



## Preservation Dallas Presentation to City Council September 24, 2104

Thank you Mayor and City Council members for letting me speak.

Preservation Dallas is greatly disheartened by the demolition underway on Main and Elm streets by the Headington Companies. All of the buildings were important historic buildings for Dallas and were listed as Contributing structures in the Dallas Downtown National Register Historic District. Their integrity and character contributed greatly to the district and they were part of Dallas' early twentieth century commercial history.

The demolitions occurred without any opportunity for public discourse or conversation with City of Dallas preservation staff, local citizens, or Preservation Dallas. Buildings help define a city, but people do as well, and they should have the right to know about the removal of significant historic buildings and what is to go in their place. In this case, there was no chance to explore redevelopment options. We know from successful rehabilitation projects all over the city that there could have been a successful solution to meet both preservation needs and new development goals.

Moving forward, we would like to collaborate with the City of Dallas to better protect the remaining historic resources left in downtown, especially those in the National Register historic district. If more of them come down, we are in jeopardy of losing National Register status and millions of dollars in federal, and now, state tax credits for rehabilitation. If we didn't have that option, rehabilitation of historic buildings like the Statler Hilton, Lone Star Gas, LTV building, Davis Building, Republic building and more would probably have not happened.

While important, the National Register designation is not enough to provide legal protection to historic buildings facing the wrecking ball. Protection only comes with City of Dallas Landmark status or being located in a City of Dallas Landmark District. Buildings like the Wilson Building, Neiman Marcus, Continental Building, Statler Hilton, and more could all be demolished tomorrow without any oversight! Can you imagine downtown Dallas without them?

There are many ways we can work to protect the remaining downtown historic buildings such as:

- Individually designating historic buildings listed on the National Register as City of Dallas Landmarks.
- Overlaying a City of Dallas Landmark district on the Dallas Downtown National Register district.
- Flagging properties with historic significance so that there is some level of review by the preservation staff before issuing a demolition permit.
- Using City economic development incentives to place a priority on rehabilitating historic properties over demolition and new construction.

We would ask that the City of Dallas consider placing a moratorium on demolition of historic buildings over 50 years old in downtown for at least six months. This would give the city an opportunity to engage citizens about the future of Dallas' historic resources. Preservation Dallas would be happy to lead this effort.

If we are to be a world class city, Dallas must honor the unique architecture that enabled Dallas' growth and prosperity. We must follow the path of great American cities like New York, Chicago, Boston, San Francisco and more who protect their historic landmarks because they know these buildings contribute to the culture of the city and make it more desirable for people who live, work and visit. We must aspire to more than demolishing buildings simply because they are old and find ways to incorporate and reuse what our forefathers built with great craftsmanship and skill, which laid the groundwork for downtown Dallas today.