



The Alliance

HISTORIC PRESERVATION ALLIANCE OF ARKANSAS

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July 21, 2014

Little Rock Technology Park Authority
c/o Little Rock Regional Chamber of Commerce
One Chamber Plaza
Little Rock, AR 72201

Dear Little Rock Technology Park Authority members,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Historic Preservation Alliance of Arkansas, I am writing to urge you to consider the value of the existing historic structures on Main Street and to incorporate them into the plans for the Little Rock Technology Park.

The Historic Preservation Alliance of Arkansas supports the decision to invest in the historic Main Street area and the economic vitality that the tech park could bring with it. While we support the development, we oppose the demotion of important landmarks, especially the 1928 Worthen Bank Building (KATV), which is individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The building is a significant piece of Main Street's and Little Rock's identity because of its association with one of the State's oldest businesses and because of its architectural quality and design by George R. Mann, the Principal architect of the State Capitol, the architect of the old Blass building (now known as the Mann Building) and one of Arkansas's most renowned architects.

A stated goal for a tech park on Main Street is to "create a sense of place." A critical component in reinforcing sense of place is retaining distinctive structures that give people an authentic understanding of where they are—that they are someplace with history, someplace that matters. The Worthen Bank Building already contributes to the genuine sense of place of Main Street.

Demolition of this historic building would also remove access to important financial tools that could save money in the project—the State (25%) and Federal (20%) Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits, which are being used throughout the Main Street Corridor to help attract financing and make the investments feasible.

Preservation and economic development are not mutually exclusive. I was recently reminded of President Clinton's remarks at the Downtown Little Rock Partnership's 2010 annual meeting. He said that preserving our heritage while looking to the future is **key** to the revitalization of Main Street. The Mann on Main, the Arkansas Building, the Boyle Building and others are successfully proving that point. We urge the board to make it a priority to adaptively reuse the Worthen Bank Building as a way to preserve an authentic sense of place while continuing to draw investment to Little Rock's core.

Through careful and considered stewardship, today's decision makers can ensure that these irreplaceable pieces of Little Rock's identity continue to inspire us all while providing the backdrop of the city's unfolding story for generations to come. Please let me know if I or the Historic Preservation Alliance can be of help in moving forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vanessa McKuin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Vanessa McKuin
Executive Director

Cc: Mayor Mark Stodola
Chancellor Dan Rahn
Chancellor Joel Anderson