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City of Austin
Historic Landmark Commission

Re: Certificate of Appropriateness for Bartholomew-Robinson building at 1415 Lavaca Street

Dear Chair,

Preservation Austin respectfully requests that the Historic Landmark Commission deny the Certificate of Appropriateness for the Bartholomew-Robinson building at 1415 Lavaca Street. The owner's Certificate of Appropriateness application shows the loss of all but the building's exterior walls and construction of a tower within its historic footprint. We feel strongly that the project as presented does not meet the requirements of the City Code or the Secretary of the Interior's Standards as they apply to this City of Austin Landmark property.

Section 25-11-243 of the City Code states that when taking action on a Certificate of Appropriateness the Historic Landmark Commission, "shall consider the United States Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, 36 Code of Federal Regulations Section 67.7(b)." The Secretary of the Interior's Standards (SOI Standards) state the following:

2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

"The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring & Reconstructing Historic Buildings" provides clarifying recommendations for applying the SOI Standards including constructing new additions that,

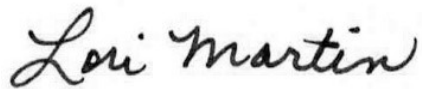
- (1) result in the least possible loss of historic materials;
- (2) are subordinate to the historic building;
- (3) are set back from the wall plane of the historic building;
- (4) are inconspicuous when viewed from surrounding streets;
- (5) are limited to one additional story in height;
- (6) appear as a separate building;
- (7) and do not negatively affect the building.

The design presented to the HLC does not meet any of those clarifying guidelines.

We appreciate that the needs of property owners change over time and understand that large towers will be constructed adjacent to historic buildings in Austin's urban downtown. However, Landmark designation is intended to protect the properties our community identifies as significant, so that their historic materials and integrity are not compromised over time. We also understand that your decisions are not always easy ones; however, ensuring that the Historic Landmark Commission applies consistent, objective standards to the review process, as directed by City Code, is vital to the integrity of your decision making process.

Thank you for your service to the community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lori Martin". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Lori" and last name "Martin" clearly distinguishable.

Lori Martin
President of the Board of Directors

Cc:

Members of the City of Austin Historic Landmark Commission
Elizabeth Brummett, City of Austin Historic Preservation Office
Steve Sadowsky, City of Austin Historic Preservation Office