

NOTICE OF RECOMMENDATION

PLANNING DIVISION
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*Si necesita ayuda para comprender esta informacion,
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RECOMMENDATION OF HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION LOCAL HISTORIC RESOURCE DESIGNATION CASE NO. HIS22-30

APPLICATION NO.: 22-119756-PLN

NOTICE OF RECOMMENDATION DATE: January 20, 2023

SUMMARY: A proposal to designate the Civic Center as a Salem Local Historic Resource.

REQUEST: Class 4 Legislative Major Historic Review of a proposal to designate the Civic Center (c.1972), as a local historic resource, zoned PS (Public Service), and located at 555 Liberty Street SE 97301; Marion County Assessors Map and Tax Lot numbers: 073W27BD00100 and 073W27BA03200.

APPLICANT: City of Salem

LOCATION: 555 Liberty St SE, Salem OR 97301

WHEREAS, a Council priority is Welcoming and Livable Neighborhoods which includes ensuring that Salem residents have access to historic and cultural opportunities by supporting Salem's historically and culturally significant buildings and sites; and

WHEREAS, the Salem City Council adopted the updated 2020-2030 Salem Historic Preservation Plan (Plan) as components and support documents to the Salem Area Comprehensive Plan in 2020; and

WHEREAS, the Plan's adopted Goal 6 is: Survey and Designate Historic Resources; and

WHEREAS, the City of Salem is a Certified Local Government and has a historic preservation program that includes a preservation ordinance and a local Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC) that meets regularly and maintains a register of locally designated historic resources; and

WHEREAS, the National Park Service designated the Salem Civic Center on November 2, 2022 as an important local example of the Brutalist architectural style as well as an excellent representation of the ideals of Salem's community planning and development in the late 1960s/early 1970s; and

WHEREAS, the HLC voted unanimously to initiate and adopt a resolution for the local historic resource designation of the Salem Civic Center at their November 17, 2022 meeting; and

WHEREAS, the HLC voted unanimously to recommend approval of the local historic resource designation of the Salem Civic Center at their January 19, 2023 meeting; and

WHEREAS, A local historic resource designation may be initiated by the Historic Landmarks Commission by resolution pursuant to SRC 230.010(c)(1)(B); and

WHEREAS, the Historic Landmarks Commission is required to provide appropriate public notice, consider the matter at a public hearing and make a recommendation regarding the findings relating to the applicable criteria for local historic resource designation in SRC 230.010 to the City Council pursuant to SRC 300.720(e); and

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF SALEM, OREGON:

Section 1. FINDINGS:

The Historic Landmarks Commission hereby adopts as its findings of fact the staff report on this matter dated January 19, 2023 herewith attached and by this reference incorporated herein.

Section 2. ORDER:

Based upon the foregoing findings and conclusions, the Historic Landmarks Commission RECOMMENDS the City Council take the following action:

That the City Council accept first reading of an ordinance bill for the purpose of designation of the Salem Civic Center as a Local Historic Resource.

HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION VOTE

YES 7 NO 0 ABSENT 0 () ABSTAIN 0



Andrew Zimmerman, Chair
Historic Landmarks Commission

The City Council will make a final decision on the proposal. The appeal of the Council decision would be to the Oregon Land Use Board of Appeals. The appeal period is 21 days from the mailing date of the Council decision.

The case file and copies of the staff report are available upon request at Room 305, Civic Center, during City business hours, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Contact Kimberli Fitzgerald, Case Manager, at 503-540-2397 or kfitzgerald@cityofsalem.net to review the case file.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE SALEM HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION

CASE NO.: Local Historic Resource Designation Case No. HIS22-30

FINDINGS: Based upon the application materials, the facts and findings in the Staff Report incorporated herein by reference, and testimony provided at the first evidentiary Public Hearing of January 19, 2023 to consider the local historic resource designation of the Salem Civic Center, the Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC) finds that the applicant adequately demonstrated that their proposal complies with the applicable provisions of the Salem Revised Code (SRC) 230.010(e) as follows:

1. **SRC 230.010 (e) (1) Age:** *The proposed historic resource is at least 50 years old, or demonstrates exceptional significance if less than 50 years of age.*

Findings: The HLC finds that the resource is 50 years of age; therefore the HLC finds that this criterion has been met.

2. **SRC 230.010 (e) (2) Significance:** *The proposed historic resource demonstrates significance in at least one of the following areas:*

- a. **Cultural Significance:** *(i) Contributes to the character and historic identity of the neighborhood or City; (ii) Makes a contribution to the historic character of a historic resource, neighborhood, district, or City as a whole*

Findings: The HLC finds that the potential resource has cultural significance for its association with Salem's community planning efforts in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The community planning efforts led by the City of Salem's Civic Center planning committee demonstrated a commitment to participatory community planning methods which were newly emerging across the nation during this time period. The participatory planning process is a process which focuses on identifying stakeholders and then establishing a framework where these participants can be part of the decision-making process. This process empowered stakeholders by allowing them to work together within a politically legitimized framework which actively determined the proposed location and use of the new civic center. The HLC finds that the resource has cultural significance for its association with the local Salem community who came together to define its future and its priorities – public services in a well-designed and open public place designed to specifically address the needs of Salemites.

- b. **Human Significance:** *(i) Is associated historically with the life or activities of a person, group, organization or institution that has made a significant contribution to the local community; or (ii) Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local history; or (iii) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, important information concerning prehistory or history.*

Findings: The HLC finds that the first documented efforts for a new Civic Center began in 1947 when the Salem Chamber of Commerce published their "Long-Range Plan for

Salem, Oregon.” This report identified a critical and urgent need for Salem as Oregon’s Capitol City to lead the way in developing a new Civic Center. Multiple sites were considered including one north of downtown near Union Street, and one extending from High Street west to the Willamette River. These sites were deemed prohibitive due to the costs of land acquisition. However, a four-block area already partially owned by the city, bounded by Leslie and Trade streets, and by Liberty and Commercial on the east and west, known as the Hillside Site, became a strong contender. A Civic Center Committee was established, but multiple plans and bond measures failed again and again. It was not until 1968, more than twenty years after efforts first began, when the community rallied together behind building a new Salem Civic Center at the Hillside site. The difference ultimately was the public outreach and education. Encouraging a ‘yes vote’ was accomplished largely by Salem’s community of women – women who were identified in newspapers most often by their husbands’ names. Over 500 women volunteered to host block parties, block coffees, distribute brochures, make and deliver buttons, and share “flipbooks” featuring the plans with the community. There were phone lines citizens could call with questions and women volunteers made their headquarters at the Chamber of Commerce office. These many dedicated volunteers took the information to the voters instead of relying on voters to find it. All of these efforts were successful and finally in 1968, the fourth bond measure passed approving a \$6 million bond measure for the construction of the Civic Center, including the new municipal administration building, a central public library, police and municipal court facilities and a central fire station.

Therefore, the HLC finds that the resource has human significance for its association with the local Salem community who worked for almost twenty years to identify a location for the new Civic Center and gain support for the funding to build it.

- c. **Architectural Significance:** *(i) Is significant as an example of a particular architectural style, building type, structural type, or method of construction; or (ii) Is the work of an acknowledged master or architect, or possesses high artistic values.*

Findings: The HLC finds that the Salem Civic Center is an excellent local example of Brutalist architecture. The completed Salem Civic Center was featured alongside the First National Center in Portland, Oregon in a 1973 edition of *Tone* magazine. The magazine described the Salem Civic Center as an excellent example of Brutalist architecture comprised of “poured-concrete buildings... [that] have a massive, contemporary look but have been designed with an airiness that orients beautifully with the open spaces of the twelve-acre park-like setting. The complex comprises a city hall, public library, and fire hall... A reflecting pond, five fountains, and extensive plantings are in the landscape plans. The entire area is designed as a refreshing space for public enjoyment, and all buildings and open areas are connected by ramps for wheelchairs. The center is the largest project ever undertaken by the City of Salem and, in the eyes of the administration, employees, and citizens of the capital city of Oregon, is a great success.” Therefore, the HLC finds that the Salem Civic Center is significant as an example of the Brutalist architectural style.

3. **SRC 230.010 (e) (3) Integrity:** *The proposed historic resource retains sufficient original design characteristics, craft work, or material to serve as an example of an architectural period, significant building type or structural type, or recognized architectural style.*

Findings: The HLC finds that The Salem Civic Center retains its original form and is in its original location. The HLC finds that the resource retains sufficient original integrity to convey its historical and cultural significance and this criterion has been met.

The Historic Landmarks Commission **RECOMMENDS APPROVAL** of HIS22-30, authorizing City Council designation of the Salem Civic Center as a Local Historic Resource.

VOTE: Yes 7 No 0 Absent 0 () Abstain 0

Attachments: A. Vicinity Map
 B. Excerpt from Applicant's Submittal Materials

Prepared by Kimberli Fitzgerald, Historic Preservation Officer