



*Hotel
Buckminster
in the 1950s*

Kenmore Square's Hotel Buckminster is currently a pending landmark. Its fate, although undecided, will either end in preservation and restoration or demolition.

The Hotel was built in the late 19th century and permanently closed its doors in March of 2020.

The building was purchased by Life Sciences real estate developer IQHQ Inc. in November, 2021 with the intention of renovating the structure into lab space. Because of inadequate ceiling heights, certain parts of the current structure would be required to be demolished to meet regulations.

However, to prevent the demolition process, the Boston Preservation Alliance (BPA) submitted a landmark petition to Boston Landmarks Commission on October 28. The BPA is a nonprofit organization that "protects and improves the quality of Boston's architectural heritage," "It's an incredibly historically significant building, an iconic building in Kenmore Square, it deserves to be a landmark and to have that level of protection," said Alison Frazee, Executive Director of the BPA.

"We try not to use landmarking as a way to prevent development or to stop development. That's not what the tool is for, but we don't have any other tools."

Frazee presented the Hotel Buckminster's landmark petition in a hearing held by the Boston Landmarks Commission on November 22.

The petition for further study was unanimously accepted by the Commission, making it a pending landmark. The Hotel's history and significance is currently in the process of being investigated.

The historic significance of the hotel is its direct ties to pop culture. The structure hosted famous figures such as Louis Armstrong, Billie Holiday, Babe Ruth and Andy Kaufman.

The hotel is also the oldest in the Kenmore and greater Fenway area, and the building's striking architectural design is one of few spared to the city's modernization.

"Losing yet another icon of the city to development would not only further erode the neighborhood's sense of place but would lead residents to the conclusion that their memories, experiences and histories are justifiable sacrifices to the interests of private development," the BPA wrote.

The Boston Landmarks Commission's approval or rejection of the Hotel Buckminster as a landmark, will be decided only after a months- long process of several levels of input, reviews, and voting.

If accepted, any changes that the owner of the property wants to make to the structure will have to first be reviewed by the Commission.

"I feel confident this building will be a landmark because of its significance," Frazee said. "A lot of Boston landmarks see upgrades and modifications and additions. They're not frozen in time; they don't have to look the same way forever. They just have a deeper level of review and approval process to make sure that what's unique and historic about these buildings is preserved as they continue to evolve to meet modern needs."

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