



PRESERVATION — AUSTIN —

Fall 2023 ★ Volume 27 No. 2

2023 Preservation Merit Awards

Preservation Austin is proud to announce our 63rd Annual Preservation Merit Awards Celebration! Join us at East Austin's stylish Central Machine Works for this unique program—the only one of its kind to honor the everyday Austinites working hard to preserve our city's heritage in diverse, exciting, and unexpected ways. Our twelve 2023 winners represent the wide-ranging efforts to build community and enhance historic spaces across our city.

Central Machine Works, itself a past Preservation Merit Award winner, is an inspiring adaptive reuse success story, and we can't wait for you to join us for locally-brewed drinks, seasonal dinner selections, and live music. Connect with designers, builders, policy-makers, community advocates, and historians at Austin's premiere industry event as we toast another wonderful year of preservation excellence!

Our Preservation Merit Awards Program has celebrated innovative preservation efforts citywide since 1960. By recognizing outstanding individuals, businesses, organizations, and institutions doing this work, we show preservation's endless possibilities for enriching lives and making Austin an incredible place to call home.

Many thanks to our wonderful Awards Jury for their time and effort in carefully selecting this year's deserving awardees. This year's jury comprised of: **Harrison Eppright**, Manager of Visitor Services & Tour Ambassador, *Visit Austin*; **Meredith Johnson**, Preservation Planner, *Johnson Planning & Preservation LLC*; **Ayshea Khan**, Equity & Inclusion Program Manager, *City of Austin Equity Office*; **Ruby Oram**, Assistant Professor of Practice, Department of History, *Texas State University*; and **Glenn Reed**, Chief Architect, Historic Sites Division, *Texas Historical Commission*.

Tickets to the 2023 Preservation Merit Awards Ceremony are on sale now! Proceeds from this event provide significant support for our advocacy and educational programming throughout the year.

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PRESERVATION
— AUSTIN —



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2023 PRESERVATION MERIT AWARD WINNERS



Austin State Supported Living Center (Photo: John C. Robinson, Jr., AIA)

AUSTIN STATE SUPPORTED LIVING CENTER

**Recipient: Texas Health and Human Services Commission
Preservation Award for Rehabilitation**

The Austin State Supported Living Center is a vital historic resource that serves Central Texans with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The 95-acre campus dates to 1917, and in 2016 its collection of early 20th century neoclassical buildings were determined eligible as a historic district. However, years of lagging maintenance had taken their toll on the buildings' extensive windows. Many of the originally operable wood and steel windows had been adapted for use as unsightly and inefficient utility penetrations, dramatically altering the campus' appearance. The Texas Historical Commission recommended the preservation of the fourteen historic buildings – all constructed between 1916 and 1944 – kickstarting the Window Replacement Project initiated by Maintenance & Construction, Health and Human Services Commission.

This enormous rehabilitation, by J. Robinson & Associates Architects, Inc. and contractors Centennial Enterprises, Inc., was coordinated closely with the Texas Historical Commission and replaced over 800 deteriorated windows. Months of field work documented existing conditions and ensured all work would comply with safety codes. The new windows replicate the single and double hung appearance of the originals and are composed of thermally broken, powder-coated, low maintenance aluminum frames with insulated low-reflective glazing.

This herculean endeavor brings energy efficiency and well-ordered aesthetic beauty to fourteen still-active historic buildings. It demonstrates the Health and Human Services Commission's commitment to recognizing and preserving its valuable historical assets while serving Austin State Supported Living Center residents.

BATTLE HALL

**Recipient: The University of Texas at Austin
Preservation Award for Restoration**

Battle Hall, designed by nationally-renowned architect Cass Gilbert, is the Architecture and Planning Library at the University of Texas at Austin and was the first building on campus to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Gilbert is credited with beautifully crafting the building's design in a modified Spanish Renaissance Revival style that set the tone and aesthetic for the University's subsequent campus master plan.

Rehabilitation efforts for the 113-year-old building required three phases, the most recent of which involved exterior upgrades including: installation of a fire suppression system, ADA/TAS upgrades, a new clay tile roof and skylight, reproduction copper gutters and downspouts, and the restoration and repair of ornate historic eaves and ironwork. Extensive care was taken to return the building's deep, carved eaves to their brilliant original color scheme after the preservation team, including McKinney York

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Battle Hall (Photo: Hutson Gallagher LLC)

Architects, preservation architects Hutson Gallagher LLC, and contractors Phoenix I Restoration and Construction, Ltd found the eaves and ornamental metalwork had been previously stripped of the original colors. Working with an experienced restoration painting contractor and metallurgist conservator, they carefully repaired, reproduced, and reinstalled detailed components to their historic appearance.

The project returned the building's iconic doors to a verdant green, and future UT graduates will have the opportunity to toss their caps in front of the vibrantly restored original facade. This stunning restoration work serves as a model for best practices at the University of Texas at Austin and a fitting tribute to an iconic century-old library.

ST. DAVID'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Recipient: Episcopal Church Council of the Diocese of Texas

Preservation Award for Restoration

St. David's Episcopal Church, the oldest stone masonry religious structure in Austin, was constructed between 1853 and 1854 in a simplified English Gothic Revival style. 19th and 20th century



St. David's Episcopal Church (Photo: Allison Chambers)

additions drastically changed the building's appearance, though these alterations, such as the high-style Victorian Gothic Revival south facade, are now historically significant in their own right. This year the congregation celebrates its 175th anniversary and the beloved church continues to stand as a reminder of early Austin amidst booming downtown development.

The preservation of this historic building has long been a passion project of St. David's parishioners, who completed structural stabilization and restoration of the historic 19th-century sanctuary in 2023. The preservation team, including Acton Partners, SpawGlass, and Ford, Powell & Carson Architects and Planners, Inc. determined that exterior steel pipe bracing added in 2017 could be removed, reverting multiple facades back to their historic appearance. Conservation work included the addition of new protective glazing on the exterior of stained glass windows, returning the sanctuary to its original color scheme using historic finish analysis, and the discovery and restoration of gothic pointed arches at the altar and historic floor tiles at the main entrance.

St. David's remains a vital force in our community. As new glass and steel skyscrapers are being erected nearby, this iconic church remains a charming example of the historic scale and character worth preserving downtown.



Uptown Sports Bar (Photo: Chase Daniel)

UPTOWN SPORTS CLUB

Recipient: Jason Jones, James Moody, Aaron Franklin, Eric de Valpine, and Tenaya Hills

Preservation Award for Rehabilitation

The Uptown Sports Club building at Waller and E. 6th streets dates to 1893. Throughout much of the 20th century, this neighborhood landmark faithfully served the community in many ways—as a bakery, grocery, butcher shop, and a sports bar. It then lay dormant for decades, vacant but intriguing, along this rapidly redeveloping East Austin thoroughfare.

The building might not have survived, but for a fateful alliance between the Hernandez family, who had operated the "Sport Bar" watering hole in the 1960s, and attorney Jason Jones. Jones represented the Hernandez family pro bono through five years of litigation to save the building, and the family eventually sold him the property. Preservation efforts by Michael Hsu Office of Architecture, Robinson Rose Studio, Acton Partners, and IE² Construction returned the building to its former glory. The project included the restoration of brick walls, original doors and windows, and architectural details like the chamfered corner entrance as well as

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thoughtful new additions like salvaged pine flooring, beadboard ceilings, eclectic light fixtures, and art deco booths. Work was completed with the support of state and federal historic tax credits, as well as a City of Austin Heritage Grant.

Uptown Sports Club brings new life to a long-vacant structure while offering a spirited gathering spot for locals and visitors alike. The century-old building is itself a member of the community, and this project's stunning rehabilitation encourages the restoration of other local landmarks and highlights the value of historic structures in a vibrant cityscape.

WINDSOR ROAD HOUSE

Recipient: Birgit Enstrom and Hugh Jefferson Randolph

Preservation Award for Rehabilitation

The Windsor Road house is an Austin expression of the early California Ranch style designed in 1939 by Page Southerland & Page Architects. Architect Hugh

Randolph and Birgit Enstrom completed its rehabilitation for their family in 2021, with designs by Hugh Jefferson Randolph Architects intended as an updated era of the gorgeous home's history.

The rehabilitation project focused on retaining the building's original footprint while adding valuable living space – two bedrooms, a shared bath, and a laundry room – in the detached wing that was formerly a garage and storeroom. A driveway was transformed into a spacious central gathering porch, layering the home's original style with a variation of the Texas dogtrot. Many materials used in the construction were salvaged from other homes including several steel windows, longleaf pine flooring, and most prominently, travertine limestone reclaimed from the renovation of the Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library.

The Windsor Road house is a family home and an urban farmstead, duly inspired by the neighborhood's historic rural character, and today is complete with a vegetable garden, two chickens, two goats, and a very large pig named Flintstone. Featured on Preservation Austin's 2023 Homes Tour, it is a meditation on the continuance of history, encouraging future generations to preserve the designs of the past while adding their own chapters to the story of their home.



Huston-Tillotson University
(Photo: Courtesy of Huston-Tillotson University)

HUSTON-TILLOTSON UNIVERSITY

Stewardship Award for the Preservation of its Historic Campus

Huston-Tillotson University, Austin's oldest institute of higher learning and our city's only Historically Black College and University, has roots dating back to 1875. The University's leadership has championed preservation of this East Austin icon, investing in its historic resources and listing the campus in the National Register of Historic Places in 2022 to honor HT's incredible legacy.

Early iterations of the African American institution were established following the Civil War, when church-affiliated organizations founded Tillotson Institute and Samuel Huston College to educate formerly enslaved people. Eventually the two colleges merged in 1952 to become Huston-Tillotson College, and more recently Huston-Tillotson University. Today the 19.8-acre historic district on Chicon Street features thirteen structures that contribute to the historical and architectural significance of the campus. Austin's Historic Preservation Office partnered with Huston-Tillotson to complete the nomination, with support from a National Park Service



Windsor Road House (Photo: Tobin Davies)

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Underrepresented Communities Grant. Other recent campus investments, both completed in 2021 include the restoration of the King-Seabrook Chapel, funded in part by a grant from Preservation Austin, and the renovation of Vicer Alumni Hall, one of the oldest university buildings, which was supported by a City of Austin Heritage Preservation Grant and the National Trust's African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund.

Recognition of the historic significance of the campus and active investment in the building's physical fabric demonstrate Huston-Tillotson's outsize contribution to Black education in East Austin and serve to further the University's mission to nurture a legacy of leadership and excellence in education, connecting knowledge, power, passion, and values.

U.S. GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

Stewardship Award for LBJ Suite Furnishings Conservation

The iconic Lyndon B. Johnson Suite is located in the J.J. Pickle Federal Building downtown. Architect R. Max Brooks designed the space for President Johnson in 1965, likely in collaboration with General

Services Administration (GSA) interior designer Gail Kinley Moore. The president used the suite as an office and meeting space between his private ranch and the White House. It played a critical role in daily operations and significant national policy discussions during President Johnson's time in office until 1971.

While the 13-room suite retains a high degree of historic integrity, its artifacts had experienced damage over time, ranging from ripped textiles and broken chairs to less apparent deterioration such as powdering foam within seat cushions. The GSA completed a restoration of the space's architecture and furnishings in 2023, preserving this significant example of Federal Modern interior design while bringing to life an immersive look at President Johnson's working environment during his presidency. Work successfully revived and archivally prepared over sixty-five objects original to President Johnson's time here. The project was supported by funds allocated to historic preservation through private leasing of government-owned properties.

This preservation project presented unique challenges for the conservation team of Cushing Terrell, Studio Six Art Conservation, and Freer Waters, in partnership with the GSA, who were required to complete much of the work within the suite's limited footprint and under strict security standards. Although the LBJ Suite is not open to the public, today the beautifully restored site is



Robin Shepherd (Photo: Courtesy of 5 birds dwellings llc.)

accessible via video tours and printable guides, and the legacy of President Johnson's office is stewarded for decades to come.

ROBIN SHEPHERD

Stewardship Award for 5 birds dwellings llc.

Robin Shepherd's drive to preserve the neighborhood scale of Austin's residential fabric makes her a champion for the little homes. Serving as the general contractor for her firm 5 birds dwellings llc, Robin has developed a business plan utilizing state and federal historic tax credits to bring new life to neglected and deteriorating residences in historic districts across Austin.

Robin offers thoughtfully curated homes in historic neighborhoods that tell the story of Austin. Where others might see a teardown, Robin envisions extending the life of modest-sized homes, maintaining their original footprint and unique features. Like many preservationists, Robin found a circuitous path to the field. After a previous career as a lawyer, she took part in the University of Texas TOWER Fellows Program, taking classes in architecture and refining her love of old houses and Old

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LBJ Suite (Photo: GSA/Cushing Terrell)

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Austin. She defines her preservation ethos as the drive to save historic residences on the brink of demolition, and to date 5 birds dwellings is finishing a fourth rehabilitation project, with properties in Clarksville, Hyde Park, and Aldridge Place. Once restored these homes serve as mid-term rentals, Robin aims to serve visiting professionals and students who seek to be active participants in the Austin community.

Robin has seen first-hand the value of historic tax credits as an important preservation tool, and hopes her business will serve as inspiration for others to invest in their communities. Working with talented preservation partners like Pilgrim Building Company and their carpentry division, Enabler LLC, Robin gives forgotten buildings new life, strengthening neighborhoods and honoring Austin's past.

BLACK AUSTIN TOURS

Recipient: Javier Wallace
Special Recognition Award for Education

Inspired by a love of history and his community, Javier Wallace founded Black Austin Tours in 2019 while working on

his Ph.D. at the University of Texas. Tours of East Austin, Downtown, and the Colorado River have immersed over 2,800 attendees in the structural and natural environment – buildings, neighborhoods, businesses (many of which have been lost) as well as murals and commemorative art –to reveal the Black Austin experience.

Javier brings to light the rich, vibrant, and often difficult stories of Austin's African American community – stories that were historically suppressed and are still untold—to show how these narratives continue to shape our city. He anchors these explorations in his own family's history: his mother's family was trafficked into the area in the 1800s as enslaved laborers at the Ancient Oaks plantation, while his father immigrated from Panama in the 1970s. Javier weaves these narratives with original research into the lives, businesses, and histories of Black Austin to create a personal and engaging place-based experience.

Javier's passion for history and tremendous storytelling breathe life into his work and make Black history visible, accessible, and relatable. Tours are immersive and authentic, encouraging guests to engage with the full story of Austin's history and support the preservation and interpretation of the sites that reflect African American contributions to our built environment.



L.C. Anderson Preservation Team
(Photo: Courtesy of Barbara Spears-Corbett)

ORIGINAL L.C. ANDERSON HIGH SCHOOL PRESERVATION TEAM

Recipient: Original L.C. Anderson Alumni Association (led by Barbara Spears-Corbett, President; Leroy Bookman, Eugenia Gaines, and Thelma Williams)
Rebekah Dobrasko (Public Historian/Volunteer)
Austin Independent School District (led by Matias Segura, Interim Superintendent and Operations Department)

Special Recognition Award for Public Service

In 2016, when the Austin Independent School District (AISD) proposed the demolition of the underutilized L.C. Anderson High School, a beacon of Black excellence in East Austin, the community responded by looking for solutions that would preserve the rich legacy of the old campus, while meeting the educational needs of a new East Austin community. The Anderson High School campus, constructed in 1953, was the fourth and final iteration of Austin's segregated Black high school, and when the school was closed in 1971, it marked the end of a unified era of education for Black East Austinites.

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(Photo: Courtesy of Black Austin Tours)

Invested in preserving their heritage, the Original L.C. Anderson Alumni Association led an impassioned volunteer team and initiated a valuable partnership with AISD. When AISD, with the support of many alumni, passed its \$1 billion school construction bond, funds were allocated for preservation initiatives at the Anderson High building. Although the 1953 school was ultimately demolished, a new building – Eastside Early College High School designed by Perkins & Will and built by Cadence McShane Construction – thoughtfully incorporated historic materials and designs.

With the help of volunteer public historian Rebekah Dobrasko, additional preservation successes included the commemoration of the historic school and the Yellow Jacket Stadium through state historic markers, a National Register listing for the stadium, and illustrative signage and murals. A further win was achieved when AISD signed agreements to continue to tell the story of Anderson High by maintaining the Yellow Jacket Stadium for athletic use, and creating the onsite Yellow Jacket Conference Center. This community space honors the legacy of the alumni and recognizes the lasting cultural impact of L.C. Anderson High School.

TO EMANCIPATE: FROM SLAVERY TO FREEDOM

Austin Parks and Recreation Department, Oakwood Cemetery Chapel

Special Recognition Award for Education

“To Emancipate: From Slavery to Freedom” interprets the lives of those buried in the “Historic Colored Grounds” of Oakwood Cemetery, specifically the enslaved people

brought to Austin beginning in the 1830s. This exhibit, presented in both digital and physical forms, features biographies of early Austin African Americans on the difficult path to emancipation, contextualizing the men, women, and children buried in Oakwood Cemetery whose lives were affected by slavery.

In 2021, Oakwood Chapel received a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to create a digital model of the originally unmapped “Historic Colored Grounds,” estimated to have over 2,700 African Americans buried in it. A subsequent discovery of 36 sets of human remains buried beneath Oakwood Cemetery Chapel necessitated that Austin’s Parks and Recreation Department work with the community to re-inter each exhumed individual directly west of the building. The Oakwood Cemetery Chapel worked with archaeologists to determine the appropriate steps for reburial and in May of 2023, the Oakwood Cemetery Chapel hosted a memorial event and monument dedication to honor the 36 individuals in their new resting place.

The online exhibit “To Emancipate” reveals the complicated history of Austin’s past and uses descendants’ stories to honor earlier Austin communities. The monument serves as a reminder of the effects of segregation, but also shows our power in the present, inspiring Austinites not just to tell the past, but to continue creating a path toward an equitable future.



To Emancipate: From Slavery to Freedom (Photo: Jennifer Chenoweth)



Translating Community History Portraits (Photo: Open Chair, for the City of Austin)

TRANSLATING COMMUNITY HISTORY

City of Austin Planning Department, Historic Preservation Office

Special Recognition Award for Outstanding Media Coverage, Scholarship, and Planning

The Translating Community History project engaged community stakeholders in historically significant African American and Mexican American neighborhoods to celebrate local heritage, engage in creative archival practices, and explore tools to combat development pressures. Supported by a National Park Service Underrepresented Communities Grant, the project successfully nominated

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Huston-Tillotson University, Austin's only Historically Black College and University, and Parque Zaragoza, a hub for Mexican American cultural activities and celebrations, to the National Register of Historic Places.

The City of Austin Historic Preservation Office partnered with The Projecto and Open Chair, collectives of Black and Brown artists, to lead East Austinites in the creation of bilingual videos, books, and

catalogs featuring community voices and photographs, as well as the installation of large-scale portraits that celebrated and affirmed community heritage.

The Translating Community History project reinforces that although historic preservation is often left out of efforts to prevent displacement, it can help stabilize communities by slowing demolitions, retaining smaller houses, and celebrating the stories that give places meaning. This

project laid the groundwork for the Equity-Based Preservation Plan and encouraged longtime East Austin residents to discuss ways in which preservation initiatives can support community goals.

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**Purchase Tickets
for the 2023
Awards Ceremony!**



Champions Needed for the Norwood House

The long saga of the Norwood House continues, and your help is needed for the next chapter! Recent years have brought solid progress for this City-owned treasure overlooking Lady Bird Lake. A volunteer foundation developed shovel-ready plans to restore the house as a self-sustaining asset, and helped generate public and private funds to support this vision. But the post-pandemic construction market brought those plans to a halt. The foundation has since dissolved, and the City has reassigned the public funds

to the completion of the Barton Springs Bathhouse.

A new community-based effort is now aiming to pick up where the previous foundation left off. Without a dedicated corps of preservation-minded folks like you, this wonderful bungalow – once the center of a beautiful, widely beloved estate – will continue to sit forlorn and neglected in one of central Austin's most spectacular locations.

A rich trove of materials about the house is online at thenorwoodhouse.org. There you can read up on the history of the house and prior efforts to save it, and enjoy a gallery of vintage photos, views from the house, previous stages in the restoration process, and renderings of planned improvements.

If you're up for lending a hand in bringing this very historic estate back to life, contact Wolf Sittler at wolfvsittler@gmail.com. ★



Norwood House, ca. 1925. Photo from Austin History Center.



Norwood House, March 2023. Photo by Charlotte Bell.



Executive Director's Note

★ Lindsey Derrington

Fall is my time to reflect on where we are as an organization – how far we've come, and far we need to go. Preservation Austin's fiscal year begins September 1, requiring a flurry of planning efforts to build on past years' success and continue pushing towards our 2025 strategic goals.

Those goals include growing our organizational capacity, driving proactive advocacy, and reflecting the diversity of the city that we serve. Here are just a few examples that, to me, demonstrate how we've translated these goals into actions over the past year alone:

- We welcomed Sarah Anderson, our new Development Coordinator, to her full-time role in July. Sarah is so smart, so capable, and so passionate about our mission. Our team has grown from two staff in 2020 to four in 2023; this has made a remarkable impact on what we're able to achieve across PA, from advocacy to programming. Expect more donor outreach and membership events now that Sarah is on board!
- We launched Legacy Business Month to engage Austinites in supporting beloved, longtime businesses across our city. This is an advocacy priority for PA and gets to the core of what we're about: rallying our community to take action and show our policymakers, friends, and colleagues what we care about, and what places we want preserved as our city grows. You can drink, eat, roller skate, and shop your way through thirteen incredible Austin institutions this month, and every October moving forward – because of Preservation Austin, City Council has declared October to be Legacy Business Month forever more.
- Because of our advocacy, the Historic Landmark Commission is more diverse than ever before. Three participants from our 2022 preservation commission training for BIPOC advocates have been appointed by City Council to serve on the HLC, including Jaime Alvarez, Roxanne Evans, and our own board member, JuanRaymon Rubio. Each of



these commissioners brings a wealth of technical expertise and community insight to their roles, with Preservation Austin merely connecting the dots help secure their appointments. We'll continue to use our resources to support a more inclusive preservation movement for all Austinites.

We'll have more exciting initiatives to announce in the coming months to build on this momentum. This is a pivotal time for preservation in our city and our mission is needed now more than ever. Your membership makes it all possible – thank you, endlessly, for believing in PA and in this work.



SELF-GUIDED TOURS AROUND TOWN



Historic Austin Churches Tour

This 12-mile bike route explores some of Central and East Austin's amazing historic churches, spanning various denominations and architectural styles, including David Chapel, Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church, and St. David's Episcopal. ★





President's Message

★ Melissa Barry

When I joined the board of Preservation Austin four years ago, we were just gearing up to create a new 5-year strategic plan. Serving on the strategic plan committee was one of my initial experiences with the board, and it was a great way to learn about the organization and better understand the priorities of our members and our community.

The first couple years of our strategic plan were spent building the foundation for more inclusive and impactful organization. We started by looking inward, first making sure that we were aligned as a board, and then making sure that our policies and practices were aligned with our values and goals for the organization. We conducted a board equity retreat, updated our nominations process, enhanced our fundraising processes, and adjusted our programs and advocacy efforts to be more inclusive. We have a lot more work to do, but with a shared vision and commitment to the goal, I know we will continue to make progress.

I'm fortunate to begin my role as board chair with a strong and growing

organization. We have a small but dedicated, hard-working, and creative team of staff working to deliver our iconic programs and events like the annual Homes Tour, Preservation Merit Awards, and Preservation Grants. We've consistently increased our budget and staff capacity, and as a result we've expanded our advocacy and education programs (two areas identified for growth by our members). One example is the recent addition of Legacy Business Month, a new program that shines a spotlight on Austin's locally-owned and operated businesses that are 20+ years old.

Amidst all this great progress, we still have a lot of work ahead of us, the least of which is completing the restoration of the McFarland House so that it can become our home base. We'll be sharing more on the progress of the McFarland House over the course of this year.

My hope for this coming year is to build more partnerships, alliances, and champions in the community to help advance preservation. **Our vision is a future where historic places play a**



meaningful role in everyone's life, inspiring all Austinites to become advocates for preservation. In order for this vision to come to life, we will need collaborators all across the city to join in.

If you are reading this, you're already a partner and we are so grateful for that. My ask of you is to help us bring more people into preservation. For example, bring a friend to one of our events, share a newsletter article or social media post that you think might be relevant, or encourage your neighbor concerned about the loss of local businesses to participate in Legacy Business Month. Our vision will only come to life when everyone becomes part of the movement. ★

SELF-GUIDED TOURS AROUND TOWN

Downtown Doorsteps Tour

This 5-mile bike route and walking tour is a companion piece to Downtown Doorsteps, our 2020 Virtual Homes Tour. The route features stops at featured homes and historic sites in between, including the Paramount Theatre, Westgate Tower, and the Bremond Block Historic District. To get the full Downtown Doorsteps experience, watch the virtual tour on Preservation Austin's YouTube channel found here before you head out! ★



Preserving the Legacy: Telling the Story of Original L.C. Anderson

by Rebekah Dobrasko, Public Historian

After seven years, the alumni, supporters, and friends of the Original L.C. Anderson High School celebrated the opening of the Yellow Jacket Conference Center and the historic marker unveiling at the Yellow Jacket Stadium in East Austin. In August 2023, over 100 people came together to honor the legacy of Austin's only African American high school and see how the legacy of its alumni is preserved throughout the new campus of the Eastside Early College High School.

L.C. Anderson High School originated as Austin's African American high school in a building on Robertson Hill in East Austin. Once housed on Olive Street, the school became known as Anderson High School and moved to a new campus on Pennsylvania Avenue in the early twentieth century. Kealing Middle School stands on this location today. In 1953, the fourth campus of L.C. Anderson High School opened at 900 Thompson Street in a modern brick building with a gymnasium and a sports stadium. L.C. Anderson served the Black students of Austin until Austin ISD closed the school in 1971 in an effort to desegregate the school system.

The 1953 Anderson High School campus, as well as the Yellow Jacket Stadium (named after the school's mascot), sat underutilized and deteriorating in East Austin for decades. In 2016, Austin ISD began public involvement around plans to revitalize and update its school facilities, and the old Anderson High School's fate

came into question. Led by a dedicated group of L.C. Anderson High School alumni, the community came together to demand Austin ISD honor and respect what many saw as "hallowed ground."

As a result of the community involvement steadfast through years of negotiations, weather delays, and leadership changes, Austin ISD found ways to incorporate the history, stories, legacy, and even the materials from the old school in a new campus for Eastside Early College High School. This work ultimately led to the celebratory event on August 3, 2023. "Mission accomplished," declared Anderson alum Johnnie Overton. For the first time, alumni were able to see the results of the preservation project. Austin ISD opened a modern, twenty-first century high school on the site of the 1953 L.C. Anderson High School campus, incorporating the spirit of the Anderson alumni and its legacy into the new high school.

One key community demand incorporated into the new school building is the Yellow Jacket Conference Center. This



Yellow Jacket Stadium and Historical Marker Ceremony. (Photo: AISD)



Speakers and Alumni at the Ceremony. (Photo: AISD)



L.C. Anderson High School Salvaged Gym Flooring
(Photo: Rebekah Dobrasko)

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Yellow Jacket Conference Center Historic Timeline (Photo: Rebekah Dobrasko)

center is a community space available for meetings, receptions, and other events open to the public, while maintaining the security of the high school campus. The Conference Center occupies the reconstructed floor plan of the 1953 school's band and choral rooms, down to reconstructed metal windows, office spaces, and salvaged glazed tiles on the wall. Throughout the Conference Center is space for exhibits and artifacts, while a detailed timeline and historic photographs from L.C. Anderson High School has prominence on the hallway wall.

Entrance to the Yellow Jacket Conference Center is through the recreated Thompson Street façade of the 1953 school. The façade restoration preserves where the original school building's entrance stood with a low, one-story brick entrance

complete with planters and a flagpole. Along Thompson Street, the new high school building outlines the location of the original cafetorium, mirrors the historic entrance to the gymnasium, and preserves the old oak trees along the front, many of which were originally planted by the early graduating classes at the school.

Eastside Early College High School's secondary entrance along Neal Street also preserves some of the original look of the 1953 school along the first floor of a 4-story "tower." This portion of the school preserves the appearance and feeling of the original classroom wing, both on the outside and the interior of the school. The original bricks from the 1953 school are mixed on the exterior with new bricks, and several classrooms retain glass block windows preserved from the historic

school. In the hallway, the first floor of the classroom wing has the original facades of the lockers, the trophy display cases, and a faithful recreation of Miss Lucille Frazier's classroom complete with a stage. Quotes from alumni and class mottos line the walls of this part of the new high school. To interpret the historic L.C. Anderson spaces and materials, alumna Barbara Spears-Corbett, writer Roxanne Evans, and public historian Rebekah Dobrasko wrote interpretive plaques installed throughout the new school.

Anderson's remarkable sports legacy is honored throughout Eastside Early College High School and with a new historical marker at the Yellow Jacket Stadium. Austin ISD carefully preserved the original 1953 gym flooring and reinstalled it in the hallway entrance into the new

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gymnasium. Additional pieces of gym flooring are within the school's weight room and media center, while the original gym scoreboard has a home in the coach's office. The historic buildings at the Yellow Jacket Stadium (the fieldhouse, concession stand, and ticket booth) have new coats of gold paint. On the corner of Thompson Street and Rosewood Avenue stands the new marker celebrating the state football championships of the Anderson Yellow Jackets as well as track and field and marching band accomplishments.

Those of us in the historic preservation field often think that the demolition of

historic buildings is a failure. However, this project shows that historic preservation can occur in non-traditional ways. The community and L.C. Anderson alumni demanded that Austin ISD respect and treat the place of their high school as a significant and important historic place. They did not want Austin ISD selling the property or continuing to use it as a place for "alternative learning." Their demands led to Austin ISD creating a twenty-first century high school campus for students to excel in learning, sports, and music while honoring those that came before them. Although ultimately the 1953 school building was demolished, its legacy lives

on through the reconstruction of key spaces and the reuse of original materials.

By highlighting Anderson alumni's accomplishments and excellence, Austin ISD provides a place to inspire and support its current high school students. The community can remember and celebrate the historic L.C. Anderson High School through visiting the Yellow Jacket stadium and using the Conference Center. The campus is now a "beacon of hope" for East Austin, celebrating a significant African American institution. As Ms. Overton stated: "It's been a long time coming." ★



PA Welcomes Development Coordinator, Sarah Anderson

Preservation Austin is thrilled to welcome Sarah Anderson, our former Development Intern, to a full-time position as Development Coordinator. We're so pleased to have Sarah in this essential role!

Sarah Anderson **Development Coordinator**

Sarah first joined Preservation Austin as Development Intern in January 2023 while completing her undergraduate studies at the University of Texas at Austin. During these months, Sarah managed coordination with over 60 Homes Tour sponsors and supported stewardship of Preservation Austin's 600+ member households. She led our successful fundraising campaign for Amplify Austin Day and developed engaging messaging for special events, while providing clutch

support to Preservation Austin's staff in so many ways.

After falling in love with Austin's historic sites all over again, and expanding her interest in our city's untold stories, Sarah is thrilled to join Preservation Austin's full-time team as Development Coordinator. Her experience with local nonprofits and student organizations will bring new perspectives to expand our membership base and grow Preservation Austin's impact for all.

Sarah is a recent graduate from the University of Texas at Austin, where she received BAs in both International Relations & Global Studies and Iberian & Latin American Languages & Cultures, in addition to minors in Business and Middle Eastern Studies. She very much enjoys



meeting new people in the community and growing her knowledge of Austin's past and present, in the hopes to better inform our city's future. ★

Tool Time on TAP

Second in a Three-Part Series: Community Land Trusts

By Mary Kahle, Advocacy Committee Chair

This is the second in a three-part series where we'll share an in-depth look at some of the tools recommended in our Urban Land Institute Technical Assistance Report on Preservation, Affordability, and Anti-Displacement, co-sponsored by Preservation Austin with the City of Austin Department of Housing & Planning. The report provides recommendations for new tools, programs, and policies to preserve older and historic housing stock while addressing our city's growing affordability crisis. With this series, we hope to demystify some of the tools discussed in the report and provide greater context and understanding of how they can work in Austin.

Scan the QR code below to read the complete series and access the report.

Faced with a bad case of writer's block when trying to frame this post (pun intended) on Community Land Trusts (CLTs) and their importance to historic preservation, I decided to explore the brave new world of Artificial Intelligence, asking ChatGPT what the term "community" means. After all, evidence in Austin and many locations elsewhere shows that historic preservation and CLTs

make great co-partners in addressing the affordability and anti-displacement challenges facing today's cities.

The response from ChatGPT was mostly boilerplate blah, but there were a couple of paragraphs that were useful in highlighting why CLTs are important tools in promoting affordability, slowing displacement, and fostering strong neighborhoods, all while supporting historic preservation:

- The term "community" refers to a group of people who share common characteristics, interests, or goals and are connected by social, cultural, or geographic ties. It encompasses a sense of belonging, cooperation, and support among its members.
- In a community, individuals come together to interact, collaborate, and

support one another, often working towards a common purpose or to address shared concerns. Communities can provide social support, a sense of identity, opportunities for personal growth, and a platform for collective action. They play a vital role in fostering social connections, promoting inclusivity, and shaping individual and societal well-being.

Given the many positive elements that living in a strong, supportive community engenders, using CLTs in the historic preservation toolkit is key to making Austin a city where everyone feels at home. The use of CLTs in historic preservation also supports the city's ongoing Equity-Based Preservation Plan, which is tasked with protecting and

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Scan the QR code to read the complete series and access the report.



READ MORE!



preserving the City's historic-age buildings and diverse cultural heritage. While there is no single solution to solving the affordability challenge, CLTs are a vital tool in the City's strategy.

What is a CLT, and how does it work?

According to the Center for Community Land Trust Innovation, a CLT is "a non-profit corporation that holds land on behalf of a place-based community, while serving as the long-term steward for affordable housing, community gardens, civic buildings, commercial spaces, and other community assets on behalf of a community." The first CLT in the United States was formed in Georgia in 1969 as an outgrowth of the Civil Rights Movement. International land reform initiatives such as the United Kingdom's Garden City Movement and India's Bhoodan-Gramdan Movement also influenced the development of CLTs in the U.S.

OK, that's interesting and all, but how exactly does a CLT work? A cool graphic in English and Spanish by the Democracy Collaborative shows a typical CLT structure, including its leadership framework, and the TAP Report decodes a CLT's key elements:

- CLTs are a form of shared equity ownership. CLTs use public and private investment funds to acquire land on behalf of a specific community. The CLT owns the land in perpetuity, i.e. forever.
- Community residents can purchase their homes, but not the land on which the houses sit. Instead, residents enter into low-cost, long-term property leases with the CLT ("ground leases"). Monthly charges for the ground lease range anywhere from \$25 to under \$100 per month.

- Although CLT homeowners can never sell the land their home is on, they usually gain some degree of appreciation on the home in addition to the equity they achieve by paying down the principal on their mortgage.
- During the term of the ground lease, homeowners enjoy full and exclusive use of the property, as well as the privacy rights associated with homeownership.
- CLT residents have many of the same obligations as other homeowners, including property tax liability. Fortunately, Texas has one of the clearest laws governing how appraisal districts value CLT properties, which gives CLT homeowners stability and manageable property taxes.
- The CLT often has a right of first refusal for every sale, and there is a cap on the resale price so that the housing remains affordable for the next owner.
- CLT leases typically include an occupancy requirement that the property must serve as the owner's primary residence.
- Most CLTs allow owners to pass ownership of the home to their children, which promotes generational wealth-building and neighborhood stability.

What are the pros and cons of a CLT?

The benefits of CLTs are clear:

- Long-term affordable housing in the community.
- Community buy-in, leadership, and stability.
- Lower costs to own or rent a home.
- Opportunity to build equity and realize appreciation on the home.
- Housing security and privacy rights.

- Generational stability.
- Preservation of historic resources.

The potential downsides of CLTs represent the flip side of their benefits and necessitate fully educating prospective buyers:

- Potential homeowners may balk at not owning the land that their home is on.
- An entity with the capacity to actively monitor the resale restrictions and work closely with the homeowners is necessary to ensure that the home is maintained and that the restrictions on the home are followed.
- The cap on resale profits when a homeowner decides to sell limits the homeowner's profit potential.
- CLTs must compete with other nonprofit housing organizations for limited resources, which hinders reaching a critical mass of housing inventory to serve the community.

It is important that all stakeholders – residents, advocates, and policy makers – understand these pros and cons to fully maximize the potential of CLTs to support stable, supportive neighborhoods as Austin navigates its current economic growth.

What programs does Austin have?

Austin is home to several CLT organizations. One of these is the Guadalupe Neighborhood Development Corporation, which formed in the early 1980s in response to development pressure just east of Austin's Central Business District and I-35. As the first CLT in Texas, the GNDC prioritizes families with generational ties to the neighborhoods where it operates, typically within the 78702 and 78721 zip codes. The GNDC builds and sells CLT homes and offers

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Jobe House, historic rental property owned by Guadalupe Neighborhood Development Corporation (Image: GNDC)

rental homes at affordable rates to income-restricted residents.

The GNDC includes several projects, such as the Guadalupe-Saldaña Net Zero Subdivision, a former illegal dumping site that combines environmentally friendly design and supportive social services with GNDC's affordable homeownership and rental programs. Fifty-eight of the final 125 units will be sold in CLT transactions, and most of the others provide rental housing, including thirty-five created in partnership with the Jeremiah Program Austin, which "disrupts the cycle of poverty for single mothers and their children." While relocation of properties is not typically viewed as ideal within the historic preservation lens because of the loss of historic context, the fact that the GNDC has developed and sold four homes relocated from the Rainey Street Historic District in a CLT sale demonstrates that demolition of historic properties isn't inevitable, and that CLTs can play an important role in preserving historic properties.

Another innovative step the GNDC is taking to support communities is its

Alley Flat Initiative, in which homeowners can build small, environmentally sustainable residential units on the back of their lots that are accessible by the alley networks in many of Austin's neighborhoods. (My grandparents lived on such a lot in an older neighborhood in Houston.) Homeowners can thus generate additional income while staying in their homes, many of which are located in Austin's historic

neighborhoods.

The GNDC is also developing CLT homes in the Montopolis neighborhood and has established thriving communities near the French Legation Museum, East Austin's Willow Street neighborhood, and in a modern, sustainable community three miles east of downtown Austin called Solutions Oriented Living (SOL).

Another local organization is the Austin Community Land Trust (ACLT), which Austin City Council created in 1979 as a public, nonprofit corporation via the Texas Housing Finance Corporation Act. Austin City Council serves as the AHFC's Board of Directors, and ACLT homes are designated for first-time homebuyers who meet income limits and residency requirements. The homes for sale include a mix of new construction and older stock,

and the program has enabled longtime residents of East Austin to purchase homes in neighborhoods where they have generational ties, places where "everyone on the street knows someone from East Austin." ACLT also has rehabilitated older homes, including at least seven in East Austin's Robertson Hill neighborhood, which dates to the 1860s.

Austin Habitat for Humanity is another CLT participant, offering place-based new homes for sale to income-eligible residents who are willing to donate 200 hours of volunteer time to the program.

Who else has CLTs?

The San Antonio Housing Trust has found creative ways to support both affordability and historic preservation, working to rehabilitate the 1914 Calcasieu Apartments, which are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Connected to the SAHT is the Esperanza CLT planned by the Esperanza Peace and Justice Center, which will permanently preserve existing older homes in San Antonio's Historic Westside for income-restricted residents.

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Calcasieu Apartments, San Antonio (Image: Apartments.com)



Citywide Banks Building, Aurora, CO (Image: Urban Land Conservancy)

In Dallas, advocates are seeking advice from Grounded Solutions Network, a national advisor on housing affordability, as they take preliminary steps to establish a CLT. Dallas advocates note that, for many, CLTs are a relatively new housing paradigm, one that requires patience on the part of stakeholders for implementation. These challenges are evident in Houston, where the city-supported Houston Community Land Trust has faced both bureaucratic and budgetary obstacles in its efforts to help low-income residents stay in their communities; the program's problems highlight the challenges of providing affordable housing in one of the fastest-growing regions in the U.S.

At the state level, the Texas State Affordable Housing Corporation (TSAHC) is an important player in the CLT landscape.

Established by the Texas Legislature, the Affordable Communities of Texas (ACT) program of TSAHC is a land banking and land trust program that assists local nonprofit and governmental entities with the acquisition and redevelopment of distressed properties. TSAHC has partnered with organizations around the state to preserve historic housing and support affordability, whether in Houston's Old Sixth Ward National Register Historic District or in Waco's Freedom's Path development, which leverages three rehabilitated historic buildings to provide thirty-four homes for veterans on the local Doris Miller VA Medical Center campus.

On the national level, a number of cities have successful CLT programs. In New York City, the Cooper Square Committee has a respected legacy of providing affordable

housing while preserving historic properties. Denver's Urban Land Conservancy is a model of incorporating historic properties into CLTs, having recently purchased a college campus with buildings that date from 1886 and the groovy 1956 Citywide Banks Building. The Burlington Community Land Trust focuses on the historic African American neighborhood of Morrowtown, successfully incorporating affordable housing and economic development while preserving historic character. In Oakland, California, the East Bay Permanent Real Estate Cooperative has acquired a corridor of historic sites, including Esther's Orbit Room, a legendary jazz club that is being revitalized for business and residential purposes.

These programs comprise part of the international network of over 400 CLT initiatives, more than 240 of which are in the U.S. While my friend ChatGPT would like me to write about every single one of them, these few examples should demonstrate the highlights, benefits, and challenges of running successful CLT programs. The affordability crisis won't be solved by any one tool alone, but CLTs and the longtime communities they support play an important role in tackling the displacement, affordability, and historic preservation challenges facing Austin today. ★

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The Austin Chicano Huelga: Making East Austin Historic

By Matthew Medina

Victoria en La Lucha

The summer of 2023 has etched itself into American history as union members around the country inspired a fervent new labor movement, demanding respect and change. Austin has a rich history of labor organizing, activism, and grassroots movements. East Austin was the setting for a movement talked about too little – a two-and-a-half-year-long labor strike by the overwhelming majority Mexican American workforce of the Economy Furniture Industries plant at 9315 Old McNeil Road in North Austin.

The workforce demographic was shaped mainly by the plant's previous location in East Austin on the corner of 5th Street and Shady Lane, which housed the upholstery efforts of EFI for over 20 years before relocating the workforce north. An Austin American-Statesman article celebrating Economy Furniture's 40th anniversary chronicles the company's move to the larger plant in June of 1964.¹ "Growth Machine," a podcast by KUT-KUTX Austin, sheds light on the history of segregation that has shaped city demographics, and provides an understanding of why this East Austin factory had so many Mexican Americans working for them. The podcast cites the infamous 1928 city plan as a driving force for segregating Mexican and African American communities into East Austin. It adds that this same plan designated East Austin as an industrial district, which historically contextualizes the presence of the EFI plant in East Austin.²

Economy Furniture's manufacturing capabilities were built over the years through the skilled and dependable labor of many Mexican Americans; however, the workforce did not benefit much from their efforts. Tensions started to boil as many workers had only received nominal wage increases over a decade or more with the company. The workers realized the only way their concerns would be heard was through a union, which was certified by the NLRB in October of 1968 after 90% of the workforce voted in favor of a union representation. Unfortunately, management at EFI refused to recognize their union vote and the



Economy Furniture strikers marching on Congress Ave, 1969.

decision by the NLRB, which prompted workers to "put down their tools in exchange for picket signs" on November 27, 1968.³ The strike, which became a catalyst for the city's Chicano movement of the 1970s, became known as the Austin Chicano Huelga. The effort was successful and led to the recognition of the UIU Local 456, a signed Collective Bargaining Agreement, and back-pay for the striking workers, "Huelgalistas," in September of 1971.⁴

La Comunidad

The Austin Chicano Huelga was a community effort. The struggle of Local 456 and the image of Chicanas and Chicanos marching the streets inspired an awakening in the Hispanic population of Austin. Catholic Churches in East Austin provided foundational meeting spaces for early organizing efforts and throughout the strike. Economy Furniture workers held a meeting to discuss the decision to go on strike in the Fellowship Hall of Cristo Rey Catholic Church on November 21, 1968.⁵ Organizational meetings were held periodically throughout the prolonged strike at Santa Julia Catholic Church and Cristo Rey Catholic Church. Many of these meetings, one depicted by a grainy photograph, happened before mass demonstrations, ensuring successful rallies and marches.⁶

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Strikers and students at Austin Chicano Huelga meeting at St. Julia, 1970.



Cesar Chavez and Father Joe Znotas, 1971.

Local heroes Father Joe Znotas, pictured with Cesar Chavez, (below) from Santa Julia and Father Dan Villanueva from Cristo Rey were active in the movement, on picket lines and speaking at rallies. Student activist organizing during the 1960s and 1970s formed a symbiotic relationship with the Economy Furniture strikers. Lencho Hernandez, a strike leader

and official “Boycott Coordinator,” is pictured visiting student boycott efforts on the UT campus.⁷ *The Rag*, a University of Texas student-led periodical focused on Austin’s radical counterculture,



Strike organizers meeting with UT student supporters, 1970.

covered the strike throughout its duration. Their comprehensive coverage of the strike kept UT students involved and amplified coverage from East Austin publications, while the established Austin news media would not report on any aspects of the strike.⁸

The labor organizing of the Austin Chicano Huelga catalyzed civic engagement in local politics for many of the striking workers. “When [Richard] Moya ran in the primary for Country Commissioner, Place Four, the [Economy Furniture] strikers were active in their support,” writes a *Rag* reporter.⁹ Local political legends Senator Gonzalo Barrientos, Commissioner Richard Moya, and Mayor Gus Garcia all recount their experience of the Austin Chicano Huelga in a production by Austin PBS “El Despertar,” in which they explain the strikes’ importance to the growing civic action of Chicanos in Austin. They were also beneficiaries of the organized support provided by Huelgalistas early in their political careers.¹⁰ Richard Moya was a regular speaker at the many rallies held by and for strikers.

The many aspects of the strike, including rally organizing, handbill passing, picketing, and boycotting, were an introduction into active civic engagement for many people in East Austin. Various iterations of rally flyers distributed throughout the entire strike feature many local and national Chicano Movement leaders. The first major “unity rally” organized by the Economy Furniture Strikers on November 30, 1969 featured speeches by national Chicano icons like Corky Gonzalez and Hector P. Garcia. The demonstration included an organizational meeting at Santa Julia, and a “car rally in the Barrio.”¹¹ One could only imagine the inspiring spectacle of low riders, students, strikers, and activists.

The most crucial rally came in 1971, when Cesar Chavez was

Continued on next page



Cesar Chavez's appearance at the 1971 rally.

Austin Chicano, continued from page 20

finally able to make an appearance to show solidarity with the Huelgalistas. [Picture 5] The Economy Furniture Strikers had built a well-organized machine of labor activism by the time of Chavez's arrival, officially organizing as the "Austin Chicano Huelga Committee" headquartered at 1915 E 1st Street.¹² Their 12-month operating budget for 1971 laid out the plan for a massive statewide boycott effort involving over 20 different community partners from Texas cities between El Paso and Houston, a public information campaign, and coordinated student efforts from Texas universities.¹³ The visit by Chavez had been in the making for a long time, and sometimes engulfs the history of the Economy Furniture Strike; however, a speech delivered by Chavez to the Huelgalistas and supporters of the strike asserts the importance of the effort in Austin, "They're setting the stage for wide organizations...not only in Texas but many other states around Texas." ¹⁴

Las Chicanas

A photo of women in what appears to be the Austin Chicano Huelga Office shows some of the underrepresented heroes of the Huelga.¹⁵ In her master's thesis titled "Austin Chicano Huelga," Mary Elizabeth Riley adds the role of women into the history of the strike, arguing that they were placed in a unique role as striking women and keepers of their home, often working a "double day."¹⁶ The contributions of the Chicana rank and file often go overlooked; as Riley explains, much of the little news coverage available on the strike tended to feature the Chicano leaders of the strike much more.¹⁷ Although left out of the record, the efforts of these valiant women offered a stark contrast to the historical relegation of Chicanas to more domestic spaces. Like their male counterparts, the Chicana Huelgalistas fought for economic viability against Economy Furniture's predatory pay practices; however, it is also essential to highlight the burden of traditional gender roles in order to understand the precarious



Women of the Austin Chicano Huelga movement.



Site of the former Austin Chicano Huelga offices in East Austin, 2023.

situation the women of the labor movement were placed in.

Vamos Adelante Austin

A documentary released in 2010 by ACC's Center for Public Policy and Political Studies, "The Economy Furniture Strike" narrated by Dan Rather, beautifully visualizes and narrates the history of the strike.¹⁸ The film preserved the public memory of the strike, there for anyone to view with a quick search on YouTube, but what about the physical memory? There is an empty lot on the corner of E. Cesar Chavez and Lynn Street (image above), where the Austin Chicano Huelga office once stood as a pillar of community activism. Its disappearance unnoticed, just another building erased by time and fading memory. Like the office, many structures that absorbed the history of the Austin Chicano Huelga are gone, but remnants of the old East Austin fabric remain, hiding behind new facades and overgrowth. At 1619 E Cesar Chavez stands Flat Track Coffee and Bike Shop (which makes excellent horchata) there used to be the East First Neighborhood Center, once a hub for the many Mexican American politicians and people who supported and received support from the Economy Furniture Strikers.¹⁹ Hiding on the corner of 5th Street and Shady Lane stands the

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The Economy Furniture Manufacturing plant in East Austin, 2023.

Art Deco exterior of what used to be the Economy Furniture Manufacturing Plant, covered by weeds and bushes slowly baking in a record Texas summer heat wave. Although it was not the factory that the strikers would picket at, the building provides a direct connection to the history of the workforce. Other pillars remain standing, changing, and growing with the needs of an evolving community. Santa

Julia and Cristo Rey Catholic Churches still serve East Austin with the same welcome of the 1970s. What happens to this story? As the endless need for progress engulfs East Austin, how often are we thinking about and advocating for preserving the spaces that make the alluring neighborhood so radical and historic? The time and the need for preservation is now, Adelante, Austin!

Matthew Madina is one of Preservation Austin's 2023 Fowler Family Foundation Underrepresented Heritage Interns. He is pursuing a master's degree in Public History from Texas State University.

All historical pictures courtesy of the Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection. ★

¹ "Furniture Maker Marks 40th Year", *Austin American-Statesman*, October 17, 1970.

² Audrey McGlinchy, "We Planned This," June 22, 2023 in *Growth Machine*, produced KUT-KUTX Studios, Podcast, MP3, 45:11.

³ Wayne Clark, Judy, JAMES EWELL, M, Jimi Hendrix, Barbara, Roger, et al. "The Rag (Austin, TX)." *Rag (Austin, TX)*, The 4, no. 43 (October 5, 1970). <https://jstor.org/stable/community.28043167>.

⁴ Teresa Palomo Acosta Revised by Mario Olgin, "Economy Furniture Company Strike," *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed September 28, 2023, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/economy-furniture-company-strike>.

⁵ *UIU Newsletter No.7, Box [4], Folder [6]* Economy Furniture Company Strike Collection, Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin.

⁶ "Strikers and students at Santa Julia 1970", *Box [5], Folder [1]* Economy Furniture Company Strike Collection, Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin.

⁷ "Lencho Hernandez at UT 1970", *Box [5], Folder [1]* Economy Furniture Company Strike Collection, Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin.

⁸ Don Elner, Steve Russell, Sheila Ryan, and George Cavalletto. "The Rag (Austin, TX)." *Rag (Austin, TX)*, The 4, no. 35 (August 3, 1970). <https://jstor.org/stable/community.28043159>.

⁹ Esther Goldenkind, John DuBose, Tom Blakley, Nancy, Dave Schreiner, Wm Roth, Robert B., Hermes Trismegistus, Ralph A. Swain, and Roberto Vargas. "The Rag (Austin, TX)." *Rag (Austin, TX)*, The 5, no. 5 (November 9, 1970). <https://jstor.org/stable/community.28043172>.

¹⁰ *Al Despertar*, Directed by Joe Rocha, (Austin: KLRU.TV Studios and Austin PBS, 2016), <https://www.pbs.org/video/austin-revealed-austin-revealed-el-despertar/>, accessed September 18, 2023.

¹¹ Bill Meacham, Barry Oliver, Jeff, Walter M. Petersen, Abe Peck, and John Washburn. "The Rag (Austin, TX)." *Rag (Austin, TX)*, The 4, no. 6 (November 17, 1969). <https://jstor.org/stable/community.28043129>.

¹² "Austin Chicano Huelga Committee 1970", *Box [4], Folder [2]* Economy Furniture Company Strike Collection, Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin.

¹³ "Austin Chicano Huelga Committee 1970", *Box [4], Folder [2]* Economy Furniture Company Strike Collection, Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin.

¹⁴ "Cesar Chavez speech to Huelgalistas 1971", *Box [6], Folder [2]* Economy Furniture Company Strike Collection, Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin.

¹⁵ "Unnamed Chicanas of the Strike", *Box [5], Folder [1]* Economy Furniture Company Strike Collection, Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin.

¹⁶ Mary Elizabeth Riley, "The Austin Chicano Huelga" (MastersThesis, University of Texas at Austin, 1996), 19, https://search.lib.utexas.edu/permalink/01UTAU_INST/be14ds/alma991048715649706011.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ *The Economy Furniture Strike*, directed by Jackie McCardell, Jr. (Austin: ACC Center for Public Policy and Political Studies and Paradigm Shift Multimedia LLC., 2010), <https://www.austinncc.edu/cppps/economyfstrike/index.html>, accessed September 20, 2023.

¹⁹ *Al Despertar*, Directed by Joe Rocha, (Austin: KLRU.TV Studios and Austin PBS, 2016), <https://www.pbs.org/video/austin-revealed-austin-revealed-el-despertar/>, accessed September 18, 2023.

Announcing Preservation Austin's Historic Tax Credit Workshop!

Join Preservation Austin and the Downtown Austin Alliance to learn about the opportunities and benefits of federal and state historic tax credits for transforming historic buildings here in Austin. The Historic Tax Credit (HTC) program is an incredibly valuable tool for historic property owners looking to rehabilitate older spaces and save thousands of dollars!

Did you know that there have been 350+ projects completed through the Texas state tax credit program since its inception in 2015, with investments of over \$4.2 billion in historic buildings from Galveston to El Paso? These investments not only save our state's heritage, but increase property values, create high-paying local jobs, bring communities together, and increase heritage tourism.

Speakers at this engaging workshop will include historic tax credit consultants, brokers, and reviewers from the Texas Historical Commission, and they'll discuss case studies showing the credits in action in Austin. Topics will be covered such as eligibility requirements for qualifying projects, the review and application process for receiving credits, and tax credit syndication. Don't miss this invaluable opportunity to learn more about HTCs! ★



State historic tax credits, administered by the Texas Historical Commission, are a big part of our funding for the McFarland House, Preservation Austin's future home. Photo: Preservation Austin.



Preservation Austin Debuts Legacy Business Month

We are so delighted to have successfully launched our first-ever Legacy Business Month (LBM) this October! Throughout the month, our inaugural LBM Passport guided Austinites to iconic local businesses across the city, encouraging them to celebrate and support the institutions that define so much of Austin's culture.

Our 2023 passports featured 13 locally-owned and operated businesses that are 20+ years old. This year's program celebrated restaurants, bars, entertainment venues, and retail establishments. Additional considerations for inclusion in the passport included whether a business:

- Has contributed to the history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood, community, or the city as a whole
- Is owned by generations of the same family

- Has operated under singular ownership for 20+ years
- Operates out of its original location or has operated out of the same location for 20+ years

Austin's explosive growth has made protections and support for legacy businesses more important than ever, which is why Preservation Austin adopted Legacy Businesses as an Advocacy Priority in 2022. In the last several years, many beloved businesses have shuttered, with others expected to follow in the near future. Cities such as San Francisco and San Antonio have adopted ground-breaking legacy business programs to protect and support their cities' identities. Following their example, Preservation Austin created Legacy Business Month to identify, uplift, and generate support for new policies and tools to sustain legacy businesses citywide and ensure they remain vital cultural landmarks for generations to come.

The month began with a bang with our LBM kick-off party at Zilker Brewing Company on October 5. We are beyond proud to have been joined by District 3 Councilmember José Velásquez and Joe Cascino from the office of Mayor Kirk Watson who presented Preservation Austin with a proclamation from Austin City Council officially declaring October as Legacy Business Month. Our friends at Zilker and artist Gerardo Rodriguez of GRZ Monsters generously created an exclusive

Did you participate in LBM 2023? Take our survey and be entered to win two tickets to our 2024 Homes Tour!



SCAN FOR SURVEY

LBM beer and art print that were for sale at the party, with a portion of the proceeds going directly to Preservation Austin.

Thank you to all of our members who supported this program by grabbing a passport and patronizing some of Austin's most beloved institutions! If you participated in the program, there's still time to complete our survey and let us know what you thought of our first-ever Legacy Business Month. Scan the QR code to take the survey and be entered to win two tickets to our 2024 Homes Tour!

Legacy Business Month was supported by the National Trust for Historic Preservation's National Preservation Trust Fund and The City of Austin Planning Department, Historic Preservation Office.

Thank you to our 2023 Legacy Business Month Participating Businesses!

- BookPeople
- Broken Spoke

Continued on next page



Joe Cascino (L) and Councilmember José Velásquez (R) presenting Executive Director Lindsey Derrington with City Council's Legacy Business Month proclamation.
(Photo: Kathy Robinson)

- Carousel Lounge
- Cisco's
- Deep Eddy Cabaret
- The Driskill Hotel
- Green & White Grocery
- The Herb Bar
- The Paramount Theatre
- Peter Pan Mini-Golf
- Playland Skate Center
- Quality Seafood Market
- Waterloo Records & Video

Notes From City Hall: Preservation Incentive + House Relocation

Since 2021, Preservation Austin has partnered with the Austin Infill Coalition (AIC) to create a new preservation incentive for Austin's Land Development Code. We know that our current Land Development Code incentivizes demolition, resulting in tear-downs of smaller, more affordable older homes for larger, more expensive single-family redevelopment. This model of development fails to serve the city's goals for preservation, affordability, and density across the board. Our proposal aims to address this issue by incentivizing significant retention of Austin's older and historic homes while generating much-needed density that will allow more people to live in historic neighborhoods.

This summer, District 7 Councilmember Leslie Pool introduced a resolution that would entitle all single-family zoned properties to three residential units by-right. As the resolution moves through to adoption by Council, PA and AIC are continuing to work with CM Pool's office and City staff to ensure that a compatible incentive is put in place to include Austin's older and historic homes in the solutions to our city's affordability crisis.

Preservation Austin is also collaborating with District 5 Council-member Ryan Alter's office to create new tools and programs to support house relocation in the City of Austin. Earlier this year, we released "House Relocation: A Practical Guide for Austin, Texas," by architect Sarah Gamble. Supported by a grant from Preservation Austin, the guide explores house relocation as a tool for the circular reuse of residential structures within Austin's central neighborhoods and beyond (scan the QR code to download the guide).

House relocation in Austin is burdened by red tape, hefty expenses, and complex city processes. Along with Sarah Gamble and Kathy Robinson of the ReUse People, our work with CM R. Alter's office aims to make house relocation within Austin more accessible and unlock the many economic, environmental, and preservation benefits of this practice.

**SCAN FOR
RELOCATION
GUIDE**



Update on LGBTQ+ Landmark Watson Chateau

We are pleased to share that, through Preservation Austin's advocacy alongside the Friends of the Watson Chateau, The University of Texas at Austin has committed to stabilizing the Watson Chateau.



Pool party at the Watson Chateau (Photo: AR-2005-001-001 Austin History Center, Austin Public Library)

Built in 1853 during the Antebellum Period, the Watson Chateau is most significantly associated with owner Arther P. Watson, Jr. and his partner, Bob Garrett, who lived there together for almost 50 years. The prominent couple hosted extravagant parties, creating a safe space for gay and straight members of society to mingle and gather during a period rife with homophobia. The property was acquired via eminent domain by The University of Texas at Austin in the late 1960s – Watson remained in the home until his passing in 1993, and Garrett departed in 2009. Since then, the house tucked away along Waller Creek has fallen into disrepair and is in urgent need of preservation.

What will become of the Watson Chateau remains to be seen; however, this commitment from UT Austin marks an important milestone in securing the building's future. Preservation Austin will continue to work with UT Austin and the Friends of the Watson Chateau to ensure that its LGBTQ+ heritage is preserved and honored. ★





Preservation Austin Supports Local Heritage Projects with \$21,000 in Grant Funding

Preservation Austin is proud to announce our June 2023 grant awardees! This summer's grantees care deeply for places and stories in Austin and these projects, all rooted in local communities, demonstrate the incredible preservation efforts happening all across our city. We are so pleased to be able to provide the following five worthy projects with \$4,200 each this grant cycle: Chestnut Avenue House, Roberts Clinic, Chateau Bellevue, the Stolle-Sweatt House, and Jump: Swim-ins at Barton Springs, a documentary film project.

Preservation Austin's grants program fuels essential projects across three categories: education, bricks and mortar, and planning/survey/historic designation. By providing funding to important projects citywide, we aim to financially support our fellow Austinites as they preserve our shared past.

Chestnut Avenue House | \$4,200 Brick & Mortar Grant

This contributing resource to the Rogers Washington Holy Cross Historic District in East Austin was once the residence of the current homeowner's grandmother. Today the owner is devoted to honoring her late grandmother's home, which fell into disrepair after she passed away. Using a brick and mortar grant from Preservation Austin, she is working to restore the house to its exceptional beauty, and carry on her grandmother's legacy. She states, "this project is close to my heart because many hard-working African Americans worked tirelessly to maintain beautiful dwellings for their families.



Chestnut Avenue House (Photo by Preservation Austin)

I know these families, am fully aware of the neighborhood's past, and as a descendant, I must pay it forward." Funding from Preservation Austin will go towards foundation repair, siding replacement, and additional interior and exterior restoration work.



Roberts Clinic (Photo by Preservation Austin)

Roberts Clinic, San Bernard Street | \$4,200 Brick & Mortar Grant

The preservation-minded owners of the Roberts Clinic are receiving their second grant from Preservation Austin, this time for structural restoration, HVAC repair, and attic decontamination. After successfully completing the scope of an architectural planning grant and commissioning a master plan for restoration work, the building's stewards will receive a brick and mortar grant for the continued preservation of this important City of Austin Landmark. Roberts Clinic is an excellent local example of the small proprietary medical clinics built by Black physicians during the period of segregated medical practices in the United States. Dr. Edward L. Roberts, founder of the clinic, opened the medical facility in 1937 and administered treatment, performed minor surgeries, and offered labor and delivery services for Austin's Black community until his death in 1967. The only remaining example of this property type extant in Austin, Roberts Clinic is seen by many longtime East Austin residents as a symbol of the Black community's history and resilience during times of transformative change.

Continued on next page



Chateau Bellevue (Photo by Preservation Austin)

Chateau Bellevue, 708 San Antonio Street | \$4,200 Brick & Mortar Grant

The North-Evans Chateau Bellevue, built in 1874 and today the home of the Austin Woman's Club, is one of our city's oldest residential buildings and has served as a venue and meeting space for local organizations for decades. A brick and mortar grant from Preservation Austin will fund the much needed restoration of a beautiful set of French doors located on the building's third floor. These doors are severely deteriorated and exterior paint is worn and peeling, so this restoration project is a small, but necessary step in preserving the building's historic fabric. Grant support will contribute significantly to both the project's completion and the building's further protection from the Texas climate, allowing the Austin Woman's Club to further its mission to preserve the historical and architectural heritage of the Chateau.

Stolle-Sweatt House, E. 12th Street | \$4,200 Brick & Mortar Grant

This Folk Victorian-style home has a powerful legacy that embodies the diverse histories that have shaped East Austin. The Stolle-Sweatt house, named for the home's builders and its most famous resident, respectively, was constructed over 134 years ago by a German-American family of bakers and grocers. Decades later, after the 1928 City Plan segregated people of color to East Austin, Mary Ella Brown Lewis, a Black woman, purchased the house and supplemented her income by taking in boarders. One of these boarders was civil rights activist Heman Marion Sweatt who lived in the home while attending and desegregating the Law School at the University of Texas from 1950 to 1952. Sweatt's fight for equal educational opportunities challenged the "separate but equal" doctrine of racial segregation, leading to the landmark Brown v. Board of Education



Stolle-Sweatt House (Photo by Preservation Austin)

decision in 1954. Grant funding from Preservation Austin will support painting, siding repairs, and window screen replacements at this essential Austin landmark.

Jump: Swim-ins at Barton Springs | \$4,200 Education Grant

This animated documentary film, created by award-winning media producer Karen Kocher, will track the essential role of youth activism in the desegregation of Barton Springs. Pairing interviews with original animations, Jump will tell the story of students in the 1960s who banded together to fight the racist policies that prohibited the Black community from buying tickets to Barton Springs Pool. "Swim-ins" led by Black high school and university students were ultimately successful and these efforts ultimately led to the desegregation of all Austin Parks and Recreation facilities. After the film is completed it will air on Austin PBS, be incorporated into AISD high school sociology courses, and become part of a permanent exhibit at the Beverly S. Sheffield Center at Barton Springs. ★



Civil Rights Activist Joan Means Khabele. Film still from interview by Karen Kocher.

30th Anniversary Homes Tour: Our Most Successful Yet!

Thanks to our incredible Preservation Austin community, our 30th Anniversary Homes Tour was a great success! For the first time, we expanded our tour to two full days of fun, giving attendees the chance to explore 11 historic homes of different architectural styles and eras all across town!

This was far and away Preservation Austin's most successful Homes Tour, supported by more than 70 sponsors, 175+ volunteers, and over 2,000 ticket holders. We exceeded our fundraising goal by nearly \$40,000, a transformative amount for our nonprofit. We could not have made this impact without our wonderful Homes Tour Task Force members, House Captains, volunteers, staff, homeowners, and all of the attendees! Our Community Engagement Committee also deserves a special thanks for their implementation of this year's free featured tour location at the Briones House.

The Homes Tour is so special because it helps our community experience Austin in a new and personal way, with an expanded view of what it means to preserve our heritage. This year we received glowing feedback from many who were involved and we feel privileged to have shared these incredible historic homes with so many in our community.

We hope you will join us again next April for our 2024 Homes Tour, which will continue the two-day, citywide format. We can't wait to share many more historic homes and their captivating stories with you all! ★



Ticket-holders and community members entering our free site through the colorful, tinted concrete facade of the Briones House. *(Photo by Preservation Austin.)*



Featured site on Park Lane, also the location of the 2023 VIP Party. *(Photo by Preservation Austin.)*



Featured site on Windsor Road, also the home of Flintstone the pig, who featured in our lovely 2023 Homes Tour logo. *(Photo by Preservation Austin.)*

Continued on next page

Many Thanks to our 2023 Homes Tour Sponsors!

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Many Thanks to our VIP Party Sponsors!



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SELF-GUIDED TOURS AROUND TOWN

Rogers-Washington-Holy Cross: Black Heritage, Living History Tour

This tour is a companion piece to our 2021 Virtual Homes Tour. It showcases homes featured in the film as well as East Austin sites with important ties to this historic postwar community. To get the full 2021 Virtual Homes Tour experience, watch the virtual tour on Preservation Austin's YouTube channel before you head out! ★





Preservation Austin presents our Facebook Heritage Quiz the first Friday of every month! The first follower to correctly identify a local landmark receives a \$5 gift card to East Austin's Cenote Café, housed in the 1887 McDonald-Cain House, courtesy of your favorite preservation nonprofit. Follow us on Facebook to participate in our future quizzes!

Congratulations to our Spring and Summer winners!

April 2023: Old Bakery and Emporium - 1006 Congress Avenue

Locals and visitors alike might recognize the historic brick and limestone structure at the corner of Congress and 10th Streets, with its signature lime green columns and stone eagle decoration. The two-story bakery was founded by Swedish immigrant Charles Lundberg in 1876, just steps away from the State Capitol Building, with decorative details by artisan John Didelot. For about 60 years, the building operated as a successful commercial bakery and was owned by a succession of European immigrants. In 1937, ownership changed hands and the building briefly served as a nightclub before falling into disrepair and vacancy in the early 60s. The Old Bakery has been the subject of several preservation efforts. The first was in 1963 when the Austin Heritage Society (our predecessor organization) and the Junior League saved the building from demolition. The second effort came in the mid-1970s when public outcry prompted the State Legislature to protect the site from development. Today, the Old Bakery and Emporium hosts an art gallery, visitor and information center, and historical center that honors the city's multicultural heritage and arts community. The building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1969.

★ **Winner: Steph McDougal**



Old Bakery and Emporium

June 2023: Covert Park at Mount Bonnell – 3800 Mount Bonnell Road

The limestone outcropping of Mount Bonnell rises 785 feet above Lake Austin and the Colorado River. Though it is named for early settler George W. Bonnell, who first documented the site in 1838, the summit and much of the surrounding land later belonged to Frank M. Covert, Sr. In 1939, the Covert family donated the summit to Travis County for use as a public park. The limestone staircase dates to this early period of County stewardship, and a 1930s boulder monument commemorates the Covert family gift. The City of Austin acquired the park in 1972 and installed the existing stone arbor and paving at the summit in the early 1980s. Today, the scenic overlook of Mount Bonnell is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and is a City of Austin Historic Landmark, in addition to being a dedicated nature preserve beloved by visitors and Austinites alike.

★ **Winner: James Canup**



Covert Park at Mount Bonnell

Continued on page 32



September 2023: Amy's Ice Creams (3500 Guadalupe St.)

The first Amy's Ice Creams opened at 34th Street and Guadalupe in 1984 (slightly south of their current location at 3500 Guadalupe). A second location followed in 1985 in the Arboretum. Today, this iconic Austin "landmark" boasts 13 Austin area locations as well as stores in Houston and San Antonio. With over 350 rotating flavors and tasty "crush'ns" to customize your scoop, Amy's Ice Creams offers sweet treats for all ages. Check out amysicecreams.com for a location near you. Yum!

★ Winner: Justin Minsker ★



Amy's Ice Cream

SELF-GUIDED TOURS AROUND TOWN

Check out our Self-Guided Tour of South Congress!

South Congress has an energy all its own. Enjoy some Texas sunshine on this 2-mile walking route featuring 15 stops along the South Congress corridor. Be sure to swing by the Continental Club, one of our featured locations and a treasured legacy business, for some cold beer and live music.

Scan the QR code to learn more about other this and other self-guided walking tours! ★



Let's get SOCIAL!



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youtube.com/user/preservationaustin



March 10 through October 6, 2023

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MISSION

Preservation Austin exists to empower Austinites to shape a more inclusive, resilient, and meaningful community culture through preservation.



PA CALENDAR OF EVENTS • FALL 2023

NOV
14

63rd Annual Preservation Merit Award Celebration

Our 2023 celebration will be held at Central Machine Works, a previous award winner! Mark your calendars and join us in honoring 2023's incredible recipients! See Page 1 for details.

DEC
7

Historic Tax Credit Workshop

Join Preservation Austin to learn about the opportunities and benefits of federal and state historic tax credits for transforming historic buildings here in Austin. Preservation Austin and the Downtown Austin Alliance will present our Historic Tax Credit Workshop at Antone's Nightclub Upstairs. See Page 23 for details.

JAN
15

Winter Grant Cycle Deadline

PA offers bi-annual matching grants of up to \$10,000 for a wide range of preservation projects. Nonprofits, neighborhoods, public entities, and building owners are encouraged to apply. Visit preservationaustin.org/grants for more info.

NOW!

Self-Guided Tours

Have you checked our collection of specially curated self-guided tours? Our website includes tours of East Austin Barrio Landmarks, historic churches, South Congress, and more. Visit preservationaustin.org/historic-austin-tours for details.

SCAN TO LEARN MORE

about our upcoming events,
or visit . . . preservationaustin.org!

