



WEST AUSTIN NEIGHBORHOOD GROUP

Organized 1973

City of Austin Historic Landmark Commission
301 W 2nd St.
Austin, Texas 78701

May 30, 2022

OFFICERS

Holly Reed
President

RE: PR-2002-032448, 2002 Scenic Drive

Cathy Kyle
Past President, Secretary

Dear Chair Myers and Members of the Historic Landmark Commission,

George Edwards
Treasurer

On behalf of the West Austin Neighborhood Group Board of Directors, I write to convey our unanimous support for initiating historic zoning at 2002 Scenic Drive.

Blake Tollett
Assistant Treasurer

The home and landscaping at 2002 Scenic Dr. has long been known to our neighborhood as the “Rock House,” possessing significant historical architecture and community value in the WANG area. The unique materials used in the construction of this home, the artistic stone features, and location next to Lake Austin make this special home part of the cultural identity of our neighborhood and our city. This was one of the earliest homes built in our neighborhood, dating back to 1923. The stone work resembles several other stone cottages and homes built near Lake Austin during this time period. The building of these homes coincides with a national movement, the “City Beautiful Movement” of the early 1900s, as described in this RECONNAISSANCE -LEVEL SURVEY – NRHP EVALUATIONS, CSJ No. 3136-01-107 – TxDOT Contract 14-548P5003, WA No. 11

BOARD MEMBERS

Mary Arnold
Joyce Basciano
Joe Bennett
Sarah Hawthorne Cain
Michael Cannatti
Heidi Gibbons
Bob Hamilton
Craig Lill
Brady Pedneau

“Developers, as early as 1915, viewed the relatively undeveloped land of West Austin as favorable to developments centered around the automobile, which by the 1920s began to surpass the streetcar. In the eyes of developers, the remote area would appeal to automobile owners eager to escape city life. In addition, the natural beauty found in the hilly topography of West Austin would attract new residents. Scenic roads in the area, including the road following the Colorado River to the landmark Mount Bonnell, became even more popular as a result of the automobile. Coinciding with these factors was the growing influence of the City Beautiful Movement upon subdivision development in the early twentieth century. Occurring across the nation in the 1890s, the City Beautiful Movement emphasized cohesive subdivisions characterized by planned developments, deed restrictions and park-like settings. Such subdivisions were often referred to as Garden Suburbs, as they incorporated natural elements and community-oriented design. The hilly topography west of downtown Austin was perfectly suited to the underlying philosophy of the Garden Suburb and City Beautiful Movement. As a result, the rising popularity of the automobile, the beauty of undeveloped land west of Shoal Creek, as well as a movement to improve the aesthetics of residential developments all influenced the rise of automobile subdivisions in West Austin beginning in 1915.

Demolishing the property at 2002 Scenic Drive would be a tragic loss of history to our neighborhood and our City. We respectfully ask that you initiate historic zoning for this property, and will support any efforts to work with the owner on preservation and restoration as opposed to total demolition. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Holly Reed, President
West Austin Neighborhood Group
President@WestAustinNG.com