

Save the Texas Pavilion/Institute of Texas Cultures Building

Dear Chairman Nau and Members of the Texas Historical Commission,

I'm writing to you as a concerned citizen in support of the State Antiquities Landmark designation of the Texas Pavilion/Institute of Texan Cultures (ITC) building in San Antonio, Texas.

The State built the Texas Pavilion for HemisFair '68 as a permanent home for a museum celebrating the diverse cultures that made our state, a purpose it served for over 50 years. The building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places for its architectural and historical significance. UTSA has managed the building for the UT System since 1973.

Caudill, Rowlett, and Scott partner William Merriweather Peña, a decorated WW II veteran and award-winning Mexican American architect known as the “father of architectural programming,” contributed to the design of the Brutalist building. Peña’s contributions make the ITC one of less than 4% of sites on the National Register that reflect Latino history and the only downtown landmark by a Mexican American architect.

UTSA, a Hispanic Serving Institution, plans to demolish the ITC building, claiming it has no use for the building and that prohibitive renovation costs take funds away from its mission. However, UTSA can save the most money and remain true to its mission, which includes community engagement and public service, by selling or leasing the site with the building intact.

Reports posted on UTSA’s ITC Centennial 2068 website show that:

- The public engagement portion of UTSA’s 2021 visioning process focused on the future of the museum, not the building.
- A 2023 Property Conditions Assessment by Raba-Kistner Consultants lists \$7M in short term rehab costs, while Skanska’s 2023 revised Demolition Assessment comes in at over \$10.7M. Demolition costs will exceed either number.
- A 2023 Historic Preservation Assessment Report by Architexas proposes five different categories of compatible uses, six different types of entertainment destinations, and five different immersive art experiences. These options parallel the proposed “Project Marvel” district the City of San Antonio has been secretly negotiating with UTSA.

Demolition of the Institute of Texan Cultures building without public review is premature and unwarranted. Please vote for State Antiquities Landmark designation. Give this irreplaceable Texas landmark the chance it deserves to be repurposed for the benefit of all, especially for the San Antonio community.

Sincerely,