

## In Court Oct. 14

# Christ Circle Must Wait For Hotel Classification

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Christ Circle's controversial religious center in the Santa Cruz Mountains is headed back to court Oct. 14.

But this time, the group is attempting to override a County Board of Supervisor's decision not to classify one of its newly-constructed residence halls as a hotel.

By changing the classification to a hotel, Christ Circle could avoid installation of a costly fire sprinkler system in the building.

The group's attorney, James Coyle, said he believes the supervisors' decision, and a similar decision by the county building appeals board was "arbitrary" and unfair. He also called the decision "punative" because the Christ Circle group did not first get a building permit for the building.

Superior Court Judge Rollie Hall ordered an Oct. 14 hearing on the matter.

He also issued an order that until the matter comes to court, Christ Circle could not place any court-referred or government-placed children in the residence hall which has become the focus of contention between the group and the county. In recent decisions, the county has ruled the building is an institutional residence hall. This means the building must meet certain codes — including the installation of a fire sprinkler system.

Christ Circle contends the sprinkler system would cost \$15,000 and is not needed in the building.

Coyle claimed the sprinkler system would "not save any lives" since a child would probably be overcome by smoke inhalation before the system was ever activated.

In addition, he said, the group already has installed a complex fire alarm system in the building.

Under the hotel classification, no sprinkler system is required.

In other rulings, Hall noted that Christ Circle had met earlier requirements set out by the county to add insulation to

the building and check light fixtures.

But, he ordered the group to get a soil test to see if a chimney constructed by Christ Circle was on stable ground. If the test is negative, the religious group will have to shore up the structure according to suggestions made by an engineering firm.

If the group does not comply by Oct. 14, an order will be

issued which would stop the religious group from using the residence hall altogether.

Dwight Herr, assistant county counsel, had sought initially for the court order barring use of the non-permit building until it was brought up to code. Christ Circle has been in court several times in an attempt to prove it has a safe building.

The religious center is located north of Boulder Creek.