

1 Vendue Demolition Plans Opposed



Staff Photo by Tom Spain

1 Vendue Range: Prominent Location

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Post-Courier Reporter

Charleston preservationists said Thursday they will oppose any move by the State Ports Authority to demolish its former headquarters building at 1 Vendue Range.

William McIntosh, president of the Preservation Society of Charleston, and Elizabeth J. Young, the society's former president, said the building should be rehabilitated.

Their comments came one day after SPA Executive Director W. Don Welch told an authority board meeting in Columbia that an architect's survey showed the structure, built in 1831, to be in need of extensive repairs. Welch said it would cost about as much to repair the building as it would to demolish it and build a new one.

"I would be quite opposed to the destruction of this building," Mrs. Young said. Although it is not listed as an historic structure, she said, it is nevertheless a valuable one because of its prominent location.

"So many warehouses in the area have been rehabilitated and this building has great prospects," she said.

Mrs. Young termed SPA suggestions that a similar-appearing building be constructed in place of the

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present structure "famous last words. They never build anything just like it."

McIntosh said demolition would be "a great loss to the city. The Preservation Society would actively oppose any demolition," he added.

McIntosh suggested the SPA "follow the example of the College of Charleston" and rehabilitate existing structures instead of demolishing and building new ones. "It is more economical to restore an old building than to build a new one," he said.

The SPA board asked Welch to study the building further and make a report at the next board meeting.

The SPA gained clear deed to the property recently from the city, and Mayor Joseph P. Riley Jr. said Thursday he would not oppose demolition if the structure is found to be unsound.

"My position is that if the building is structurally unsound and they could rebuild along the lines of the current building that would be the proper course of action," he said.

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