

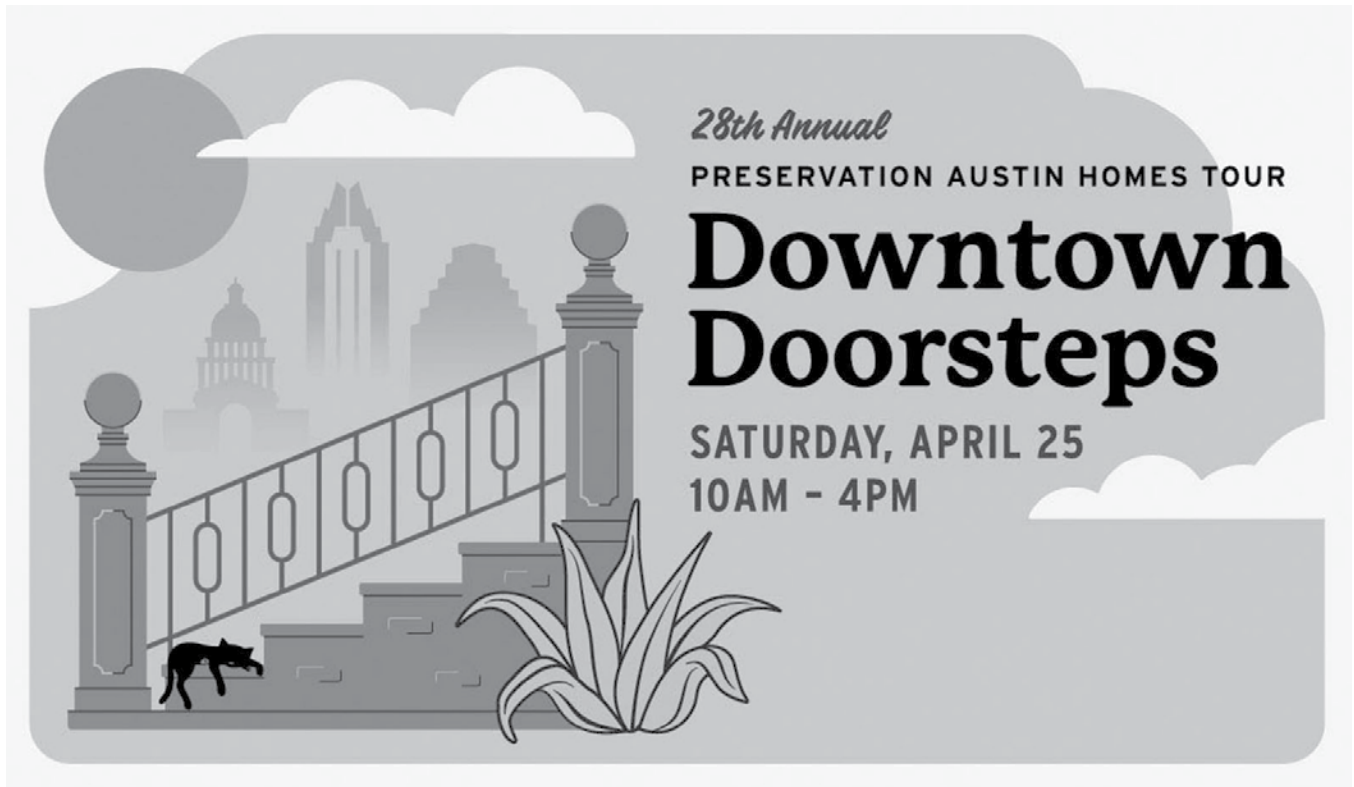


PRESERVATION
— AUSTIN —

PRESERVATION — AUSTIN —

SAVING THE GOOD STUFF

Spring 2020 ★ Volume 24 No. 1



Join us for Preservation Austin's
**28th Annual Homes Tour on Saturday,
April 25!**

"Downtown Doorsteps" celebrates downtown's historic living spaces in all their forms, from a mid-century high-rise with stunning views of the Texas Capitol, to a converted Congress Avenue storefront overlooking the Paramount Theatre.

Every year the Homes Tour explores some new aspect of Austin's architectural legacy - it's a powerful and personal way to connect with our heritage that you can't find anywhere else. It's also Preservation Austin's most important fundraiser, with all

proceeds supporting our advocacy efforts and educational programming year-round.

Members receive special pricing on tour tickets and some membership levels include free tickets

as well. We hope you'll join us, and bring along some friends, to spend a beautiful Austin day celebrating these incredible homes, their homeowners, and all the good work our nonprofit does year-round!

HOMES TOUR

SATURDAY, APRIL 25

10am to 4pm

Early Bird rates thru April 1:
\$25/PA Members, \$35/Non-Members

Standard rates:
\$30/PA Members, \$40/Non-Members

Early-bird tickets are on sale now (\$25 for Preservation Austin Members, \$35 for non-members) and standard pricing begins April 2. For details visit preservationaustin.org.

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NOTES FROM THE Executive Director

I want to share this quick note about some important changes we have going on here at Preservation Austin. You may have noticed that this is our latest newsletter since last fall. For the short term, we are moving to a bi-annual newsletter format each spring and fall, covering our Homes Tour and Preservation Merit Awards along with all the wonderful content you've come to rely on.

This decision gives us space to focus on our nonprofit's future. Our Board of Directors and staff are working hard on Preservation Austin's first strategic planning process in seven years. This is a pivotal time for historic preservation in our city, as rapid growth and changing political dynamics bring new challenges to fulfilling our mission. It's also an incredibly exciting time, with new opportunities for aligning our work preserving Austin's diverse cultural heritage with making it a more sustainable, equitable, and meaningful place to call home.

Our new strategic plan will result in a new vision, and actionable goals, for building a 21st century preservation nonprofit over the next five years. With your help, this organization accomplishes so much, and I'm excited to build on our successes to grow and to do even more. This is our opportunity to rise to the times, to make sure that our nonprofit has the resources we need to best serve our community. Austin deserves nothing less.

We look forward to sharing this vision with our members in the coming months! And to returning to a quarterly newsletter format as we build staff capacity. In the meantime, make sure to subscribe to our e-newsletter at preservationaustin.org, and follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter for up-to-date details on events and advocacy issues.

Thank you so much for your contribution and for your support – it makes all the difference.

Sincerely,

Lindsey Derrington



★

STAFF

Lindsey Derrington, Executive Director

Lesley Walker, Development & Communications Coordinator

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PRESERVATION — AUSTIN —

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And now for a sneak peek at this year's featured homes... Join us on April 25 to experience them in person and learn more about their stories, past and present:



706 Congress Avenue - 1872

This City of Austin Landmark has lived many lives over the past 150 years, including as numerous saloons and the Austin Chamber of Commerce. Vogue Shoe Store occupied the space for three decades starting in 1951; like so many other buildings along “The Main Street of Texas,” its original façade was destroyed by mid-century cladding during this time. The current owner purchased the building in 2003 and embarked on a meticulous 2.5 year-long reconstruction using historic photographs. The project returned the façade to its 1918 appearance, including limestone masonry, round-arched windows and doors, and steel-framed balcony. The first story remains commercial space. The tour will feature a third-story penthouse added during the restoration and a second story vacation rental, both with glorious views of the historic Paramount Theatre.

his young family. The Pennsylvania native and Union Army veteran was a leading member of Austin’s Republican Party, while wife Nellie came from rough and tumble Texas pioneers. After Nellie’s death in 1925 the home sold to stenographer Clara Besserer, who converted it into apartments to meet the growing demand for professional housing downtown. Chris Riley purchased the building in 2002. The first story had been converted to offices trapped by drop ceilings and fluorescent lighting. Riley peeled back these alterations to reveal beautiful wood finishes and return the space into apartments for himself and partner Denise Brady. This beautiful four-family building was the first residential remodel awarded 4 stars by the City of Austin’s Green Building Program.



709 Rio Grande Street - 1905

Joseph D. Sayers commissioned this gracious home by Page Brothers Architects soon after finishing his second term as Governor of Texas. Sayers led the state through numerous tragedies during his tenure, including the heartbreaking Galveston Hurricane in 1900. Wife Orline Walton Sayers lived here until her death in 1943. A painter and renowned hostess, she was known as the “Dolly Madison of Texas” for turning the Governor’s Mansion into the “center of the state’s social and cultural life.” Owner Blair Fox has lived here since 1994. This City of Austin Landmark’s gorgeous interiors retain extensive woodwork alongside his extensive art collection, which makes exploring this labyrinthine home a pure pleasure. Sayers was former Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Texas; the attic apartment includes a mysterious fireplace mantel with Masonic iconography.



1310 San Antonio Street - 1890

Austin’s newly appointed Internal Revenue Collector, Major Joseph W. Burke, built this home just west of the Texas State Capitol for

Continued on page 4



Brown Building – 1938

Construction industry titan Herman Brown commissioned C. H. Page and Son architects for this Art Moderne office building at the height of the Great Depression. His firm, Brown & Root, was heavily involved in federally-funded infrastructure projects – work reflected in the Brown Building’s marbled elevator lobby with stylized etched-glass panels depicting a dam, highway, and oil field. The City of Austin Landmark was converted into condominiums in the late 1990s. Owners Monica Pereira and David Zisa purchased their unit here in 2018. The light-filled space retains its industrial feel with steel-framed windows, exposed electrical conduits and concrete pillars, and terrazzo floors. A gorgeous new open kitchen features textures and colors that play off historic materials, accented by a mix of contemporary and midcentury furnishings and fixtures.

Cambridge Tower – 1965

Cambridge Tower embodied opulent urban living at the height of the Cold War. Dallas developers opened this fifteen-story residential tower, then the tallest in Austin, with New Formalist detailing and colorful branding geared towards young professionals. Floorplans boasted names such as Envoy, Chancellor, and Premier with wall-to-wall carpeting in shades of “Gold” or “Martini.” Austin’s own Swinging Sixties could rub elbows at the “Mediterranean style” swimming pool and Table Royale restaurant. Children were permitted but not encouraged (because of the building’s height, so management claimed) and if things took a turn for the worse, Cambridge Tower boasted its own fallout shelter.

This year’s tour features two units in this National Register-listed landmark:



Architect Anthony Alofsin, FAIA purchased a tenth-story “Minister” unit with wife Patricia in 2006. The west-facing balcony overlooks the Judges Hill and West Campus neighborhoods. White walls, floors, and custom casework glow with gorgeous LED lighting that transforms their home with serene shades of yellow, pink, green, and blue depending on “the weather, season, and mood.” Furnishings and decorative pieces from the couple’s travels add warmth. Banks of floor-to-ceiling windows have been reinforced with triple-pane glass and solar shades.



Michael Raiford and Todd Logan have lived in their seventh-story “Viceroy” unit since 2002. Their home faces south and west, with a wraparound balcony boasting stunning views of the Texas State Capitol and the UT Tower. A mixture of large-scale street art, pop art, and Raiford’s own works are displayed throughout alongside original and contemporary pieces by Knoll and Herman Miller. A recent project opened the original kitchen and dinette to the living-dining room, improving flow for a couple who entertains often. Natural light plays off color throughout this vibrant space.



A grateful thanks to our 2020 Homes Tour Photographer – Leonid Furmansky

Greening Your Vintage Home: Getting Back to Nature

Wednesday, May 20 7pm to 8:30pm FREE!

Elisabet Ney Museum – 304 East 44th Street, 78751



Presented by Preservation Austin's Education Committee. ★

Preservation Austin's Greening Your Vintage Homes series explores the intersection of preservation and sustainability. Join us for this year's program to learn about Austin's natural history and how you can integrate your vintage home into native ecosystems! Discussion topics include birds, plants, and pollinators, and we'll learn how ongoing landscape restoration efforts at the beautiful Elisabet Ney Museum are returning the grounds to their native prairie origins – as Ney herself would have known them. Become a habitat helper by

supporting Austin's natural communities in ways big and small, from neighborhood backyards to apartment balconies.

We'll be announcing our speakers soon, so mark your calendars and stay tuned!

Light refreshments provided. Seating capacity is limited, RSVP to events@preservationaustin.org by Friday, May 15.



Historic Austin Happy Hour at Cisco's: Recap

Many thanks to Will Bridges and Matt Cisneros for hosting another amazing Juggling and Jawing: Historic Austin Happy Hour at Cisco's on February 26! This iconic Tex-Mex diner was ground zero for many neighborhood political and civic efforts during the 1960s and 1970s. Austin mayors, US Representative Jake Pickle, and President Lyndon B. Johnson all paid court here

to friend and owner Rudy Cisneros, "the Mayor of East Austin." Will and Matt are part of the team that purchased Cisco's in 2018, and have lovingly preserved its legacy and character for future generations. We absolutely loved learning about this preservation success story! Keep an eye out for details on our next happy hour this summer.



Spring at Oakwood Cemetery Chapel

Jennifer Chenoweth, Museum Site Coordinator, Oakwood Cemetery Chapel



Oakwood Cemetery Chapel

Early Austin was created by unique individuals, many of whom are buried at Oakwood Cemetery. When I moved to Austin in the late 1990s I lived near the cemetery while attending graduate school at The University of Texas at Austin in Studio Art. I often walked there and thought about its headstone shapes and monuments to love, and later wrote my thesis on the cemetery. Now that I have the amazing opportunity to curate the Oakwood Cemetery Chapel as its first Museum Site Coordinator, I get to spend my time researching people's lives and how they made Austin.

Caminar (To Walk): December 21-March 18

Our current exhibit *Caminar (To Walk)* has been a series of meaningful events with one more to come. On December 21, Danza Aztec Mexica performed a “Dance of the Four Corners” ceremony to remember the Tejanos and Mexican Americans buried at Oakwood. We also walked the perimeter of the cemetery and read aloud the 900+ names of people with Mexican heritage buried here. In February, Mary Jane Aranda spoke about the traditions of Tamaladas in her family, and showed a tamale quilt she has been sewing.

On Saturday, March 7 Robert Ojeda and the Bronze Band performed traditional Mexican American music as a processional. At noon there was an action of remembrance by Francisco Gonzalez, followed by screenings of films *Hundiré en el Jardín Mis Manos* by Mayra Silva and *Building the American Dream* by Chelsea Hernandez.

Our *Caminar* digital history exhibit remembers Save Austin Cemeteries



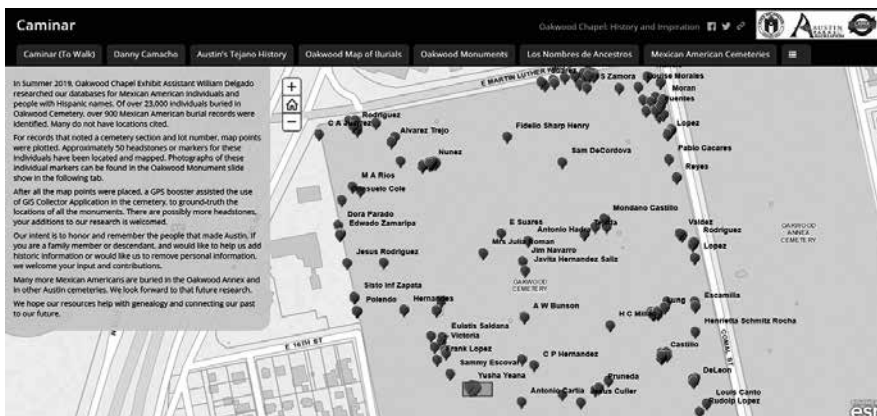
Dance of the Four Corners

co-founder Danny Camacho as well as the work of the Tejano Genealogical Society. It can be found online, along with other digital history projects, on the Oakwood Cemetery Chapel's website here: <http://www.austintexas.gov/page/oakwood-cemetery-chapel-resources>

To Hear: March 19-June 19

Our next exhibit, *To Hear*, appreciates Austin's musicians, including the Besserer Orchestra, the Gant Family, and Ernie Mae Crafton Miller. They played in music halls such as Scholz Garten, Pressler Beer Garden, and the New Orleans Club. John and Alan Lomax, musicologists with deep Austin roots, were known for traveling the world to record folk music.

On Saturday, March 21 at 2pm Michael Corcoran and Tim Kerr will launch their new book: *Ghost Notes: Pioneering Spirits of Texas Music*. On Saturday, April 25 at noon we'll dedicate a Texas historical marker for the Gant Family in the Oakwood Cemetery Annex. Following the dedication, we will learn more about the Gant Family with Michael Corcoran, and Kevin Russell will perform folk songs from the Gants and other John and Alan Lomax discoveries. ★





Dear Members,

As Austin's mild winter becomes a memory and we anticipate spring, I want to look back at Preservation Austin's very successful Preservation Merit Awards luncheon, held at the InterContinental Stephen F. Austin Hotel in November. We celebrated some of our city's most amazing preservation projects with a room full of wonderful supporters who understand our mission and appreciate the work we do.

But preservation is not always an easy sell, especially when our city is faced with so many growth and development pressures. Lindsey and many of our board members have spent much of their time working with city staff and council members on the rewrite of the Land Development Code. We understand the balancing act in play between our need to address issues like density and affordability while still maintaining our historic fabric and sense of place. These objectives don't have to be mutually exclusive. But, if we are to convince less ardent supporters, it may be time to refine our message.

PlaceEconomics and Donovan Rypkema, Principal and a former speaker at our Preservation Merit Awards luncheon, recently published an article entitled "Twenty-four Reasons Historic Preservation Is Good For Your Community." What is most relevant about PlaceEconomics' approach is that their analyses are based on the economic impacts of historic preservation. Their findings are based on defensible research and quantifiable results.

Over the past five years, PlaceEconomics analyzed the impacts of historic preservation in nearly a dozen U.S. cities from New York City to San Antonio. If we explore a few of the article's twenty-four reasons, we can see that what's good for these representative cities will likely work in Austin as well. Some of these economic drivers include revenue from heritage tourism, increased property values and tax generation, and creating density at a human scale. Here's a quick look into just a few of the other reasons that speak directly to many of the issues we're trying to address with our Land Development Code rewrite.

Environmental Responsibility

It's been said that the greenest building is the one that's already been built. As we turn our concerns to the environment, it's important to include the re-use of historic buildings as part of the solution.

Older buildings constructed more than 70 years ago use less energy per square foot. An example from the article notes that a structure in Raleigh, NC built since 1980 used nearly 13% more energy per square foot than did an apartment built prior to 1920.

When the energy cost of demolishing and hauling the materials from a historic building to the landfill are added to the embodied energy already used to construct the building, the demolition of a modest-sized historic home can be equivalent to throwing away thousands of gallons of gasoline.



To paraphrase Rypkema, nearly every grade-schooler learns that it's environmentally responsible to reduce, reuse, recycle. The use of historic buildings does all of those things.

Housing Affordability

One of the major attractions for young people moving to and staying in any city is affordable housing. Transportation must be taken into consideration when calculating the economic burden of housing costs. Older housing stock needs to be recognized for its contribution to nearly every city's affordable housing.

Preservation Allows Cities to Evolve

As I included in my remarks at the luncheon, some folks think preservationists want everything to look like something from Grandma's attic. Cities should and will change over time. The purpose is to manage change so that the character and quality of an entire neighborhood is not diminished by out-of-scale and out-of-context changes. Some of the most historic cities in America have managed thoughtful and robust

Continued on page 8



This winter Preservation Austin was thrilled to support three new projects as part of our matching grant program. Boggy Creek Farm, the Holy Cross Neighborhood Association, and the Foundation for the Preservation of the Historic Millett Opera House received funding to support a variety of needs.

Funding supports new restoration work at the five-acre Boggy Creek Farm, home to a City of Austin Landmark farm house thought to be one of the two oldest homes in Austin. The Holy Cross Neighborhood Association grant is in support of East Austin's Holy Cross/Washington Local Historic District to preserve one of our city's first neighborhoods developed by black professionals. The grant for the Millett Opera House will aide in the restoration of crumbling mortar for the 1878 structure.

Our grant application process is open now with March 15, June 15, and September 15, 2020 deadlines. Nonprofits, neighborhood associations, public entities,

and owners of individual landmarks or proposed landmarks, in addition to schools and church organizations are encouraged to apply for up to a \$5,000 matching award. Spread the word!

Education Grants support projects that foster a better understanding of Austin's history, including significant historical figures, cultural landscapes, cultural movements, sites, buildings, and neighborhoods. This includes, but is not limited to, oral histories, photography, art, film, applications and websites, neighborhood histories, and signage.

Bricks and Mortar Grants support the rehabilitation of historic properties, following the Secretary of Interior Standards, and must be locally designated at the time of the project's commencement or within one year of its completion. Qualifying expenses include façade rehabilitation/restoration, window/door rehabilitation and repair, repair of siding or exterior materials, exterior painting, repair of façade items, porch

repair, foundations, roofs, electrical, mechanical/HVAC, and other structural improvements and/or stabilization. Grants are also allowed for landscape features that contribute to the property's historical significance.

Planning/Survey/Historic Designation Grants support planning efforts, historic resource surveys, and historic designations that enable or encourage preservation of Austin's buildings, sites and neighborhood. Funds can be used for historic building condition reports, engineering and rehabilitation plans, feasibility studies, historic resource surveys and updates of previous surveys, National Register nominations, and local historic designations for individual buildings and districts in addition to consultant and application fees.

To obtain an application with additional information, visit preservationaustin.org or contact Development and Communications Coordinator Lesley Walker at lesley@preservationaustin.org.



President, continued from page 7

development happening in tandem with protecting their historic fabric. Preservation Austin is fortunate to have a membership that is informed, involved and passionate about our city and its future, based on the majesty of its rich history and culture. We call upon you, our esteemed members, to share your passion with friends, neighbors, colleagues and city officials to make preservation, sustainability, and environmental responsibility a strong part of our city's conversation about its development. As Austin experiences growth and prosperity,

it is incumbent on all of us to protect the historic resources and cultural landscapes that make Austin a standout city in which to live, work and play.

In another quote from the article, I'll close with this final thought:

"It's perfectly fine when we [preservationists] talk among ourselves to argue about cornices and gargoyles. But when we are talking to those who don't call themselves "preservationists"—when we talk to mayors and bankers and minority

communities and housing advocates and real estate developers—we need to expand our vocabulary."

All the best,

For the complete article from PlaceEconomics, go to <https://www.placeeconomics.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/City-Studies-WP-Online-Doc.pdf> ★

Heritage Grants

The City of Austin Heritage Tourism Division provides **Heritage Grants** for the preservation, restoration, and beautification of historically-significant buildings and spaces in Austin. The program serves to support historic preservation and tourism as mechanisms for engaging and building community, enhancing Austin's sense of place, and broadening our collective understanding of the area's heritage.

Applicants (nonprofit, commercial, or government entities) are encouraged to attend an upcoming Information Session on March 11 to learn more about the opportunity to apply for capital or marketing / educational grants connected to the significance of a historic building or district that attracts visitors and tourists.

Heritage Grant applications will be accepted beginning March 2. For more information on the Heritage Grant Program visit www.austintexas.gov/heritage-grants.



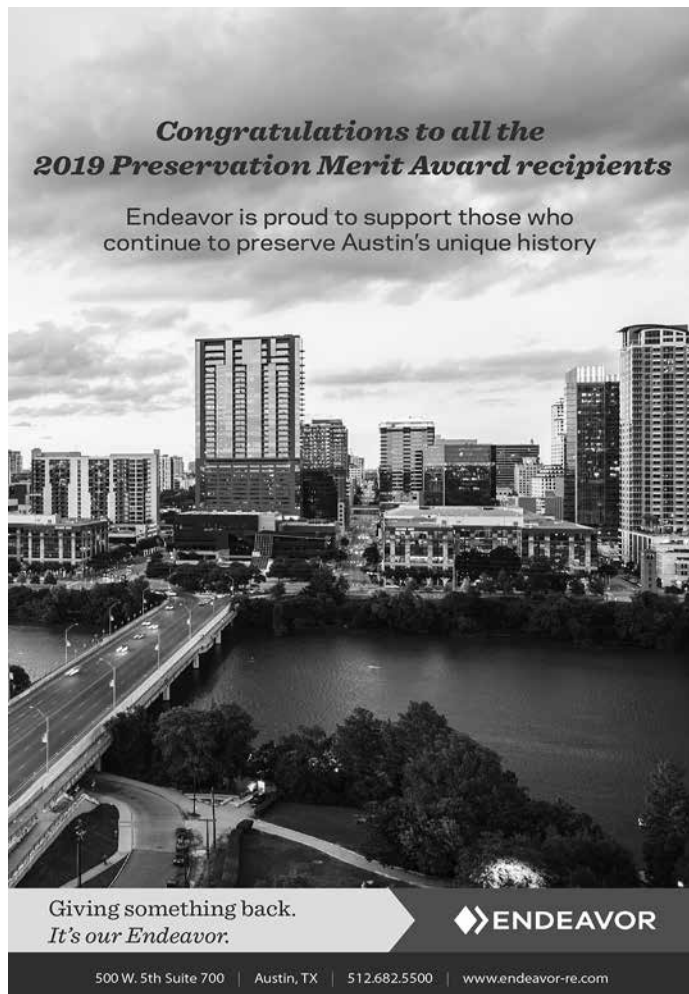
HERITAGE GRANT

The Heritage Grant serves to promote tourism through preservation of historic buildings, sites or districts.

Applications are due Friday, May 1, 2020
Visit AustinTexas.gov/Heritage-Tourism for more info.

 Heritage Tourism


Register to attend the Heritage Grant Information Session on March 11 at <https://bit.ly/38uvpTo> ★



***Congratulations to all the
2019 Preservation Merit Award recipients***

Endeavor is proud to support those who continue to preserve Austin's unique history

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Reimagining Austin's French Legation

Ellen Cone Busch, Texas Historical Commission Director of Historic Sites Operations

People generally recognize the importance of historic places in our lives, landscapes, and collective heritage. But as we seek to preserve them, we should be mindful that the stories they represent are not static or unchanging, but reflect as much of the present as they do the past. In the retelling of history our own concerns and values invariably color how the past is remembered and how the present is understood. Ultimately, it can impact the continued preservation of the places where these stories live. In working to restore and plan for the reopening of the French Legation State Historic Site, we have closely examined its place in history and how to convey the stories it represents in a way that is compelling enough to ensure it remains a place of value to the whole community, both today and tomorrow.

The site's significance had never been forgotten, as its last resident, Miss Lillie Robertson, offered tours of her lifelong home as "the Old French Embassy" in the first decades of the 20th century. France was the first to recognize the sovereignty of the young Republic of Texas and sent fledgling diplomat Alphonse Dubois as the King's chargé d'affaires to see what agreements and common objectives could be established between the two nations. Dubois began construction on the Legation in 1840 as he lobbied the Republic's Congress to pass the Franco-Texian Bill, and hastily completed the house in 1841 after departing Austin in the wake of personal conflicts and the bill's

failure. He sold the property to Father Jean Marie Odin, who worked to reestablish the Catholic church in the new Republic. Odin brought such notable guests as Sam Houston and Henri Castro to the site, and their efforts continued to bridge cultures as they built communities in Texas.

After annexation to the United States, physician and former Texas Ranger Joseph W. Robertson acquired the property and moved his family to the site, making it their home for nearly a century. He and his son George expanded the original 21.5 acres with the purchase of various undeveloped parcels, or "outlots," near the property line, which stretched from present-day I-35 to San Marcos Street and from 7th to 11th streets. Following the death of the elder Robertson in 1870, the family began selling off parcels of the land to business associates, freedmen, and recent immigrants from Mexico and Europe.

What had been the family seat grew into the Pleasant Hill/Robertson Hill neighborhood of East Austin, a diverse and thriving community. Even after the 1928 Koch and Fowler city plan designated the neighborhood part of East Austin's "negro district," the community continued to welcome Latinx, Lebanese and Southern European residents. Still today, the neighborhood is changing and reflects a mosaic of cultures. History is, after all, the story of change over time. At the French Legation, we are choosing to embrace change as a means to do what the site



Looking out the front door of the French Legation to the city and communities the site aims to engage in collaborative storytelling.

was built for: bring people together, find common ground, and build community.

The work underway by the Texas Historical Commission very much reflects a continuation and renewal of this vision. While stabilizing and preserving the French Legation and documenting its history has been of primary importance, the guide star for the project has been a focus on the visitor experience. Community feedback to the questions "what does this neighborhood / community need?" informed decisions made in every phase of the project. Surveys and discussions revealed a desire for more passive-use greenspace, intimate gathering places for individuals and small organizations, space for emerging visual and performing artists to be seen, and preservation and

Continued on the next page



Cypress beams from the original 1841 construction lay beside newer materials.

acknowledgement of the neighborhood's history. When asked what the French Legation meant to them, neighbors spoke of a general sense of history as it related to their memories of the area, a calm oasis amid tremendous change, and a place to learn more about the past and see themselves as a part of this history's continuum.

In response, we have included project components to improve the site's accessibility and improved visitor amenities like restrooms and indoor seating. Entrances and pathways have been improved to ensure ADA compliant access from both the San Marcos and Embassy Drive gates, and a new ramp on the west side of the Legation building not only improves the north façade but allows all visitors to enter through the front door. Understanding how important the grounds are to our neighbors, admission to the Legation's grounds will be free of charge, and stories of the past will be told

on interpretive panels both inside and outside of the stone wall surrounding the site.

This visitor-centered focus will extend to the historic French Legation building as well. Though the preservation work undertaken has restored original 1841 features, period room displays will make way for changing exhibits and small programs. Historic furnishings will be featured in rotating exhibits instead of permanent, static installations as we make space for a more diverse and inclusive array of stories from the Republic of Texas to the present day.

While original features such as window openings, casements, stone hearths, and chimneys have been carefully researched and restored, accommodations have been made for modern use. The restored canvas wall finish was painted to match the original color scheme with modern oil-based paint rather than the less durable, but historic, water-based calcimine paint. Doors accessing the hallway from rear rooms, which were added by the Robertsons, have not been removed as they provide necessary emergency egress. Swatches of surviving wall papers will be preserved behind Plexiglas windows to illustrate the decorative changes over time, with contemporary lighting illuminating a new era of activity in the Legation's rooms.

The project's preservation focus has been to enhance the French Legation's original Republic Era features as the building speaks to what Austin was at that time: a frontier capital city with great expectations. However, the

interpretive and programmatic focus of the site's reimagining is about how those expectations have been realized in present-day Austin. It is about the diversity of the neighborhood, celebrating the achievements of the whole community, and remembering even the difficult stories that can inform efforts to make a better future. We aim to tell history backward – beginning with the present day lives of our community and following the stories back to the Republic Era and beyond to the breezy hilltop overlooking the Colorado River valued by indigenous peoples. It is a story about change; about development and redevelopment. It is about reaching across the siloes of culture that can divide us to build community by bridging communities, as was the original intent of the Legation: a place where we can find common ground and see ourselves in a shared heritage. Collaborative programming and rotating exhibits will welcome our community to be active participants in the storytelling that happens here and to value this place as they continue to forge its history. ★



Members of the Legation Boules Club teach students from THC's Doing History Camp how to play pétanque.

New Life for North Austin's Zimmerman House

By Cyrus Yerxa, Education Committee

In 1854, Edward Zimmermann purchased 164 acres of land several miles north of Austin and on it built an 18' by 24' home for himself and his young family. His nascent community grew into Fiskville, home to approximately 150 citizens by the early 1870s. Like Zimmermann, many were German immigrants. It is likely that he received help from his friends and neighbors to build the home -- his own skillset is evident by his surname, which means "carpenter" in German -- and that he gathered most of his building materials from the site. Limestone serves as the structure's foundational footing, and as infill within half-timber framing of hand-hewn cedar shaped to dimension and joined by mortise, tenon, and peg in the German *fachwerk* tradition. Zimmerman used sand and water, likely sourced from the stretch of Little Walnut Creek that passed through his property, for mortar securing the stone and the plaster finish on the walls. Animal hair from his livestock served as a binder. He hand-cut and carved the larger stones to square for the fireplace and chimney, which divided the home into two rooms. As his family was growing, Zimmermann began work on an addition with two adjacent rooms to the east, continuing the gabled roofline in that direction. For this he used milled lumber, most likely purchased from the young Austin City Steam Mill, instead of hand-hewn wood as in the original construction.

This is the story told by the investigation work of Chris and Tracy Hutson, recent buyers of 9019 Parkfield Drive -- the Zimmermann House. The Hutsons

purchased the property in 2018, 164 years and seventeen owners after the Zimmermanns. As long-time residents of the neighborhood, they frequently walked past the house, knew it well from the outside, and over the years began to notice movement in the west wall facing Parkfield Drive. The Hutsons (of preservation architecture firm **Hutson | Gallagher**) grew concerned for the structure, one of the oldest in Austin, and Travis County's only remaining example of *fachwerk* construction. They approached the owner with concern for the stability of this City of Austin Landmark and discovered a caring homeowner without the resources to maintain the aging structure. Modern, large scale developments now surround it -- and given its condition, the building was a candidate for demolition-by-neglect.

Since their purchase, the Hutsons have begun checking items off a long list of things that need to happen before the home can be restored to its original state. First, they submitted a request for a Determination of Eligibility for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places through the Texas Historical Commission (THC). Approval for this is required to take advantage of federal and state historic tax credits to help fund the cost of restoration. At their initial request, the Coordinator



of Federal Programs at THC questioned the home's existing historical record, leading the Hutsons to carry out a more thorough investigation into the family and architectural history. Their research is ongoing, but by Christmas of 2019, after an updated request, they received notice the project is eligible for the tax incentives.

Their research has involved removal of non-historic materials to discover original details; previous owners over the years had added drywall, drop-ceilings, plywood paneling, plumbing, electricity, and air conditioning to the building, as well as additional rooms. Behind these additions lay the clues to Zimmermann's construction. In the attic, the Hutsons discovered an original casement window and shingles in un-weathered condition centered on the east gable. This indicated that the eastern addition, which encloses the window, was built soon after the

Continued on the next page

fachwerk building, likely in 1855. On the gable wall below, it appears that two original windows were converted to doorways for entry into that addition.

Initially the Hutsons presumed the chimney to be part of the 1855 addition, but after discovering that its wall it was of *fachwerk* construction, they concluded that it and the two-room division are original. The chisel marks on the stone in the fireplace are very defined, and match marks on the original stone footings under the house as well. Adjacent to the fireplace is an interior doorway that was widened and narrowed more than once over the years. The Hutsons have used patterns in paint and siding layers to determine its original width. It's likely that Zimmermann would only have been able to finish the 1854 stone surface with his homemade plaster, but in subsequent years, he acquired milled siding for the exterior and beadboard for the addition's interior finish. To install the beadboard finish, Zimmermann drove square nails into his framing. The Hutsons use these nails and the holes they leave behind as indicators of early construction.

For the restoration of the 1854 structure and 1855 addition, they have engaged preservation experts in engineering,



masonry and carpentry -- individuals they've worked with through the years -- to restore the home. The house will need to have its compromised west wall disassembled and rebuilt; some joints have been totally displaced. The reassembled materials may not meet current structural standards, in which case the cedar will be reinforced; one possible solution is hiding steel cables to brace the *fachwerk* walls. The house will need to be lifted and leveled (Zimmermann rested his floor joists on stone footings, but the stones have since sunk, leaving the joists in the dirt where they will continue to rot, if left). The foundation will likely be a combination of the original limestone footings and modern reinforcement pending an engineer's assessment. The current lime-based mortar, a mixture of sand and animal hair, has deteriorated and will need to be replaced; new lime-based mortar will be chosen for its ability to secure the wall and protect the restored masonry. At some point in the 20th century, the section of chimney stones above the roofline was replaced with bricks. This section will revert back to limestone, with the upper half of the chimney rebuilt.

As the Hutsons explain, their goal is to restore the structure to its period of significance, which is between 1854 - 1867, when the Zimmermann family occupied it, and preserve all



existing historic building materials. The restoration will get underway when the investigation and construction documents are complete. They plan to apply for a Certificate of Appropriateness with the Historic Landmark Commission in a few weeks. ★

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Spicewood Communities
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MileStone Community Builders, LLC
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PRESERVATION
AUSTIN



HERITAGE QUIZ

★ by Elizabeth Porterfield & Maggie Conyngnam

Preservation Austin presents our Facebook Heritage Quiz the first Friday of every month! The first respondent to correctly identify a local landmark receives a \$20 gift card to East Austin's Cenote Café, housed in the 1887 McDonald-Cain House, courtesy of your favorite preservation nonprofit.

Congratulations to our Fall and Winter contestants for spotting the following properties:

OCTOBER: City of Austin Municipal Building (124 West 8th Street)

First constructed in 1907 as Austin's City Hall, the building was extensively remodeled to its current appearance in the late 1930s by Page & Southerland, architects. At that time the front portion of the original building was removed, the footprint greatly enlarged, and the Art Deco façade incorporated. The renovated City Hall served as City Council headquarters until the 1970s. Today, the Municipal Building is a designated City of Austin Landmark and houses a number of municipal offices. The site itself is significant in both local and state history, not only as Austin's former City Hall (including a previous 1874 City Hall building on the site), but also as the location of the first Capitol of the Republic of Texas from 1839 through 1853.

★ **Winner: Brian Shaw**



City of Austin Municipal Building

NOVEMBER: Pease Mansion/Woodlawn (1606 Niles Road)

This Greek Revival style home was built in the early 1850s by master builder Abner Cook around the same time he designed the Texas Governor's Mansion. The house was originally built on a large plot of land for State Comptroller James Shaw but was later sold to Governor Elisha M. Pease in 1857. The Pease family lived here for the following century and developed much of the surrounding acreage. Texas Governor Allan Shivers later bought and moved into Woodlawn, and ultimately donated it to the University of Texas. It passed into the State of Texas' hands and then back into private ownership in the early 2000s. The home was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1970. It is both a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark and a City of Austin Landmark, and remains a crown jewel of Old West Austin architecture.

★ **Winner: Emily Bell**



Pease Mansion

DECEMBER: Threadgill's (6416 North Lamar Boulevard)

In 1933, Kenneth Threadgill opened a filling station on today's North Lamar, at that time known as Lower Georgetown Road. Located just outside the city limits, the gas station served motorists traveling to and from Austin along the Meridian Highway. Mr. Threadgill, who reportedly received the first beer license in Travis County, soon began offering travelers a drink, and his beer joint became a popular spot for traveling musicians. Threadgill's thrived into the 1960s and attracted a diverse crowd from hippies to beatniks, including the legendary Janis Joplin who got her start singing there. In 1981, Eddie Wilson, owner of the former Armadillo World Headquarters, purchased Threadgill's and established it as a Southern style restaurant. Today, Threadgill's continues to serve up live music and Southern fare including their "world famous chicken fried steak." Grab your next meal and hear some tunes at this iconic Austin landmark!

★ **Winner: Carolyn Rzeppa**



Threadgill's

Continued on the next page



PRESERVATION
— AUSTIN —



HERITAGE QUIZ (Continued)

JANUARY: Blackshear Elementary (1712 E. 11th Street)

Blackshear Elementary first opened in 1891 as public School No. 3 to serve African American students in East Austin's Gregorytown community. In the late 1890s and early 20th century it was known as Gregorytown and later Gregory School. According to newspaper research, a new seven-room brick school building opened here in 1903. By 1935, the grounds included a detached cafeteria and two additional detached classroom buildings. In 1936 the school was enlarged and renamed in honor of Edward L. Blackshear, a longtime African American teacher and principal, and former supervisor of Austin's African American schools. Today, Blackshear Fine Arts Academy is a National Blue Ribbon School elementary school devoted to the arts. The campus received an Official Texas Historical Marker (OTHM) from the Texas Historical Commission in 2001 commemorating its lengthy association with African American education in Austin.

★ Winner: Alan Garcia

FEBRUARY: Anna Hiss Gymnasium (University of Texas at Austin)

Anna Hiss Gym opened in 1931 as the Women's Gymnasium on the University of Texas at Austin campus. The original design by the firm of Greene, LaRoche, and Dahl reflected the vision of Anna Hiss, director of Women's Physical Training at UT from 1921-1956. The four-building complex included a gymnasium, dance studio, and natatorium (indoor swimming pool) designed around a central courtyard. Generations of UT women danced, swam, and played sports here under the direction of Anna Hiss. The Women's Gymnasium was renamed in her honor in 1974. Facing potential demolition in the 1990s, it was largely saved with the exception of the east wing natatorium that was razed in 1994. Anna Hiss Gym is currently undergoing renovation to house UT's robotics programs.

★ Winner: Phil Butler ★



Blackshear Elementary



Anna Hiss Gym

Making Progress!

Waterloo Greenway Conservancy began replacing the severely damaged main entrance at the 1887 Hardeman House in Symphony Square, home to the nonprofit's offices, earlier this month. The new door system, approved by the Historic Landmark Commission, will restore this City of Austin Landmark's historic appearance. Preservation Austin supported the project with a \$5,000 Bricks and Mortar matching grant in winter 2018. We're excited to see the results! For more on our grants program, see Page 8.



The Preservation Committee’s primary focus since last fall has been the rewrite of Austin’s Land Development Code (LDC) and revisions to proposed zoning maps. Members of Preservation Austin’s staff and Board have had numerous discussions with the Mayor and various City Council offices, as well as members of the LDC team and Historic Preservation Office to share our concerns and recommended revisions. During that time the staff have issued three supplemental reports - on Oct. 25, Nov. 25 and Jan. 31 - and City Council has held hearings on the first and second readings of the ordinance.

Know that we are working diligently to communicate preservation needs and concerns during this complicated, ever-evolving process. The position documents we’ve shared with Mayor and Council can be found on our website under the “News” tab.

Preservation Austin believes that building an affordable Austin for existing and future residents is important to our community, but that doing so should include incentivizing preservation of older, existing single-family homes and apartment buildings, and strengthening long-term affordability requirements for increased entitlements and new development.

We have diligently encouraged improvements to the Preservation Incentive so that its use might result in preserving more of the character and scale of older neighborhoods while reducing the amount of building materials ending up in the landfill. We’ve also

asked for massing models, and clearer evidence, of what can be built in addition to existing homes under this new program. We continue to advocate for reducing transition zones in our city’s historic core to decrease the impact and intensity of those zoning changes, and express strong opposition to reducing front yard setbacks to 15’. (We will express our opposition to further setback reductions to 10’ in R3 and R4 zones in light of Council Member Flannigan’s amendment during second reading – such changes would have a significant negative impact on historic streetscapes and the health of Austin’s urban forest and heritage trees).

We also carefully reviewed the proposed changes to the historic preservation code and have communicated errors and recommended revisions to staff so those can be addressed.

Leading up to the scheduled third reading by Council in late March/early April the Preservation Committee will continue to review the LDC proposals and make recommendations to guide staff and Board members’ continued advocacy efforts at City Hall.

Prior to our last newsletter the Austin Independent School District (AISD) released its report “School Changes 2019,” which recommended closure and repurposing of twelve schools – Sims, Pecan Springs, Maplewood, Sadler Means, Webb, Brooke, Palm, Metz, Ridgetop, Pease, Joslin and Dawson. In response Preservation Austin wrote a letter to AISD’s Trustees urging them “to engage with parents and community organizations ... to re-examine facilities’ evaluation criteria, which may have skewed closure recommendations; to ensure that additions to newly-consolidated campuses are compatible

Continued on the next page



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ONE MERIT AWARD-WINNING PROJECT AT A TIME.

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with existing historic fabric; and finally, if closed, how these historic school buildings might be re-used in ways that honor their past and allows them to remain resources to our community.” We offered to share preliminary research into the historical significance of the twelve schools recommended for closure; clarified that the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards would allow for upgrades and new construction on school properties such as Pease Elementary, and offered to participate in discussions on how to modernize and improve historic campuses set to receive new students and associated facilities expansions. We strongly encouraged AISD to consider the adaptive reuse of those campuses that

do close - sharing that cities nationwide have adapted former school buildings to an incredible range of uses. In November, AISD Trustees voted to close four schools – Pease, Sims, Metz, and Brooke. Additional closures are still possible although there’s no specific timeline for when AISD might begin those discussions.

Last summer we sent a letter to the Historic Landmark Commission (HLC) supporting landmark designation of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church on East Oltorf Avenue. This was the first

A-frame church in Austin and represents the post-WW II expansion of suburban churches. Unfortunately, because of an error in the timing of the case being placed on the HLC agenda and the commission initiating designation, the City was required to release the demolition permit. The building has since been demolished and the site is now being prepared for a Palm car wash.

We also sent a letter to the HLC requesting it apply the Secretary



Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, demolished last fall.

of Interior’s Standards, which guide preservation best practices nationwide, to review of a tower proposed to be built within the footprint of the Masonic Lodge at 311 W. 7th Street - a City of Austin Historic Landmark also listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Unfortunately, the HLC voted to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness as proposed at a schematic design level. HLC members Ben Heimsath, Kelly Little, Teri Myers, and Blake Tollett voted against the proposal.

On a happier note, the Historic Preservation Office’s new Development Services Manager position – approved by City Council more than year ago after ardent advocacy by Preservation Austin – has been filled by Elizabeth Brummett. Ms. Brummett comes from the Texas Historical Commission where she was a Program Coordinator for the Federal and State Review Program. She has an MS in historic preservation from the University of Texas at Austin School of Architecture and brings many years of experience to this new position, as well as a strong connection to the local preservation community. She will be starting in her new position on March 2 and we look forward to working with her and the rest of the Historic Preservation Office staff to protect and preserve our shared heritage. ★

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The Education Committee keeps busy making programs happen that expand Preservation Austin’s reach across the city and raises awareness amongst its diverse citizens.

This past fall’s activities and now planning into spring and summer keep us busy!

We held a successful “The ART of Preservation” walkabout downtown on November 2 capturing historic buildings (while learning all about them) through photography and illustrations. This was part of our rewarding partnership with Big Medium and the WEST/West Austin Studio Tour (delayed from last spring due to rain!). During the EAST/East Austin Studio Tour we hosted a pop-up event with the Texas Society of



Architects featuring the architectural photography of Leonid Furmansky and the documentary photography of Lily Brooks, “Drawing the Moon” celebrating Austin’s historic moonlight towers. (And if you were inventive, you could build your own moonlight towers with marshmallows and pretzels!) In addition, Preservation Austin participated with Big Medium and Sightlines on a panel discussing how arts

and artists can express cultural heritage and support historic preservation through creative placemaking. All in all, a great partnership reaching new audiences and engaging in an important conversation about why investing in the arts, in preservation and in cultural history are vital to the future of our city.

Up next is our annual “Greening Your Vintage Home” event set for Wednesday, May 20 from 7pm -8:30pm at the Elisabet Ney Museum. Join us as we welcome speakers who will share their knowledge of Austin’s natural habitat, bird life, and plants and pollinators - with incentive to integrate the native habitats into the landscapes of our own dwellings - be they neighborhood homes or apartment balconies, (see Page 5 for details).

And when you aren’t joining us at talks and walks and lectures and explorations, you’ll find us “juggling and jawing” at our Historic Austin Happy Hours visits to celebrate

and honor why local imbibing businesses are such an important part of our urban landscape. We were welcomed at Cisco’s Restaurant on East 6th Street on February 26 for some history and some brews. Keep tabs on our web page for our next “juggling and jawing!”

And finally! While looking to Austin’s future, we don’t want to forget the



EDU volunteers leading a walking/drawing tour of downtown on November 2!

legacy of all of the preservationists who preceded us and paved the way for saving many buildings - along with lamenting those we were unable to save! Education Committee members are capturing the oral histories from a breadth of preservationists, former “Heritage Society” Board members, and community leaders over the past 50+ years who played a key role in preserving many of the special places we are fortunate to still have here today. We look forward to sharing this archive of memories upon completion.

Please know that we welcome new members at all times! So, join in our fun - with true purpose to increase the impact of Preservation Austin. We meet the third Tuesday of every month from 6pm-7:15pm at Preservation Austin, 500 Chicon. For more information about how to get involved or if you have any questions contact Executive Director Lindsey Derrington at lindsey@preservationaustin.org. ★



Our New & Renewing Members



BENEFACTOR

James Hillhouse, IV
McBee Family Foundation

Waterloo Circle

Emma Linn
Jill & Stephen Wilkinson
Mary Holt Walcutt
Matthew & Rita Kreisle, III
Patricia Winston & Bill Head
Peter Flagg Maxson & John C. R. Taylor III
Tom & Elizabeth Granger
Tracy Dileo
Tyler & Meredith Spears
William & Regan Gammon

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Barron Restorations
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David Wilson Garden Design
digiDaybook
Farrington Lane
GOGO Charters Austin
Gottesman Residential Real Estate
MacRostie Historic Advisors
Mustian Architecture & Design
Six Square: Austin's Black Cultural District
Waterloo Greenway Conservancy

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David B. West
Edward Tasch & Anne Crawford
Frederick & Ann Dure
Marian Casey
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Michael Holleran

Robert Mace & Wendy Weiss
Robert Nash
Ron & Mary Ann Bowling

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PA CALENDAR OF EVENTS • 2020

**APR
25**

Preservation Austin's 28th Annual Homes Tour
"Downtown Doorsteps," our 2020 Homes Tour, celebrates downtown's historic living spaces in all their forms. Early-bird tickets are on sale through April 1 at preservationaustin.org, see Page 1 for details.

**MAR
15
+
JUN
15**

March 15 + June 15: Spring & Summer Grant Deadlines

PA offers quarterly matching grants of up to \$5,000 for a wide range of preservation projects. Nonprofits, neighborhoods, public entities, and building owners may apply. See Page 8 for details.

**MAY
20**

Greening Your Vintage Home – Getting Back to Nature

Learn about Austin's natural history and how you can better integrate your vintage home into our city's native ecosystems. See Page 5 for details.

Juggling and Jawing Historic Austin Happy Hours

Our Education Committee Happy Hour series continues!
Check our website and social media to see where we'll be this summer.

★ Visit www.preservationaustin.org for details and tickets today!