towards a new life for the I. Q. Hurdle House at 1416 East 12th Street. Please do all you can to move us towards this outcome, and please let us know if we can provide any additional information that will assist you in your efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nate Jones', followed by a long, horizontal, slightly wavy line that extends to the right.

Nate Jones  
President, Organization of Central East Austin Neighborhoods