

City's Howard Hall demo decision appealed to state board



Michael Rose, Statesman Journal

4:45 p.m. PDT September 4, 2014



(Photo: KOBBI R. BLAIR / Statesman Journal)

Salem City Council's decision to allow the demolition of Howard Hall to proceed has been challenged.

[Beverly Rushing](/story/opinion/readers/2014/06/26/howard-hall-significance-blind-community/11382275/), a former resident of Howard Hall, on Tuesday submitted a "Notice of Intent to Appeal" to the state's Land Use Board of Appeals. The LUBA appeal will contest a city council decision, made in July, that clears the way for Howard Hall's destruction.

For Rushing, Howard Hall was a second home when she was growing up. The dormitory at 700 Church Street SE is the last remaining building on the former Oregon State School for the Blind campus.

The thought of Howard Hall's demolition "breaks my heart," Rushing said. Howard Hall, which was built in the 1920s, has too much historic significance for the city to allow it to be razed, she said.

RELATED: [Complete coverage of Howard Hall](/search/%22howard%20hall%22/)

In July, Salem City Council voted to overturn a [Historic Landmarks Commission decision](/story/news/2014/06/13/plan-raze-howard-hall-denied-city-commission/10408941/) to protect Howard Hall.

Salem Hospital owns Howard Hall and wants to demolish the structure to make way for a playground and therapy garden for children with disabilities. The hospital has the right to intervene in the LUBA appeal, but hasn't made a decision on how it will respond, said Mark Glyzewski, a hospital spokesman.

RELATED: [Therapy park vs. Howard Hall: Can there be both?](/story/news/health/2014/05/19/therapy-park-vs-howard-hall-can/9302911/)

Salem City Attorney Dan Atchison said the council had wide discretion under city code in its review of the Historic Landmarks Commission's ruling on Howard Hall.

"We feel comfortable with the decision," he said.

Rushing's notice to appeal to LUBA doesn't address her argument for overturning the city's decision. That will come at a later date when she files a brief with LUBA.

The notice to LUBA triggers a 21-day period when the city must provide written records to Rushing and LUBA.

Rushing has asked for city records in an audible form. City officials said they would comply with the request.

Howard Hall was designed by John V. Bennes, who is best known for work on the Oregon State University Campus. The state's historic preservation office noted in a May 6 letter to the city that Bennes is "highly regarded for his residential design."

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RELATED: [Howard Hall poised for destruction](/story/news/2014/07/29/howard-hall-poised-destruction/13347319/)

Background

In 2010, Salem Hospital bought the former Oregon School for the Blind campus from the state. The hospital paid \$6 million for the approximately 8.22 acre property, which once had 10 major structures.

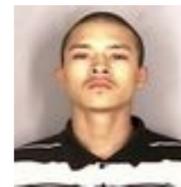
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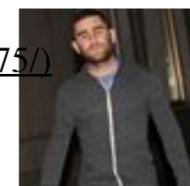
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