

This old house on shaky ground

By PHIL WRIGHT

East Oregonian Jun 9, 2013



The Saling House was built by Isham and Malinda Saling in 1880 in the town of Weston. The brick structure was recently placed on the list of Oregon's most endangered places.

Weston's most historic house has landed on Oregon's list of most endangered places.

The designation from the Historic Preservation League of Oregon could lead to a grant to help restore the cracking and deteriorating Saling House.

Isham Saling, a prominent Weston businessman, had the ornate brick house built in 1880. But following the Great Depression the house changed hands, upkeep fell off and the house began falling apart. Saling House Restoration Committee, a nonprofit dedicated to giving life to the old place, bought it in 1976 with the aim of one day operating the house so it can earn enough to pay for itself. That has not happened. Committee member Sheldon Delph, 62, said the house is on shaky ground.

The foundation, he said, is crumbling, and the house is splitting apart. Large cracks run the height of the two-story walls, and the brick in some places is pulling away from interior walls. The Saling House committee last year focused on keeping the porch from falling down, Delph said, but repairing the foundation is the top priority and comes with a price tag of about \$300,000.

The Saling House was one of 10 places the preservation league selected across Oregon. The list includes public and private properties, both residential and commercial, and spans rural and urban Oregon from the pioneer era to World War II. The league considers each site historically important and in imminent danger of being lost, so each will receive help from the league, including qualifying for a \$2,500 grant to help start rehabilitation and reuse.

That's why getting on this endangered list is good, Delph said. The league really goes all out to help the places on the most endangered list, he said, and that will be an essential component of saving this architectural treasure.

If the Saling House committee can restore the place, Delph said, the next step would be making it economically sustainable. Maybe the house could work as a type of hotel or guest home. How do we have it be something that people want to come to Weston to see? he said, is the big question.

The answer could determine the future of the Saling House.



https://www.eastoregonian.com/news/local/this-old-house-on-shaky-ground/article_00fa732c-374a-58fb-a18c-12428aa4281_b.html