



MEDIA CONTACT: Lewis Vetter, President
The Conservation Society of San Antonio
210-621-7872 (cell) 210-224-6163 (office)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Wednesday April 16, 2025 at 2:30 PM

CONSERVATION SOCIETY FILES NOTICE OF APPEAL IN ITC DEMOLITION

As crews continued demolishing the Texas Pavilion/Institute of Texan Cultures building, the Conservation Society of San Antonio filed a notification Wednesday that it would appeal's the District Court's decision blocking UTSA and the City from being sued. On Monday, April 14, the court granted 'Pleas to the Jurisdiction' filed by COSA and UTSA, meaning those entities could not be sued due to their sovereign immunity and that the district court did not have jurisdiction. The Conservation Society argued that UTSA and the City were not acting legally, but these claims were not heard.

While UTSA claimed that work crew were only in the remediation phase, it became clear last week that permanent structural damage was being done to the iconic 1968 building. Crews were seen removing giant concrete wall panels with a backhoe on Tuesday, April 8 and reducing them to rubble.

"We have filed notice of an appeal to the 15th Court of Appeals as we continue to try to make our voice heard," said Lewis Vetter, President of the Conservation Society. "We are asking the 15th Court of Appeals to allow us to show evidence demonstrating that UTSA and COSA did not follow the law regarding this demolition."

UTSA and the City see demolition of this historic structure as required piece of the multi-billion-dollar Project Marvel. The Conservation Society of San Antonio has repeatedly said that the structure could be a part of Project Marvel.

"The building is eligible for investment tax credits thanks to its listing on the National Register of Historic Places and as a State Antiquities Landmark," said Vetter. "You would think a developer would want that equity, especially if public financing is limited."

The Conservation Society, founded in 1924, has been pushing for public hearings on the future of the building since 2022, and successfully listed it on the National Register of Historic Places and as a State Antiquities Landmark in 2024. "Those designations mean that certain procedures need to be followed, and UTSA has not played by those rules," said Vetter.

###

BACKGROUND

The original suit, filed in District Court on Wednesday, March 26, asks for a halt to the demolition being undertaken by the University of Texas at San Antonio following the administrative approval of a demolition permit last December by the Texas Historical Commission. The petition claims that the demolition violates the original 1967 deed that transferred the property from the City of San Antonio to the State of Texas and that a required federal review of the demolition did not occur. The legal action references the City's statement about Project Marvel, which will utilize federal funding, and UTSA statements about "monetizing" the ITC site.

"UTSA and the City of San Antonio have moved forward with the demolition of the Texas Pavilion without following the requirements of the Texas Antiquities Code and those of the National Historic Preservation Act," said Lewis Vetter, President of the 100-year-old Conservation Society of San Antonio. "The Texas Pavilion should be part of Project Marvel," he added.

The Conservation Society began in 1924 and was pivotal in the preservation of the San Antonio Missions beginning with restoration of the San Jose Granary in 1933, creation of a National Park in 1978 and nomination as World Heritage Site beginning in 2006. The Society was instrumental in the creation of the River Walk and has preserved hundreds of sites, including Casa Navarro, the Aztec Theatre, Ursuline College, the Rand Building and Yturri-Edmunds House and Mill. The Society provides over \$100,000 in building and educational grants to San Antonians each year, has over 1100 members and offers a range of educational programming and resources.

There are several public policy issues regarding the demolition of the Texas Pavilion that have not been resolved, including public financing; the existing Spurs lease at the Frost Bank Center; tepid public support for Project Marvel; and the potential for state and federal transportation funds for the project.