

8 August 2018

Alison Brake, CNU-A
Historic Preservation Officer & Planner | Planning & Development Services
City of San Marcos
630 E Hopkins St, San Marcos, TX 78666

Dear Ms. Brake,

As the owners of the historic African American Baptist Church building located at 219 W MLK Drive in San Marcos, Texas, we are writing to make an official request to have this building recognized as a historic landmark by the City of San Marcos. Historic preservationist James Nolan stated that this is the grandest African American church building in the State of Texas.

Shortly after buying the property in April of 2017, we showed the building to City of San Marcos Council Members Jane Hughson, Lisa Prewitt and Dr. Ed Mihalkanin. Dr. Mihalkanin explained to us that the original location of the church had been burned by the KKK in 1876. It took the church three decades to rebuild.

Jane Hughson and Lisa Prewitt guided us to community members who were working toward the restoration of the building prior to our involvement. We learned that this is a project with many years of interest and a large community support behind it.

Since our purchase of the property, various organizations within the community and around the state have expressed a desire to contribute to the restoration of the building. Prairie View A&M Professor of Architecture, William Batson drove in to see the building. He wants to provide the working drawings for the restoration.

The Calaboose African American History Museum Board stepped up to be a partner to manage the use of the building after it is restored. Currently, the SMART orchestra, San Marcos Cinema Club, Cheatham Street Music Foundation, and other arts groups have expressed interest in using the building.

Dr. Shetay Ashford is currently working to have the neighborhood recognized as a cultural arts district. Jazz composer Eddie Durham and abstract artist Bill Hutson grew up in the neighborhood.

The people of this neighborhood have faced extreme oppression over the years. Dr. Ashford believes that the surrounding neighborhood is likely a freedmen's colony. After the burning of the church in 1876 (the same year that Prairie View A&M was founded), the community stood strong. However in 1923, twenty thousand Klansmen returned to frighten and harass the residents. The neighborhood came together. This beautiful building housed NAACP and other civil rights meetings throughout the 20th century.

As this endeavor has evolved, we can see that the restoration of this building is of prime importance for the neighborhood as well as the City of San Marcos. We are grateful to have learned about the historical significance of the building and feel honored to be a part of this project. We envision the church restored to its grandeur and able to serve the community once again.

We have learned from preservationists that it is paramount for the building to receive local landmark status to show that the community is behind its restoration. It is our belief that the building once restored will again be a crown jewel of San Marcos.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signatures of Konrad and Katherine Waldhauser. The signature on the left is 'Konrad' and the signature on the right is 'Katherine'.

Konrad and Katherine Waldhauser, Sole Members
Waldhauser, LLC