Position Statement on the Hyrum Jensen Mansion, Sugar House, Salt Lake City
September 21, 2009

Utah Heritage Foundation supports Deseret Industries utilizing a vacant big box building to continue providing services near the Sugar House Business District. Retaining Deseret Industries near the central core of the business district is crucial to the revitalization of the neighborhood and business district.

However, we believe that acquiring the historic Hyrum Jensen Mansion in order to demolish and replace it with loading docks and a drive-through does not support the physical preservation of Salt Lake City's founding, nor does it promote good planning principles beyond historic preservation such as walkability and retaining neighborhood character. The Sugar House Community Council has voiced concern about the proposal to demolish the historic mansion and UHF supports the council on this point. We believe that demolishing another small, historic building in Sugar House would be a significant loss to providing affordable space to businesses in a building that defines the historic character of the neighborhood.

Historically known as the home of Hyrum Jensen, the building has historic and architectural value to the city and should be considered for adaptive use for another purpose, either by Deseret Industries in conjunction with this project or with another project. To that end, we strongly encourage The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and project architects from Parker Gould Ames & Weaver to seek every method possible within their program, to facilitate the reuse of the Jensen Mansion for Deseret Industries’ offices by re-configuring docks, drive-throughs, store space, and parking, or consider not purchasing the mansion, or selling it to another owner for adaptive use instead.

The Hyrum Jensen Mansion was built as his second home. Jensen was of Scandinavian descent, as many were in this area known as Swede Town. He owned much of the land from 700 East to Highland Drive, and 2100 South to 3000 South, originally belonging to Brigham Young as Forest Farm Ward. Much of the architecture built on land owned by Jensen was built by the Kimball Richards Jensen Partnership. Jensen was the contractor/developer (as the owner of the land), Kimball the investor, and Richards the architect. Jensen’s third home, the Graystone Mansion is still located at 2700 South and 1300 East in the Graystone Pines development, and is divided into five living units. The Kimball and Richards homes are on Stratford Avenue east of 1300 East. Other neighborhoods built by this partnership included Westminster Heights and Highland Park.