

Howard Hall has significance for the blind community

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Your Sunday, June 22, [editorial \(/story/opinion/editorials/2014/06/21/honor-howard-halls-history-walls/11214863/\)](/story/opinion/editorials/2014/06/21/honor-howard-halls-history-walls/11214863/), deceptively titled “Honor the history of Howard Hall,” was demeaning and dismissive toward the entire blind community. The piece stereotypes blind and visually impaired people as ignorant and helpless.

As a totally blind individual, I strongly object to the editorial’s characterization of Howard Hall. The idea that we would not be able to appreciate Howard Hall if it were restored or that restoring the building “would do nothing for blind Oregonians” is ludicrous.

I attended the Oregon School for the Blind for many years and my room was in Howard Hall. I went on to attend Lewis and Clark College and became a businesswoman.

Howard Hall is a culturally and architecturally significant work. This building is Salem’s only known building that was designed by Oregon’s famous architect John V. Bennes. It is clear to me that Salem has torn down too much of its history.

Speaking as a former president of the American Council of the Blind of Oregon, I and most of my colleagues support the Salem Historic Landmarks Commission’s finding that the Salem Hospital has not submitted a plan that replaces the significance of Howard Hall as a historical and cultural landmark.

Beverly Rushing

Salem

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