

Brummett, Elizabeth

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, July 24, 2021 10:25 PM
To: PAZ Preservation
Cc: Brummett, Elizabeth; 'Ryan York'; 'Al York'; [REDACTED]
Subject: Request to speak: Save No-Comply, oppose demolition of 812-16 W. 12th St

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Members and Staff of the Historic Landmark Commission,

I oppose the demolition of the property at 812-16th W. 12th Street which currently houses No-Comply. I would like to speak to this issue during the HLC deliberations on potential landmark designation if they occur on July 26th but I do also support staff recommendation to postpone discussion until August 23 for further research and consideration of alternatives.

My professional area of expertise as a preservation architect and former Director of the Division of Architecture at the Texas Historical Commission is historic buildings. I've been asked to offer an opinion on this property by my 17 year old son, Ryan York because he has been part of the skater community in Austin since he learned to skate at age 11. He and others can speak to No Comply's considerable contributions to the community of Austin and also to the community of skaters, whom recently have found international recognition and standing through the Olympic games.

I have evaluated the commercial property at 812-16 W. 12th Street and reviewed the staff assessment. I would go so far as to say the building is an excellent example of neighborhood-scale commercial architecture and one of very few commercial buildings built immediately after World War II remaining in this area of Austin, along and adjacent to Lamar Boulevard. Built in 1946, this single building contains three small storefronts bays that beautifully represent the scale of modest mid-twentieth century businesses typical of American cities, in this case, a hairdresser at 812, a paint and wallpaper store at 814 and an ice-cream store at 816. Each occupied exactly 1,000 square feet of space which seems quaint in this day and time.

Certainly, the architectural integrity of the building is very high. All the original metal framed plate glass storefront windows, and wood doors remain as does the continuous corrugated metal canopy across the façade. The original brick and black ceramic tile of the façade are also intact and in good condition. It is rare to see so much intact and original historic fabric in a building in Austin these days. No-Comply has been a good steward of the building and worked to preserve and protect the three original storefronts while occupying the entire building for their skate shop. I contend that it clearly meets the criteria for landmark designation for its architectural significance as an excellent and intact example of neighborhood scale commercial architecture.

In terms of community value, not only does the building physically convey a sense of a small scale business model with links to its immediate neighborhood, the property continues this tradition today. No-Comply is such a definer of its neighborhood that the city built a skate park to serve its customers. It is a stable tenant of the building and the business contributes to the character of the neighborhood as well as the broader (counter) culture of our city. This is not "a random-ass skate shop" in the words of my son. Others can speak better to why that is but as a preservation professional, I voice my strong support in opposition to this building's demolition because it is an important example of small scale commercial architecture in a city that is losing this particular building type, and with it, the viability of small businesses, very rapidly.

Sharon Fleming, AIA

Preservation architect

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