ON FEBRUARY 10, SUPPORTERS OF OUR CAMPAIGN TO SAVE THE SHOWBOX gathered at the beloved cultural landmark for our sixth annual Heart Bomb, a display of affection for places that matter. We took to its legendary spring-loaded dance floor to craft valentines that raise awareness of this historic but endangered place.

You may be wondering why The Showbox, which was designated a landmark in 2019, is still under threat of being redeveloped. The harsh reality is that landmark designation isn’t enough to save a historic building from being demolished. Seattle’s landmarks ordinance prevents the protections known as “controls” from infringing on a property owner’s “reasonable economic use.” The term “reasonable” lacks clear definition within the ordinance.

The controls and incentives process, in which the Landmarks Preservation Board (LPB) staff negotiates with the owner of a newly designated landmark, continues to be delayed by the owner of the Showbox property. At the LPB’s February 19 meeting, legal counsel for the property owner requested yet another extension to negotiate controls and incentives – their third such request since the building was landmarked.

We know that the property owner doesn’t want controls placed to protect the building, but how long must this drag on? Unfortunately, the landmarks ordinance doesn’t establish a deadline, leaving the LPB and City staff’s hands tied. The LPB granted an extension until May 20, but it’s currently unclear whether they will be able to make a recommendation on controls and incentives at that meeting.

Historic Seattle, Seattle Theatre Group (STG), and Friends of The Showbox have called for controls on the property and no further delays in the process. Landmarking is recognized through decades of case law as an established and important public benefit, and it would benefit the public to confidently know that our landmarks will in fact be protected.

Thank you to those of you have written to the LPB in support of controls on The Showbox. If you haven’t already done so, please visit our website to learn how you too can advocate for controls. Landmarks deserve protection, not plaques!
Call for Preservation Award Nominations

EACH YEAR, AT OUR ANNUAL PRESERVATION CELEBRATION BENEFIT, Historic Seattle presents awards to honorees selected from nominations received in the following categories:

- Best Preservation Project
- Preservation Champion
- Community Investment
- Preserving Neighborhood Character
- Community Advocacy
- Best in Neighborhood*

* a rotating category specific to the neighborhood where the annual benefit is held

The deadline for nominations is April 30. Please visit historicseattle.org for more information about categories and rules.

Later this spring, we’ll announce this year’s Benefit date and location and share ticket, table, and sponsorship information - so stay tuned!

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Many of our spring programs are impacted by the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. If you have registered for an event that is postponed or canceled, we will contact you directly with updates. Please visit our website for current information on the status of future events. Thank you for understanding the importance of prioritizing the health and wellbeing of our community.

We look forward to seeing you again when it is safe to gather.

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