



SAN ANTONIO CONSERVATION SOCIETY

November 7, 2018

STATEMENT:

TO: Michael Guarino, Chair, and Members
Historic and Design Review Commission, City of San Antonio

RE: Agenda Item 43 – 1411 W. Ashby Place (Beacon Hill Elementary School)
HDRC Case No. 2018-444

The San Antonio Conservation Society has long supported the preservation of the Beacon Hill School. Despite more than two decades of neglect, the school remains structurally sound and retains significant architectural features on both exterior and interior. We concur with staff's finding that the building meets eight out of the sixteen criteria required for historic designation.

Despite promises made many years ago to restore and re-use the property, the San Antonio Independent School District allowed the Beacon Hill School to deteriorate. This year, their closing of the adjacent playground prompted the parents of schoolchildren to call for the building's demolition. The structural strength of the building, as attested to by a reputable local structural engineer with over 30 years of experience, will make its demolition unusually expensive.

Beacon Hill residents should be aware that the school district is not currently required to submit site plans to the Historic and Design Review Commission for approval prior to demolition. The building's lack of historic designation limits neighborhood control over what the district does on that site. Should the school be demolished, there are no guarantees that it will be replaced by the greenspace many parents desire.

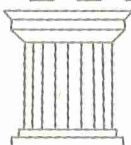
For these reasons, the San Antonio Conservation Society supports a finding of historic significance. We continue to support Councilman Roberto Treviño in seeking a solution that will allow the 1915 building to be restored to productive community use and are disappointed that the school district chose to pass up one such opportunity already.

Respectfully,

SAN ANTONIO CONSERVATION SOCIETY

Susan Beavin, President

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The Purpose of this Society is to preserve and to encourage the preservation of historic buildings, objects, places and customs, relating to the history of Texas, its natural beauty, and all that is admirably distinctive to our State; and by such physical and cultural preservation to keep the history of Texas legible and intact to educate the public, especially the youth of today and tomorrow, with knowledge of our inherited regional values.

