

AMAZON

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rent buildings may be demolished before plans for rebuilding are in place.

Sorenson said that he has written a letter to Higher Education Chancellor Thomas Bartlett urging the moratorium and that he will meet with University President Myles Brand soon to discuss this and several other topics.

Sorenson expressed three major concerns about the project. First, no plans are currently in place to rebuild Amazon after the scheduled demolition.

"I have requested to see the plans, but I haven't seen any. I think it would be good to see them so that we know the cost and when all this will happen. I

certainly hope that the University will have some plans in place and that students will have the opportunity to participate in the process. If that can be done quickly, that's OK with me," Sorenson said.

Sorenson, the newly appointed senator of the district that includes the University and the Amazon community, also said he is concerned that the ongoing controversy will erode the image of the University, both in the Legislature and statewide.

"I want to make certain that the University's importance in the state is put forward, and that the University is not seen as a group of people who are bickering. It

concerns me to see a decision that involves so many people become so difficult," he said.

Sorenson also mentioned a 1992 engineering study that housing and administration officials often use to argue in favor of current evacuation and demolition. He said the report by MS&G architects of Eugene did not conclusively find that the facility must be rebuilt.

The report recommends that the Amazon facility should be abandoned after 1996, but also says the facility's life-span is "a highly subjective issue without any clear conclusive information triggering a calculable life-span."

The report also found that "there is not a clear and immediate life safety hazard," but recommended a study to improve the fire alarm system.

Critics of the report say it was done in a hurried fashion and that the findings were inconclusive and misleading. They further say that the report lumps the two-story and single-story units together, and that the two-story units are in an obviously worse condition than the single stories.

One Amazon tenant, Bruce Gibbons, who is a licensed general contractor, attacked the report in a written statement dat-

ed Sept. 27, 1993.

"In my experience as a builder I can see no justification for the demolition of the single-story units ... the two-story units are in worse condition than the single-story units and could possibly be candidates for demolition. I think that the two-story units need further study," Gibbons wrote.

Sorenson said there is no definite conclusion over the need to rebuild.

"We need to get a definite answer, yes or no," Sorenson said. "If the answer is that we need to rebuild, and that answer comes after a longer study, we should go out and get an architect that will incorporate the various needs of the project. Right now we don't have an engineering study and we don't have an architect with any plans. I don't think we should be taking any further steps without plans."

Amazon tenants released a statement the same day renewing their call for a moratorium on demolition plans, evacuation of current residents, for the University to sever its relationship with Christopher Alexander, and his firm, CES/T&E Venture, and to halt plans to construct Alexander's Amazon Master Plan.

The statement further called

for greater student involvement and control in decisions made by the University and the housing department.

"After all, we pay for those decisions," the statement said.

Residents also demanded an additional independent study of the Amazon facility that "establishes the condition of all units and takes into consideration the possibility of maintaining units that are safe and habitable."

Residents also complained that the closure of roughly 100 units, which is set to be completed by March 1994, is unnecessary and costly. Thirty-eight units have been emptied so far, at a cost of roughly \$7,000 per month in lost rent payments.

"As citizens of Oregon and as residents of Lane County we insist that the University preserve what low income housing already exists in South Eugene until they provide us with a plan that they intend to build new units that are truly low-cost," the statement said.

Alexander and his firm are currently under investigation by the state Architect Examiner's Board to determine the Alexander's exact role in the Amazon project.

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HOUSING

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afford to attend the University.

He said that he, his wife Ruth and his 7-year-old son Gabe have put a lot of effort into painting and decorating the two bedroom unit that they have lived in for the past six weeks.

"This is our home," he said. "It's not much, but if you work hard enough you can make it comfortable and safe."

They were evacuated from their original unit because it was part of the impact zone in the first phase of demolition, which is scheduled to start this summer.

Sheryl Hogan, an Amazon resident for 18 months, was also evacuated from that zone.

Nonetheless, she said that the hassle of moving, and Amazon's warped floors and lead paint are a small inconvenience when compared to the higher rents she would face in non-university housing.

She said that the Amazon community is a unique place to raise her 10-year-old son as she pursues an architecture degree.

Closure of Amazon, she said, "is really going to affect single parents. It may eliminate them from getting a college education."

She said that she believes the units are worth saving and should be restored instead of torn down.

Former Amazon resident, David Zupen said that he also feels that Amazon should be repaired and preserved, and that University officials may have ignored tenant's endorsement of this option when officials decided to demolish Amazon and build Amazon Village.

Zupen, a representative of the Eugene Council for Lower Income Housing, said that University officials promised in 1980 to maintain the current Amazon structures for an indefinite period of time. He claims that University housing officials have reneged on this agreement by labeling Amazon as temporary housing and portraying the facility as unsafe.

"Isn't it about time that we realized that these are permanent structures and a permanent part of the community that we feel very attached to," he said.

"Amazon is part of our culture, and we don't want to see it torn down."

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