

28 May 2015

Max Grossman, PhD
El Paso County Historical Commission
6265 Camino Alegre Drive
El Paso, Texas 79912

Dear Dr. Grossman:

This letter is in strong support of creating a national historic district in downtown El Paso.

El Paso has an inventory of outstanding buildings from the first half of the 20th century when it was a leading city in the southwestern United States. This is widely accepted as being one of best collections of buildings of this era in the Southwest. As far as architecture of this period goes, El Paso has much more historic fabric to offer than Austin, Tucson, Albuquerque, Phoenix and virtually all other cities in our area.

Due to the new state law granting 25% of the cost of improvements in state franchise tax credits in addition to the 20% federal income tax credits, there is a great interest statewide in capturing this incredible 45% of the cost of improvements. It should be emphasized that this is not just for the historical improvements, but for all improvements, including roofing, electrical, mechanical, plumbing, windows, doors, and others, as long as the work meets the National Park Service standards. However, in order to qualify, the building must be either on the National Historic Register (NHR) or a contributing building in a national historic district. Both of our firms specialize in historic preservation and rehabilitation projects and we recognize the need for such a district. The designation of a national historic district would be the next step El Paso needs to prepare the way for the developers and owners we work with to be able to take advantage of the potential tax credits on future projects.

As one example, Wright & Dalbin Architects is currently working to transform the NHR OT Bassett Tower into an Aloft Hotel. The potential tax credits that can be realized are in excess of \$5,000,000. The owner's are also evaluating the 8-story Mims Building in Abilene, Texas, for eligibility for tax credits. This is an indication of the potential for economic development in our downtown that would be a boon for local property owner's, developers and architects.

Please accept this letter as the joint support for a national historic district from both of our firms. It would be the right thing for our downtown redevelopment efforts.

Respectfully,



Geoffrey Wright, AIA
Wright & Dalbin Architects



William C. Helm II, AIA
In*Situ Architecture