

June 20, 2020

Emily Reed, Chair  
City of Austin  
Historic Landmark Commission

Re: 2502 Park View Drive

Dear Ms. Reed,

Cedar and Oak Homes is a family owned company creating beautiful homes in Austin. We are thoughtful in our design selections, considerate in the build process, and look to restore the community we grew up in and love. Whether improving an existing home, or restoring a neighborhood with a new build after a structure has deteriorated, we look to honor the period and design influences of each neighborhood and carry those influences through to an updated, efficient, and modern home.

The structure at 2502 Park View is not a well-preserved structure. This property played a role in construction science in the 1950s and was innovative for its era. However, mechanical design and insulation of residential HVAC has advanced drastically. In its infancy, residential air conditioning engineering focused on the equipment. Since the central A/C unit's invention (1902) and introduction to residential construction (1931), the technology has not changed much outside of the improvements made in refrigerant. What has changed and where we continue to innovate is in a home's architectural and mechanical design for air quality, efficiency, and maintenance. The lack of an attic, characterized by the architectural design of the era, makes remedying the HVAC design near impossible for 2502 Park View. There is a path to preserving the neighborhood and architectural intent without investing in an unsound structure plagued by antiquated mechanical design.

The history of demolition in the neighborhood should also be considered. Eight of the original 22 homes have been demolished due to their dilapidated condition, some of which were in better condition than 2502 Park View. That history coupled with years of deferred maintenance affecting the environmentally unfriendly tar and gravel roof, cast iron plumbing, failing foundation, and general livability of the house -- We do not see a path to restoration, and support the demolition of the structure.

Even though this neighborhood is not historically designated, the goal is to honor the architectural style and design period of the neighborhood. This house was a fine example mid-century modern architecture when it was constructed. Like Fred Day's original design, the new construction will be a stylized example of mid-century modern architecture - exposed beams, asymmetrical facade, courtyards, single story, north and south facing windows, and inherent efficiency. The neighborhood association deed restrictions have been followed to the letter. We do not want to change the aesthetic of the neighborhood. The goal is to create a beautifully crafted, comfortable family home. Our design breathes life into the property while embracing the past of this amazing mid-century modern neighborhood, and extends the mid-century modern design another 50 plus years.

Thank you for your consideration.

Cedar and Oak, Inc.