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National Trust for Historic Preservation Files Suit to Immediately Stop White House Ballroom Construction

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The National Trust for Historic Preservation, which was chartered by Congress in 1949 to facilitate public participation in the preservation of sites of national significance, filed a suit today in the US District Court for the District of Columbia against various individuals and agencies of the government asserting that ongoing construction of the White House ballroom is unlawful and asking the court to halt further construction activities until the government complies with the law by going through the legally mandated review processes, including a public comment period.

“The White House is arguably the most evocative building in our country and a globally recognized symbol of our powerful American ideals. As the organization charged with protecting places where our history happened, the National Trust was compelled to file this case,” said Carol Quillen, President and CEO of the National Trust for Historic

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The filing makes several claims: construction has commenced even though plans have not yet been filed with the National Capital Planning Commission as required by the National Capital Planning Act; no adequate public environmental assessment or Environmental Impact Statement has been prepared as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA); and Congress has not yet authorized construction of the building as it is required to do when construction is proposed in any federal park in the District of Columbia (the White House sits in The White House and President's Park).

In addition, the filing argues that the President, in disregarding these laws, is violating the Property Clause of the Constitution, which reserves to Congress the right to dispose of and make all rules regarding property belonging to the United States.

In mid-October, the National Trust submitted a [letter](#) [Link: /national-trust-letter-regarding-proposed-construction-of-white-house-ballroom] to the National Capital Planning Commission, the National Park Service, and the Commission of Fine Arts calling for a pause in construction until the legally mandated review processes were completed. The National Trust acknowledged the utility of a larger meeting space but raised concerns that the massing and height of the proposed new construction would overwhelm the White House itself and permanently disrupt its carefully balanced classic design, citing the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, which offer clear guidance for construction projects affecting historic properties.

Our concerns went unaddressed.

The National Trust is currently the sole plaintiff in this case and has retained Foley Hoag as outside counsel. We stand ready to assist the National Park Service, the White House, and relevant review agencies in exploring design alternatives and modifications that would accomplish the objectives of the Administration while preserving the historic integrity and symbolism of the People's House.

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[Complaint For Declaratory and Injunctive Relief](#) [Link: /nthp-complaint-20251212] (12/12/2025; PDF)

[Declaration of Alison K. Hoagland](#) [Link: /declaration-of-alison-k-hoagland] (12/12/2025; PDF)

[Declaration of Elizabeth S. Merritt](https://savingplaces.org/files/declaration-of-elizabeth-s-merritt) [Link: https://savingplaces.org/files/declaration-of-elizabeth-s-merritt] (12/12/2025; PDF)

[National Trust Letter Regarding Proposed Construction of the White House Ballroom](#) [Link: /national-trust-letter-regarding-proposed-construction-of-white-house-ballroom] (10/21/2025)

About the National Trust for Historic Preservation

The National Trust for Historic Preservation is a privately-funded nonprofit organization dedicated to helping communities maintain and enhance the power of historic places. Chartered by Congress in 1949 and supported by partners, friends, and champions nationwide, we help preserve the places and stories that make communities unique. Through the stewardship and revitalization of historic sites, we help communities foster economic growth, create healthier environments, and build a stronger, shared sense of civic duty and belonging.

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