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Old State Prison Demolition Ushers in New Chapter of Utah History *Crews topple guard tower to signal start of redevelopment*

DRAPER (November 29, 2022) –The public demolition of a 50-year-old prison guard tower marks a critical milestone in the redevelopment of Utah’s Innovation Community at The Point. Today’s 10 a.m. ceremony honors Utah’s past and formally welcomes its future. It will also be live streamed on The Point YouTube Channel, Twitter account and Facebook Page.

“We are working diligently to transform this closed and restricted space into an open and accessible community that all Utahns can enjoy,” said Alan Matheson, The Point executive director. “Today marks a new chapter in the evolution of The Point and represents a major leap forward in creating one of the most significant quality-of-life opportunities in Utah’s history.”

The old Utah State Prison utilized three different types of guard towers, with today’s demolition toppling one built in approximately the 1970s. As a relic of the past, guard towers have been increasingly recognized as an outdated form of surveillance and are being removed at correctional facilities across the country.

In July, inmates were moved to brand new, state-of-the-art facilities in Salt Lake City that better prepares inmates to return to society. Abatement of the aging facilities started immediately afterwards to safely remove hazardous materials and shore up aging infrastructure. Demolition starts today and is scheduled to take several months. Refined plans for the first phase of redevelopment are anticipated to be released in the coming weeks.

While most of the aging and outdated facilities will be removed, the Point of the Mountain State Land Authority (Land Authority), has acted to preserve important aspects of the prison, including the chapel and the Johnson Bar locking system. Inmates built the prison chapel in the early 1960s with a multi-denominational group of citizens and community organizations helping to fund its construction. Since 1961, the prison chapel has provided inmates a place to exercise their spirituality. It will continue to be an important part of the site’s future as a symbol of redemption and hope.

In addition to the prison chapel, the Land Authority will preserve the Johnson Bar, a mechanical locking system that allowed guards to open individual cell doors or groups of cell doors remotely by pulling levers at a control panel. The system can only be found in one other place in the world- Alcatraz Island. The locking system will be on full display for the public to see during the guard tower removal this morning.

“We recognize our solemn responsibility as stewards of the public’s investment to respect the site’s past while simultaneously planning for its future,” said State Representative Lowry Snow, co-chair of the Land Authority. “This momentous occasion signals a new chapter in our work to reflect Utahns’ vision and values at The Point.”

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About [The Point](#)

The 600 acres of state-owned property at the old site of the Utah State Prison in Draper is known as “The Point.” The site is owned by all Utahns and represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to create an iconic Utah development. It is anticipated that The Point will offer affordable housing options, advance innovation, catalyze robust economic growth, provide parks and regional trail connections, demonstrate sustainable practices, protect the environment, and ultimately enhance Utahns’ quality of life.

About [The Point of the Mountain State Land Authority](#)

The Point of the Mountain State Land Authority was established by the Utah State Legislature on May 8, 2018. It is an 11-member board composed of state legislators and agency executives, local elected officials and business leaders with a mandate to plan, manage and implement development at The Point.

Get to The Point

More information, including live-streaming, recordings and materials of all board and working group meetings, is publicly available on The Point website at www.thepointutah.org. Follow The Point on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#).