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## Property owner, preservation groups allowed to enter Iron Quarter suit

Written by

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A judge has allowed a Main Street property owner and four preservation groups to join a federal lawsuit involving the historic but deteriorating Iron Quarter buildings.

Friday's ruling by U.S. District Judge John Heyburn will make it easier for preservationists to intervene should the city issue an order allowing developer Todd Blue to demolish the buildings, which could happen by early May, said attorney Steve Porter, who represents the property owner and the preservation groups.

For now, the preservationists support the city and Blue's effort to find a buyer who will preserve the buildings, but "we will do everything we can through the federal, state or local administrative processes" to block the demolition, Porter said.

Heyburn ruled that DKH Properties, which owns the adjacent building at 121 W. Main St., has "substantial legal interest" in joining the lawsuit because its property "could incur physical or economic harm" as a result of the Iron Quarter proceedings.

He also permitted the four nonprofit groups — the Louisville Historical League, Neighborhood Planning and Preservation, Open Louisville and Preservation Louisville — to join the suit, which gives them more limited say in the matter, Porter said.

Preservationists' next step, Porter said, might be to formally challenge an agreement between the city and Blue's Cobalt Ventures under which the city is to allow Blue to demolish the buildings after 90 days — or May 6 — while studying the feasibility of saving the facades.

Porter's group claims the settlement, negotiated by Mayor Greg Fischer, violated local laws by excluding the Metro Landmarks Commission and the Waterfront Review Overlay District from talks over demolishing the buildings.

Fischer spokesman Chris Poynter did not return a call Friday evening. Nor did Blue or Cobalt attorney Glenn Cohen at their office lines.

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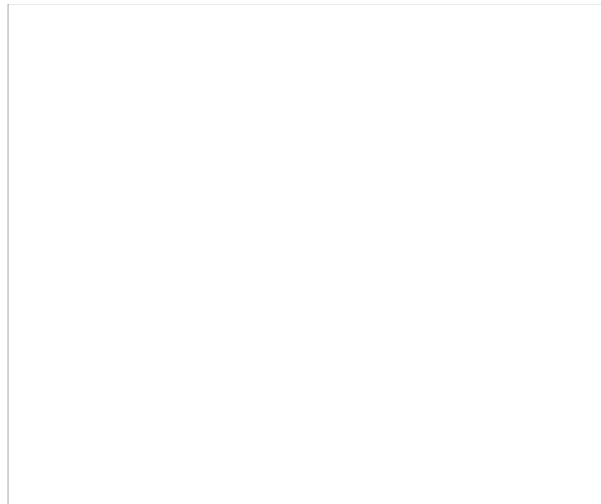
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Cohen has previously said the preservationists should have sought to intervene in the case before the city and Blue negotiated their settlement.

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