


# **EXHIBIT 34**

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# Top architectural and historic preservation groups sue Trump over Kennedy Center plans

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By  Betsy Klein



A consortium of the nation's top architectural and historic preservation groups is targeting President Donald Trump's plans to **temporarily close and extensively renovate** the Kennedy Center, filing a new lawsuit Monday that asks a federal judge to indefinitely halt the project.

which bypassed approvals from Congress and key commissions and therefore violates historic preservation laws, the groups contend.

It comes just days after the arts center's board of trustees, which is stacked with Trump loyalists, **unanimously approved plans** for a two-year closure that will begin in July, marking the latest effort to impose the president's style and cultural tastes in the nation's capital. A judge is already weighing a **separate challenge** to Trump's plans by a Democratic congresswoman who serves as an ex-officio member of the board.

The new case was brought by eight groups, including the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the American Institute of Architects, the DC Preservation League, and the American Society of Landscape Architects. They're asking a judge to pause "any further work on the Project" until the government completes a standard review and consultation processes with Congress, the Commission of Fine Arts, the National Capital Planning Commission, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, among other entities, according to a draft of the complaint obtained by CNN.

The groups are represented by a trio of law firms that are already involved in other cases related to Trump's development in Washington: his sprawling **East Wing ballroom** addition, his attempt to **paint the Eisenhower Executive Office Building** white, and his efforts to redevelop the **East Potomac Golf Links**.

The Kennedy Center requires significant maintenance, as outlined in a 2021 comprehensive building plan obtained by CNN that estimated more than \$250 million was required for projects such as drainage and waterproofing improvements, exterior wall repair, and roof replacement. Congress approved \$257 million for the center last year as part of Trump's "Big Beautiful Bill."

Trump announced in February that after an extensive "one-year review," the arts institution would need to close for roughly two years for the renovations, which, he

He subsequently suggested that the project could be dramatic — a demolition effort short of a teardown, but one so severe that it would leave the Washington building’s steel “fully exposed.”



Portraits of President Donald Trump, first lady Melania Trump, Vice President JD Vance and second lady Usha Vance are seen inside the Hall of Nations at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC, in February. *(Jabin Botsford/The Washington Post/Getty Images)*

A source close to the center told CNN at the time that Trump has very specific ideas about what he wants to do to the building, and those ideas — which have not been publicly released — don’t align with the complex’s current state.

Documents provided to the board of trustees ahead of last week’s closure vote did not provide new information on what the renovations would entail that necessitated a full

documents. The documents obtained by CNN included that 2021 review, an eight-page report from 2022 on soffit failure on the building's exterior, and minutes from a March 2 "Buildings and Grounds" subcommittee meeting.

"Major infrastructure needs include HVAC and chilled water systems, electrical infrastructure, structural and concrete deficiencies, service tunnel conditions, waterproofing, roof and steel degradation, and life-safety systems. A full shutdown is the most efficient and cost-effective path to complete the work properly," the meeting minutes said, adding that "approximately 75 to 175 of the Center's roughly 300 employees" would be impacted.

The plaintiffs are concerned the renovation will be much more extensive than the administration has publicly telegraphed.

"We're concerned that, as with the White House East Wing, the potential scope of planned changes is understated and will result in irreparable loss," said Carol Quillen, president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, which is also suing Trump over his ballroom project.

Judy Chesser, chair of the Committee of 100 for the Federal City, added: "Without public input and congressional approval as required by law, the Administration's statements that its intentions are only to 'enhance' the Center are not reassuring but are cause for alarm."

## **'Masterwork of modern architecture'**

Plans for a National Cultural Center, a public auditorium in Washington, DC, began during the Eisenhower administration, and President John F. Kennedy was instrumental in fundraising for the space. After Kennedy's assassination, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed a law renaming the project for Kennedy, and it ultimately opened in 1971. The building was designed by architect Edward Durell Stone, who

according to the Library of Congress.

The Kennedy Center has been regarded as “a masterwork of modern architecture” and “one of the most significant modern buildings in the Washington, DC, area,” said Liz Waytkus, the executive director of Docomomo US, a modern architecture nonprofit.

Its exterior has stayed largely the same since its 1971 opening, until last fall, when Trump oversaw the painting of its gold-bronze columns white.

“It looks so much better. Before they had the steel painted gold, and the gold was very cheap. ... We got rid of the gold columns, which was always terrible — they looked cheap and they looked fake,” Trump said as he convened the building’s board last week.

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The next major change came in December, when the board voted to rename it the “Trump Kennedy Center,” installing new signage bearing the president’s name just one day later. That move is also being challenged in court as part of Democratic Rep. Joyce Beatty’s lawsuit.

The president, who was elected chairman of the board last year, has also overseen major programmatic and leadership changes to the center, leading to slumping ticket sales and major artists pulling out of planned appearances, which some saw as driving the desire to temporarily close.

Trump has been unhappy with some of the negative publicity around the Kennedy Center, announcing this month he planned to replace its president, longtime ally

*Correction: This article has been corrected to attribute a quote to Liz Waytkus.*



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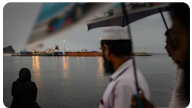
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