

Dear Historic Landmark Commissioners:

I am writing in support of Historic Preservation Office staff's recommendation for historic zoning of the late Mr. Edward Rendon's former home, located at 1705 Haskell St.

Mr. Rendon was a venerated neighborhood leader and activist in the East Town Lake community from the 1970s up until his death in 2018. His numerous contributions and accomplishments are highly significant in the context of the neighborhood's history as a former working class Mexican American enclave. To wit, in 2007, the City of Austin officially designated a portion of Holly Shores (at Festival Beach) as Edward Rendon, Sr. Park in recognition of his extraordinary service to the community. Below I list some of Mr. Rendon's most notable achievements:

- Served as President of the East Town Lake Citizen Neighborhood Association (1975-1999)
- Led the movement to close the nearby Holly Power Plant (1990-2007)
- Co-organized the movement to stop the Town Lake boat races on Holly Shores alongside Austin's storied Brown Berets (1978)
- Served as a founding member of Austin's Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- Respected as an East Austin business owner known professionally for his talents as an expert stonemason. His company, Edward Rendon Masonry, completed stone masonry projects locally and beyond on neighborhood homes (including his own), at Cristo Rey church, and at Tom Miller's home

Mr. Rendon's former home at 1705 Haskell St. thus appears to meet the requirements for landmark designation based on his significance as a prominent Mexican American community leader and businessman in the East Town Lake district, and per the following eligibility criteria:

1. **Architecture:** the house retains architectural integrity; the stone façade exterior, which can be seen in photos taken in the early 1930s and which remains today, lends a distinctive vernacular quality.
2. **Historical association:** the house has a history dating back to the early 1930s in what was long a working-class neighborhood.
3. **Community Value:** Mr. Rendon moved into the house in 1962, and lived there for almost 60 years. During that time, Mr. Rendon hosted many important community-based events and initiatives in his home, including:
  - a. Weddings for several of the Honorable Judge Perkins' family members

- b. Planning meetings for Edward Rendon Sr. Holly Shores Master Plan stakeholders, including dignitaries Lady Bird Johnston, Mayor Carol Strayhorn, and community members Marcos DeLeon, Hortencia Palamores, and Paul Hernandez (1979)
- c. Primary staging site for free Haskell St. Halloween Block Party community events.

Mr. Rendon's former home at 1705 Haskell St. contributes to the historic character of the East Town Lake district. Considering its distinctive vernacular aesthetic in the context of Mr. Rendon's importance to Austin's Mexican American community, the house represents an architectural, cultural, and historical anchor for many long-term residents. Were Mr. Rendon's former home demolished, the community would surely lose an important asset that embodies aspects of both its tangible and intangible heritage. A vote in favor of historic zoning is a vote to protect it.

Sincerely,

Kristen Hotopp

East César Chavez resident

Sector 7 Representative, East César Chavez Contact Team