The Austin Motel has stood here since 1938, along with its suggestive signage. From the outside, the motel still resembles a humble motor court from a bygone era.

The longtime restaurant Snack Bar once occupied the attached space. After renovations came the short-lived bar Fine Foods, and trailer Jo’s Burger Box. A new healthy diner, Joann’s, is planned to open spring 2018. It will be headed by hip Austin entrepreneur Lary McGuire, who known for creating high-end eating experiences.

The motel’s previous room decor was individually set up by Dottye Dean in the late 1990s. Her son sold the place last year, and the new manager Liz Lambert finished renovations in time for SXSW 2017 in March. Lambert’s design features, among other elements, wallpaper patterns created by an international design firm.
Music Lane is a $55 million project under construction across the street from the motel. It will be 163,000 square feet and feature retail, office and restaurant space. A new boutique hotel managed by the same Liz Lambert will also be home there.

Invasive species in the Republic of Texas

1 a certified Masshole from North Carolina, although the bike rack and bumper sticker fit right in with local Austin cars.
2 from Maryland, again with a bike rack and sticker.
3 from Ohio, bonus points for now-extinct obscure car brand.
NO, LIVE MUSIC ISN’T DEAD [YET]

A TALE OF TWO BUSINESSES

The Continental Club, left, has been a staple of South Congress since 1955. Its illustrious history includes witnessing the height of Austin’s live music scene with the nearby Armadillo’s rise and fall. Names such as Stevie Ray Vaughan have performed here. Passing by, I heard a man exclaim, “This was my barback in the day!” On the right is Warby Parker, an upscale eyeglasses peddler based in New York.
THE OLDEN DAYS

Just north of the motel stand these old edifices. These are some of the original buildings in South Congress, developed in the late 1800s by German immigrants. They were originally a general store and pawn shop.

The Hotel San Jose, once a seedy, run-down joint, was Liz Lambert’s first hotel project when she acquired it in 2005. It’s now one of her signature luxo-boutique hotels, and is indicative of where SoCo is heading.
CITY OF AUSTIN
Population by the decades

[US Census Bureau, City of Austin]

HOUSE PRICE INDEX:
Austin-Round Rock-
San Marcos MSA

Current median listed home price in Austin: $389,000

In South Congress zip 78704

MEDIAN HOMES PRICES WENT FROM $469,161 IN 2015 TO $539,600 IN 2017

by 2020, Austin area rents could increase 11 percent

$1,376 per month

PICTURES FROM SIMPLER – AND LESS EXPENSIVE – TIMES

[US Census Bureau, City of Austin]