



Last week, the LADWP demolished the old Hair I Am barber-shop and salon, despite protests from local citizens and the county planning commission that were voiced last year when the project was first announced. Photo by Nancy Masters

Demolition raises ire among Indy residents

With Hair I Am torn down, LADWP says improvements are planned for other buildings

Register Staff

One of Independence's old, but not technically historic buildings, a barber shop that stood on Edwards Street/U.S. 395 for more than 100 years, was demolished by its owner, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, last week.

While the department has justified its actions, saying the building was uninhabitable and would take extensive work to bring up to code, residents in Independence are claiming that the department's early-morning start-time for

the demolition and failure to pull the proper demolition permits was an underhanded way to skirt public process.

According to Inyo County Public Works, the LADWP applied for a demolition permit from Inyo County in 2010, but that permit was not issued due to the possibly historic nature of the building. The State Office of Historic preservation asked the department in 2010 to complete a California Environmental Act analysis of the property before demolition could take place. The LADWP says a consultant was hired to conduct the analysis. After its initial attempt to receive a demolition permit, the Independence Civic Club expressed interest in occupying the building, but said it never received a response from the LADWP.

"The Hair I Am building was actually a small addition to an existing building that is

now being leased to the Independence Lions Club," a press release from the LADWP states. "The Hair I Am addition sat on a dirt and rock foundation and was unsafe and not up to code. The addition was unusable in its current condition and extensive renovations would need to be done before it was safe to occupy."

The press release goes on to state that a professional historical study "determined that the Hair I Am addition was not a historic structure."

As a result, the LADWP decided the addition needed to be removed for safety reasons.

"The LADWP will now make improvements to the adjacent structure that is leased to the Lions Club, including siding, a new roof and windows and extending the fence to the building," the press release states.